Laurens de Munck,
Interiors Buildings Cities
WS 21/22
MSc 3/4 Future Bank
project journal



Andreas Gursky, Desk Attendants, Thyssen, Düsseldorf 1982

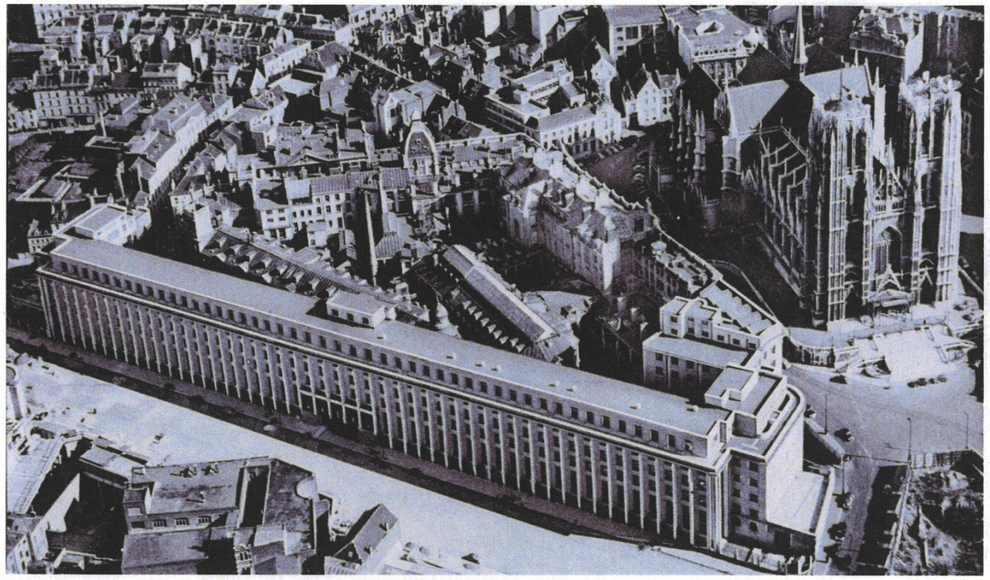
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Mirthe Andriessen
Ron Barten
Laurens de Munck
Natalia Drożdżowska
Jemer Elsing
Pablo Escamilla Sanchez
He Weijuan
Pascal Henle
Marianne Hermann
Ebrina Koster
Lai Yi-Chen
Bas Leemans
Li Jieqi
Julia Linde
Aneesh Nandi
Alejandro Oest Arrecuta
Cameron Reid
Alessando Rognoni
Sophie Soenen
Izabel Todorova
Rumy Toncheva
Giulia Vieira Dellosso
Sebastian van Rosen
Bart Vos
Wei Rui
Robin Weishaupt
Renske Worm
Yu Chen

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Future Bank

2021-22 MSc3 AR3AI100



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

Introduction.

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

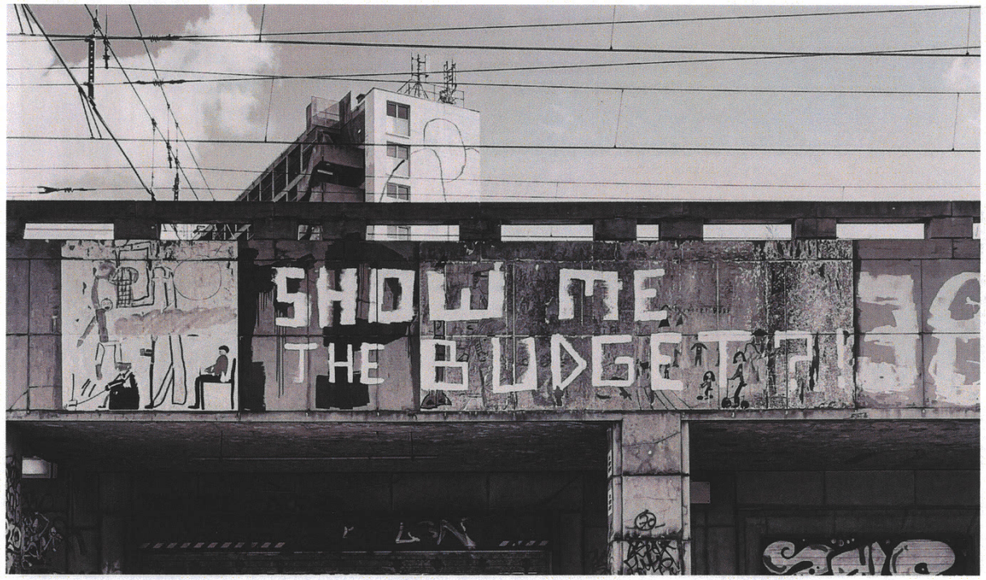
Capitalism enshrines this right of self-enrichment, at every scale. It does however place limits upon it. In order to regulate capitalist economies, complex financial systems have developed, which control finance and secure assets. Banks of many kinds provide liquidity and invest wealth. National Banks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

Modern industrialised economies measure their performance through growth, a desire for the sustained increase of national wealth which has underpinned the thinking of National Banks. A sustained increase in gross domestic product has been the mantra of prudent governance, fueled by work and production and regulated through finance, the control of interest rates and levels of inflation. However, we are arriving at the collective realisation that our obsession with enrichment has come at an enormous cost. The relentless extraction of profit has unbalanced the finite resources of the planet to the extent that humanity now faces an existential threat. As we attempt to address the enormous challenges the future holds, we ask what might be the role of a future central bank?

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

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

Future Bank



Photograph by Daniel Rosbottom, Brussels, 2021

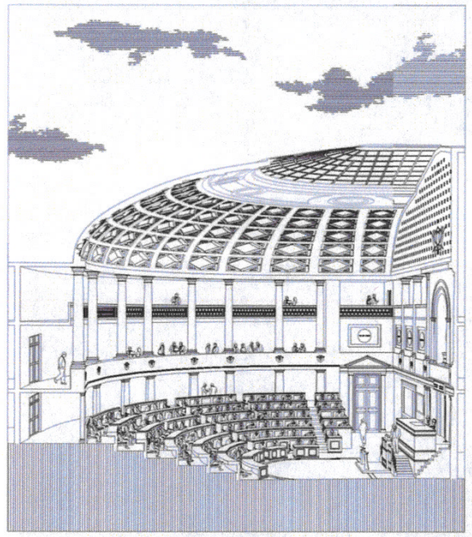
In collaboration with the City of Brussels it has established an architectural competition to decide how to consolidate the workspace of the 1500 members of office and research staff who will continue to work across the site, while the loss of its traditional secure functions has led it to envisage itself as a more open, permeable environment.

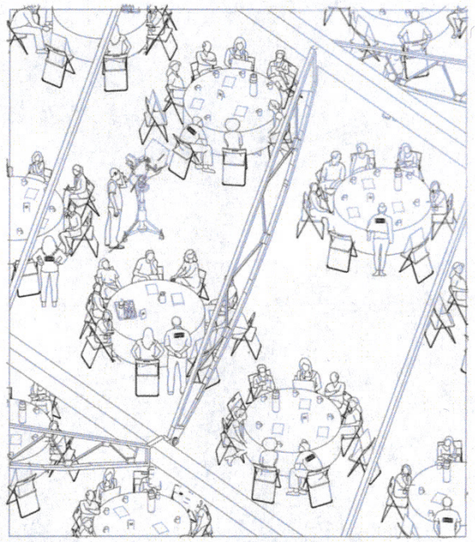
This will be our starting point. As a studio, we will critique both the existing buildings and the brief across a number of scales; considering what the shifting role of the Bank might be as it transforms from an institution that seeks to uphold the status quo, to one which must become an agent of change if it is to help lead the huge transformations required to successfully decarbonise our economy. We will explore the ways in which the Bank might translate these ambitions, through architecture, into spatial, material, and experiential terms. Individual projects will propose means by which it could engage both the public and its own staff in this process of transformation: asking who they are, how they might be brought into relation with one another and what types and qualities of space might successfully accommodate and engage them. As the Bank seeks to turn its attention outwards and to invite people in, we will reflect upon the ways in which both the institution and its site might be reimagined in order to transform the urban fortunes of the wider city.

Brussels has declared itself a doughnut economy. As architects, our economy will be an economy of means. We will make the most of what we find and carefully and creatively address the technical and ethical dilemmas of constructing new buildings where they are needed. Most importantly we will approach the project in a spirit of optimism, making architecture which is capable of addressing past, present and future with both a sense of continuity and an openness to change

Interiors
Buildings
Cities

Palace





G1000 A Machine for Innovating Democracy, students Meihui Qi and Johan Löwstett, 2019 Studio City Hall Brussels

Working Together.

The project for the transformation of the Belgian National Bank, which provides the starting point for our 2021 graduation studio, embodies two significant aspirations which will together inform the collective research that we will undertake. The first of these provides the economic underpinning for the project. This is the consolidation of the Bank's property portfolio, focusing their activities within their principal site and subsequently selling off ancillary buildings.

The main building complex on Boulevard de Berlaimont, in the centre of the City of Brussels, will become the workplace of the Bank's 1500 office-based staff, while secure facilities for the storage of currency will be transferred to a new building on the periphery of the capital. The Bank, as it presents itself to the city, will transform from being a closed fortress and a partly industrial space for the minting, printing and storing of money to a knowledge centre. An office environment, where people will type and talk and think together. Part of a network of governance and that engages with the European Union, the National Government, the wider banking infrastructure, cities, companies and, ultimately, citizens.

Designing the right working environments for the diverse activities of this Future Bank will be central to the ongoing success of the reformed institution. What relations will they define between people? How can they foster a positive and engaged culture and create a sense of wellbeing while avoiding unnecessary hierarchies and silo's being created which undermine the possibilities for innovation which will be required if our economy and society is to transform itself in ways that allow it to meet the enormous challenges we collectively face?

Understanding the past is fundamental to designing for a possible future and so our work starts with an examination of the history and changing culture of the office, as it has been translated through architecture. Within the Research Course, we will explore these questions broadly, contextualising them through the investigation and analysis of a number of buildings that exemplify the history and development of the office as an idea, through time and in different cultures. The Design Studio will focus and consolidate this more broadly based research through the making of several, related pieces of work.

Working in pairs, students will document each of the 16 chosen office buildings, redrawing them at a series of agreed scales, in order that they can be situated, understood, and compared. These will include, a situation plan, building plans, key sections, facades, a detail plan of an office layout.

Working in groups of four, students will create a model of a spatial fragment within 8 of the precedents that focus on key moments of the development of the office building as a modern type, across the last century. These models will take as their starting point photographs of significant aspects of the office



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

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

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

design course
a representative scaffold
being in and representing (model making)
democratic relation to the city

<u>future bank</u>
brussels, National Bank of Belgium (NBB), a
building rigid in hierarchies
construction + ruination

the bank typoloy as an agent of change

NBB 2019 - 2030:
the question of the workplace
office block

how will we work together?
how do 1500 people work together?

a public platform
incremental decision making

the history of the office through office precedents

experience of the workplace in a view
relations + hierarchies
the informal character
the simulated interior
paper model of the experience of the work place
model as a scenography
design for the image

notes adapted from introduction by Prof. D.J. Rosbottom

01 working together

research course

workplace — modes of production,
economic zeitgeist
equity, hierarchy
performativity
development capitalism
detachment of the office interor from the building

bank — banking hall
mechanical function of the bank
facade as a layer that represents confidence
facade as a wall, a barrier
(bank) buildings, interior lobbies being occupied

the artifact as a central notion to research
material culture
phenomenology

iterative process, in dialog + overlap in relation to design

office nostalgia
office walls

curtain walls results in a conditioned environment
resulting in a universal interior

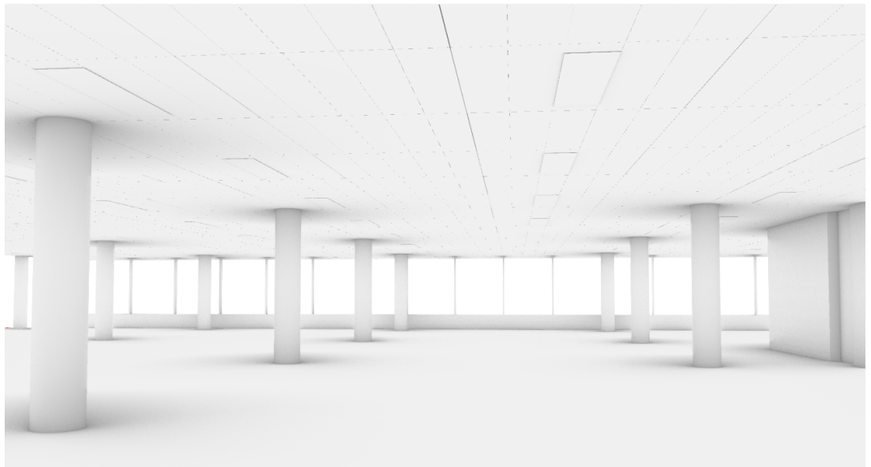
notes adapted from introduction by ir. Jurjen Zeinstra, Mark Pimlott, Dr. Amy Thomas + Birgitte Louise Hansen



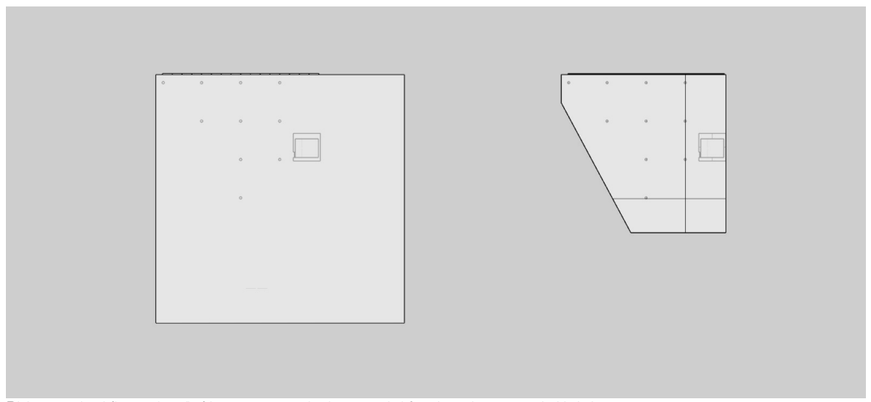
Heinrich Heidersberger, Osram Hauptverwaltung, München, 1965


Heinrich Heidersberger, Osram Hauptverwaltung, München, 1965

inventory



Rhino, 3D model interior sketched from plan drawing



Rhino, typical floor plan (left) cutout needed to model for the photograph (right)

01 working together is a collaboration with Ron Barten, Aneesh Nandi and Renske Worm

inventory of material:
images, plan, section, texts

Annette Gigon, Mike Guyer, Arend Kölsch (Eds.) Bürogebäude Office Buildings, gta Verlag, ETH Zürich, 2019

plan and section we drew first in Rhino, afterwards a 3D of the building was modelled. subsequently, A 3D was made through which we decided on the scale for the paper

model scale: 1:20

measuring and photographing the desk of Rubén Dario Kleimeer who works in Studio Playtime.

Playtime is a studio building in the centre of Rotterdam. the building offers spaces for research, design and small-scale construction to a community of 30 people. Playtime is a design from Enzo Valerio.

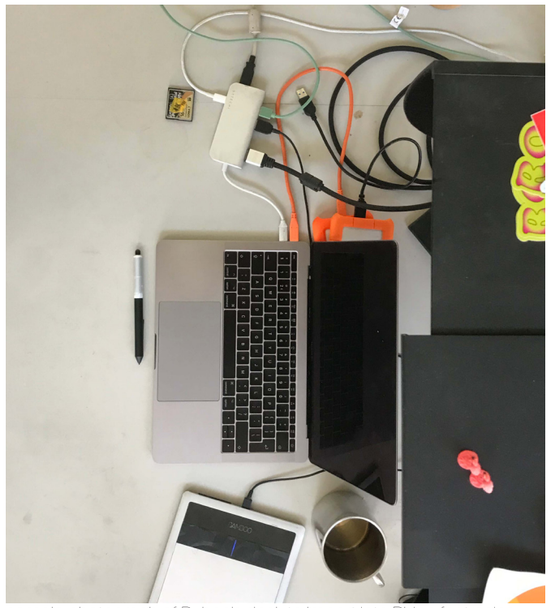
Rubén Dario Kleimeer portrays the urban landscape and public space. his photography questions the spaces in which we live, work and recreate.

I felt Ruben's desk was a relevant example as he works in the co-working space of Playtime, co-working as a concept is still a relatively new and rather contemporary way of working.

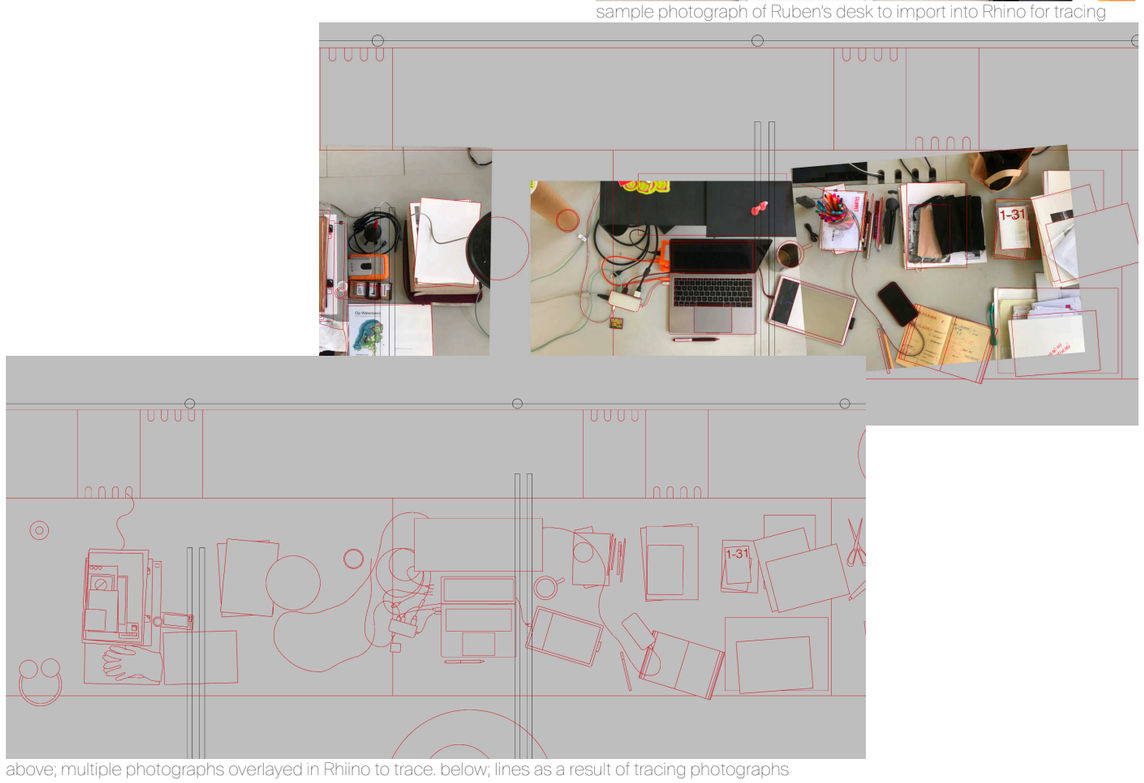
We talked about the Heinrich Heidersberger photographs of Osram Hauptverwaltung. During this conversation we also looked at the drawings of Jan Rothuizen and the photographs from Ezra Stoller.

https://www.rubendariokleimeer.com
https://studioplaytime.xyz/
http://enzovalerio.com/

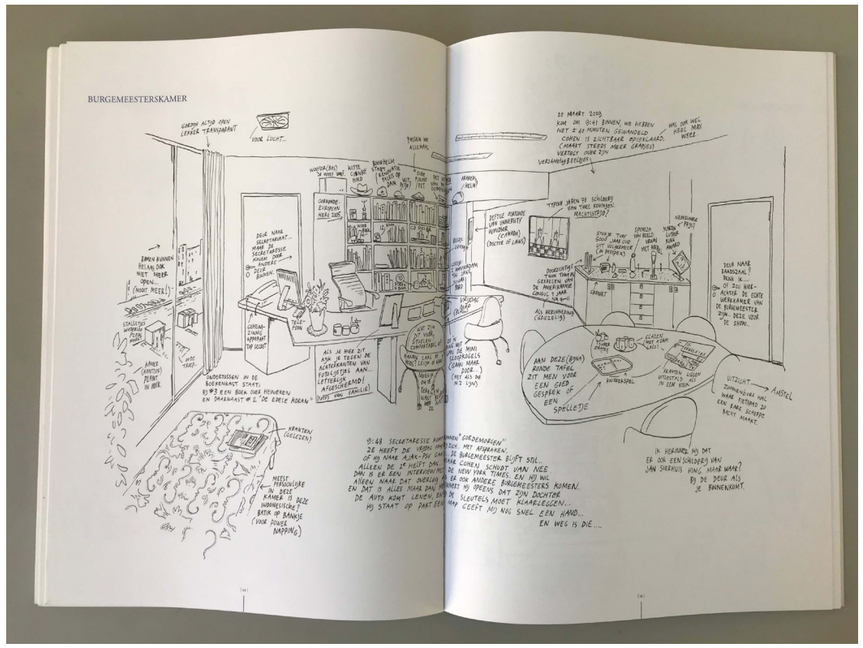
the desk



sample photograph of Ruben's desk to import into Rhino for tracing



above; multiple photographs overlayed in Rhiino to trace. below; lines as a result of tracing photographs



De Zachte Atlas van Amsterdam, Jan Rothuizen, pp. 94 - 95

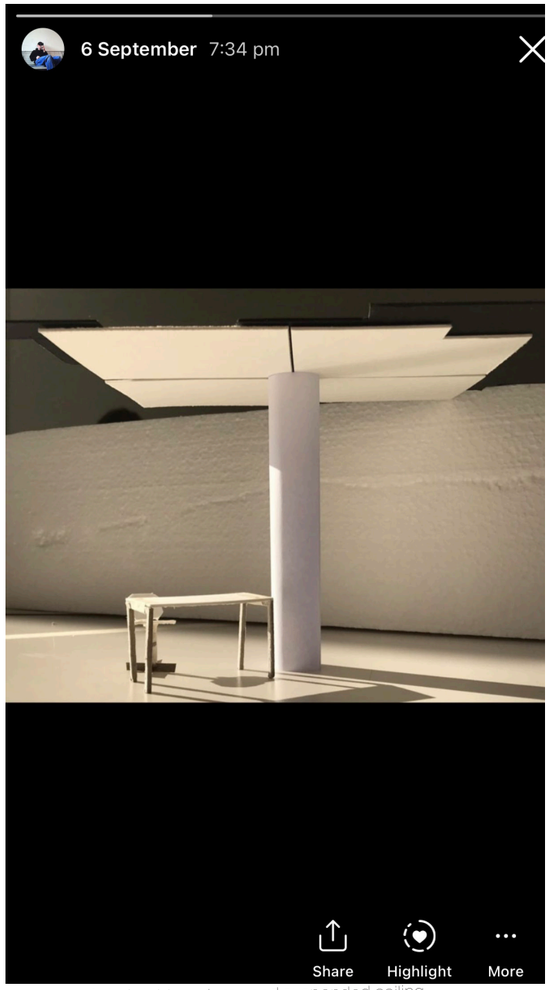


Photographer, Ezra Stoller, pp. 102 - 103

the model



Osram Hauptverwaltung, drawing of typical floor plan with furniture



mock-up of chair, table, column and suspended ceiling

1:20 modelling with the goal to mock-up elements of the interior
paper and cardboard

making a base plate exactly like the cut-out derived from the 3D model
blue XPS foam and cardboard

first reading about the systematic office interior planning of the Quickborner team.
then deciding to systematically inventorize each element visible in the photograph.
through which we can systematically construct the model for the photograph

in the photograph a variety of elements are visually repeated
- the suspended ceiling consisting of the one individual panel repeated
- the furniture (chair, table, side table) repeating itself as a cluster of the entire floor
- the column, which is repeated 9 times in the interior of the photograph

we need an idea to formulate an idea how to construct each element individually and then multiply its production

papercutting, lasercutting,
how do we construct the model? the 1:20 model itself needs to be engineered and designed
the construction of the model out of blue XPS foam which we then clad with paper.
the ceiling panels can be mechanically lasercutted
the furniture can be mechanically lasercutted in black cardboard and afterwards cladded with paper.

subsequently working on the drawings (plan, section, site plan, elevation) for Osram by Henn architects and the Pirelli building by Gio Ponti.

furthermore reading:
- Office Buildings and Organisational Change
- Space Gender Architecture

research reading

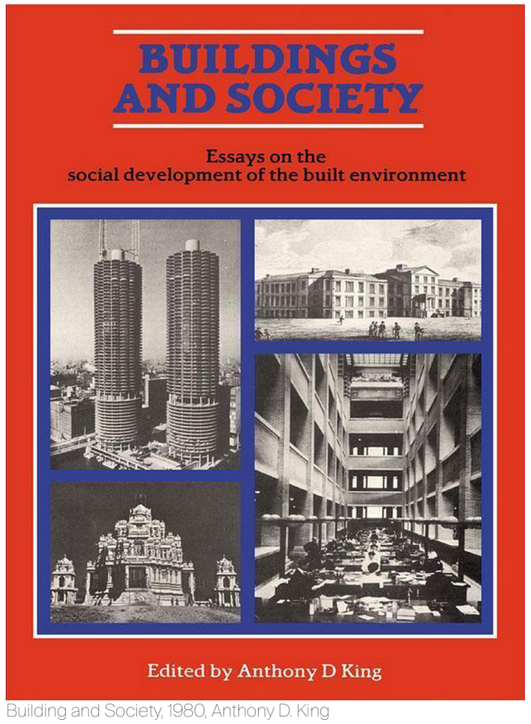
In this reading response the text '**Office Buildings and Organisational Change**', in Anthony D. King, ed., Buildings and Society, 1980, by Francis Duffy is treated as a subject for reflection after a group discussion at the TU Delft with Dr. AR Thomas.

'Buildings betray what we value.'
This statement was the starting point of the collective discussion by questioning the meaning of the word value on a universal and economic scale. We consider values as universal worth, however its implications on an economic level differ, especially in relation to the (speculative) office building. Values, economics, and office buildings constitute the mechanics of real estate.

The mechanical aspects of the office building itself is elaborated by Duffy alongside a number of case-study projects, chronologically treated in the text from the late 19th century up until the end of the 20th century. Duffy explicitly mentions the elevator and the steel frame as key mechanical and technological aspects which radically altered the plan of the office building. The steel frame is a straightforward example of structural technology which was significant for the development for the office building. The development of the office building plan is considered multiple times throughout the text. Duffy
being an architect himself, something he acknowledges in the text, states the limitations of his role as a non-historian. Furthermore, he is seemingly well aware of the limitations of the timeline he constructed in this text.

With Duffy's final case-study, the Ninoflax offices from 1963, a different kind of technology is introduced: the technology of systems. At this point in time the office building has developed itself with the help of physical technology such as air-conditioning, the telephone and TL lighting. Alternatively, a new kind of technology, neither physical nor structural, is treated in this case. the technology of a system: cybernetics. System thinking in combination with feedback loops, turning a mathematical concept into a cultural construct.

this issue resolved into the building not only as a physical technology but also a systemic technology. designing a technology which turned the office into a control system.



Building and Society, 1980, Anthony D. King

In this reading response the text '**The Contemporary Worplace**', in Rendel Penner Borden, Gender Space Architecture, 2000, by Daphne Spain is treated as a subject for reflection after a group discussion at the TU Delft with Dr. AR Thomas.

Which occupational category refers to which sex? According to statistics mentioned in the text of Spain, Women are more likely to take on teaching, nursing and secretary roles. Men are likely to take on manager roles.

During the discussion it was initially questioned if this disbalance of roles was a gender issue at all, alternatively perhaps a working class issue derived from context and upbringing. It was emphasized during our collective discussion that the statement by Spain on managerial roles and its relation to amount of women and men operating in the field was derived from statistics, consequently proving its objectivity.

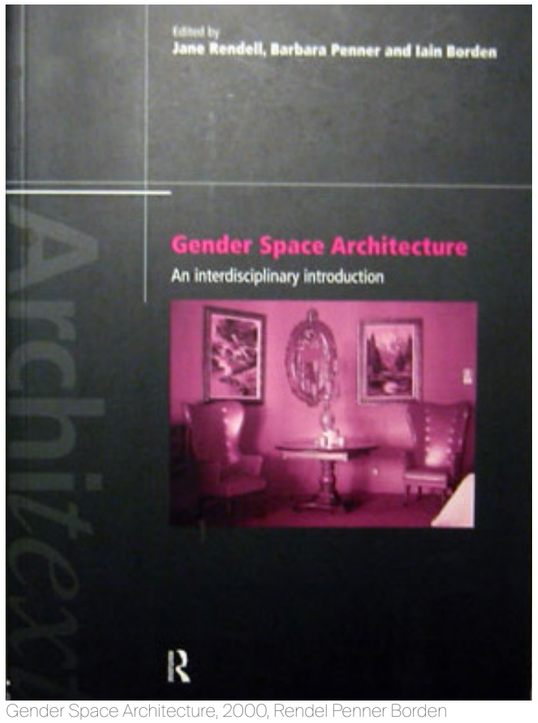
"The public nature of open-floor jobs constitutes lack of privacy, repeated interruptions, potential for surveillance." it seems this notion is omnipresent in the interior images of the Osram building in Munich.


Heinrich Heidersberger, Osram Hauptverwaltung, München, 1965

The text seems to revolve around the notion of performance and how spaces instigate a
certain performance. The image above shows the "working" interior of Osram. When comparing this interior to the executive office on the right, one can sense the different types of behaviour tolerated and performed in each of these spaces.

Spatial arrangements in the office reinforcing certain status distinctions seems to me the core idea communicated by Spain.


Heinrich Heidersberger, Osram Hauptverwaltung, München, 1965



Gender Space Architecture, 2000, Rendel Penner Borden

lasercut of the suspended ceiling done,
divided in 3 cardboard parts.

papercut of the suspended ceiling panels done,
divided per panel.

how to connect all the cardboard and paper parts together? how to make sure the ceiling does not bend when supported by the columns?

making and engineering the suspended ceiling
- drilling holes in the cardboard parts for the columns to hold up the ceiling

- connecting the cardboard parts to eachother with XPS foam beams

- cladding the cardboard with black paper for shadowlines

- cladding the black paper with the papercutted white panels

- a layer of translucent paper inbetween

drilling, connecting, cladding

dweling further on the drawings of Osram Hauptverwaltung and the Pirelli building
- testing line thicknesses
- a hatch?
- drawing the furniture in the plan as essential part of the lay out
- printing the drawings for the first time

further developing the drawing of Ruben's desk. a lot of cables intersecting, cable management is an issue.

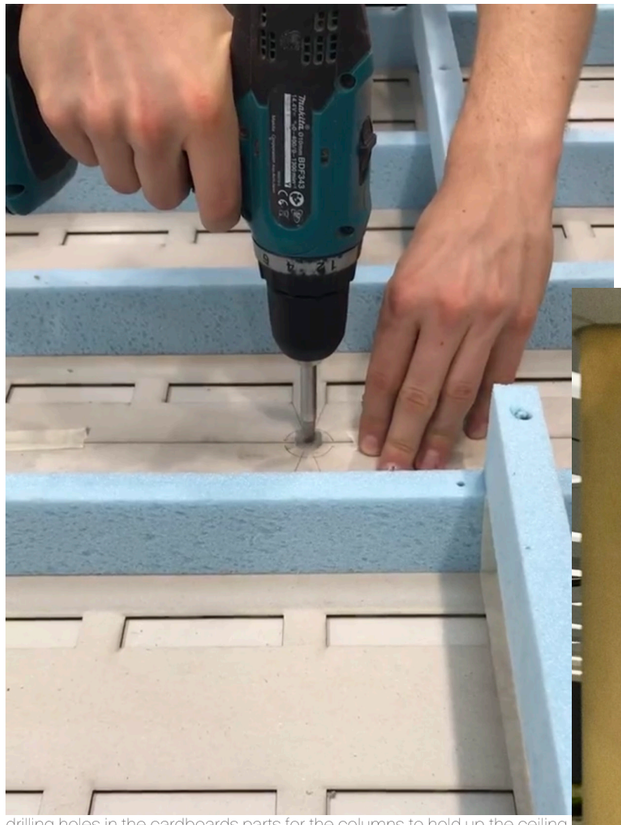
I am not yet connecting the lines of everything that is happening at the same time in the form of making, reading, listening and writing

furthermore reading/listening:
- Corporate Towers and Symbolic Capital
- Financial District and the Planet

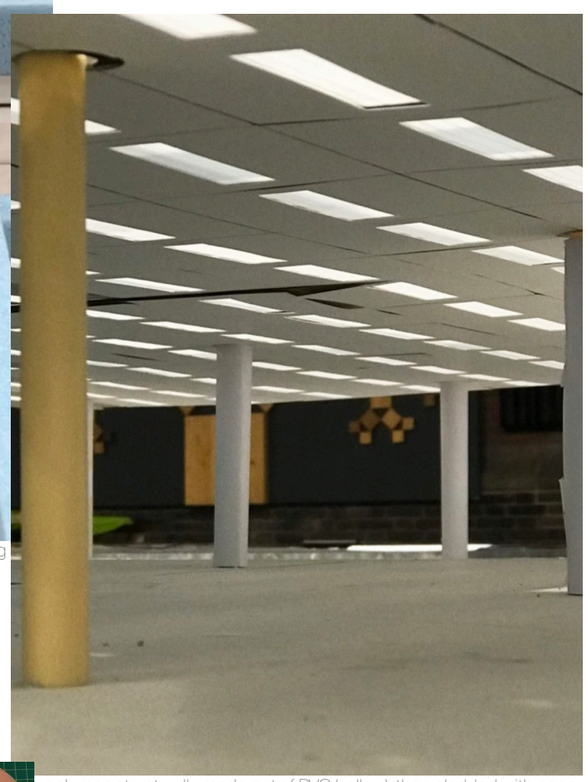
1:20 model making



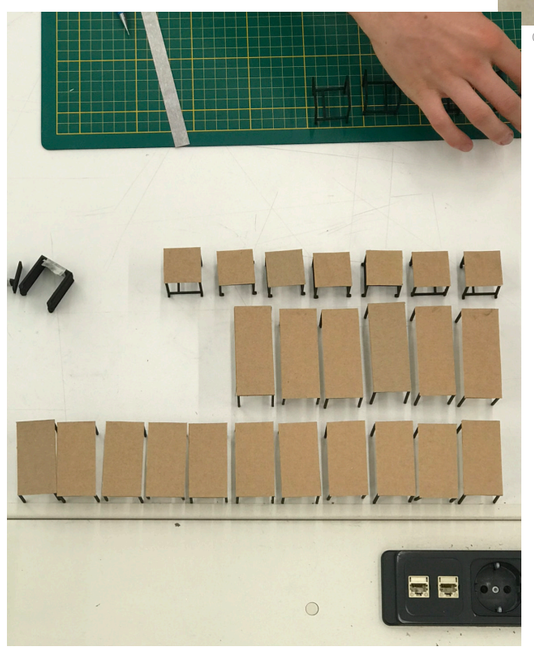
top to bottom; white paper (papercutted), black paper, translucent paper, grey cardboard (lasercutted)



drilling holes in the cardboards parts for the columns to hold up the ceiling



columns structurally made out of PVC (yellow), then cladded with paper



1:20 model making

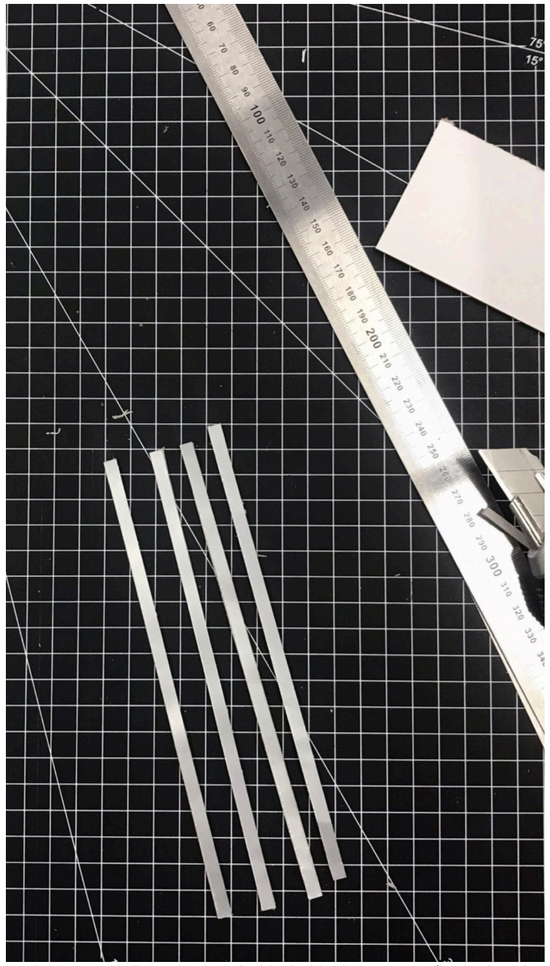
further working on cladding the lasercut cardboard ceiling with papercut panels

the repitition of these white paper panels on the grey cardboard makes for a rather hypnotising image.

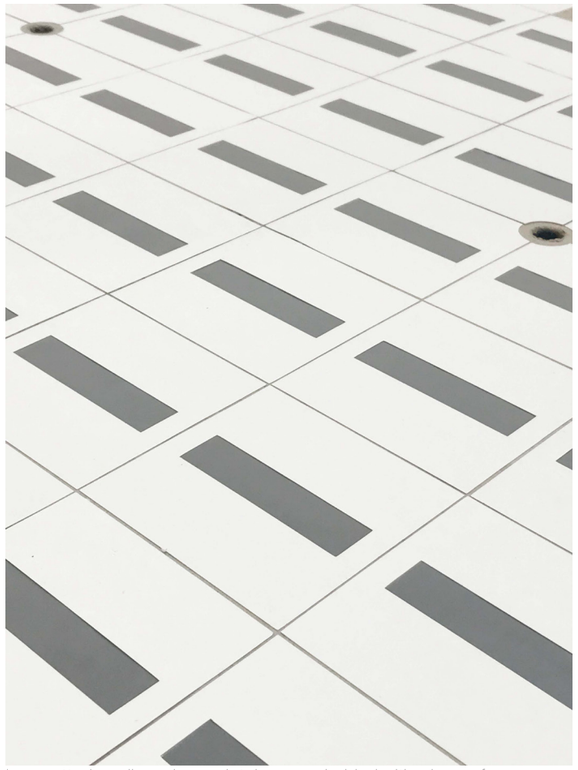
cladding the cardboard base with paper.
the ceiling and the floor is half the model essentially.
cladding the structural yellow PVC pipes with paper and a shiny metallic rim.
making the horizontal window in the back with cardboard and silver paper.

turning the lights on inside with the first table placed in the interior.

the base is finished, now onwards to the furniture.



vertical grey cardboard strips cladded with glossy paper for the band window in the back of the interior



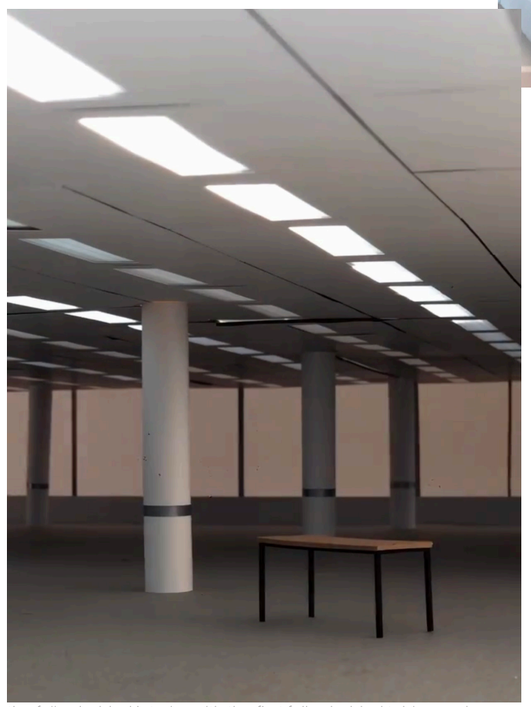
lasercutted cardboard completely papercladded with a layer of translucent paper inbetween for the light to bounce through



top side of the suspended ceiling; the three big lasercutted grey cardboard pieces are held together by blue XPS foam beams and masking tape. the band window is composed of a horizontal piece of white cardboard with vertical grey cardboard strips.



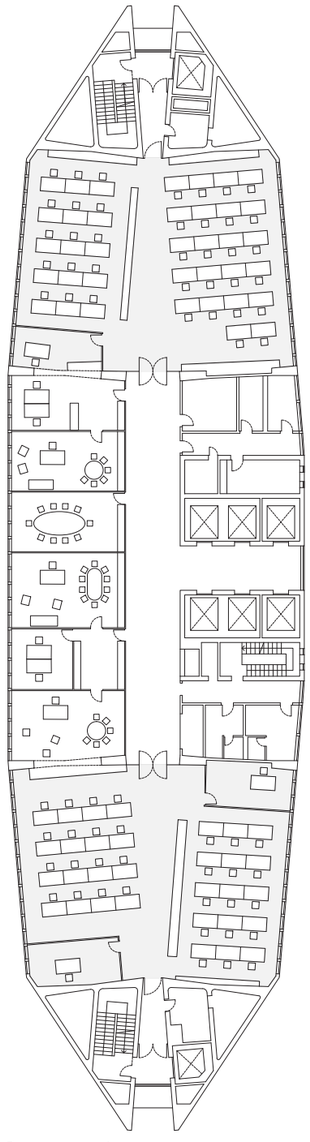
the fully cladded interior juxtaposed with the uncladded blue XPS foam amplifies the idea of the model as a theater set



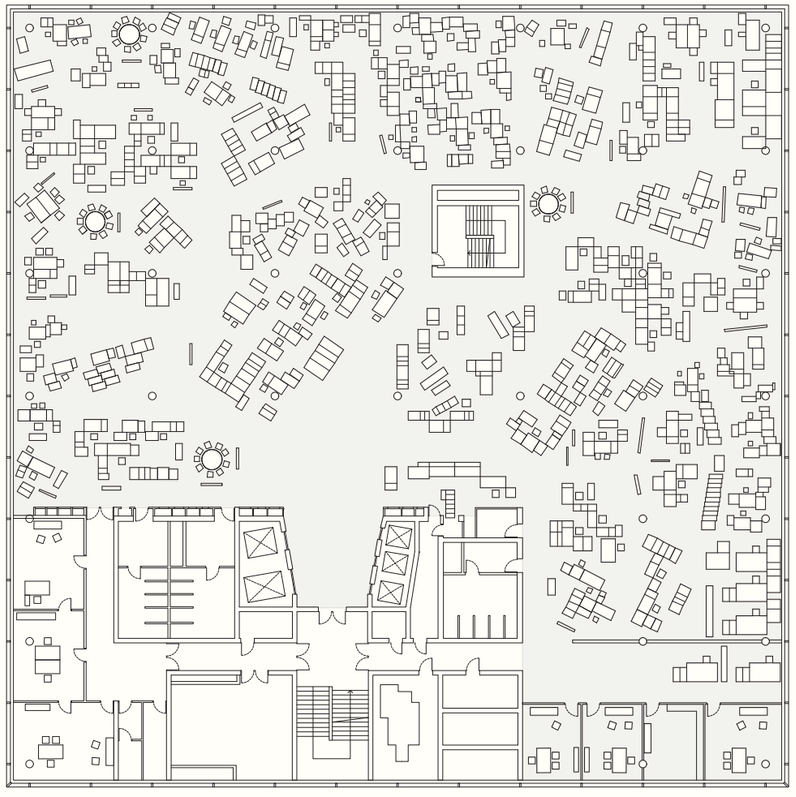
the fully cladded interior with the first fully cladded table; mad men

drawing

we decided to accentuate the working floor in the two plans with a grey hatch. as the furniture is intrinsic to the lay-out of the plan, we decided to draw those in as well. a first print of the urban situation, plan, section and elevation on biotop A3 created a clear, graphic overview and comparision of the two projects.



Pirelli, typical floor plan



Osram, typical floor plan

research reading

In this reading response the text ‘Corporate Towers and Symbolic Capital’. Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design 19, no. 2 (1992): 173 - 178 by K. Dovey is treated as a subject for reflection after a group discussion at the TU Delft with Birgitte Louise Hansen.

Symbolic capital throught builtform: value of a building that is attributable to a symbolic, aesthetic or mythological ‘aura’.

How to construct aura?

The text revolves around a collection of leasing brochures and advertisements on speculative late 1980s australian office towers. What is, regarding this specific type of real estate, the symbolic discourse which surrounds the source of profit?

The aura of the office tower is constituted by themes such as timelessness, domination, presence, scale, stature, stability, establishment location and estate.

The office towers in the ads communicate postmodernist tendencies; architecture inspired by classical features.

Advertising = fake + artificial

The foyer as a stage, the view of the city in the abstract. tall buildings, tall people, patriarchal space

The facade as a street frontage, with the tower set behind.

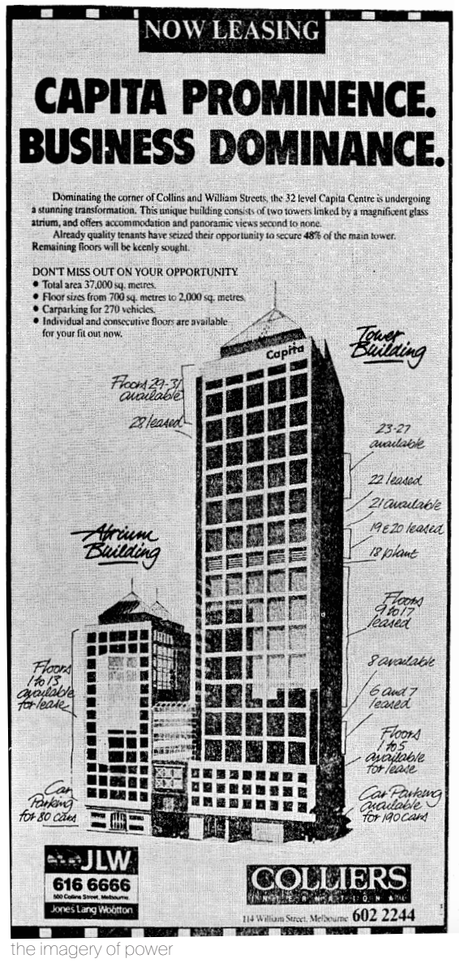
The office tower chasing an image of a timeless quality which is paradoxically subject to rapid cycles of fashion.

A Philip Johnson designed foyer sells, apparantely. Postmodernism is speaking to the real estate market. Postmodernism propagates and helps to sell this kind of architecture. What is the role and responsibility of the architect in this real estate market?

How tall is the building going to become? How tall does the building have to be? Atleast taller than its neighbouring buildings, according to the advertisements in this text.

Power, buying into things. The imagery of power, both visual and verbal. Architecture is used as a tool for real estate. The imagery is merely the surface of something, buried underneath is the symbolic.

The text seems to point its finger on the challenge that is real estate versus architecture. Architecture is presented as something artificial in these advertisements.



the imagery of power

In this reading response the audio documentary **‘Market Landscape: Speaking betweenFinancial Districts and the Planet’** by Maxime Decaudin and Sben Korsch is treated as a subject for reflection after a group discussion at the TU Delft with Birgitte Louise Hansen.

Rise of the global city
Two districts within systems of global finance

Deregulation and globalization of financial firms pushed specialized expertise and knowledge such as traders, laywers and consultants

deregulate
privatize
globalize

office space boom, market deregulations?

Canary Wharf as foreign urban model imported to London. Green spaces in financial districts rely on the importation of plants. Garden as a machine. Extractive nature of the new economy.

Corporate ideology and complex funding mechanisms obscure the everyday realities of extractive industries on the ground. Pipeline infrastructures.

The physical intervention in the landscape as a mode of resistance to the destruction of these environments and the rights of communities to their resources. No healthy local without healthy locals.

The landscape of finance is unequal as a core idea communicated in this audio documentary


pin-up of precedent projects during research course

The Changing Workplace
(or: The Political Economy of Flexibility)
Dr. AR Thomas.

research lecture

the concept of flexibility; the value of the open plan is rooted in flexibility

fluctuation and change at the core of business: organisation and real estate within architecture

- deregulation
- privatization
- globalization

reagan + thatcher
neoliberalism
rights and laws are replaced by investment, competition and interest as pivotal concepts

environmental apparatus
user as the individual and the organisation

thinness as economic emparative
maximalising profitability

seperation of interior and core/shell

nothing is fixed, anything is possible?
architecture as endless system
responsive design

corporations being prioritized caused a building boom in the 80s and 90s

pattern language
building block ensemble as a multitude of patterns
data, aggregation

complex and multi-layered organism

shell lasting	50 years
services	15 years
scenery	5-7 years
Sets	Changing every day

dismantling, obsolence, deconstructing

several layers of longevity of built components

management: rationalising + standardising modes of production simultaneously tracking efficiency.

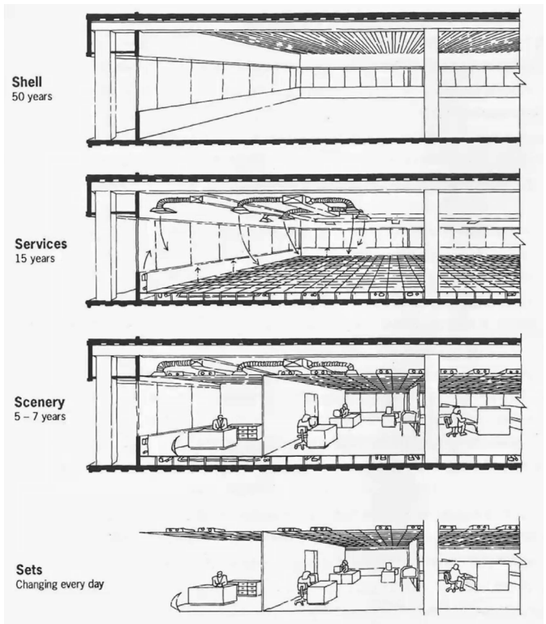
if you can not measure it you can not improve it

Quickborner, the office as social container
Organisation as a communication system

Office work glam, furniture as a management tool.

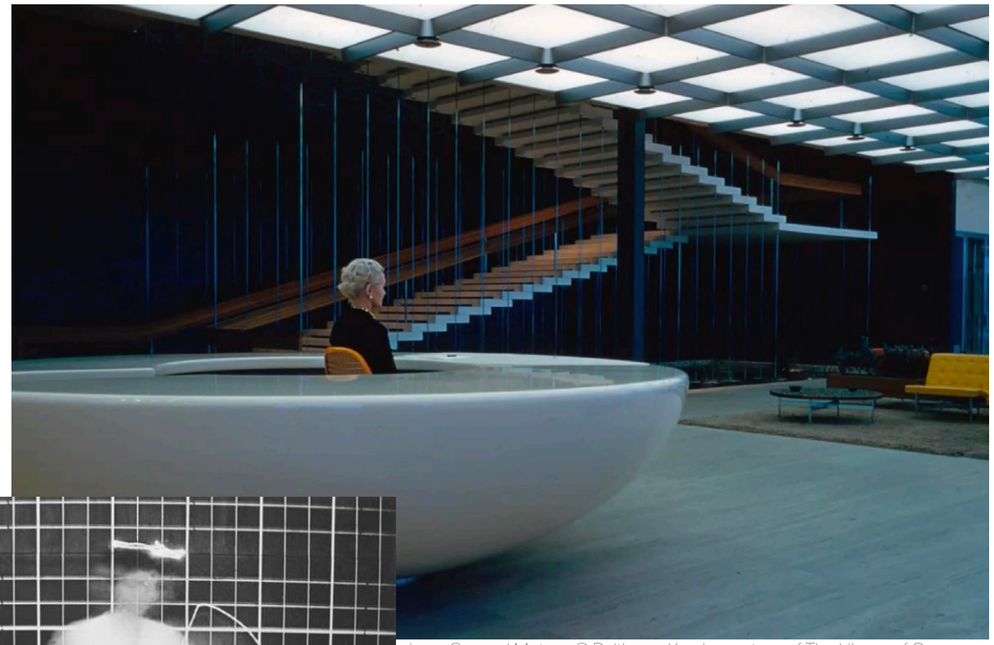
investment in human capital
individual having self-interest

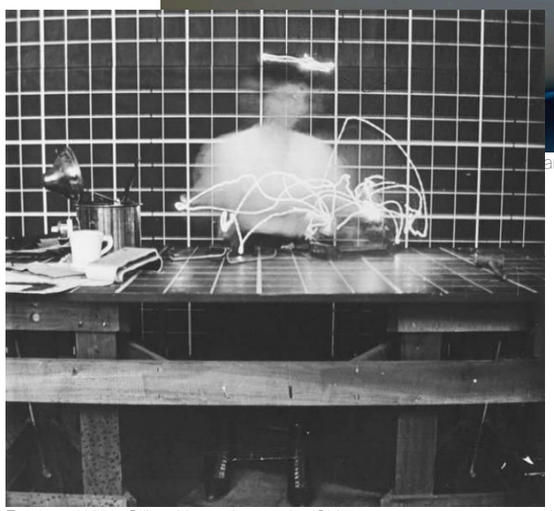
where is the architect in all of this?



DEGW, Shell, Services, Scenery and Sets in the office building, The Changing City. London: Bulstrode Press, 1989


King Vidor, The Crowd, 1928


arinen, General Motors, © Balthazar Korab courtesy of The Library of Congress


Frank and Lilian Gilbreth's motion study, 1914

1:20 furniture making

we collectively shifted the focus from floor, columns and ceiling to the furniture (tables, chairs, side tables), objects (typewriters, paper) and details (curtains, plants).

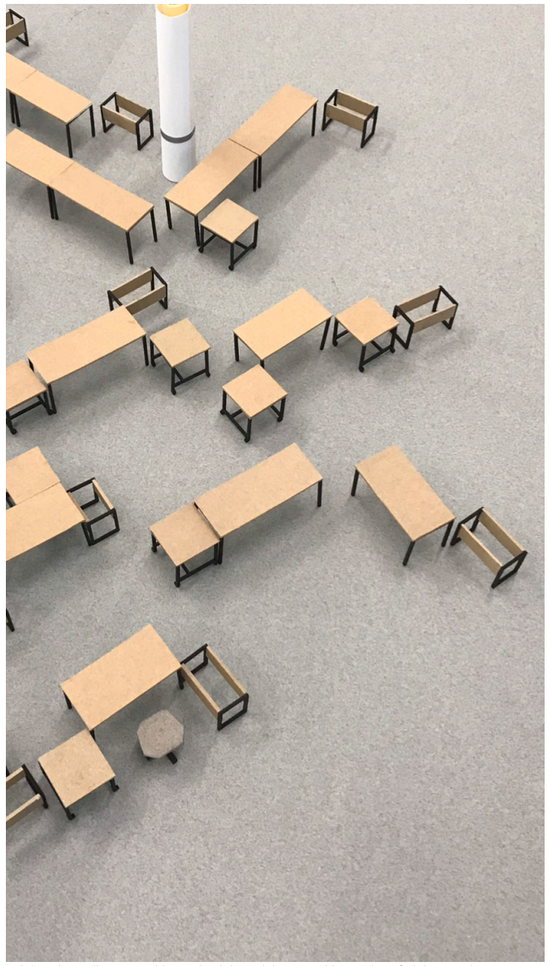
making final decisions on the palette, as the palette is mostly defined by the color of the furniture.

grey - (light) brown - black - white - light blue

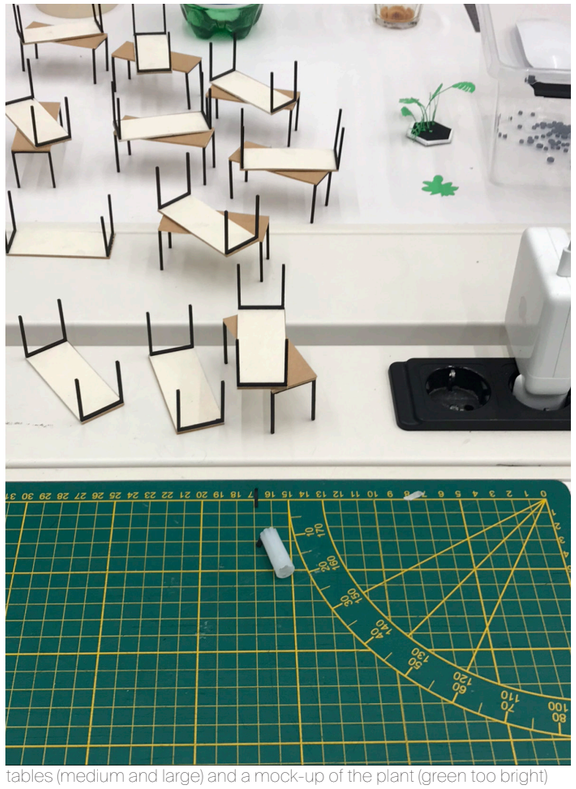
a lot of tables and a lot of chairs
how much repitition is needed?

modelling from front to back, adding detail in the front and making the objects more abstract in the back

the furniture in the back became more block-like to emulate a fuller and more cluttered appearance in the back part of the interior.



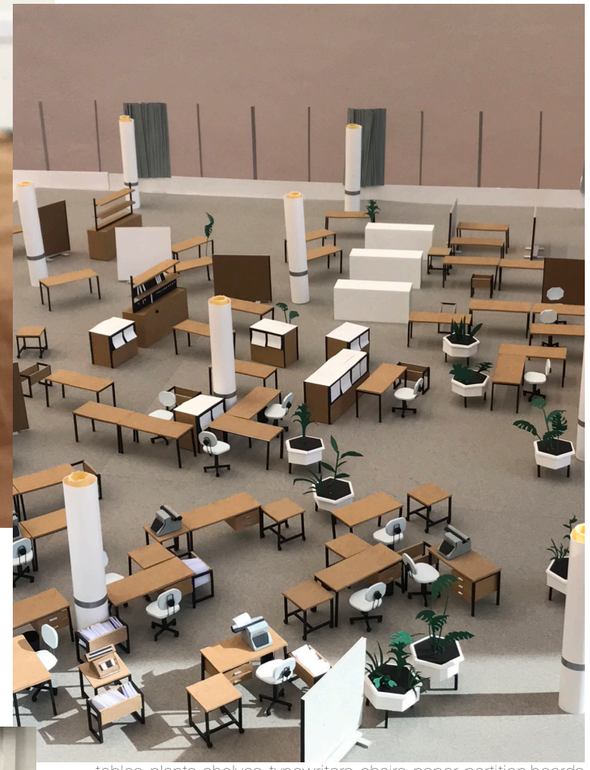
tables (medium and large), side tables and hanging folder racks



tables (medium and large) and a mock-up of the plant (green too bright)



mock-up of the curtain



tables, plants, shelves, typewriters, chairs, paper, partition boards



objects placed in the model, a part of the ceiling in against the wall

model photography

with what do we photograph the model that emulates or imitates a large format camera with wide angle lens?

how do we reproduce the light on the ceiling?

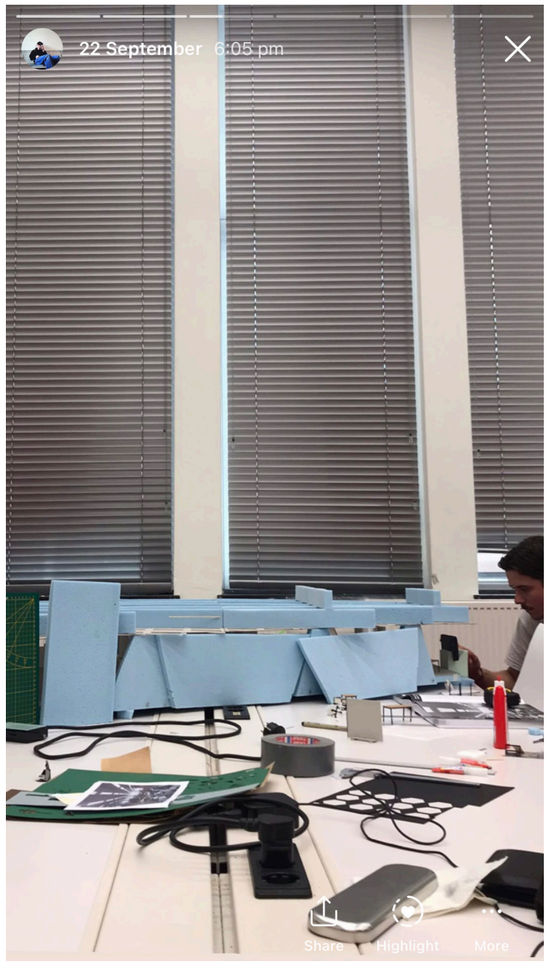
how do we position the furniture right?

first multiple options were tested such as the iPhone 7, iPhone 10 and a Canon SLR with 8-80mm lens.

then we found out that we absolutely need a camera with a wide angle lens to get the depth of the ceiling right.

we ended up borrowing an iPhone 12, as we found out these have a wide angle feature.

we had to take the photograph from quite far away to use the right amount of zoom.





photographing the model with an iPhone 12 in a foam block tripod

the work-method consisted of taking photographs with the iPhone, airdropping them to a MacBook, loading the photo in Photoshop and overlaying it with the original image, numerous times.

in this way, we used the overlaying technique to match the height of the window, floor and columns. after this we matched the lay-out of the furniture. starting with the front left corner and working our way to the back.

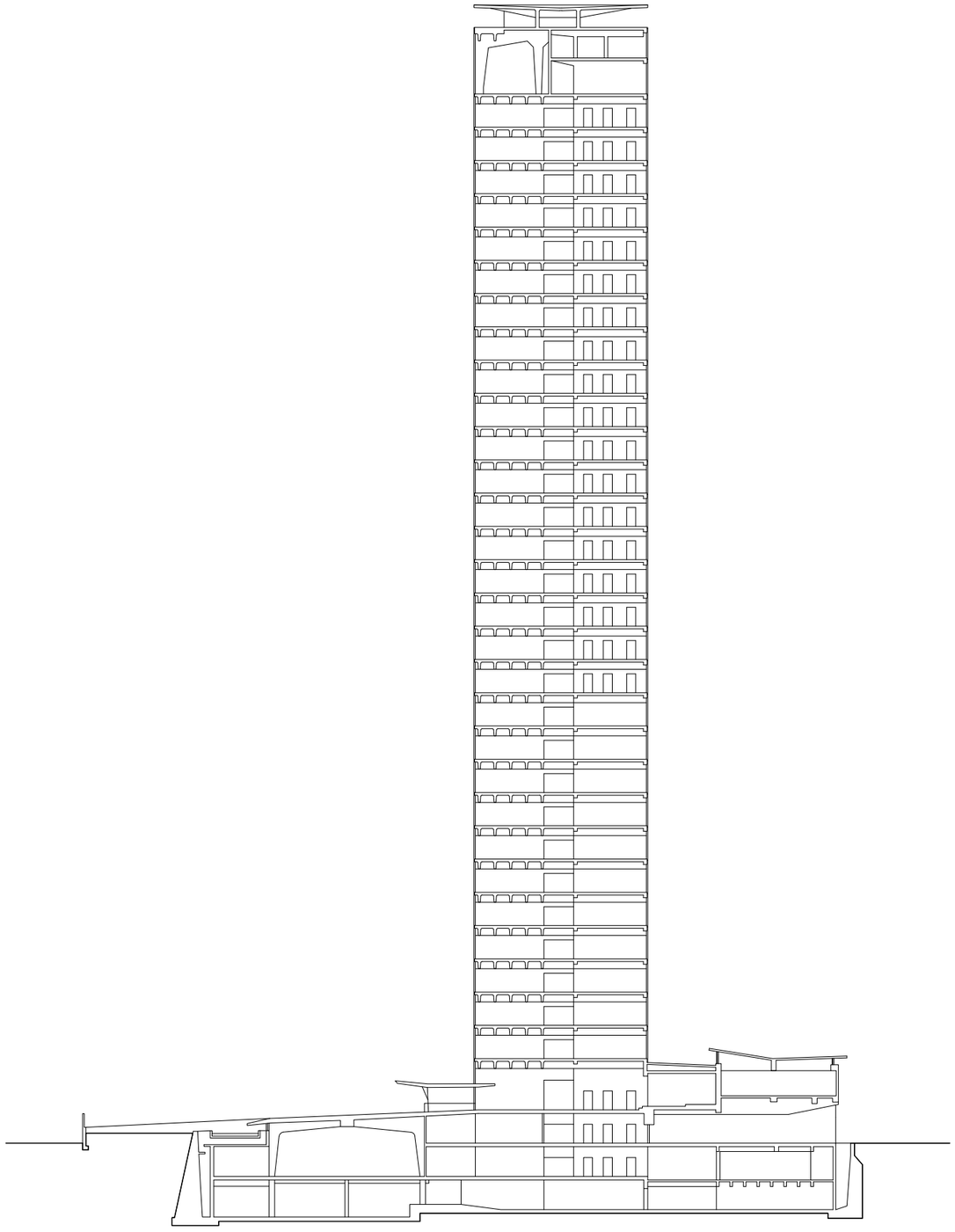


original image, large format photography in black and white



first iteration, iPhone photography in colour

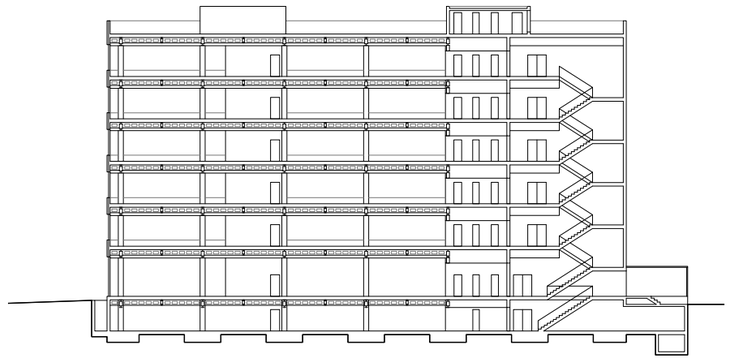
drawing



Pirelli tower, section

contrary to the first iteration, we collectively decided in the studio to figure out one scale on which all the projects would fit printed.

this decision was rather crucial, as now the scale of the projects could be compared. the Pirelli tower is a vast urban figure in relation to the Osram headquarters.



Osram Headquarters, section

model photography



scan of the printed first iteration with missing elements and adjustments marked

revisiting the photograph we took.
the first iteration was good.

however there are still a few elements missing and some changes to be made, such as:

1 missing armrests on a single chair

2 a few telephones still to be made

3 a few fax machines still to be made

4 some books missing on the shelves

5 the fire exit sign hanging from the ceiling missing

6 a few plants missing 7,8,9 etc.

we printed the first iteration and marked these missing elements and changes still to be made.

as we had the time, we decided to spend a day on making these missing elements.

as a result of this, we made a second, final image with all changes adapted, again going through the process described before.

in the end, the interior reminds me of a less rigid office shown in the opening sequence of The Apartment.



second and final iteration, iPhone photograph in black and white



Billy Wilder, The Apartment, opening sequence, 1960



second and final iteration, iPhone photograph in colour

research

In this reading response the text '**Exchanges and Banks**', in A History of Building Types, Princeton University Press, 1976, Ch.12 by Nikolaus Pevsner is treated as a subject for reflection after a group discussion at the TU Delft with Jurjen Zeinstra.

The first part of the text goes into banking and the term bank itself. A whole dissertation could be written on these topics, therefore the first part of the text is heavily condensed.

An importat notion is how the term banking derives from the table of the banker. therefore banking as a term is actually derived from a piece of furniture.

Historically, Pevsner discusses the different typologies of the bank building, arguing from the view of the discipline and evolving from small-scale domesticitiy to grand urban palaces. The London and Amsterdam exchange appear pivotal in the sense that these both are:

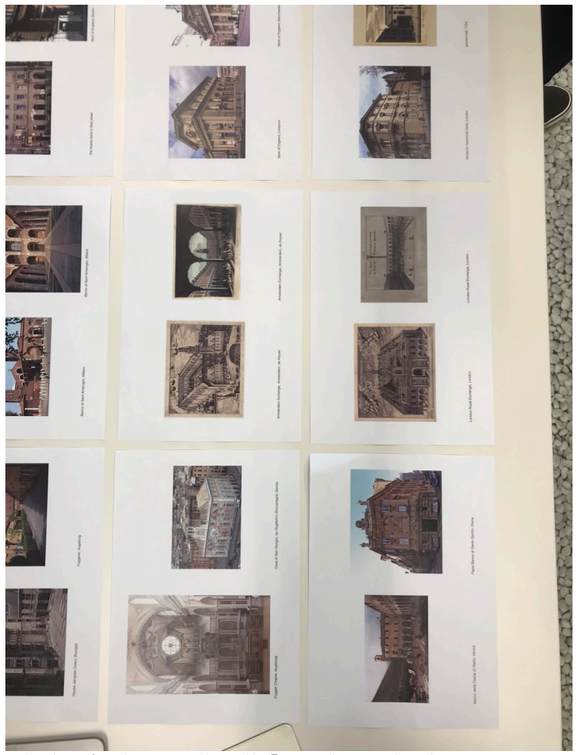
- public, situated in the very center of the city
- established close to the market and therefore close to the trade
- important actors in developing the stock market

The development of the bank and exchange typology is analog to the development of capitalism. The idea of securing valuable goods stored inside an enclosed volume is expressed by the appearance of the building, the idea of trust and facade as a wall. What is trust related to? The interior? The exterior?

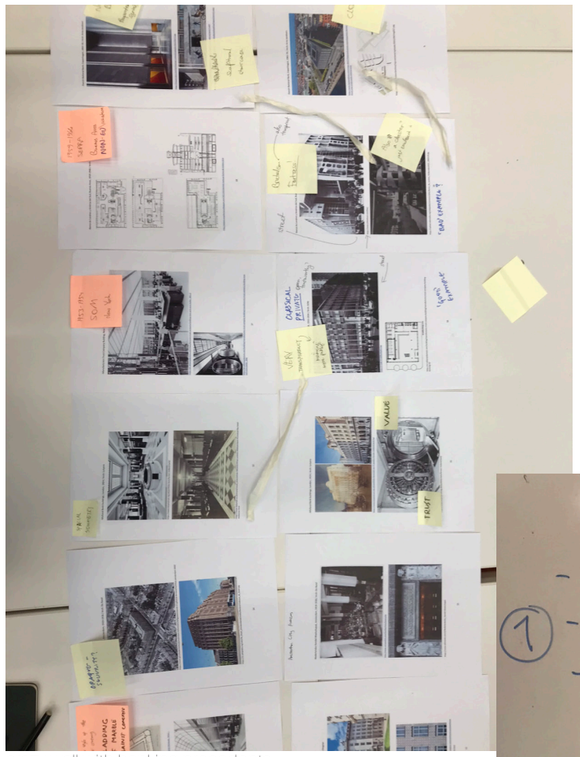
John Soane's Bank of England as a starting point of The National Bank.

The building as a fortress versus the building as a transparent box. Trust is not only communicated through heaviness (the facade as a wall) but also through lightness (the facade as a see-through window).

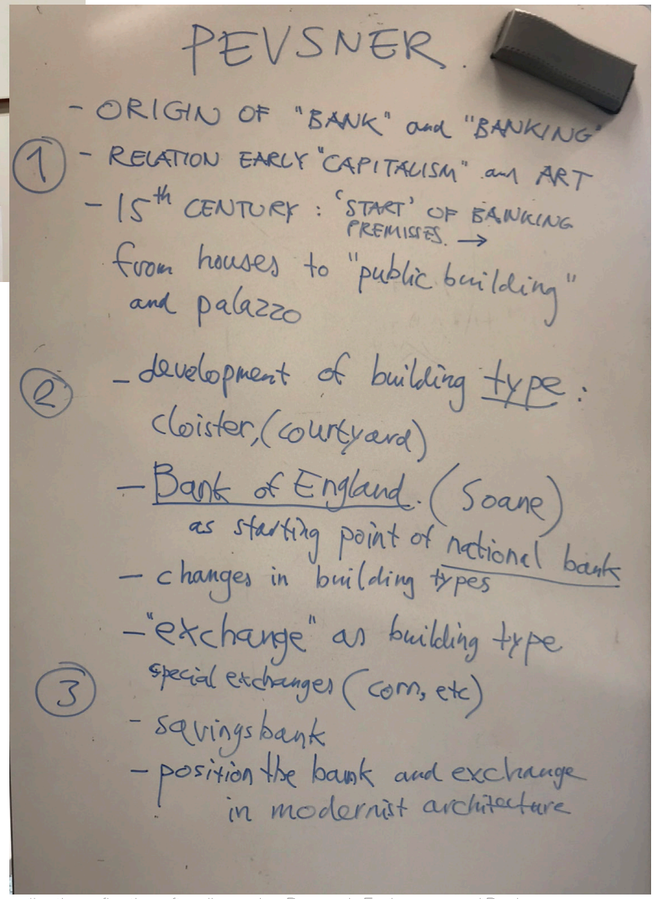
Is a building with a transparent glass facade actually transparent?



selection of projects mentioned in Pevsner's text printed



crazy wall with banking precedents



collective reflection after discussing Pevsner's Exchanges and Banks



Knossos, GR, 1994. Mark Pimlott

Social Plinth

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

During the remaining weeks of the research course, you will be studying historical examples of banks and examining the developing ways in which their banking halls, forms and facades have engaged with the city and the citizen in representational terms. Thought of in terms of architectural language, the plinth can be understood as a base or fundament upon which other things stand. It is a visible manifestation of the founding of the building, a new ground or platform from which the rest of a wall can be constructed. As such, it often takes on a different expression and material condition for both aesthetic and technical reasons. In making a new ground to negotiate with or overcome the limitations of an existing topography or terrain, the plinth can also be understood as something which separates, distances or objectifies the architectural edifice which is constructed upon it, elevating it above its surroundings. This is the manner in which a plinth is traditionally understood in artistic practice, as a base or pedestal upon which an artwork – a sculpture or a statue – is placed in order to objectify it and enhance its presence and power in relation to both the viewer and the context. In this way it can also be understood as a scenography, or a stage; an architectural device that can monumentalise and express power and authority.

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

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

Future Bank

MSc3 AR3AI100 Week 1.5–1.8



Heraklion, GR, 1994. Mark Pimlott

those bank buildings were made, has now been fundamentally called into question. As we all now know, it is a model which has in fact catastrophically destabilised the planetary structures on which we all depend. There are now urgent calls for it to be completely transformed and indeed Brussels, the city in which the National Bank stands, has recently declared that it will adopt a *doughnut* economic model – moving towards a zero carbon, circular economy, the parameters of which are established by a *social foundation* at one end and an *environmental ceiling* at the other.

With all of this in mind, and before you finally arrive at the site of the bank itself, we would like each of you, either individually or working socially, together, to begin to determine for yourself what the concerns of a social plinth might be and how you might translate this into representative form, space or action. This will take the plinth as a provocation and will proposed a model as a response, at an appropriate scale, up to 1:1. This could be a model in the physical sense or it might be a model for appropriation or inhabitation; an act or an event. Your approach might engage more or less directly with issues that pertain to what the bank does, or it might relate to questions that will form the context within which a future bank should operate or which it should be working to protect. Which parts of culture, nature or society might it foster? In developing your approach to the question, you might look for actors or agents from within or beyond the traditional world of the Bank: not only those who might traditionally work with it but also advocates of alternative economies, organisations that seek to promote more equitable approaches to prosperity, citizens who feel a sense of responsibility, or those who protest about the state we are in. How might the Bank listen to, engage or make space for such agents of change in order that it might become one itself?

Your project can remain unsited but it might also draw on your own experience, your own culture, or situations you know. It should be carefully formulated, designed and communicated, a compelling and representative starting point for the architectural project that will follow.

all model images pinned up on the studio wall

after which the second brief, social plinth, was introduced.

the social plinth is revolving around the idea that the Belgian National Bank in Brussels could capitalize upon the possibilities in its reduced need for security.

The Belgian National Bank, as representative place in the city, apparently proposes to use this opportunity for a social and open plinth of the building.

furthermore, the concept of the plinth can be interpeted in various ways. it is not only related to the plinth of the building. the plinth as a public platform, a social platform, a place for gathering, a place for action.

the idea needs to be communicated in a model. a model of which the scale is undefined, up tot 1:1. a model for action.

a design proposal needs to be developed revolving around the idea of the plinth, the foundation, the office and the bank.

a physical object that has value?

contrary to the previous brief this assignment has little reproduction.

the assignment for the social plinth is the first design proposal of the graduation studio.

02 social plinth



Mark Pimlott, Heraklion, Greece, 1994



Philip Wolmuth, The Catholic Evidence Guild. Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, London, 1995



Philip Wolmuth, The Catholic Evidence Guild. Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, London, 1995



model images pinned up in the studio

power relations playing out in the public realm - we are not taking any more loans

IMF international money fund
secure financial stability

leftist alignment with liberals

alternative present
2036, looking back <--
the capitalistic now

great stability
1950 - 1960
sustained growth, equality in inflation
mark, pound, frank, dollar, fixed rate,
therefore a single currency across the world. free trade, U.S. economy stabilising Japan and Europe. planned capitalism,
social democracy

Thatcherism, Reaganism
1970 - 1990
deficit country (the U.S.). American trade deficit. Japan, China, German capitalists rushing to wall street, effectively to reproduce themselves. need for an ideology. financalised globalisation
neo liberalism

collapse
2008
collapse of the house of cards.
state pumping money into the financial sector
socialism + austerity

another now: what could we have done differently to bring down financialised pseudocapitalism and replace it with a truly liberal democratic society?

what would a liberal democratic society look like?
a post capitalist vision

deliveroo, uber drivers

corporations must be top down institutions.
in many cases climbing the ladder is not working with a competitive strategy

what would a high tech corporation with a horizontal hierarchy look like?

world trade share elimination

research

90% of the U.S. stock exchange belongs to 3 supercompanies. that is not a free market? who owns whom? who is deserving and who is not deserving?

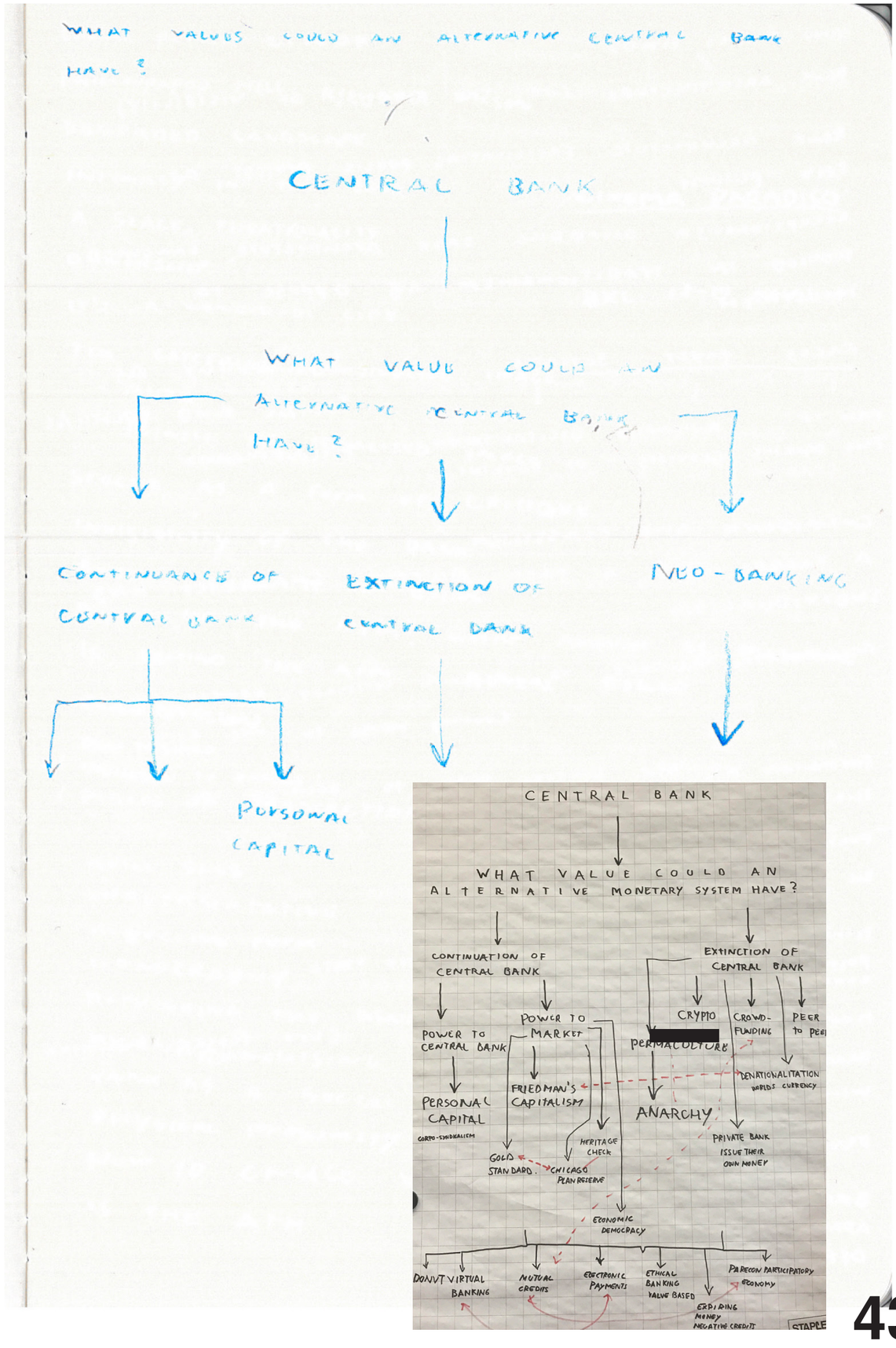
sci-fi visions;
no income tax, 5% of the revenues goes to the state, to society. tax on land-use. banking becomes extinct. commercial banks do not exist. central bank provides each person with a bank account for personal capital (percap) with three funds:
accumulation, legacy and dividend

universal basic dividend as oppose to universal basic income

collectively the question was posed what values an alternative central bank could have.

we investigated this question through a collective study and inventarisation of alternative monetary systems. these alternative monetary systems were linked to two possible scenarios: the first being continuation of the central bank and the second being the extinction of the central bank.

to make the collectively gathered material digestible, I proposed to draw a flow chart to illustrate our ideas as a group.



research lecture

Bank Architecture
(or: The Paradox of Visibility)
Dr. AR Thomas.

bank architecture facilitating public protest at the base, the plinth, of the building

exceptionalism regarding bank architecture, language rooted in traditionalism as oppose to modernism

faces
face
to
face
banking

paper
automated
services

screens
digitalisation
of
banking

technology as social and political phenomeneon

confidence and classicism
a facade like a face dictates character and individualism

architectural grandeur vs discrete intimacy domesticity country house in the city

formation of the central bank is related to the formation of a ation

fortification

big business classicism

technical precision for a bureacratic state
post WWII
consumer banking

money being worked

banking as an experience with consumerist tendencies

banking for everyone



Brian Griffin, The Big Tie series, 1986



Duplex, Curb Teller Machine, 1955



Duplex, Curb Teller Machine, 1955

social plinth: seriality + nostalgia? the ATM

nostalgia for the disappearing objects of reality
objectivity in their depiction (photography):
- elevation
- side view
focusing on the object, the ATM, itself

- scenes
rooting the ATM in the reality of
everyday life

what is the relevance of the ATM as a
physical object in the plinth of the building?

the presence of the ATM in the plinth
enforces a certain social code: maintaining distance, looking away, privacy

ATM, the guardian of cash
externalising the interior to the exterior
a safe standing around unguarded...
capitalist machine, technological
object
the only interaction of the bank's plinth
towards the city

different elements around the ATM. the steps, which put the cash-withdrawer on a pedestal, or a overhang for shelter

the ATM cuts into the plinth of the building in section, how can this action of being-in be used?

each ATM we photographed was being used either prior to or after we took a photograph, our documentation of the ATMs made a lot of people nervous...

ATM, penetrating the facade as a wall
physical object that has value
commercial construction

can we place an ATM in the city through which it enforces a different social code? performativity and performance, action

how does the disappearance of the ATM resonate in Belgium? The Netherlands has the lowest number of cash transactions in eurozone countries...

the ATM

KBC and ING for example have public interiors in the city for cash-withdrawal. an extension of the street into the interior. here, the same social codes apply as on the plinth in the exterior.

how can we enter the world of the bank by using the ATM as an instrument?

a window...

ATM as a signifcant capital investment.
transformative function. never before had electronic equipment been so exposed to the elements.

relationship between network and ATM
i.e. IBM + lloyds Bank

convenience of the ATM changed patterns of consumption.

what is behind the ATM?

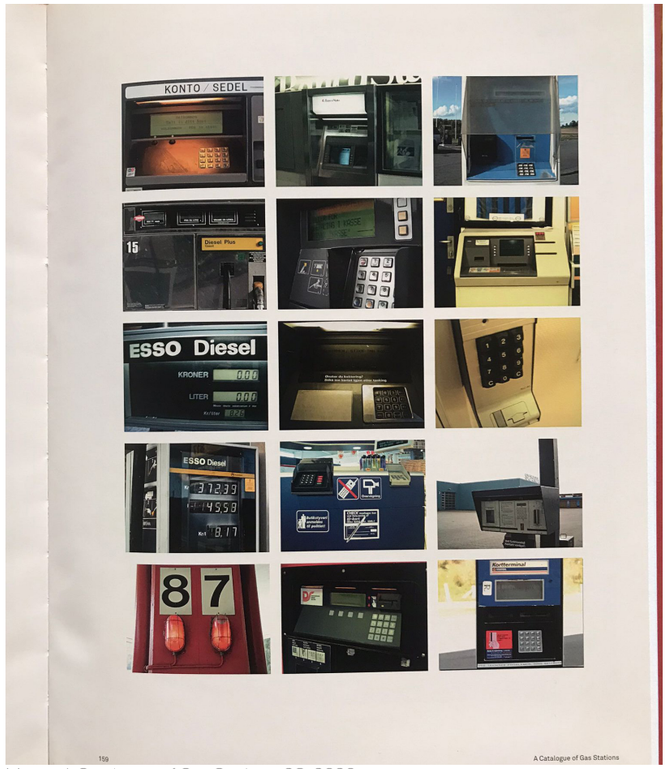
what is the potential of the "opening" of the ATM in the plinth?

how can we internalise the ATM, or
reintroduce the ATM to a public interior?

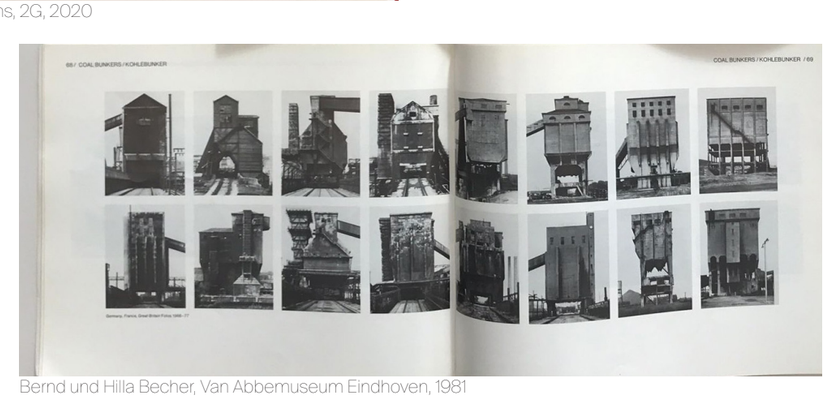
is bringing back the human teller worthwile?

is a personal relation with the bank still valid and existing?

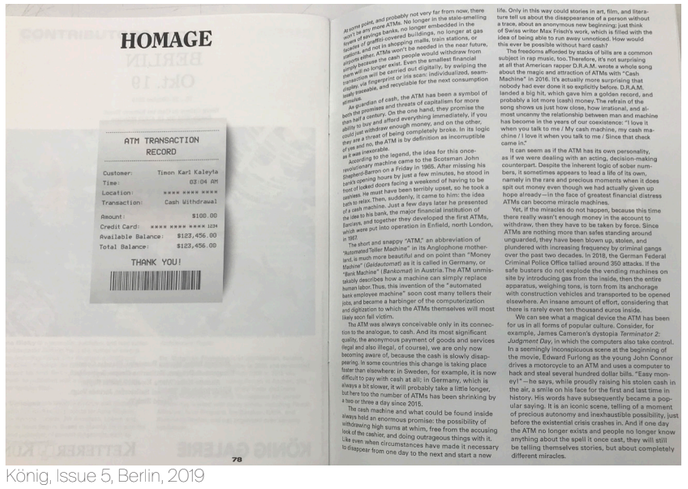
02 Social Plinth is a collaboration w/ Bas Leemans



Muoto, A Catalogue of Gas Stations, 2G, 2020

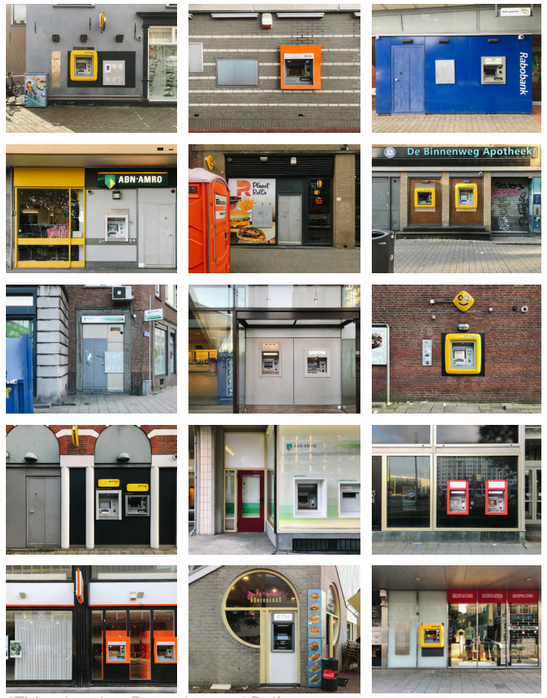


Bernd und Hilla Becher, Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven, 1981



König, Issue 5, Berlin, 2019

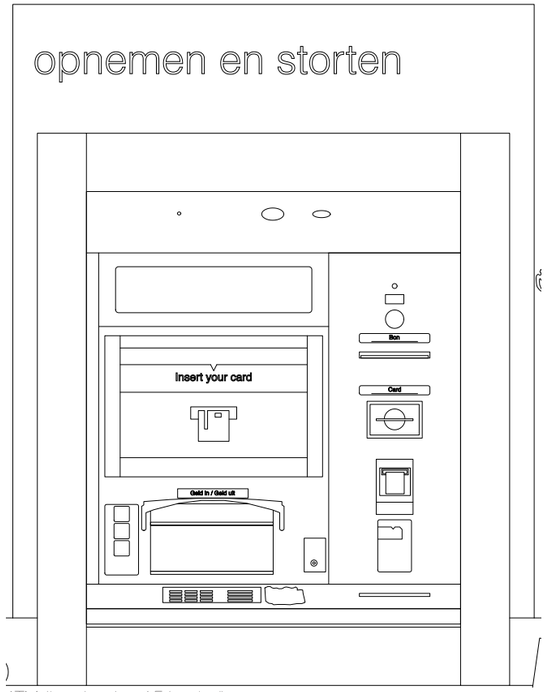
ATM photography



ATMs, elevation, Rotterdam and Delft



ATMs, side view, Rotterdam and Delft



ATM, line drawing, 1:5 (scaled)



crit

we printed our photographic survey on A3s. objective depictions in the form of elevations and side views of the ATM showed a focus on the object itself. furthermore, a number of “scenes”, depicting the queues in front of ATMs rooted these objects in the reality of everyday life. finally, we picked out one ATM and drew it as a line drawing in 1:5 and printed a photograph of this ATM on an A0 in 1:1. in this sense, the physicality of the ATM was present in the room. people attempted to insert their PIN-card to see if the print was actually 1:1. photographing the 1:1 printed ATM with someone next to it created an ambiguous image of what is real and what is not.

general comments from Prof. Daniel Rosbottom:

intimacy in the bank

a stage, theatricality

ownership

the carefully constructed image
- aura
- plinth as idealised image

staging as a form of critique
invisibility of the bank
reveal what it is doing
trangression
invitation to engagage
places of transaction

ATM-specific comments from Prof. Daniel Rosbottom:

metal shed
unrepresentative object
reductive form
iconography
rethinking the bank
disenfranchising
bank as a social space
physical proximity

how to engage with social institutions?

collaboration w/ Bas Leemans



Harry Gruyaert, France. Ile-de-France region. Seine Saint Denis department. La Courneuve. Streetscene, 1985.



American Security and Trust Co. Johnston, Frances Benjamin, 1864-1952, photographer 1901.



Amroscoop, June 1968

CONTANT GELD UIT DE BANKOMAAT

Amroscoop juni 1968

Drie grote bankinstellingen in Nederland, de Algemene Bank Nederland, de Amsterdam-Rotterdam Bank en de Nederlandsche Middenstandsbank, gaan samen een proef nemen met geldautomaten, waarmee hun cliënten — ook buiten de openingsuren van de banken — contant geld kunnen opnemen tot een bedrag van ten hoogste f 500 per 24 uur.

Deze proef zal plaatsvinden op vrij drukbezochte plaatsen in ons land, te weten, bij het N.M.B.-kantoor in Hilversum, een A.B.N.-kantoor in Amsterdam en een AMRO-kantoor in Dordrecht. In elke plaats zullen vooralsnog 500 cliënten van de drie betrokken banken in staat worden gesteld gebruik te maken van deze nieuwe dienst te nemen. De aard van de proefneming brengt mede dat het niet mogelijk zal zijn ook geld op te nemen via een andere Bankomaat dan waarop men is aangesloten.

Het stucht zeer samenen van de automatiseering op bank- of girorekening vereenvoudigt een contactloze in de geldstroom. Was het vroeger zo, dat een deel van het salaris bij bank- of spaarbank werd gestort, tegenwoordig komt veelal het gehele salaris op de rekening en wordt dan voor een deel opgenomen.

De behoefte aan mogelijkheden tot uitbetaling altijd dan sterker. Dit wordt reeds gedeeltelijk ondervangen doordat de banken er op vele plaatsen in het land toe overgingen één avond per week voor het publiek geopend te zijn en door het bestaan van nachtkluizen, waarin kan worden betaald, maar waarmee ook bij alle banken in Nederland kan worden opgenomen. Een Bankomaat behoeft dan een uitbreiding van deze service. De tijdens de normale kantooruren zullen de cliënten die alleen maar geld komen halen, evenmin van de Bankomaat gebruik kunnen maken. Tijdens de kantooruren werkt de Bankomaat dus als een automatische en anoniem kluis.
De bediening van de Bankomaat is eenvoudig en biedt toch de zekerheid dat geen onrechtmatige dingen kunnen voorkomen. Het bedieningspaneel is afgeschermd met een stalen deur, waarvan een gleuf, waarin een gepastiffeerde kaart met pompjaren kan worden gestoken, die de deur slechts dan opent, de deur sluit en opnieuw opent, de deur zich en wordt het bedieningspaneel zichtbaar. Daarop bevindt zich een vijftal knoppen voor het aangeven van het aantal banknotjes dat men wil hebben en een tiental knoppen voor het aantalaan van cijfercodes. De cliënt staat daarop zijn persoonlijke codenummer (een getal van 4 cijfers) in. Dit nummer wordt door de bank in beheer vastgesteld en door de bank in een door de fabriek vervegelde envelope aan de cliënt uitgereikt en is dus alleen aan hem bekend. Alleen als het codegetal klopt met de gegevens van de pasmaart, wordt geld afgegeven.

Ook bij vertlies van de pasmkaart kan de bank er voor zorgen, dat misbruik van geld te kennen kan worden gemaakt. Het laatste van zijn rekening opnemen.

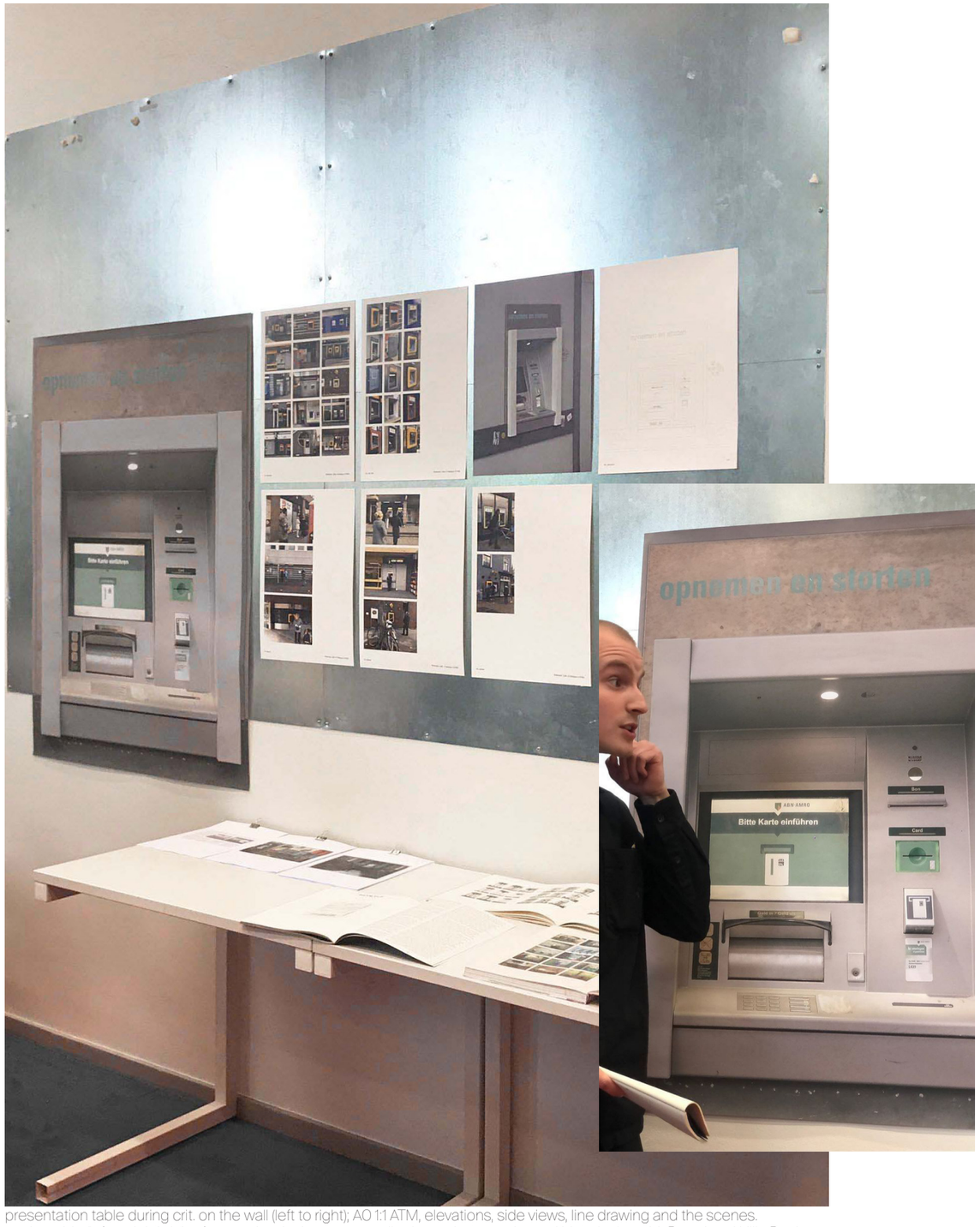
Nadat een cliënt geld heeft opgenomen, wordt de Bankomaat voor een automatisch voor een periode van 24 uur geblokkeerd.

Het apparaat is in principe geschikt voor bijdragen van f 10, f 25 of f 100. Geldafgifte-eenheden voor verschillende coupures kunnen samen op één centrale eenheid worden geschakeld. Tijdens de eerste beperkte proefneming zal alleen met coupures, afgestelt op bijdragen van f 100 worden gewerkt.

Dergelijke Bankomaten zijn reeds in gebruik in Zwitserland, waar vier grote banken gezamenlijk in een zestal steden Bankomaten exploiteren en ook in Zweden bij verschillende banken.

BANKOMAAT GESLOTEN

BANKOMAAT GEOPEND



presentation table during crit. on the wall (left to right); A0 1:1 ATM, elevations, side views, line drawing and the scenes.
on the table (left to right); A4 reference books (newspaper clippings, photographs and historical study), Bernd und Hilla Becher van Abbe Museum Eindhoven, König issue 5 and 2G Muoto.

plinth, interior and exterior. the ATM and the teller. a window... engaging through a place of transaction. an opening.

a potential coexistence of the automated and the personal experience?

the ATM should not go extinct, what if you rely on physicality? what if you do not have a smartphone?

a scenography or theaterset, 1:1 or 1:2, staging as a form of critique

staging the plinth as a social space

do we move (the ATM) to the interior?

how can we internalise the ATM, or reintroduce the ATM to a public interior?

the potential of the opening of the ATM in the plinth

ATMs are still doing the same thing which they did 50 years ago...

can we place an ATM or teller which enforces a different social code? a different interaction...

extension of the street to the interior

three key words:

01 dissection

02 reconfiguration

03 displacement

post-crit

a stage set / scenography of the following objects in 1:10:

a table, rectangular

two chairs, blocks

a counter

a plant

a lamp

some paper

some clutter

some rubbish

a bin

a coat stand

a bench

a freestanding ATM



Lütjens Padmanabhan, Binningen II, 2014, photography Walter Mair



Cortis & Soneregger, Making of 'Büro' (by Thomas Demand, 1995), 2020

making each individual object in brown cardboard in 1:10

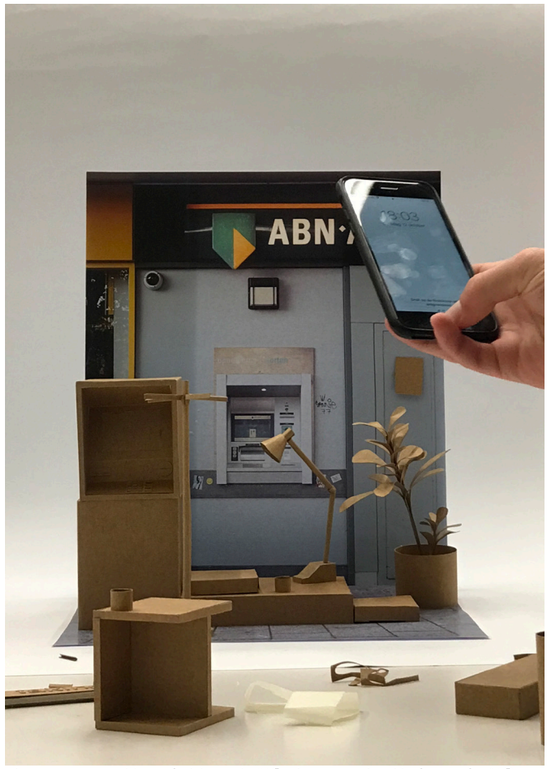
photographing each object individually against a white backdrop

photographing the objects together as a composition against a white backdrop

photographing the objects together as a composition against a 1:10 inkjet print of the ATM and the floor

picking out one 1:10 scene and rebuilding it in 1:1 with brown cardboard, placing it in front of the 1:1 A0 print of the ATM from previous week

1:10 cardboard



above; composition of objects in 1:10 photographed in front of a 1:10 inkjet print of the ATM and the floor. right; scene rebuilt from 1:10 in 1:1 with brown cardboard and 1:1 A0 print of the ATM



1:10 objects in brown cardboard: plant, bin and table



ATM-specific comments and observations from Prof. Daniel Rosbottom, Mark Pimlott, Susanne Pietsch and Sam de Vocht

crit

rethink the place of the ATM

money becoming irrelevant in its physical form

collective bank, talking to people

ATM as a secure thing

one element

a series of elements

treating the ATM as a scenography

mobile object

bank as a scenography

reverse

unpacking the ATM

more than one ATM

the automat

what is happening inside?

other actors

scaling

brief notes vs coins

prolonging the infrastructure of the ATM

voting, a scenography, a set

allowing to make the ATM remain accesible

very broad social infrastructure

economy dependent on change

why do you still use cash? what is real and what is not? multiplying

1:1



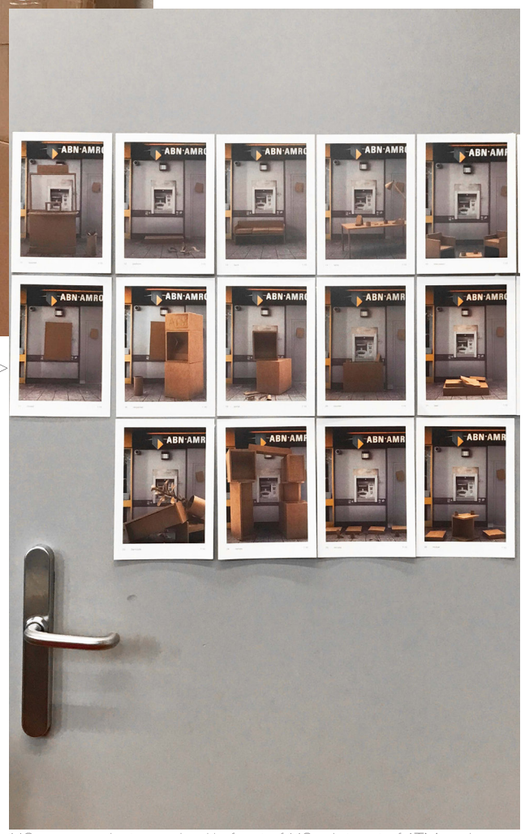
stage set, 1:10



working, 1:10



presentation table during crit. 1:10 models, 1:1 models, 1:1 prints and prints of 1:10 objects and scenes. not enough space for everything, had to move to the door ->



1:10 scenes photographed in front of 1:10 print-out of ATM and pavement

collectively presenting and formalising a statement, a position, what if? a possible outcome of all the research that has been done so far...

action

the notion of action in the interior of the bank, action enforced through the physical proximity of the desks, enforced through the presence of physical objects such as the ATM or the market ticker. action enforced through efficiency of the worker.

protest as a form of action transforms the plinth of the bank to a public, inhabitable, interior

physical and allegorical, violence of the workplace

action- reaction
the bank reacts

representation, reappropiation, reconfiguration, re-something

theory supported by the architectural discipline

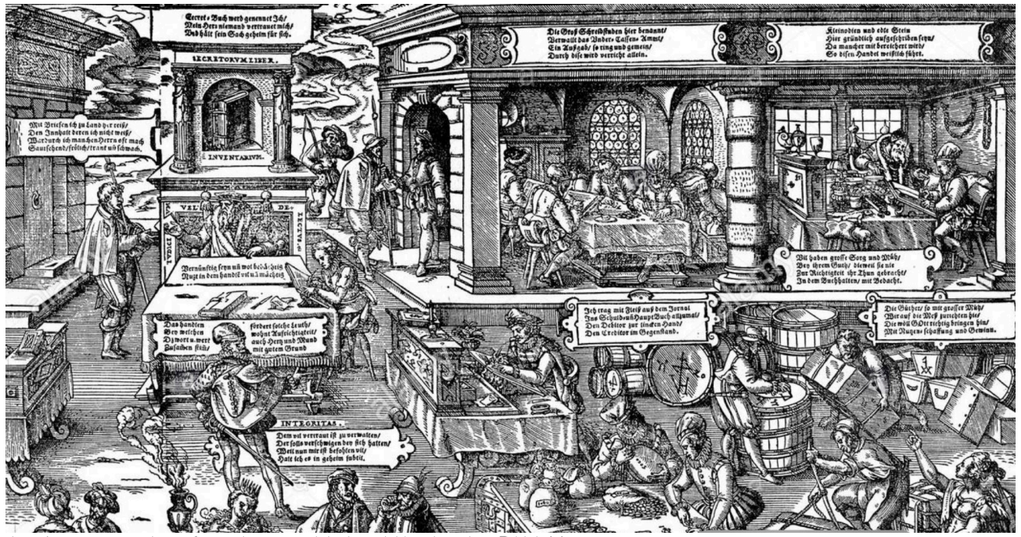
01 problematisation
02 using all tools at hand to answer question formed during problematisation
03 why, for whom and what is the research question relevant

research



crazy wall (group work), individual print-outs assembled on the wall with collective post-its and titles





Jost Amman, woodcut of merchants and their activities, London, British Museum



Adam McKay, The Big Short, 2015

research plan

informed by:

The Changing Workplace
(or: The Political Economy of Flexibility)
Dr. AR Thomas.

DEGW diagram, Shell, Services, Scenery and Sets in the office building
shell lasting 50 years
services 15 years
scenery 5-7 years
Sets Changing every day

dismantling, obsolence, deconstructing

01 Working Together
Osram Headquarters
model 1:20

the perspective the plan and the photograph enforces is literally a theater set

02 Social Plinth
the ATM
model 1:10

ATM as technological object
reveal what it is doing

three key words:

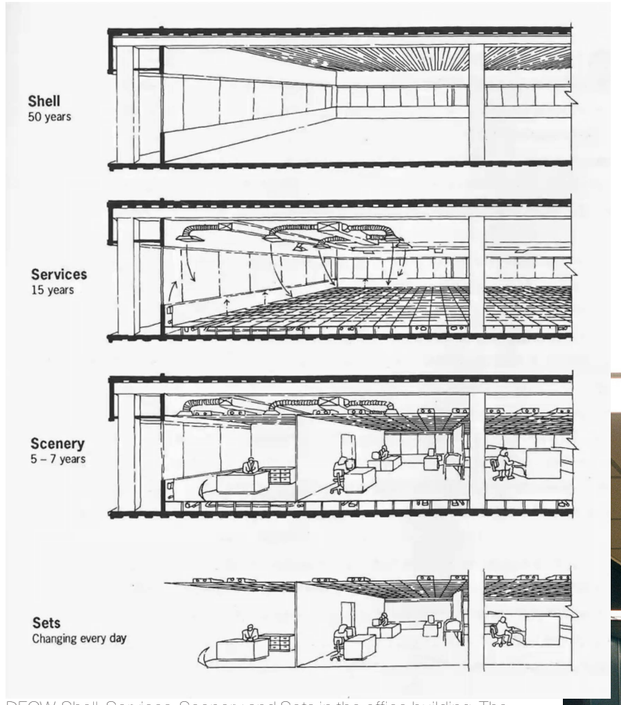
01 dissection
02 reconfiguration
03 displacement



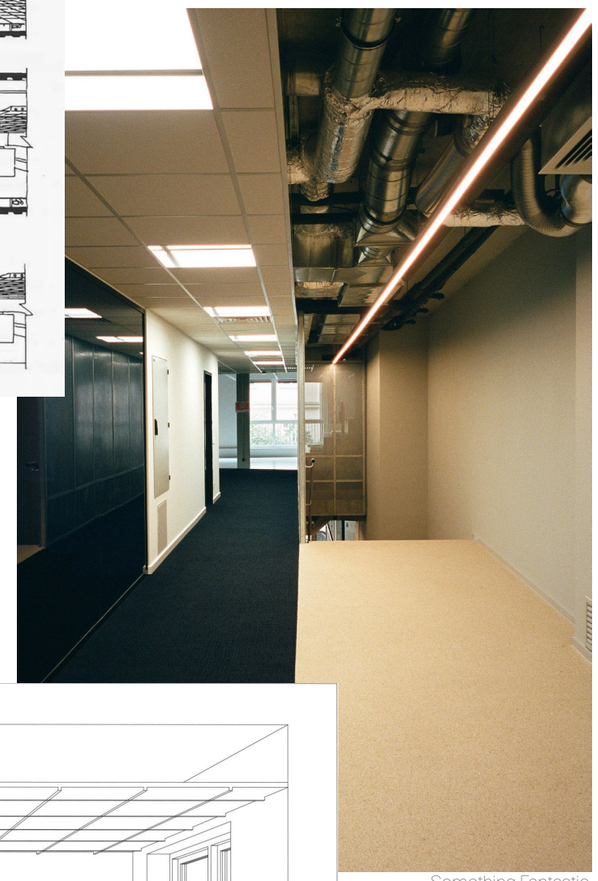
Osram Headquarters, 1:20



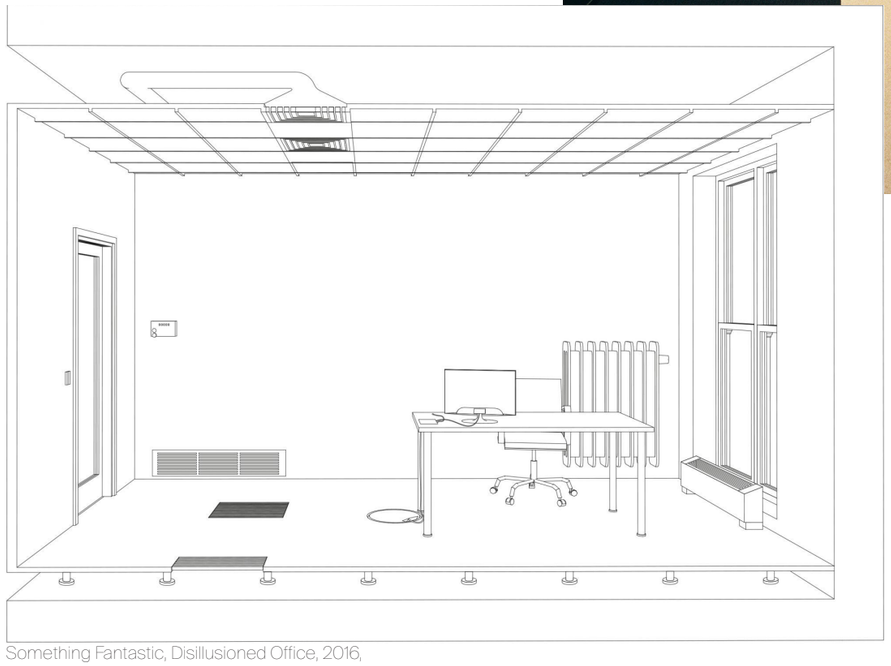
scene: working, 1:10



DEGW, Shell, Services, Scenery and Sets in the office building, The Changing City. London: Bulstrode Press, 1989



Something Fantastic, Disillusioned Office, 2016, photography Zara Pfeifer



Something Fantastic, Disillusioned Office, 2016,

continuing the work on the ATM, we wanted to move from the 1:10 cardboard scale to the 1:1 cardboard scale, thus literally blowing up the objects we made in 1:10 with the same level of detail (or abstraction) in 1:1.

we developed our concept on the following remarks we received during the crit:
- collective bank, talking to people

- mobile object
- unpacking the ATM
- automat
- broad social infrastructure

furthermore, we developed our concept as an assemblage of the following titles we gave to the scenes of the 1:10 models:

- counter
- canopy
- table

in week 1. 7 we dissected the ATM into several parts and displaced the ATM in various ways, which we showed in the 1:10 white space scenes and the 1:10 scenes in front of the ATM.

now, we combine this into a single object...

post-crit



1:10 scene: canopy



1:10 scene: counter



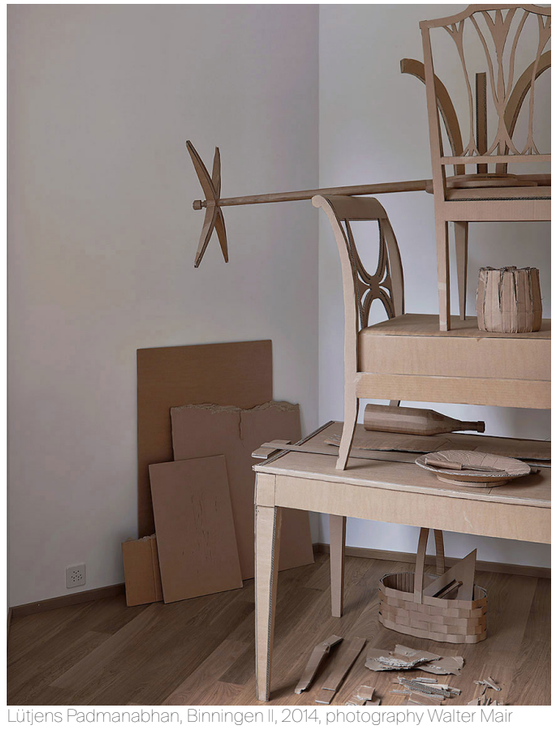
1:10 scene: table

... we reconfigure the ATM into a mobile object, moveable on wheels, a singular object that can unfold and unpack into a collective bank, with the opportunity of talking to people, a broad social infrastructure with a counter, a canopy, chairs and a table.


Tom Sachs, Toyan's Jr, 2001



1:10 scene: discussion


Lütjens Padmanabhan, Binningen II, 2014, photography Walter Mair



Tom Sachs, Nutsy's 1:1 McDonald's, 2002

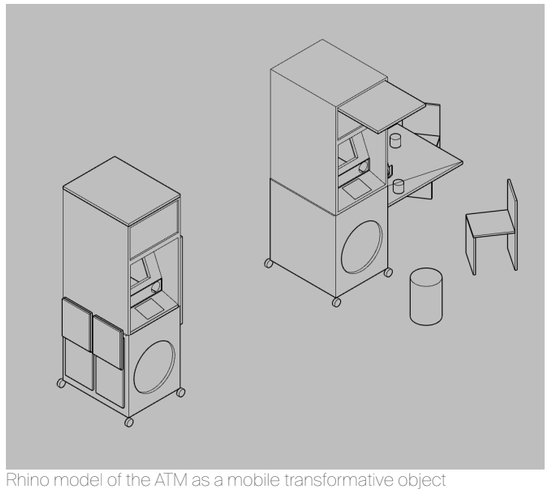
There is a tendency from banks to withdraw from physical space, leaving behind the ATM as the only physical window through which a pedestrian can interact with the bank. Physical money, conversations and transactions are going extinct in the city, thus the ATMS in the street are going extinct as well.

However what if you rely on physicality, physical money, contact and transaction? What if you have not got access to the digital world and just want to talk to someone about your finances? Physical aspects of local economies and community life are left behind. An exclusivity is created.

Can we inverse this? Can the bank regain its physicality through the ATM? Can the ATM be more inclusive, more intimate and stimulate social interaction, kindness, mutual transactions and agreements?

By reconfiguring the action of transaction, we could enforce a different social code. A different interaction through coexstience, by bringing together and reconfiguring existing objects.

The future bank might go out into the world, as a franchise of objects, bringing physical money into the exterior of the city. By doing so it can facilitate the cash economy, essential for big markets, local events, excluded places and communities. Facilitating not only cash as part of a trivial economy, but also offering advice, a conversation and information.



Rhino model of the ATM as a mobile transformative object

1:1 cardboard





1:10 cardboard ATM as a mobile transformative object







What could this reconfiguration of the ATM look like?

One could see this object as a prototype for the alternative social, helpful and friendly ATM, an ATM that is much more than an ATM. Deploying the physical elements of the bank into an urban stage set, reattributing its physicality.

The ATM fulfils its function as usual and is recognisable through its generic form and graphic design. A mobile object, moveable on wheels. A singular object that can unfold and unpack into a collective bank, with the opportunity of talking to people, a broad social infrastructure with a counter, a canopy, chairs and a table.

The ATM should not go extinct.



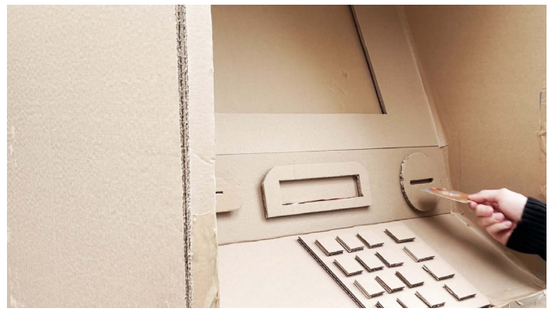






P1 film ATM










https://vimeo.com/640328371

P1

the P1 was a moment to look at the body of work created by the studio since the beginning of the semester. a collection of the work from the first brief, Working Together and the second brief, Social Plinth: the model photographs and the drawings of the office buildings, the social plinth models and research.

during the P1 exhibition collective questions arose such as: what is the banks responsibility in relation to production and waste? what is the meaning of the word national (relating to the National Bank of Belgium) in a city such as Brussels with a highly international culture? what is the institutional image?

our ATM film was on a constant loop on a television screen in the studio. the film had no soundtrack, only the ambient noises of cars, bikes and people passing by in the background. as the film (both its audio and visuals) were on loop playing on this screen in the studio, one could constantly hear these ambient noises of the city during the P1 presentations, which provided a rather comfortable background noise during the day.

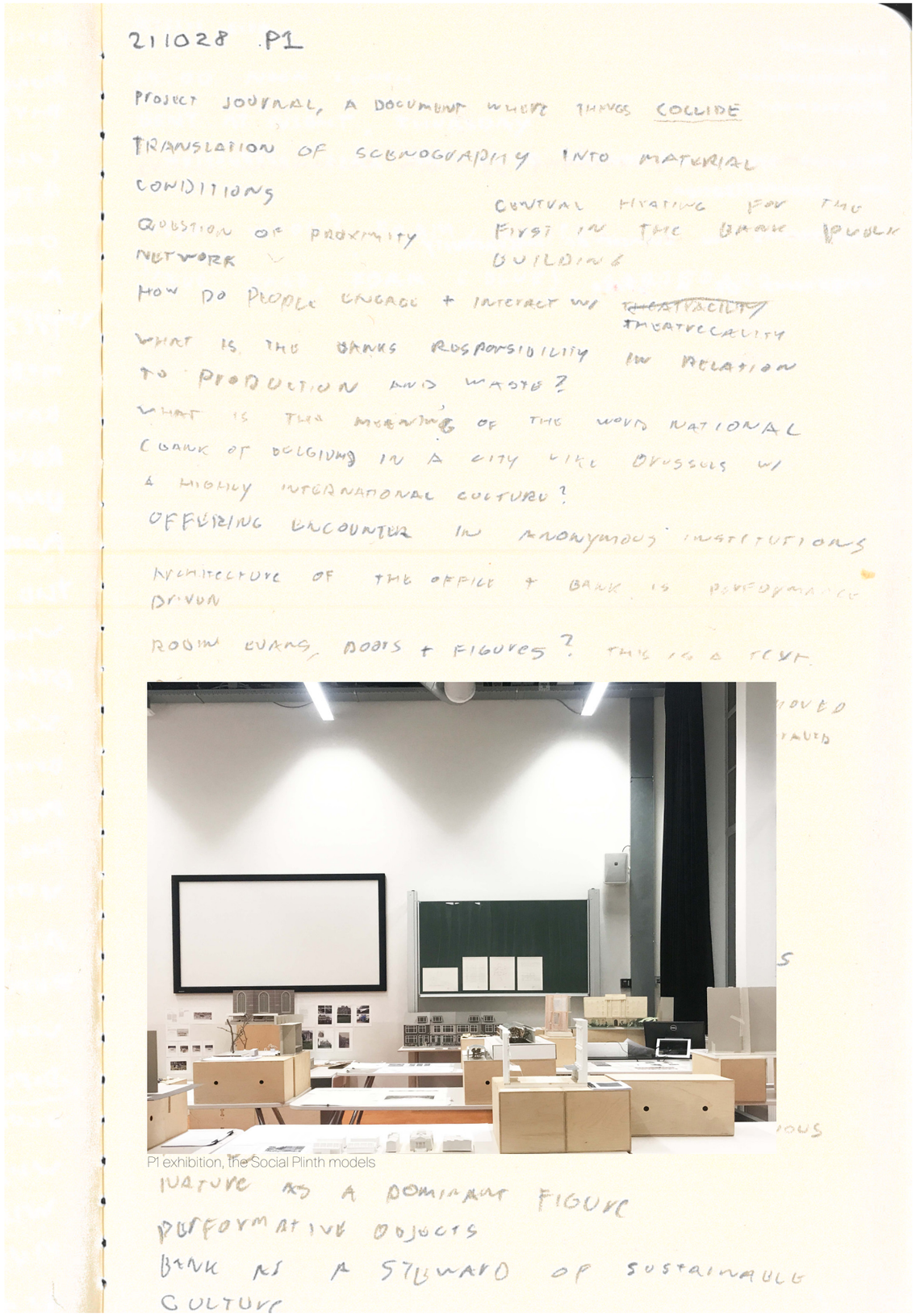
exhibition

dissection
reconfiguration
displacement
incorporating an element of interactivity
components of a space
exploring systems, objects and structures derived from-
mass production and standardisation
performative objects
play and politics are perhaps not so far removed

above the key notions that informed the base for the further development of the research plan after the P1.



P1 exhibition, display of the work on the ATM. starting with the photographic research on the left, the 1:10 models and photography in the middle and on the far right the 1:1 ATM . the film on loop on the screen in the middle.



P1 exhibition, the Social Plinth models

Standardisation and Reconfiguration

research plan

The Question of Building Services in the Office Interior

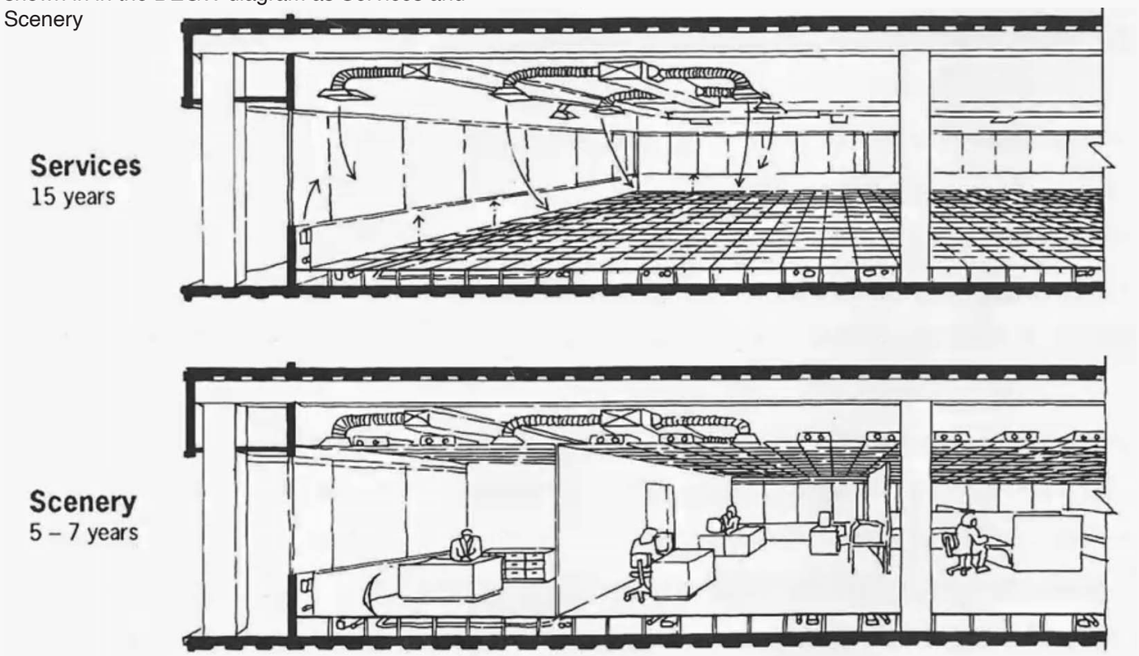
In this research plan I would like to construct a proposal based around the notion of taking a standardised building element, exploring its reconfiguration through dissection and displacement and ultimately incorporating an element of interactivity.

This research aims to review a number of case studies to ground and address the technical developments which altered plan and section of the larger-scale office building, the notion of control as a concept in relation to building services and ultimately a critical positioning of building services related to existing building transformation in contemporary times, by contemporary practices, related to notions of dissection, displacement and reconfiguration.

These subjects are considered to formulate an answer to the question of how one can reconfigure the standardised elements of technical services. The standardised elements being machines, ducts, shafts, cables, lights, ceiling- and floor tiles, essentially the elements shown in in the DEGW diagram as Services and Scenery

How can one reconfigure the standardised elements of technical services as an active instrument in the “exposed” interior of the office? What is the potential of these standardised building components when one does not hide them behind a suspended ceiling or beneath a raised floor? What if we dismantle, deconstruct and reconfigure the obsolete technical elements of an existing bank building? Can we incorporate an element of interactivity to this rigid and modular system of technical services? What happens when these elements are displaced (fig. 10)?

The implications of this research on the design proposal relate to how one can use the standardised elements of technical services not only as a means for climatic regulation but also as an active instrument in the exposed interior of a contemporary office building. This physical manifestation of technical services in the interior will relate to notions of dissection, reconfiguration and displacement.



