

# project journal

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Msc3/4 Interiors Buildings Cities

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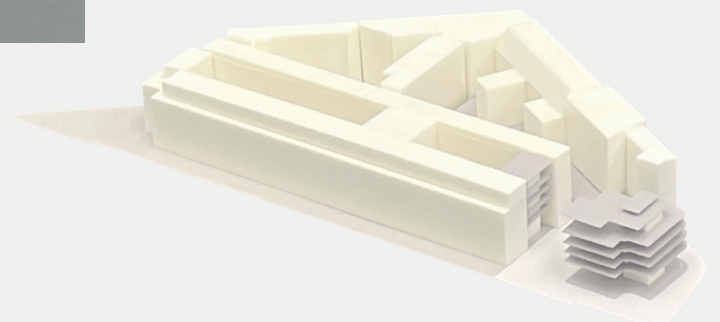
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# an introduction

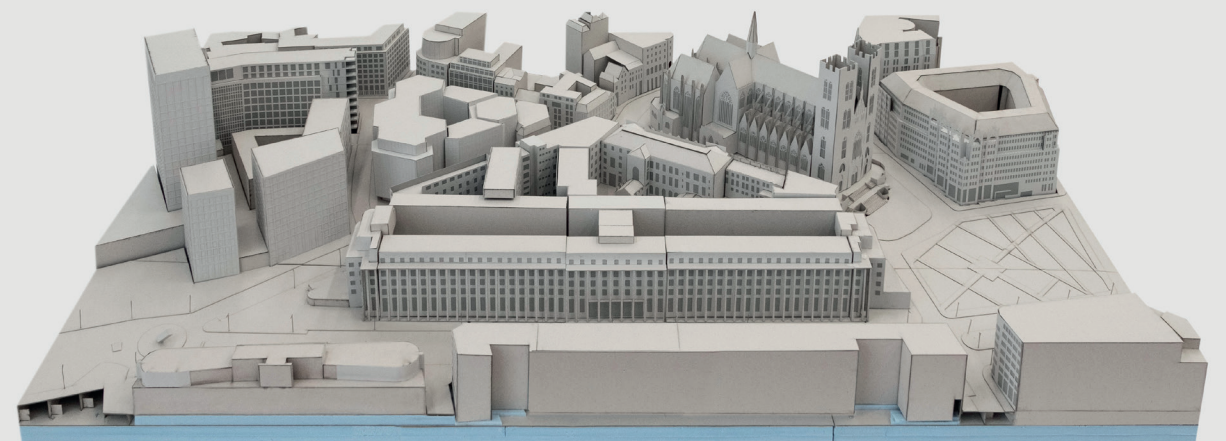
## the future bank: a new face in the city

### allowing for unconventional permeable spaces within a vast urban block

This year, the Interiors Buildings Cities graduation studio has revolved around the topic of the Future Bank. The project addresses the transformation of the National Bank of Belgium set in Brussels. The existing building consists of a vast triangular urban block of 90.000 m2 consisting of a conglomerate of different buildings from different time periods. The main building was designed by Van Goethem just after the Second World War. It is an imposing building with a 200 meter long columnar façade, rising up from the adjacent boulevard. The complexities of the site, the sectional shift of two stories, the position between upper and lower Brussels etc., and the critical position of the bank as an institution within the contemporary societal climate make this design project a critical and challenging one.

The national bank of belgium currently is a traditional and hierarchical public institution dressed up in a modernist building. But as the city of Brussels has declared itself a doughnut economy, the city is moving to less traditional forms of economics. They are no longer aiming for unending growth, but aiming for stability, equality and wellbeing. Therefore the bank needs to be reframed within it's new economic and societal context. What image does the bank want to portray in the 21st century?

Here the project began with the grass route movements, counteracting the heavy façade by creating more intimate spaces within the colonnade. This translated into reframing the bank into several parts with a new end stretching out towards the city. This allowed for more intimate spaces to be created within the vast urban block, creating a new public and inviting face of the bank. *A new face in the city.*







National Bank of Belgium, Boulevard de Berlaimont, 1950s. Source: hemels.brussels

Introduction.

Contemporary society is governed by the regulation and flow of capital. The supply, perceived value and control of money determines, to a large extent, the conditions in which we live, and its accumulation underpins the perceived success of individuals, companies, cities, regions and nation states.

Capitalism enshrines this right of self-enrichment, at every scale. It does however place limits upon it. In order to regulate capitalist economies, complex financial systems have developed, which control finance and secure assets. Banks of many kinds provide liquidity and invest wealth. National Banks control the production and supply of money, regulate their commercial counterparts and, together with governments, define monetary policy and protect national interests. They are the lenders of last resort at times of crisis.

Modern industrialised economies measure their performance through growth, a desire for the sustained increase of national wealth which has underpinned the thinking of National Banks. A sustained increase in gross domestic product has been the mantra of prudent governance, fueled by work and production and regulated through finance, the control of interest rates and levels of inflation. However, we are arriving at the collective realisation that our obsession with enrichment has come at an enormous cost. The relentless extraction of profit has unbalanced the finite resources of the planet to the extent that

humanity now faces an existential threat. As we attempt to address the enormous challenges the future holds, we ask what might be the role of a future central bank?

Set in Brussels, the project will address the transformation of the National Bank of Belgium. This occupies a vast, triangular urban block of 91,000m2 that is situated at a critical moment between the upper and the lower parts of the city. This is made manifest in the 8m sectional shift across the site as it rises from the austere, 200m long, columnar façade that announces it to the Boulevard de Berlaimont.

From palatial beginnings, the present bank developed as a consolidated aggregation of buildings, planned by Marcel Van Goethem after the Second World War. Its current form is the result of a massive reconstruction project that transformed and rescaled this piece of city into an imposing, yet ultimately alienating urban environment. Built to its boundaries, the introverted nature of the complex reflects the historic need to secure Belgium’s financial reserves within its walls. However, since its completion, there has been a fundamental shift in the requirements placed upon it. Industrial functions like the printing and storage of currency have been relocated out of the city, or overseas; finance is becoming increasingly digital; while Belgium’s membership of the EU has led to much of the Bank’s traditional role being subsumed into the European Central Bank (ECB), based in Frankfurt. In response the National Bank has decided to redefine itself physically.

first thoughts  
week 1.2

what is a bank? a fortress of the city? an archive, a storage, a secret place, a workspace? when I think of a bank I think of wealth, gold, economies, capitalism. I also think of secrecy and confidence. the bank is not a place I would visit or go to on a regular basis. only maybe if you’re bank card expires.. It’s not like a library or a museum, but it is somehow public. how does this work?

I am just left with a lot of questions...[what is a bank in a media an tech-based society? does it offer us anything besides ‘old comfort’? did capitalism form our whole built environment? Is our Western architecture based on progress and wealth? What would our cities look like in different systems, such as socialism? Would they look similar or totally different? and how can the bank relate to the relations between people?

“architecture establishes plans, which establish relations between people”



Ford Foundation, Roche & Dinkeloo  
Location: New York, NY  
Size: 287,500 Square Feet  
Completion Date: 1968

when you enter the building there is a feeling of being enveloped by pristine glass cubicles all equally divided, none seem more important than the other





their buildings [roche and dinkeloo] aimed to demonstrate a belief for "A unique solution for a unique problem", in the case of the Ford Foundation the problem was the isolated workplace



equally divided glass facade gives the illusion to the public that everyone has a corner office



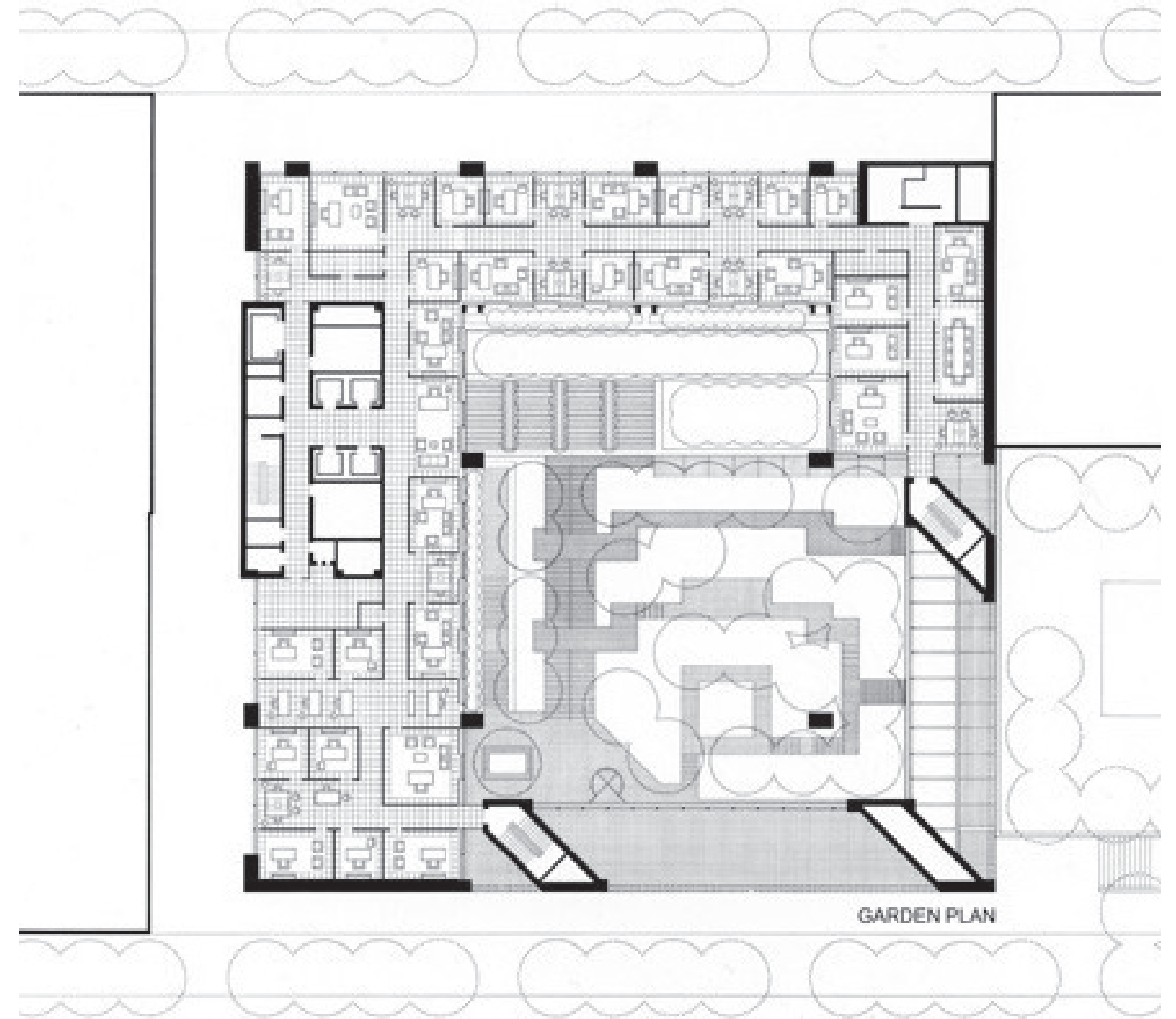
hierarchy manifested in a straight manner upwards and across very typical for offices at the time but the idea of hierarchy is perhaps not as initially apparent to an outsider

Julia Linde

## precedent study: the ford foundation

### week 1.2

the building is broken into a 6 foot module grid which determined the positioning of all the spatial divisions  
hierarchy is shown by how many squares in the grid you occupy





## the photo week 1.2

this is a very unique building because it is an office of executives. therefore as much as there are signs of hierarchy it is much less obvious than in other offices. for example all the furniture in the building is the same. the secretary's chair and the chairman's chair were the same.  
the ford foundation, paper model study. the building we have to grasp, inhale. our group is building this picture in a model.



## Future Bank

MSc3 AR3AI100 Week 1.1–1.3



Thomas Demand, Copyshop, 1999. C-Print / Diasec 183,5 x 300 cm. Courtesy the artist and Esther Schipper, Berlin  
© VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, 2020. Photo © Thomas Demand

interior. The task will be to recreate these photographs as three-dimensional models and then record them in a way that recreates the original image. To be successful this will require extensive analysis of the drawings alongside the image. Its intention is to focus attention on the spatial and experiential character of the studied buildings and the ways in which they are inhabited, as a means for critique.

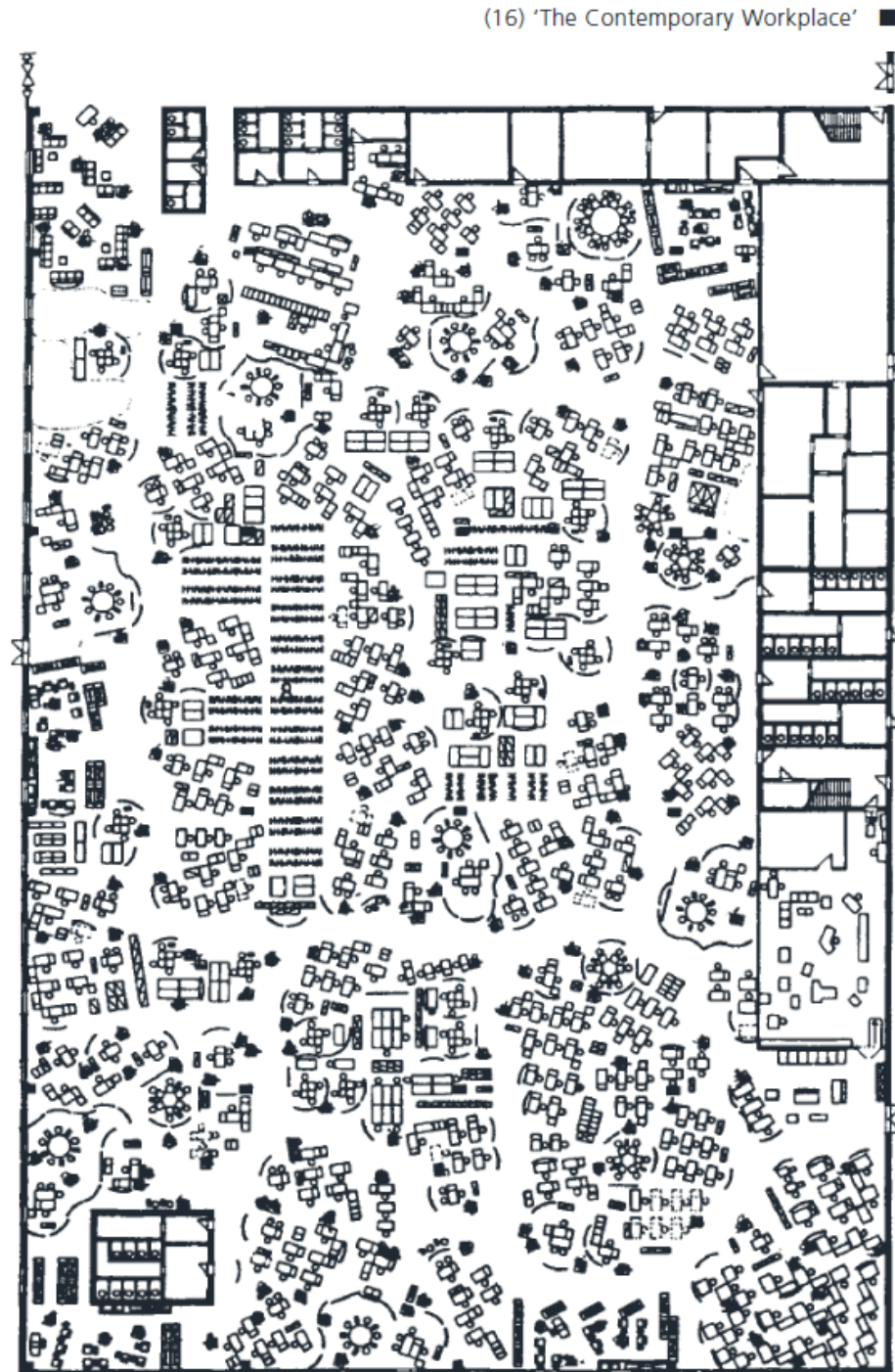
In parallel students will undertake an individual research task, visiting and documenting an office space of their own choice, carefully recording through a series of drawings, an actual office as they find it; the kind of office environment people actually work in and create for themselves, as a counterpoint to the canonical examples offered. Students will draw a workspace in detail as a plan, reflected ceiling plan and elevation, recording not only the spatial arrangements and types and scales of furnishing, finishes and lighting, but also the ways in which it is appropriated at that moment, by the person who inhabits it, as a landscape of family photos, mobile phone, empty coffee cups and post it notes for example.



# the contemporary workplace

## week 1.2

image from: gender space architecture  
bürolandschaft, effective communications lead to a highly efficient floorplan, logical flow of information  
looks friendly, but hardcore efficiency  
hierarchy through amount of space, positioning in the room and space divisions



# Gender space architecture: an interdisciplinary introduction

## by Daphne Spain

The main point Spain is addressing in this text, is the spatial segregation in office spaces, especially between the manager and the secretary, (the man and the woman). She discusses the fact that office design is often enforcing spatial segregation which contributes to gender stratification. Through different architectural means – walls, bookcases, plants, desks – the space is controlled which makes the transferring of knowledge often not very possible. This causes the inability for secretaries to climb the ladder, since they are unable to control the spaces in which they work which does then NOT lead to knowledge and indirectly power.

Spain explains these issues by means of the 'open-floor' and the 'closed-door' jobs. The typical women's workplace is an 'open-floor job', involving limited access to power and a very public nature of the space in which they work, whilst the typical men's workplace is a 'closed-door job', meaning supervisory jobs, or managing functions. In order to transfer knowledge, formal and informal, frequent contact is necessary. Spatial proximity provides opportunities for subordinates to be seen by the boss. Because secretaries are often placed in a central and public place in the office – whilst men get private office cubicles surrounding the public space – they are excluded from the knowledge transfer, which makes the potential chance of improving women's status little to none.

As is shown, office design plays a big role in this issue of segregation. A higher status within an organisation is accompanied by greater control of space. Within the contemporary office, space is still divided in hierarchies. Whether it's a bigger cubicle, a larger executive office or more space defined by luxuries plants and furniture; space symbolises status.

After reading this text, I started thinking about this issue of gendered space. Luckily, I have not experienced something like this in my career (yet). Still, this text makes me feel as though women are from the beginning at a disadvantage. But I'm not so sure whether this counts for every employment sector, especially in the 21st century. I wonder whether this is an issue of hierarchy or gender? In the group discussion we touched briefly on this, but I'm still not quite sure... It is true that hierarchy and patriarchy are often interlinked with each other, but maybe this is just because woman started working way later in history, I don't know whether we can blame men for that? Anyway, my question is whether in the contemporary workspace gender still plays a role?

The part on secrets was also something that stuck with me. Secretaries are meant to be keeping important secrets while they are seated in the 'public arena'. But a common prejudice about woman would also be that they 'tell each other everything'. So how come men trust them with their secrets? Also, the office wife, which apparently was a thing, is something of a whole other world to me. The men in the offices basically had two wives, one at home and one in the office. I think that is absolutely ridiculous! It definitely reveals something about the society in which this happened and the role of woman in it.

All in all, after reading this text I was left with a few questions... [How come we experience privacy and physical spatiality as such status symbols? How come we as humans define hierarchies according to amounts of space?

Why do we not define hierarchies by 'good deeds', or something else? How does space define hierarchies in office buildings and why do we allow for so much power and status to depend on square meters?]



*"buildings betray what we value"*  
 “buildings betray what the corporate world and real estate values”

## Buildings and society: office buildings and organisational change, by Francis Duffy

### week 1.2

Buildings communicate what is found to be important in our societies. In his text Duffy describes the development of office buildings and organisational change by means of juxtaposing two examples from three different time periods. What becomes strikingly clear is that office buildings are a reflection of society and a direct consequence of technological innovations, organisational change and economic forces. “Buildings are like mirrors, but like grotesque distorting mirrors, since they exaggerate some features of life and diminish others.”

In this text Duffy describes the organisational change of office buildings by means of internal and external factors, comparing their similarities and differences. Within two ages the office design itself has completely evolved. The Sun Life Insurance Company Office and the Oriel Chambers (1850-60s) were built in the form of a palazzo resembling a typical ‘household’, including homely decoration and fireplaces. The floorplans contain small separate units on a long corridor suited for small entrepreneurs and professional men.

The Larkin building and the Guaranty building (1890-1900s) lean towards maximisation and efficiency, resulting in a ‘machine like’ design. The modern office building shows clear evidence of the rapid economic growth. Every little thing is designed for workers doing their job, as efficient as possible. The Guaranty building – the first skyscraper – is basically a copy and paste of corridor floorplans with a light court in the middle of the C-shaped building, whilst the Larkin is a compact factory like building with a machine like work floor in the middle.

The Seagram building and the Ninoflax (1950-60s) have completely new floorplans, due to the invention of air-conditioning. Plans could be deeper, more offices could fit. Whole clerical factories as big as the Larkin could fit into one floor now. The product of the building is the same as the Guaranty, a copying of floors with corridors and cubic office spaces. In the Ninoflax however, an entirely new open-floor plan was implemented according to the principles of bürolandschaft. The building is a product of organisational ideas in particularly obvious way.

I found reading this text very helpful in order to understand the process of change in office design. It really gave a clear understanding of the organisational changes due to economic forces, inventions such as the elevator and real estate factors. I think the examples are very well chosen, in a way they are ‘iconic’ for their time.

After reading this text I also came to wonder about the bürolandschaft and how it became obsolete within a decade... This open-floor plan principle could really work I think. I wonder what went wrong exactly? In the seminar we talked a bit about the first sentence; Buildings betray what we value. What does the word value mean in this context? Is Duffy talking about economic value, or ethical values? It is such an universal notion, but we all value things differently according to culture, upbringing, social, political background etc. I would argue this text is more about economic value, in that sense Buildings betray what the corporate world and real estate values.

Lastly, what strikes me is the rapid change of office design. It is quite an accurate reflection of our rushed society, trying to maximize everything there is really. It’s funny how the first offices resembled households. The homely aspect of it made it look like a quite nice space to work, maybe even comparable to our home offices during the pandemic. The developments after that are far from anything homely, shortly after offices resembled something more like efficient factories. And now, we have these huge corporate impersonal office buildings that all look the same and show very little character. I wonder how we can maybe take a step back, and ask ourselves whether these are the spaces that we actually like to spend 8 hours a day in?



## the city week 1.3

"In the cultural shift from modernism to post-modernism, argued by many, we strike upon a new 'depthlessness' of cultural life." - corporate towers and symbolic capital

\_what does this depthlessness mean? is it about aesthetics? the way humans interact with architecture? digitalization?

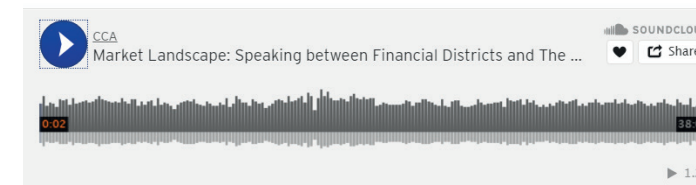


## Audio documentary by Sben Korsh and Maxime Decaudin Market Landscape: Speaking between Financial Districts and the Planet week 1.3

The audio documentary Market Landscape: Speaking between financial districts and the planet by Korsh and Decaudin, touches upon this tension between climate and the world of finance. The documentary describes the disastrous consequences of places of finance, such as the Canary Wharf in London and the Central District of Hong Kong, for the planet. The financial flows from these finance districts dictate the physical realities of place around the world.

Take for example the tar sands in Alberta. Industries (financed through investments of big corporations) have exploited the land for decades, destroying the land and ignoring the suffering of the indigenous people, all in order to produce more oil and more profit. I wonder how long this unending longing for progress and profit is going to last, since our current system is now built on finite resources.

I also realize that I am as much part of this as anyone else. We design spaces and buildings with the most exclusive and expensive materials from all over the world, God knows how these materials are produced or where they come from...





“public space suffers from the rapid developments around corporate towers. The meaning and life has been drained from public space and taken by the public symbols on the skylines of the cities.”

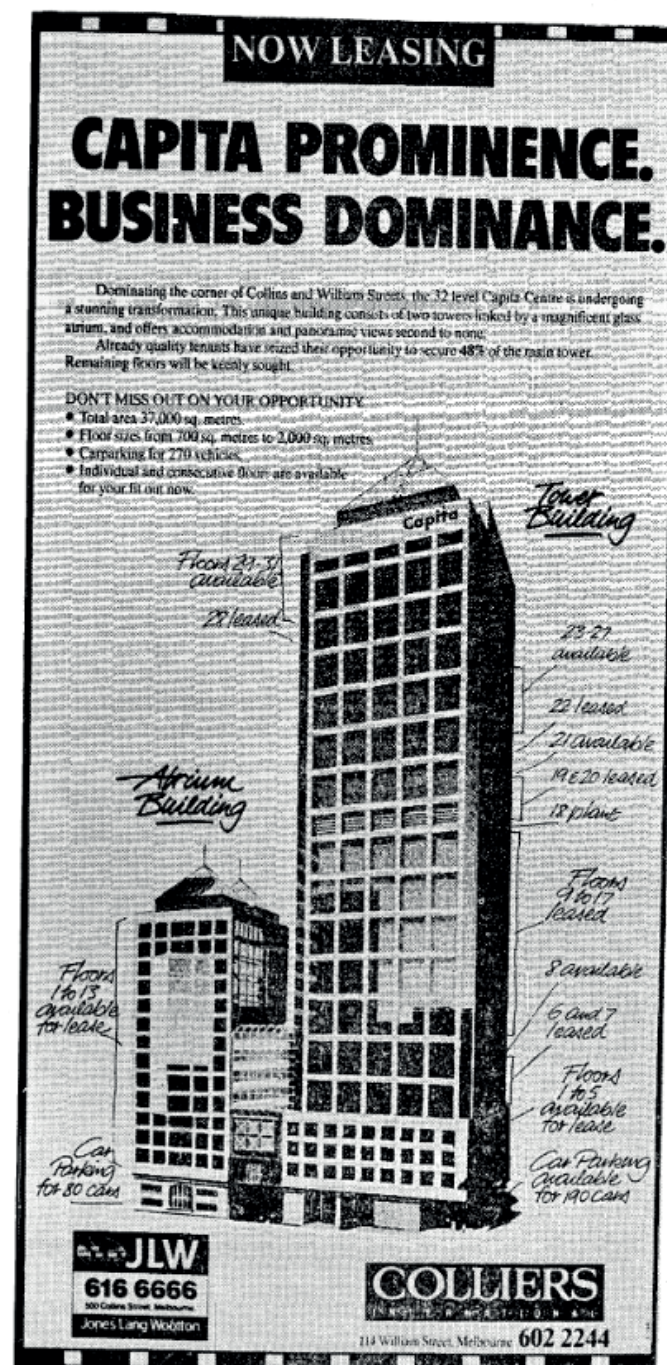


Figure 3. The discourse of power.

## Corporate towers and symbolic capital by K. Dovey week 1.3

This text discusses how myths, symbols, advertisements and meanings have become interwoven with corporate architecture. In our age office buildings, office towers, are portrayed as masterpieces, each carefully and uniquely crafted; all authentic, timeless, unique.

Dovey explains how the office tower functions as a capital symbol by means of a few characteristics of the building. The location, preferably on a prestige street in a corporate cluster in a city is preferable, because the place of the building embodies power. The foyer, which functions as a “set stage” to impress whoever comes into the building. The view, which also functions as a status symbol to impress visitors but simultaneously links the symbolic capital to the tower as a building type. The patriarchal space, which is often the corner office, shining with wooden desks, golden lamps and other luxurious materials. And global access and security, which puts the office in a prime position on the technological market. All these characteristics construct an image of wealth and power.

But these lead to many contradictions such as ‘dominant contextualism’, chasing timelessness whilst being ‘in fashion’ and creative destruction. For example, how can every office offer a panoramic view whilst being in a prime location? The location will be filled with office towers, each one limiting the others views. And how can the building always be in fashion? Doesn’t this change every few years? As we can see, eventually it is capitalism itself which makes these corporate office towers go desolate within a decade... After all, corporate towers are the popular buildings of a powerful, patriarchal, and predatory corporate culture.

This text strikes me as rather funny in a cynical way. The author explains how office buildings are presented in the most extravagant and excessive ways, fooling the public. It makes you wonder, what is the role of the architect in all this? Dovey does touch upon this briefly but does not really elaborate on the subject. It feels as though you’re being trapped. You’re either a producer of symbolic capital (as a bee in the hive of capitalist society) or you’re the responsible architect ending up in the same place (maybe in self-denial). Is there a way out?

We talked about our own experiences in offices and came to the conclusion that often, sadly, we actually are bees in the hive of capitalism. Especially in corporate architecture, it’s the client who makes the final decisions. The architect merely carries out a consulting role. Although, depending on the country you’re working in of course, law and restrictions force clients to run to the architect for the beautiful design solutions. In that way, the architect does have ‘power’ and creative freedom.

During the discussion we also stumbled upon the question whether we as architects are really so different than the corporate realtors and developers. Are we not doing the same? Selling our designs and propositions to a client, a municipality, a tutor, a professor? Are we just as bad? Especially with the computer rendering, creating these beautiful and highly unrealistic images of spaces. In the process we have maybe become used to even fooling ourselves.

It is the capitalist system which devours our buildings quicker and quicker. The corporate office tries to sell itself as a status symbol, but is just as subject to Dovey’s contradictions as the rest of us. Maybe we need to rethink why we build buildings? Is it really just for profit or can we create a system in which everyone can flourish?



# the changing workplace: the political economy of flexibility

## lecture by Amy Thomas

### week 1.3

a few notes:

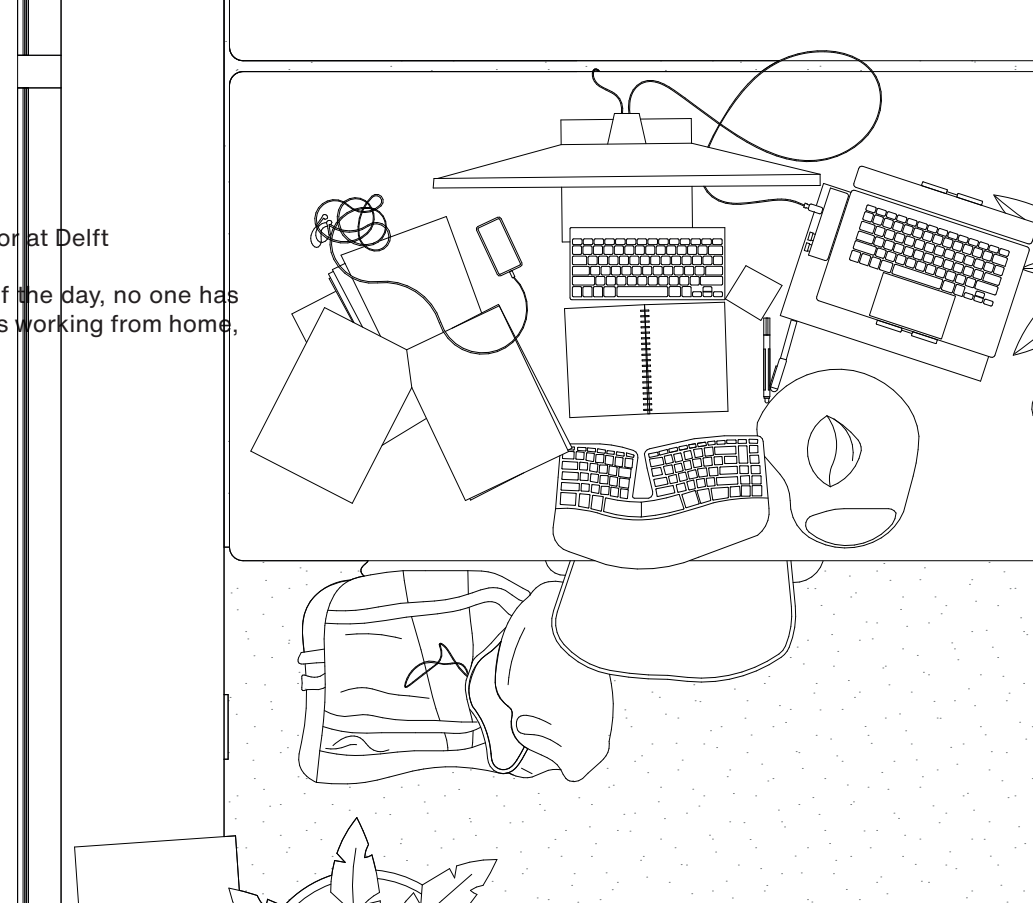
post war floorplans were open floor and about flexibility  
70s from a state led economy to a market led economy  
the user becomes very important in the design of office  
buildings with easy adaptable structures [tendency to  
compete]  
the thickness of a wall linked to economical profit  
from open plan to an open building  
the market depression and crises led to a new demand in  
office design  
80s building boom  
DEGW an architectural consultant [1973] talking about  
responsive environments  
architecture as a proces instead of a fixed form  
“our basic argument is that there isn’t such a thing as a  
building... A building properly conceived is several layers of  
longevity of built components” - francis duffy  
the building becomes an extension of the organisation  
flexibility as a managing tool [quickborner]  
office landscaping “system thinking”  
the knowledge worker makes we have to rethink office  
design, companies have to go out of their way to keep the  
employer, an investment in human capital



## the desk

### week 1.3

a desk in an start up office at an incubator at Delft  
software IT company  
the desks have to be empty at the end of the day, no one has  
a fixed place. flexible working. sometimes working from home,  
sometimes in the office





## debating the workspace week 1.4

inventory of the furniture  
all luxurious mahogany, leather, and vilts



## first attempt at recapturing the photo week 1.4

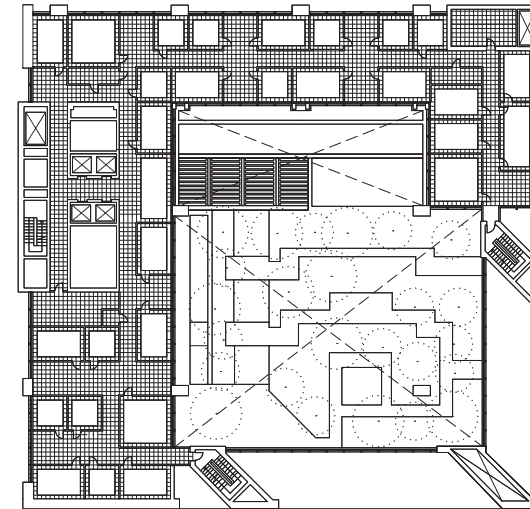
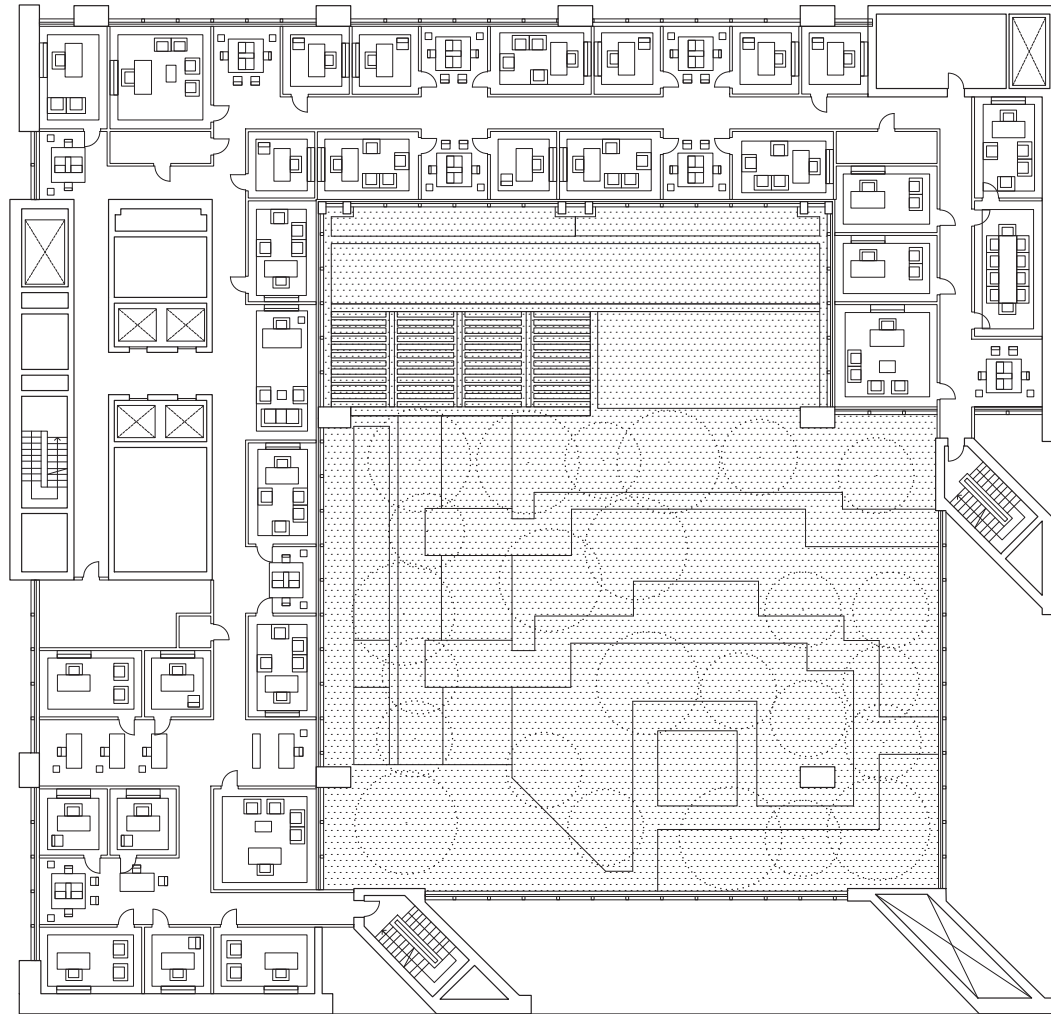




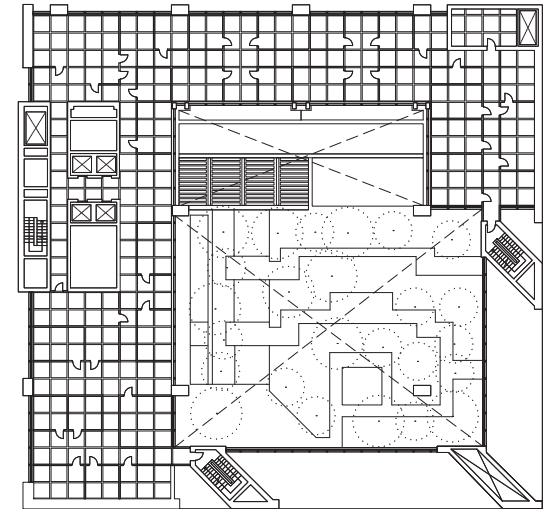
# the ford foundation plans

## week 1.4

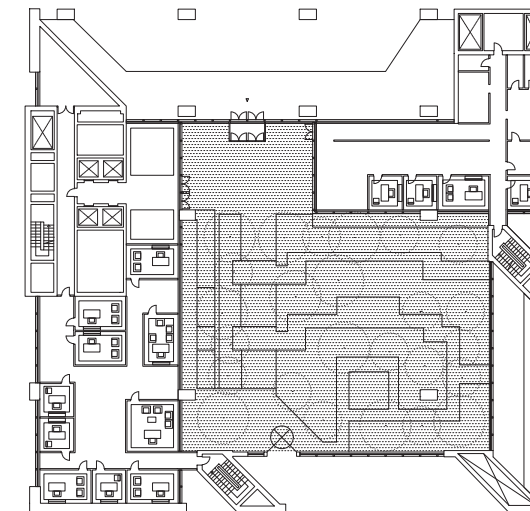
all offices are meant to be equal [to some extent]  
the furniture is the same in all the offices, made of the same  
materials resembling the same status  
everyone can look out on the garden or the street [few  
exceptions]



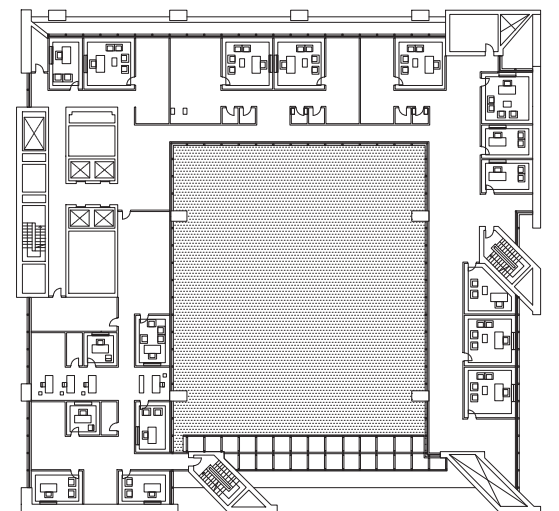
plan of floor finishes



ceiling plan



ground floor



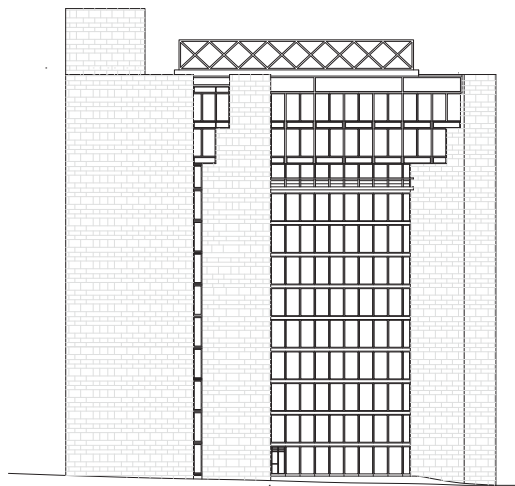
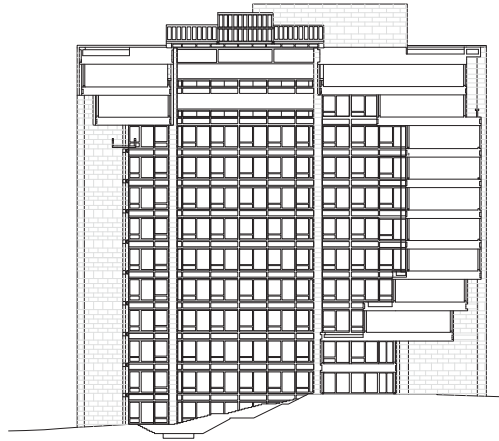
10th floor



# the ford foundation plans

## week 1.4

in the elevations the strict 6 foot grid is also reflected  
the section shows the relationship with the street and the garden very well



# research seminar reflection

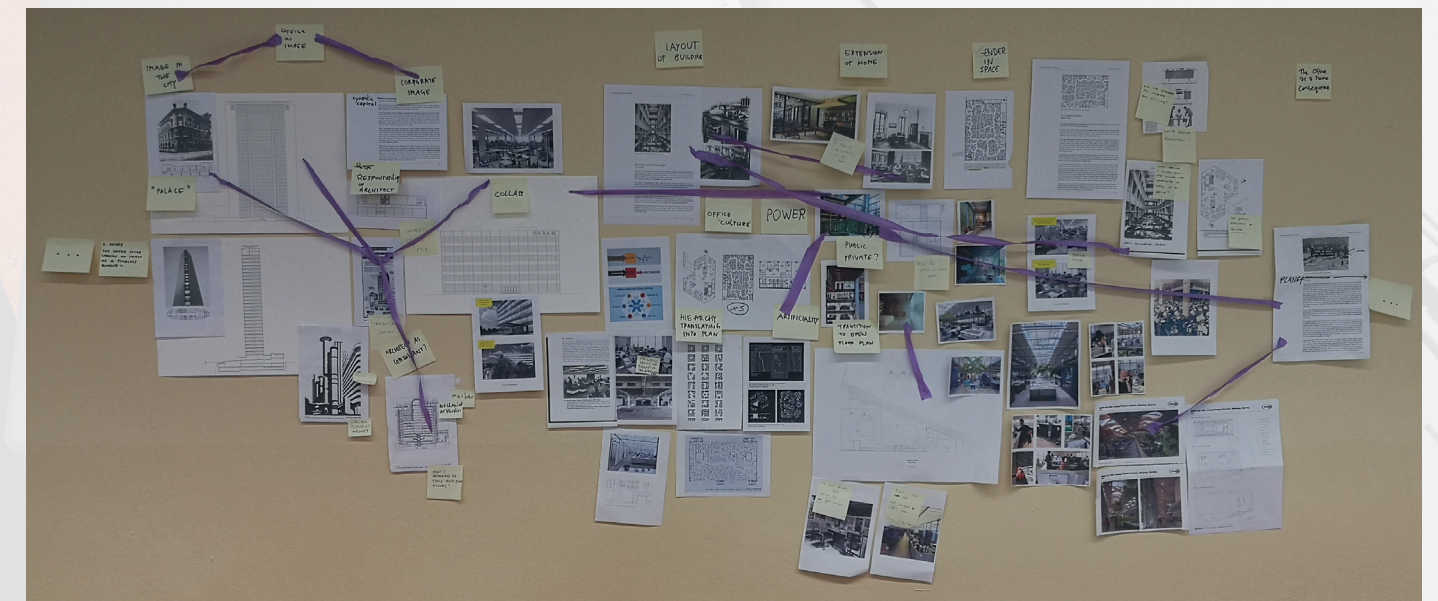
## week 1.4

[office as an image]

In the debate on office buildings we focussed on the topic of 'the office as an image'. The crazy wall shows the developments of the office building in relation to it's changing image in society.

The right part of the crazy wall reflects how the office building is an image within the city, in its context and how this was first a palazzo type and moved to the corporate tower. The middle part talks about the layout of the office buildings that want to portray a certain image. For example in the Ford Foundation there is a strong link to the home, the office with the 'garden' reflecting the suburban homes of New York. In the Larkin building this is completely different, where a machine is reflected, creating an image of power.

We also talked about the masculin image of the office, the image of capitalism. The corner office. And how this is related to text we had to read on gendered space by Spain.





## the final photo

### week 1.5

the corner office... the mahogany desks, the perfect pens on the desk, the single notebook, no piles of paperwork, perfectly aligned bookshelf, a beautiful view to greenery. what more could an executive wish for?





# Exchanges and banks in a history of building types

by Nikolaus Pevsner

week 1.5

In the first part of the text Pevsner introduces the origin of the bank and the phenomenon of banking. It is explained how the first merchant-bankers traded their goods for ‘money’ in the south of Europe and how developments towards the first forms of modern banking came to be. The rest of the text elaborates on the developments of the typologies of the bank and the exchange. It is in the 15th century when we start to see the first premises of banking. Evolving from a private house (palazzo’s) to a public building.

The second part discusses the developments of the building types of the banks and exchanges. The bank evolves from palazzo’s to town halls, from cloisters to courtyards. The Bank of England by John Soane is elaborately explained, as it is the starting point of national banks as we know them today. Due to diversification the exchange evolves into special exchanges for specific products and markets such as corn, coal, wool, etc.

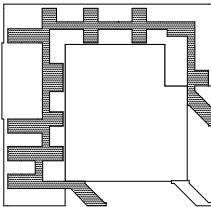
The third part of the text talks about how from the 19th century the savings bank starts to appear. A place to store private wealth which changed the position of the bank in society. Pevsner addresses a few buildings, and puts them in the context of modernism, criticizing the way in which this is done (it seems); “perfection is denounced as dull and impersonal”.

As Pevsner mentions, I think it’s highly interesting how some exchanges and banks were built in Gothic style since its connotations with religion and honest craft. There is a certain morality that comes into play, a way of thinking. For me it also has to do with the notion of banking itself. Nowadays it can hardly be seen as anything moral. The investments banks make are often affiliated with exploitation and the demolishing of habitats. I wonder what Ruskin and Morris would have to say about what kind of architecture would suit these kind of institutions.

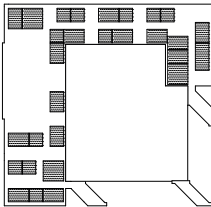
This text provides a good overview on the developments of the bank and exchange typologies and really helped me in starting to understand the history of the bank building. It raised the question for me how banks have developed over the 20th century. I would like to dive into that part of history a bit more, how modernism shaped the contemporary bank. It is good to note that Pevsner of course wrote this text with a certain timeframe and from a European perspective. The developments on a global scale are for example not discussed, understandable from a western point of view, but it might be useful to look into that as well.

# the ford foundation in diagrams

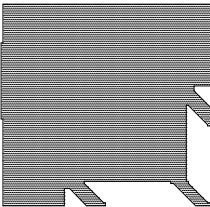
week 1.5



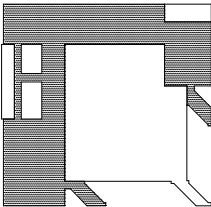
circulation space



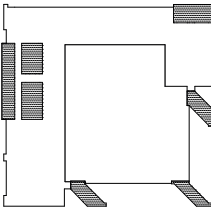
office spaces



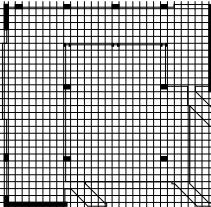
gross surface



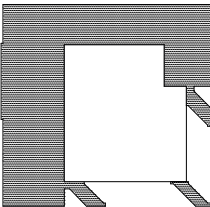
net surface



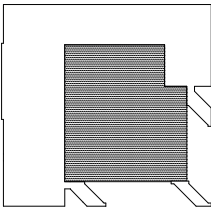
structural cores



structure on grid

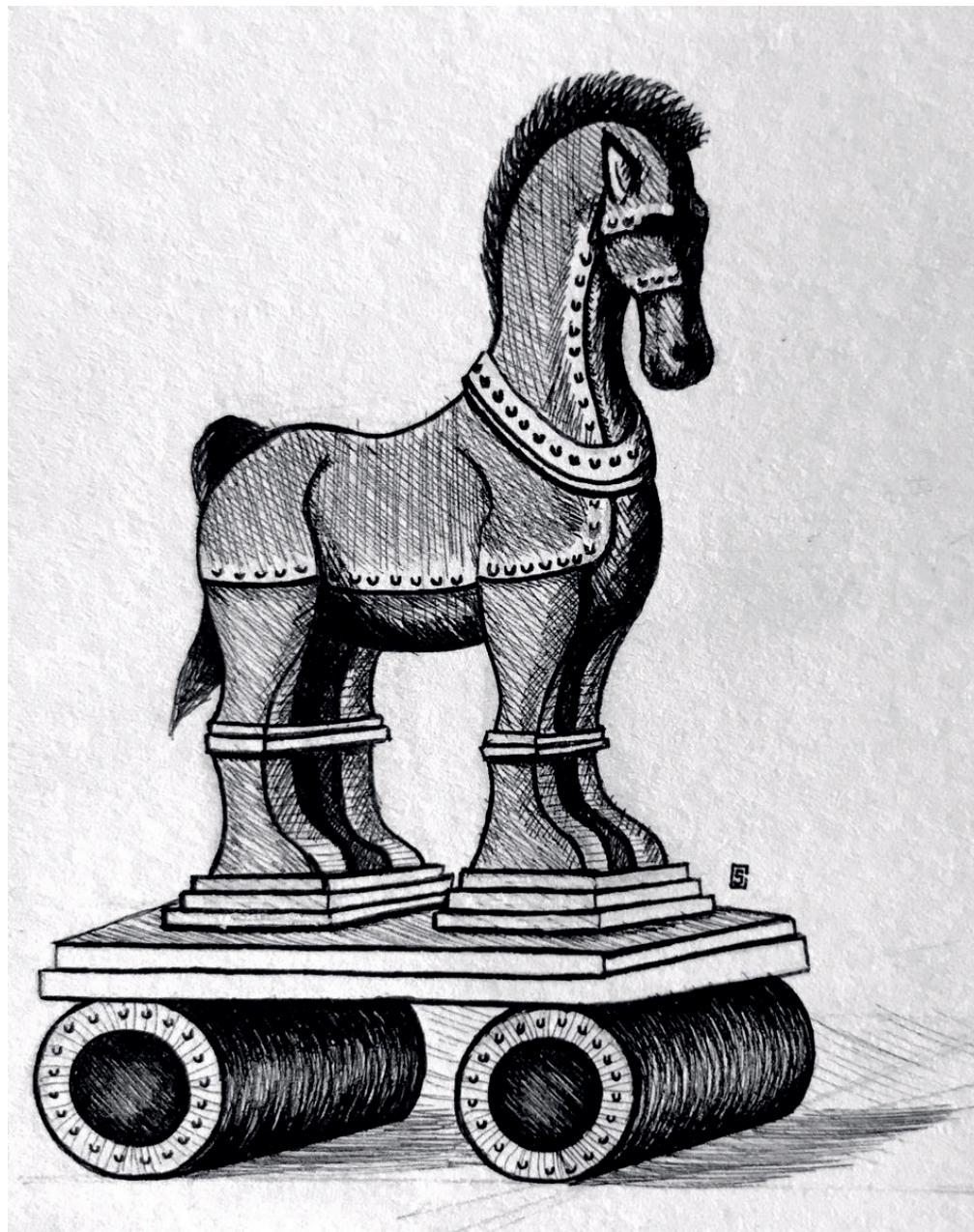


building mass



garden





“to what extent is this entire movement simply a green trojan horse, whose belly is full with red marxist soscioeconomic doctrine?”



Knossos, GR, 1994. Mark Pimlott

## Social Plinth

If one key aim of the Belgian National Bank is to provide a new consolidated workspace for its employees, another is to capitalize upon the possibilities that might be discovered in its reduced need for security. The Bank proposes to use this opportunity for openness to begin to define what it describes as a *social plinth*. As it is currently defined, the brief sees this social function in terms of representation. It will offer an invitation to the public to enter the world of the bank, to drink a coffee or look at a painting from the collection perhaps. However, one might imagine the opening up of the Bank's site in more fundamental terms, as a catalyst for transforming the ways in which the institution works, or as a means to define its role and responsibilities to society in new terms. Through this brief we ask you to begin to consider what this might mean.

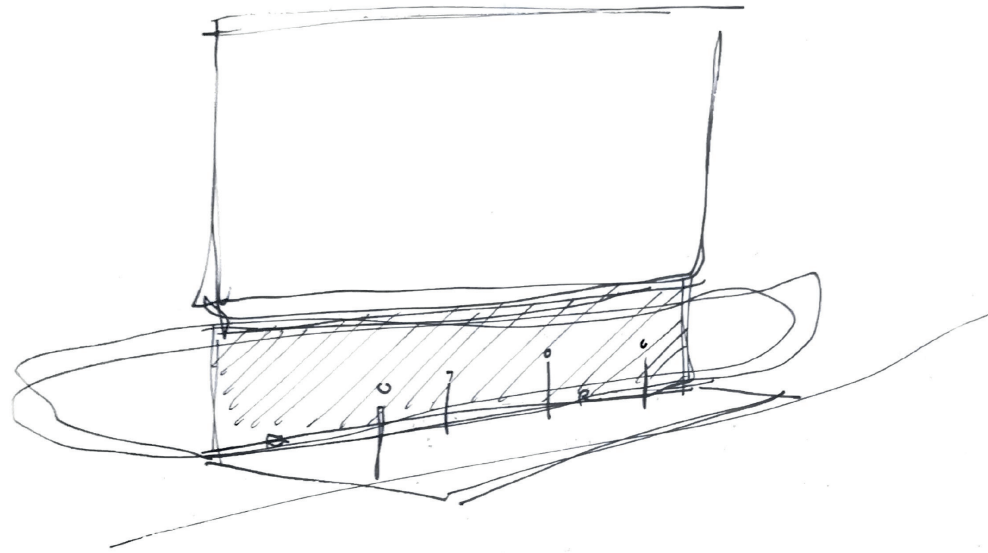
During the remaining weeks of the research course, you will be studying historical examples of banks and examining the developing ways in which their banking halls, forms and facades have engaged with the city and the citizen in representational terms. Thought of in terms of architectural language, the plinth can be understood as a base or fundament upon which other things stand. It is a visible manifestation of the founding of the building, a new ground or platform from which the rest of a wall can be constructed. As such, it often takes on a different expression and material condition for both aesthetic and technical reasons. In making a new ground

to negotiate with or overcome the limitations of an existing topography or terrain, the plinth can also be understood as something which separates, distances or objectifies the architectural edifice which is constructed upon it, elevating it above its surroundings. This is the manner in which a plinth is traditionally understood in artistic practice, as a base or pedestal upon which an artwork – a sculpture or a statue – is placed in order to objectify it and enhance its presence and power in relation to both the viewer and the context. In this way it can also be understood as a scenography, or a stage; an architectural device that can monumentalise and express power and authority.

The idea of a social plinth is one then that requires both critique and interpretation. Is it to be understood as a re-grounding of the institution, as the antithesis of monumentality, as a platform for dialogue? Is it a foundation from which the transformed Bank of the future might be constructed? Or is the very notion of a plinth one to be countered?

The image of the plinth as a robust base, that defines the stability of the whole, has long been employed in the architecture of bank buildings, to assist in proposing them as strong and stable institutions, which people could trust. However, what has long been thought of as a stable economic model, which banks underpinned and National Banks helped regulate, a model of continuous growth supported by industrial production and the extraction of the very materials of which





does the bank only want to represent wealth,  
money, capitalism and security? or does it  
want to portray the image of the peoples of the  
city and the values in that sense (cultural,  
social, political) and the earth? What does, - and  
the future bank represent? Who.-

## Podcast Uncommon sense: a vision for a post-capitalist society with Yanis Varoufakis week 1.6

The podcast starts with Amy Mullins introducing Yanis Varoufakis and his political stands and background. They talk about liberalism, the intent of capitalism and the world of large corporations – like small soviet unions – in which we live today. The podcast goes on with Varoufakis explaining how he is being influenced by his parents and grandparents, who have shaped him to be the activist politician and economist he is today.

He goes on to talk about his time in the Greek government during the 2015 crisis and his role in leading to country as minister of finance. It becomes clear the issues that he had to deal with, have been the same since the 2008 collapse. Mullis and Varoufakis discuss this phenomenon and talk about Reaganomics and Thatcherism, in the context of the Golden era of the 50s and 60s, the financialized globalisation and the big collapse of 2008 leading to the credit crisis. The last part of the podcast discusses the new book by Varoufakis called Another Now, about an alternative system/reality as a response to capitalism. They address themes like horizontal hierarchies within large corporations, creating meaningful work, getting rid of tradable stocks and eliminating commercial banks, the changing role of the central bank with a possible Universal Basic Dividend (UBD) and lastly sexual politics on the hard to eliminate patriarchy.

What was new to me was the way in which Varoufakis addresses large top down corporations like Google as small soviet unions. I have never looked at the big businesses like that. But hearing him talk about the oppressive ways in which the companies indoctrinate their people, the absence of a marketplace and the strong hierarchies, makes it sound an awful lot like a strict socialist regime.

On this subject, the contrast between the early capitalists and the reality of today struck me. The right wing capitalists mimicking the words of Adam Smith about the butcher, the baker, the ordinary people - exchanging on small markets like front porch communities - preach noting more than a myth. We now live in a world of large corporations who control the market and let the ordinary people suffer from the caused inequality.

What also struck me was the harsh reality of what happens to money that governments print in order to boost or stabilize the economy. When they do, they hand it to banks, who lend it to corporations in order for them to invest in good jobs, education, climate, infrastructures etc. But what happens is, these corporations use the money to buy back their own stocks to push their value, so the corporation makes more money which is directly linked to their bonuses. Isn't that ridiculous?! This vicious cycle is something that greatly upsets me and definitely changed the way I perceive banks and corporations.

There were a lot of things to learn in this podcast and I swiftly want to address the three eras that are mentioned by Varoufakis because I think it's very important to understand history in order to say something about what a future bank might look like.

The first era is the Golden era in the 1950s and 60s, where kids would have better lives than their parents and all was good. This was mainly because of the establishment of Bretton woods which pegged all currencies to the dollar which was the only currency that could be exchanged with

gold (reintroducing the gold standard) and created fixed exchange rates. It was a form of planned capitalism.

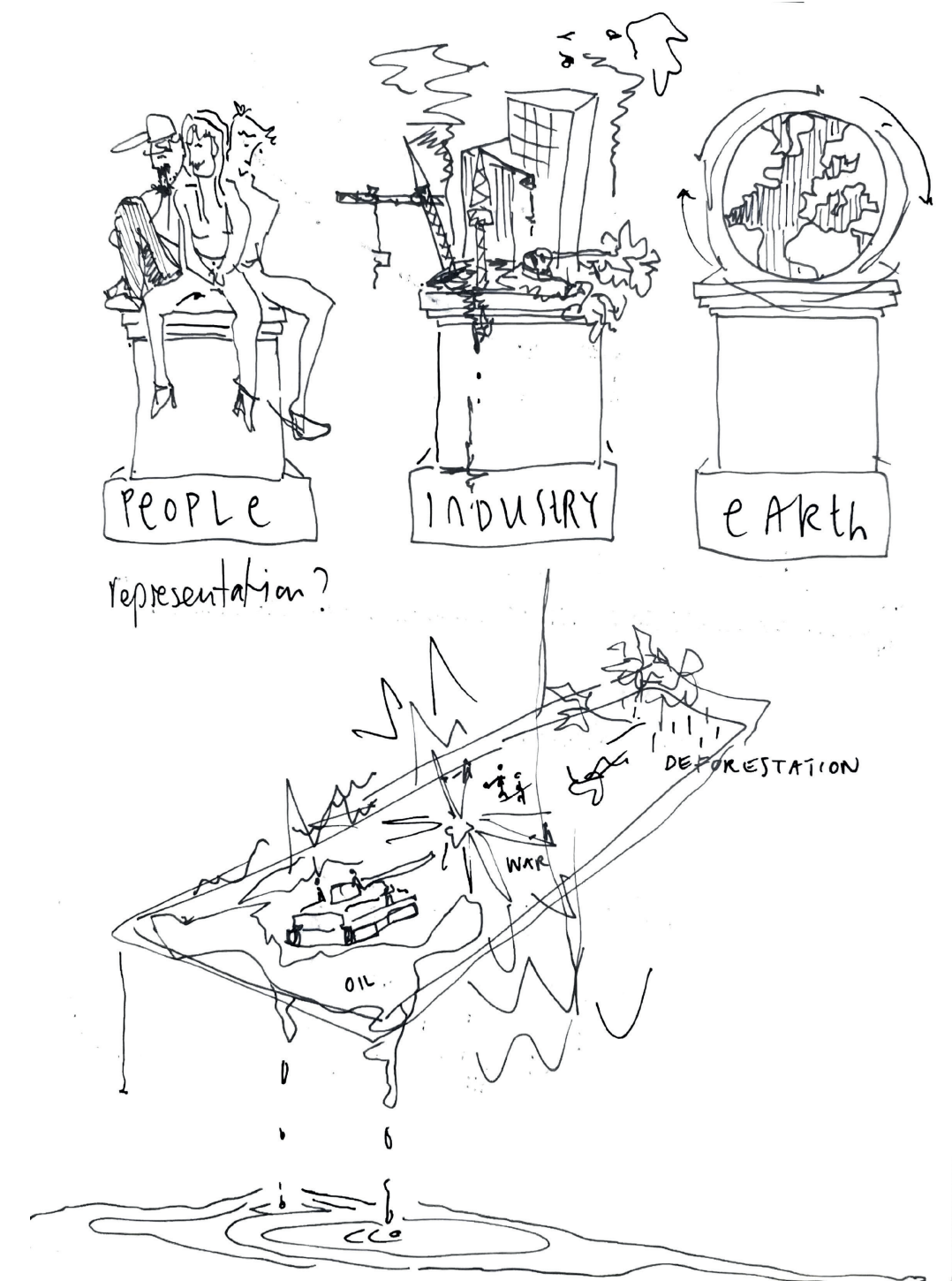
In 1971 however, this blew up (oil crises etc.) and the US went deeply into red making it a deficit country. Politicians were forced to do away with all restrictions in banking. This is when Thatcher and Reagan liberated the markets and allowed finance to do its own thing. This era is called the financialized globalisation.

The last era is the comeuppance of 2008. Due to the sub-mortgage crisis in the US everything collapsed, starting with the Lehman Brothers Bank. The state is then forced to come back in and pump money into the economy to bail out the banks.

I think it's interesting to see that apparently the liberation of the market and financial system is not sustainable without certain restrictions and laws to prevent crises like the credit crisis. We have to rethink our system since too much power is now granted to the big banks and corporations. The book by Varoufakis Another Now addresses, amongst others, this issue and puts forward 'a solution' to the problems of our current society.

For our brief of the Future Bank I think it's necessary to think about future scenarios. This is why I think the book Another now might be a good read to rethink our system and the way we might want to do things differently in the future. In the podcast several interesting topics are put on the table such as, corporations without hierarchies (what?!), eliminating tradable stocks and commercial banks, a basic dividend income and the future of the patriarchy. I think it would be highly interesting to look into these topics in order to understand fundamental changes that might need to happen. Especially at this point in time with the pandemic shaking our systems, it might be a good time for us to look back, see what we've created and think about what we could do differently in the future.



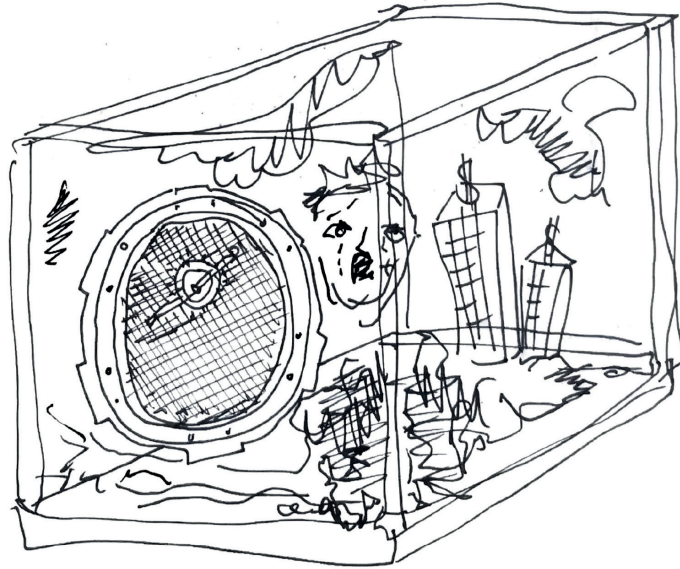




## the notion of transparency

### week 1.6

a transparent safe [to keep safe] the invisible thing, the immaterial thing  
what does a safe conceal? what happens if the safe becomes transparent? what is behind the big investments?



## what is a bank associated with?

### week 1.6





# the issue of representation

## week 1.6

Isn't the most social thing to do, to tell the truth for once?  
My social plinth is a living plinth, provoking the issues that raise with the question what a bank represents. The plinth becomes an object of interaction.

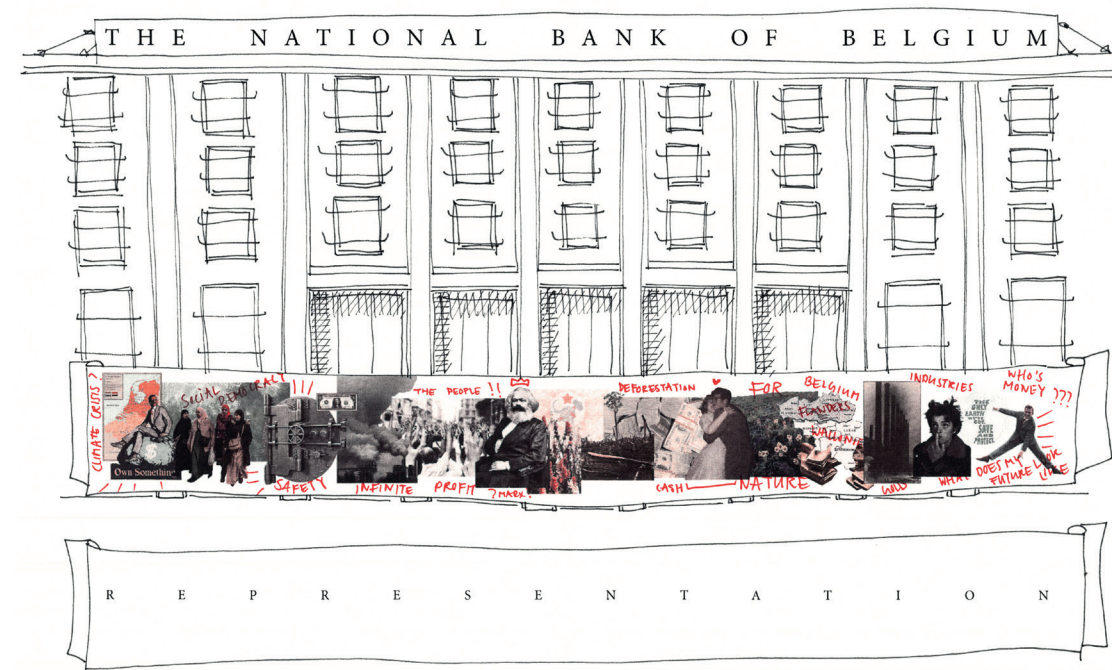
Doesn't the plinth belong to the people? The issues that raise with the image of the bank, a national bank, if you will, concern everyone. At this moment in time, it's good to rethink our structures.

The canvas becomes a major piece of art. Art connects. This canvas takes ownership over the bank, expressing what needs to be expressed. Did we lose the connection? The question is what part of society, nature, or culture a bank might foster.

1:1 canvas plinth, an object of interaction

All the issues that rise, let's talk about it. Let's take ownership.

Does architecture have to be made of stones, bricks, or concrete. Or can it be a piece of paper? The power of the canvas is that it could be put anywhere. The bank is part of all of our lives, in visible or invisible manners, maybe we should be confronted with this idea for once. It's not necessarily about giving an answer, it's about starting the conversation.



# the issue of representation

## week 1.6

The classic renaissance sculpture. David, Michelangelo. The glorification of the human body, composition, ratio. What do we elevate? What do we put on a pedestal? The human body. Hierarchy. What does the artist choose to portray? What does an institution such as a bank want to display? The solid and cold material, contrasting with the soft, living human body. The bank, cold, solid, the people, the clients, warm, alive.

What does the bank put on a pedestal? Not humans, like the renaissance sculptors. Does the bank only want to represent wealth, money, capitalism, progress, profit? Is this only the facade? Or the reality? Is there more to address?

Would it want to portray the image of the peoples of city of Brussels? The people of Belgium. The values; social, cultural, political? And what about the planet? Would it be possible for a national monetary institution, to put forward a message of unity and care?

Banks are often associated with capitalism, fossil fuels, war, the longing for unending progress, infinite profit, gold, wealth. What a bank chooses to invest in, defines the wellbeing of our planet, of our people. Infinite progress does not combine well with finite resources. This contradiction is necessary to address. The most social thing to do? What should the bank represent? It's citizens, its investors, its planet. Let's rethink our system and let's start with addressing the nearest, closest, most touchable thing about the bank; the plinth.



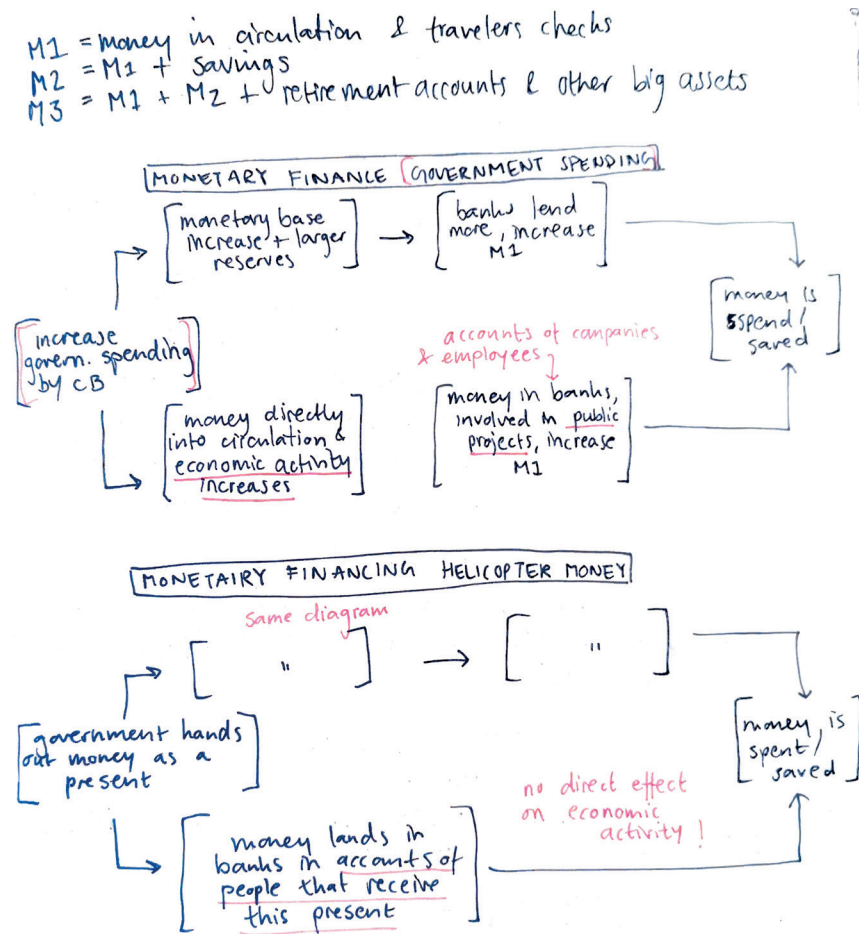


# the basics of money and banking

## week 1.6

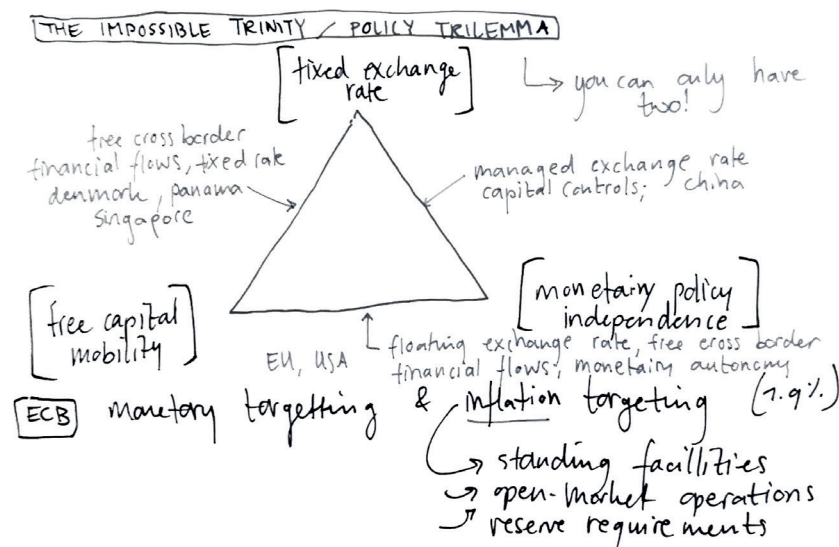
Through these texts I learned a lot about the basics of economics and banking. The more you read, the more you come to understand how little you actually understand about our financial system and the banking world. What was new to me was the origin of for example the Euro, how before that every country pegged their currency to a strong economy such as Germany's, the German Mark. The origin of the central bank also became much clearer to me through reading this text.

[I tried to visualize my thinking, I redraw a lot of diagrams in order to fully understand them]



monetary policy: price stability, economic activity, unemployment  
"INDIRECT" vs. "DIRECT"

European monetary policy under full German control.  
German mark.  
follow the Deutsche Bundesbank



# faces, paper, screens, a lecture by Amy Thomas

## week 1.6

[notes]

a visual confidence: bold architectural display  
Midland Bank as a leading bastion to capitalism

public protest...  
anti ugly action group  
"here layeth brittish architecture" R.I.P.  
street a dark cabin  
financial centre of conservatism  
2nd rate architecture

modernism in the 60s had taken over corporate building but there was an exception for bank buildings because of its role in society, a public face to convince, communicate, impress a private institution with a public service, ambiguity

why is the bank so consciously visible whilst dealing with such an immaterial thing?

after WO II you do see the dominance of modernism coming in

consumer focussed: not only a savings bank but also for investments  
transparency: being able to see the process, what happens?  
every increasing corporation, globalisation

high rise, silhouette

paper, paperwork crisis, transactions went up

screens, 80s deregulation of the banking system, removed trading restrictions  
dealing room

offshore banking and bitcoins...

# reflection research seminar

## week 1.6

[linear timeline history central banking]

In this research seminar our group had to create a timeline of central banking, focussing on Europe. It is quite a vast topic, central banking, making the whole proces of the origin of central banking quite hard to understand. But with creating this timeline it became much more understandable, and reachable.

What was new to me was the fact that these waves of crises, throughout the 20th century, really shaped central banking, especially in Europe [ECB].



# reflection design tutorial

## week 1.6

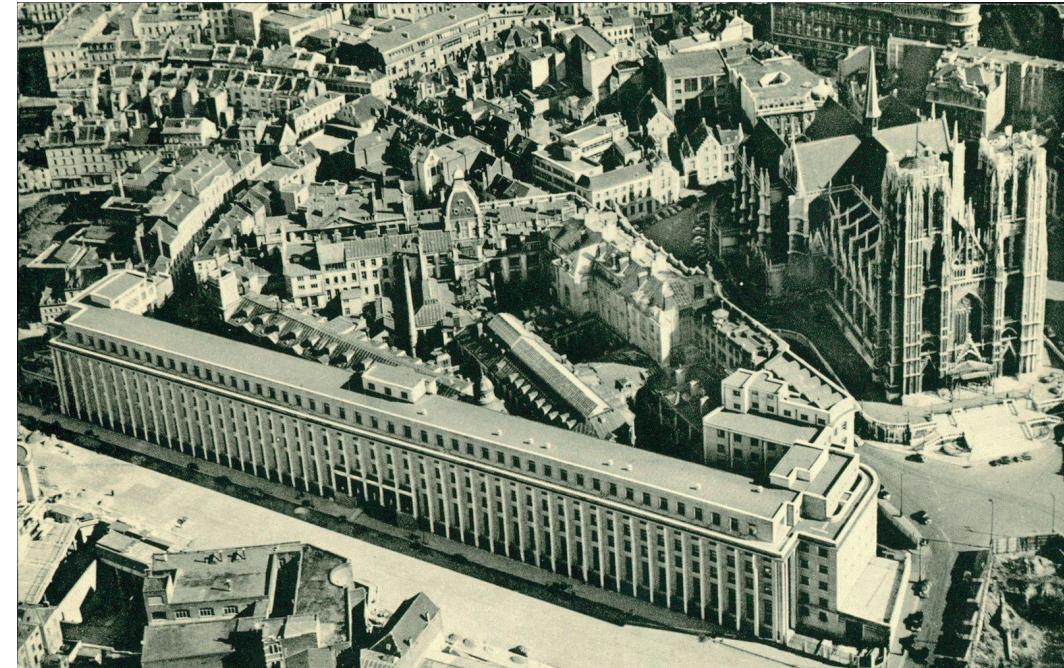
reference: dimitris pikionis, paths to the acropolis, athens

in a way a reference to my social plinth project. the history of athens is incorporated in the landscape by the re-use of the ancient stones from the buildings of athens. the ancient stories of the people become part of the contemporary landscape. is the street the place of self expression? how can the peoples stories become part of architecture?



