

An aerial photograph of a city intersection. A multi-lane highway runs diagonally from the bottom left towards the top right. To the left of the highway, there are several large, modern buildings with flat roofs and some greenery. To the right of the highway, there are more buildings, including a large one with a circular feature, and a dense area of trees. The overall scene is a mix of urban development and natural space.

Project Journal

Veronica Danosin

weeks 2.1 - 2.10

A new edge for DeSingel

Outdoor spaces in relation to the
highway

Introduction - BRIEF
Archiving Architecture

Design Studio mentors:
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The new brief talks about the relation between the VAI and the DeSingel. What is the VAI trying to do? How?

As stated on the brief our aim needs to be:

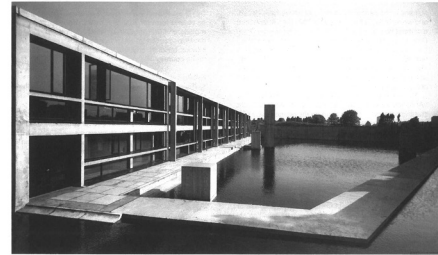
“An ambition might be to redefine its relationship with the city and its surroundings, while understanding its own identity and typology and enjoying its modernist sensibility.”

A new individual brief needs to be developed trying to merge our interests and our thoughts with the original brief information.

P2 : outline of a proposal to develop an architectural proposal across different scales; interior, building, city and landscape

Archiving Architecture

2024-25 MSc3 AR3AI100
Brief 03



Undated image of deSingel, Library Royal Conservatory Antwerp

Developing an Archive

VAI
The Flanders Architectural Institute (VAI) represents architecture as a subject and a discipline in Dutch-speaking Belgium. It seeks to provide a meeting place for everyone who wishes to make, share and experience architecture through its engagement with exhibitions, lectures, debates, events and publications. The VAI offers an important critical framework, through which to consider contemporary Flemish architecture, producing a biennial yearbook and curating the Belgian Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale.
Since 2016, this active participation with contemporary architecture has been extended through its appropriation of the Flanders Architectural Archive. This collection, originally built up by the Province of Antwerp but now addressing Flanders as a whole, holds more than 180 private architect archives, including those of Leon Stynen, Bob Van Reeth - AWC, Christian Kieckens, Bataille-Ibens and many others.
The relation between the archive and the VAI's other activities is a developing one. It will be the task of this project to consider what might be the role of the extensive historical material and technically defined conditions of the archive, as an integral component of the wider public mission of the organisation.

De Singel

The VAI is currently based at De Singel, a modernist cultural campus on the Southern periphery of Antwerp's historical centre. In 1958, the Ministry of Public Works commissioned architect Leon Stynen to design the first phase of this ambitious complex, a new Conservatoire as an extension to the Antwerpse Vlaamse Muziekschool. It featured a pavilion shaped like an open figure of eight with rooms overlooking two inner courtyards. In 1979, work began on the construction of phase two, becoming the expanded deSingel Cultural Centre and including a series of performance space for music and theatre as well as a television broadcasting centre. In 1987 the building was extended again, based on a design by Stynen and his assistant Paul De Meyer, with additional space for the Conservatoire and a small public foyer. In 1995, Stephane Beel was tasked with drawing up a masterplan for the reorganisation and extension of DE SINGEL and the Conservatoire, finally leading in 2012 to the opening of a major extension to the complex, part of which houses the office and exhibition hall of the VAI.

A New Home

With the addition of the archive, the institute has now outgrown this space. The archive is housed in a separate

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building in the centre of Antwerp, which we have visited, and which is not fit for purpose. In 2021 the VAI launched a competition, through the Flanders Bouwmeester Open Call, to create a new home for itself, incorporating both its more public activities and the archive, within a redundant church, Sant Fabia, in Berchem, Antwerp. This competition was finally abandoned due to cost and unclear political motives, even after a winner for the competition was chosen.

This history is the starting point for our project. The VAI needs a new home. We propose to take a different starting point, which is to build on the relationships and potential synergies that already exist between the VAI and De Singel, as a means by which to engage both institutions but also as a catalyst to rethink the condition and environment of the building itself. While De Singel is an important venue for the arts, its relationship with both the city and its public is an ambivalent one. The complex has a distant and introverted character and its public spaces often feel under-utilised. Core uses, such as the television studios, have been abandoned and the complex as a whole feels in need of a new sense of purpose and engagement. The Beel extension ultimately does little to amend these senses, indeed it could be said to exacerbate it, with its large, empty circulation spaces and its ambiguous relation to the ground and the city.

Over the remainder of the course each of you will develop a project to define a new, united home for the VAI, incorporating the needs of the archive, alongside its other public and administrative roles. The starting point will be the competition brief written in 2021. This aids offer possibilities for public and community engagement to the organisation's core activities. However, that brief is for a standalone building. Working in response to the existing complex of De Singel, and perhaps the VAI's existing spaces there, you may feel you need to critique, adapt and develop the brief to engage with the situation as you find it and the possibilities it offers. This may engage, to one extent or another, the larger condition of De Singel and the other organisations that occupy it, or might focus on the VAI as a defined entity within or in response to it. This brief is a starting point and offers a significant degree of flexibility in your approach. You may choose to extend De Singel, create a new structure that relates to it in some way, or perhaps work entirely within its existing body. An ambition might be to redefine its relationship with the city and its surroundings, while understanding its own identity and typology and enjoying its modernist sensibility.

To Begin

As a beginning, we would like you to explore, document and represent De Singel, as a developing body and as a situated one, describing the relationships between it and its context historically and now, with an understanding of potential future developments. In the next weeks we will ask you to refine your own brief for the project and to test the scale and possibilities of your interventions.

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By P2 we expect you to have a strategic direction and an outline form for your proposals, presented through models and drawings, from which you can establish a developed architectural proposal across the scales of interior, building, city and landscape by the conclusion of the course

Public

- Reception and counter: 100m² (incl. separate sanitary facilities and seating)
- Exhibition space/multifunctional space: 200m²
- Reading room: 200 m² (cf. current reading room 96m², is too small) (keep reading room and library divided, small separate group study room)
- Library: 200 m² (books and visitors' workstations) (keep reading room and library divided)

Total: 700m²

Additional

- Staff workspace 300m²
- Large workplace for archive employees is 12.5 m² assume 10 + 125 proposal 300m² (4 + 30 employees including interns, temporary employees, etc.)
- Large workstations with archives 3.5 m x 3.5
- Standard office spaces
- Focus spots
- 1 large meeting room 80m²
- 1 small meeting room 30m²
- Kitchen, bathroom, dressing room 150m²

Total: 560m²

Archive

- Storage Packaging material: 120m² (near archive, depot, office)
- Loading and unloading space: 150m²
- Waiting depot (emergency depot): 100 m² (storage of non-exclusive archives, bulk pallets)
- Fringe space correct - contaminated material: 60m²
- Quarantine (storage of contaminated material): 120 m²
- Cleaning space (processing contaminated material): 60 m²
- Pre-depot (storage of own material): 60 m²
- Processing (processing of own material): 60m²
- Digitization space (own material): 60 m² (free)
- Restoration studio (own material): 60 m²
- Depot storage 2,500 m² (Currently 1,000m, growth in recent years 470m in 5-7 years > per 5y 400m > 10y > 20y with expensive storage system)
- Taking into account climate class for paper
- Climate class photos separate space: 100 m²
- Bulk storage
- Storage in racks and planning cabinets
- View depot: too in the underground term, 125m is visually attractive, desire to collect more 3D objects > this could be a 'regular depot box' with a transparent wall in front
- Server space 10m (not on functional schedule)

Total: ~ 4000m²

total material
Sum + 125

Palace

But fist a step back

P1 Feedback

Is the trolley part of the process or just a mean to display?

Cooping everyday with the paraphernalia status of handle in an exhibition space:

Elements in the room that don't make sense, clestory that does not line up with the door – there is a weird relation with the different heights, is it intentional or not? Think about the techtonical relation between elements.

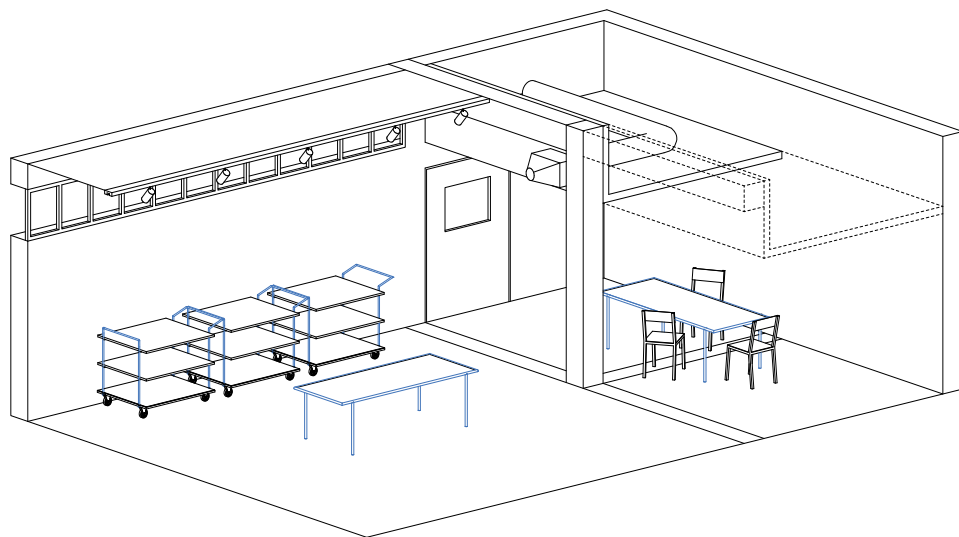
Room as a machine where to look at elements?

Does it need to be a quality space or should it be just a normal room in the archive?

There is still a gentle approach, the relation to nature, how to connect the two – explore, focus on the components to create a generic space – soften

Why is there a lower area, other than for creatinga “different” space in the room? Is it part of technical The proportions – positions helps the thesis.

Are fluo lights the right approach to a everchanging room? Maybe something less fixed could be better?



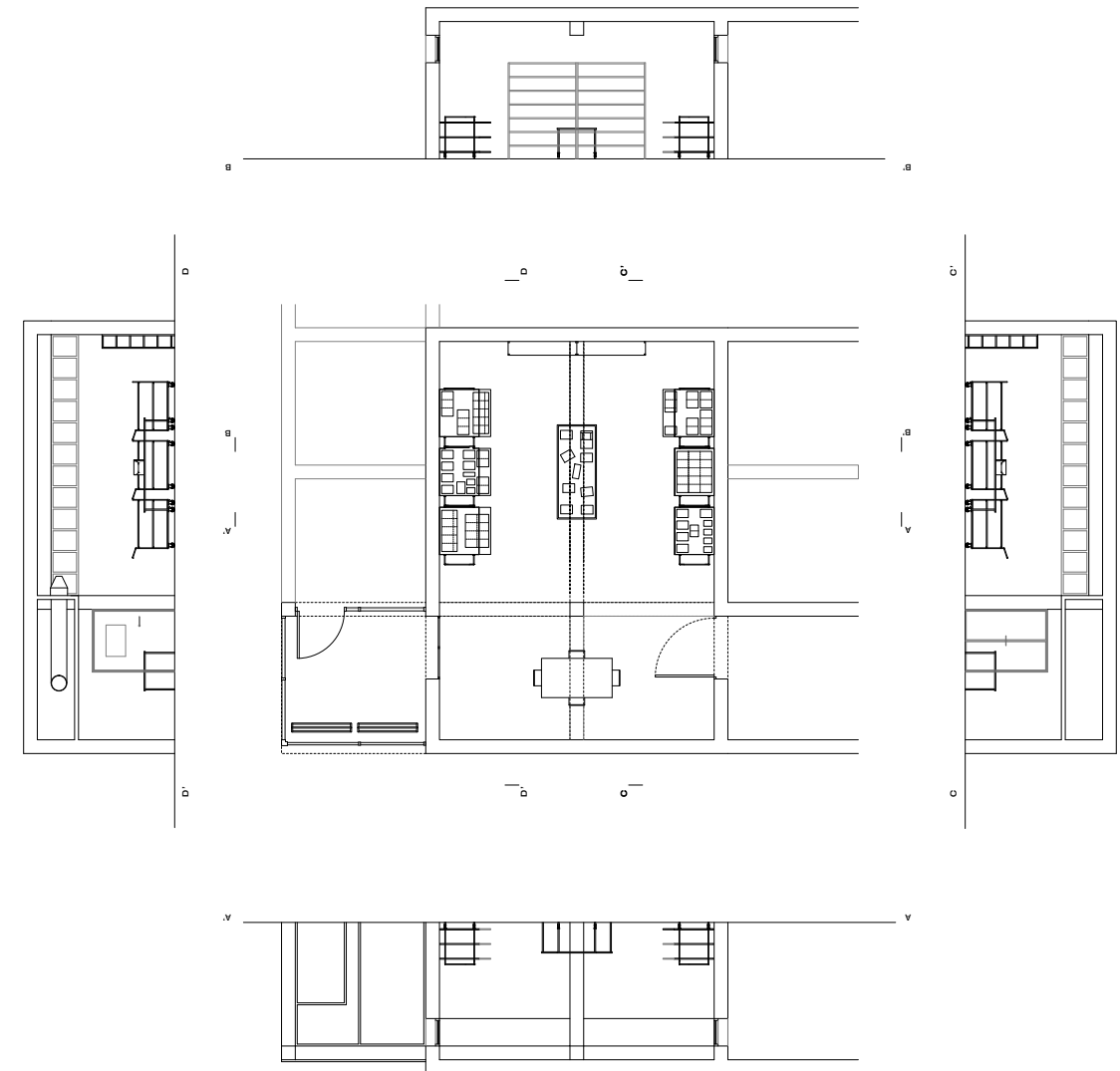
The trolleys define the space sice the space is a generic room.

What is the meaning behind the floor pattern?

Tension between the trolleys and the table, both wheeled as to define that the space is defined by the furniture in it.

Trolleys – should they be combinable?

Exhibition space as an amalgamation of archival objects.



Unknown Architects room

This design concept establishes a thoughtful balance between interior and exterior elements, creating a dynamic and adaptable space that connects the ever-changing outside world with the stability and depth of an archive. The hall is conceived as a flexible environment that can be placed in any urban context, serving as a platform for emerging architects. By intentionally incorporating tall windows on both sides, one facing the outside world and the other facing the archive, the space becomes an “in-between” zone, a transitional area that encourages dialogue between two distinct realms: the evolving city and the curated knowledge within the archive.

The tall windows are not only an aesthetic element, but play a functional role in creating the atmosphere of the room. Light enters from both sides, mixing natural lighting from outside with artificial lighting from the archive, creating a space that is both vibrant and contemplative. This play of light not only increases the visual appeal of the room, but also reinforces its dual purpose: to connect the tangible physical world with the intangible ideas stored in the archive.

The placement of the room in close proximity to the archive is a deliberate choice. This design allows for seamless interaction between the two spaces, fostering a closer relationship between the materials on display and those “in flux.” The room becomes a bridge, not only metaphorically but also physically, inviting visitors to move between inspiration and documentation. This positioning encourages a continuous exchange of ideas, in which the materials on display in the room acquire a new context when viewed in relation to the archive, and vice versa.

One of the most innovative aspects of this concept is the use of display furniture modeled after archival trolleys. These trolleys serve as functional and symbolic elements of the project. Functionally, they allow drawings and materials to be transferred directly from the archive to the exhibition space, eliminating unnecessary steps and creating a streamlined process. Symbolically, they reflect the fluidity and accessibility of the archive itself,

reinforcing the idea that the materials on display remain deeply connected to their origin. The trolleys also provide a practical solution for frequent reconfiguration, ensuring that the space remains flexible and adaptable to the needs of various exhibitions.

This flexibility is critical to the purpose of the room. By allowing quick and easy changes, the space becomes a democratic platform that can accommodate a wide range of architects and projects. In this way, it provides an opportunity for emerging voices in architecture to present their work in an environment that is both grounded in tradition and open to innovation. The design of the hall supports this mission by providing a neutral yet dynamic environment that allows the works on display to take center stage while maintaining their connection to the historical and cultural context of the archive.

Ultimately, the hall functions as more than just an exhibition space: it is a bridge between ideas, a platform for dialogue, and a celebration of the interaction between architecture’s past, present, and future. Its careful design makes it a stimulating space for creativity and exchange.



How to understand the building



The NAI

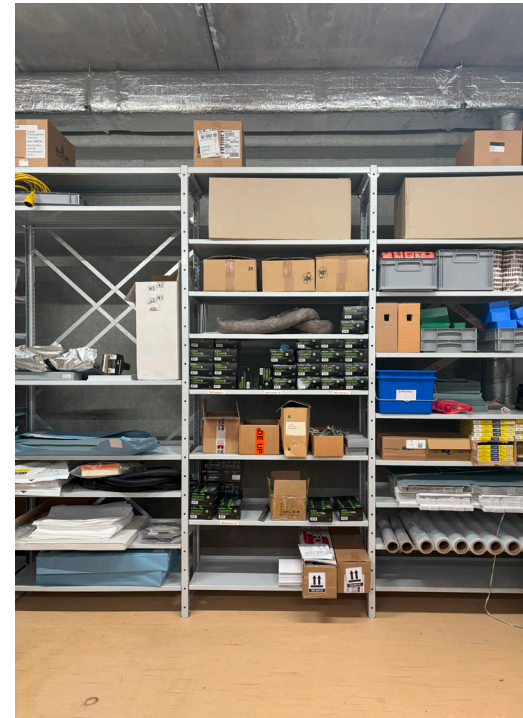
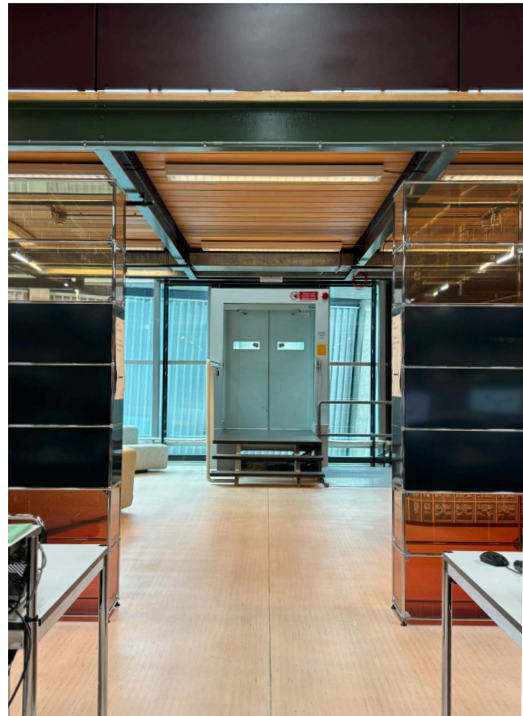
The Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAi) could have been considered an architectural museum, hosting several functions such as exhibition spaces, archives, and libraries.

Now the institution, called Het Nieuwe Instituut, brings together various activities as described on its website. It merges the NAI, Premisela (Netherlands Institute for Design and Fashion), and the Virtual Platform, a knowledge institute for e-culture ("Netherlands Architecture Institute NAI (1993–2013)," n.d.).

Most of the architectural archive collections are focused on Dutch architecture after the 19th century. The main aim of the NAI, which remains a core part of Het Nieuwe Instituut, is to give access to the cultural heritage of architecture in the Netherlands. This not only applies to the physical archive but also extends to making the archive an online platform open for public use.

The NAI archive does not prioritize the built environment as the end result. Instead, it focuses mainly on designs. In a way, it follows the concept proposed by Alberti, who argued that the best expression of architecture lies not in its physical outcome but in the drawings and models that attempt to capture the essence of a building (Figueiredo, 2016). This perspective makes architecture no longer tied to a fixed location, allowing everyone to interact directly with its primary sources. This method of dealing with architecture makes it more tangible to the public.

Het Nieuwe Instituut is said to hold the largest architecture collection in the world. However, as we've observed in other archives, there has been a shift from simply acquiring as many archival containers as possible to implementing more specific acquisition policies. This reflects a broader goal of creating a more diverse and inclusive archival collection. This approach is evident not only in the materials collected but also in the effort to make the archive increasingly accessible to the public. Het Nieuwe Instituut continues to aim for an archival database where, eventually, all the materials stored in the archive will also be available online.



DeSingel

Architects : Léon Stynen (1899-1990) & Paul De Meyer (1922-2012), Stéphane Beel (1955-)

Function : International Arts Campus for theatre, dance, music and architecture, radio station

Owners : Flemish Community, Artesis Plantijn University College, VRT

Total surface : 46.000 m2

Capacity : Conservatoire: 600 students

 Concert Hall (Blue hall) : 900 seats

 Concert Hall (Red hall) : 230 – 800 seats

Adress: Desguinlei 25, 2018 Antwerpen, Belgium

Elements that needs to be taken into consideration:

Routing

Connection between the archive and VAI

Engaging the public with the archive

Trying to connect the history of the Flanders architecture into the present.

How architecture can deal with social issues (economy, digitalization, sustainability and dealing with heritage)

Becoming a knowledge center for whoever might be interested

Merging the two different buildings (DeSingel and the Vlaams Archive) into one

Relevance of the social inclusion aspect of the building

The DeSingel has multiple institutions in it:

DeSingel

Royal Conservatory Antwerp

Eastman

I solisti del Vento

Nadar Ensemble

Studie Centrum voor vlaamse muziek

vlaamse Architectuurinstituut

LEON deSINGEL CAFE

Het Theater festival

Spiegel String quartet

The VAI has multiple stakeholders connected to it:

De Singel is an artistic partner where the public programs are being held

Construction companies

Knowledge exchange opportunities

Team Vlaams Bouwmeester

Platform Architectuurcultuur (PAC) – cultural organisations

The heritage sector

Architectural educational institutions

International partners

Young Promising Architects

London Festival of Architecture

Architecture Foundation

Archined

Flanders House

DeSingel or ...?

After visiting DeSingel it seems clear how complicated the building is. It's hard to understand whether it's possible to add something to this already complex campus, not only as added construction but even as a new strong identity added to this.

The VAI already situated in the building is not present or at least is hidden and not really known. Which somehow makes me wonder whether there is a specific reasoning beyond DeSingel being situated in this building and not looking into other possible locations. When looking into the empty plots of the area it's easy to see that there are multiple possible options. Especially one seems interesting for me, seems big enough to host the programme and is directly related to the residential area around it. It has a specific conformation filling in the area surrounded by the building around it.

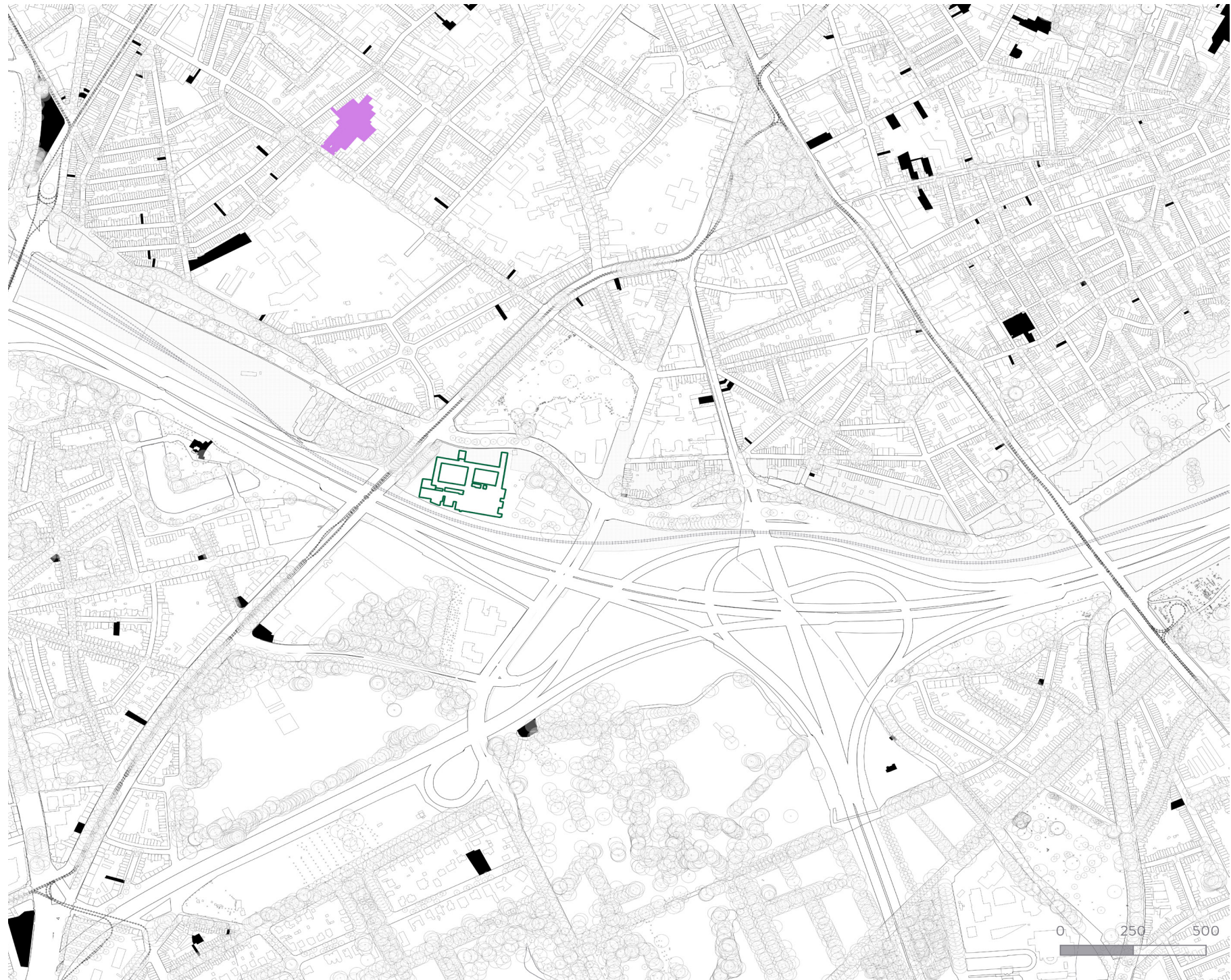
This would give me the opportunity of working more in relation with the site, the people and giving the VAI what they were somehow asking with the church brief, an archive in relation to the city, that could become part of the social life of the area.

The building seems close enough to DeSingel and could potentially be integrated as part of the new cultural area that will be developed with the new depot. However, leaving DeSingel brings to many things that should be considered, DeSingel has indeed existing spaces, as the auditorium and exhibition spaces, whereas moving outside the existing building would mean having to design those too.

Therefore, is the space enough? What would it mean making a truck pass through those residential streets few times per week?

Would it be a positive or negative thing for the people living in the area having a new circulation and more and more people going there?

The only way for me to understand all these elements is to look more into the building, seeing if there are possibilities and if so, how I could possibly approach it.



Markgravelei 21-35, 2018 Antwerpen, Belgium

Architect: Soetewey Stan

Surface area: 5 136m²

Typology: apartment buildings ,garage companies

Dating: after WWII

Style: modernism

What about the building:

Multi-purpose building complex in postwar modernism, commissioned by the Etablissements Camerman (facade stone), to a 1952 design by architect Stan Soetewey.

The Etablissements Camerman was an important transport company specializing in exceptional transport, and a garage for trucks.

The extensive inner area of the building block formed by the Markgravelei, the Pyckestraat, the Haantjeslei and the Van Trierstraat was also occupied by, among others, the former Tivoli brewery (Pyckestraat 51) and the former workshops and diamond cutting factory of the contractor Peeters-Verheyen.

The Etablissements Camerman building is distinguished primarily by its contemporary mixed typological model and progressive construction method, while the architectural design is more conventional in nature. The main component of the complex is the garage for 150 vehicles with lubrication and washing facilities, which is housed in a large two-part hall construction of almost 2000 m². Where initially a span with steel trusses was planned, Soetewey ultimately opted for prefabricated arched trusses made of Schokbeton. The elongated extension on the Markgravelei, which covers the width of eight plots, integrates an office pavilion and further consists of apartments on the upper floors. Initially, only one floor of three spacious flats was planned, but during the construction, in 1953, an additional building application was submitted for a second floor. The two-part facade consists of an open front in accordance with the business function, and a conventional superstructure that reflects the residential function. The materials used are exposed concrete for the main structure, blue ceramic tiles (now painted over) and bluestone for the cladding of the front, cream-coloured brick in tiled bond and white artificial stone for the facing of the superstructure. The

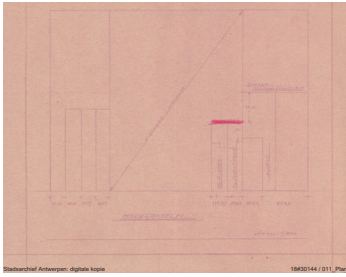
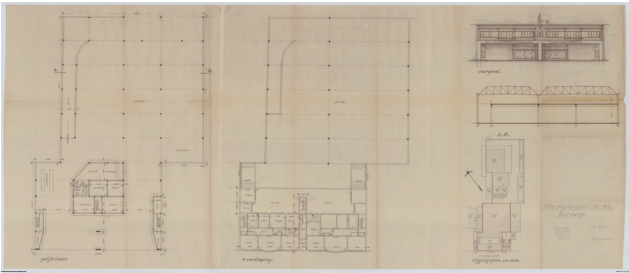
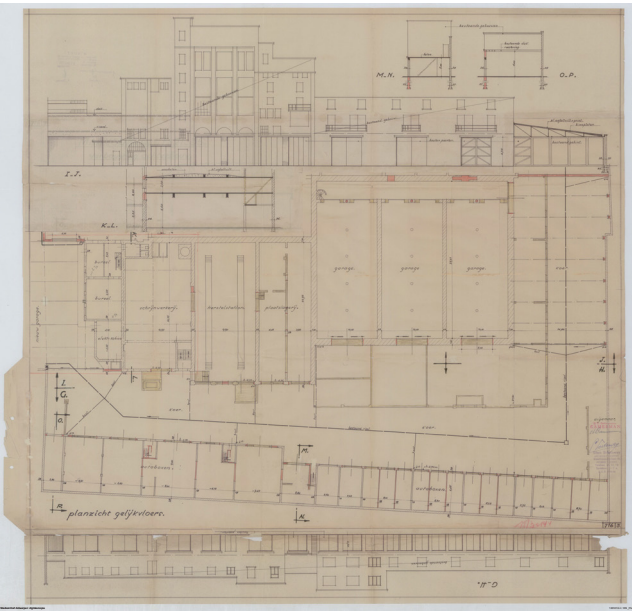
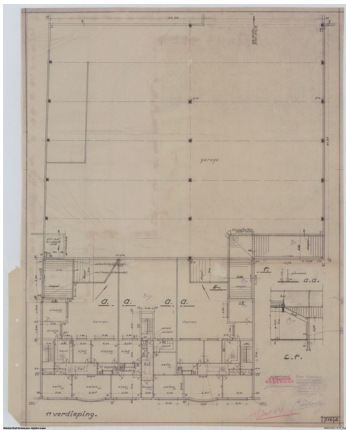
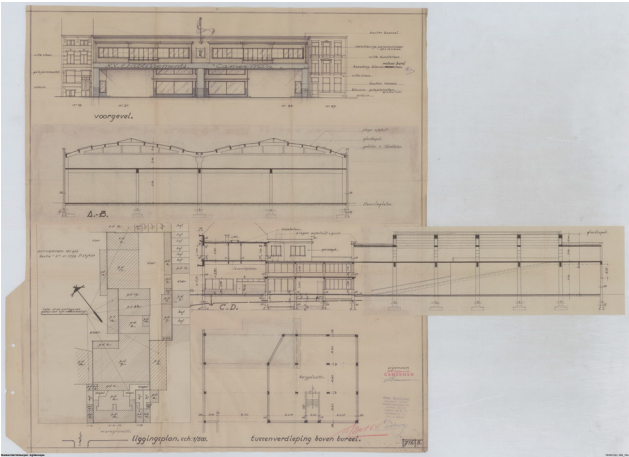
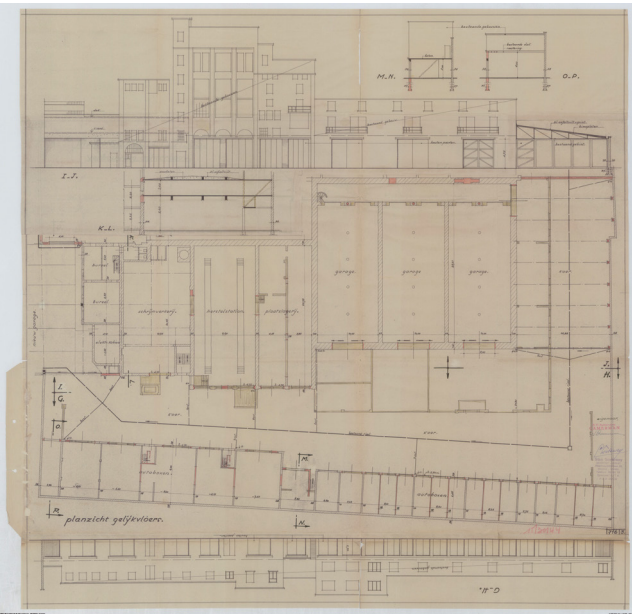
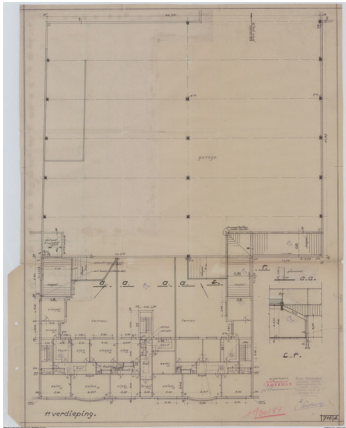
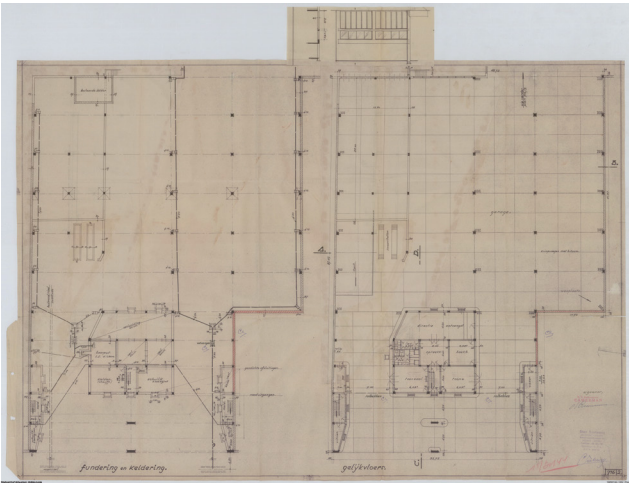
open substructure, of which a central pillar supports the porch span, is protected by a short canopy that originally carried the neon sign. The superstructure corresponds to a completely symmetrical composition delineated by the concrete roof cornice, with wide, centrally designed bow windows within continuous frames.

The actual garage forms a basemented two-aisled space of two levels connected by a ramp, built of reinforced concrete. The high lower level was probably intended for lorries, the low upper plateau for passenger cars. More than 40 m long, both bays are covered by coupled arched trusses supported by a common central pillar, with a span of almost 25 m each and a ridge height of 10 m. The arched trusses, respectively five and six per bay at a distance of almost 10 m from each other, are of the type without vertical posts, with hangers and tie rods. Both parallel roof structures have a continuous skylight in the ridge and two lateral skylights. According to the building plans, the apartments are accessed by three separate private portals and staircases: two against the common walls, and one in the office pavilion.

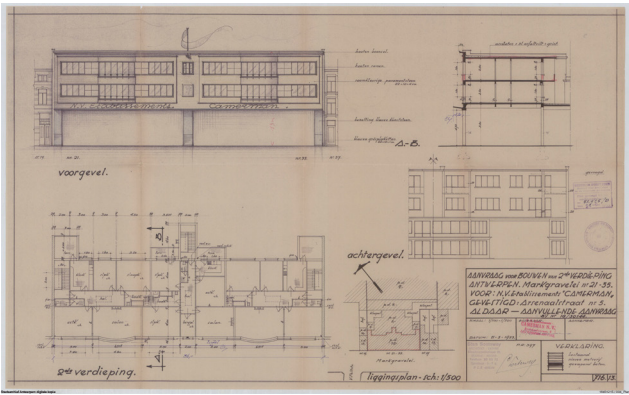
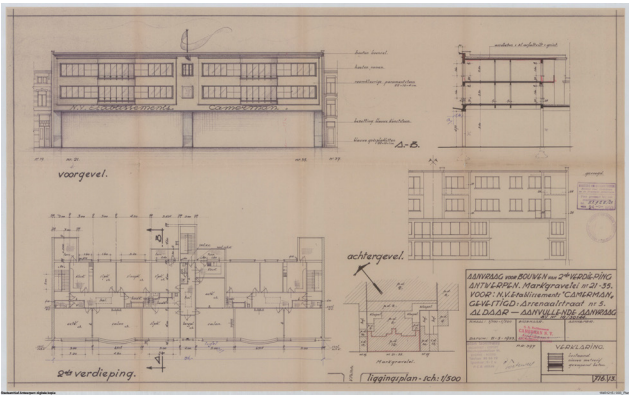
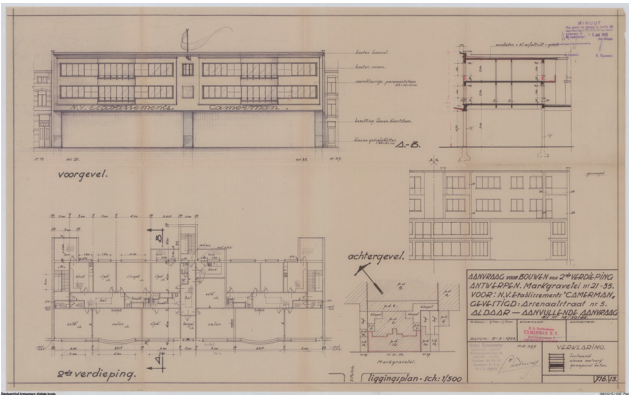
The floor plan of both the middle flat and the larger outer flats includes a suite of living and dining room, two bedrooms, a kitchen, a bathroom and a terrace. In addition, the outer flats have an additional bedroom and a children's room on the first floor.



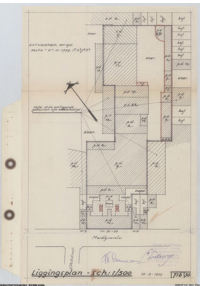
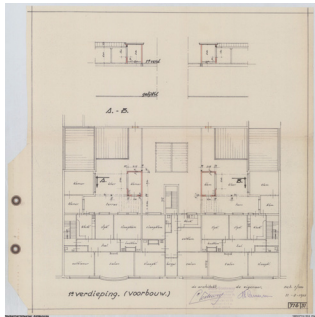
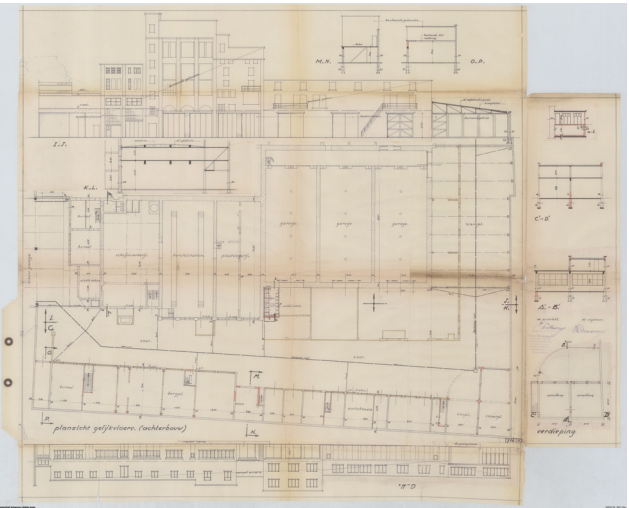
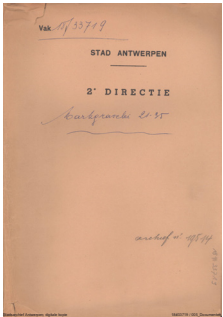
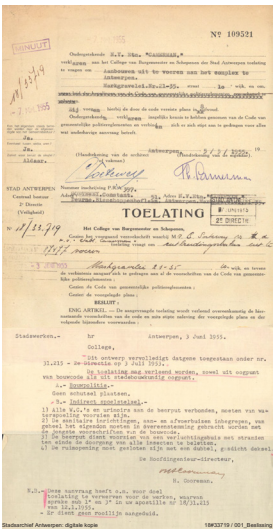
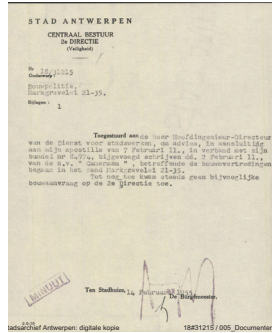
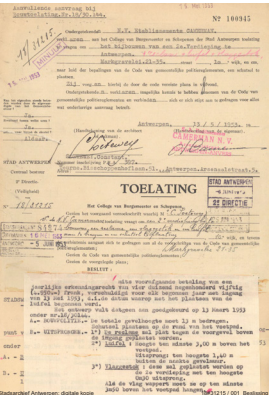
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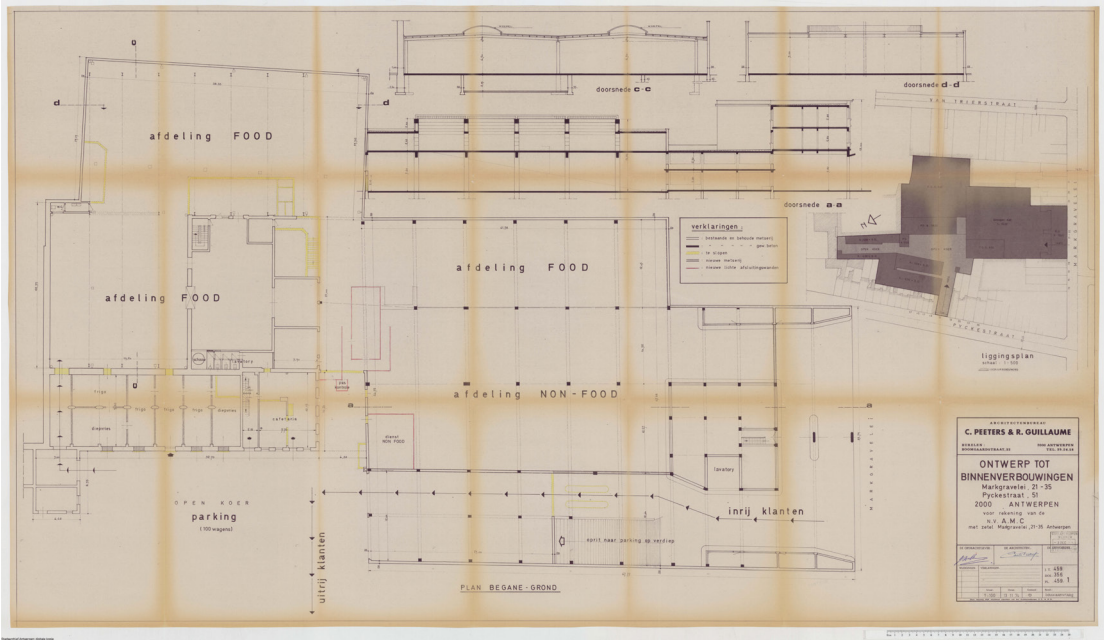
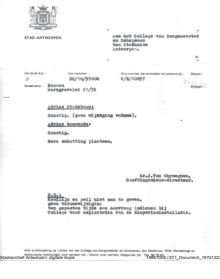
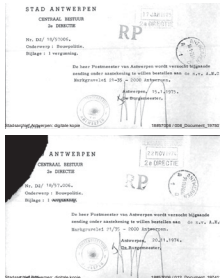
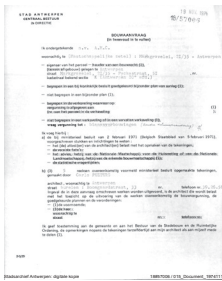
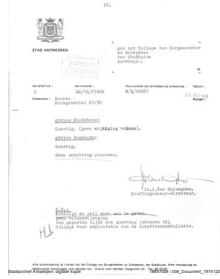
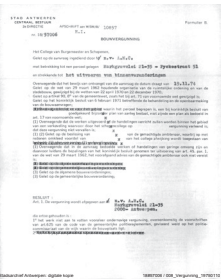
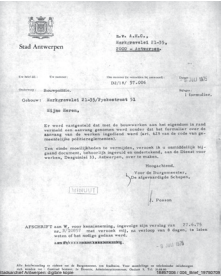
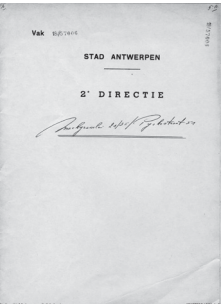
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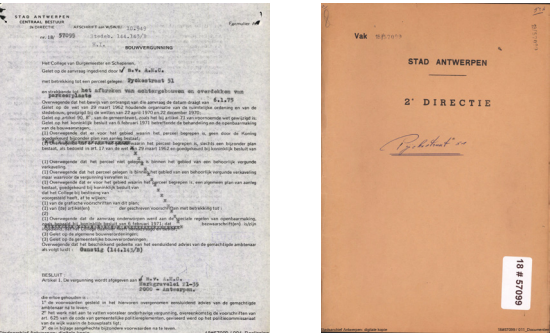
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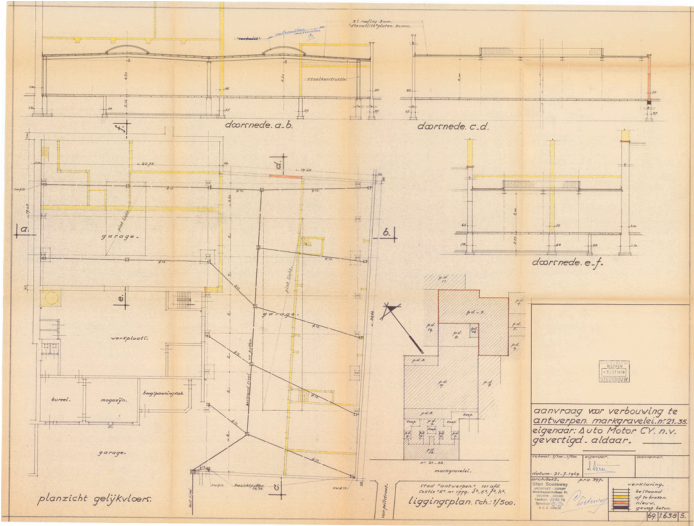
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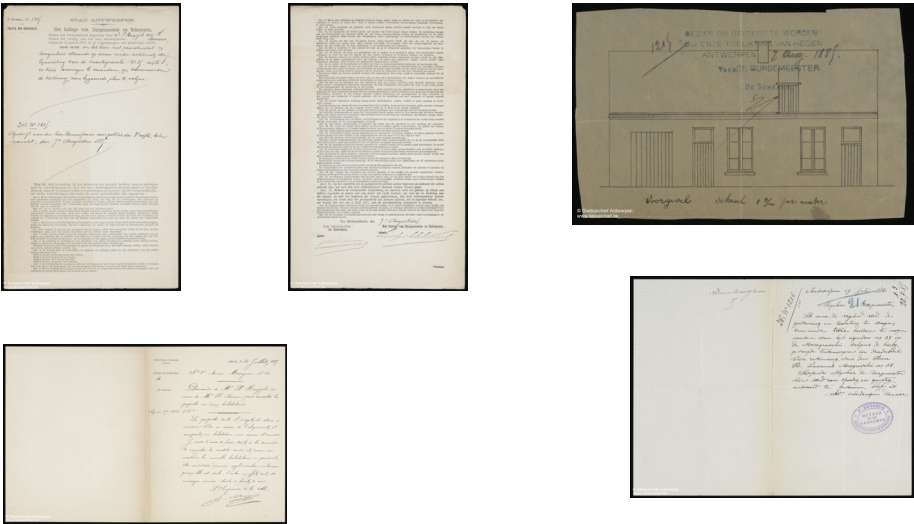
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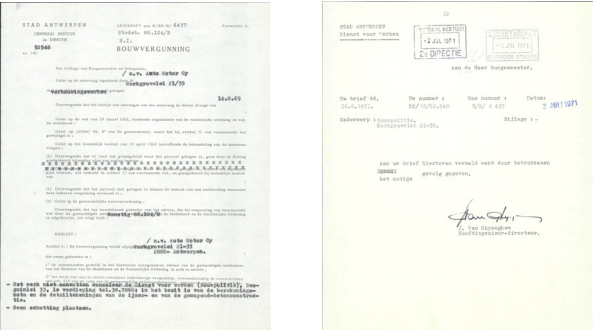
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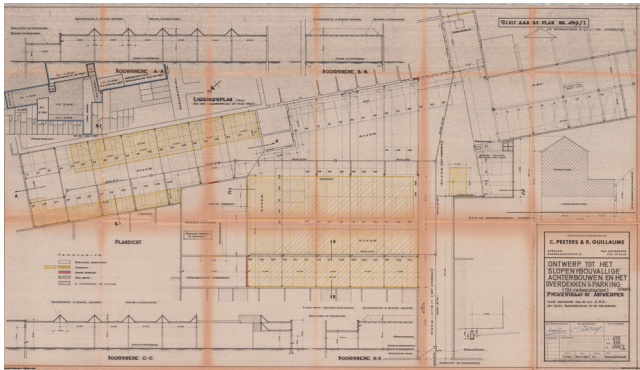
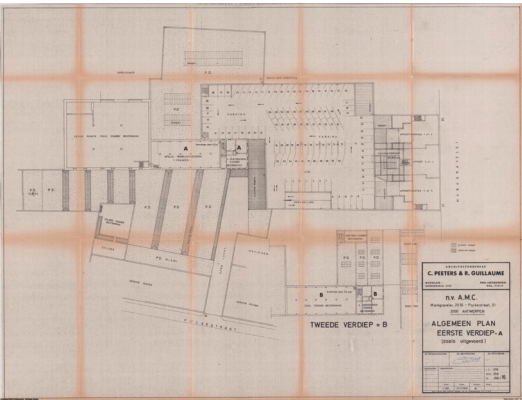
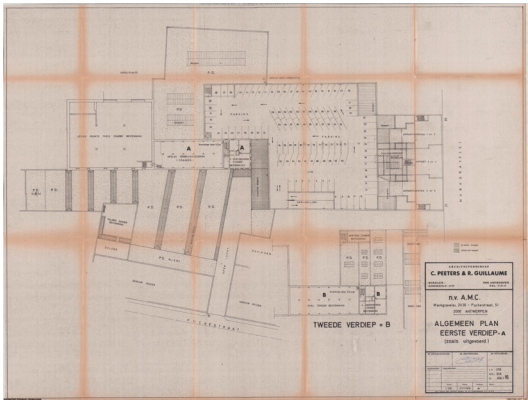
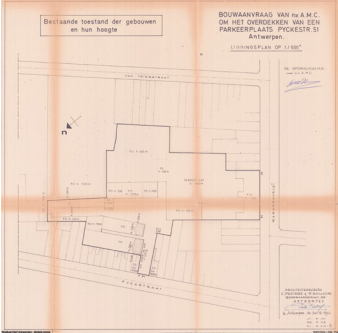
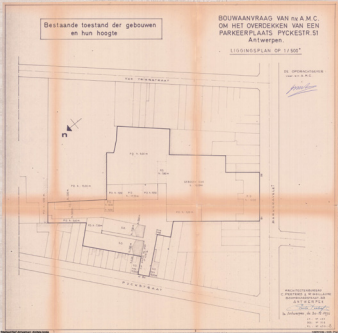
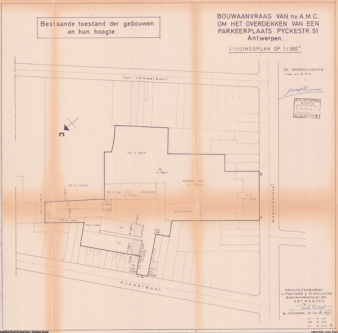
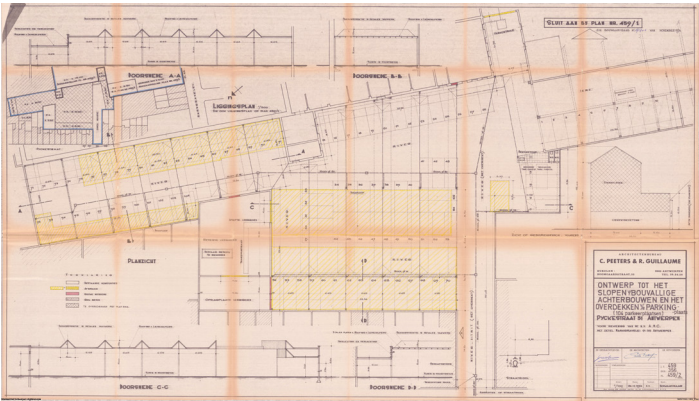
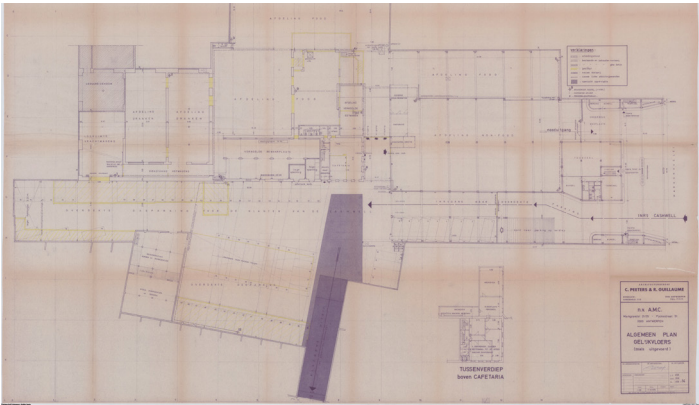
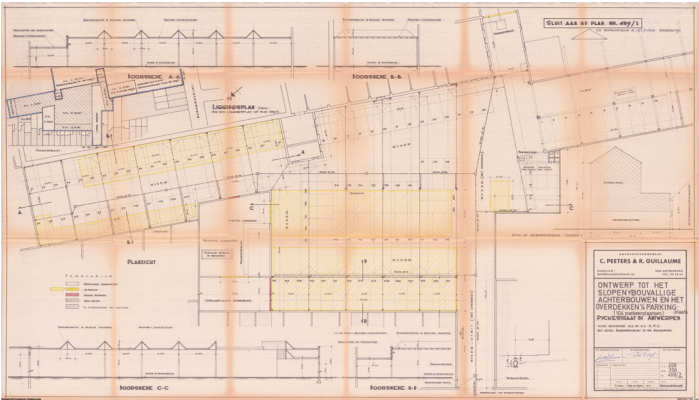
1885#1215



18#52548



18#82151



Markgravelei 21-35, visit

After going back to Antwerp again, I had the chance of looking at the building. Some of the things I was wondering about, as the impact of adding a cultural centre in the street seemed more problematic after the visit.

