

PROJECT JOURNAL

an archive for the Flanders Architecture Institute
at deSingel, Antwerp

Interiors, Buildings & Cities

Msc3/4 Palace

Jenny Fang / 4773489

2024-2025

contents

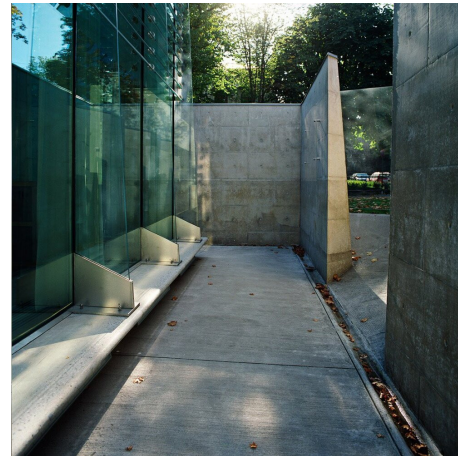
<div>Q1</div> <div><div>W 1.1 BRIEF I. LOOKING CAREFULLY 'architectural archives' / first lecture / forethoughts / photo match</div><div>pg. 5</div></div> <div><div>W 1.2 plans, section & furniture drawings / making the space / sampling materials / cricut / 'foundation of archive'</div><div>pg. 13</div></div> <div><div>W 1.3 metal trolleys / reflection of aluminium foil / halon gas / completing the space</div><div>pg. 17</div></div> <div><div>W 1.4 testing lighting / making the photo / reflection / the next brief / reading about Christian Kieckens</div><div>pg. 21</div></div> <div><div>W 1.5 BRIEF II. A PLACE TO ARCHIVE EXCURSION TO ANTWERP De Singel / VAI archive / archive materials / lecture - 'the museum is not enough' / dealing with the aftermath of excursion</div><div>pg. 27</div></div> <div><div>W 1.6 the dualities / ideas for furniture / Kieckens' furniture and scenographies design / iterations of Van Hover-De Pus House / inspired by Kieckens / representing time by space</div><div>pg. 41</div></div> <div><div>W 1.7 defining the function / inventarising the items / combining display with storage / combining display with study / ways to display / tests in SketchUp / the first proposal / feedback tutorial</div><div>pg. 49</div></div> <div><div>W 1.8 personal statement / taking another look at Kieckens / Kieckens' furniture design / rethinking the table / table form study on 1:50 / designing the furniture / ceiling & lighting / an 1:15 model / pre-P1 / feedback pre-P1 / reflection</div><div>pg. 55</div></div> <div><div>W 1.9 lighting / studying proportions / floor plan / the kitchen analogy / keep looking at Kieckens / sampling materials / Depot / making furniture / reflection</div><div>pg. 67</div></div> <div><div>W 1.10 personal statement / testing floor color /testing skylight assembling the model / making stuffs / making photo</div><div>P1 pg. 75</div></div>	<div>Q2</div> <div><div>W 2.1 BRIEF III. THE PROJECT organization / the building model / Het Nieuwe Instituut</div><div>pg. 91</div></div> <div><div>W 2.2 the section model / the brief / reading the history of deSingel / first idea</div><div>pg. 97</div></div> <div><div>W 2.3 'Figures, Doors, Passages' / new organization for research / continuing with the section model / researching HVAC / massing analysis / conceptual sketch / feedback tutorial</div><div>pg. 101</div></div> <div><div>W 2.4 the crossing / the Beel entrance / Collectiecentrum Antwerp / 'Quotidian Monuments' / movement & spaces / drawing sections / plans & sections / massing / the section model / interrogating the direction</div><div>pg. 107</div></div> <div><div>W 2.5 massing study / shifting the programs around / a range of scenarios / plans - scenario 3 / massing - scenario 1</div><div>pg. 117</div></div> <div><div>W 2.6 volume & relations / plans / study - detaching / study - figure & ground / another visit to deSingel / studying the front facade</div><div>pg. 123</div></div> <div><div>W 2.7 massing & entrance / 'As Found' / the theatre entrance / overview of the history / reorganizing programs P2-crit P2-crit feedback / reflection</div><div>pg. 131</div></div> <div><div>W 2.8 studying the section</div><div>pg. 149</div></div> <div><div>W 2.9</div><div></div></div> <div><div>W 2.10 looking for a title P2 P2 feedback</div><div>pg. 151</div></div>	<div>Q3</div> <div><div>W 3.1 BRIEF IV. A DIFFICULT WHOLE project description / the Flemish identity / facade materials / interior materials / structure / tutorial feedback</div><div>pg. 167</div></div> <div><div>W 3.2 re-evaluating the spaces / the cabinet analogy / visualizing the dimensions / comparing with BK city / what is the cabinet / finishing the 1:100 model / tutorial feedback / entrance references</div><div>pg. 173</div></div> <div><div>W 3.3 entrance & the public space / experiencing campuses in real life / tutorial feedback / testing the entrance in model / reflection on meeting spaces</div><div>pg. 181</div></div> <div><div>W 3.4 moving forward with the floor plan / meeting of the facades / spreading the grid inside-out / exterior & interior impressions / a facade fragment</div><div>pg. 185</div></div> <div><div>W 3.5 composition of the depot / functional cabinet walls / calculating depot area / the thermal envelopes / facade fragments / a version of the facades</div><div>pg. 191</div></div> <div><div>W 3.6 structural layer in the facade / Neutelings Riedijk / sectional relation / view of the depot / abstracting the plan / covering the entrance hall / tutorial feedback / dimensions of the box / moodboard / pairing with the Stynen facade</div><div>pg. 197</div></div> <div><div>W 3.7 decomposing Stynen's facade / getting an impression of the building / solving structure & skin / the new facade / the view-depot / tutorial feedback</div><div>pg. 207</div></div> <div><div>W 3.8 tectonics in model making P3 P3 feedback / reflection</div><div>pg. 213</div></div> <div><div>W 3.9 BRIEF V. MATERIAL & MAKING the three spaces / tutorial feedback / reflection in groups</div><div>pg. 221</div></div> <div><div>W 3.10 1:100 model of the entrance / building the surroundings of the 1:200 / a comparable project / visiting the Kunstlinie</div><div>pg. 225</div></div>	<div>Q4</div> <div><div>W 4.1 back to deSingel / the making of the facade</div><div>pg. 233</div></div> <div><div>W 4.2 facade material / structure</div><div>pg. 235</div></div> <div><div>W 4.3 ventilation & ceiling / detailing curtain walls / remark on the project journal / structuring the presentation pre-P4</div><div>pg. 237</div></div> <div><div>W 4.4 P4 reflection</div><div>pg. 241</div></div> <div><div>W 4.5 P4</div><div>pg. 243</div></div> <div><div>W 4.6 P4 reflection / P5 outlook</div><div>pg. 259</div></div> <div><div>W 4.7 the signage of VAI</div><div>pg. 261</div></div> <div><div>W 4.8 afterword P5</div><div>pg. 263</div></div>
---	--	--	--

BRIEF I. LOOKING CAREFULLY

Week 1.1-1.4

getting to know architectural archives

"architectural archives"



The typology of an architectural archive is not unfamiliar for me. A range of buildings came into my mind. As an architecture student, I have visited a number of museums and exhibitions related to architecture. The **architectural museums** in Paris, Oslo, Rotterdam, Design museum in Ghent, City museum in Gent, Museum of architectural drawings in Berlin, and Biennale Venice. Other references also came to my mind: the city archive of Delft, the famous Bauhaus Archive, the recently opened museum of architectural models in Shanghai and the Centre for Contemporary Drawings in Berlin.

VAi & De Singel

The Flemish Architectural Institute and De Singel is also not completely unfamiliar. Last May, I have visited the exhibition of **Marie-Jose van Hee** in De Singel with the office I was working for.

My impression of De Singel was that it was **complicated** both functionally and spatially, both inside and outside. There were peaceful and clean moments but an overview was difficult to grasp, although we were the only group of visitors in the whole complex. Maybe it was the vacancy that made the space seemed a bit excessive.



first lecture

I was assigned in the Canadian Centre for Architecture group with Veronica, Yunke & Daan. I considered the difficulty of this model medium among all the photos. I was just happy that I didn't have to make the John Soane's museum.

- the space is rather confined, sight is not too wide nor too far.
- the amount of furniture is rather overwhelming. It requires a lot of precision and cleanliness.
- the lighting fixtures are not directly visible. A workaround is thus possible.



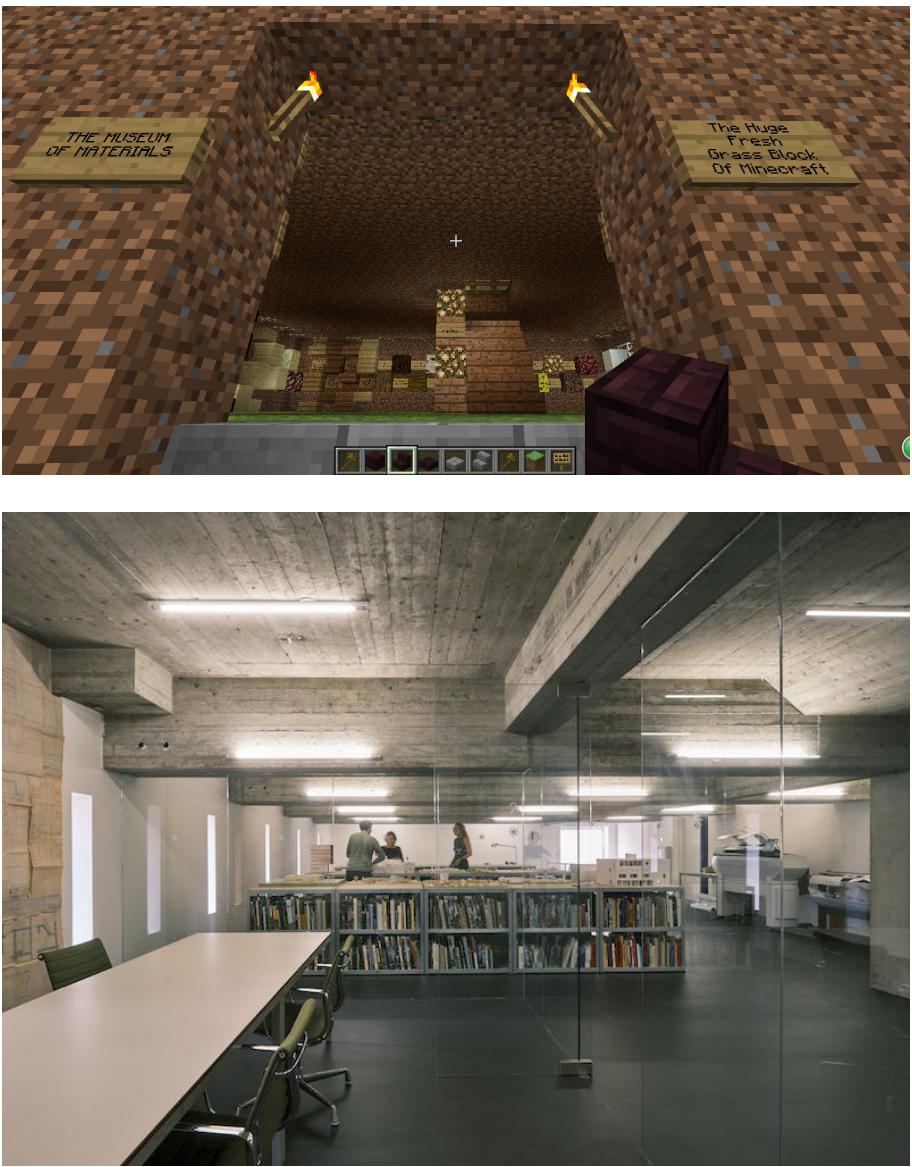
forethoughts

The more I think about it, the more I am excited to design an architectural archive as my graduation project.

First, I am a consistent **archivist of my personal life**. I think in a rationalized, grid-like way. I have been journaling in the form of tables for 10 years. I keep my drawings in rolls, organized by courses. I keep all the receipts, in piles by seasons. I name and organize my digital works and photos, improve the file system and do back-ups once a while. I have written an essay on how the smells of different hand creams that I used throughout three years in high school were correlated to the pieces of memories, as if they were stored in a grid shelf. In middle school I have built a "museum of materials" in Minecraft, displaying all the materials in a big cubic space, categorized and labelled. These activities that might seem meaningless and time-consuming for some people, are a major source of satisfaction for me.

Second, designing an architectural archive must involve reviewing the history of architecture, taking a position in the **field of architecture** and rethinking the role of an architect. Being able to manifest these thoughts in a project marking the end of my architectural education would be more than meaningful.

Third, the two **offices** that have done internships at, Atelier PRO and Bedaux de Brouwer, both had a long history and a well-kept office archive. I enjoyed working with those archives and would love to gain more knowledge on archiving.



reading about Canadian Centre for Architecture

The appearance of the CCA is so different than how I could have imagined. The size and style of the building are hard to be related to the photo we were asked to replicate.

I was confused when I tried to figure out the configuration of the building by looking at its plans and **sections**, combined with photos and descriptions. The confusion was mainly in the section. Texts referred to the vault level, curatorial level and public level. I thought the public must be on the ground floor, and vaults are referring to the vaulted ceiling of the galleries. After some detective work I was able to confirm that vault means the secured storage with heavy doors as in a bank. It is underground. It is the space that we will be making. And it has no floor plan.

From the data on building heights and span dimensions I was able to scale the drawings accordingly and identify the **height** of the ceiling to be merely 2,5m. In order to achieve the precision of the delicate furniture, and make the model height operable for making photos, I thought the scale has to be no smaller than 1:15, making the ceiling height in the model 16,7cm.

- exhibition galleries
- theatre
- bookstore
- library & research centre
- curatorial & conservation facilities
- controlled archival storage for books / photographs / models / works on paper.

1989
by Peter Rose.

Shaughnessy House
19th century, restored
- cafe
- administrative offices

sculpture garden
by Melvin Charney
footprint of the mansion
& modern sculpture

- 1960s urban renewal, more cars, demolition of trad. arch.
- 1960s/1970s architectural conservation movement
- 1975 Phyllis Lambert founded "Heritage Montreal"
- 1974 P.L. bought Shaughnessy House
- 1979 P.L. founded CCA.
- 1985 - 1989 design & construction of CCA

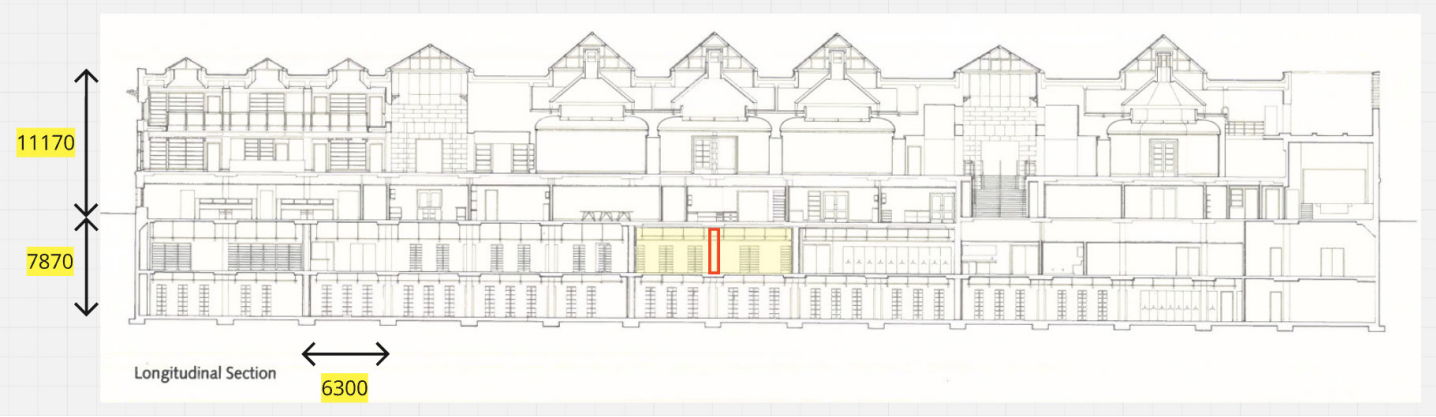
material use

- ↳ Montreal gray limestone
- ↳ Canadian maple wood.
- ↳ aluminium by Alcan company (main donor)

photo match

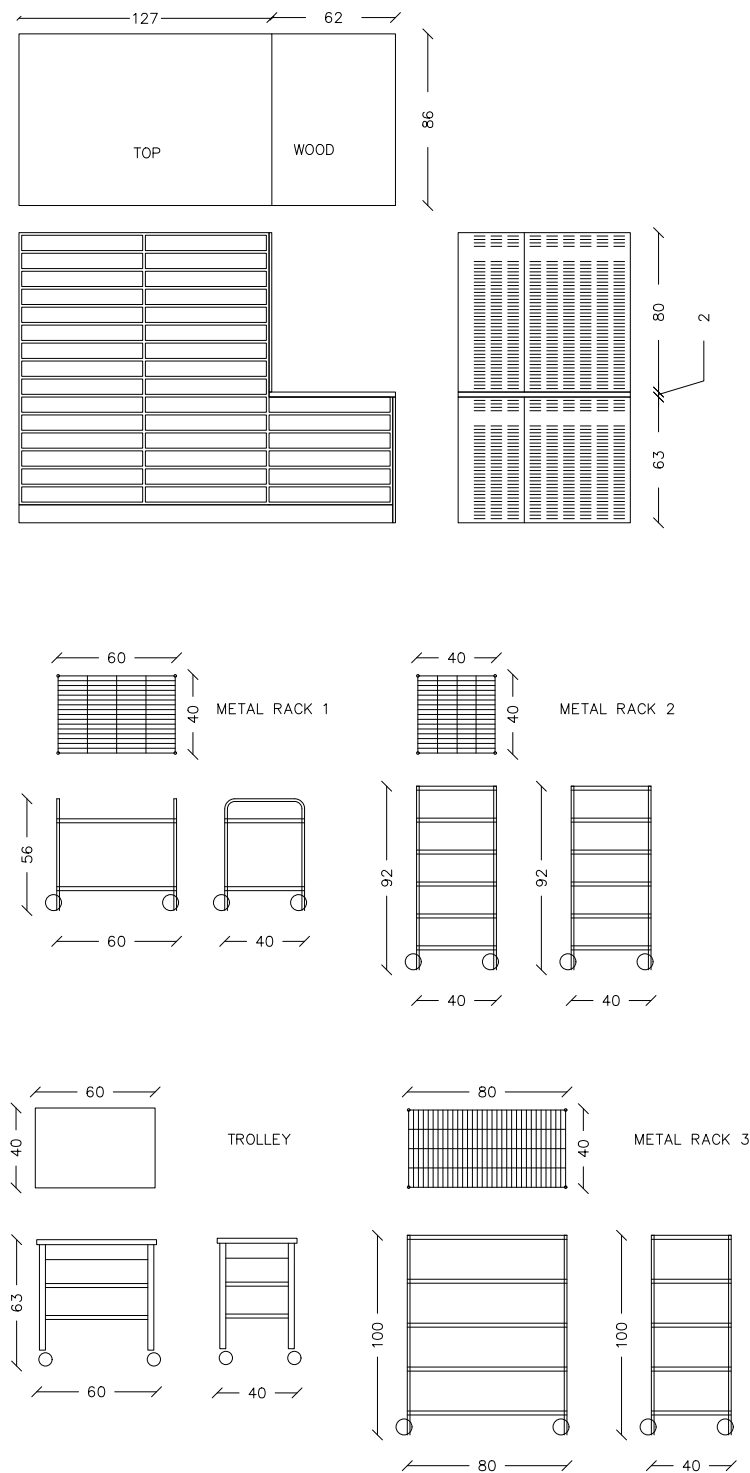
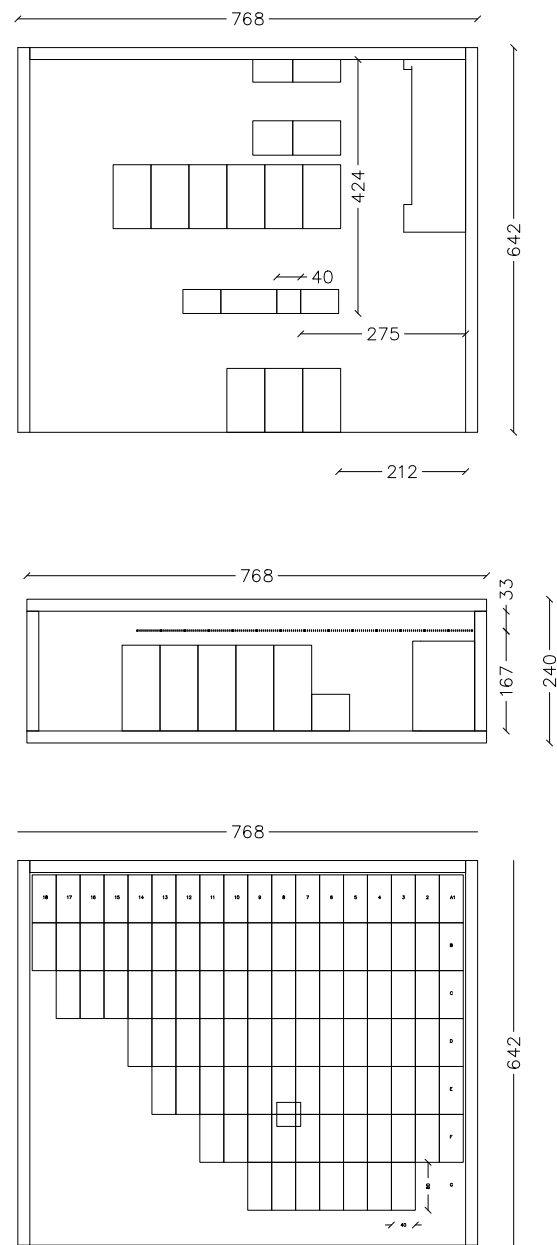
I started to build the space in SketchUp based on the 2,5m ceiling height, and other dimensions derived from correcting perspectives of photos in Photoshop. It is very hard to determine the exact camera angle. I wasn't sure if it's the wrong camera position, wrong field of view or the dimensions of the space that made it looking off.

In the back of my mind, I vaguely remembered that there was a tool that helps you to match a photo with the model in SketchUp. I never knew what it was for exactly. It is finally time to try it out. It became a very powerful tool to adjust the dimensions of all the furniture based on a reliable camera angle.

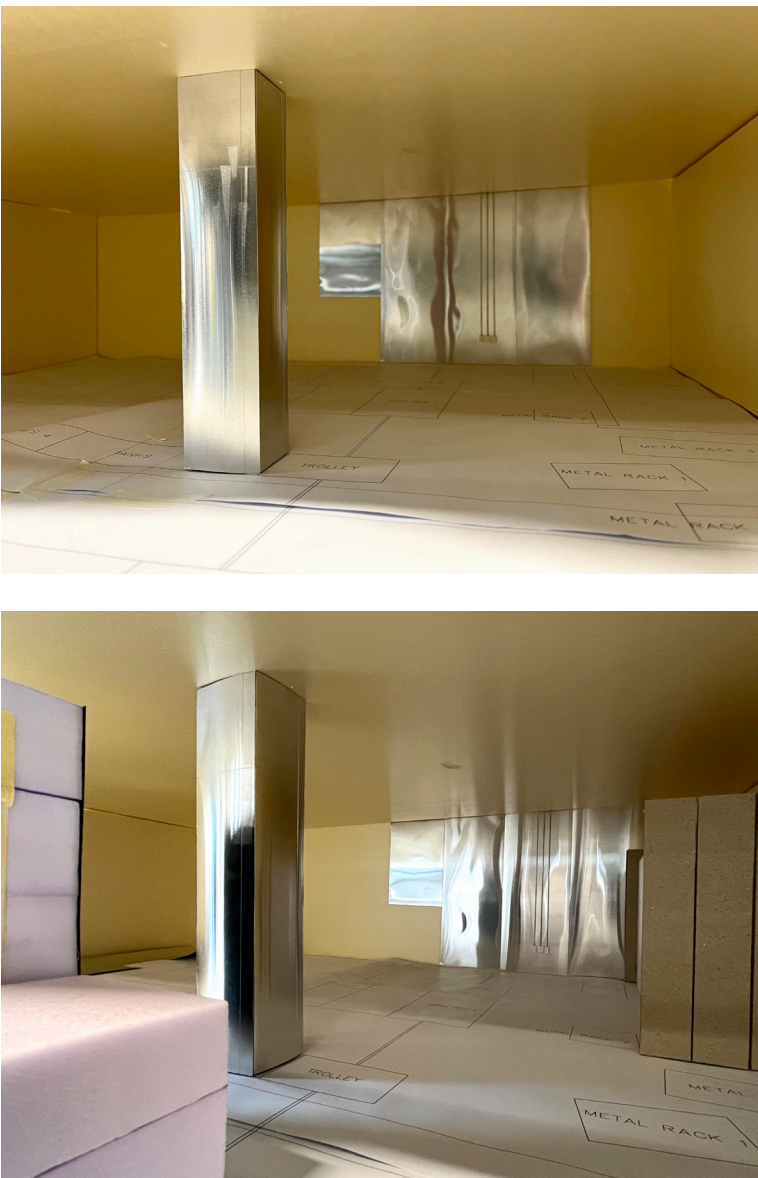


plans, section & furniture drawings

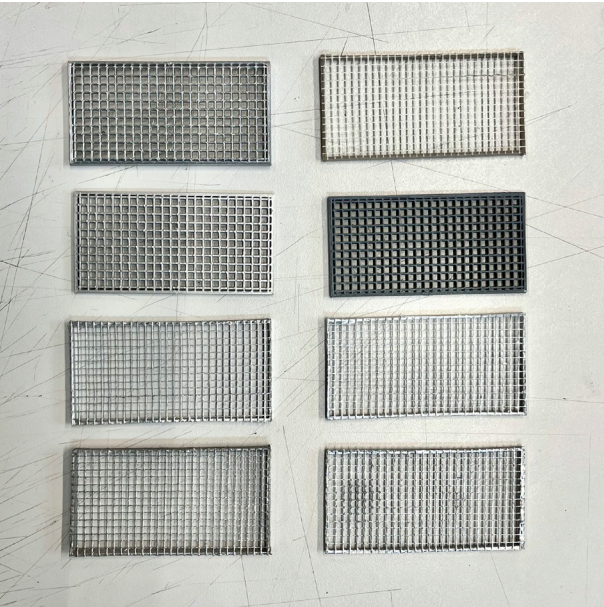
I drew and printed the floor plan, section and ceiling plan on 1:15 in CAD for my groupmates to construct the model accordingly. Later I worked on the furniture drawings and printed them on scale, to choose the best material and method to make them.

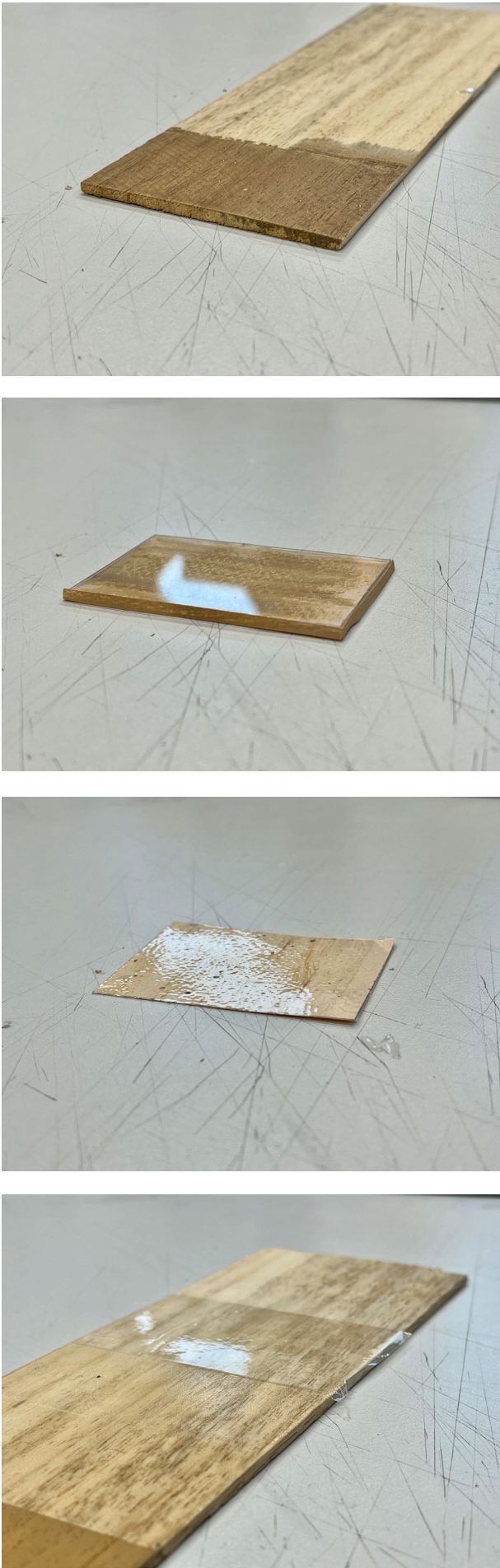
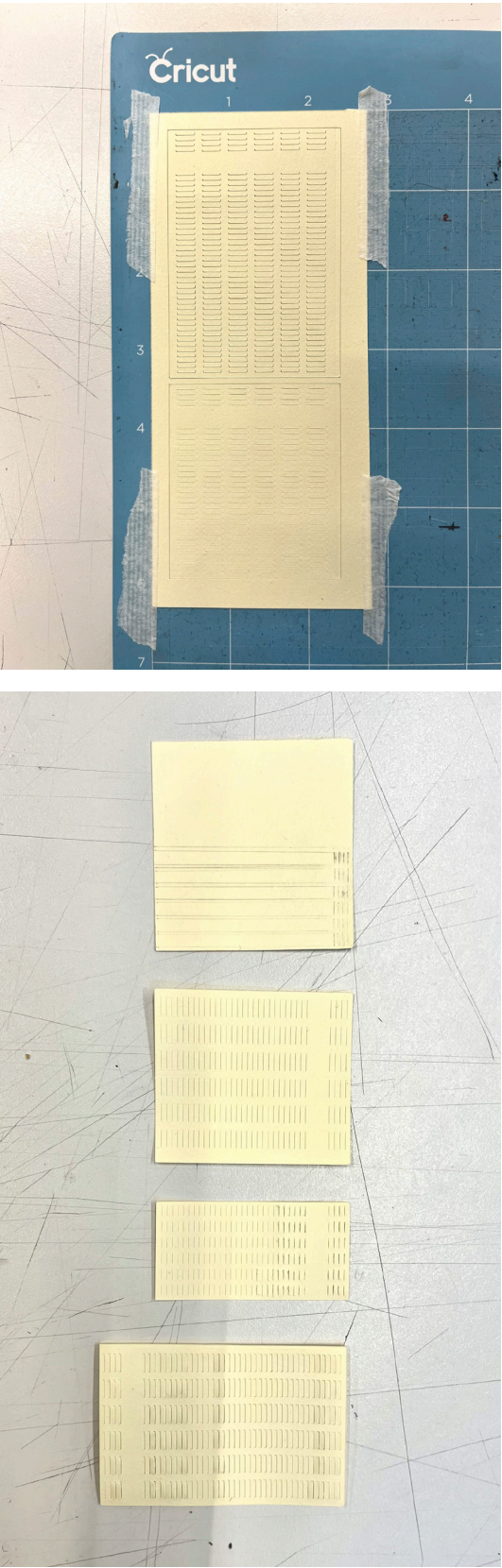


making the space



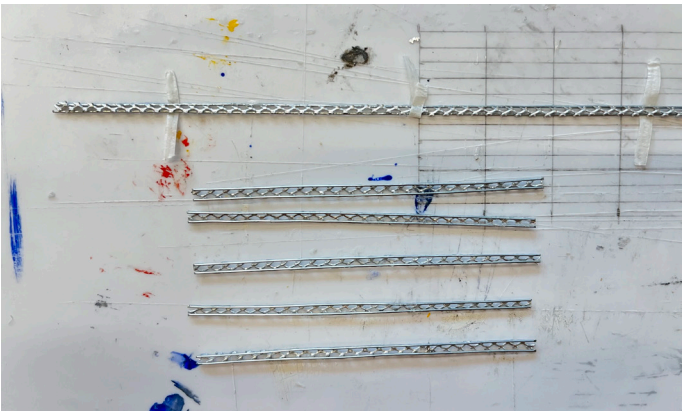
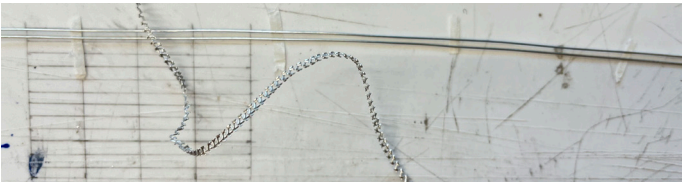
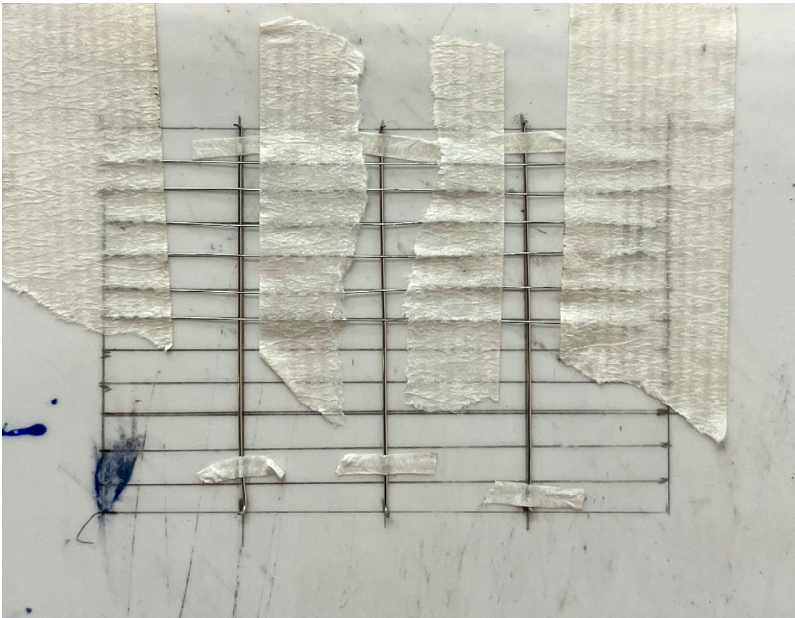
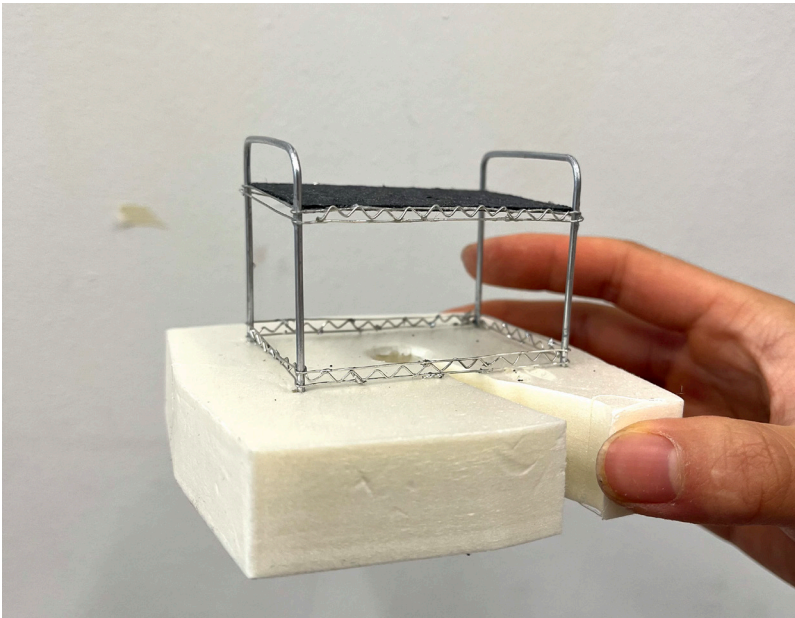
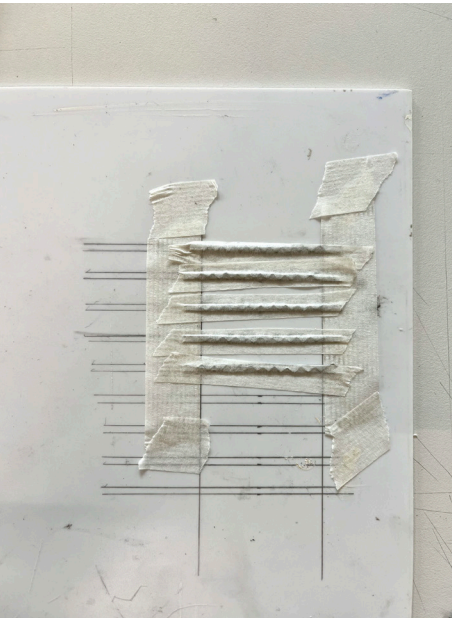
sampling materials





The first week's reading is 'Storehouses of Knowledge: The Origins of the Contemporary Architectural Museum' by John Harris. The reading was a bit long and tedious. As it was written in the 1980s, it was also quite outdated. The discussion on the research seminar around 6 questions was rather fruitful:

- How is the history of the architecture museum linked to the history of the architecture **profession**?
 - > I thought museums came into being when architecture was separated from considering building as a craft. Crafts were passed from one to the other in a master-apprentice way. When pattern books existed, architecture knowledge started to be documented on paper, on representations of architecture instead of the making itself. From that point on, museums were needed to spread knowledge.
 - > The emergence of museums was closely related to the professionalization of architectural field, which went parallel with education. An important date is 1834, the year RIBA was founded.
 - > The process formalized things but inevitably excluded things at the same time.
- What is an architecture **museum**, and how is it different/similar to the architecture **archive**?
 - > Museum is public display while archive is for professional study.
 - > Museum has selective pieces while archive has the complete collection.
 - > Museum has an intention, it wants to tell a story, while archive is waiting for discovery and is relatively objective.
 - > Each piece in a museum collection has its own meaning, while an archive's collection only makes sense as a whole.
- How do **technologies/furniture** of storage and display relate to historic ideas about collecting and archiving?
 - > There has been growing attention on protecting and preserving the collection.
- What kinds of changing **publics** are implied in this history of the architecture museum?
 - > The audience went from domestic and friend circle (as in John Soane's museum) to professionals & students, and now to the general public.
 - > Models and 1:1 replicates of architecture are much more powerful for the non-professionals than drawings.
- What shortcomings are there in Harris's **historiography** of the architecture museum? What information is privileged, and what is lacking?
 - > He was the founder of ICAM, the international conference of architecture museums, which contains only western countries.
 - > We miss the theory of knowledge of the other parts of the world.
- How might we bring this history up to the present day? What are the **recent concerns** of architecture museums and archives that are missing in this history?
 - > Digitalization.
 - > "Living archive" is more a buzzword than a new concept.
 - > The archives all need to open to the public to survive.





After making cladding of the stainless steel column with 0,5mm aluminium foil, we discovered a quality of this material. It only reflects well when you look at it perpendicular to the grains. The reflection becomes very blurry when it's parallel to your sightline. Later we replaced the cladding with a new piece of aluminium cut in the right direction.



Fire protection

Halon gas system (collection storage and collection work areas); hydraulic dry pipe sprinkler system (all other areas).

Since the very beginning of looking at the CCA vault photo, I have been wondering what the blue tanks were. They were quite blurry on the photo we are making but are more visible on other photos of the vault. I found the answer on the 'Building and Gardens: Participants, Chronology and Specifications' document. It specified that the fire protection applied in the basement is halon gas. Photos of it coincides with our blue tanks.

A fun fact was that halon gas has been prohibited from producing in 1987 at a conference in Montreal. Which means that when the construction of the CCA started, the gas was banned in the same city, but the CCA still decided to install them.

This choice of fatal gas for fire protection showed the CCA's priorities. Its upmost task is to protect the collections instead of human.

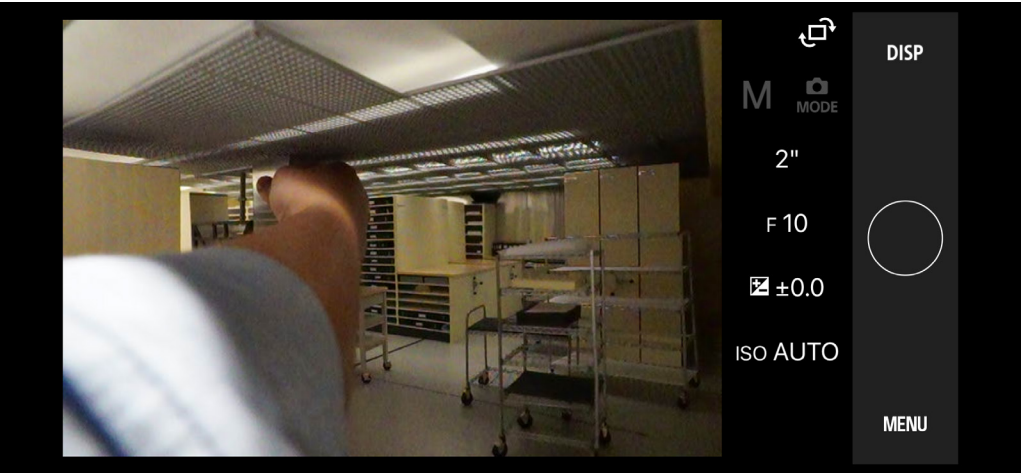


testing lighting



test photos





reflection

Collaboration went quite smoothly in this first brief of making a model of the CCA vault. From the beginning, curiosity guided me to be a detective of the space and of the building. I enjoyed finding the right dimensions of the space and furniture and matching it with the photo. This knowledge put me in a leading position in the process.

Since I was the only one working with SketchUp, I had an overview of everything that needs to be made, and my groupmates had to consult me for all the dimensions. In the first week, I felt a bit stressful to feed work to my groupmates, who were eager to start modelling. This pushed me to produce very simple and pragmatic CAD drawings of the space as fast as possible for them to work with. When they started with that, I was able to take my time to produce the other furniture plans. Later on, we naturally took on parts of the model to work on: Veronica worked on the handcrafted ceiling (but mainly on the drawings for research); Daan worked on the 3D printed ceiling, the gas tanks, the rotating handles, the wooden trolley, and the main shelving; Yunke did the reflective wall and column, the floor, other shelvings and their sides; I worked on cricutting shelving claddings and the metal trolleys.

The fact that all four of us have experience with large scale model making ensured the smooth process and the high quality of the result. The accuracy of the final photo was beyond what I could have imagined when I first saw the photo. We had a good balance between machine-made and handcrafted. This produced enough preciseness and cleanliness of this particular photo while leaving some margins to be auto-completed by our brain.

the next brief

We will visit the VAI archive and be given an ensemble of archive of an architect. Our task is to design the environment to store, protect and present the ensemble. The tutors suggested that we should research on the architect we were assigned prior to the archive visit.

My first question was: Should we design a personal **museum** of the architect, or a space of an institution in which a temporary **exhibition** of the architect take place? Daniel answered as usual - it's up to you to decide how much the design is related to this architect.

With the long-term goal of designing the new VAI archive in mind, it is more practical to consider the space as a flexible space, in which certain archive materials are kept permanently and exhibitions happen intermittently. I understand the purpose of defining how archives should be for us, but it is all too ambitious to think through it to the level of model-making in two weeks time. However, seen from the brief itself, the only grip we have for this task is the architect. It is more realistic to learn something from him than devise my own philosophy on archives in the two weeks we have.

reading about Christian Kieckens

Christian Kieckens (1951-2020) was an architect, educator and scenography designer. He was active in Flanders and southern provinces of the Netherlands. His designs differ much in scale, including tableware, furniture, exhibition, houses, apartment buildings, factories, to urban planning. He wrote many books and gave many lectures. He was one of the founders of the S/AM (Stichting Architectuurmuseum). He had close relation with the nowadays VAI & de Singel.

- 1993 - exhibition 'De plaats en het gebouw' in de Singel, along with the installation on the ramp 'Tafel-Landschap'
- 2014 - his archive is donated to the VAI as a whole
- 2016 - exhibition 'Het huis. De mentor. Het archief.' in de Singel, showing selected works from the donated collection, his teaching career, and an (almost?) 1:1 replica of the Van Hover-De Pus House
- 2020 - after his death, the VAI designed a room in the library for him, to permanently house his collection of books

I started to read the book 'Zoeken, Bouwen, Denken'.

I really liked all the photo series he published as pdf's on his website. They are documentations of his lens towards the world. Not every photo is an artwork, but I can read why he took each photo.

"Tafel - landschap"

- ↳ Vlaanderen - landschap verdiepen → aandacht wordt geschonken aan het interieur
- ↳ let it be. few architecture nowadays are about let it be.
- renaissance / classical influence.
- ↳ "stoa" inspired. expo / interior designs.
- ↳ wall on one side, columns on the other.
- ↳ moving back & forth
- ↳ changing perspectives.
- using words "correct" / "right".
- ↳ Swiss mentality, exactness.
- ↳ Dutch "effe kijken, zeg maar" vs. Belgian "ja maar nee" vs. German "Genau".
- ↳ objective, reasoned, soberness, an absent presence.
- architecture is... directness.
- ↳ not an autonomous field.
- ↳ can never bring "trend"
- ↳ an applied art.
- ↳ a flat layer with accents.
- ↳ very different from art, but uses art
- ↳ spaces could be functionless → flexibility & quality more important.
- ↳ system & proportions. → depth, sections
- ↳ judge neutrally based on the historical/geographical conditions instead of judge emotionally the current direct content.
- ↳ in history, houses were not "architecture". 1980s magazines sell a lifestyle ideal to everyone, making "architecture" ownable for the particular.



BRIEF II. A PLACE TO ARCHIVE

Week 1.5-1.10

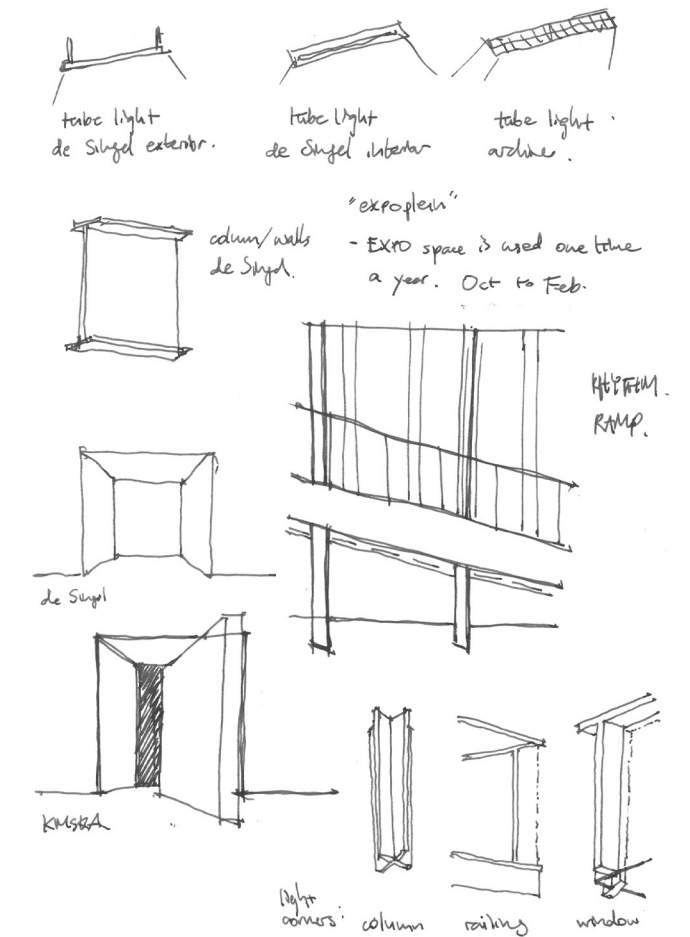
visiting the site & designing an archive room





The ongoing construction totally didn't help with the circulation and navigation around the huge complex. While this complicated system is frustrating, it might also have some potentials. Like the lady said, kids like to get lost and roam around the building, which is freely accessible for the most part. This quality of getting lost might become a highlight in a design.

I liked the focus on water on the exterior design. I liked the rhythm of tube lights inside and outside of the building. I liked the slab shaped columns that were in rhythm.



- audience:
 - ↳ music concert goes
 - ↳ family -sunday. children running around hallway.
- not accessible for wheelchairs.
- not accessible for visual impairments → too big, bad acoustic.
- bad wayfinding.
 - ↳ wished for feeling of certainty.
 - ↳ long open hour & reception desk.
- needs lockers/gardrobe.
- gender neutral toilets are confusing.
- exhibitions in hallways.
- multiple entrances / permeability.
- de Singel & conservatorium want to use the expo space
- function of de Singel is unclear from its exterior.
 - ↳ people don't visit if they don't come on purpose.



The archive is composed of many specialized **furnitures**. There were trolleys that fit the width of the aisle exactly. There were trolley with planks or without. There were lockers and cupboards. There were drawer cabinets. There was a speaker's stand on wheels. There ladders and stools.

What caught my attention most was the **foldable plank** on the side of the shelves. When pulled out, it provided a convenient surface to open a folder or write a note instantly on spot. It was the only horizontal surface within arm's reach. It serves the same purpose as the overhanging plank in the shelves of DMT architect's office. However, in the archive storage, a permanent, continuous horizontal surface would be too luxurious.



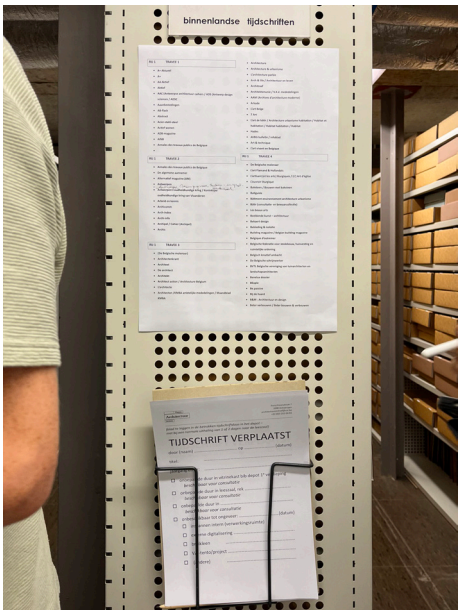
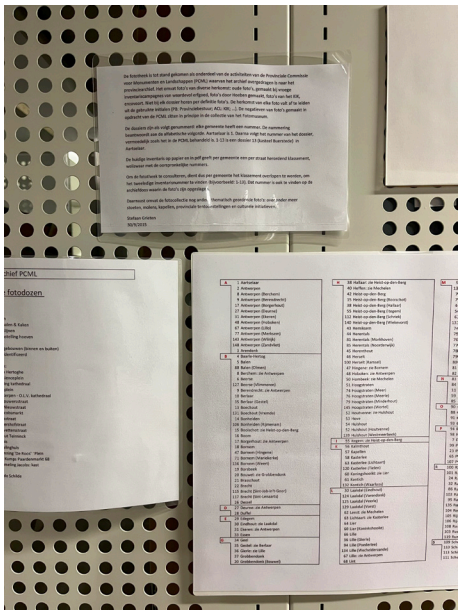
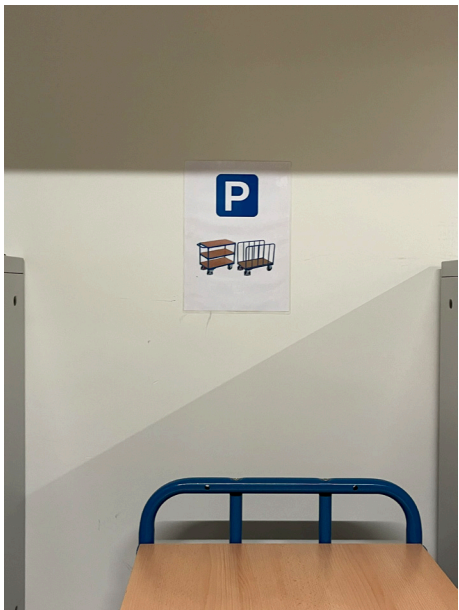
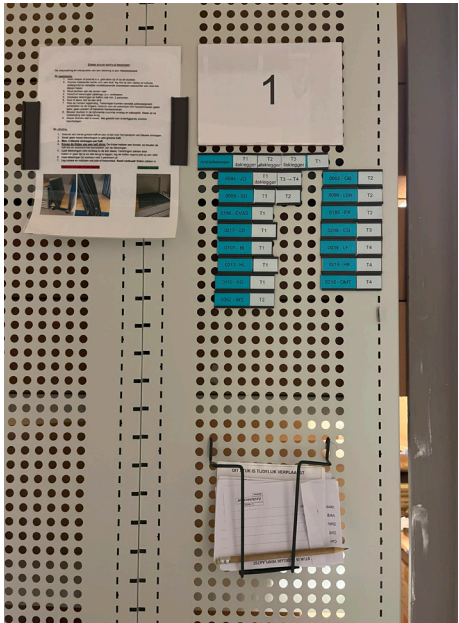
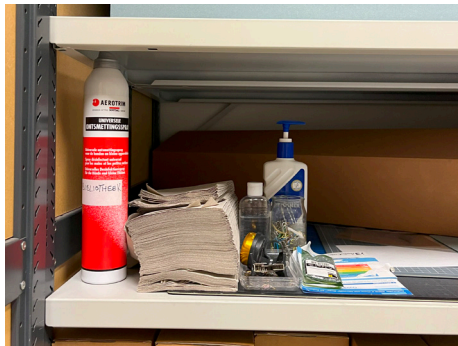
The mismatch between the building and the archive is obvious. The shelves were **underdimensioned**, resulting in an improvised structure across two shelves to support a large model. Every inch of space next to the ventilation pipes was stuffed by boxes.

The **traces** on the composite floor recorded the frequency and directions of trolleys movements clearly.



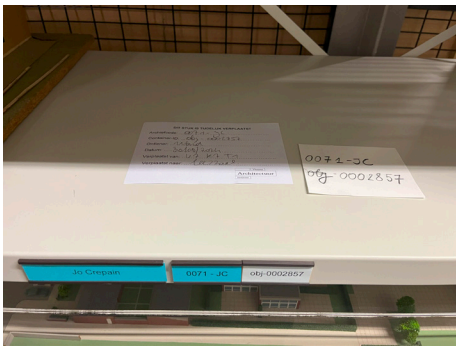
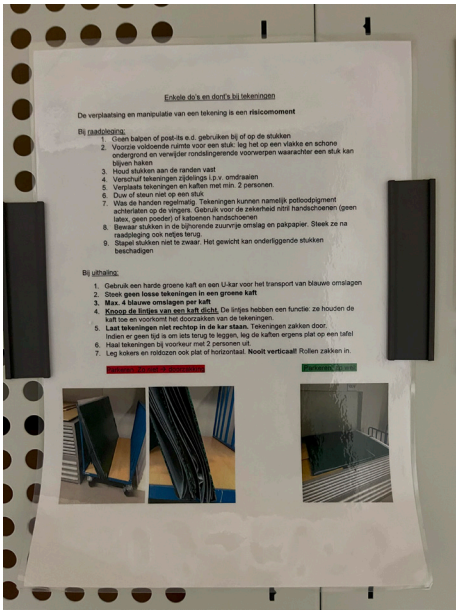
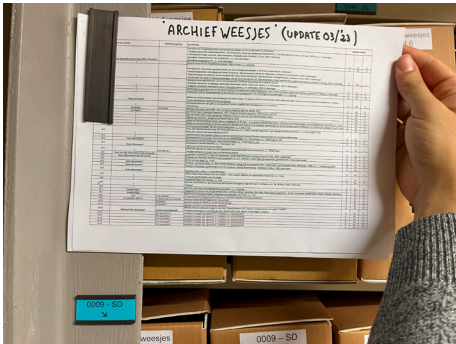
VAi archive

There are lots of **stuffs** in general. The pencils, pencil sharpeners, reparation tapes, weights, staplers, rulers, disinfection sprays, clips, gloves, brushes, scissors, towels and bins are lively representation of the daily works in an archive. They could be neater though.

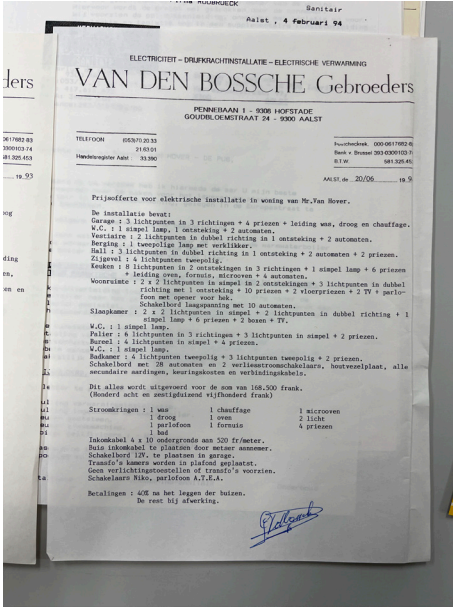
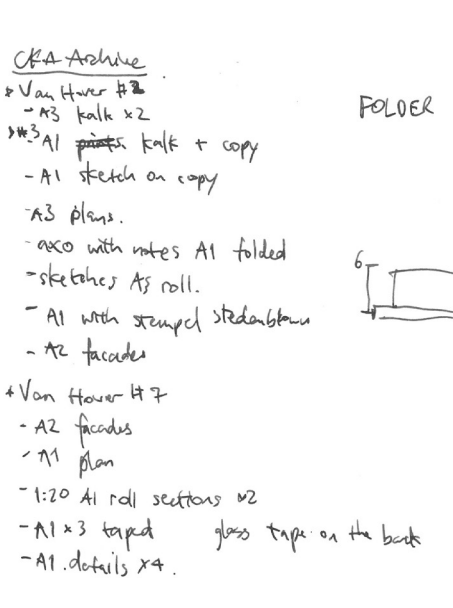
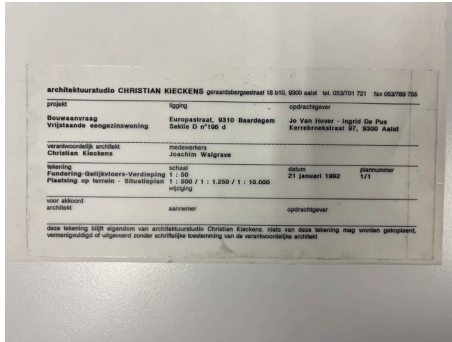
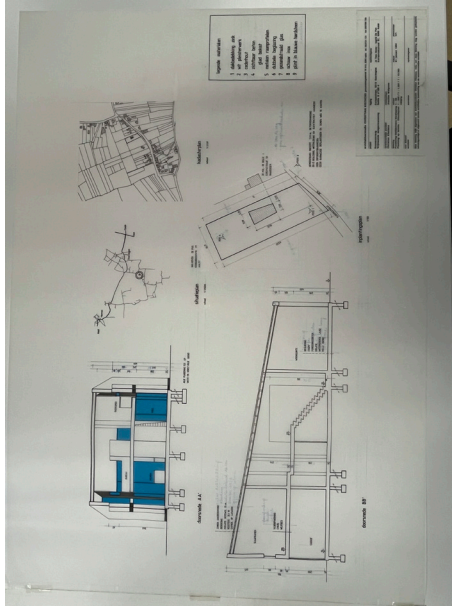
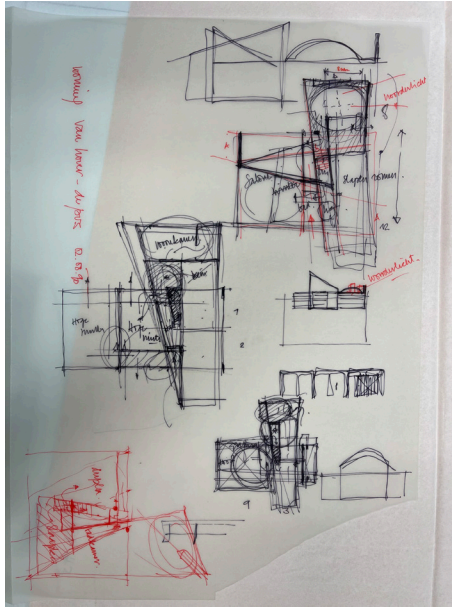
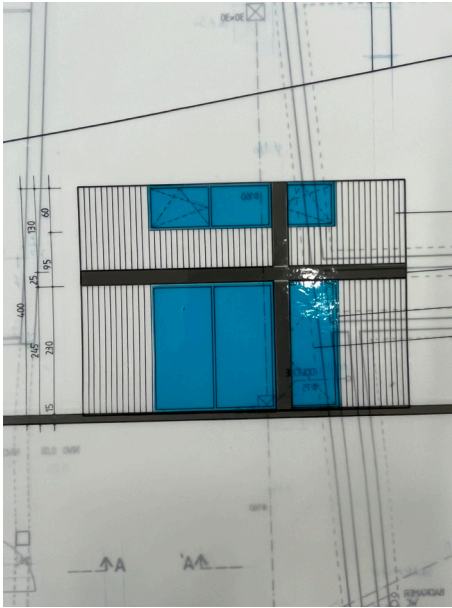
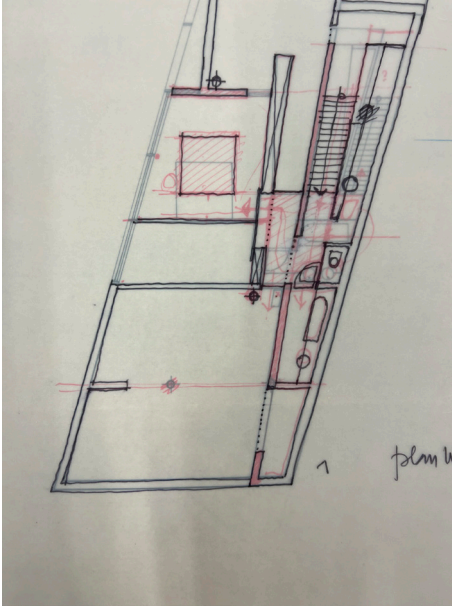
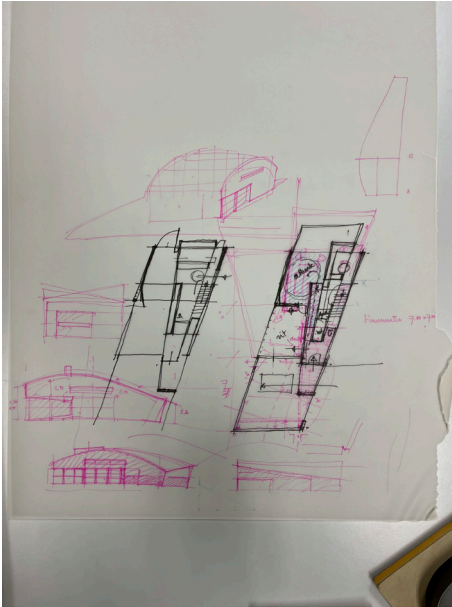
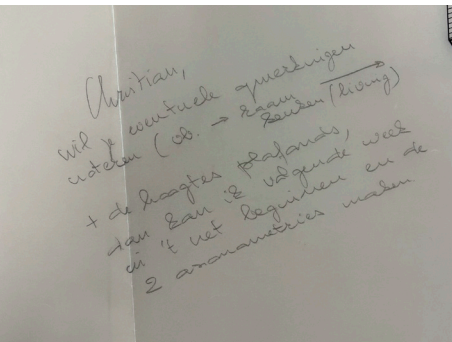
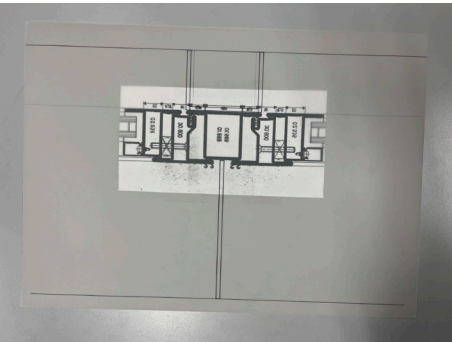
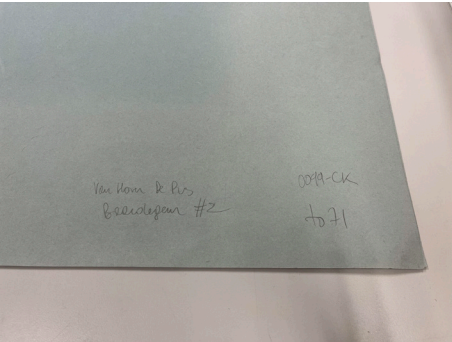


There are lots of **tags, instructions and illustrations** taped, placed or hanging everywhere. It makes the spaces look chaotic and improvised. The papers were also not always very readable.

Could magnets be a solution? Or would it all be integrated in digital display?



archive materials



I have received a blue drawing folder of 120 by 80cm and a box of folders which then include subfolders of A4 documents. They were all about the Van Hove-De Pus House project in Baarddegem.

The drawings were ordered by dividers labelled #2, #3 and #7. They contained neat drawings with ink pen on tracing paper, copies of those drawings, revising drawings, pencil draft for final drawings and sketches. The sizes differ from A3 to A1. The collection is especially interesting because of the different media used, and the written notes on the side.

The A4 folder contained contracts, biddings for different materials and installations, product pages and sketches of construction details. These were important in understanding the building technology, process and prices back then.

The Archive is not Enough — Sofie De Caigny

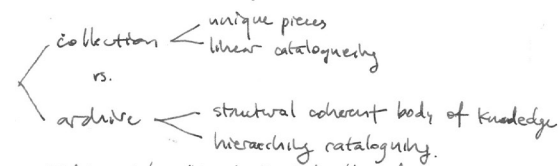
- the establishment of VAI archive:

- inventories of local archives
- bringing people together
- Province of Antwerpen initiated
- 10 years preparation
- 2016 - the historical collection merged with the expo / contemporary arch. institution which became the VAI.

Sofie who was involved in the whole process became the director.

► The NAI effect — Sergio M. Figueiredo

- roles of arch. arch
 - ↳ memory
 - ↳ contemporary issues
 - ↳ public awareness



- ICOM - International Confederation of Museums

- ↳ 1979 founded for professionals
- ↳ to unite eastern europe with other parts after the cold war
- ↳ new mission to engage the other parts of the world.

- 20th century

- serving scholars
- for restoration of monuments. → very practical & urgent nowadays.
- celebration of "Architecture"
- single architects honored.

- scientific process

- ISADG - International Standard on archival cataloguing.
- change of STATUS → investment once artefact entered arch.

- 1990s

- new institutions
- US buys European Archives
 - ↳ CIAM (Belgian) → Los Angeles Getty Centre.
- expectation of the growth of commercial value of archives.
 - as art markets.

- 2000s

- digital-born archives.
 - ↳ authenticity?
 - ↳ professional archivists were not trained as IT-specialists.
 - ↳ public vs. protection of authorship
- VAI shares a digital archive platform AIDA with other institutes
- demand for more openness → public criterion (not architectural)
- awareness of "integrity" > size of collection.
 - conflict & "selection"
 - ↳ growing towards a limit (sustainability)

- 2008 - 2020 disruption

- self-referential architectural culture about to explode.
- NAI (the biggest archive) were threatened to be merged by new political runners
- growing impact of Biennales vs. slow / traditional archives.
 - faster / more influential / innovative / contemporary
 - ↳ but these Expo have always existed?
- "Preservation is Overtaking us" - Ren Koo (何超英)
- what about "curated decay"?
 - ↳ managed / controlled, accept decay & loss.

- post-Covid

- awareness of post-colonialism / BLM / Feminism
- experiments / self-reflective / engagement.
- drifting away from the "scientific way"
- inclusion.
- people wanting to see their own house vs. professional scholars?
- holistic, story behind
- in ISADG
 - ↳ no collaborators of the architect
 - ↳ no users, only clients
- objectivity → intersubjectivity.
- women don't consider that themselves don't have archives
 - ↳ only ego / self-recognition makes an archive?
- how do we re-evaluate the existing collection?
- CCA → centring Africa in the history of architecture.
 - ↳ but it's still catalogued by names, by educated architects, by drawing, models.
- "archives are places of violence"
- Marcel Raymakers - overlooked & under-appreciated
 - recycle / fun / collage
- Elza Severin - archives "lost" in between husband Renat Braim.
- focus on network (commissioner / planner / advisors / users).
- ARCHIEF HUB VAI, - focusing on interrelations.
- current procedure:
 - acquisition → catalogue → research → exhibition / publication → public outreach.
- participation at every stage!
- everything is UMBAU (Houses Europe Group)
- dead → activated!
- everyday - everyone - everywhere...

- A BUILDING ...

- ↳ one building → still a feeling of freeness.
- ↳ two locations in one → more interactions between ^{contemporary} & ^{PAST}.
- ↳ distributed model?
- ↳ collect for the sake of reuse
 - not to glorify the past?
- ↳ NAI problems
 - too big frame → climate
 - archive completely separated from the other functions.
 - ↳ ECTV architect's proposal of Hubert church.
- AI is twisted by existing knowledge
 - ↳ speeds up recognition / cataloguing
 - ↳ limited to ~~new~~ names, continue to ignore what have been ignored.
- shared facility with other parties (deSingel) for occasional use of auditorium (use per month maybe).
- de Singel - every fall & spring the basement is filled with water.
- She liked the proposal over the bridge the most.

Coming back home, I had to sort and edit the photos taken in the trip. I took hundreds of photos of, in and around De Singel, as documentation for the design phase later. The visits to De Singel were sometimes random, making the photos repetitive but also complementing. To sort them in folders that can be easily used in the future, I created a set of **cataloguing criteria**:

- Surrounding
 - > showing the direct relation of the surrounding (landscape, streets, buildings) with De Singel
 - > the landscape, streets and buildings in the vicinity of De Singel
- Exterior
 - > showing the volumes and landscape within the plot
 - > showing details of the exterior finishings and joints
- Interior
 - > interior spaces
 - > interior finishings and joints
 - > the outside from an interior viewpoint

Here are my observations in this cataloguing process:

- Exterior and interior spaces are **mixed**. We continuously stepped in and out of doors, going through spaces like rooftops, stairs and courtyards. I often took photos of the exterior while standing inside, taking advantage of the large windows and glass corridors. There were many places on the outside of the building where I felt more like being sheltered, such as under the lifted volumes and next to the high walls.
- Interior being **continuous**, difficult to separate the different parts of the building, let alone sorting them in a linear order. There are also hierarchies within the interior. The theatres and the expo space are for example the interior of the interior.



This photo has been placed, for example, in all three categories.

- Surrounding - It is looking at the building across De Singel.
- Exterior - It shows some exterior finishings
- Interior - Its viewpoint is rather interior, framed by the overhanging volume and the roof below.

FIRST THOUGHTS

10/08
TUE.

MOVING ARCHIVIST/ VISITOR/ CHAIRS.

- controlled circulation
- why not robots?
- theme park, trains.
- no need to look for the item.
- minimal circulation space.

MOVING DOCUMENTS/ SHELVES.

- people are free in a space
- windows to see / operate the stuffs
- efficient storage
- underground parking tower.
- building as a big machine.

HIGH SPACE FOR EXPO

- feel open/sacred.
- possibility of experiencing (i).
- flexible for other expo.
- flexible for lecture/events

LOW SPACE FOR STORAGE.

- efficient use of space
- everything is reachable (with a ladder or).
- feel safe, easy fire control.

FIXED FURNITURE

- more holistic space
- rather fixed relation between expo & storage.
- have some contents for the expo pieces

MORABLE FURNITURE

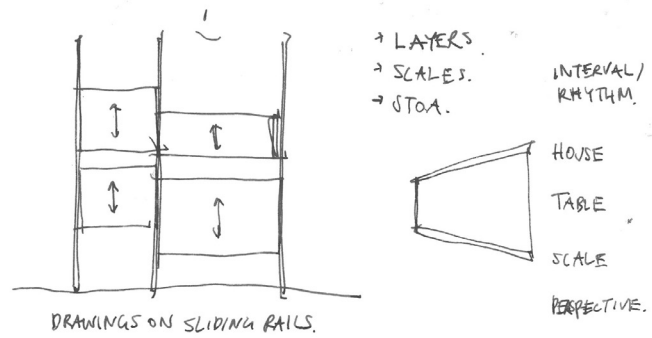
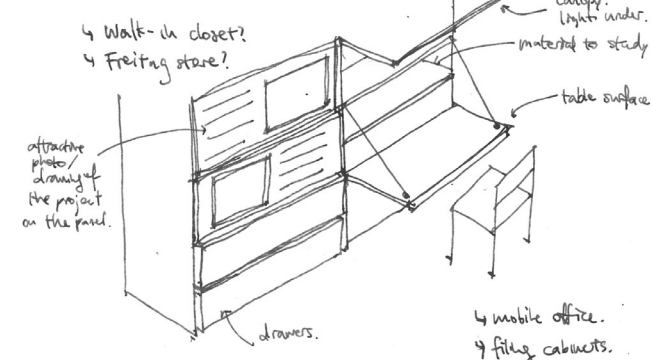
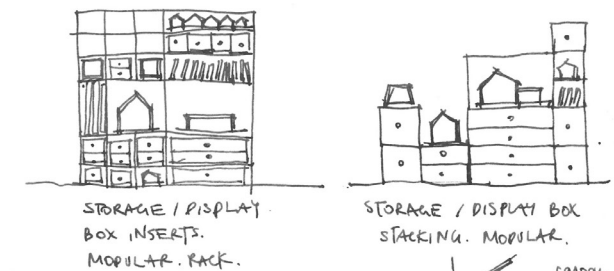
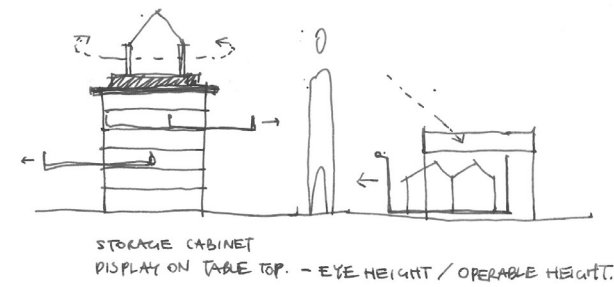
- space can be emptied → expo
- things in storage can be moved to the expo space, as a whole
- clumsy, fragmented, space itself should fall into background
- large elevator/corridors needed.
- different configurations for expo.

HORIZONTAL

- books, documents.
- large models
- small drawings/photos
- study carefully.

VERTICAL SURFACES.

- large drawings/photos/films.
- small models.
- relations, (detective wall).



Christian Kieckens — zoeken / denken / bouwen — XS.

- layeredness ← space / images / language.
- different variety of inspirations, beyond architecture.
- wide oeuvre.
- made many expos.
- bringing orders, orienting structure.
- themes arise from the history (eg. perspectives)
- the references behind his work should not be revealed immediately, but hidden to some extent.
- artists who also play with language:
 - ↳ Rene Magritte
 - ↳ Marcel Broodthaers
- furniture design. (metaphor for arch.)
 - ↳ onefro (brasserie/caf )
 - functionality - reading + coffee. → both foods.
 - setting - rotated to look at arch., always against the wall, connected to arch.
 - meaning - material related to food (walnut + cherry).
 - perspective.
- ↳ Face 2 face
- eat & study heights for 2

- ↳ Buttercup
- smallest monolithic architectural volume.
- ↳ Milky Way:
 - "there is no milky way when the milk is away"
 - ↳ long mood play adds another layer to objects

- ↳ Fort des Cotes
- landscape of images
- influence of Descartes
- ↳ Brique de Verre
- verre (green) + verres (glass)
- mass & transparency.
- tangible + metaphorical object showing what architecture is about.

- Pieter de Bruyne blurred the boundaries between furniture/interior/arch
- ↳ influenced him to study proportions/numbers from Baroque & Egypt
- ↳ after studying Baroque domes he drifted apart from Pieter.
- music → interest in rhythm/series/intervals

- ↳ Bacino (10 carpets)
- a passage with rhythms on both sides.
- perspective is never fragmented but always a hole.
- it is never for the past but for the future.
- relation - ourselves - now - future.

- theatrical moments through the house
- later works became business-like → directness as Swiss-German.

- scenography
 - ↳ layout
 - ↳ nittegen ← explain
 - ↳ something for expo

- ↳ Belgian Pavilion Venice 1991.
- wooden platforms
- ↳ literal tables for maquette/reading.
- ↳ a platform for architects to show their work (S/AM)
- ↳ Belgian landscape.
- ↳ connecting the rooms spatially.

- ambiguity
- using temporary structure to give the space another meaning.

Waring Van Haver - De Plus, Baardbergen.

- 1990-1991 design - 7+ proposals
- 1994-1995 construction.
- proportions - squares - divisions.
- symmetry & asymmetry.
- material & detailing.
- views - relation with landscape.

S65 expo A&A. 1993.

- added 4 corner walls to form a new space
- symbolic representation of conceptual thinking world of architects

presentation concept the given location

SYNTHESIS.

"LABYRINTH - LIKE ~~FEAR~~ LIVES"

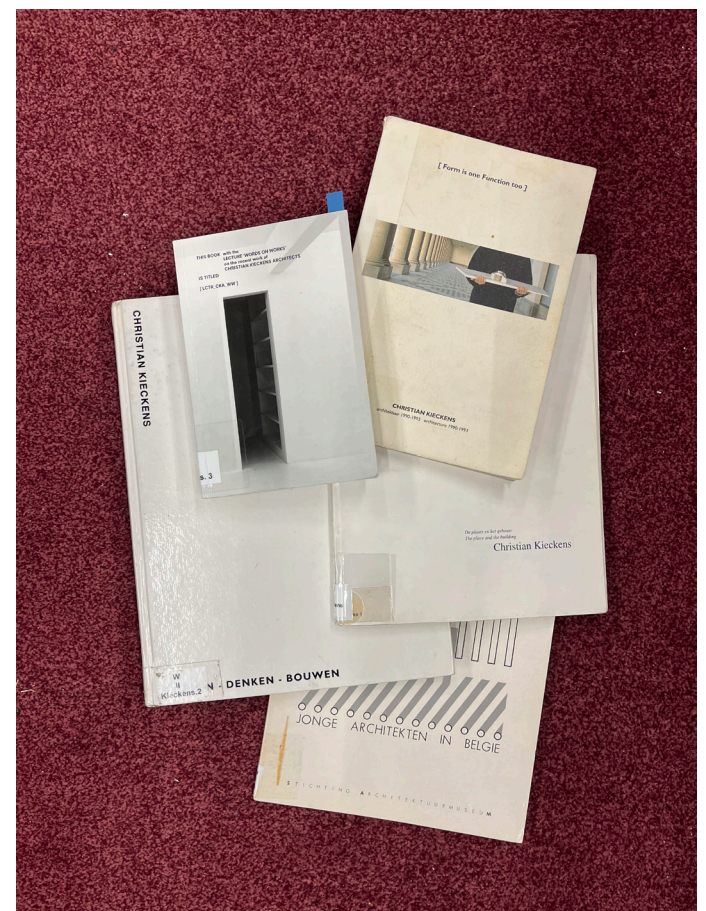
- ↳ both spatial & conceptual.
- ↳ not everything is sight.
- ↳ somethings hidden.
- ↳ just around the corner.
- ↳ ambiguous metaphors. layers of meanings.
- ↳ once you got it it will be super clear.
- ↳ understandable if you walk around

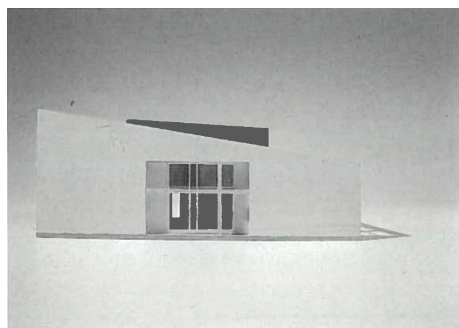
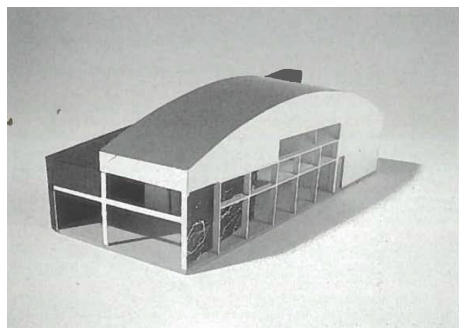
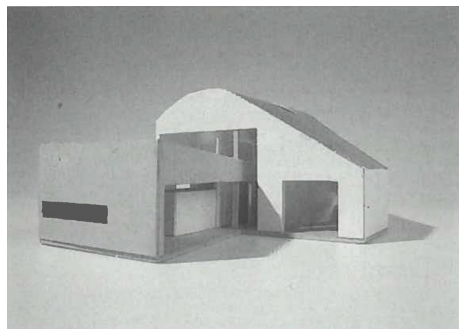
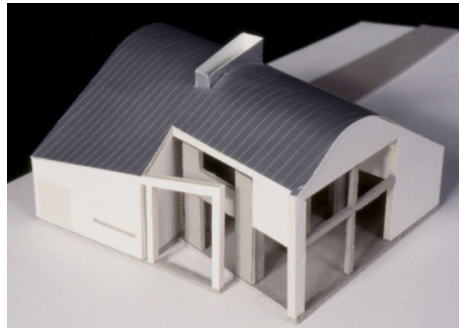
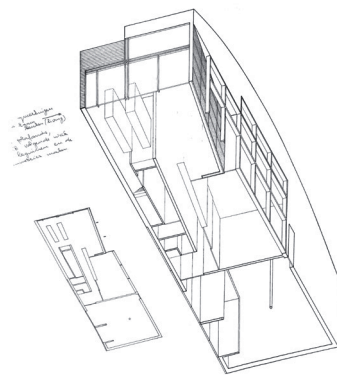
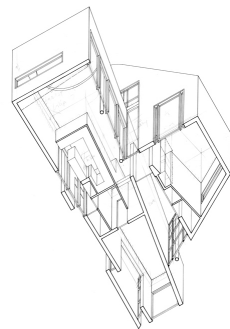
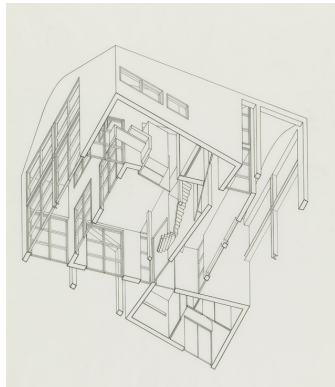
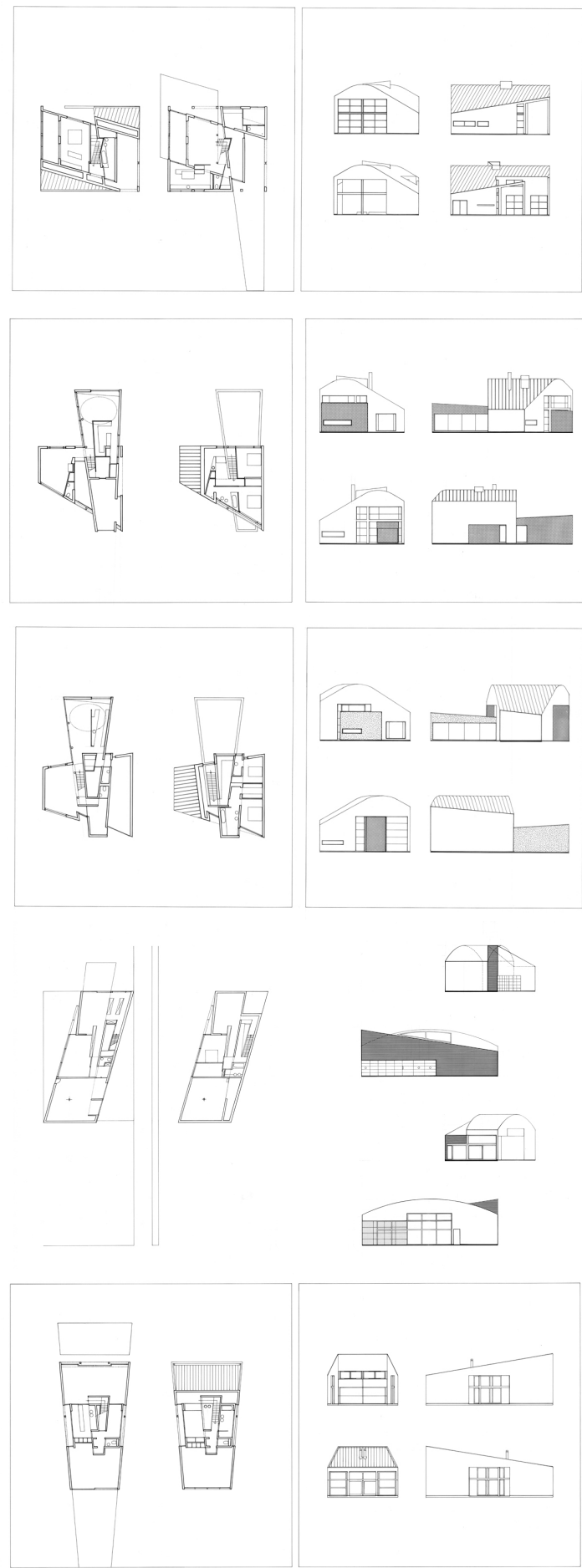
CONNECTS ABSTRACTNESS & CONCRETENESS.

CRYSTALLIZATION.

CONDENSING COMPLEXITY & LAYERS INTO FORM. THAT INTERACTS WITH THE LOCATION. → DIRECTNESS.

PERSPECTIVE → A LONGING → TOWARDS PERFECTION & NEVER-ENDING SEARCH FOR TRUTH & CORRECTNESS

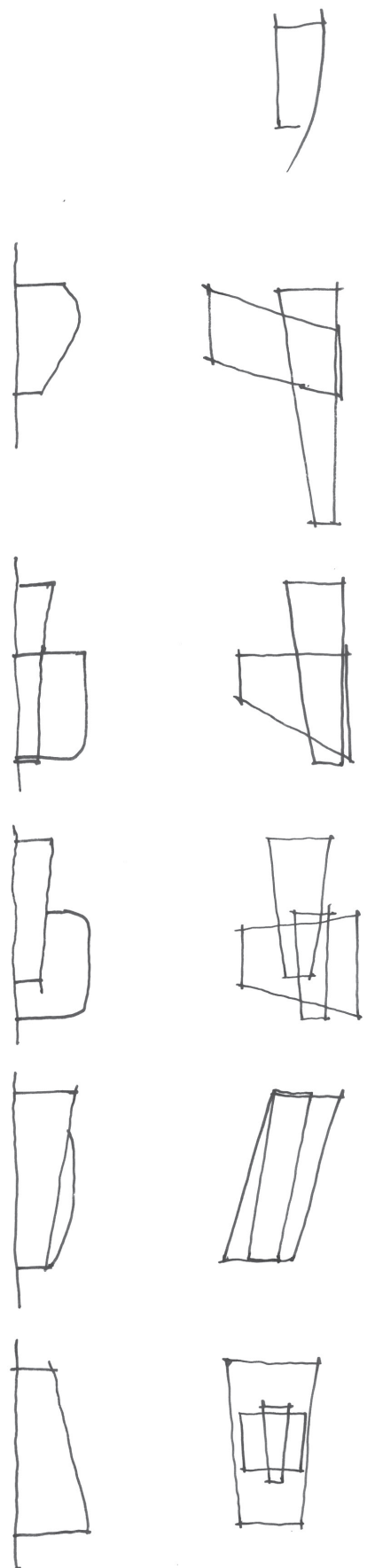


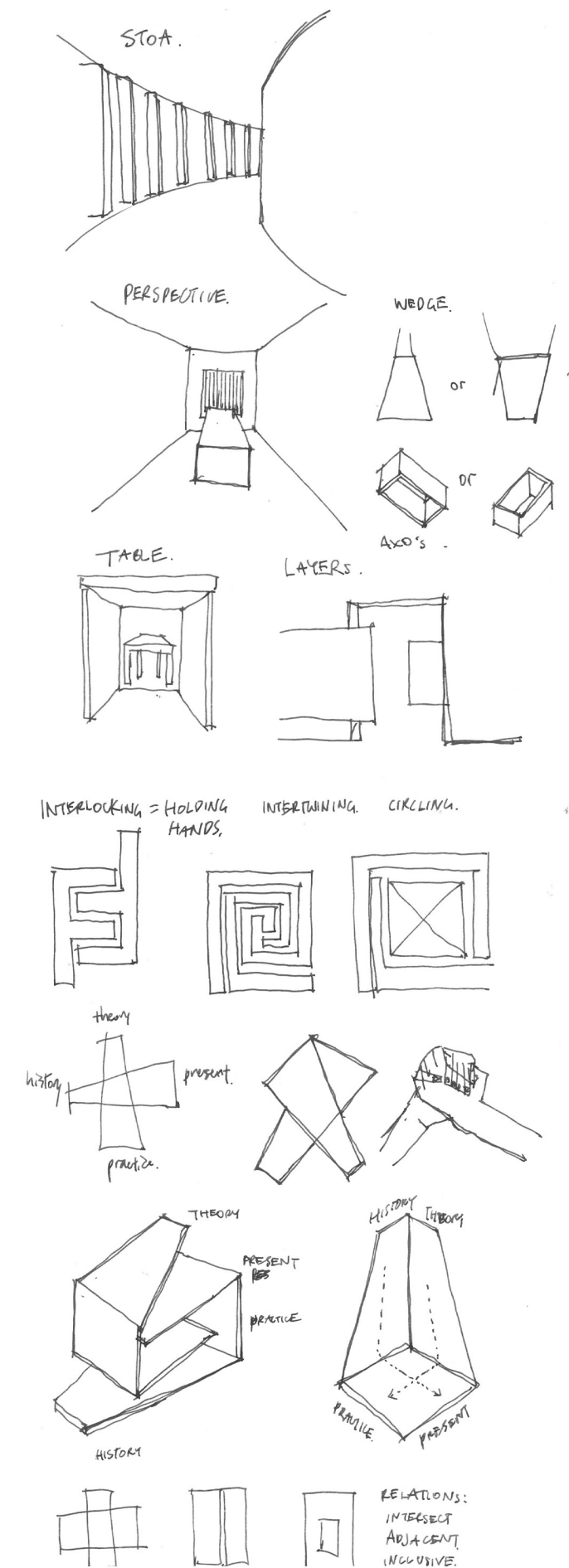


Through studying the archive materials I saw at the archive, digitalized archive materials by VAI, the book 'Form is One Function Too' and 'Zoeken Denken Bouwen', I collected the whole design process of Van Hover-De Pus house project. There were at least 5 versions of designs produced in 1990-91, that underwent significant changes. The technical drawings of the final plan were done in early 1992. The construction happened between 1994-1995. What a long process for a private house in the village. It was unclear why it took this long, or why the design changed so much. Nevertheless is it interesting to reveal this whole design and construction process to people. All the preliminary sketches, bidding documents and product flyers would visualise how an architect worked in the 90s in Flanders.