# lobby

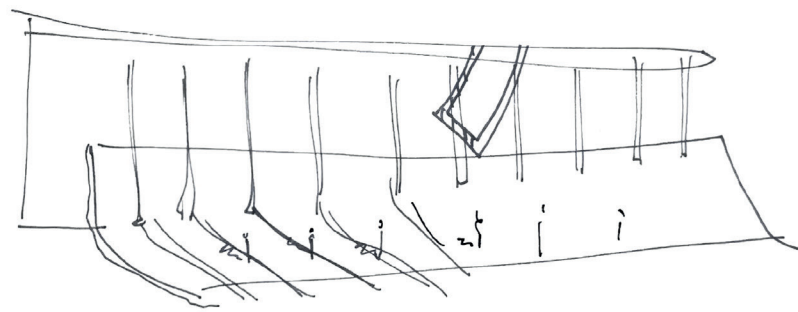
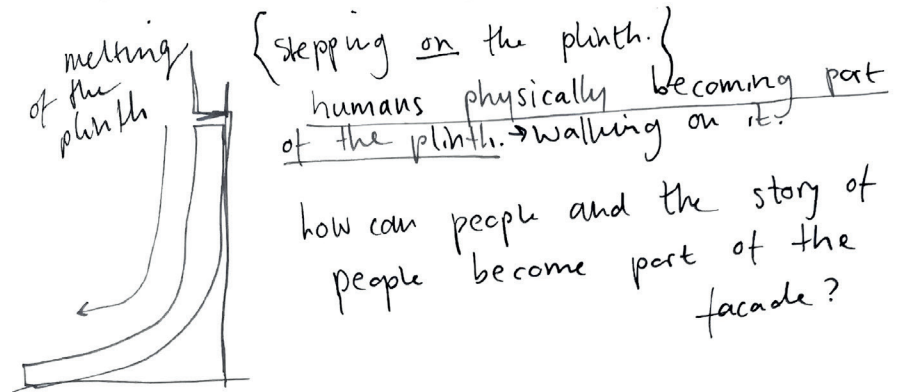
## week 1.7



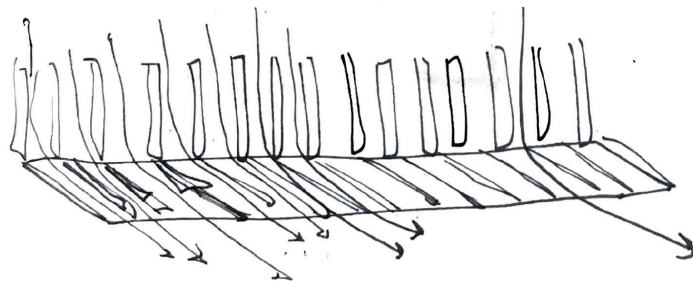


## sketching week 1.7

representation of the people, how do people become part of  
the facade?  
what are the parameters and boundaries of 'the plinth'? can it  
be something horizontal?



eliminating  
the plinth



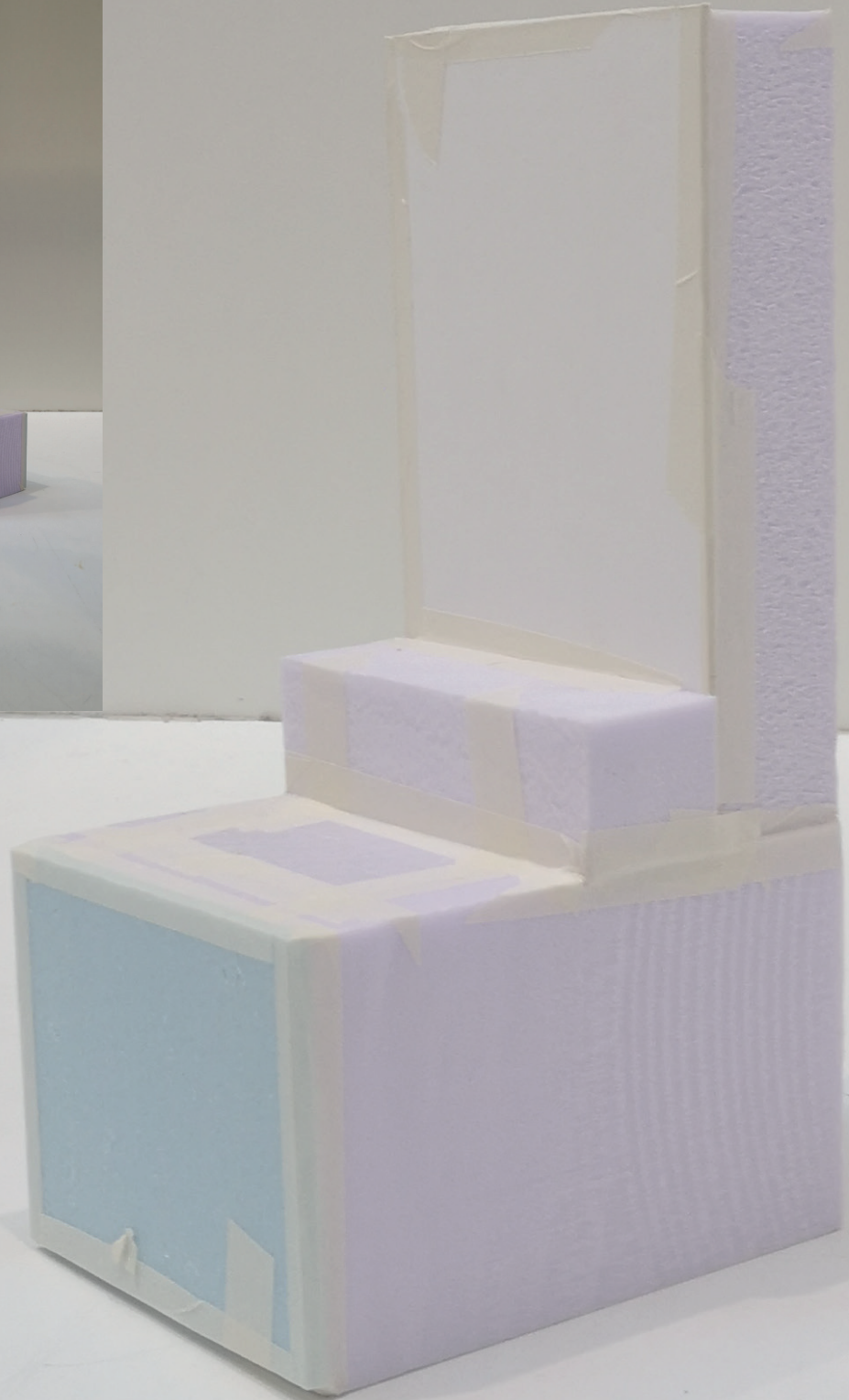
## the facade week 1.7





## modelling progress

### week 1.7



## a conceptual model

### week 1.7

"A modern central bank at the service of society, at the heart of the Eurosystem." (NBB website)

Though banks are meant to convey 'trust', this is often not the feeling people have regarding this intangible institution. When you think of a bank, you think of issues such as investments in fossil fuels, unending progress with ending resources, unjustly distributed wealth, large scale investments and all that has to do with capitalism. Noting trustworthy about this. Who trusts a bank nowadays? In the specific case of the National Bank of Belgium, the bank itself states to be 'at service of society, at the heart of the Eurosystem.' It sounds like there is a contradiction in actions and words. If the bank wants to be at service of society, there is something that should change. Maybe it's a matter of representation.

So, what does the bank represent? The national bank should represent the people of Belgium, the values of Brussels' citizens, a reflection if you will. If the national bank is 'at service of society', then how can the plinth represent this? How can the people become part of the façade?

When I think of the social plinth I think of two questions; what or who should the plinth represent or interact with? And what space does the plinth appropriate, what space belongs to the plinth?

This social plinth addresses the notion of representation as well as the notion of the plinth itself. What space belongs to the plinth? What space does it appropriate? Can it be that the city landscape - the pavement, the bench, the street - becomes part of this space? By challenging, or even eliminating, the conventional plinth and by stretching its boundaries, the plinth extends into the city, becoming a fluid form.

The extension of the plinth in the horizontal plane, ensures that people can interact with the plinth by walking on it. By stepping on the plinth humans physically become part of the plinth, challenging its boundaries and meaning in the public realm of Brussels. The plinth becomes an object of interaction, interlinked with the people of Brussels.

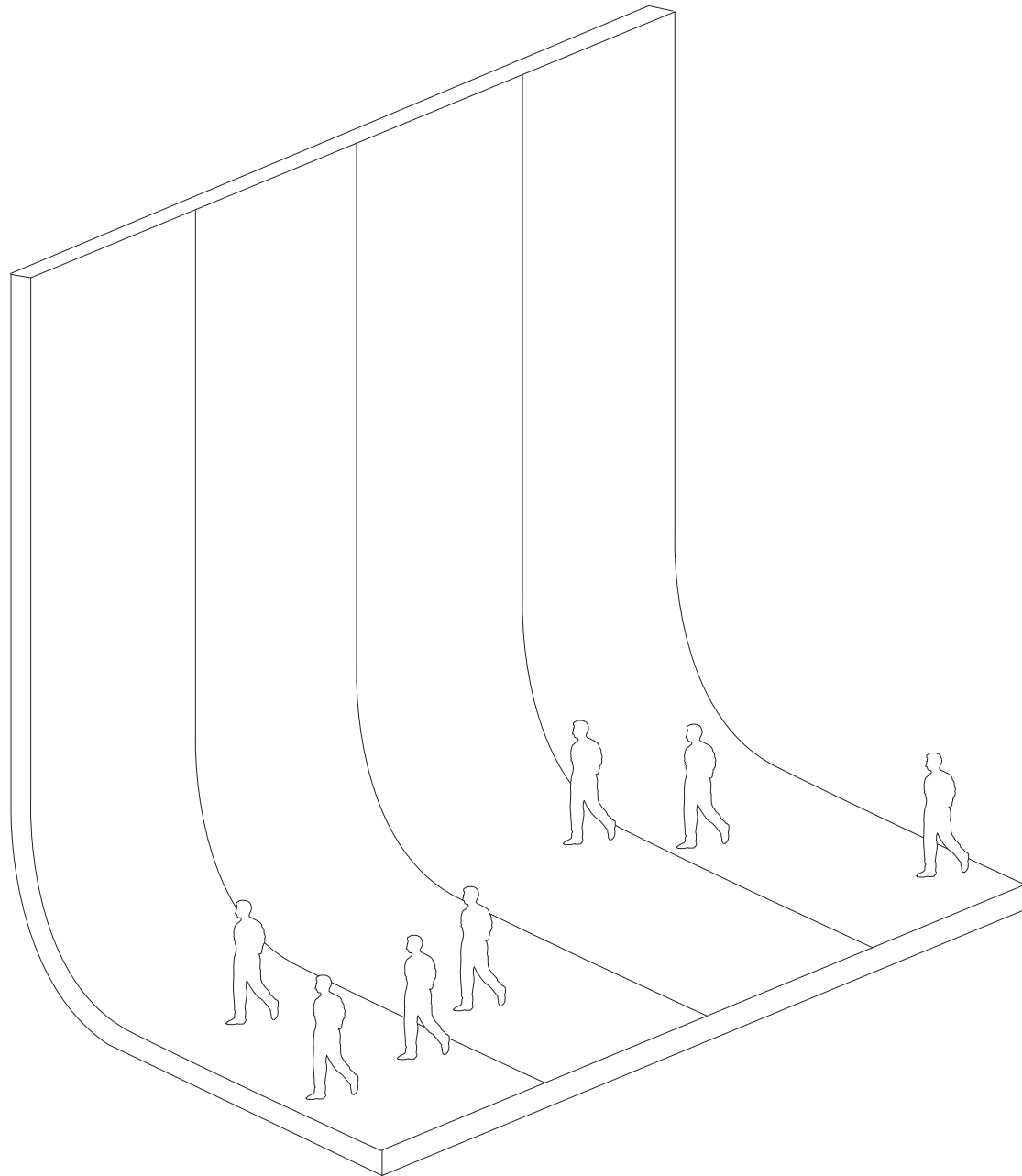




## the extension of the plinth

### week 1.7

the extension of the plinth into the horizontal  
by physically stepping on the plinth the people become part  
of the architecture  
the street as a place of 'self-expression'



## the boundaries and parameters of the plinth

### week 1.7

what space belongs to the plinth? what space  
does it appropriate?





film: the big short

week 1.7

film on the start of the credit crisis of 2008

betting against the housing market  
packages upon packages of crap mortgages, collected in  
bonds, sold to make profit, consisting of basically nothing  
because people were incapable of paying off the mortgages  
lehman brothers go bankrupt, all banks go bankrupt  
financial crisis all around the world

it's interesting how this whole proces could have been legal.  
how on earth is this possible?!



reflection design tutorial

week 1.7

is the street the place for self expression?  
how can there be a dialogue between the facade and the  
people of BX?

photo: accidental generosity  
people taking ownership of the plinth and its boundaries

the facade of the bank is a powerstructure, how can we , on  
a human scale relate to that? how can we put an appropriate  
space next tot that, how do we juxtapose those two?

The rythem of the building might create moments on the  
street moments that people can inhate and appropriate. The  
street is their canvas. The extension of the plinth in a social  
and architectural manner. It can be a bench extending from  
the facade, or little nooks on streets that are created by the  
enclosure of a car, a tree, a threshold, a facade. Moments in  
the city that are vibrating, alive. It doesn't have to be overly  
designed I think... It's good if people feel like they have space  
to interrupt, to appropriate the street and do their 'own' thing.  
The parking place for example is in many cities appropriated  
by terraces, restaurants, people who want to meet and inter-  
act on the street but don't have a 'proper' space allocated to  
them. How can the plinth of the bank become such a space?





# debate banking

## week 1.8

Throughout these first weeks I have become very interested in the subject of banking itself. The systems that we as humans have created to empower ourselves, to progress and to build a system of values that has now become incomprehensible for the average person.

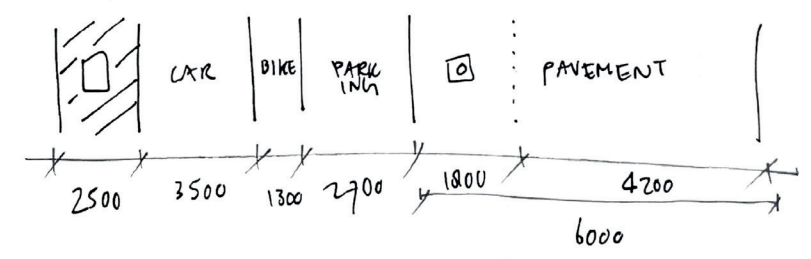
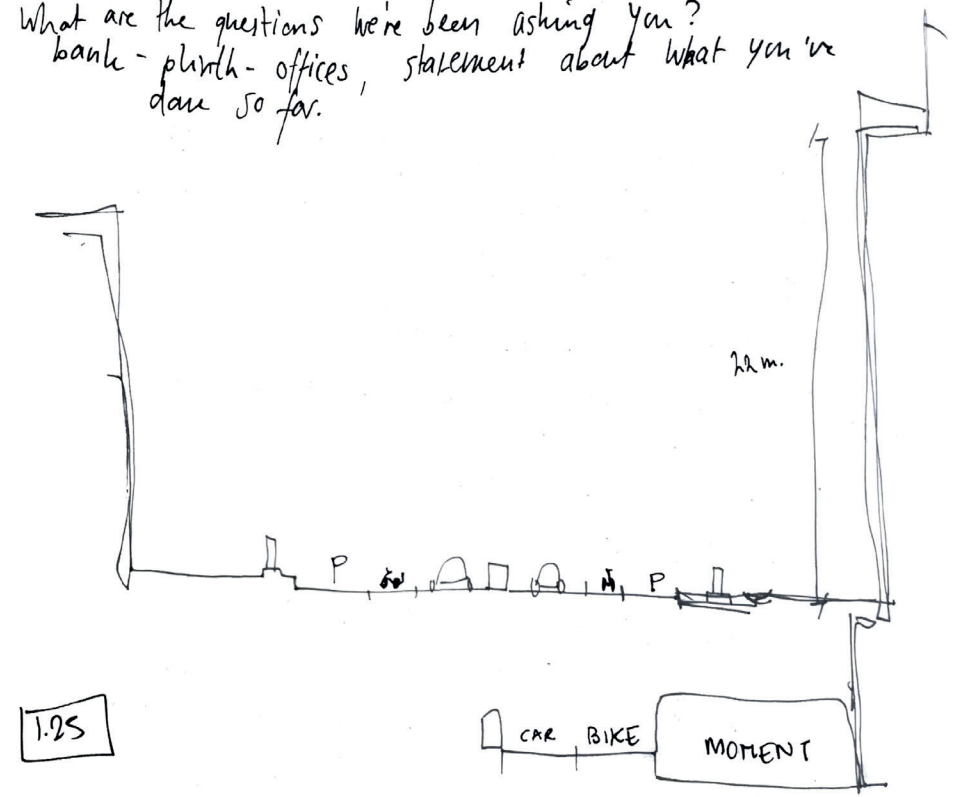
What strikes me, I guess, is the complicated relationship between our economic systems and the 'real world'. Because of digitalisation, amongst other reasons, we have become detached from institutions such as the bank. We have lost the face to face contact, the connection with the bank. What can we as architects do to bring back this connection, to establish a relationship again?

# the street

## week 1.8

21.10.

What are the questions we're been asking you?  
bank - plinth - offices, statement about what you've done so far.





## the occupy movement week 1.8

[anti-capitalist]  
the issue of all the money circulating in a very small circle of  
1% of all americans  
"the 99% will not be silent!"  
but what is the alternative?



...working on the research plan [reflective problem statement]

Maybe it's time to rethink our society and our system, rethink our values. Varoufakis, in his book *Another Now* is describing an alternative, a post-capitalist society, as a solution to not only the tension between capitalism and climate, but to many contemporary problems. In order to design a future bank, it is highly necessary to analyse and anticipate these alternatives scenarios for us to understand what systems we might lean towards.

For me personally there is a gap in knowledge of how the relationship between the bank and the public has changed as a consequence of the financial system at the time. Banks evolved over time portraying different images to the public, like 'trust', 'security' and 'transparency'. In the meantime, the bank as an institution, has become distanced from society since its function has become unclear. The bank is not storing gold or paper money anymore, people don't go to the bank with their savings due to the economic climate, etc. On top of that, digitalisation pushes societal changes in an extreme pace, with implications for our financial systems.

So what does the bank become? In order to answer this question, I want to dive deeper into the paradox of visibility. Why is the bank so consciously visible in society whilst dealing with such an immaterial thing? (Lecture Amy) What is the relation between the exterior face of the bank, the façade, and the material or immaterial thing it's safeguarding, which can be gold, paper money, digital money, or in the future something like a crypto currency? The material expression of the face of the bank portrays a certain image to the public, which simultaneously changes the relationship of the institution with them.

Overall, the problem statement: How is the relationship between the bank and the material/immaterial thing it keeps, expressed in the façade, and how has this changed through time as a consequence of economic and societal shifts?



## appropriation of parking spots

### week 1.8

people appropriating the streets, the parking spots, in the United States



## social plinth

### week 1.9

### City rooms

Julia Linde

Though banks are meant to convey 'trust', this is often not the feeling people have regarding this intangible institution. Economic crises, digitalization, complex systems, among others have caused a feeling of mistrust and disconnection. The current façade of the bank – an immense powerstructure of repetitive columns – creates a strict boundary which isn't allowing for the relationship between the bank and the public to be restored. Now, how do we interfere to create moments of accidental generosity for the people? How can we bring human scale to this structure so we can interact with it, so we can relate to it? This social plinth is about the dialogue between the people and the bank, aiming to restore position of the bank within the city, whilst simultaneously questioning the boundaries and fixed forms of the architectural plinth.

By juxtaposing the rhythm of the façade on the horizontal plane – the street – moments are created. Moments that people can inhabit and appropriate. The street can become a place for self-expression and in a way the peoples' canvas. The social extension of the plinth is confronting the monumentality of the facade in an anti-monumen-

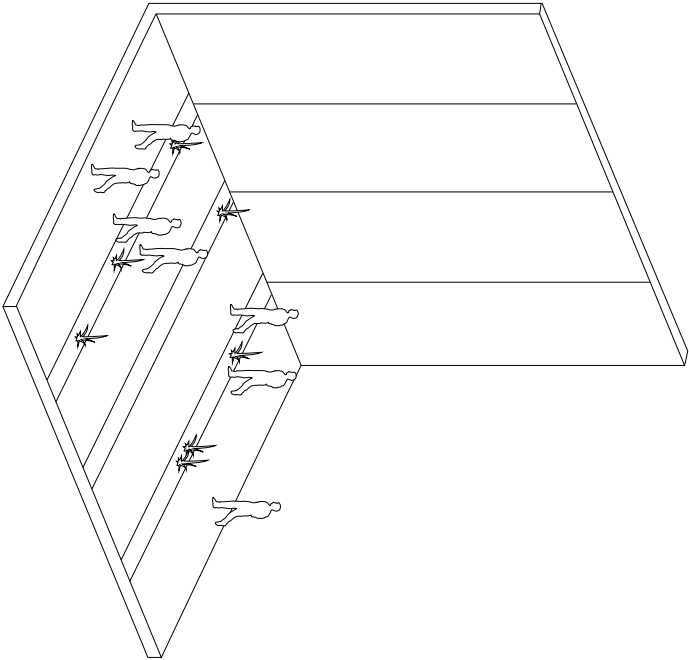
tal way. A protest... The removing of the tiles in the pavement recreates the strict rhythm of the façade in a friendly way, allowing green to flourish and water to re-enter the soil.

The moments on the street that flow from this act of anti-monumentality extend the plinth into the public realm, challenging the boundaries of the bank and interfering with its rigorous character. The spaces that are created are in a way city rooms, which people can appropriate however they want, whenever they want. The space flowing from the façade, or even from inside the bank onto the parking spot can exist of different things like a bench, a terrace, a table, or a little nook on streets that are created by the enclosure of a car, a tree, a threshold, a canopy, a facade. It doesn't have to be overly designed... It is necessary that people feel like they have space to interrupt and to appropriate. In this manner the plinth becomes a place for self-expression and interaction, looking for an opening line in the dialogue with the bank.

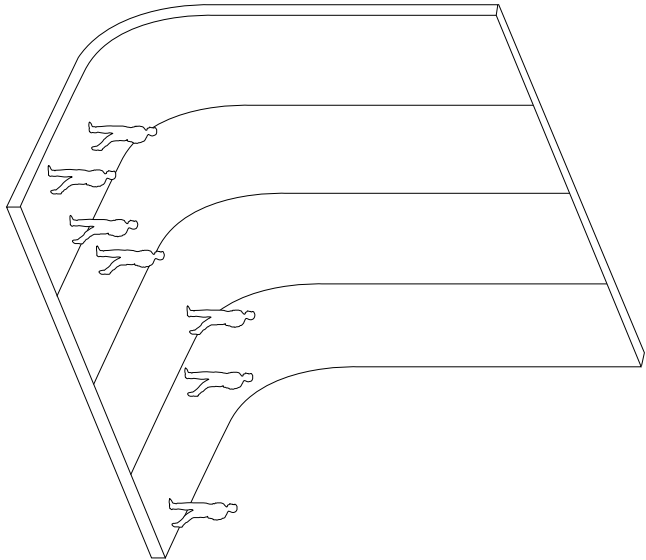
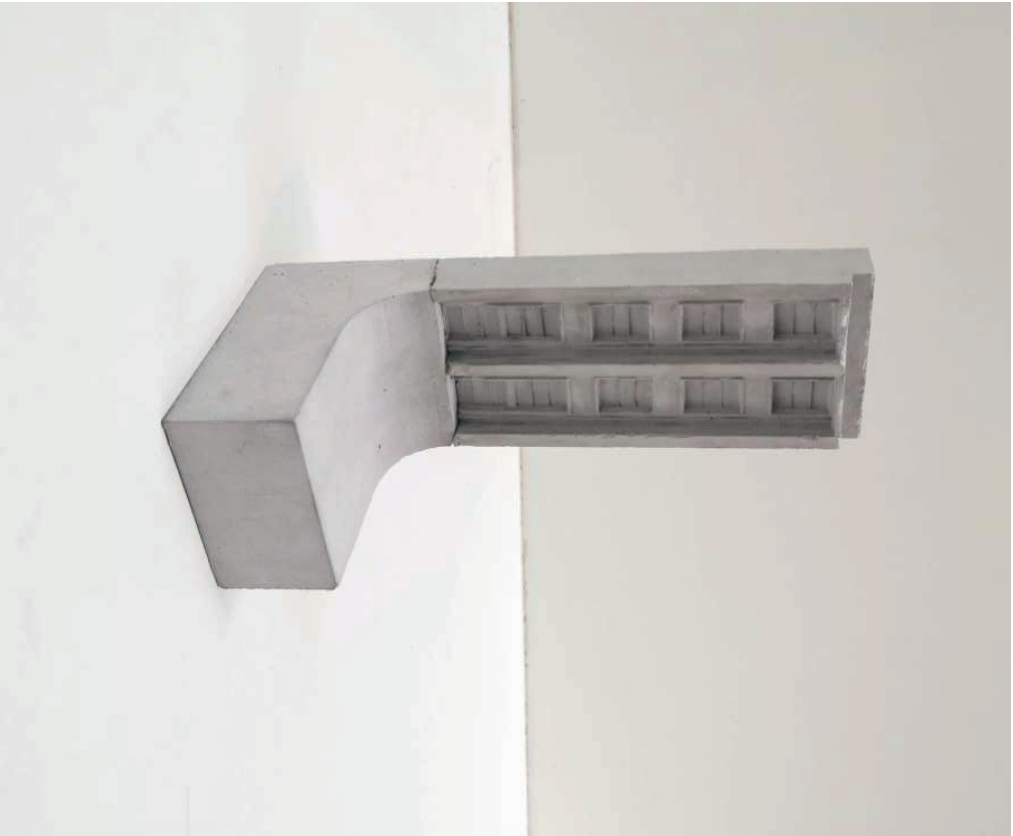




\_by juxtaposing the grid of the facade on the pavement 'moments' are created. the motion of the horizontal plinth is translated into a physical design.



\_the grid on the pavement is established through green.



\_conceptual drawing of the plinth. the street as a place for expression.



social plinth  
week 1.9

[guerilla gardening] the anti-monumental act of guerilla gardening not only allows for the street to get greener, the gardening itself it also is a community activity. one can gather to get creative and reorganise the pavement, with taking out the tiles all sorts of green can flourish.  
a paved street, like the one on which the bank is located, it is important to provide good water drainage systems which these green patches can contribute to.



social plinth  
week 1.9

drawing of the pavement in front of the national bank





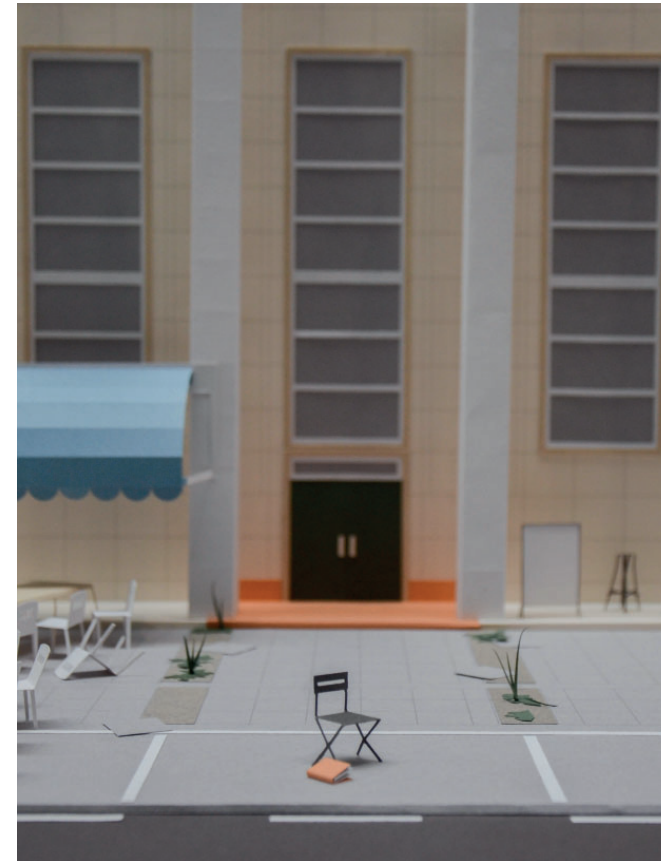
social plinth  
week 1.9



the terrace



the awning



the chair



the bench



# Expression of value(s): research plan

## week 1.10

### Introduction

Though banks are meant to convey ‘trust’, this is often not the feeling people have regarding this intangible institution. Economic crises, digitalization, complex systems, among others have caused a feeling of mistrust and disconnection. The current façade of the bank – an immense powerstructure of repetitive columns – creates a strict boundary which isn’t allowing for the relationship between the bank and the public to be restored. Now, how do we interfere to create moments of accidental generosity for the people? How can we bring human scale to this structure so we can interact with it, so we can relate to it? There is a need for a renewed dialogue between the people and the bank, aiming to restore position of the bank within the city and its relationship with it.

Throughout these past weeks of reading, discussing and reflecting I have become very interested in the way our economies function and how they impact society. I have started to wonder what value means and how we have built our entire society on things we decided to have value. For the brief of the Future Bank I think it would be useful to think about our financial system to really understand its implications on society.

In spite of several crises, capitalism has survived. Our relationship with the institution however has changed. Who trusts a bank nowadays? The ambiguity of the national bank as a private institution offering a public service makes it a unique building type. But it does also confuse. What does the bank typology look like? And is a bank just there for commercial ends or does it somehow want to sustain a close and personal relationship with the public? Now, the question is how we can design an ambiguous institution as such. One aiming to revive the relationship between the bank and the public whilst representing an immaterial thing of value.

### Academic positioning

Architecture is highly dependent on economic forces and subject to its fluctuating business cycles. No building can escape from these external factors. Duffy (2003, p.279) states in his text on Office buildings and organisational change, that office buildings can only be explained in terms of the fundamental economic forces at the time. Since capitalism was introduced it has been driving and shaping our societies and built environment. The typologies of the office and the bank might have direct consequences on our economies, since they host the driving forces of capitalism: employers who keep the economy running, and the medium of exchange called money. These buildings cannot be seen as separately developed objects in the city. They have evolved over time as products of economic shifts and societal changes.

An interesting quote by Duffy (2003, p.255) states the reality of our built environment quite accurately; “Buildings betray what we value”. Whether it’s economic, social or cultural value, it does raise the critical question of what we as a society actually do value most. The exteriors and interiors of our buildings reflect our society. Sometimes these might work as smokescreens to portray a prettier image to sell. In our patriarchal culture for example, corporate office towers have become this symbolic face of capital. In his text Dovey (1992) displays how these towers are presented to the public, trying to convey certain messages, usually a message of power and

wealth in order to sell the buildings for large profits. What does this tell us about society?

Buildings communicate what’s important in our societies. In his text Duffy (2003) describes the development of office buildings and organisational change by means of juxtaposing two examples from three different time periods. What becomes strikingly clear is that office buildings are a reflection of society and a direct consequence of technological innovations, organisational change and economic forces. “Buildings are like mirrors, but like grotesque distorting mirrors, since they exaggerate some features of life and diminish others.” The development of the office typology shows this harsh reality, like for example in the Larkin (1904) building. The buildings design shows the unity of organisation in a strict hierarchical manner. Individual needs or privacy are not considered.



Larkin Administration Building by Frank Lloyd Wright, New York, 1904.  
Source: [https://live.staticflickr.com/5518/9611814074\\_860df9e7a7\\_b.jpg](https://live.staticflickr.com/5518/9611814074_860df9e7a7_b.jpg)

Within a time span of fifty years (1850-1900s) we see the office change from a domestic palazzo typology to a complete routinized factory, based on efficiency and profit pushed by technological advancements and rapid economic growth. In the following years (1900-1960s), offices develop quickly towards high skyscrapers and organic open plan buildings. In the Seagram building for example, by Mies van der Rohe (1954), deep spaces were integrated within a compact plan form due to the invention of air-conditioning. Large office towers, stacking floors upon floors upon floors, could now be realized with elevators moving one “from one wildly different corporate world to another” (Duffy, 2003, p.273).

During the same period in Germany, new office layouts were experimented with in the Ninoflax building (1963). Developments such as cybernetics led to the organisational principle of bürolandschaft. This friendly-looking open layout, pursuing “organic freedom both in organisational and building form without precedents or constraints” (Duffy, 2003, p.274), was actually based on hard-core efficiency. The more efficient the communications within the organisation, the more profit. Office buildings evolve, just as societies evolve. Now, the bank as well had to adapt to all these changes because of its pivotal role as intermediary. But there lies an ambiguity in its goal (Thomas, 2021). The bank, on the one hand, is a private institution with a commercial purpose but on the other hand it’s an institution serving society. How can we understand this?

The history of banking finds its origin in the fourteenth century, in the first professional; the merchant-banker. The first premises of the bank typology were found in buildings built for merchants and bankers with open floor plans, like town halls, meant for trade and exchange. Banking itself mainly took place in the private home, like the Medici family in their palazzo’s. In the fifteenth century however, we see a swift move from private house banking to buildings with a more public character. Over time the banks evolve to cloister-like buildings and courtyards, where one could trade, exchange, lend and credit (Pevsner, 1986).

Banks were meant to radiate confidence through a bold architectural display. For a long time this display was shaped in a variable but strict classicistic language. “Gothic – touted as it was by moralists such as Ruskin and Morris – was hardly an appropriate look for usurers” (Wilkinson, 2019), and thus unfit for a pagan building like a bank. The financial centre was meant to represent a fortress of conservatism, radiating trust, maybe like a religious building. The architectural reference to the ancient temples is therefore not unfit, since the banking business depends entirely on belief as well.

The dominance of modernism in bank architecture is starting to rise only after the second world war – thanks in part to the invention of the ATM (Wilkinson, 2019). Banks become consumer focussed and don’t only accommodate savings but also investments. This is linked to the moment when bank facades started to express literal transparency, as is seen in the Manufacturers Bank (1954) by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. The bank becomes a consumer based institution, luring in its clients looking for more and more profit. This consumer based relationship resulted in a more competitive atmosphere in the banking sector, forcing banks to evolve, pushing them to innovate and literally be more ‘transparent’ (Thomas, 2021).

The developments of the bank and the office typologies have to be understood in light of their context. To understand this, it’s necessary to not only look at architectural developments but also at the economic changes. In the podcast Uncommon sense – A vision for a post-capitalist society (2020) with Mullins and Varoufakis these changes are explained by means of three capitalist eras (in the United States).

The first era is the Golden Age of capitalism in the 1950s and 60s, actually the first time in history where kids would have

better lives than their parents. This was amongst others because of the establishment of the IMF, the Worldbank, and the Bretton Woods agreement which pegged all currencies to the dollar (which was linked with gold) and established fixed exchange rates. It was a form of planned capitalism and resulted in quick economic growth and unbelievable rise of consumer spending.

In the 1970s however, this blew up – due to the oil shock in 1973, OPEC purposely limited access to oil which led to rapid inflation – and the United States went deeply into red making it a deficit country. ‘Stagflation’ led politicians such as Thatcher and Reagan to do away with all restrictions in banking to free up the market. This era is called the financialized globalisation.

This inexorable financialisation drive resulted in the comeuppance of 2008, the last era up to now. Due to the subprime mortgage crisis all large economies collapsed, starting with the fall of the Lehman Brothers Bank. The state is then forced to come back in and pump money into the economy to bail out the banks. All this resulted in the Great Recession which we have only recently recovered from through government spending and tax cuts.

Now the image of the bank of course had to deal with these crises and economical and societal shifts. The relationship with the public has changed, and what is left of it? Under the current light of the pandemic, climate crisis, issues of inequality, etc., we might wonder what the bank should reflect. What happens to the image of ‘security’ in a post-2008 world? Maybe it’s time to rethink our society and our system, rethink our values. Varoufakis (2020), in his book Another Now, is describing an alternative post-capitalist society as a solution to not only the tension between capitalism and climate, but to many contemporary problems. In order to design a future bank, it is highly necessary to analyse and anticipate these alternatives scenarios for us to understand what systems we might lean towards in the coming decades.

### Reflective problem statement

For me personally there is a gap in knowledge of how the relationship between the bank and the public has changed as a consequence of the financial system at the time. Banks evolved over time portraying different images to the public, like ‘trust’, ‘security’ and ‘transparency’. In the meantime the bank as an institution has become distanced from society, since its function in our digitalized age has become unclear. As stated in the Architectural Review, “the miniaturisation and proliferation of the bank has continued apace in the form of banking apps, which mean the activity has now been entirely divorced from fixed architectural form” (Wilkinson, 2019). The act of banking has become detached from an actual architectural building, what does the empty shell within our city become?

This research will focus on the relation between the architectural expression of the bank and the internal activities and systems of the bank. This leads to the following question: What is the relation between the exterior image of the bank – the façade, advertisements,





Manufacturers Bank by SOM, New York, 1954.  
Source: <https://www.som.com/projects/manufacturers-hanover-trust-510-fifth-avenue/>

media, government attention – and the internal activity – money, value, profit, systems, digitalization – and how does this affect the relationship with the public? In order to propose an answer to this dilemma, the expression and organisation of the public part of the building – the plinth, the public zones – will be set out against its economic and societal context. By mapping these different precedents, relations are posed to be drawn between the financial systems and the architectural expression.

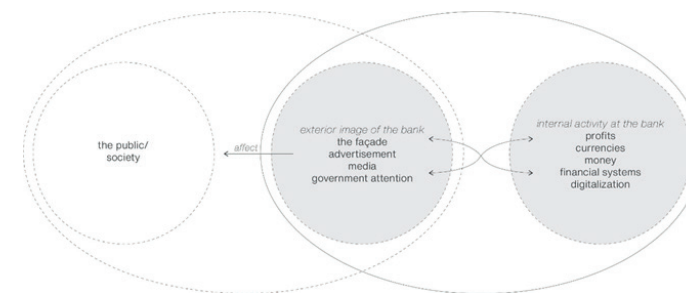


Diagram problem statement.

There are a few other related topics for the research propositions I might explore in the coming year as well. The first that needs to be addressed is the paradox of visibility. The question of why the bank is so consciously visible in society whilst dealing with such an immaterial thing (Thomas, 2021). I'm interested in the relationship between the belief in money and the architectural expression of the bank building. This could be linked to religious architecture, the only other typology where belief stands at its fundament.

Secondly, the relationship between the bank and the public could also be researched through materiality. What does the expression of the façade communicate to the public? What is the material culture of these buildings? Is there in any way a connection between the materials used and the monetary policies and systems of the time? This theme could also tie into our current climate crisis, researching what materials are still 'ethical' to use in buildings.

All in all, for my research I wish to try and pose an answer in order to restore the relationship between the national bank and its city and citizens through architectural means.

### Methodology

This research will mainly be conducted through comprehensive literature research and analysis of relevant case studies. Several bank precedents from different time periods throughout the 20th century will be analysed focussing on the plinth and the public spaces. The imagery put out by the banks, such as advertisements by various media, will also be analysed. These findings will be put against the economic and societal context of the time. By creating a chronological timeline of the bank buildings and their 'faces', it will be easier to draw the connections with the crises and economic changes. Through this I want to gain understanding of the impact of the financial system on architecture.

The materialization of the plinth, of the face of the bank building, is an aspect of bank architecture which needs

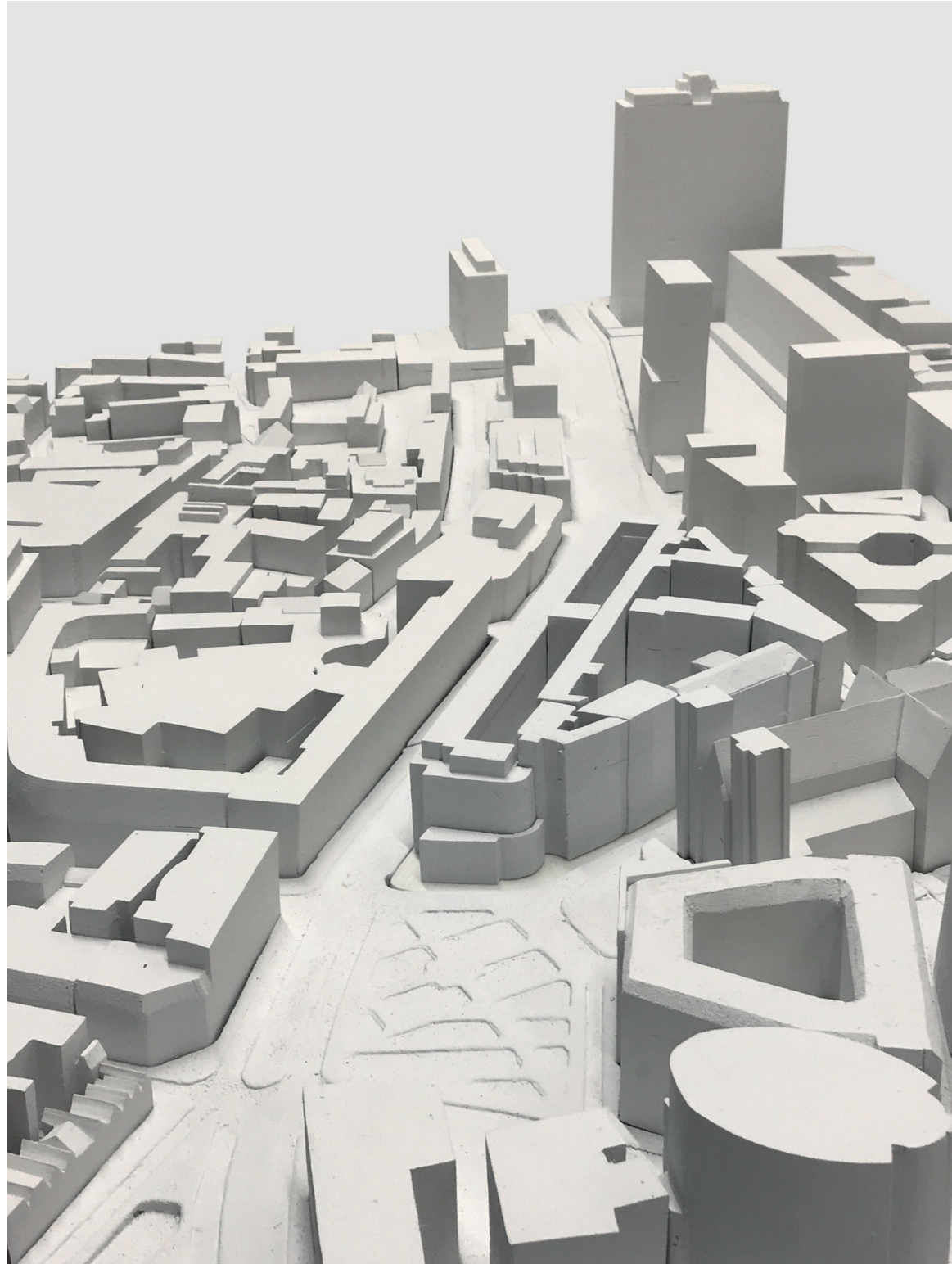
further attention. Through analytical research and literature studies I want to understand the meaning of the materials expressed in the façade. How does the material culture of the bank relate to the internal activities? By analysing materialization of precedents and by juxtaposing these, it is posed to find relations between the material used and organisation. In order for us to design an ethical Future Bank, we also need all available knowledge on local economies and material streams in Belgium.

To understand economic and societal shifts, it is highly necessary to understand the history of capitalism and the crises societies have suffered from through literature. I want to limit my research to the 20th century in order to create a clear framework. The books *Talking to my daughter about the economy* by Varoufakis (2019) and *23 Things They Don't Tell You about Capitalism* by Chang (2011) will help understand the history of capitalism. As mentioned earlier, the book *Another Now* also by Varoufakis (2020), providing a post-capitalist scenario would also be an interesting read to gain understanding of possible financial systems of the future.

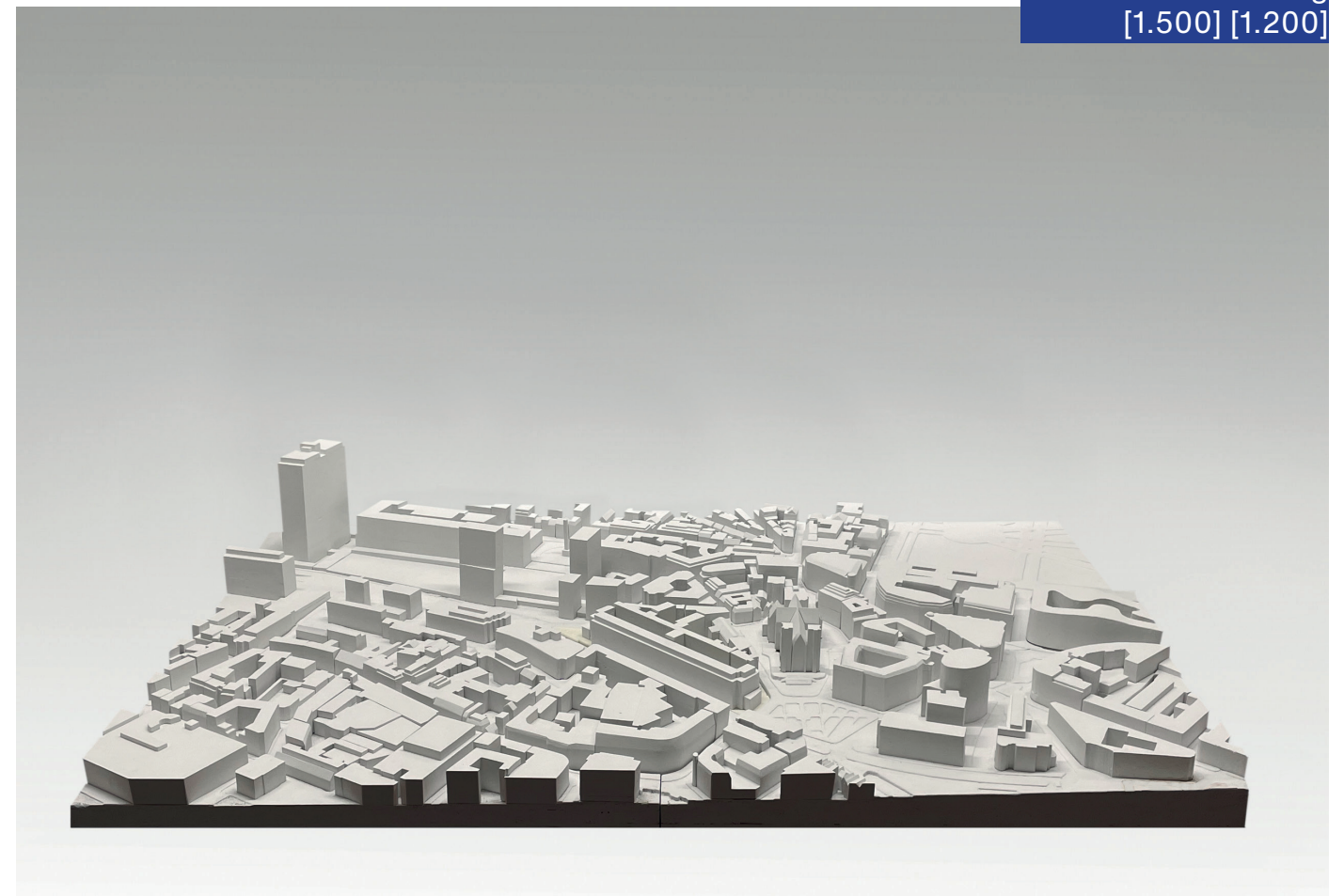
A large part of the research will be done collectively. The precedent studies, analytical drawings and site analysis amongst others. By organizing study groups and lectures for example, the work can be divided which will be profitable and less time consuming for everyone. Overall this research will consist of collective research, analytical drawings, watching documentaries and ted talks, reading columns, opinions and forums, collecting photographs, and interpreting the existing body of literature.



model making  
week 2.1-2.4

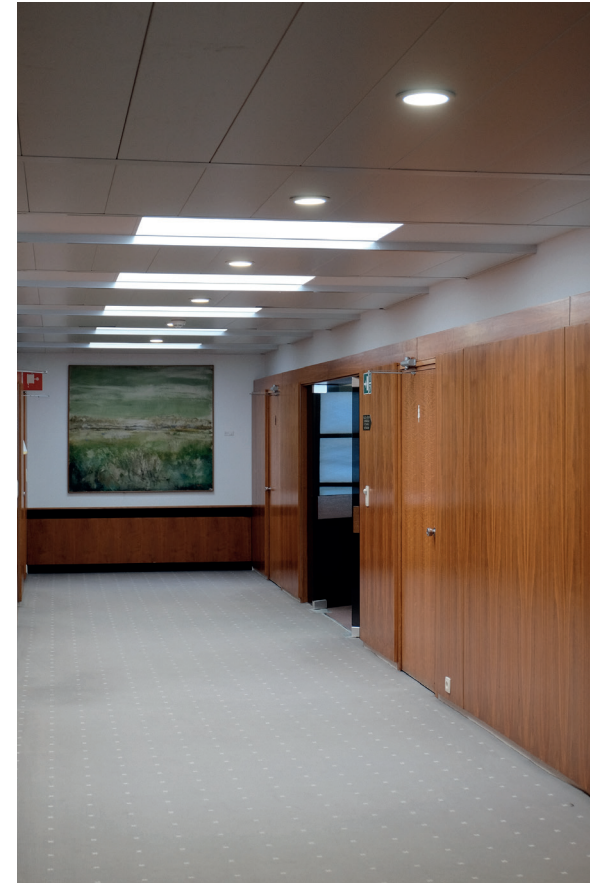


models in the making  
[1.500] [1.200]





site seeing in brussels  
week 2.2





## sensitive architecture

### week 2.5

Lina Bo Bardi  
São Paulo 1968, Museum of Art

In her autobiographical text 'Currículo Literário', Bo Bardi pays tribute to the lessons she learnt from Ponti, whom she affectionately defines as the 'last of the humanists' – for his commitment to the social and cultural agenda of architecture, his interest in traditional forms of craft and his all-encompassing approach to design, 'from cups and chairs to fashion, including also urban design, curatorial and editorial work'.



“For her [bo bardi], it was not enough to design the physical object of a building, or to act as a solitary artist. She “put people in the centre of the project”.”

## stone garden in beirut

### week 2.5

Lina Ghotmeh - “Stone Garden” stands side by side juxtaposed with the few remaining traditional tiled-roof houses and the identical concrete masses rising in Beirut’s cityscape. The building dialogues with this strange melancholic euphoria that persists within both the built and natural landscape of this town.



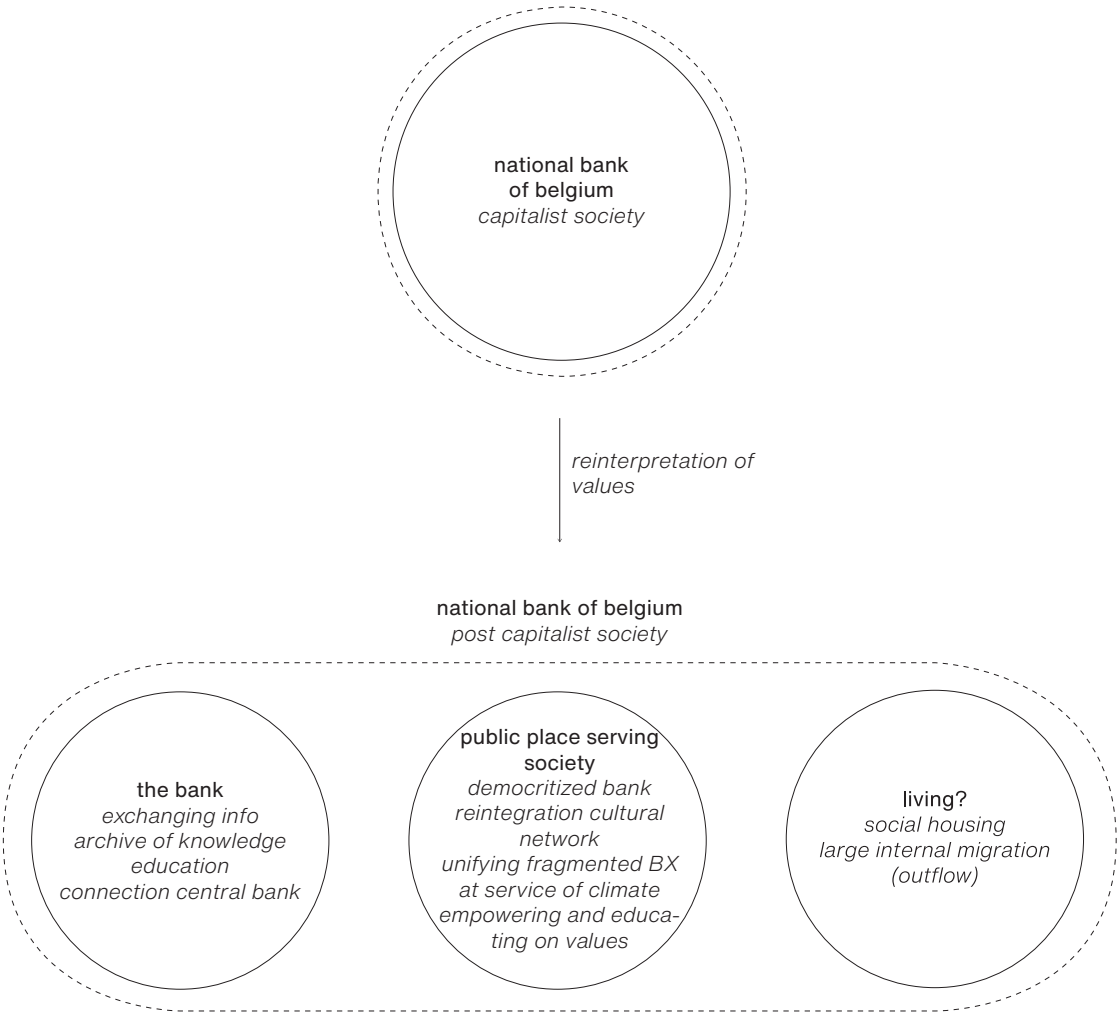
how can we create humane contextual sensitive architecture?  
is there a way to approach a design with a certain sensitivity.



# reinterpretation of values

## week 2.5

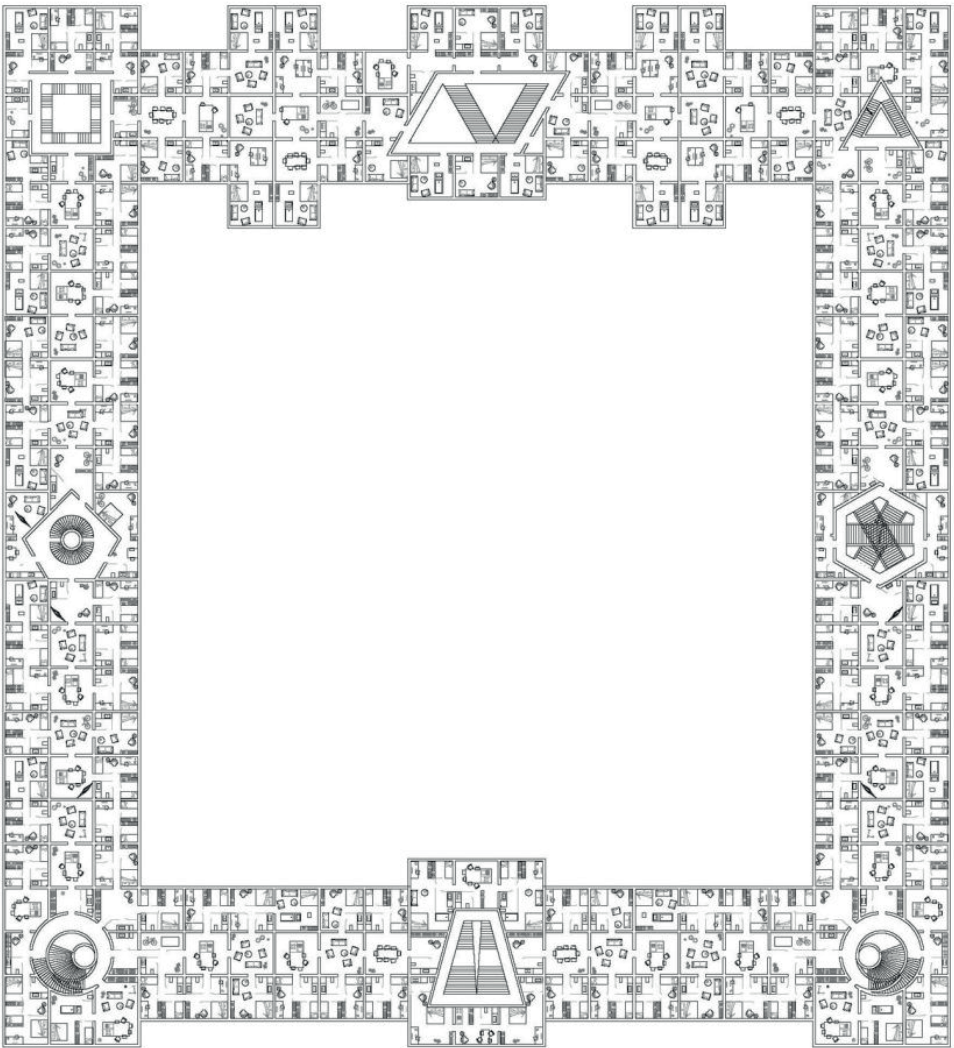
genuinly competitive markets requires the end of capitalism.  
what happens if we eliminate commercial banking?  
a more social role for the national bank, as a protector of the  
individuals as a branch of the central bank?



# buckingham palace

## week 2.5

Opposite office, 2019. A proposal to turn the Buckingham Palace into 50.000 living units. For me it raises the question of how we divide space and who has 'the right' to what space. A critical question to ask is why we allocate so much space to certain public buildings and not to housing for example? Especially with buildings like a palace, which have an enourmous footprint within the city. If there is such a housing shortage, why don't we use what is already there?





# the charged void

## week 2.6

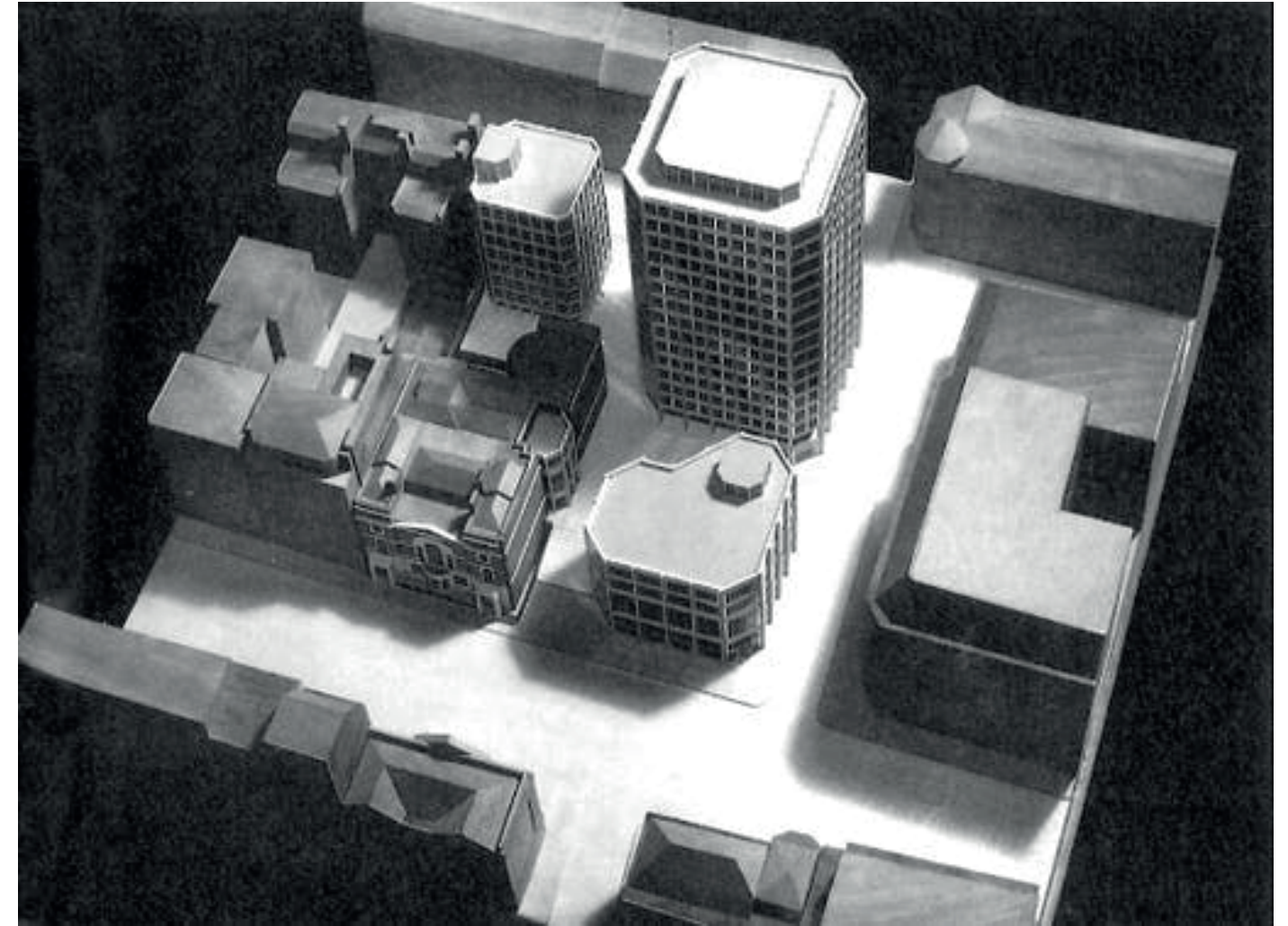
“All these Economist buildings respond to the existing urban environment, and at the same time, the complex creates its own inner environment in the form of the plaza lifted above the surrounding streets. **Is this a miniature public square or an outside room?** A tight, trapped space or one of discrete proximities? It is perhaps all these things, for each is activated as the plaza is looked upon or occupied in different ways. In part, these complexities are a product of the need to provide light across the site despite limitations on blocking the light of surrounding buildings, but the plaza also serves to **reinforce links between the three buildings, and creates a variety of relationships to its surroundings in vista or glancing view.** These multiple nuances work towards what the Smithsons called **‘the charged void’.**” page 60, Alison and Peter Smithson by Mark Crinson [2018]

“The idea of the ‘charged void’ probably came from Rex Martienssen’s articles on Greek architecture, shown by Theo Crosby to Peter Smithson in the late 1940s. [...] What Martienssen called ‘space technique’ was to be found in sites like the sanctuary at Sunium, **where small groups of monumental buildings were poised on a stone platform whose different levels guided views across the site.**

The propylaeum - temple relationship, which encouraged spectators to ‘model’ understanding of the site, is echoed in the movement between St James’s Street and the entrance to the Economist Building. The Smithsons’ stone plinth orders the site, mapping a regular datum in relation to busy, secular St James’s much as Sunium’s platform controls the complex’s relation to its own dramatic setting.” page 61, Alison and Peter Smithson by Mark Crinson [2018]

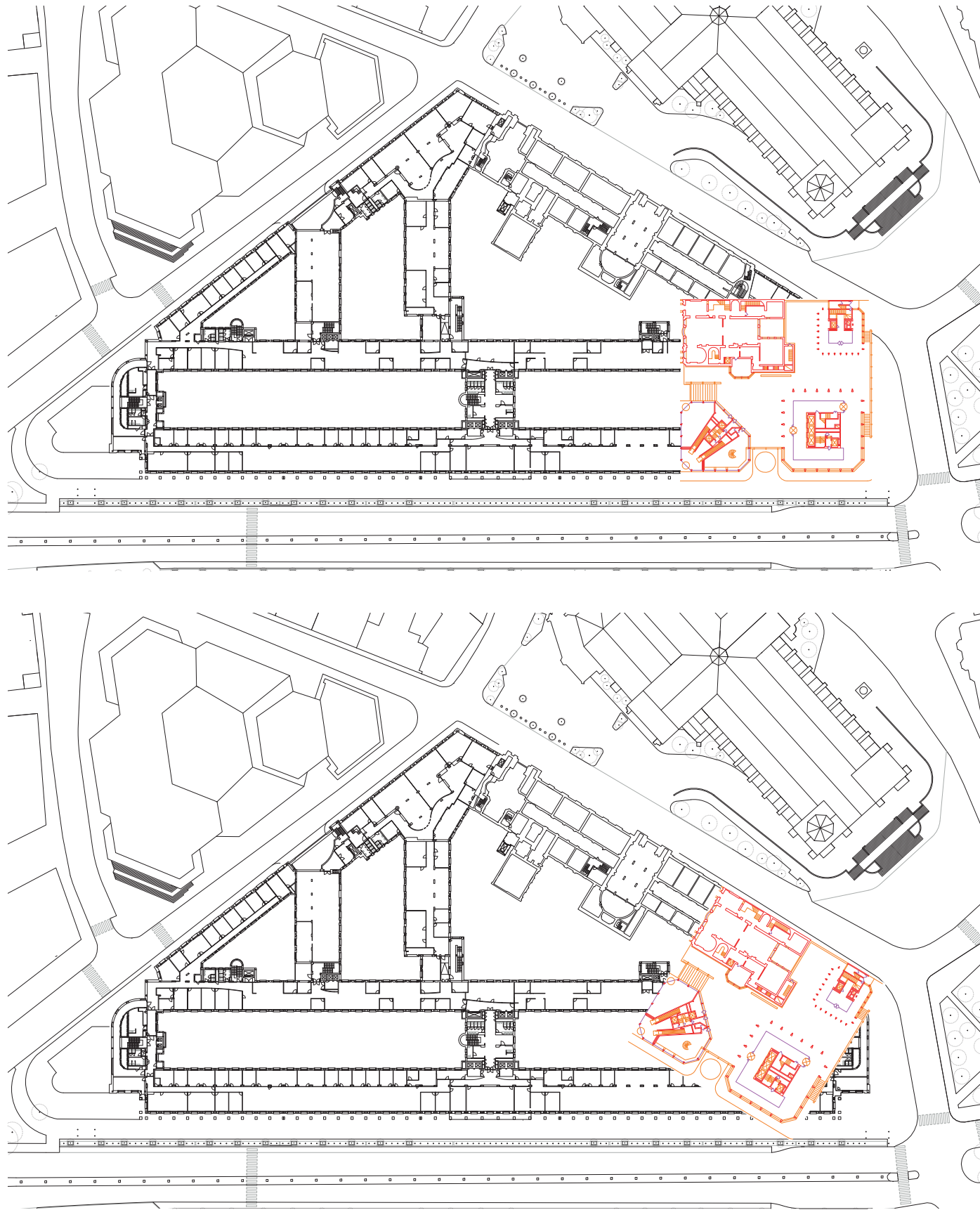
“Since architecture shelters the entire human drama, it is the most natural of the arts to express the complexities of life.” page 120, De-Architecture by James Wines [1987]

“... [Martienssen] discusses the primary elements of architecture in the sense of providing enclosure or of making a transition between enclosed and open space, as, for example, porticoes which established both the exterior bounds of a structure and at the same time allowed an integrating penetration of the surrounding areas with the solid.” page 33, Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians [Vol. 16, No. 4] by Richard Stillwell [1957]

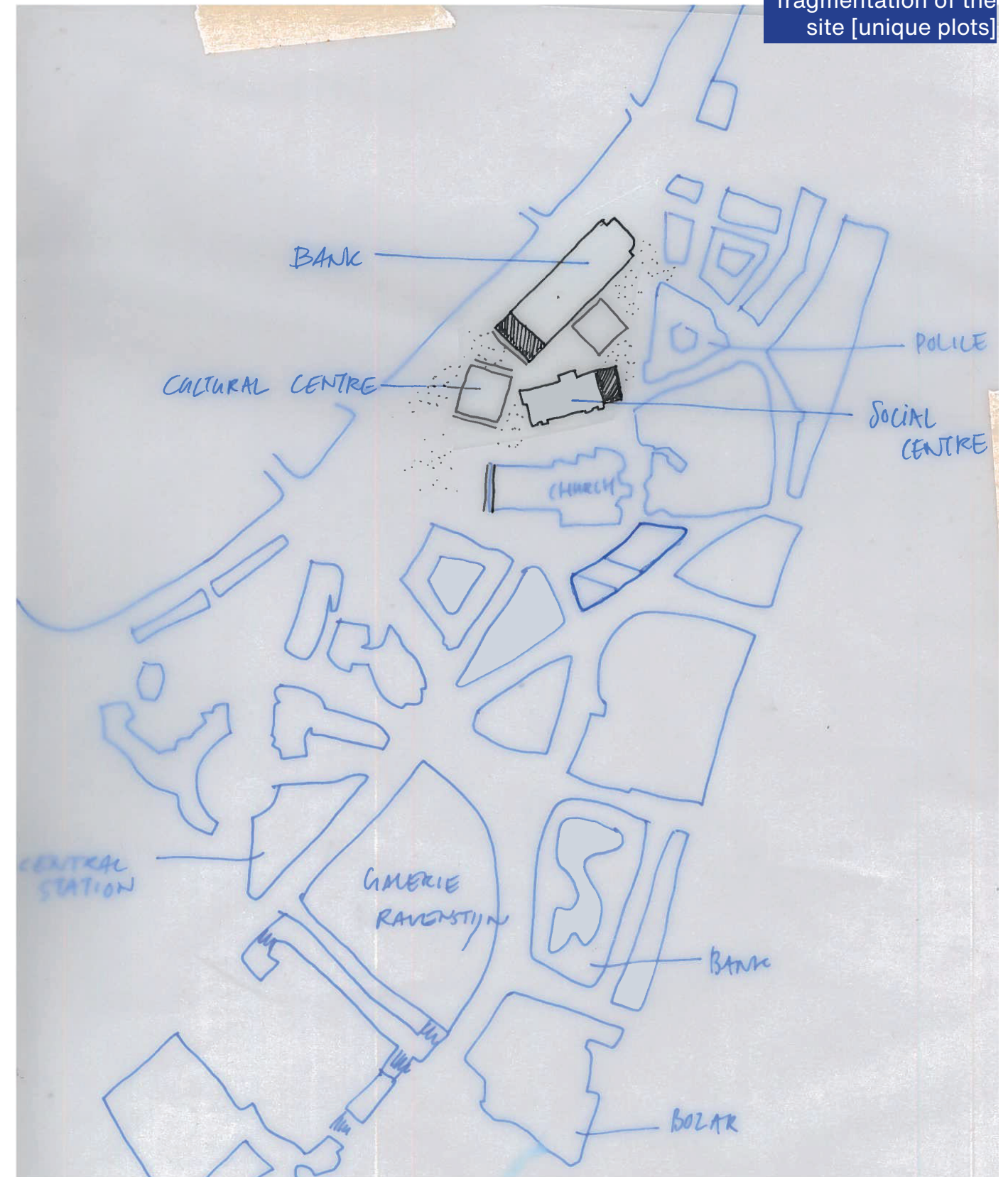




opposing the megastructure  
week 2.6



playing with the  
fragmentation of the  
site [unique plots]



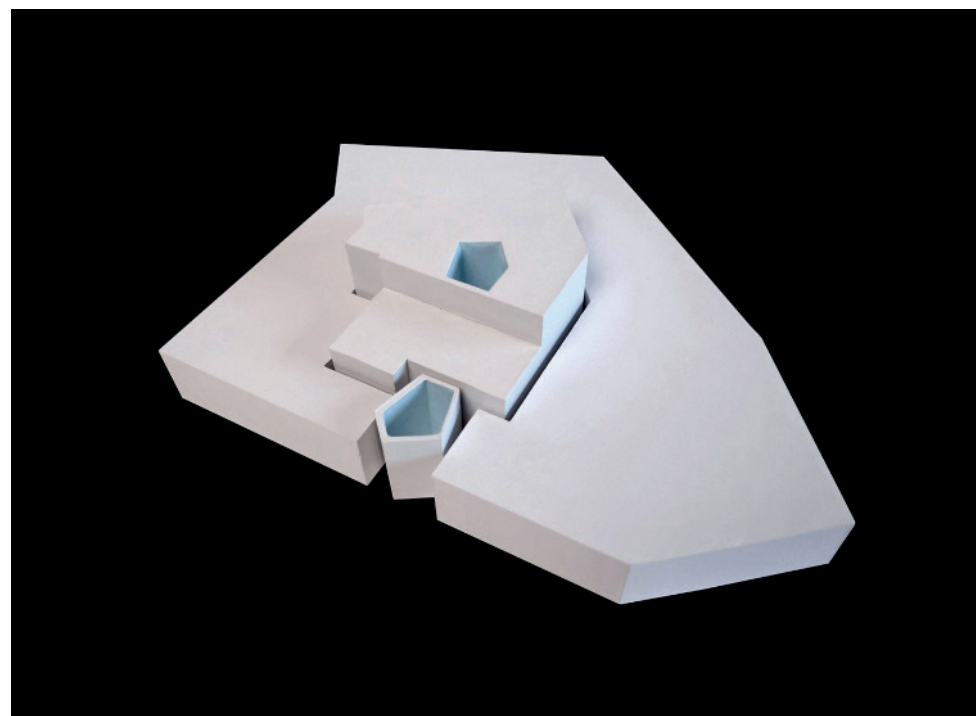
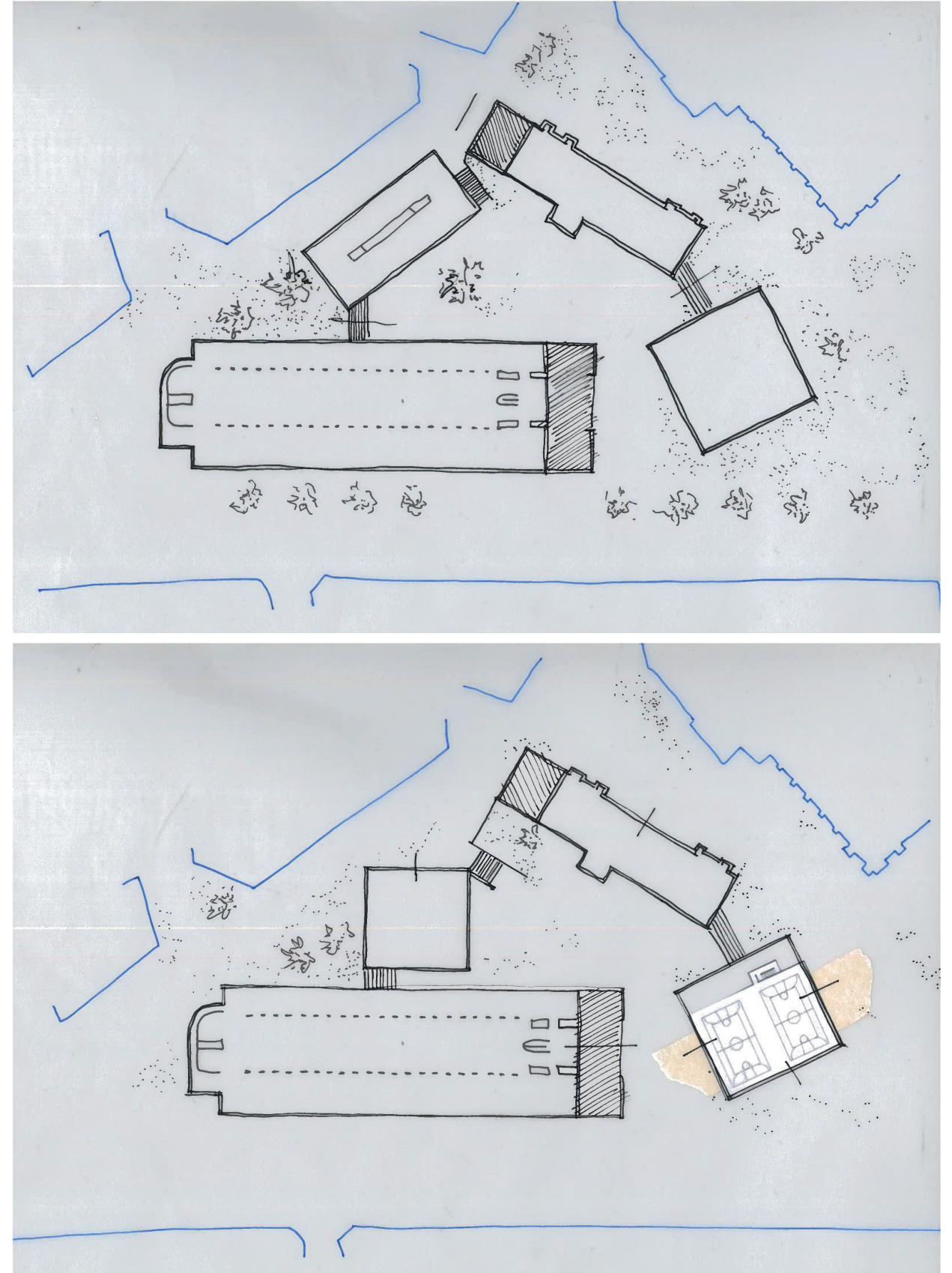


democratic space  
week 2.6



Lacaton & Vassal, Nantes school of architecture

buildings on a public platform  
week 2.6



BUDA Art Factory, 51N4E



## the space between week 2.7


Max Risselada

kolommen, de schoorstenen uit de Engelse

in het begrip *space* is verwoord.

1  
Allison & Peter Smithson, 'The Space between', in: *Oppositions*, nr. 4, 1974, p. 76–78.

2  
Peter Smithson, 'Space is the American Mediator or the Blocks of Ithaca: A Speculation', in: *The Harvard Architectural Review*, nr. 2, voorjaar 1981. De thema's van dit essay werden door Peter Smithson voor het eerst in 1975 aan de orde gesteld op de School of Design van Harvard University ter voorbereiding van een studio programma waarin studenten ontwerpen maakten binnen een veronderstelde Amerikaanse ruimtelijke traditie.



Low Middleton on the River Tees, County Durham

### The space between

The title of this essay comes from Allison and Peter Smithson themselves. 'The Space Between' is the title of a statement on the work of Louis Kahn which they wrote shortly before his unexpected death on March 17, 1974. It was accordingly published as an in memoriam in the magazine *Oppositions*.<sup>1</sup> In this short article, which essentially consists of a number of aphorisms, only two paragraphs and one illustration are devoted to Kahn's work.

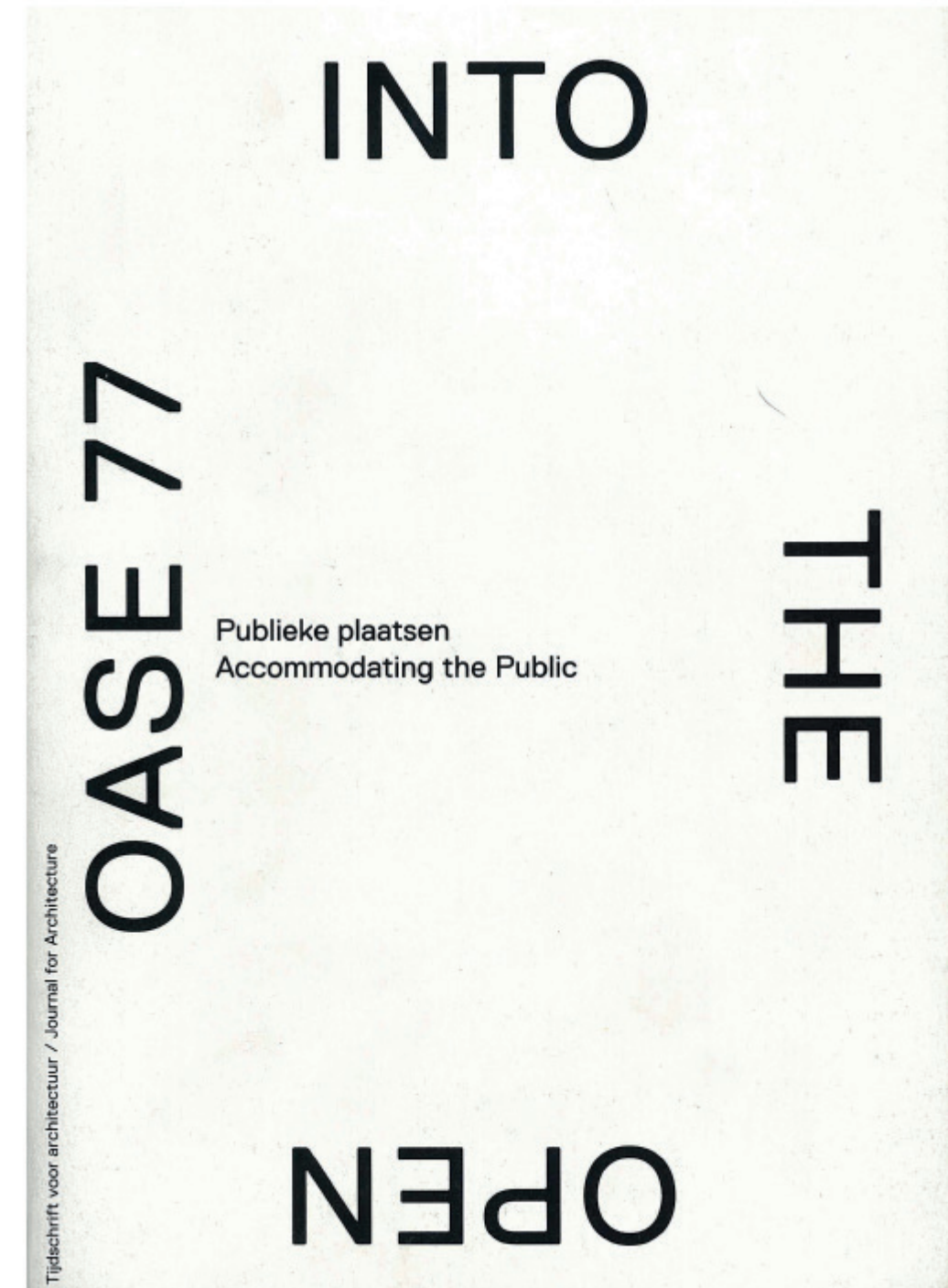
The opening paragraphs set the general tenor of the text: 'The most mysterious, the most charged of architectural forms are those which capture the empty air. The standing columns of the temple whose cella walls have gone, the empty barn, the Kahn house of the square brick columns, the chimneys of the English Renaissance...

such forms are double-acting, concentrating inwards, radiating buoyancy outwards. The drama is set up by the ring of chairs at the round table before the knights arrive.

The chimneys of the English Renaissance can also be read as architecture's own break with Rome; the center simply gone, and in place of the all summing dome the play of almost equals making magical emptiness in between and creating imaginary answering turrets beyond.'

Although not explicitly, the Smithsons are referring here to a specific concept of space as perceived in an Anglo-Saxon tradition of architecture and urban development, a concept that has its roots particularly in North America. A concept that is already expressed in the term 'space' itself.

For example, in contrast with their contemporaries' proposals for 'megastructures', the Smithsons advocated a system of meaningful separation. This would allow a part of a composition, whether it be a ventilation system in a building or a collection of buildings in a city, to have the necessary space – 'elbow room' – to develop according to its own laws or patterns, with the possibility of change through time.