DEGW, Shell, Services, Scenery and Sets in the office building, The Changing City. London: Bulstrode Press, 1989



Edwin Zwakman, Room to Grow, 2014



Andreas Geffeler, Untitled, Ceiling 3, Düsseldorf, 2007, Photographic edit of a deconstructed suspended ceiling

Charlotte Posenenske, Deutsche Bank, 1989

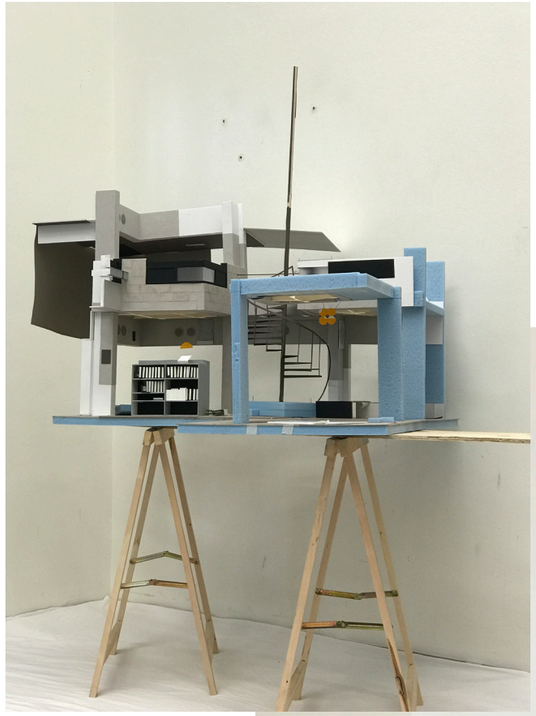


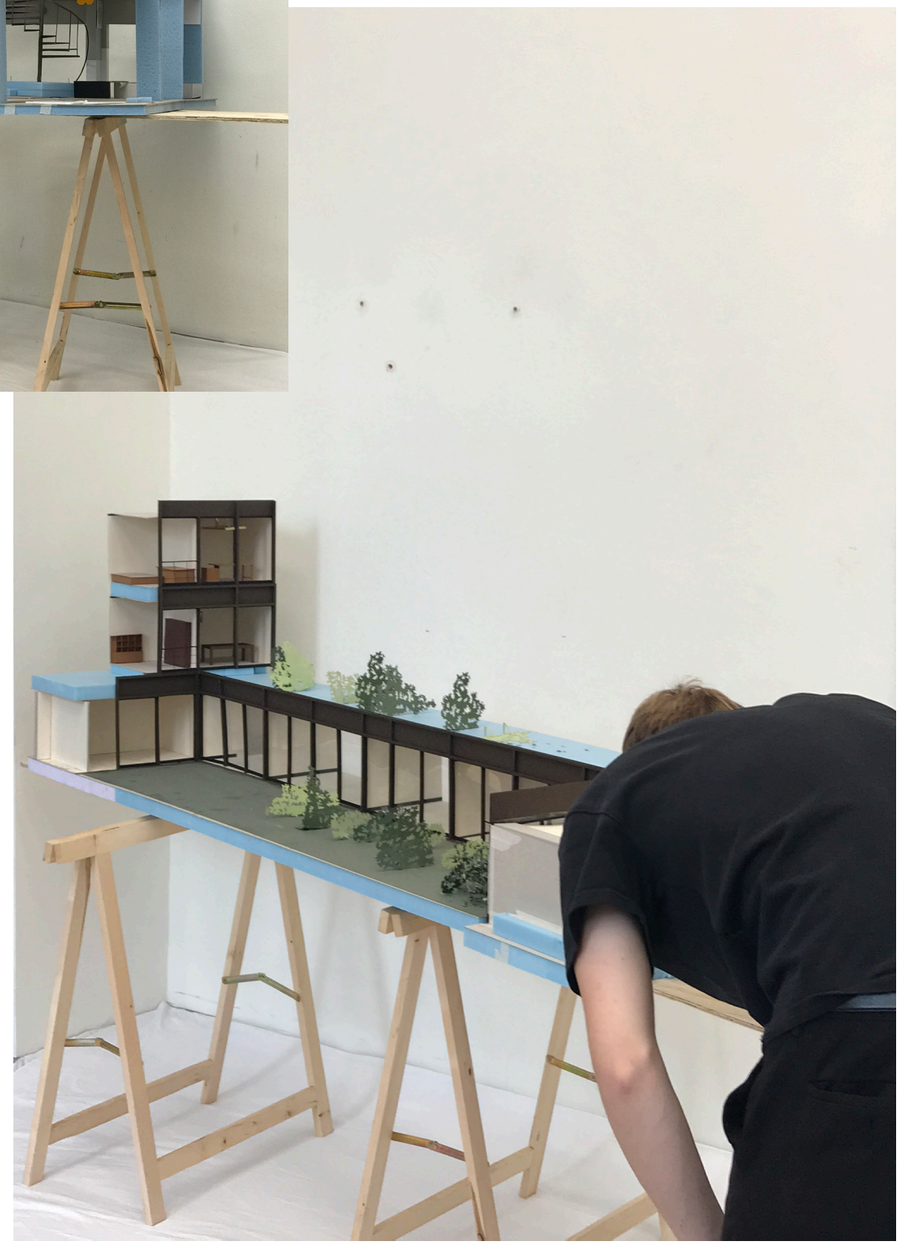


Charlotte Posenenske, Series DW, performance

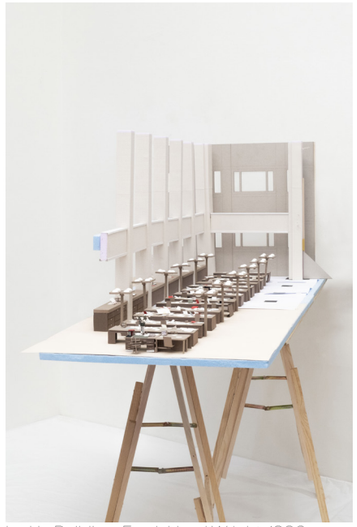
documenting the Working Together models as objects w/ Bas Leemans

model photography









Larkin Building, Frank Lloyd Wright, 1906, Buffalo, 1:20



Union Carbide, SOM, 1960, New York, 1:20



Centraal Beheer, Herman Hertzberger, 1972, Apeldoorn, 1:10



National Social Insurance Board, Sigurd Lewerentz, 1930, Stockholm, 1:10



Osram Headquarters, Walter Henn, 1965, Munich, 1:20



Willis, Faber & Dumas Headquarters, Foster + Partners, 1975, Ipswich, 1:10



Johnson Wax Headquarters, Frank Lloyd Wright, 1939, Racine, Wisconcin, 1:20



Ford Foundation, Roche-Dinkeloo, 1967, New York, 1:20



Osram Headquarters, Walter Henn, 1965, Munich, furniture 1:20

Future Bank

MSc3 AR3AI100 Week 2.1-2.3



Belgian National Bank. View towards Saint Michael and Gudula Cathedral, 2021. Mark Pimlott

City Bank

Having begun to address some particular issues which arise from the brief for the transformation of the National Bank: the forms and histories of the workspace and the idea of the social plinth, we will now turn our attention to the building itself and its situation within Brussels. The façade of the National Bank on the Boulevard de Berlaimont is a continuous colonnade, nearly 200m long, an attenuated temple with little to no hierarchy. It is set against a vast, anonymous street, straightened in relation to the building and the infrastructure below and with a similar sense of disdain for the scale of a human, representing the building's current position as an institution, an entity impossible to either deny or to penetrate. The facades on Rue de la Banque are still more anonymous, apparently undifferentiated, suggesting only that some sort of bureaucratic or administrative labour goes on within. A major part of the facade to Rue du Bois Sauvage, on the other hand, is specific. Although its evocation of a palace in a grand manner may not be particularly inviting to everyman, that same everyman might at least have an idea of significant spaces within: entrances, staircases, salons, inner sanctums. This representation of the Bank also gives a sense that the triangular site on which it sits was once an aggregation of individual building blocks, set within a dense urban grain, before their remnants were sublimated within its present, fortress-like condition. Around it, other institutions are gathered, within a part of Brussels which is at an intersection, in section, of the highly differentiated urban conditions that constitute the city, but which is nonetheless bereft of many of the qualities that exemplify it. Therefore, multiple images, suggestions, and relations constitute the 'identity' of the National Bank in the City of Brussels. Together, they might be considered to invoke the several ideas, which the Bank has wished to communicate about itself to the city and the nation over the course of its history: that it is a serious institution, opaque in its operations but with connections to elites and traditions, which is working hard and anonymously on behalf of the State, and by extension, its citizens. The collage of the building exemplifies this sense of aloofness, assisted by the disconnectedness of each of the three sides of the sites: a virtue, one might say, of the triangular block that has been in place for a very long time. But are the fictions of this arrangement and the distribution of its various identities relevant in the present, and how might it be adjusted or transformed to indicate a new reality and a new future for the Bank, at the centre of a transformed economy?

If one is able to penetrate beyond the security lines, which mark the limits of possible engagement for most of the public, into the block's interior, then one discovers a complex, aggregated structure in both plan and section, a labyrinthine and heterogeneous architecture that represents the multiple tasks and hierarchies that the Bank historically developed and depended upon. Much of this complexity and many of the spaces that accommodated are now redundant and perhaps irrelevant to the issues of today. Although the Bank project is ostensibly concerned with the consolidation of its Brussels workforce within a single site, the question of how 1500 people might usefully inhabit 90,000m2 of built space remains an open one.

To begin to unpack these and other questions, which will arise, and in preparation for your own projected interventions, this brief asks you to study the National Bank as a history, as-built form, as a working entity and as a place in the city. Working at many scales, you will work with models and model photographs, drawings, discussions and photographic imagery, both made and collected. Creating studio research material, embodying several themes and chapters, you will collectively reflect upon it as the first step towards making an individual proposition in response to it. The outcomes will be:

- a durable and adaptable working site model, constructed at an appropriate scale so that parts can be added or removed;
- a model of the Bank's mass and situation in the City, made so that you can insert individual propositions;
- a set of clarified architectural drawings of the Bank and its historical layers
- a set of drawings and imagery which situates the Bank within the City
- an archive of research material which describes the Bank's development and documents its role in the City and the Nation.

This material can be commenced prior to the visit to the site. Its precise forms are left open, for you as a studio to define. Alongside it, you should complete the drawings of bank references, learning from the techniques previously developed in the office references and focusing on the forms and manner of public representation and public space. The envisaged timescale of this project is 3 weeks.

Future Bank

MSc3 AR3AI100 Week 2.1-2.3



Rue du Bois Sauvage / Wildewoudstraat, 2021. Mark Pimlott

Interiors
Buildings
Cities

Palace

03 city bank

models 1:200 / 1:500

what is the appropiate material for which scale?

do we want to extend a previously made 1:500 wooden model?

how can these models be workable and a daptable?

wood as a material is heavy, however it is sturdy
foam as a material is soft, more sculptable, however it is not necessarily sturdy.

grey cardboard 1:200, yellow foam 1:500

grey painted foam?

two grey models of a grey city

a combination of different techniques;

foamcutting by hand, CNC cutting foam painting foam

lasercutting cardboard, handcutting cardboard, papercutting grey paper



design the models in 3D digitally before going directly to the physical, both for 1:500 and 1:200

1:500 digital 3d model with slope and masses of the buildings
1:200 digital 3d model with facades drawn on the masses and the slope

we need to define a zero point for the 1:200 model, so each facade can stand on its own and we make the slope of the street out of grey card inbetween

1:500 slope is made with

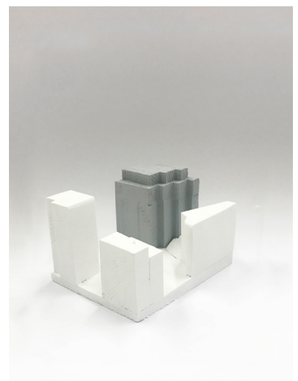


grey cardboard, 1:500

grey cardboard, 1:200



foam painted, 1:500



wood painted, 1:500



white papercut, 1:500

Brussels Silversquare

Before the collective visit to The National Bank of Belgium..

we visited Silversquare, a aoworking space in the Shell Building designed by Alexis Dumont and Marcel van Goethem. van Goethem also designed the National Bank of Belgium. Silversquare is curated by Maniera, a gallery in Brussels specialised in editions of objects and furniture drawn by artists and architects.

Objects, interiors, textiles by:

Felt, Piovenefabi, Doorzon, Theo de Meyer, Christoph Hefti, Studio Verter, JDVIV, Jo Taillieu, Maxime Prananto, Richard Venlet, Stéphane Barbier Bouvet,

at Cantersteen 47, right next to the central station, very closeby to the National Bank of Belgium

an open floor with desks in different shapes and forms, spaces and hallways divided by steel profile boxes made for meeting rooms or a different, calmer, atmosphere for working, exposed ceilings, round ducts as lamps, suspended ceiling panels under a 45 degree angle.



desk by Jo Taillieu



meeting room boxes made of steel profiles by Doorzon



reception desk with non-structural steel column hiding electrical installations

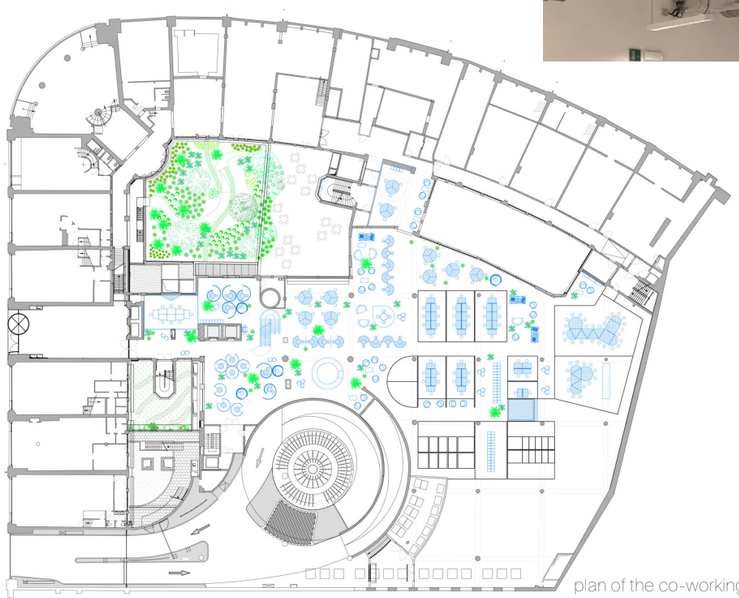
round duct lamp by Theo de Meyer



suspended ceiling in the meeting room boxes where the acoustic panels have been placed under a 45 degree angle



exposed suspended ceiling



plan of the co-working layout by Doorzon

collective studio visit to the National Bank of Belgium

insane sequence of spaces. starting from the basement on the rear side of the street, going down with an escalator into a postmodern palace with mirrors and fish pools, then a tiled tunnel leading us to the basement of the bank where e-waste is gathered and general waste is processed, furniture is stored, the whole nerve system of the building exposed on the ceiling.

going up.. through high security and entering the banking hall. bright, light and undefined

proceeding to the office spaces, each floor different colors and different materials. hardware, scanners, A4 paper prints and no cable management as unifying elements.

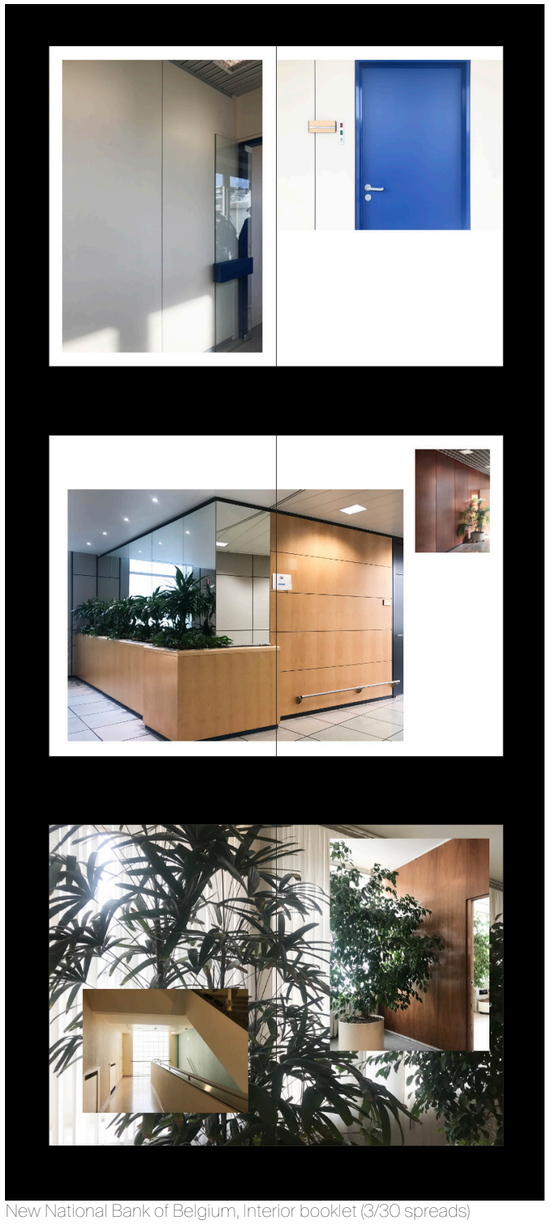
finally entering the palace. abandoned, the ruin in the bank

the visit to the interior of New National Bank as a visual overload

over 150 photographs were shot on my iPhone

the only way I could gather this material was in a book with a layout that fitted this sequence of radically different spaces. a reference was the lay-out of the spreads in Wolfgang Tillmans' his books, where he consciously overlays his images. I followed this same strategy in my booklet of the interior.

Brussels NBB interior



New National Bank of Belgium, Interior booklet (3/30 spreads)



Wolfgang Tillmans, Neue Welt, 2012, Taschen



National Bank of Belgium, banking hall, own photograph



Andreas Gehrke, Der Spiegel, 1995 - 2011,



National Bank of Belgium, office space with suspended ceiling, own photo-

the site around the National Bank of Belgium was, on this particular day, exceptionally empty. the windows on the buildings appeared black, construction and new developments are going on directly around the building block of the bank. the Pacheco parking is a site for new developements and as of now a platform for nothingness and a wasteland around it. the travertine, aluminium and concrete makes the site feel impenetrable and inhuman, made for cars and passing by, described by Ballard in his 1974 novel Concrete Island.

These impressions were radically different to those two days before in interior of the bank, which is why I gathered this photographic material of the site and exterior in a different way, with a different layout specifically, referencing the strict layout of the 2007 publication “Rotterdam” from Bas Princen.



J.G. Ballard, Concrete Island, 1974


Bas Princen, Rotterdam, 2007, Witte de With Publishers

Brussels NBB exterior


New National Bank of Belgium, Exterior booklet (3/14 spreads)


platform on top of the Pacheco parking, offering a view of the city in abstract, own photograph


corner of the National Bank of Belgium, own photograph

Brussels



Marinus van Reymerswale, after Quinten Metsys, The Banker and his Wife. 1539. Oil on panel (photograph).



Thomas Rawlandson, The Great Hall, Bank of England, 1808. Etching (detail photograph).



National Bank of Belgium, 1:200 model in white cardboard.



National Bank of Belgium, 1:200 model in white cardboard.

Brussels
Maniera
Bozar



Maniera, gallery view, 1B, a Bar by Koenraad Dedobbeleer. Blue powder-coated lamp made of 5 steel tubes (left). two round mirrors, moveable on hinges (right).





Maniera, office view. Aluminium window frames, Bas Princen photograph (Times Square), steel table with cast resin top from Office KGDVS and silver curtain

Maniera, gallery view, lamp pendant made of four steel elbow tubes



Victor Horta, Bozar, 1928, basement, double-curved walkway around the large concert hall



Brussels, view from the 5th floor of the Royal Library of Belgium

1:200 model



future situation in front of, on and around the Pacheco parking with new developments by Max Dudler + Jasper Eyers

to plan the 1:200 model, which we collectively decided to make in grey cardboard, we divided the building blocks within the outline of our 1:200 model.

each person responsible for a building block, sometimes one building, sometimes several

modelling this building block in Rhino with 1mm cardboard for lasercut

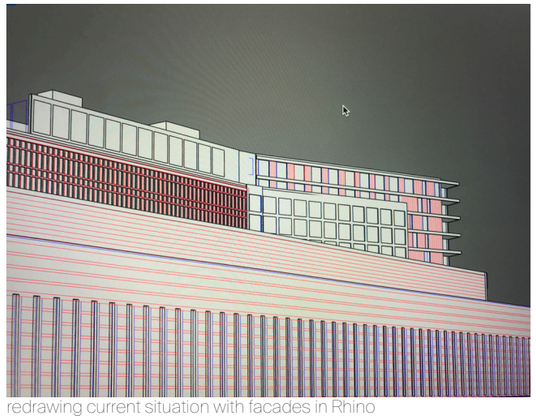
drawing the facades of the building block for papercut

a combination of two precise techniques

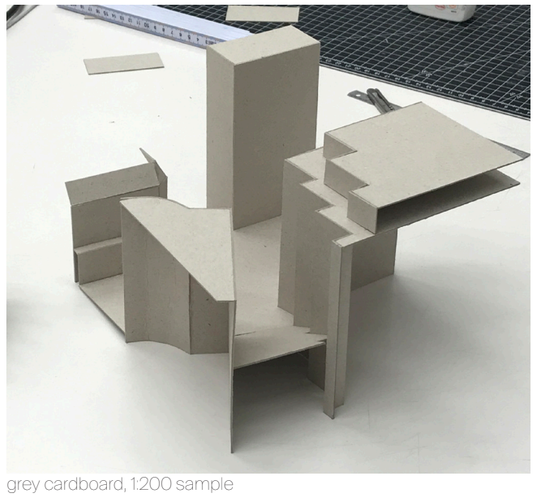
I modelled the pacheco parking block next to The National Bank of Belgium with apartment and offices behind it and new developments being inserted. The building on top of the Pacheco parking has been demolished, photographed (and photoshopped after) during its demolition by Filip Dujardin. This completely demolished building will be replaced by an identical volume by Max Dudler. The new developments shown above will house apartments, commerce and a school, designed by Jasper Eyers + Max Dudler.



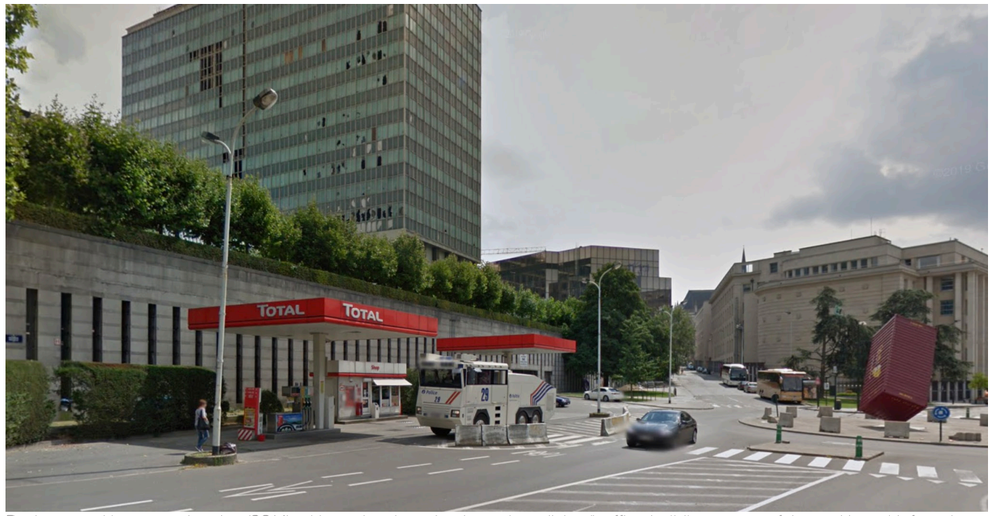
Pacheco parking, current situation, 2021, photograph Bas Leemans



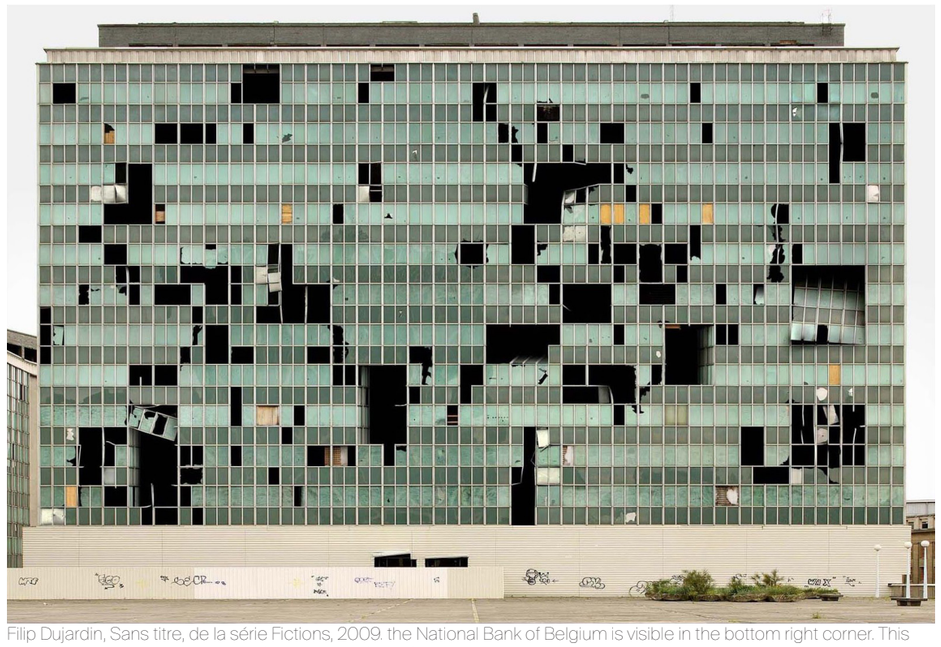
redrawing current situation with facades in Rhino



grey cardboard, 1:200 sample



Pacheco parking, past situation (2014), with total tank station (now demolished), office building on top of the parking with facade panels being removed (now demolished), police station with mirror facade (now a building development), the National Bank of Belgium on the right and a Luc Deleu container sculpture in the middle of the roundabout



Filip Dujardin, Sans titre, de la série Fictions, 2009. the National Bank of Belgium is visible in the bottom right corner. This photograph was taken on the platform on top of the Pacheco parking.

drawing

Sveriges Riksbank

location: Stockholm, Sweden
year: 1975
gross area: 17 000 m2

architect: Peter Celsing

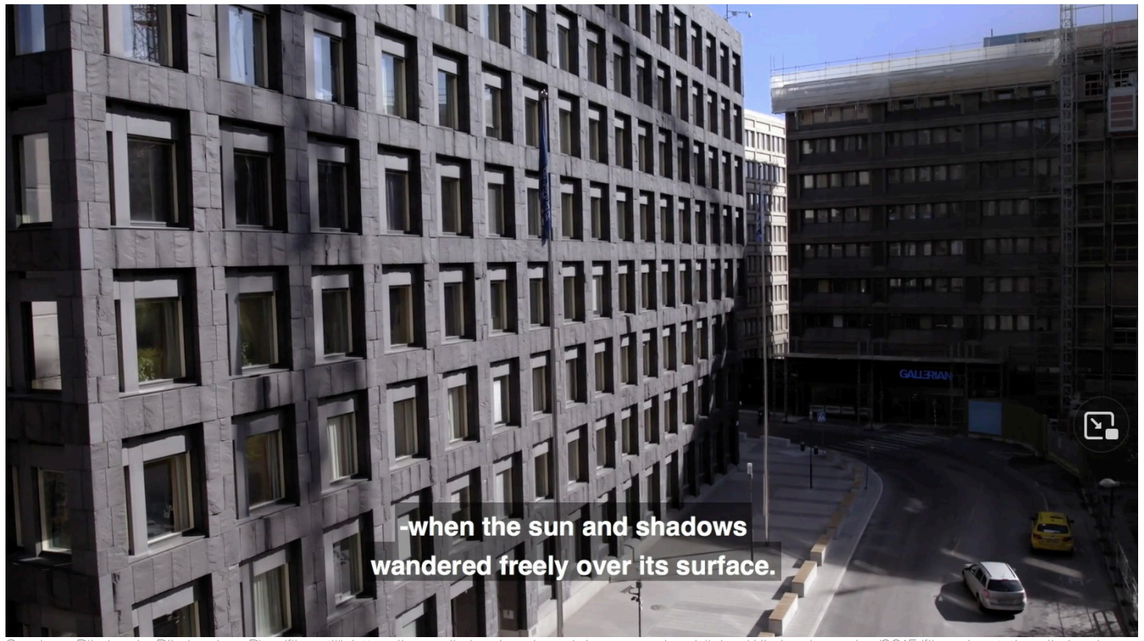
drawing collaboration with Bas Leemans



Sveriges Riksbank, site plan



(left to right) Peter Celsing: The Facade is the Meeting between Outside and Inside, Arkkitehtuurimuseo Helsinki 1992 (book). Ground floor plan 1:300, office floor plan 1:300, South elevation 1:300.

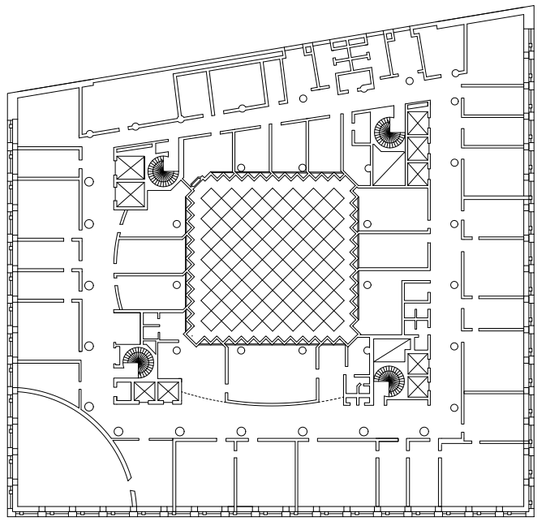


Sveriges Riksbank, Riksbanken Play (film still), https://www.riksbank.se/en-gb/press-and-published/riksbanken-play/2015/film-about-the-riksbank-building/

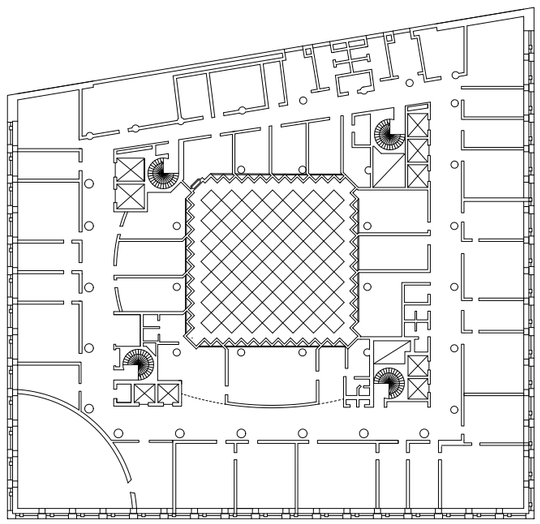


Sveriges Riksbank, Riksbanken Play (film still), https://www.riksbank.se/en-gb/press-and-published/riksbanken-play/2015/film-about-the-riksbank-building/

drawing



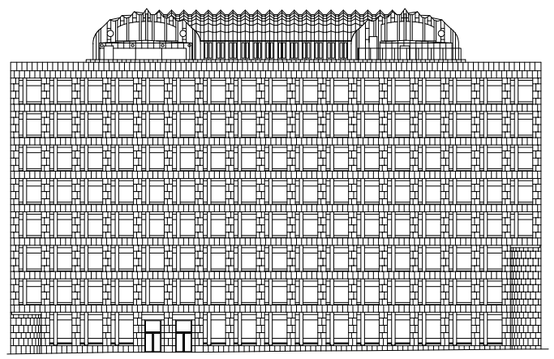
ground floor plan, 1:200, 50% scaled



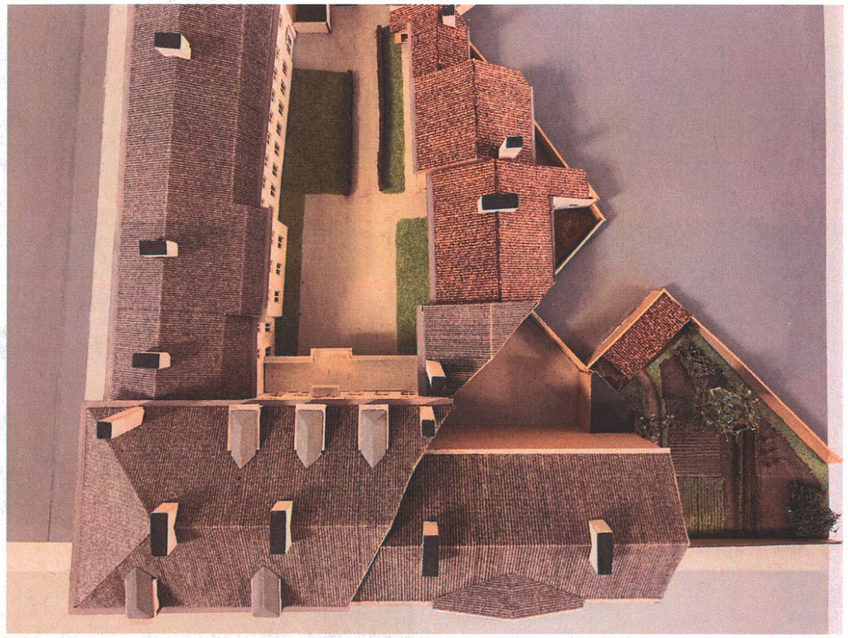
typical office floor plan, 1:200, 50% scaled



Caruso St. John, Bremer Landesbank Headquarters



south elevation, 1:200, 50% scaled



Model of early National Bank of Belgium on project site. Photo Mark Pimlott

voices as well as to speak? How can it be seen to set an example, through its own form, that others can follow?

The following pages offer you a summarised version of the programmatic brief which the Bank itself has proposed for its redevelopment (the full version is available for you to study in detail as necessary). Having looked carefully at the building of the existing Bank, its place in the city and the complex history of that city, this brief asks you to begin to transform your observations and the thoughts that emerge from them into a proposition. In developing your attitude to the project, one starting point will be to consider and critique this brief, deciding for yourself whether it appropriately addresses the challenges facing the Future Bank and relating it to the opportunities and issues presented by the building complex as it exists. You should consider the scales at which the Bank might have influence: not only its immediate surroundings and its place within the wider city, but also the ways in which its role and function relates to that of other National Banks and the European Central Bank; a transformation in Europe's structure of finance and governance that have already begun to have a fundamental effect upon what it is and does. Such considerations will allow you to individually explore how a Future Bank might be able to address the wider challenges we all face: political, environmental, cultural and societal.

The medium for your exploration will be architecture. By the conclusion of the MSc3 course, we will expect each of you to have developed an architectural strategy for the Bank, which can embody your ideas, address the brief as it is defined, or redefined, by you individually. Your proposal should consider the ways in which this can be integrated into the existing building fabric and can address the surrounding city. You will be able to articulate and advocate your project through drawings, models and words, making appropriate use of your research and the collective resources prepared by the studio. This will allow you to demonstrate a solid foundation and well-understood strategy for further design work in the MSc4 course. As a minimum, this should include a set of plans and sections at minimum 1:500 scale and accompanying models which describe the resulting form and clearly indicate what you have added or taken away.

This brief is not simply about making a bank building but also about building a bank: one that understands its role and responsibilities at many scales and is able to articulate it in physical terms; which represents itself openly and transparently; which can demonstrate that it understands the value of things; which is genuinely public, and which presents itself not as an upholder of a failed status quo but as an agent of necessary change.

Future Bank

MSc3 AR3AI100 Week 2.4-2.10



Photograph of room with models, of the National Theatre, South Bank, London, with added autograph remarque perspective drawing, 1991, Sir Denys Lasdun RA (1914 - 2001)

Bank Building

As we have collectively experienced, the National Bank of Belgium is an accreted, conglomerate form, the complex outcome of many plans, large and small, grandiose and expedient. Together these have combined to create an almost impenetrable, labyrinthine structure. One might understand this as a direct, spatial translation of the many hierarchies and segregations that historically defined both its working processes and the relations between its employees. In some ways, we might also imagine it as a representation of the financial system itself. Since the first buildings of the bank appeared on the site, this has become ever more complex and increasingly challenging to understand and control. The inherent dangers of the ever more tenuous grasp, which institutions like National Banks have managed to maintain on the proliferating and increasingly abstracted mechanisms of the market, are demonstrated in the disastrous effects of the 2008 financial crash on the lives of ordinary people and since by new threats, such as the rise in cryptocurrencies and the inability of governments to adequately control tax or address the global climate emergency.

Our project takes as its starting point the premise that all this is understood. A bank has always been a place to store valuable things, but now it must demonstrate that it knows what needs to be valued. For us then, the opportunity to physically remake the Bank is seen as a means to clarify and transform it into an open, transparent and publicly engaged institution, which can speak and listen to all parts of society, as well as itself. We propose that its physical, material character – its architecture – has agency in re-understanding its role as a catalyst. One that can assist in the enormous challenge of profoundly reshaping the economy, redefining society's attitude to the expenditure of resources and the questions of fairness that must underpin such a transformation.

The processes and thinking that reshape this reinvented Bank will have as much bearing on the project's success as the final forms and spaces. Questions abound: What will be kept? What can or should be taken away? What will happen to the materials that are no longer needed? What new materials are necessary, and what is their embodied footprint? The Future Bank should understand the environmental impact of its consumption and retention of resources.

In its redefined form, it will need to more fully address people and nature, as well as *things*. How, for example, will it define a better working environment, one that encourages innovative and open thinking across a spectrum of expertise? How will it represent and communicate its ideas and the necessary changes in systems of regulations, not only to the network of financial institutions of which it is a component, but also to wider society, its own government and those of other nations, as well as at the level of the individual? How will the new relationships it fosters allow the Bank to listen to those many

Interiors
Buildings
Cities

Palace

ADJUST / REMOVE / ADD.

NATIONAL BANK OF BELGIUM SUMMARY OF PROGRAMMATIC COMPETITION BRIEF

FUNCTION	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL AREA / m2	BREAKDOWN	NOTES
OFFICE				
	Typical	22500	15m2 per person of which 3m2 per person is collective, including coffee corner / printing / kitchenette / lockers.	1500 WP (1700 workers / flex working so lockers and storage) -to be worked out by students in detail. 300 WP should be able to be separated and be flexible and easily rented out
	Specific	300	The area is unspecified. The 300m2 total is based on 15m2 for the 85 people specified. However as there are specific offices there is some flexibility in this.	85 WP OFFICE incorporating: Reception with workspace for 3 staff / waiting space for 6 persons / coffee corner / toilets / small kitchen / lounge for informal discussions
	Senior Managers	400	6x30 m2 senior managers offices + 100m2 board room + 40m2 dining room + 2x30m2 meeting rooms + 20m2 coffee corner	6 senior managers offices / board room for 30 participants / dining room for 10 / 2 small meeting rooms / coffee corner
	HR	120		6 offices space / meeting room 10 people / archive
	Trading Hall	240		Rooms with screens from which traders can follow the Market
	Crisis Centre (high security)	150		Crisis / Data Centre / Control Room / meeting room for 15 people
	Reception	25		
	Foyer			
	Auditorium			250 seat auditorium including projection room, Positioned in order to be able to independently function
	Finishing Kitchen			catering for 300 people
	VIP Meeting			Salon for 8 people
	Press Room			20 Seats
	Wardrobe			200 people
	Central Meeting Rooms			4x5person, 4x12 person, 3x20 person, 1x35 person, 1x50 person, 1x100 person
PUBLIC FUNCTIONS				
	Entrance Hall(s)			Arrival of visitors of different kinds, consider security, accessible entrance
	Reception Desk	60		Back office for 3 people
	Waiting area			For visitors
	Public Meeting Rooms			2x12 person, 2x6 person
	Counters		30m2 admin office, 6 counters of 15m2 each, safe 100m2, safe room for 10 people, waiting hall	3 accesses, public domain, personnel, cash handling
	Museum			This function may be relocated if desired from the current separate building
SOCIAL FUNCTIONS				
	Restaurant		500 seats	Buffet
	VIP Restaurant		60 seats	Table service
	Kitchen			As Appropriate
	Recreation Room	100		Ping pong, darts, pool,
	The Club'	20		Office organising outside recreation activities
	External Recreation Space			Undetermined
	Lounge			180 spaces
	Exhibition Space	300		
	Coffee Bar			30 seats + standing
	Library	500		
	Legal Library	50		
	Innovation Lab	50		
	Changing / Showers			Local or centralised?
	Medical Facilities	150		including Lactation room with 5 relaxation seats
SERVICE FUNCTIONS				
	General facilities and circulation			Halls, stairs, lifts, wcs, service risers etc: 1.3-1.5 net to gross multiplication factor, as a guide
	General Storage Rooms	2000		Office furniture, building materials, machines, cleaning
	Central Archives			4500lm of shelving
	Art Store	150		
	Security	40		
	IT	400		200 +200 stock
	Server Rooms		10m2 each	Per floor
	Data Centres		100m2 each	Per floor
	Refuse			Undetermined
	Delivery zone			Different Deliveries /Refuse/Medical staff
	Print Shop	450		
	Workshop	450		
	Car parking			150 cars 20 motorbikes
	Bike Parking			as Brussels standards
	Building Services			consider vertical risers, horizontal distribution, type of service installations, localised/centralised?
RENTAL		7000		Rental offices 6000m2, gym 500m2, nursery 500m2,
GIVEN AREA TOTAL		**35455**		

OBSERVING

BUNKER

SERVICE THE BANKS EMPLOYEES

LINEAR METRAGE

WHAT ARE THE NORMS OF THESE THINGS?

22 000 m² OFFICE SPACE
90 000 m² TOTAL SPACE

1:500 model

collective work on the 1:500 model

sculpting and editing the CNC cutted base to make the building masses fit

sanding each building block to make them fit in the CNC cutted base and to be able to paint them properly

painting the building blocks

re-organising the building blocks + assembling the building blocks

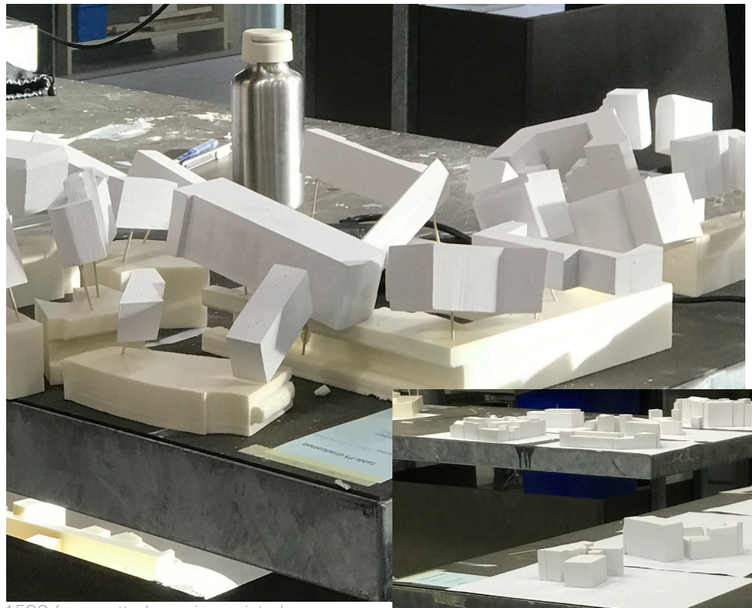
the grey paint transforms the materiality of the foam to something seemingly robust and solid



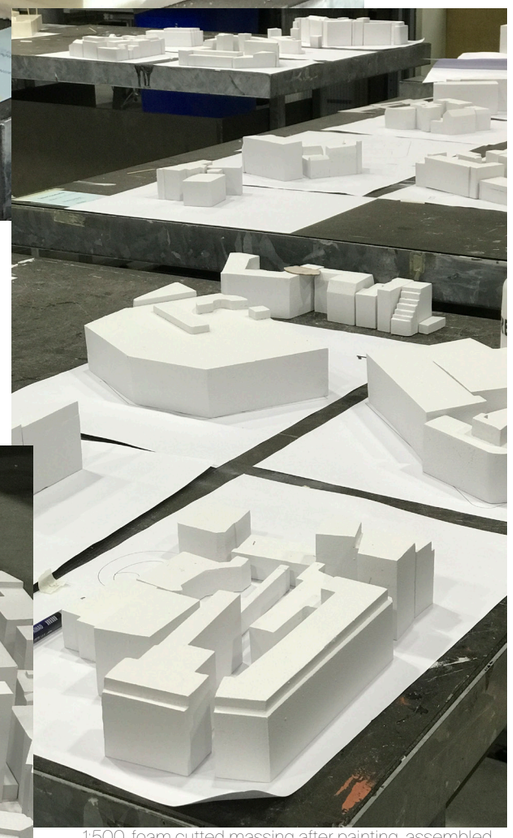
1:500. painting the yellow foam to a light grey



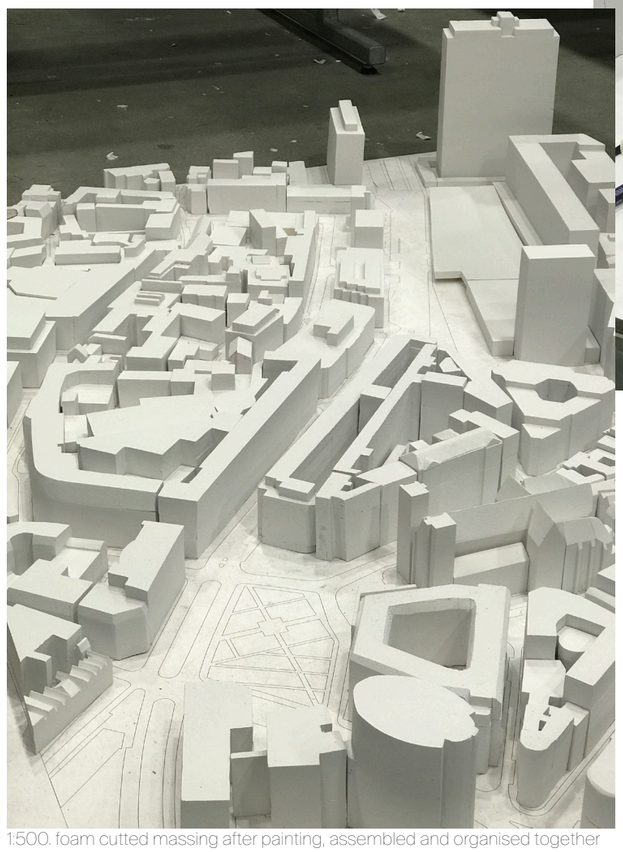
1:500. foam cutted massing, CNC cutted base with slope



1:500. foam cutted massing, painted grey, disassembled



1:500. foam cutted massing after painting, assembled and organised by building block



1:500. foam cutted massing after painting, assembled and organised together

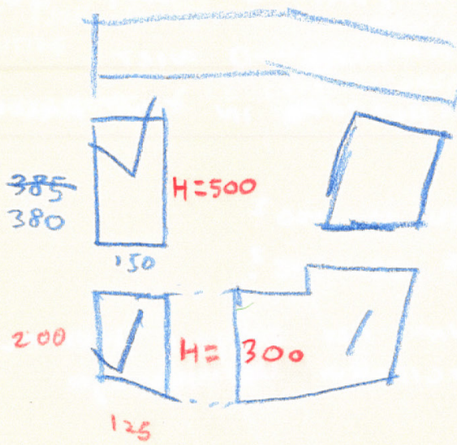
1:200 model



new developments on, in front and around the Pacheco parking



Fritz Lang, Metropolis (1927)



defining mass and height of the new developments for the 1:200 cardboard model



Metropolis
Metropolis
Metropolis



1:200 facades, papercutted in light grey paper for the facade and darker grey paper for the window tints

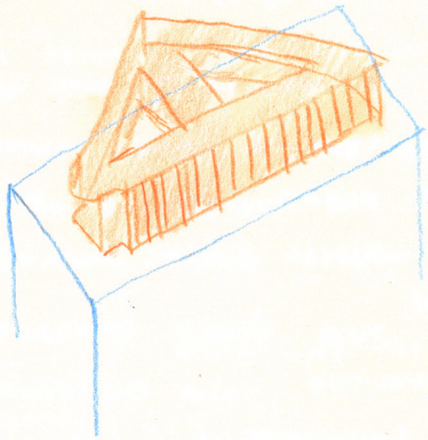
1:200 building blocks, lasercutted in 1mm grey cardboard

SHELL
SERVICES
SCENERY
SETS

DISSECTION
RECONFIGURATION
DISPLACEMENT

DISMANTLING

1:1000 and 1:10



SHELL

HOW CAN ONE RECONFIGURE THE STANDARDISED ELEMENTS OF TECHNICAL SERVICES AS AN ACTIVE INSTRUMENT IN THE "EXPOSED" INTERIOR OF THE OFFICE ?

WHAT IF WE DISMANTLE, DECONSTRUCT AND RECONFIGURE THE OBSOLETE TECHNICAL ELEMENTS OF AN EXISTING BANK BUILDING ?

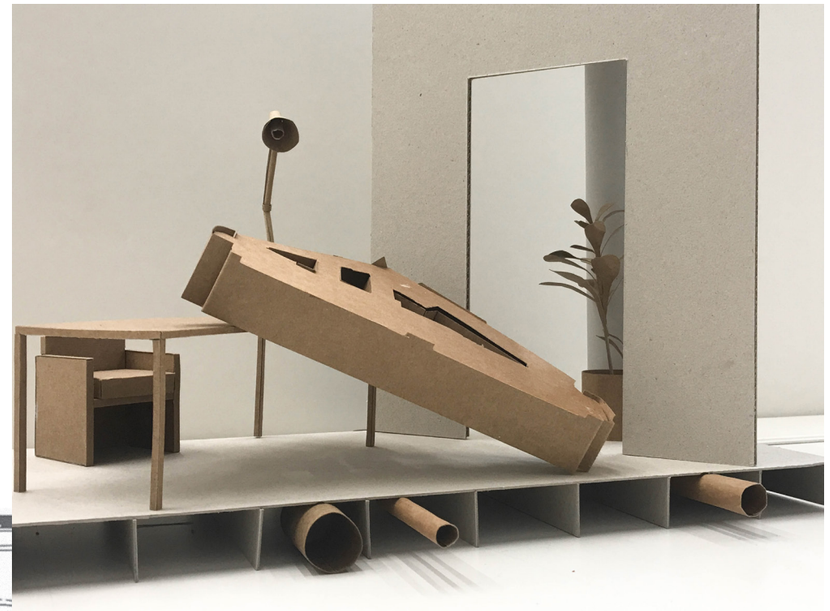


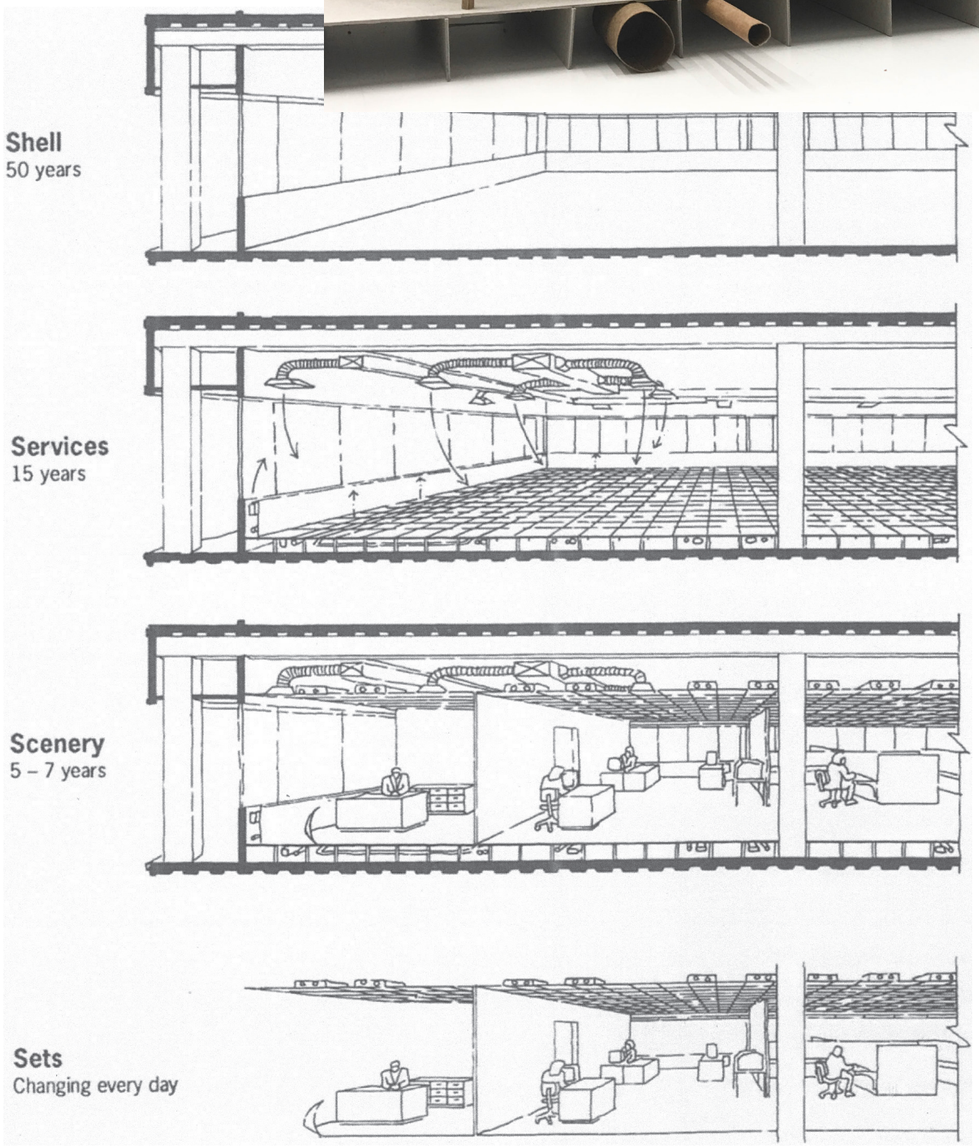
a 1:1000 cardboard model of the bank

the bank as a shell, an object on a table

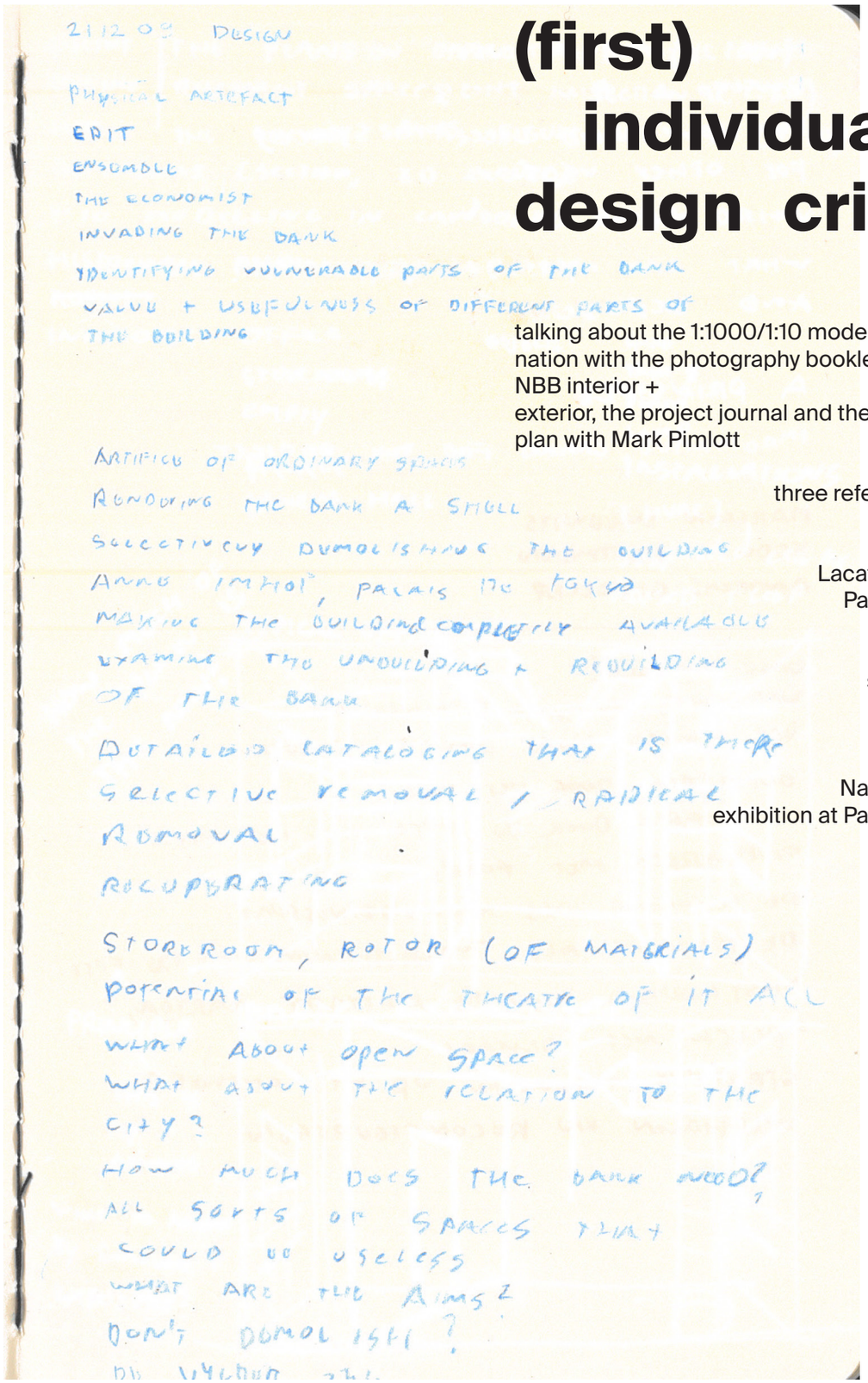
the 1:1000 bank does not fit on a 1:10 table

1:1000 bank as a **shell**
1:10 tubes as **services**
1:10 raised floor and walls as **scenery**
1:10 chair, table, lamp and plant as **set**





DEGW, Shell, Services, Scenery and Sets in the office building, The Changing City. London: Bulstrode Press, 1989



(first) individual design crit

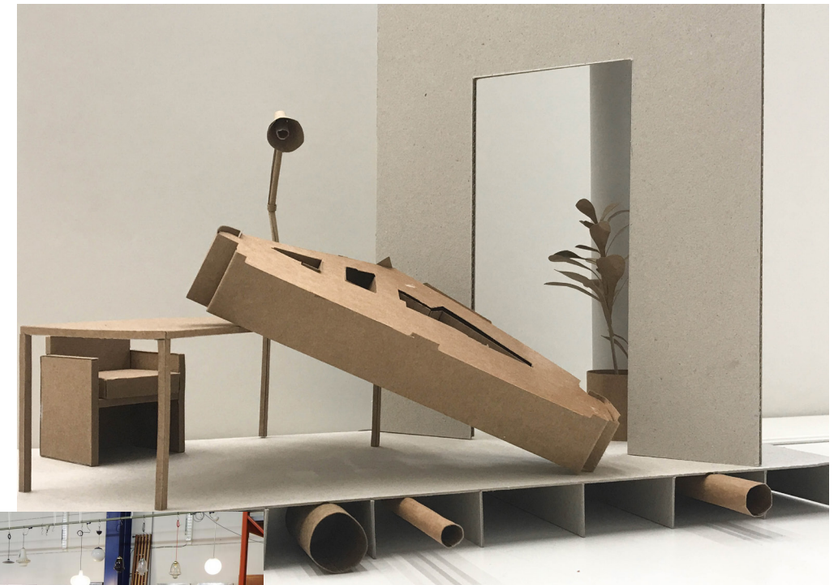
talking about the 1:1000/1:10 model in combination with the photography booklets from the NBB interior + exterior, the project journal and the research plan with Mark Pimlott

three references were suggested:

Lacaton & Vassal, Palais de Tokyo

Rotor DC, storeroom of materials

Anne Imhof, Natures Mortes exhibition at Palais de Tokyo



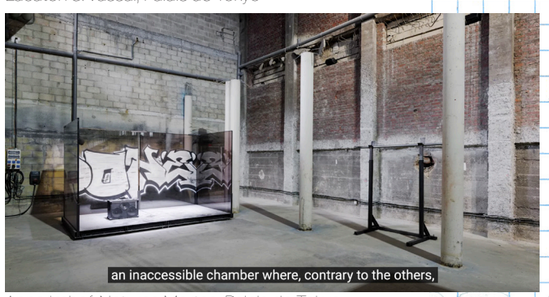
1:1000 bank shell in a 1:10 scenery and set with 1:10 services in the floor



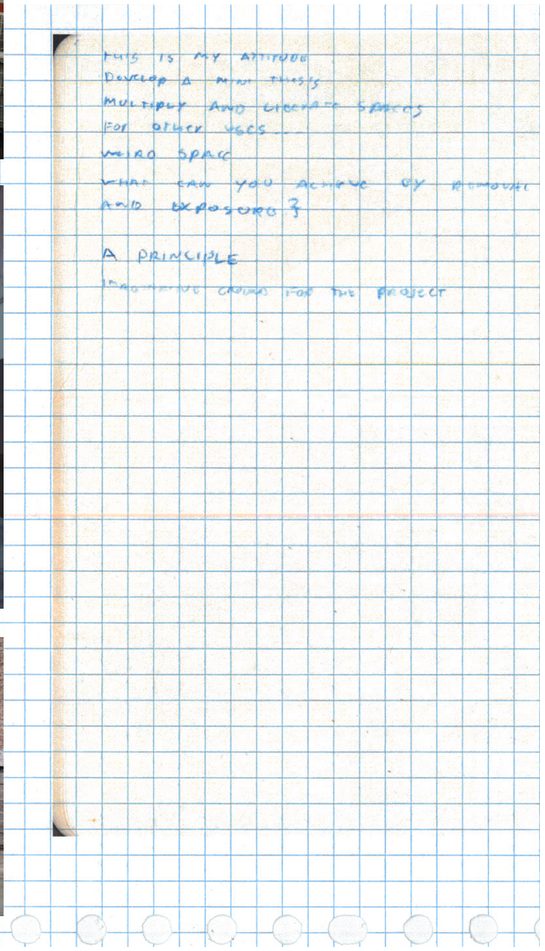
Rotor DC, storeroom



Lacaton & Vassal, Palais de Tokyo



Anne Imhof, Natures Mortes, Palais de Tokyo

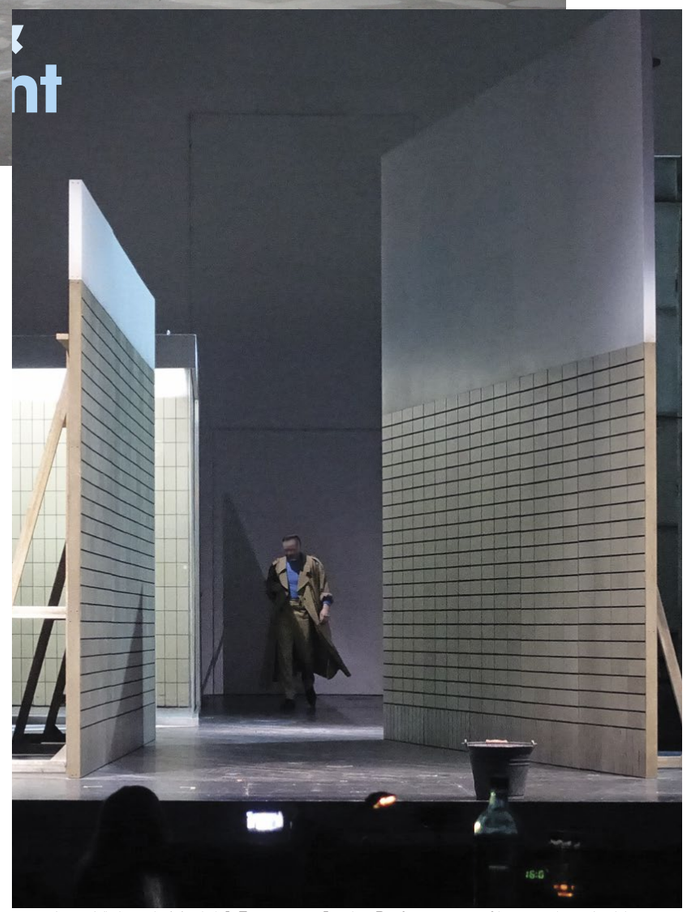


images (or doubles)



Governor's Palace, own photograph


National Bank of Belgium, banking hall, photograph
Meitar Tawel


Anna Viebrock, Model & Fragment: On the Performance of Incomplete Architecture


Jo Taillieu Architecten, Verzameld Werk, 2000



Room used for storage of furniture and objects, photograph by Yu Chen



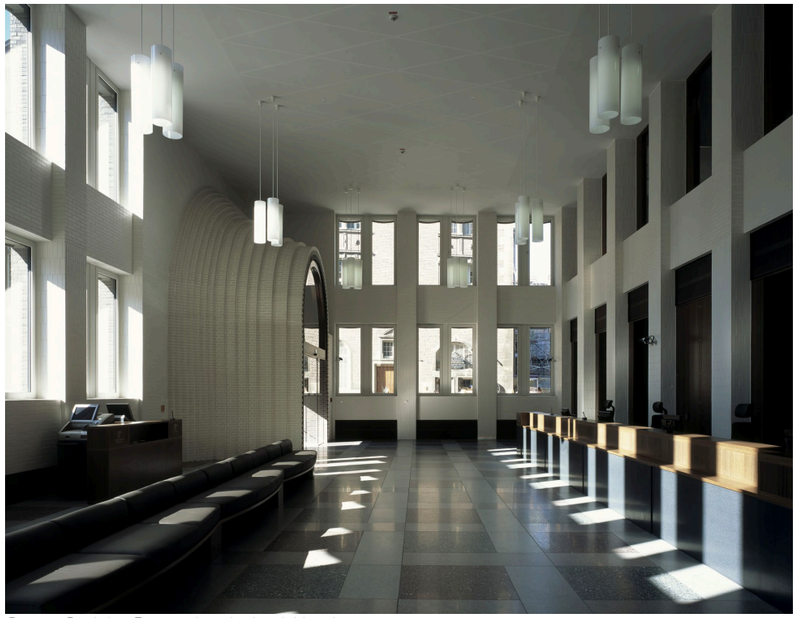
Photograph of room with models, with added autograph remarque perspective drawing, of the National Theatre, South Bank, London, 1991



Matthias Hoch, Silver Tower #25, 2010



Matthias Hoch, BER #60, 2018



Caruso St. John, Bremer Landesbank Headquarters



Andreas Gehrke, Landeszentralbank 2000–2016 Meiningen, 2017



Andreas Gehrke, IBM Campus 1974–2009 Stuttgart Vaihingen, 2010



Anna Viebrock, IQ opera set design, photograph Walter Mair



Andreas Gehrke, Quelle Versand 1956–2009 Nürnberg, 2012



Anna Viebrock, Model & Fragment: On the Performance of Incomplete Architecture

A H / B P *Secondly, we realized that no matter how big something is, if you put it inside an even bigger space it starts to look like a model. Models seem to be inherently connected to the interior. In the actual proposal of the work, you put the proposed structure underneath the highway flyover, to give it a second roof, to make it an interior again. The surface of that model was treated in a special way so that it is no longer a 1:1 version, but it looks like a 10:1 version of a paper model. Are these things essential for it still to be a model?*

T D They are essential for suspending the Disneyfication that is a danger when it comes to such projects. It also needed some way of translating what would be a huge pixel if you

blew the original images up to the scale of the building we intended. How to keep the traces of the other buildings next to it and all the different remains of rebuilding, extending and decorating the original, which made it so unique, like a palimpsest? I wanted to make sure that people knew it was different from what they knew but still serves the same purpose. Finally, where does my designing stop? At the signage? The toilets? The plates? So I was convinced it needed a clear distinction between the sculpture and the rest of the world and its details. As we planned the thing in wood we could practically treat it like a carved object and I did extensive research into how we could get a structure that could modulate all necessary messages into a formal pattern.

B P / A H *As we now know, the* Nagelhouse *wil not actually be built. We can imagine that for the architects the desired end result would be the realized structure, but that for you this might be more ambiguous because it will remain in a model state, in a non-built state?*

T D I am fine with that. It has already made it into the local idiom, the *Nagelhaus* in Zurich is now being used as a metaphor for a couple of political and cultural aberrations and the rightwing party made it their big trophy. I was fully aware that most art is too complex for political campaigns, which is good and why I like it. The downside is the waste of time on all sides, but it did have a certain impact. And which artist ever gets a poster like this dedicated to his work?

Nederlandse vertaling op p.68

1. 'La Carte d'Après Nature', Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, group exhibition curated by Thomas Demand, with among otherts Tacita Dean, Luigi Ghirri, Rodney Graham, Anne Holtrop and René Magritte; September 2010 – February 2011.

J F / H T *A more careful look at the presentation of the office's various projects turns up fragments of buildings, or images of their interiors, which somehow investigate the experience of these spaces. Models of the outer form of buildings are quite scarce. Does this mean that the exterior is of secondary importance to your office? How important is the presence of the building in the city and streets?*

A C It is difficult to build one model that combines the exterior and interior. A different kind of model and a different scale is needed for each aspect. Since a lot of our projects deal with existing buildings, these projects concentrate on the interior. But another reason for the importance we grant to the interior is that we challenge the position of a lot of contemporary architects whose work seems to ignore the question of interiors. There are some very famous contemporary architects who in their quest to design 'modern' buildings say that the cladding, the structure and the interior are all the same thing. To us, that is not architecture. A public building should consist of a range of interiors. Until the Second World War, and certainly until the end of the nineteenth century, it was clear that the task of architects was the interior as well as the exterior of their buildings. Karl Friedrich Schinkel and Louis Sullivan spent as much time working on interiors as they did on the exterior of their buildings. The exterior is one element, but a building accommodates a multiplicity of interiors, so you need more ideas for the design of the interior than for the exterior. The volume and the tectonics of the building inform the image of the exterior. Of course they can also inform the character of the interior, but it is dumb to think that a building should have only one interior character. You also could say that our emphasis on the interior influences our architecture.

We don't make buildings that are meant to be viewed from five hundred metres away. We think it is more important to engage with what the experience of the space could be, which we do through our models. What do you smell or what do you imagine if you go right up to the building? That is our priority; a lot of the images we produce are about that. We concentrate on the interior and on specific parts of the building, where the building can be affecting. In that sense, our architecture is a form of pastiche, in a nineteenth-century sense. We try to bring things together. Or call it "picturesque", a word we like to use in the office. There is no perfect definition, but we interpret the picturesque as recognising that one is not building in a perfect world. Even when we are working on a new building, we are conscious of its situation, which is not only physical but also social. We have learnt a lot from the picturesque tradition in English landscape, the way it engages with social mores, which for us is also the task of the architectural project: giving weight to the social and the physical as appropriate to different situations.

J F / H T *It's clear that the models produced in your office are never a final product of the design process. In fact, they only can be understood as an instrument through which future perception and appearance is projected. The genuine test of a model is to take photographs of the model, images that reveal the specific light and atmosphere of a room. But the search for such a very specific perception is never incidental in the practice of Caruso St John; it is consumed by the quest for a 'final image' that somehow encapsulates the concept of the building.*

The models, and the photographs of the models are a way of getting closer and closer to an image that is already in our minds, it is about articulating all of the qualities in that image. I like the fact that in a competition one can try to communicate the concept and the atmosphere of a project in one or two such images. I would say that the preoccupation in the office is not the production of models, but of finding the image of a project. These images have a kind of pictorial form of realism, like a Millet or Hopper painting, which is a sympathetic and formalised kind of realism, with a knowing distance from the real.

118 W2.6 211220 - 211224

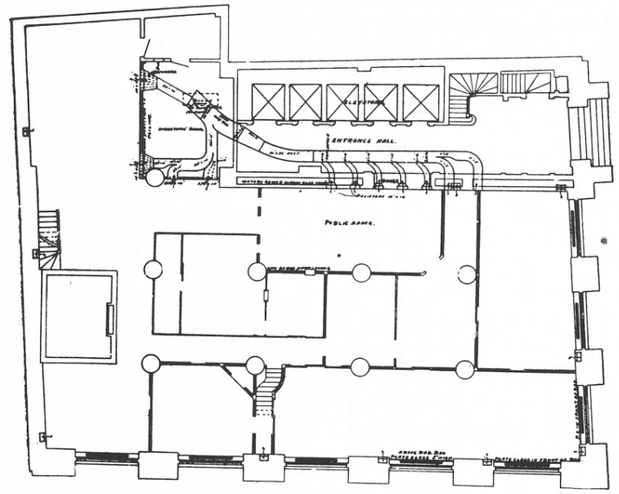
Reyner Banham the Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment

10. Concealed power

The calculations of George Bailey on the economics of the slab skyscraper, cited in the previous chapter, bring together three environmental aids—acoustic tiling, air-conditioning, and fluorescent lighting—that were to add up into one of the key inventions of recent architecture (though no architect invented it): the suspended ceiling. One should add immediately that ceilings have been suspended almost as long as there has been architecture, but whereas the traditional reason for suspending a ceiling was to close the top of a room volume, the sense in which the word is employed nowadays in trade literature and office-conversation, implies opening up the top of the room volume to admit environmental power over its entire area. Paradoxically, this opening-up is commonly considered as an act of concealment; the ceiling, in spite of its general perforation, is seen as a way of concealing the fact that the upper part of the room volume is occupied by ducts, conduits and service adits generally.

The earliest documented use of this type of concealment that has come to hand, is A. M. Feldman's ventilation installation[1] in the Kuhn and Loeb bank in 1906, mentioned in chapter 4. The problem was to cool the banking hall (the building still stands, at the junction of William and Pine Streets, near Wall Street, but none of the installation appears to have survived) which was on the corner of the block, with exposure to both streets. The only available surface on which the plant could reasonably be mounted was the flat roof of an extension at the back of the block. Between this and the banking hall was the manager's office, lit through a glass roof. Ductwork taken through the upper part of this room would be conspicuously seen in back-lit silhouette, quite apart from any other environmental disadvantages that might accrue,

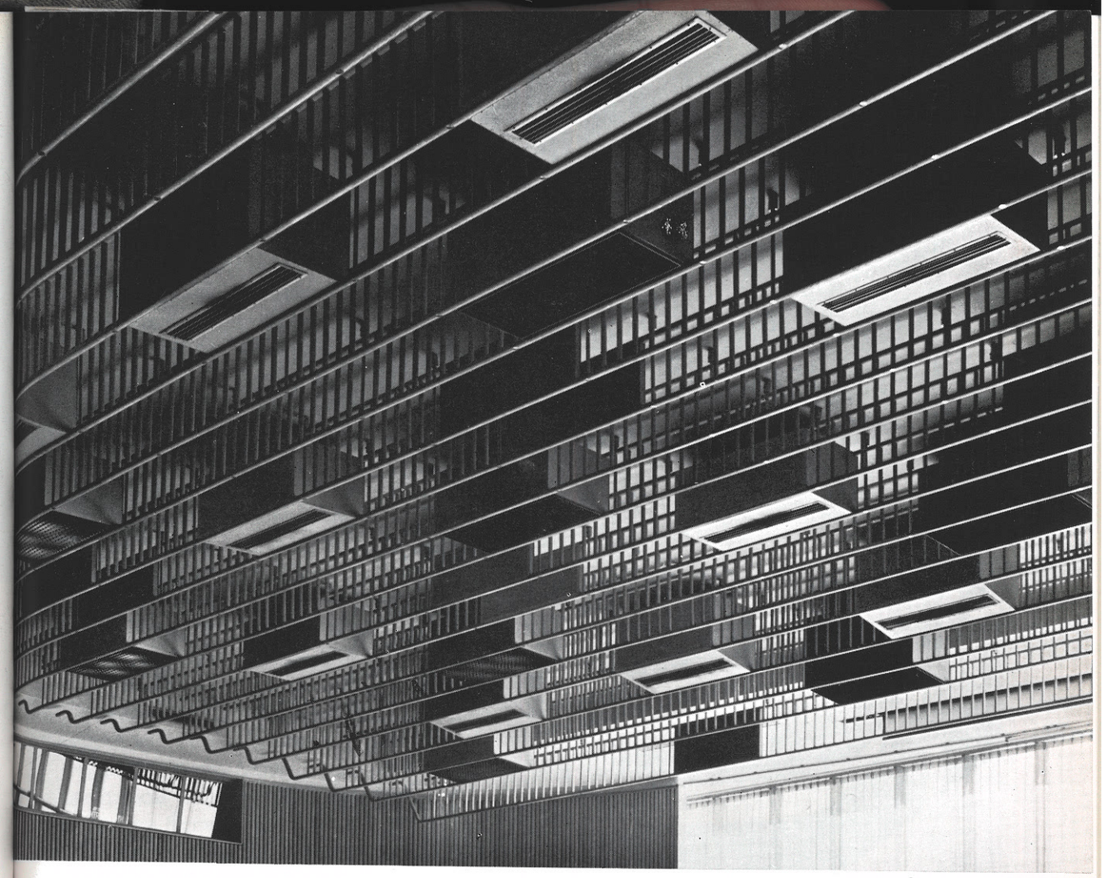
[1] the only full account is in a paper read to the American Society of Mechanical Engineers in 1909 by Feldman himself (New York Public Library, Bound Pamphlets, VEW pv6, No. 12), but the installation is mentioned in the Ingels chronology.



Kuhn and Loeb Bank, New York, 1906, ventilation installation by A. M. Feldman; plan showing overhead duct-work.

and Feldman dealt with the problem by suspending a ceiling of obscured glass at the level of the internal cornice, thus retaining at least some of the room's natural lighting but concealing the ductwork.

Even though the installation did not service the room in which this ceiling was suspended, the intention of concealment was much the same as that animating most later suspenders of ceilings. The fact that these concealments take place normally within the formal rules of an aesthetic (the International Style) conspicuously given to honest exhibition of structures and services (see chapters 7 and 8, *passim*) will suggest that the story of the emergence of the suspended ceiling as we know it now must be somewhat confused, both in its narrative sequence and in the intentions of those involved. Though this is true to some extent, and represents the



United Nations Building, Chamber of the Trusteeship Council, 1952, by Finn Juhl; exposed diffusers and light fittings in ceiling.

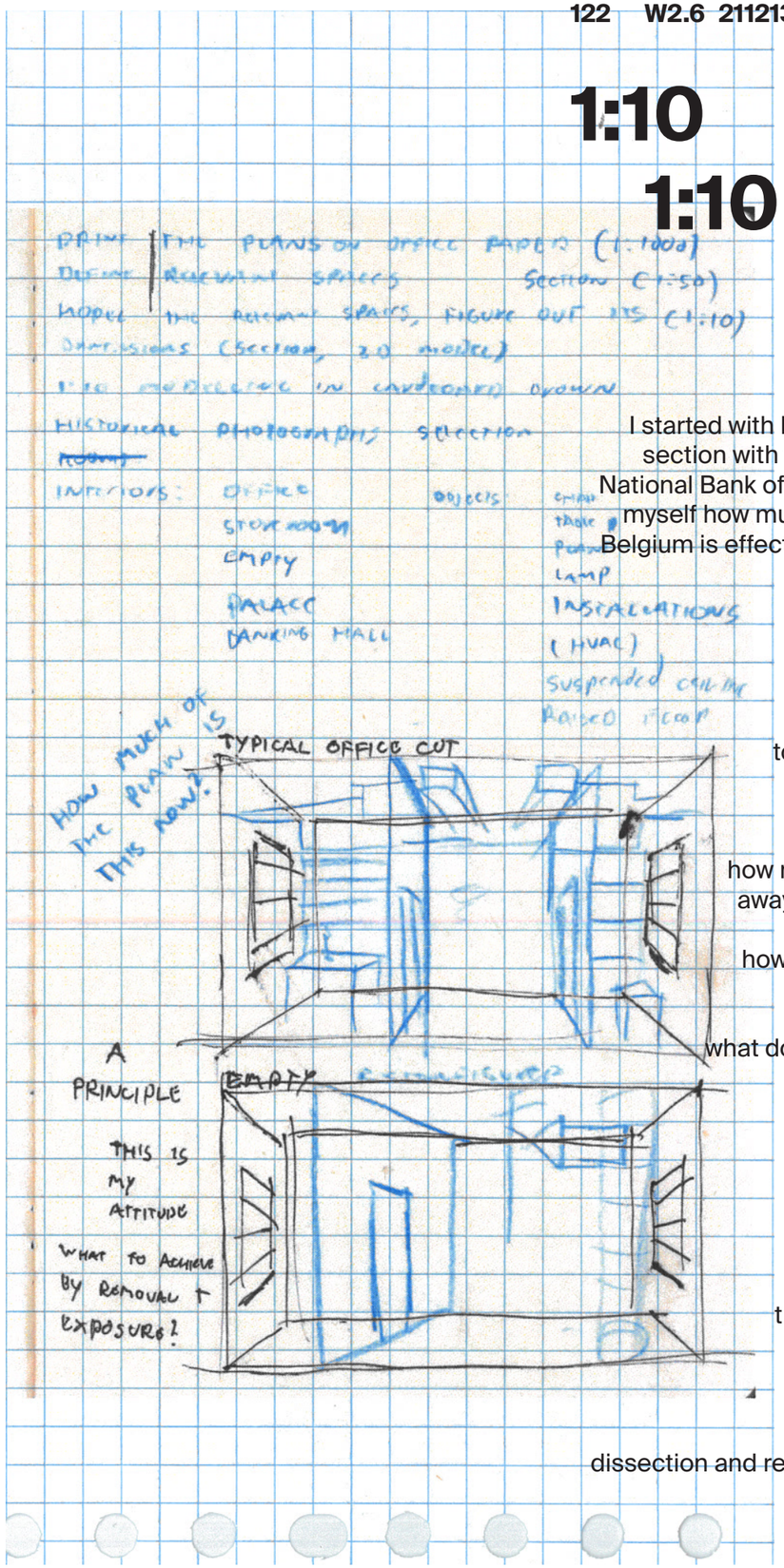
In the specialised council chambers in the podium of the Secretariat tower, overhead services were generally left exposed, picked out in emphatic colours, and—at the most—no more than lightly veiled by a kind of residual skeleton of a suspended ceiling. These interiors were not normally the work of the office of the executant architect, but of architects nominated by the donor-countries which paid for the interiors. Nevertheless, the message did not

go unheeded, and in the giant foyer of the General Assembly building, completed in 1957 (though not as Le Corbusier had intended it), Harrison allowed the massive and complex duct-work of the air-handling system to be fully seen all over the ceiling. It was neither emphasised, nor concealed, but simply allowed to be seen.

Such a solution was almost certainly too casual intellectually to appeal to, say, Mies van der Rohe, who has never proposed anything like it, and too informal aesthetically to appeal to such of Mies's followers as the active designing partners in Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. Historically, the aesthetic blockage is probably the more crucial of the two—the architecture of manifest environmental services had to wait upon a change of aesthetic preferences quite as much as upon the growing difficulties of finding somewhere to hide the ducting and mechanical plant, as both became bulkier and more complicated. And in this change of preferences the influence of Le Corbusier was, as usual, the most important detectable factor. Not that he made any direct contributions to the architecture of mechanical services that are worth mentioning (with one conspicuous exception to be mentioned below) but his movement away from smooth anonymous surfaces, and his growing preference for bulky, plastic and non-rectangular forms, both helped to create a climate of taste in which far greater freedom of architectural expression became possible, a situation in which mechanical services often provided the impetus or excuse for expressive formal experiment.

His heroic and sculptural foul-air stacks on the roof of the *Unité* at Marseilles must be acknowledged as historically important if only as the first explicit sign for almost twenty years in his work that mechanical services are an expressible function of a building. But it must be admitted, also, that their direct influence on the general manner of designing buildings was practically zero—their only well known descendant is the smoke-stack from the heating plant of the 'little *Unités*' in the London County Council's housing

1:10 and 1:10



I started with looking at the typical office section with the hallway typology of the National Bank of Belgium (right) and asking myself how much of the National Bank of Belgium is effectively this section now (see plans on next spread)

which turned out to be quite a lot... (next spread)

therefore i decided to model this section in 1:10

to investigate:

how much space is being taken away by the suspended ceiling

how big are the installations in the suspended ceiling

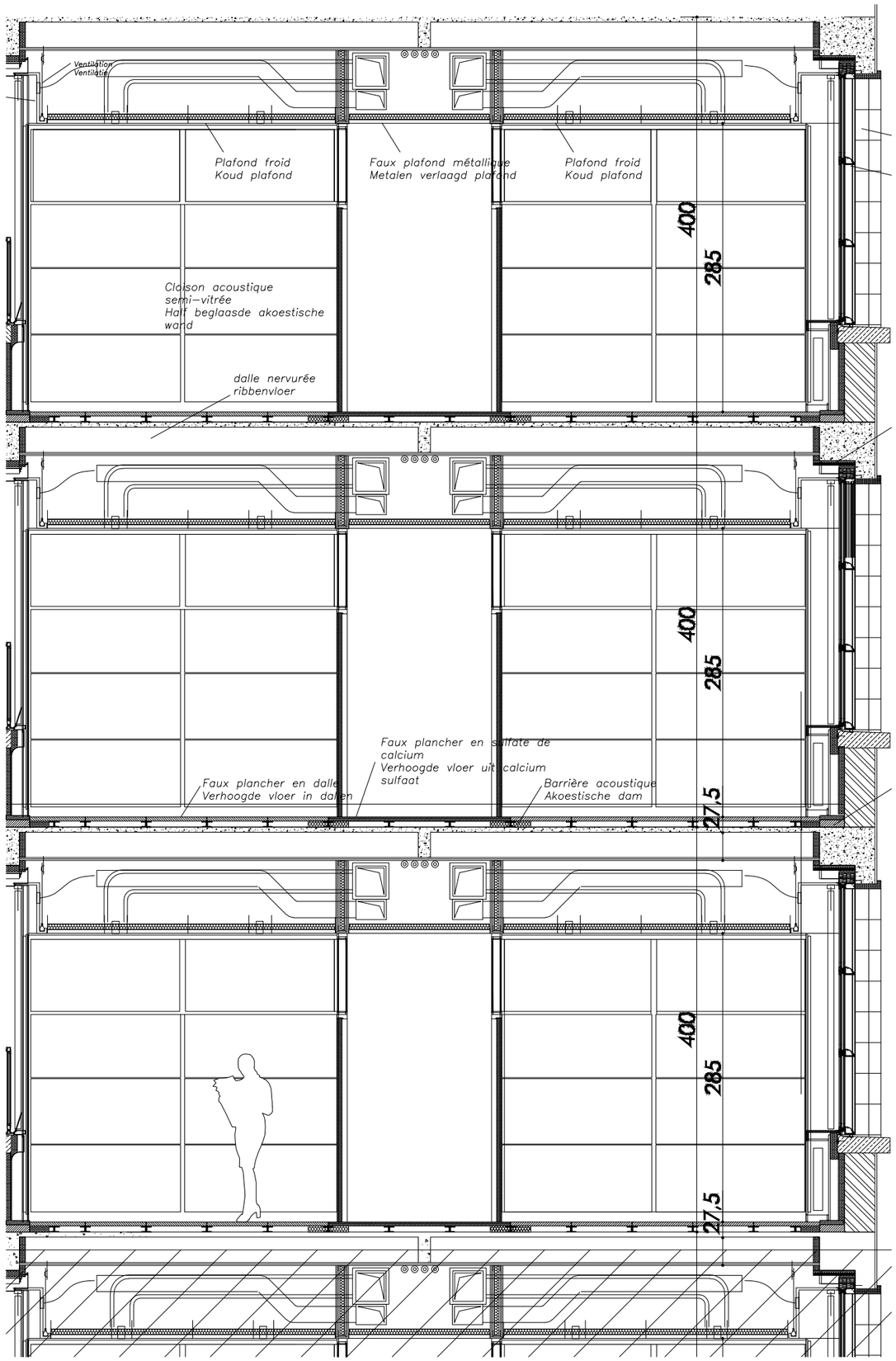
what does the structure look like?

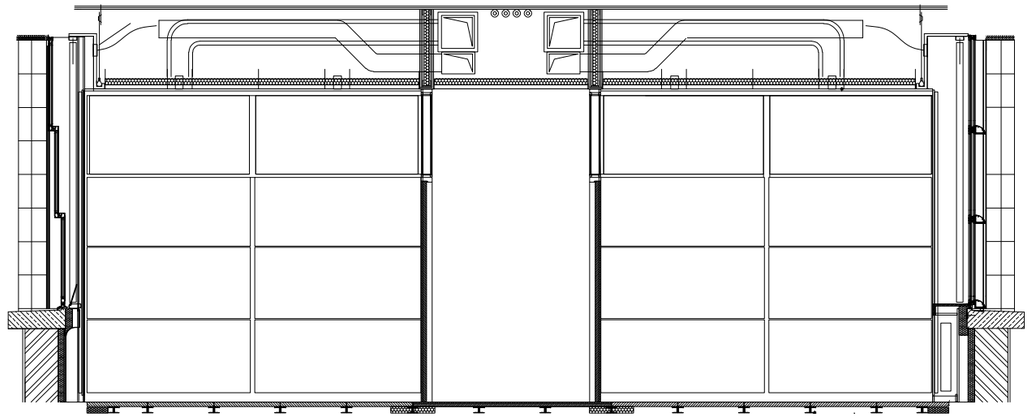
what can i achieve by removal and exposure of these elements like the suspended ceiling, the installations, the partition walls

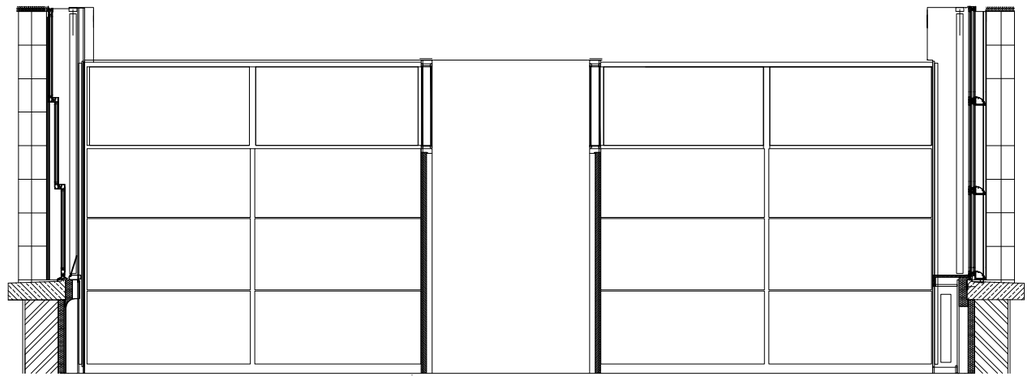
this model would represent my attitude

a principle

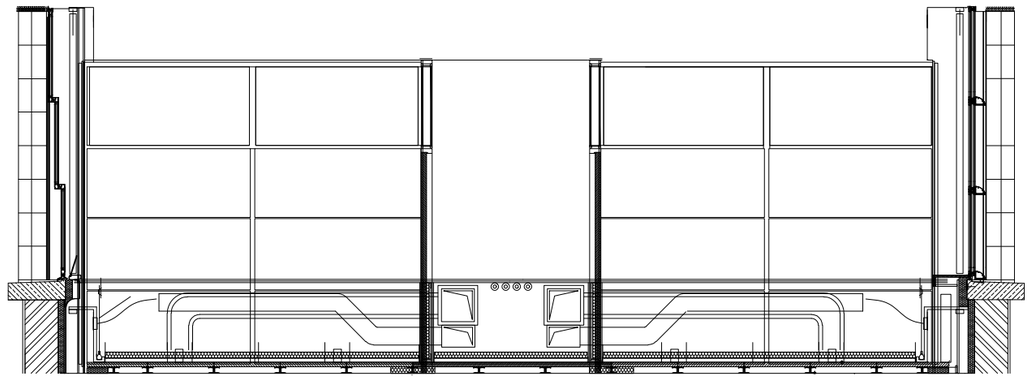
dissection and reconfiguration in the model

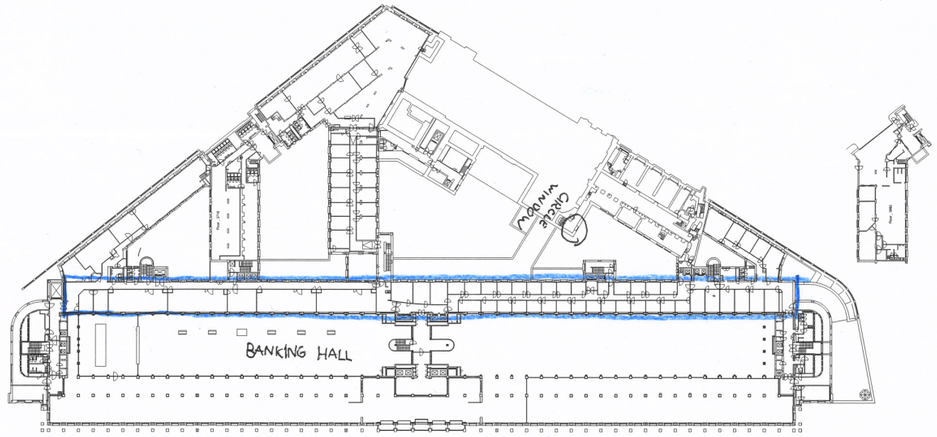




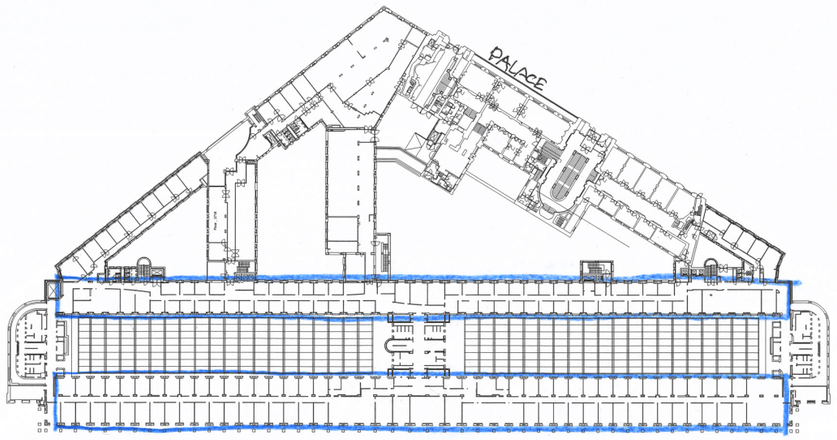


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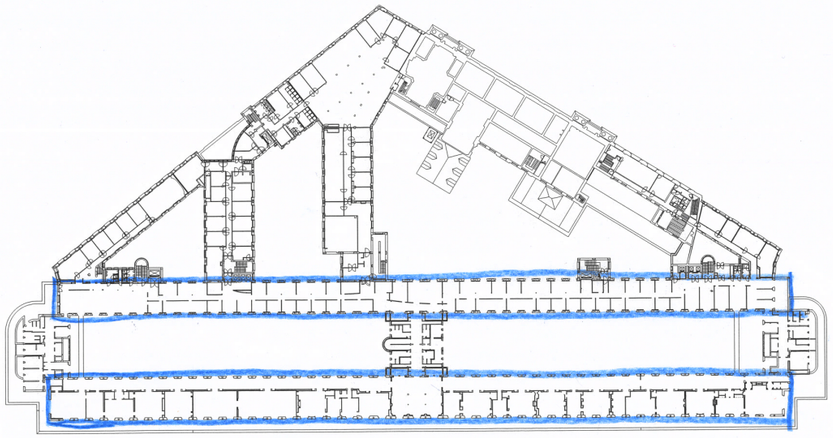




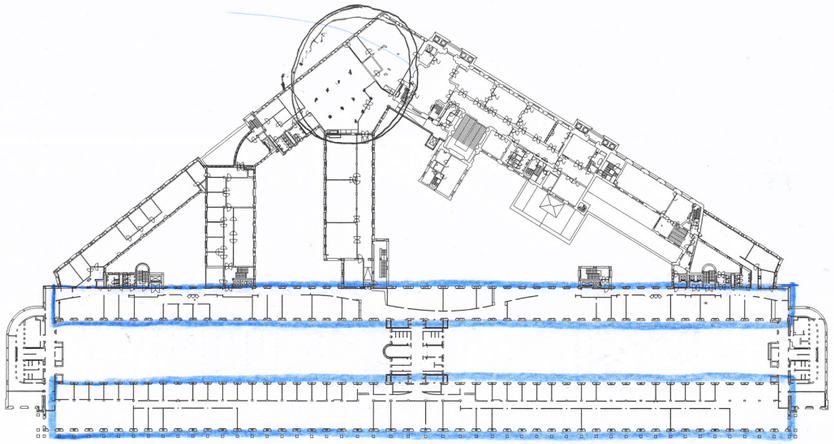
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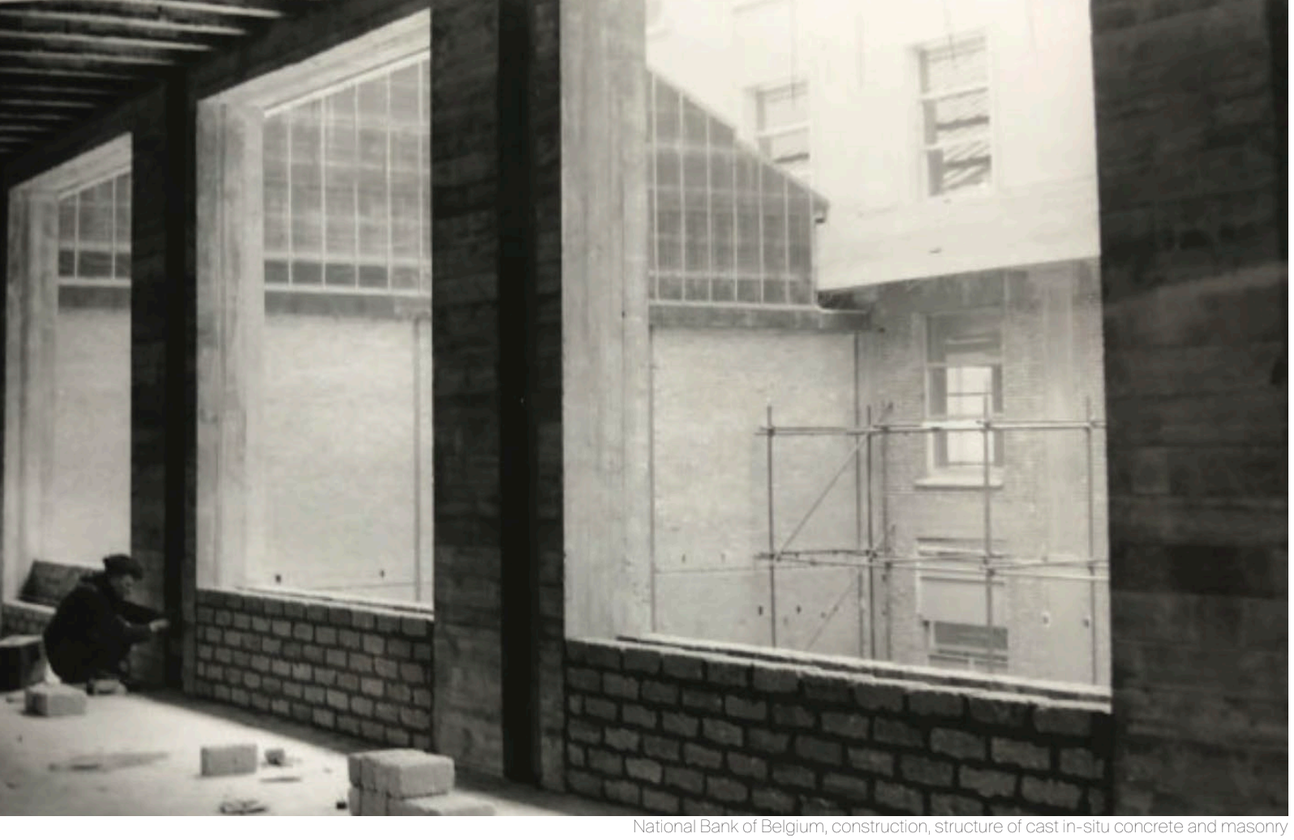


3



TYPICAL OFFICE CUT

4



National Bank of Belgium, construction, structure of cast in-situ concrete and masonry



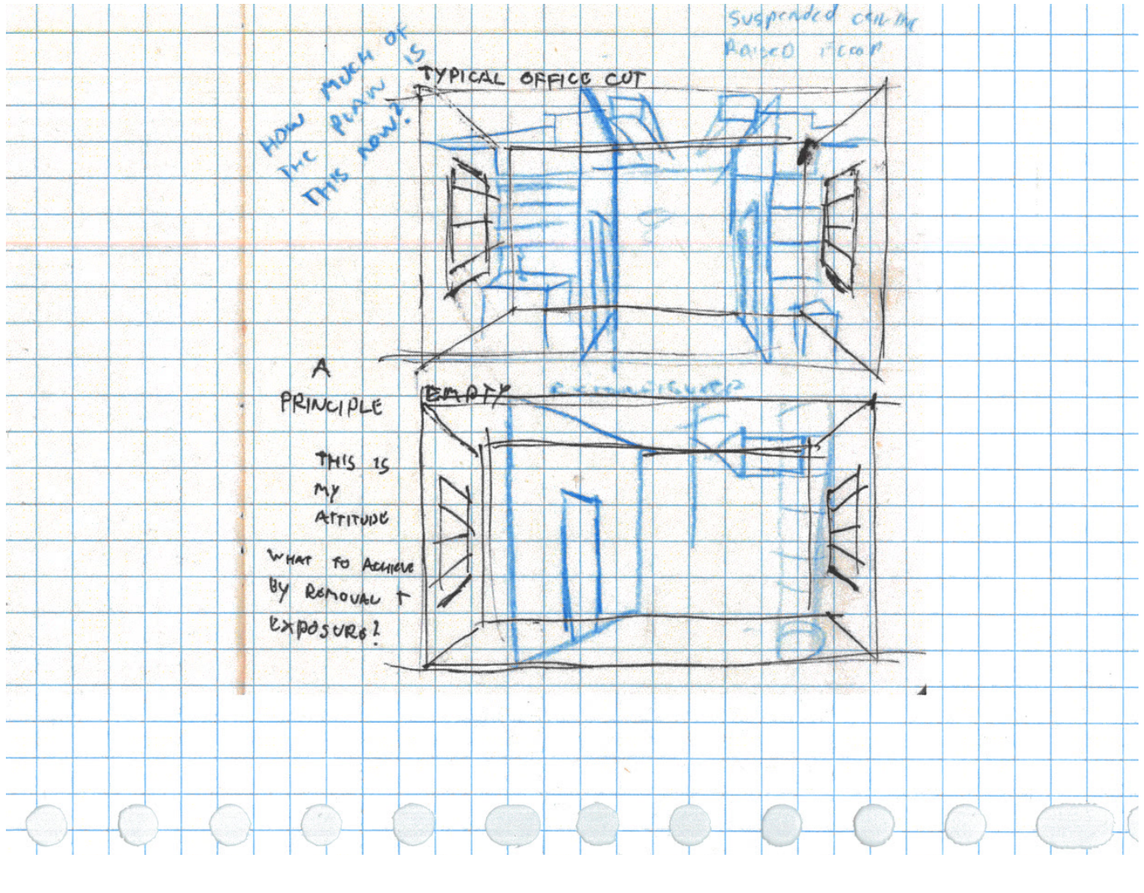
National Bank of Belgium, interior with non-structural partitions, cladding, suspended ceiling



Thomas Demand, Raum, 1994



National Bank of Belgium, interior with improvised storeroom for materials





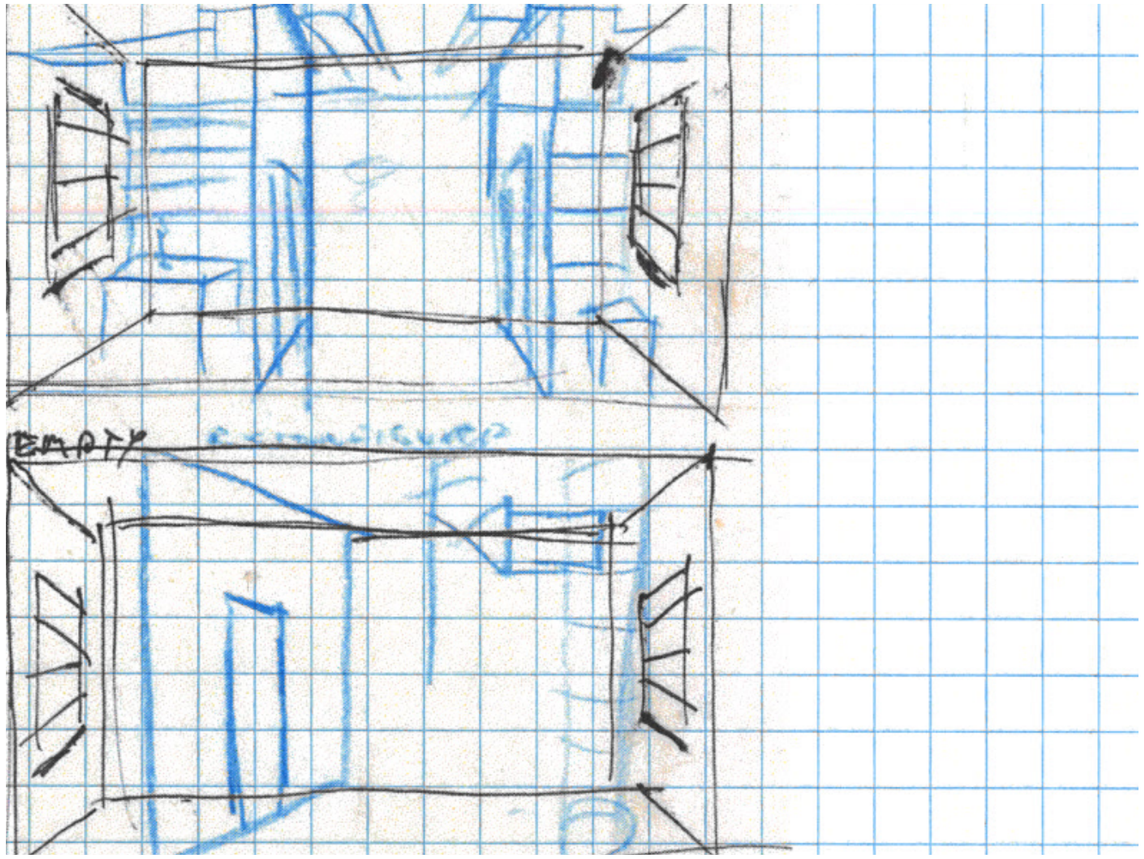
1:10 typical office with raised floor, suspended ceiling and installations



1:10 variation, the installations become a column and a couch in the space



1:10 variation, the partition walls constituting the hallway previously are now turned under a 45 degree angle and become a figure in the space. the installations are a room defining element above a table





1:10 typical office with raised floor, suspended ceiling and installations



1:10 variation, the installation becomes a column in the space



1:10 variation, the partition walls constituting the hallway previously are now turned under a 45 degree angle and become a figure in the space. the installations are a room defining element above a table



1:10 variation, the installations become the plinth for social meeting

(second) individual design crit

feedback Mark Pimlott + Susanne Pietsch

ALTERN[illegible] ARCH[illegible]
FRED SCOTT

21 12 16 DESIGN

LABELLING IN THE PLAN

SERVICES NEED TO BE REVISED

DO THE SERVICES PLAY A ROLE?

TESTING THE EXTREMES

- WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE SERVICES ARE IN THE FLOOR?

- MORE VARIATIONS!

WHAT VALUE CAN GAIN BY JUST WORKING WITH THE FABRIC?

QUESTIONING THE HIERARCHY

BUILDING SERVICES VS. WINDOW

RE CALIBRATION OF THE HIERARCHY

WHAT ACCOMODATES THE SPACE?

WHAT IS FUNDAMENTAL?

AIR, LIGHT, ACOUSTICS

WHAT IS NEEDED IN A ROOM

AFTER THE SHELL!

SERVING IS THE MOST

ACCUMULATION OF



HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH THE STACKING OF SPACES AFTER ONE ANOTHER!

CONCLUSION ON THE HIERARCHY

FROM ARCHITECTURE TO THE PLANT

WHAT does THAT MEAN IN RELATION TO THE BUILDING
- OTHER SPACES!

WHAT does THAT MEAN IN RELATION TO OTHER BUILDINGS?

CLIMATE

RADICAL REVISION

THE INSTITUTION EXPRESSES ITS ATTITUDE

SURGICAL OPERATIONS ON THE BUILDING

REPLACING

PUNCHING A WALL

MAKING A HOLE



doubles 2





Gordon Matta-Clark, Splitting in Englewood (cross section), 1974



Matthias Hoch, Silver Tower #2, 2009



Charlotte Posenenske, Series DW, 1967, Between Bridges exhibition

GORDON MATTA CLARK OFFICE BAROQUE

CONTINUITY OF SPATIAL PROGRESSIONS

OFFICE BAROQUE CEILING EFFECT

MODULATING THE OPENINGS

INTERSECTION OF MAJOR

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

INTERSECTION OF

CEILINGS

BUILDING COULD BECOME A

THEATER OR STAGE, COMBINATION OF OPEN AIR AND

ENCLOSED THEATER SPACE

POSSIBILITY OF SEEING THE PERFORMANCE BOTH

FROM THE INSIDE AND THE OUTSIDE AT THE

SAME TIME

VARIOUS LAYERS AND LEVELS ARE VISIBLE

AND SPACE

SHAKESPEARE THEATRE WITH VARIOUS LEVELS

THAT BOTH ACTORS AND THE AUDIENCE REACTED

TO EACHOTHER FROM

DOWN

RUST PIECES OF CUTS AND INCISIONS COLLECTED

TOGETHER ON THE GROUND FLOOR

Office Baroque

notes from watching documentary film on the Office Baroque project by Gordon Matta-Clark in Antwerp



video-still from Office Baroque documentary by Cherica Convents



Gordon Matta-Clark, Office Baroque, 1977, Antwerp



Francesco Borromini, San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane (ceiling), 1630s, Rome

Fred Scott Altering Architecture

This definition would seem to have something in common with Aldo Rossi's definition of the role of buildings as acting as silent monuments in the city.[9] Rossi suggests the idea of a building having a monumental quality, regardless of the uses to which it is put at different times. One can think of it like a rock, basically unchanging, as at different times, different uses wash over it.

Both descriptions assume a separation between function and being, between the temporal and the timeless.

The ruin is the building that, according to Kahn, is able to speak, to say how it is made. The common result of ruination is loss of enclosure. A ruin then has qualities of transparency, of becoming incidental in a spatial continuum, as is a transparent structure.

The quality of transparency suggests an affinity with Modernist theory and practice. In addition one might comment that decorated architecture is tectonically generally made up of cover-strips that carry the ornamentation. Cover-strips are among the most vulnerable parts of a building, the parts generally destroyed or displaced during the process of ruination. Modernist aesthetic intends to abolish the cover-strip and to become, by this, tectonically explicit. In many ways a Modernist building strives to become an exquisitely detailed structure that is explicit in the way it is made, a quality shared with ruins in Louis Kahn's definition. In this respect there is thus a further affinity between the ruin and Modernism.

The ruin is something in process, belonging to the past, present and future,[10] and consequently is an aspect of temporality, contrasted with the preserved building, which is a corpse, a product of the mortician's art, preserved and maintained in an attempt to keep it beyond the reaches of time: the Villa Savoye. It is the difference between the living and the dead.

The ruin allows privileged views from previously inaccessible viewpoints, and from these it offers a fresh explanation of itself. A building in this respect may show itself in a way only previously available as drawings, or other depictions, sometimes making evident the plan and section within the structure (Figure 6.1). A ruin may be said to give, in certain circumstances, a more complete expression of a building than when it was newly completed. A ruin is not merely surface; it is also structure.

But above all else, a ruin may be thought of as incomplete.

A building is usually altered because of a change of use, which may be

Such theories would seem to suggest that all possible models of architecture, both of the past and of the future, are perpetually existent but hidden, in a similar manner that the laws of gravity reflect a reality that was undetected before Newton. In a similar way, are creative works also discoveries? Are the cello sonatas of Bach an echo of something outside of time? This strange idea lies at the heart of the primary purpose of stripping back, of making an acquaintance with the building, in order for this to support a notion of *model*, abstract, ideal and complete, as the thing from which the building is derived and the thing to which all conditions of the building, past, present and future, in some way bear allegiance.

It is possible to claim that with the adoption of the idea of *model*, of an ideal, as being able to aid direction, projects of restoration are changed from the retrogressive to the progressive, and so able to address a correct approach to the future of the host building, rather than one mired in the sentimentality of the past.

This is not the complete story, however. Wren suggested that there are two sources of beauty, which perhaps can be typified as the formal and the colloquial.[13] A building may have, is even liable to have, particularities or peculiarities, which may be due to a variety of things. They may be the result of eccentricities in the original, difficulties of the site or later impositions. They may be intelligent and inventive. They may be overall in nature or specific and isolated; for instance there may be a general heaviness in the ornamentation, or there may be a fine later addition in a different style from the original; both might be thought of as valid components of the host building. In addition, other aspects of the host buildings, for instance various contexts, social, spatial and temporal, are liable to be particular rather than general.

The point of stripping back consequently is to establish a means by which the designer can begin a negotiation between the ideal and the actual, and also to begin the process of intervention by which other disparate parts must be made to cohabit. The aims of intervention are similar to the aims of the painter Sean Sculley, when he said that 'things must fit together'. The procedures are therefore intended to locate the tension between the idiosyncrasies particular to the host building, acquired at its inception and afterwards, and also its derivation from a paradigm or archetype, the clearest indication of the model or the ideal.

improvement is deterioration. If this too is to be avoided, works of intervention are expected to strike a fine balance. If one should err, which direction would be preferable? It may be that improvement is merely a myth attached to that other idea that conservation is different from restoration.

With regard to stripping back, the question of improvement may come to be considered as an act towards the clarification of the host building.

Why should a building be frozen, for that is surely what is intended, as it was a week ago or three hundred years ago? What thinking lies behind such decisions, beyond an incipient unease regarding our own mortality?

No work of restoration should be attempted without knowing all that there is to know of the host building, materially, spatially, historically, archaeologically, anecdotally. Even then any such restorative work will be arbitrary, that is needing judgement and imagination as well as learning to be carried through. All investigative and analytical work will only take you to this threshold where decisions are needed. It is work for the informed imagination.

The objection to such a definition would stem from the concern for the authentic and the taboo against improvement through any restorative work; it relies on a belief that no mistakes happened in the past, or that such mistakes are indiscernible in the present. One might wonder if there is a similar censure against detrimental work, and one can assume that there is. It is difficult to think of anyone denying this, but for some reason one believes that it doesn't carry the moral weight of the first prohibition. If the original or particular actuality of a building is lost to us, which it is in all cases, how then might anyone judge what is or is not improving work? This is of course a discussion aside from the understandable desire of the client to welcome and encourage whatever improvements the designer can deliver.

We talk here of the responsibility of the designer, perhaps the primary one, to carry a building over from the past and through the present, so that it will survive into another age. That is, the requirement of the designer who works on an existing building not to damage but rather to elucidate its essential nature. For such work to be considered self-effacing, so as to attempt to walk an imaginary line between detriment and improvement, can only lead the designer to delusion, of their self, of others or of both.

Should mistakes if confirmed be repeated? One might argue, not without reason, that there are never true mistakes in the way that things come to be as they are, but it requires a certain balance of mind to claim it. It is also a

To an altered building and the time-lapse camera, the occupants are like spirits, transitory and passing magically through what had once been floors and walls.[12] For the occupants, the new circulation of the altered interior may be like a journey through ruins, taking previously impossible routes, and having new, almost aberrant viewpoints as a result. An altered building explains itself; it is in this way an inhabited ruin. The ruin may, however, be neither accidental nor imprecise, as is made evident by the work of Gordon Matta-Clark. The altered condition may have qualities of exposure that previously one thought of as confined to drawings, such as sectional perspectives.

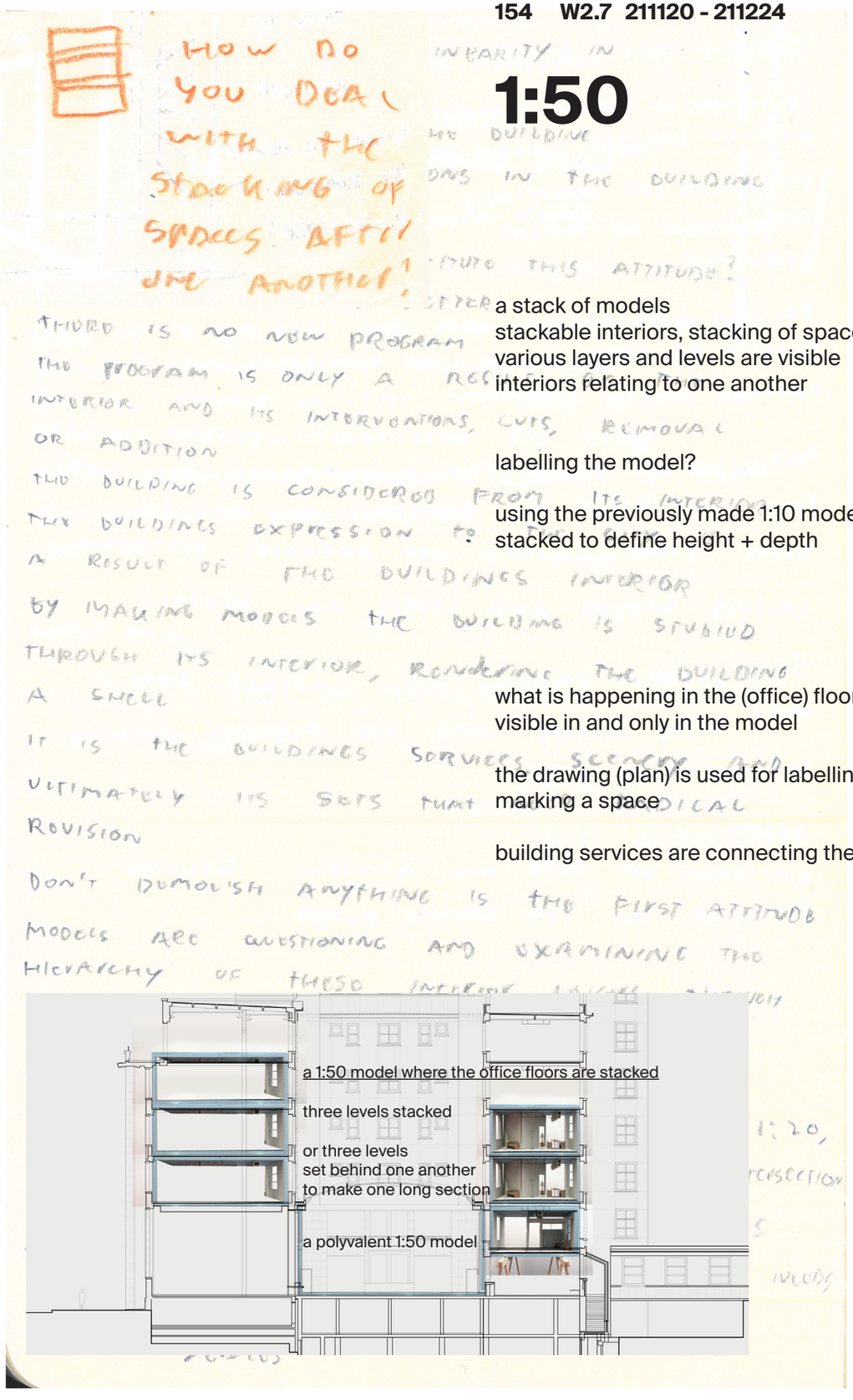
Alteration is breaking and entry, the precise cut, the strategic section exposed. It makes absences as well as additions. An over-reverent and potentially tiresome regard for every aspect of the existing can clog the creative mind. A clear diagram of intention, however radical, is more likely to lead to an effusive absorption of a new occupation into the host building.

The two conflicting types of spatial articulation, which seem destructive one of the other, need to be conflated in the work of alteration. Symmetry assumes completeness, and asymmetry suggests incompleteness, with the chance of addition and subtraction. This marriage of opposite styles requires that the remains of a symmetrical plan imply the complete; this need not be too restricting, for as noted elsewhere, half a symmetrical building can describe the whole (Figure 10.3). The use of transparency to unify and to integrate the new programme with the host building has been explored earlier in Chapters 7 and 9; the classic and the modern[13] can be worked through geometry and transparency, which are together the strongest tool for the work of intervention.

Change of use[14] almost always requires spatial and physical changes. Unlike Ise and the Villa Savoye, most alteration occurs as a result of change of use; this is the source of the new life of the building. The new use is one usually derived from expediency, from needs that may be outside of formal considerations. Unlike the making of a new building, the question of fit is different and more complex in re-use than in pure architecture. This disjuncture has its value.[15]

The aptness of the new occupation within the existing is derived from coincidence; such intersects are often not clear at the outset, and the search for them is commonly the longest phase of the design process. The process of insinuating new use into the given building is coloured throughout with reappraisal and reinterpretation. The fitting of the new into the existing is ever

1:50



a stack of models
stackable interiors, stacking of space
various layers and levels are visible
interiors relating to one another

labelling the model?

using the previously made 1:10 model
stacked to define height + depth

what is happening in the (office) floors is
visible in and only in the model

the drawing (plan) is used for labelling and
marking a space

building services are connecting the layers

(maybe) not a manifesto

1. THERE IS NO NEW PROGRAM.
THE PROGRAM IS ONLY A RESULT OF THE INTERIOR AND ITS INTERVENTIONS, CUTS, REMOVAL OR ADDITION

2. THE BANK IS CONSIDERED FROM ITS INTERIOR.
THE EXPRESSION OF THE BANK TOWARDS THE CITY IS A RESULT OF THE BANKS INTERIOR

3. THROUGH MAKING PHYSICAL MODELS THE ~~BUILDI~~ BANKS INTERIOR IS STUPID, RENDERING THE BUILDING A SHELL

4. DON'T DEMOLISH ANYTHING IS THE FIRST ATTITUDE

5. ~~SCALE~~ MODELS ARE QUESTIONING AND EXAMINING THE HIERARCHY OF THE BANKS INTERIOR LAYERS.
THROUGH TESTING INTERIOR VARIATIONS AND ULTIMATELY EXTREMES, CONCLUSIONS ARE DEVELOPED

6. IT IS ABOUT MULTIPLE SCALES TO TACKLE THE BANK.
- 1:1, 1:10, 1:20, 1:50, 1:100, 1:200, 1:500, 1:1000 AND AN INTERACTION BETWEEN THESE SCALES

7. IT IS ABOUT ABSTRACTION IN CARDBOARD.
USING THE MODEL AS A DESIGN TOOL

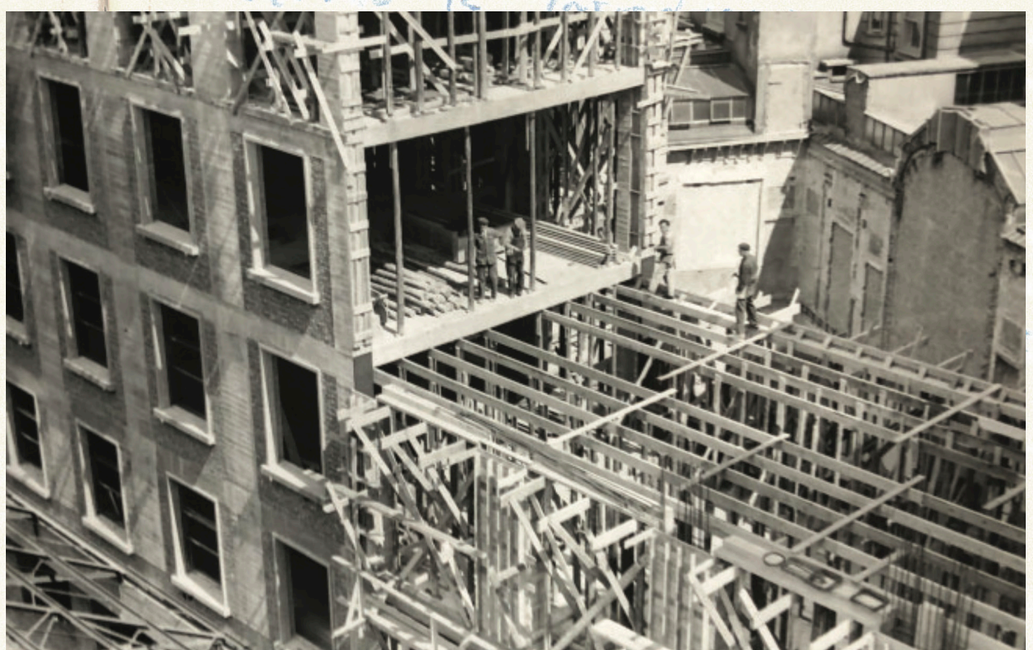
office 1 dissection - reconfiguration - displacement? 1:50

linearity

1 what happens if you remove one long partition wall and reconfigure the furniture to union carbide?

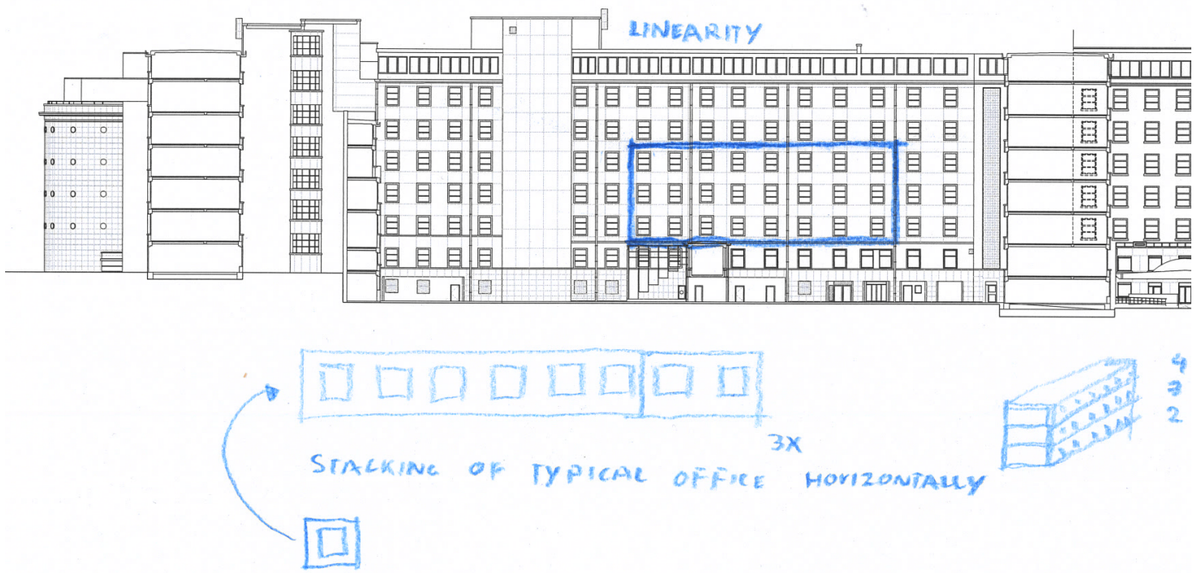
2 what happens if you remove all partition walls and reconfigure the tables together like the open plan in the larkin building?

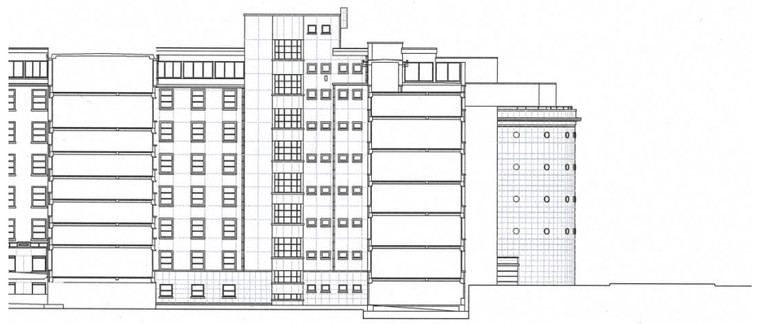
3 what happens when you reconfigure this open plan into the open plan of the Osram Headquarters?

