

FUTURE BANK

PROJECT JOURNAL

Interiors Buildings Cities 21/22
Graduation Project

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TU Delft

CONTENTS

I	REFLECTION	4
II	INTRODUCTION	12
	THE NATIONAL BANK OF BELGIUM	14
	THE CONTEXT AROUND THE NATIONAL BANK	42
	GALLERIES AROUND THE NATIONAL BANK	60
III	INTERVENTION	78
	ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATE	80
	URBAN APPROACH	86
	INTERIOR RENOVATION BANK BUILDING	104
	INTERIOR RENOVATION RESIDENTIAL BUILDING	138
	STUDENT HOUSING TOWER	156
IV	CONCLUSION	168

I PROJECT REFLECTION



Source: bma.brussels

The website Investopedia defines a central bank as “a financial institution with privileged control over the production and distribution of money and credit for a nation or group of nations. In modern economies, the Central Bank is usually responsible for formulating monetary policy and the regulation of member banks”.

The National Bank of Belgium is part of the European Central Bank, which is based in Frankfurt and coordinates with other European central banks with regards to monetary and economic policies. The Eurosystem as a whole is responsible for creating and implementing the monetary policies of the Eurozone, as well as for guaranteeing currency and price stability and providing an environment of economic growth.

The National Bank of Belgium executes European monetary policies, prints banknotes, analyses markets and market data, acts as a financial ambassador, and provides services to the financial and the public sectors, amongst other things.

In these times of social, economic and ecological change, and given the importance of such institutions, one could consider national banks as agents of

change. Banks could use their high institutional power to implement changes that favour the social conditions of cities and their inhabitants, changes in policies that are more ecological and sustainable for the future and changes in economic policies to help people and promote and finance exciting projects.

The National Bank of Belgium, located in Brussels, is the ideal building to test these hypotheses. From its palatial beginnings, the present Bank developed as a consolidated complex of buildings designed by Marcel Van Goethem after World War II. Its current form results from a massive reconstruction project that transformed and resized this part of the city into an imposing but alienating urban environment. Built to its limits, the introverted nature of the complex reflects the historical need to secure Belgium's financial reserves within its walls. Since its completion, however, there has been a fundamental shift in the demands placed upon it. Industrial functions, such as printing and storage of currency, have moved out of the city or abroad. At the same time, finance is increasingly being digitalised. In response, the National Bank has decided to redefine itself physically.

The architectural proposal for the transformation of the national bank is guided by essential principles in line with the Graduation Studio. Transformed to respond to contemporary needs, it provides a framework or scaffolding for collective public life. "Interiors Buildings Cities" emphasises the structures and histories of representative public buildings while recognising that their functions and responsibilities to society and culture have been constantly reinterpreted over time.



Source: hemels.brussels

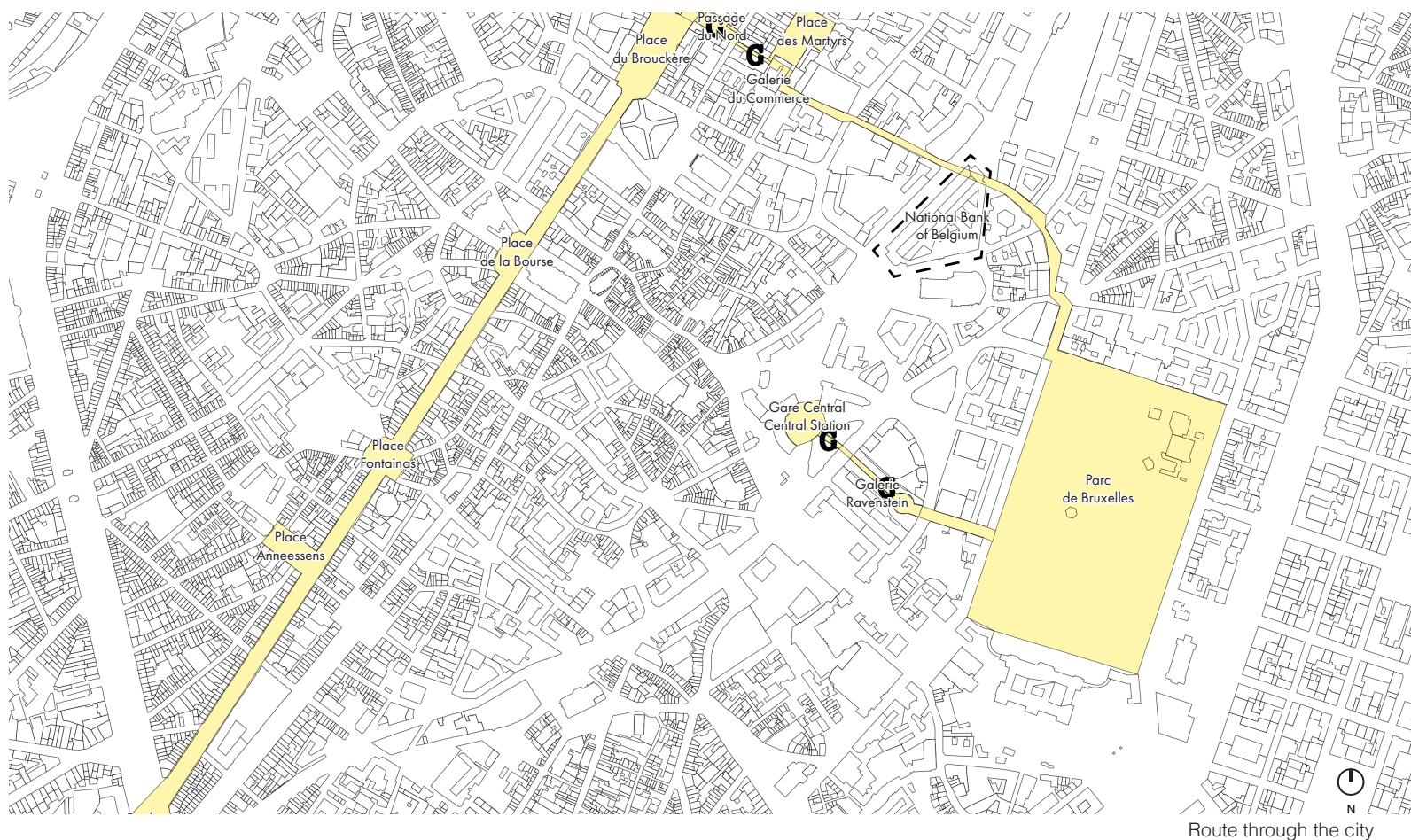
The NBB aims to become the “National Bank of Tomorrow” and evolve into a new way of working, where collaboration and intellectual productivity are central. The project explores the NBB building, its past significance and its ability to adjust, adapt or transform in response to present and future needs. The goals of the project changed over time. Initially, the main objective was to create better workspaces that encourage communication and interaction. In addition to this, the refurbishment of the building in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way. After visiting the bank and the surroundings, the objectives were complemented by new ideas and purposes. As with any project, research was crucial.

Unlike other projects in other years, research has been ongoing from the beginning until the end. In the studio, we started this phase by analysing precedents of office buildings. This introduction to the world of work was reinforced by reconstructing one of the iconic offices as a paper model. This forced us to analyse the office in question in great detail, looking at even the tiniest elements. The next precedents analysed were national banks and branches of smaller banks, which provided the necessary information to understand how these buildings are organised, why they have that peculiar fortification shape and its implications. Analysing all the models and studying all the precedents gave us an initial input for the research phase.

In general, research and design have gone hand in hand throughout the course, and I have learned to not only design by researching but also to research by design. In my case, I started the study on the urban scale. I was very interested in understanding why the surroundings of the bank had a significant lack in life, mobility and urban atmosphere and how this could be reversed. When I discovered the old street that led from the Anspach boulevard to the central station, passing through the royal garden, I set the urbanistic guidelines for the design. Analysing the different functional maps of the city, I discovered the reasons for the lack of liveliness in the neighbourhood, which gave me ideas on how to improve it.

Besides the research, the weekly feedbacks from the tutors were vital to continuing with the process of the project development. Contrasting opinions and communication are always critical in the decision-making phase, so creating zones for this purpose in my building was another of the main objectives. Analysing the brief with the required programme, one can see that the building organisation is very poorly designed at the moment. The sum of all functions adds up to about 49,000 m², while the bank offers a built-up area of about 91,000 m². What about the rest? That was the first question that came to my mind, which promoted the rest of the ideas from now on.

Firstly, an urban approach is taken, analysing the environment and context of the building, looking for current deficits and how these could be transformed into opportunities and solutions for the community. In this



sense, the project's relevance lies in the attempt to reactivate the urban block by opening both the building and the bank to the general public and the neighbouring community.

The route that leads from the Anspach Boulevard to the central station is the common thread of the urban approach. The diagram shows how this route links different squares until it is interrupted by the bank building.