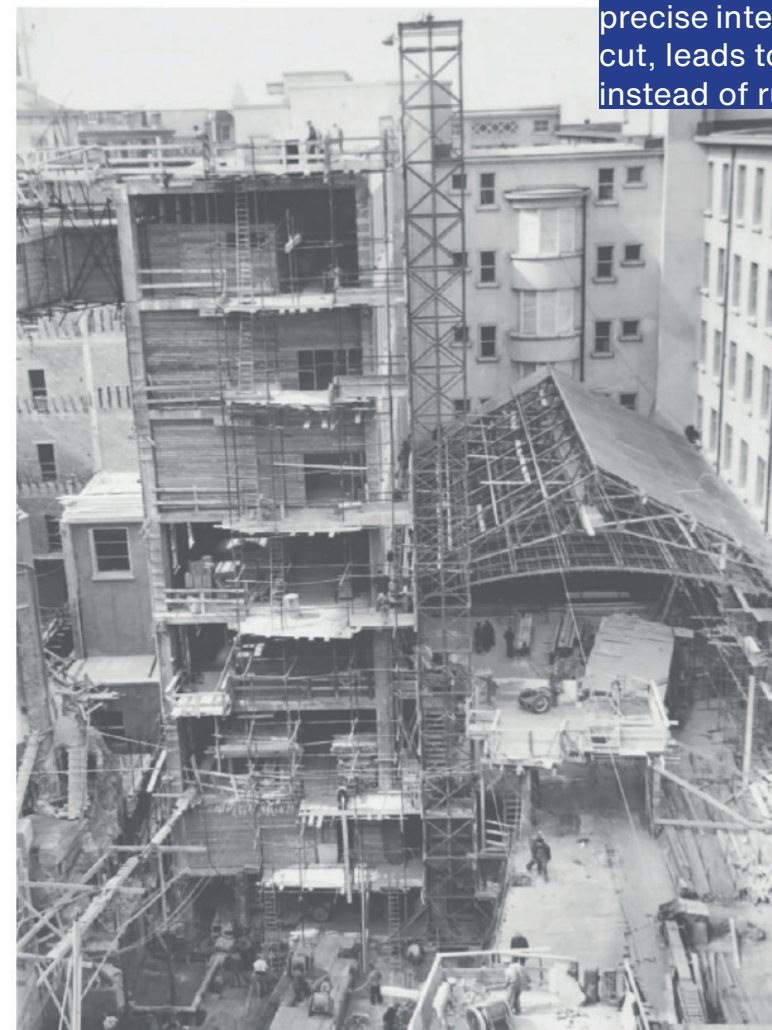


Gordon Matta-Clark, Conical Intersect, 1975. SFMOMA, San Francisco © Estate of Gordon Matta Clark Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

“we might interpret matta-clark’s cutting in a new mode: not so much destructive, or deconstructive, in relation to architecture but rather constructive of an architecture that would (finally) embody the modernist spatial promise in a way denied by the systematic vulgarizations of modernity built by corporate efficiency.”

page 69, Transmission: The art of Matta and Gordon Matta-Clark by San Diego Museum of Art [2006]

Julia Linde



precise intervention,  
cut, leads to order  
instead of ruin...

from the Baroque period to the modern as a progressive opening up of the building = notion of space, sigfried giedions 1941  
page 69, Transmission: The art of Matta and Gordon Matta-Clark by San Diego Museum of Art [2006]

“Conceptual art [...] in its rejection of what he called ‘the functionalist aspect of the past-due Machine Age moralists.’”

“In another project, entitled Conical Intersect, Matta-Clark chopped a series of concentric circular openings through the facade and interior walls of a seventeenth-century townhouse destined for demolition as part of the redevelopment of the Beaubourg and Les Halles areas in Paris. The crowning glory of this vast real-estate enterprise was the Pompidou Centre, which would house the ministries of French culture and the museum of modern art. The site of Matta-Clark’s invasion by art was directly adjacent to the Pompidou, then under construction and showing every sign of becoming a quintessential example of ‘Machine Age moralist’ functionalism. Matta-Clark’s perverse statement was a beautiful contrast to the overzealous technological extravaganza across the street.

He burrowed his way through the old building with subversive determination, intent upon creating a confrontation of what he called the

## ‘non-umental’

that is an expression of the commonplace that might encounter the grandeur and pomp of architectural structures and their self-glorifying clients.”  
page 139, De-Architecture by James Wines [1987]

“anarchitecture preserves the architectural utopianism of the early social reformers, ..., but in a form that constructs open, permeable social space rather than closed, aestheticized elitist space.”  
page 69, Transmission: The art of Matta and Gordon Matta-Clark by San Diego Museum of Art [2006]



## precise vs generic

the space inbetween

intent upon creating a confrontation of what he called the 'non-umental' that is an expression of the commonplace that might encounter the grandeur and pomp of architectural structures and their self-glorifying clients

fragmentation

"Since architecture shelters the entire human drama, it is the most natural of the arts to express the complexities of life."

providing enclosure or of making a transition

clear spatial character and precise boundaries

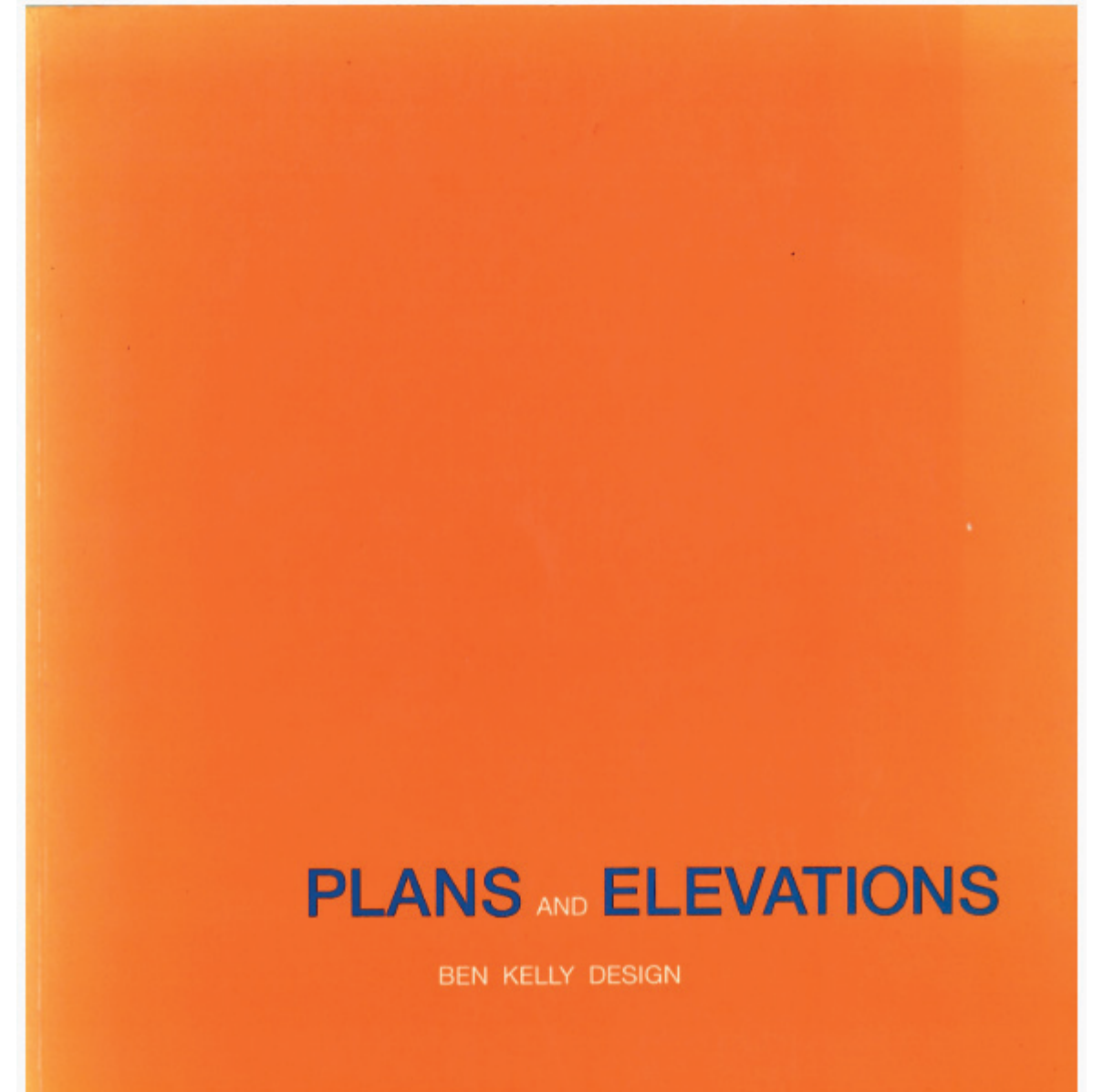
human scale

"anarchitecture preserves the architectural utopianism of the early social reformers, ..., but in a form that constructs open, permeable social space rather than closed, aestheticized elitist space."

## the void

### On Interior Design

Essay by Fred Scott





## monadnock building

### week 2.7

17 story skyscraper located in Chicago, designed by the firm of Burnham & Root [1891], tallest load-bearing brick building ever constructed



## assemblage and bricolage

### week 2.7

“Intervention, like collage, is the assimilation of disparate elements into a resolution where the parts work together while maintaining their own identity. While concerned with purity of style at certain points, the activity is more akin to assemblage and bricolage; and as with collage, the coherence must derive from this.”

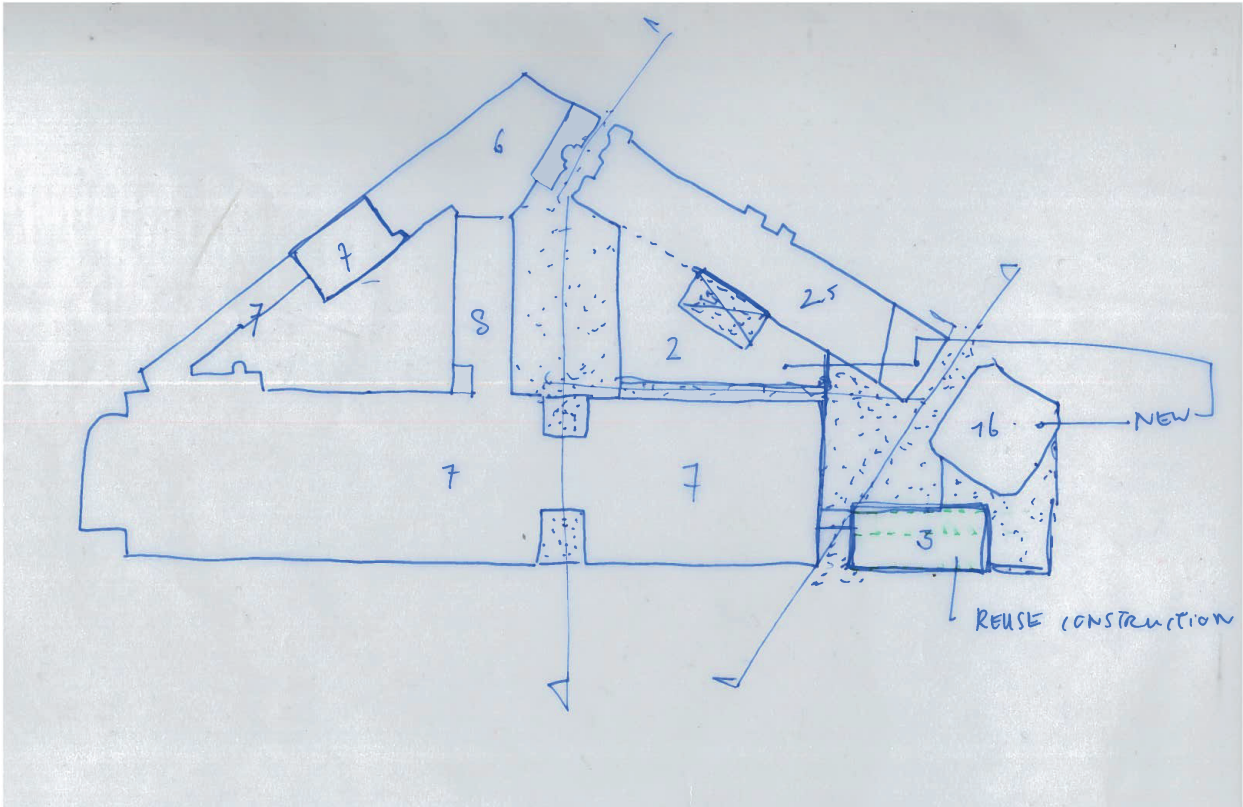
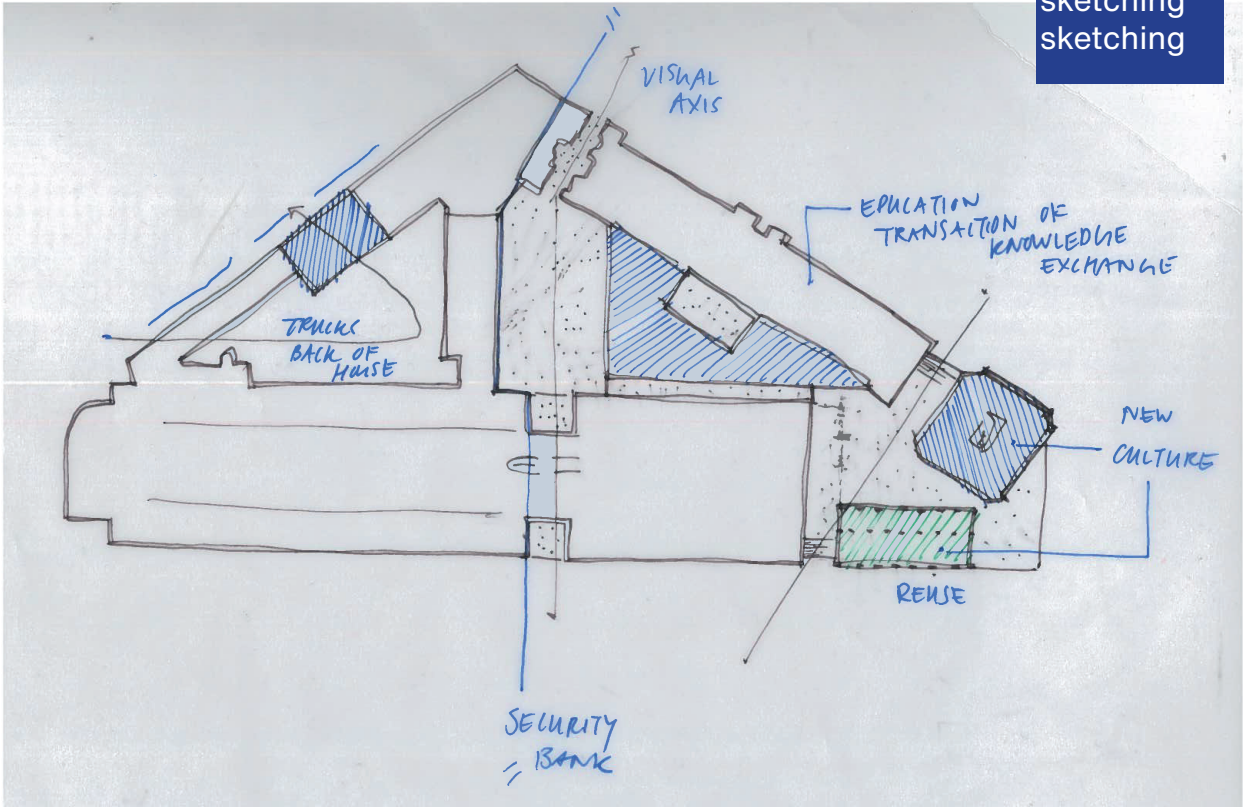
**FRED  
SCOTT  
ON ALTERING  
ARCHITECTURE**



visual inspiration  
week 2.7



sketching  
sketching  
sketching



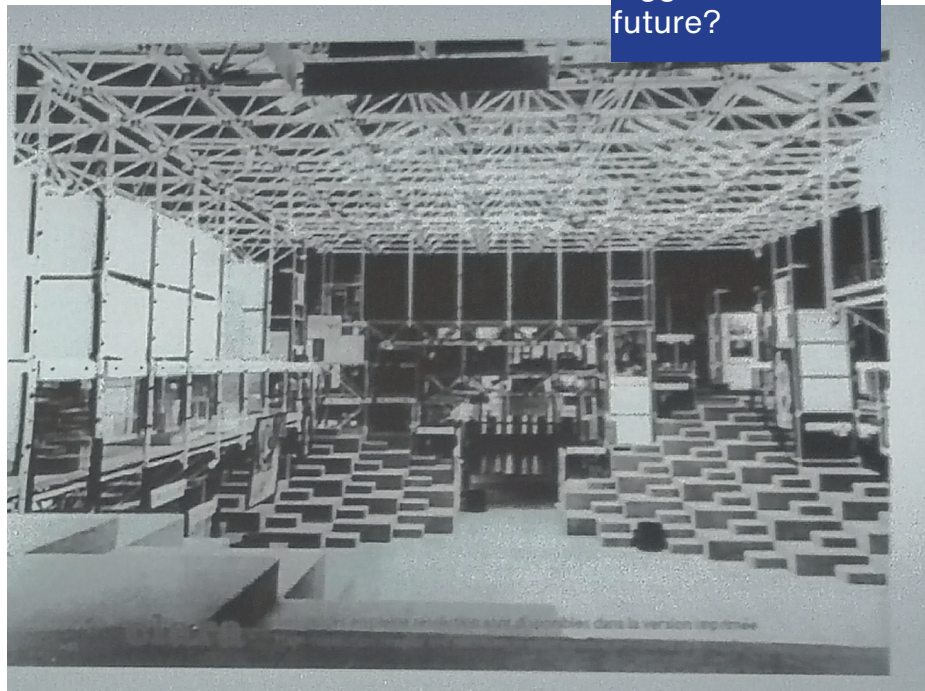


## lecture paul vermeulen [coping with frustrations] week 2.7

how to deal with dissapointing sites?  
how to deal with the existing?  
louis roelandt  
university building [rijksuniversiteit] in Gent by Louis  
Roelandt shows a carefull handeling of the existing whilst  
creating a beautiful new structure.  
victor horta  
palais des beaux arts by Victor Horta in Brussels  
an urban structure within a palace with two cores  
diagonally organized  
maze of connections  
a composition of rooms without corridors for circulation  
merging the arts

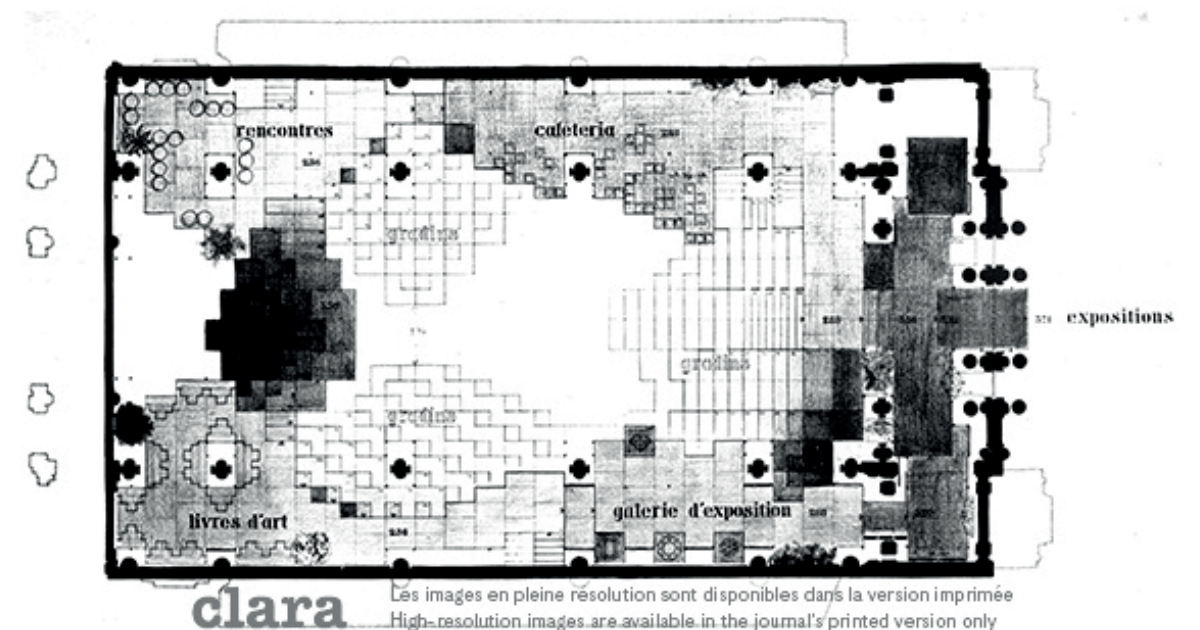
...maybe  
rethinking a  
space doesn't  
always have to  
involve massive  
renovations...

our desires,  
our culture, our  
needs change  
rapidly. do we  
really need  
physical set  
spaces to define  
our spatial  
desires? or can  
temporality play a  
bigger role in the  
future?



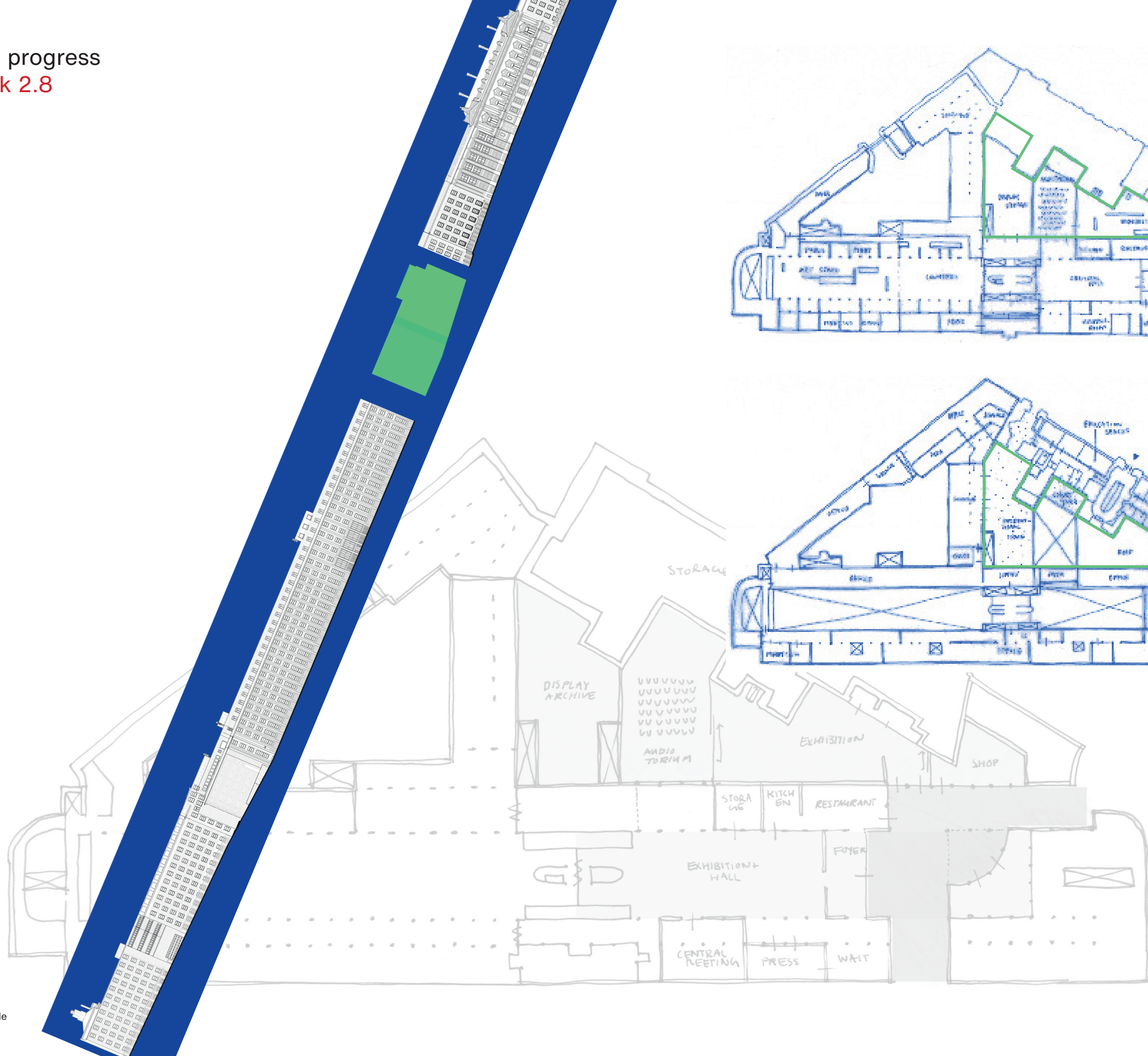
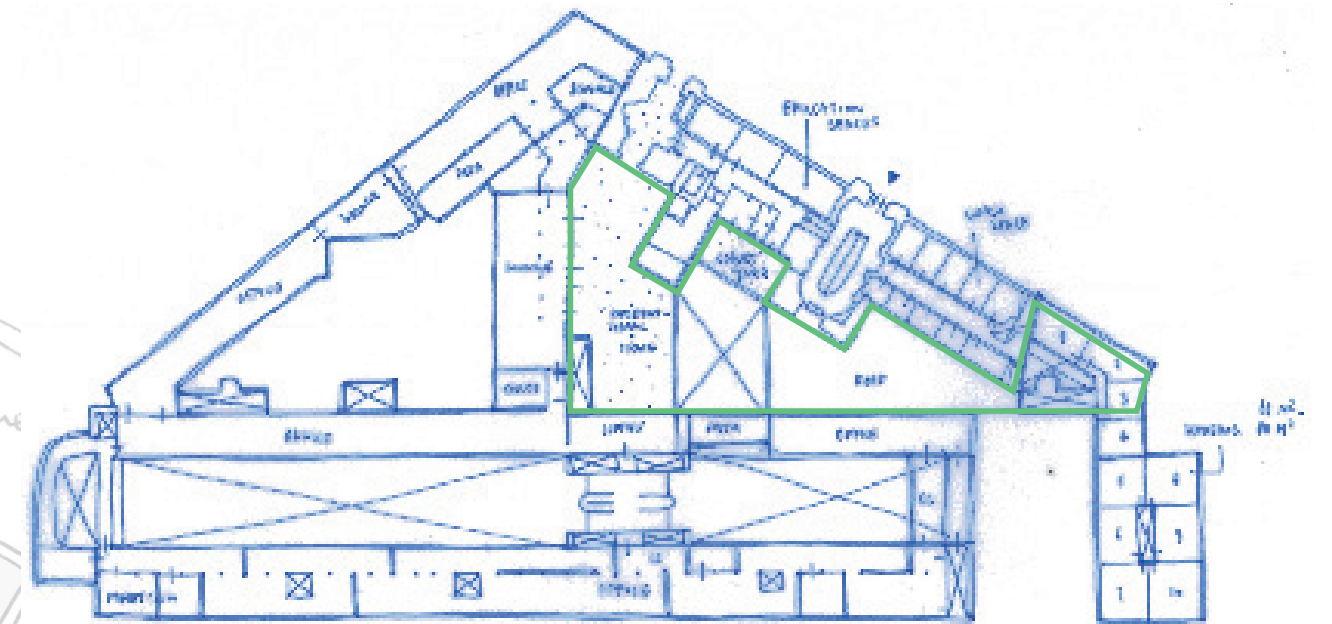
## temporary structures week 2.7

"In the Hall of the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, we had created a meeting space, all in tubular structure, a large central space where things happened, shows, concerts, meetings, there was a peripheral gallery with a bookshop, exhibitions... May 68, does that ring a bell, the student revolts? In the Palais des Beaux-Arts there were meetings of artists challenging official art, public art. Pierre Janlet was impressed by these meetings, he said: "It's great, in this Palace, in this Hall where nothing happens, we have to do something, we have to invent a place where people can meet freely. So he thought up a little competition. An architect proposed a concrete slab in the middle, halfway up... We won the competition because we proposed a structure that could be dismantled, reassuring people: "We can find Horta in 48 hours, we won't damage it, we can find it...". In the end, it was 25 years later that the layout was dismantled, in eight days, which is not bad at all!"





plan progress  
week 2.8





# umbaukultur

## The Architecture of Altering



Christoph Grafe and Tim Rieniets  
with Baukultur Nordrhein-Westfalen

the presence of the past - aesthetic strategies and other  
approaches to adaptive reuse by christoph grafe

### week 2.8

“it is no coincidence that these strategies were often explored in the artistic production of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The discovery of everyday objects in the early years of pop art and brutalism in London, the study of the simplest of materials by the Italian Arte Povera, the fragmenting cuts of Gordon Matta Clark’s Anarchitecture - all of these movements explore spaces and spatial designs that run counter to the faith in progress propagated by the consumer society of those decades...” p.18

“are we witnessing a corrosion of respect for the architectural achievements of others or do we simply no longer value our buildings, especially those that do not qualify as monuments?”

history, precious resources, land is a limited commodity, demolition is easier

“the importance of such prominent conversions of cultural buildings should not be underrated: they illustrate that there are definitely alternatives to “starchitecture”, the usual choice for such building projects. Rem Koolhaas once summed it up perfectly when he said that preservation was a type of “refuge” to escape from starchitecture.” p.10

everyday architecture

“marcel duchamp’s Fountain is an icon of this art: a urinal lying on its back that was presented at the major 1917 exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists in New York. By reinterpreting the urinal as a fountain and displaying it at an exhibition, Duchamp caused a huge scandal since he questioned not only moral and functional categories, but also the conventions of the contemporary art world.” p.67

adding more  
value by taking  
less away  
what is of  
value?



historical juxtaposition  
week 2.8

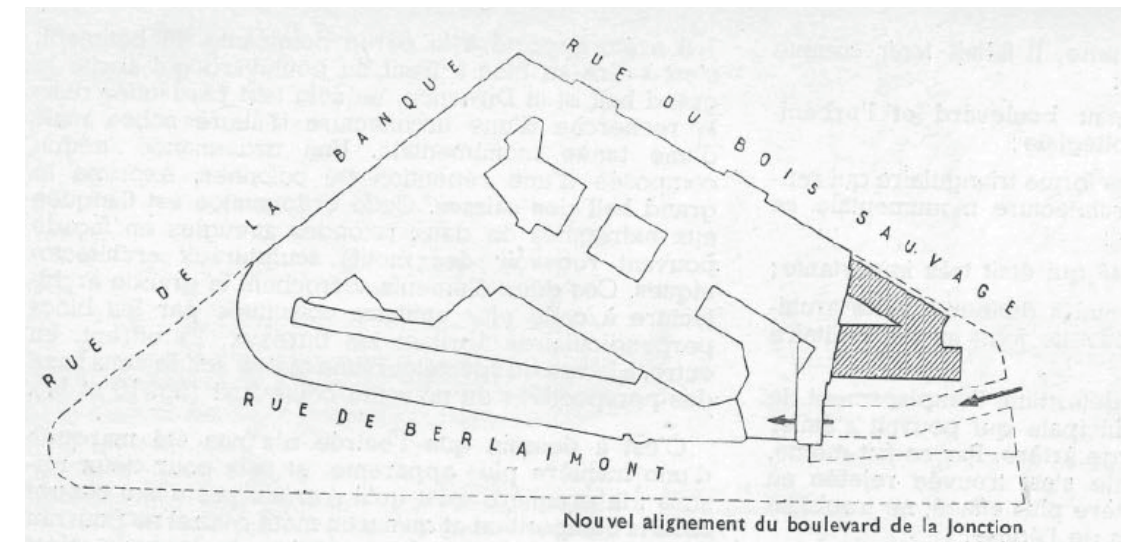
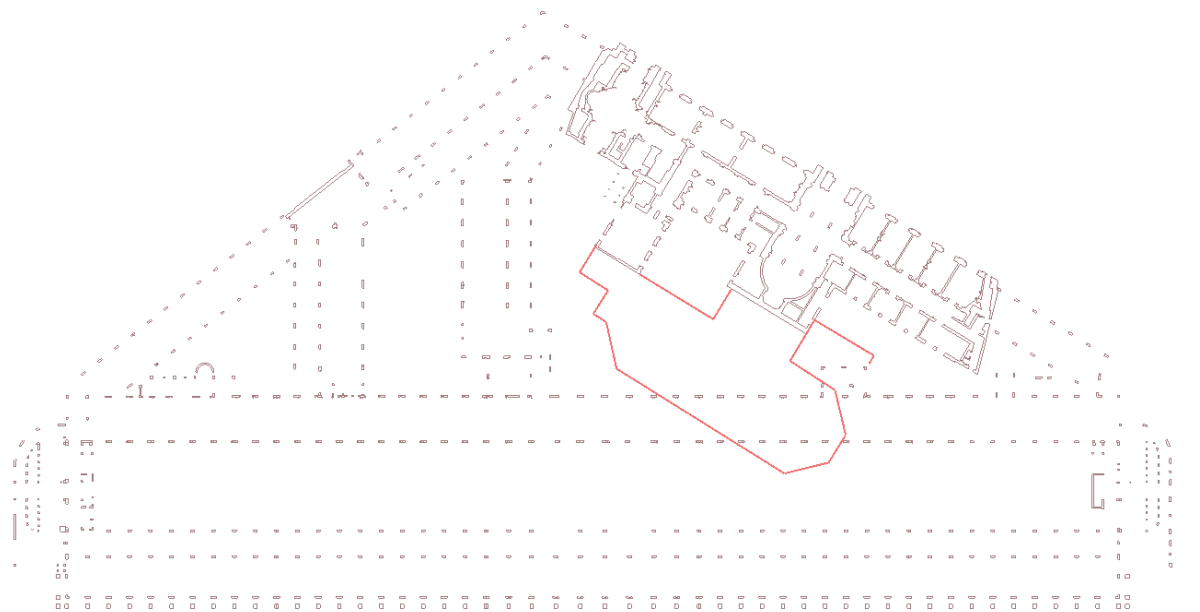
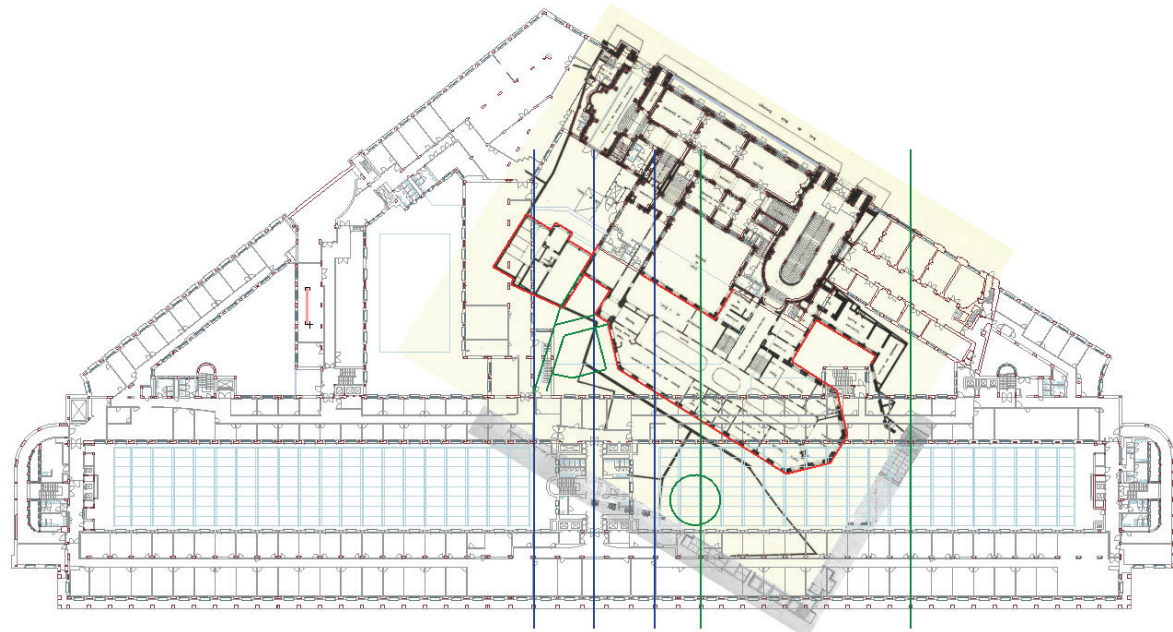
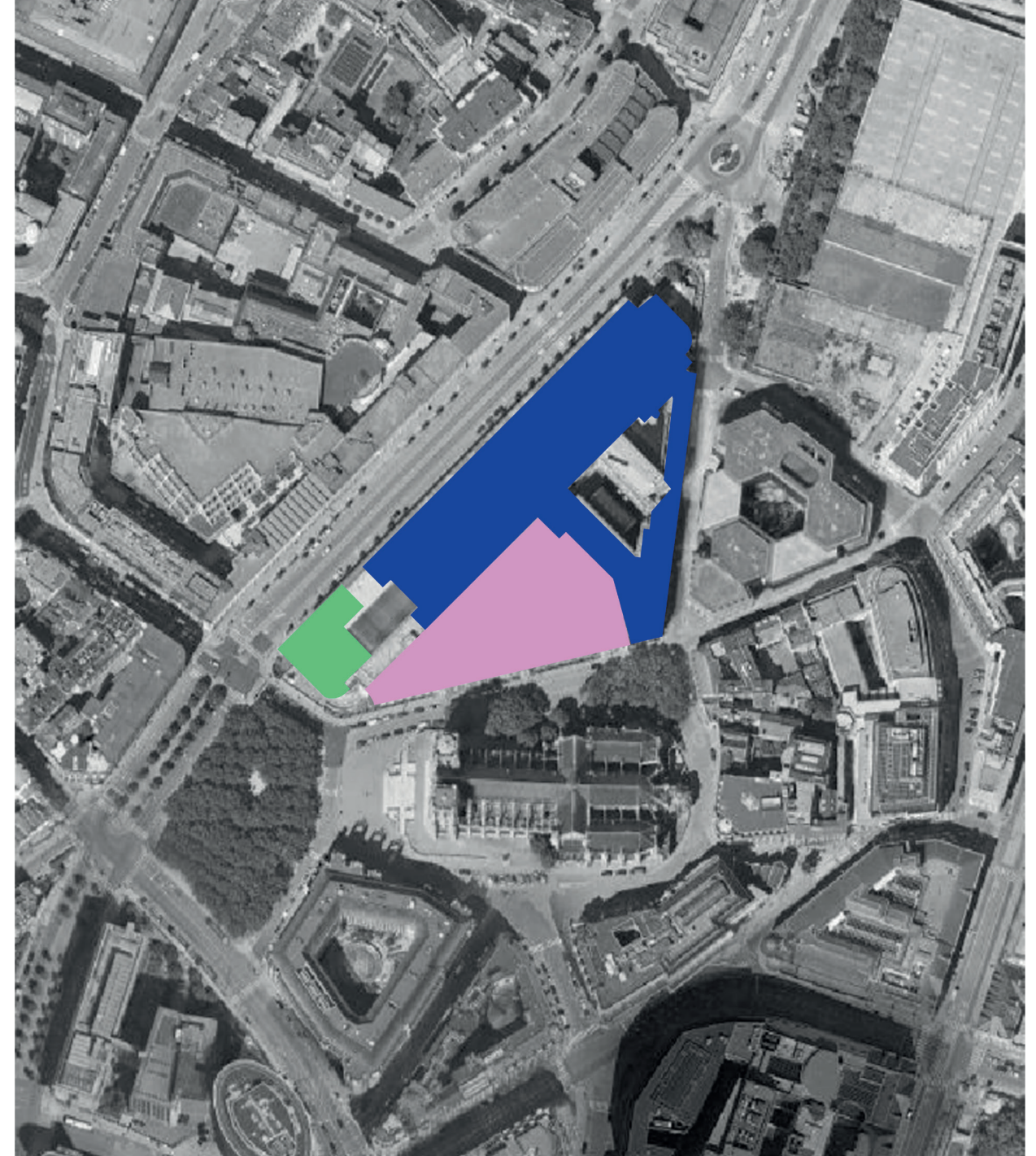


FIG. 9. — Phase extension.



FIG. 10. — La façade de l'aile extension.







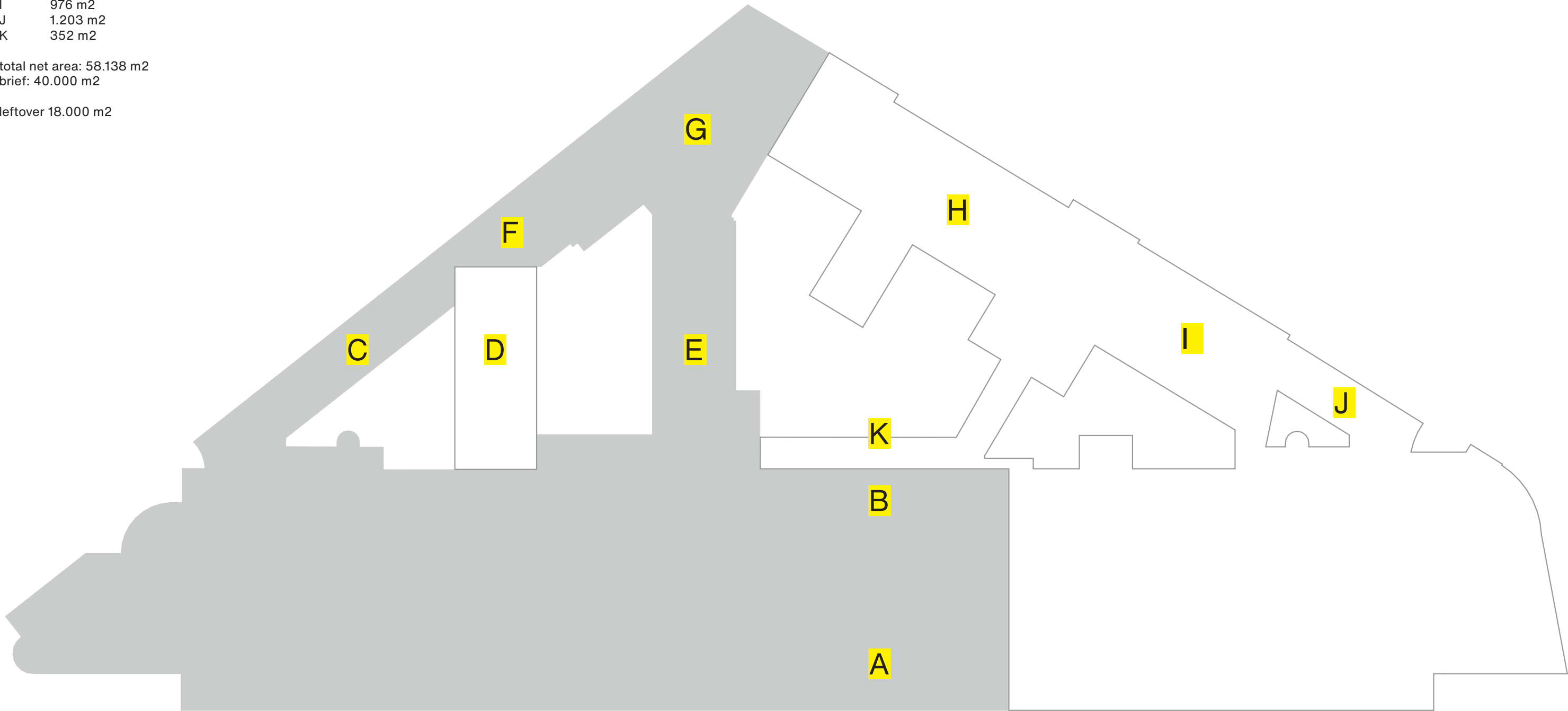
area calculations

week 2.8

A	12.734 m2
B	10.777 m2
C	2.258 m2
D	2.751 m2
E	3.493 m2
F	762 m2
G	5.414 m2
I	976 m2
J	1.203 m2
K	352 m2

total net area: 58.138 m2  
brief: 40.000 m2

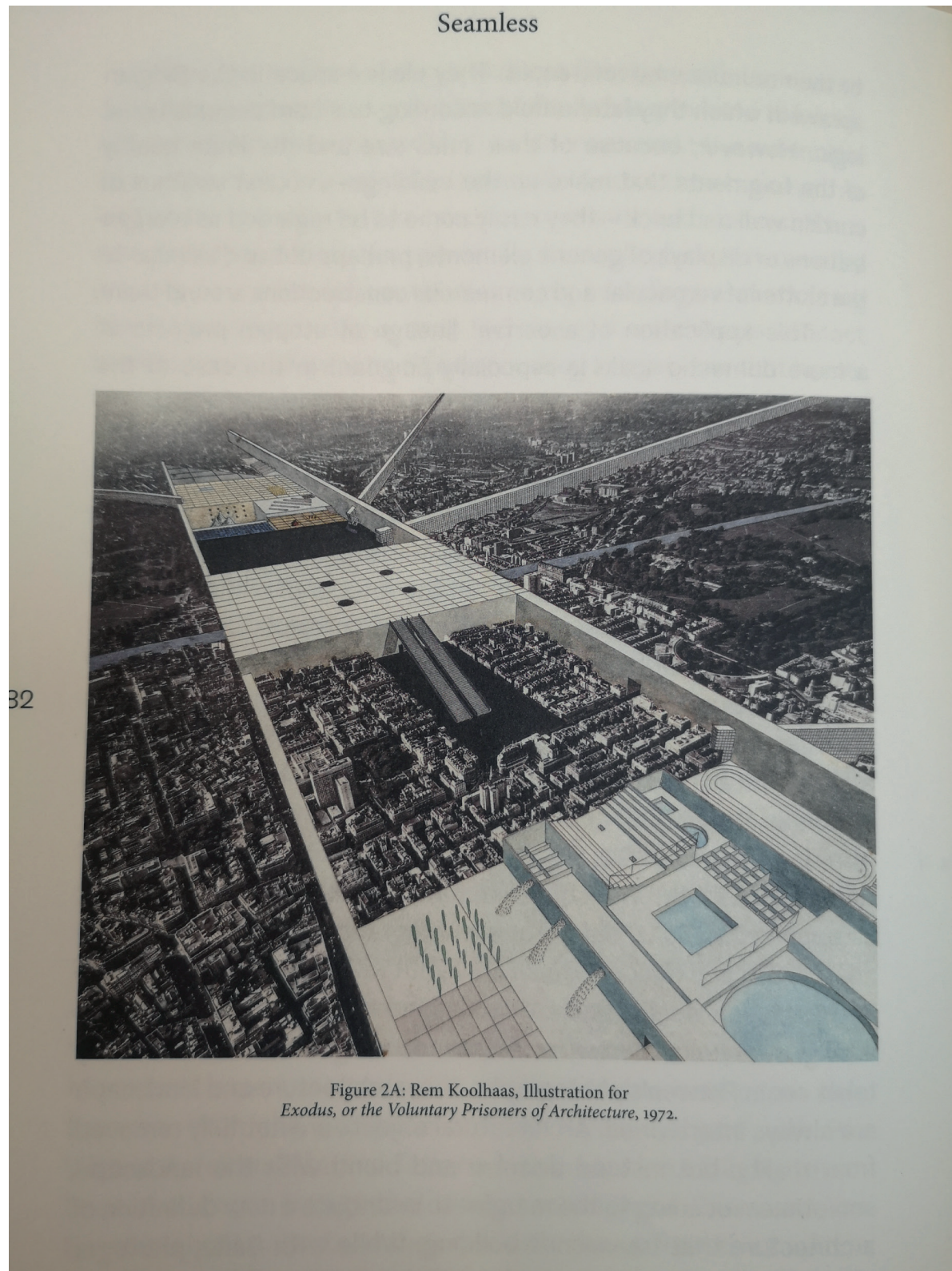
leftover 18.000 m2





inspiration  
week 2.8

a collage of facades - filip dujardin  
week 2.8



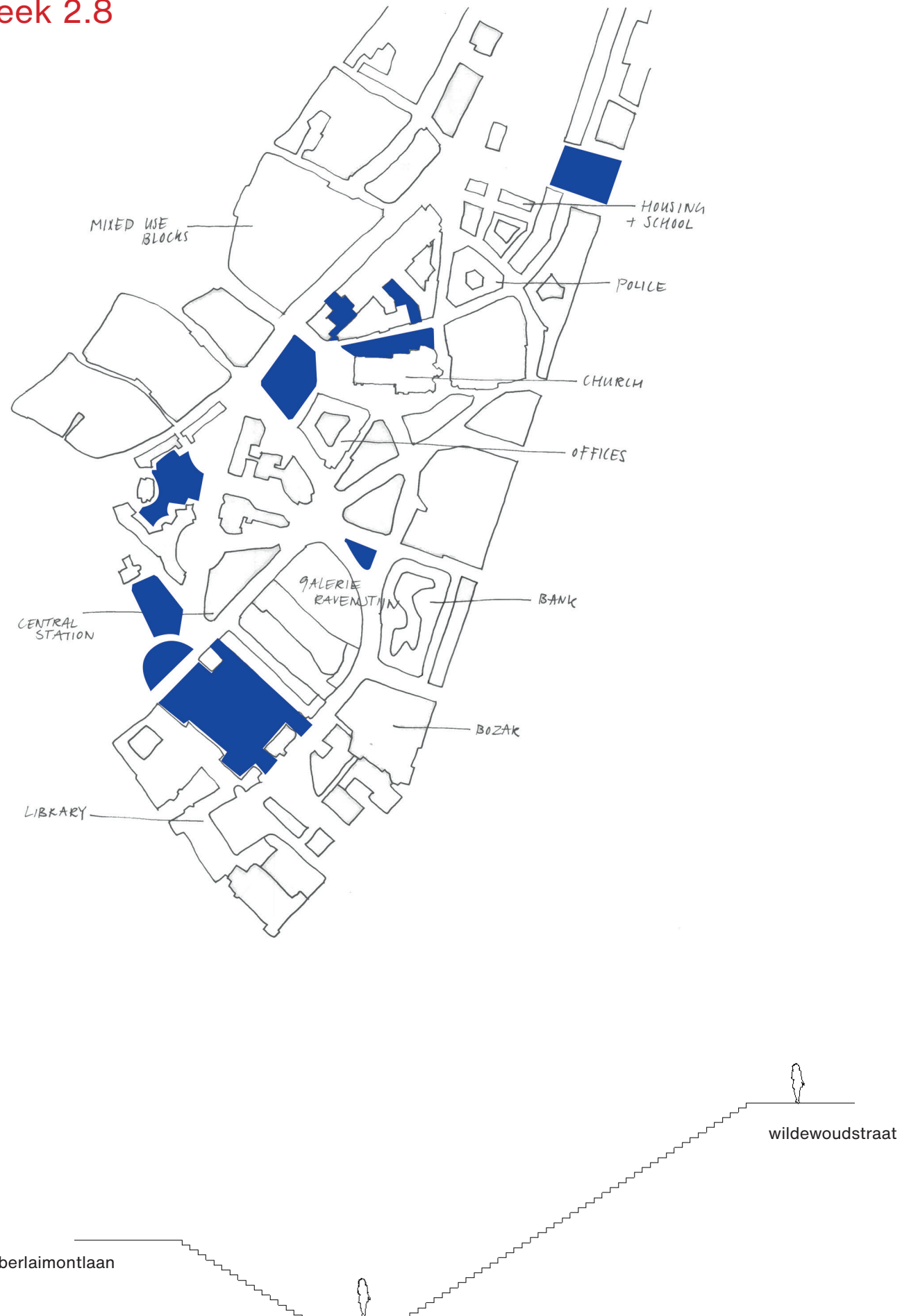


goldsmiths cca by assemble [2018]  
week 2.8





urban map  
week 2.8



a new face to the building  
week 2.8

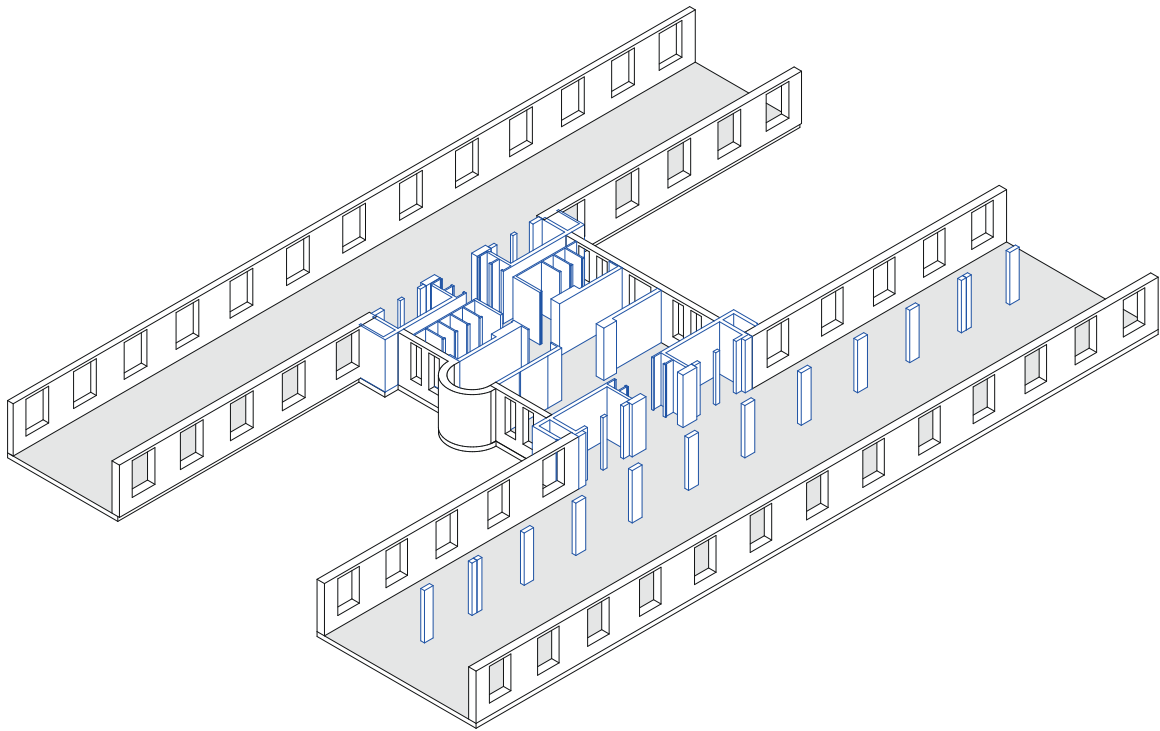
permeable layers  
disassembling the building





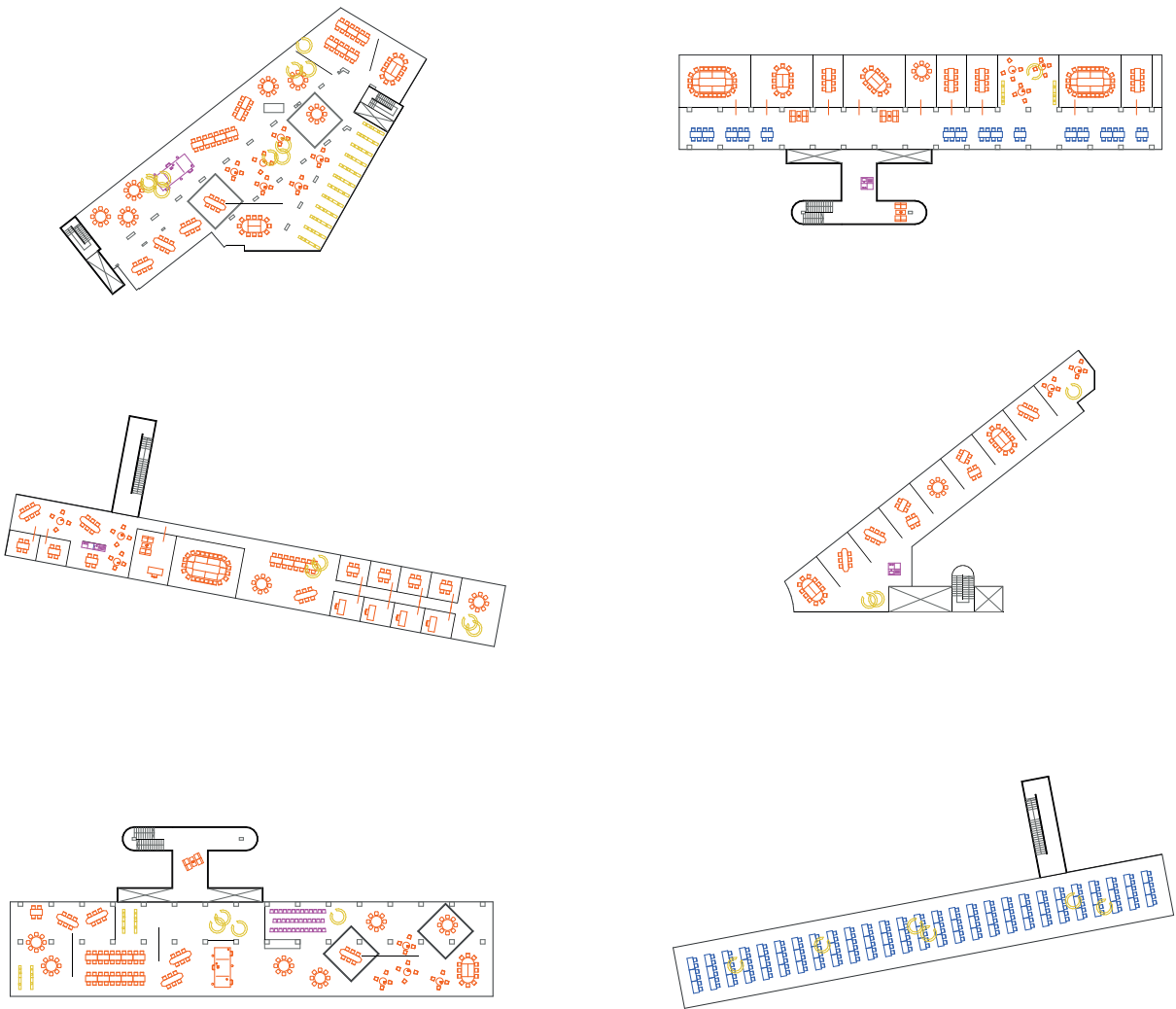
the empty shell  
week 2.9

emptying out the two wings, an analytical study of what is left



office configurations  
week 2.9

analysis of different configurations within the bank building





# the doughnut economy [a theory by kate raworth]

## week 2.9

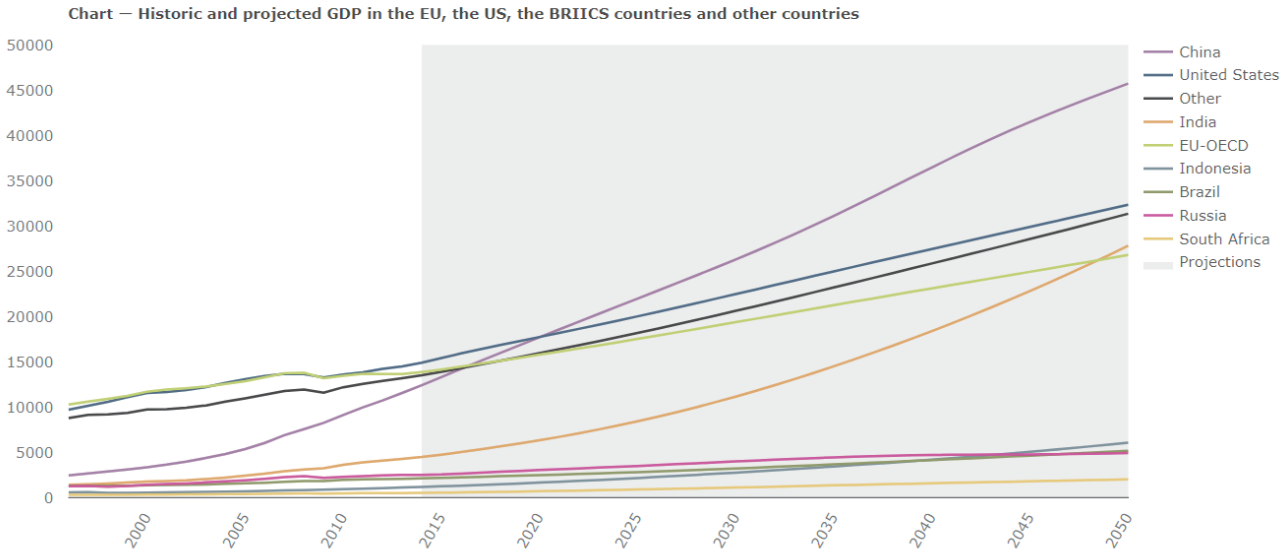
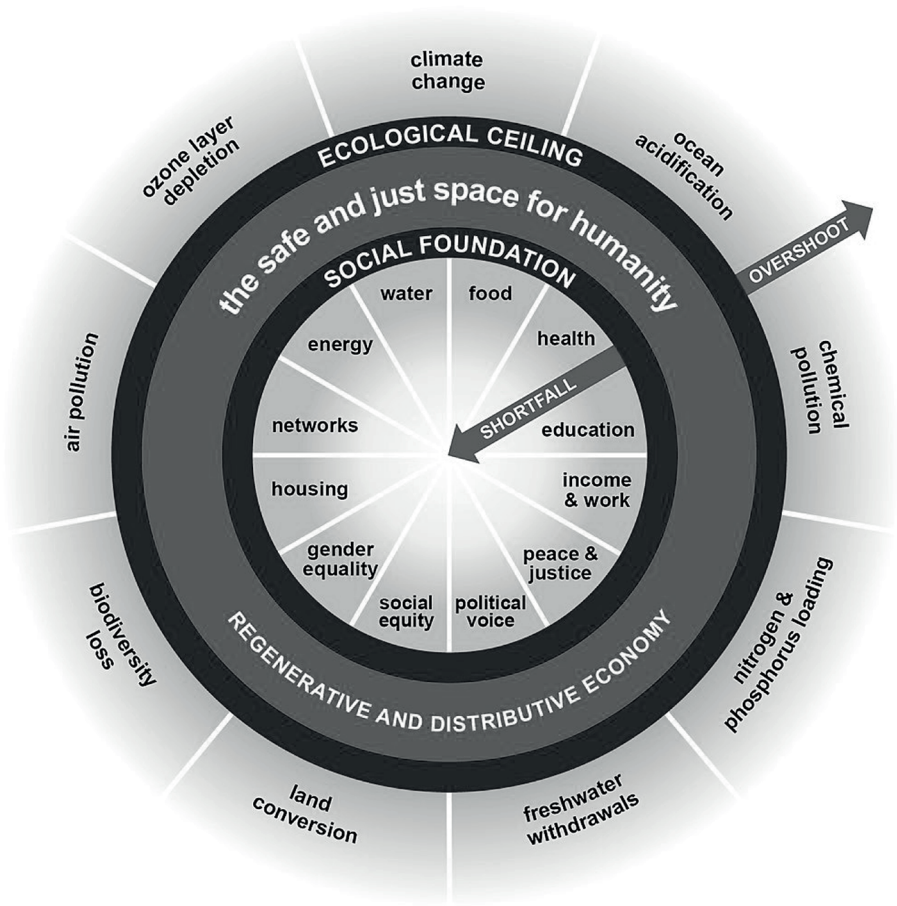
some thoughts inspired by the doughnut economy theory:  
what can we do through design to strengthen the social foundation of brussels? what is necessary?  
how do we prevent breaking through the ecological ceiling?  
is there a way to raise awareness?

it seems ofcourse quite impossible to be striving for a thriving economy instead of a growing economy based on GDP.  
though it might actually be the only solution to many of our contemporary problems. it has been proven that unending growth hasn't saved us. it doesn't solve all problems. the climate crisis doesn't go away, not everyone is living above the poverty line, not every child is receiving the same chances coming to education and social networks. we have to rethink our society.

how can the national bank contribute to a safe and just space for humanity?

Rostow's stages of economic growth model is one of the major historical models of economic growth. It was published by American economist Walt Whitman Rostow in 1960. The model postulates that economic growth occurs in five basic stages, of varying length:[1]

- The traditional society
- The preconditions for take-off
- The take-off
- The drive to maturity
- The age of high mass-consumption





# a democratized bank

## week 2.9

the charged building offering a platform for inclusion

In order to gain a stable and thriving economy we should move towards a doughnut economy model, as explained by kate raworth. as the worlds richest countries, we are currently overshooting the ecological ceiling causing the earth and its natural systems to collapse. at the same time we have not managed to keep all - and protect all - individuals in society from shortfall. especially in brussels there is a lot of people living under the poverty line. brussels is a city with cultural significance. but to be an open city means that “everyone receives sufficient chances for personal development and for climbing up the social ladder. traning, employment and housing are therefore the key sectors.”

the national bank should be involved in these sectors, and as a public and financial institution it should aim to value these sectors as it values economic growth. a public institute is defined as any entity established or controlled by a government which is accesible to the public. the bank now acts as a stand alone building, a megastructure if you will, mostly privately used. it does not stretch out to the city and does not identify with the citizens of brussels.

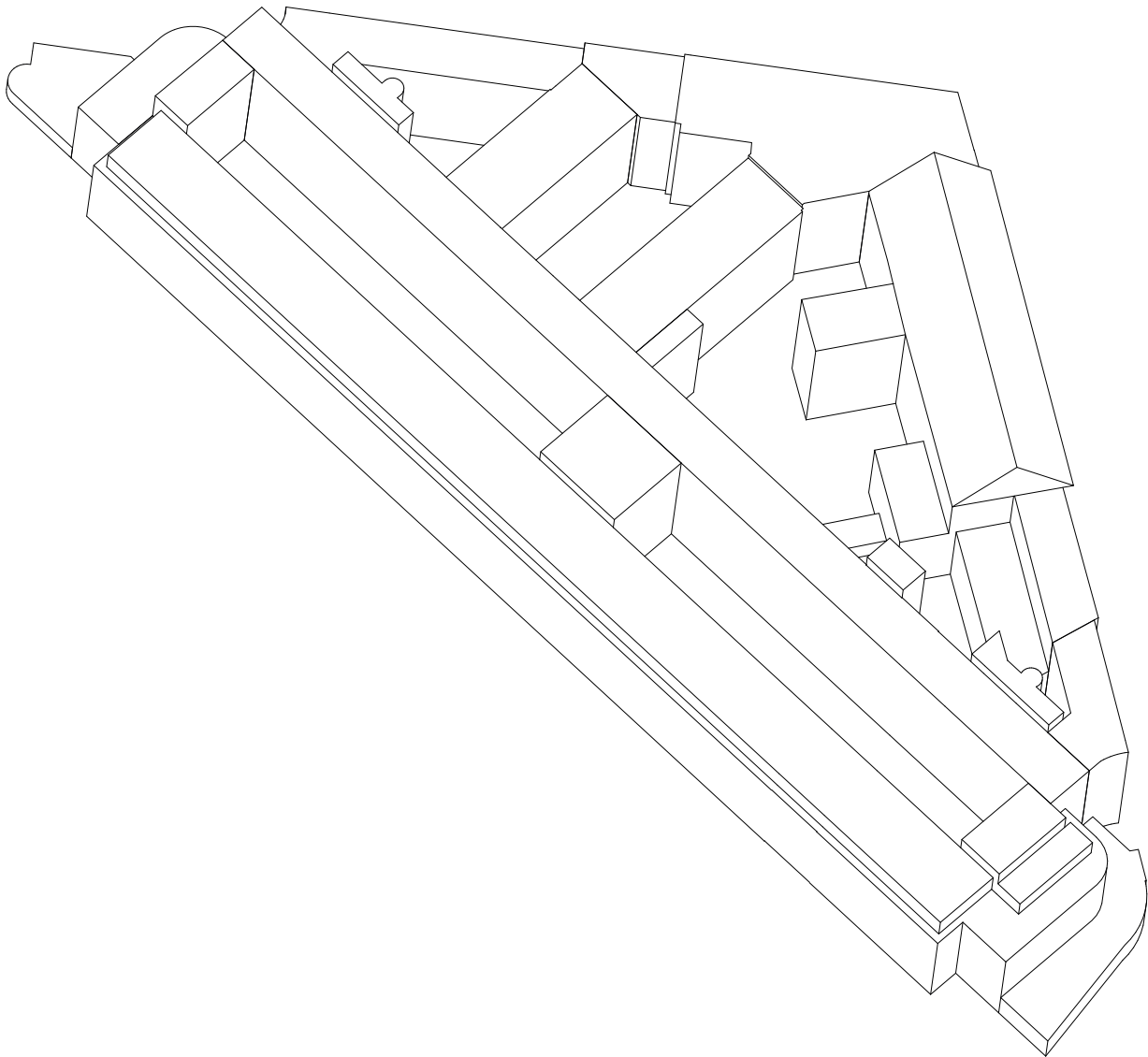
the national bank should be accesible to everyone, it should be democratized. by deconstructing the bank as it is, the megastructure will open up to the upper and lower part of brussels, reintroducing a relationship with its citizens. [moreover, smaller volumes will add to the future value of the building since its much easier to adapt to any program and change overtime].

in the current state the bank, acting as a private and closed off building, holds too much space within the city. in order to create a more permeable and open structure different program is added. the bank will function largely as it is, but will identify itself much more with a public and open building. to adress this publicness, different volumes with different programs are added on the site, to enlarge the atmosphere of the conglomerate of different entities the bank already is.

**a library:** a cultural, educational and scientific auxiliary institution that organizes the public use of published works. the knowledge bank. this building will consist of spaces such as educational spaces, library spaces, archives, workplaces, public meeting rooms etc. it is proposed to be a building that activates the city and raises awareness on climate issues, socio-cultural segregation, economics and other pressing issues.

**housing with a community centre:** social housing owned and regulated by the government to adress the pressing housing issues in brussels on top of the social segregation. the central district of brussels barely holds any social housing.

**a public square:** by adding an intimate public space to the site, the three buildings are connected to eachother. the square will be activated by positioning the entrances on this square leading into different buildings with different characters. outside room



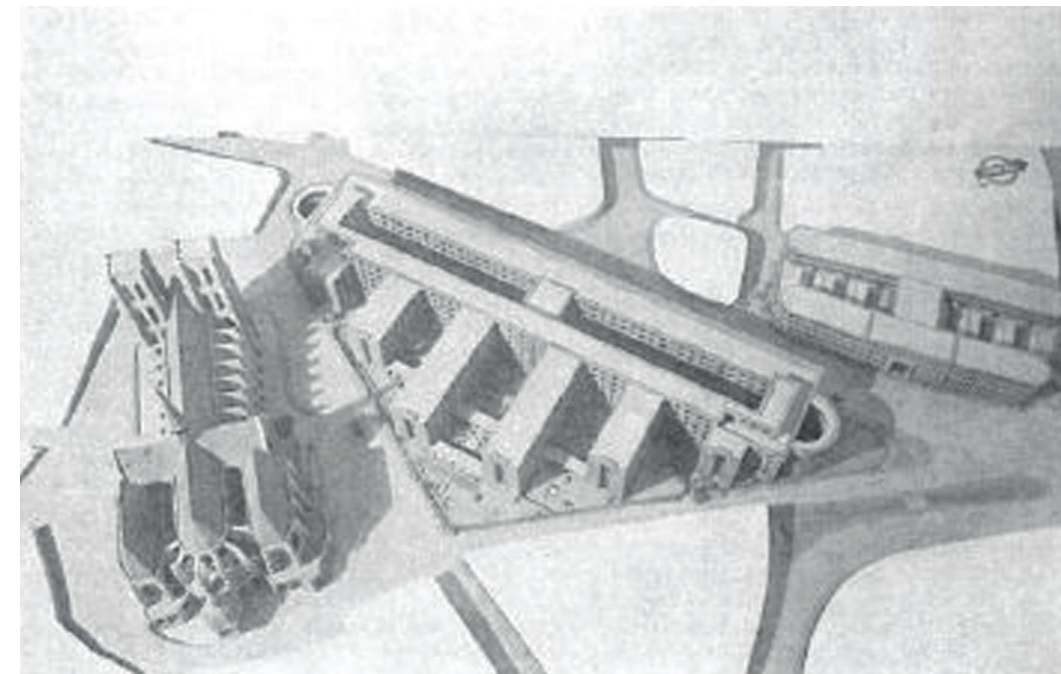


## repositioning the entrance

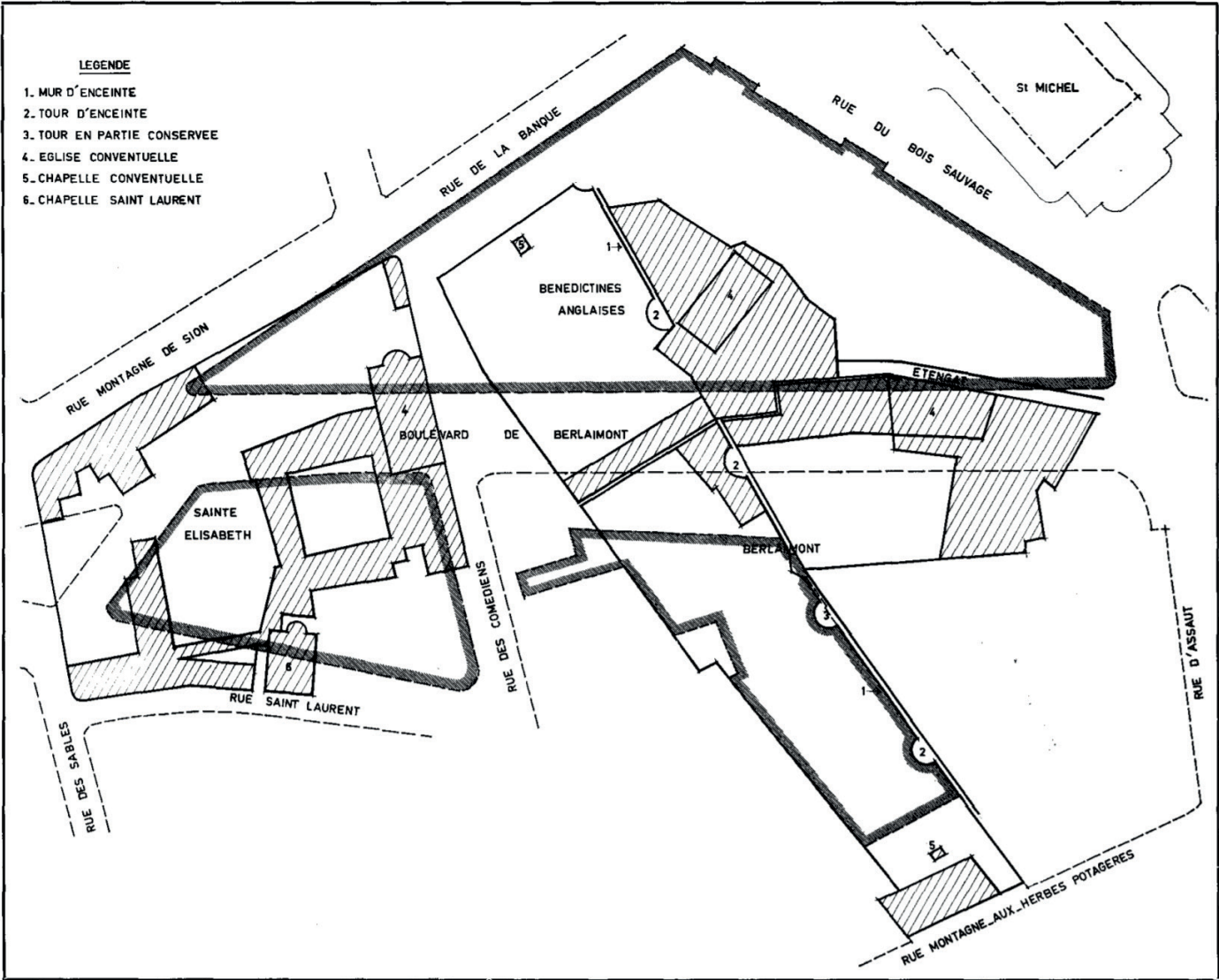
### week 2.9

The possibility of extension of the facilities of the Bank was already discussed before the first world war, but it only became urgent just before the Second World War. The number of workers went from 853 in 1919 to 946 in 1939, the demand for bank note's emission exponentially grew, and newly created institutions housed in the Bank demanded more space. The Bank was therefore thinking about a new project to renew and expand its space. The creation of the North-South junction was the perfect opportunity; it allowed the Bank to extend and build a modern building that could be extended through time and adapt itself to potential future needs.  
p.143 research booklet

So, he decided to orient the main entrance towards the new boulevard (symbol of the modern city), instead of the cathedral (symbol of the medieval town).

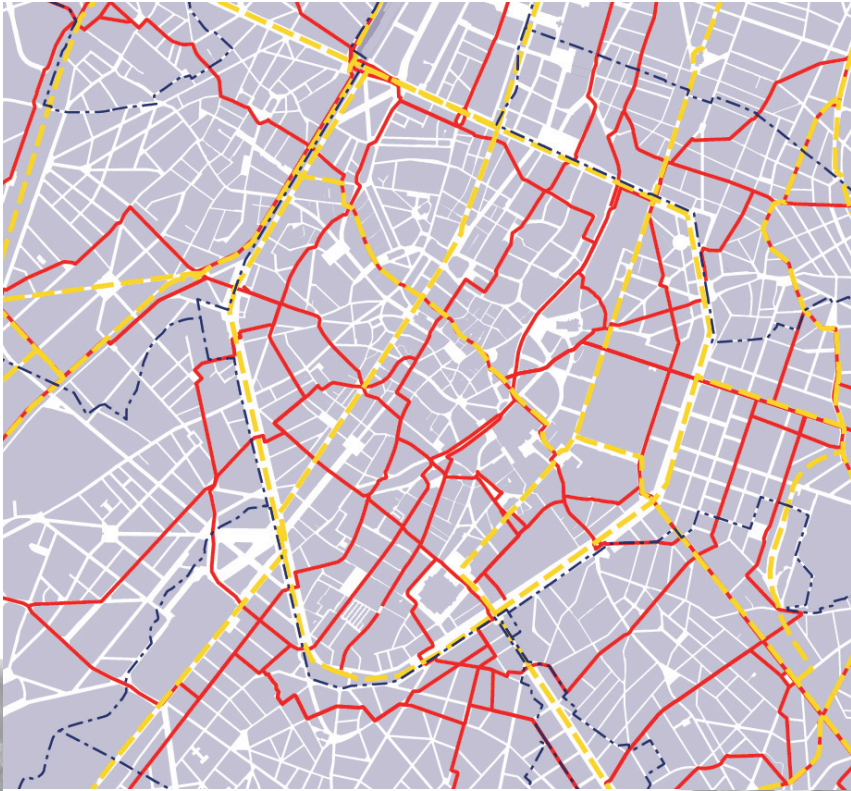






Plan montrant la position exacte des bâtiments actuels de la Banque par rapport à l'emplacement des couvents de Sainte-Elisabeth, des Bénédictines anglaises et des dames de Berlaimont.

Footprint of the National Bank of 1950  
compared to the convents present before Beyaerts' bank



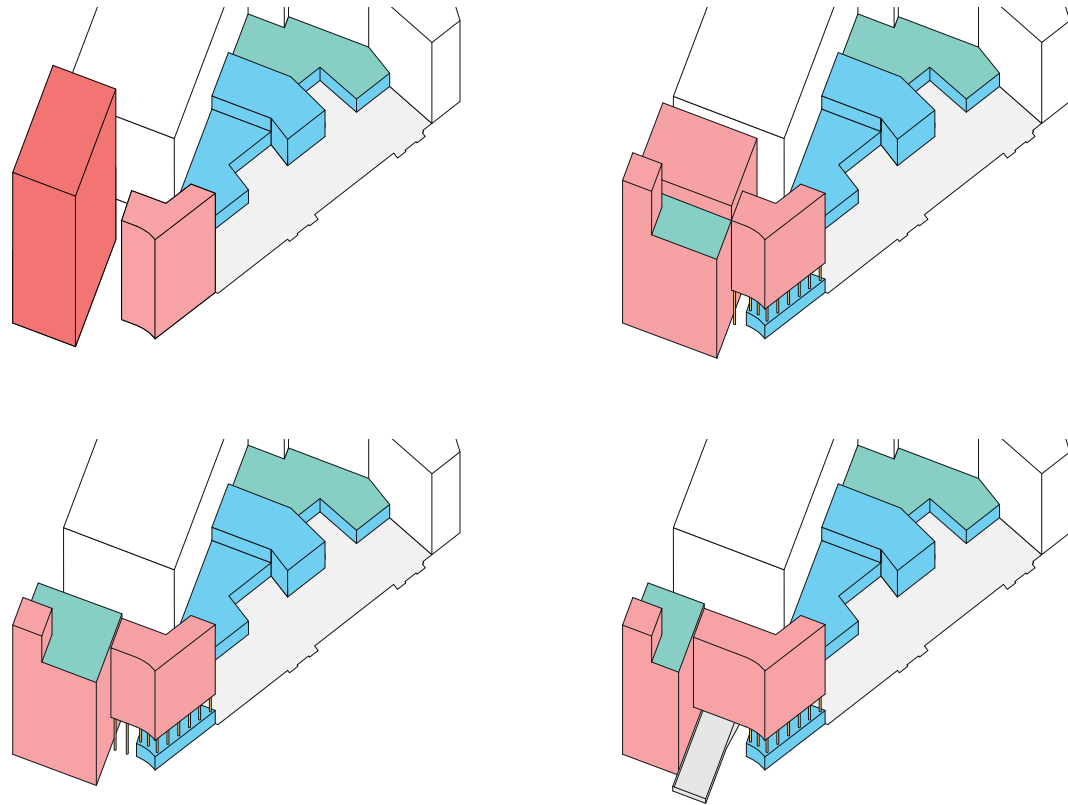
Development Plan for Brussels (2040)  
Regional Sustainable Development Plan (GPDO 2018-2040)





## studies on the plaza

### week 2.9



## paley park

### week 2.9

Paley Park is a pocket park located in Midtown Manhattan, New York City, on the former site of the Stork Club. Designed by the landscape architectural firm of v it opened May 23, 1967. Paley Park is often cited as one of the finest urban spaces in the United States.

Measuring 390 m2, the park contains airy trees, lightweight furniture and simple spatial organization. A 6.1 m high waterfall, with a capacity of 6,800 l per minute, spans the entire back of the park. The waterfall creates a backdrop of grey noise to mask the sounds of the city. The park is surrounded by walls on three sides and is open to the street with an ornamental gate on the fourth side, facing the street. The walls are covered in ivy, and an overhead canopy is formed by honey locust trees.





