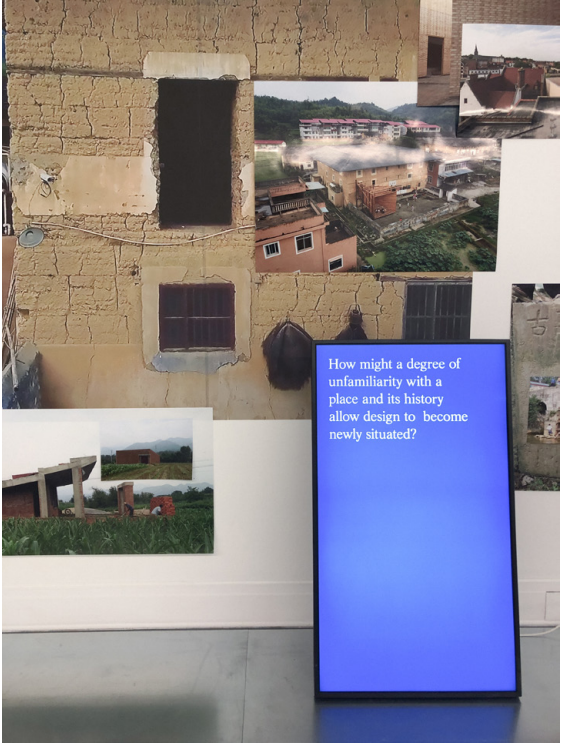




If the Canadian Center for Architecture is said to be, by peers and professionals, the pinnacle of an architecture center; my countless visits there - while being a student in Montreal, will only support such praises.

More than a just place of discourse, the CCA was for me plenty. From an open-air cinema during a warm summer night to a shelter when my hands were getting numb from the cold: many of my rituals in the city were gravitating around and towards that place.

Unfolding now my bond to the CCA would, I believe, be too soon and irrelevant. However, I intend, in this journal and throughout my year, to engage in a dialogue between my design and a place that genuinely shaped my time in the city.

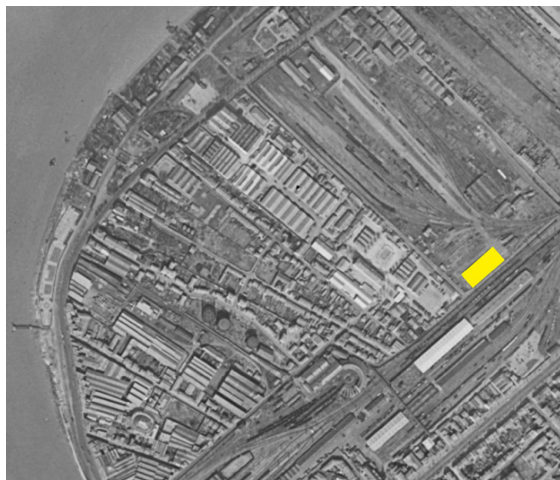




Reading room, photographed by Filip Dujardin, 2015
 Façades of the building, photographed by Filip Dujardin, 2015
 Inside one «magasin», unknown photographer and date



The building in railway sector, photographed by Alain Cassagnau, 2003
Aerial photograph of the site, 1965





Before launching the construction of our model/set, as to reproduce the photo of the reading room by Filip Dujardin, we ought to understand the elements composing the image (objects and materiality).

This preliminary research led us to understand the historical and geographical context of that building by Robbrecht and Daem.

At the same time, in an Excel sheet, we listed/catalogued every single object and texture composing the image.

The jointed research on the building from different scales helped us to understand the building as a whole.

Drawing the volumes out of foam
Realising the scale...



After the research, it was time to finally start building the model. Before actually tackling the issue of textures, colors and materials, we decided to solely focus on the volumes.

We had to divide the work very strategically as the model would turn out to be 2m x 0,7m big.

Out of foam, using plans and sections, we were cutting the volumes, and finally assembled what we called the «3 magasins», naming them A, B and C.

Naming things turned out to be essential considering the increasing number of pieces we were cutting.

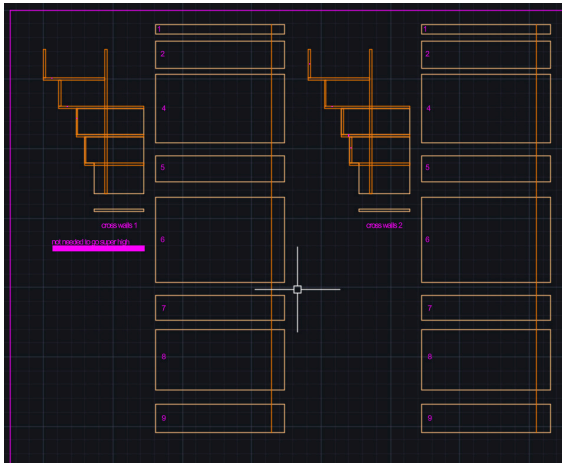
Yet, if we had a clear idea on how to model the concrete volumes, the way to model the light on the left on the image was still unclear despite the recommendations during the tutoring.

We first opted for a led strip but the intensity and scale of the light turned out to be deceptive.

a catalog of the different pieces constituting one «magasin»







Naming methodically all the different pieces allowed us to gain time during the building phase.

That building phase was divided in two parts:

- the painting
- the assembling

Painting took the longest time, and would be crucial since it will determine the whole aesthetics and consistency of our model.

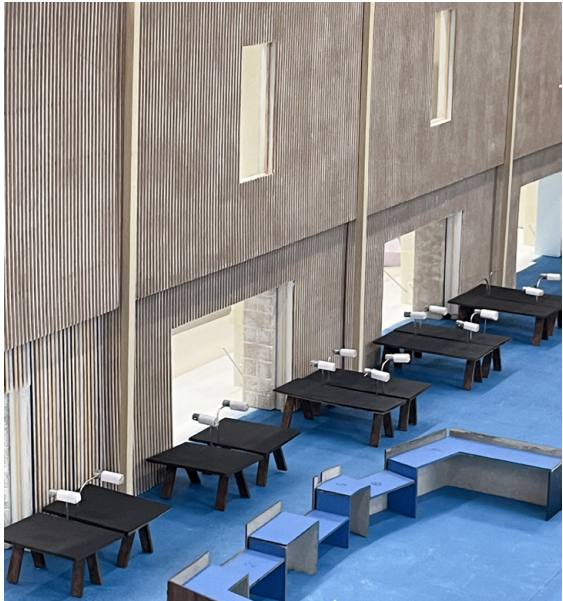
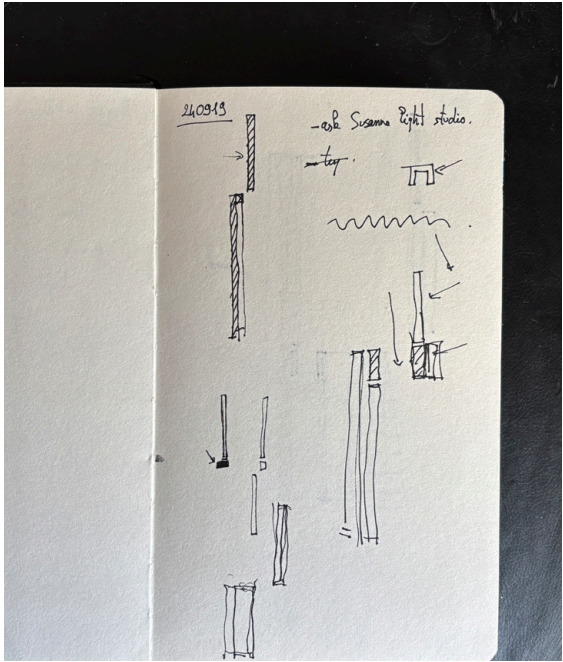
When the concrete was finished, we had to decide, by juxtaposing sample next to the concrete, on how to represent the wood and the carpet of our space.

If the fabric was the most realistic, it turned out to fragment the image and made the concrete texture less convincing. Following the critiques of week 1.2 it turned out indeed that doing all the texture in paint was the best solution in order to produce a homogeneous and consistent image.

Painted concrete volumes juxtaposed with a floor in sugarpaper
 Painted concrete volumes juxtaposed with a floor in fabric and a painted wood texture
 Painted concrete volumes juxtaposed with a painted floor and a painted wood texture



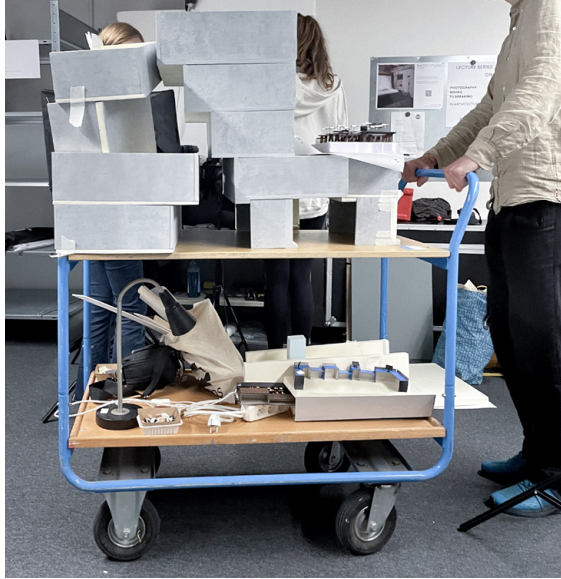
Sketches on how to design the Lambrisering wall
Lambrisering wall using corrugated cardboard



Fragments of the model in the photo studio
System to filter the light within the model









Week 1.4

path towards the Sounthern terrace
glimpse on the Crowne Plaza Hotel by Stynen



view on the highway from De Singel
From the left to the right: BP Building (Stynen), Silvertoptorens (de Roover), De Singel (Beel + Stynen)







It seems hard to give a definition, in scale and limits of the site in which de Singel is situated. The constellation of buildings: the BP Building, the Crowne Plaza Hotel, the Silvertopstorens and de Singel, seem to all acknowledge and respond to each other. However, the landscape is discontinuous: the highway is fragmenting the site.

A corridor in the building by Stynen
Connecting bridge between the building by Stynen and Beel





Within the building, a lot of empty spaces. Some are in the process of being turned anew, some, are left abandoned. For some staff members, it is sometimes even hard to tell what is the function of certain spaces...

Some space are left as residues.



The new building by Beel, swallowing the one by Stynen



Week 1.5

Building framing the landscape near de Singel



Week 1.5





Within the archive co-exist this ambivalence or order/disorder. Maybe what appears to be chaos is just a misunderstood organisation?

Medical instruments within a shelf of the VAI Archives
Purple chirurgical gloves





The sterilized metal furnitures, coupled with the synthetic cold neon light give to the archives an almost operation room character. Within that framework, in which the archival spaces are only defined by their practicality - i.e storing and protecting material), it seems like a challenge to imagine a space in which the outside world intervene. How one can bring poetry within such space?





Visiting what remains of Jul de Roover's oeuvre serves as a starting point in this research. During our time in Antwerp, we visited three of his buildings and saw five of them in total. Most of them underwent, in the late life of Jul de Roover, renovations and refurbishments. The renovation of the Silvertoporens, wrapped into new colorful skins, denotes a certain disdain towards the work of Jul de Roover.

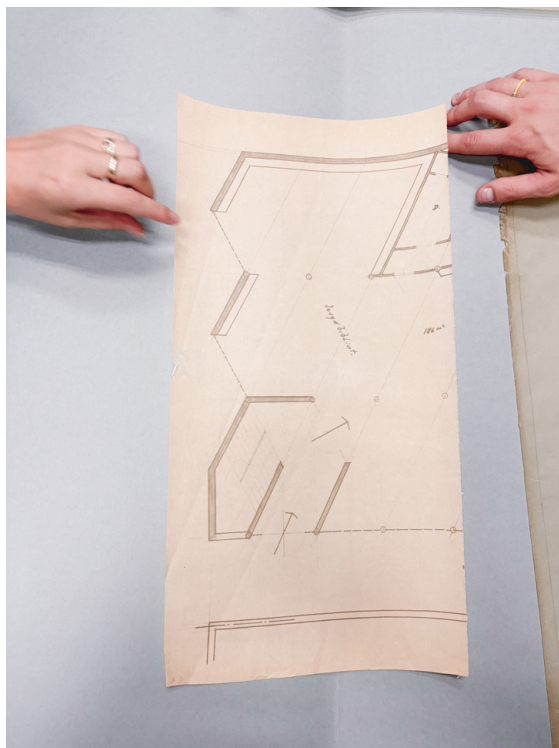
Facade of the daycare center Melkweg by de Roover, Antwerp
 Inside the daycare center, renovated by AG Vespa





Same goes for a house he designed in Berchem. If the façade was left intact and restored, the interiors endured severe transformations. The color scheme was not respected, and the tacky designer furniture is distracting us from the quality of the domestic space.

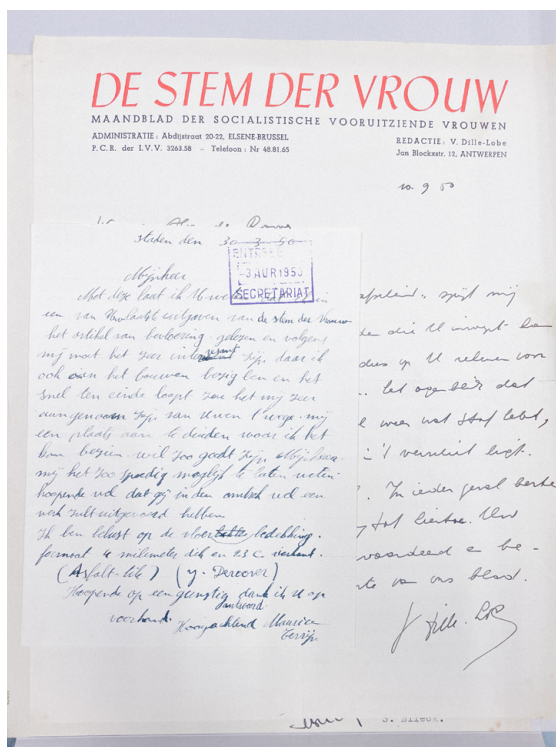
In fact, the heritage of Jul de Roover seems to be forgotten; his work considered as the one of an almost not-so-important architect. From these on-site observations, one can ask themselves if it would even be relevant to design an archival room for an “anonymous”.



However, the materials found at the VAI Archives are tackling these early beliefs; positioning Jul de Roover alongside the *crème de la crème* of Belgian modernists.



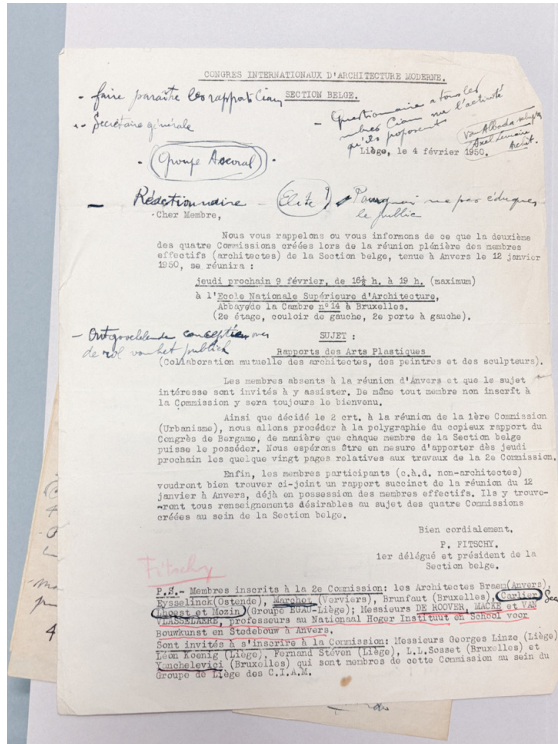




Formed and as an “Interior Architect”, Jul de Roover could be seen as an activist when it comes to his discipline. Opinionated socialist, teacher, and prolific writer of pamphlets: he believed in Modernist architecture as a way to speak and improve the life of the many. Yet, after joining the CIAM Congress in 1953 – when the movement’ influence was starting to fade out; Jul de Roover became critical of a movement hijacked by the elite.

The annotations on the CIAM invitations he received are displaying such rebuff. He wrote: “An Exhibition is a necessity”. For him, the movement failed to address the public. As such, he started to admire the new European ideas for an “Anti-Design”, led by groups like Superstudio or Archigram. The latter work of his student are tainted by such development in his thinking.

Represented in his archives through a majority of photos (furniture,



exhibitions), his modernist tendencies cannot fully represent the span of his thinking regarding *Interior Architecture*. In the CIAM reports, we perceive the cracks, the doubts.

To understand and pay justice to his work, and the discipline he forged; an archival space for Jul de Roover should be designed as a domestic arena, a salon in which the core of his modernist ideas is being confronted to the ricochets he had on other people as a teacher and as a writer.

Scale model of a house by de Roover
Interiors drawing of a house by de Roover and van Treeck



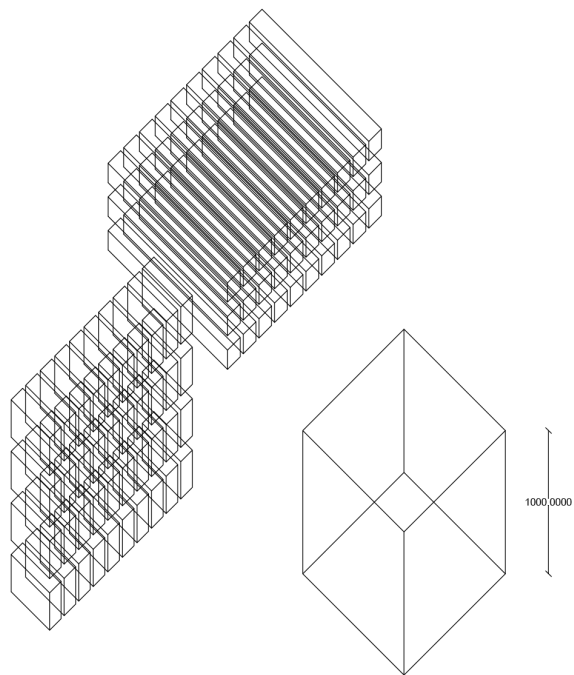
Photos of the exhibition «Woon met Kleur», curated by de Roover in 1958
 Piece of furniture designed by de Roover

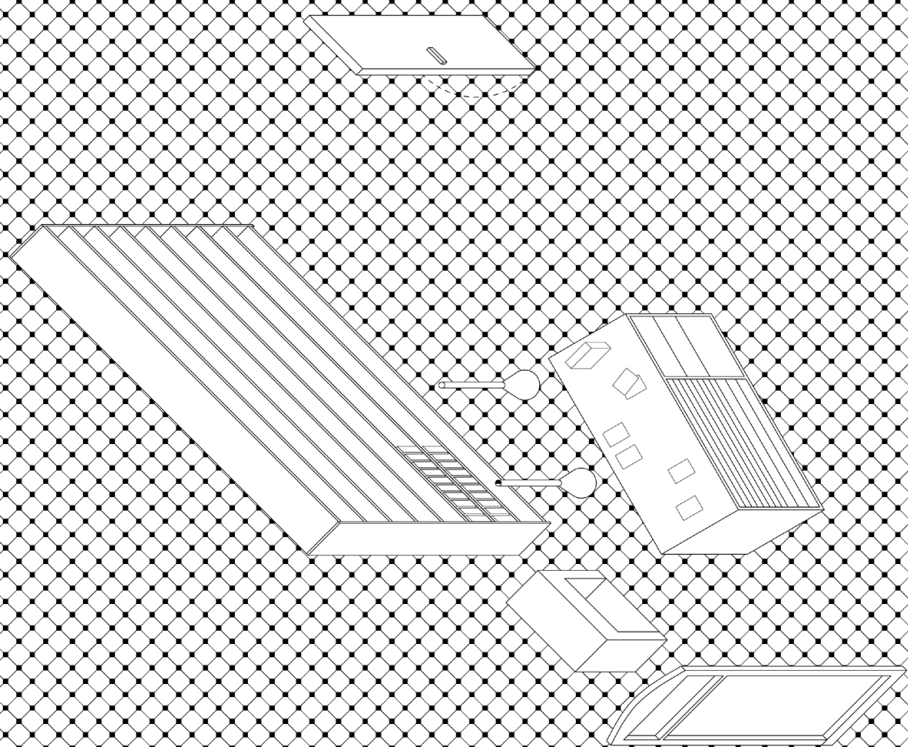






The Werkstoffarchiv in St. Gallen, Switzerland, combines the creation of a domestic salon within an archival space. If maybe not political *per se*, the spatial layout and the furniture are fostering dialogues. Distanced yet connected through a large table, the art books library is put in relation to the construction materials archive on the other side of the room. The table is a mediator: both display and research apparatus that connects two worlds.





To create a political space within the archive, it would be essential to divide the material in two cabinets, one that would contain the core of his modernist ideas (furniture, plans and models of his projects), and one furniture, more flexible, which could contain some work of the people he influenced. Again, as the articulation between the two: a table.

One key question is how the materials are archived and sorted following a rational system. How can you decide in a scientific way which document goes in which cabinet? Should the influence cabinet be one of temporary materials? Should it be exhibiting too?

The elements within the space could refer to domesticity in the proportion they take. An archival storage could disguise in a fireplace. In fact, a foyer seems important to foster exchange and create domesticity.



After Week 1.6, I decided to look back at the VAI to understand how a traditional archive functions. As such, I focused on a photograph of an office space nestled between two shelves. Deprived of natural light and interaction with other users, this space seems to lack appealing qualities. The archivist appears almost diminished by the task of storing and sorting materials.

Creating spaces for debate and interaction among the shelves would not only improve the archivists' environment but also encourage serendipitous discoveries and integrate political discourse as a ritual within the core of the archive; in close contact with the materials. This approach would necessitate a reduction in the overall size of the space, consolidating functions into a single room through the use of designated and climatically independent furniture.

For Jul de Roover, *interior architecture* is a political discipline. Therefore, it is essential that the space enables visitors and researchers to reflect on both past and present Belgian interior realm. However, the archive must maintain its credibility and sobriety. The materials and visual expression of the space should align with those found in a traditional archival setting, whilst the spatial proportions and furniture should evoke a domestic interior.

The initial sketch of the space illustrates these concepts. It features two main furniture cabinets, one designed to resemble the proportions of a domestic fireplace. A table is placed between them, serving as a workstation for two researchers. Protected through ventilation and a high climate control, materials can remain on the table for at least a day, allowing it to double as an exhibition surface. The room is a modest space that invites politics and debate into the core of an archive.

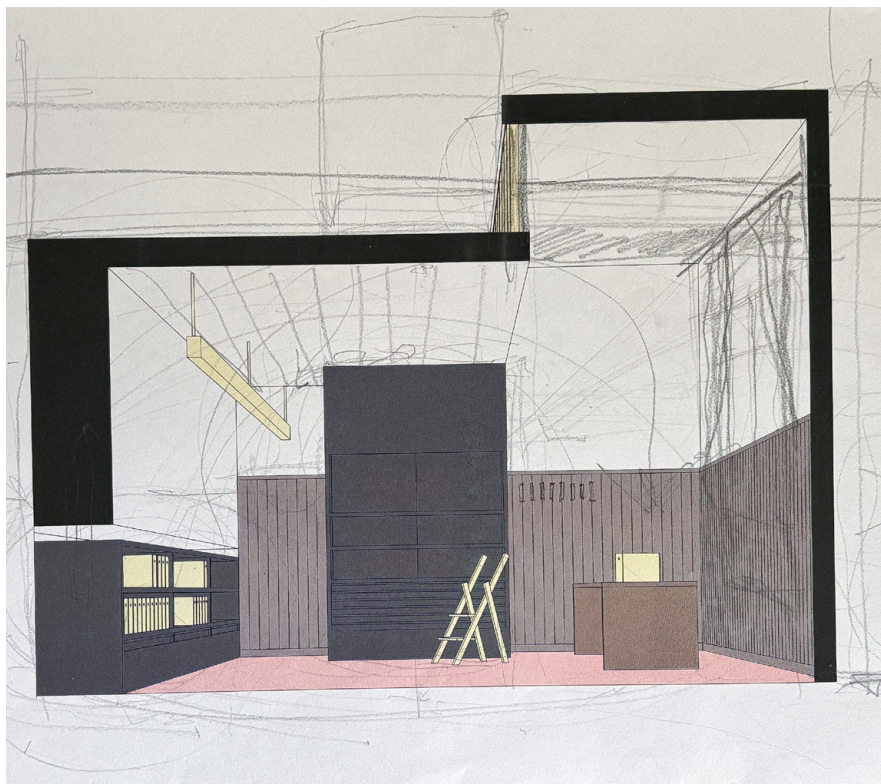
Sketch articulating the idea of a space of interactions, following the Werkstoffarchiv



Scale model 1:25 following the sketch



Week 1.7



The tutoring of week 1.7 helped me clarify my narrative while understand the current qualities of my space and how to expend it. In fact, the space is showcasing a clear spatial organisation. However, the contact with the exterior, the polis, is not clear year. Clarifying the relation of this space with the outside would help in understanding the ambitions of such space in relation with the city.

By expending the model, we should be able to perceive that this archive is, in fact, “peripheral”. In other words, decentralising the archive within a neighboring; bridging direct links with the city and the public sphere.

Yet, I realised that connecting this space with the polis in a commercial way is not my intention. Making a decentralised humble archive doesn’t mean discarding the small rituals that makes this space so special to the public. A “*Disneyfication*” is here not an option. In other words, if this space should not be esoteric, it should also not be a didactic and commercial approach to the act of archiving or to the approach of de Roover.

Maybe the furniture tryptic should also be expended or defined better. Maybe the core of de Roover’s *oeuvre* can be confronted, not to the reverberations of his work (which would be a difficult archival process), but to the contemporary *Interior Architecture* field. Thus, not per se a commercial space, the archive could, following de Roover’s heritage, produce knowledge and distribute it to the city.

Reflections on *Archive Fever* and on capturing de Roover's legacy

In reflecting on how Derrida's *Archive Fever* might influence my approach to designing the archive for Jul de Roover, I find myself rethinking the very nature of what an archive should be. Derrida challenges the notion that archives are neutral spaces; instead, they are sites of authority, spaces where decisions about what is remembered and what is forgotten are made. This raises questions on what can be left out and what will be kept. How to ensure that the complexity of his work, both as an architect and a political thinker, is represented without reducing him to a single narrative?

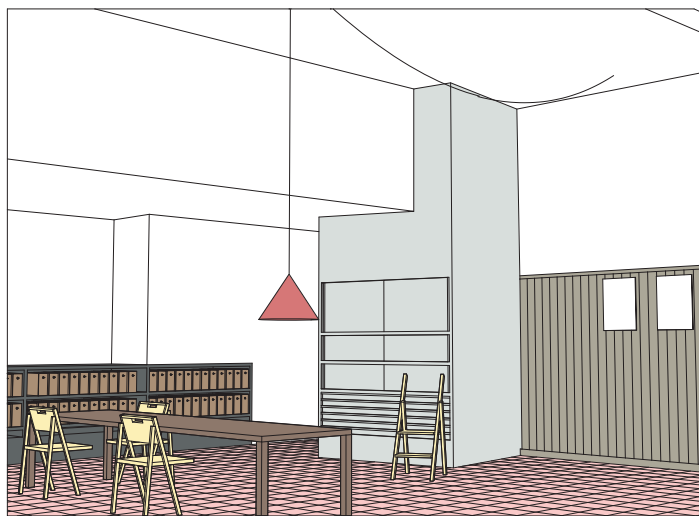
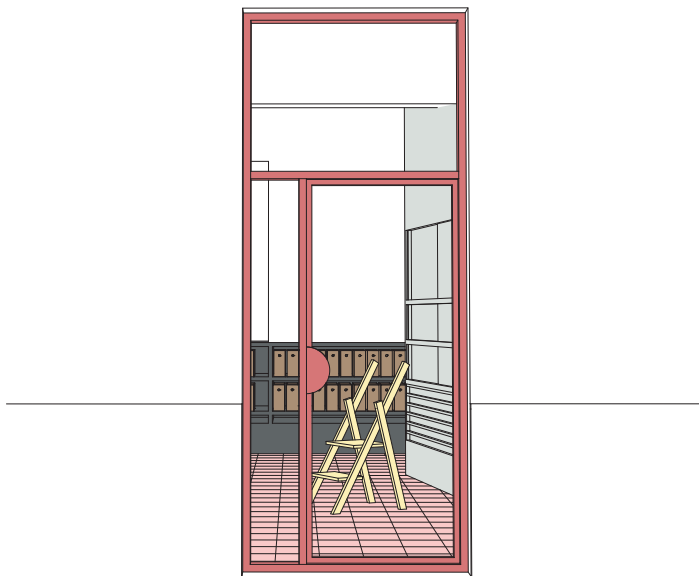
Derrida's reflections on the political dimension of the archive, both through what and how it contains, feels especially relevant for this case. De Roover was deeply political: viewing *Interior Architecture* as a tool for social change. His critiques of Modernism's elitism and his later admiration for more radical movements like Superstudio suggest that his archive should be more than just a quiet repository of his designs. Derrida's notion of archive fever, this compulsive desire to archive everything, makes us think about the urgency and impossibility of capturing de Roover's labile political voice. It can't just be about documenting his past; the archive should foster new dialogues about *Interior's Architecture* role in social life today. If the latter informs us about how the archive is managed or organised; we need to understand how the Political of this archive is informed and fostered through the spatiality of the room. Derrida's attention to materiality and space is something particularly relevant as to think about how the archive for Jul de Roover should take shape. Emphasizing that an archive is not just about the content it holds but also about the physical space that frames it, ties directly into my belief that de Roover's legacy is best reflected in a domestic environment. By creating a space that feels intimate, familiar, and domestic, I want to mirror the way interior architecture influences the way we live and experience everyday spaces.

In this context, the archive is not just a simple storage but a living room for ideas, where de Roover's work can be experienced up close, in a setting that echoes the kind of spaces he was most interested in. Individuals should feel the presence of de Roover's ideas

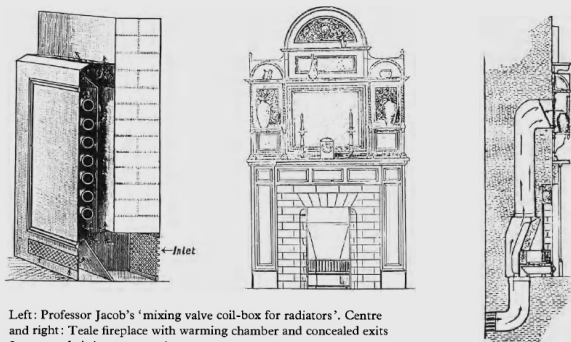
in their physical surroundings—not through pure pastiche aesthetic choices, but through a similar approach to creating domestic yet socially engaged spaces.

Moreover, the close contact with the materials, whether that's drawings, models, or the objects in the room itself, creates a tactile, almost immediate link to de Roover's architectural politics. This close proximity to the materials is a way of grounding the space in his "ideology", making the archive not just a place for passive historical reflection; but a space where interior architecture's political implications are felt in real time.

View of the main space: ideas on materiality and colors
 Peep on the room from the street: the archive subtly reveals itself







Left: Professor Jacob's 'mixing valve coil-box for radiators'. Centre and right: Teale fireplace with warming chamber and concealed exits for warmed air in overmantel.

inhabitants and their activities, in the processes of ventilation and the distribution of heat, is what Professor Jacob's slim volume was all about. It was written primarily for the guidance of clergy, ecclesiastical building committees and church architects. The environmental insufficiencies of buildings for religious ritual and study always bring out his most caustic and characteristic blend of intellectual scorn and humane sympathy:

The worst offenders against the laws of health are those responsible for the building of churches and other places of worship. The reason for this is not far to seek . . .⁸

⁸ *ibid.*, p 26.

Then follow some admirable examples of 'whole-building' environmental analysis:

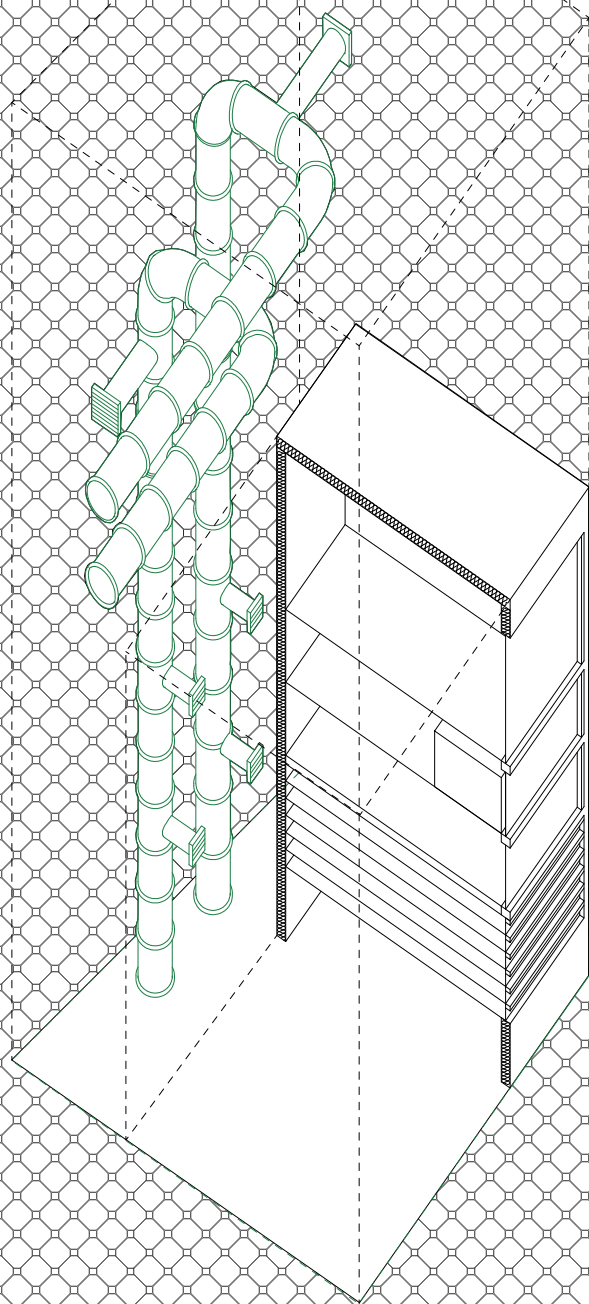
A church is built on a conventional plan, fixed in mediaeval times, when churches were less crowded, services shorter, and above all, at a time

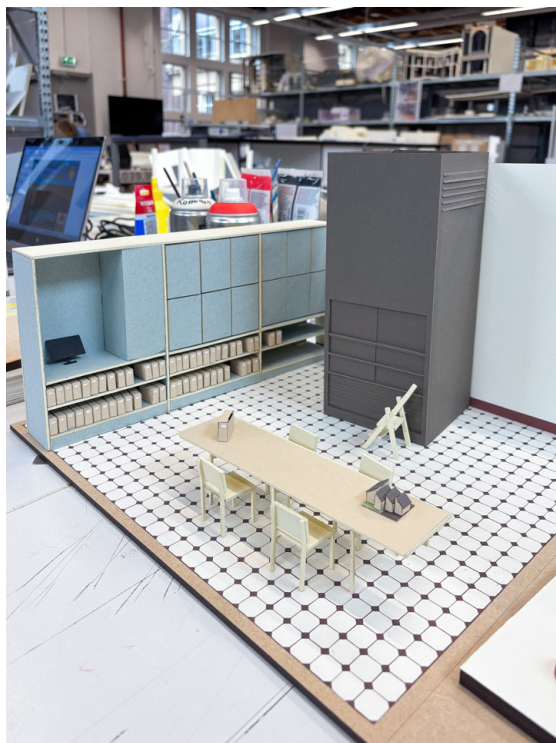
While I worked on developing the narrative and behaviors within my space, last week's tutoring made me realise I needed to define how the room creates a political environment in proximity to the public. Since the beginning, it was clear that an inner climate would play a key role in this room's atmosphere, first through its aesthetic dimension (such as ideas of metallic curtains and visible ventilation pipes that evoke climate). The visit to the VAI made me understand that, despite the lack of natural light, an archival space remains deeply connected to the outside world through pipes that filter and link the interior with the exterior.

In this archival room for Jul de Roover, the aim was to create a space where the interplay between various furniture pieces fosters encounters, inspired by the approach of the Stiftung Sitterwerk in St. Gallen. This requires two things: first, each piece of furniture must function independently of the others, and second, the spaces between should be free from the constraints (such as climate requirements) typical of archival spaces.

To preserve paper, it must be stored at 18°C, while a comfortable temperature for people is around 21.5°C. Additionally, paper needs to be shielded from natural light, yet daylight is essential for creating a welcoming space. These two environments seem to demand separation; however, their proximity is necessary to foster a political space.

Thus, it becomes evident that the furniture housing the archival materials must be climatically independent, almost like a self-contained room. While materials are stored in this 'climatic chimney,' the surrounding space is liberated from these constraints, allowing it to engage freely with the city—the *polis*.