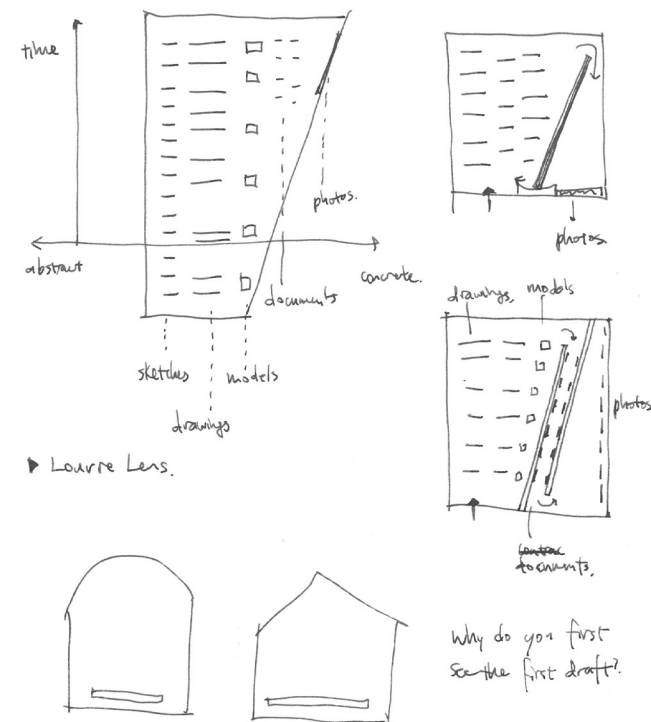
There are some ideas from this project that could inspire my design for the space:

- The project is a home, therefore a small and intimate space is favorable.
- The design evolved from rather complicated geometries to a purified form in the end.
- Intersection of geometries played an important role.
- The wedge shape has always been present, both in section and in plan, acting as a lens to the landscape. He was hesitant about its direction as he flipped it through the process.
- The first 3 axonometries were drawn from below, where as the final axonometry was from the top.
- He liked to use squares in facades.
- Very clean details and materialization.

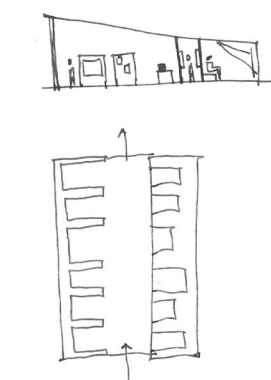




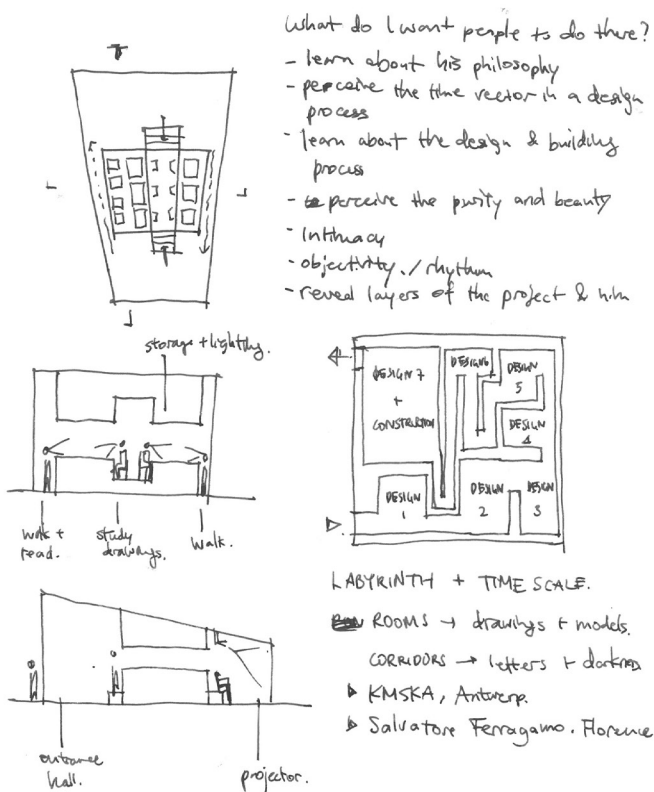
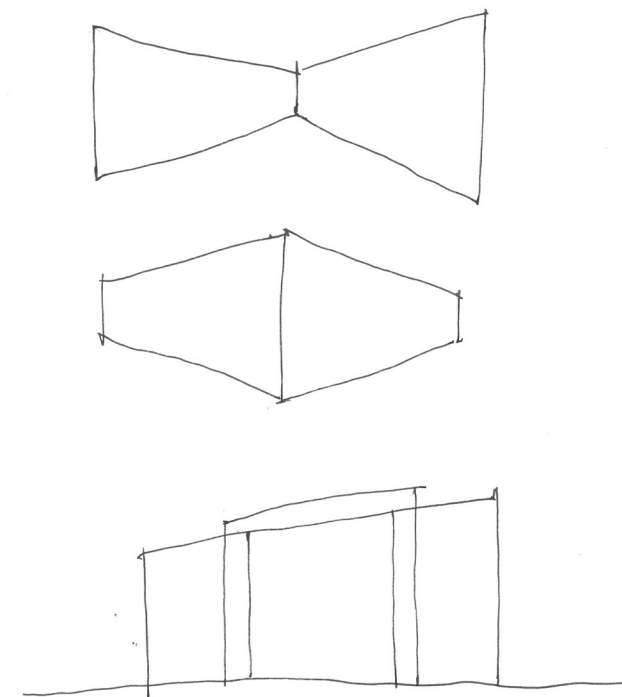
In archives, materials are usually compressed and not insightful as a whole. I want to make a space where archive materials are arranged in a way that represent their interrelations. In this case, the spatial configuration should correspond to the design process. I want the visitors to perceive the time duration and the work intensity when they walk around the space.



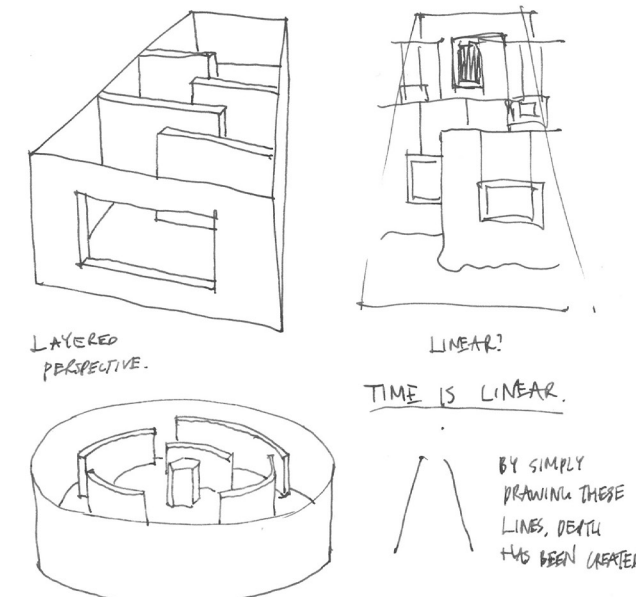
is archive → process → not worth exhibiting
 needs time to read, analyse, reflect
 for professionals?
 museum → unique piece → exhibition for the world.
 for the general public?



printed to send back to the archive.
 the image
 key process.
 - collect all the final photos of the models.
 - Brief 2 is squeezed on both ends.
 W18 - pre P1. (Thursday) - idea, draft presentation.
 W18 - final P1.

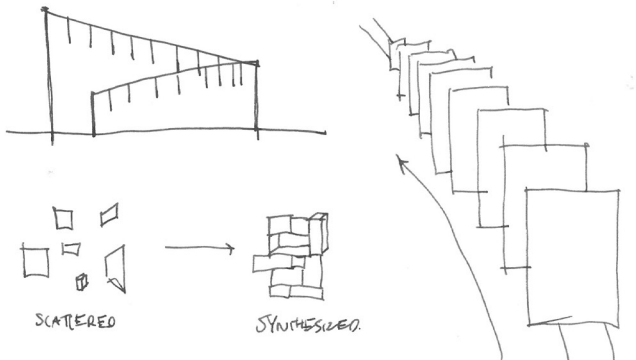


What do I want people to do there?
 - learn about his philosophy
 - perceive the time vector in a design process
 - learn about the design & building process
 - perceive the purity and beauty
 - intimacy
 - objectivity / rhythm
 - reveal layers of the project & him

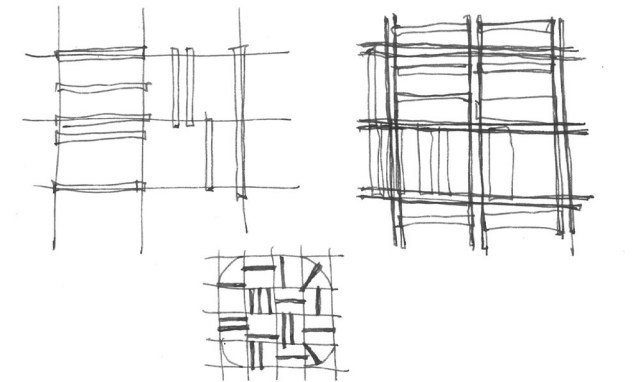


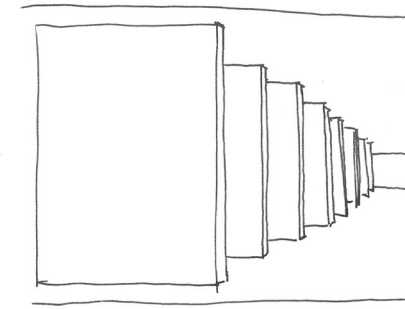
IN AN ARCHIVE, TIME IS WARPED.
 THE HISTORY HAS BEEN ENLARGED - FOCUSED ON, GIVEN IMPORTANCE
 CONDENSED - SELECTED. REPRESENTED.

Sketches drawings. Models (letters w/ client) → (large) drawings models photos potentially the space? contracts product pages details.

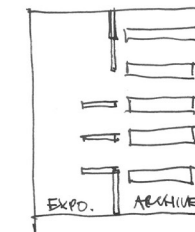


INTENSITY VARIETY OF WORKS. → DESIGN PROCESS VISUALISED. → TRINGS ARRANGED IN SCALE TO THEIR REAL TIME INTERVALS SHOW THE PAGES, MOVABLE SHEETS.





RHYTHM, STOA, LABYRINTH.



CONTROLLED OPENINGS
TOWARDS ARCHIVE.

INTELLECT IN A SPACE.

"GAS" EXPO THROUGHOUT
THE STORAGE.

EXPO	vs	ARCHIVE
- pleasant space		- minimal volume.
- reachable visually		- reachable physically.
- may include repro. projection, display composition		- originals, tangible. (per dimension/media) separated.
- curated story.		- organized & catalogued.
- for groups,		- for trained staffs.
- to get attention, spread.		- to save space. stacked.
- convey info fast & direct. (edited ideas)		- may take time to find & get something
- passive acquisition of knowledge.		- active acquisition of knowledge

VISIBLE ARCHIVE & OPERABLE EXPO

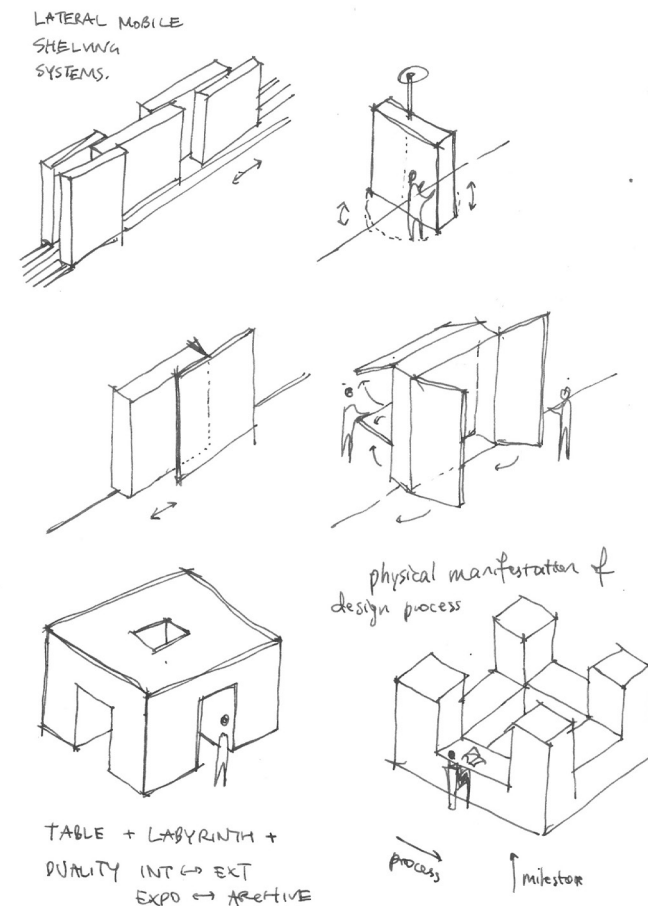
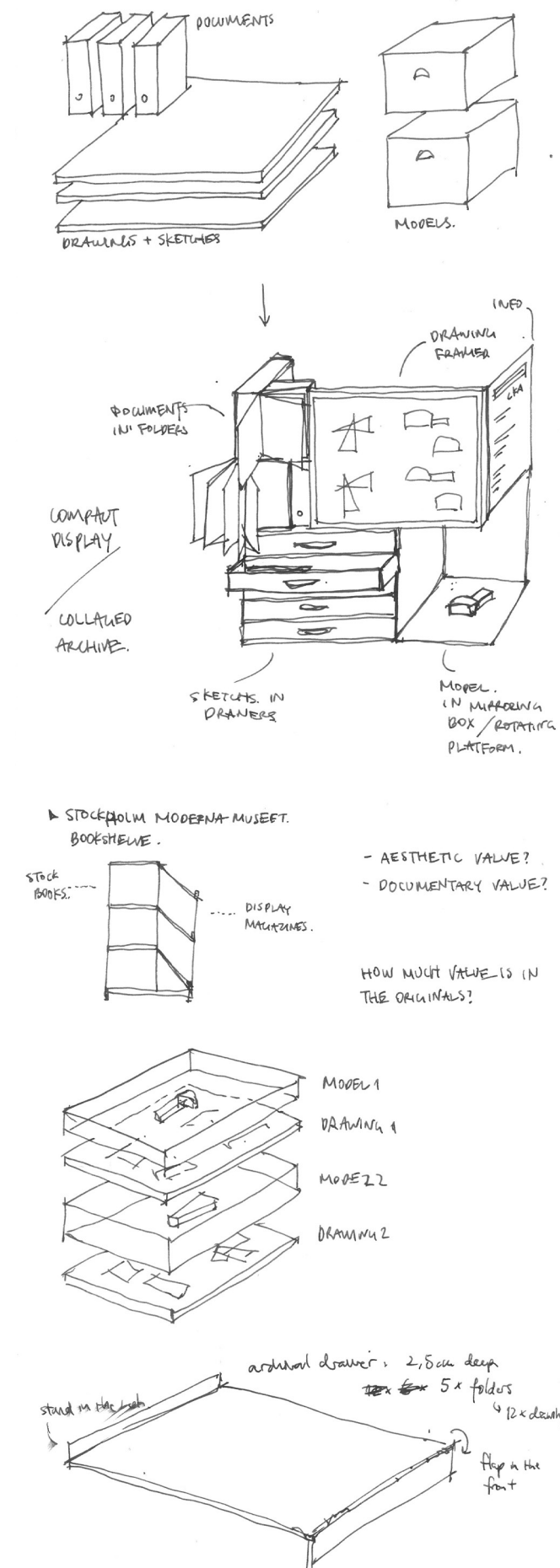
TO DISPLAY:

- MODEL (10x20 cm)
 - visible 360°.
 - no protection box needed
 - at eye height / table height → 80 cm → 130 cm.
 - makes sense by itself.
 - spot light?
 - space for display ≈ space for storage.
- SKETCHES. (A4 → A1)
 - to be studied directly, preferably no glass.
 - irregular shapes / sizes.
 - different media, touching & varying angles preferred. rotation.
 - reading distance ≤ 30 cm.
 - have to fit in story, to be ~~comple~~ supplemented by other drawings.
 - getting an sensual impression of the work / the way they worked
 - tracing paper (very sturdy).

- DRAWINGS (A1).
 - reading distance 20-80 cm.
 - sturdy tracing paper / printing paper
 - as a reference, might be clearer on scans.
 - can be framed & put ~~side~~ vertically.
 - makes sense by itself.
 - for understanding info. not the way they worked

- DOCUMENTS (A4).
 - can be flipped as books
 - no need to spread everything out
 - better arranged in chronological order, or relate to different parts of the building
 - reading distance ≤ 30 cm.

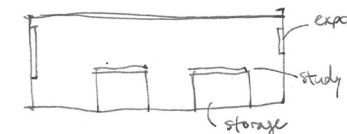
combining display with storage



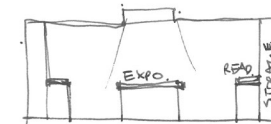
- the furniture display pieces, where under more material stored
- the furniture stores other material, uses surface to display
- the furniture stores & display the material at the same time
- the furniture stores the many materials, where some can be opened & viewed.

- separation of ... difference in
- TIME - STATUS
 - SPACE - POSITION
 - PEOPLE - ACCESS.

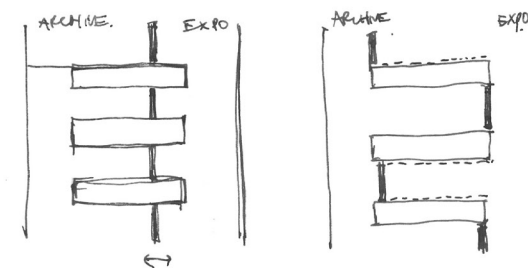
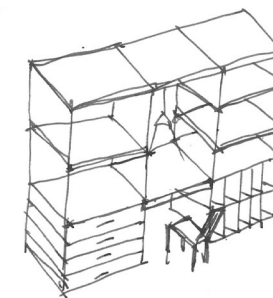
in archive storage, walls are just bounding box, no other function, no interaction w/ people.
in exhibition spaces, walls are intensively used. central spaces were rather neglected.
in reading/study spaces, table tops were used, vertical surfaces were not used.



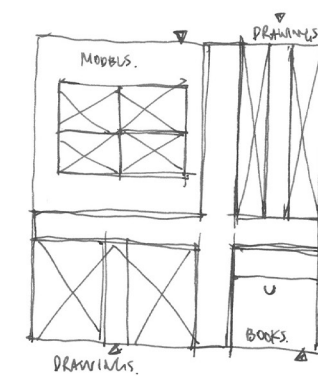
REVERSE:



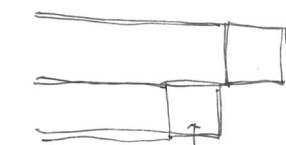
Who's using?
- professionals, students, & the general public to get something out of the design process & understand what an architect does with it
one glance + carefully examines each piece of the materials & read through stories.



THE ENDS OF AN ARCHIVE CABINET?

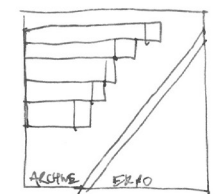


THE BACK WALLS AS VIEW ROUTE
THE CAUTIVE WALLS VIEW CLIMATE.



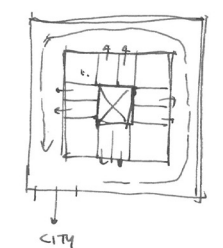
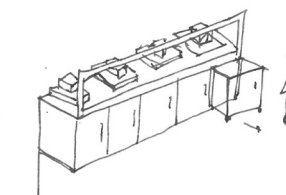
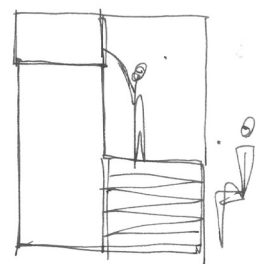
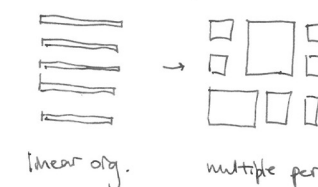
the ends of an archive cabinets as
↳ mechanism
↳ display
↳ table of content for the row.
↳ work surface.
↳ small items.
↳ tags.

Why visible storage?
- for public:
↳ while seeing the concrete expo, they should also be exposed to and impressed by the immensity of the collection in the storage.
↳ see how archivists work / how students consult.
- for professionals:
↳ while seeing the expo, they should have access to more related content & apply for further consultation.



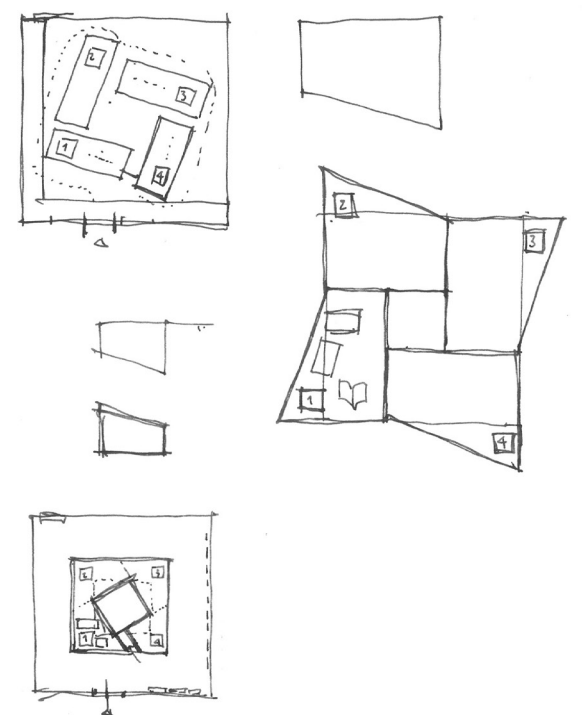
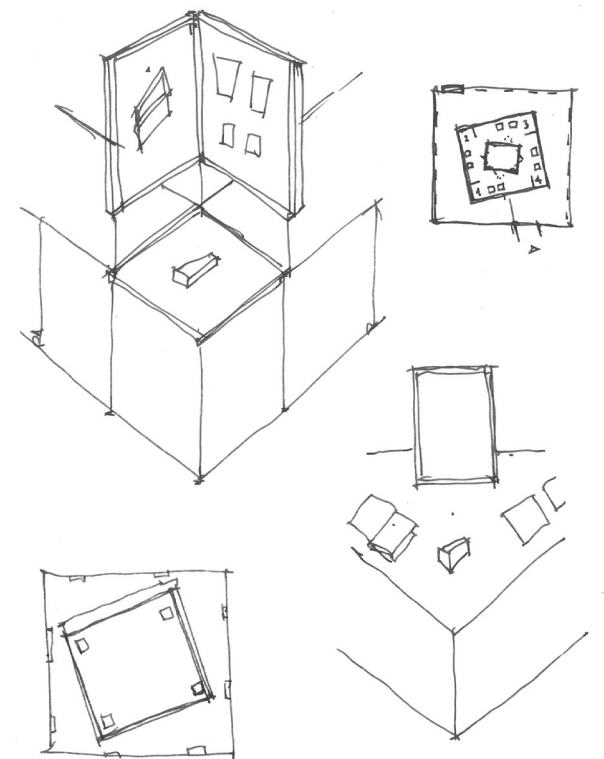
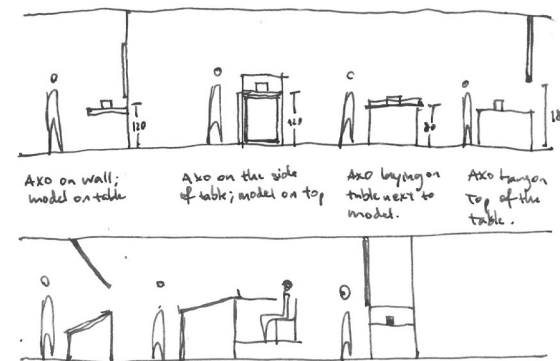
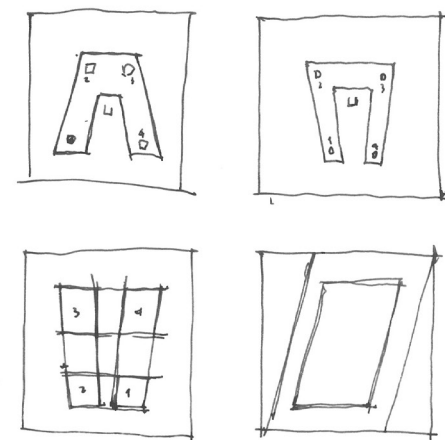
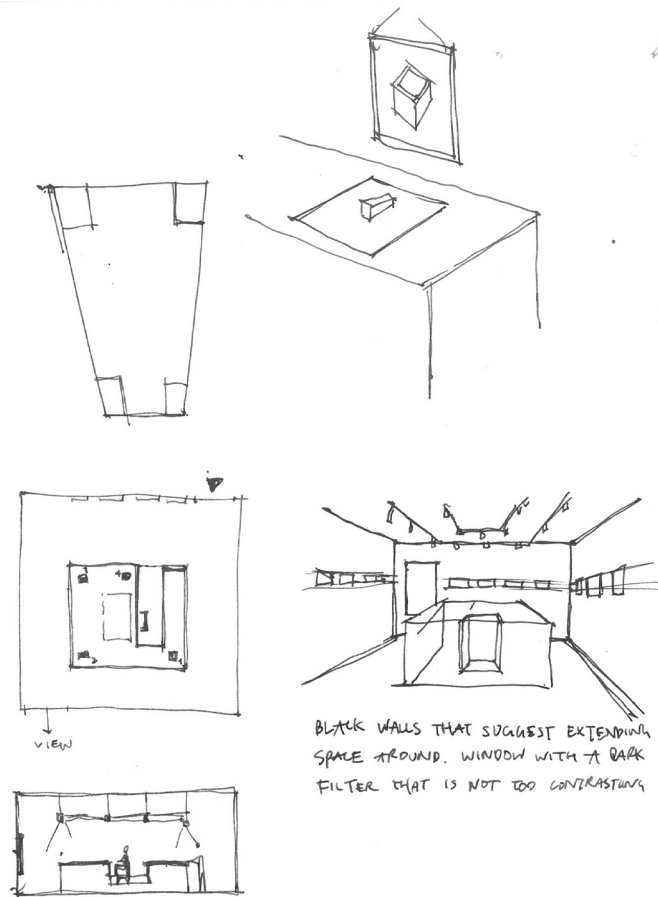
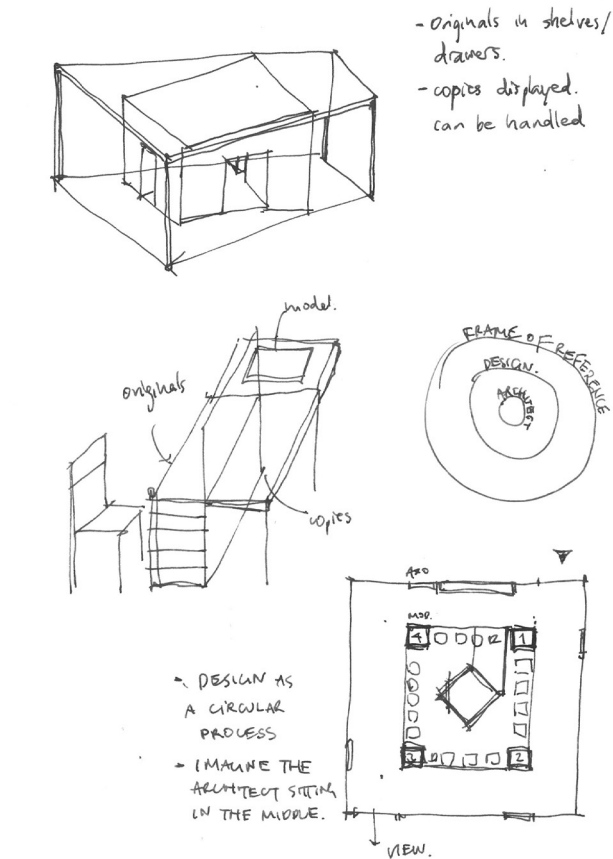
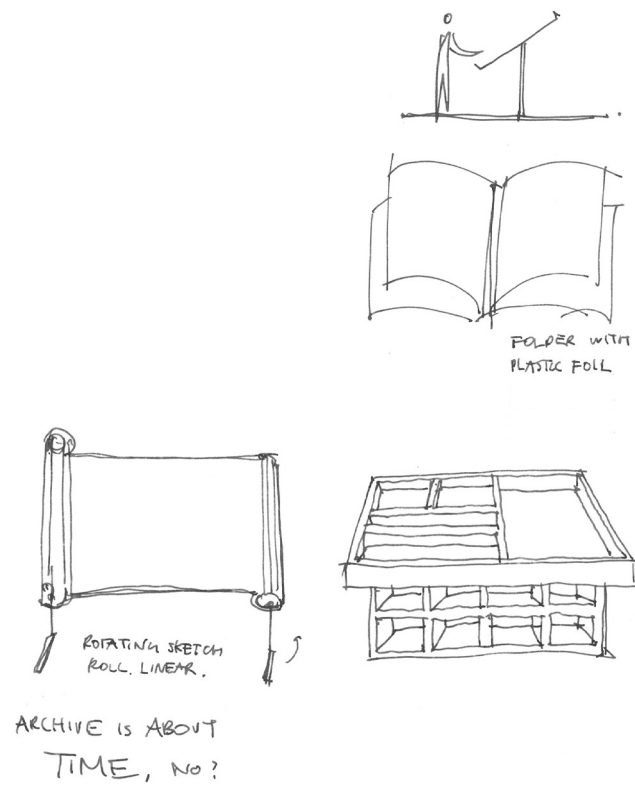
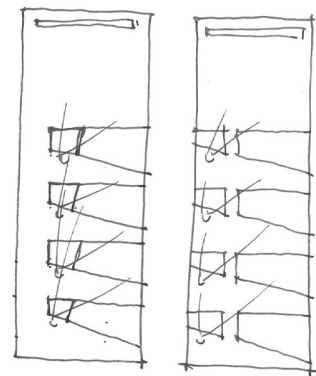
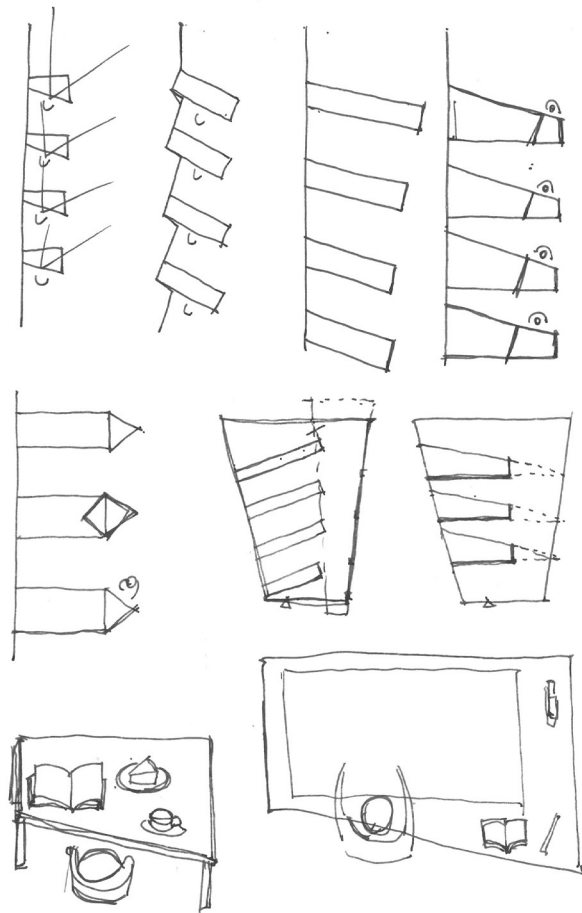
organised by SIZE vs STORY

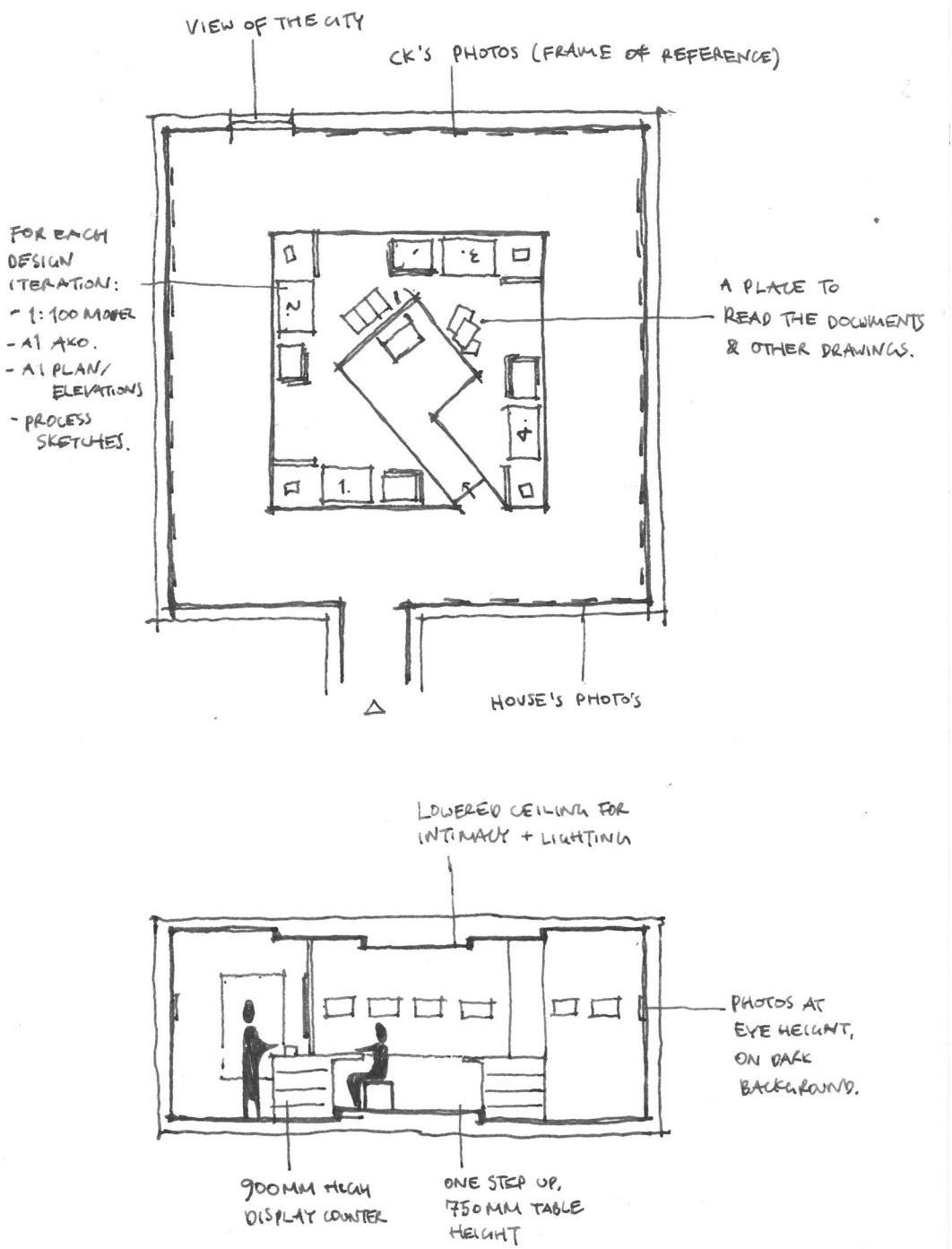
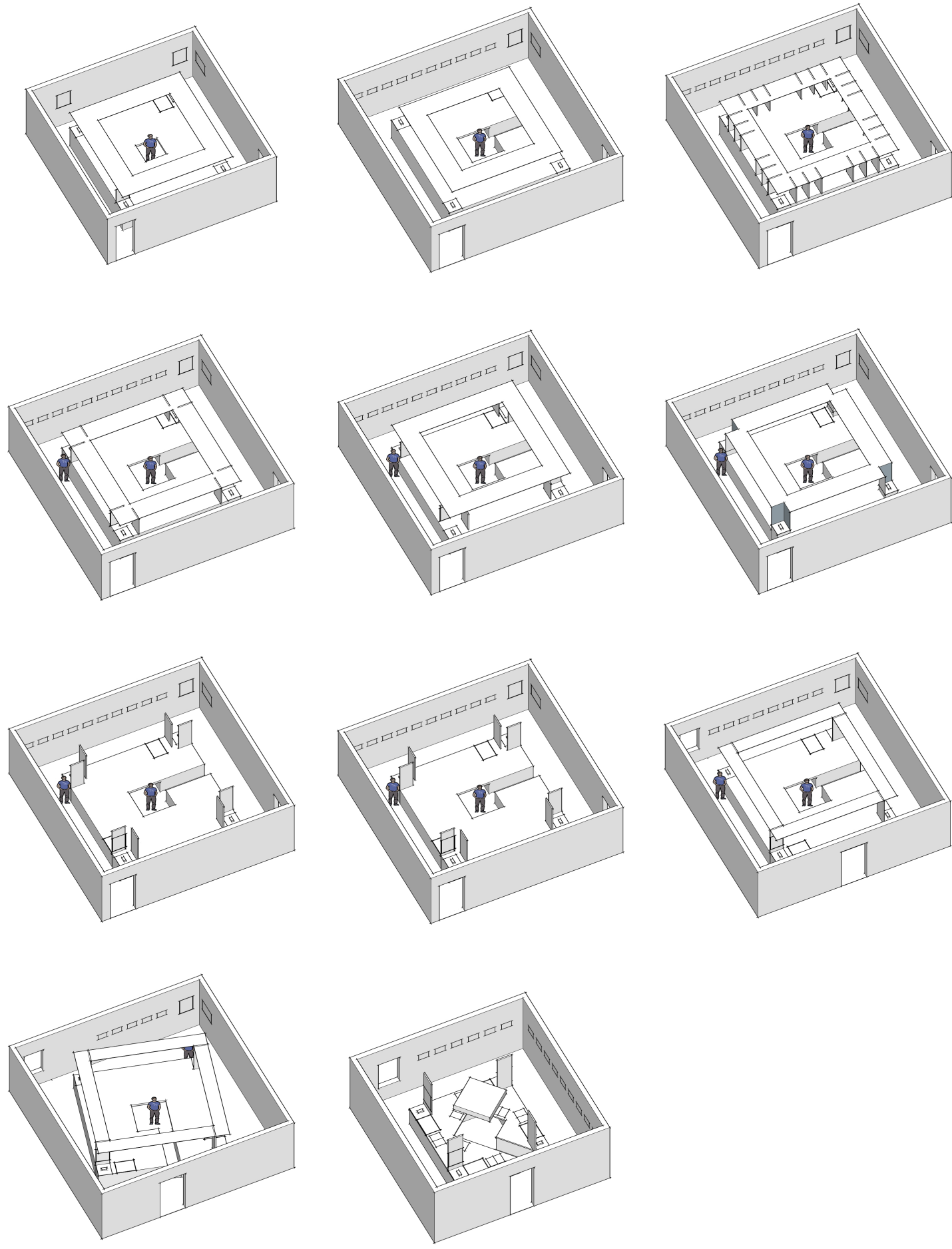
from linear to grid?



how to make the archive storage visible for expo go-ers without using glass? (only)

why should storage be visible?
for whom & how much?





It is an intimate space where the visitors see the exhibition around the table, walking through the different design phases of the Van Hover-De Pus project. At the end of the route they would walk to the middle of the table, sit down and take their time to read the documents. Alternatively, the room can also be booked by a visiting researcher or interested student, who can study the works alone while being immersed in the world of Kieckens.

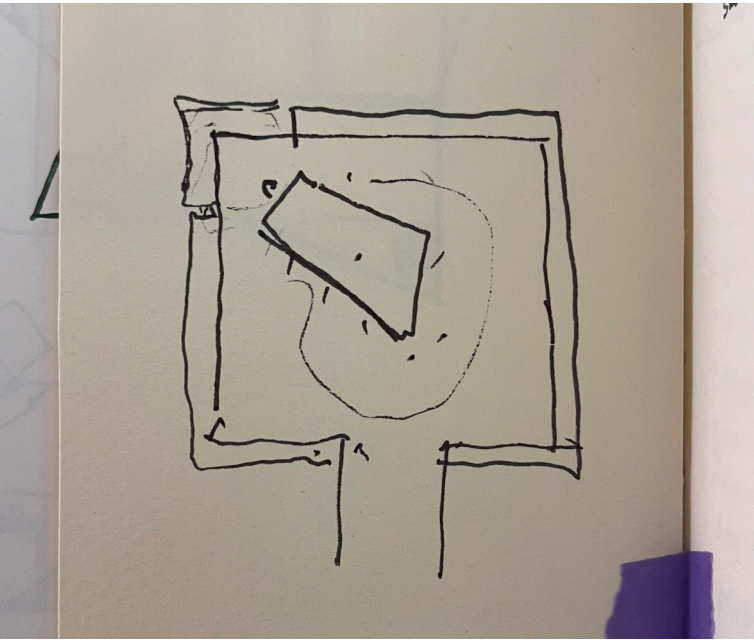
w/ Daniel & Susanne

on Christian Kieckens

- Christian Kieckens was a **critical figure** in Flemish architecture world. He changed the architecture culture. He has a permanent archive in the VAI.
- We might want to make a **permanent** room for him. There might be a paid researcher who specializes in him working in the archive.
- His projects were less good or less important than his role in **education**, a preacher of architecture. We might want to make a space serving this purpose. It should be productive, active & dynamic.
- A space should be **generous** enough for users appropriate it in different ways. It should not be too prescribing.

on my proposal

- The setup is **too curated**, too formal like a museum. Make a space that allows visitors to roam freely in the space
- To what extent can people **interact** with the exhibition? Can they take books off the shelves? Can they switch the drawings and recompose the exhibition?
- Can the room house his **whole archive**? How big is his archive? Where will all the books go in this new archive building?
- Is the exhibition permanent?
- Not convinced by the **geometry** of the table. Is it nice to work on the small corners? Make a proper table where large drawings can be unfolded.
- Does the **researcher** feel comfortable sitting in the centre of people, with their back to the door? Make a proper corner for the researcher, with sufficient **daylight**, so that they have the option of facing the room or facing outside.
- The **brasserie table** he designed is really interesting, with moments of limitation and elaboration. It is more interesting than the project Van Hover-De Pus house.
- **Wheelchair** accessibility?



Before this research, the theme of architectural archives felt personally relevant. As someone who enjoys recording, organizing and tracking patterns, I've always been archiving my own life. My visits to architecture-related museums across Europe gave me a sense of familiarity with the typology. Additionally, my work experience as an intern at two architectural offices, both with relatively long histories and extensive archives, gave me the opportunity to work with and organize their archives.

Over the past two months, my exposure to a broader range of archives expanded my understanding far beyond my initial comfort zone. While creating a model of the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) photograph vault and researching the building, I was struck by two things. First, the immense space, time, and resources devoted to preserving artefacts in laboratories was something I had not previously considered nor visualised. Second, I was intrigued by the contrasting faces of the CCA building, where visitors experience grand galleries with skylights and vaulted ceilings, yet staff work in much more utilitarian spaces with 2,5-meter ceiling and standard shelving.

While the CCA is often seen as a "textbook" architectural museum and research institute, the seven other archives explored by my peers challenged the conventional notion of an architectural archive. For example, the domestic scale of Drawing Matter contrasted with the bold gestures of the City Archive Bordeaux, while the sacred atmosphere of Soane's Museum and the Beinecke Library differed from the stark simplicity of the Kabinett and the ArkDes. These varying scales and atmospheres are closely tied to the institutional contexts of each archive, whether cultural, personal, governmental, or professional.

This spectrum between museum and archive, public and professional, significant and ordinary, were central in the lectures and discussions. Several key issues

caught my attention. First, architectural archives, unlike other types of archives, often carry aesthetic value due to the visual qualities of drawings and models. This positions them closer to art museums, creating an opportunity for public engagement. However, there is an inherent tension between this public-facing role and the archive's professional responsibility to support academic and professional research.

Second, despite efforts to engage the public, most of an archive's collections remain inaccessible. For external researchers, access to archival materials requires either prior knowledge of specific documents or archivists' guidance. The latter is also time-consuming as the collections are vast and hard to navigate. While digitization offers potential solutions, it is expensive and often targeted for internal organization. As a result, there is often no comprehensive overview of the collections published apart from the counts of items.

Finally, archives represent a complex relationship between space and time. They both magnify the past, by devoting so much attention to preserving and studying the history, and compress it, by storing only selected and representative items. This distortion of time is mirrored in the spatial design, where display spaces are expansive while storage areas are compressed. The attitude toward history is inconsistent between how an archive is presented to the audience and how it actually functions.

My project seeks to combine my personal interests with the challenges archives face. I aim to explore how an architectural archive can better visualize the composition of its collections and the archiving process, enabling archivists, researchers, and the general public to better understand and utilize the archive. My research question is: **How can the spatial configuration of an architectural archive help in visualizing and organizing its collections?**

Reacting to the idea of including all the archive materials of Christian Kieckens, I looked into the VAI archive webpage of him again. It was possible to find the amount of books, drawings and slides he had, but there were no info of the count of models and documents.

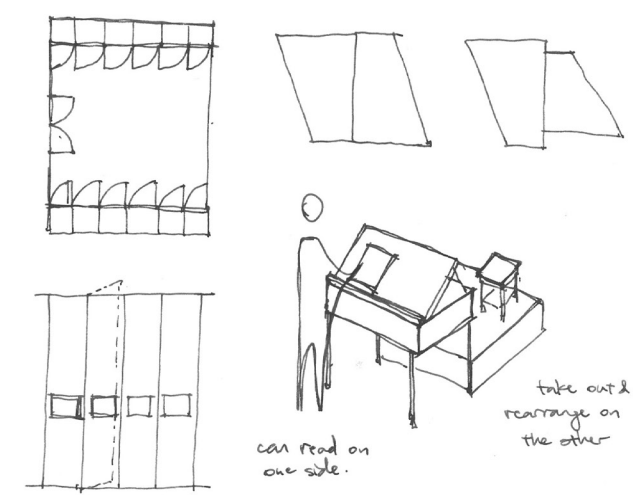
I thought about the possibility of making **storage space** in the walls. Since I want to keep the serenity of a photo gallery, it could be photos attached to floor-to ceiling cabinet doors, that accomodates the A4 folders. But again, what is the relation of the photos and the folders behind?

I thought about changing the form of the table to incorporate storage function.

A line by Christian Kieckens that I had come across weeks ago but didn't interpretate at the time caught my attention again: **"Het archief bewaart, reikt aan, en neemt afstand."** My room now has the function of storage, display and study, but does it allow one to "steps back to distance himself from the work"?

This could be related to the comment Daniel & Susanne made about the space being too curated and prescribing. I need to put more air in the space and allow people to **distance** themselves and get inspired. So I sketched some options of either changing the form of the table or changing the form of the space, trying to utilize his perspective wedge geometry. This might be an opportunity to synthesize act of looking in perspectives and the form of perspective.

- The expo "Het Huis, ~~het~~ de nunter, het archief" in 2016 is attempting to include all his work + theories. But it was an exhibition, display, not to study.
- Do I want to include all his work, with some samples displayed, to make a room replacing his bookshelves, permanently stays in VAI?
 - ↳ 4000+ drawings/sketches
 - ↳ 500 books/magazines
 - ↳ 11612 slides
 - ↳ 40 models?
 - ↳ 1200? project dossiers



Christian Kieckens -
"Het archief bewaart, reikt aan, en neemt afstand."

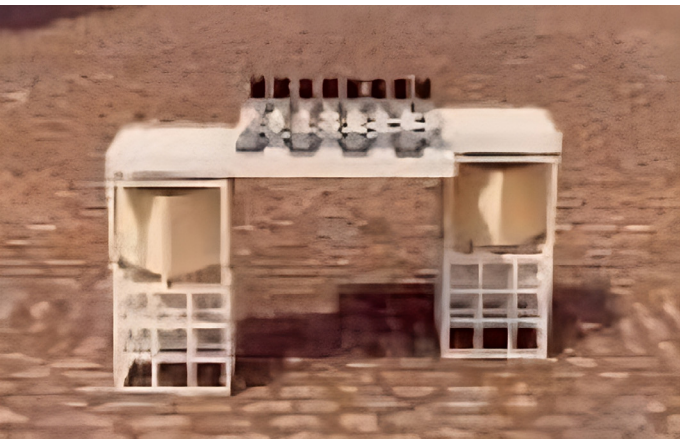
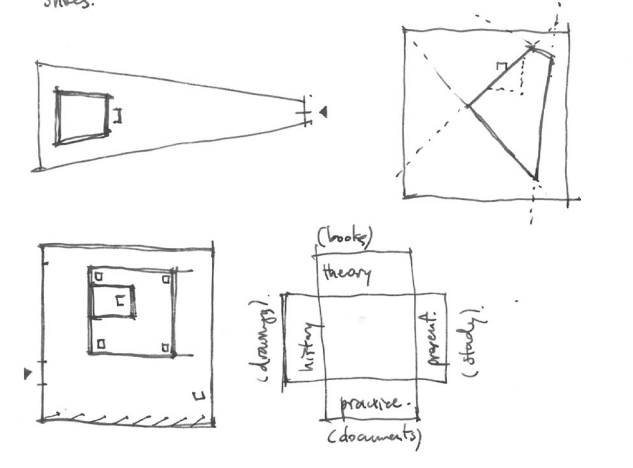
The archive preserves, offers, and steps back.

storing	displaying	reflecting
	studying.	distancing
	sharing.	

tension: perspective

understanding the process, standing & the architect's shoes.	Vs.	looking at the works as a whole, cool-headed, in its content.
--	-----	---

↳ fostering an objective, reflective stance by maintaining a certain separation from the original work.



The brasserie table, the chess table and a scenography in Brugge. They are all tailoring the table for the body and the activity. For example, giving extra space to read a book while having a coffee, providing extra space to rest the arm while playing chess, and creating different heights for sitting and standing.

rethinking the table

I sketched different table forms, trying to learn from Kieckens' table designs. I found it problematic that I wanted to create a form (sitting space) within a form (the table) that is within another form (the room).

David Hockney's **reverse perspective** idea came to my mind. Since people are always moving and synthesizing images while perceiving an object, what people perceived is a reversed perspective. The Renaissance perspective is true to a moment in time, as captured by a camera, but not for the brain. Therefore he drew tables in an upside down trapezoid form, which makes the viewer feel more immersed in the drawing.

I was considering how to design a table that would make the researcher feel surrounded yet remain easily accessible.

On the other hand, making unorthogonal tables feels unsure for me. Why do I make an orthogonal room then? How practical is handling orthogonal drawings on an unorthogonal table? I thought, maybe I shouldn't take Daniel's interest in the brasserie table that literally. It should just be about creating spaces that could accommodate different activities, which is, in my case, the different combinations of the **measurements** of the drawings being displayed and studied. Therefore, I decided on a few measurements of the table.

Thinking about the brasserie table, the chess table and my own experience in the reading room at the VAI, the study table should be an **L-shape** for putting large drawings on one arm and accessories on the other arm. 'A Guide to Archival Care of Architectural Records' also suggested a cross form table, where the drawing in the middle can be easily reached from all sides without rotating or shifting it.

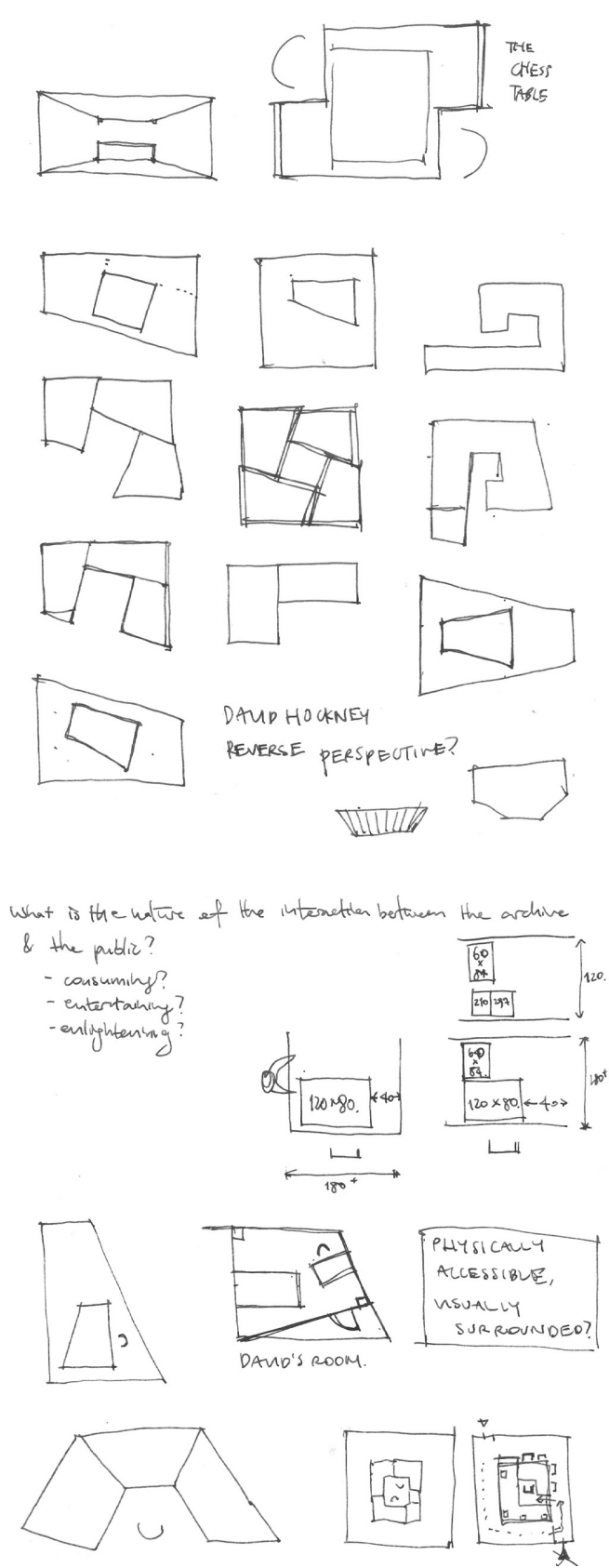
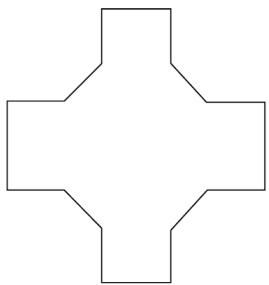


table form study on 1:50



I made a 1:50 model of the space and table that I have now. It will help me visualizing what the shape of the table does with the room.

- **Rotating** the square table doesn't work, because the space is too small.
- My current form of a rotated square hole within a orthogonal square, gives the possibility of being divided into 4 **quadrilateral forms**. They can be rotated. They can be just off from each other, creating acute angles where models can be displayed, or nooks where a visitor will feel more involved.
- Playing with them gave me the idea of making them actually making the tables **separated**, that can be pushed to the corners to change the functional setting of the space.
- I enlarged the quadrilateral shape as the only table in the room. Related to Kieckens' idea of the brasserie table being placed against the wall, I placed it the same way. This shape created three spaces in the room: an elongated entrance, a large triangle allowing wandering, and a small triangle that would be intimate for the researcher to sit. From the **perspective** of the entrance, the visitor will see an exaggerated perspective pointing towards the researcher. From the researcher's chair, they can see the table expanding towards the world of Kieckens. This made a lot of sense. It works as the reverse perspective idea. But such a large table against the wall actually make the materials on it difficult to reach.
- Then I tested Daniel's proposal of an elongated quadrilateral shape **detached** from the walls, with its short end enclosing a corner for the researcher and its long end provide space for display. In this way, the researcher looks like an office director, which I don't like. It also doesn't encourage people to walk around the table or even approach the researcher's corner.
- Eventually I went back to the **C-shape**, where one side of the table is wider to allow study of large drawings. The exhibition happens mainly in the other wings of the table. But now, the space is too small for the size of the table.

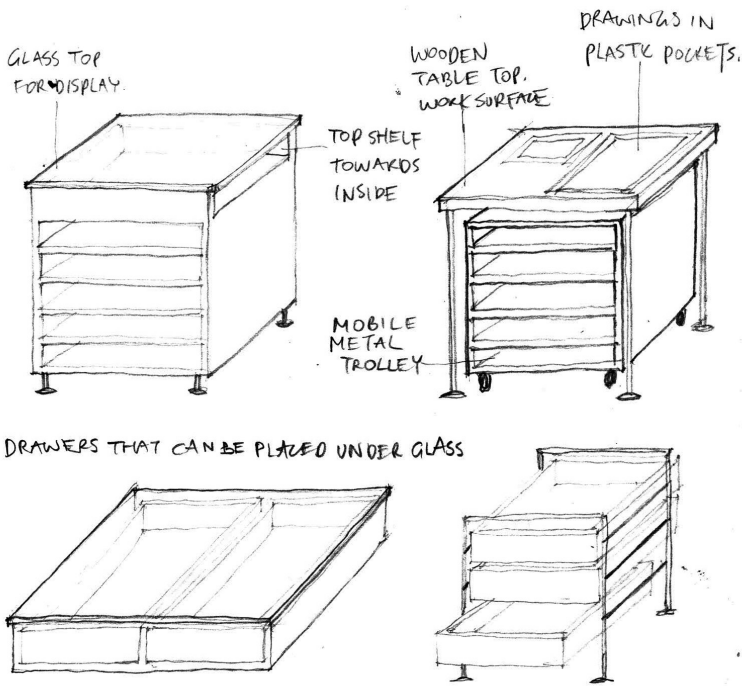
designing the furniture

I've noticed, the fact that I am constantly sketching forms and ditching them, could be related to that I was drawing with a thick **ink pen**. It makes things definite, solid and unnegotiable. I always start off new. I was not drawing to scale nor to the same reference. It has always been diagrams and concepts. I was not serious while putting the ideas down, which didn't help me committing to any idea. So I switched to **pencil** with sketching furniture.

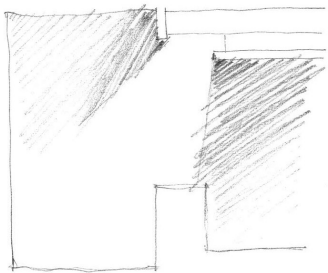
I looked at Kieckens' furniture design for a bookshop in Ghent. These are the most relevant furniture of his that I can find when it comes to the relation between display and storage. I noticed that he **articulated** the difference between the two functions in structure and in material. Each piece of furniture has a sense of architectural order.

I wanted to apply the same principle for my table. I can't decide on the **material** though. Practically speaking, wooden surface would be more suitable as a working surface, it is warmer and softer; stainless steel would be more suitable as shelving and drawers, as it is smoother, easier to clean, does not retain humidity and is less vulnerable to insects or mould. But aesthetically speaking, it makes more sense for a steel plate to hover above wood, which is visually heavier.

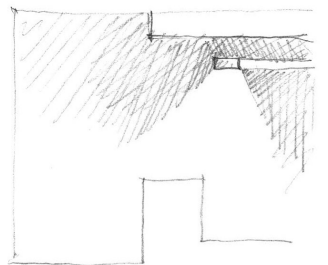
- Do I want people to read / study large drawings in the centre?
 - ↳ if all his collection is stored under the table, yes. big table.
 - ↳ if only files/photos are stored, no. shared is good.
 - ↳ if drawers are accessible from the outside, table needs to be cleared to place the drawings.
 - ↳ if drawers are only to be opened on the inside, only one special big table is needed.
 - ↳ if trolleys are accessible from the outside, it can be pushed to the "study table".



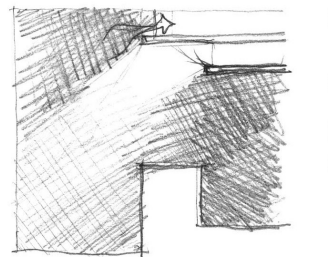
ceiling & lighting



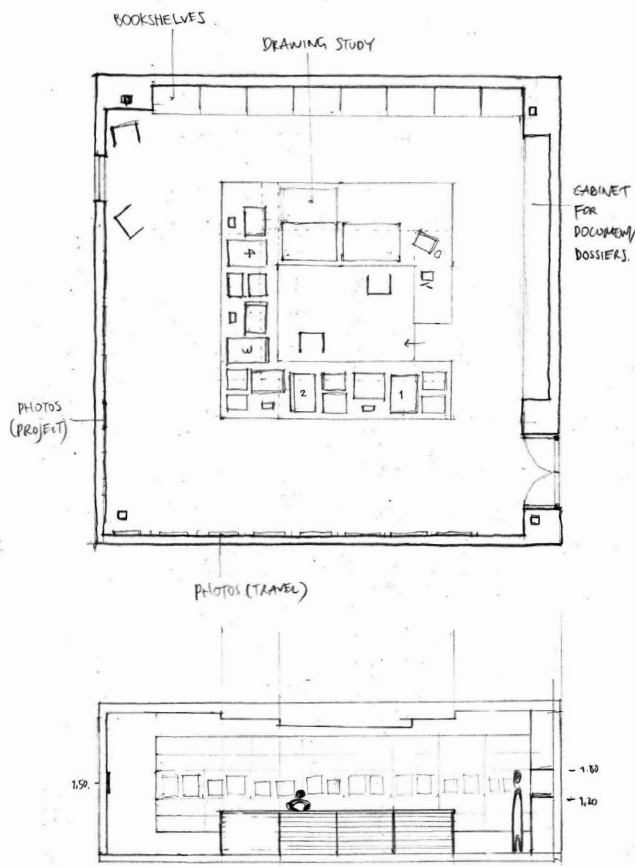
LIGHT PANEL / MILKY GLASS.
ANOTHER HANGING PANEL
THAT BLOCKS LIGHT.



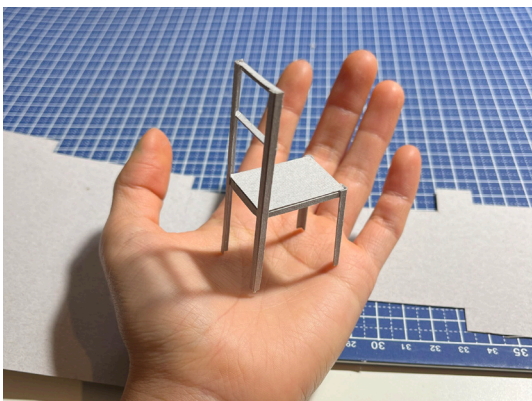
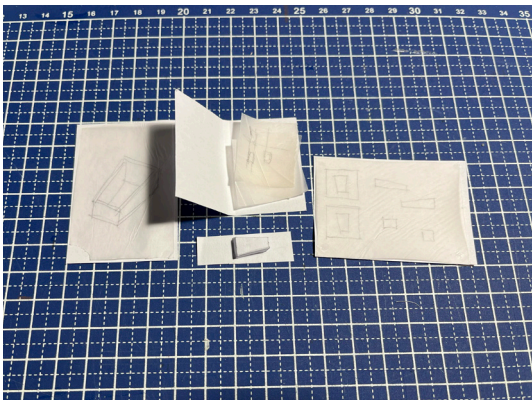
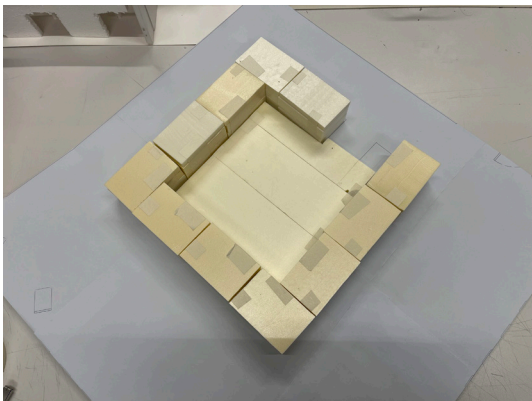
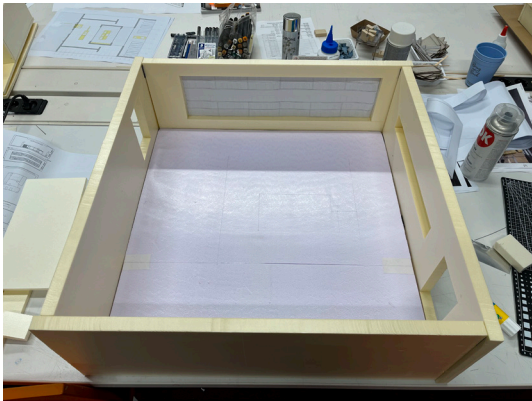
CEILING RELIEF
HANGING RING LIGHT.

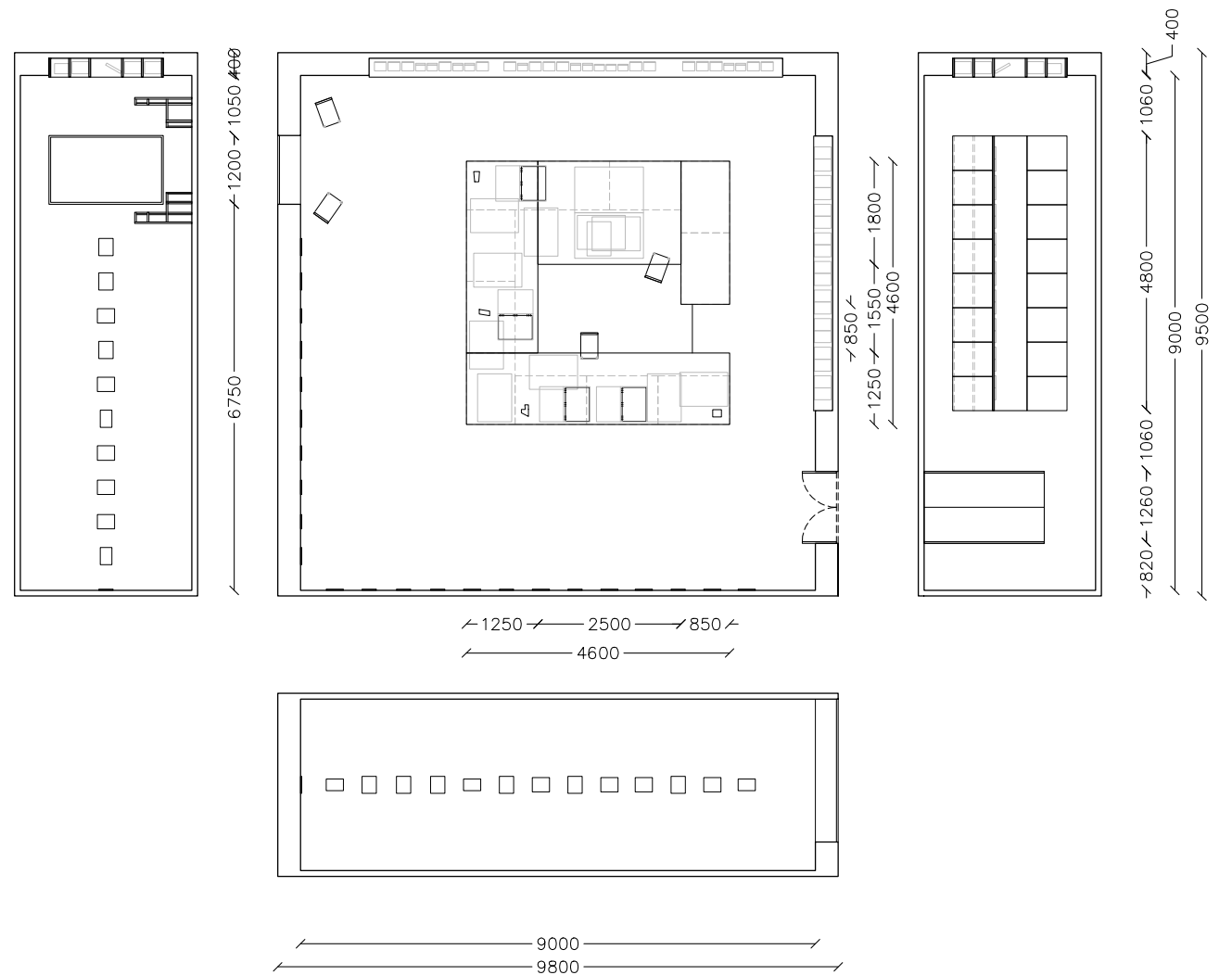
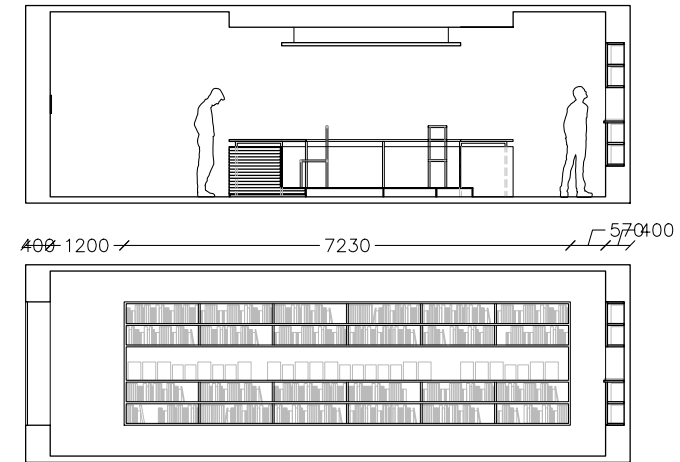
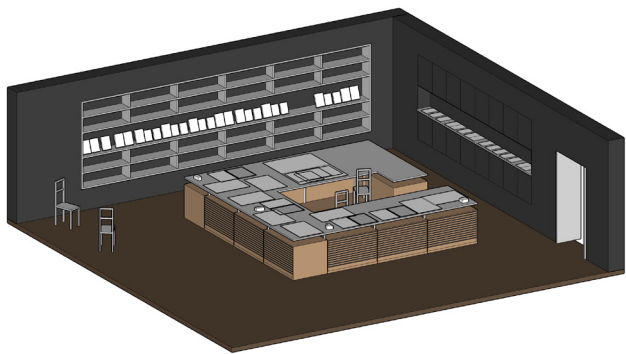
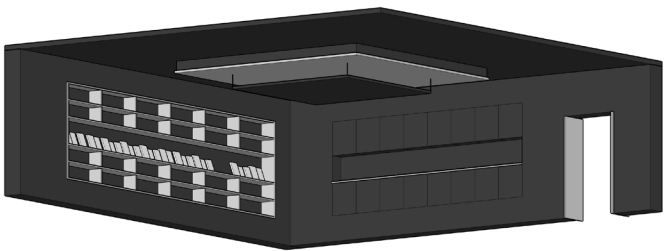
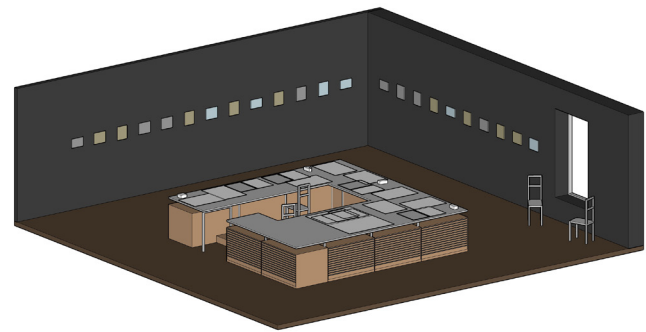
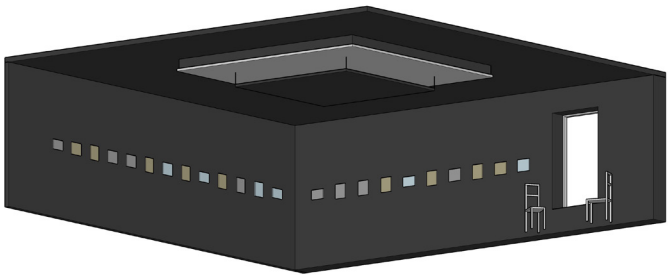
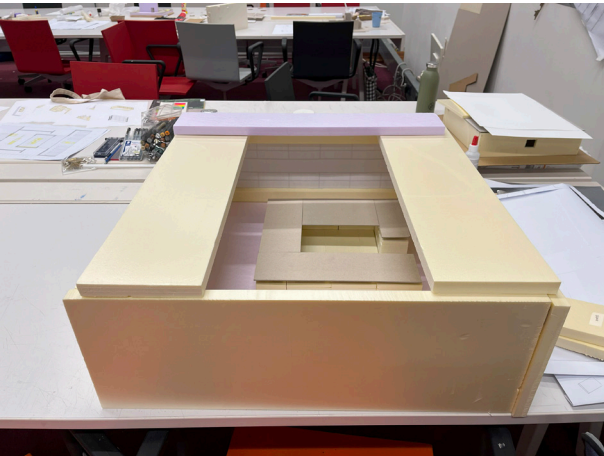


HANGING ALUMINUM PANEL,
REFLECTING ON THE BOTTOM.
GRATES ON THE SIDES FOR VENT.
LIGHT TOWARDS TOP FROM THE
LOWER HANGING PANEL.
BLACK BOTTOM.



an 1:15 model





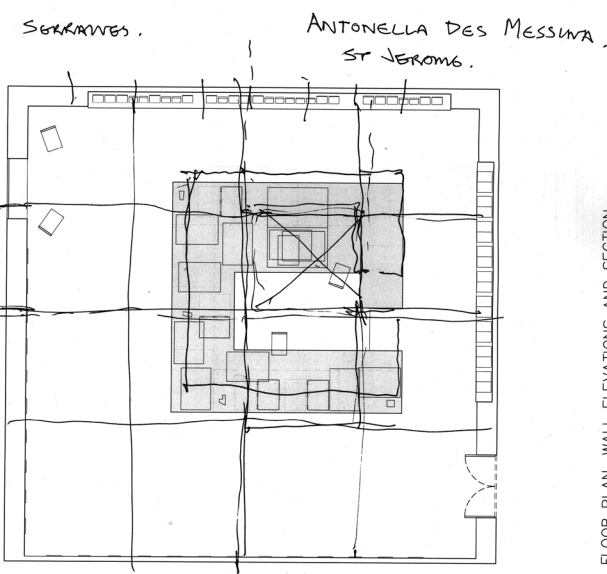
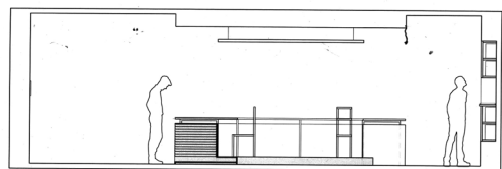
There are two sets of logics that organizes the room. One is **conceptual**. A researcher sits in the middle, representing the role of an architect. He is surrounded by sketches, drawings and models, which are the works an architect produced. The books, photos and documents on the walls, including a view on the city, represent the context in which an architect is situated.

The other is **functional**. If you bisects the room at the diagonal that connects the entrance with the window, one half provides a proper setting for an exhibition, and the other sets a more intimate environment for studying and reading.

w/ Daniel, Susanne, Sam & Jurjen

on my proposal

- The placing of the **geometry** should be more careful. Study the **proportions**. Now the table is just off-centred but not quite, and the relation between the wall shelves and the table is also unclear.
 - > There should be more **tension** in the plan.
 - > Try flipping the table by placing the large table on the wider side.
 - > Maybe divide the room into quarters as a basis of placing things.
 - > The table looks almost like a Fibonacci series.
- Accessibility
 - > Making a **step** in the room is simply not allowed. It is 21st-century.
 - > The highest bookshelves should be **reachable** for small people and wheelchair users - if they are meant to be taken and placed back by visitors.
- The **lighting** is really bad. The hanging disks don't make any sense. It looks like a retail space. There should be more daylight in a space where a researcher will work for a long time.
 - > Integrate a skylight in the roof structure.
 - > Look at Siza's upside down table in Serralves.
 - > Look at the painting St Jerome in his study.



1:50

FLOOR PLAN, WALL ELEVATIONS AND SECTION



I think the main problem in the pre-P1 tutorial was that the way I **presented** the project was far more concrete than what it was in my mind. The 1:15 box I made was too intimidating. Although it was still in bare foam, it might have given the tutors the impression that I have already made my mind to start on such a big model. The way I presented it was also quite confident, stating that I am making a room with this and that. In fact, I was just trying to present one version of the design, with many known flaws that I haven't worked out yet, to get help from the tutors. I don't think making the 1:15 model was wrong – I knew it was necessary for me at this design stage. I also knew that this would not be my final model. But I should have made it clear to the tutors in the beginning of the tutorial, and also clarify what kind of help I needed. The amount of model photos I printed was exaggerating its importance. The colored axonometries were also illustrating the ideas too concretely.

The other problem was that since the last tutorial, Daniel read my room differently than I pictured it. In this tutorial, he continued with that thought and gave suggestions according to his expectations for this room. I designed the space from the perspective of visitors seeing an exhibition of Christian Kieckens, with possibilities of opening the drawers, taking books off the shelves and sitting in the middle to study him. Daniel said I was basically "making a big table for the researcher in a room", which was of secondary importance when I made design choices. He provided suggestions in making the room more pleasant for a researcher to work in. Now, should I change the focus of my design, or design a space that correctly suggests the reading of its **intention**? The tutors have talked multiple times about designing something ambiguous that is open for interpretation and appropriation. Maybe I shouldn't have defined my intention so concretely in the beginning and allow deviation along the way of designing.

I explained to Daniel about the dilemma of using **geometries and proportions** as the guiding principle for a design. Personally, I like to study them and they have been the core of my previous designs. However, in previous design processes, being strictly attached to the geometric principles created unnecessary problems that I had to spend a long time solving. In the end, the principles didn't seem to be valuable to anyone besides satisfying myself. Therefore, to make a draft design quickly, I chose to let go of the proportions and decided the dimensions based on the minimal functional needs. I was expecting to fix the proportions after I get the relationships right.

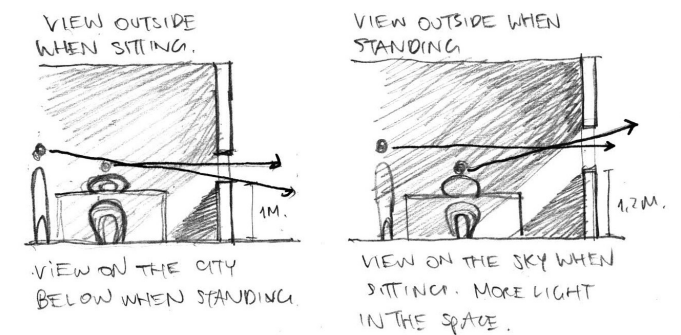
Although Daniel has commented on wheelchair accessibility last time, I chose to keep the **step** in. I hold the opinion that a wheelchair user's experience doesn't always have to be 100% the same as an able-bodied. In my case, a wheelchair user can see all the drawings on the table as well, but just from the other side of the table. People don't need to carry big drawings while going up the step either, because the drawings can be simply moved to the other side of the table. Therefore I thought the step was acceptable. But now I need to consider if the step and the lowered ceiling are the only ways to create the spatial effect I wanted. I should be able to find other options that are simpler and clearer.

lighting

The last model was clearly too dark.

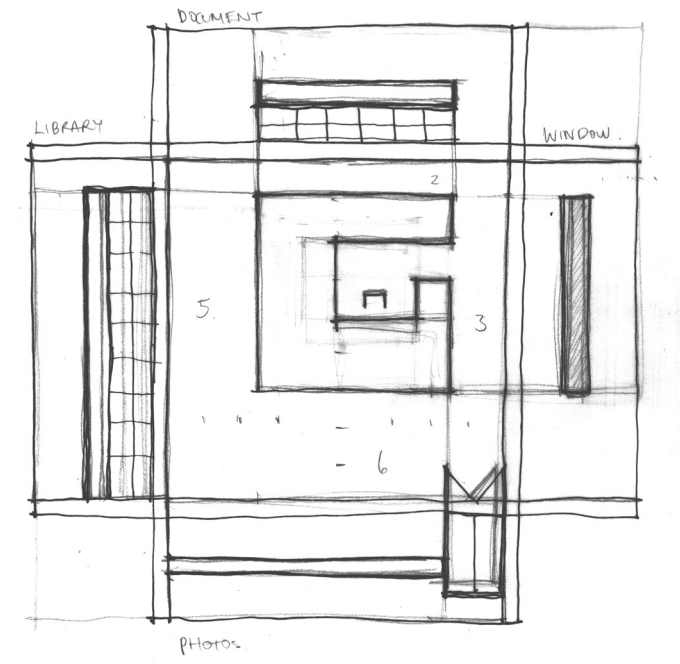
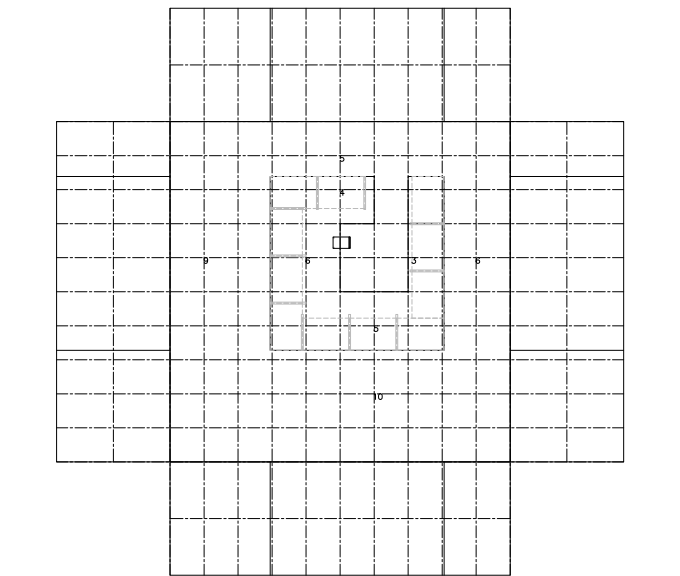
I changed the vertical window that was a part of the photo series into a horizontal window. Now the four walls have distinct functions, being the library, the documents cabinet, the photo gallery and the view of the city.

I flipped the ceiling upside down, to preview the effect of a skylight above the table. This allowed clearer perception of the geometry of the room. The skylights fits in the conceptual story of the room. It represents the context of nature that architects work in.



studying proportions

As Daniel suggested, I started to introduce grid system in the room. I laid out a 10x10 grid 900mm apart in the 9x9m room. Initially I wanted each table-to-wall distance and each wing of the table to be different. This would need a sub-grid system. It resulted in a 2-3-5-6 proportion. Later I noticed that in the model, one wouldn't notice the minor difference between the 2-3 and the 5-6. Maybe just simply it to 2-2-3-3. In this way the enclosed table space is still in one of the quarters of the space.



floor plan

I struggled with making decisions on the position of the table in relation to the function on each wall. Each wall has its requirements for the free space in front, for possibility of sitting down or walking by, and the storage capacity. The position of the door will decides the route of exhibition. The window defines how the room is situated in the fictive building.

As the room and the table are both square, I kept **rotating, flipping, shifting** the walls, the table and the space enclosed in the table. I lost track of the orientation, because none of the elements were fixed in any place. I might have been literally chasing my own tail, running in a circle that ended up the same way I started.

- books should be able to be taken off the shelves to read in front.
 - sitting on the larger table
 - pull out a plank from the shelf ← folding sliding.
- if it's a table that no one can sit outside, wouldn't it be dishonest?
- photos - stand and look at a distance.
- documents - sit & read stand & read / incl.
- VISUALLY - walls not too empty nor too overcrowded.
 - have focal points on the walking route
 - composition of each wall.
- FUNCTIONALLY - size requirement for the library.
 - space needed for photo-expo.
 - reading space for library / doc.
 - window visible on the table.
 - smooth circulation for expo.
- CONCEPTUALLY - geometry relationships.
 - library at the beginning, down at last.

the kitchen analogy

I figured that what I am making is basically a kitchen. The wings of the kitchen island are tailored to its functions. The wings of my table have different depths, just like an L-shaped kitchen with a bar table.

A modern kitchen allows both **cooking & dining**, which corresponds to **studying and displaying** in the archive. There are storage around the island and below the tabletop. The cooking space is more functional & utilitarian, while the dining space is more luxurious & relaxed.

In the past, kitchens were enclosed & separated from the living space. It was a space for the women. It had special climate requirement (ventilation for humidity control). Now, with the advanced installation technologies & shifted social norms, kitchens became an **integrated** or even central part of the living space.

So is an archive space. The studying & displaying can happen on one table nowadays.

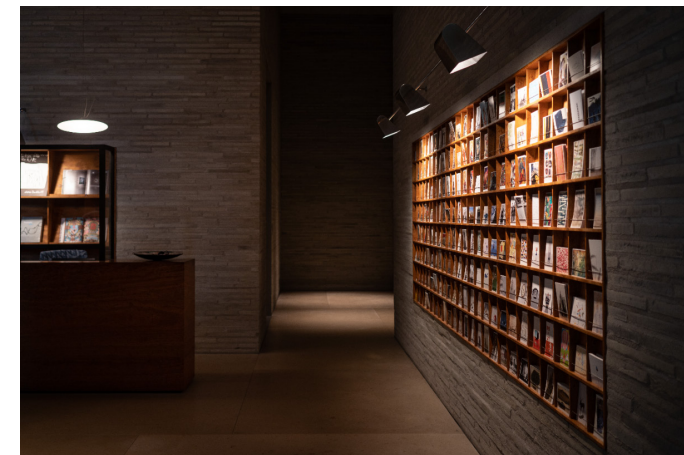


I was looking for confirmation and inspiration from Kieckens while making design decisions. Such as continuous horizontal line on the walls, skylights and lowered ceilings, the way he exhibited or stored photos and slides in his office, the creamy colored wall and the wooden furniture.



Aside from Kieckens, I must have been inspired by other works as well, which are overshadowed by Kieckens at the moment. It is worth to take a small break from Kieckens to give justice to these subconscious references and interrogate myself what my real intentions were.

The idea of walking in a **dark box** with the focus on the centre of the room clearly came from the recent visit to **KMSKA**. Its drawing rooms were situated in this secret in-between floor and were completely dark in contrast to the bright and open galleries. The reflective floor gives a certain tranquility that lures contemplation. The prolonged corridors connecting the rooms resemble the passage to a chamber in a pyramid. This whole experience was mysterious and enticing curiosity, which I considered appropriate qualities for an archive space.



This memory of **darkness, antiquity and focus**, reminded me of the **Kolumba Museum**, which I paid visit to a few years ago. Its interior was primitive, crude, elegant and refined at the same time. The texture of the materials and the precision of the details were sufficient to animate the vast space. I liked the way the wooden shelves were embedded in the solid wall.

The idea of working alone on a table in the centre of a space while being **surrounded by references**, came from a room in the **office of Eagles of Architecture**. The room was nearly the only spacious area in the entire office, allowing ideas to drift freely, unlike the rest of the space, which was crowded with models. The room had a simple but large table that was quite empty and sufficient daylight. One can freely walk around the table to see the images, drawings and texts on the walls. Those paper crawled over the window towards the adjacent space, trying to block any distraction from the rest of the office. The simple yet inspiring quality of the space left an impression on me.



The other office that we visited together in Antwerp, **DMT architects**, might have also contributed to my current proposal. We stood in the meeting room for a long time. The **large table** was just enough to display so many books, and the space around was just enough to accommodate all of us. While listening to the speeches, we moved the books around and thumbed through a few of them. All the pages related to Leon Stynen were spread out on a single table, allowing for free manipulation. I found this approach to be an effective and interactive way to provide an intuitive overview on a topic.



sampling materials



- The material palette of Van Hover-De Pus house is a good reference:
- walls - white plaster
 - floor - polished concrete
 - skirting - metal strip
 - cabinets - Oak wood veneer on multiplex
 - door - mdf cladded with Inox brushed stainless steel



- stainless steel
- aluminum foil from model hall
 - pearl gray cardstock from bouwshop
 - silver spray painted vivak
 - silver spray painted gray cardboard
 - silver spray painted white cardboard
- The aluminum foil worked well as wall cladding in the CCA model, but this time, on smaller surfaces of furniture, the reflection might be too much. Thin ones are vulnerable to bending, while thick ones have to be sawed and will be hard to achieve clean and precise edges. Vivak has a much smoother surface than cardboard or paper, thus preventing the glittering effect. Since I need 2mm wide edges that are absolutely clean, I decided to **lasercut perspex**.



- oak wood
- 94 kraft brown on cardboard, white cardboard & mdf
 - Amsterdam raw sienna on cardboard, white cardboard & mdf
- One color is too beige and the other is too orange compared to the oak wood Kieckens used. I want a more yellow wood color. The spray paint covers well, but I think it would look too flat and abstract on scale 1:15. Although the white cardboard base looks much smoother than the mdf base, it is acceptable. To achieve the cleanliness and sharpness of my furniture, I decided to combine 1mm white cardboard and 2mm mdf. Gray cardboards are too flexible afterall. I decided to **paint the wood** color to achieve minor color differences in the wood panels.

Depot

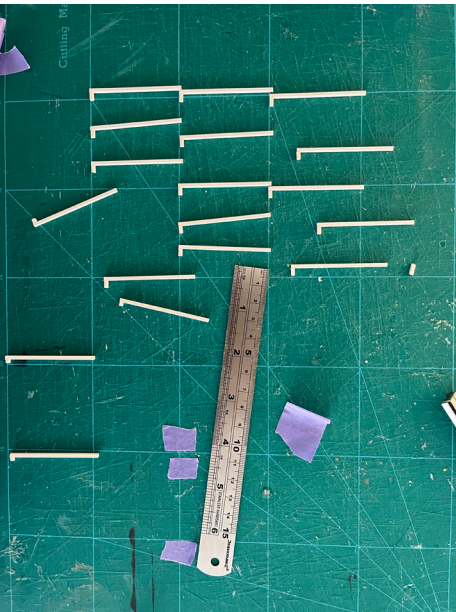
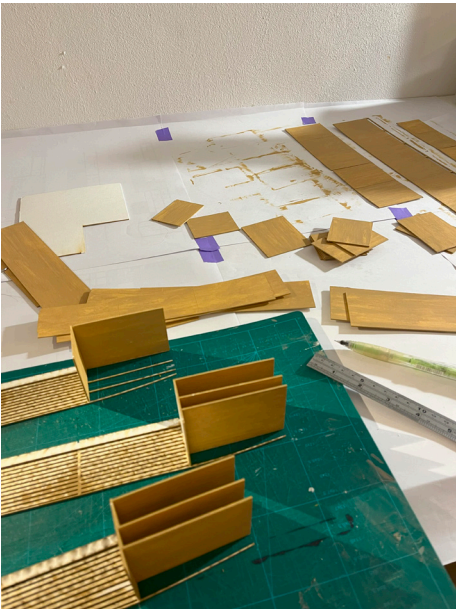
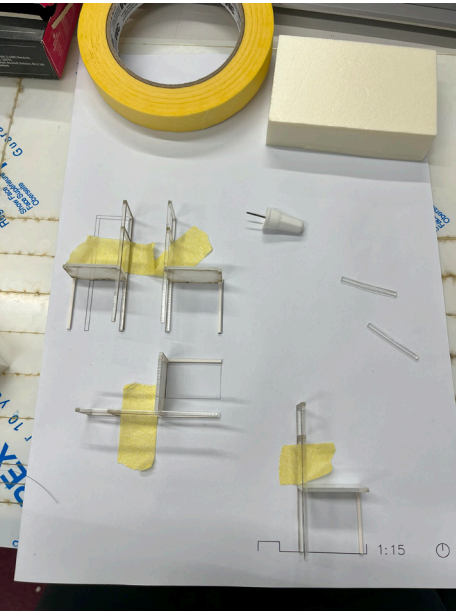


The visit to Depot came at an awkward moment. My mind was fully occupied by the model making. The moment that actually woke me up was when I saw that the top floor has the same combination of **materials** I wanted to use: concrete floor, wooden walls and brushed stainless steel doors.