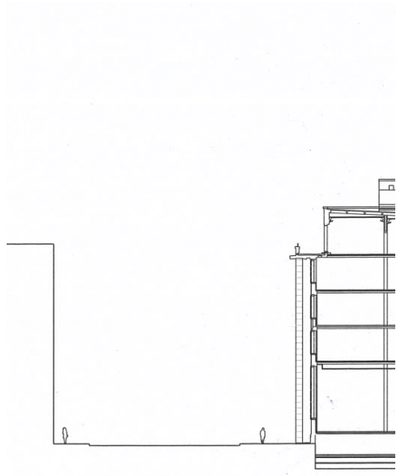


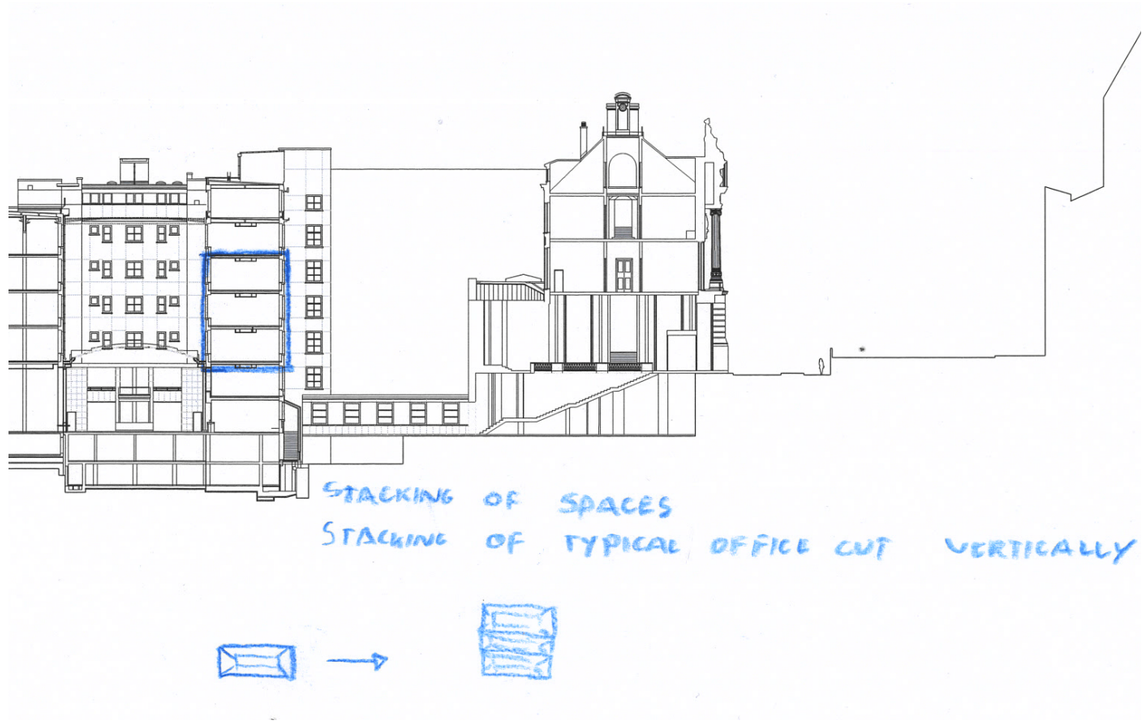


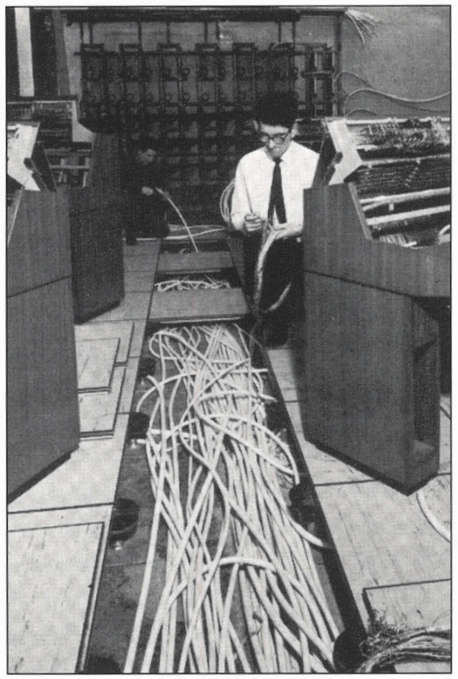
1:50, three typical office floor "hallways" stacked on top of each other


LINEARITY
3X
STACKING OF TYPICAL OFFICE HORIZONTALLY
4
3
2






STACKING OF SPACES
STACKING OF TYPICAL OFFICE CUT VERTICALLY



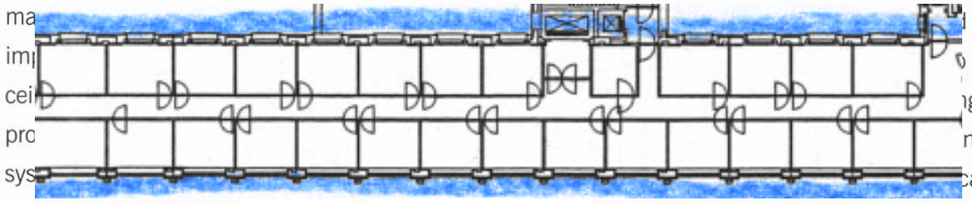
4.11 Layout of cables underneath a raised access floor, circa 1972.

compact network of electrical systems. Each of these options was sufficiently developed and available to planners in the early 1960s; all they needed to do was merge the redefined concept of mechanical space with the enlightened reexamination of Taylorism advocated by theoreticians and business leaders. The depth of the Inland Steel Building, 65 feet, matched the Quickborner Team's recommended minimum dimension for the office landscape, thus indicating how the leap to a 160-foot depth signified a readaptation of interior work systems (layout and furnishings) more specifically than it did a significant change in construction.[7]

FROM THE OFFICE LANDSCAPE TO THE AUTOMATED BUILDING (1970–2000)

The appearance of automated work systems at the beginning of the 1970s marked a turnaround in the principles governing the construction of office spaces. As a result of the need to incorporate wires under the floors, these systems prompted a new process of revising floor depth by incorporating raised floors for mechanical equipment. Energy equipment was also tested for adaptability, and, compared to other subsystems, its rapid obsolescence became obvious. The cores and floors housing centralized mechanical equipment were replaced by a more compartmentalized organization that questioned the existence not only of mechanical floors but also of interior cores. At the same time, systems for regulating environmental comfort were augmented: in addition to air-conditioning, air recirculation, lighting, and electrical cabling, systems began to appear for telecommunications (telephone, telex, fax, television, closed circuits), fire detection and sprinklering, emergency and security lighting, pneumatic mail, intercoms, cleaning, signals, and alarms. These environmental options sprang from the same normative conditions that required an appropriate place in the spatial structure of the office building,[8] and they raised questions about the suspended ceiling as the generalized plane from which energy should radiate.

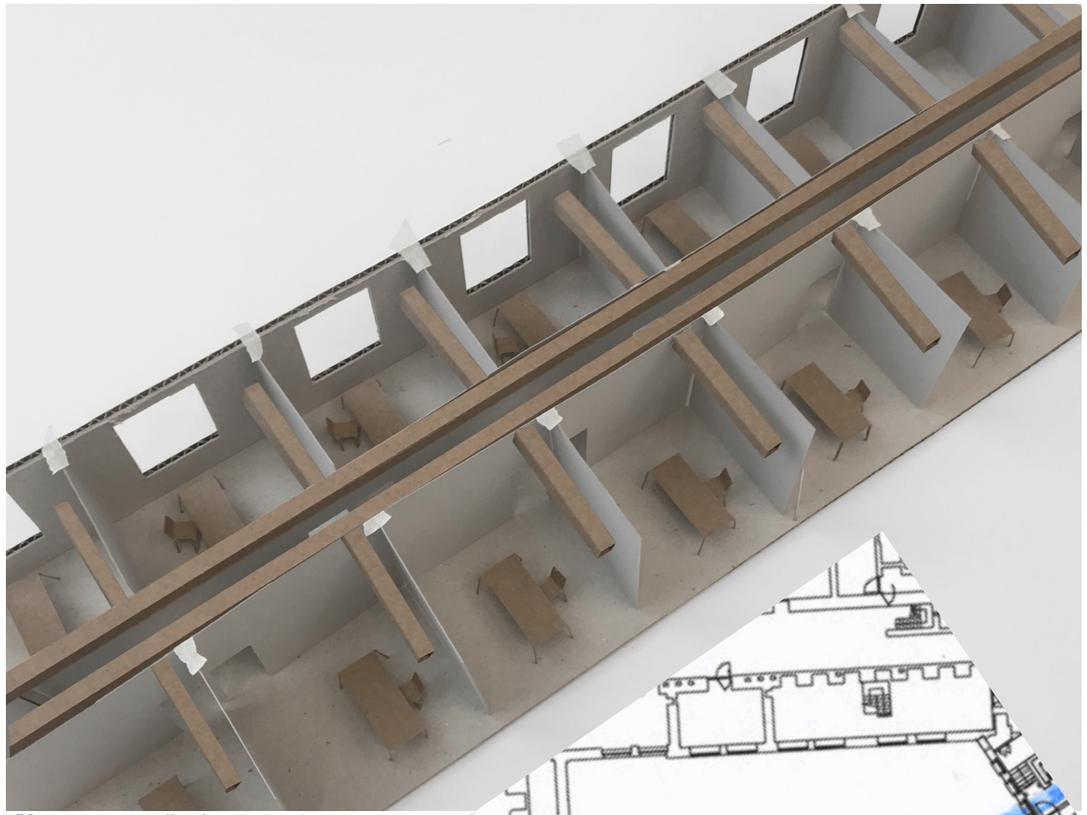
Coinciding with increased mechanization in the workplace and office, centralized computer spaces, which appeared in the early 1970s, became models for a new form of integrated technology. The densely packed cables and wires required by computers and the need to dissipate the heat they produce led to the widespread development of raised access floors, with cables placed in channels just below floor level to facilitate repairs, alterations, and equipment replacement without turning the entire office into a construction zone (fig. 4.11). This solution within the ma... workplace: imp... free usable cei... g or of bays pro... ness, energy sys... apacity; the and physically linked to energy systems, and in the majority of cases the work environment became progressively individualized or compartmentalized. Computerized labor resulted in increasing autonomy, and the universal suspended ceiling associated with the open plan and office landscape was replaced by a model based on a manipulable environment, which translated into the widespread use of access floors.[9]



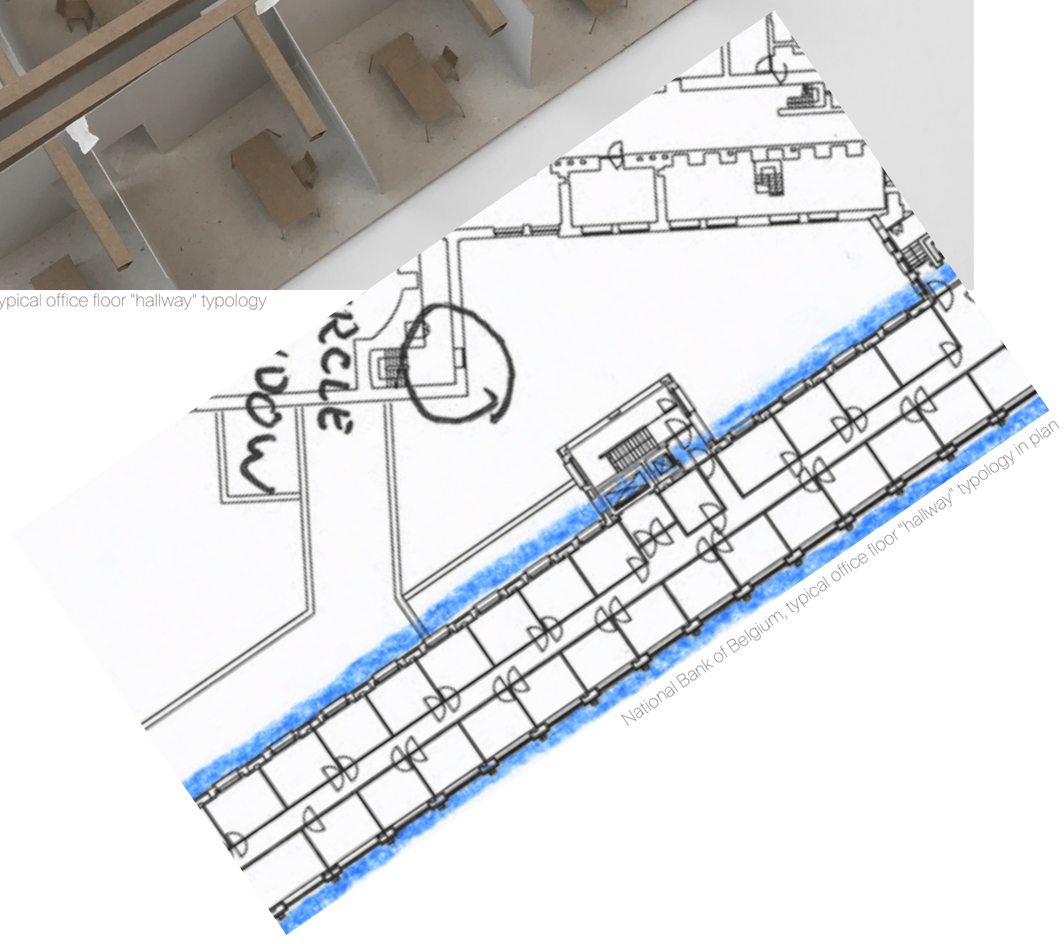
Replacing the ceiling as the building's energy protagonist, the access floor introduced the possibility of purging the ceiling of extraneous elements and reestablishing it as the stable architectural dimension conceived by architects of the 1950s. The access floor was particularly suited to Louis Kahn's concept whereby the finishing slab of a floor acts as a layer of acoustic insulation and a fireproof barrier, thus constituting an element independent of the floor's structure and not its protagonist—the double role that had been assumed by the slab in the Maison Dom-ino. As it was now less important to the overall structural mechanics of the building, the floor could be elevated, folded, or eliminated as needed to make the organization of this cavity the essential concept of the building, a component that served the spaces both above and below it, just as the examples developed for laboratories and electronics firms had anticipated a decade earlier. Thus, the integration of new computer technologies can be understood as an evolutionary structural development as much as a new programmatic demand.

Various ideas emerged concurrently with an increasing emphasis on the work space of a structure—horizontal and vertical—to accommodate the office's mechanical spaces; and the concept of the floor as a "three-dimensional cavity that contains." Automation was in large part an ultimate development of these ideas, but its impact closely resembled that of air-conditioning in terms of its implications for buildings.

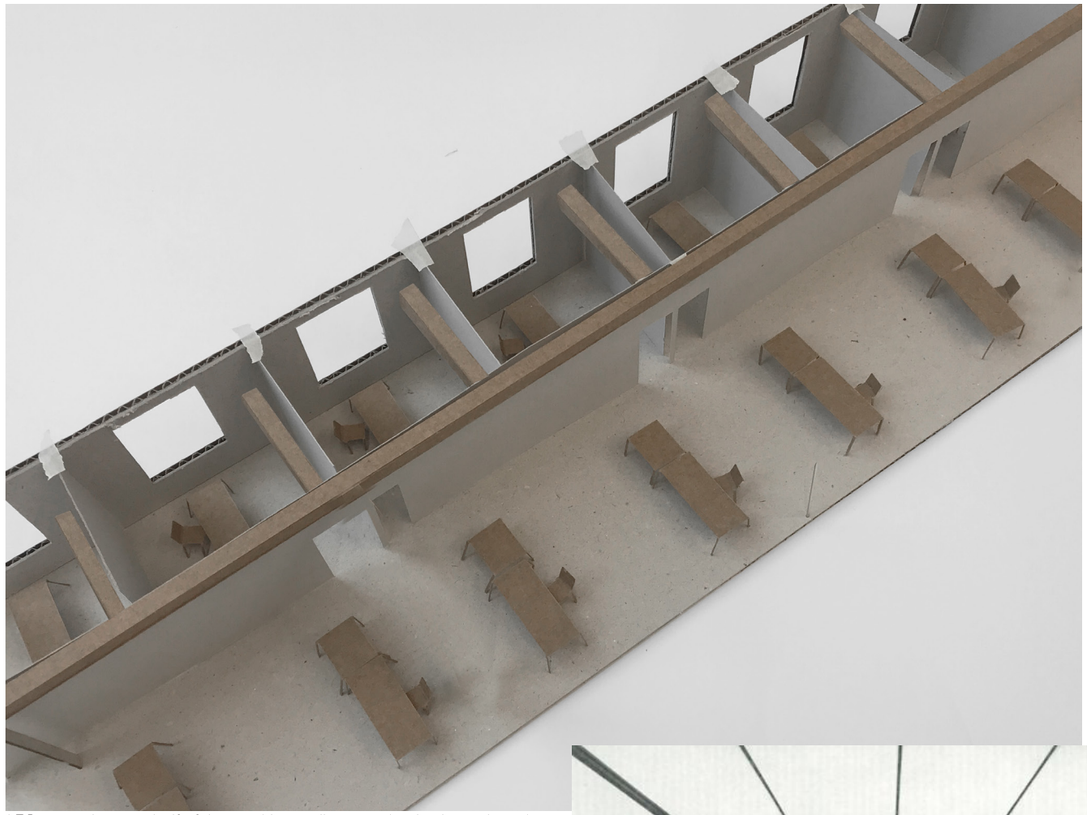
Certain buildings exemplify the early forms in which this development was articulated, its impact on floor thickness, and the effects it had on the definition



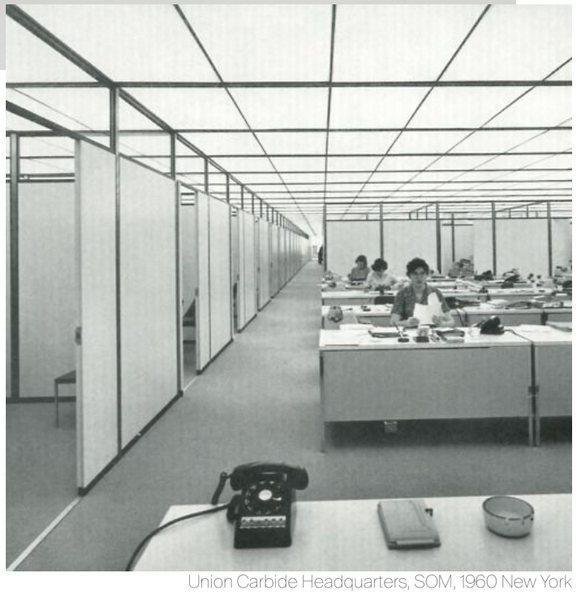
1:50, current typical office floor "hallway" typology



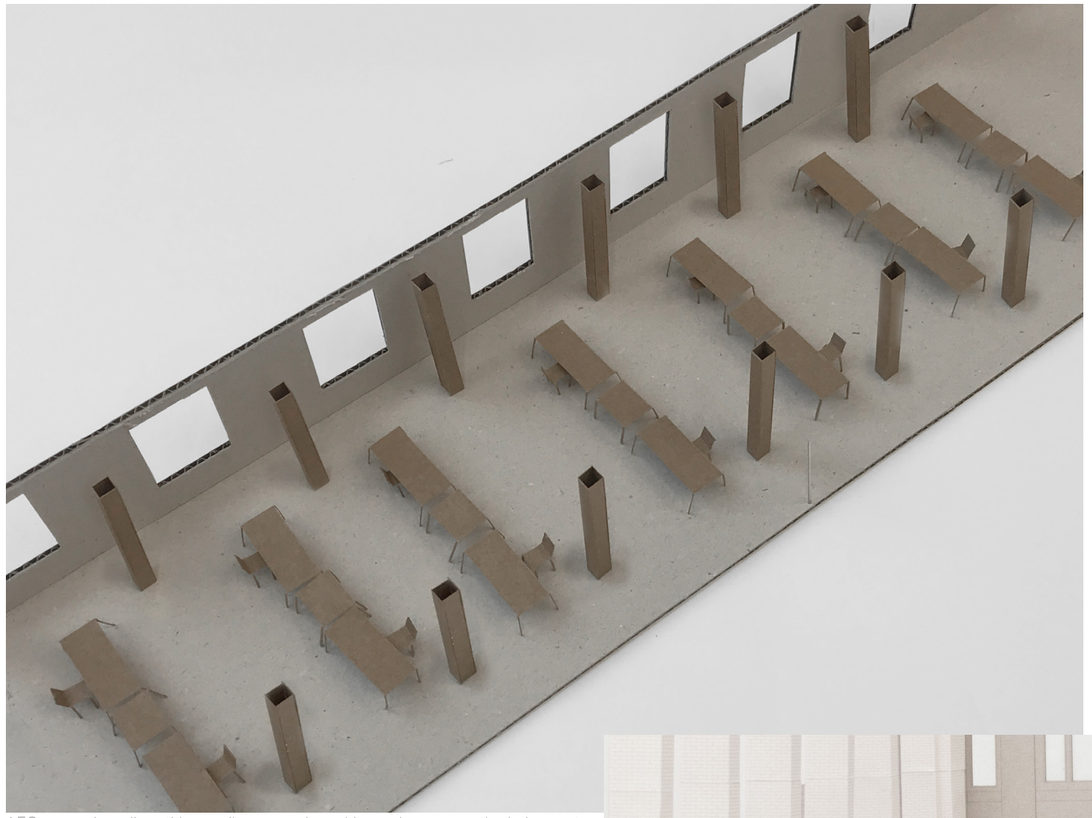
National Bank of Belgium, typical office floor "hallway" typology in plan



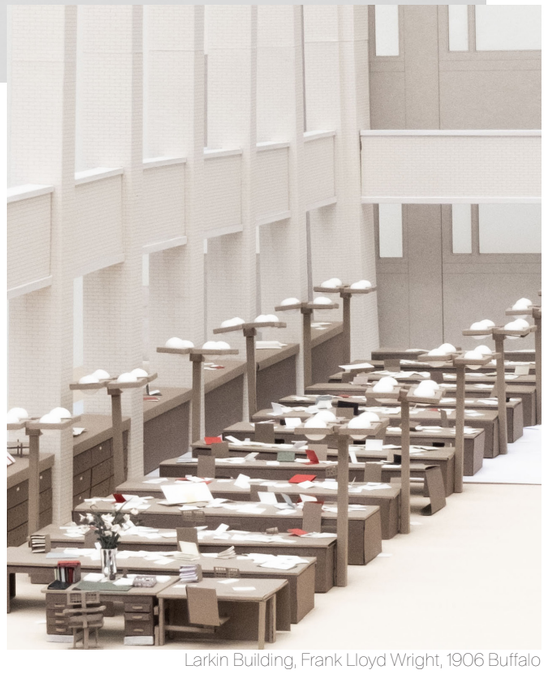
1:50, removing one half of the partition walls, exposing horizontal services



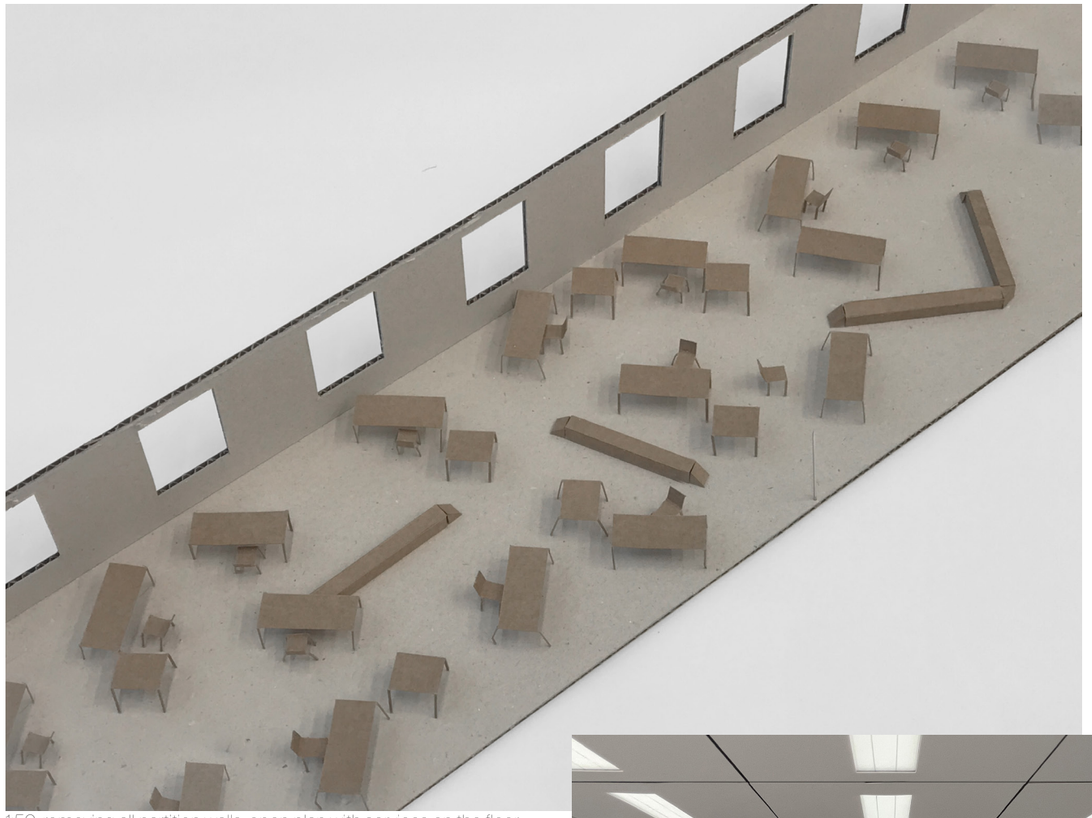
Union Carbide Headquarters, SOM, 1960 New York



1:50, removing all partition walls, open plan with services as vertical elements



Larkin Building, Frank Lloyd Wright, 1906 Buffalo



1:50, removing all partition walls, open plan with services on the floor



Osram Headquarters, Walter Henn, 1965 Munich



1:50, four typical office floor "hallways" stacked on top of each other



1:50, four reconfigured office interiors stacked on top of and relating to one another.
building services are connecting the layers.

SNOWCRASH
1997 - 2003

9. Murray, Andreas. 2020. Telephone interview March 27th.
10. Murray, Andreas. 2020. Stockholm 2018. Interview May 14th.
11. Bluetooth. *Understanding Bluetooth Range*. https://www.bluetooth.com/learn-about-bluetooth/bluetooth-technology/range/ (2020-04-02)
12. Tuck, Andrew. 2000. The ICD+ jacket: Slip into my office, please. *The Independent*. September 4th. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/analysis-and-features/the-icd-jacket-slip-into-my-office-please-694074.html (2020-04-02)
13. *Snowcrash*. 2000. Snowcrash. Press release. April 14th.

given me an assignment with instructions; instead we had a continuous creative dialogue and I felt free to explore.'[9]

The Snowcrash office moved from Växjö in the south of Sweden to Tulegatan in central Stockholm and Andreas Murray began to hire the right competence to help him build a design company for the 21st century.

'Snowcrash did not have its own production or any established distribution network, so we had the opportunity to develop new solutions in many traditional areas. Early on we explored e-commerce but of course no one at the time had taken this step in the furniture business so we did not understand how easy or difficult it could be. Many different ideas were discussed, and simultaneously we were looking for ways to utilise all this new technology with design.'[10]

Netsurfer, *Globlow* and *Jack in the Box* were objects which in different ways had incorporated electronic hardware, and it was now high time to explore if the same could not be done with software. In 1999 the Swedish telecommunications company Ericsson was among the first to successfully develop and release a new technology called Bluetooth, which meant wireless, short range communication between electric devices.[11] Andreas Murray engaged the product developer Gustaf Rosell, who had knowledge in this field, to work out a technical concept for furniture using Bluetooth. The fashion industry had already explored ideas about wearable technology, which in spirit bordered on the wireless theme, and in the beginning of 2000 the *ICD+* jacket was released. This was the result of a collaboration between Levi's and the Dutch electronics firm Philips. Aimed at 'urban nomads', it enabled the wearer to easily control different digital gear, such as mobile phones and Mp3 players.[12] A sample of this jacket was also bought and used as inspiration, and in the hands of Snowcrash, the humble desk was destined to be elevated from mere furniture to a wireless connection hub.

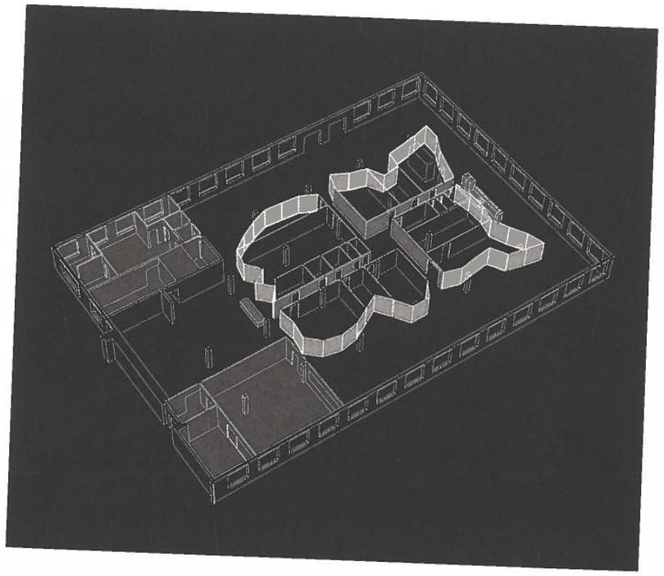
'It is actually quite natural that a desk, which in the open office landscape constitutes the centre of the work place, functions as a gateway or bridge towards the internet. In my opinion this is even more relevant than hooking up a fridge ...in the long run we will see even more of the technical functions that today are placed within the walls, floor and ceiling of the office, transferred to systems of furniture', Gustaf Rosell later stated in the press release.[13] The table, designed by Teppo Asikainen and Ilkka Terho, got the name *Broadway* and was one of several new products being developed for presentation at Salone del Mobile in Milan, 2000.

Ever since a contract had been written between the originators behind Snowcrash and Proventus Design, the team at Valvomo, Timo Salli and Ilkka Suppanen, had been engaged on a freelance basis while also working for other clients. Andreas Murray now hired Ilkka Suppanen as creative director for Snowcrash, and collaborations with new designers were established. Robert Weil proposed a meeting with

33. Tham, Bolle and Videgård, Martin. Stockholm 2019. Interview September 24th.

'The Snowcrash collection was very dynamic—it was light, mobile, changeable—and combined with a scenario of where Snowcrash would be in the future, made us think of how it could change over time based on needs. Our whole programme rested on the idea that as little as possible was permanently built, so we made a structure with a glass wall that acted like an amoeba that easily could be altered, moved or taken down altogether.'[33]

Despite the seemingly flawless line-up of creative competence, experience and know how that now was gathered under one roof, it would as it so happened be the latter of the architects' scenarios that played out. Snowcrash would be taken down altogether before it reached commercial success.



Overview of the new Snowcrash office

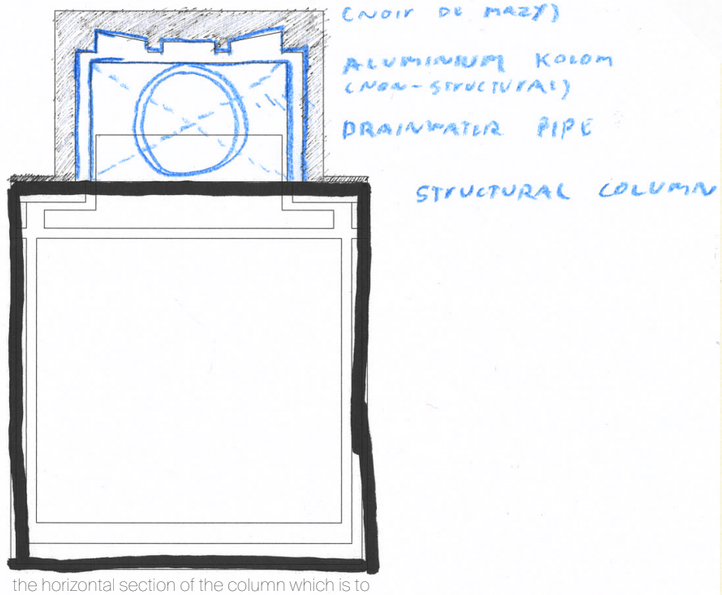
1:20

is it possible to apply the strategy of dissection - reconfiguration - displacement to a different space in the National Bank of Belgium, one that is different from the previously considered office floors and perhaps more monumental?

what happens when the monumental banking hall is selectively dissected?

- the column(s) in the banking hall
- the partition wall following the historic line of the counter
- the not-so-historic furniture

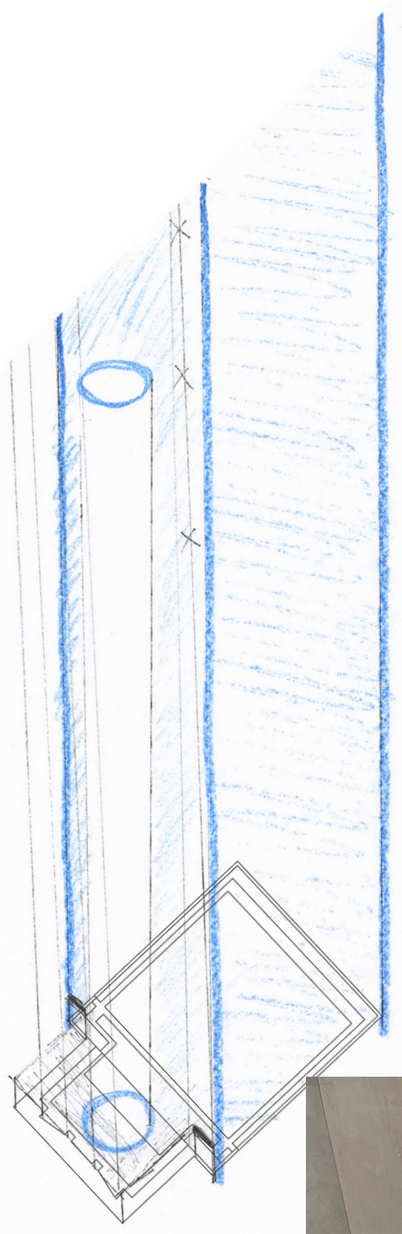
that has somehow become an iconic element in the space after its refurbishement?



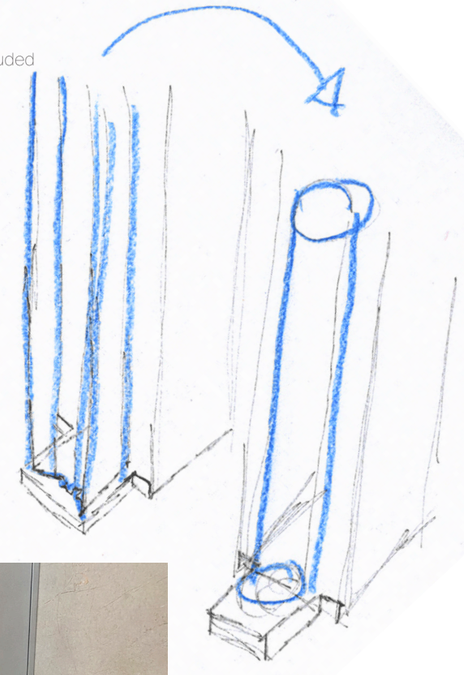
the horizontal section of the column which is to be found like this42x in the banking hall on one side

De wanden zijn bekleed met marmerplaten (Lunel Uni) op een zwart marmeren plint (Noir de Mazy). De ruimtes worden geritmeerd door kolommen en pilasters op een zwart marmeren plint. De schacht van de kolommen in de lokettenzalen is vervaardigd uit aluminiumprofielen waarin de afwateringsbuizen geïntegreerd zijn. In de lokettenzalen is nog oorspronkelijk vast meubilair aanwezig (o.a. schrijftafels, loketten, enz.). Aan de binnenzijde zijn de ramen afgewerkt met een aluminiumomkasting met nissen waarin tevens de gietijzeren radiatoren geïntegreerd zijn. Ook de oorspronkelijke verlichtingselementen zijn nog grotendeels aanwezig.
Ook hier gaan esthetiek en techniek hand in hand. Zo is, bijvoorbeeld, de afwatering geïntegreerd in de schacht van kolommen, die zijn opgebouwd uit aluminiumprofielen, op een zwart marmeren plint, en werden de gietijzeren radiatoren speciaal ontworpen om ingewerkt te kunnen worden in het geheel van de ramen en hun omkasting. Die combinatie van techniek en esthetiek vormt een van de belangrijkste troeven van het gebouw.

(dutch) text from the National Bank of Belgium BIM file regarding the water piping in the banking hall

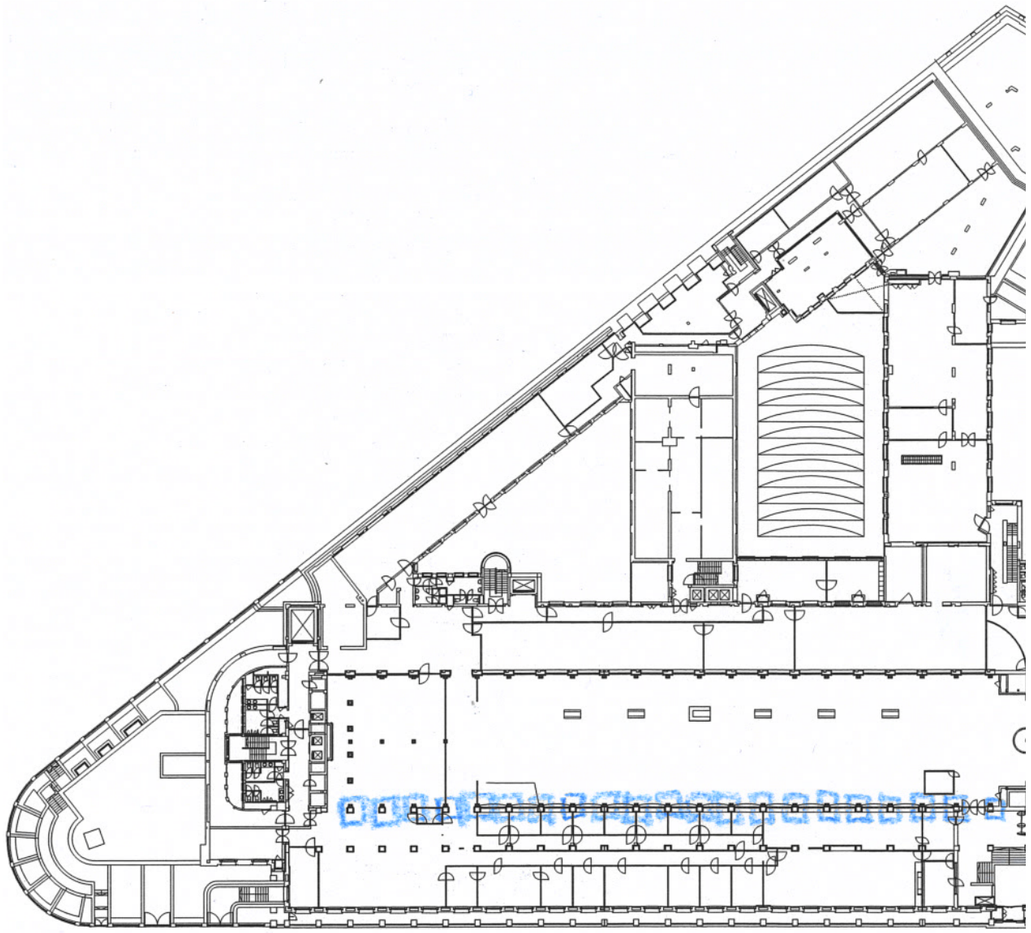


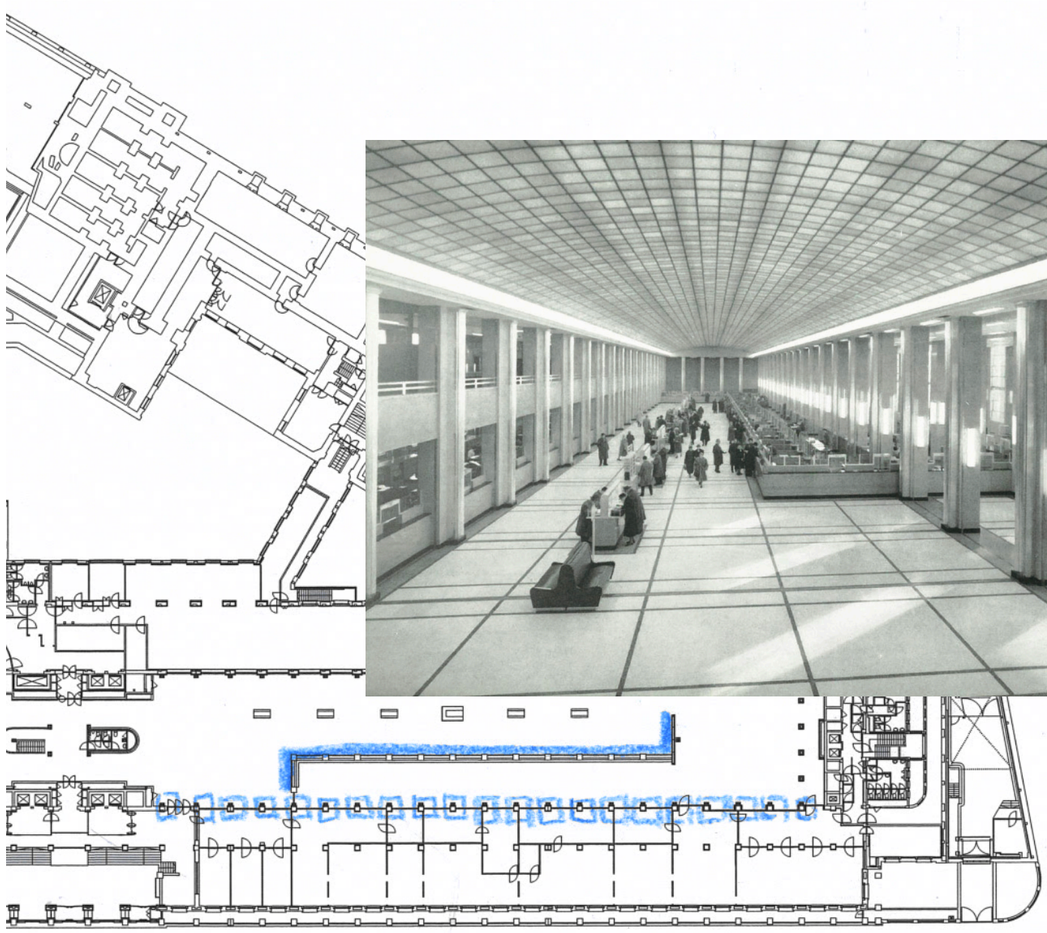
the horizontal section extruded





close-up of the aluminium cap, note: this is the column on the other side of the hall. photograph by Alessandro Rognoni





42 x



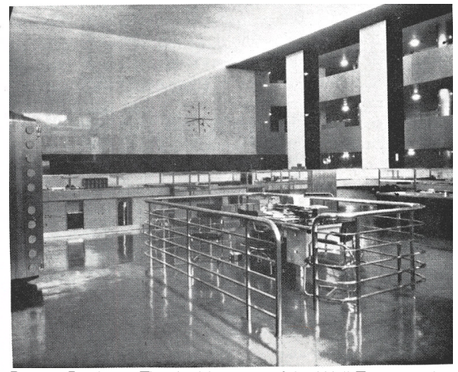


THE BANKING HALL HAS TWO DISTINCT INTERIORS: THE ONE IN FRONT OF THE PARTITION WALL (01) AND THE ONE BEHIND IT. (02)

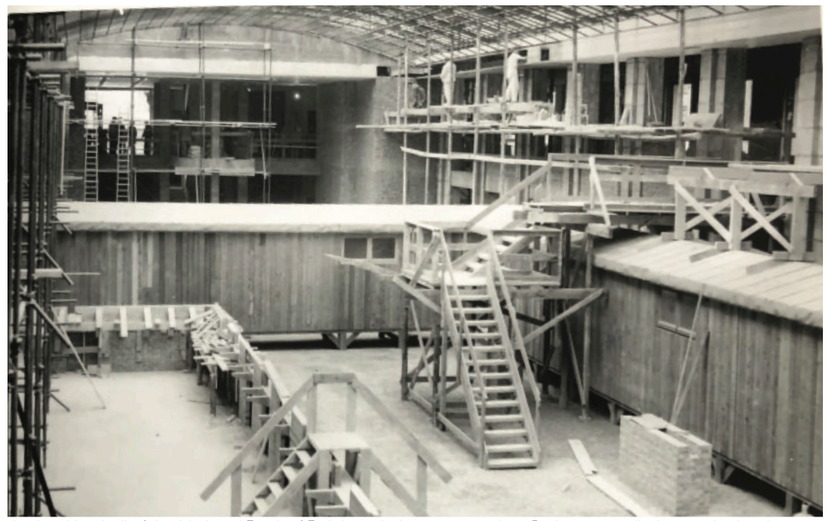
The situation was different in the banking halls and public spaces, however. The main banking hall was lit by low fittings on the counters, and by indirect light thrown up on the ceiling from lamps concealed above dropped panels around the heads of the columns. Inlet and extract grilles for the air-conditioning were also inset in these columns, the ducts being concealed in massive furred spaces that swelled the visible section of the columns far beyond structural necessity. In other areas, such as the entrance lobby, furred spaces in the ceilings also served to house ducts, from which the air entered the lobby through annular diffusers around recessed lamp-fittings—again an anticipation of much later practice.[7]

How much extra heat load was imposed on the air-handling system by such usages as this is not clear, though it seems that filament lamps generally throughout the building caused thermal problems, and most of the lighting in all areas has been extensively altered. However, the point which is historically relevant here is that in these combined diffuser/lamp types of installation, architects and engineers were working together to exploit the lost

Reyner Banham, The Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment, pp. 211



Reyner Banham, The Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment, pp. 212



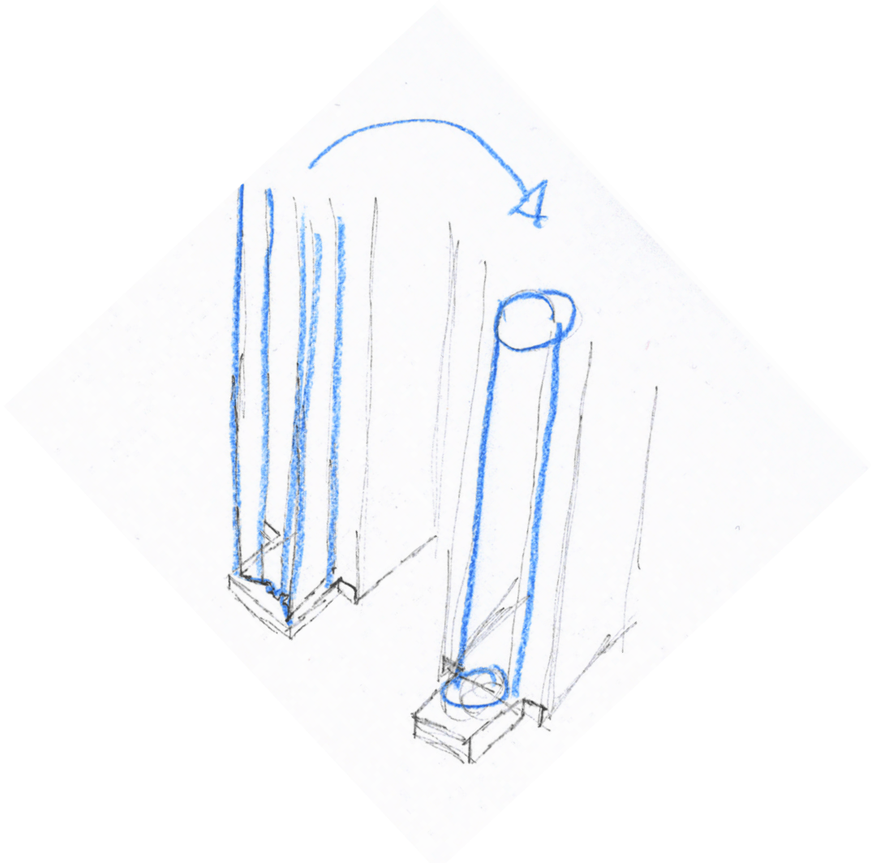
the banking hall of the National Bank of Belgium during construction. Staircase to climb over the bank counter and the exposed rainwater pipes.



banking hall, National Bank of Belgium, current situation, own photograph

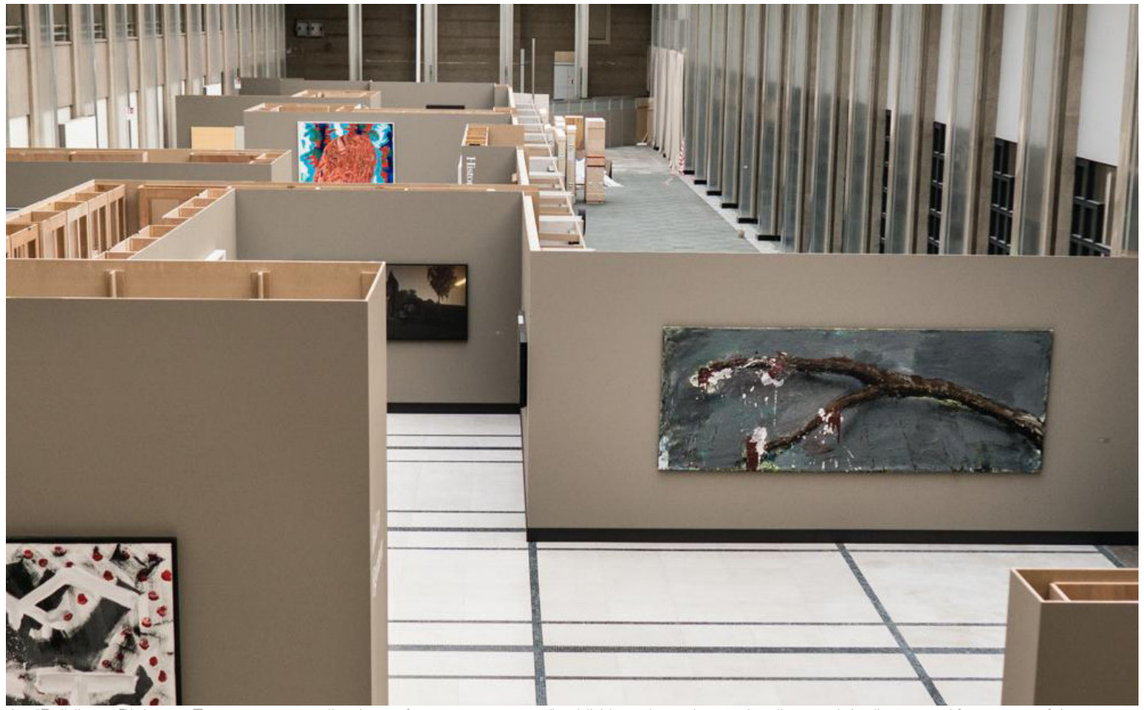


1:20, current situation of the banking hall in the National Bank of Belgium





1:20, removing the aluminium cap and exposing the rainwater piping behind it



the "Building a Dialogue. Two corporate collections of contemporary art." exhibition where the stud wall was originally erected for as part of the scenography



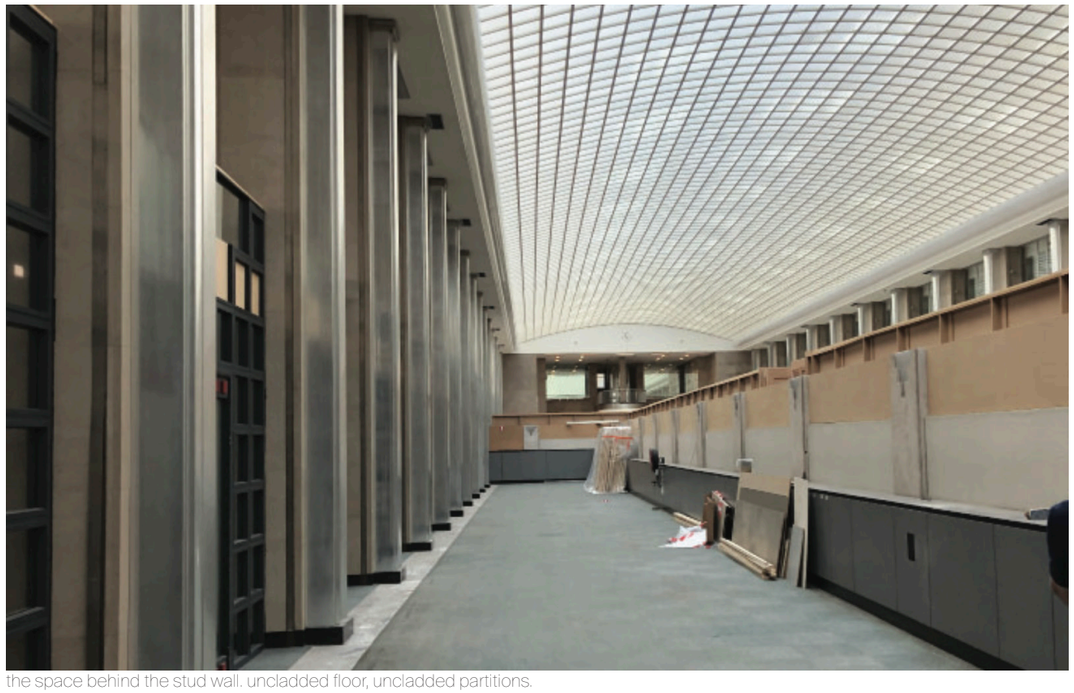
1:20, cutting into the stud wall, revealing the framework behind it



the space behind the stud wall. uncladded floor, uncladded partitions, uninteruppted columns. photograph by meitar tewel.



1:20, removing the cladding of one entire stud wall, revealing the framework of the stud wall completely



the space behind the stud wall. uncladded floor, uncladded partitions.

(third) individual design crit

feedback Mark Pimlott, Jurjen Zeinstra

adress the bank as a whole,
a far larger adress,
how to situate previous episodic interventions in a larger way
the entirety of the bank

a larger setting

ROLE OF THE CENTRAL BANK ?

LARGER SCALE
LARGER CONTEXT

THE BUILDING FABRIC AS A
ORGANISATION
CONTEXTUALISING
LARGER FRAME

BUILDING STRATEGY

DISTRIBUTION OF THINGS .
- ZONING

FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE WORK
BASIS OF THE PROJECT
THIS IS WHAT THE FIRST PROPOSAL
LOOKS LIKE IN TERMS OF ORGANISATION

MAKE IT LOOK LIKE THERE ARE
NO VAST AREAS OF VAGUENESS/
UNDEFINED

ATTITUDE ON THE INTERIOR
THE BUILDING
THE SITE

CATALOG OF PARTS

PRESENTATION MAY INCLUDE REFERENCES

ROOM C

HARDCOPY PROJECT JOURNAL
EDIT

To: Caruso St John Architects
Adam Caruso
1 Coate Street,
London, E2 9AG
United Kingdom

From: Tom Avermaete and Hans Teerds
OASE Journal for Architecture

OASE modernities

Dear Adam,

Your project for the Bremer Landesbank testifies to our understanding of the search for a more nuanced understanding of what it means to be 'modern'. The project is located in the very centre of Bremen, near the main square and part of a Unesco world heritage site. The design clearly positions itself between other important buildings of the city, like the Dom on the opposite side of the square, and the Medieval Town Hall next to it. Although the building houses the offices of a contemporary bank, it doesn't express that contemporaneity by differentiating itself from the historical context in which it intervenes, nor by overtly celebrating modern technology or construction methods.

Another approach seems to be at stake, in which the relation to the building conventions and architectural codes of the city of Bremen play a paramount role in constructing a frame of reference for the new design. Through its materiality, the use and treatment of brickwork, as well as through its formal qualities, the clear differentiation between basement, body and roofscape, the shape of the windows, the articulation of the entrance, the building embeds itself in a long tradition of formal and monumental architecture that dominates the (medieval) city centers of Northern Europe. At the same time, the architecture of both exterior and interior, particularly the public hall with its formal lamps, banks and desks, seems to refer to a long history of archetypical banking buildings. The upper floors of the building, organised around the inner court with its white plastered walls and its large window openings, in turn, seem to refer to a modern office tradition.

As a start of our conversation, we would like to ask you the following two questions about the project (and your practice):

What role can the 'context – understood as both the existing architectural codes and conventions, and as the history of architecture – play in establishing a frame of reference for the current project?

How did you read the context in this case? Which references were significant with regard to the design of this bank building, and how are they used?

We look forward to your response to our questions,
Tom and Hans

Dear Tom and Hans,

To address your questions one first has to define what 'modern' is. Orthodox modernism was often rhetorical and abstract. Although imbued with ideas that came out of modernisation – such as relativity, quantum physics, socialism, psychoanalysis – within architecture city. This is the modern of Édouard Manet and Emile Zola, of Alfred Döblin and James Joyce, work that engages directly with the concrete realities of the modern world. In architecture this is what Helen Thomas and I studied in the series of books we made at the ETH Zurich.

For a long time I mistakenly thought that the architecture I made with Peter St John was postmodern, because of our diverse set of references, our openness to history and the significance that context held for us. Now, I realise that postmodernism is just another form of abstraction, as indifferent to reality, and as willing a servant to capital, as is positivist modernism. To unequivocally engage with the full range of reality is modern. Like the work of Ferdinand Pouillon and Asnago Vender, and also the work of Martha Rosler and Gordon Matta Clark, work that is profound because of its engagement with actual physical and social situations at the same time as employing contemporary means of production.

So to address your questions, context is fundamental to how I think about architecture because to me, the main reason to think about and make architecture is to understand the world that I inhabit. Being at architecture school during the first half of the 1980s, all of my projects began by making context and precedent studies, empty exercises that fortunately did not completely kill off my interest in engaging with the world around me. The context that is important to me is that described in the work of Martha Rosler, Gordon Matta Clark, Robert Smithson, Andreas Gursky, Thomas Struth and Candida Höfer. The breadth of this work's subject matter, and the flatness and all-over formal quality that characterises the photographic work, shows how the epic and the everyday can sit side by side, and suggests how a contemporary architecture can emerge out of our postindustrial times. The more that Peter and I looked at and understood this work, the more we were able to make designs that could engage with the grand narratives of urban architecture at the same time as attending to the more fragile stories of contemporary existence. Over time our capacity to draw upon a broader history of architecture and a wider range of constructions has increased.

At Bremen we certainly were interested in the Hanseatic tradition of brick architecture, and in the exceptional historical richness of the site in the Domshof, a context that includes grand public buildings alongside food and flower markets. The handling of the brick façades refers specifically to Hans Poelzig's Hanover Office building (1924), and the plan, organised around its oval courtyard, comes from Sigurd Lewerentz's Social Security Administration Office Building in Stockholm (1928). But these are only part of a network of references and stories that inform the design of the Bremer Landesbank. For me, context is an infinitely rich topographical, cultural, formal and material resource, within which the whole of the project can be found. This resource is something that expands with each project, and then stays with me. As I get older the ways in which I draw upon it becomes less obvious and more intuitive.

Best regards,
Adam

experimentation and progress, still valid, or can the technological frame of reference be associated with new values?

Warm regards,
Tom and Véronique

Dear Tom and Véronique,

The term technology is not only broad and full of connotations, it no longer has the same meaning today as in the past. We're far from the positivist spirit of the nineteenth century, which saw the machine as a model of absolute efficiency. The primacy of technique is no longer the norm, as other imperatives (economic, ecological, environmental) counterbalance technical innovation. Our societies no longer hold an absolute belief in progress, but question the meaning of progress itself. In our office, we still consider progress desirable, but only when it is tinged with innovation and experimentation. Technology is than the set of formal, technical and economic means that allows us to conquer these three notions of innovation, experimentation and progress.

Optimism is, for us, not from another time. On the contrary, we understand and claim it as a projective influx. Our method is to reason and to act on the basis of opportunities and not constraints. It's neither a question of innovation for the sake of innovation, nor of restoration for the sake of restoration, but of making hybridisations possible. In search of new materials, there is no predetermination of constructive modes or materials in our architecture. Industrial materials can prove to be efficient in housing as well as in projects for the tertiary sector. Architecture does not have to submit itself to the processes of the building industry, but on the contrary, has to test them, to reveal new potentialities. A personalised reshaping of technology could stimulate an alternative kind of environmental engineering. Architects' experiments can benefit from better targeted and more responsible industrial practices.

We're interested in how the use of technology allows us to claim a certain fragility. Other artistic currents have illustrated that it's possible to create with depreciated materials (the Italian Arte Povera) or to invent modes of production by claiming their precariousness (the 'lo-fi' of the independent rock labels of the 1990s). Let's look at this second example. Daniel Johnston sings 'I live my broken dreams', while accumulating handicaps: a trembling voice, a badly tuned guitar, a microphone placed too far away, sometimes parasitic echoes. But miraculously, this song manages to live its dented 'broken dream' and to go straight to the heart. It has the shape of the conditions that gave birth to it. The example is too extreme to be transposed to architecture and its primary imperative of solidity. Constructing a building and composing a two-minute song do not mobilise the same means or energies. But we sometimes have to build in environments in the form of 'broken dreams' and an implicit part of the architectural commission requires us to stabilise dented environments. A building, with a coherent internal logic, can sometimes, on its own, offer new landmarks to a site that is sorely lacking them.

For us, the driving force behind a project is a strong relationship between aesthetics, technology and economics in which the three terms stimulate each other, without establishing a hierarchy. The design of the project and the construction of the building are processes in which these different 'reasons' are confronted and thus generate specific solutions. We keep a lucid eye on technology.

For us, it's the pharmakon of architecture, both the remedy and the poison. An indispensable but ambiguous means. It obviously brings advances, while sometimes revealing a toxic aspect. This is why we push it into its entrenchments in order to reappropriate it. We remain rational minds, and continue to think of our projects as a chain of reasoning, both formal and constructive. A technology that becomes ours, becomes a precious ally to support each step of this reasoning. In the Life Science Building of the École polytechnique fédérale (EPFL) in Lausanne, the loggias in the double glass façade with its monumental tilting windows act as box windows for thermal insulation and as chimneys for ventilation. In the new Galeries Lafayette in Pau, the side façade becomes a monumental multipurpose filter whose curved, translucent panels regulate both the 'comfort' heat exchanges and create a special lighting atmosphere.

We could say that our buildings are forms of 'constructed reasoning'. We must not lose the thread of complexity. If it loses itself and forgets its own reasons, complexity becomes 'complicated', a sum of knots without resolution. Unravelling this thread seems to us to be a crucial position in the contemporary world. Today we're immersed in a logic of algorithms that feed our ways of informing as well as distract us. So many results that come directly from the 'black boxes' of our smartphones and computers. Faced with this deliberately unreadable logic, we choose to show everything! We look for the truth of assembly and the essence of the technology: showing the forces that pass through the building, defining the right thickness of material, designing the most efficient and economical constructive devices. An approach that must imperatively remain in the realm of the visible, to signify that every detail of the building is part of a joint effort.

Best wishes,
Stéphanie and Alexandre

Dear Stéphanie and Alexandre,

Thank you for your elaborate response to our first letter in which we asked about your relation to technology and the set of references that you hold. Your expanded definition of technology, as a set of formal, technical and economic means that allows for innovation, experimentation and progress, reminds us of the approaches of some of the architects of the Modern Movement. Also, in the 1920s and 1930s, many architects, urban designers and politicians believed that such a 'thick' technology would pave the path towards social, cultural and economic progress.

Indeed, the relation between technology and architecture is not a new one, but marks the history of modern architecture. How does the design practice of Bruther relate to this historical *affaire* between building and *technē*, that can most probably be traced back to the very origins of the Modern Movement in architecture? Are you the heirs of this modern tradition? And how can this history of architecture and technology be activated in practice nowadays? In more general terms, how would you situate your practice and position as contemporary architects in relation to history?

Warm wishes,
Tom and Véronique

1:50 BIG MODEL

A MODEL THAT SHOWS THE BANK IN A LARGER WAY

STARTING AT THE FACADE, DEFINING NEW ENT A NEW ENTRANCE THROUGH DISSECTING THE COLUMNS

WHAT HAPPENS FURTHER ON THE GROUND FLOOR?

THE MODEL SHOWS THE BUILDING STRATEGY DISSECTION- RECONFIGURATION - DISPLACEMENT WITHIN THE LARGER FRAME

STACKING OF SPACES IN LONG AND SHORT DIRECTION

1:100

the design so far revolves around interventions to elements in the building that repeat itself either horizontally, vertically or both. through this repetition a episodic intervention on a single element of the building can have a tremendous impact, as it gets multiplied, stacked and repeated throughout the building.

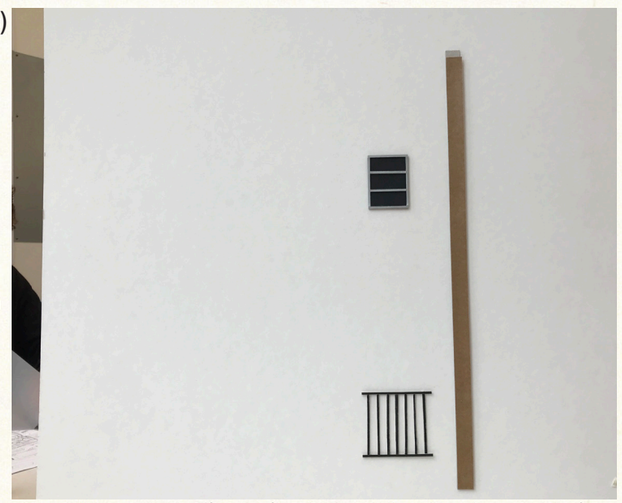
stacking of spaces in long and short direction becomes relevant now.

how to add to the model(s) made previously to make this happen?

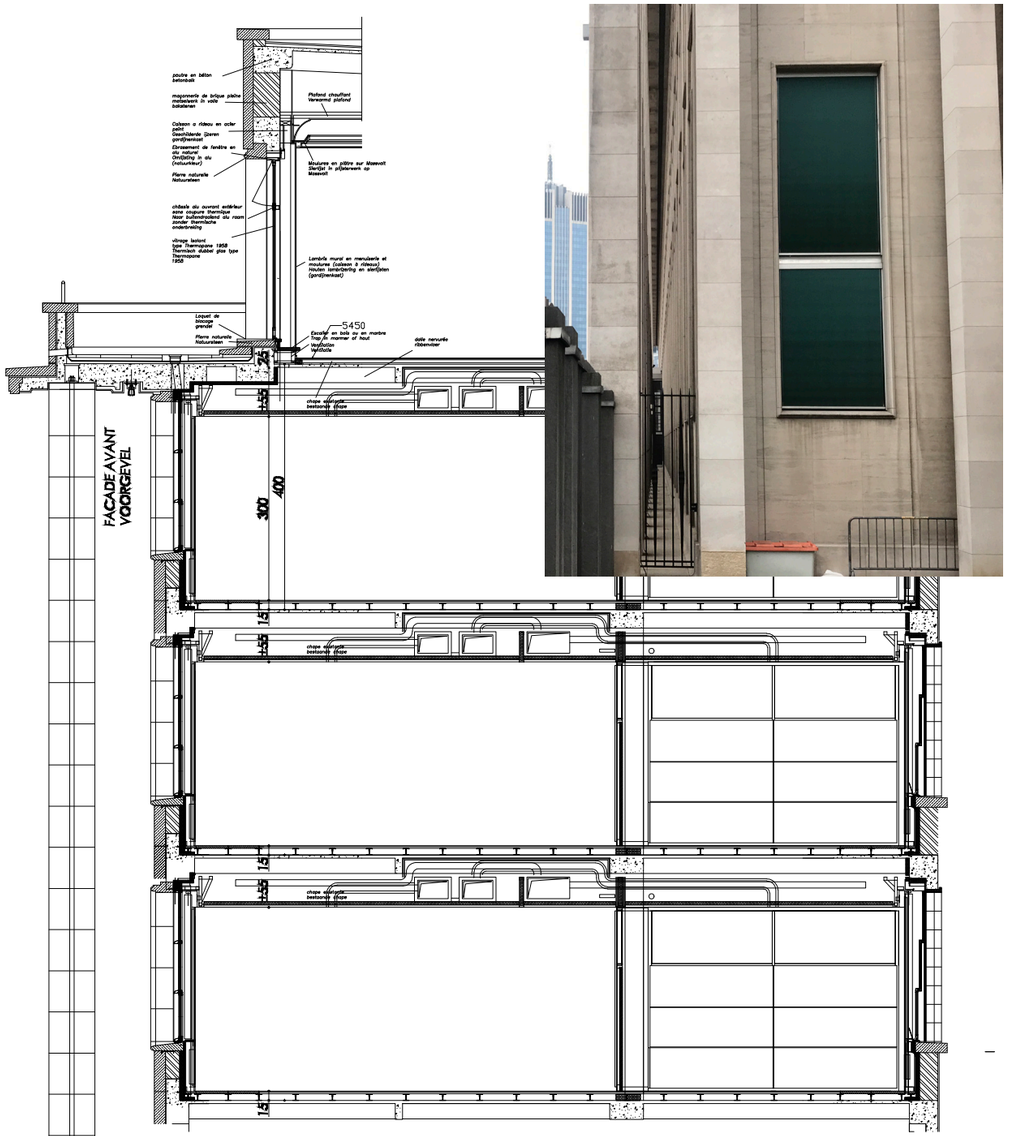
working on expanding the models, re-using them

taking an essential cut through the building, from facade to the inside, to show the expression of its attitude

rescaling the 1:50 model to make proposals on a 1:100 scale



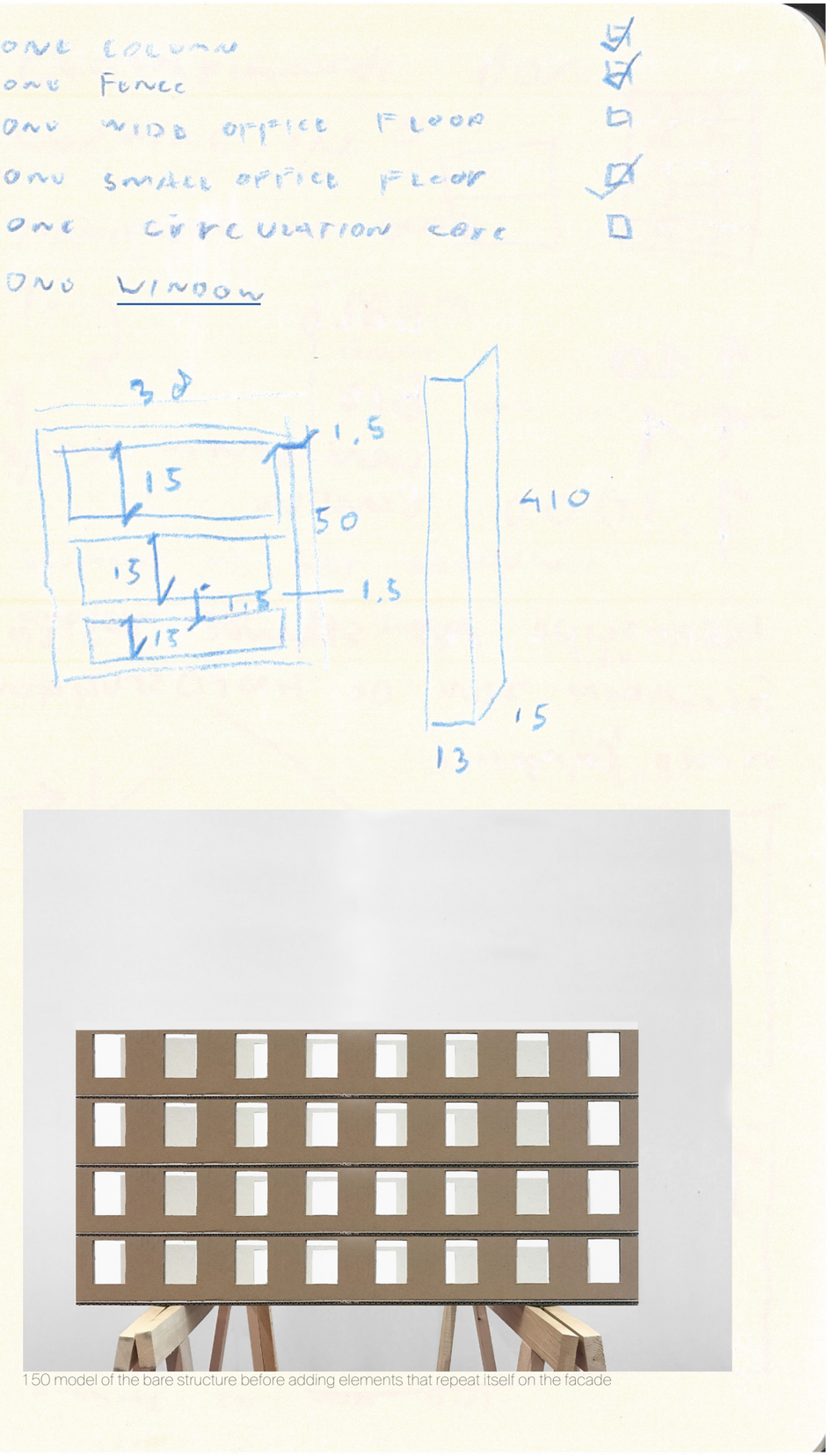
elements that repeat itself on the facade: the window, the column and the fence



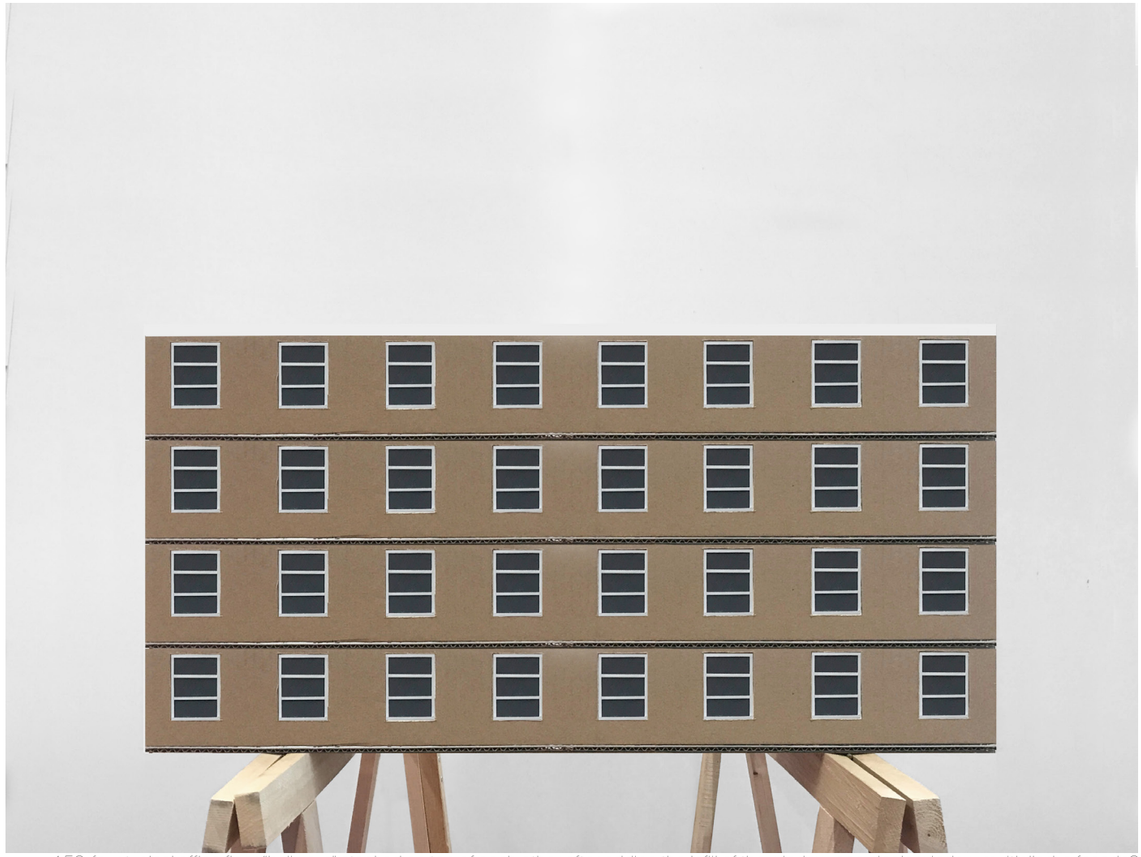
facade columns, those that are rendering the facade as a wall in the oblique view, are non-structural and solely decorative

Qua structuur is het gebouw opgetrokken uit een betonskelet en opgedeeld in 5 onderdelen, gescheiden door uitzettingsvoegen. De structuur is opgevuld met metselwerk (baksteen), en bekleed met crèmekleurige kalksteen (Savonnière); de raamkaders en de dekstenen zijn bekleed met Euville kalksteen. Voor de gevel aan de de Berlaimontlaan staan 54 zeer slanke, hoge kolommen (0,75 x 0,85m x 20m). Ze geven maat, schaal en visuele eenheid op afstand – een principe dat doet denken aan de 'kolossale orde' bij Michelangelo. Hoewel deze kolommen puur decoratief zijn (ze hebben geen dragende functie; de daklijst is in overkraging), vormden ze door hun slanke dimensionering toch een constructieve uitdaging. Ze werden gerealiseerd door stalen kabels onder voorspanning te brengen in de holtes van de op elkaar gestapelde natuurstenen elementen, en die vervolgens, via van onderuit ingepompte cementspecie, te fixeren.[64] De kolommen zijn aan de voet verbonden door een decoratief hekwerk, ontworpen door Van Goethem en gerealiseerd door de firma Alexandre.

61 Van Saene Maakte ook het grote fresco in het Civitas Dei paviljoen op Expo '58. Selectie van zijn werk op Balat
62 Uitvoerige bespreking hiervan in Novgorodsky, L., 'Les nouveaux bâtiments de la Banque Nationale', p. 220.
63 'Les fondations des rotondes du nouveau bâtiment', *NBB/BNB*, 1951/1, pp. 14-15.
64 Martiny, V. 'Immeuble de la Banque nationale de Bruxelles', p. 12



1:50 model of the bare structure before adding elements that repeat itself on the facade



1:50, four typical office floor "hallways" stacked on top of each other after adding the infill of the window, one single window multiplied, a facade?



two faces of the banks main facade on Boulevard de Berlaimont: facade with window openings and facade with window openings + non structural columns in front



National Bank of Belgium, typical facade Boulevard de Berlaimont, current situation



National Bank of Belgium, main entrance Boulevard de Berlaimont, current situation. photograph by Bas Leemans.



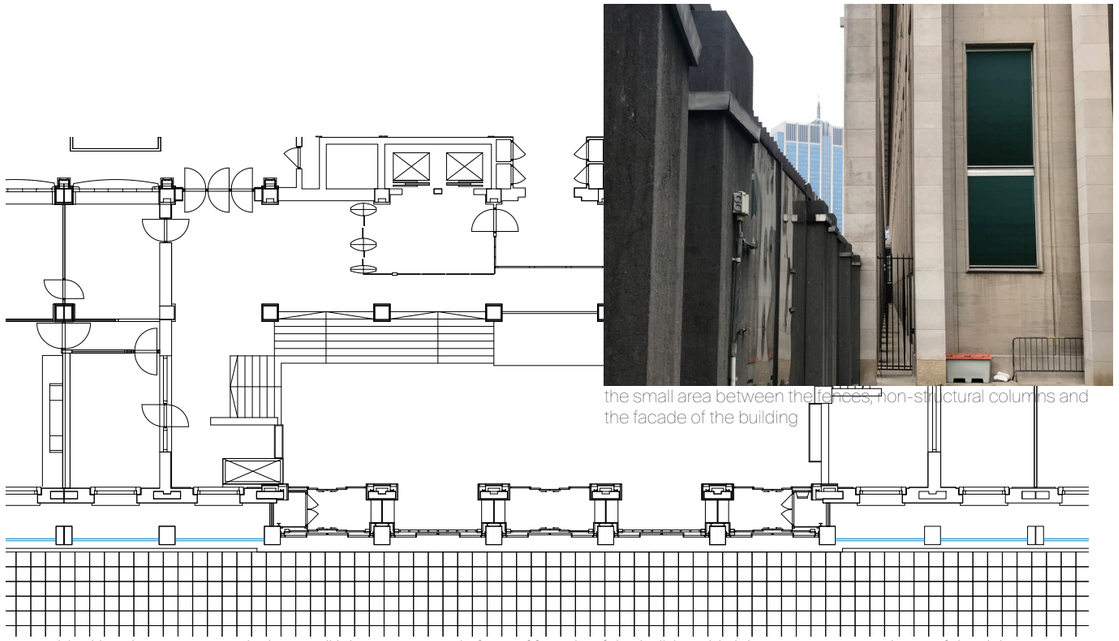
National Bank of Belgium, dissecting the non-structural columns above entrance and removing the fences on the entrance



National Bank of Belgium, dissection of non-structural columns above entrance. original photograph by Bas Leemans.

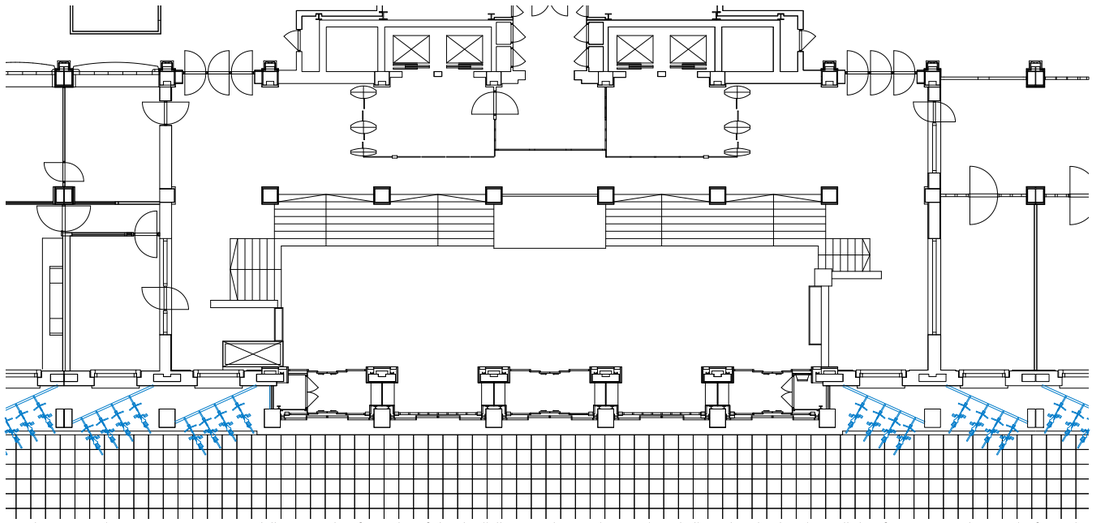


National Bank of Belgium, the fences inbetween the non-structural columns ->



the small area between the fences, non-structural columns and the facade of the building

-> are blocking the entry towards the small inbetween area in front of facade of the buildng, this inbetween area can be useful as it has a cantilevered roof and is therefore protected from rain



-> thus creating a space to store bikes on the facade of the building and creating a visual direction by having all the fences on the main facade point towards the entrance

National Bank of Belgium, reconfiguring the fences by turning them under an angle towards the building ->



National Bank of Belgium, dissecting all non-structural columns to the height of the entrance



National Bank of Belgium, total removal of non-structural columns, the entrance remains as a figure

Architecture as Environment

Parc architectes



Brise-soleil

The architecture of transforming this former factory into an office concentrates on the progressive strengthening of the link that subdues the sun and diffuses light throughout the interior. The mollification of the light associates the initial built framework, the bay-window units, and the metallic solar-protective gratings.

The intervention consists of changing the ateliers' tall single glazing bay windows, initially conceived to provide maximal brightness for workers, for rescaled windows to create air-conditioned office spaces. The building's existing framework is subdivided by carpentry that draws on the ornamental features of the rounded posts that can be found in other parts of the building. In this way, we reduce the windowed surface while enlarging isolated areas.



The brise-soleils, added to the upper section of the bay windows, provide perpetual protection while allowing filtered light to pass through. In the project, the metallic gratings incline like fabric awnings to induce the pleasures of solar warmth.

Restructuring of an old factory in Gennevilliers
View from the nev stairwell

View of the office spaces

awnings to induce the pleasures of solar warmth.





Ed Ruscha
Union, Needles, California, 1962

Andrew Cross
I 75, Exit 69/SR 40, Florida, 2005



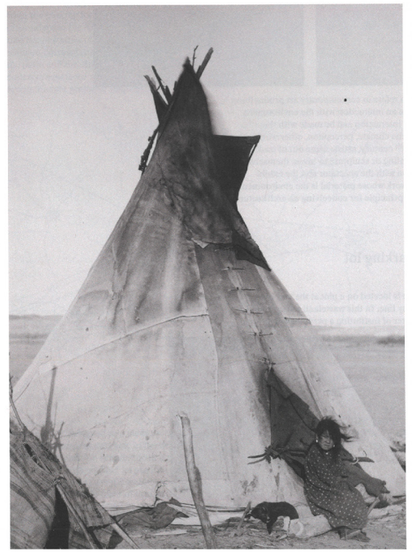
nity is no longer just a form of urbanity, it is an extensive
fe that spreads in line with the reach of networks. Wherever
reach by car, wherever you can make a phone call, you are
banity. So much so, that in the suburban city, the street names
have disappeared. To find a place, just follow the directions
l you to the desired location by a series of branches. The syste-
esh of the traditional city has been replaced by an opportunis-
The landscape of roads is punctuated at each intersection with
dicating several directions. As unorganized as this tracking
nay seem, there is no real need for a map in this environment.
ation is found by iteration after a succession of bifurcations,
e precise than the last.
e suburban environment of networked parks separates the
ctions of living and moving, inserting vegetation and vacant
etween them. In the suburban area, elements are posed with-
real master plan. Emptiness or nature persist like wasted,
ited space that testify to the fact that once upon a time in
ce, people decided that the site's wild nature was ready to be
d.

Installation

it relates to a material device with the aim of generating an effec es specific activities. To conceive architecture as an i s to imagine it as a form whose structural, constructiv nd functional logic aims to produce effects when enter eraction with the environment.

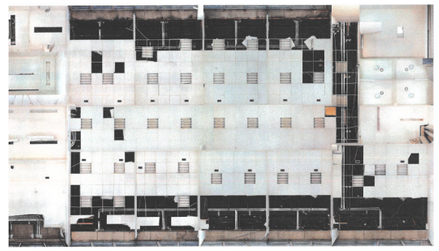
A Nat merican tent exemplifies an installation. It is a climatic d at exploiting fire. The tent, if it is a device for protecting from the rain and wind, is also and especially an adjustable fireplace at its base and tip. Inside, activities are organized according to nearness to and distance from the hearth. This climate system is also a cultural fabric that aims to bind the earth and the sky. The wood beams that make up the structure are planted in the ground and are tied in the sky. The firewood that grew from the soil rises in the air through the tent's open top during combustion.

The light tent installation is itself inseparable from a way of life related to the environment. Native Americans are nomadic and move to settle in different climates according to the seasons so as not to overexploit the areas where they hunt and graze their animals.



John C. H. Grabill
A young Oglala girl sitting in front of a tipi with a puppy by her side, probably on or near the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, 1891

ub is an acoustic cocktail shaker teeming with vapors and
nes. A housing block is a place where each person develops
personal atmosphere: lighting, temperature, odors, colors,



ture is not dissociable from the atmosphere because it modi-
material to create comfort and visual effects. To consider
sphere is to accept the continuity between all the elements
pose it, architecture and humans included.



Air

particles, dust, radiation, waves, heat, odors, sounds, etc.)
imary component of the atmosphere. Air is what we
It is breath. Air enters and leaves our bodies. It dissolves
mosphere and penetrates other bodies.
r is a primordial substance in architecture. A built structure
of air, conceived to adjust certain qualities. The isolation

These conside tive to the atmosphere and air could seem to only belon ntific domain, but air is a social and cultural issue. Fo the quality of air is a major indicator of segregation. question of air, whether it concerns its temperature r its composition. When one has the means to travel, we say that we will "get some air". In cities, the wealthiest live higher up to breathe fresh air, while the poorest are in the lower neighborhoods, which are less well-ventilated. Medical treatments through atmospheric quality are as numerous as thermal cures or mountain sanatoriums.

One of architecture's goals consists in locally sculpting the atmosphere to adapt it to the activity that we want to practice inside it. The architectural work of modifying the air and the ambiance constitutes what we commonly call a mood.

← Andreas Gefeller
Untitled, Ceiling 5
Düsseldorf, 2007
Systematic editing of a photographic view of a dilapidated suspended ceiling.

↙ Shinji Ohmaki
Liminal Air Space Time, Mori Art Museum, 2012
Cloth veil suspended in a laminar flow of air.

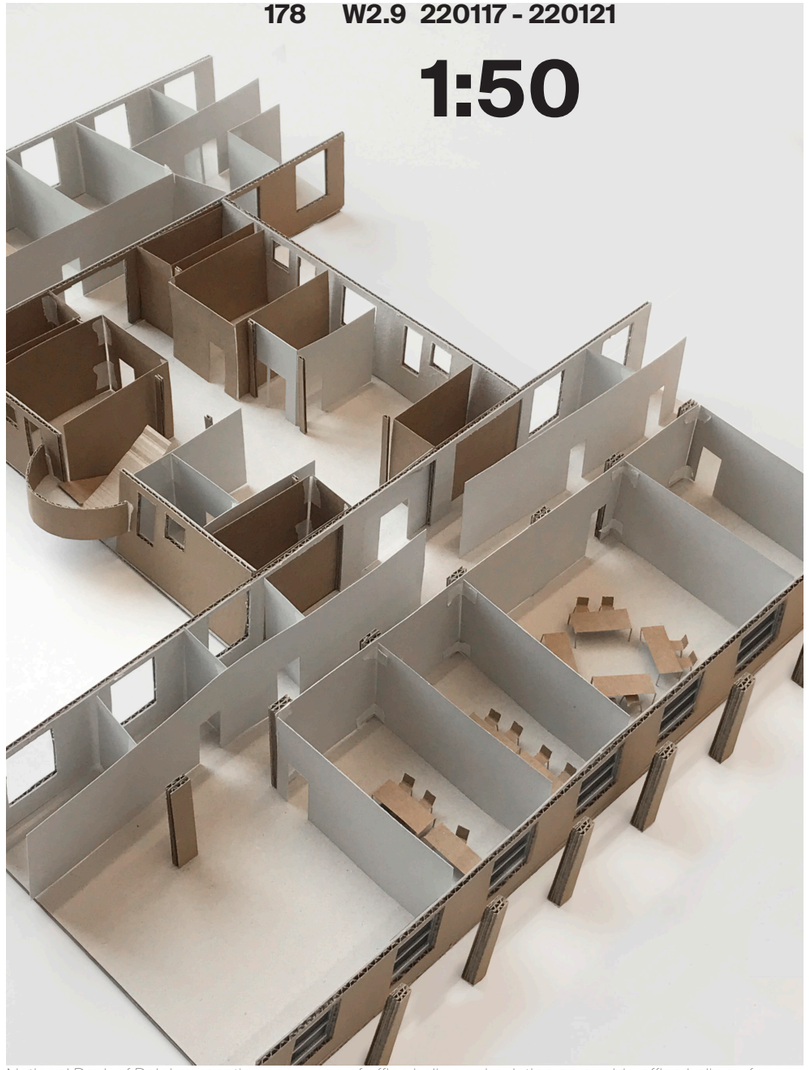
Office building in Batignolles neighborhood, Paris, France, 2014
View of the façade on the railroad side

Ducts

Current technical conventions and habits of use lead us to conceive air-conditioned office spaces that remain at 21°C year-round. The lighting must be practically constant. After having been treated, the air circulates around it mechanically. The environment of work spaces must produce optimal and constant conditions for tertiary activity.

To manage a building's interior climate, technical ducts carry major importance. As service corridors did in other times, ducts are spread out around all spaces in a dissimulated manner, leaving only gratings apparent. In order to renew all the air of a building, we build them a sort of homothetic casing with a story height of about 60 cm that are found in suspended ceilings and vertical columns. Air-treatment machines are like shapeless octopi on the roof stretching their metal tentacles into every possible cavity. They exchange energy between the interior and exterior using electric motors that yield phenomena of gas compression and release. These thermic centers reheat the atmosphere to the same level as they cool the interiors they are devoted to.

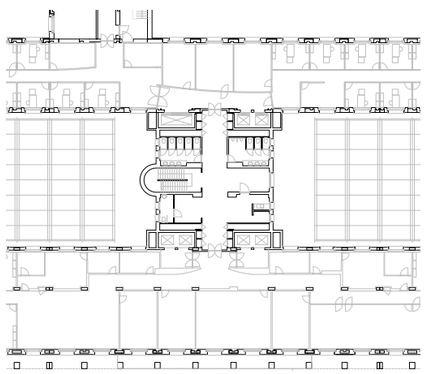




National Bank of Belgium, section sequence of office hallway, circulation core, wide office hallway, facade, facade columns, current situation

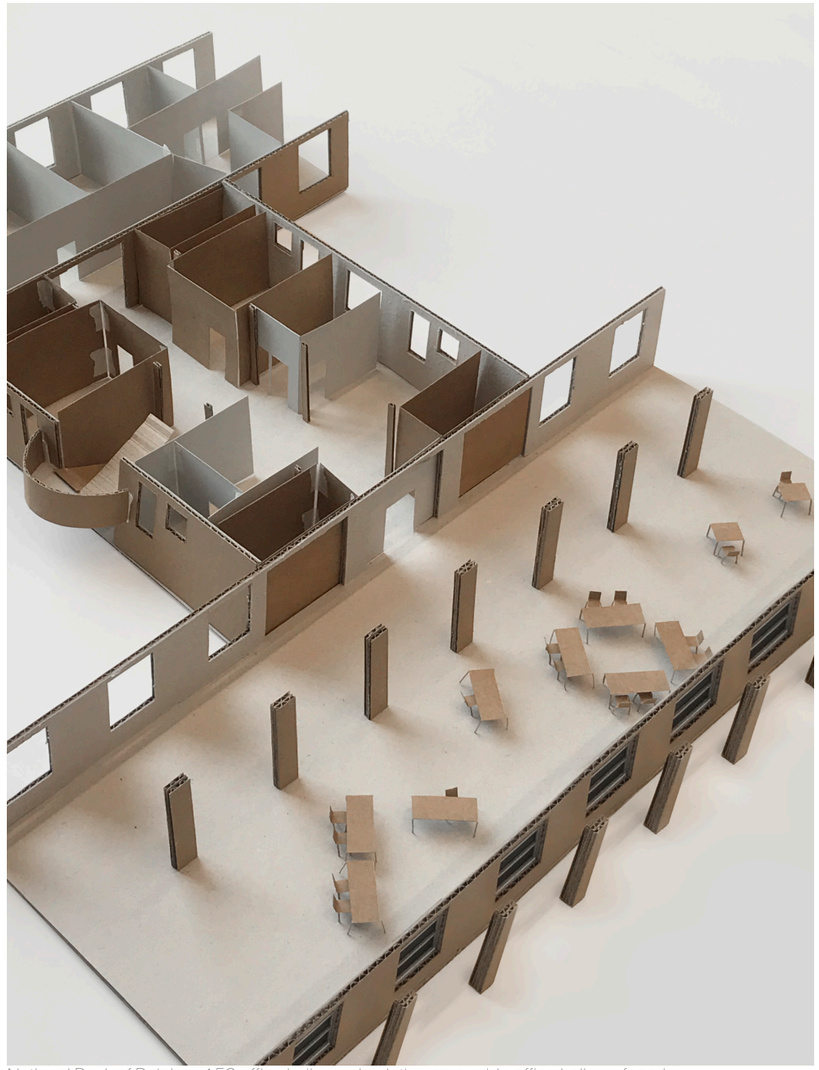


National Bank of Belgium, 1:50 office hallway, circulation core, wide office hallway, facade. reconfiguration of partitions





National Bank of Belgium, 1:50 office hallway, circulation core, wide office hallway, facade.
removal and reconfiguration of partitions



National Bank of Belgium, 1:50 office hallway, circulation core, wide office hallway, facade.
total removal of partitions



lifts and door to circulation core visible in the space before the partitions came in (National Bank of Belgium, historical photograph)



structure visible in the space before partitions came in (National Bank of Belgium, historical photograph)



National Bank of Belgium, 1:50 office hallway, circulation core, wide office hallway, facade.
dissection and reconfiguration of technical services: lifts + toilets



National Bank of Belgium, 1:50 office hallway, circulation core, wide office hallway, facade.
reconfiguration of technical services: lifts + toilets are becoming figures in the open space

AgwA lecture

RE-USE MEANS TEMPORARILY STOCKING ON THE SITE AGWA

LARA ALMARCEGUI

JUXTAPOSITION OF BUILDINGS RECOMBINING A BUILDING

VERTICAL CIRCULATION, OPENING UP THE STRUCTURES

1.65 TON CO_2 / PERSON

OF WHICH 33% GOES TO THE SYSTEM (HOSPITALS/INFRASTRUCTURE)

66% TO EACH PERSON

NOT RENOVATING AND NOT HEATING HALF OF THE BUILDING

DO NOT INSULATE

DO NOT HEAT

SO ... REDUCE DRASTICALLY HEATED SPACES

STAIRCASE CAVITIES DOU

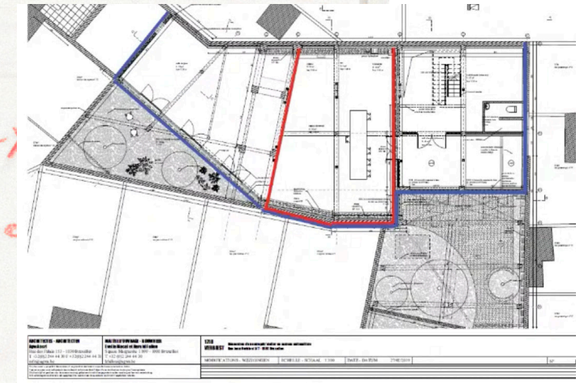
SKYLIGHTS

HOW WORST PERSON

MEASURING AND CATALOGING FOR

RE-USE OF PARTITION WALLS

INVESTING ON PEOPLE WORKING ON THE CONSTRUCTION SITE, THUS LOCALISING THE ECONOMY



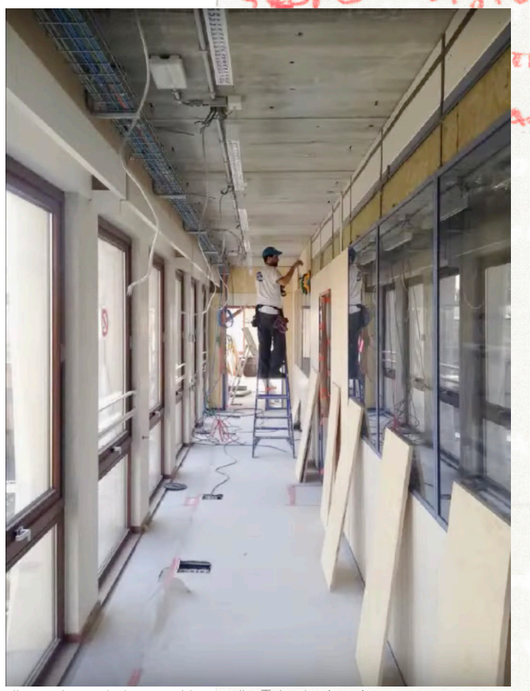
reduce drastically the heated spaces. Verbiest, AgwA.

60.000 M^2 NEXT TO THE CITY CENTER - EXHIBITION PALACE

STOPS VISIBLE IN THE BUILDING

TRG

AND REMOVING THE



dissecting existing partition walls. Takeda, AgwA.





re-use means temporarily stocking on the site. Takeda, AgwA.

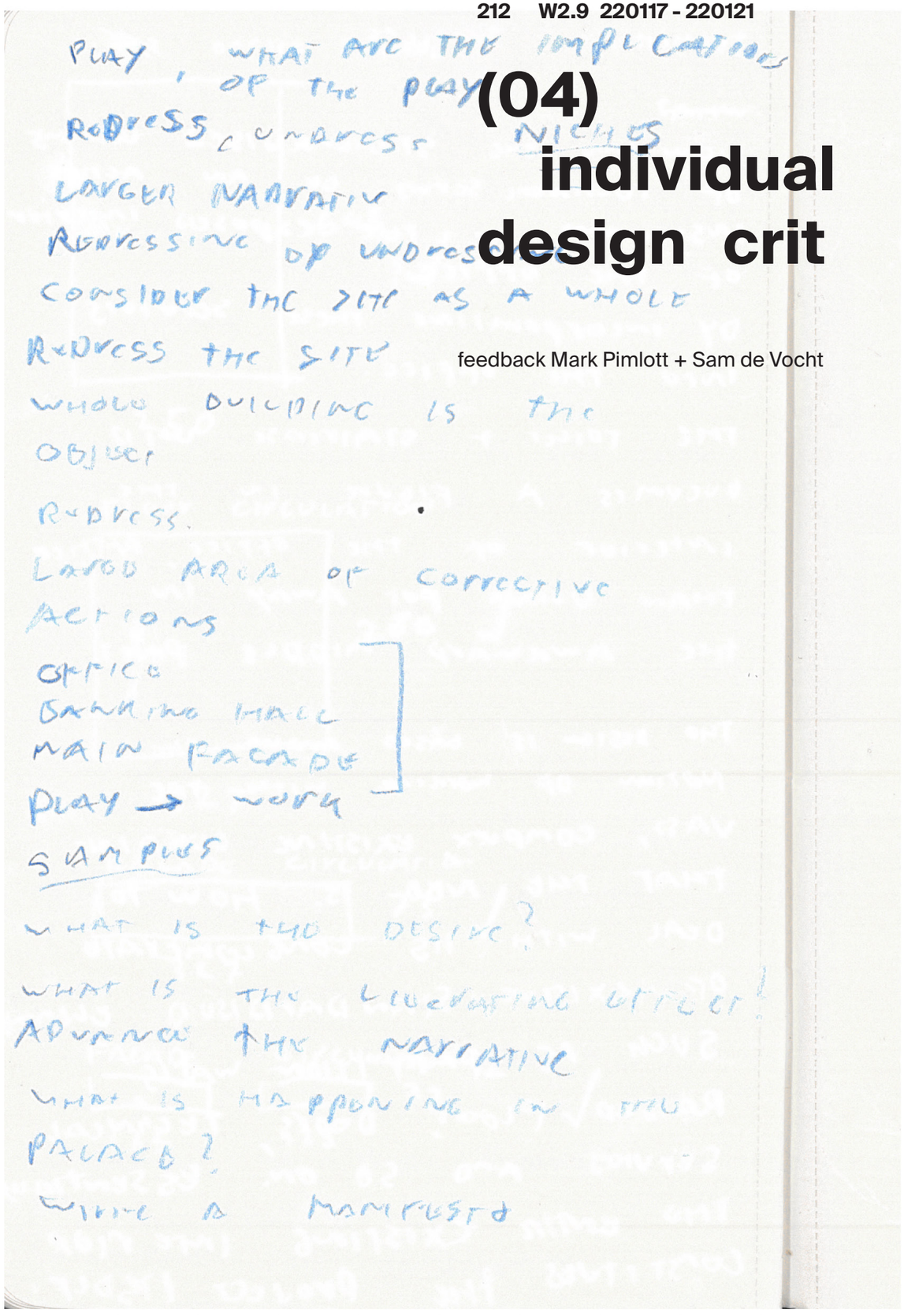


reference projects from this lecture:

Verbiest, reconversion of existing warehouse, Molenbeek, Brussels

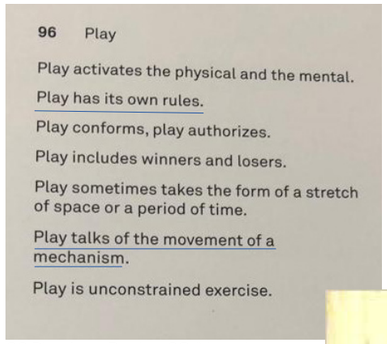
Takeda, adaptation of an existing office building, Molenbeek, Brussels

Cha pex, 60 000 m2 re-use of existing building in Charleroi, w/ AJDVIV



(04) individual design crit

feedback Mark Pimlott + Sam de Vocht



96 Play

Play activates the physical and the mental.

Play has its own rules.

Play conforms, play authorizes.

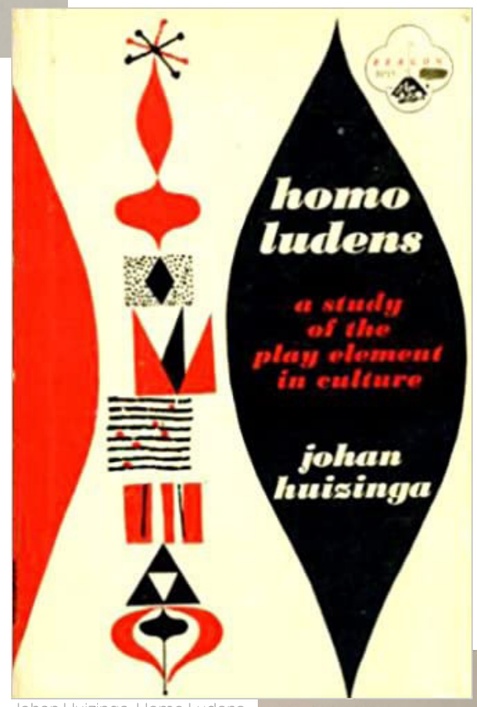
Play includes winners and losers.

Play sometimes takes the form of a stretch of space or a period of time.

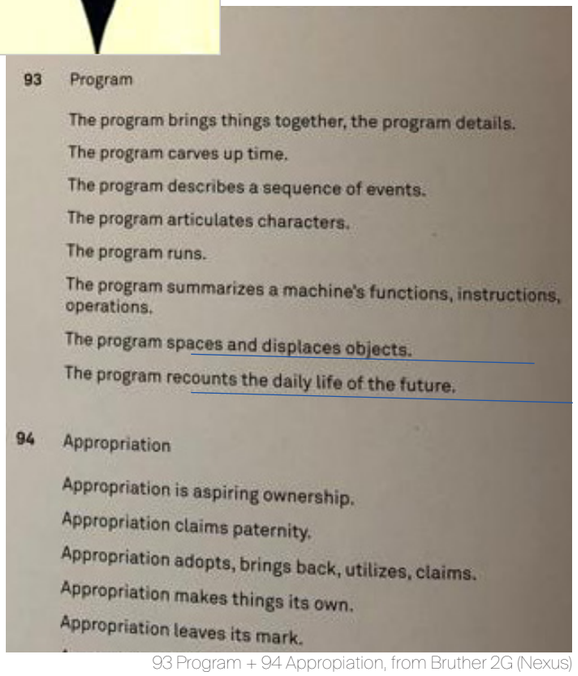
Play talks of the movement of a mechanism.

Play is unconstrained exercise.

96 Play, from Bruther 2G (Nexus)



Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens, recommendation from Sam de Vocht



93 Program

The program brings things together, the program details.

The program carves up time.

The program describes a sequence of events.

The program articulates characters.

The program runs.

The program summarizes a machine's functions, instructions, operations.

The program spaces and displaces objects.

The program recounts the daily life of the future.

94 Appropriation

Appropriation is aspiring ownership.

Appropriation claims paternity.

Appropriation adopts, brings back, utilizes, claims.

Appropriation makes things its own.

Appropriation leaves its mark.

93 Program + 94 Appropiation, from Bruther 2G (Nexus)

3

Confort ou conformisme ?
Bruther (janvier 2018)

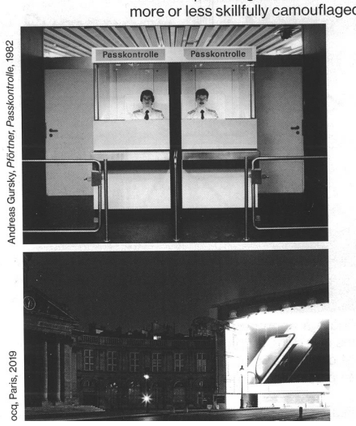
Maintenir le corps dans sa zone de confort, tel est le mot d'ordre secret de notre environnement quotidien. Dès qu'une porte est franchie, dès qu'un intérieur est parcouru, l'environnement se doit d'être dompté, climatisé, aseptisé. Tout est fait pour que nous ne nous sentions même plus respirer, même plus transpirer, les efforts physiques sont estompés, notre sécurité assurée. Notre corps s'est coupé des variations climatiques, acoustiques, lumineuses, sécuritaires, quand bien même celles-ci sont finalement restreintes sous nos latitudes.



Bruther, Centre de recherche nouvelle génération / New Generation Research Center, Caen, 2013 (Julien Hourcade)



Andreas Gursky, *Frankfurt Airport*, 2012



Andreas Gursky, *Pförtner, Passkontrolle*, 1982

occ, Paris, 2019

Comfort or Conformism?
Bruther (January 2018)

Keeping the body in its comfort zone
cret formula of our daily environmen
as a door is opened, as soon as an int
tered, the environment must be tame
ditioned and sanitized. Everything is d
we don't have to feel like we are br
even sweating, physical effort is reduc
safety is guaranteed. Our body has c
from climatic, acoustic, luminous and
iations, even though these are finally
in our latitudes.

This invisible normalisation is not
fra-spatial issue. From comfort to c
or even conformation, it is only a step
process is already insidiously modifyi
our behaviours. Who hasn't been surprised when entering a shopping mall to feel like in need of a sweater, even in the middle of August? Sensory reactions return to the very place where we are trying to numb them.

These impromptu contrasts say something about the fragmentation of contemporary space. Without us necessarily realizing it, we spend our time crossing thresholds, sometimes clearly visible, sometimes less so, but always subject to some form of control.

It is why the control of flows (air, sanitary, circulation) is ultimately the first question to which architects must submit.

The paradox of this control is that it seeks to make itself invisible, while at the same time being very concrete. There is no architectural project without its array of machines and protocols that have to be integrated into it while most often wanting to remain hidden. The most emblematic example being the air conditioning batteries more or less skillfully camouflaged in the roof to



shafts in joyful disorder, free compositions of mechanical corpses

Is it possible to readapt Beaubourg's gesture, or rather its spirit? Already by questioning even the notion of comfort, as translated in the procedures of design and construction of the building. Doesn't the influx of standards, equipment, sanitary controls, always in the name of the user, cause comfort to drift towards conformism? Is asepsis the only horizon? We can no longer pretend that well-being is generated without instruments. It is perhaps time we learn how to look at these instruments.

To see them as small ready-mades, that will animate in a sculptural way facades or gables. But also to see them as elements for understanding the different internal flows of the building. Indeed, this is the paradox of these equipments: to ensure comfort, to make people believe that the building is stable, consuming a lot and having an undeniable ecological impact. If they are so often masked, it is because they reveal that comfort—or a certain type of comfort—that thrives on an uncomfortable operation. Giving a place to these "comfort instruments" within the project also means questioning them in full light (but a sensitive questioning, not a police interrogation) about their capacities and limits. It means showing that they are part of a consumption network that, in this age of climatic and ecological imperatives, cannot be ignored.

Turning the hidden into a compositional element. The gesture becomes a double-edged sword. There is an element of provocation, duchampian, which makes us admit that an air conditioner has its own beauty and can be seen in a larger architectural arrangement. It also means assuming the mechanistic dimension of architecture. If we consider a building as a machine, it is because it is full of small machines.

But there is a social gesture as well. No longer hiding the flows is already the first ecological gesture.

Like all changes of the future, this one invites us to find new connections, between the invisible and the perceptible.
Eventually, the user will find "another" comfort, or even a "new" comfort. Perhaps they will be ready to admit that this comfort is more fragi le than the hyper-comfort provided by standards and hygiene. And that part of the fragility, even impurity in this environment is also a guarantee of dynamic space.

Dixit
Hypercomfort
Bruther
Laurent stalder

The Norm and the Unsettled
Bruther (June 2019)

As architects, we are constantly confronted with the standard. Behind every line we draw, every shape we draw, there is already a materiality introduced. Such thickness implies such a type of material. But this material never comes alone. Its "technical performances", which it is so proud to present, act as guarantors, so that it can be used

hibiting a collection of ready-mades, but of inventing other circuits that reveal something of our way of evolving together in contemporary space. Let's push the levers of these machines beyond the aseptic space in which they are confined. Let's take them in reverse to create a real atmosphere. Let's make the streams, currents and particles visible. Let's take them towards a joyful disorder, free compositions, exquisite mechanical corpses that will bring back influx in a contemporary space that has forgotten all nervousness. Let's transform the shafts and fluids into the real nervous system of the building. Let us turn this technology, which we no longer even take the time to question, from a simple "mood controller" into a real "mood creator", that prefers to solicit the human body and its reactions, rather than to spare it. From a well-tempered architecture, let's move on to an architecture of contrasting sensations.

Reinventing standards

It is up to technology to solicit its own assembly and to look for new, poetic, whimsical connections that will reveal dimensions that are both secret and omnipresent in contemporary architectural production. Like the cavalcade through the Louvre in *Bande à part* by Jean-Luc Godard (1964), which compresses the history of art in a flash, the journey inside the Pavilion condenses in a few minutes the history of the (largely invisible) technology of our time. Instead of celebrating it in a technicist mode, let's push it to its limits so that it no longer suffers the standards but reinvents them!

Cette normalisation invisible n'est pas qu'une question infra-spatiale. Du confort au conformisme, voire à la conformation, il n'y a qu'un pas. Ce processus modifie déjà insidieusement certains de nos comportements. Qui ne s'est pas surpris en entrant dans un centre commercial à avoir envie d'un pull, même en plein mois d'août ? Les réactions sensorielles font retour à l'endroit même où on cherche à les insensibiliser.

Ces contrastes impromptus disent quelque chose du fractionnement de l'espace contemporain. Sans que l'on s'en rende forcément compte, nous passons notre temps à franchir des seuils, parfois clairement visibles, parfois moins, mais toujours soumis à une forme de contrôle.

C'est que le contrôle des flux (air, sanitaires, circulations) est finalement la première question à laquelle les architectes doivent se soumettre.

Le paradoxe de ce contrôle est qu'il cherche à se rendre invisible, tout en étant très concret. Il n'y a pas de projet architectural sans son attirail de machines et de protocoles qui doit y être intégré, tout en voulant le plus souvent rester caché. L'exemple le plus emblématique est les batteries de climatisation plus ou moins habilement camouflées en toiture pour permettre de respirer un air qui, littéralement, ne nous fait ni chaud ni froid. Cette asepsie des ambiances se doit d'être aujourd'hui réinterrogée au regard des enjeux de consommation énergétique. Le confort apporté se doit d'être réévalué par rapport aux contraintes de sa mise en œuvre.

Ces contraintes ne sont que la traduction spatiale et technique de normes administratives qui régissent notre environnement. Maîtrise des ambiances ou contrôle des ambiances ? La nuance est parfois délicate à appréhender. Il n'en demeure pas moins que dans l'espace contemporain, l'usager est de plus en plus guidé, les parcours de plus en plus normés.

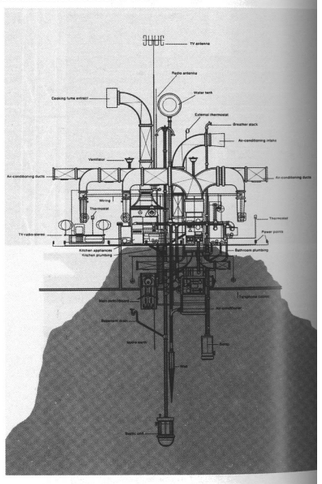
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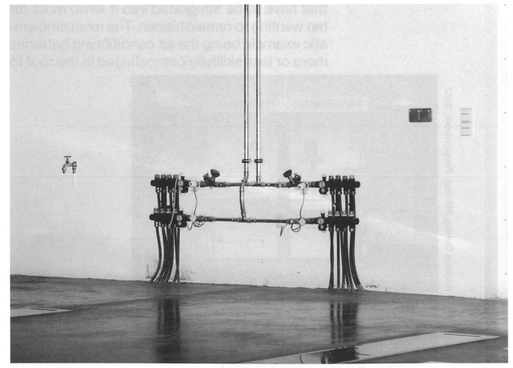
allow us to breathe air that literally makes us neither hot nor cold. This asepsis of environments needs to be re-examined in light of the current challenges of energy consumption. The comfort provided must be re-evaluated in relation to the constraints of its implementation.

These constraints are nothing more than the spatial and technical translation of administrative norms that govern our environment. Mastery of environments or control of environments? The nuance is sometimes difficult to grasp. The fact remains that in contemporary space, the user is more and more guided, the paths are more and more standardized.

Modular spaces, specialized spaces

Contemporary public spaces (airport, subway station, train station, school) represent the culmination of this spatial approach; places of sharing, defined public spaces that are actually made fool by a succession of technical devices of control and social fragmentation. These public architectures no longer appear as places of pleasure. Gone are the days when the public had free access to the Orly observation platform to come and watch the ballet of planes taking off and land-



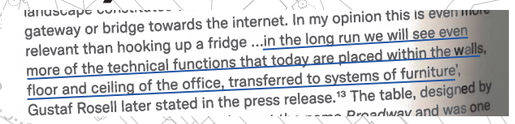


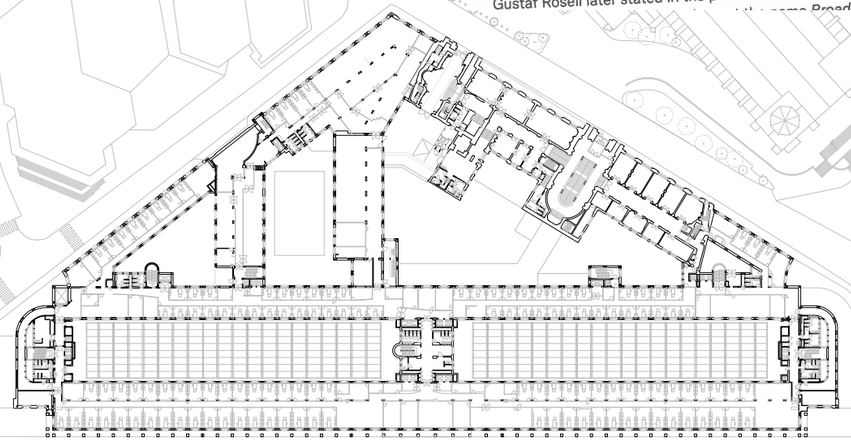
Bruther, Centre de recherche nouvelle génération / New Generation Research Center, Caen, 2013 (Julien Hourcade)

existing installations plan



existing partitions, furniture



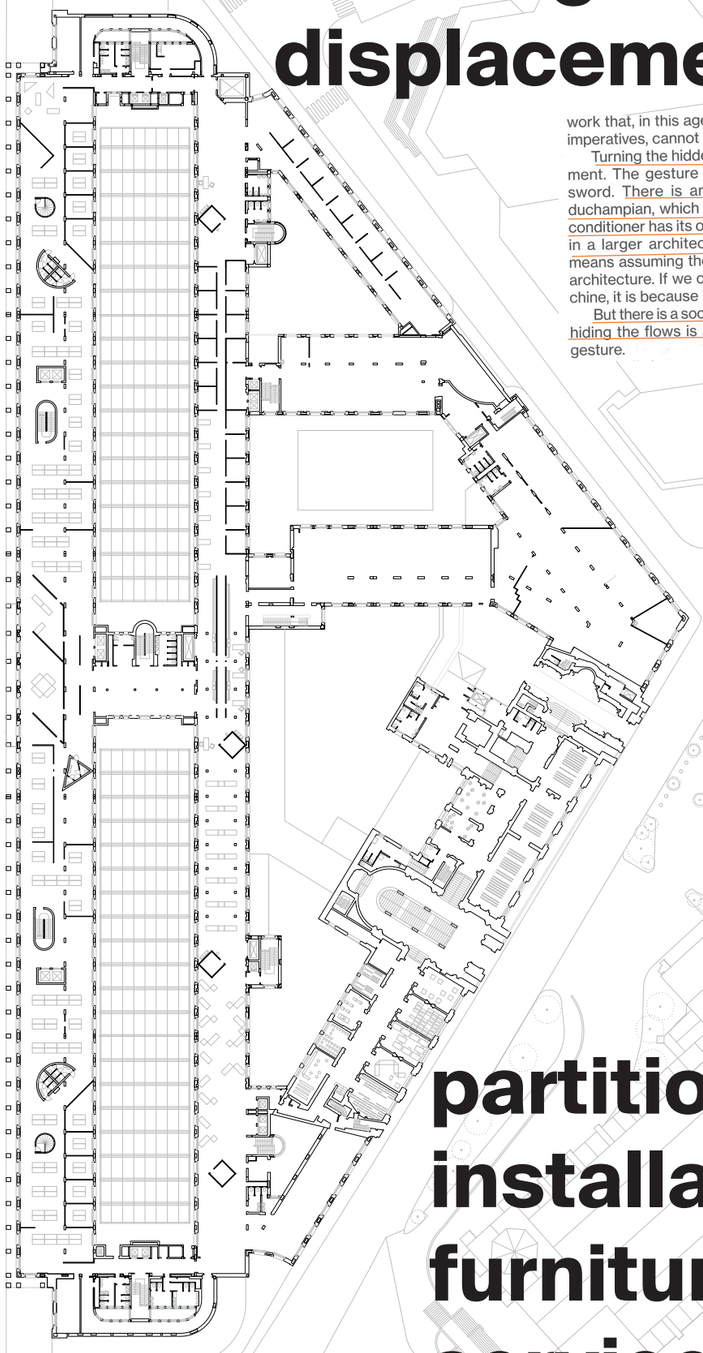


dissection reconfiguration displacement

work that, in this age of climatic and ecological imperatives, cannot be ignored.