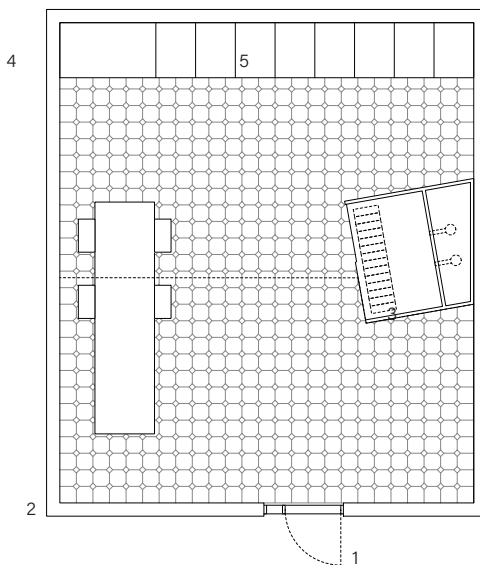




Reading *The Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment* by Reyner Banham, along with *Histoire Naturelle de l'Architecture* by Philippe Rahm, deepens the understanding of climate's importance within the interiors we inhabit. In my project, climate is expressed through the chimney-like furniture that stores and protects the documents. Moreover, according to the books, the materials used in the space also influence behaviors. Choosing the right materials can reinforce my intention to create a socially and politically engaged place within the archive. As such, by using wood –which, in contrast to the metal chimney, has low thermal effusivity– the table and chairs offer a warm tactile experience. This table, intended for work and conversation, is designed to welcome the stationary bodies.



The serendipitous discoveries made through model making brought more definition in the materiality, colors and ambiances of the space. In fact, the first ideas, with very toned-down colors, were quickly discarded by the addition of the vent system. The standardised deep green Starbucks straws from which they are made added a new layer within the model. With the addition of that noticeable color, the climatic systems within the room are rendered as a central element in the design.



1. Entrance
2. Debate and Research table
3. Climatised furniture for de Roover's archive
4. Computer station
5. Storage and unprotected archive of magazines

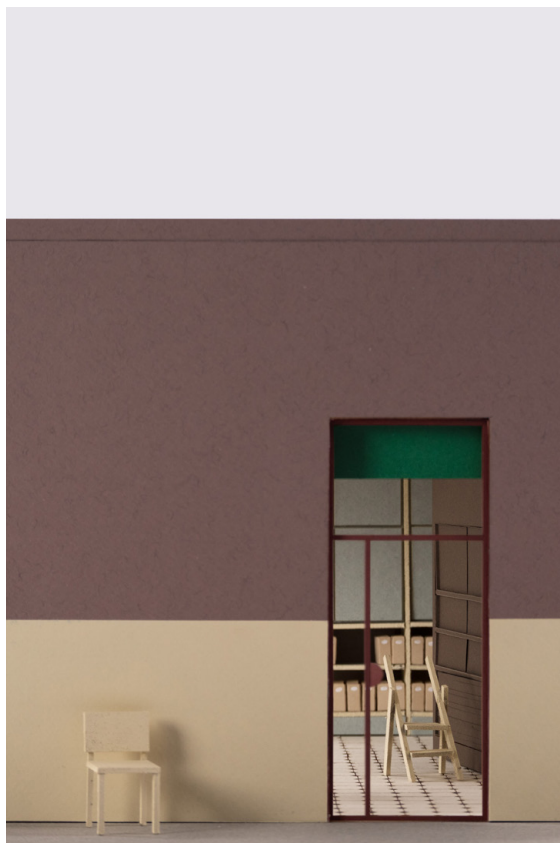


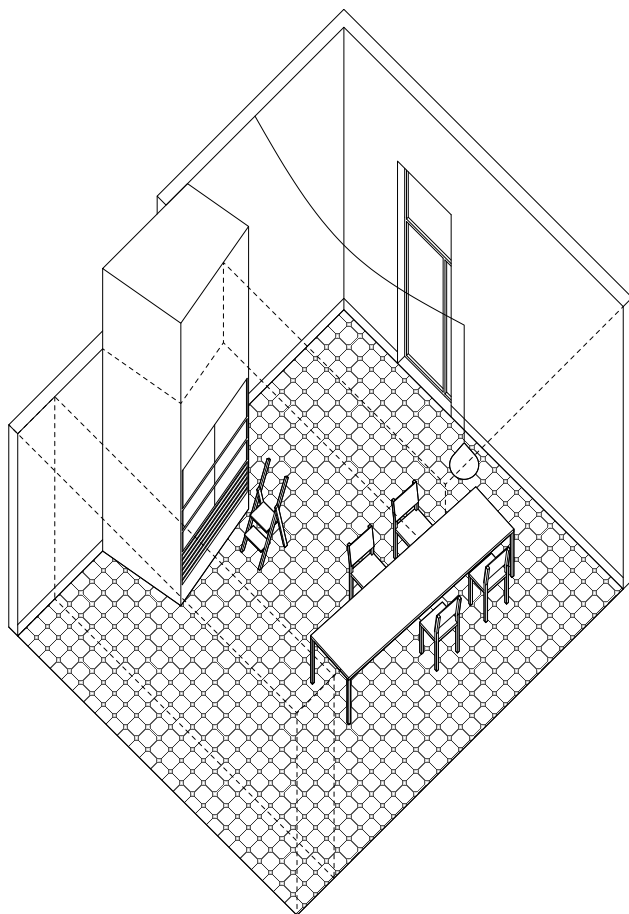
Entrance of the room



Week 1.10

View of the room from outside





Romain Tournon

Project Journal 2



After P1, I had the opportunity to visit the Archives of the Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine in Paris. I am deeply grateful to the Cité and Simon Vaillant, Researcher and Head of Public Relations, for dedicating their time to answer our questions and provide an inspiring tour of the archive building.

The visit consisted of three parts: a discussion with Simon Vaillant about the institution and its structure, a two-hour tour of the storage warehouse (magasin), and a consultation of archival materials in the reading room.

This visit was invaluable, not only for comparing the Cité with the VAI but also for situating it alongside other architecture archives like the CCA and NAI. Together, these institutions form a fragmented yet interconnected corpus of architectural archives and centers. Unlike the CCA, where I only experienced the exhibition side, the Cité and the VAI represent geographically separated but interconnected entities. Interestingly, this separation, according to Mr. Vaillant, benefits the archives by preserving their scientific autonomy. This focus on «scientific rigor» is reflected in both the spatial organization and methodology of the Cité.

Established in 1980 by the Institut Français d'Architecture (IFA), the archive center has always operated independently from the Musée des Monuments Français (MMF), its museum counterpart. While the MMF has always been located in the very center of Paris, the creation of a bigger entity, merging both the MMF with the IFA, was decided, not as a way to create synergies between the two instances, but as a way to spatially reorganize the two.



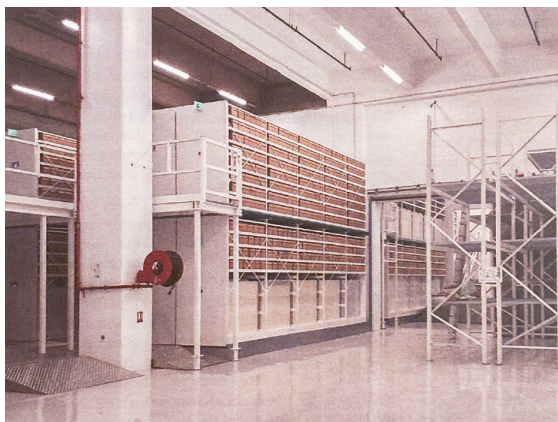
The merging allowed both the MMF and the IFA to share common storage spaces around Paris, and liberate the underground floor of the MMF as to implement a library, add some offices and a temporary exhibition space. Now spatially closer and intertwined, the two instances are yet to truly connect, before the moving of the Archives Center from their old building in the 13th arrondissement to the North of Paris, Porte de Clignancourt. Half an hour away from the Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine Museum (formerly MMF), the archive is surprisingly located in a very mundane building, built in 1975 for the SNCF. This utilitarian structure, with its high ceilings and two-level storage systems, optimizes density, housing 12 linear kilometers of archives across 3,875 m² of storage and 520 m² of office space.

Disposing the first documents on the shelves of the new storage space, 2020. courtesy of the *Cité*



Week 2.1

Compact furniture and the shelves of the museum artefacts (on the right), 2020. courtesy of the Cité
Threshold to enter the compact furniture shelves, 2020. courtesy of the Cité



The warehouse, located on street level, is merging and bringing together the materials of the archive with the sculptures and casts of the museum. The move, completed between 2021 and 2023, marked a significant milestone. Renamed the Archive of Contemporary Architecture, the center shifted its focus to the present, acquiring around 10 fonds annually, including materials from Postmodern architects. With capacity for 20 more years of acquisitions, the archive emphasizes responding to contemporary research demands.

Despite their geographical distance, the exhibition and research centers function cohesively. According to Mr. Vaillant, this setup supports the production of unbiased, high-quality research. However, as a public institution, the archive is influenced by state directives, especially in its acquisition policies.

The visit prompted me to reconsider aspects of my project, A Room for an Archive. When asked about the building's climatic controls, Mr. Vaillant highlighted the reliance on analog methods, such as passive insulation, rather than mechanical systems. This approach addresses issues previously encountered with mechanical devices, challenging my initial design focus on mechanical climatic solutions.

The Cité's recent relocation offers insights for the VAI's potential move to DeSingel. To facilitate the change, how much the new spatial organisation would have to reflect the current one? Can all the materials be brought to the new site? Considering this process not as an answer to an emergency problematic, but as a long ongoing operation that would necessitate a lot of space if it wants to survive through time.

Views inside the reading and consultation room of the Archive



Looking at the documents using a light table. Photography by Margaux Lomax



Week 2.1

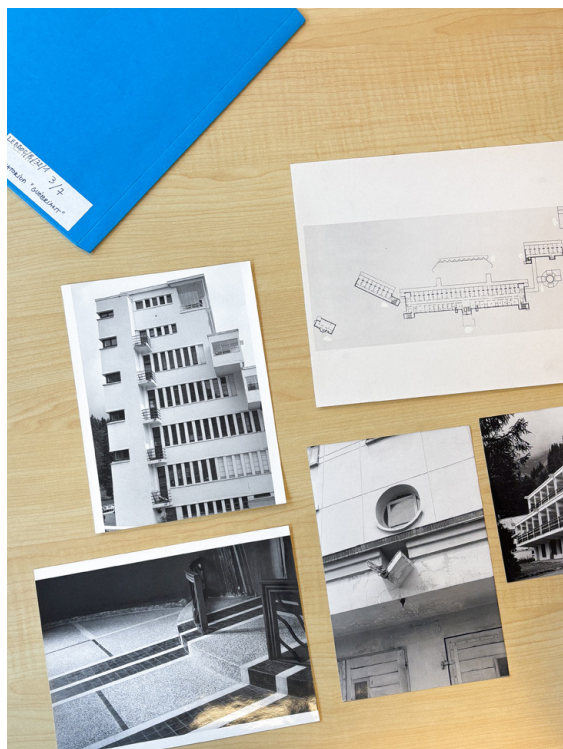
Photographic enlarger in the reading room
Documents on the light table (Fond Henri-Jacques Le-Même)



Orotone photograph by Eugène Atget. The photos can only be manipulated with gloves



Photographs of the Sanatorium «Guébriant» designed by Henri-Jacques Le-Même



On the importance of indoor climates in conservation

In an archive, the importance of an internal climate is paramount. The mainstream technique for preserving documents relies on what is often referred to as “flatlining,” which involves creating a stable internal climate seemingly independent of external conditions. This climate adheres to strict rules concerning relative humidity and temperature, commonly referred to as the “20/50 rule.”

This climatic approach to building design is not new, but it holds particular relevance for archives. According to Reyner Banham, who pioneered research in this area, buildings can be understood as structures that employ different strategies to create environments suitable for human thriving. Banham identified three primary methods for managing climate: the conservative, selective, and regenerative approaches. The first two are deeply rooted in vernacular architecture, while the third—emerging with the advent of air conditioning—is a hallmark of modernist ideals.

The regenerative method, which relies on mechanical systems, appears to make buildings more flexible and enhances user comfort. In essence, modern architecture’s history can be framed as “the progress of creating human environments.”

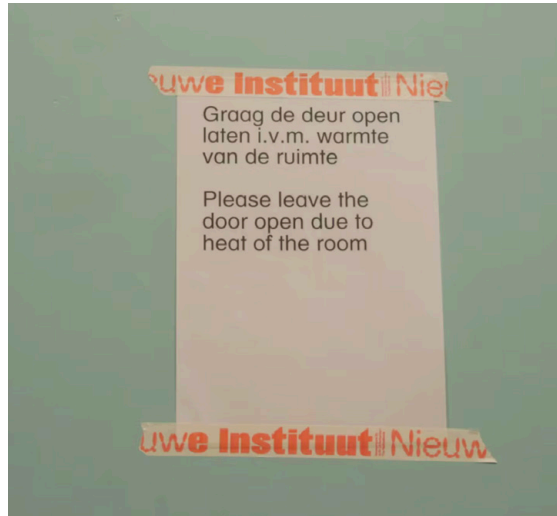
In the context of an archive, however, the concept of “care” through HVAC systems extends beyond humans to the documents themselves. While Banham’s theories were groundbreaking in their time, his neutral stance on the regenerative method feels inadequate today. The ongoing climate crisis compels us to rethink how we manage environments, especially in light of resource scarcity. Can flatlining still be justified?



Although these concerns might seem abstract or pessimistic, they are crucial. Archives are inherently connected to the future. As acquisition processes grow exponentially, questions arise about the most durable hosting structures in terms of both size and quality. When reviewing the VAI archive competition program, it's evident that the dimension of any future adaptability is barely addressed. For VAI and future archives, traditional approaches to preservation and climate control cannot be sustained.

At DeSingel, understanding the existing structures—seen as a juxtaposition of interconnected systems, both physical and mechanical—could provide a foundation for adaptation. Could the building evolve into a «ship» capable of accommodating current and future energy needs?

To achieve this, the existing systems (both tectonic and energy-related) must be thoroughly analyzed and improved. Could the HVAC systems at DeSingel be deactivated entirely, or should we consider a transitional approach between on-and-off air conditioning to accompany the building's evolution into an archive? While partial reuse of the structure seems likely, new additions may also be required to meet the program's demands. This raises questions about whether these additions should integrate with or remain independent from DeSingel's existing fabric.

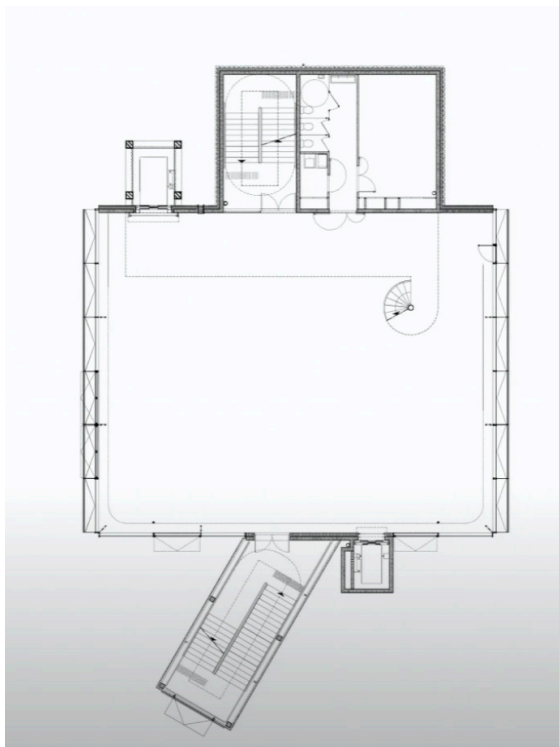


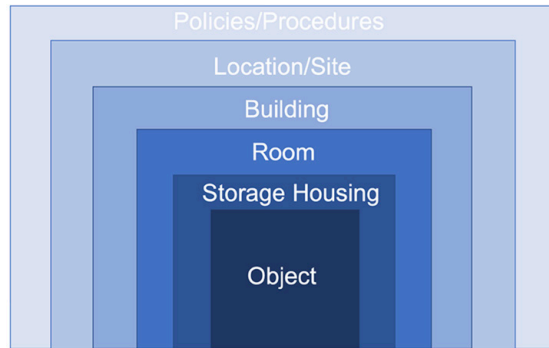
Additionally, how will other functions of DeSingel interact with this gradual transformation? What compromises might be necessary, and how will archival rituals and behaviors adapt to such changes? Although imagining an archive free from HVAC might seem inconceivable—due to concerns about document preservation—this assumption may be more of a prejudice than a certainty. Rethinking the archive's climate systems is not just a technical challenge but a philosophical one, tied to the broader question of how we build for a sustainable future.

Finding a new narrative, a new departure from modernity. The tale of perfectly sealed flatlined climate is inherited from this modernist story.

The myth of neo-modernity is stained by a nostalgia rooted on a naïve movement. Yet this nostalgia is maybe symptomatic of this need of finding a new grand narrative.

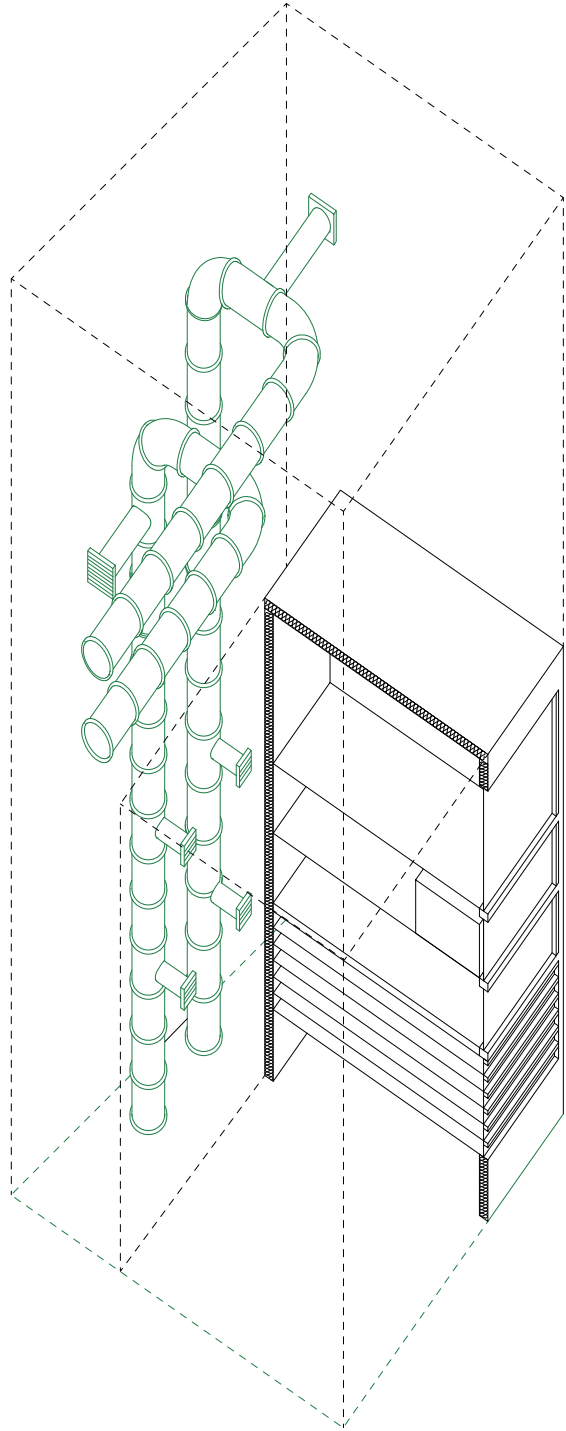
Richards Medical Research Laboratories, Philadelphia, Louis Kahn
Plan of the New Generation Research Center, Caen, Bruther

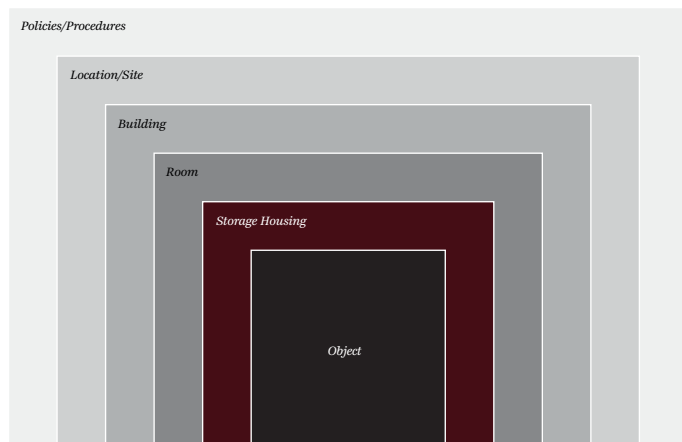




Inherited from Modernity and the advent of the «hermetic white box» in the conservation industry, flatlining seem now to have become obsolete. The research conducted by the Image Permanence Institute and the Canadian Conservation Institute, both supported by empirical changes in the field, are proving that alternatives are possible and are yet to be invented. However, if this research is nowadays motivated by ecological and economical ends, we can easily imagine using this research as a way to bring the materials closer to the public and the researchers.

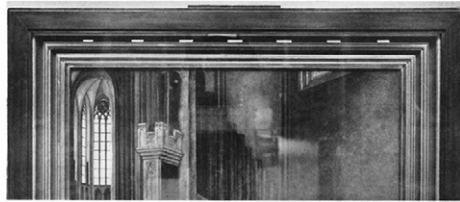
According to the aforementioned sources, documents can face fluctuations, as long as they are contained within 10% variations of the «ideal flatlined» climate, or, as long as they are contained in they «proofed memory». (the proofed memory is the largest fluctuation to which the artifact has responded in the past). These variations are acceptable as long as they don't peak. Within this range, the documents are safe from mechanical damages but still exposed to the biological ones (mold for instance). Thus, to conserve the documents properly, the space should be homogenous and without micro-climates in the room. As such, placing the users in the same room as the storage depot is a bit of a risk on the long run. However, it would be possible to temporarily place the documents in contact with the public, as the documents' equilibration would take more time to the documents to adjust. As such, we could imagine an archive in which the temporary depot and the logistic is in contact with the users, as long as they stay in these parts of the building don't exceed two days. After this period, they would go back to the depot safely



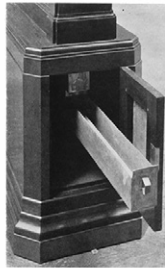


Both in the depot and in the temporary storage/logistic areas, the climates could be controlled using archaic methods, that would allow for variations to stay in that 10% range. For instance, using Hygroscopic materials such as wood and fabric is something we could see ourselves using. For the depot, thick walls with high thermal effusivity could align with the thermal phase shift and keep the inside of the depot climatically stable within the 10% range.

Considering ourselves in a period of ecological transition, it would be impossible to fully rely on these archaic systems as the Flemish regulation doesn't allow such. Thus, following the ideas of the architect Roger Boltshauser, we could imagine the building as an hybrid between archaic and technological. The building, whose storage capacity is up to 20 years, is transitioning from the flatlined epoch to a period of scarcity. The building, designed during that transition, should function during both epochs.



A—DETAIL OF C, SHOWING AIR-DUCTS AT THE TOP OF THE FRAME AND OBSERVATION PANEL ABOVE



B—DETAIL OF C, SHOWING CONTAINERS FOR SALTS



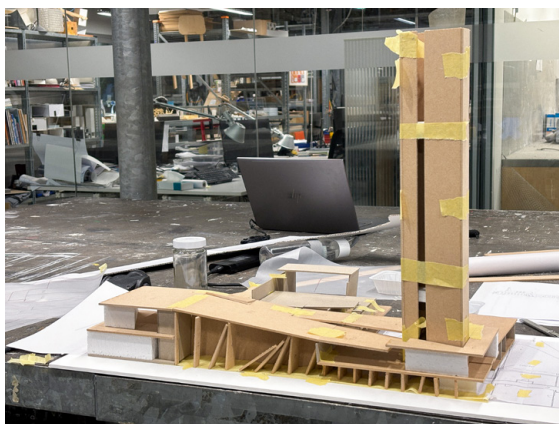
C—ONE OF THE TRINITY COLLEGE ALTAR-Piece PANELS, ATTRIBUTED TO HUGO VAN DER GOES. 178 or 96.5 cm. (LENT BY H.M. THE KING TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND)



D—DETAIL OF C, SHOWING AIR-DUCT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE FRAME

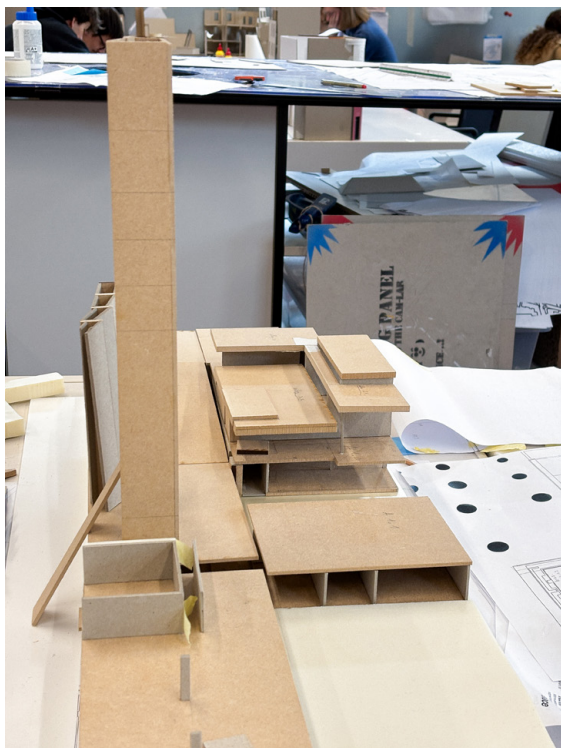
As part of the research, a group was constituted to build a scale 1/200 model of DeSingel. Only a portion of the building was replicated; as such, we chose a section of what we consider being the principal circulation axis of the complex. As a matter of fact, this spine is constituted by all the different layers of time of the building. As a group of four, we were each given a part. The objective wasn't merely to build the model but also to develop a deeper understanding of the space, especially since no comprehensive 3D model or clear architectural plans were available. The model gave us an idea on what would be the main spatial qualities of DeSingel. In fact, the building seems to be composed from a series of corridors. Varying in size and functions, these corridors attest the low density of function within some parts of the building. If the size of the spine corridor seems disproportionate on a daily basis (the space is rarely saturated), it is punctually crowded by the masses of people coming for shows and lectures in the evenings.

Calculating the heights under ceilings
First juxtaposition of all the different parts



Week 2.2

The different parts glued



Week 2.2

The visit to DeSingel on Wednesday, 20th November, was crucial to test assumptions derived from the model. The primary aim was to understand how users navigate the building, identify shortcomings in its current state, and explore potential improvements. My approach focused on the qualities of each entrance and the hierarchy they establish within the building.



The first entrance I examined was the monumental ramp leading into Beel's building. While it presents itself as grand and imposing from the outside, the experience inside falls short. Upon entering, instead of arriving in a welcoming lobby, visitors find themselves in a transitional corridor flanked by a deserted faux-chic restaurant, two service elevators, and an oversized descending ramp towards the first floor. With the descending ramp currently closed for restoration, users must take a «service» staircase to access the upper levels (where students rehearse) or the lower levels (which house the VAI offices). The stark contrast between the ramp's dramatic external publicity and the uninspiring internal space it leads to is striking.

Monumental slope from the +2 to the +1



Week 2.2



Within Beel's building, spaces lack coherence: the upper levels feel overfilled with "stuff," while the lower levels are noticeably underutilized. Reimagining the layout—perhaps flipping the rehearsal studios to the lower floors and relocating private offices upwards—could optimize functionality and better utilize the building's volume. Circulation and program distribution challenges are not limited to Beel's building. The clash between the architectural styles of Stynen and Beel results in underused and residual spaces.

Corridor around the music studios in the +3 of Beel's building
Cultural and Sport Center, Paris, by Bruther. Courtesy of Filip Dujardin



For example, what is now the «Backstage Entrance» once held significant qualities. Previously bordered to the south by a green mound and flanked by the south-western wing of the historical 1968 building, this entrance was envisioned as a dedicated access point for artists and performers. However, the construction of Beel's building disrupted its carefully scenarized relationship with the landscape and topography. The result is a complex, ambiguous, and oversized dead-end that fails to meet user needs, echoing the issues of the ramp entrance.

The most consistent entrance is the «Main Entrance,» located on the northern end of the site and extending like an arm toward the heart of Antwerp. With its canopy and large exhibition posters, this entrance effectively serves a public function. It accommodates access to the two largest auditoriums and doubles as the entry to the Conservatorium. Remarkably, this entrance retains Stynen's original vision. Upon passing through its large glass doors, visitors encounter a monumental yet inviting staircase bathed in light filtered through the building's largest courtyard. The staircase leads to the central artery of the complex, which connects all major spaces and integrates the various wings and additions. This entrance, with its well-proportioned design and spatial coherence, embodies the original architectural intent.

One corridor in the ground floor of the 1980 layer



Regardless of their individual qualities, the multiple entry points into DeSingel collectively express Stynen's vision of a porous building that appears to «domesticate» nature. Much like Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye—an inspiration for Stynen—DeSingel enhances and reveals the site's topography through rigid horizontal visual lines supported by pilotis. These lines overlook the hilly landscape, creating pathways that lead to the pinnacle of domesticated nature: the two gardens.

The building's circulation patterns, starting from its entry points, are deeply influenced by its position within the city. Originally conceived by Stynen as part of a new diffuse city,» DeSingel's proximity to the highway did not facilitate the creation of an isotropic urban fabric. Instead, the building was relegated to a peripheral space, becoming a modern residue in a context dominated by the highway's infrastructure. This shift caught the architect's noble vision—of a building that overlooks and performs a new urban ideal—off-guard, as the belt highway imposed a peripheral narrative onto the site.

Beel, in his later additions, attempted to play with this new context, integrating immersive and strategic views of the highway into his designs. However, the two buildings, born of different societal ideals, clash in both intent and execution. Their divergent purposes add complexity to an already intricate network of spaces.

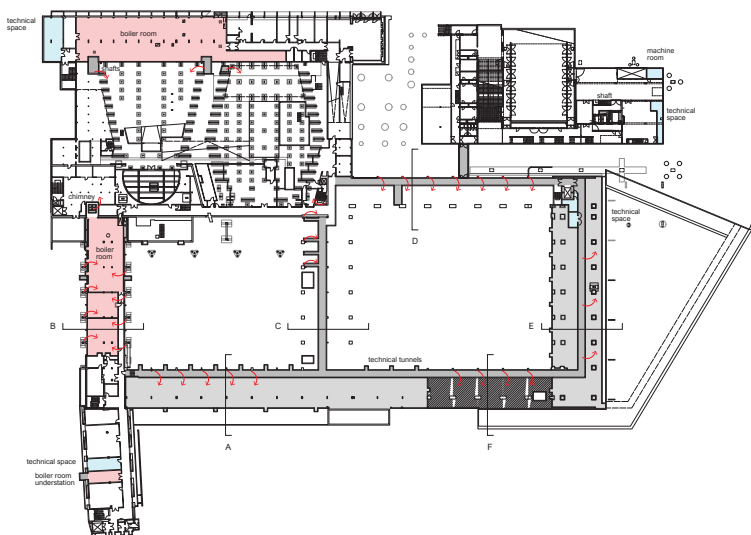
Indeed, the symptomatic complexity of DeSingel stems from its inability to define itself over a longer time frame. Instead, it has evolved reactively, often in response to urgent needs. Originally conceived as a Conservatory, the building was later forced to grow into an International Arts Center. Stynen and de Meyer's plans, with their overly two monumental auditoria, proved too ambitious for the initial context and had to be adapted for a broader audience. Beel's masterplan in the early 2000s sought to address the infrastructural deficiencies.



The fragmented development of the complex continued to require ad hoc adaptations to meet pressing demands. For instance, office spaces in the ground floor of the southwestern wing were added to address these immediate needs.

This raises a critical question: how can our addition redefine DeSingel's identity without further compounding its complexity? Adding an archive means adding a structure that would necessarily need to grow overtime, in a context already saturated to its almost limit. Our addition will have to curb the growth of the complex and clarify its definition.

Plan of the -1, in blue the technical chimneys, in red the boiler rooms and with red arrows the direction of the heat transmission

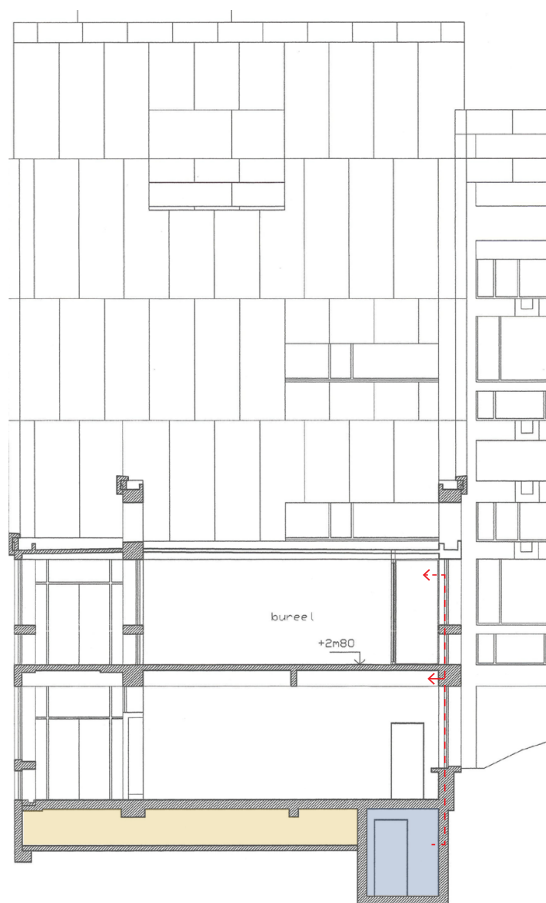


In the initial plans of the Conservatorium, designed by Léon Stynen, a “Banhamnian” definition of structure is highly expressed; with the tectonic structure is enmeshed with the climatic structure. Protruding on the façade, the structural vertical elements are dissimulating the vertical distribution of energy.

exception in the system: an exposed exhaust in aligned with the structural facade element.



Section of a Conservatorium wing.
In blue is the technical corridor running under every wing, and in red is the energy distribution

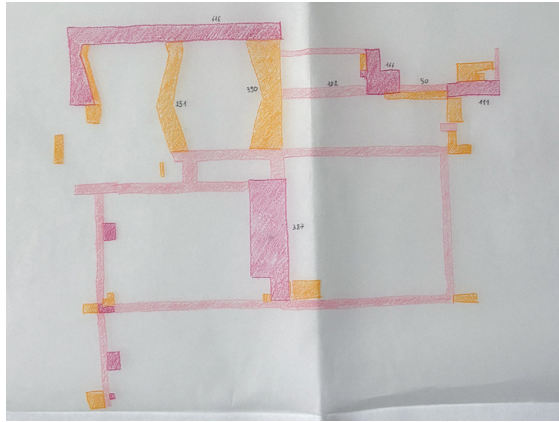


The research by design approach intuitively pushed me to analyse the structures of deSingel through their different axis: their tectonic, their approach to climate, and their circulation system. This helped me to understand the hierarchy or the current state of things, as to understand where a new addition of deSingel, containing the VAI, could hold position.

In the analysis, it is striking to see that all the different layers of time have a different structure, or approach to structure. Looking at the plan, they form a composition of juxtaposed elements that don't necessarily relate to each other. In fact, this fragmentation is induced by the functions hosted in the structures, and by the time in which the structure was built. Following this, we understand that Beel's 2010 addition is radically different from the rest. Fundamentally seen as a composition of structural concrete boxes within a bigger concrete box, this layer seems to display more rigidity compared to the former parts designed by Stynen and de Meyer.