The space has a big entrance for trucks, however the street in front of it is small, which might become problematic since an archive requires trucks to be able to arrive multiple times per week.

In addition to this the possibilities of having moments in which the archive host lectures or exhibition would mean having the street blocked by people.

The neighbourhood seemed quiet, not much happening, therefore adding this could mean either that there would be an higher circulation of people or the archive to be somehow hidden again and not really become part of the public life.



DeSingel second visit

After the first DeSingel visit, I realised how many layer the building has. There is not a specific way of approaching the building. The amount of information's that we got form the building, by following someone that knew how to move around it, was for me confusing. In a way, the multiple layers were merged into one, and the definition of the spaces to understand what is where, what is whose, was not clear enough. The extremely complicated composition of the DeSingel was indeed the staring point of the discourse. How can the building be unfolded, divided into the different institutions, different floors, and different compositions of the space? The various layers try to get together into one, therefore creating a confusing environment.

To start working in the building, the best approach is indeed going back to it and looking at it without anyone else walking us around the place.

As second approach to the building, the space is even more complicated. The memory of some of the places that we saw and where they are positioned in the space helps a bit moving around, however, going from one place to the other is more complicated than expected. How do we go from the Beel to the other side of the building? How do we go in the tower? Nothing is specified around the building, and the interior circulation is not clear.

Walking around the building for around 3 hours turned out to be more tiring than expected, with necessary breaks in trying to embrace the information that we manage to gather.





DeSingel

The DeSingel is divided between three different owners: the Flemish Community (deSingel), Artesis Plantijn University College (the Conservatoire) and VRT (Radio 2). This division brought to the definition of a complex structure that has different programs in it. This has turned the building into a complex structure where these different stakeholders have specific areas and at the same time need to share other common spaces. The building does not have a logical division of areas, either by function or by institution; everything is merged in the different areas and there are just small bits of programs scattered around the building. This approach to the building turns it into a non-well-organized space. Walking around is confusing and tiring. This approach makes the building completely public and almost all day long open in all areas. However, it does not block people wandering around even in non-accessible spaces. The private spaces are indeed most of the times opened and almost most areas become accessible anyway. The building has many different layers and going from one area to the other can be complicated, since the connections between the different built phases are reachable only from certain levels. The original ideas that defined the architectural choices on the concept of the building changed during the years and after its multiple transformations. It can be seen by looking at phases I and II how the building tried to have a clear circulation and orientation even when the second phase was completed the building could still be considered as a unified and coherent building. The human scale is something that is considered in the first phases, even now walking around the main areas, there is still a different perception of space. There are multiple moments in the building where people can just stop and contemplate, especially the corridors around the two main courtyards. There are small tables all around the main courtyard where people can stop standing while talking or waiting to enter the rooms.

Considering that the DeSingel project was supposed to be part of a masterplan in which the conservatoire was surrounded by a green landscape, the whole perception of the space was completely different from the

one that we can see now. As the masterplan changed and the development of the E3 from 1965 onward changed the composition and the development of the building for the II phase. As a matter of fact, the second phase consists mainly of the concert halls and the radio station area under it. This area of the building has another approach to the outside landscape: the terrace.

The terrace follows the length of the new addition and tries to have a direct relation between the building and the new highway and the landscape that continues after it.

This idea of looking at the highway has a futurism layer to it, the concept of having a direct interaction to the cars passing through the ring as fast elements goes back to some of the main concepts from the futurism manifesto:

“4. Noi affermiamo che la magnificenza del mondo si è arricchita di una bellezza nuova: la bellezza della velocità. Un'automobile da corsa col suo cofano adorno di grossi tubi simili a serpenti dall'alto esplosivo... un'automobile ruggente, che sembra correre sulla mitraglia, è più bello della Vittoria di Samotracia.
5. Noi vogliamo inneggiare all'uomo che tiene il volante, la cui asta ideale attraversa la Terra, lanciata a corsa, essa pure, sul circuito della sua orbita.”

As a matter of fact, the idea of the ring was different compared to what it is now. It was and still is the main road connecting some of the most important cities of north Europe, Paris-Brussels-Antwerp- Rotterdam-Amsterdam, however the number of cars passing through it changed expansively, from few per day to having daily stuck traffic in front of the DeSingel. Therefore, the concept of the terraces changed into a hidden back space where people don't want to go, since to get there from the outside would mean passing through the back road of the building.

The relation between the landscape and the building goes even under the building itself. The floor in the cloister areas is higher up by the pilotis and the land-

scape passes under there too. However, the perception of the cloisters has been modified by the changes in the urban area and in the building, therefore now are still part of the complex but cannot be perceived as their main scope.

The building has turned into a different element placed in the city; in its first phases the aim of Leon Stynen was to have a clear structure building facing the city.



However, the multiple interventions changed the perception of it, there is not a clear identification of what the relation between the building, the city and the highway is.

This has turned the DeSingel into an monumental building on the limit of the Antwerp Ring surrounded by highly trafficked streets and hard to reach by public transport.



What happens if I approach the DeSingel

After analyzing the building again and looking back at some of the main conversations that came up during the trip to Antwerp the main area that for me would make sense where to work is the South side of the building. Now the façade facing the Highway on the Leon Sty-nen part has two terraces that face the landscape. However, the relation between the building and the Ring has changed due to the extreme overcrowded situation of the main road connecting The Netherlands to Belgium and France.

This could be interesting as a place where people from the VAI could move their offices, considering that the Backstage area, behind the two big auditoriums is at the moment rarely used, or just during certain times of the year.

Approaching that would mean trying to create a relation between the Styren interventions and the Beel addition, from both an outside approach and an interior intervention and reorganiza-tion of the space.

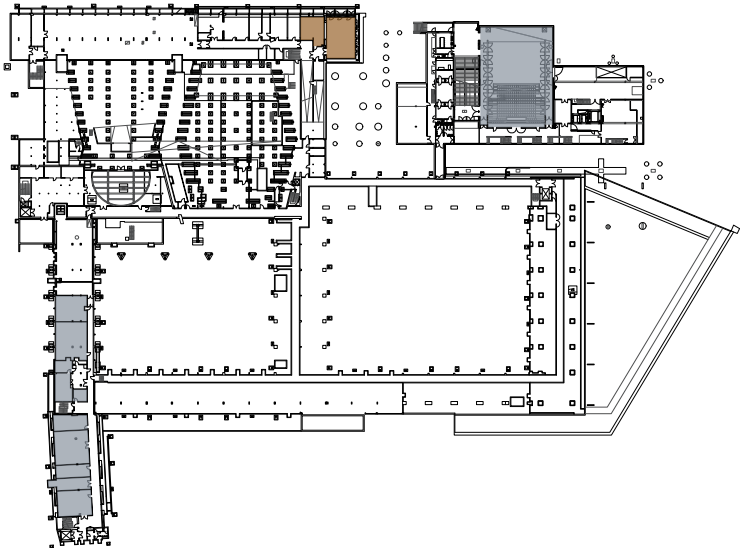
Name	Size m ²	Description
Total	5157,25	
Public	700	
Reception and counter	100	Incl. separate sanitary facilities and seating
Exhibition space/multifunctional space	200	cf. current reading room 96m2, is too small; keep reading room and library separate; small separate group study room
Reading room	200	
Library	200	Books and visitors' workstations
Additional	872,25	
Staff workspace	300	
Large workplace for archive employees	300	12.5 m2 per employee (+/-30 employeeed, including interns, temporary employees, etc.)
Large workstation with archives	12,25	3.5x3.5m
Standard office space		
Focus Spots		
1 large meeting room	80	
1 small meeting room	30	
kitchen, bathroom, dressing room	150	
Archive	3585	
Storage packaging material	120	near archive depot, office
Loading and unloading space	150	
Waiting depot	100	emergency depot, storage of non-exclusive archives, bulk pallets
Tirage space correct - contaminated material	60	
Quarantine	120	Storage of containment material =
Cleaning	60	Processing of containment material
pre-depot	60	Storage of own material
processing	60	processing of own material
Digitization space	60	own material
Restoration studio	60	own material
Depot storage	2500	Currently 1500, growth in recent years 470m in 5-7 yrs > per 5yr 400m with extensive storage system, paper climate class
Climate class photo storage	100	
Bulk storage		

Tenants	Description	Adress	Adress 2	Adress 3	Occupancy	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Website	
De Singel	The Flemish Government established DE SINGEL, since the building complex, is the core provider of subsidies, and conferred on it the statute of Art Institution.	Tickets: +32 (0)3 248 28 28 tickets@desingel.be Desingel 25 2018 Antwerpen	Administration: +32 (0)3 244 19 20 info@desingel.be	Registered Office Jan Van Rijswijcklaan 155 2018 Antwerpen	Byten East 1 Backstage 0 Tower 2	Closed	Ticket booth: Phone accessible 11am-4pm	Ticket booth: 2pm-6:30pm Phone accessible 11am-4pm	Ticket booth: 2pm-6:30pm Phone accessible 11am-4pm	Ticket booth: 2pm-6:30pm Phone accessible 11am-4pm	Ticket booth: 4pm-6:30pm	Closed	https://desingel.be/en	
Royal Conservatory Antwerp	Royal school for Music, Dance, performance arts, production, composition, director, singing instruments, theatre, podiumarts, teaching	Desingel 25, 2018 Antwerpen +32 3 244 18 00 conservatorium@ag.be			Beel 2/a	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	Closed	Closed	https://www.ap-arts.be/nonrijkj-conservatorium-antwerpen	
					See floor plan	Conservatorium m. 10am-5pm	Conservatorium m. 10am-5pm	Conservatorium m. 10am-5pm	Conservatorium m. 10am-5pm	Closed	Closed	https://www.ap-arts.be/nonrijkj-conservatorium-antwerpen		
					Library center: 10am-12pm & 1pm-4pm Library reading room: 10am-5pm	Library center: 10am-12pm & 1pm-4pm Library reading room: 10am-5pm	Library center: 10am-12pm & 1pm-4pm Library reading room: 10am-5pm	Library center: 10am-12pm & 1pm-4pm Library reading room: 10am-5pm	Closed	Closed	https://www.ap-arts.be/nonrijkj-conservatorium-antwerpen/			
Eastman	Dance Studio	Jan van Rijswijcklaan 155, 2018 Antwerpen, Belgium			Backstage 0	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	Closed	Closed	https://desingel.be/bel/repel/westman	
Solisti del vento	Ensemble and Music production house with international recognition. I SOLISTI unites top musicians who have each built up a solid reputation as soloists, orchestral or chamber musicians. A permanent core of about twenty musicians is expanded or reduced in a modular manner where necessary, depending on the project.	DE SINGEL Jan Van Rijswijcklaan 155 2018 Antwerpen Tel 0032 (0)3 800 01 20			Backstage 0								https://www.solisti.be/en/home/	
Nadar Ensemble	Plurimedial music and performance studio	Nadar vzw Zwaalsesteen 7 9100 Sint-Niklaas BELGIUM			Radio 2 studios (after renovation) backstage -1								https://nadarensemble.be	
Sabbatini	Sabbatini is an employment initiative for VDAB, the Social Fund for performing arts and Desingel (Antwerp). Theater, podiumarts/education program for work seekers	Desguinlei 25 2018 Antwerpen			Backstage 0								http://sabbatini.be	
Studecentrum voor Vlaamse Muziek	Center for conservation, study, promotion, valorisation of Flemish Music	Jan Van Rijswijcklaan 155 2018 Antwerpen Belgie			Tower 4	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	Closed	Closed	https://www.svm.be	
Vlaamse Architectuurstichting	The Flanders Architecture Institute is housed at two locations in the city of Antwerp. The public program (exhibitions, lectures, debates ...) takes place in De Singel, where you can also find our offices and Kabinet Christiane Kieckens. The collection and library are located in the city center.	De Singel J. V. Rijswijcklaan 155 2000 Antwerpen T: +32 (0)3 242 89 70 info@vai.be	Collection (reading room) Parochiaanstraat 7 2000 Antwerpen T: +32 (0)3 202 04 83 architectuurarchief@vai.be		Beel 1st Beel 2/a Beel 1st Parochiaanstraat 7	Closed Kabinet C.K.: Upon appointment Office (DeSingel): 9am-5:30pm Library & Collection: 9am-5pm	Closed Kabinet C.K.: Upon appointment Office (DeSingel): 9am-5:30pm Library & Collection: 9am-5pm	8pm (DeSingel): 2pm-7pm Evening perf. Until 10pm	8pm (DeSingel): 2pm-7pm Evening perf. Until 10pm	8pm (DeSingel): 2pm-7pm Evening perf. Until 10pm	8pm (DeSingel): 2pm-7pm Evening perf. Until 10pm	Closed Clos	Closed	https://www.vai.be/en/ https://www.vai.be/en/ https://www.vai.be/en/
Leon de Singel Cafe	Both during the day and in the evening, you can come to us for a drink, a light snack or a full meal.	LEON deSINGEL CAFE Jan Van Rijswijcklaan 155 2018 Antwerpen T +32 (0)3 237 11 00 info@leondesingelcafe.be			Grand Café, Beel 2	11am-11pm	11am-11pm	11am-11pm	11am-11pm	11am-11pm	11am-11pm	11am-11pm	https://www.leondesingelcafe.be/en/	
Artiesten Foyer	Come and enjoy our Performers Beel! After a concert or performance or during breaks you are welcome here for a drink (and who knows, you might catch a glimpse of our artists).													
Blauwe Foyer					Grote podia									
Witte Foyer					Beel 3									

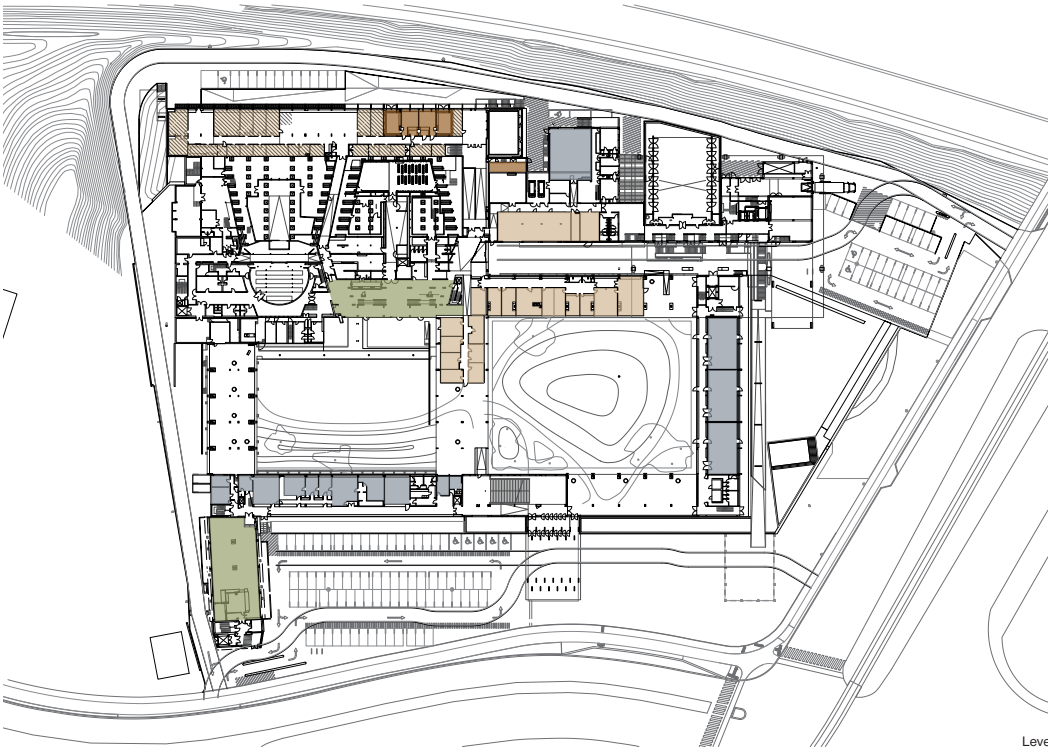
Feedback :

The whole concept of developing the building facing the Highway is not too bad, there is already a street, therefore a direct access for trucks to the archive.
This in connection to the possibility of taking away the added offices in the ground floor of the 1st phase of the building will help having a direct connection from the city to the VAI passing through the landscape courtyards.

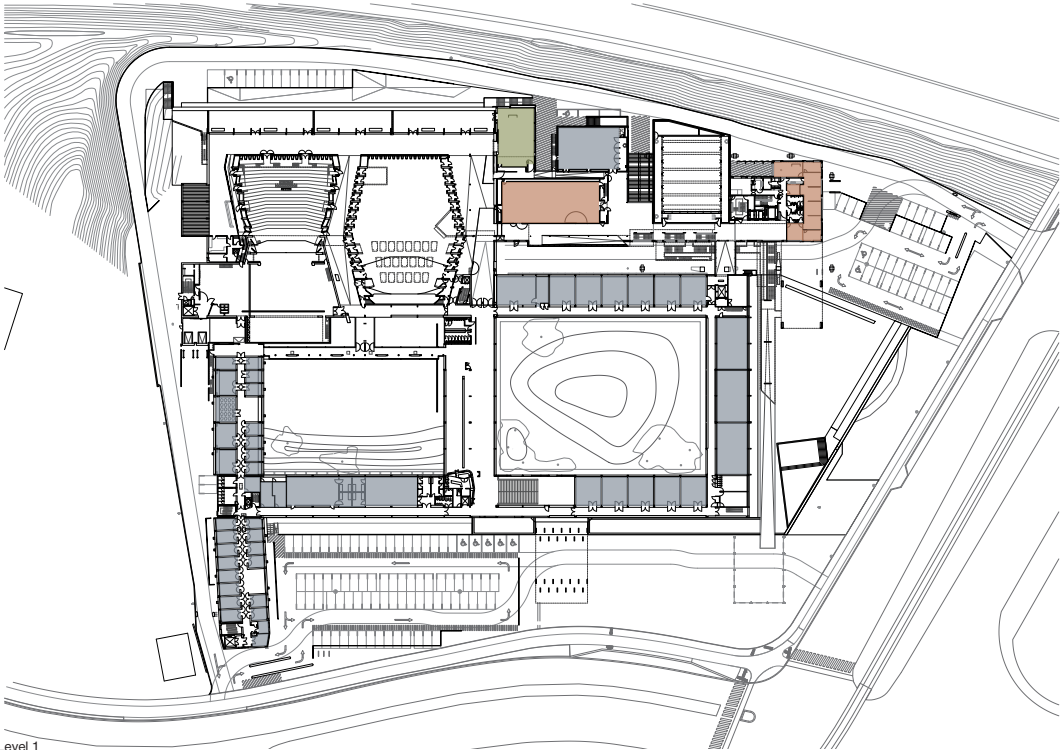
Location of the different institutions



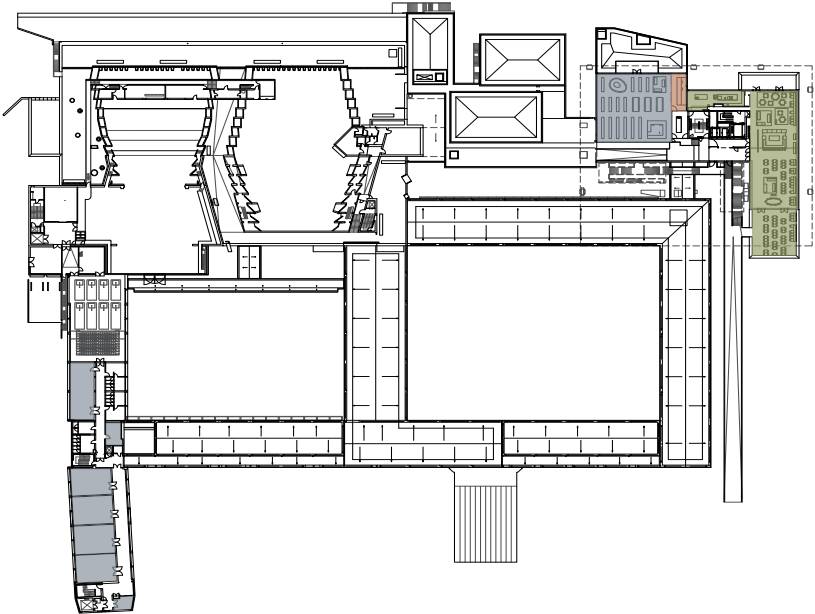
Level -1



Level 0



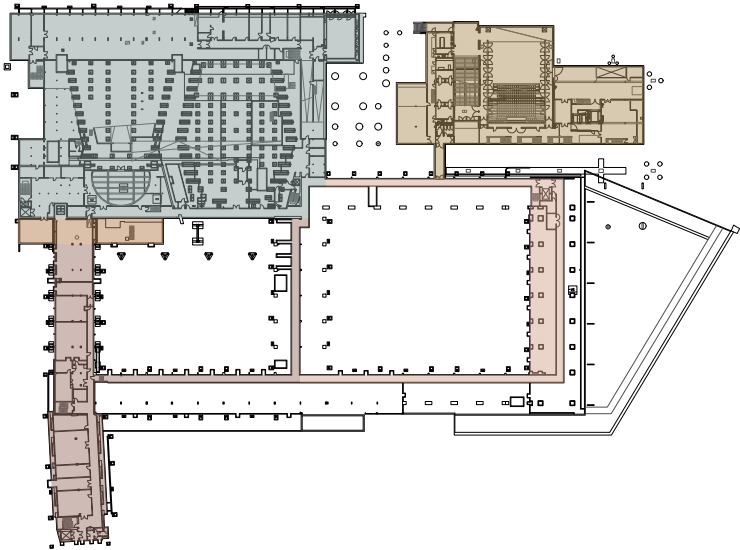
Level 1



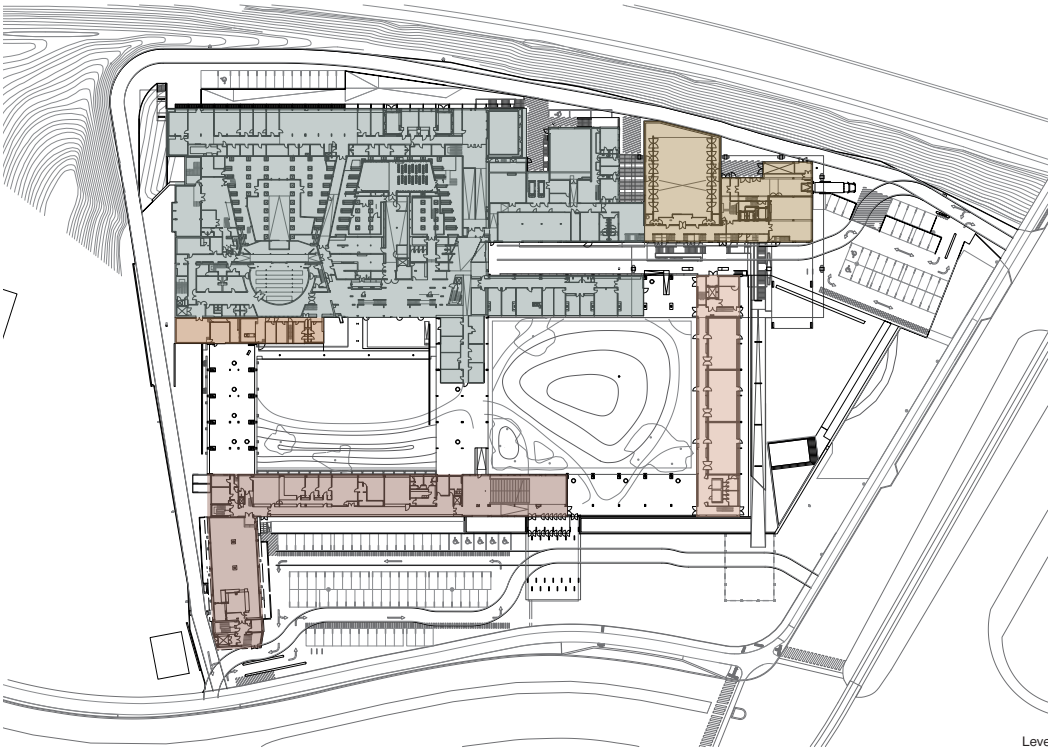
Level 2

- VAi
- Conservatoire
- DeSingel
- I Solisti del vento
- Nadar Ensemble
- Eastman
- Sabbattini
- Catering areas

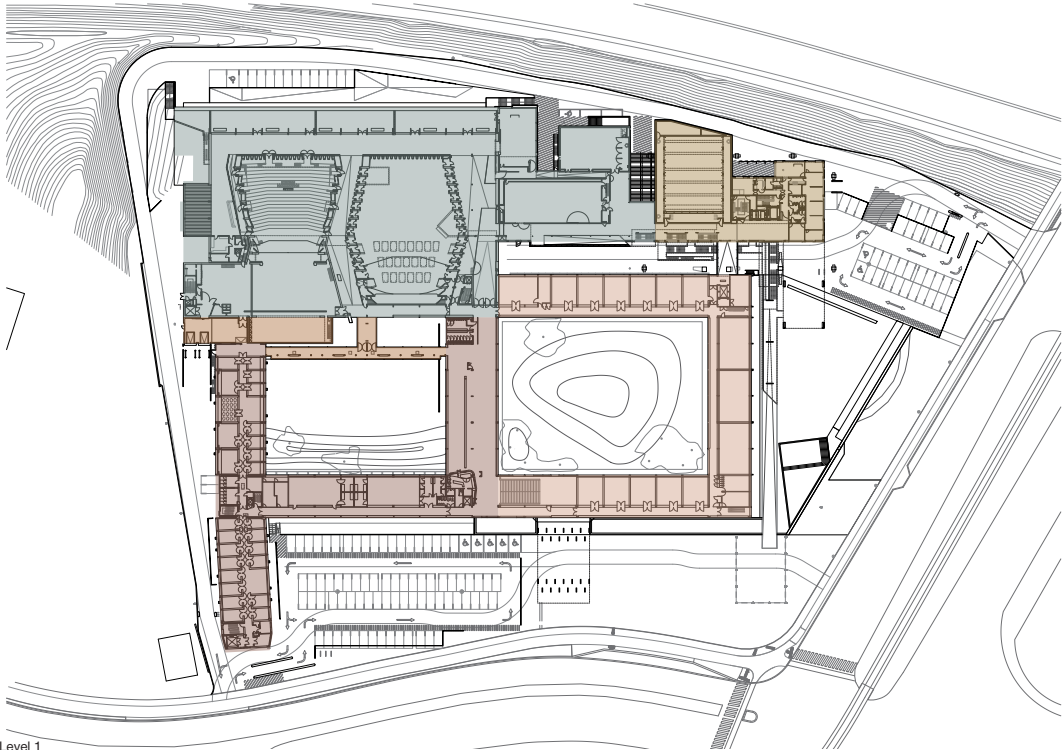
DeSingel divided by blocks



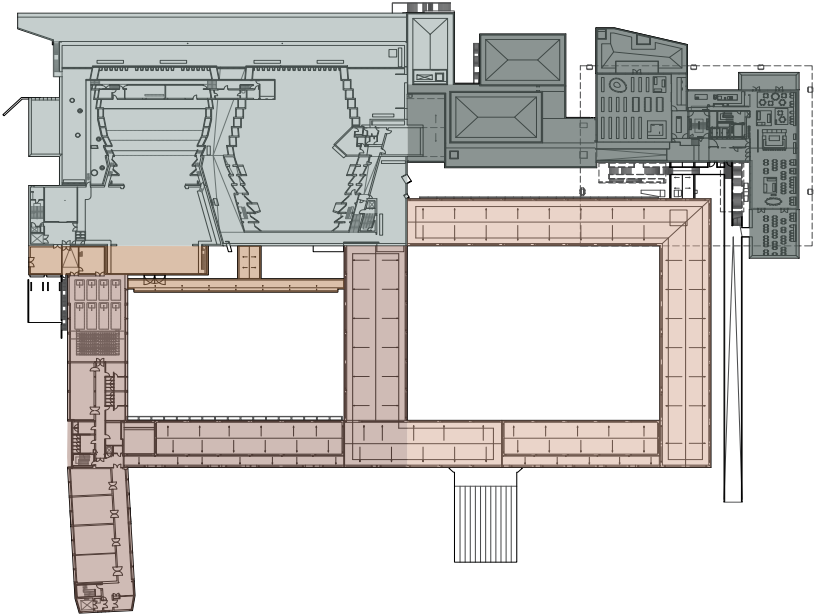
Level -1



Level 0



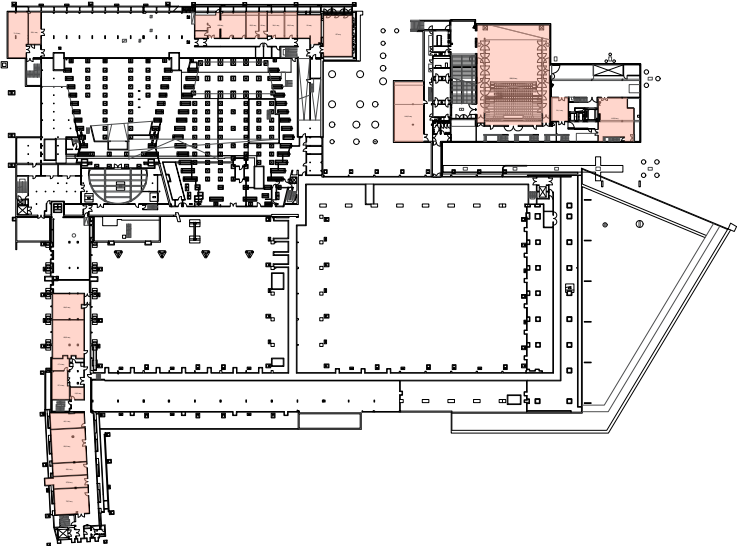
Level 1



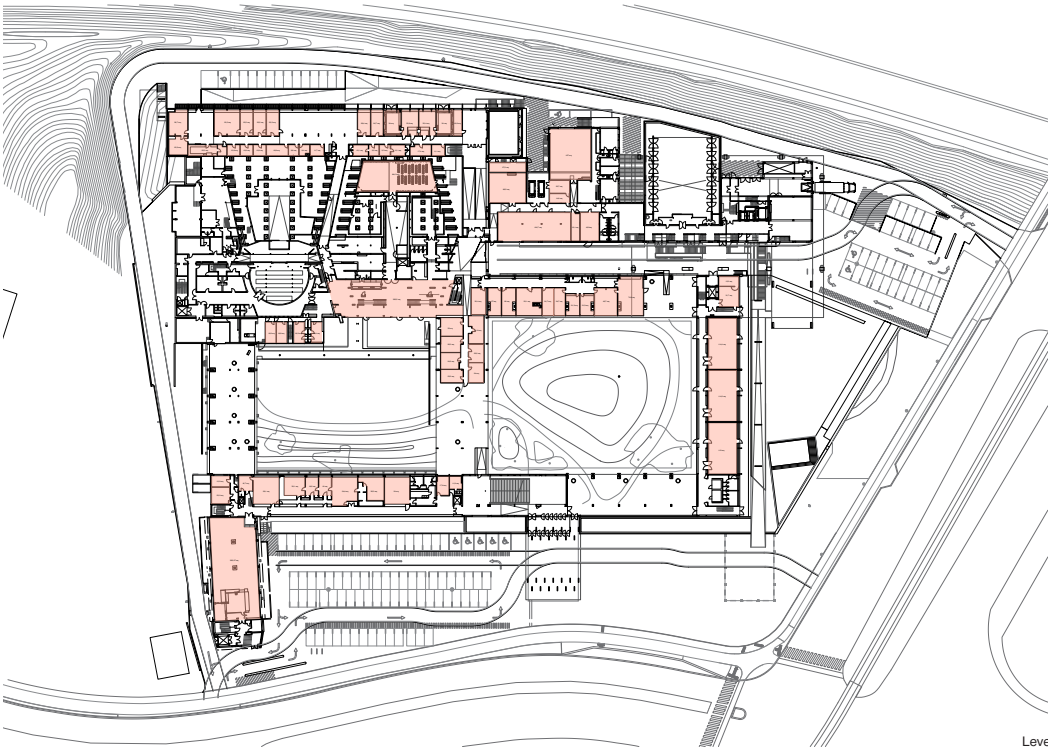
Level 2

- Backstage
- Grote podia
- Stynen oost
- Stynen west
- Beel laag
- Beel hoog

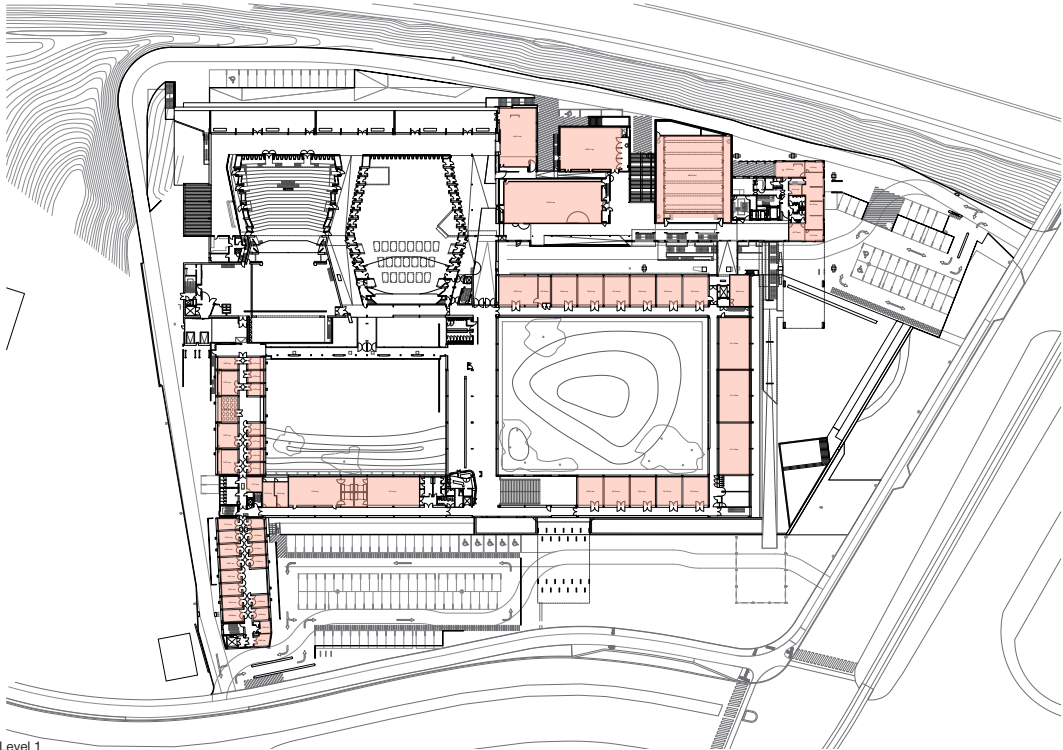
Area per room



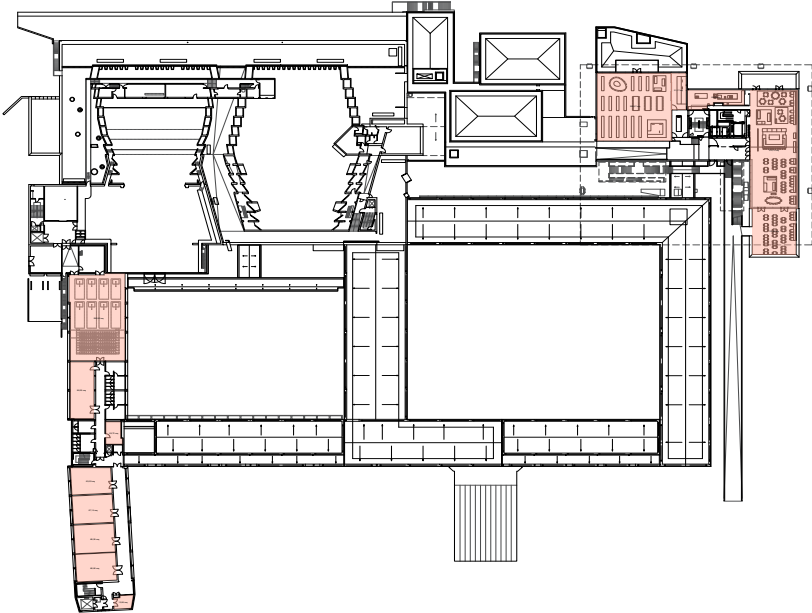
Level -1



Level 0



Level 1



Level 2

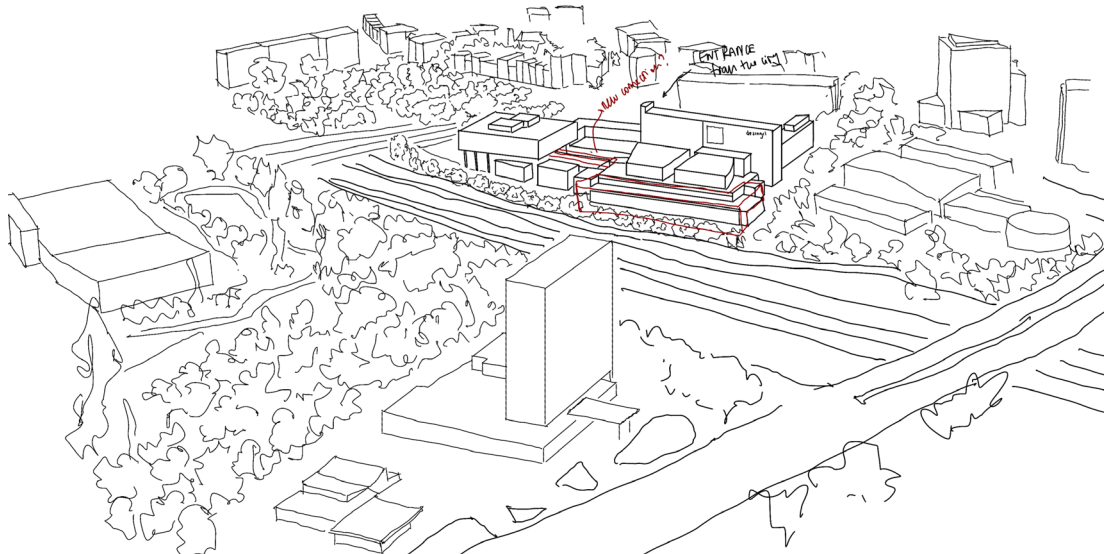
Where in the DeSingel

The DeSingel in a way tries to become a theater act in the city. A statement by Stynen that with time has been lost with the multiple addition to it.

The building has indeed lost his conformation as a one element and became what we can see now, multiple elements and forms that turns it into a public structure that does not work well as one.

It became a non-functional urban block.

The building has indeed typical problems of the urban environment: not well connected, leftover areas, poor attention into making it functional. In a way it has become an urban area that has never got a proper urban plan and just adapt the spaces as that were already existing. This concept has even gotten worse in the Beel addition, where it seems that there is no proper logic on how the building is organized.

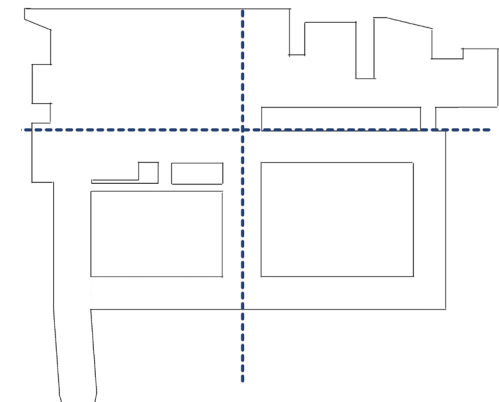
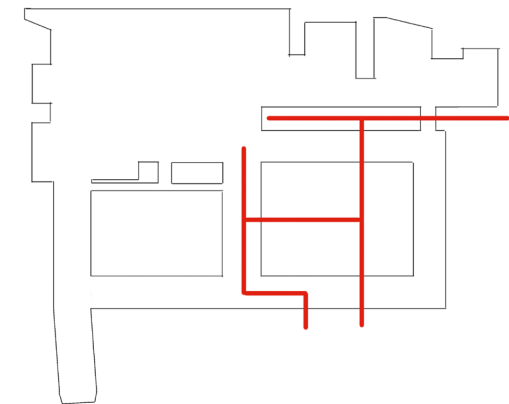


This concept can be clearly seen by the different programs in the building:
3 libraries; 2 music libraries, 1 architecture cabinet)
4 catering areas; 2 bars, LEON and Artiestenfoyer; canteen; bar for theater openings
1 archive; music archive

This situation has arisen primarily because DeSingel has taken on more and more roles over the years. Initially established as a music institution, it later became home to a radio station and now hosts the VAI offices as well. This expansion has created a chaotic environment within the building, causing it to lose focus on its original purpose.

The question now is: should the building continue to evolve, adding more layers and functions, such as another archive? Or should it return to its core mission and fully embrace its identity as a center for music, theater, and dance? Should it prioritize being a performing arts center, or should the VAI remain an integral part of its structure?

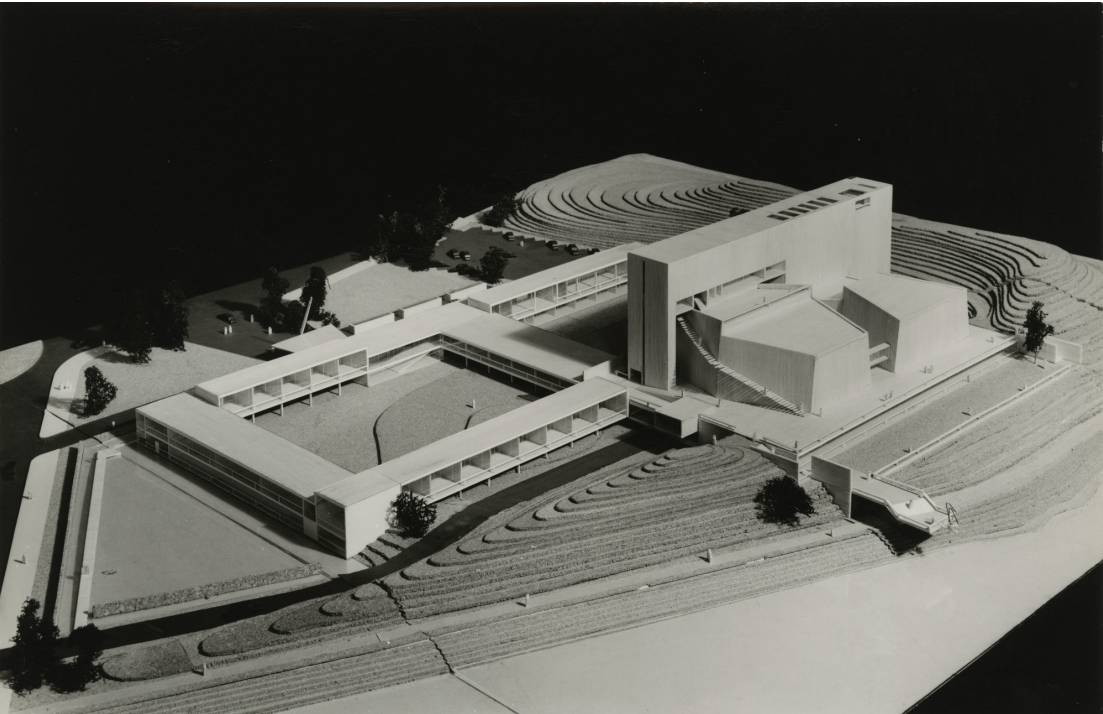
Currently, the VAI lacks a clear identity within DeSingel. It occupies some office space and shares an exhibition hall with other institutions but is barely mentioned on the website. This gives the impression that it exists within DeSingel without genuinely integrating into its community.