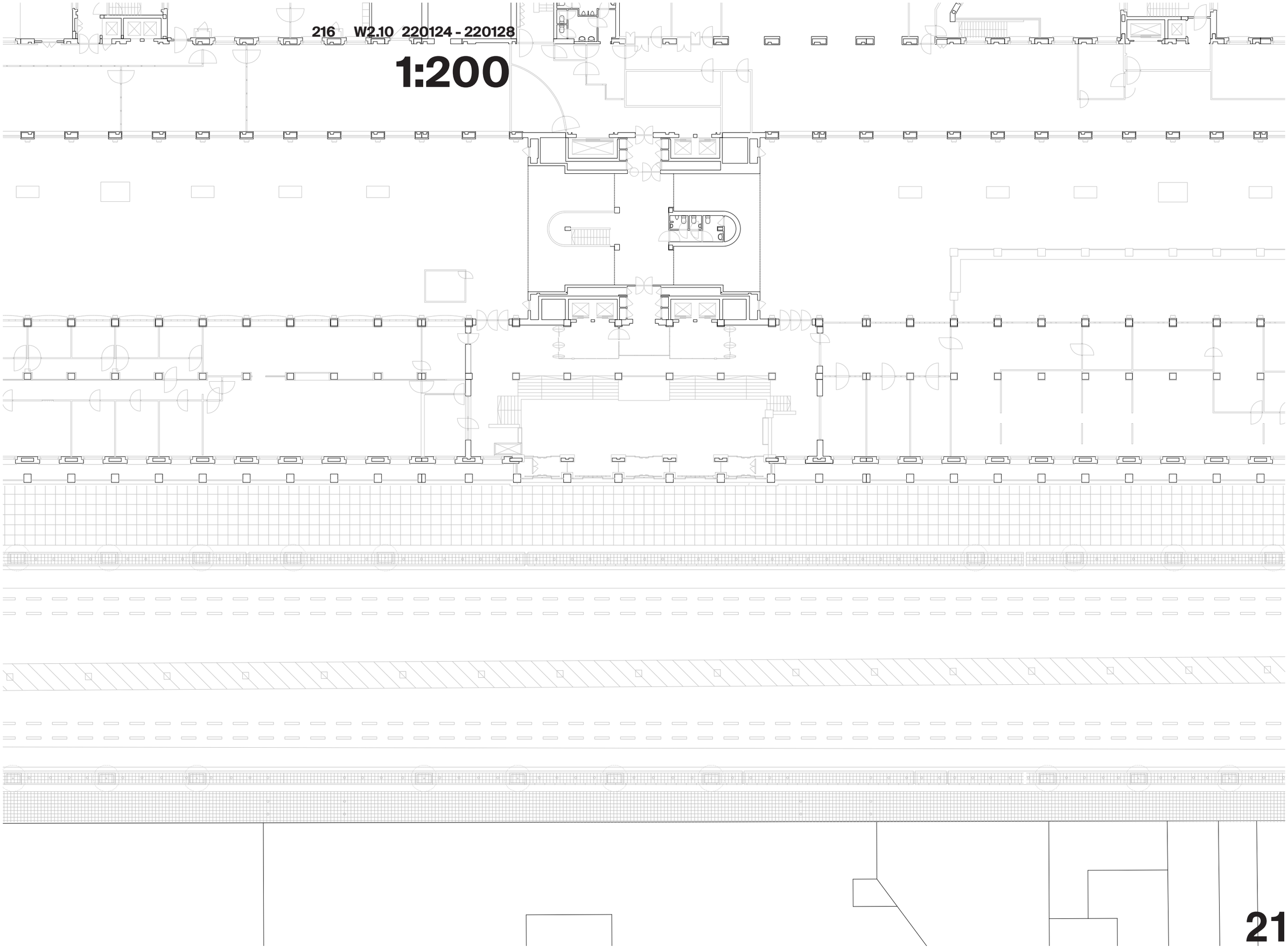
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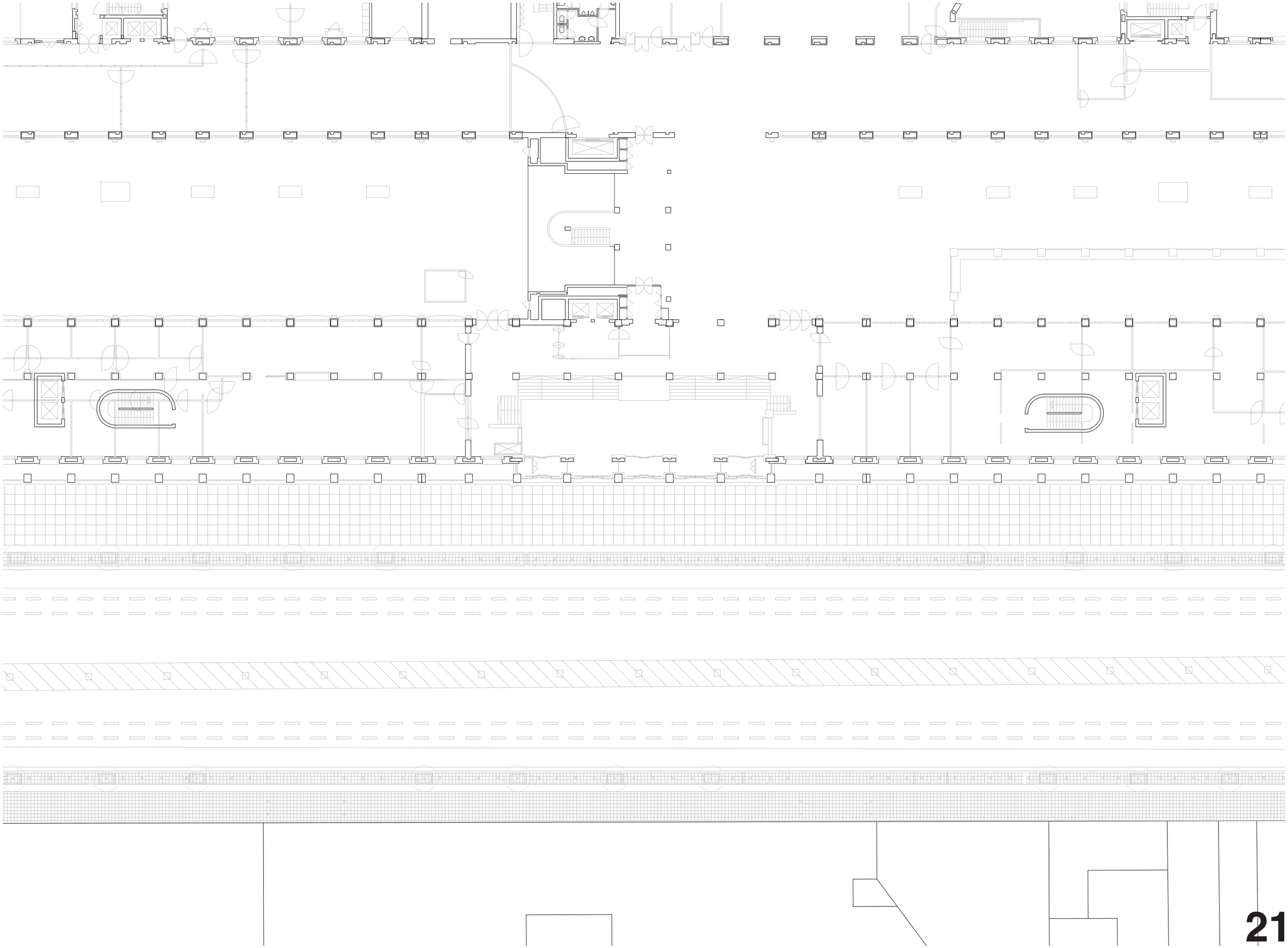
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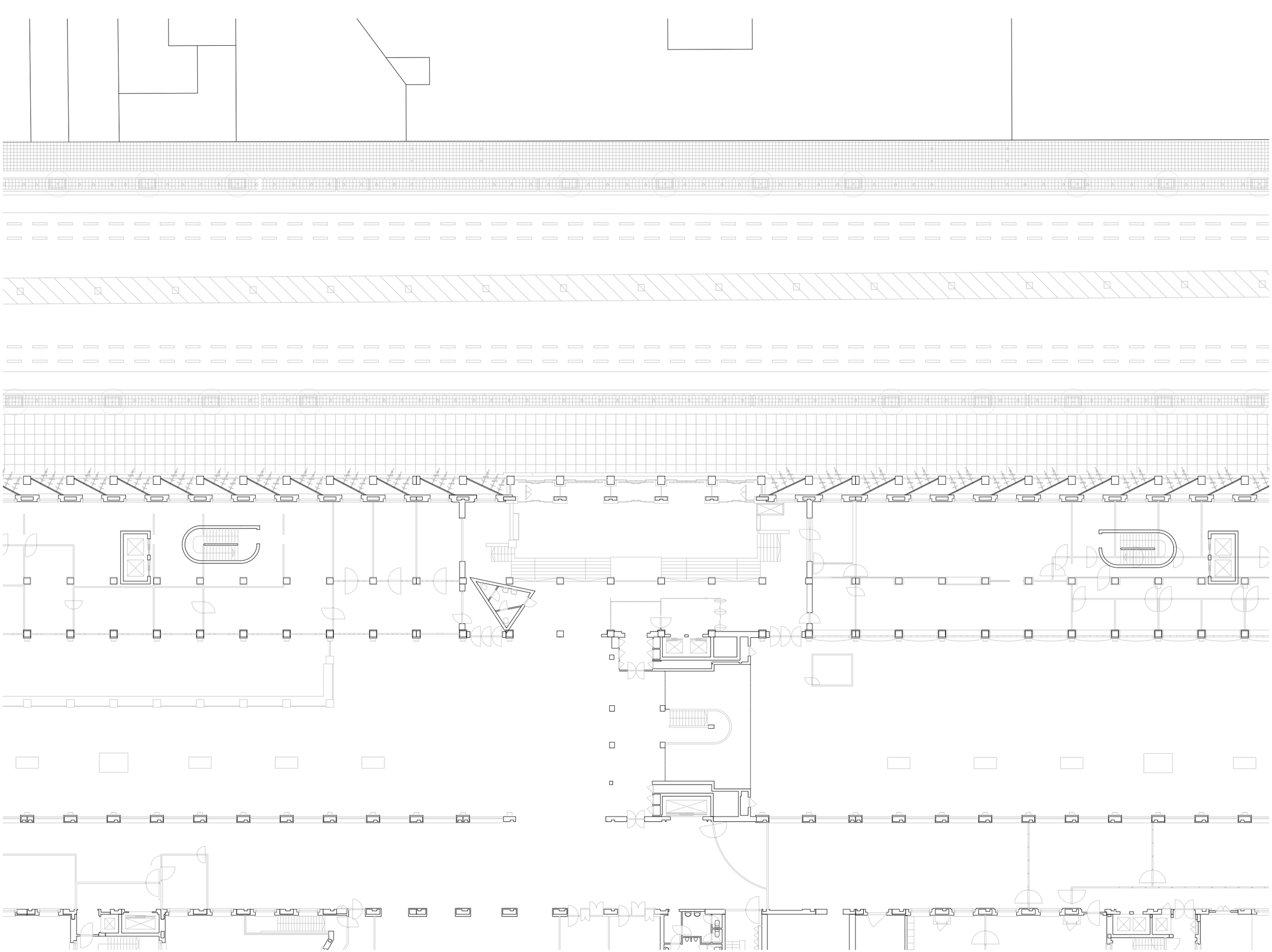


partitions installations furniture services bathrooms

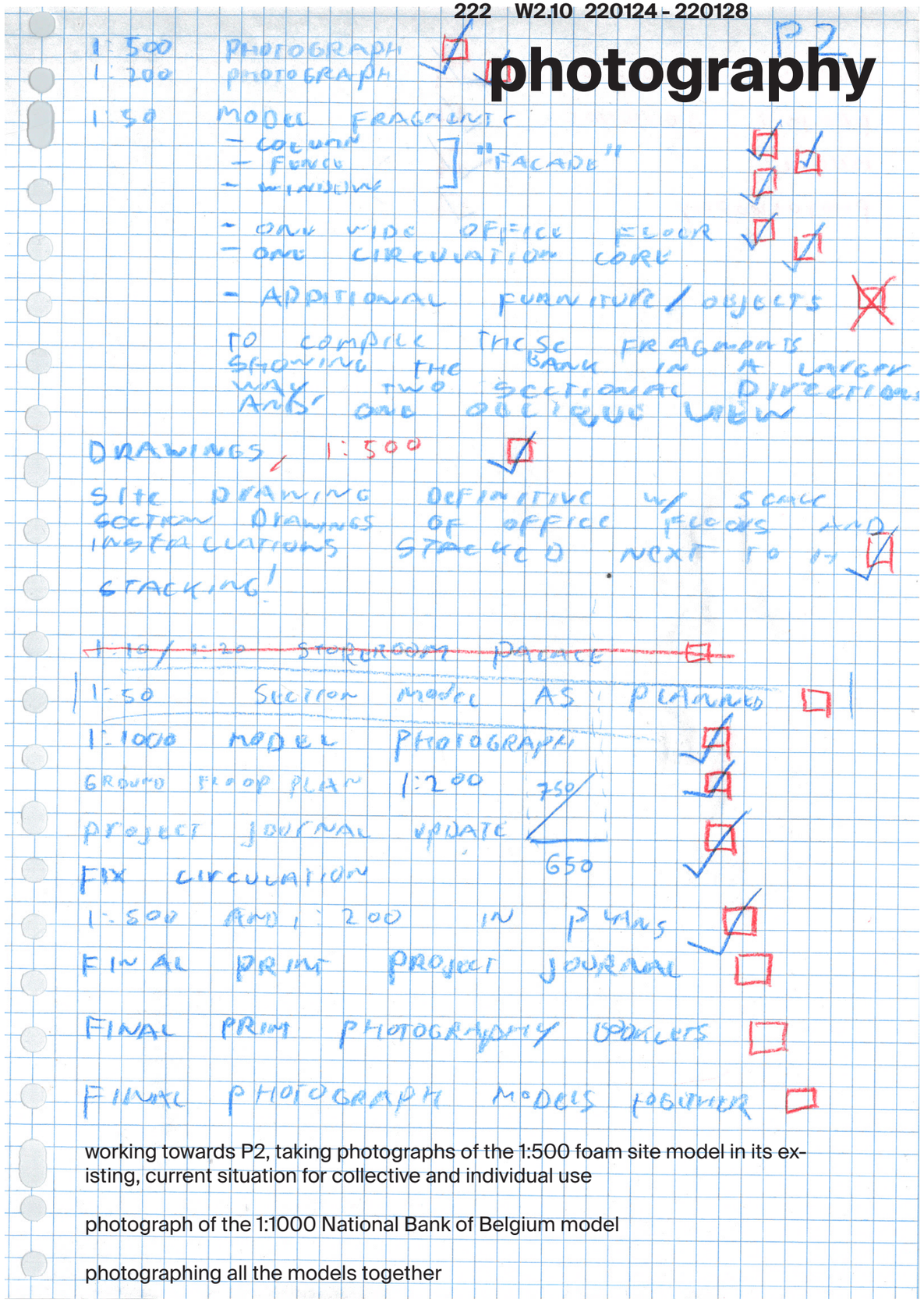
1:200







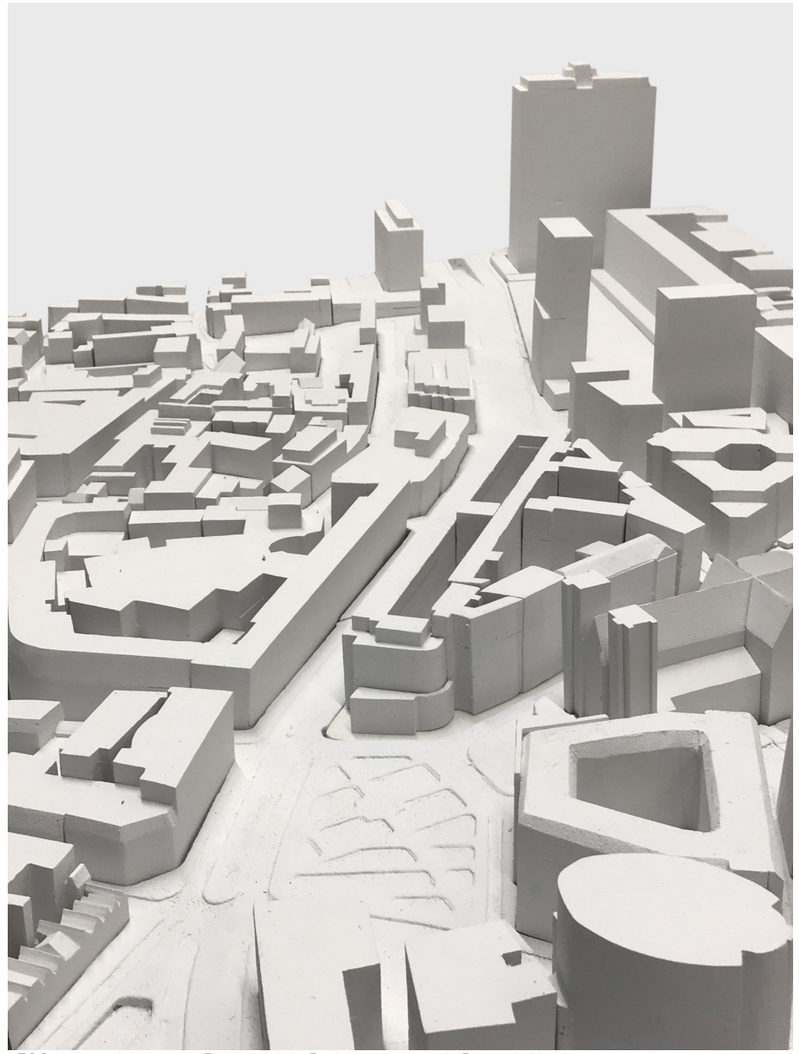
photography



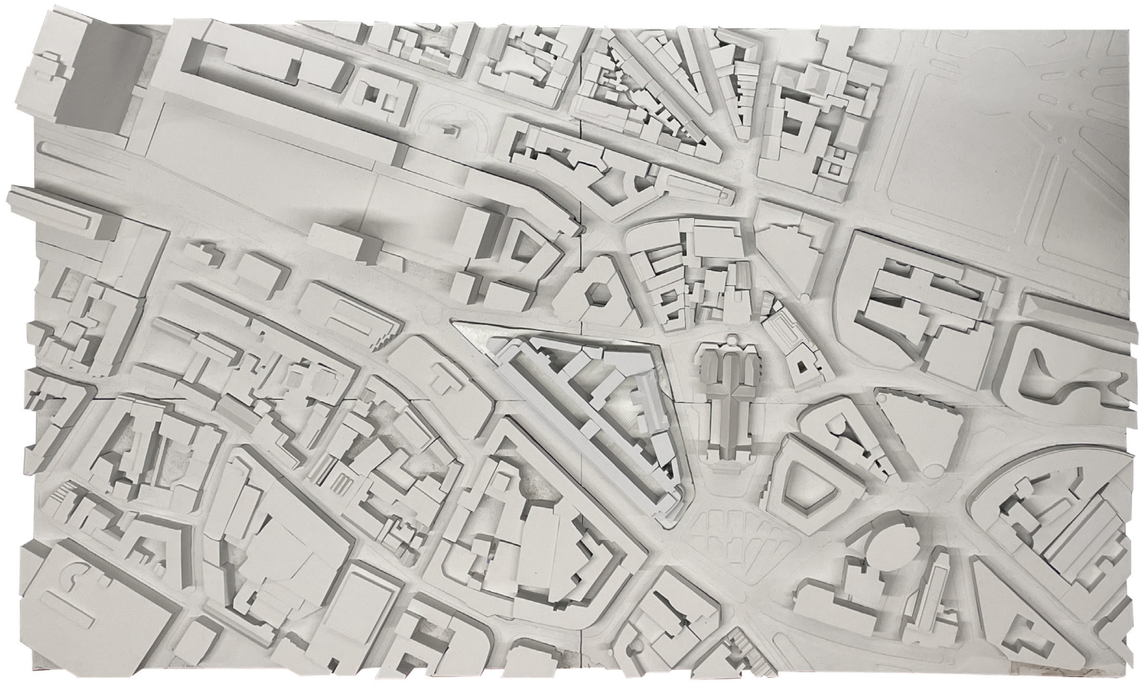
working towards P2, taking photographs of the 1:500 foam site model in its existing, current situation for collective and individual use

photograph of the 1:1000 National Bank of Belgium model

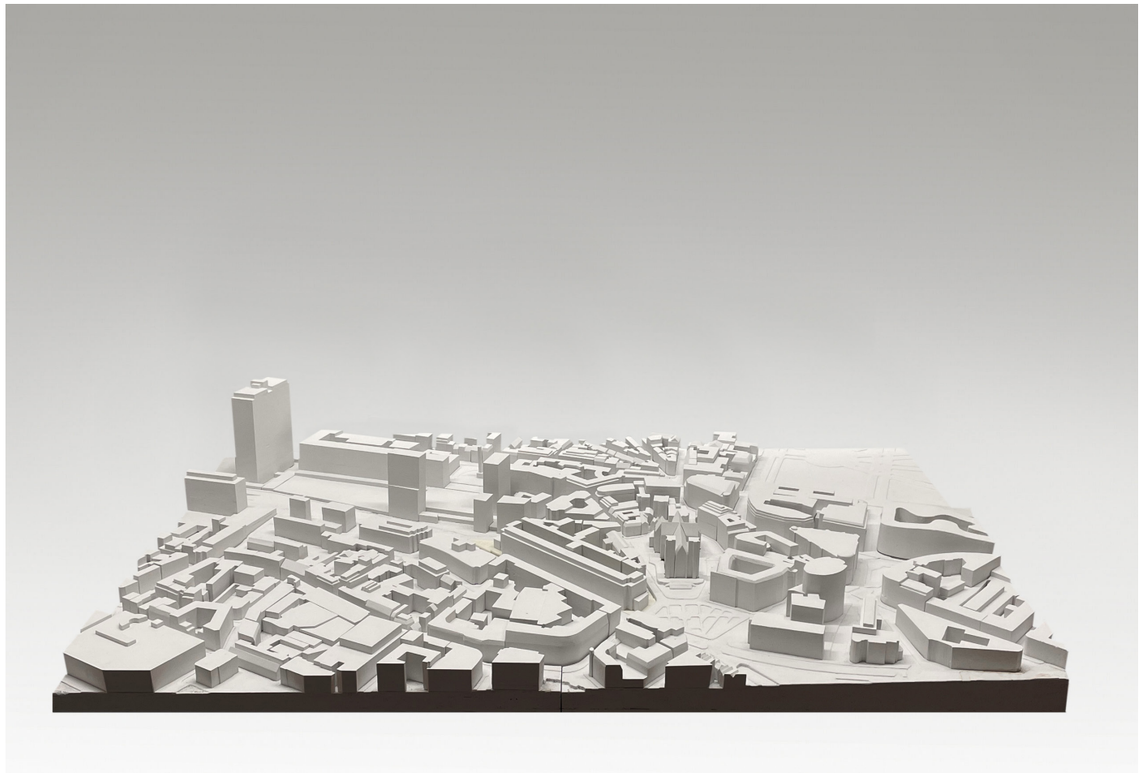
photographing all the models together



1:500 site model, view on Boulevard de Berlaimont towards Brussels North.



1:500 site model, top view with the current situation of the National Bank of Belgium



1:500 site model, frontal view showing section and slope



1:1000 model of the National Bank of Belgium in cardboard



1:1, 1:10, 1:50, 1:20, 1:1000, all models together



P2

P2 result on 2022-01-31

noreply@tudelft.nl

Mon 1/31/2022 2:49 PM

To:Laurens de Munck <L.M.C.deMunck@student.tudelft.nl>;

Cc:Regina Bokel - BK <R.M.J.Bokel@tudelft.nl>; Mark Pimlott - BK <M.Pimlott@tudelft.nl>; Matthijs Klooster <M.W.Klooster@tudelft.nl>; Jurjen Zeinstra - BK <J.S.Zeinstra@tudelft.nl>;

[Submitted by M.Pimlott@tudelft.nl]
This message was created by a Microsoft InfoPath form. The form data may be included as an attachment.

P2 | Munck, L.M.C. de - 4456378
28-1-2022 - Passed Take: 1

PASSED

DESIGN AND RESEARCH:
Regarding to the end-criterion:
"'What is presented, will be assessed on coherence, significance, elaboration, correctness and innovativeness – both on main line and on aspects."
That what is presented is sufficient to go on.

DESIGN

At this moment, considering the P2 stage of the project, you have to pay extra attention to presence, development and profoundness of:
(A checked box indicates that this aspect needs work)

¨Coherence: internal consistency, integration, essence, concept
þSignificance: ethical, socio-cultural and/or scientific relevance, value, meaning
þElaboration: extensiveness, degree of detail of all aspects
¨Correctness: accuracy, efficacy, and evidence-based
¨Innovativeness: personal interpretation, creativity, new, unexpected, unique situation
¨Knowledge and know-how: effective study and use, processing of precedents and principles
þExploration: openness, discovering and investigation, analysis and testing
þReflection: careful consideration, evaluation, effects, comparing and positioning
¨Presentation: clarity, intelligibility, reflection and being engaged by it as a listener

You have to pay extra attention to the development of your design with respect to:
(if applicable and considering the P2 stage of the project):

¨Spatial aspects: such as experiencing space, by circulation, composition, light, texture, colour, shape and mass
¨Functional aspects: such as programme, requirements, order and circulation, dimensions and physical conditions
¨Material and technical aspects: such as material, detailing, physics, structure, construction, and climate design
¨Contextual aspects: such as site, response to the surroundings in shape, composition, mass, function and circulation
þSocio-cultural aspects: such as socio-cultural, ethical, historical, philosophical, economical aspects – in particular sustainability

RESEARCH

At this moment, considering the P2 stage of the project, You have to pay extra attention to presence, development and profoundness of:
(A checked box indicates that this aspect needs work)

¨Coherence: internal consistency, integration, essence, concept
¨Significance: ethical, socio-cultural and/or scientific relevance, value, meaning
þElaboration: extensiveness, degree of detail of all aspects
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þReflection: careful consideration, evaluation, effects, comparing and positioning
¨Presentation: clarity, intelligibility, reflection and being engaged by it as a listener

You have to pay extra attention to the development of your research with respect to:
(if applicable and considering the P2 stage of the project):

¨Abstract: summary, main line
þProblem statement and research question: formulation objective, context, main and sub-questions and theoretical scope problem
¨Research method: description and appropriateness of research method(s)
þResults: outcomes research, order, formulation and processing all relevant data
þConclusion: direct answer on research question(s)
¨Discussion: reflection on research method, data and answer in a broader context, such as position in society or academic debate and possible relation with design

NOTES:

In consideration of the bank interior, what might the interior SAY, or infer or suggest, as a socio-political (or even cultural) environment? Lacaton + Vassal's Palais de Tokyo uses demolition to suggest freedom. What do you suggest?
How, in their rearrangement, do the office interiors work? What are the life-spans of the re-conditioned elements?
How might you ensure the operation of services?
In your ATM project, a whole new culture of access was possible; is that part of this project?
What does this Bank say to the society it serves and represents to?

Matthijs
The space taken up by installations, do their new configurations prevent or diminish future freedoms?
The treatment of the exterior of the building might also be able to be reappraised; how might that be done to suggest new relations, both intimate and urban? What can be done to the exterior of the building to change the relation of the building to the city, and the space of the office itself?

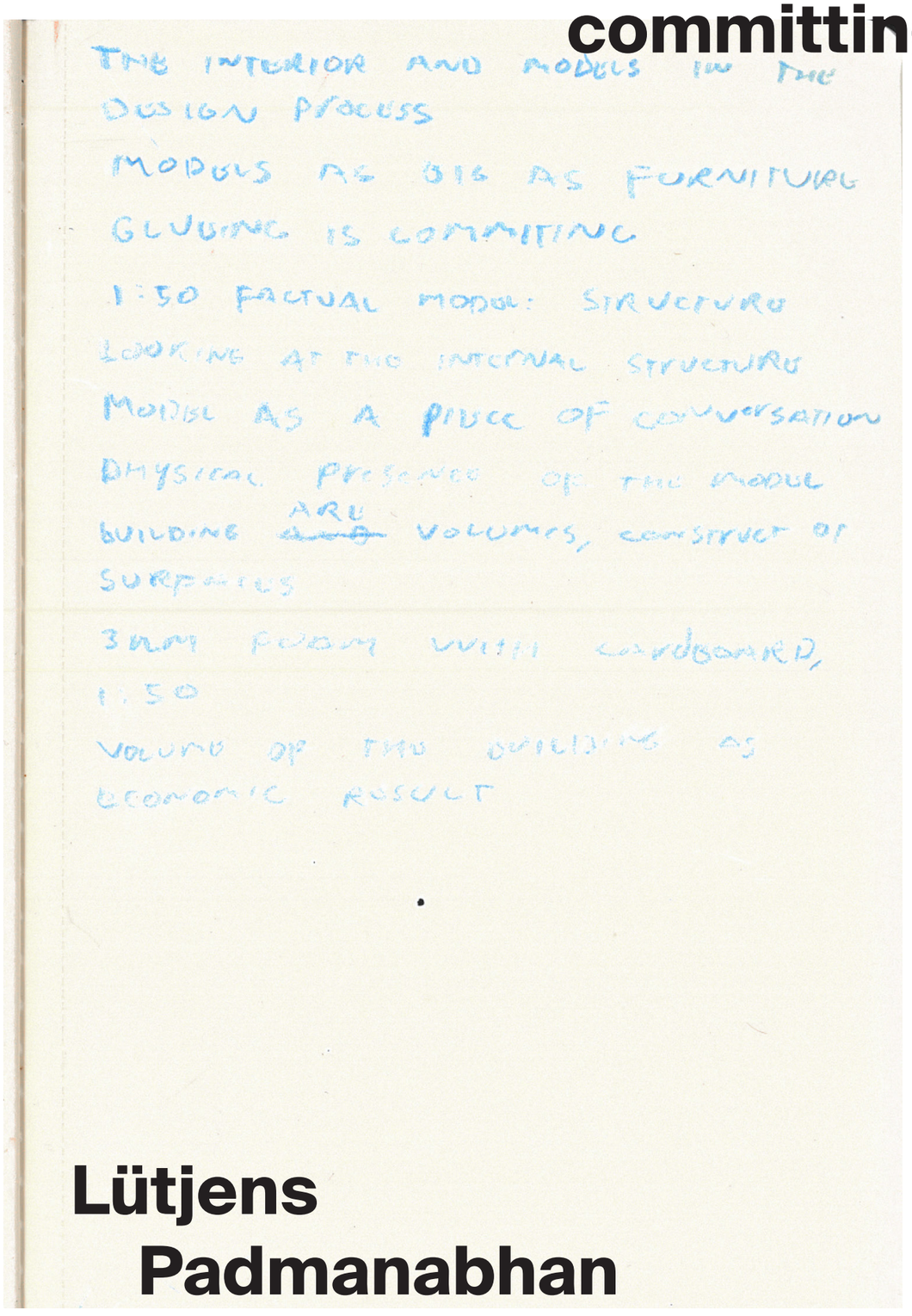
Jurjen
A more general strategy needs to emerge that engages with the Bank as a working entity and 'culture' (which the form of the project might suggest itself). This will allow the project to be more convincing as a critique and remedy to the Bank and Office.
There is a danger of the scheme being a series of fragmentary attentions.

Regina
Improvisational mode of Buurman en Buurman;
Scales suggested by film: please let us see this at a presentation;
Building services and their reconfiguration; a good model for teaching!
Lack of colour in presentation makes it difficult to read (particularly important in didactic situation)
The circularity of the project can be more forcefully presented, studied and argued

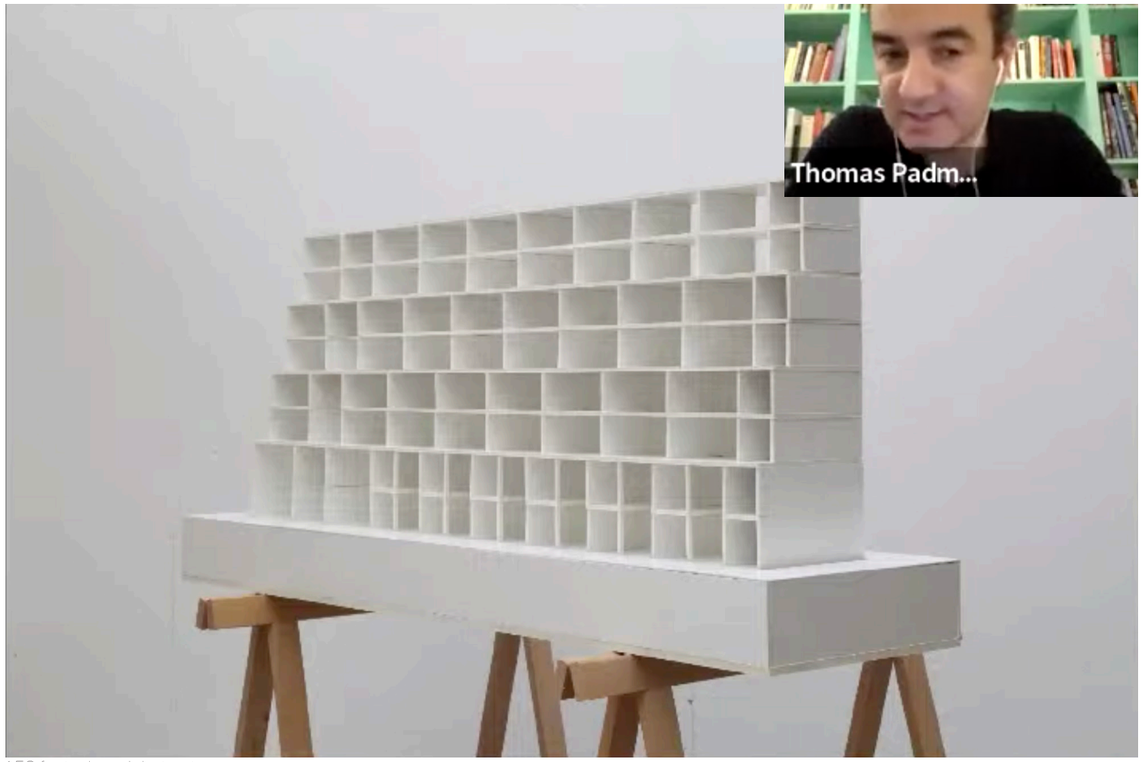
The strategies you have generated at a variety of scales remain, at this stage, episodic, and perhaps disconnected from a larger statement about the Bank and its position in society, its relation to society, and the character of access to it. Within the Bank itself, a new work culture will emerge from the accumulation of 'provisional' or experimental revisions of construction hierarchies. How can you plan positively for this, so that you effectively renew that working culture and not merely turn it upside down (or inside out)?

GO
P4 week of 16 May 2022
P5 week of 20 June 2022

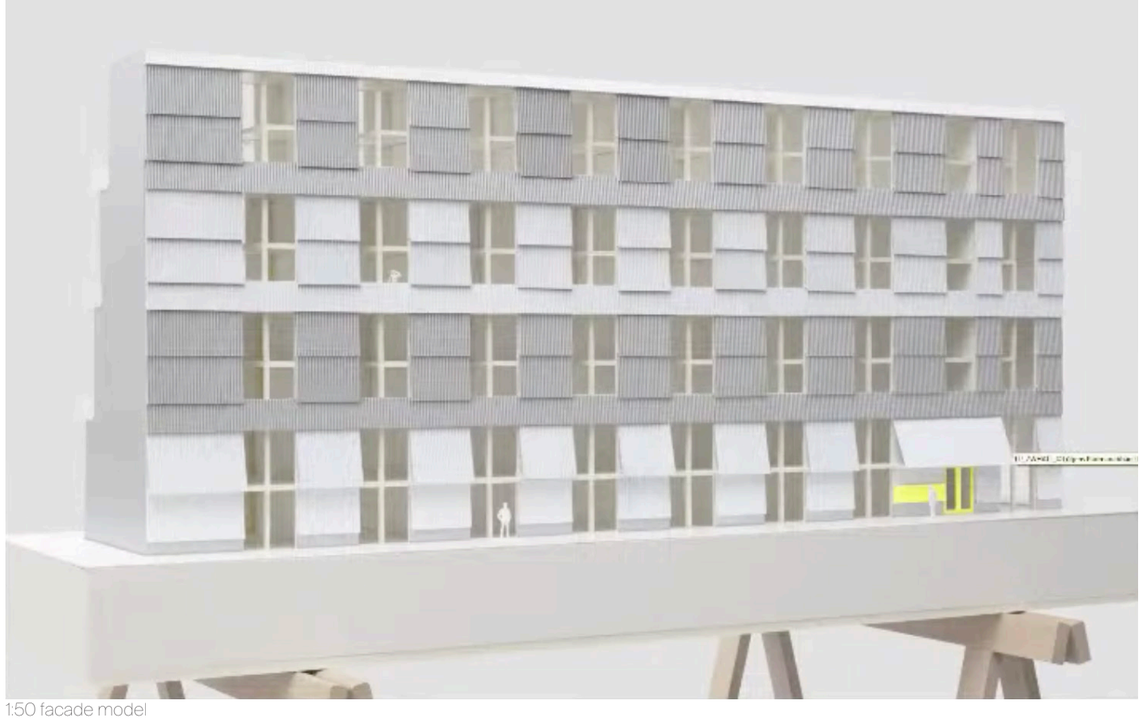
gluing is committing



Lütjens
Padmanabhan



1:50 factual model: structure



1:50 facade model



230 W3.1 220207 - 220211

1:200 model

collective work on the 1:200 model

cladding the 1:200 lasercut cardboard volumes with two shades of grey

dark grey and light grey for existing buildings

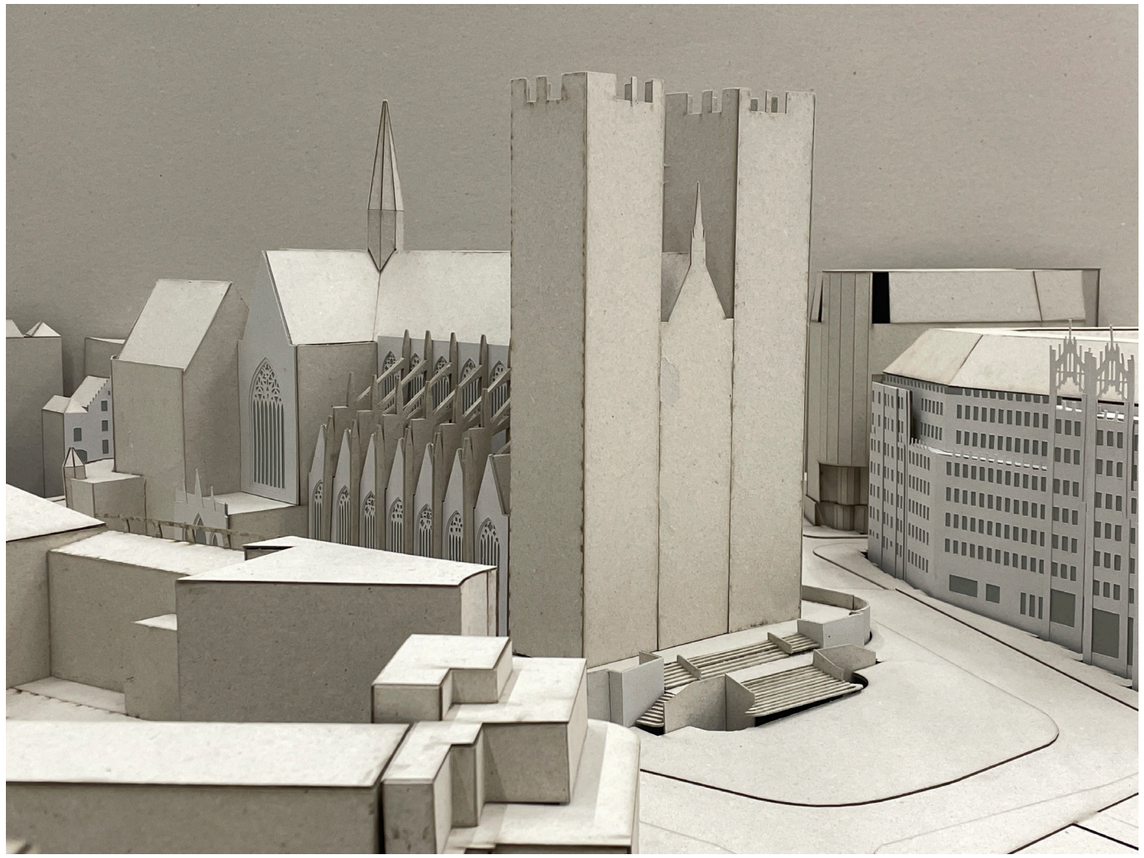
light grey and light grey for the new developments, as in buildings that will definitely change or still have to be built

making a base

lasercutting street lights

still a lot to do.





abstract



The graduation studio, set in Brussels, addresses the transformation of the National Bank of Belgium, a triangular urban block of 91.000 m2 set in- between the upper and lower part of Brussels. What might be the role of this future central bank? How to transform this vast triangular urban block of 91.000 m2? How can the National Bank of Belgium be an agent of change?

The graduation project is based around two fundamental points:

Standardisation and reconfiguration

The design is based around the notion of working with the vast, complex, existing building that the NBB is. How to deal with its conglomerate of existing standardised elements such as interior partition walls, raised floors, doors, technical services, furniture and so forth. Essentially, the entire existing interior constitutes the project itself.

How can the strategy of dissection, reconfiguration and displacement be adapted on these standardised building elements and be implemented on multiple scales ranging from the the interior of the National Bank of Belgium to the scale of the city. How far can the architect go with an existing building without demolishing anything, rendering the building a shell and combining the services, scenery and sets of an existing interior into one? How does this strategy inform the organisation of the NBB as a building, the facade, sequence of spaces and its program?

Developing a strategy for dealing with an existing building, especially focussing on the adaptive re-use of the existing and perhaps obsolete standardised (technical) elements of the National Bank of Belgium, thus localising the economy as work on the building is concentrated around reconfiguring, dissecting and displacing existing building elements seems relevant in contemporary times, especially as so much building stock in (Belgian) cities is exactly this building, partly-abandoned and too big to program. All bank buildings are facing this problem either now or soon. The adaptive re-use of this existing Bank building seems therefore relevant in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.

How can these standardised elements which are repeated throughout the building and its vertical identical stacking of floors of the building inform this strategy? An extensive inventory these standardised elements is needed. The challenges for this project lie therefore in the notion of standardisation, reconfiguration, stacking throughout multiple scales.

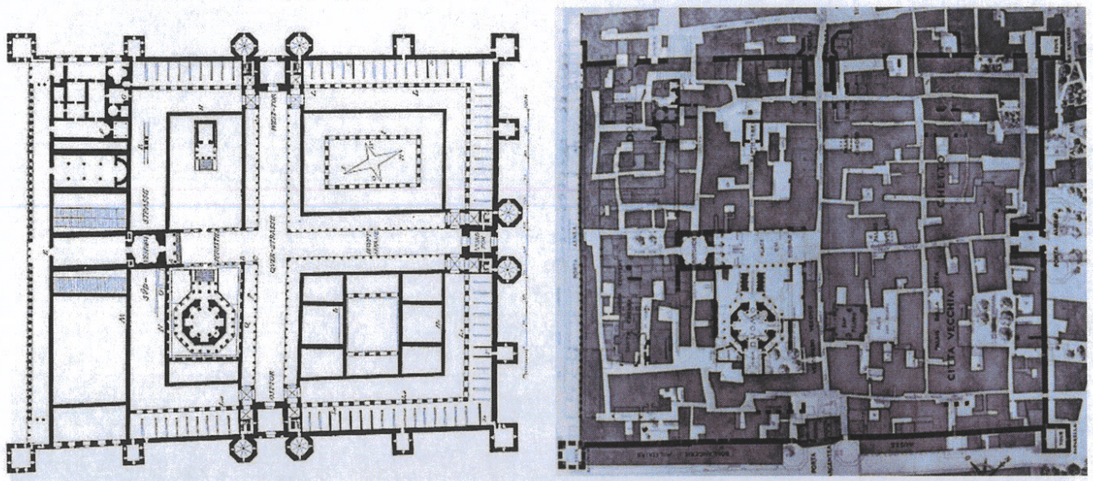
My individual project started by using the physical model as a research- and design tool. Through making physical models the interior of the National Bank of Belgium is studied. These models are questioning and examining the hierarchy of the interior layers of the bank. The expression of the bank towards the city is a result of the interior of the bank. Through testing variations and ultimately extremes in the model, conclusions are developed. It is about multiple scales to tackle the complexity of the bank. 1:1, 1:10, 1:20, 1:50, 1:200, 1:500, 1:1000 and an interaction between these scales. It is about abstraction in the model to make the bank comprehensible, using the photography of the model as a design tool.











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

Intelligent Ruin

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

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

How many lives can a building have? When we look at the Pantheon in Rome or the Hagia Sofia in Istanbul, we deal with structures whose form and material have allowed them to stand the test of time and accommodate many lives, shaping the form of the city around them. If we think about the Diocletian Palace in Split, we recall the fabric of a building that literally became the bones of a city. Their interiors, and many others, have accommodated changing programmes according to the evolving needs. While a building's programme can be a leading design tool, when functions and necessities change over time – look at the given brief for the National Bank of Belgium project – a good building knows how to deal with change.

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

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



Aerial cutaway view of the Bank of England from the south-east, 1830 by Joseph Gandy, imagining Sir John Soane's building in ruins and commissioned by the architect himself. Photograph: Courtesy Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum

Now that we start MSc4, *how* the building performs and is made comes to the fore, and Building Technology tutors enter the studio as part of your design mentoring. They will set up methodologies to deal with structure, heating and ventilation requirements, and last but not least, the sustainable (and circular) use of building materials.

In preparation for this, over the coming two weeks, you will collectively look at the existing condition of the NBB building plot as an intelligent ruin. For a fortnight, you will forget about programme requirements – utilitas – and consider the existing building as a material artefact, both at strategic and detailed scales, observing which material interventions are possible within its current conditions.
The above should result in a series of diagrams alongside a clarified digital model for shared usage at the strategic scale. The diagrams will indicate the layers and categories of physical fabric: columns / beams / vaults / slabs / stair and lift cores / service risers / movement joints / facades. They should also analyse the building in terms of its potential for use: widths and heights of floor plates / build ups / means of escape, directions and distances

At detail scale, we would like you to understand the key components of the buildings and their relationships, including the roof lights / windows / stone facades and the layers of the interior fabric.

You should make an inventory of the materials present on the site, looking at the existing building fabric as a library or stock of building products for recycling or reuse? What are the strategies for doing this? How could one organise the building site when transforming the NBB? Where could one keep a temporary supply of material?

Having made a set of drawings and a model to analyse the whole, we would like you to individually consider your approach to the material and structure:
What can you learn from specific structural interventions in one of the buildings on the plot? If you want to amend the structure through addition or subtraction, what might be the structurally and materially strategies? Could this approach become replicated in another location, or is it specific to its condition?

How will a building like this be serviced in a post-carbon future? What are the potential strategies you could employ? What elements of this are achieved through the addition of tertiary technology, and where might it become part of the primary fabric of the building into the future?

How can the existing stock of materials you have identified be reutilised or transformed within the site? Is a *carbon shadow* cast in this process? If you employ new building materials,

Future Bank

MSc4 AR3AI100 Week 3.1-3.3



Palais de Tokyo, Paris in function between 1934 - 1974. Renovation between 1999 - 2014. Lacaton & Vassal architectes

where do they come from? What is the impact of extraction and transport on their Life Cycle Analysis? What will be the embodied energy or *emergy* (expressed in emjoules) of the building transformations on the site? What is the optimum balance between (over)dimensioning building elements and the lifespan of the building?
How can one guarantee a qualitative interior with sufficient daylight or give character and expression to a façade of a building with ever more stringent energy requirements preventing us from continuing to make architecture as we know it?

We do not expect you to solve all of these more qualitative questions in the next period. Still, this brief will be a catalyst for a series of issues, which will be played out through your MSc4, allowing you to find some form of resolution or conclusion by the end of the project. Again this might be strategically or in detail.

As a society, we might want to protect buildings because they have a sturdy skeleton that allows reuse. We might want to protect buildings because they express cultural values. Our built environment is the material expression of the economy of past societies, and in doing so, it comes with a certain beauty, rhythm, proportion or characteristic materiality. Clients, architects, policymakers, builders, and users must learn to respect the invested energy in the carefully designed expressions from our predecessors. We should also be aware that when we intervene in an existing structure, we often no longer have the capacity or material to replicate what it achieves, often because it was done so through extreme exploitation in ways we can no longer countenance.

We can, however, make the best of what has already happened by profiting from the material artefact as it exists. As architects, part of a genealogy of humankind, we shape the environments in which our society could thrive – both with human and non-human actors. Respecting their emergy and well-intentioned cultural expression, the buildings we make will hopefully be capable of transforming again one day as intelligent ruins.

Dean Hawkes
inv. imagination.

Interiors
Buildings
Cities

Palace

MSc 4 10-02-22

OWNERSHIP

CORNER FRAGMENT

STRATEGY FOR CLIMATE

-TEMPERATURE
-VENTILATION

PASSIVE
ACTIVE

FABRIC AS A FUNCTIONAL SHELL

NON INSULATED AND NON-TREATED

CIRCULATION SPACES

MINERAL
ATTITUDE TOWARDS CLIMATE (DESIGN)

BUILDING UPON THE EXISTING

A PROJECT UNDER CONSTANT CONSTRUCTION

DEVELOPING AS PART OF THE WHOLE

-WHAT TO ADD OR REMOVE
IT FUNCTION

SUPERIMPOSITION OF DIFFERENT LAYERS

WHAT ARE THE ADDITIONS?

DESIGN + REGULATIONS

ARCHITECTURE AS COHERENT WHOLE
DEAN HAWKES

FROM THE ROOM TO THE CITY
INTERIORS IN RELATION TO KEY
IDEAS OF THE PROJECT
A P3 AS EXHIBITION
SERIES OF DESIGN PROPOSALS AT VARIOUS
SCALES THAT RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER

Bravoure Scarcity Beauty

ances above. Pipes that need to cross the space, right through the centre. And why not? But columns of a classical order define the space. How, then, could mere pipes be allowed to cross this space? By the boldness to introduce a different column. A column in a material that was supposed to be hidden. Here applied with exacting precision and dedication — an object of difference. A very different column, but also a very precise one, between the others. As precise as necessary to transform the classical order into a different order. Again, observation, but also boldness. The boldness to introduce a difference.

P.85 A roof light is set in the roof. The edge of the roof light needs a finish. It is obvious how this should be finished. Of course it should be finished. Or maybe it should not. A moment of doubt. The acceptance of what is. A moment of scarcity that turns into a moment of acceptance. And so becomes a moment of *bravoure*. The border is beautiful

as it is. A beautiful scarcity.

P.69 Acoustic panels and light fittings in a day-care centre. Technical installations are inevitably part of the whole. But how to be a part of the whole is the question. The question of how to imagine technical installations to be no longer technical installations. But something else. A shift in meaning. A shift in naming. A shift in perception.

Technical installations as birds.

P.57 A door frame in Nivelles. A door frame for a door. The same door frame for pipes too. To let pipes circulate.

The framing of pipes when pipes are allowed to be more than pipes. A different framing. A different perception.

intermezzo

This is what architecture needs to do. This is perhaps what architecture really needs to do. To be an all-encompassing possibility. The possibility to move that which is expected into a


57




69


85

GENEROSITY

Sometimes the notion of the everyday is reduced to the conventional. To us, the everyday is precisely that which is connected by all kinds of small, unexpected events breaking through the routine.
— Paul Vermeulen

Bravoure *is not just a perfect technical execution. You need the expertise, but the expertise is only the condition from which you can create so much more than just a solution.*
— Henk De Smet

CG Scarcity, economy, acceptation, technology. To us, these words all relate to the legitimisation of architecture. They are posited here as an invitation to discuss building and the making of architecture.

JDV Our fascination for these objects — these birds — in your building in Antwerp derives from an interest in the building process. More specifically, it comes from an interest in the moment that the building process takes a turn. There is not much that happens here, but for once the acoustic panels are not positioned straight, and for once the lights do not line up with the grid. Can you describe the moment when something like this happens?

PV Of course, a moment like this occurs late in the design process. The design has already taken shape and the themes are already present. Then a problem arises that needs to be solved. At a certain point we needed to calculate the amount of acoustic material necessary, and we realised that less material was needed if the panels hung freely in the space, releasing the upper side of the panel as an absorbing surface. The rest was inevitable. The number of light fittings had already been specified and the acoustic panels had to be suspended evenly with the lights. I remember that someone made a small model in a few minutes, where the light and the panels were a single figure, and together they became a bird.

HDS This sort of thing very often happens by accident. Because this kind of problem needs to be solved quickly, certain things come into being without us having anticipated them. And once the solution is described as something else, as a bird, it develops its own logic, which you then have to follow through.

JDV At that moment it becomes so much more than just a solution. It solves the problem, but it also takes a turn, it departs from it. To what extent was this determined by a limited budget?

HDS A limited budget is not necessarily a condition, but it does stimulate resourcefulness.

PV Scarcity also has a lot to do with the amount of time available to solve a problem. It would be absurd to commission an artist or to draft a brief for something like this. Those acoustic panels had to be hung either way, and the only thing we did was to suggest hanging them in this specific way. Once you call them cranes or herons, it becomes clear that the light needs to be suspended in such a way that it sticks out on the side of the panels. This much is at least necessary to resemble the image of a crane. This way it also seems as if no effort had gone into it, as if these elements had been carelessly positioned.

JDV How important is it that an occasion or opportunity presents itself that allows this architectural incident to happen? Is a certain condition necessary to make such occasions possible, to recognise and seize them?

HDS Having a clear understanding of the building is a precondition. During the design process the building develops its own logic and rules. It is only from an understanding of those rules that you can clearly recognise what is right or not. That is when you can spot these opportunities. If you still have to learn the rules of the building at that stage, it is too late to seize them. In that sense, the birds are the result of the relation between several elements that were already present in the building. The bird is very important as an object in itself, but its existence is dependent on the building as a whole. It is the kind of element you would expect in this building.

CG Scarcity often suggests a minimum, reducing something to its essentials, not being able to afford anything. These birds are then not something you can explain from the economy of the building, but maybe they can be understood from the purpose of the building?

PV It is not something that has been added to the building to give it meaning. It is something that was necessary. Those acoustic panels had to hang there, so they might as well hang there in this specific way.

HDS I would definitely not consider it an artistic intervention. It is something that was done to solve a problem. We are sensitive enough to see the poetry of it, but we did not intend to create an installation as an artist. That is a very fine line.

JDV Your architecture is primarily concerned with acts of building, but there is always an element of playfulness there, too. I think it is very important that you can explore a sense of innocence in something as serious as a building. To me this is indeed a different position from that of an artist.

HDS Sometimes you impose certain rules on yourself that do not immediately make sense. For example, in the adjacent nursing home, we set a rule that there would be no flat roofs, so all roofs had to have an angle. People would look down from the surrounding high-rises and see the shadows of the towers glide over the building during the day. We wanted to break these shadows. In the end, that is an additional complexity you create for yourself, but it is a complexity that also enriches the building.

JDV This is *bravoure*. Doing this. Not only in this one object we are showing, but also in the complete building there is an attitude of *bravoure*.

PV I also think this has a lot to do with appreciating the everyday and the ordinary. We are related to a broad movement in architecture that is concerned with creating 'an architecture of the everyday'. Sometimes the notion of the everyday is reduced to the conventional. To us, the everyday is precisely that which is connected by all kinds of small, unexpected events breaking through the routine.

JDV Do you think it is relevant to draw attention to something like this at a place like the Venice Biennale? Not to talk about large-scale urban interventions, but rather to talk about, for example, the doorknob? To say, look at those birds over there?

PV I think it is definitely worth it, especially in the context of the Biennale, where all kinds of grand statements flourish. The idea of craftsmanship is definitely relevant too. All of the objects on show here are the result of the question of how to build something. It is about overcoming the obstacles posed by the materiality of things, without exaggerating. In this sense, they are all graceful projects, because they do not give the problem more attention than it can claim.

HDS Of course, we could have solved this acoustic problem with more precision or perfection. Here, it is only a simple assemblage of different materials to deal with the problem. *Bravoure* is not just a perfect technical execution. You need the expertise, but the expertise is only the condition from which you can create so much more than just a solution.

JDV At the beginning we had words such as scarcity, economy, acceptation. It seems that other words are also important, for example, gracious, and maybe also generous. It is indeed generous to use an acoustic panel and fluorescent lighting to arrive at a crane bird. By attributing more to the assembly than just the separate materials, it becomes something poetic, simply through building, without trying to create poetry as such.

Architect: De Smet Vermeulen architecten
Project: Day-care centre De Strandloper, IGLO, Antwerp, 2013
GENEROSITY
Interview with Henk De Smet and Paul Vermeulen
All interviews by Christoph Grafe and Jan De Vylder unless otherwise indicated

Charlotte Posenenske 1930-1985

The things I make are
changeable,
as simple as possible,
reproducible.
They are components of a space, because they are similar to building elements,
they can always be rearranged into new combinations or positions,
thereby altering space.
I leave this alteration to the consumer, who thereby again and again participates
in the assembly process.
The simplicity of the basic geometric forms is beautiful and suited to demonstrate
the principles of rationalized alteration.
I make series
because I do not want to make individual pieces for individuals,
in order to have elements combinable within a system,
in order to make something that is repeatable, objective,
and because it is economical.
The series can be prototypes for mass-production.
Series DW (at Fischer's) is made of corrugated cardboard, which is lightweight and
inexpensive: a material for consumption.
Often, the elements or their combinations are very large in order to alter the
spatial surroundings all the more thoroughly. They approximate architectural
dimensions and for this also reason increasingly differ from the former gallery
objects.
They are less and less recognizable as "works of art."
The objects are intended to have the objective character of industrial products.
They are not intended to represent anything other than what they are.
The previous categorization of the arts no longer exists. Future artists will have
to work with a team of experts in a development laboratory.
Although art's formal development has progressed at an increasing tempo, its
social function has withered.
Art is a commodity that is only temporarily contemporary, yet the market is
minute, and prestige and prices rise the less current the supply is.
I find it difficult to come to terms with the fact that art can contribute nothing to
the solution of pressing social problems.

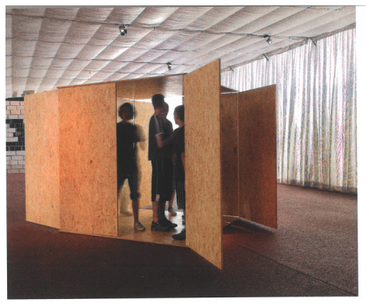
Offenbach, February 11, 1968



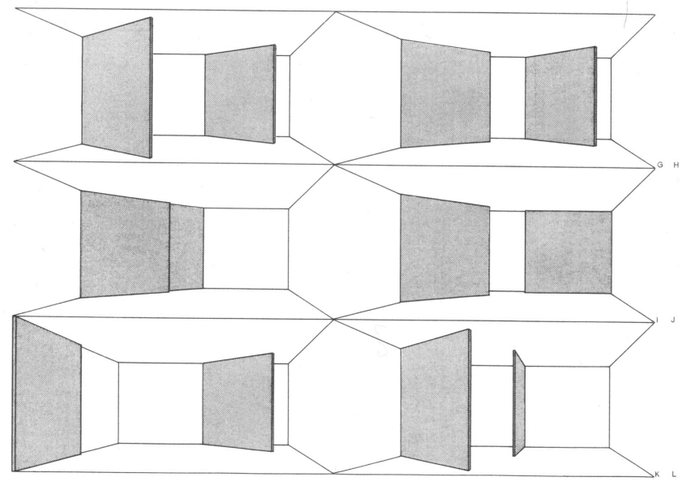
56 Series D Vierkantrohre (Square Tubes), reconstruction,
sheet steel, main train station, Stuttgart, 1989

Charlotte Posenenske, "Statement" [Manifesto], Art International no. 5 (May 1968)

(Square Tubes) (detail), reconstruction,
hdi Chouakri, Berlin, 2007



Series E Drehflügel (Revolving Vanes), reconstruction,
documenta 12, Kassel, 2007



71 Raumteiler (Partitions), 1967, unrealized concept

Posenenske's main body of sculpture—although sociocritically motivated—was never directly intended to provoke or agitate. In a much more subtle and subversive way, she related her procedures to reality mimetically. As an artist, she introduced structures that could be produced industrially and temporary models for action in real time and space. Their aesthetic potential does not shock viewers but is intended to educate them about the way their own minds are defined by exploitative materialism and the constraints of authoritarian politics. Posenenske places models of self-determination and democratically constituted community against these findings. Her concept of "mimetic minimalism" shaped all of her artistic decisions, from the choice of material and presentation to handling her "objects."

The material basis of her sculptures—sheet steel, sheet aluminum, corrugated cardboard, RAL colors—reflects the customary industrial and building materials of the day. The artistic stipulations for the Reliefs, Vierkantrohre, and Drehflügel series are kept to a minimum to the extent that the artist always defines two or three elements that can easily be produced industrially, whose "beautiful simplicity" (Adam Seide) negate any agreements with the category of "visuality." The elements of Posenenske's sculptural series do not depict the "world," even on an abstract plane. Aesthetic variation and temporary forming processes do not begin to develop until the elements are being worked with. Serial production is a conscious mimetic reflection of factory and product manufacturing standards.[19]

Even though it was just as impossible for Posenenske to do without the system of galleries and group exhibitions for the presentation and communication of her artistic work as it was for other artists, as early as 1967 she refused to allow her works to acquire museum status, seeking out locations that were alien to art and performative contexts for the temporary presentation of her sculptures. The element of "mimetic Minimalism"—relating to presentation—can be identified in Posenenske's decision to find public places for her sculpture that were open to experience as manifestations of social production, consumption, and distribution structures. In 1967, the artist positioned her Vierkantrohre on a traffic island in Offenbach, where the legendary filmmaker Gerry Schum filmed them while they were being set up for his pioneering television art reportages. At the same time, Posenenske set up her Vierkantrohre and a large Drehflügel, the latter now at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne, for a photographic action at the Frankfurt airport. In an exhibition context, it was impossible to overlook the artistic character of her sculptures, but in the context of architecture and road and air traffic, mimesis can go so far that in these contexts, the objects are virtually indistinguishable from omnipresent functional components such as ventilation pipes or the like.

The terms democratization, variability, participation, and cooperation are crucially important for the reception of Charlotte Posenenske's artistic oeuvre. Her decision not to place a limit on the number of elements produced is fundamental in this context, as is the practice of setting the purchase price to match the manufacturing costs. Posenenske was thus undermining the compulsory capitalist added-value system and at the same time canceling out the factor, decisive for art objects, of capitalizing on symbolic increases in value. Within a framework defined by the artist, it was the viewer/purchaser's or curator's own decision how the objects were to be presented. Several people have to come to a consensus in advance to assemble the Vierkantrohre and the Drehflügel. These components of cooperative action in handling the art, choosing the location, and positioning different ensembles symbolize the democratic process and the requirements for action relating to changeable political structures.

It is possible to identify the high political, social, and democratic ethos that motivated Posenenske to work as an artist from her decisions about the production, presentation, and reception of her work. The founding of the Cologne Art Fair in 1967 and the massive presence of Minimalist sculpture at documenta 6 in 1968 may have triggered doubts in her at the same time about whether it would be possible to keep art's metaphorical interventions in life out of the circulation cycles of capital and goods. One early consequence was a further reduction in her artistic work and a move toward participatory projects in the medium of criticism, survey, and flyer campaigns—

abstract 2



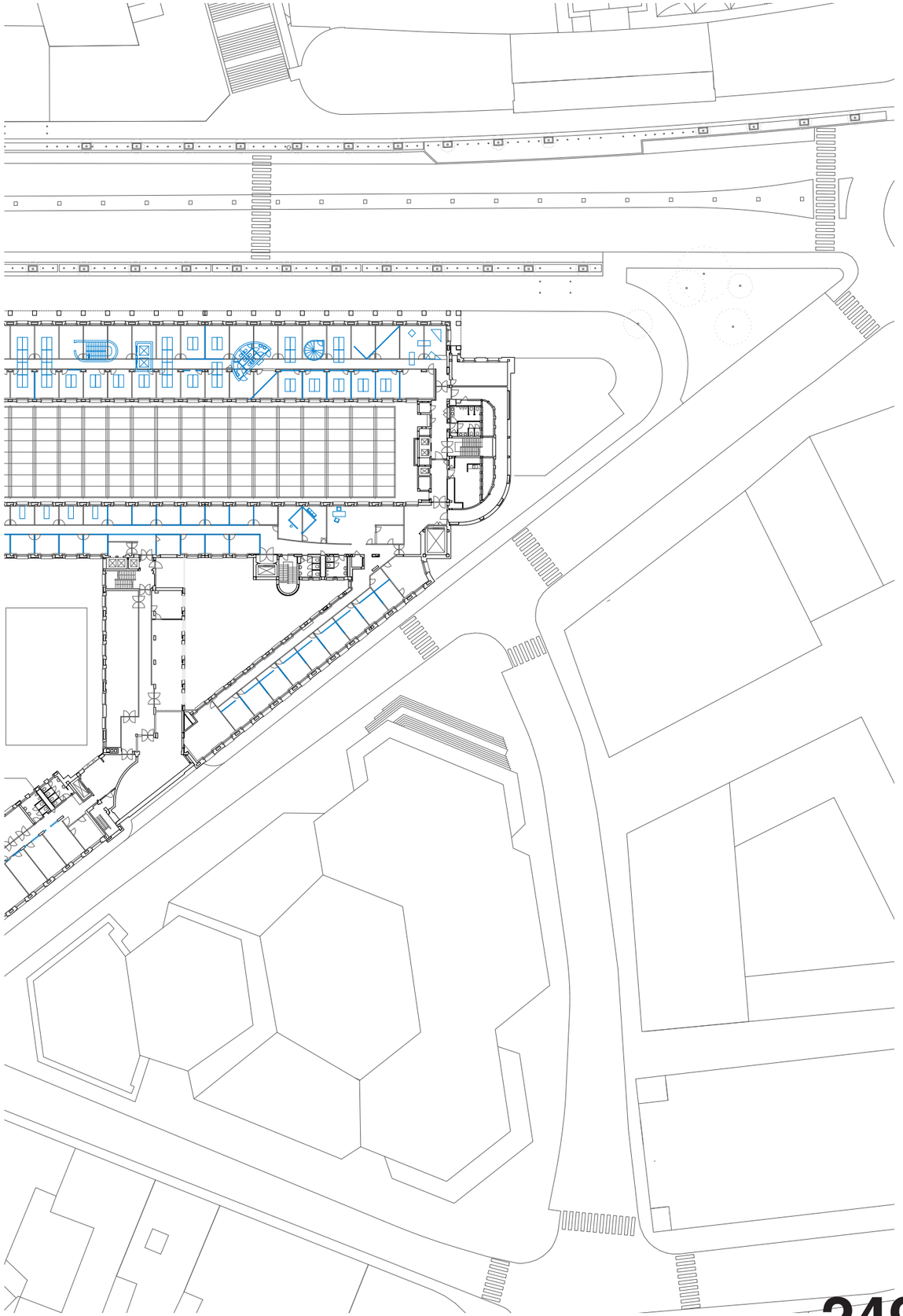
Standardisation

00

This project, set in Brussels, addresses the
transformation of the National Bank of Belgium, a
triangular urban block of 91.000 m2 set in between the upper and lower part of Brussels. What might be the role of this future central bank? How to transform this vast triangular urban block of 91.000 m2? How can the National Bank of Belgium be an agent of change?

The design is based around the notion of working with the vast, complex, existing building that the National Bank of Belgium is. How to deal with its conglomerate of existing standardised elements consisting of interior partition walls, raised floors, doors, technical services,
furniture and so on. Essentially, the entire existing
interior constitutes the project.

So much building stock in (Belgian) cities is exactly like this building: partly abandoned and too big to program. All bank buildings are facing this either now or soon. The project attempts to illustrate a strategy to deal with buildings like these in a way that localises the economy of the building site as much as possible.













Dissection

01

How far can the architect go with an existing building without demolishing anything, rendering the building a shell and combining the existing services, scenery and sets into one layer? How does this strategy inform the organisation of the National Bank of Belgium as a building, the facade, sequence of spaces and its program?

Surgical operations on the building. Cutting into the existing fabric to reveal the theatre of it all. Cutting into the existing fabric to make the building completely available. Cutting into the existing fabric to make- and open up space.

Undressing the National Bank of Belgium, to reinforce its loss of traditional secure functions and allow for a more open and permeable environment.





Reconfiguration

02

What is needed in a room after the shell? What accomodates the space? How to reconfigure the hierarchy of these interior layers? The expression of the bank towards the city is a result of this interior recalibration.

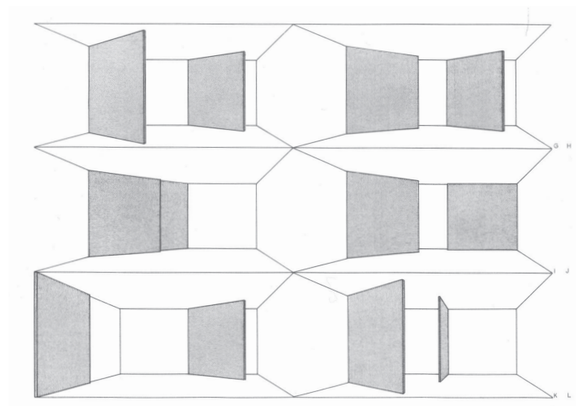
Through reconfiguration the interior hierarchy is renewed. Each individual worker having their own individual office is not legible anymore. Partitions become a different element once the doors are removed, placed under an angle these elements break with the previously strict interior layout. A more dynamic lay-out which allows for intimate niches and a notion of domesticity emerges.

A single element is repeated numerous times in a building like this. It is repeated on each individual floor, after which it is stacked vertically. An intervention on a single element can, because of this multiplication in both horizontal and vertical direction, have a serious impact on the building as a whole.















Displacement

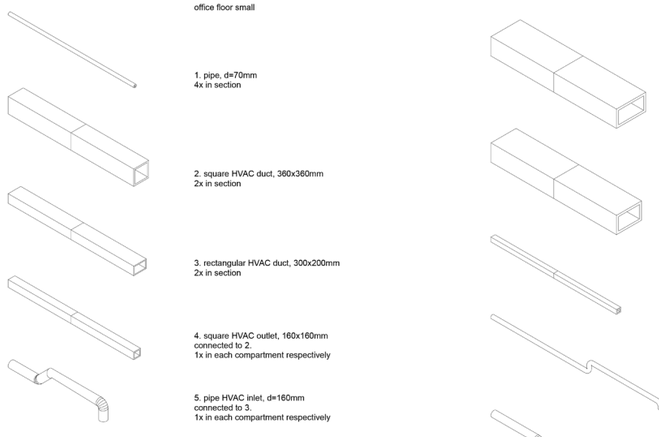
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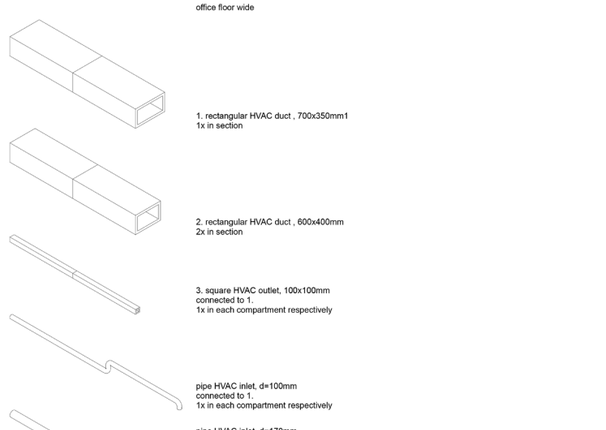
How can standardised elements of technical services, ranging from ducts to lifts, be an active instrument in the interior of the office? What if ducts are becoming columns? What if the technical installations are a place for meeting?

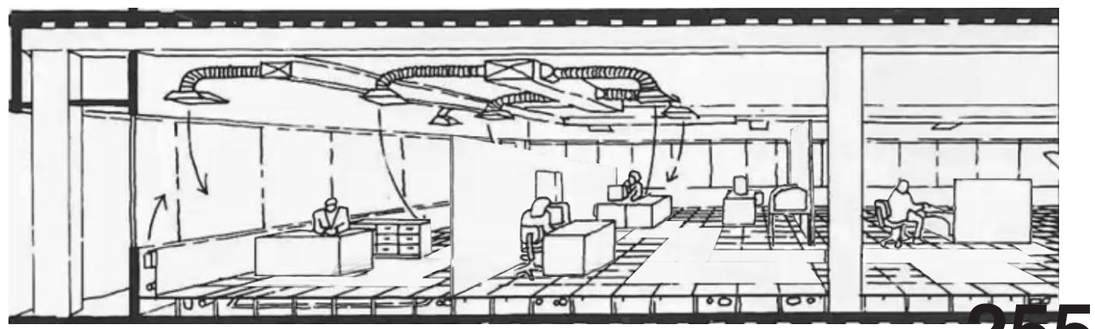
Through the displacement of technical elements in the interior of the office, a new work culture emerges. Ducts, lifts and services are becoming space-defining elements in between which the work is happening. There is no hierarchy anymore between circulation, services, installations and the workspace itself, these co-exist on an open floor together.

Focussing on the adaptive re-use of existing building elements localises the economy of the building site as work is concentrated around reconfiguring, dissecting and displacing elements which are already present in the building now. Re-use means temporarily stocking on the site, the palace becomes the storeroom.

A detailed cataloging of what is there is needed.







MSc 3



Charlotte Posenenske, Series DW, 1967, corrugated cardboard

MSc 4



Charlotte Posenenske, Series DW, 1967, stainless steel

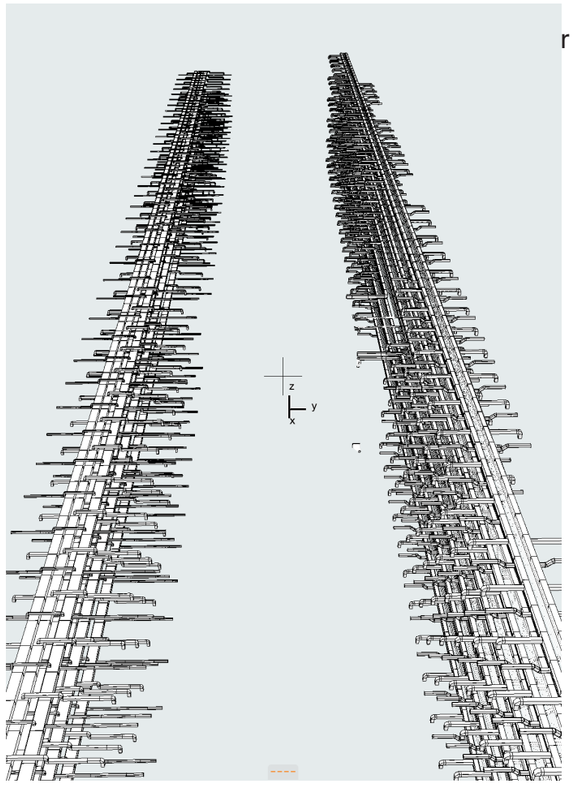
+ Bas Leemans

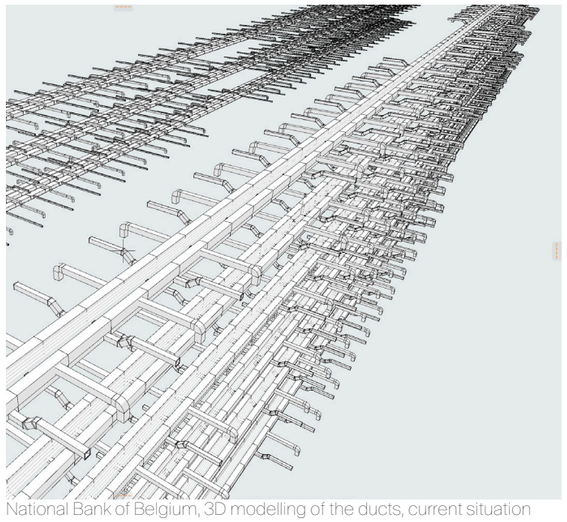
NBB, cataloging and drawing current ducts

s), horizontal and vertical
3. plumbing (pipes), horizontal and vertical

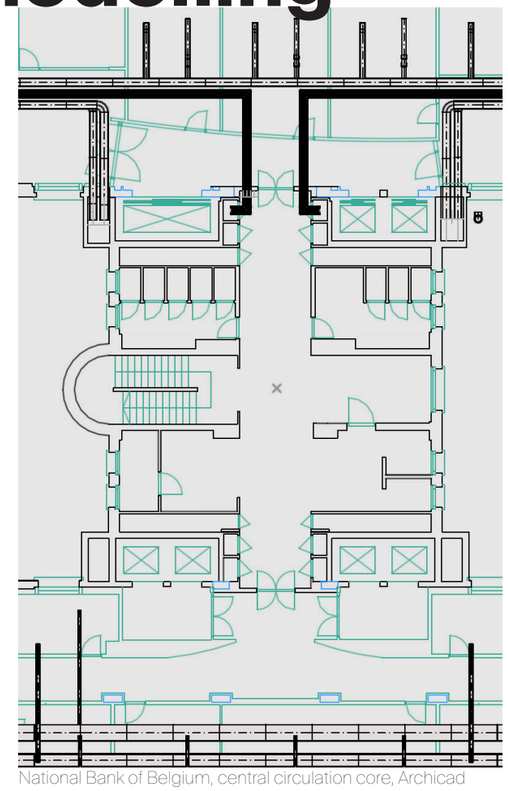
Archicad 3D model. Routing the ducts in plan.
investigating archive material to define where
the ducts are travelling in vertical direction.

Ducts modelling

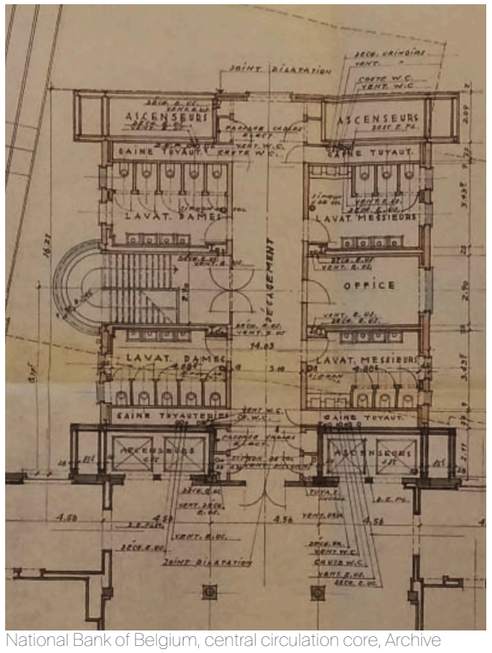




National Bank of Belgium, 3D modelling of the ducts, current situation



National Bank of Belgium, central circulation core, Archicad



National Bank of Belgium, central circulation core, Archive



National Bank of Belgium, Afb 3.63: 9/12/55. installations from 1955 without suspended ceiling!



National Bank of Belgium, Afb 3.63: 9/12/55. same space with suspended ceiling

Corporate Arcadia on



National Bank of Belgium, main entrance hall

Corporate Arcadia

'Brussels is good for a photographer, not for an architect'[1]

This exhibition project started in February 2017 as a carte blanche in response to the question, 'What has most influenced the real and the imaginary fabric of Brussels since 1989?'
Despite the creation of the Brussels-Capital Region and the introduction of new instruments to encourage public and private projects, the city has mostly been shaped by the corporate architecture of banking headquarters, office buildings and hotels. While in the 1970s and 1980s the architectural debate was rich in proposals and counterproposals, in the 1990s the built reality took over by sheer numbers. Large office blocks appeared on the Canal, in Little Manhattan, in the abandoned areas of the city centre, on Place Stéphanie, in the European Quarter and around Rond-Point Schuman. Some office towers were dismantled, sometimes to be rebuilt; a few were refurbished. A strange doppelgänger appeared next to the Cathedral, the Marquis. Facing the Chambon, the Radisson Blu. At Place du Luxembourg, a private consortium of a dozen architectural firms and promoters started building what would officially be declared the European Parliament only after its completion.

Neither old enough to be 'history' nor recent enough to be still vivid for the public, these buildings have already been absorbed into the city's incoherent whole, with its terrific potential to change endlessly while remaining essentially the same. Besides very few articles in Belgian architectural reviews, or some debates organized by platforms such as Disturb, such buildings seem to have been disregarded by architecture culture. They are the most evident architectural manifestations of the 1990s and early 2000s, yet they remain hidden in plain sight, almost unnoticed by architects and passers-by, like elephants in the room.

Inside the Corporate Arcadia

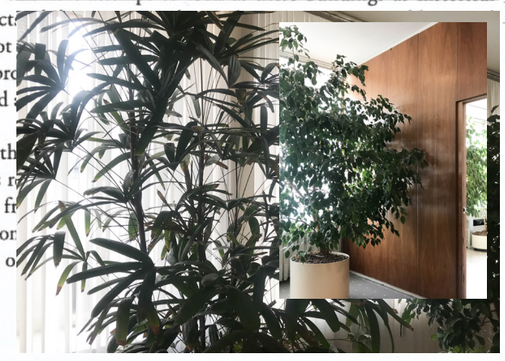
Due to their size and presence in the city, all these buildings have a public dimension, while their inside is mostly inaccessible. Highly secured, they represent the bodies of many public and private institutions that rule over the lives of citizens, architectures through which a company or a service literally gets *in-corporated*, embodied.
The content of such buildings exceeds their social function. Besides ordinary office spaces and meeting rooms, they reveal a full *interior urbanism* of alleys, atriums, lounge areas, cleaning services, fitness centres, underground canteens and top-floor restaurants, footbridges and hanging gardens, in-house maintenance and guarantee services, broadcasting studios, themed cafeterias, museums, multipurpose event spaces, auditoriums, sometimes even travel agencies, a mail service, newsagents, bank branches and ATMs: a city within a city for thousands of employees, an architectural continuum where everything has been designed, from the monumental atrium glass roof to the lift's button, encompassing the whole building on all scales in the spirit of the end-of-the-century Total Work of Art. This mix of domesticated nature, bureaucracy and dramatized monumentality was already noted by artist Dan Graham writing on large atrium buildings, like those designed by John Portman for the Hyatt Hotels in the 1970s: 'The urban corporate atrium is an attempt to smooth over contradictions between environmental decay and technological progress. As a mini-utopian retreat from the stresses of city life, it revokes the notion of "garden" as idealized landscape (the return to a pre-urban Eden).'[2] In the Corporate Arcadia you could indeed live forever: electric generators and fuel reservoirs could keep the main functions up and running for hundreds of employees for many days, 'even in the case of a total blackout over Belgium'.

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own photographs of the National Bank of Belgium interior

2 D
1987), pp.
Developer
Architectur

1 Christian Kieckens in conversation with Accattone, March 2017.

CORPORATE ARCADIA

Clémence Piedelievre, Michel Robberechts, Vincenzo Rosso, David Roulin, Laura Semey, Charlotte Snios, Leo Van Broeck, Angélique Vancraenenbroeck, Marc Van Neck, Didier Vanderhasselt, Marc Vanneck, Hans-Bart Van Impe, Stefan Vansant, Kevin Versailles, Georges Valders, John Vrebos, Iris Walter, Alain Wouters

For their precious help: Maxime Delvaux, Marie-Cécile Guyaux, Roxane Legrelle, Iwan Strauven, Tom Weaver

National Bank of Belgium
Banking hall with atrium
(overlayed on article)

CORPORATE





DAN GRAHAM AND ROBIN HURST

Here, Lycoris, are cool fountains, here soft fields,
Here woodland, here with you I'd be Time's casualty....
As the green alder pushes upward in new spring.
Let us arise: for singers heavy is the shade,
Heavy the shade of juniper; and shade harms fruit.
Go, little she-goats, Hesper comes, go home replete.
—Vergil, "Eclogue X," translated by Guy Lee

[The arcades and botanical winter gardens are] residues of a dream world...[in which] the collective consciousness sinks into ever deeper sleep....The city is now a landscape, now a room.
—Walter Benjamin

The modern city lives in a tension between the urban and the "natural," in Rousseau's sense of the utopian, Edenic, or arcadian possibility. This dialectic began in the early Enlightenment, with the Abbé Laugier, who, influenced by Rousseau's opposition of the supposedly uncorrupted "natural man" to civilization, proposed a similar first principle for architecture in the "rustic hut." This elementary hut Laugier set in an Edenic nature, as a critique of the despoilments of the new, disordered bourgeois city. As model, the hut, a simple shelter, reduced architecture to an absolute elemental base, reflecting an Enlightenment myth of a social arcadia in terms of the urban plan. Simultaneously, the hut evoked two related archetypes: first, Greek architecture's pure, geometric, elementary forms; second, the original derivation of its column from the tree. Laugier writes, "The pieces of wood raised vertically give us the idea of columns. The horizontal pieces that surmount them give us an idea of pediment."[1] His proposal that city streets be laid out in a fashion analogous to the paths of the picturesque English landscape garden (then gaining ascendancy over the French, Baroque, formal garden) represented an assimilation of the natural into the urban and architectural. The metaphor of nature that Laugier introduced into the urban order took the form of a symbolic antidote to the city, while at the same time it was incorporated into the city's underlying plan.

The introduction of nature into the city took a circuitous route. The births of both the park and suburbia were indebted to the relocation of the inner-city cemetery to just outside the city walls in the 18th century.[2] It was discovered that decaying corpses and lack of ventilation were prime causes of the spread of disease; accordingly, the cemetery was relocated to the relatively open environment on the city's edges, and new designs for its symbolic layout were introduced. The cemetery's landscaping anticipated later urban design. The picturesque, "Elysian Fields" cemetery plan, Anthony Vidler points out, was "an arcadian realm...with individual monuments set picturesquely within groves of trees linked by winding paths."[3] This setting articulated the sentimental nostalgia that the city-dweller felt for the country environment: as Richard Etlin writes, "The living might imagine their relative's eternal rest and even anticipate their own."[4] Yet at the same time that the cemetery's location and landscaping connoted an idea of nature, they also anticipated developments in the city. As Vidler writes in a discussion of Paris' Père Lachaise cemetery, "the design of a cemetery represented in microcosm that of the...city as a whole....the cemetery might surpass that [degree of planning] attainable in the city, founding in this way a veritable *utopia in reality*, and providing intimations of city embellishment [the tree-lined, promenaded boulevard and the park in the city] long before the actual transformation occurred."[5]

It was in the mid 19th century that the new inner-city parks appeared, first in Baron Haussmann's Paris, where they coincided with the building of tree-lined boulevards. The overt rationale of these urban spaces was the bringing of "airy greenery and light into crowded districts."[6] That purpose, however, masked political and military functions. In opening main urban arteries, the boulevards countered the rebellious proletarian tactic of "taking to the streets." Boulevards allowed for better communication between various city districts; they permitted the military access to any point in the city. Later, the creation of the garden city by English social reformers took a different approach to related issues: the evolution of the suburban enclave was one answer to the urban concentration and accompanying political explosiveness of the slum. To accommodate the working-class family in its own house in a relatively rural set-

ARCADIAS

ting helped to reestablish it as a stable nuclear form. In addition, this helped to create a new consumer society based on the family.

The glass-roofed arcades (*passages*) that appeared in Paris in the 1830s also marked a stage in the development of the consumer market. Here, the city street became an interior devoted to shopping and the display of commodities, supplementing the new department stores as a kind of commodity festival in a setting of advanced engineering. For Walter Benjamin, the inner world of the glass architecture suggested "residues of a dream world...[in which] the collective consciousness sinks into ever deeper sleep....Just as the sleeping person...sets out on a macrocosmic journey through his body, and the sounds and feelings of his own insides...generate hallucinations or dream-images which...explain [these sensations], so it is too with the dreaming collective which, in the arcades, sinks into its own innards."[7]

The arcade, the department store, and the trade fair came together in the international expositions of the latter 19th century. In their crystal palaces, these often included a conservatory, in which plants were displayed in a protected environment that enabled them to survive throughout the year. Remaining after the expositions ended, this winter garden became a place in which to take temporary refuge from everyday life, a "natural" place effecting a symbolic escape from existing urban society. In the winter garden the meditative, private garden of the past was transformed into the botanical display as mass entertainment and mass education.

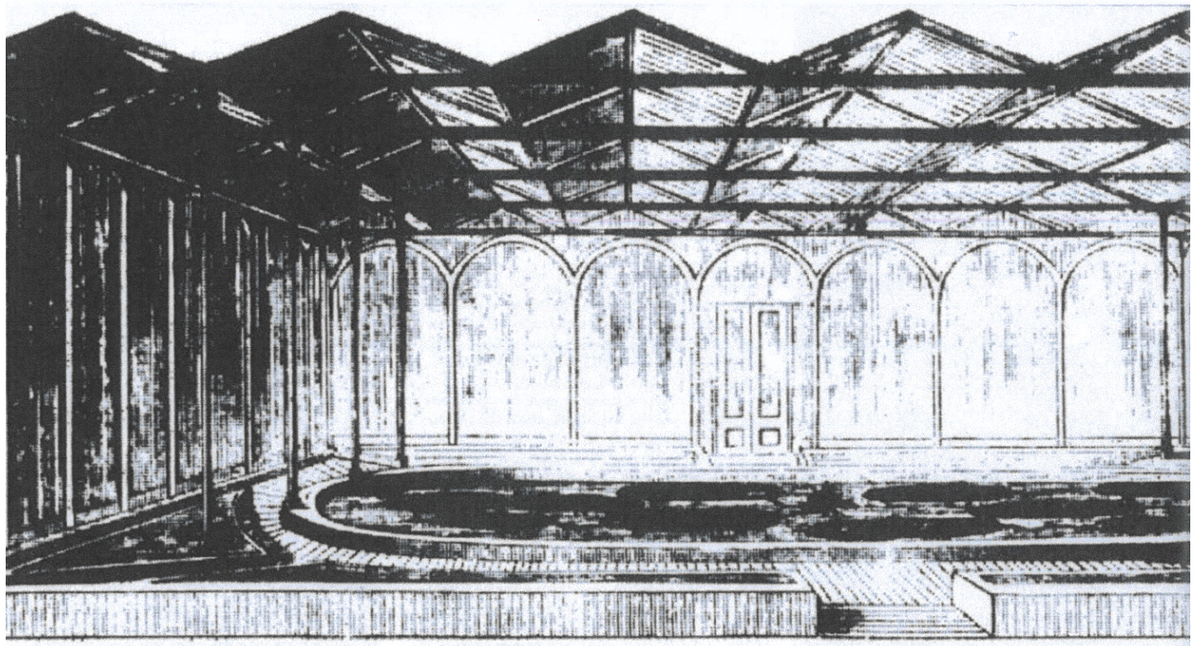
It is enough, then, to enter at random one of those crystal museums in which [the] somewhat funereal riches [of flowers] are displayed under the harmonious veil of the days of November. We at once grasp the dominant idea, the obtrusive beauty, the unexpected effort of the year in this special world, strange and privileged even in the midst of the strange and privileged world of flowers. And we ask ourselves if this new idea is a profound and really necessary idea on the part of the sun, the earth, life, autumn, or man....
—Maurice Maeterlinck

It was out of the 19th-century trade expositions and winter-garden structures that office buildings with a glass-roofed atrium court developed in

America at the turn of the century. The best-known example, now demolished, was Frank Lloyd Wright's Larkin Building of 1904–06, in Buffalo. Here, a glassed-over central core surrounded by bays of open balconies provided workers with light, and made them visible to one another. Wright's administration building for the Johnson Wax Company, 1936–39, in Racine, Wisconsin, inflects curved corners and predominantly cylindrical interiors, giving the atrium core a science fiction look. The main light source is a translucent ceiling supported by columns that open out at their tops into large flat discs, like lily pads floating above one's head, an image reminiscent of but inverse to the image of the lily pads floating on the surface of ponds within winter gardens. Wright's Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1943–59, in New York, is a helical form widening upward from an empty center atrium. The observer gazing from the ramp that constitutes the viewing area overlooks the void as if from a mountain precipice. The helical ramp is for pedestrian traffic, but seems to allude symbolically to the ramps of parking garages and the miles of roadway built in postwar America for exurban travel.

The spread of suburbia after World War II is a sign of the automobile's reformation of American life. The new middle-class suburban family was more transportable than before, willing to pack up and move rapidly to another location. Corporations were able to spread and decentralize, shifting their staffs from branch to branch throughout the country. This suburban and automotive period also saw the rise of the drive-in cinema and the shopping mall. The use of the automobile for leisure, and the decline of the urban cinema, led to the highway theme park—for example, the original Disneyland, which opened in 1955. The theme park often became the vehicle of corporate ideology. Disneyland's "Tomorrowland," for example, once housed General Electric's "Carousel of Progress," a film-and-slide dreamland that presented the idea of progress, or "better living," through commodity technology. Visitors sat in a theater section that moved forward around the carousel after each of a series of tableaux of a family of natural-looking robots in a middle-class kitchen. The sequence progressed in 20-year increments, from the turn of the century on; between each section the audience was encouraged to sing along with

Dan Graham and Robin Hurst,
'Corporate Arcadias', *Artforum*,
December 1987, pp. 68-74.
Courtesy of Dan Graham



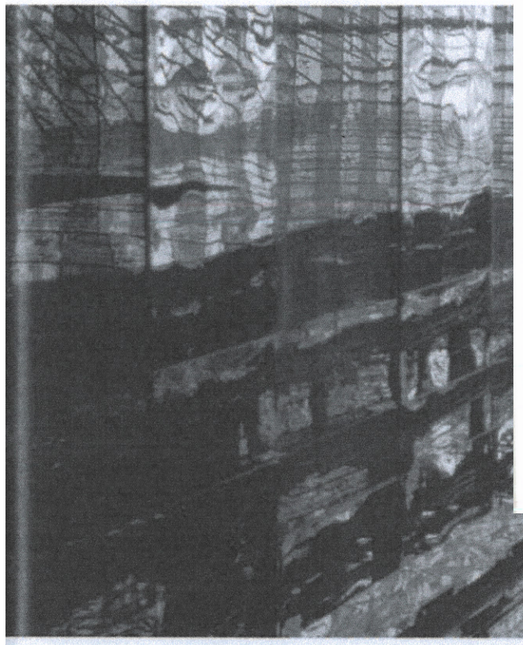
the robots, "It's a great big beautiful tomorrow, shining at the end of every day. Man has a dream and the dream can come true." The robots grew imperceptibly older, and their clothing and the decor changed to reflect the styles of the time, but the most significant changes, which the family was always showing off, were in the kitchen's electricity-based home technology. The circular motion of the carousel expressed the idea that this technological progress would be endless, endlessly satisfying human needs.

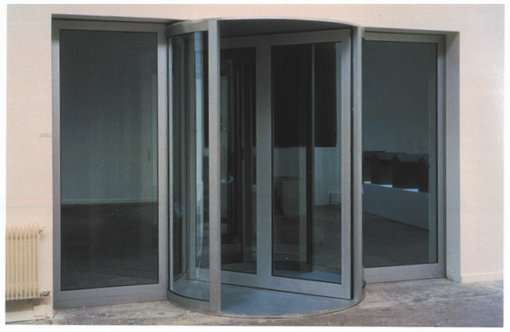
During the '60s the American city's core came to be dominated by high-rise office buildings. Metaphorically, these corporate showcases use the social openness and transparency of window glass to merge the image of technology implicit in the buildings' construction with that of efficient business practice, for the passerby can observe, through the glass, the workings of the company. At the same time, the building seems to open to the environment, incorporating into itself the light and sky reflected in the glass or, sometimes, visible through the glass on the structure's other side. The workers open to view are only the lower echelon; the executive suites are high above the city. And while the lobbies of these towers are open to the public, they are not public space; they are designed as passages for those ascending to the higher floors.

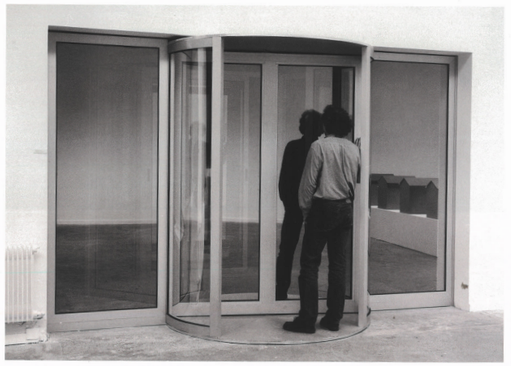
After the mid-'60s wave of prosperity fueled in America by the Vietnam war came the sudden collapse of inner cities in the Northeast and Midwest. Many companies abandoned the city, moving to the suburbs; not only did they want an escape from urban problems, but the suburbs were nearer to corporate workers' homes, and had lower tax bases. At street level in the sterile urban grids surrounding the Modernist corporate high-rise, crime and drugs were an increasing threat. The corporations that remained in the city began a move toward enclosure. Existing spaces—the plaza in front of the New York headquarters of the Chemical Bank, for example—were contained in architectural extensions; newly constructed buildings turned in on themselves like the medieval castle keep. Services, the retailing of goods, and pedestrian transit became concentrated in an inner court. New York's Ford Foundation building, 1968, by the architects Kevin Roche and John Dinkeloo, and the architect/developer John Portman's Hyatt Regency in Atlanta, 1967, codesigned by Portman and Griffith Edwards, reapplied the atrium form first used by Wright, and attempted to reopen the inner city and to attract suburbanites back to a protected area of the city. These and megabuildings like London's Barbican Center, which suggests the walled medieval city, evoke nostalgic dreams of the closed urban plaza, and set them against the open but sterile Modern plan.

In its interior atrium, a rectangular hole inserted in a "70-story cylindrical tower, clad in reflecting glass," Atlanta's Peachtree Center Plaza Hotel, 1976, a typical Portman building, puts a tropical resort in the center of the city. From outside, the tower looks like a rocket in its gantry; it is connected to the rest of the building by bridges at each level. The floor of the tower is covered by a reflecting pool, or, as Jonathan Barnett has written, a "half-acre lake.... boat-shaped islands are pushed out between the columns, forming places to have a drink and observe the space and the people."[8] Portman's hotels have developed a pattern of combining the dreamworld of the amusement park with the recreational arcadia of the picturesque park of the city. Landscaping techniques are brought indoors to create the dream-like mood of a film set. Often, as Portman says, light "is filtered through hanging plants," and "as the sun comes through foliage, it makes a pattern...like shadows on the floor of a forest."[9]

In the late '60s, New York City zoning law was amended to allow incentives for the creation of covered pedestrian spaces. In exchange for providing a "public amenity," the parklike atrium, the developer was permitted to add to the new building's rentable floor area. The result was a sprouting of such spaces in the city. Privately owned and maintained, these sanctuaries are usually under surveillance through the building's







Dan Graham

Altered Two-Way Mirror Revolving Door and Chamber (for Loie Fuller) (1987) installed at Le Consortium, Dijon, France, 1987

PARK AVENUE ATRIUM

hidden electronic security systems, as well as through the presence of guards. They often double as an entry to areas off limits to the general public. The questions of how individuals may use these corporatized "public spaces," who will decide that, and whether or not they are truly open to all, remain open. Still, these atriums are taking over some of the functions of the urban park. In some cities, they are becoming integrated into the existing outdoor park system. From the River Walk along the San Antonio River in San Antonio, Texas, for example, pedestrians can follow a stream of running water into the Hyatt Regency Hotel atrium.[10]

Many atriums have become a kind of parallel form to the suburban shopping mall. The late '70s and '80s have seen a return of the upper middle class to the city from the suburbs, and the atrium has adopted the suburban model. Spaces like Citicorp Center, the New York headquarters of the Citicorp bank, and Trump Tower, also in New York, are simultaneously office or residential building, public park, and mall. These atriums suggest a suburban areadia in the midst of the city (no need to commute), an urban fantasy of the picturesque brought into city central.

The urban corporate atrium is an attempt to smooth over contradictions between environmental decay and technological progress. As a miniutopian retreat from the stresses of city life, it reevokes the notion of "garden" as idealized landscape (the return to a preurban Eden), attempting to reconnect it to the idea of technology as an aid to man. The same attempt lay behind the 19th-century utopian communes of Robert Owen and Charles Fourier, which abandoned the city for the countryside; the Ford Foundation building seeks to address similar issues, but integrates itself with the urban community and urban park that surround it. More recent corporate atriums have increasingly separated themselves from the city fabric. Today, there is a proliferation of separate, self-contained, competing corporate atriums, which tends to vitiate the radicalness of the Ford Foundation model. Emilio Ambasz's just-completed San Antonio Botanical Conservatory stands as a critique of this trend, and as an attempt to rethink the questions raised by the atrium form.

1. Quoted in Anthony Vidler, "The Third Typology," in Leon Krier et al., *Rational Architecture*, New York: George Wittenborn, Inc., 1978, p. 29.
2. This idea is discussed by Richard Ellis and Vidler in *Oppositions* 8, Spring 1977, pp. 13 and 13–31, and by Ellis in his book *The Architecture of Death*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984.
3. Vidler, "Cemeteries of Life and Death," *Oppositions* 8, p. 13.
4. Ellis, "Landscapes of Eternity," *Oppositions* 8, p. 18.
5. Vidler, "Cemeteries of Life and Death," p. 13.
6. Vidler, "Promenades for Leisure," *Oppositions* 8, p. 49.
7. Quoted in Susan Buck-Morss, "Benjamin's Passagen-Werk: Redeeming Mass Culture for the Revolution," *New German Critique* 29, Spring/Summer 1983, pp. 216–17.
8. John Portman and Jonathan Barnett, *The Architect as Developer*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976, p. 185.
9. Ibid., p. 96.
10. See Michael J. Bednar, *The New Atrium*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1986, p. 32.

+ Susanne Pietsch

individual design crit

What is the esthetic quality of the interventions?
How do these interventions show sign of use?

How to show the difference between what is already there and what is new (or reconfigured)? i.e. painting the walls up until a certain height.. (1.)

Selective operations

Scenario: palace becomes the storeroom
How does the storeroom work in terms of its practicality?
- The palace (hotel) consists of a sequence of grand spaces with a lot of ornament on the wall and ceiling
- Moving material in and out of the palace would damage this ornament, especially on the wall
- these interiors would have to be robust to fulfill this function... boarding up a part of the ornamented walls in the palace for protection and robustness? (3, 4.)
- A structure in the palace to hold the materials (elements of the building, valuta), to facilitate the program of a storeroom (5.)

Next step: case studies of specific places in the building, with its real materiality, letting go of the abstraction and the cardboard. make these case studies, with its real notions of materiality, climate and comfort? (2.)
- what is the shell?
- what is the intention of the architect?
- what is the use?
Bringing back the monumentality of the building by stripping back.



1. painting



2. comfort



3. protection



4. robustness



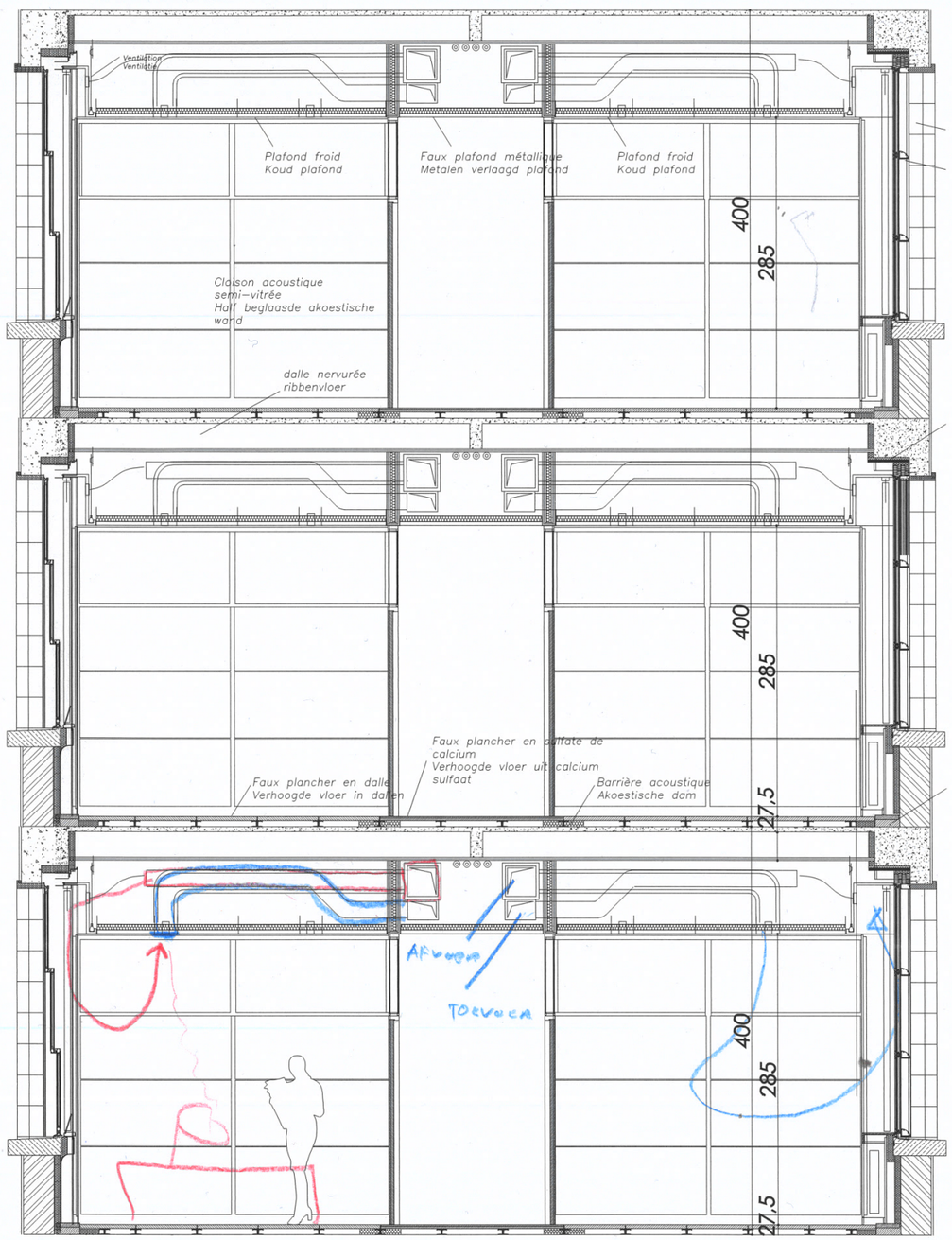
5. structure

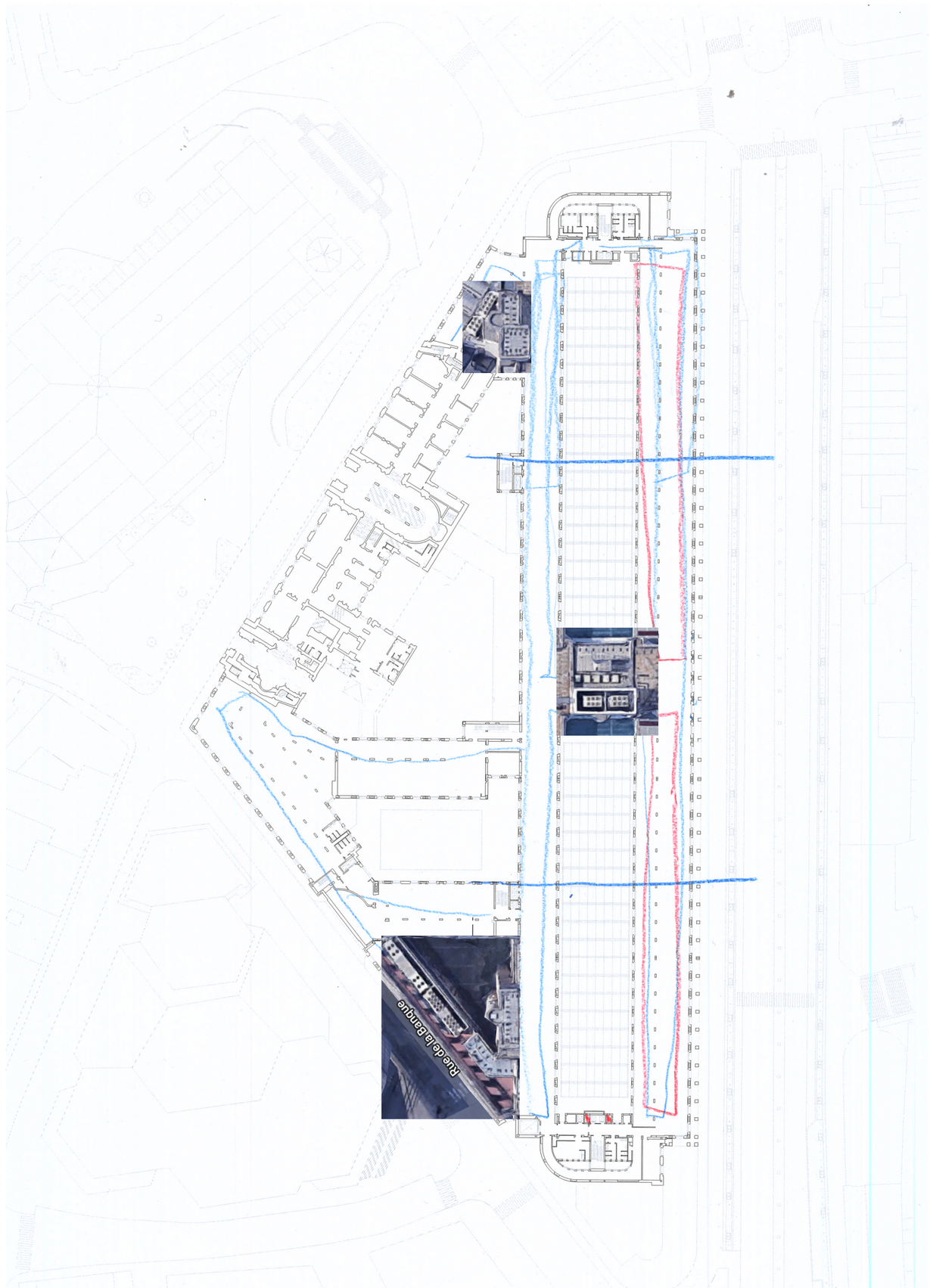
+ Matthijs Klooster

National Bank of Belgium, current situation

installations: flow and return
climate system: divisions
verticality and horizontality of ducts and pipes

building engineering

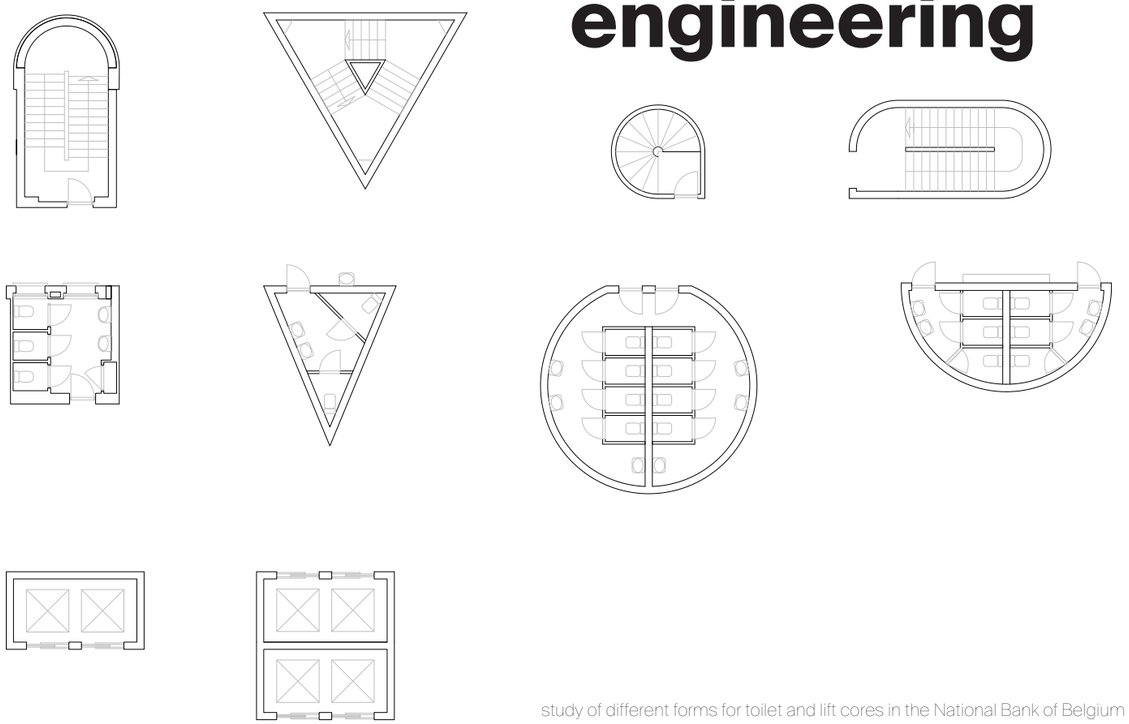




+ Matthijs Klooster

National Bank of Belgium, discussing the design

building engineering

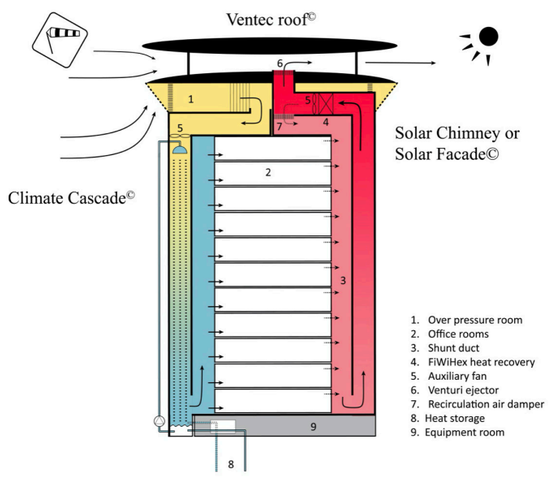


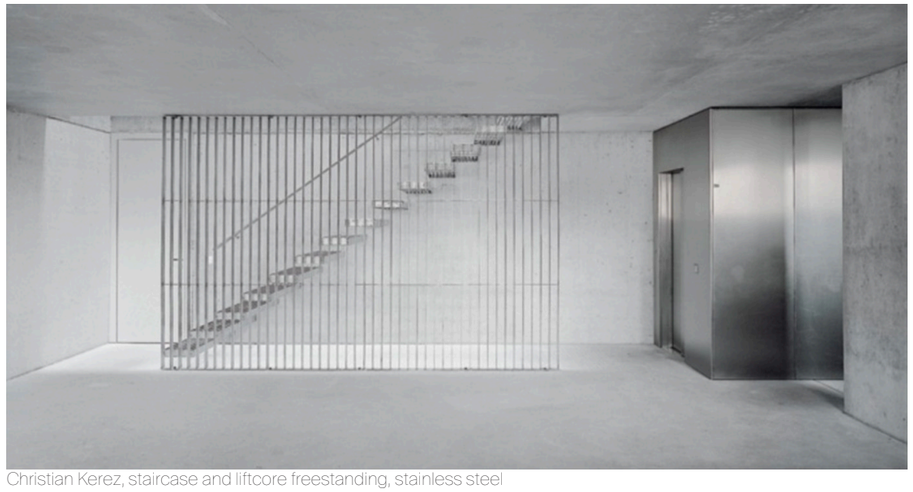
study of different forms for toilet and lift cores in the National Bank of Belgium

the new inserted interventions are making the building fit for purpose. a set of new lift, stair and toilet cores are inserted into the open plan of the building, combined with a radical revision of its HVAC, heating and water system (technical services)

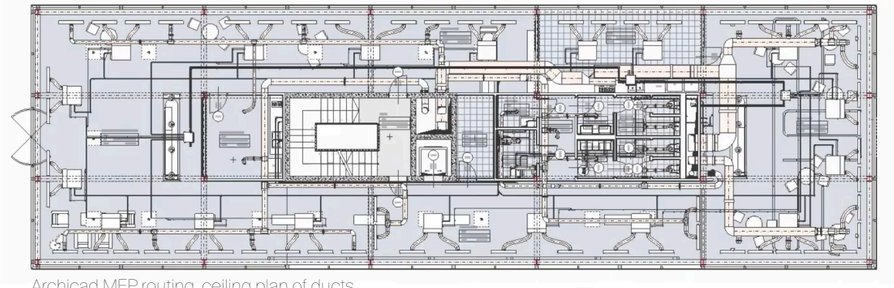
lift, stair, toilet cores and the technical services are becoming space-defining
elements in the architectural repetoire of the project.

materiality: aluminium, stainless steel, galvanized

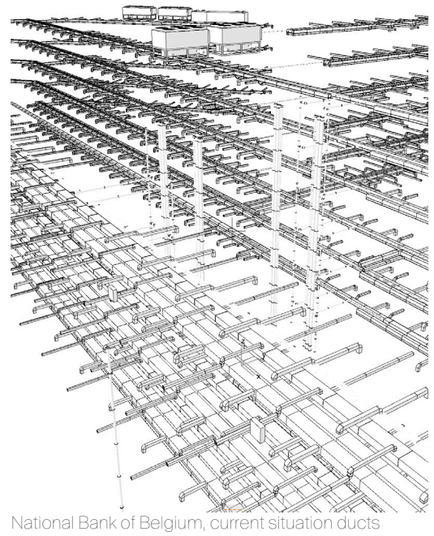




Christian Kerez, staircase and liftcore freestanding, stainless steel



Archicad MEP routing, ceiling plan of ducts

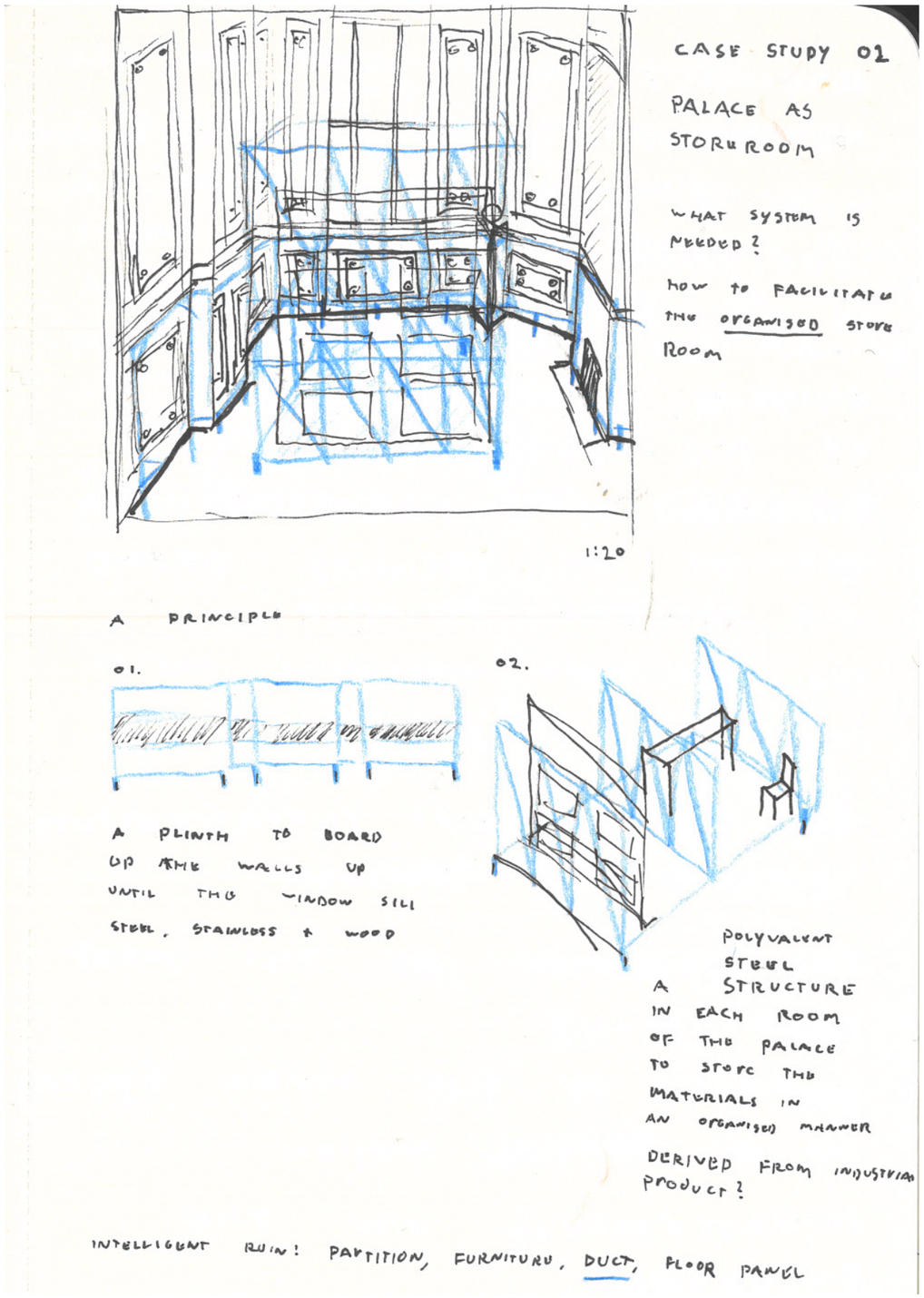


National Bank of Belgium, current situation ducts



Bruther, Residence for Researchers, lift core as a freestanding figure

case study 01
storeroom







National Bank of Belgium, The Hotel of the Governor



National Bank of Belgium, The Hotel of the Governor



National Bank of Belgium, The Hotel of the Governor



Christian Kerez, steel framework model of the Leutschenbach school



Peter Fischli, Stop Painting



Rotor Storeroom with Topregal industrial shelving system



Topregal shelving system



Nicolas Moulin, Vider Paris



1:20 Hotel of the Governor, current situation



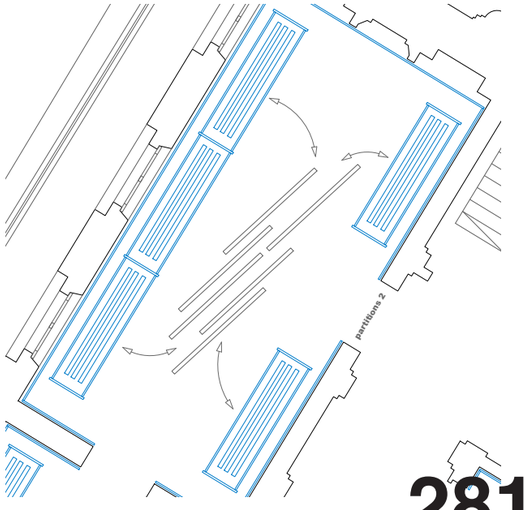
1:20 Hotel of the Governor, boarding up the plinth



1:20 Hotel of the Governor, boarding up the plinth + family of Topregal galvanized heavy duty racks



1:20 Hotel of the Governor, storage of partition wall units



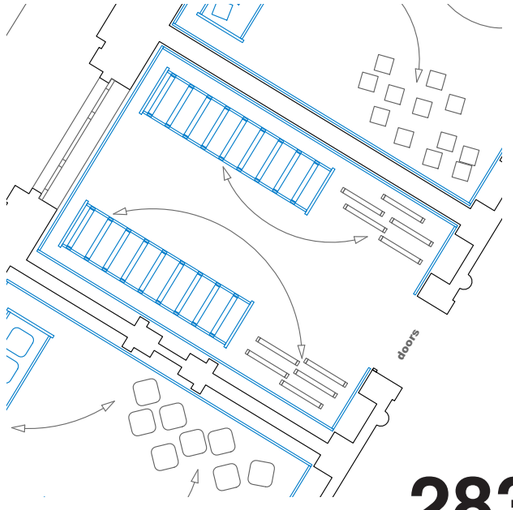


1:20 Hotel of the Governor, storage of floor panels

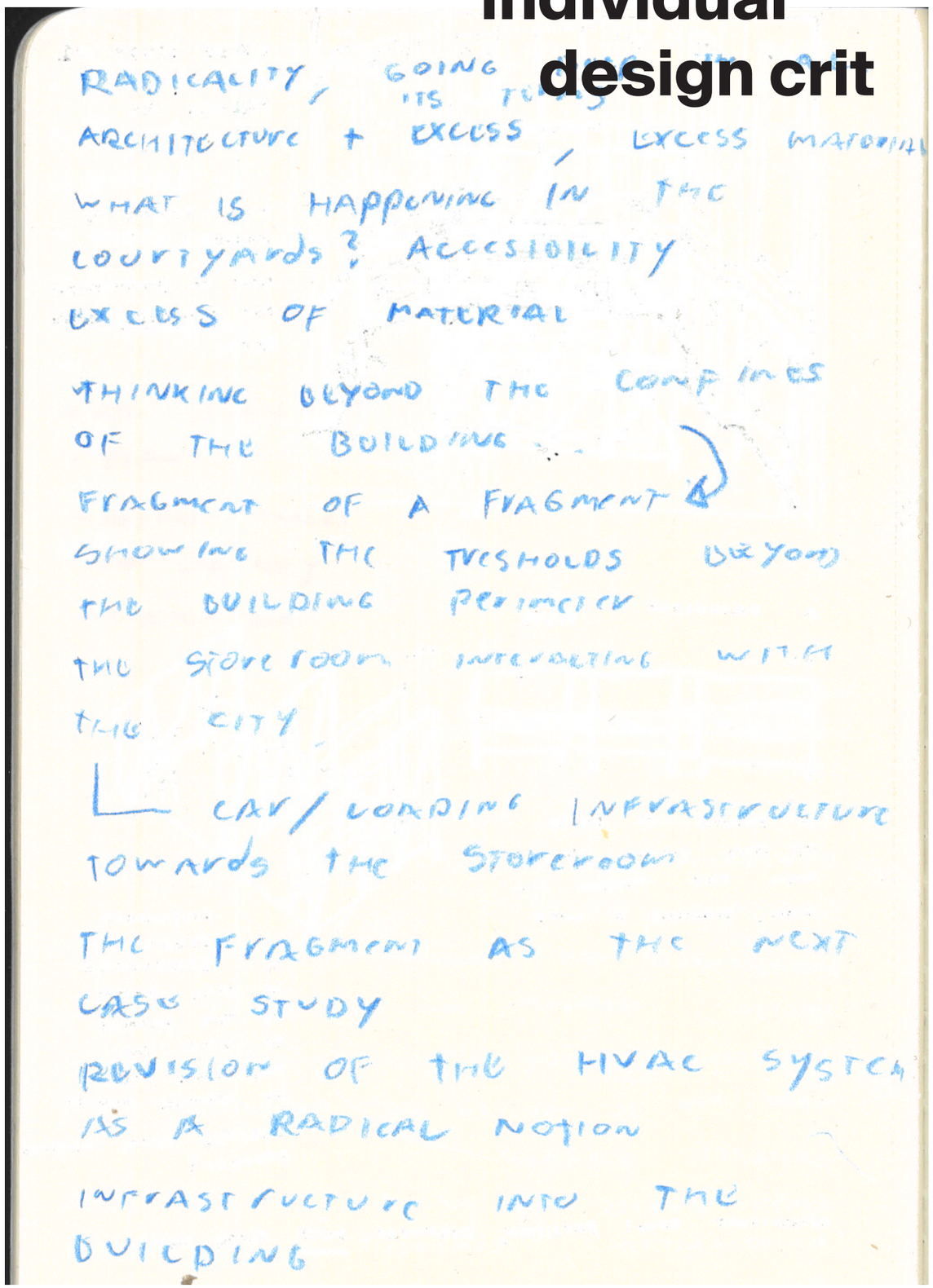


1:20 Hotel of the Governor, storage of doors



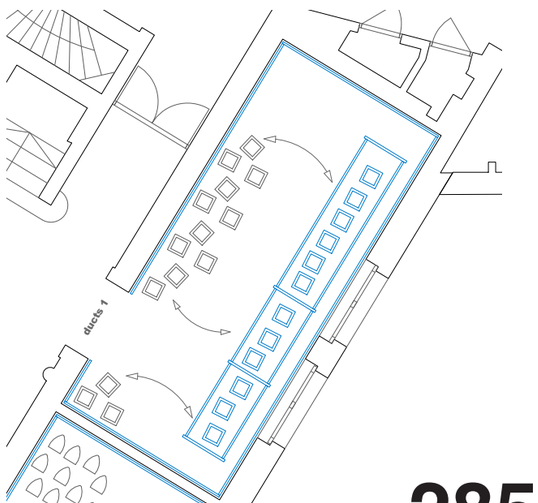


individual design crit



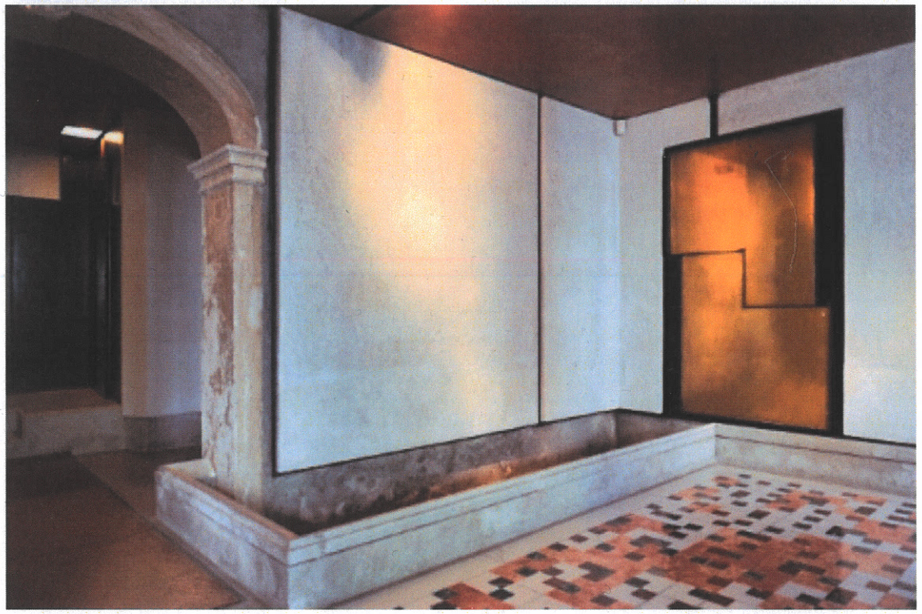


1:20 Hotel of the Governor, storage of ducts



Future Bank

MSc4 AR3AI100 Week 3.4-3.7



Entrance Querini Stampalia, Venice, architect Carlo Scarpa (1950-63)

Fragment

If the existing building, as it stands, can be understood as an intelligent ruin, then how do your plans for change at the bank adjust or transform it while taking advantage of its inherent structure and qualities?

You have individually started to consider this strategically in relation to the site as a whole and its place within the city. Up to P3, we would like you to translate your more intimate knowledge of the buildings, in terms of form, material, structure and operation, by concertedly addressing a detailed fragment. You should choose where to work with care, as a means to elucidate your broader concerns and as being exemplary of your attitude to the whole. It should be a significant part of the building and address significant thresholds: where new relates to old; interior relates to exterior; private relates to public, or the bank relates to another function, for example - focusing on interesting architectural conditions and junctions. Your development should consider the totality of the building fabric, beyond structure and envelope; considering secondary and tertiary layers, how elements such as services and linings might be integrated and the ways in which the resulting architecture might accommodate people and inhabitation in time as well as in space. This development should be presented through large scale plans and sections and three-dimensional models, which might be physical, digital or both.

Fragment of a fragment

Through a large scale physical model, a fragment of the fragment 1:25 scale, a subsequent brief will ask you to speculate on how different publics might inhabit this piece of building through the course of a day. This engagement in the relationship between strategy and detail is a critical space within which the architect operates. The fragment should allow you to address questions of building technology, construction and material usage at one scale, but the insights gained from it should also be folded back into your attitude towards the buildings as a totality and inform your design of the wider project

HOLISTIC PIECE OF BUILDING

THRESHOLD CONDITION

TOTALITY OF THE BUILDING

INTERIM

FIT FOR PURPOSE

CONSTRUCTED DEVICE THAT CONTAINS CERTAIN MESSAGES TO THE INTERIOR + EXTERIOR

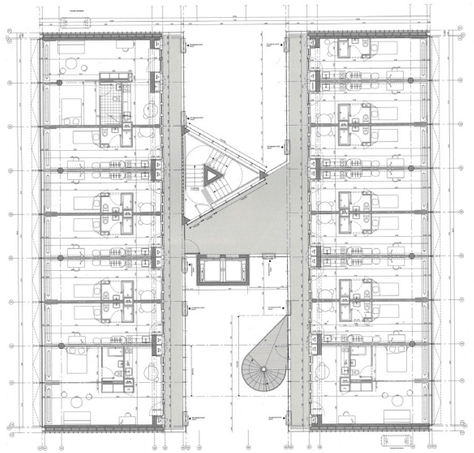
ASSEMBLING OF COMPONENTS

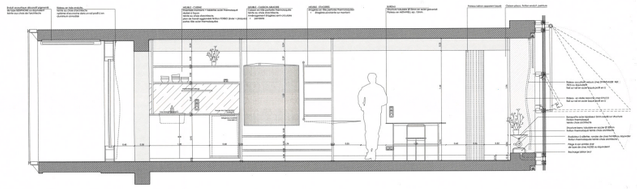
CRUDITY OF THE JUNCTION

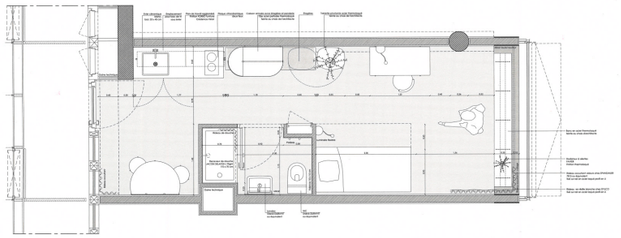
WHAT WAS THERE ALREADY?