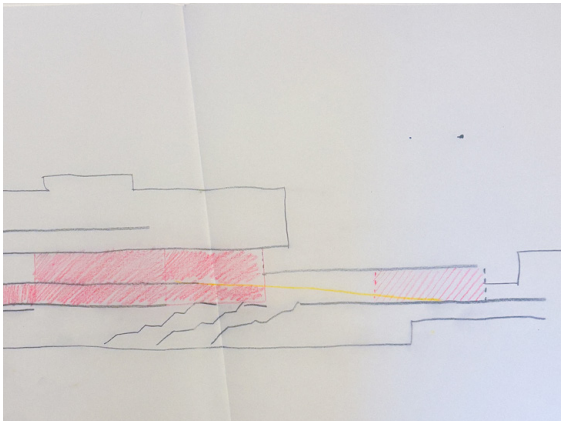
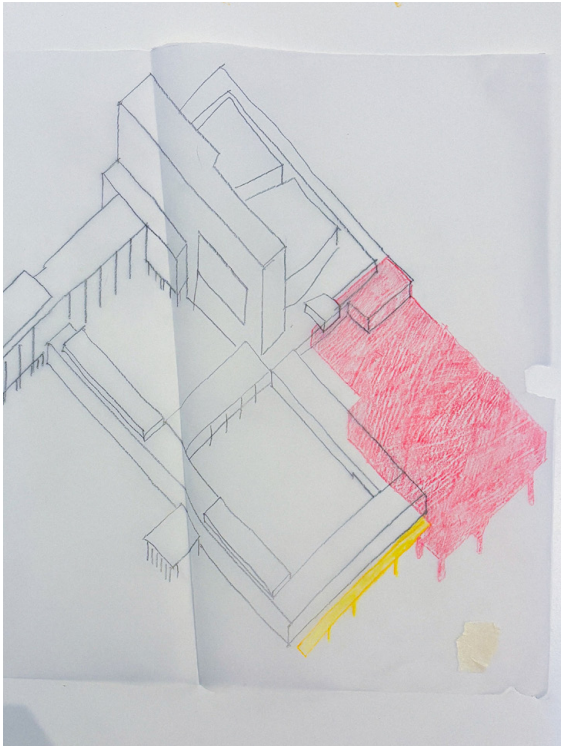


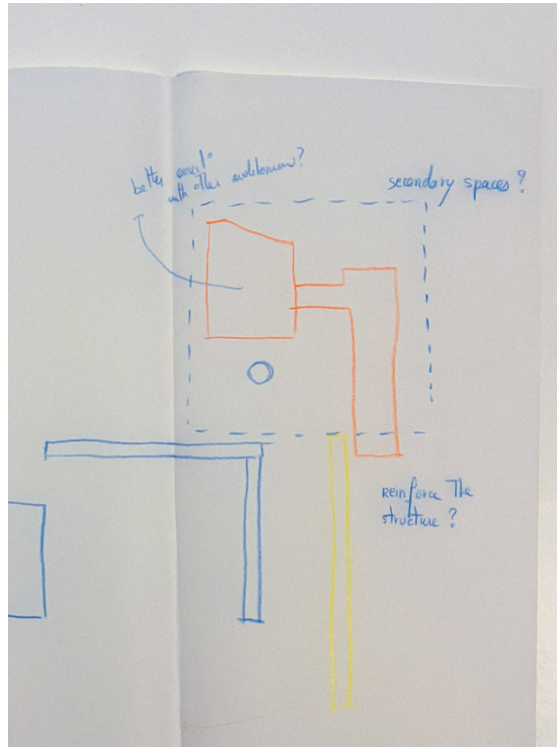
Serving spaces of the first floor, divided in three categories: corridors, squares and vertical circulation



However, when looking at the circulation, we almost forget about the fragmentation of the different structures, and we tend to feel deSingel as a continuously interconnected indoor landscape. The circulation spaces, or serving spaces, are abundant and diverse. Yet, they share one quality: they seem to be a space of flexibility and resilience. Designed by Stynen with a width of 2.5 meters, the corridors in the Conservatorium wings were designed to be more than just circulation: they are spaces of encounters, spaces in which the body is either in movement or stationary. The corridors were designed for people to gather, to influence and inspire each other in this boisterous building.

Hierarchy of the elements composing Beel's addition: in yellow is what we could get rid of





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Nevertheless, if these spaces bear in theory these qualities, they seem to be currently underused – in some parts – and are thus left as residual spaces. This first draft for a project tends to address this, by activating or deactivating some parts of deSingel, as to simplify its circulation and indoor landscape. For instance, the massive entrance ramp towards Beel's addition is removed, making the dominating character of that building over the historical one less obvious. Moreover, the original entrance of the Conservatorium gains some importance, and the building is rendered as more legible by the public coming from the core of the city. Yet, this entrance is addressing the historical center of Antwerp, which was surely the intent of Stynen as the “rest” of the city wasn't properly formed on the South of the plot.

Now, the highway on the south and the tramway coming along the West side of the plot is clearly drawing new entrances. After the 1980 addition, in which two auditoriums and a tower were attached to the original Conservatorium low-rise building, a promenade connecting the ground floor of the 1980 addition with Jan van rijswijklaan on the West was created. In some ways, this addition was already addressing “the new city” and the new forms of transport symptomatic of the second half of the XXth century. With the addition of Stéphane Beel, this Western Entrance – now called “Backstage Entrance” is left as residue. Thus, this proposal aimed to reactivate this side of the project, as to also address the peripheral and infrastructural context of deSingel. If removing the ramp and requalifying the “backstage entrance” through landscape interventions was the first step; adding the VAI on the other side of Jan van rijswijklaan had the intent to build and create strong connections with both this “backstage entrance” and the new archive by Office Winhov.

Yet, the tutoring made me realise that disconnecting so much the VAI from deSingel is not gonna help me solve the circulation issues of the building. Thus, I should understand my intervention and addition of the VAI within deSingel as an improvement of the whole indoor landscape and infrastructure.

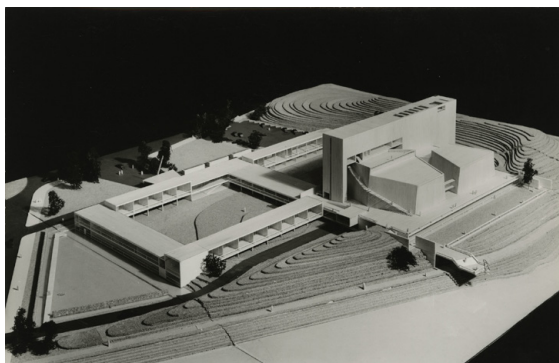
Buffer zones around deSingel: currently parasited with parking lots
 Densification in 2015 of the Parking lots
 Sketch of the new building/structure for the VAI on the other side of Jan van rijswijklaan



6a architects, Cara Center, New York
6a architects , mk Gallery, Milton Keynes



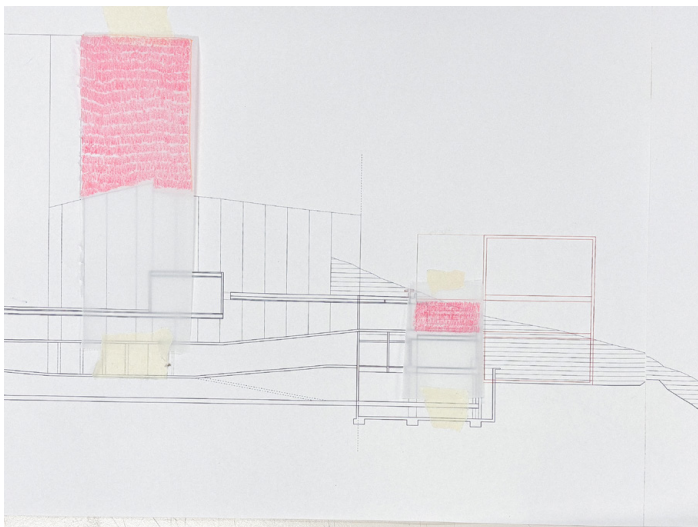
Entrance Hall used as an auditorium, from the master's thesis of Marie Huyghe
model showing the buffer zones between the building and the city, as well as the *tropia* towards the highway

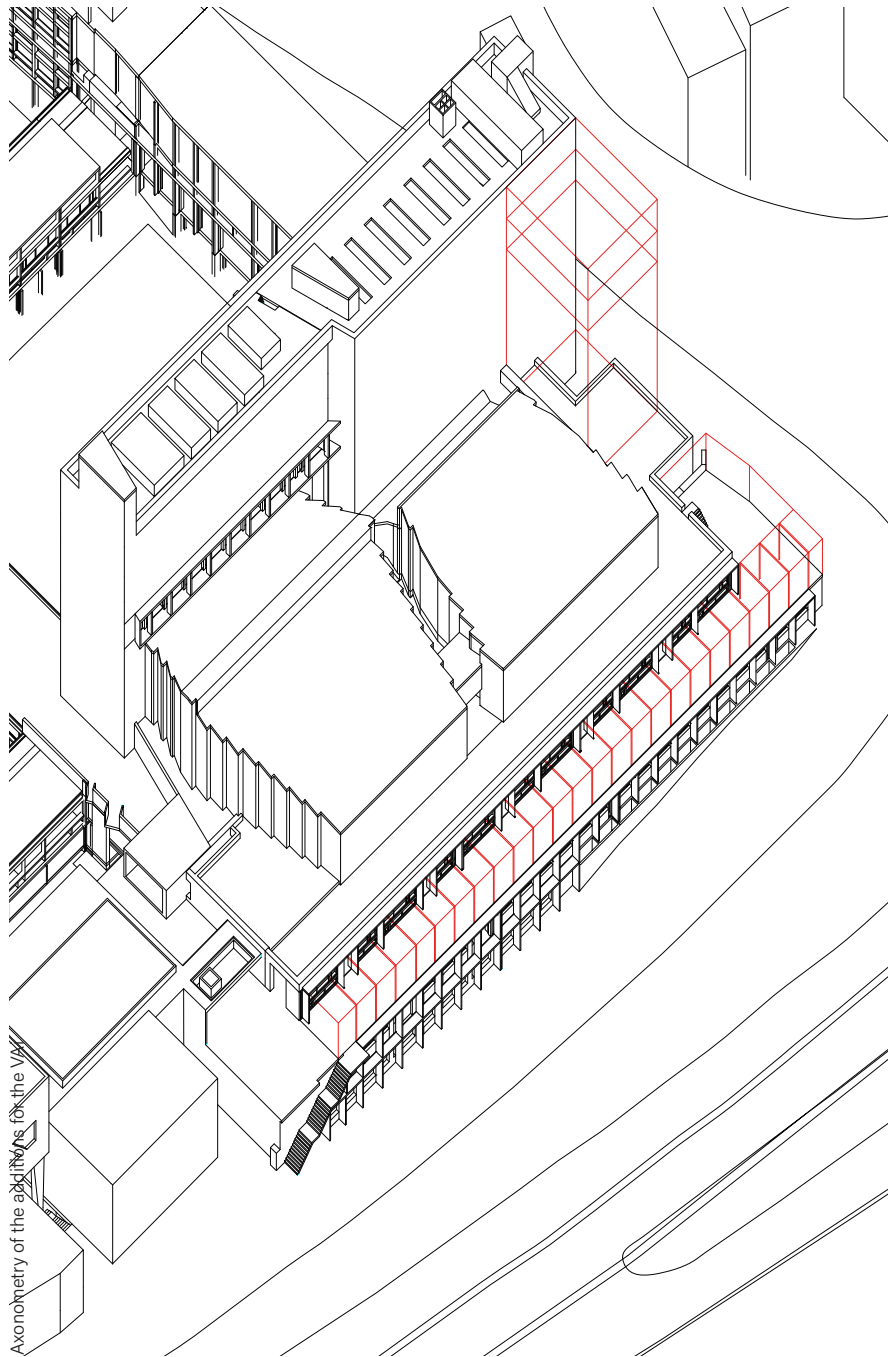


This week's design iteration responds to critiques from week 2.3, concerning the lack of interaction between my earlier design and the existing circuits of deSingel. Recognizing that the hierarchy of spaces within these «loops» depends on their proximity to the entrances, we identified certain spaces needing improvement to integrate our VAI addition. While most spaces form cohesive loops, the East side of the project disrupts this flow: the East wing of the Conservatorium feels disconnected from the Auditoriums. Similarly, the South-East part of deSingel seems remote and isolated within this indoor landscape. Far from Stynen's original plans, the highway to the south has redefined the interior spaces adjacent to it. The generous terraces along the south, connected to the Auditoriums, are now underused or treated as residual spaces due to the site's evolution. By densifying and requalifying these areas, we can accommodate new VAI functions, activating these underutilized spaces and redefining the relationship between the south façade and the bordering infrastructural landscape.

Focusing on the «back» of the plot also brings us into dialogue with the tower, situated near spaces adjacent to the highway. The tower, currently housing an archive for the Study Center for Flemish Music, is a monolithic, windowless structure—well-suited for archival use. However, its poor climatic conditions and certain façade details (e.g., plastic windows) require improvement. By expanding the tower and leveraging its existing logistics systems, we can provide the VAI with the necessary space to house its collections. This addition will emphasize the tower's verticality as seen from the highway while subtly enhancing its presence from the north and west ends of the site. In doing so, we restore the original volumetric balance of Stynen's design, which had been compromised by Beel's «horizontal tower.»

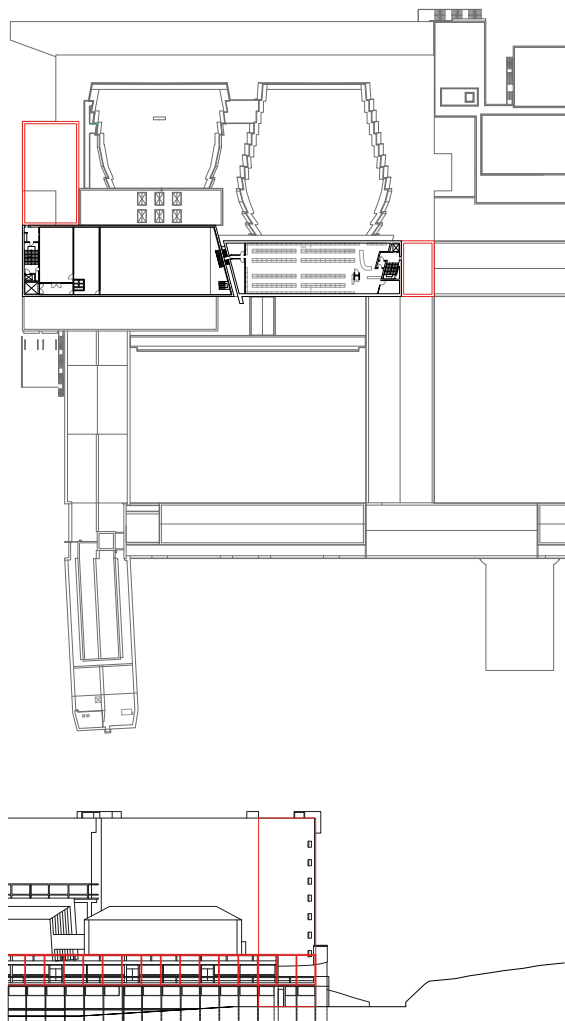
section in the main circulation axis of the building. The addition are sketched in red



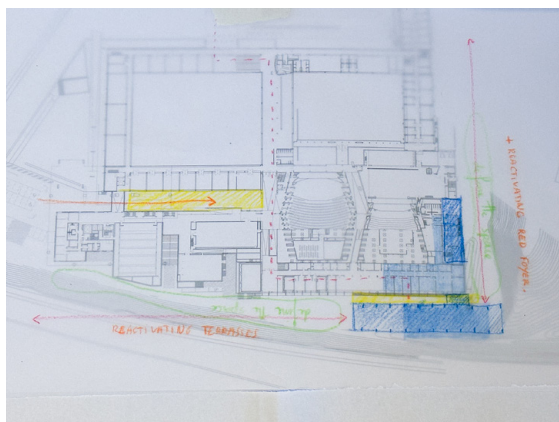
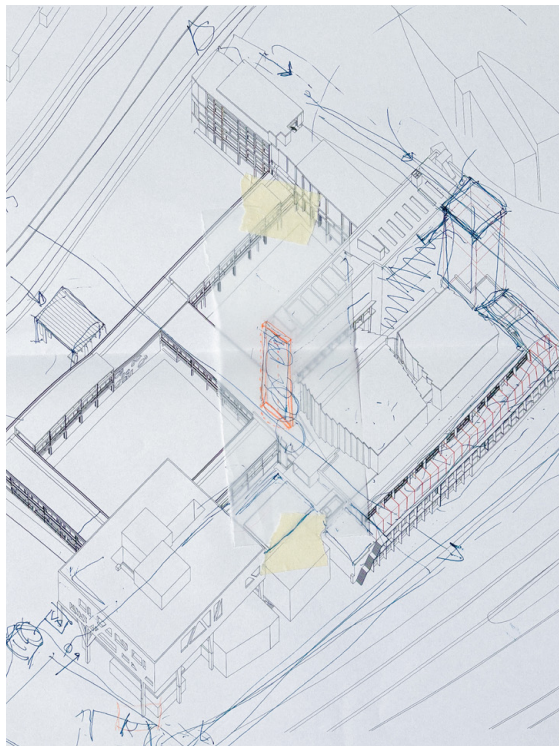


Axonometry of the additions for the V&A

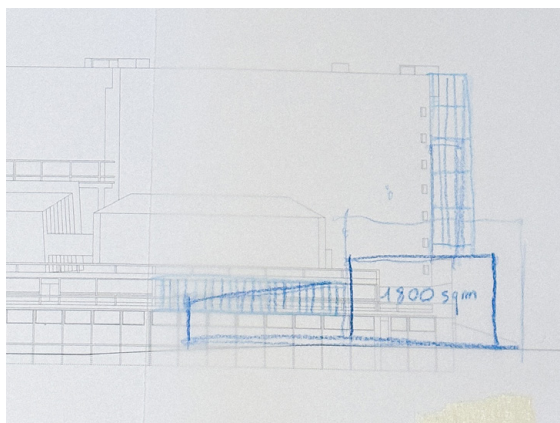
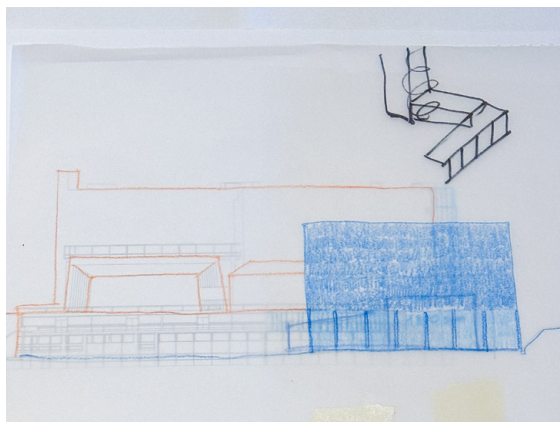
Plan of the potential extensions of the tower
South elevation of deSingel

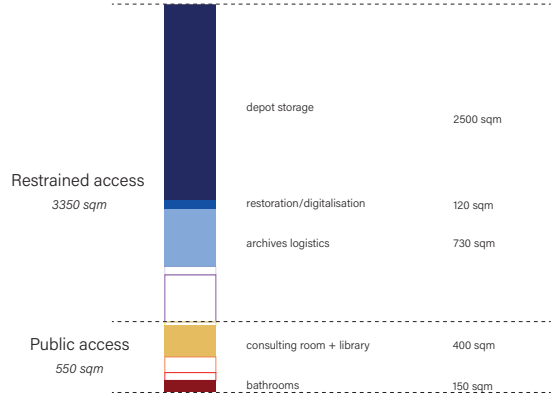
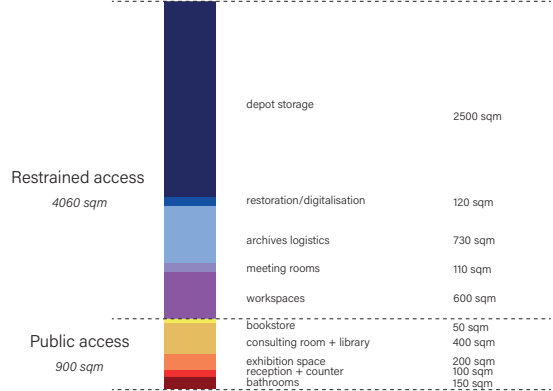


Sketch of the potential additions and their interactions with the site
Consequences of our addition on the plot



Sketches of the South elevation, the visual impact of potential additions



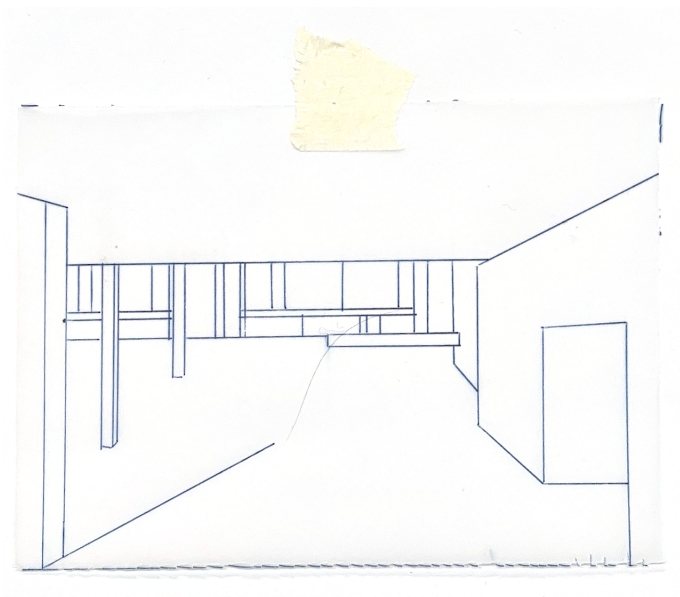


In this process, I analyzed the program and categorized elements into two groups: «restricted access» and «public access.» This helped me identify programmatic components that could be accommodated within deSingel's existing structure. Many service spaces, previously treated as residual, could be reconfigured. Additionally, some programmatic elements, like cafés and canteens, are redundant and could be merged to free up space.

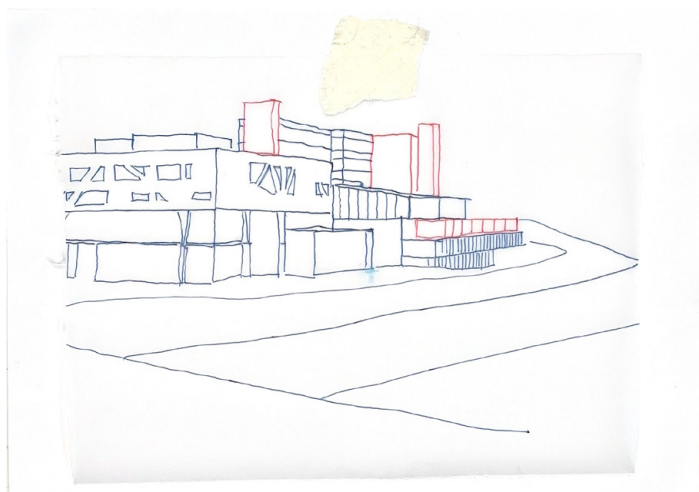
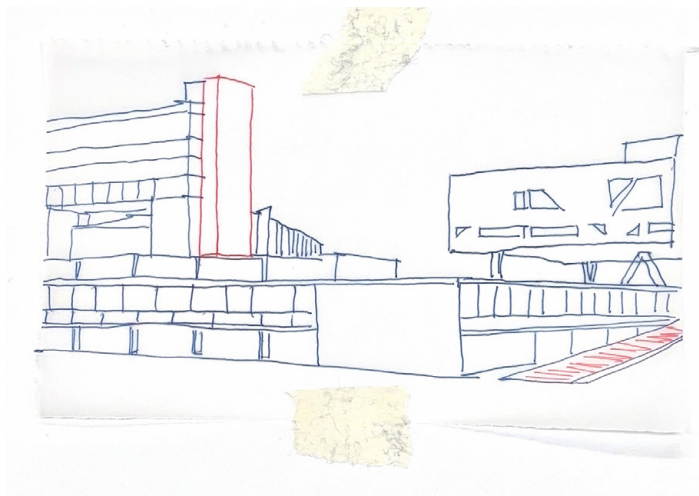
Tutoring sessions highlighted that my interventions at the back of the project cannot be viewed in isolation from the rest of the building. These extensions and additions will inevitably influence the overall programming of deSingel. How can these adjustments create a cohesive center for the VAI? How will the entrances highlight and integrate the VAI within the larger complex? To address these questions, I need to analyze the program elements, their interactions, and their current proximities within deSingel. For instance, if I remove a student café, how will I compensate for its loss elsewhere in the building?



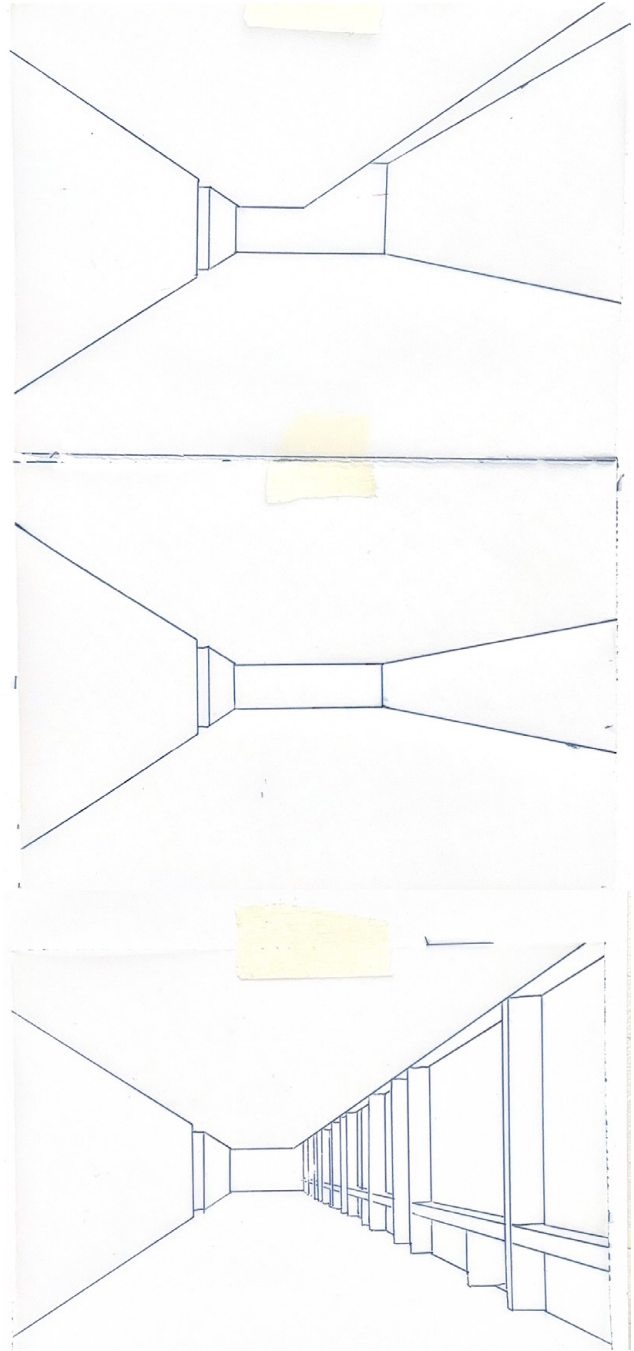
View of the ramp towards the South terraces



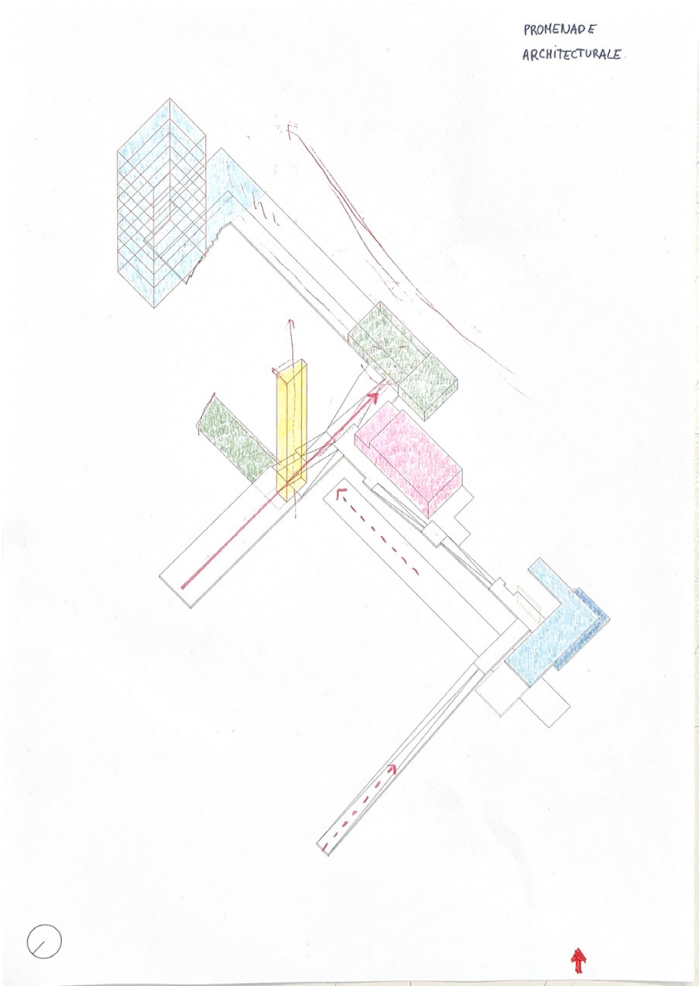
View of the building taken from Desguinlei
View of the building from Jan van Rijswijklaan

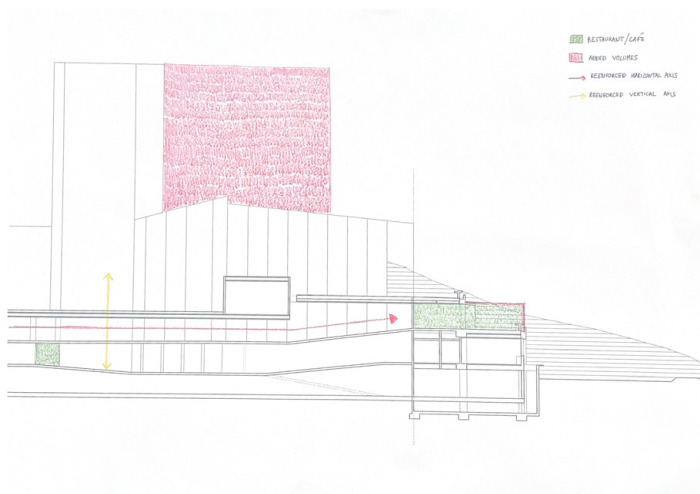


Potential evolution of the corridor on the South of the auditoriums



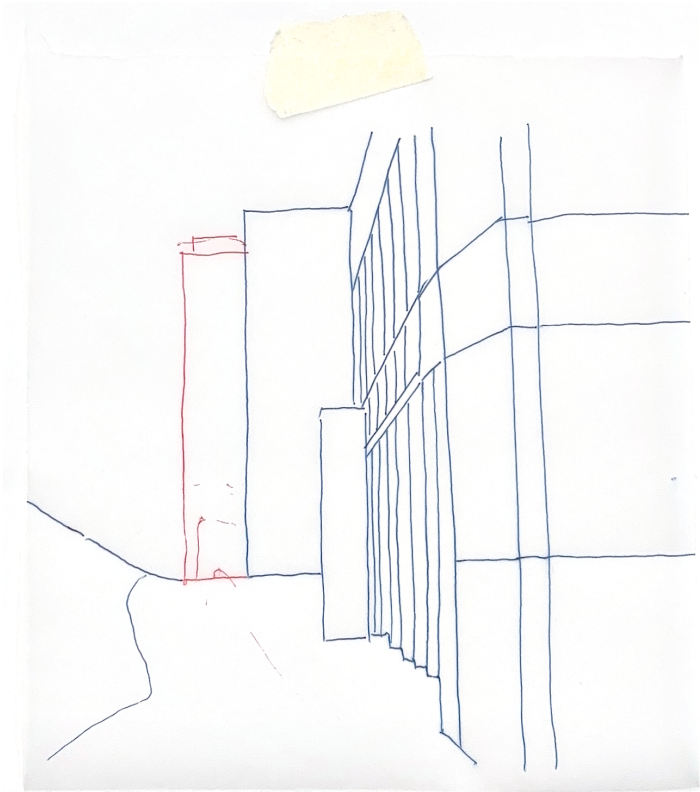
Promenade architectural within the building, laying out a new public/private gradient for the VAI



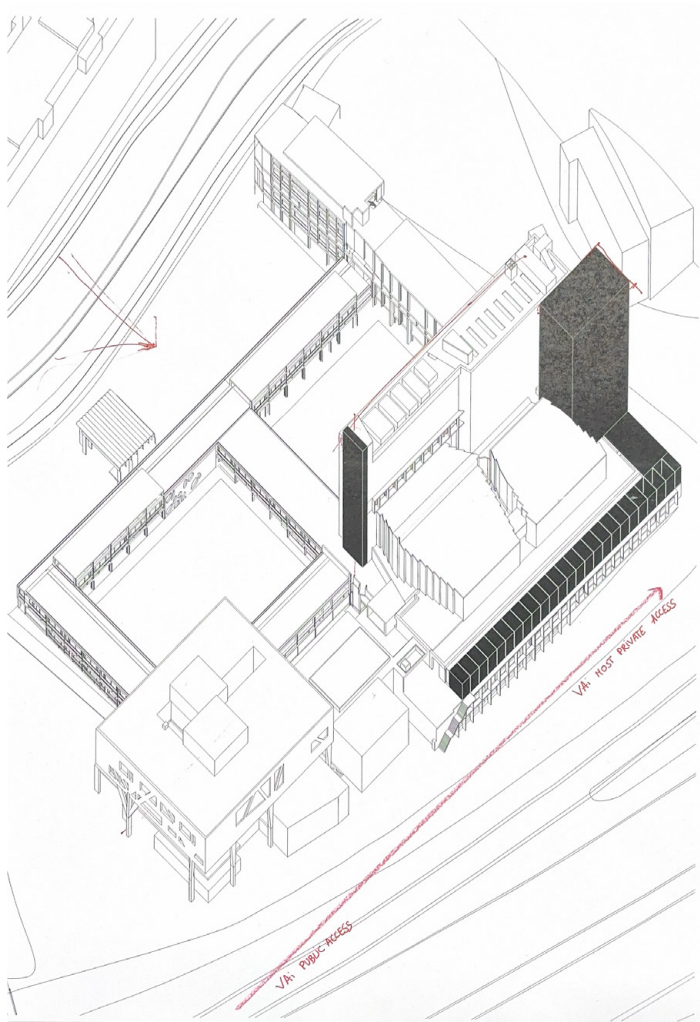


The tutoring with the design tutors made me understand that I need to start designing using another scale, and really give more materiality to my interaction within deSingel. Thus, I should work on a section West-East to understand how the spaces interact, and play with the red-yellow black color code as to make my interaction very clear. The “foyers” must be spatially clarified, as much as the journey I intend to draw within deSingel. I would have to work on 1:200 plans of deSingel, as draw tangible elements.

View of the addition from the service alley on the East side of the building



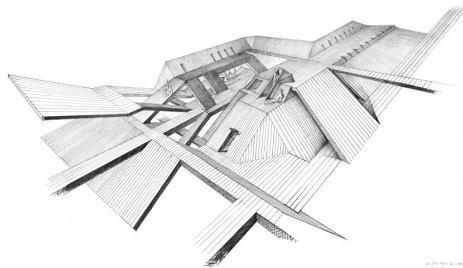
Axonometry showing the volumes added to deSingel



Stynen's original vision for DeSingel was to create an inspirational center where nature and architecture intertwine, forming two harmonious landscapes: one indoors and one outdoors. These two realms converge in the courtyards, where the boundaries between the interior and exterior dissolve. However, the addition of the freeway introduced a third, unanticipated «landscape,» one that disrupts the serene, slow-paced atmosphere of Stynen's contemplative temple. Yet, this juxtaposition may have unintentionally created something profound: as opposed to the frenzied energy of the highway, DeSingel positions itself as a sanctuary—a space where time slows down amidst the accelerated decay of our increasingly fragile contemporary society.

Influenced by the principles of Le Corbusier, whom Stynen admired deeply, DeSingel is designed to be experienced through a promenade architecturale, a slow, reflective movement through the space. Like the Villa Savoye, Stynen's design places the user as an 'object,' allowing them to lose themselves and open their minds to beauty. The ramp, uniting rather than dividing the floors, embodies this sense of openness and lightness, serving as the backbone of the building's circulation. Connecting the south and north ends of the ground and first floors, the ramps are joining the stratas seamlessly. Beel, in his later additions, borrowed this concept to shape his interior spaces, continuing Stynen's indoor promenade architecturale.

Architects and theorists Claude Parent and Paul Virilio describe the promenade architecturale and the ramp as expressions of the "diagonal" typology. The ramp unifies spaces, linking them into a fluid continuum. It encourages slowness, a deliberate pace that invites users to contemplate the spaces, their volumes, and their rhythms. This contrast between DeSingel's tranquil, reflective environment and the juxtaposed highway's speed underlines the building's identity as a modern-day temple—a place where space and time are savored rather than rushed. The musicality of DeSingel's design, evident in the rhythms of its indoor and outdoor façades and amplified by the music performed within, reinforces its role as more than a productivist art institution.



View of the ramp towards the solarium. Villa Savoye. Le Corbusier. Courtesy of the BNF
View of the interiors' circulation. Villa Savoye. Le Corbusier. Courtesy of BNF



Ramp and Entrance in the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts. Le Corbusier. Cambridge, MA.



Readable section of the building from the ramp. Le Corbusier, Cambridge, MA.



Week 2.7

DeSingel defines Stynen's architecture as a delicate balance between "Order and Movement." Beyond illustrating his stylistic preferences and his belief in how architecture should be experienced, it reveals his broader ambitions for an urban project. DeSingel, envisioned by Stynen as the nucleus of a new urban development in the South of Antwerp, was designed to absorb the surrounding urban fabric and extend it inward. The entrances are intentionally porous to the city, while the corridors function as continuations of the streets. Antwerp's urban life was intended to flow seamlessly into the building, while the ideas generated by its walls would reverberate on the city's future development.



View of deSingel from the other side of the freeway. Antwerp. Unknown photographer.



This porosity extends beyond the entrances to the very façade itself. “The façade is a vitrine; it says nothing and hides nothing. It manifests its own empty perfection - a window that is both ‘frame and screen.’” Generous terraces on the southern edge of the plot, originally designed to engage with the natural landscape and the modernist neighborhood conceived by Stynen, now stand as modern ruins of a naïve modernist vision.