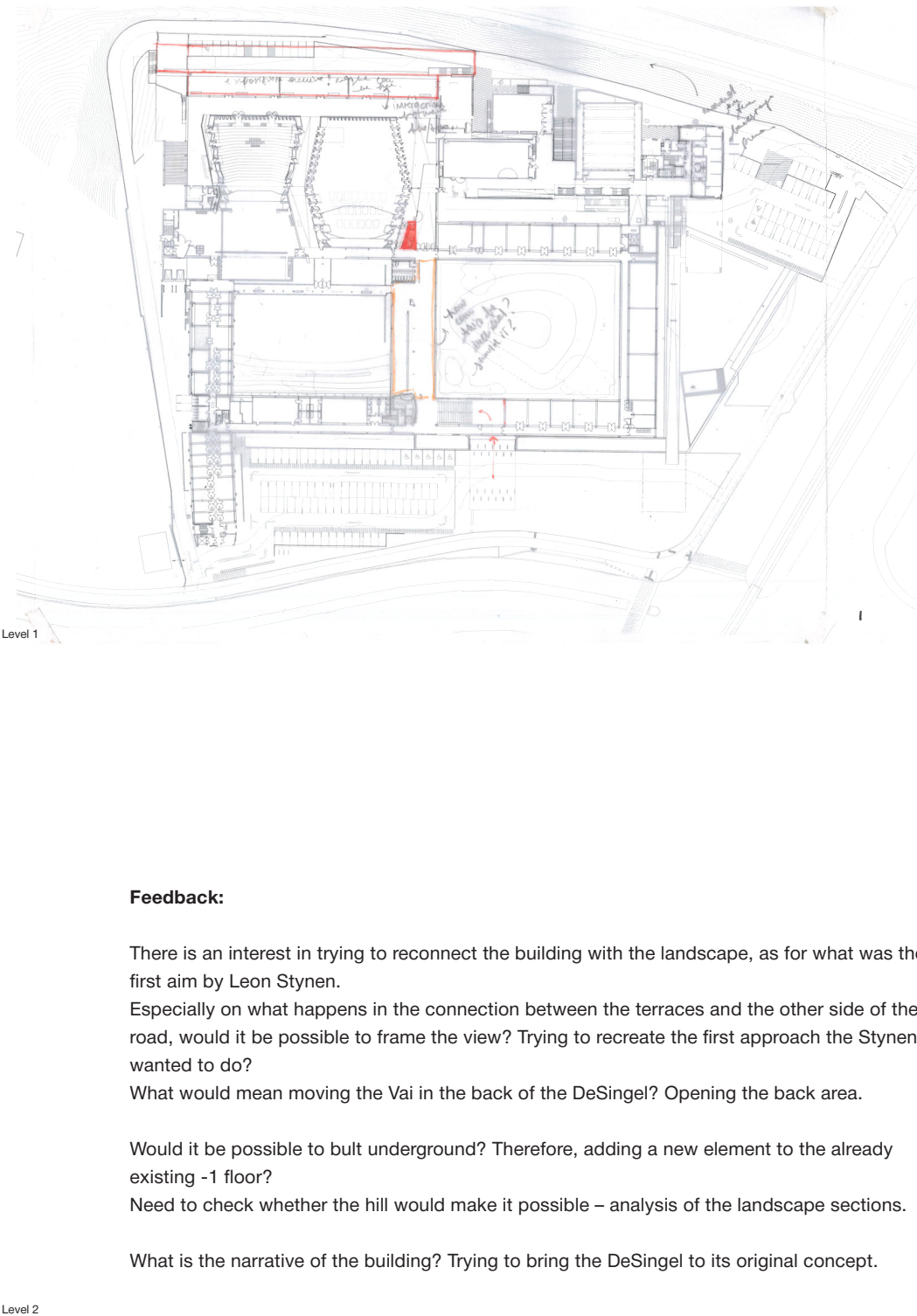












Feedback:

There is an interest in trying to reconnect the building with the landscape, as for what was the first aim by Leon Stynen.

Especially on what happens in the connection between the terraces and the other side of the road, would it be possible to frame the view? Trying to recreate the first approach the Stynen wanted to do?

What would mean moving the Vai in the back of the DeSingel? Opening the back area.

Would it be possible to bult underground? Therefore, adding a new element to the already existing -1 floor?

Need to check whether the hill would make it possible – analysis of the landscape sections.

What is the narrative of the building? Trying to bring the DeSingel to its original concept.

A Library as a Tower

Libraries are considered the pinnacle of knowledge. The place where everything is preserved, where knowledge of the past is kept and where people have direct interaction with this knowledge. However, this approach could also be used for the archives. Considering that archives are places where everything from books to models are stored, the amount of different material stored there keeps the knowledge of the past intact.

The main difference between archives and libraries, however, is that the former are less accessible to the public because of multiple elements. Being an enclosed space, people do not have direct access to archives and, in most cases, they are not even well defined as public spaces in the city. This approach affects both the exterior façade, which usually does not have many windows, and the relationship with the street. This turns the spaces into hostile spaces that citizens are not invited to enter. Libraries generally take a completely different approach, trying to be more inviting, having both quiet rooms, cafes, places where you can both study and talk, and meeting rooms to be able to work with other people. More programs are then hosted, making them more accessible to a wider audience.

Is there a way to bring this element into the archive, while still trying to maintain the necessary division between the storage and public areas of the archive?

In a sense it is possible; there is no specific guideline on what should or should not be considered an archive. In most cases, libraries are actual archives. Therefore, there is a fine line between what is what. This gives us the freedom to define what we want to be part of it and what VAI must include in its program to be identified as an archive. Currently, the area that VAI has available for the archive is almost insignificant, about 480sqm in the building, of which 315sqm is just for the exhibition hall. Therefore, it has no real identity as an institution that is part of the building. And the location where it is located does not help the cause, as it is on a lower level than the main entrance of the Beel addition.

When we visited the DeSingel, the impression I got

from their placement was that we had to find a place to put them, which turned out to be the remaining undefined space of the building. They are placed in a hidden corner that most people probably only find when trying to move from the old DeSingel building to the Beel building.

However, if the main purpose of the building is to try to give the VAI a relevant position in the DeSingel, both as an institution and as an easily accessible place, the terraces (backstage) area is the one that would become most relevant to me. This would mean trying to resolve one of the complicated and unresolved relationships in the building and trying to bring it back to its original purpose.

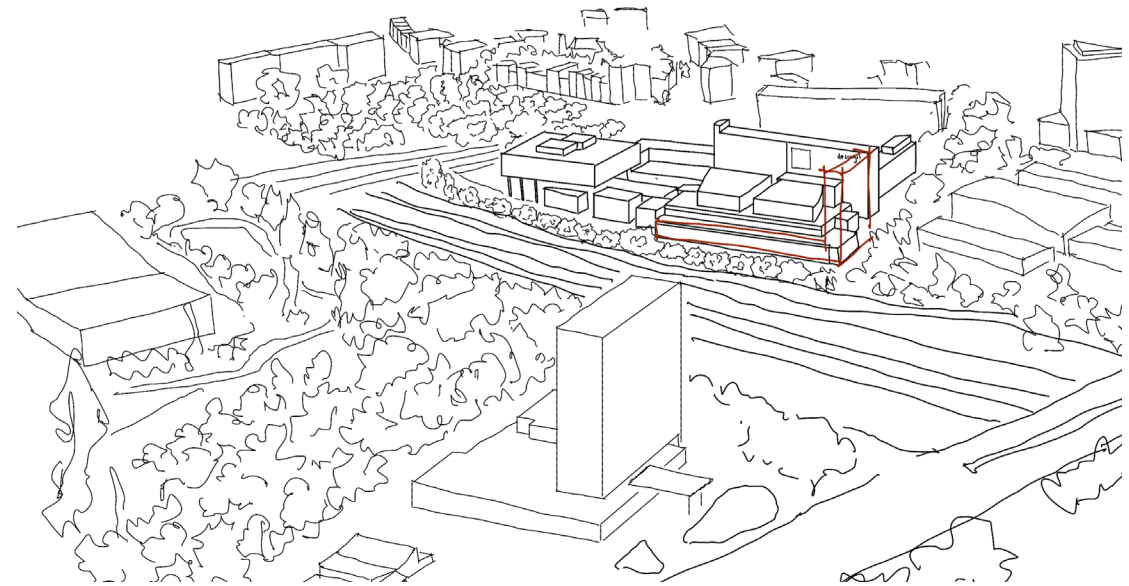
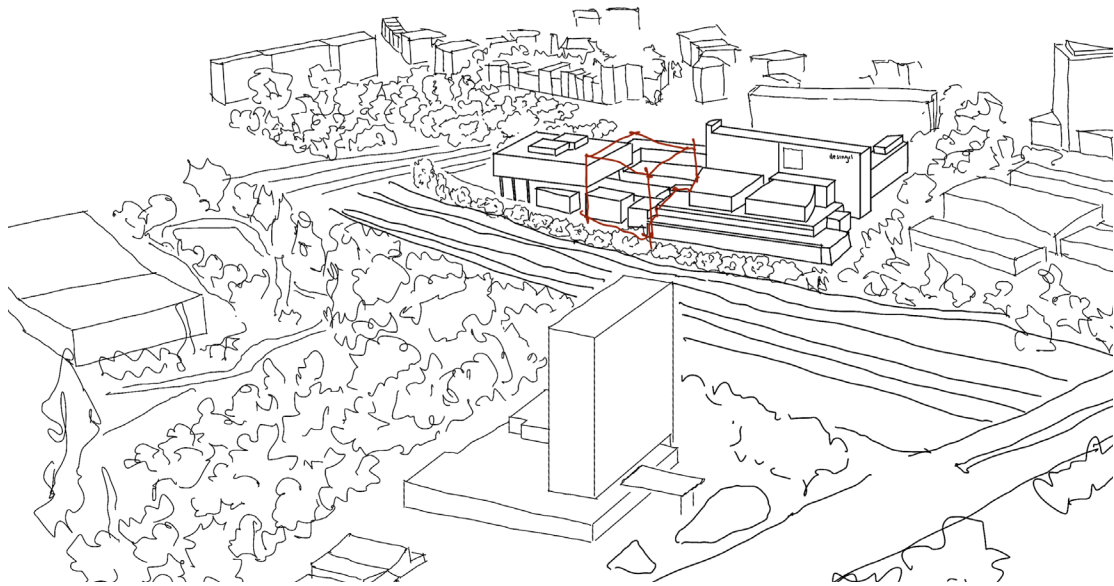
As mentioned above, DeSingel's goal was to have an open façade, in direct dialogue with the city, and an opaque façade, facing primarily toward the southern landscape. The building thus becomes the intermediate monumental element that seeks to connect the highly dense urban fabric of the city with Antwerp's predominantly landscaped suburbs. However, Stynen's idea was that the south of Antwerp would become the "new" city, focusing on high-rise structures scattered throughout the area to implement Antwerp's landscape.

However, the DeSingel tries in a way to become a composition of different forms that brings together low and high structures, trying to maintain a relationship with both the city and the suburbs.

Would it therefore be so absurd to think of the archive as a tower?

As mentioned above, libraries are considered the pinnacle of knowledge, but the archive might be even more relevant as a place where knowledge is stored.





English picturesque gardens or Japanese gardens

After the feedback session of last week, the main here that was brought in the conversation was, how to bring the building back to its original concept.

The relation between the city, the building and the outskirt at the moment are non-existent, mainly because the building is surrounded by streets that block direct interaction with it. There are multiple layers to get to it, that in most cases bring to long waits before being able to cross the street and reach the building.

However, the main “wall” is the one that faces the south façade of the building. The ring has indeed changed the initial spatial perception and view of the place. Stynen's intention was indeed of having a landscape view from the terraces, where some scattered around high-rise buildings would have helped framing the composition of the sight. As a result of a modern composition of a picturesque garden.

To understand better how to frame the view it's important to go back to some of the most relevant examples of framing the landscape: English picturesque gardens and Japanese Gardens.

Starting with the English picturesque gardens, there is a strong aim in framing the views as a landscape painting, proportions and composition are the main elements that define the space. There is indeed the need of looking back at the past, bringing elements from Italy, as for Palladio's projects and turning them into architectural elements that help the composition, as what William Kent does in his work.

The aim of the English picturesque garden is still trying to have a natural landscape result, not an artificial superimposition on the natural landscape. The balance is in trying to recreate what landscape painters used to paint as ideal landscape realities. Where the landscape follows the painting rules, the elements, such as buildings, bridges etc., define the space and the composition of it. (Frank 2020)

Therefore, the landscape composition of the vegetation helps identifying specific focal points that help the composition of the garden. Therefore, the landscape composition of the vegetation helps identifying

specific focal points that help the composition of the garden. At first glance the composition of threes seems is natural, however, by looking at it closely enough it's clear that the composition is not so natural, they are positioned in specific location to show some specific elements of the background, therefore they are divided in small agglomeration. (National Trust 2016)

Another interesting element of the English garden's is the ha-ha concept, which helps in destroying the concept of boundaries. The garden does not have a visible end, it just continues until the horizon line. This illusion helps the framing aspect of the garden bringing outside elements, for example the tower bell of the town close to the castle, as part of the garden itself.

All these elements that are part of the English picturesque garden try to bring modify the perception of the distance, therefore giving the illusion that some elements that were located outside the garden where actually part of the property. This concept destroys the concept of interior-exterior in the garden, connecting to what Stynen tried to do with his buildings, the interior is the direct consequence of the outside, and vice versa.

130. Jack Wallington, Stowe's Palladian Bridge and gothic folly in background, 2017

131. J.M.W. Turner, Pope's Villa, at Twickenham, 1808

132. John Millar, The gardens and ha-ha at Berrington Hall in Herefordshire, National Trust Images



Japanese gardens have a completely different approach, the garden becomes a miniature of the natural landscape of the country. There are different moments in the garden, and everything is well framed from inside to outside. The houses have indeed different partitions in them divided by panels that define the space. The panels become the big opening elements, therefore the proper frames from which the garden needs to be looked from. However, the garden in the Japanese culture becomes part of the meditation, there are partitions of the house that are mainly taught to be places where the landscape needs to be admired while meditating. (Bring and Wayembergh 1981)



JAPANESE GARDEN → how to frame landscape
 → crafted by man, crafted, architecture a piece of art.
 Nature is physically ^{and visually} **FRAMED** by the garden doesn't
 garden can not be treated independently of architecture.
 Japanese garden is reminiscent the **architecture** of the country itself,
 dai-dairi (great inner interior) → what is the architecture of the Defining?

Shishin-den → mandarin tree and] sometimes positioned as piece of architecture
 cherry tree

Imperial hall of Kyoto

Katsura Palace gardens.

Japan → beauty is perceived as not natural in Japan as a property of natural accident or as the purpose of man-made type.

Shunmon (reception)

→ nature as go-shikui

Japanese culture
 beauty as a perfection of man-made type - aesthetic response clear hierarchy
 fixed rules

Shokin-ten Pavilion

Katsura villa

on or sense of horizon

partition garden on
 city steps → urban plot layout

temple of unceasing splendour - Kyoto

yo haku no bi

↳ beauty of empty spaces

list:

- Asymmetry
- Simplicity
- Asymmetry of glistening
- Nana/nen
- Both profundity or deep reserve
- Freedom of architecture
- tranquillity.

framed literally
 view on frame
 frames.

just the horizon
 that most
 in the garden
 is on this different
 level: we need
 impr.



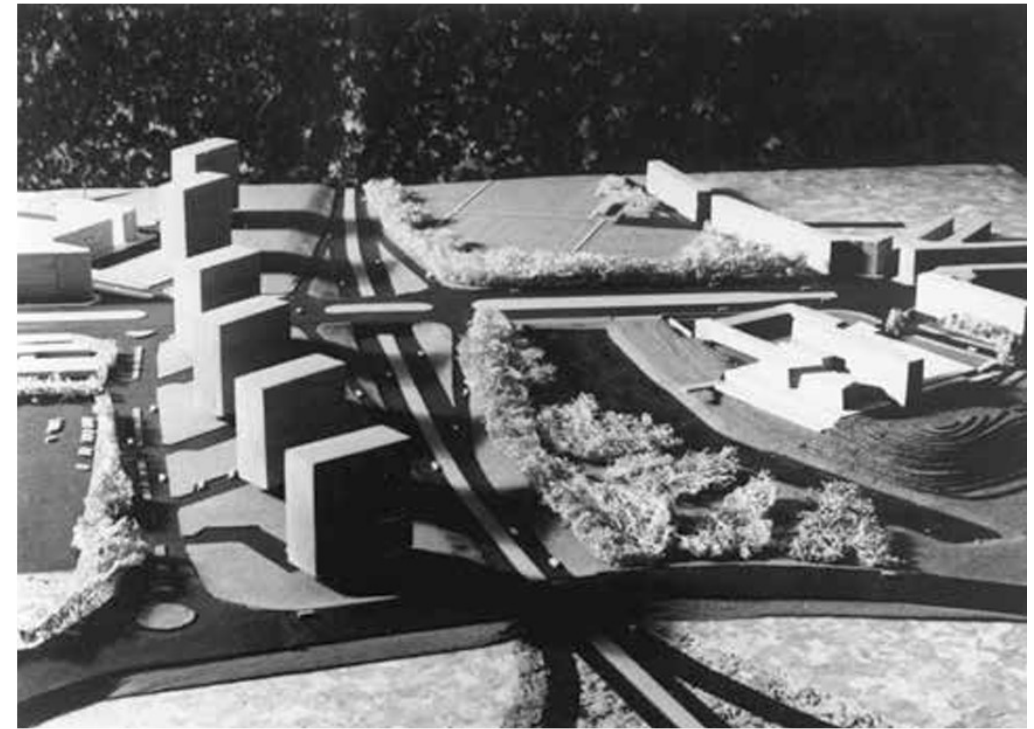
Léon Stynen and the city landscape

During his work, Léon Stynen started questioning some of the unresolved areas of the city of Antwerp. These are mainly urban interventions that were developed by him, mainly following the ideologies of Le Corbusier and the historical landscape and picturesque principles of Camillo Sitte.

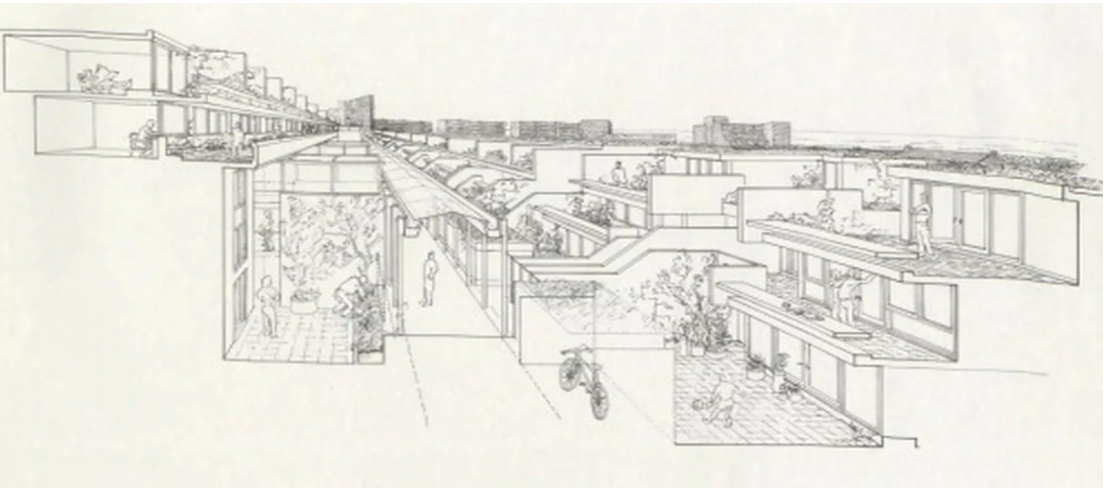
The two plans that he made were the Left Bank project and the development of the Wezenberg site. The latter is particularly relevant for Stynen, considering that the area had regulations that were not properly followed. Therefore, the area was developing in an uncontrolled way, having single houses next to high-rise buildings. The interesting aspect of the Wezenberg site design is how he tried to merge his design around what was getting built, The Ring highway. It is interesting seeing how in his vision, the landscape was supposed to be scattered by different high-rise buildings that would define the non-built environment.

The new addition of the Wezenberg site shows the relation between the deSingel and the new high-rise, and how the terraces area is thought to be extremely relevant in the building. The perception of the space changes completely, and the terraces become the main point of view to look at Stynen's work.

It's even interesting how the entrance that is in the back area is completely different. The hill was supposed to bring people from the outside directly on the rooftop. Therefore, the relation between the building and the landscape is extremely relevant. The landscape is part of the building, and the building is part of the landscape. Therefore, the terraces are in a way the belvedere of the deSingel, where the building becomes part of the landscape that extends after the highway.



140. Neave Brown, A perspective section of Brown's Zwolsestraat in Scheveningen following the same concept of the Alexandra Road Estate, Neave Brown
141. Alexandra Road estate, <https://www.dezeen.com/2017/10/05/neave-brown-interview-high-rise-buildings-only-for-very-rich-social-housing/>

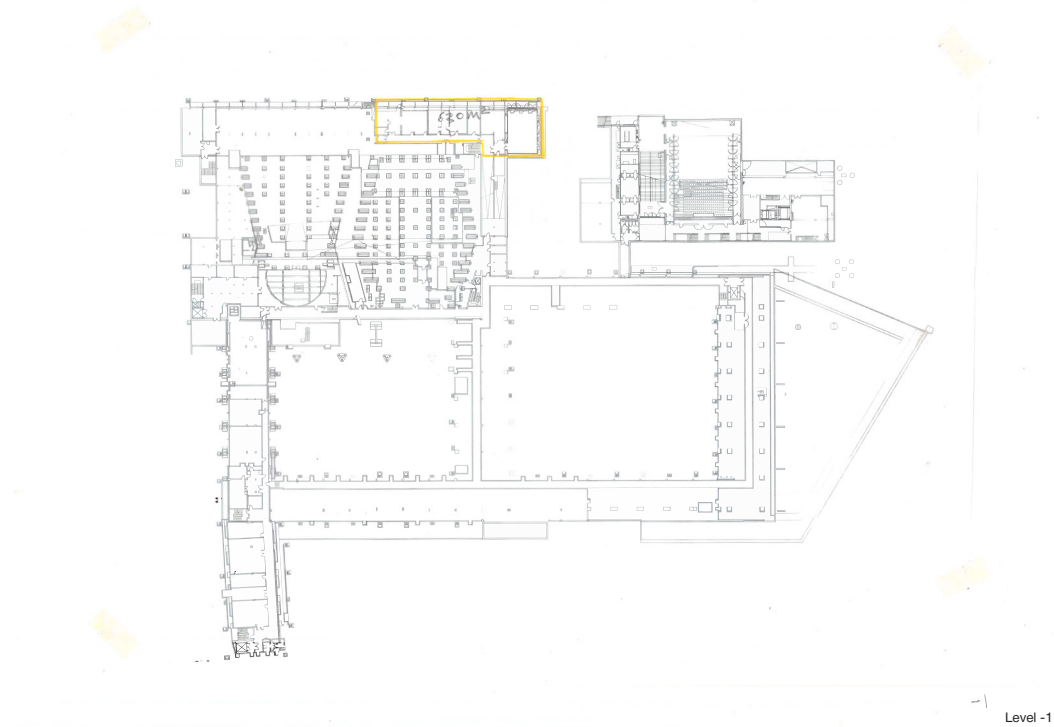


142. Martin Charles, Alexandra and Ainsworth , Neave Brown, RIBA Collections

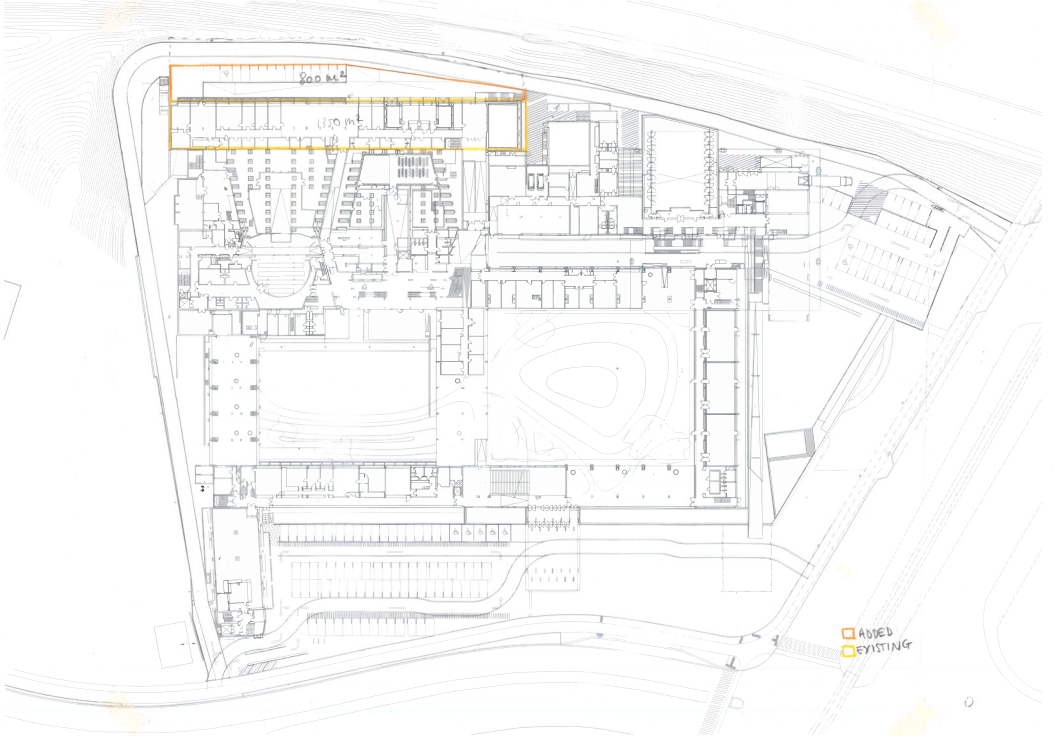
Neave Brown, Alexandra Road Estate, London

Perhaps one of the most famous examples of modernist housing in London is Alexandra Road Estate by Neave Brown, dating from the 1970s. It uses a linearity of stepped terraces, purposed to maximize light and space for each unit, while creating a strong sense of community. The buildings are oriented to minimize noise from nearby railway tracks, with the stepped terraces facing inward toward pedestrian pathways and green spaces. Each house also has private access to the outdoors, whether a balcony or patio; and within the estate, amenities include a school, community center, and playgrounds. A bold, concrete Brutalist aesthetic is softened through thoughtful landscaping and human-scale design that emphasizes the importance of people.

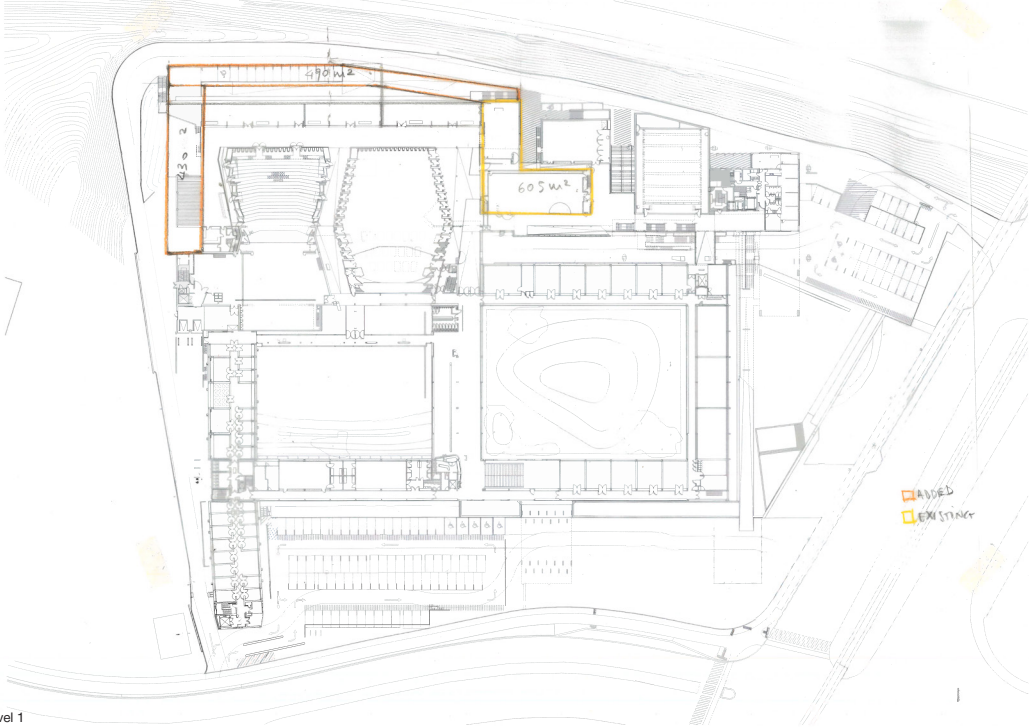




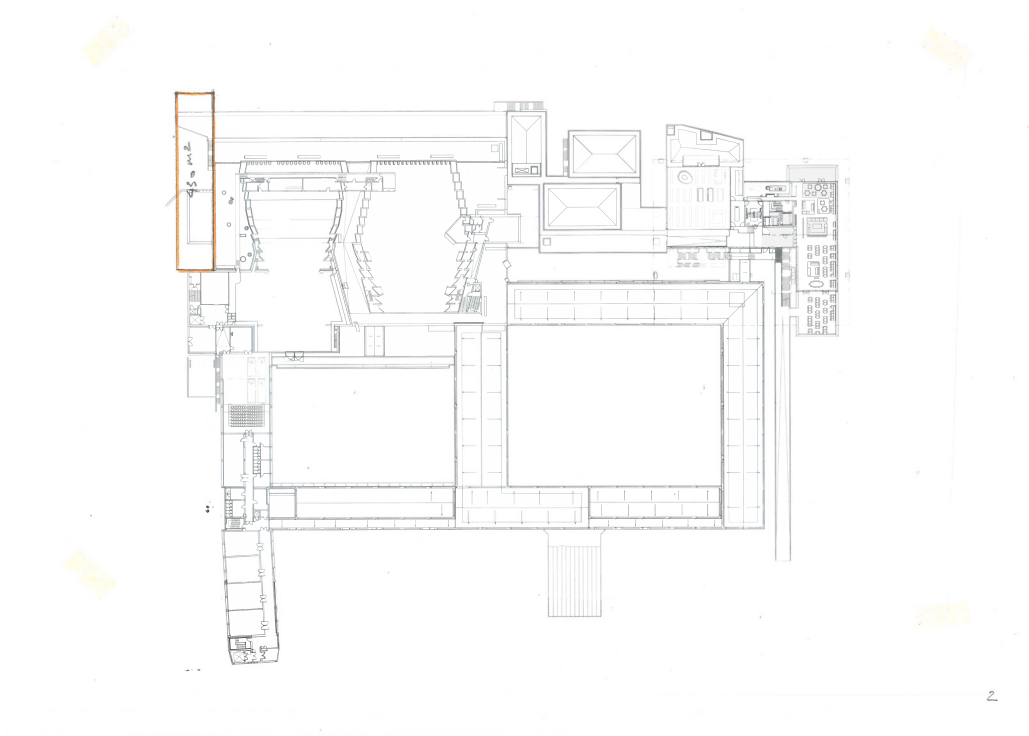
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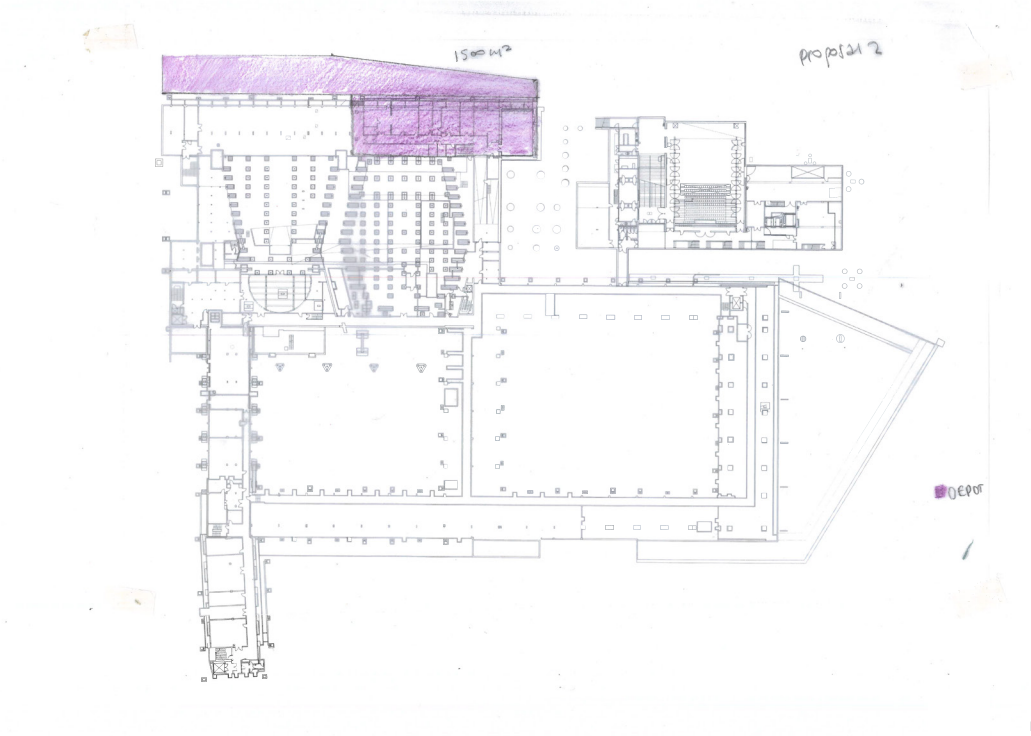
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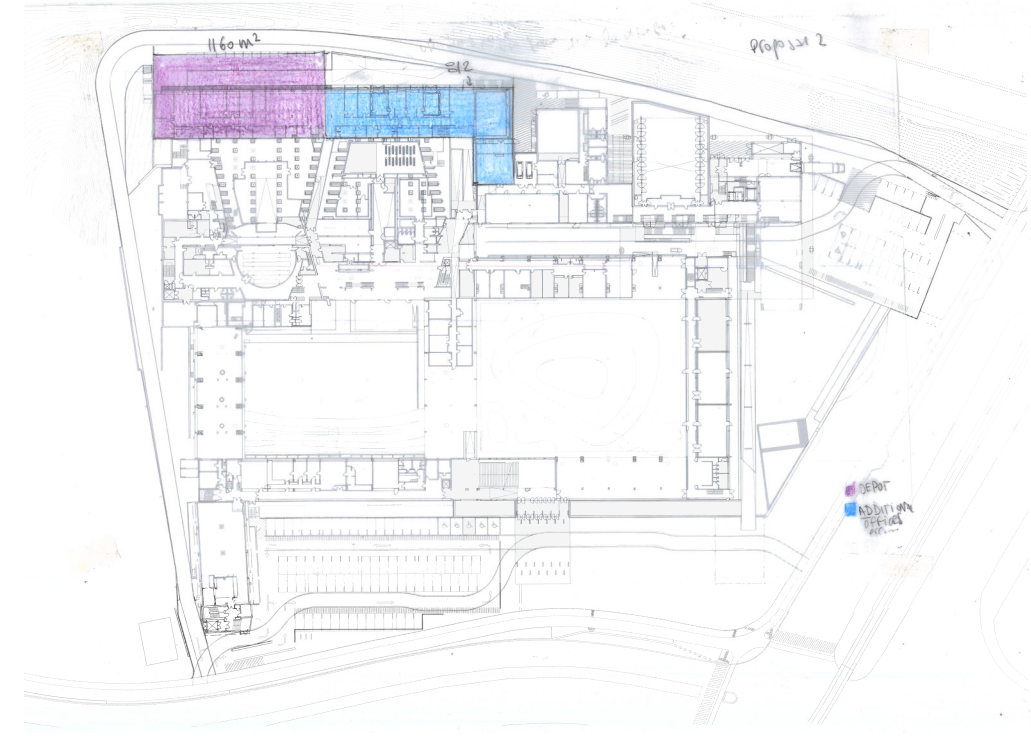
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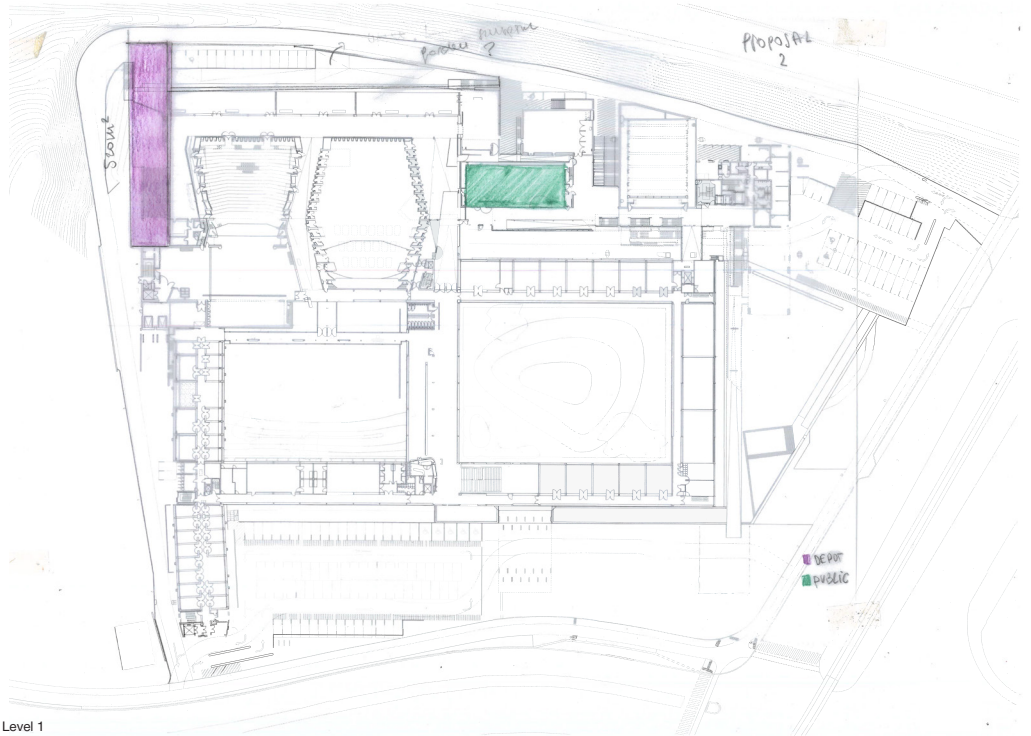
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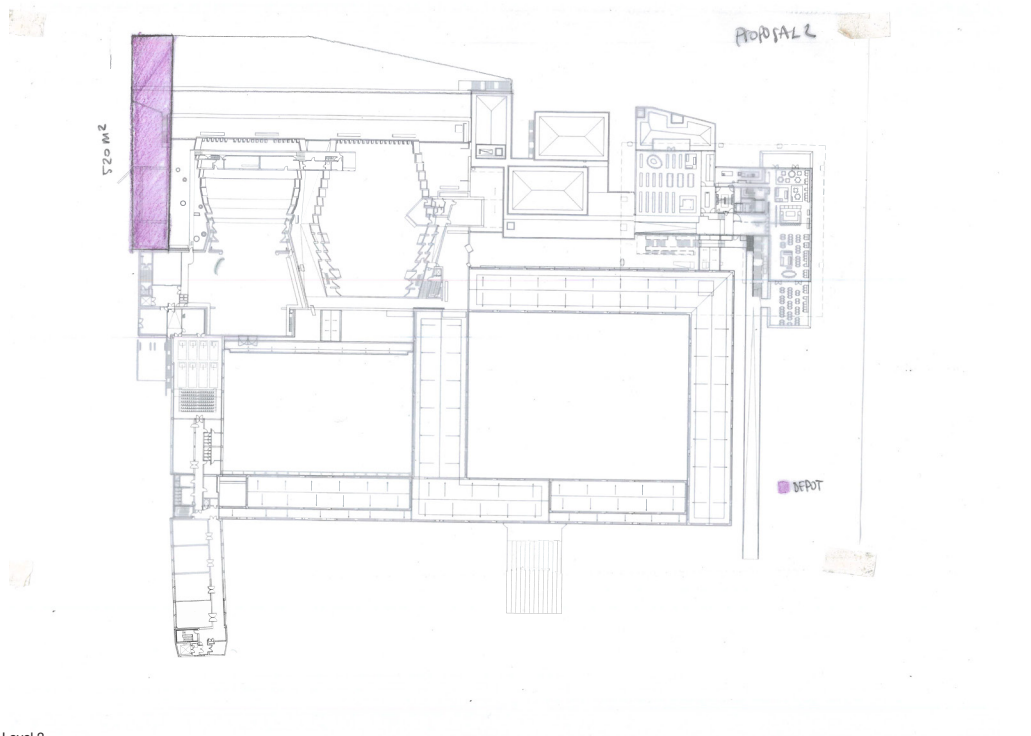
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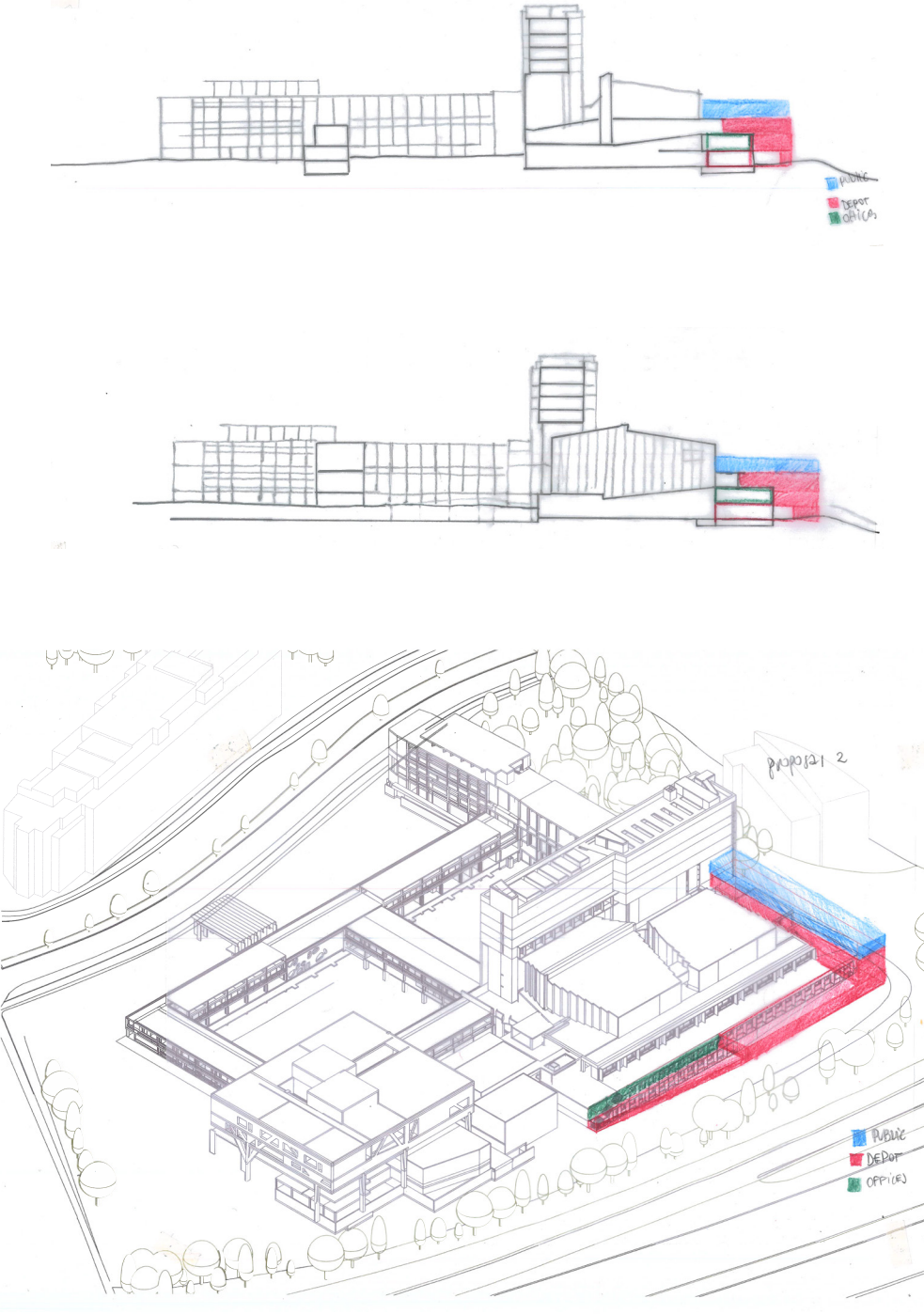
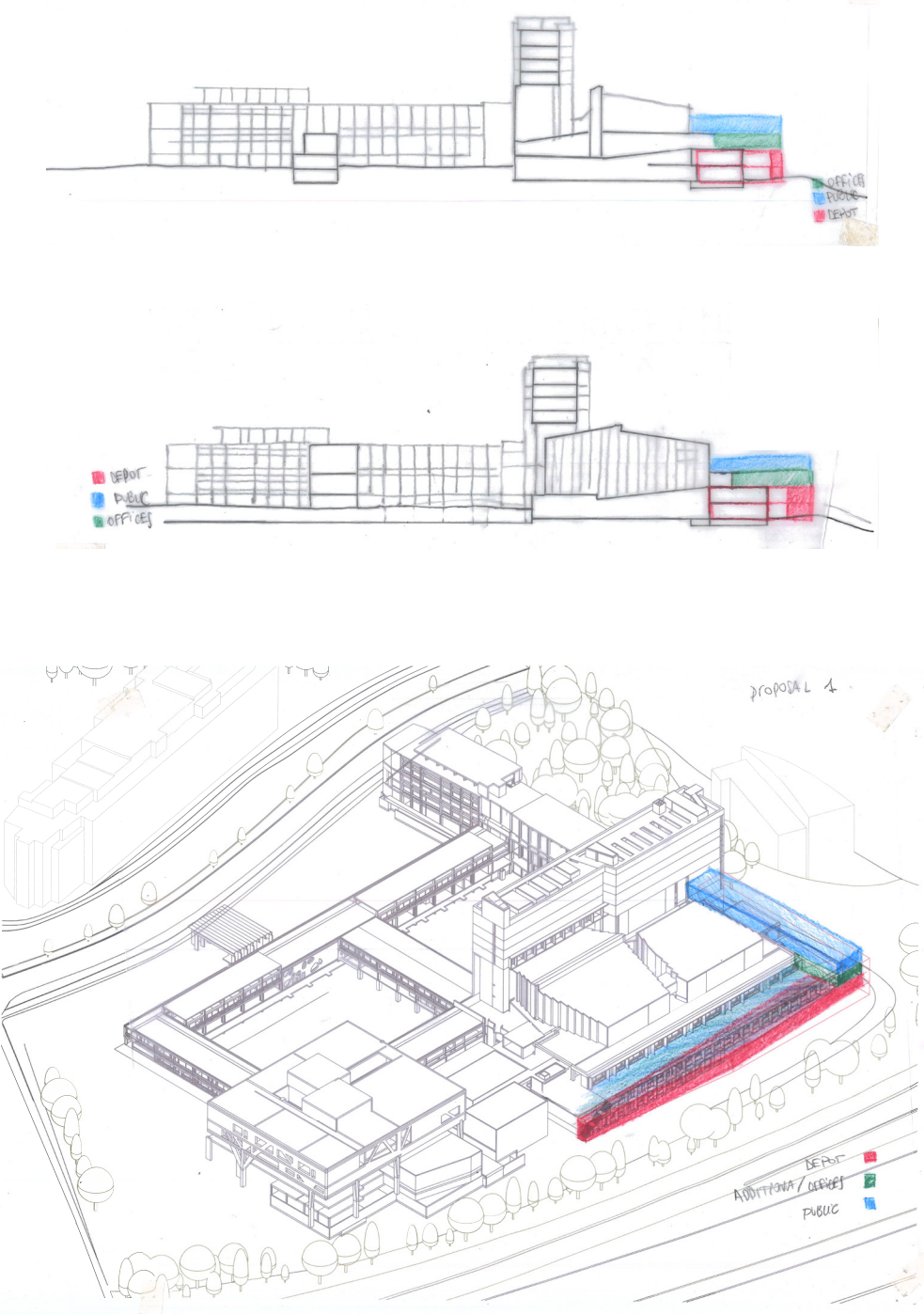
Level 1



Level 2

PROPOSAL 1

PROPOSAL 2





Feedback:

There is an aim in having the archive as a sort of element that holds the rest of the building. It becomes a sort of wall where the material is stored.

The division of the space is similar to what there is in the CCA, should that be a reference? Or should the archive be more open?