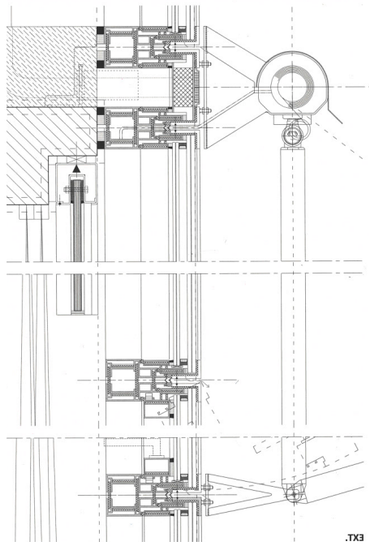
Interiors
Buildings
Cities

Palace





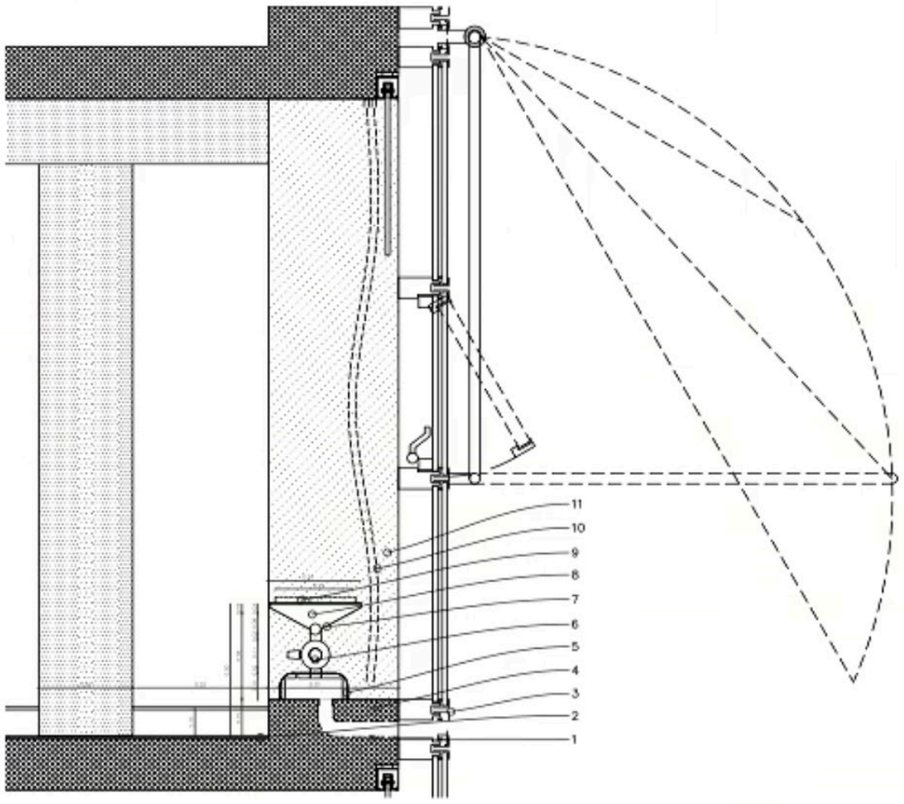




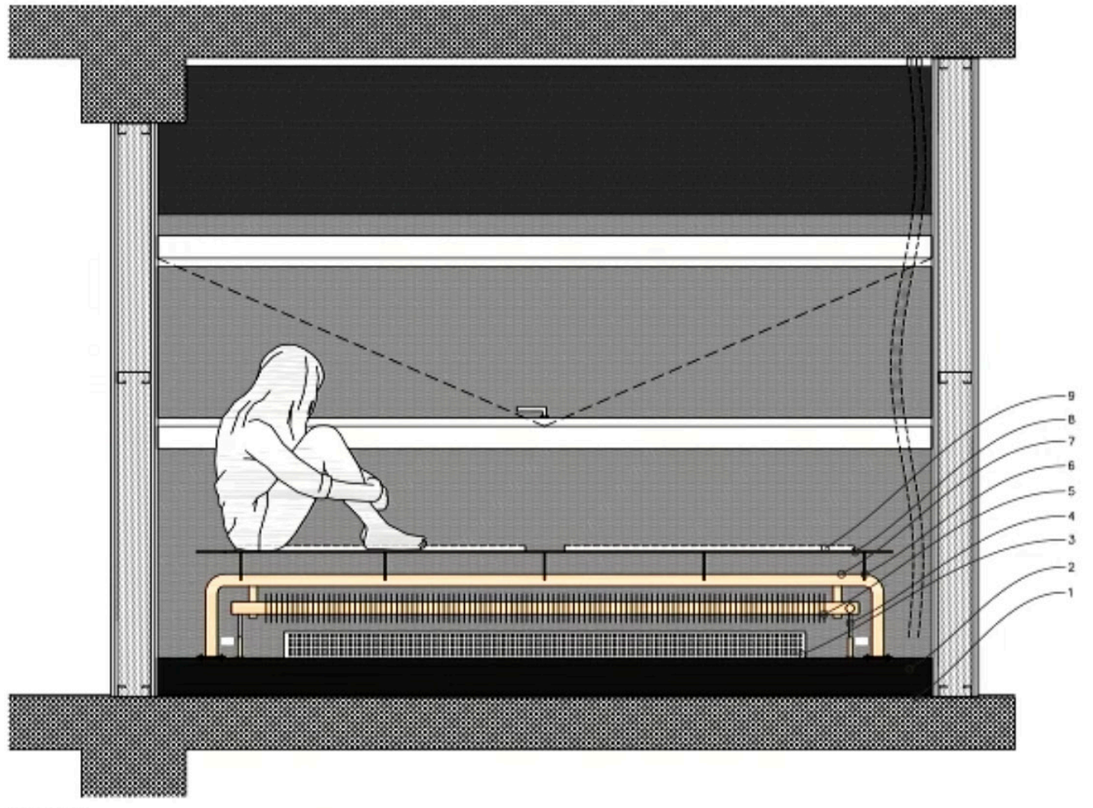


Bruther, New Generation Research Centre,

typical plan top left, plan of a single living unit top right (fragment), section of typical window left (fragment of fragment), mock-up of window fragment above (model of fragment of fragment), detailed section of typical window fragment bottom left (technical fragment of fragment)



1- Manchon coudé de raccord entre entrée d'air et piège à son noyé dans recharge béton
2- Sol souple caoutchouc en lés de type Noraplan Stone Uni Acoustic de chez NORAPLAN ou équivalent
3- Grille d'entrée d'air finition aluminium thermolaquée
4- Recharge béton brut
5- Capot d'habillage entrée d'air en tôle perforée de chez Gantois fixé sur recharge béton, finition thermolaqué
6- Radiateur à ailettes rondes de chez FAVIER ou équivalent finition thermolaquée
7- Ailette transversale acier support du banc
8- Banquette acier ep.5mm finition thermolaquée soudée sur la structure acier
9- Coussin mousse aggloméré type tapis de judo hors marché
10- Rideau de type M140EC Blanc de chez CROCFEU fixé sur rail en acier laqué profil en U
11- Ensemble confectionné Rideau type Sinda de chez VESCOM Rideau occultant de Réf. : 11141/13 de chez LEOBERT ou équivalent fixé sur rail en acier laqué profil en U



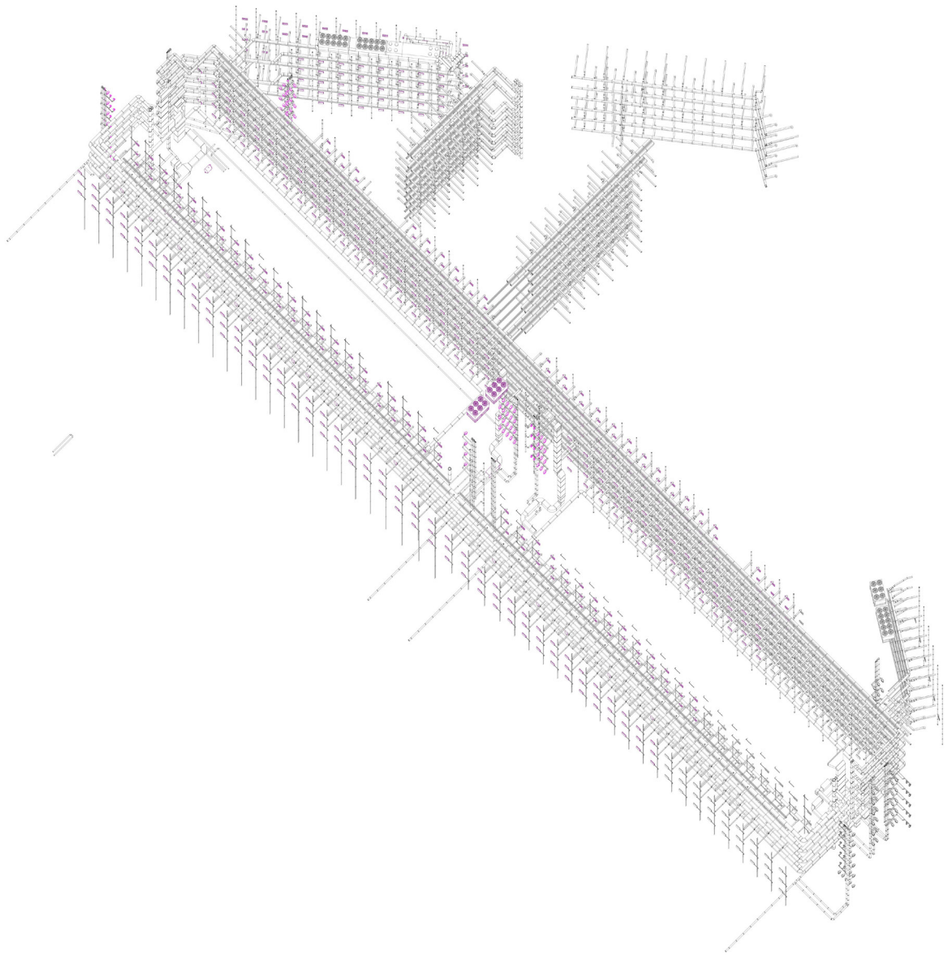
1- Sol souple caoutchouc en lés de type Noraplan Stone Uni Acoustic de chez NORAPLAN ou équivalent
2 -Recharge béton brut finition très soignée
3-Capot d'habillage entrée d'air en tôle perforée de chez Gantois fixé sur recharge béton, finition thermolaqué
4- Alimentation radiateur
5- Radiateur à ailettes rondes de chez FAVIER ou équivalent finition thermolaquée
6- Ailette acier support du radiateur soudée sur structure acier finition thermolaquée
7- Structure banc poutre horizontale T acier finition thermolaqué
8- Banquette acier ep.5mm finition thermolaquée soudée sur la structure acier
9- Coussin mousse aggloméré type tapis de judo hors marché

0.25m 0.5m

+ Bas Leemans

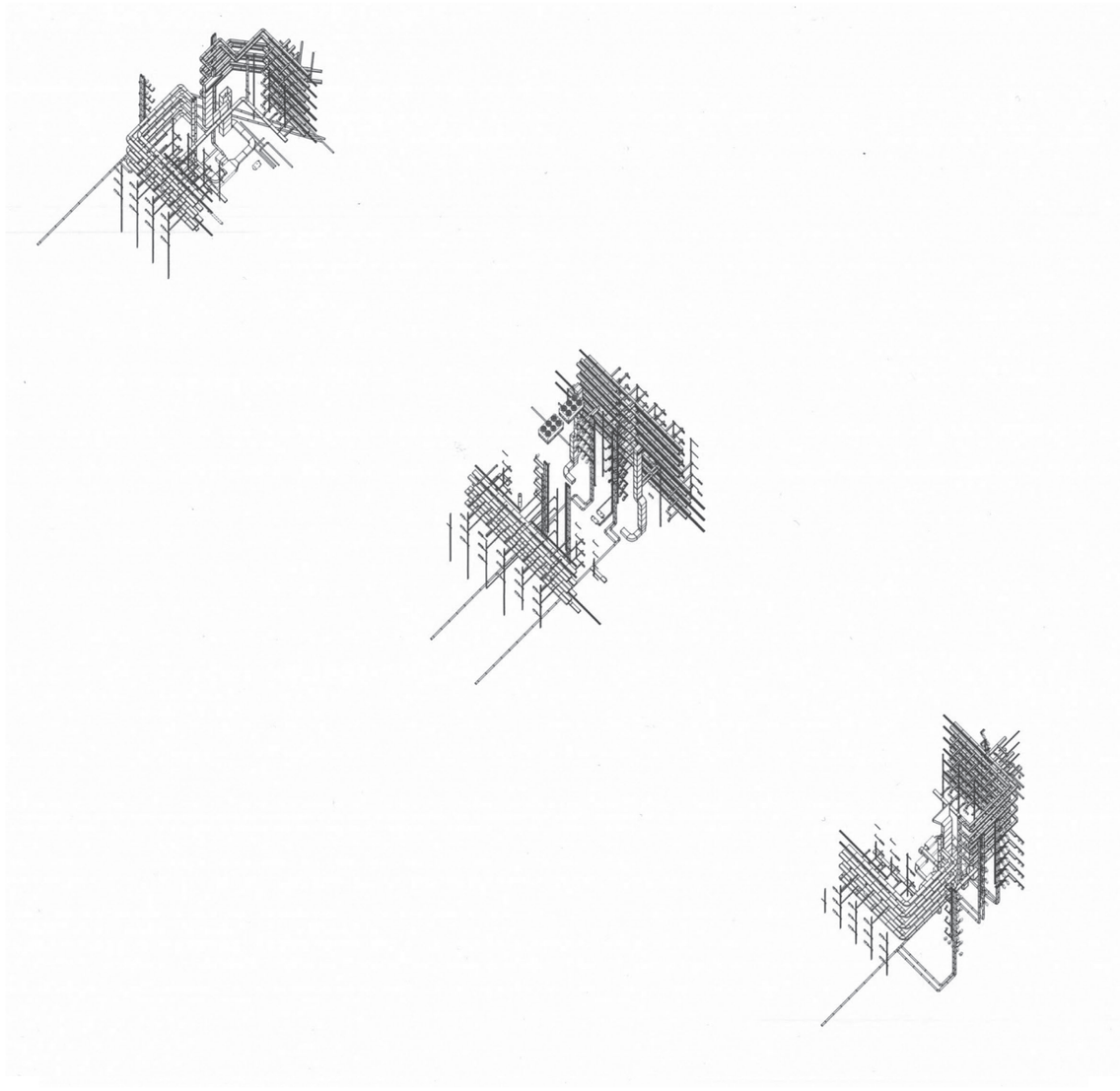
current situation of the building

ducts, pipes, machines



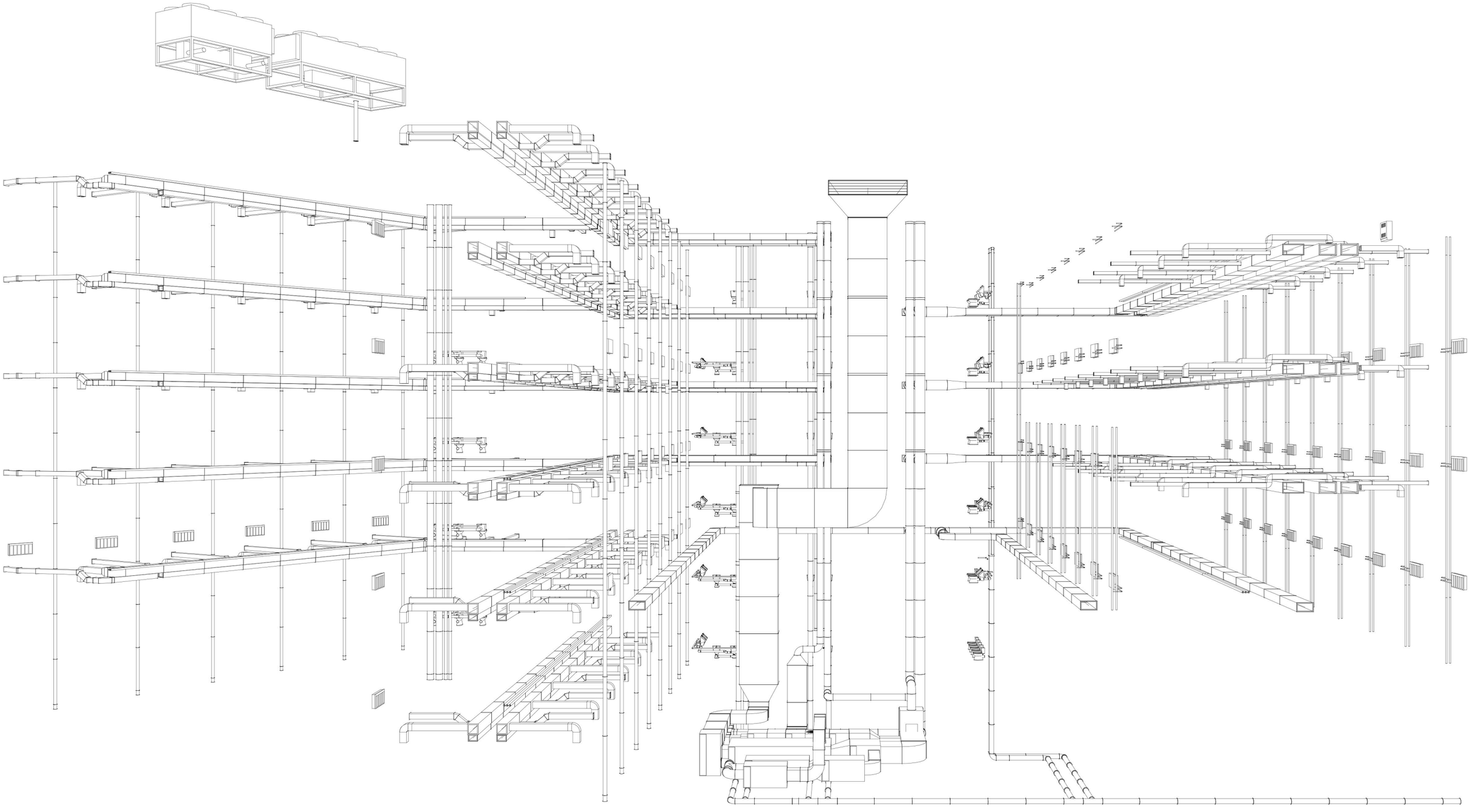
BANK
1:1000

VENTILATION, HVAC ROOF UNIT, TECHNICAL SPACE



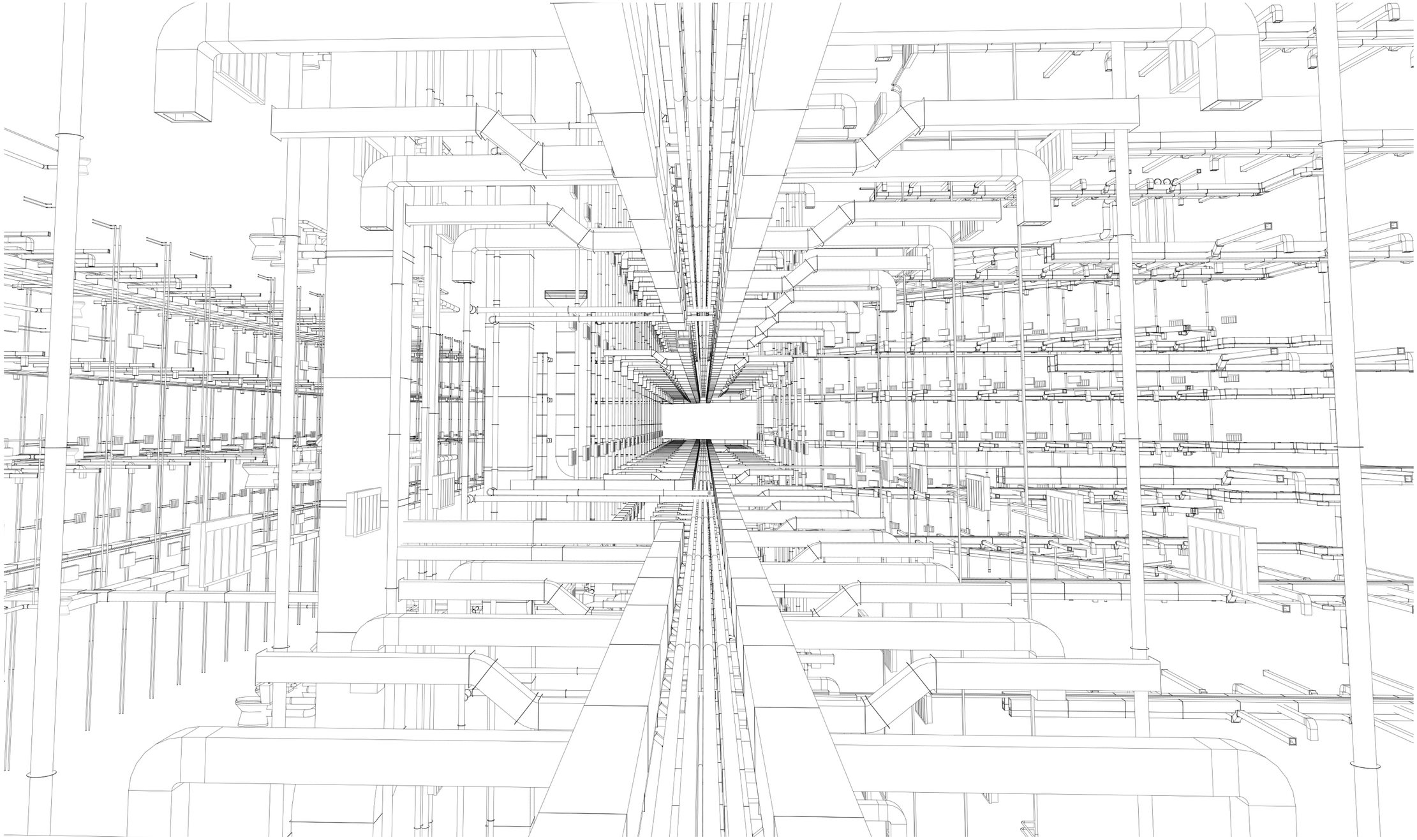
CORES
1:1000

VENTILATION, HVAC ROOF UNIT, TECHNICAL SPACE, HEATING



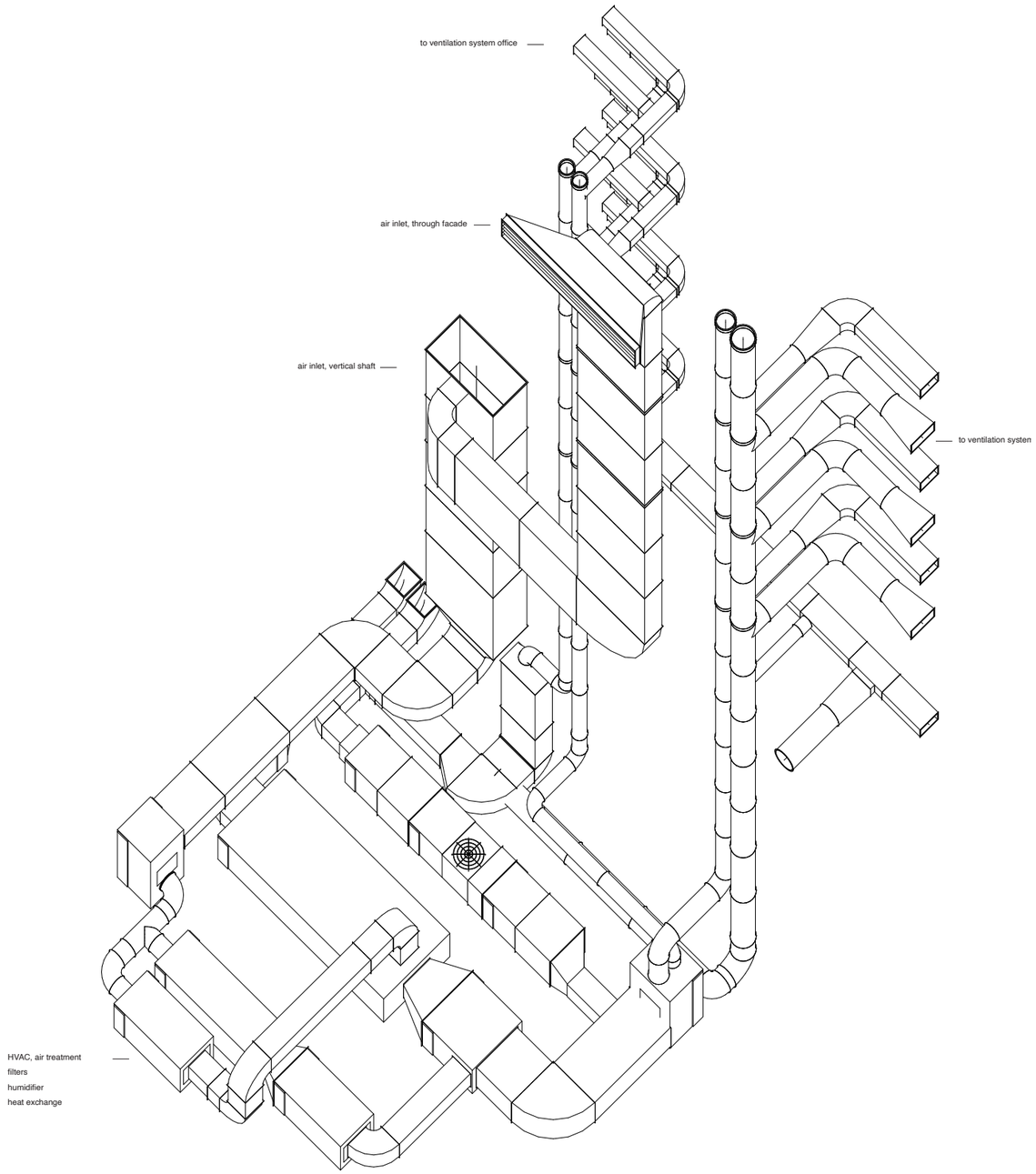
SOUTH CORE
PERSPECTIVE

SEWAGE, SPRINKLER,
VENTILATION, HEATING



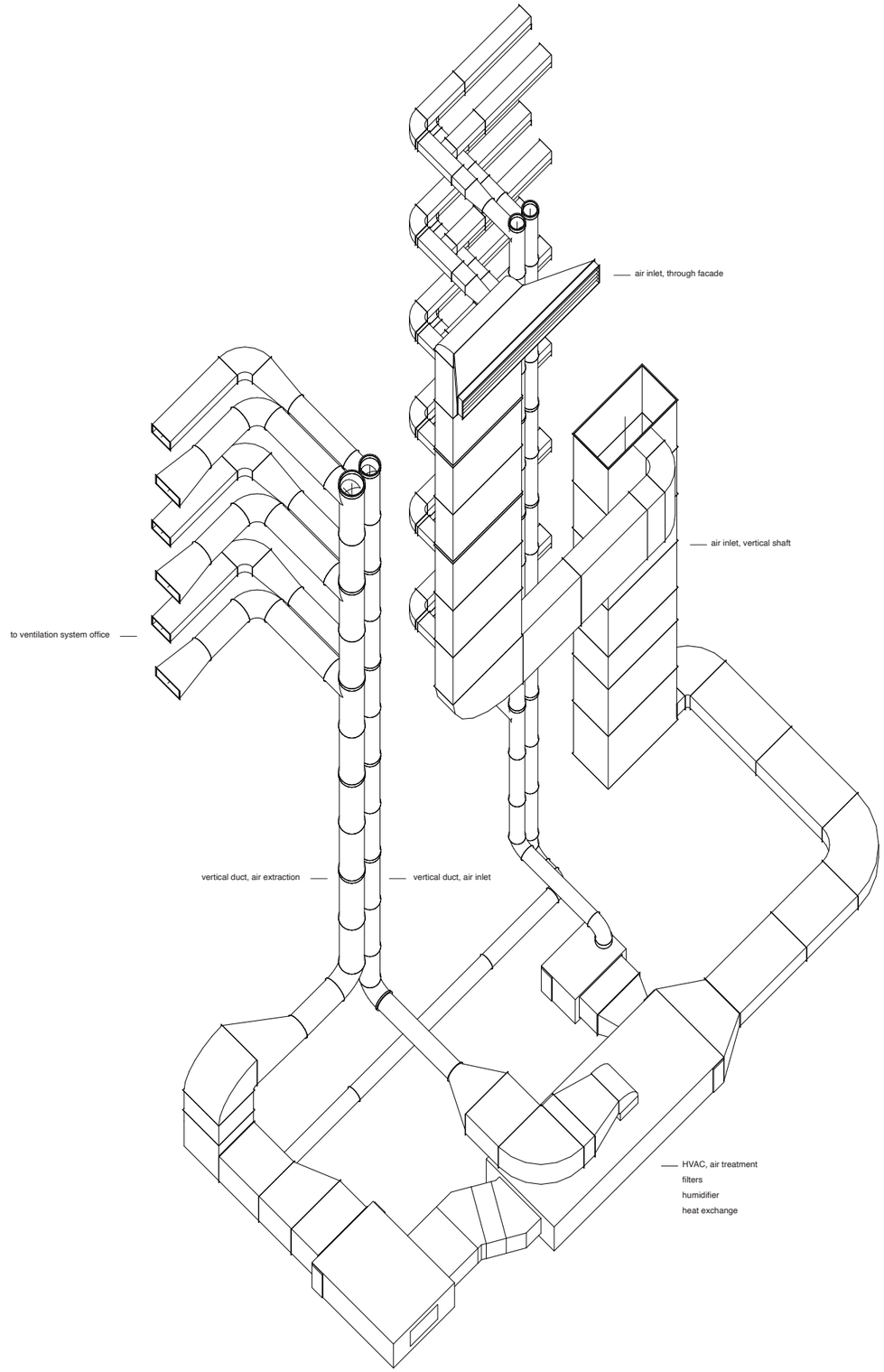
TECHNICAL INTERIOR

perspective



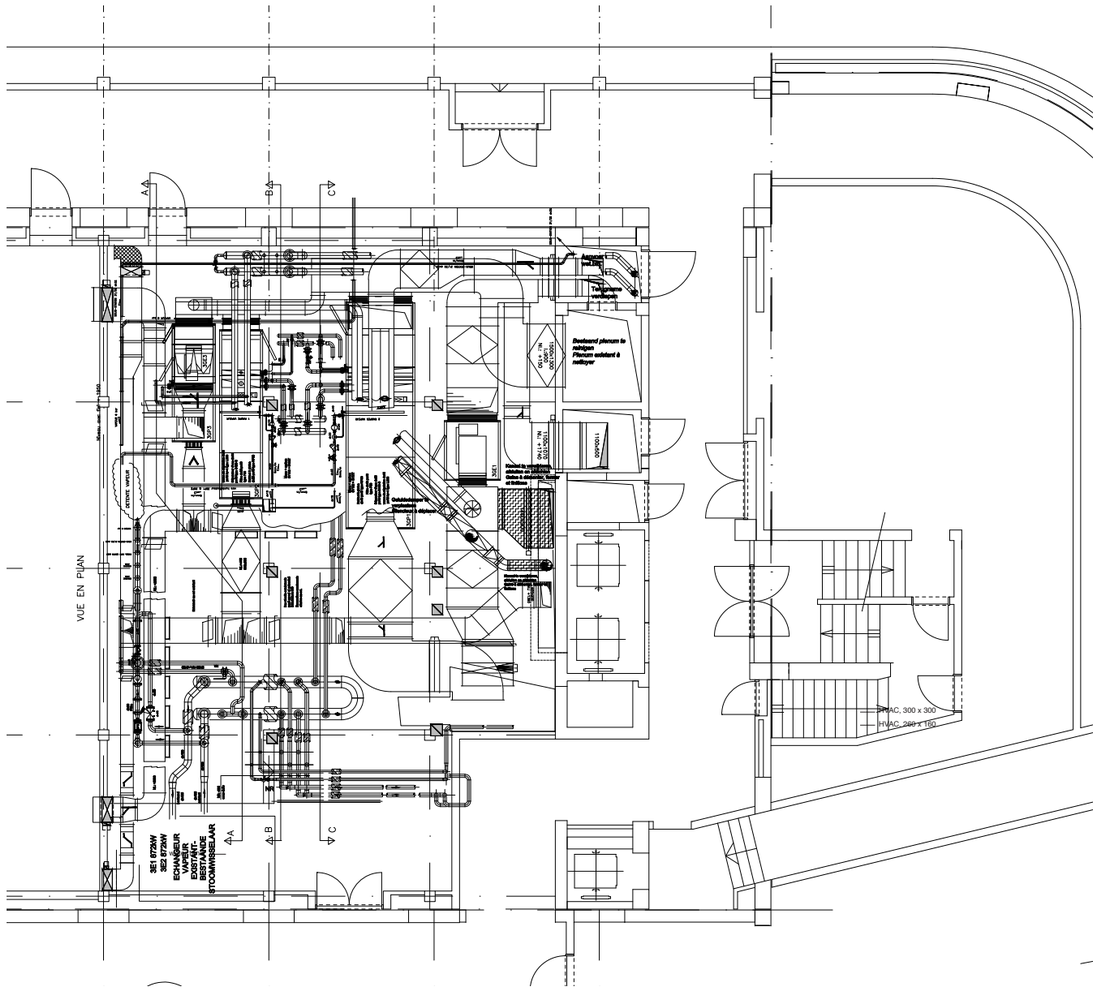
SOUTH CORE
1:100

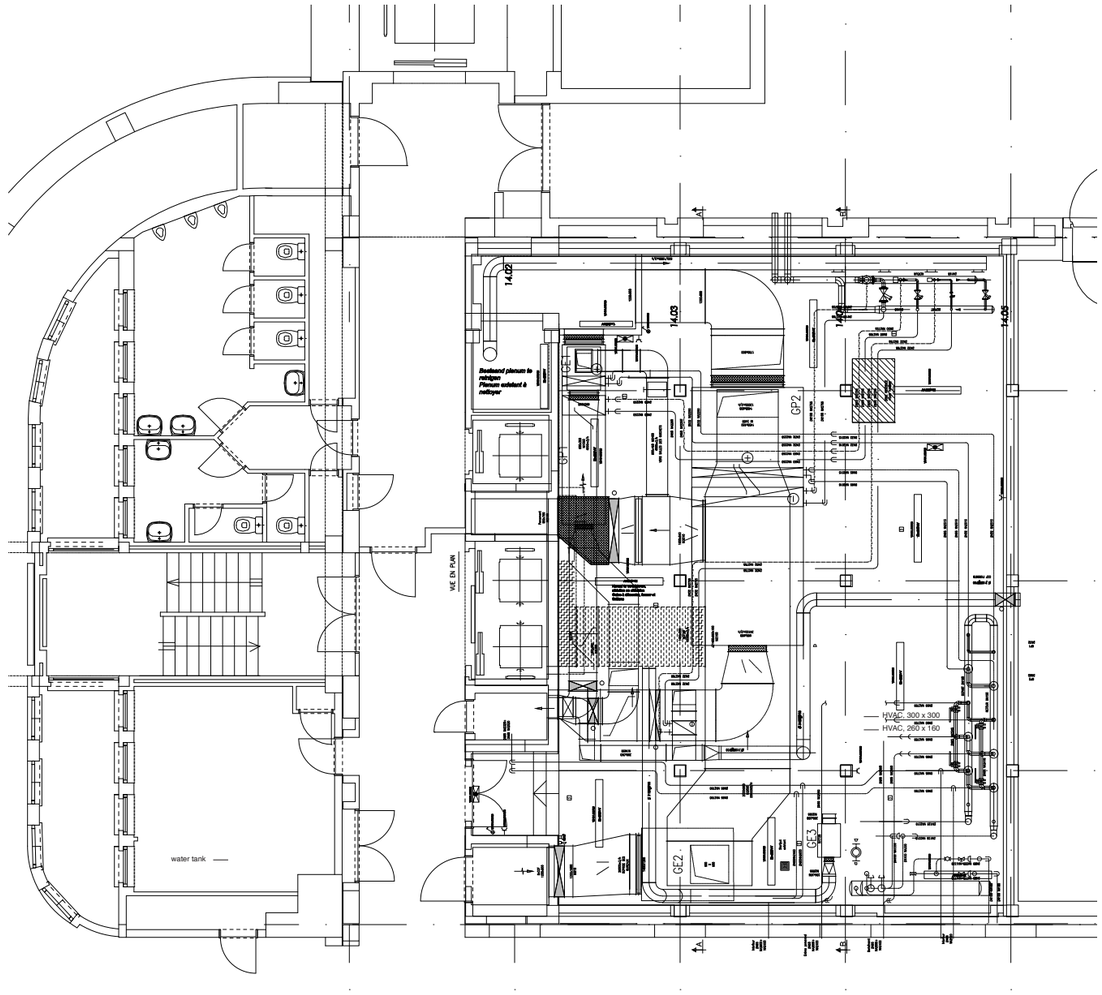
VENTILATION,
HVAC, AIR TREATMENT



NORTH CORE
1:100

VENTILATION,
HVAC, AIR TREATMENT



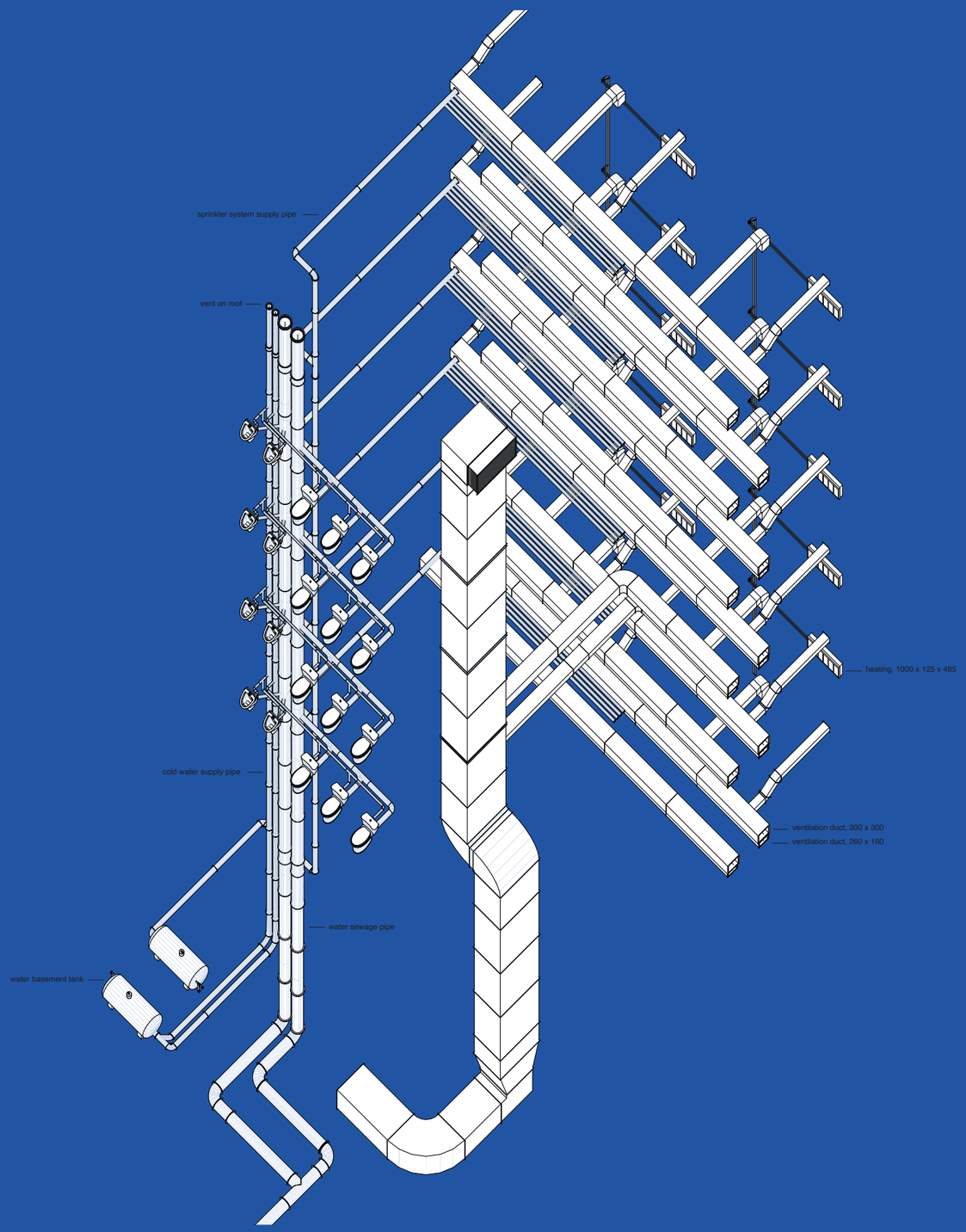


SOUTH CORE
1:100

TECHNICAL SPACE, BASEMENT
HVAC, HEATING, SEWAGE

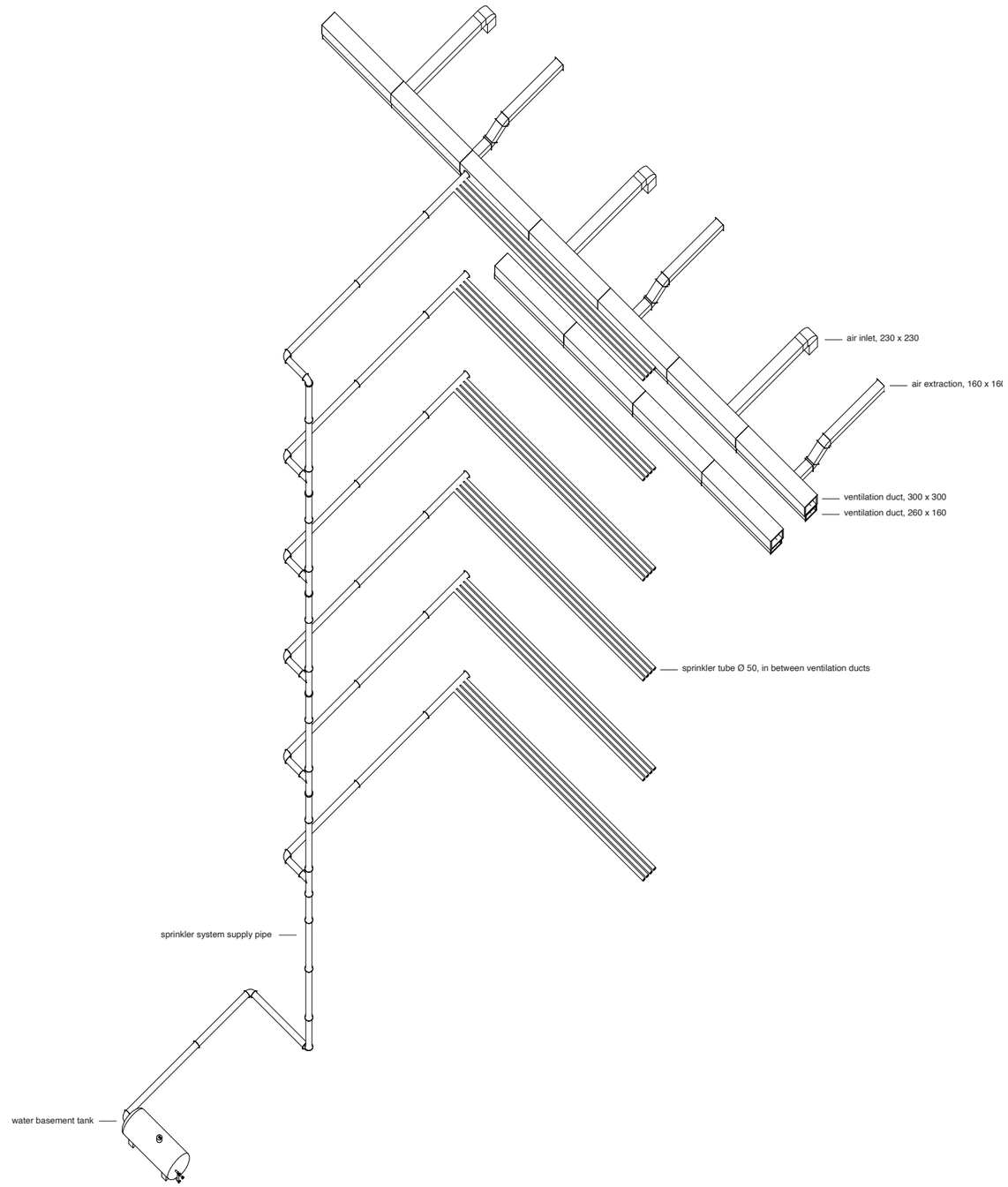
NORTH CORE
1:100

TECHNICAL SPACE, BASEMENT
HVAC, HEATING, SEWAGE



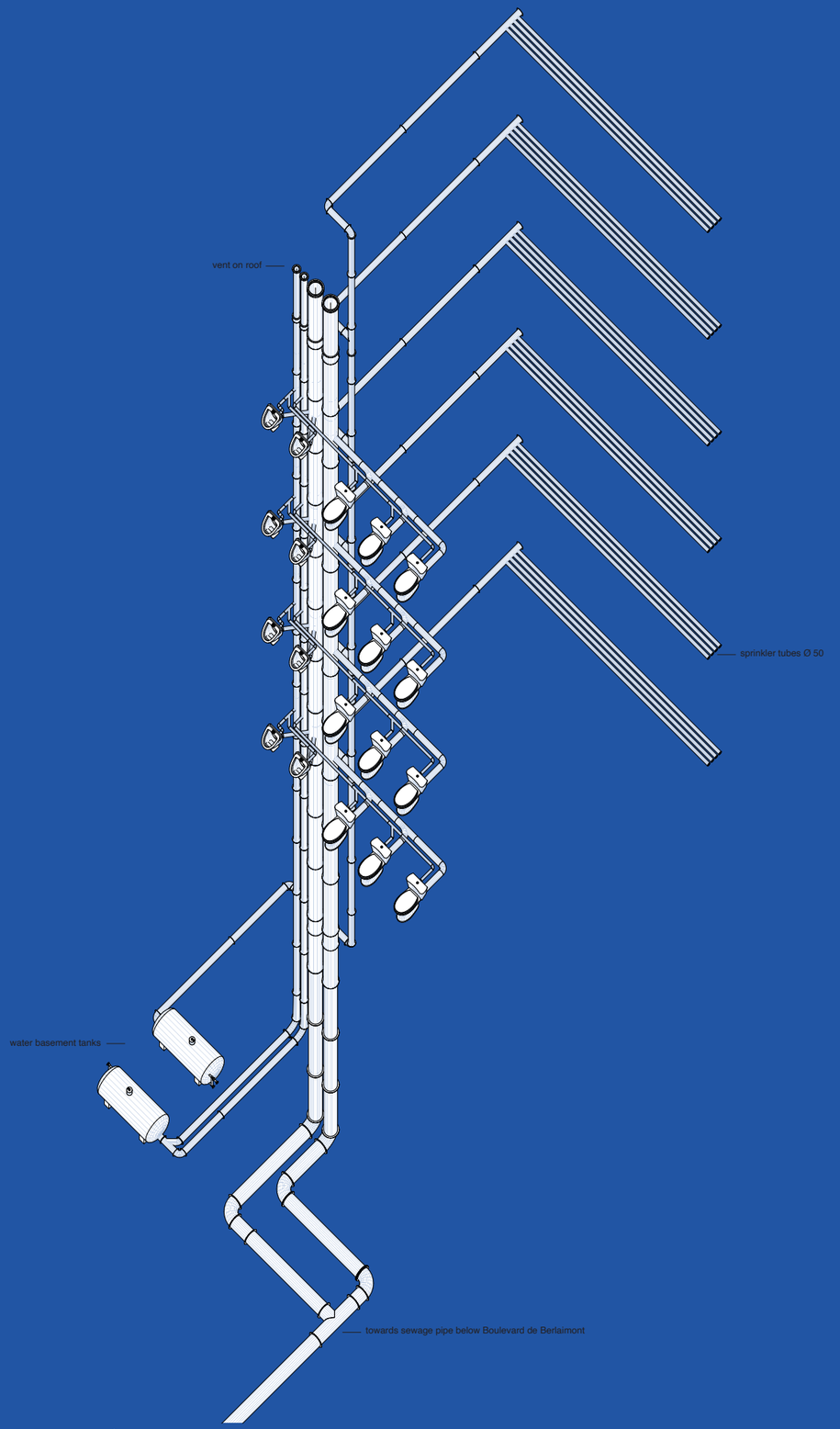
MIDDLE CORE
1:100

SEWAGE, SPRINKLER, VENTILATION, HEATING



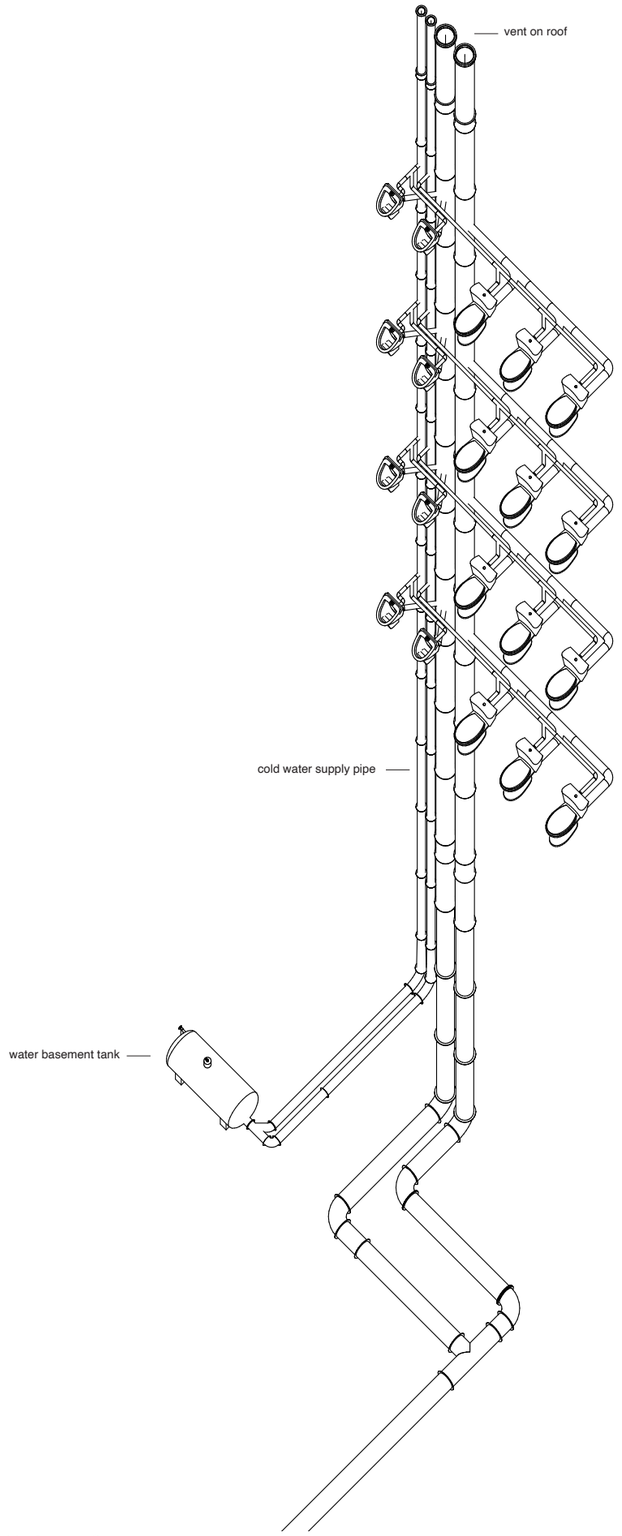
MIDDLE CORE
1:100

SPRINKLER, VENTILATION



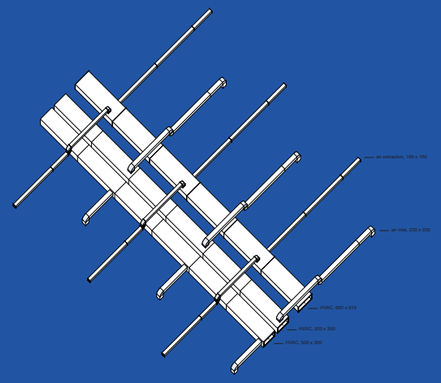
CENTRAL CORE
1:100

SPRINKLER, FIXTURES, SEWAGE



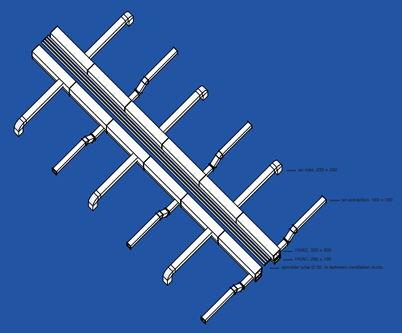
MIDDLE CORE
1:100

FIXTURES, SEWAGE



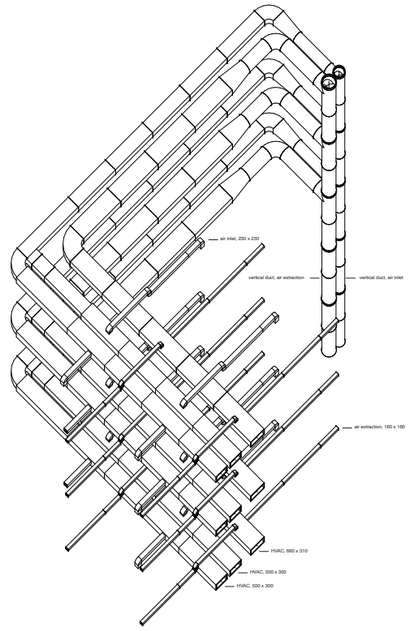
FRONT SECTION
1:100

VENTILATION



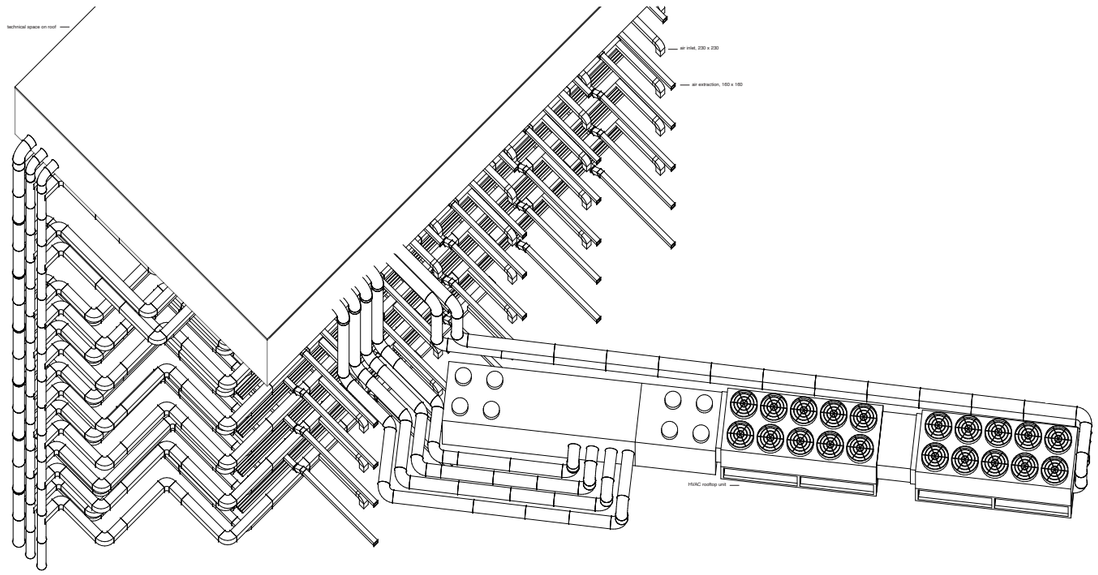
BACK SECTION
1:100

VENTILATION,
SPRINKLER



NORTH CORE
1:100

VENTILATION

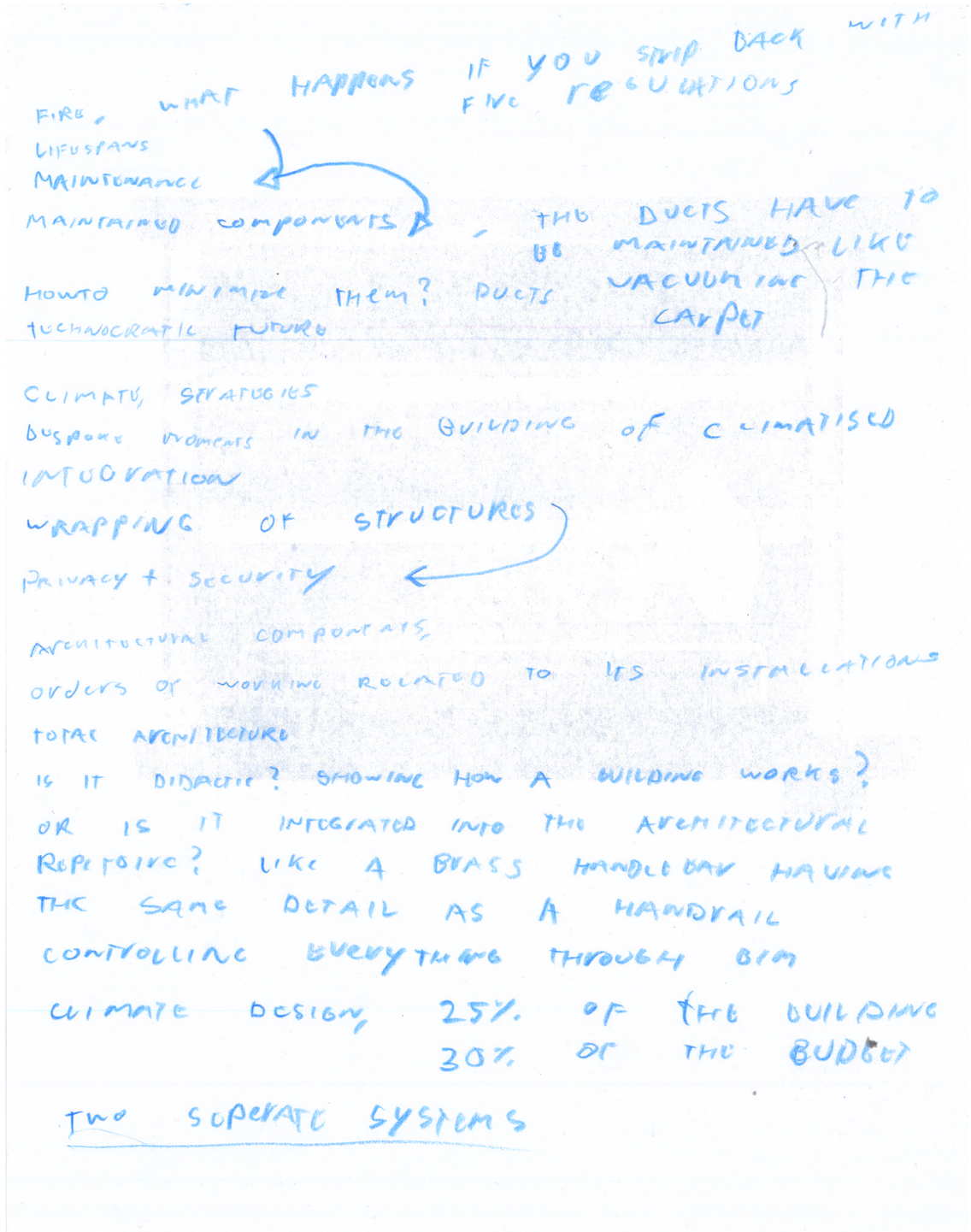


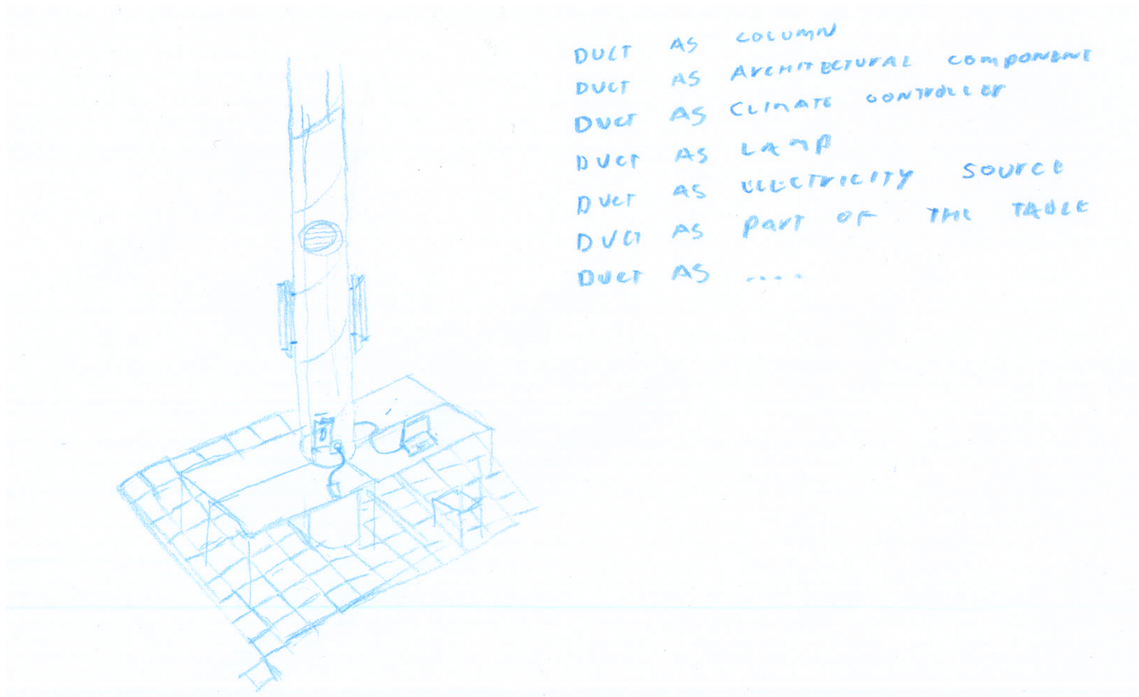
SIDE ARM
1:100

VENTILATION, HVAC ROOF
UNIT, TECHNICAL SPACE

+ Daniel Rosbottom

individual design crit





Office buildings are architecture of excess. Historically, once the shell has been erected, the interior is clad-ded with partition walls, suspended ceilings and raised floors to make up for, conceal and clad the areas for installation ceiling ducts, floor cables, heating and other equipment.

Essentially, these are the elements that make the building inhabitable, workable and functional.

Bank buildings are architecture of representation. Banks are meant to represent a safe, , secure and trust-worthy institution. This culminates, usually and historically, in the main banking hall, where very specific materials are chosen for its cladding.

Bank buildings have now lost their security reasons as no physical money or value is stored in a bank build-ing anymore. All bank buildings are facing this either now or soon.

Specifically, the National Bank of Belgium is a distinct example as the building is an urban block of serious scale. With a serious amount of stuff in it. An excessive amount of stuff.

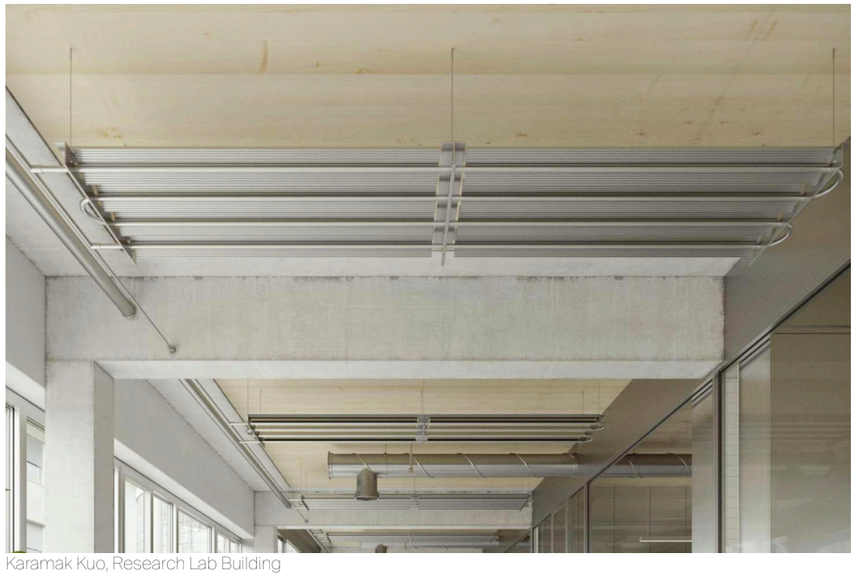
To undress the National Bank of Belgium as a first act. Stripping as far as possible the interior, rendering the building a shell.

To store as a second act. Re-use of the existing means stocking on site. A part of the National Bank of Belgium, the Governor’s hotel, becomes a storeroom. Not only a storeroom, also a Baumarkt. To find a way to put not only a different value on these interior layers, but also share it with the city. Using it as en educa-tional tool.

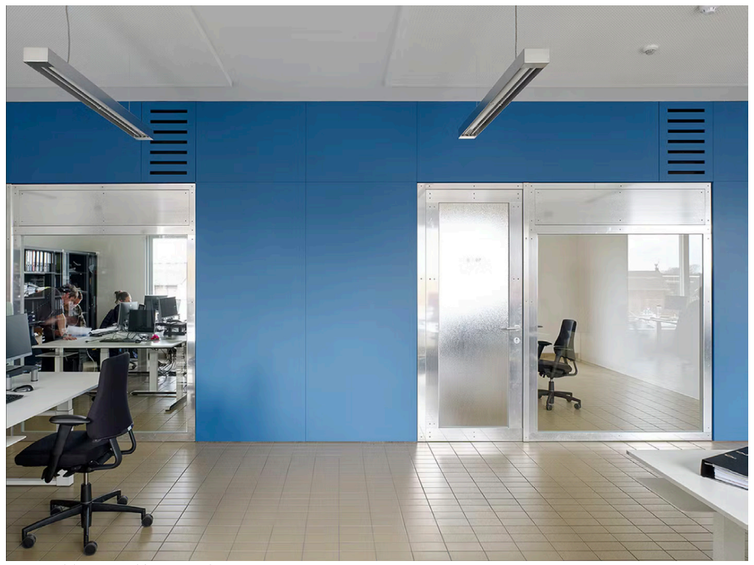
To reconfigure and dissect as a third act.



Theo de Meyer, Goods between Floors exhibition scenography

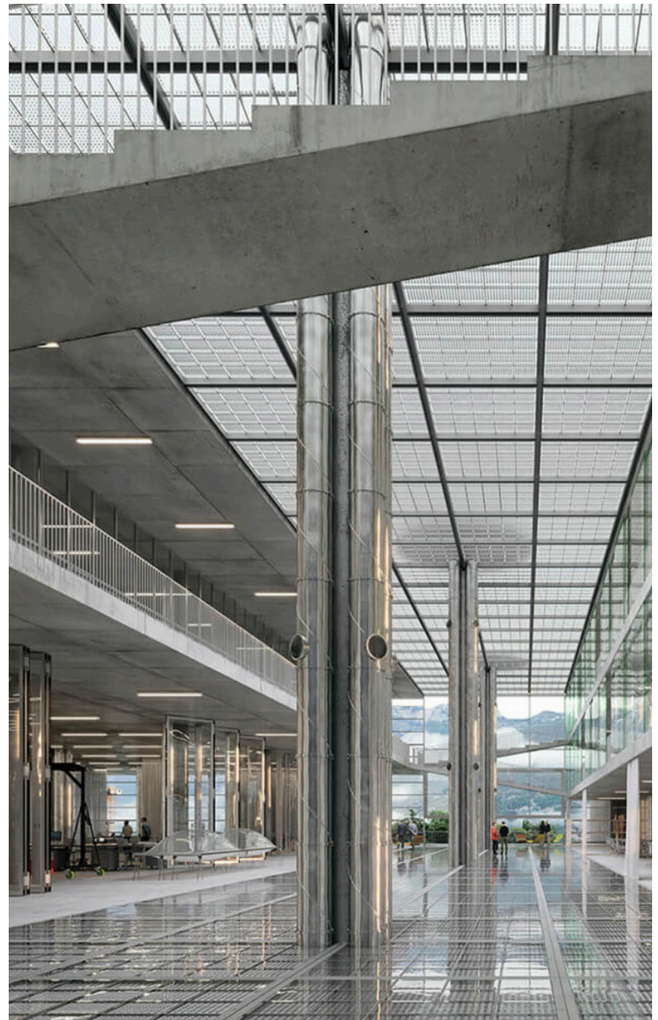


Karamak Kuo, Research Lab Building



ono architectuur, Kantoren Inagro





Bruther + Jan Kinsbergen, Fachhochschulzentrum Chur

case study 02
office

CASE STUDY 02: OFFICE

- PLAN
- SECTION (TECHNICAL)
- MODEL, 1:20 (OFFICE,
- AXONOMETRY

PLAN AND SECTION AND MODEL SHOW:

TO UNDRESS THE NATIONAL BANK OF BELGIUM AS A FIRST ACT. STRIPPING AS FAR AS POSSIBLE THE INTERIOR, RENDERING THE BUILDING A SHELL

WHAT IS NEEDED IN A ROOM AFTER THE SHELL?
WHAT ACCOMMODATES THE SPACE?

TO RECONFIGURE THE NATIONAL BANK OF BELGIUM AS A SECOND ACT. THROUGH RECONFIGURATION THE INTERIOR HIERARCHY IS REVOKED

HOW CAN (STANDARDISED) ELEMENTS OF TECHNICAL SERVICES, RANGING FROM DUCTS TO LIFTS, ELEMENTS THAT CLEARLY MAKE A BUILDING INHABITABLE, WORKABLE AND FUNCTIONAL NOT ONLY BE SUBSERVIENT TO CLAD AND CONCEAL, BUT RATHER ACTIVELY TAKE PART IN THE INTERIOR OF THE OFFICE, SPACE-DEFINING ELEMENTS.

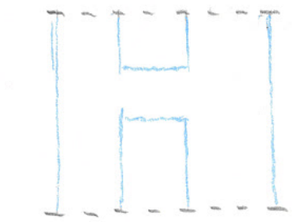
IN THE NEW NATIONAL BANK OF BELGIUM THERE IS NO HIERARCHY BETWEEN CIRCULATION, SERVICES, INSTALLATIONS AND THE WORKSPACE.

WHAT DEFINES THE TYPICAL OFFICE FLOOR OF THE NEW NATIONAL BANK OF BELGIUM?

- SPACE, MORE OF IT, BY UNDRESSING AS FAR AS REGULATORY POSSIBLE.
- DIFFERENT CLIMATES, NOT HEATING PARTS OF THE BUILDING. OUTSIDE SPACE POSSIBLE ON DIFFERENT LEVELS. MORE LIGHT, BESPOKE MOMENTS OF CLIMATISED INTEGRATION,
- A RADICAL REVISION OF ITS (VENTILATION) SYSTEM. DUCTS BECOMING PERFORMATIVE AND POLYVALENT OBJECTS. HEATING BECOMES SEATING. SHEET STEEL? DUCTS AS PART OF THE FURNITURE, MAINTENANCE USING THE DUCTS AND INSTALLATIONS ANALYSIS AS A WAY TO SUPPORT THE ARGUMENT.

WHAT DID IT LOOK LIKE BEFORE?
WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE AFTER?

- A RECONFIGURATION OF THE EXISTING STANDARDISED ELEMENTS. PARTITIONS BECOMING DIFFERENT ELEMENTS

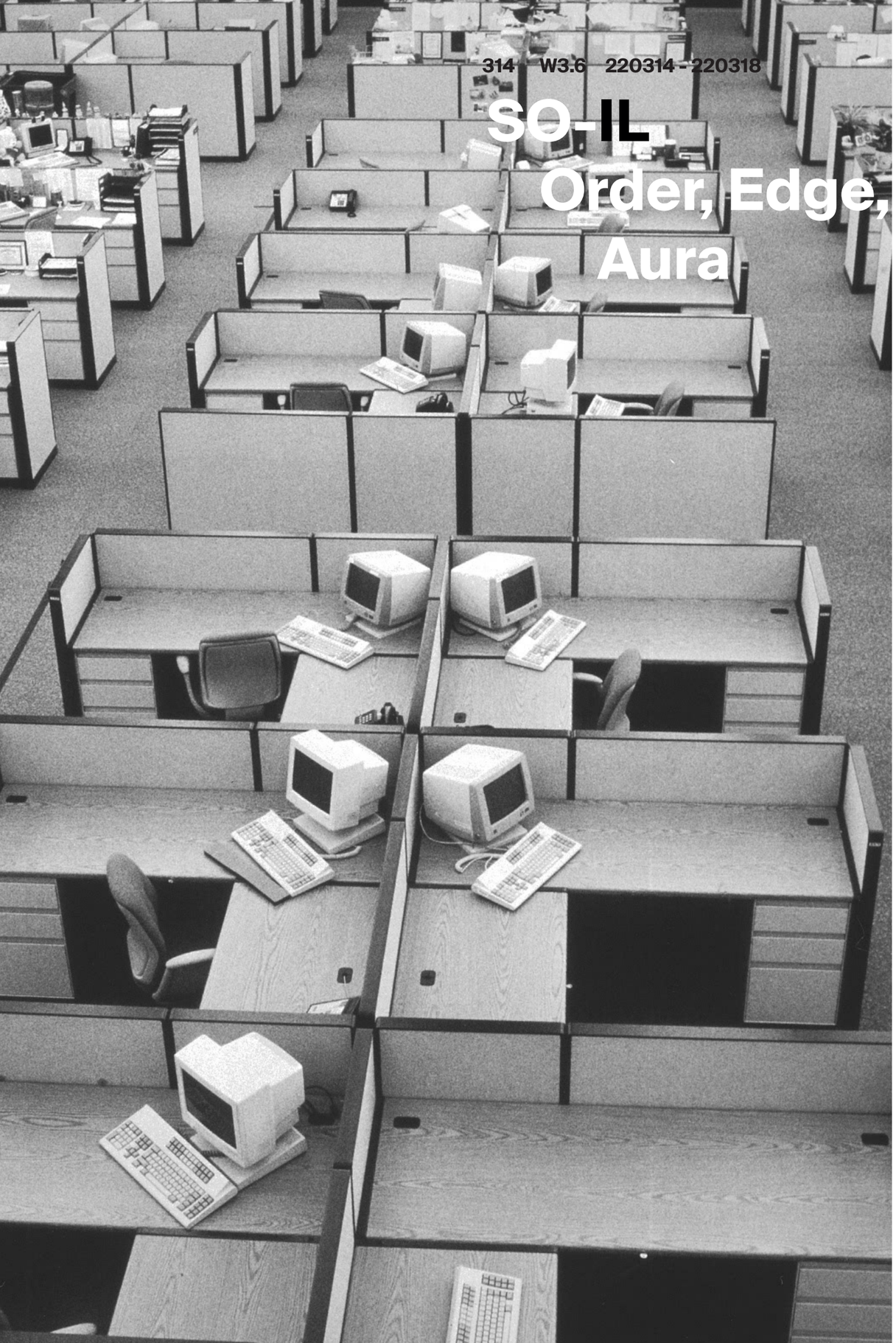


- CEILING PLAN
- SECTION VERTICAL
- SECTION HORIZONTAL



(DRAW IN TYPICAL OFFICE CHAIR) □

SO-IL
Order, Edge, Aura



work spheres

it's over. the conventional office is no more. we work anywhere, at any time. we have even become unconscious of the fact. work has become a constellation of many different things we do, sometimes alone, sometimes with others, to whom we are connected through a myriad of mutating platforms and dynamic structures. we meet, tweet, and charette in lobbies, lounges, clubs and incubators, drop-down benches or hot desks, café cars, coffee shops, and concentration rooms. the flexibility and freedom that was limited to executives now applies to those charged with more mundane responsibilities—bookkeepers, creatives, notaries. all this work is done wherever one wants to be; anywhere but in the traditional office.

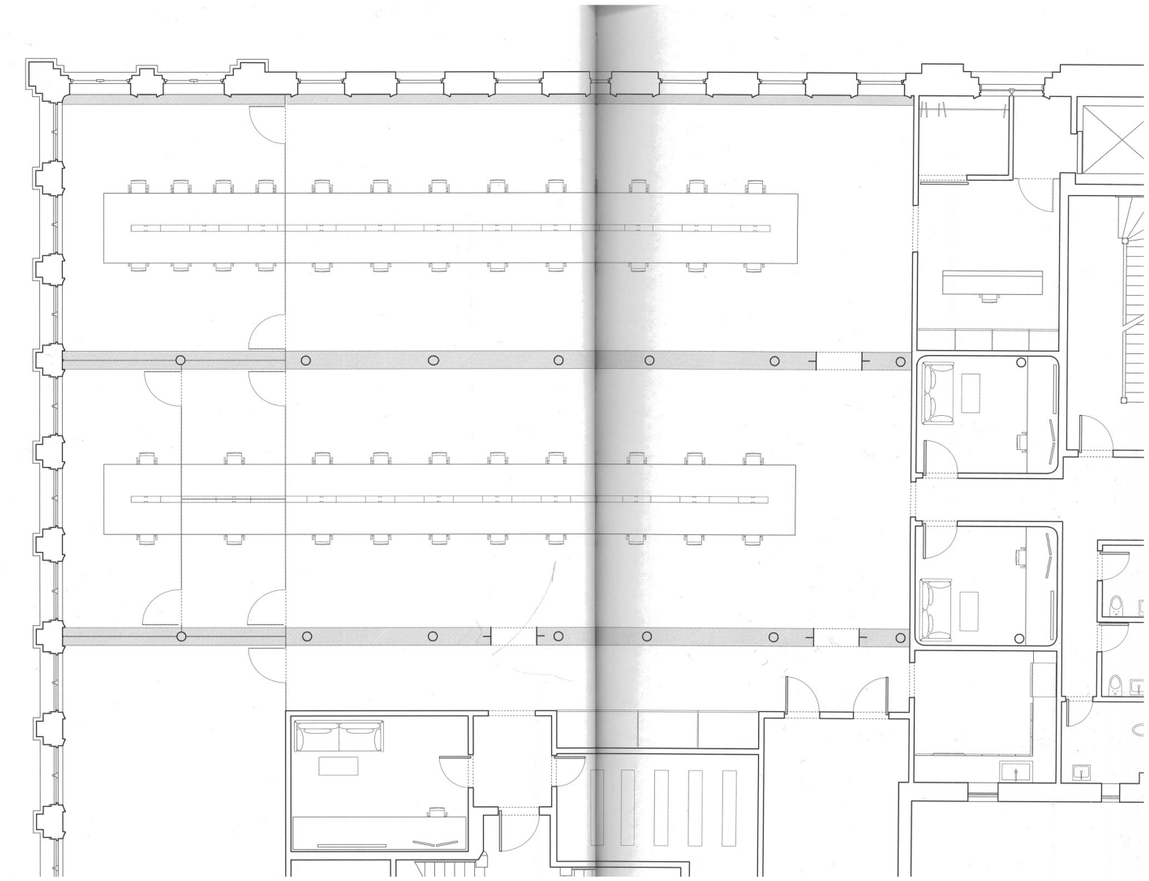
not only has the location of work changed, the fundamental notion of what work is has shifted. new terms like *playbour*, *enterprise gamification*, and *hackathons* suggest a general ludification of work, the merger of leisure and employment obligations. the work sphere has become a big social playground, its players and playmakers diverse troupes of nomadic urbanites outfitted with a menagerie of technologies. like magicians and con artists, we juggle our hybrid devices, as they get faster and more ubiquitous, while roaming from hot spot to hot spot. home has become less of a home, and the office as a type has vanished.

in this fleeting and fluctuating environment, architecture may insert itself at two distinct levels: experientially and structurally. technological advancements have triggered the evaporation of the office as a hierarchical space. software and tools allow for flexible orders and connections while assuring work gets done on time. if the digital architecture keeps this fluid world in check—if it has become the space of reason, of planning, of system—then its physical counterpart can relax. liberated from having to follow function, form, or architectural intelligence, architecture could

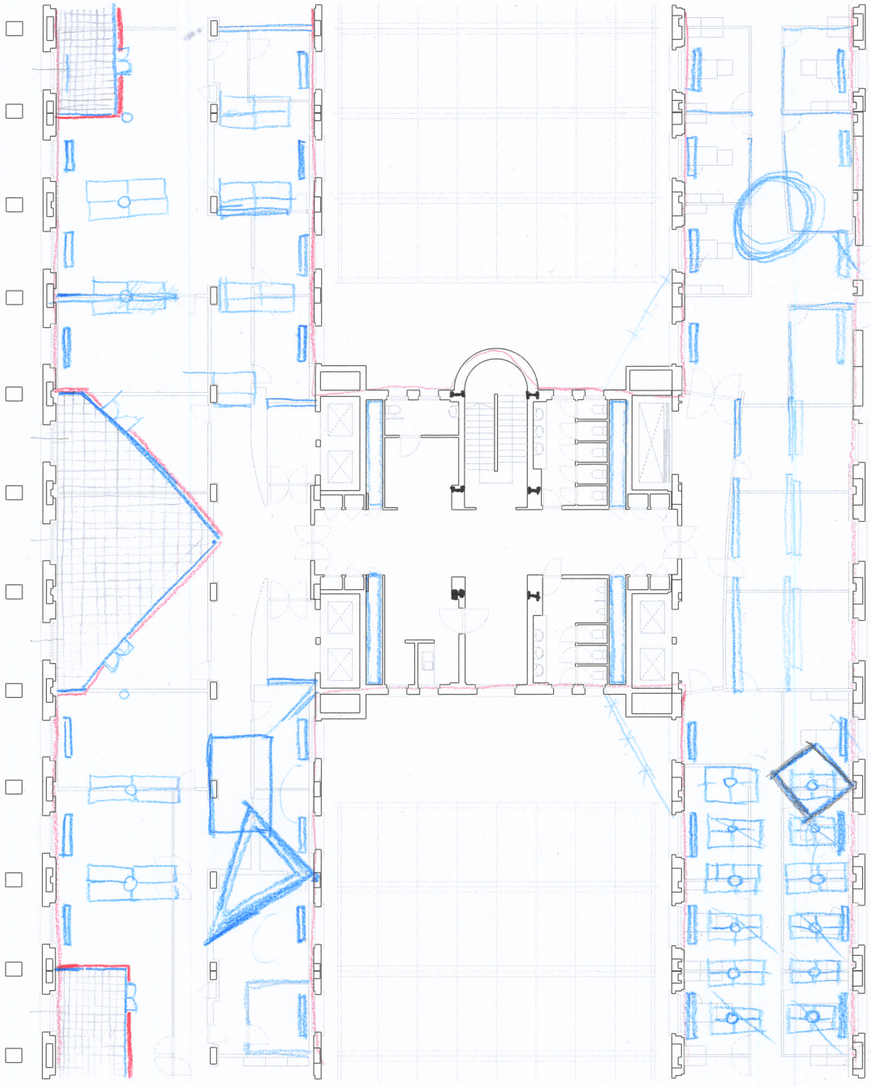
counterbalance this new order by offering haptic adventures, enticing spaces that inspire and offer nonlinear insights and heightened awareness of our direct surroundings. the office space can become a sensorial oasis in a saturated, digitized environment.

paradoxically, the same technologies that loosen our physical structures are sharpening our social orders to hyperprecision. while hierarchies become more complex and dynamic, relationships between us and our coworkers, colleagues, consultants, and friends become unfathomably intricate as we "friend," "like," and "share."

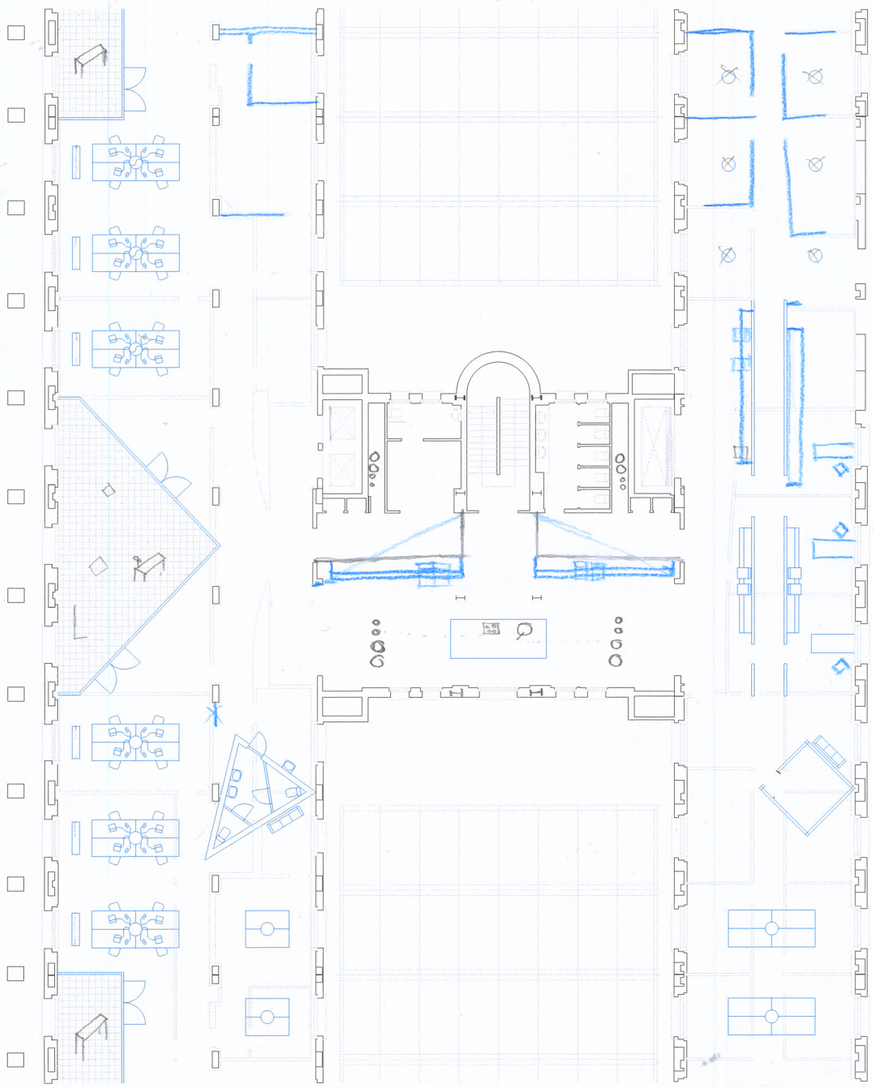
in the past, hierarchies were elemental and stable: rudimentary planning strategies such as the corridor vs. the closed office or the open plan and the cubicle sufficed. the current complexity of our interconnectedness requires more precise framings. careful consideration of positions, dimensions, and layered material use can translate these unstable relationships and fluid organizations into a range of finely calibrated and lively environments. by paying attention to the workings and evolution of an organization, architecture can offer a multitude of spatial connections and situations in which organizations can develop and thrive. architecture can offer flexibility without endlessly moving furniture around; an anticipatory environment that highlights the physical connections between people, objects, and environment.





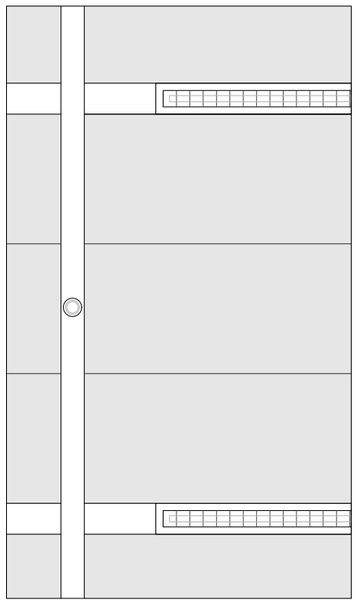


National Bank of Belgium, Fragment, plan with sketches



National Bank of Belgium, Fragment, plan with sketches



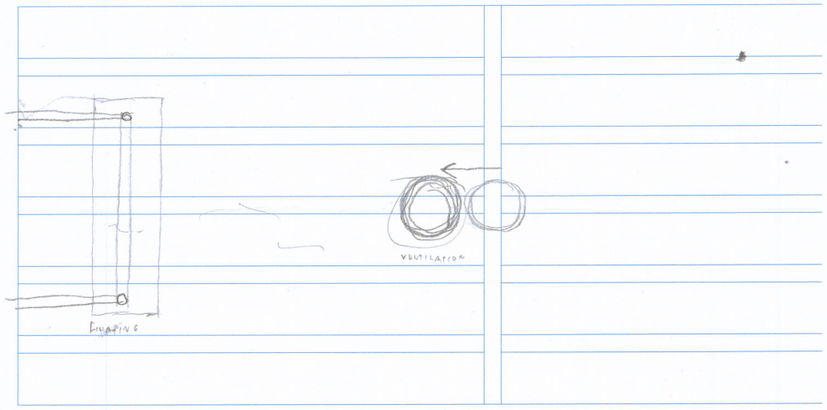


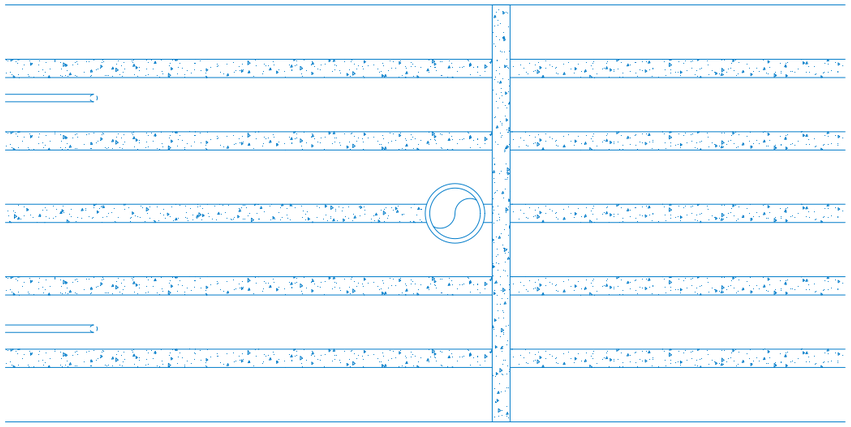
Typical ceiling drawing

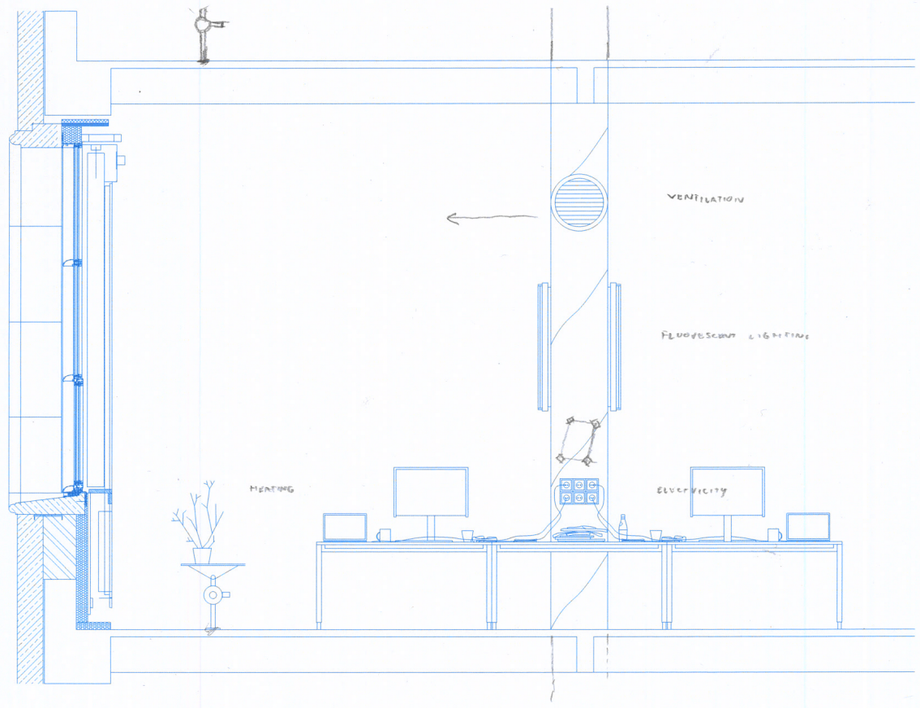
Scale 1:20

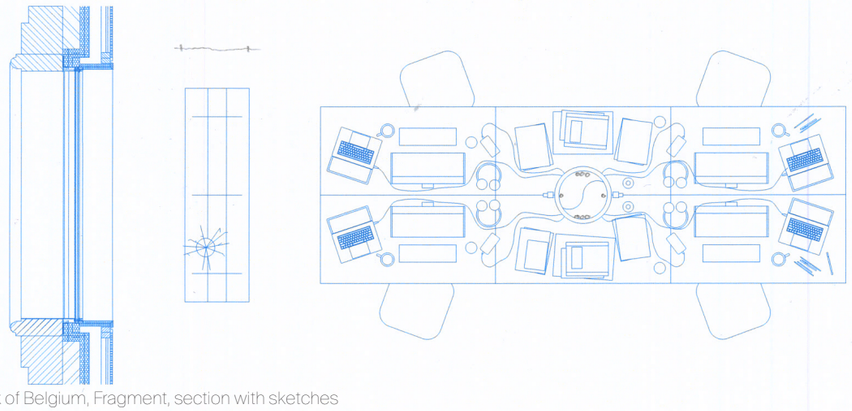
0 0.2 0.5 1 2m



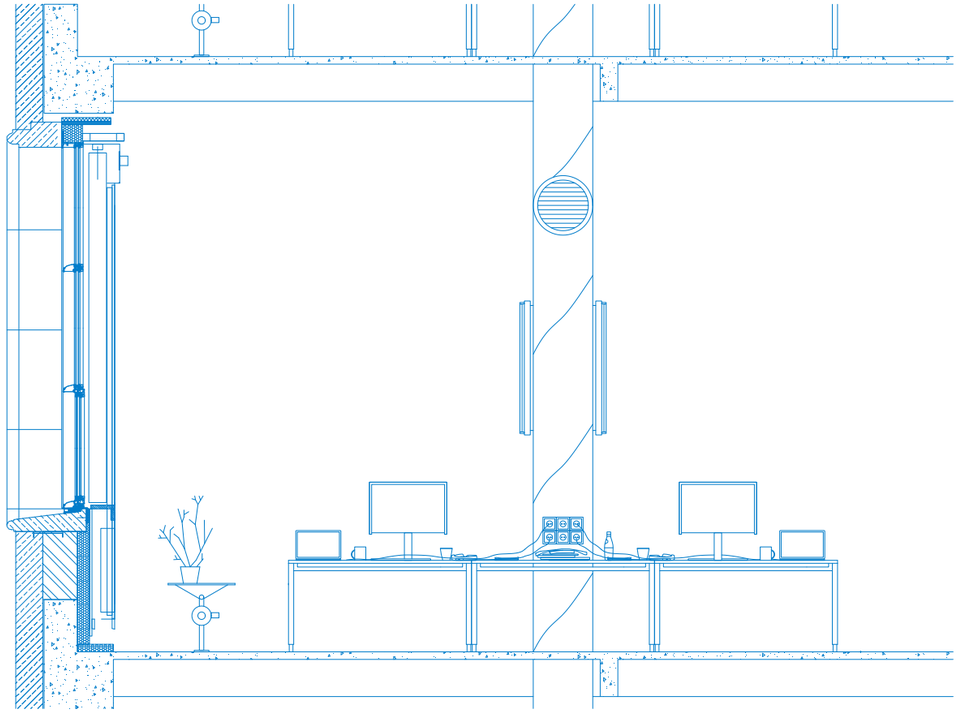


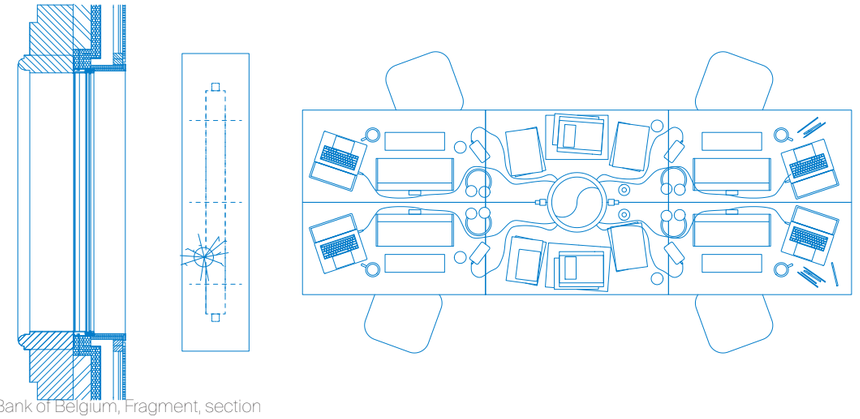






National Bank of Belgium, Fragment, section with sketches

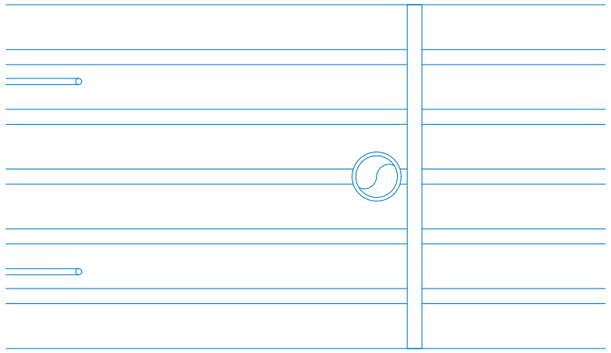


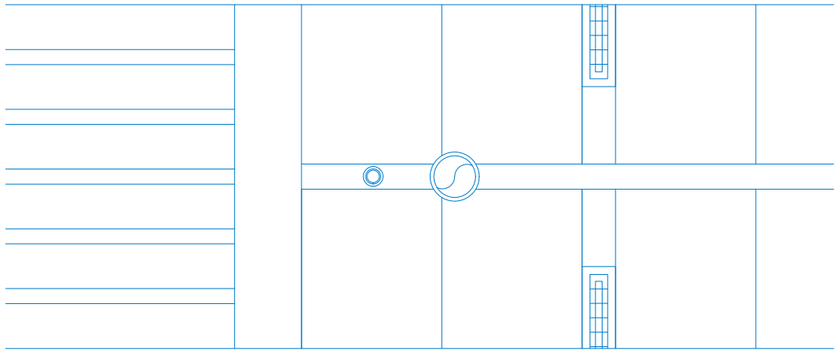


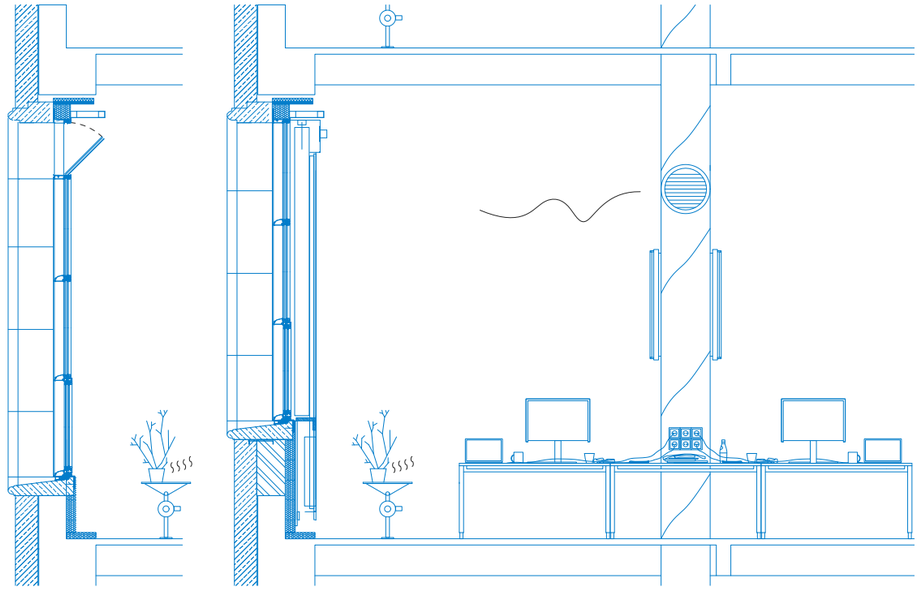
National Bank of Belgium, Fragment, section

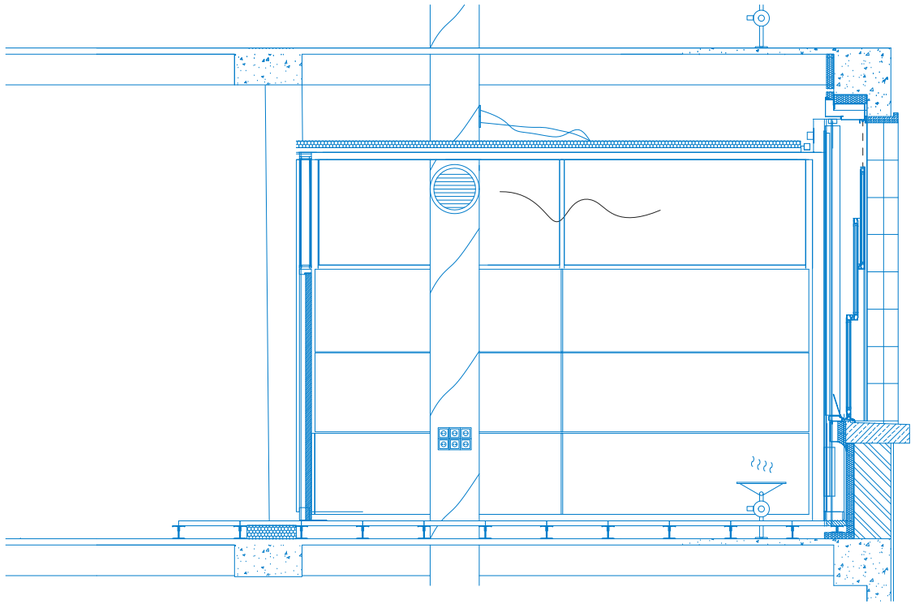


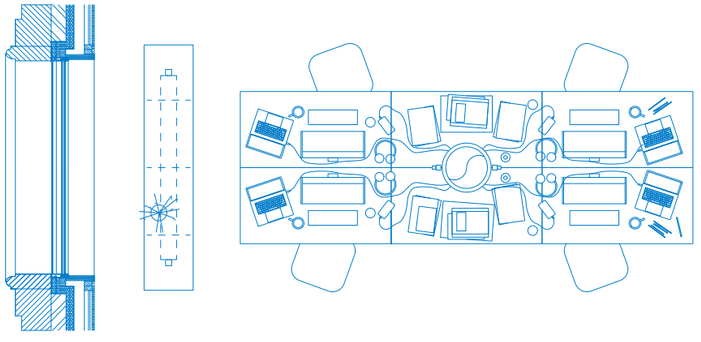
ono architectuur, offices inagro (night cooling)

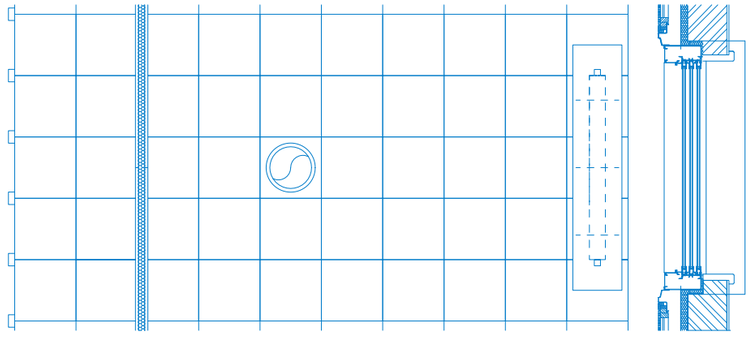










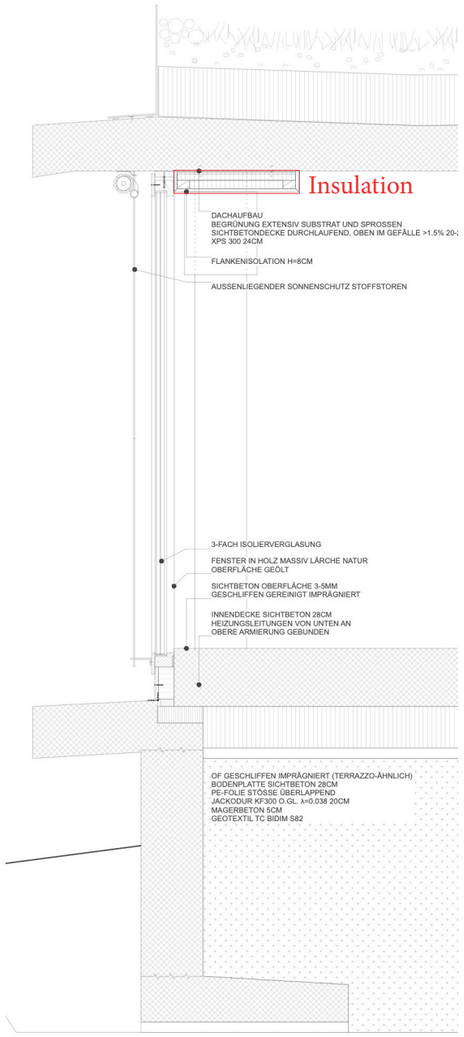


National Bank of Belgium, Fragment, section office floor

+ Daniel Rosbottom
+ Sam de Vocht

individual design crit

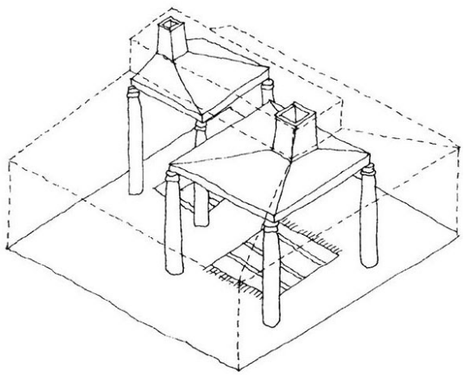
FACILITATING DIFFERENT NEEDS IN DIFFERENT WAYS
SERVICING OF THE SPACE
DIFFERENT SYSTEMS, THE PIPE IS ONLY
THE BEGINNING...
INLET/EXTRACT/ HEATED AIR?
HANDRAIL AS
A CONSEQUENCE
BASEMENT....
TAKING INSIDE OUTSIDE AND OUTSIDE INSIDE
CHARLES MOORE HOUSE
MORE THAN ONE CLIMATE SYSTEM
THE INTERVENTIONS ARE INBETWEEN
THE STRUCTURE AND THE FURNITURE
BUILDING INSIDE THE BUILDING
ONLY INSULATE WHERE YOU NEED TO
INSULATE. THE INSULATION STOPS
AT A CURTAIN
SPECIFIC MOMENTS + FLEXIBILITY



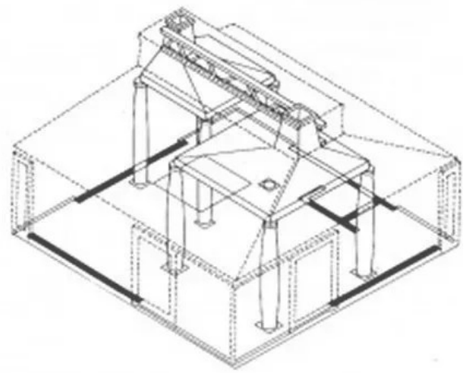
Angela Deuber, Private House

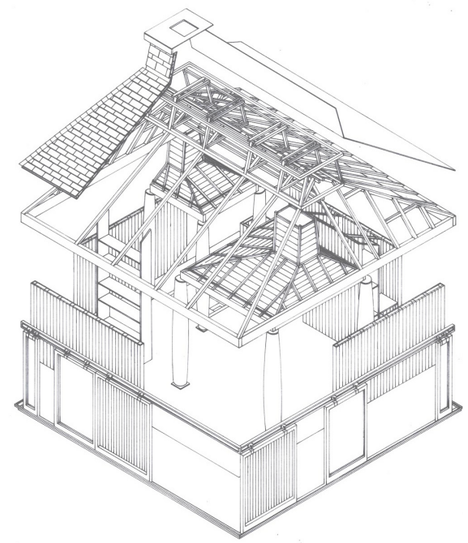


Jo Taillieu Architecten, Dworp

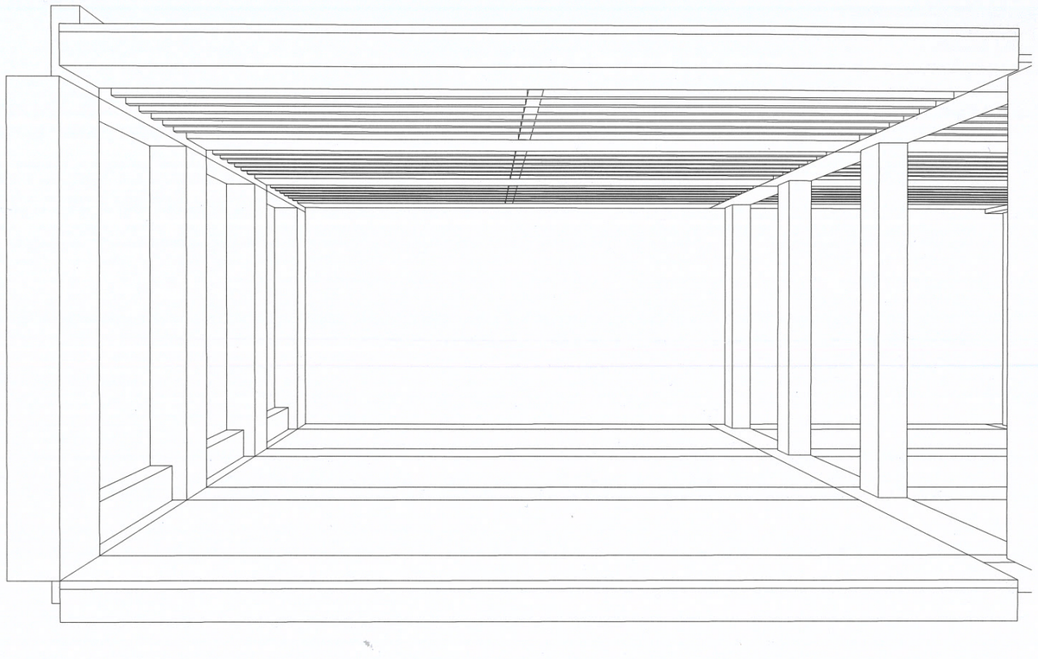


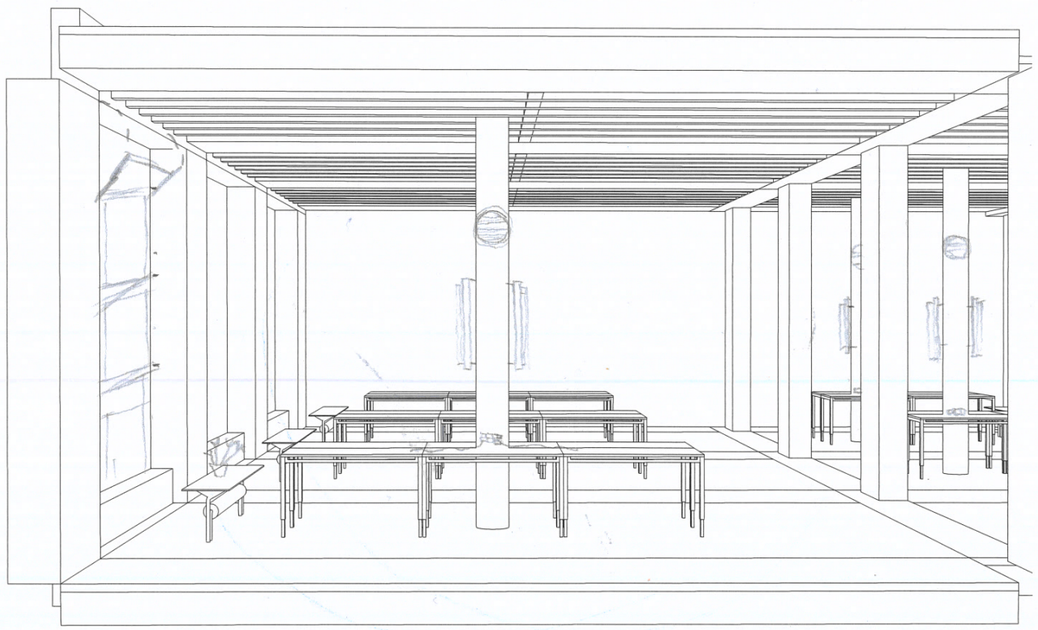
building inside the building



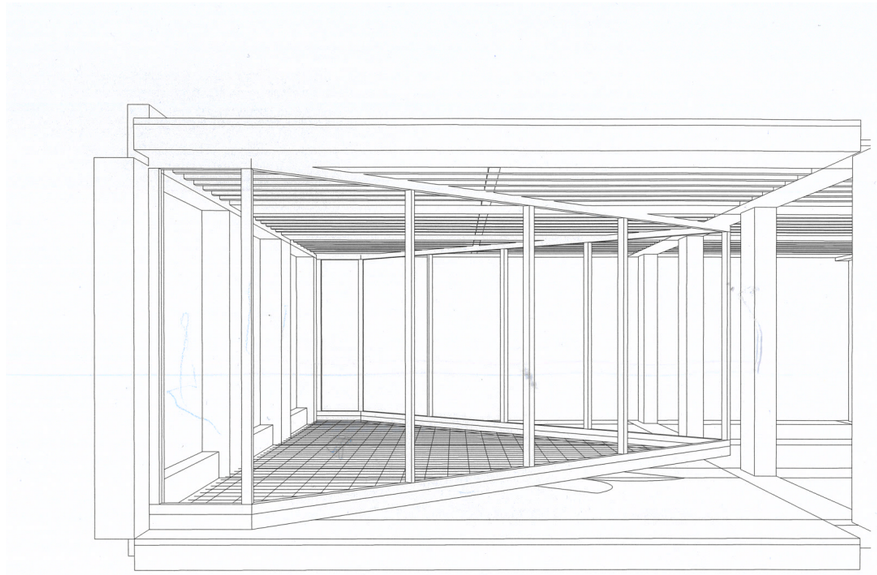


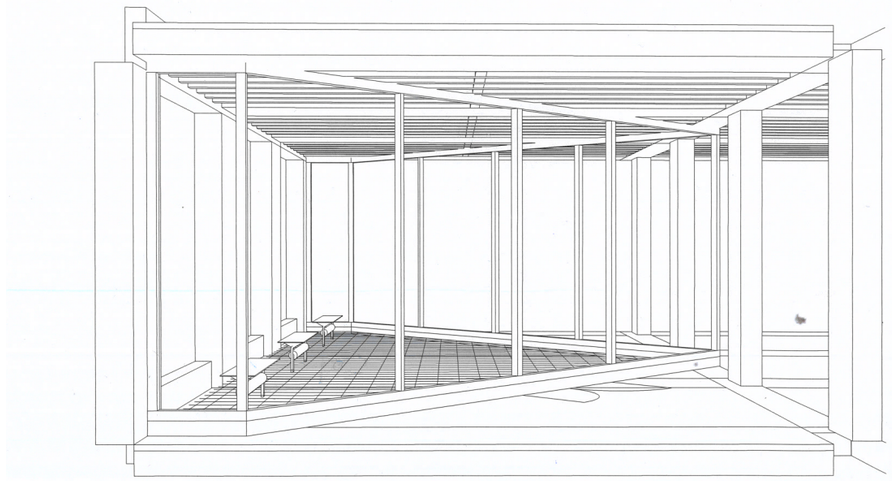
Charles Moore, Moore House



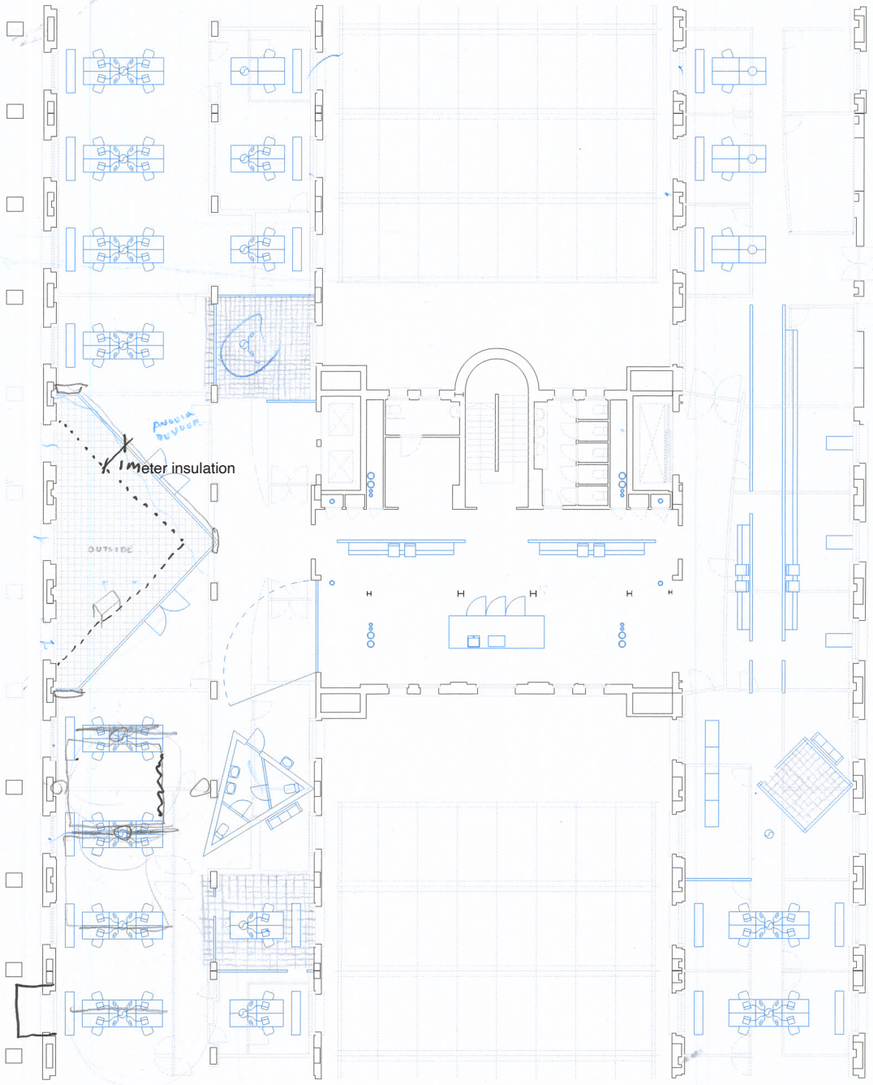


National Bank of Belgium, Fragment, perspective office floor

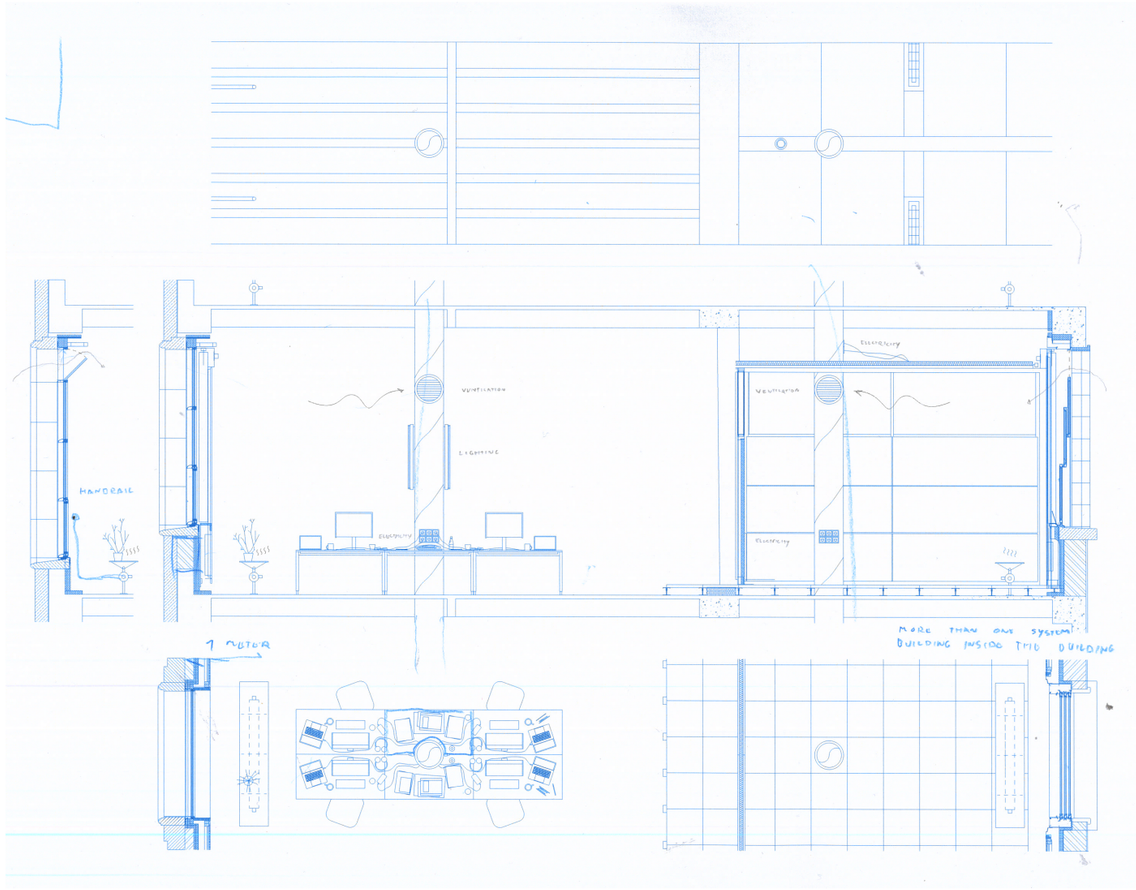




National Bank of Belgium, Fragment, perspective indoor balcony



National Bank of Belgium, Fragment, plan with design crit annotations

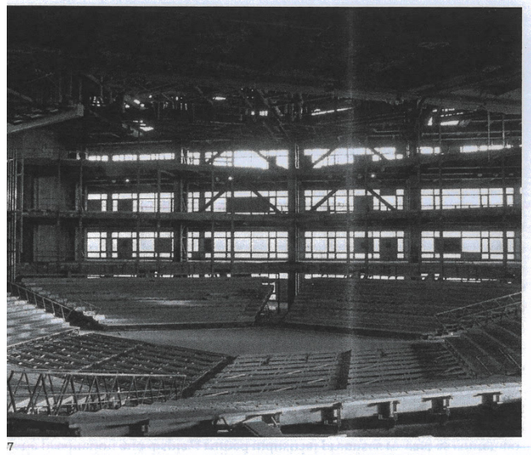


National Bank of Belgium, Fragment, section with design crit annotations

Mark Pimlott
Public Interior as Idea and Project



48



7



49

RUIN AS STRATEGY FOR THE PRESENT

The discourse implied between buildings of the past, cast in the role of 'being of the past', and those constructions representing the condition of the present has continued to be potent, and poignant. The Grand Louvre in Paris, designed by Ieoh Ming Pei (1917–) of Pei Cobb Freed (1989; 1994), was proposed so that visitors would confront a structure, manifestly of the present, yet evocative of the forms of the ancient past—a glass pyramid—embraced by the arms of the pavilions of
45–46 the Palais du Louvre. The contrast between Pei's structure and the palace seemed irreconcilable until one entered the pyramid, and found that it served as the lens through which the great pavilions were to be viewed. Immediately upon entering, one descended into a sepulchral space: a new crypt suggesting 'deep time' because it lay beneath the Palace and the city itself, even accommodating the foundations of the first fortified Palace on the site, exhibited in a vast and beautifully illuminated cellar. The ruin was constantly invoked. It was, of course, a play, in which the visitor imagined being an explorer or an archaeologist, wandering through vast, enigmatic halls erected by past builders, past citizens, past civilisations.

This play, reminiscent of the Romantic period's assumption of the ruin as an object of reflection, has followed and determined many popular public interiors today. The latter days of the Palast der Republik in Berlin saw the building stripped of its representative materials and symbols after the collapse of the German Democratic Republic; it became a shell, a gargantuan construction of concrete cores and steel
47 spans, a megastructure. The euphoria that greeted the fall of the Berlin Wall and the DDR affected the reception of the stripped out building, whose ruins were literally played on, and elaborated through an extensive programme of cultural events, from exhibitions and radical installations to concerts. The building was flooded for an exhibition on one occasion; on another, it was filled with an imaginary landscape.



Christian von Steffelin, Palast der Republik



Christian von Steffelin, Palast der Republik, stripped of representative materials

The ruin of the Palast enabled ludic abandon, and demonstrated that precisely this character of freedom from prescribed values and order affected a potent image for contemporary cultural space. In wandering over the ruins of the past, one was absolved of responsibility for them and for the present alike; and one could experience, at least fleetingly, the vertigo of freedom.

This sensation has prevailed in many spaces associated with culture and the pretence of connections to culture. The 'loft', emergent in New York and Berlin in particular in the 1960s and 1970s, drew upon artists' re-use of redundant inner-city light-industrial spaces for studios in which they could work and live cheaply. Inevitably, the character of their interiors became a stylistic trope for residential spaces and even for cultural spaces. Loft imagery cited that 'off-grid' history to bolster its own legitimacy, borrowing the sense of play associated with artists' practices and lifestyles (neglecting its crushing, attendant poverty). Spaces for contemporary art also used the artist's loft as a signifier, a motif that spoke of artistic production, conceptualisation, and again, freedom. Such spaces as the Haus für Neue Kunst in Schaffhausen, created by Urs Rausmüller (1982), used a former textile factory as space to display contemporary art in conditions offered as similar to those in which that art was produced. From those foundations, the conceit was executed in a more refined way in Max Gordon's transformation of a bus depot in west London into the cavernous spaces of the original Saatchi Gallery (1985). Such 'ruined' or 'as found' spaces were imitated in many artist-organised 'maverick' exhibitions, that occupied the 'ruins' of former industrial spaces which were fitted with white-painted gallery walls.[41] Herzog & de Meuron transformed a decommissioned power station designed by George Gilbert Scott for the Tate Gallery's outpost for modern art, Tate Modern (2000), proposing it in their 1994 competition project as an environment that would resemble the classic sites of artistic production and display: ruined industrial premises re-cast as contemporary art spaces. The inference was that the public could revel in the atmosphere of the artist's loft, and share the artist's rogue use of abandoned spaces that had fallen out of currency and usefulness: the ruins of industrialised urban culture.

The ruin, therefore, has given licence to a certain liberation of activity in the present. One might recognise the transformation by Lina Bo Bardi (1914–1992) of the factory complex in São Paulo into the cultural centre Fabrica SESC Pompeia (1986) similarly as a programme for emancipation, transforming obligations of work into opportunities for play, and transforming workers through engagement into citizens consciously and unconsciously living and making culture and enjoying leisure. Bo Bardi effected, designed and curated 'mis-uses' of the former drum factory, whose shell was made to accommodate quite different actions and atmospheres —leisure, study, creation—from those it was originally designed for, and in the design of new buildings that (quite intentionally, as posters showed the new 'chimney' belching out flowers)[42] assumed factory-like forms of raw and 'damaged' expression, particularly evident in the gouged shapes of the windows of the sport tower.

The industrial infrastructure of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has left an abundance of material for reinterpretation and transformation. In Paris, the former Gare d'Orsay—a train station parallel to the banks of the Rive Gauche of the Seine—was transformed into a museum dedicated to the nineteenth century

(1980–1986) by Gae Aulenti (1927–2012). The Musée d'Orsay's main space was the glass-vaulted main hall, more *jardin d'hiver* than train shed. The conversion of this space in particular drew close to one's mental image of ruins, in that artefacts were displayed on walls that resembled the remains of an ancient complex, such as those around the pyramids at Cheops. The effect was that of a rather sober ruin, through which the past—evident in the entire fabric of Haussmannian Paris—was monumentalised. In that way, it was consistent with the programme of consolidating the Haussmann legacy that typified the various *grands projets* undertaken during the Presidency of François Mitterrand, including Pei's Grand Louvre.

MODERN-DAY PALIMPSEST

The Palais de Tokyo, a building contained within the ensemble built for the *Exposition Internationale des arts et techniques de la vie modernes* in a stripped classical or late-Art Deco style 1937, had accommodated the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris and the Musée nationale d'art moderne in its two wings. This latter institution vacated the eastern wing for the Centre Georges Pompidou, and the conversion of the space into a centre for contemporary 'creation' in 2002 by Lacaton and Vassal saw the creation of a new ruin, the existing arrangements within the building torn out to reveal the structure's essential fabric. The building was treated as a resource in order to maximise the possibilities and opportunities for its use and interpretation. The interior thus stripped down no longer resembled a museum; rather, it resembled the remains of some centre of production; a monumental loft. This suited the architects' aim to create spaces that, like the loft model, were characterised by generosity, looseness and ambivalence. In this guise, it neatly aligned itself with the prevailing atmosphere of sites for contemporary art, as suggested earlier, and the fantasy that ran through them: namely, that in evoking the putative sites of art's production, the viewer was drawn into being an actor in



Palast der Republik, Berlin, 1977



Steel from the deconstruction of the Palast der Republik went to mould engines blocks in Volkswagen cars.



Bronze-glass façade panels from the Berlins Palast der Republik used by Benjamin Bergmann in his work: The Dream of Something Big, 2008



Palast-Transfer, Bandol, France, 2008. Fred Rubin's version of the Palast der Republik, incorporating the original facade panels of the original.

that production, and was so transformed into a cultural maker. This position was consistent with the aims of contemporary art practices, in which the condition of art's visibility is not just a contingent factor, but part of the art's very substance. The artist Michael Asher (1943–2012), for example, stripped out a commercial gallery, the Clare Copley Gallery (1974), showing all its spaces, from showroom to office, as the site in which the public image or idea of art was ratified.[43] The transparency offered was a form of institutional critique, which has since been completely absorbed in the art world's modes of presentation and display. It was also the view propounded by the Palais's first (co-)director (with Jérôme Sans), Nicolas Bourriaud, who had coined the term 'relational aesthetics'[44] to describe practices that broke down boundaries between the artist and the audience of the work of art, and promoted more obvious forms of exchange between the two. The programme echoed that set by the Swedish curator Pontus Hultén, director of Stockholm's Moderna Museet, Kulturhuset and Centre Georges Pompidou, who had built these institutions around notions of interaction between people, and their empowerment. The impression for the visitor, despite the representative character that contemporary cultural production has assumed, has become one of freedom: freedom to see, to act, to intervene, and all within the wreckage or ruin of that which has gone before, acting out a ludic fantasy that cast the visitor was a working artist. It is of interest in considering the effects or affordances of the public interior that such a ruin might stimulate the public imagination and heighten the sense of agency of both the group and the individual.

The Palais de Tokyo cultivated an atmosphere of informality through the treatment or mistreatment of the building fabric, and was among those projects that in their manner of re-use of existing structures have been reliant upon the 'ruin value' of the structures that have accommodated them. The opposition has been central, as has been the aura of legitimacy provided to both the projects and the publics that use them. This might be regarded as a craving for authenticity, particularly in the face of new constructions that frequently offer only abstractions, whether in the clothing of minimalism, functionalism, deconstructivism or parametricism. These ruins have served the 'ego' of the public and its need for legitimacy.

The Neues Museum in Berlin (2013), as revived by David Chipperfield (1953–), presented another, graver atmosphere, also expressed through its attitude toward the existing structure—heavily damaged in fighting in the last days of the Second World War—treating it as a ruin. The ruin in this case assumed a character consistent with Romantic tastes: an artefact, or environment, of contemplation. The building was largely left 'as found', repaired or modified as needed. Remnants of the original *décor*, scarred and faded, were left as *momenti mori*; additions were executed in a manner sympathetic with that of the building—classical, symmetrical—yet were distinct. Rather than a sense of play, the visitor was led to assume an attitude of attention to the interiors' traces of narrative and their intimations of mortality. Of course, like Döllgast's Alte Pinakothek, it has proven impossible to detach the building from the historical circumstances that wrought its destruction, and the building has served as a witness to this, involving its visitors in the constantly unfolding of history and responsibility for that which has been and the here and now.

53–54



4.

Michael Asher, Kunsthalle Bern. Relocation of the building's radiators from its exhibition spaces to its entry-way gallery and presented as a group.



Michael Asher, Kunsthalle Bern. Steel pipes connected them to their original valves, d isplacement of givens

they are crucial elements within the national system of production. [28] Not surprisingly, behind the notion of the "purposive disposition" of functional buildings lay an economic imperative. The term *Zweckmässigkeit* (purposiveness) was broadly used by the national building authority, which administered the construction of public buildings and was bound to *Wirtschaftlichkeit*, the responsible handling of public funds. [29] Adopted likewise for industrial and private building projects, purposiveness and efficiency became the benchmark for all kinds of architecturally regulated workflows and circulations. [30] Describing functional buildings in terms of the machine around 1880 had a specific economical ring to it, namely to design them to run as effectively and profitably as possible. At the same time the machine reference proved to be the genuine tool to achieve just that: to analyze and optimize the architectures concerned with respect to their purposive disposition.