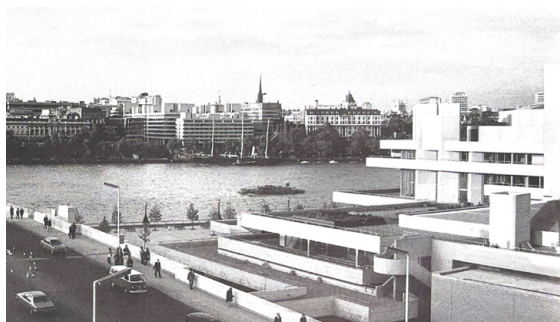
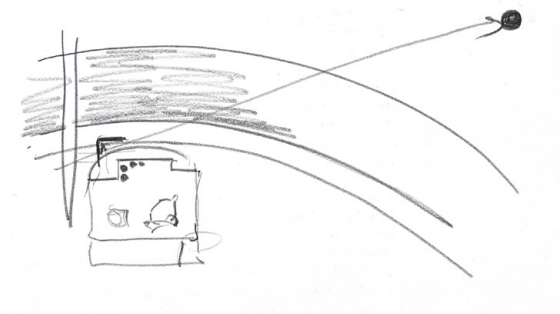
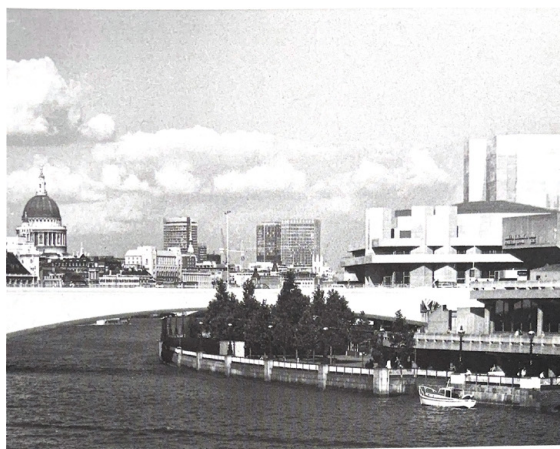
While the building retains its public character, it nowadays only reflects the broken dreams of a bygone past. Frozen in time, deSingel is a poignant reminder of a modernist ambition that never fully came to fruition.

View of a corridor in the Conservatorium. Date and Photographer are unknown.
View of the ramp between the two auditoriums. The walls are rendered as rhythmed facades. Date and Photographer are unknown.



The integration of a structured, institutionalized archive into DeSingel's program has the potential to enhance its time-resisting character. Such an addition could solidify the building's identity as a temple of art, music, and knowledge, countering the impermanent nature of the world around it. However, this vision faces challenges posed by the broader construction industry and the increasingly restrictive norms that render new structures heavily reliant on perishable systems (as discussed in the project called *Zombie Basements* by Solène Hoffmann). To what extent can these norms be reshaped to make archives less dependent on such impermanence? Can we improve resilience by working within, or even bending, existing regulations? Furthermore, can the proposed structure contribute to DeSingel's overall resilience, reinforcing its identity as a time-defying temple? The addition must not only enhance the archive's role but also harmonize with DeSingel's essence—preserving its contemplative spirit while resisting the pressures of a world moving too fast to appreciate its own lasting creations.

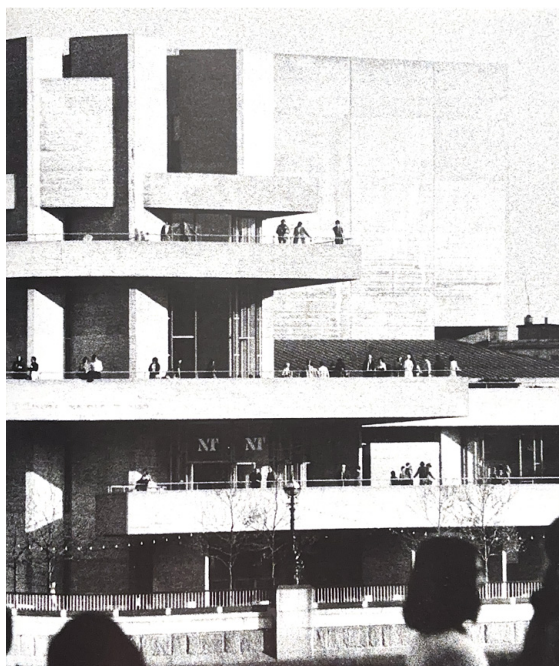
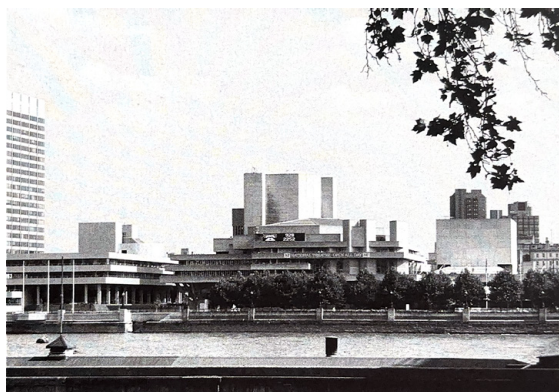
BW Photograph of the National Theater with Waterloo Bridge, Kings Reach and St Paul's
 Sketch of the National Theater by Lasdun, showing Waterloo Bridge and view to St Paul's, 1973.
 National Theater, BW view northwards towards Somerset House. Date and photographer are unknown.



National Theater, looking down from upper-level foyer - BW picture



IBM London Marketing Centre. Seen from the north bank of the Thames with the National Theater alongside. 1978

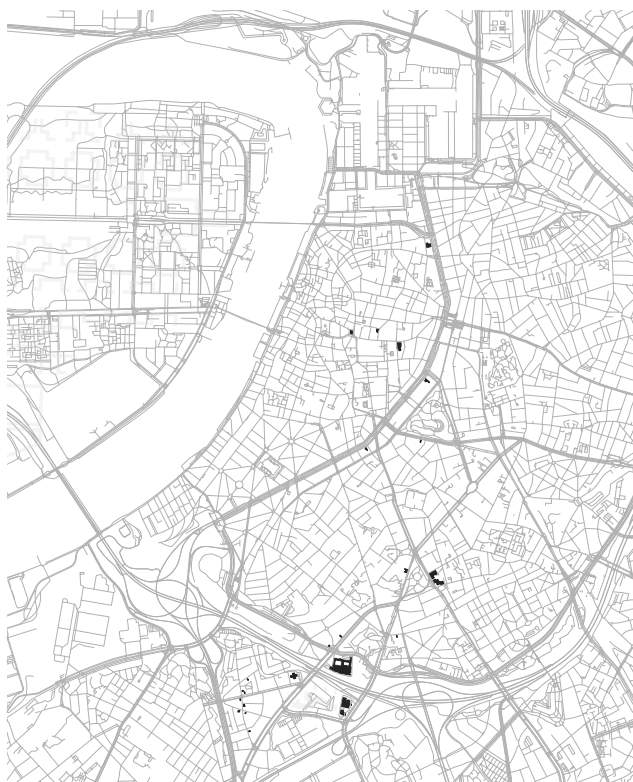


Both sharing similar ideals and a mutual admiration for Le Corbusier's ideas, Léon Stynen's deSingel and Denys Lasdun's National Theatre reveal striking parallels. The interactions they intend to create with their respective cities are alike: both are envisioned as extensions of public space, acting as elongated arms of the street that invite the urban exterior into the indoor realm through a porous architectural language.

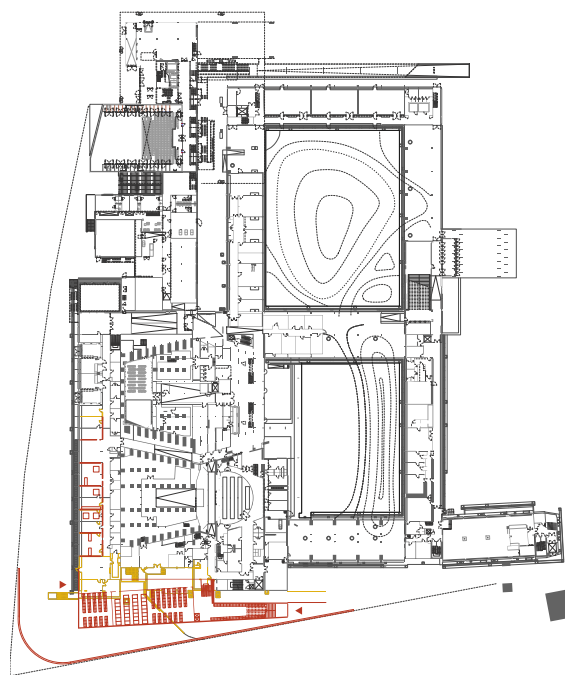
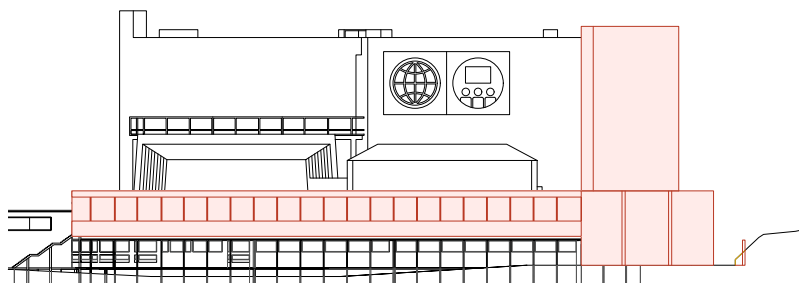
However, while their commanding urban presence and shared urban ideals align, their treatment of the public interior diverges significantly. DeSingel emphasizes a slow, deliberate promenade architecturale, guiding visitors through elongated, low-ceilinged corridors. In contrast, the interiors of the National Theatre are defined by spatial dilation and visual connections between its layered foyers. The terraces, foyers, or «stratas,» as Lasdun calls them, serve as visual and spatial bridges between the exterior and interior realms. At deSingel, it is the inclined corridors and their interplay with the topography that create this connection.

While at deSingel, foyers are discovered gradually along the promenade and present themselves as surprising architectural events, the foyers of the National Theatre are interconnected, fostering a dynamic and vibrant atmosphere. Lasdun's design generates a sense of grandeur and communal energy, whereas Stynen's work invites contemplation and introspection, marking a nuanced difference in how these two architects envisioned the relationship between people, space, and the city.

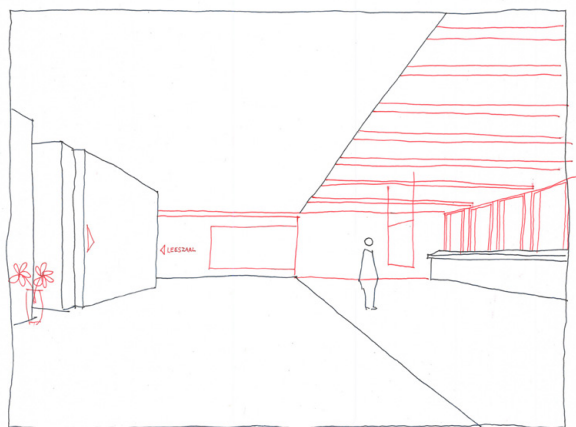
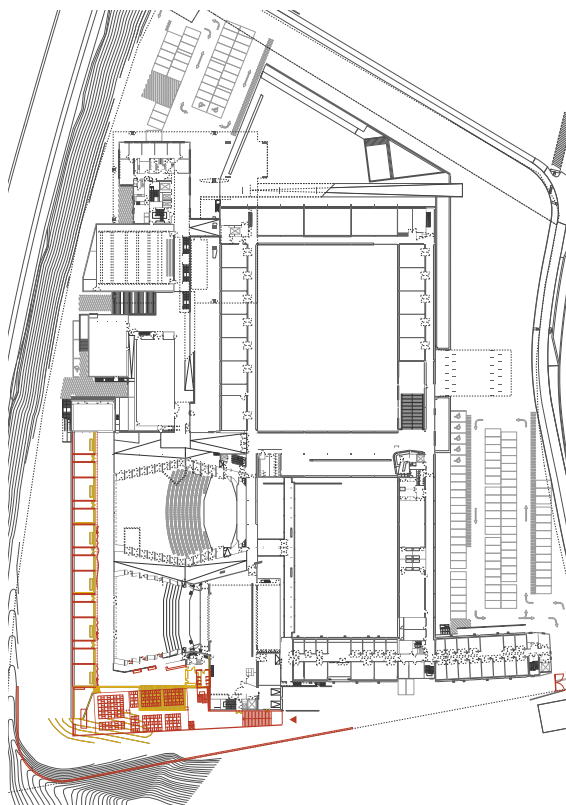




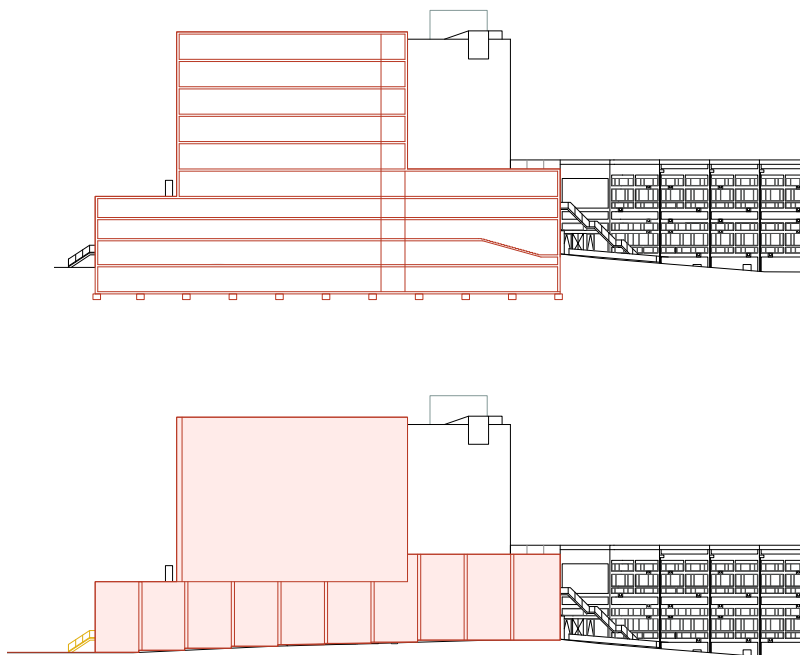
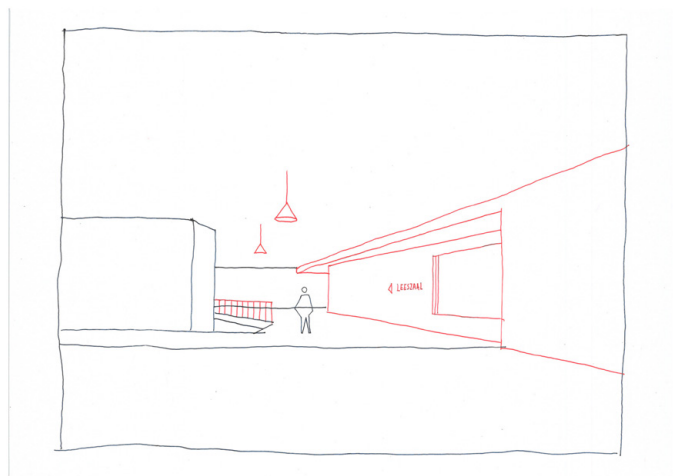
Plan of the groundfloor: care and technical facilities
South Facade of deSingel



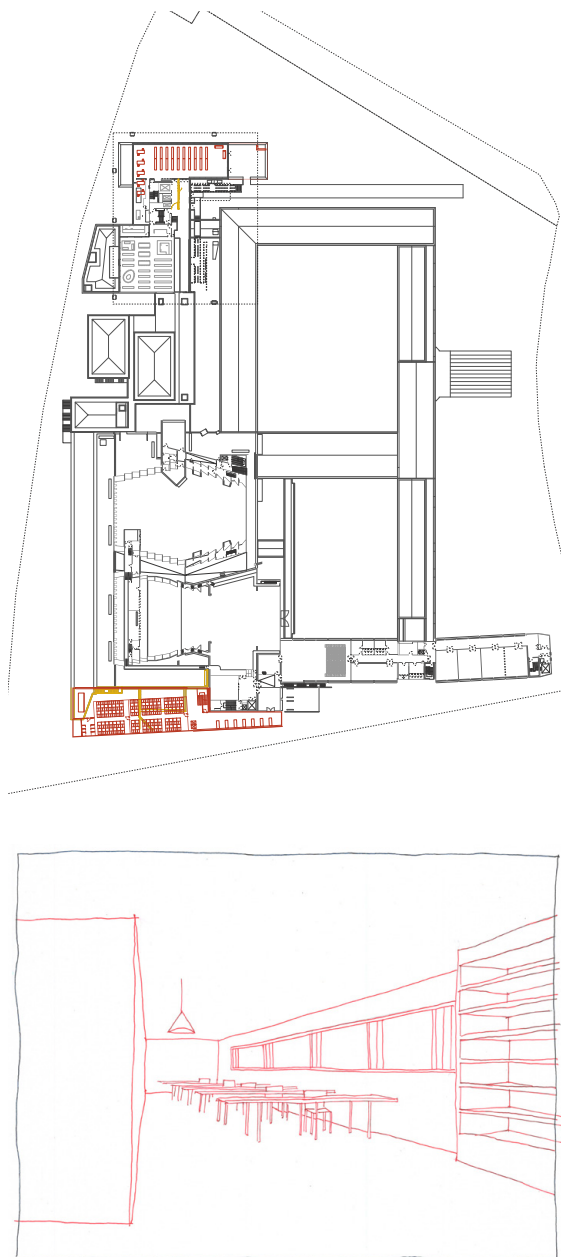
Plan of the First Floor: A new foyer
Perspective of the new foyer



Perspective of the new foyer from the former terrace
 Section cutting through the new entrance
 East Elevation of deSingel

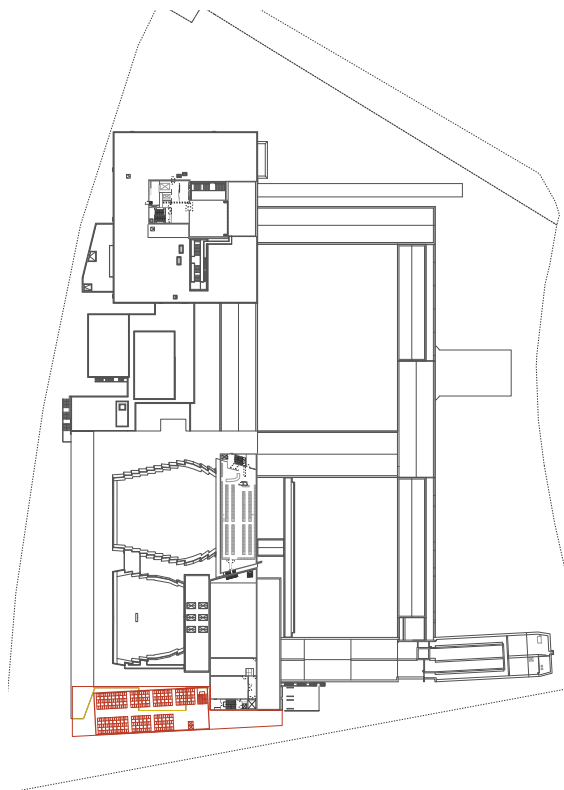
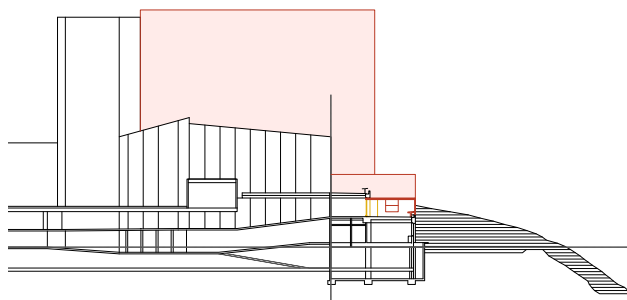


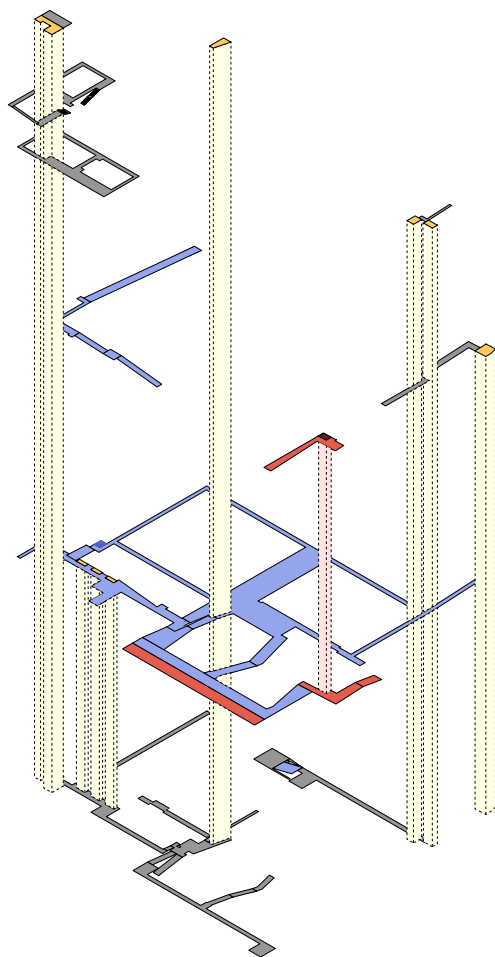
Plan of the Second Floor: the reading room
 Perspective of the new reading room

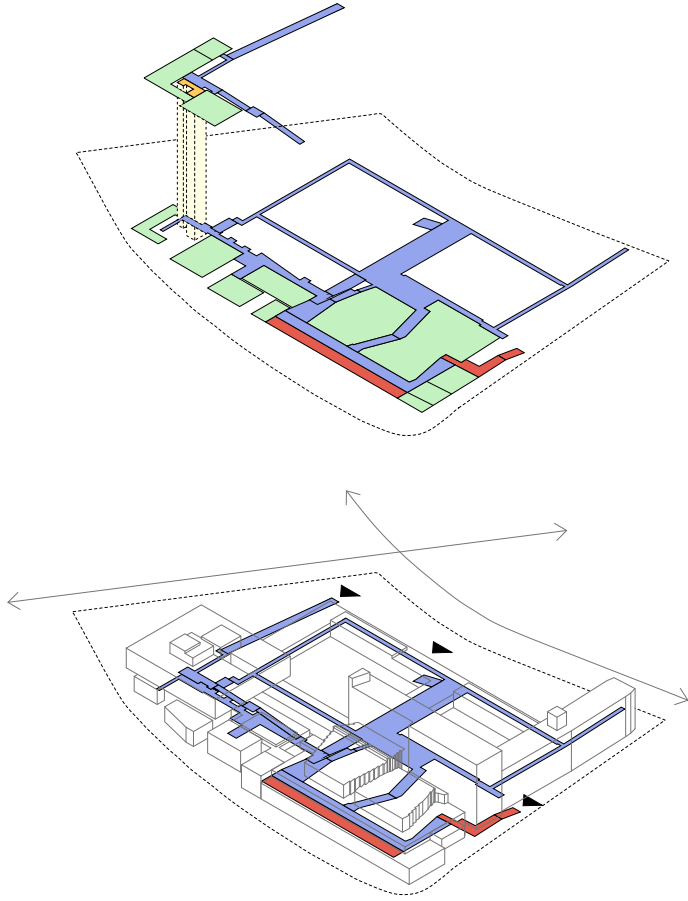


Week 2.8

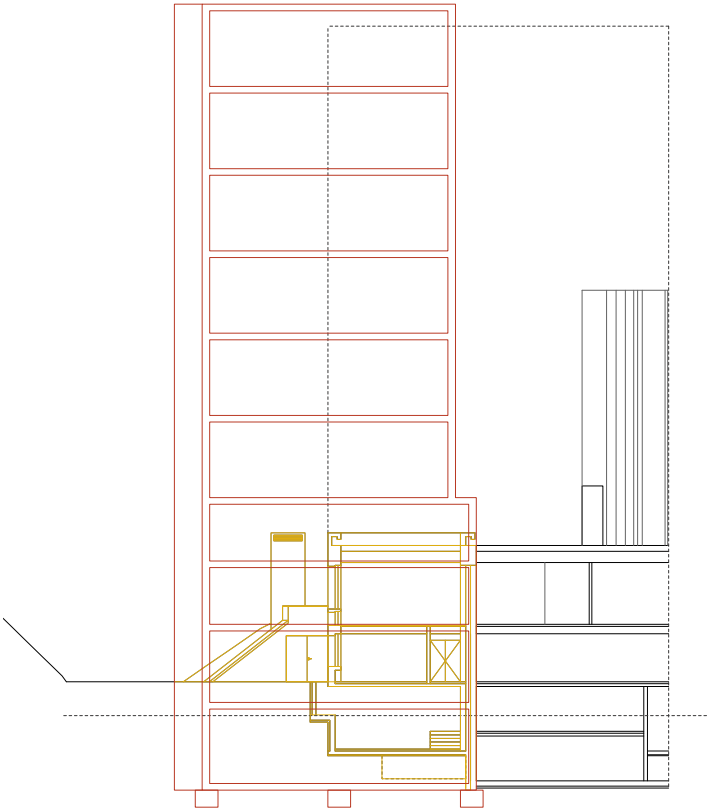
Plan of the Fifth Floor: the storage depot
 Section through the main North-South axis of the First Floor



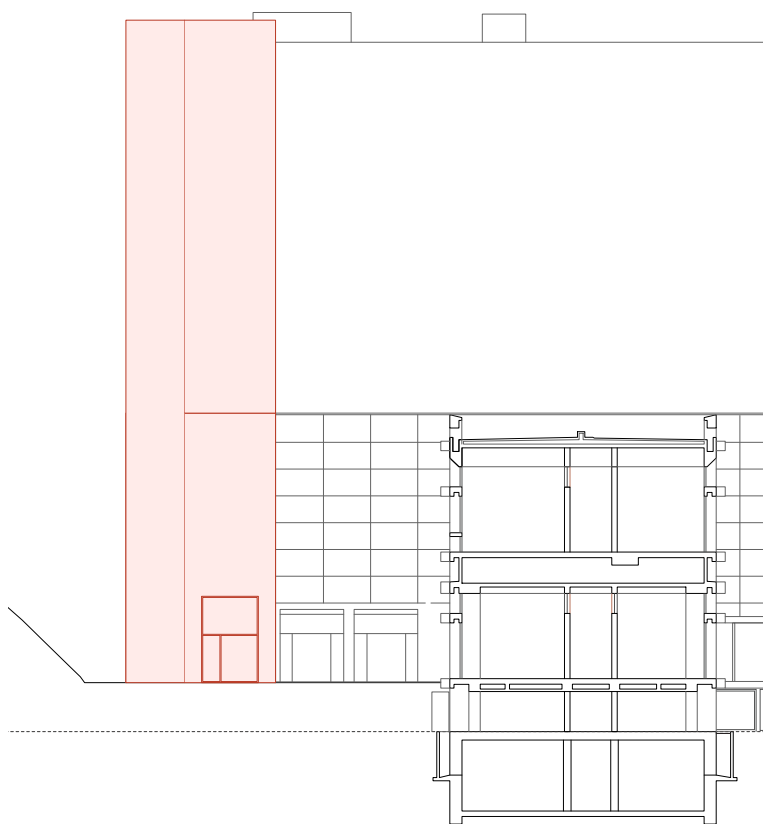




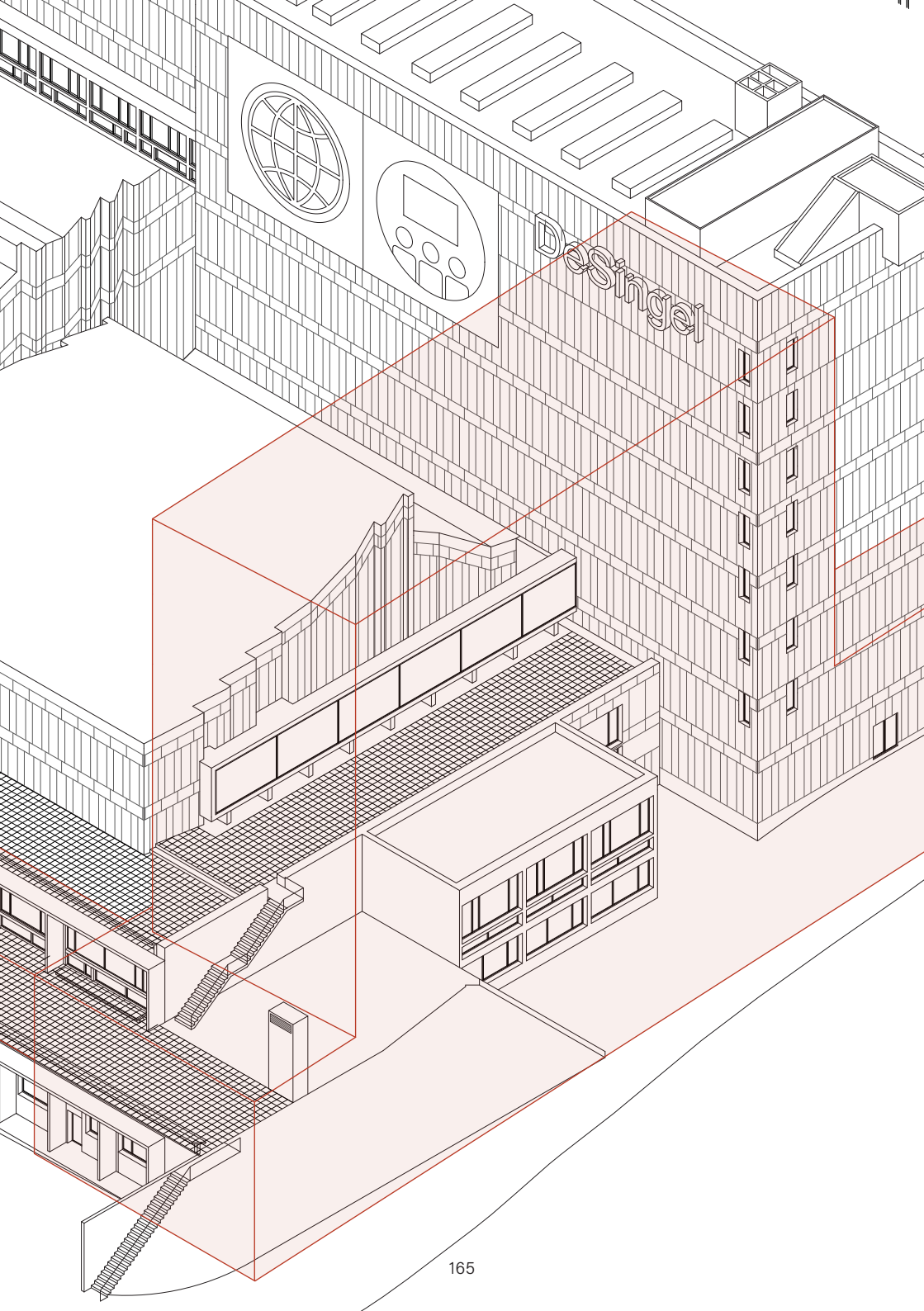
Section of the tower-like addition , cutting through the Eastern logistic path



North Elevation of the new addition



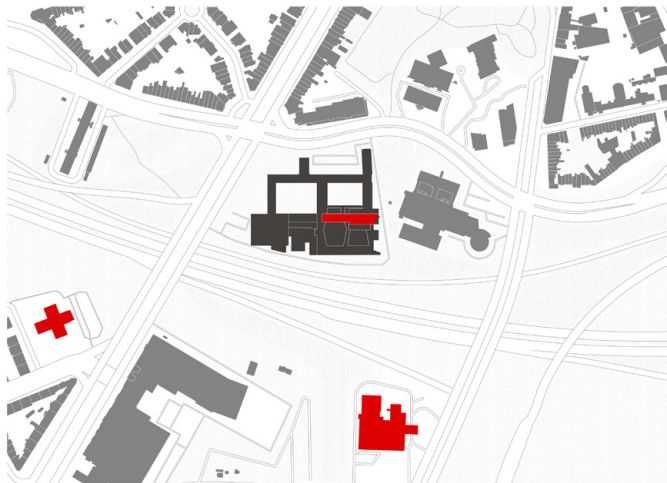
Week 2.8



During pre-2, it was discussed that the idea of having this West to East promenade architecturale, along which the VAI public functions are disseminated, was interesting and feasible. However, some other ideas were challenged and discussed, like the one of having the former terrasses covered. Moreover, if I attract people from the Eastern logistic axis, I would have to think of a “new nature” or new landscape in that part of the plot. The tutoring after the crit gave me new insights and perspectives to continue designing. One of them was to, on the Eastern edge of the plot, to separate the public entrance to the VAI with the logistic entrance by making the public access the addition through a ramp climbing the mound separating deSingel with the swimming pool. This path, echoing the promenade architecturale motto, is also echoing the ramp designed by Beel, as both of them form the two edges of the aforementioned west to east axis.

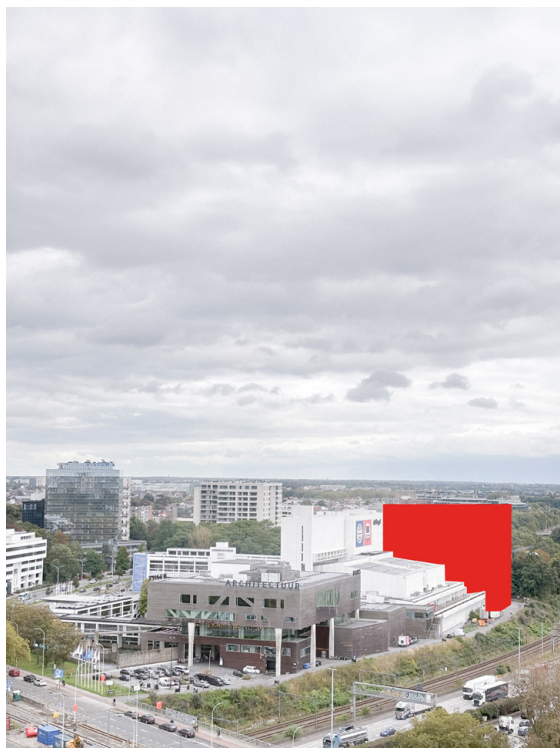
The idea of conceiving the building as a parasite, that would function in symbiosis with the existing, was something after pre-2 that needed more clarification. Now, I understand my new structure as a way to improve the logistic of the theaters while using the infrastructure for the VAI. By moving the existing vertical circulation deserving the flytower, some space is freed on the backstage, increasing to a 50/50 ratio of stage with the backstage surface. The new vertical axis, which reveals itself on the North façade, will connect the new parasite with the Conservatorium wing on the +2, and finish the circulation loop. Following this, the old “Black stage” is made more accessible throughout the building and by the VAI.