By drawing an imaginary line through the building and cutting there, an isolated volume emerges, and the rest of the bank block opens up to a square. While the block maintains its shape, the standalone building adapts its height and shape to the newly developed towers next to the bank. In this way, as well as opening up the block, it is integrated into the urban fabric.

Optimising the spaces of the bank and adding residential, leisure, catering and other functions, allows the building to open up to the public, making it more attractive and achieving a revitalisation of the urban block. In addition, its excellent location between two residential areas allows the project to be the link between the two parts of the city. All these operations result from intense research into the "ruin" of the building. This exercise helped me see which parts of the building

could be demolished and thus be replaced by new volumes. The interior is demolished in the eastern part of the building, but the existing façade and structure are maintained. In this part, the remainder is used to accommodate the residential part of the project.

The feedback and input from the tutors helped to discover the problems and clarify doubts about how to solve these. The constant back and forth of ideas and suggestions helped solve the most problematic areas and find solutions for the design.

When designing the façades, analysing project precedents and technical details was very important, as it gave me the technical knowledge and design ideas for them. The façade of the bank breaks with the old colonnade of more than 200m in length. The columns are maintained on the first two floors, which house public areas, and then the volume goes out to the edge of these, creating a less abrupt transition. The three new buildings have façades of different materials but are united by tonality, giving them a more unified appearance. The project's final phase tries to define the unresolved spaces so that all parties benefit from them and harmonise. In addition to the pictograms, plans and diagrams, the use of images will help to give a better impression of how the project will look in the future - not only on an urban scale but also on the materiality of the facades, interiors and exteriors. These images will also reflect the atmosphere that the project aspires to give, filling with life in a neighbourhood lacking in vitality.

This project is of great importance as it demonstrates that national banks can act as agents of change and promote the values we need in today's society and the future.



Route through the building

II INTRODUCTION

THE NATIONAL BANK OF BELGIUM



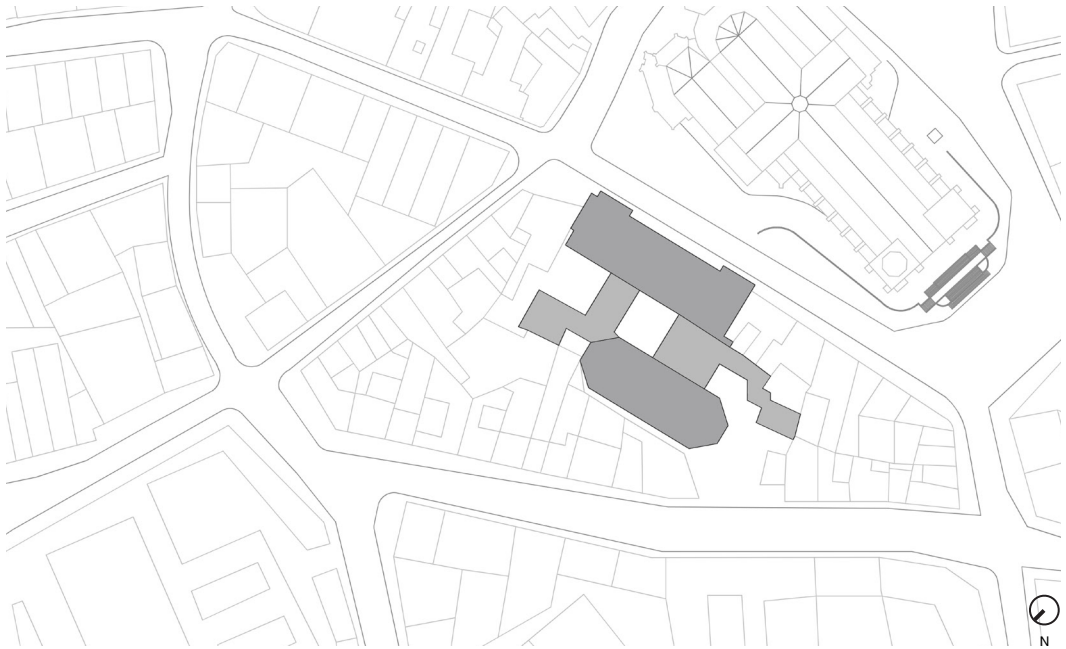
First headquarters of the National
Bank of Belgium in 1851

The National Bank Of Belgium was created in 1850 after the association of the Société générale de Belgique and Banque de Belgique to create the investment fund to found the central Bank of Belgium. It was a collaboration effort between the Governor, Baron François Philippe de Haussy and the minister of justice. The Bank initially established offices at 10 Montagne - aux-Herbes Potagère, not far from the current location of the Bank, before moving to the corner between Rue Royale and Rue du Moniteur and finally settling on its current location on Rue du Bois Sauvage. The National Bank and the story of its development are closely related to the urban development of Brussels as the capital and the growth of the still young but ambitious Belgium.

Today, apart from part of the so-called Warmoesbroekpoort (central in the building block of NBB2), hardly anything remains of this historic 'first layer'; the work on the North-South connection started in 1958 when large zones in the area were expropriated for "public utility" and would allow the North-South junction in the future.

With the ambition to settle in this more critical part of the city and with a view to more expansion opportunities, the National Bank took advantage of the expropriations that took place in this context and bought several properties in the area. Five buildings in Wildewoudstraat and three in Berlaimontstraat, where they would start building the offices they are in now.

BUILDING EVOLUTION THROUGH TIME



1869 - FIRST BUILDING PHASE



1876 - SECOND BUILDING PHASE



1908 - THIRD BUILDING PHASE

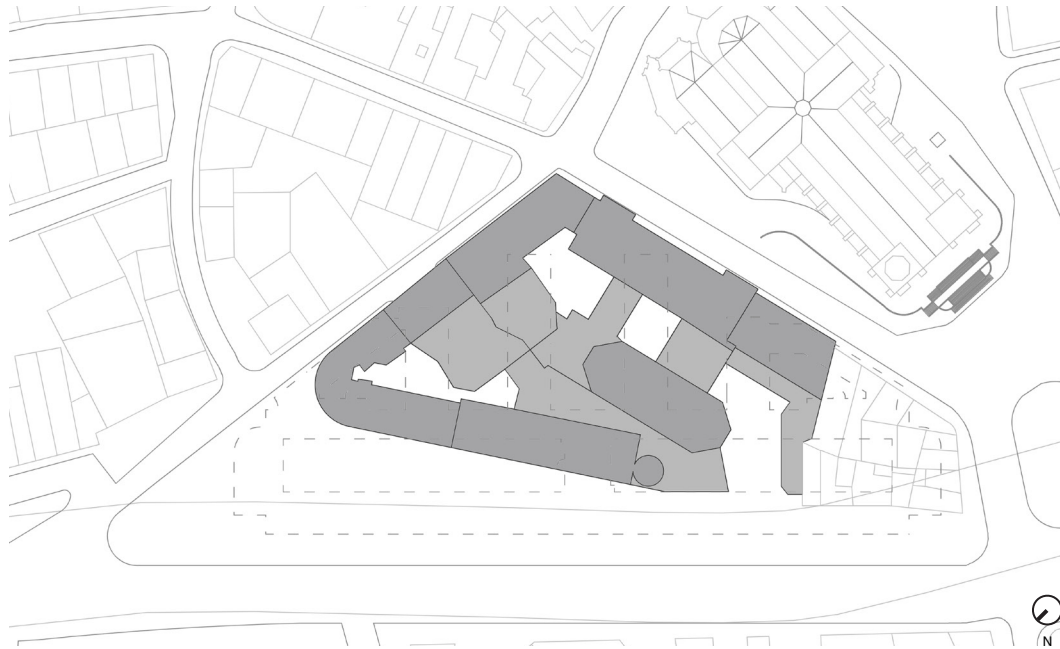


La façade de la Banque vers 1870.