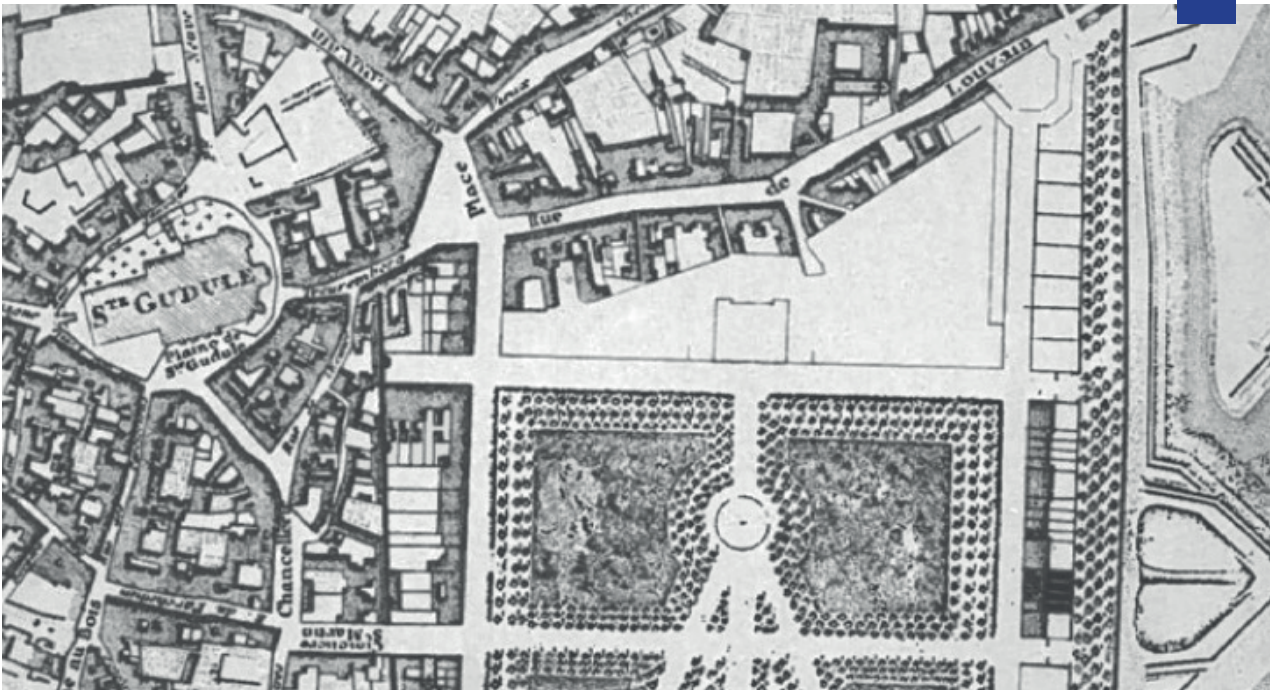
1657



1868



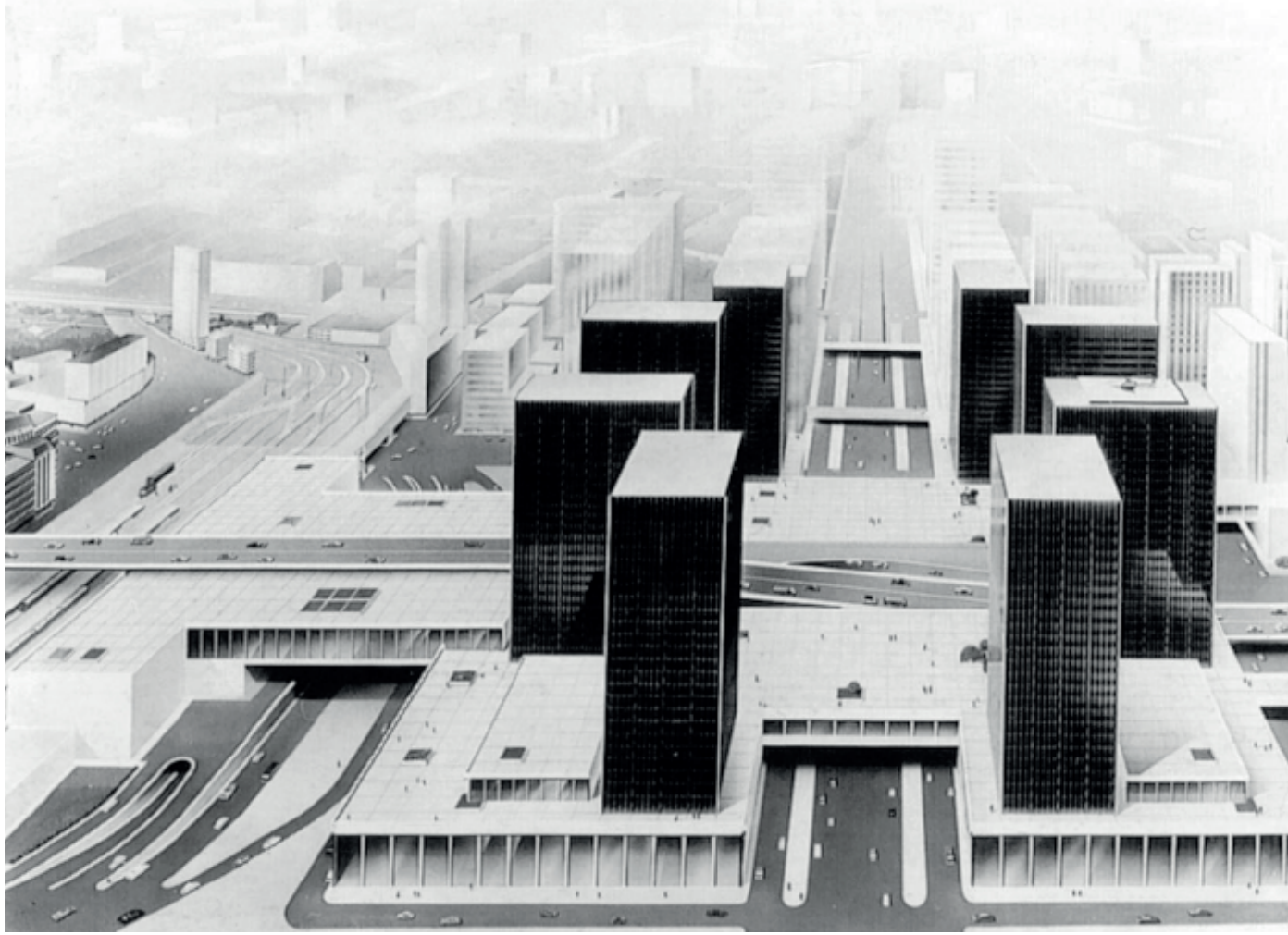
1780



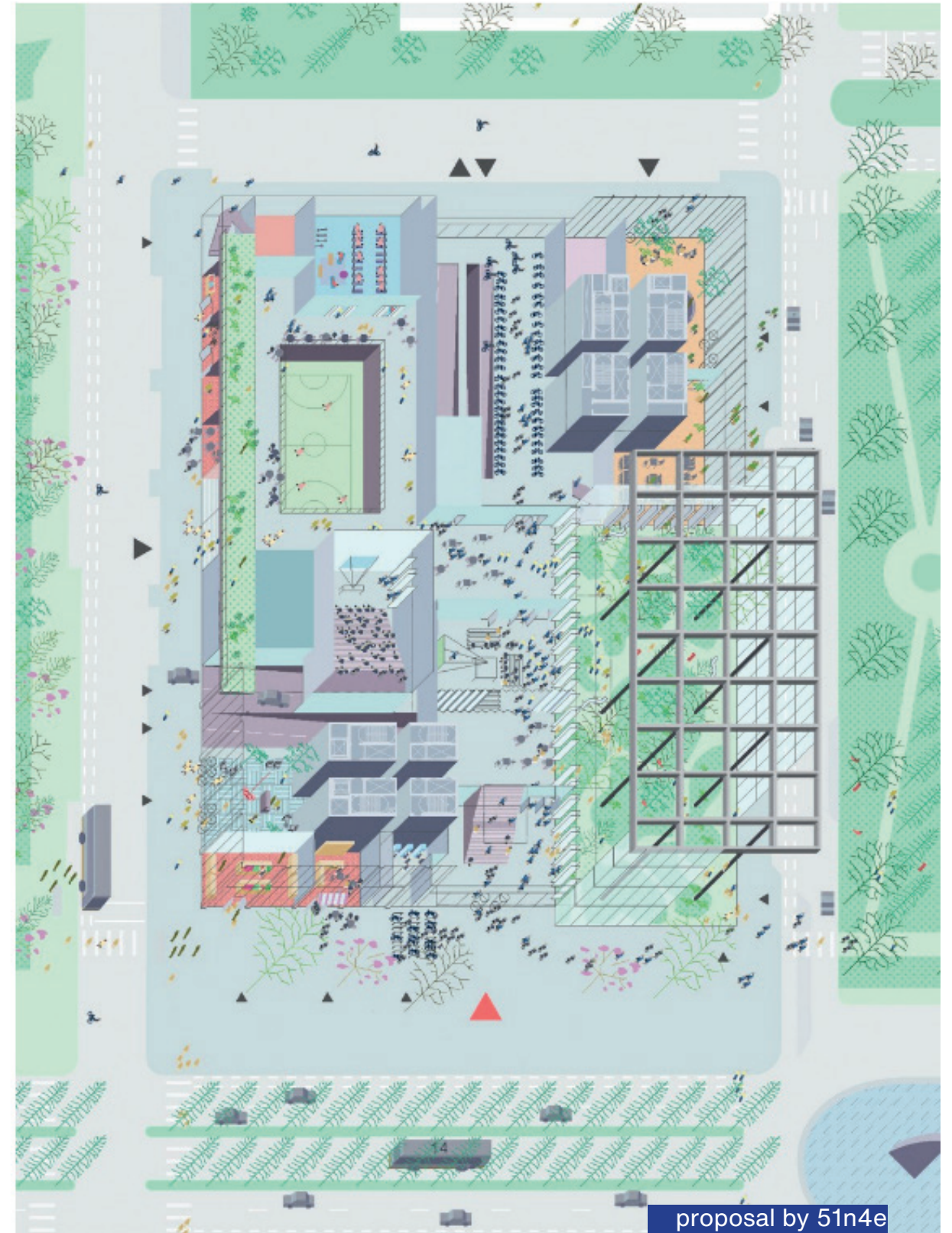


## manhattan plan brussels

### week 2.9



1958 was not only the year in which so many social changes became visible in Belgium for the first time, it was also the point in time that sealed the fate of the North District. In that same year the part of the Senne flowing along the neighborhood, the last part that was left open in the 1870s, was paved over, making the North District ripe for reconstruction plans. Structures, a group of architects and urban planners, together with the American architect Victor Gruen, proposed the first version of the Manhattan plan - as it would later be called - in 1960. The plan, which picked up on a lot of elements proposed by Victor Bourgeois (especially his proposal for the location and the total razing of the old neighborhood) consisted of 10 office towers and some luxury apartment buildings of lesser height. A plan of such an immensity was now rejected because it wasn't big enough.



proposal by 51n4e  
for the wtc towers in  
brussels



# AgwA lecture [20.01.2022]

## week 2.9

In Charleroi, a formerly prominent industrial city on the southern side of Belgium, stands a large Exhibition Hall. This exceptionally sizable building of 60 000 m<sup>2</sup> is left largely underused due to the difficulty of appropriating such broad volumes in a shrinking industrial context. Nowadays, a city of the scale of Charleroi can make use of at most 25.000 m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition halls, about a third of the available space.





## P2 presentation

### week 2.10

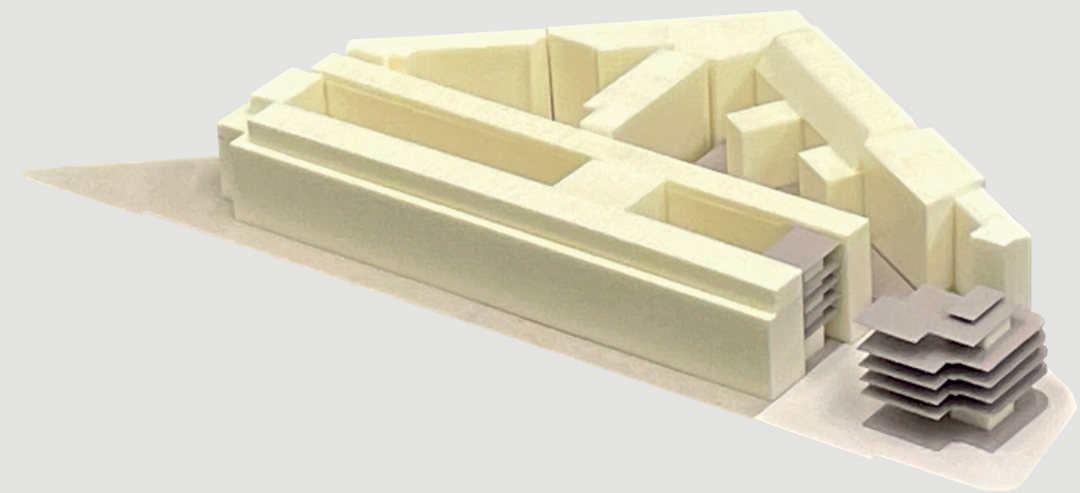
situated between the political, financial district and the cultural district  
the bank as a financial and public institute, owned 50% by government and 50% by private stakeholders



## proposal

a clear intervention which allows the bank to refigure itself within its context and organisation

creating an open and permeable structure which allows for a dialogue between inhabitant and institution

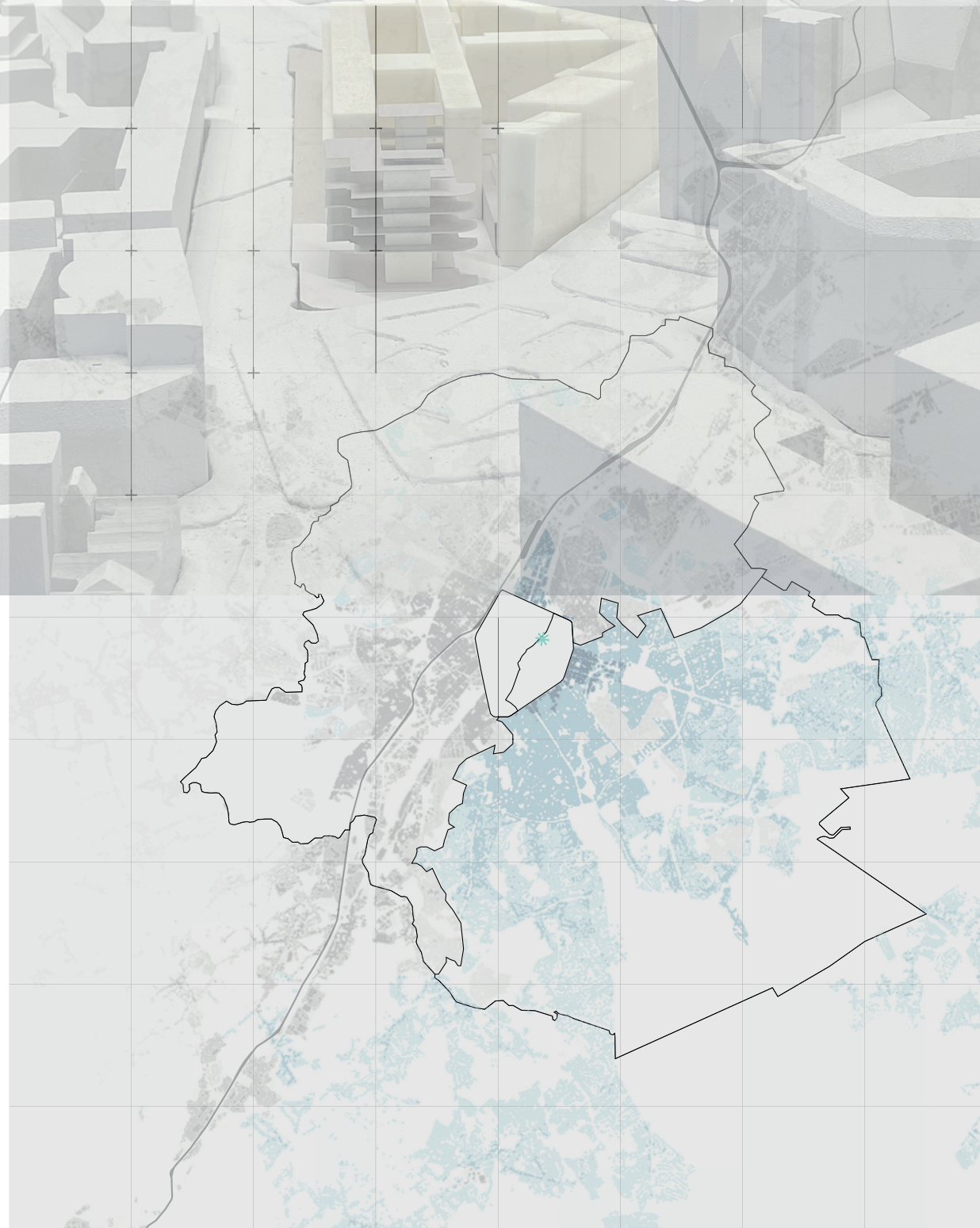




## fractured brussels

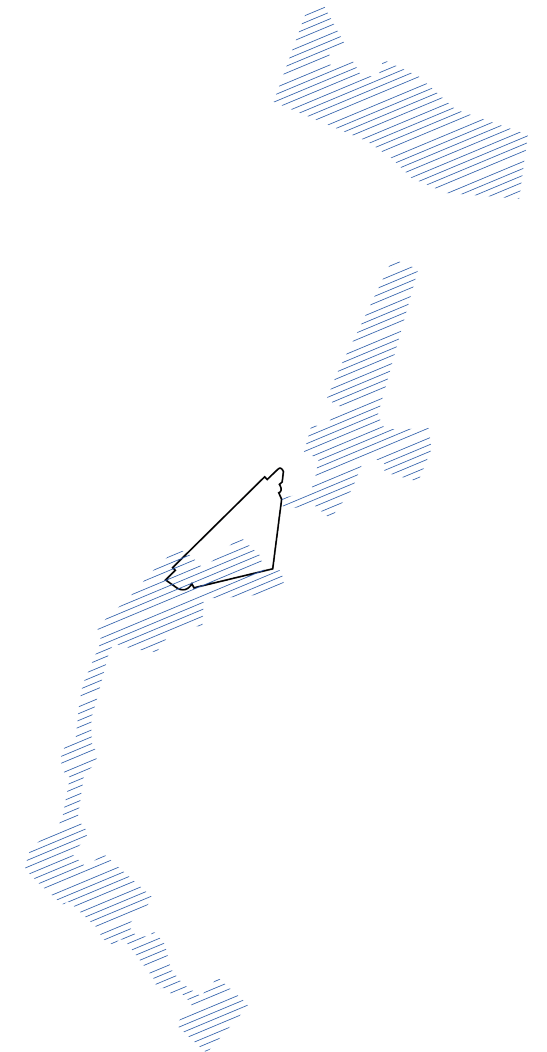
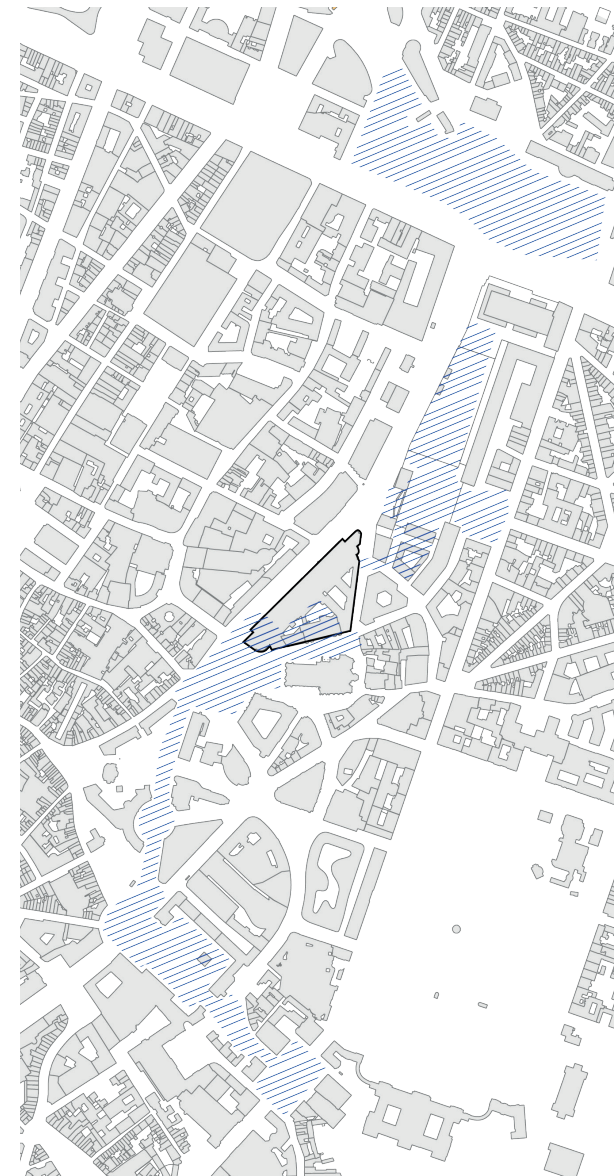
### week 2.10

critical position between upper and lower brussels  
topographical and socio-economic



## public corridor

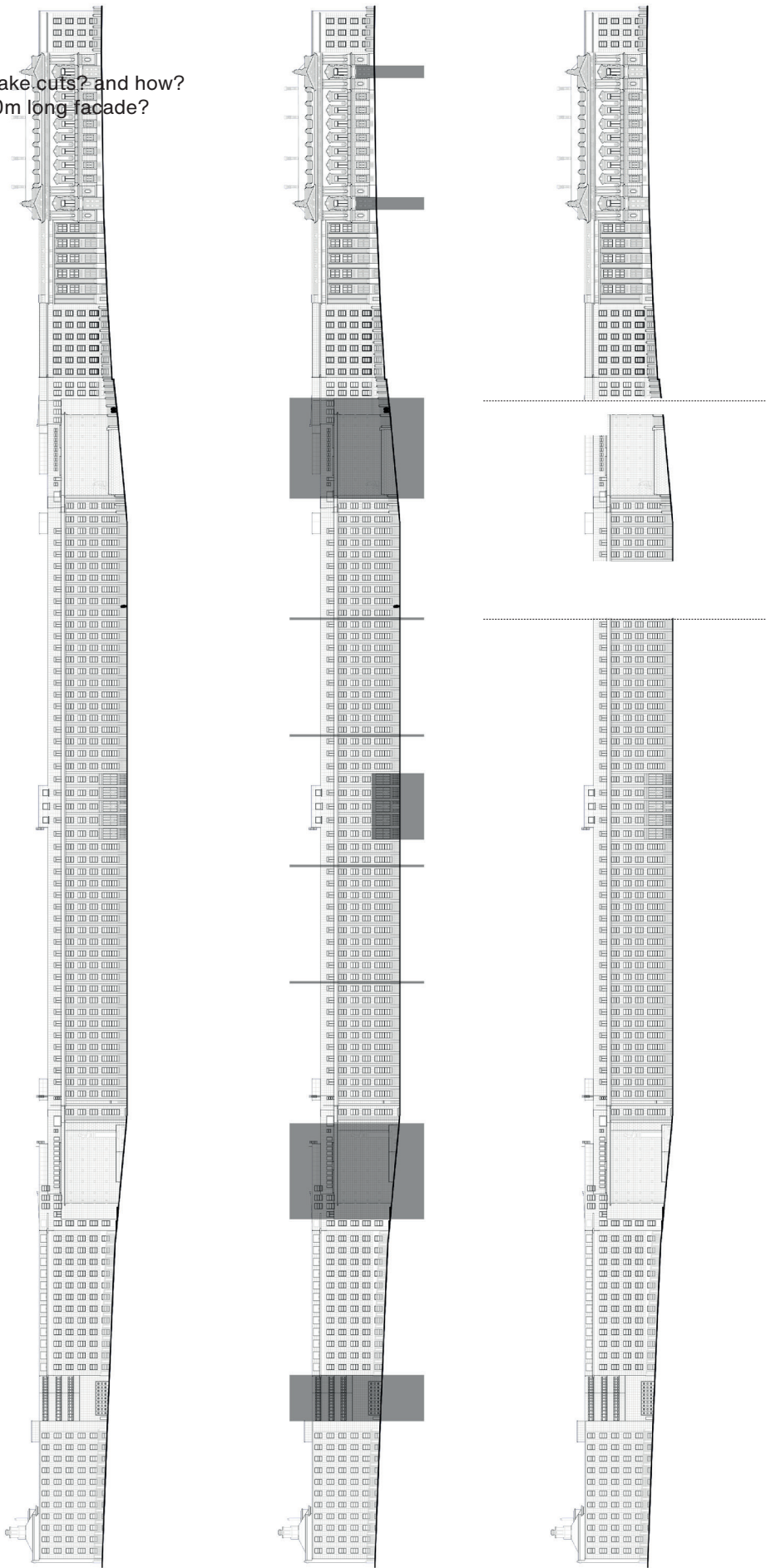
moving towards a more public institute, connecting to the cultural district  
through a public corridor





facade stitch [cuts]  
week 2.10

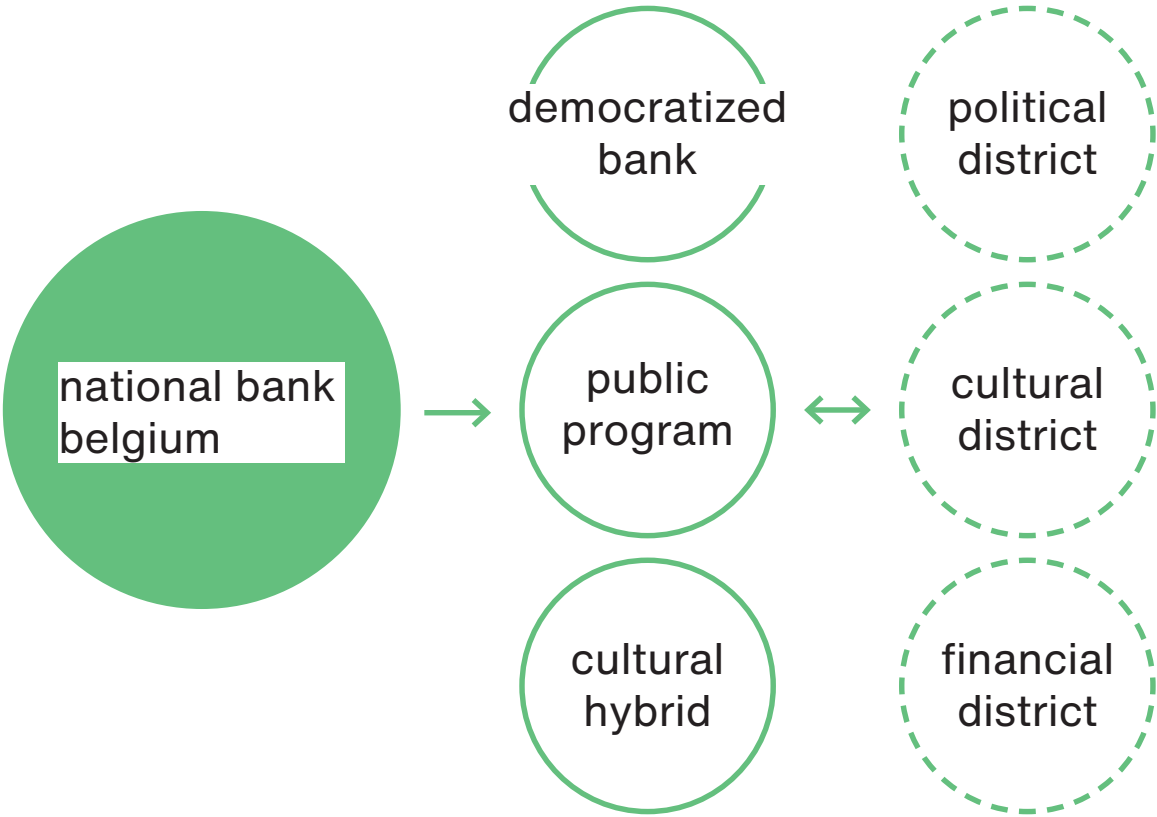
where is it possible to make cuts? and how?  
how to deal with the 200m long facade?



how to strengthen the social foundation of brussels?  
week 2.10

make the bank accesible to everyone / the notion of permeability

- 1. opening up the megastructure: the financial institute moving towards and open and permeable structure functioning as an actual public institute instead of a stand alone elitist space
- 2. adding program which aims to strengthen the social foundation of brussels and aims to re-establish a connection with inhabitants [education, training, social and cultural]
- 3. adding to the conglomerate of different entities through assemblage and bricolage [finding unity in the different characteristics]
- 4. adapting and reusing as much as possible





proposal  
week 2.10

a national bank: a financial and public institution aiming for a more open relationship with its city.

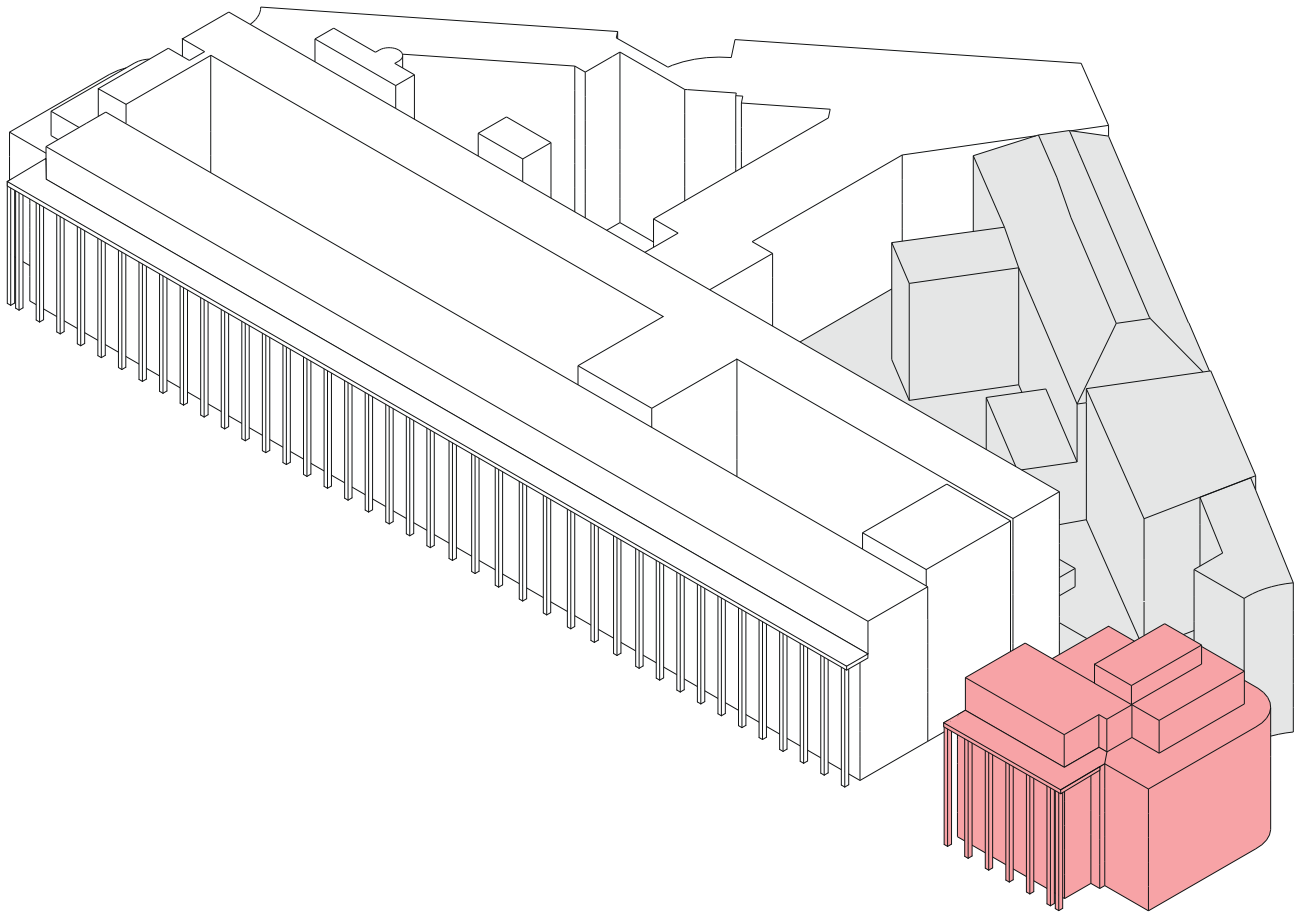
the future democratized bank is aiming to be more permeable and offer a platform for the public. it is proposed the building reinvents itself in organization and attitude towards itself and its surroundings.

a library: a cultural, educational and scientific auxiliary institution that organizes the public use of published works. an extension of the bank: the knowledge bank.

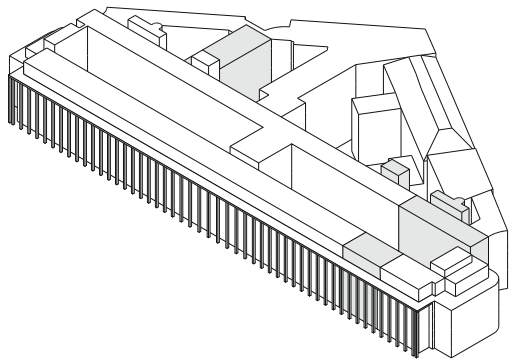
it is proposed to be a building that activates the city and raises awareness. at the same time the building should function as a practical educator on economics, language, climate and other societal topics.

a cultural hybrid: a building wich aims to re-establish a connection between upper and lower brussels, between the citizens and the institutions.

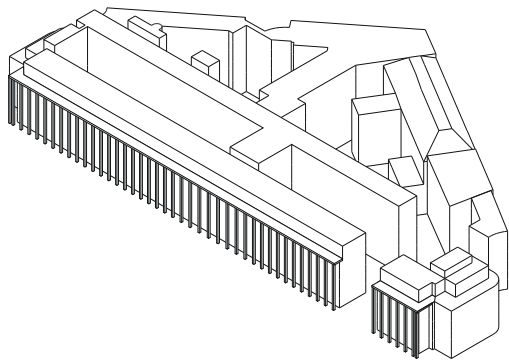
brussels is a city with cultural significance. but to be an open city means that “everyone receives sufficient chances for personal development and for climbing up the social ladder. traning, employment and housing are therefore the key sectors.”



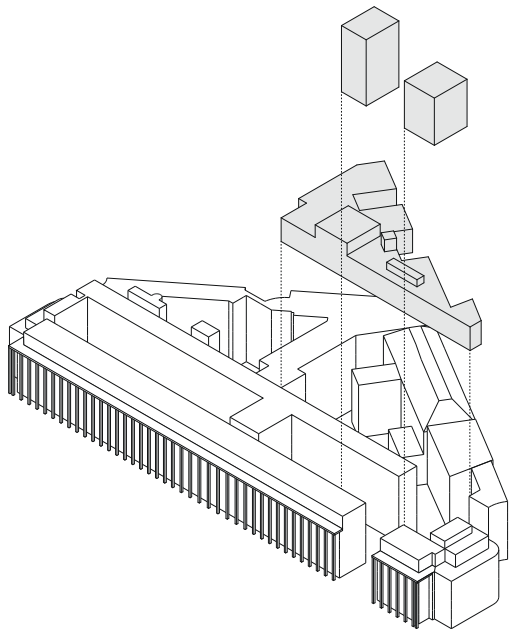
(1) existing



(2) intervention



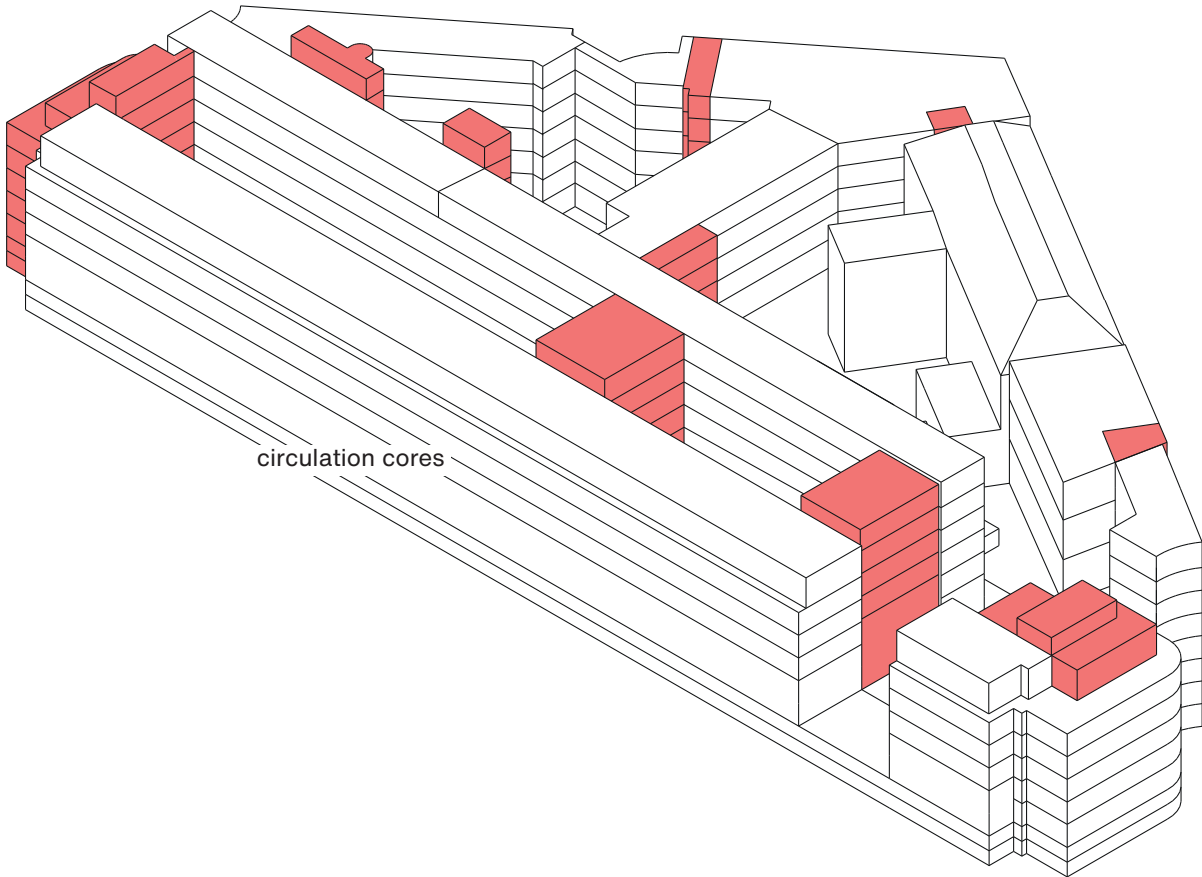
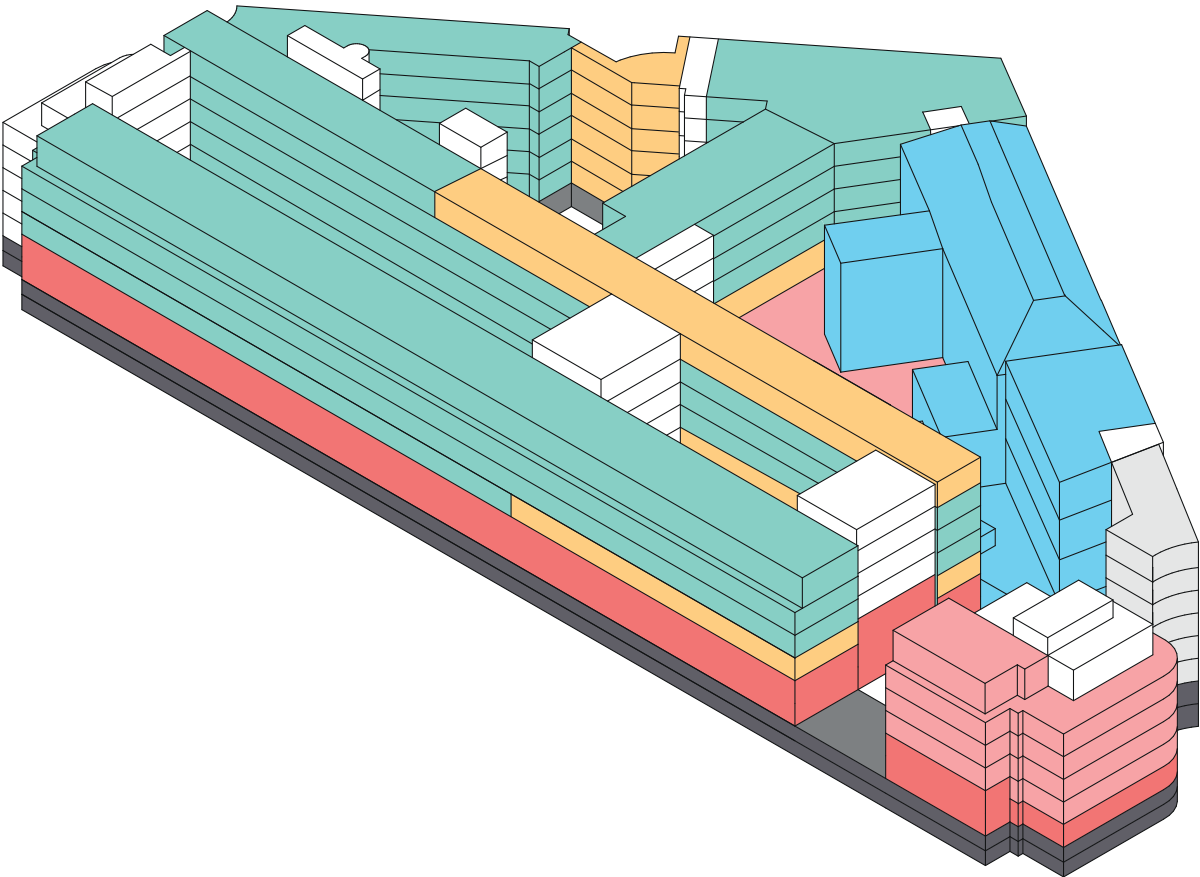
(3) adding





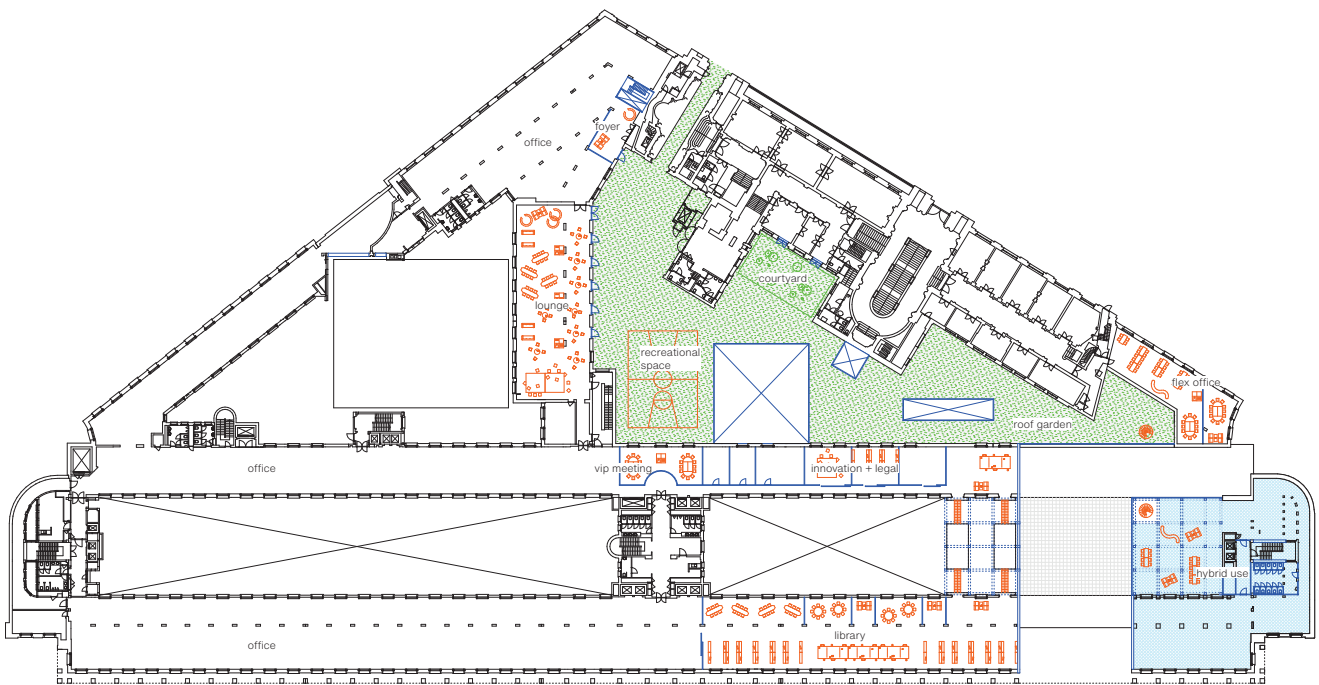
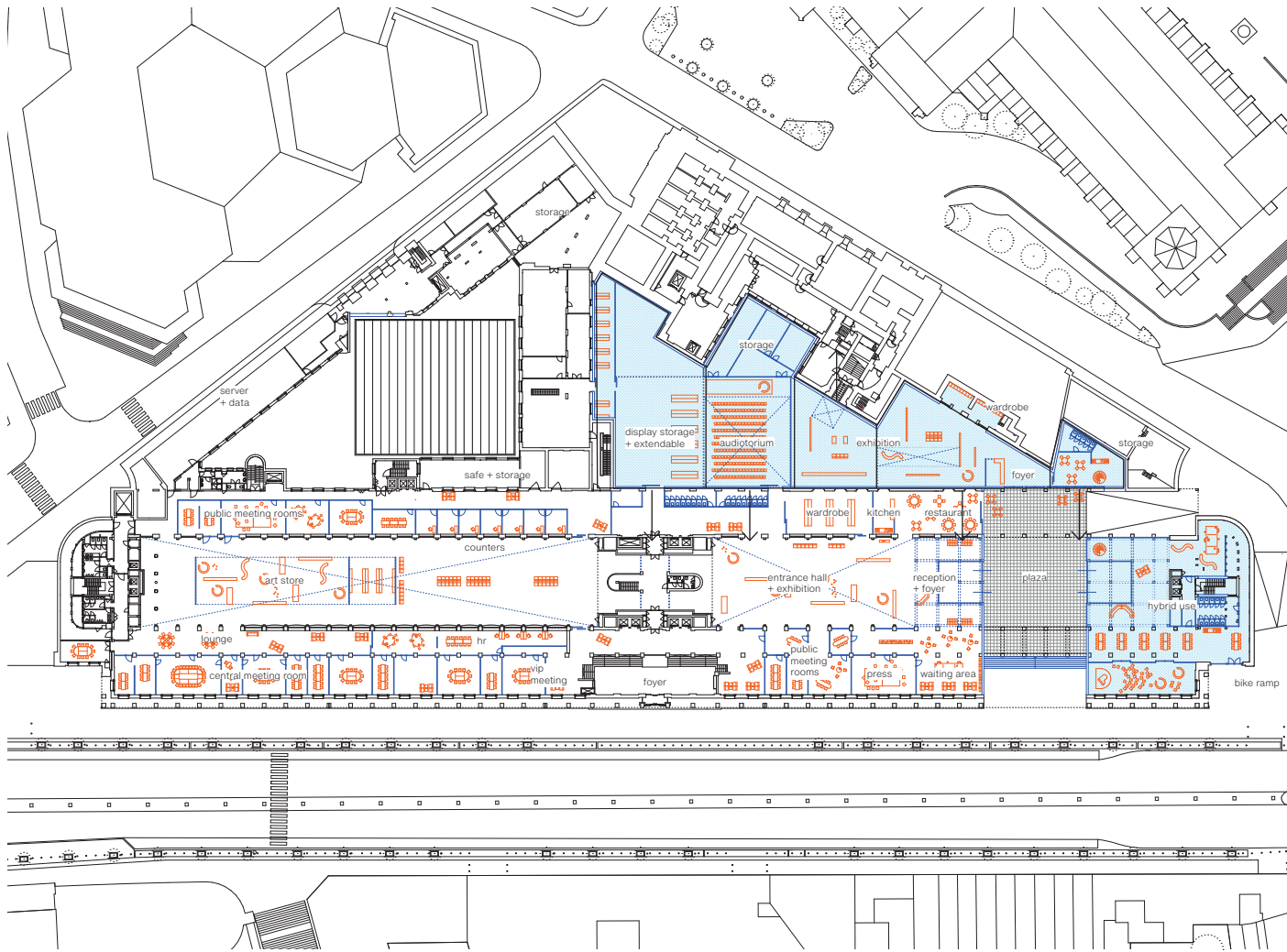
program  
week 2.10

programming of the three buildings; the bank, the library and  
the cultural hybrid



- public
- recreational [social] functions
- office
- storage
- cultural hybrid use
- library [educational, scientific, cultural spaces]
- flex office [rent]
- circulation



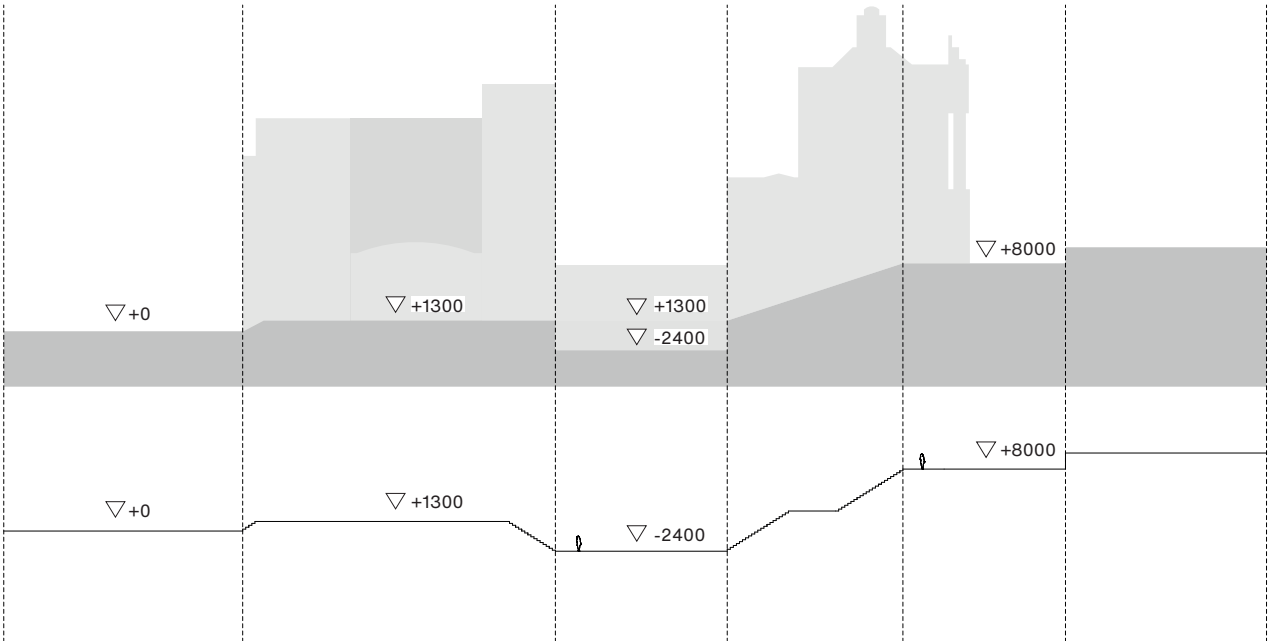




sectional study

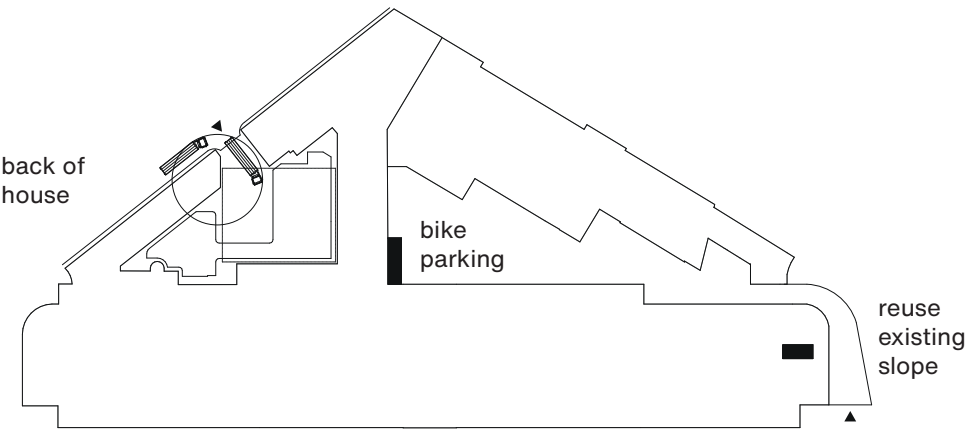
week 2.10

height differences within the site



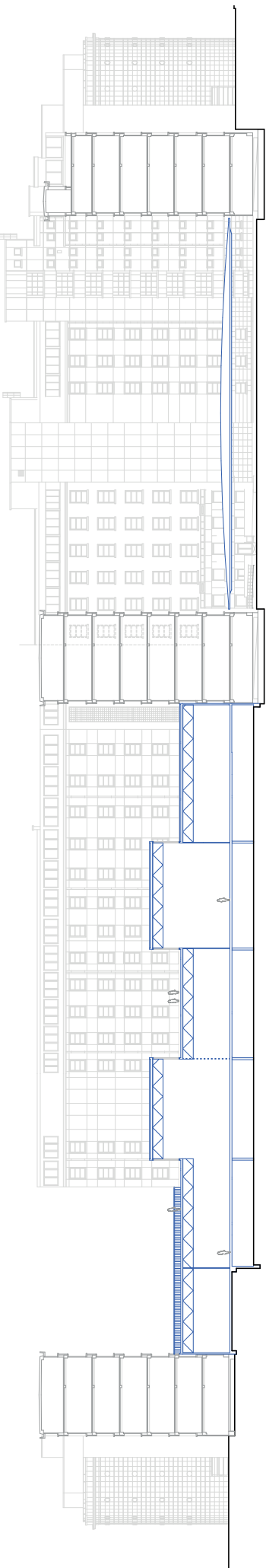
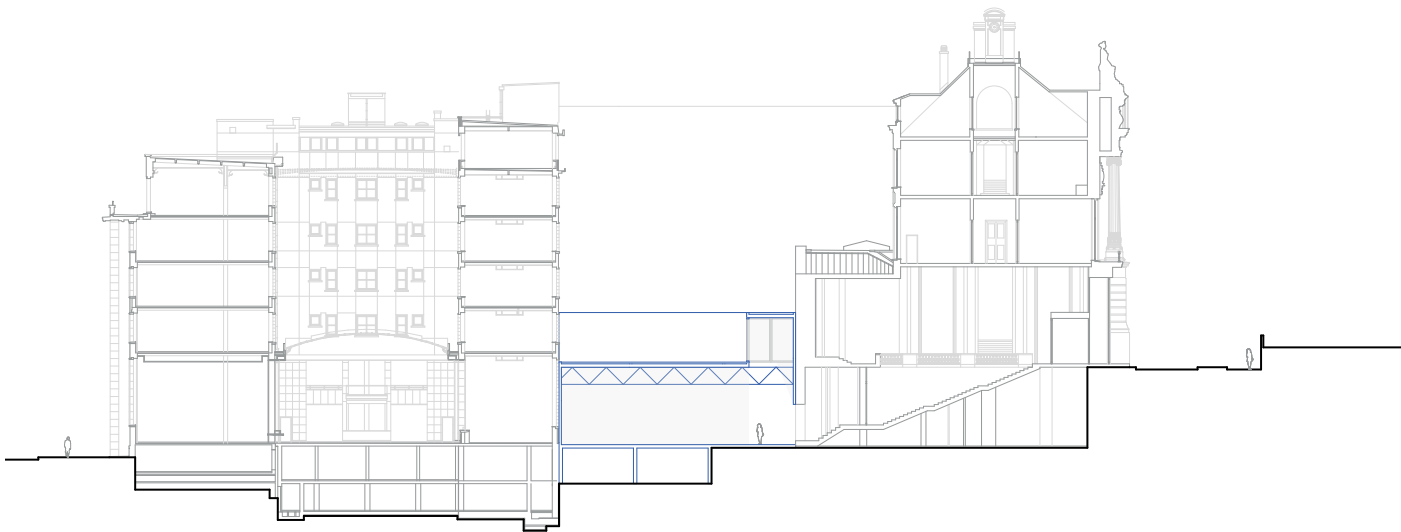
basement level

improving accessibility and creating a clear separation  
between back of house and public courtyard





sections  
week 2.10





references cultural projects  
week 2.10



School of Architecture  
Lacaton & Vassal  
2009 Nantes



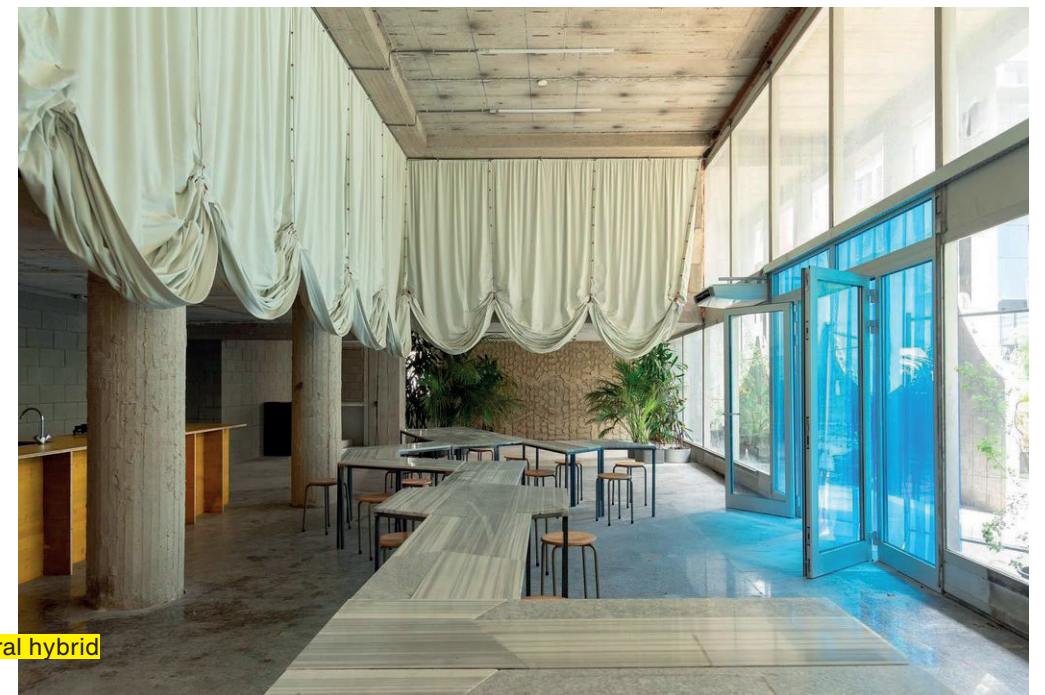
Nottingham Contemporary  
Caruso St John Architects  
2004 Nottingham

reuse/adaptation



Palais des Expositions  
AgwA  
2015 Charleroi

cultural hybrid



Stam Europa  
51N4E  
2021 Brussels



research the office building  
week 2.10



Centraal Beheer  
Herman Hertzberger  
1972 Apeldoorn



Osram Headquarters  
Walter Henn  
1965 Munich



Union Carbide Headquarters  
SOM  
1960 New York



Willis Faber Dumas  
Foster + Partners  
1975 Ipswich



Ford Foundation  
Roche-Dinkeloo  
1967 New York



Johnson Wax Headquarters  
Frank Lloyd Wright  
1939 Racine, Wisconsin



Larkin Building  
Frank Lloyd Wright  
1906 Buffalo



National Social Insurance Board  
Sigurd Lewerentz  
1930 Stockholm



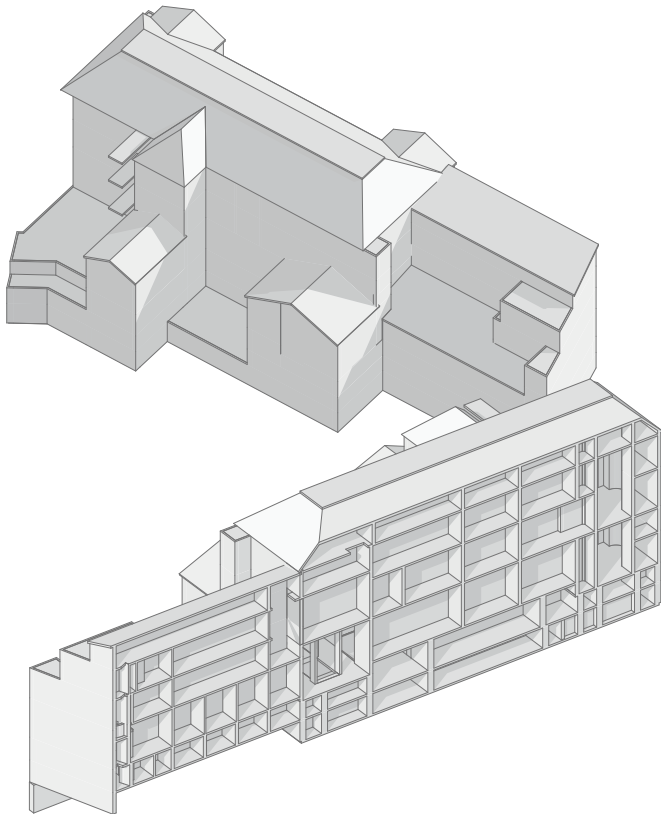




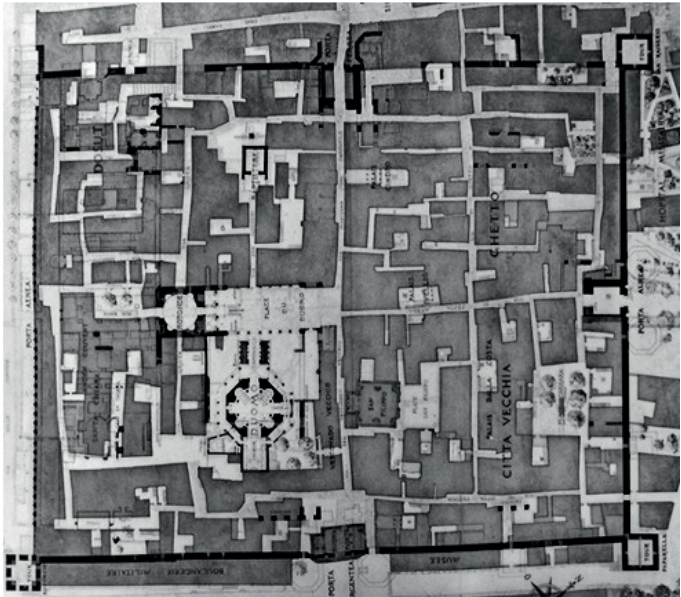
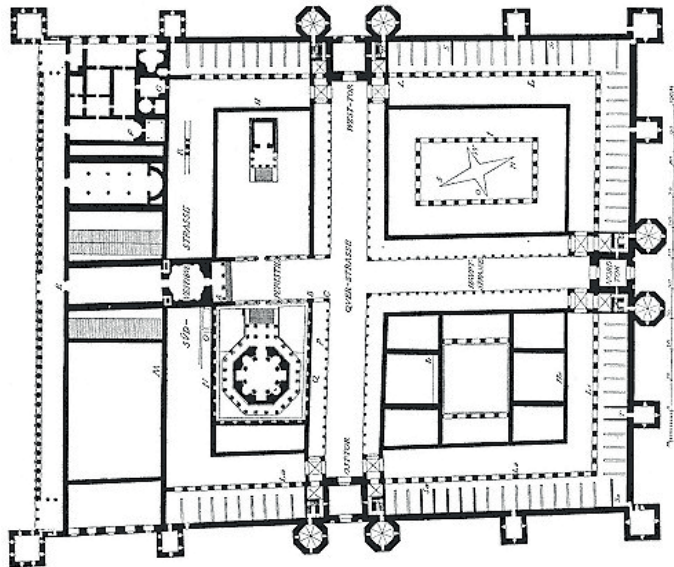
the intelligent ruin

week 3.1

building a bim model of the existing fabric...



Future Bank



Diocletian's Palace, Split, Plan of original palace 305 AD and Map of 1912

Intelligent Ruin

*A building is a possibility, is conducive, preferably taciturn, silent, is willing, liberates space and mediates. Buildings as intelligent ruins. Suitable for use, fit for purpose, as Charles Voysey expressed it. Good buildings hide daily use; they are stable and stubborn, obstinately distributive and (following Kant) 'purposive without a purpose.' Therein lies the quality of their durability, of their cultural durability, which yields dignity. Expediency asks for the right scale, an utmost precision that leaves everything open that cannot be predicted. Aldo Rossi used to point unceasingly at this: a feeling for measure, discretion and preparedness, committed but not concerned. Architecture does not pass in time; time passes in architecture. Good buildings are straightforward. They are generous. The result of designing and building does not need to be simple but straightforward. We do not solve formal problems but building problems, and because of this, we do not need to involve ourselves with the arbitrariness of formal invention. In doing so, architecture can avoid becoming designed, and it is spared artificial homogeneity.*

From Bob van Reeth 'Good Architecture' Oase 90-42

How many lives can a building have? When we look at the Pantheon in Rome or the Hagia Sofia in Istanbul, we deal with structures whose form and material have allowed them to stand the test of time and accommodate many lives, shaping the

form of the city around them. If we think about the Diocletian Palace in Split, we recall the fabric of a building that literally became the bones of a city. Their interiors, and many others, have accommodated changing programmes according to the evolving needs. While a building's programme can be a leading design tool, when functions and necessities change over time – look at the given brief for the National Bank of Belgium project – a good building knows how to deal with change.

Vitruvius has given us the trinity: Firmitas, Utilitas, Venustas. Firmness, usefulness and beauty are three characteristics that can order an interior, a building or a city. Each can also be the reason to protect a building from demolition. If a building has a solid structure, this might have a lifespan of more than 100 years; think of the buildings that formed the tissue of the 19th-century expansions of historic European towns and which are now the playground for thankful contemporary architects. Those buildings had facades which were generally part of that structure. Now, thanks to ever more stringent energy policies, a building's skin might last 20-30 years. At the same time, an interior, along with the systems that service it, could change more frequently, depending on its quality and refinement, in line with the changing requirements of users or inhabitants.

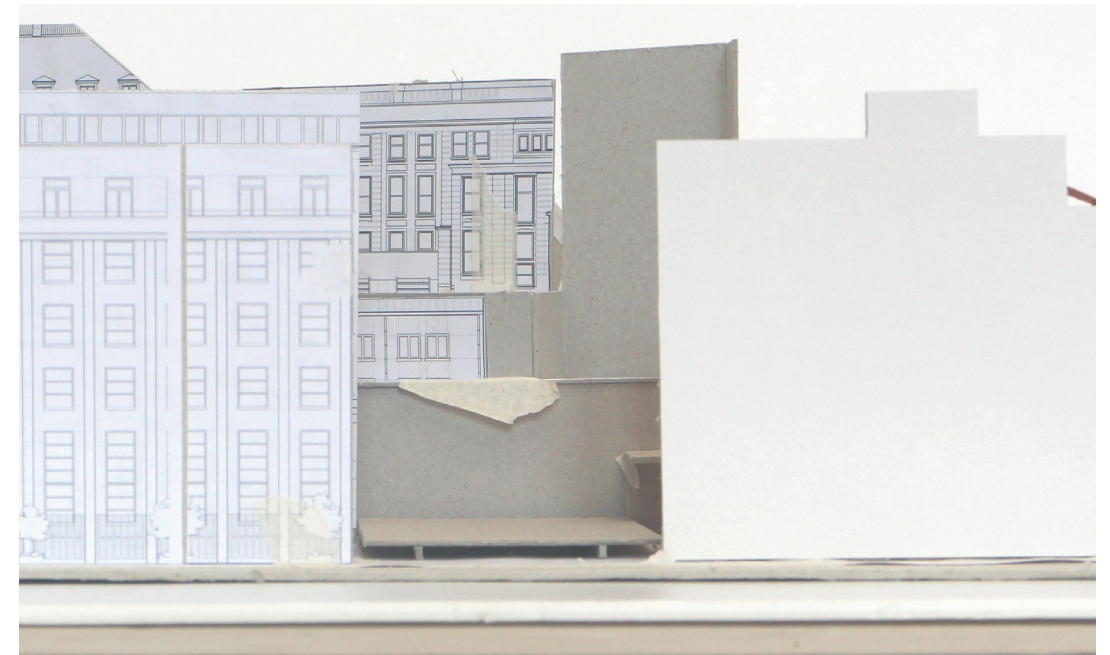
So far, you have been thinking about the National Bank of Belgium as a repository of ideas about the city and society while trying to understand and critique its complex programme, as described in the brief of the NBB, programme requirements.



# sketch models

## week 3.2

a study in light of the intelligent ruin brief...  
what to keep and what to take away  
what happens to the view from the main boulevard if you look into the new  
entrance?



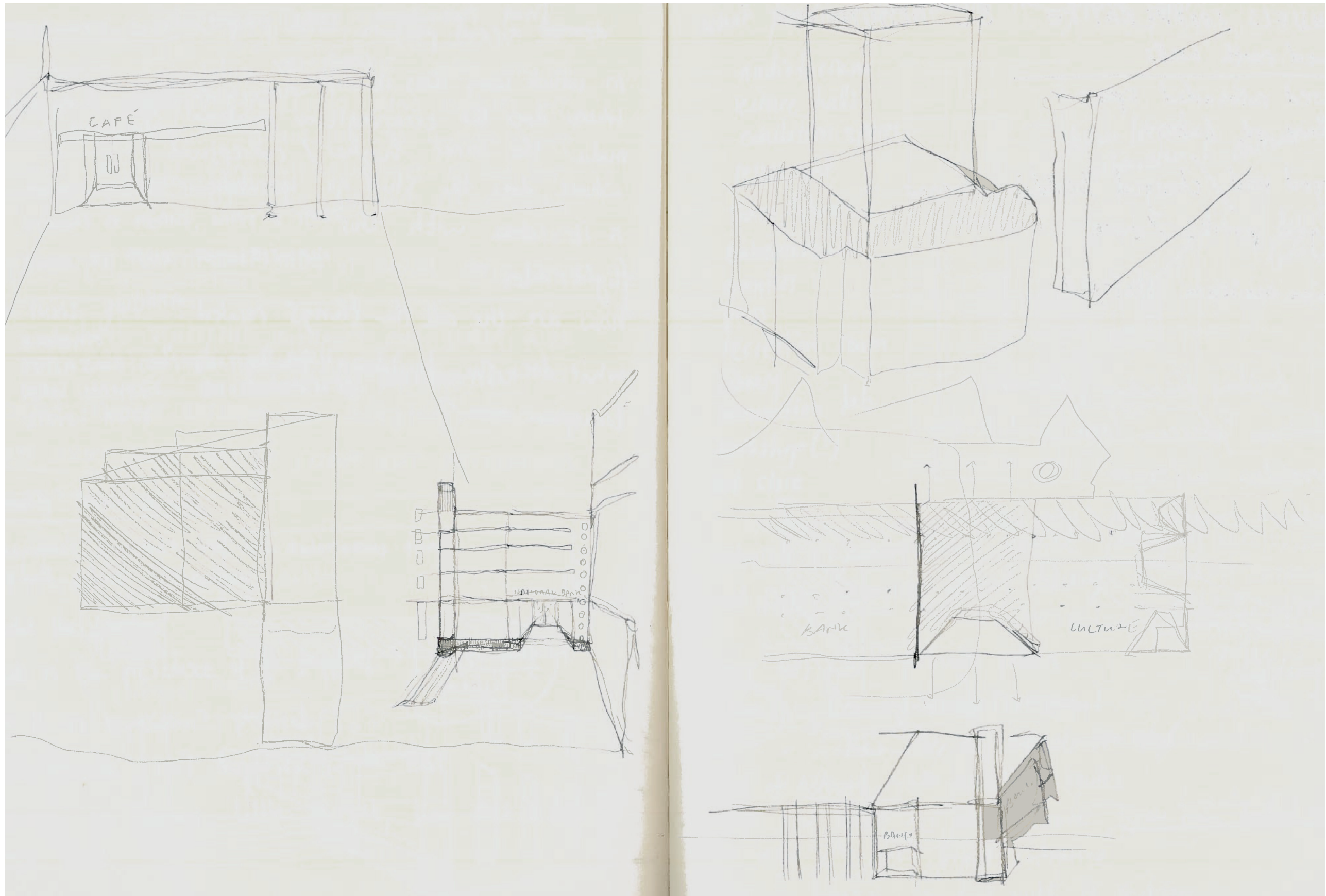
the messy 'back' facades that become visible when  
removing both blocks



the view when one of the blocks is kept



sketches  
week 3.2





sketches  
week 3.2

10 FEBRUARY 2022 MSc4 [BRIEF: INTELLIGENT RUN]

climate design: circulation vs. rooms  
ventilation + correct temperature  
coherent integrated design

FRAMEWORK FOR INHABITATION

ECONOMY OF MEANS, WHAT IS THERE?

FLOOR BY FLOOR REFURBISHING

roman ruins guiliano ...

BREEAM

PELAZES CONSTRUCTION ARCH

PEAN HAWKES: ENVIRONMENTAL IMAGINATION

STEVE REICH

17 february tutorial sbsanne

autonomous moments, not one autonomous thing.  
city hall splund gothemburg

model the facades

what is the presence of the hybnde?

what is it's expression? physical.

back facade, isn't supposed to be seen

Sequence of things, little pocket, how does it look?

Soft voice

illustrations  
models

the  
corner

drawn aerial picture with proposal.

in which way does it differ?

where does the excavation material go?

make the corner higher / conceptual

where does the stuff go you take away?

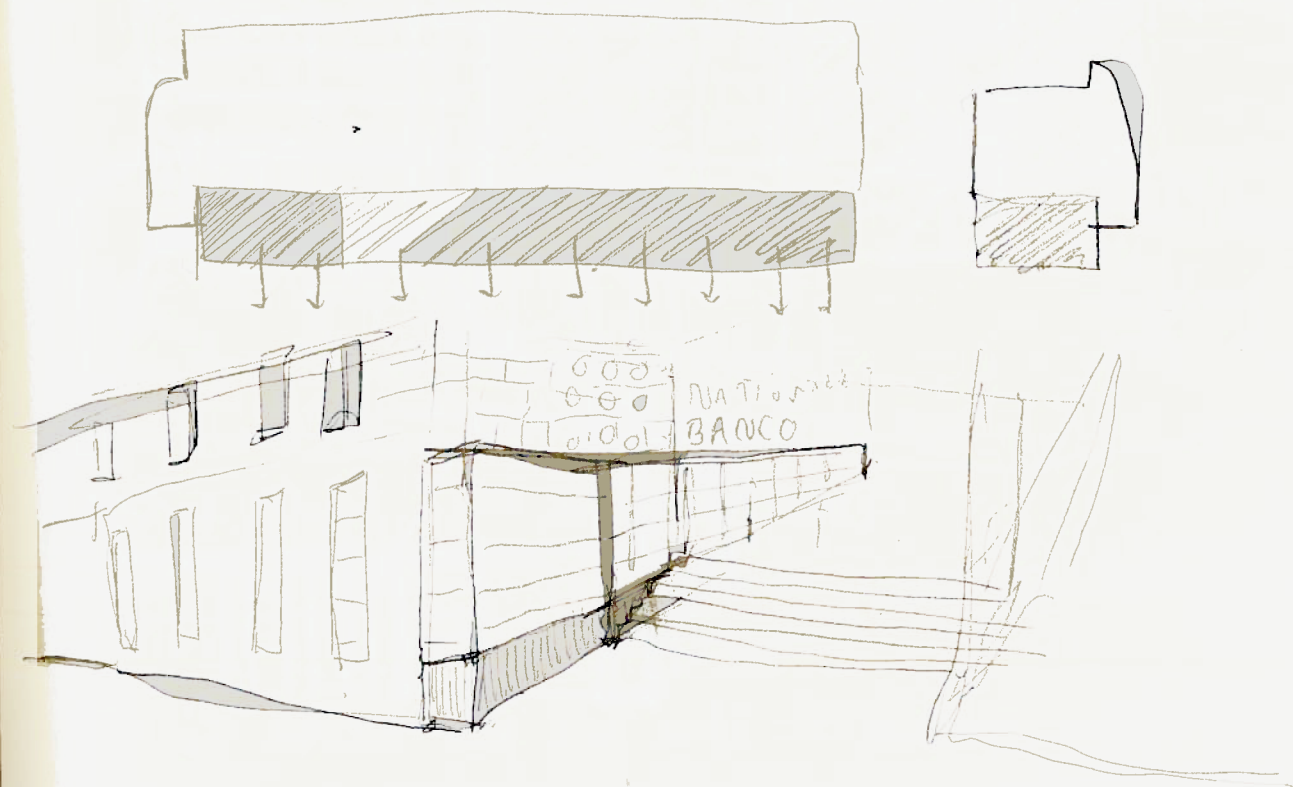
is it done with this?

flight routes?

how are the all the things related?

what does the building really do?

transform more?

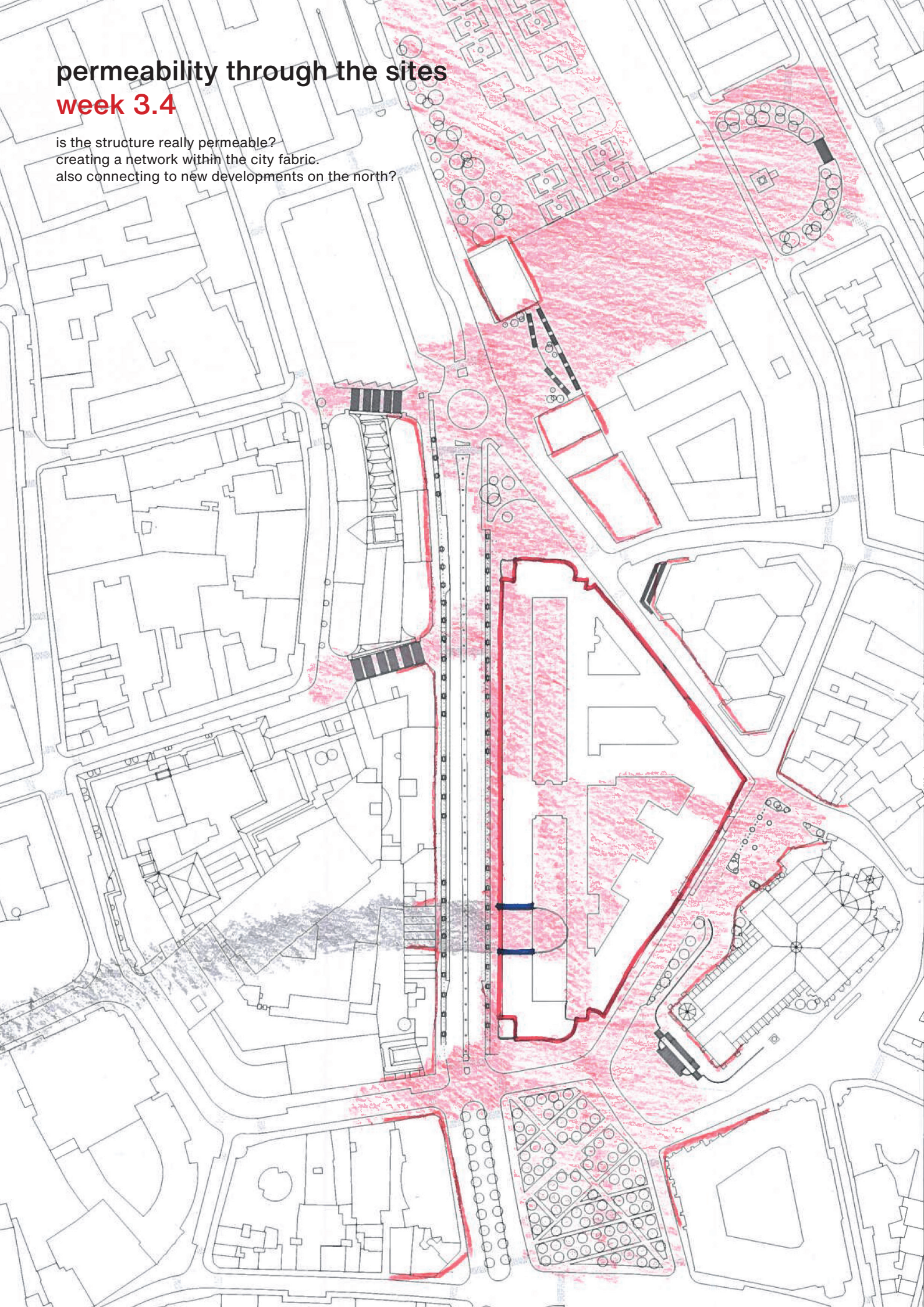




## permeability through the sites

### week 3.4

is the structure really permeable?  
creating a network within the city fabric.  
also connecting to new developments on the north?