Plan of the neighborhood and the relation between Styren's buildings





Intervention as seen from the roof terrace of the BP Building

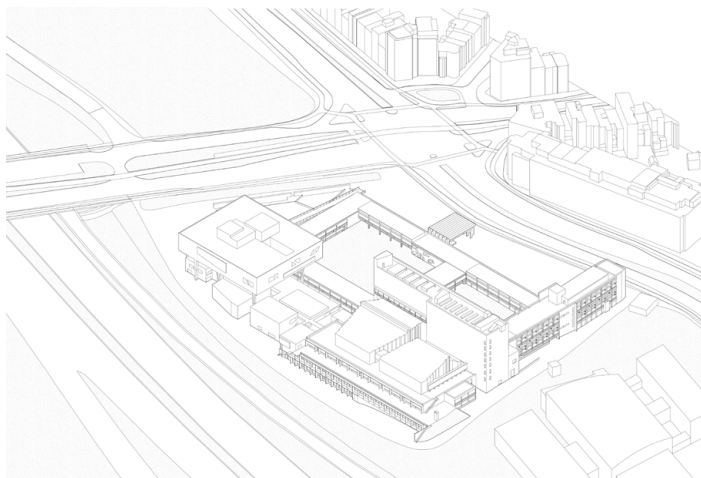


A new entrance: view of the intervention from Desguinlei

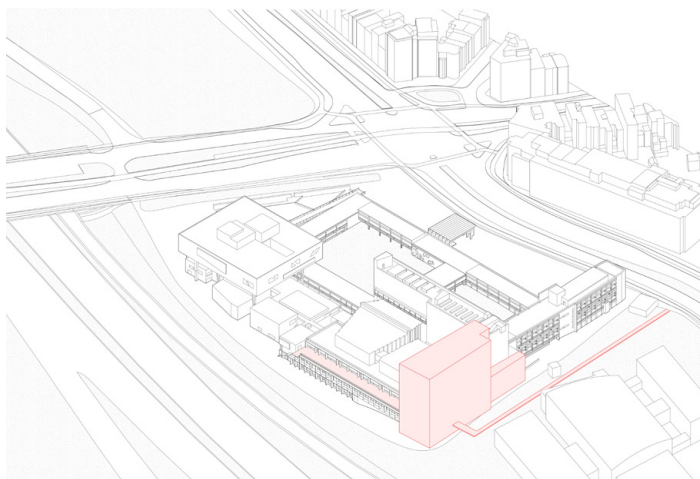


Week 2.9

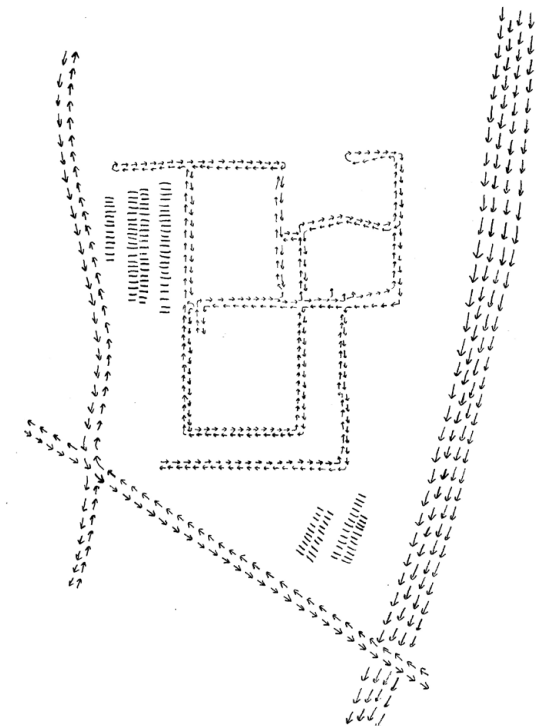
Massing of the intervention and how it changes of emphasizes the relation of deSingel with the South



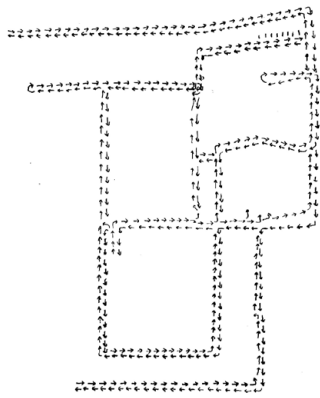
Massing of the intervention and how it changes of emphasizes the relation of deSingel with the South

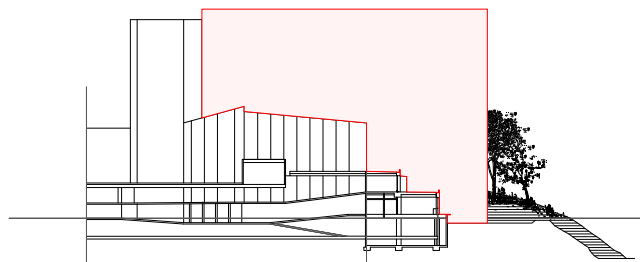
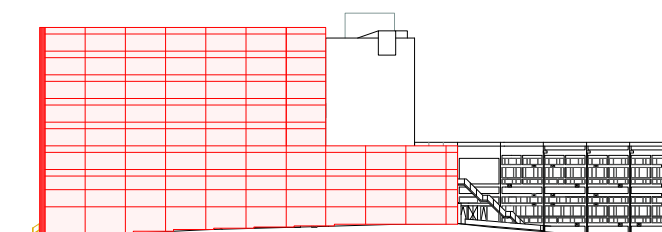
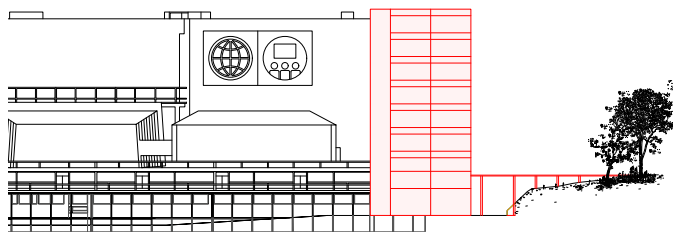


Circulation diagram of deSingel's corridors juxtaposed with the ones of the cars

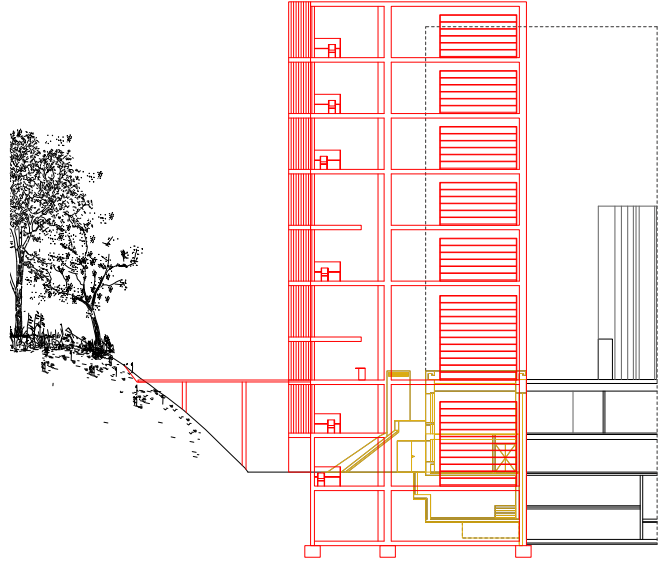


Circulation diagram of deSingel's corridors with the intervention

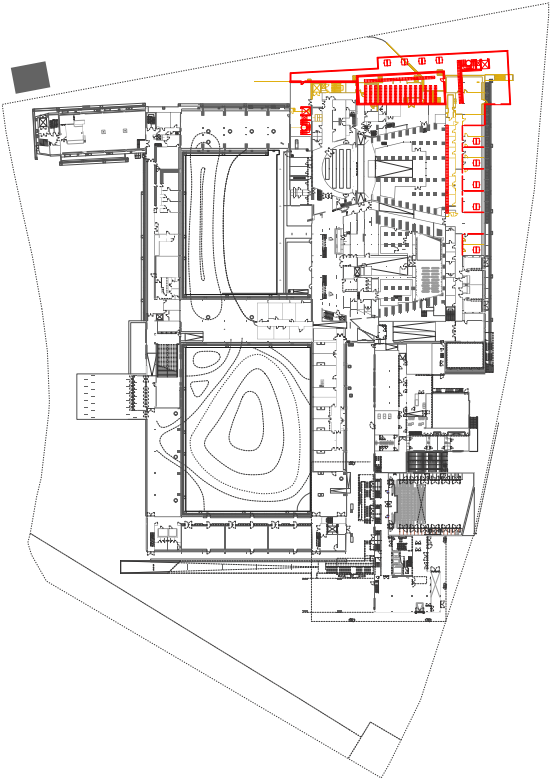




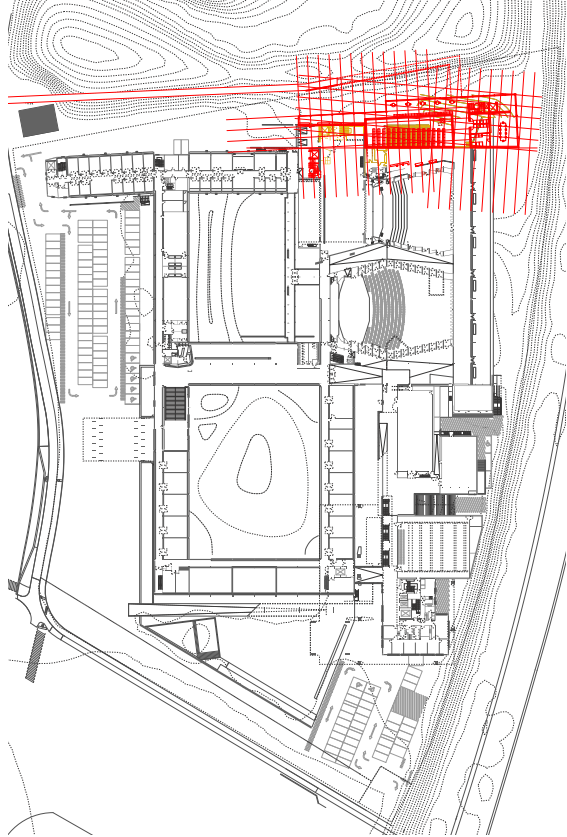
Section through the intervention, displaying the gradient user to documents



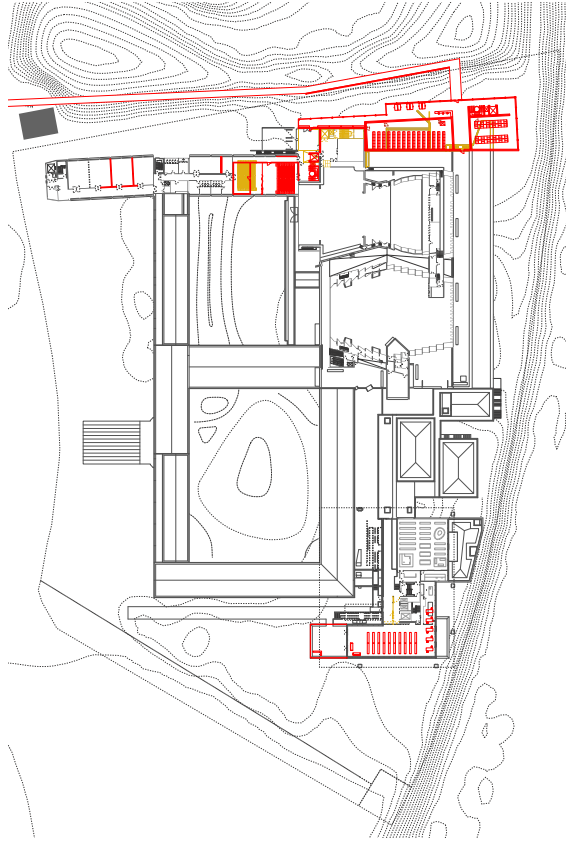
Plan of the Ground floor: logistic facilities and offices for the staff



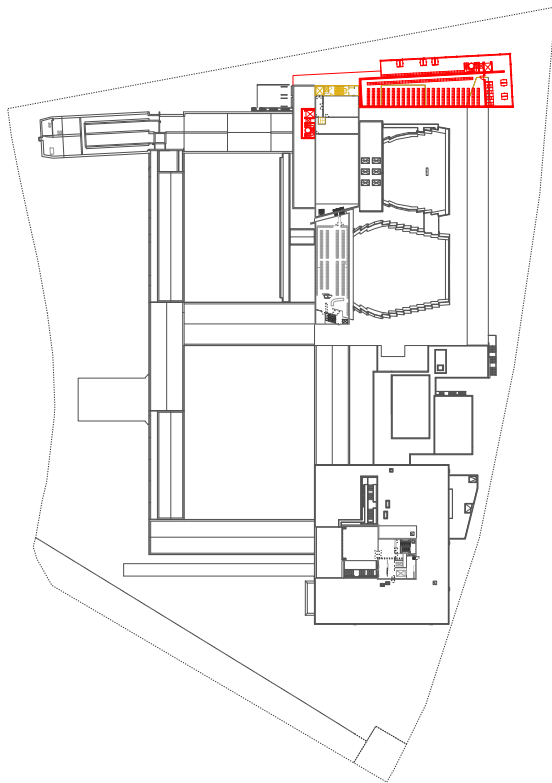
Plan of the first floor: big meeting room, reading room and restroom



Plan of the second floor: Entrance of the VAI



Plan of a standard floor in the tower; unfolding the gradient «users to documents»



Perspective view in one of the reading rooms



Making a 1:200 section model of my intervention site, starting with the topography
Painting and glueing together the different volumes



Photography of the situation before the intervention



Iteration of the intervention, in which the added tower is higher than the existing one



Iteration of the intervention, in which the added tower is aligned with the existing one



Week 2.9

Photographs of the Eastern fragment in which my addition takes place



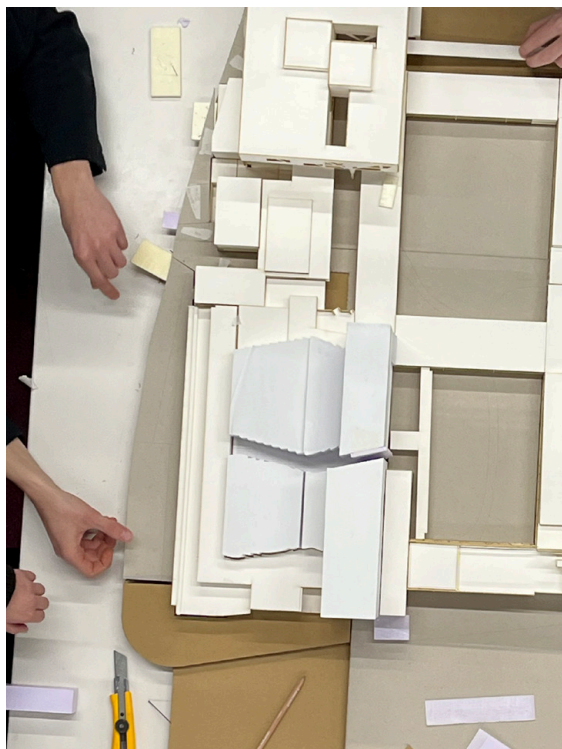
Working on the 1:200 group model of deSingel. Photography by Margaux Lomax.



The 1:200 model of deSingel, Photography by Margaux Lomax



Working on the 1:200 group model of deSingel. Photography by Margaux Lomax.



The 1:200 model of deSingel, Photography by Margaux Lomax



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Romain Tournon

Project Journal 3



To start off the new quarter, I intend to start my project journal with a reflection on P2. This reflection is divided in three parts: a self-critique of my presentation, a reflection on the question asked by the tutors, and a reflection on the feedbacks given.

Named “The Life and Comfort of Documents”, my presentation was focusing on the approach and the directions the VAI’s archive takes on Archiving. Understanding archives as climatic structures segregating the public with the documents; the VAI’s archive intends to reimagine indoor climates as to bring the documents in close contact with the public, and desacralize the function of archiving. As such, the temporary logistic shelves are places as a buffer zone between the depot and the researchers’ spaces in a climatic gradient. By doing so, the corridors of the addition are mimicking the corridors of Stynen’s design, as more than serving spaces.

Corridors are public spaces. Corridors are reading rooms. Reading rooms are public spaces.

However, my presentation, in its format, in its organization and even in the name given to it, was very much oriented towards the research and towards this definition of what constitutes an archive. Thus, it appeared to the tutors as theoretical, abstract, and lacking of material definition. I believe that the spatial ideas behind the project, of mimicking the corridors of deSingel, and integrating my design in the West to East public corridor axis, is the right posture for my project. Yet, I omit and must research on ways to fully integrate my design in the existing, by having continuous intervention along that axis and along the extension of that axis (i.e the new path along the hill).

As a result, on my approach regarding the way of introducing my project, the questions were mostly oriented towards a material or technical understanding of my intervention. As the climatic question surround my project are predominant, the thermic qualities of the materials, and the way they are used are important when talking about my project. Thus, I will have to understand precisely what materials to use when doing this thermal phase shift tower, and, what material expression it will have on deSingel at large. Morevo-

ver, will the structural expression of the tower be an intervention strategy throughout the whole axis West to East? A material and constructive language must be found in expression the addition as a new layer in deSingel. This language is the expression of an interpreted language of the existing with a new climatic nuance added to it. Thus, the furniture and the wall must be detailed, and they role as regulating climatic instruments (hygroscopy, temperature) must be expressed.

During the Q&A, Jurjen mentioned the approach of JDVIV as having potential in solving the problem of having a consistent design, both in the new and the re-use of the existing. For Jurjen, I shall think my design as if I would be designing it myself of with a group of friends.

Following my presentation and the question asked, remarks emerged on where my design needs more work on. One main point of the remark was to put energy on the design of the entrance path on the East of the building, as to make it welcoming. I should understand how this path is a continuation of the corridors, and is not only generous to all the users of the site: from the users to the animals. Is the path very architectural and thus will reshape and de-nature the mound? Or will it be an independent hovering structure that doesn't destabilize too much the existing ecosystem?

Besides, the formal definition of the tower must be clearer in its structure, in its materiality, and in its implication regarding wind, shadow and acoustic. Currently, the added tower is seen as an expansion of the formal language of the flytower, and thus is aligned in height with the existing. However, it was suggested that going higher than the flytower, could be one other expression of an intervention that takes the building in "sandwich".

Thus, to respond to these comments, I started the quarter by diving again in the work of DVVT and JDVIV, and see how their approach could be strategically used in this case, and if it is at all relevant. During P2, my main reference was the work of the Swiss-German architect Roger Boltshauser, as a great precedent on how indoor climates can be controlled through a hybrid architecture that merges the archaic with the technological. Can this approach be juxtaposed

with the work of JDVIV? Can it help me give some nuance to their position and help me define my own?

Architettura Povera as a connection between Boltshauser and JDVIV
Inspiration through abstraction > the way of representing > Luigi Moretti's casts

In Les Ballets, is it possible to create a good building bases on serialization and repetition as a generator? As the building main role?

In Both the projects of Boltshauser and JDVIV, the tectonic expression and use of materials is solely dependent on the physical qualities of theirs, and their impact on the climate and the structure. The use of materials is relying on calculations that would make the expression of the interiors as a patchwork of different textures and materiality.



The stratified interventions of the Toneelhuis Schermenhuis 64, by JDVIV



On week 3.1, the tutoring with Daniel help me give a clearer definition to my narrative, and helped me understand where should be the points on which I must focus for the next incoming weeks. If it is clear that the main intervention of my design is the tower on the East of the plot, the expression of that tower and its geometry responding to the existing must be defined better. My project is in fact a recalibration of the landscape already designed by Stynen and Beel. In the original design, the landscape is both built and natural, and the way both landscapes meet is something quite important in the tectonic expression of the building, with these wings hovering over the natural landscape.

Thus, what qualities have my diffused components along that Randonnée? How to articulate them and does the materiality and the constructivity gives an articulation to such? To represent such, a drawing expression the different journeys within the building must be drawn, to understand how the interiors and the exterior landscape are actually enmeshed.

During that tutoring, we talked about the expression of the tower on the façade, and how it can relate to deSingel and with the towers of the existing.

Kitchen Tower by XGGA
Tweewaters by XGGA





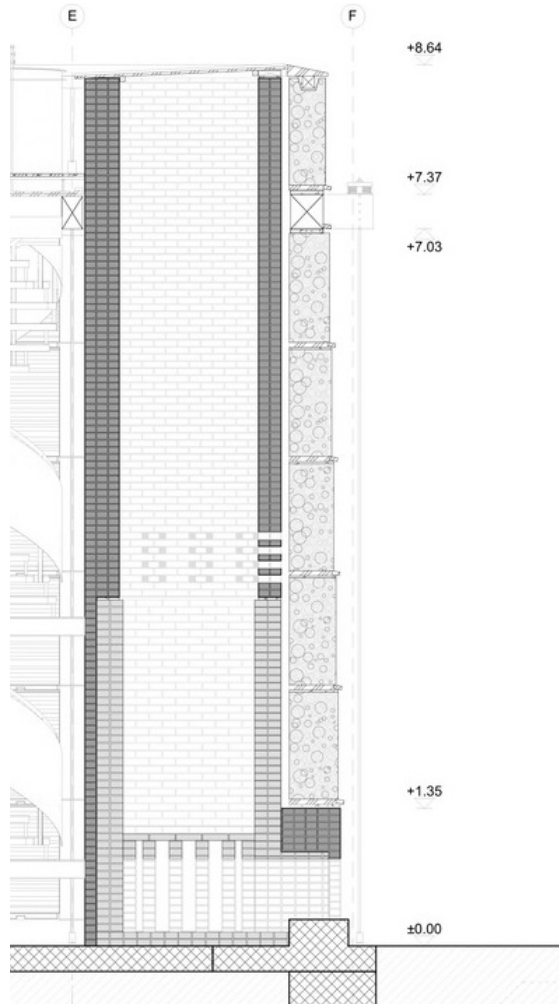


This model, of building as infrastructures, expressed on their facade by plain glass facades with layers of transparencies has been criticized during my P2, as I had the idea of using such a strategy. This attitude was described as excluding, mostly regarding the nature and the ecosystem around the project. As a response, I intend to fully understand how the current facade of deSingel is generous to the surrounding environment, and how it reacts to the natural landscape around. Since my project is about the two promenades: the built and the natural, the ways they meet, is of particular importance. The facade is one of these interfaces between these two worlds.



In a project like Les Ballets C de la B by JDVIV or in any project by Boltshauser, the materials are used qualitatively and quantitatively following their physical impact on the environment. In a JDVIV project, the interior structure is usually quite composite, as the columns and beam can have contrasting materials. In a project by Boltshauser, the materials are calculated as to create an efficient climatic system in the buildings: in temperature, hygrometry, and energy consumed. Thus, following these approaches, as I aim towards a building that creates a stable environment through archaic methods, materials with high thermal effusivity are essential. As such, concrete or rammed earth could be used.

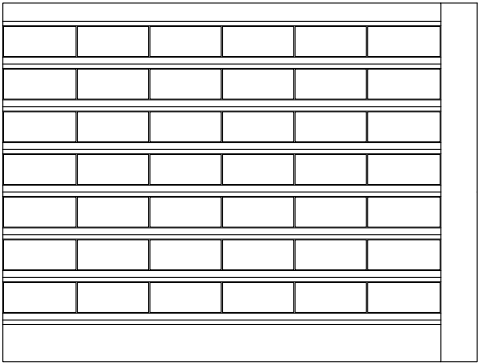
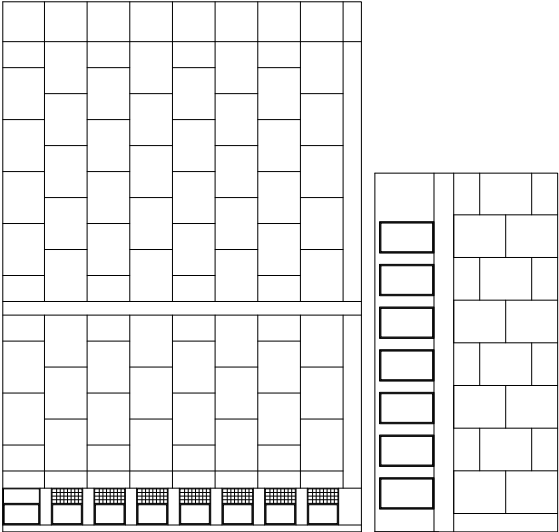
pre-stressed concrete in the Kln tower of Boltshauser architecten



However, with a low resistance to horizontal forces, it is hard to imagine a high building in rammed earth. Architects like Boltshauser managed to create high structure by using a “pre-stressed rammed earth” technique. However, this technique has never reached more than 10 meters high.

Logement collectif à Reuilly, by Charles Henry Tachon Architectes
Gent city archive, by Robbrecht en Daem





Paper model with the unfolded facade: looking from the BP Tower



Paper model with the unfolded facade: looking from the Crowne Hotel Plaza





The research during week 3.2 was mainly focussed on the material and proportional expression of the building. Thus, some research on the material expression of the building was made, using some precedents such as the Bucherer building in Zurich by Office Winhow. Moreover, I did some research on the openings, and the rhythms on the façade. This helped me understand the potential expression of the building to the city of Antwerp, and how the rythms of the façade could help enhance the proportions of the verticality of my tower. However, due to the division between the depot and the open research and logistic spaces, the Western façade of the building is mostly left without openings. Thus, I must treat this façade in a way that will not render the building as an intimidating monumental figure.

On Friday the 21st of February, I went on site again as to confront my design ideas, once again, to the reality of the site: hoping to make some problems emerge. During my visit, I mostly stayed around my implantation site, either in the interiors (behind the auditoriums), on the roofs, and on the Eastern logistics promenade.

If all the parts are to be read collectively as a holistic way to understand my addition, the first two are somehow deeply enmeshed as they reflect the existing attempt to create an indoor-outdoor promenade. As such, the spaces reflect one another in proportion, scale and materiality. The promenade is in fact the void or the gap between the auditoriums, expressed here through their stony massive characters. The angles and the fragmentation of their facades are reminiscing organic shapes that are intending to create this almost “stone garden”. When on the roofs, the spaces bear similar qualities, however they are seemingly more monumental. My design has the potential to reactivate these spaces as a public continuum, and thus will suggest extending their language spatially and material-wise.

View of the level 1 terraces, looking where the addition will be



Week 3.3

View of the level 2 terraces, where a series of new ventilation system were added



Week 3.3

View of the level 2 terraces, in between the two auditoriums



View of the level 2 terrasses, behing the Blue Hall



View of the level 2 terraces, in between the two auditoriums



View of the level 2 terraces



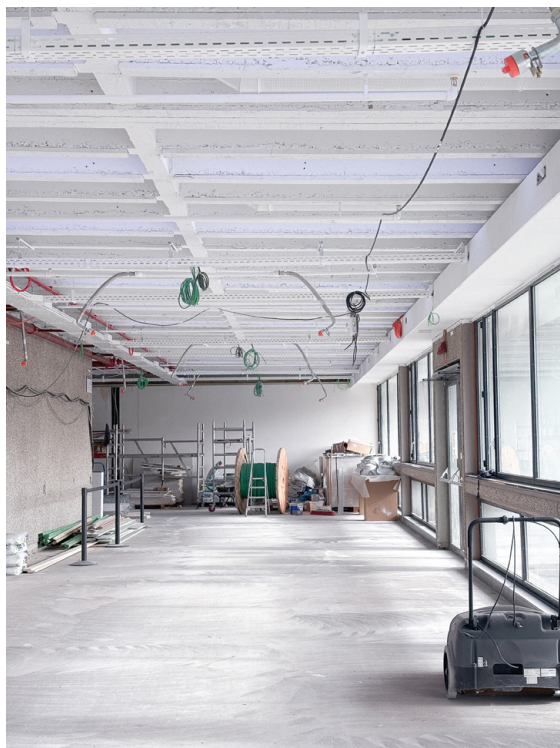
View of the level 2 terraces
View of the level 1 terraces: the monumentality of the volumes



View of the corridors on the first floor, in between the two auditoriums



View of the corridors on the first floor, behind the two auditoriums. Looking towards the new addition



Detail of the Red Hall Foyer, where details of the floor are revealing the structural independence of that volume



Week 3.3

Views of the Red Hall Foyer, looking from the Eastern logistic path



View of the BP Tower, looking from the Eastern logistic path



Tryout for a more lightweight massing of the new addition



Week 3.3

Tryout for a more lightweight massing of the new addition



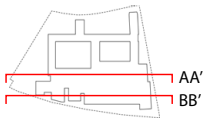
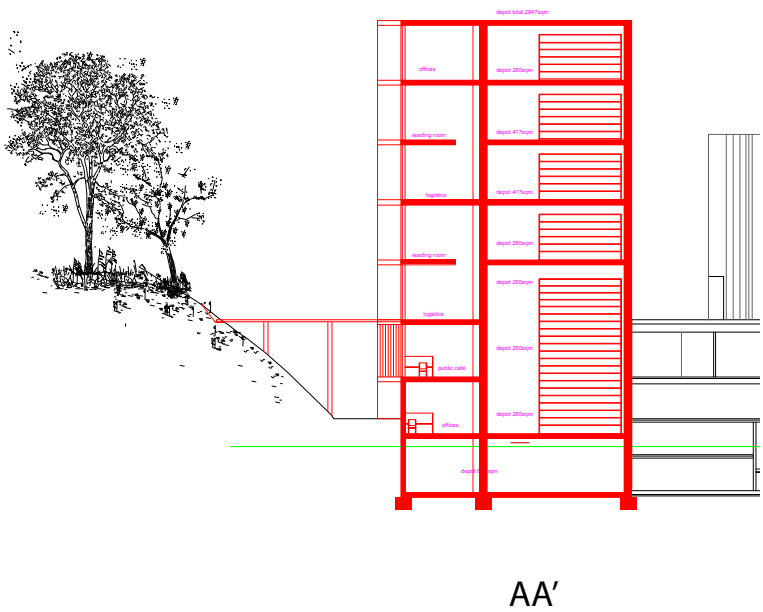
Week 3.3

Tryout for a more lightweight massing of the new addition

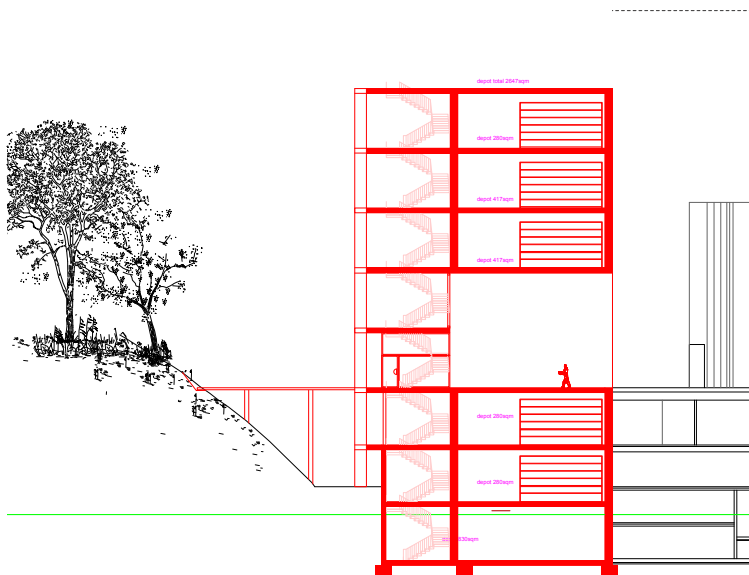


Week 3.3

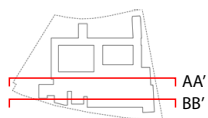
Section through the different functions of the addition and the interiors organisation



Section through the entrance ramp in the new addition

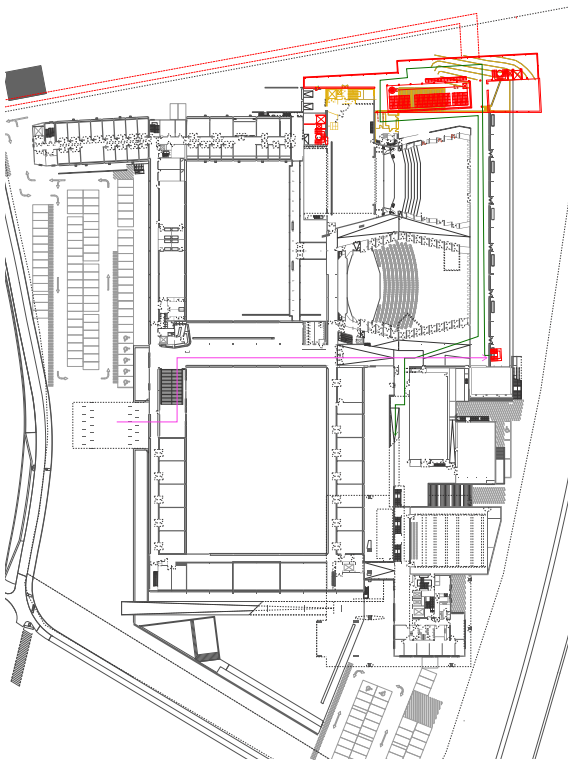


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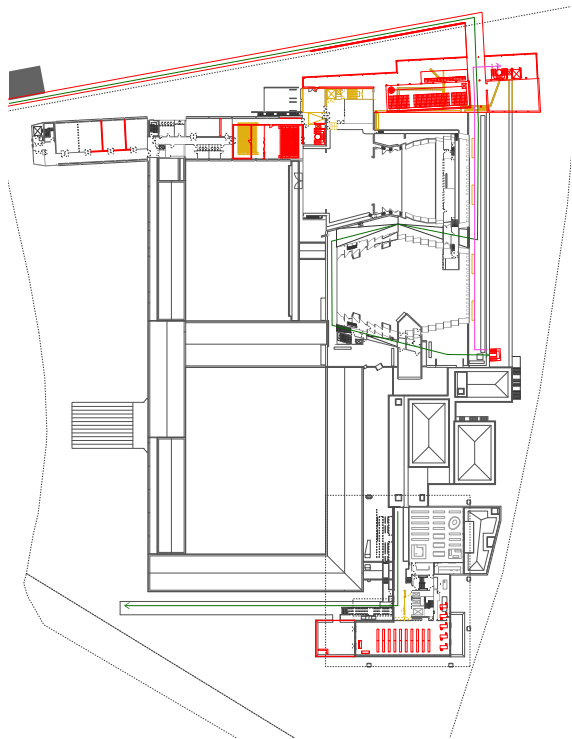


Week 3.3

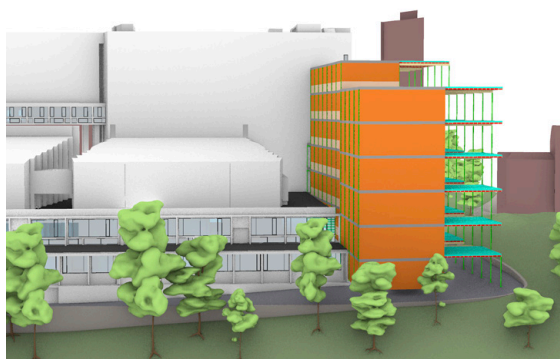
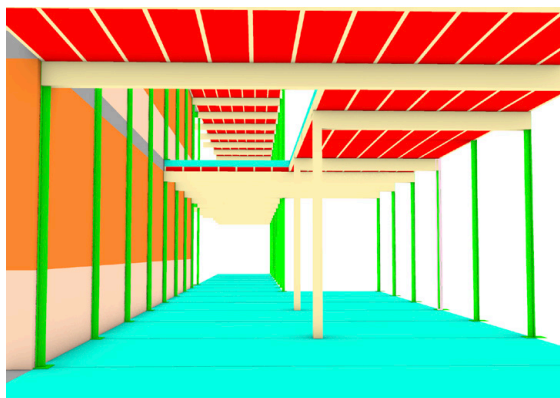
Plan of the first floor of the new addition



Plan of the second floor of the new addition



3D Model of the structure of the new addition

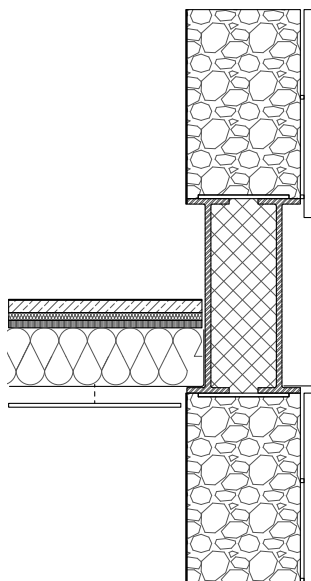
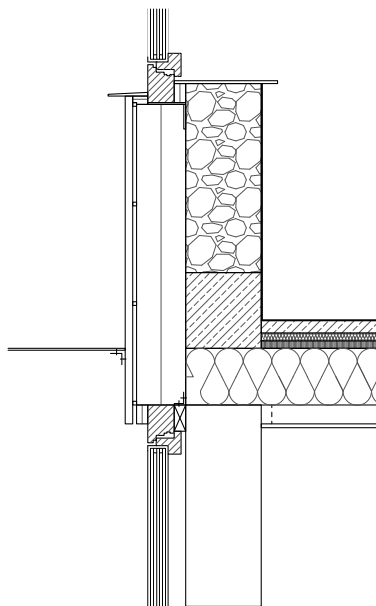


However, going on the roofs and experiencing the promenade, made me realize how monumental and intimidating my current design is. Thus, the massing and the expression of it could still be detailed even more. I realized that, by putting a lot of depot spaces in the basement of my addition, 700sqm of depot could be saved above and thus making the massing possibly smaller. Thus, I tried on some different variations with more subtle shapes that would react and reminisce the topography create on the roofs of deSingel. The different variation made me choose one option, that I tried to detail in materiality, using a bio-sourced material called “light earth”.

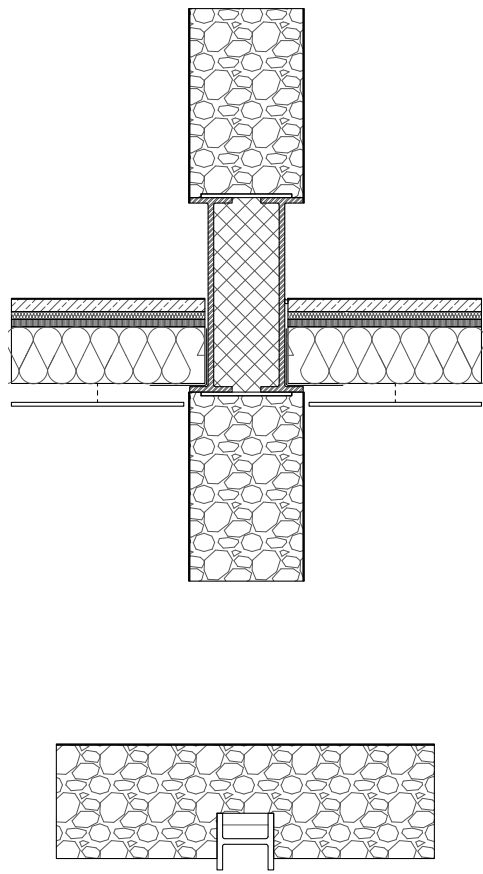
Light-Earth is similar to Rammed Earth, bearing similar qualities with a strong thermal mass, perspirant qualities, and while being more lightweight and non-structural: thus, perfect for a hybrid structure combination a bio-sourced material with a material like steel or concrete as to be able to reach a building of around 20m to 30m height.

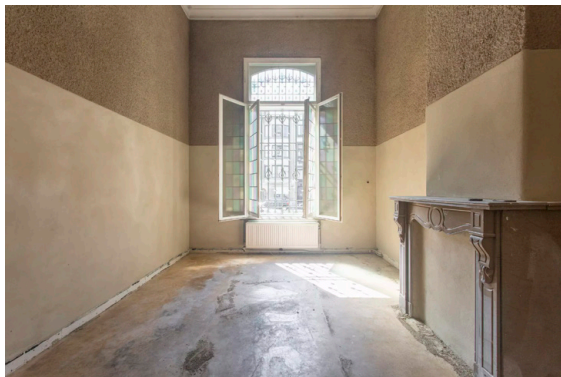
Light-Earth of Rammed Earth is no stranger to Belgium, in fact, a company and architecture practice like BC Materials/ BC Architects are testing and commercializing Earth construction product with base materials from Belgium and around. Thus, we can imagine our building to use these products. Using a bio-sourced material in combination with a concrete or steel structure offers the possibility to lower the carbon emission of our building, and to improve the long-term flexibility of the building through time. As a non-structural material, light earth is very easy to maintain. Moreover, if letting it exposed without a covering is not an option, a smooth clay covering will allow the wall to keep breathing while protecting the interiors of the depot from potential dust.