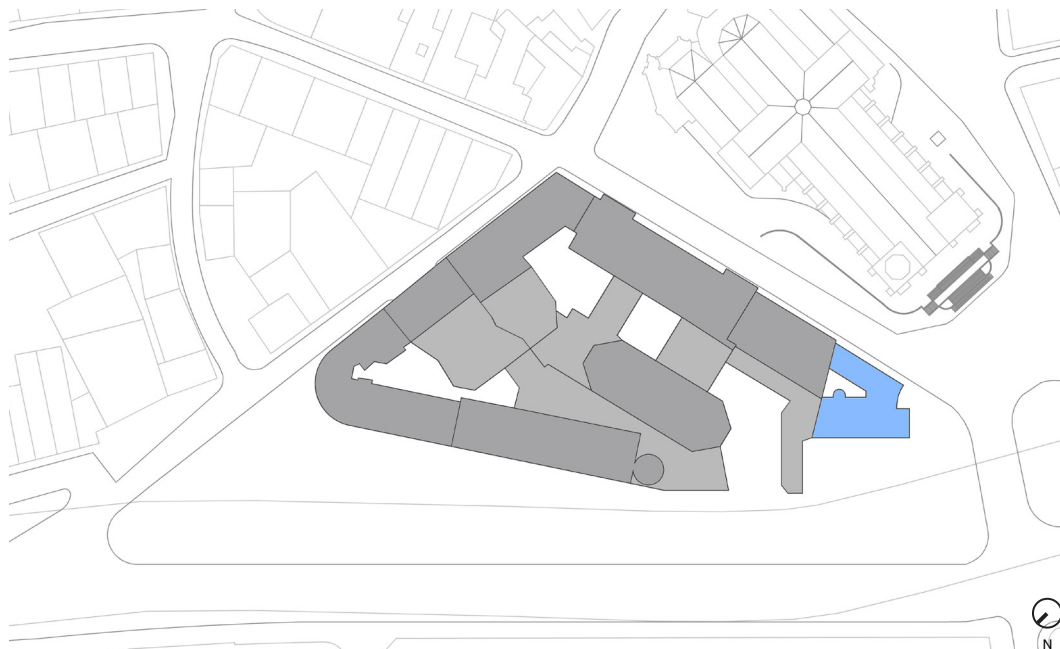
Palace facade. 1870



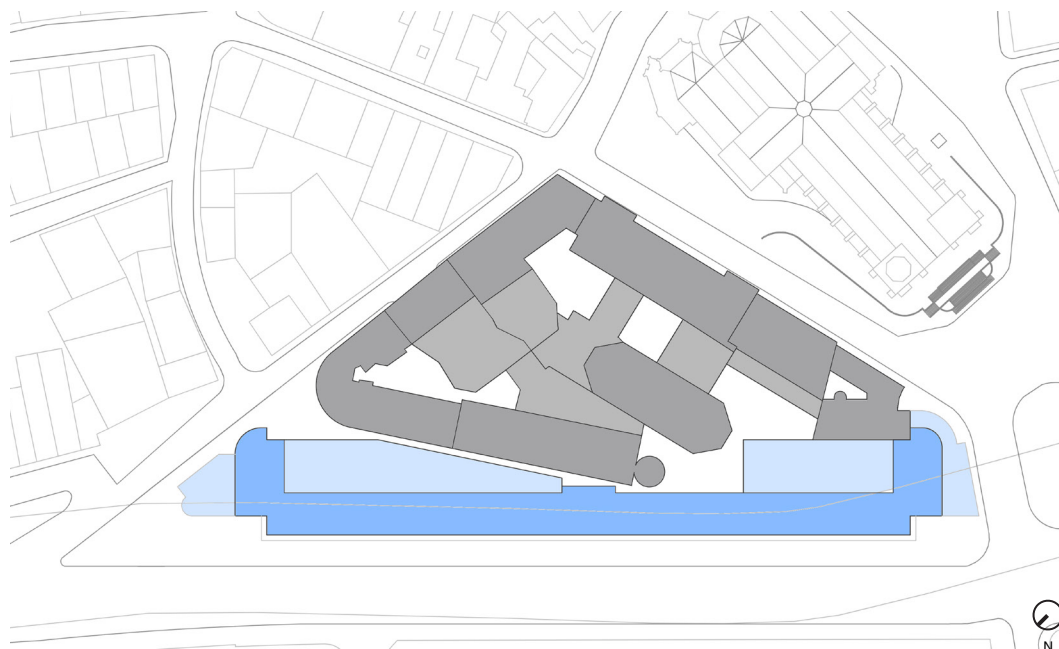
Banking hall. 1870



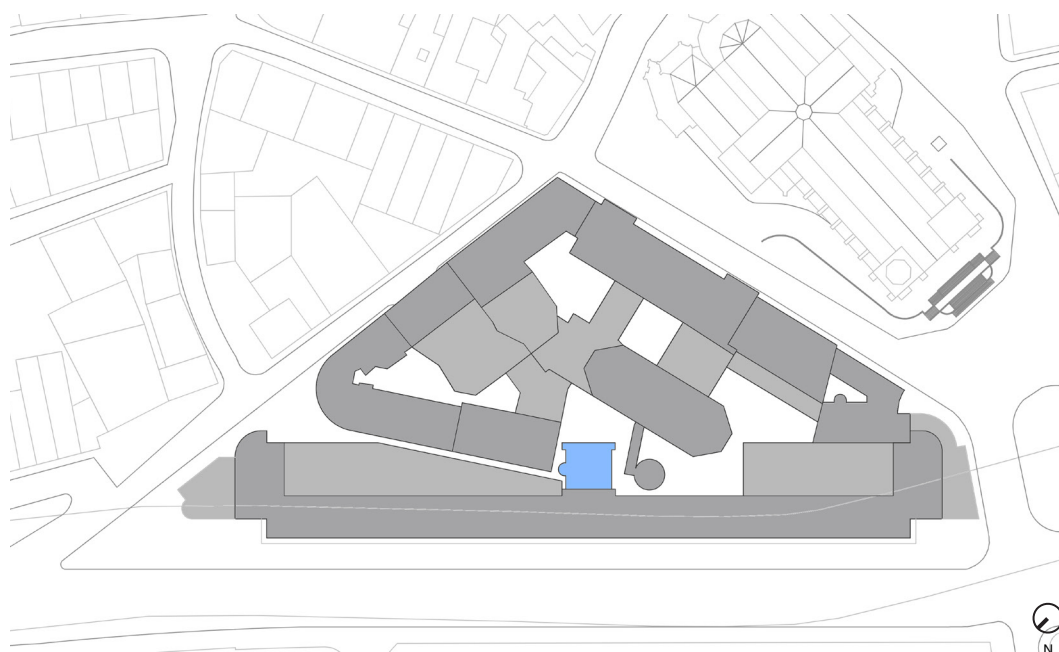
1940 - FOURTH BUILDING PHASE | FASE 0



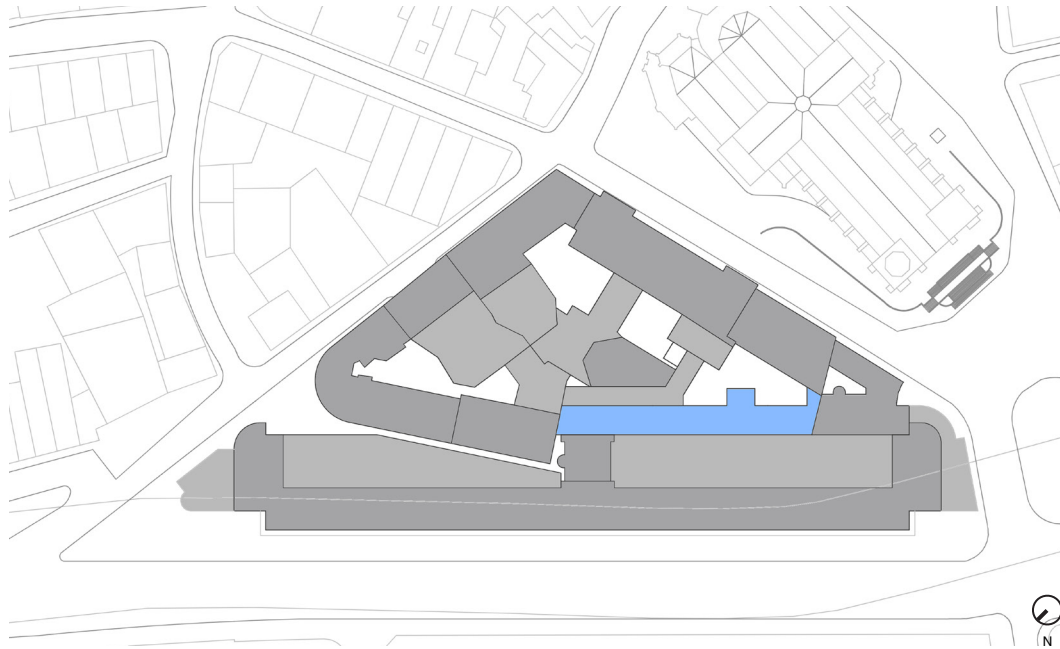
1948 - FOURTH BUILDING PHASE | FASE 1



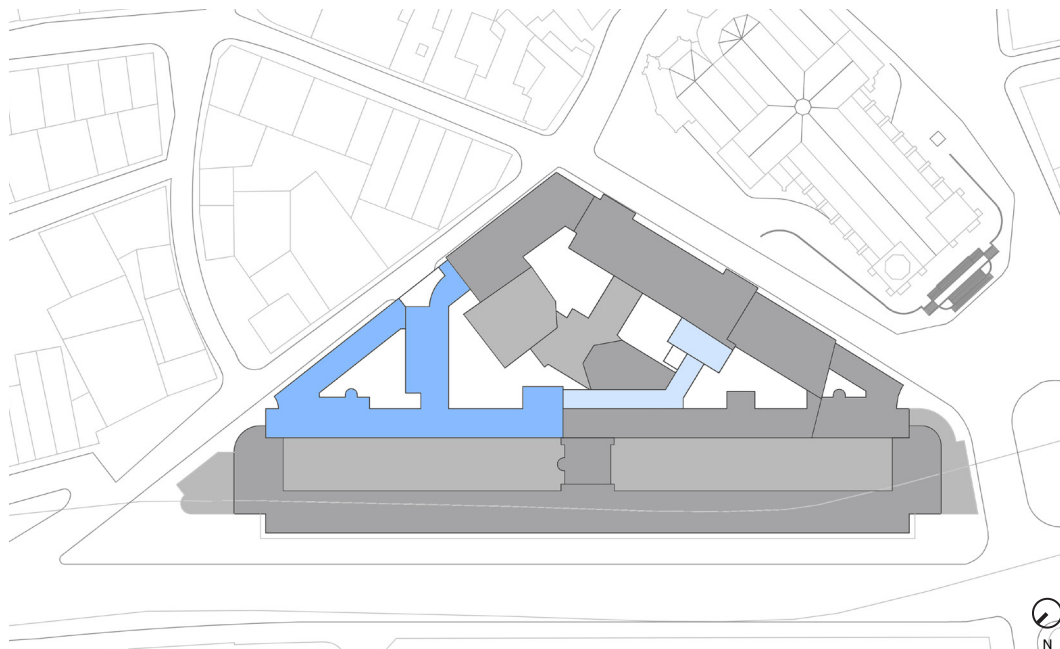
1949 - FOURTH BUILDING PHASE | FASE 2



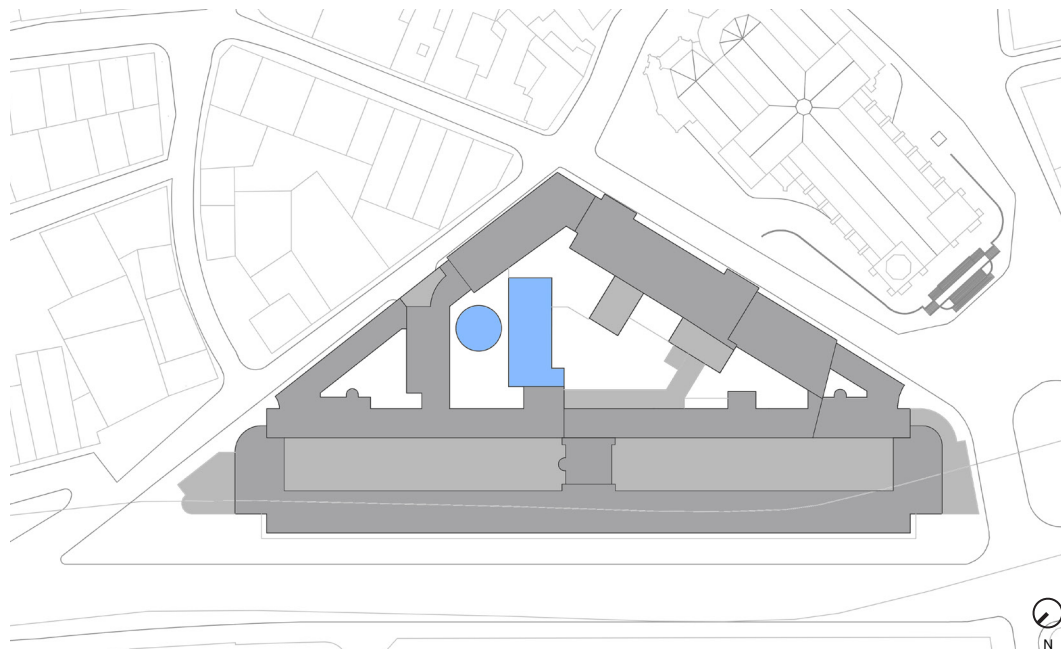
1952 - FOURTH BUILDING PHASE | FASE 3



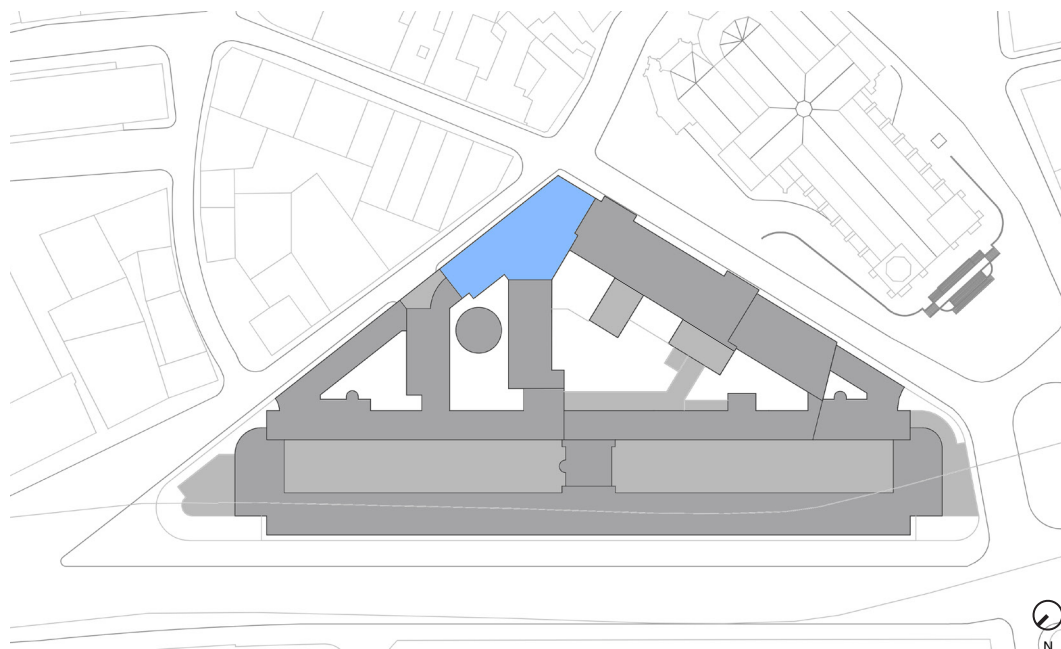
1953 - FOURTH BUILDING PHASE | FASE 4