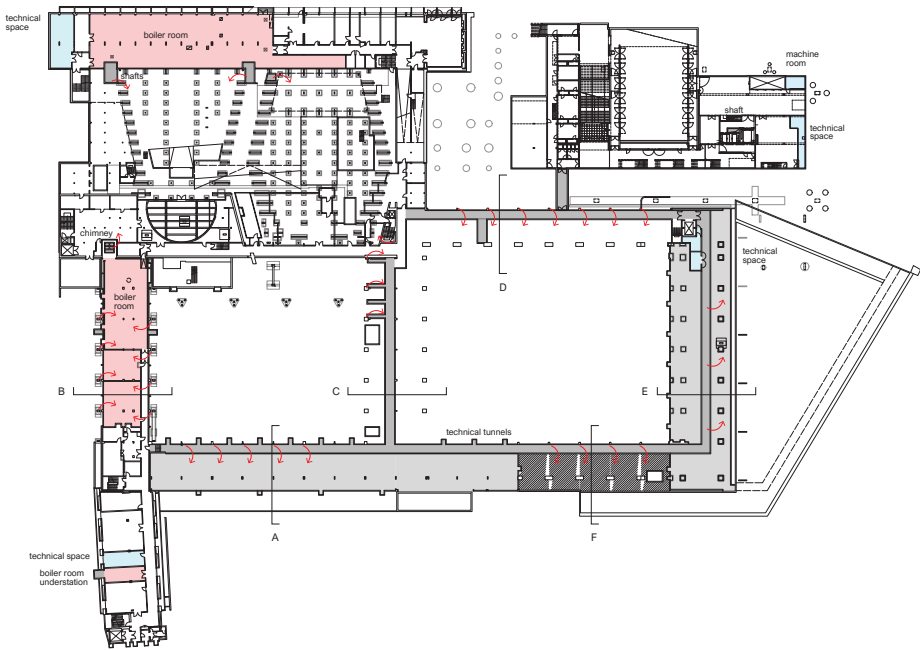
What happens on the terraces? is it an outside or inside space?
How is the view framed and what does and should it show?

Museum Beelden aan Zee, The Hague

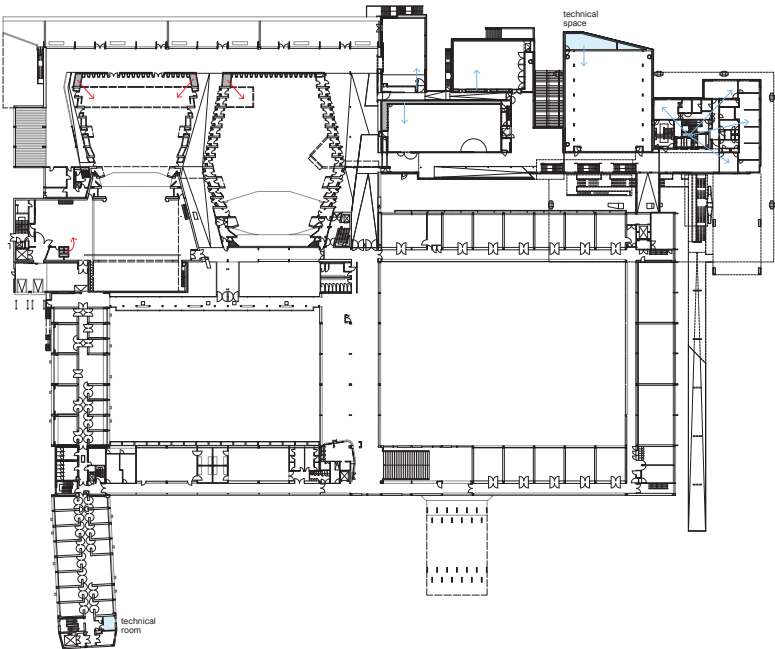
How to frame the landscape



HVAC Plans

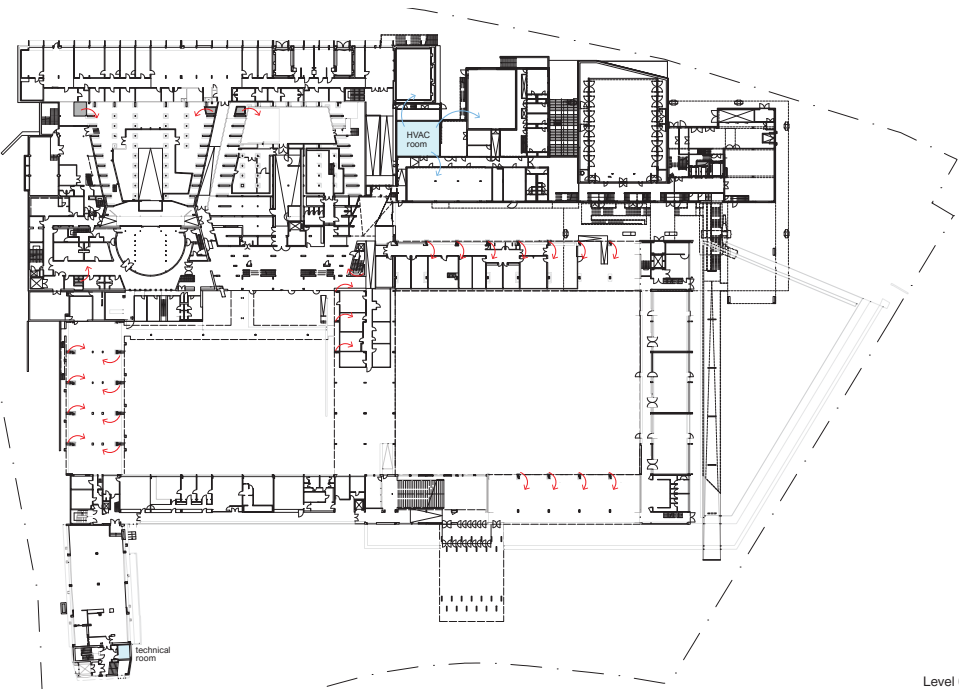


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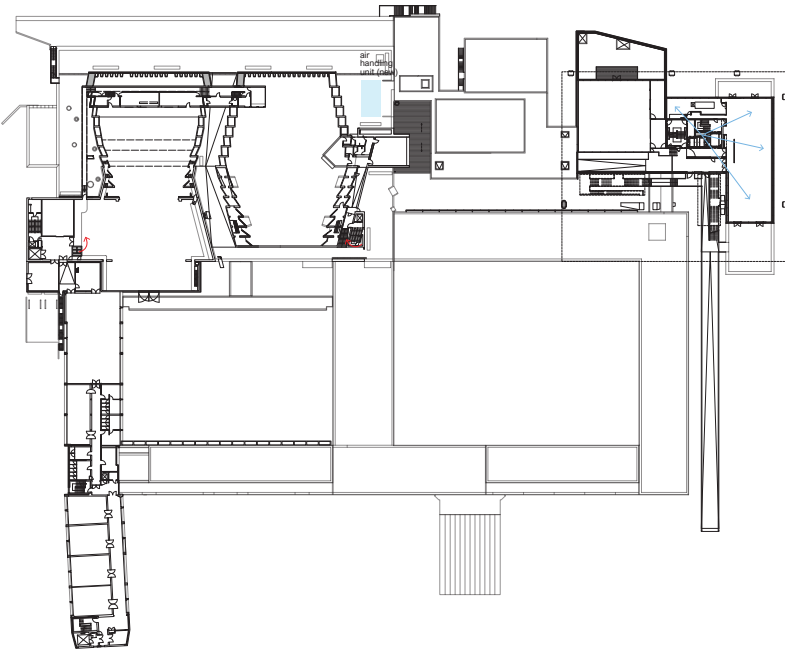


Level 1

HVAC Plans

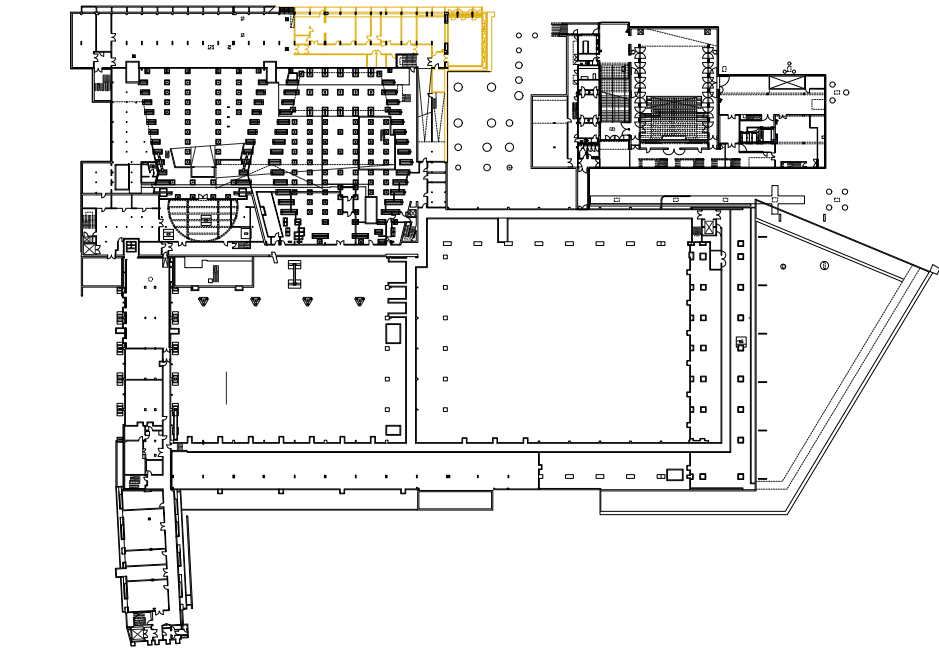


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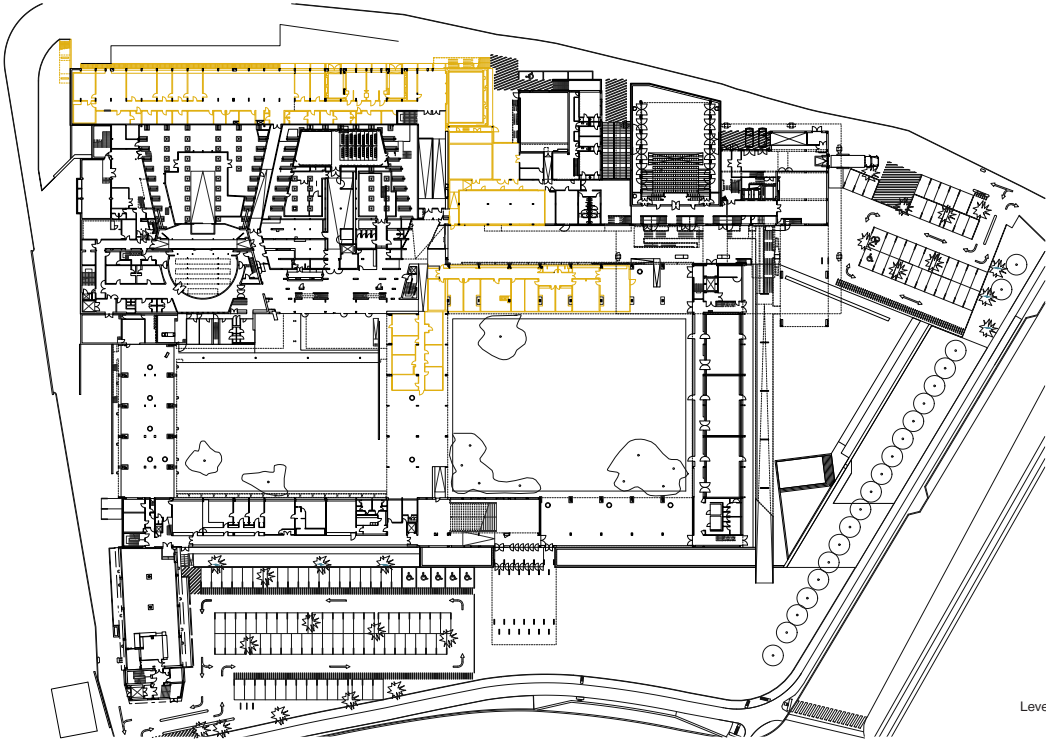


Level 2

Demolition

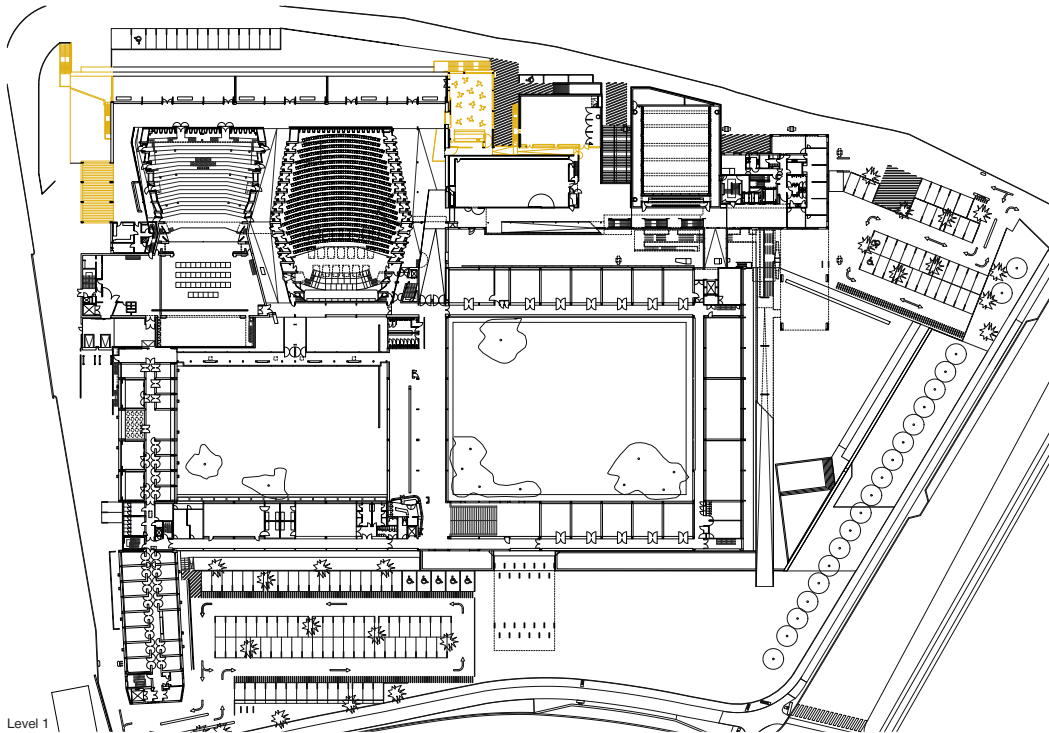


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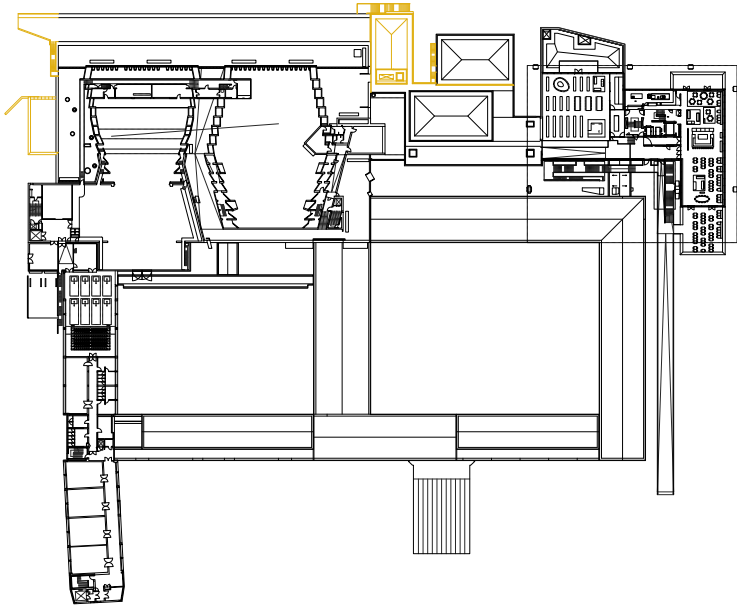


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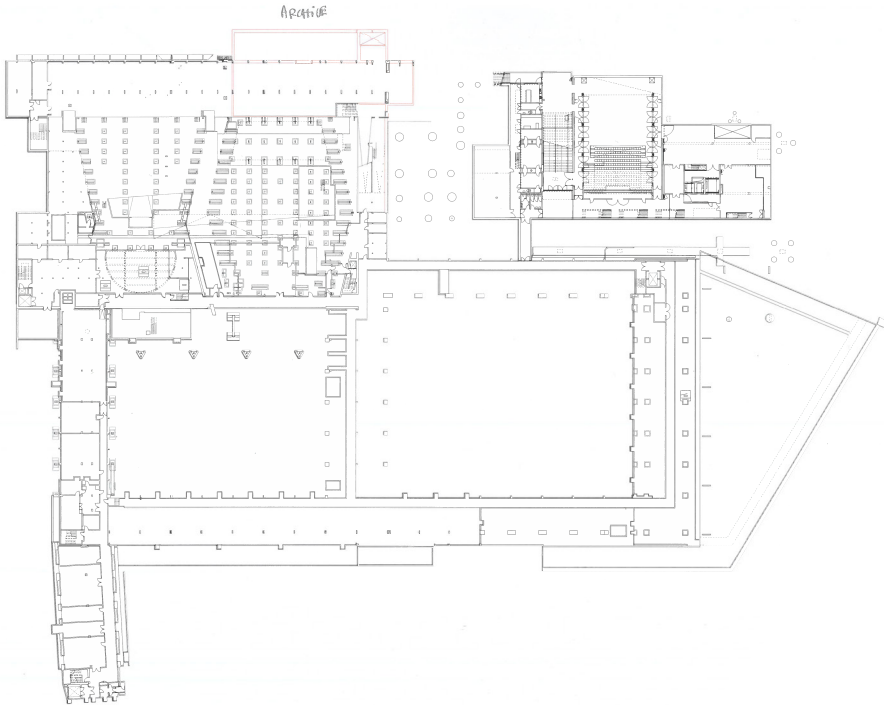
Demolition



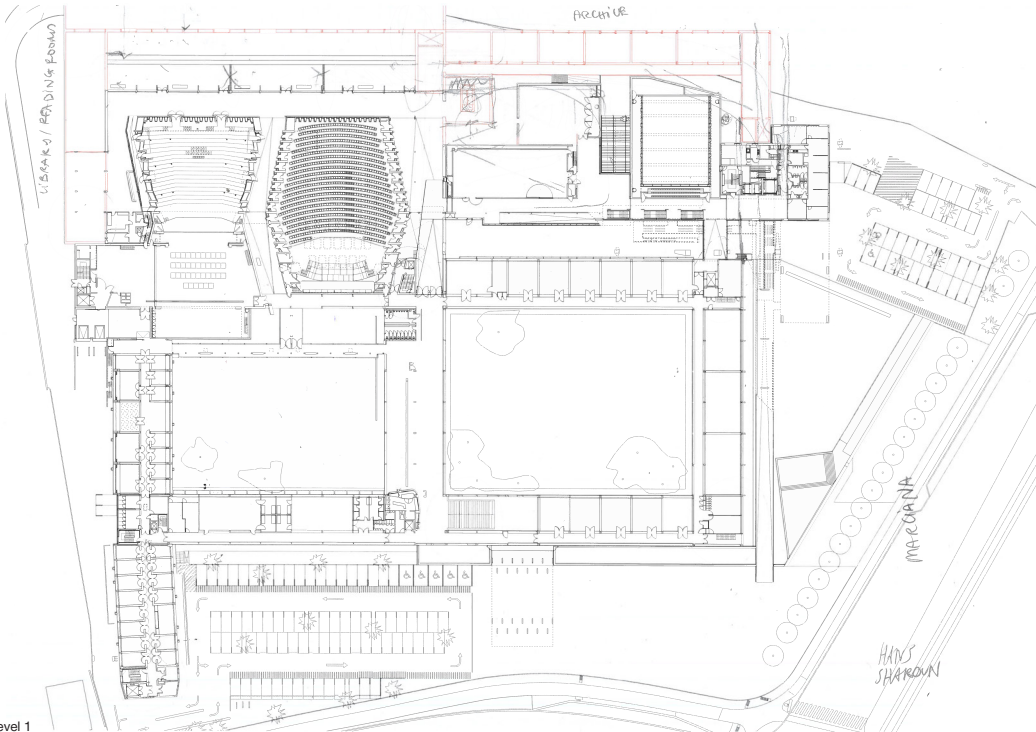
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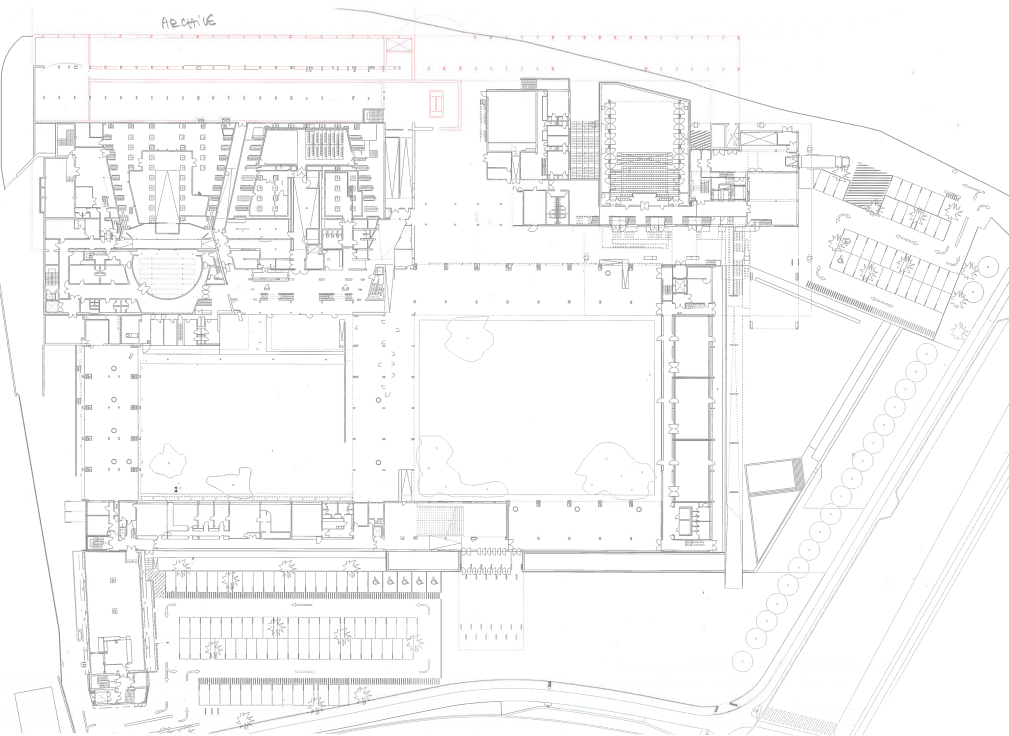
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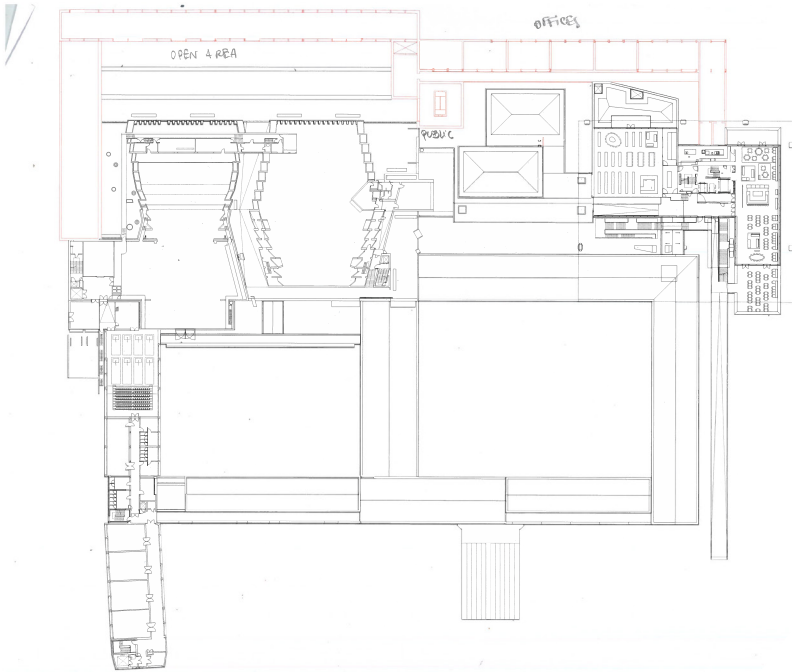
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Level 1



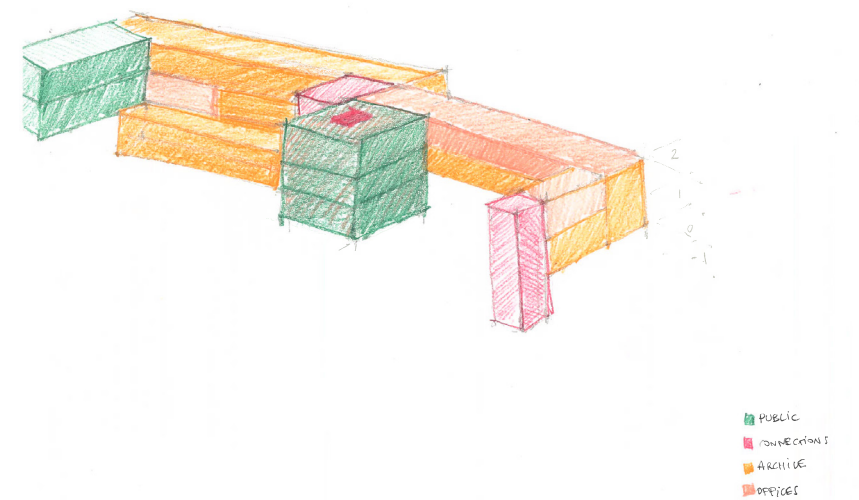
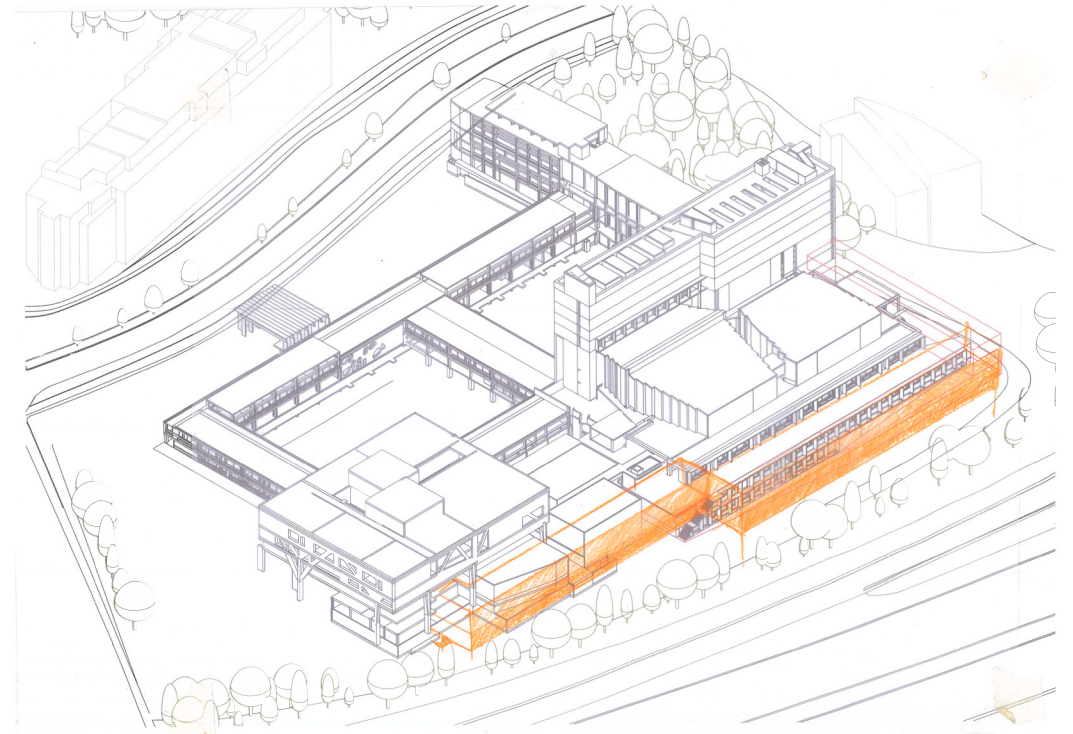
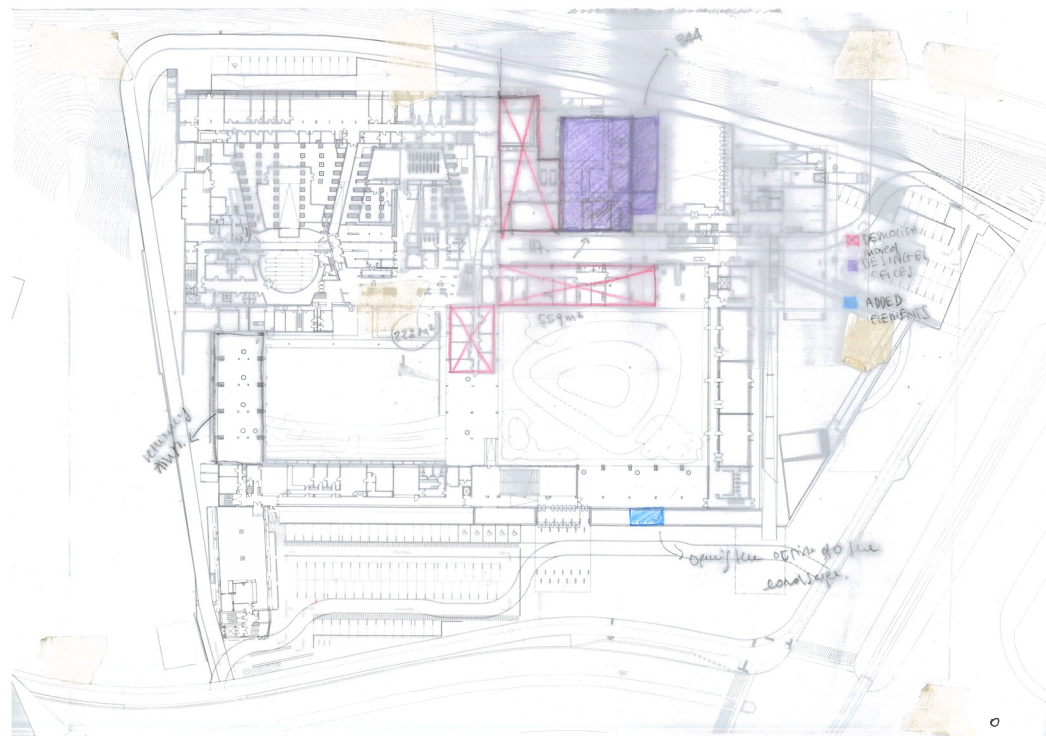
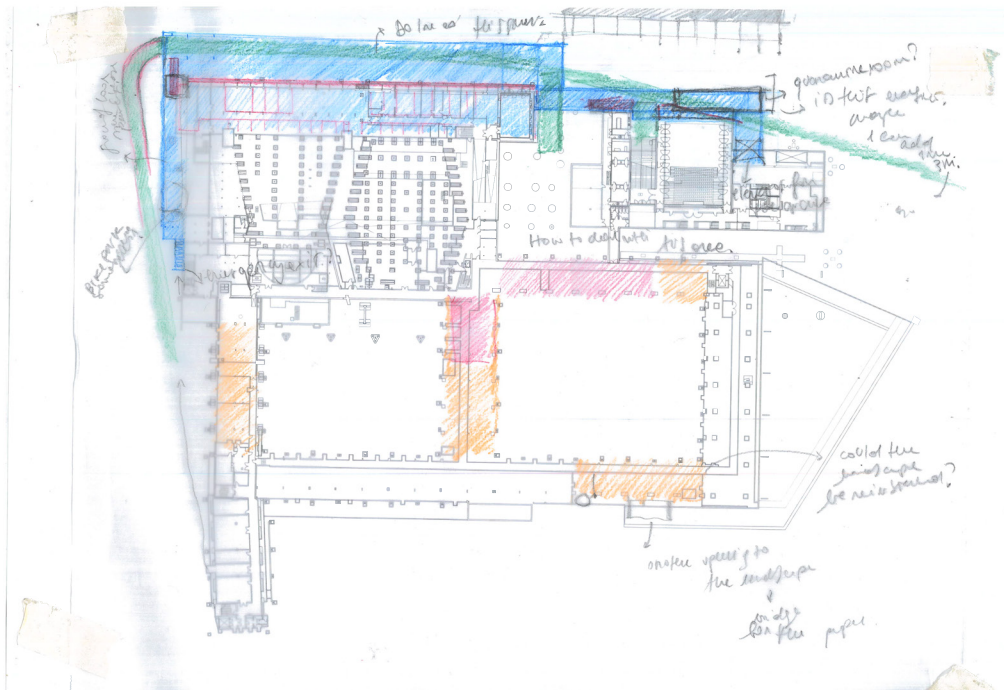
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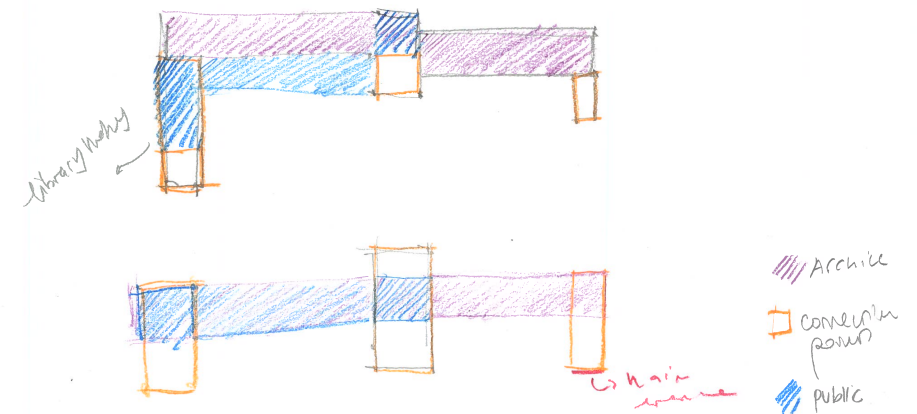
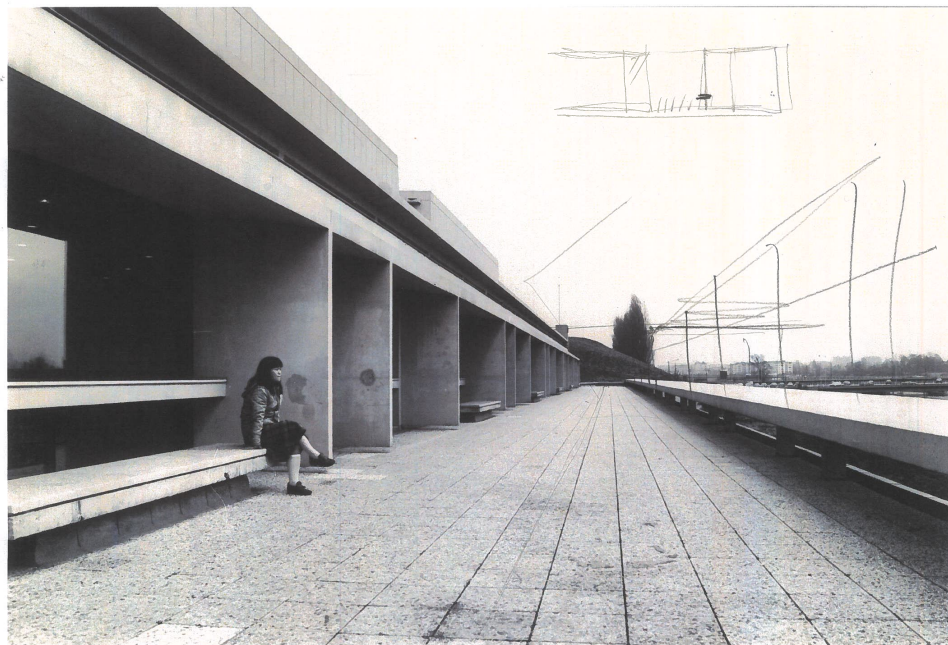


Level 2

Addition

Addition





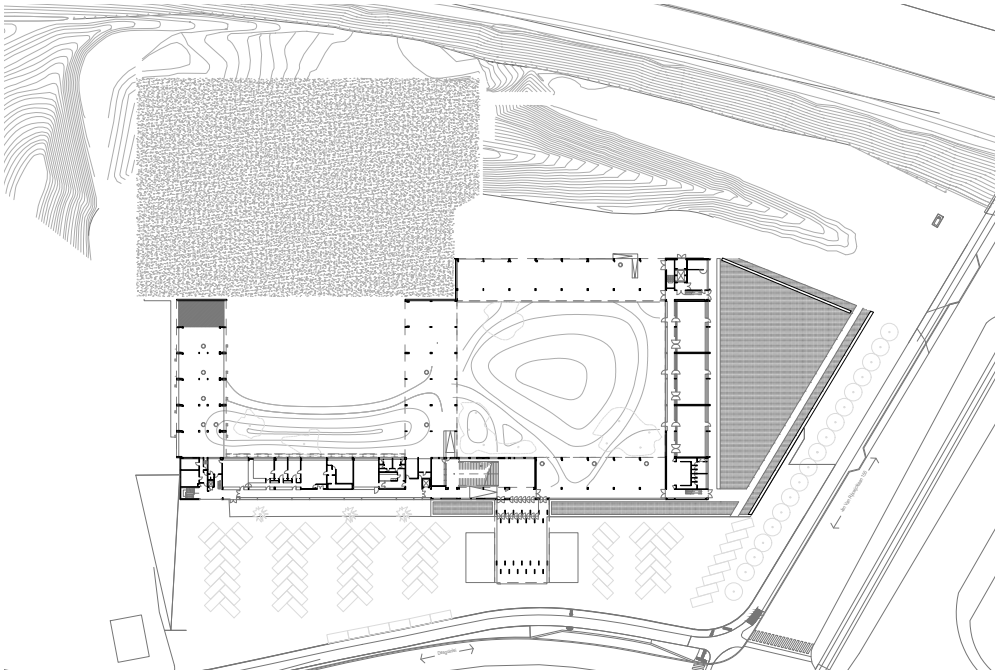
Feedback:

Interesting the aspect that there is another layer in the back.

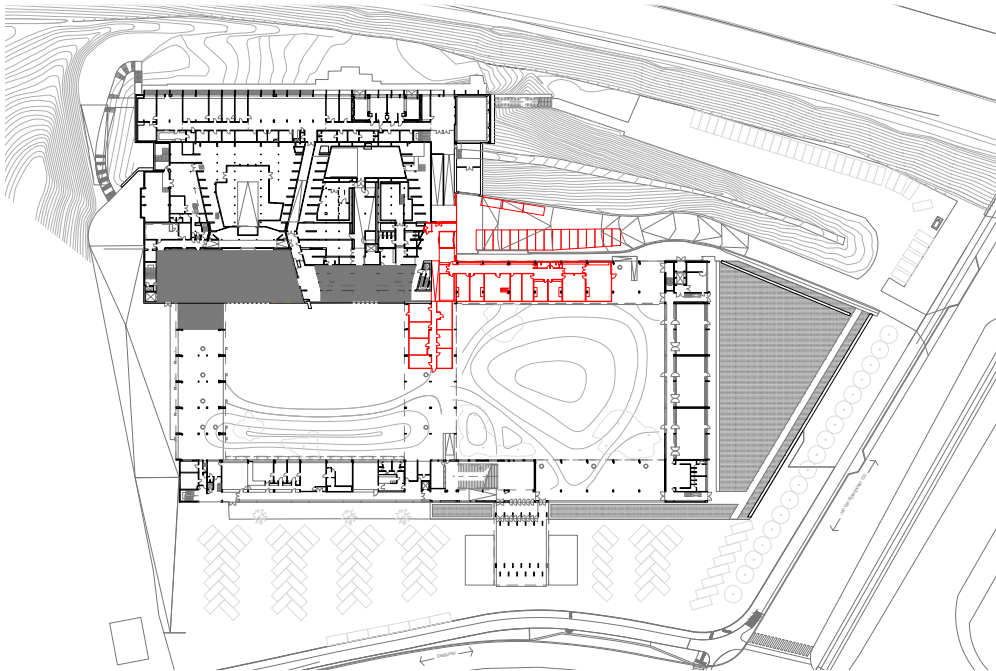
Maybe it does not need to be so strict? Could follow the lines of the Beel building
Understand how to develop better the circulation, it has its own entrance, but how do you go from one place to the other?

How is the composition of the terraces? What are they supposed to be? Open areas? Or should they be half open/ half close? Is it necessary for them to be open? Could they be a covered space? And let the light in?

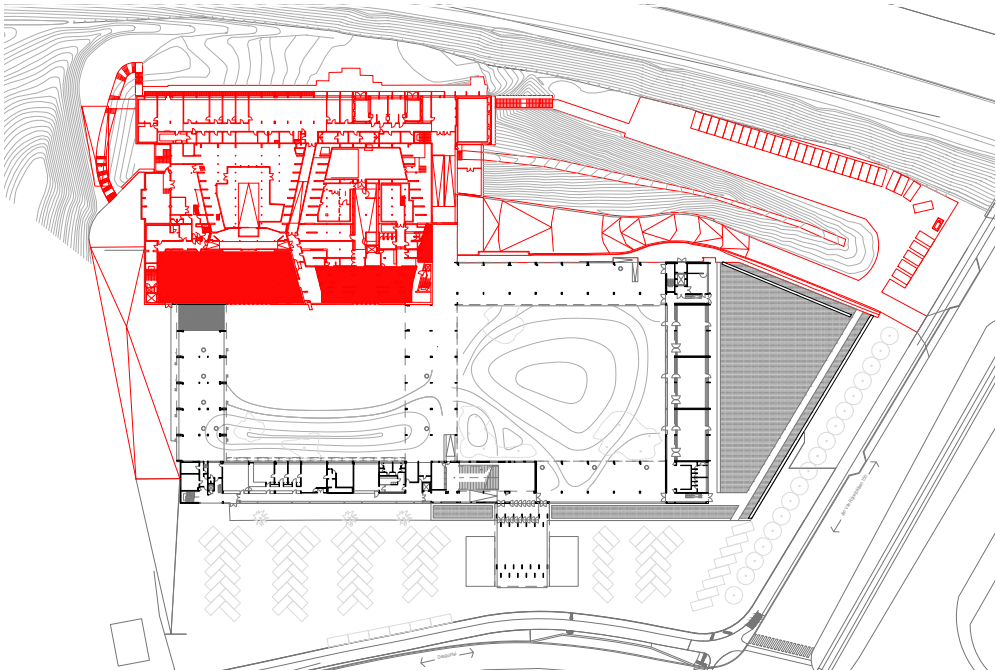
DeSingel different phases



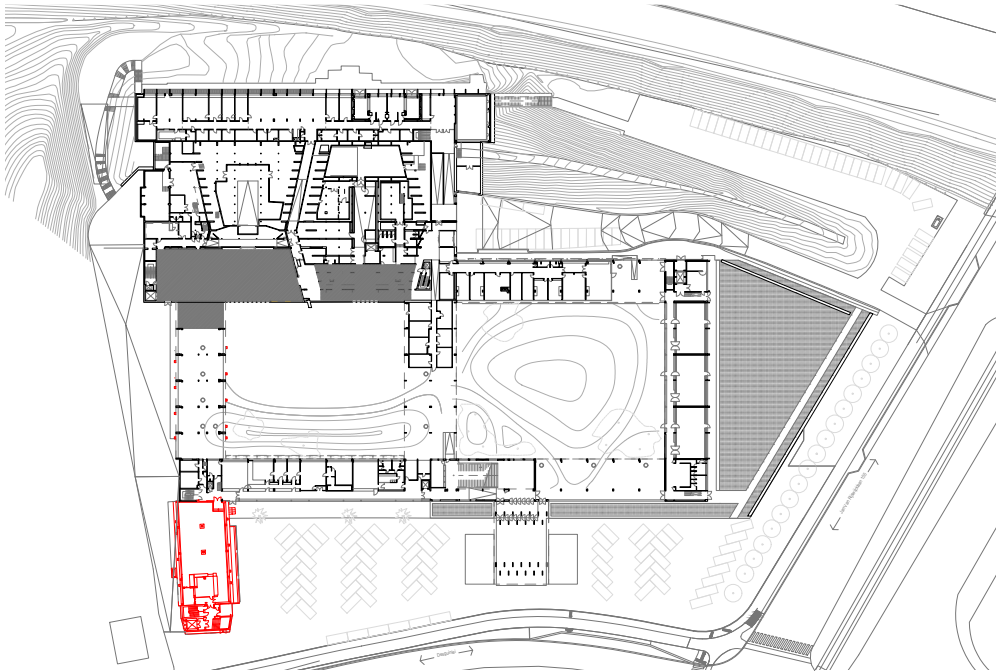
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1st phase



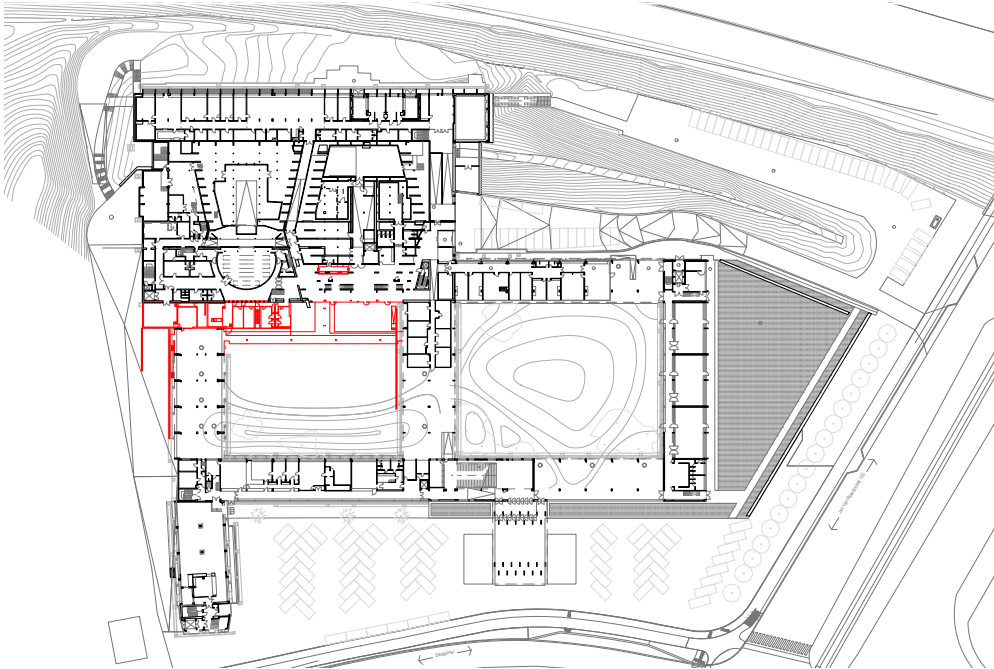
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3rd phase



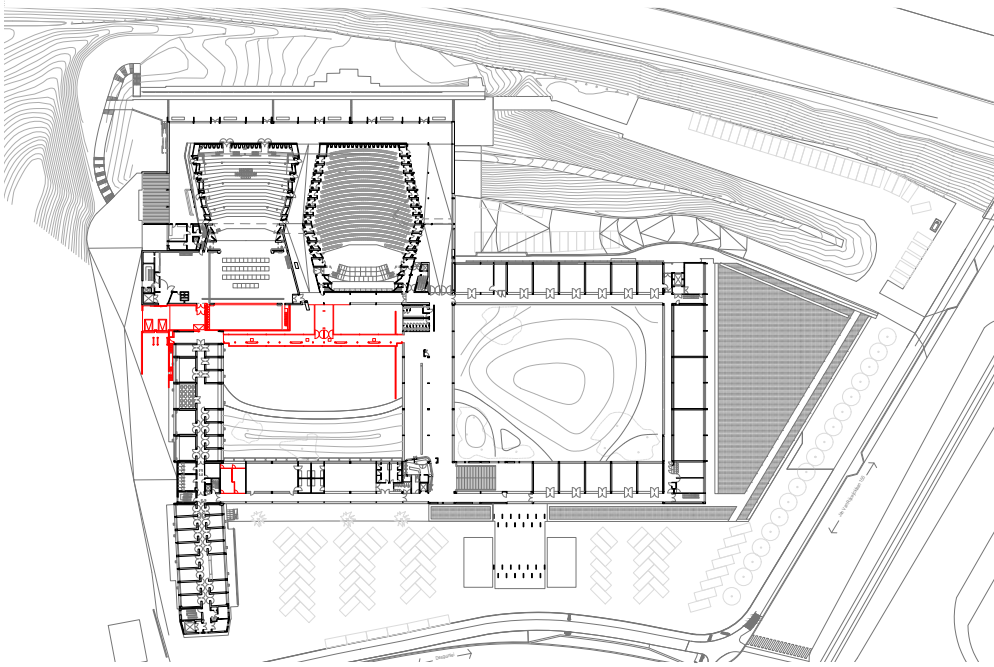
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2nd phase



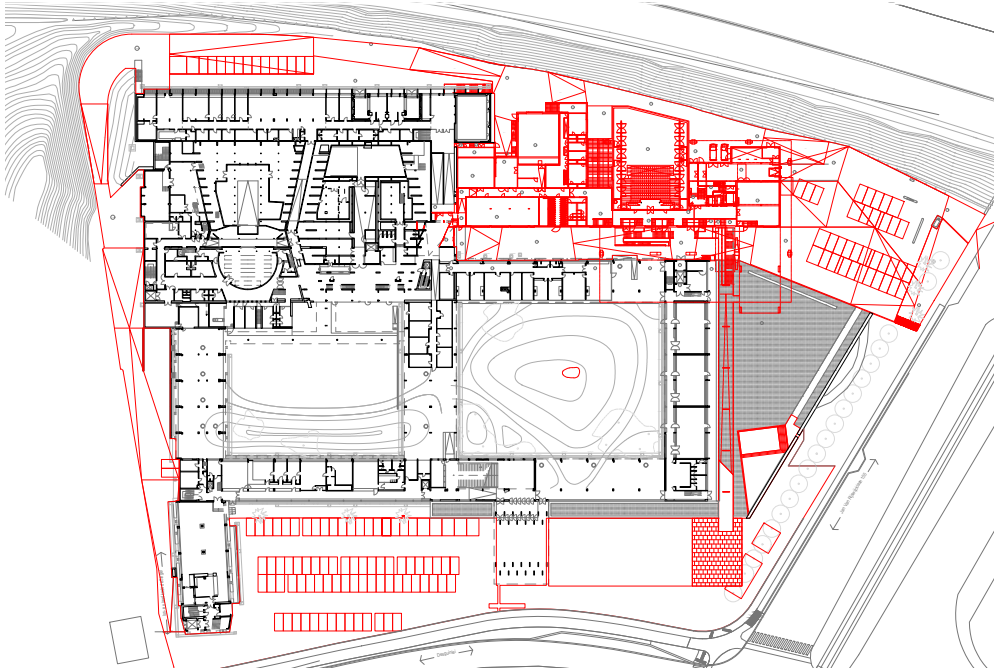
0
4th phase



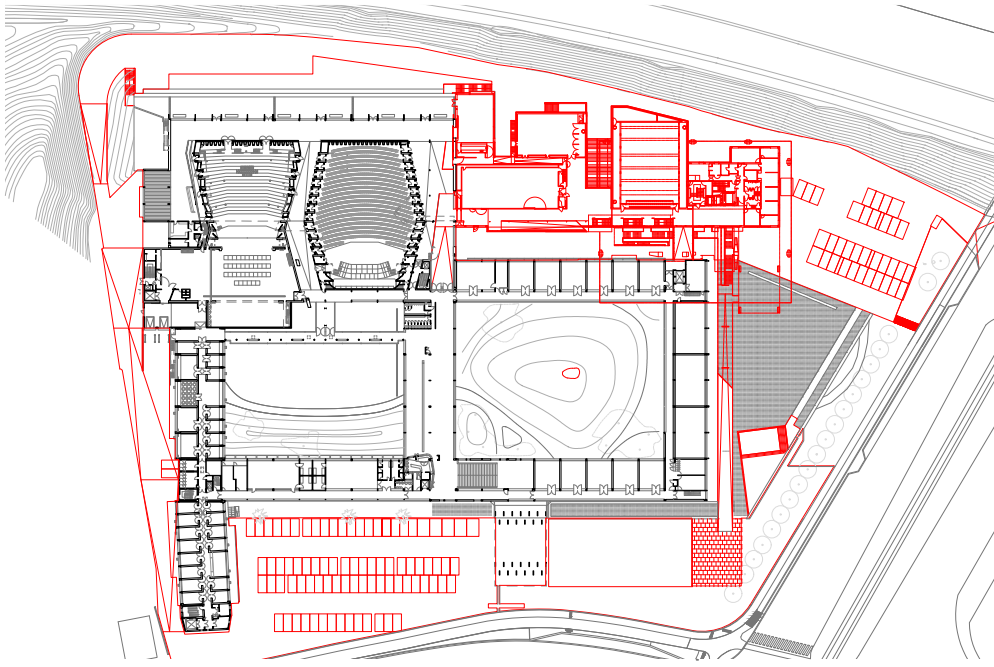
0
5th phase



1
5th phase



0
6th phase



1
6th phase

LANDSCAPE

noun

a large area of land, especially in relation to its appearance:
a rural/barren landscape
Demolition firms and builders are busy changing urban landscapes.
The landscape is dotted with the tents of campers and hikers.
The cathedral dominates the landscape for miles around.

verb

to make a garden, park, or other area of land more attractive by
adding different features, plants, etc

adjective

A landscape document is to be printed with the longer side of the
paper at the top and bottom.