Detail 1:20 of the Facades, trying some connections between earth and steel



Detail 1:20 of the connection between the depot structure and the open structure in front

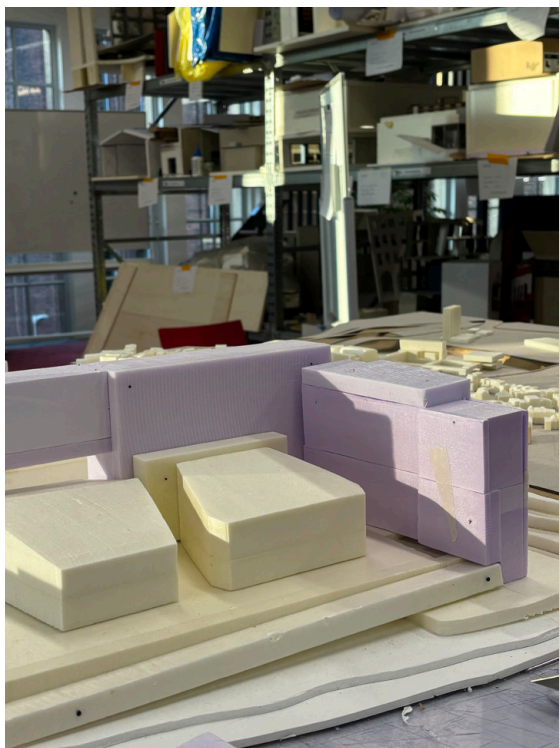




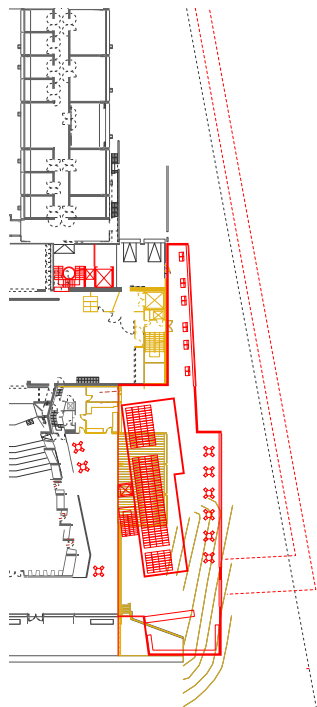
Choice of a material: lightened earth



The tutoring of week 3.3 made some questions emerge, regarding the structure and the massing of my building. Since I lowered my volumes, making the addition somehow visually independent from the flytower, my addition almost wants to speak the same language as the two auditoriums with their sculptural character. Thus, for next week, I must try plenty variations of my addition, using references such as some buildings by luigi Moretti (girasole, Corso Italia)

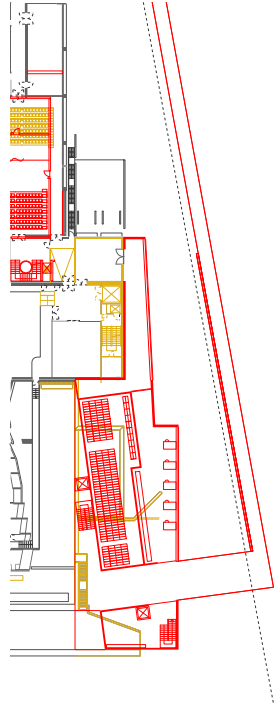


This week, because of the flu, I didn't study as much as I hoped for. Thus, after being back from resting, I started directly with the massing and trying out some potential variations of my volume that would appear slightly more sculptural and elegant in shape. I understand that the shape of my addition looked last week a bit awkward in proportions. Thus, after trying out some different iterations, I selected a shape in which the former diagonal following the volume of the auditoriums is amplified, and cuts through the whole volume to make a shape that runs thinner in the direction of the highway.

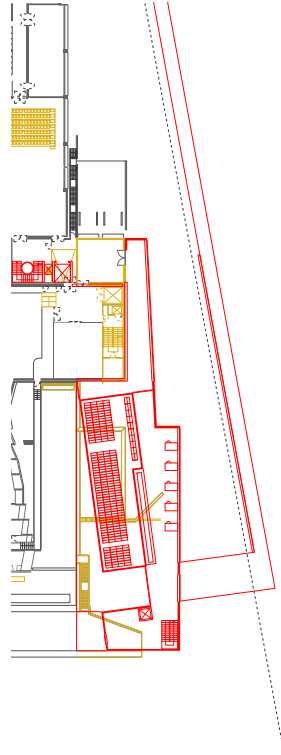


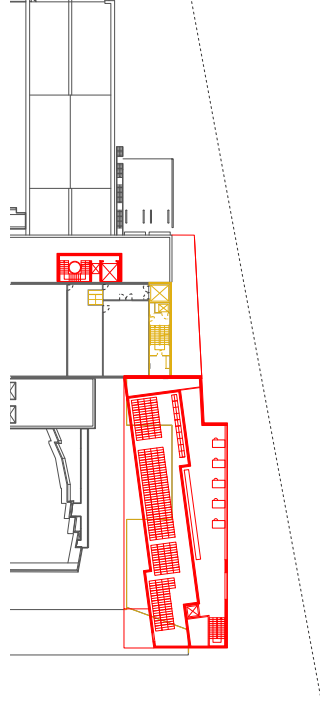
After deciding on the massing, I had to work again on the plans. The new sharp angles in the plans, and the thinner volumetry are making the spaces narrower, thus redefining the gradient of comfort of the documents designed during P2. For the week after, I realized I should be doing visualisation of the interiors, to understand how my new gradient unfolds, but also to understand how the openings in these spaces should be. Moreover, doing visuals will also help me precise the materiality in these spaces.

2nd floor - Entrance of the new addition



3rd floor - Depot and research space





Collage of the east, to understand how the materiality and the volumetry speaks to the existing ones

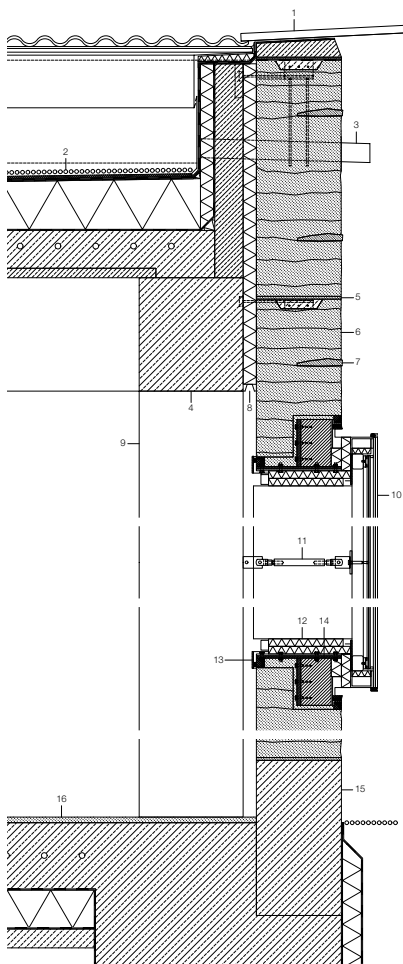


Week 3.4

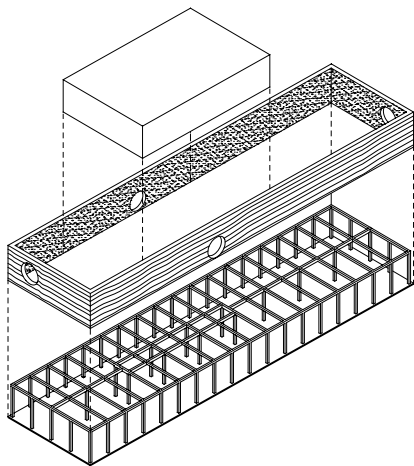
Collage of the east, to understand how the materiality and the volumetry speaks to the existing ones



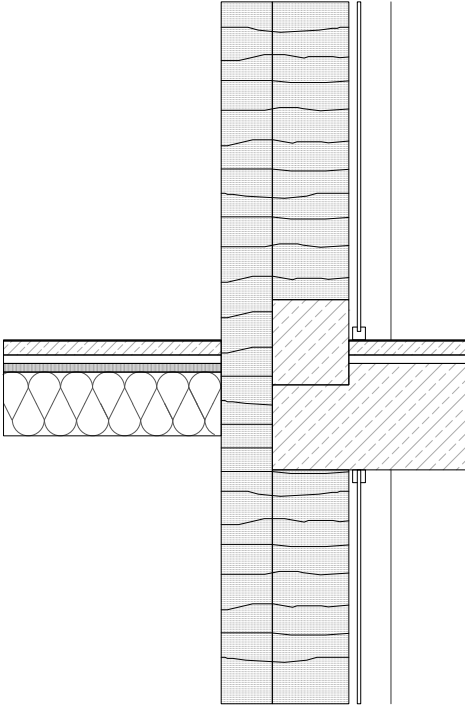
Week 3.4



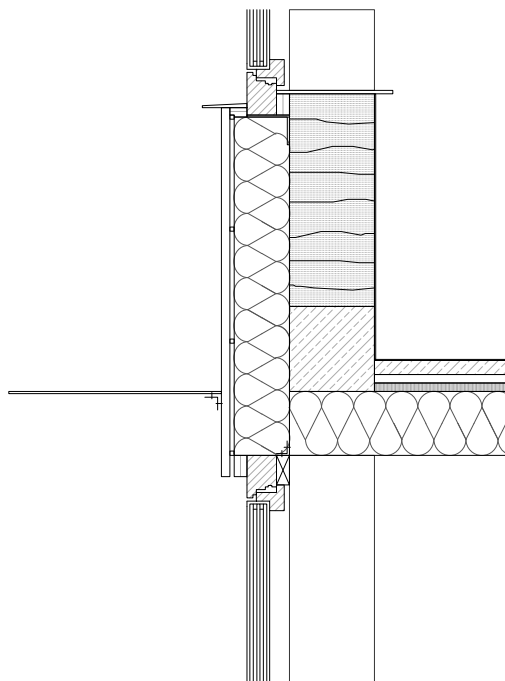
Axometry of the Ricola building's structure
 Photo of the construction work of the Ricola building



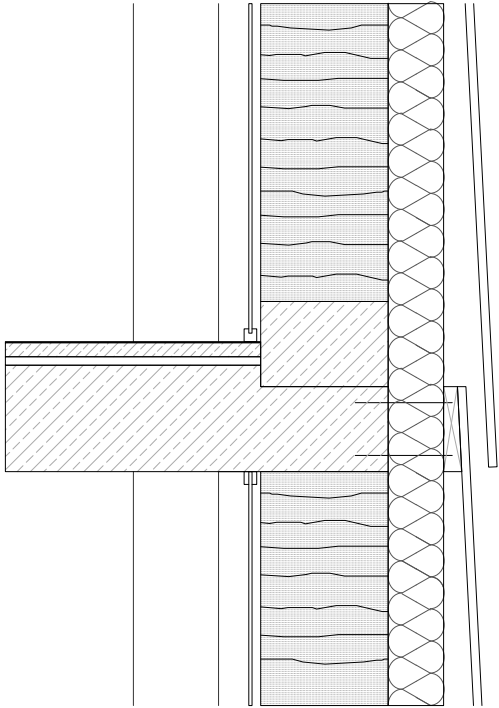
Connection between the depot and the light structure for the research spaces



Detail of the east façade



Detail fo the west facade and the cladding



In parallel of defining better the massing and the spaces, I designed some details of the skins and façade, as I believe the materials and the structure is connected to my climatic and theoretical idea of an archive, more than it is actually connected and dependent to the shape of my addition. As to design my details, and since I intend to use light earth, a material similar to rammed earth in properties, while being lighter. I rediscovered the reference of the Ricola building by Herzog & de Meuron, in which the structural and material concept is very interesting for my addition. In fact, this building is structurally hybrid; the rammed earth is not structural and coupled with a concrete exoskeleton. This strategy can be perfect for my addition, as it would allow me to keep using the technical properties of earth while using the performance of concrete as to achieve a high building with long open spans for the interiors of the archive.



During week 3.5, I went on a study trip to London, where I visited some buildings I thought were relevant to my research. The buildings I chose were either programmatically or spatially interesting, as they relate to DeSingel as a building or to the program required by the VAI for their archive. As such, I visited the Tate Modern, where some spaces designed by Herzog & de Meuron inspired parts of my design; such as the thin gap creating a narrow atrium between two walls. This space was particularly relevant for thinking about the connection between my main addition and the existing building, and how they meet by creating a void.



As mentioned in my Project Journal for P2, the National Theatre was already a building I considered interesting to analyse, as it shares characteristics with De-Singel - particularly in the way the terraces are used to mediate the link between the building and the city. Moreover, these two buildings are programmatically quite similar, as they are both internationally recognized performance hubs.

Staircase in The National Theater, by Denys Lasdun





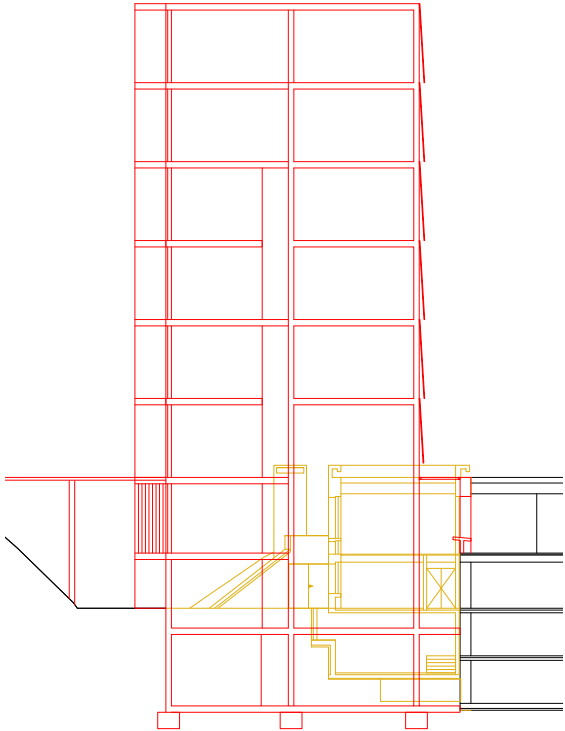
To conclude, I visited the Sir John Soane Museum, as a way to return to a raw understanding of the typology of the architecture archive, and what it means for both the field of architecture and society at large.

Building a model 1:100 of my junction

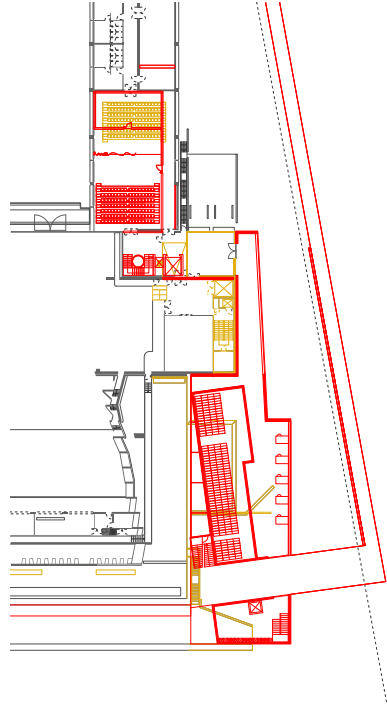


Week 3.5

Section of the junction between the existing deSingel building and the addition



Plan of the addition with the new gap in between the new and the old

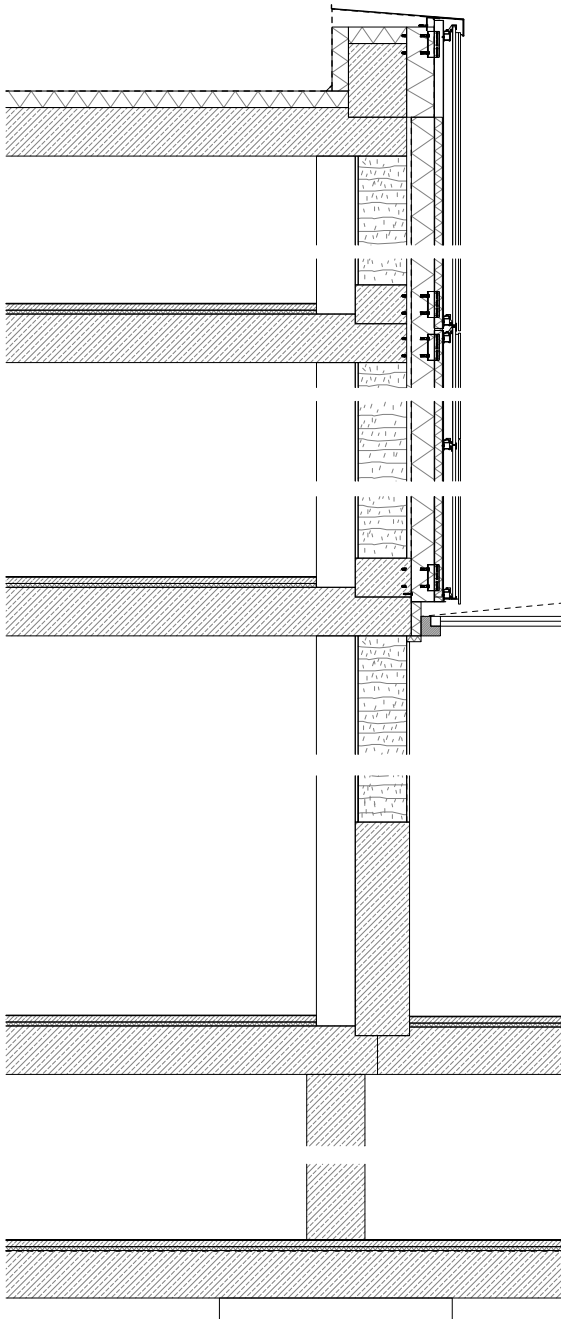


During Week 3.6, I focused on further defining my building - working both at the detail scale and on the overall image through façade composition. After re-modelling the massing, the building took on a more elegant, slender appearance. The façade is conceived as a series of horizontal layers that introduce a subtle sense of verticality. In this way, the façades are imagined as fluid elements; almost like a veil unfolding across the site.

On the southern side, the façade remains silent and closed, as it protects the storage spaces behind it. This idea stems from designing a building that responds to the climatic requirements of an archive, while also questioning and departing from conventional and often misguided notions of indoor climate control that I explored during my research.

I chose to work with earth as a primary material because of its climatic properties: it regulates humidity through hygroscopic behavior, offers strong thermal mass, and conveys a material expression of porosity. However, earth needs protection from rain and must be covered. This led me to the idea of tiling the façade. Still, I believe in creating a material continuity between the interior and exterior. For this reason, I decided to abandon materials like metal sheets or concrete panels, which would interrupt this gradient. Instead, I am exploring the use of ceramics or terracotta: materials that can reflect the presence of earth even on the outside of the building, particularly as one approaches it.

1:20 section of the facade of the addition



1:100 section model of the existing next to the addition

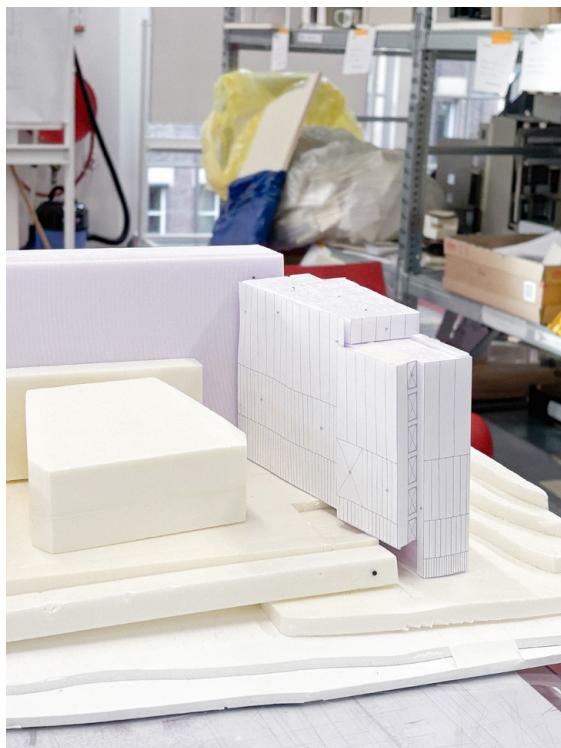


Week 3.6

1:100 section model of the existing next to the addition



1:250 model of the new volumetry, aimed to be more sculptural

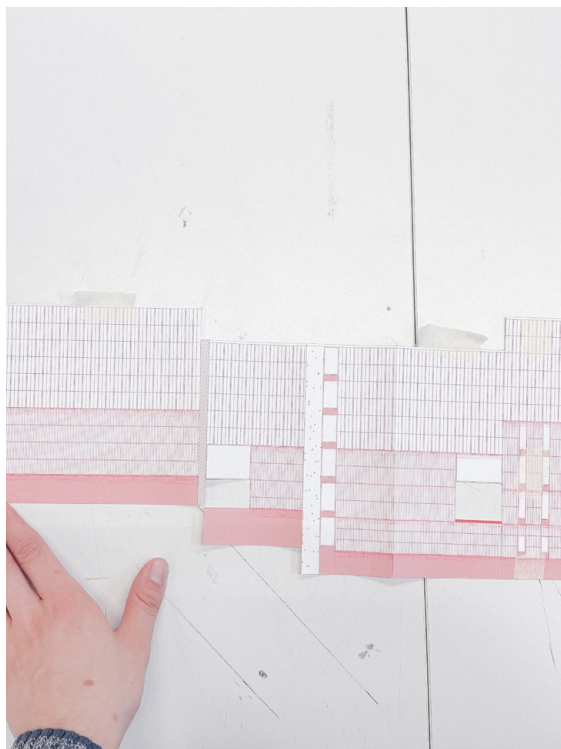


Week 3.6

Wall with the research of the week



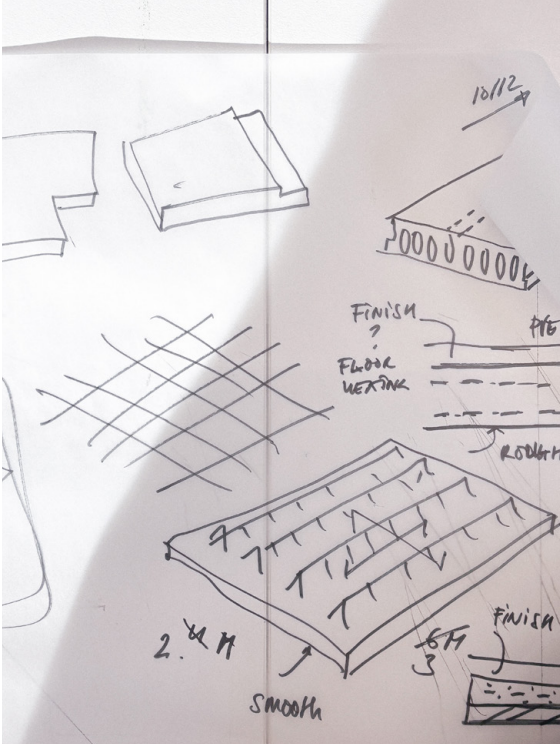
Week 3.6



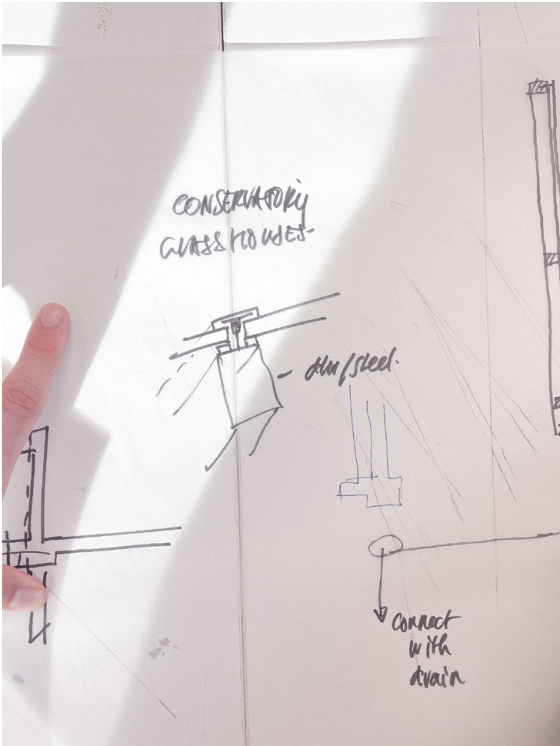
Sketch model for the 1:33 fragment



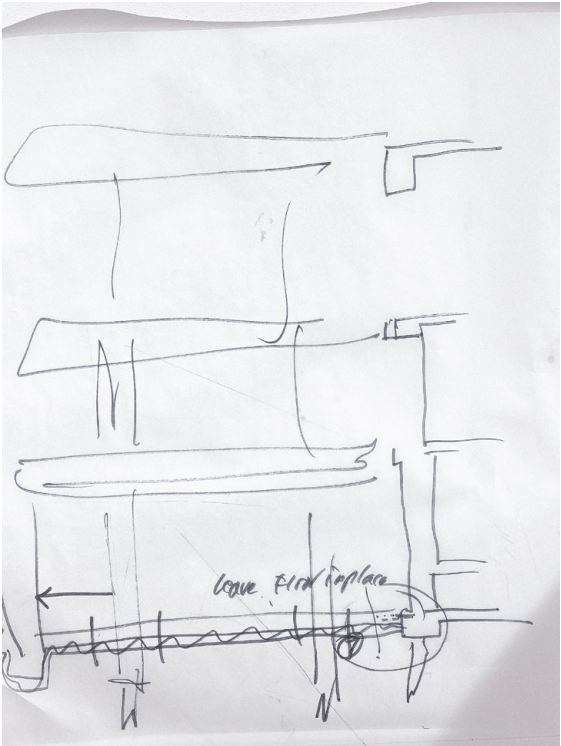
Sketch after the conversation with Matthijs about the concrete slabs

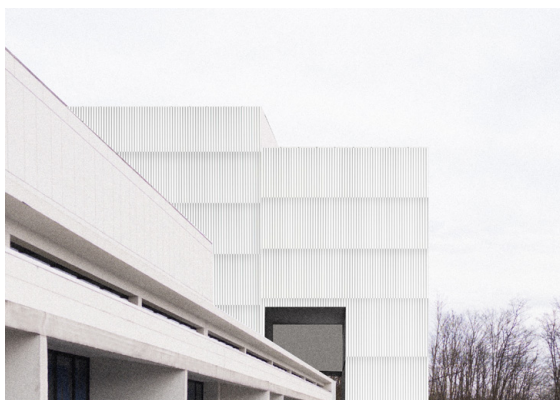


Sketch after the conversation with Matthijs about the junction between the addition and the existing



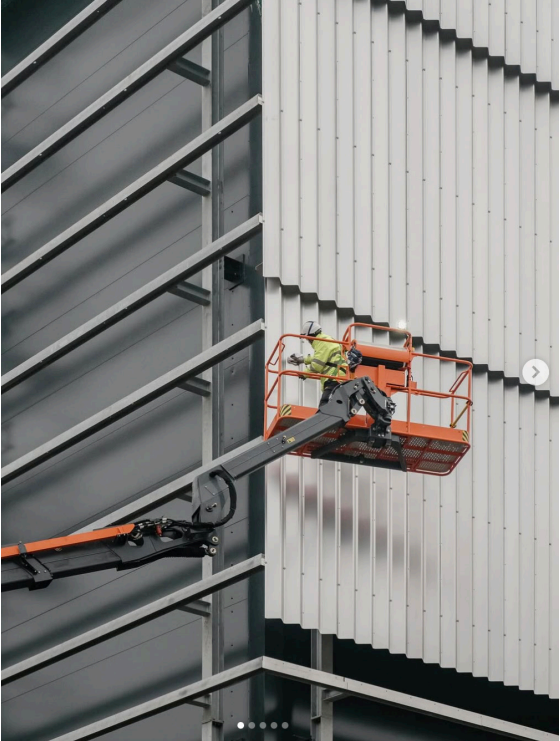
Sketch after the conversation with Matthijs about the junction between the addition and the existing



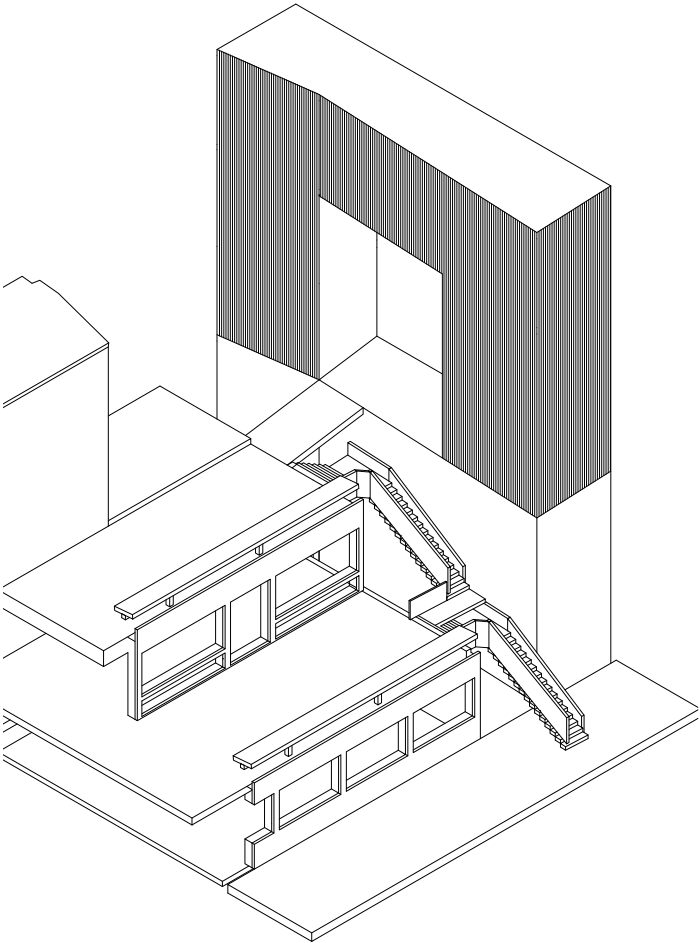








Axonometric of the fragment 1:33, as to understand the different element to model



Colors and Materials for the model and for the interiors of my addition



Modelling the existing building



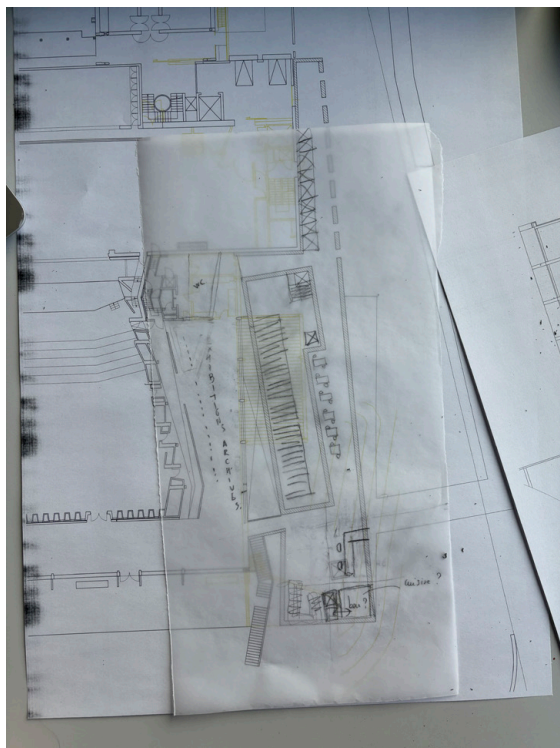
Week 3.7



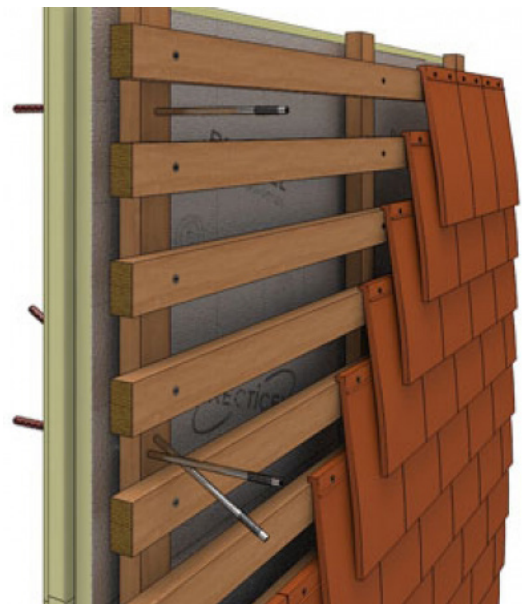




Work on the plans as to detail the functions and the spatial organisation in the addition



Facade layering using tiles for the facade



Continuing the model and building the addition next to the existing



Week 3.8

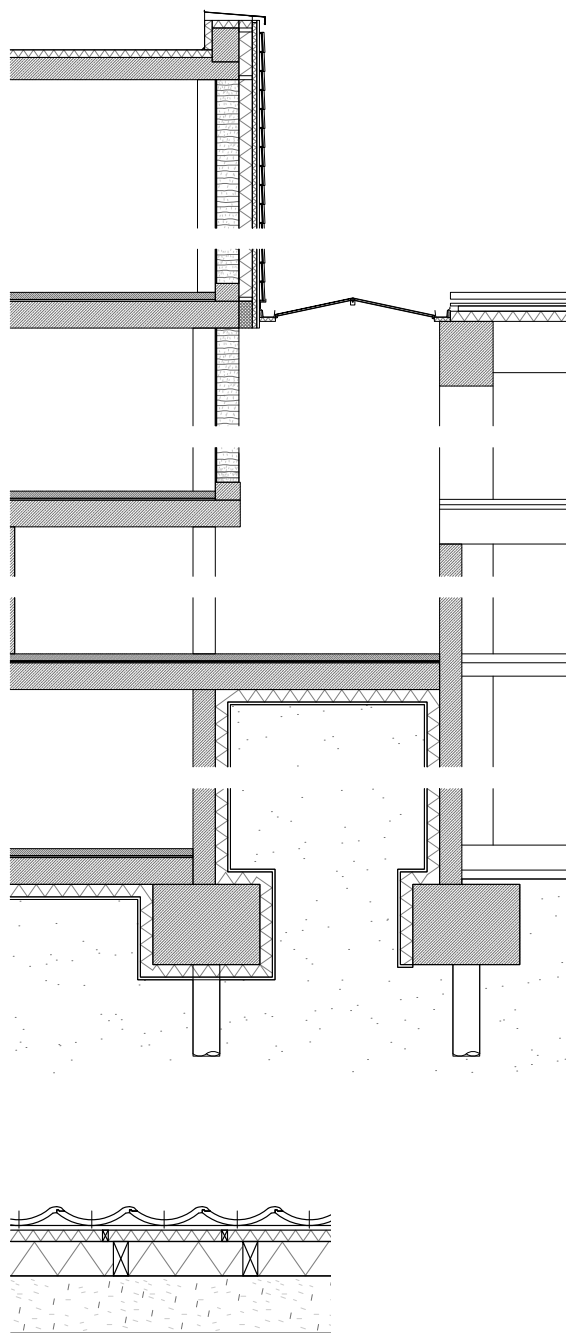


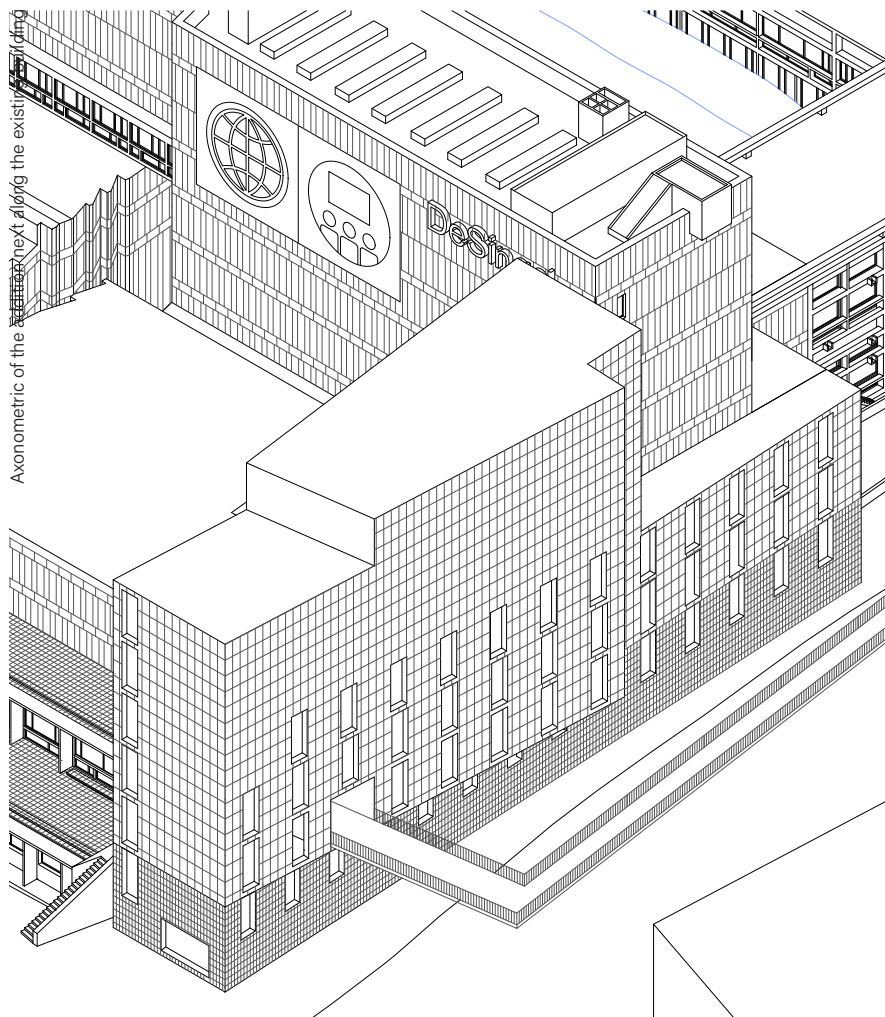
Collage of the addition juxtaposed to the existing terraces