MJVH Architecten  
Fashion Museum  
Antwerp

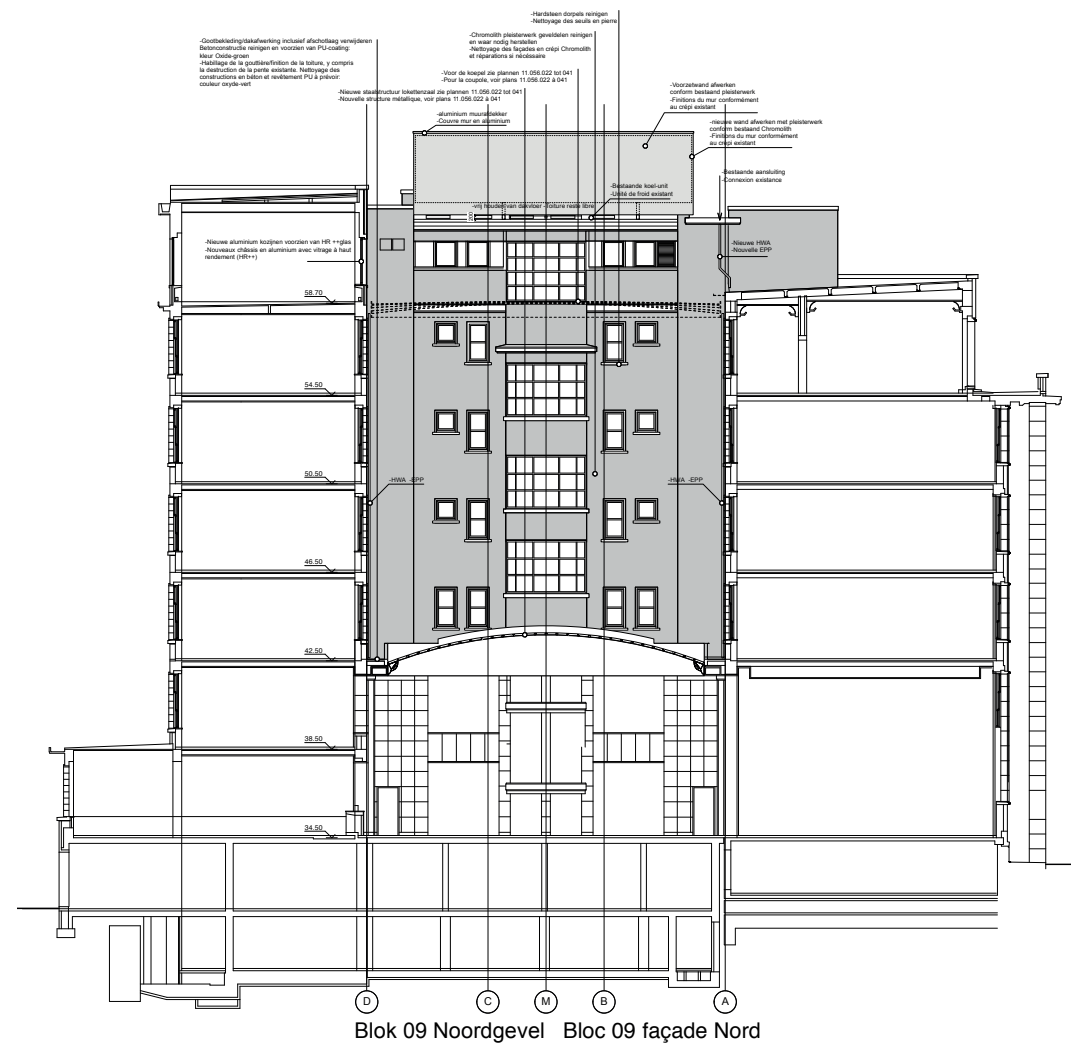


## week 3.5

thinking about removing a part of the roof...

disassembling

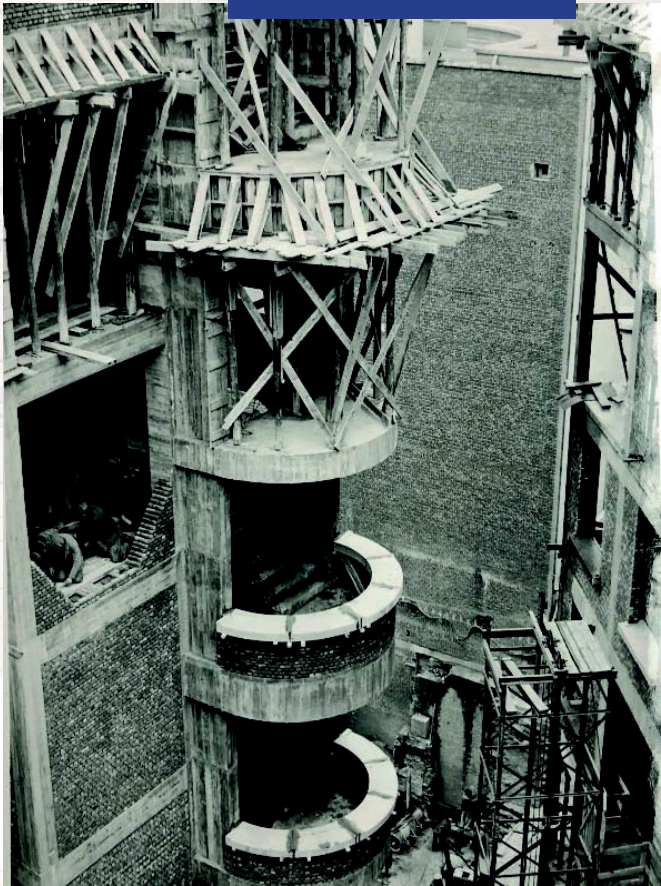
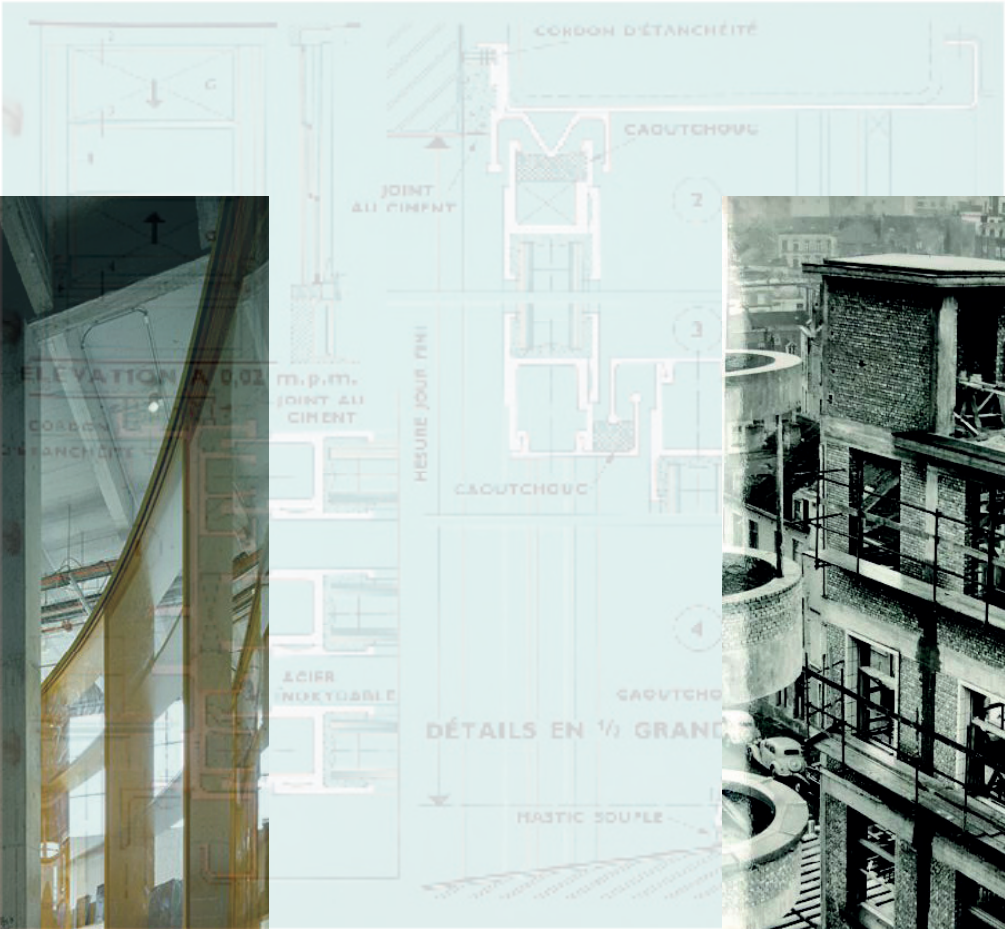
it seems possible looking at the details, cutting the roof in half





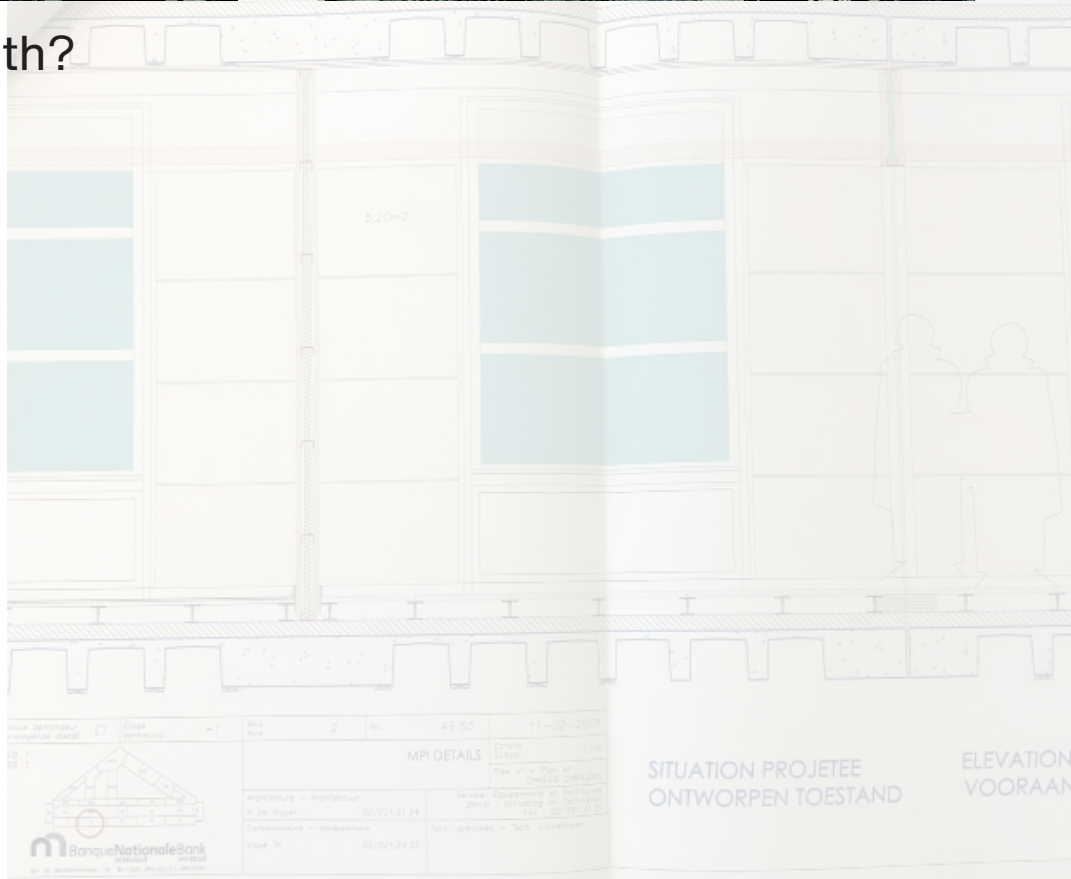
palais de tokyo  
week 3.5

revealing the concrete structure and adding  
temporary/dismountable structures



recyclen material  
[bricks, concrete slabs,  
concrete columns]

what are we left with?





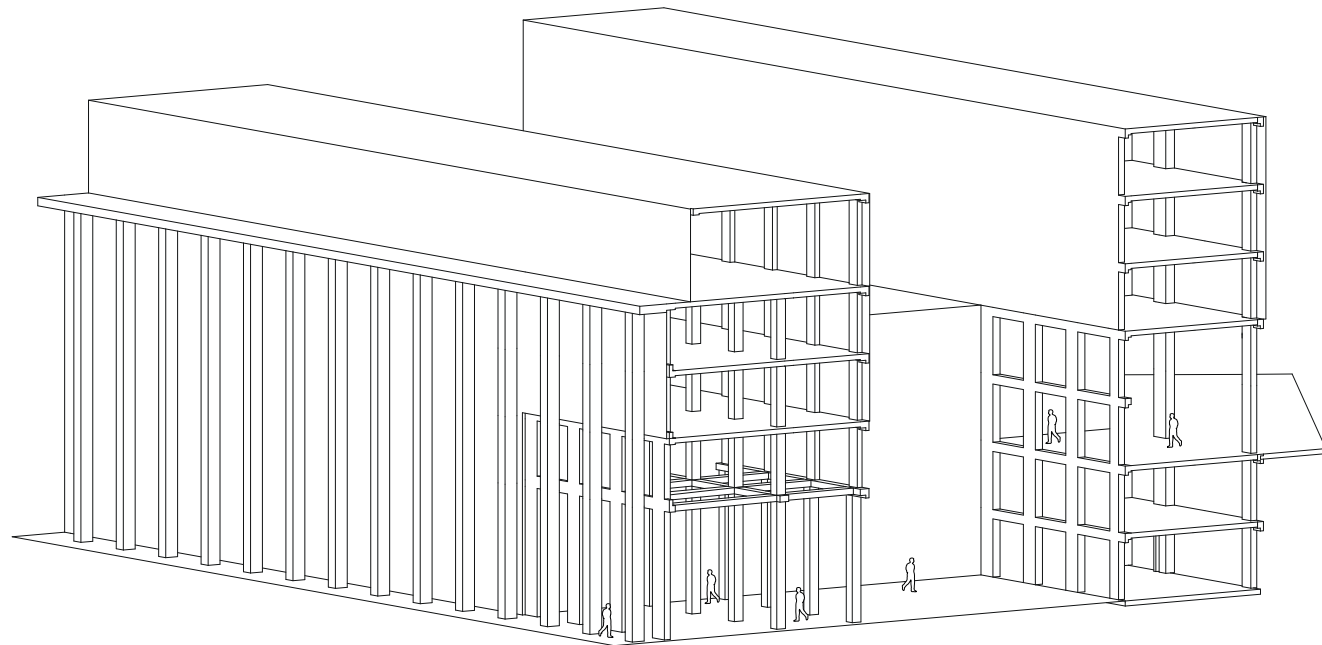
# layering of thresholds

## week 3.5

is it possible to create a pocket square whilst keeping the existing structures?  
what happens if we leave the structure intact?

creating visual and physical connections  
[the layers of permeability]

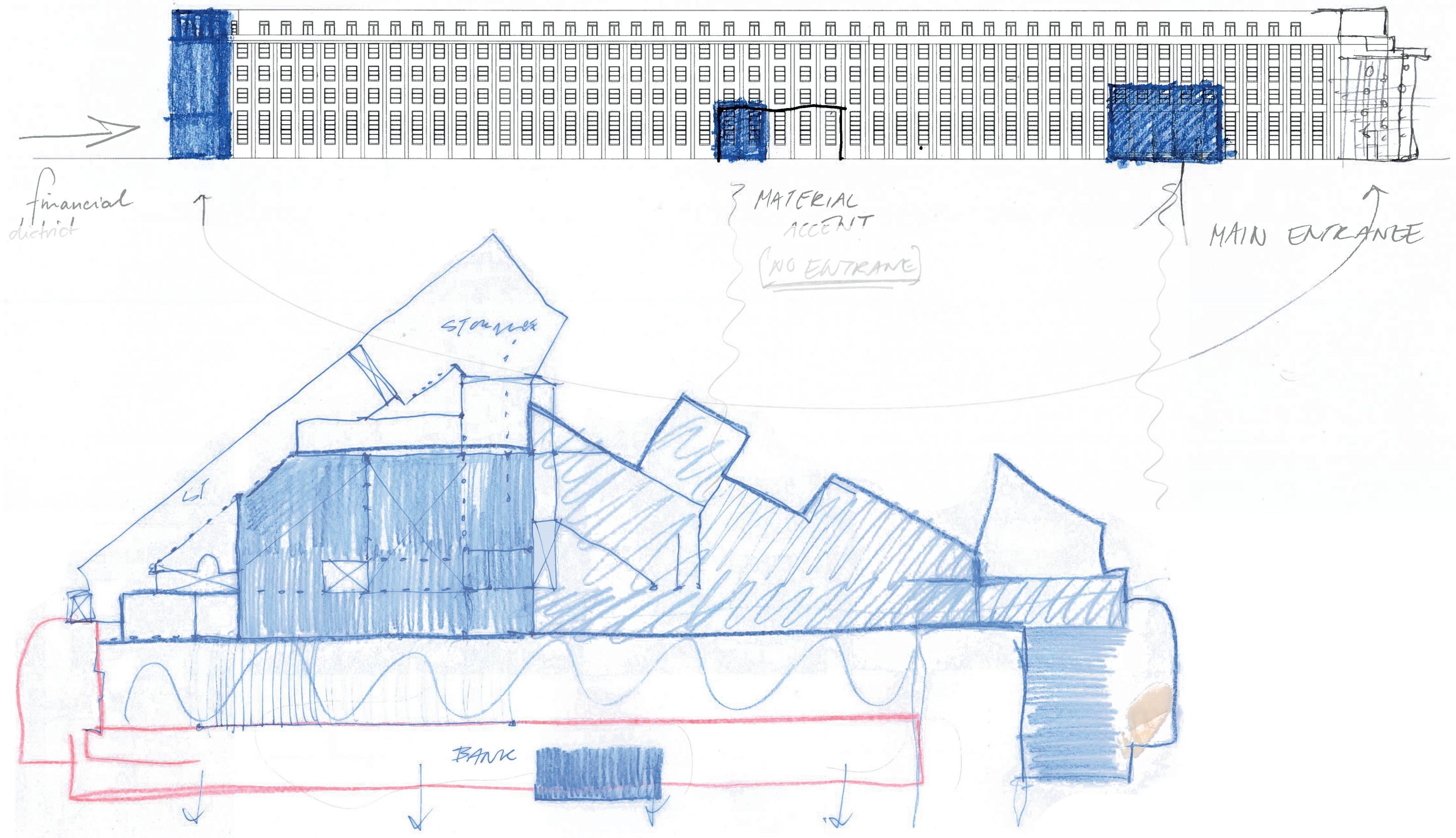
how to establish a connection with the roof terrace? does it  
have to be physical or can it only be visual?



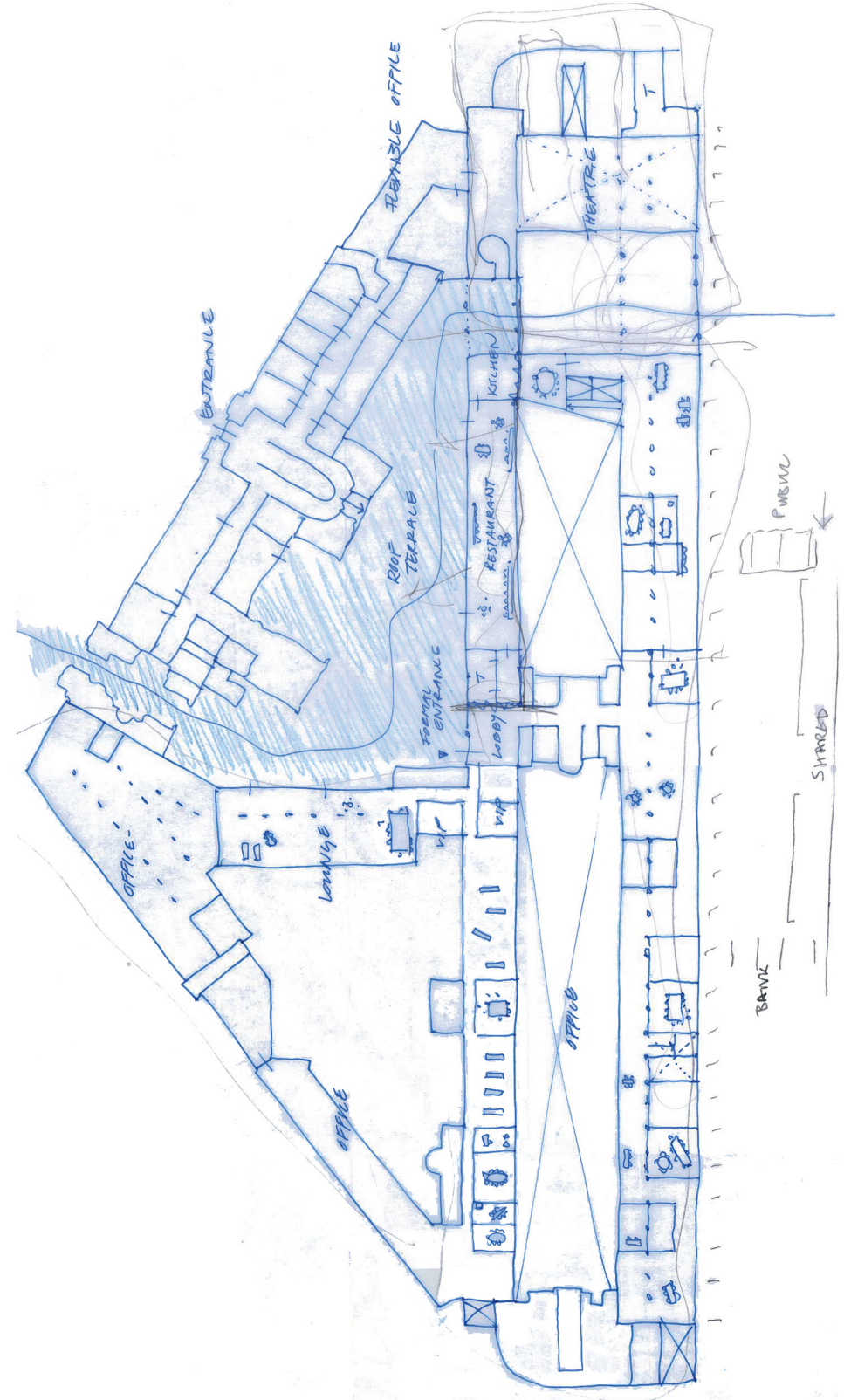
de Vylder Vinck Tallieu  
FRIANT



MAKING A SYMMETRICAL  
ACCENTUATE PLAYFULNESS / OPPOSING TUTIST FACADE



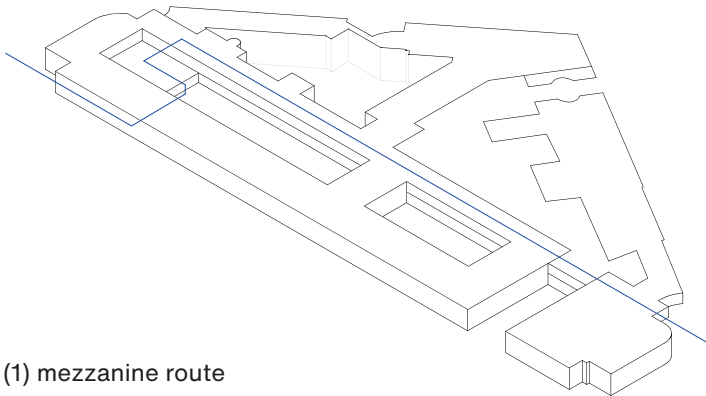




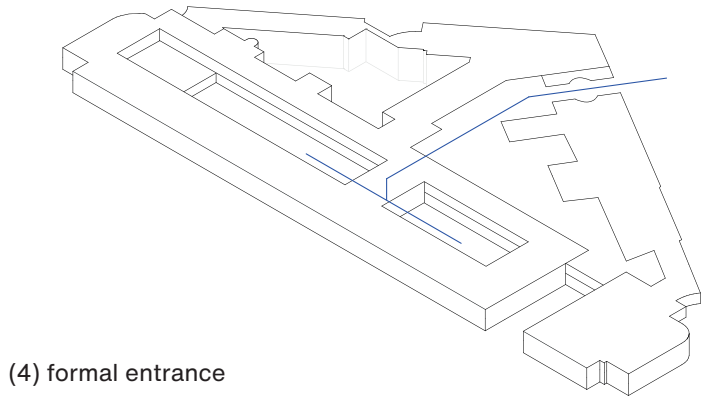


public routes  
week 3.6

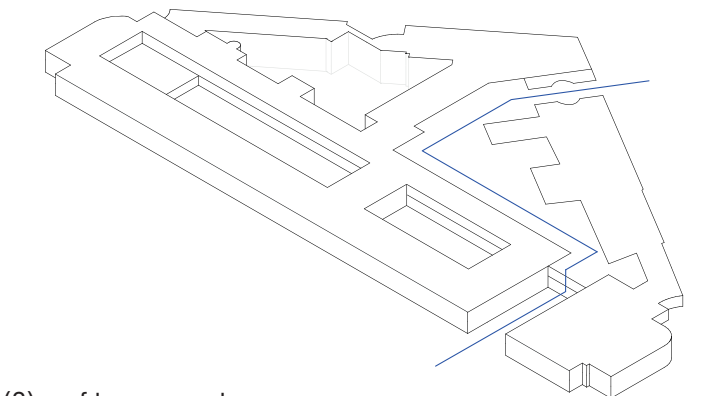
the different public routes through the building aiming  
to create a permeable structure



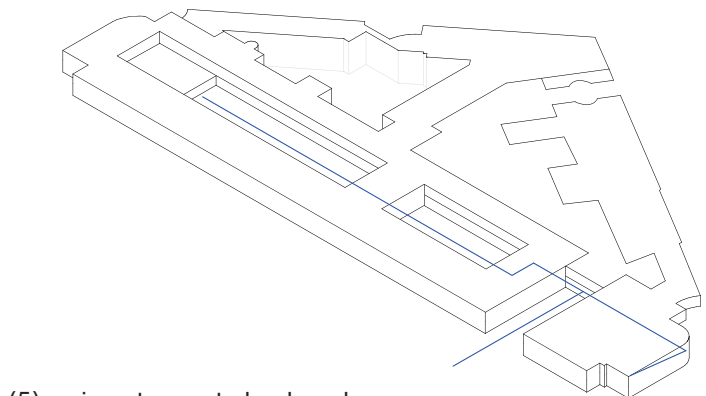
(1) mezzanine route



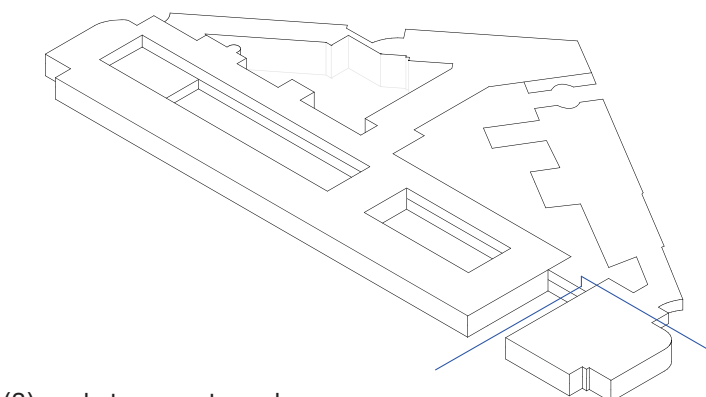
(4) formal entrance



(2) roof terrace route



(5) main entrance to bank and  
cultural centre



(3) pocket square to park

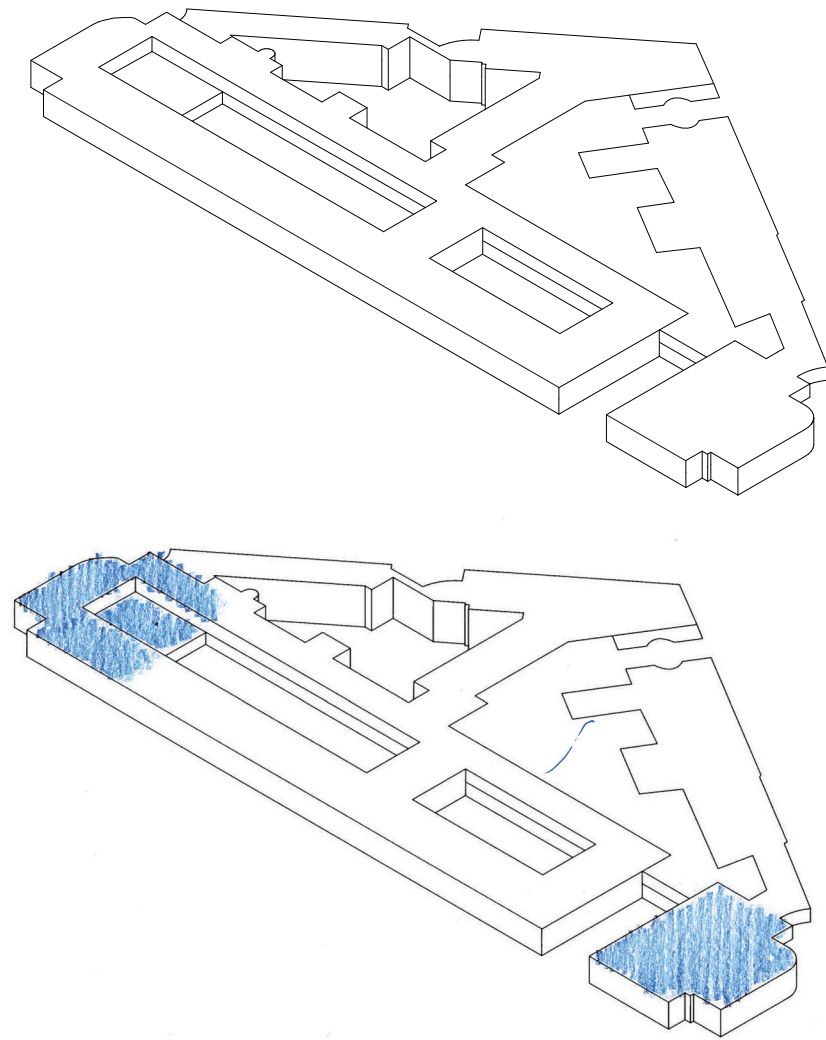


echo

## week 3.5

interiorizing the concept of the cultural hybride on the left side of the building

all the interventions will have the same materiality which makes the changes readable and allows the public the be guided along this line of interventions



OFFICE KGDVS  
Library Gent





## veiling the building

### week 3.5

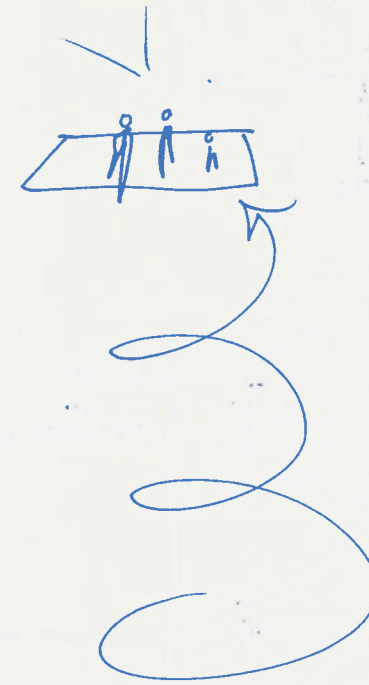
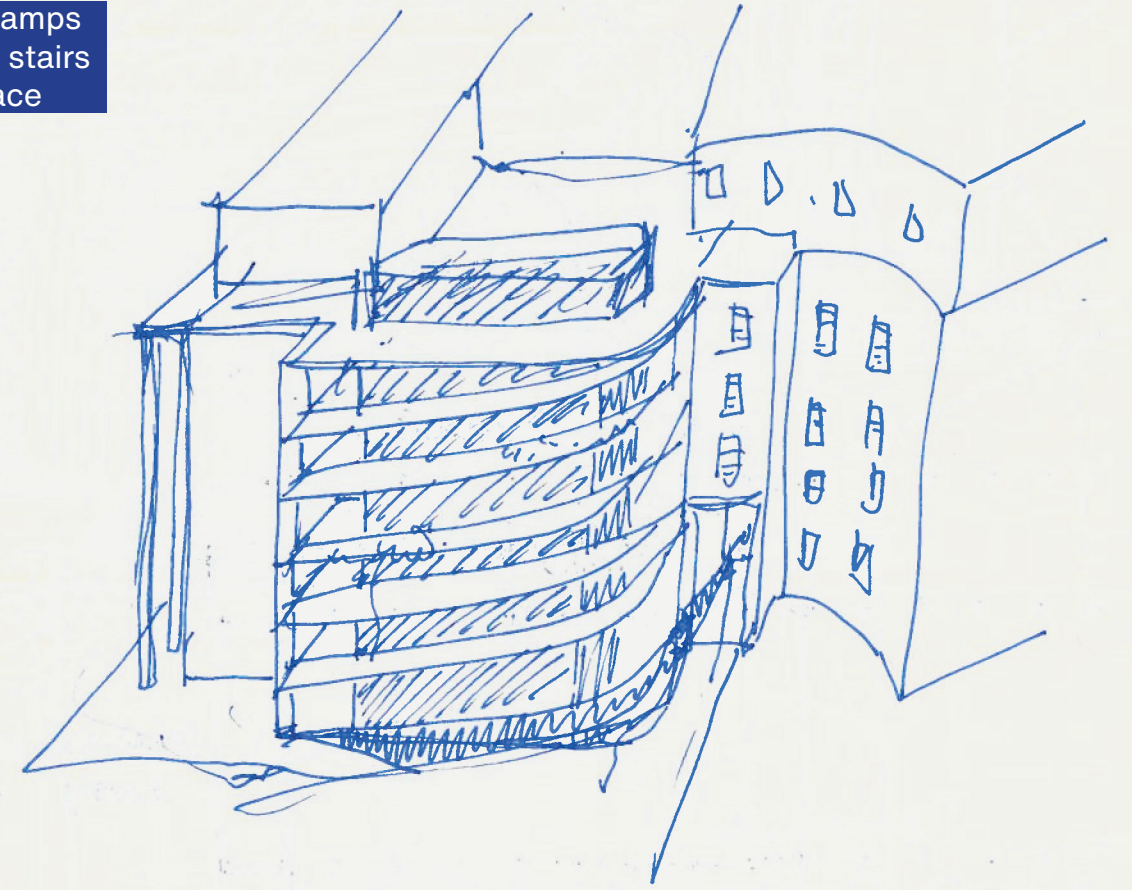
the music center [2010] by Kersten Geers en David van Severen is a building covered by a seamless steel mesh, providing cover from the sun and transforming the building into a 'veiled' object

considering the possibility of veiling the corner piece of the bank building...  
revealing the structure, but covering it with a new transparent material

masking the building?



exposing the ramps  
for public use. stairs  
to a roof terrace



exposing the  
ramps...?  
unusable...  
still closed...

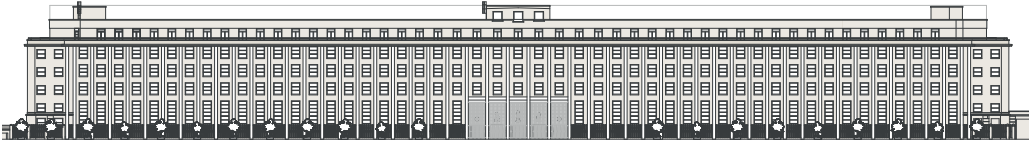
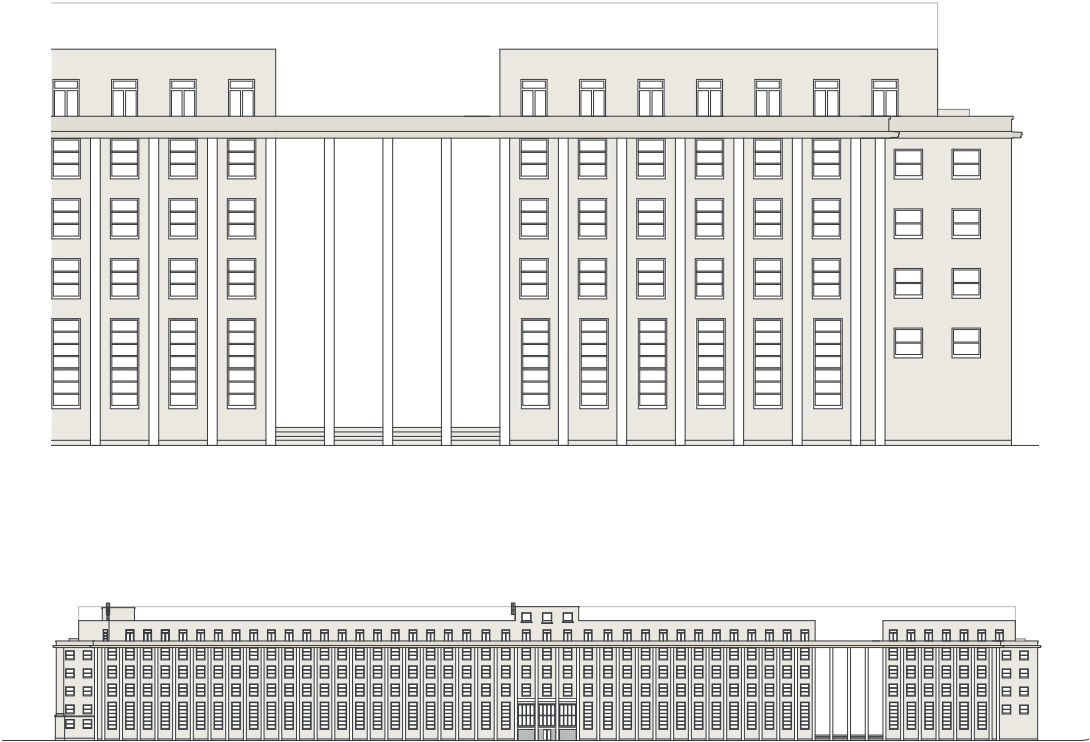
part of a route?  
view?



# elevation study

## week 3.5

studies on how to make the ‘gap’ between the cultural building and the bank. does it have to be readable in the facade?  
if a new entrance area is created it should have the ‘allure’ and ‘grandness’ of an entrance, shouldn’t it?





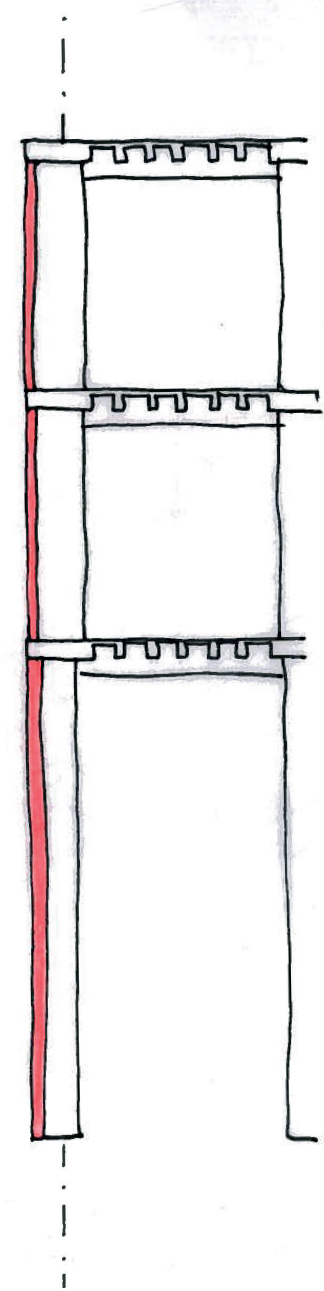
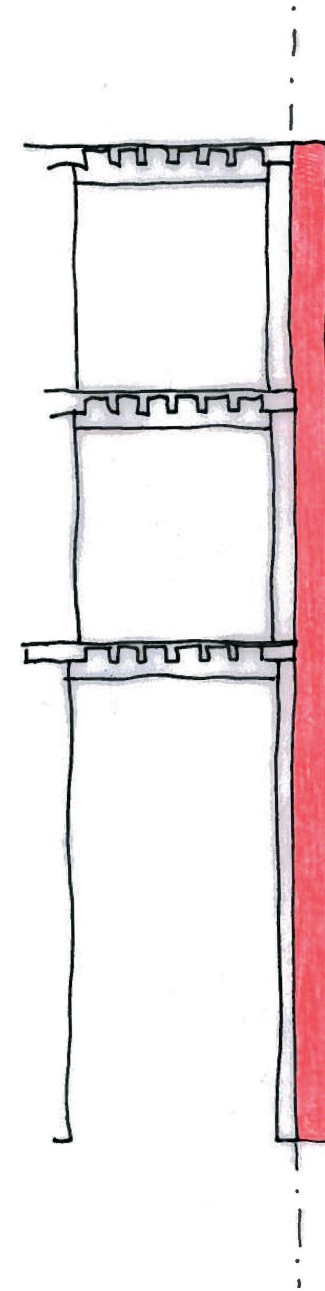
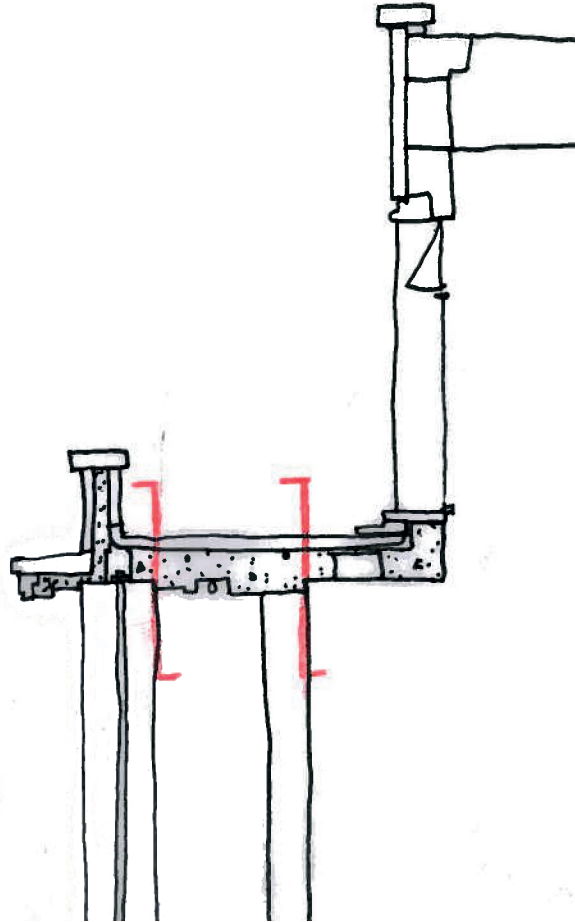
# cutting the building

## week 3.5

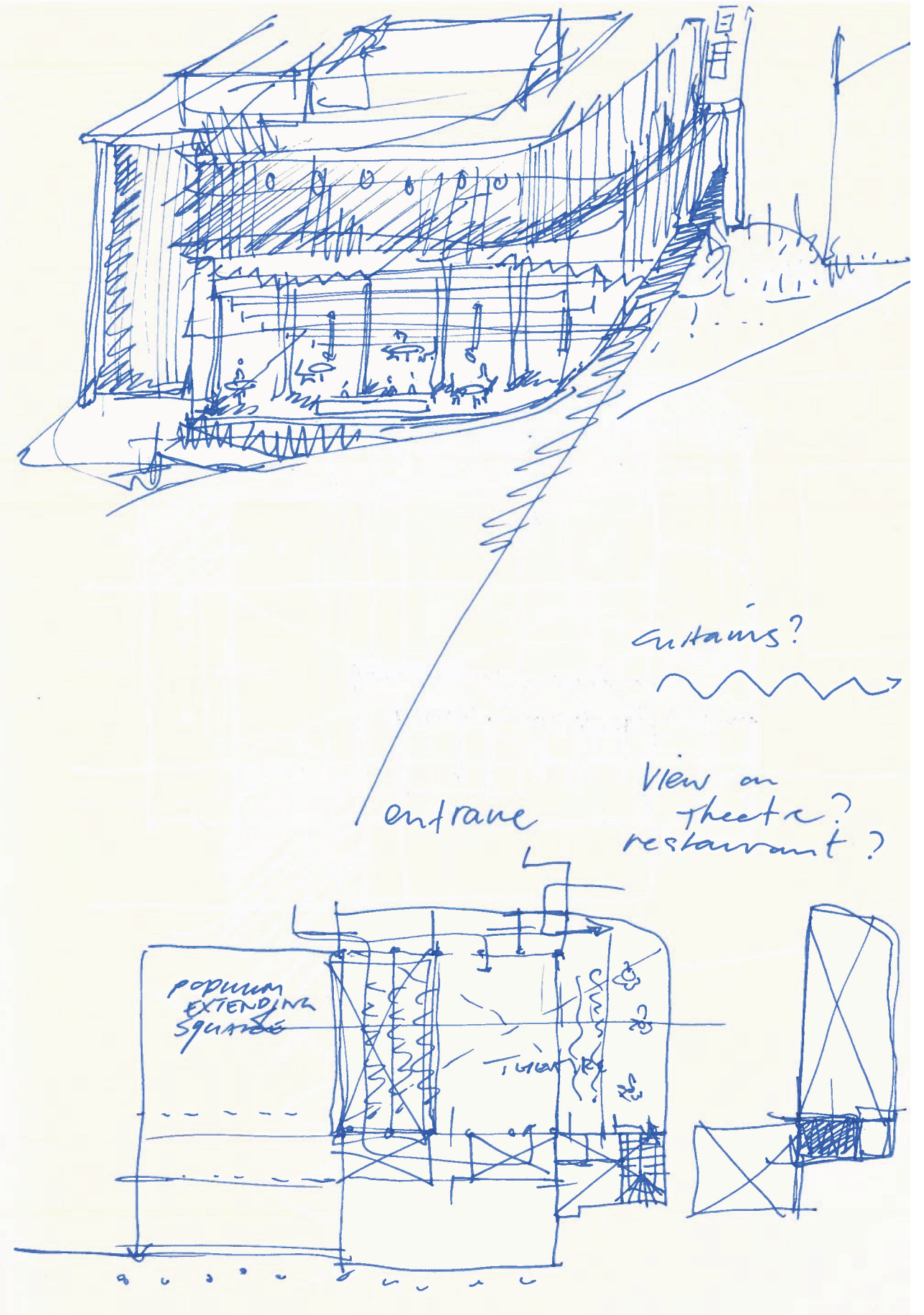
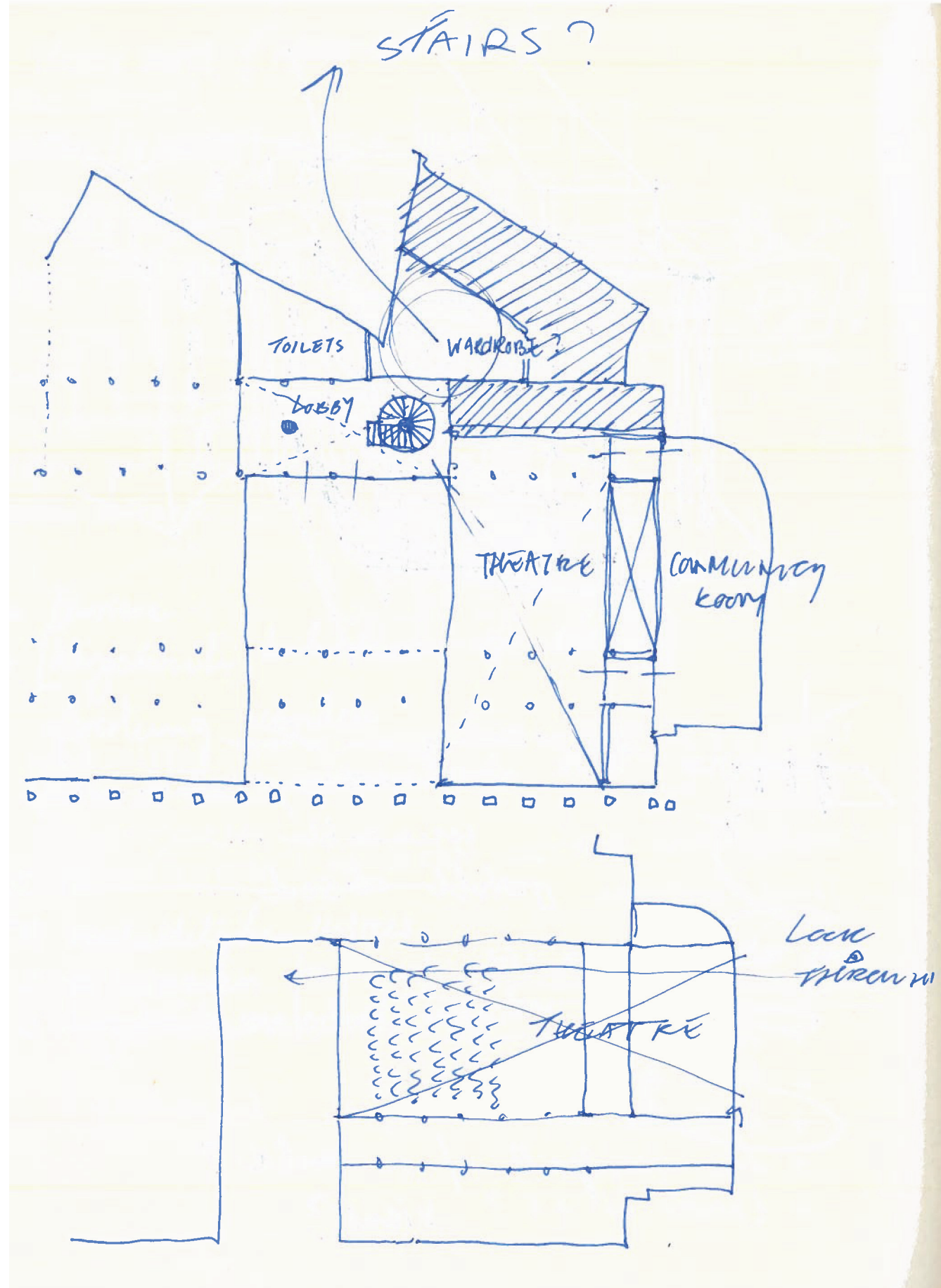
on the left side the building is cut on a joint, which allows for a relatively easy disassembling of the building

on the right side the building is not cut on a joint, it needs to be cut next to the beam in order for the construction to keep working properly

If the collonade should continue along the boulevard...  
how should this work? can we disassemble the concrete construction on top? can it be cut?

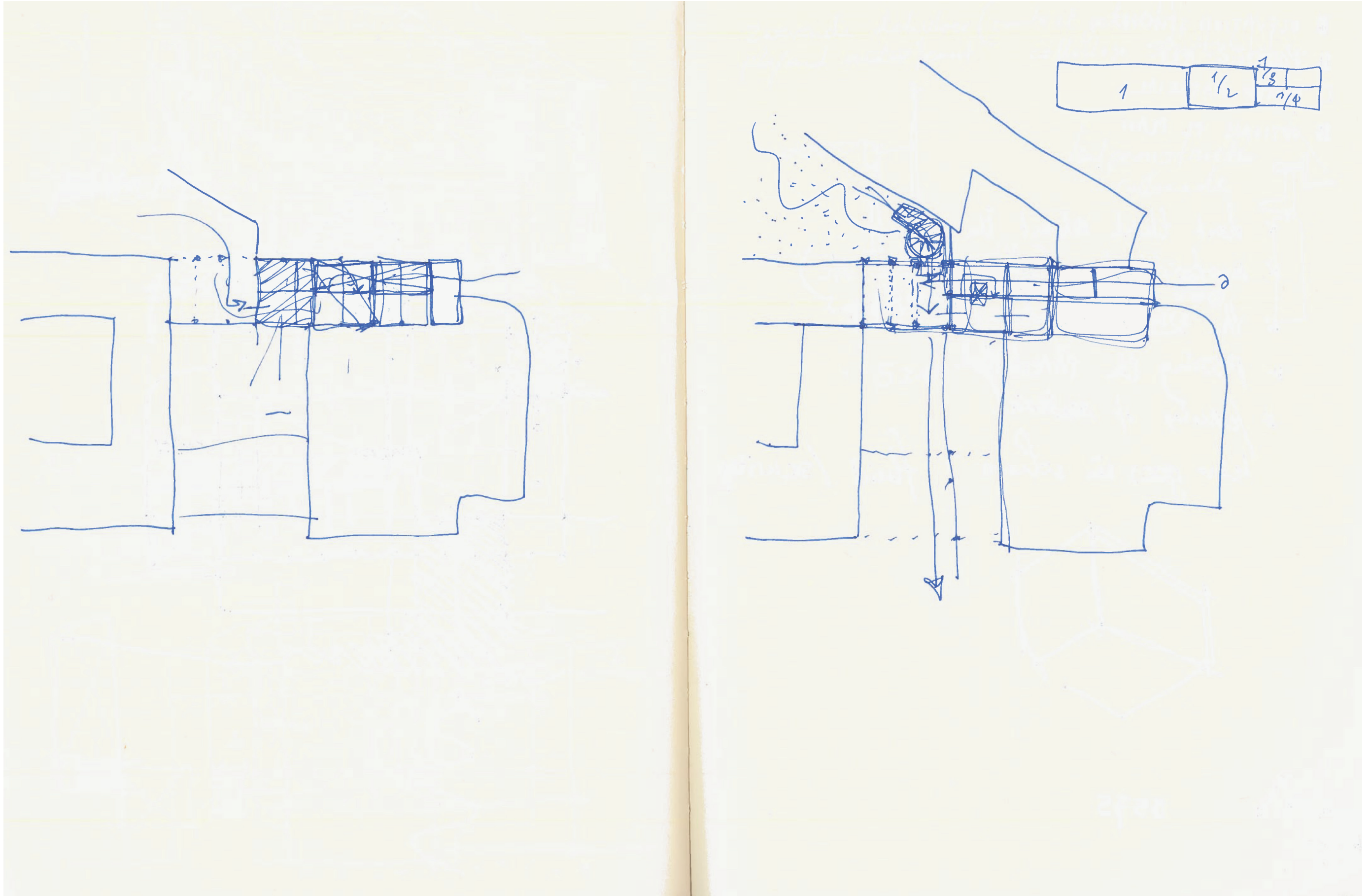








sketches  
week 3.6

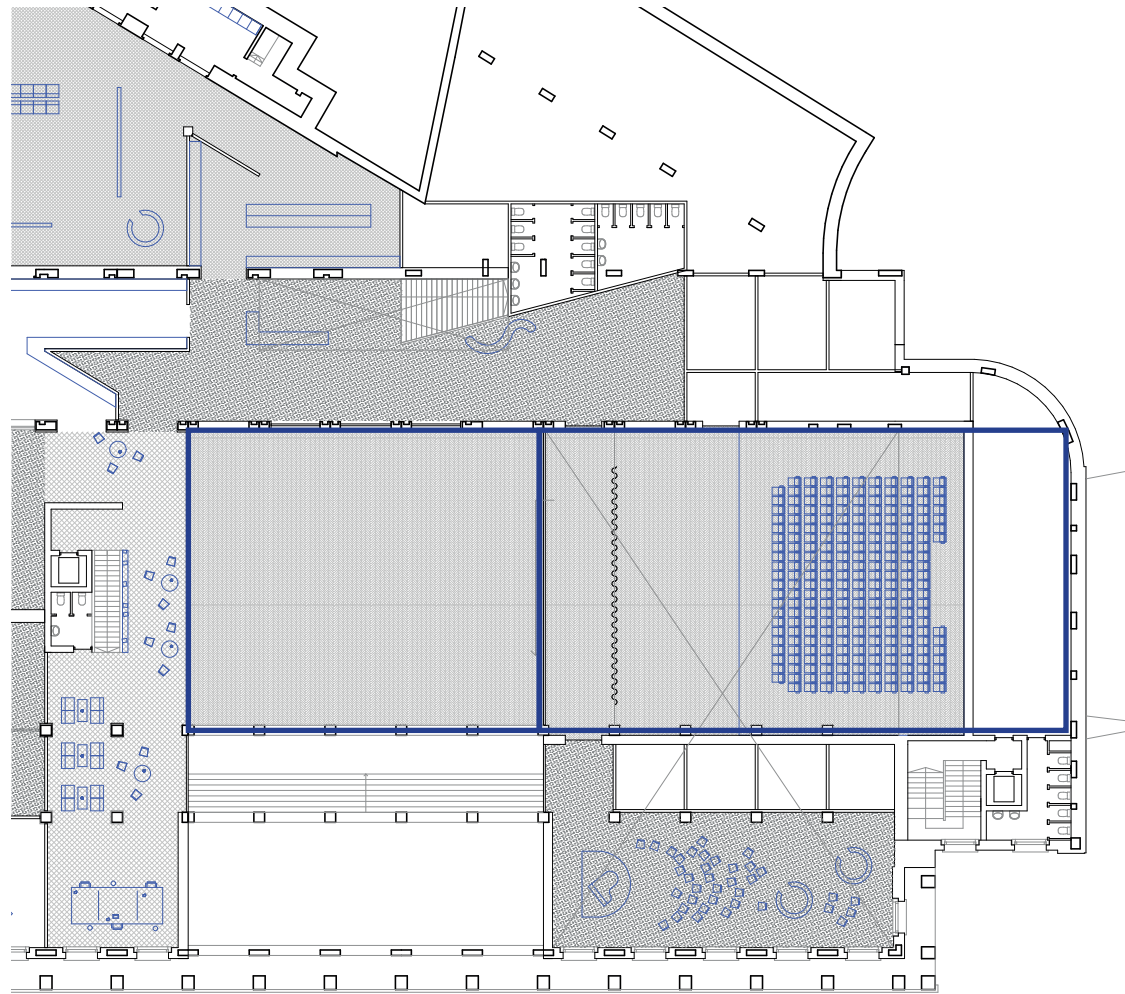




## a new theatre

### week 3.6

the theatre on the ground floor as a new face of the building,  
a 'street theatre', extending on to the public square

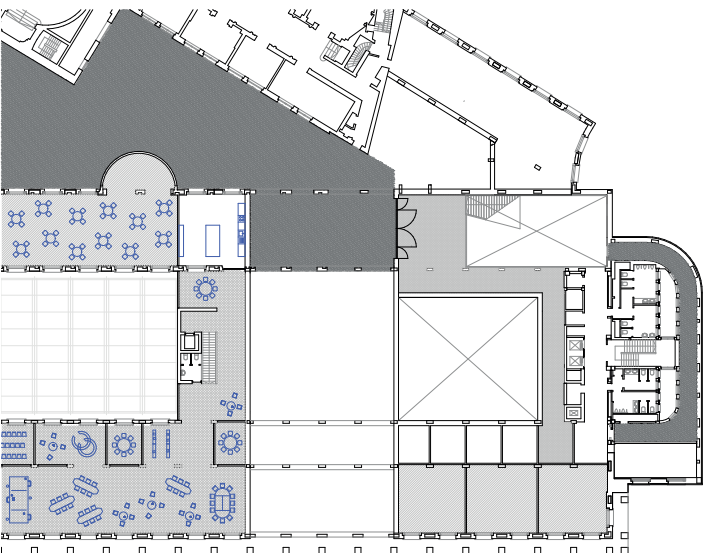
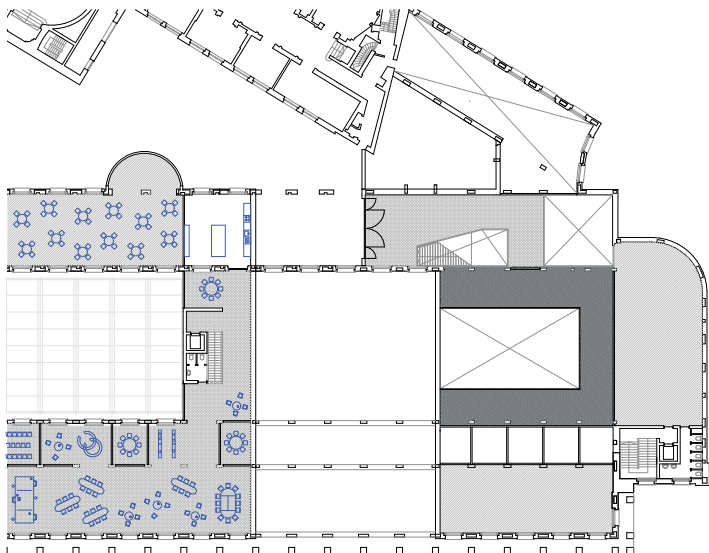
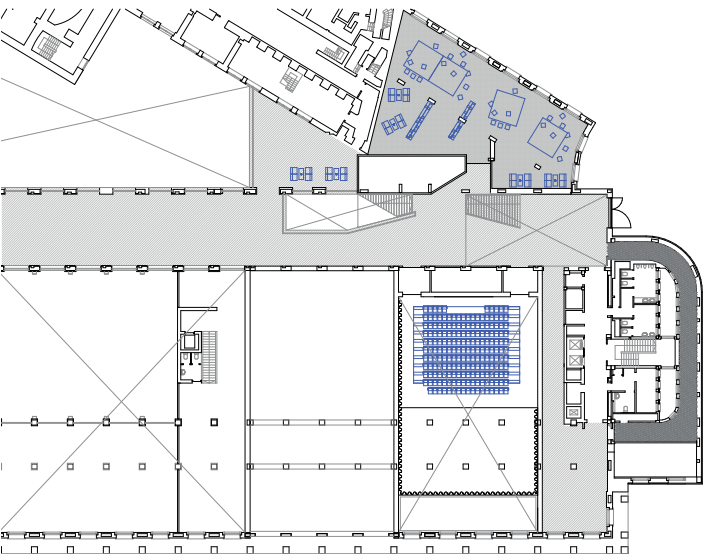
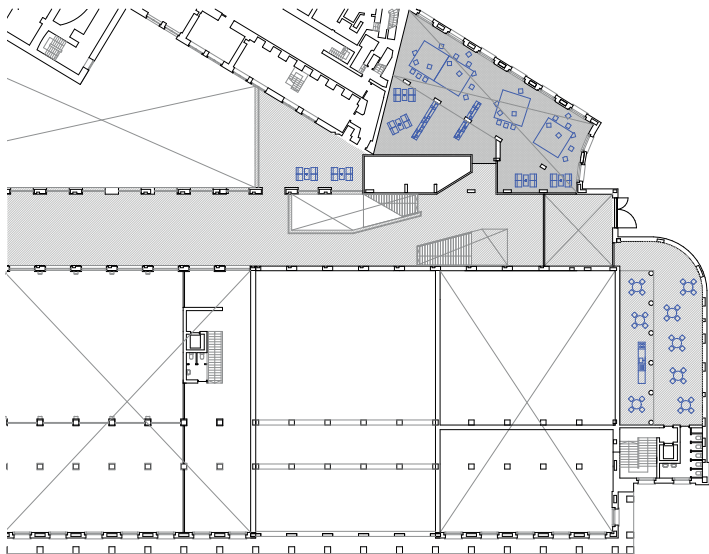
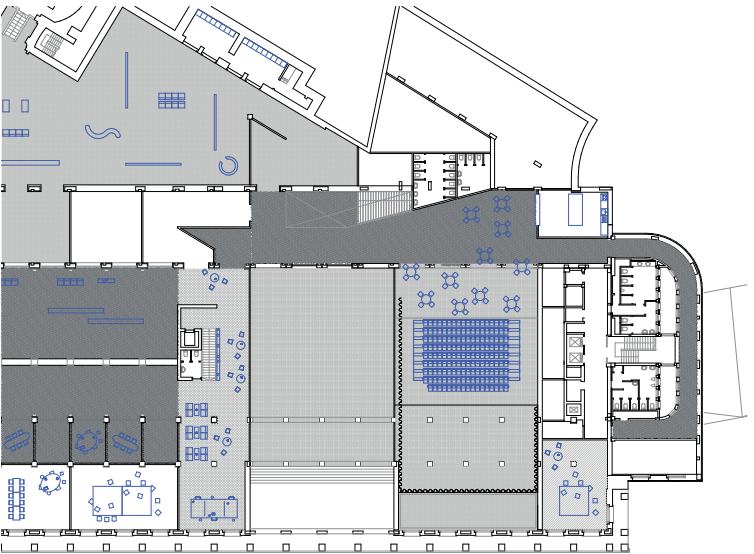
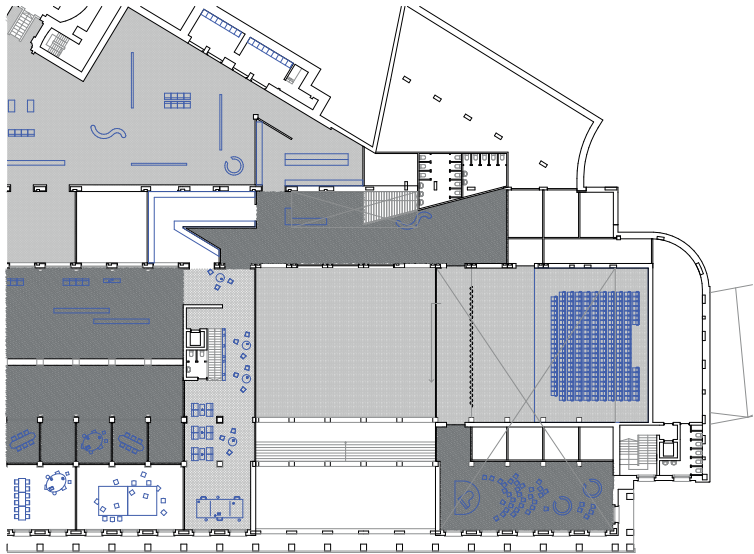


assemble  
bell square pavillion



the fragment  
week 3.6

weighing the odds of taking the core away or not...  
if we take the core away, does it offer new opportunities for the 'face of the building' towards the square?

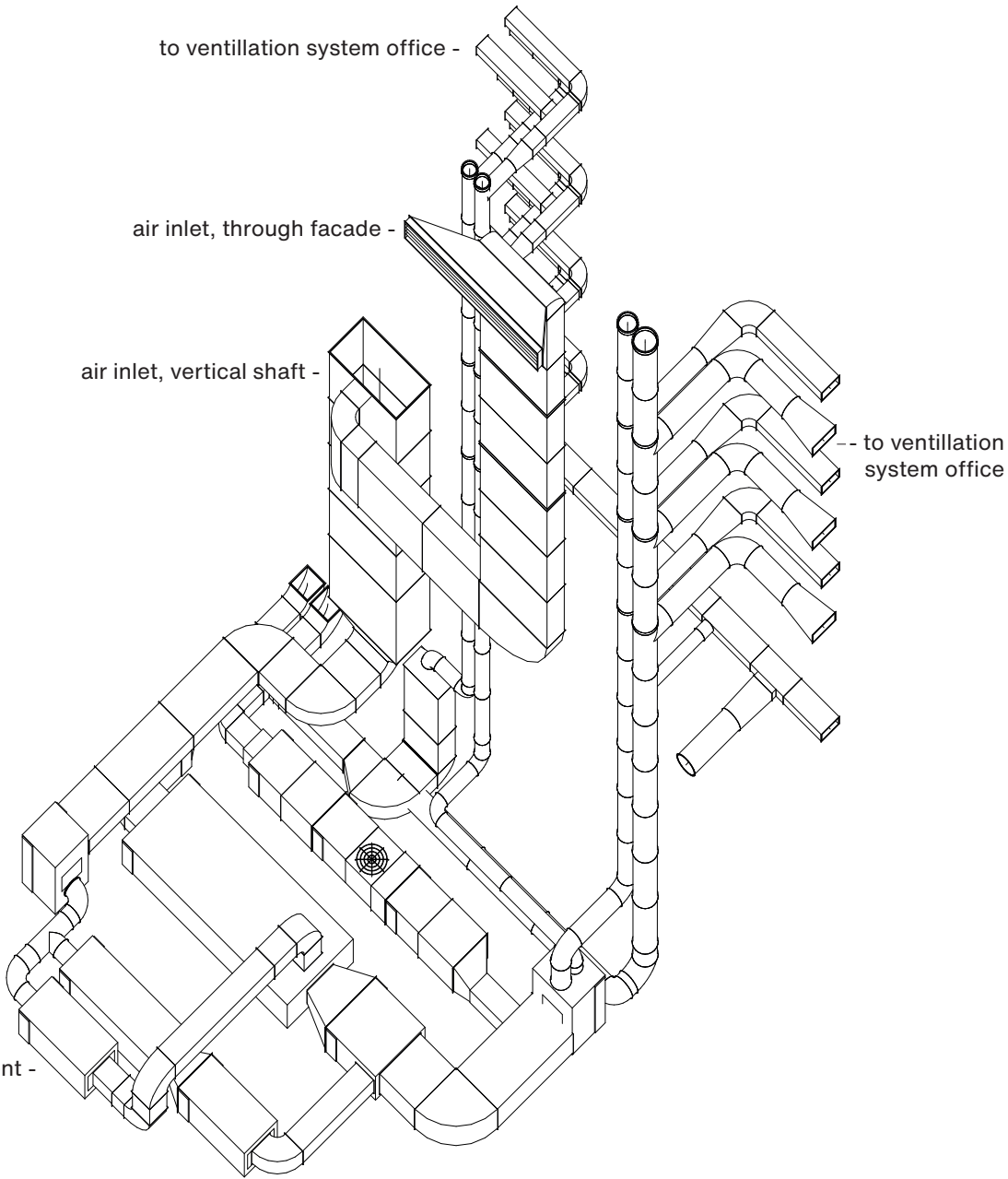
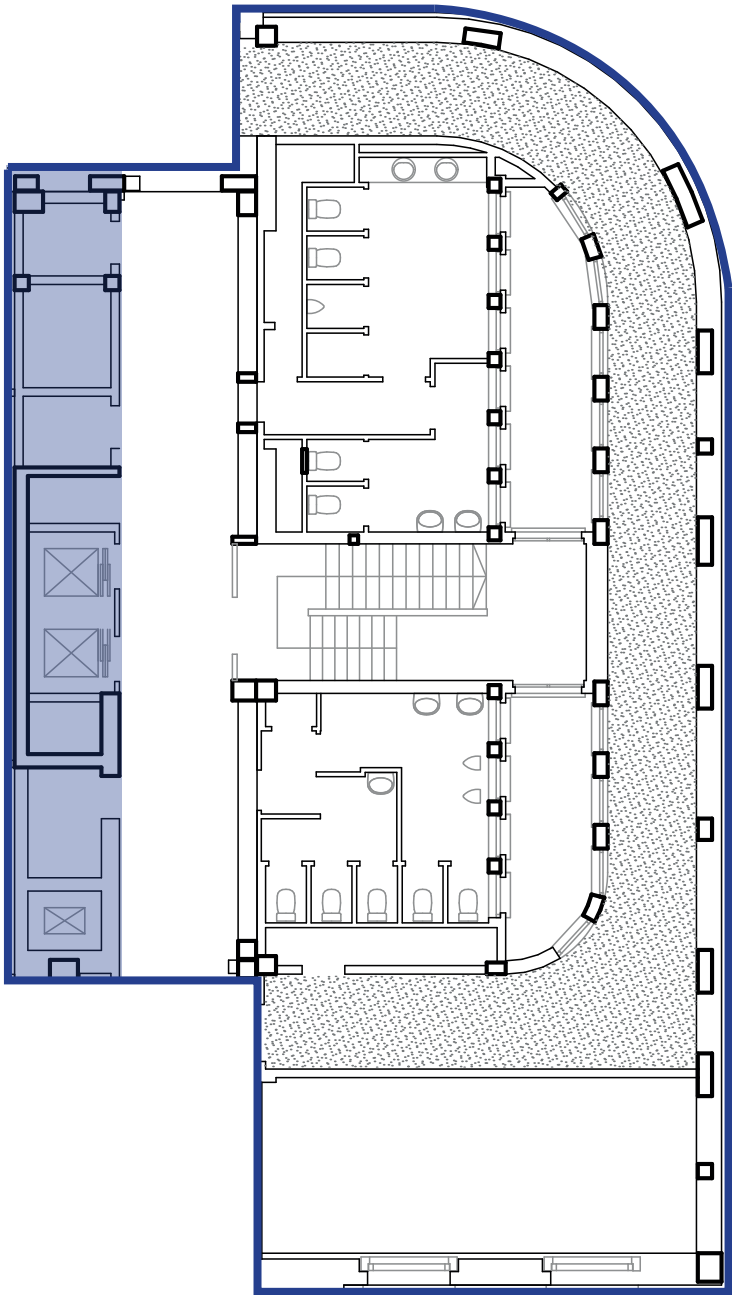




south core  
week 3.6

installations in the south core  
sewage, ventilation heating

[the cores are freestanding constructions]

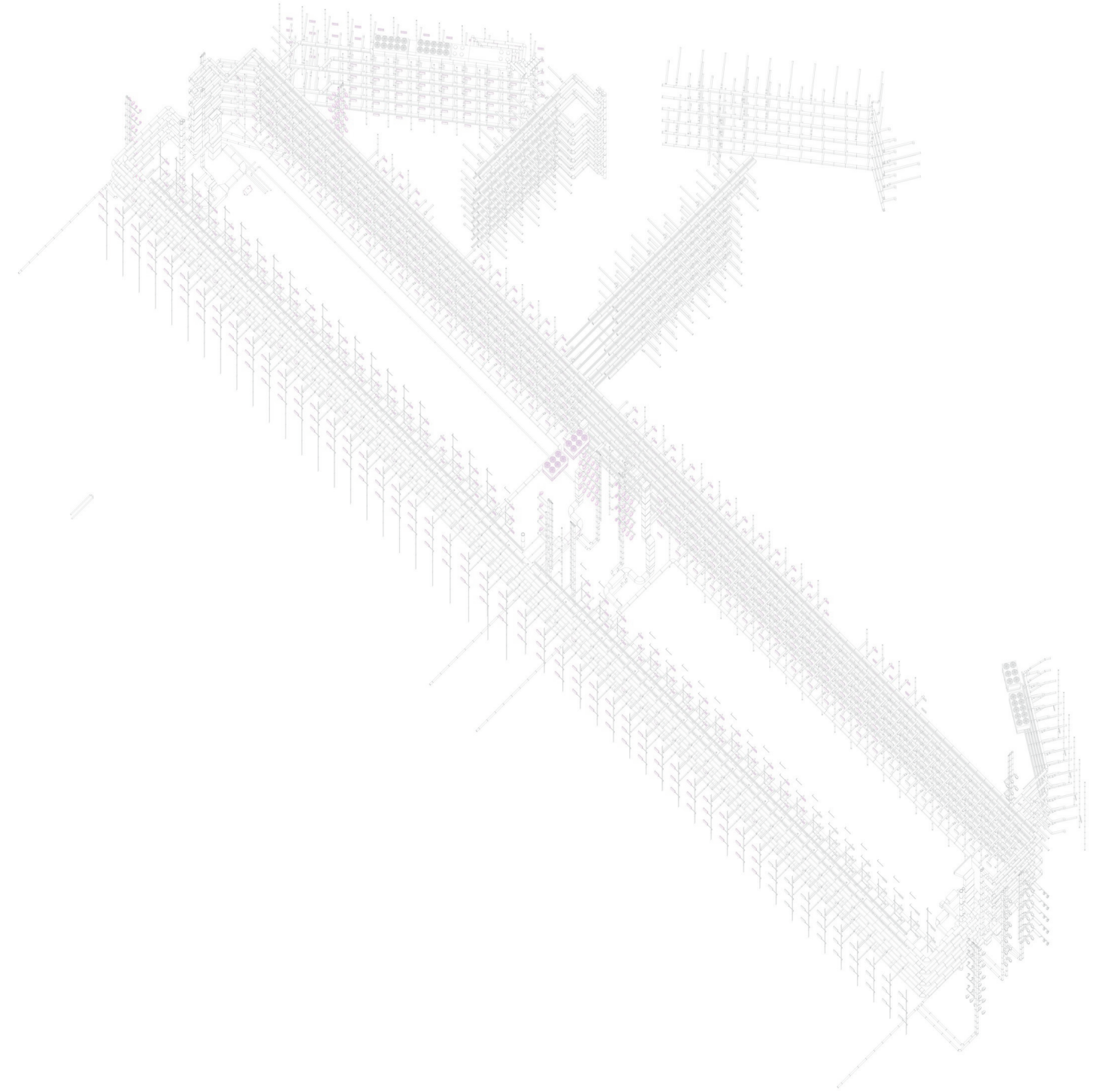
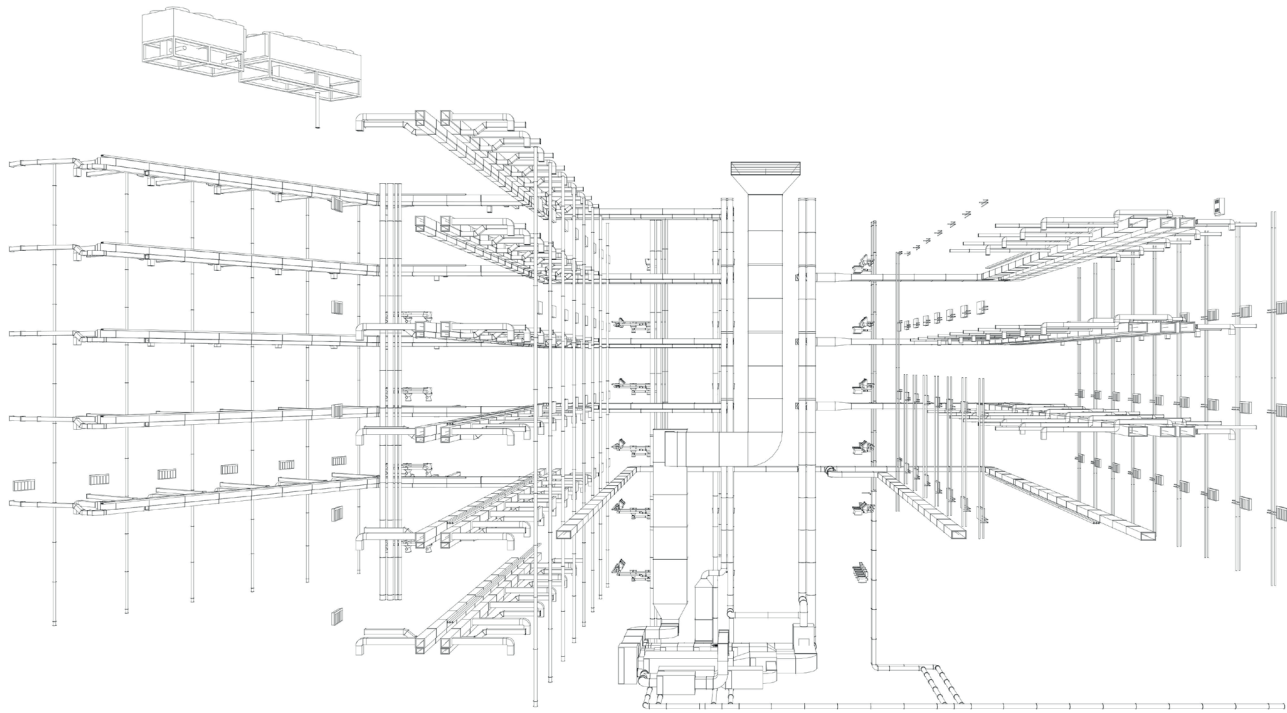




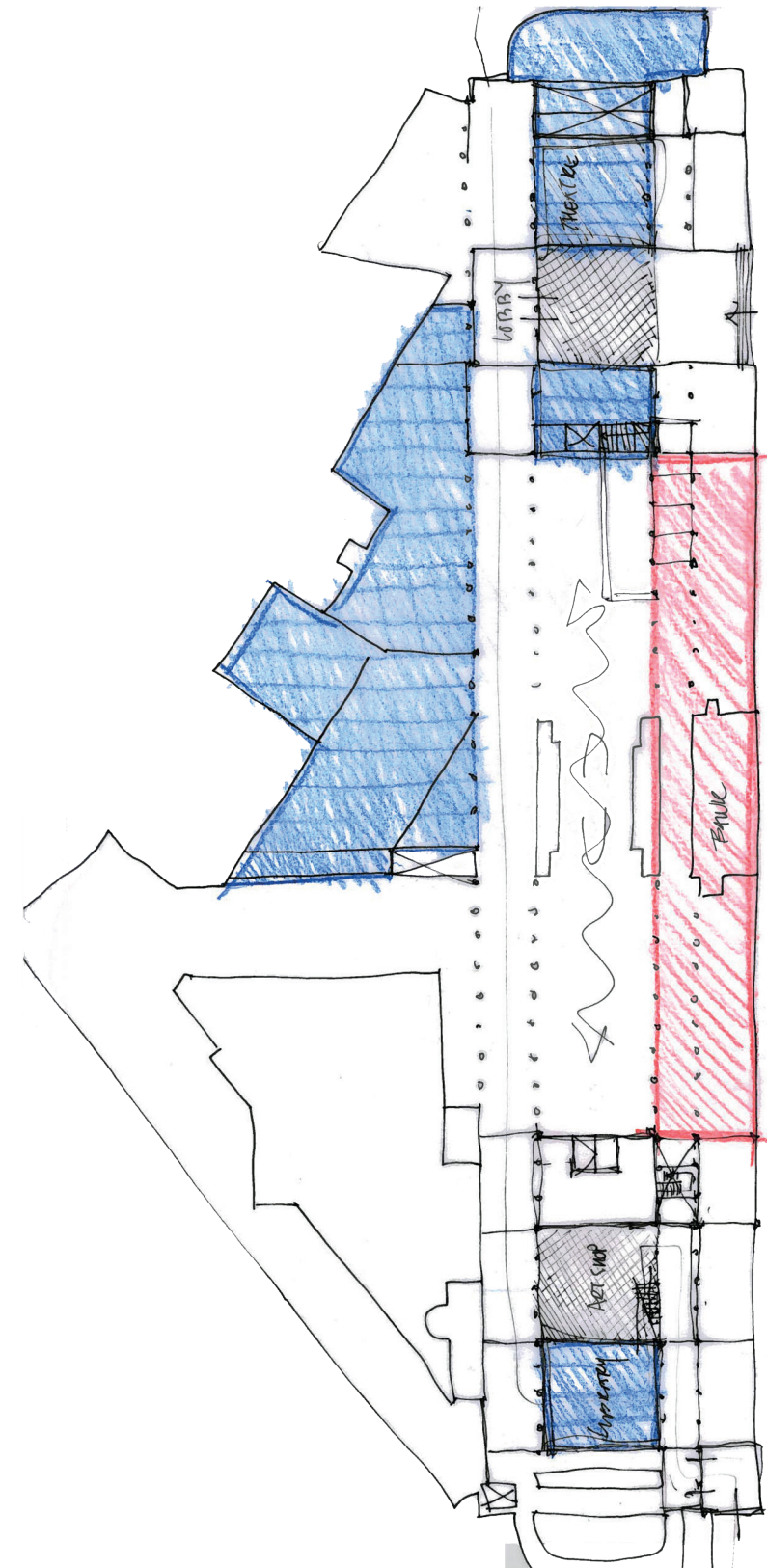
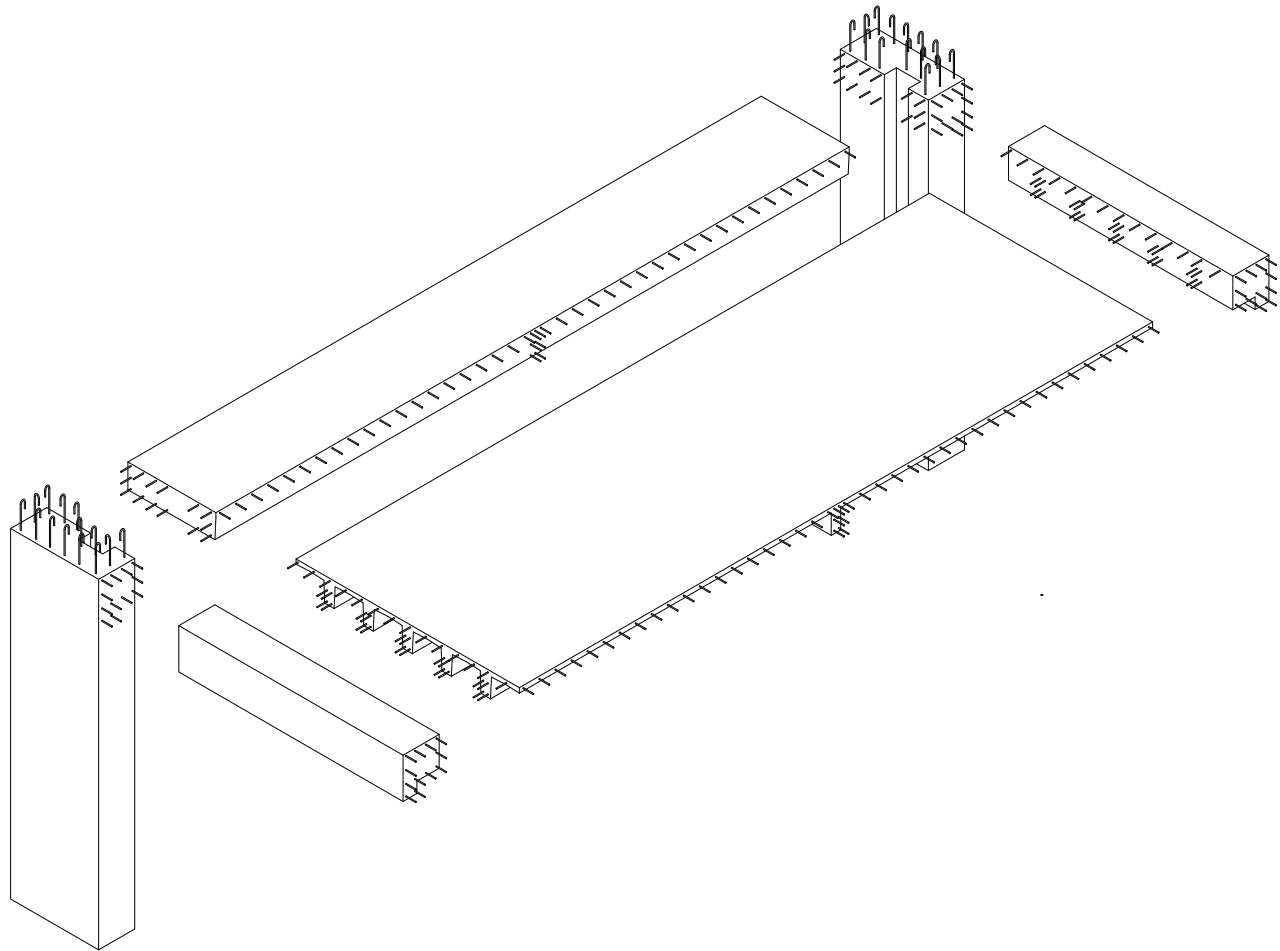
# network of installations through the building

## week 3.6

working on installation schemes, ideas.  
how does the existing building work?