Landscape and Power

After analyzing the role of the landscape on Stynen's projects and different typologies of framed landscape (picturesque garden and Japanese garden) the main question that I was dealing with was, what is a landscape and how to deal with something so broad in a building scale.

When thinking about the landscape what comes to mind are different typologies of beautiful natural views. However, there is not a specific element that the word landscape refers to, landscape is the composition of different elements that generates certain emotions on the people looking at the view.

As how W.J.T. Mitchell describes it:

“Landscape has a subtle power over people, eliciting a broad range of emotions and meanings that may be difficult to specify.” (Mitchell 2002)

Therefore, while looking at the landscape/ view there is not one element to concentrate your attention at, but the composition of different elements that suggest a nice view.

This brings to the question, how a framed view can have the same approach to it. Is it possible to frame the outside landscape as what was the original intention of Stynen, multiple elements that define the landscape, both natural and built. And how can this complicated relation with the highway be hidden or redefined to create a composition that would help the main aim?

In the DeSingel case the landscape has been modified over the years, both the building landscape and the composition of the other side of the road has changed the relation of the building to its surroundings. Its initial position and composition were aiming in having a big construction that would have a strict relation to the city, based on different layers of open and opaque facades and a belvedere relation to the other side of the highway.

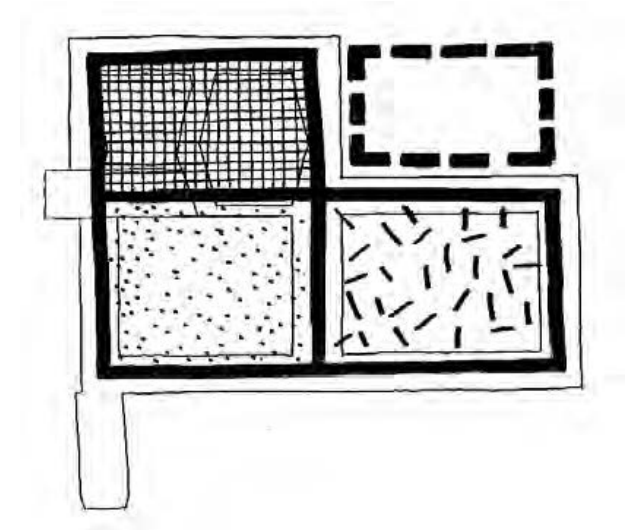
The former still tries to have a relation with the city, even considering the barrier that the streets have strongly defined DeSingel's plot. However, the clear identity of the building has been lost during the different phases, turning it from a clear relation to the city and relation to the suburbs of Antwerp, into a non-well identified identity of multiple facades facing different sides.

DeSingel identity does not only lie on its facades, but its initial landscape and relation to the ground. The building in a way follows what de Certeau identifies two different “fields”, space and place.

Place as a moment of stability, a located moment whereas space is the consideration of different velocities and times, in a way the concept of movement. What de Certeau says is that empty space is different from an empty place.

Therefore, in case of empty place we have a filled space, therefore the latter comes up when the former disappears. Which in a way is the concept of the interior circulation of the building, in its interior and exterior.

“space is a practiced place” (Mitchell 2002)



Mitchell identifies two main ways of understanding the landscape: one from a modernist perspective and another from a postmodernist style. This differentiation is especially helpful for grasping why the relationship with the landscape is so important in the context of DeSingel. What I find particularly striking is how he explains the modernist landscape, which he describes as:

“an attempt to understand the history of landscape mainly through the history of landscape painting, and to tell that story as a process of gradually refining the visual field.”(Mitchell 2002)

He calls this the “contemplative” landscape, which seeks to construct a specific, designed view of the landscape, adding an extra dimension of experience to it.



Given DeSingel's significance as a cultural center in Antwerp and the existing presence of the VAI within the arts, it seems almost inevitable to consider housing the Architecture Archive there. This move would enhance the archive's visibility—transforming it from an obscure entity in Antwerp into a more accessible resource for the public.

My interest lies not only in Stynen's original vision for DeSingel as a boundary-defining element on the city's edge but also in how this vision has evolved. Alterations to the building, coupled with the growing prominence of the highway as a key connection between Belgium and the Netherlands, have reshaped its relationship with its surroundings. This is particularly evident on the South façade, where the back terraces have changed the intended interaction between the building and the landscape.

These considerations lead to several key questions:

Can Léon Stynen's original vision for DeSingel's terraces be reintroduced? How can we highlight key moments in the landscape to help the public understand the building's intended relationship with its site?

How can a new structure be integrated with the existing building in a way that respects its historical significance while introducing a new function?

How can the VAI establish its place within DeSingel while coexisting harmoniously with the other institutions housed there?

190. Felixarchief, Areal picture, 1950



191. Felixarchief, Areal picture, 1971
192. Felixarchief, Areal picture, 1990



Curating the DeSingel

From 2004, Moritz Küng, initiated the Curating the Campus project. During the years there have been multiple interventions to make the DeSingel as part of the artistic environment, multiple exhibitions have been hosted and even long-term interventions (Jerry Aerts and Küng 2014).
Considering the addition that we need to make to the existing building there has been one intervention that I find extremely interesting and that could help try to figure out how to even make the Archive more approachable for the public.

From 2003 to 2009 the DeSingel hosted the Curating Library project, whose intention was to have a container in which different architects, choreographers, composers, philosophers, artists, writers and theorists were invited in presenting their favorite books to the public. This was hosted in the Untitled 2002 project by Richard Venlet, a mirrored surface container that was located in the corridor next to the Blue hall (Jerry Aerts and Küng 2014).



Connected to the landscape the Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, during the “Alphavile?” exhibition of 2004 made different interventions around the camps. One of those remained, mosaic pond with lamp in the main courtyard of the DeSingel. The intention of the project was to highlight the lowest point of the courtyard, as a sort of natural pond (Gonzalez-Foerster 2004). The project is inspired by Garrett Eckbo work, and especially the Rio 2004 project.

The terraces featured a project by Joelle Tuerlinckx, whose exhibition After Architecture After (des plans et des planches) tried to explore the concept of both the movement of “After Nature” and the perception of architectural space in memory (Jerry Aerts and Küng 2014) . To represent this, she created the Terrasse sur Terrasse, where she drew new tiles over the already existing ones. This was an attempt to define an architectural space based on the Modernist idea that architecture should be transparent (Tuerlinckx 2006).



198. 1831 map of antwerp, 'Geopunt'. n.d. Geopunt.be. Accessed December 2024. <https://www.geopunt.be/>.
199. 1831 map of antwerp, 'Geopunt'. n.d. Geopunt.be. Accessed December 2024. <https://www.geopunt.be/>.

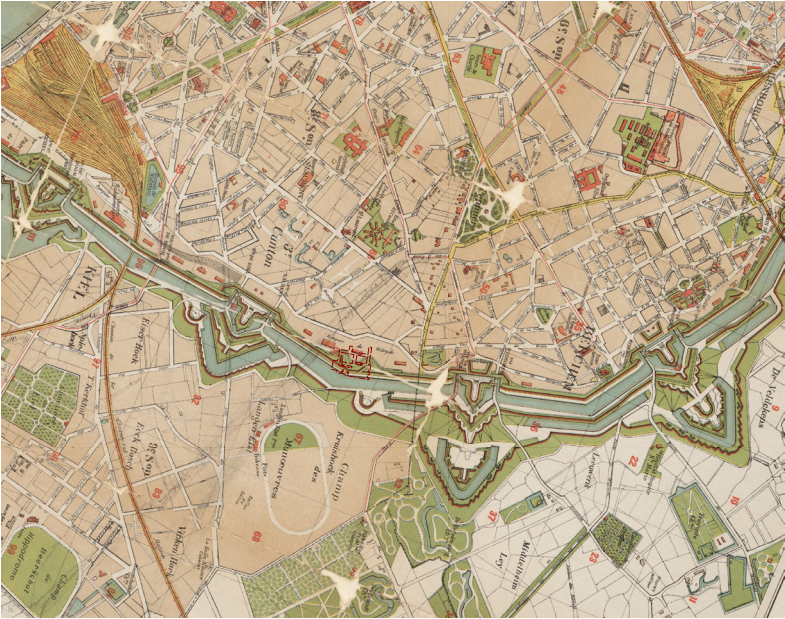
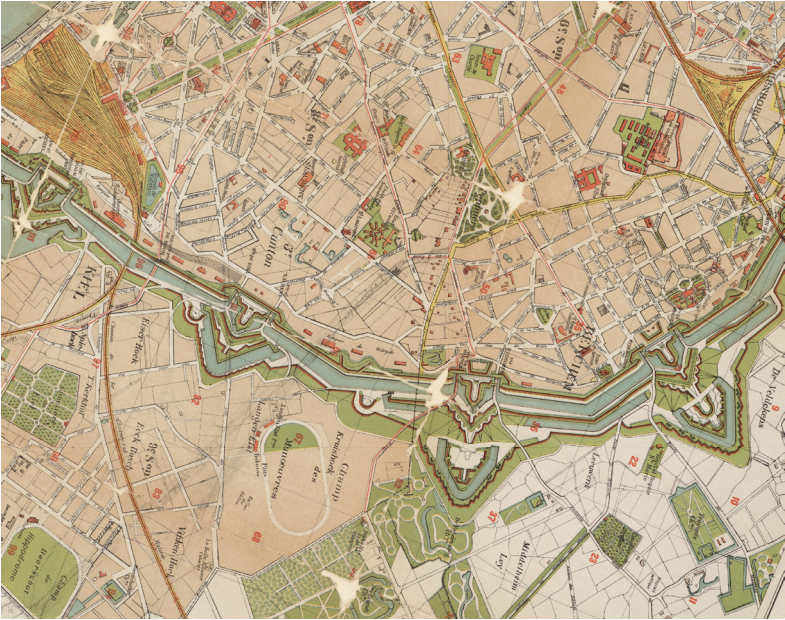
200. 1897 map of antwerp, 'Geopunt'. n.d. Geopunt.be. Accessed December 2024. <https://www.geopunt.be/>.
201. 1897 map of antwerp, 'Geopunt'. n.d. Geopunt.be. Accessed December 2024. <https://www.geopunt.be/>.

Analysis of the DeSingel area during the years

1831



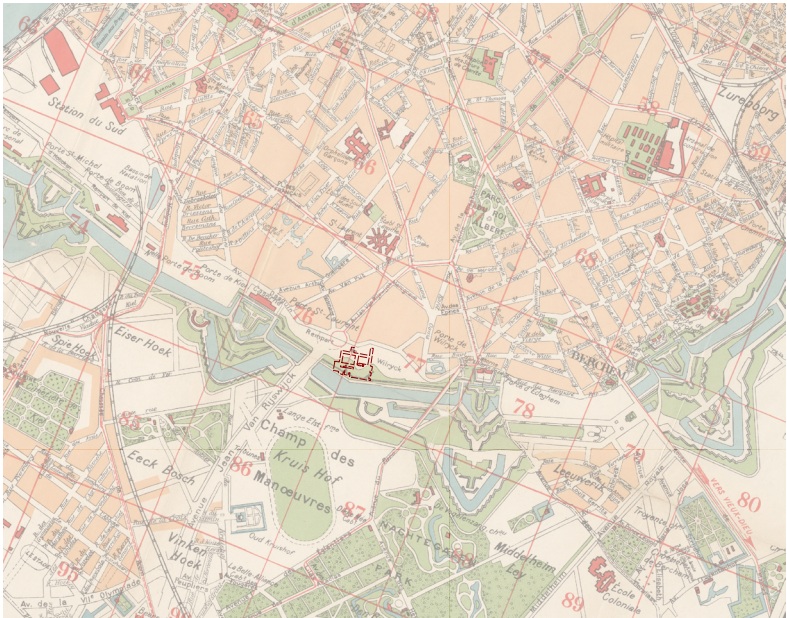
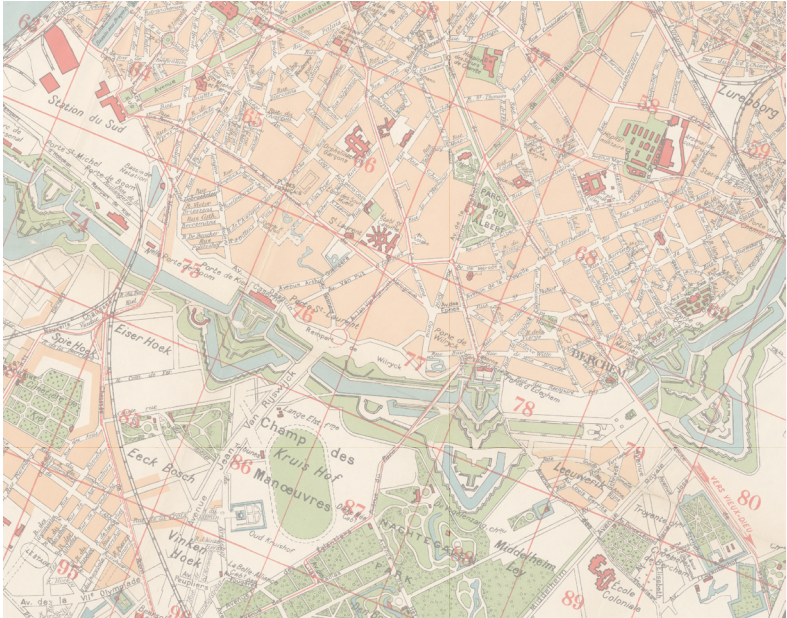
1897



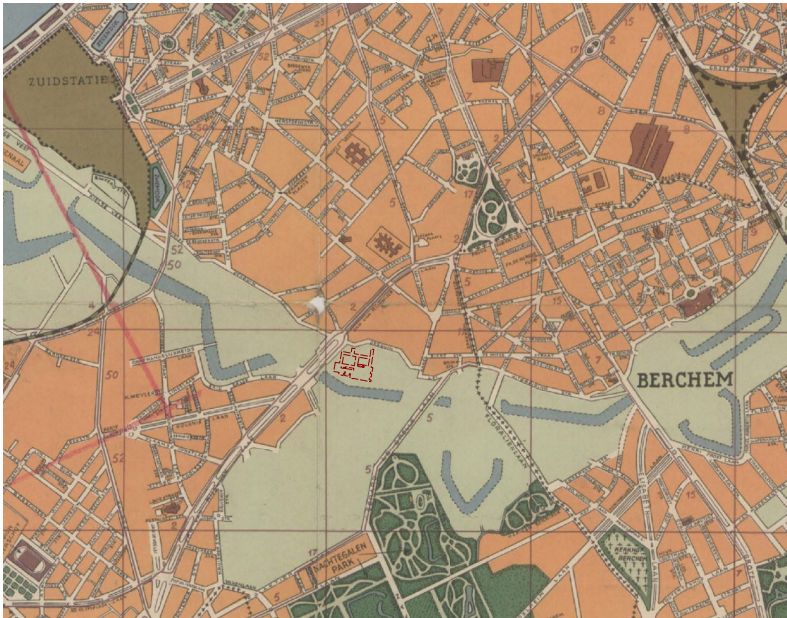
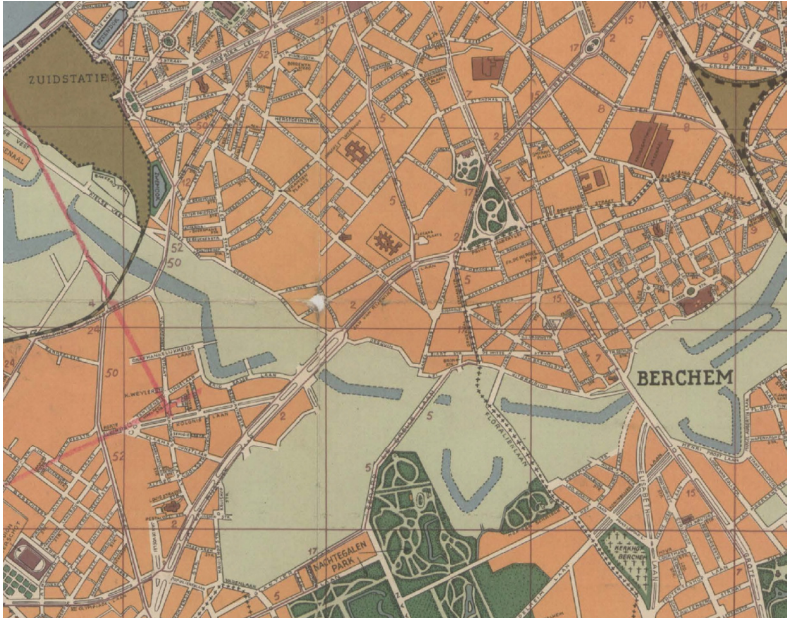
Analysis of the DeSingel area during the years

Analysis of the DeSingel area during the years

1922



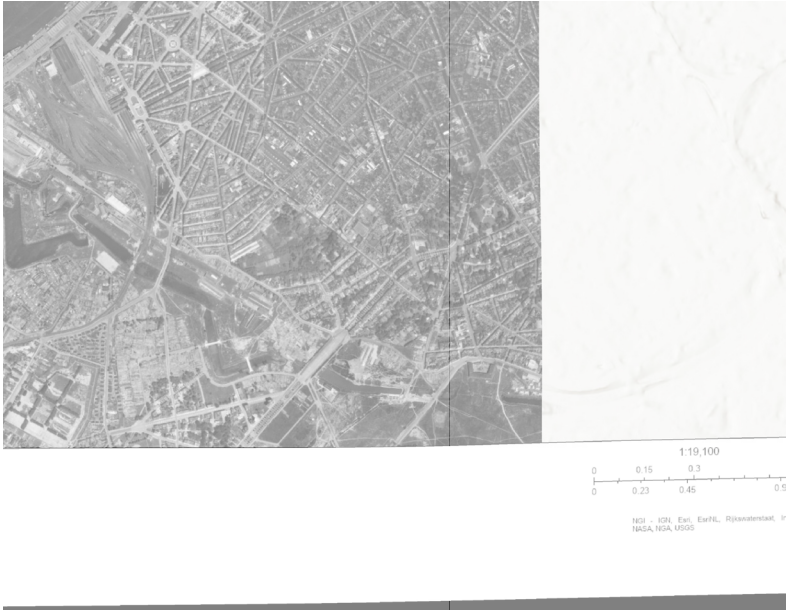
1950



Analysis of the DeSingel area during the years

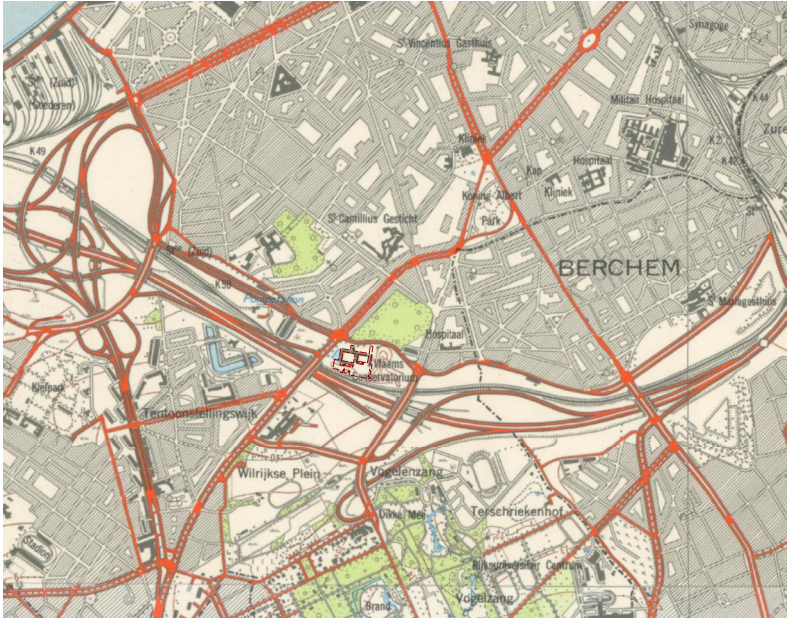
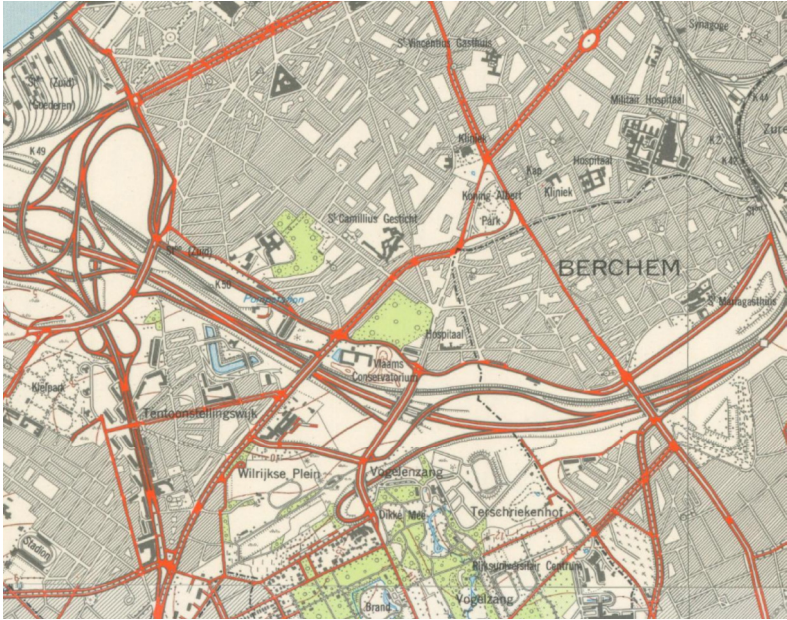
206. 1947-54 map of antwerp, 'Geopunt'. n.d. Geopunt.be. Accessed December 2024. <https://www.geopunt.be/>.
207. 1947-54 map of antwerp, 'Geopunt'. n.d. Geopunt.be. Accessed December 2024. <https://www.geopunt.be/>.

1947-54



208. 1981 map of antwerp, 'Geopunt'. n.d. Geopunt.be. Accessed December 2024. <https://www.geopunt.be/>.
209. 1981 map of antwerp, 'Geopunt'. n.d. Geopunt.be. Accessed December 2024. <https://www.geopunt.be/>.

1981



In the book *Insedirsi e Costruire* Guarrera discusses the inside-outside relationship in the context of the house. He emphasizes in particular how the archetype of the house underlines element of the wall as one of the main features. Therefore, the wall has become the net division between the outside (the forest) and the inside (the house). This concept has been lost over time therefore trying to reconstruct a relationship between inside and outside. Thus with the landscape. In particular Guarrera quotes Ponti:

“... una volta il muro portava e l'onore del muro era la sua grossezza, che ne dimostrava la capacità portante [...] poi il cemento armato si disimpegnò dal muro e divenne struttura, e noi forgiammo quelle nude strutture che salirono sole fino al tetto senza muri: costruttivamente i muri non portavano più, scomparvero come elementi costruttivi”

This intervention highlights how the need for solid walls is no longer required, obviously the structural part helps to develop a relationship between exterior and interior that changes over time.

However, this concept must be contextualized in the place where the building is located. For example, the house in an urban context generally does not open onto the street, but tries to become an introverted place with solid walls on the street with few openings and an access on the street.

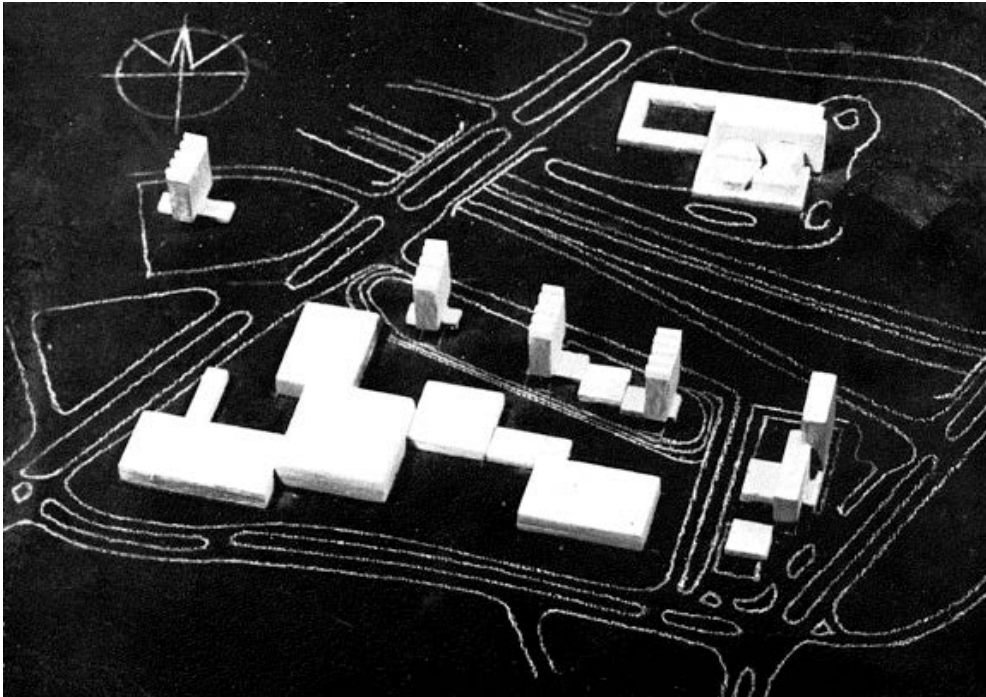
This echoes back to what used to happen with the *Roman domuses*, partially faceless places from the outside that open completely to the inside. This creates a level of privacy and an egg interpretation of the city in which there is in a precise way of framing the outside, the ridge line of the roof, the building next door that towers above the height of the house etc..

This concept can relate a lot to monasteries. Where everything is defined by perimeter elements that define the boundary and open up to them through internal openings, cloisters, where life is developed for the most part.

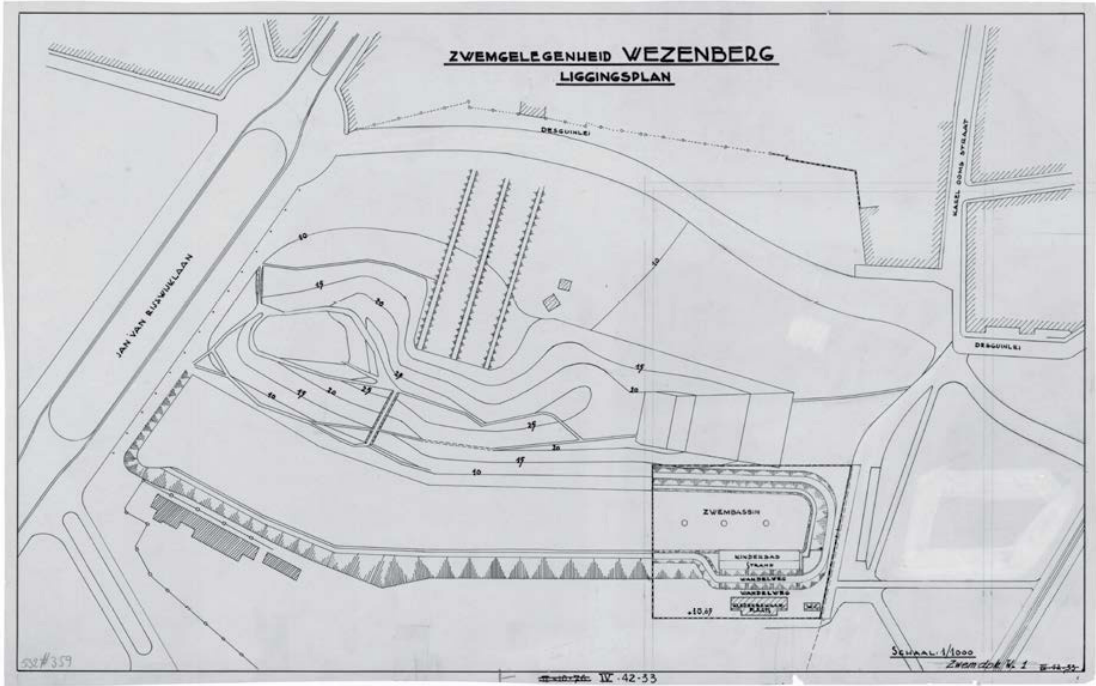




213. Léon Stynen, Wezenberg plan, 1950's



214. Felixarchief, Swimming pool, 1950
215. Areal view, 1971



Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, NL, Jo Coenen

Described as a “compact urban ensemble,” Het Nieuwe Instituut is also the home of the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAi). Built in 1993, the structure embodies the institute’s dedication to architecture, design and digital culture. Situated at the corner of Museumpark, it contributes meaningfully to the formation of the public ground.

Among the most remarkable aspects is the banana shape archive, which forms a wall on the southern side of Rochussenstraat. This is the element that gives the division between public space and the Rotterdam traffic, works as a buffer zone between the street and the park. What makes this barrier particularly intriguing is how its use of storage space for the archives — a space that doesn’t require, or use, natural light — configures the public space. This element unifies the building’s various components, resulting in a cohesive and coherent façade on the street-facing side.

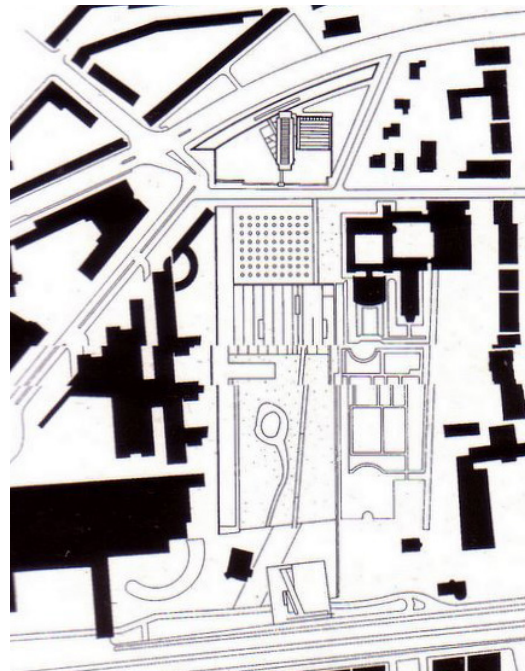
When comparing Het Nieuwe Instituut to the DeSingel, there are some common elements that emerges.

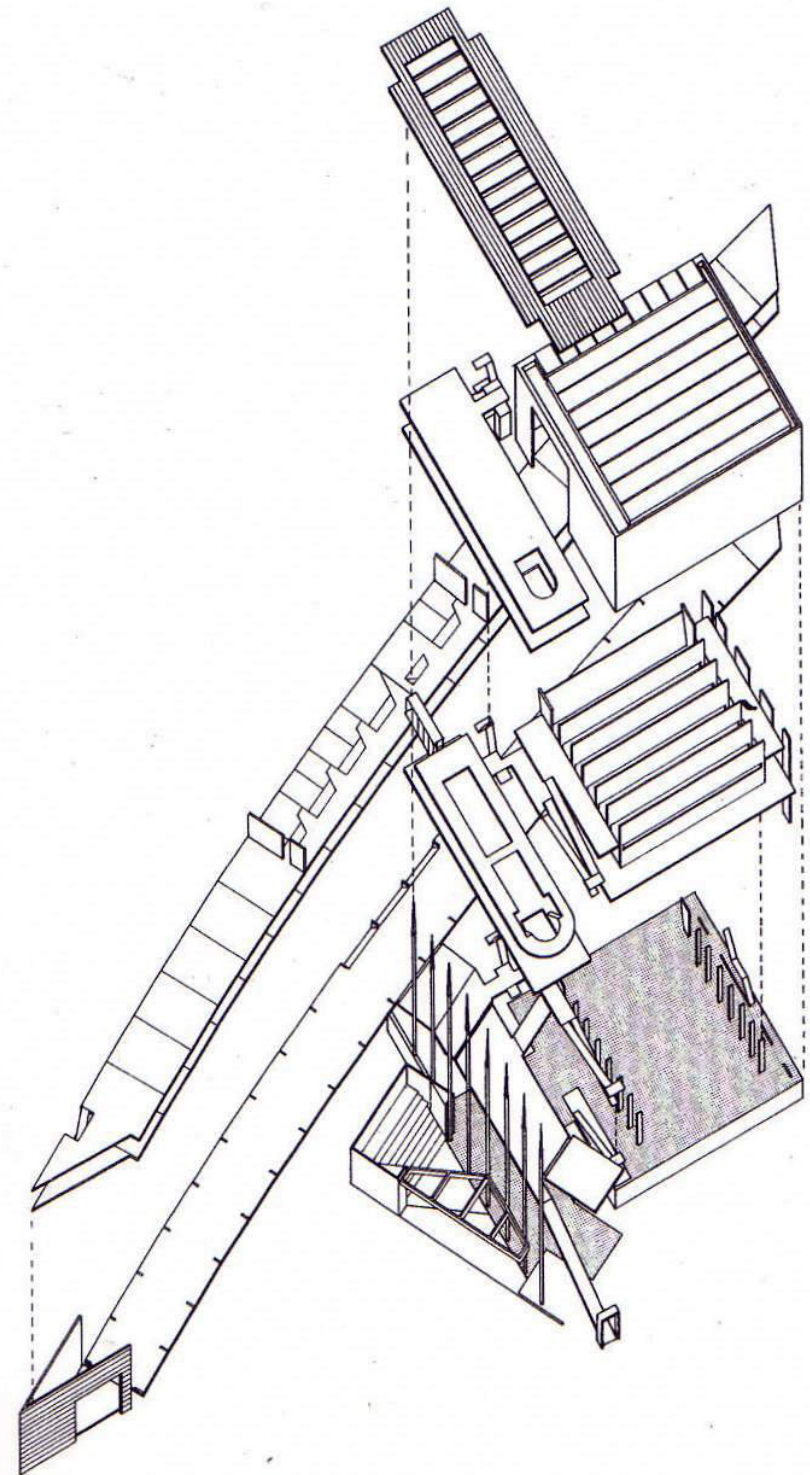
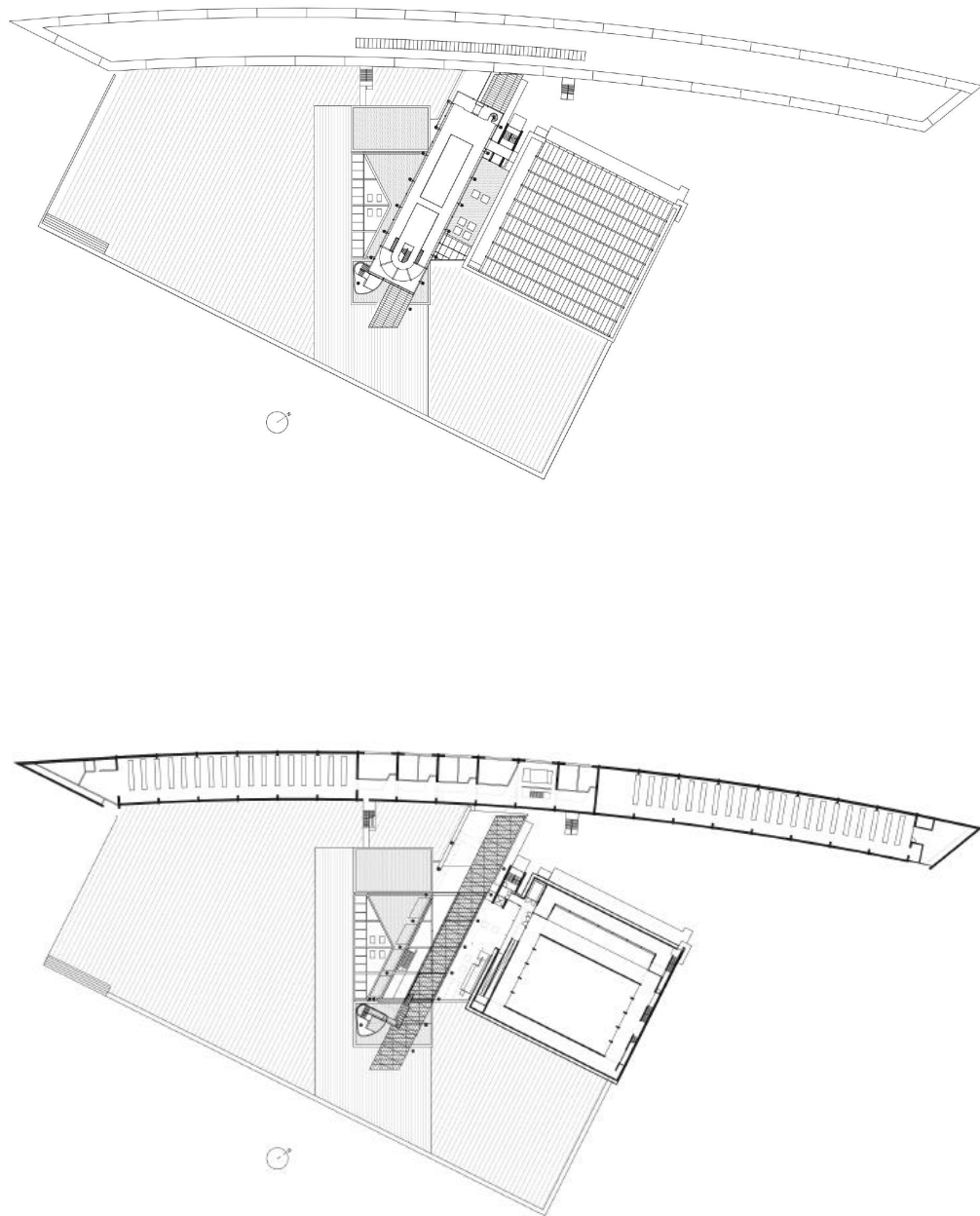
Both buildings isolate themselves from the outside, creating a barrier between their respective cultures and the surrounding city. As for DeSingel, its placement on the edge of the city was once well situated to be reachable both from the conservatoire students living in Antwerp and the ones living outside the city. Over the years, though, traffic and urban development have made access to the building more difficult. This has added another layer of estrangement, further cloistering the cultural center.

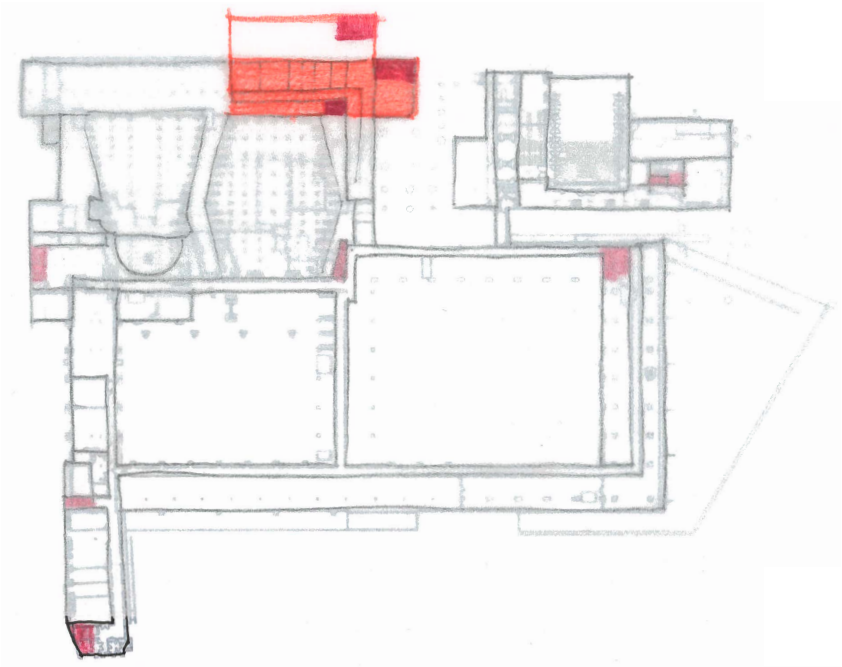
Interesting to see is even how from a conservatoire the building has been introduced with other art related elements to it: Music, Dance, Theater and partially Architecture. Transforming it into an urban scale building. However, now every art has its identity in the building except for architecture, that partially uses some common spaces and have some offices there.

Therefore, my aim is to try to restore the initial intention for the back of the building by giving to Architecture its identity in the DeSingel, that could help iden-

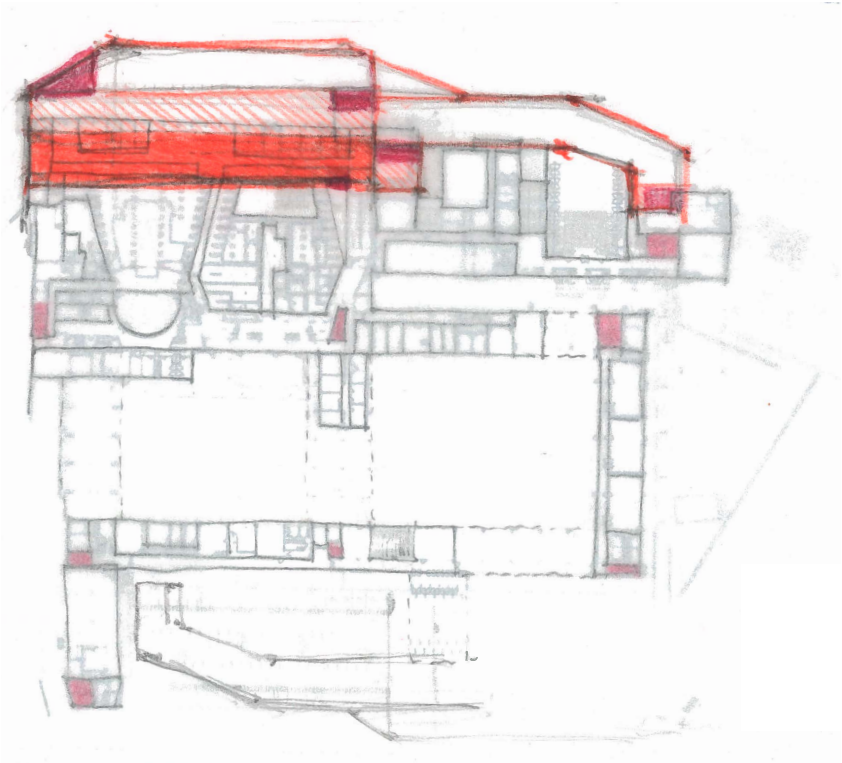
tifying the building as one element from the highway and not a fragmentation of different interventions that creates multiple readable volumes. Therefore, my focus is to try to restore the initial intention for the back of the building by giving the architecture its identity in the DeSingel, which could help identify the building as a single element from the highway and not a fragmentation of different interventions creating multiple legible volumes. Thus, identifying the building as a unified cultural center, and not a collection of several centers next to each other.