Week 3.8

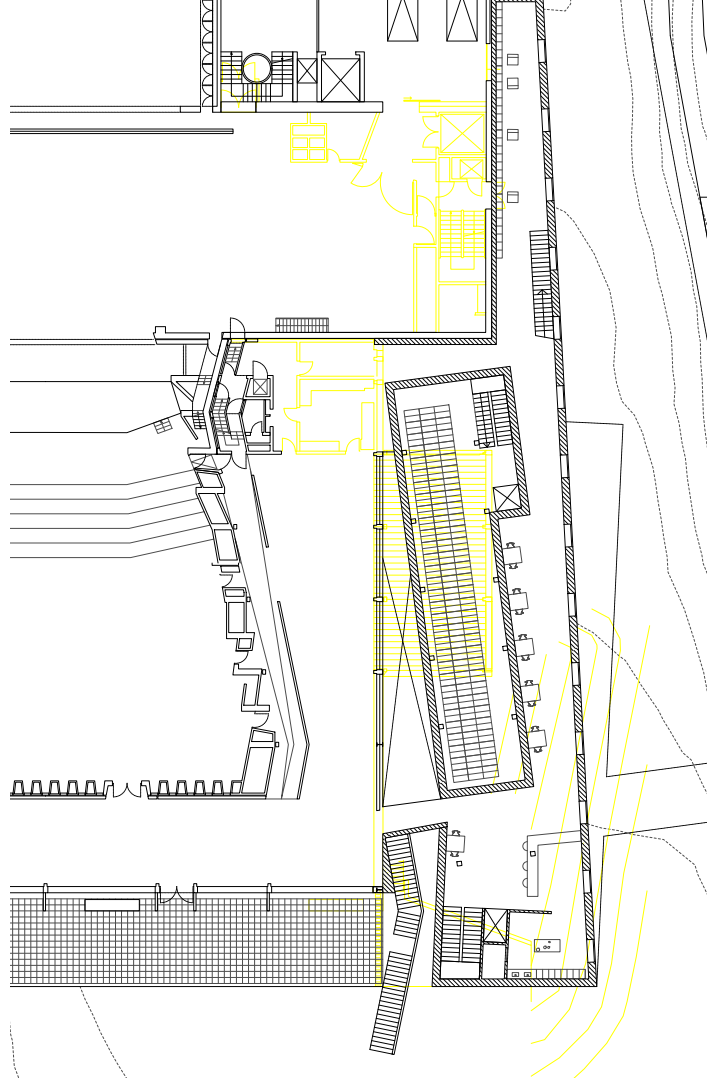
Detailed section of the 1:33 fragment , with the facade layering



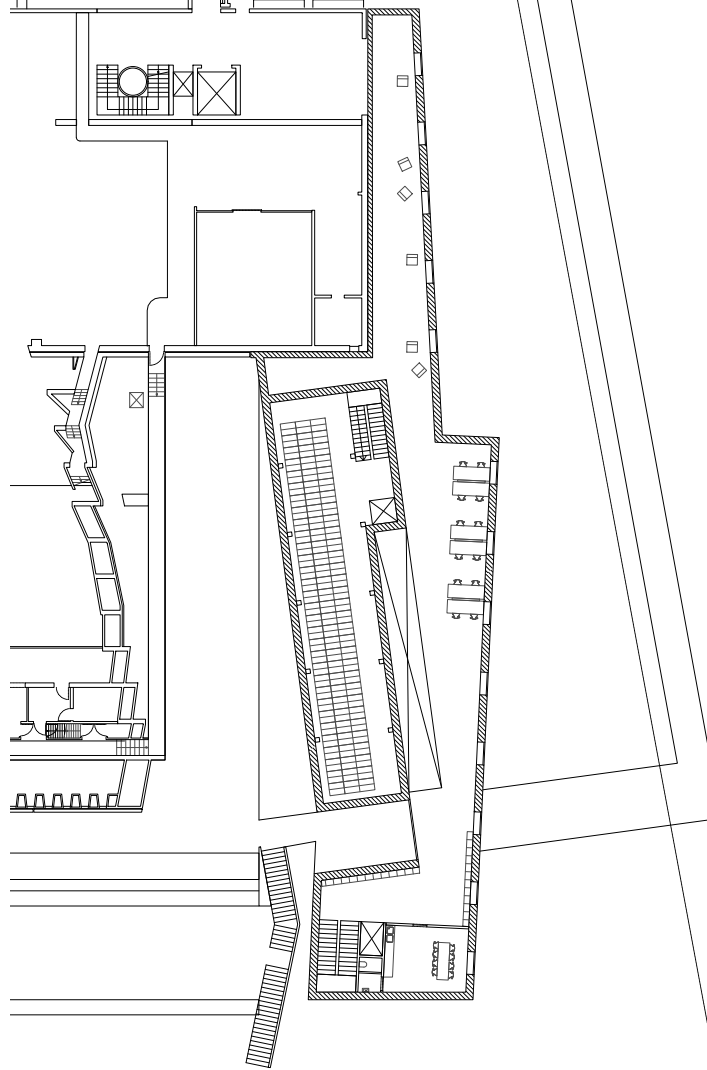


Axonometric of the addition next to the existing building

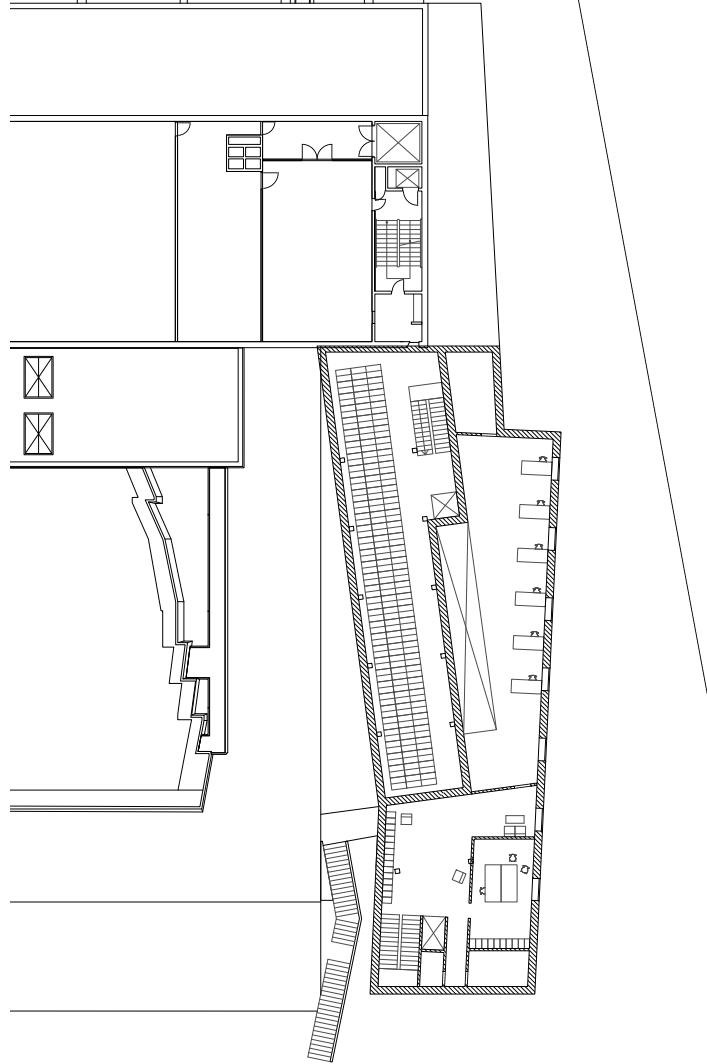
Plan of the 1st floor with the new shared foyer along the auditoriums



Plan of the 3rd floor with the groupwork reading room



Plan of the 4th floor with the individual work reading room

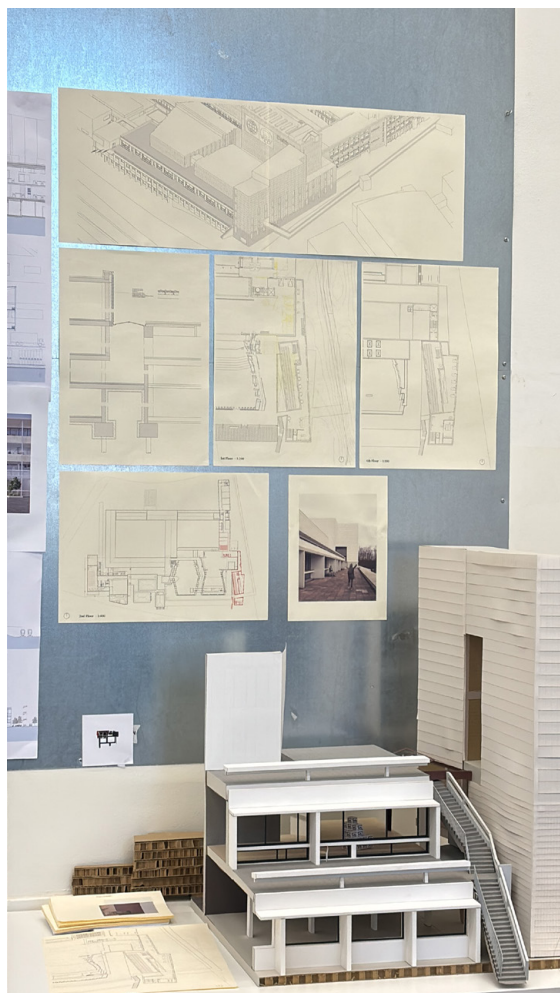


The P3 presentation gave me the opportunity to present my project to Dennis Pohl, who was unfamiliar with it. This made it a good exercise in presenting the project clearly and effectively. For the presentation, I prepared models (1:33, 1:100, 1:200), floor plans, and an axonometric drawing showing how my project integrates with the existing building.

I realized that I was missing drawings that explain the routing of my project - especially since the design is about extending the different circuits within DeSingel. The goal is to build upon and enhance the qualities of the existing structure by integrating its spaces into the new addition. Therefore, I believe I need to prepare a drawing that illustrates the circulation and identifies the different user groups it serves, while also showing which existing spaces are reused or extended within DeSingel.

During the critiques, both the visual appearance of the addition and the new staircase between my main volume and the existing building were discussed. The cladding and visual expression of the façade - made with white ceramic tiles - were described as compelling and well-integrated with the existing structure. However, the staircase raised many questions regarding both its appearance and its significance within the interior circulation and the landscape around DeSingel.

The original intent of the staircase was to connect the two terraces and integrate seamlessly into the building's overall circuit. However, in the P3 design, the staircase also connected the terraces to the ground floor, where the parking lot is located. The reason for this additional connection was that, in my new design, the staircase also served as a replacement for the existing exit stair, linking the terraces to the back of the site.



After a conversation with Daniel, we concluded that this extra connection to the ground floor is unnecessary. The second floor of the terraces is already directly connected to the ground through the entrance bridge, making the additional link redundant.

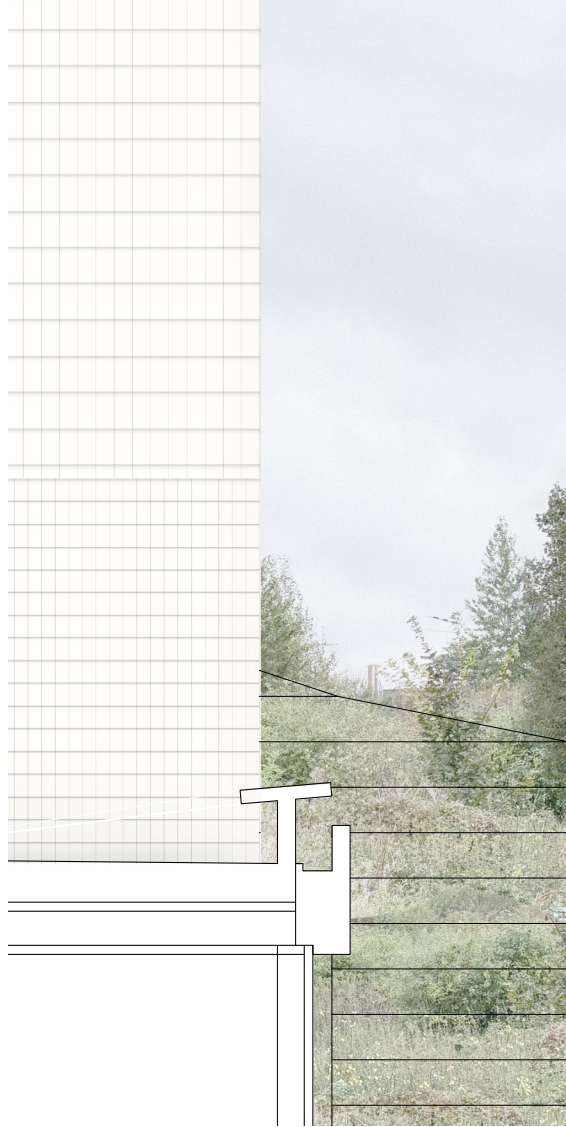
Romain Tournon



Week 3.9's work was oriented as a reaction to the comments made during P3, about the points I need to push in my project, but also about the general comments made by Dennis about finding the right drawings to express the intentions of one's project. Thus, I directed my research on finding the right façade expression, and, on making a circulation axonometry that would reflect the intention of my project as an addition that contributes to mend and weave in the existing fabric and patterns of deSingel. The different façade iterations made me realise that the curves on the tiles was something interesting as the shadows were creating some interesting reliefs on the façade. The conversation with Matthijs made me realize the importance of this shadows, and how they contribute to make this volume more dynamic with some tectonic interest.

During the design tutoring with Daniel, we discussed the axonometry and the different flux of public within my building. The axonometry seemed effective in discussing the topics of circulation, and reuses of the different spaces already existing within deSingel. As such, we talked about the reuse of the flytower's staircase, and how in my drawing I intend to give one section of the staircase to the general public. After explaining to me the functioning and the technicality and privacy of a flytower, Daniel and I concluded by saying the flytower staircase should be a shared staircase used both for the flytower staff and the staff of the depot. Thus, the public circulation between the 1st and the 2nd floor should be provided by another staircase.

Collage of the Facade, with flat tiles



Itération collage 1 of the facade as seen from the 1st terrasse



Itération collage 2 of the facade as seen from the 1st terrasse



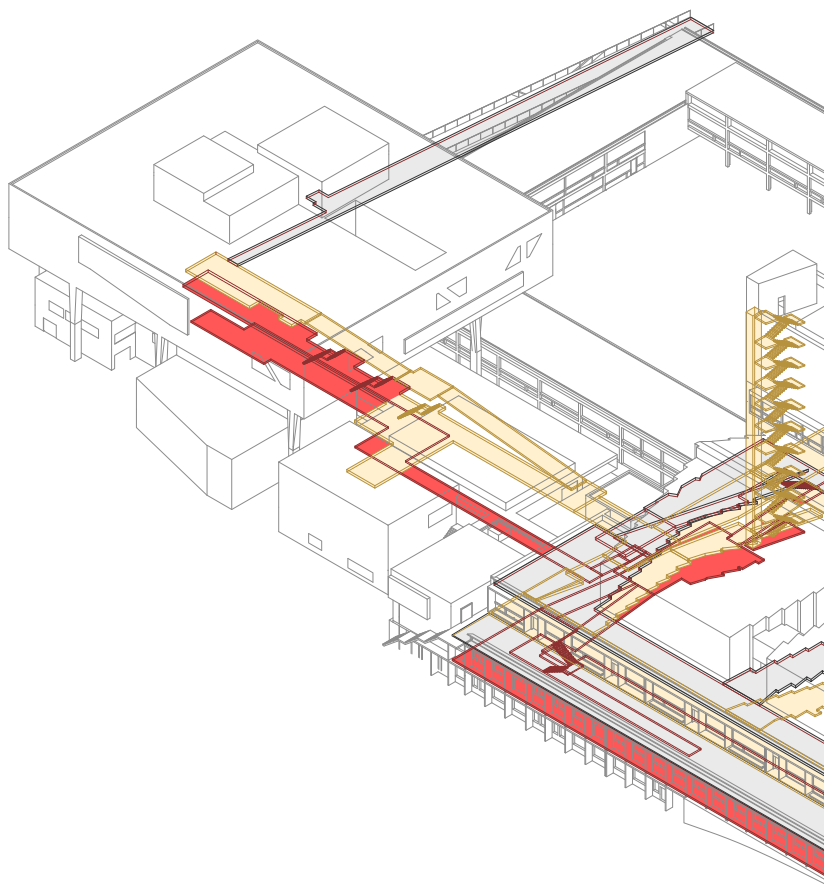
Itération collage 3 of the facade as seen from the 1st terrasse

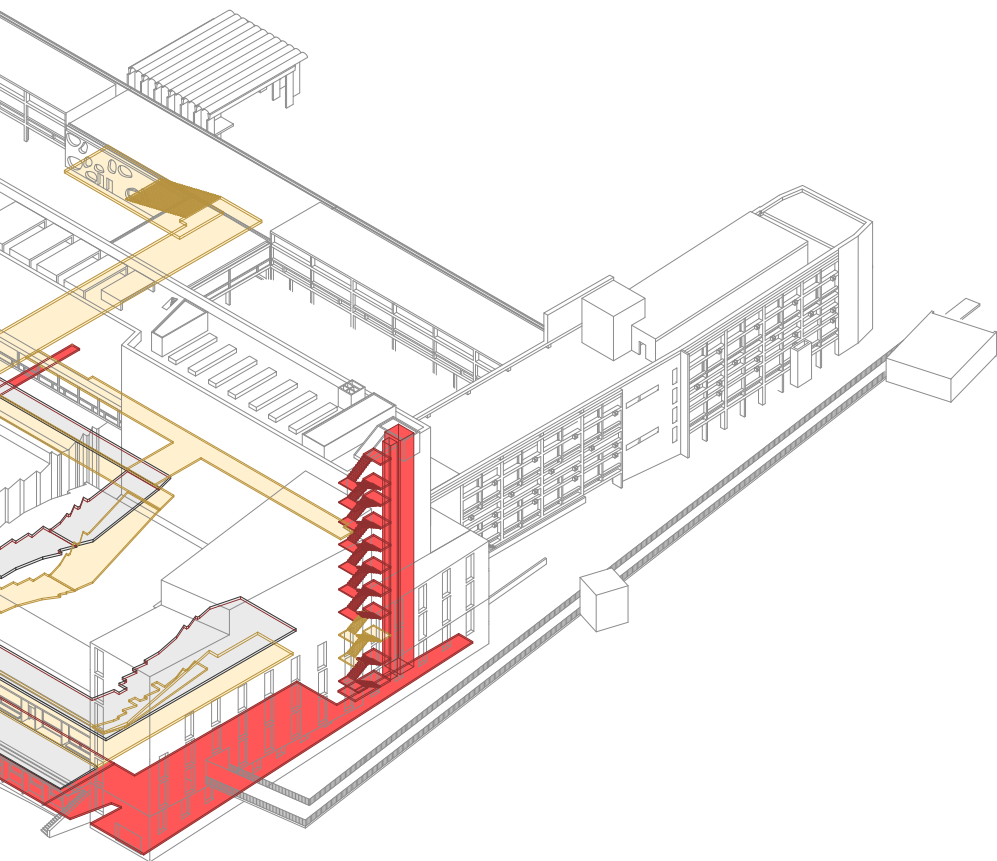


Itération collage 4 of the facade as seen from the 1st terrasse

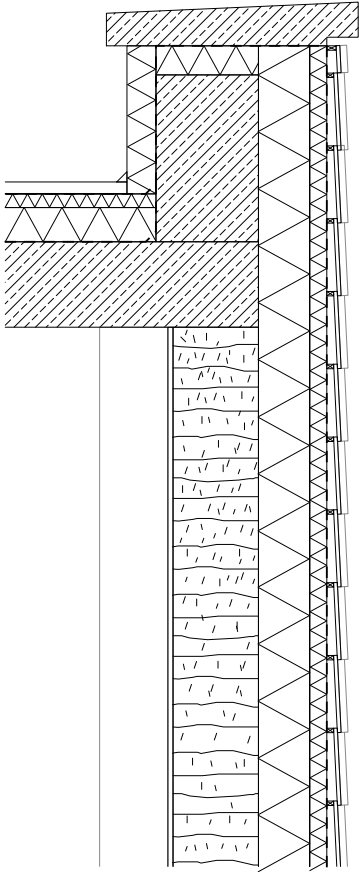


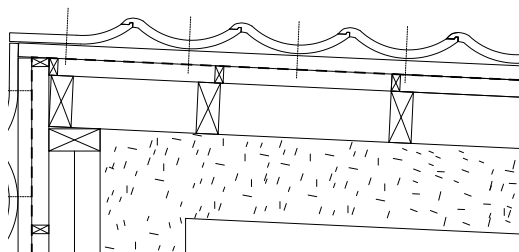
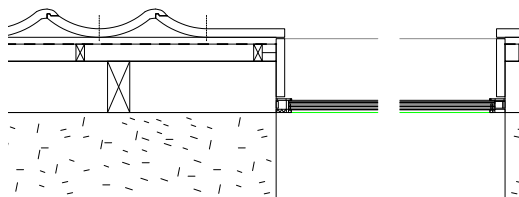
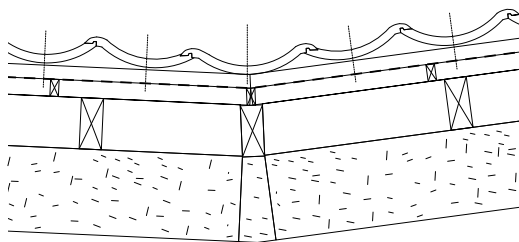
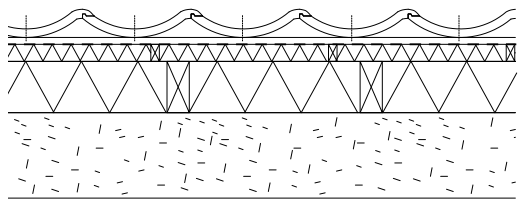
Axonometry of the different publics in deSingel, and the routing they would take towards or away from my main addition on the South



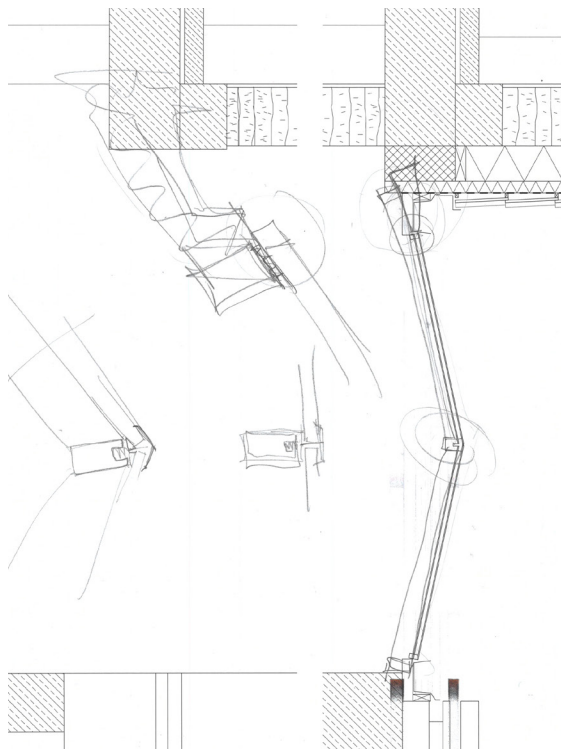


Cornice detail 1:20 of the facade





Sketches by Matthijs after a conversation of the skylight above the atrium

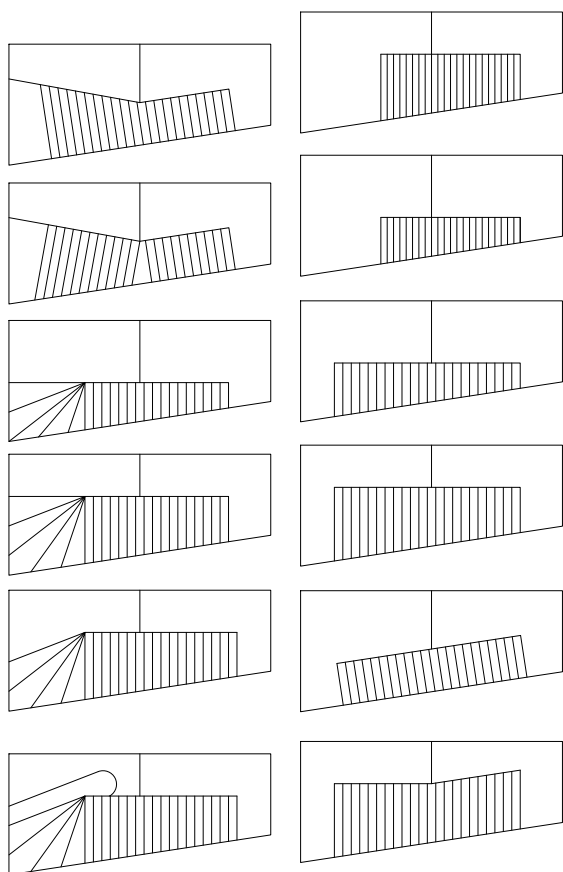


With Matthijs, we also discussed the appearance and technical realization the skylight above the atrium. If I somehow now how this atrium should be drawn like after the tutorial, Im still wondering to what element this skylight belongs to, and, how it will visually connect with the rest of the project.

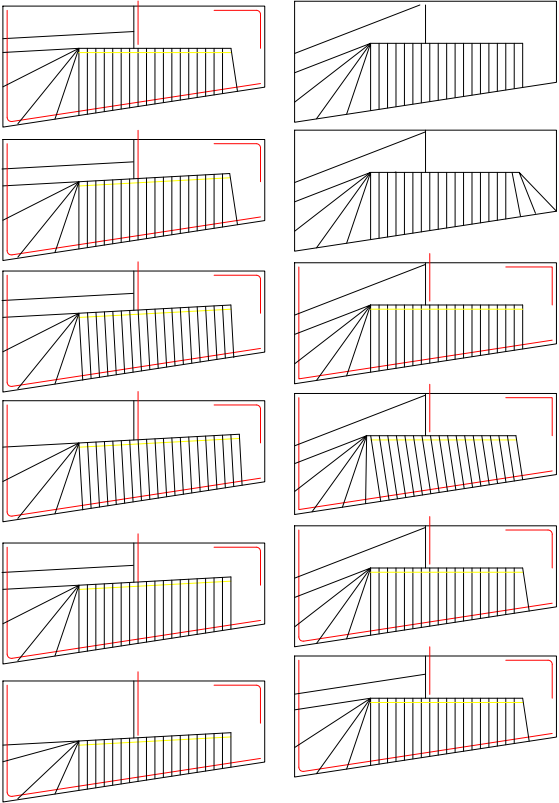
Now that the technicalities and the logistics of the staircases were discussed, I decided to place the monumental staircase between the two terrasses, as an outdoor one. The circulation of these two public floors is still provided by a stairwell at the South end of my addition. During this week, I started to expend the visual and material research of both the façade of the addition, and of the staircase, seen as an important architectural moment in my project as it also expressed my intention of weaving in the existing fabric of deSingel in all the different scales of research.

Regarding the staircase, and the way it weaves in the existing and acts as a new connection for the addition to fit in seamlessly, I decided to see this element as an almost monolithic block expanding the plinth of the existing building. However, before trying some visuals out, the language of that plinth was not really clear. Should the staircase be seen as a third element between the new and the old, or, should it belong to one of the two. After doing some iterations, I decided that the staircase should, in language, belong to the existing, and fully extend the language started by Stynen. Thus, a play of railings, materials and proportions is at stake when designing the staircase.

Moreover, the careful design of this staircase will be helpful in understanding the other circulation blocks in my project, as I believe this staircase is part of the “Randonnée” that starts from the North of the mound, and goes through my new topographic path on the landscape. As such, the railings could also in proportion and language be a repetition of what I’m starting here. After showing the images to Sam, I realized that the staircase, could also act as an entry point from that façade, and recreate an entrance or exit for the staff of the VAI’s archive. This possible entrance is also motivated by the proximity with the logistic entrance of the archive, also located on the south of the plot.



Itérations for the new staircase connecting the terrasses



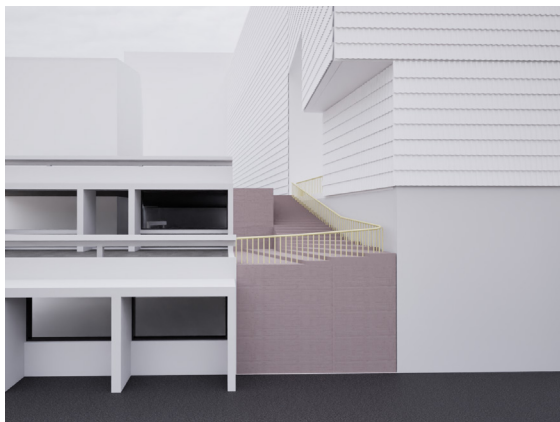
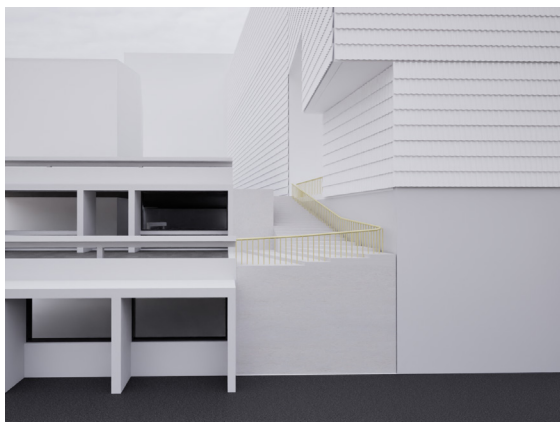
Model 1:200 of the staircase connecting the terraces



Render of two iterations of the staircase connecting the two terraces



Render of two iterations of the staircase connecting the two terraces



Visual of the staircase connecting the two terrasses
Visual of the cladding on the facade



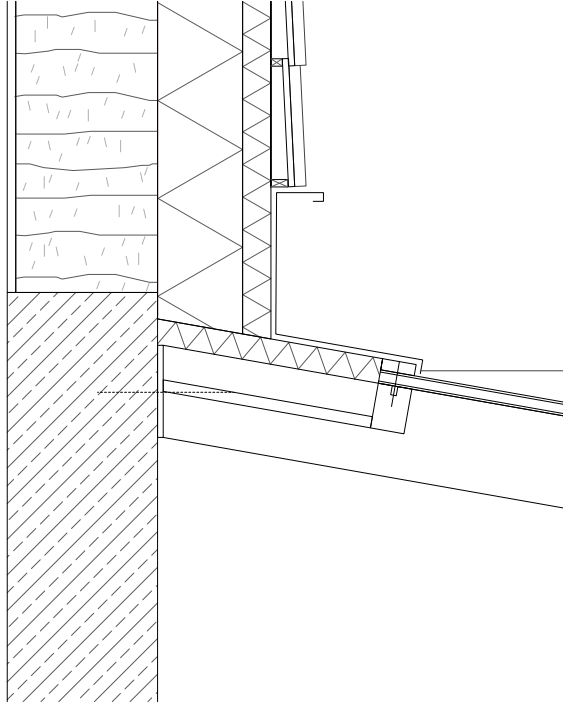
Itérations 1 and 2 of possible patterns for the cladding on the facade



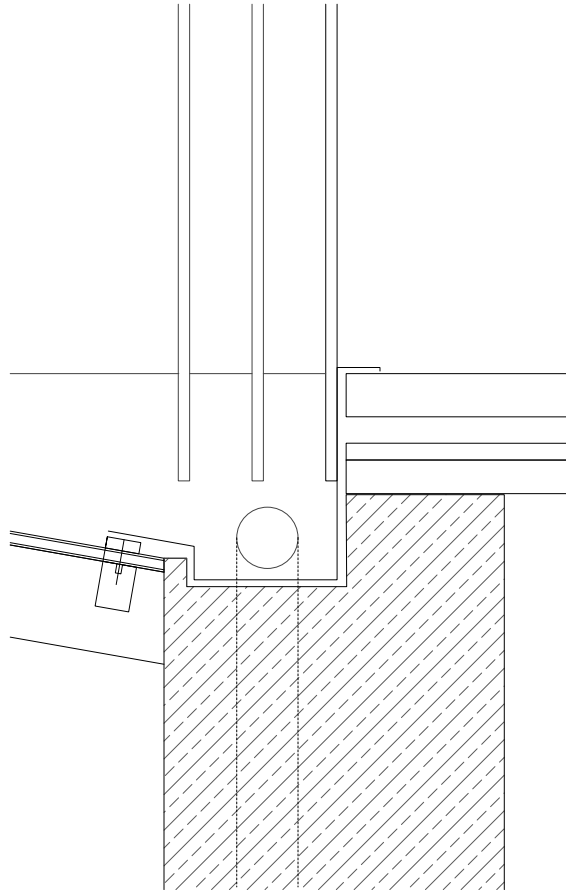
Iterations 3 and 4 of possible patterns for the cladding on the facade

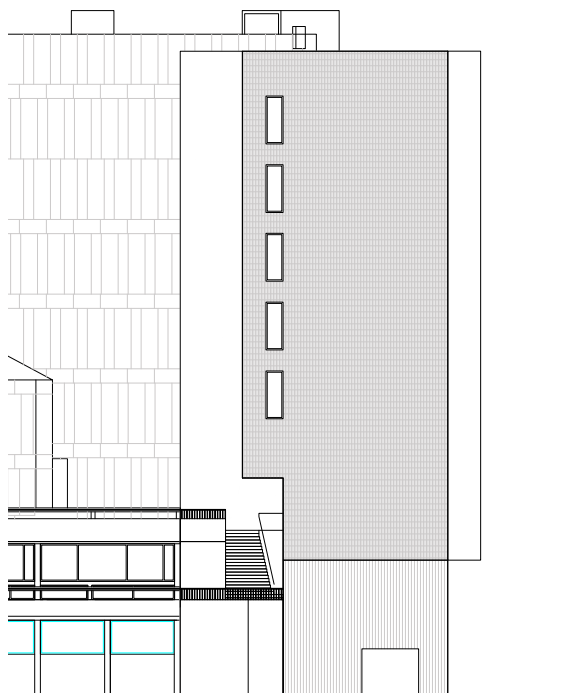


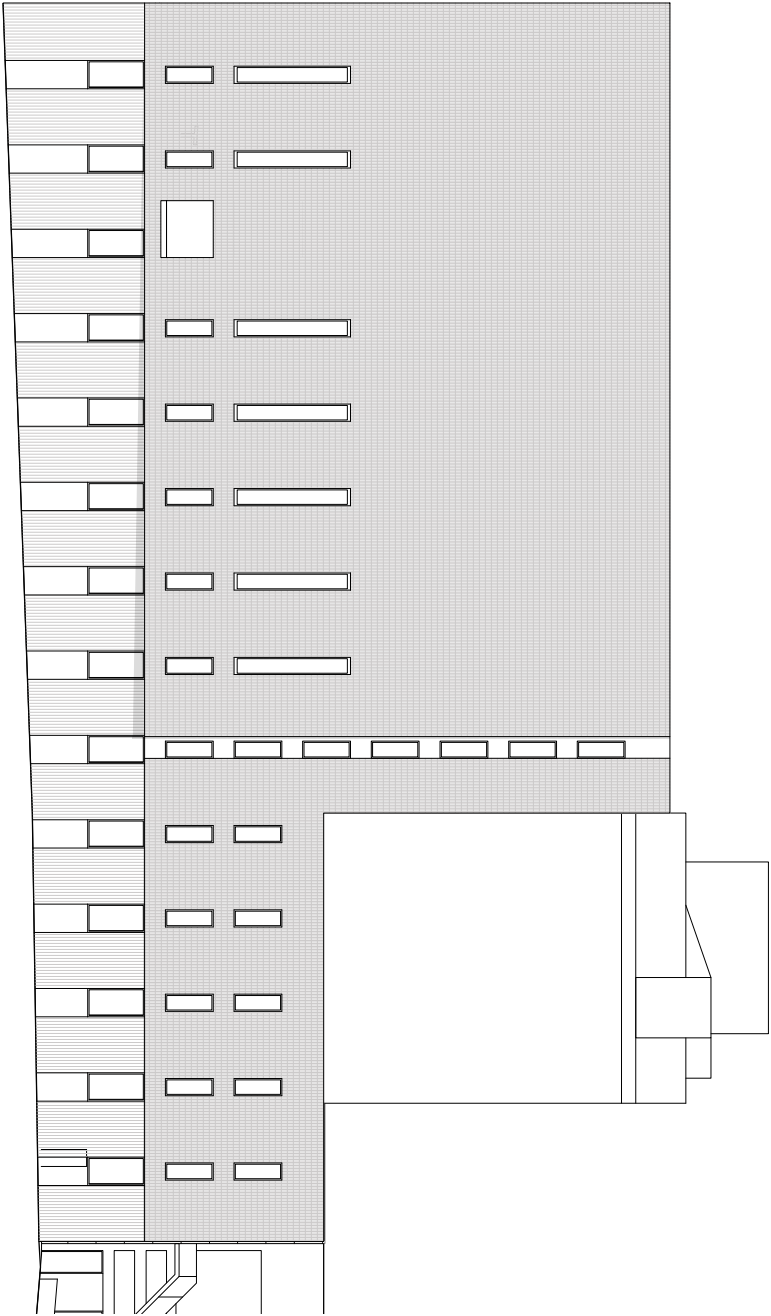
Detail 1.5 of the connection between the glasshouse and the facade



Detail 1:5 of the connection between the glasshouse and the existing

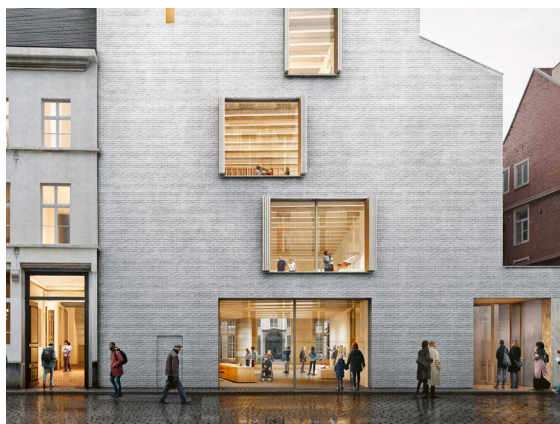






During Week 4.2, I focused my research on giving more definition to the façade, by choosing a product of tiles, and refining the details by moving to the 1:5 scale. Thus, I tried iterations of the façade with the plinth and the upper body, and how it influences the interiors space (which I also made visuals of). However, during the tutoring with Daniel on Thursday, I realized that the composition of my façade, very regular in this iteration, doesn't represent the stakes of my project. My project is about finding middle grounds between programmatic need and spatial implementation: making the shape and the volume completely tailored to very specific situations. Thus, the spaces it creates are not following the rules of a orthogonal rationality. As such, the facades should also reflect the very specific characters of the interiors spaces, defined by all the aforementioned factors. The façade should be the expression of the needs indoor, and thus should be designed from the inside-out. Daniel gave me the reference of the Walsall gallery by Caruso St John, and, I believe that the Design Museum Gent by Carmody Groarke is also a good reference regarding the play of the windows and their scale.