The experience of stepping into the 'organic and combined material' storage was quite interesting. Dust, temperature and humidity were strictly controlled. Being inside, we were observed by the visitors in the public area, as if we were part of the exhibit.

The never-ending **transparency and reflection** in the public area were not my favourite thing. The movement and noise of the people, the construction details, the colors and lights of the artworks were all exposed and exaggerated. I felt overloaded with information and could hardly look at anything. I think the purpose of this building is more to impress people of the amount of things they own than to allow people really look at the artworks. I remember a discussion the other day in the studio, about if one would like to work in the space Silas designed, where one would be surrounded by stuffs displayed behind glass shelves. I did not like that. In the very beginning of this design exercise, I defined it to be a small and intimate space where there are not so much visual noises. I believe that an archive should make people contemplate rather than impress them.





I'm confident with the speed and quality I make models, therefore I always extend the design period as long as possible, leaving the final week to execute all the plans. This means I have **no time** to reconsider things while making the model. I don't feel like I would do so even I have time. Because all the decisions are made in the mind, responding to an abstract world that I created myself instead of based on perception. I cannot really work out the space, start building it, then design the furniture or vice versa. Because decisions are related to each other. Their dimensions, materials and details should be on the same complicated web. Susanne has told us in Msc 1: don't try to solve all the problems on one scale level while designing a facade. I guess I'm still doing the same with the current project.

Any comment will disrupt the **principles** I initially created. Through this exercise, I realized that the principles I originally considered valid only seemed flawless because I was unaware of many things at the outset. As I progressed, I became aware of more factors to consider and received challenges from tutors and peers. As a result, my plan no longer seemed perfect. It likely never will, given the sheer number of factors to balance in reality—many of which I initially chose to ignore to maintain a clean, pure plan. When I compare the current not-so-pure plan to its original, seemingly fluent in logic, I feel dissatisfied and continually push for improvement. This whole process slows me down from making changes to the satisfactory first plan and stops me from delivering a completed plan on time.

personal statement

Before this research, the theme of architectural archives felt personally relevant. As someone who enjoys recording, organizing and tracking patterns, I’ve always been archiving my own life. My visits to architecture-related museums across Europe gave me a sense of familiarity with the typology. Additionally, my work experience as an intern at two architectural offices, both with relatively long histories and extensive archives, gave me the opportunity to work with and organize their archives.

Over the past two months, my exposure to a broader range of archives expanded my understanding far beyond my initial comfort zone. While creating a model of the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) photograph vault and researching the building, I was struck by two things. First, the immense space, time, and resources devoted to preserving artefacts in laboratories was something I had not previously considered nor visualised. Second, I was intrigued by the contrasting faces of the CCA building, where visitors experience grand galleries with skylights and vaulted ceilings, yet staff work in much more utilitarian spaces with 2,5-meter ceiling and standard shelving.

While the CCA is often seen as a "textbook" architectural museum and research institute, the seven other archives explored by my peers challenged the conventional notion of an architectural archive. For example, the domestic scale of Drawing Matter contrasted with the bold gestures of the City Archive Bordeaux, while the sacred atmosphere of Soane’s Museum and the Beinecke Library differed from the stark simplicity of the Kabinett and the ArkDes. These varying scales and atmospheres are closely tied to the institutional contexts of each archive, whether cultural, personal, governmental, or professional.

This spectrum between museum and archive, public and professional, significant and ordinary, were central in the lectures and discussions. Several key issues caught my attention. First, architectural archives, unlike other types of archives, often carry aesthetic value due to the visual qualities of drawings and models. This positions them closer to art museums, creating an opportunity

for public engagement. However, there is an inherent tension between this public-facing role and the archive's professional responsibility to support academic and professional research.

Second, despite efforts to engage the public, most of an archive’s collections remain inaccessible. For external researchers, access to archival materials requires either prior knowledge of specific documents or archivists’ guidance. The latter is also time-consuming as the collections are vast and hard to navigate. While digitization offers potential solutions, it is expensive and often targeted for internal organization. As a result, there is often no comprehensive overview of the collections published apart from the counts of items.

Finally, archives represent a complex relationship between space and time. They both magnify the past, by devoting so much attention to preserving and studying the history, and compress it, by storing only selected and representative items. This distortion of time is mirrored in the spatial design, where display spaces are expansive while storage areas are compressed. The attitude toward history is inconsistent between how an archive is presented to the audience and how it actually functions.

My project seeks to combine my personal interests with the challenges archives face. Specifically, I want to explore how an architectural archive can physically embody the internal logic of its collection. This might involve aligning the spatial and structural design with the rhythm of time, allowing visitors to experience architectural history as they move through the building. Alternatively, the collections could be organized to simulate an architect’s workspace, giving visitors insight into how architects worked. The goal is to make archives more than just storage units or glass vitrines; they should convey an additional layer of meaning related to the field of architecture. This approach could help archivists, researchers, and the general public better understand and engage with the archive. My research question is: **How can the organization and spatial design of architectural archives enhance visitors' understanding of the architectural profession?**

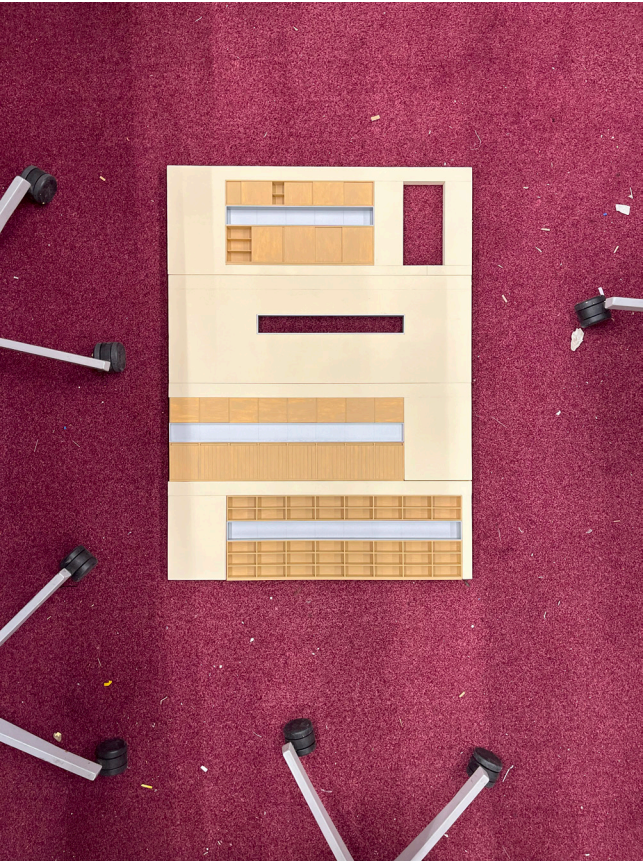
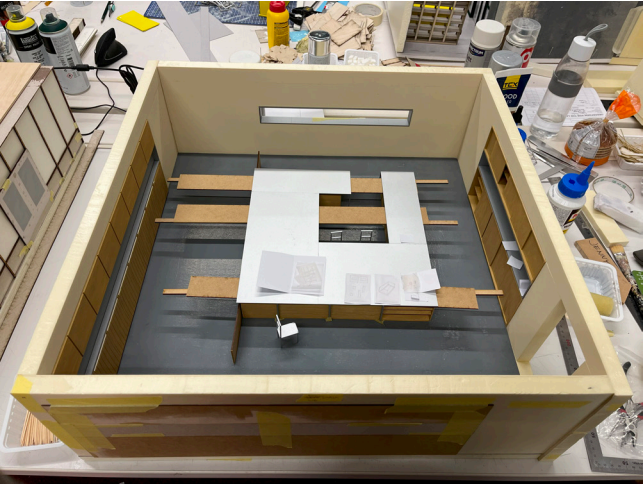
testing floor color



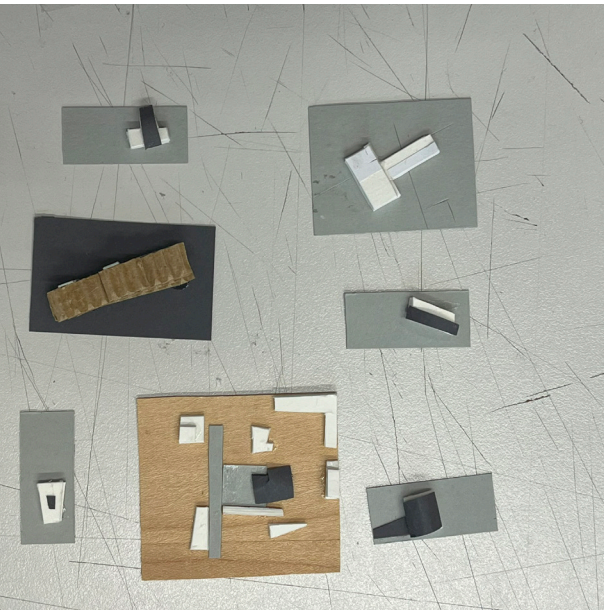
testing skylight



assembling the model

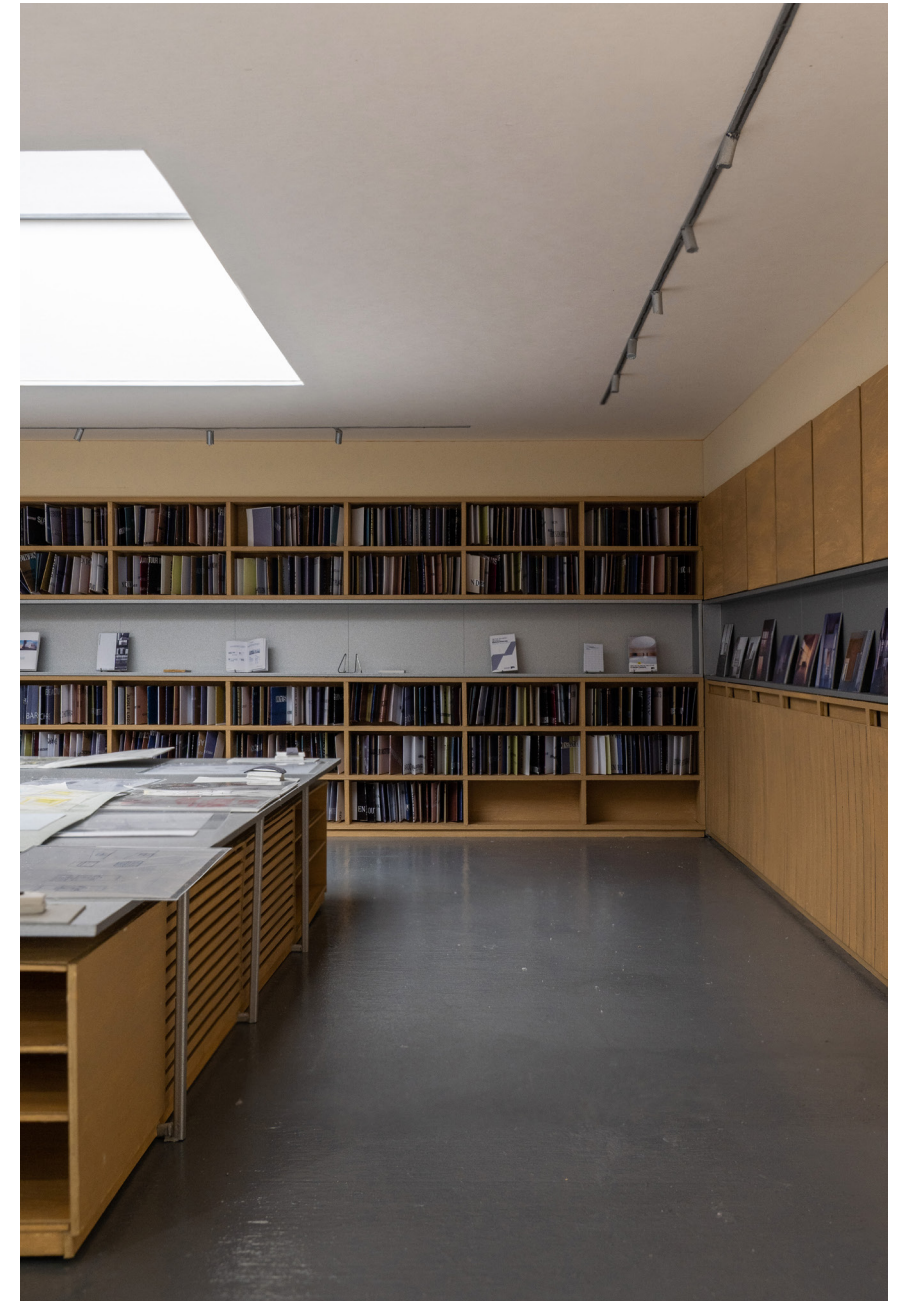


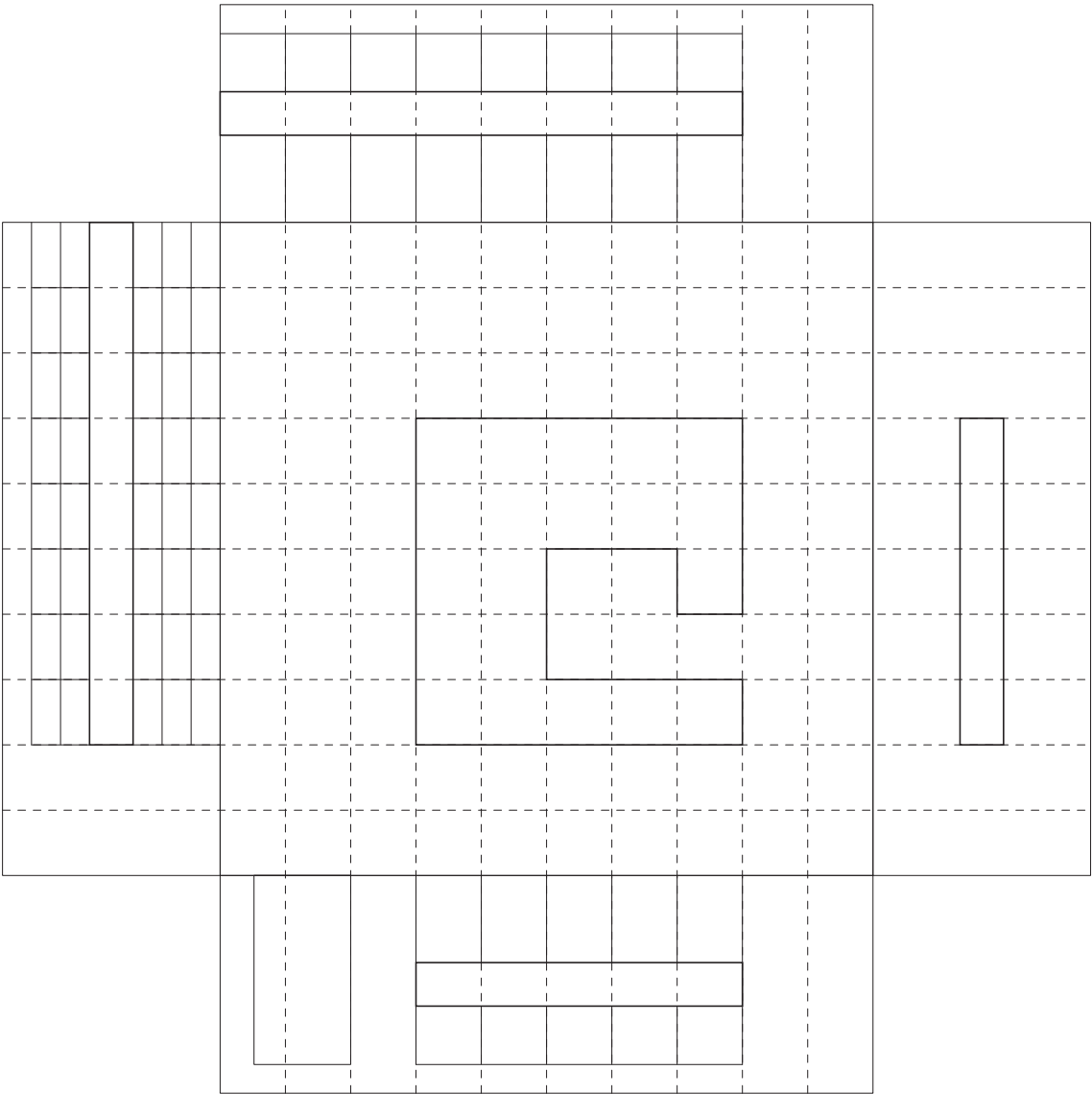
making stuffs





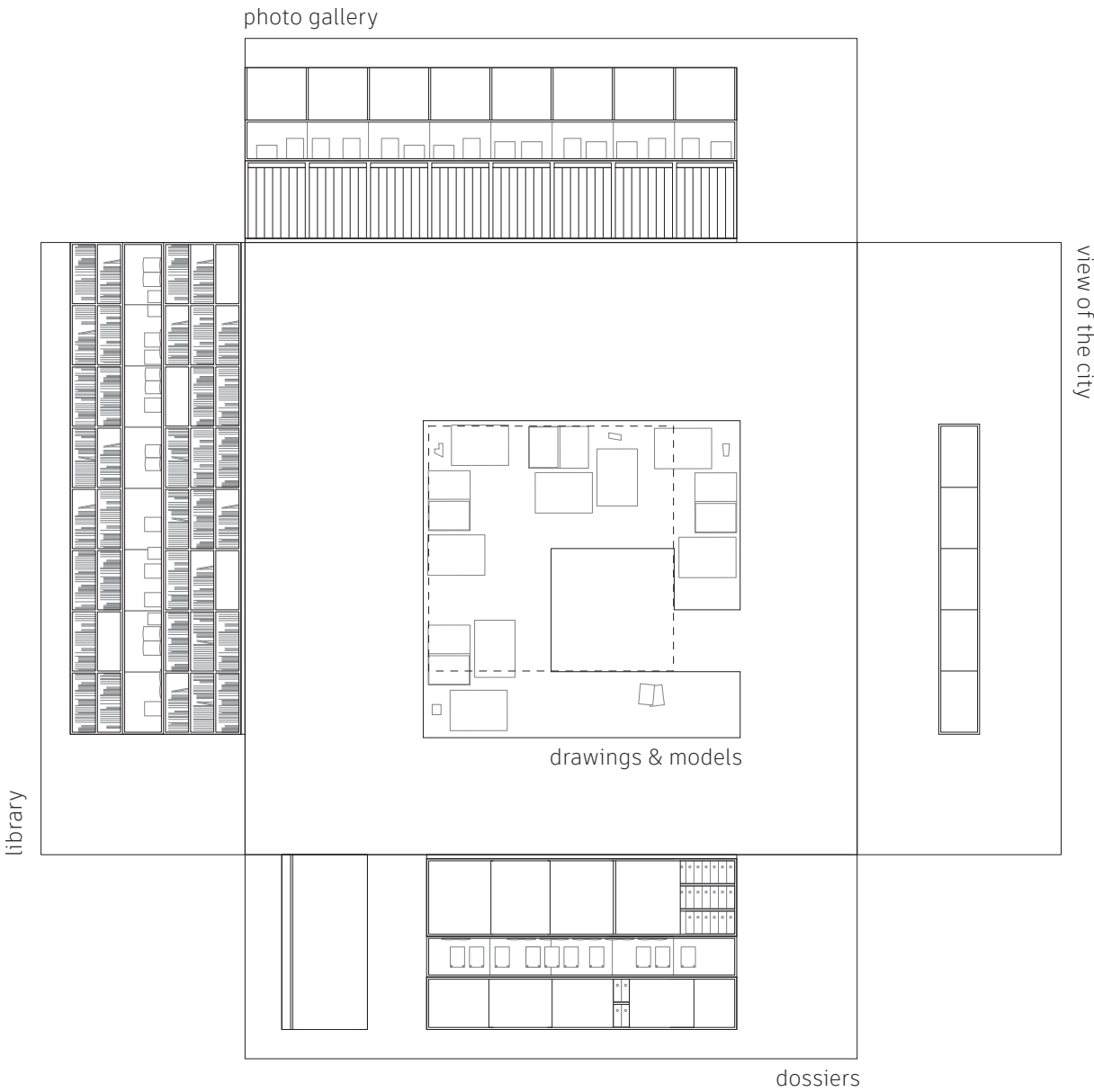






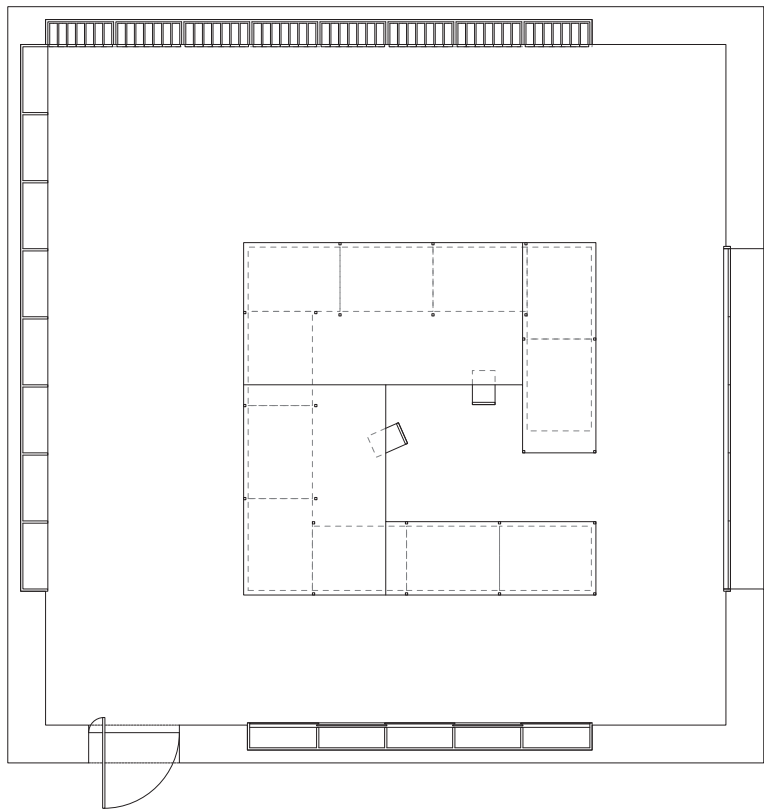
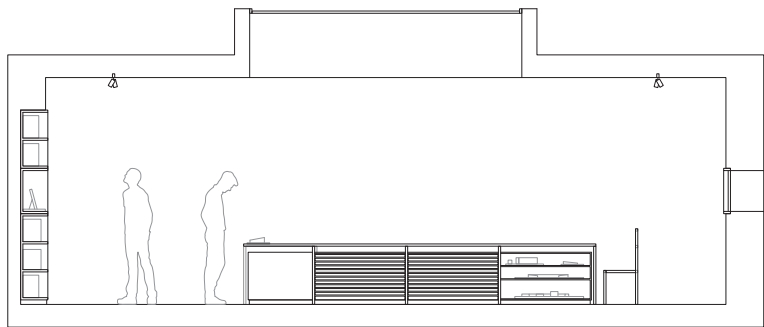
10 by 10 grid of 900mm
fibonacci sequence 1:2:3:5:8

1:100



study area - table - wall form nesting squares that point towards the architect - the work - the context
distinction between display and storage furniture

1:100



The study area, table, and walls form a series of nesting squares that serve as a metaphor for the relationship between the architect, the work, and the context. At the core is the architect's mind and hands, shaping the work on the table, which is always situated in its broader environment. This environment includes history and theory (the library), physical environment (the photo gallery), urban context (view of the city), architectural industry (the dossiers), and lastly the climate (the skylight). The room embodies Kieckens's vision for an archive – it should preserve, offer, and step back.

Primarily, it serves as an open archive where visitors can walk around the table to view drawings and models, as well as other materials displayed on the walls. They can also take a book or folder off the shelves to sit and read. When booked by researchers, it serves as a study room.

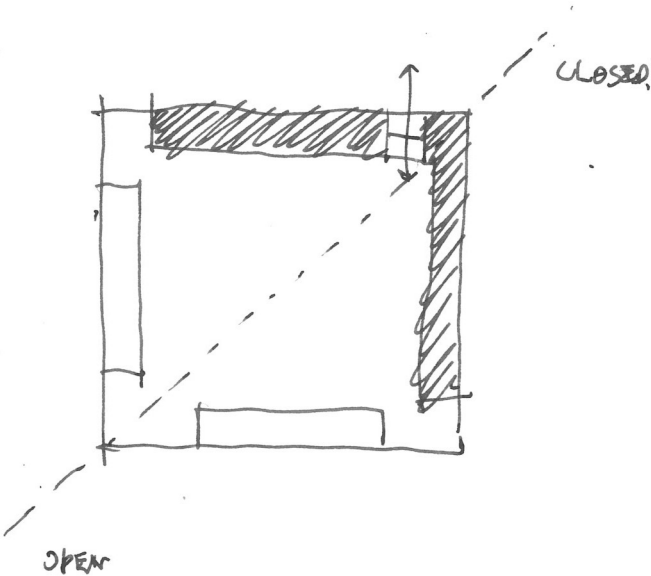
feedback & reflection

The feedback was pretty positive overall. Peer students and the tutors expressed their appreciation for the completedness and the level of detail of my model and the realness of my photos. What impressed me more was that the tutors said it was an elegant design, of which Christian Kieckens would be thankful. I really liked my design to be called elegant, because to my standard it is almost the ultimate pursue of a designer, to make beautiful things that seem effortless and right on point. I haven't been thinking of this word in the process of design though, which made the compliment even more surprising.

- All the comments:
- elegant
 - well photographed
 - gives a sense of a certain time (80s or 90s), which gives the right feeling of an archive
 - the door is not in the system of diagonal symmetry
 - > mirror the door in the other corner?
 - > place the door in the corner of library - photo gallery, fit it in the wooden furniture system
 - > strengthen the diagonal symmetry by making the two closed corners structural and leave the other two open
 - open corners of the table are elegant, but...
 - > how are they supported?
 - > make open corners in the room as well, continue the logic of the table on the larger scale

Some suggestions that Daniel made for the whole class were very relevant for me. He said that we should look carefully at the photos we took again without the predetermined design ideas. We should distance ourselves and reinterpret them. This is very important for us designers. Sometimes we don't know what we've made until the end. What we've made is more important than what we are making.

This was exactly what I've experienced during this short design exercise of 4 weeks. In the interim tutorings, I always think that the tutors' reading of my design departed too much from my intention. I knew the visual materials I prepared were incomplete and could be misleading, therefore I tried to defend my points verbally. Due to miscommunication and shortage of time, I usually could not get the help I wanted which deals with my struggles at the time. Instead, more questions opened up. As I am used to this, I decided that what I want from the tutors was not a solution to my design problems, but guidance to my mentality in the design process. As Daniel pointed out, a designer always have to face the interpretation of others and shall train oneself for this. I realised the reason that I've been insisting on expressing my way of thinking is, I've been denying the value of my design other than the logic part. I'm proud of my rationality and I like to present myself as someone who's strong in logics. I don't feel comfortable or confident to stand behind and advocate the intuitive and perceptual parts of my design. I should accept that I make random decisions as well and they are not always bad. There's much more that I should examine and evaluate of my design than how and why I initially devised it. There should be more cycles of thinking subjectively and looking objectively in my future design process.

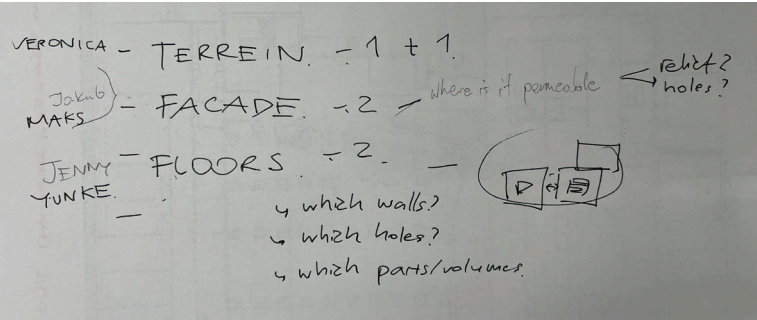
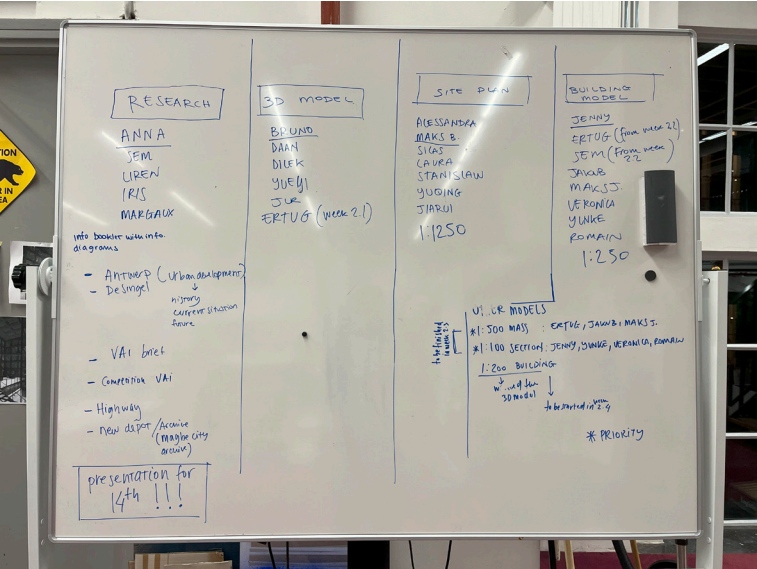


BRIEF III. THE PROJECT

Week 2.1-2.10

understanding the site & defining the project

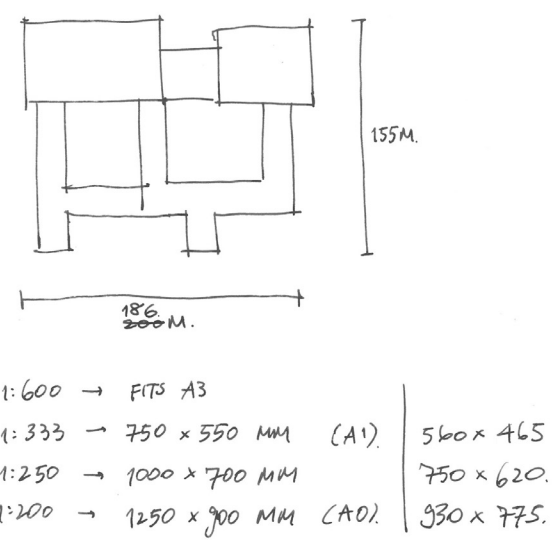
organization



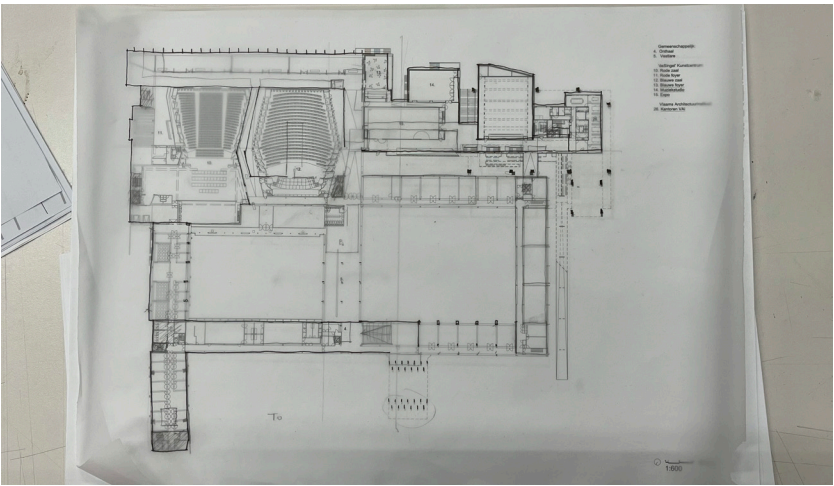
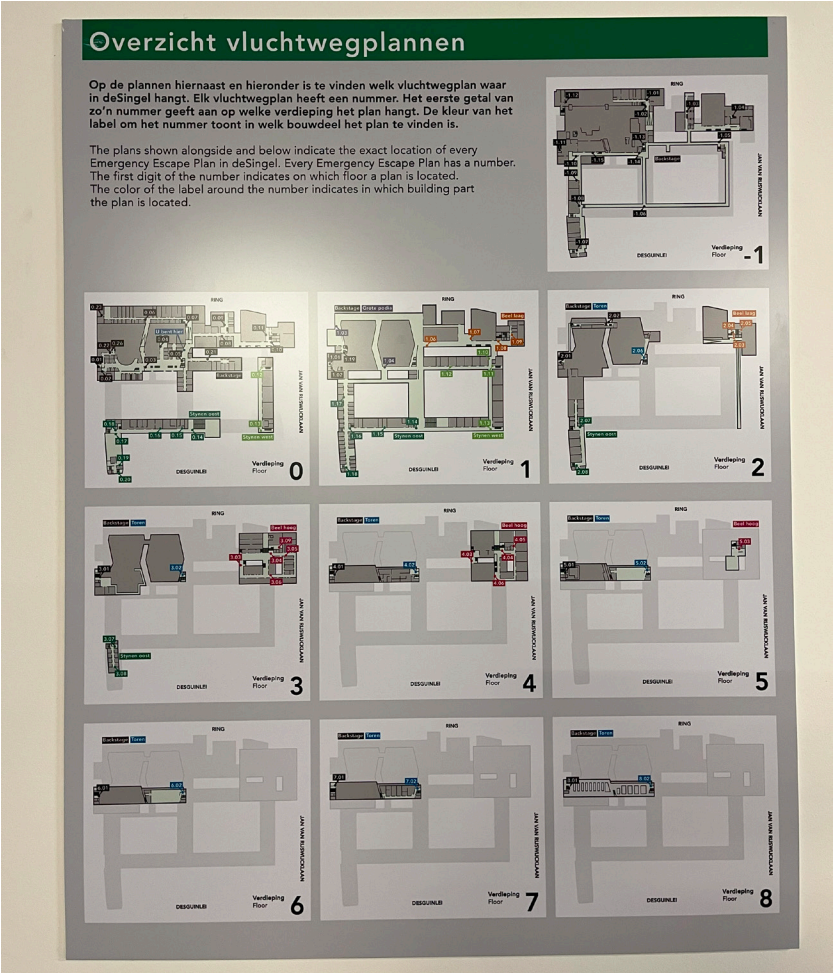
We divided ourselves into 4 groups - research, 3d model, site model & building model. Since I am more into physical modelling, and I expected myself to work with the existing building as much as possible, I joined the building model team. Hearing the suggestion that I should fully show my potential by taking on a **leadership** role, I decided to step forward and lead our group.

I understand why people around me saw the potential of a leader in me. I always take **one step ahead** to make sure that I am on top of things on day one. I hate when there's a meeting, everyone just says I don't know yet and we have no material for discussion. Therefore I would bring some ideas or materials to make sure that we are moving forward as a team. Just like today I printed the building plans on 1:333, 1:250 & 1:200 to test the potential model scale and size. Other than that, I don't like being a leader. I think I'm not a good communicator. I can barely plan my own time. I take full responsibility for my own decisions but I don't like making decisions for others.

At the end of the day, we decided for the **1:250** scale. It is the largest possible scale to include the whole plot and the immediate surroundings while keeping the model size manageable. After briefly talking about the detail level and way to construct the model, I proposed sub-division of tasks to further investigate how to make the model. These sub-groups are terrain, facade and floor, taken by Veronica & Romain, Jakub & Maksik, Yunke & me.



- 1:250 + orthogonal site.
↳ 1100 x 900 mm.
- accessibility / permeability / inside-outside.
 - spatial, not structural.
 - taking apart per layer per part
 - rooms as volumes
 - stairs as holes.



the building model

I realized, that the activities that we are doing now are just different ways to learn about the site. We all have different tasks with the aim of production, but the more valuable part is the knowledge we gain in the process. Without setting specific tasks, we will probably be overwhelmed by what we still need to and get lost in what we should prioritize.

Nonetheless, the task of "analysing which **floors** are needed to make in a 1:250 model" was not an easy one. I get stuck on even tracing the level 1 floor plan. DeSingel is just so complicated. Due to the different relationships between soil and void among the parts of the complex – the corridors, the theatre and the Beel part – it is hard to find one model system that works for all the parts.

I couldn't wrap my mind around the building by only looking at the plans. As the sections are missing, I really wanted to construct the building in 3d to understand it. Meanwhile, the facade group also poses the question that 1:250 would be really small for the facade. So I quickly started to make the building in **foam** with Ertug, while printed an 1:200 plan to compare. These materials, together with sketches and samples made by the terrain and facade group, were enough to start a discussion about the model with the tutors.

After the tutorial, the 1:250 foam model was decided to be kept as a **work model**. To better represent the building, an 1:500 site model, an 1:200 structural model and an 1:100 section model were suggested. Indeed, due to the complexity of the building, one building model would not be sufficient. When one model is loaded with too many layers of information, it becomes too delicate to work with.

While the complexity of the building asks for a **larger scale** model with **more details**, the uncertainty of the process asks for a more **flexible model** that includes a **larger bounding box** of the site. As the models are intended to support the study and presentation of each student's future proposals, which remains flexible, it's hard to define the scale and boundaries of the models right now.

Daniel suggested, that we should start with the personal design while progressing with the collective models. Some observations and decisions on the design side would then make the intention of the model-making and research parts clearer. He said that we designers often postpone **designing** by extending the **research** forever. There are only two states of an architect, one is feeling uninspired, the other is knowing what to do. I can very much relate to this. We should not allow ourselves to feel uninspired all the time and expect to be inspired all of a sudden.



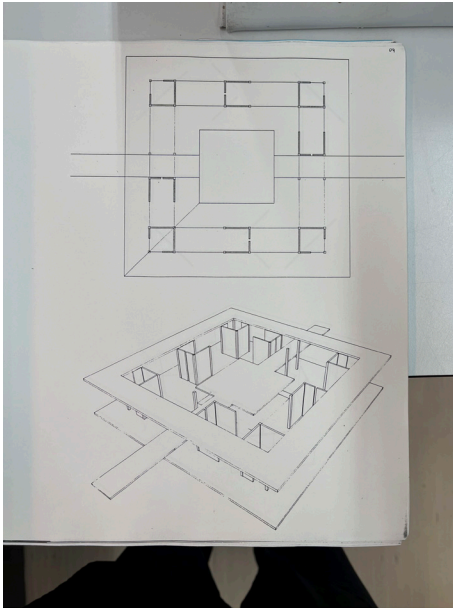
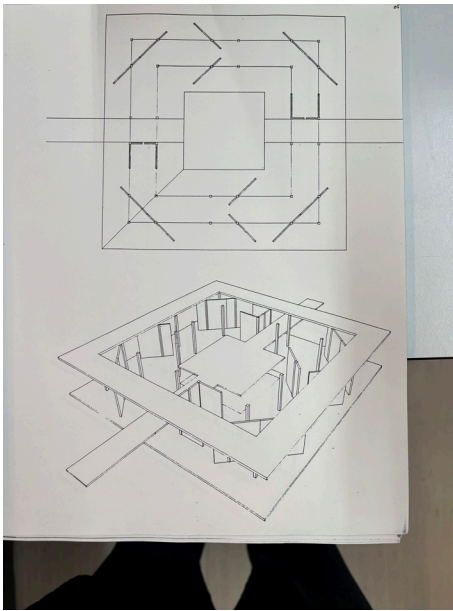
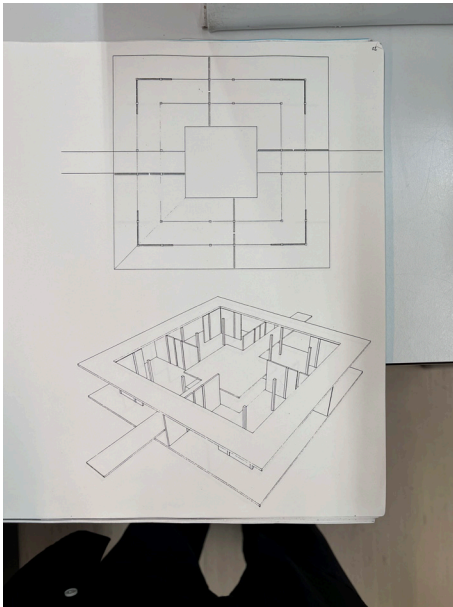
There were two themes of the research centre of HNI that I really liked. One is that all the structures were hanging, **floating** or have a gap in between. The floor slab, the slats, light, ventilation ducts and railing were all interweaved together in a restrained manner. The other things is that the ventilation ducts were embraced as a part of the design. The **ducts** were exposed but the space does not give the simple industrial atmosphere, because they were integrated into the fabric in a clever way. I've been paying extra attention to the **dimensions** of furniture in this visit.



Looking at a colored section drawing of Jo Coenen, the woman explained that he imagined the collection wings as a huge collection shelf, where different storage spaces were compartmentalized. This is similar to my idea of visualizing the internal logic of the collection with the spatial design. Although, it could be very conceptual.



Jo Coenen's drawings of the different configurations that the exhibition space can have, were similar to one my initial sketches of the last design exercise. The form of the space similar to my final design.

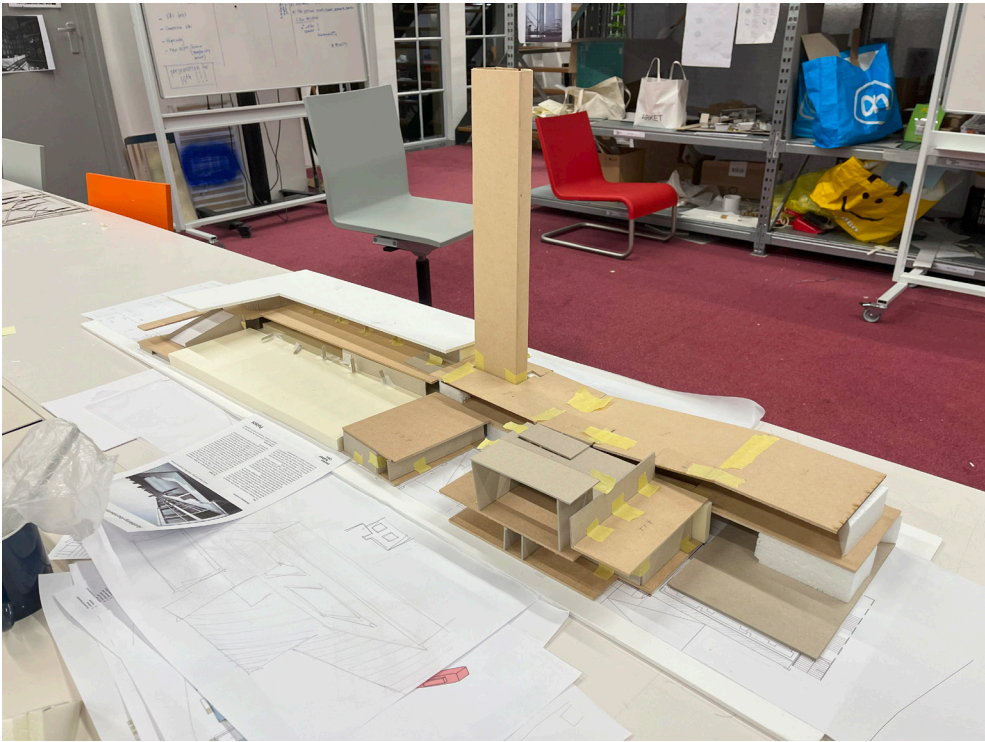
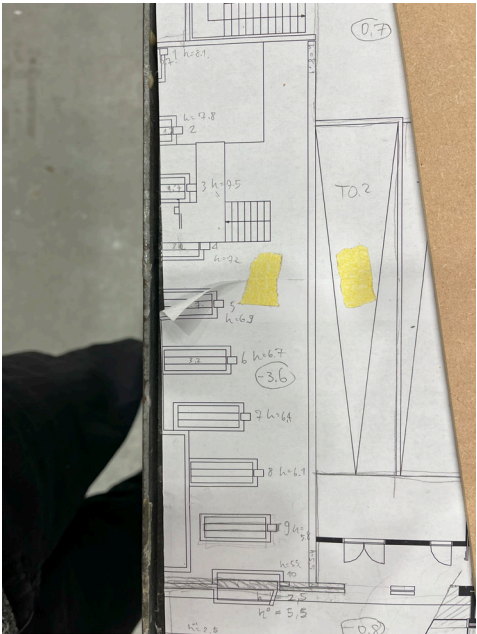


the section model

Due to the complexity of the spaces in deSingel, we saw the need of making an 1:100 section model through the centre of the building. The slice shows the main public route of the building. It contains a bit of each part of the building: the corridor, the theatre and the Beel part. A new team is formed: Yunke, Veronica, Romain and me.






We defined the model as a study model to help us better understand the building. Since the 3d modelling team is still completing their work, we decided to make the floor slabs and walls first by hand. During the process, we had an internal discussion on whether we should continue doing it by hand, accepting some imperfection, or waiting for the 3d model to **laser cut** things precisely and efficiently. I stood firmly by the **hand-making** side. First of all, I enjoy the process of handcrafting more than drawing CAD. Second, this way we could work on it now without waiting for the 3D-model, and perhaps provide a different perspective on the building. Third, handmaking allows the four of us to work together on the model at the same time, whereas lasercutting would overload one person. Lastly, we could learn more this way. Doing a lasercut model is not much different than joining the 3d-team and work fully digitally.

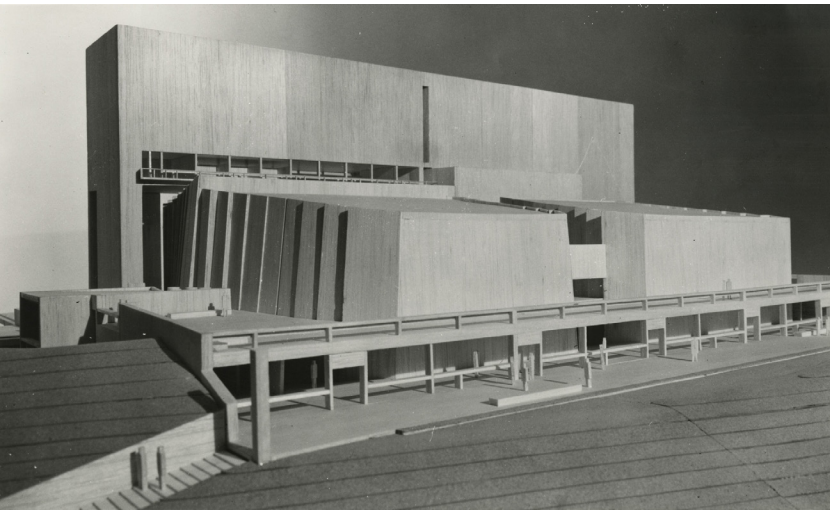
At the end of the day, we had a model that is falling apart. But it shows the scale change between the courtyard and the tower.



the brief

public (700)	reception	100	separate sanitary
	exhibition	200	multifunctional
	reading room	200	small separate rooms
	library	200	workstations
staff (560)	staff workspace	300	10x12.5 workplace for 30 employees. workstations are 3.5 by 3.5. standard office spaces. focus spots
	large meeting room	80	
	small meeting room	30	
	kitchen, bathroom, dressing room	150	
archive (4000)	storage packaging material	120	near depot
	loading & unloading	150	
	waiting depot	100	emergency storage
	triage space	60	to separate correct & contaminated material
	quarantine space	120	for potentially contaminated material
	cleaning space	60	processing contaminated material
	pre-depot	60	
	processing space	60	
	digitization space	60	
	restoration studio	60	
	depot	2500	climate class for paper.
	photo storage	100	
	view depot	125	for 3D objects
total (5200)			
bruto (6000)			

- 1968 -  - Styneu.
↳ quiet patios.
↳ classrooms & offices. for conservatorium
- 1980 -  - Styneu.
↳ concert hall (1000p) + theatre hall (750p)
↳ radio in the basement {art functions grew under
↳ library in the tower. director
Frre Leyssen}
- 1987 -  - Styneu
↳ expansion conservatorium
↳ black hall
↳ dining room
- 2000 -  - Beel.
↳ expanded backstage
↳ functional.
↳ better logistics for the theatre.
↳ glass door for ticket control.
- 2007 -  - Beel.
↳ 1995 - study of a tower addition
↳ reputation halls / exhibition / cafe / offices.
↳ acoustic made the tower impossible.
↳ horizontal tower



The archive photos showed deSingel as a beautiful architectural object. The model made for the Wezenburg urban planning competition in 1960 showed how Styne imagined the building with landscape instead of highways. The extended pier towards highway shows the intention of creating a **public axis** in the building. Another early model showed the building without the spaces for Radio 2 in the basement yet. The tower also used to accommodate much less program than the built version. The wide and open **terrace** is well connected with the landscape. The terrace seems to be more connected to the interior and has a more public character. The original **landscape** explains the shape of the back of the building well, which became invisible after the addition of Beel's part in 2007.

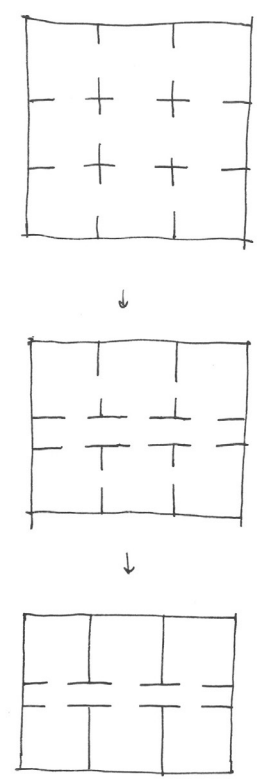
The cloister-like **courtyards** were designed by Styne with the idea of creating a quiet and introvert school campus. At that time the complex was designed only to accommodate classrooms and offices for the conservatorium without the large theatre halls and all kinds of art-related activities yet. The archive photos with only this part of de Singel reminds me of my encounter with the campus of the university of Antwerp.



My first idea was to utilize the vacant spaces under the **terraces** which add up to around 1500m², and accommodate the rest of the program in a new volume in the Eastern **courtyard**. These are my considerations:

- by placing an attractive public program in the back of the building, the **central axis** will be activated during the day
- although the western **courtyard** still has a lot of quality, the eastern one has already departed from Styne's original design. It is rather cramped and even filled with a tent when we visited. The cloister-like quality originally belonged to the monofunctional music school building, a role that deSingel has long since evolved beyond. We should maybe accept that deSingel will take on a different character and let one of the courtyards go
- adding a new volume in **front** of the building might become to much of a statement, which I generally want to avoid
- creating much more **dark spaces** is not necessarily a problem, because the archive has a lot of dark programs

Figures, Doors, Passages



- INTERCONNECTED ROOMS.
- NO SEPERATION BETWEEN CIRCULATION & INHABITATION.
- VISUALLY & SPATIALLY UNITED.
- ENFILADES CREATE THOROUGH SIGHTLINES.
- DESIGNED TO SOCIALIZE.
- MOVEMENTS WERE 'FILTRATION'
- ROOMS WERE JOINED LIKE A PATCHWORK.

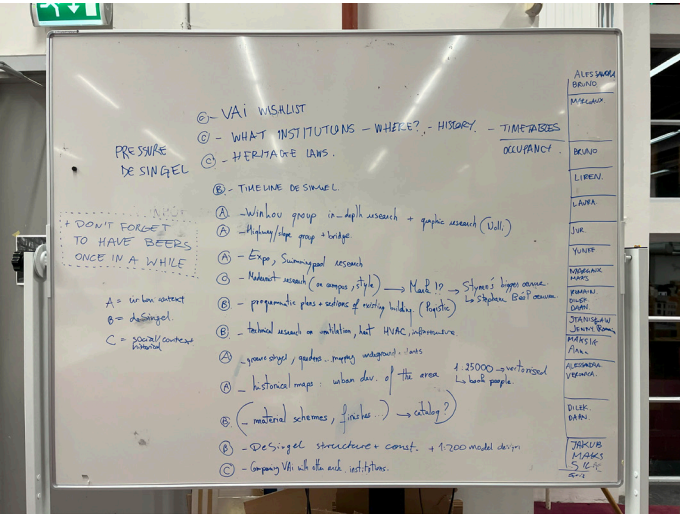
↓

- A PASSAGE PARALLEL TO THE INTERCONNECTED ROOMS.
- ENFILADES WERE KEPT TO SERVE FOR BEAUTY.
- PASSAGE IS PURELY FUNCTIONAL FOR THE SERVANTS.
- DOORS ARE CONSTRAINED WHILE SIGHT GOES AFAR.

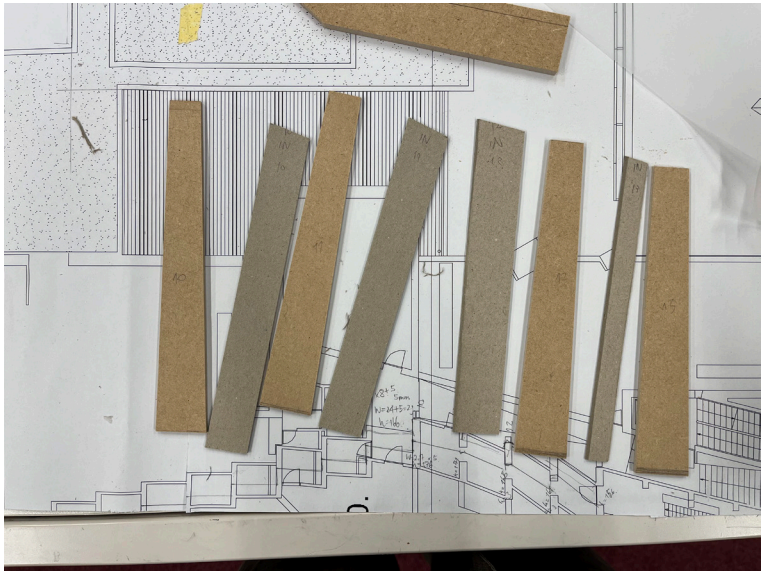
↓

- CLEAR SEPARATION BETWEEN CORRIDOR & ROOMS, ROUTE & DESTINATION
- COMPARTIMENTALIZATION
- INDIVIDUALIZED.
- MOVEMENTS BECAME 'CANALIZATION'
- THOROUGHFARE BECAME THE BACKBONES WHERE THE ROOMS ARE ATTACHED TO.

new organization for research



continuing with the section model

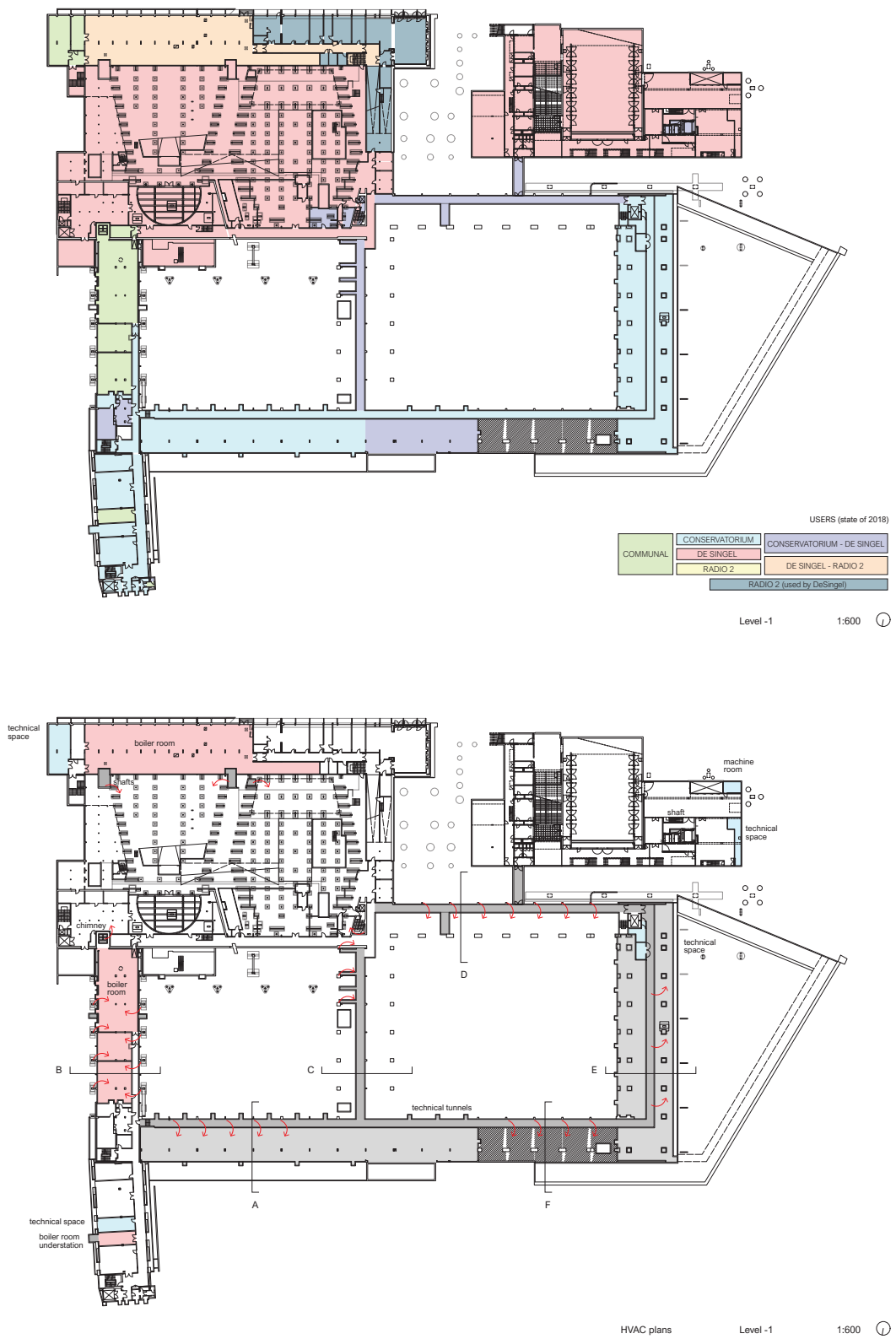


There's an artwork hanging in the corridor between the two theatre halls, saying "Space here becomes time" and "Time here becomes space". This could be related to an archive. The rhythm of the structure walls of the theatres that I have been making these days, is very much archive-like as well.

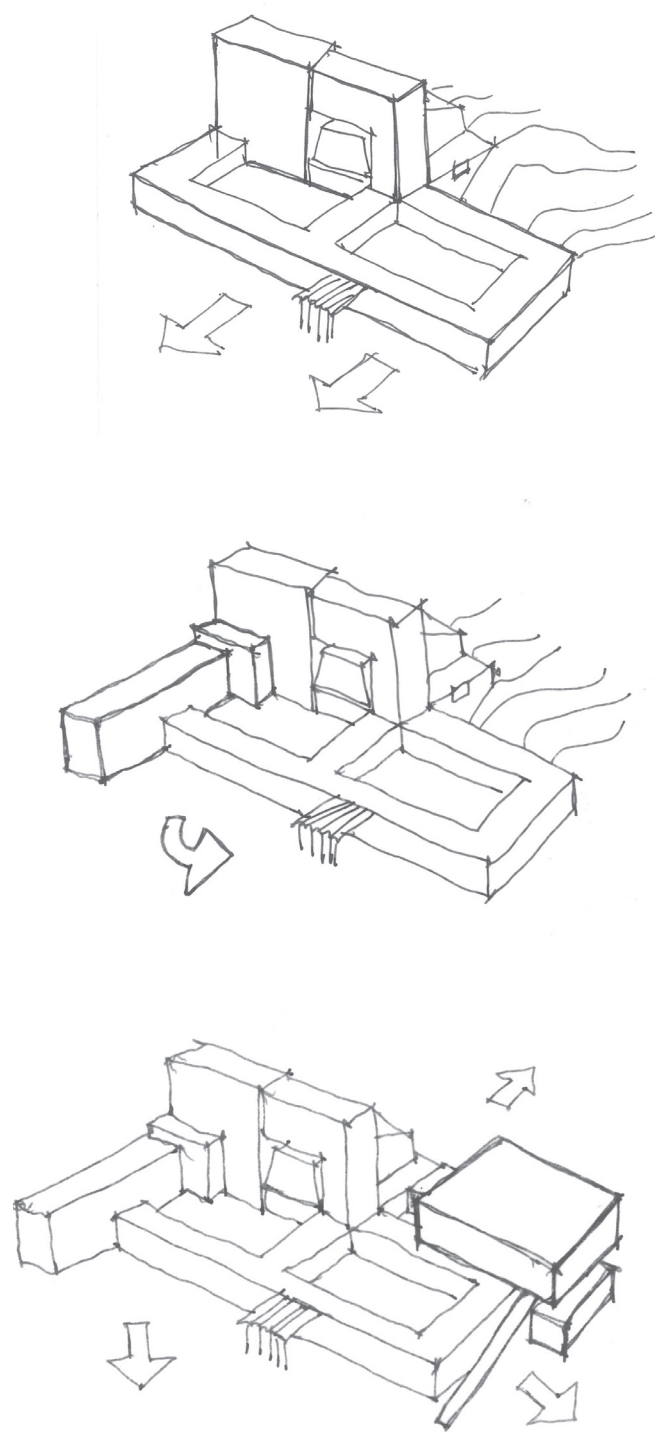


researching HVAC

I worked on the HVAC & infratructure topic with Romain & Stanislaw. By looking at different plans, sections, photos, information from the installation companies, and Marie's master thesis, we were able to identify the source and distribution of heating and ventilation systems. Through the course of the development, although orginal systems became obsolete, the principle stayed the same. New heating pipes for radiators were planted in the orginal floor cavity made for convectors in classrooms. New radiators in the main corridor were attached to the flat columns. New rainpipes are also always attached to structural elements. Beel's part, however, has a completely utilitarian modern HVAC system that is hidden in the core, half levels and dropped ceilings.



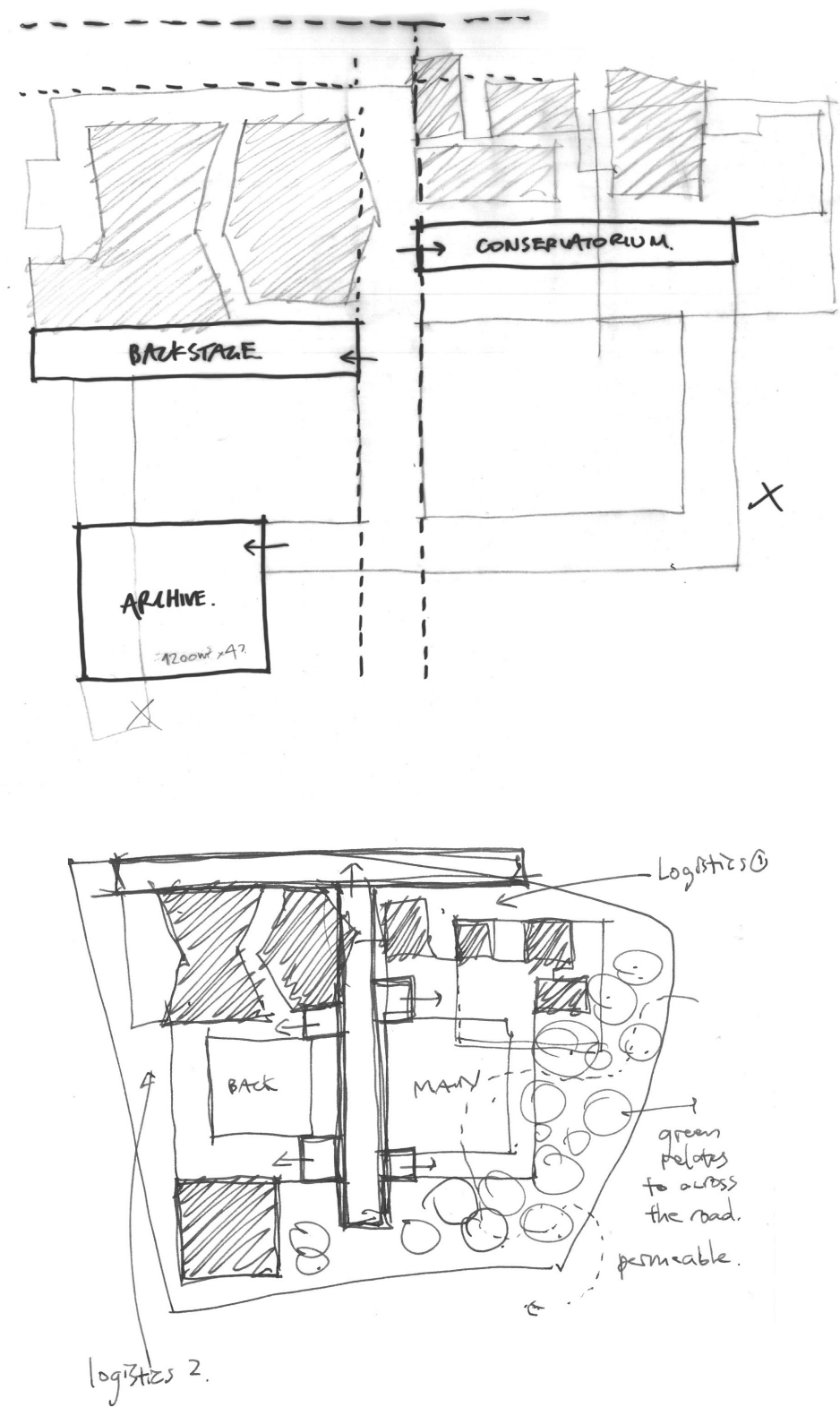
massing analysis



DeSingel originally had a very **clear gesture** & orientation. It faced the city and sat with its back towards the hill. Although the tower volume is on one side, the off-centred entrance balanced it back. The volume is pretty static and in peace with the landscape.

After the addition by de Meyer in 1987, the building became **uncomfortably rotated** towards the crossing. It became an "L" gesture, blocking the Wezenberg hill behind. It is a very short and unbalanced "L" though, where the de Meyer wing faces completely towards one side and the tower is a statement towards the other. Beel's addition of the backstage made the armpit even bulkier and more awkward.

The Beel addition in 2007 was an effort to balance out the volume but it made the orientation problem even more conflicting. The box overlooks the highway and the bridge, distributing the attention outwards to all sides. The complex no longer works as a whole. The courtyards were **torn apart** by the centrifugal and twisting forces.

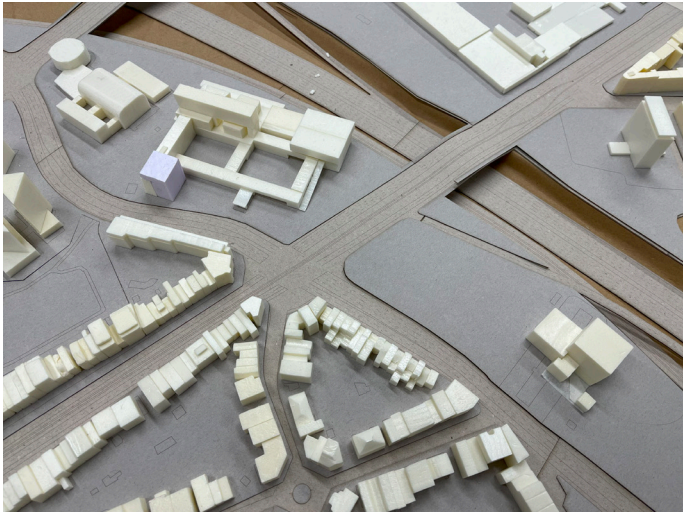
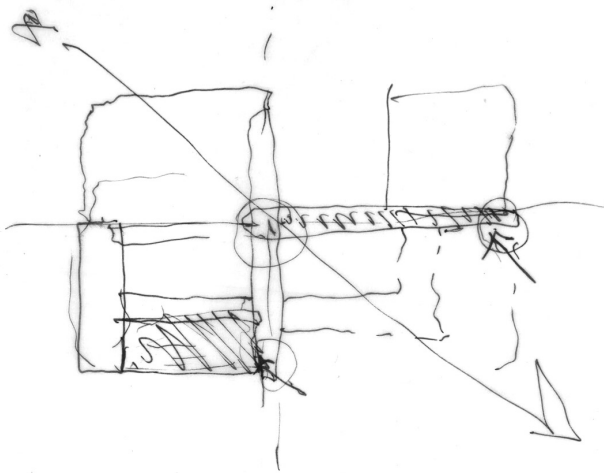


Using the massing analysis as a starting point, I would propose an **archive volume** in the diagonal corner of the Beel box. This would continue the act of pulling the complex apart, helping to articulate itself as an urban cluster instead of a single building. Other than that, I plan to deal with the chaotic void between Beel's part and the original corridor, and the fragmented backstage addition by Beel. The following points are important in this plan:

- strengthen the central spine that gives access to the different parties
- secondary public spaces by the entrance of each cluster
- the eastern courtyard becomes the back side, surrounded by the less public programs
- the western courtyard will be activated. It should be permeable from the crossing & streets, the space in front should be planted to connect with the park on the other side
- the pond and the ramp should be taken away to make the public space walkable
- the logistics will be kept where they are, the back sides of the "L"
- activate the terraces in the back as public promenade

by Daniel & Sam

- do you really want to demolish the Meyer wing to place the new volume?
- do you have to building against the original facade?
- the idea about the volume is clear, the counter balance works
- one garden being defined as the back, surrounded by taller volumes also works
- the logic of the circulation should be coherent with the logic of the volumes. The circulation cannot be a relic of Stynen's plan when the volumes are in a diagonal gesture
 - > extend the archive block to the entrance, creating a formal entrance corner
 - > the archive block can be permeable on street level, providing access to the ground floor of the Meyer wing
 - > stress the axis of the Beel part as well, create an entrance there, then the two perpendicular entrance routes would cross at the centre
- work on the model, study the volume, it doesn't have to be a cube



the crossing



The crossing is supposed to provide good views to all the four ways. the materiality of the classroom corridors is clearly to be distinguished from the public way. however, due to the complexity of the structure, and the placement of glass doors, the spatial relation is not very articulated.

the Beel entrance



The pond and the artwork significantly blocked the view of the original Stynen facade and the entrance to the Beel part.

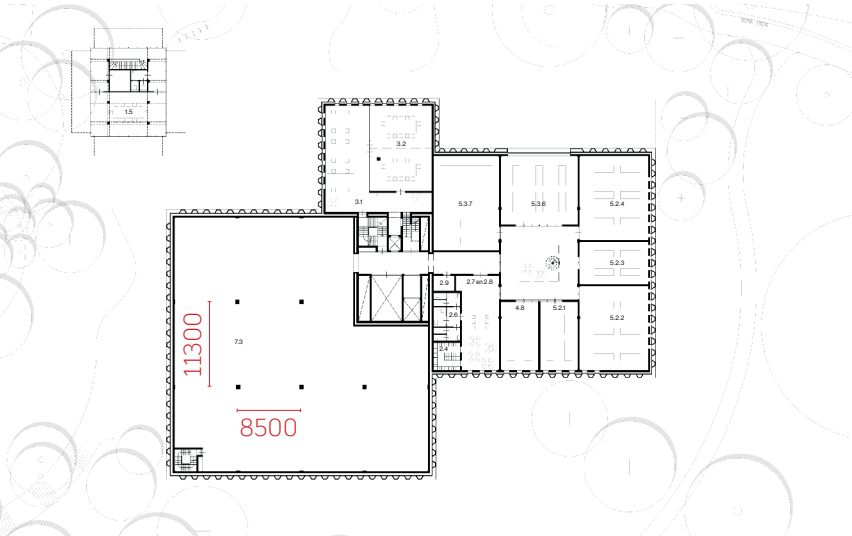


The new archive building in the park, designed by office Winhov, is planned to be built in 2028-2031. It is a cluster of cubes attached to each other, housing the depot/exhibition space, the logistics/offices, the entrance/reading rooms, and the cafe respectively.

It has basically all the **programs** that were asked in the VAI brief. It is twice as large though, with 12.000m² in total, out of which 8.000m² is depot space. It shows very well how a contemporary archive with public functions could work. The closed and brutal facades, however, are a clear indication of the function of the building and are not particularly inviting. It is also worth keeping in mind that the plan is at a competition state, which is always more romantic than the building that actually gets built.

The **compactness** of the building is worth contemplating. It has almost no corridors, which is completely the opposite than deSingel. The building is standing freely in a park, which made it possible to grow from inside out. Whereas on the plot of deSingel, the existing conditions are constraining this possibility.

Seeing that a beautiful archive building project will be sitting next to our site, I start to question if the **emphasis of my project** should be on making a good archive. I don't have the confidence of making a better design than office Winhov. Nor does the existing building provide me the perfect conditions to do so. My design should then focus on activating the site and maximizing the qualities of deSingel as a whole.



SAMENVATTEND PROGRAMMA VAN EISEN - OPPERVLAKTE TABEL				
	opp.	opp. gevraagd		
1. OPEN ONTHAALFUNCTIES	374 m²	+/-	211 m²	
1.1 Inkomhal met balie	40 m²	+/-	30 m²	
1.2 Lockers en garderobe bezoekers	74 m²	+/-	35 m²	
1.3 Borstvoedingslokaal / EHBO	12 m²	+/-	9 m²	
1.4 Toiletten bezoekers	20 m²	+/-	17 m²	
1.5 Café	niveau 0 114 m²	+/-	120 m²	
	niveau +1 114 m²	+/-	- m²	
2. FACILITAIRE FUNCTIES	344 m²	+/-	300 m²	
2.1 Parkeerplaatsen	100 m²	+/-	100 m²	
2.2 Fietsenstalling	86 m²	+/-	70 m²	
2.3 Afvalverwerkingsruimte incl. KGA	13 m²	+/-	13 m²	
2.4 Douches en kleedruimte werknemers	36 m²	+/-	30 m²	
2.5 Lockers en garderobe werknemers	13 m²	+/-	15 m²	
2.6 Toiletten werknemers	23 m²	+/-	17 m²	
2.7 Keukenette met koffieruimte	64 m²	+/-	25 m²	
2.8 Lunchruimte (ruimte 2.7)	- m²	+/-	25 m²	
2.9 Poortruimte (niveau +1)	6 m²	+/-	5 m²	
	Poortruimte (niveau 0)	3 m²	+/-	- m²
3. KANTOORFUNCTIES	393 m²	+/-	360 m²	
3.1 Activity based workplaces (niv. +1)	104 m²	+/-	250 m²	
	Activity based workplaces (niv. +2)	187 m²	+/-	- m²
3.2 2 vergaderruimtes samen	92 m²	+/-	100 m²	
3.3 Economisch	10 m²	+/-	10 m²	
4. LOGISTIEKE FUNCTIES	847 m²	+/-	854 m²	
4.1 Laad- en loskade	195 m²	+/-	200 m²	
4.2 Pakruimte	127 m²	+/-	128 m²	
4.3 Transitruimte	61 m²	+/-	66 m²	
4.4 Materiaalruimte bij transitruimte	98 m²	+/-	100 m²	
4.5 Quarantainestraat	95 m²	+/-	100 m²	
4.6 Ruimte chemische producten (2 lokalen)	21 m²	+/-	20 m²	
4.7 Ruimte chemische bewerking / vernisruimte	51 m²	+/-	50 m²	
4.8 Magazijnruimte voor restauratie ateliers	46 m²	+/-	50 m²	
4.9 Consultatie- en passieve depot	98 m²	+/-	100 m²	
4.10 Materiaalruimte klein in passieve depot	29 m²	+/-	30 m²	
4.11 Apart lokaal persoonlijk beschermingsmateriaal	26 m²	+/-	10 m²	

5. RESTAURATIE - EN ONDERZOKSGEDEELTE	opp.	opp. gevraagd	
5.1 De raadpleegruimte	98 m²	+/-	100 m²
5.2 Ateliers voor werk			
5.2.1 metaalatelier en lasbewerking	46 m²	+/-	50 m²
5.2.2 werkatelier tentoonstelling + opslag	102 m²	+/-	100 m²
5.2.3 Houtzagerij + opslag	51 m²	+/-	50 m²
5.2.4 Restauratie atelier voor hout en scheepsmodellen fijne bewerking	102 m²	+/-	100 m²
5.2.5 Atelier XL groot formaat	108 m²	+/-	100 m²
5.3 Ateliers stofvrij			
5.3.1 Restauratie atelier schilderen	93 m²	+/-	100 m²
5.3.2 Restauratie atelier papier en boek	102 m²	+/-	100 m²
5.3.3 Restauratie atelier textiel	97 m²	+/-	100 m²
5.3.4 Restauratie atelier polyvalent	102 m²	+/-	100 m²
5.3.5 Restauratie atelier hout	93 m²	+/-	100 m²
5.3.6 Restauratie atelier scheepsmodel	93 m²	+/-	100 m²
5.3.7 Fotostudio	109 m²	+/-	100 m²
5.3.8 Onderzoekruimte	97 m²	+/-	100 m²
6. TECHNISCHE FUNCTIES	589 m²		
6.1 Technische ruimtes			
6.1.1.1 HS-cabine	20 m²	-	m²
6.1.1.3 no-break	10 m²	-	m²
6.1.1.4.1 AISB	8 m²	-	m²
6.1.1.5.1 serverlokaal	14 m²	-	m²
6.1.2.2.1.1 centrale installatie verwarming	54 m²	-	m²
6.1.2.2.1.1 verdeling installatie verwarming	26 m²	-	m²
6.1.2.2.2 aansluiting warmtepomp	25 m²	-	m²
6.1.2.4.1 luchtgroepen	169 m²	-	m²
6.1.2.3 koelgroepen / warmtepomp	100 m²	-	m²
6.1.3.1 lokaal waterteller	6 m²	-	m²
6.1.3.2 lokaal pompinstallaties	24 m²	-	m²
6.2 Lijven			
6.2.1.5.1 personeel (per verd.)	3 m²	-	m²
6.2.2 grote goederenlift (per verd.)	24 m²	-	m²
6.2.3 kleine goederenlift (per verd.)	6 m²	-	m²
7. DEPOTRUIMTEN	8211 m²		
7.1 Transitruimte/voedruimte	195 m²	+/-	200 m²
7.2 Zichtbare depot	548 m²	+/-	500 m²
7.3 Het grote passieve depot	7116 m²	-	m²
7.4 klimaatkamer COU	34 m²	-	m²
7.5 klimaatkamer COOL	318 m²	-	m²
8. TOTAAL			
(EXCL. TECHNIEKEN, DEPOTRUIMTEN EN CIRCULATIE)	3351 m²	+/-	3025 m²

The article features a discussion with Daniel about the public library and the theatre hall his office designed for Bodø, Norway. It addressed many familiar issues that are reappearing in lectures and tutorials in Interiors. In a written version, these ideas become more solidified and allow me to slowly take them in.

Daniel defined the quotidian monumental experience as the daily **shared memory** between people. When the space has some essential qualities that are related to people's common experience, it becomes both ordinary and characteristic.

- > what is essential in the identity of Flemish architecture?
- > what is the collective memory of an architectural museum, a performance art centre or an cultural complex?
- > what is the shared experience of the place of deSingel?

In Daniel's design, the manipulation of the **void figure** in the city was central. Buildings, especially public buildings, are responsible for shaping boundless urban spaces into an urban interior. This was especially relevant for deSingel. The leftover plot is currently undefined and blends into the already wide streets. This makes the void around the building a non-place, incomprehensible and inaccessible.

- > how will the addition of a new volume reshape the public space?
- > how will the design of entrances affect the public spaces?
- > should deSingel have the quality of an urban block or a campus, in terms of the figure-ground relation?

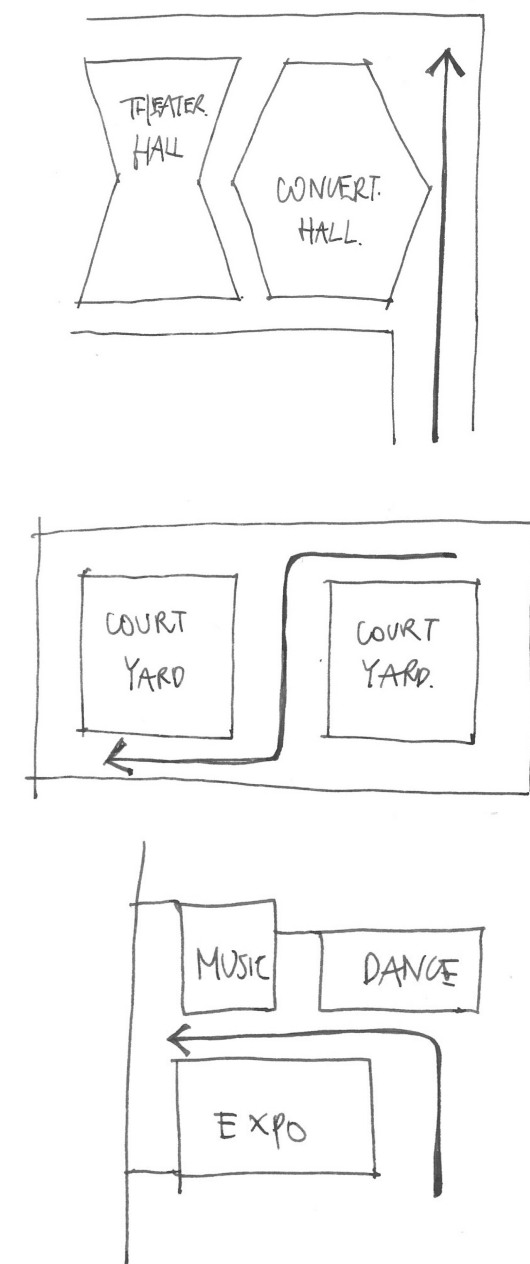
The article talks about designing the **extended sequence** of a figure moving between layers of interiors, buildings and cities. The concert hall unfolds itself sequentially, processional and theatrically, whereas the public library is a big tent that is connected directly to the landscape. DeSingel, at least in the original version of Stynen's design, has a carefully manipulated theatrical route between the entrance, the theatre and the landscape beyond. This quality is worth preserving and strengthening.

- > how can the existing spatial sequence be further extended to the urban interior?
- > how to ensure that the new interventions respect the existing spatial sequence?
- > what kind of relation should the VAI archive have with the urban interior?
- > should one be the subjective figure moving through the space or an objective figure moving around the space?

It was stated that the interiors are unique because of its proximity and intimacy with **human body**. One can only fully understand and experience a space when they sit in and move through it. This is especially interesting with the archive function, where both researchers and visitors physically interact with objects on a daily basis.

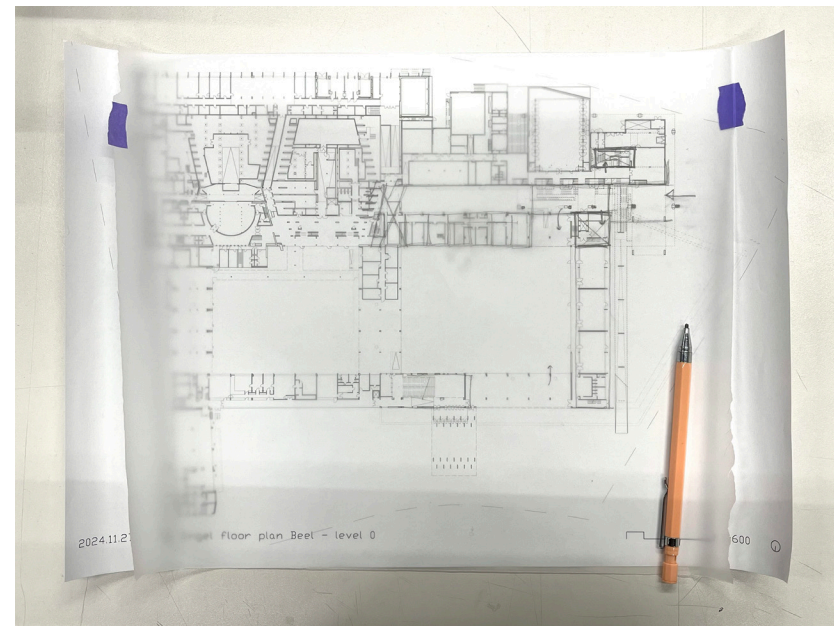
- > how big should the roles of ergonomics and culture be in the design of an interior and an urban interior?





Different from typical theatre/concert hall buildings, people move along the halls in deSingel instead of behind/under them. One would **walk around the big figures**. The same happens for the courtyard. The space one walks along attracts one's attention, which takes away one's attention on the route itself. This makes the large scale circulation spaces somewhat enjoyable.

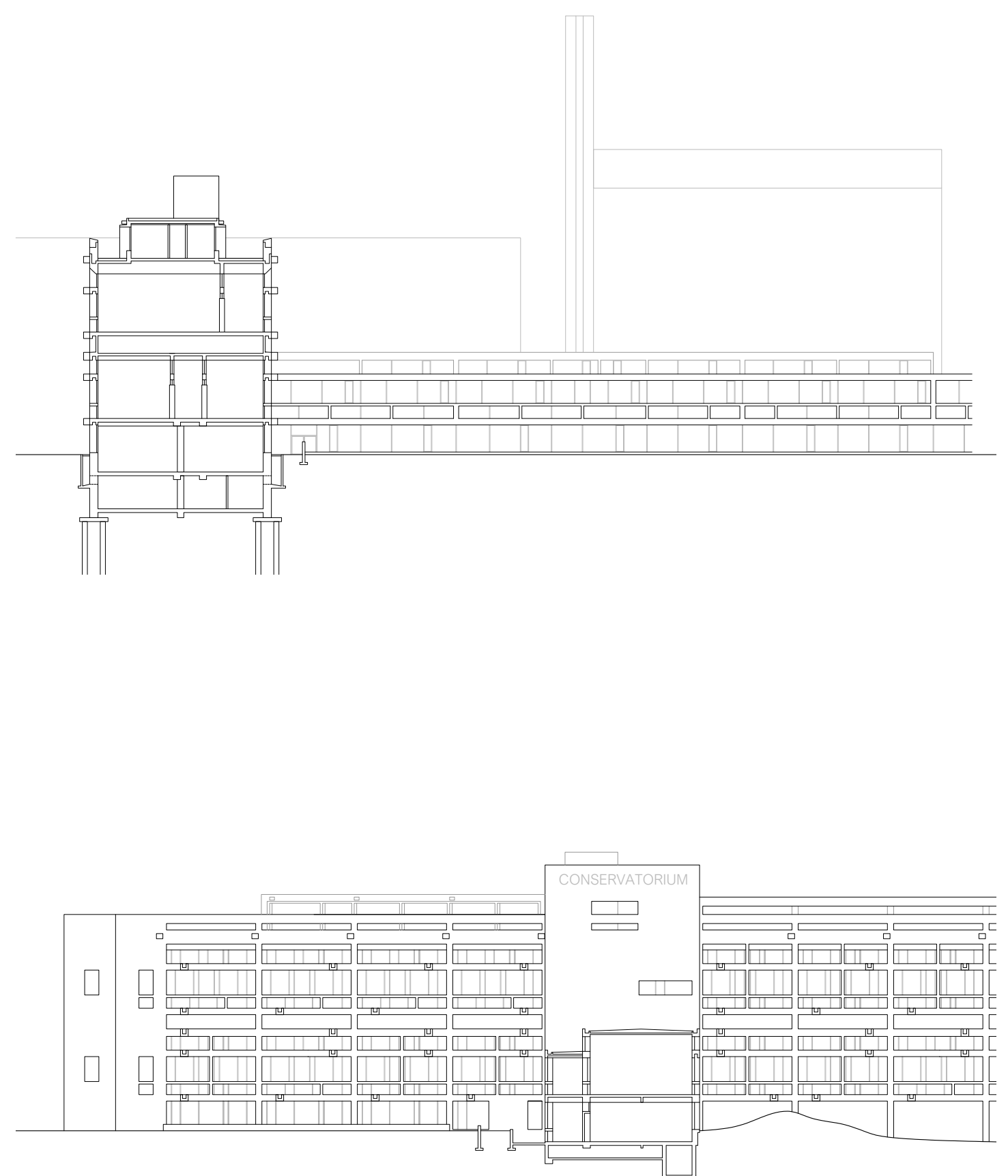
In Beel's part, one would **walk in between large spaces** like exhibition spaces and dance studios but one could barely notice their existence. All attention is on the never-ending circulation space itself. It felt like the whole building is consisted of these detouring routes that were going nowhere. On the plans, it is clear that the circulation spaces were treated as the leftovers of the large functional boxes.