4 Imagining functional buildings such as banks, disinfection plants, or dairies as operating machines made up of intermeshing elements aids the understanding and implementation of workflows in relation to their spatial requirements and functional logic. Whereas the machine metaphor used in late-nineteenth-century architectural discourse only implicitly referred to matters of spatial organization, this aspect was increasingly explicated in the early twentieth century. In 1930, the engineer Rudolf Wolters wrote about railway stations:

"The most important elements of the layout occur for the same purpose [Zweckbestimmung] *and in the same order in each facility, just as every steam engine needs a boiler, cylinder, piston, and flywheel in this particular succession. Changing the sequence of the single components or omitting any one of them would render the machine impracticable. The station building can be compared to such a machine."* [31]

Being alert to the spatial interdependency of architectural and technical elements seems to have proven useful for avoiding scenarios such as that painted in vivid colors by Walther Schmidt, one of the architects of the Munich parcel distribution center:

"If from the very start the architect building a house pays no attention to the complex 'organism of the mechanical,' then the technology thus ousted from the ... overall architectural organization of the project runs riot within the building. Then, there is no taming it. Then, spaces are blocked and windows obstructed. In every corner something judders, something shifts, and people are obliged to find their way around an ugly mess of a structure." [32]

28 Cf. Thomas Brandstetter, *Kräfte messen: Die Maschine von Marly und die Kultur der Technik 1680–1840* (Berlin: Kadmos, 2008), pp. 13–4, 227, 255–6.

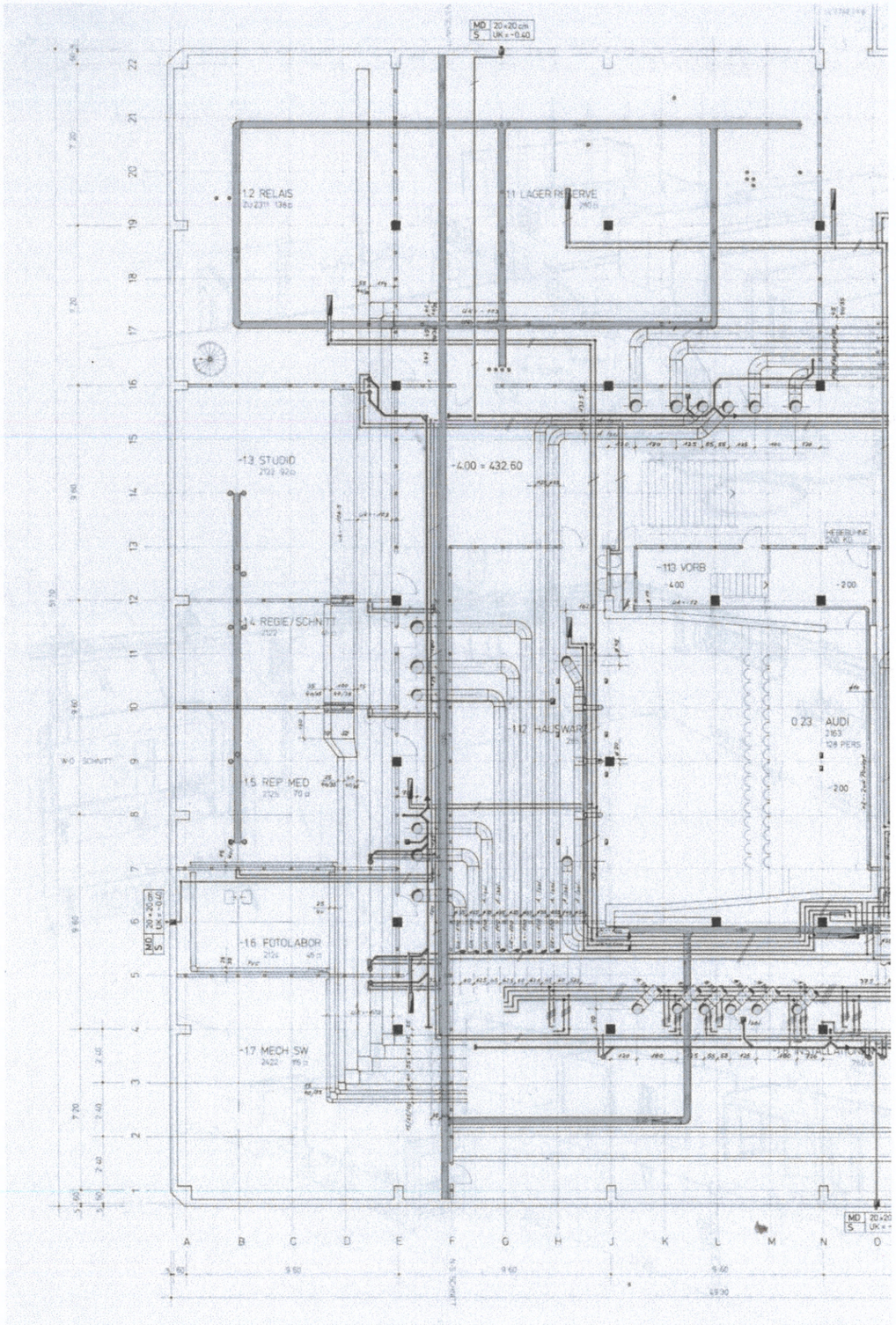
29 For the novelty of this economic concept and its ties to architectural practice, see Reinhart Strecke, "Prediger, Mathematiker und Architekten: Die Anfänge der preußischen Bauverwaltung und die Verwissenschaftlichung des Bauwesens," in Strecke (ed.), *Mathematisches Calcul und Sinn für Ästhetik: Die preußische Bauverwaltung 1770–1848* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2000), pp. 25–7.

30 To give just one example: "In many cases the successful prospering of an industrial company depends on the purposeful arrangement [of its workspaces]." Julius Koch, "Mittheilungen über Fabriks-Anlagen," *Zeitschrift des österreichischen Ingenieur- und Architekten-Vereins*, 34, no. 4 (1882), pp. 74–81; here p. 74.

31 Rudolf Wolters, *Vom Grundriss der Empfangsgebäude großer Fernbahnhöfe* (Berlin: Germania, 1930), p. 41.

32 Schmidt, *Amtsbauten* (see note 2), p. 133.

10 Is it possible to systematize all the building services in a well-equipped building as consistently as one can the construction of the latter and, above all, to coordinate the two? These are the questions to which Fritz Haller devoted his attention when planning the Swiss Federal Railways Training Center in Murten. In order both to install the various distribution networks independently of one another yet economically, and to leave leeway for future modifications, their arrangement was worked out in advance in a 3D planning grid.



gta papers
Architecture / Machine

cocooning

the design of interiors has come to embody a line of egocentric thoughts. it purports to put our biological body—and possibly even our soul and individualistic existence—at its center. womb-like sensations arise, promising warmth, safety, and other prenatal comforts. how do we swaddle or cushion the self sufficiently for it to survive our savage reality? interiority as a pure and peaceful haven for the spirit … a mindset that seems increasingly coveted, even as we roam in public. we create mobile cocoons, shielding ourselves with screens, headsets, and blank stares. we eschew or minimize contact with others. absurdly, even though technology has seemingly brought the outside world in, our devices have diminished points of contact with it. the public realm is contained, compressed, and trapped behind thinner and thinner layers of glass. the exterior is powered up or down with the swipe of a finger.

where this notion of interior design evokes thoughts of monastic disconnection, of dwelling in a shielded totality, we would like to consider its opposite: the interior as a locus for a new collective condition, an inside that fosters exchange. after all, it is mostly in the perceived comfort of our interiors that we let our guards down and allow for connections to occur. up until modernity, humanity experienced its interiors —even those of the dwelling—as a public domain. the living room was a place for conflict and exchange. even our beds were shared. given this, let us regard the interior not as a space created by protective surfaces and moods, but rather as a porous field defined by realms and structures. otherness will trickle in and a productive contamination will ensue.

beyond a spatial definition, a new exchange must be fueled by content. this collective interior demands activation by things: volumes and objects, elements that supersede their functional obligations to play suggestive and symbolic roles—think of the kaaba, the butudan, the kitchen table, or the parliamentary mace. we see this as the vivid place that Bruno Latour depicts wherein

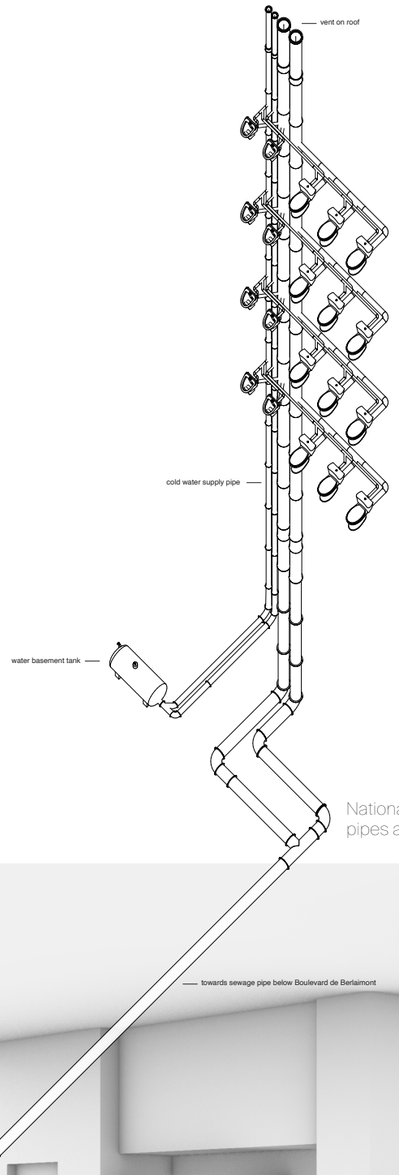
> (e)ach object gathers around itself a different assembly of relevant parties. each object triggers new occasions to passionately differ and dispute. each object may also offer new ways of achieving closure without having to agree on much else.[1]

in the place of comfort, the new interior instead offers devices of contestation and the promise of an active public.

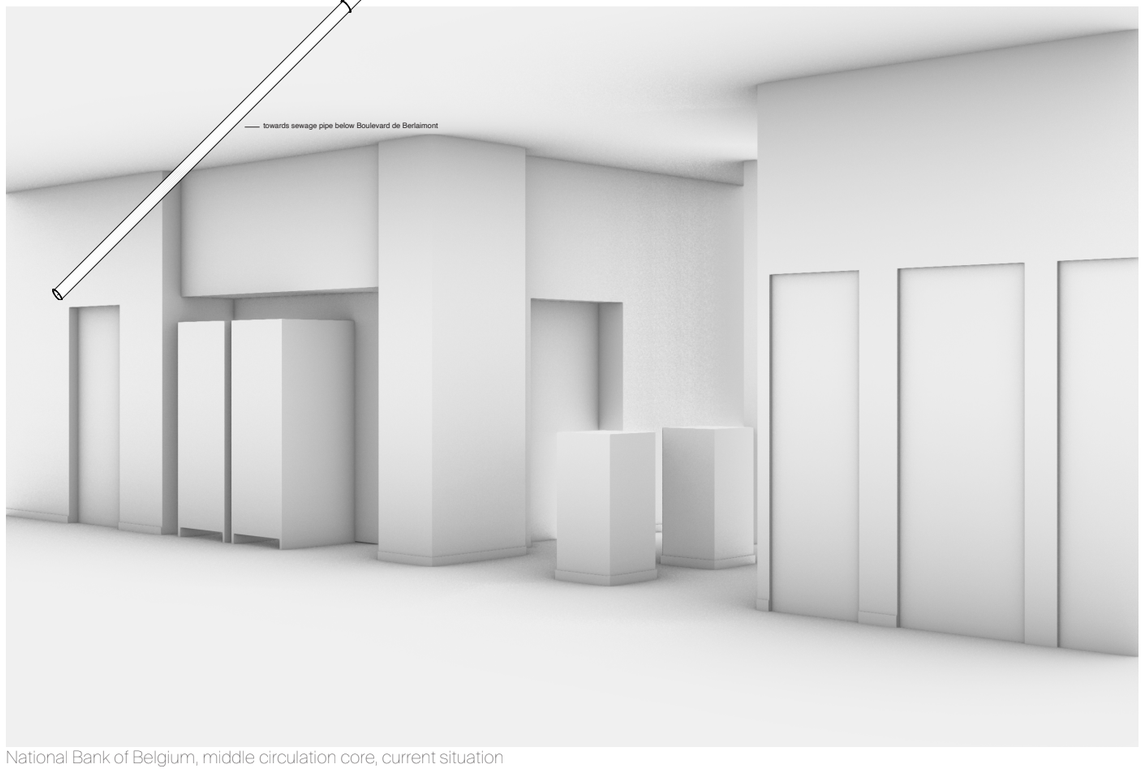
in order to accommodate differences, an architecture of the interior will be assembled with characterful structures and objects that trigger discursivities, to fuel the fire, the textures taking on qualities of the outside, rupturing and destabilizing. think of sublime volumes, endless depths, infinity pools, and fillets. think of Tarkovsky: the rain inside, cobblestones in the living room, sand in the bathtub. the interior as a space of contestation might recoup some of the scope architecture has forfeited to the creators of soothing mood and Pinterest pinboards. as layered and fleeting realities of the exterior return indoors, condensed and redirected, they might unsettle the insulated, comfortable individual in pursuit of a more vital collective interiority.

[1] Bruno Latour, "Fro Realpolitik to Dingpolitik, How to Make Things Publi in *Making Things Publi Atmosphere of Democrac* ed. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibe (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005),

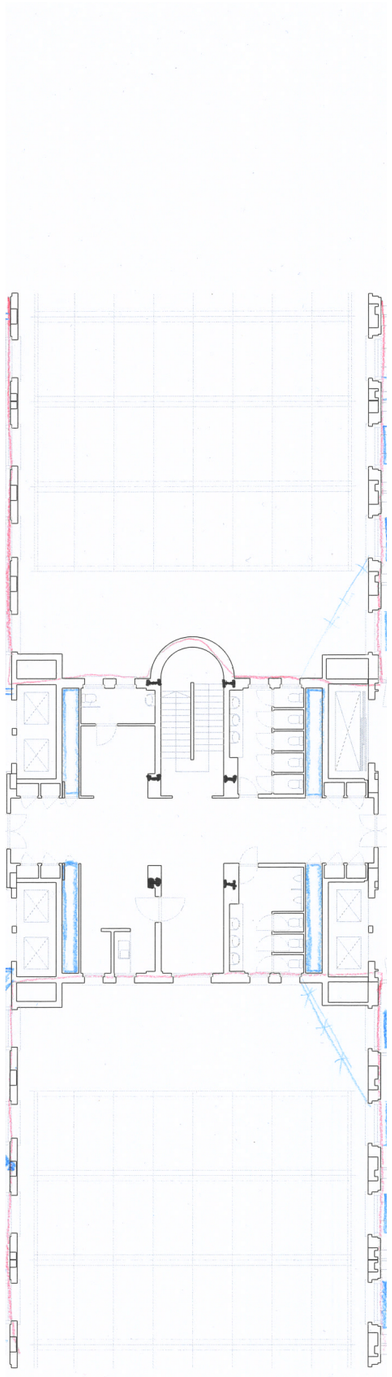
case study 03
middle
circulation
core

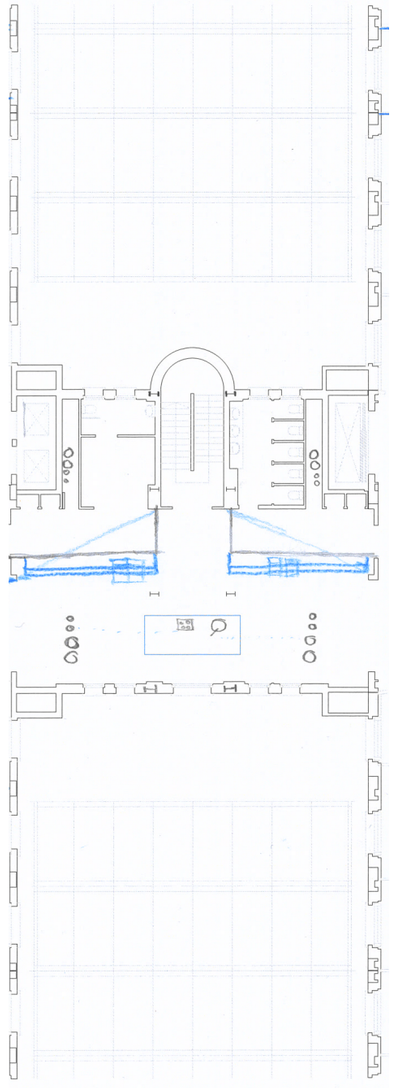


National Bank of Belgium, current situation of water system in middle circulation core, vertical pipes are to be found next to the lifts (emphasized in blue on the plan to the right)



National Bank of Belgium, middle circulation core, current situation





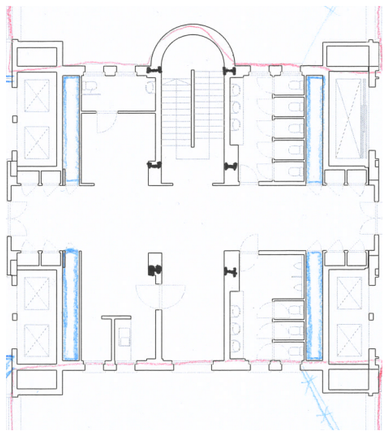
National Bank of Belgium, middle circulation core plan sketches (fragment of fragment)

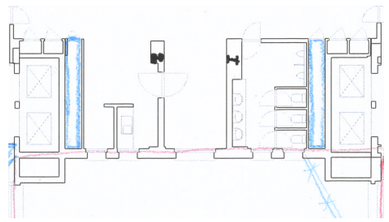


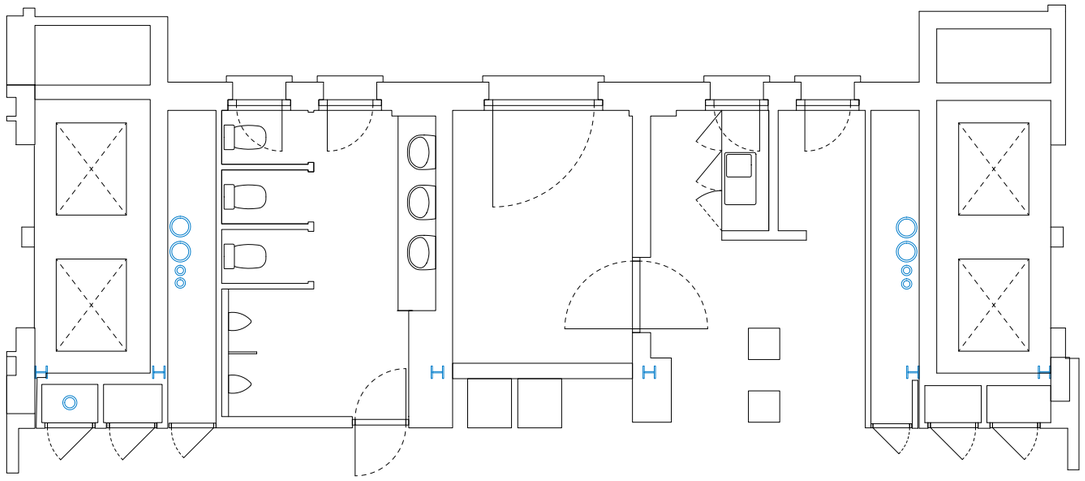
National Bank of Belgium, middle circulation core, current situation first floor. photograph: Bas Leemans

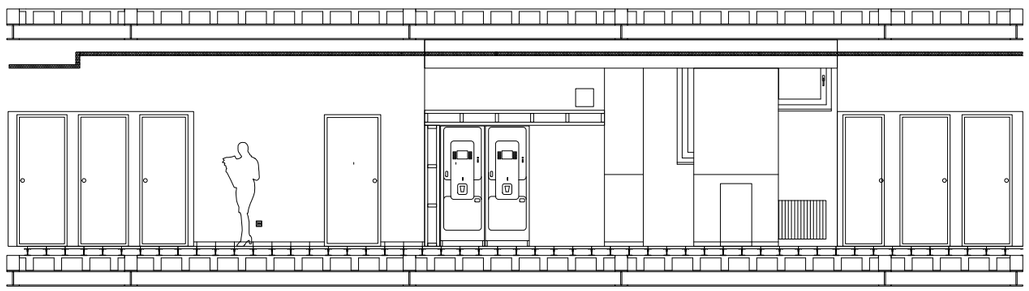


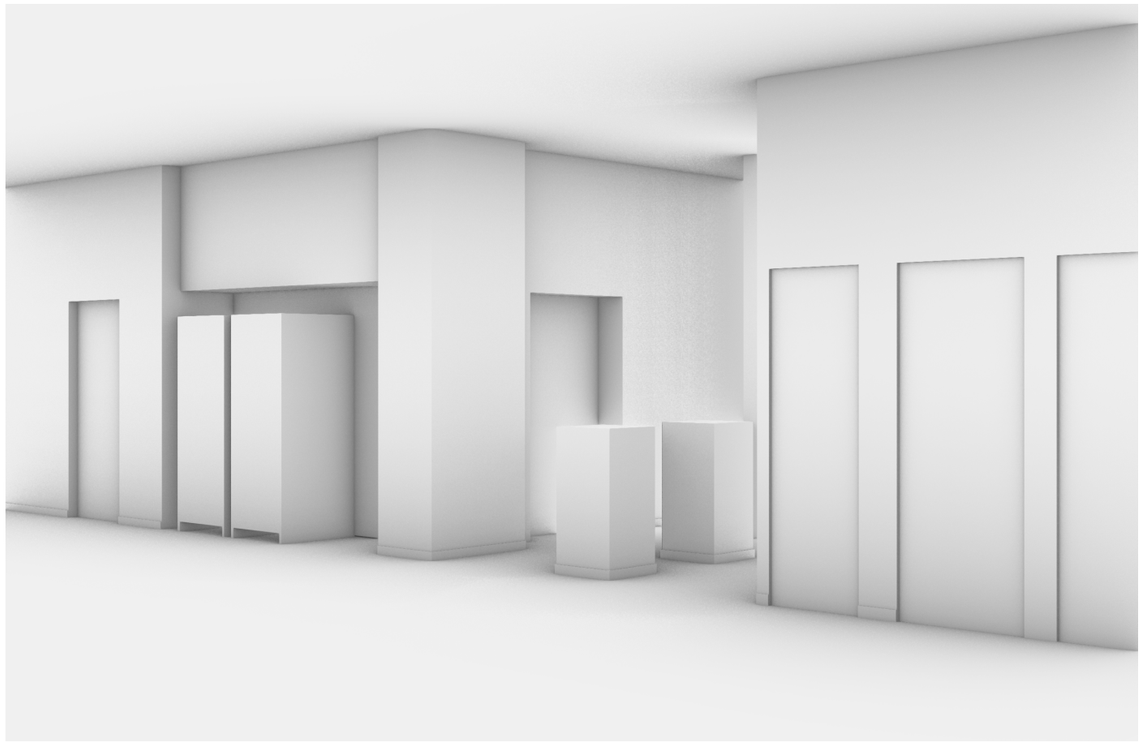
National Bank of Belgium, middle circulation core, current situation first floor. photograph: Yu Chen



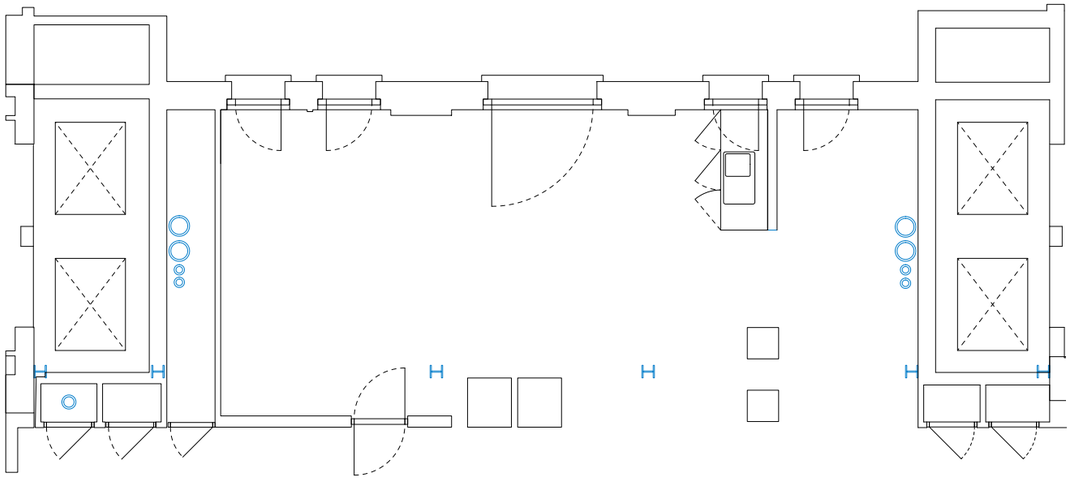


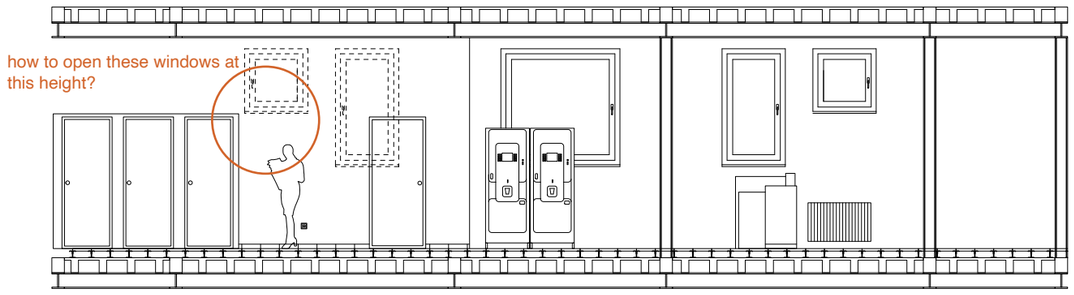


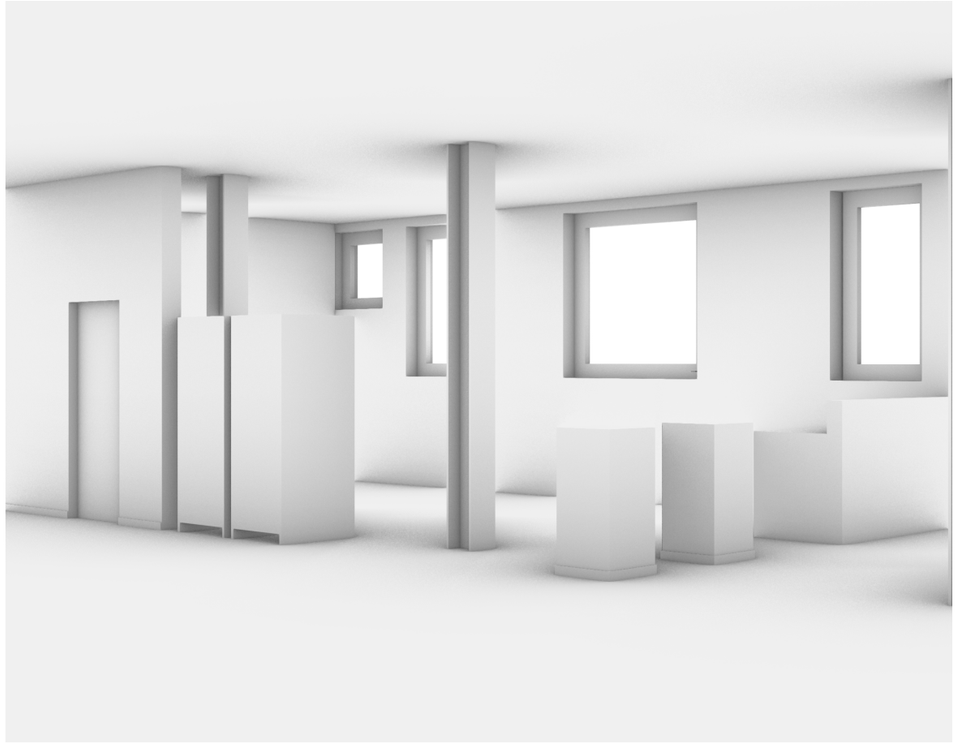




National Bank of Belgium, fragment of middle circulation core, current situation, plan + section



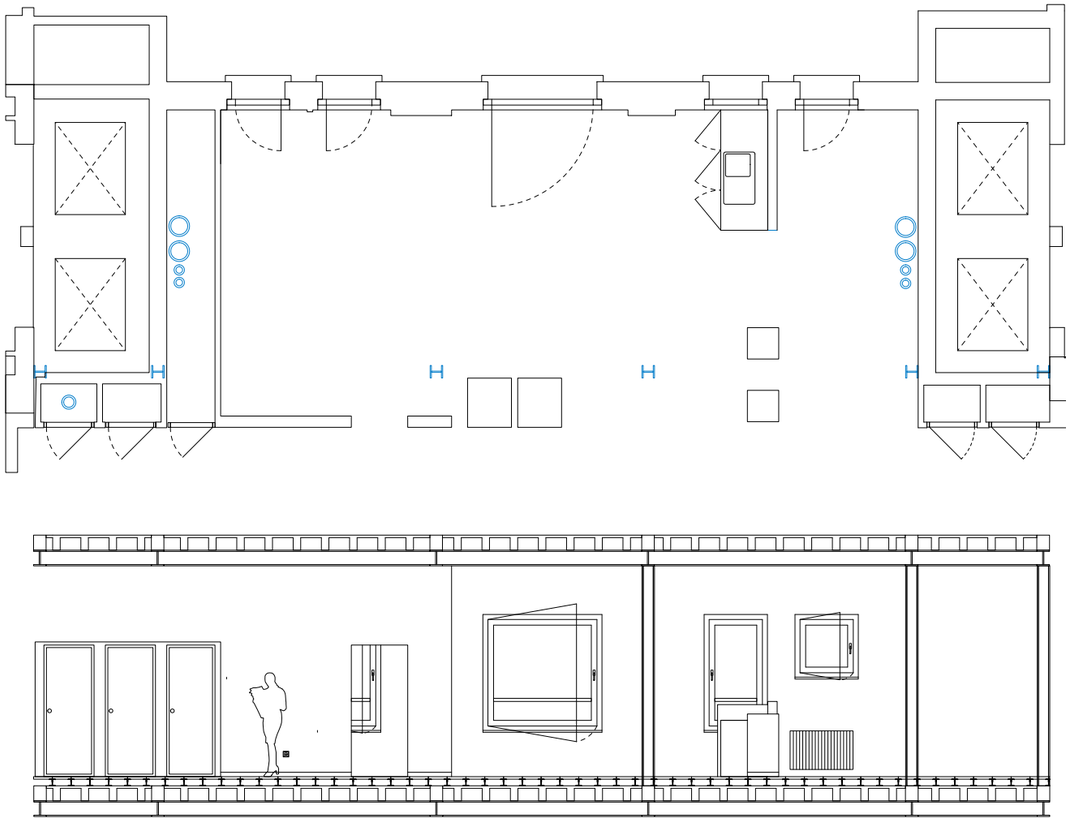


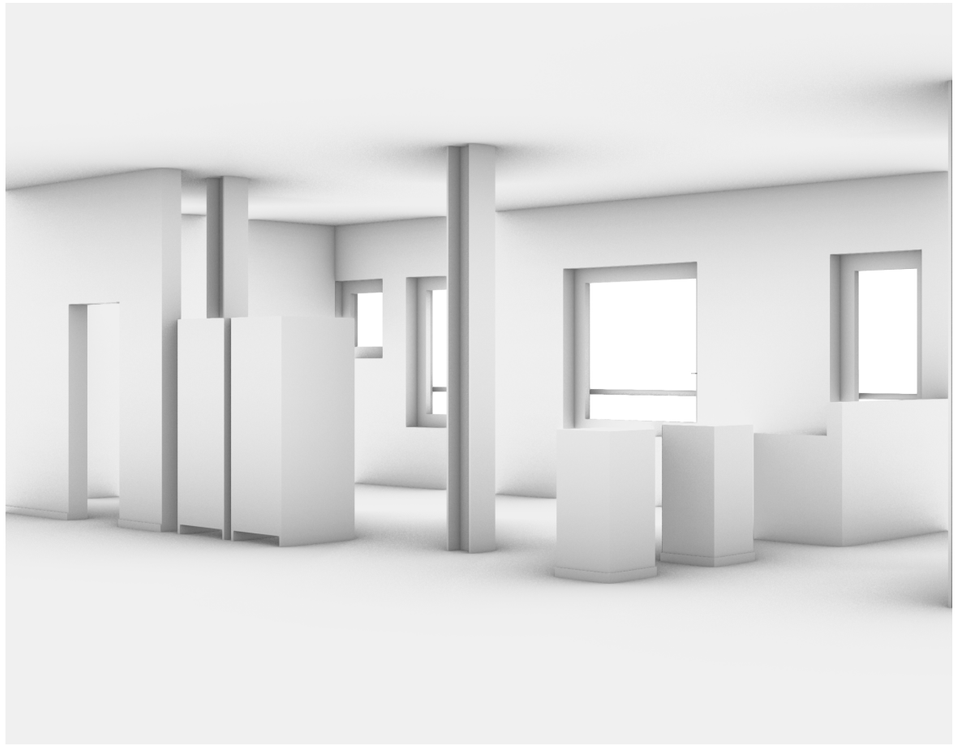


undressing

National Bank of Belgium, fragment of middle circulation core, new situation, plan + section

undressing: removing partitions, suspended ceiling. exposing steel construction and aluminium window frames

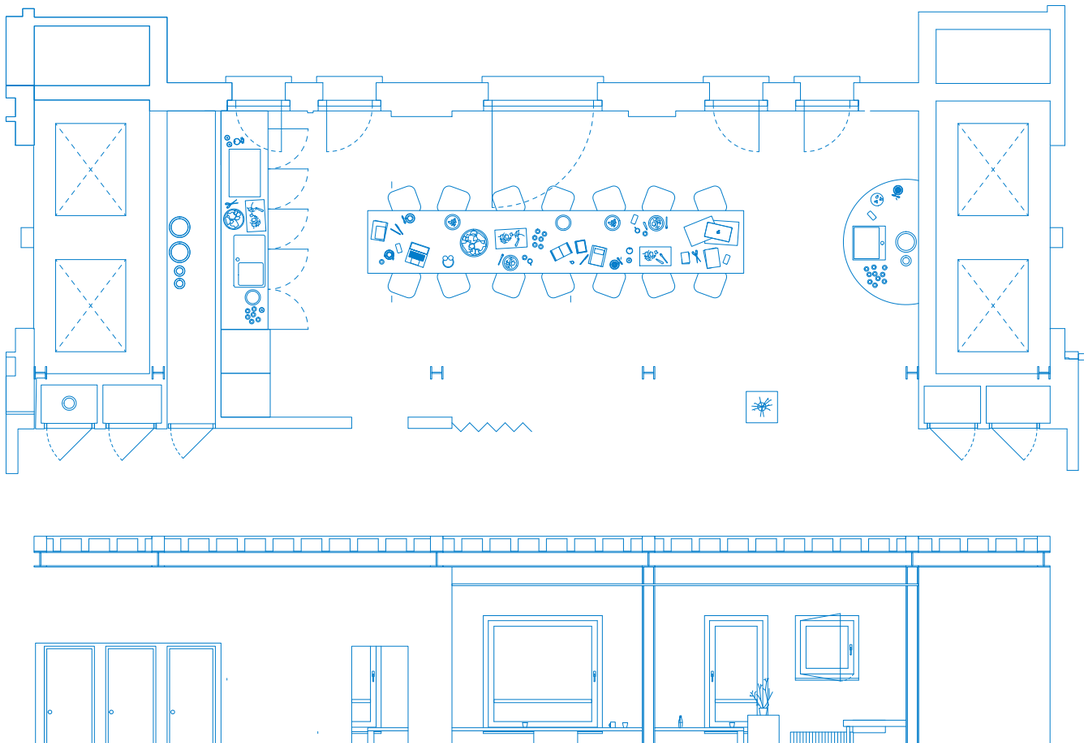




shifting

National Bank of Belgium, fragment of middle circulation core, new situation, plan + section

shifting: moving window frames down to be able to open them whilst taking human height into account





plugging kitchens into existing water pipes, a place for meeting, a place for work, a place for a break



steel construction and concrete ceiling become visible again. doors are removed from partition wall. glass pedestal remains

National Bank of Belgium, fragment of middle circulation core, new situation, plan + section

+ MARK PIMLOTT

individidual

MANUAL DEFINING THE LAYERS

design crit

A MANUAL IS NEEDED TO DEFINE ALL LAYERS OF THE BUILDING AND THE DEGREE OF INTERVENTIONS OF THE PROJECT

STRUCTURE, INFILL, AIR, WATER, ELECTRICITY, DUCTS, PARTITION WALLS, SUSPENDED CEILING, RAISED FLOOD

WHAT DOES THE AREA AROUND THE WINDOWS LIFTED DOWN LOOK LIKE? ARE THERE SCARS VISIBLE?

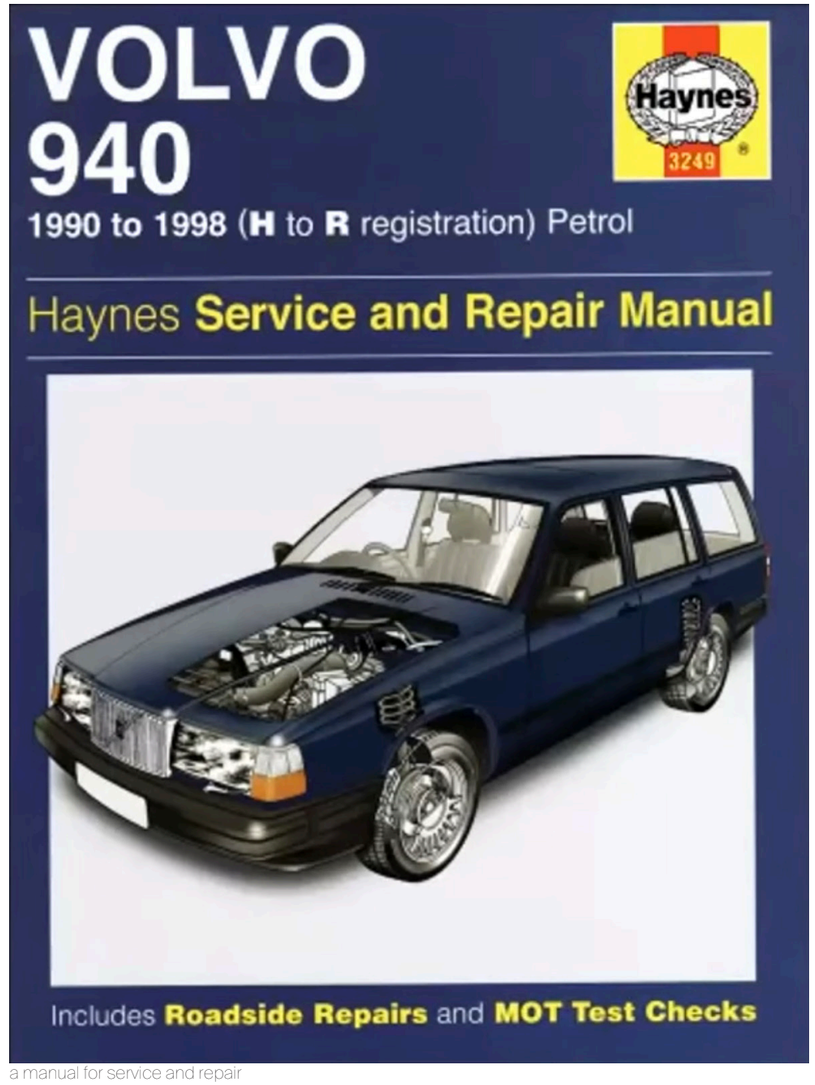
ARE THERE SCARS VISIBLE IN THE FURNITURE THAT IS ALTERED TO MAKE WAY FOR THE DESIGN?

REMOVING A LIFT CORE IS A BIT NUTS!!!

THE MODEL FRAGMENT SHOULD BE THE OFFICE FLOOR AND IT SHOULD SHOW THE SHIFTING OF THE WINDOWS DOWN, THE IDEA OF THE INTERIOR, THE STEPS IN THE MANUAL

THE MIDDLE CORE IS AN INCIDENT

RELATE THE CONCEPT OF THE MODEL TO THE BIGGER PICTURE



a manual for service and repair

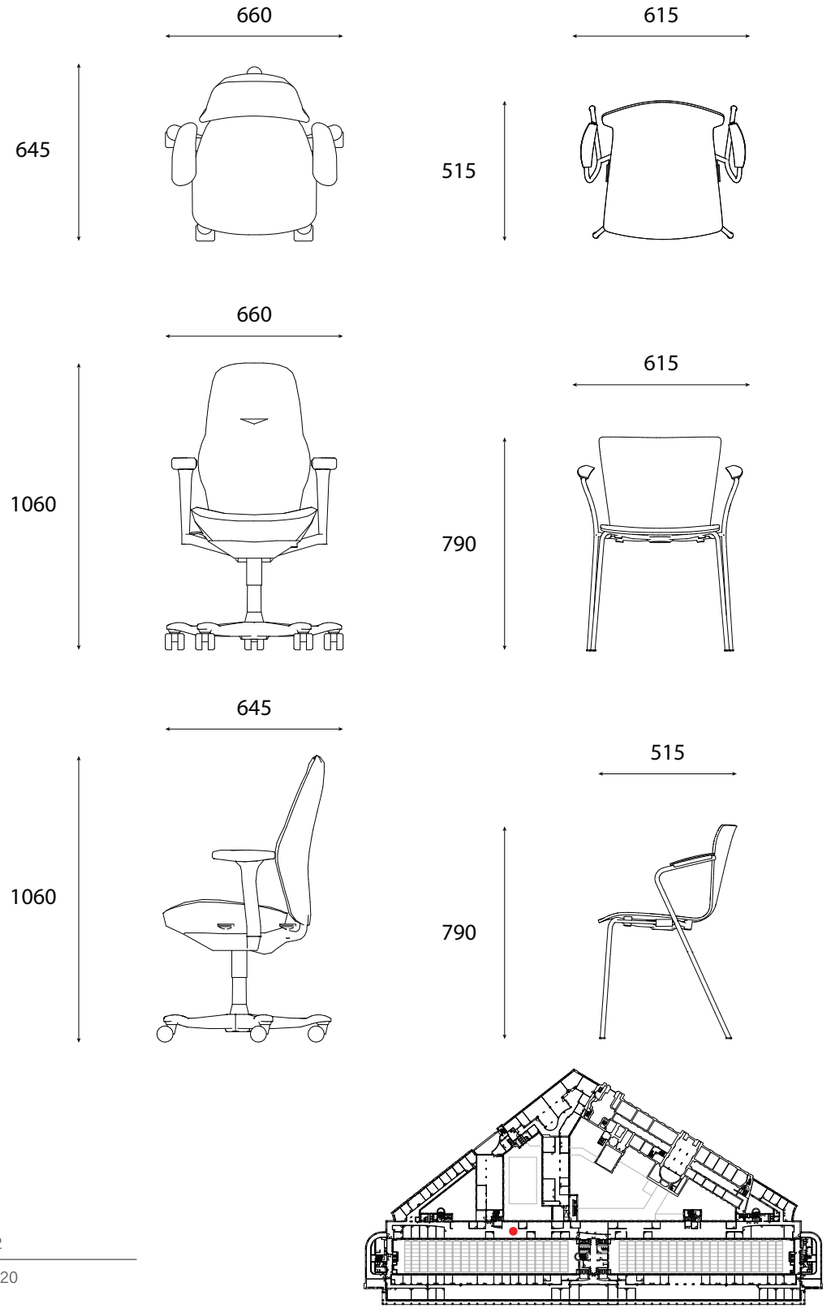
working towards P3



Andreas Gehrke, IBM Campus 1972–2009



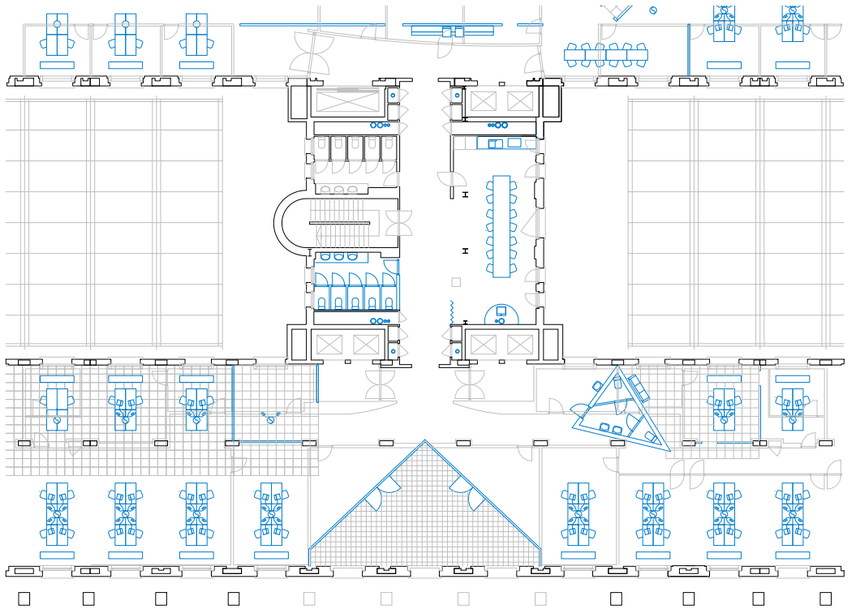
De Vylder Vinck Taillieu, LWWK, Brussels

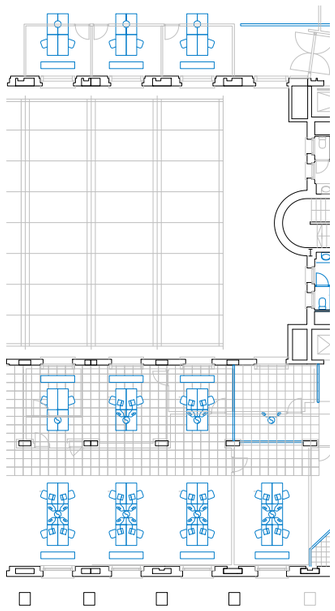


Plan +2

Scale 1:20

National Bank of Belgium, chairs on the office floor

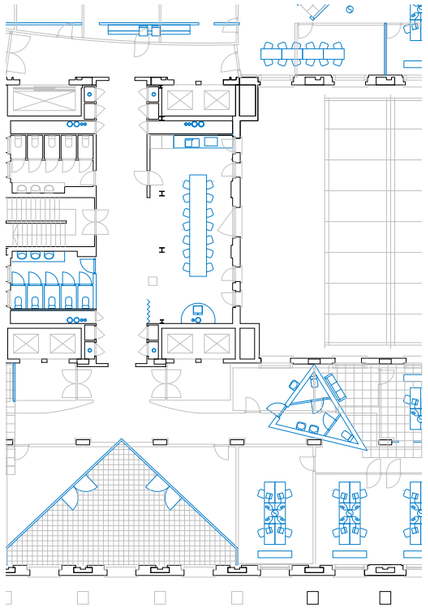




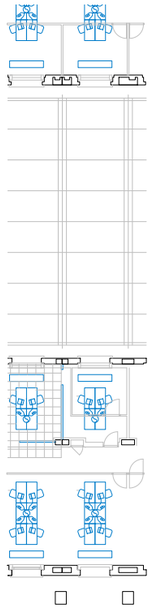
Boulevard de Berlaimont

National Bank of Belgium, fragment

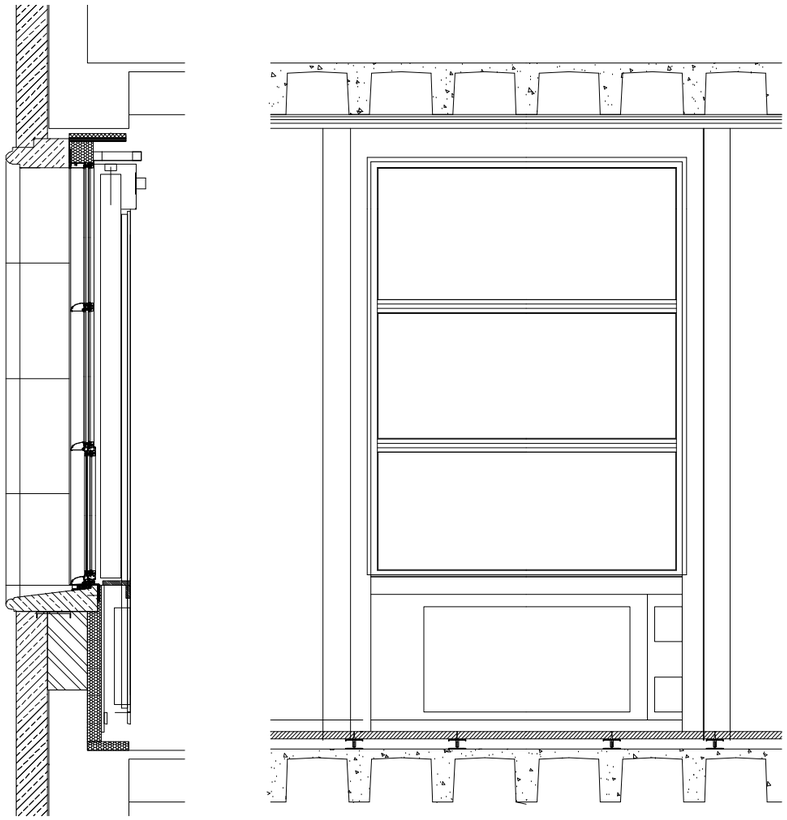
National Bank of Belgium, offie 1, fragment of fragment



National Bank of Belgium, middle circulation core, fragment of fragment



National Bank of Belgium, office 2, fragment of fragment

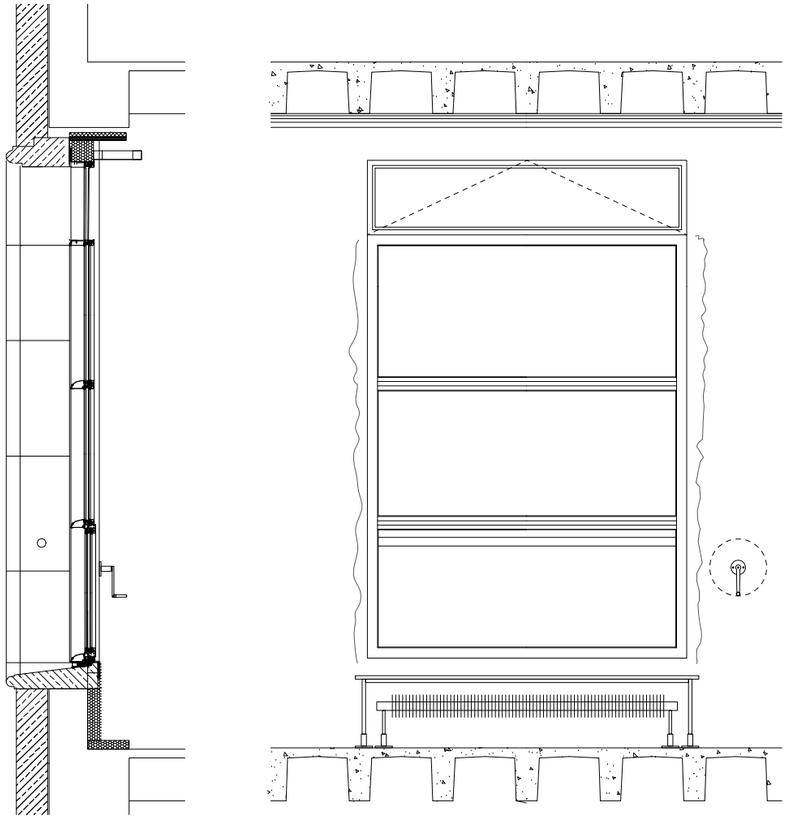


National Bank of Belgium, current situation windows on Boulevard de Berlaimont, section



undressing, current situation windows and concrete construction

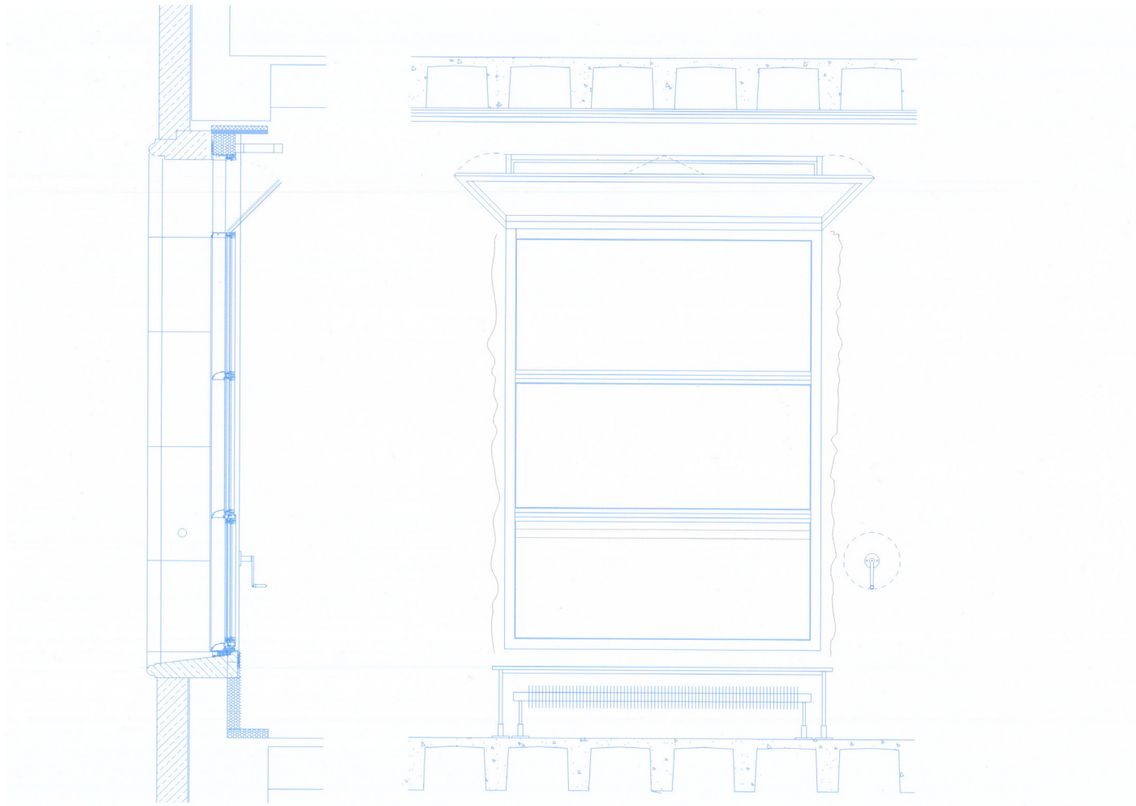
undressing





shifting

National Bank of Belgium, shifting window frame down and adding new openable frame

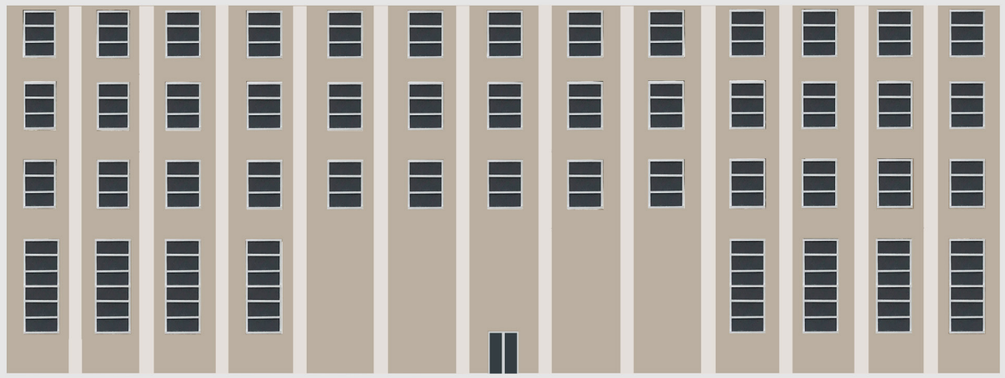


fixed windows on Boulevard de Berlaimont
are now openable with a ventilation flap
on top

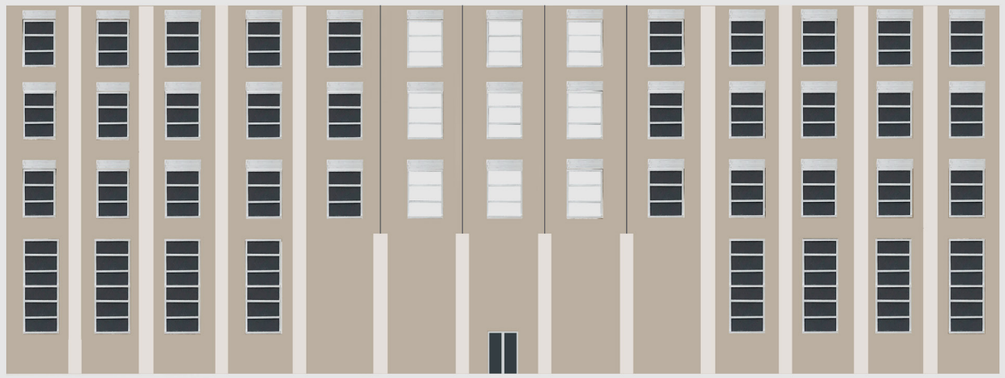


National Bank of Belgium, putting heating directly on the floor as an element to sit on

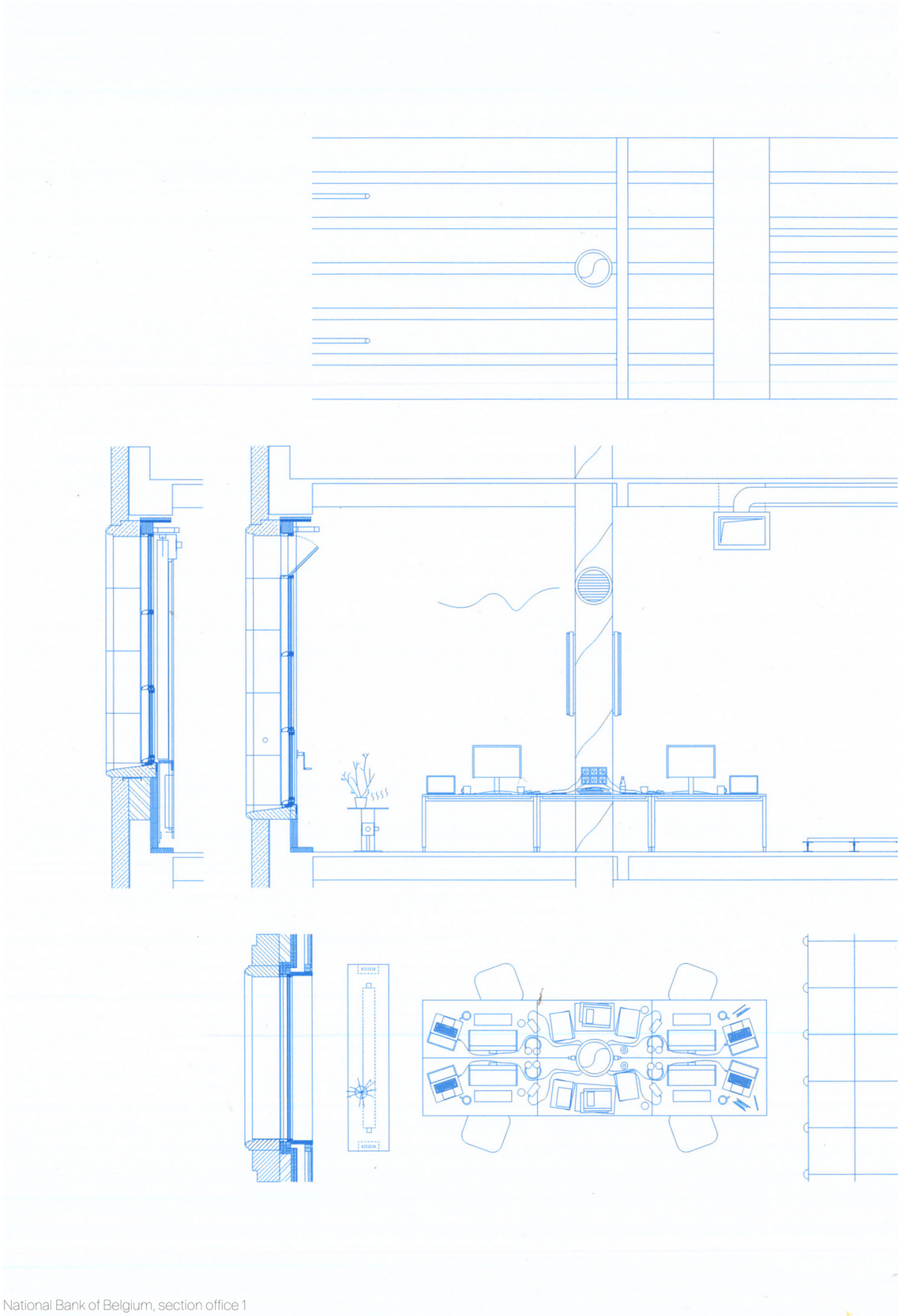
window and heating as performative objects



National Bank of Belgium, current situation facade



National Bank of Belgium, new situation facade. undressing columns and displacing windows down



National Bank of Belgium, section office 1

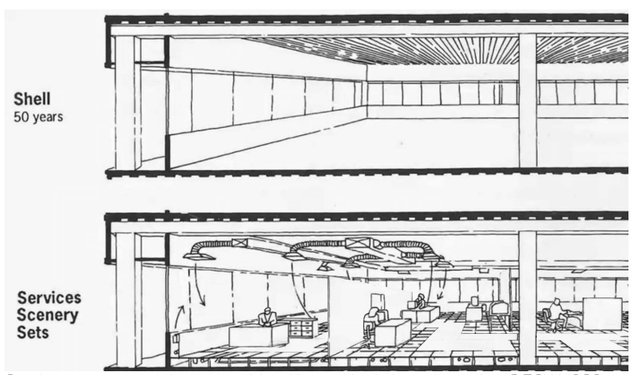


partition and floor panels undressed and reconfigured. technical services are becoming an active instrument in the interior of the office as a polyvalent object that is part of the furniture and work is organised around it

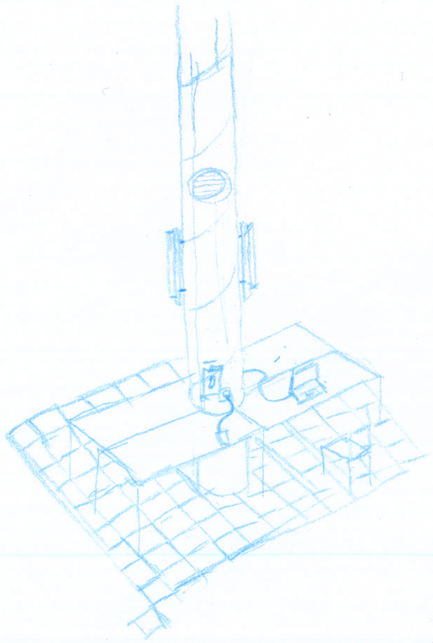
reconfiguring



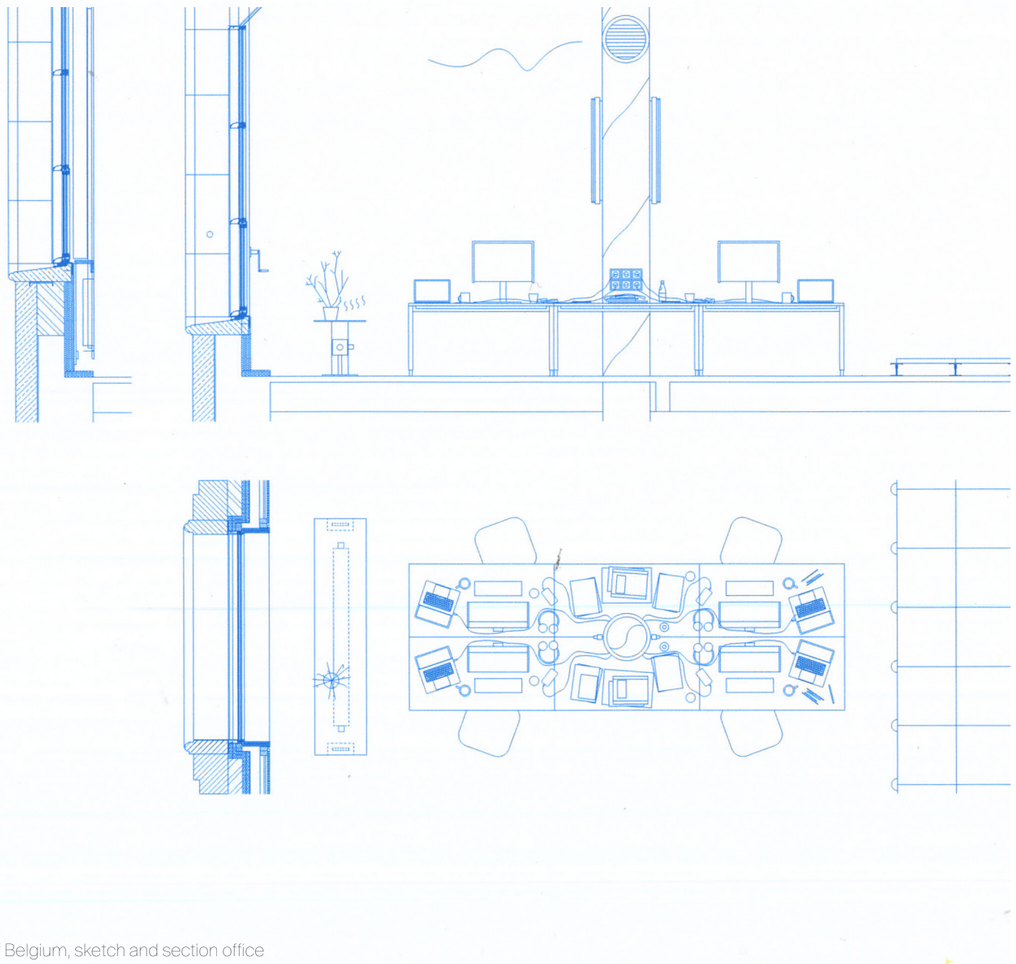
Andreas Gehrke, Quelle Versand 1956–2009
Nürnberg, 2012

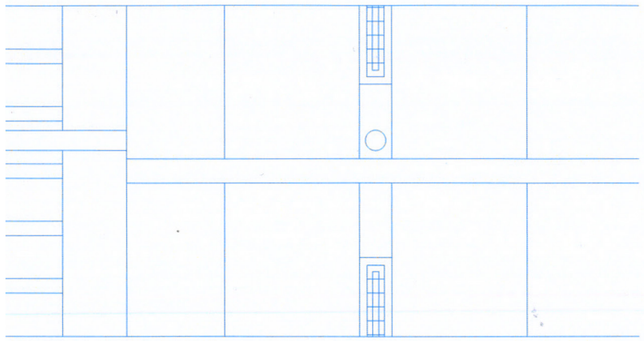


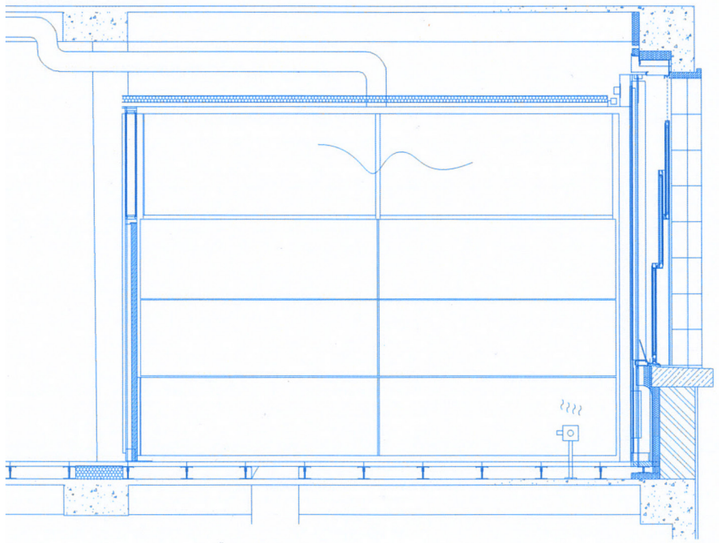
Services, scenery and sets combined into a single layer, based on DEGW, 1989

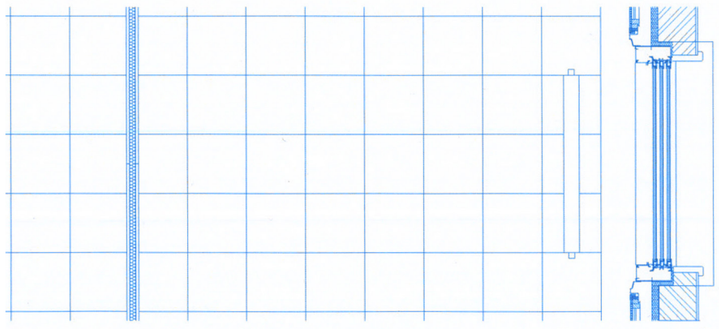


DUCT AS COLUMN
DUCT AS ARCHITECTURAL COMPONENT
DUCT AS CLIMATE CONTROLLER
DUCT AS LAMP
DUCT AS ELECTRICITY SOURCE
DUCT AS PART OF THE TABLE
DUCT AS ....

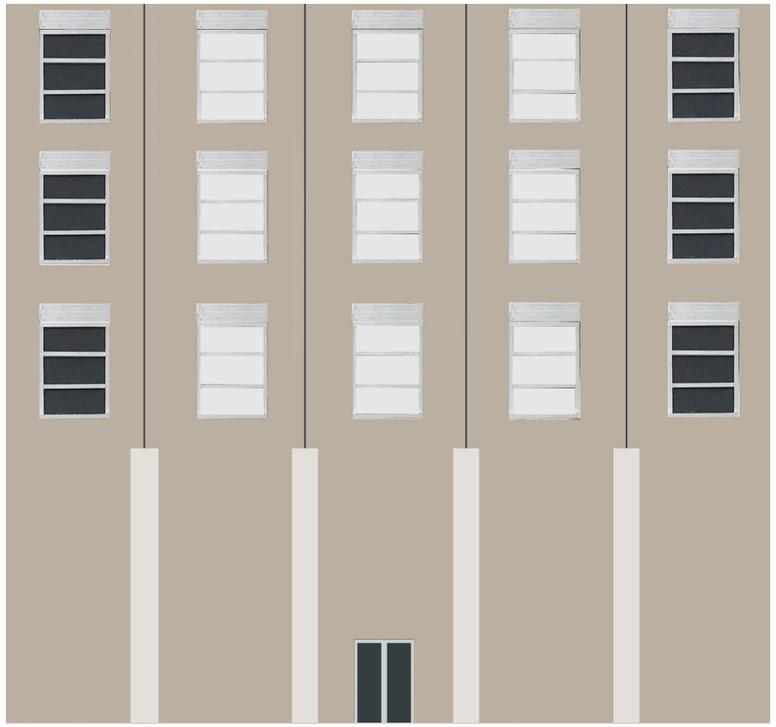








National Bank of Belgium, sketch and section office



National Bank of Belgium, column dissected and window frames without glass

National Bank of Belgium, triangular meeting and
break room with a different climate

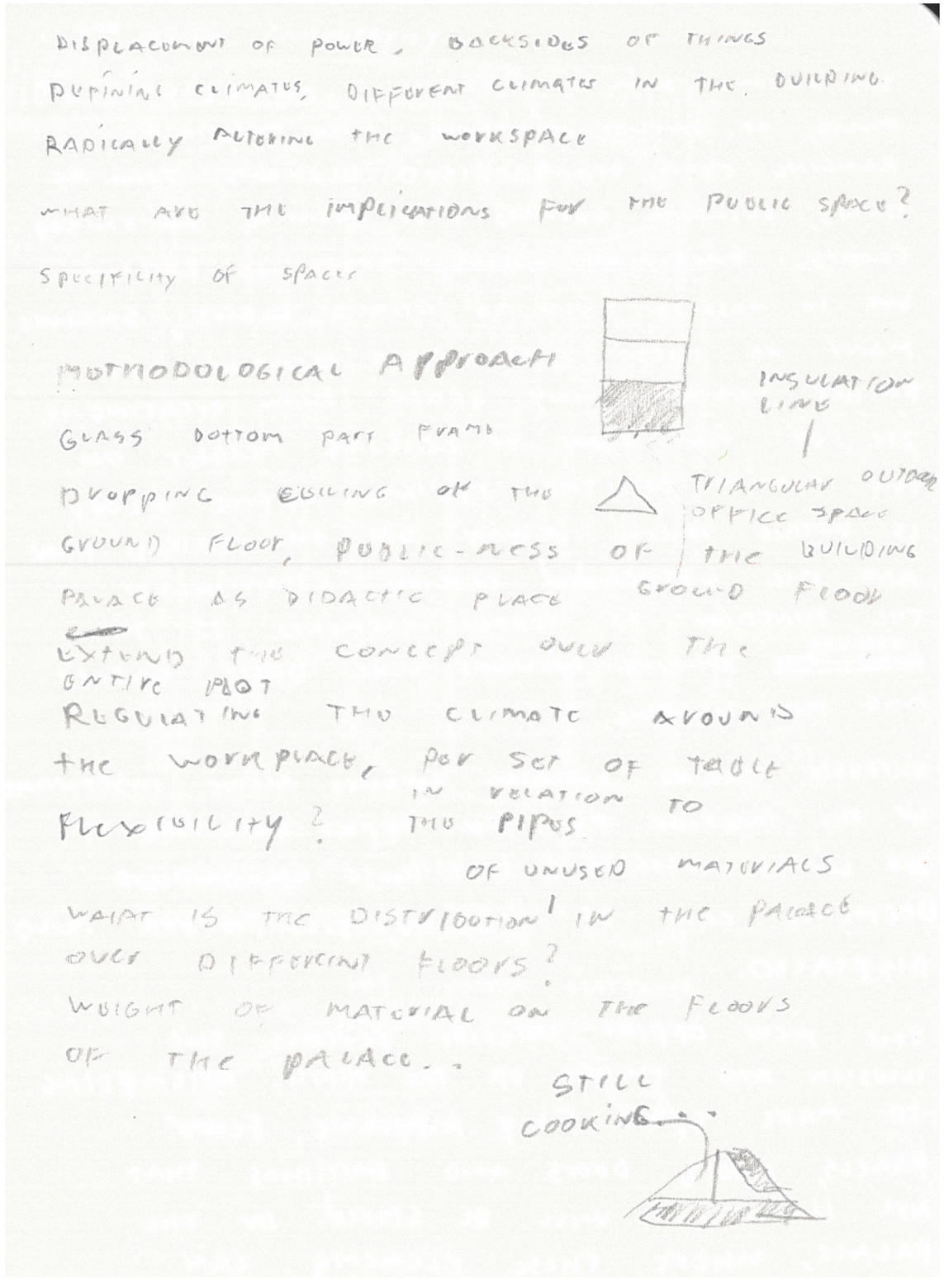


National Bank of Belgium, triangular meeting and break room with a different climate (bringing the exterior to the interior)



Dan Graham, exhibition view, Le Consortium, 1987

P3



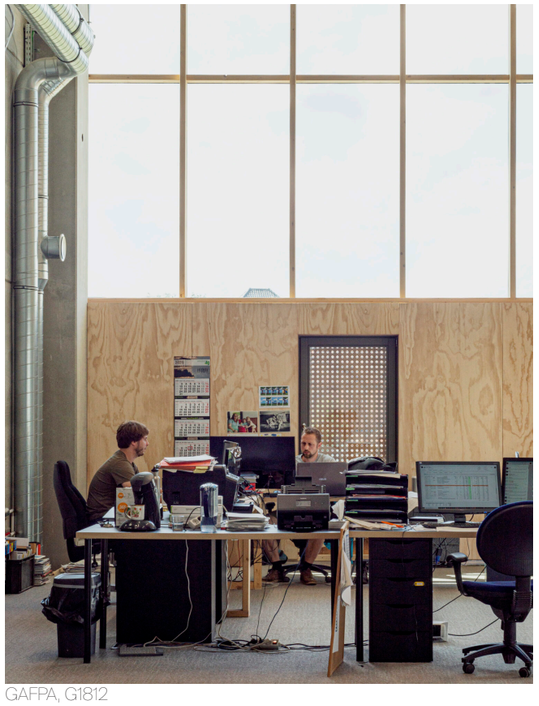
Mark Pimlott

NOTES:

Sometimes, there is too much effort put into things that may not really require it; something which seems conceptually necessary, but it not quite worth it. Much effort is put into the slight displacement of windows, for example, necessitating enormous physical work. You will find that your project benefits more from concentration on the inversions of meaning established by your 'inversion' of expectations on the normally secondary materials of building services, which you render visible and useful, replacing the material that is usually offered. Beyond the formal interest generated by this inversion, you probably need to become more explicit (and more complete) about the political-cultural idea of your acts in the place of work (so that it remains a place of work, but one whose 'values' are fundamentally changed by your interventions), and, of course, the large and possibly public spaces of the Bank and their relation to the spaces of the city. Your project is more than a conceptual game; it is, and I think you need to regard it or accept it as a complete architectural and cultural and political project.



GAFPA, reconversion warehouse - office



GAFPA, G1812

thinking heating insulating

The National Bank of Belgium is a building filled, or rather cluttered, with materials ranging from standardised elements such as heating, ducts, raised floors, partition walls, suspended ceilings to objects such as chairs, tables and shelves. Many of these standardised elements are rather taking away space than creating it. 31% of the floor to ceiling height on the typical office floor section is being taken away by the raised floor and the suspended ceiling. Essentially the function of these two elements is to obscure building services like ventilation ducts, electricity cables and central heating.

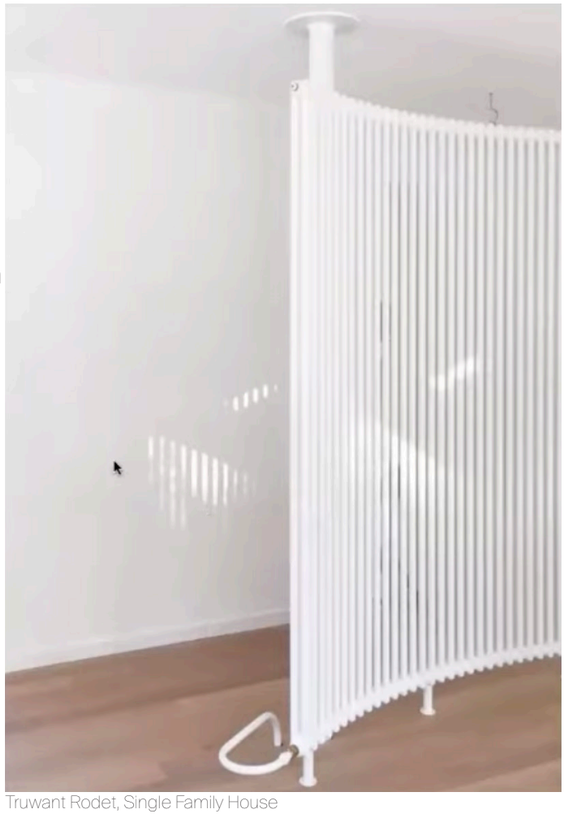
By making building services active instruments in the interior of the office, obscuring is no longer necessary. Consequently, these standardised elements can be undressed, reconfigured and displaced.

The new office interior reveals the illusion and theatre of the office. Attempting to make space completely available. Floor panels, ducts, doors and partitions that are undressed will be stored in the palace, where these building elements can be in dialogue with the city either as valuta or didactic elements.

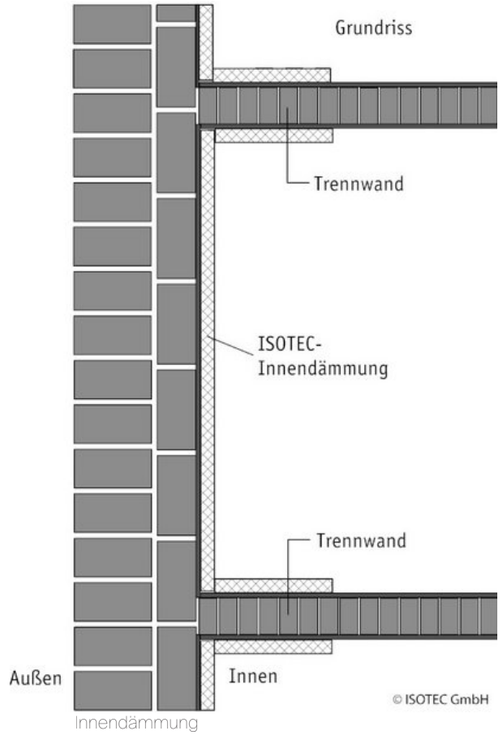
Through undressing the National Bank of Belgium the building becomes a more open and permeable environment. The National Bank of Belgium relates to the city on its ground level, where the palace is rendered accessible to the public as a public storeroom.



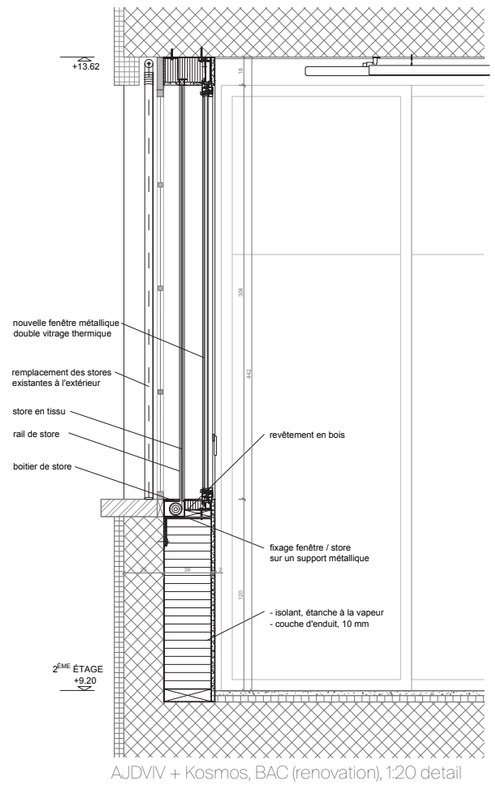
circular column mounted radiator



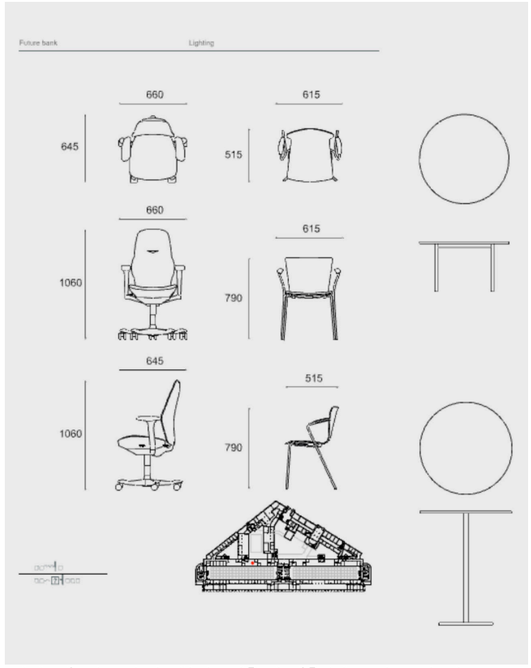
Truwant Rodet, Single Family House



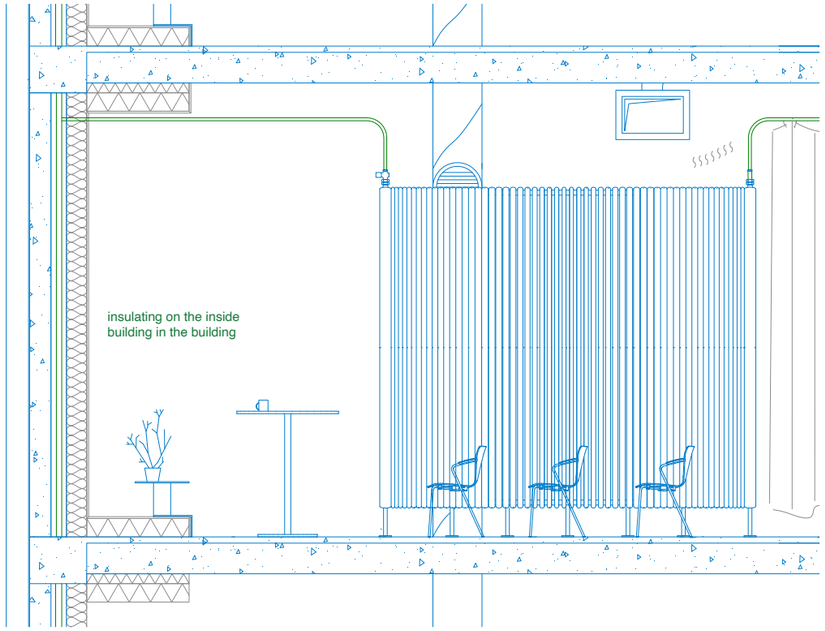
Innendämmung

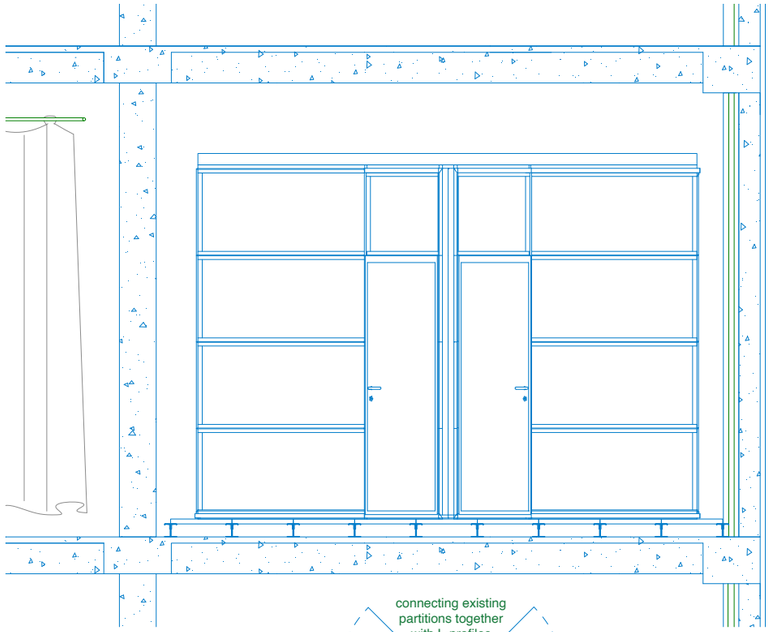


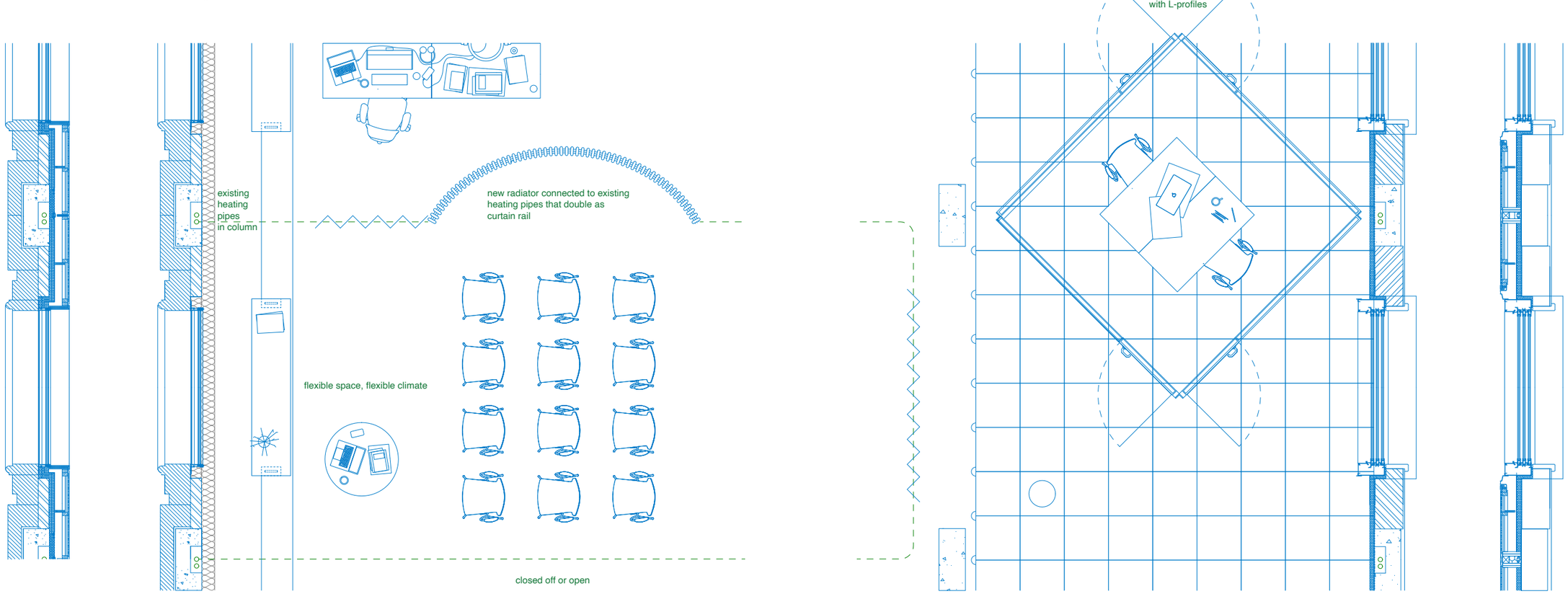
AJDVIV + Kosmos, BAC (renovation), 1:20 detail



existing furniture in the National Bank of Belgium, drawn by Jeremy + Pascal Henle


insulating on the inside
building in the building

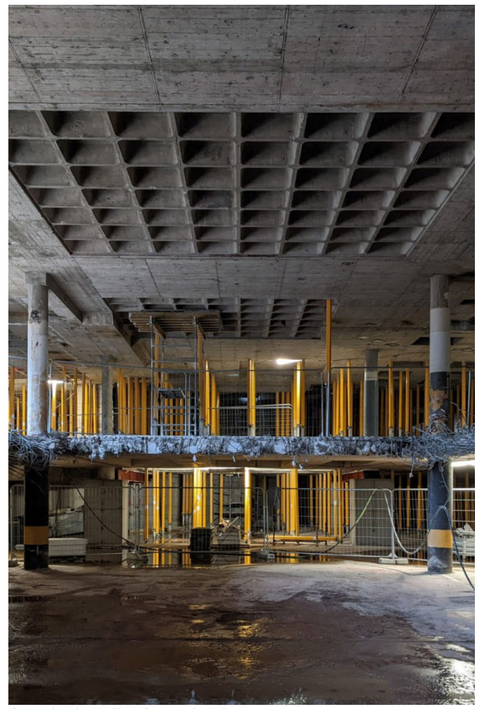

connecting existing
partitions together
with L-profiles


existing
heating
pipes
in column
new radiator connected to existing
heating pipes that double as
curtain rail
flexible space, flexible climate
closed off or open

+ Ron Barten

arranging a guest lecture from Bovenbouw
organised by students for students

about the Royale Belge, a 70s office building in
Brussels that Bovenbouw is renovating with
Caruso St. John



© Benjamin Wells / Caruso St John



In Progress, Reuse of the Royale Belge in Brussels

Wim Boesten (project architect)
Bovenbouw, Antwerpen

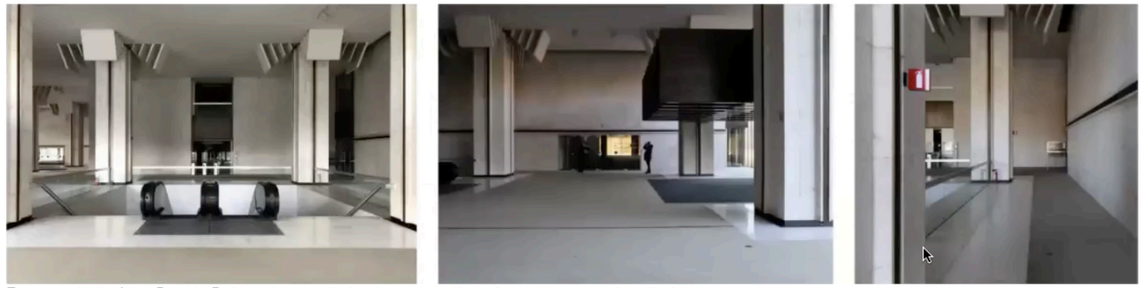
08 April 2022, 13.00
Zoom ID 927 0131 6415

+ Wim Boesten (project architect Royale Belge) **376 W3.9 220404 - 220408**

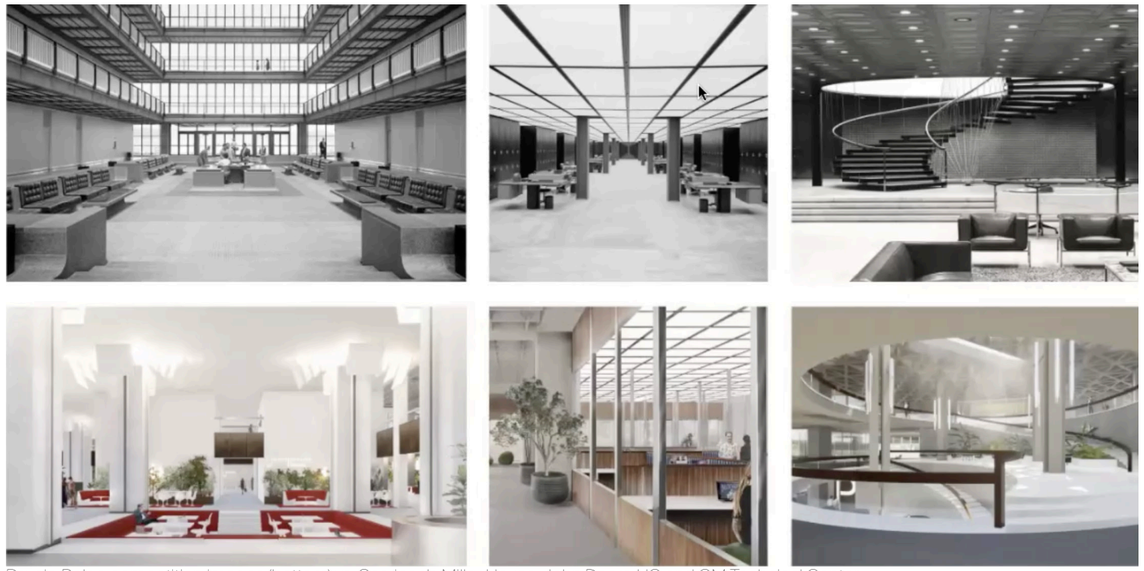
Zoom lecture for the studio (and others interested) organised by Ron Barten and myself.

60 participants in the Zoom!

Lecture Bovenbouw



Entrance hall of the Royale Belge with ventilation integrated in columns (current situation)



Royale Belge competition images (bottom) vs. Saarinen's Miller House, John Deere HQ and GM Technical Center



Royale Belge, typical office floor (archive photograph)



Royale Belge, typical office floor (current situation, insulating)

PODIUM, TOWER

VENTILATION INTEGRATED IN COLUMNS

MOVING ELEMENTS IN THE BUILDING LIKE THE STAIRCASE

SAARINEN, JOHN DEERE HQ

DARK AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE PARTS OF THE BUILDING NEEDS BOLD MOVES

BIG CUT IN THE DARKEST PART OF THE BUILDING

INTERACTION BETWEEN OFFICE, RESTAURANT, GROUND FLOOR AND PEOPLE ENTERING THE BUILDING

FELT WALLS, CURVED

AXA RUBID INTERIOR IN

JULES WABBES

ACOUSTIC SPRAY COVERING WAFFLE CEILINGS

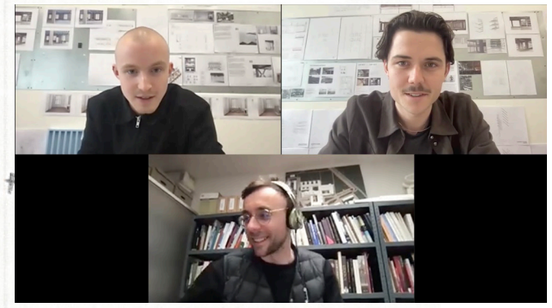
AT 292, OVERSIZED ADAPTIVE RE-USE

LEARNING FROM 90s MISTAKES

"LOOKING LIKE IT SHOULD BE THERE"

IS IT OBVIOUS THAT IT IS A NEW INTERVENTION?

NEW INTERVENTIONS IN STAINLESS STEEL



+ Ron Barten

roof

how to deal with the 2018 renovation of the roof?

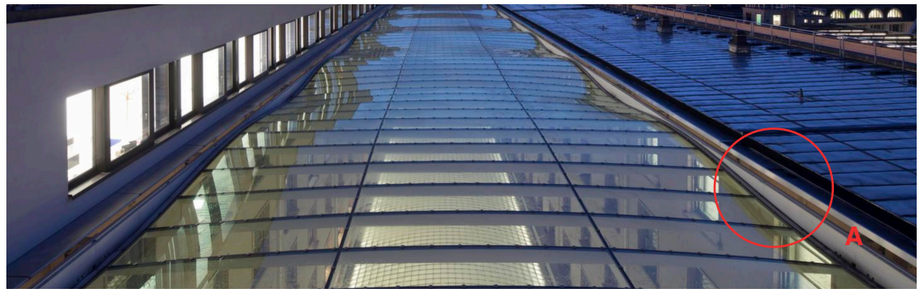
a curved glass and steel construction, visually imposing

studying details of the 2018 glass roof construction:

- the glass roof lets air in through through a cavity (circle, a), meaning that it is possible to ventilate through the atrium without demolishing the roof renovation
- the glass roof is cleaned in the atrium itself by a substructure hanging from the roof (circle, b)

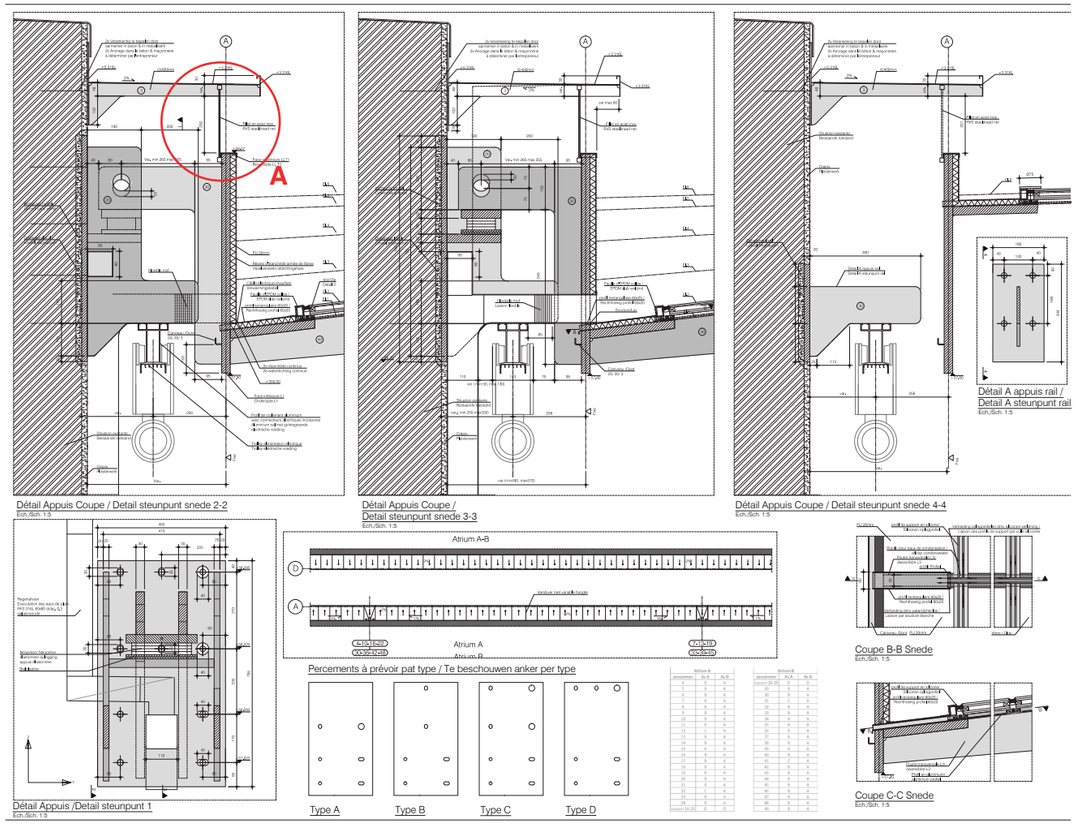
is there a possibility to make an intervention that is minimally invasive to the glass roof steel construction and allows some type of control regarding sunshading and visually making the roof look better, calmer?

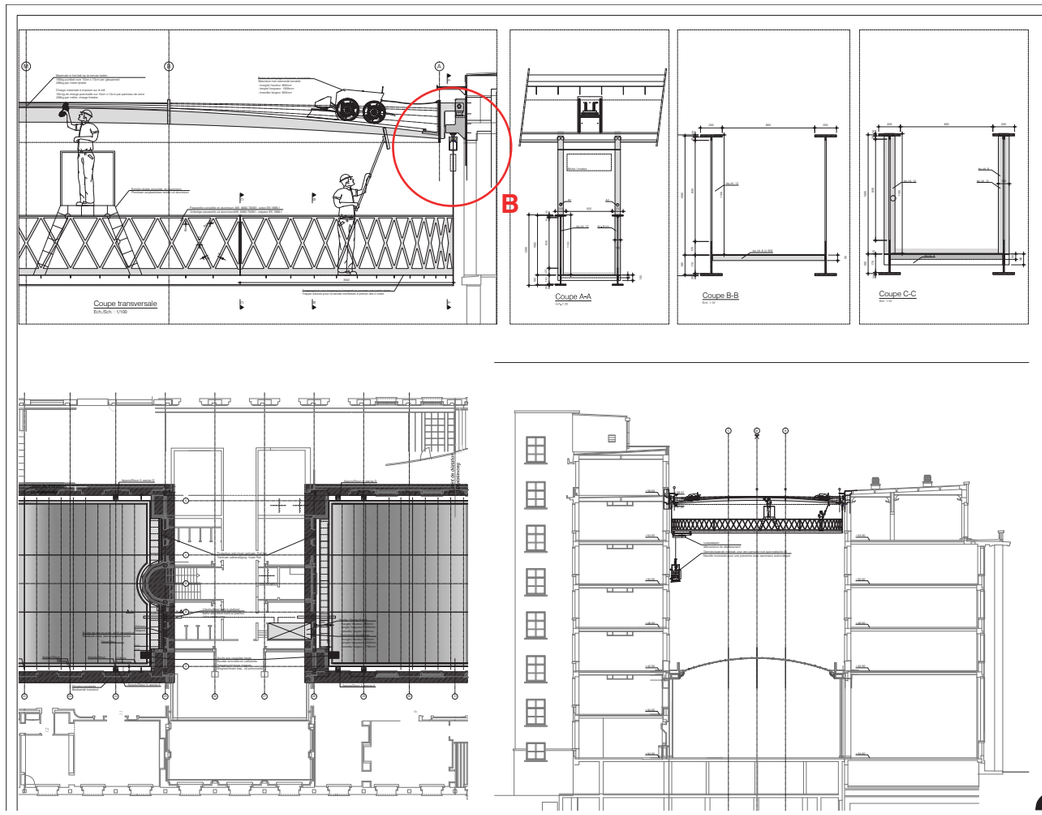
the shifted down windows on the main facade can now cross ventilate with the open roof in the atrium





National Bank of Belgium, steel and glass roof structure by Dok Architecten





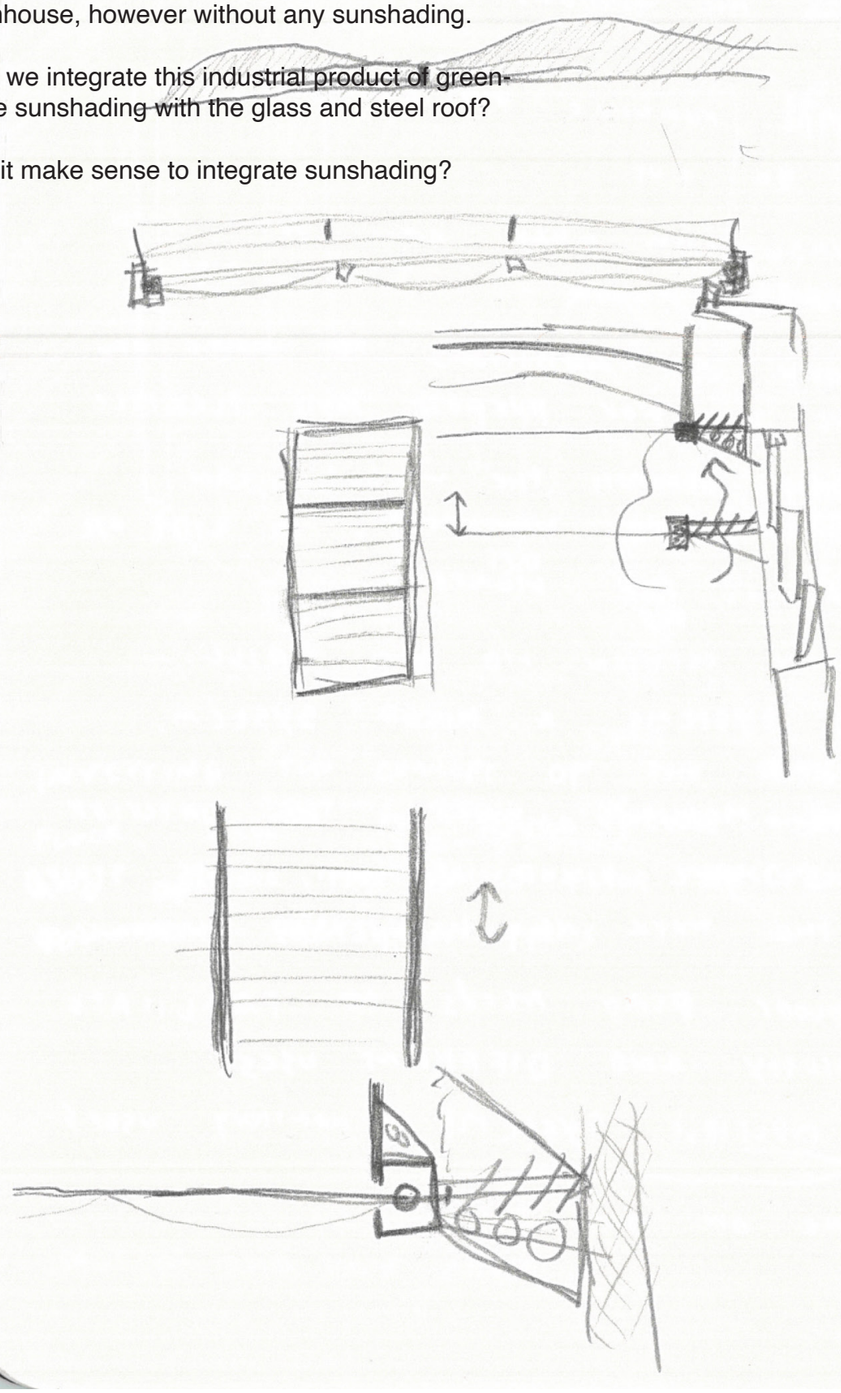
+ Ron Barten

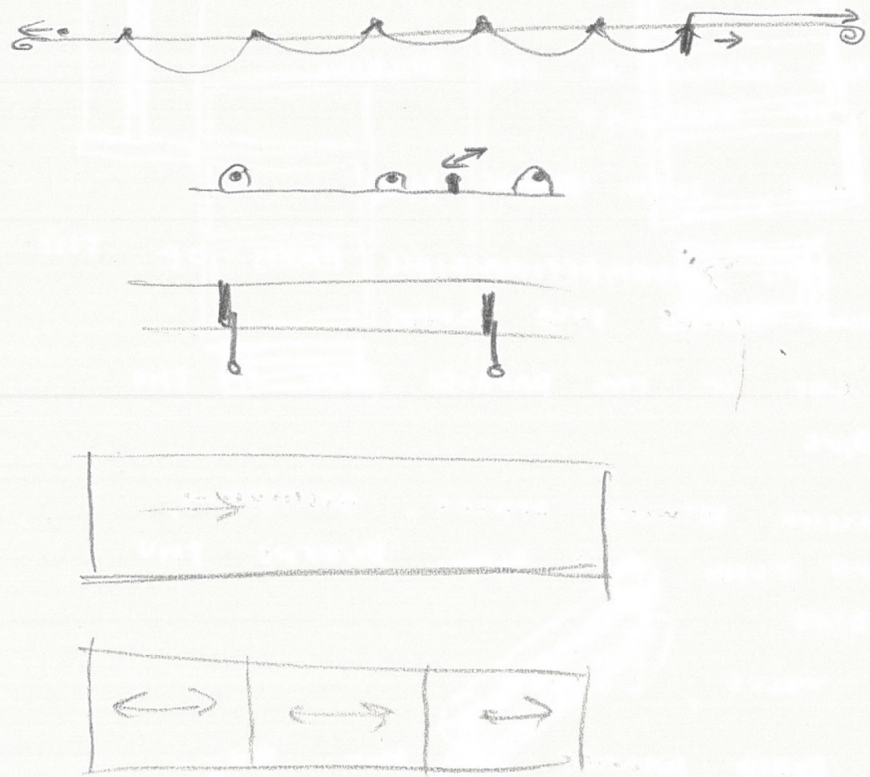
looking at photographs I took at the Baukunst exhibition in Bozar, where a system from Schermned (dutch manufacturer for greenhouse sunshading) is hung on the ceiling.

essentially, on a hot summer day, the atrium of the National Bank of Belgium is exactly like a greenhouse, however without any sunshading.

could we integrate this industrial product of green-house sunshading with the glass and steel roof?

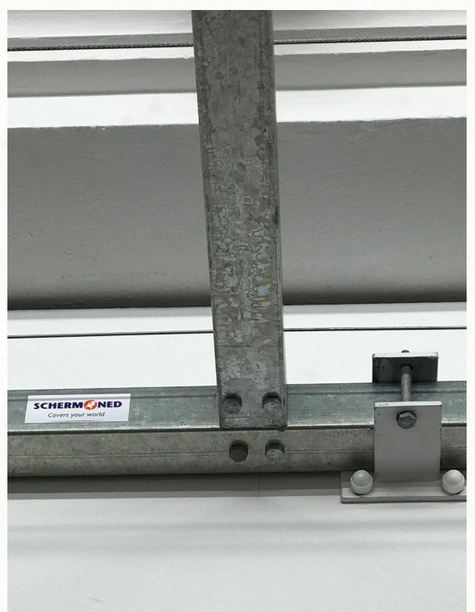
does it make sense to integrate sunshading?







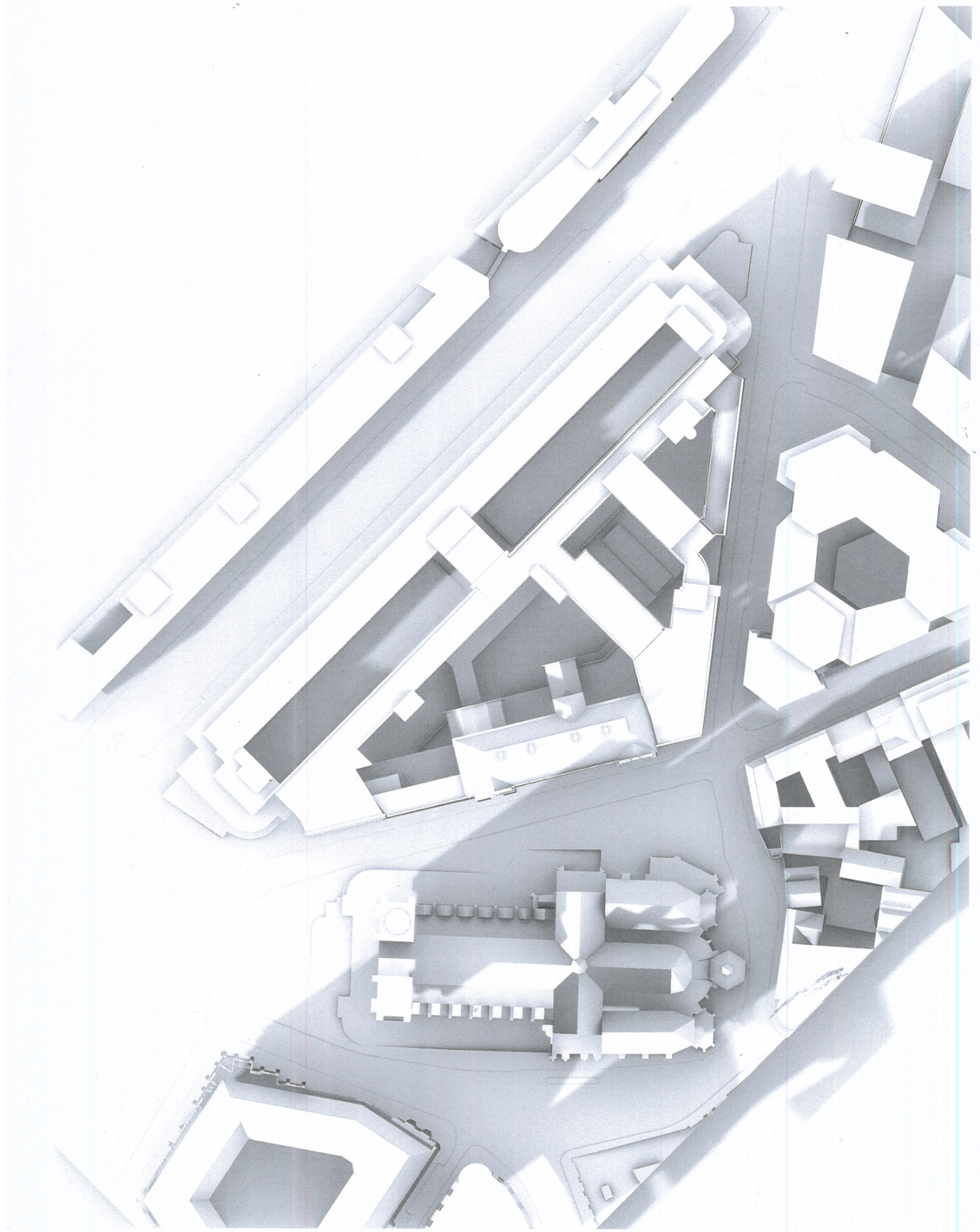
Baukunst, Performance & Performativity, Bozar



Baukunst, Performance & Performativity, Schermned

NBB SUN
1:1000

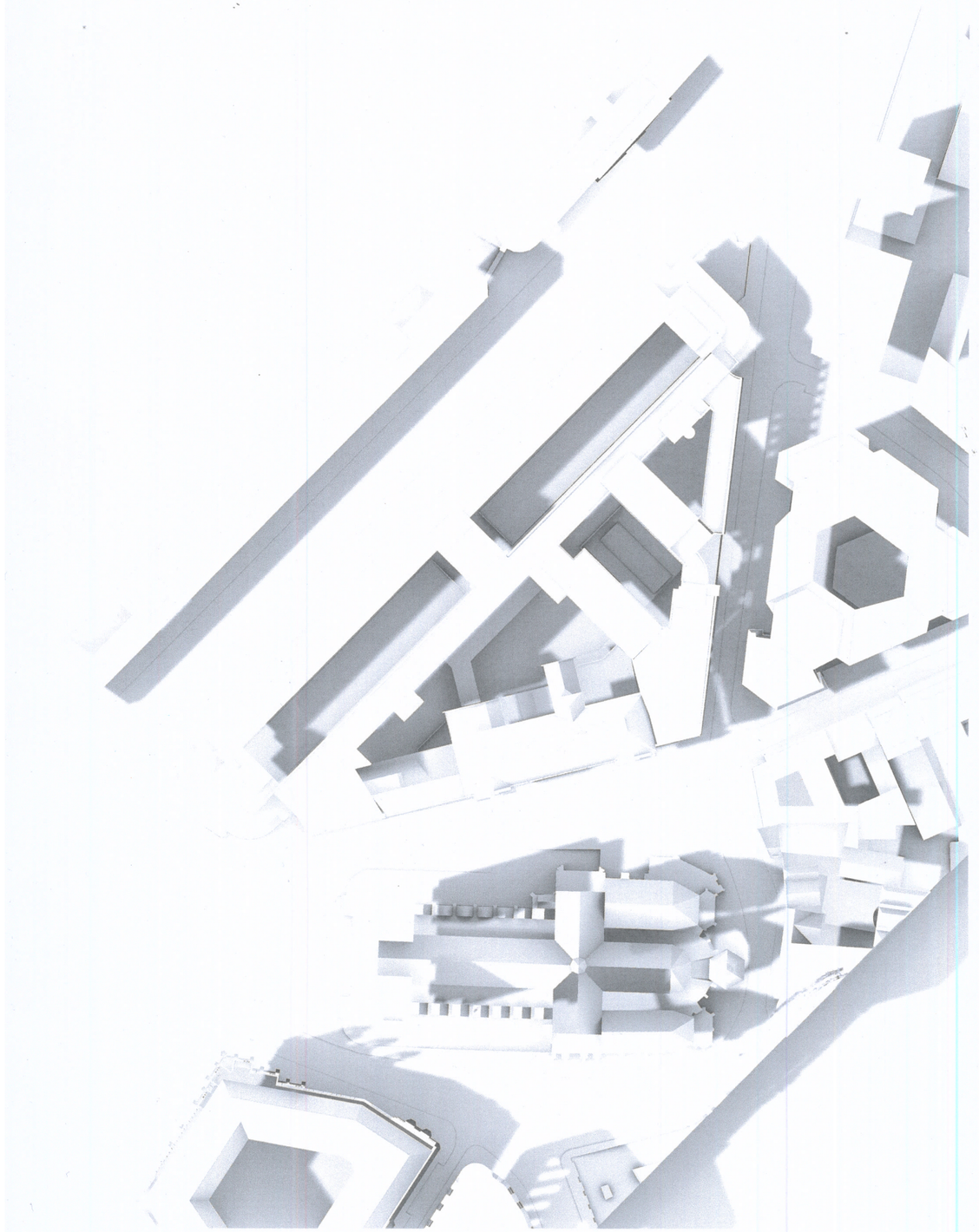
12.03.2022
16:00



study by Bas Leemans

NBB SUN
1:1000

12.07.2022
16:00



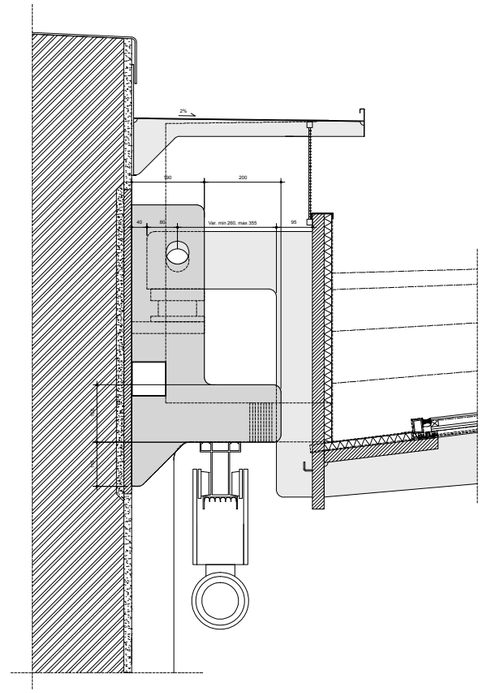
study by Bas Leemans



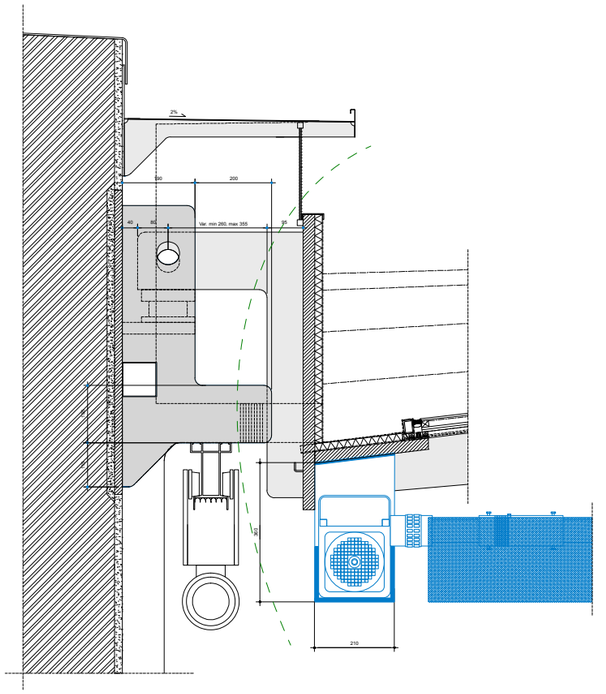
motor that rides the screen along a wire



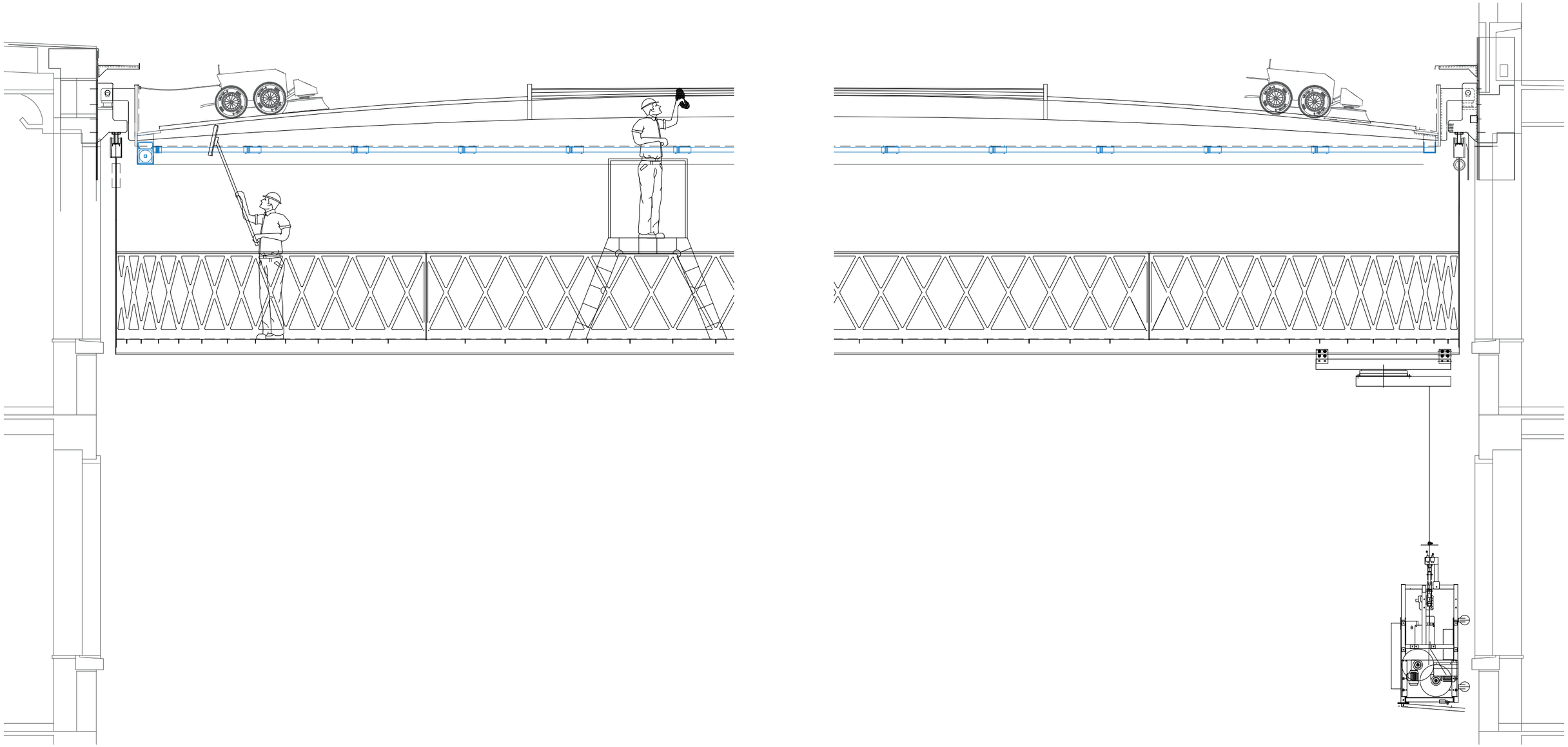
motor that rides the screen along a wire, close up with detail of how the motor is connected to a structure



1:10 (scaled) detail roof, current situation



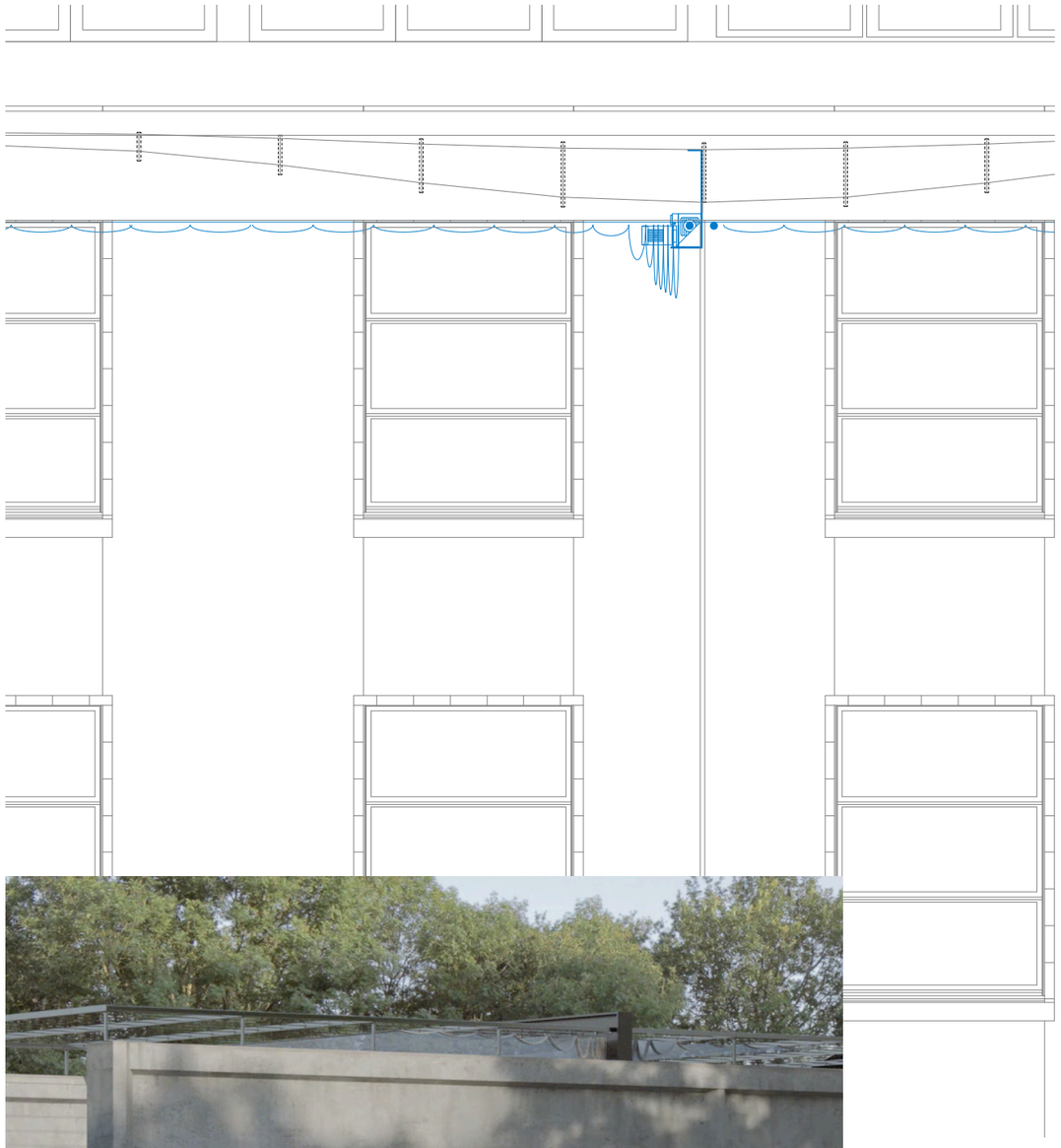
1:10 (scaled) detail roof, new situation with steel substructure welded to the roof to hold the motor(s)



1:50
cross section showing motor mounted below structure on the left and 10 wires inbetween

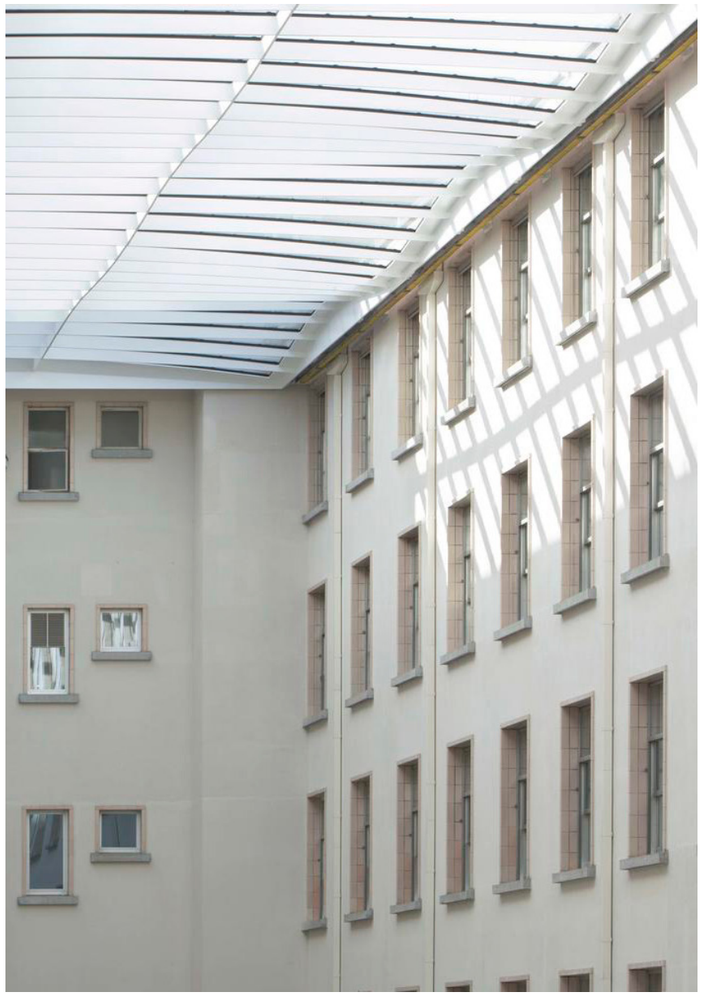


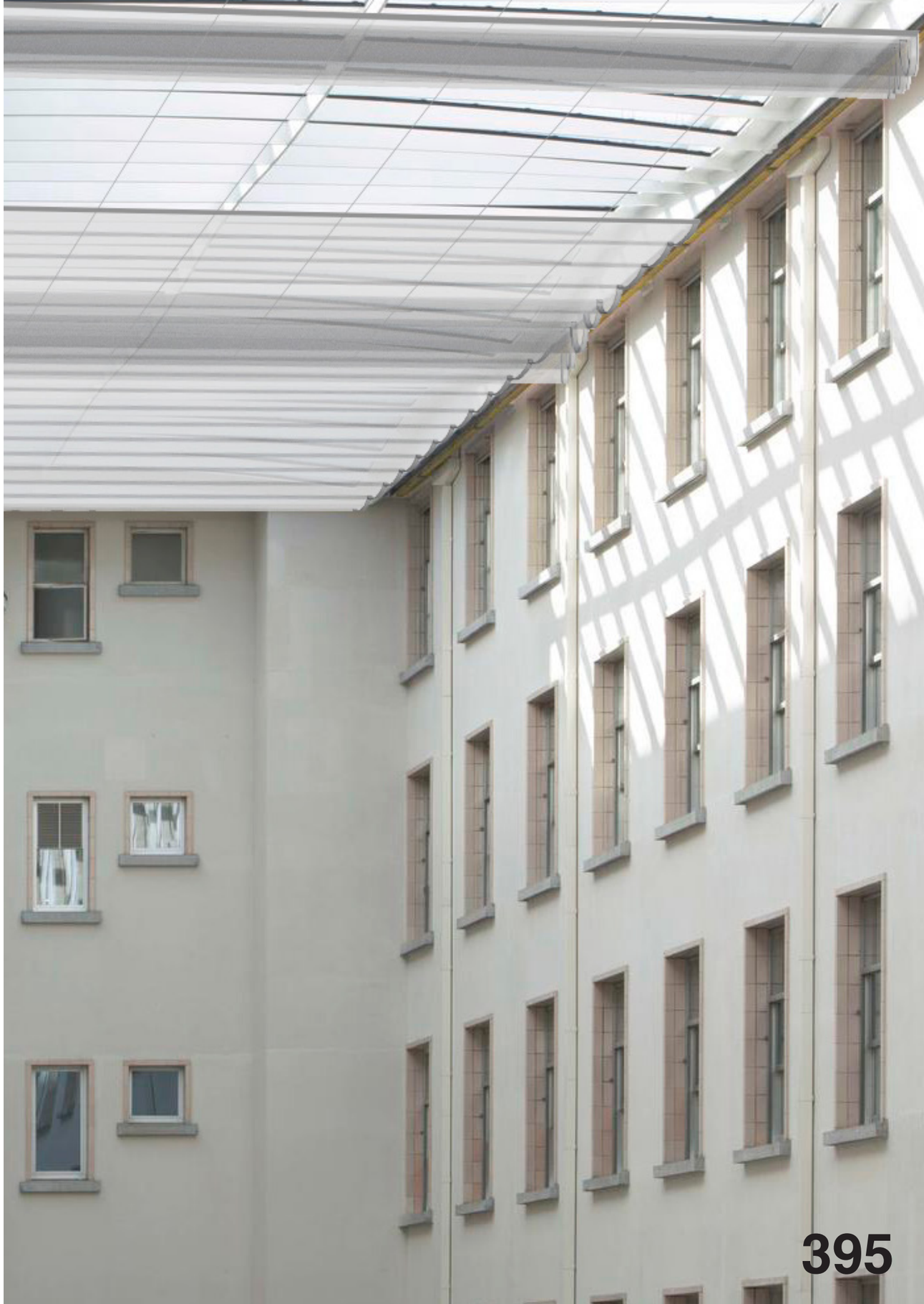
1:50
sunshading and motors in cross section, following the rhythm of the rainpipes



Baukunst, La Hunelle with Schermned system mounted on structure

+ Ron Barten





left: current situation of roof with no sunshading
right: new situation of roof kept as is with sunshading structure hung beneath

window(s)

what is the actual effort of shifting the windows down?

what elements around the window frame can be kept when shifting the windows down?

how many new elements are needed to shift one window down?

how can shifting the window down inform a different facade of the National Bank of Belgium?

how to design the undressing?