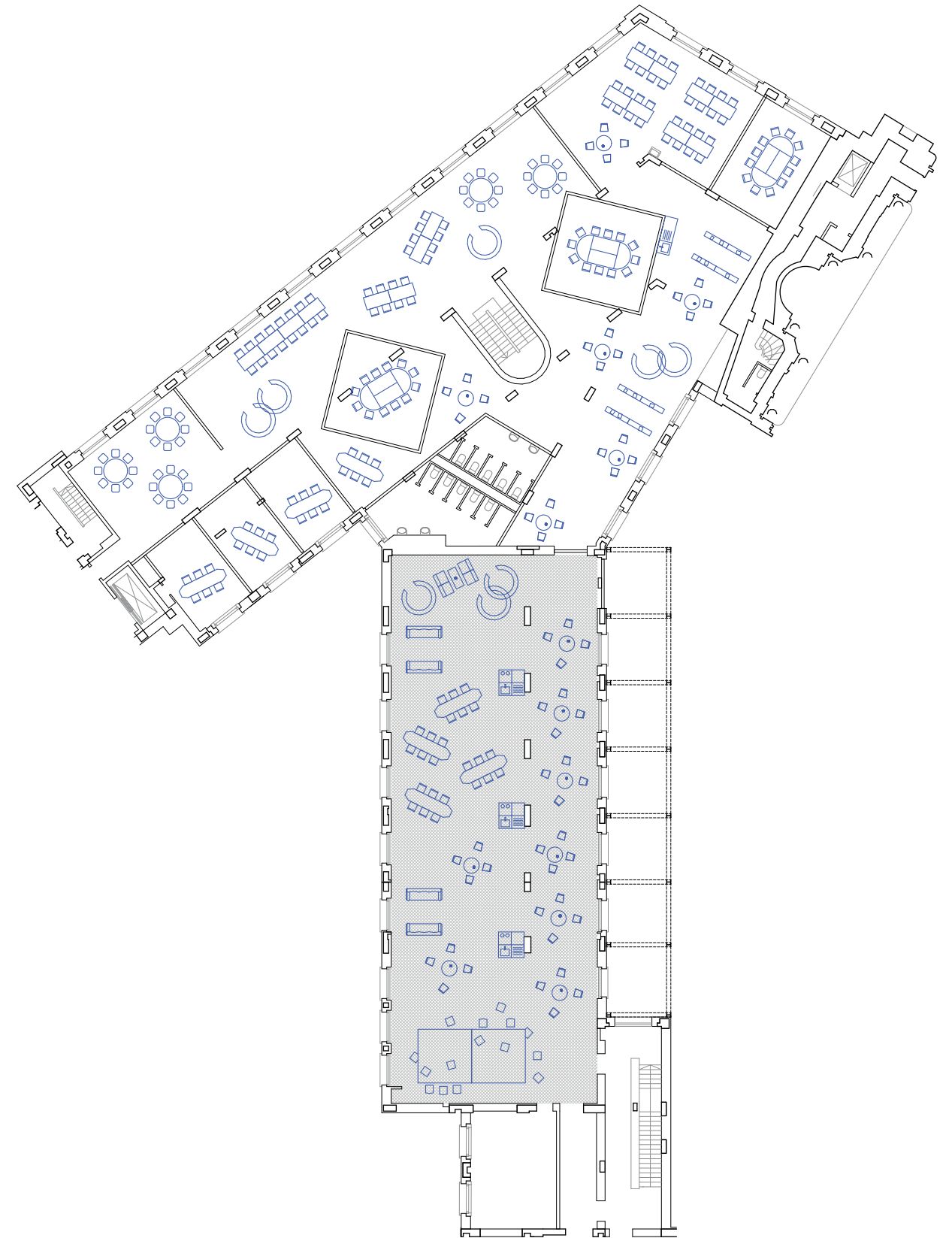
how does the added 'new' material relate to the existing fabric? how does material go around the corner?

can the new structures be dismantlable and reusable in different times and spaces?

how to connect the groundfloor to the mezzanine and roof terrace?

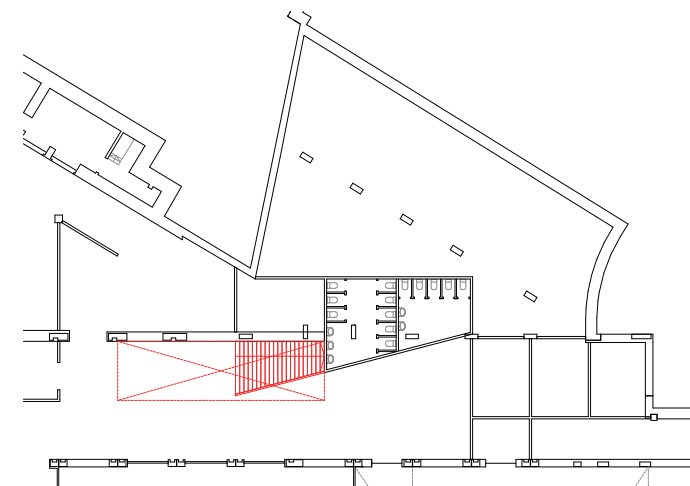
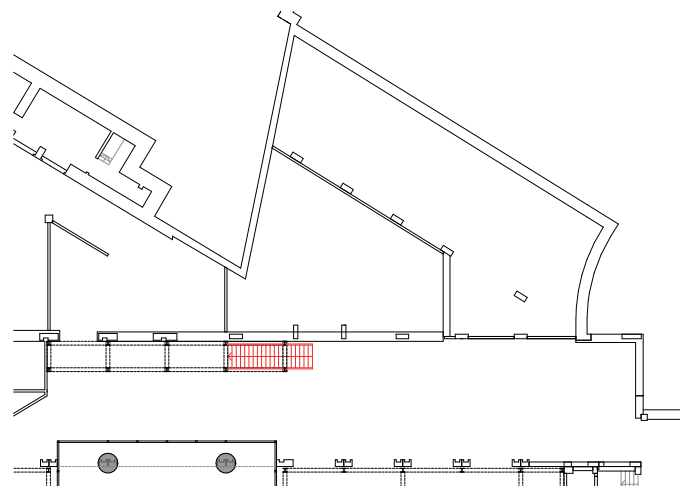
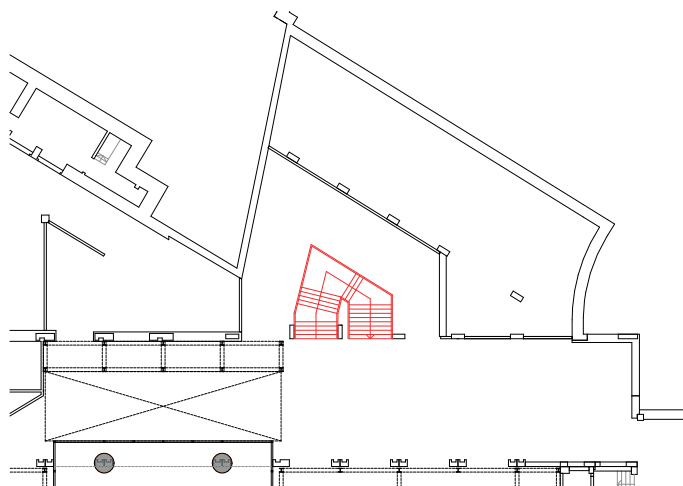
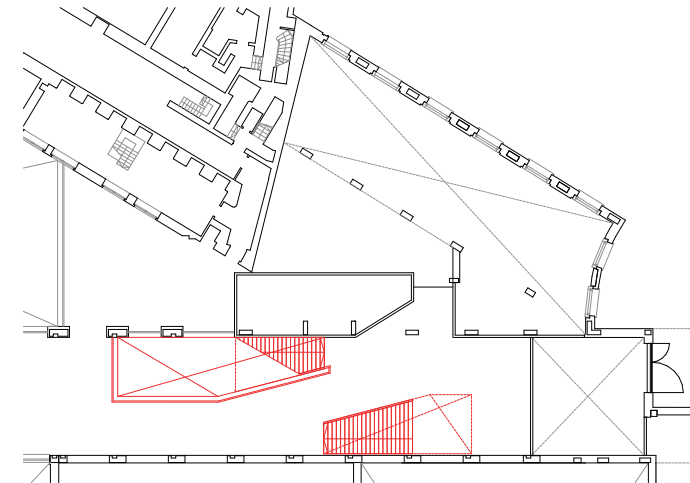
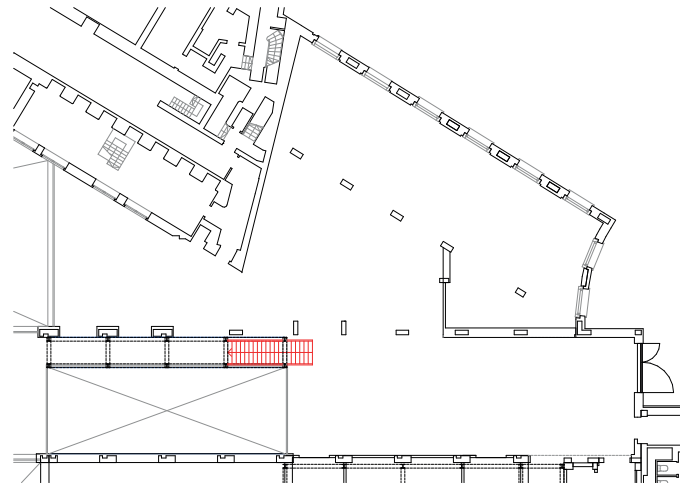
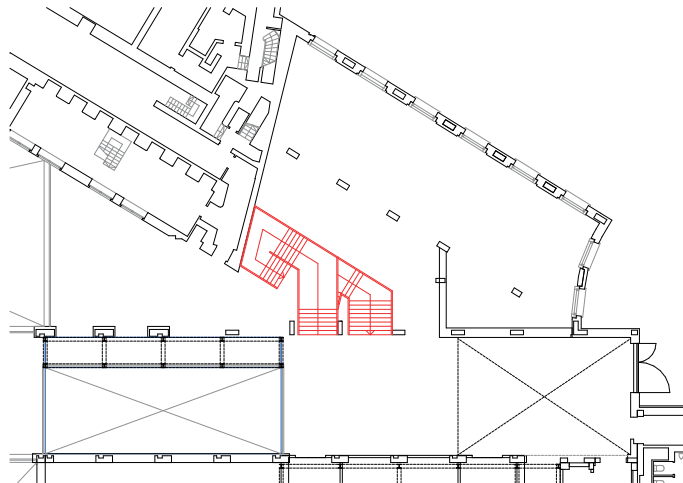
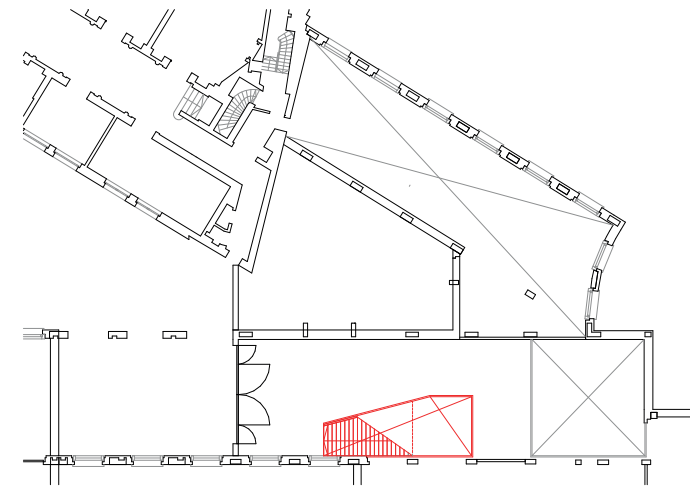
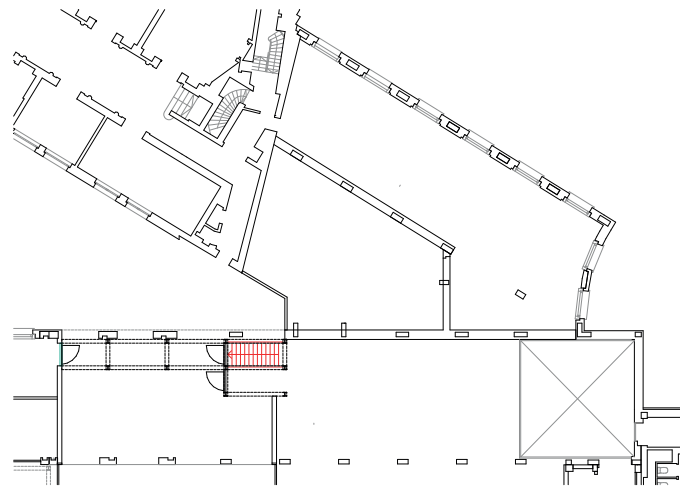
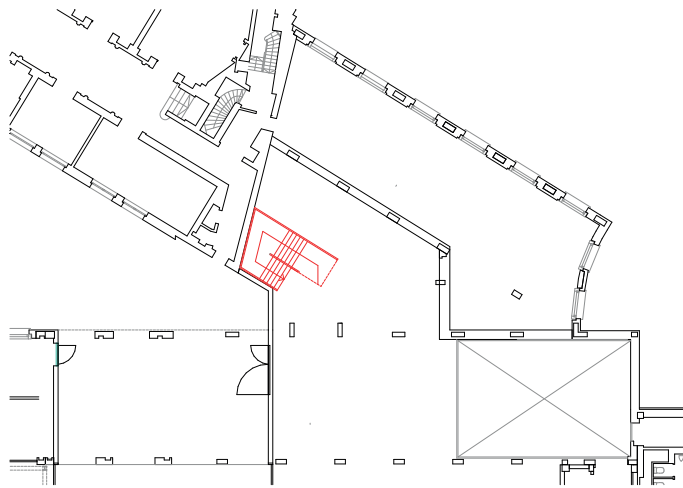
how to deal with the back of house in section?

how does the office space relate to the cultural functions?





stair studies  
week 3.7



(1) a big stair as a public gesture

(2) a subtle stair, straightforward and precise

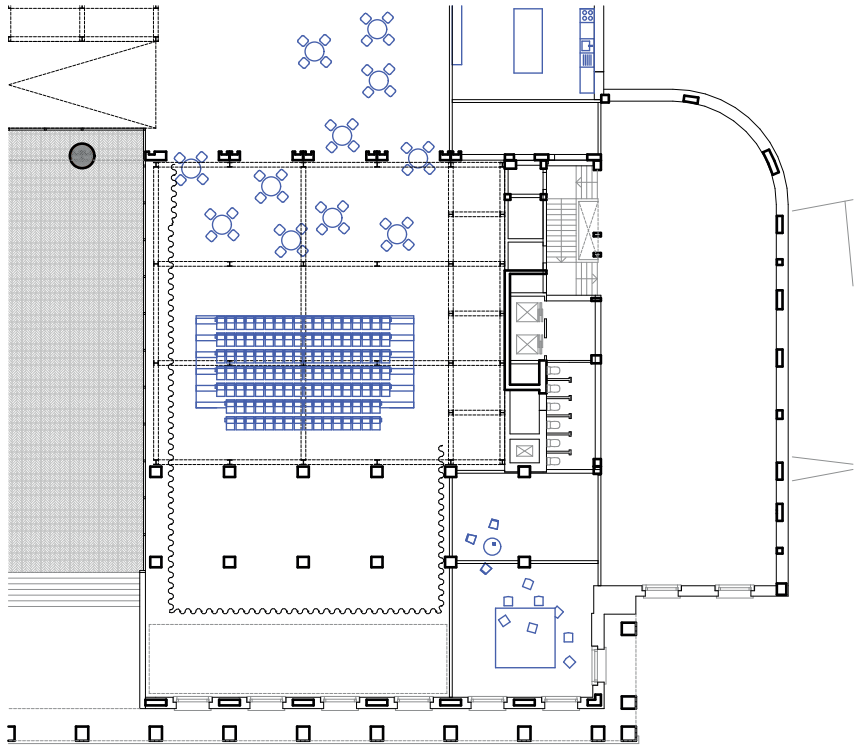
(3) a stair creating different balconies



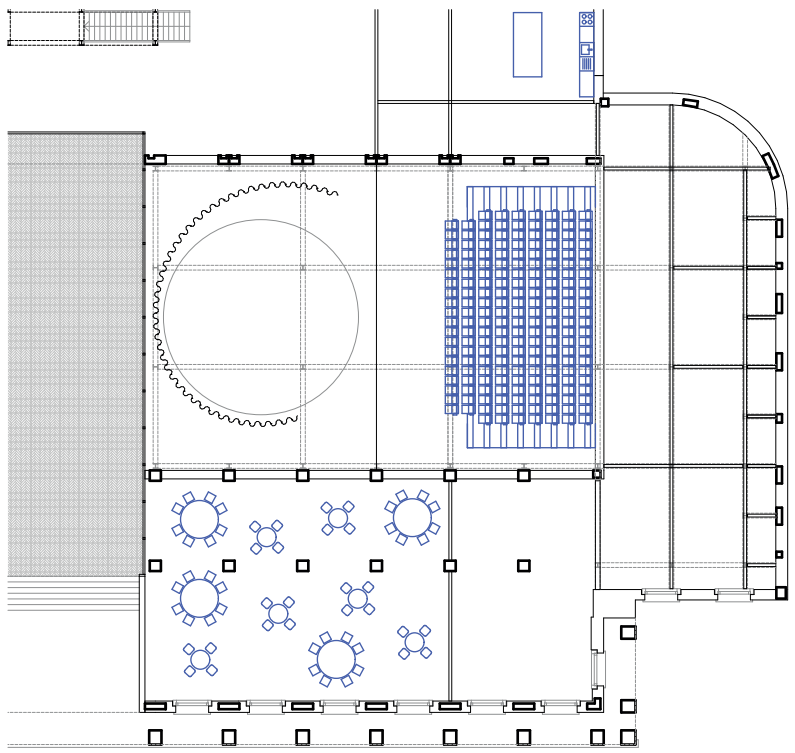
theatre studies

week 3.7

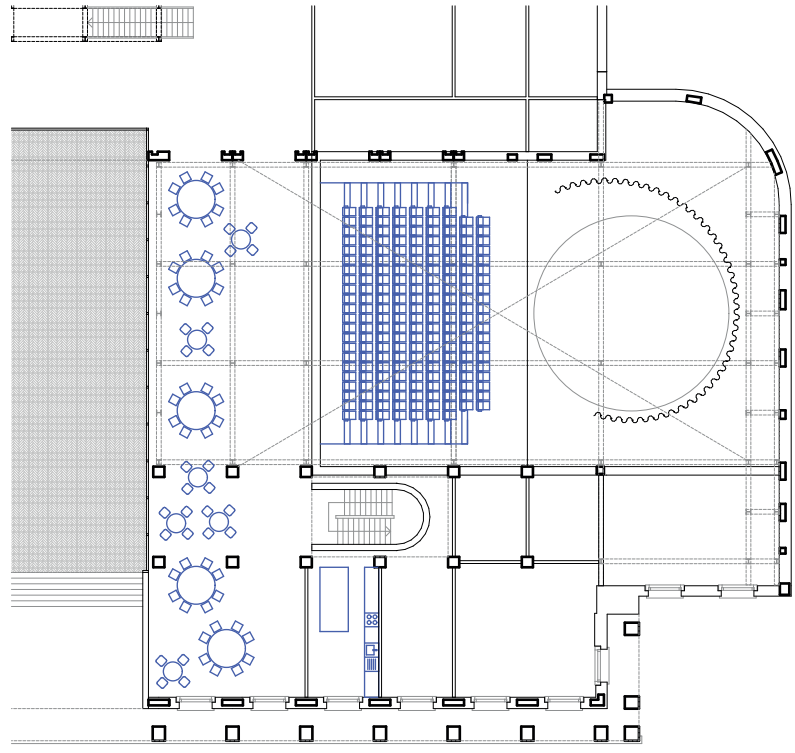
- (1) keeping the existing structure, shafts and installations  
- removing core - placing the theater aside the square and creating a new public room on the west side of the building
- (2) keeping existing structure - removing core and shafts - placing the theatre in the new building facing the square
- (3) keeping existing structure - removing core and shafts  
- placing the theatre in the new building facing the park allowing for space at the side of the square



(1)



(2)



(3)



# Bruther - Cultural and Sports Center

## week 3.7

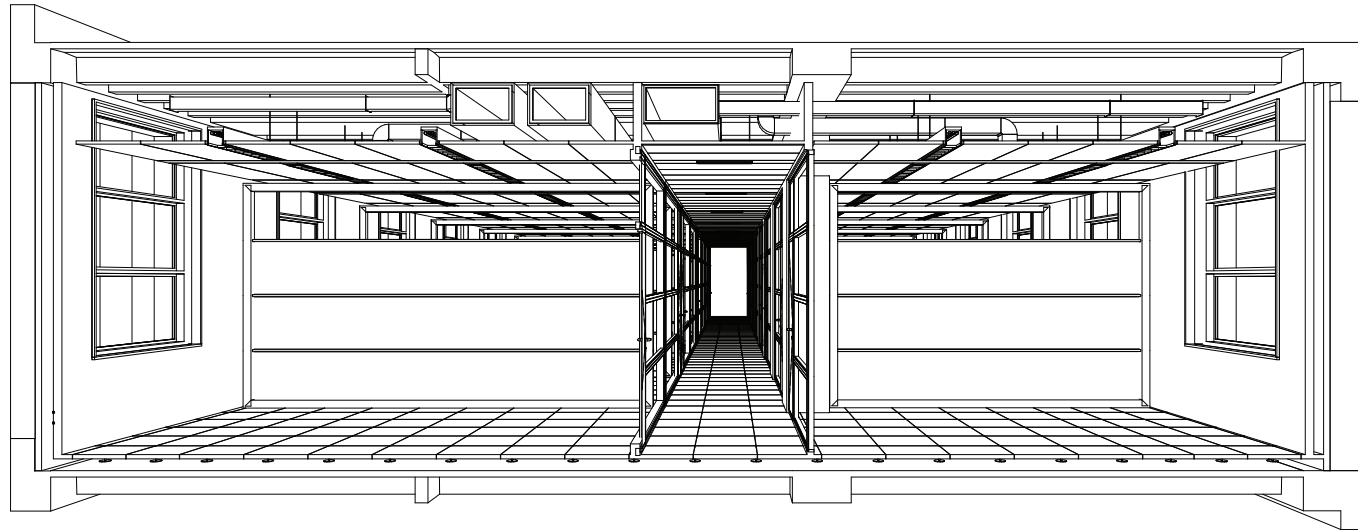
Location: Paris 20e (Fr)  
Client: Ville de Paris  
Size sqm: 1 300  
Invited Competition, 2011  
Completion: 2014

[inspiration]  
combination of unfinished concrete, steel, glass, wood  
and metal

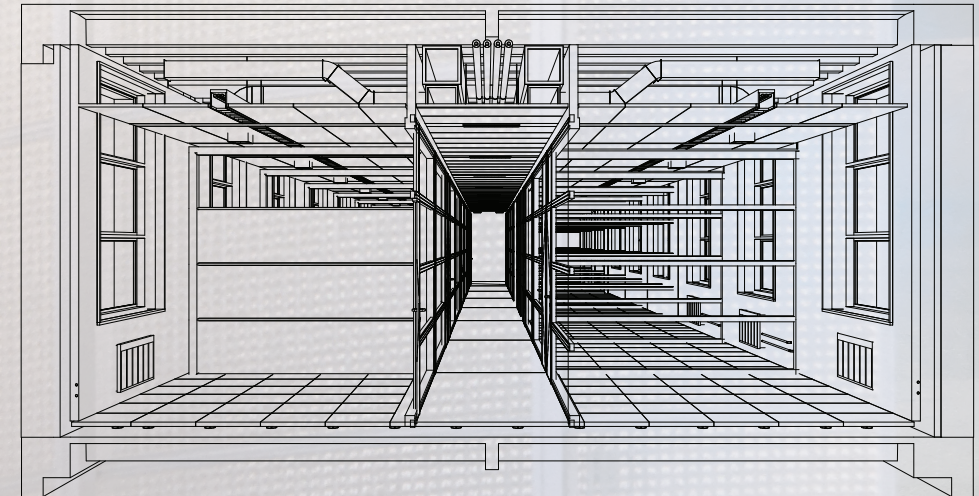




the office [section fragment]  
week 3.7



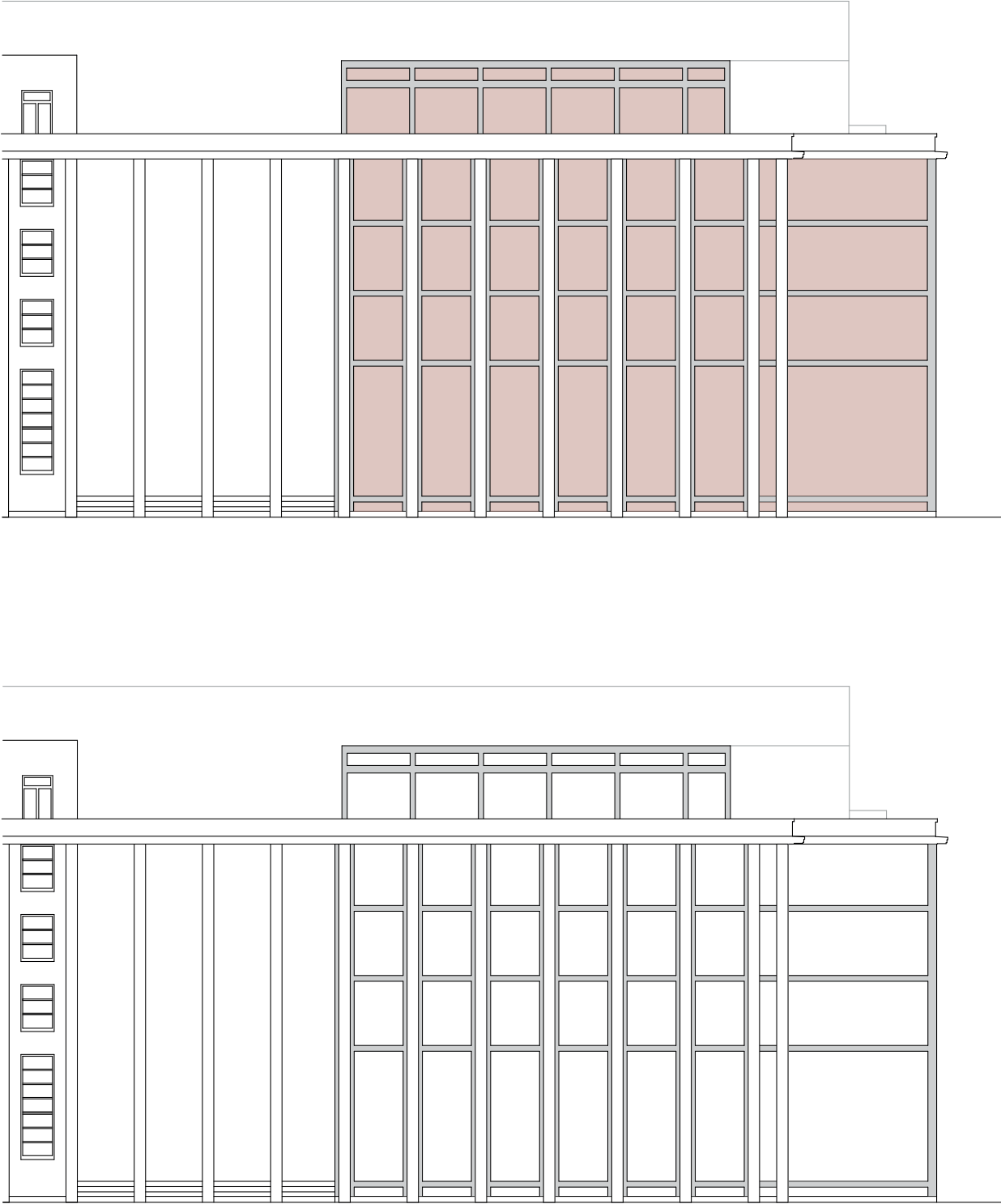
north wing



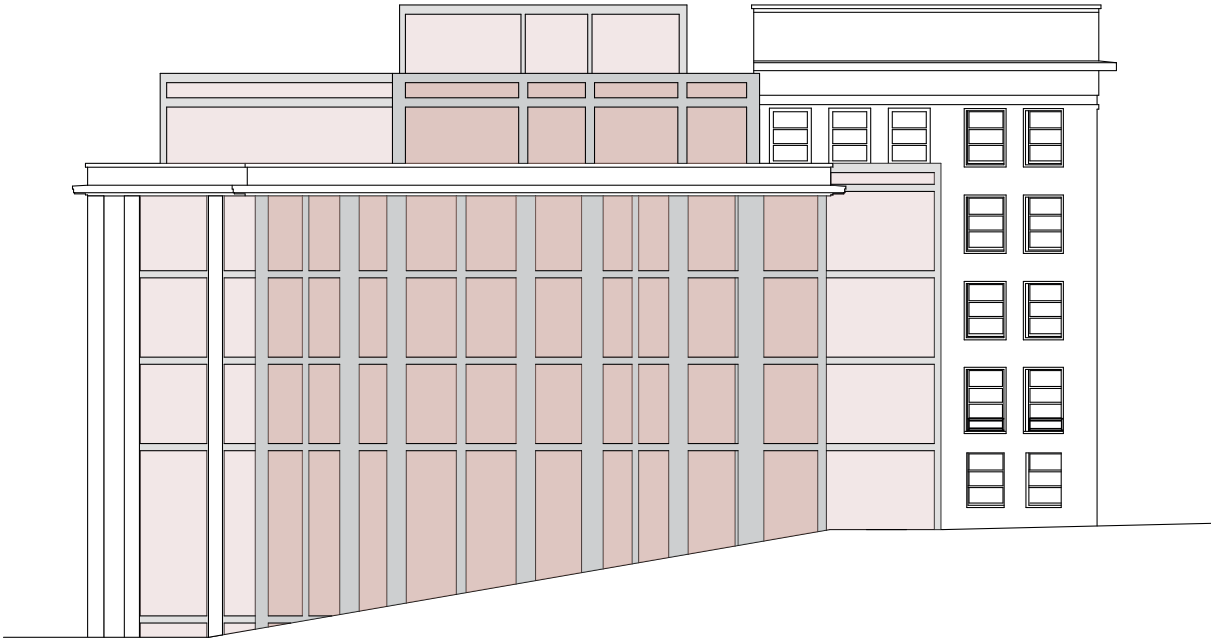
south wing



north elevation stripped 1.350  
week 3.7



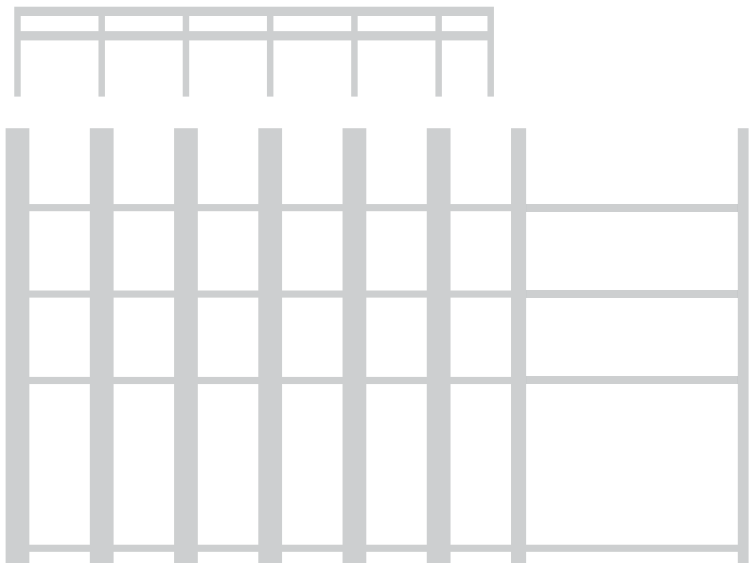
west elevation stripped 1.350



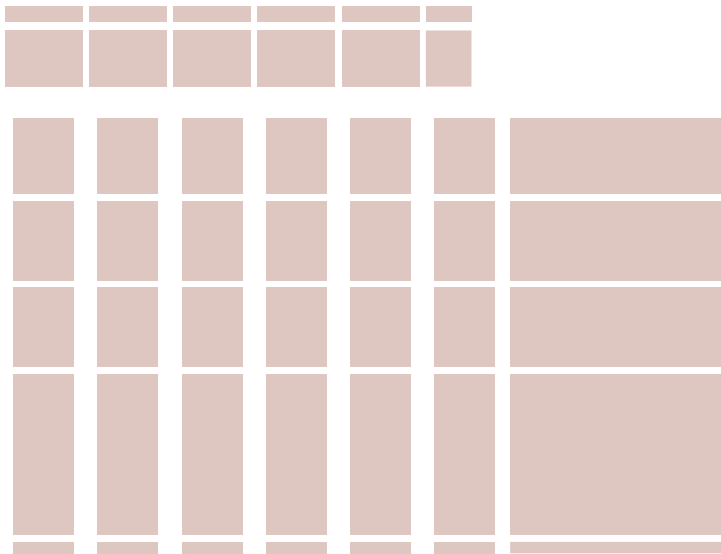


decomposing the facade  
week 3.7

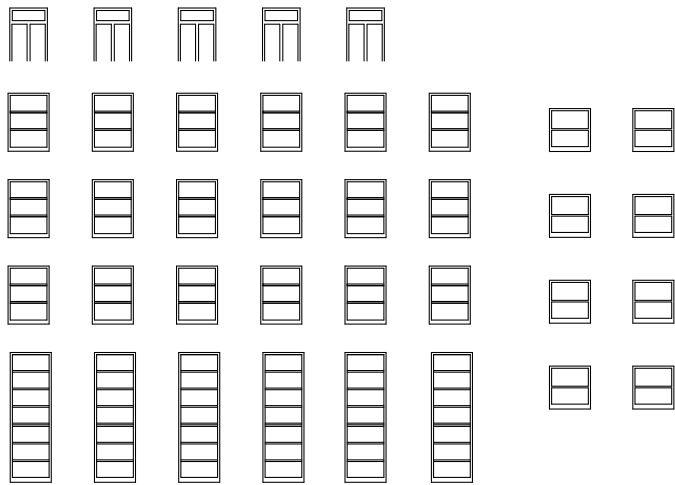
reinforced concrete  
columns, beams and floors  
[in situ]



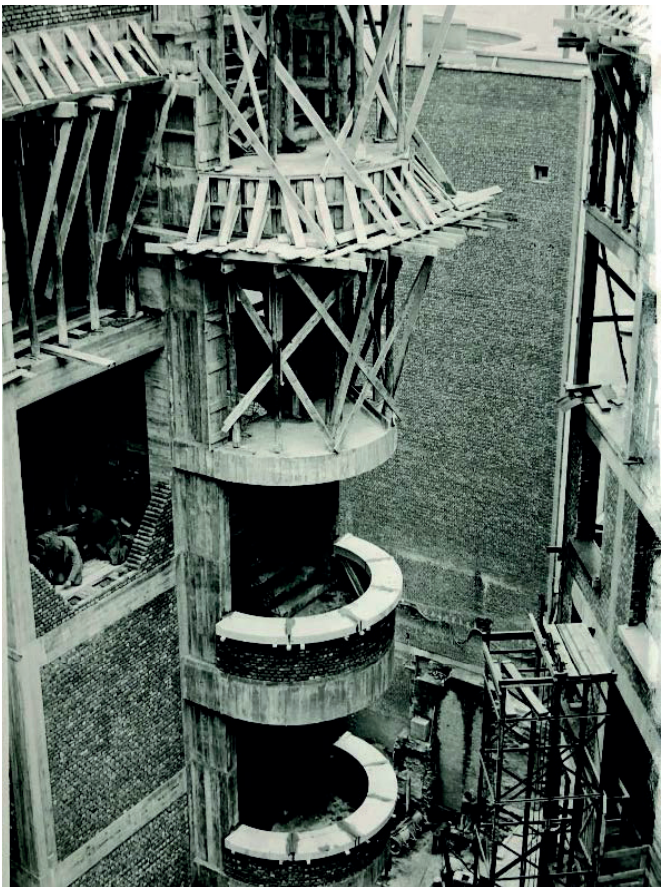
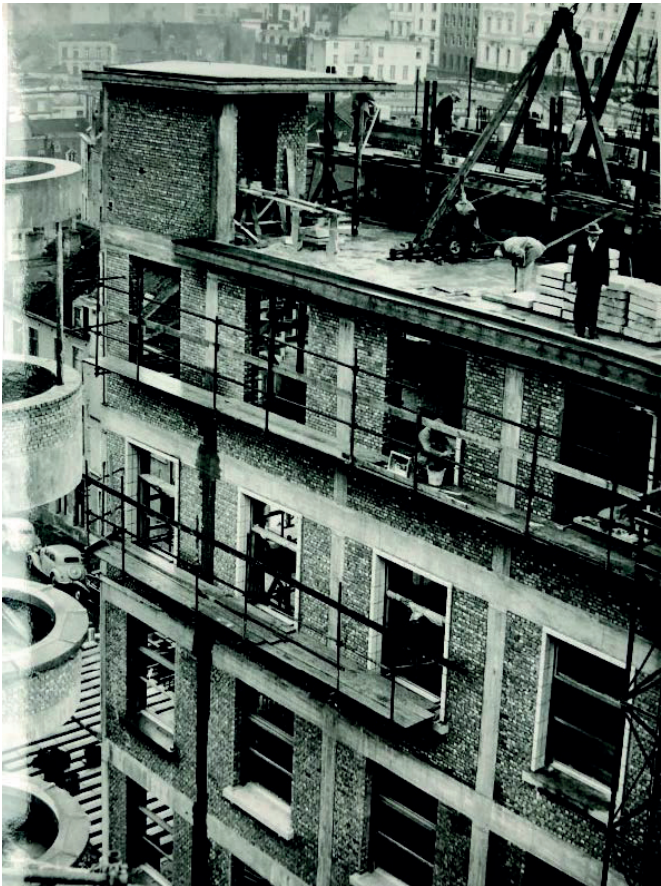
brick infill



aluminium windowframes  
[double glazed]



“what happens to the building if you remove the cladding?”

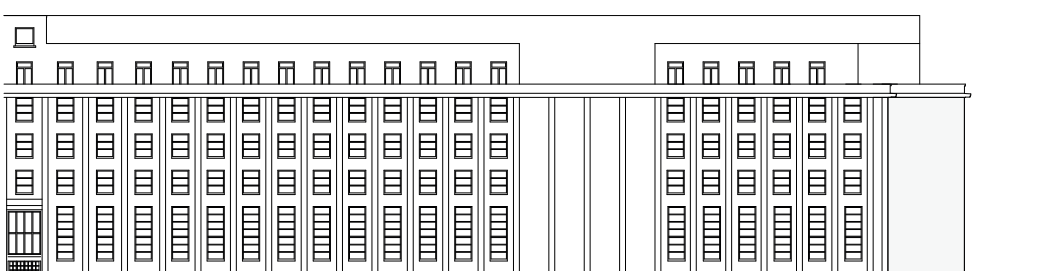
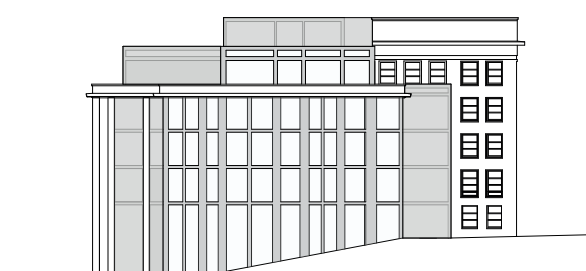
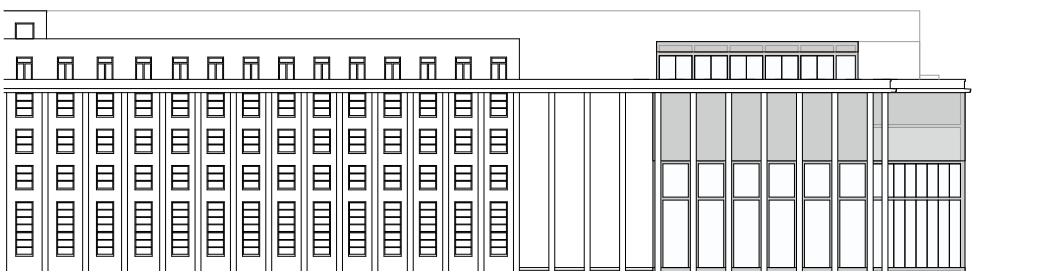
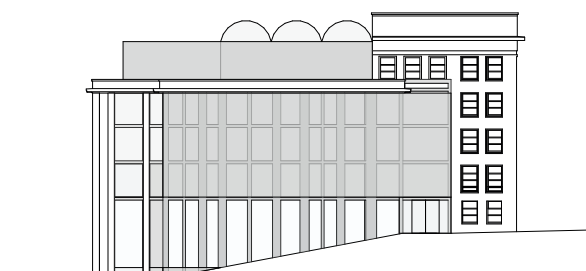
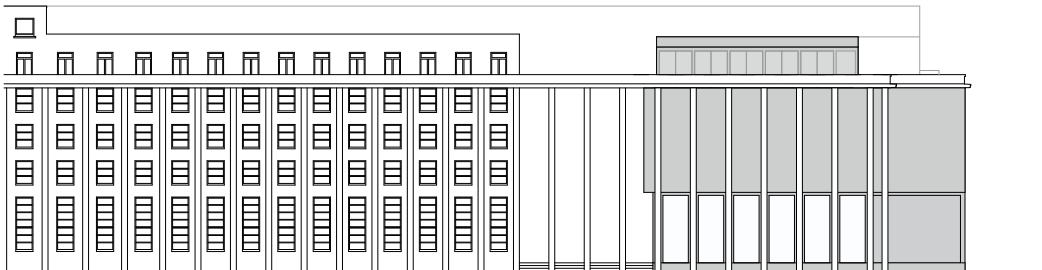
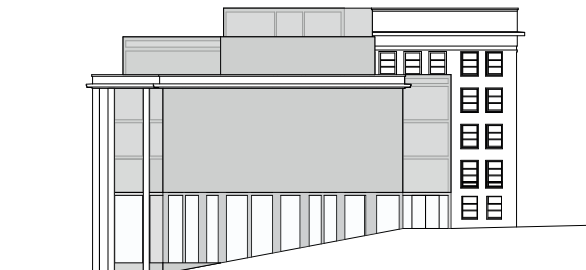
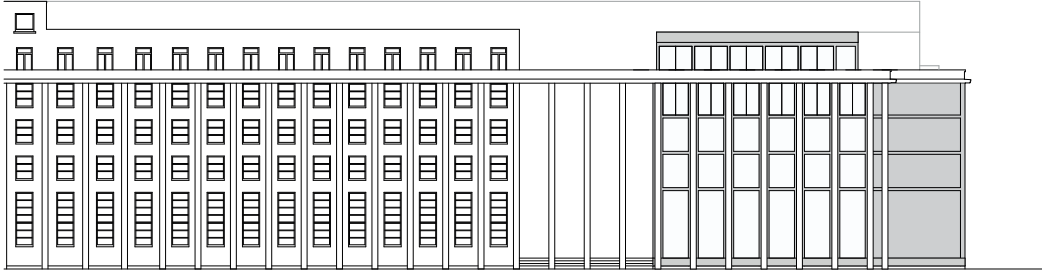
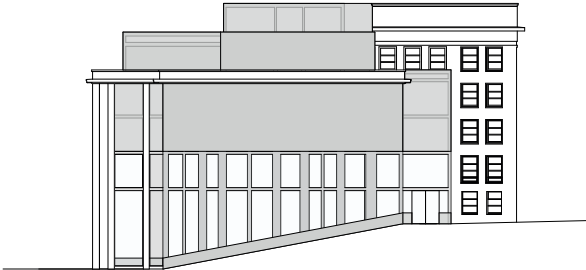




elevation studies

week 3.7

giving a new face to the building. should it be a contrast?  
interwoven? should it be open or closed? how is the building  
enganging the public?





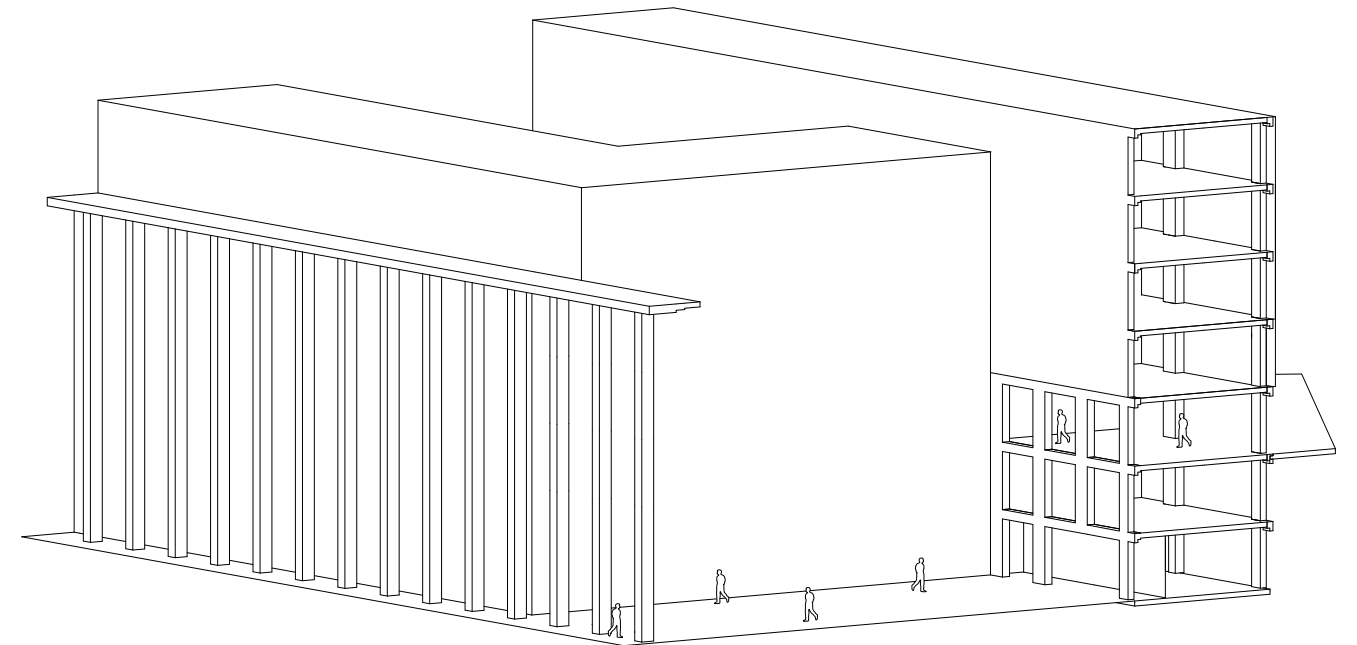
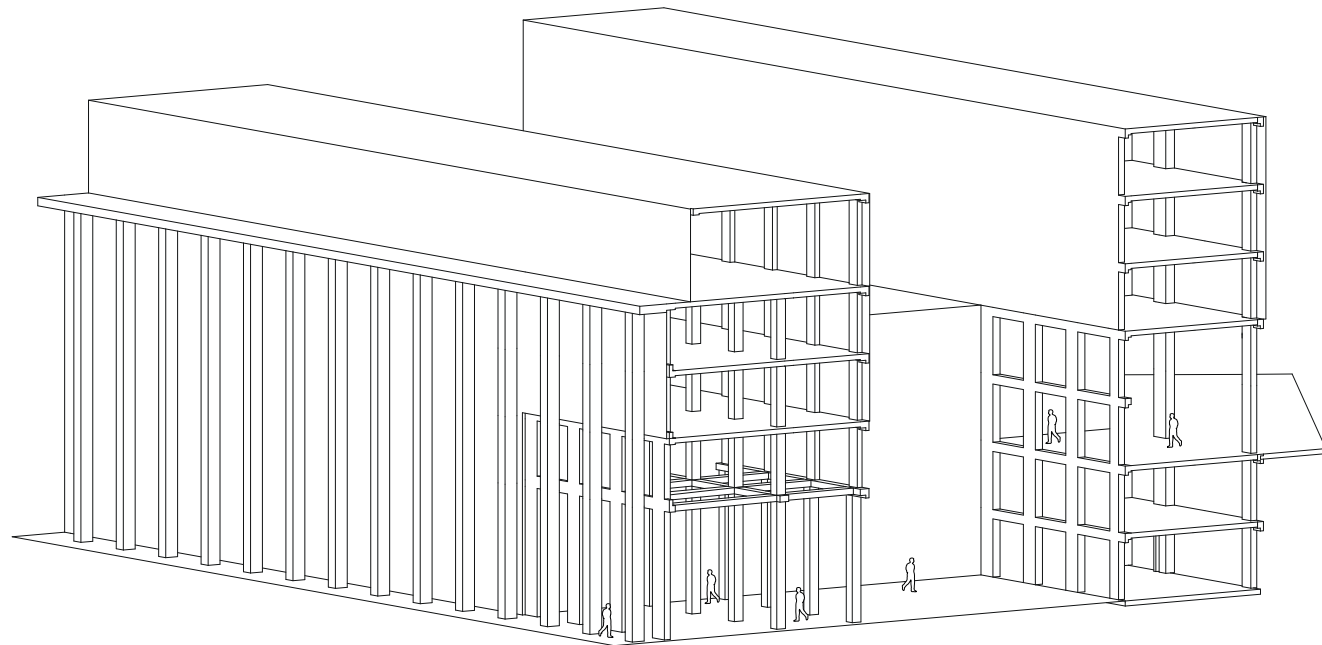
# layering of thresholds

## week 3.7

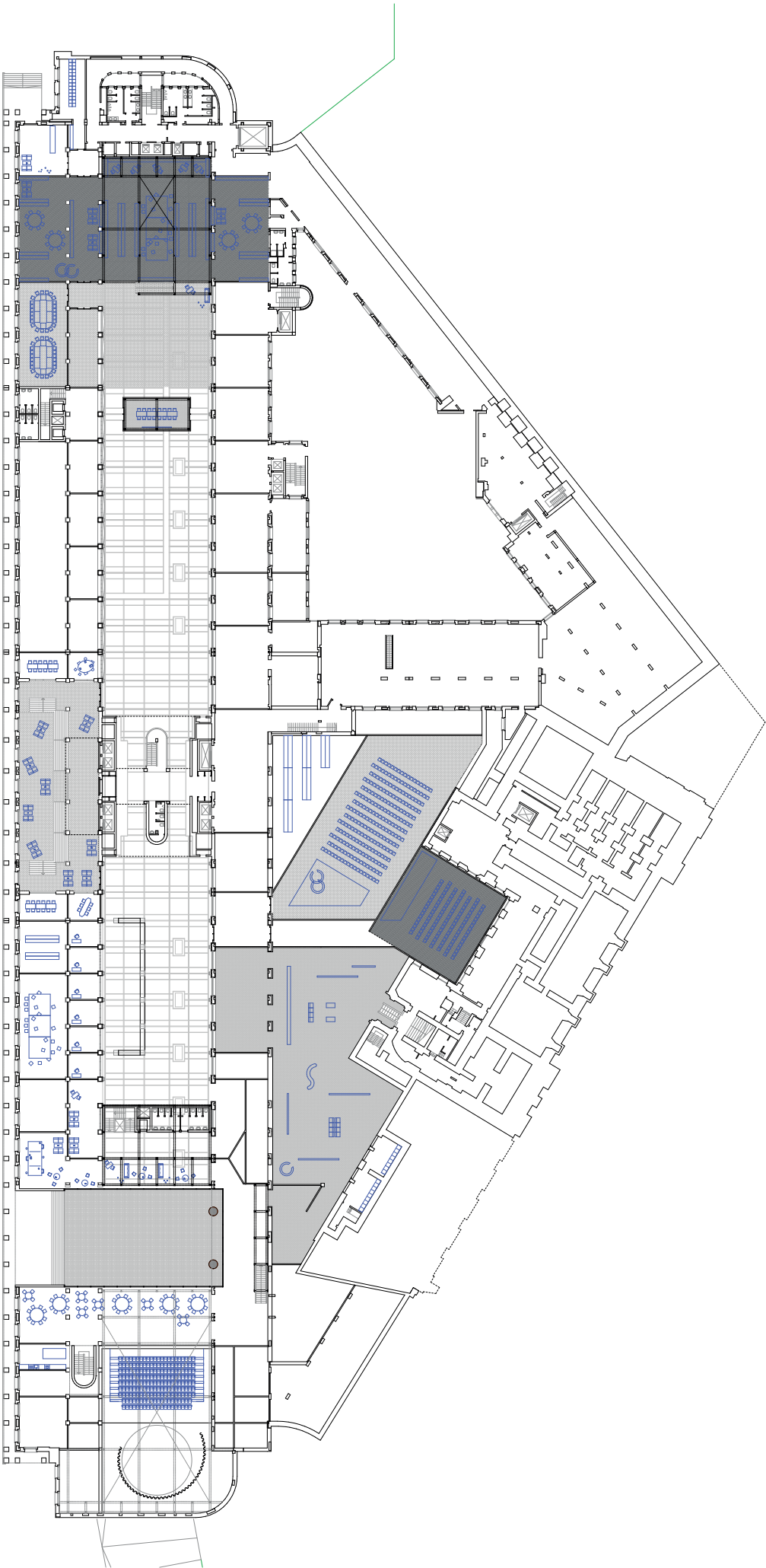
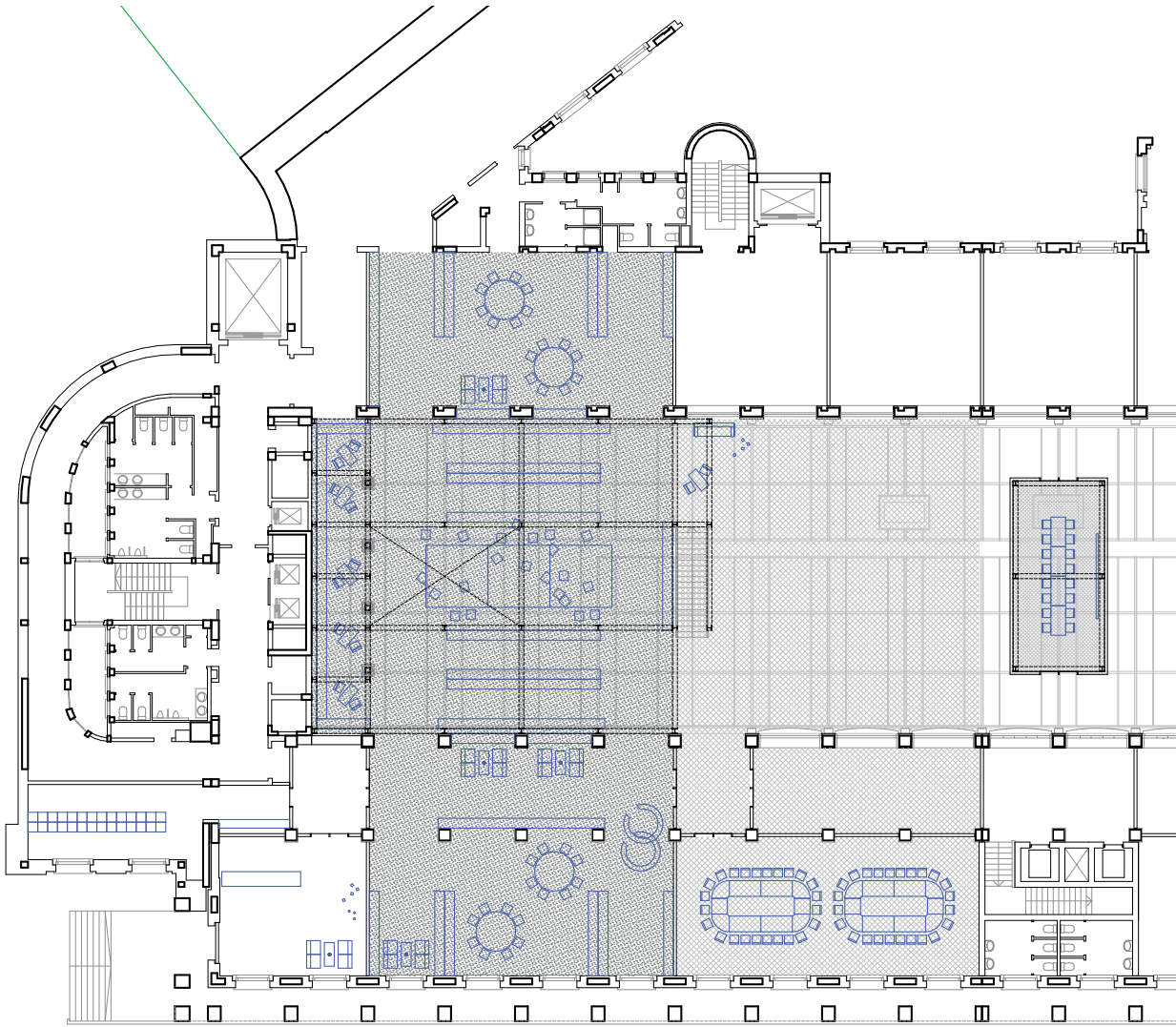
is it possible to create a pocket square whilst keeping the existing structures? what happens if we leave the structure intact?

creating visual and physical connections [the layers of permeability]

how to establish a connection with the roof terrace? does it have to be physical or can it only be visual?









references  
week 3.7



hans hollein  
museum abteiberg



de vylder vinck tallieu  
offices for famous

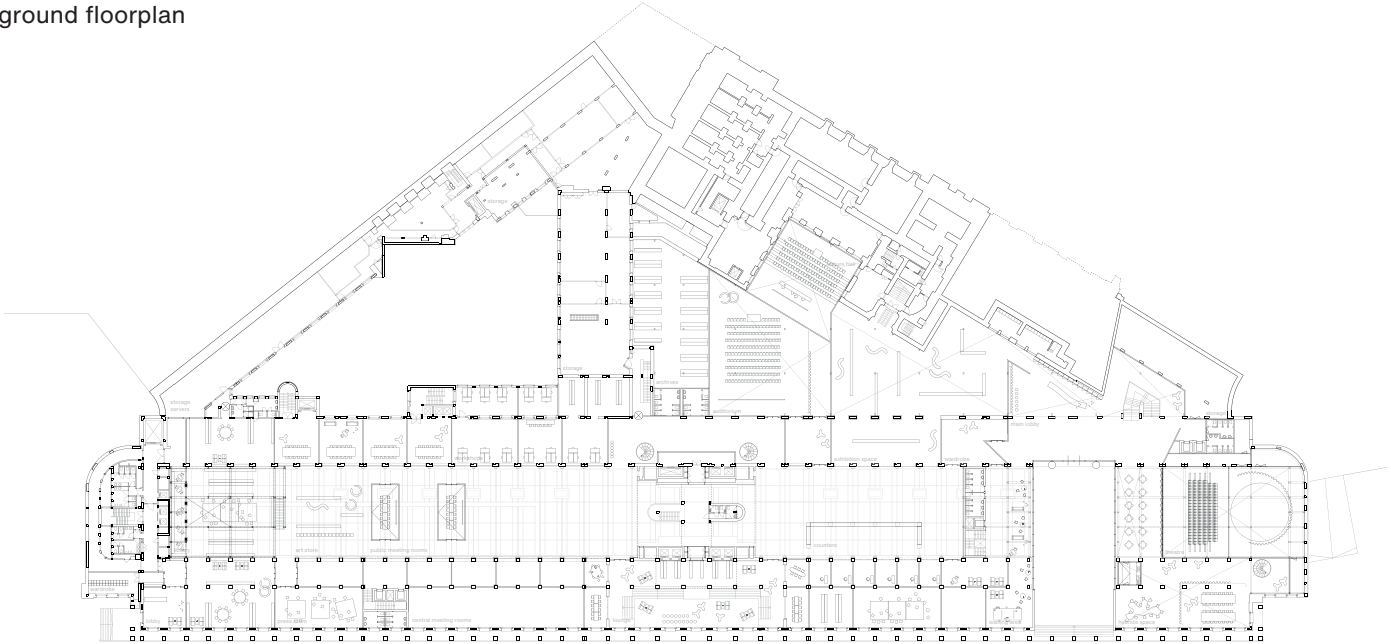


references  
week 3.7

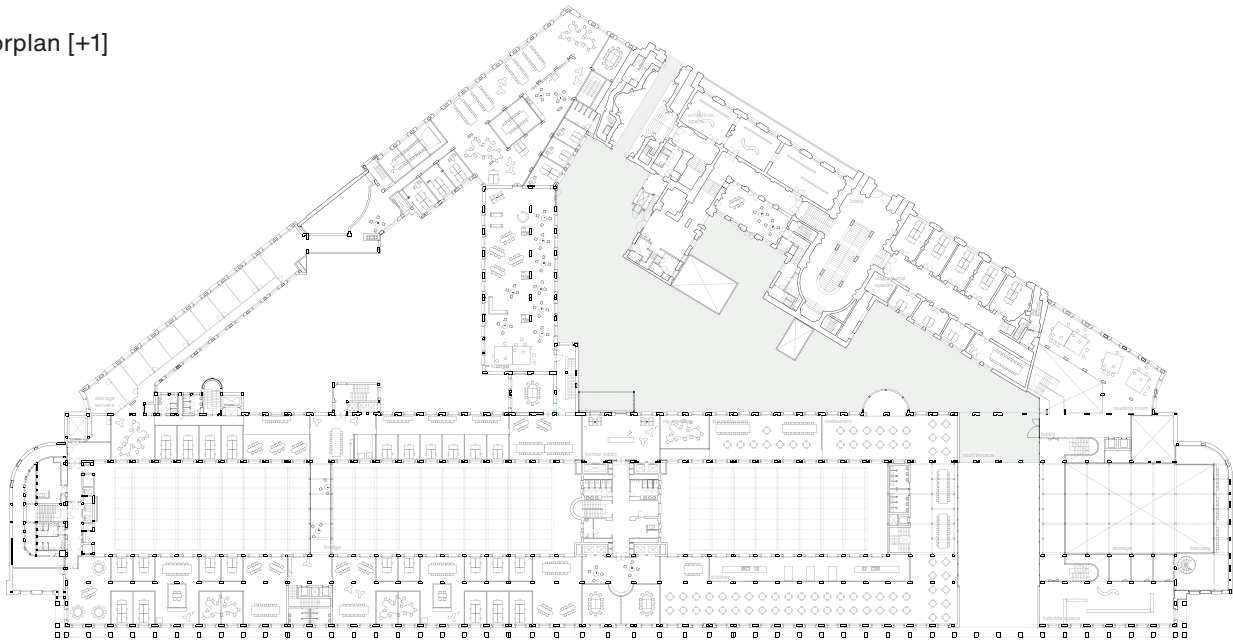




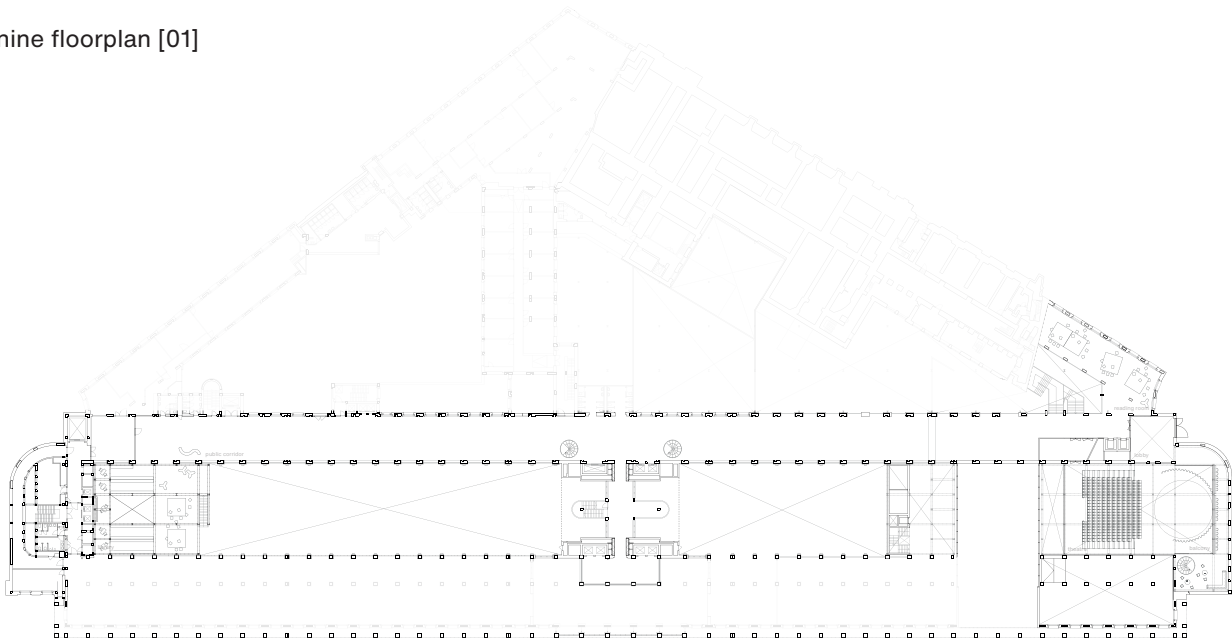
ground floorplan



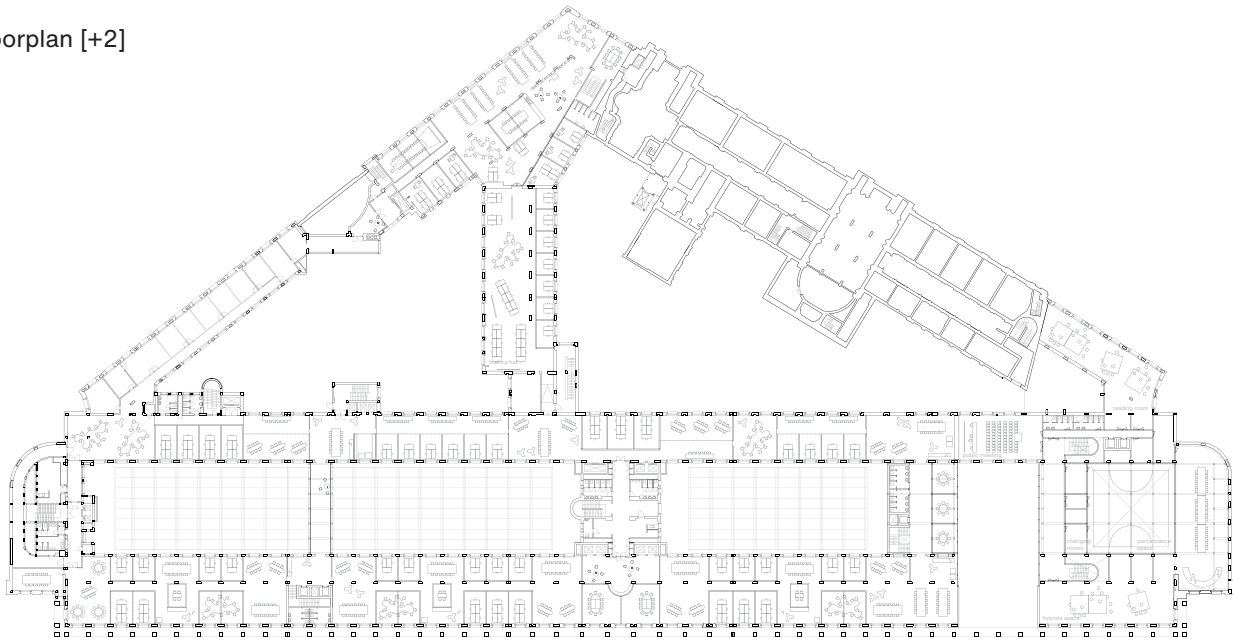
1st floorplan [+1]



mezzanine floorplan [01]

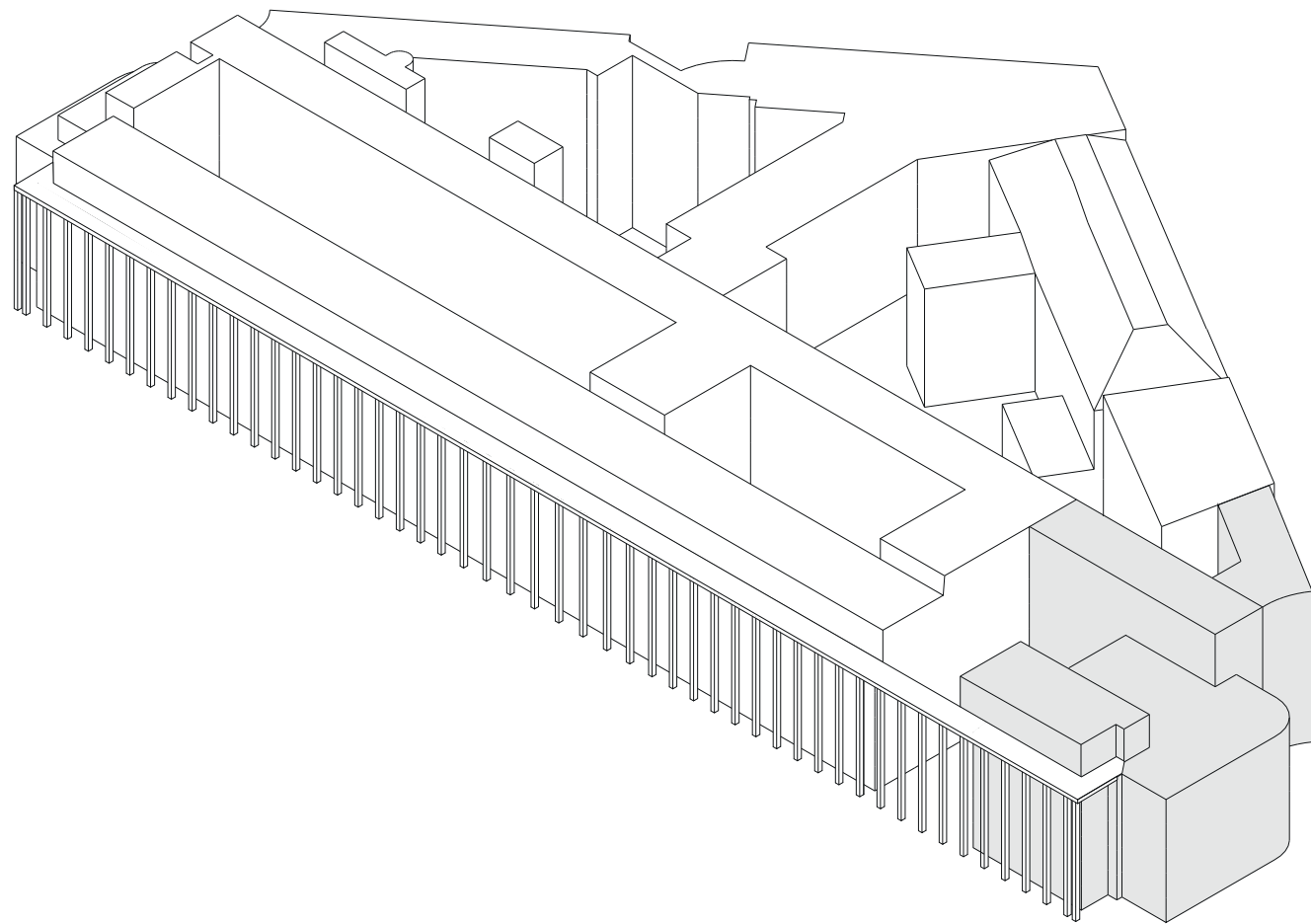


2nd floorplan [+2]