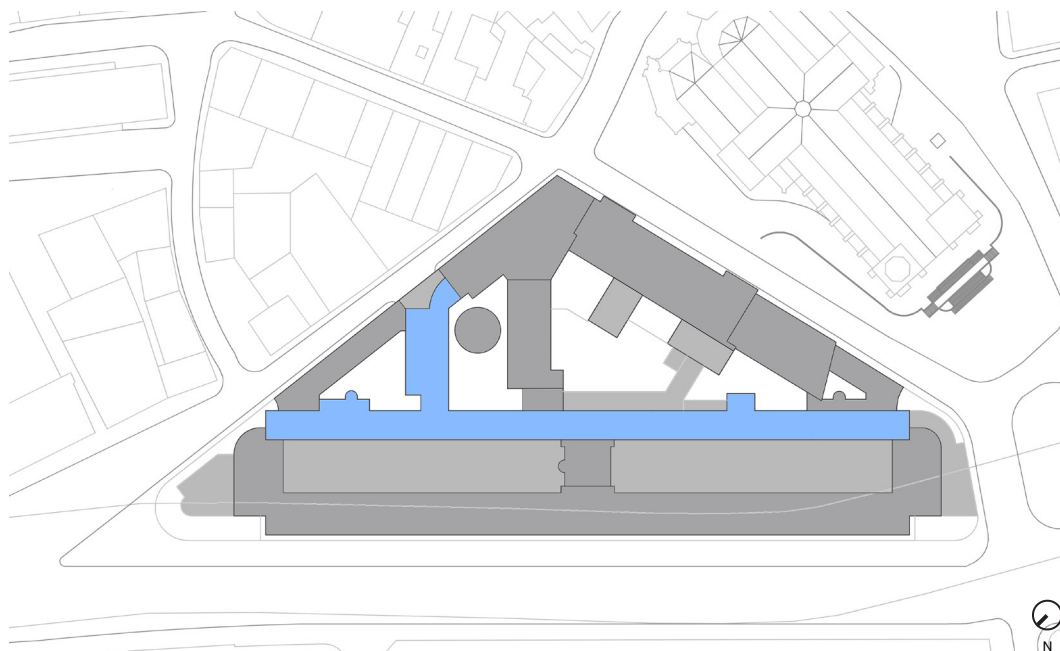
1954 - FOURTH BUILDING PHASE | FASE 5



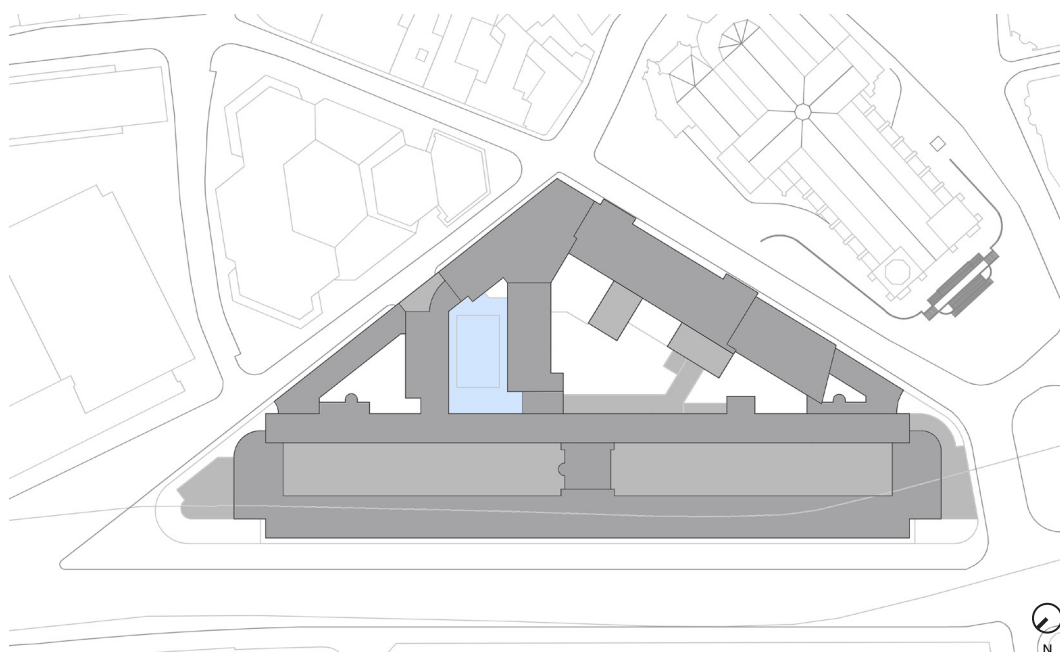
1955 - FOURTH BUILDING PHASE | FASE 6



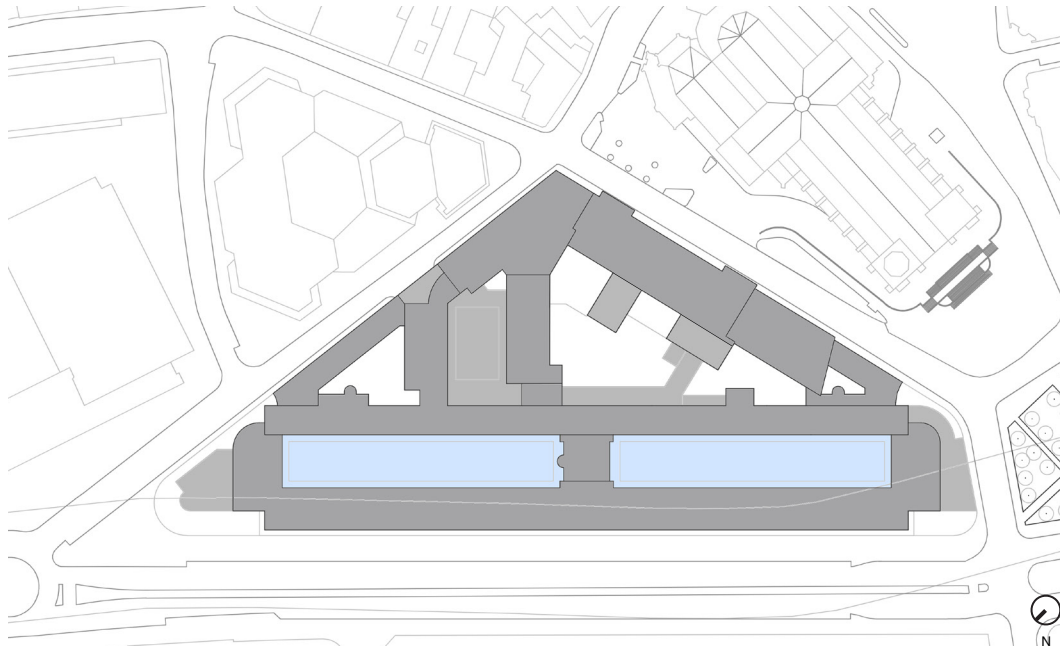
1963 - FOURTH BUILDING PHASE | FASE 7



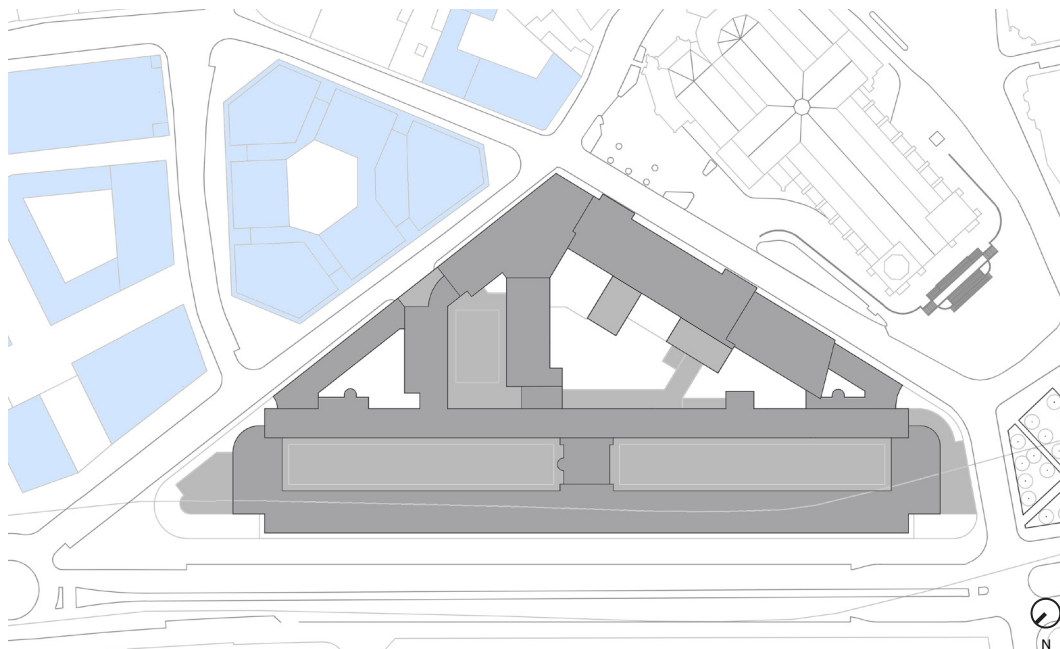
1965 - FOURTH BUILDING PHASE | FASE 8



2000



2015



2025



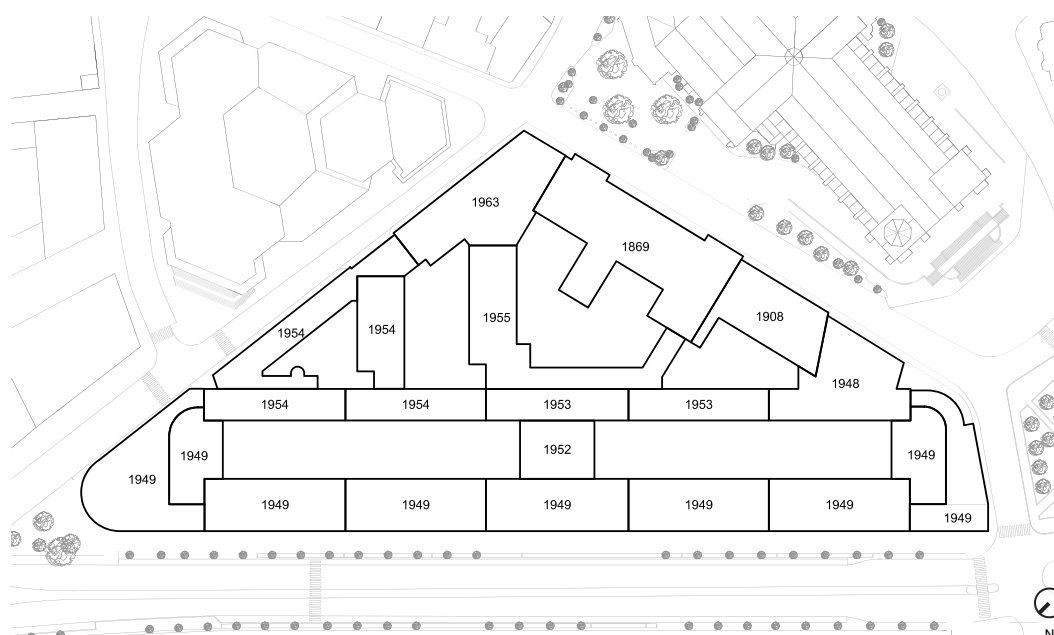
Corner Building. 1908

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

The initial plan was to construct, on the one hand, a building for the printing presses and the emission of money and, on the other hand, to acquire the rest of the buildings around the current Bank to own the whole block and create a new ensemble.

The new architect was Marcel Van Goethem, who started working for the Bank in 1944. At first, he planned to remove the entire Bank designed by Beyaert, but it soon became apparent that the demolition of the Hotel was difficult to defend after the Royal Commission for Monuments and Sites (KCML) got involved in the debate, urging the Bank to preserve both the Hotel and the Beyaert Tower.