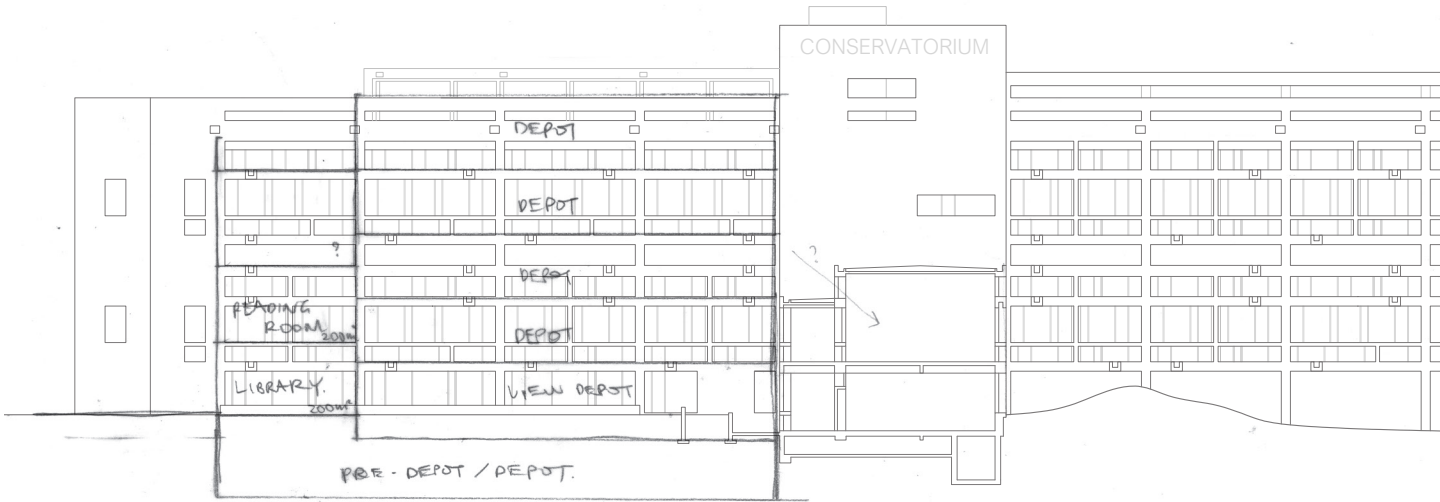
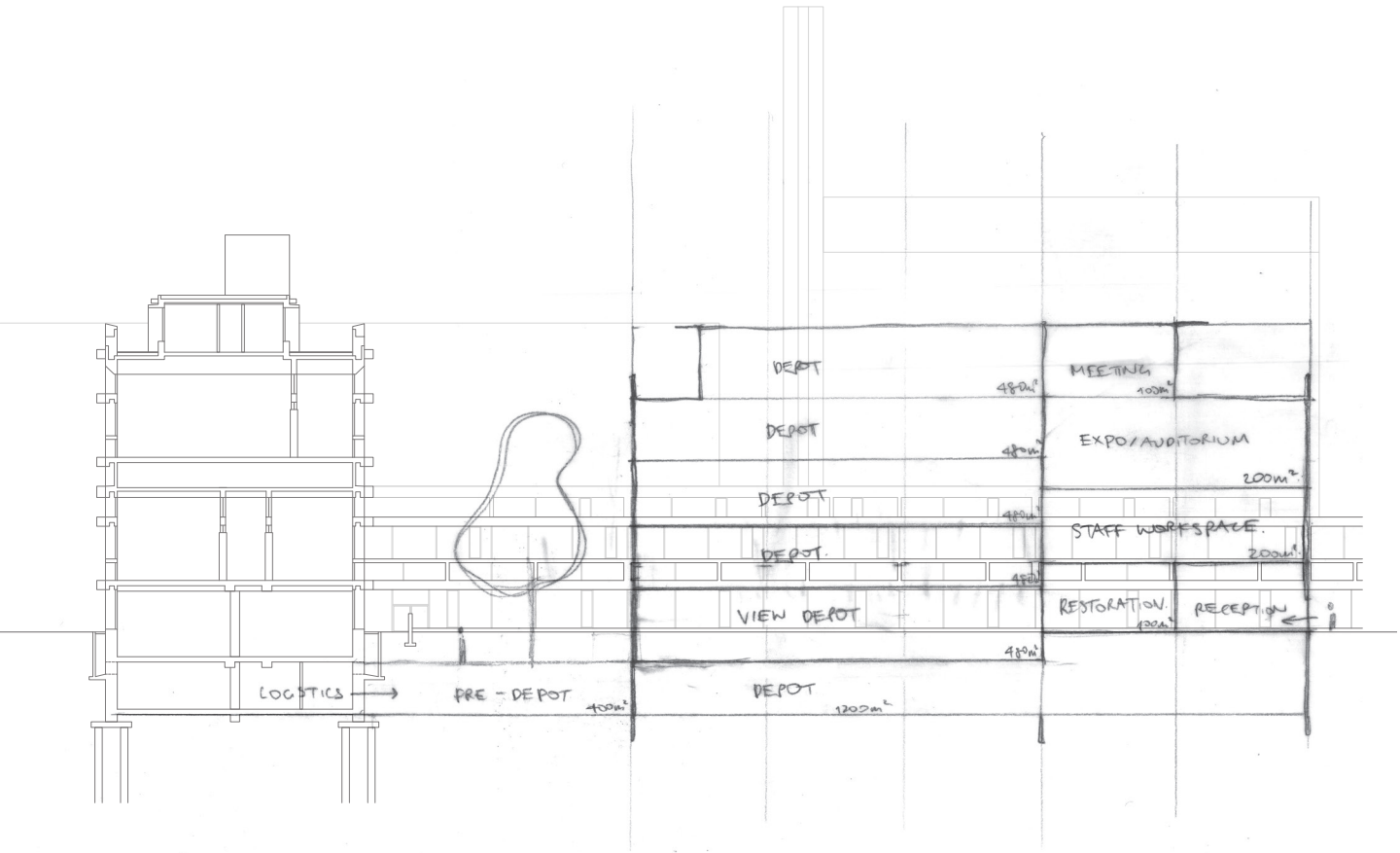
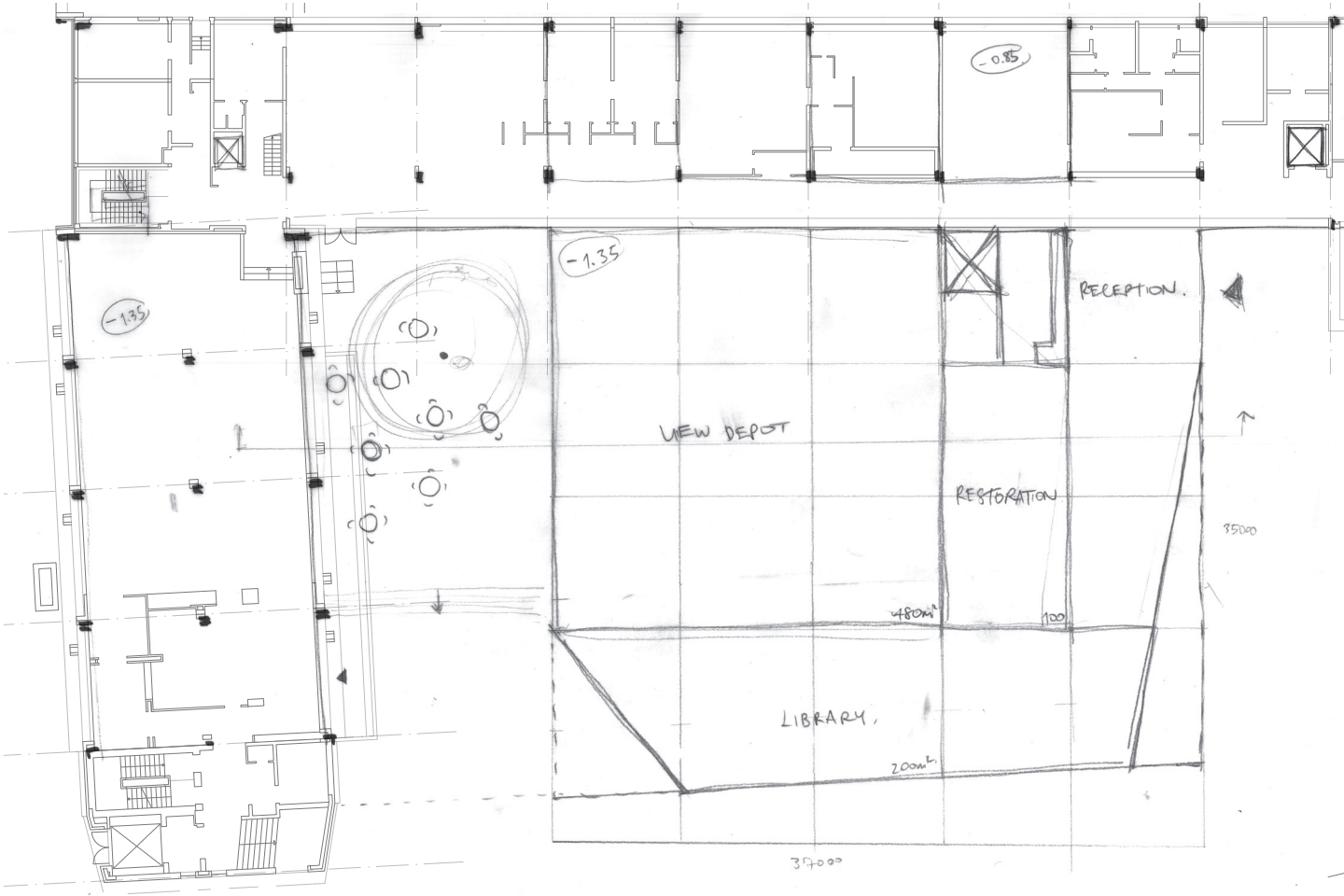


I started with the 1:600 plan of level 0 and 1, seeking for the opportunity of improving the circulation on Beel's side and enhancing the crossing of two main circulation routes. I imagined the possibility of keeping the current front entrance on level 1, and introducing another significant entrance on Beel's side on level 0 by closing off the redundant logistic alley. They would meet at somewhere near the current central circulation tower, where a void has to be created.

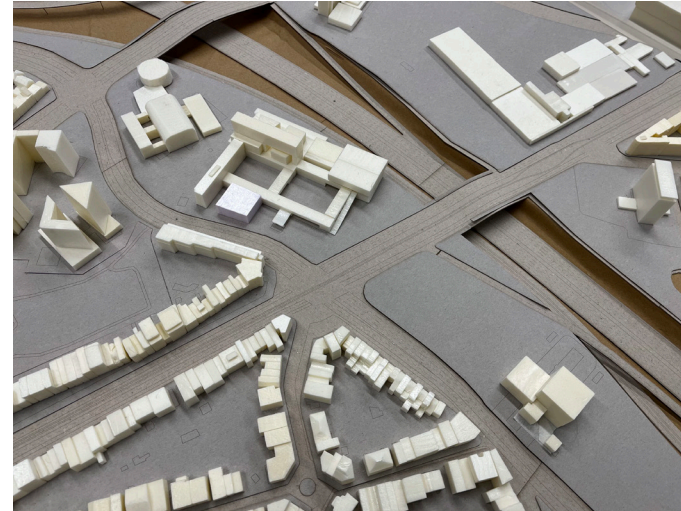
Arrows and crosses could work on the schematic scale, but it is hard to make sense of the actual spaces. On Beel's part, there are already three **parallel circulation routes** (the courtyard corridor, the public route towards VAI, and the staff corridor behind the expo), why would I create another one and call it the main? Without adding or taking away programs, I couldn't find argument to significantly adapt the existing concrete boxes.

I realized that I should deal with the actual programs of the VAI and get a sense of their scales. I need to work on a **bigger scale** to not only sketch diagrams. My focus should be on the new part. I need sections on scale. So I started to draw 1:200 sections through block G & A, which will be the settings of my new volume. I might want to connect to the current wings or replace parts. They have to be tested on top of the existing plans and sections.





massing



Romain shared an archive photo that showed how the marble stairs at the entrance was used as a concert hall when the halls were not built yet. This is interesting because it could be a solution that goes with shifting the front entrance to the new VAI side.



progressing with the section model



interrogating the direction

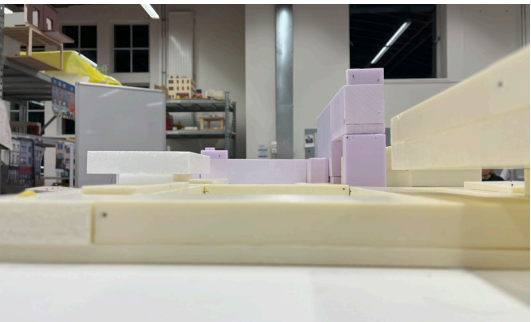
This week it seems like I have chosen to work in front of deSingel. The choice still seems to be somewhat arbitrary to me, but I understand that once I have enough arguments, I should just continue in one way and stop further justifying every choice I make.

So here are the arguments for continuing with my current direction, put down in words to remind myself:

- balancing the **volumes**
- making the complex work more like an **urban complex** with multiple cores
- a **centralised** location for VAI & its archive – as they wanted. While having the opportunity to rent large halls from deSingel.
- more **realistic**, easier to be built
- chance to express VAI's own **identity** through its own building
- to be able to focus on **facade** design with respect to heritage and the immediate urban context

The opposing arguments for focusing on the existing fabric of deSingel would be:

- **reorganizing** and improving the functions and circulation in deSingel
- utilizing current **vacancy**
- making the VAI a gas-like institution, **deinstitutionalization**
- not to compete with **Office Winhov's** design
- not to introduce a **third style** to the complex



What if the volume would be a second **floating disk**? It makes sense in the way that it respects the existing wings by simply not touching them. It creates a canopy for the public spaces around it which could create proper urban interiors. The 'leaving a gap' strategy is a recurring one in deSingel. The tower leaves a gap around the concert hall, the corridor leaves a gap with the landscape below, the Beel addition leaves a gap with the original parts. In a way, there needs to be more air in the Meyer wing.

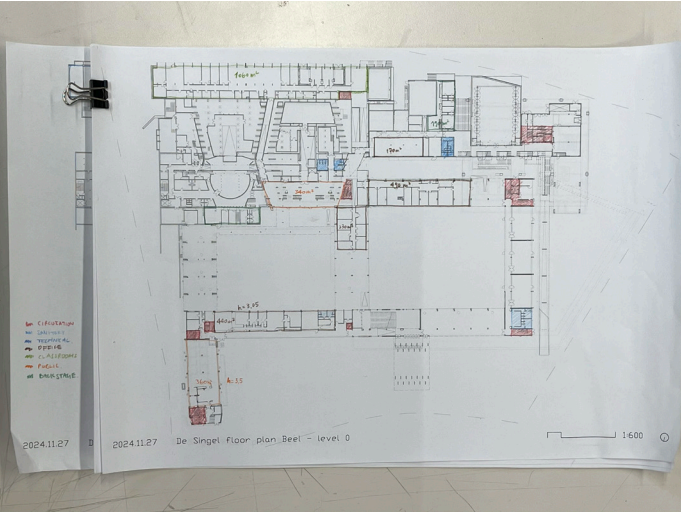
Functionally, the new volume needs a larger ground floor than upper floors. It has to accommodate all the logistics, and facilitate the urban spaces on the ground floor. This is why I tried a **base** that follows the street fabric with a **volume on top**. This shape though, presents itself as a pancake extending towards the public with an isolated tower standing behind, which is a somewhat snobby gesture. It doesn't invite the public. It is also too minor to balance with the other volumes.

To make the volume more substantial, I took away the existing block G and added it to the new volume. It becomes a **tower** parallel to deSingel tower. It comes more in balance with the tower, but it integrates itself too much with it. It is opposing the principle of detaching in deSingel. It makes the already tight Meyer wing even more breathless.

Continuing with the assumption of taking block G away. What if the VAI would be a **selfstanding** block that is completely detached from the existing building? Then I would question, why does the VAI have to stand here? How does it benefit deSingel mutually? Looking at the gap with the existing wing, I couldn't stop thinking about the disastrous situation at the gap in between Beel's addition and the existing wing. How should I avoid a dead alley if I were to leave a gap?

I could also treat the new volume as a **thickening of the existing wing A**. It goes parallel with the tower and completes the enclosure of the eastern courtyard. However, its relation with the roof of the existing wing is still unclear. Could it become an accessible terrace for the new building? I have the urge to include the existing wing in the new volume. Should I attach the new structure to the exterior of the existing, and disguise it under a new skin, as Meyer did? Or make a detached bridge structure that lands further in the courtyard.

shifting the programs around

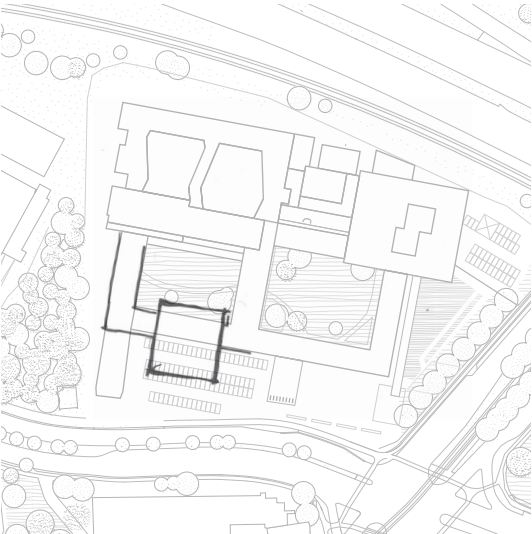
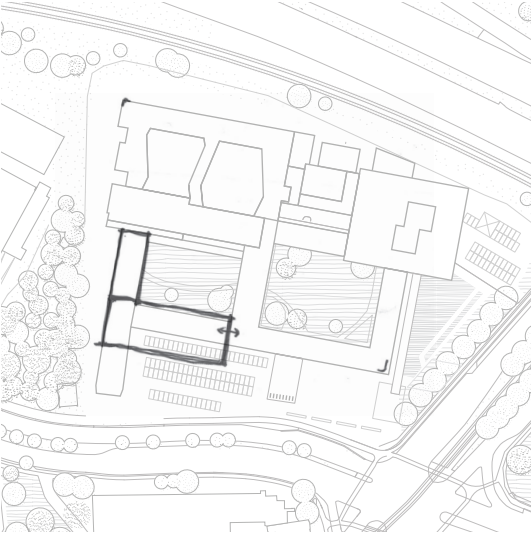
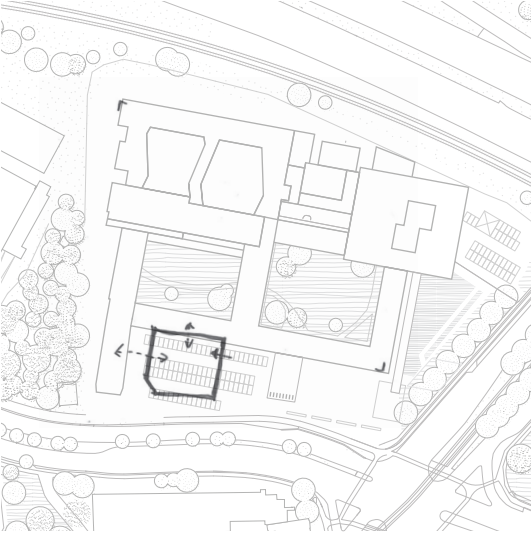


To be able to continue testing the options of **reprogramming or demolishing** the existing wings A/B/G, I have to see where the current programs could go. I started by coloring functional clusters on the existing plan, and noted down the area of each. Then I did an calculation for different scenarios.

If I only reprogram block G, its current function could fit in the existing vacant spaces.

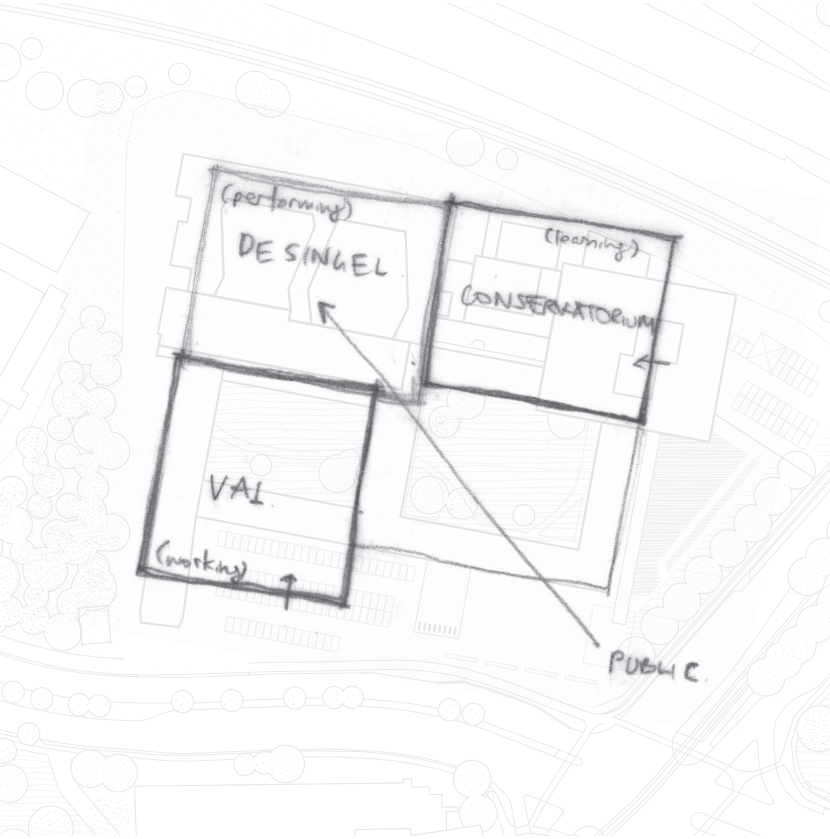
The other possible solution would be moving all the conservatorium-related programs to the existing vacancies, on the condition that the new building could house all the office programs.

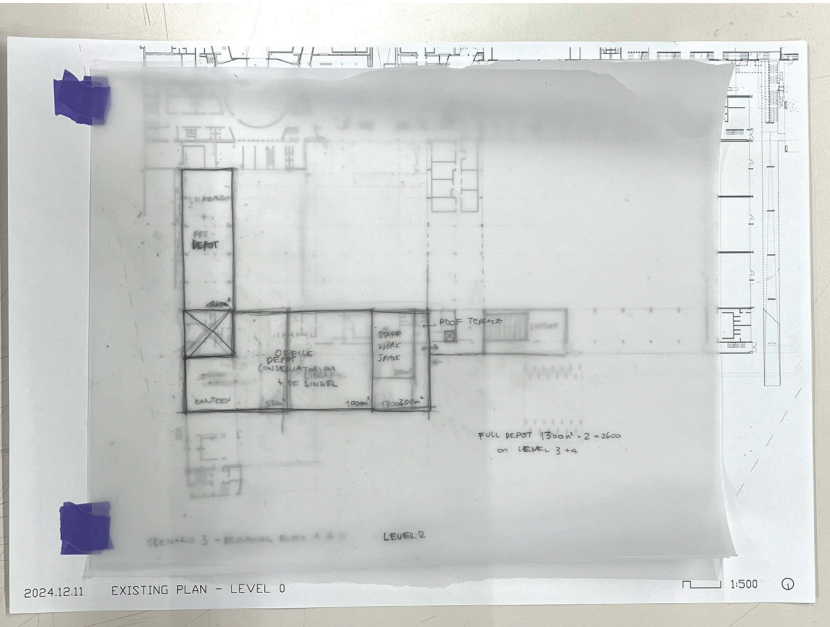
a range of scenarios



All the different scenarios, whether considered from massing or program, need a coherent logic.

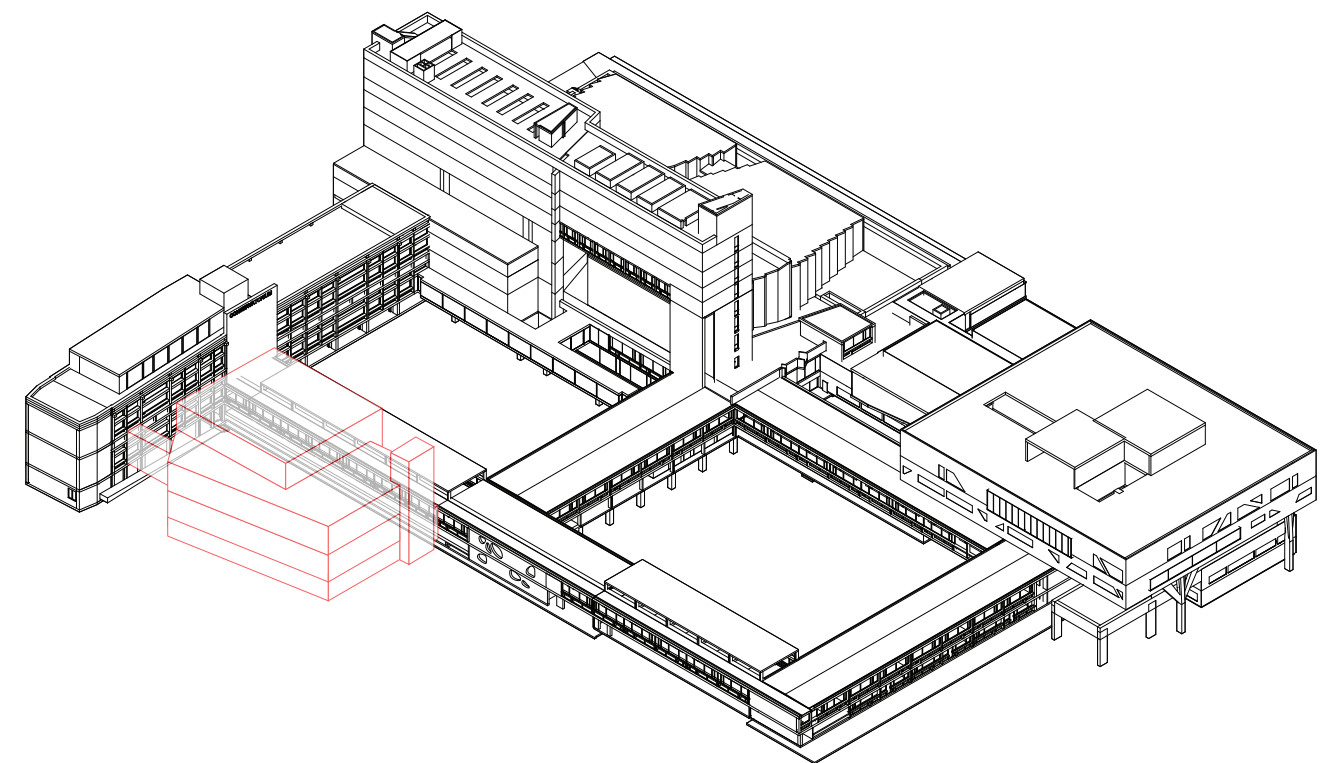
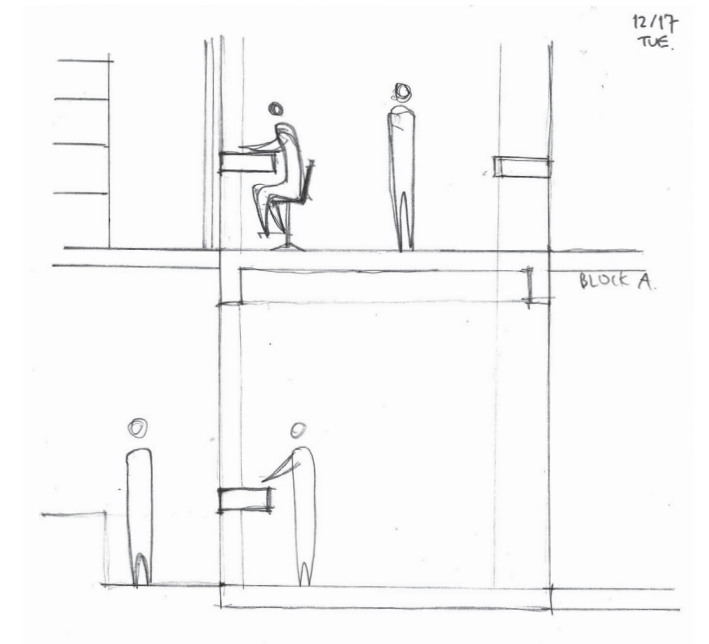
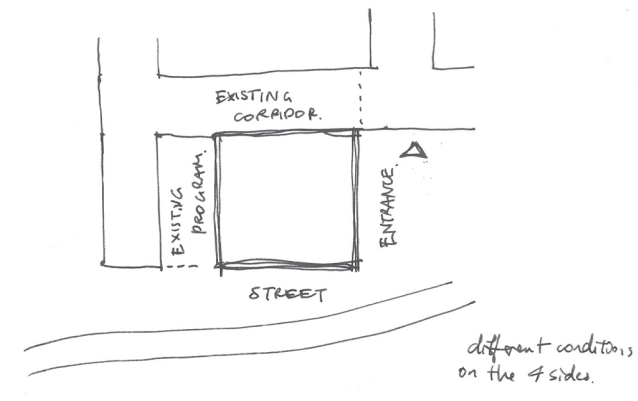
For now, the most convincing logic I found is based on the calculation of reprogramming. In this scheme, the western courtyard is treated as the public realm. The eastern courtyard, occupied by the VAI would become a counterpart of the Beel quarter, occupied by the conservatorium. Since the VAI quarter would also host the offices of the other quarters, it is better to say that a working quarter and a learning quarter that both lead to the performing quarter. This abstract diagram, though satisfying and overlapping with what Daniel sketched two weeks ago, is very much up in the air. The archive tower of deSingel for example, is not included in this abstraction.

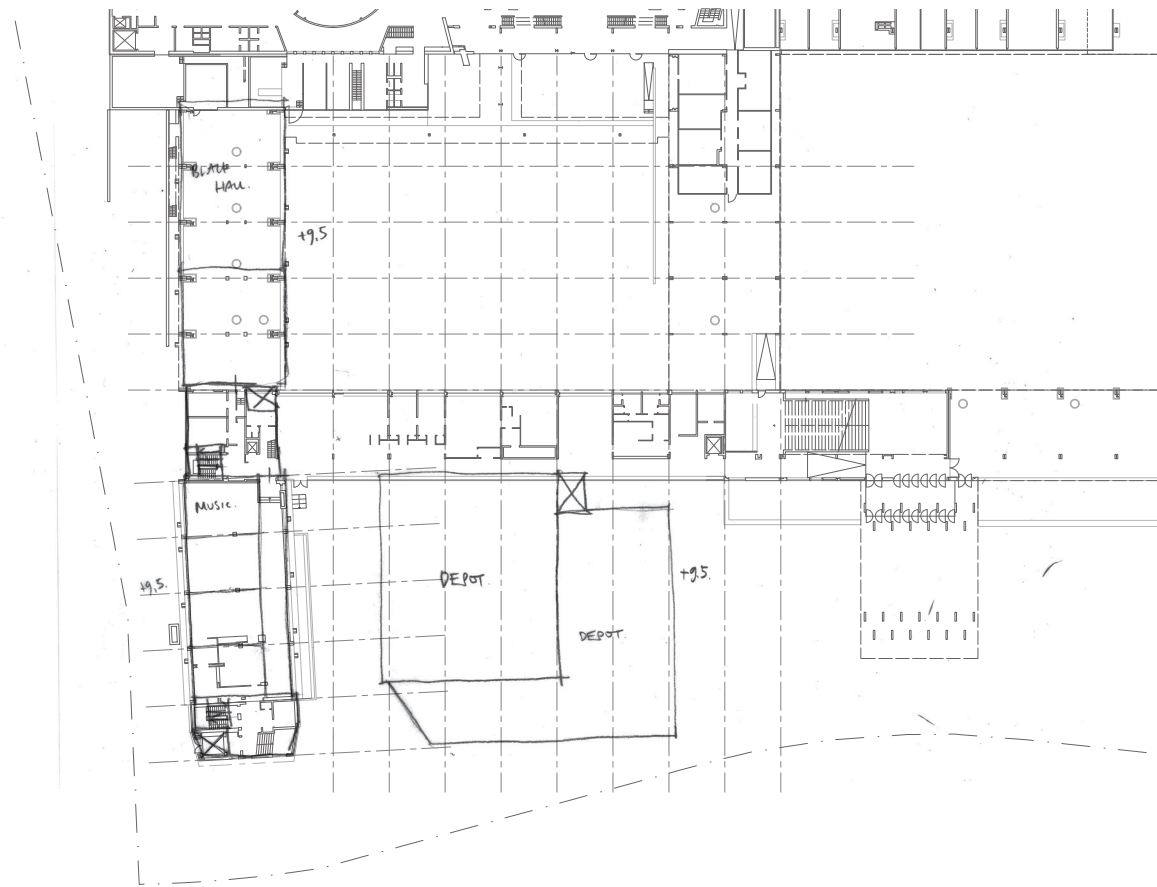
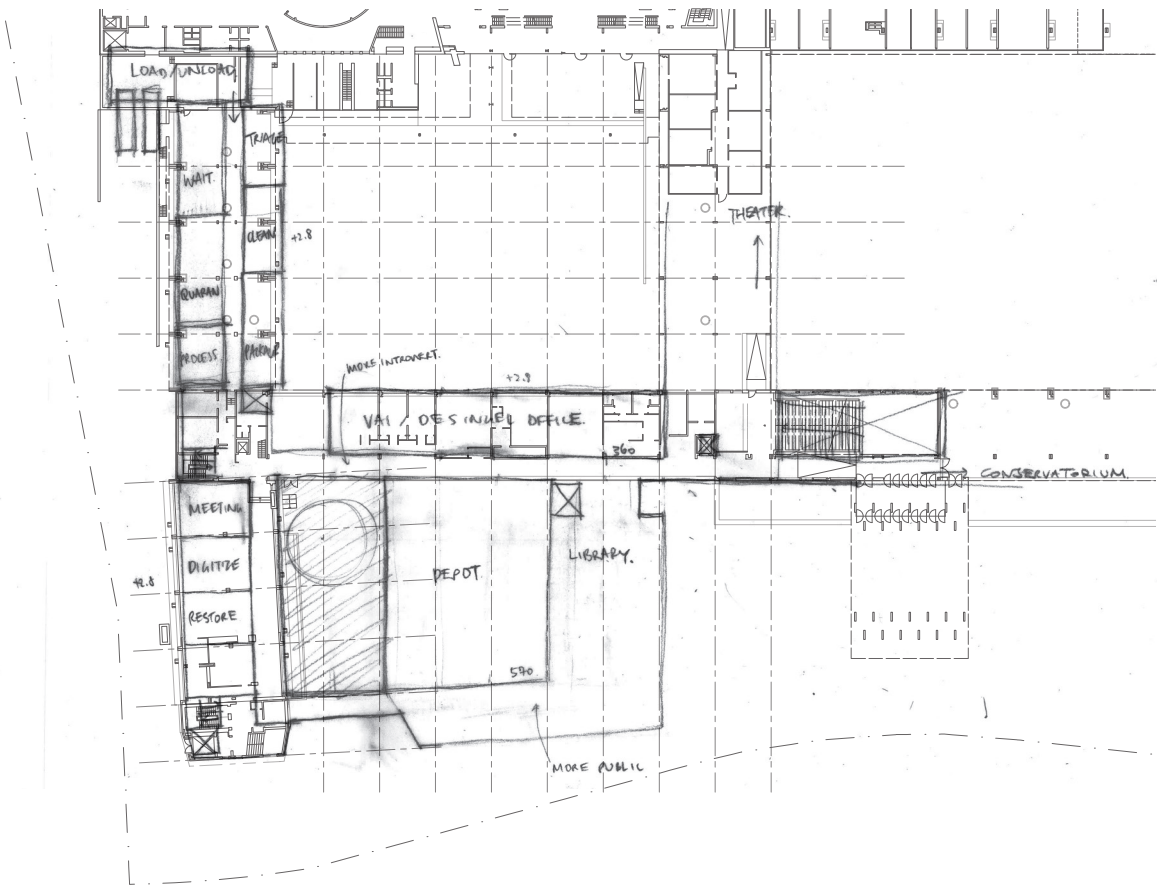
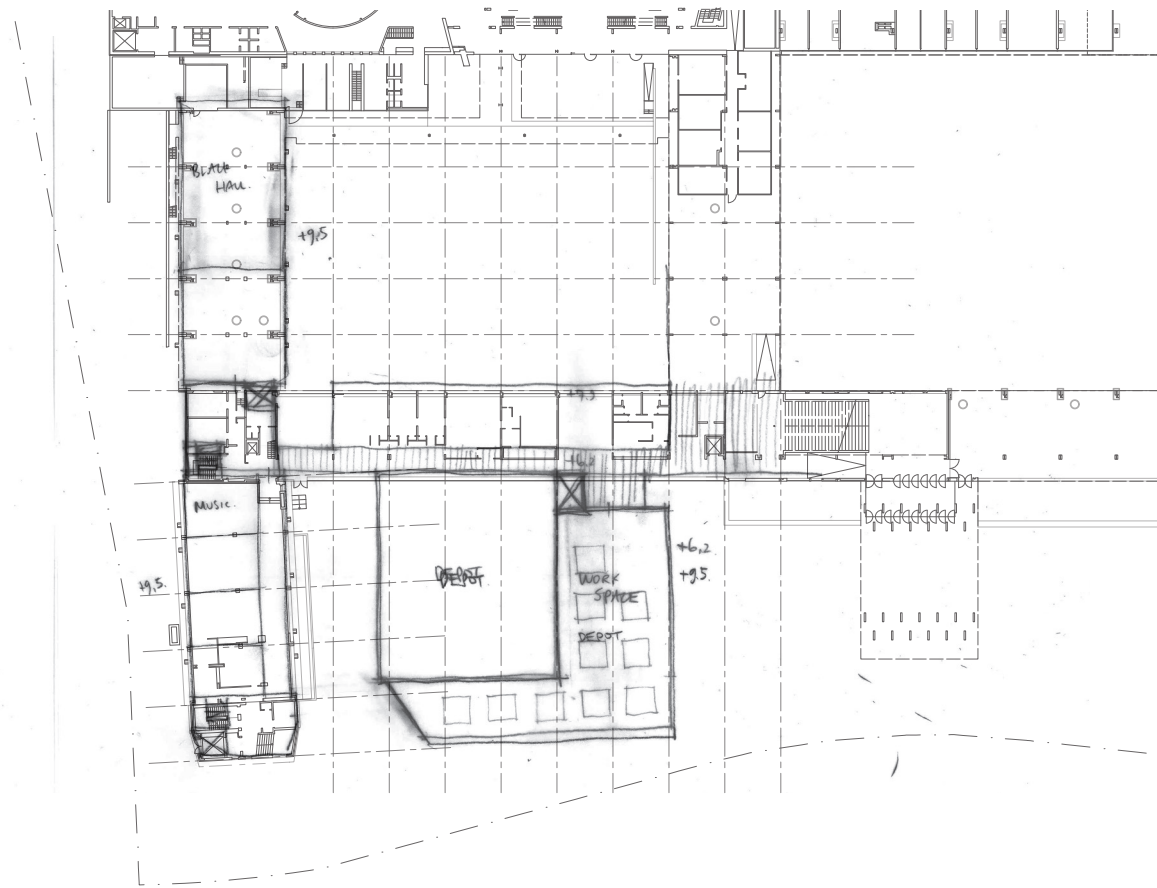
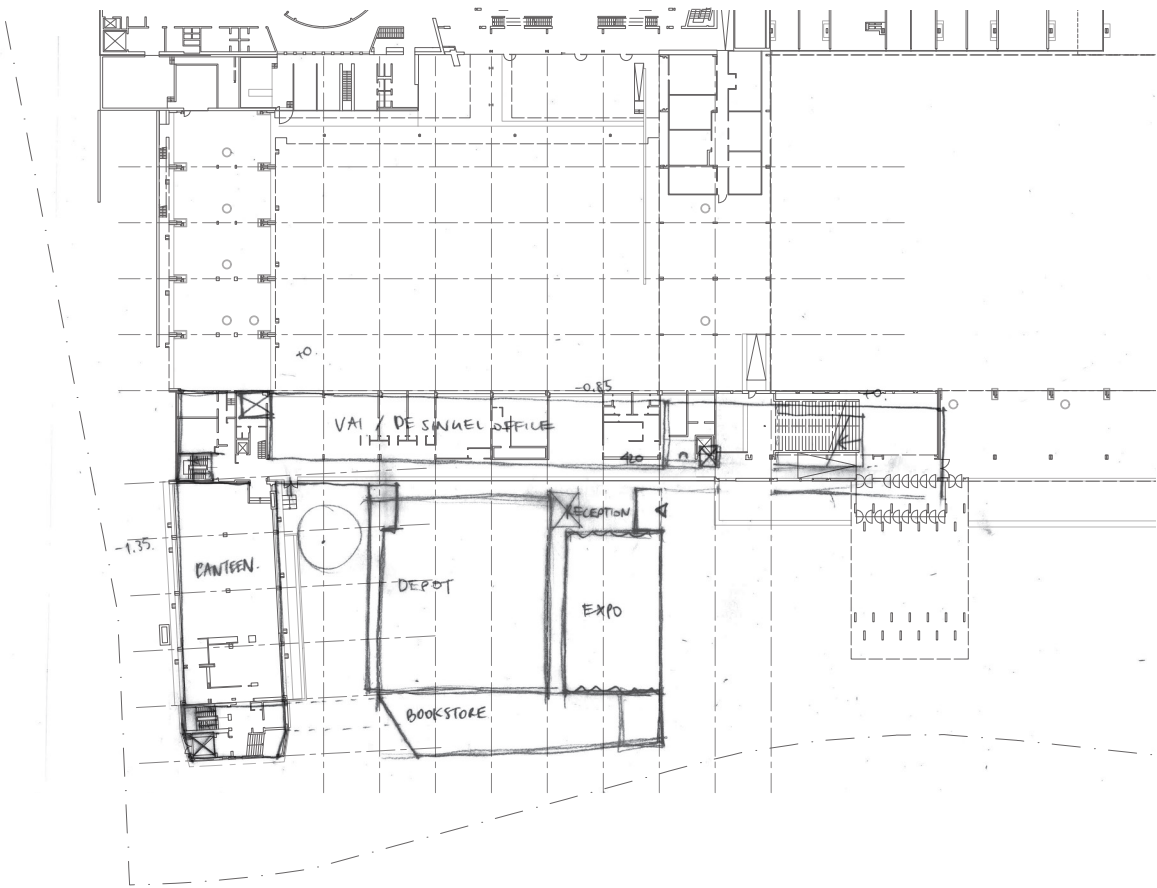


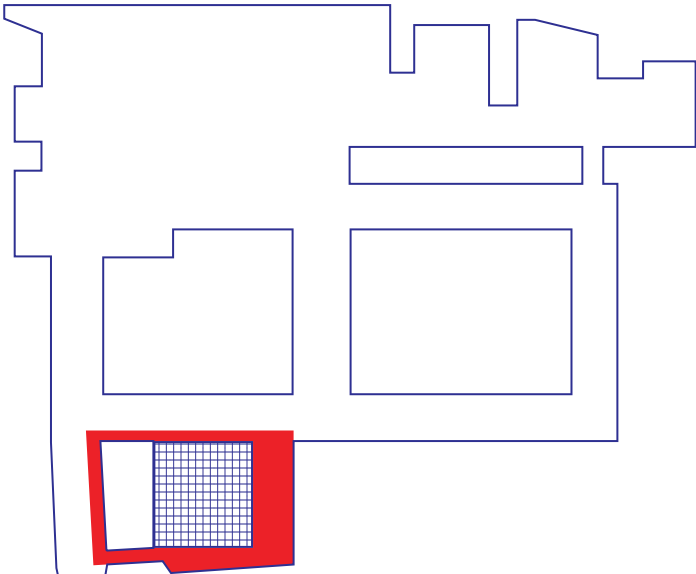
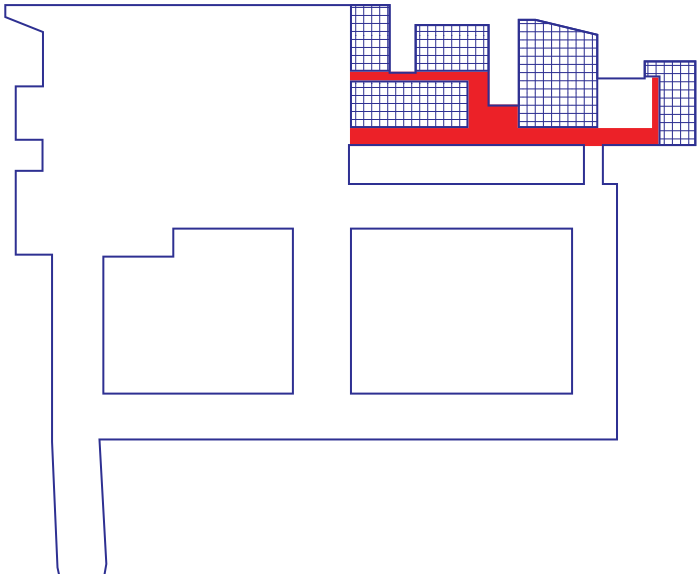
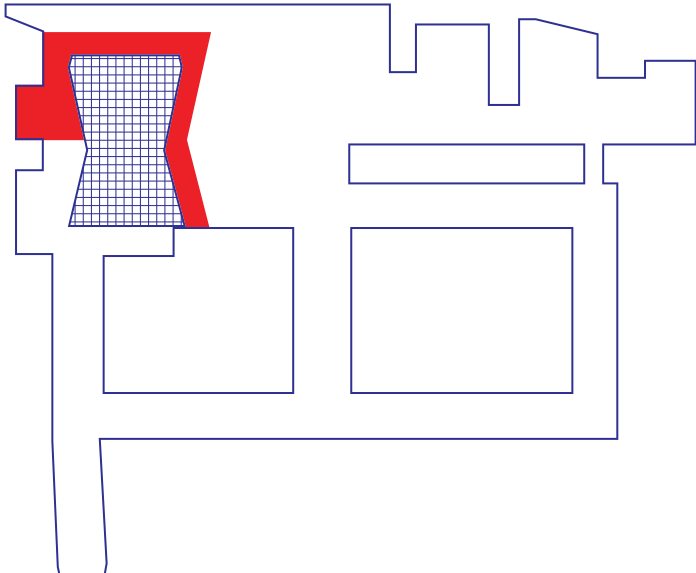
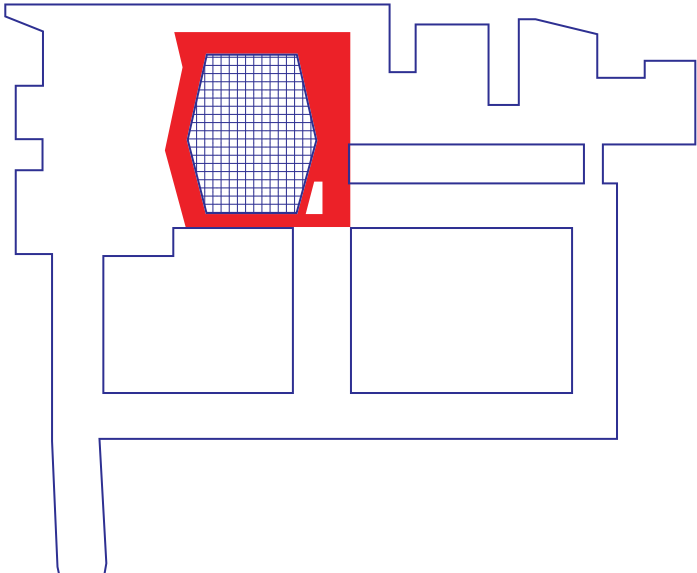
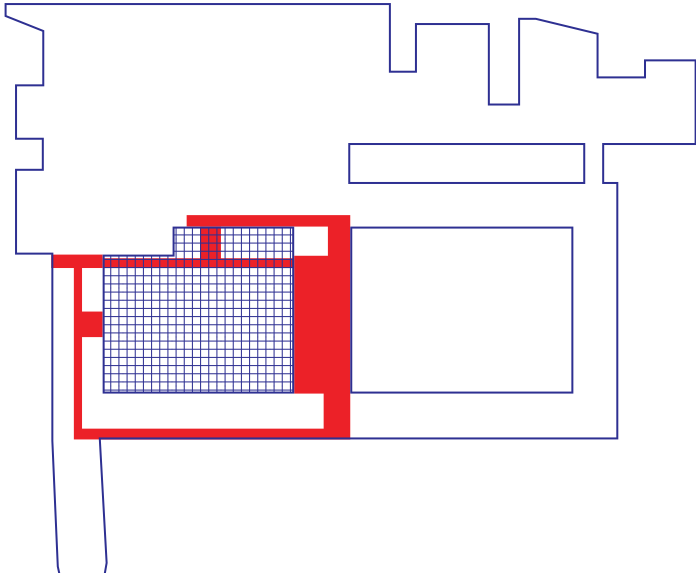
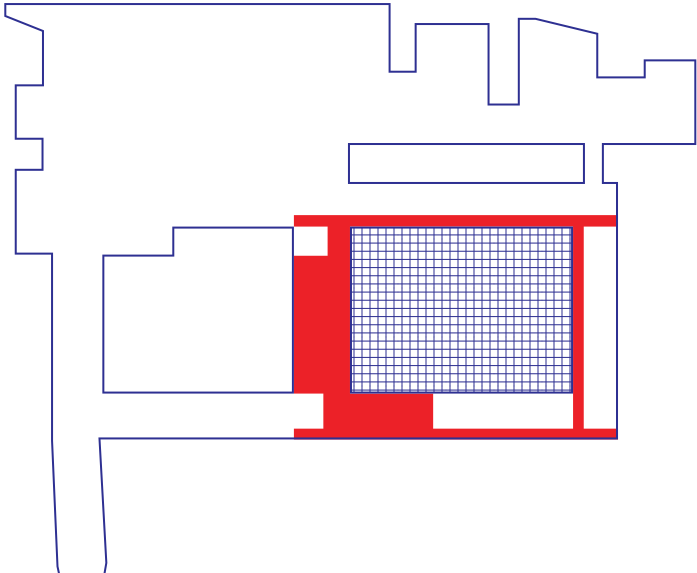
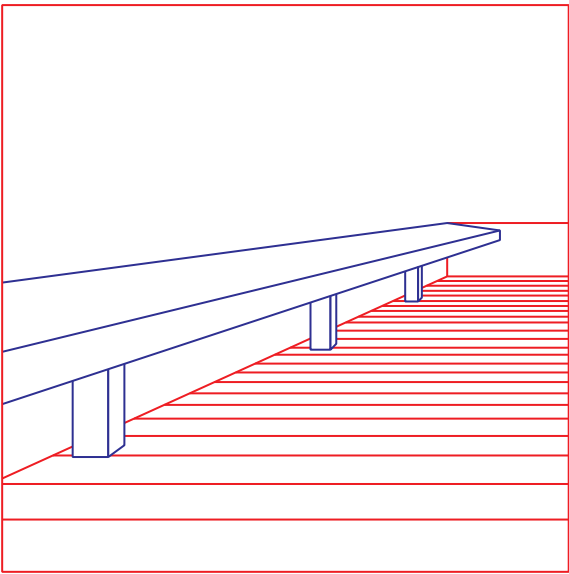
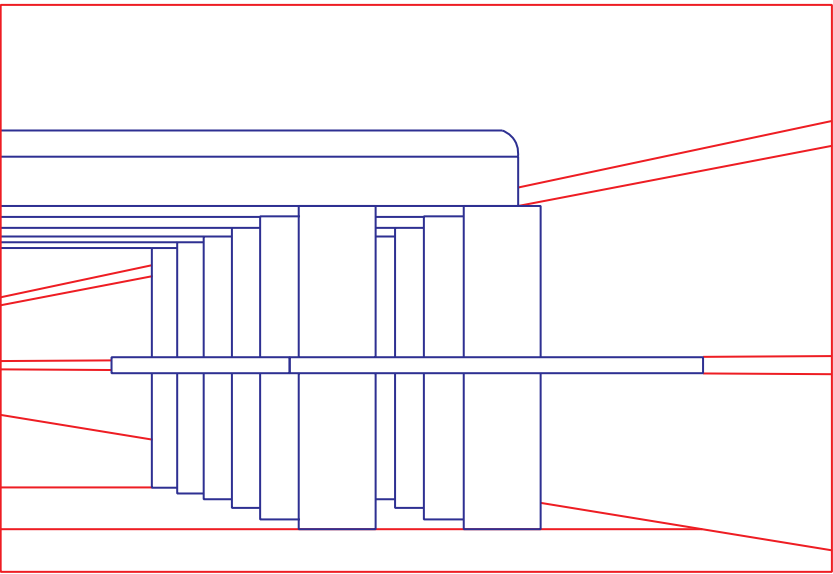
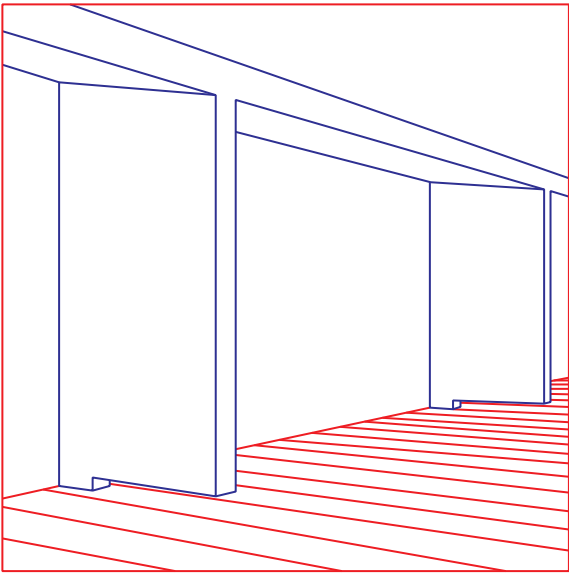
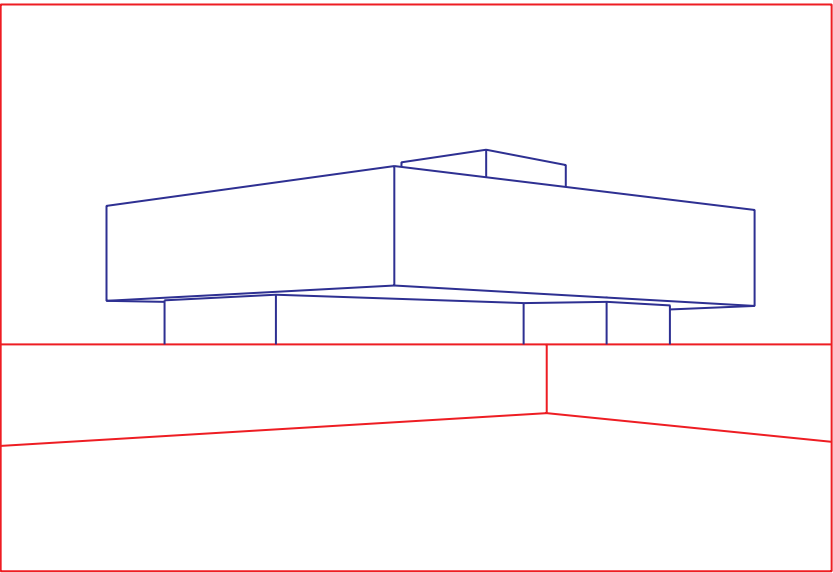
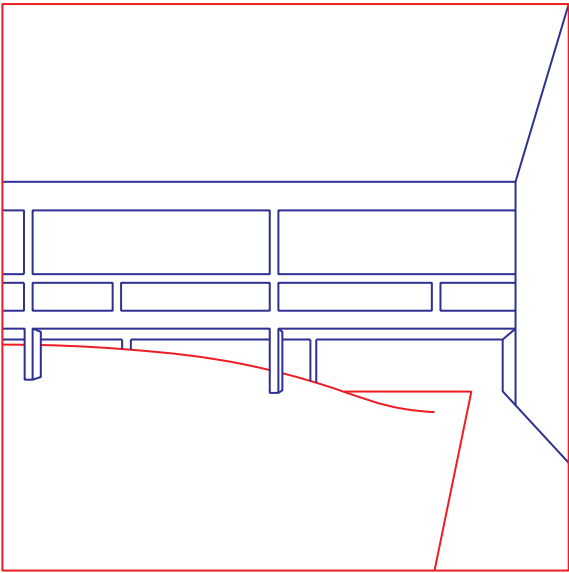
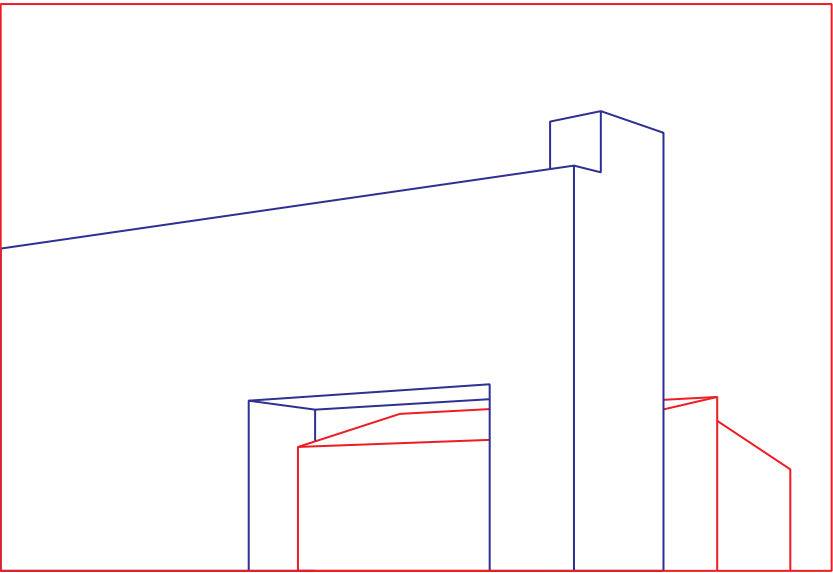


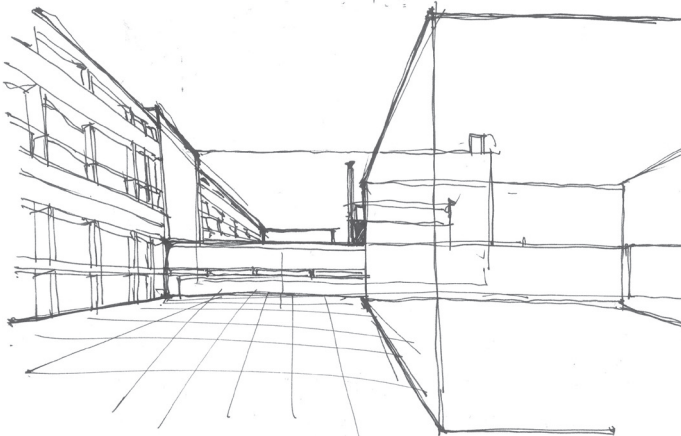
This option corresponds to the thickening variation of the massing study. It looks at the possibility of realizing the last abstract diagram, of making the eastern courtyard fully for VAI and other offices.







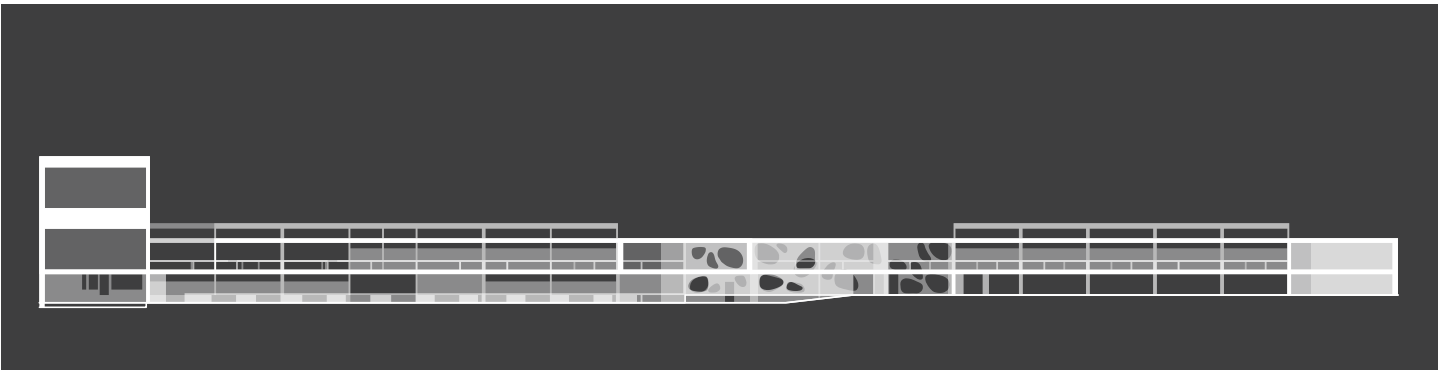
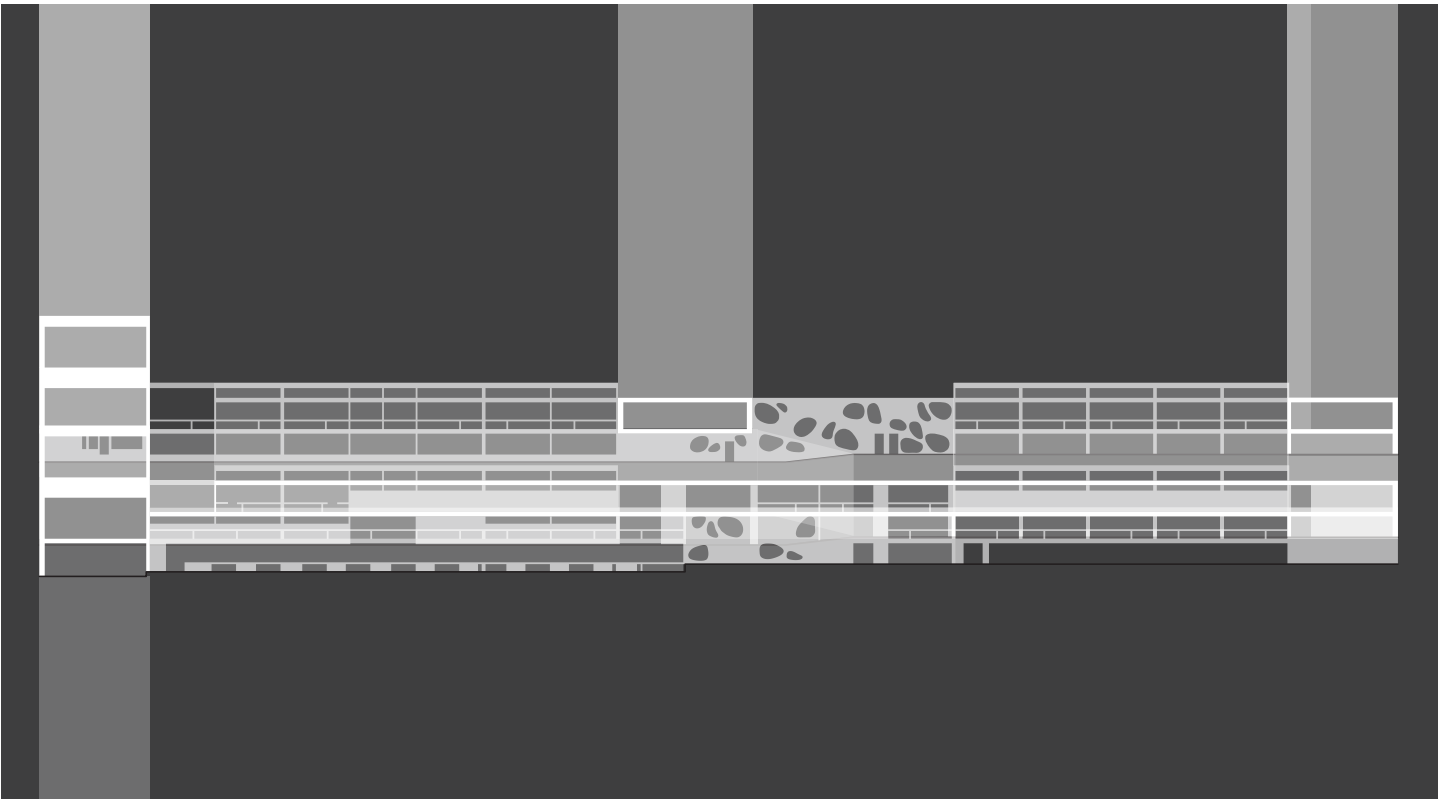
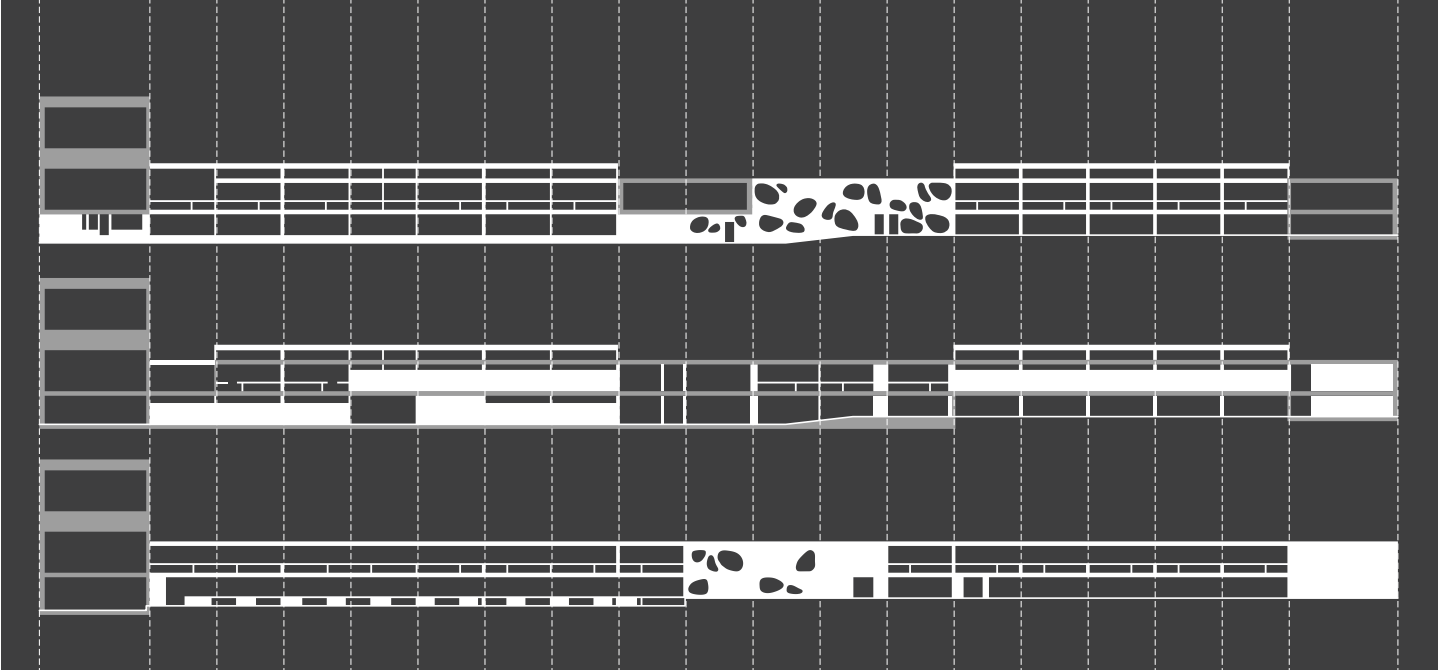




To restart the design process after a brief Christmas break, I've headed to deSingel on my own. It is always nice to have all the time in the world and explore a place quietly by myself. I wanted to focus on the details of the part of the building that I decided to work with.

To my disappointment, deSingel was completely closed. Not only was the conservatorium on a two-week holiday, but deSingel also had no scheduled events during this period. Since the parking lot was almost completely unoccupied, I was able to take some upright photos of the front facades. I also got to measure some precise facade dimensions to confirm the drawings I've made.

Thinking about the importance of the entrance sequence, I realized the need of not only drawing the front facade out, but also the wood cladded interior wall behind it and the other facade facing the courtyards. These three layers are framing the spaces in between.



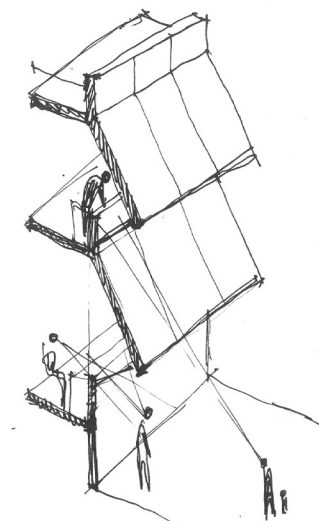


I was looking at references for entrance relationships of public buildings, and inspirations for the massing of a heavy archive block.

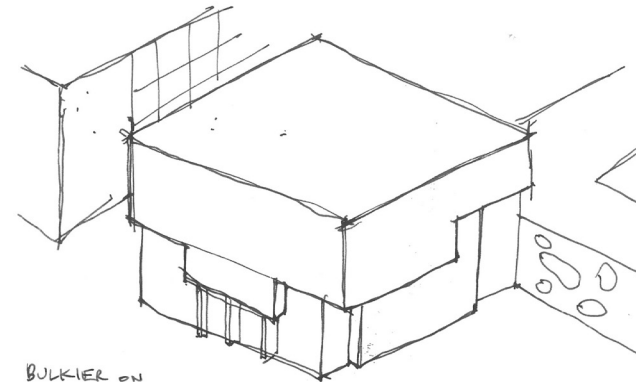
The massing of the **Berkeley Library** in Dublin could be a good expression of the program of my archive. The public and open functions on the lower floor would incrementally change to a closed depot facade towards the top. The whole would be perceived as a robust block. The lower facades are peeled off or carved out of this volume to create some sheltering for the entrance.

The modest but welcoming entrance of the **Museum of Architecture in Kanazawa** is appealing. It has a prolong reception space looking at the street. Its openness mediates the relation between the closed exhibition hall and the street. This is what I eyed for in the case of the archive as well. I find the immediate encounter to the volume of the archive through the undep entrance hall quite interesting.

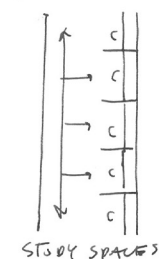
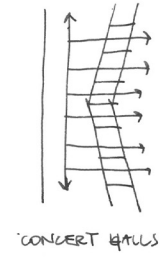
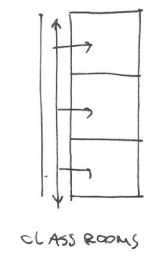
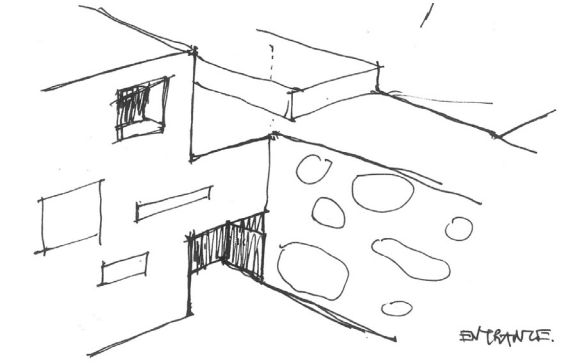
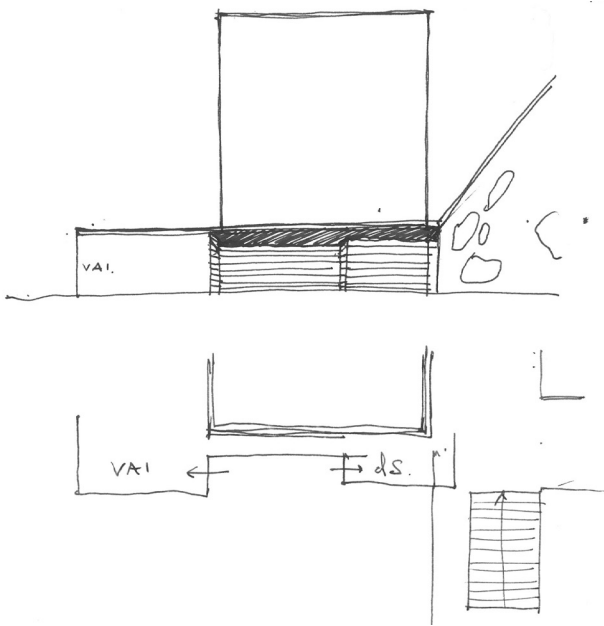
The General and Royal **Archive of Navarre**, has a new archive volume sitting at the corner of an existing cloister courtyard. Both the proportions, the roofline and the facade material are a subtle modern twist to the old cloister.



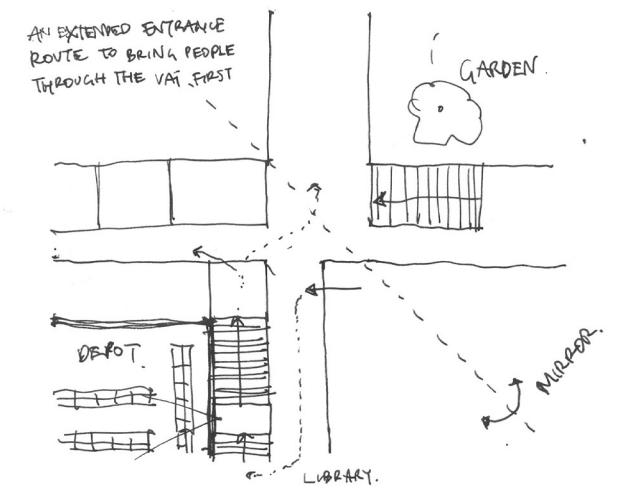
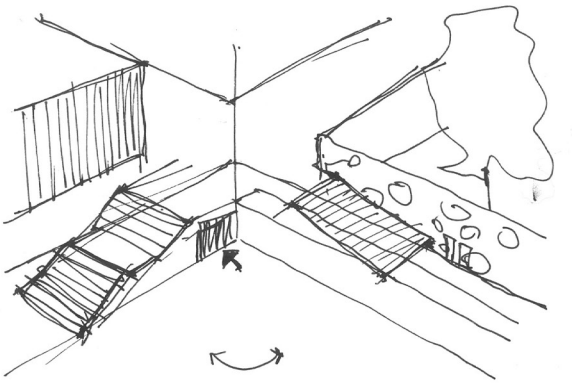
- CLOSED FACADES FOR SUNSHADE.
- GLASS TOWARDS THE STREET FOR EYE CONTACT.
- REDUCES REFLECTION OF VERTICAL GLAZING.



BULKIER ON THE TOP BUT STANDING STURDILY ON THE GROUND.



CONCRETE SHELL. BOLD. FOLLOWING THE EXISTING. COLONIES. WOODEN INTERIOR SPILLS ON TO THE FACADE IN DETAILS. SHOWCASING THE DELICACY OF STAVEN'S DESIGN. WARM & PLAUSIBLE TO WORK INSIDE. NOT AS OPEN AS THE OTHER PARTS



'As Found'

Ensemble

De Singel has developed according to the changing demands and the growth of institutions, which are mainly internal conditions. Meanwhile, the urban context of it has long drifted away from the situation Stynen initially imagined. The new project of VAI archive gives an opportunity to repair and redefine the relationship between the rather introvert complex and the city around it.

Inside Out

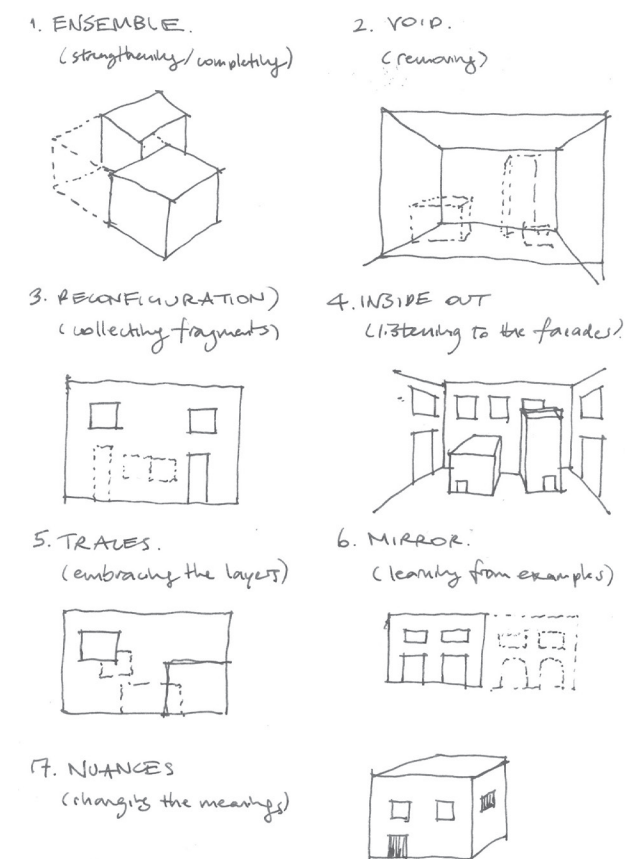
Stynen's modernist design followed the principle of expressing the building's interior on its facades. The later addition by Beel put less importance on this issue. The new building could continue the thread of Stynen.

Traces

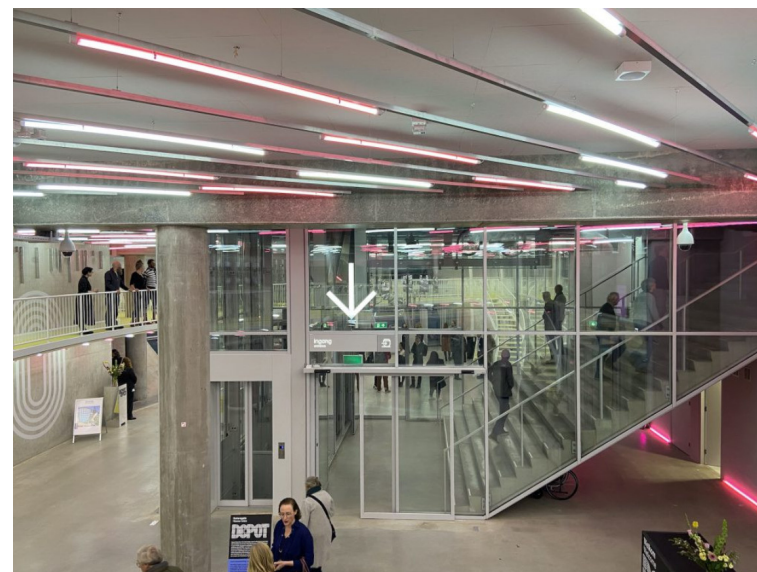
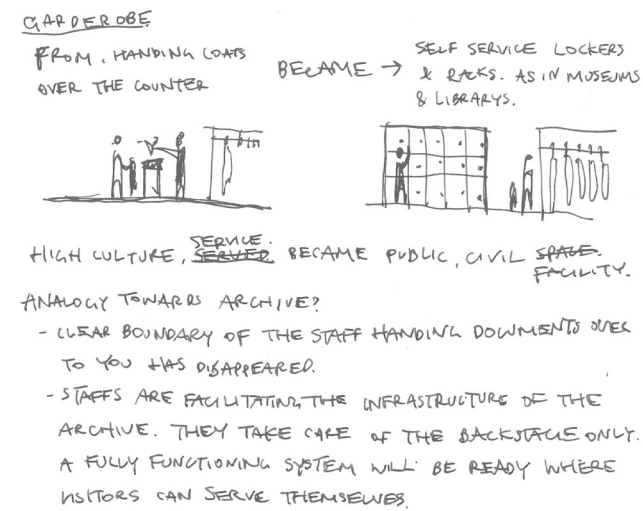
Both Meyer and Beel tried to honor some aspects of Stynen's original design in their own parts. Their interpretations were represented very differently in the building. These characters reveal the different historical contexts the architects and their projects situated in, which should be embraced. The future addition should respect and learn from all parts in a way that shows the zeitgeist of today.

Mirror

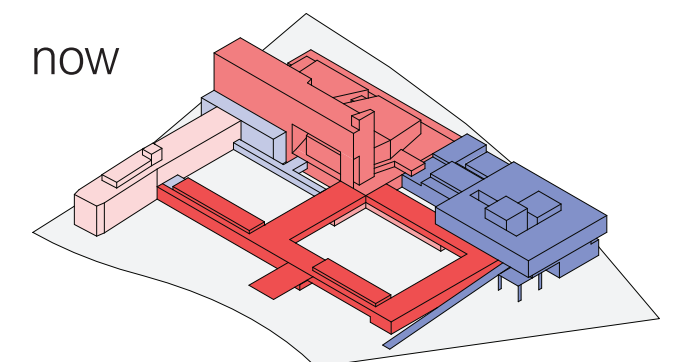
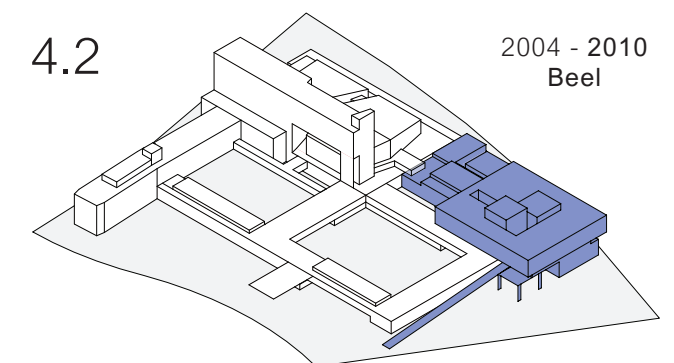
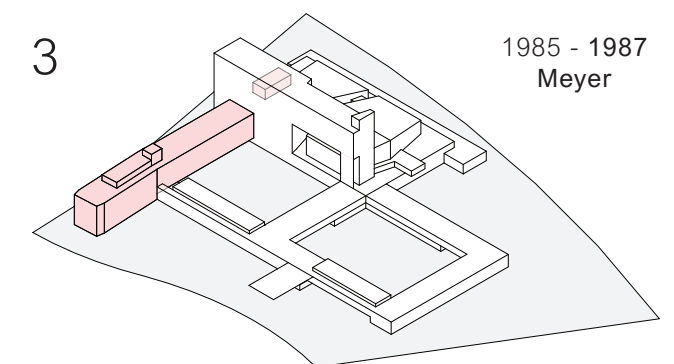
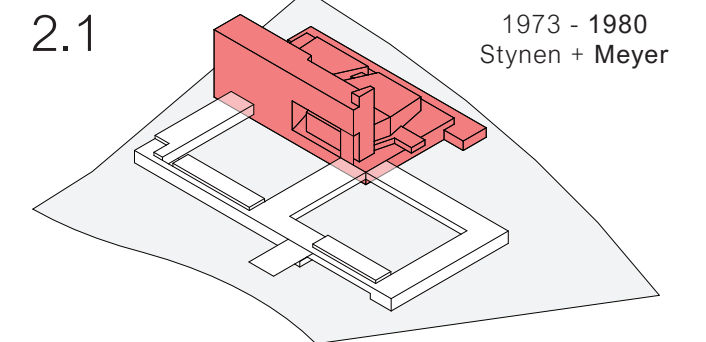
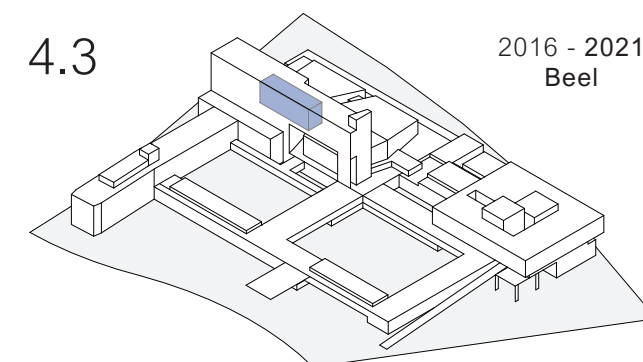
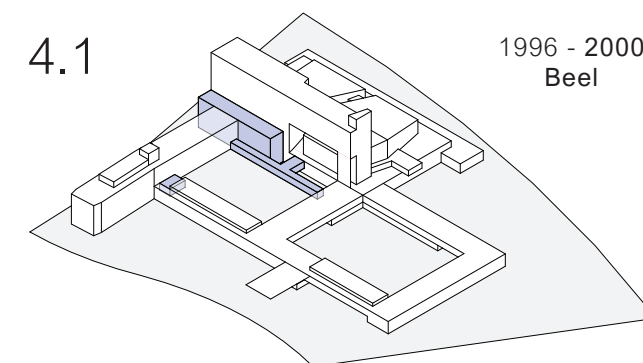
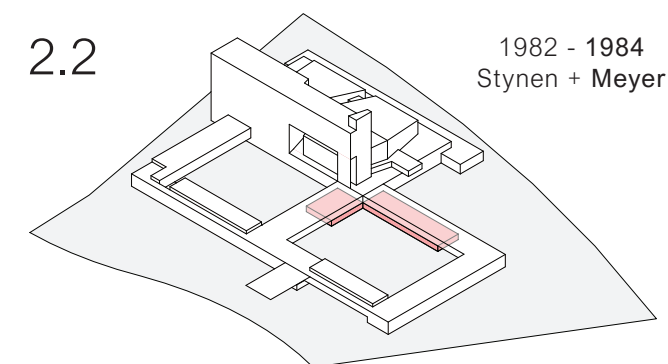
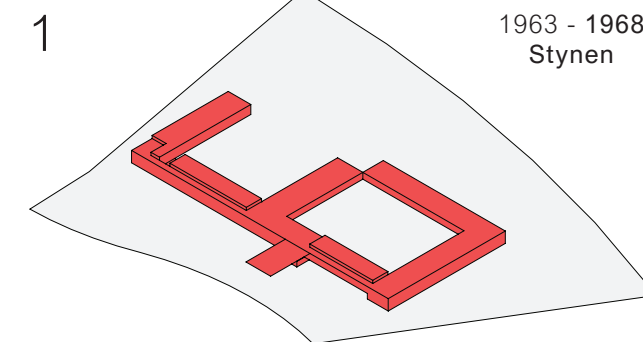
The three architects who have contributed to the complex provide more than enough inspirations for the next addition. The new addition should find a position between the strong characters of Stynen and Beel and mediate the difference.



the theatre entrance



overview of the history

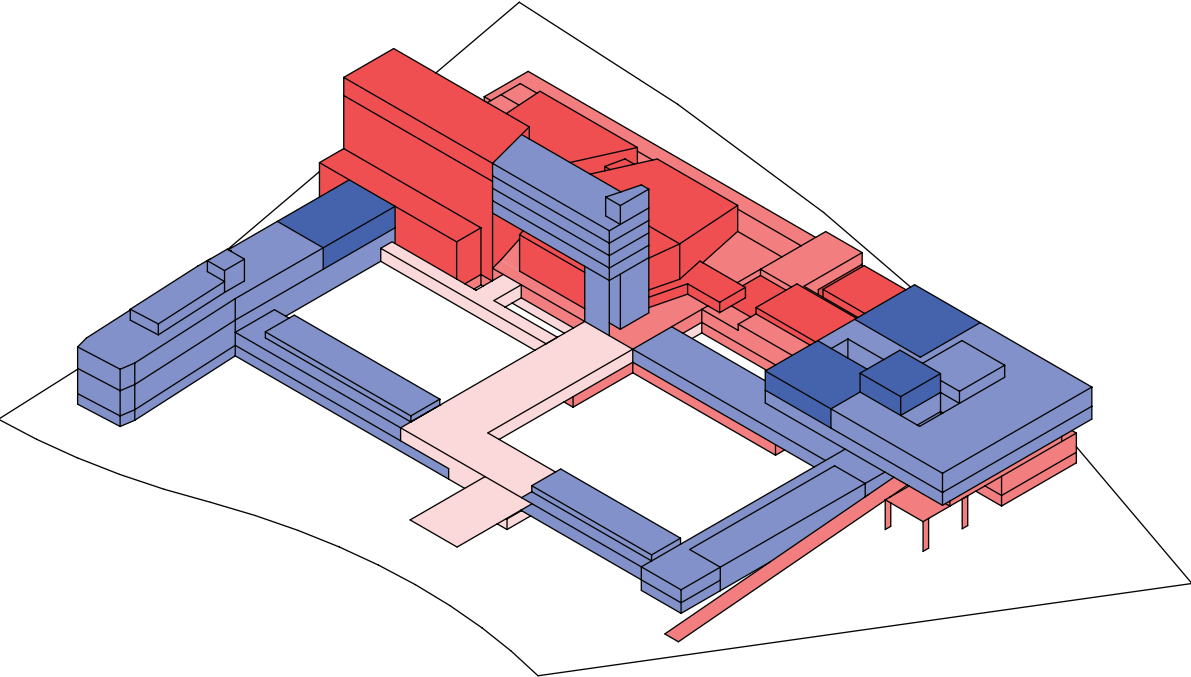


reorganizing programs

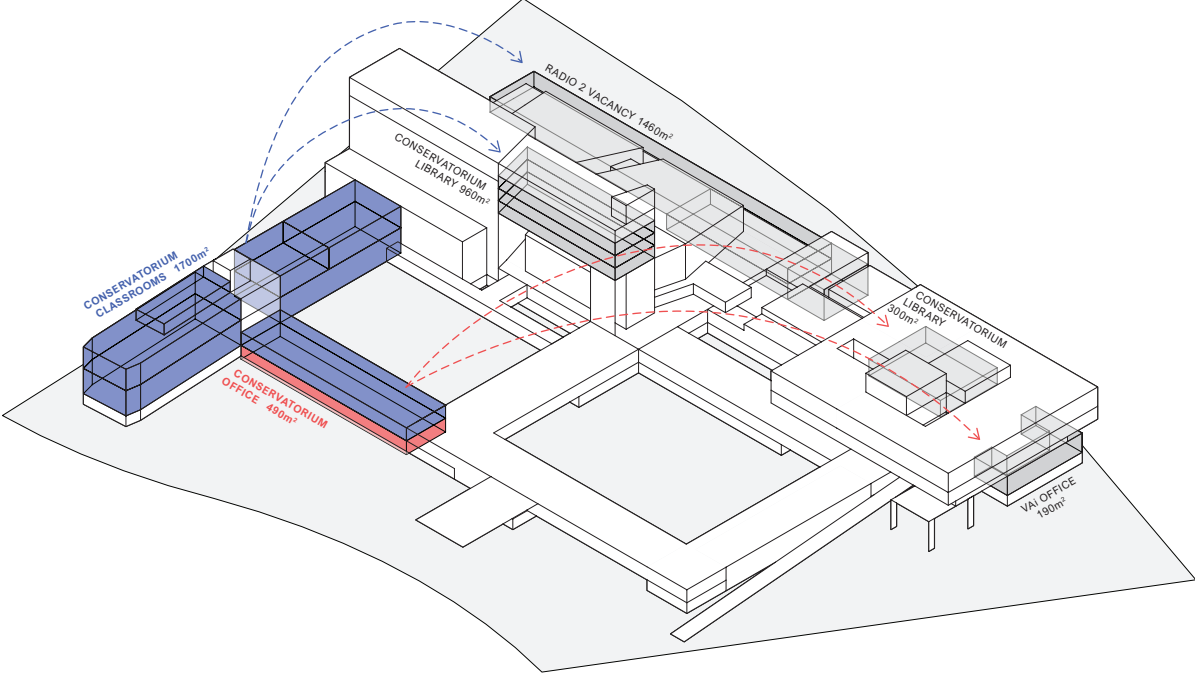
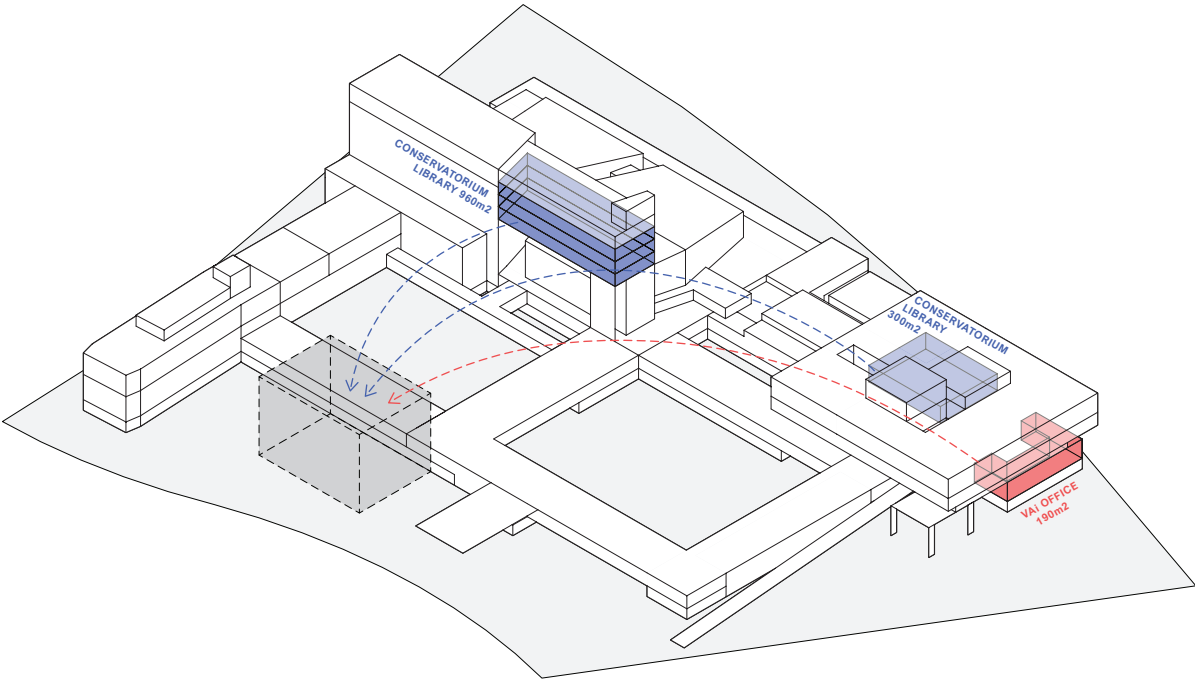
In order to make a concrete step towards the volume and the plans, I had to make some definite decisions on which programs the new volume holds. This was actually dependent on how the **logistics** should work. To not let the loading & unloading function of the new archive come to the street, which will further take away the accessibility for public to the complex, it can only be placed at the existing loading & unloading of the stage. Which is also logical and efficient. For the material to travel to the front of the building, which is where the depot will be, it can only travel via level 1. This takes away the public circulation on level 1, which leads to the decision of completely closing that end and taking away the conservatorium function out of the Meyer wing.