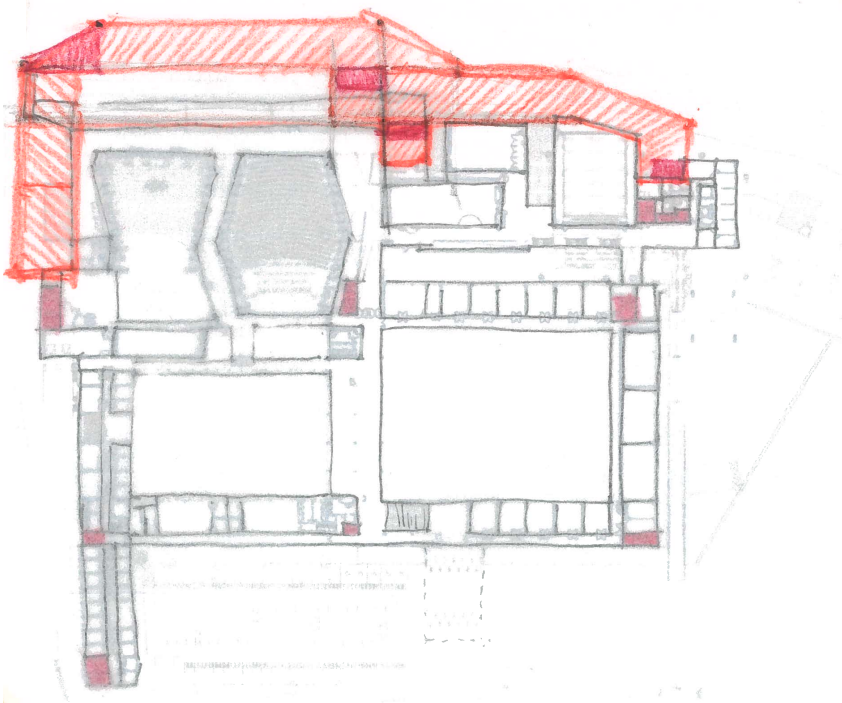




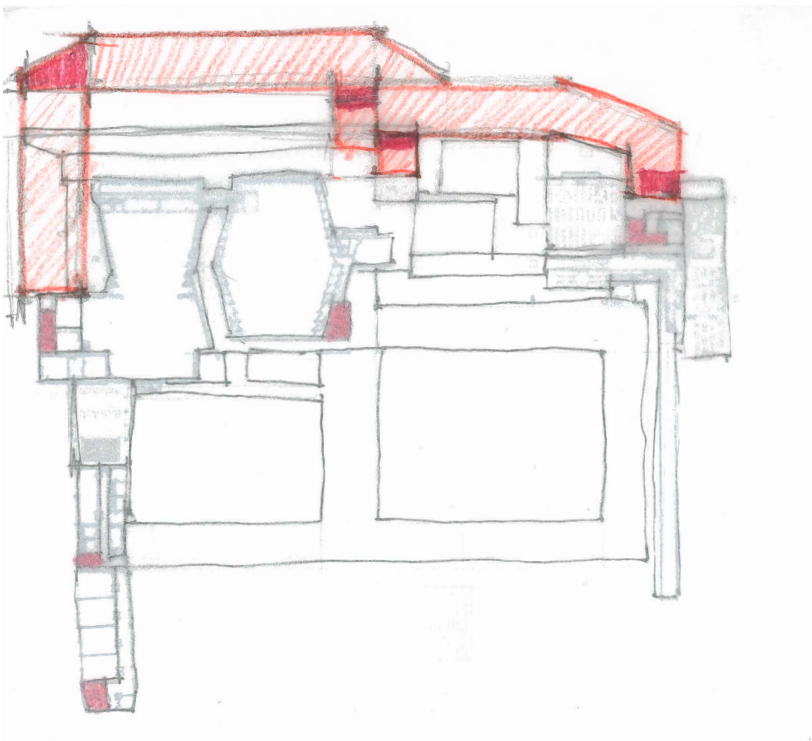
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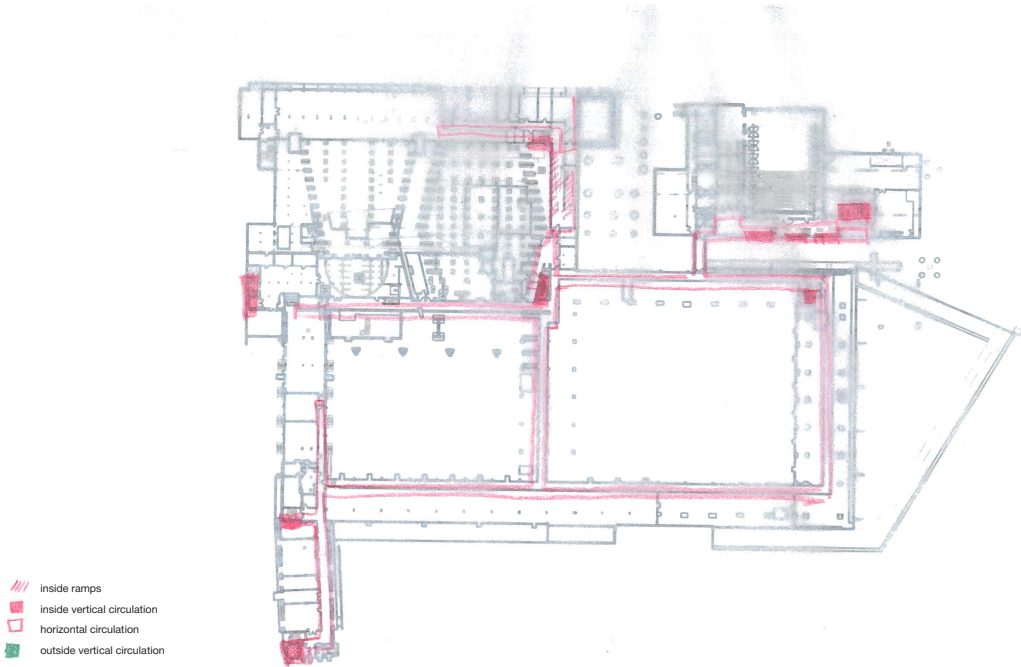
Level 0



Level 1

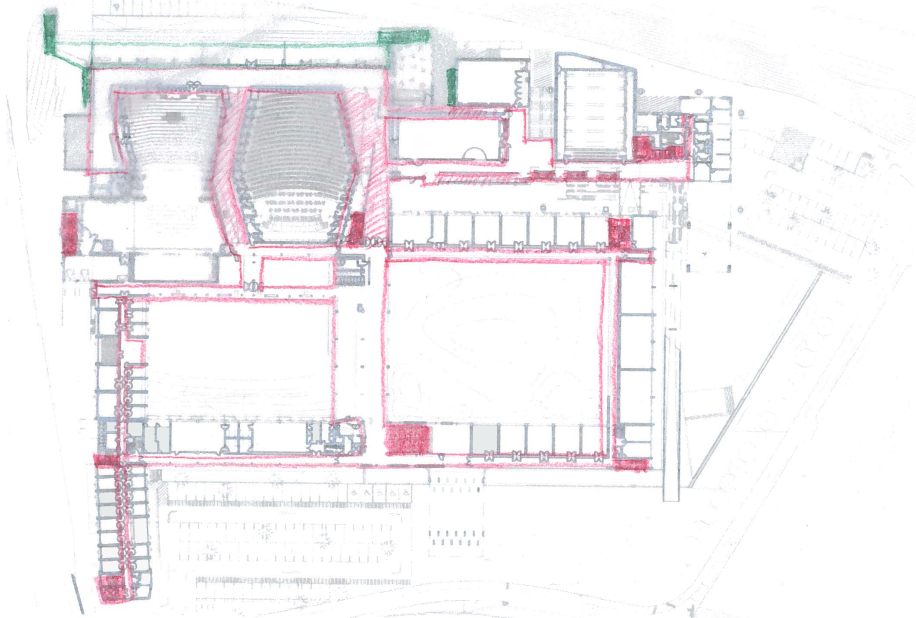


Level 2

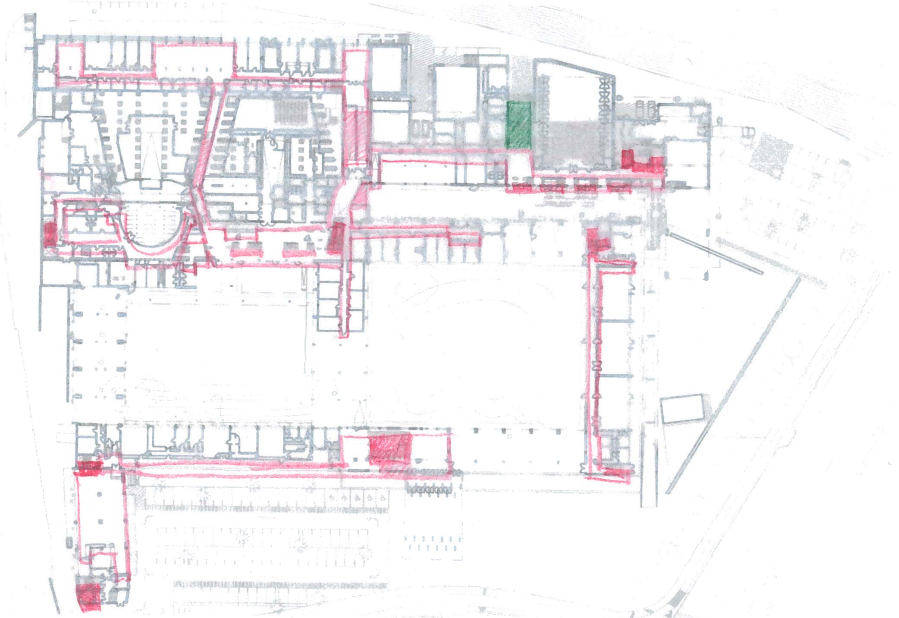


Level -1

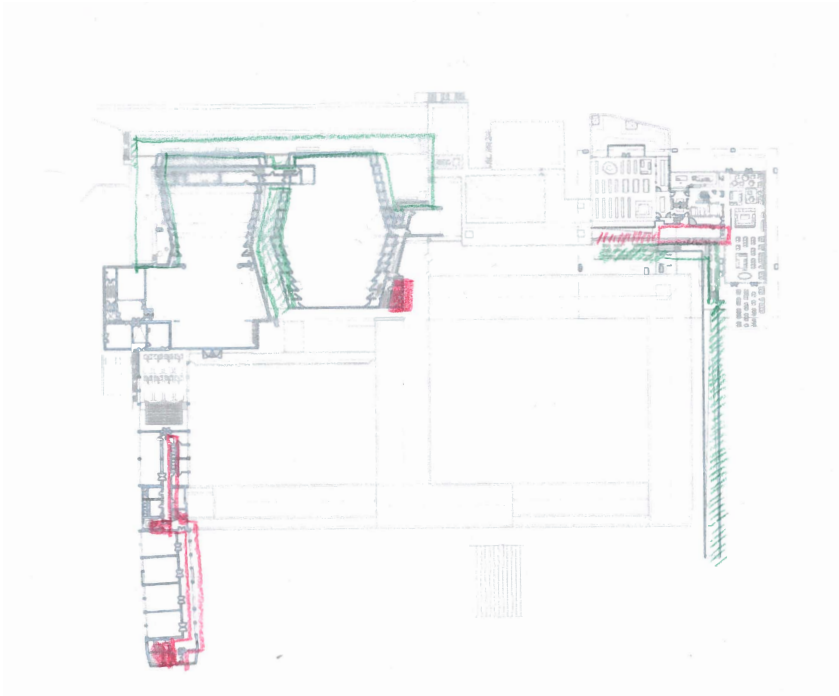
- inside ramps
- inside vertical circulation
- horizontal circulation
- outside vertical circulation



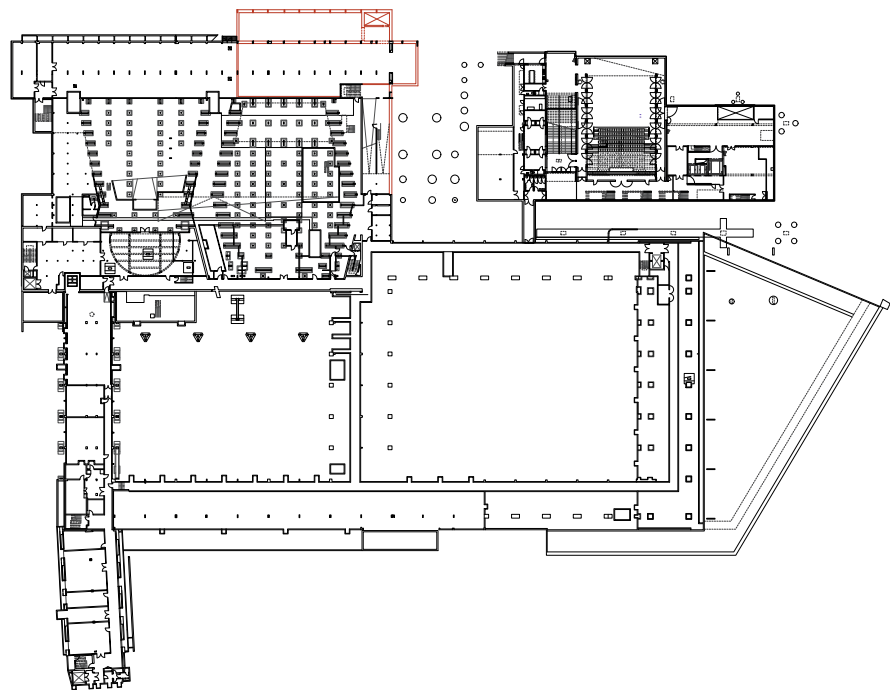
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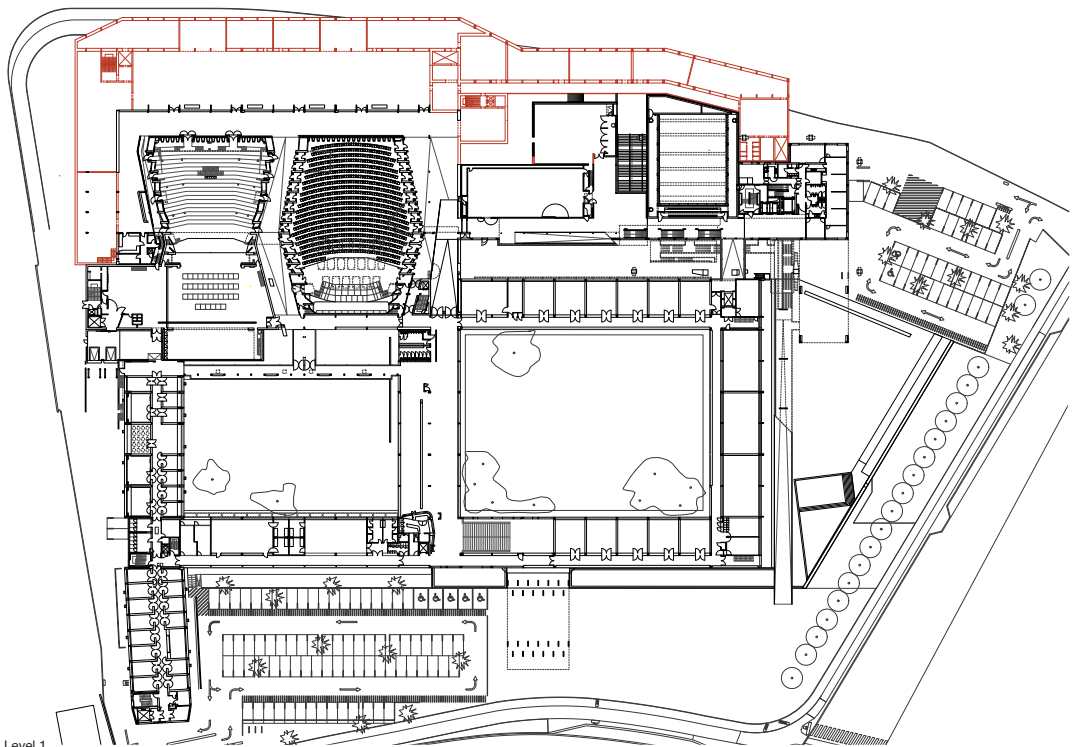
Level 0



Level 2

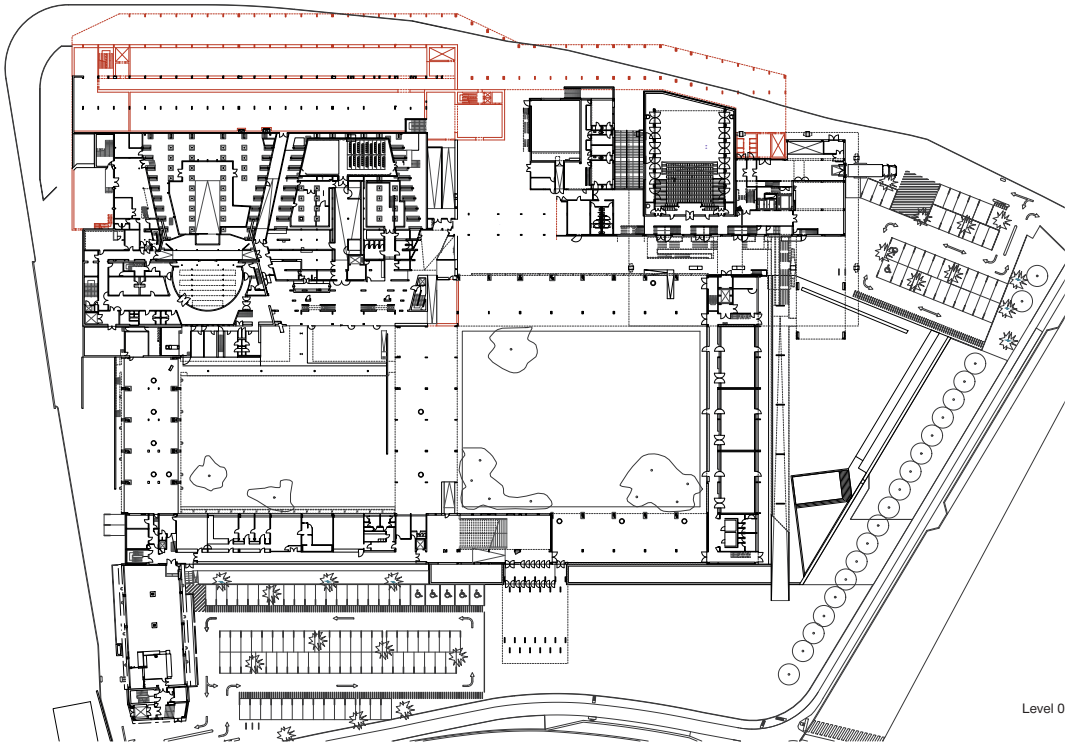


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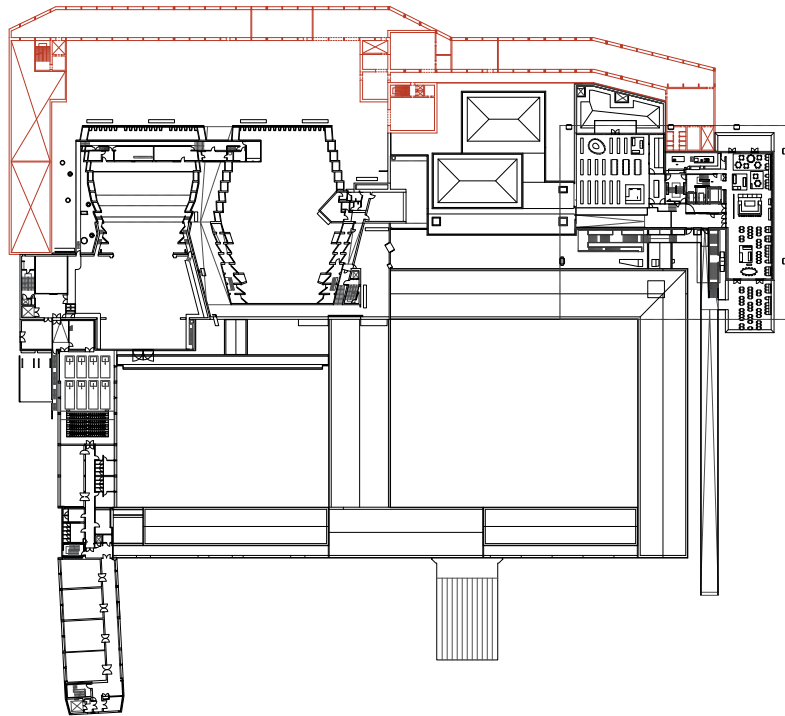


Level 1

Addition

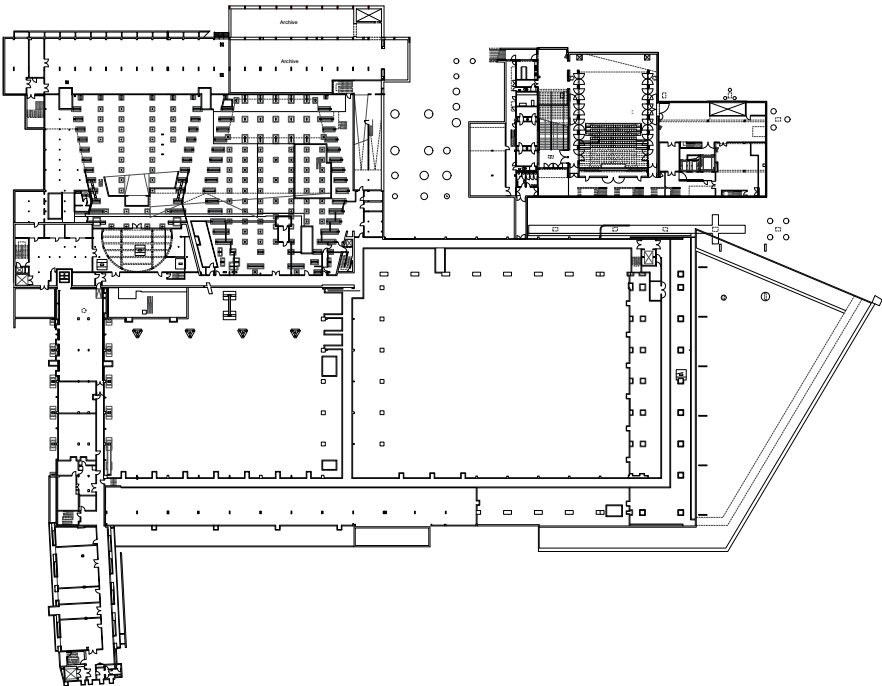


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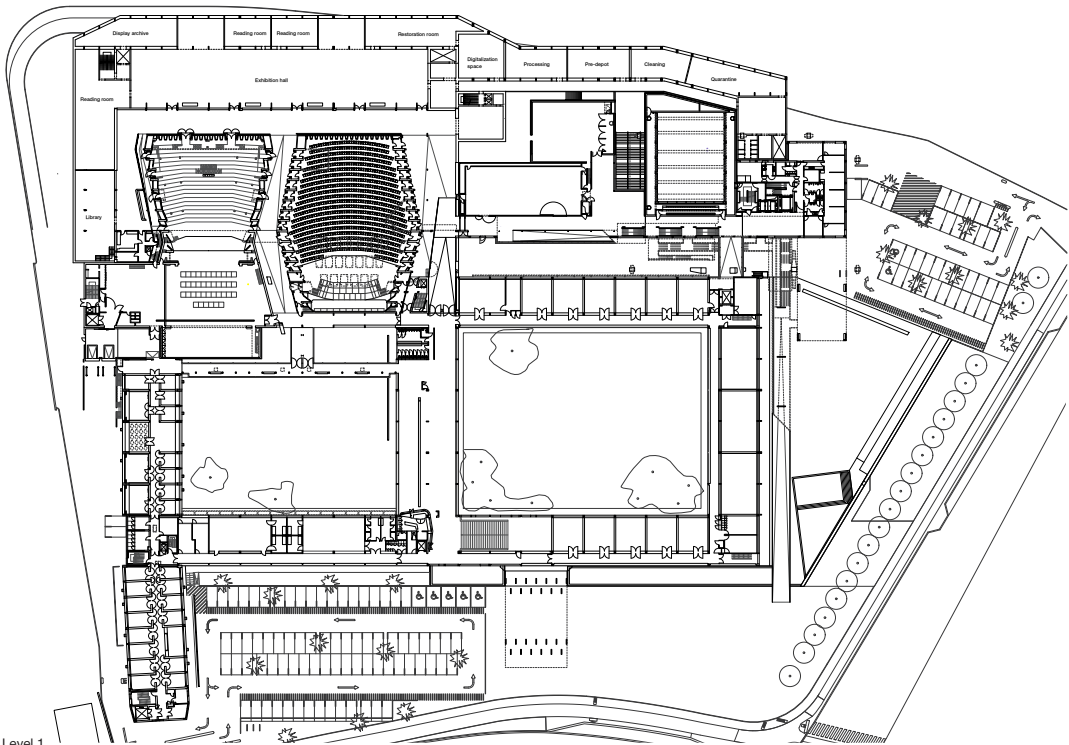


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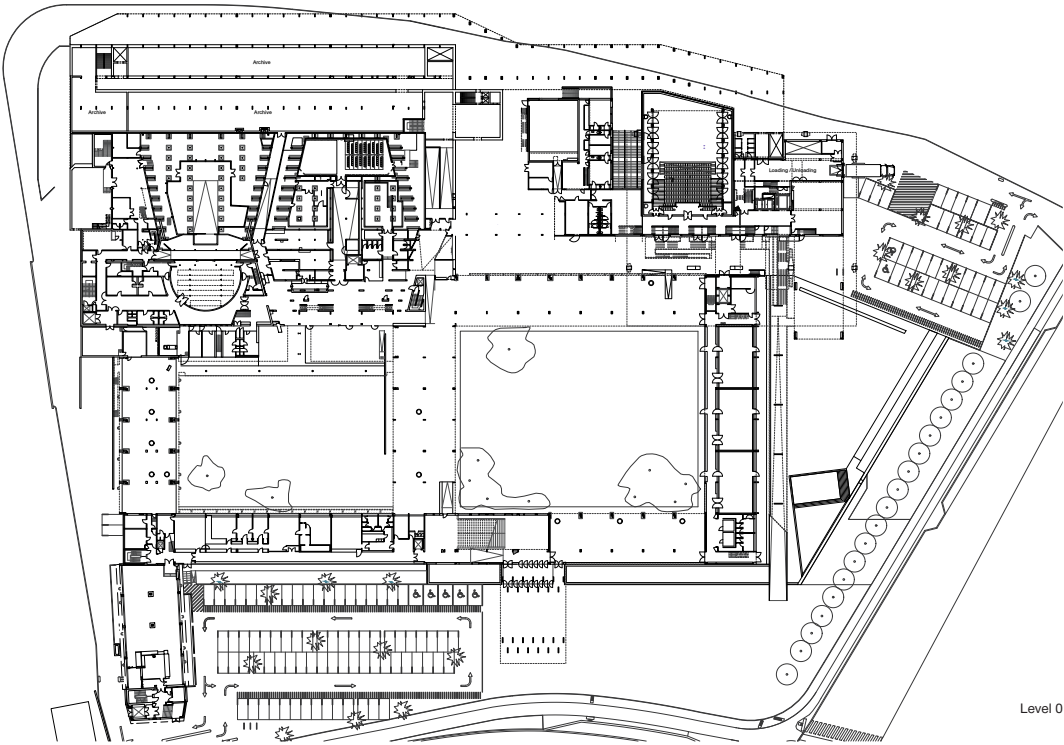
Addition



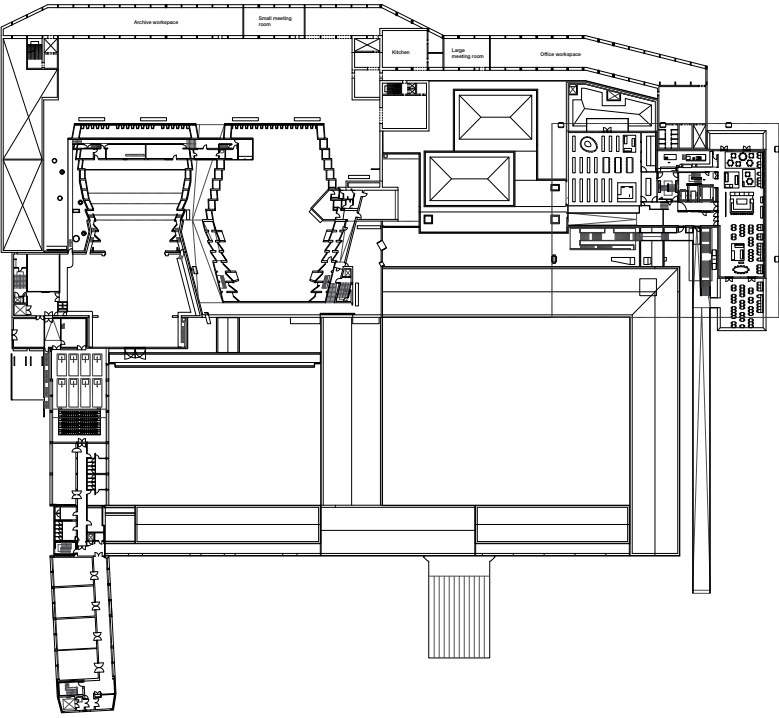
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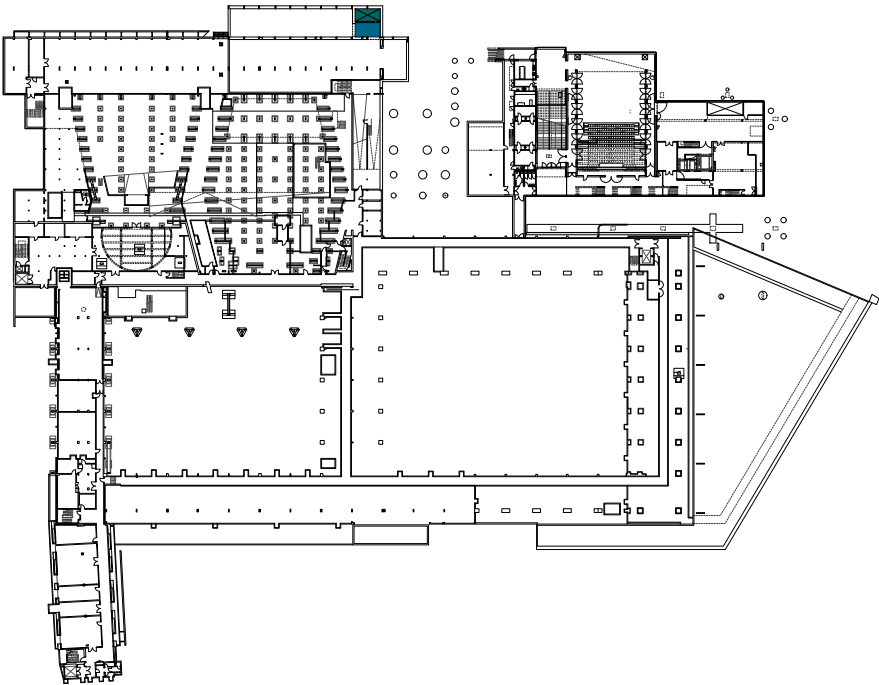
Level 1



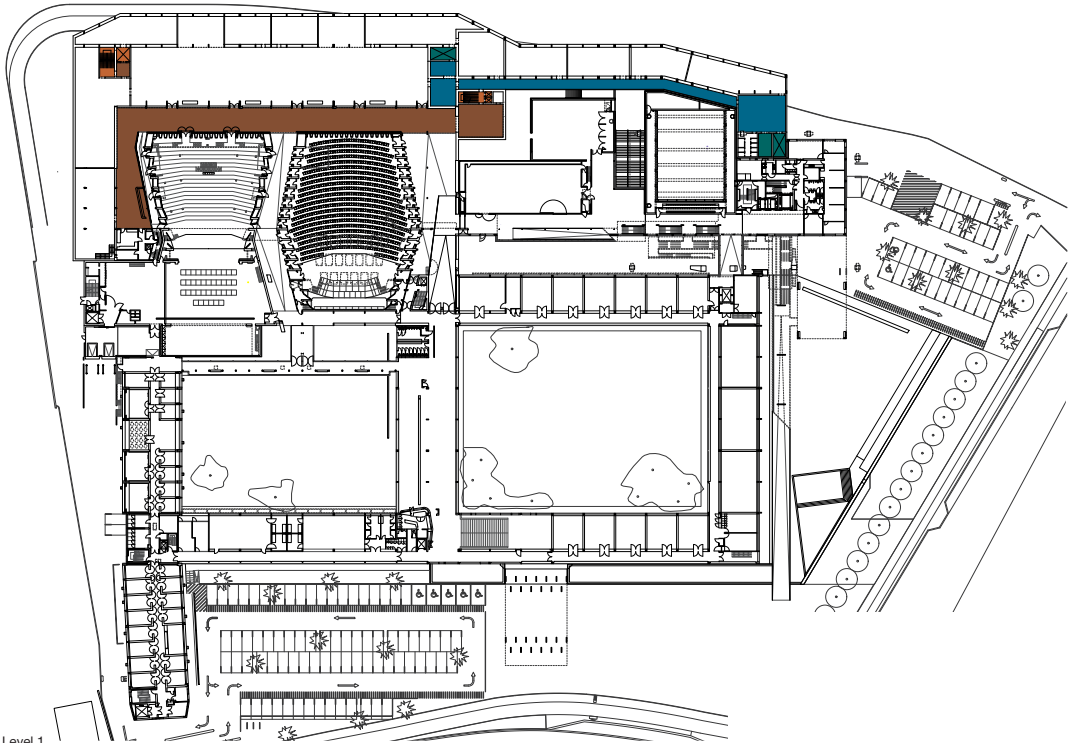
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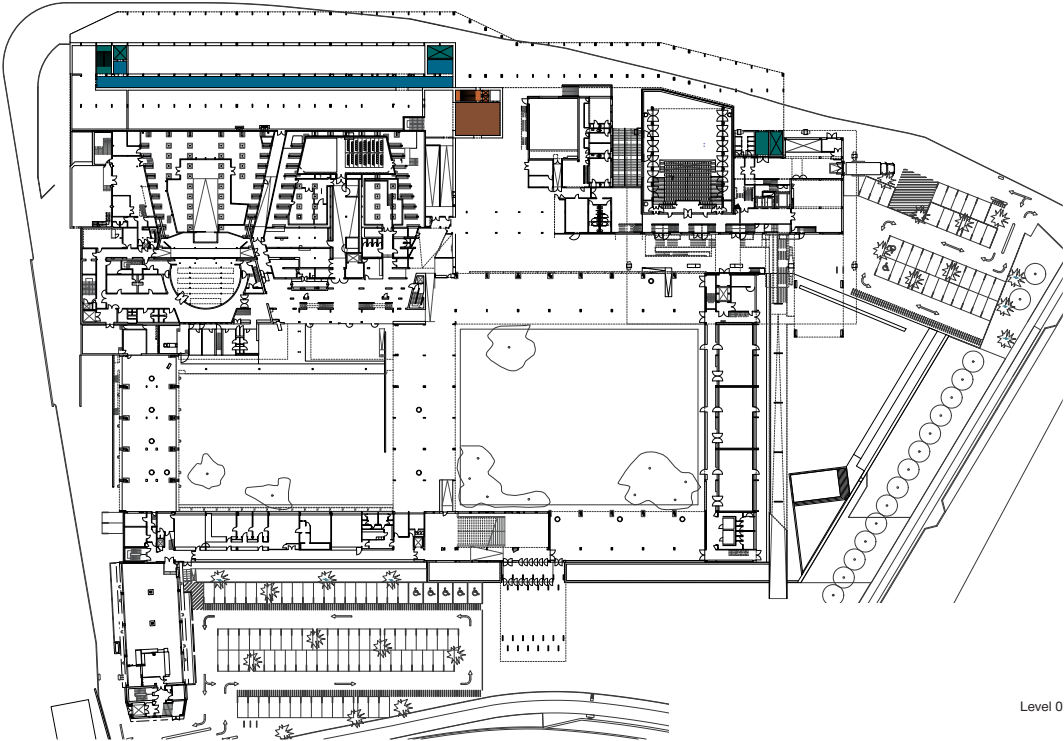
Level 2



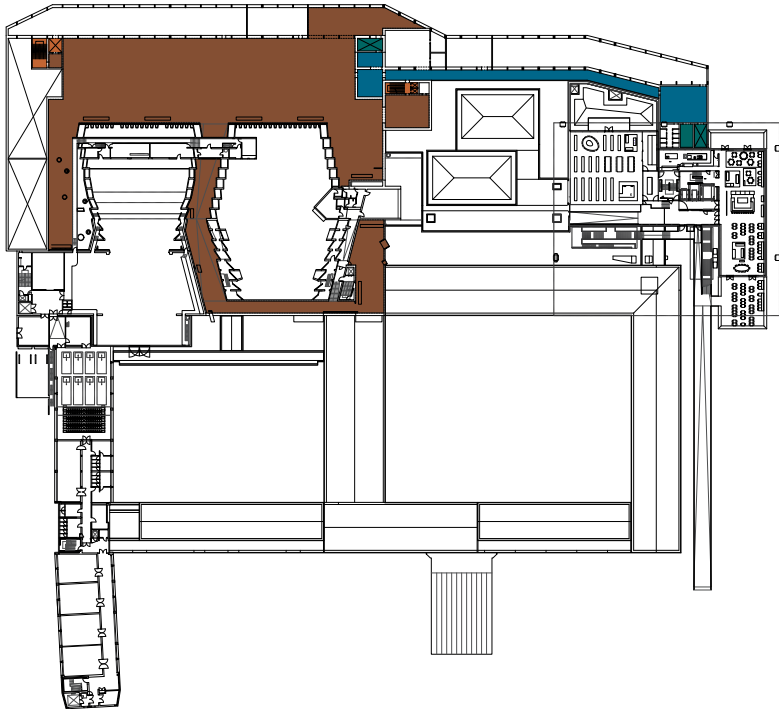
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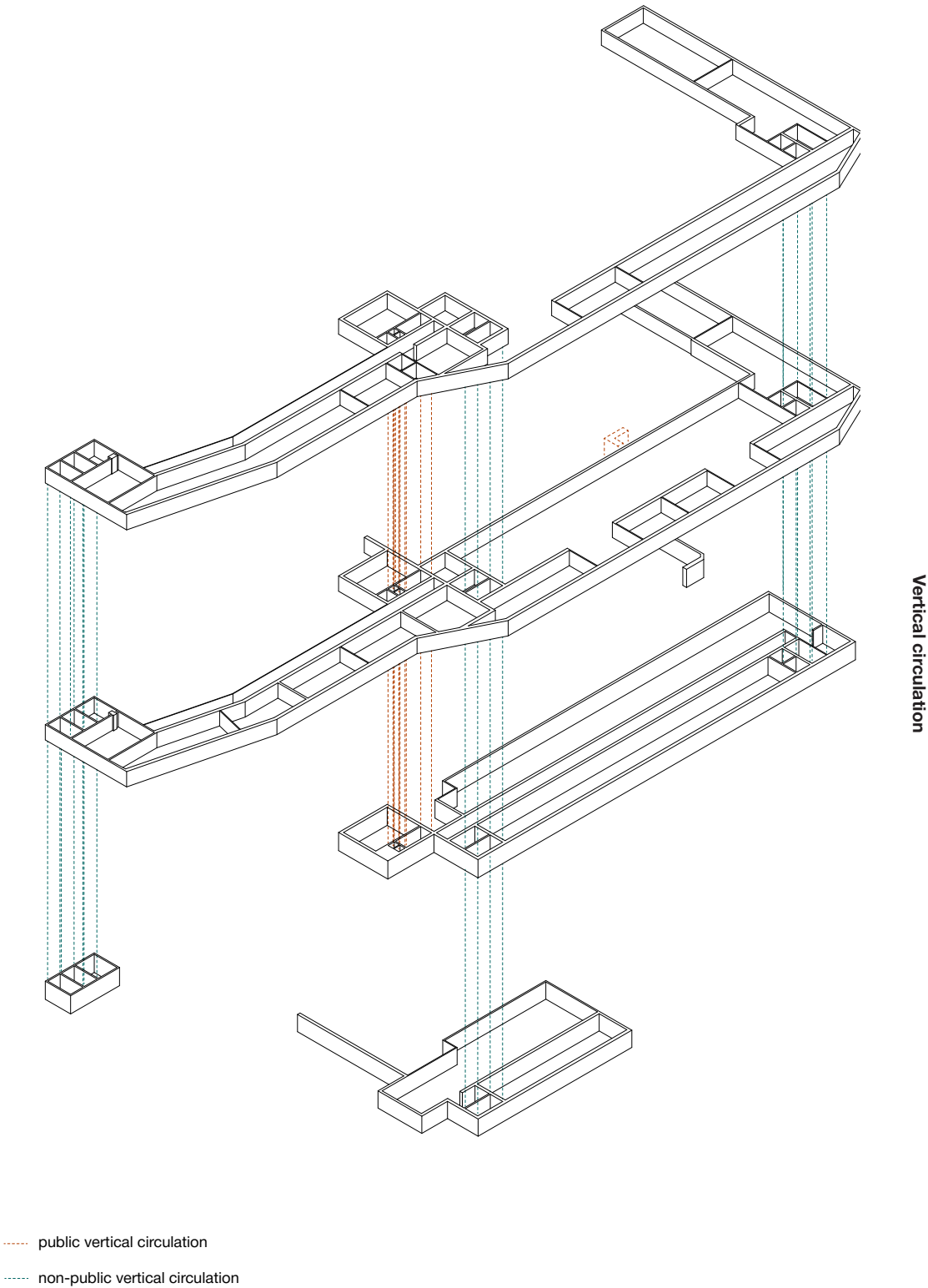
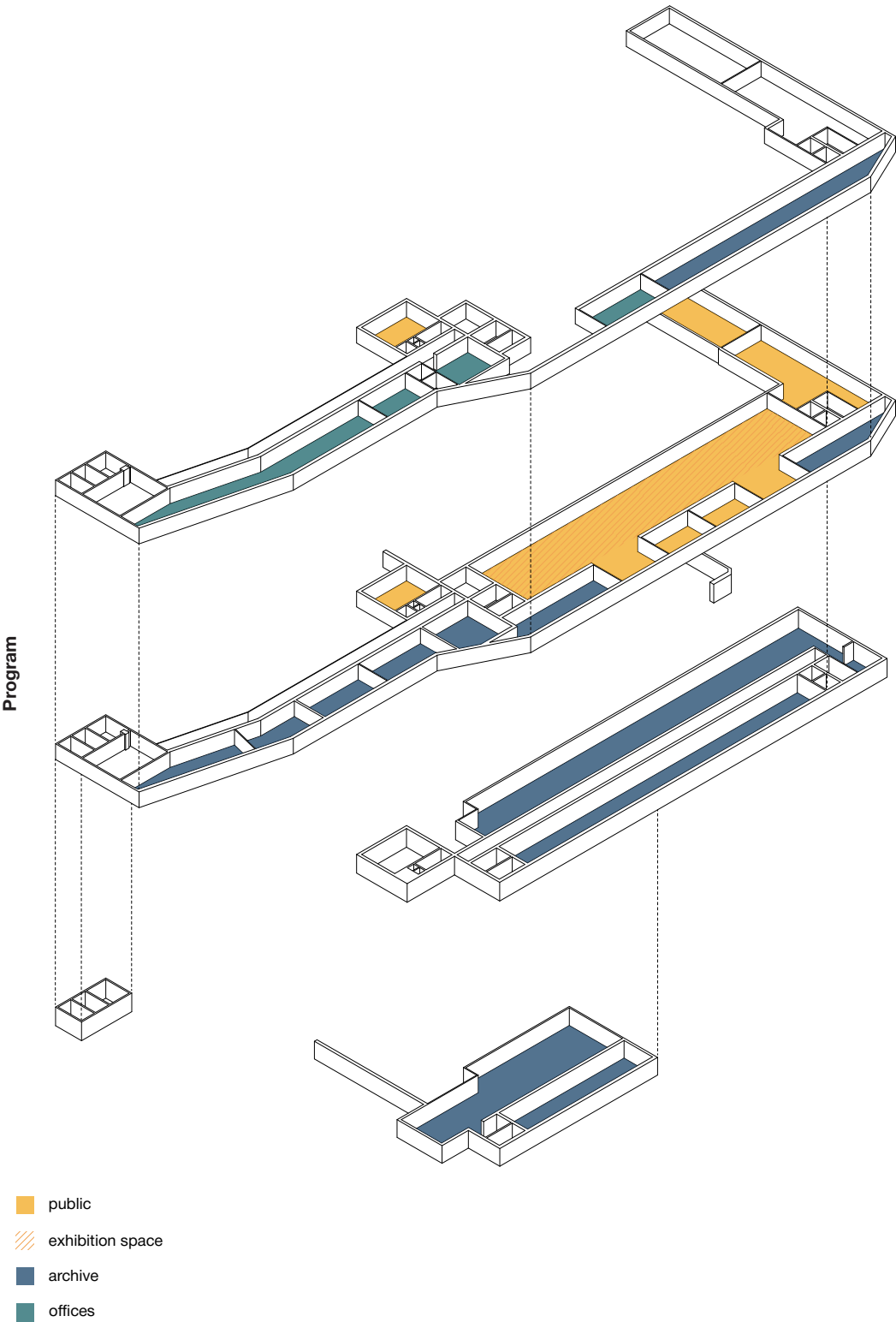
Level 1

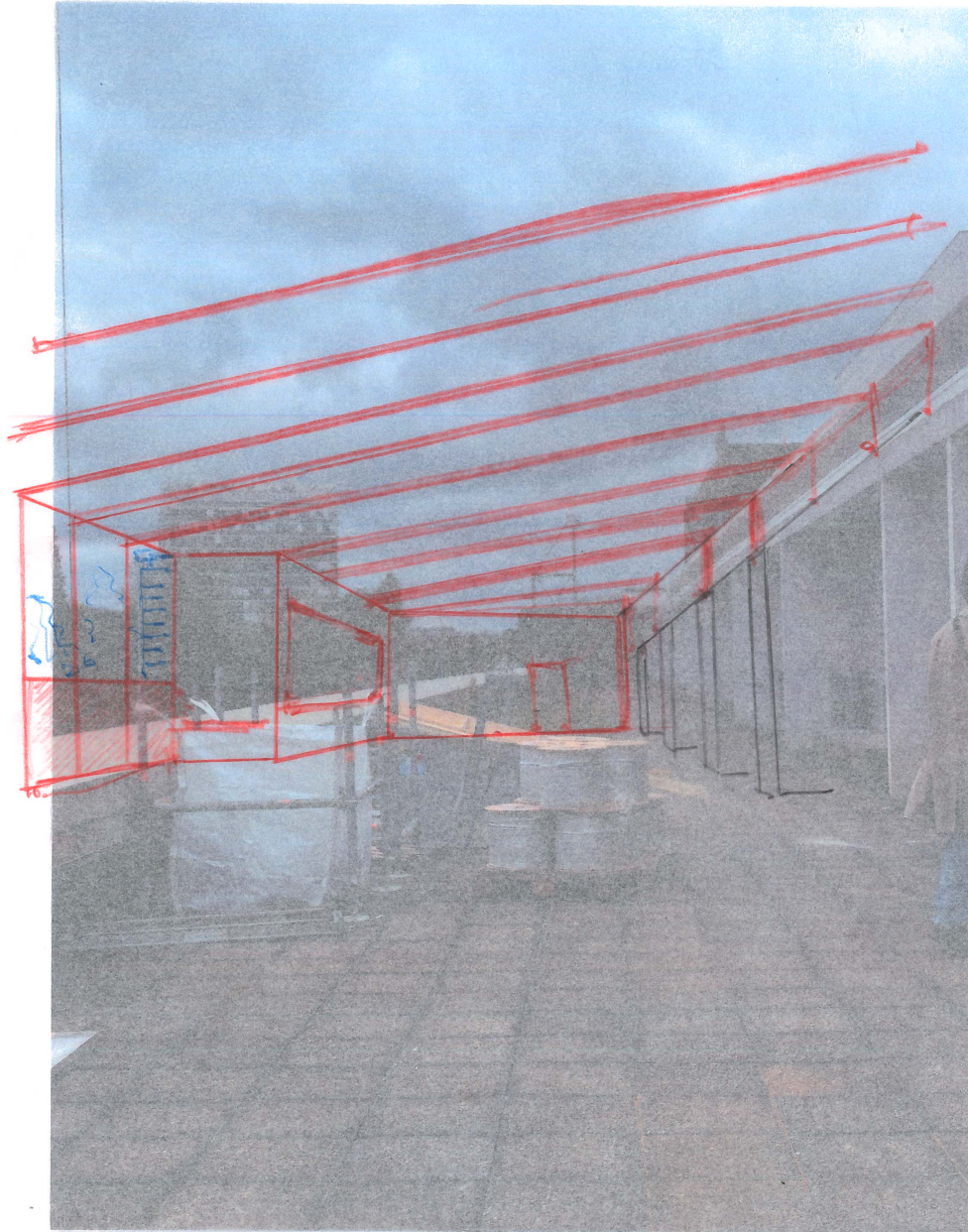


Level 0



Level 2





Feedback Pre P2:

Section south – north needed to understand the concept

It's a connecting piece along the back

Beel part could become a garden? Maybe that part is not necessary

Topics: more coherent façade to the motorway

Address the terraces of the existing building

What is the reason for this situation? The view from the terraces?

What is the view looking out from the motorway? Relation motorway – terraces? Look across and frame something in the back

The terraces become the courtyard?

Make a narrative that explains the building

Why is this the right place for building

What is the view from the building bridge

“bridge the pop”

The story needs to focus around readdressing the facade

It's a sectional project therefore should be mainly explained through sections.

The addition in back could be helpful as an acoustic noise barrier for the music/dance and theater rooms in the building.