The result of the discussion was that Van Goethem had to use the old buildings in his plans, which he was not happy about. So, he decided to orient the main entrance towards the new boulevard (symbol of the modern city), instead of the cathedral



Partitions and Extensions plan

(symbol of the medieval town). This idea contained a move of the ticket hall, offices for servants and management to a newly realized building block along the new boulevard, with the public entrance in the center. Even after construction started, Van Goethem kept speculating that all old buildings would eventually be demolished. However, this was only partly true; only the building along the Bankstraat would be demolished and replaced by Van Goethem's design, explaining why so-called 'Aile Extension' connects rather awkwardly to the existing buildings, after all, the connection would only be temporary.

From 1948, the building was constructed in phases, as the service of the Bank couldn't be interrupted. Both construction work and usual bank service had to be carried out simultaneously, so the project was carried out in phases, and the different services moved into the new buildings as they were finished. First, the 'Aile extension', the corner building between the De Rycker hotel wing and the new building, was constructed. After that, Fase I (1949-1951) began with the construction of Block I-V, the building block along the Berlaimontlaan containing the ticket hall. Fase II (1952-1965) consisted of the construction of Block IX (central staircase) in 1952, Blocks VI, XI and XII in 1953, Blocks XIII-XVI in 1954 and Block XVIII only in 1965 (and designed by Jean Lepomme, since Van Goethem died in 1959). Phase III was the last significant extension of the building, consisting of an extra story added on Blocks XI-XIV between 1965 and 1967.

Since its completion, however, there has been a fundamental shift in the demands placed upon it. Industrial functions, such as printing and storage of currency, have moved out of the city or abroad. At the same time, finance is increasingly being digitalised.