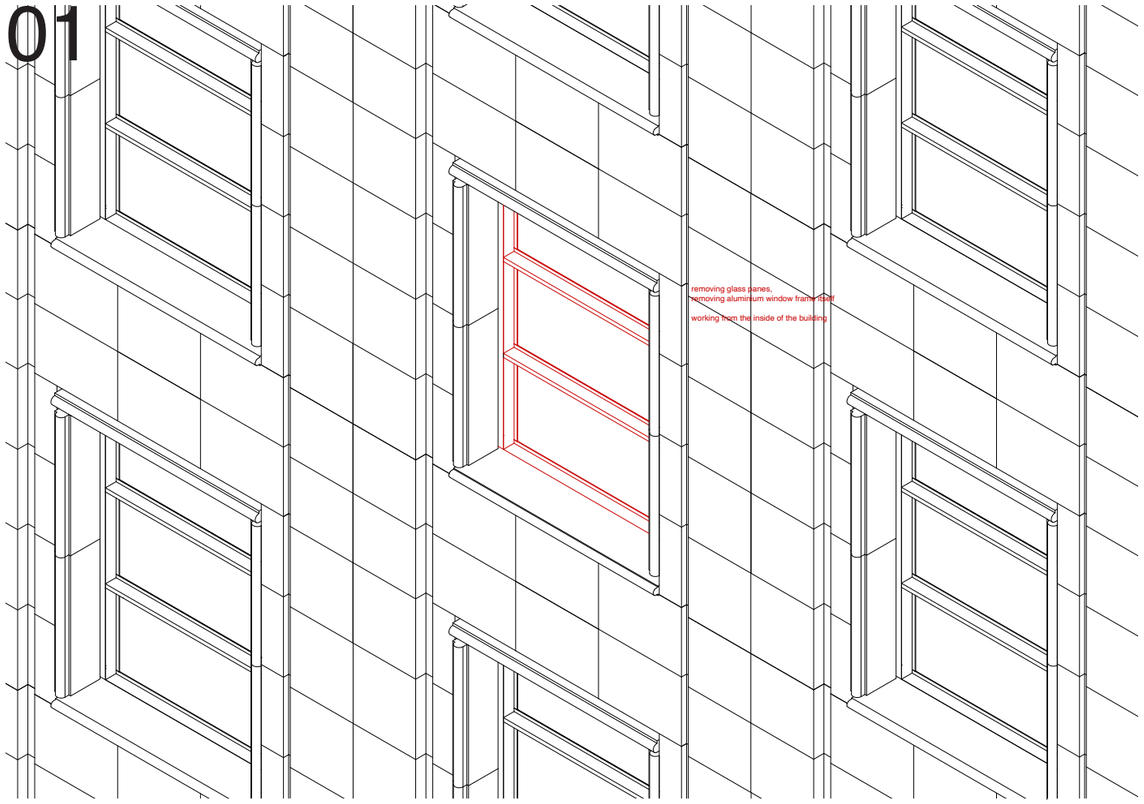
what does the meeting between old and new elements around the window look like?

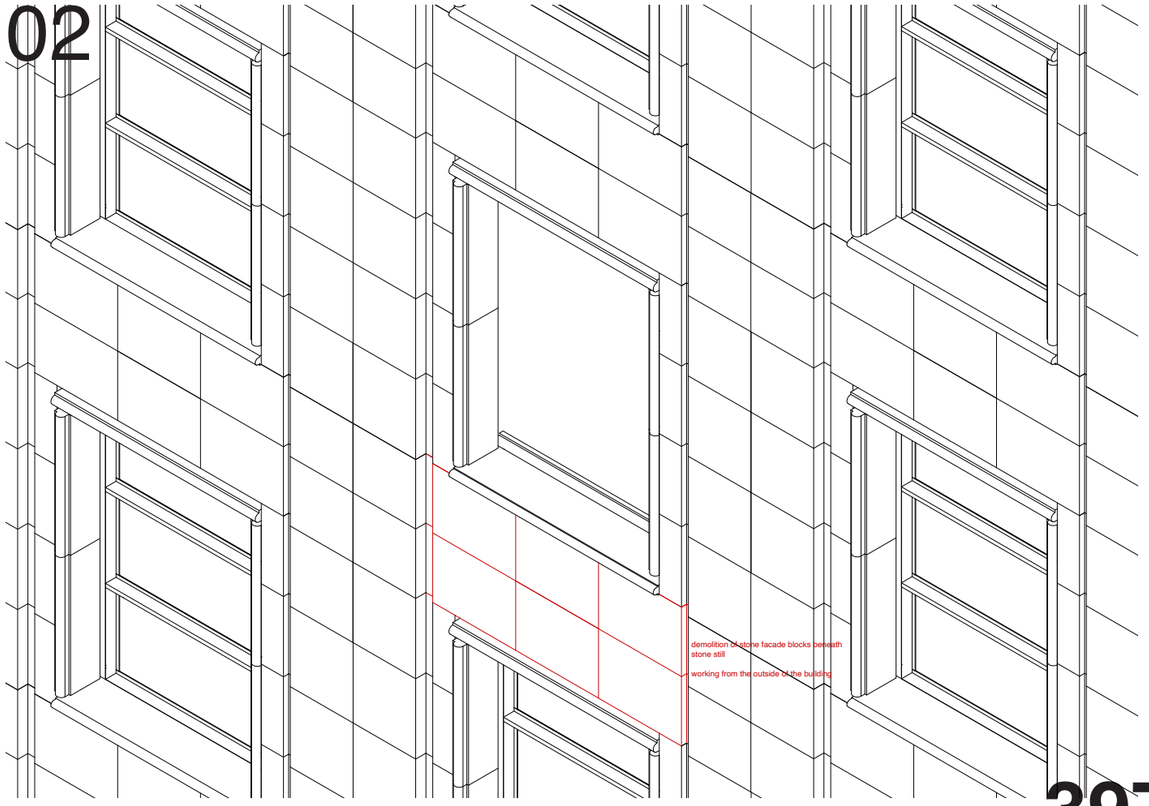
series of axonometries + video showing the effects of interior considerations on the main facade of the National Bank of Belgium

undressing and shifting as liberating act

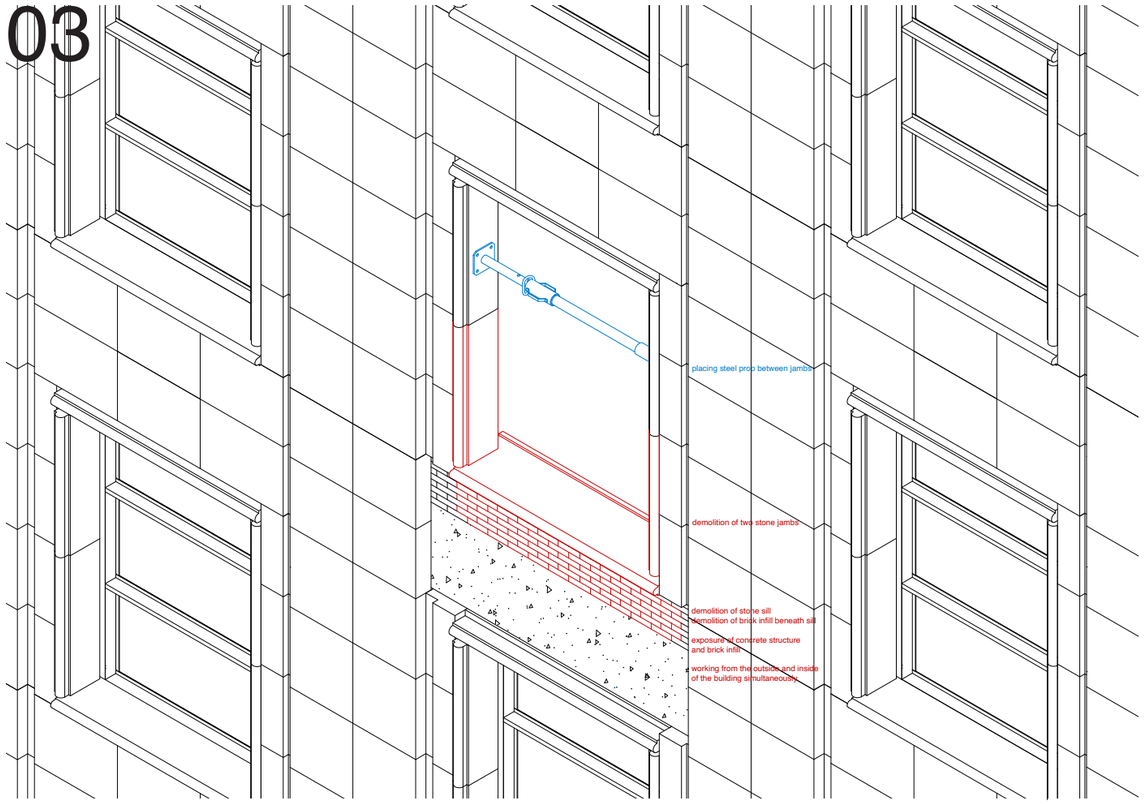


Jo Taillieu Architecten, Pachtwoning, meeting of existing brick wall with new prefabricated concrete sill, jambs and lintels

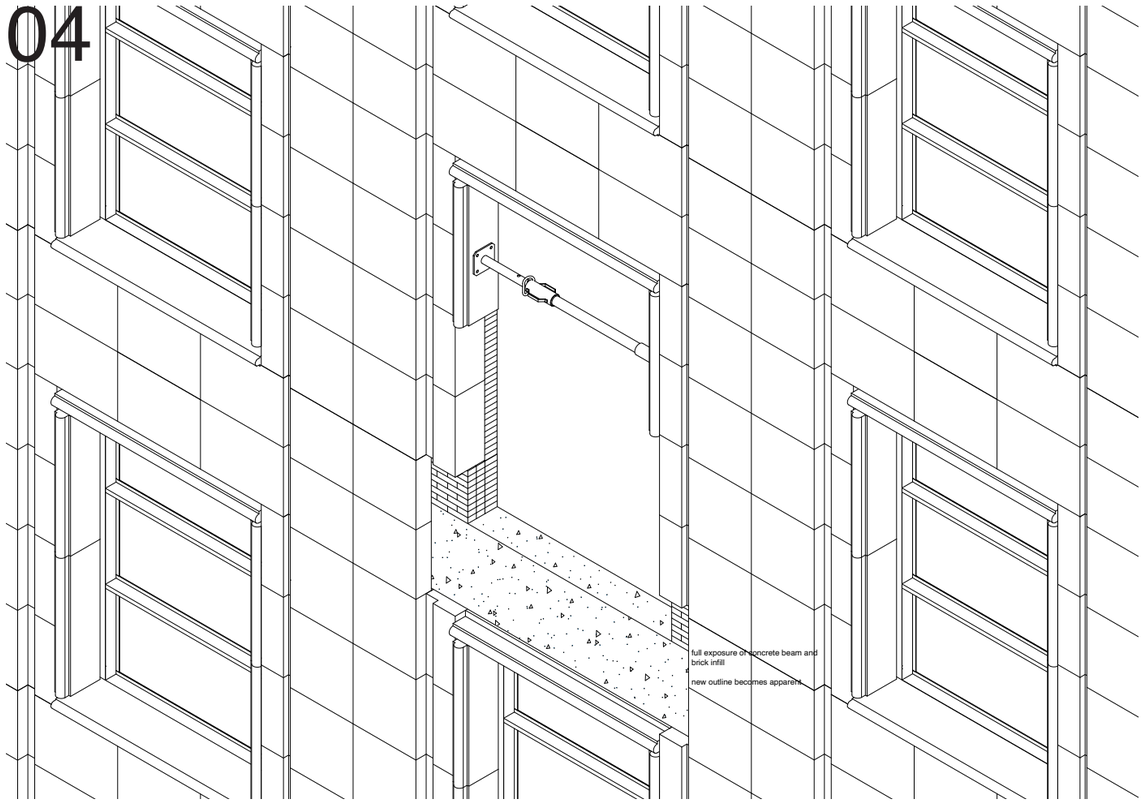




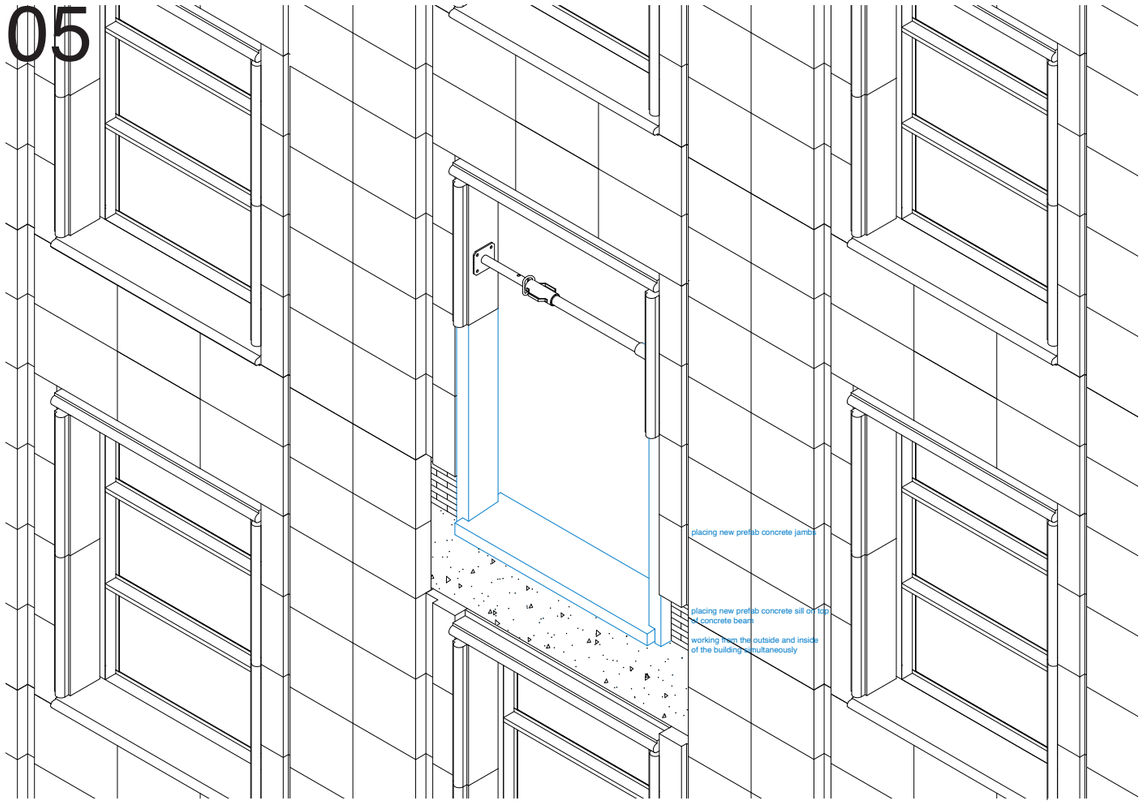
03


placing steel prop between jambs
demolition of two stone jambs
demolition of stone sill
demolition of brick infill beneath sill
exposure of concrete structure
and brick infill
working from the outside and inside
of the building simultaneously

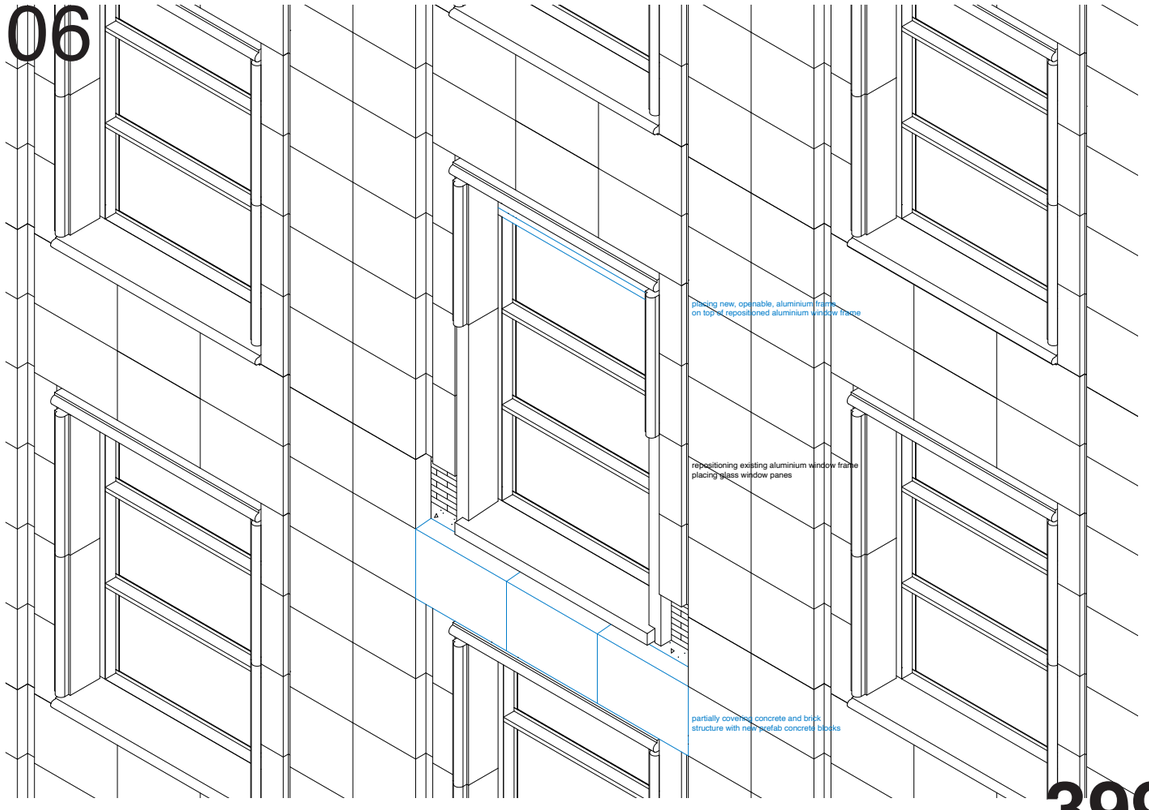
04


full exposure of concrete beam and
brick infill
new outline becomes apparent

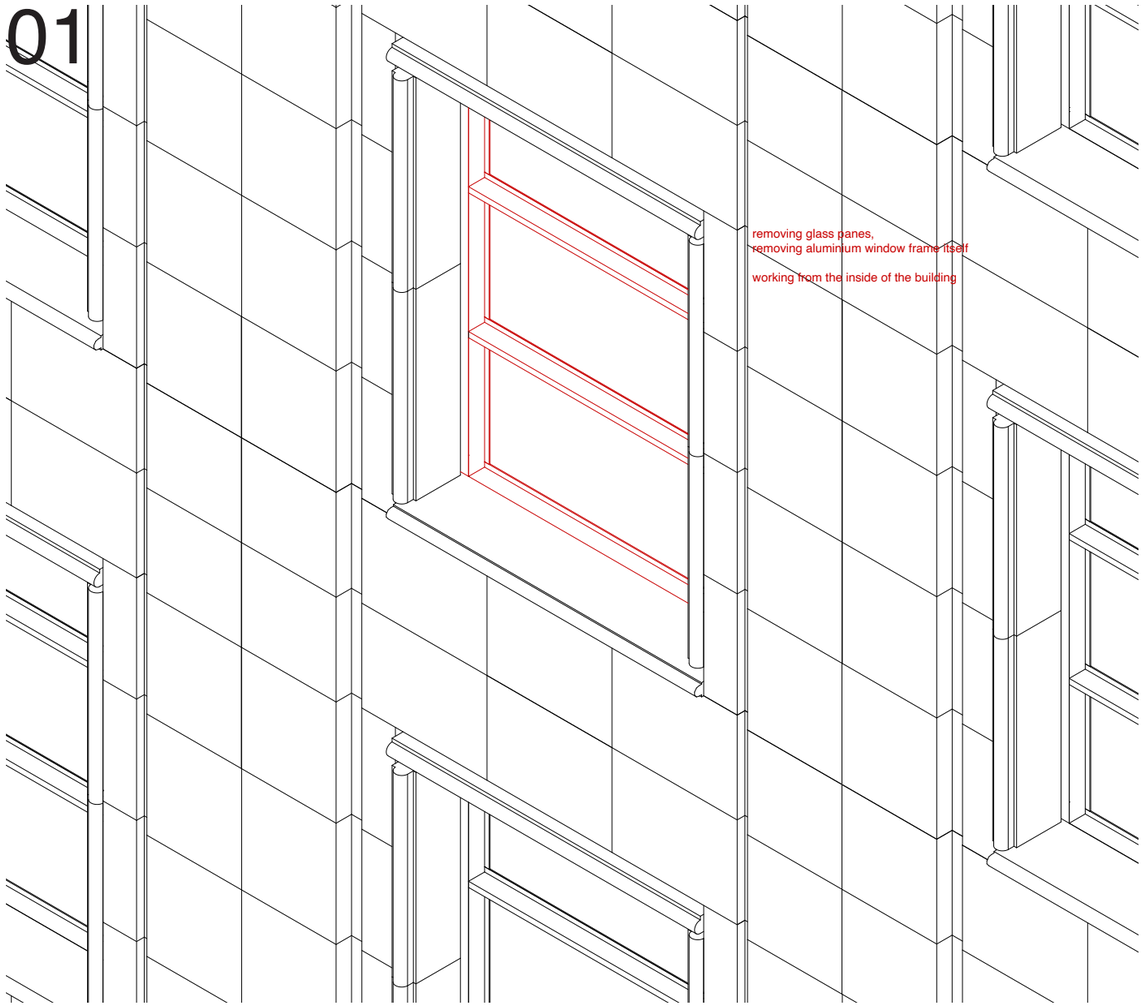
05


placing new prefab concrete jambs
placing new prefab concrete sill on top
of concrete beam
working from the outside and inside
of the building simultaneously

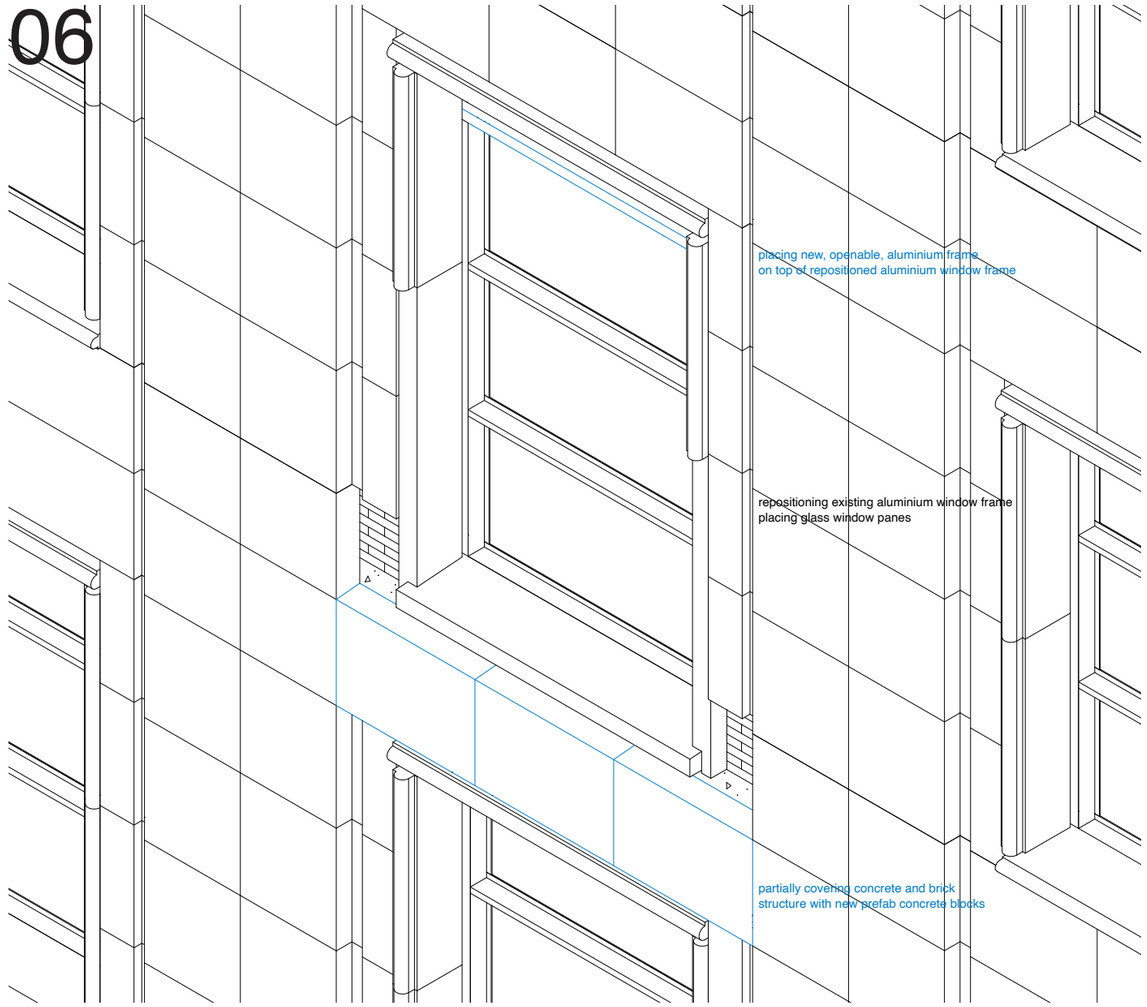
06


placing new, openable, aluminium frame
on top of repositioned aluminium window frame
repositioning existing aluminium window frame
placing glass window panes
partially covering concrete and brick
structure with new prefab concrete blocks

01



06



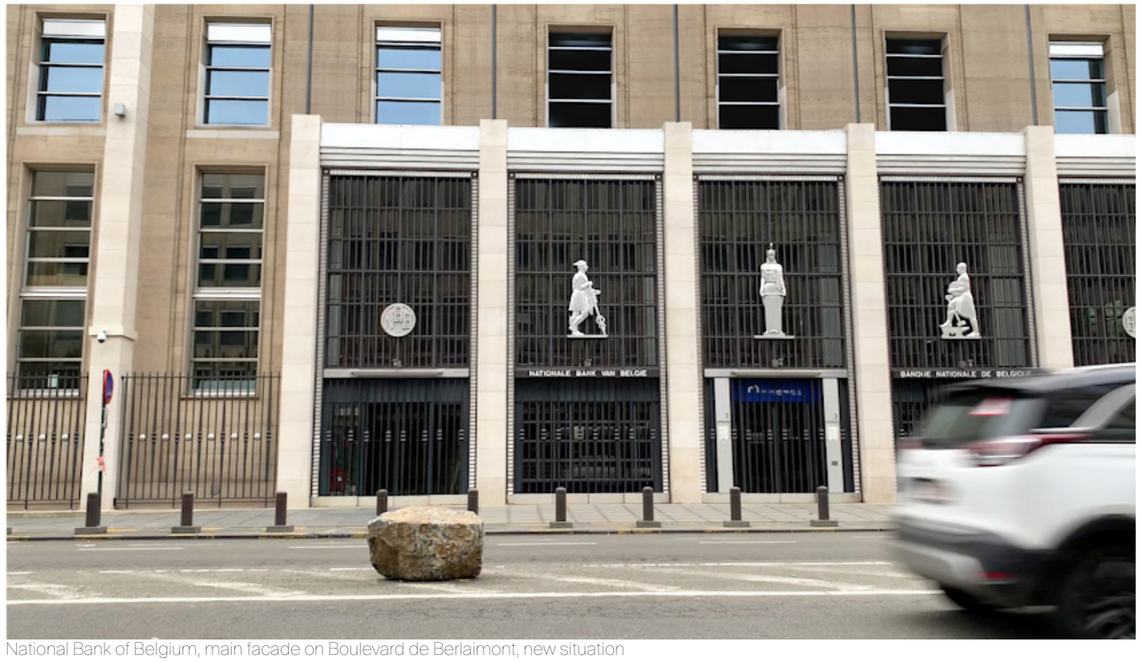
perhaps using this newly opened facade to drill
holes for facade ventilation grills?

current situation

new situation



National Bank of Belgium, main facade on Boulevard de Berlaimont, current situation



National Bank of Belgium, main facade on Boulevard de Berlaimont, new situation


Souto de Moura, Carandà Market

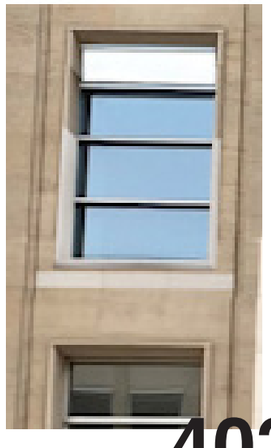

Souto de Moura, designed demolition of Carandà Market

undressing

columns on the main entrance of the building mark the entrance as a seperate volume again through undressing

shifting

windows from the interior. new jambs and sills are showing the meeting between old and new



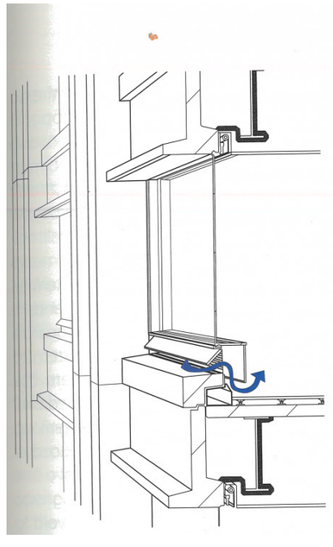
climate section

is a climate diagram sufficient?
is a 1:50 section perhaps better to understand the climate “diagramatically” ?

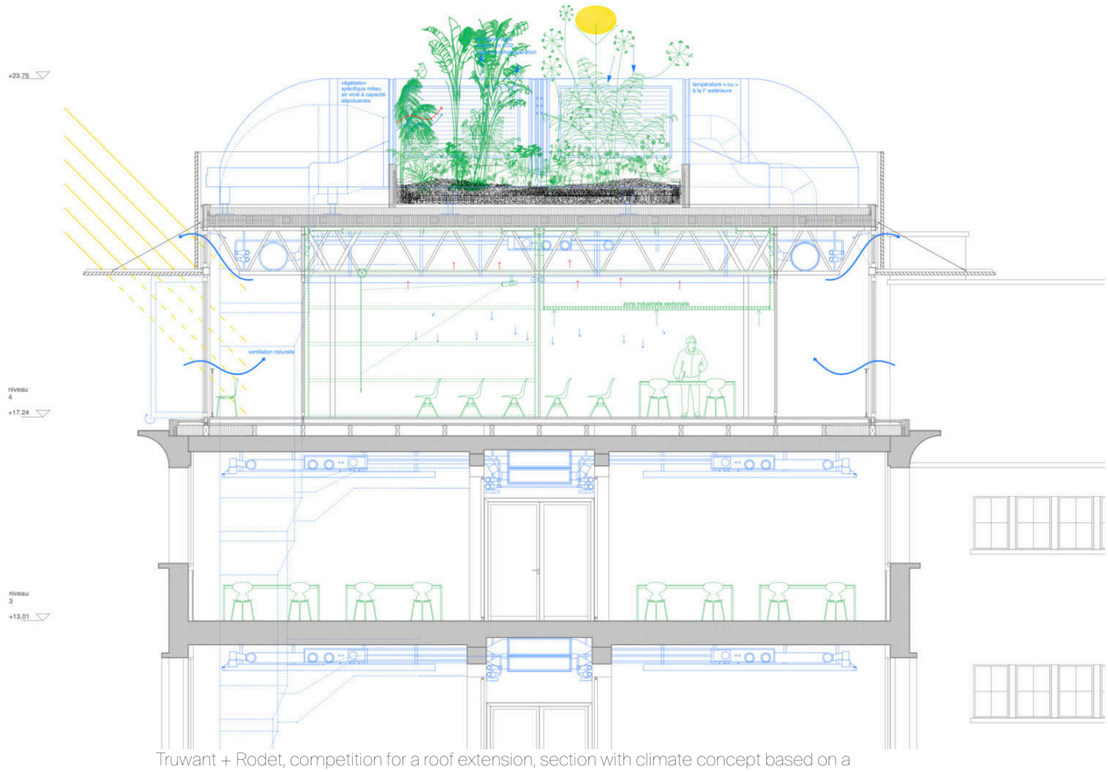
combining the interventions regarding the office interior(s), insulation, heating and climate in a single section with (climate) annotations

one section 1:50 to be divided in three distinct sections

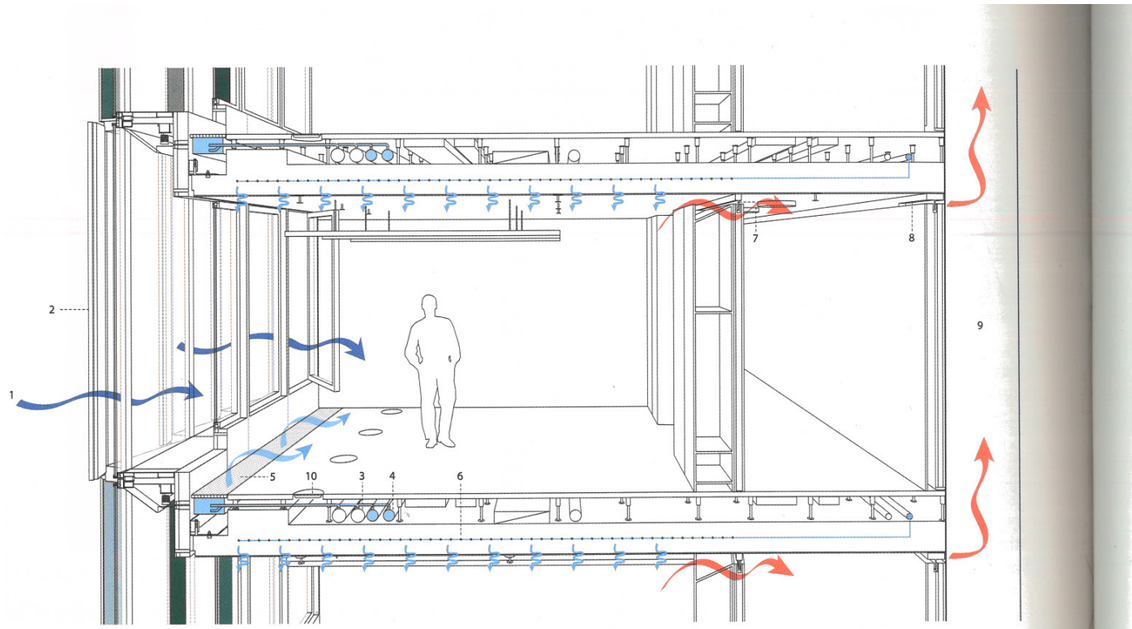
01. office 1 (office floor facing boulevard de Berlaimont)
02. atrium
03. office 2 (office floor facing courtyard + atrium)



Ventilation opening beneath window

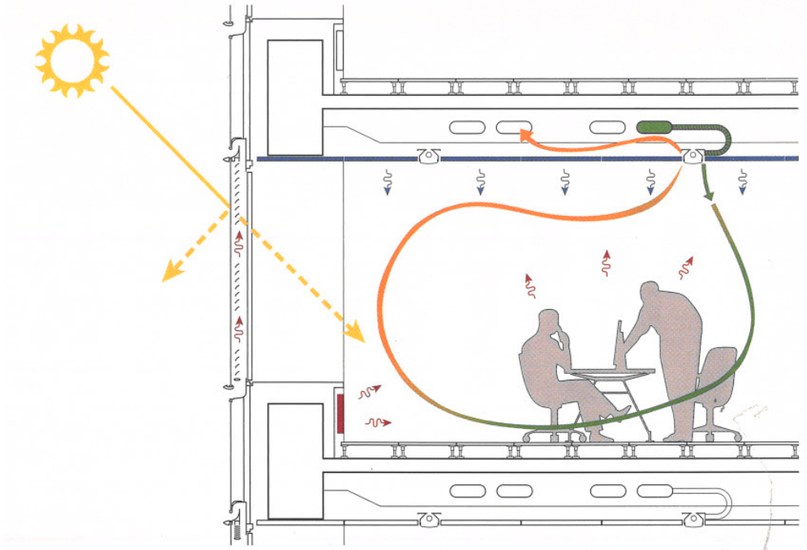


Truwant + Rodet, competition for a roof extension, section with climate concept based on a combination of natural cross ventilation with additional mechanical ventilation



1 – Fresh air supply
2 – Air vent
3 – Central heating lines
4 – Central cooling lines
5 – Air vents or under-floor convectors in every second axis
6 – Thermo-active building components
7 – Sound-attenuating air overflow
8 – Central exhaust
9 – Vertical exhaust shaft using natural stratification
10 – Under-floor electrical outlet

Sauerbruch Hutton, KfW Westarkade, section with climate concept based on natural cross ventilation with active ceiling



▲ Figure 2.2.12: Diagram showing a typical office during either hot or cold weather extremes that prohibit natural ventilation. Mechanical ventilation introduces air which on hot summer days is chilled by a water-filled cooling system integrated in the ceiling panels. In winter, supplemental heating is provided via panel radiators located beneath perimeter windows. © Foster + Partners

A2 1:50 section (scaled)
blue color code for new interventions
green color code for symbol annotation
black color code for existing material

combining the interventions regarding the office interior(s), insulation, heating and climate in a single section

01. office 1 (office floor facing boulevard de Berlaimont)

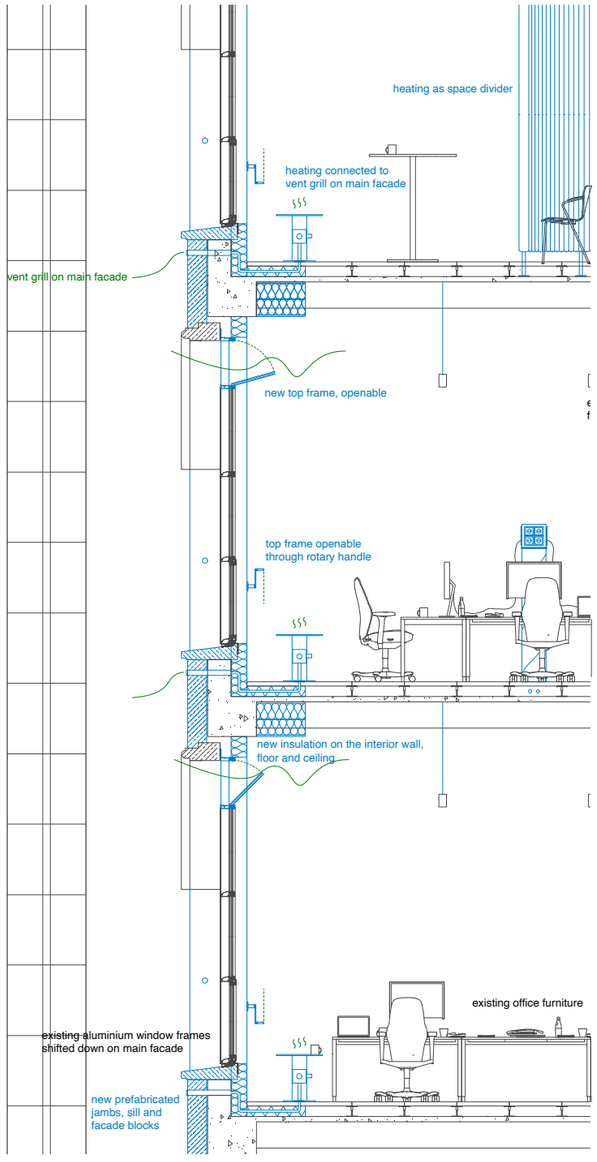
02. atrium

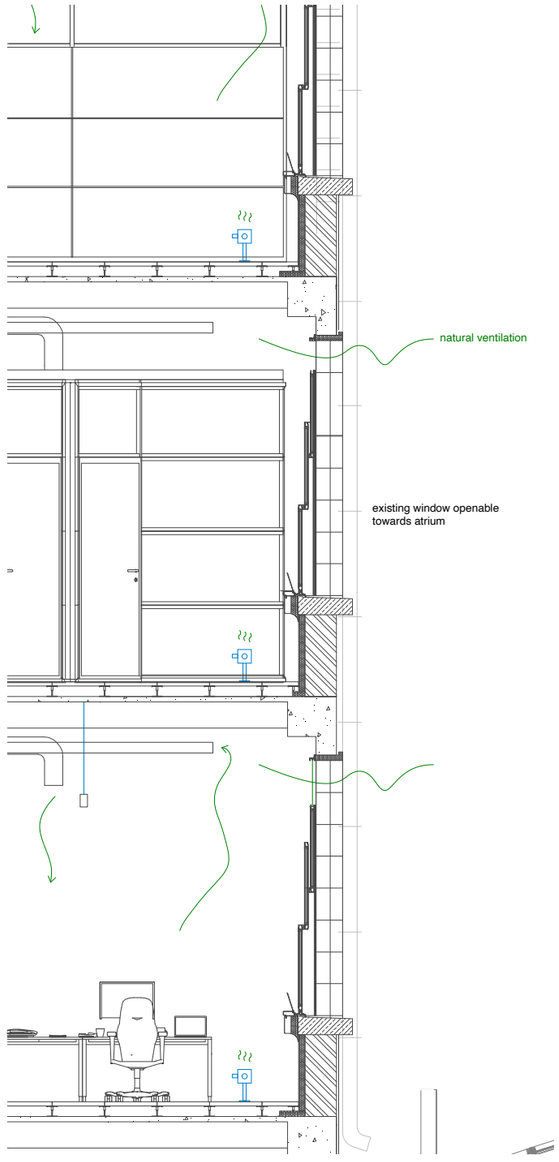


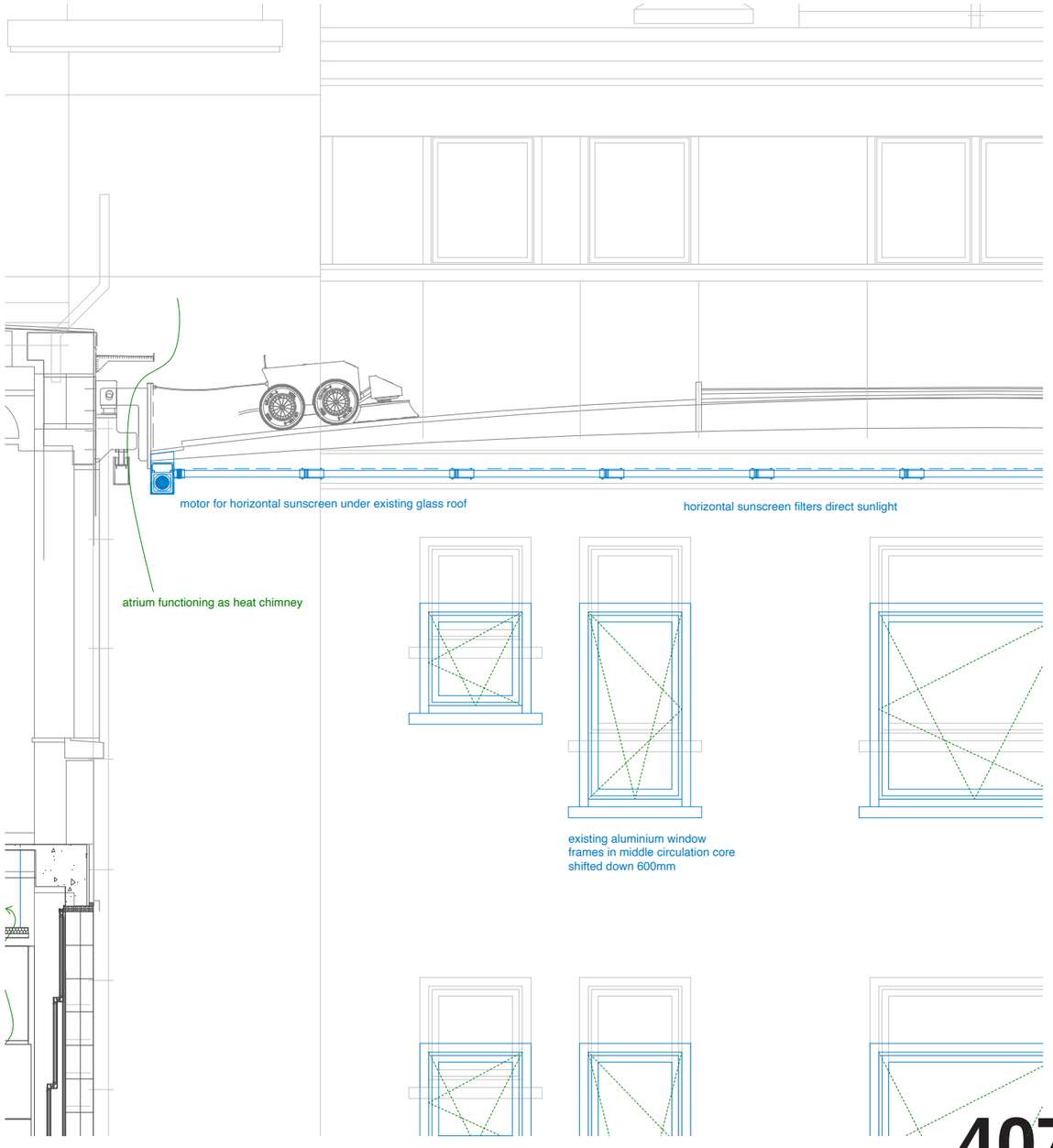
existing aluminium window frames on main facade shifted down with new technical radiators connected to main facade



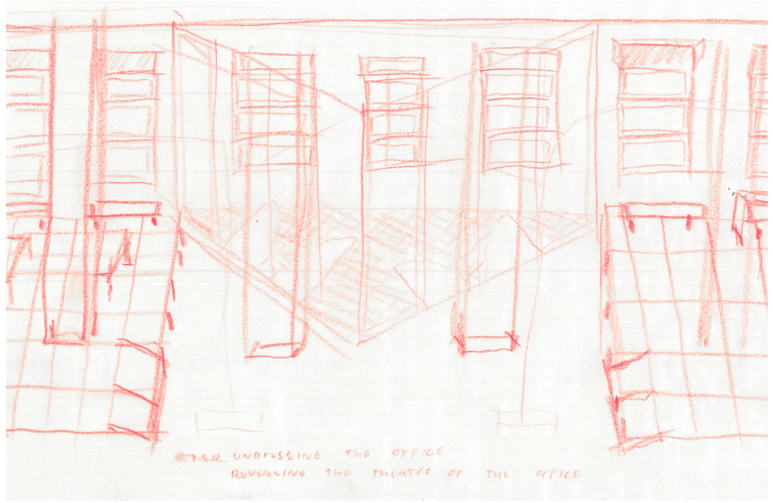
existing aluminium window frames in middle circulation core shifted down 600 mm







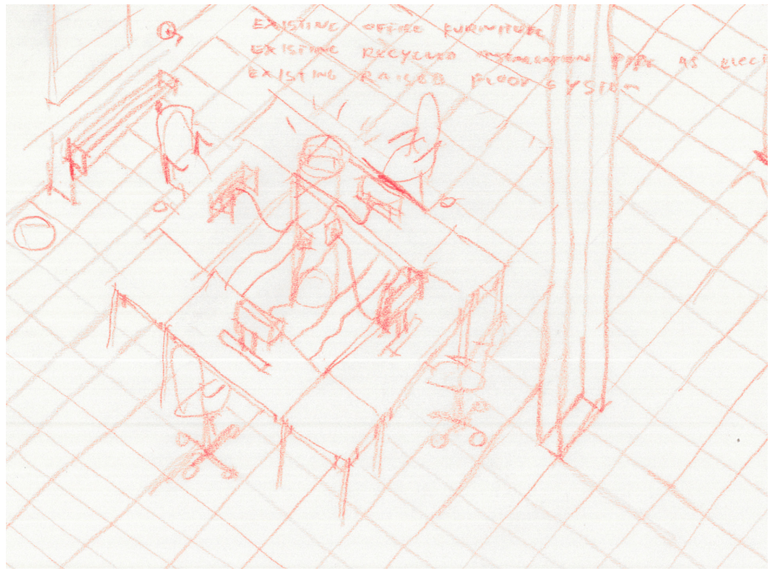

roof cleaning robot
motor for horizontal sunscreen under existing glass roof
horizontal sunscreen filters direct sunlight
atrium functioning as heat chimney
existing radiator beneath window sill
natural cross ventilation
existing windows openable towards atrium
existing aluminium window frames in middle circulation core shifted down 600mm
mechanical air supply outlet
hot air escapes through roof
moveable electricity column made from removed existing mechanical ventilation pipes
radiator ventilates heated fresh air
natural cross ventilation
new top frame, openable
mechanical air supply outlet
reconfigured partitions create intimate niches
existing concrete floor/ceiling structure exposed through removal of suspended ceiling
dissected partitions create freestanding hallway
removed ductwork becomes furniture
existing aluminium window frames shifted down on courtyard facade
vent grill on courtyard facade
existing windows openable towards atrium
mechanical air supply inlet
mechanical air supply outlet



undressing the office 1: central moment of revealing the theatre of the office

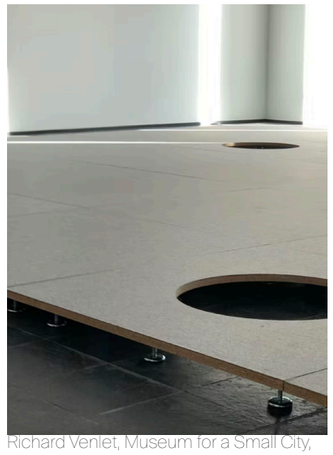


Something Fantastic, Bitkom offices,
moment of stepping onto the raised floor



existing raised floor system selectively uncovered inbetween tables, revealing
electricity cables and installations





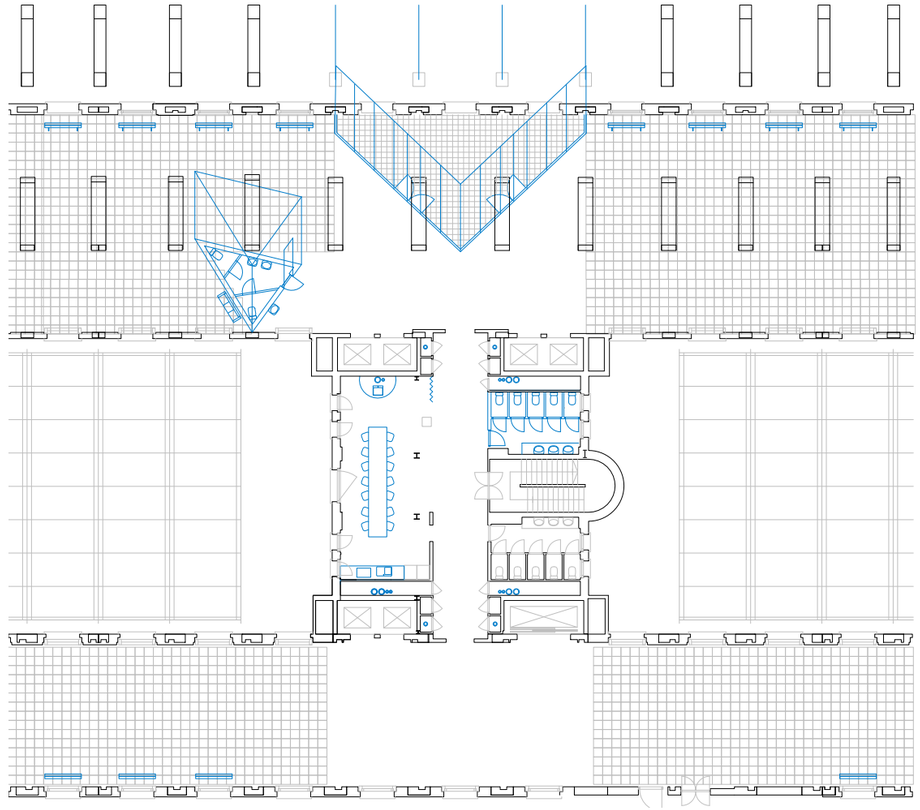
Richard Venlet, Museum for a Small City,
raised floor with wheelchair accesibility



facade on Boulevard de Berlaimont

Boulevard de Berlaimont

outside



windows shifted
down,
new technical
radiators on the floor
ventilating through
facade

windows remain
untouched, existing
radiators are left on
the wall

atrium (interior)

windows remain
untouched, existing
radiators are left on
the wall

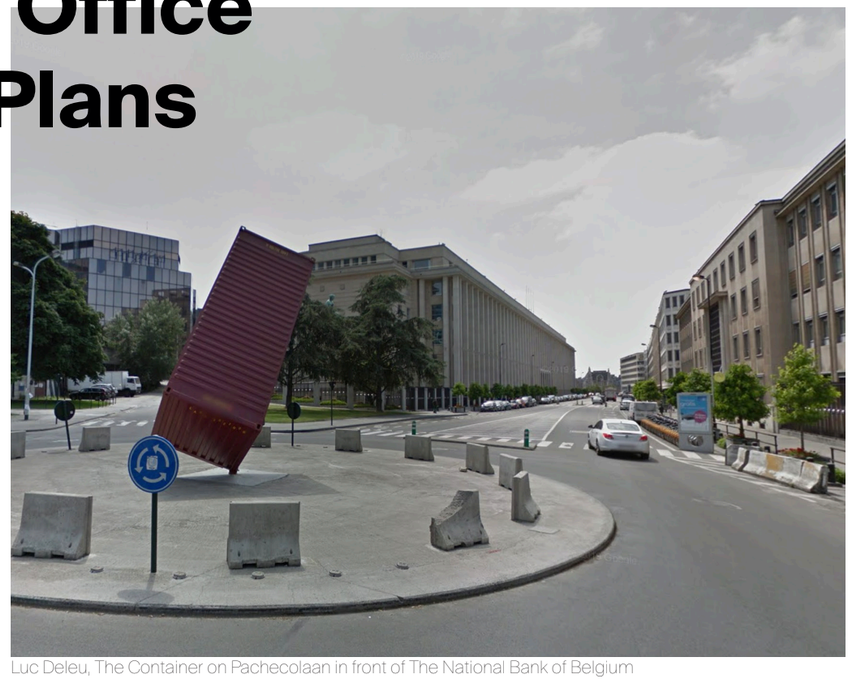
windows shifted
down,
new technical
radiators on the floor
ventilating through
facade

courtyard of The National Bank of Belgium

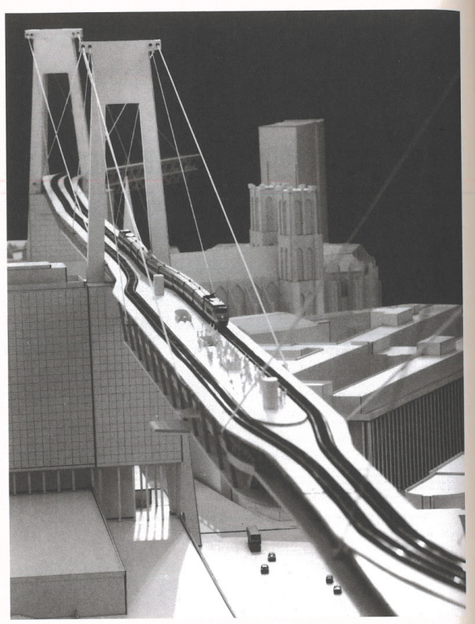
outside

Luc Deleu & T.O.P. Office Future Plans

410 W4.1 220411 - 220415



Luc Deleu, The Container on Pachecolaan in front of The National Bank of Belgium



Gare Europe Centrale, scale model (under construction), 1986-89

GARE EUROPE CENTRALE (1986-89)

T.O.P. office*

On 7 August 1986, *De Morgen* published a proposal by urban planner and architect Luc Deleu to let the TGV zip high above the centre of Brussels on a route that roughly follows the North-South underground connection.

The Brussels cityscape would thus gain a dynamic skyline. Passengers could arrive in and leave from the heart of the 'capital of Europe' in a spectacular, futuristic and pleasant manner.

The centre of Brussels would thus have a superfast and easy connection with cities, hooked up to the TGV network, and could even become a hub.

Almost two years later, this proposal hasn't lost any of its topicality and it still seems to testify to a sense of reality. This intervention can break through the urban-planning conservatism of Brussels and its resistance to change.

That is why T.O.P. office prepared a preliminary design. This drawing shows the projected route between Schaarbeekpoort and the Central Station. The new station is suspended at a height of 60 metres, parallel to the administrative centre, and forms a powerful urban-planning whole with it. St Michael & St Gudula's Cathedral, already isolated from its original context, acquires a new setting.

Towards the north, the route continues above the Kruidtuin and towards the South above the Keizerslaan. (Office) Buildings form the pillars of this skyline. Public lifts in them give access to a rolling carpet that runs from north to south (and vice versa) and connects to the TGV station, the North Station and the South Station. As a result, the TVG connects immediately with the other national public transport network.

Not only international travellers, but anyone getting around in Brussels along this route will enjoy a breathtaking panorama.

The design shows that the TGV can be an added value in the compact office zone that emerged in the wake of the demolition carried out for the underground north-south connection and coincided with a scaling-up in Brussels. The TGV skyline therefore accentuates a historical development of Brussels.

Since there are few residential zones located along the projected route, this project can be carried out with minimum disruption to Brussels citizens. Remarkably little demolition work is necessary. This proposal only requires two buildings to be razed, namely the Gemeentekrediet office building and a housing block between the Koloniën-, Parochianen- and Kanselarijstraat.

It is clear that this solution can serve as a model for several cities (e.g. Rotterdam) and that the idea of a TGV skyline is also valid in rural sectors.

With this realization, Brussels could take a bold step into the third millennium.

** Press release excerpt.*

TOWARDS RE-USE

INTRODUCTION

Already in the introduction to the report on the First Residential Course (1976) Giancarlo de Carlo gives a very wide definition of the concept "re-use" : "The concept of re-use should be taken in a very wide sense : it means not only the rehabilitation for new users of a building that has exhausted its original function, but also the reconsideration of values which have been arbitrarily discarded, the re-use of carelessly abandoned technologies and the re-adoption of signs and messages abusively done away with because they did not meet the requirements of institutional codes, and so on." (1)

Nevertheless, within ILAUD re-use has primarily been interpreted as a functional and technical means for urban renewal. A means to ~~reactive~~ reactivate and to regenerate structures.

Likewise, "insertion", the (soft) re-use of the urban fabric, has primarily been seen as a functional-technical interference to recuperate, to redeterminate and to refresh this urban fabric in a more consumer-minded way. "Insertion", though not on a too large scale, seems to be the best way to resurrect, to rejuvenate, to revitalize and to repeople urban quarters in a participative manner.

Recently (1983), Sint-Lukas, Brussels, stresses re-integration (integration seems to be more appropriate here because in most cases it involves the completion of urban quarters or blocks and the adoption of never integrated (CIAM) parts in the whole. The adoption, on basis of equality, of a new architecture in an historical context). Sint-Lukas, Brussels, declared (re)integration to be a policy to redirect, to reshape, to remodel, to redesign and even to redecorate unadapted urban structures in a democratic way.

Because the application of these concepts did not quite manage before to stimulate architecture as an autonomous element and because they had little to no effect on theory of architecture, Sint-Lukas, Brussels, wants to emphasize this year the FORMAL ASPECTS of re-use, intertion and (re)integration. To have an impact on architecture, these formal aspects will necessarily have to develop new semantics.

It is clear that "re-use, insertion and (re)integration" should be a means for the architects and urban designers to tell an architectural story with the aim to evoke (architectural) emotions and to visualize and architectural and urban concept.

By now stressing the formal aspects of these concepts next to their functional and technical aspects, the concept "re-use" might contribute to the specific AUTONOMOUS ARCHITECTURAL THINKING.
This does not mean at all that the acquisitions of participative architecture are done away with. Indeed, this participative thinking resulted in the important formal concept MULTIPLICITY OF LANGUAGE. Next to this, ILAUD has to take into account the "obligation towards the difficult whole. (...) because the whole is difficult to achieve and I have emphasized the whole of unity rather than of simplification in art, whose truth is in its totality. It is the diffficult unity through inclusion, rather than the easy unity through exclusion." (2)
In other words : multiplicity of language within UNITY OF CONCEPT.
Examples :
- Siena, with its overall colour of terra di Siena.
- The arcades all over Bologna.
- The grid of New York and Barcelona.
The research for "~~anonomous~~ autonomous architecture in a wide social context" would be a contribution to the actual discussion on architecture.

RE-USE IS : FUNCTION FOLLOWS EXISTING FORM(S)

We clearly state that the facet 'ready-made' or the facet 'objet trouvé' is an important motive for re-use. This means that in fact, on world scale, there is little time, space and money to make "new architecture". Recycling existing architecture in a simple way gives the necessary solution to meet the demand for "interior space" of the ever growing world population.
Only a very important, necessary interference can justify demolition, which only allows re-use of material and land.

4.2. Also sentimental, emotional, moral and esthetic motives often lead to re-use. In this case forced, unnecessary, far-fetched, etc.... functions are often introduced into buildings or urban structure, with the aim to preserve or protect them.
When only sentimental, emotional, moral or esthetic motives are at stake, it would be wise to let time judge and to preserve and maintain the architecture as spare space without imposing any function. Because time brings about relativity and objectivity, certain values will be easier to evaluate and urban structures will adopt necessary functions in a more natural way.
"The two main permanences in the city are housing and monuments. (...) When a monument retards the process of urbanization, it is considered by Rossi to be 'pathological'. The Alhambra in Granada is an example of one such a part of a city functioning as a museum piece. In the city whose analogue is the skeleton, such a museum piece is like an embalmed body : it gives only the appearance of being alive." (7) But Granada lives on the Alhambra.

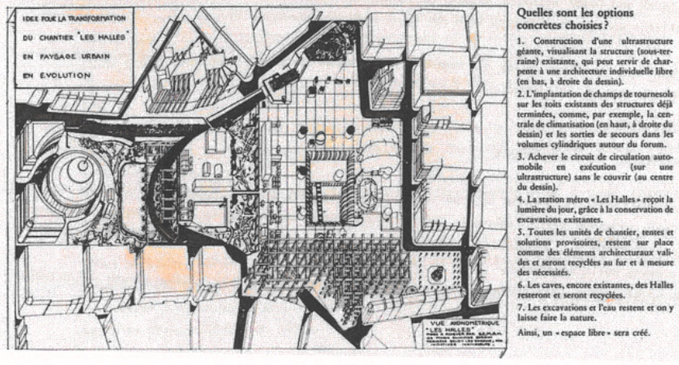
4.3. Next to searching for an adequate, natural and necessary function for given structures and forms, the architect urban designer should above all visualize the spiritual meaning, the statement, the intellectual transfer through the existing appearance.
ONLY BY DEVELOPPING AN IMMENSE IMAGINATIVE POWER IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO SURPASS THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE.
Imaginative power allows to find the right balance between old and new with a minimum interference (less is more).

5. REUSE-ART AS COUNTER-BALANCE FOR THE INCREASING URBAN ENTROPY

5.1. Built-up environment is increasing daily. Urban structures become more and more complex. Open space becomes rare. More and more structures have to be re-used.



Luc Deleu, "Les Halles", Paris, project, 1979.
The re-use of the building site by stopping building activities and the installation of a (empty) building-site-design structure south and west, metamorphoses the site into a fair-like situation (observe the technical analogy with the Centre Pompidou in the neighbourhood).
By not adding functions, urban ground is preserved for the future.



Quelles sont les options concrètes choisies ?

1. Construction d'une ultrastructure géante, visualisant la structure (sous-terraine) existante, qui peut servir de charpente à une architecture individuelle libre (en bas, à droite du dessin).
2. L'implantation de champs de tournesols sur les toits existants des structures déjà terminées, comme, par exemple, la centrale de climatisation (en haut, à droite du dessin) et les sorties de secours dans les volumes cylindriques autour du forum.
3. Achever le circuit de circulation automobile en exécution (sur une ultrastructure) sans le couvrir (au centre du dessin).
4. La station métro « Les Halles » reçoit la lumière du jour, grâce à la conservation de excavations existantes.
5. Toutes les unités de chantier, tentes et solutions provisoires, restent sur place comme des éléments architecturaux valides et seront recyclées au fur et à mesure des nécessités.
6. Les caves, encore existantes, des Halles resteront et seront recyclées.
7. Les excavations et l'eau restent et on y laisse faire la nature.

Ainsi, un « espace libre » sera créé.

Because the architect always has to supply the best possible contribution to the given space and given time, within the context of the transferred values and those still in use, also the concept "architecture" will acquire a new meaning. To create an order throughout the chaos of the lived-through and worn-out architectural or urban structures, the architect will have to come up with a clear and new concept.

The new buildings too will once have to be re-used. Our actual concrete skeletons even ask for more re-use, because they are hard to demolish and the material itself cannot be recuperated. The original concept will define the possibilities of re-use at a later stage. The autonomous treatment of architecture and city seems to supply the best guarantees in this case.

"Indeed, change in the program of existing buildings is a valid phenomenon and a major source of the contradiction I am endorsing. Many compositions that acknowledge circumstantial exceptions, like the Palazzo Tarugi, result from renovations that maintain an expression of the whole. Much of the richness of the Italian urban scene at eye level results from the tradition of modifying or modernizing every several generations the commercial ground floor interiors, for example, the frankly stylish contemporary bars, located in the frames of old palazzi. But the building's original order must be strong." (8) In a wider sense : THE ORIGINAL URBAN CONCEPT MUST BE STRONG.

RECAPITULATION

In summary, we can state that the architect must surpass the functional-technical or populistic re-use by means of REUSE-ART.

Participation is expressed by MULTIPLICITY OF LANGUAGE, while structural decisions can show through UNITY OF CONCEPT.

Unity of concept is an appropriate tool for harmonic (urban) reconstruction in a wide social context, not through exclusion (like the historical reconstruction of the city of, for example, Rossi and Krier) but through inclusion.

In a re-use project, function follows existing form but, through his imagination, the designer will have look for new and renewing values (the study of the existing form can stimulate imagination).

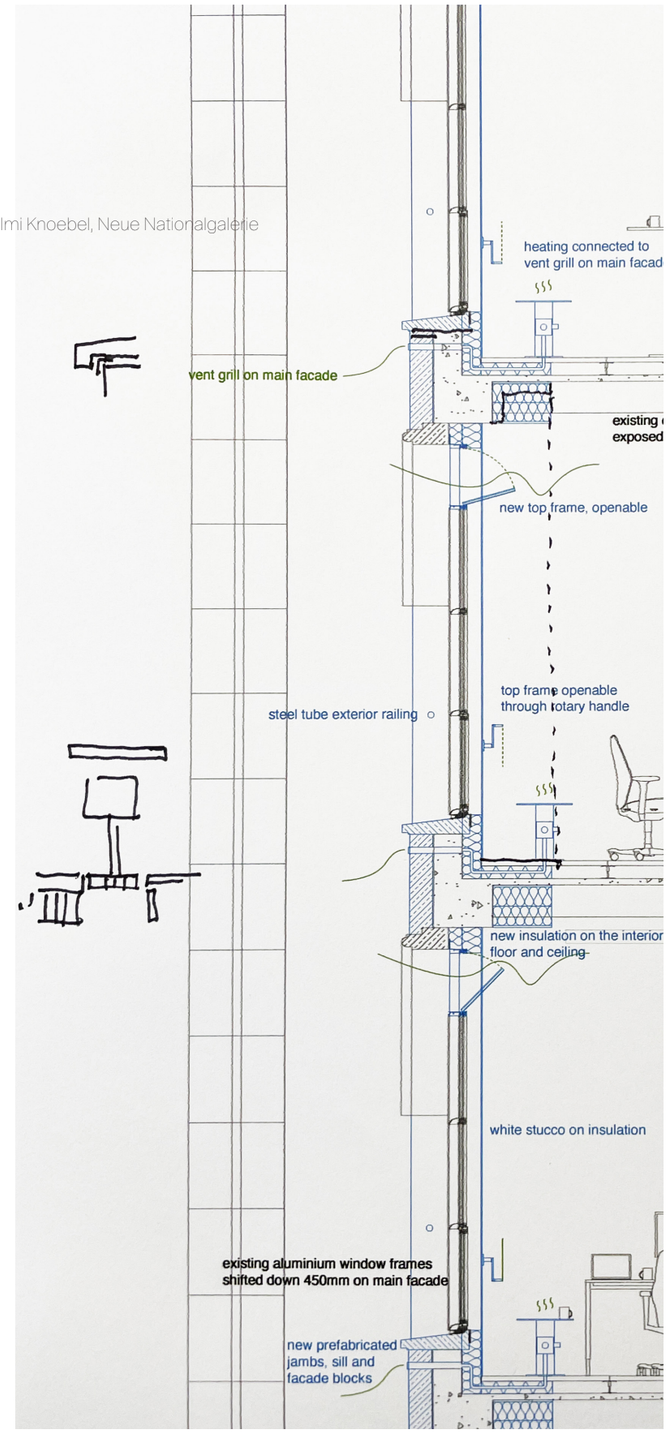
WHERE IMAGINATION STOPS, COPYING STARTS.

Luc Deleu, July 1985.

NOTES

Giancarlo De Carlo, Report on the 1st Residential Course Urbino 1976, ILAUD, Università di Urbino, 1977, p. 11.
Robert Venturi, "Complexity and contradiction in architecture", The Museum of Modern Art, New York in association with the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Chicago, 1966, p. 88.
Buckminster Fuller, 1927, see also Architectural Design 12, 1972, The Standard Catalogue Co. Ltd., London.
Marcel Duchamp, quoted in "Dada Art And Anti-Art", Hans Richter, Thames and Hudson Ltd., London, 1965, p. 89-90.
Manfredo Tafuri, "Ontwerp en utopie" ("Progetto e Utopia"), SUN, Nijmegen, 1978, p. 169.
Marcel Duchamp, op. cit., p. 207.
Peter Eisenman in the introduction to "The architecture of the city", Aldo Rossi, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, 1982, p. 6.
Robert Venturi, op. cit., p. 42.

design crit



Imi Knoebel, Neue Nationalgalerie



New National Bank of Belgium, palace as store-room



Imi Knoebel, Neue Nationalgalerie



Imi Knoebel, Genter Raum



Schüco Lüftungsflügel

- WHAT IS THE LANGUAGE OF THE REPLACED FACADE BLOCKS? ARE THEY COMPLETELY REPLACED? IS ~~THERE A NEW~~ SILL THE CURRENT MILLED OUT TO MAKE WAY FOR A GRILL? WHAT IS THE APPEARANCE OF THE GRILL ON THE FACADE? HOW IS THE GRILL MEETING THE HEATING? A LANGUAGE OF ALUMINIUM? PERHAPS FIGURING THESE QUESTIONS OUT THROUGH A SERIES OF AXONOMETRY? WHAT IS THE LANGUAGE OF THE INSULATION? WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU PRESS AGAINST THE INSULATION? LUTJENS PADMANABHAN WOULD MAKE IT LIGHT AND ALL THEATRE... CHIPPERFIELD WOULD GO MARBLE (I LIKE THIS BETTER)

IT IS VERY IMI KNOEBEL

HEATING AND GRILL AS THRESHOLD

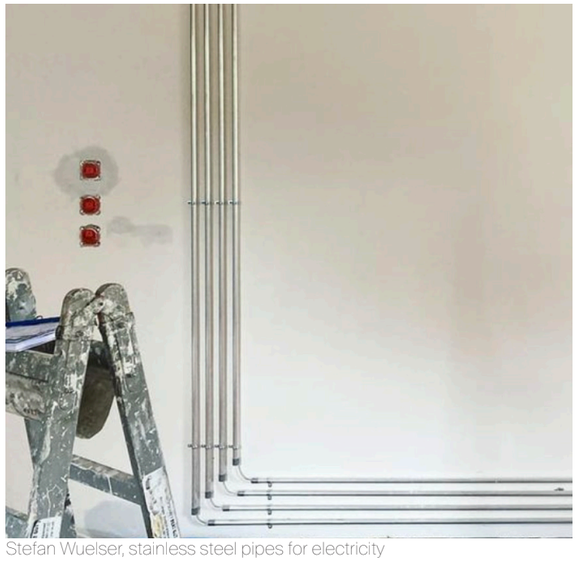
DETACHED RAISED FLOOR AND INSULATION

SOUND INSULATION?

VENTILATION FLAP WITH INSULATION



Isabelle Andriessen, DORM, De Pont



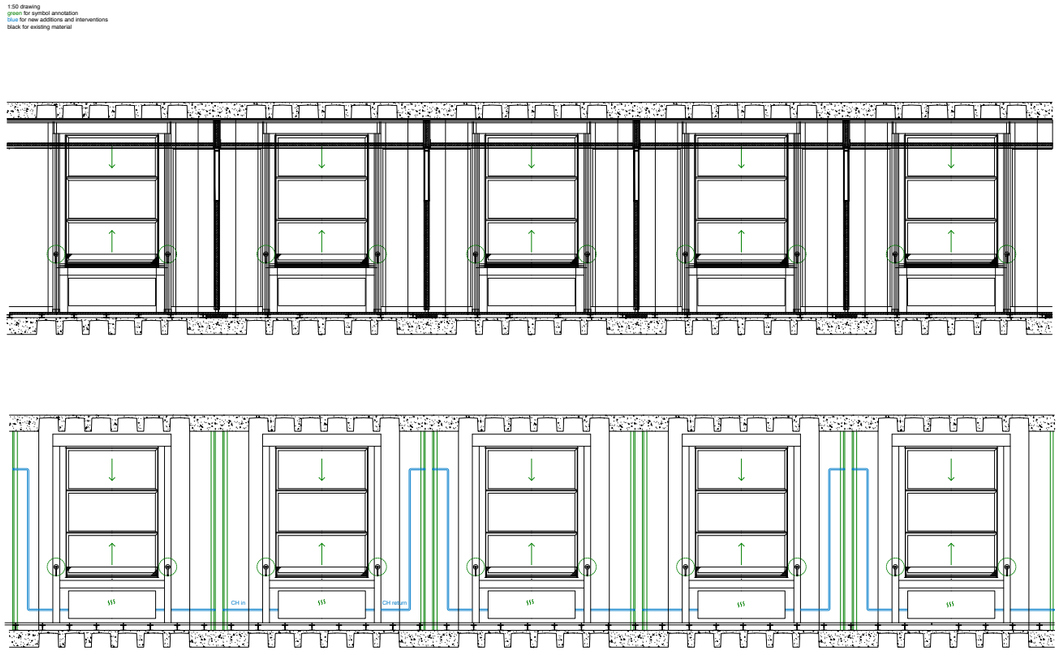
Stefan Wuelser, stainless steel pipes for electricity

how are the two distinct walls on the office floor (i.e. the one that is facing the interior atrium where the windows are untouched and the one that is facing the exterior where the windows are shifted down) treated?

how to make the finish of the wall as simple as possible?

white walls with stainless steel pipes running into the new and existing radiators?

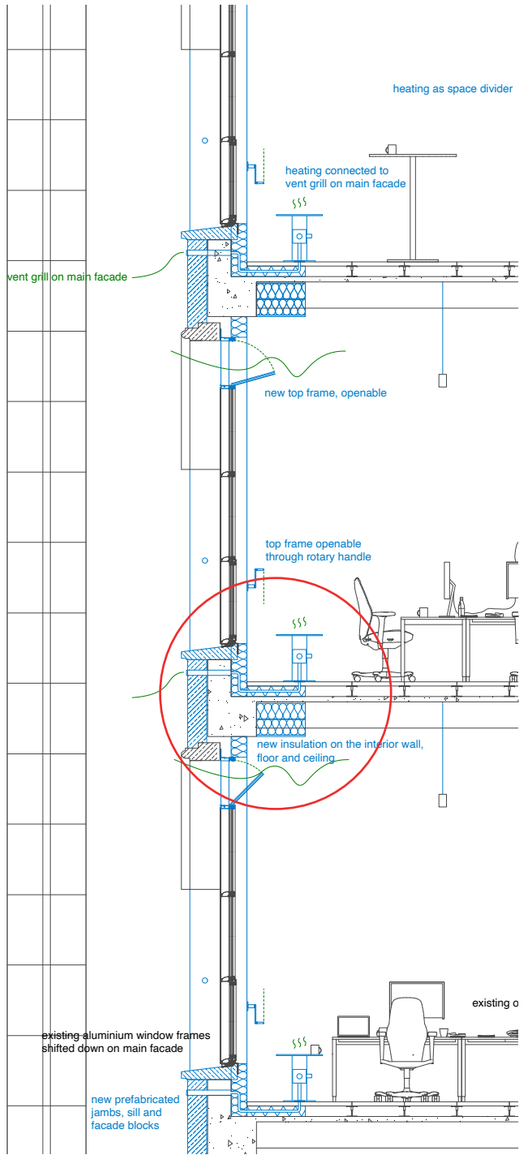




+ Laure Itard

summary of comments

climate consultation



insulating on the interior walls facing the main street + courtyard of the building seems like a good idea

maybe the new radiator can also facilitate cooling, an extra cold water pipe would be necessary

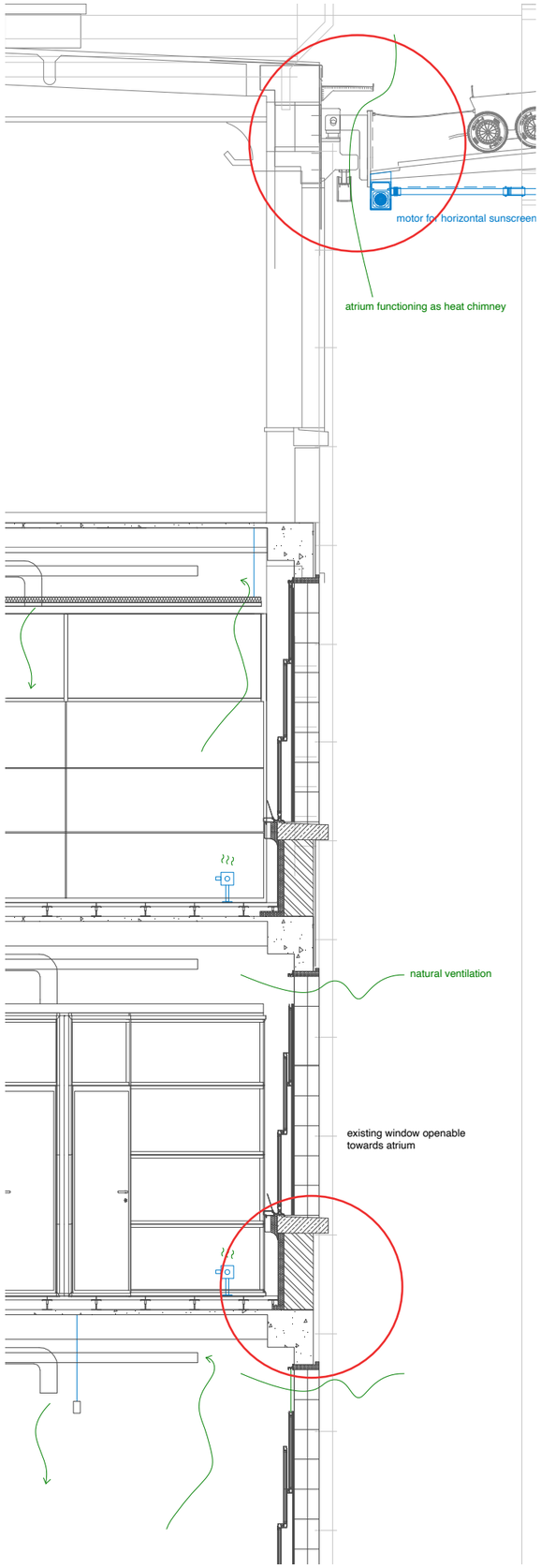
in terms of mechanical ventilation ductwork, it could be possible to only keep and maintain the mechanical ventilation inlets

the mechanical ventilation oulet would be replaced by the function of the atrium

the atrium could facilitate the escape of air through the heat chimney effect (underpressure)

consequently, the windows facing the atrium side would always have to be open or a grill should be introduced on that specific side of the building

furthermore, a fan is necessary either at the top of the atrium or locally in the new radiator





Sigurd Lewerentz, Black Box studio

a different attitude regarding insulation on the walls facing the atrium can be taken on.

a possiblity is to not insulate on this side of the building at all, relying on the greenhouse curtain to keep the warmth in.

in inbetween seasons this would work, however during winter it would be not so effective

another idea could be to insulate in the atrium on the outside of the building,
... this would be a lot of material

another idea would be to only insulate locally behind the existing radiator.

another idea would be to put reflective foil behind the existing radiator to reduce heat loss on the atrium side.

ideally combing insulation + reflective foil behind radiator to reduce loss

this would mean that on the walls of the building facing the atrium, one would only insulate from the inside, locally behind each existing radiator with a refective foil as finish



plan

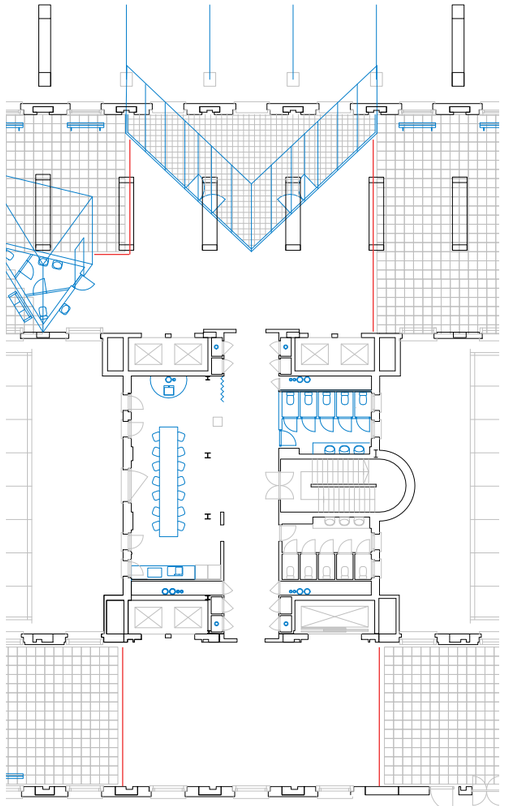
ending W4.1 with zooming out

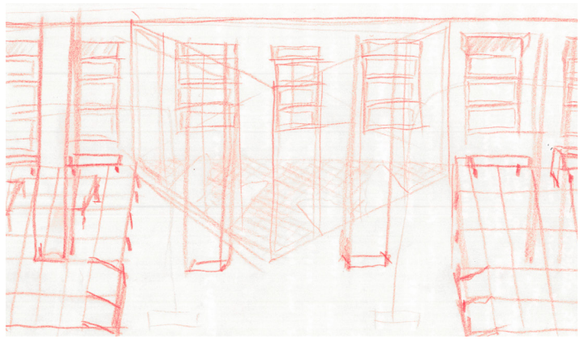
how to incorporate the concentration of the P3 fragment over the entire plan? resulting in:

three moments where exterior space is drawn into the interior

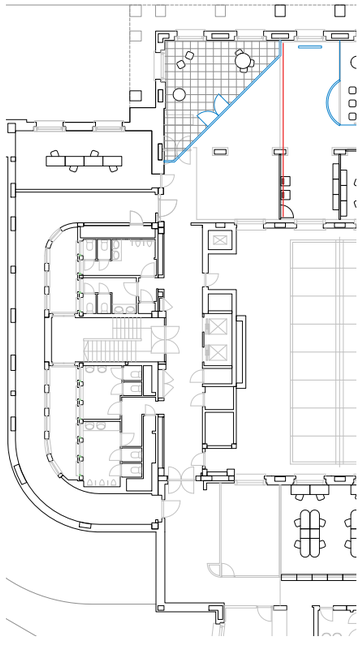
three moments where on the facade the columns are undressed and dissected

three moments where the start of the raised floor is emphasized

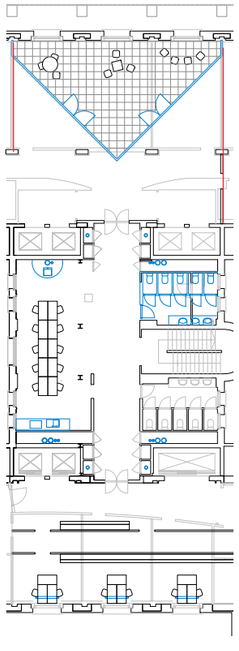




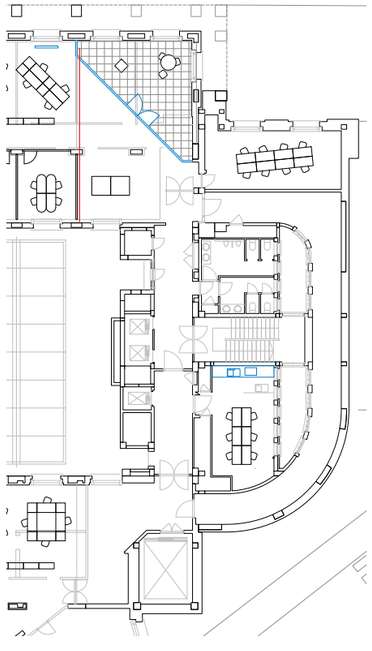
moment 01

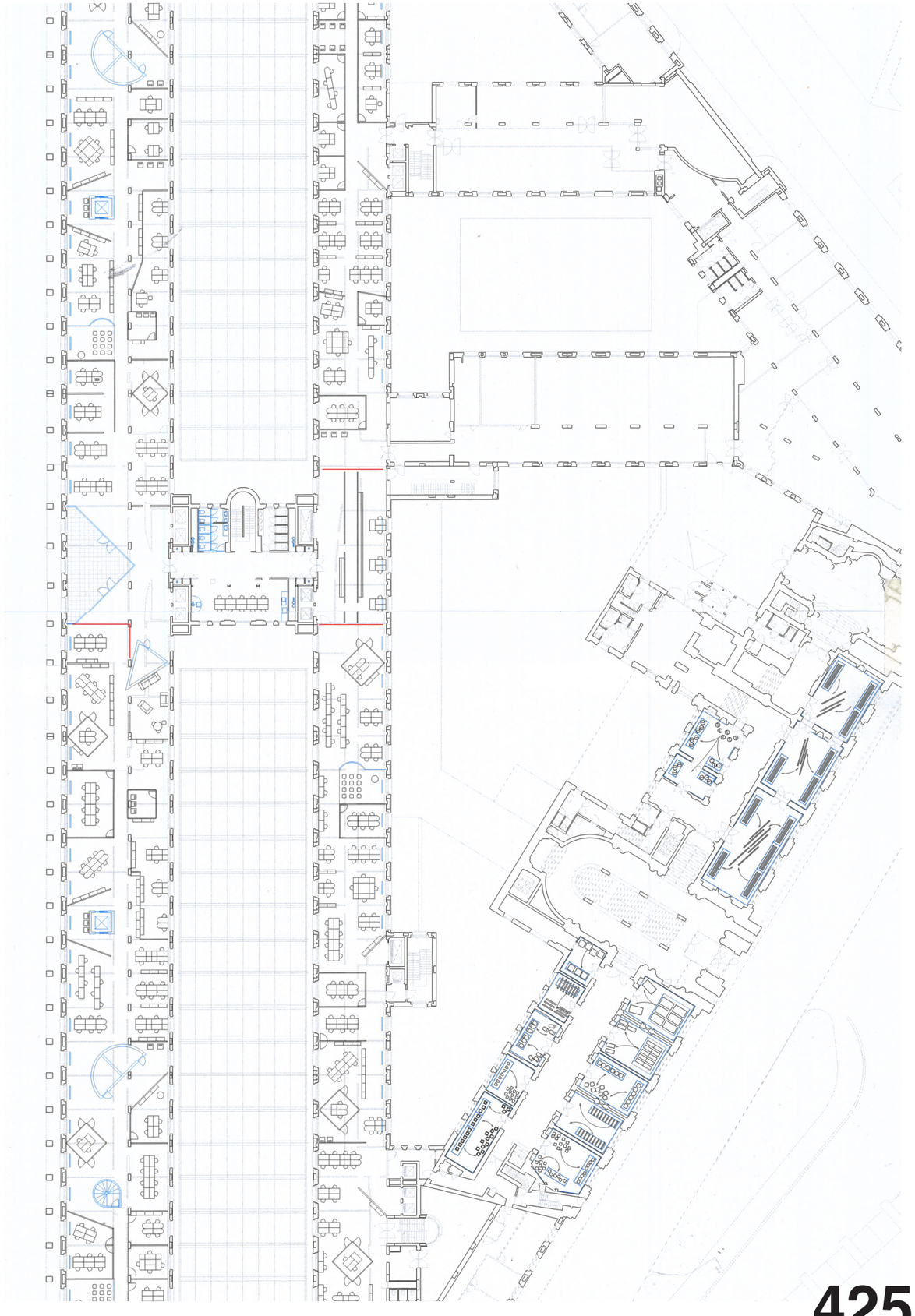


moment 02



moment 03



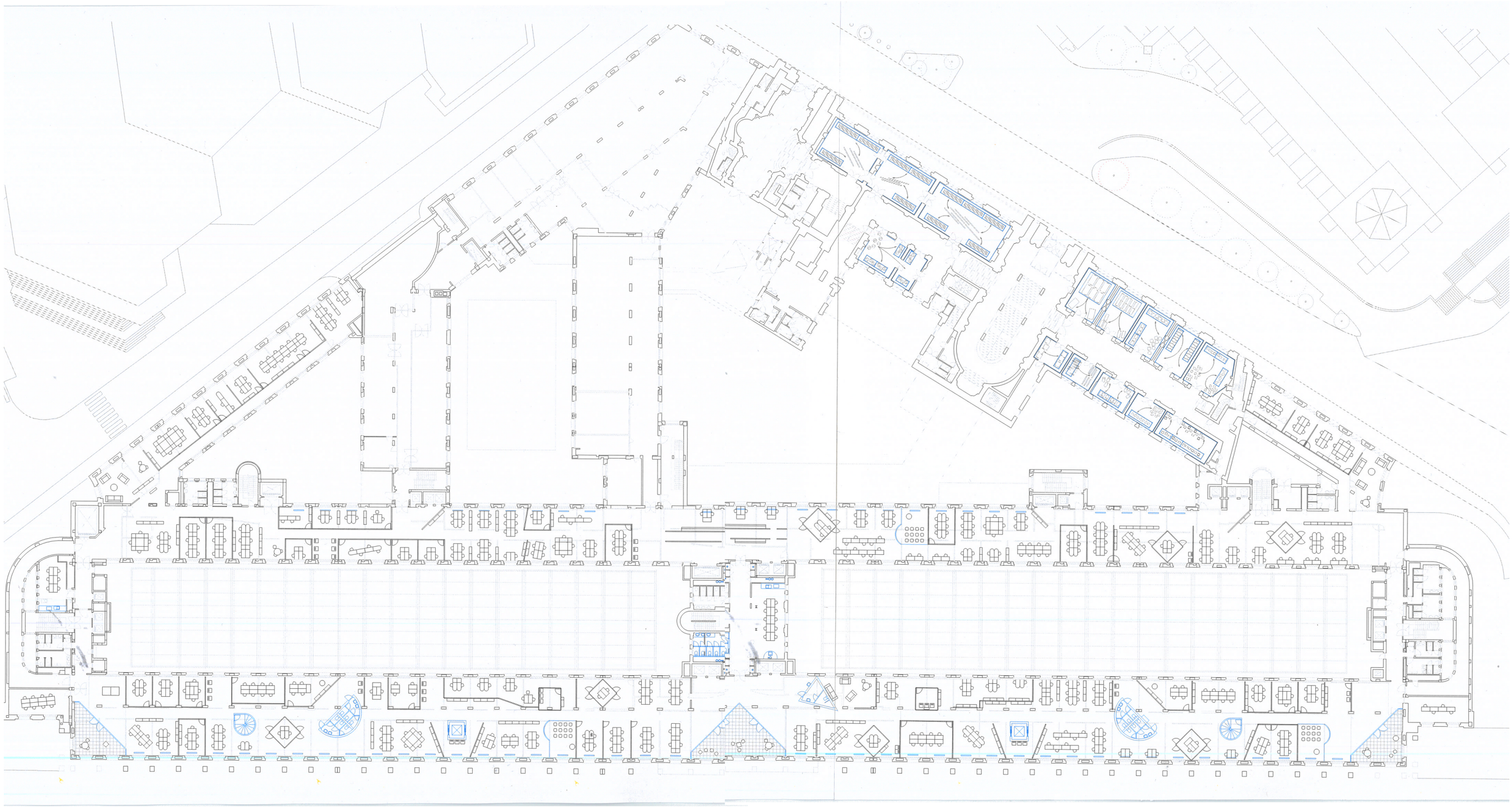


moment 01

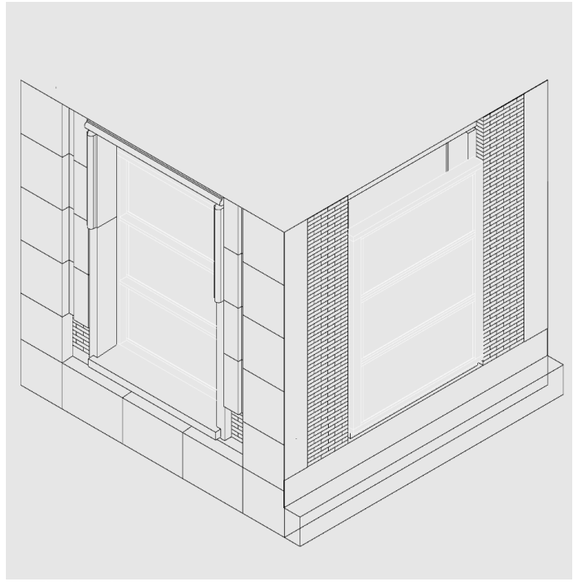
moment 02

moment 03

plan



detail



exterior / interior axonometry test

how is the interior radiator grill connected to the facade for air inlet?

what is the appearance of the grill on the facade?

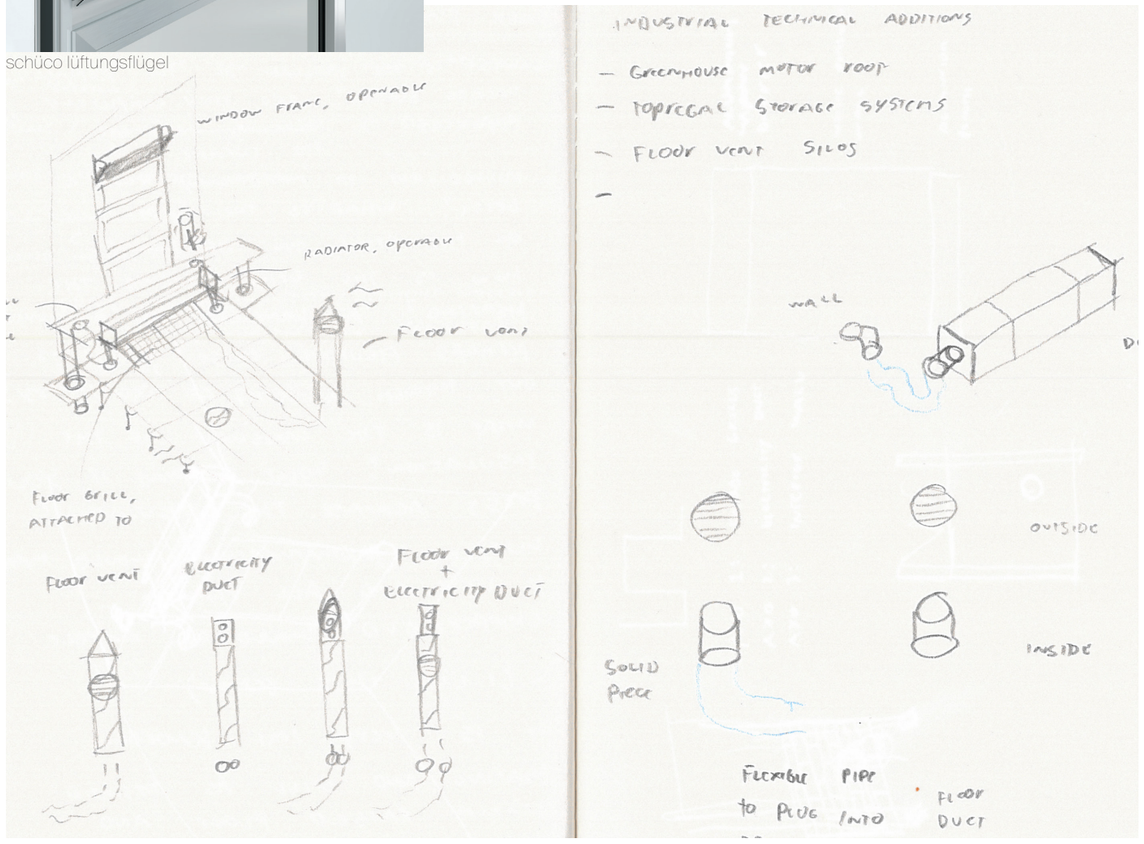
how is the grill meeting the radiator? a language of aluminium?

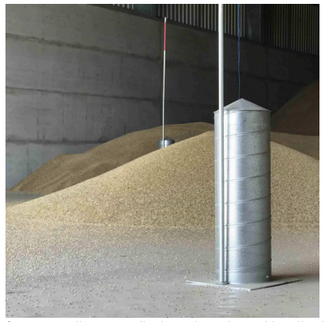
considering radiator grill as a treshold between raised floor and insulation

what is the language of the insulation?

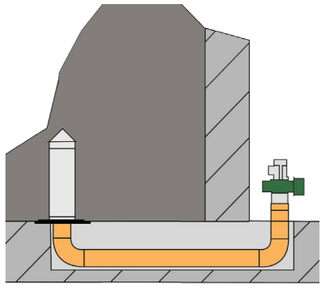


schüco lüftungsflügel





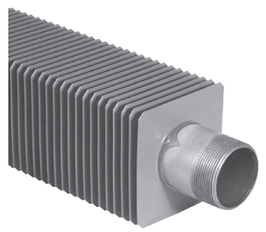
freestanding ventilation duct (used in silos)



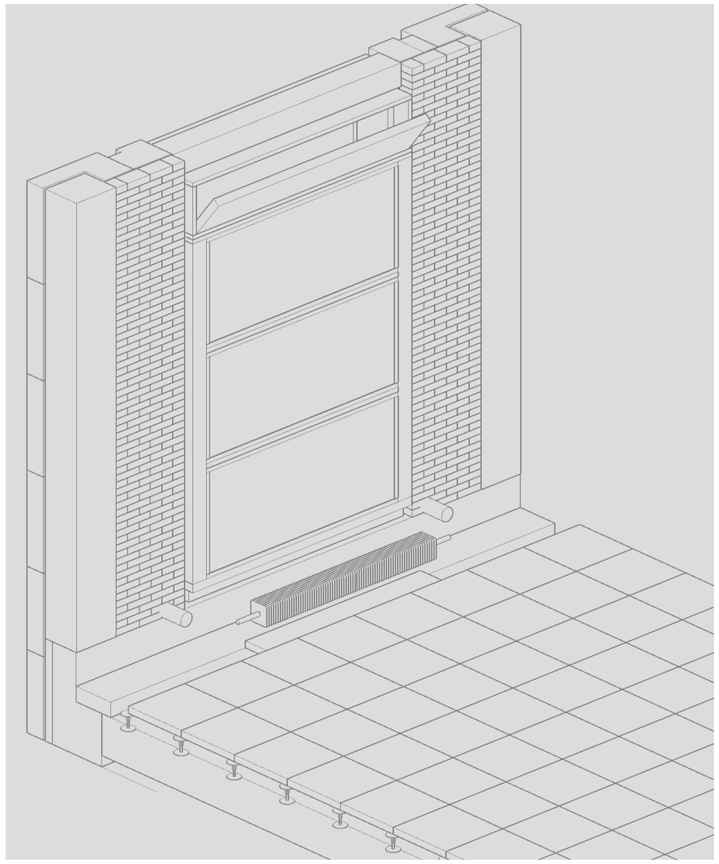
Silo ventilation duct principle (interior space left outside space right)

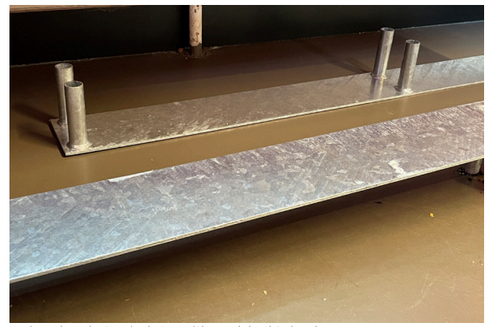


ventilation grill wall



fine tube, bare radiator element





galvanised steel plate with welded tube legs

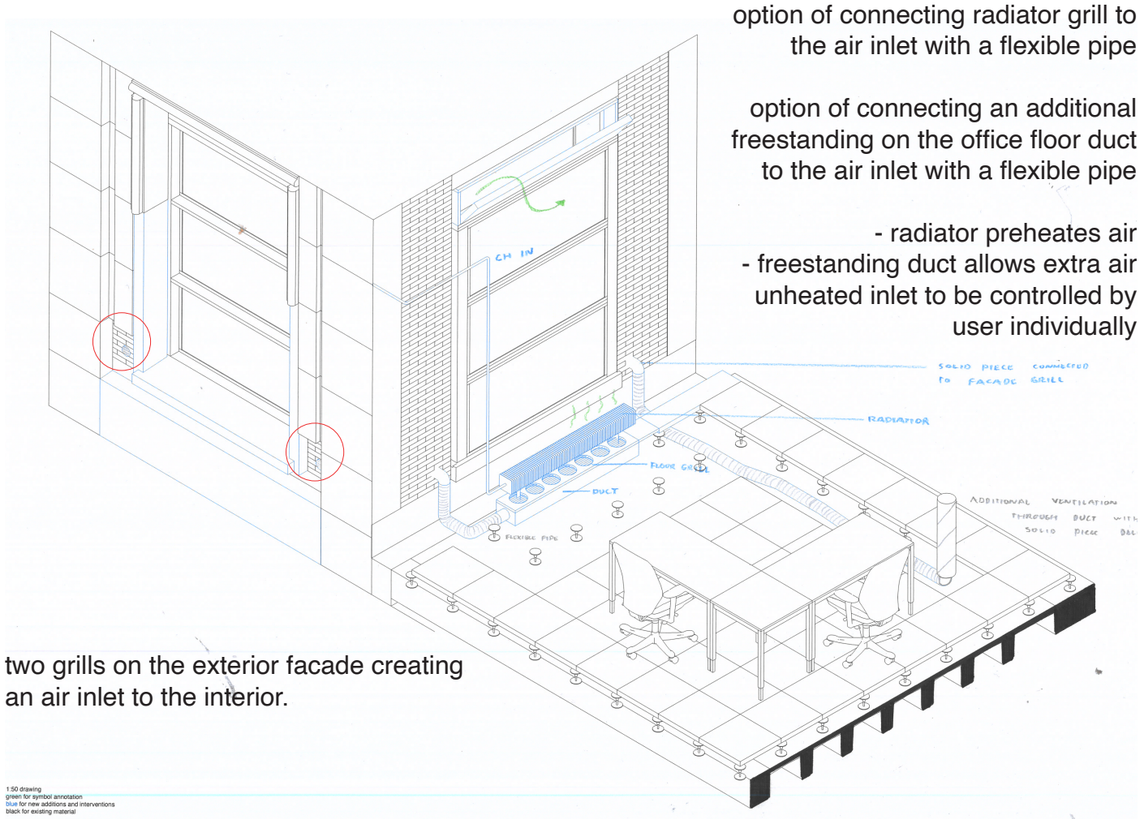


floor grill

option of connecting radiator grill to the air inlet with a flexible pipe

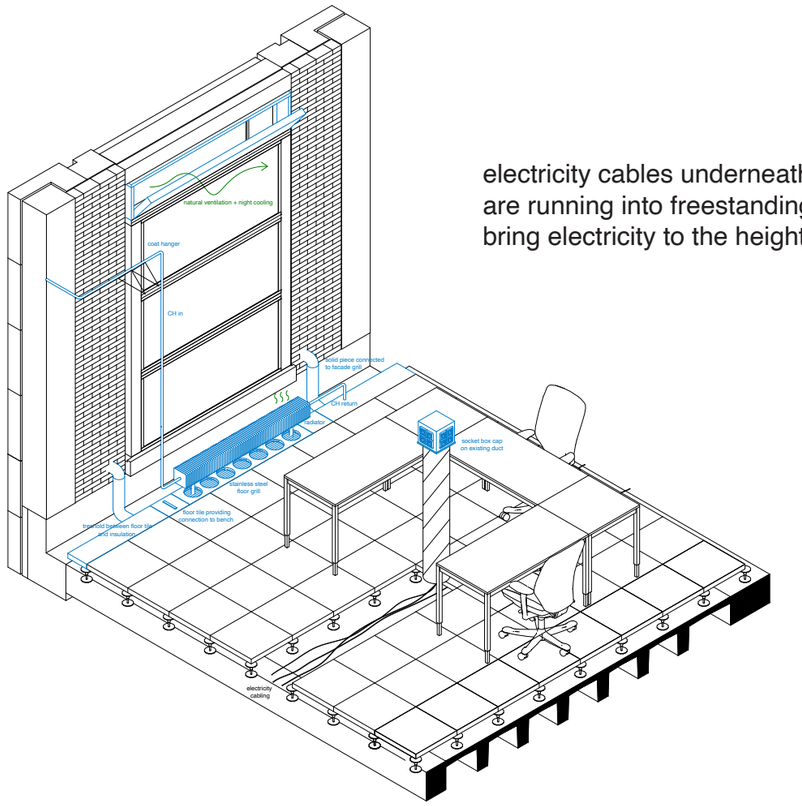
option of connecting an additional freestanding on the office floor duct to the air inlet with a flexible pipe

- radiator preheates air
- freestanding duct allows extra air unheated inlet to be controlled by user individually



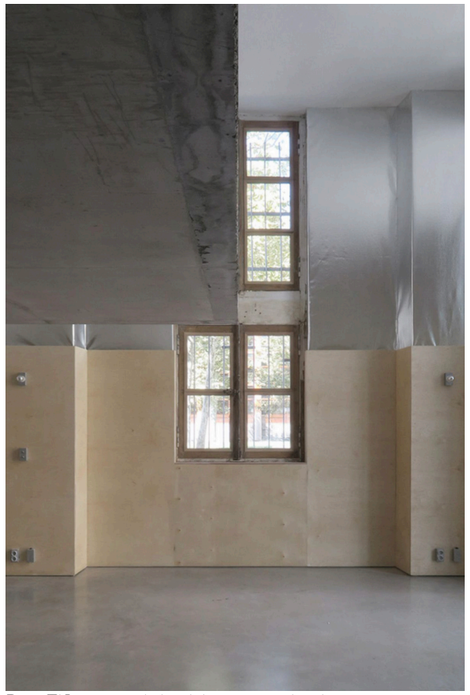
two grills on the exterior facade creating an air inlet to the interior.

1:50 drawing
green for symbol annotation
blue for new additions and interventions
black for existing material



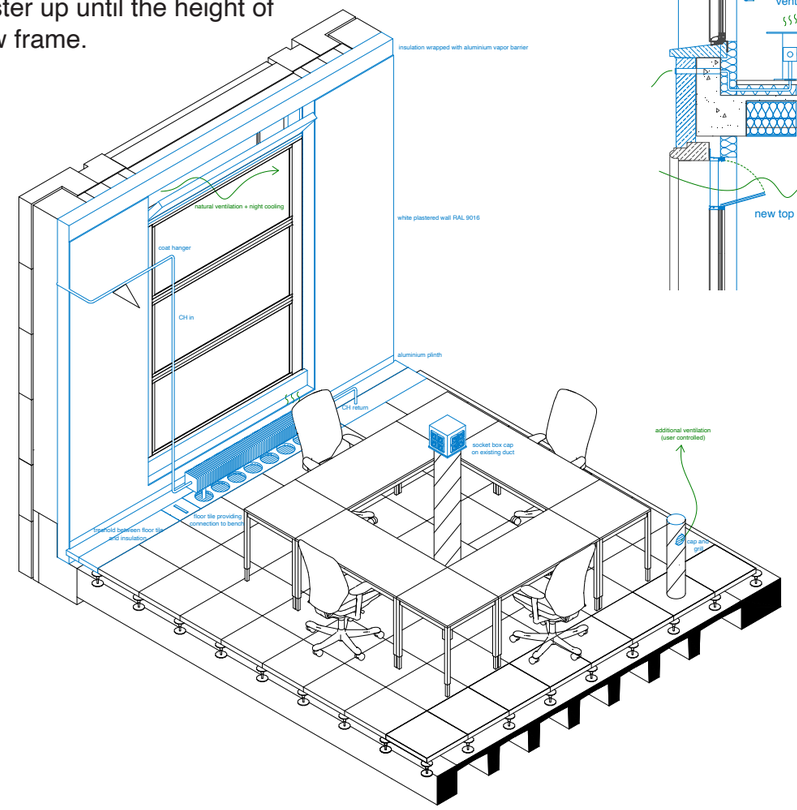
electricity cables underneath raised floor are running into freestanding duct to bring electricity to the height of the table

1:25 drawing
green for symbol annotation
blue for new additions and interventions
black for existing material



Bast, T10, exposed aluminium vapour barrier

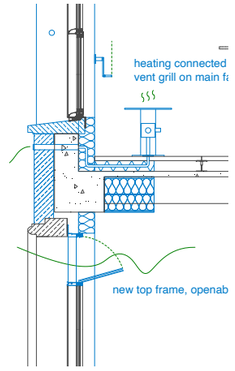
insulating from the inside of the structure, wrapping insulation with aluminium vapour barrier. finishing wall with white plaster up until the height of the top window frame.



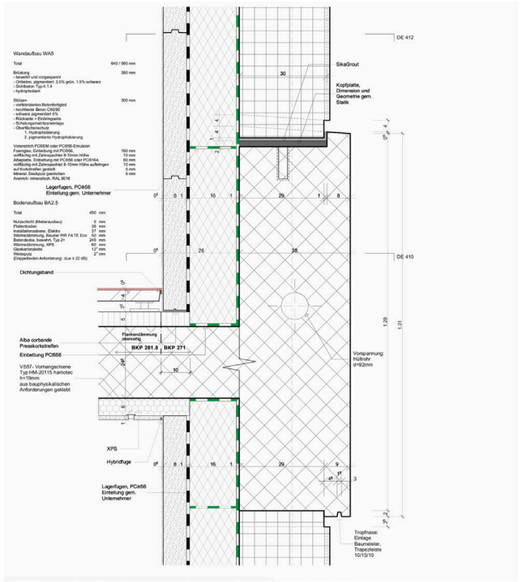
1:25 drawing
green for symbol annotation
blue for new additions and interventions
black for existing material



wall: white plastered (RAL 9016), exposed aluminium vapour barrier, concrete beam, ribs covered with thin high-performance insulation wrapped with aluminium vapour barrier



facade fragment, details



Caruso St. John, office building Escher Wyss detail


National Bank of Belgium, facade (photograph Bas Lee-

what are the consequences of the interior details on the “face” of The National Bank of Belgium? What differences in texture arise?

the facade of the New National Bank of Belgium is partially stripped of its representative materials. All windows on the main facade are shifted down, thus there is a meeting of the existing construction around the window and the new construction around the window.

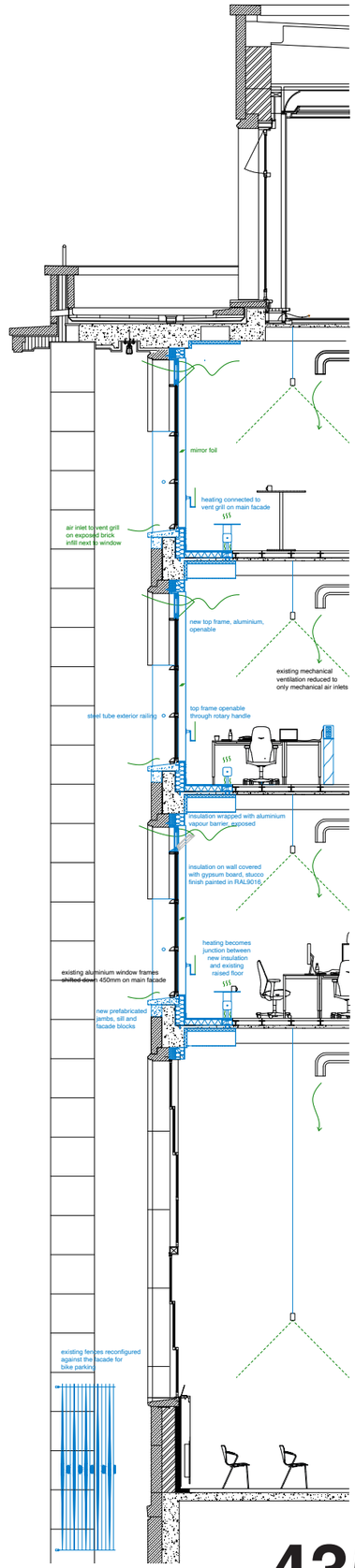
New prefabricated elements are inserted below and next to the window: two new jambs, a new window sill and a facade beam in prefabricated concrete. The grey offsets to the limestone texture of the facade, through which one can clearly read the meeting between old and new.

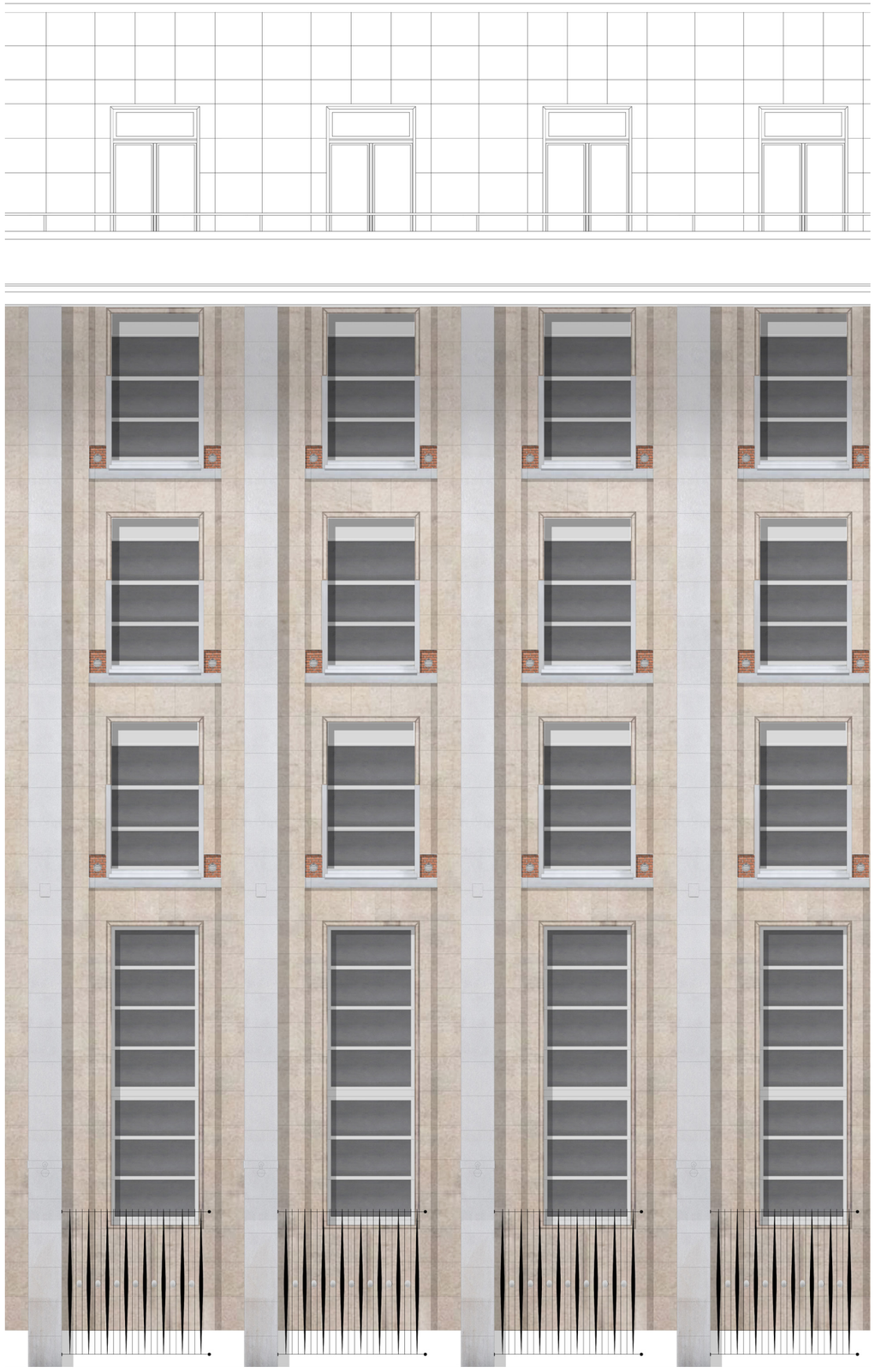
Furthermore, the facade blocks next to the two new jambs are removed, exposing the brick infill of the concrete structure behind it. The brick infill is drilled into, making ventilation openings in the facade possible. These openings are finished with simple round ventilation grills, which also become part of the rhythm of the facade.

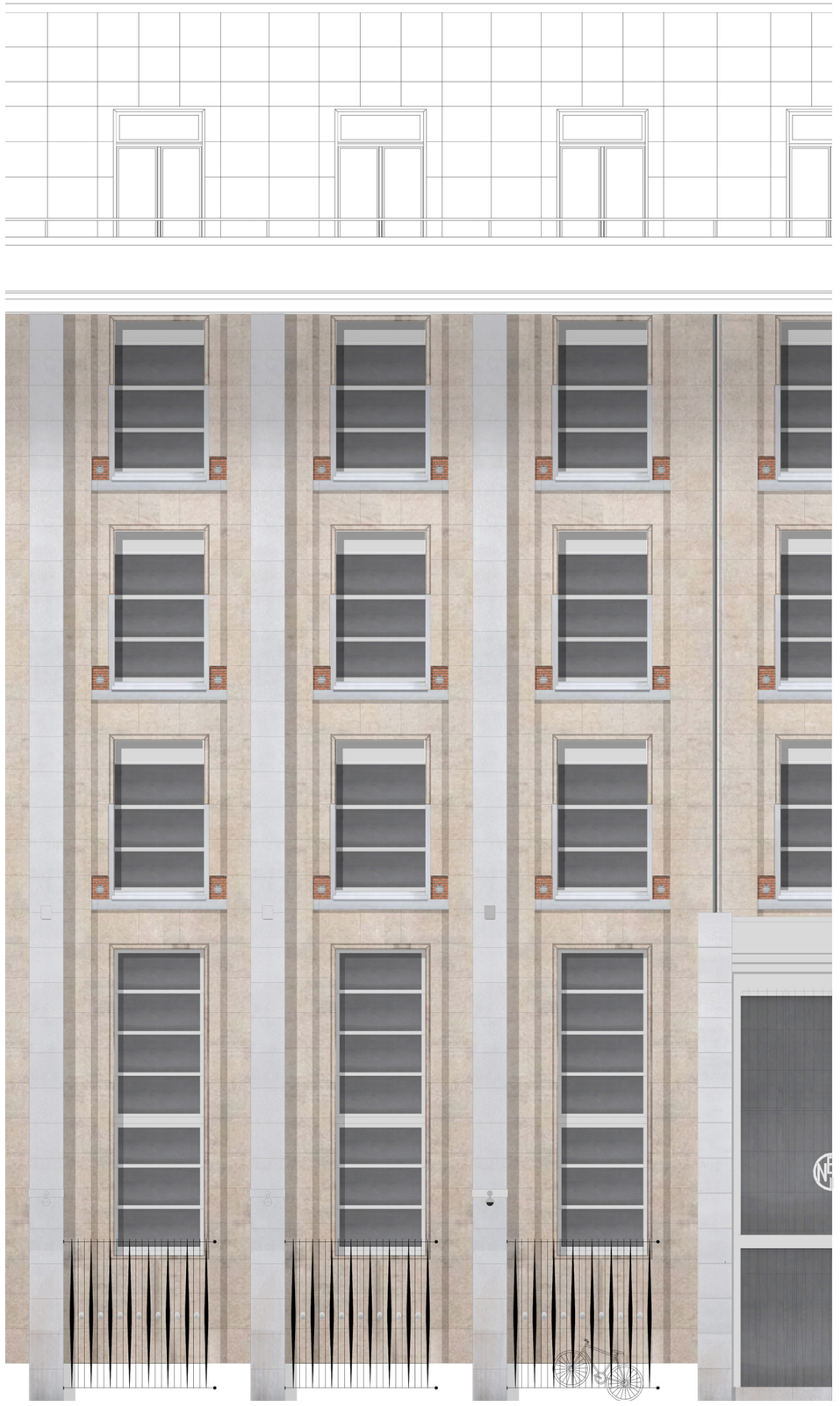
The facade columns, specificially those that are on the entrance and the corners of the building, are undressed to the point where the steel cable becomes visible. The entrance becomes a figure again, appearing to be freestanding within the seemingly endless rows of facade columns.

The facade fragment shows the existing facade column next to the undressed facade column on the entrance, with the new windows shifted down and other interventions on the ground floor such as the reconfiguration of the fences.