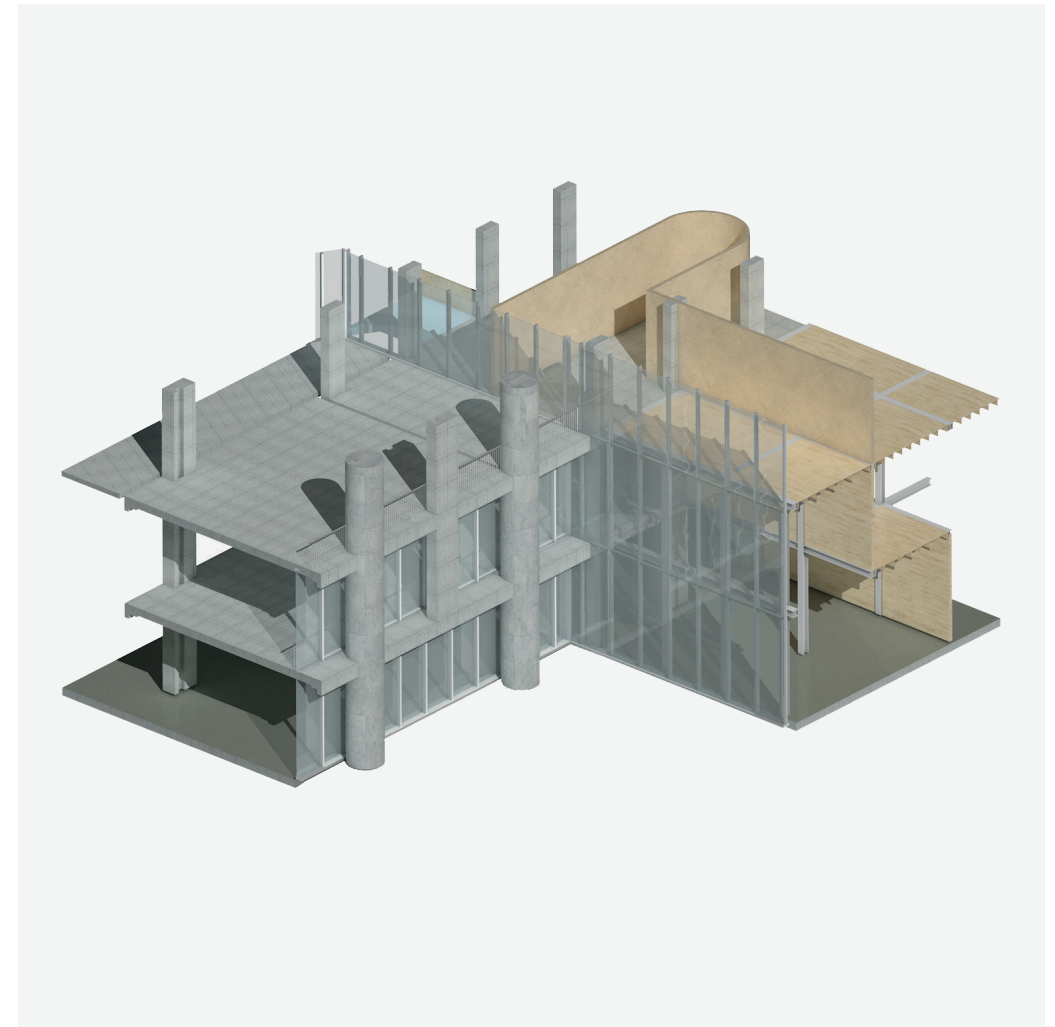


proposal  
week 3.8



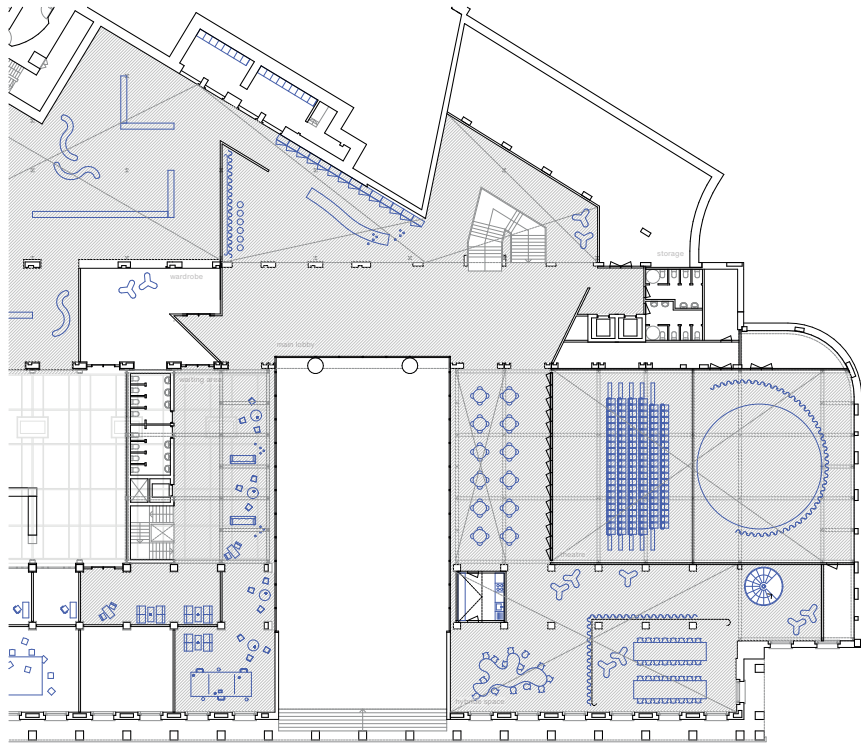
materiality and construction  
week 3.8

adding a steel structure with timber infill  
zooming in on the entrance area

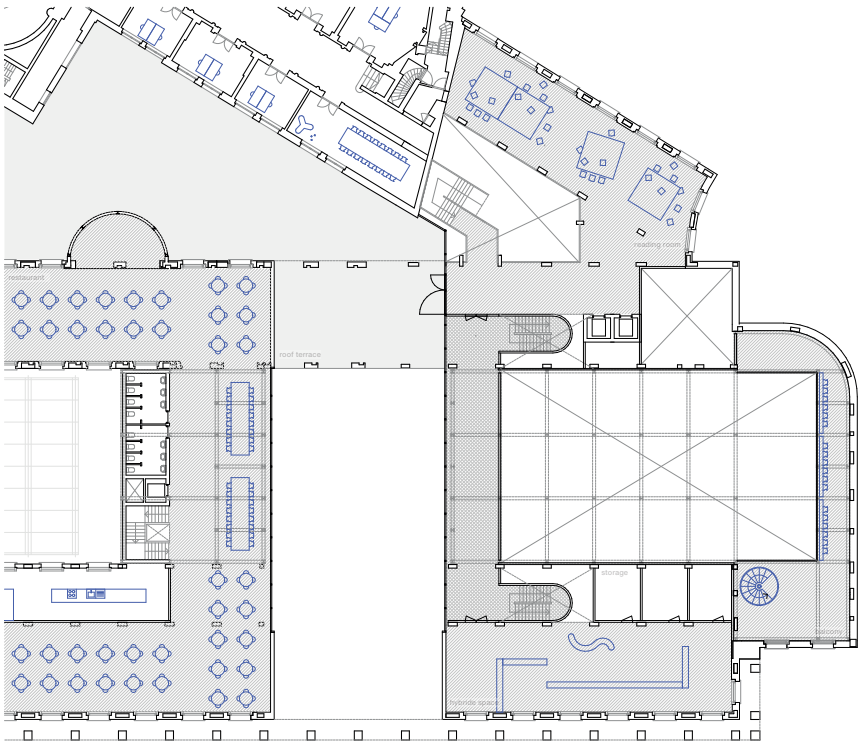




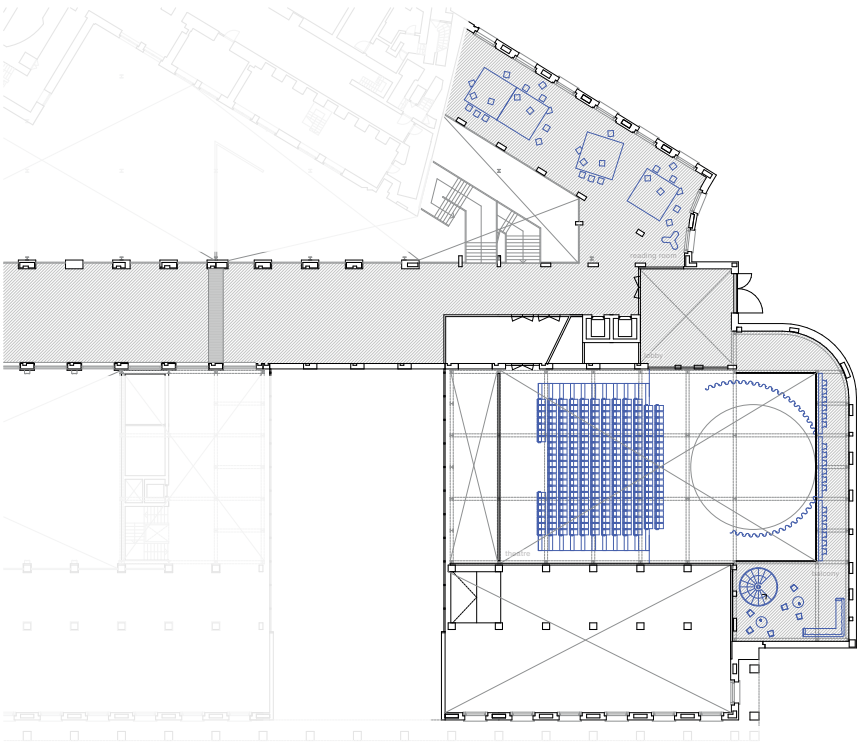
plans fragment  
week 3.8



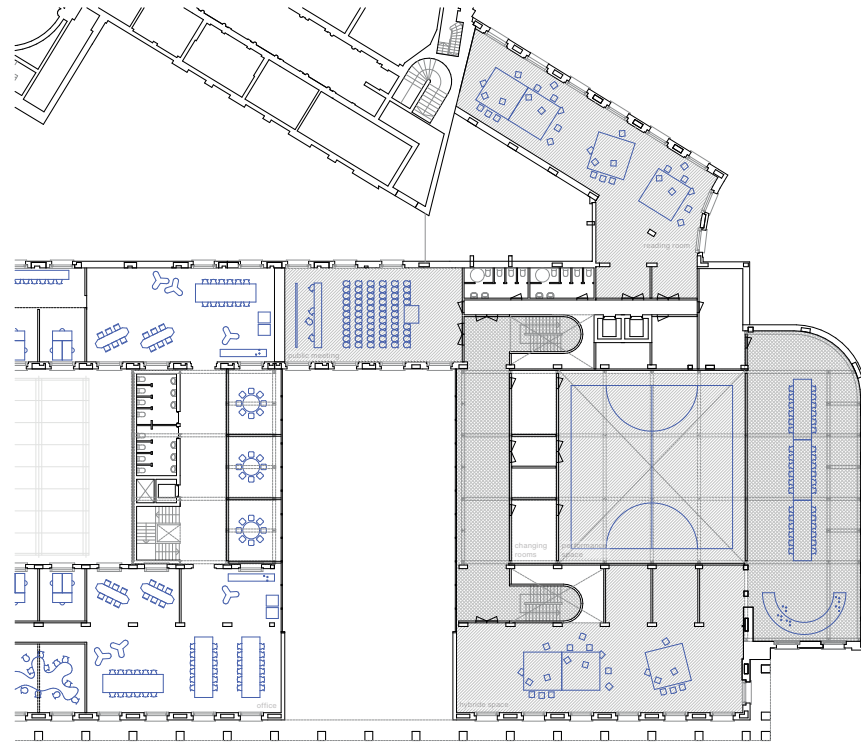
ground floor



1st floor [+1]

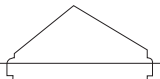
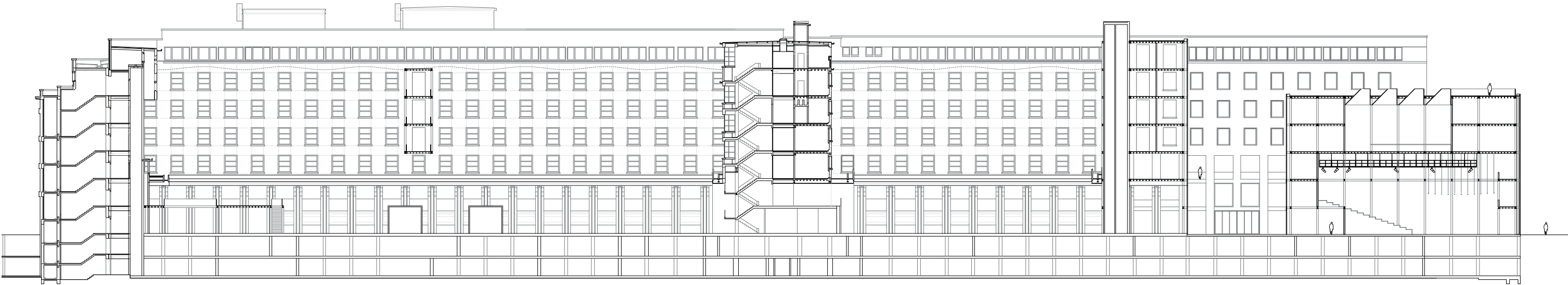
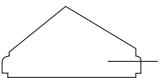
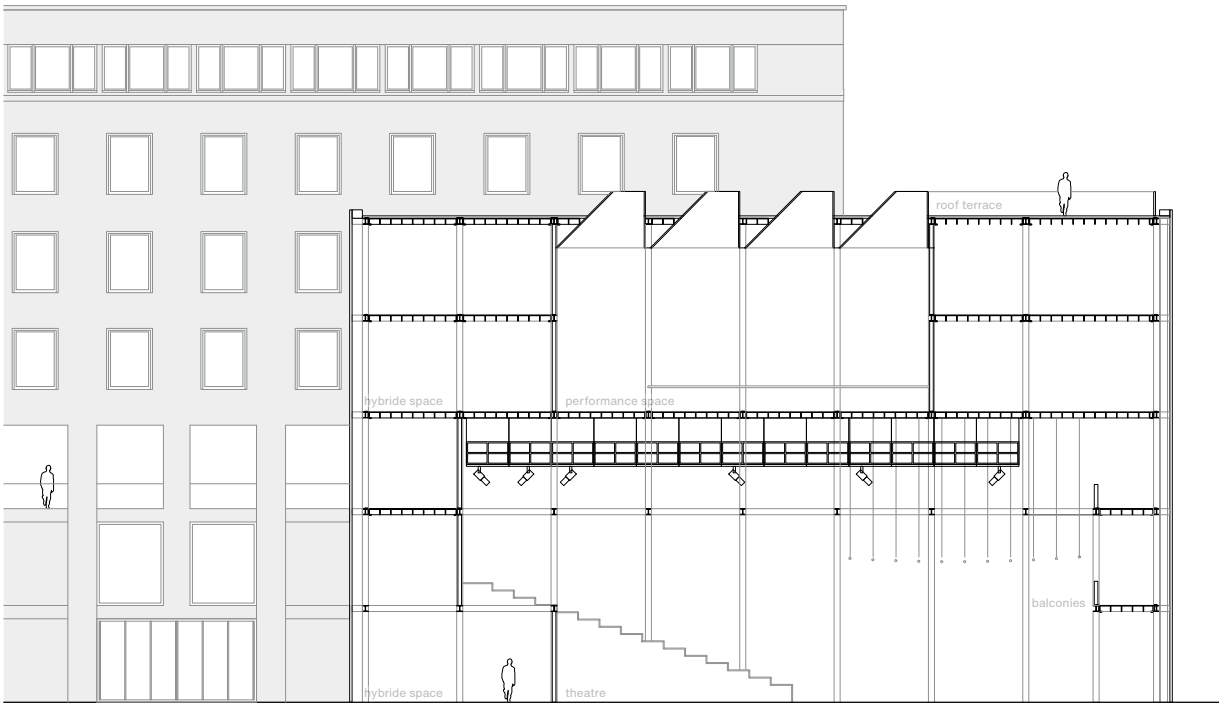


mezzanine [01]



2nd floor [+2]

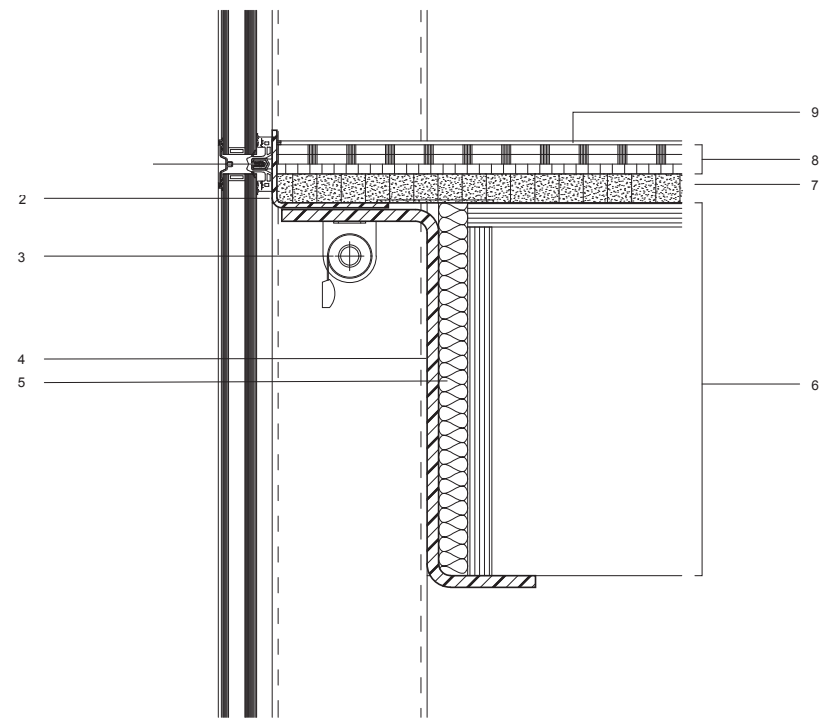




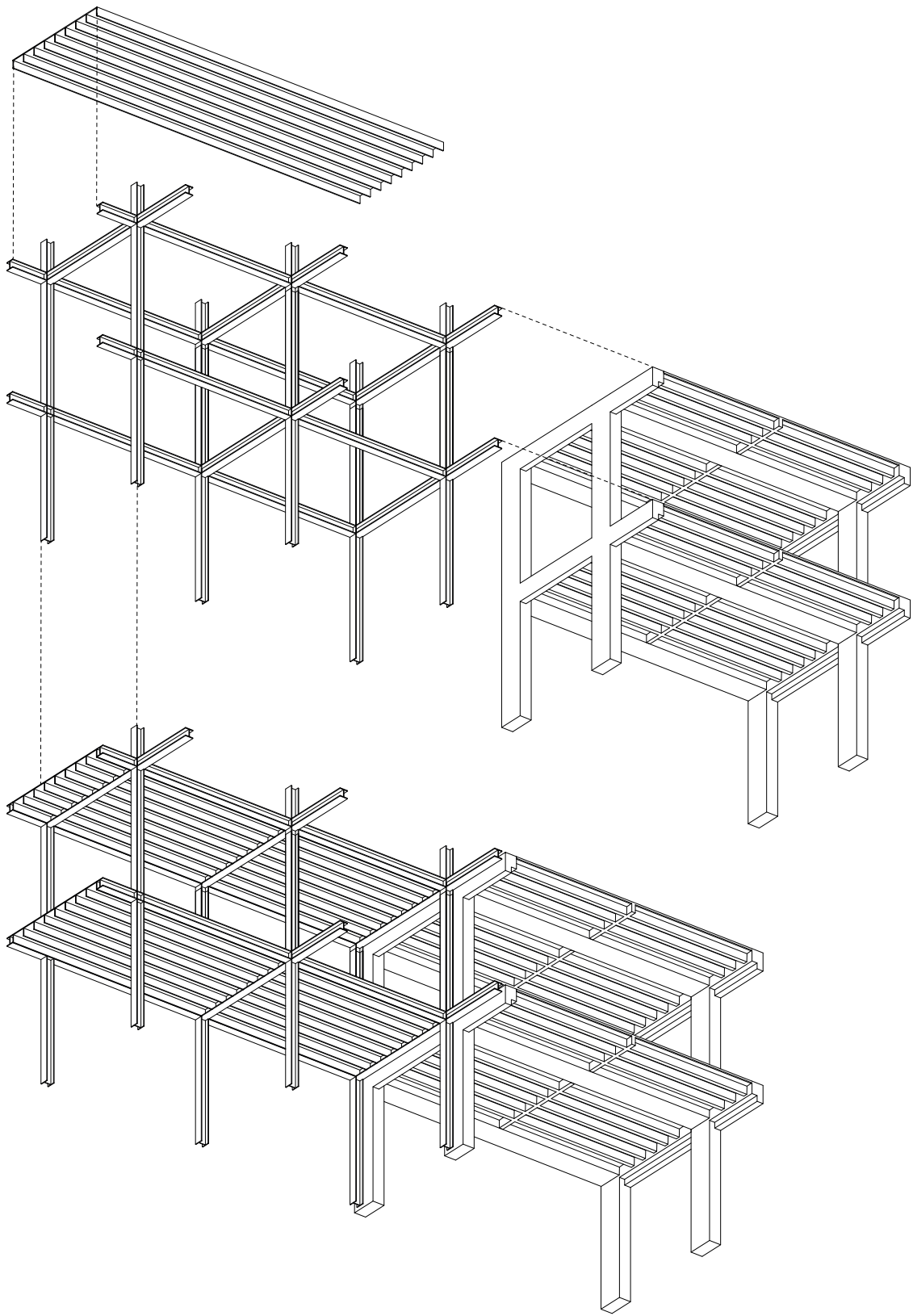


materiality and construction  
week 3.8

adding a demountable steel structure with timber infill to the existing concrete structure



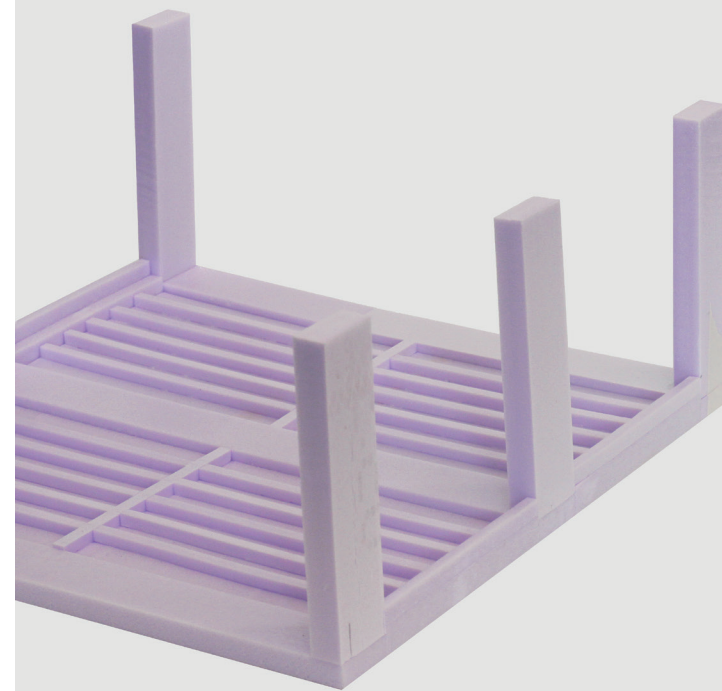
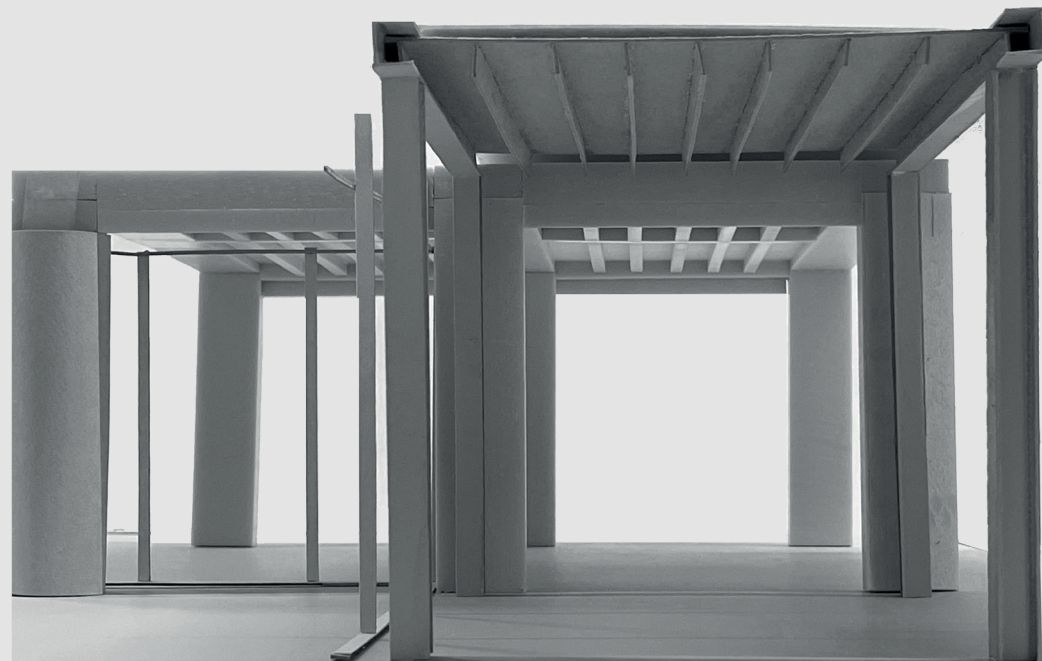
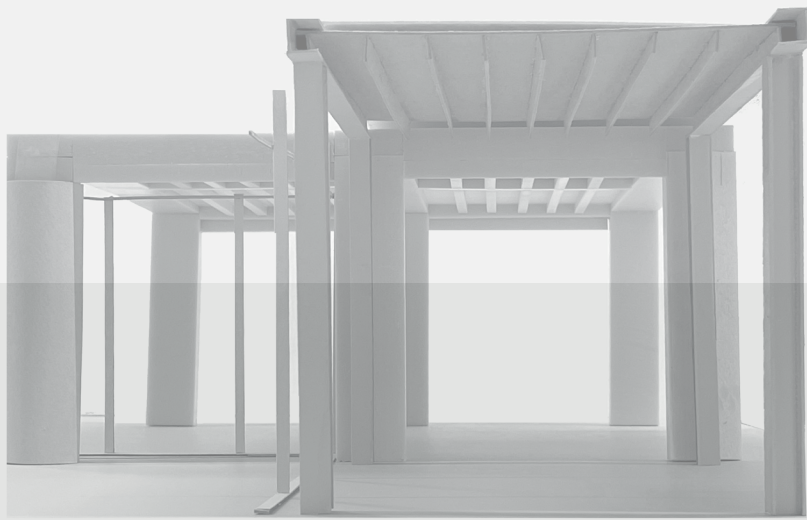
reference detail [cepezed]



B-ARCHITECTEN, go talent in Dendermonde



an atmosphere of readable elements  
week 3.8





# the office - degrees of flexibility

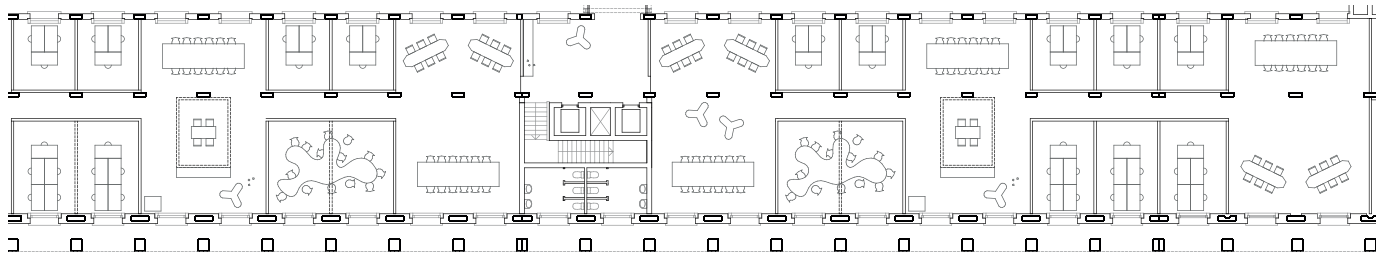
## week 3.8

the office space within the bank is designed in different ways according to the varying wings of the building

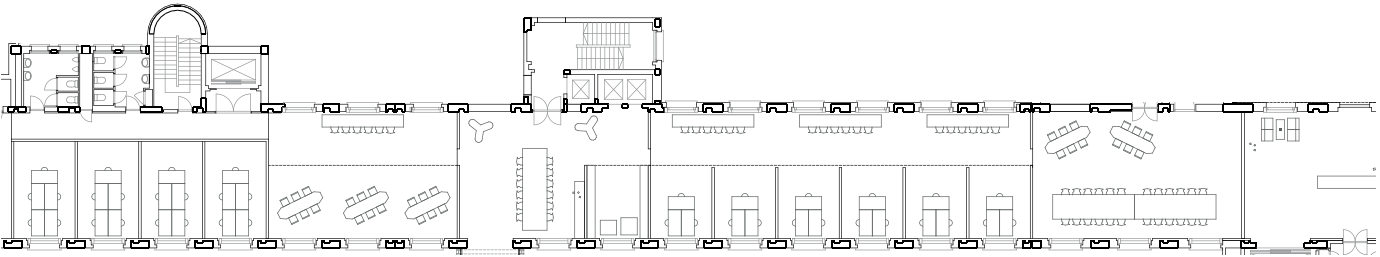
(1) [flexible] cubicles are installed to create a sense of privacy and rest within the the workplace. meeting spaces, coffee corners, print corners and collective workspaces create a diversity within the the long wings of the bank.

(2) the narrow wing is designed to be more flexible with its partitions, with opening up spaces but also closing them in case of a meeting. the coffee corners are combined with collective workspaces to enlarge a sense of community within the bank.

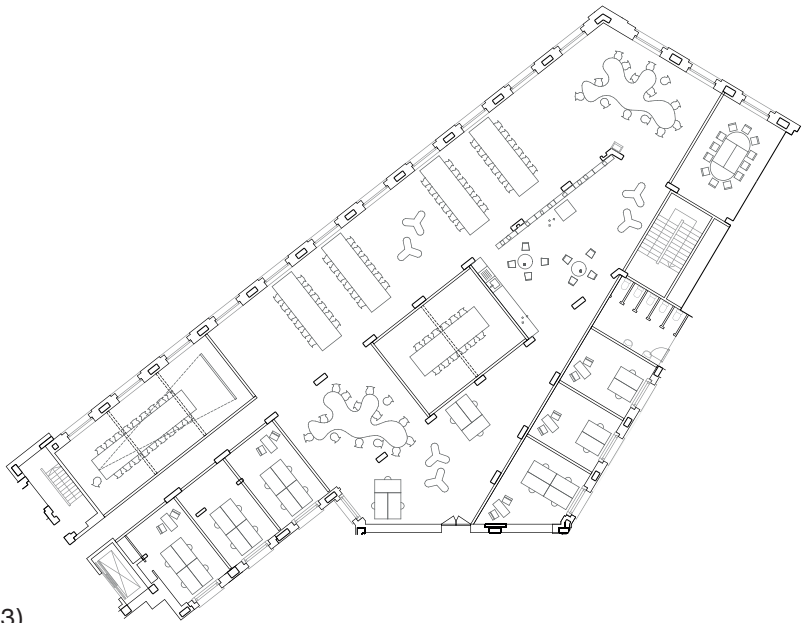
(3) a deep[er] plan asks for a more open floorplan to let the light in. this workspace is less formal and can be used by workers that enjoy working in a lively environment. moments of privacy are ensured by smart positioning of walls and furniture.



(1)



(2)



(3)



## reflection after P3

can the routes within  
and through the building  
be more public and more  
obvious? what do they  
lead towards?

what do the 'new' facades  
look like?

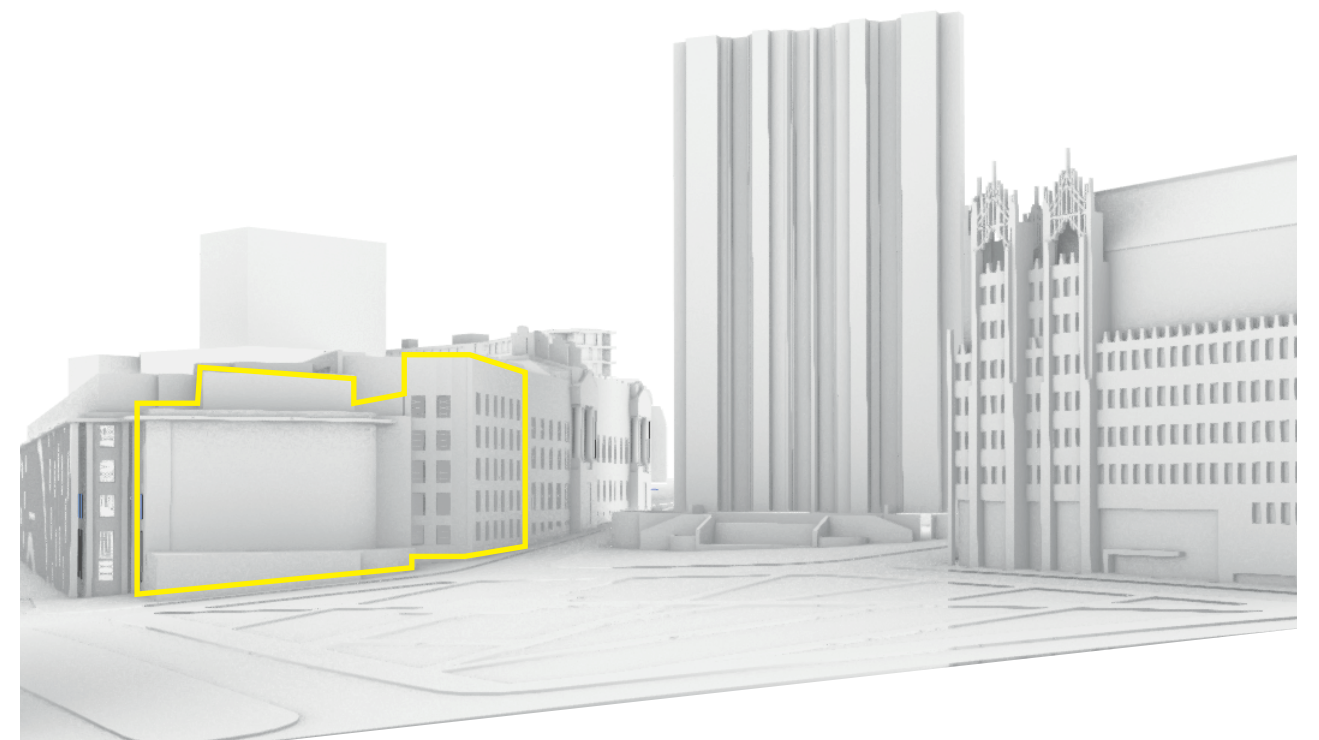
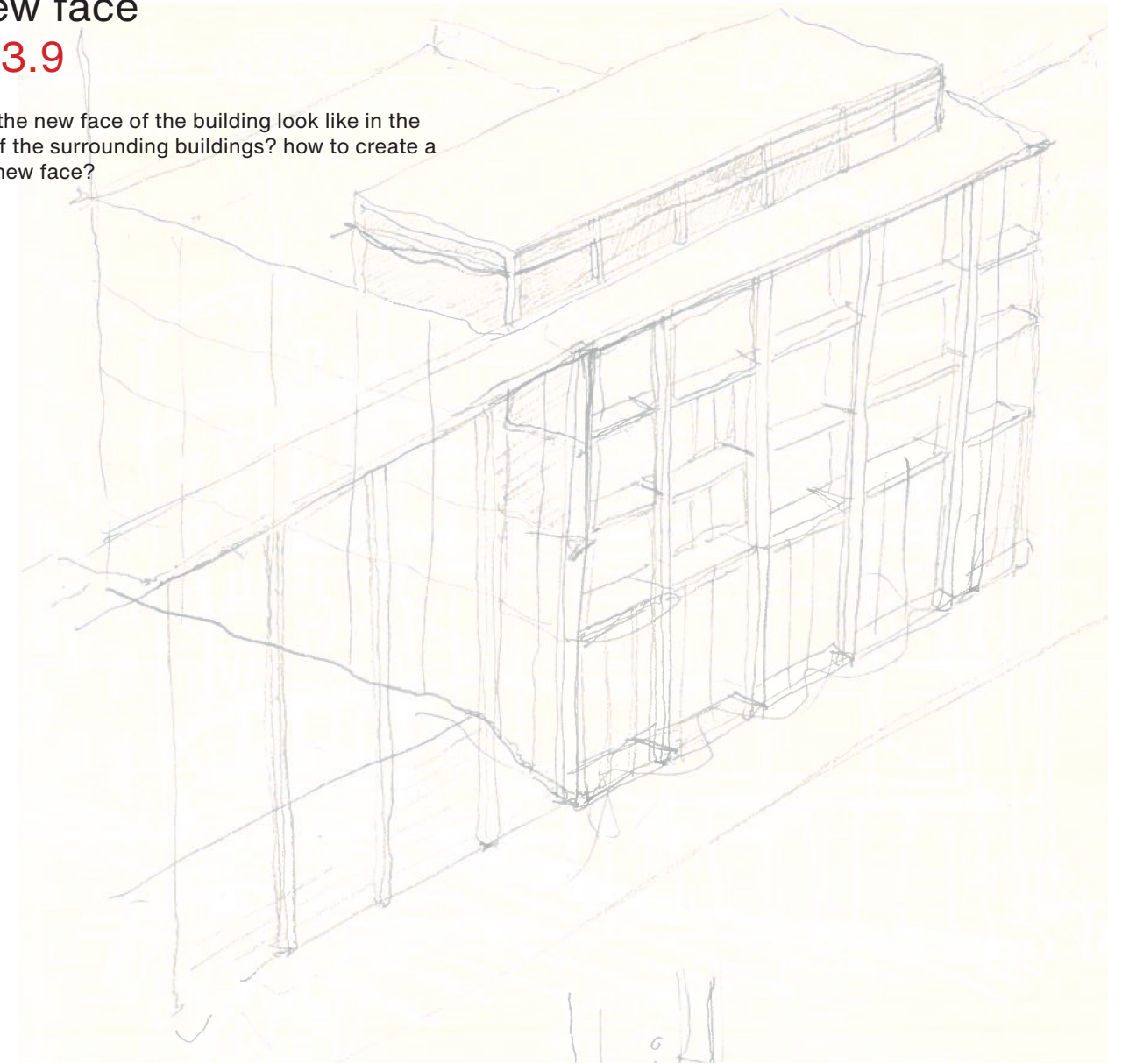
is the theatre a box in a  
box construction ... [?]

how is the character  
of the cultural building  
reflected in the bank and  
how does it affect the  
office?

it's not a pocket square...  
it is an outside room

## the new face week 3.9

What does the new face of the building look like in the  
ensemble of the surrounding buildings? how to create a  
public and new face?





the outside room

week 3.9

studies on what the facades of the new entrances look like.  
what atmosphere does the enclosed exterior breathe? how  
can the different buildings come together in an subtle but  
obvious way?



finishing the bank building  
[keeping an open plinth]

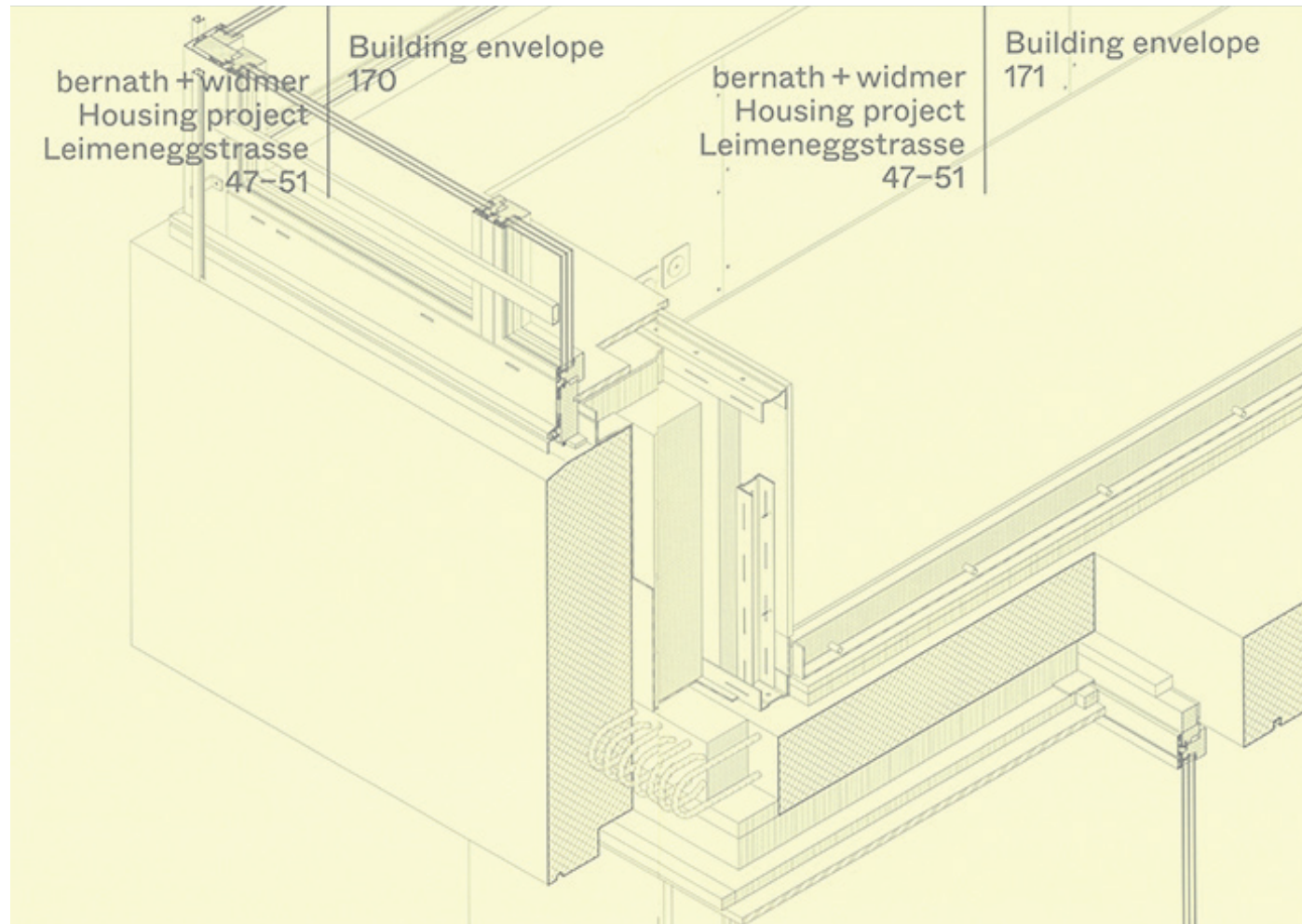
the new entrance  
[stripped existing facade]

cultural building  
[a transparant - no nonsense facade]

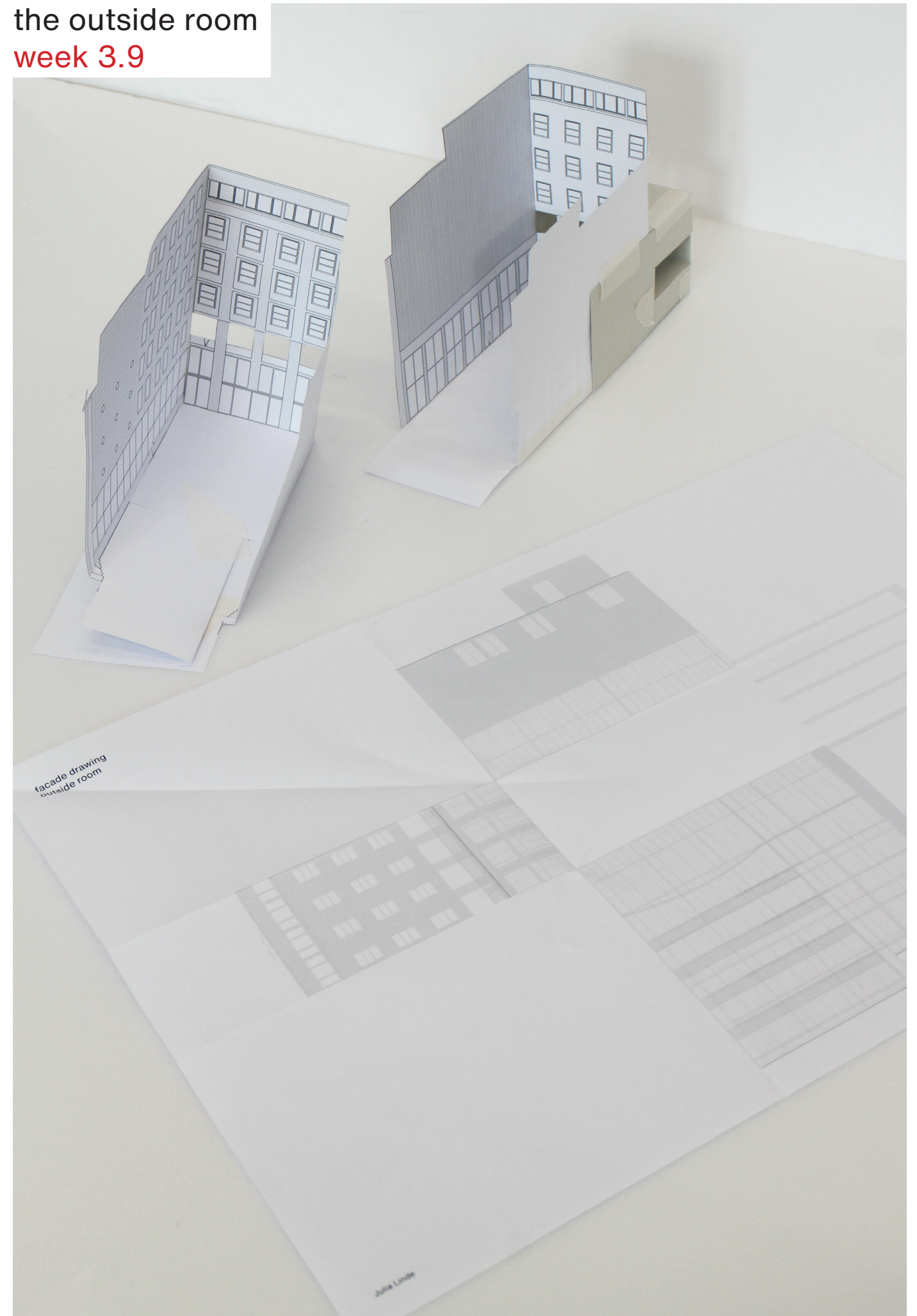


## detailing week 3.9

detail inspiration, how to make a detail drawing clear. how to represent [the detail]...



## the outside room week 3.9





# Royale Belge [lecture by Wim Boesten, Bovenbouw]

## week 3.9

notes:

ventilation integrated in the the columns

akoestical spray used to sound insulate the concrete exposed ceilings

A+ 292 magazine: adaptive reuse



exposing the concrete ceilings - akoestical spray



a big entrance party - ventilation integrated in the column





# the counter act

## week 3.9

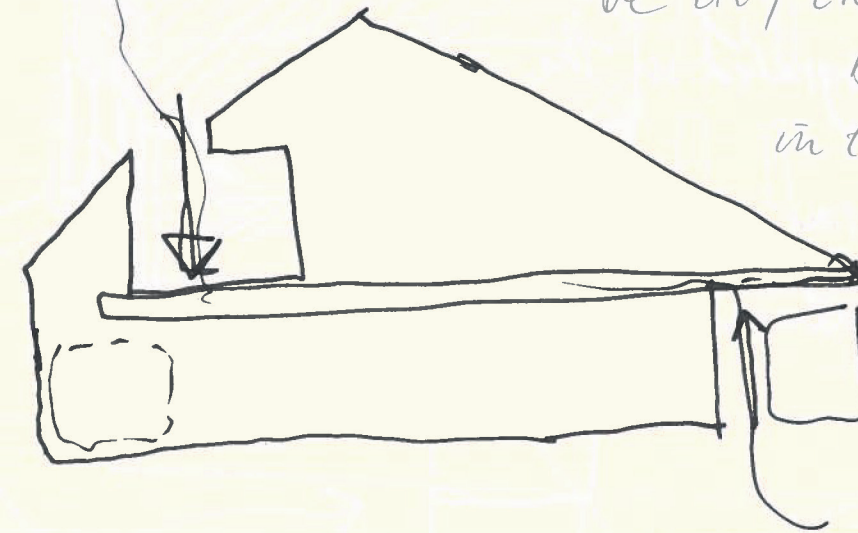
what is the public experience of the building?  
is the city crossing the building?  
a spine that has things  
the permeability has to be readable in plan as well as in section !!!



inside outside stair  
passing along

Where does the public  
go?

the public experience  
the city crossing the  
building  
in the city  
itself  
3 routes



What is worth walking 200 m?  
counter acting! two

spine  
that  
has things



Speak through the plan  
do the routes work?  
move back to the city plan.  
subtraction / building new adding  
look at the church!  
permeable in plan

main banking  
hall

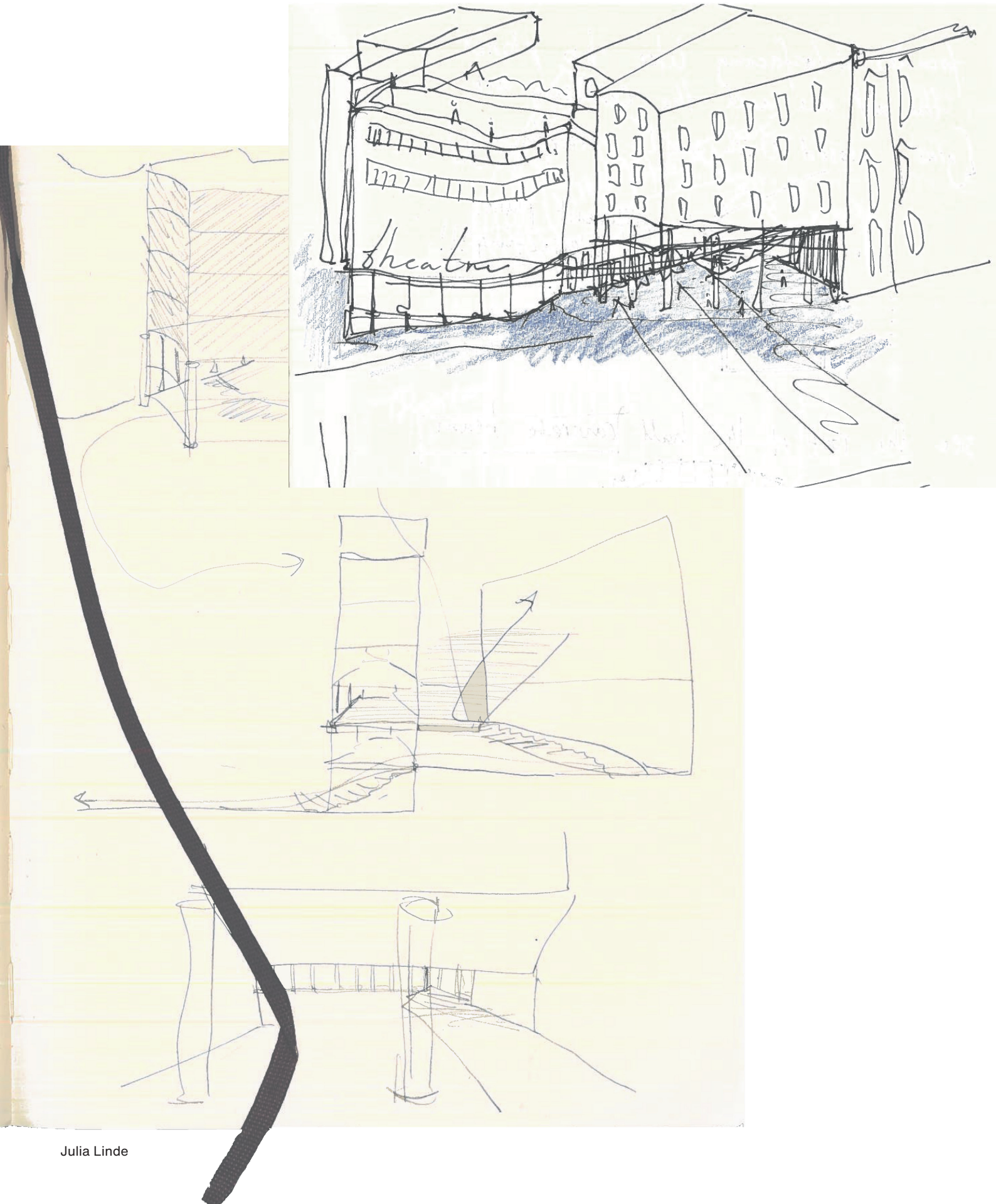
200



# towards the church

## week 3.9

how can the corner piece in the building serve as an entrance?  
opening up towards the church



Julia Linde



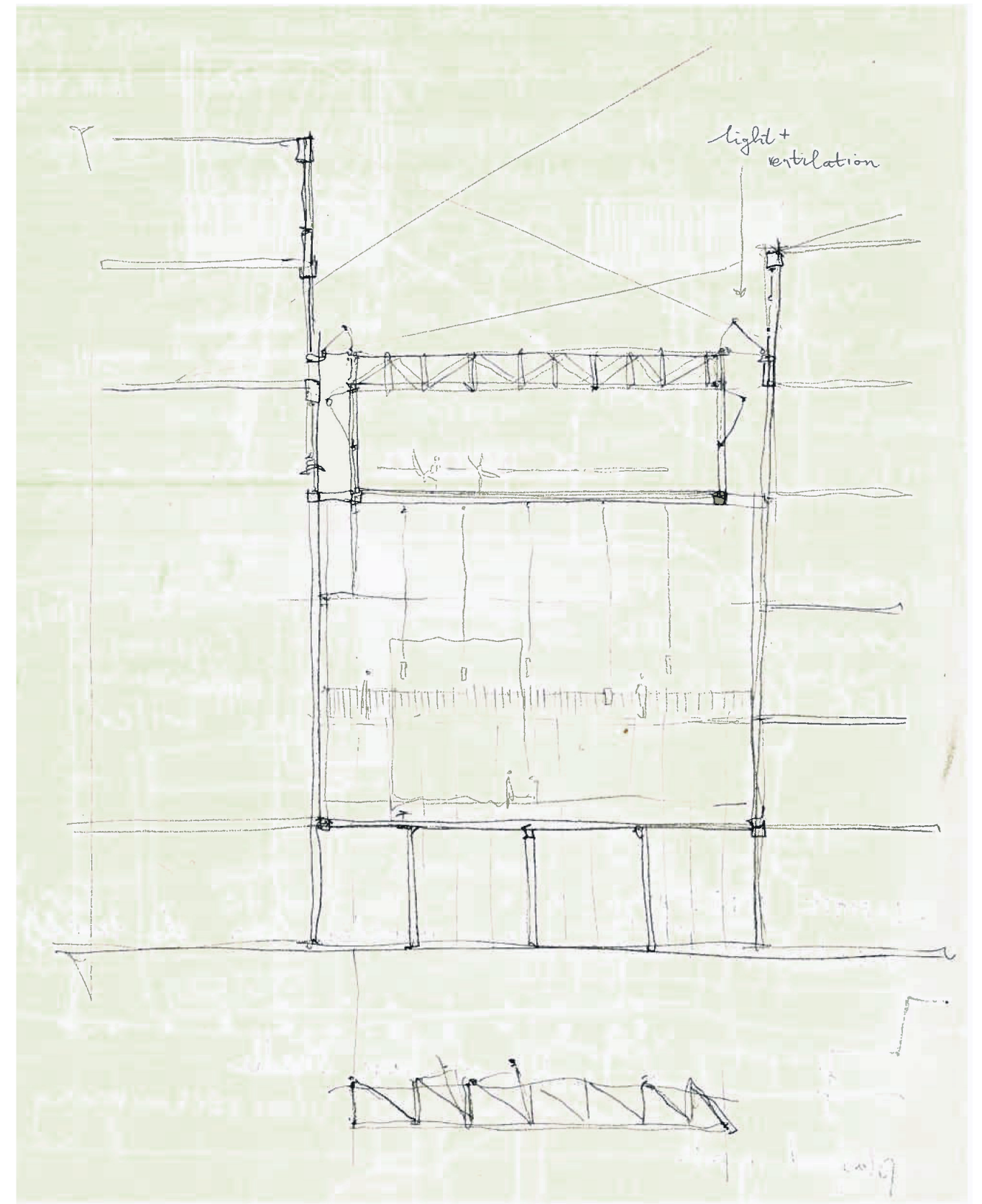
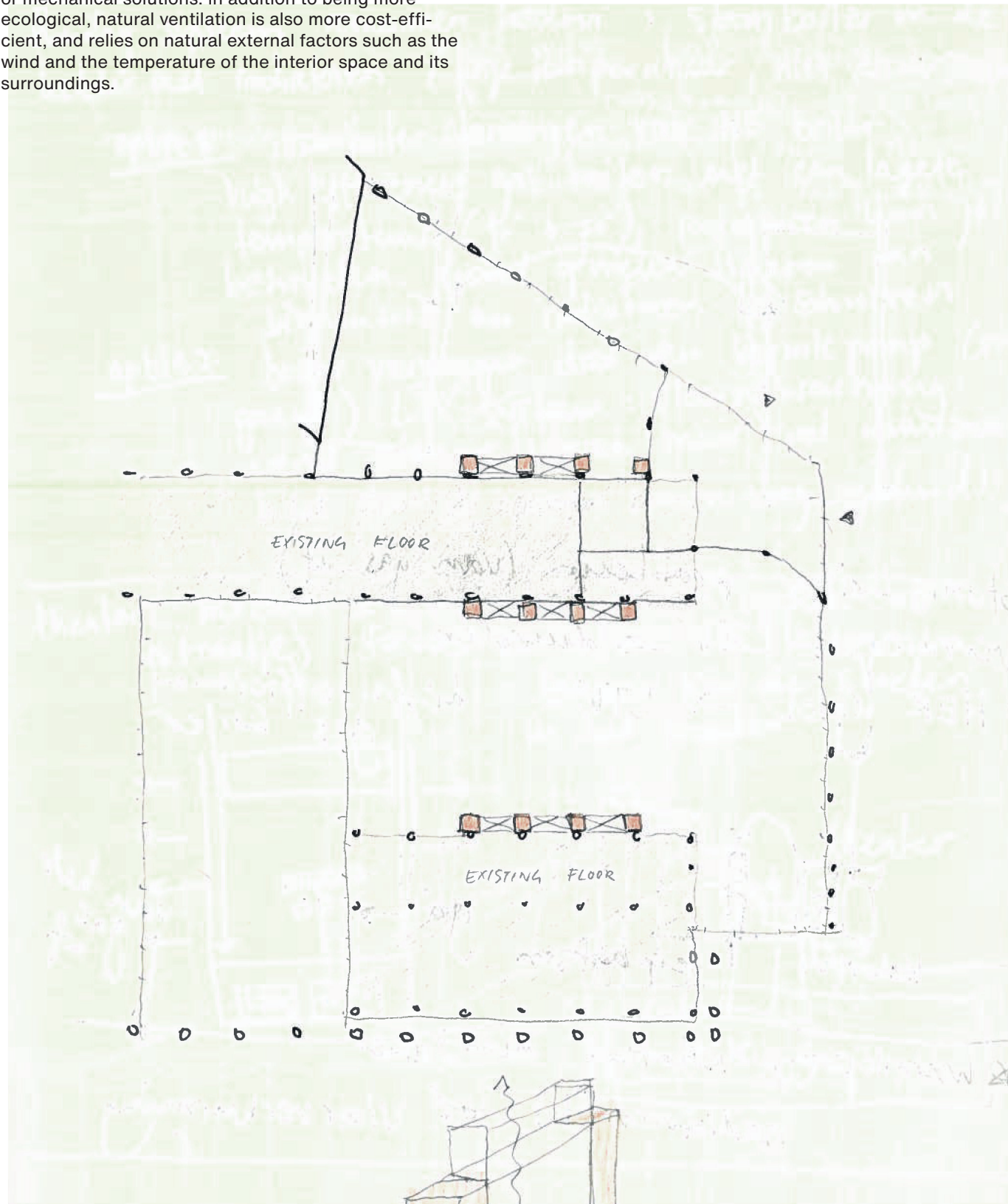
Praça das Artes by Brasil Arquitetura  
[concrete boxes projecting over a public plaza]



# climate concept

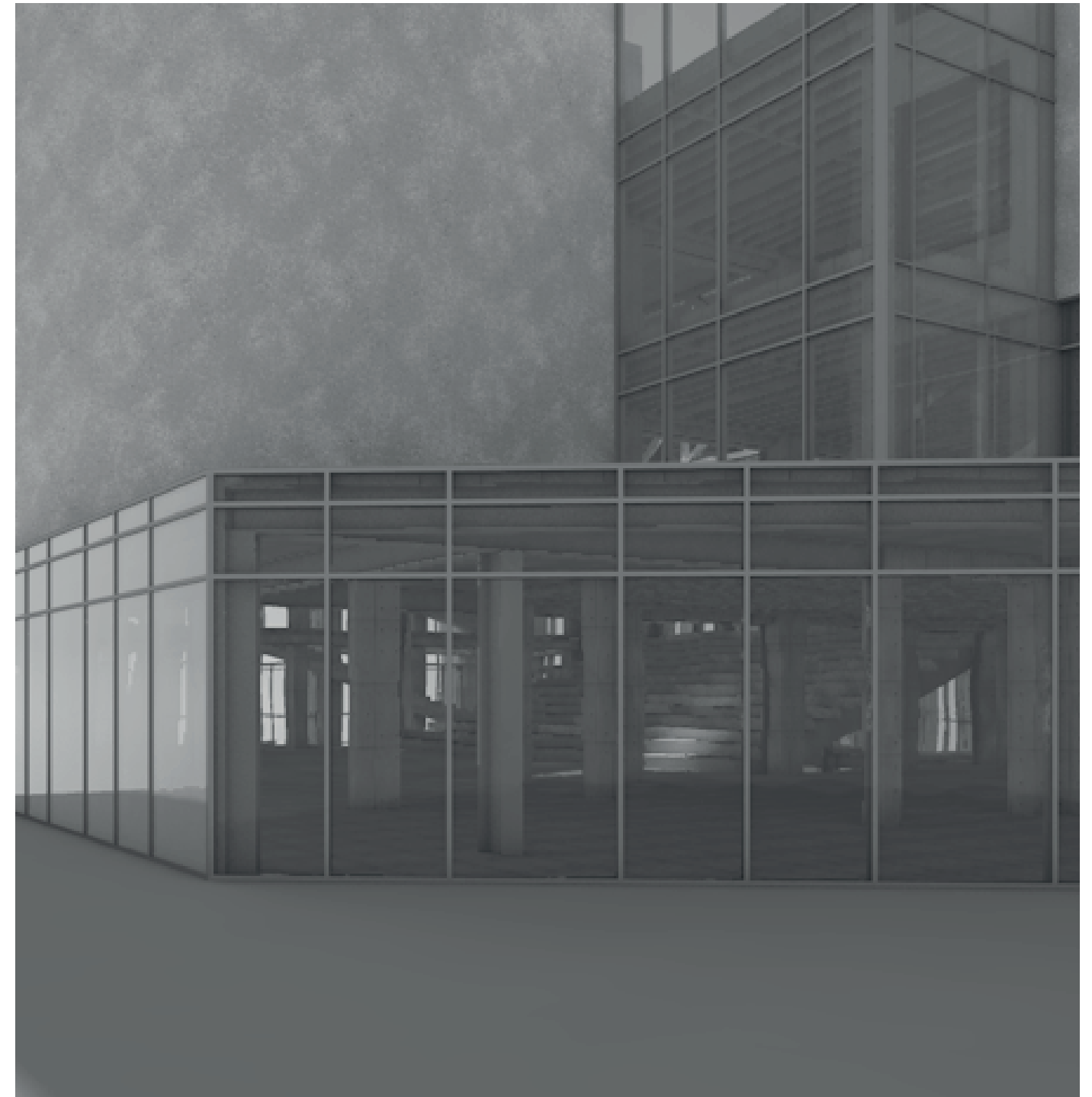
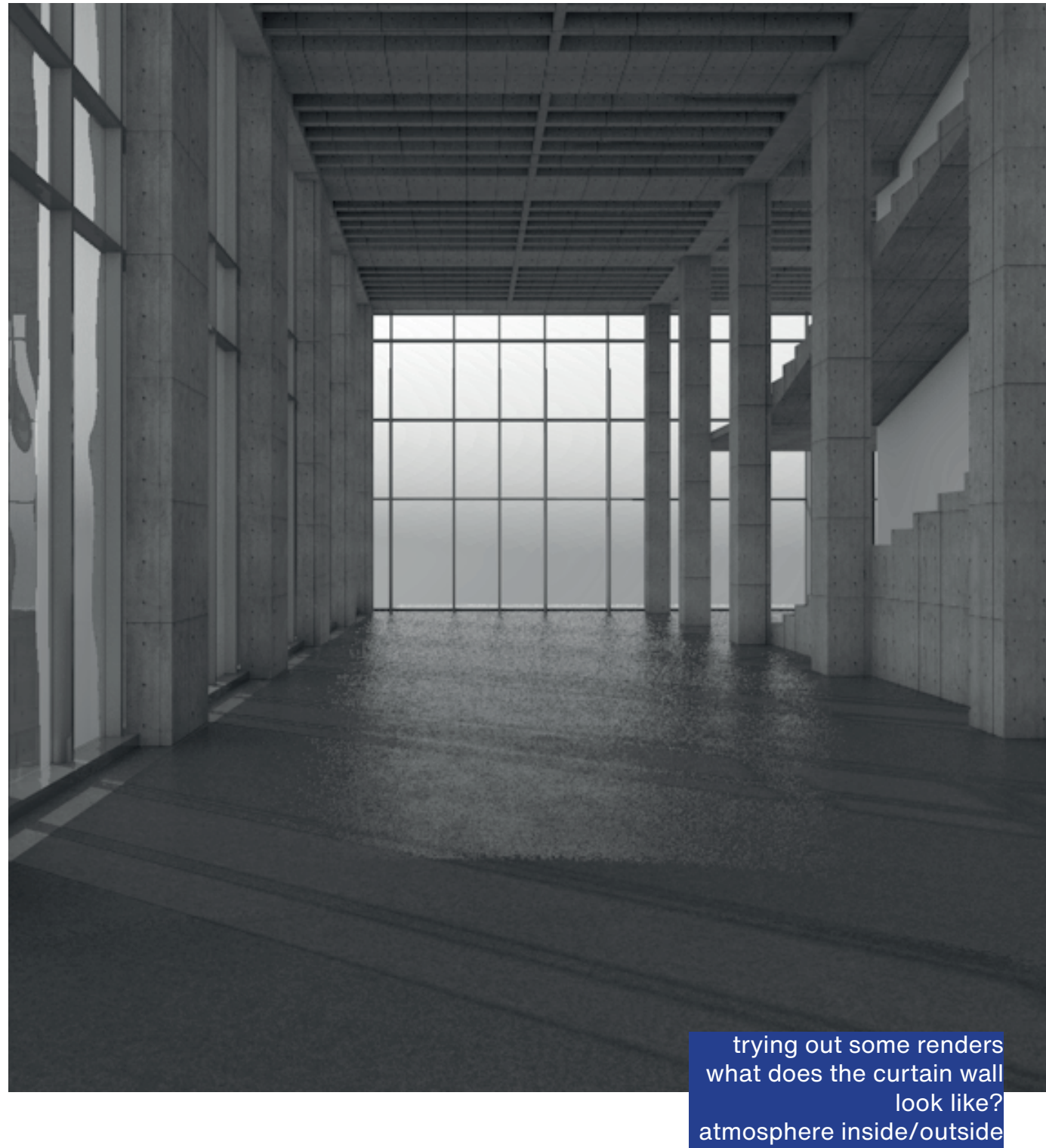
## week 3.9

Natural ventilation is the use of environmental-ly-friendly systems that do not require any automated or mechanical solutions. In addition to being more ecological, natural ventilation is also more cost-efficient, and relies on natural external factors such as the wind and the temperature of the interior space and its surroundings.



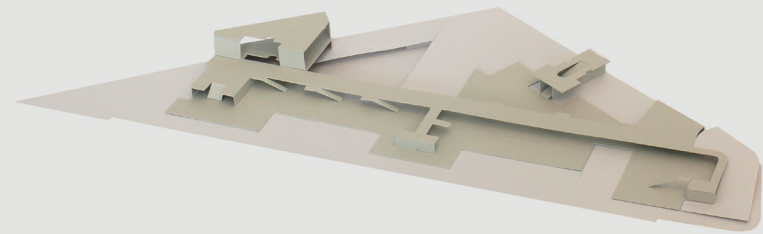


curtain wall atmosphere  
week 3.9

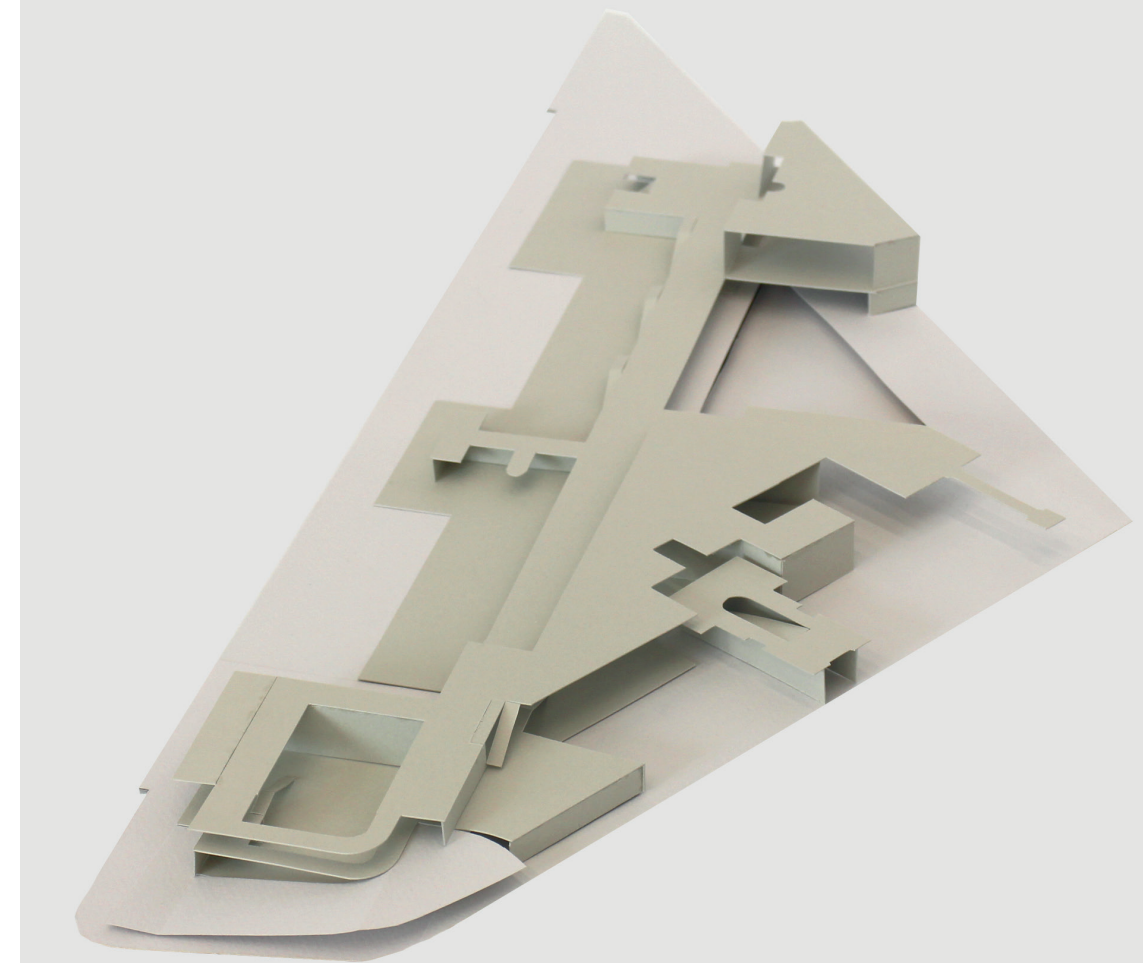




the public space within the building  
week 3.10



walk through the plan  
the routes work?  
move back to the city  
abstraction / building new  
look at the church!  
meable in plan



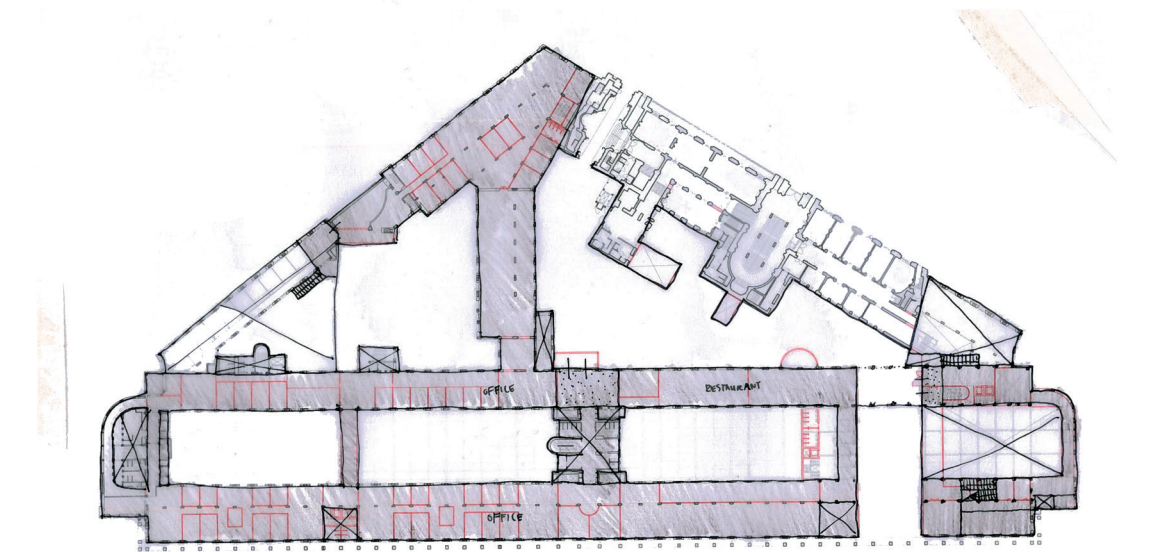
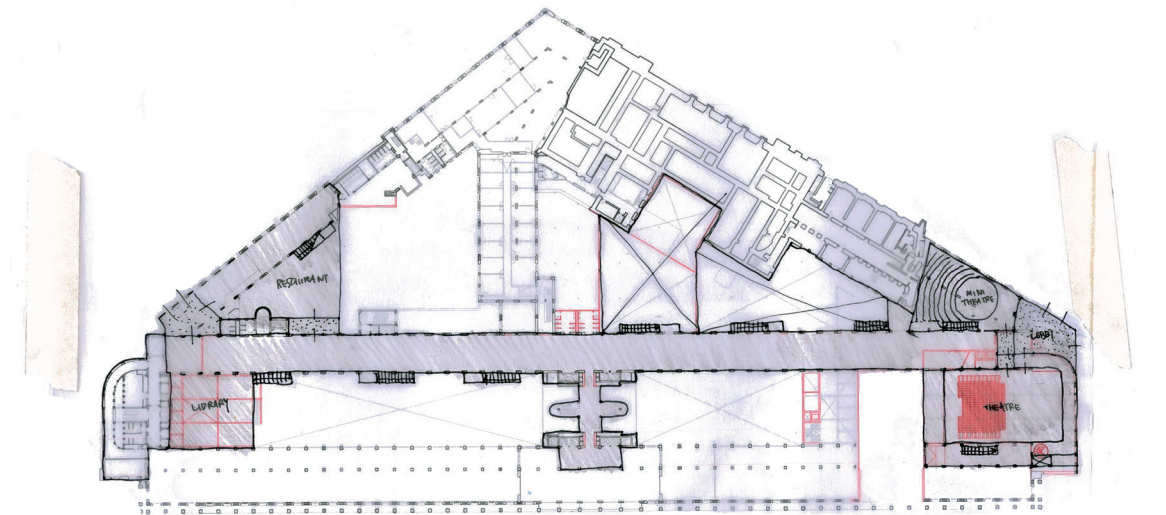
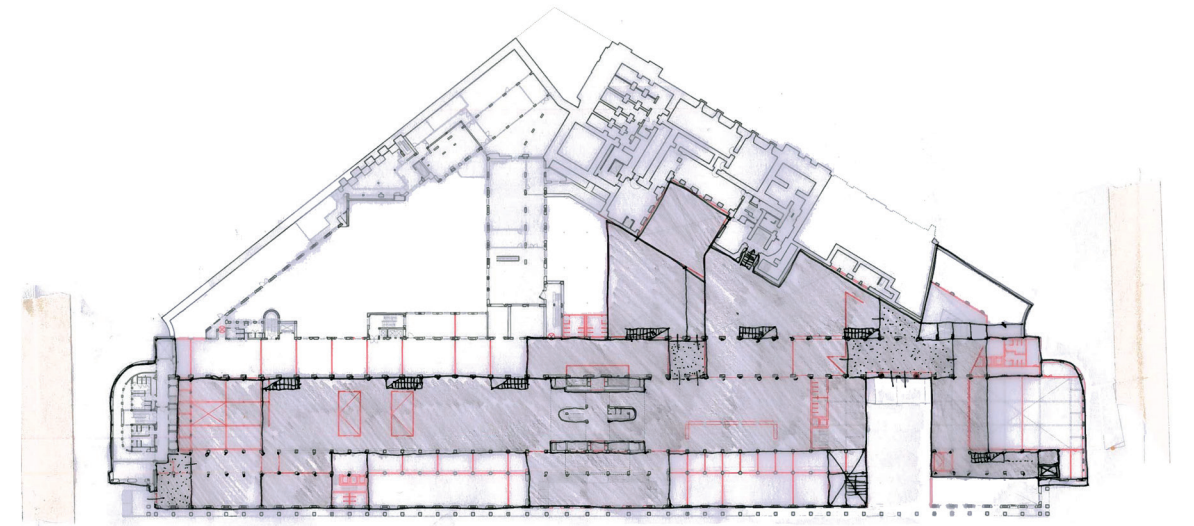
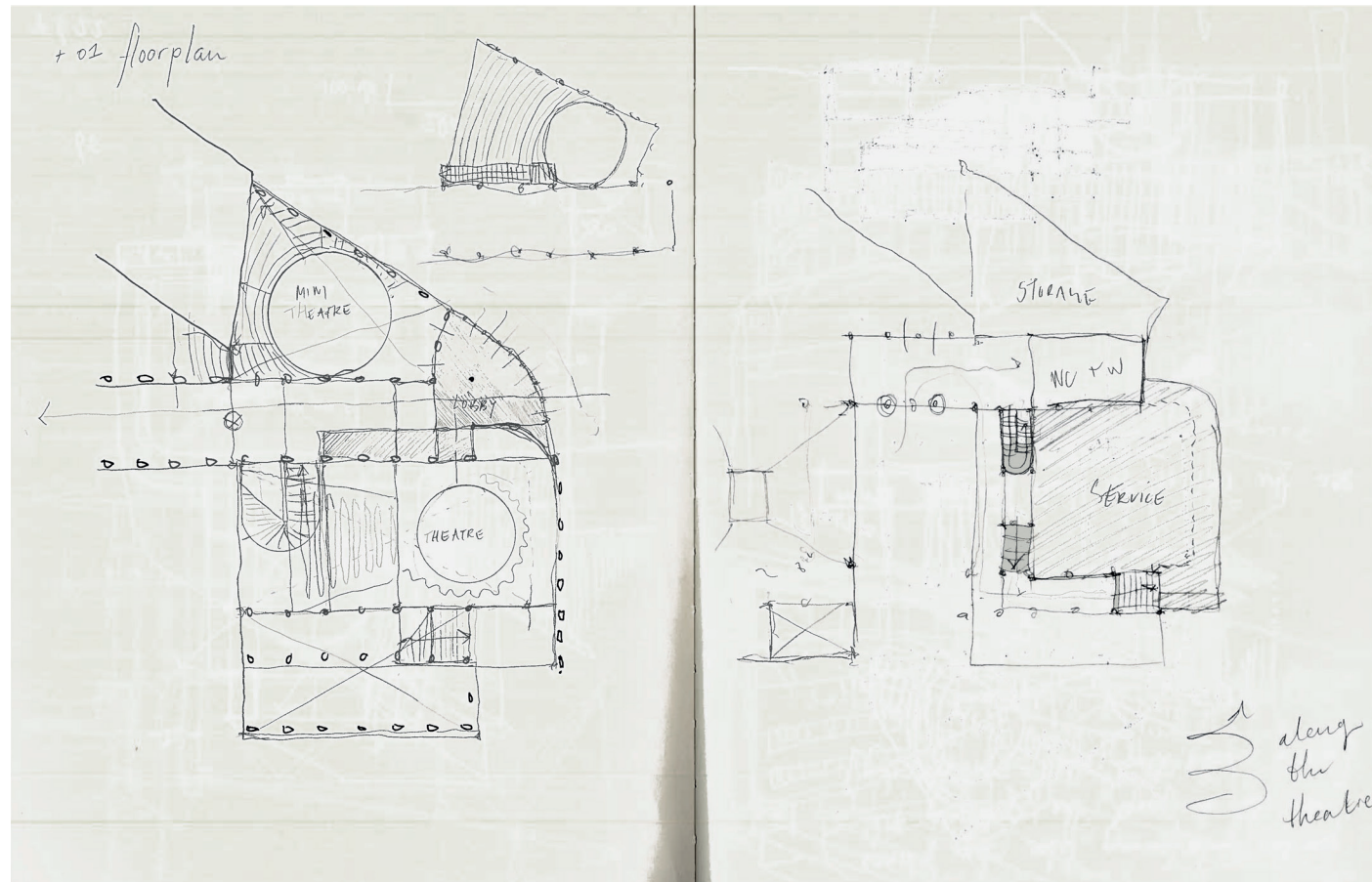


# plans progress

## week 3.10

the spine 'along which things happen' [public spine]

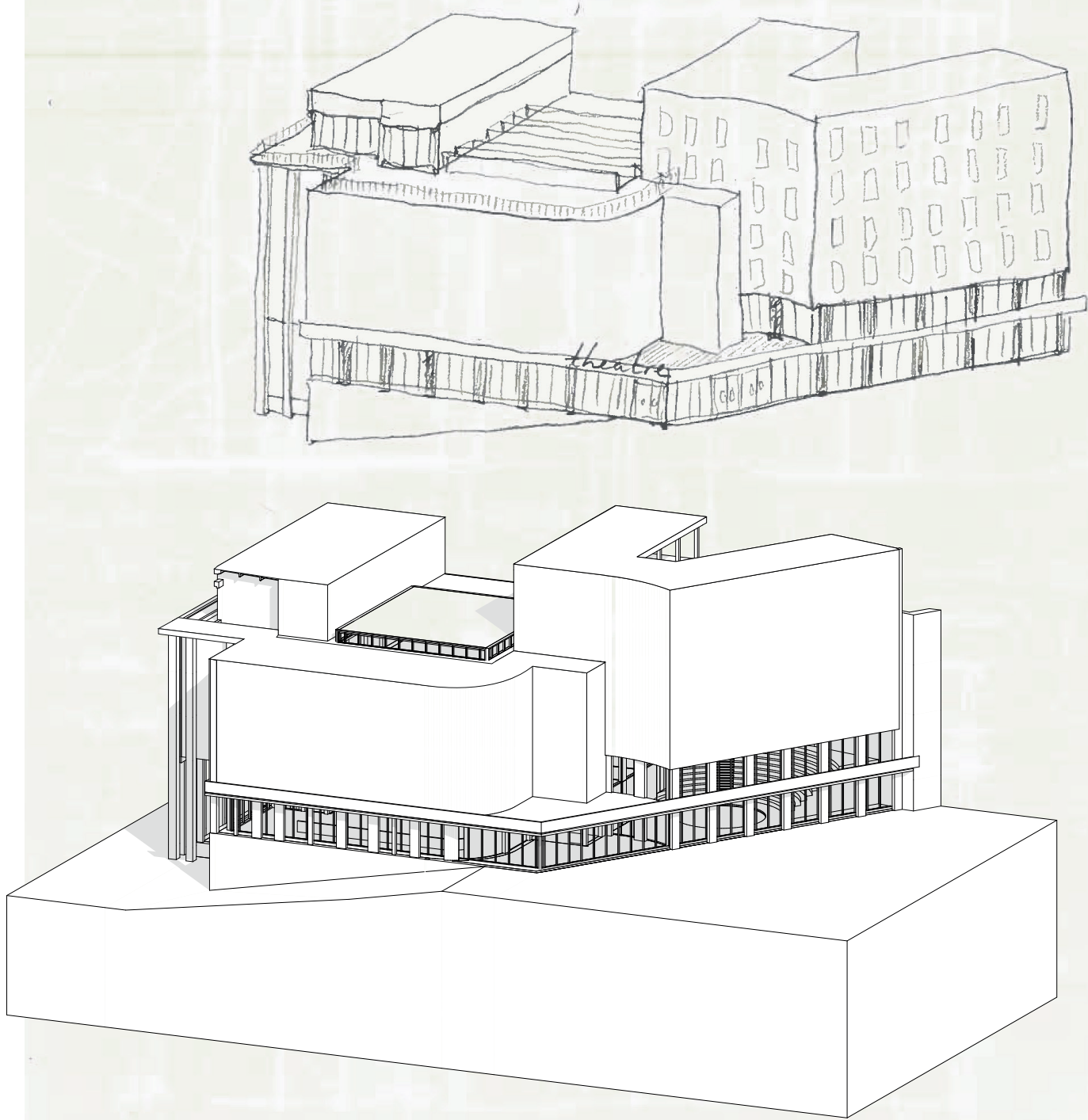
the theatre with a mini theatre as a public experience  
with a library and a cafe on the other side of the building  
stretching out to the surrounding housing developments