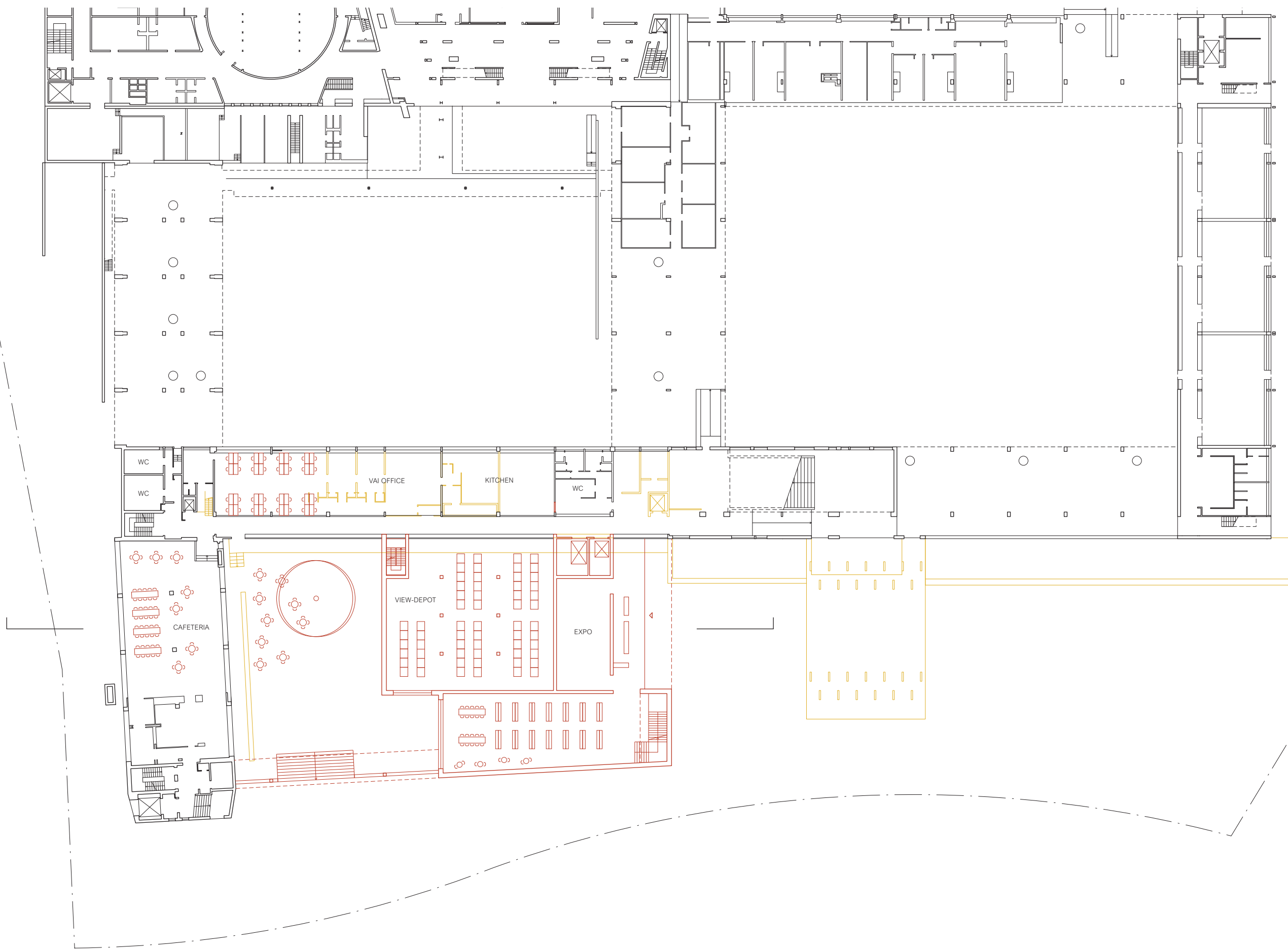
Then, a diagram is made to show how the conservatorium function will be relocated to the back of the deSingel, focusing on the Beel part, and the music archive and library will be moved to the VAI end.

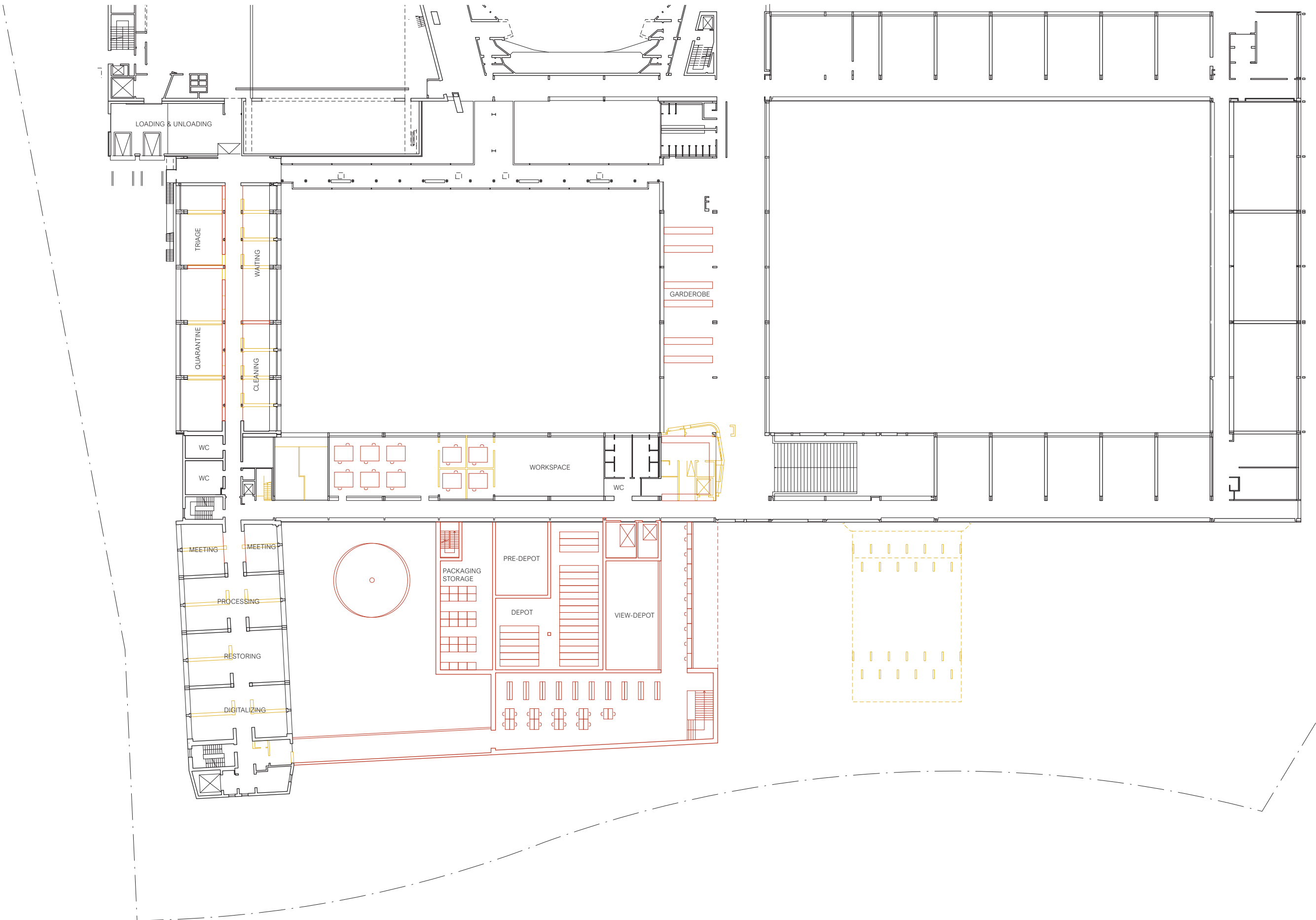
- LOGISTICS
1. Use the current one on level 1.
+ shared trolleys / equipments.
- blocks circulation on level 1. makes the glass bridge useless.
- insulate and darken Meyer classrooms. the free heights are not necessary (4,5m).
 2. shared load / unload, use lift of backstage to move to ~~off~~ basement
- new connections to be made
+ easy to insulate + follow the logic of the building
 3. parking in between new & old block.
- quality of public space / garden.
+ concentrated logistics / circulation for VAI.
+ need a new large goods lift anyway.
- truck's htr
3.8m
3.3m
- ground floor Meyer not enough height for truck to drive in.
 - also not enough to create passing (2,3m).
 - basement (3,6m) is the heating still there?

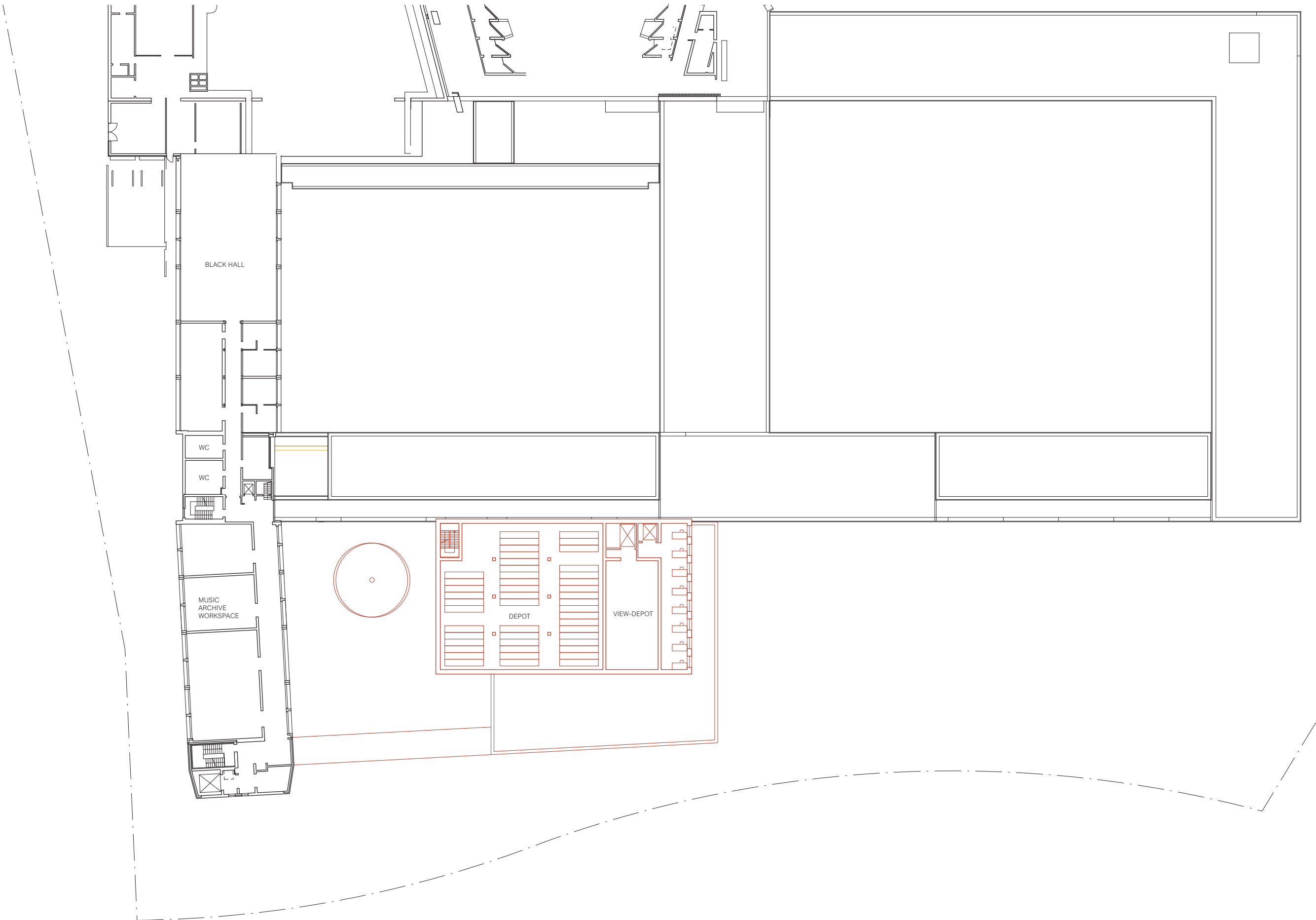


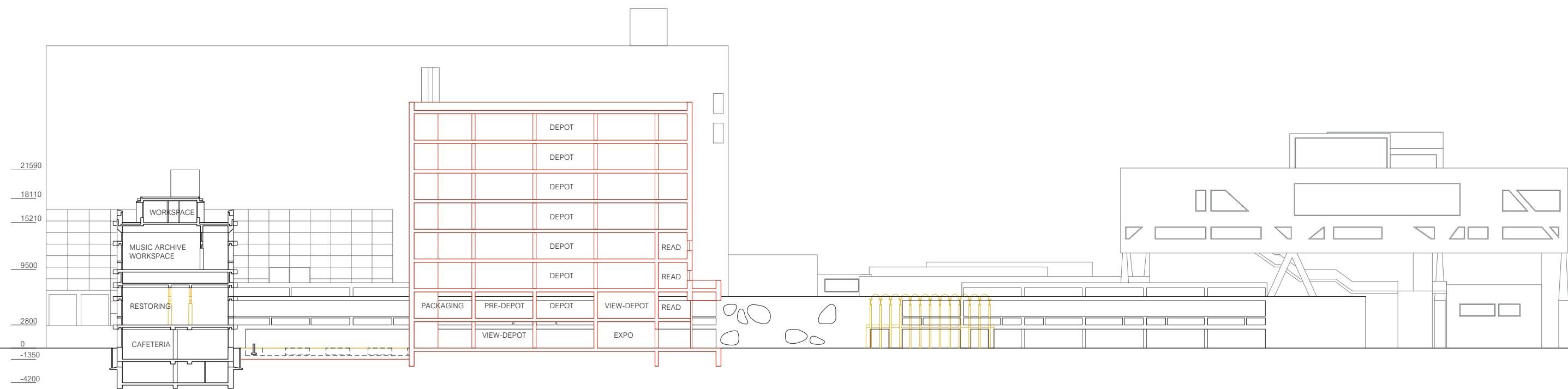
CONSERVATORIUM ■■■ DE SINGEL





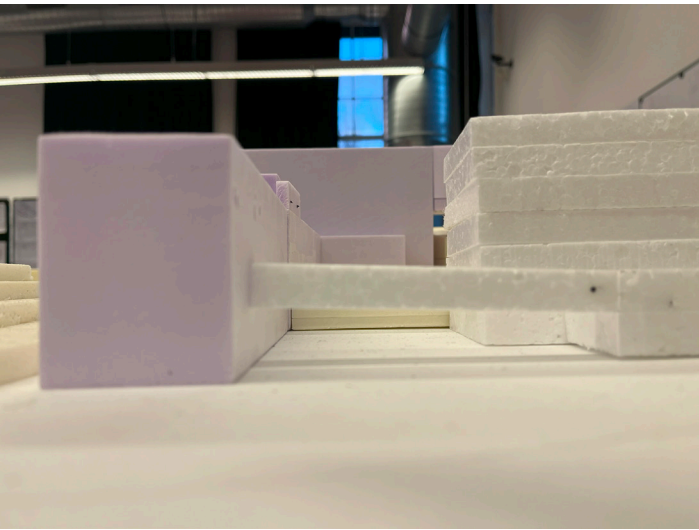
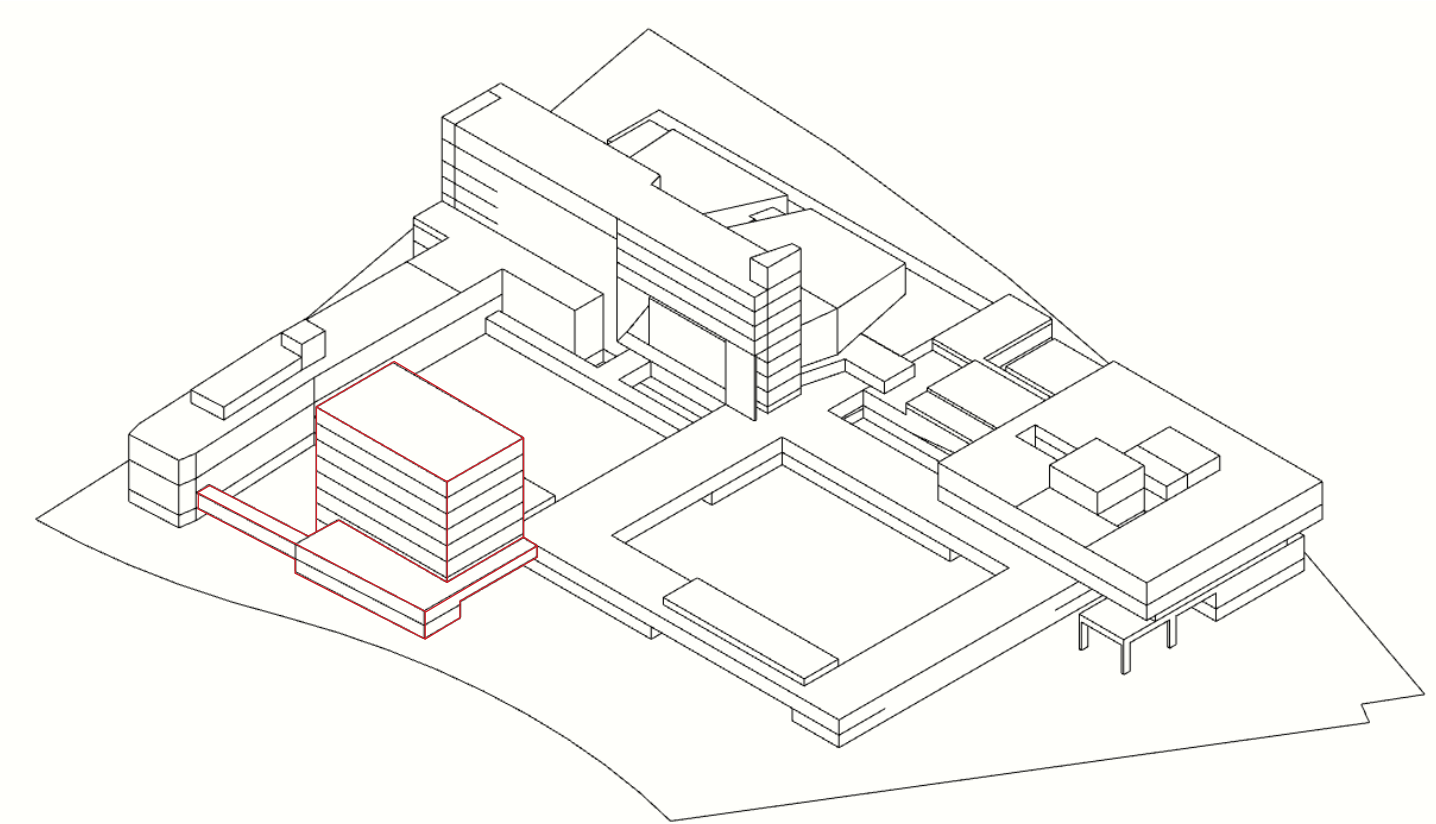






Two Point
Perspective





Daniel:

Its strong to understand the whole building as one organism which you **redistribute** in order to make a space for the VAI.

If the depot tower is pushed against the **stynen façade**, so that the windows look into the depot, then that relation could be drawn in some detail for P2.

The hierarchy and relation of the new and existing **entrances** is not convincing at the moment and needs some further thinking.

The **bridge** back to the stynen extension on the corner feels weak and you need to assess how the mass here can be strengthened.

Does the archive **box** have a precise relation with stynen's hole in the theatre tower façade? What is the box made of?

Others:

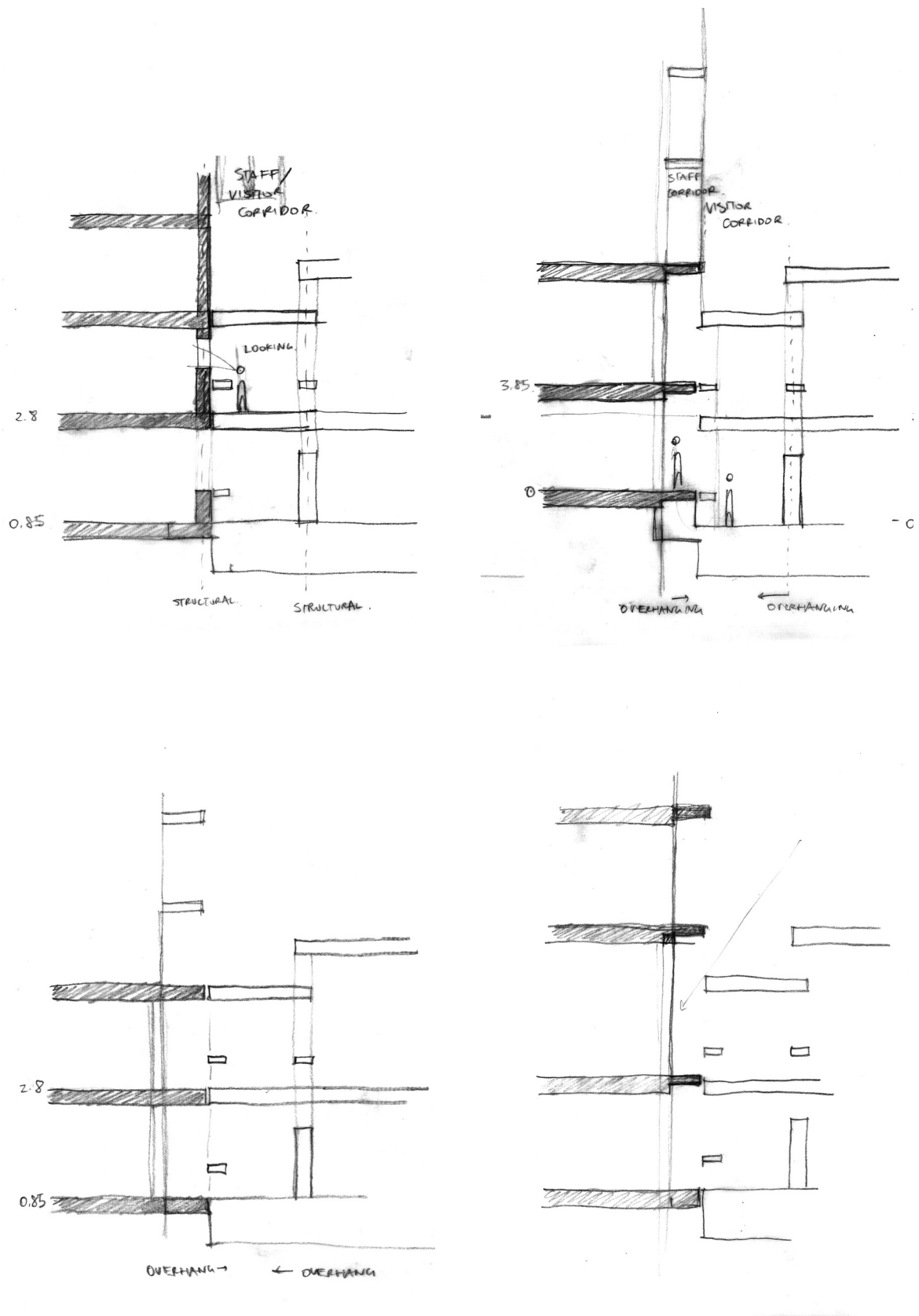
- There are woodworm problems in frames. **Wooden** interior for an archive is problematic.
- The theatre hall of 1000 people still need **stairs** of at least 3-4m wide. Although deSingel is trying to get rid of the image of being too monumental, the basic functionality cannot be overlooked
- What's the quality of the courtyard/**terrace**? Will there be enough sunlight if it's lowered?

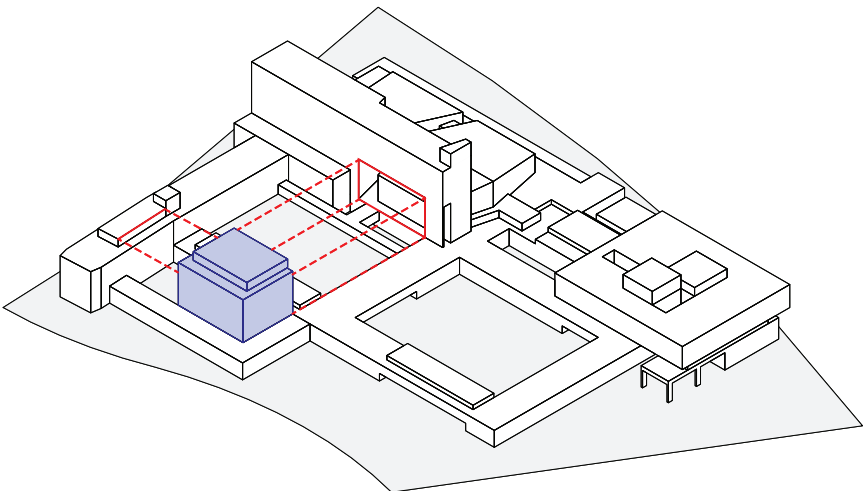
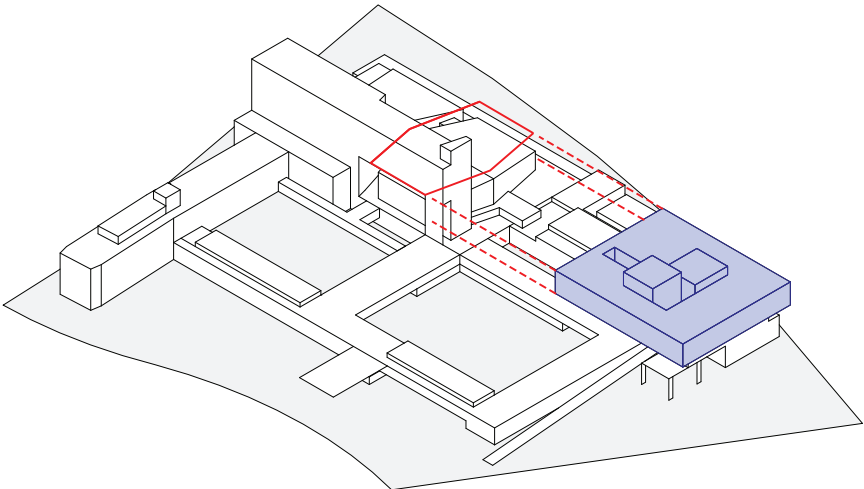
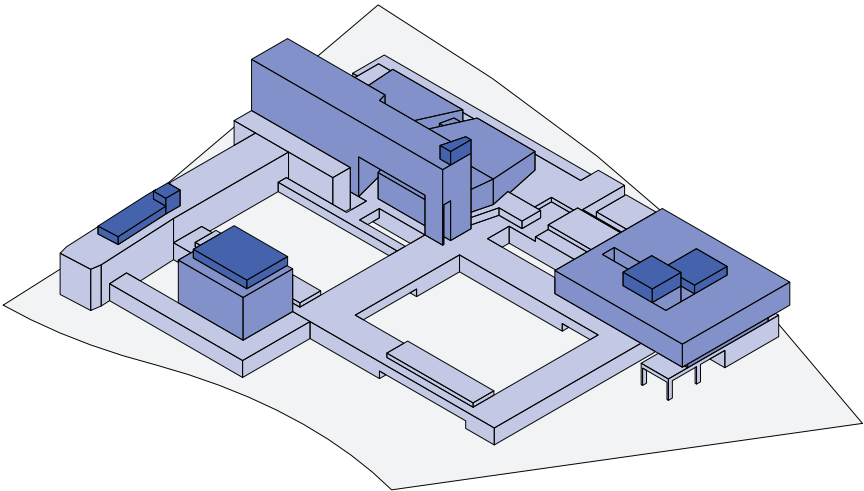
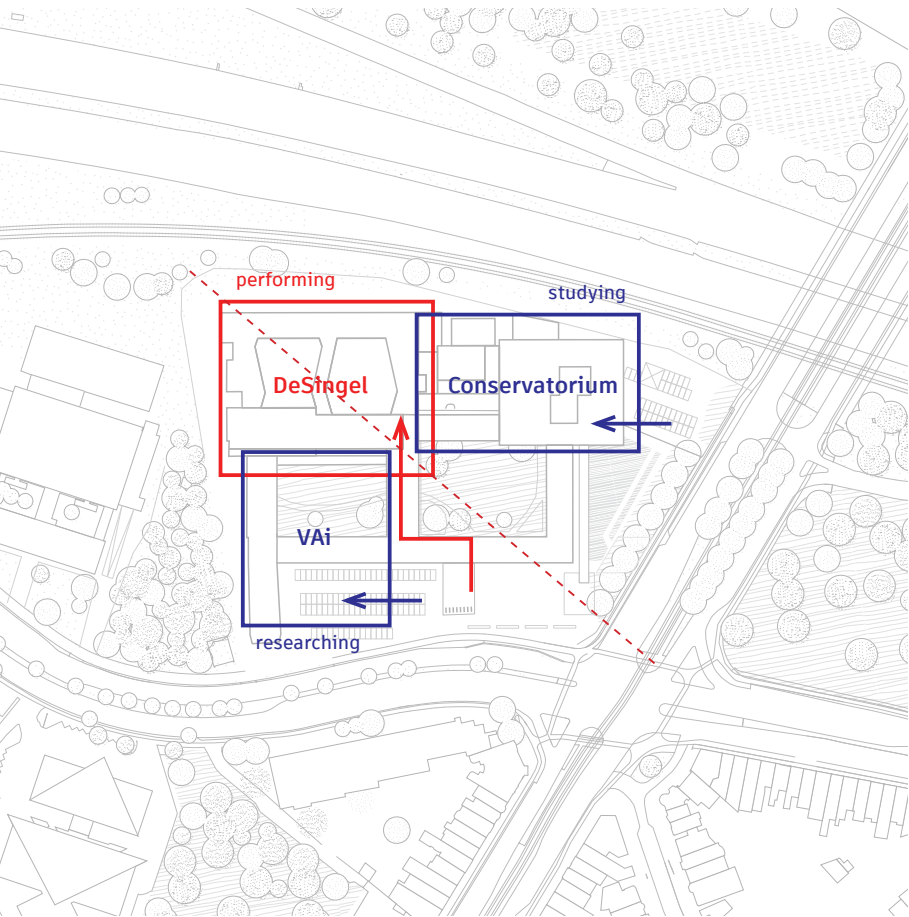
I realized some points that I could have said in the presentation. Or, narratives that could become more central in my project.

What I am making is a **tower on a base**. It is very much in line with the existing logic of the site. One scale relates to the Stynen tower and the Beel box. The other continues the 2-floor high base around the courtyards. By clarifying this relation with my new addition, the relation between Beel's addition and the rest of the complex would make more sense.

Walls are extremely important in my project. I can imagine the naming of "attaching & detaching". The way that the new volume touches the Stynen facades and detaches from the Meyer facade can use more explanation. Another way to think about the walls are the four walls of the depot, each bordering a different condition. This could be related to my P1 project, where walls accomodate both storing and displaying functions and get another layer of meaning. While those walls were completely introvert towards the room, the walls in the new archive building should be double-sided, serving both the depot and the public space. So the meaning and possibility of walls could be interesting to elaborate on.

The suggestion of considering de depot tower to be an **automated box** instead of a tower with standard floors is an interesting way to see it. I need to see references of such projects. I worry if there are will be restrictions for fire safety.



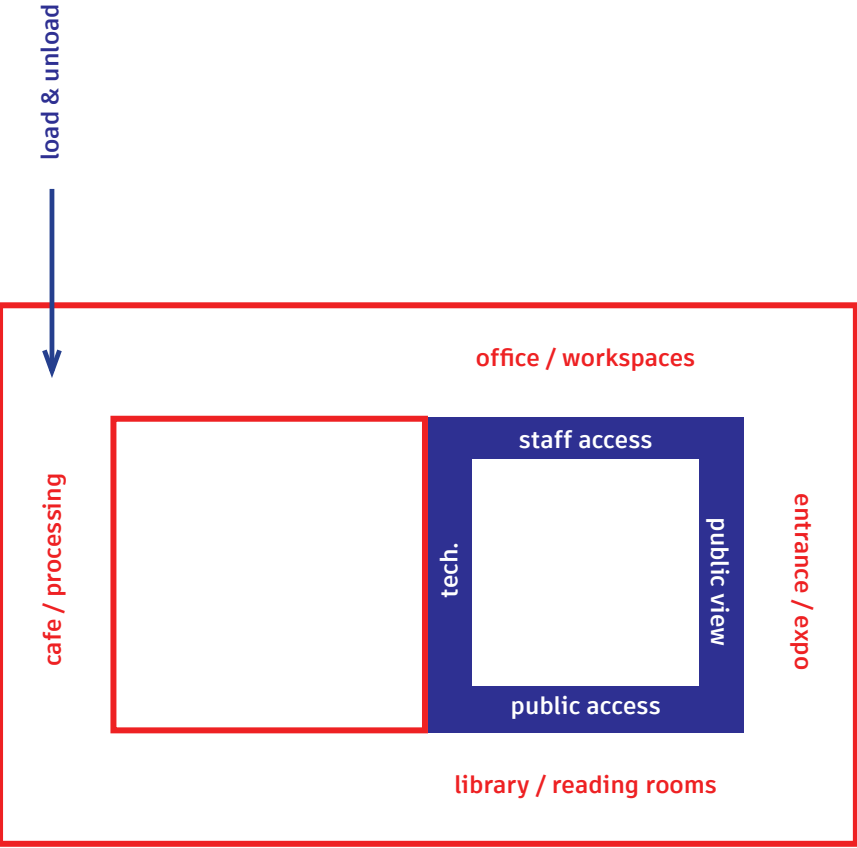


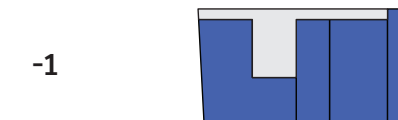
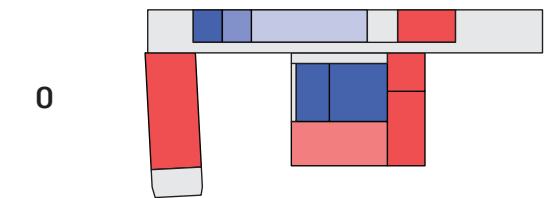
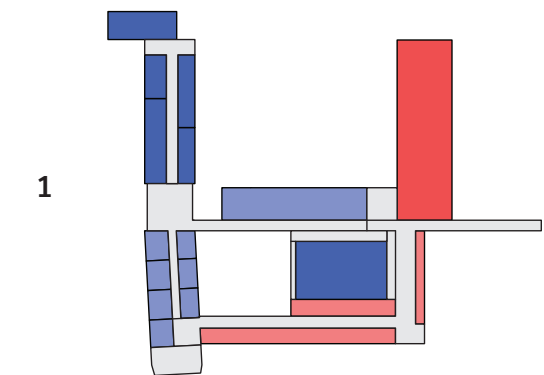
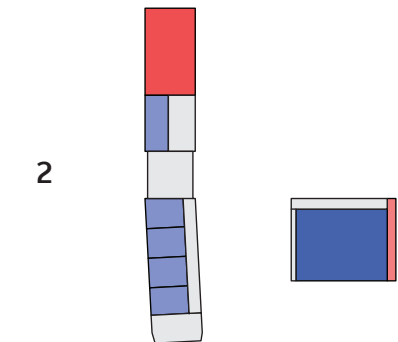
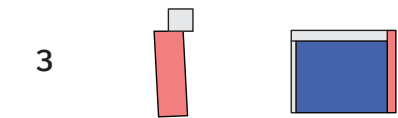
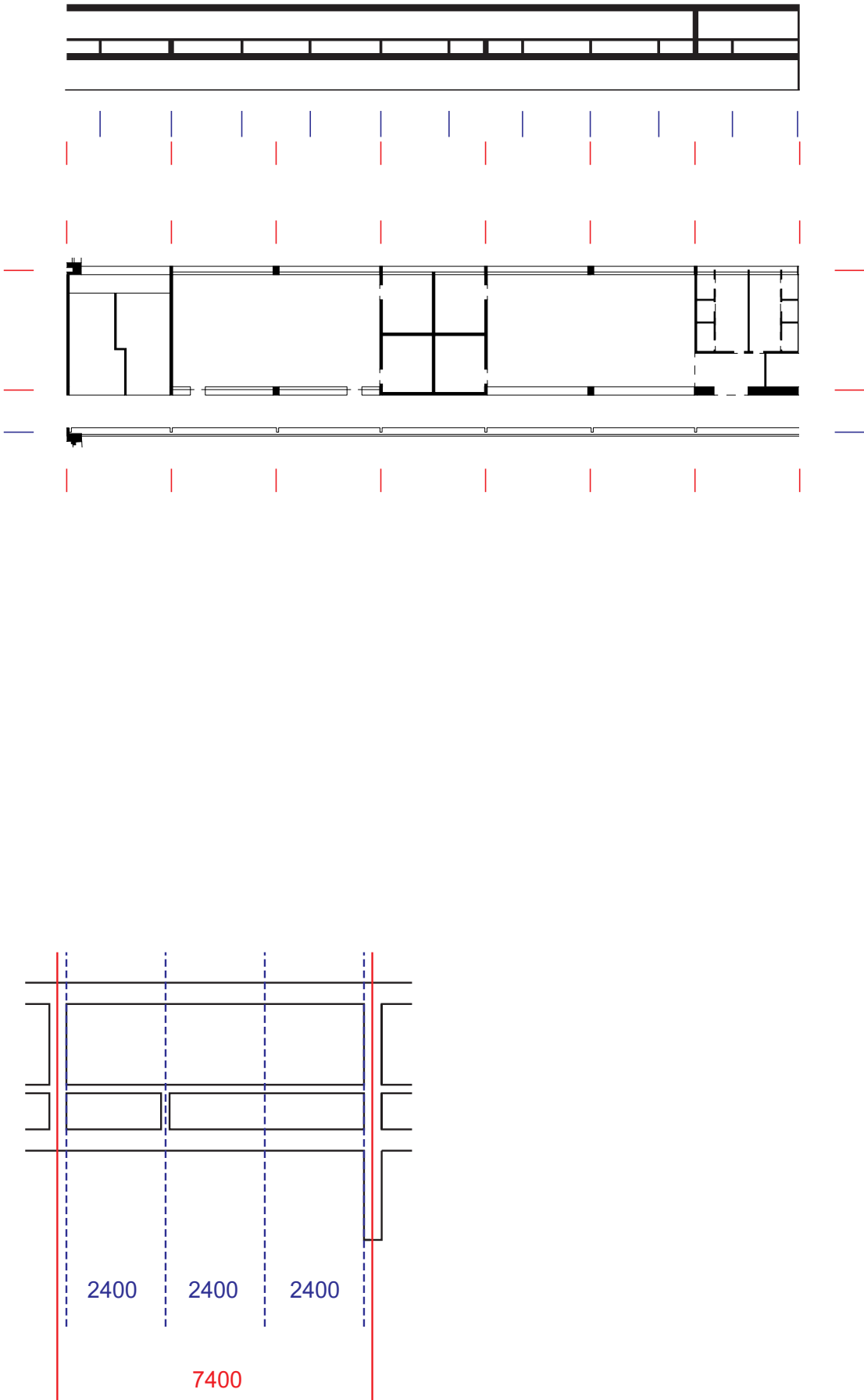
detach & attach
autonomy & integration
balanced tension
dual relationship

continuum
symmetry
mirrored
balanced

loop
circuit
core
counterweight
weight and void
anchoring

space in-between
membrane
layered
interface
permeable walls
the layer in-between
interaction





new	
music depot	344

depot (double)	426
reading rooms	46

depot (double)	426
reading rooms	46

depot (double)	426	music archive workspace	272
reading rooms	46	music archive office	85
		auditorium	284

model depot	350	cafe	377
reading rooms	170	dS wardrobe	643
library	200	loading & unloading	125
		triage	60
		cleaning	60
		quarantine	120
		waiting	80
		digitizing	80
		restoration	80
		processing	80
		meeting room	41

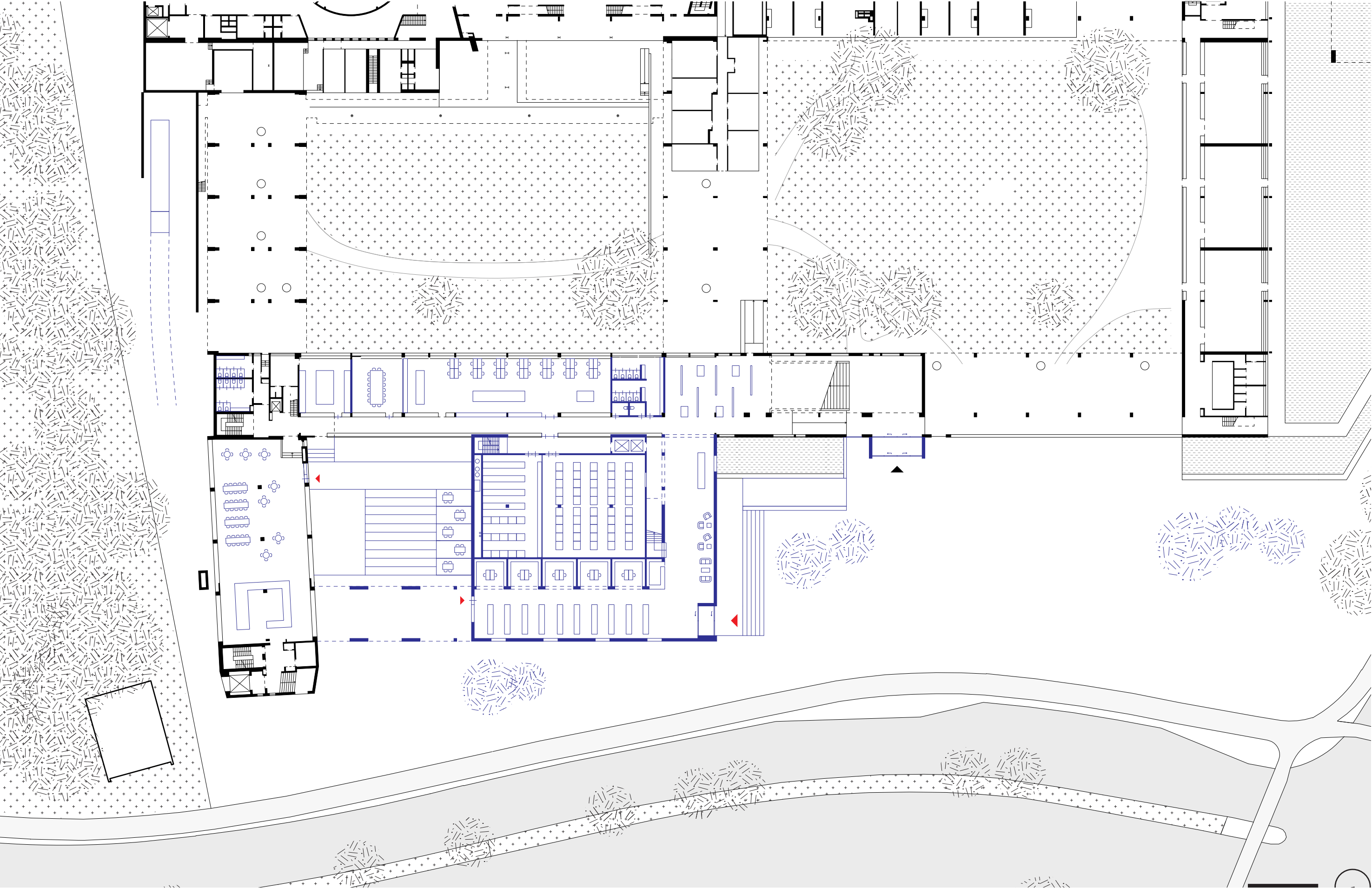
model depot	220	cafe	377
packaging	126	meeting room	60
exhibition	94	exhibition	122
reception	182	pre-depot	60
library	276		

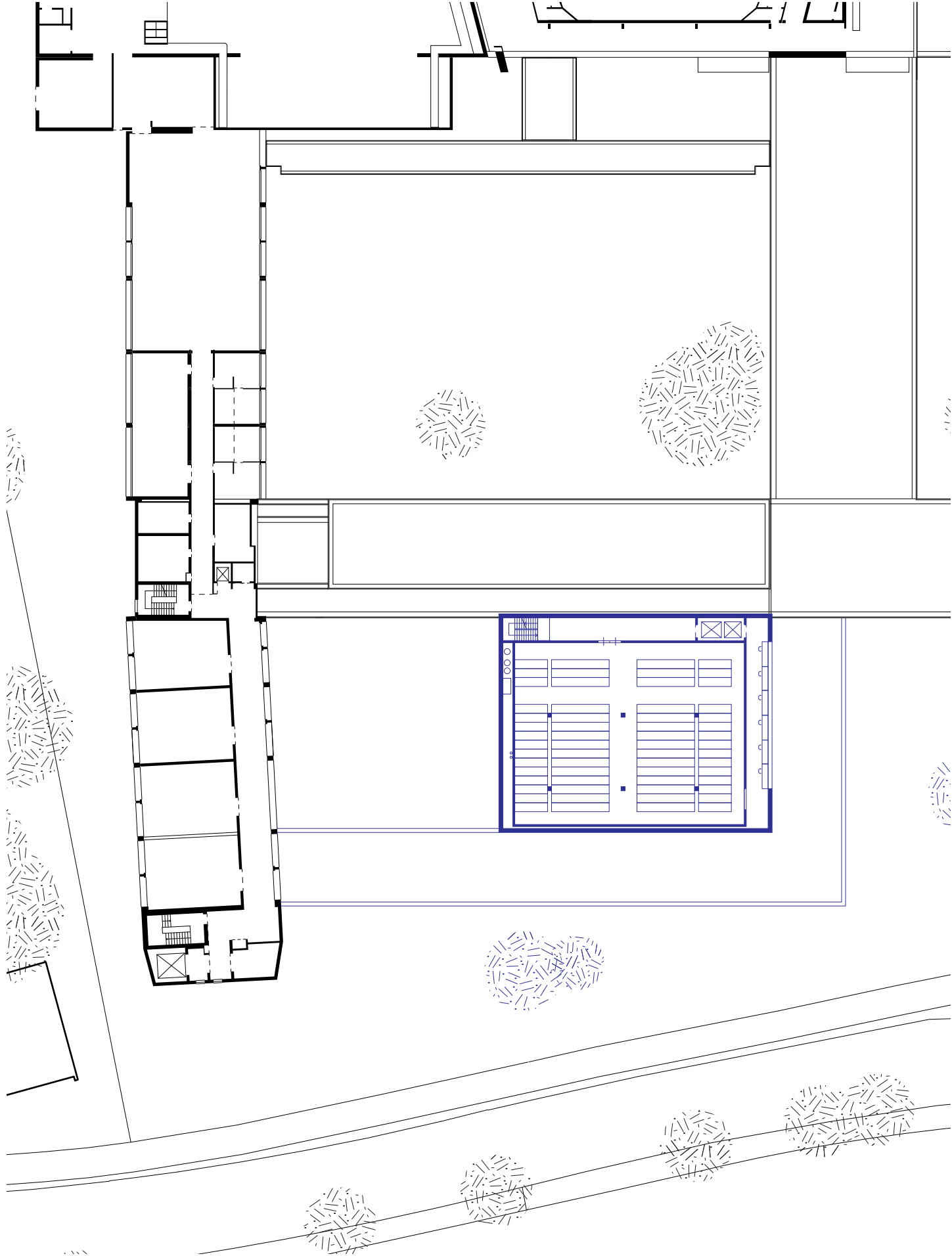
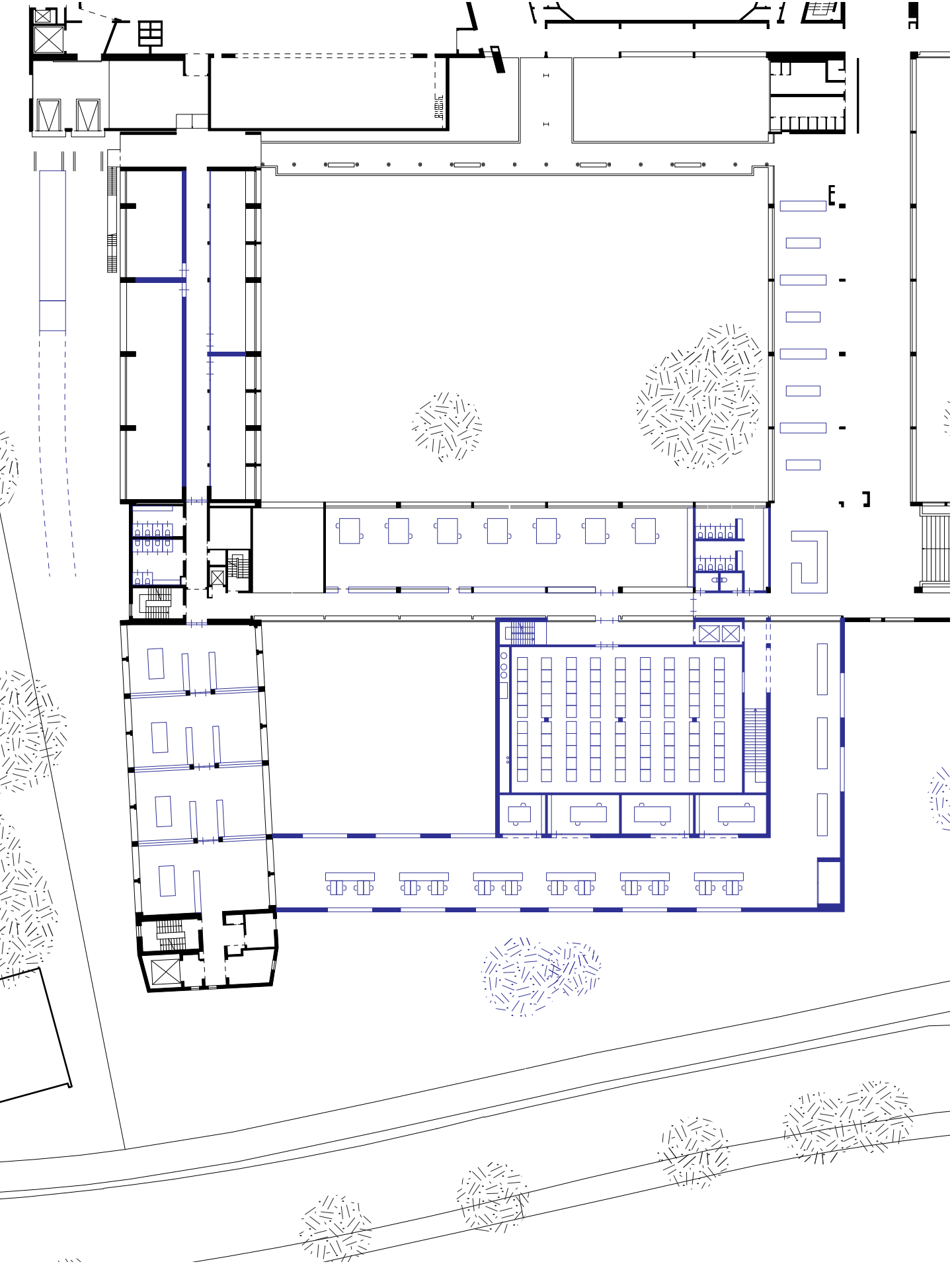
photo depot	220
depot	1128
tech.	117

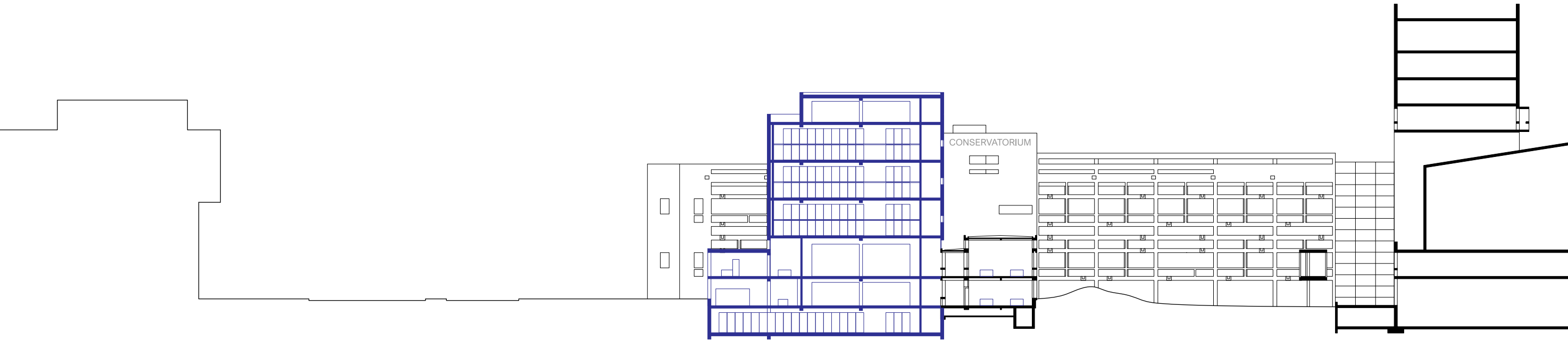
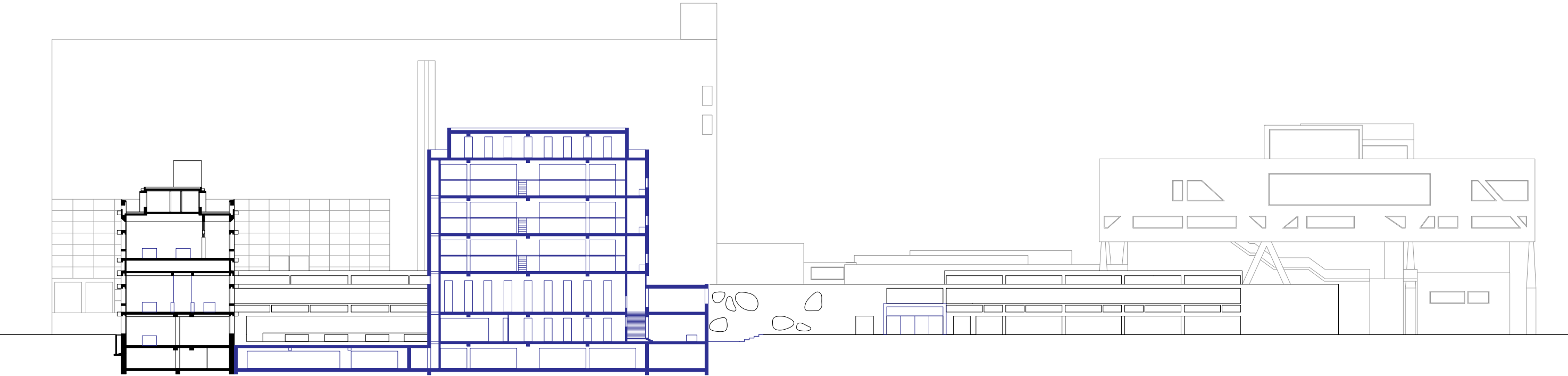
total depot = 3540

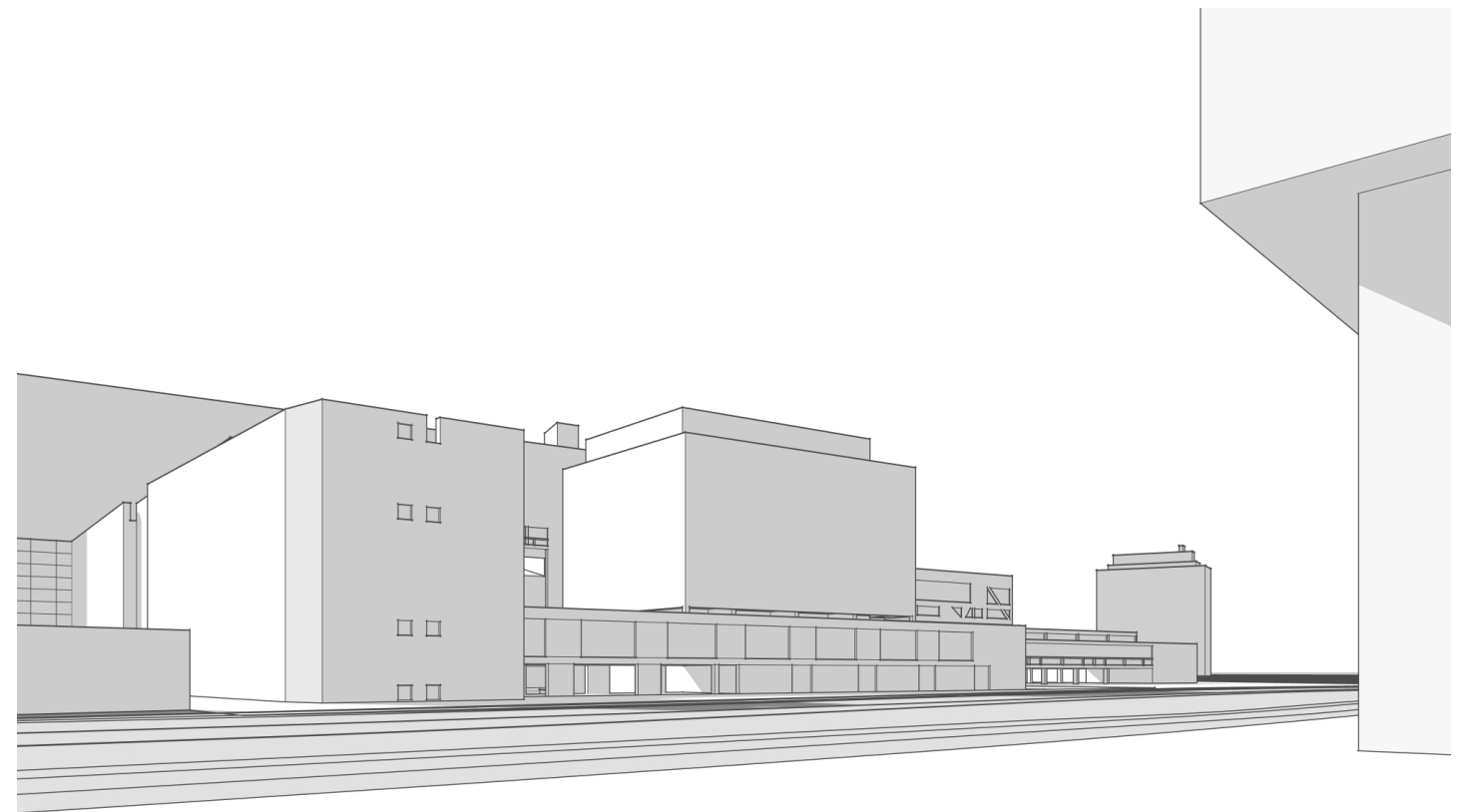
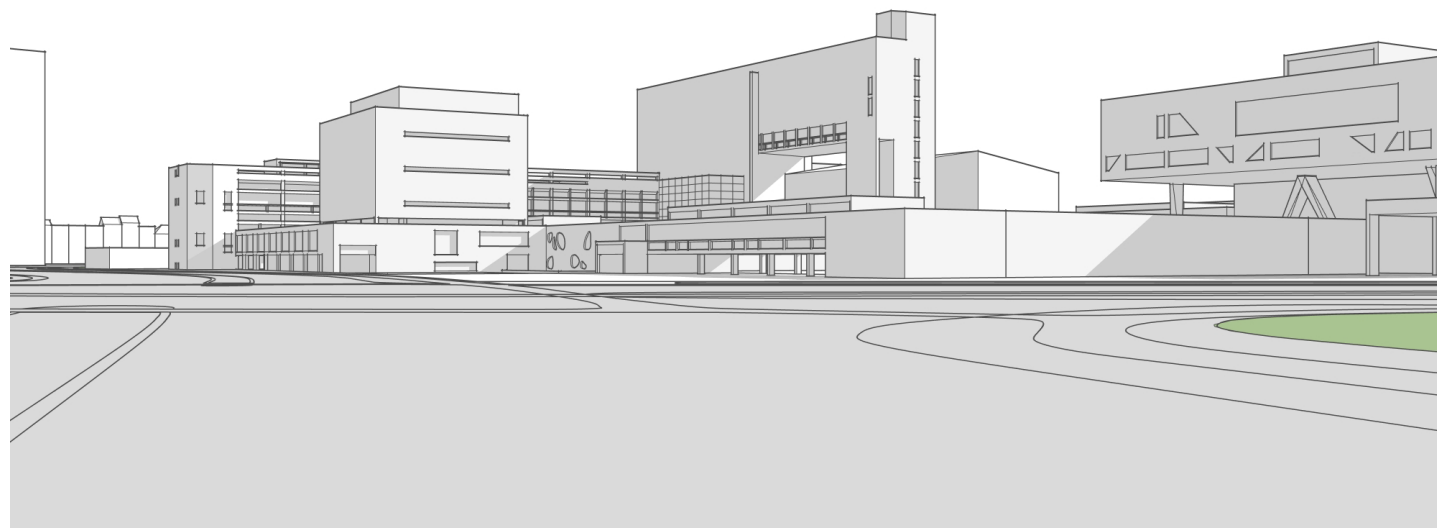
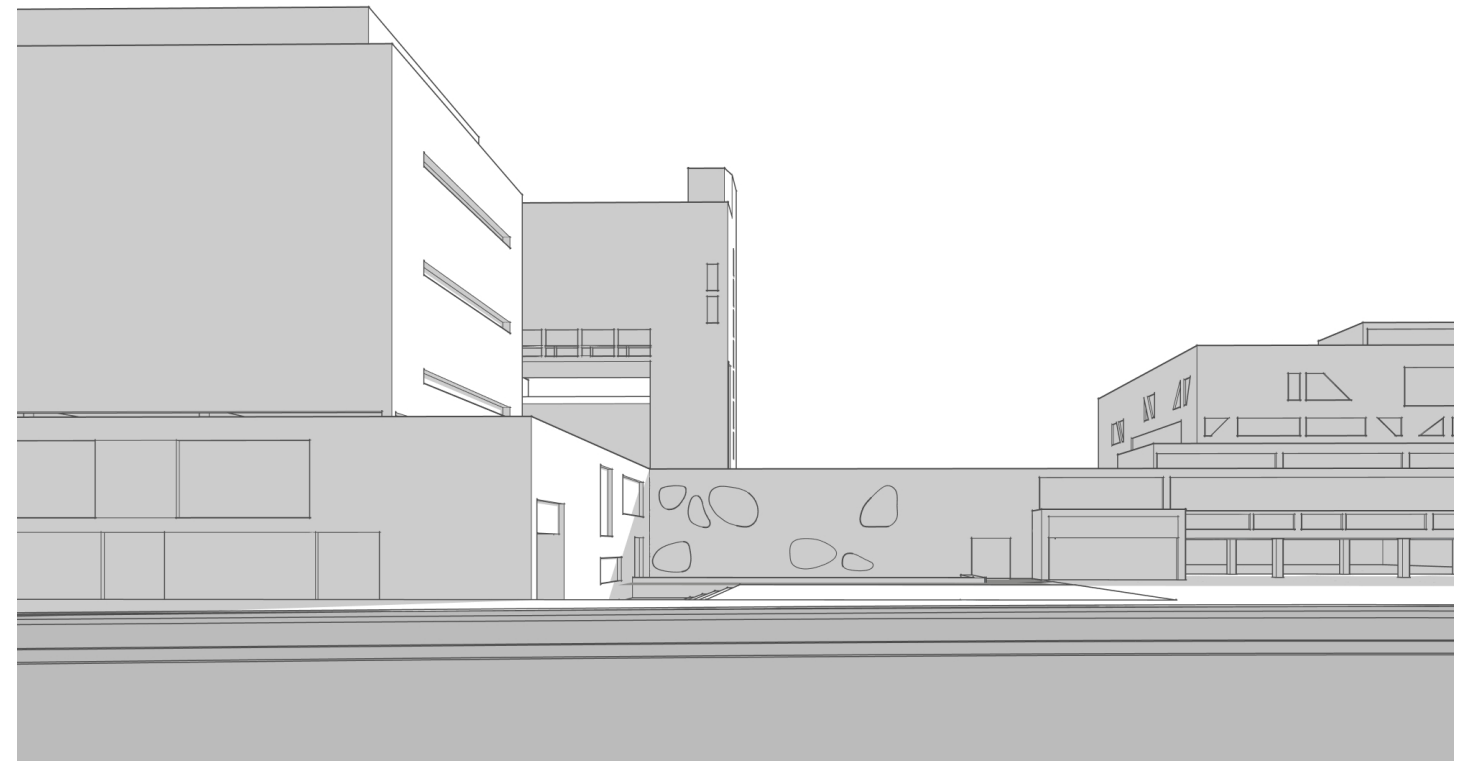
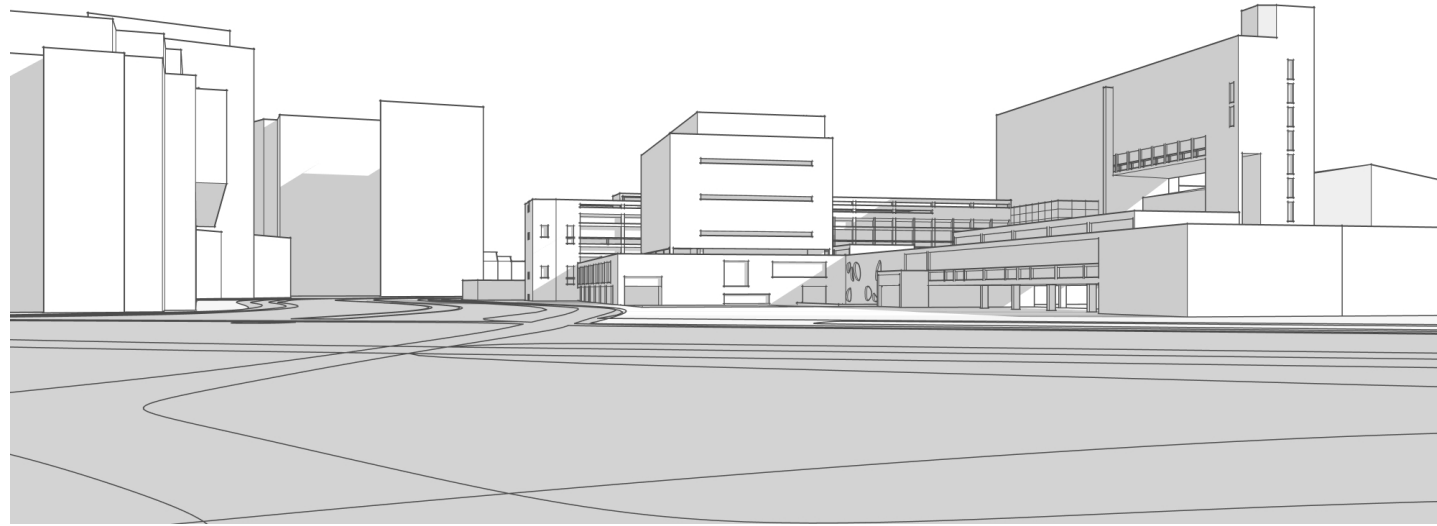
total new area = 6330

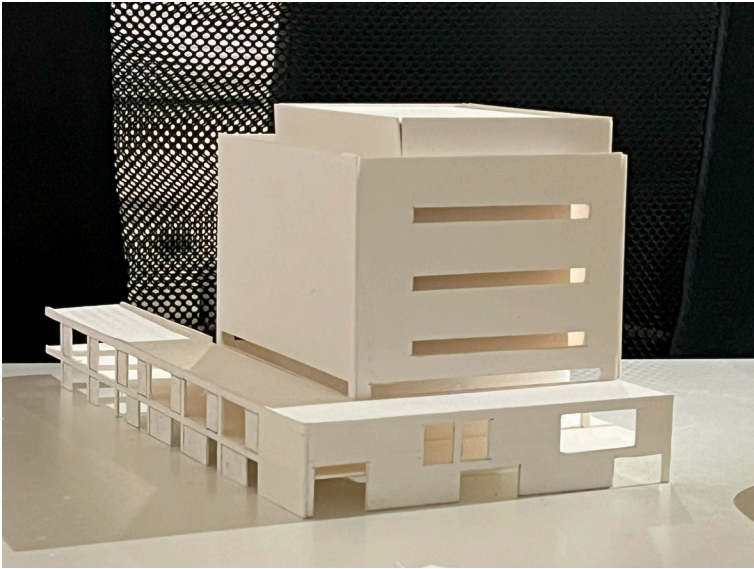
- cafe / entrance / expo
- library / reading room
- circulation / sanitary / tech.
- office
- staff workspace / processing
- depot / loading & unloading











	the site deSingel	the archive VAi	the architect my position
1. WHERE?	history massing urban context	user's needs	a counterweight
2. WHAT?	reorganization loops & voids	the programs the idea of an archive	a layered box
3. HOW?	grid access facade	materials	the permeable (or not) walls

P2 feedback

Sam:

- Vai is at the front, and the conservatorium is at the back. What does this mean for entrances?
- Auditorium as a protagonist: same width for Beel volume, same broadness for your addition.
- I am amazed by the relationship between your P1 table and the building that you propose.
- Accessibility
 - > Your main staircase could become more prominent (deeper stairs)
 - > You choose to have people walk down steps when entering.
 - > Public access zone: physical relation to the archive?
 - > How can I get to the cafe in a wheelchair?
- You build against the Stynen building? What is the relation between it and your extension?
- Will you demolish part of the concrete front wall with potato-like openings?
- TRUST YOUR GUT FEELINGS!

Matthijs:

- Materials: The archive blends in with the Stynen building. You pick up about the dimensions. Could you tell us more about the material aspects?
- Do you intend to renovate the De Meyer wing?

Amy:

- Careful analysis of the challenges is nice to see how you approach this rationally.
- You relate your design a lot to De Singel. I didn't hear you discuss relating your building to the Vai with its institutional identity. What kind of atmosphere do you imagine?
- Reference furniture: women's studies library at the LSE: two-sided lockers.

Jurjen:

- I was impressed by the aesthetics of your proposal.
- Atmosphere: you could point to your P1 proposal. It is a challenge to see maybe if it is indeed building sustainably. I wonder if it is necessary to build the archive in concrete.

BRIEF IV. A DIFFICULT WHOLE

Week 3.1-3.8

developing materials and details

project description

Attach/Detach
The design proposes a dynamic interplay between autonomy and integration for the new VAI archive at deSingel, encapsulated in the title Attach/Detach. This duality reflects the archive’s relationship to both its site and its public. While the VAI asserts its identity through a dedicated northeast quarter of deSingel—partially embedded in existing wings and partially extending into a new volume—it simultaneously strengthens deSingel’s functional and spatial coherence.

Reorganization of deSingel
Relocating the conservatorium’s music studios and offices to the rear of the complex creates a more legible organizational structure. Concentrating student programs at the rear mitigates wayfinding challenges. Clustering the VAI archive with the music library and archives in the front wings enhances public accessibility, offering a visible entrance towards the crossing. The two major institutions at deSingel establish a balanced dialogue: the VAI archive in the northeast and the conservatorium in the southwest.

Architectural Counterbalance
The new VAI volume serves as a deliberate counterweight to the existing addition by Beel, transforming the site’s perception from two competing entities into a group of three bound by underlying design principles. Echoing deSingel’s architectural language, the new structure maintains the interplay of outspoken volumes and a two-story base around courtyards. The tall volume aligns geometrically with the main tower, reinforcing the ensemble’s harmony.

The Archive as a Cabinet
The depot is functionally and spatially the core of the archive. The depot is enveloped by circulation spaces, just as how the existing courtyard or the concert hall are surrounded by corridors. The depot is conceived as a “cabinet” with layered boundaries, responding differently to each context—whether accessible for staff, accessible for the public or visible for the public. Materiality underscores this duality. The lower levels reinterpret Stynen’s legacy through a gridded concrete façade. The upper volume, a mix of steel and wood carpentry, evokes a crafted cabinet.

the Flemish identity

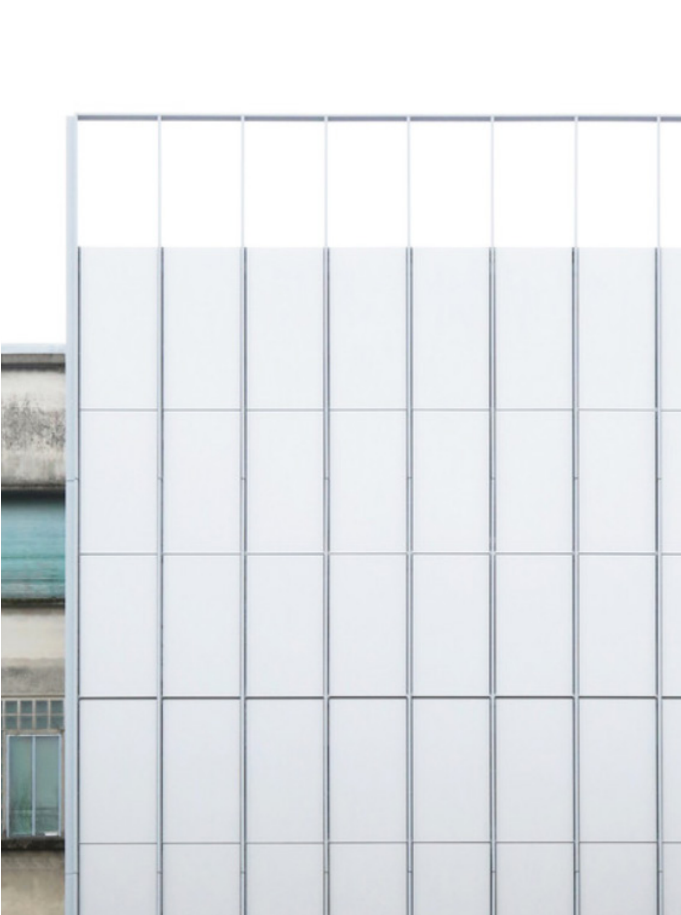
Although I answered Amy’s question regarding Flemish identity in my project dismissively, the question still hang in my mind after the holidays. I think it could be a breakthrough for the next stage of design. The materiality and atmosphere is closely related to cultural expression after all.

What is the Flemish architectural spirit?
How does VAI wants to express themselves?
These are in fact two distinct questions, one refers to the tendency of a collection of individual architects, buildings, and spaces, and the other refers to the stance of an institution towards or among these entities. The first is undoubtedly a more relevant and long-lasting question than the second.

- How will the **atmosphere** of my archive be?
- is it Christian Kieckens? Vintage, back in the times feeling? Treasure box, cozy, safe and sophisticated?
 - is it technical, open, transparent, simple fair, accessible, neutral and thresholdless?
 - is it an institution or a home? A palace or a temple?

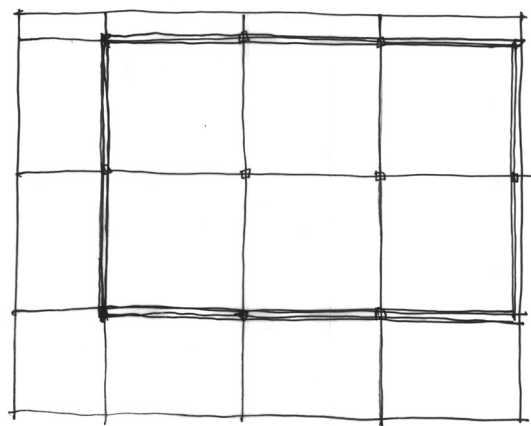
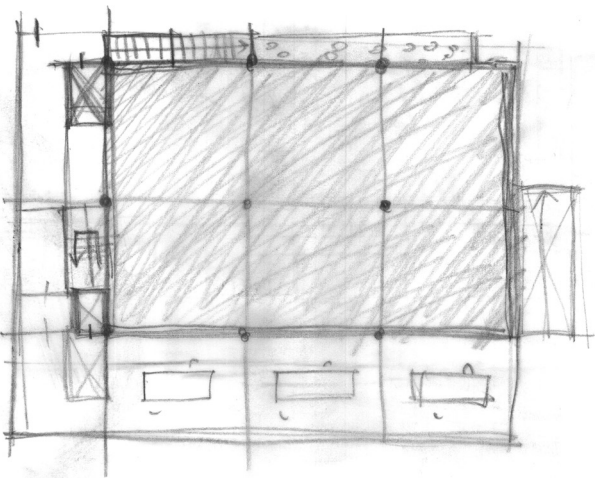
I went to consult the discussions in 'As Found'. "**Craftsmanship**", "a **strong sense of place**" and "a **strong cultural body**" are used to describe the Flemish architecture culture. While it has the simplicity of German or Swiss architecture, it kept the touch of craftsmanship in it. I find the word '**understated elegance**' accurate in describing it. Process-wise, the **openness** in discussions and design alternatives, represented by the open competitions, is the cornerstone to the success of Flemish architecture in recent years. This openness and accessibility is what VAI intends to express, which should be taken in to consideration.

facade materials



interior materials

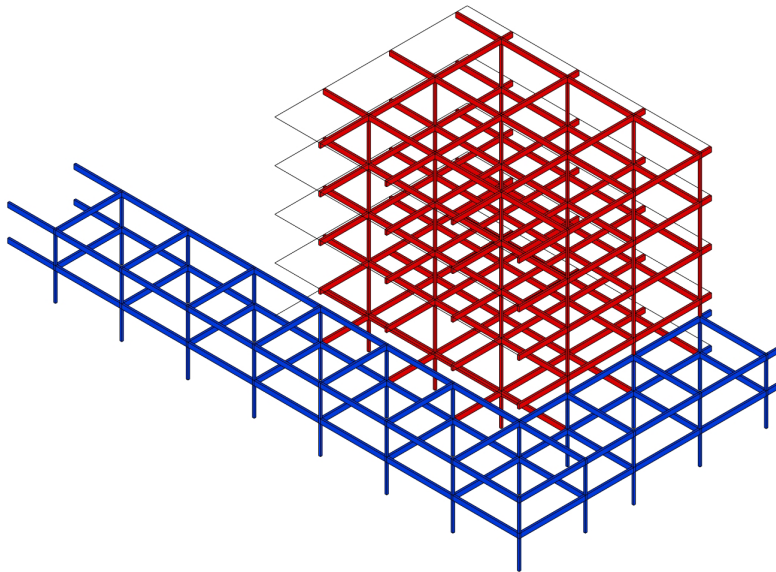




The accessibility and the location of the cores were not completely solved by P2. Under Silas's suggestion, I **switched** the function of the top corridor and the left corridor. The cores would be located on the left, which makes it accessible for both the public and the staff side. The top corridor bordering the Stynen facade would become an **inaccessilbe technical shaft**, where the public could look through into the depot box. For better publicness on the entrance side, the main stairs would be moved out of the box, intro the wing. It can then take more width and spatial quality.

The result of this in structure, would be larger overhangs on the left and the bottom, and a more eccentric relationship between the two boxes (the facades and the structural lines). This reminds me of the weeks when I had to constantly rotate and flip my plan of the square room I designed for P1, to find the ultimate functional and spatial relationship between the table and the walls.

The depot box and the wings around it are two systems in my mind. They would want to have different material expressions. The depot will be an cabinet that has a light metal and carpentry expression, while the wings should be stony and landed. I discussed this with Matthijs, he has a good point in that the structure should not be two systems. It would be hard to combine steel and on-site concrete in on project, because of the logistics but also the difference between the preciseness of the two building methods. So I thought everything could be **steel**. This allows the large overhangs on the edges of the box. Wooden structure is not good for the archive materials because of its acidity. It's not the atmosphere I aim for either. Concrete would be unsustainable, and it just doesn't fit the narrative of the cabinet. Steel structure can be cladded with different materials on the box and on the wings. The box could be metal panels with ribs, and the wings could be prefab concrete or fibre panels. The seams provide the opportunity to play with expression and craftsmanship.

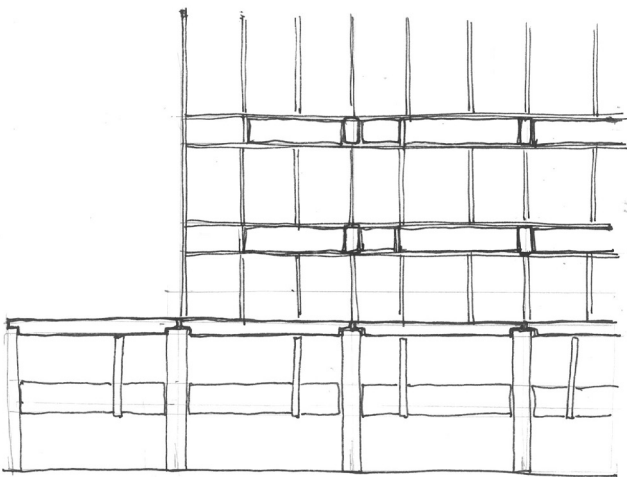
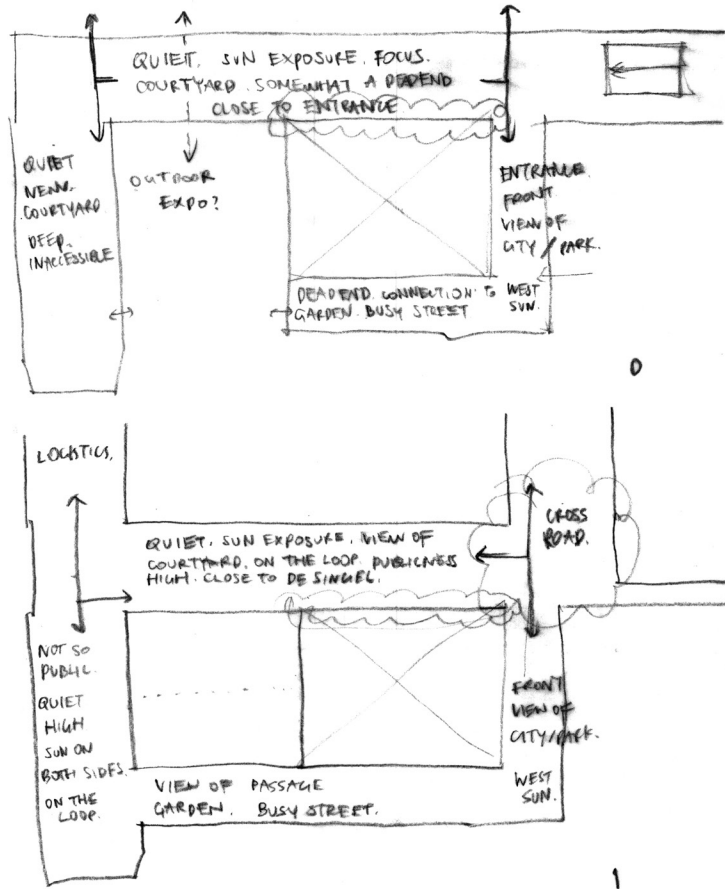


- Daniel:
- I would flip the **library with the office**. It's nicer to study next to the courtyard than the street. It would activate the existing wing and the courtyard. The public would also be able to see through the Stynen facade into the depot.
 - You need a larger **entrance** for both functions. Bring it forward. Maybe let people circulate around the pool and split into the two institutions. It can be a glass pavilion, it can be outside.
 - The way you drew the stairs don't work. Is it a regraded sunken **landscape**? Look at Tate modern.

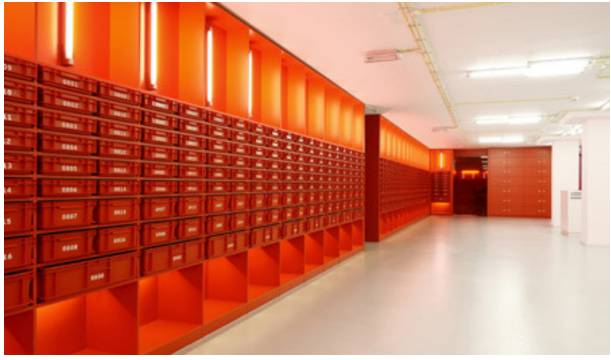
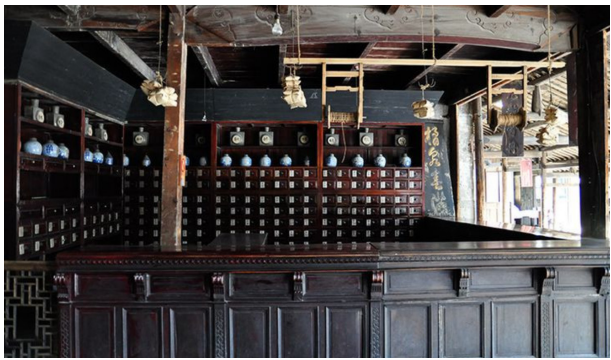
re-evaluating the spaces

Daniel's comment on placing the **library** in the Stynen wing and the **staff office** on the street side reminds me of the fleeting thoughts before P2 of why can't the library be here or there. Daniel's intention was to stimulate the use of the Stynen wing by putting a public function there, and to highlight the view into the depot. My reasoning was simply that the right and the bottom wings were on the entrance square and the street, hence more public. The staff office and processing spaces should be closer to the logistic wing, which is on the top left corner. My doubt on the arrangement arouse from the thinking of that offices are actually more intensively and constantly used than library, therefore it's more important for them to have a stable indoor climate. However, the south-facing Stynen wing already experiences problems of overheating. It could be more understandable to put the library in that space from this point of view.

These conditions of each space, regarding **climate, orientation, dimensions, and accessibility**, have to be put on one chart for me to see the best arrangement of functions. On the other hand, a voice says that I only need to provide the suitable spatial interventions specific to each space without necessarily fixing its use. The uses will be adapted by the users in the future anyways.

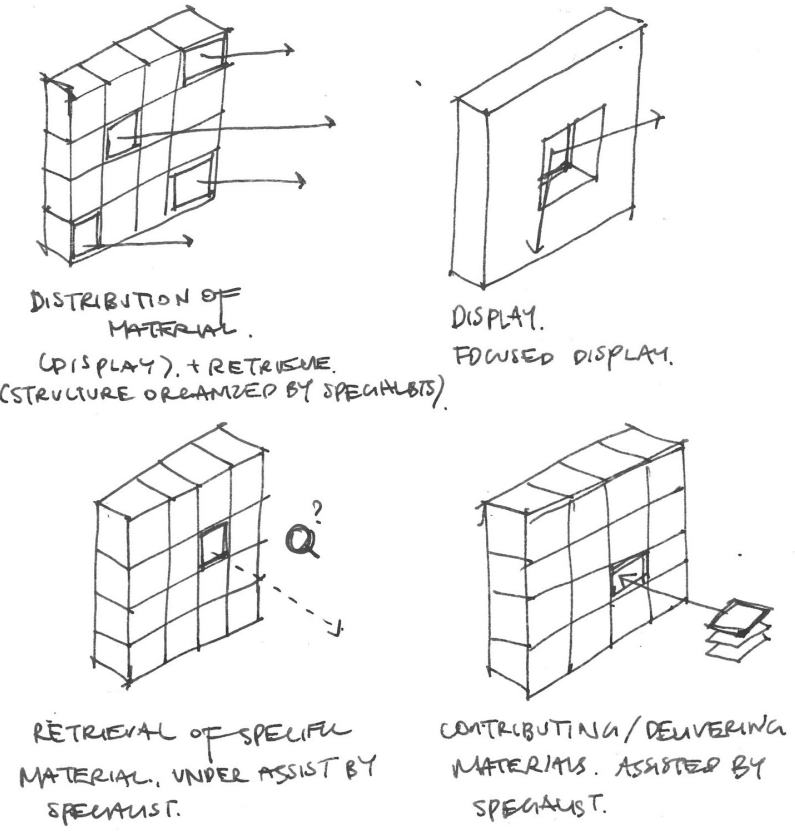


the cabinet analogy



I've always wanted to draw analogy between an archive and other forms of "cabinets". These correlations could help the archive to shake off its mysterious impression. The examples could also broaden the my frame of reference for the appearance of an archive. So I compared these similar typologies: a concierge, a Chinese medicine pharmacy, a library pick-up system, a fast food automat, and the postboxes.

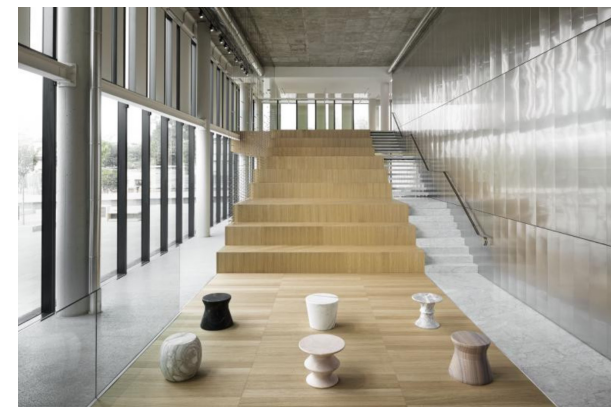
They are all structured systems to store, organize and retrieve specific items efficiently. They are intermediation between two parties, usually the experts or the service provider on one side and the consumer on the other. They are reliable gateways of the physical material and the knowledge.



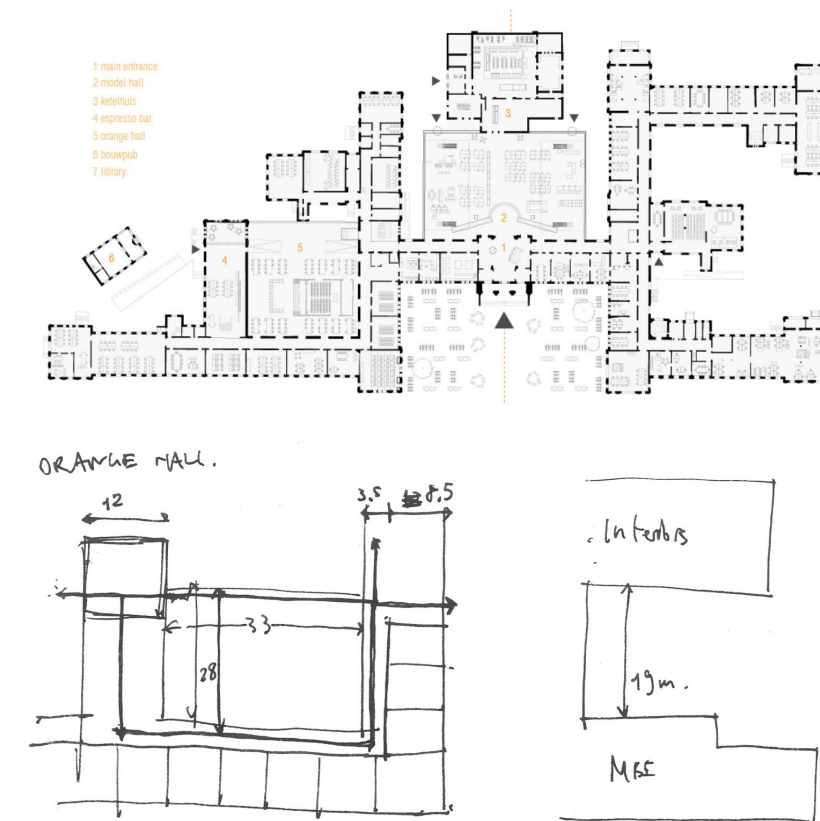
By drawing plans next to the existing building of de Singel, I began to lose feeling of the scale. De Singel is so big that every space I draw feels so small. I do have the feelings for the dimensions of a house, or the minimum requirements for a school or office, for example, but public spaces are different. There you would need to be more generous with the dimensions. The lighting, furnishing and finishings could distort the perceived sizes of the space. So I looked for reference photos of spaces that have the similar dimensions as what I designed.