Do you need to have people on the rooftop? It might not follow the narrative

Ribbon added to the existing

Restore Stynen initial idea of the terraces

Do not think about it only as a back

Daniel Rosbottom notes:

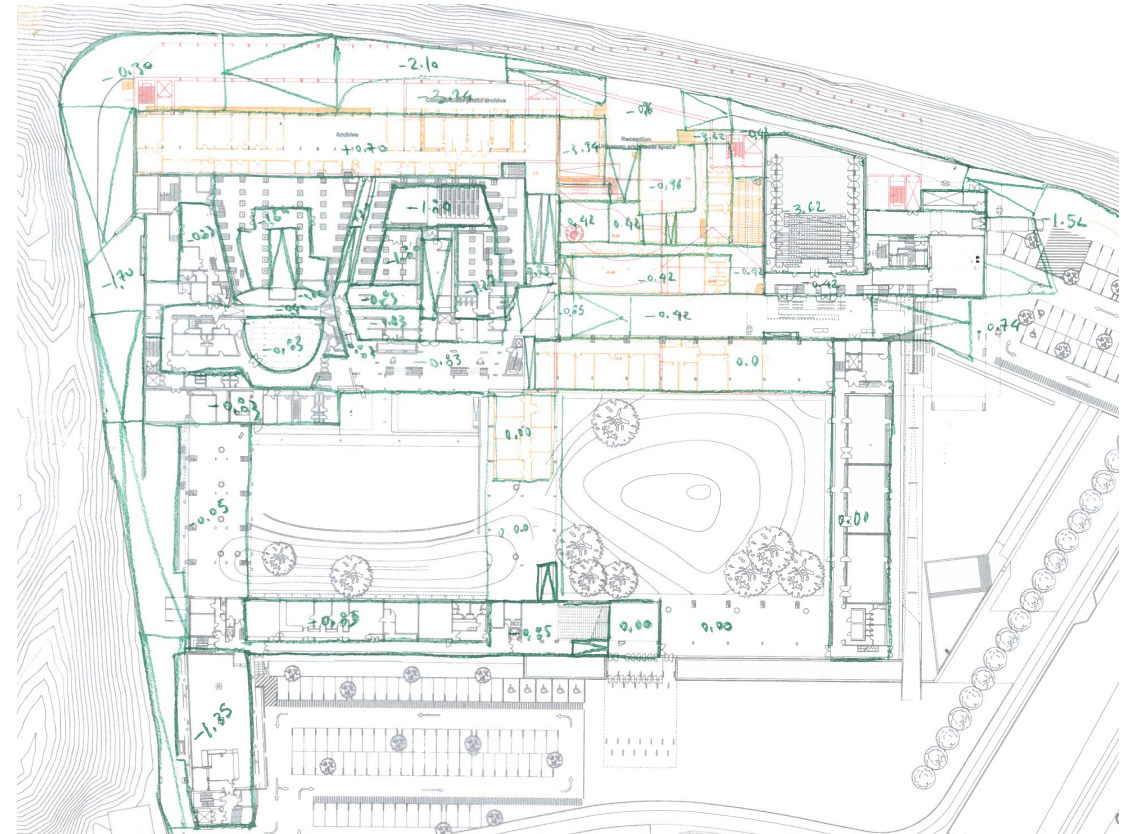
The making of a continuous edge: what does it do it do for you? It seems to do two things:

To make a new façade to the motorway

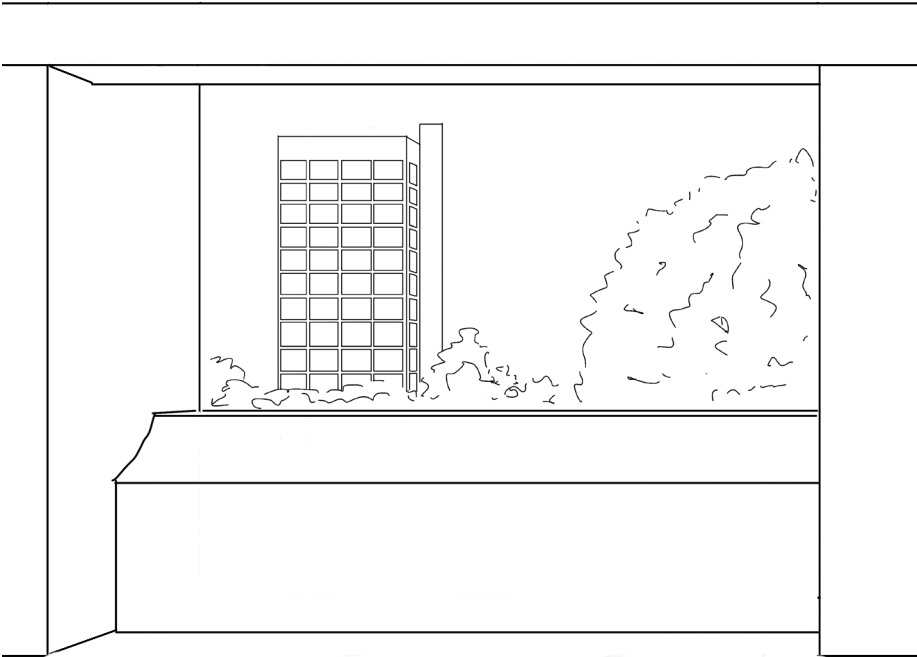
To create a new relation between the terrace and the landscape on the other side of the motorway, cutting out the road as a kind of haha

You cover the terrace in – why? Couldn't it remain one?

Making this new edge creates potentially a new 3rd garden or space between it, Beel and the original stynen building. What might be the character of this third space



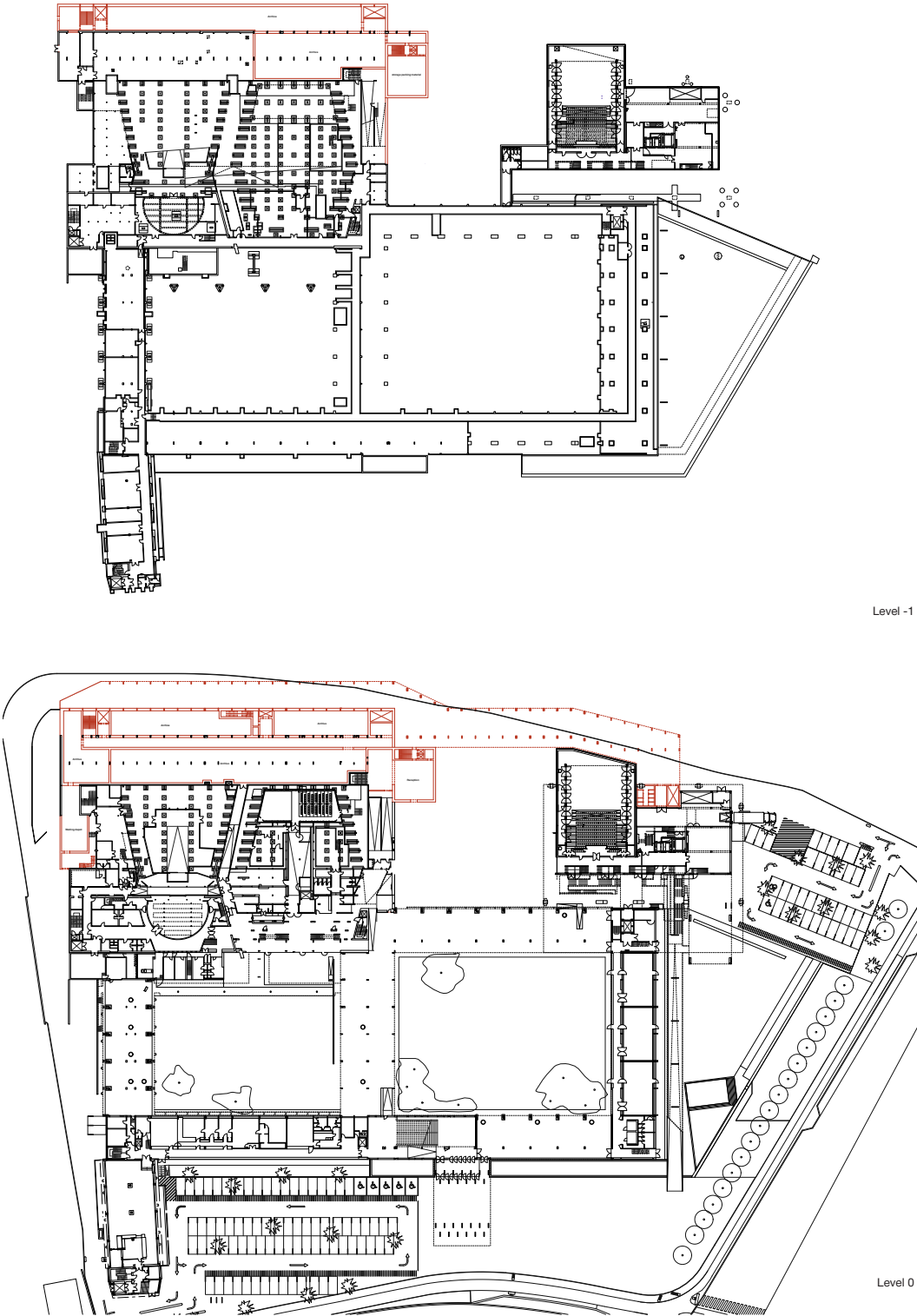
Framing the view







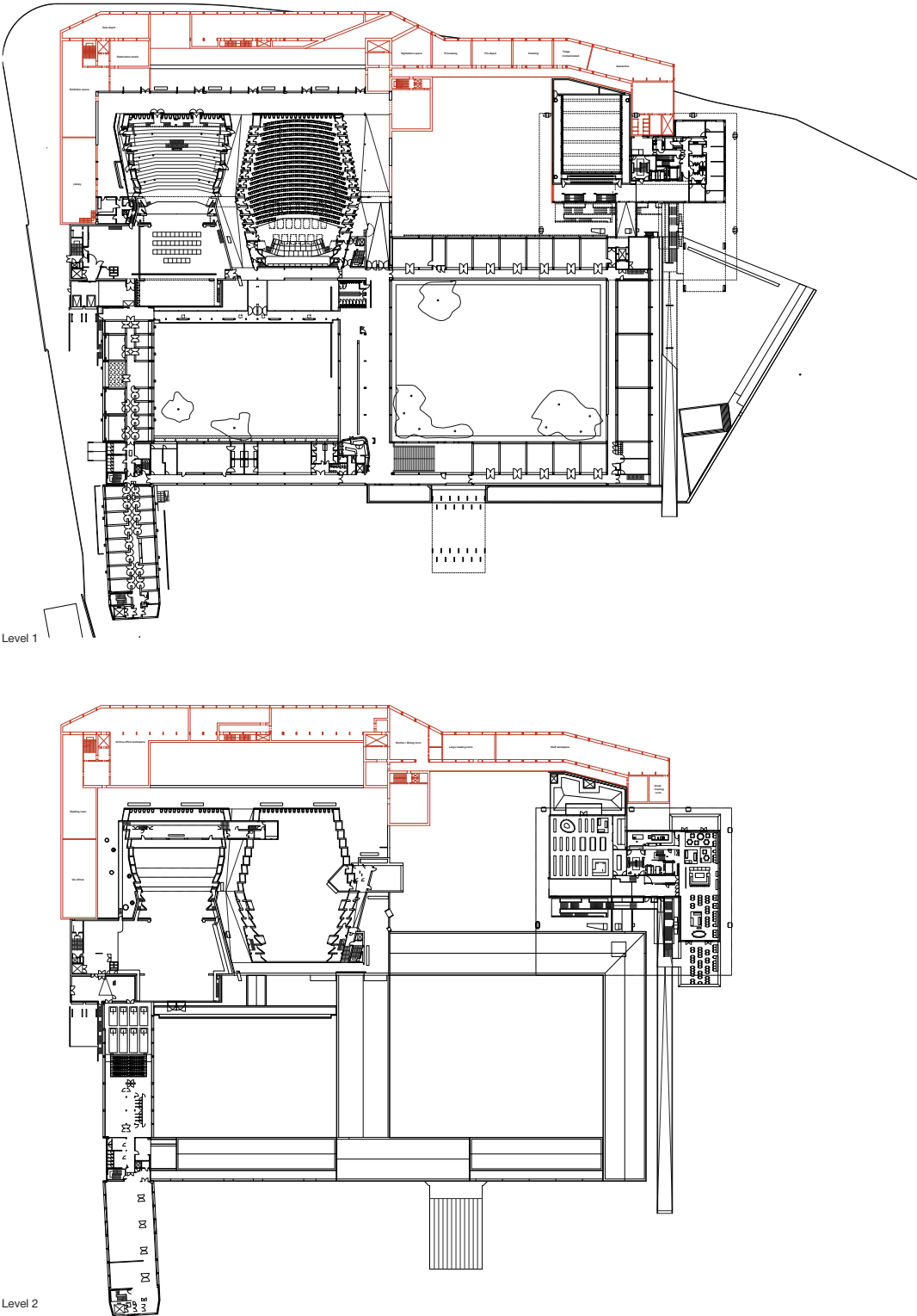
Addition



Level -1

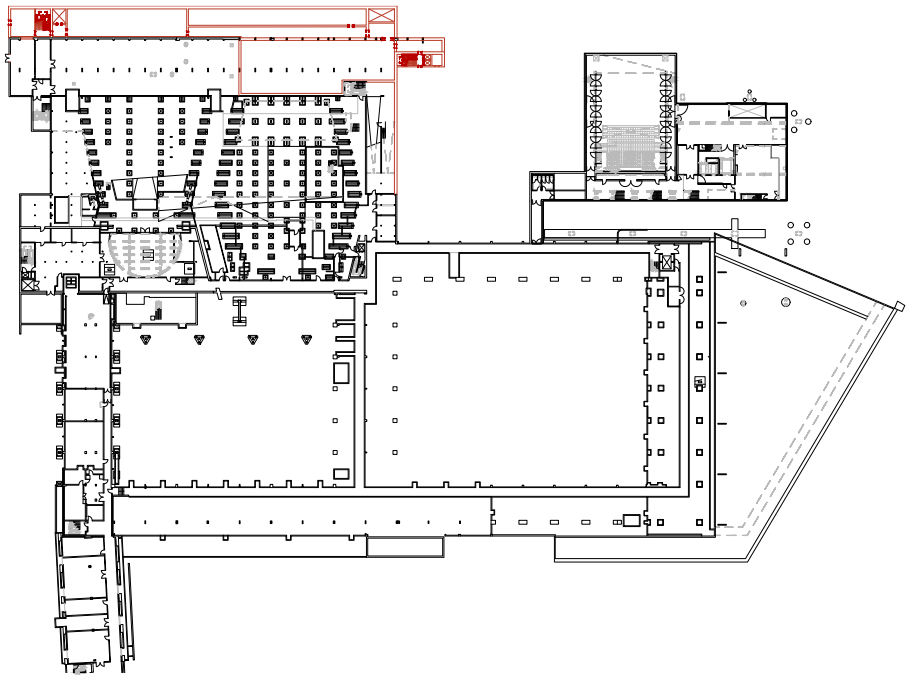
Level 0

Addition

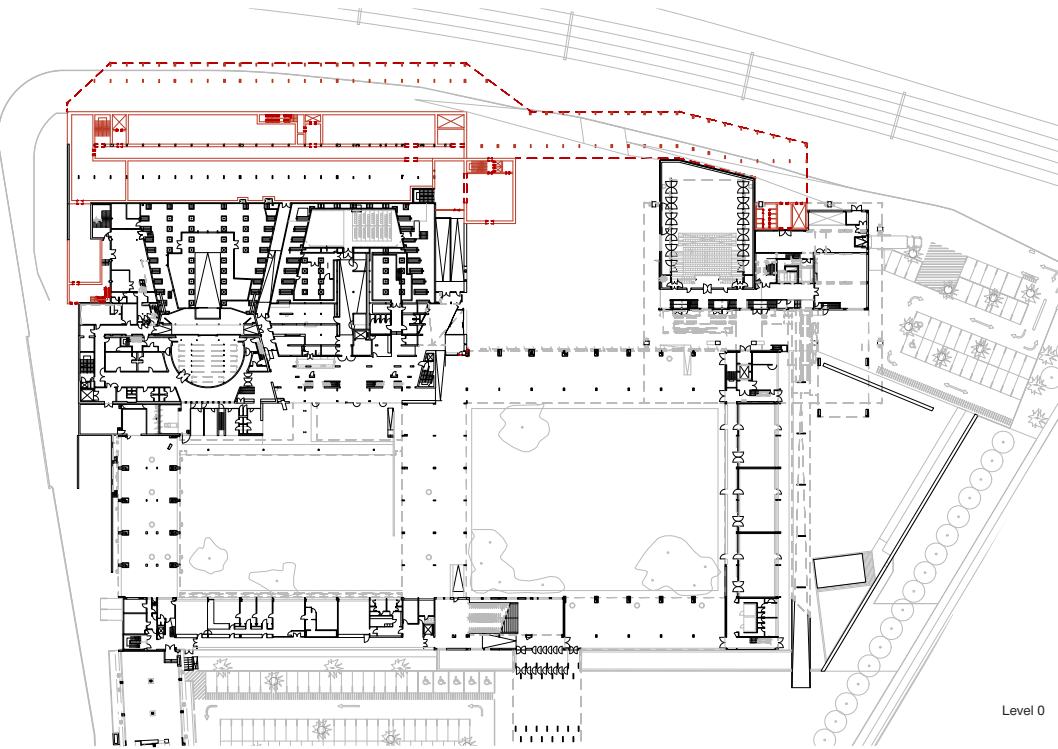


Level 1

Level 2

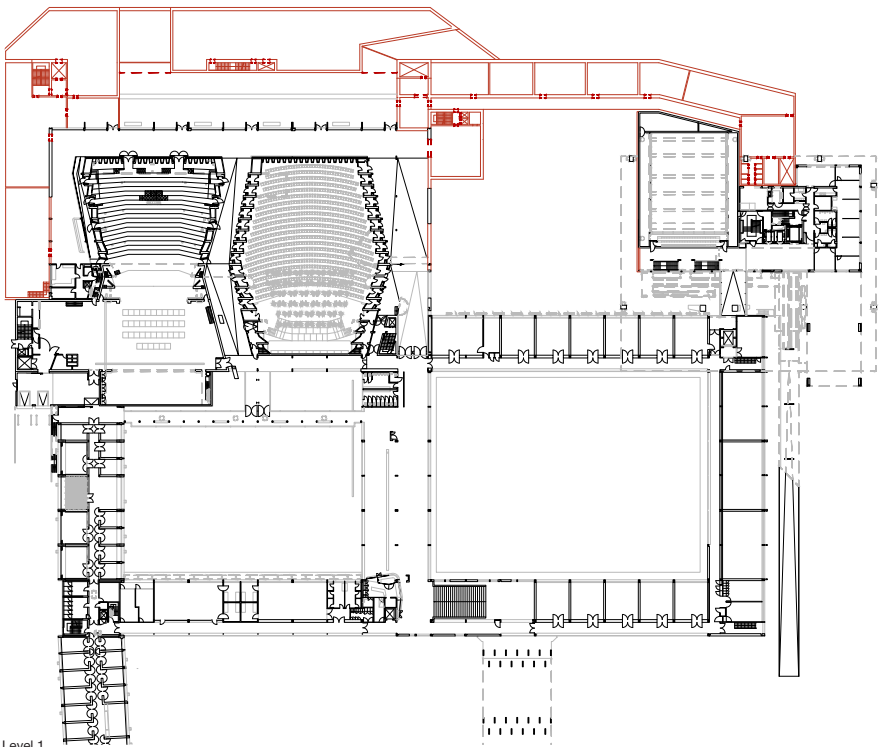


Level -1

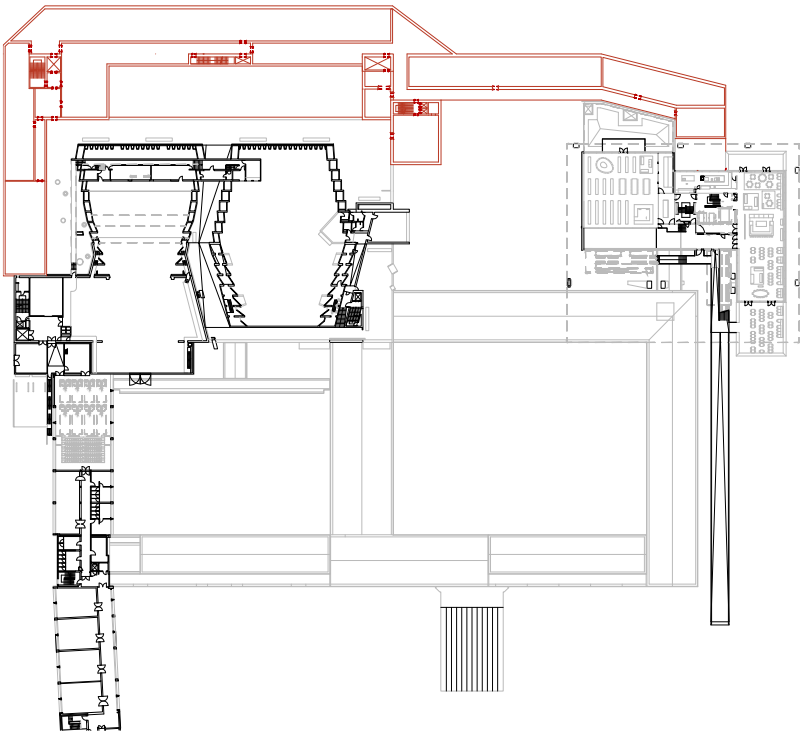


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Addition

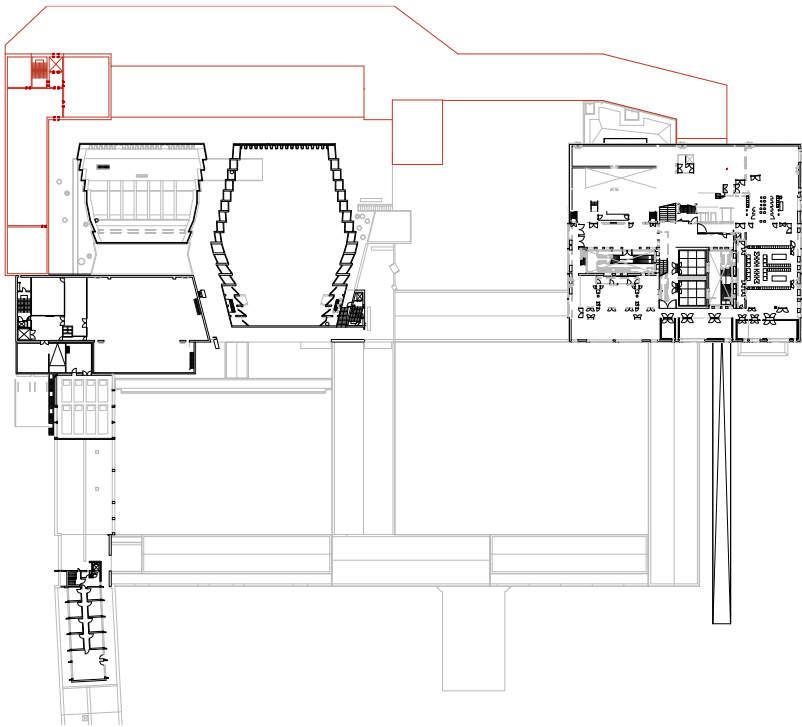


Level 1



Level 2

Addition



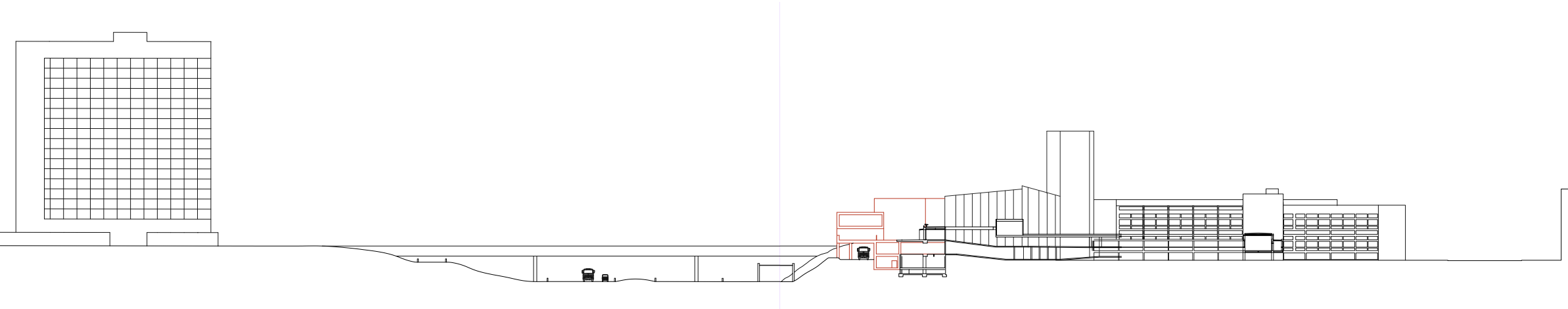
Level 3

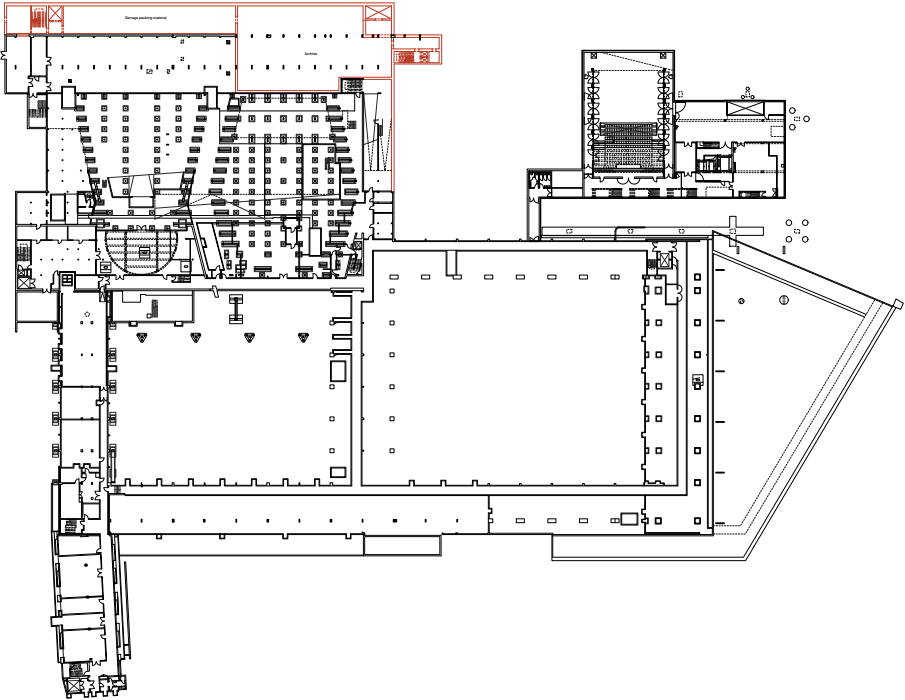
Feedback 16.01

Maybe there is no need to have the top part being so close to the trainline, right now it seems too close.

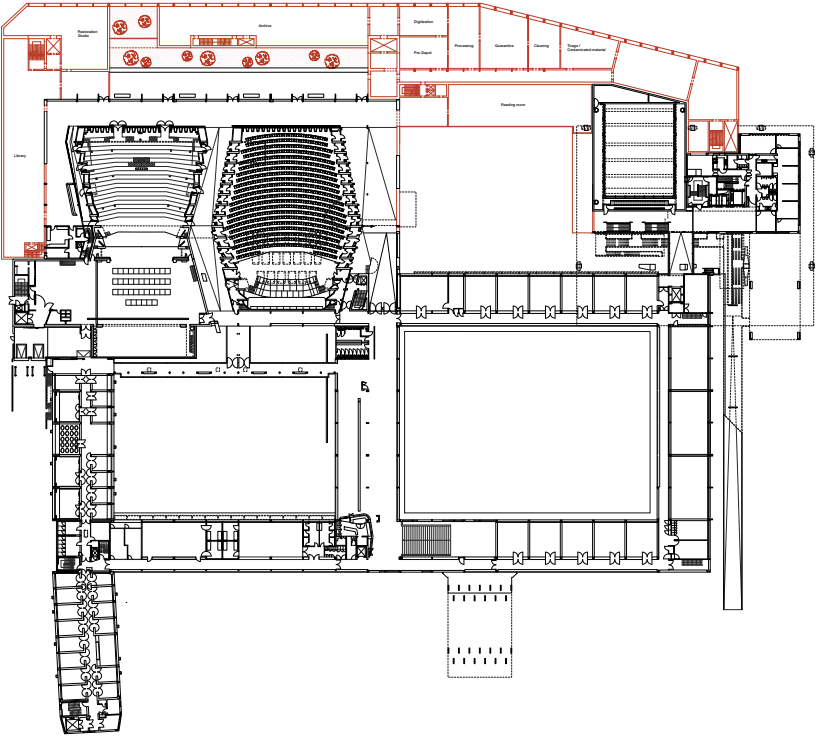
What is happening in the new garden? There is an open connection between the courtyard and the highway, why? This goes against other interventions. I that area is closed there could be more space for the public spaces of the archive.

The building needs to become the means to go through the landscape. People need to be invited to move around and see the different small, framed moments.

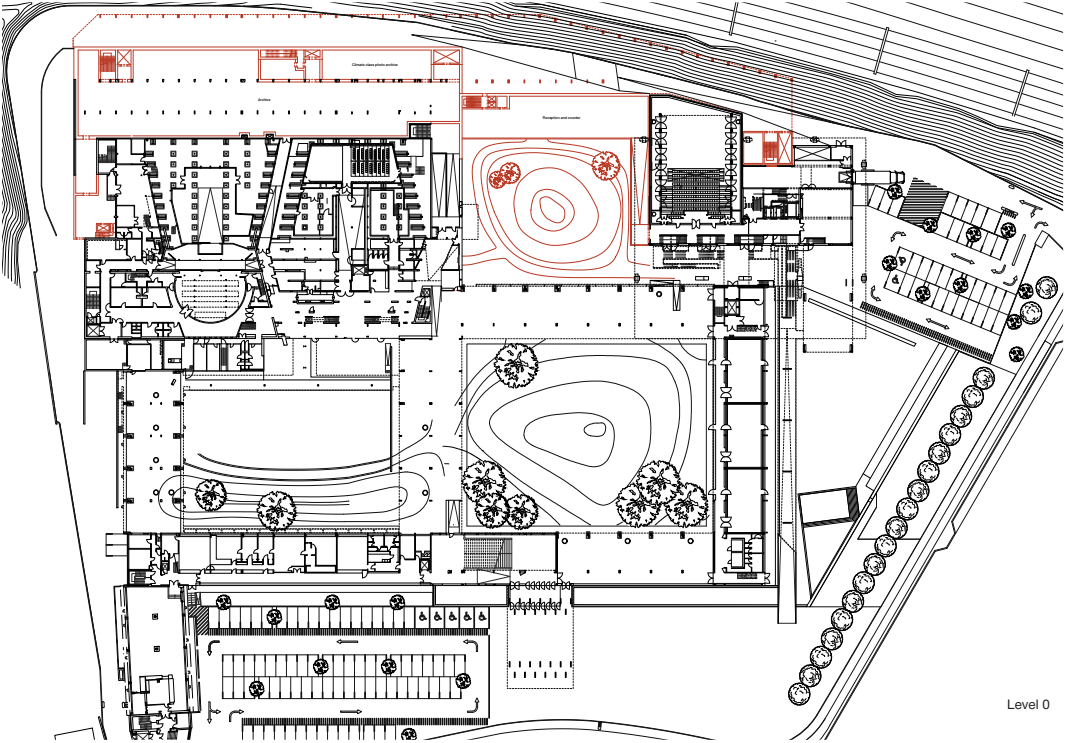




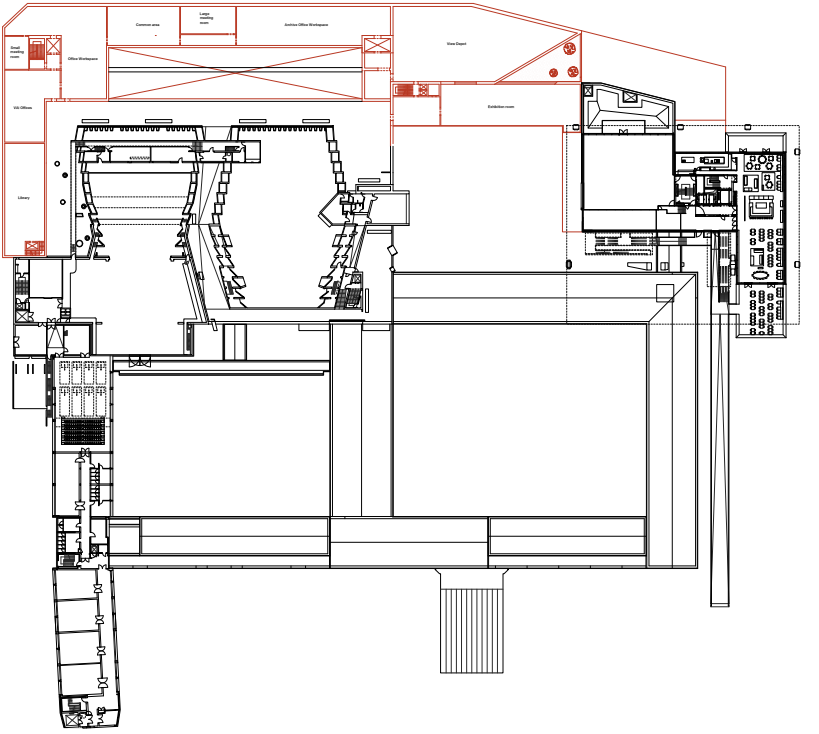
Level -1



Level 1



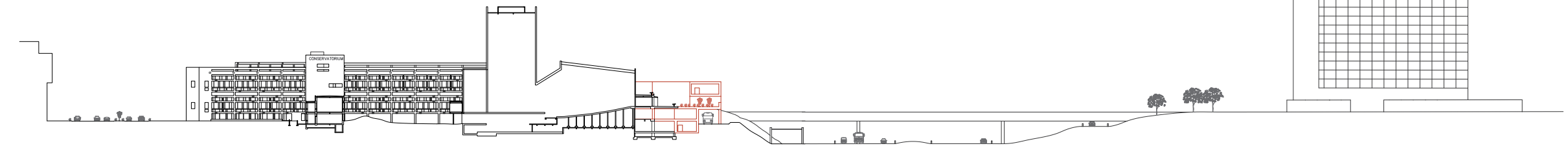
Level 0



Level 2

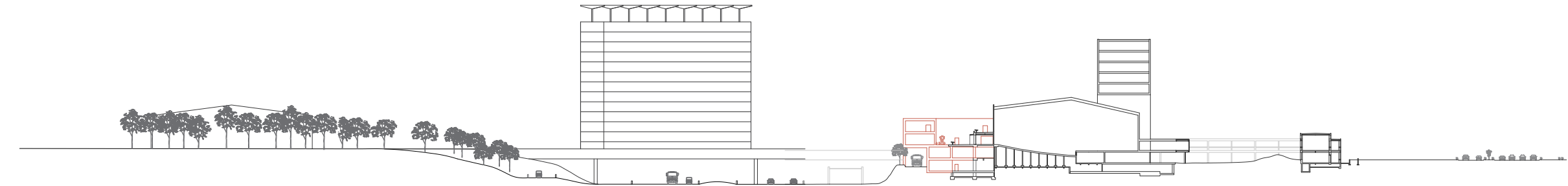
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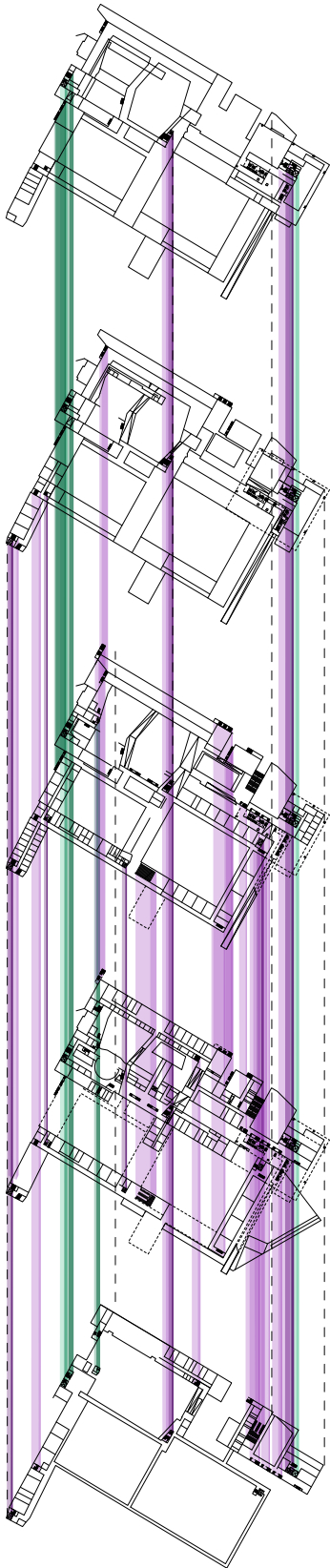
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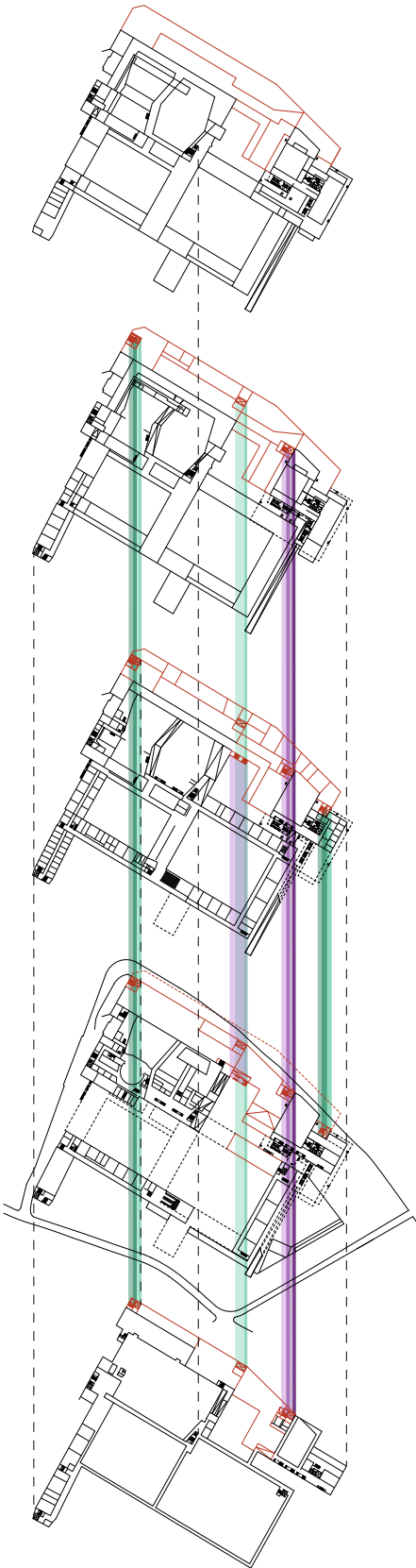
Addition

Addition

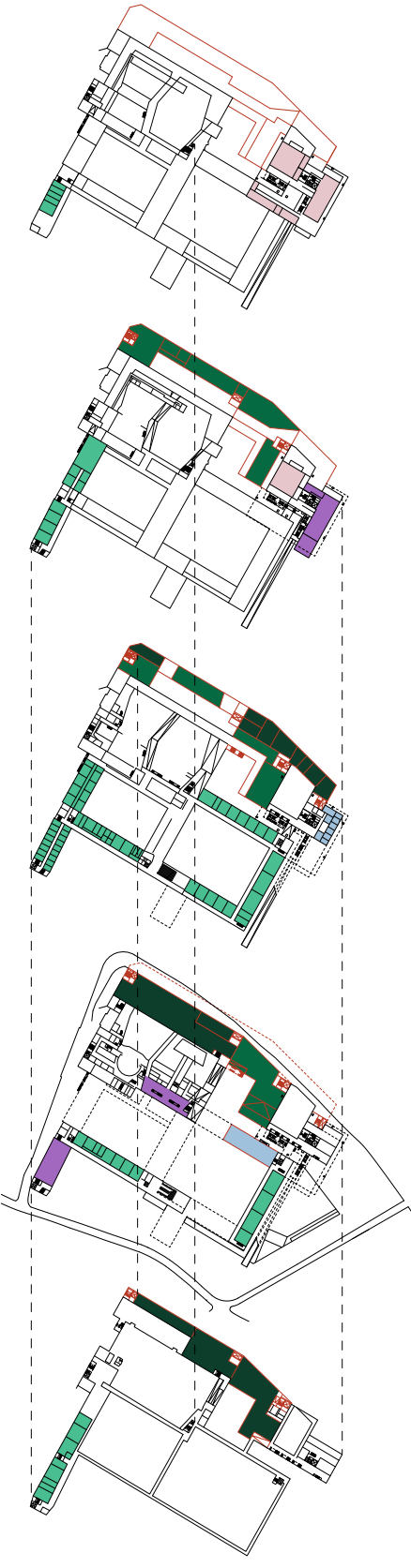
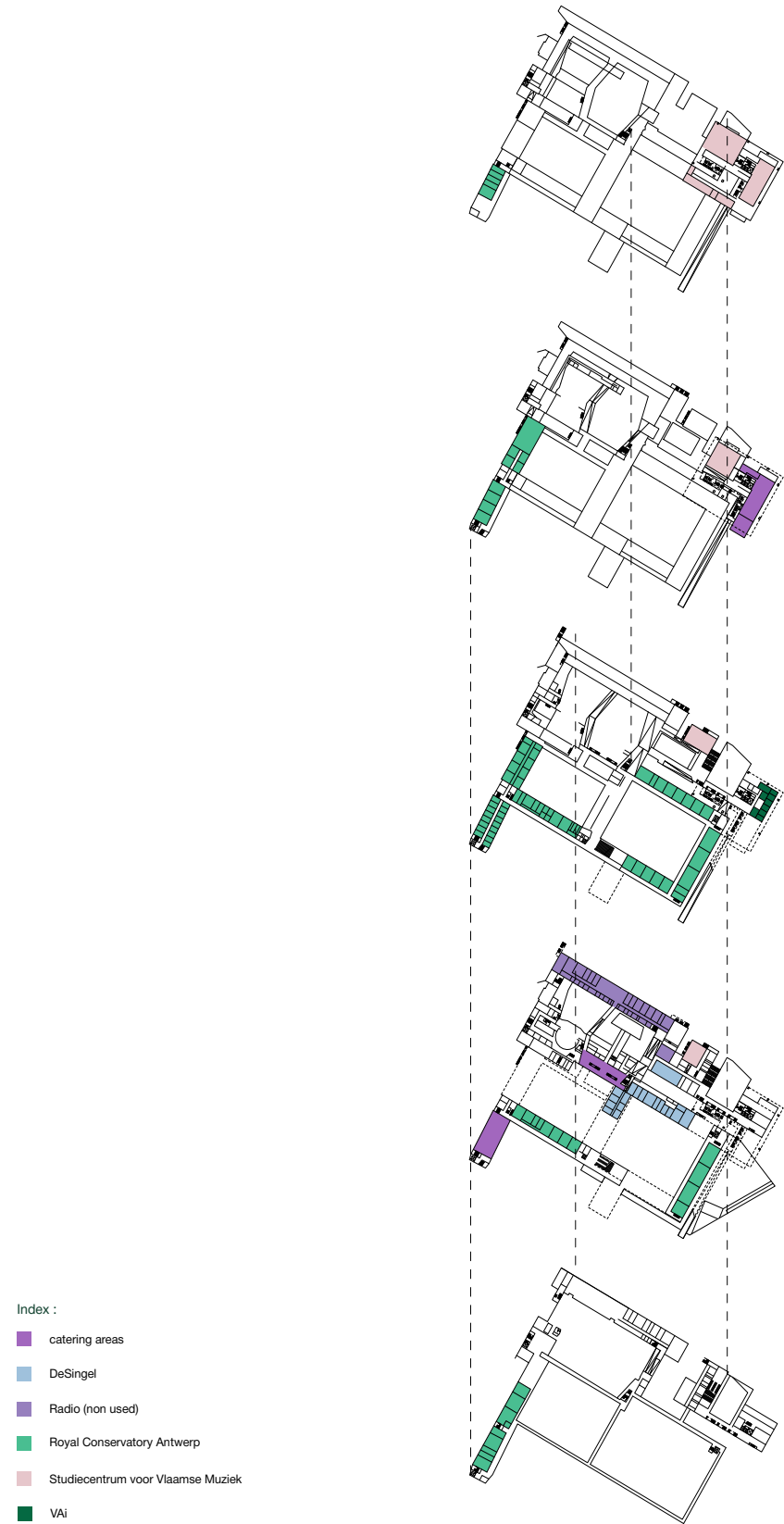


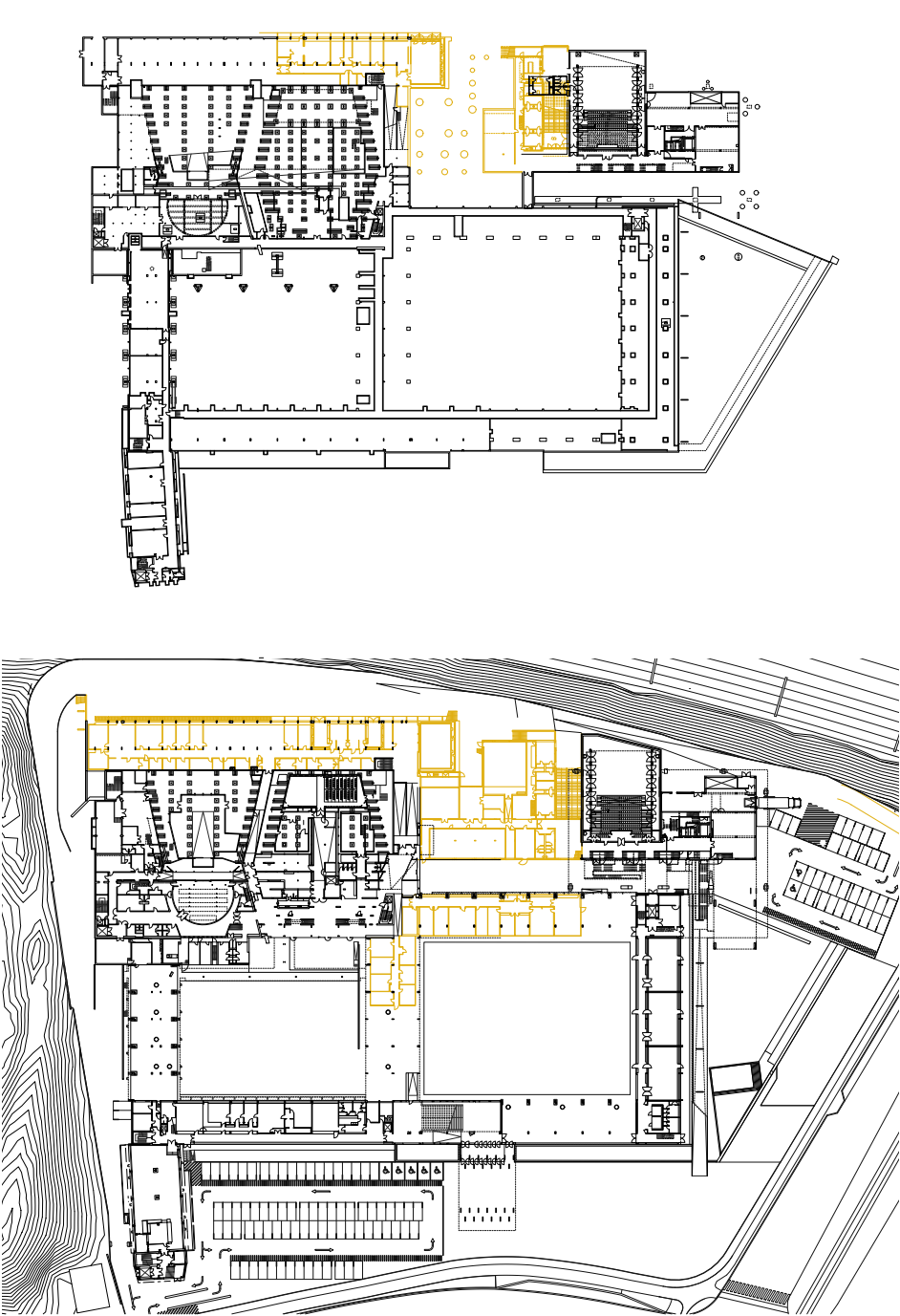


- Index :
- Public vertical staircases
 - Public vertical elevators
 - Non-public vertical staircases
 - Non-public vertical elevators

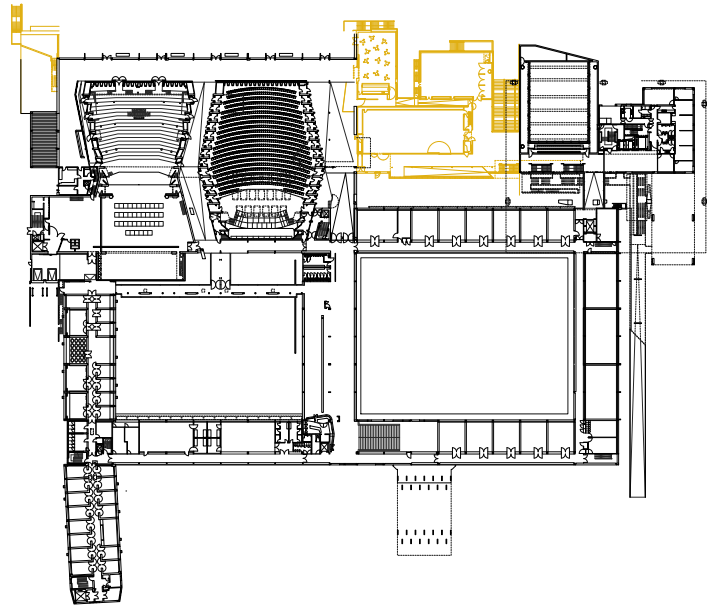


- Index :
- public circulation
 - non-public circulation / logistic
 - outside public circulation
 - public entrance
 - non-public entrance / logistics