New Art Gallery Walsall by Caruso St John Architects
Design Museum Gent by Carmody Groarke





Visual of the Facade, the plinth and the upper part



During week 4.3, I had the chance to spend some more time in Belgium, in Antwerp and Ghent. On Wednesday, we went to DeSingel with the Msc2 students, to transfer some of our knowledge of the building and on the specific zones we are working on. The conversations with the MSc2 students were also very insightful as reminder of our own first impressions as students visiting deSingel for the first time. Moreover, I got to finally take proper photos of the hill on the Eastern side of the plot, and go on it, as to experience the space on top and the potential views it offers on the side and on the building. Moreover, I got to see the logistic spaces of the flytower thanks to the janitor Wouter. It was very insightful as a big part of my project is to reuse some circulatory spaces and make it common between the archive depot and the logistic of the theater. The comments made by Wouter helped me to design this space. He mentioned that this staircase is only used by the staff of the theater, yet it is very underutilized. While the elevators could not be shared, as they must carry goods and the staff, the staircase could then be used for our archive.

Our tour crew: Hulya Ertas, Sereh Mendias, Susanne Pietsch, Dirk Somers, Veronica Danesin and Jenny Fang



Our tour crew: Hulya Ertas, Sereh Mendias, Susanne Pietsch, Dirk Somers, Veronica Danesin and Jenny Fang



Week 4.3

The view from the windows of the flytower



The space on the very top of the flytower



Week 4.3

A glimpse in the backstage area, taken from the top of the flytower



The backstage of the red hall



The logistic entrance for the flytower



View of the building where my addition where the bridge to my addition will be placed



Week 4.3



The mound seen from the swimming pool



The next Monday, we had the chance to get a tour by Sam de Vocht of Marie Josée van Hee architectural heritage in Ghent. The tour was composed of a visit of her house, followed by a visit of the office and of the buildings designed by van Hee in the vicinity. This tour was very insightful and inspiring, as Marie Josée van Hee is one of my precedent for my project with her exhibition «Grande Randonnée» at deSingel. The projects of Marie Josée seem to always be about the intelligent weaving between the domestic and the natural, the domesticated and the undomesticated. How does nature gets inside? How does nature had the power to inspire inhabitants and let them prospect the world? I gathered all these reflections and questioning for my project, and how they can help me build my narrative about the weaving of a promenade that blurs the line between interiors and exteriors and between public and private.

An entrance of the house



Week 4.3

The «drawing room» of the house



Week 4.3

The courtyard and garden



A furniture piece used for the exhibition «La Grande Randonnée» in DeSingel, 2022



Week 4.3



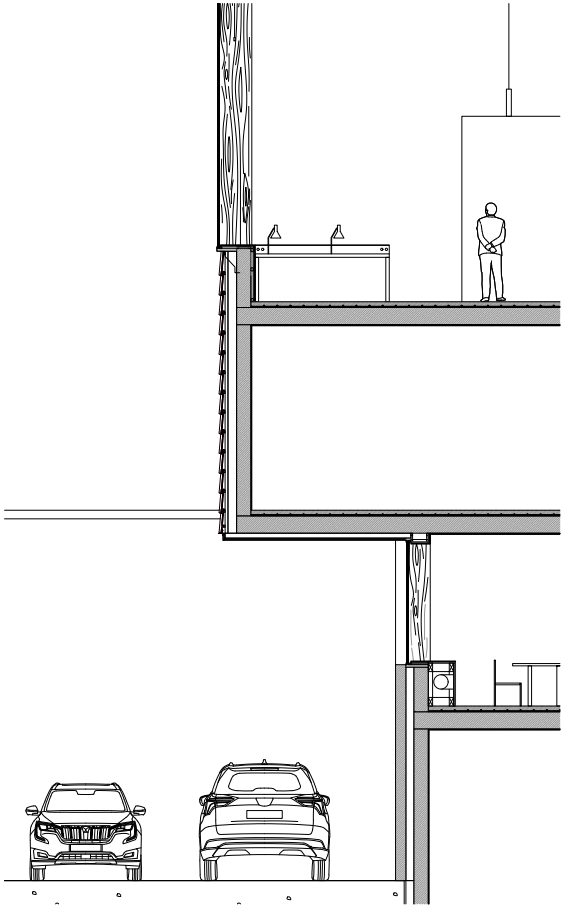


Two iterations of the interiors of the mai reading room of the VAI addition



From Week 4.3 on, I started to produce the drawings for my P4 presentation. While I was producing plans, sections and facades, I was still in designing some parts of my projects . Thus I was making iterations of the facades, to try out some compositions. The expression of my building and the facades quickly became a key component of this project as the building must express itself as the continuity of deSingel and the flytower along which it implement itself. Yet, from the inside out, in which I use light Earth for the depot, the addition is still trying to break free from the modernist dogma of «all concret». This doesn't mean not using concrete, in my case. It means using cunningly the hybridation of both.

First iteration of the 1:20 fragment of my project

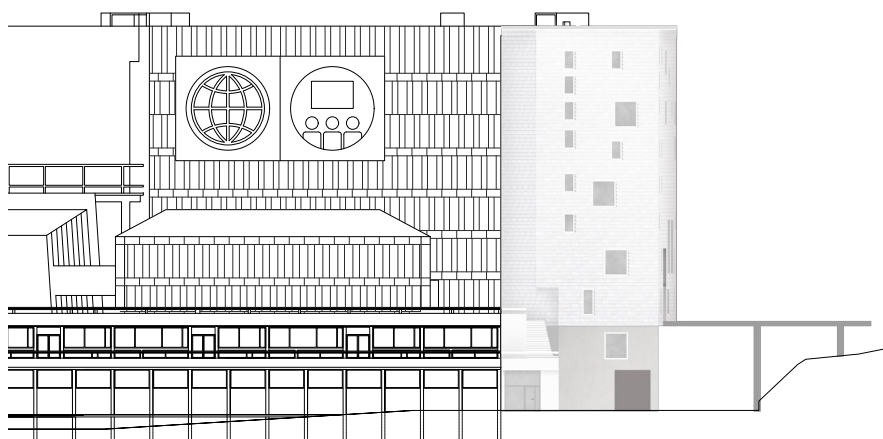
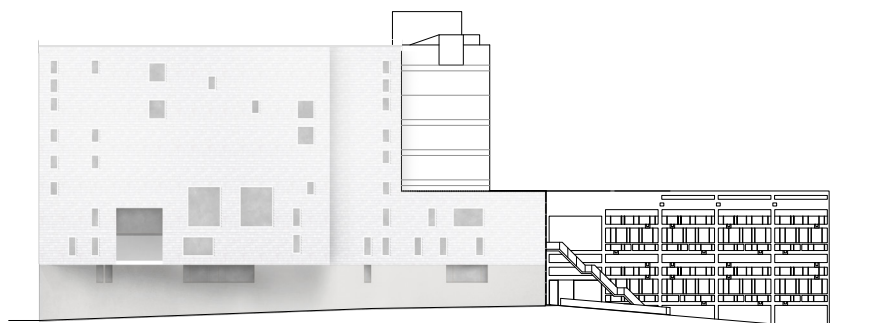


Week 4.4

Collaged 1:20 fragment of the facade

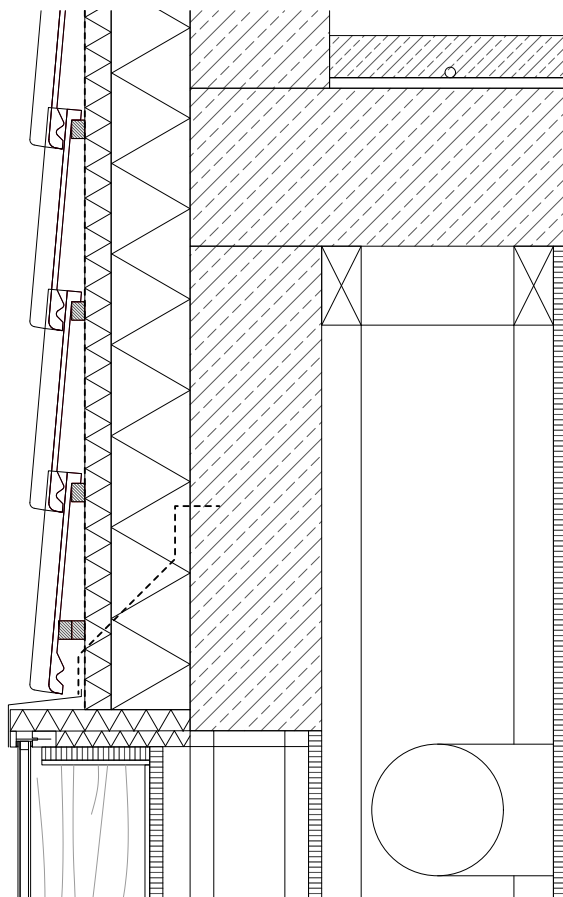


Week 4.4

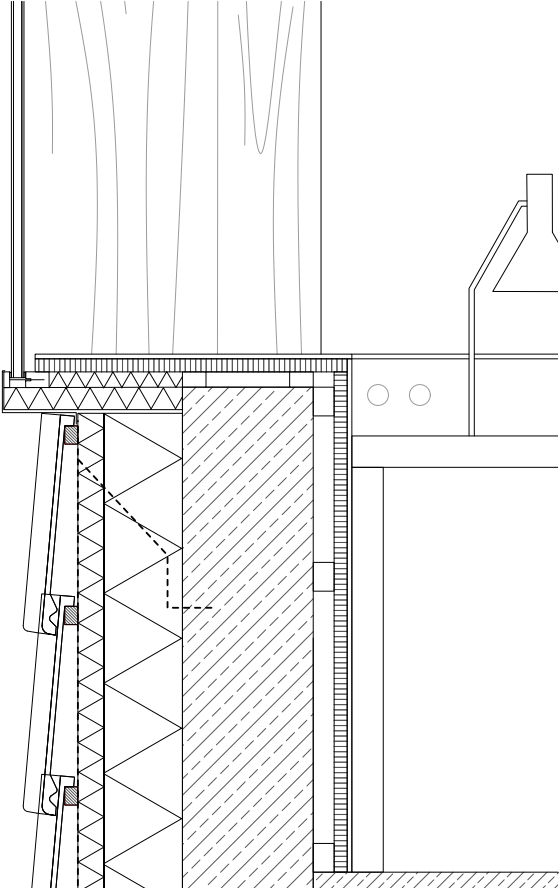


The facade of the new addition is punctuated by openings, which expresses the intent of making a building that doesn't intend to rationalize its interiors when its positioning and shape is highly specific (cf truck passage and size of the depot). Thus, the interiors also have to be tailored for very specific conditions. In fact, the interiors of specific because of the contrast between the geometry of the depot and the geometry of the skin around, but also because they have very different needs in light entry. When the reading room demands lots of light for the researchers and students to work, the higher spaces of the depot are almost hermetic to any external source of light.

Moreover, these punctuated windows are an opportunity to use them in order to strategically divide the narrow interiors. As such, the windows are creating and defining, in the reading room, niches where the table is the extension of the window sill, in shape and materiality. This allow for a subtle division (accentuated by the concrete structure) between the circulation and the researcher's tables.



Detail 1:5 of the window sill in the reading room



Regarding the exterior realm, and since my building intends to weave the now fragmented promenade designed by Léon Stynen, it intends to have an impact on the landscape as to also extend the realm of this promenade. It's also been the intention of Stynen to connect natural and the architectural in the promenade of deSingel, yet, this relation is still very much contained to the courtyard. With my design, I address the bigger landscape, of this time, the neighborhood. As such, the South of Antwerp and deSingel is punctuated by patches of green (parks and squares) in the midst of asphalt. By creating a new hike path on the Eastern mound, I connect the terrasses with the landscape, and with the park on the North of Desguinlei. The project is weaving the nature back together.

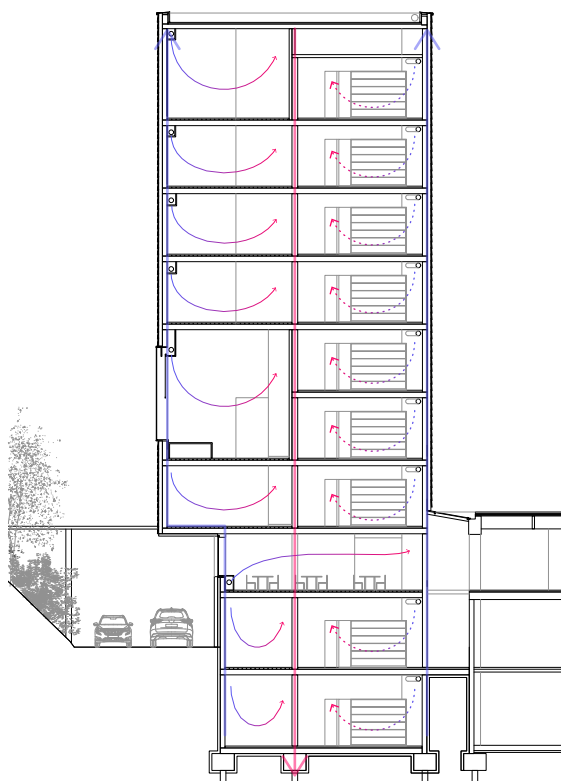
Yet, I still had to design this path on the hill. After sharing my questions with Daniel regarding the path, which I thought aimed to be a primary entrance for my project, Daniel suggested this path is more something of a discovery, something the wanderer has to discover. Yet, one can imagine the staff of deSingel knows about it, while the public is yet to know it. This means reinforcing the Beel's entrance as the primary entrance of the VAI territory. Now, the West to East axis has main direction.

Designing the path on the hill as a slow ascension, following the topography lines of the landscape



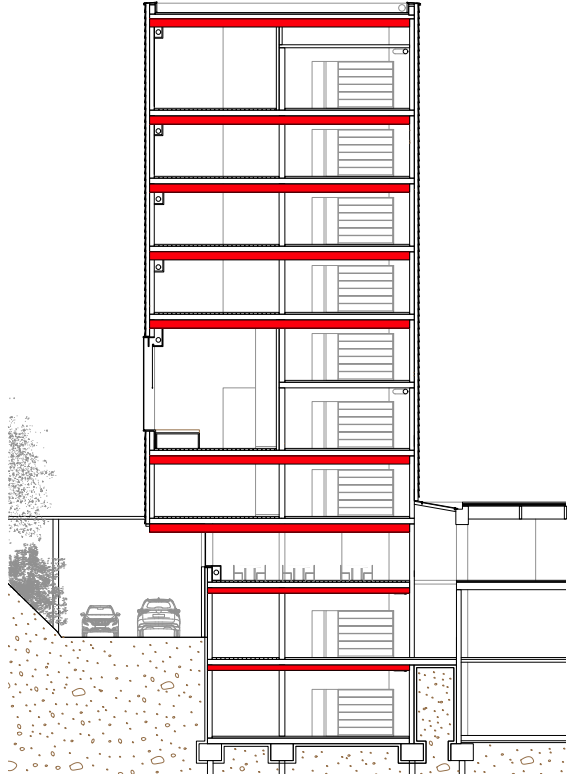
Week 4.4

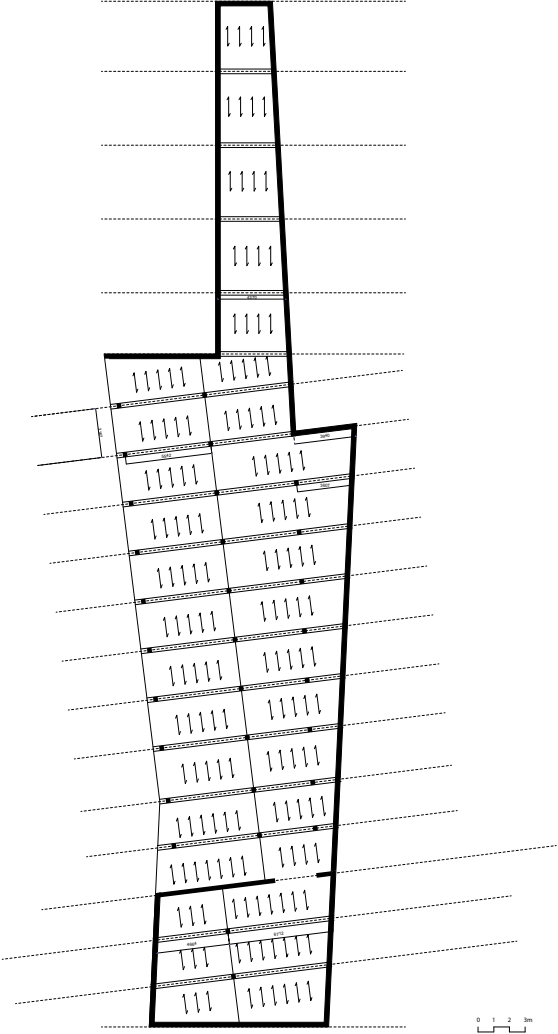
This week was also punctuated by the tutoring of the climatic specialist and the structural engineer. The meeting with the climatic specialist as very insightful, as a way to know more about my passive building, and how it should still be coupled with HVAC, but also, as a good reminded to think of a position in plan for all these vertical shafts. After the tutoring, I started to make minor changes in plan as to adjust the vertical shafts of the HVAC.



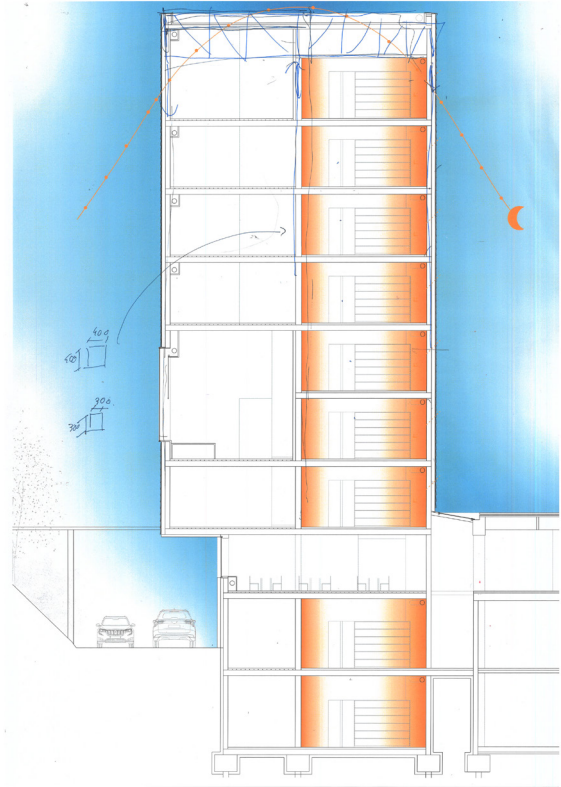
Regarding the structural engineer, I presented him with my concrete structure, coupled with light earth «curtain walls» for the depot». My main questions were directed towards my two small cantilevers, in which I first solved with having 500mmx300mm reinforced concrete beams on every floor. Moreover, as to deal with the fragmented geometry of the eastern facade, and as so liberate the space from an other row of column while having a material with high thermal mass, concrete came as the most convenient material. Yet, the structural engineer suggested me to use steel and do big trusses on the ceiling that would support the overhang. I don't believe in this strategy as, to me, steel is not to be coupled with earth as they don't speak the same tectonic language. I also understand that, the concrete would not be visible from the outside, as for general continuity of the facade, tiles are covering the building. However, I intend to reveal the concrete inside and create an interesting contract in materiality between the concrete and the earth of the depot. This contract is also making the depot stand out even more as an object in itself within the general complex of deSingel.

diagram explaining where the beams are supporting the overhang





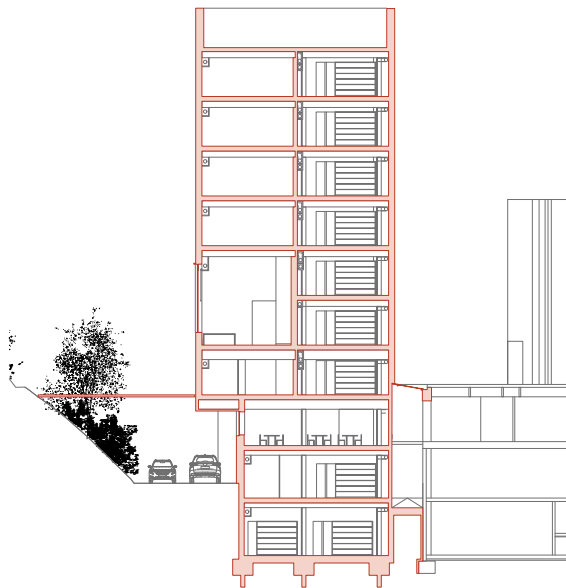
Suggestion by the structural engineer of using steel trusses



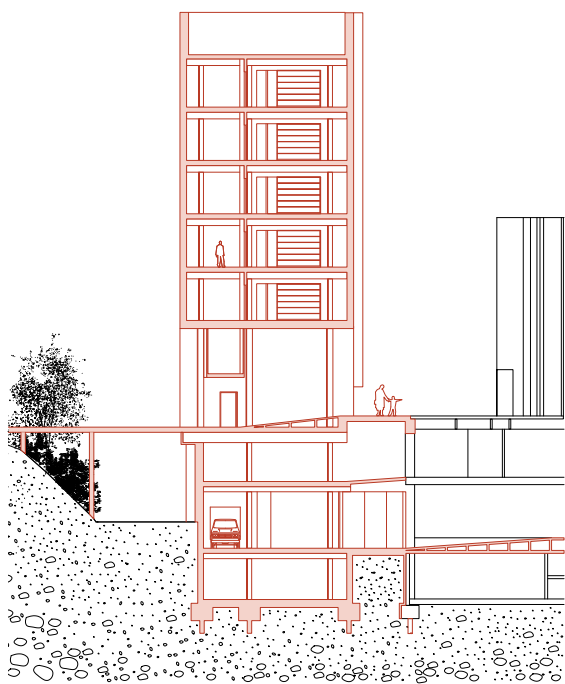
During week 4.5, I was still producing drawings, an correcting others, while also thinking about my narrative and how the drawings will serve it. At the same time, I focused on designing and thinking of the structure as it still remained an element i wanted clarity on. For the sake of understand and learning about how cantilever struc-
ture work.



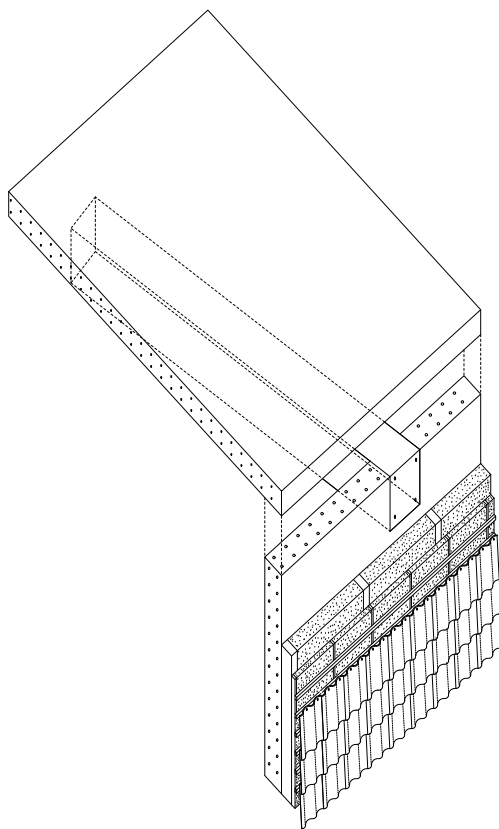
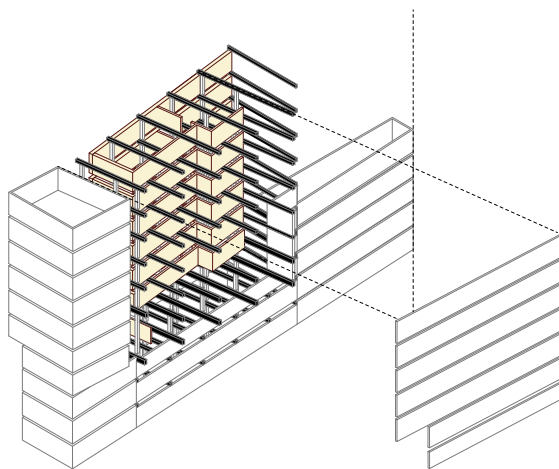
Section of the building as to understand the «division» of the public and private routing

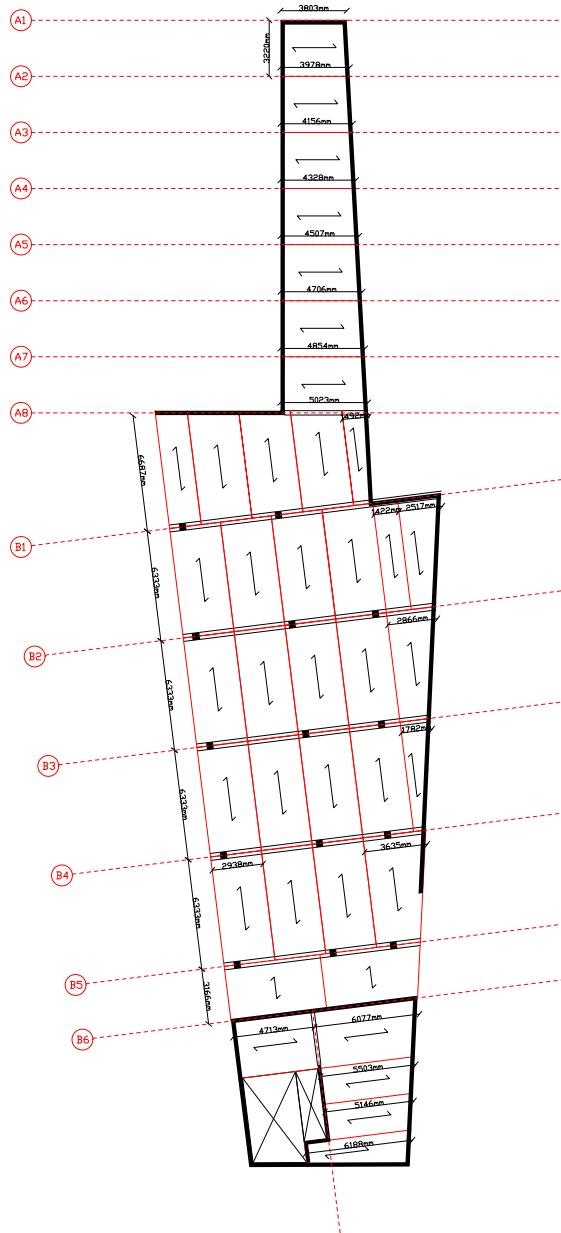


Section of the building cutting through the bridge connecting the landscape with the terraces

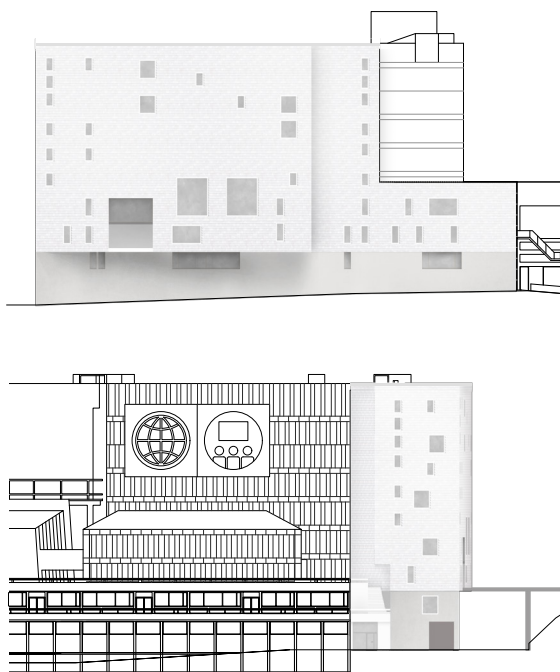


Trying to express the structure through an axonometry
Connection between the concrete beams and the concrete walls





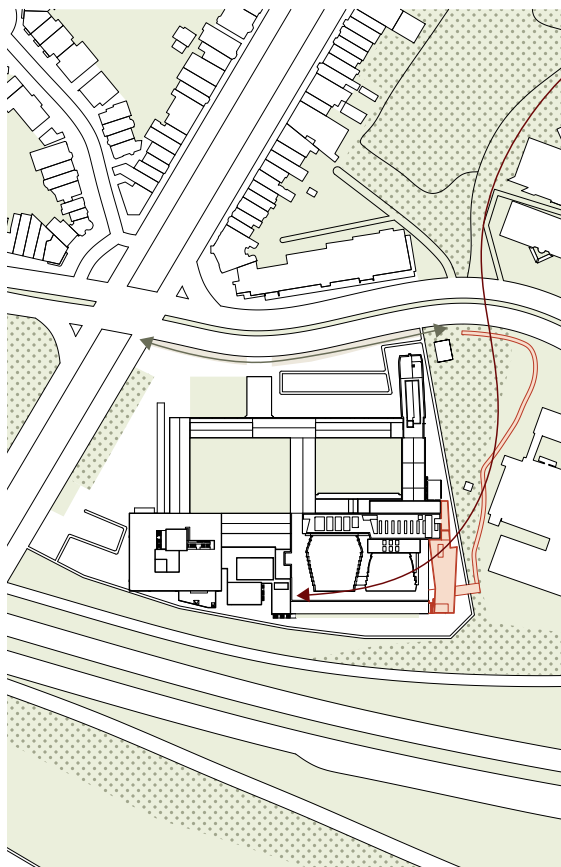
Two main facades collaged of the new extension



Week 4.5



Despite all these drawings, I have also worked on some others drawings, like plan/digrams to explain the repartition of the program in deSingel. Moreover, I also worked on some situation plan to finally explicit my position regarding the landscape and how my building is integrating the landscape in the promenade architecturale created by Léon Stynen and continued by Stéphane Beel.



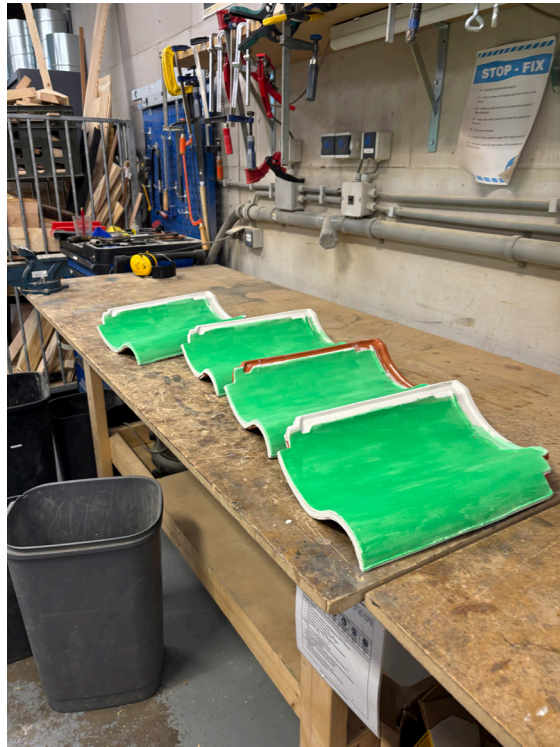
On Friday, I also had an interesting conversation about the details with Matthijs, and what could be changed to make the details a consistent ensemble. If I made the changes Matthijs suggested, I still believe that working on the interiors and their material expression (through visuals and detailing) is what I will focus on during the month separating P4 and P5. This work should be mostly made through renders and scale models, as to nourish and understand how the expression of the building from its facade can also be reflected in the interiors of the project.

Painting the tiles white



Week 4.6





During P4, it was said that my story and design was strong enough, and thus, I should be working on drawings that would make the story even stronger. As such, I must work on a series of impressions that would give a sense of the promenade through the building, and also give a better sense of my facade materiality by making a 1:1 sample of what the tiles would look like. Moreover, I also imagine working on the 1:33 model as to remake the connection between the new and the old (e.g the staircase between the terrasses) and the massing of my addition (which changed between P3 and P4).

Photograph of the final 1:1 fragment



Rebuilding the addition of the 1:33 fragment



Week 4.7

Making the tiles in paper, and modelling the composition on the facade



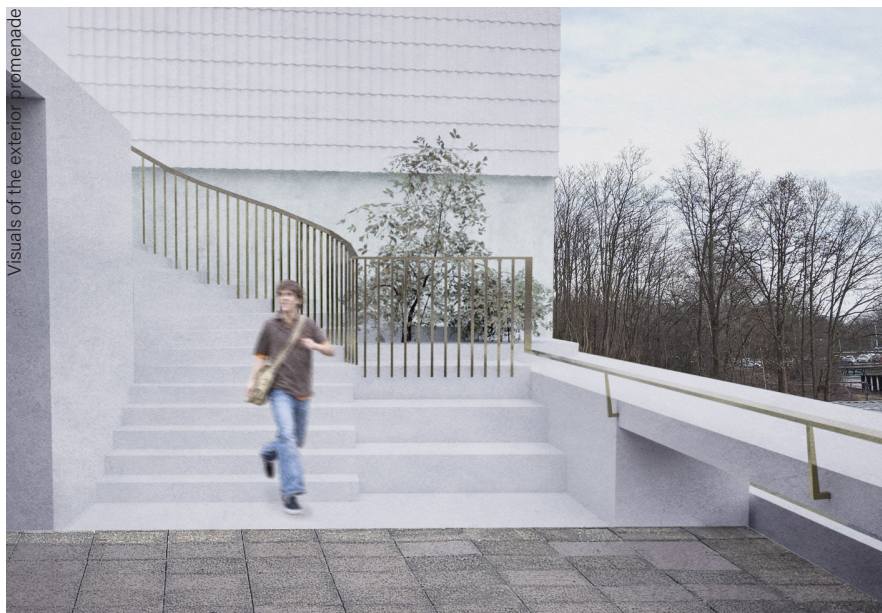
Week 4.7



On the road to P5, it was important to make more impressions of my project, as to give a sense of what the architectural promenade is about, and how this long journey as a consistent language through the building.

By making these impressions, I tried to make my design more consistent as to develop one uniform language throughout the whole promenade architecturale i develop. Thus, the work and detaillling of the railing imposed itself as a guiding element of this promenade. Moreover, the material dialogue between the earth and the concrete, in the interiors and subtly on the facade (glazed clay tiles with concrete plinth) is something that become recurring in this project.

Visuals of the exterior promenade









Romain Tournon