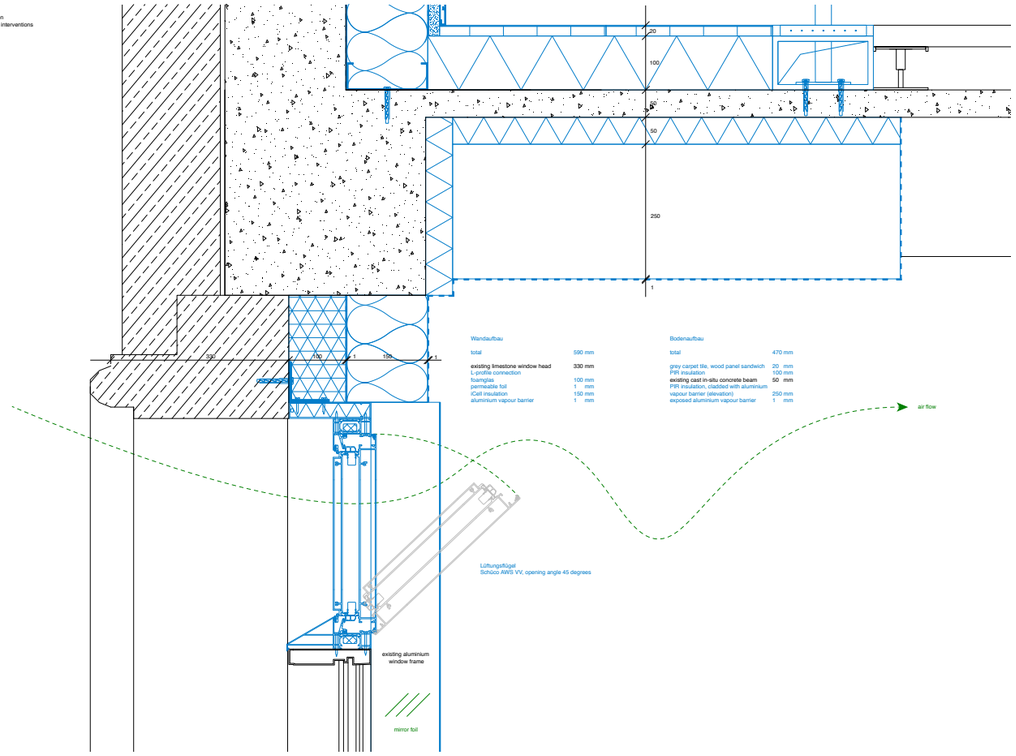








1:5 drawing
green for symbol annotation
blue for new additions and interventions
black for existing material



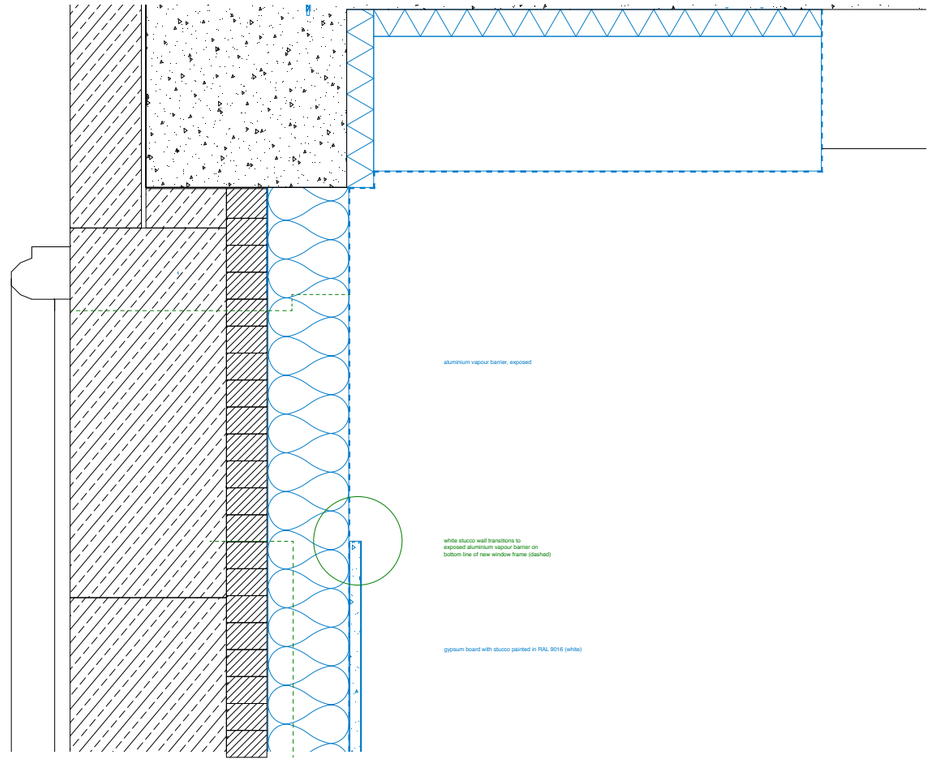
Wandaufbau

total	590 mm
existing limestone window head	330 mm
L-profile connection	
foamglas	100 mm
permeable foil	1 mm
iCell insulation	150 mm
aluminium vapour barrier	1 mm

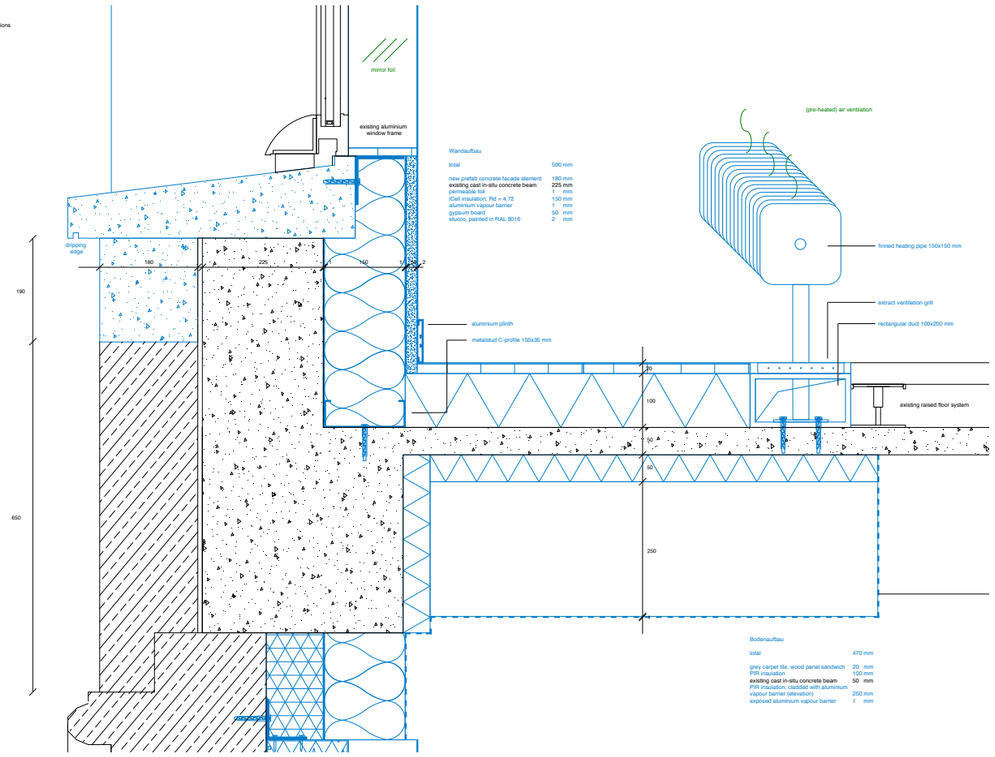
Bodenaufbau

total	470 mm
grey carpet tile, wood panel sandwich	20 mm
PIR insulation	100 mm
existing cast in-situ concrete beam	50 mm
PIR insulation, cladded with aluminium vapour barrier (elevation)	250 mm
exposed aluminium vapour barrier	1 mm

1:5 drawing
green for symbol annotation
blue for new additions and interventions
black for existing material



1:5 drawing
green for symbol annotation
blue for new additions and interventions
black for existing material



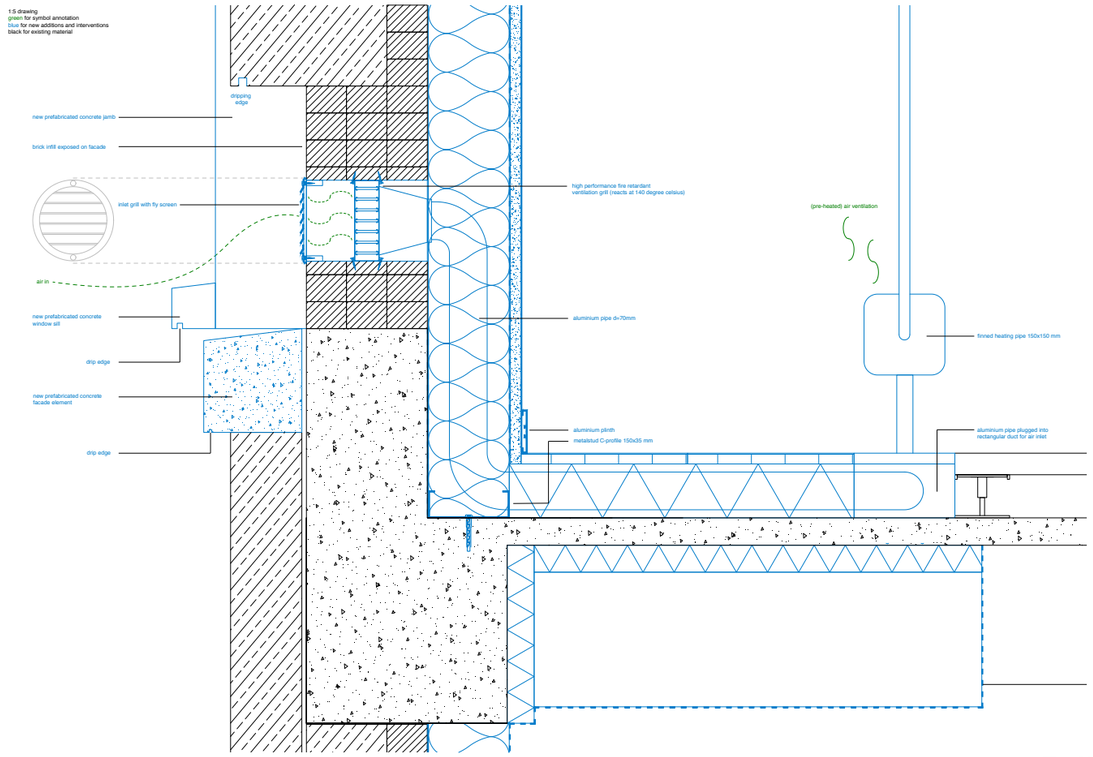
Wandaufbau

total	590 mm
new prefab concrete facade element	180 mm
existing cast in-situ concrete beam	225 mm
permeable foil	1 mm
iCell insulation, Rd = 4,72	150 mm
aluminium vapour barrier	1 mm
gypsum board	50 mm
stucco, painted in RAL 9016	2 mm

Bodenaufbau

total	470 mm
grey carpet tile, wood panel sandwich	20 mm
PIR insulation	100 mm
existing cast in-situ concrete beam	50 mm
PIR insulation, cladded with aluminium vapour barrier (elevation)	250 mm
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1:5 drawing
green for symbol annotation
blue for new additions and interventions
black for existing material



+ Ron Barten

arranging a guest lecture from noAarchitecten
organised by students for students

about the Kanal Centre Pompidou, a 35 000 m2
existing structure of which the monumental part
is designed by Marcel van Goethem, the same
architect of the National Bank of Belgium

noAarchitecten are renovating and redesigning
this structure together with Segison Bates and
EM2N.



© EM2N, noAarchitecten, Sergison Bates

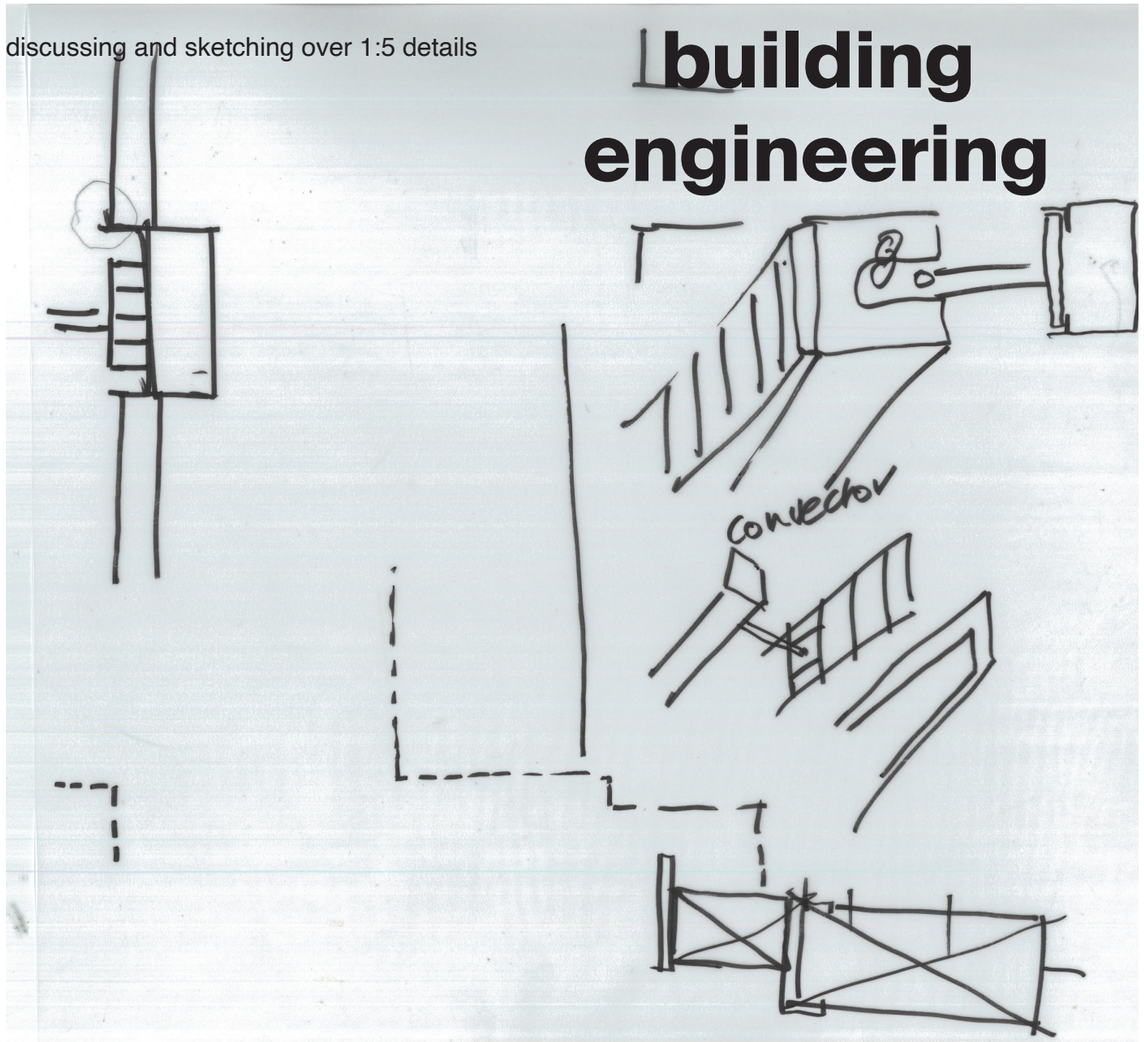
In Progress, Reuse of KANAL - Centre Pompidou in Brussels

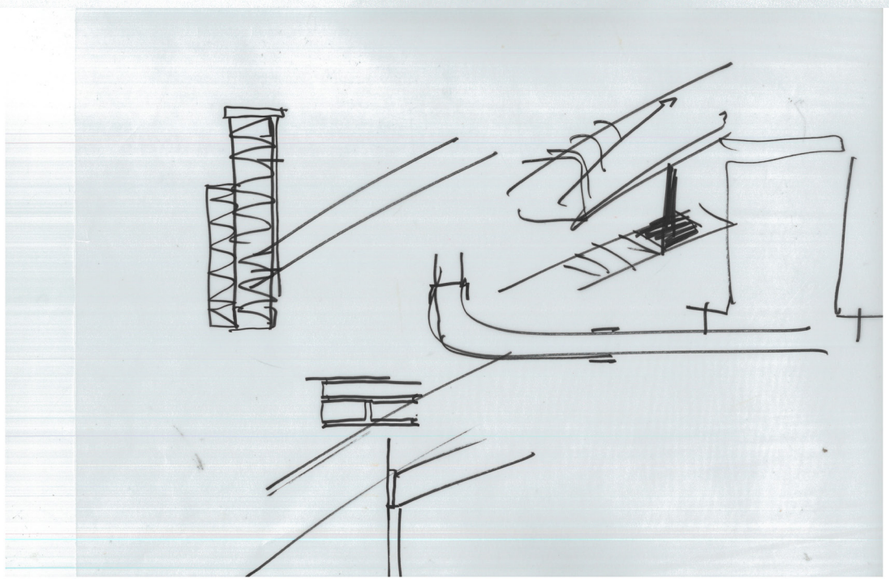
Philippe Viérin (partner)
noAarchitecten, Brussel

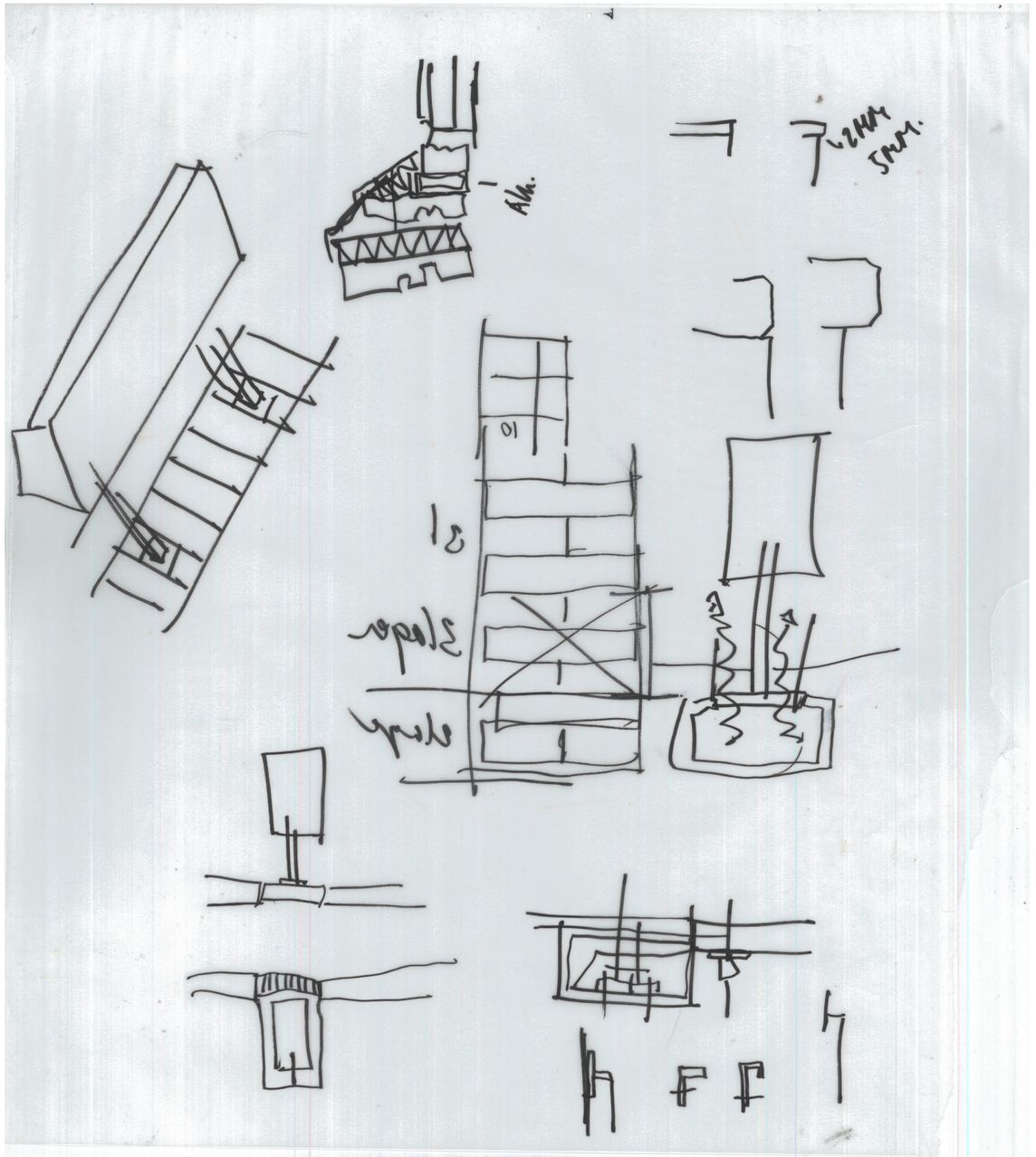
13 May 2022, 13:00
Zoom ID 953 2392 6732

discussing and sketching over 1:5 details

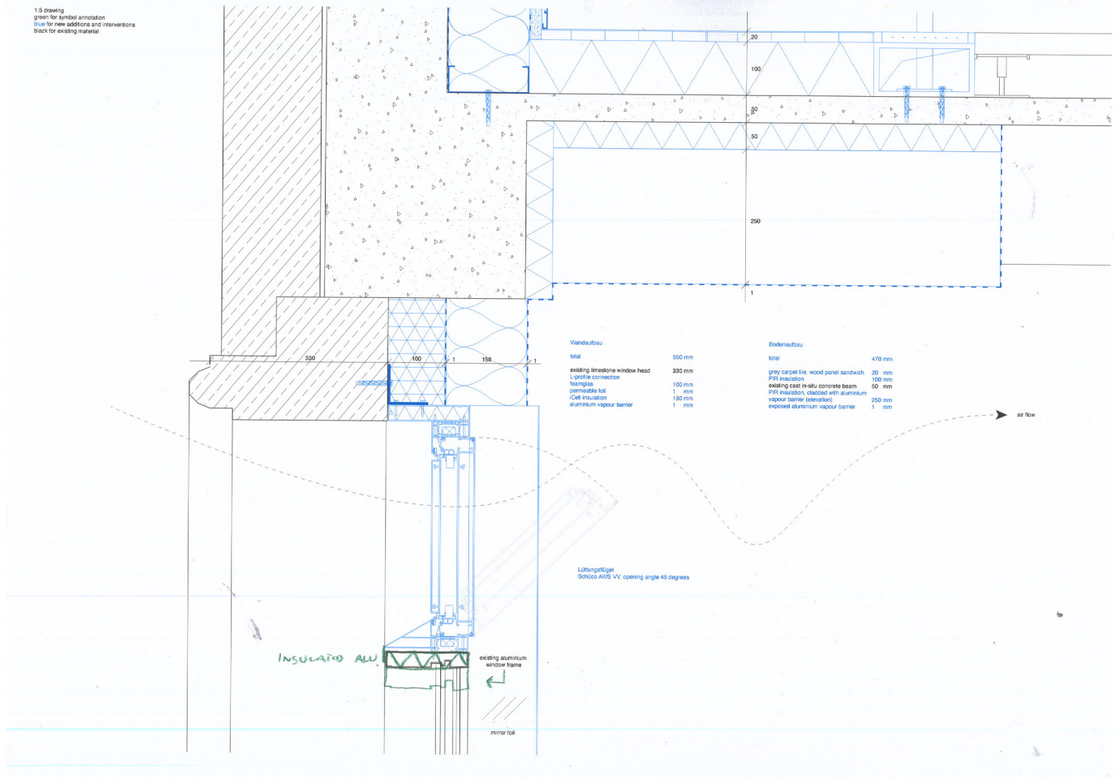
building engineering







1:5 drawing
green for symbol annotation
blue for new additions and interventions
black for existing material



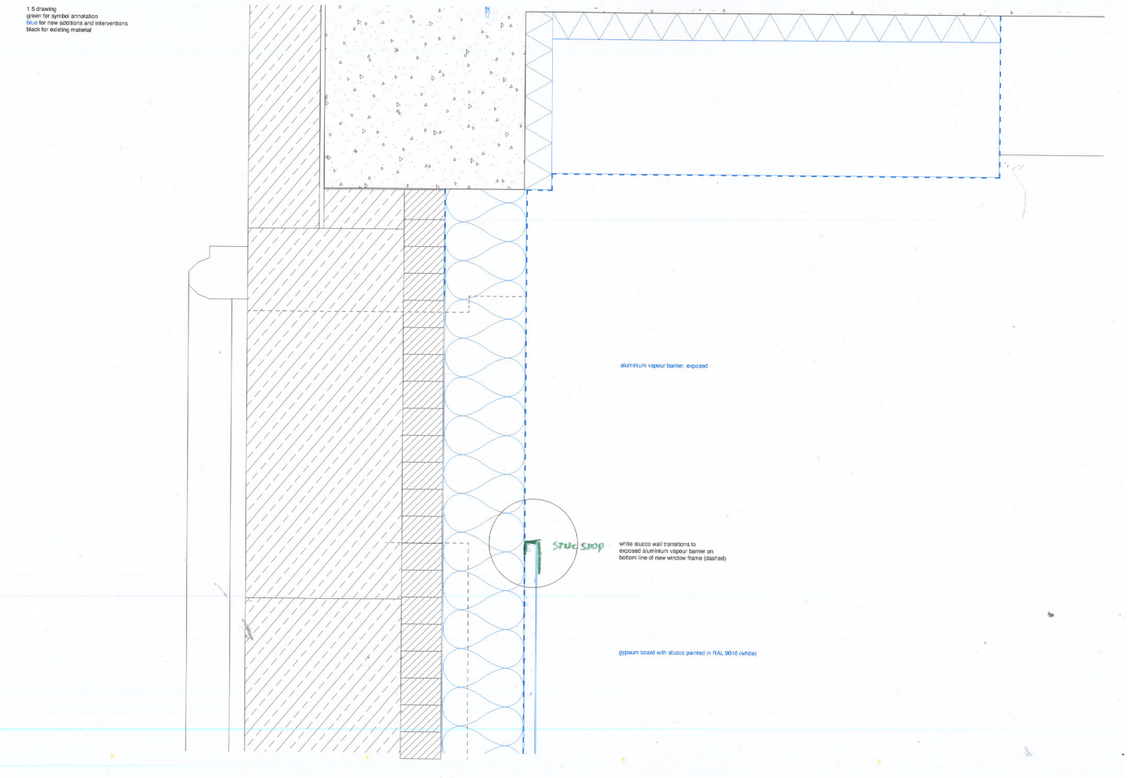
Wandaufbau

total	550 mm
existing limestone window head	330 mm
L-profile connection	
foamglas	100 mm
permeable foil	1 mm
iCell insulation	150 mm
aluminium vapour barrier	1 mm

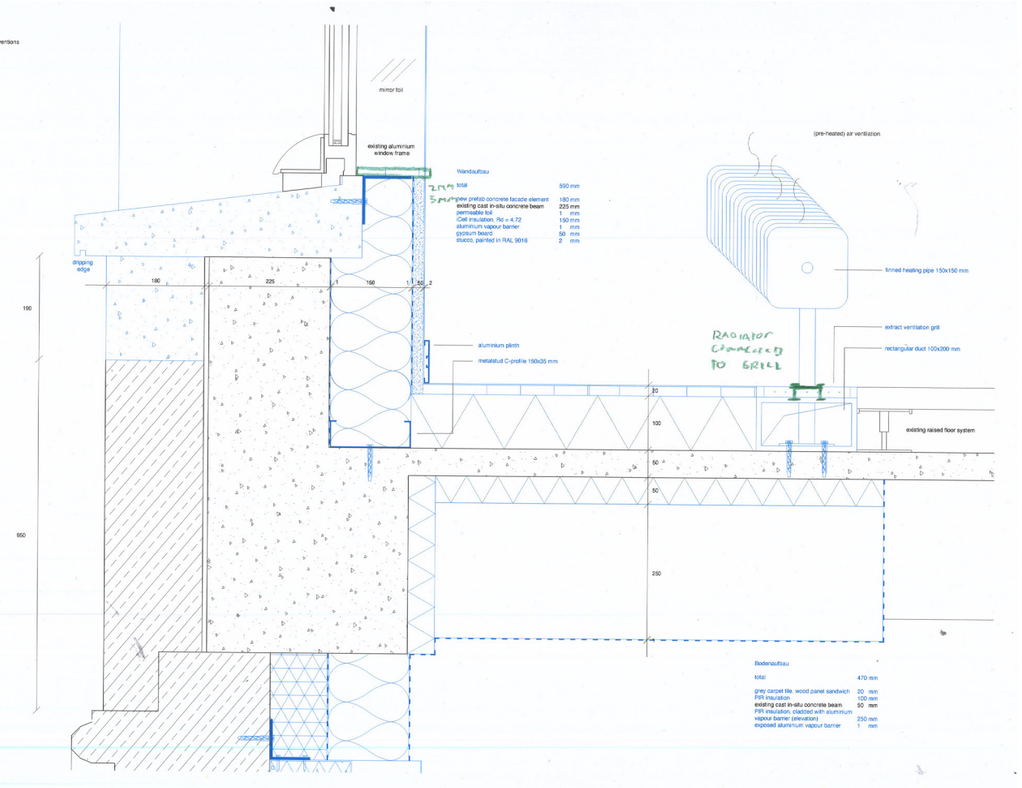
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1:5 drawing
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black for existing material



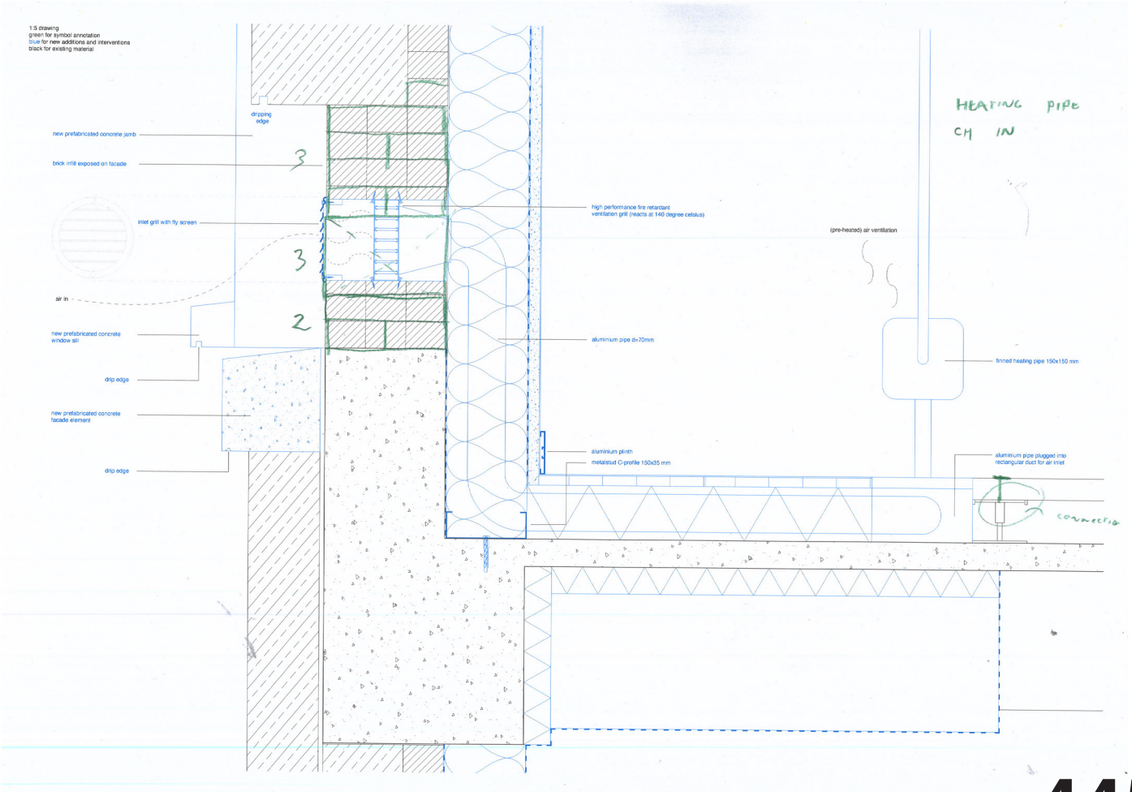
Wandaufbau

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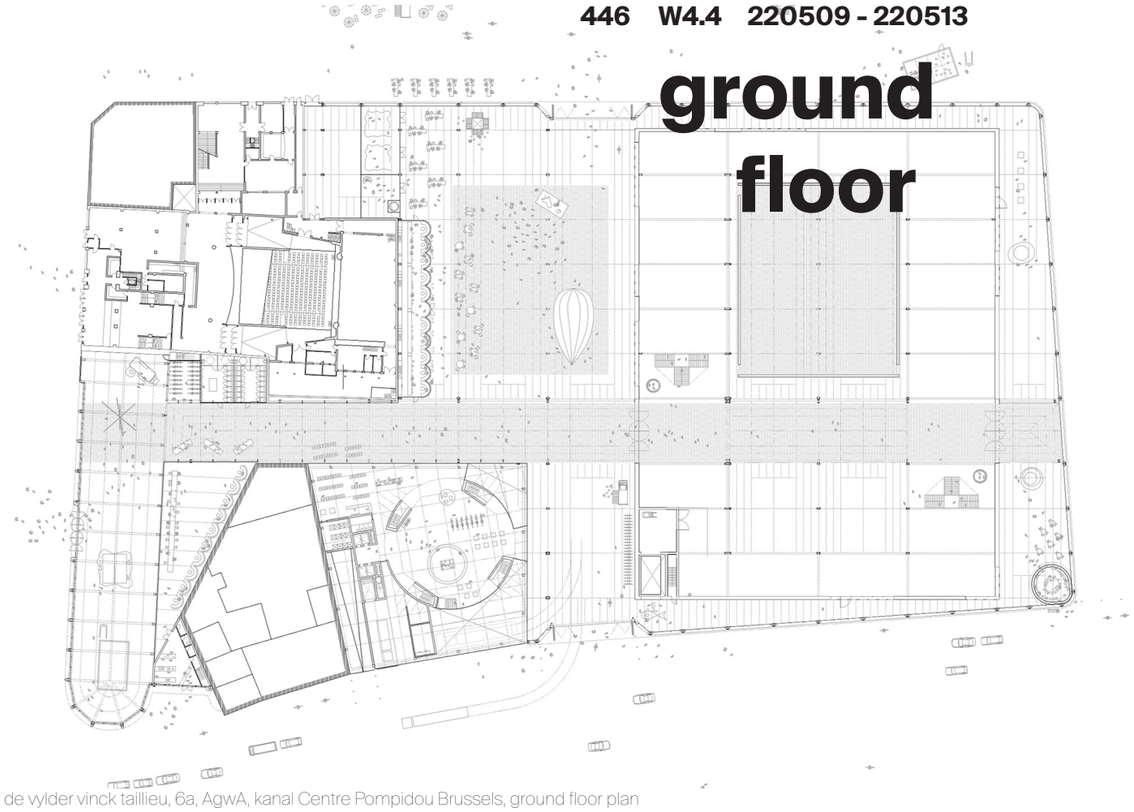
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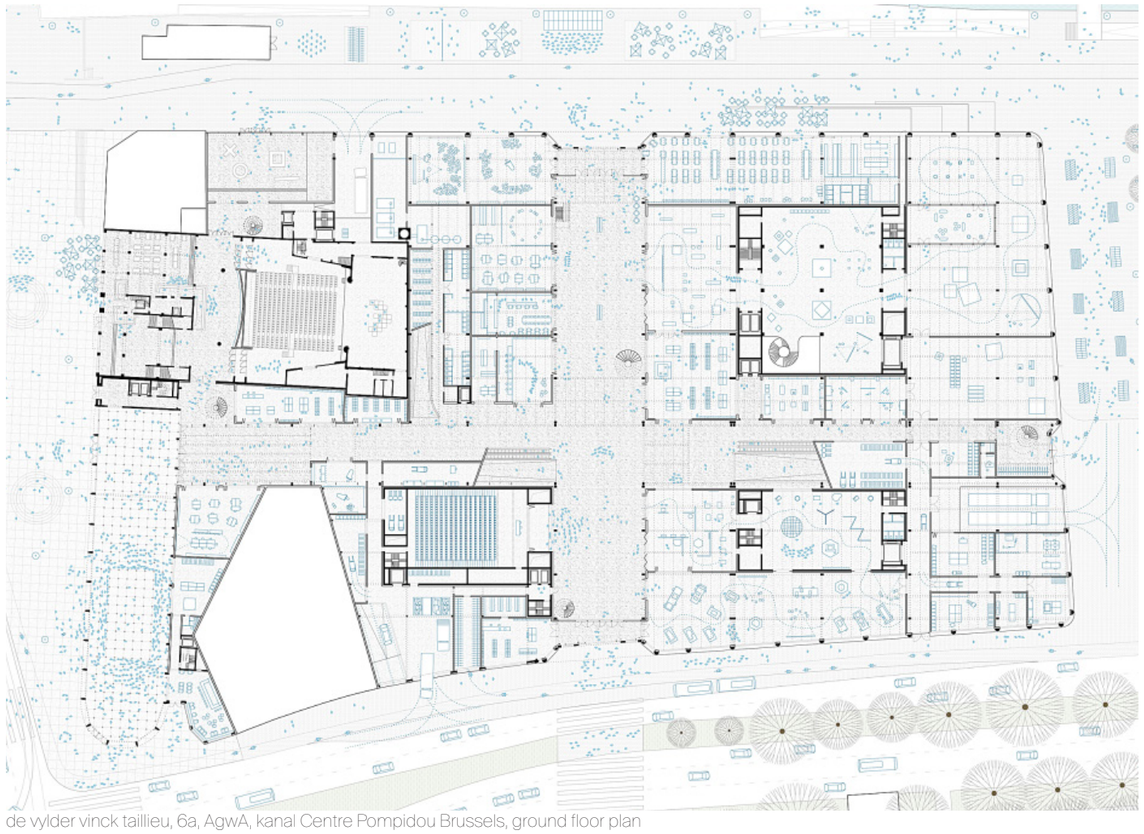
1:5 drawing
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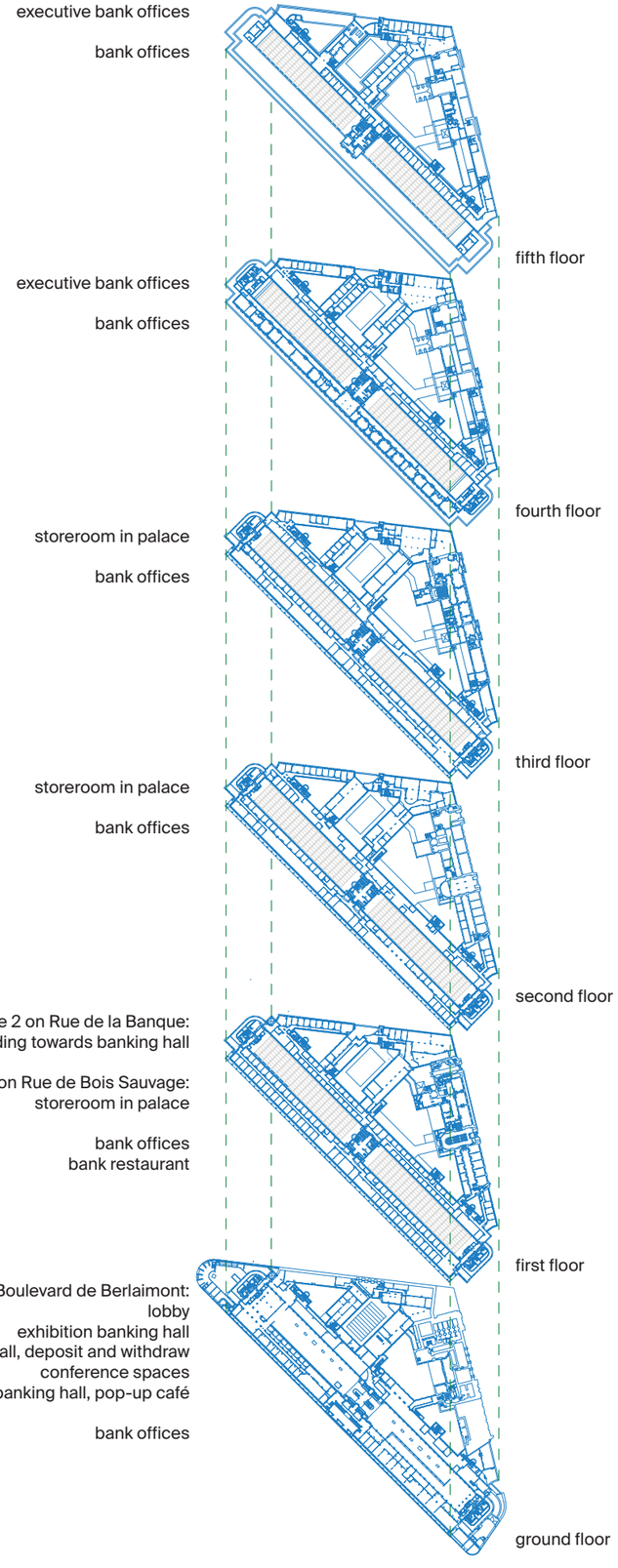
ground floor

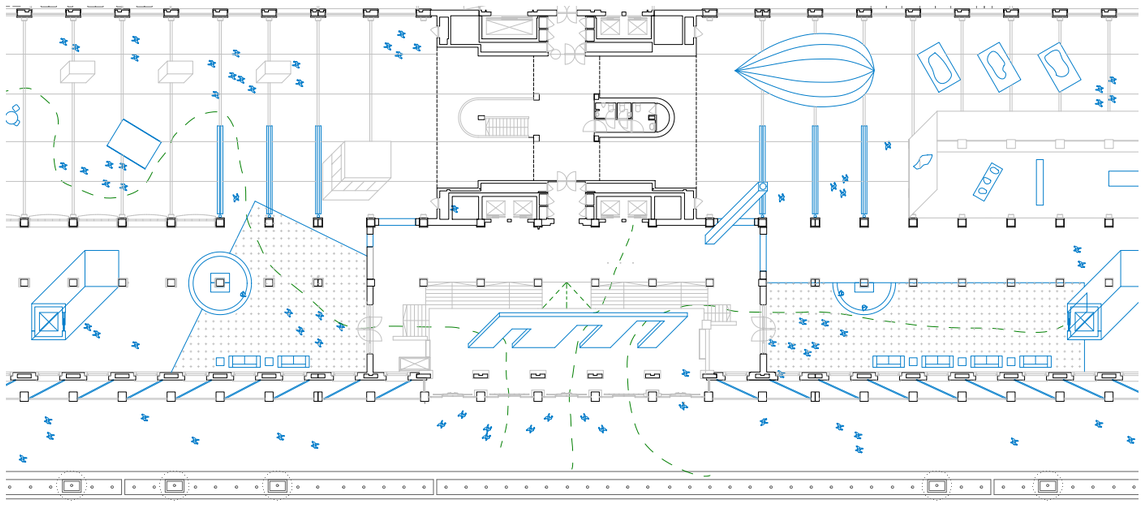


de vylder vinck taillieu, 6a, AgwA, kanal Centre Pompidou Brussels, ground floor plan

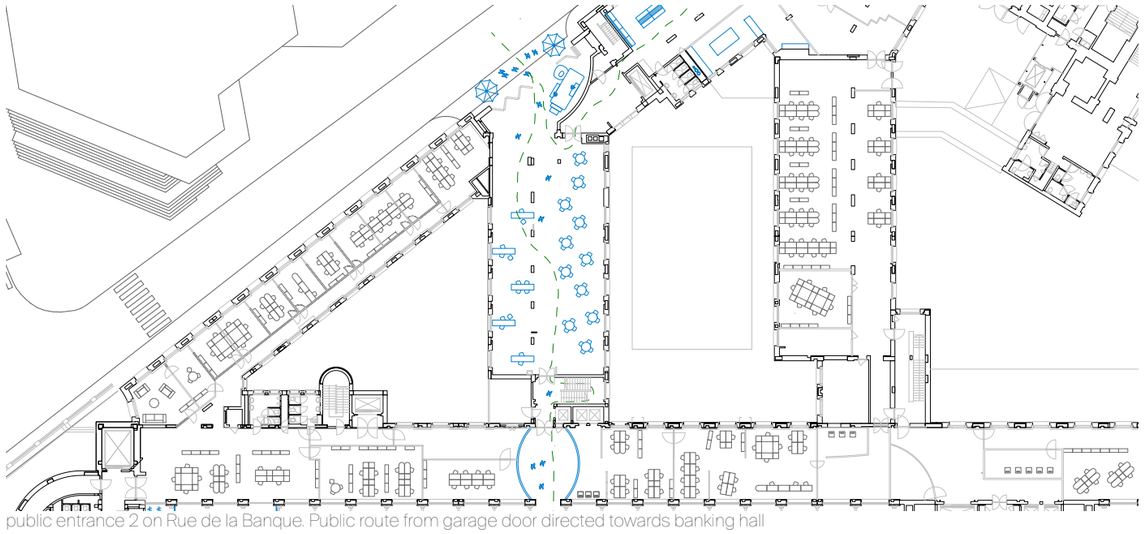


de vylder vinck taillieu, 6a, AgwA, kanal Centre Pompidou Brussels, ground floor plan





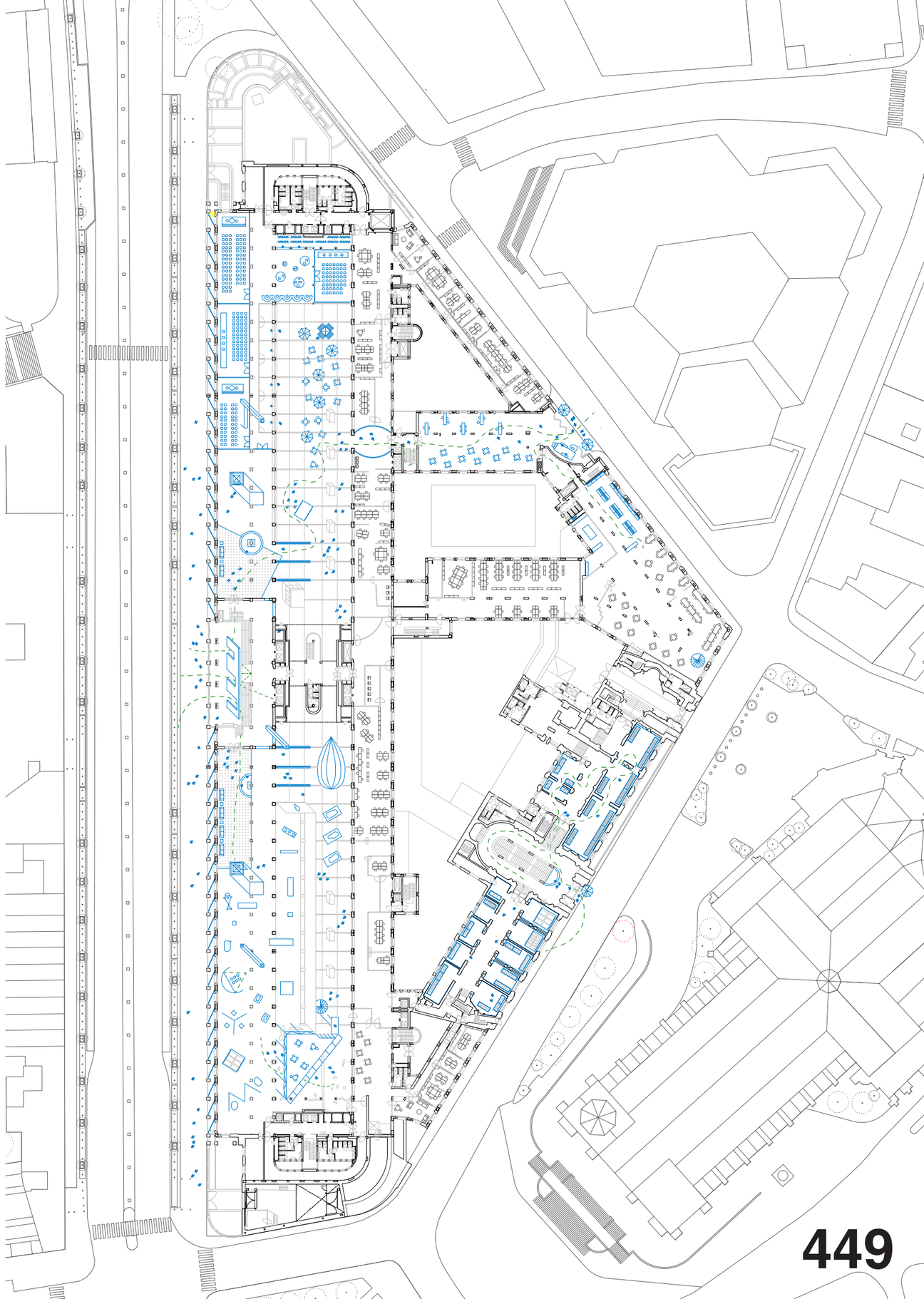
ground floor public entrance 1 on Boulevard de Berlaimont. Public merges with bank workers

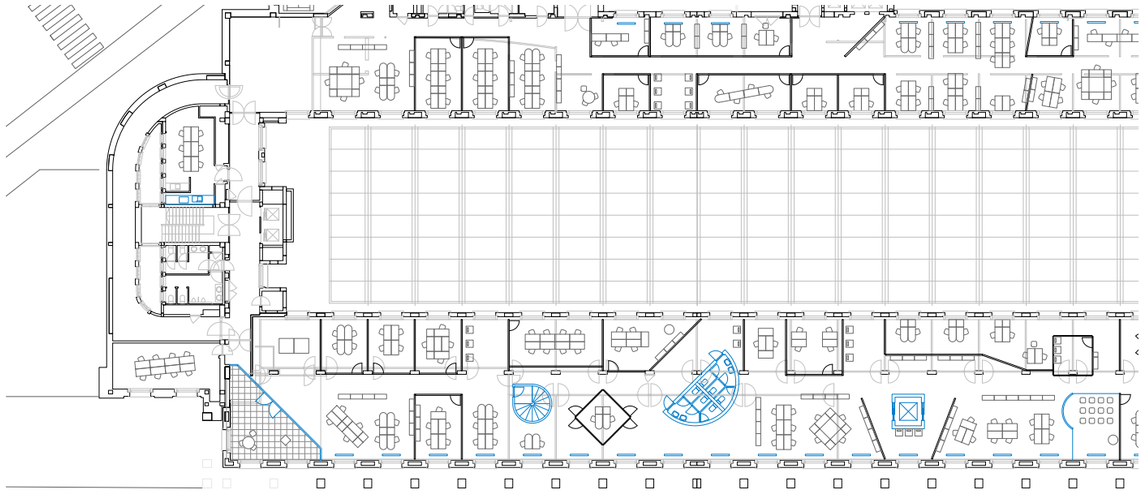


public entrance 2 on Rue de la Banque. Public route from garage door directed towards banking hall

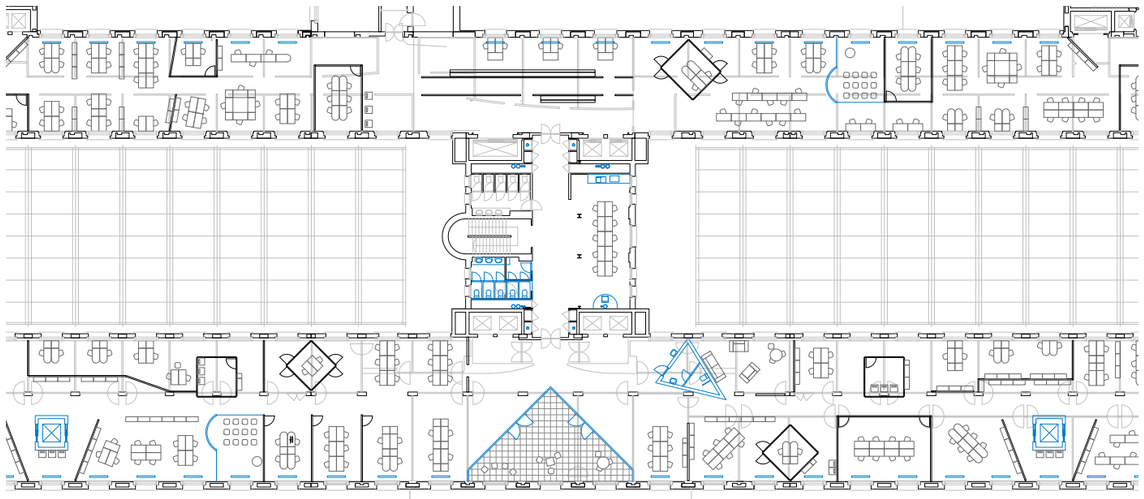


public entrance 3 on Rue de Bois Sauvauge. Public storeroom in palace.

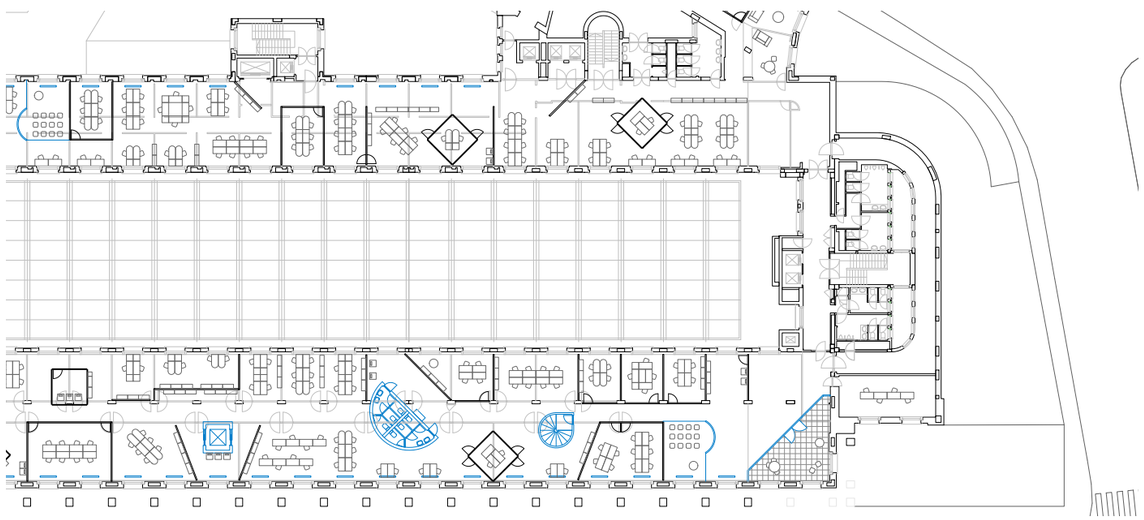


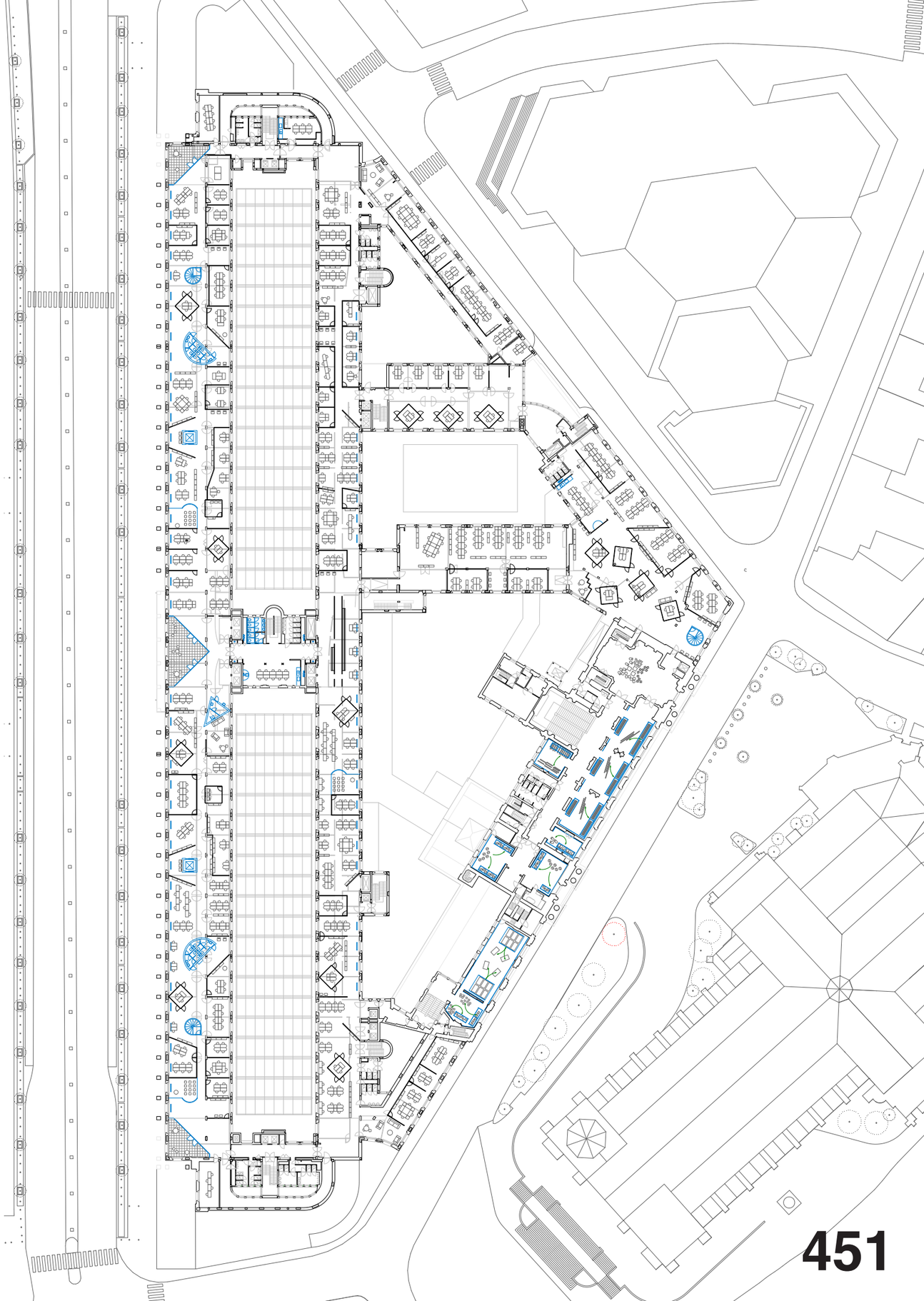


corner circulation core with corner triangular outside space in the interior. window frames with removed glass panes, columns on the corner dissected for optimal view and more light in the triangular glass box



middle circulation core with middle triangular outside space in the interior window frames with removed glass panes, columns on the middle above the bank entrance dissected for optimal view and more light in the triangular glass box





Sam De Vocht - BK
Yesterday, 8:23 PM
Laurens de Munck; Mark Pimlott - BK; Jurjen Zeinstra - BK

Re

pre-P4

Action Items

Everyone should have some slides that show what is taken away, what is added and the result.
Address the question WHY you do the things you do, focus on the relations between the users of the building, human or non-human agents.
Structure your project by scale, using a simple framework.
Place your building in the context, don't treat it as an island.

Notes Daniel
Very interesting and polemical - wondering what this happens when the conceptual undressing meets the realities of construction - damage to the fo of the installation - snots of mortar between the stone face and the brick construction is revealed. Who curates the office interior and who visits it. A building materials part of the museum exhibition of the bank

Notes Sam (including feedback of the other tutors present)
Undressing
Reconfiguring
Displacement
Very complete presentation.
Freestanding ventilation column in the middle of the table I keep on finding quite strange.
Detail 1:5 where the insulation of the roof and that of the wall come together: could this be elaborated more smoothly?
Relation to the cathedral as a collection box.
Longitudinal section 1/50 would be interesting showing both the interior and exterior, not in two separate sections
Who is curating the interior of the palace?
What is it for?
Foil facing of the gyproc is not pristine What happens with these things?
Inevitable degradation of construction
Materialisation

Good energy for the further preparations of your P4!
Sam

Future Bank, reflection

Future Bank, the graduation studio of Interiors Buildings Cities 2021/2022 revolves around the transformation of the National Bank of Belgium, a 90.000 m2 triangular building block which is to this day functioning as the offices of this national central bank, between the lower and higher part of the central city. The refurbishment of these offices and the related transformation of the city block offers an opportunity to rethink the National Bank of the future, the Future Bank, as a more open and permeable environment, whilst simultaneously critiquing the existing building(s), the role of the Bank in contemporary society and attempting to recognise the bank of the future as an agent for change.

The design propsal for this transformation is based around the adaptive re-use of with the vast, complex, existing building that the National Bank of Belgium currently is with an emphasis on its interior layers. The building is filled, or rather cluttered, with materials. Ranging from building services like ducts and heating, standardised elements such as raised floors, partition walls, suspended ceilings to objects such as chairs, tables, shelves. Many of these building components are rather taking away space than creating it. 31% of the floor to ceiling height of the section of a typical office floor is being taken away by the raised floor and the suspended ceiling. Essentially, the function of many of the building components is to obscure building services like ducts, cables and heating.

The design propsal aims, among other things, to make building services active instruments in the interior of the office, that no longer need to be obscured. Thus, these building components can be undressed, reconfigured and displaced.

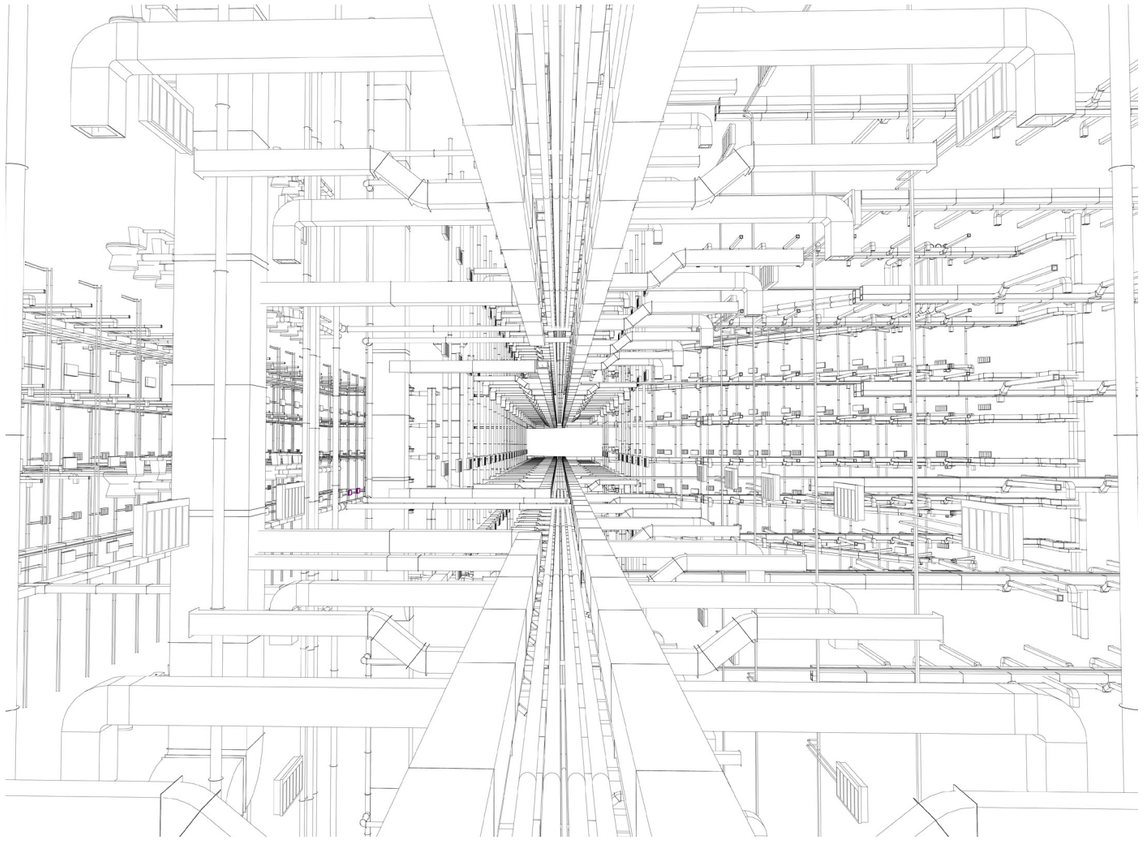
The New National Bank of Belgium reveals the illusion and theatre of the office. Attempting to make space fully available. Floor panels, ducts, doors and partitions are selectively undressed and meticulously stored in the Governor's Hotel on Rue de Bois Sauvage, where one of the new public entrances to the New National Bank of Belgium is to be found. In this new storeroom, these building components, which are not unique to this building, can be in dialogue with the city either as valuta or didactic elements.

The New National Bank of Belgium merges the public of Brussels with the Banks employees. Two new public entrances are to be found on the ground floor, both leading into the monumental banking hall of the building. A permanent exhibition space, where the Belgian art collection of the bank is offered to the public in the banking hall, the other half of the banking hall maintains its original function, with conference spaces behind it and a informal meeting spaces within a representative space.

Relevance

The theme of this studio is not about inserting a new object into the city, but rather tackling a vast, existing building block in central Brussels, which seems particularly relevant in contemporary times. The project has a radical trust in that which is already there, the built fabric that the current existing situation offers. The project is not revolving around a spectacular architectural intervention, rather it offers specific interventions that make the building more fit for purpose whilst simultaneously liberating the interior of the building. Much building stock in (Belgian) cities is quite similair to this building, partly-abandoned and partly too big to program. All bank buildings are facing this problem either now or soon. The adaptive re-use of this existing Bank building seems therefore relevant in the larger social, professional and theoretical framework

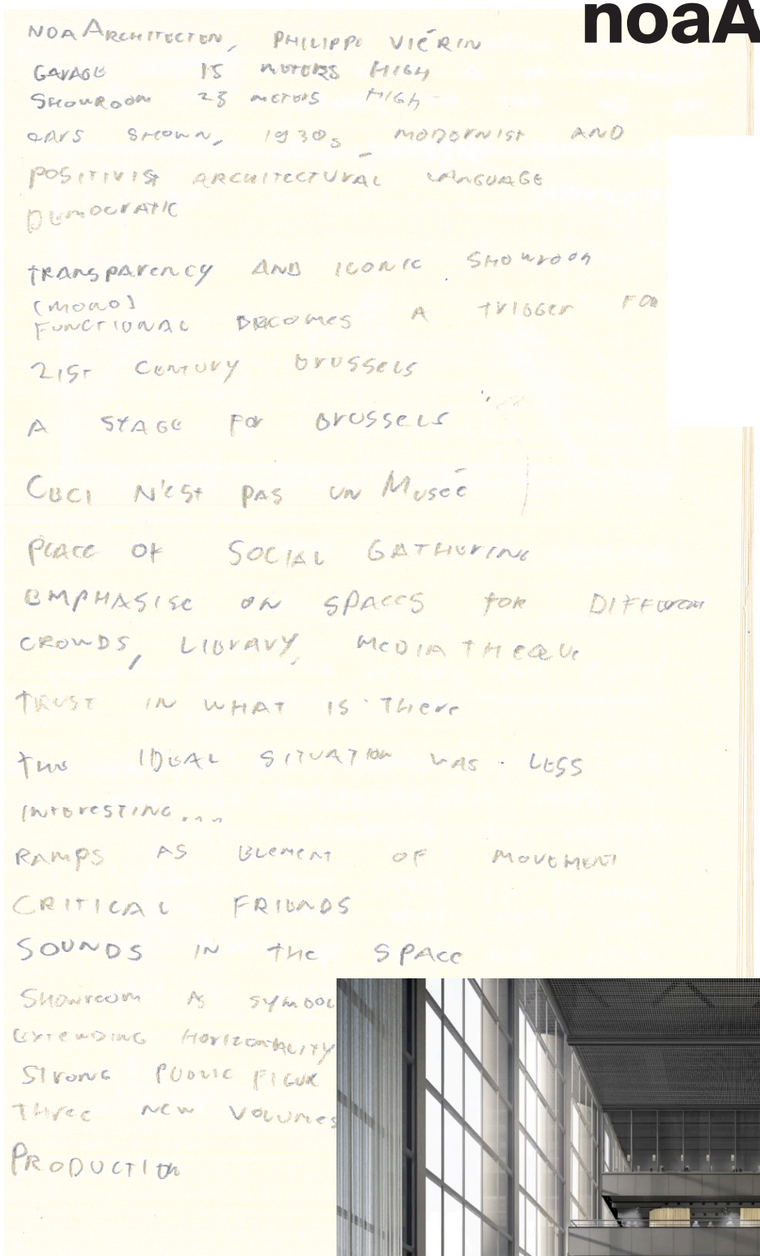
Developing a strategy for dealing with an existing building where the specific focus in relying especially on what is already there, the existing and perhaps obsolete standardised and technical elements of the National Bank of Belgium, thus localising the economy of the construction site as work on the building is mainly focussing on reconfiguring, dissecting and displacing existing building elements.



+ Philippe Viérin (partner noaArchitecten)
on Kanal - Centre Pompidou

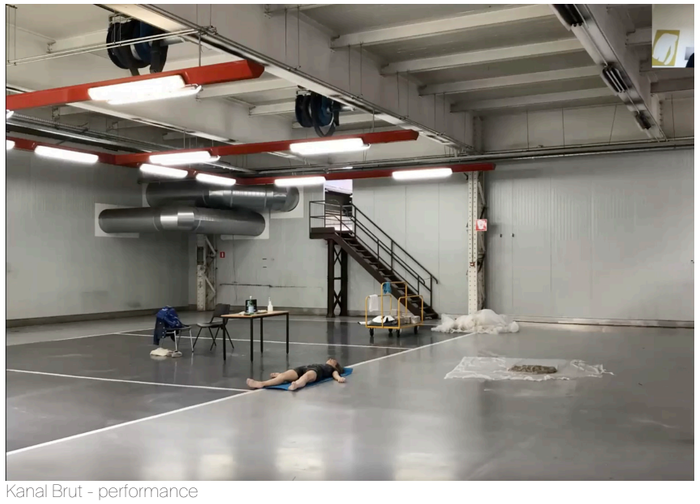
Zoom lecture for the studio (and others interested)
organised by Ron Barten and myself.

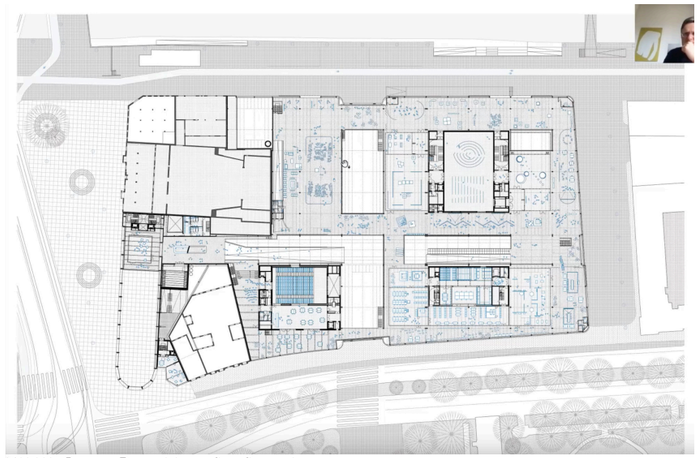
lecture noaArchitecten



TRUST
IN WHAT IS THERE

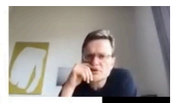

KANAL Centre Pompidou - former showroom, now permeable with guillotine openings


Kanal Brut - performance


KANAL Centre Pompidou - first floor plan


Kanal Brut - theatre


KANAL Centre Pompidou - textured ground floor plan

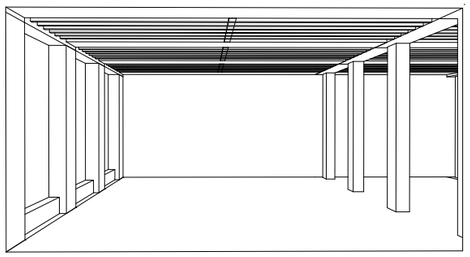


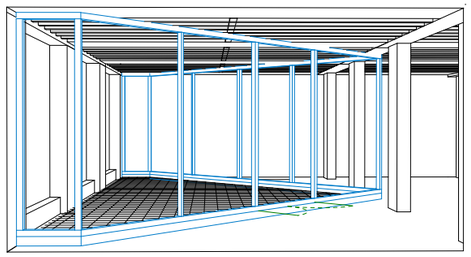
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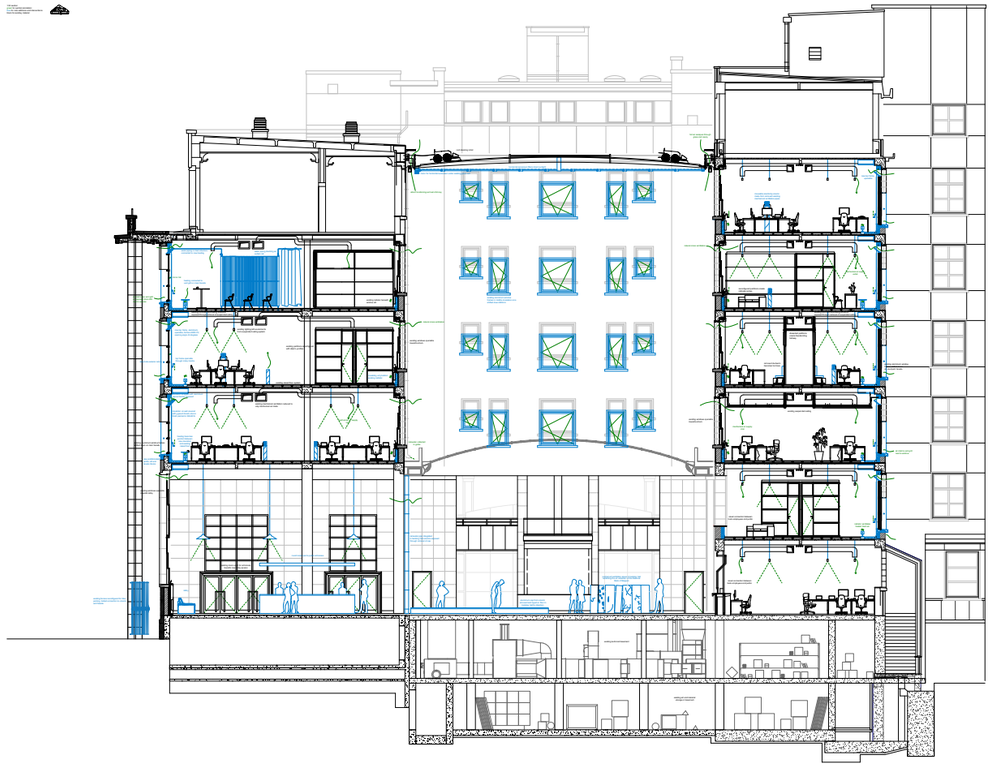
reworking/updating and making drawings
compiling drawing book

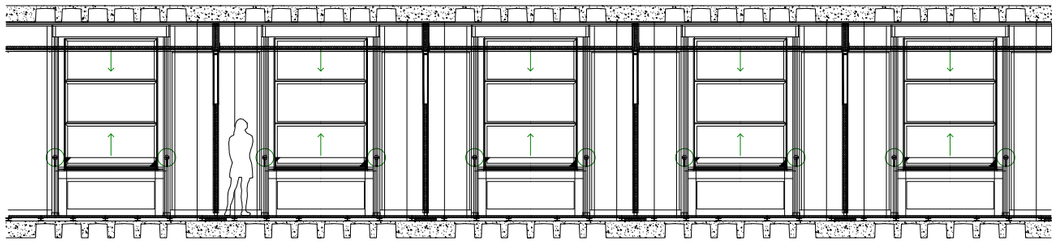
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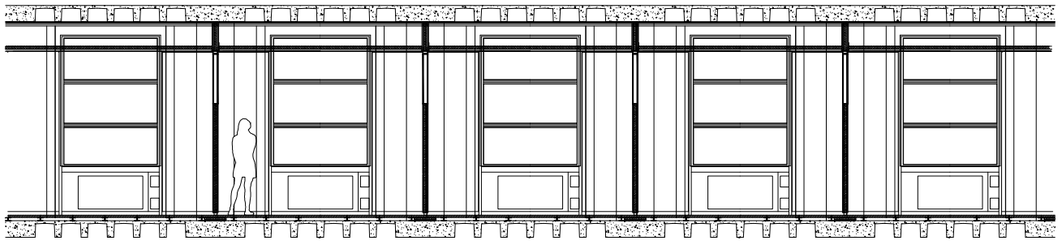
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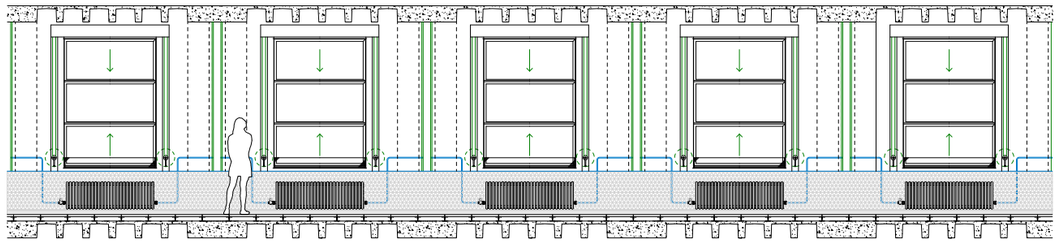


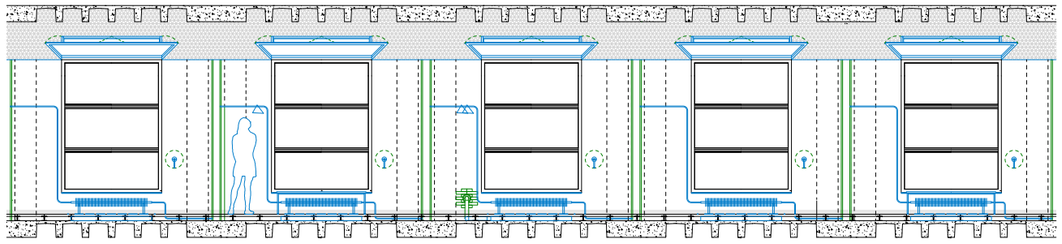












+ Bas Leemans, Ron Barten

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post P4

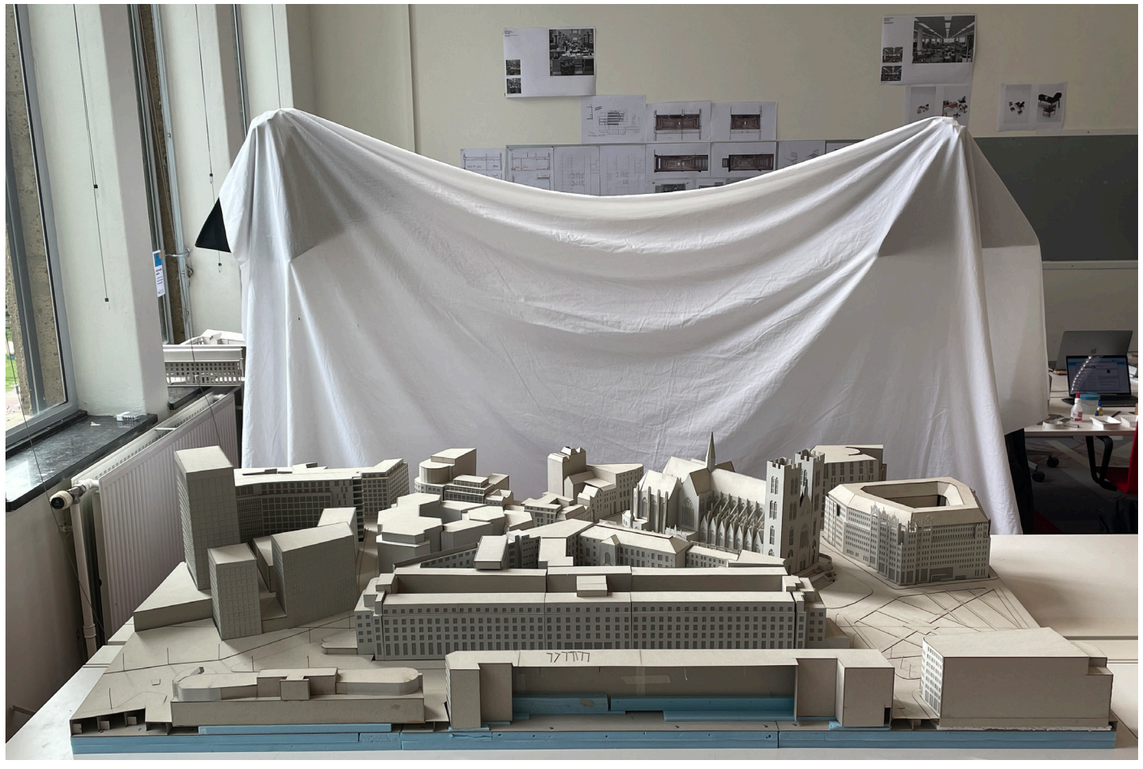
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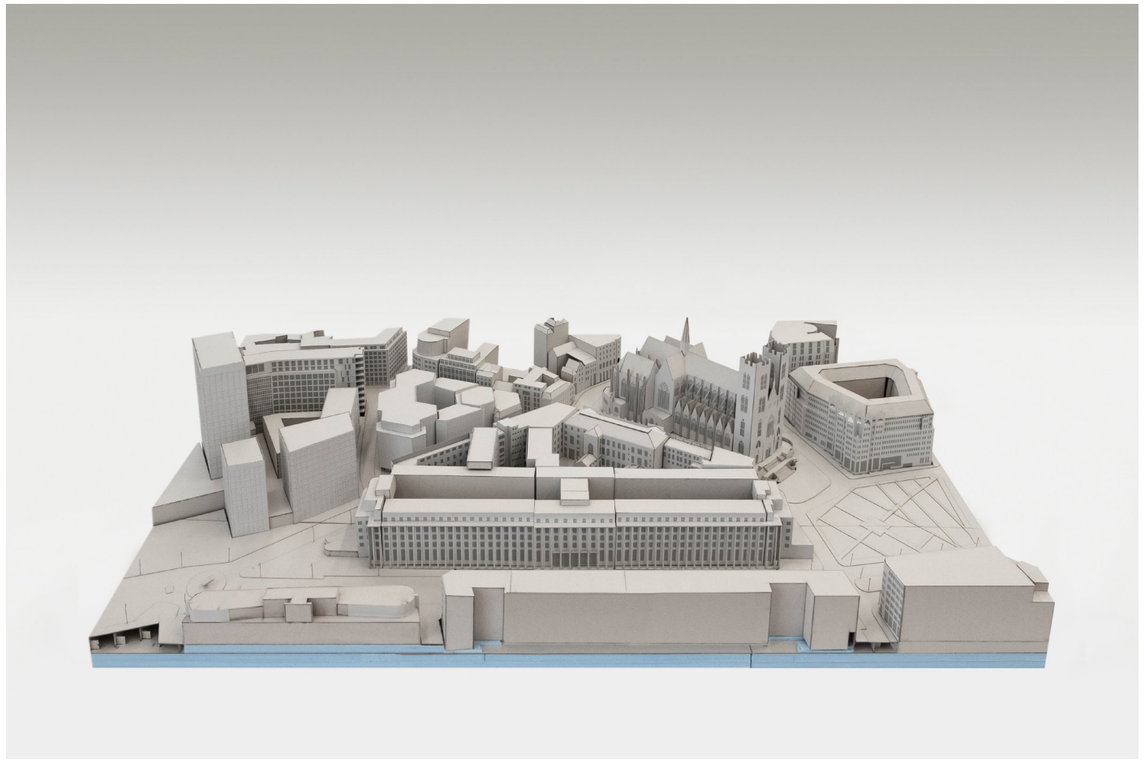
updating, finalising and photographing the 1:200 cardboard model

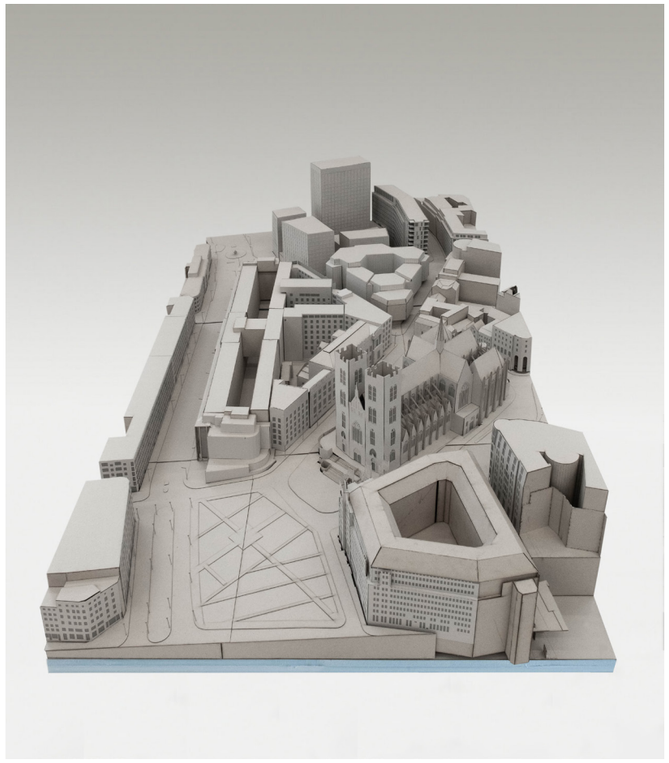
retouching, adding columnar facade of the bank in the model

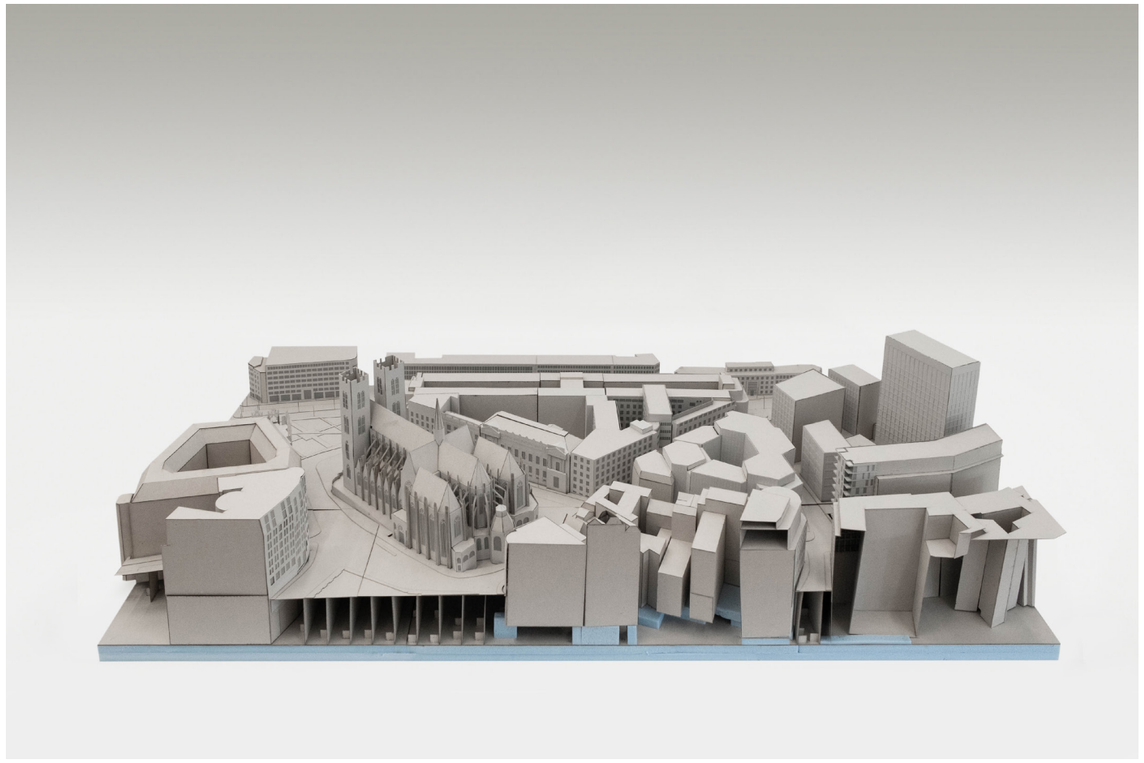
photographing the situation as is, without any interventions

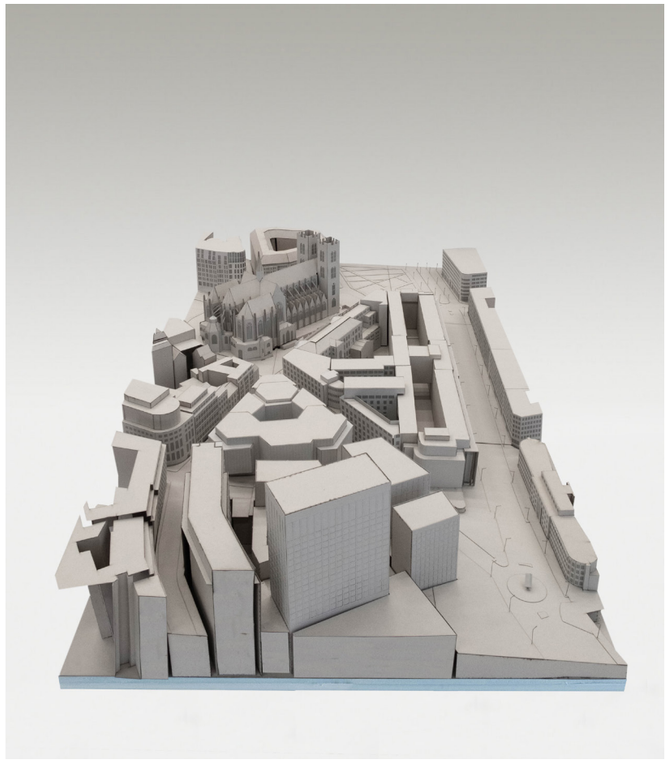


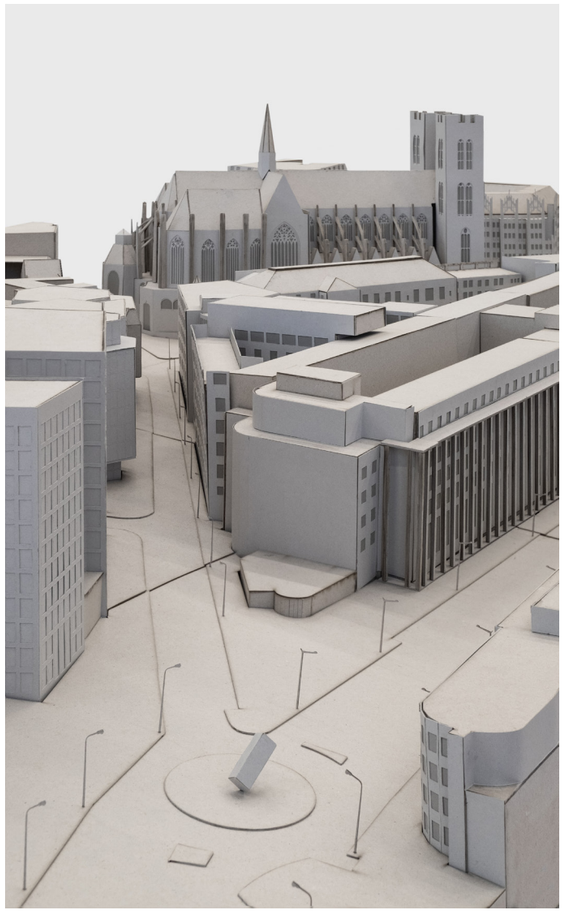


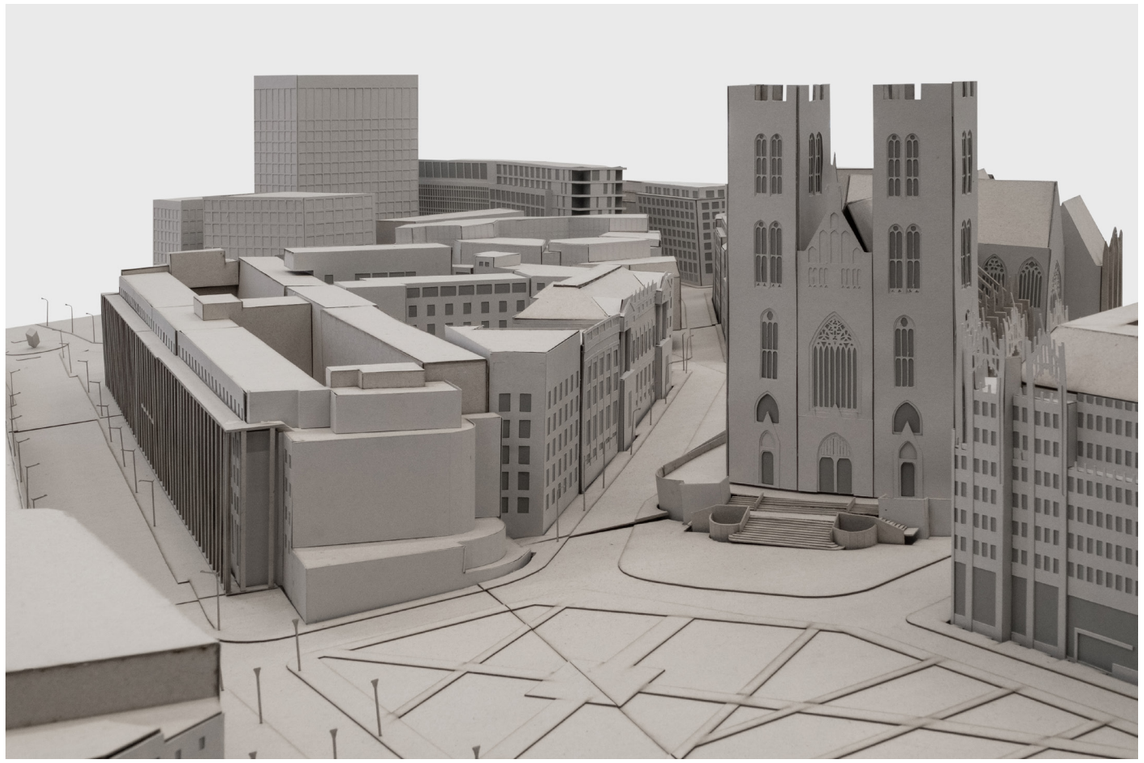














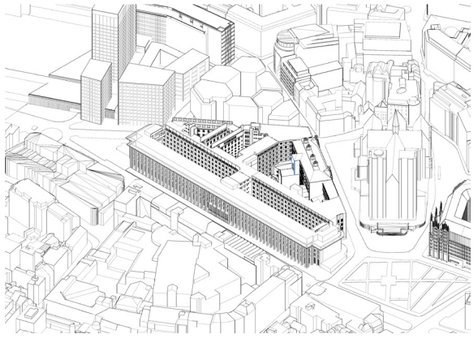
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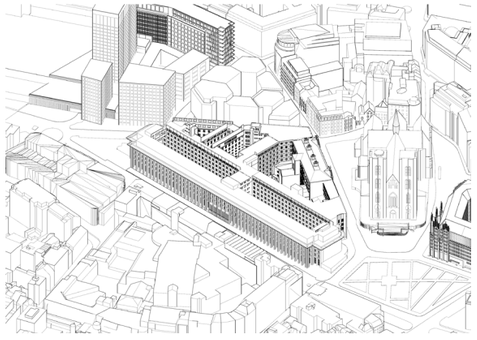
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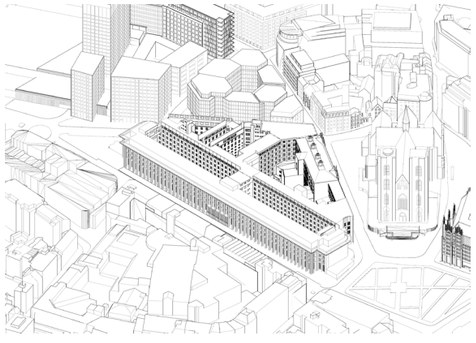
axonometry,

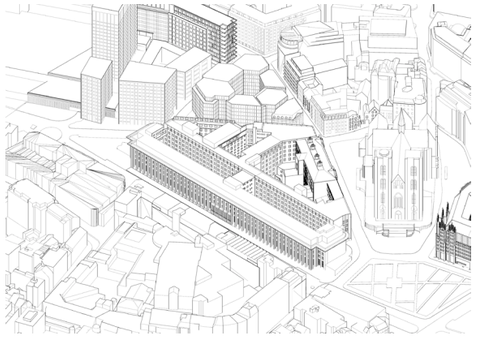
making an overview axonometry with all the material we already had at hand for the 1:200 model

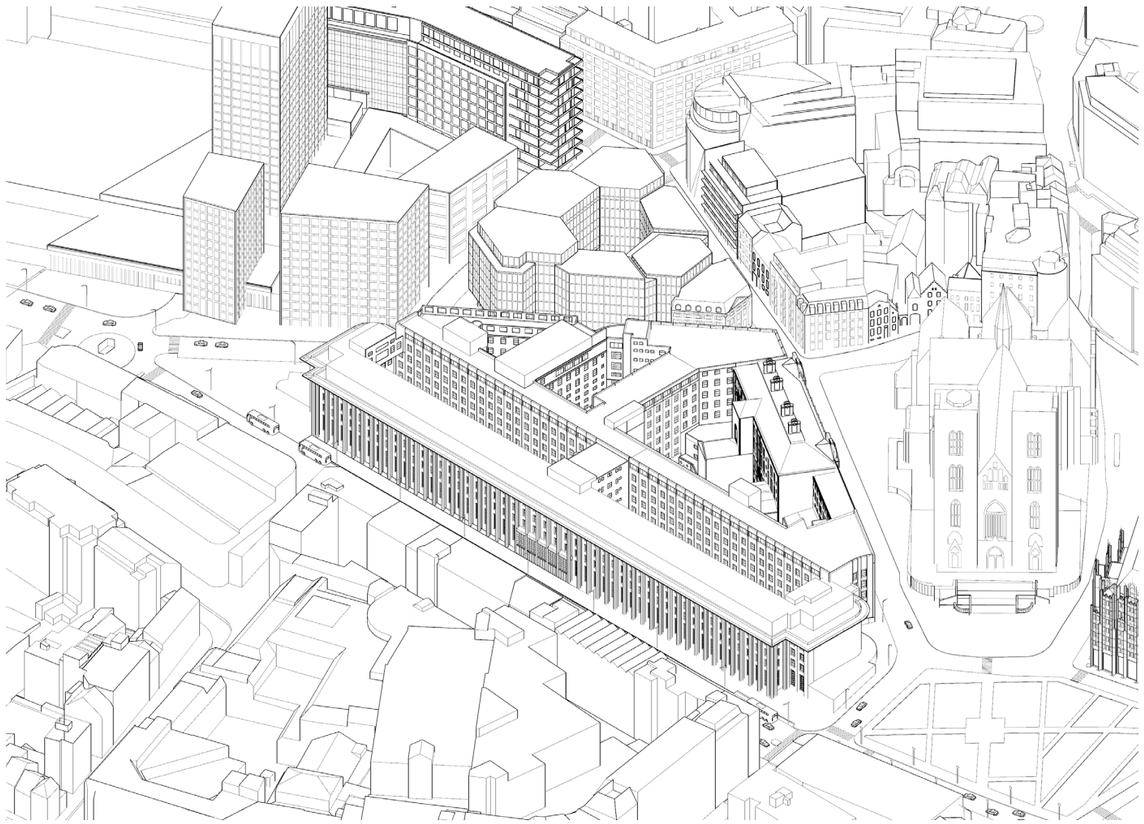
drawing in streetlights, cars, zebra crossing, cleaning lines,

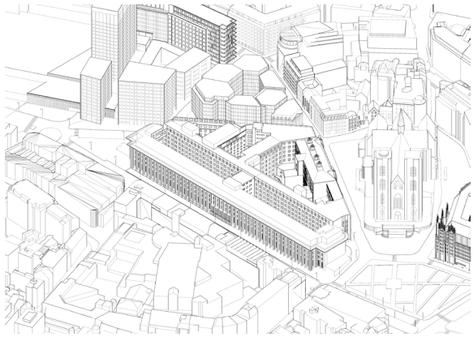


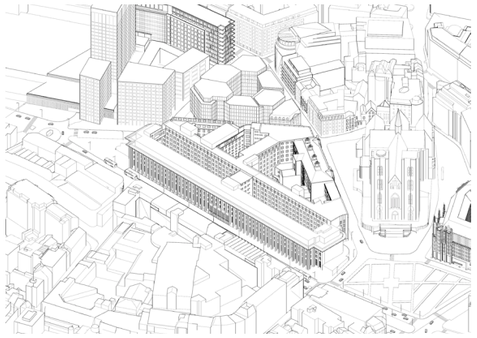












models

making 1:20 models that show the full palette of the office interiors and the breakroom

all foam surfaces must be cladded with a material or color
everything should be understandable

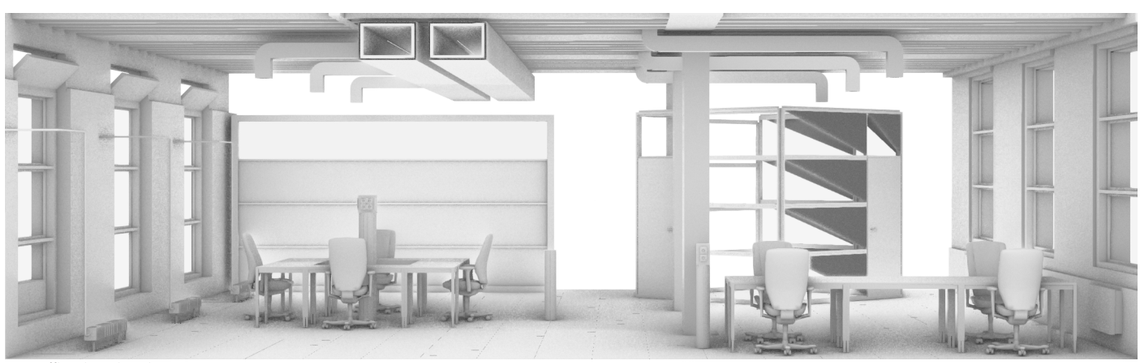
1:20 models made for specific photographs, view defined beforehand (see right page)

immersive (model) photographs, one should have the feeling of being in the space when looking at them..

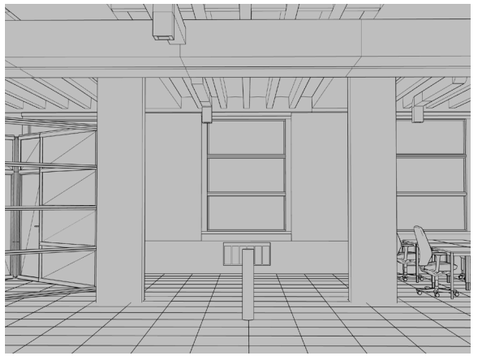
looking beyond the white window

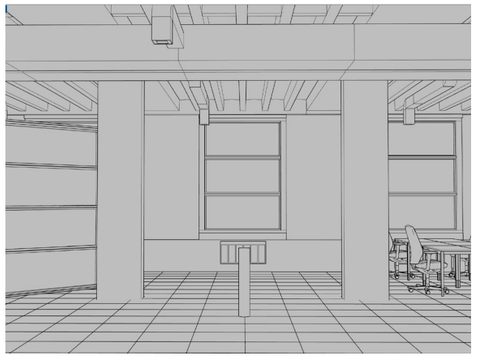


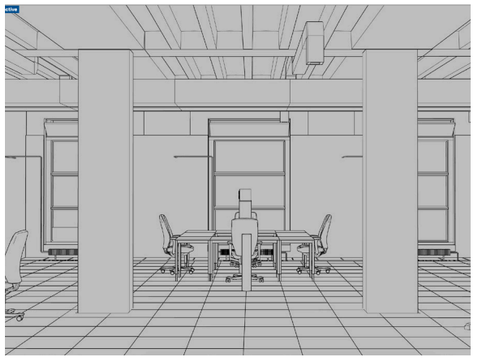
breakroom in middle circulation core, current situation

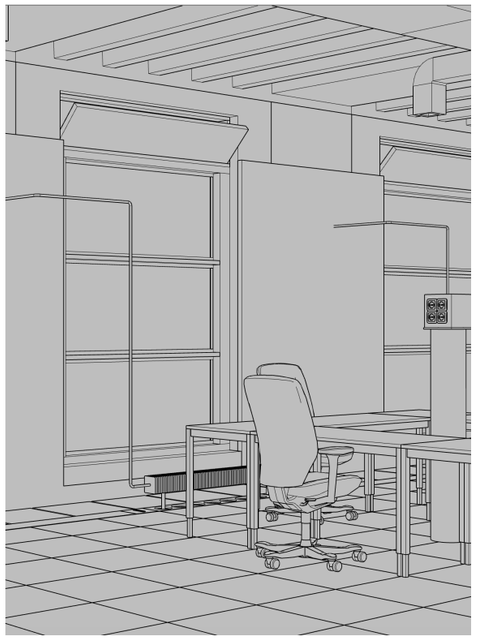


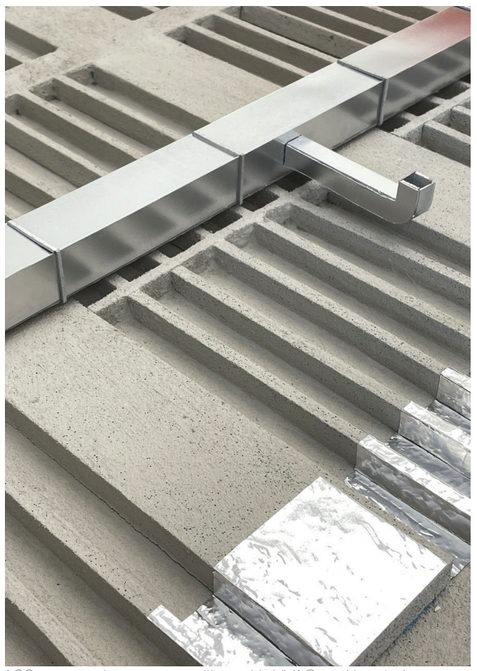
new office interior view











1:20 exposed concrete ceiling with HVAC and insulation



1:20 breakroom in middle circulation core



















1:20 breakroom in middle circulation core































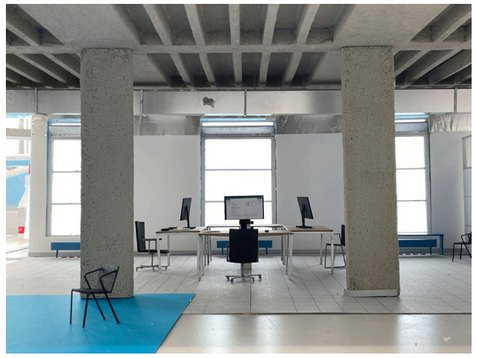




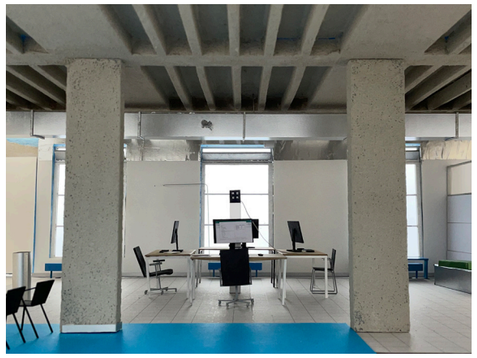
1:20 office facing interior atrium

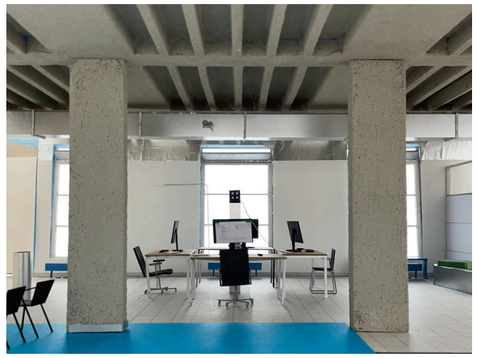


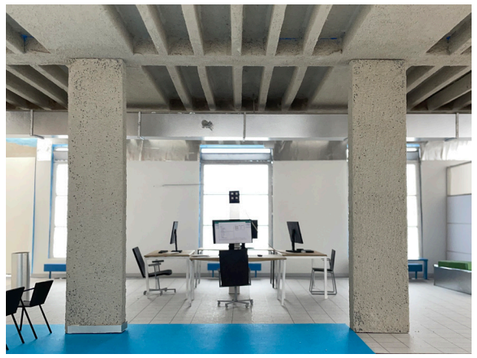
1:20 office facing Boulevard de Berlaimont

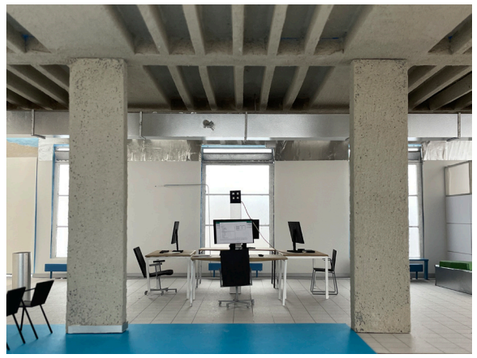


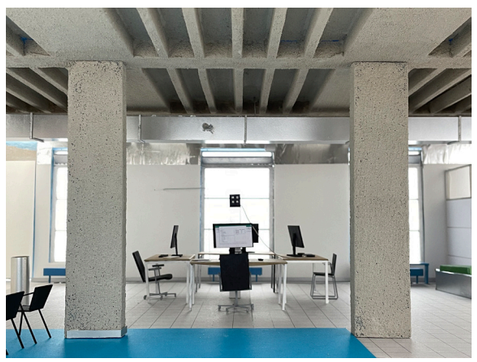


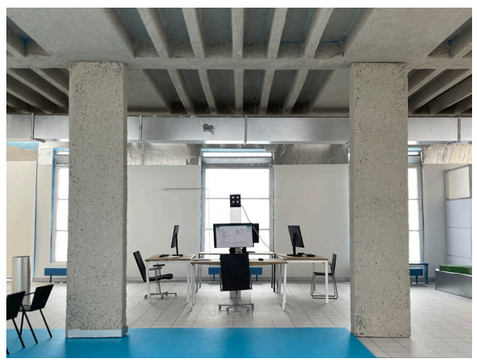












OASE #84 Models

Models and Other Spaces

Milica Topalovic

Once she had asked an architect to design a house for her; she had built his project in canvas as a 1:1 model, then decided against it because a nearby train came too close to the theoretical house. . . . I suddenly saw him inside the colossal volume, a cubic tent vastly lighter and more suggestive than the somber and classical architecture it attempted to embody. I guessed – almost with envy – that this strange 'enactment' of a future house had drastically changed him: were its whiteness and weightlessness an overwhelming revelation of everything he did not yet believe in?
Rem Koolhaas, 'The House That Made Mies', *S,M,L,XL*, 1995

Disbelief

There are spaces whose main quality is that they don't appear to be real. Some of them seem to linger on the edge of reality: they may look too simple or too perfect or even too familiar. Or they look slightly imperfect, with some crucial details missing, almost disappearing before your eyes, like a faded image. Others seem to escape reality in the direction of a mental space: they are too particular, obsessive in the way that details and elements are arranged, caught in the grips of individual fantasy, taking on the features of the mind of their maker. And sometimes a space seems to be a pure departure into the unknown, away from the common laws and norms of reality: a new universe of forms and relations.

Model

The reality of a space is brought to question when its attributes contradict conventional experience; for example, when a space or a place seems to be doubled or multiplied, when a place thus comes to act for another place, and the reality of both the original and replica loses credibility. Doubt is also cast on the reality of a space when a time shift is involved, when a space seems to try to enact an event or a setting from the past or in the future.

The space of a model always seems unreal, as it comprises precisely these kinds of time and space shifts; a model always points beyond its specific geographic and temporal coordinates to a different space and a different time. In the space of a model, *here* becomes *there*, and *now* becomes *then*.

Walking In

A model's distance from reality is constructed by creating a certain detachment from the body, a reduction of sensory perception. Architectural models, for example, are small, usually made on a scale that is incongruent with the scale of the human body: they are meant to be apprehended visually, not to be inhabited. Still, the scale of the model doesn't seem to produce a difference in the way its space is perceived. In life-size models (think of the fragile qualities of theatre sets, dioramas or art installations) the sense is that they are not meant to be physically occupied; they, too, are objects of contemplation. The use is indicated, but generally not 'allowed'. The space is ungraspable, fixed between familiarity and distance. The body is tranquil, the eyes and the mind are alert. One walks there as if in a dream.

Looking At

The distance from reality is also constructed by way of a certain mirroring property of models, where a protagonist in the real space is reflected in the model space. In an architectural model, for example, a (white) model figurine serves as a vehicle to transpose oneself from an actual situation to the potential one of the model. In the silhouette of a white figurine,

'I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up'[1] through the provisional, miniature edifice. In turn, the model exerts a sort of a counteraction to the position I occupy. From the standpoint of the model, I don't look back; I seem unaware of myself where I am. The space of a model is always under a gaze, but the gaze can never be directed back. The threshold between the two spaces is impassable, impenetrable.

Reality

In a real space, an unreal one: in a building, a model. Whereas models are seen as imaginary and transient, buildings constitute the idea of reality and permanence. Buildings are real, it might be said, just as there are real spaces and real places and things that concern the real life of men. This is reality understood as the world of facts of material existence, independent of meaning and interpretation. But the idea of reality that is interesting here is not a fixed category. This is the idea of reality as specific to time, to place and to their protagonists, of reality perceived and constructed as a subjective truth or a particular regime of truth.

The idea of a model corresponds to this idea of reality as a construct. To model is to construct, to engage in a creative process – *to mould*, *to model* – as in forming in clay or wax. This sense of model is close to *image*, *to form an image of*, *to imagine*, to alter reality.

Imaginary

To imagine is always to recognise in reality that which is not perceived through senses in a given moment, that which is absent, and even nonexistent. Yet the imaginary is not a realm opposed to the real world as its denial or compensation. It grows among things, from room to room, in the interstice of buildings; it is born and takes shape in the intervals between places. It is the phenomena of the real, of the everyday.[2] Every concrete situation in the world, every moment is pregnant with the imaginary. Imaginary objects are equally phenomena of reality – a kind of an assemblage of one's impressions and knowledge – reality is their source.

For a possibility of a 'passage' from imaginary to the real, the structure that enables one to grasp imaginary objects from the standpoint of reality is sometimes called analogy.[3] Meaning literally *proportion*, similarity, analogy or *analogia* is an object or icon that stands for something else. (This is rather familiar ground in theology, where descriptions of divine attributes use *via analogia* such as 'God is a rock' or 'Jesus is a shepherd'). Through the processes of the imaginary, an object – an icon, a model, a work of art – ceases to be a thing-in-itself and begins to be imbued with the attributes of that which it represents – it moves beyond itself.[4]

In a Dialogue with Reality

The space of a model is perceived to be on the border between representation and actuality. Like a painting, where the frame, the brush strokes and the cracks in the paint and varnish are imprinted into and merged with the image itself, a model is neither purely material nor a transcendental object. It claims a certain autonomous objecthood, yet this condition is always incomplete. Just as image is always an image of, a model is always a model of. And precisely because it serves as an analogy for another object or condition, it allows for imaginative occupation.[5] A model can neither be purely real nor pure imagination; there is always a dialectic. It is somewhere on the edge: reality plus or minus something else.

Architecture of the Imaginary

If architecture is a veritable genre of space creation, then the model is fictional. If architecture serves to stabilise, reinforce and build up the structure of the real, models can be understood as the architecture of the imaginary. If architecture can structure our sense of reality, models can loosen and disrupt that structure – revealing the freedom that we have.

Reality, the state of things as they exist in the world and in consciousness, is perhaps more comfortable with things existing in the state of permanence. It is as if the fragility and weakness of physical space, of its architecture, can weaken the very fabric of reality, and permit the imaginary to seep in. On the horizon of reality lies a skyline of paper volumes, cardboard coulisses and canvas cathedrals: everything reality does not yet believe in.

In the Rescue of Reality

Curiously, there seem to be periods in the life of a society when models and their social role take precedence over buildings. For example, the exploration of environments that have qualities of models, such as the 'the room as a work of art', was extremely present in the early twentieth century. A total work of art, where the spectator is immersed in both time and space, emerged in architectonic works by Kurt Schwitters (Merzbau), El Lissitzky (Cabinet abstrait, Prounenraum) and the De Stijl complex l'Aubette à Strasbourg, among others.[6] No doubt, such engagement was anything but an accident. In Kurt Schwitters' words: 'In the war . . . everything had broken down and new things had to be made out of the fragments; and this is Merz.'[7] As if the post-war reality itself called for an intervention: Schwitters called it Merz, but Dada and constructivism essentially meant the same: to construct a new world from the debris of the old, if not in reality than in one's own room.

These works make it clear that the value placed on reality and the conceptions of it, not the medium of representation, are essential. When the building is being built or when its material existence comes to define architecture, as it did in the post-war decades, then 'studies of a hypothesis' are an embarrassment. But in times when buildings seem unreal, when Beaux-Arts for example looks false, or high modernism empty, then the idea and all of its manifestations in drawing, model or building will preempt reality. That is to say, in times of radical change.[8]

Our time and context (of the European West) to a certain extent diminishes the possibility of looking into and representing the future – a condition that Schwitters and El Lissitsky could not avoid. The perception of reality is relatively stable, slow moving; it's the time of a dialogue with reality, rather than remaking it.

In the Museum

It seems today that models as medium of spatial design, but also of critical engagement with the world, are migrating more and more from architecture to art. Whereas physical models in architecture acquire the status of an obsolescent or perhaps romantic modus operandi, contemporary art – and artists such as Guillaume Bijl, Gregor Schneider and Hans Schabus, among many others – continue to deploy the same techniques introduced by Schwitters and the avant-garde. In other words, a model seems to develop a special affinity with the museum.

The relationship of the museum with the world and reality is sometimes, following Michel Foucault's famous analysis,[9] described as heterotopia and heterochrony, a counter site. This concerns a curious property of the museum of being in the relation to all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralise, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate. In whatever way a museum is understood, as an archive or as a site of public interaction, for example, the site of a museum is essentially a suspension of real time and real place. A museum thus easily embraces a model, for its ability to bind itself to other realities, other spaces.

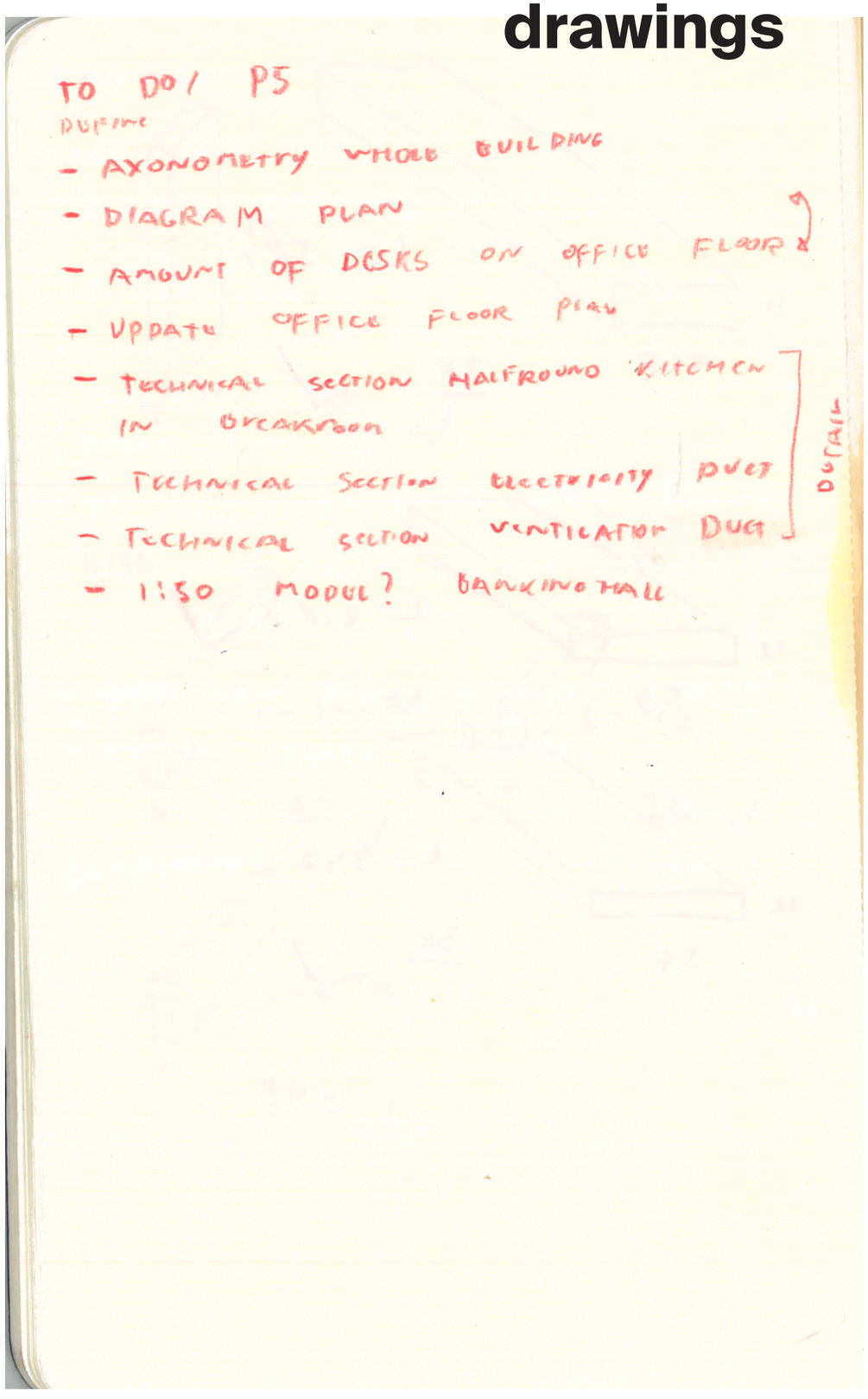


Hans Schabus, *Astronaut (I'll be right there)*, 2003
Secession, Vienna/Wenen

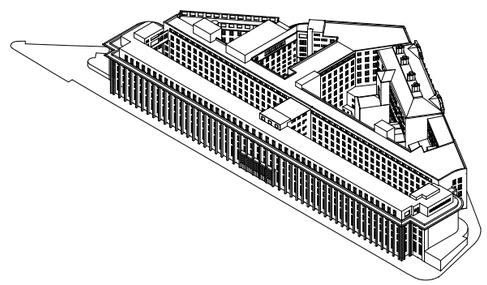


Hans Schabus, *Astronaut (I'll be right there)*, 2003
Secession, Vienna/Wenen

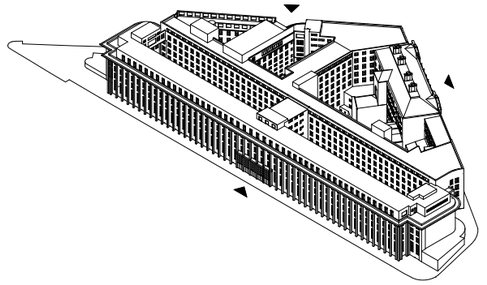
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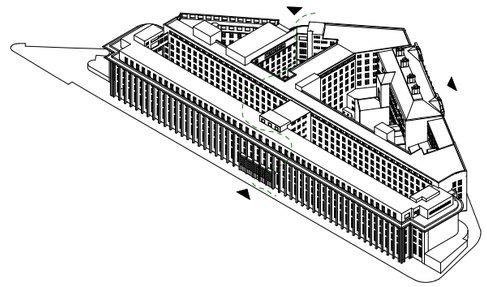
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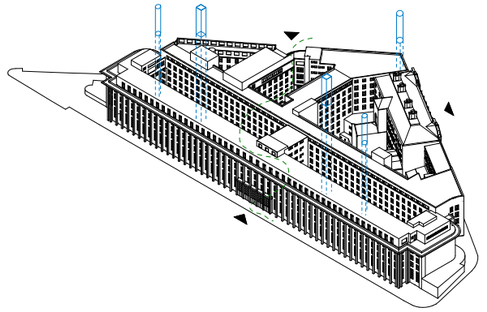
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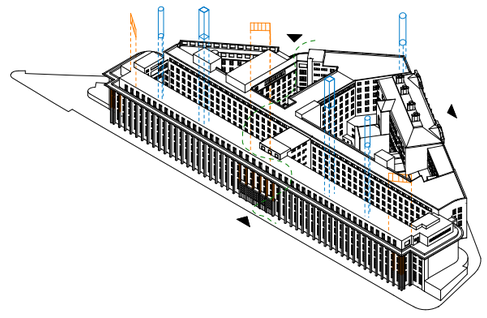
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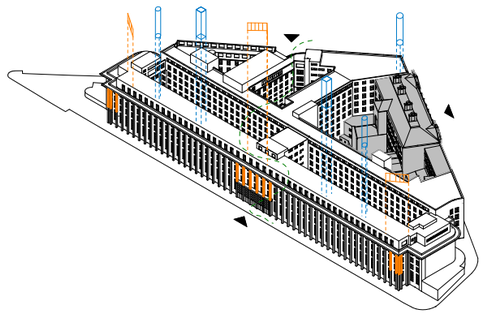
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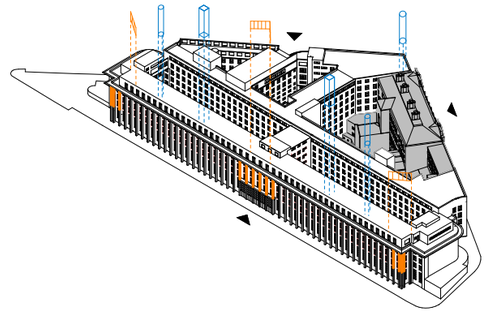
04.



05.



06.



00. The National Bank of Belgium ‘as found’
01. three public entrances
02. a new public route through the building
03. insertion of new circulation cores (lifts + stairs)
04. opening up the entrance and corners
05. palace as public storage
06. shifting down the windows

how to adapt the current infrastructure of the National Bank of Belgium as a permanent exhibition space?

move the material out of the basement towards the banking hall

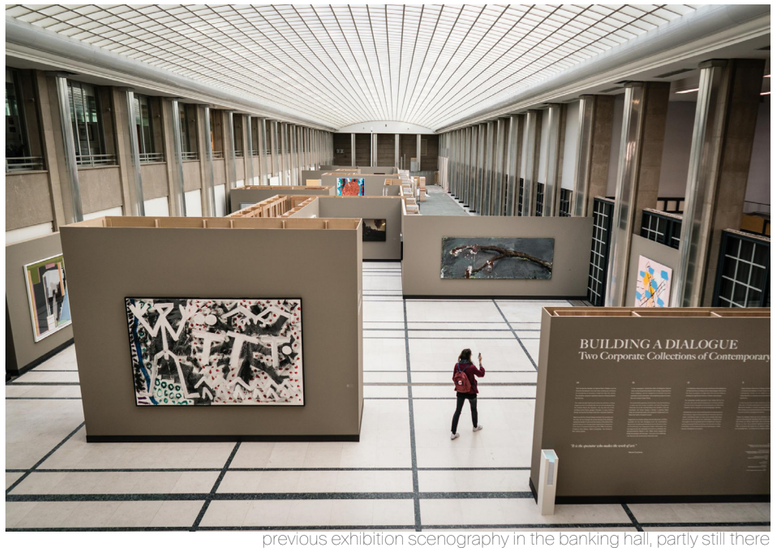
a permanent exhibition space, publicly accesible for the city

482 W5.1 220620 - 220624

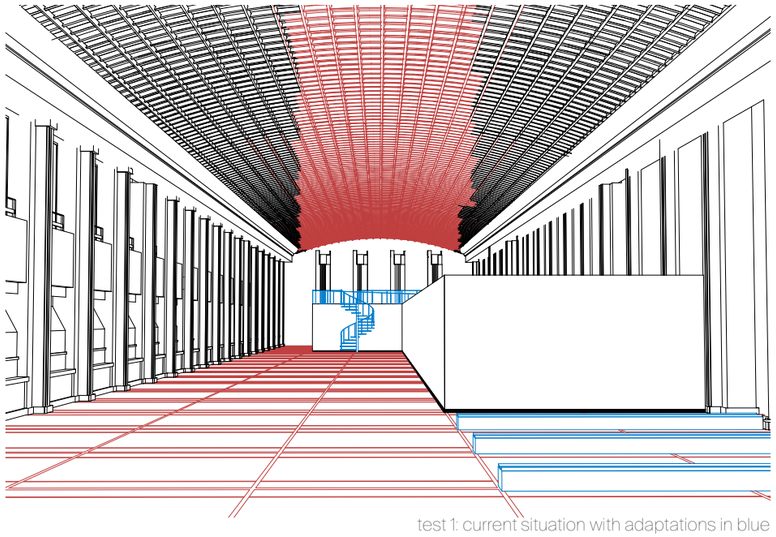
banking hall



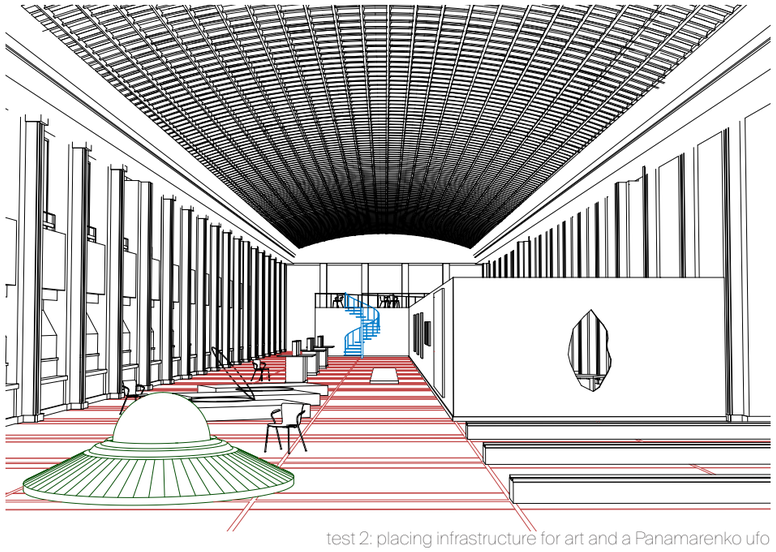
art storage in the basement of the National Bank of Belgium



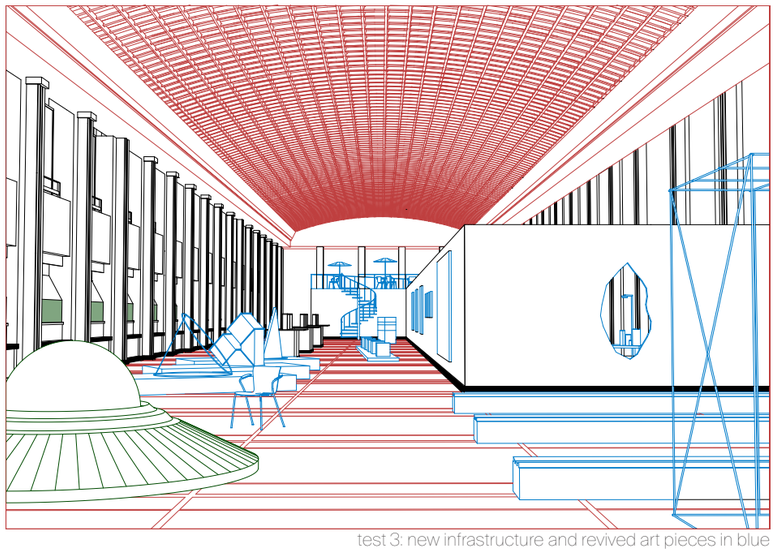
previous exhibition scenography in the banking hall, partly still there



test 1: current situation with adaptations in blue



test 2: placing infrastructure for art and a Panamarenko ufo



test 3: new infrastructure and revived art pieces in blue