The **wing on the street side** is a 3m high and 7m wide space, with floor-height windows on one side and dark on the other. I wanted to know if this space would be too dark and cramped. I also wonder if it can be an office where public circulation is allowed. The Britten Pears Archive by Stanton Williams shows a good example of this. This space can be filled with rows of tables on each side, leaving a circulation space in the middle. It can also be larger tables taking half of the space and leaving the rest for circulation. It has a rather intimate, not so public character.

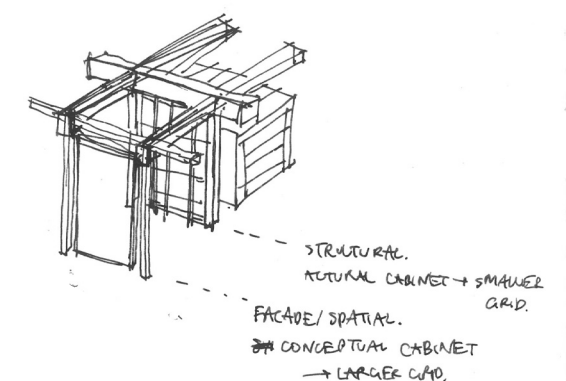
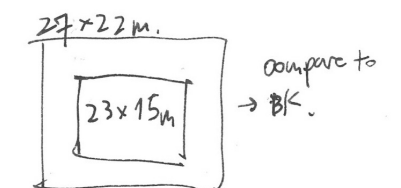
The **entrance wing** has the potential of being double floor, then the space would be 7m high and 7m wide, with one-sided natural light. The NTT DATA Milan Headquarter by deamicisarchitetti shows a foyer space like this.



I realized that the orange hall in BK city has the same character as the depot box I intend to build. When I walk around the **orange hall**, the daylight and the bright orange color always attract me to look inside. The lack of physical connectivity and enough visual connections lures my curiosity. The size of the orange hall is a bit larger than the depot box I'm making, 33x28m compared to 27x22m. The corridors here are also larger than the ones I'm making, 12m compared to 7m. More importantly, BK city has a lot more height in both the hall and the corridors.



Is the cabinet literal or conceptual? Can it be both? On which scale is the cabinet?



What does it mean to place the depot in the middle of my building? Is it suggesting the idea of **worshipping the materials**, the stuffs, the physical state of knowledge instead of the people? Do I want this? If I use the analogy to a cabinet. Do people place the bookshelves, cabinet or closet in the middle of their house? What does that mean?

Michael Johansson's installation artwork **Recapturing a Contemporary Past** that I came across in brainstorming the P1 project, floats back to the surface. It is an assembled cube of archival or office furniture standing in the middle of an exhibition space. It looks unreal, flat and compressed.





It seems like I always want to create a completely safe environment for myself, and then act recklessly within it. When modeling, I want every single line to be precise, even if it's insignificant—so that later on I can snap to or align with any line freely, ensuring efficiency and ease. Maybe this stems from my family and school environment—where nothing unexpected ever happened, everything followed the rules, unfolded naturally, and felt effortlessly safe.

The problem is, that I don't act before having the perfect conditions or being mentally prepared. After listening to a podcast about dealing with **perfectionism**, I realized it's just an excuse for not getting started. I have to really tell myself from now on that having anything is better than nothing.

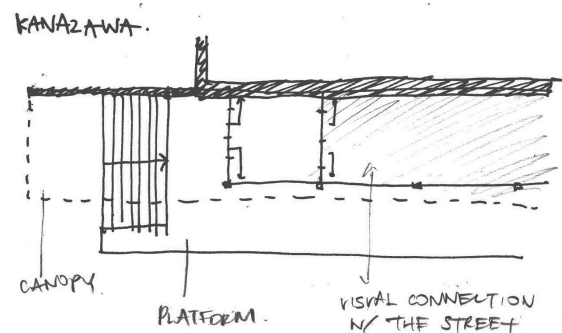
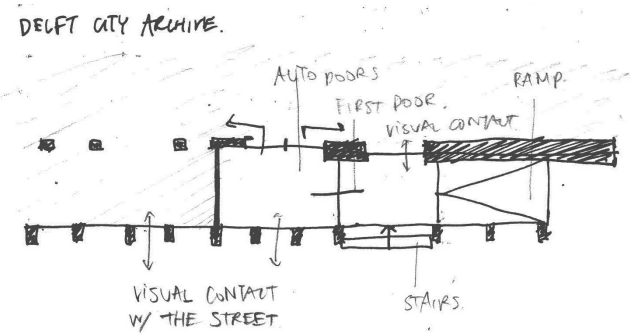
Since the entrance of BK was transformed into a garden, finding **bike parking** spots has become challenging. Extra rows of bikes inevitably appear between the two rows parked on the racks. Sometimes I'm the one who starts that informal row. Recently, a sign has been put up warning that such parking behavior is hindering the fire trucks in emergency situations. But the problem is, there simply aren't enough designated spots. What can we do?

The same issue exists in the studio—there's never enough space for building and storing models, so we end up setting up tables in open areas. This causes problems for the fire department. When drawing plans, designers easily designate evacuation zones here and there to meet the codes, even if it puts usable space under pressure. When the building is put into use, the users will always expand into those areas, reclaiming those spaces unless strictly monitored. No one willingly respects evacuation routes reserved for emergencies, which sound hypothetical. That's human nature: daily convenience always outweighs distant, invisible goals.

This is why **accessibility** should always have priority over heritage and sustainability. The former is bottom-up, shaped by users' immediate needs, while the latter two are top-down ideals, ranked higher up on the hierarchy of needs.

- Susanne:
- the walk from the crossing to the building is too long. An not so large building standing far away is not so inviting to enter
 - > add volume to the front of the **entrance**
 - > make the whole front facade more permeable
 - > create a courtyard or something to look at or walk around at the entrance
 - where to park the **bikes**?

entrance references



I liked the entrances of Museum of Architecture in Kanazawa by Yoshio Taniguchi and City Archive in Delft by Office Winhov. They both provide a **gradual transition** from the exterior to the interior space. When people are about to enter the building, they get a preview of what they are about to encounter. When they first step into it, they still have the **visual connection** with the outside, which suggests an opportunity for retreat. Visual connections with the interior space should be established prior to access, the same goes for the exit. Psychologically this gradual transition would make people feel safe to enter an unknown building.

However, both buildings are situated **along a street**. This is not the situation at deSingel. The sidewalk of deSingel is not really a walkable one now. First, it is on the edge of the city centre, there are not a lot of passer-bys who are heading to the destinations in the vicinity on foot. Second, the street is quite wide and is dominated by cars driving at 70km/h, which makes it unpleasant to walk along. Third, deSingel is not built up to the redline, nor do I intend to do so in my proposal. I will just keep it as it is, which is the **modernist campus** typology. All visitors come on purpose. The problem is how to bring them from the fringe of the plot to the entrance. People should know where to park their bikes and where to get protected quickly if it's raining, for example.

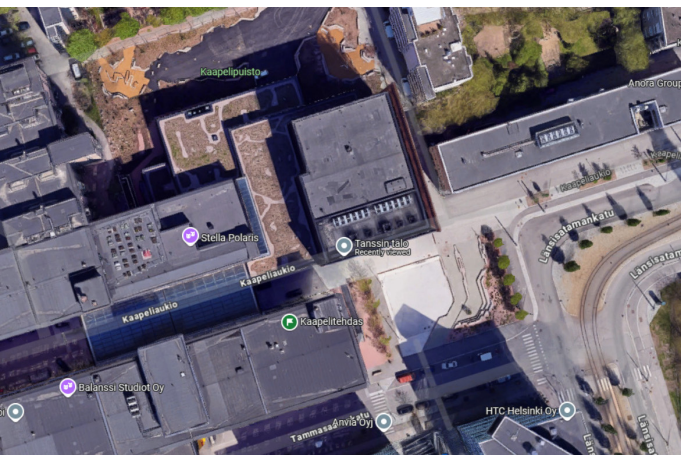
I needed to collect references that fulfills these criteria:

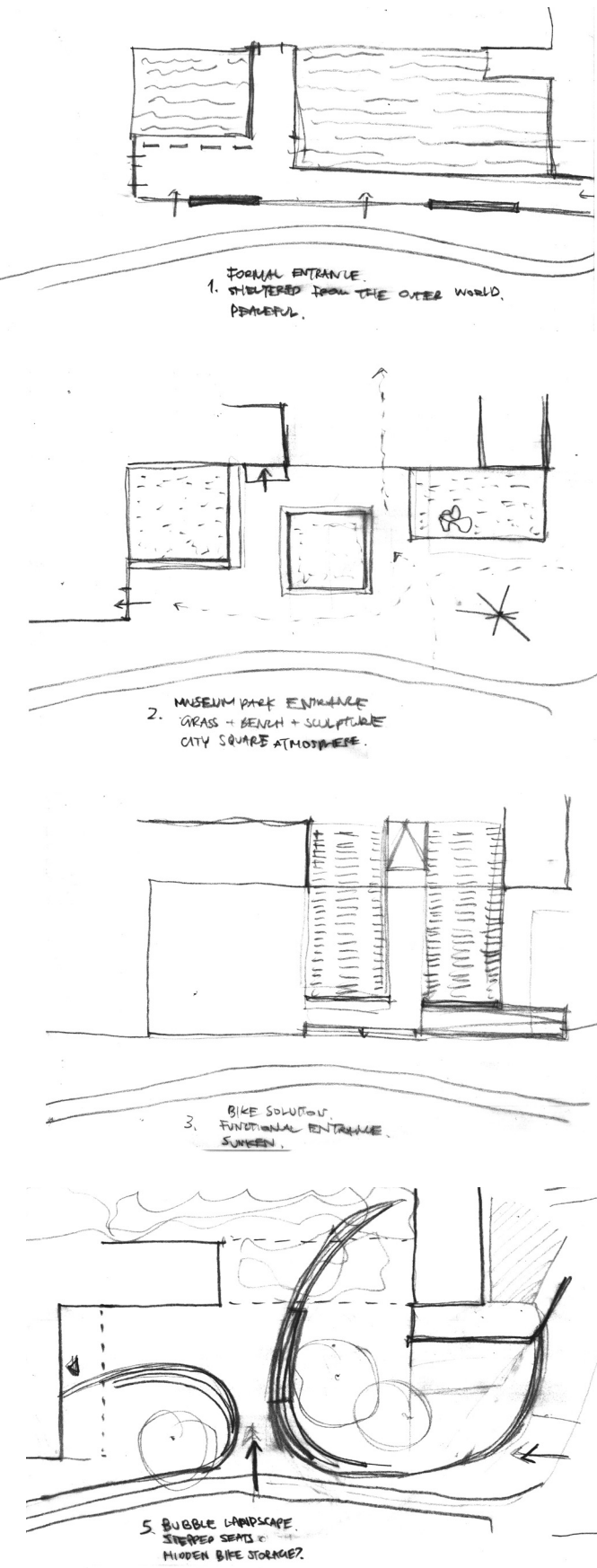
- a cultural complex
- next to a busy driveway
- not in the city centre
- building standing free from the red line
- multiple entrances of the complex

I found four examples:

- Library of the Ibero-American Institute, Berlin
- Berliner Philharmonie, Berlin
- Harald Herlin Learning Centre, Helsinki
- Dance House, Helsinki

I concluded that the entrance must be made visible either by a **recessed canopy** between two volumes or by a **canopy extending** into the public square.





With all the references and sketches, I am still struggling with imagining a plausible version of the entrance and the public space that leads to it. I felt that my brain is drained, no idea or vision would come to my mind. I used to be often inspired by architecture I saw during trips, but not anymore. Problems and cases have become more specific, that I could no longer allow myself transplanting something I liked in Abu Dhabi in a design I'm making for Amsterdam. Along the way I also learned more about the ambiguous side of architecture. I don't dare to say that this would work and that wouldn't, because I know about the "depends". I too often have the arguments for both sides. I start to believe that architecture could only be tested when it's built and put in use.

Under a friend's suggestion, I stepped out of the door to look for inspirations. Specifically, the campus typology and the spaces in between buildings. I went to see **Erasmus University** in Rotterdam and spent a day in **Aachen**. Too be honest, I didn't get anything from these trips.



- Daniel & Susanne:
- you worry too much
 - you are in a paralysed state
 - why can't you just leave the front yard empty? It is not that big
 - make a model to test the entrance addition!



testing the entrance in model

I made two variants of the entrance wing on 1:200 scale, attached to my P2 model. The facades of the P2 model was already obsolete, but I started to test what the facade of this new front could be.

One version is a more **sculptural** gesture that treats the two-layer height as one mass, with large areas of walls and large areas of glass. This extends the horizontality of the Stynen facade. It helps to highlight the void underpass in the existing wing. The scale fits the publicness of the building more.

The other continues the **grid** structure of the Stynen wing. It extracts the underlying logic of the Stynen building but works less as a formal continuation. This version has the scale of a mundane school or office building, which is inadequate for a public entrance to a large cultural complex

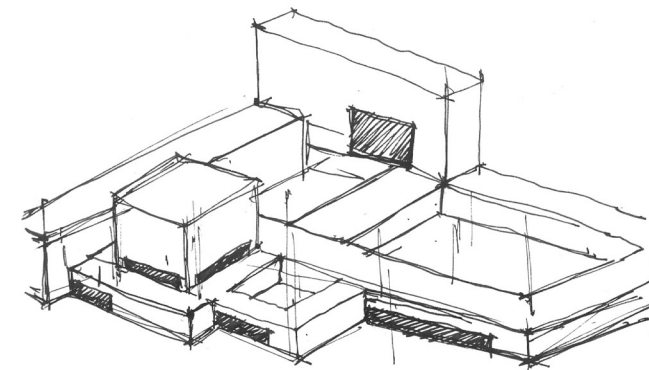
In both variants I put a **blind facade** to the final bay on the street facade, to repeat the rhythm between void & mass that already exists on the street side. I liked this repetition but later I realized that this suggests that the building faces the street side, which is what I always wanted to counter.

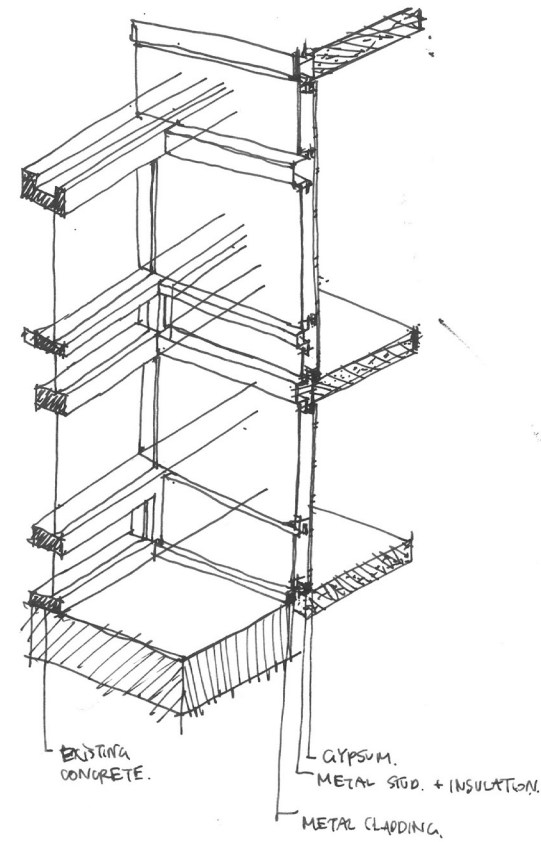
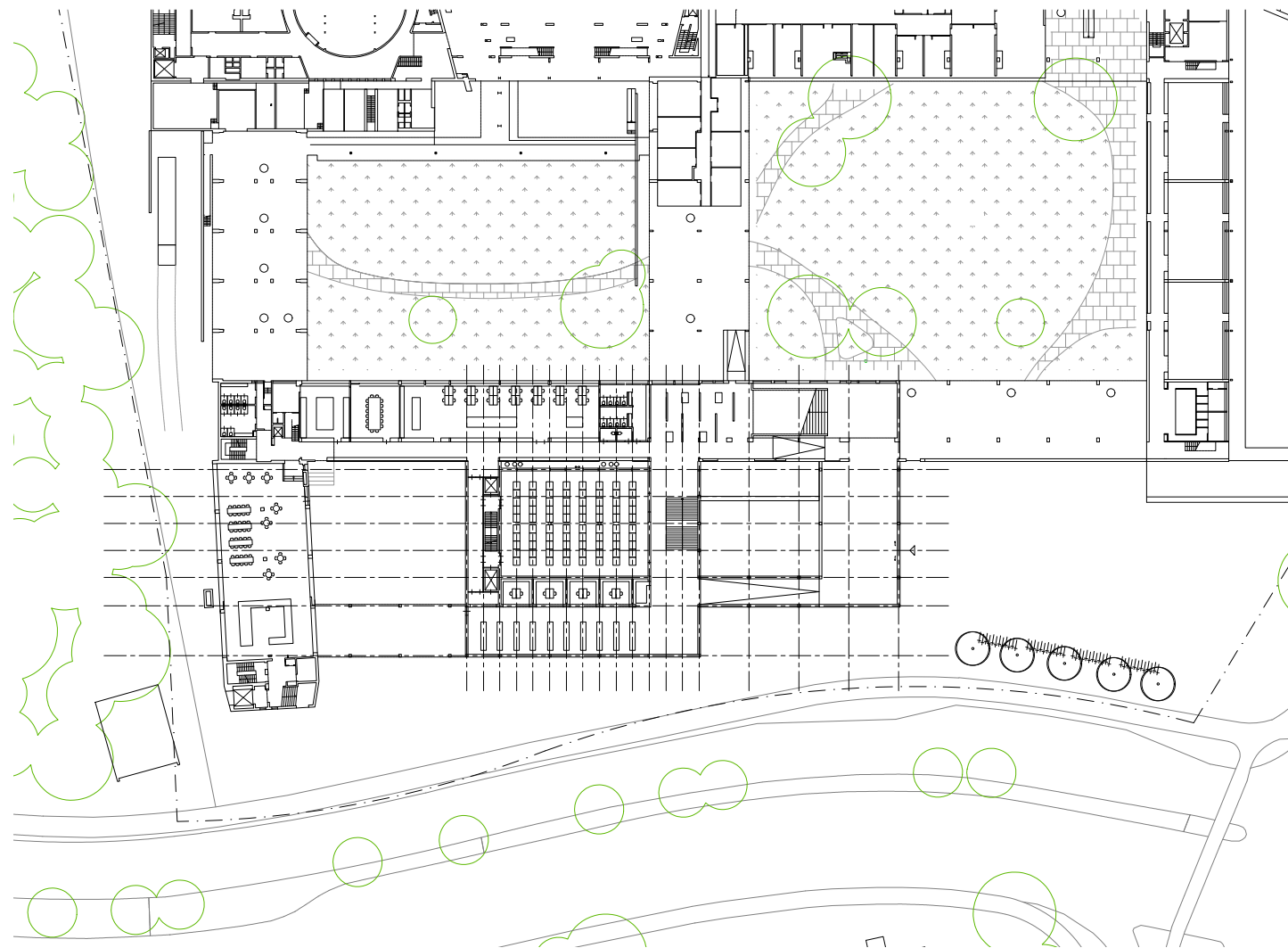
reflection on meeting spaces

Silas was asking why I leave the entrance to be a courtyard, why not creating a covered large space where people in such a large cultural complex can meet. Something like the orange hall is not unimaginable. My first argument is that I do still want to make the iconic potato facade visible from outside. The second argument is that I already have so many **unassigned "public spaces"** that could serve as meeting areas, and I don't want to create another one without knowing exactly how it will be used.

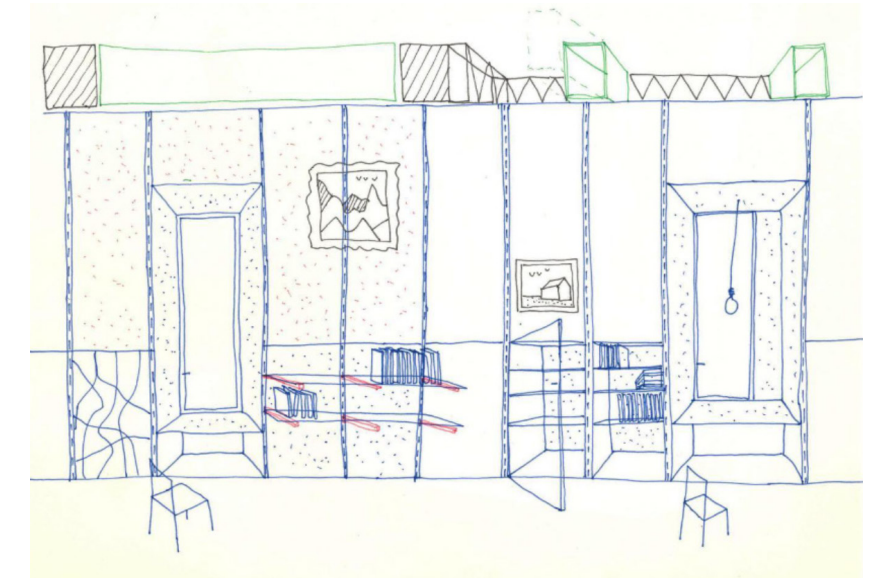
It came to my realization since a while ago that I'm **not so generous** with spaces. It is partially due to that I don't have enough experience with designing public buildings. I still have the fear of leaving a space blank and being interrogated by an imaginative tutor of what that space will be used for. Therefore I just simply avoid creating extra spaces, otherwise I feel the necessity of filling them in with random fillers as plants and couches. But the main reason is that is just how I do things. I like the feeling of having just enough, of saving resources and allocating them wisely. I do so with money, with packing, with shelving space in my room, with cooking... I generally like to ask "why" before taking any action or putting down any line on my plan. It is a constructive way of looking at the world. I sometimes don't know how to react when people ask "why not".

Silas continued to illustrate his vision for such a space. Students could meet here for a coffee and staffs will come here for an informal talk. I further reflected why I am not so touched by such narratives. First thing that comes to my mind is one of those cliché renders of a glass foyer where people are engaged in conversations, holding their drinks, with dogs and plants around. I think it just became a cliché that I want to avoid. Another thing is that I just don't use that kind of **social spaces** a lot in my own life. Deep down I value meeting space less than other dry functions. I don't go to Bouwpub that often, I usually don't chat around in a dedicated space. I just do my business and chat about what I do. I like corridors and streets more than halls and plazas. The former is functional with an affiliated social purpose, while the latter serves purely as a social place. I like to sit or stand in a space where I see people doing their business, instead of being in a large space where everyone is just talking around.



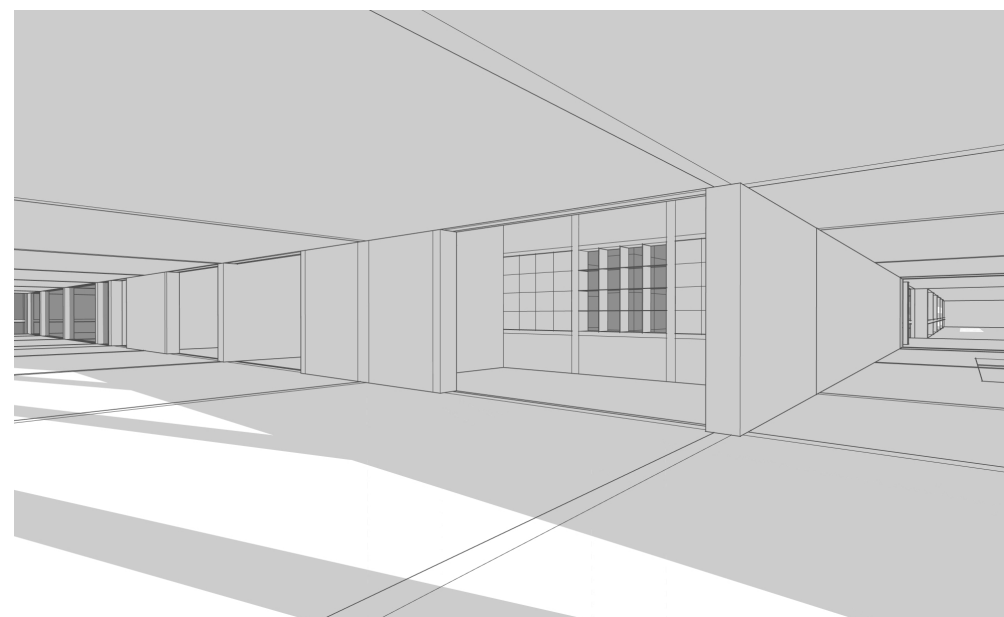
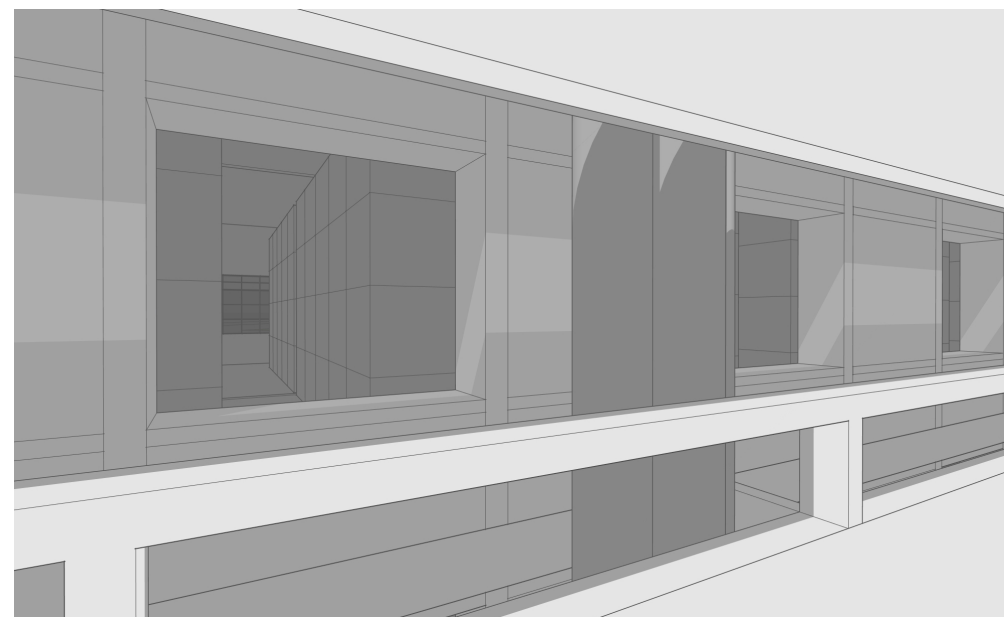
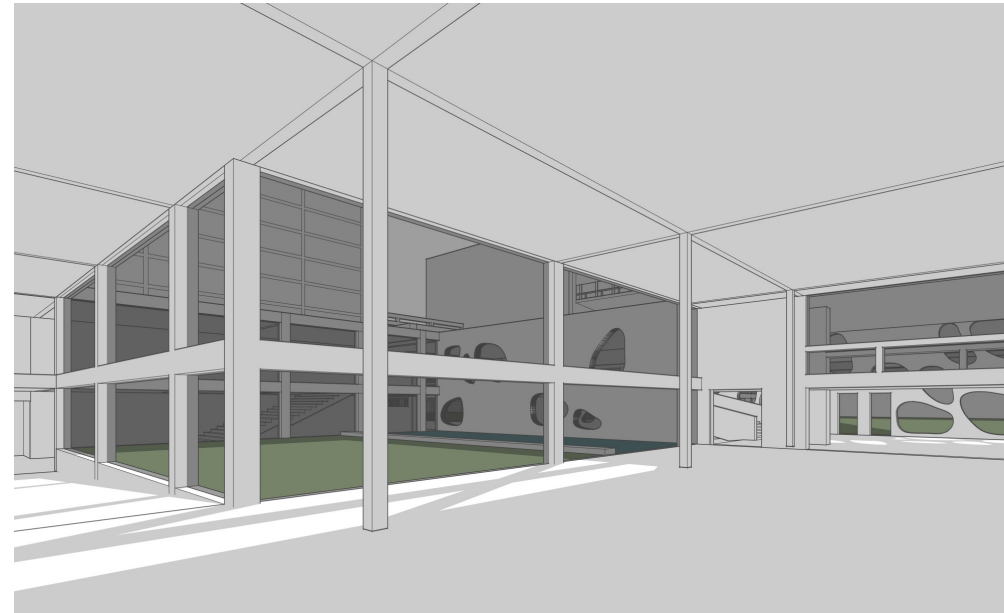
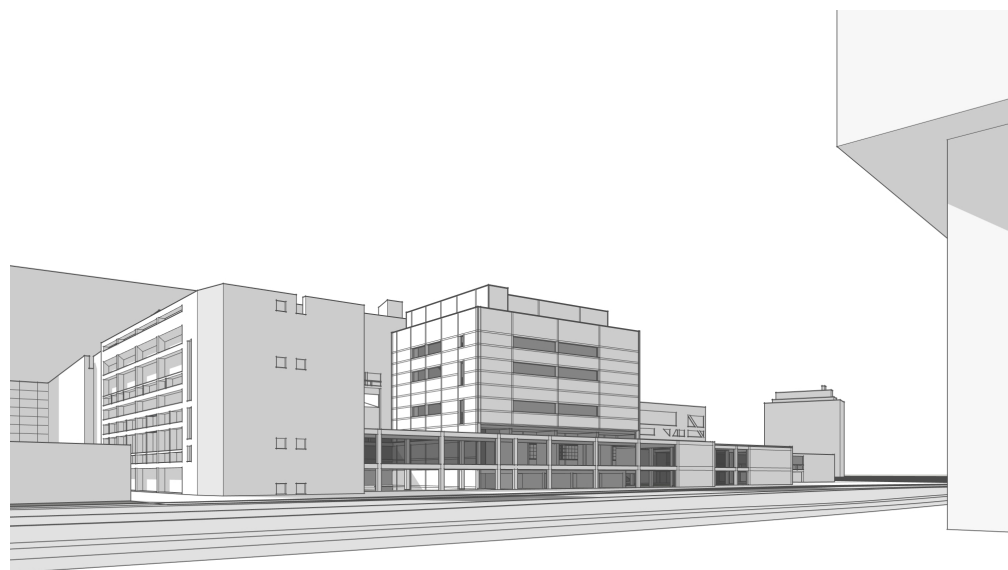
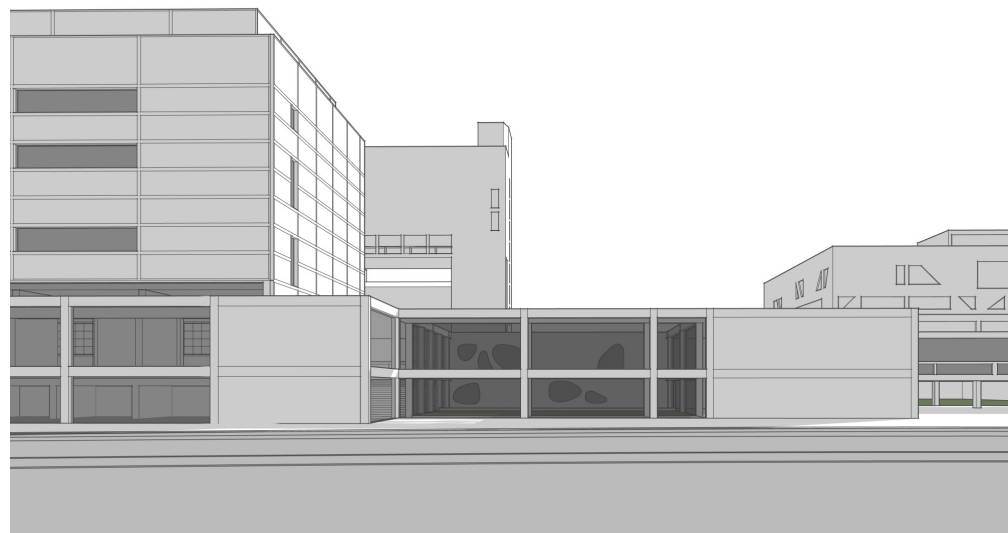
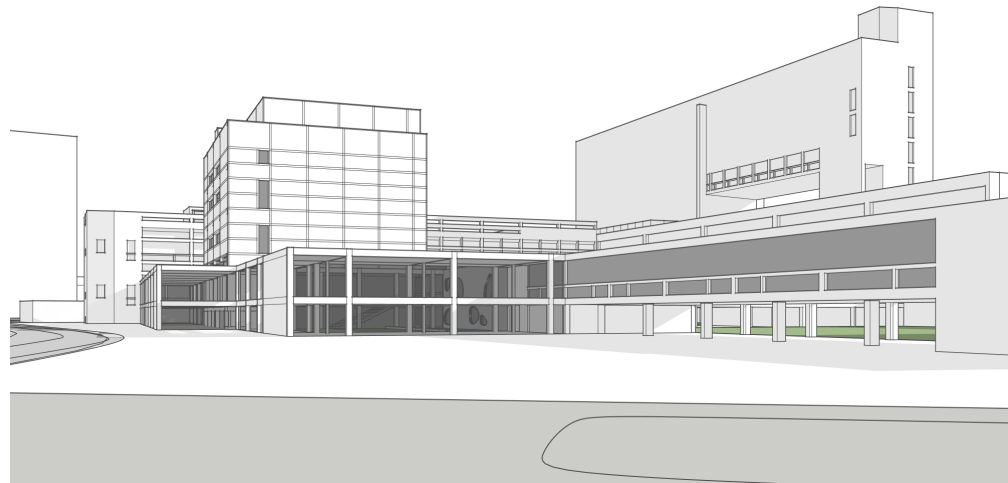


I tried to look for the answer of how to make the facade by zooming into a corner where the new facade meets the existing perpendicularly. At this particular meeting point, in the small courtyard, the existing facade has continuous horizontal windows where no solid pillars can act as the anchor point for the new facade. This means that the new has to insert into the old, forming a **zipper** almost. If the facade was made out of metal cladding, it could have a concave Stylen facade, as if the existing facade leaves an **imprint** on the new wall.



I need to quickly visualize at least one space bordering the depot. I need to get concrete with the **magic wall system** that I promised to design. The current state of my design is, I can't hammer down the function of each space without knowing that those spaces have the potential to offer the required qualities; I can't shape the spaces and design the walls either because I don't know the functions for sure yet.

So I went online to "shop" for possible solutions from references again. What Jonathan Tuckey designed for their own office and Eagles of Architecture sketched for Morsel City Hall gave me some plausible images of what my walls could be. They are just a **framework** with different proportions of integrated work surfaces, openings, and shelvings. This is feasible because the whole building is now ruled by the Stylen grid of 7400, which is further divided into 2400, and can be divided into convenient furniture grid of 600.



Throughout the week I have been modelling the interior spaces and the main structure in SketchUp, to be able to really walk through and feel the spaces.

I pulled a **horizontal grid** on the facade of the tower, with window openings on the street side, where reading rooms are suppose to be. I find that the horizontal grid works better with the facade rhythms of the rest of the site. It gives a stacked, solid feeling which correspond to an archive. It is also just easier to fit in windows that are suitable for seated height – which I intended to have for the reading spaces. However, the concept of the depot as a cabinet, calls for a more vertical division. It would make the building few lighter. It is now a stack of drawers instead of a cabinet, which, could also make sense for an archive.

The facades of the wings around are bluntly extended from the grid on the floor plan. The old grid in the floor plan and the new entrance volume I pulled up is **not compatible** yet. The division in the front facade doesn't make sense. The 1200 distance from the Stynen facade, which is defined by the necessary dimension of a shaft and the distance kept between the foundations, does not work in the facade. A tense moment arises between the new and the old, as if it's a thick layer of glue.

I could see the potential of the entrance courtyard as a **formal sculpture garden**, where you would keep a distance from the lawn and the iconic facade. But I'm in doubt with the threshold to either side. Will there be a door to deSingel? Will there be another reception desk for the VAI right after the ramp?

The interface between the Stynen corridor and the depot box is finally visualized. The existing windows would be kept. People would see a **gridded box** behind, constructed by steel stud and exposed insulation infills. This box allows people to peak into. The box can be perceived in its height when one lean against the existing facade, as the shaft continues in height.

On the other side, the street side, the **reading niches** become the transition between the public space and the archive. The actual wall of the depot would also be gridded, with partially openable glass vitrines and partially cabinets with models behind.

I realized that these features I'm doing are **not spatial**. The double wall of the archive is hardly visible from the corner, where the most people approach from. I keep deconstructing the spaces into walls, ignoring the corners and the spaces they contain.

It was announced that the Pritzker prize winner of 2025 is the Chinese architect **Liu Jiakun**. I knew him but haven't really looked into the person, into his projects and why he made them. The more I learn about the his personality and his modest design philosophies, the more I liked him.

Here are some of his quotes from an interview (translated):

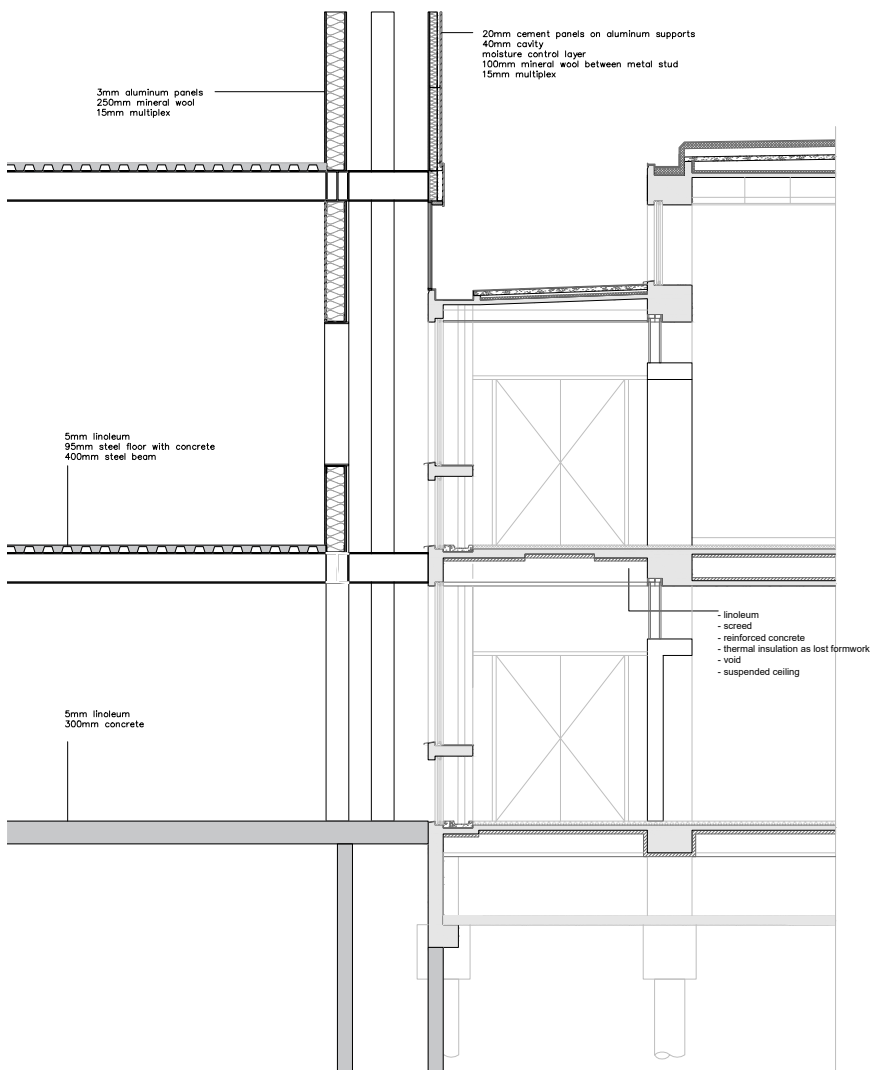
"When things are unclear, and your energy is sufficient, that's often when the real opportunities arise – you end up making decisions in the midst of chaos."

"Sometimes, overthinking leads you beyond what can be expressed, into what becomes incomprehensible. But other times, precisely because you overthink, you arrive at a certain point of insight."

"Architecture seems like a step-by-step, cumulative process – but at critical moments, what's really needed is a kind of primal force. You just feel that it's right, or maybe you constantly feel it doesn't make sense, keep arguing with yourself – yet it still insists on going that way."

"My language forms slowly, but it certainly takes shape."

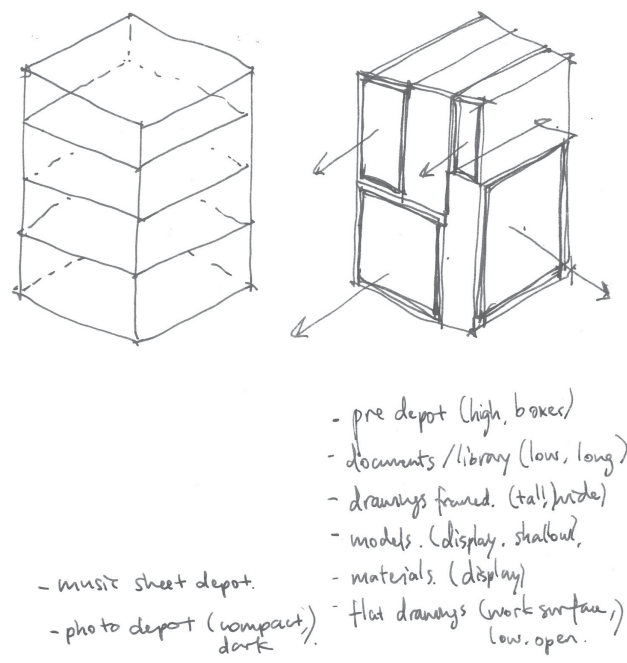
"The unspeakable is simply another kind of language."



The steel structure lands 1200mm from the existing structure and hovers over it. The gap is made watertight with a stripe of glass. The depot box would have a double facade all around. The inner layer has the most insulation, with exposed insulation where possible, and panelled finished on the depot side for dust-free. The outer facade has a thin layer of insulation and is cladded with either fibre cement panels or metal cladding. I consulted if the floors of the archive can be fully made out of steel or other assembled elements, as it is a shame if only the floor has a bit of cement while other parts of the building are fully assembled products. The options are:

- steel grates on joists covered with glass
- prefab steel boxes filled with concrete
- anhydrite panels on steel deck
- stainless steel chequered plate on steel deck
- wooden underlayment + poured floor

composition of the depot

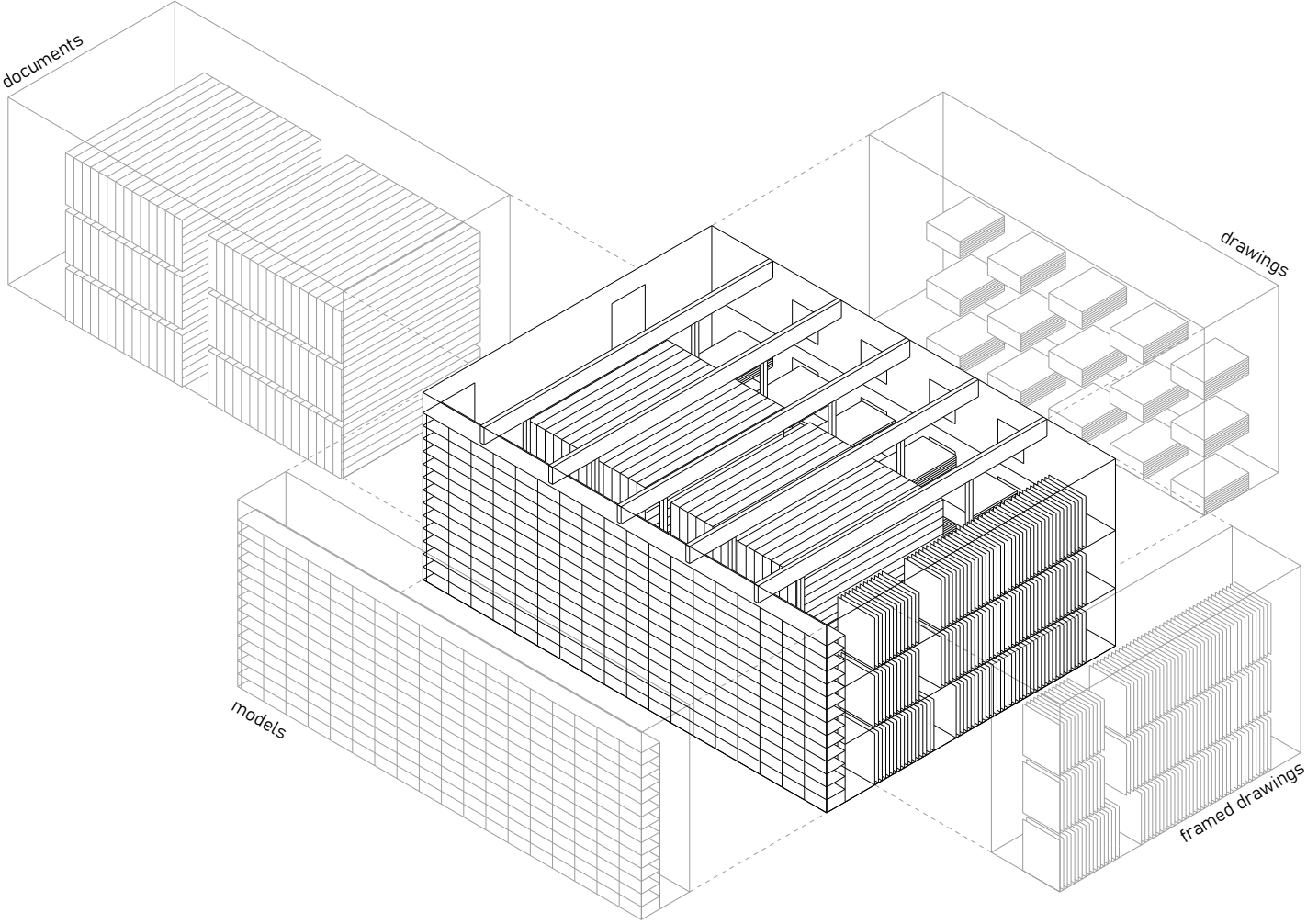


Why is my depot box still a **stacked tower**? I was trying to establish variable experiences on each side of the depot, but in fact, the public and the staffs are all looking into the same depot space that is not even that big. Why would people then walk around this space? It doesn't really make sense. Can I imagine the depot box as a **3D cabinet** volume, where different materials are visible/accessible from each side? This could then naturally create incentive for people to loop around the depot, without designing complicated walls on each side.

I picked up the image of installation artwork Recapturing a Contemporary Past by Michael Johansson's, and thought about the idea of grouping different **medium** together in my P1 design. Imagining the depot volume as such a cluster of many compartments of different sizes could actually make sense. Different medium have different physical qualities and require different climate conditions as well. As much as it could be beautiful as a museum object, it remains rather impractical for staff access to the compartments.

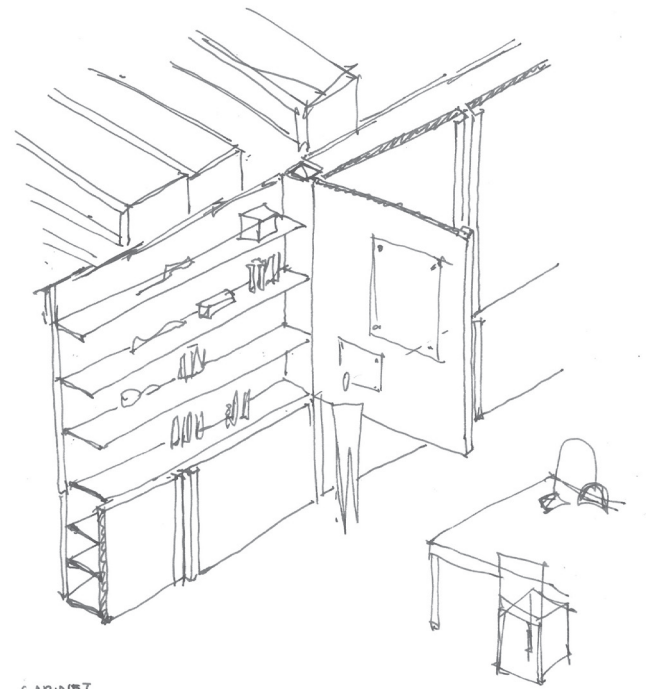
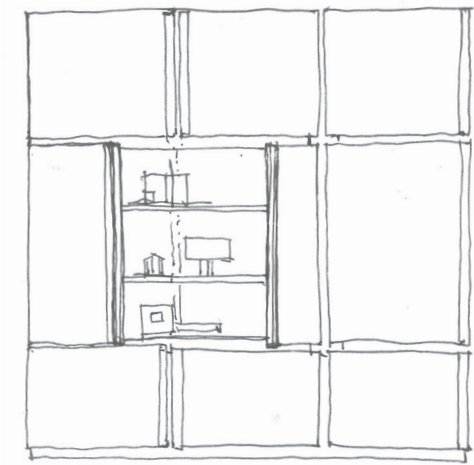
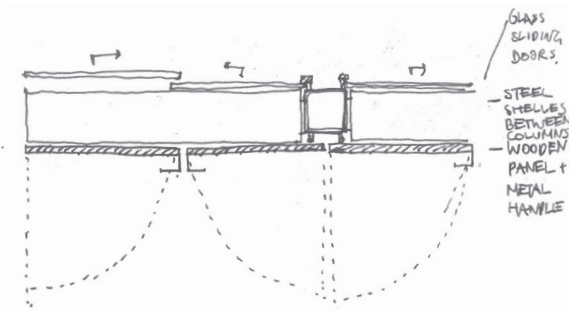
It is still possible to leave the upper floors of the depot as standard depot and create some spatial experience in the bottom two floors that actually come into contact with people. The height is actually enough for 3 depot floors. Keeping in mind the functions that the depot borders on each side, I drew a version of the **view depot** with its four sides being:

- **models** on racks - library - street
- **framed drawings** on rails - exhibition - entrance
- **drawings** in work tables - staff work space - courtyard
- **documents** in compactors - staff access core - small courtyard



functional cabinet walls

I could imagine these 1200mm wide wooden panels with metal handle details as the boundary between depot and public spaces. The dilemma is, I like the aesthetics of large areas of closed cabinets, but what is the point of keeping the cabinets closed from the public?



(CABINET PANEL) CAN BE LEFT OPEN WHEN THERE ARE LARGE FLUX OF VISITORS. IT CAN BE A CURATED EXHIBITION, BUT ALSO A PRE-DEPOT - A RANDOM COLLECTION YET TO BE SORTED.

calculating depot area

depot 2500 + 60 pre-depot + 360 music depot.
400 m² / floor. = 3000 m²

6	3	4		
5	3,5	5	3	3
4	3,5	4	4,7 (x2)	4 4
3	3,5	3	4,7 (x2)	3 6,5 (x2)
2	3,5	2	4,7 (x2)	2 6,5 (x2)
1	4,8	1	4,8	1 4,8
0	3,6	0	3,6	0 3,6

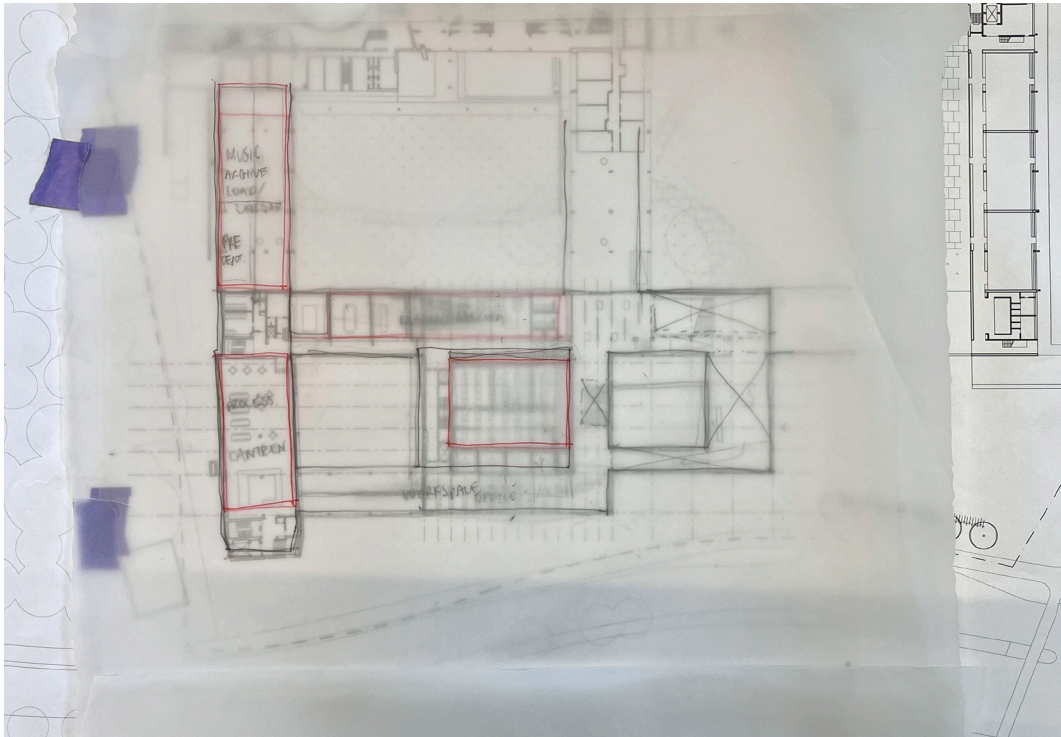
400 x 7 = 2800 m ²	x 9 = 3600 m ²	x 7 = 2800 m ²
340 x 7 = 2400 m ²	x 9 = 3060 m ²	x 7 = 2400 m ²

For P2, a hasty decision was made to include a basement to compensate for the insufficient depot area. It always felt like an enclave to my design. I don't want to design it since there are already too many focus points in my project. Now that I started to draw 1:20 facade fragment, I need a definite answer on whether there will be a basement or not. So I recalculated the depot areas in my current plan. It is still flexible whether the upper floors will be double deckers or standard floors. I am also open to keeping a reading area on each floor or including it in the depot. Anyways, the depot area in the tower is just about sufficient. It is safe to say I **don't need a basement**.

I looked into the possibility of putting the pre-depot and the music depot in the 2nd floor of the Meyer wing, where the auditorium is. Logistically, and in terms of overall functional clarity, this solution would work. I do have questions for what needs to be done building-technology-wise. Do I wrap the whole facade from the inside with insulation? Do I need to block all the windows?

These questions reminded me of an unresolved issue with the Stynen wing. How do I treat the existing building? How intensive will the intervention be? How **future-proof** should the spaces be after the renovation?

the thermal envelopes



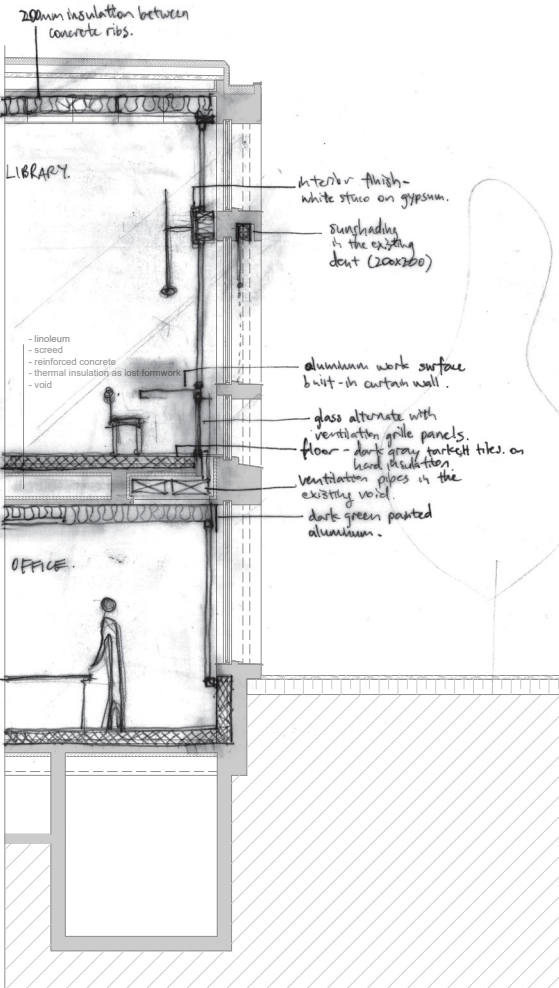
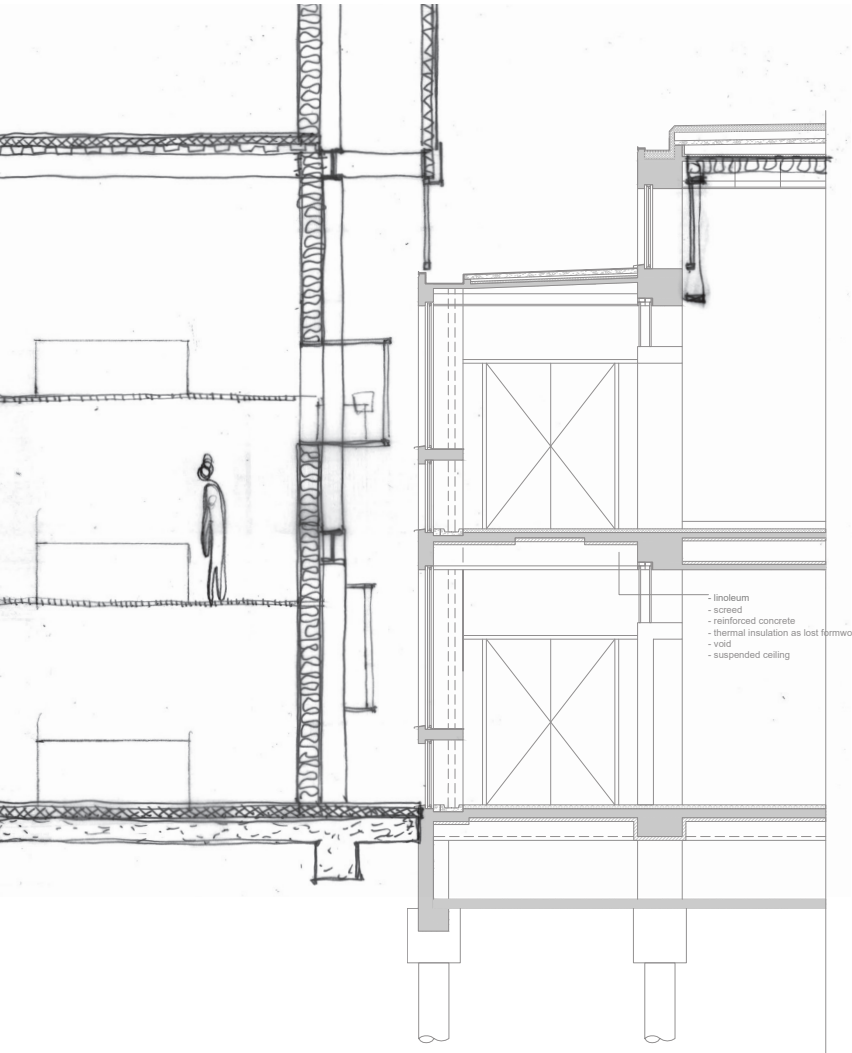
I defined the spaces that have requirements for a comfortable indoor climate. The entrance area, the corridors and in-between spaces are excluded out of the thermal envelopes. It's not unimaginable that I only design these interventions and leave the functions of each space to be defined later.

These past few months, I've found myself saying "**I don't know**" more and more often. But maybe it's not that I truly don't know anything. I'm always faced with two options: one forces me to confront my own hypocrisy and emptiness, and the other challenges my laziness and incompetence. I don't dare choose either. Instead, I just keep holding on to these vague, half-formed principles—using them to cover up my ignorance. I like to think I'm brave and honest with the world, unbothered by exposing myself. But the truth might be, I'm not even brave or honest to **myself**.

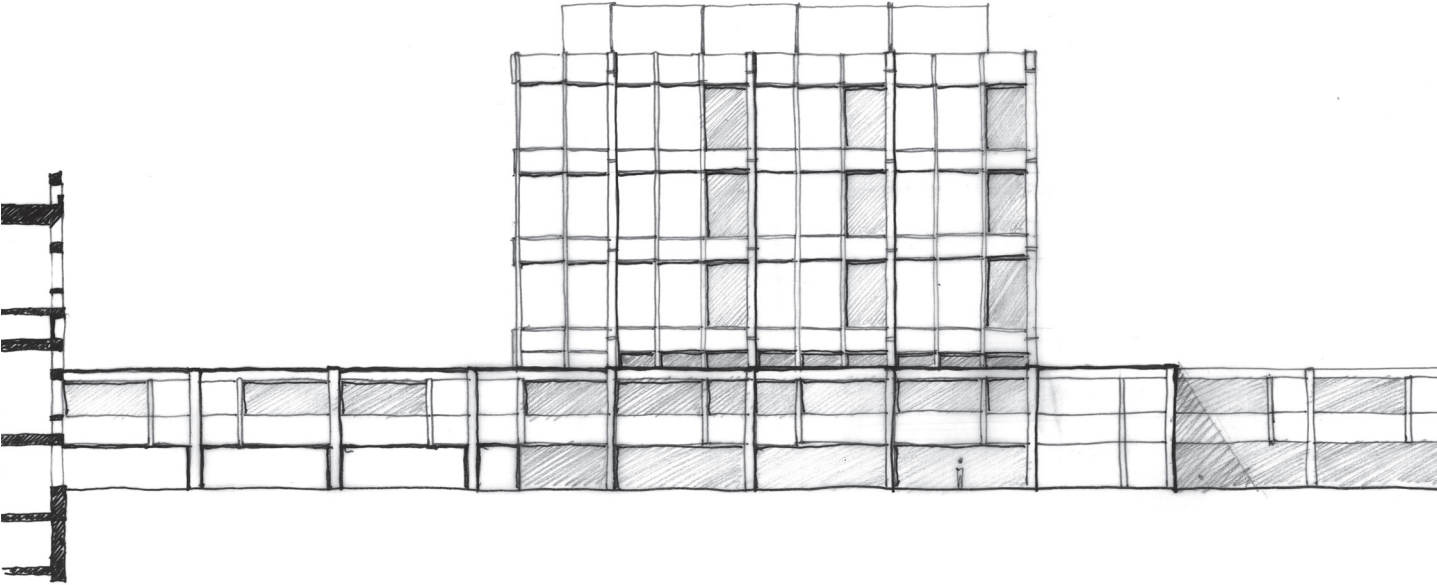
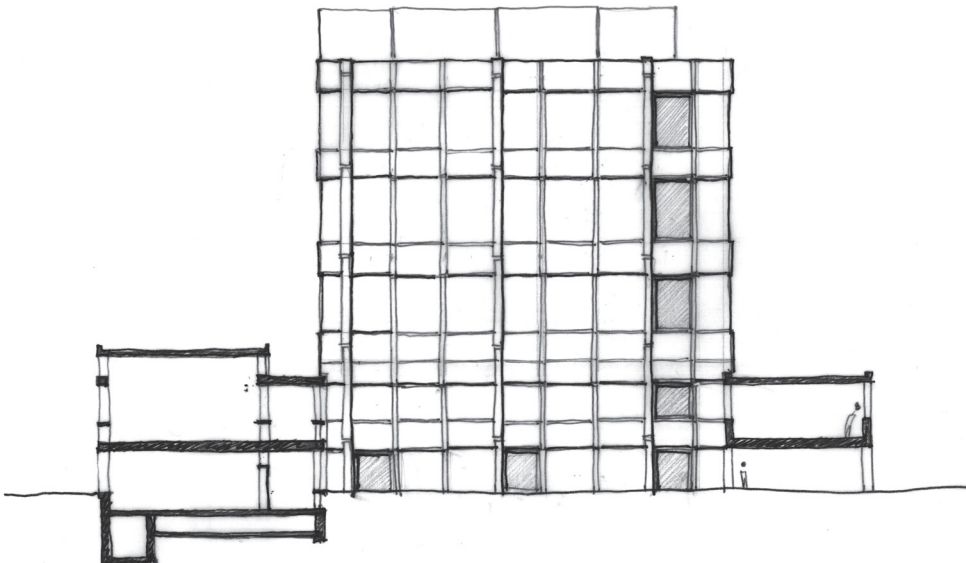
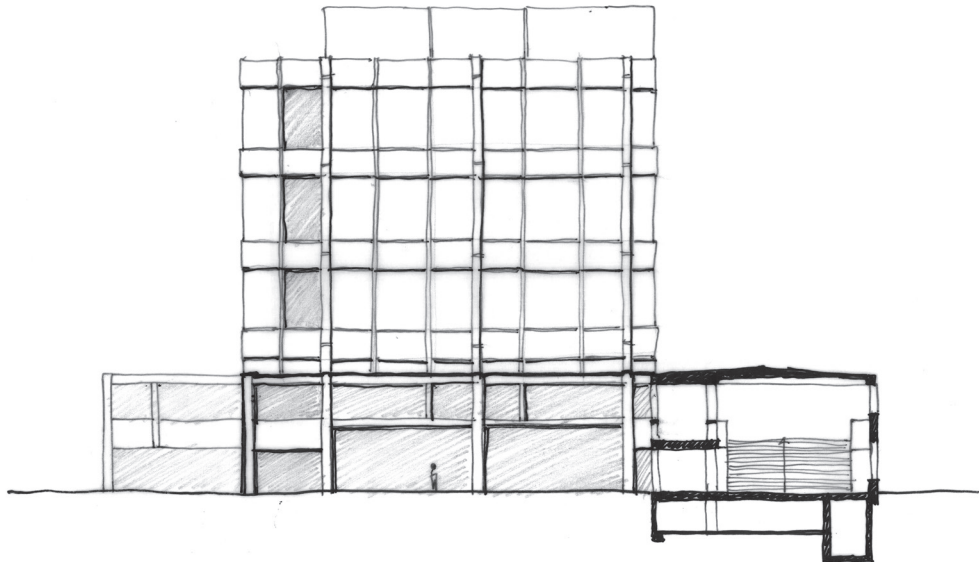
facade fragments

To see how far I can renovate the Stylen wing on a building technology level, I sketched on the **south facade** that faces the courtyard. Maybe decisions here will tell me more about what I should do on the other side of the space.

One strategy would be creating another facade behind the existing one, to avoid any thermal bridge in the existing concrete facade. While making these sketches, I become convinced by the suggestion of making this space into a library.

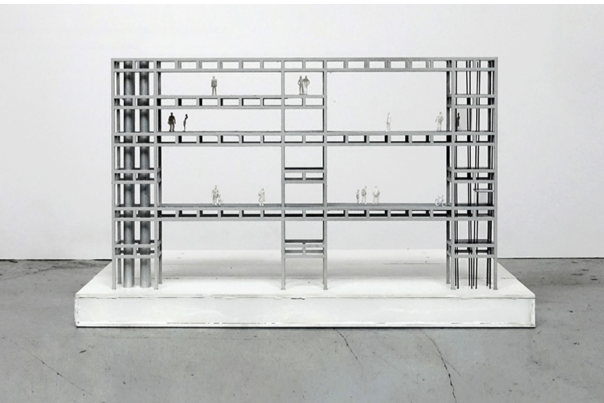
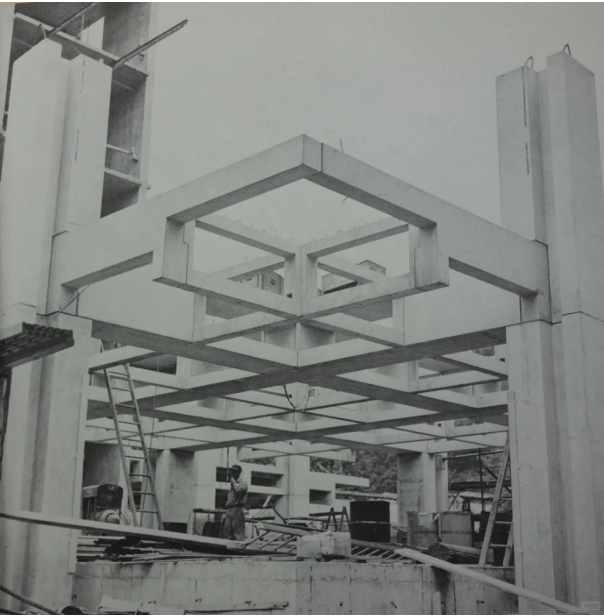
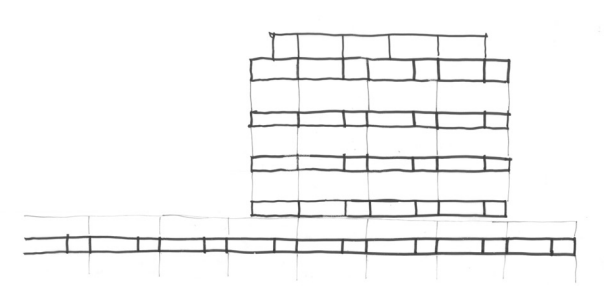


a version of the facades



structural layer in the facade

The "neck" where the upper volume lands on the plinth has been a headache on facade drawings. I have always left it as a **stripe of glass**, where the facade grid sometimes lands and sometimes floats from the base. Since the structure that spans over the large view depot finds itself in that zone on the facade, I wonder if it can be expressed as structure in the facade. Looking at Louis Kahn's Richard Medical Research Libraries and Salk Institute, and Muoto's proposal for a Fun Car Palace, I could imagine this structural/technical layer could become a repeated motif in the facade. It could take the form of a **vierendeel truss**. But that wouldn't make much sense for a steel structure. Is this a reason to make the building in concrete? It's not that simple, as bearing structure cannot be directly exposed on the facades.



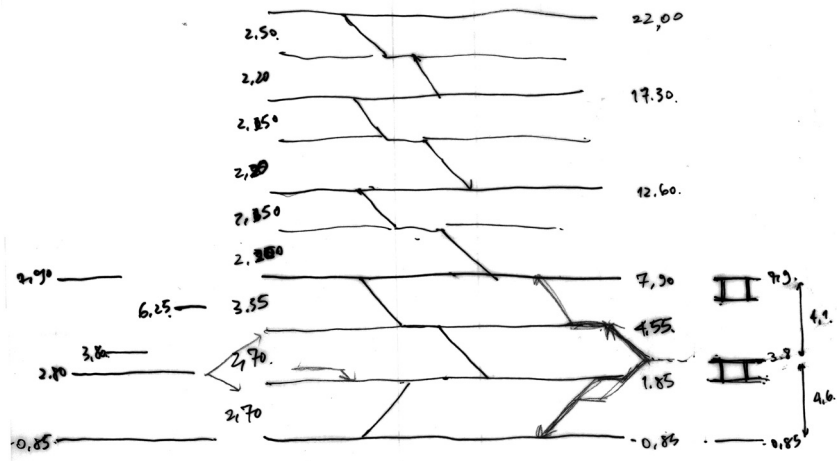
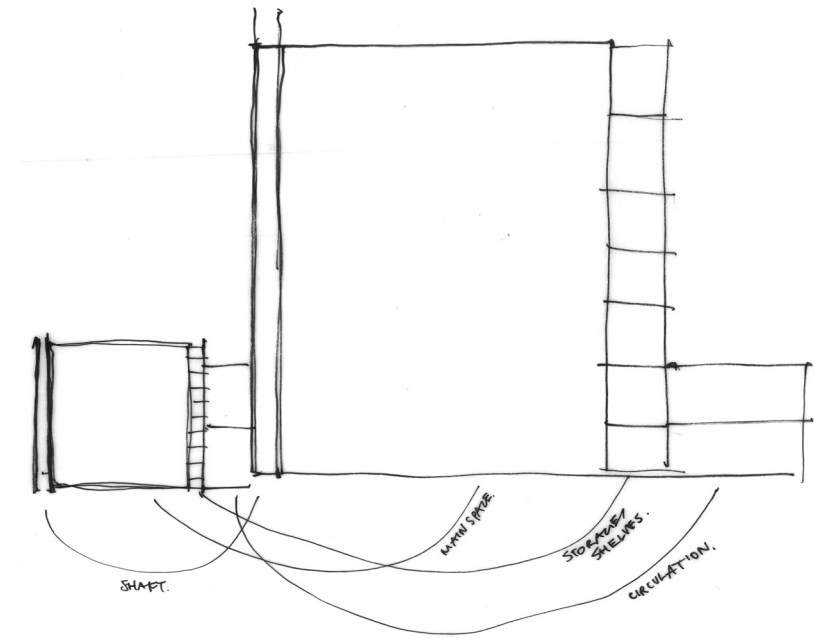
thoughts on Neutelings Riedijk



I always find the buildings of Neutelings Riedijk interesting. I don't find them beautiful, as they are often too heavy and rich. But I appreciate how their buildings function like simple diagrams, illustrating a somewhat creative relationship between the various users or functions. When I stepped into the building, I immediately understood what they were trying to do. I think that same **clarity and directness** can be found in my own design approach. It's not the most intelligent or poetic way to design, but it does satisfy a certain part of my brain. They have designed many successful civic buildings including libraries, which could be inspiring for this project.

sectional relation

When drawing the facades and the facade fragments, I realized there could be a similarity between the section of the existing wing and the new building. The new building is simply an enlarged version of the Stynen wing. It has a double facade for climate control, then the functional space, then a cabinet wall followed by a lower space for circulation. This clarification gives me peace in mind.

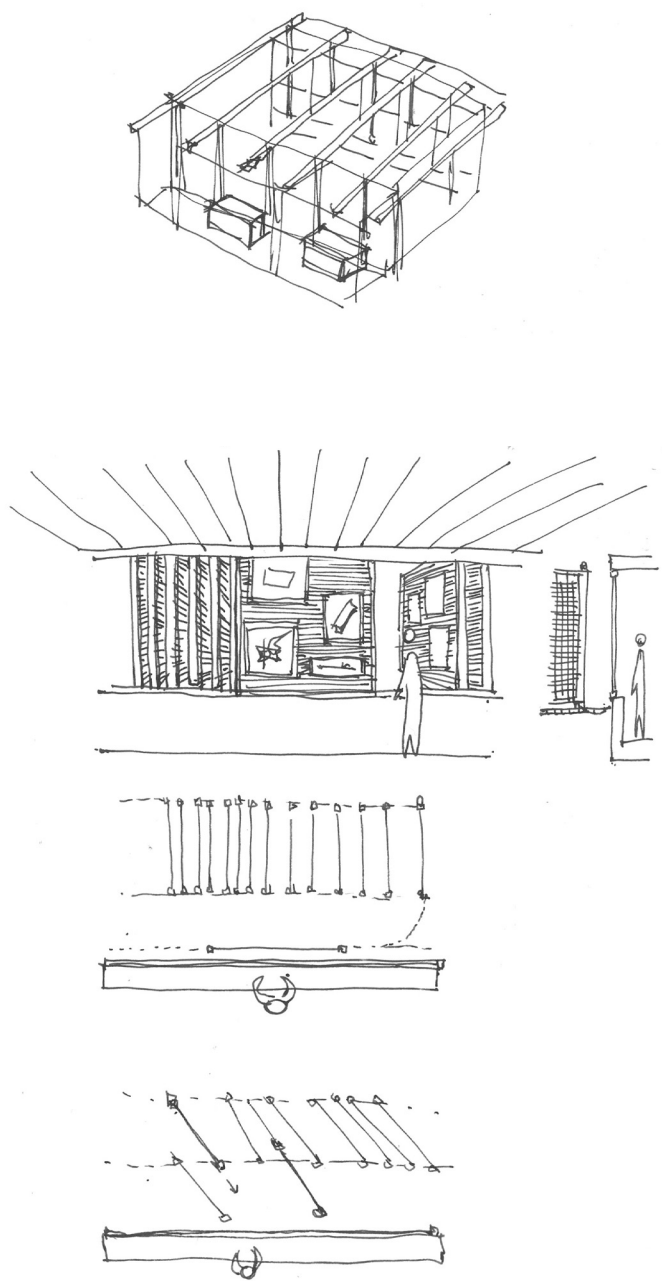


The older I get, the more I realize that my inability in decision making might come from a **lack of political stance**. I don't have a clear idea of how the world should be, nor do I feel a strong urge to change what's around me. This makes it hard for me to commit to a concept in design, and it leaves me without conviction in life. Maybe deep down, I don't truly believe that architecture can change the environment or people. Or more precisely, I don't believe that my ideas and decisions can impact the real world. It's like there's a missing link somewhere – I always feel like a separate, detached individual, observing the world from an objective distance. My choices end up feeling virtual, based on preference rather than belief. They are optimized decisions within a given framework, a temporary alignment with one stance. It is more so in academic settings, that I complain about the exercises being too hypothetical. What I actually miss is a boss from either the architect's side or the client's side that state strongly what they want.

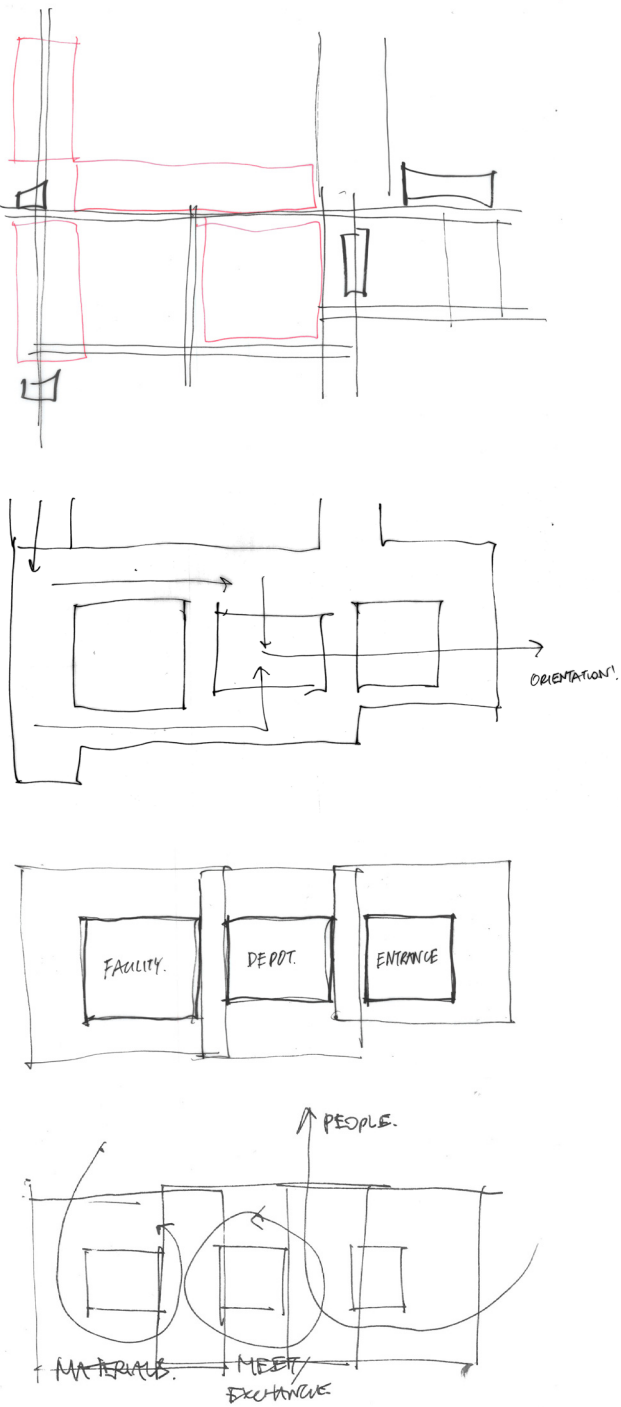
view of the depot

Continuing on the idea of having a model display wall towards the Stynen facade and reading/studying rooms towards the street side, the image of the depot becomes clearer to me. By placing the main steel beams north-south, the depot becomes more open in the east-west direction which is what I always wanted. This sketch suggests that the depot opens itself grandly to the entrance. Although it sounds nice conceptually, I never intended to overwhelm the visitors with a large open view of rows of compactors. What would the visitors actually see then?

I sketched a version where the depot displays the framed drawings on its most public side. It is still a compact storage system on rails, but the visitors could control the panels by pushing buttons behind the glass. I like the idea that the public has "thumbnail" views of the contents in storage, and they can choose to "zoom in" on anything that catches their interest. Zooming in doesn't necessarily mean interacting directly with the storage system though, it could simply involve walking closer or viewing the display from a different angle.



abstracting the plan



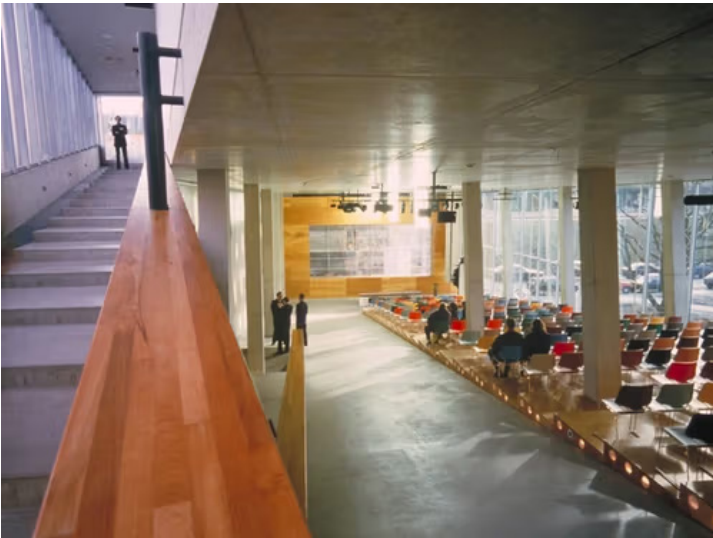
The project becomes a series of 3 rooms and 3 loops. The rear courtyard feeds materials to the central depot, while the front courtyard welcome people to the heart of the building.

covering the entrance hall

Leaving the first courtyard outdoor will make the spaces around merely circulation. That makes the loop unconvincing. Therefore, I tried the option of covering it into a **flexible exhibiton space**. I can imagine it as the lecture room at the entrance of the State Archives in Ghent by Robbrecht & Daem. There, a wheelchair accessible ramp wraps around the translucent lecture hall, that serves more as a spatial gap with the street than the direct access route. It also reminded me of the Kunsthal by Koolhaas. The lecture hall is a part of the circulation, which was experienced as a colorful intermezzo in between chapters of exhibitions.

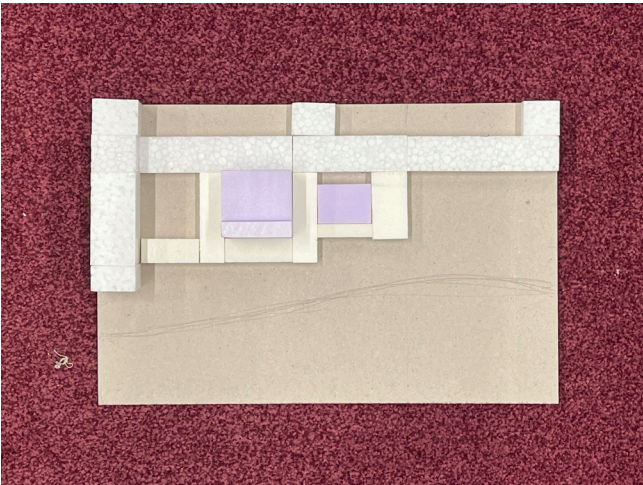
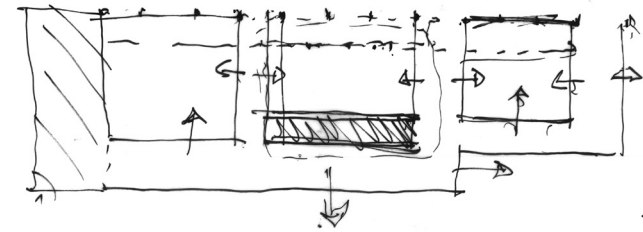
I realized that what I'm doing with the first courtyard is the same as what I did with the entrance before I extended it. It is about entering a wide but shallow space, seeing a full height wall with a reception desk, and be directed either left or right. It must be influenced by the Yoshio Taniguchi reference that's stuck in my mind. Is the current version a more advanced one?

What defines the **boundary** between the loop around and the space itself? Is it the height difference in the floor and railings? Is it curtain between columns? Is it a glass curtain wall?



tutorial feedback

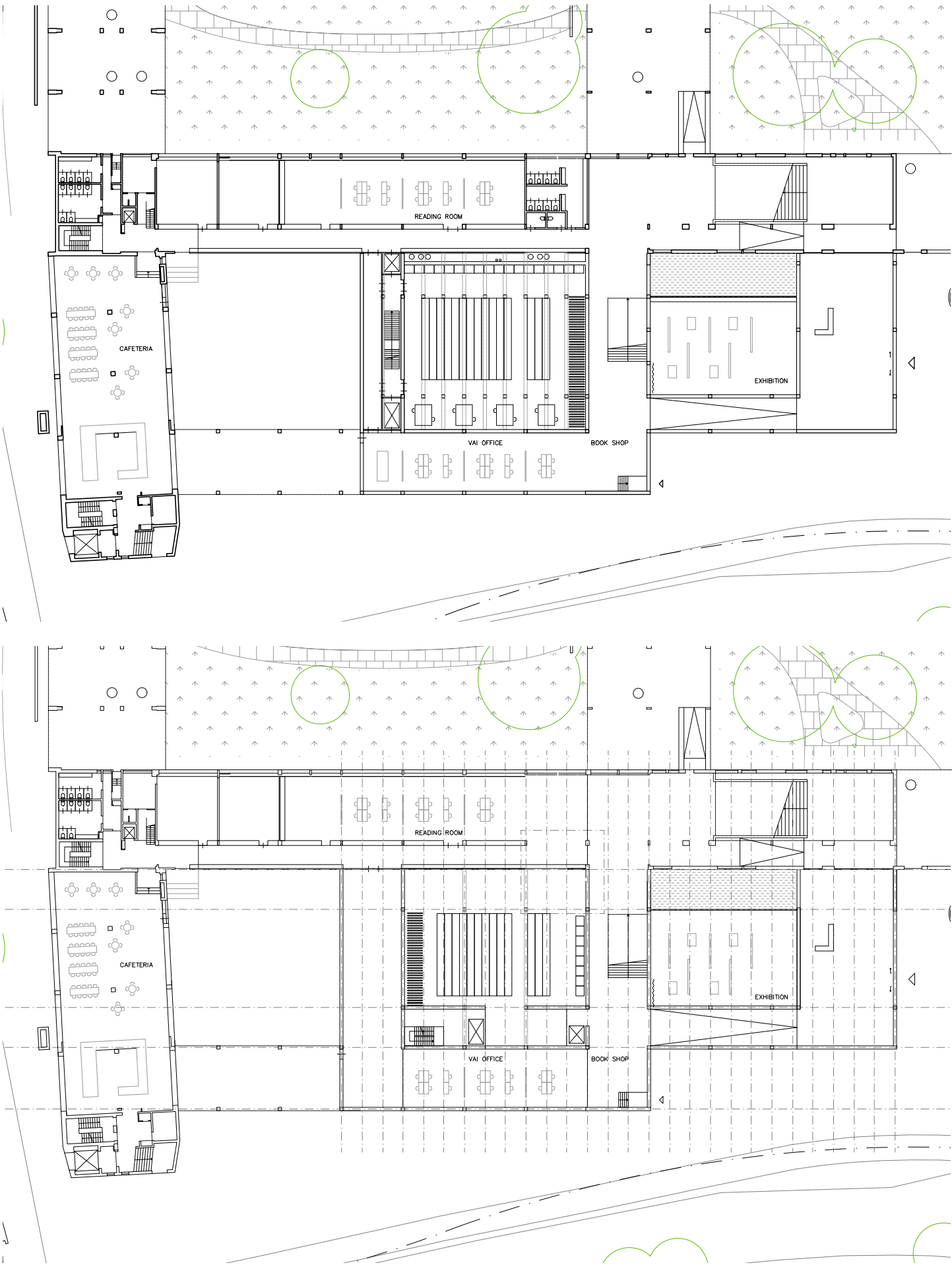
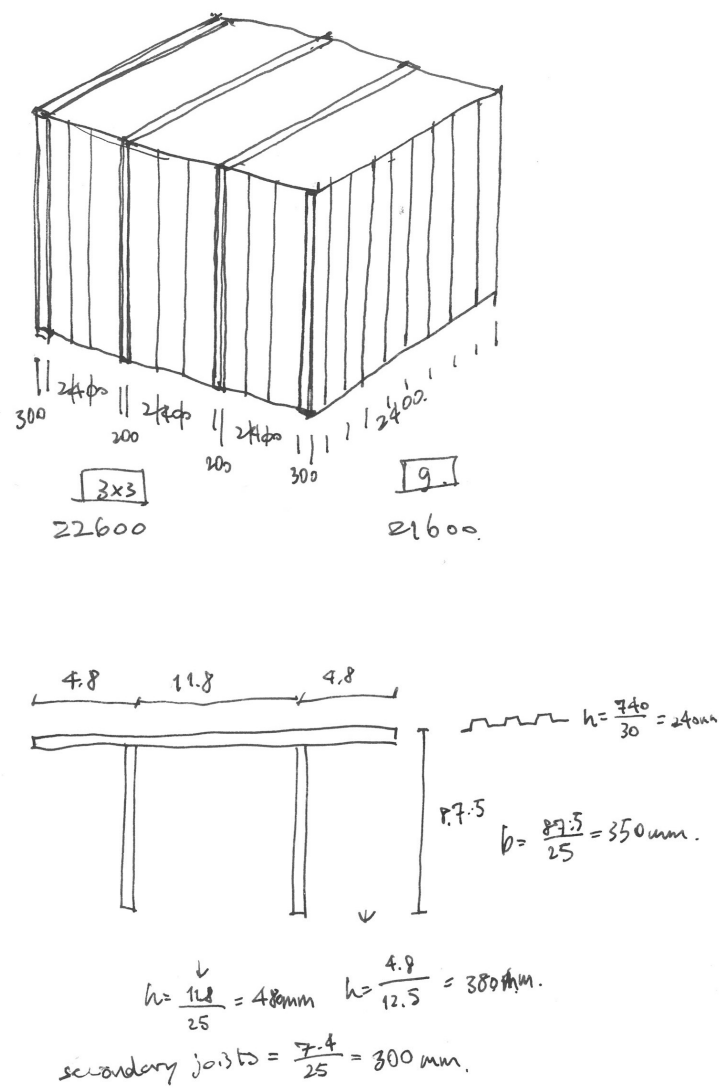
- Daniel:
- the experience of the **Stynen facade** should be central, why would you make a double wall against it?
 - > open it up, so that the Stynen facade will be an 1:1 exhibited piece in the depot
 - don't build an insulation box in the Stynen wing, double facade will only create more problems.
Replacing the window will be sufficient
 - > if you want to insulate the thin strip of concrete in the facade, combine it with a light shelf
 - > Neue Museum by David Chipperfield
 - don't let secondary things (regulations/sustainability) stop you
 - your project is about 3 objects, the connections around and the new urban frontline organized by a **tartan grid**, with a higher volume sitting on one of them
 - > the core should be moved to the bottom side of the depot
 - it's perfectly fine to design from having a convincing volume then squeezing the brief in
 - > if you can't make enough m² of depot, **make less!**
Creating a well-designed, meaningful space is a powerful tool for negotiating with the VAI.



dimensions of the box

The previous 4200/4000/4000/4000/1200 **grid** is simplified to 4800/11800/4800. The previous one was a result of saving a suitable dimension for the two sides (reading rooms & shaft) and dividing the middle bays equally. The current one is based on picking out lines from the 2400 base grid and symmetry.