New Banking Hall Roof. 2015

EXTERIOR IMPRESSIONS



Rue du Bois Sauvage



Boulevard de Berlaumont



Rue de la Collégiale/Boulevard de Berlaimont



Boulevard de Berlaimont



Boulevard de Berlaimont



Boulevard de Berlaimont



Boulevard de Berlaimont



Boulevard de Berlaimont

INTERIOR IMPRESSIONS



Central accesibility core



Corridor facing the courtyards



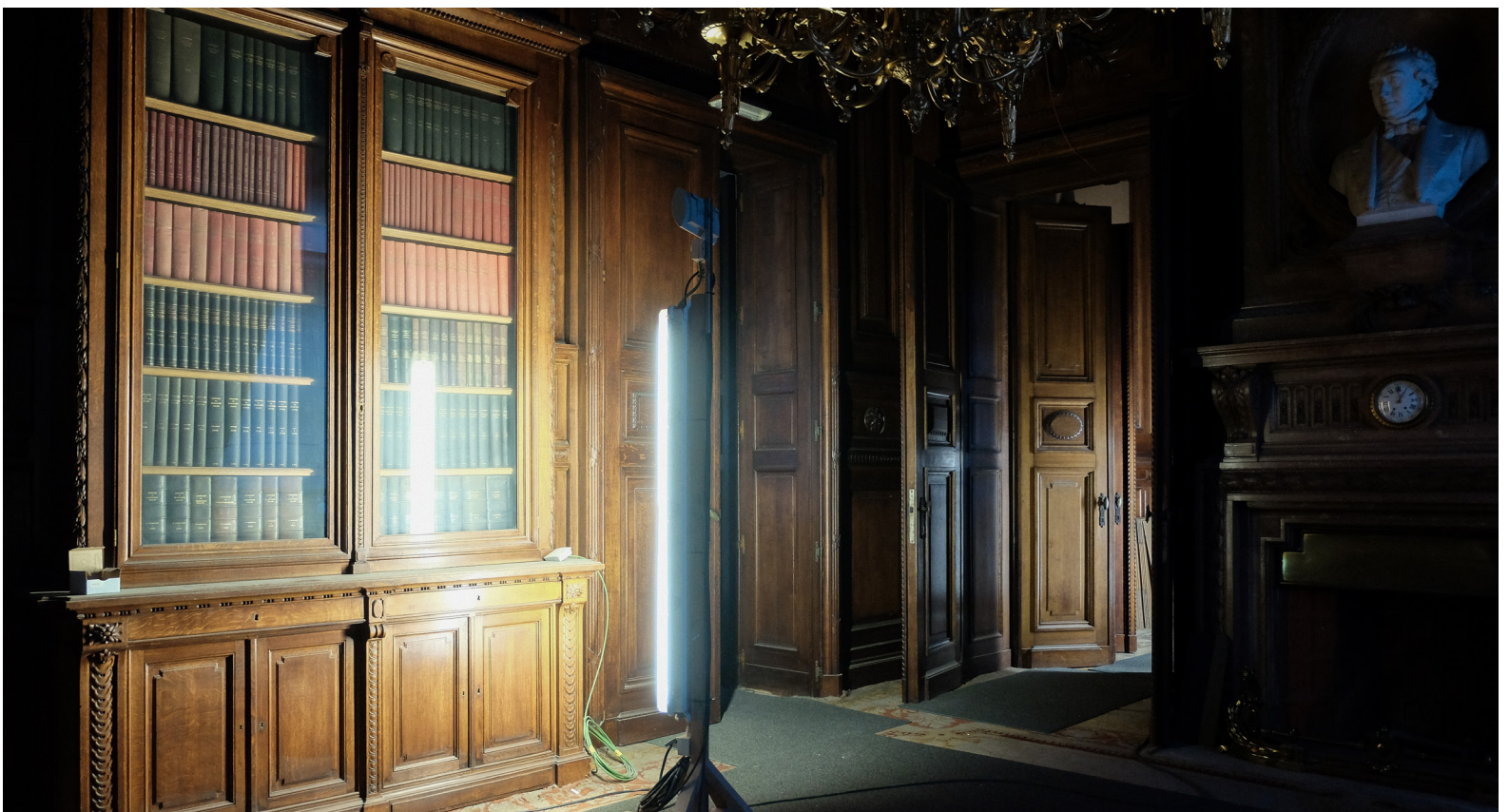
Corridor



Typical office



Office in the palace



Office in the palace



Interior courtyard



Interior courtyard



Corridor



Corridor

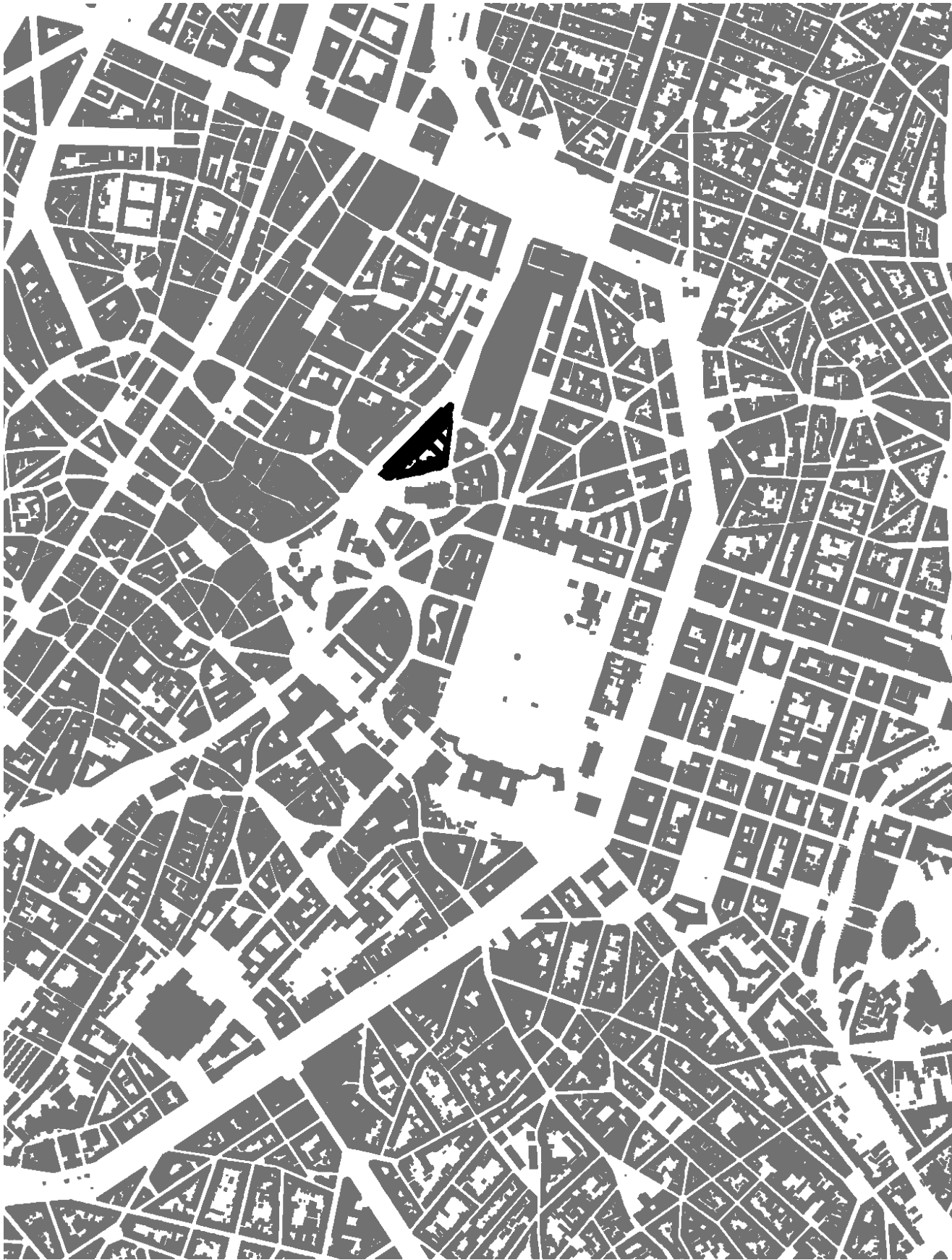


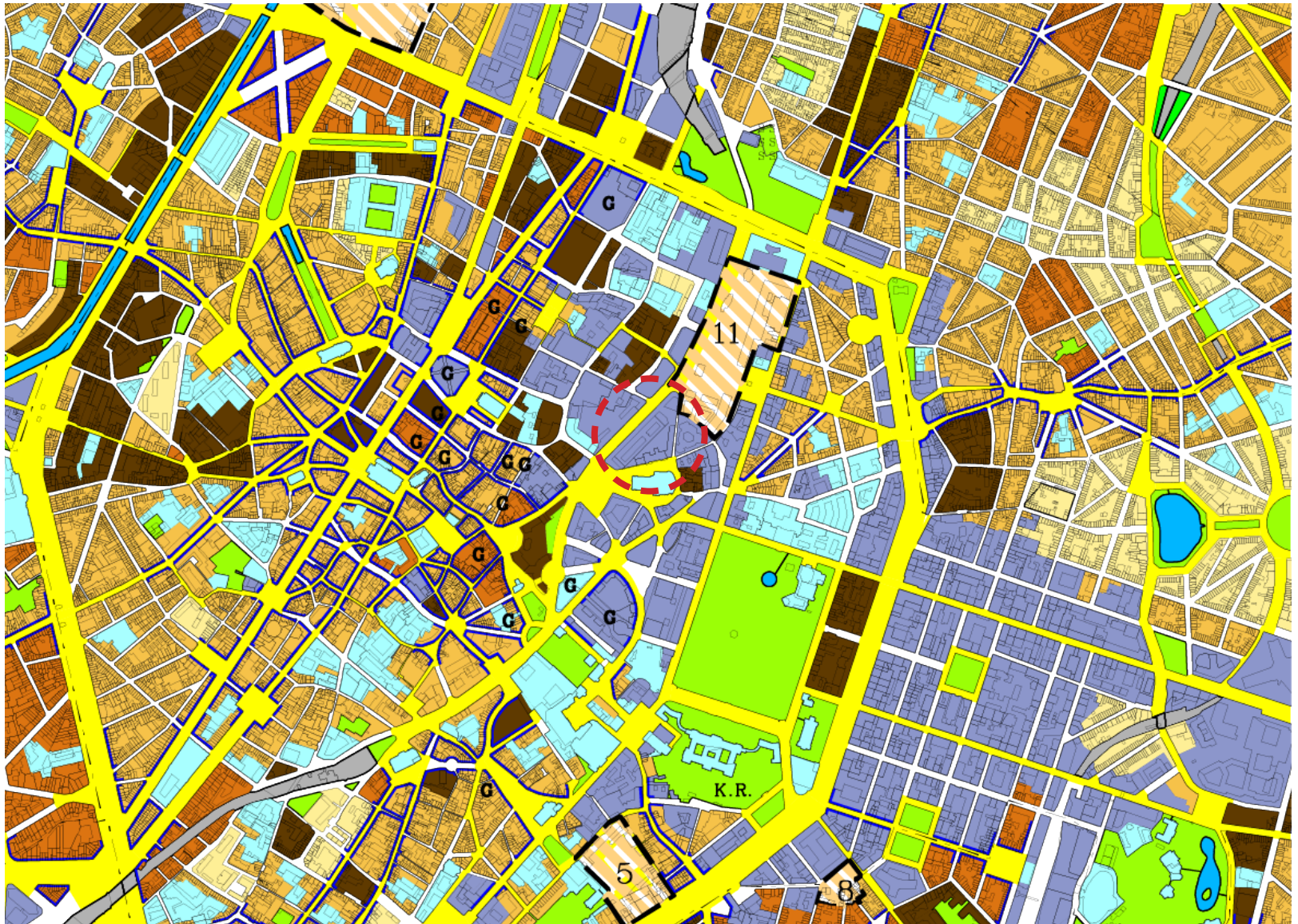
Banking Hall



1st Underground

THE CONTEXT AROUND THE NATIONAL BANK



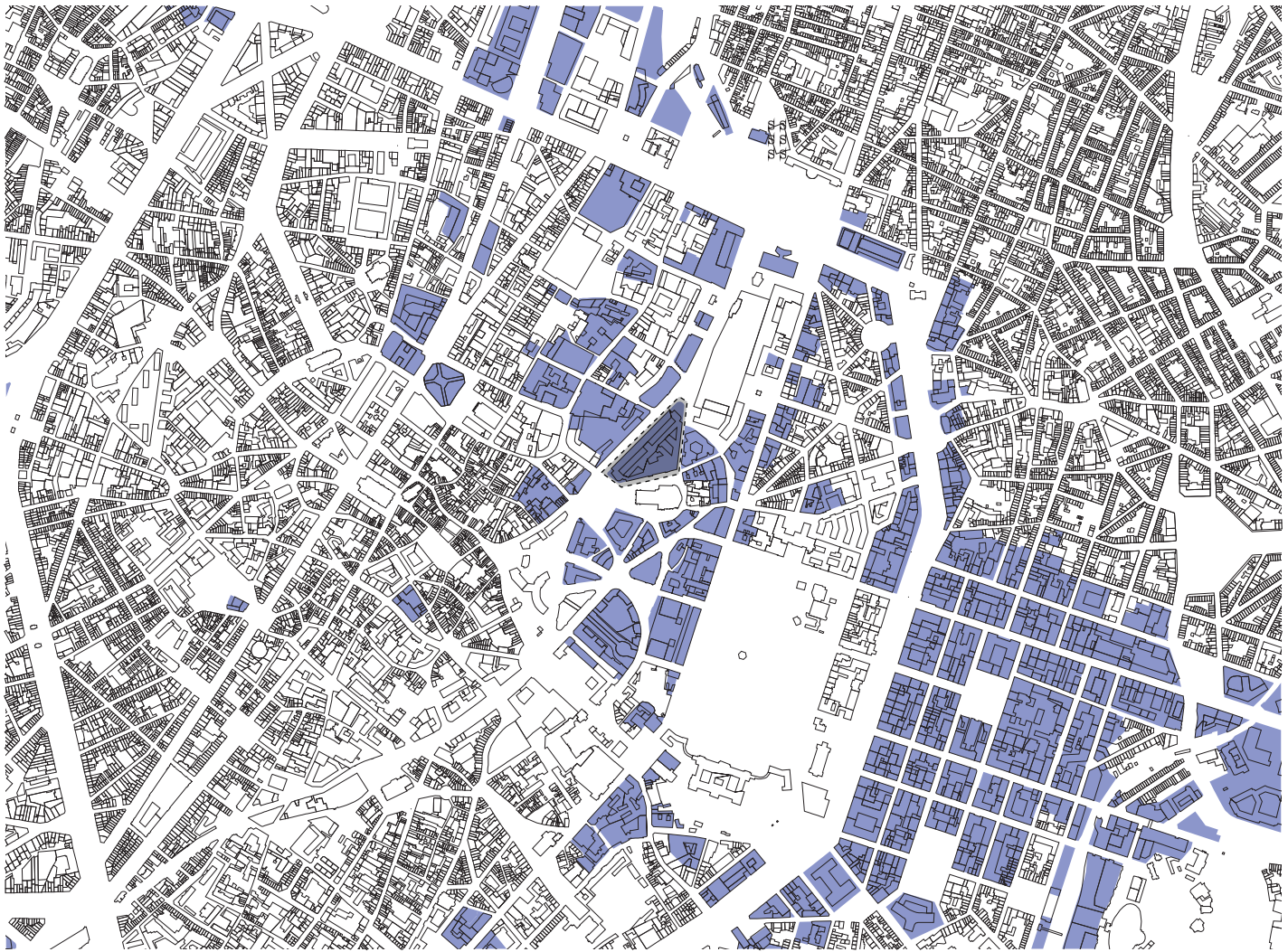


CASBA is the abbreviation for the 'Allowable Office Balance Map'. This map gives concrete form to general prescription 0.14 of the PRAS and applies in the predominantly residential zone, the residential zone and the mixed-use zone.

The Brussels regional territory is divided into a hundred or so "grids" in which the balance of eligible office space by type of zone and the grid number is indicated.