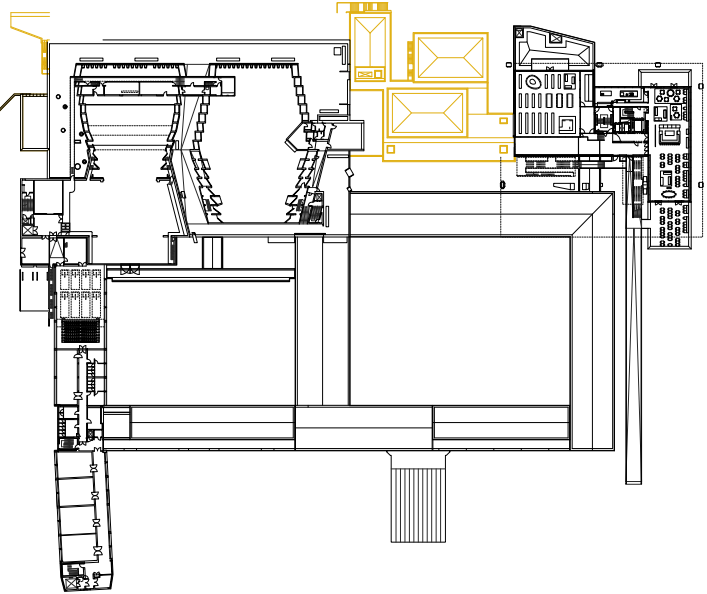




Level -1

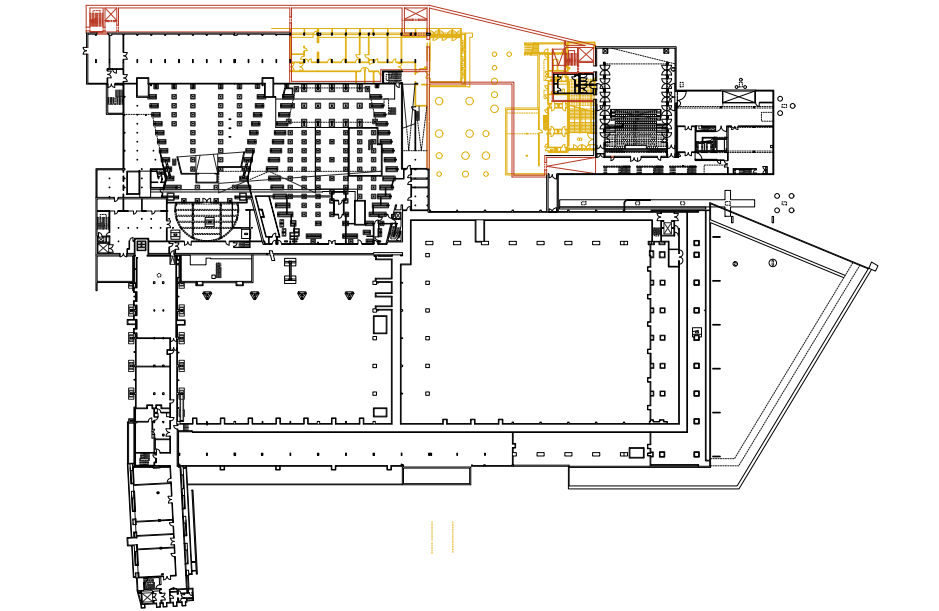


Level 1

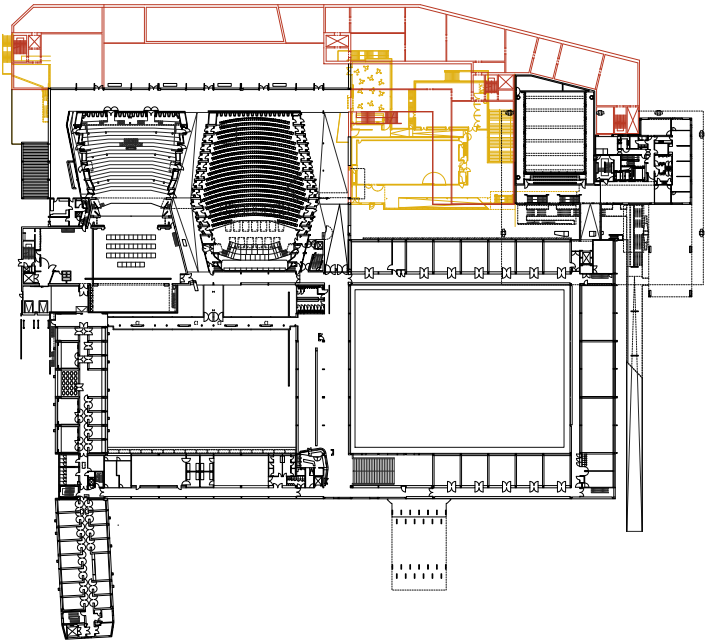


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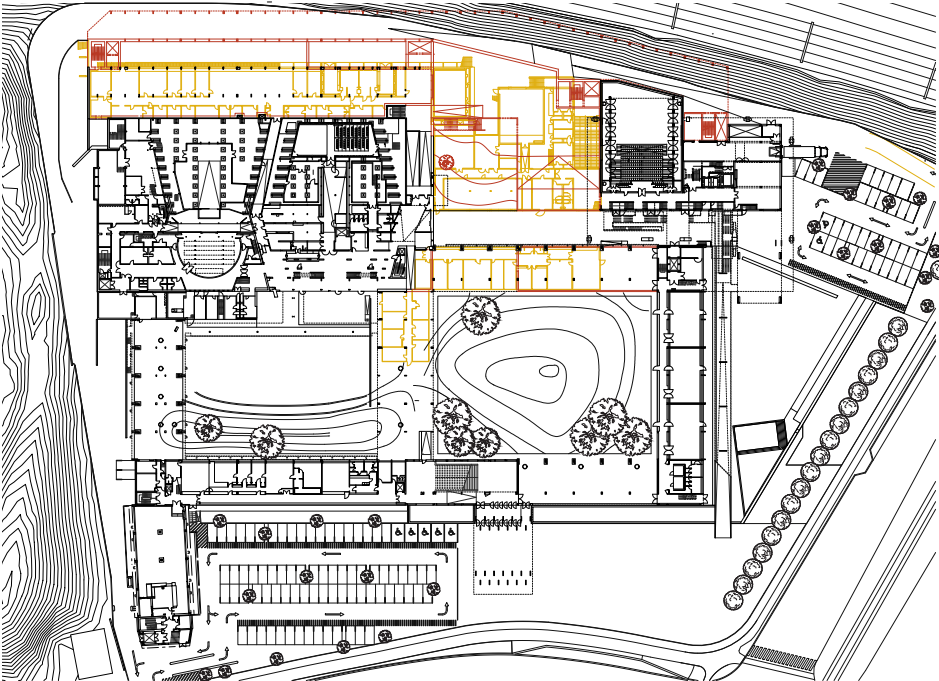
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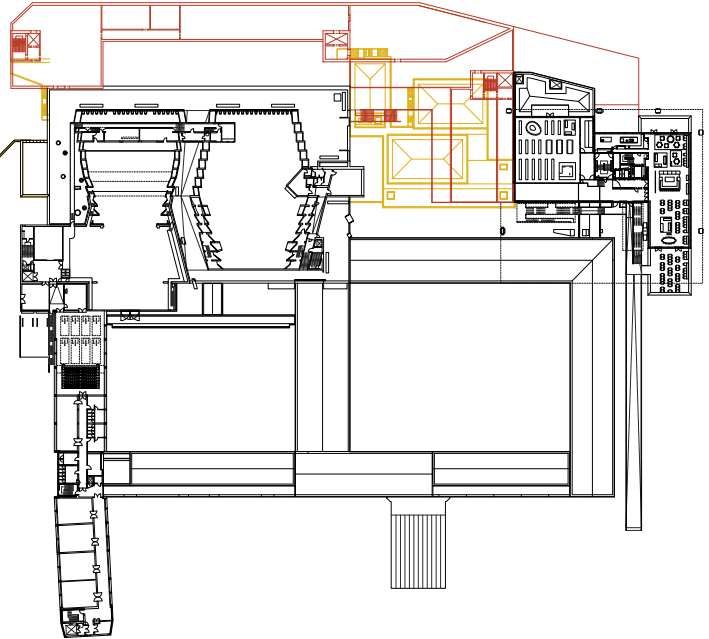
Level -1



Level 1

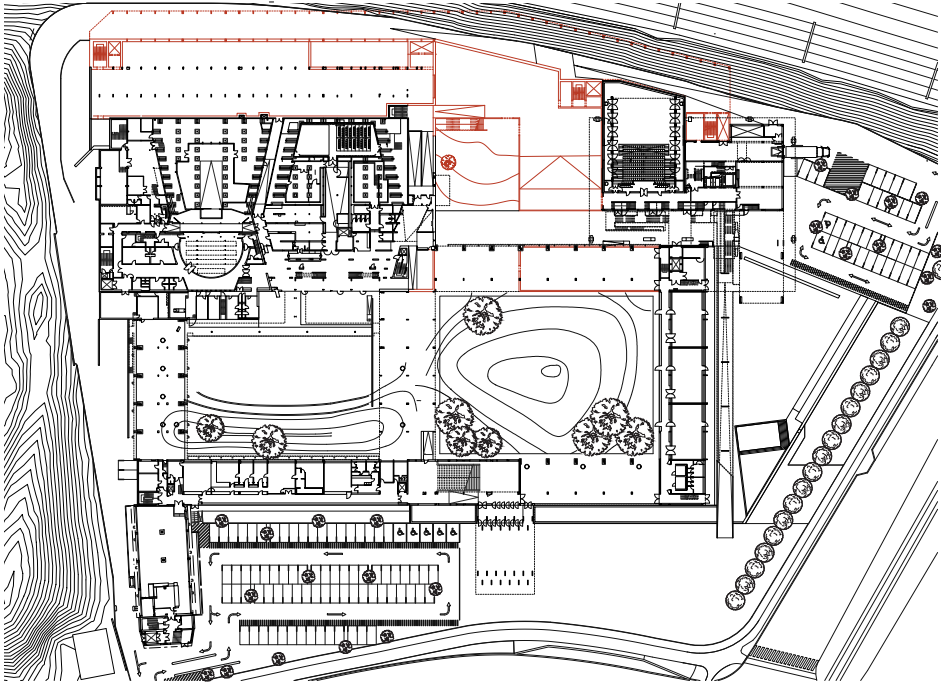


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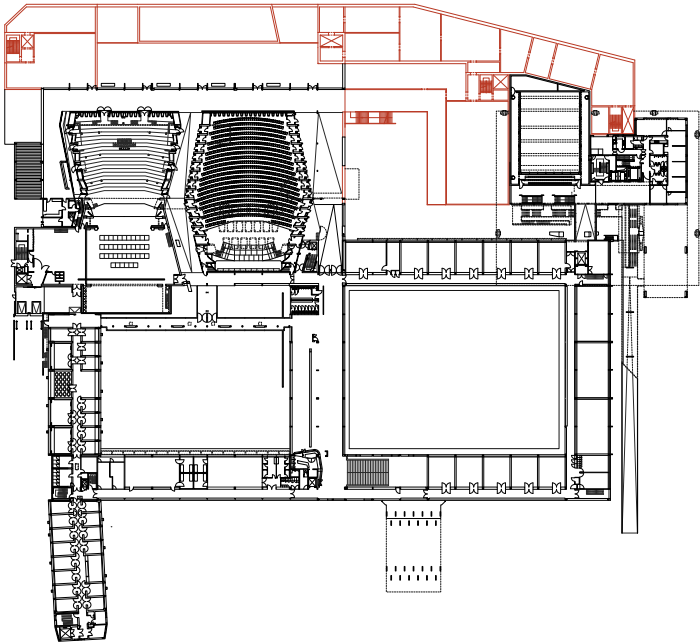
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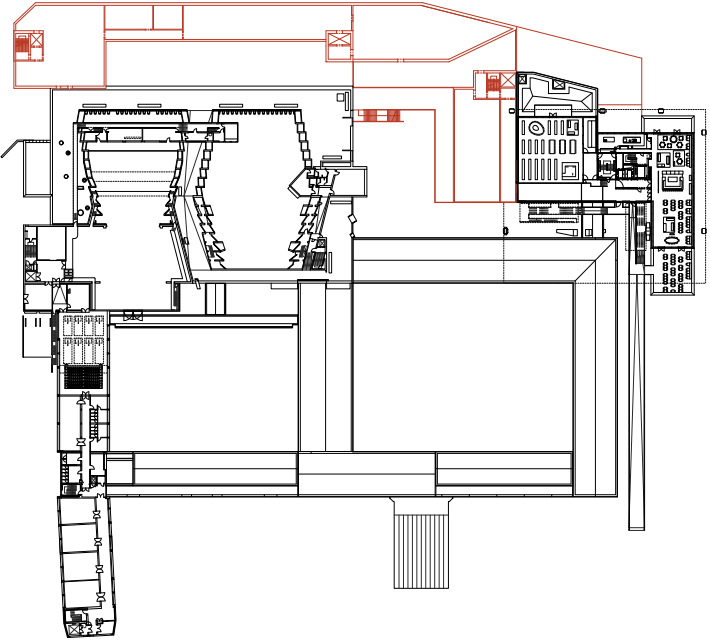
Level -1

Level 1



Level 0

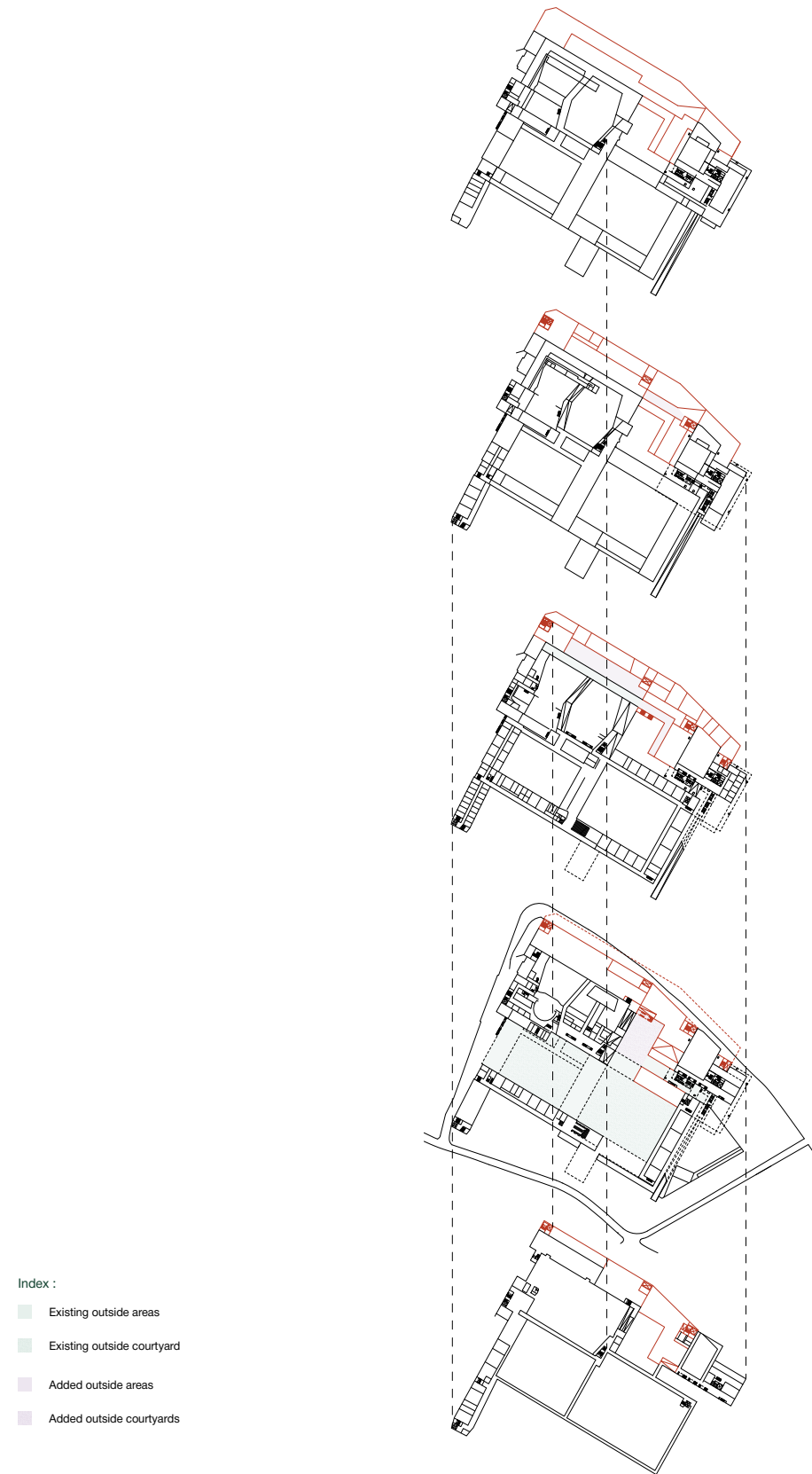
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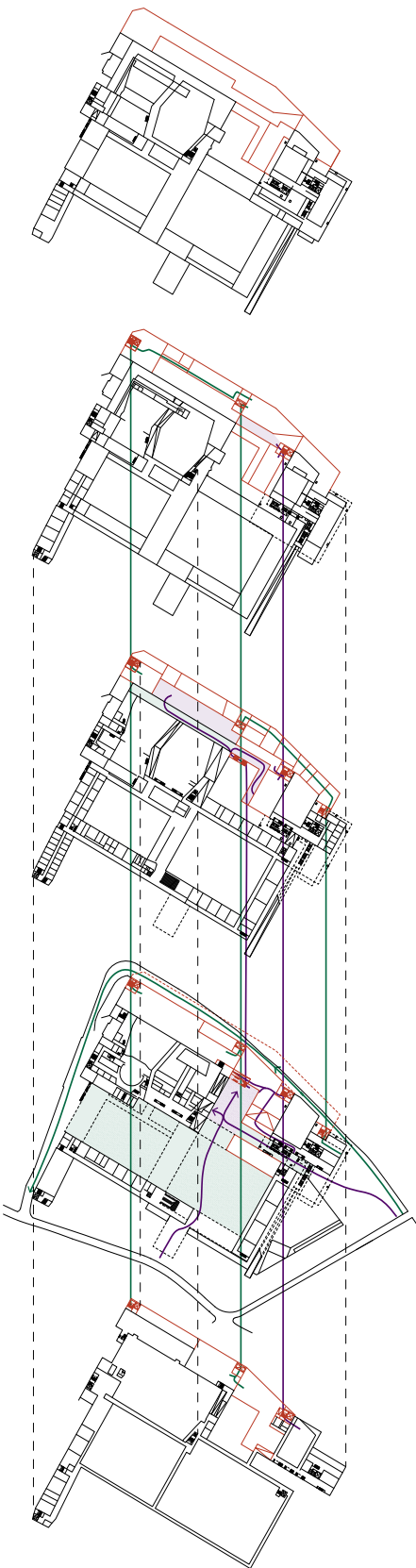
Addition

Brief	Required	Proposed
Name	Size m²	Size m²
Total	5145	7748
Public space	700	1712
Reception and counter (+ exhibition space for the unknown architects)	100	730
Exhibition space/ multifunctional	200	447
Reading room	200	211
Library	200	324
Work Space	860	1512
Staff workspace	300	301
Archive workspace	300	334
Large meeting room	80	80
Small meeting room	30	49
Common space	150	283
VAi offices	260	465
Archive	3585	4524
Storage packaging material	120	258
Loading / Unloading	150	182
Waiting Depot	100	107
Triage space / contaminated space	60	60
Cleaning	60	77
Quarantine	120	162
Processing	60	148
Pre-Depot	60	97
Restoration studio	60	106
Digitization	60	146
Depot storage	2500	2969
Climate class photo depot	100	171
View Depot	125	0
Server space	10	41

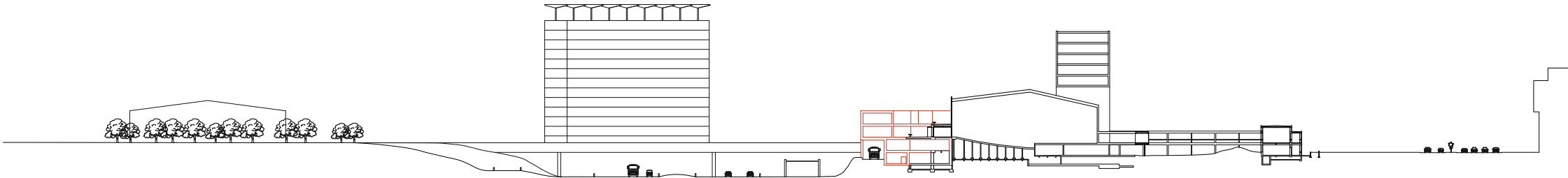




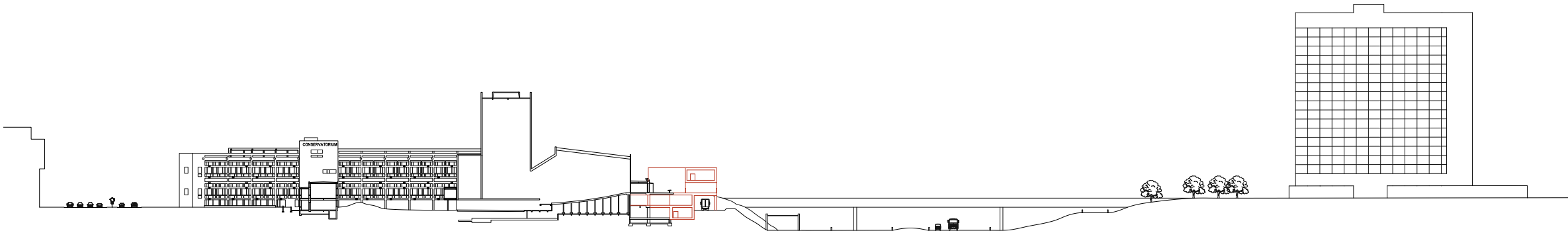
- Index :
- Existing outside areas
 - Existing outside courtyard
 - Added outside areas
 - Added outside courtyards

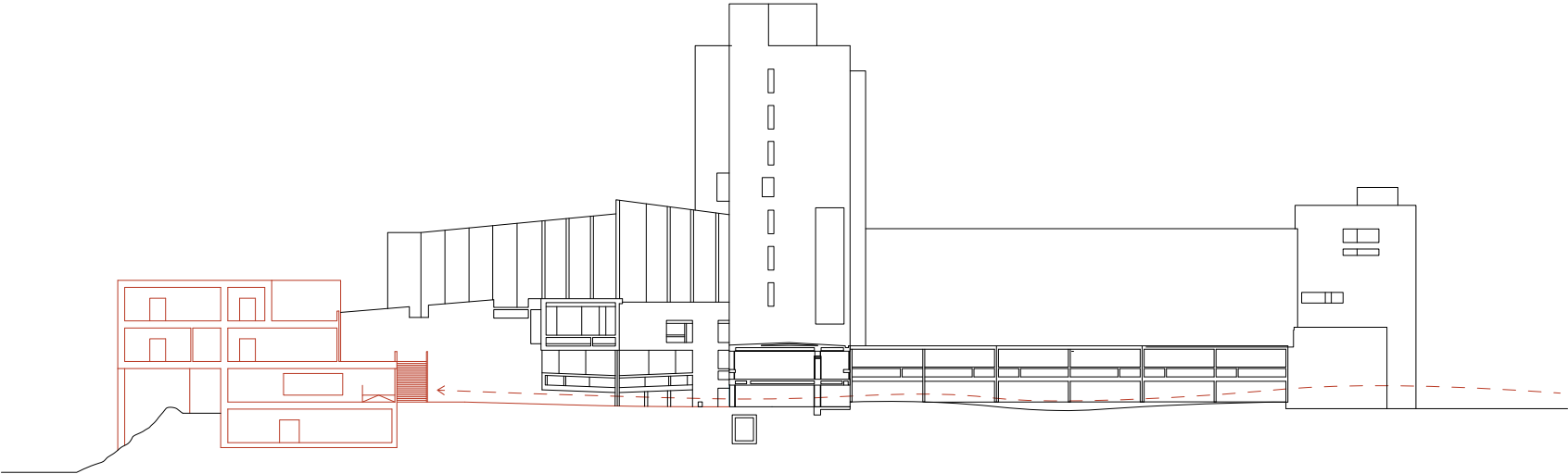
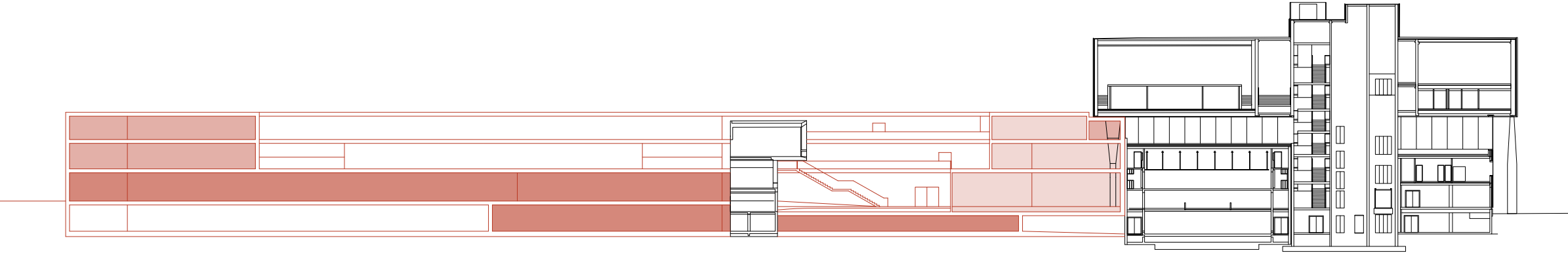


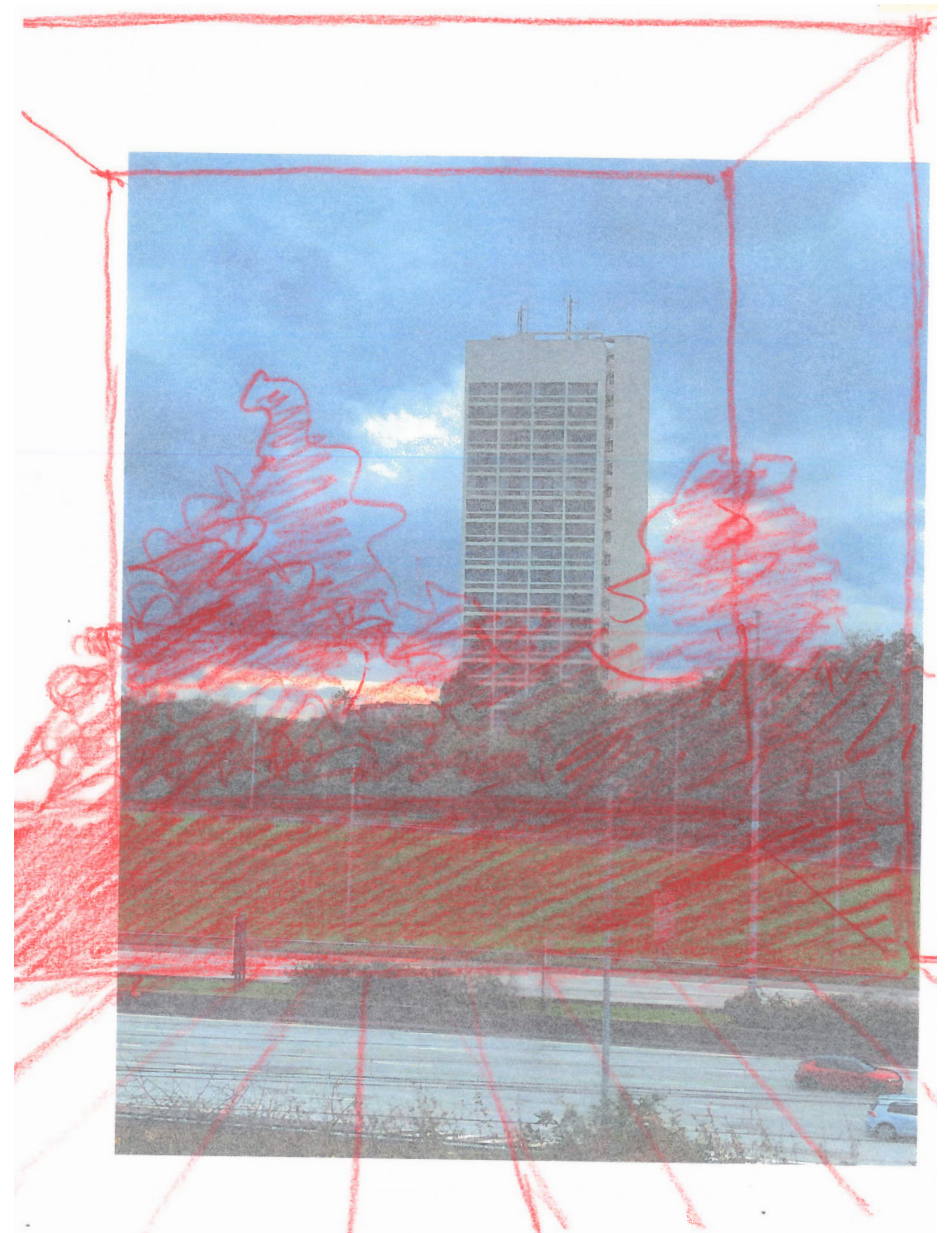
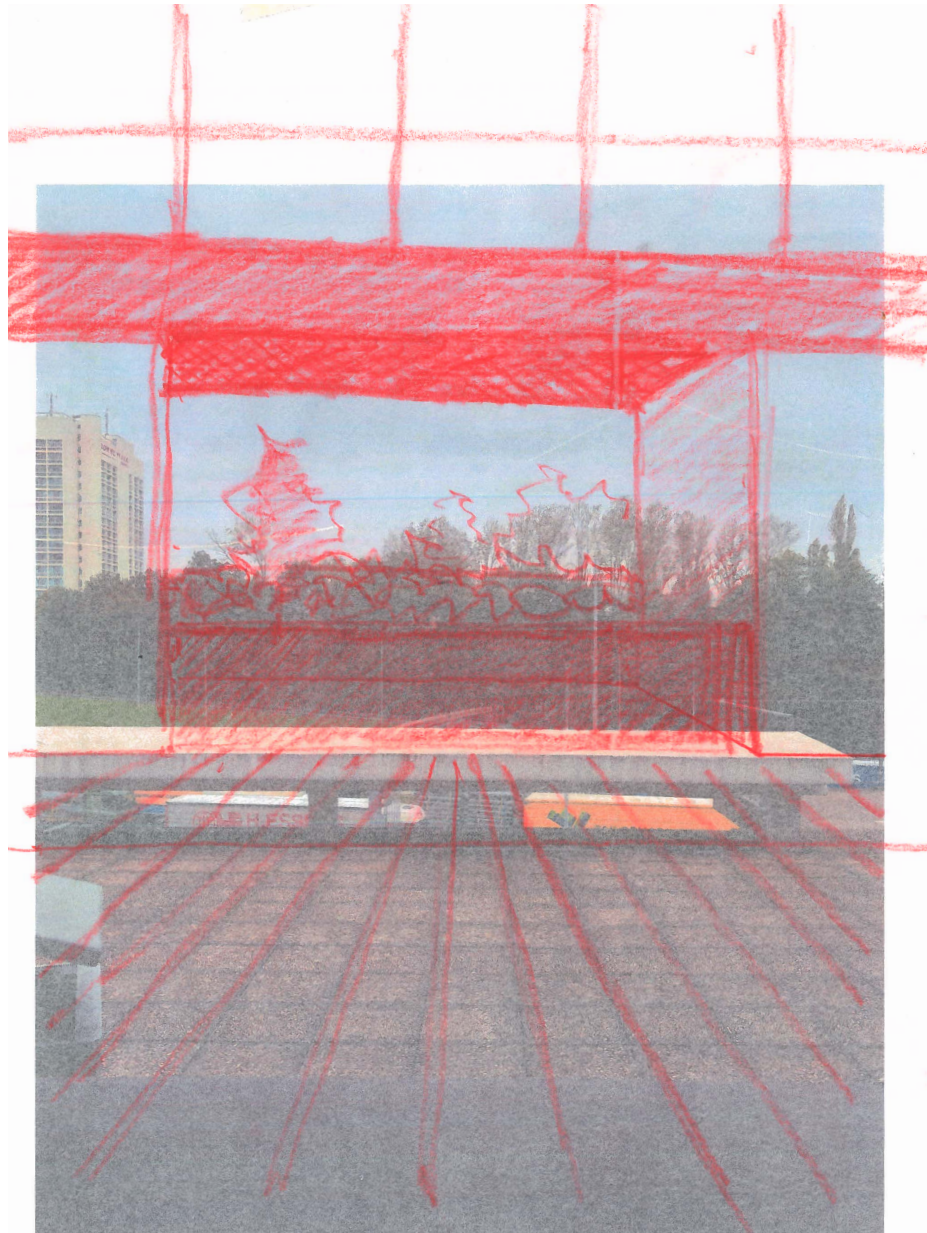
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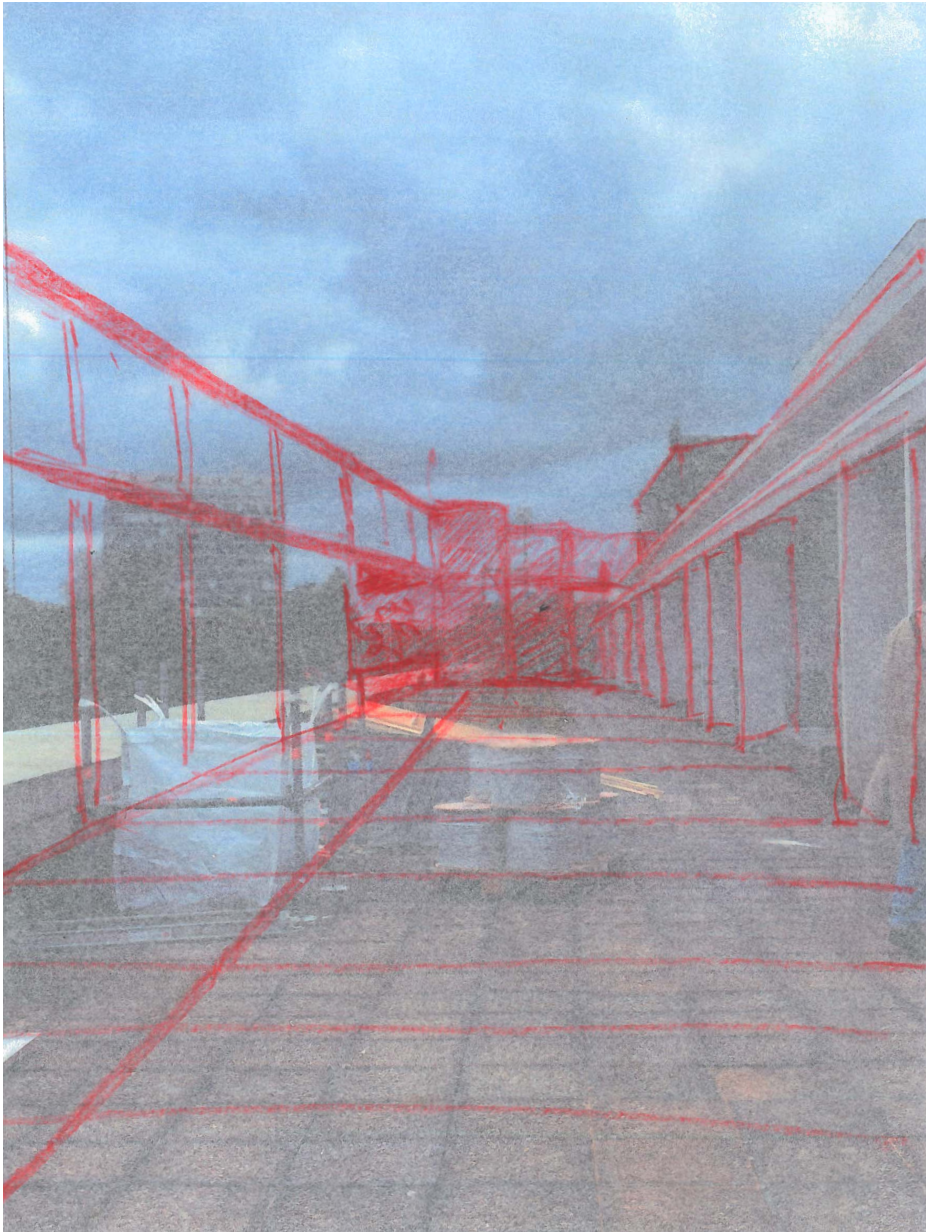


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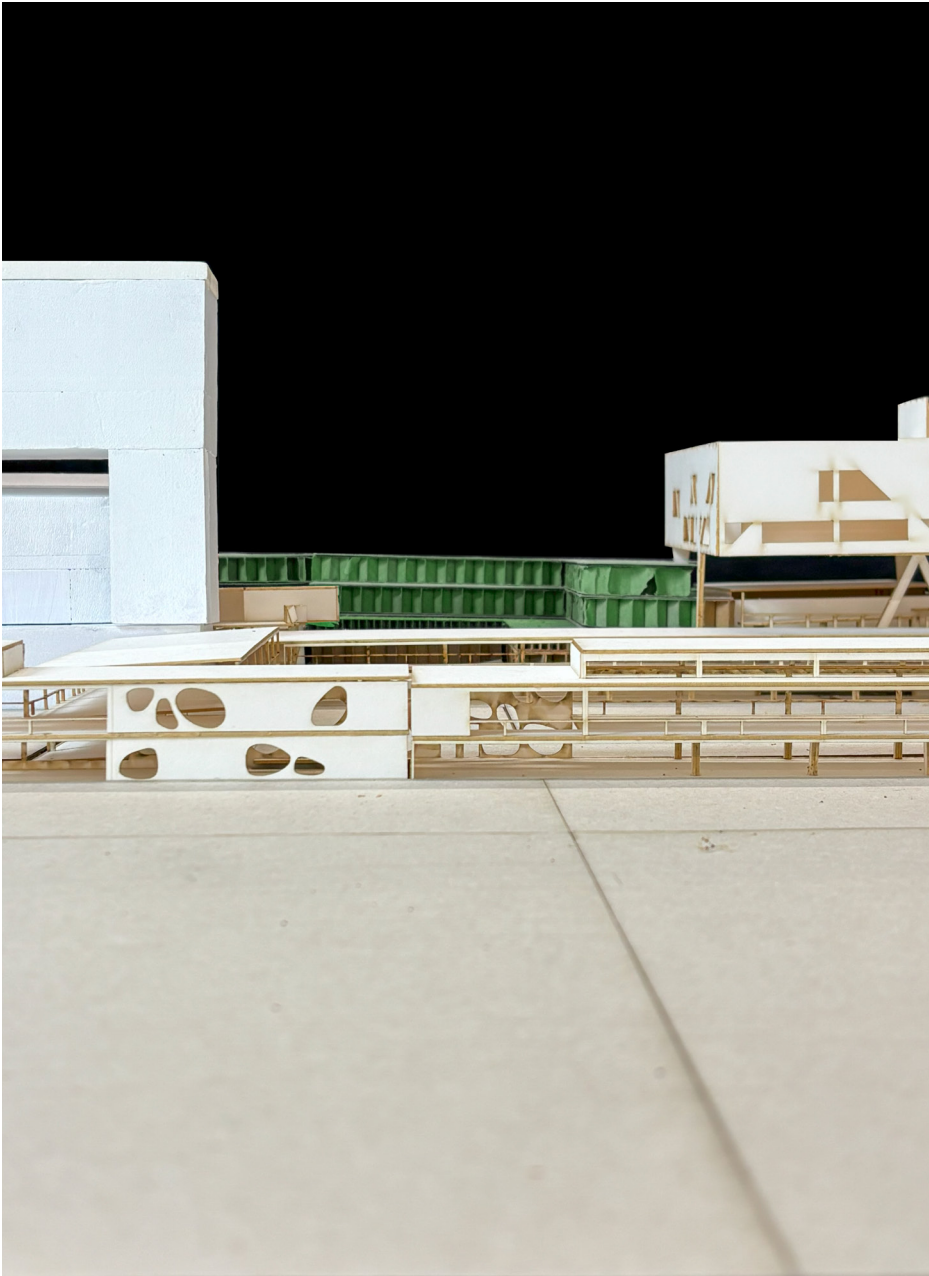




















Process



Process





Process

PROGRAM

DEMOLITION

CIRCULATION

- public horizontal circulation
- public vertical circulation
- non-public horizontal circulation
- non-public vertical circulation

Scale 1:600

Project Manual

Process

Margherita 21-25



Addition

Scale 1:600

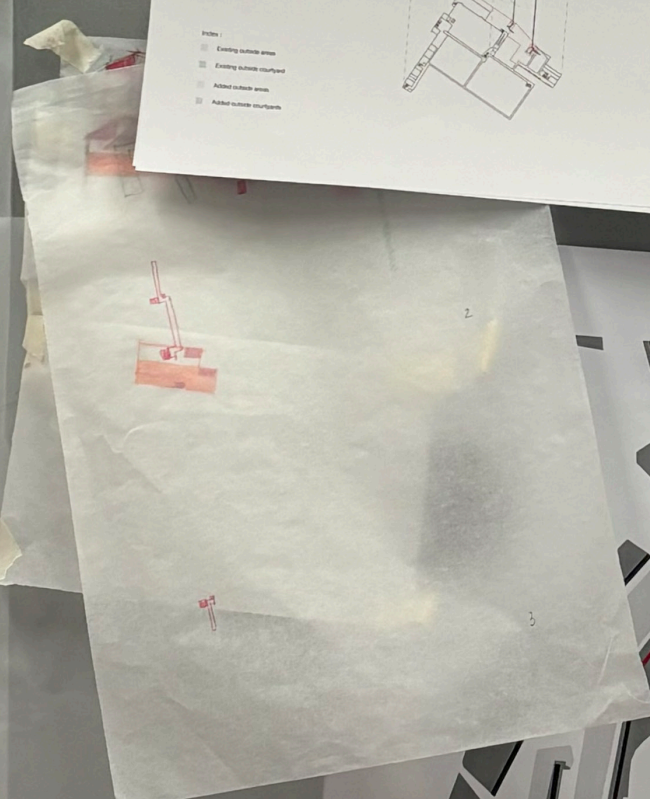
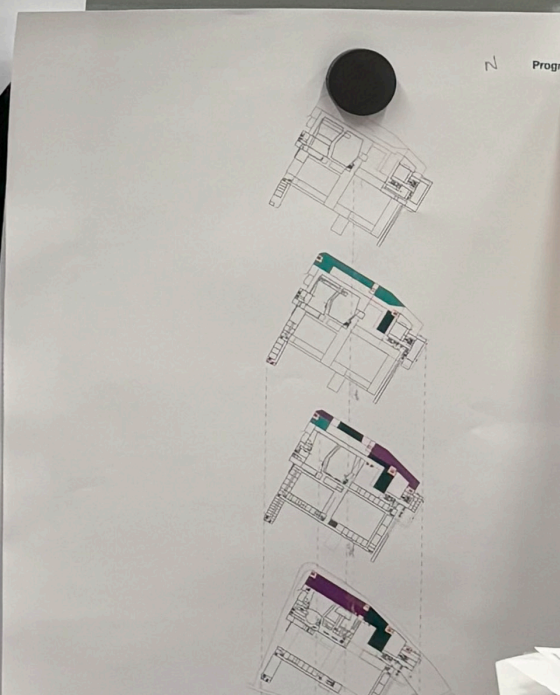
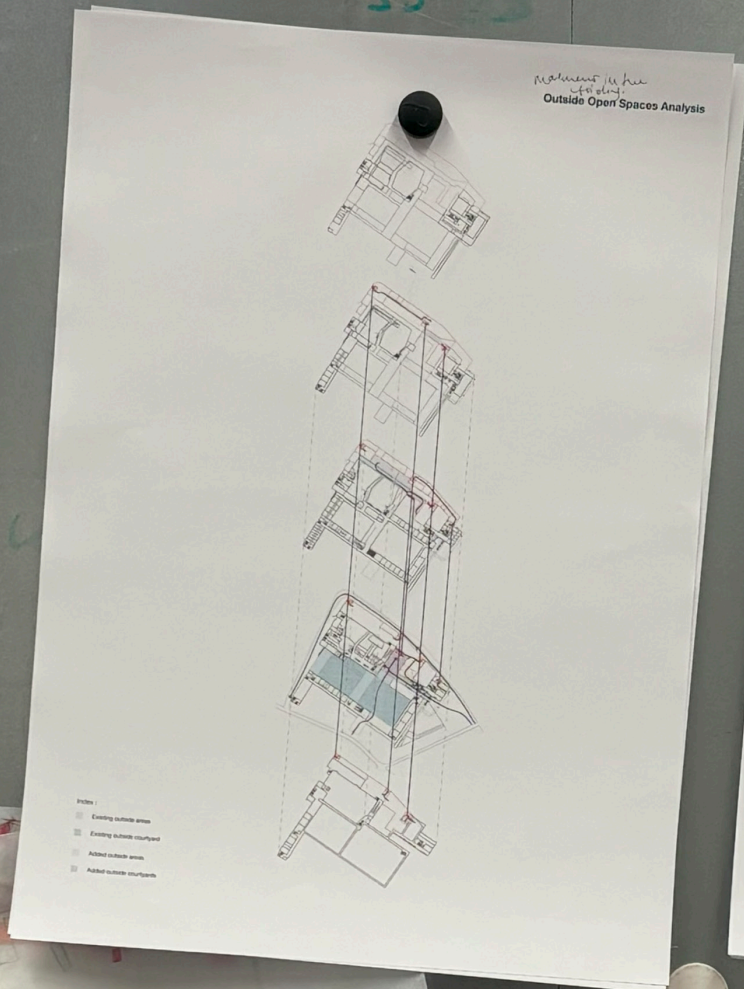
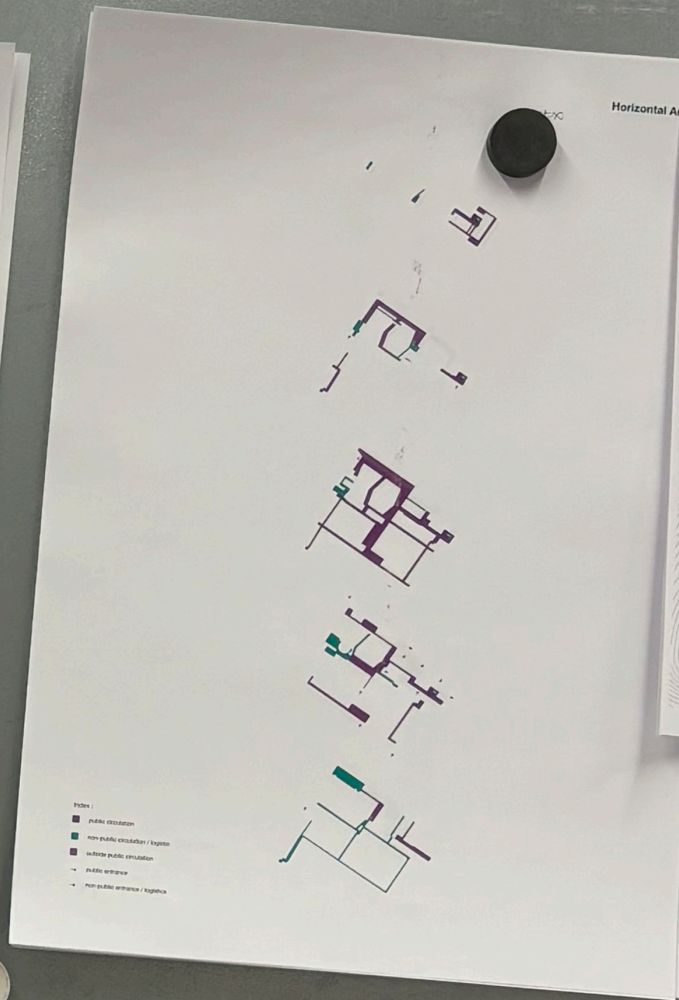
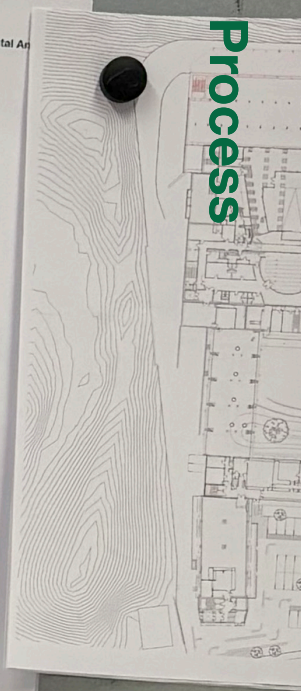
Demolition

Scale 1:600

PROGRAM
Scale 1:600

-1	Archive Storage	460m ²
0	Archive Storage	162,9m ²
		609,8m ²
		237,9m ²
		171,9m ²
1	Archive Storage	305m ²
2	Archive Storage	214,95m ²
	PH New	126m ²

Process



Process

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