The depot box is **not a perfect square** – it is 3 Stynen bays wide but a little bit shorter in depth, because it has to align to the slightly rotated Meyer wing. This subtle difference between the dimensions of the two sides creates an incentive to treat the two facades differently, as I always wanted the box to face the west instead of being an all-rounded box.

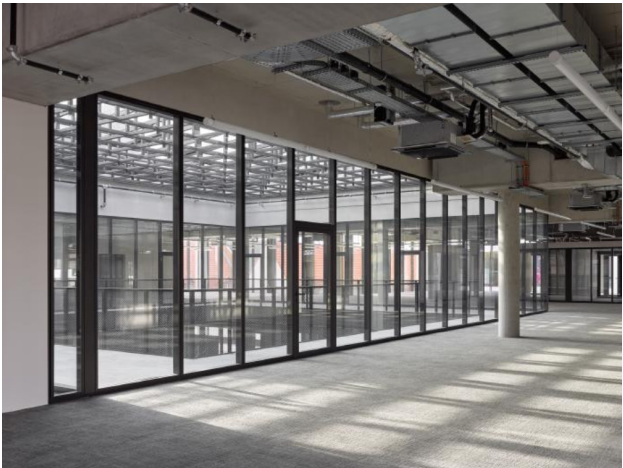


moodboard

Now that a piece of the Stynen facade will be included in the main depot space as a major spatial feature, the interior material palette has to be redefined. I collected photos of the current state of the Stynen wings; the P1 room for Christian Kieckens as a guideline for the public spaces; the P1 room of the CCA as a guideline for the depot space; a reference of Yoshio Taniguchi. Then I added a palette of materials that I have in mind until now.



pairing with the Stynen facade



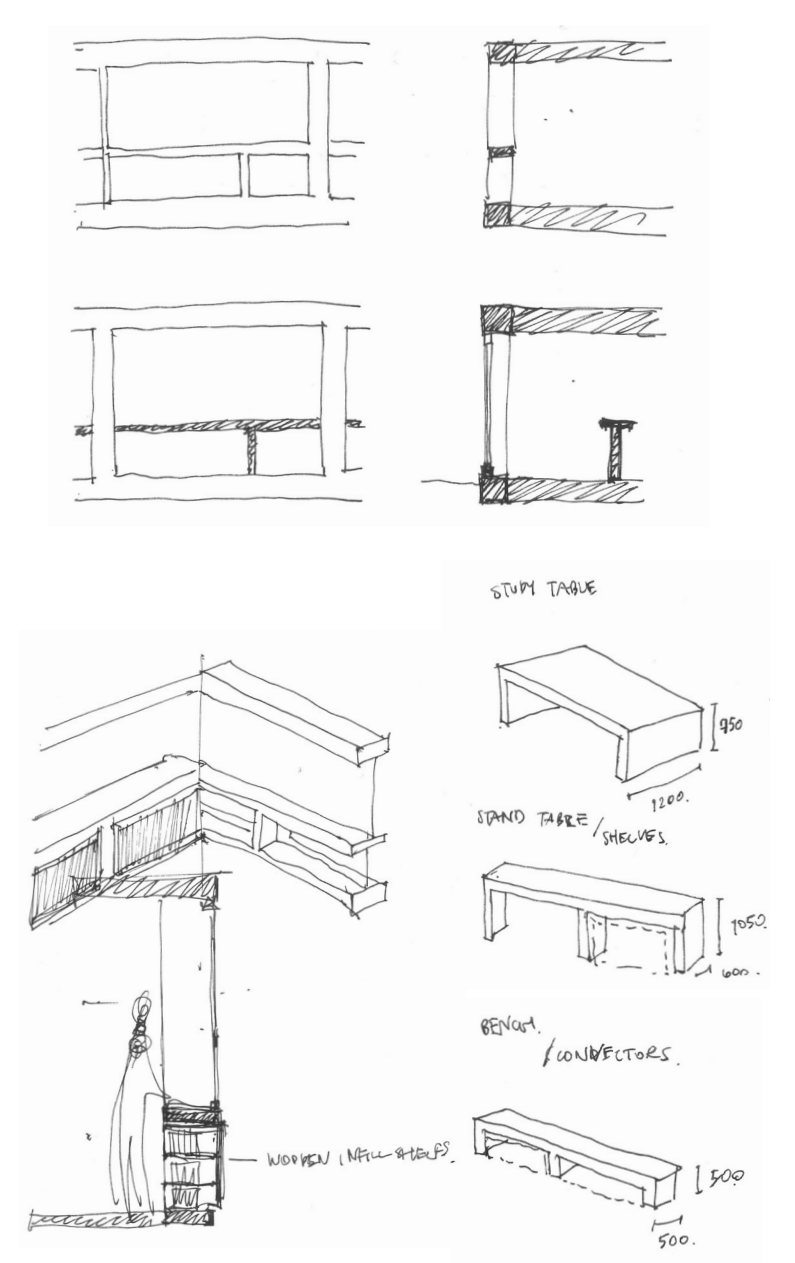
What would go with Stynen's facade? I haven't really seen a reference where a similar white modernist building was attached by an extension of comparable importance. Typical extension strategies nowadays are: when the setting is bland and tolerating, like an industrial shed, you would add **rich and characteristic** materials to it, such as wood and bricks; when the heritage is rich in itself, you would add an **abstracted** version of some kind that doesn't overshadow it. However, in the case of deSingle, the existing building is already abstracted, yet it has a strong character. Neither strategy is directly applicable.

I have collected so many facade and interior photos for references so far, but I have never implanted them in the site. By simply putting them next to the photo of the Stynen facade, I could tell a bit more what is conceivable for this place and what not.

Since the beginning, I have imagined the archive to be a more or less massive appearance, with continuous wall surfaces punctured by holes. I thought, the Stynen facade is already so open, why should I attach something equally open to it? However, from facade studies, interior spatial experience, and structural point of view, this archive is becoming more of a **grid and infill** structure. Some sort of grid wall/facade has to meet the Stynen facade at multiple moments. What would this be? Slim or robust? Dark or light colored? Metal, stony or wooden? Flat or layered?



decomposing Stynen's facade



Having to build new walls perpendicularly to the Stynen facade and including them in the same double-high space, puts the **confrontation** between the new and old into sharper focus. The grid in the facade is so commanding that it's hard to design a new wall without responding to it. But I also don't want to take it over literally. In previous versions (P2) I've tried to take over the grid and fill some windows in with solid walls every bay, but that created too much unease.

I came across a film about the transformation of the Nimeto school by Maarten van Kesteren, in which a new wooden structure was placed behind the existing concrete facade, offset by half a bay. The shifting of the camera revealed that the two layers formed a **dynamic composition**—at times aligned, and at other moments offset by one-third. The latter looked a lot like the Stynen facade. So I realized that the Stynen facade can be decomposed into a basic primary facade grid and a changing secondary grid of furniture. It can be tables, low shelves, benches or convector boxes.

getting an impression of the building



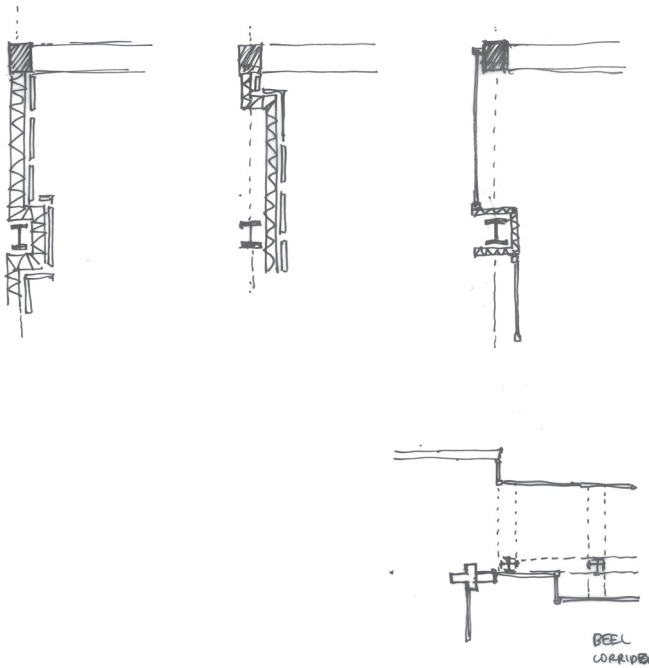
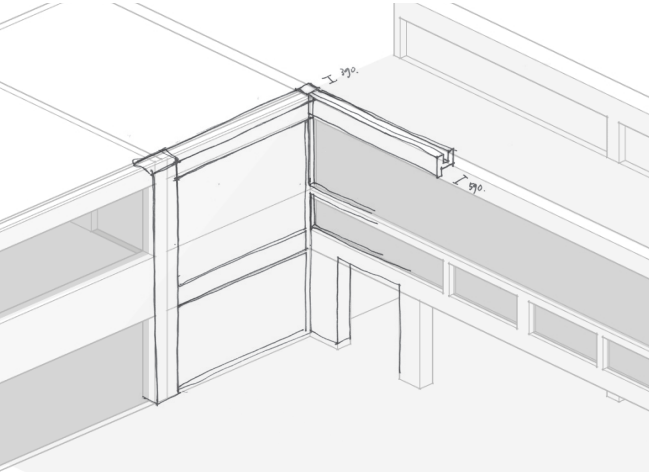
As P3 approaches, I am eager to see a materialized version of the building that gives me the confirmation and motivation to go further with it. The quickest way is to make **collages**.

The first try was looking for the possibility of using a cute color like pale pink or pastel green. It's not bad. The sturdy plinth and robust top made in prefab concrete elements work as well.

I tried another version of sand-colored natural stone cladding, where I made the windows as dark as it is in the existing building. Such contrast between a light facade and dark windows is not favorable to me.

So I tried to darken the facade material to bring it closer to the windows, that it will be perceived as one entity. A mid-gray depot will counterbalance the Beel tower better.

solving structure & skin

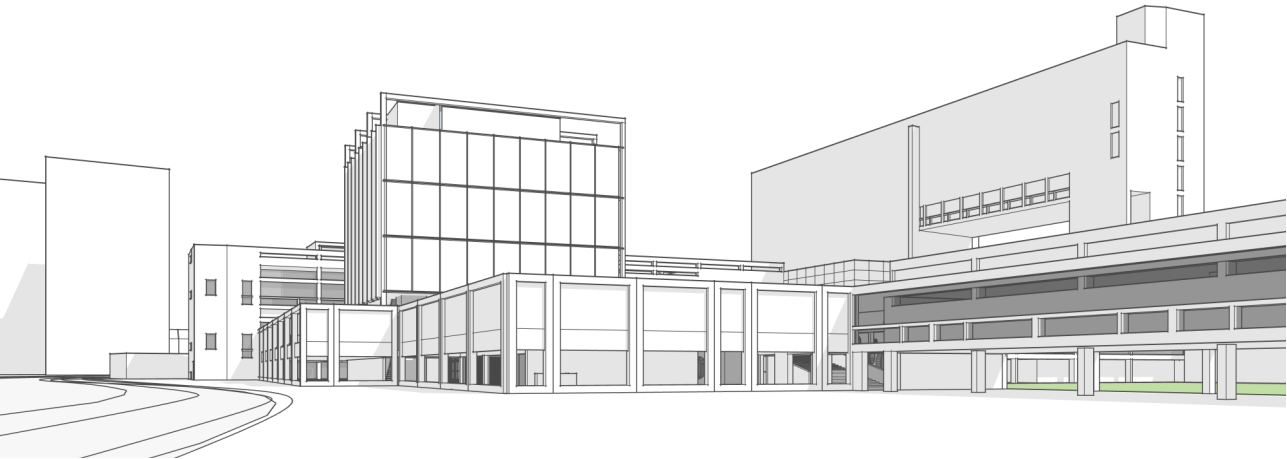


When designing on a larger scale, I always place the columns at the centre of the grid. Now that I have to look at how facade works with the structure and how it meets the existing facade, problems emerge. The existing pillar in the facade, where my new facade is attached to, is only 390mm wide. It is not thick enough for the whole package of the facade to bump into. I want to avoid bumping into glass. The possibilities are:

- align the facade to the grid, and **wraps around** columns locally, forming vertical accents
- wrap the facade around the outside of the structural line, and **crank** it in to meet the pillar in the facade. This suggests an awkward relation with the existing though
- place the crank at the last column, and attach the facade to the inside of the existing pillar. This is inspired by how **Beel's corridor** addition meets the existing facade
- place the column on the **inside of the grid**, and accept that the distances between the columns are not equally distributed

the new facade

The more I play with different versions of the facade, the more I see that it's not public enough. The **scale** of the Stynen facade was for a school building, which was partly why deSingel didn't look inviting as a cultural complex. The new addition that makes a new entrance to the entire complex, has to at least get a bigger scale in the facade. Therefore, I tried versions of the facade where the **verticals** are stressed, while some horizontal lines are continued on the layer behind. I am quite happy with the last version. The size of the panels in the plinth are coherent to the panels on the tower, which help bringing them together.



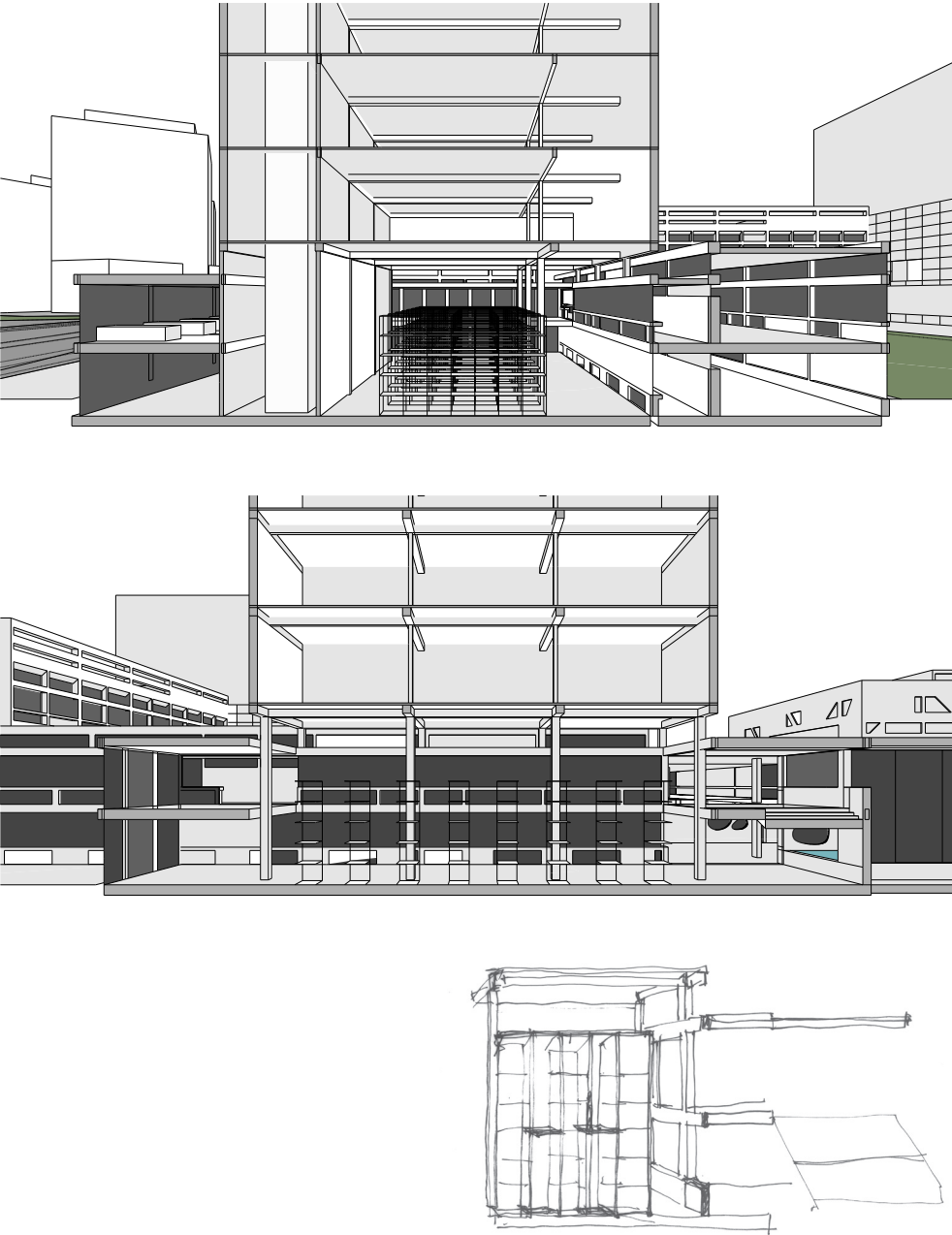
I seem to be highly **critical** by nature. I know that I don't want this or that. Any idea that seems to be causing trouble, I dismiss immediately. Anything that leans too much toward a certain style or falls into a recognizable pattern, I instinctively try to avoid. I'm clear about what I reject, but I can't quite articulate what I desire.

It's like I'm in a space lined entirely with mirrors—I bounce back as soon as I reach out. And because I use my clever mind to predict that all walls are like the one I just touched, probably none of them will lead anywhere. So I just end up standing still in the middle, not moving at all.

What I'm supposed to be working on is the floor plan, but my mind keeps jumping ahead, imagining the façade. I'm **impatient** to know if the final product will look good, if it will be successful, before I'm even willing to keep going. But without going through the process of trial and error, how could I possibly get it right all at once? I'm not a genius.

I need to find fulfillment in this “main quest” of architectural design. Only then do I feel relaxed, confident, and at ease in life. I'm someone who can push myself to the limit when it comes to what I care about. But unfortunately, right now, I've lost the motivation to do **architecture**. I keep wanting to escape it. And because the main quest has stalled, every other aspect of my life has started to feel numb.

There's still pleasure here and there—but it doesn't satisfy the core desire: to move forward in architecture. Have I fallen out of love with architecture? But then... why do I still care so much about the work I do?

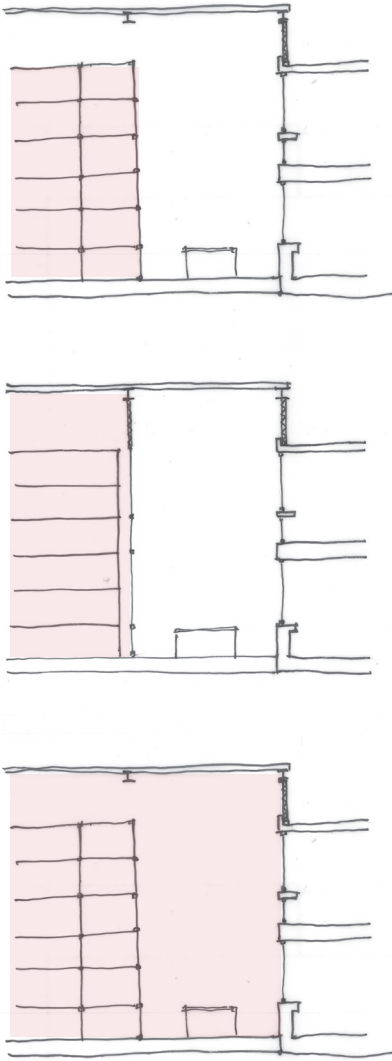


Now I made the view depot into one large space and left the space adjacent to the Stynen facade open. However, I am in a dilemma between **spatial quality** and functionality. I don't want to change the view-depot into a full public plaza that functions as an exhibition space. I want to retain its function as a permanent storage for some materials, such as models. Which means it has to be somewhat **efficient** in space and be **climatized**.

- If I pull the **shelves** all the way to the ceiling of the space, will the space still be perceived as one large space? If I stop the shelves at people's eye levels on the first floor, the space would be really inefficient.
- What do I do with the space next to the facade? Silas gave the suggestion of putting **large tables** there, so the researchers can enjoy the height in space while leaving the facade exposed.
- Do I consider the whole space as climatized, so that the shelves can be open inside? Then I have to pay extra attention to the detail at where the new meets the existing facade. Do I consider the workspace to be semi-climatized, so that I need to divide it from the storage space with a **curtain wall**? Do I not aim to climatize the whole space, and only put glazing on the shelves themselves to protect the models?

Susanne:

- your building can be read as a **3d-grid**, which is generated from the information of the site
 - > play with grid & infill, prefab elements
 - > Louis Kahn & Jean Prouve
- the **verticals** in the facade work
 - > they have a welcoming gesture at the entrance, they can be even deeper, to replace the hanging canopies
 - > the grid on the tower can be flush, it is something else
- wrapping the facade around the column could be a solution, but it will be challenging in the **vertical section** at the roof. Pushing the columns back from the facades would be easier

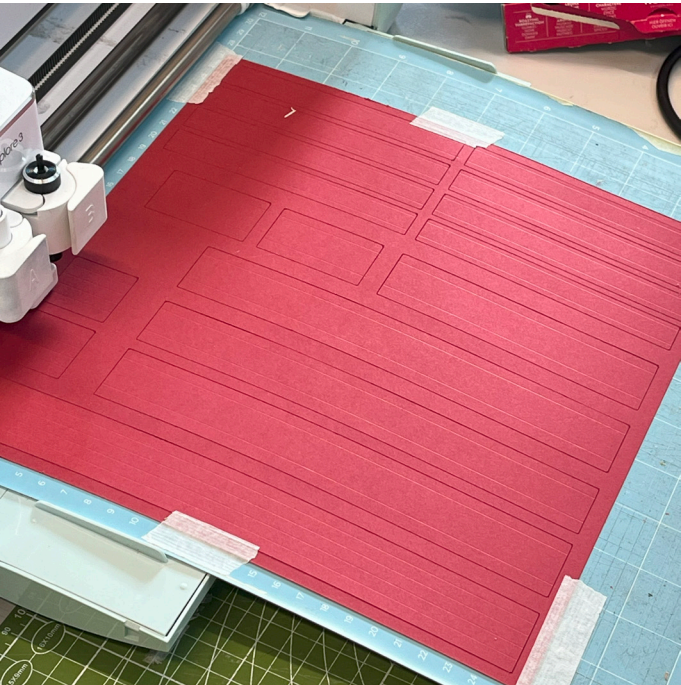


When the **deadline** is far away, I try to enjoy the process of designing. I allow myself to think freely, to chase interesting ideas, to indulge in the fantasy that anything is possible, without pressuring myself to actually solve problems. But when the deadline approaches, I shift into someone who enjoys the act of getting things done, even the torment that comes with it. There's a strange satisfaction in the struggle.

I am reluctant to admit, but the truth might be: I can accept things that are **superficial**, yet I struggle to accept things that are solid but plain. This can explain why I say "I don't have anything" when I have things that I find below the standard, while I can put together a beautiful model in the last moment be content with it.

Every tutorial ends up being somewhat **comforting**. The tutors say "you're fine, you are not behind." Then I chat around with classmates a little, finding out that everyone struggles with their own thing, my mood lifts. But as soon as I get onto a new part of the project, I get stuck again. Back to the routine of going in circles, digging through references.

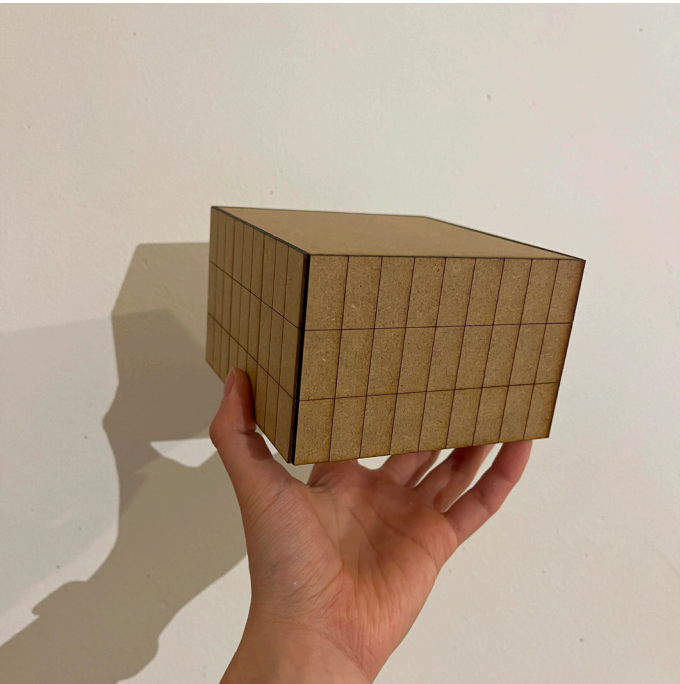
I'm searching for magical **coincidences**, and sometimes even just waiting for them to happen. Which, of course, will not happen.

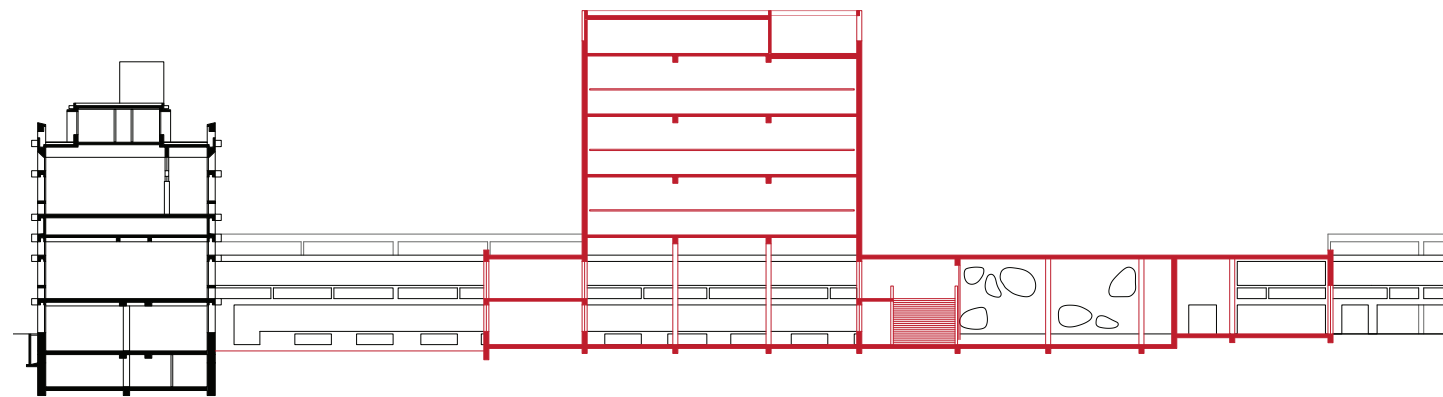
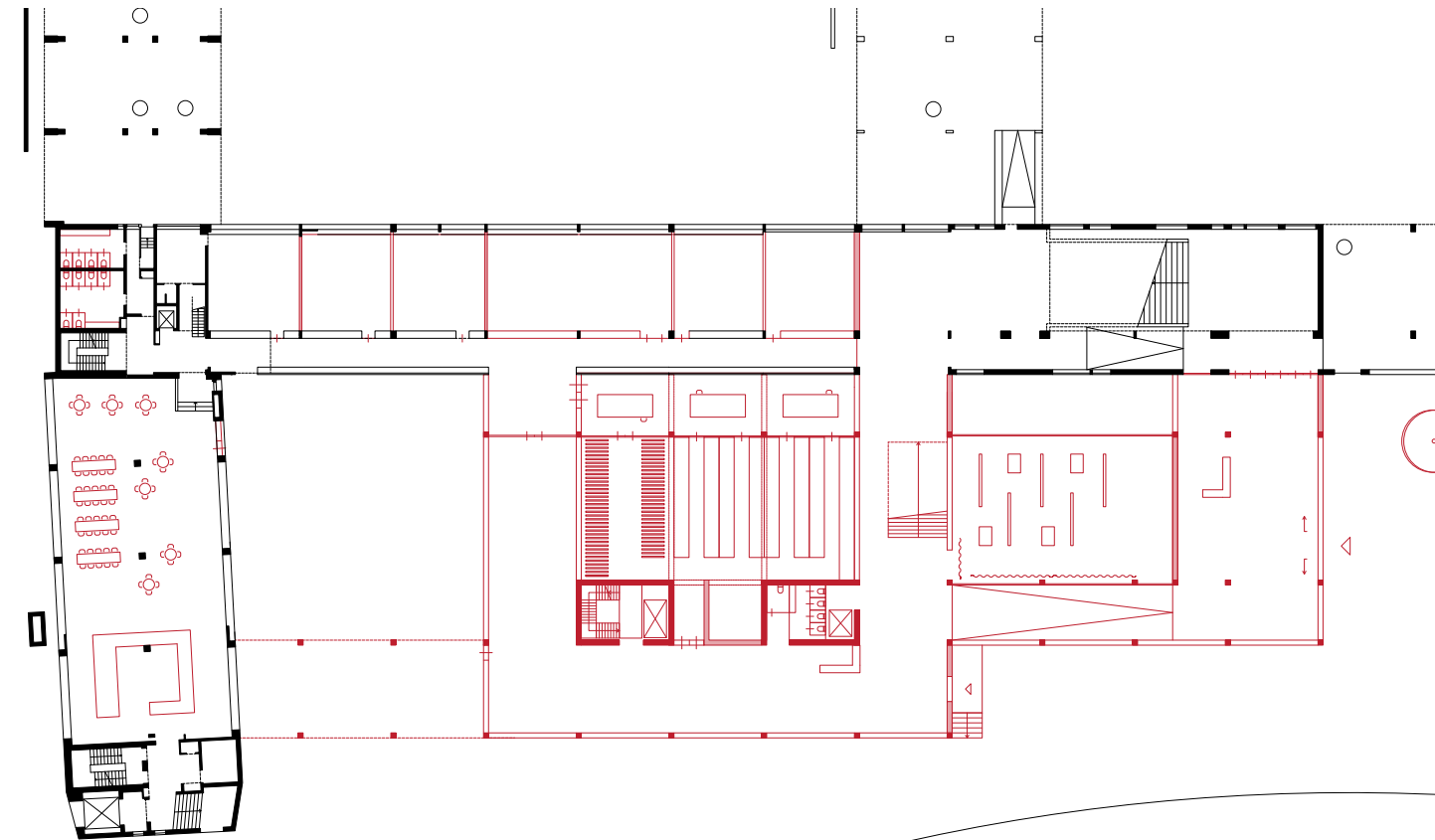


The model I'm making is quite atectonic. Since the new part is many overhanging floors sitting on only one column, I was afraid that it wouldn't stand. For the best color and scale, I chose to make the steel columns & beams in colored paper. To compensate this, the **insulation layer** had to take on the role of supporting structure. I gave the foam edge a mdf core, which would not be visible when everything is wrapped properly. No one would ever ask how this model is supported when seeing it finished.



The 1:200 model of the archive box. It is an **omnidirectional** object. It can be flipped left or right, up or down. It is a fun object to hold with one hand. It gives the right feelings that I want from the archive box - universal, scaled, light and sturdy.



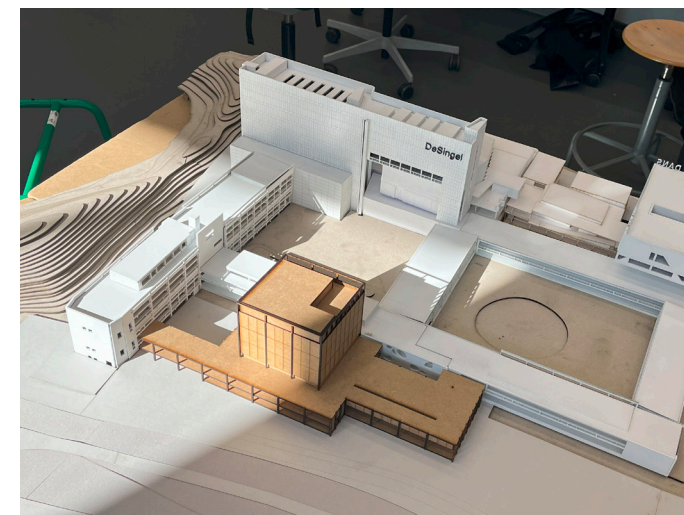


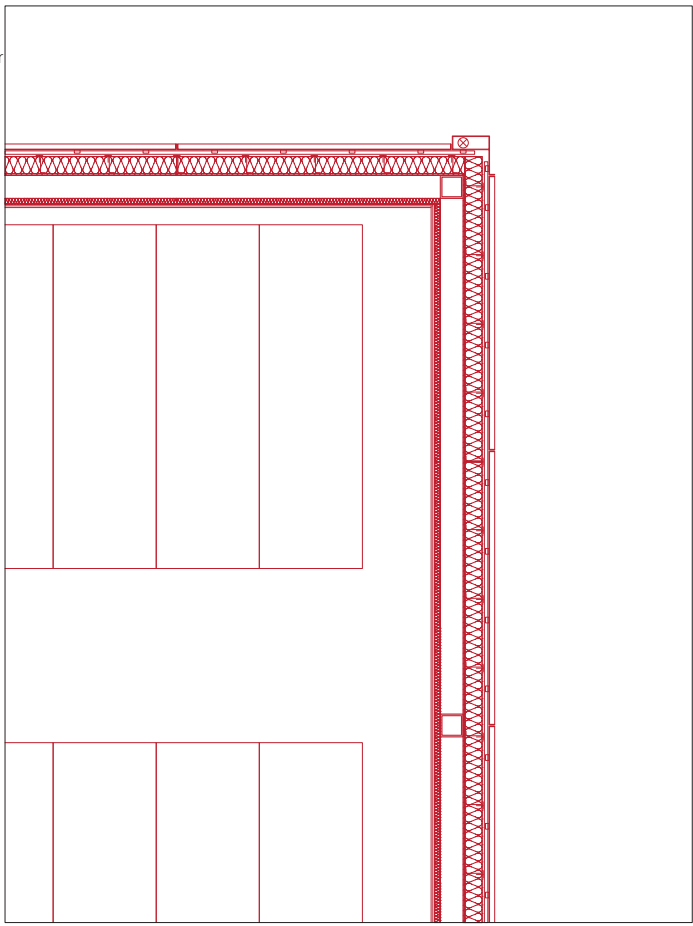
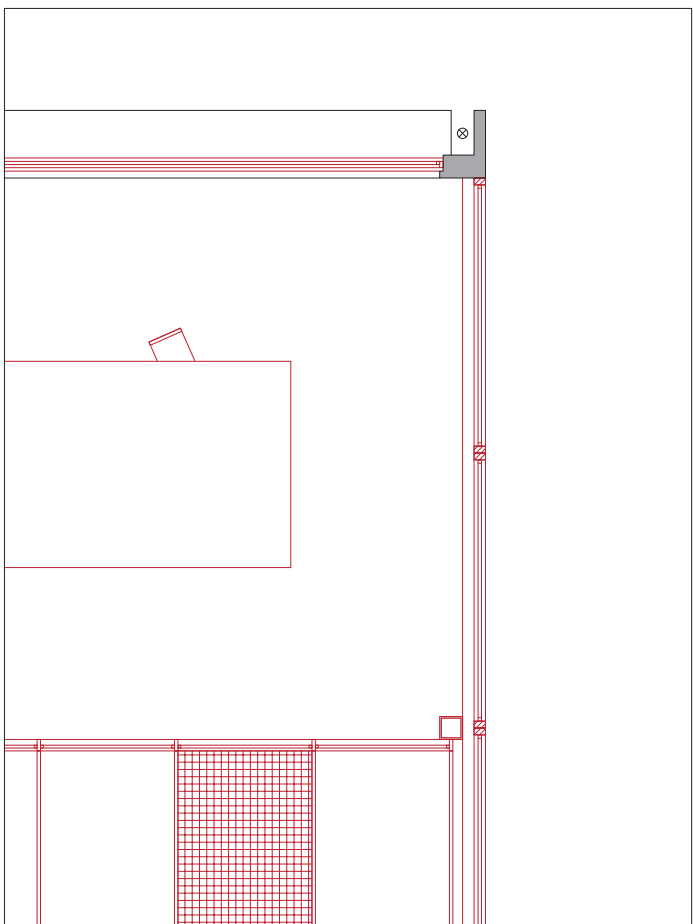
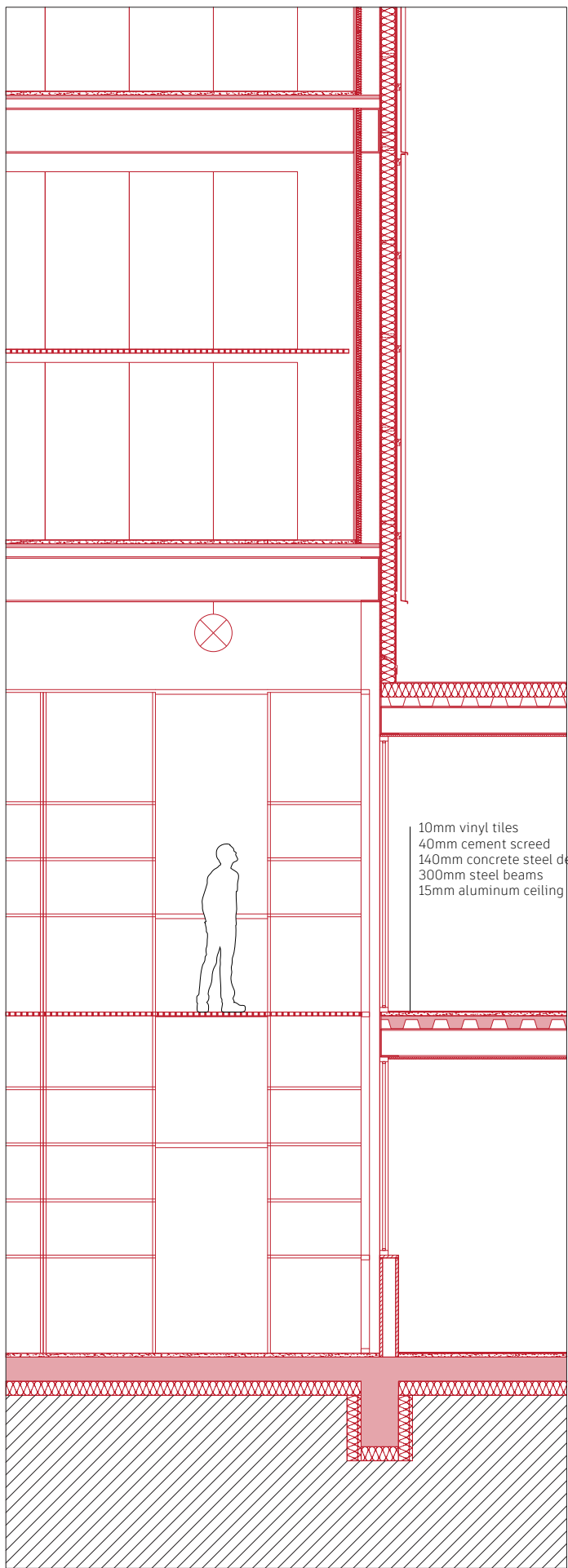
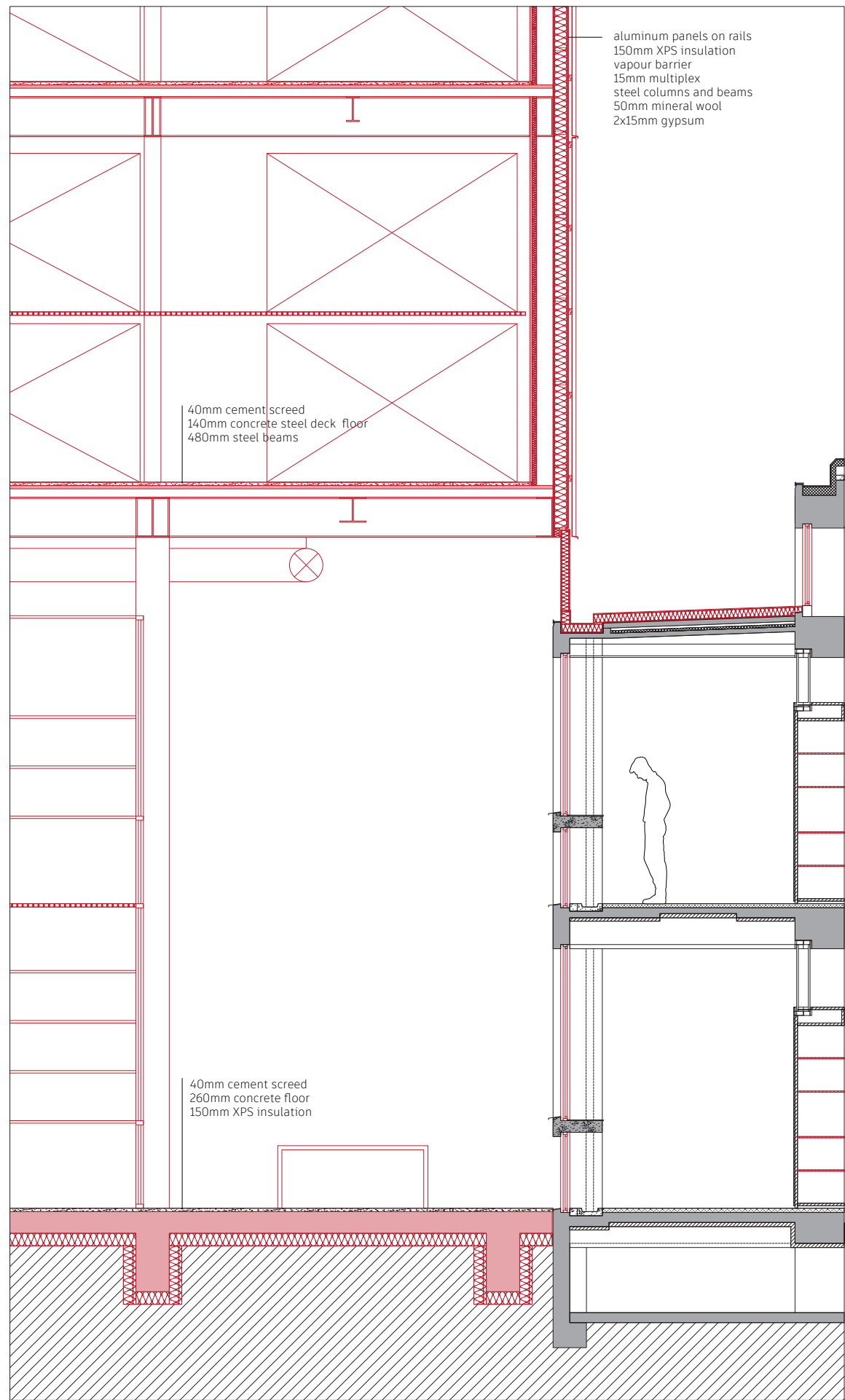
My project aims to restore balance to deSingel as a whole. In terms of **volume** and composition, my addition serves as a counterbalance to the Beel extension. It reorients the complex from a linear, one-directional layout to one that actively engages the crossing. The new volume follows the site's existing pattern, a massive block resting on a double-height plinth. The geometry of the cube is defined by the void in the stage tower and the top of the Meyer wing, while the shape of the plinth below responds to the surrounding urban lines.

Programmatically, the entire Meyer wing and the front wing of the Stynen part are reallocated to house the VAI. The current conservatorium and office functions in these areas will be relocated to available spaces at the rear of the building, as well as to the current VAI offices in the Beel wing. This reorganization allows the three major institutions—deSingel, the Conservatorium, and the VAI—to each occupy their own distinct quarter within the complex.

The VAI quarter is conceived as a sequence of loops surrounding **three core spaces**. Existing backstage logistics areas will be repurposed for VAI operations. This wing, functioning as the 'tail' of the depot, feeds materials into the processing spaces around a small rear courtyard. At the center lies the 'view depot,' topped by the storage depot. The public library and offices are situated around this space, allowing visitors to circulate around the depot. The first one, the entrance quarter, welcomes the public with a flexible exhibition area. These core spaces frames sections of the original front facades in different spaces and allow people to perceive and interact with them in different ways.

The façade of the new building **reinterprets** the existing Stynen façades. While the original expresses its structural grid implicitly through a sculptural concrete form, the new façade articulates an abstract grid using prefabricated, assembled elements.





Daniel:
The form of the building feels **well-composed** and clear; it has a compelling urban image. The way you meet the building seems strong and the qualities of the archivist rooms between new and old are quite clear in the fragment model.

There are questions about the relationship between the large internal and external spaces. The **entrance hall** feels like it crowds the potato windows, and we wonder if this is correct.

- Can the exhibition space not be placed somewhere else? Why does it have to be blocking the potato facade? Are you able to see those facade from the street?

What is the relation between the **box and the ground**? Does it ever come to ground? Are you making three rooms on the ground or one more continuous space partially covered by the archive above?

- Working on not just fitting the program in, but also the spatial relations

Sam:
Try to trust your **designer instinct** and try to understand the choices you make. You seem to be a natural, and you're looking for explanations. You can construct these explanations and find the reasons for doing what you do, yourself.

- Why does the facade rhythm differ on the two sides?

Jurjen:

- How important is that connection to the left? Should it be there?

Jakub:

- Depot as an **omnidirectional** object: What is the character of the courtyard spaces around? How are they different? Approach and directionality.

The past few weeks, since P2, has been a big **chaos**. I wasn't able to start a design process that keeps me solving problems and motivates me forward. I am used to short design processes when I would struggle for some weeks to find a clear design narrative and then use one or two weeks to develop and present it. The tutors would then give me inspirations or point out problems along the way, but I remained in control of the project and I reserved the right to ignore their suggestions. This was possible because after one or two weeks I would come up with a well-dressed "final design" that is convincing in itself.

In the current project, due to its **length** and **complexity**, I felt the necessity to make even more well-considered decisions. However, I often find that the options are all leading to more problems. Things are too dependent on each other. Since there are too many variables, I can't pull out a calculation of which would work which won't. I don't have a clear ground of myself. I want to look for a perfect state where things all work together. That's what I like. When I finally come to a decision (just to push myself a step forward) and want to base the future judgements on this decision, the tutor comes in and overthrows this decision that just became the ground of my coming weeks. Then I either choose to hold on to my own thoughts and awaits for the same comment the next week, or convert to the new idea and holds onto something that I can't argue against nor really stand behind. The inability of making decisions makes myself susceptible to **other's opinions**. I was just trying to hold onto a large piece of wood when being flooded away, blindly hoping that it would bring me somewhere other than this swirl.

I always thought trying to justify every decision **rationally** was what slowed down my design process. Then the tutors say, "let it go a bit, try to trust your **instinct**". I did so. At the presentation I was asked to explain the reasons behind some choices, of which some I could (that still didn't convince the tutors), others couldn't (result of speeding up the process and letting things loose). I questioned the tutors, if I use my reasoning to convince you but you still hold your judgement, does it mean we are allowed to use opinions to design? If I couldn't explain some choices rationally, because we simply don't have the capacity to consider everything rationally, why would you still ask me to provide evidences for everything?

It rings a bell to the recent conversations I had with myself: am I as rational as I think? Have I been exaggerating the role that rationality plays in my mind? Have I been trying to portrait myself as a completely rational person and convincing myself that I am such a person? I tend to deny that I have any kind of talent. Instead, I do accept that I am intelligent, which entails that I think a lot. Maybe I value rationality and the engineering type of intelligence too much (thanks to the family I'm raised in), that I tend to diminish the value or the validity of the random thoughts and forced myself into coming up with "better", reasoned and coherent thoughts.

BRIEF V. MATERIAL & MAKING

Week 3.9-4.5

weaving the fragments and systems into a narrative

the three spaces

It is about guiding visitors to circulate around the three spaces (which are yet to be defined), allowing them to appreciate fragments of the Styne facade from different perspectives.

The first piece of potato facades, shall be seen from a distance. The second piece is transformed into a furniture piece in the interior, enabling people to see and touch it from both sides of the facade. The third piece appears as a wall of a courtyard, where it meets different versions of it (de Meyer wing and my addition).

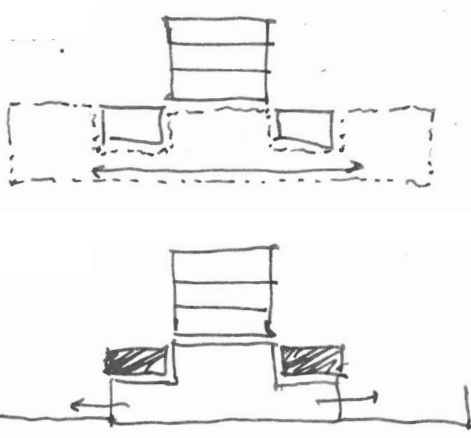
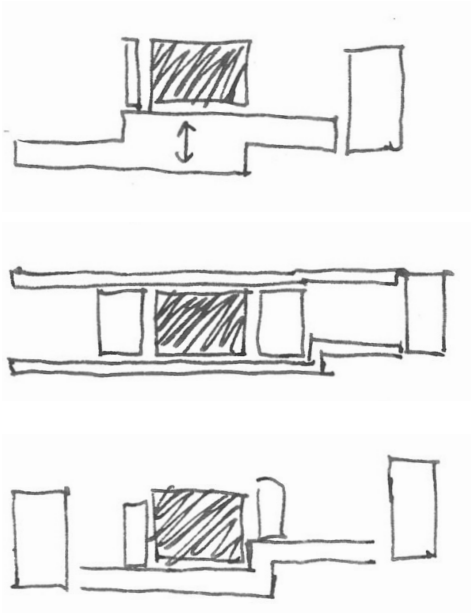
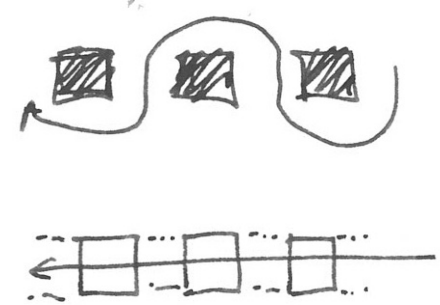
The three spaces serve different functions: the first for gathering, the second for storing and working, the third for looking.



tutorial feedback

Daniel:

- are the 3 rooms **enclosed objects** or a **continuous** space?
- can the functional space be **wider**?
- what are the **spaces** / bridges / edges?
- is it about an **edge** connecting the entrance to the cafe?
- is the **ground floor continuous**? Is it open for visual connections if not physical? Can it be used for public exhibiton?
- does the **depot extends** to the flanking wings on the ground floor, with bridges passing over it?
- refine the **proportions** on section & plan, play with the subgrid, don't be limited by the 7400 grid
 - > can the core be narrower? How can it give quality to the space
- can exhibiton just happen around the depot in the corridors?
- do you need a second evacuation stairs?
- the first courtyard - either close it fully or open it fully.



reflection in groups

Today, Sam organized a discussion session for us to reflect on P3 collectively, along with a few other students who have similar projects. Our discussion with Stanislaw and Bruno mainly focused on how to receive and process the feedback from P3. Many of us were **questioned** about our fundamental design intentions or major design choices. How should we proceed with these challenges under the pressure of refining our projects within a limited timeframe?

I learned a new way to look at the pointed questions raised by Daniel. We could see them as reminders of the **evidence** we still need to provide to support the presentation of our projects. We don't necessarily need to change our design, but we need to be prepared to answer the questions with visual materials, like diagrams and drawings. The fact that I tend to take them as **judgments** on my design choices – and as suggestions to change my design – partly stems from the imposing way Daniel delivered these comments and partly from my own lack of confidence in my choices.

Sam shared a quote by **Fernand Pouillon** to frame the discussion today:

"... To study, observe, control, return in many repentances, in order to achieve a certain perfection.

Work that is both more selfish and more generous, more humble and more proud, more fruitful and less useful; what do I know?

Each reasoning is opposed by another, the truth is also divided into two truths..."

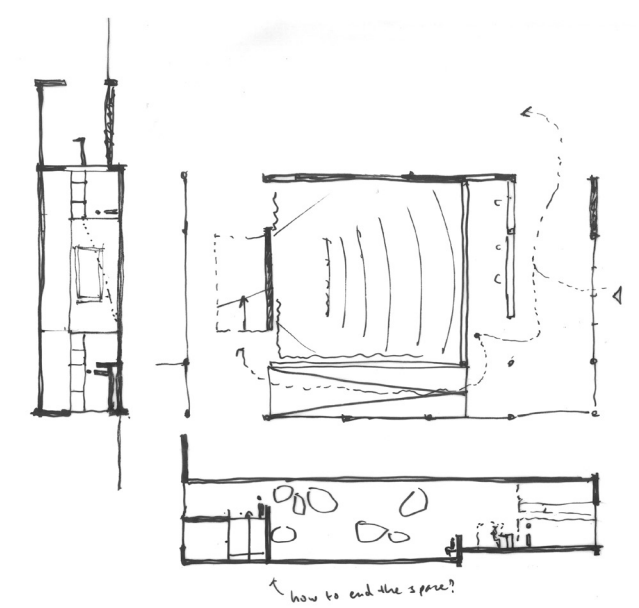
1:100 model of the entrance

To explore the spatial qualities of the entrance, I made a quick model of it. The model confirmed my expectations:

- demarcating the space using **height difference** & railing
- the side of the stairs as a **projection wall**, hinting the potential of holding a lecture or an exhibition

It also raised questions:

- how should the steel **columns** relate to the **infills**/skins, in facades, railings, walls, reception desk...
- how open should the **railings** be?
- how wide should the **stairs** be?

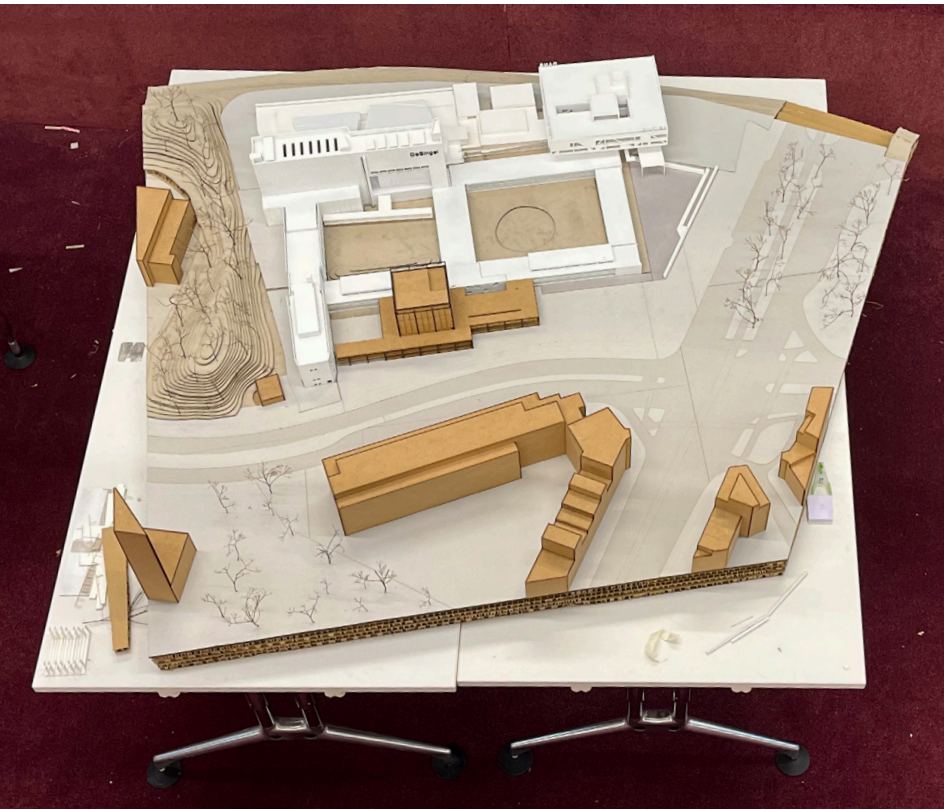
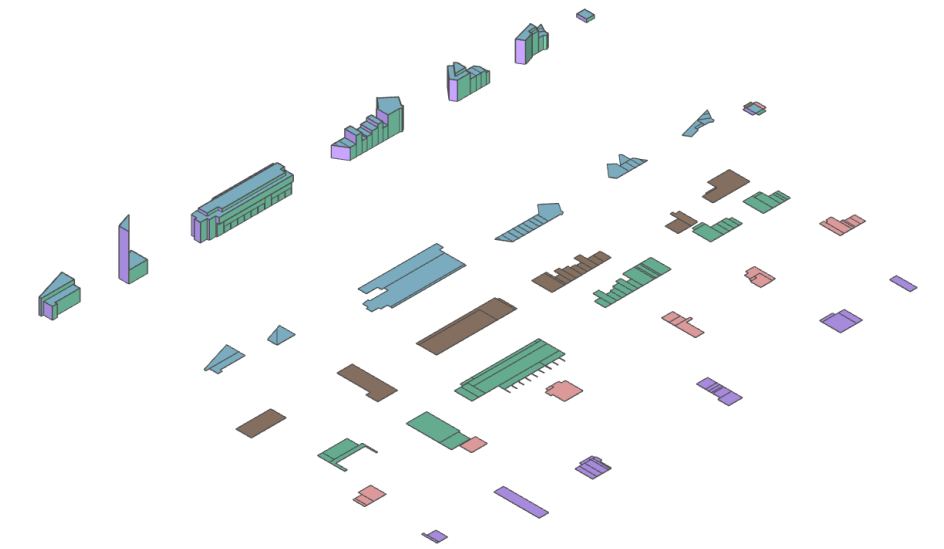


building the surroundings of the 1:200

We made some progress on the collective 1:200 site model this week. I took on the task of making the surrounding buildings. It was a fun challenge for myself, reflecting on how to execute the task in the most **efficient** way.

I modelled the 3d volumes as boxes of slabs to be lasercut. They were color coded by top/front/back/left/right and grouped by building. With the help of the 2d matrix I quickly identified the lasercut fragments and labeled them. These were handed as **packages** of a specific building to the helpers. Then I sent them screenshots of the color coded 3d volume of the corresponding building. The helpers were able to glue the pieces together correctly in a short time.

These volumes really completed the model as a whole. I placed my P3 volume in and examined the volume from different perspectives at eye-height.

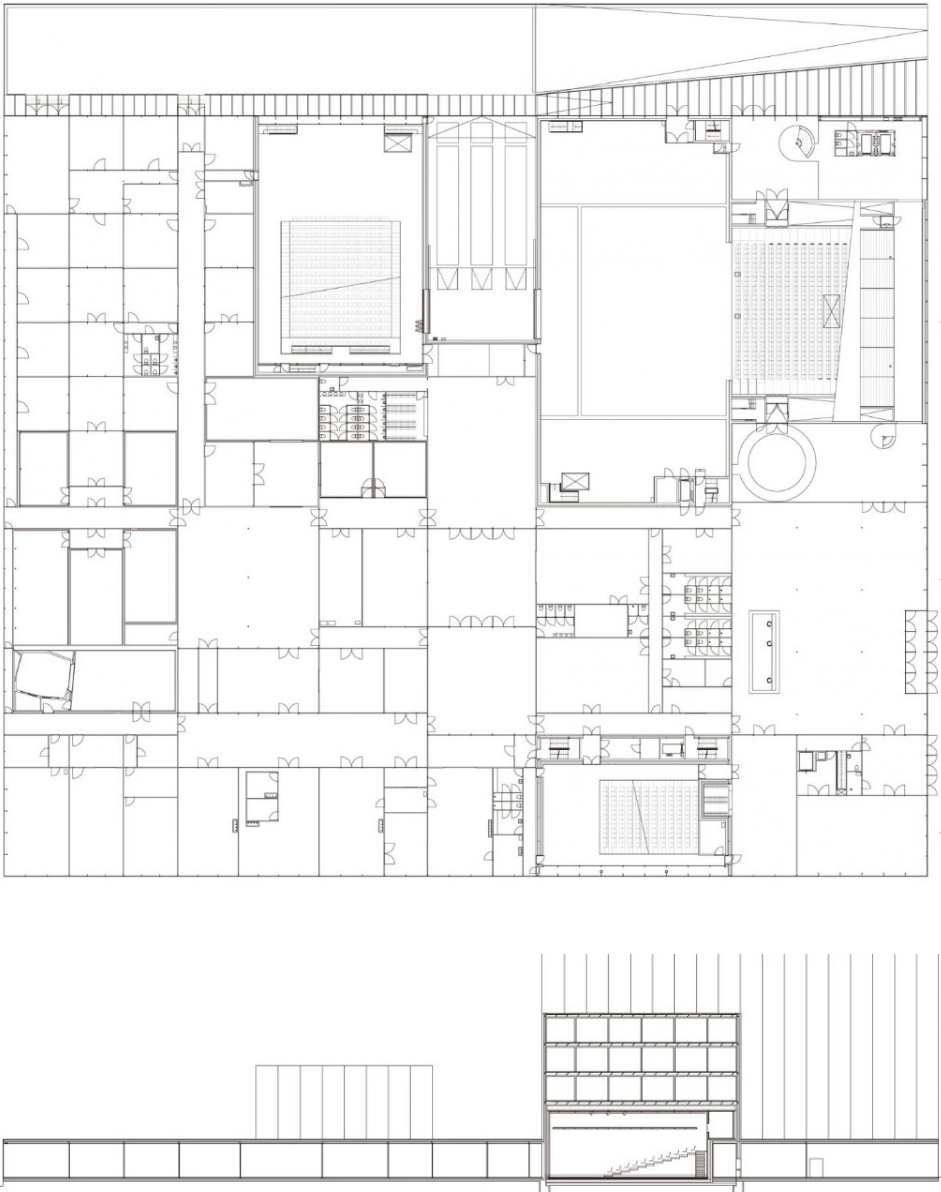


a comparable project

The **Kunstlinie Museum in Almere** designed by **SANAA** is not a completely unfamiliar project to me, but it never came across my mind during the graduation project. When I saw it this time I found out that it is comparable to my project in many aspects:

- **volume** - a horizontal pancake plinth with cubic volumes on top
- **facade** - grid extending from the plinth to the volumes, where the facade in the plinth is transparent and the volumes are clad with closed panels. The base grid is also 2400mm. However I don't intend to make this SANAA kind of flat and light facade. I want to make something more robust and more crafted.
- **structure** - the building has a steel frame structure
- **program** - the Kunstlinie is just as deSingel, a cultural campus. It houses large theatres, exhibition spaces, a cafe, music classrooms, and offices.
- **space** - the large entrance hall with a central reception gives access to the multiple cultural programs. It is 22x26m big, which is very similar to my entrance hall of 21x28m.

I'm really curious how such a design actually works. If the large entrance hall is the solution to such a cultural complex. If the transparent facade is an acceptable choice for my project or not. So I decided to visit.



visiting the Kunstlinie

the exterior

I thought the facade panels were natural stone, because they have different tints and looked quite warm on the photos. In fact, they are just **prefab concrete panels**. The effect is unexpectedly good.

It does look a bit **cold** and nonchalant from the outside, that's probably why they decorated it with red billboards and red flags at the entrance.

entrance doors

The entrance sas is 4 facade bays (each 2400mm) wide. It is composed of 2 single **automatic sliding doors** in the middle and one set of double doors on each side. The second layer of doors, standing 2400mm inside, repeats the pattern of doors but comes with slimmer or no frames. These doors are really confusing. When I approached, I had to choose from the 4 sets of doors. I noticed the arrow stickers on the middle two indicating automatic sliding doors and decided to take them. As I walked in I finally understood that they are single doors where the right panel slides behind the left. Before I realised I'm already in front of another 4 panels of potential sliding doors. This time even more difficult to choose because they have no frames, and both the fixed panel and the sliding panel have arrows on them. The clearance width is also only wide enough for one person to pass. This whole experience of entering the building gave me so much unnecessary uncertain feelings. I saw many other people had to stand still in front of the doors to see which one would open. Glass facades are intended to be more open, transparant and welcoming but they could work counterproductive.

entrance hall

To my disappointment, the entrance hall has become a **big mess**. What I saw was a huge children's playground, with tiny sandpits, cages, pulleys and slides placed in the middle of the space. The foyer of the big hall is used as a parking space for the This could be a special set up for the Easter weekend, but there are also lots of more permanent furniture that are out of place. The spaces next to the sas, along the front facade, are filled with those city hall type of seats and tables that resembles the shape of a house, fake plants, and decorative wooden boxes with huge cartoon letters.

The layout has been **changed** too. The reflective reception desk has been moved from the centre of the space to a corner on the left of the entrance. You could still see where it used to be from the position of skylights. The cafe which used to be in a separate room in the corner, enjoying the water view, was merged into the entrance hall. The tables are lined along the back wall, facing the not so well lit children's playground. The bar is placed in a blind corner behind the core, which is only made visible by sticker arrows. I don't think putting the cafe in the entrance hall is a good idea. It has too much hustle for the customers who just need some rest after their visits. The tired visitors sitting with their jackets and bags is also not the first scene of the museum you want the new visitors to see. The entrance hall needs some benches but not coffee tables with menu on them which make people wonder if they are only for consumption.

It turns out that the ceiling of the entrance hall has been changed. It used to be white plastered ceiling, which was better in reflecting light. That was stripped, the structural ceiling was sprayed with black insulation material and floating mesh ceiling panels. The ceiling in former workshops used to be system ceiling, now it's the same black sprayed insulation with hanging mesh panels that have gaps in between.



visiting the Kunstlinie

a public building in use

The amount of adaptation and mess created in this building made me think of deSingel. Are these kind of buildings destined to evolve into a mess after some years of usage? Is it the facility managers fout? Is it just what the occupants need and what the public wants? I came to see how a **large open entrance hall** works, but what I saw kind of verified my fear. When you design a large space mainly for the spatial experience, it will one day be occupied and used for something else. Unless there's a strict management holding the ground for the architect's original intention. But that only happens when the users have a certain respect for the building, which is possible for buildings targeted at a certain public (art museums, university libraries) but less likely for buildings that serve the general public (city libraries, city living rooms). In the latter case you don't want to create any distance or threshold for the users.

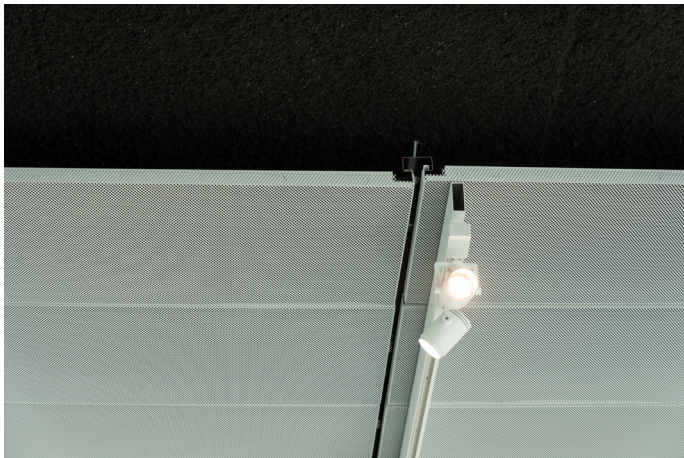
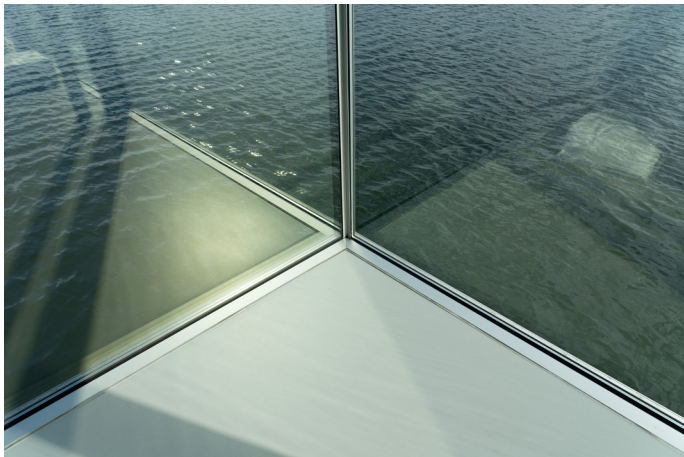
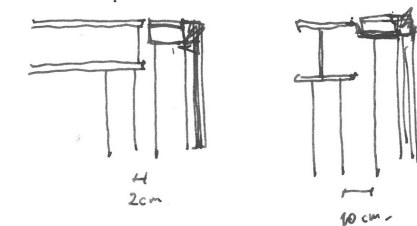
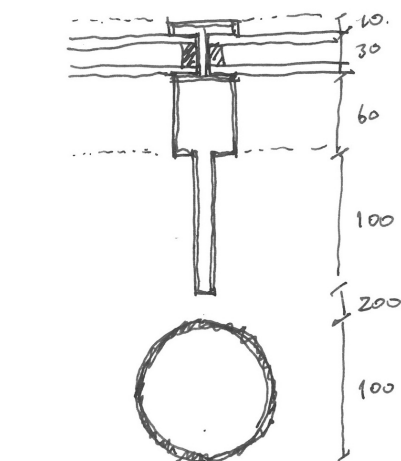
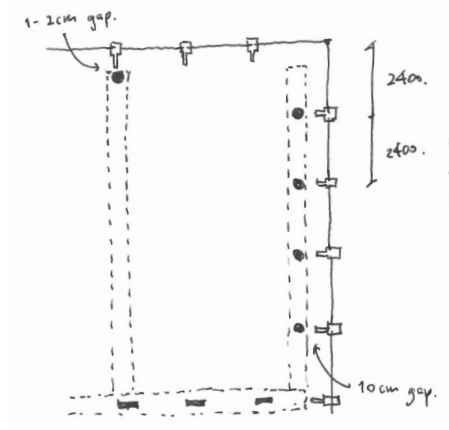
Below is the comparison between the entrance hall photographed just after completion and when I visited.



details

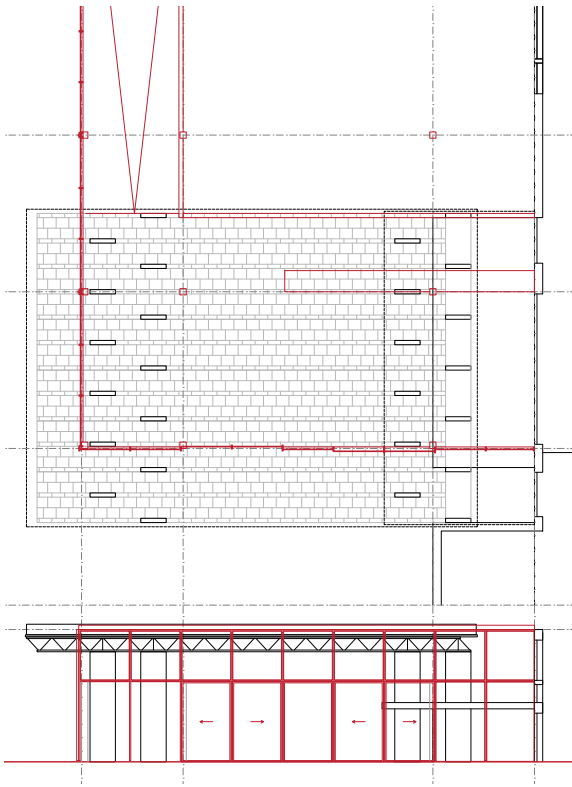
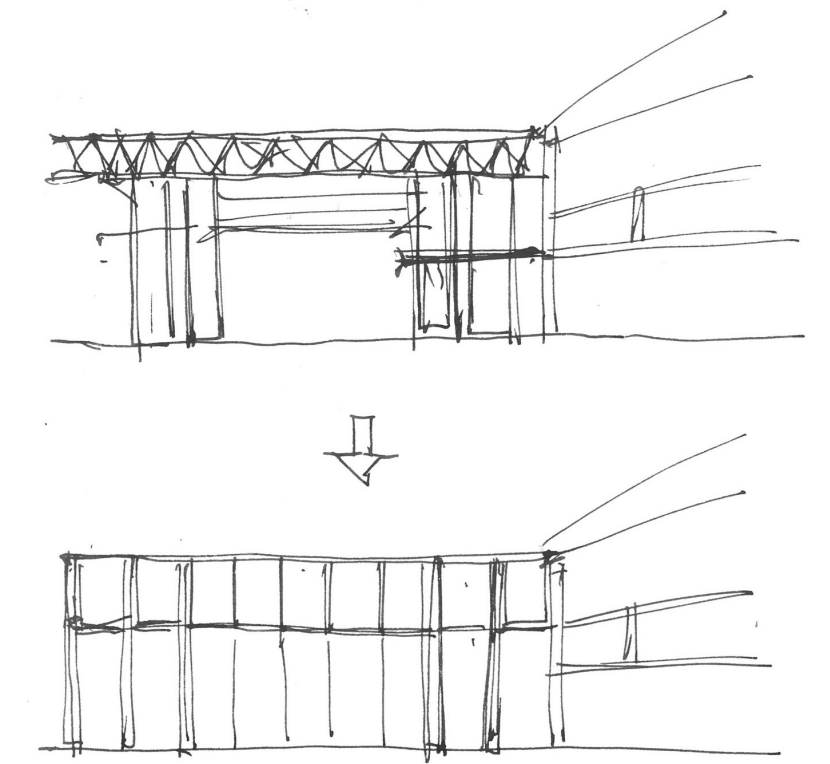
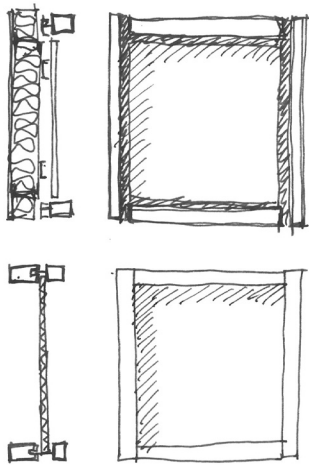
The glass elements are all equally wide. Which means that the **grid** was aligned to the skin, and the columns were offset inwards.

The distance between the column and the facade is not always the same. The facade that is perpendicular to the main beam has a smaller **gap** than the facade that is parallel to the beam.





I would like to make my facade look **crafted**, which means that the visible seams, reliefs and layers reveal how the facade is constructed. This corresponds to a thicker facade package of dry panelling system, like the project BRF Smedjan by Högberg Gillner Arkitektur. If I make a **curtain wall** facade, where the connections between panels and frames are sealed with rubber, it will make more sense to create a flat and minimalist look. The computer shop in Tielt made by Office KGDVS is an example of this.



Together with the Msc2 group, I visited deSingel again. This time I really took my time to look at the entrance area and the existing wings I'm working with, in and out. I took a lot of photos. By taking photos, I discovered new angles of looking at the building.

When I looked at the **entrance canopy** that I was planning to demolish from the side, I see a high resemblance to the entrance facade I'm making. I recalled a tutorial from several weeks ago, when Jurjen and Sam questioned the possibility

of reusing the structure instead of taking it down completely. I think what I want to do is replace the current canopy with a new version that evokes the collective memory but is much more accessible than the old one. I also saw the quality of the existing **travertine pavement** under the canopy. I observed that it has a strong geometrical relationship with the rest of the grid system, which is the one my project is based upon. Preserving this pavement could not only make my entrance feel more public and more special, it will strengthen the geometrical relation between the new and the old as well.

We had lunch in the **sunken canteen**. It was actually the first time I experienced this space. I always had plan to connect this canteen to the courtyard and make it more public, but now I changed my mind. It is not so enjoyable to sit in a 1.35m sunken space. This height difference put the seated at a disadvantage, where one cannot see the outside without raising their head, while people outside can easily see all of the space from above. One would have the feeling of being observed while physically trapped, which doesn't sound appealing for a public cafe. Another program such as a workspace would fit better. The windows on the other side is filled with green outlooks.

facade material

- Titanium Zinc

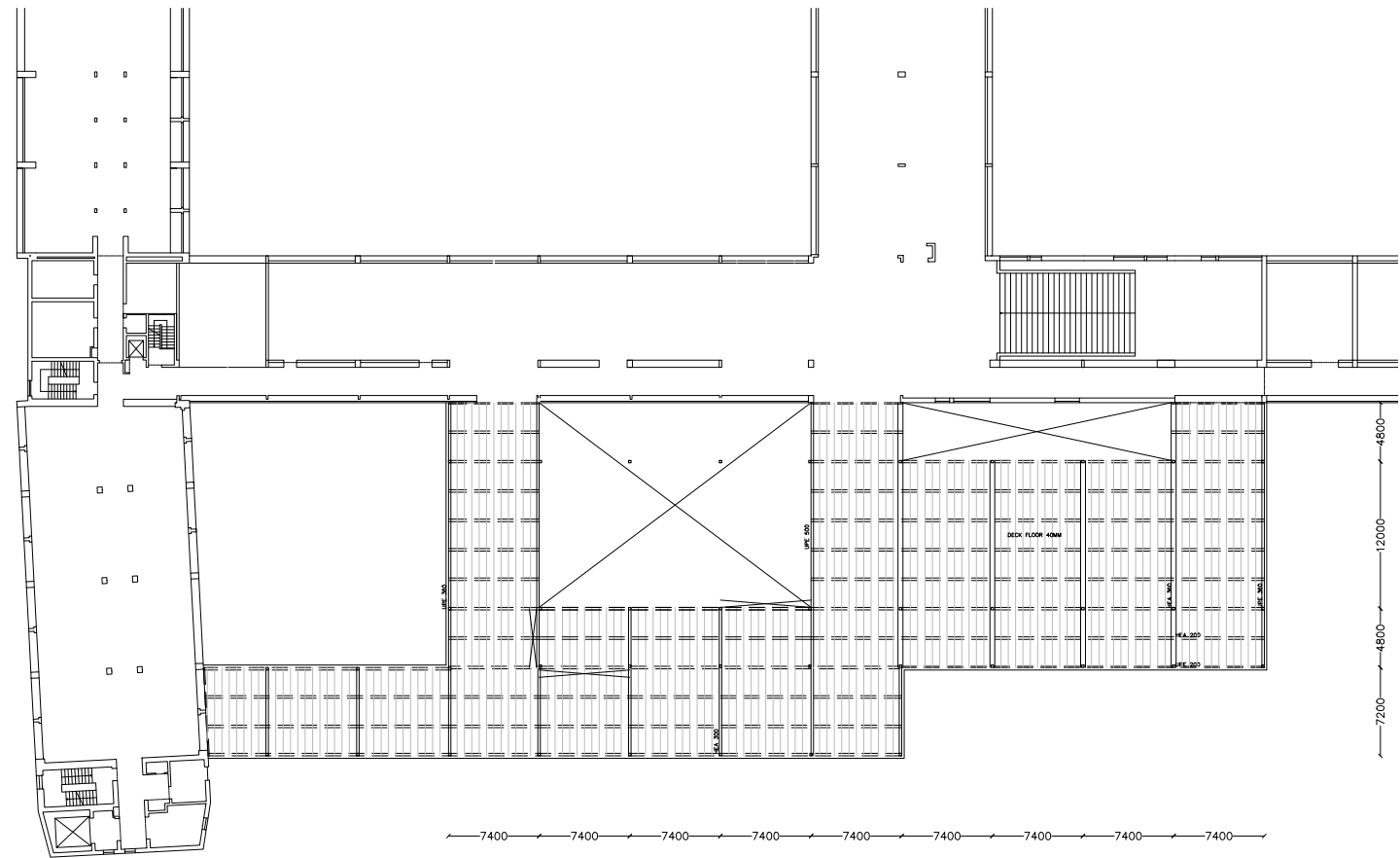
 - natural matte grey patina, self-healing
 - lasts 60-100 years, basically maintenance-free
 - stable to acidity/salinity
 - low thermal expansion coefficient
 - malleable & flexible, outstanding for making curved forms
 - heavier
 - more labor-intensive installation
 - 100% recyclable
- Anodized Aluminum

 - bright, consistent and precise color
 - sharp & crisp edges, very flat planes
 - have to be recoated every 10-20 years
 - less labor-intensive installation
 - light weight
 - the surface layer is extremely hard, the material itself can deform
 - higher thermal expansion coefficient
 - 20%-40% lower costs than zinc
 - reflect solar heat better

I like the matte finish of zinc. You can clearly tell it's metal, but it doesn't look as smooth, shiny and cold as other metal. Its irregularity in a surface brings liveliness back to a modular metal facade. It almost looks like a paper model compared to the render-like aluminum facade. Its durability exceeds aluminum as well. One thing I worry about is whether it can span over 2,4m.



structure



I had always imagined the ceilings in the public areas to be neatly finished. Pipes and wires hidden behind a dropped panelled ceiling. However, the need to bridge the floor heights to the existing wings, plus the minimal required free heights, excluded this option. The pipes have to be **exposed** after all.

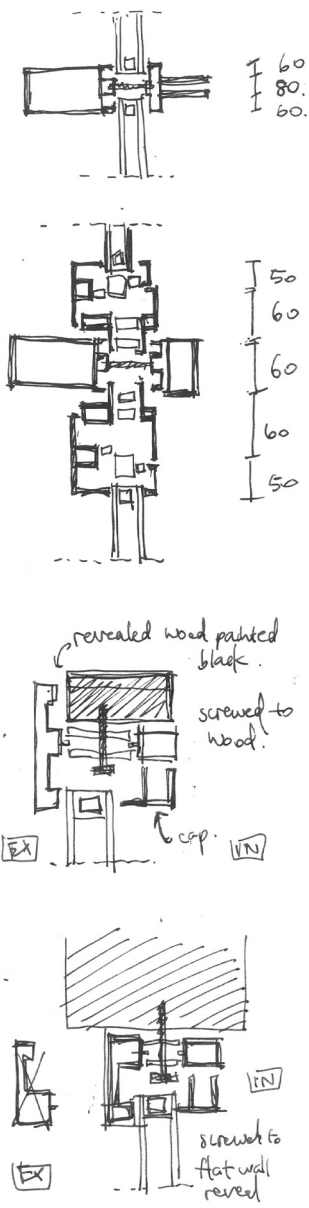
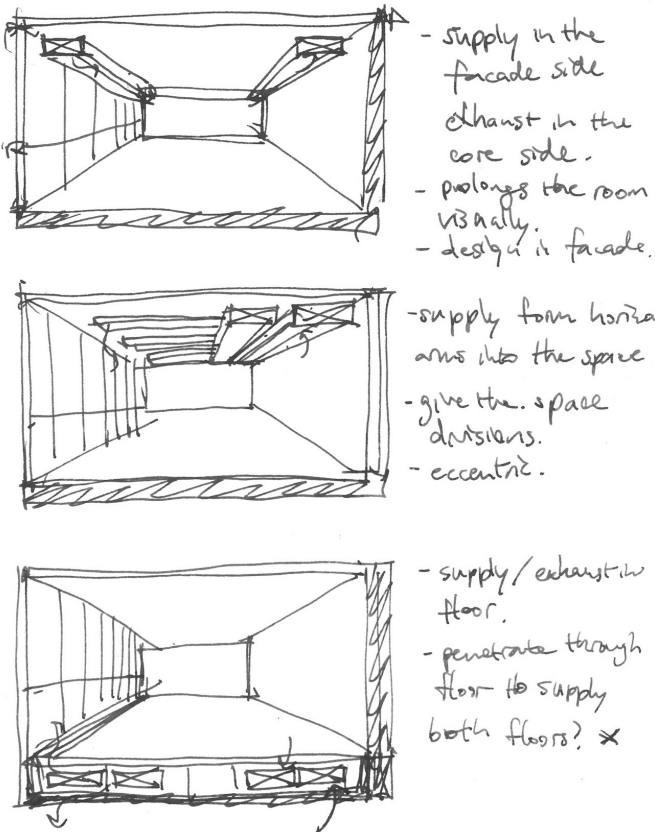
Why am I always making decisions that go against my aesthetics? It is the same with the **facades**. In the beginning, I wanted to make something more solid, more robust. On the one hand, I didn't like the look of very light and glassy office interiors. I thought it's too much distractions to work in. That's why I made a closed room for deep focus in P1. On the other hand, I came across students at deSingel complaining about the building being too open and exposed. They would like to have some spaces with less glass.

But still, I chose to use a **steel skeleton structure** instead of wood or concrete structure, because I didn't want to make a literal copy of the Stynen and I didn't want the interiors to look completely exposed wood. Not to be forgotten, the most decisive factor was the large span. But now, the steel structure looks too light and industrial. I want to make it look more solid but I can't bear the thought of wrapping the steel column with something else. At that point I just thought, why didn't I just use concrete structure? The interior images I liked are mostly constructed of concrete.

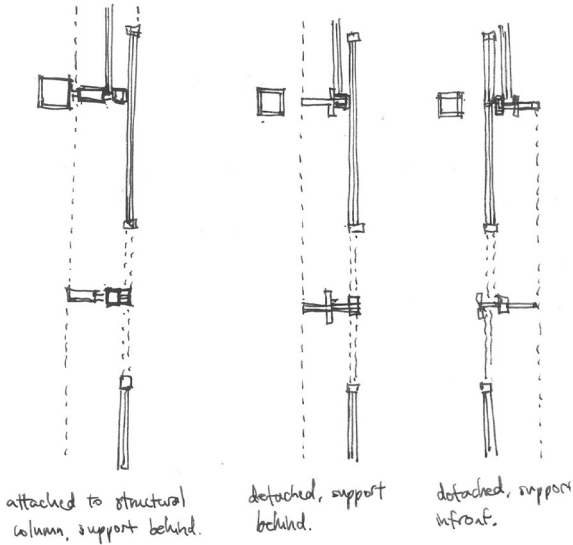
Then, I get stuck in the awkward position where I **dislike** what I'm making, while telling myself that I shouldn't **overthrow the decision** already made (steel structure). I kept looking at eye-candy references, knowing that they are constructed differently than my case, while pushing to resolve a detail that kept making me question, "am I doing something stupid?".

Now the conflict between the exposed mechanical ventilation and interior atmosphere puts me in this type of dilemma again. It is stupid and too late to rethink about the structure to reduce the structural height. I just have to accept that the interior is not going to look the way as I imagined. I could still arrange the pipes so they work in favor of my overall architectural idea.

It's not that I haven't thought about this problem at all in the early concept phase. I quickly eye-balled that there will be enough free height and just moved on. Back then, I was told to not let these **minor issues** getting in the way of what I wanted to do, that these things always get solved eventually. I just have to accept that as a very unexperienced architect, I am unable to judge which issues were minor in the early phase. I mean, it is not that tragic. It is indeed solvable, but just **hardly acceptable** for me. I just have to lower my bar and make peace with less favorable situations. I think the resistance to making "**ugly**" or "**nonsensical**" design doesn't actually stem from how bad the design is, it comes from a feeling of defeat. It's that inner voice saying, "You can't design," or "You didn't think things through enough back then." The thought of presenting the design makes me cringe. I am very likely to collapse and admit "this doesn't work at all" if I present a design that I don't stand behind. I am unfortunately quite bad at **telling the story** from the favorable side, something I'm increasingly realizing is a vital skill in an architect's toolbox.

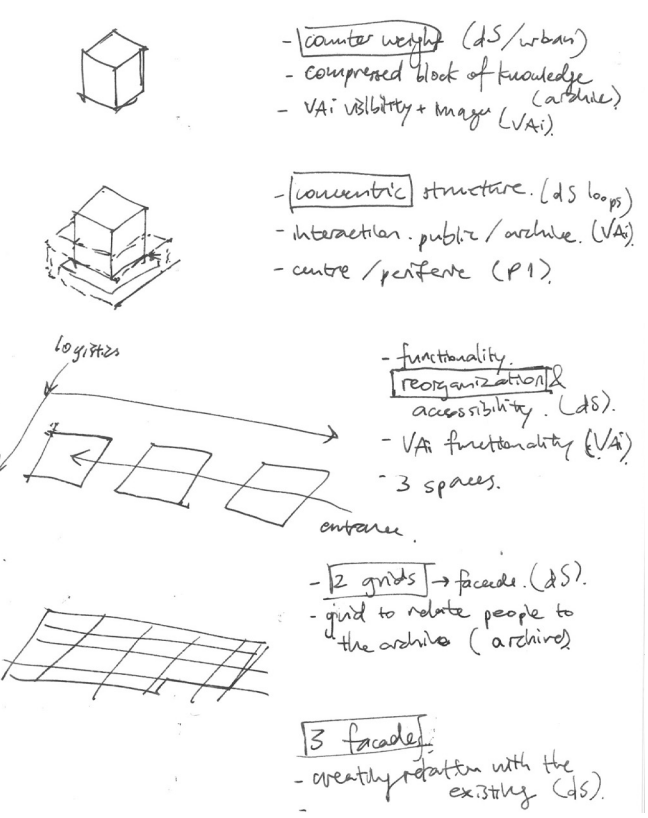
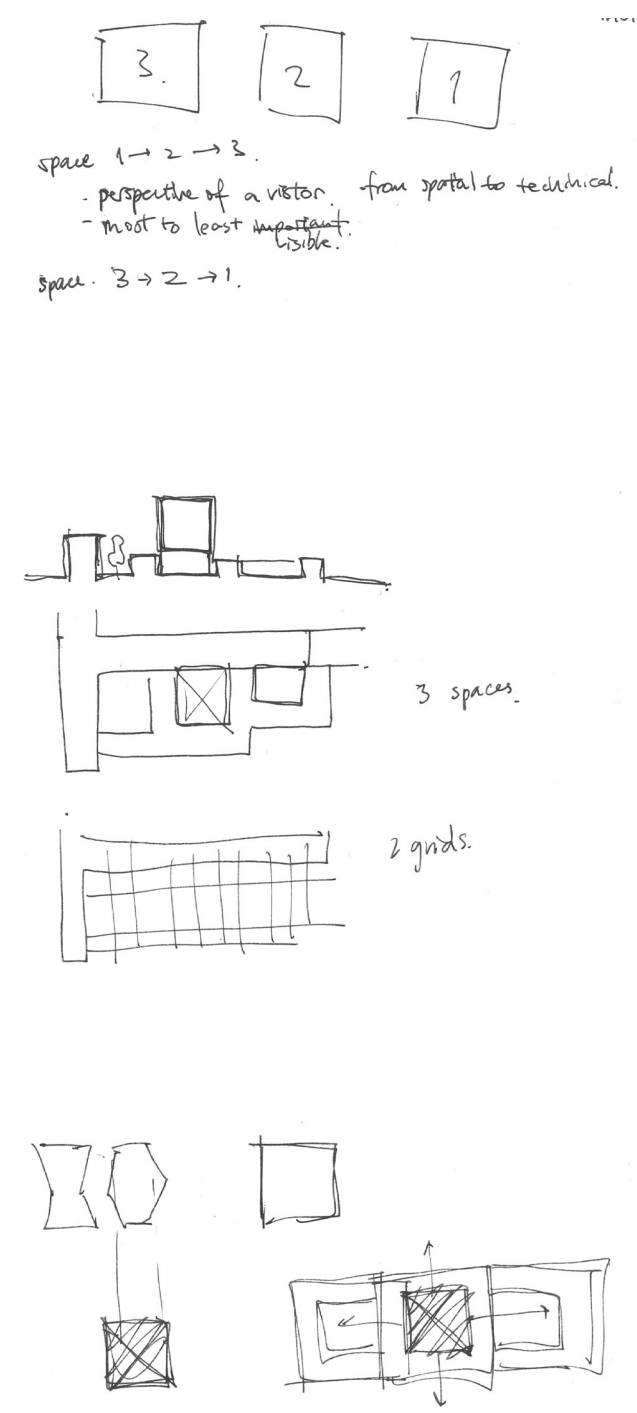


can curtain wall system have sliding doors?