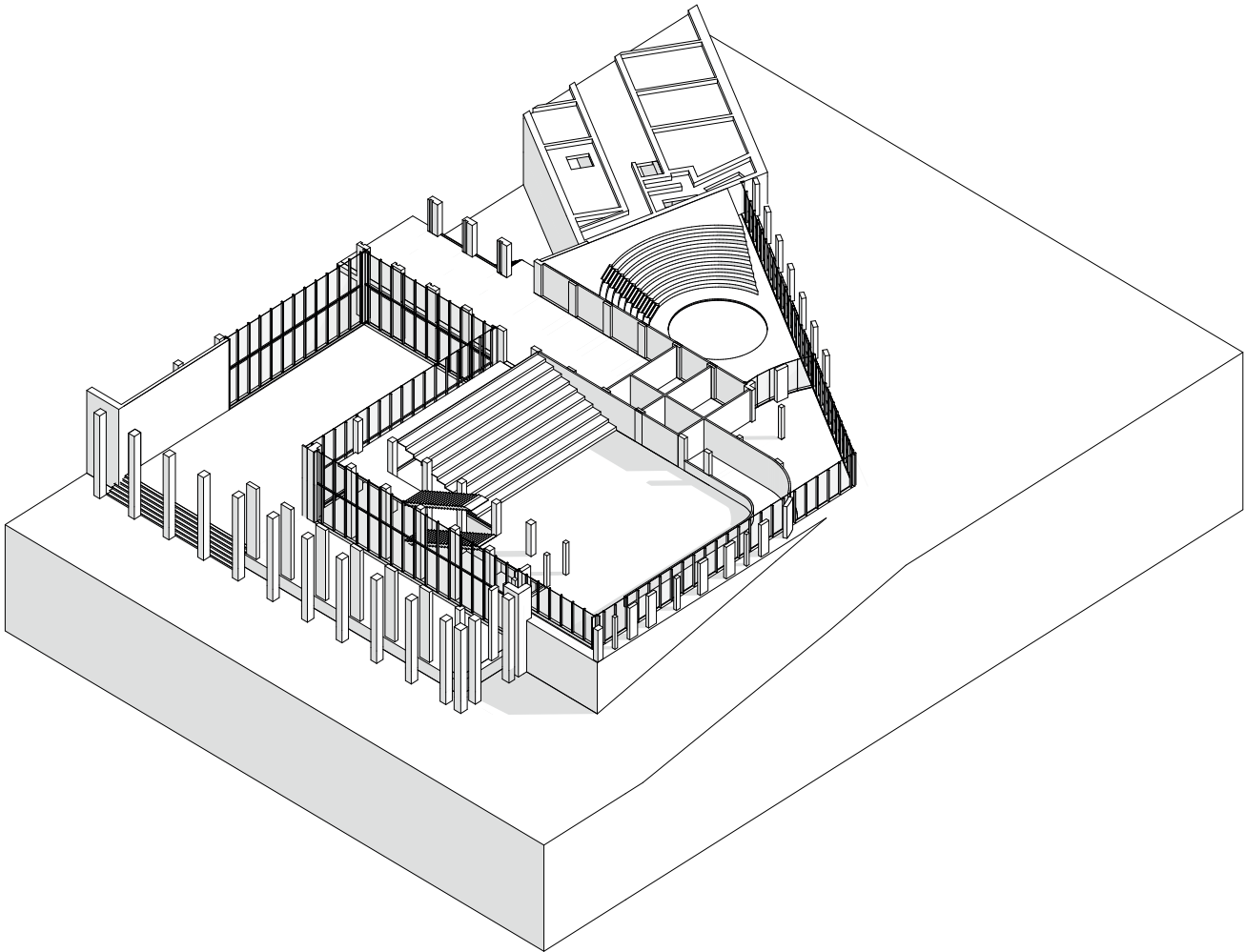


the continious plinth  
week 4.1

facade wrapping - creating a new facade by carving and adding



positioning of the two theatres towards the city

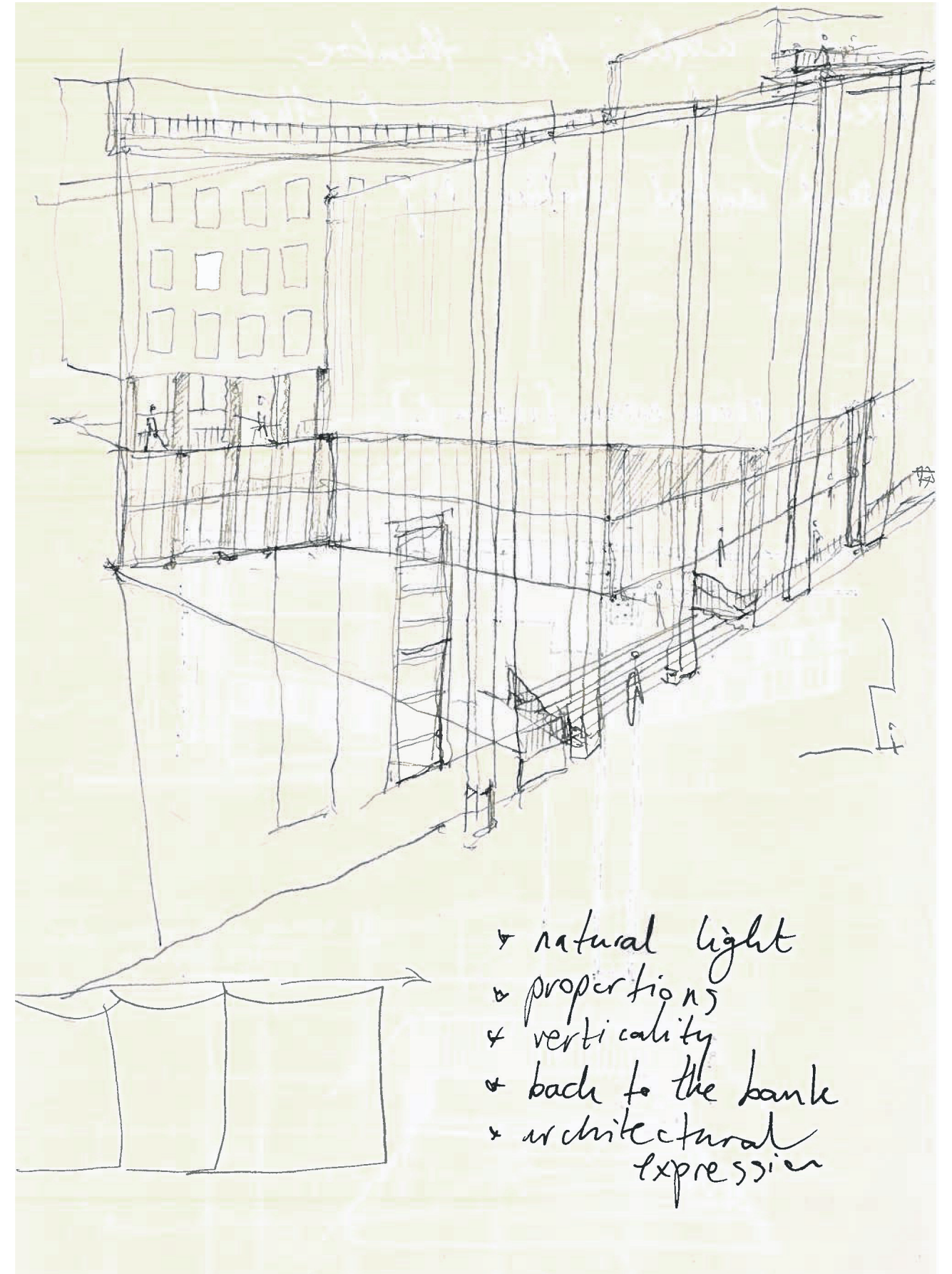




# construction methods

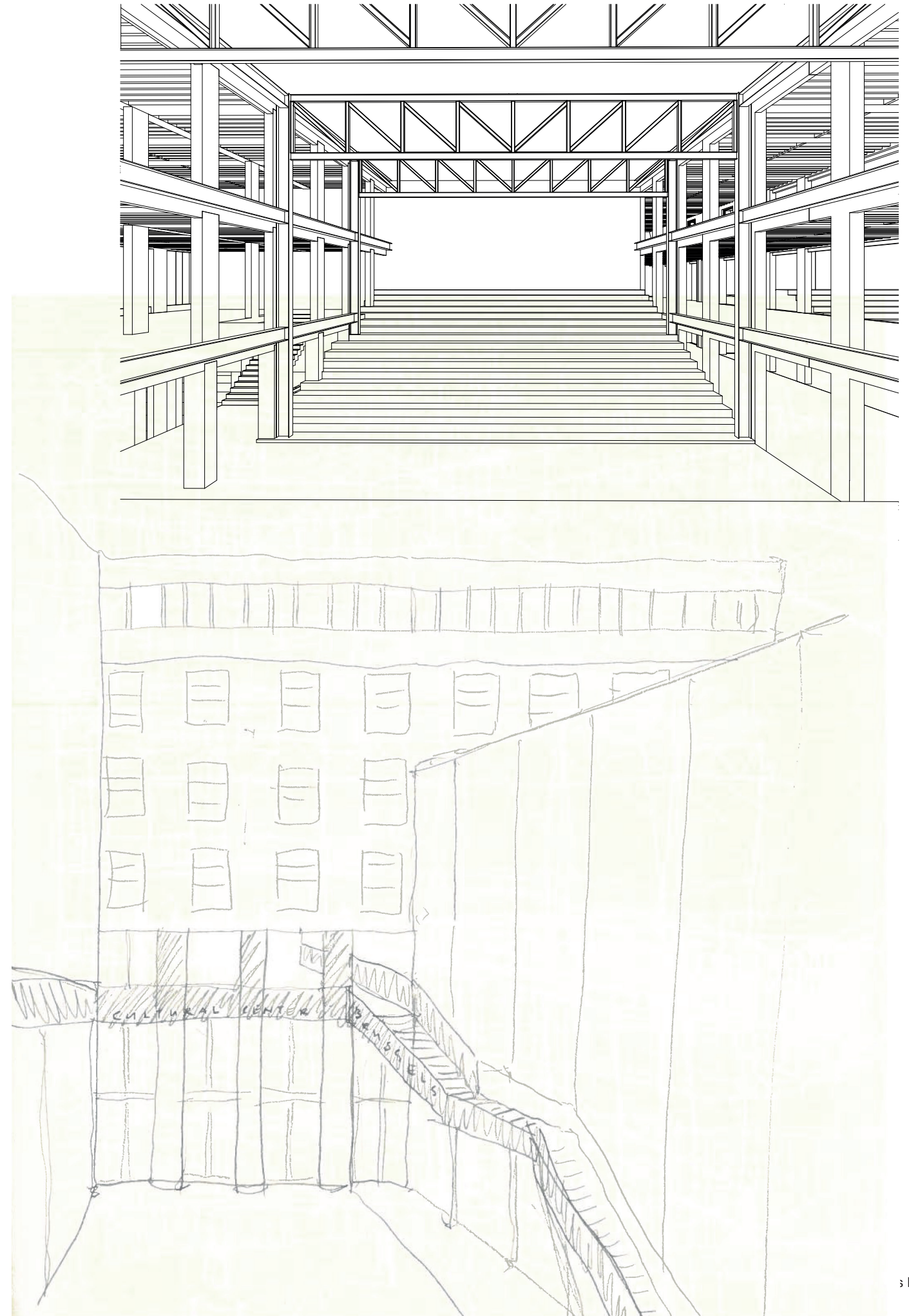
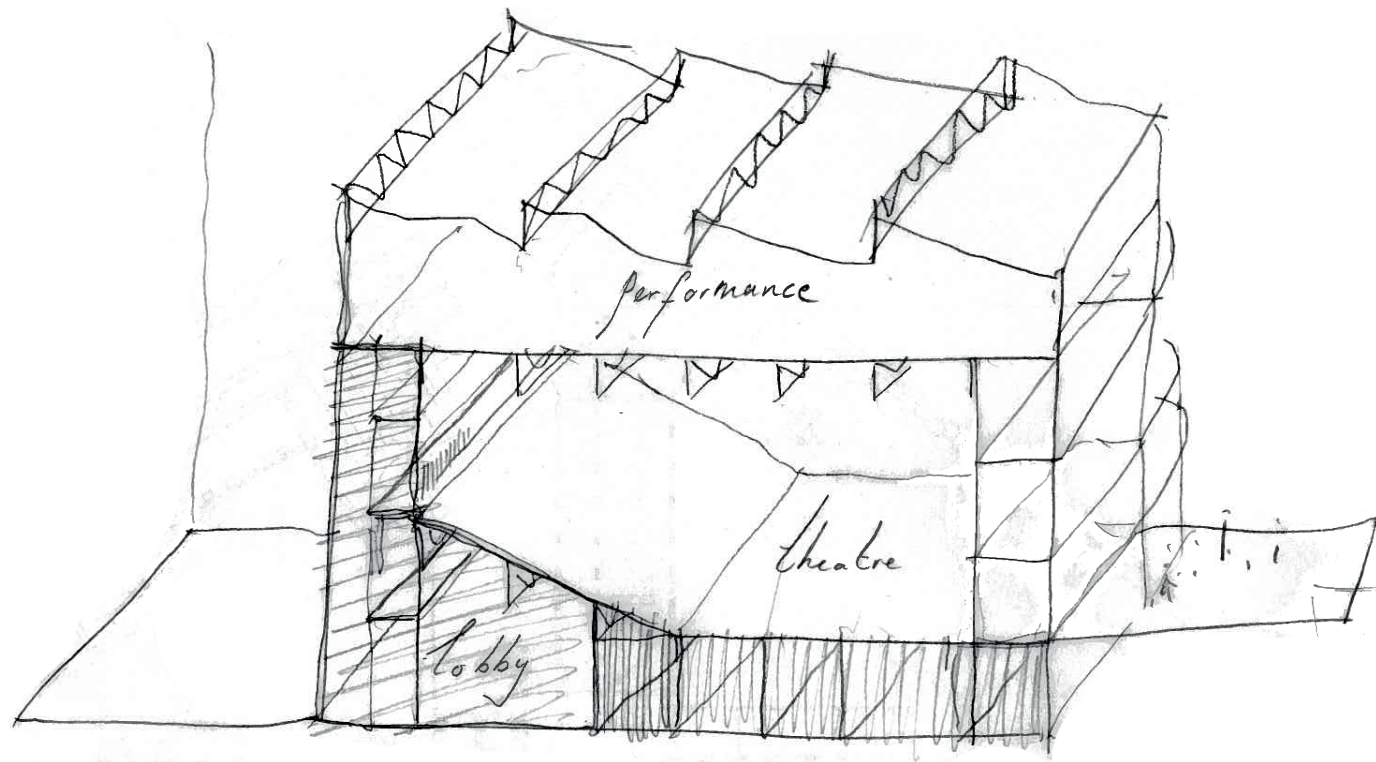
## week 4.1

"A new method of constructing multi-storey buildings has been investigated using Cross-Laminated Timber (CLT) panels acting as floor slabs with a steel framed support structure. Conventionally, concrete slabs are used for floor systems but timber panels weigh approximately one third of the equivalent concrete slabs, and hence the superstructure mass is significantly reduced, smaller sections can be used and thus less steel is needed overall. Further economy can be gained if composite action that can be generated between the CLT flooring and supporting steel beams. This paper presents the findings of a detailed finite element study to examine the composite performance of steel-CLT beams taking into account the method and degree of shear interaction, the determination of a suitable effective to width to account for shear lag, the position of the CLT relative to the beam (i.e. above the beam as in conventional composite construction or within the beam depth to form a slimfloor type system) and the layup and orientation of the laminations in the floor units. After briefly outlining the advantages of using a CLT-steel hybrid system, this paper explains how a detailed numerical model which captures the key features of the system was developed and validated and then present the results of a parametric investigation into the generation of composite action in a CLT-steel hybrid system."





view on the theatre  
week 4.2

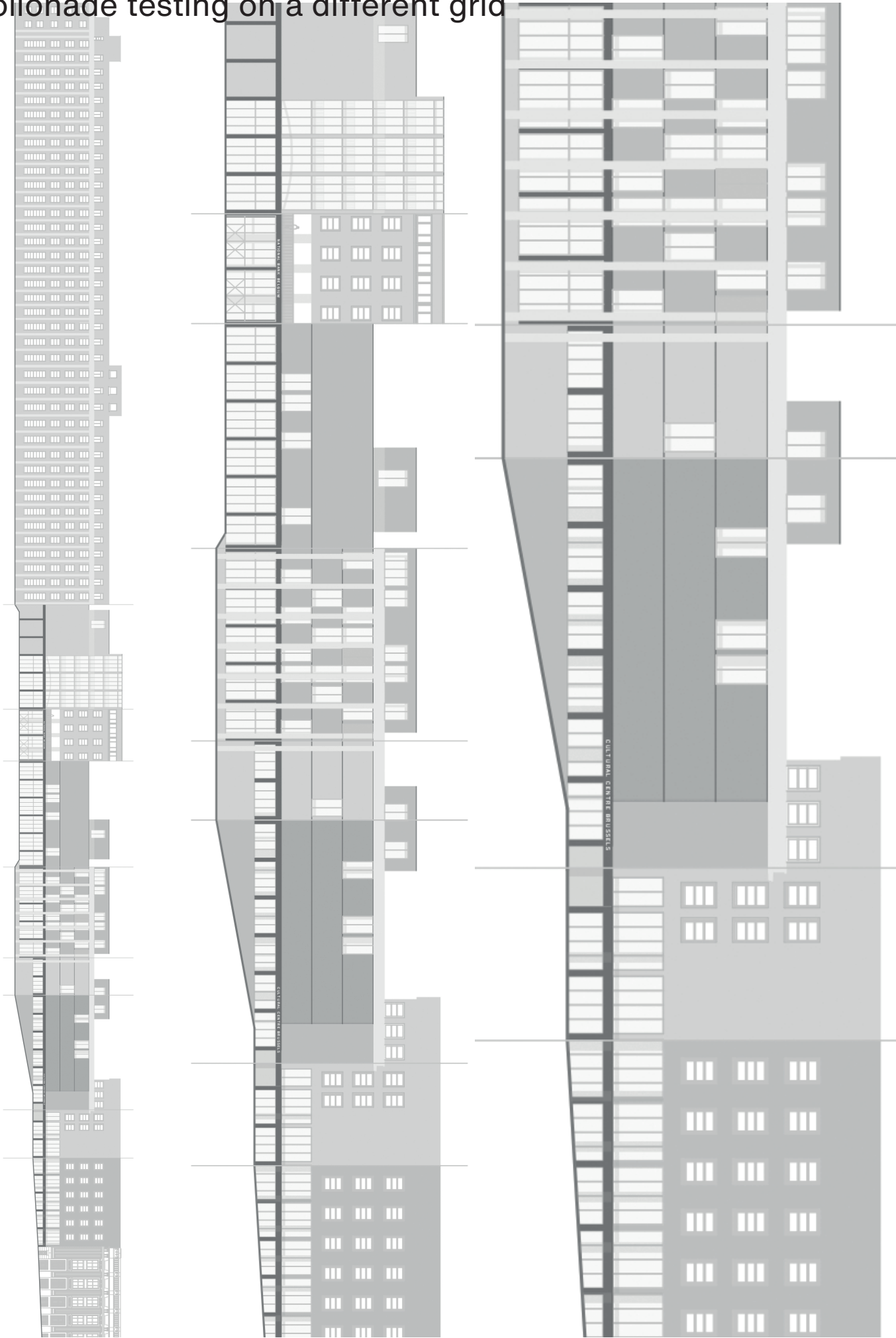




the outside room  
week 4.2



collonade testing on a different grid





flat lay facade drawings  
week 4.2

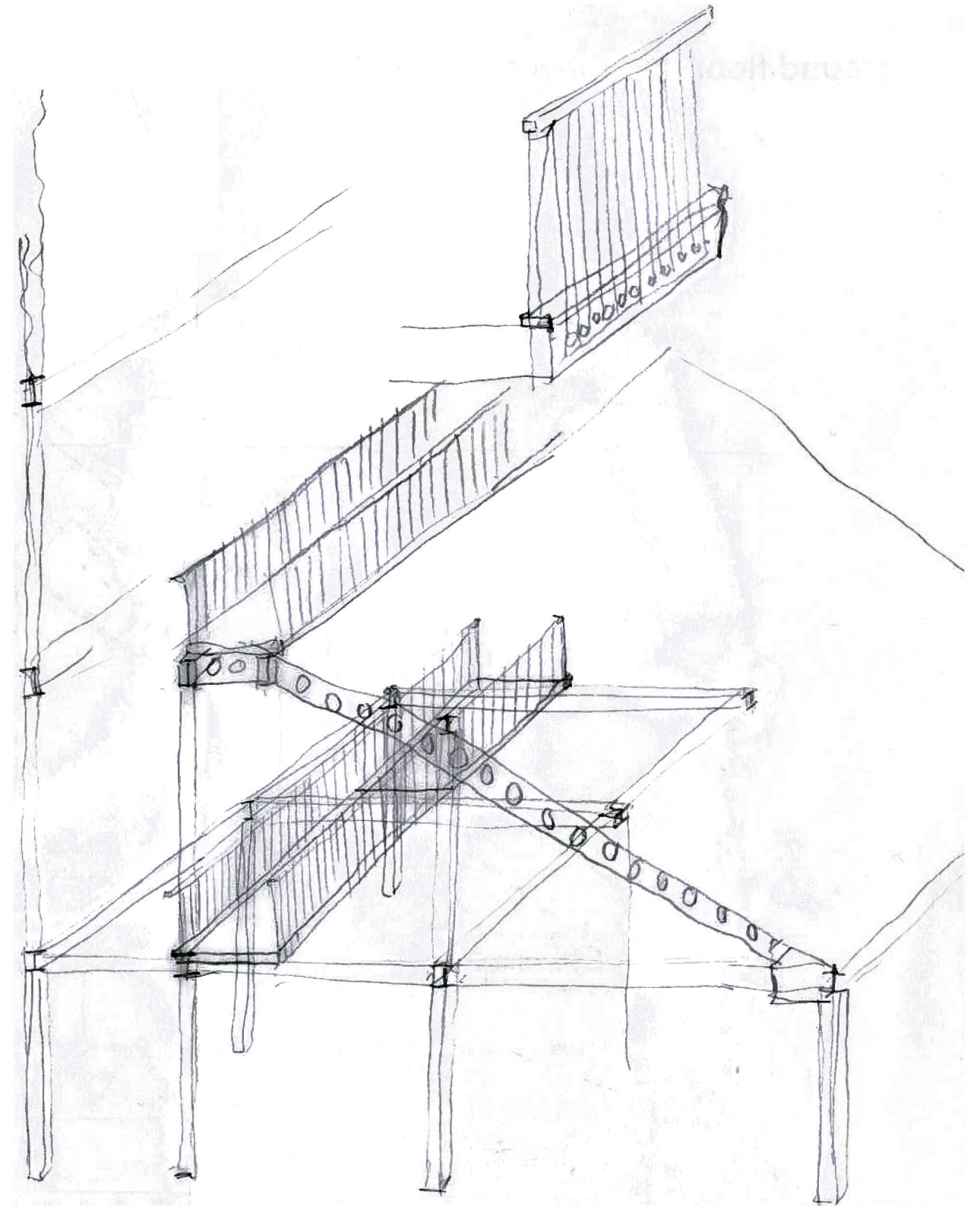
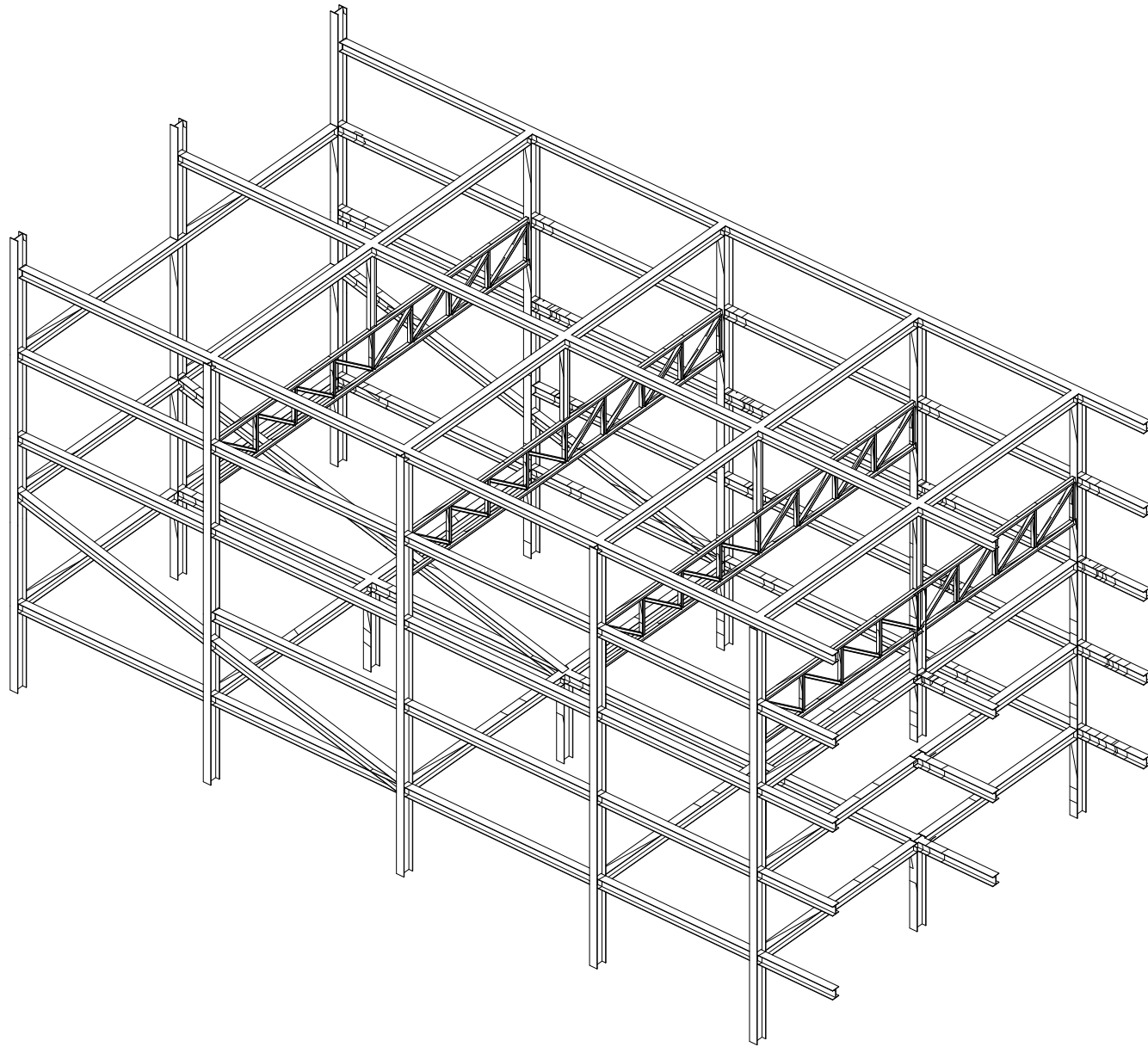




## steel construction

### week 4.2

structure axonometric  
steel columns and beams with clt floors



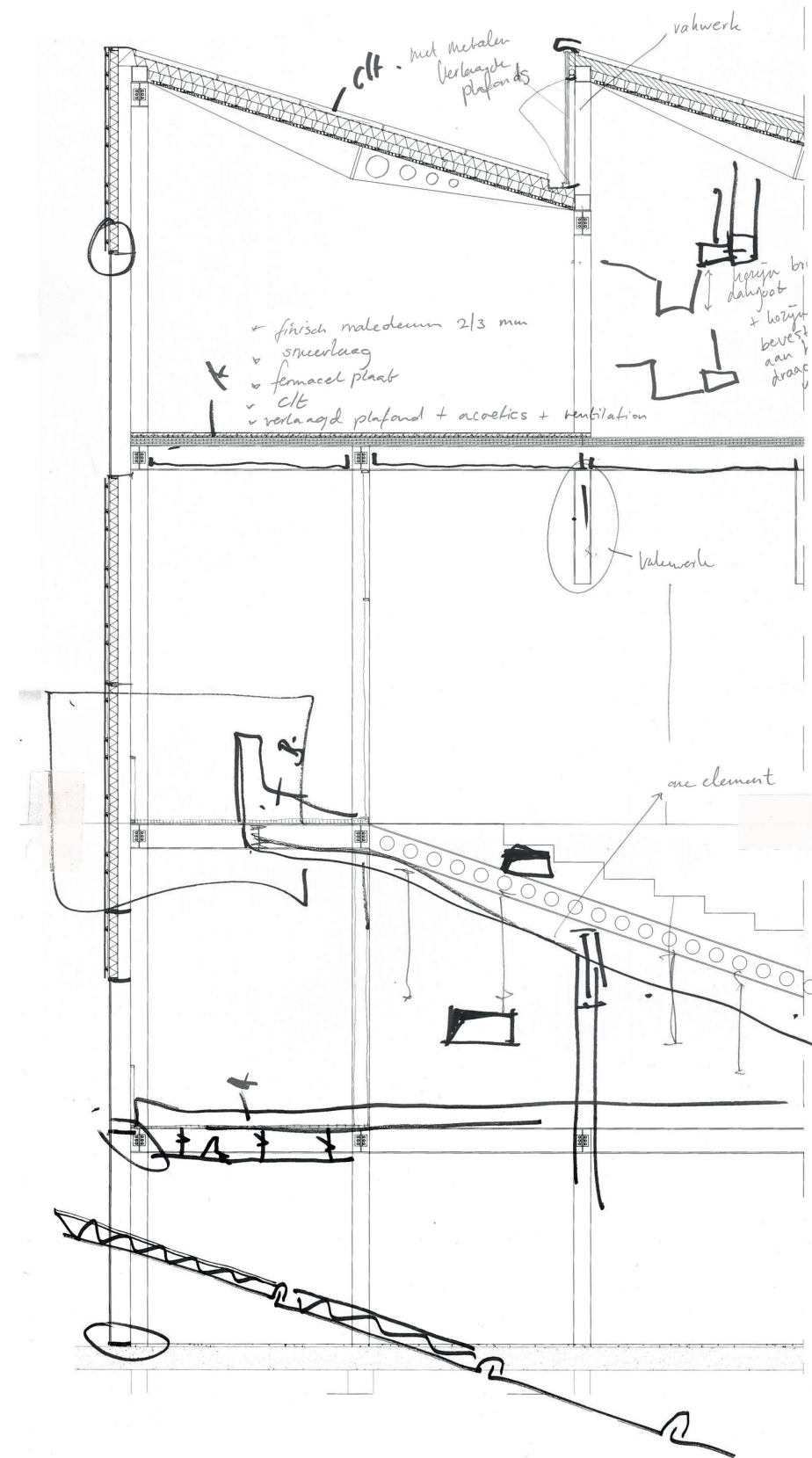
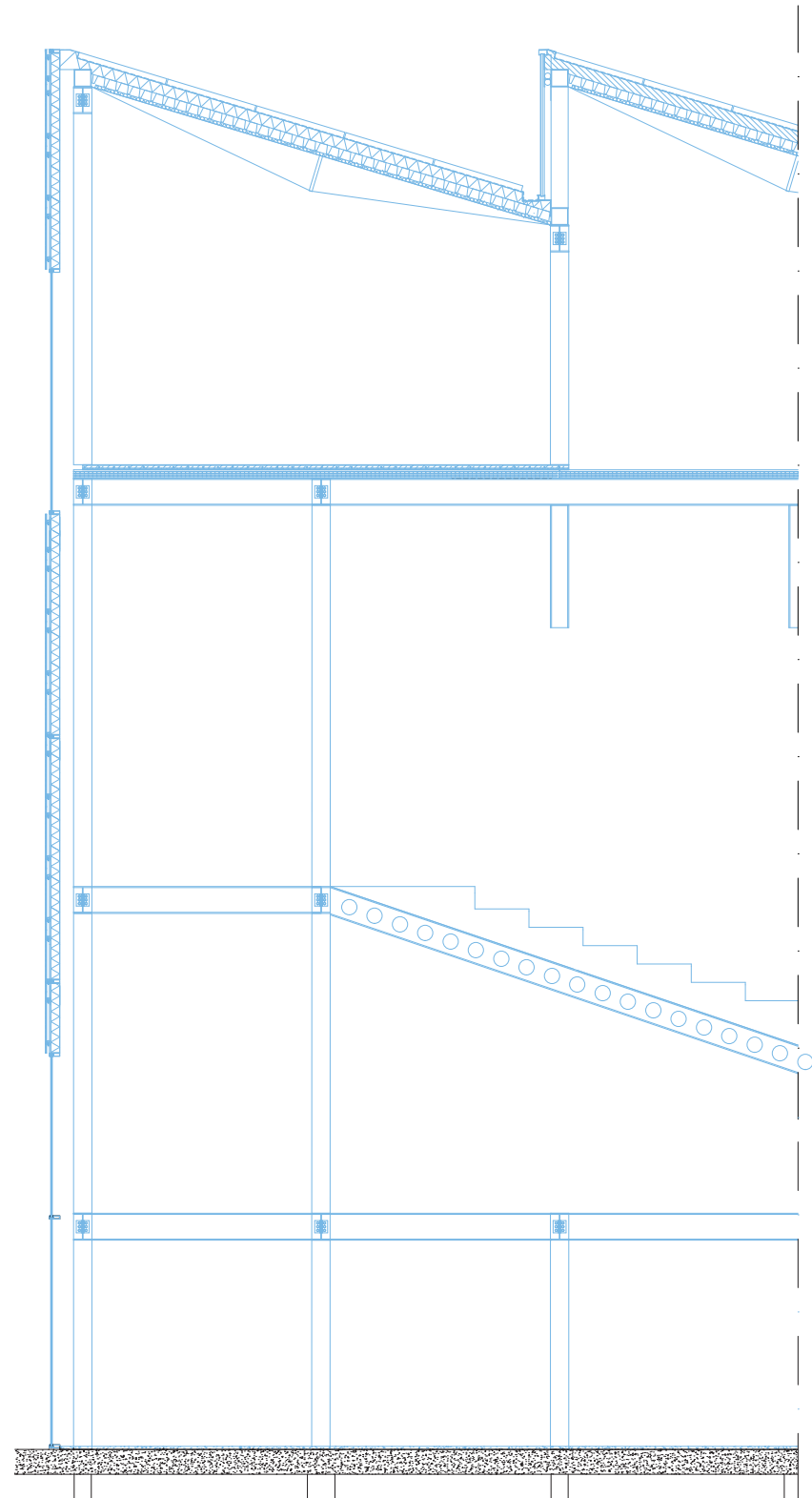
# BUILDING TECH



# detailing facade fragment 1.50

## week 4.2

how does the transparency of the curtain wall relate to the interiors? to the theatre? breaking through the conventional theatre building....





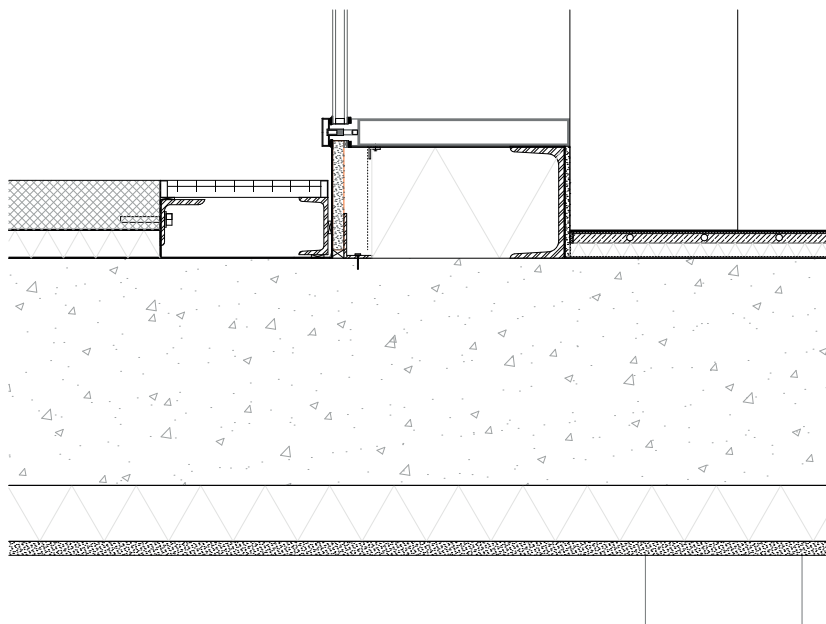
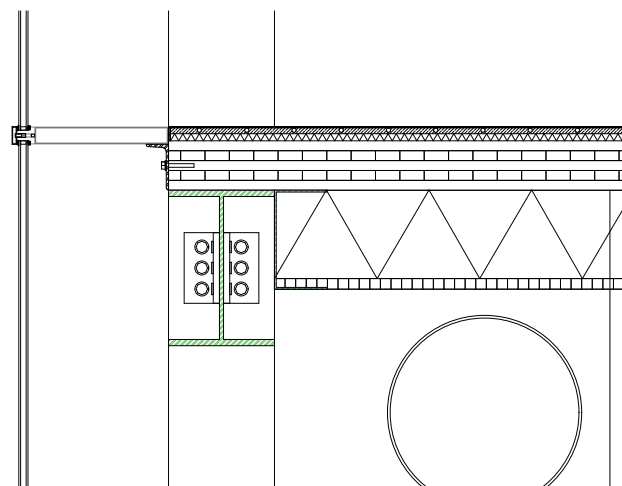
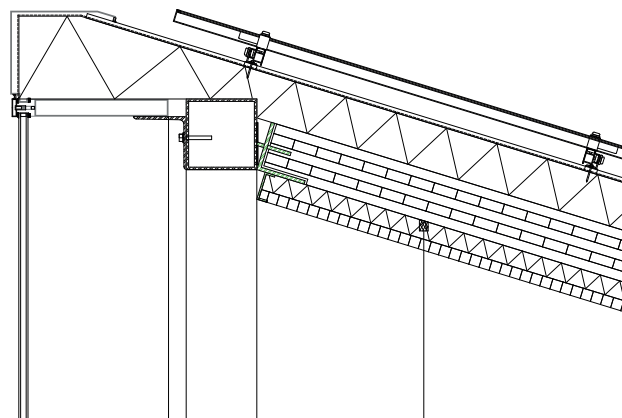
ON DETAILLING [berlage lecture] by Christoph Kumpusch

week 4.2

buildings outlive people  
looking at inspiring details, how are things built?



detailing 1.5

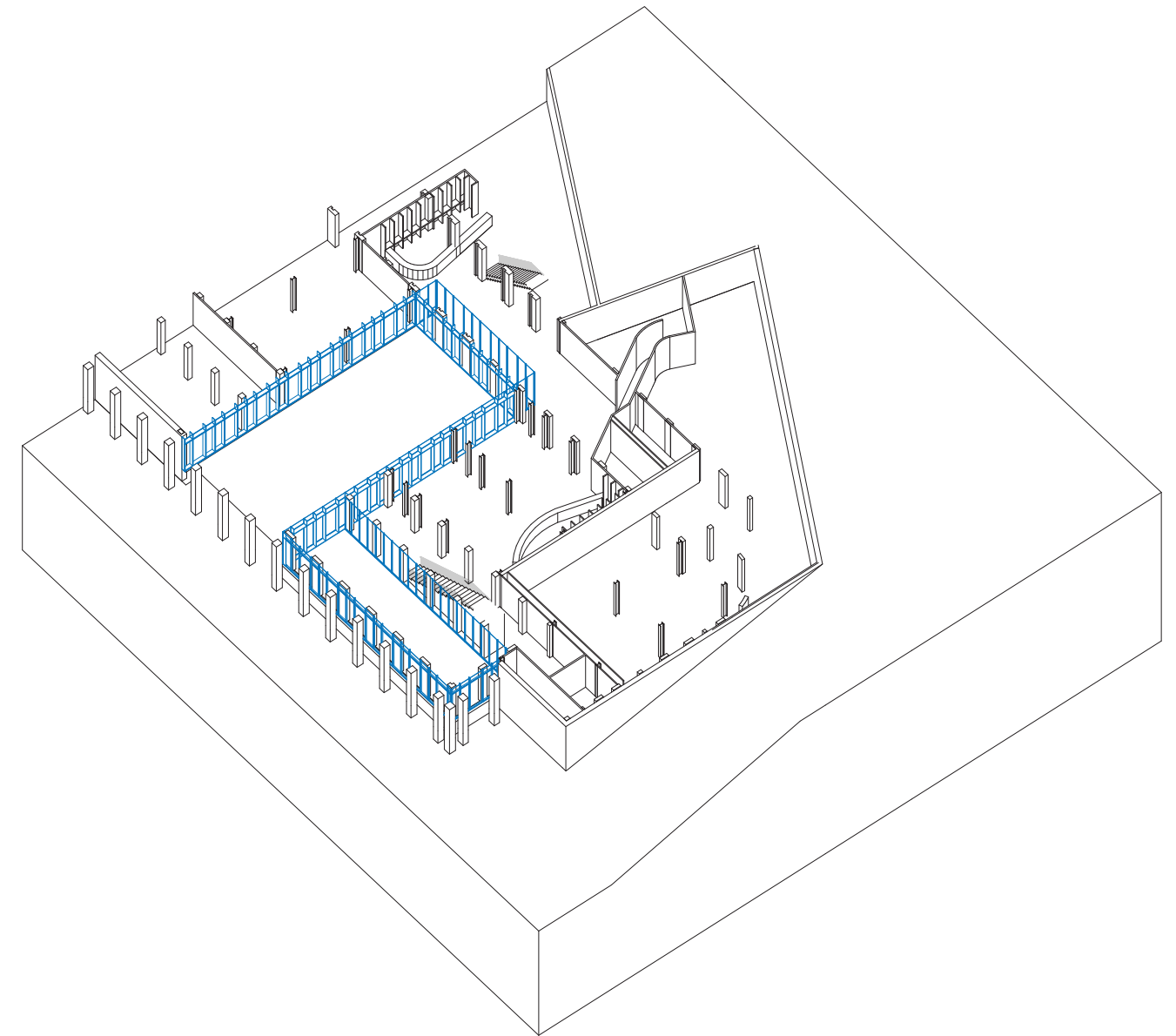




concept - theory  
final reflection on  
architectural and social  
relevance

site 1.5000/1.1000  
ground floor plan 1.500  
floorplans 1.200/1.100  
crosssections 1.200/1.100  
fragment plan 1.50  
facade fragment horizontal  
and vertical detail 1.20  
details 1.5

views  
axonometric theatres  
axonometric construction  
axonometric detail 1.10  
elevations ribbon





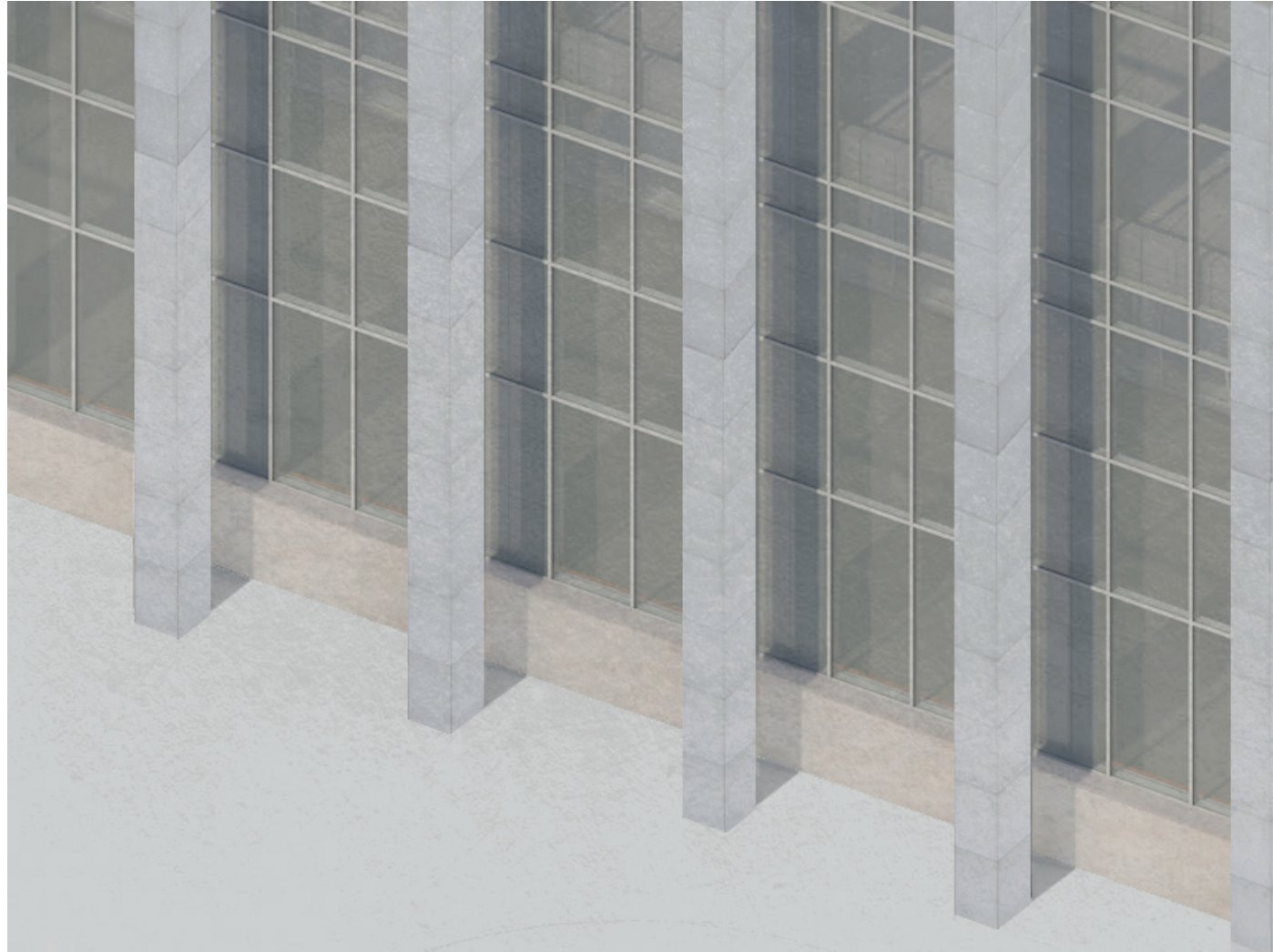




# materiality

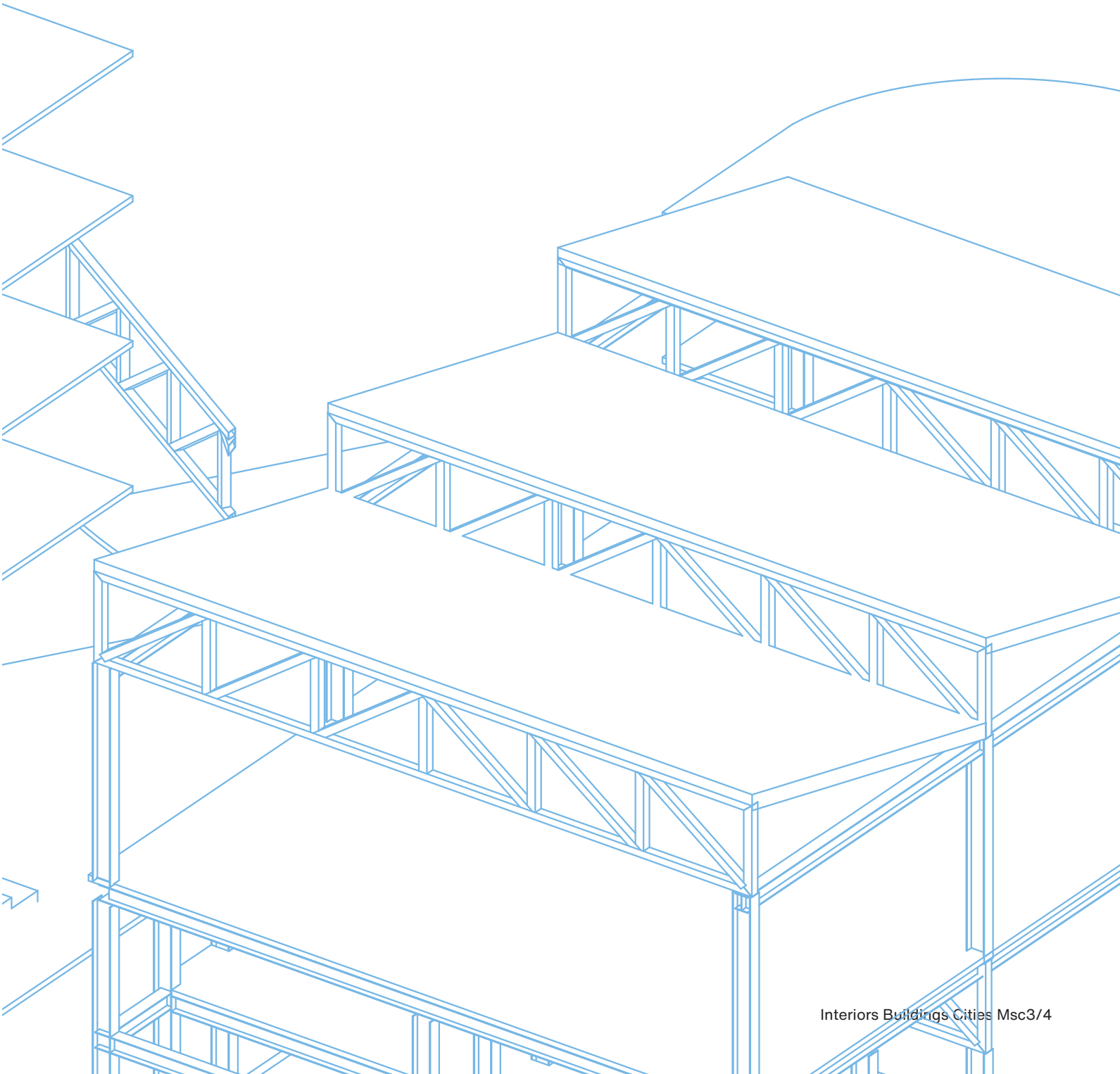
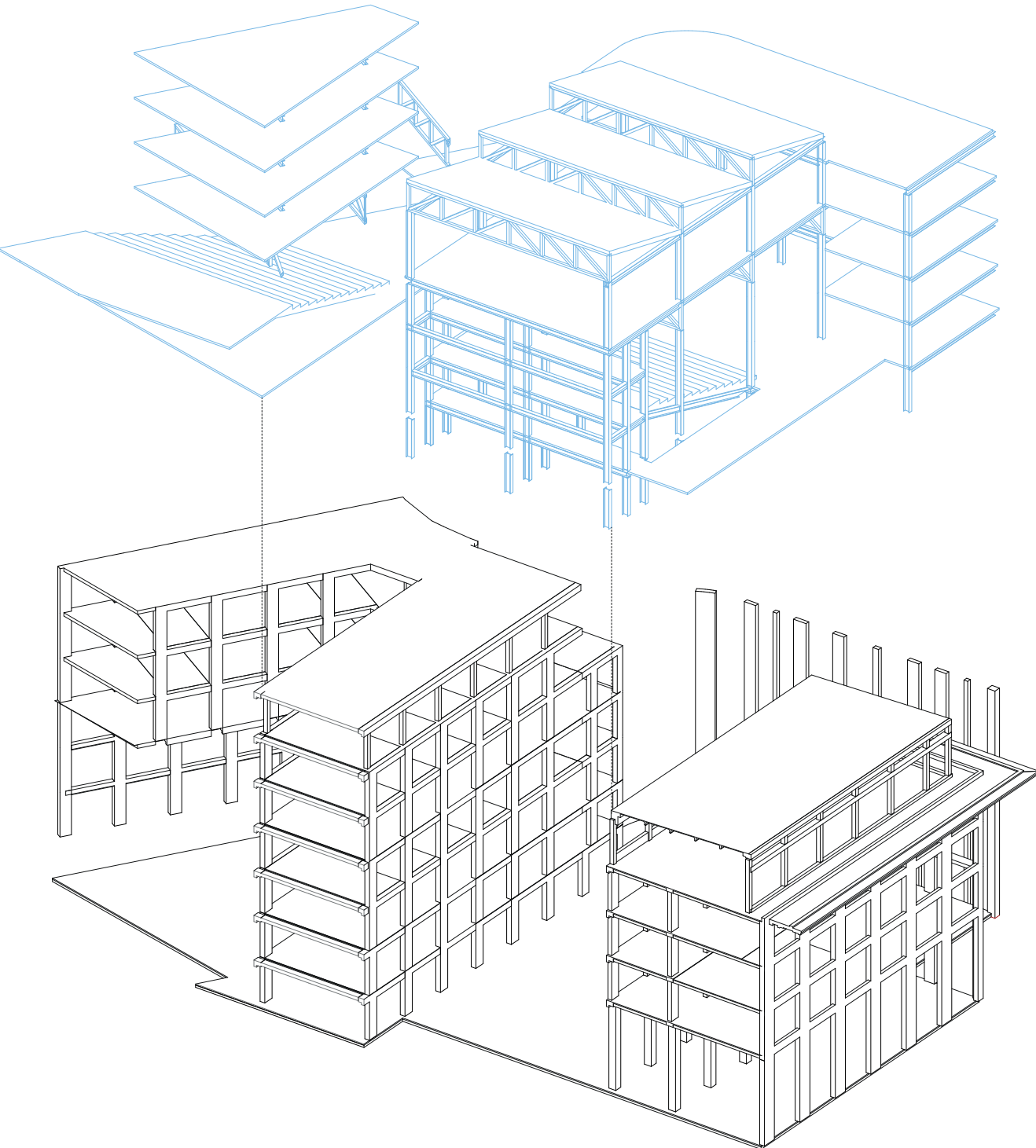
## week 4.3

a use of solid and light materials  
metals and stone to match the material palette of the bank  
the marble... the beautiful roofs... the floors... the columns...  
how can we find a materiality for the new building that  
doesn't overshadow the existing? how can we find a material  
that doesn't fade within the existing?  
a soft combination of solids and transparants  
metal, steel, glass vs. wood, warmth, stone  
thin aluminium windowframes of the curtain wall oppose the  
solid material inside





insertion of a new structure  
week 4.3





# the office

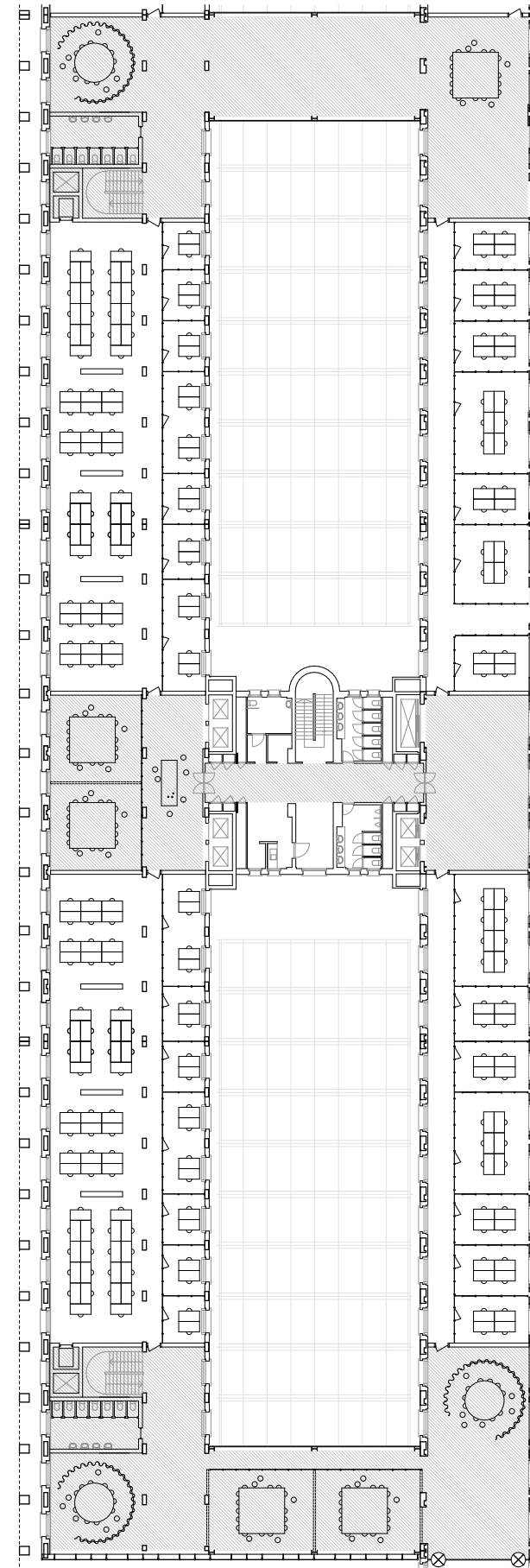
## week 4.3

creating routes through the office floor  
coffee corners connected to bridges  
open and flexible workspaces, permeable  
closed of workspaces but transparant

introducing the coffeecorner more generously through the  
building aiming to establish more open communications  
within the office space

an open office floor with privacy, places to be 'unseen'

breaking the long sight lines and creating places of  
recognition  
within the large building it is important to be able to locate  
oneself within the structure

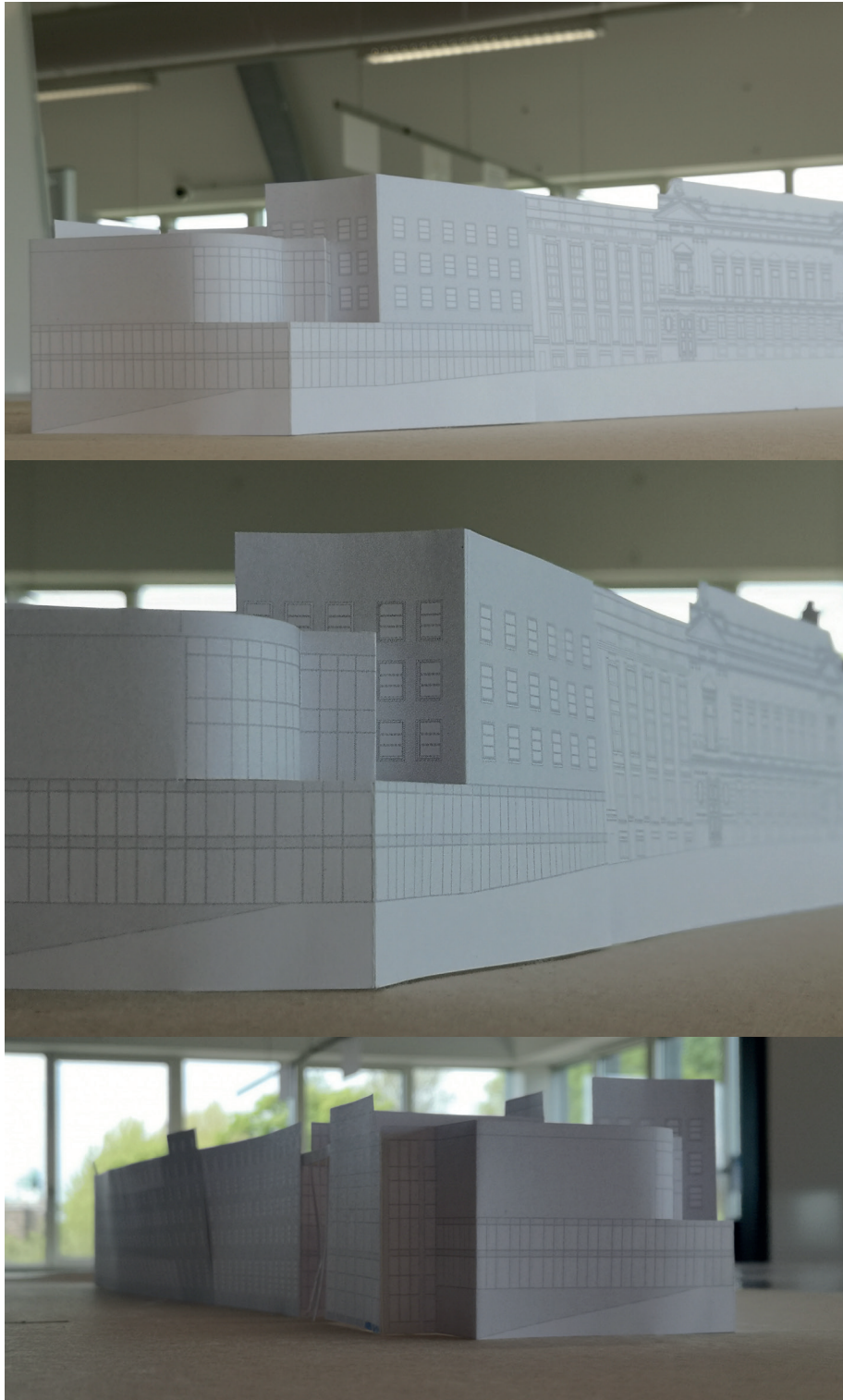




# sketchmodelling elevations

## week 4.3

extending the curtain wall along the existing like a ribbon  
sketchmodelling the facades...





# The Future Bank

This year, the Interiors Buildings Cities graduation studio has revolved around the topic of the Future Bank. The project addresses the transformation of the National Bank of Belgium set in Brussels. The existing building consists of a vast triangular urban block of 90.000 m2 consisting of a conglomerate of different buildings from different time periods. The main building was designed by Van Goethem just after the Second World War. It is an imposing building with a 200 meter long columnar façade, rising up from the adjacent boulevard. The complexities of the site, the sectional shift of two stories, the position between upper and lower Brussels etc., and the critical position of the bank as an institution within the contemporary societal climate make this design project a critical and challenging one.

In the first semester a lot of collective research was done on office and bank buildings. We researched office precedents from different time periods in order to gain knowledge about different ways of working, about the effects of technology and innovation of the office layout, about the role of emancipation on office design etc. Drawings, photographs, models and readings helped us to take a position on office design (as well as the bank building). Starting from the same point, we all positioned ourselves within the context of the national bank in Brussels resulting in a variety of interesting projects.

My interest was sparked by the Economist Buildings by the Smithsons (1964), one of the precedents. To address this complicated project in Brussels, I looked more closely at the scale and the permeability of the design of the Smithsons, which of course was the opposite of what we were dealing with. By juxtaposing these two, my design process was sparked and the notion of permeability became a leading thread through the project.

The main driver of the project is to address the bank within its societal context and to reframe its relationship with its surroundings and the citizens. Brussels aims to be a doughnut economy, which means it's not aiming for unending growth, but it's aiming for stability and equality. The bank therefore needs to drastically change its elitist face towards the city and should aim to be an inviting institution for the citizens of Brussels. In order to establish this the project aims to be permeable for the public, allowing to re-establish the connection between upper and lower Brussels, between the city of the institutions and the actual citizen.

The national bank and the city fabric are closely knit together by opening up the structure at specific moments through precise interventions. This allows for the bank to become part of a public corridor running from the cultural district in the south to the financial district in the north. At the same time the project embeds itself in the local area by addressing the square with the church, the hotel and the new housing developments.

By adding cultural program along the spine of the building, a new face towards the city is created. On the south a cultural building is realized with theatres, hybrid-use spaces, performance space etc. Situated on the north side is a public restaurant with a library. These public rooms are connected through a spine along which public and 'city life' happens. Exhibition space, auditoriums,

the banking hall, counters etc. Different routes lead the public through the building, creating a transparent and inviting institution.

The office is transformed by the implications of the cultural additions and interventions. The same method is implemented with creating a route through the office floors with more permeable spaces and more formal solid spaces. This is mainly reflected in materiality.

## Research and Design

In the studio of Interiors Buildings Cities research and design are not treated as separate elements. The research completely supports the design and vice versa. Through the year this has resulted in a diverse way of working supporting the design process. Questions that rise during designing became research questions and topics and then resulted back into a more thorough design. Because the studio was dealing with a very complex existing building, it was highly necessary to keep researching the existing fabric. With every design decision it was necessary to really dive into the existing plans, sections and details and see if this was even possible. This meant a continuous going back and forth between existing and new ideas.

Several briefs were given to guide the design process. For example, one of the briefs called intelligent ruins, asked of us to collectively built a 3D computer model of the building. A complex task but in the end helpful to understand the building better. It would have been helpful though, to start with this a lot earlier in the process in order to have a better understanding of the existing fabric you're working with. I feel it would have been very helpful to dive into the building a lot earlier in the year in order to really understand the implications of certain interventions.

In the design and research process tools such as sketching and modelling have been exercised again and again. For me personally it's a tool to quickly research thoughts or ideas and if they could work. The process of making models and sketching served the process in a way the digital workspace cannot. It allowed me to step away from the computer and really feel the atmosphere of interiors and exteriors.

## Relevance

Transformation has never been more relevant. The amount of vacant buildings, especially office buildings is large. With the current housing shortage problems we are facing it is highly essential to be able to transform buildings to flexible and usable spaces. Whether it be living spaces, offices or cultural spaces. In the coming decades, we as architects, will have to deal with transforming our cities and built environment mostly maybe through transformation. This project shows a building can be transformed to current needs without demolishing the whole.

The topic of hybrid and mixed use buildings (within existing fabric) is a highly relevant one in today's climate as well. The way architecture is practiced and taught within the studio, in this case addressing an existing building, is a delicate way of dealing with the built environment. It's a unique way of practicing architecture and taught me a lot on being precise and careful in ones views and interventions.



# services in the floors and walls

## week 4.3

realizing the implications of using clt floors in a public building with theatres

switching to lignatur floors in the theatres and performance space in order to be able to put vents and other installations in the floor

no finish needed, saving on materials needed for suspended ceilings

grey stained wooden acoustic panels : lignatur

Roof membrane with acoustics

Selected roof structure:

Polymer bitumen membrane 2nd layer

Polymer bitumen membrane 1st layer

Thermal insulation

Vapour barrier

LIGNATUR surface element (LFE) with acoustics

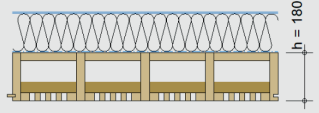
Possible span of LIGNATUR

7.8 m


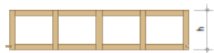




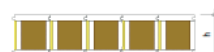
Snow load  $s_k$ : 100 kg/m<sup>2</sup>

Load roof structure  $a_k$ : 20 kg/m<sup>2</sup>

Dead weight of element g: 38 kg/m<sup>2</sup>





	h (mm)	kg/m <sup>2</sup>		h (mm)	kg/m <sup>2</sup>	
	120	37		120	33	
	140	39		140	35	
	160	42		160	36	
	180	44		180	38	
	200	47		200	39	
	220	49		220	41	
	240	52		240	42	
280	63	280	45			
320	68	320	48			
	kg/m <sup>2</sup>			kg/m <sup>2</sup>		
	REI 30	0		REI 30	0	
	REI 60	16		REI 60	13	
	kg/m <sup>2</sup>			kg/m <sup>2</sup>		
	* Splitt	45		* Splitt	50	
	* Splitt	90		* Splitt	100	
	silence12	22		silence12	25	
	kg/m <sup>2</sup>			kg/m <sup>2</sup>		
	** Absorber	3		** Absorber	4	
	h (mm)	kg/m <sup>2</sup>		h (mm)	kg/m <sup>2</sup>	
	120	2		120	2	
	140	3		140	3	
	160	3		160	4	
	180	4		180	5	
	200	5		200	5	
	220	5		220	6	
	240	6		240	7	
	280	7		280	8	
	320	8		320	10	

10





deep aluminium curtain wall frames





## curtains [work of petra blaisse]

### week 4.4

using curtains in the building to create a more intimate atmosphere - adding softness to the megastructure - creating privacy and intimacy within large spaces - used as sunshading, decoration and room dividers

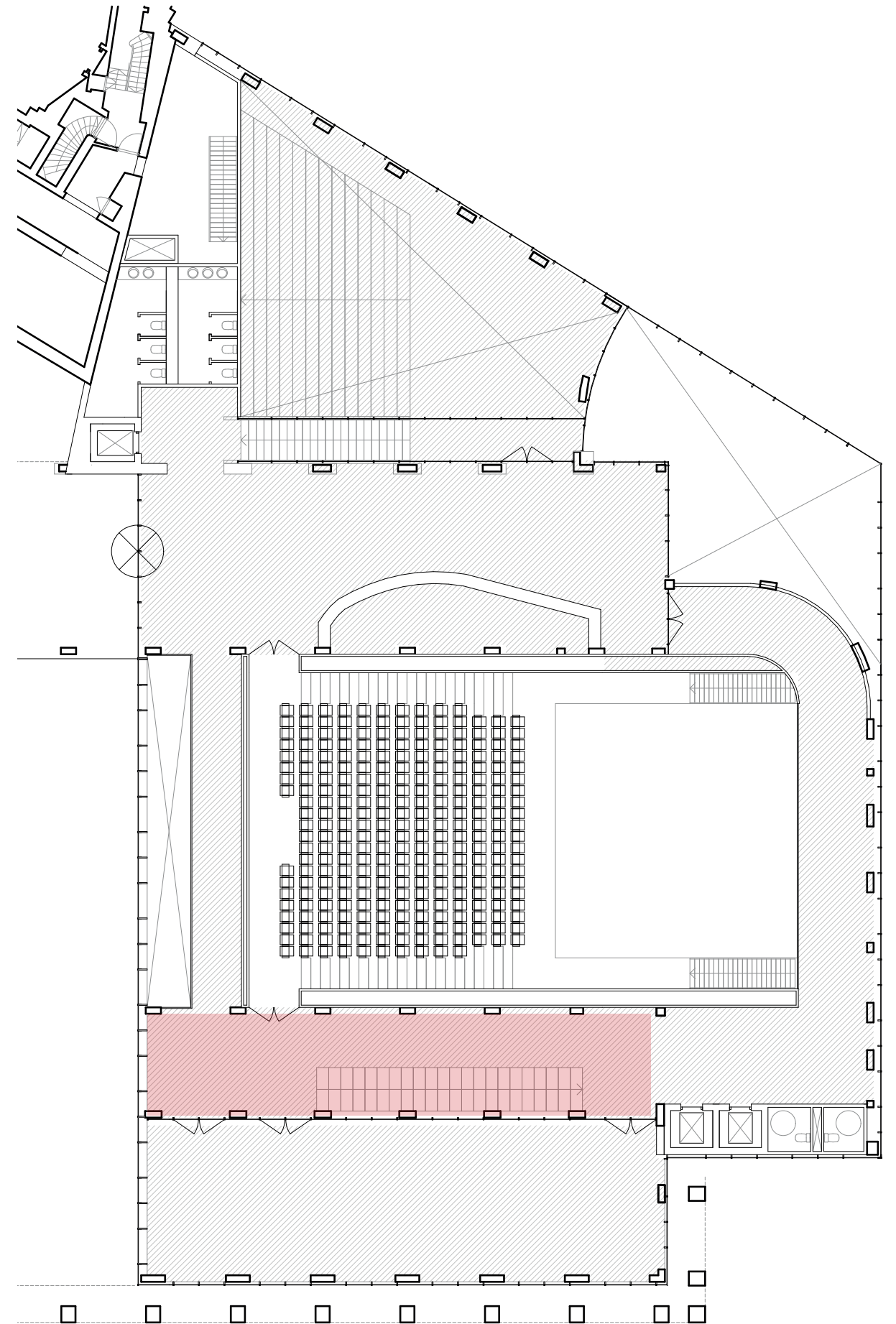




## public stairs [by koolhaas kunsthall]

### week 4.4

the narrow side of the wing can be used as circulation space, a generous public stair with light coming from three sides guiding the public along the routes through the buildings

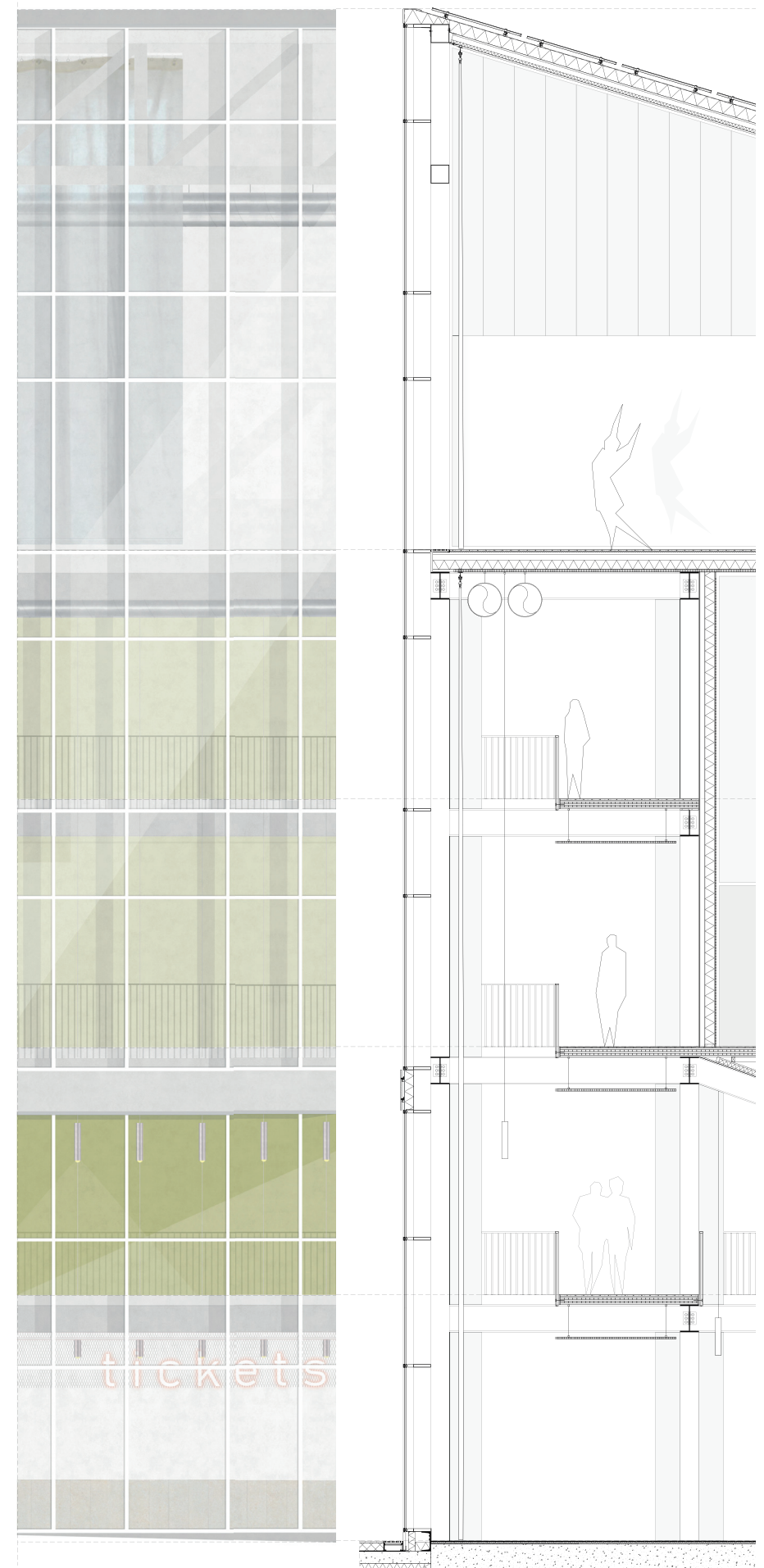
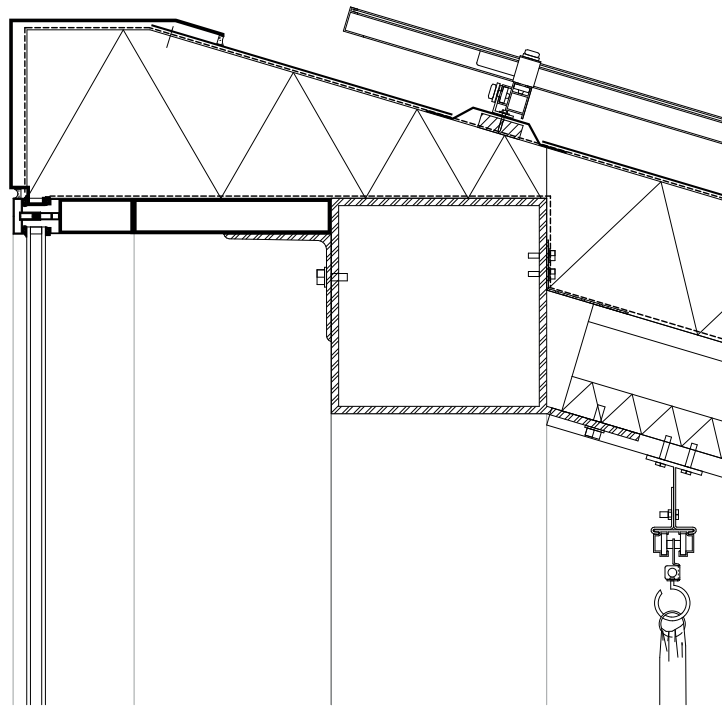




# facade fragment

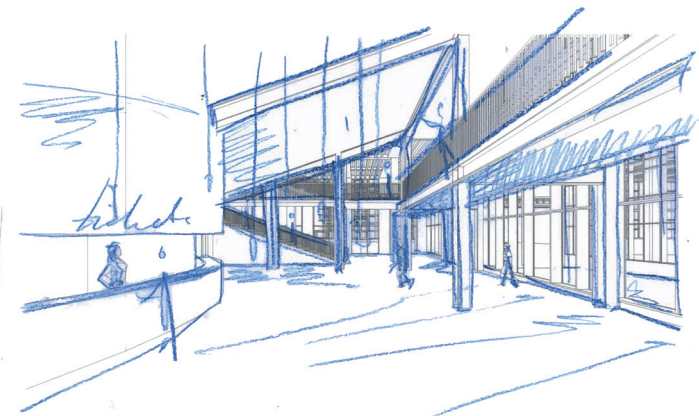
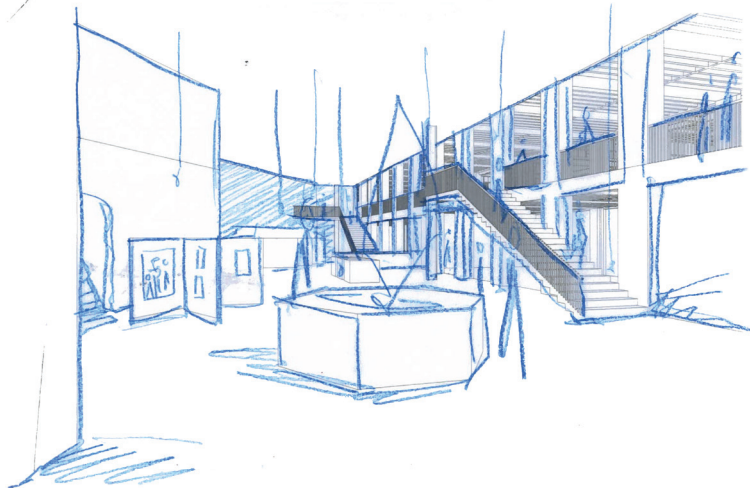
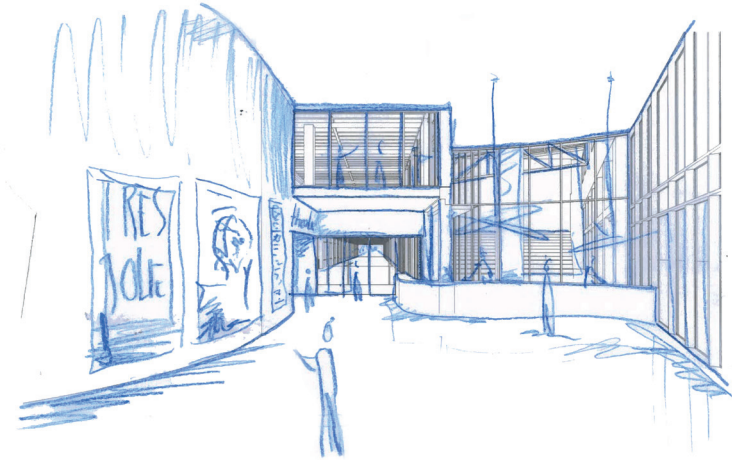
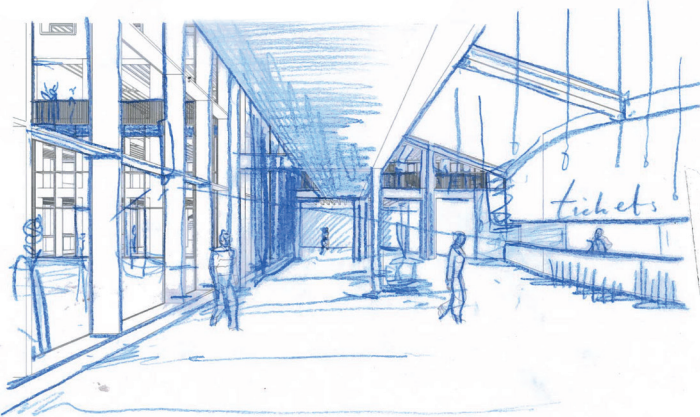
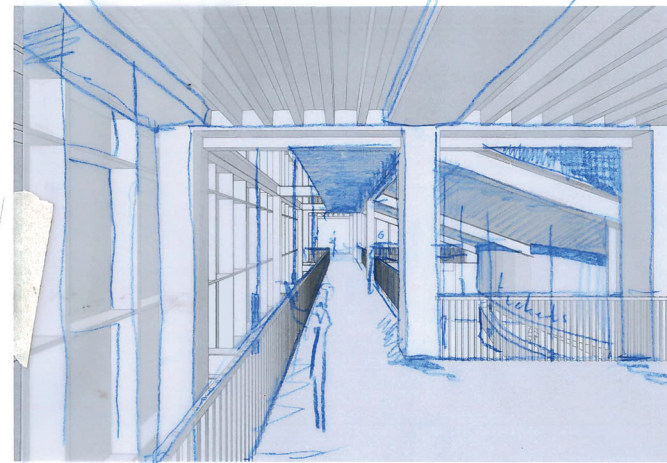
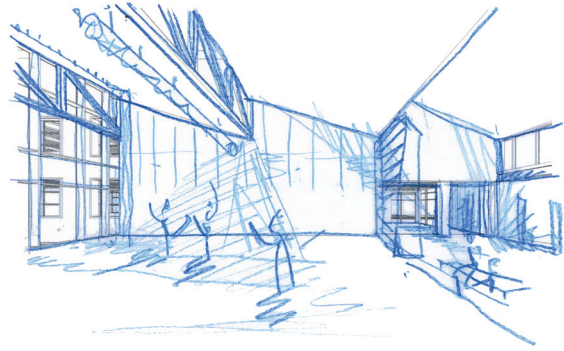
## week 4.4

a combination of solids and transparant materials





impression sketches  
prep P5





model photographs  
prep P5