I initially imagined that the table of contents grid would visually reflect the intensity of work each week throughout the year. I thought that, if you squinted, you'd be able to spot the peaks of activity and the slower, more **stagnant periods**.

However, looking at it now, I see a reversed pattern. There are fewer entries before each "P"—when I actually made the most decisions and got the most work done. In the weeks when I felt lost, unsure what to do, and made little progress, the cells are filled with many titles. That's because those were the periods when I was accumulating input—constantly seeking external help and reflecting on it. I would struggle with just one minor decision and write about it at length. Although those entries often led nowhere, they became essential groundwork for the seemingly quick and arbitrary decisions made during the **production weeks**.



the brief

The Flanders Institute of Architects (VAi) collection in Antwerp has outgrown its current building in the city’s historical center, which no longer meets the needs of the collection, staff, or public visibility. VAI is exploring the possibility of relocating and uniting with its counterpart, the VAI office, at deSingel—a modernist cultural campus designed by Leon Stynen and expanded by Stephan Beel. Currently home to multiple institutions, including the Royal Conservatorium and deSingel Art Campus, this fragmented site on the city’s outskirts offers an opportunity to reimagine its state.

I have developed a proposal to reorganize, adapt, and extend deSingel, enhancing the performance of this cultural campus, respecting its architectural qualities and integrating a 4,000m² architectural archive along with its affiliated programs.

the project and process

At the start of the academic year, the studio focused on two topics: the program and the site – architectural archives and deSingel. The first assignment involved collectively studying eight archival precedents through model-making, redrawing, and written analysis. The second was an individual design task: creating a room to archive a Flemish architect’s collection. The third brief shifted the focus to the site, as we collectively analyzed and modeled deSingel. The fourth assignment returned to individual work, exploring possible interventions on the site. These cycles—between design research and research by design, between collective and individual efforts, and between program and site—have shaped the structure of my project up to this day.

Retrospectively, what I was doing throughout the design process was juxtaposing the conditions of the site with the vision for a contemporary archive. It was about finding alignment between the two and balancing the necessary compromises. The design borrows features from the existing building while also giving qualities back. It is about both asserting a clear identity for the VAI and fostering integration within deSingel’s existing ensemble.

In this sense, the project became a dialogue between research and design. Each step of the design was shaped by what I learned through analysis—of archives, of deSingel, and of their spatial and cultural roles. These themes guided both the conceptual direction and the architectural response, tying research and design closely together.

a counterbalance

My extension to deSingel restores compositional and programmatic balance to the site by introducing a new volume that serves as a deliberate counterweight to the Beel extension. This addition follows the site's formal language: a strong, cubic mass resting on a double-height plinth, with its geometry informed by the void in the stage tower, while its base shaped by the surrounding urban lines.

Programmatically, the entire Meyer wing and the front wing of the original Stynen complex are reallocated to house the VAI. Current functions, including the conservatorium and office spaces, are reorganized towards the rear of the site—establishing clear, legible zones where deSingel, the Conservatorium, and the VAI each inhabit distinct yet interconnected quarters. This redistribution simplifies wayfinding and enhances spatial clarity, fostering more meaningful interactions among the institutions and the public.

The initial ideas stemmed from my intuitive impressions during the first site visit. Upon arriving at deSingel, I noticed a disconnect between the building's gesture and the direction from which people approach, as well as a visual tension between the two distinct architectural styles. These early observations were later supported and refined through various analyses. Studying the historical development of the building within its changing urban context reinforced my sense of this spatial mismatch. Examining the different users, their logistics and public circulation informed the decision to reorganize the users. Reading about the design intentions of Stynen and Beel helped me understand the genes of the site. The final massing was developed through several iterations of physical models at scales of 1:1250 and 1:250.

a depot

The depot is both the functional and spatial core of the archive. It showcases not only the physical artefacts but also the activity of archiving within the view depot. This core is surrounded by circulation and working spaces, much like the way deSingel’s courtyard or concert hall is framed by corridors.

The concept of a condensed core that draws activity to its periphery was already present in my earlier design for an archival room. The large table I created in that assignment has evolved into the view depot space in my final design. What was as an introverted room focused inward toward the central table has transformed into an outward-facing glass room extending to its wings and into the city. Christian Kieckens’ idea that “a piece of furniture is also a house” is embodied in this transition.

It’s interesting how the 1:15 model I made during that early, contextless design exercise influenced the final project—not through materiality or detailing, but on a conceptual level. That freedom allowed me to design intuitively and helped reveal where my passion lies, before the full complexity of the site came into play.

a sequence

The VAI quarter is conceived as a sequence of loops surrounding three core spaces. Existing backstage logistics areas will be repurposed for VAI operations. This wing, functioning as the 'tail' of the depot, feeds materials into the processing spaces around a small rear courtyard. At the center lies the 'view depot,' topped by the storage depot. The public library and offices are situated around this space, allowing visitors to circulate around the depot. The first one, the entrance quarter, welcomes the public with a flexible exhibition area. These core spaces frames sections of the original front facades in different spaces and allow people to perceive and interact with them in different ways.

My understanding of how an architectural archive operates behind the scenes developed through precedent studies and a visit to the VAI archive. I learned, for example, about the careful procedures followed at the Canadian Centre for Architecture: artefacts undergo a clinical process of quarantine, restoration, and curation before being stored and eventually made accessible to the public. At the CCA, this sequence is clearly articulated in the building’s section, moving from bottom to top. In contrast, the current VAI archive lacks such spatial clarity. In my design, I chose to visualize this process horizontally in section—from left to right—making the operational flow legible and integrated into the architecture.

a grid

The structure and façade of my project are defined by the intersection of two grid systems—one derived from Stynen’s original grid, the other from the entrance canopy that I plan to remove. The new façade reinterprets the Stynen façades: while the original expresses its structural grid through sculptural concrete, the new design uses prefabricated, assembled elements to articulate an abstract grid. This grid weaves the new with the old, linking people to objects, and occasional visits to the daily workings of the archive.

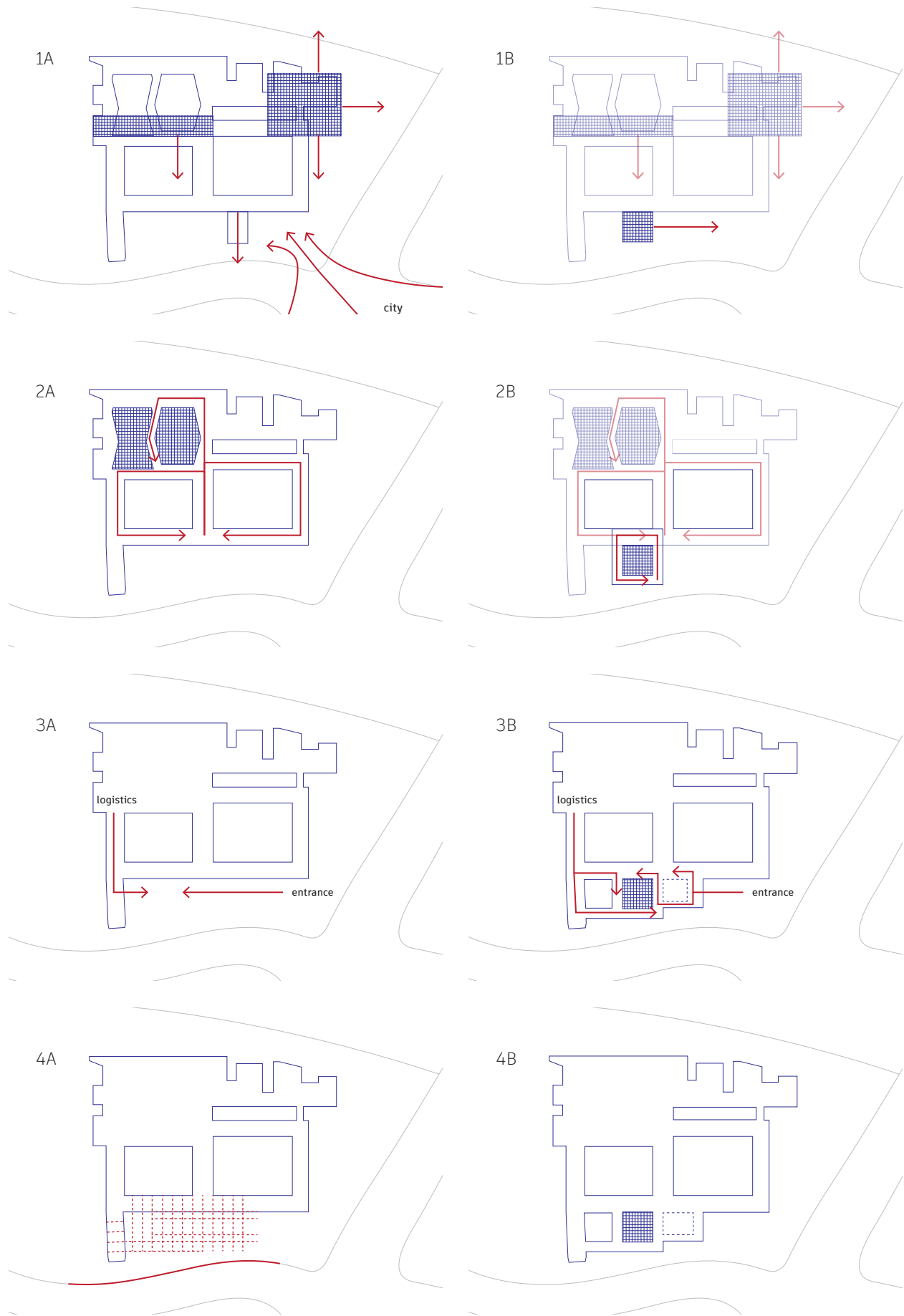
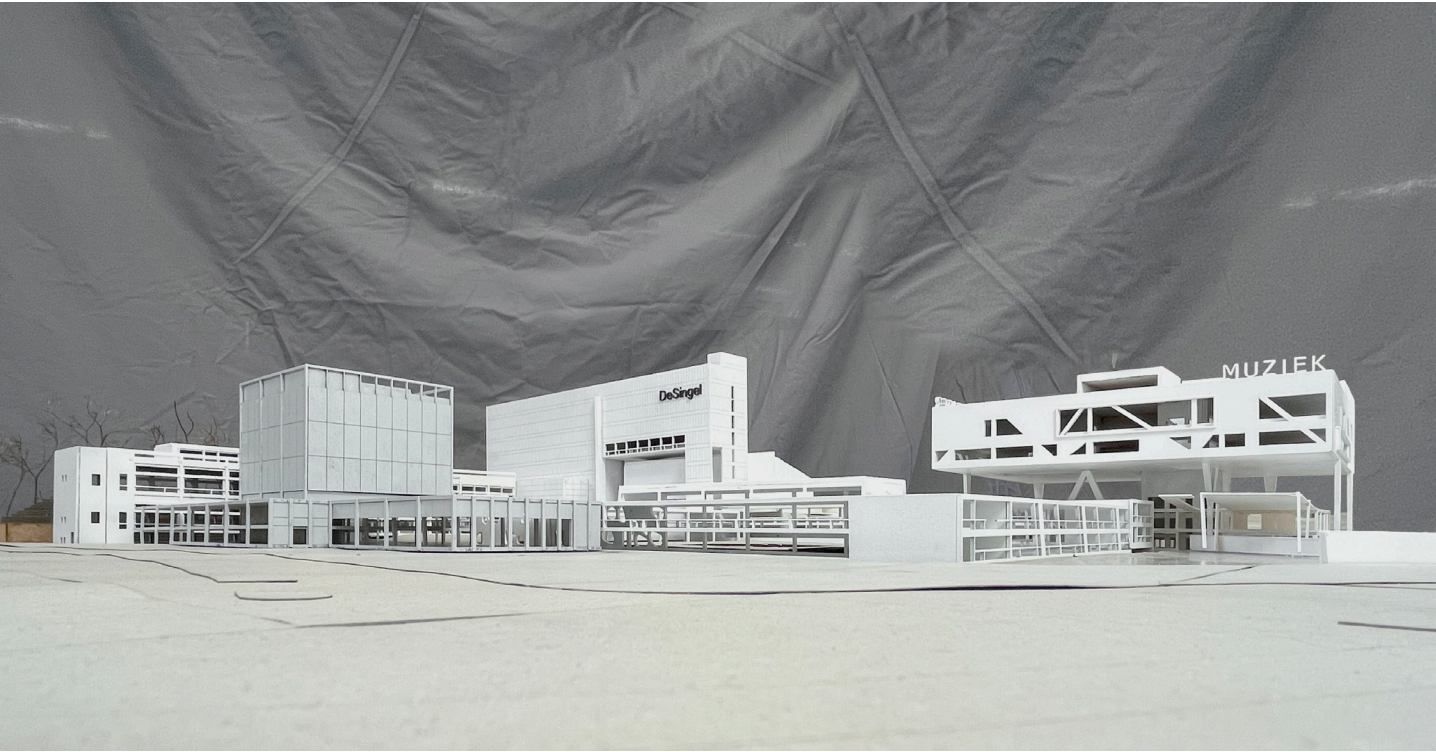
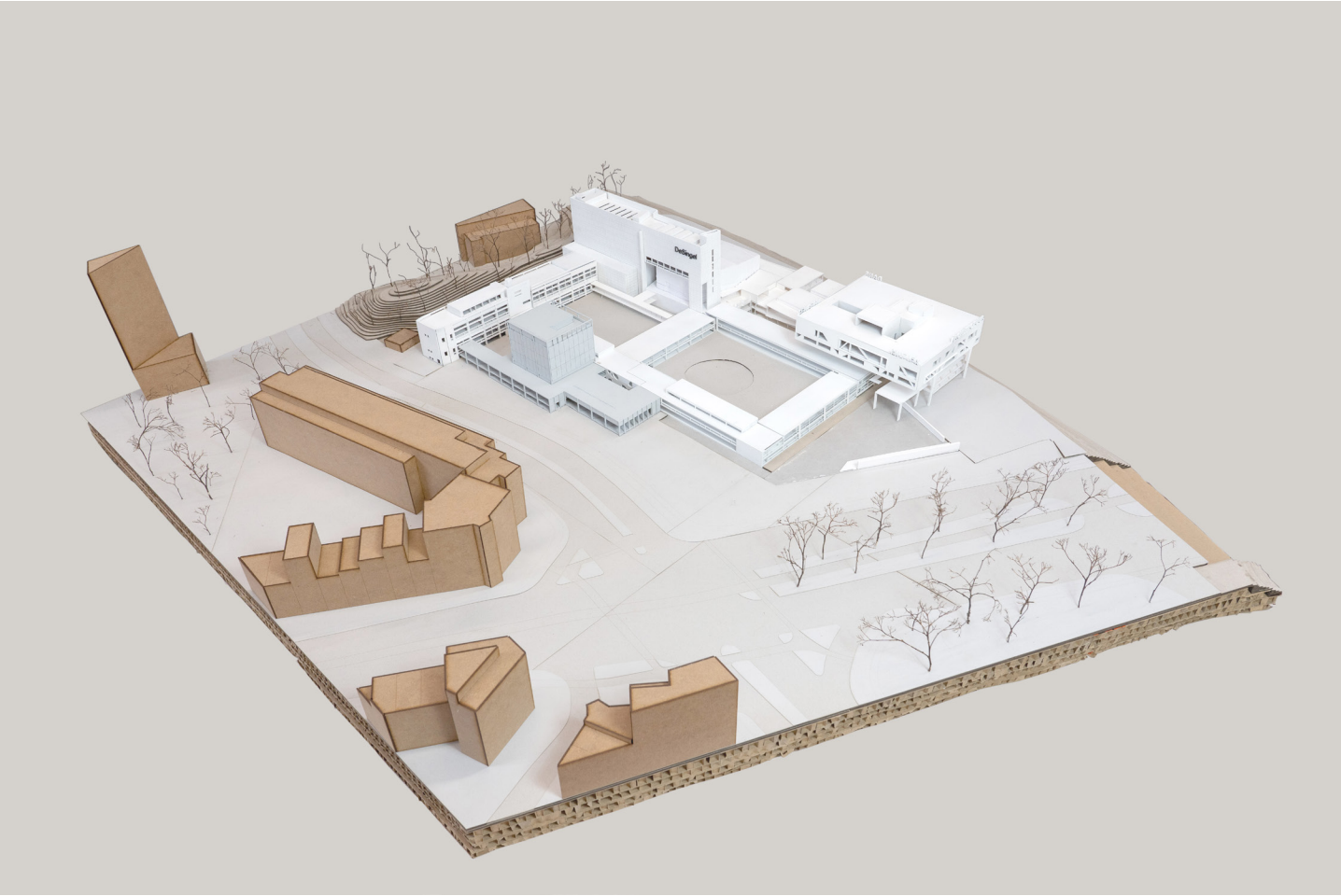
The rational grid is fundamental to archival architecture. Shelving systems and trolleys conform to standardized dimensions. In buildings like Ungers’ House or the Beinecke Library, a three-dimensional grid extends from shelving to floor, ceiling, and façade—making vast collections legible and relatable to the human body. This capacity of the grid to bridge scales became evident through working with both the 1:200 and 1:33 models.

other thoughts

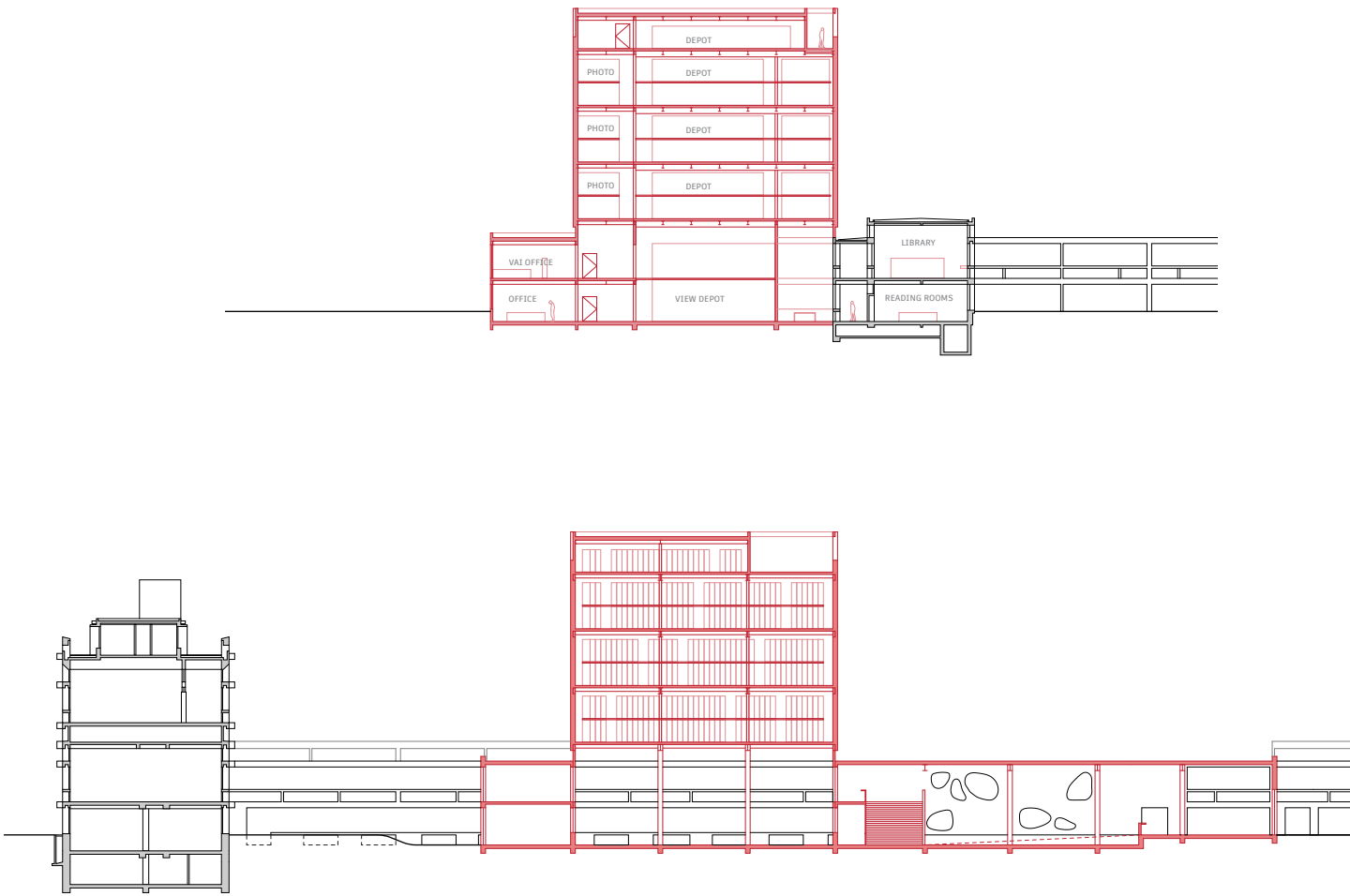
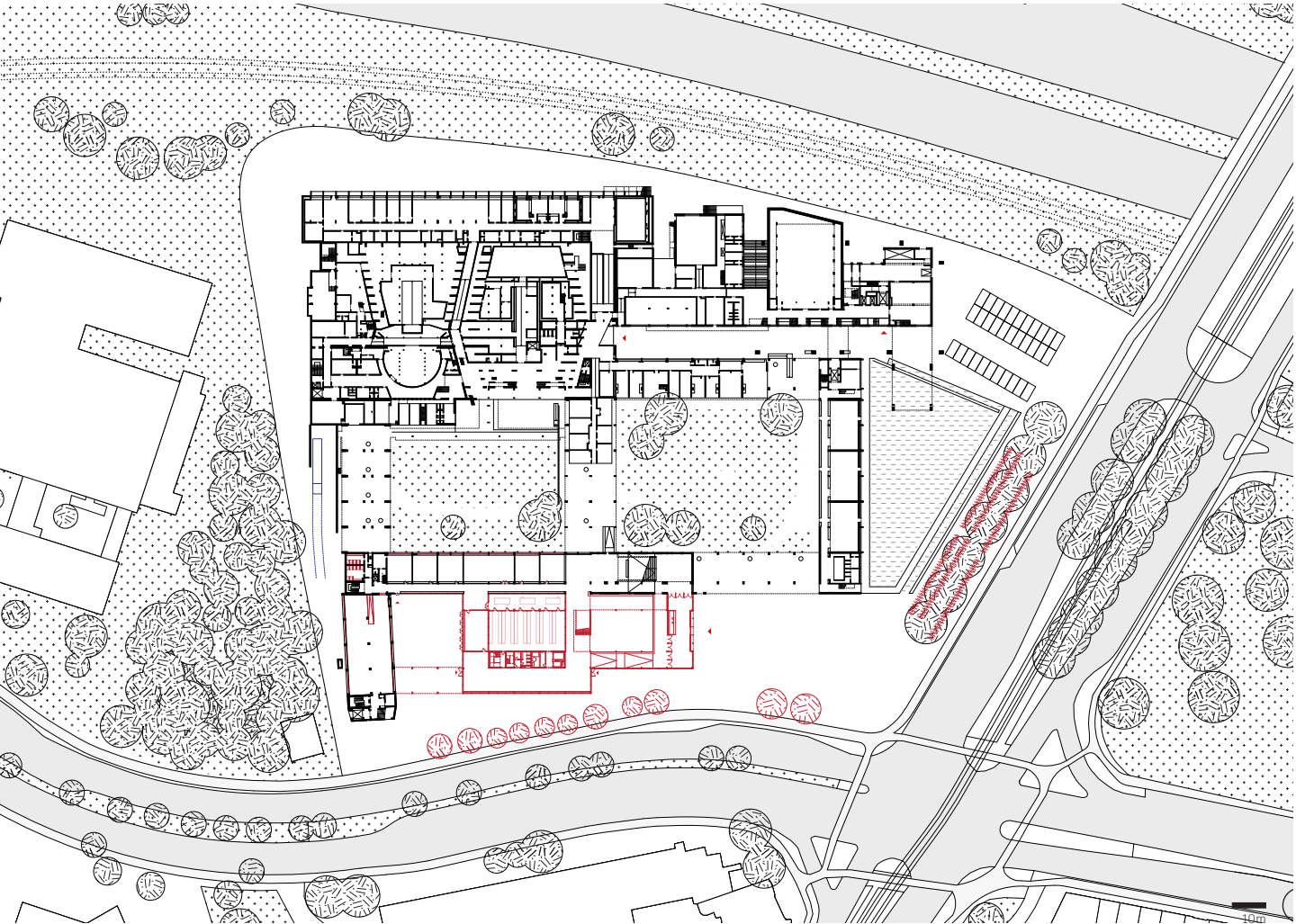
This year has felt less like the end of my studies and more like the start of a long and challenging path. What I once imagined as a final, polished project turned into a personal process of reflection and uncertainty. I kept questioning myself—my ideas, my direction—without arriving at clear answers. The moments of tension and inner conflict that emerged throughout this process are not yet resolved; they remain with me, waiting to be understood over time.

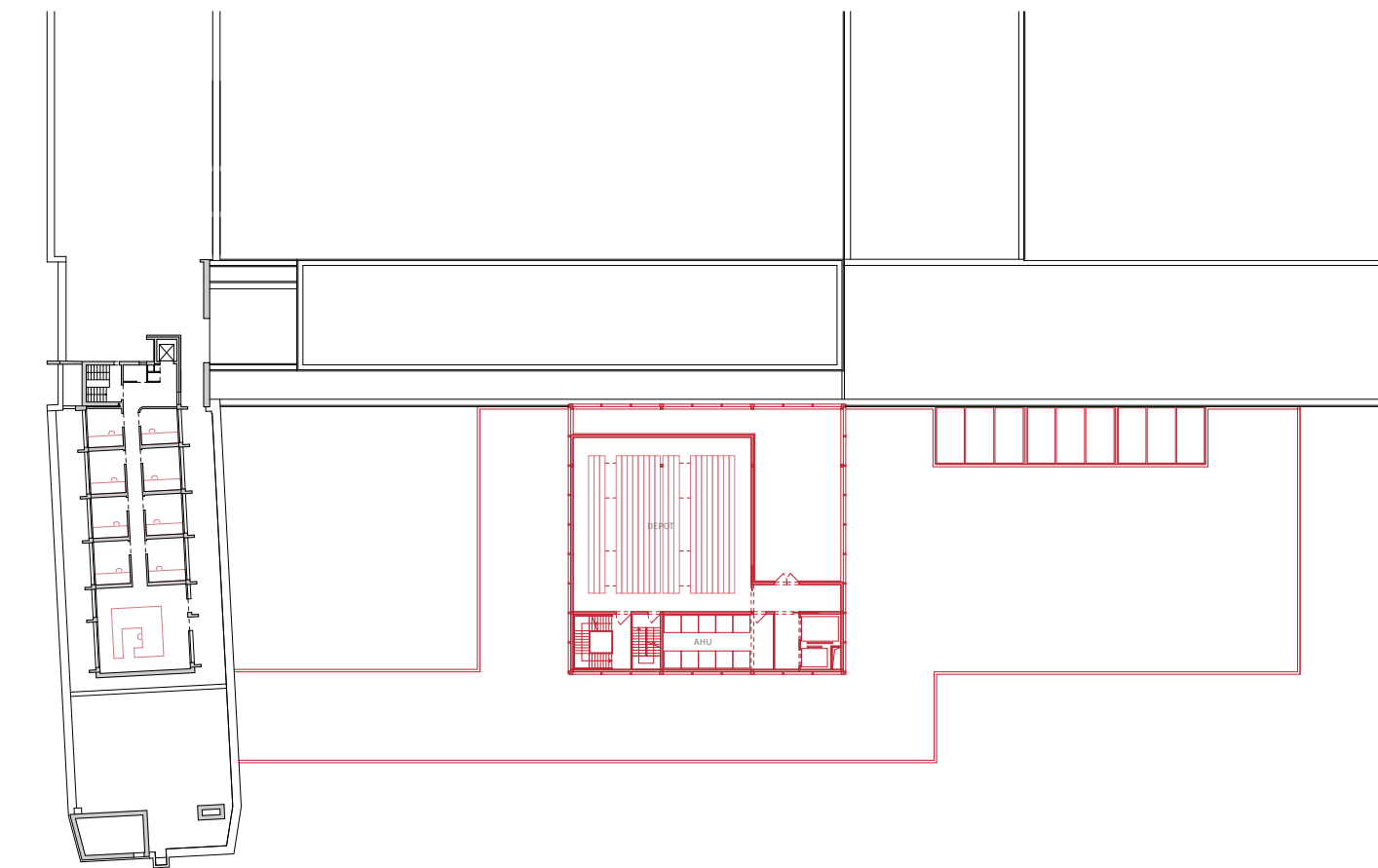
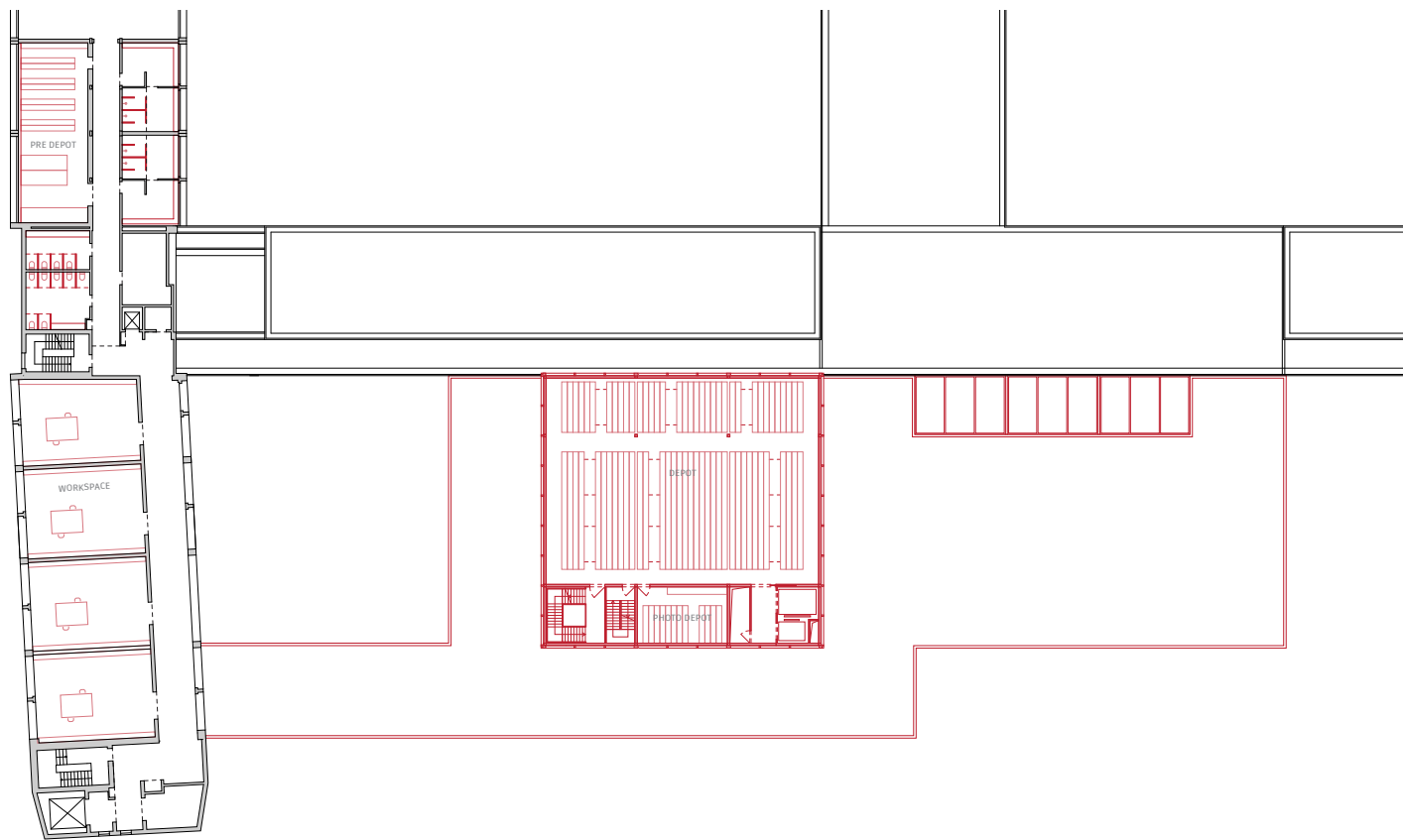
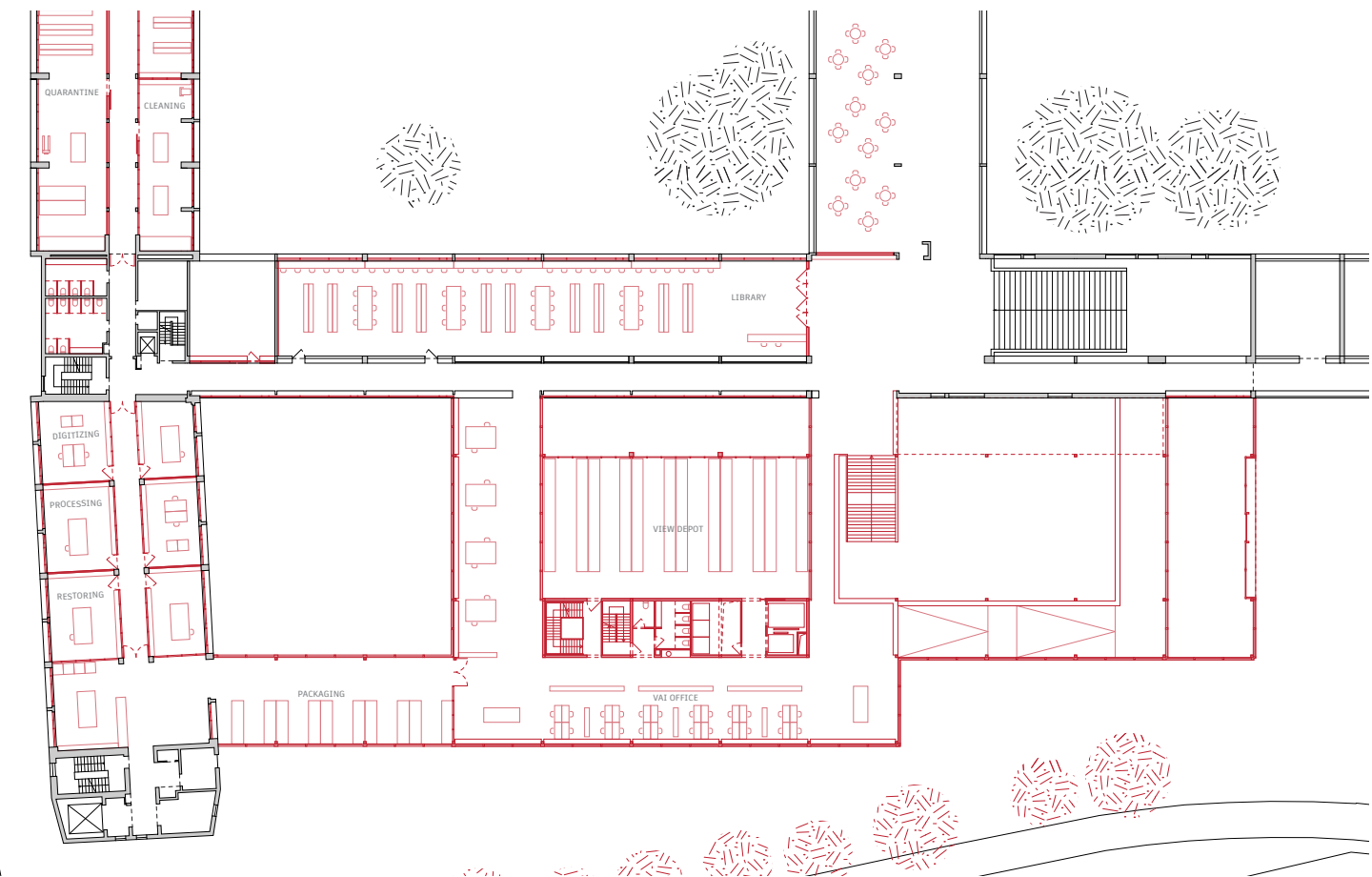
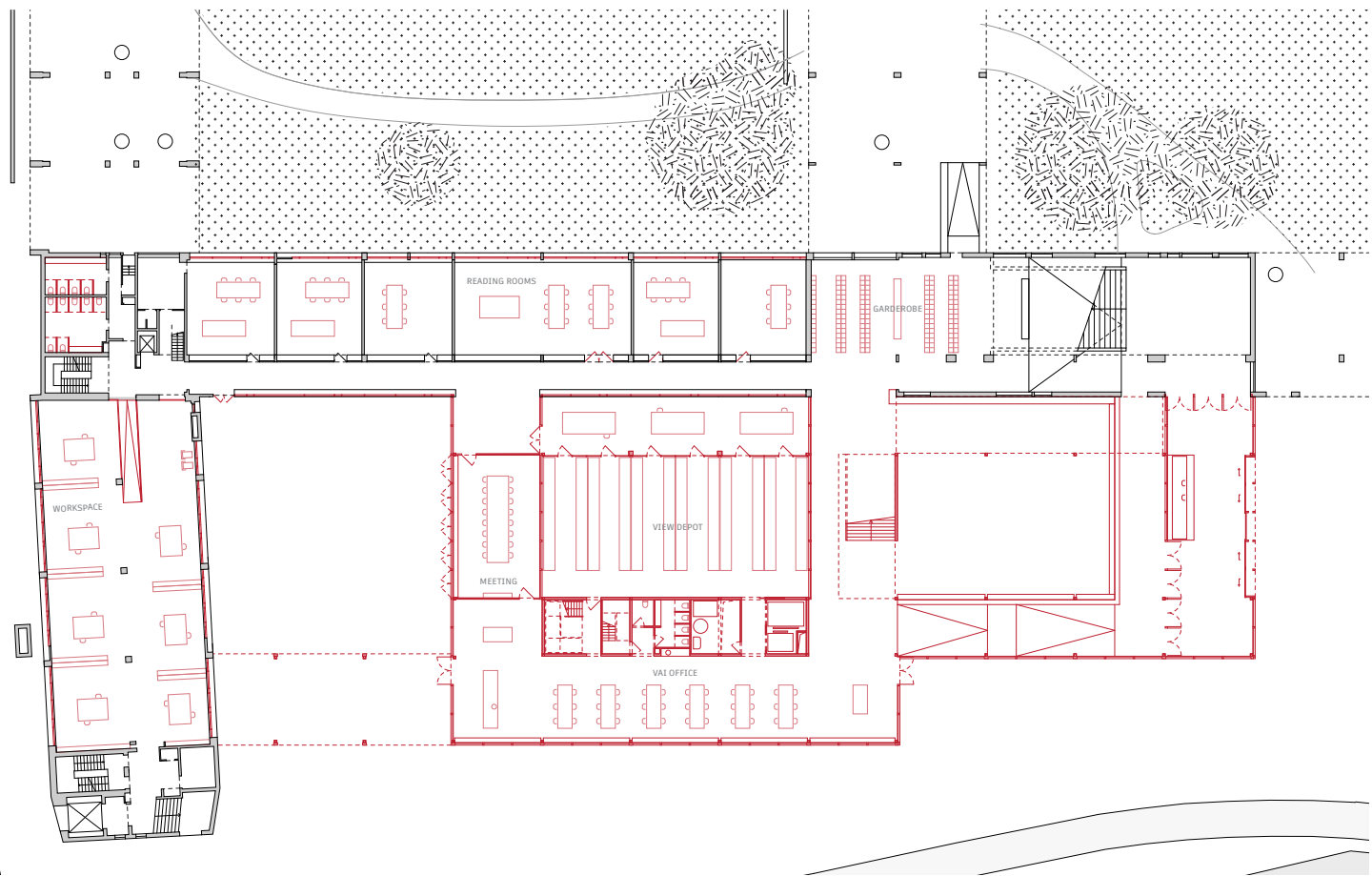
At the beginning, having a full year to design seemed like a dream opportunity to plan and refine something thoroughly. But as time went on, I realized that most of it was spent hesitating, revising, and second-guessing. The more time I had, the harder it became to commit. Tutors often reminded us to treat the project more like a competition entry than a real building—what matters most is a sharp strategy, a strong narrative, and compelling representation.

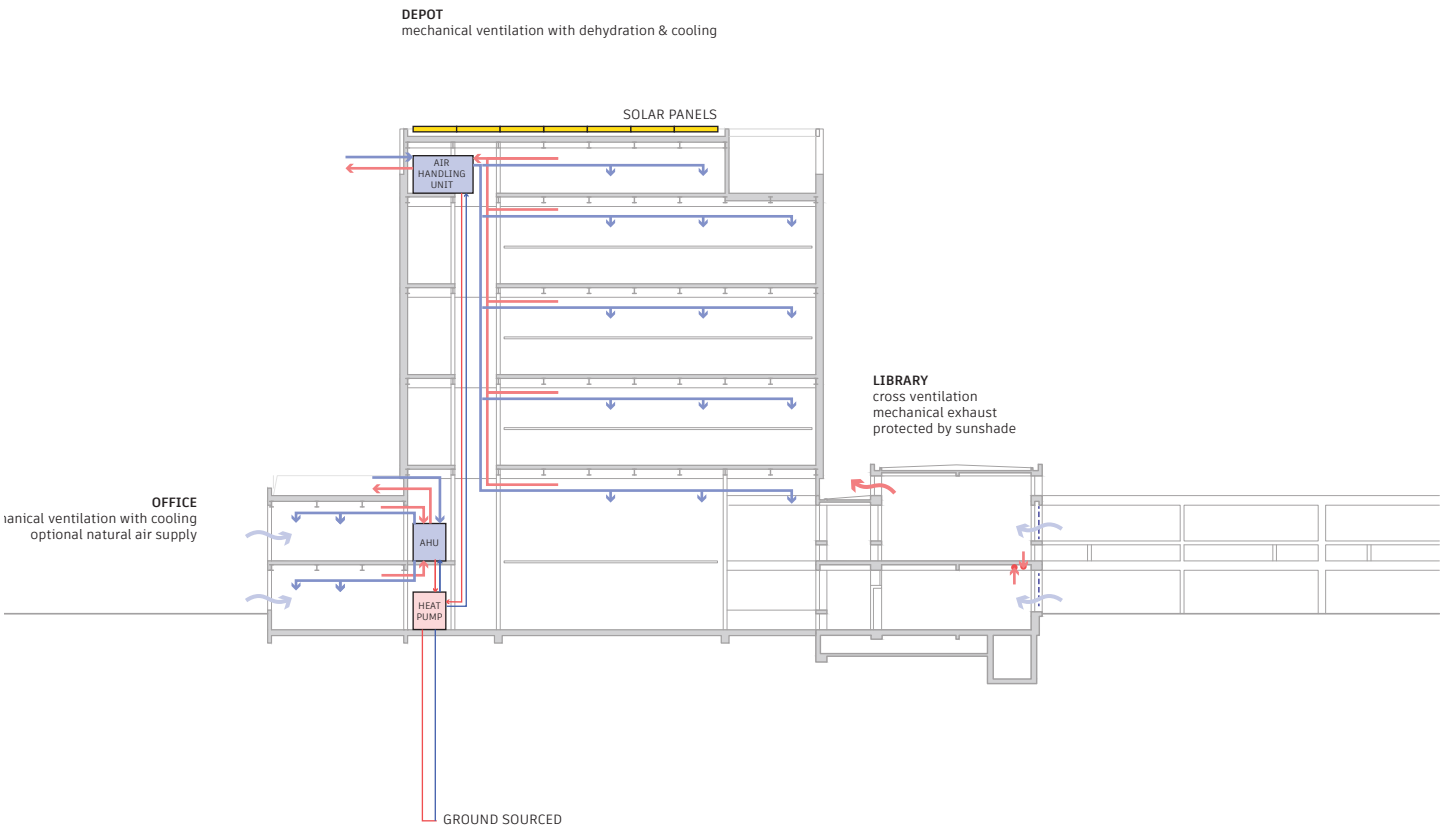
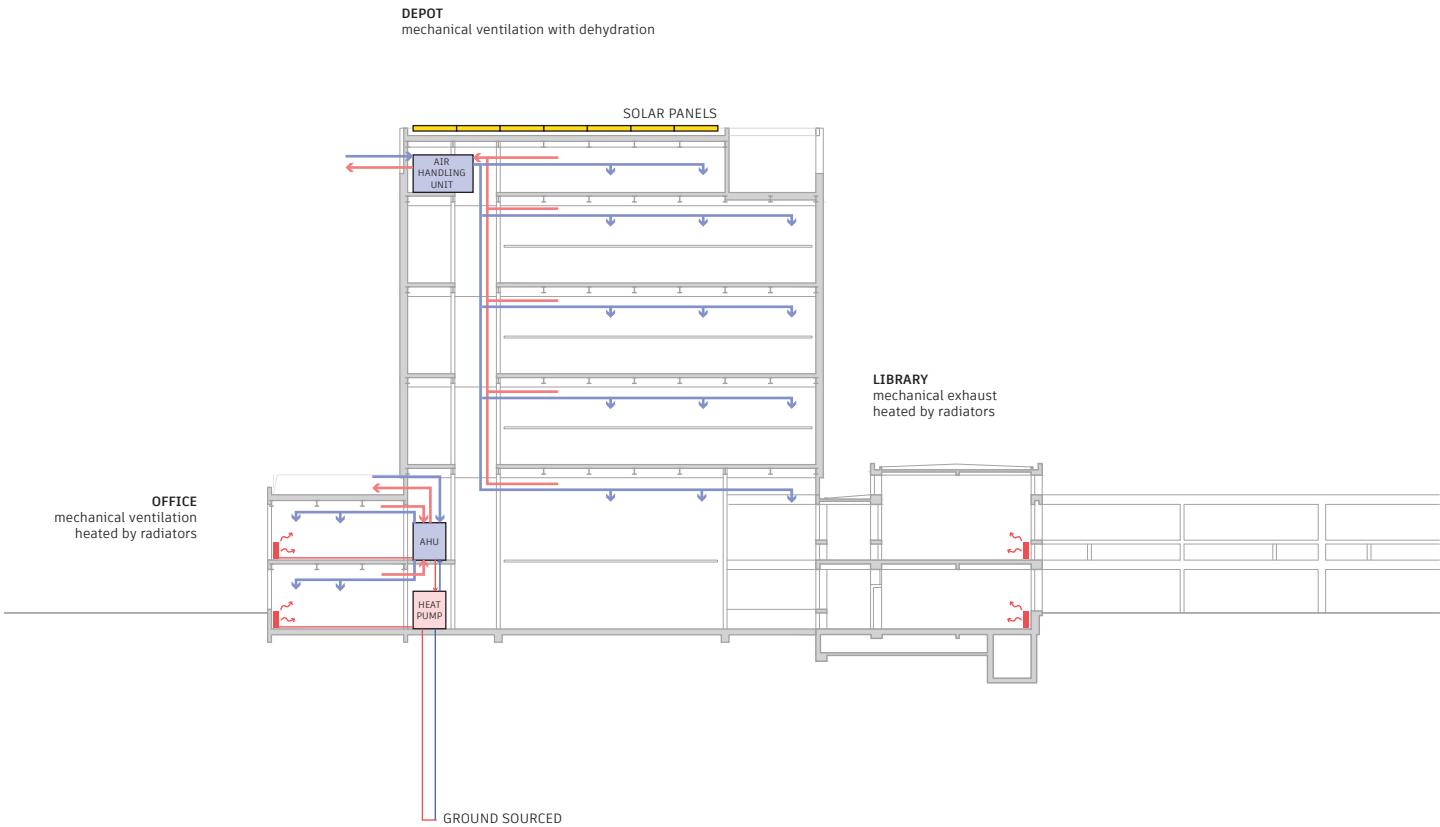
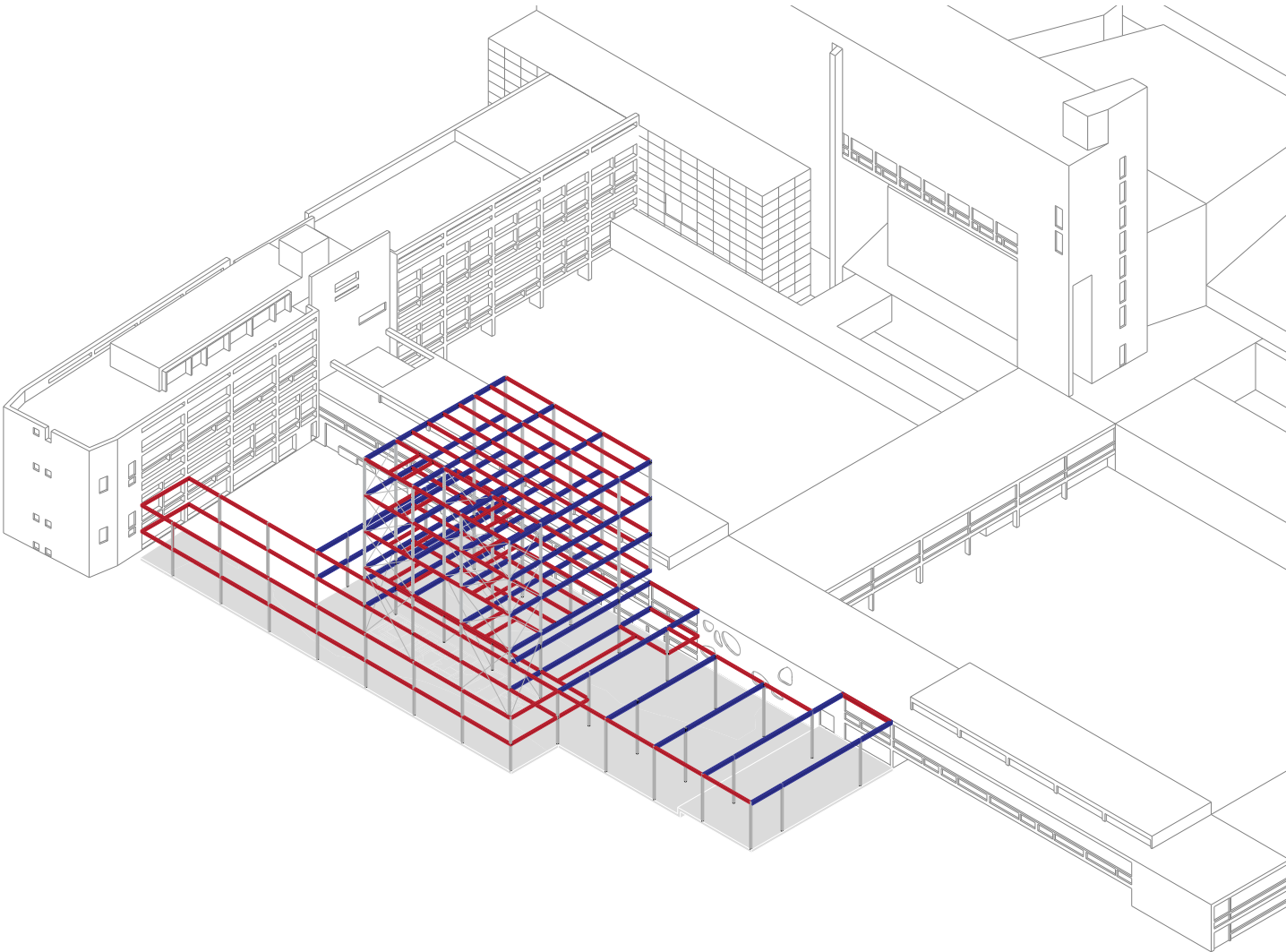
Consulting with four different design tutors in rotation revealed something critical: the importance of standing firm in my own ideas. Learning to take in feedback, yet measure it against my own convictions and criteria, became one of the most valuable lessons of the year. In this tension between external input and internal clarity, I began to understand what it means to find my own voice as a designer.

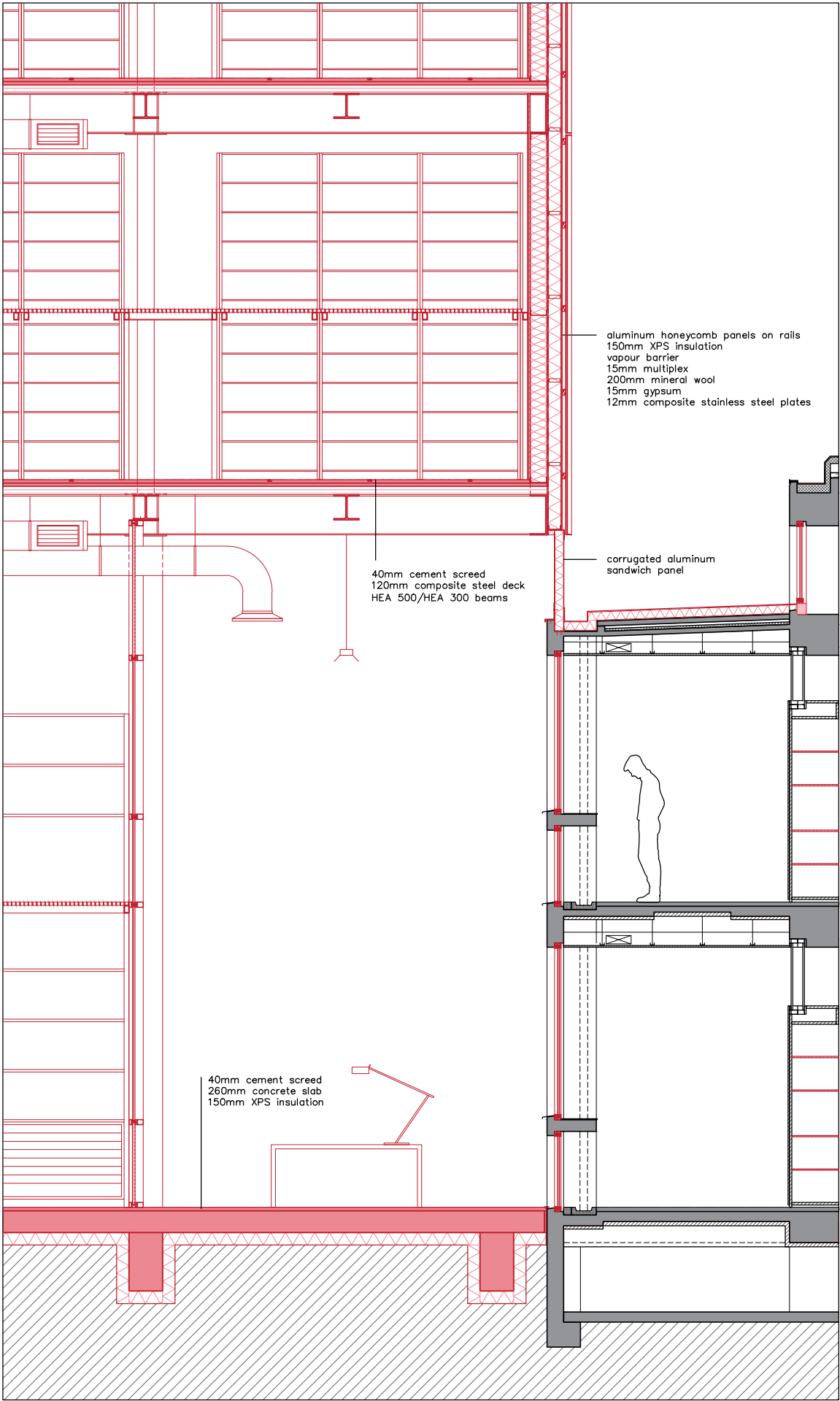


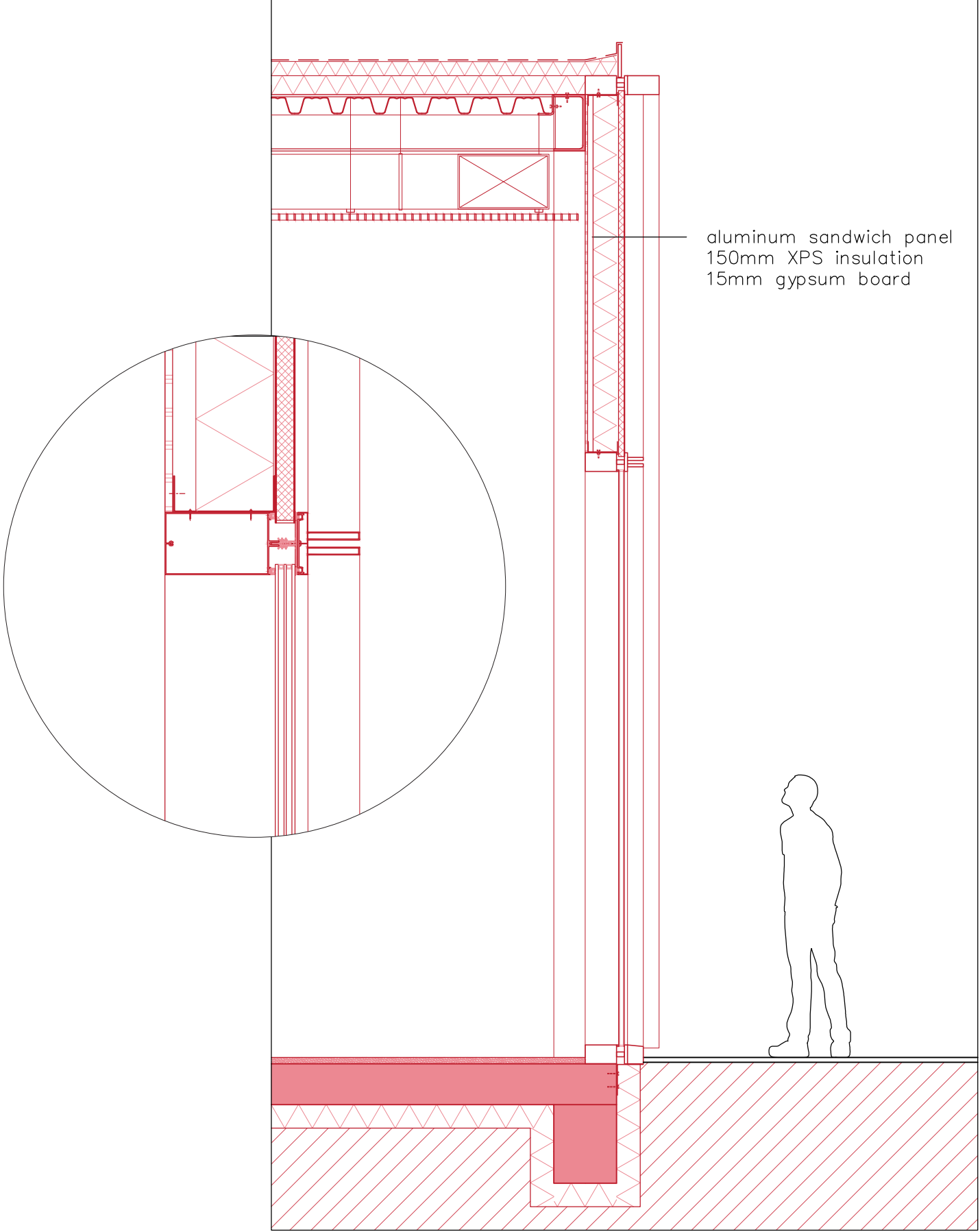
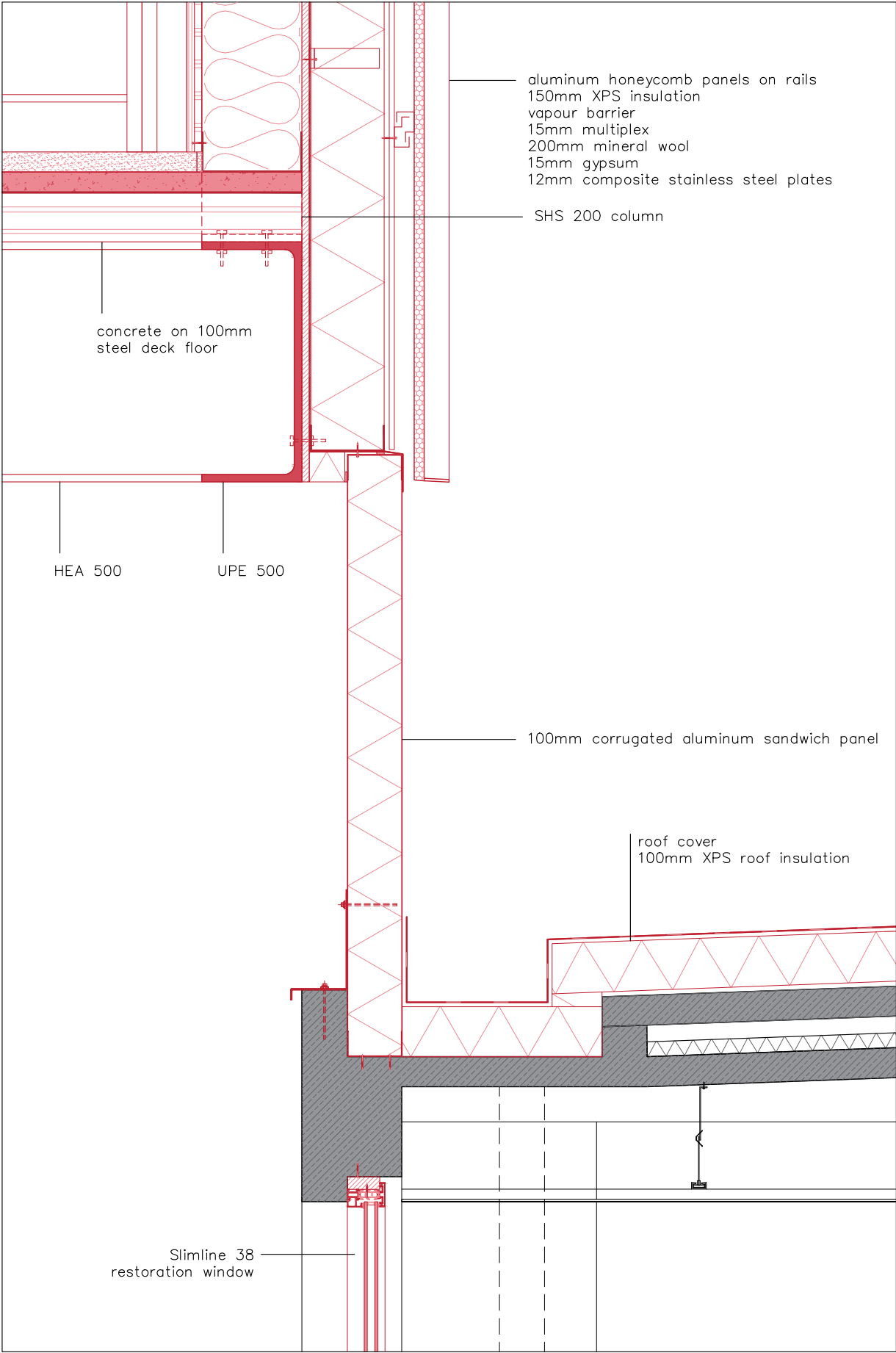
	the site	the archive
	deSingel	VAi
1. A COUNTERBALANCE	the ensemble of volumes	a part of the whole
2. A DEPOT	enveloped rooms	a condensed core
3. A SEQUENCE	the front and the back	a visible process
4. A 3D GRID	two sets of grids	a measurable collection

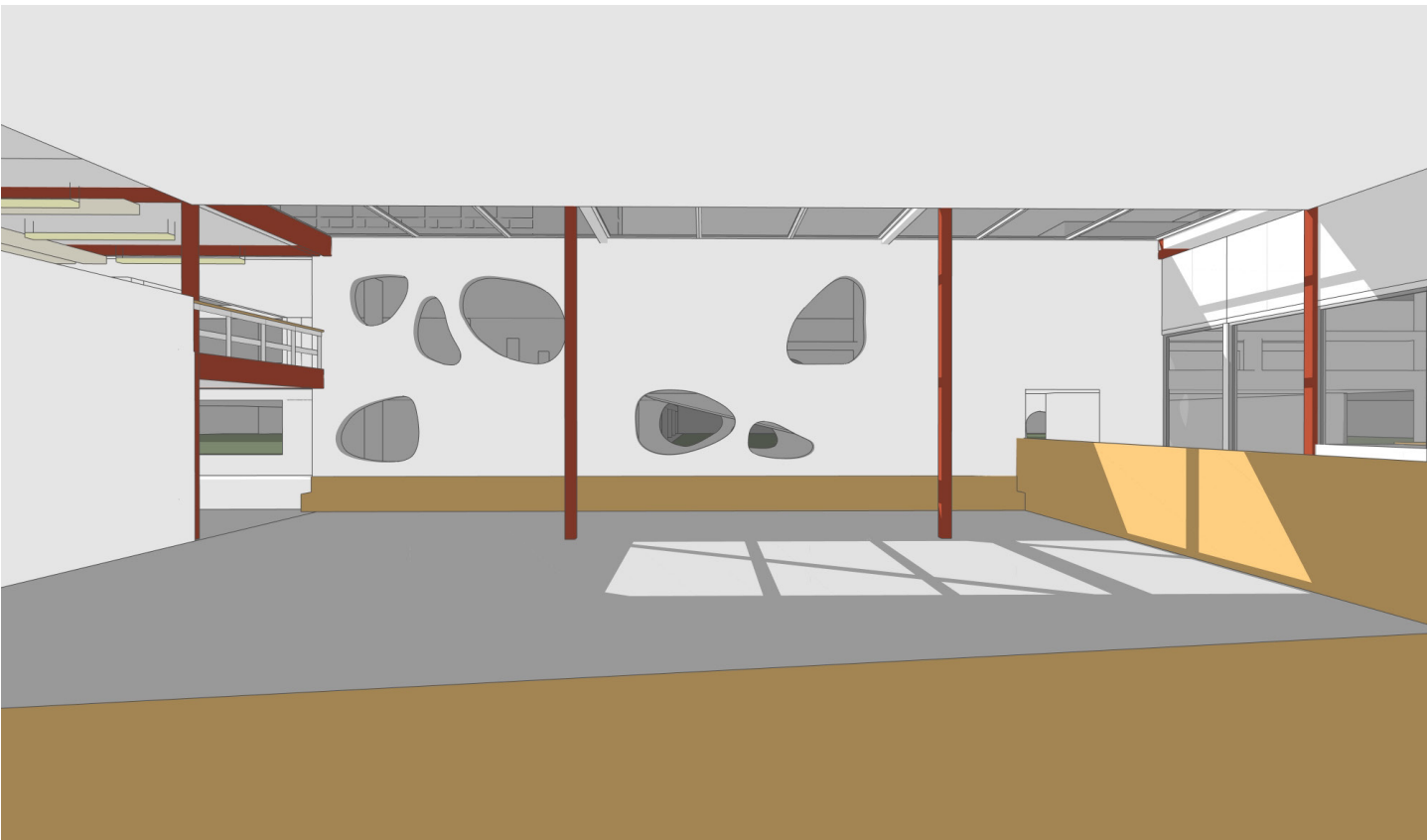
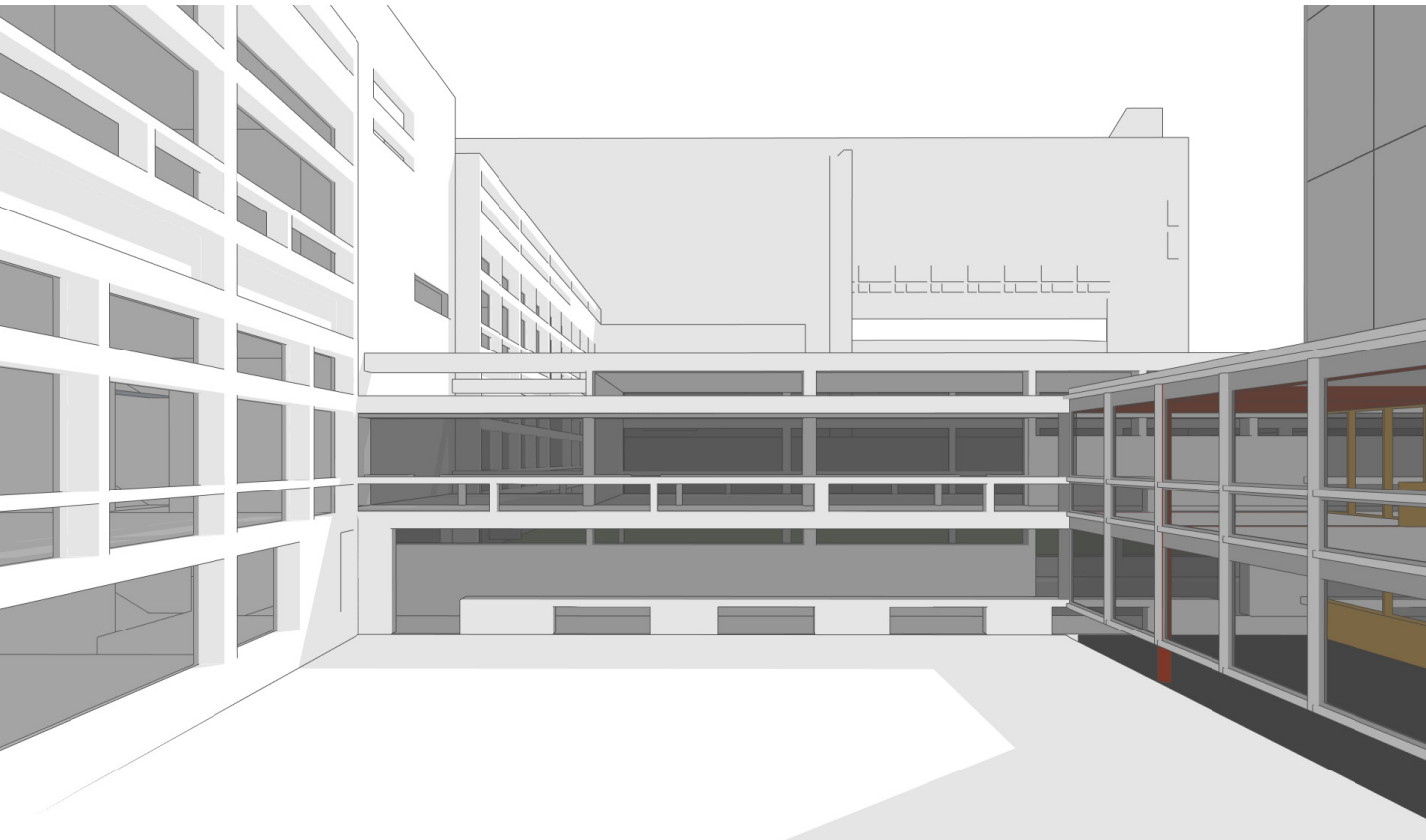
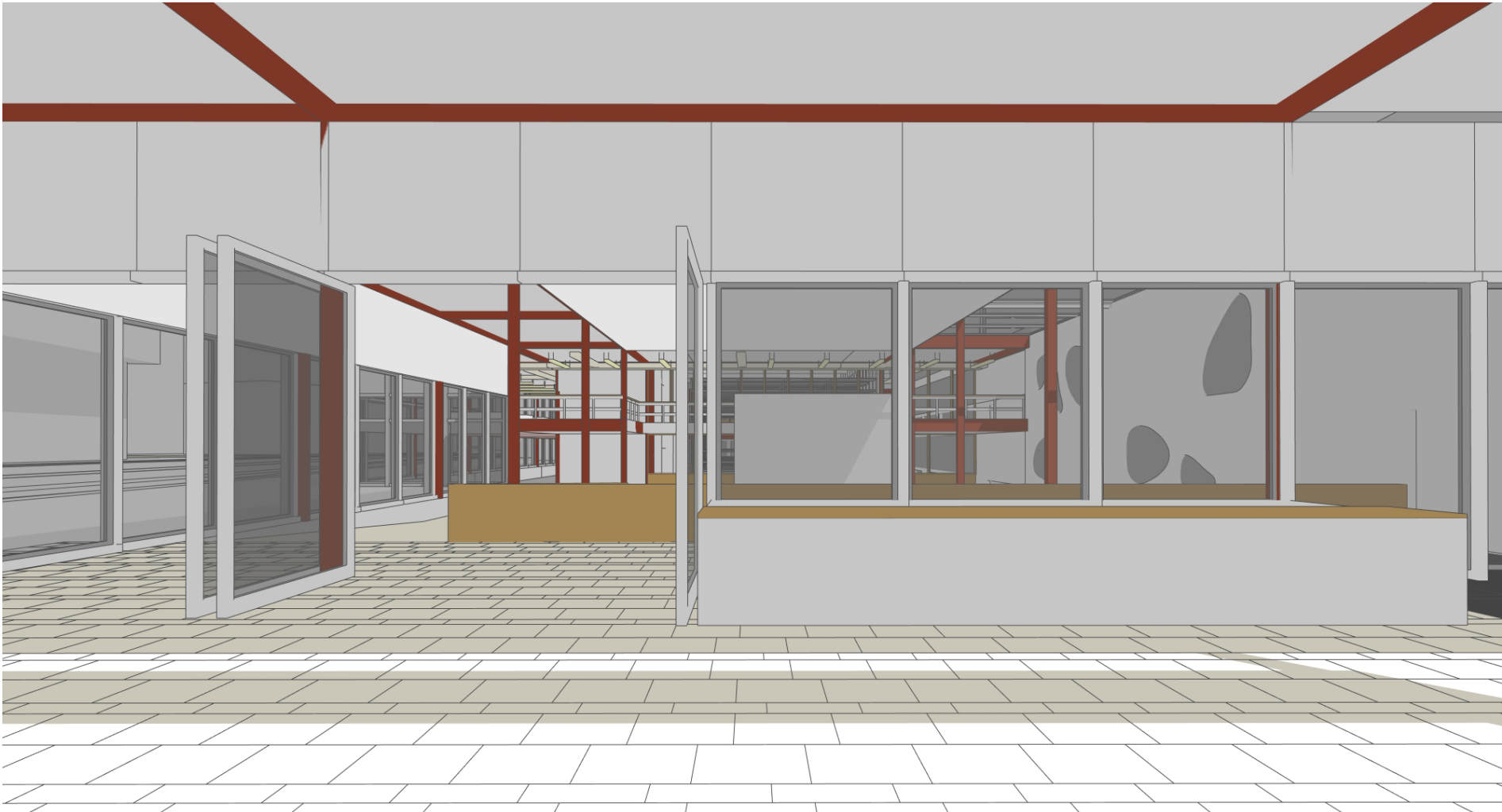
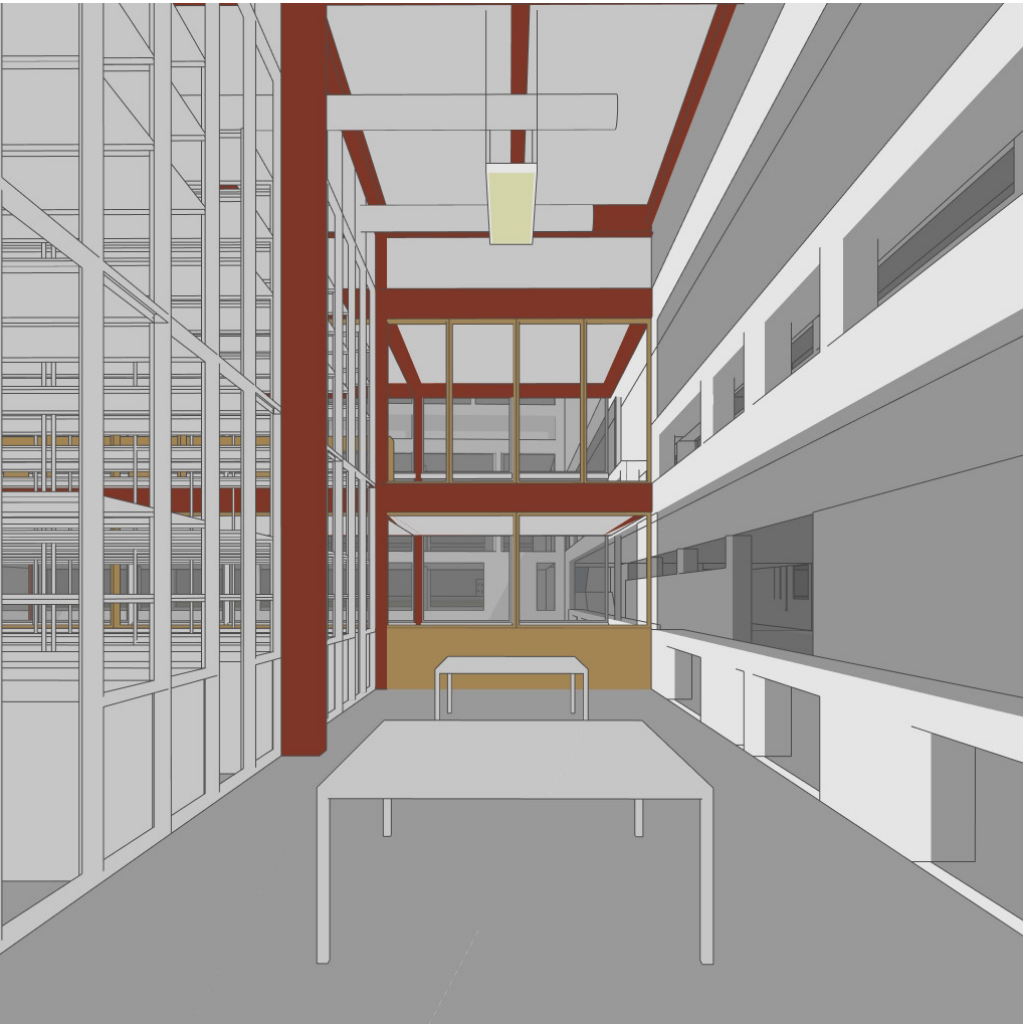


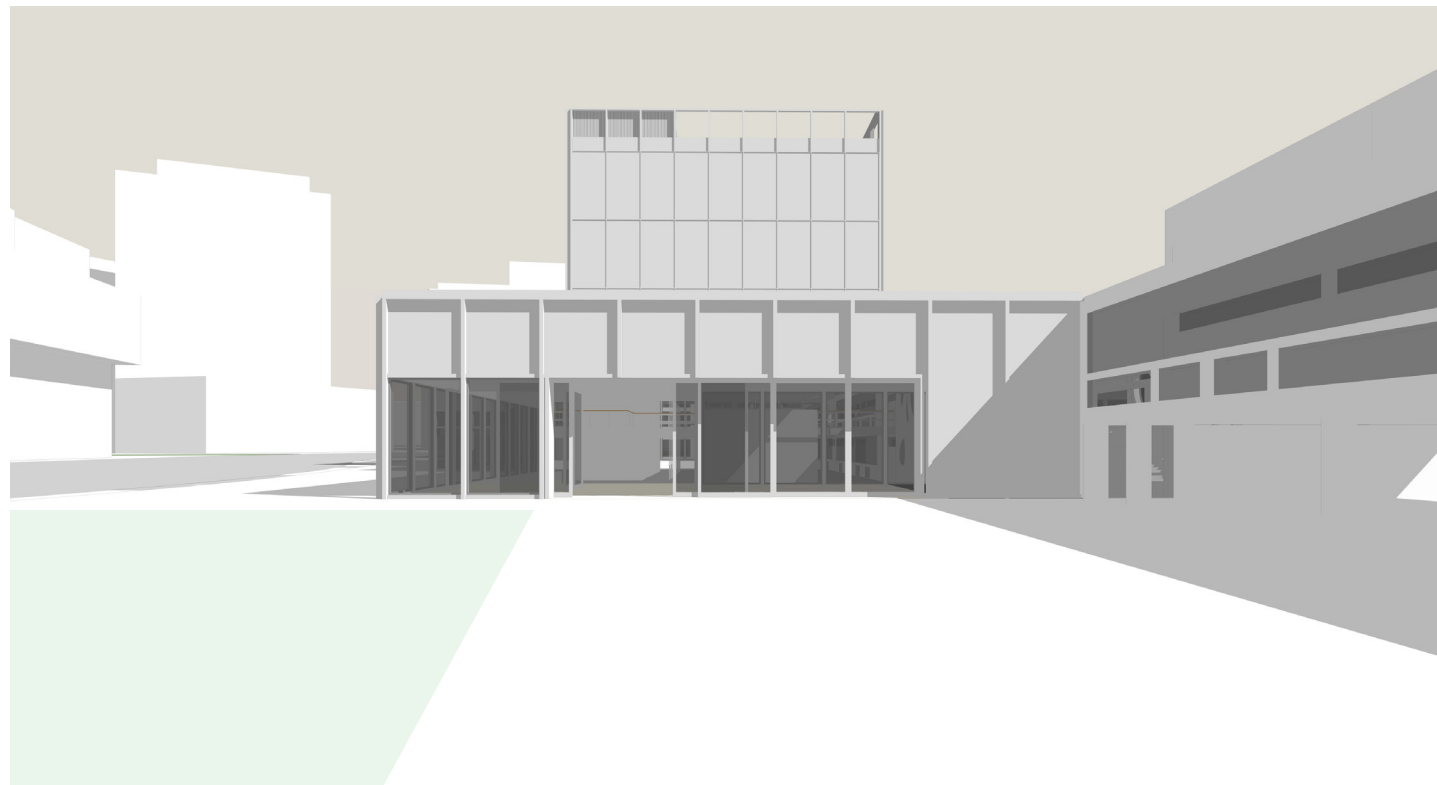












Sam:

- Suggestion to show the total number of pages at the bottom so people know more or less where they are in the presentation. Not numbering for each section.
- The presentation is really **condensed**
- Very clear and **analytical** approach
- ‘Problem of the site’ may be referred to as the ‘challenge of the site.’ Could you give some feedback about the location of **Antwerp** and its relation to the hinterland across the ringway?
- I wouldn’t use the expression potato facade to a layman.
- 4600 renovation and 6000 new built; what does this mean in relation to the given programme? Might be good to put this into context?
- Size of the courtyard. The hall could be a **glazed roof**?
- Activities happening in the building and their relation to the environment: **packaging** on the bridge.
- You have made already two highly detailed interior **models** of archives. Is there a third coming?
- Would there be interference between the projection and the **evening sun**?
- Could you talk about more about the **measurability** of architecture to the body in relation to your project. How does this affect the way you design?
- You demolish the **entrance canopy**. Have you considered keeping it as it is a really clear signifier of the entrance, where as now it might not be so much.
- New **entrance**: looking at the model, the small opening in the crevice along the street looks to me like the front door. Just like there is a possibility underneath the covered space. Where are the staircase? Would you consider lowering the outdoor space recalling the historic marshy conditions of the site?
- Vai **office** instead of lobby?
- VAI is going from sandwiched underneath the UFO of Beel to being the face of De Singel. Do you envision **different entrances** for the institutions as you group them in the four corners of the site?

Matthijs:

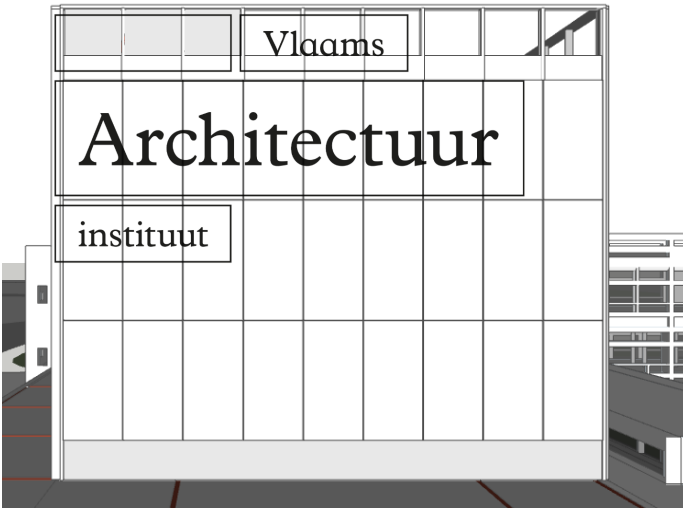
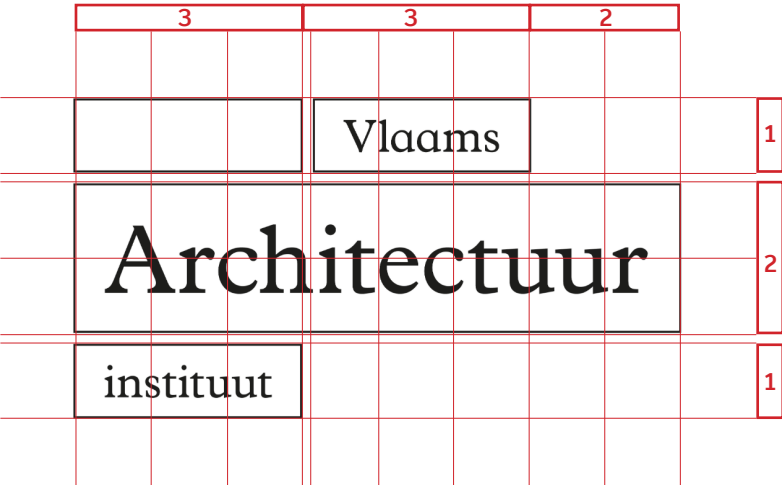
- Top floor **terrace** and depot: how do you see that conversation? Would it be something to make accessible?
- Careful positioning of your building. Materialization makes sense but when it gets to the archiving part, I wonder whether steel is the correct choice. Did you consider **more mass** (concrete) in view of sustainability.

There are a few approaches in deciding what kind of products I want to make for P5:

- what I enjoy doing
 - > physical **models**, across the scales
- what best represents my project
 - > **axonometric** drawing, or parallel projections, to visualize the grid & the 3 rooms in one drawing
- what solves the design better, from which I can learn more
 - > drawing a series of **details**, to show how the abstract grid is translated into tangible materials and connections
- what I miss in my portfolio
 - > collaged / rendered **visualizations**

There has always been a dilemma of whether I should spend my energy in showing my strengths, and present the parts of the project that I'm proud of, or take the chance to learn more and make up for the short ends. I know, of course, that there is no definite answer to this, that it is an art of subtle balance. But I still crave for an objective judgment of where I am on the scale so I can decide which way I want to go. Right now, with all the doubts of "is what I considered the strength of the project merely a skewed projection from myself?", "will there be added value if I push this to the extreme?", I can only stand where I am, looking from side to side without moving in any direction.

I am aware of my paralyzed position and I am aware of that I only have 3 weeks for P5. Still, I couldn't help thinking in a systematic way of what could be done and doing a complete optimization of my strengths, the time, and the value of results. I know that the reason for all this overthinking is rooted in my belief in the existence of an objective "best". I should get rid of these imaginative standards that I keep generating in my own world. But for the time being, they are still deeply programmed in me that are on "auto starts" and cannot be "forced off".



As Sam pointed out, the VAI needs some letters on top of the building to show its equal position to deSingel & the conservatorium.

The most obvious solution is putting **three letters**, VAI, in each of the three closed panels on the top corner. It matches with the style of the existing signages. But the lettertype and the spacing makes the "VAi" looks unfamiliar, as the VAI doesn't have a logo like this. To an outsider, the VAI would not be directly linked to architecture.

Then I looked closed to the current **logo** of the VAI. I see that it follows a grid system and could actually be place perfectly on my facade. In this way the logo becomes a part of the building, it can be subtle since it's already readable from a distance due to its size. The "Vlaams" could be a neon light sign where people look out through on the roof terrace. But the size of it suggests its priority over the other two institutions, which was already pointed out by Sam as a problem. It also pulls the centre of focus down, and weakens the contrast between the box and the plinth.

A smaller version of that logo is neither legible nor highlighting the grid.

Another version could just be putting **"architecture"** on the top, but it is a bit too general and contextless. It can be misunderstood as a placeholder. It's as titling a book as "BOOK". Too unserious.

In the end I chose for the corner "VAI". A simple decision on the signage manifests the balance between the autonomy of VAI and composition of the whole ensemble.



This project journal may have started with a lot of ambition in the beginning but faded into mundane products and very **personal writings** in the second half. It does not show as much design studies, sketches, decision-making process, and development towards the final design as I wished. Instead, it shows inner struggles, self doubts and random observations that may not be connected to the last-minute decisions I made.

I have a lot to confess and reflect about the very negative and **passive attitude** I developed towards the project. I need more resilience in dealing with situations that are not fully under control. People around me have been so supportive, that I just accepted the way it is. I accepted that my graduation project is my least favourite in the whole master study. With the other projects, I had a mysterious drive that just kept me working, improving and giving all of it. As effortlessly as I once gained this drive, I found it slipping away just as easily this time. I found myself on the opposite pole – I have absolutely zero motivation to improve my design and push myself. It can be blamed to the duration of the project. Perhaps I gave too much previously, and in doing so, drained the love and energy I once had for architecture. I just hope that it is not all downhill from now on. I mean, I should not just hope but I should actively work on it.

One thing that I appreciate in this project, or in the process, is my **genuineness**. The project pushed me to question myself again and again – without coming to an answer – just like the many threads documented in this project journal. I chose to openly write down my most sincere and raw reflections here, without worrying whether they meet academic standards, so this precious experience of how architecture stimulated my personal growth is archived.



architecture tutors /

Sam de Vocht
Daniel Rosbottom
Susanne Pietsch
Jurjen Zeinstra

building technology tutor /

Matthijs Klooster

research tutor /

Amy Thomas
Susanne Pietsch

students /

Alessandra D'Acunto
Anna Klaver
Bruno Teles Xavier
Daan Franken
Dilek Zaid
Ertuğ Çiftçi
Iris Niederer
Jakub Nowak
Jenny Fang
Jiarui Xing
Jur Sinia
Laura Tijchon
Liren Chu
Maksymilian Bernady
Maksymilian Jaszczuk
Margaux Lomax
Romain Touron
Sem Verwey
Silas Windrich
Stanisław Kilian
Veronica Danesin
Yueyi Liang
Yunke Li
Yuqing Zhang