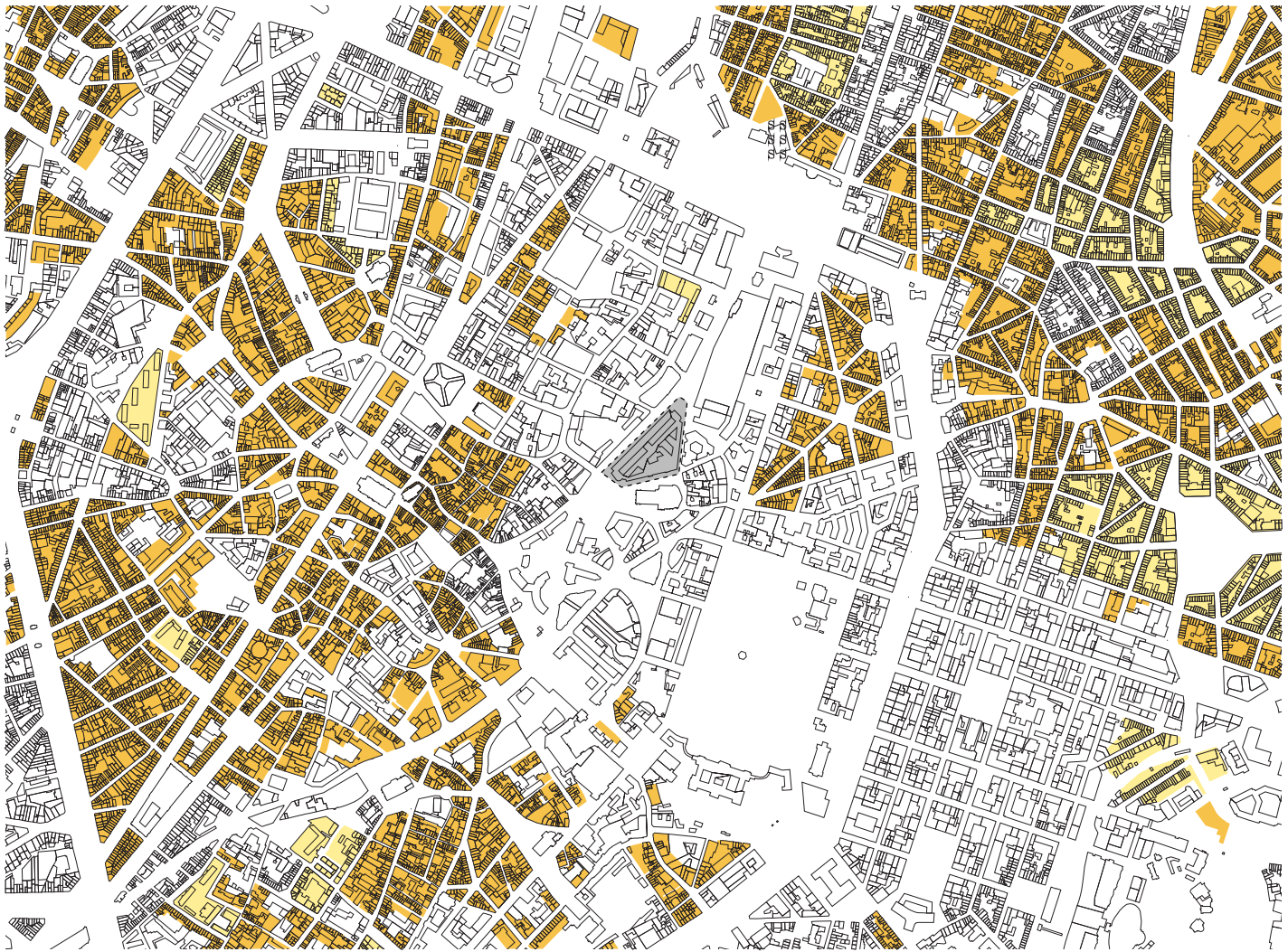
This plan is beneficial when researching the different uses within an urban context. In the case of the National Bank of Belgium, the investigated area comprises the Brussel-Zuid train station in the southwest of Brussels to Square Armand Steurs, in the northeast, with the bank building located in the middle of the plan.

ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS



Within the context of the plan, different uses of the plots can be distinguished. In blue are marked the administrative areas. These are located in the centre, near the bank and surrounding the royal palace garden. Given the proximity to the European parliament, this area is mainly used for office buildings.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS



This plan shows the residential areas. In yellow, the purely residential areas and in orange are the predominantly residential areas, including commercial spaces on the ground floor. This plan shows how there is hardly any housing in the area near the bank, apart from a few exceptions. This is reflected when walking through the site, as people barely use the area due to the lack of social activity options.

PUBLIC INTEREST/PUBLIC SERVICE AREAS



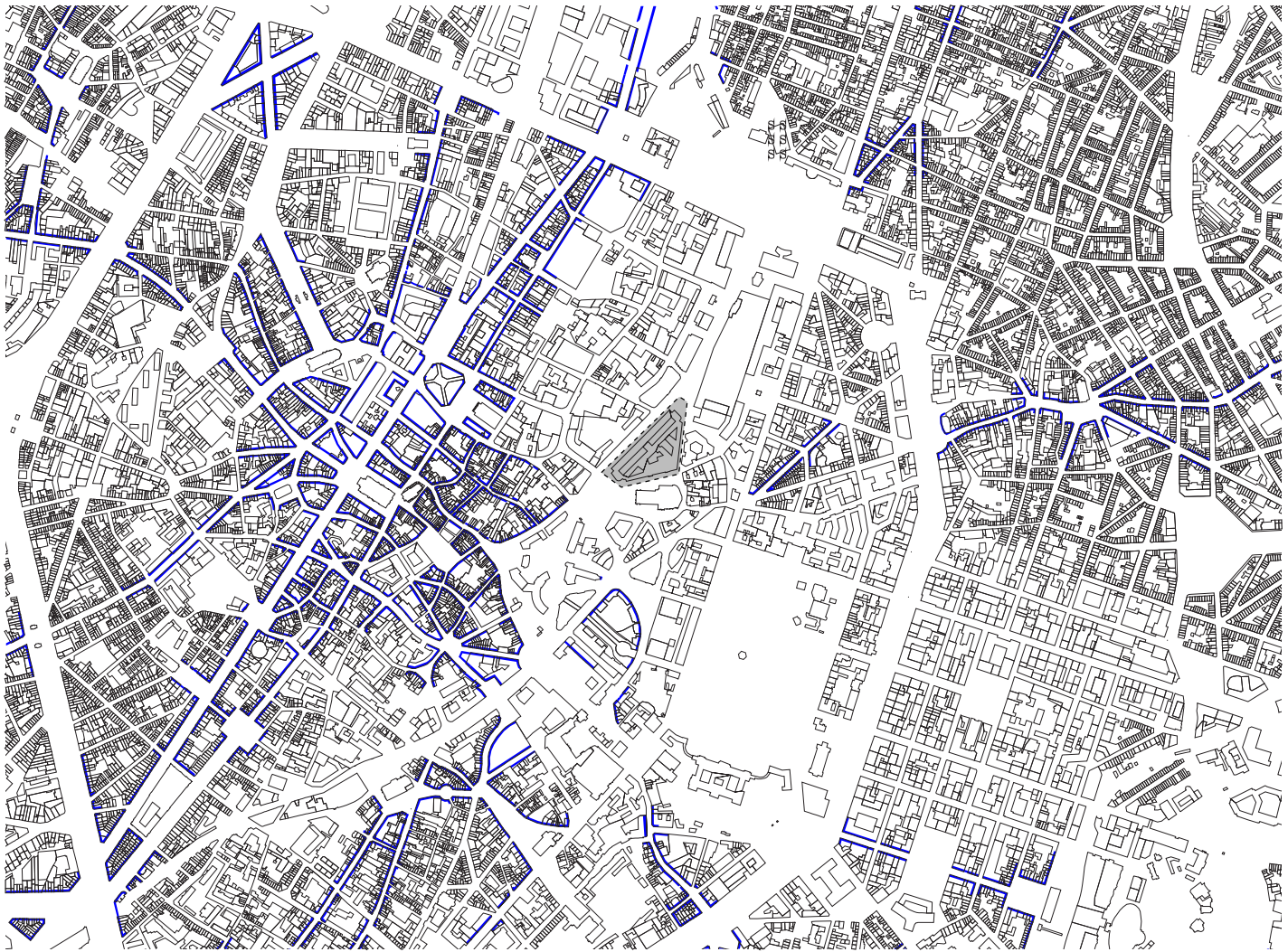
Marked in turquoise, we can see the zones of public interest and areas of public service equipment. These buildings are related to activities of management character and destined for the maintenance of the territory and its structures. They are classified as public safety, public administration services, funeral services, transport, infrastructure and unique. Near the national bank, we can find several buildings of this category, such as the cathedral and the campus of the University of Leuven.

MIXED-USE AREAS



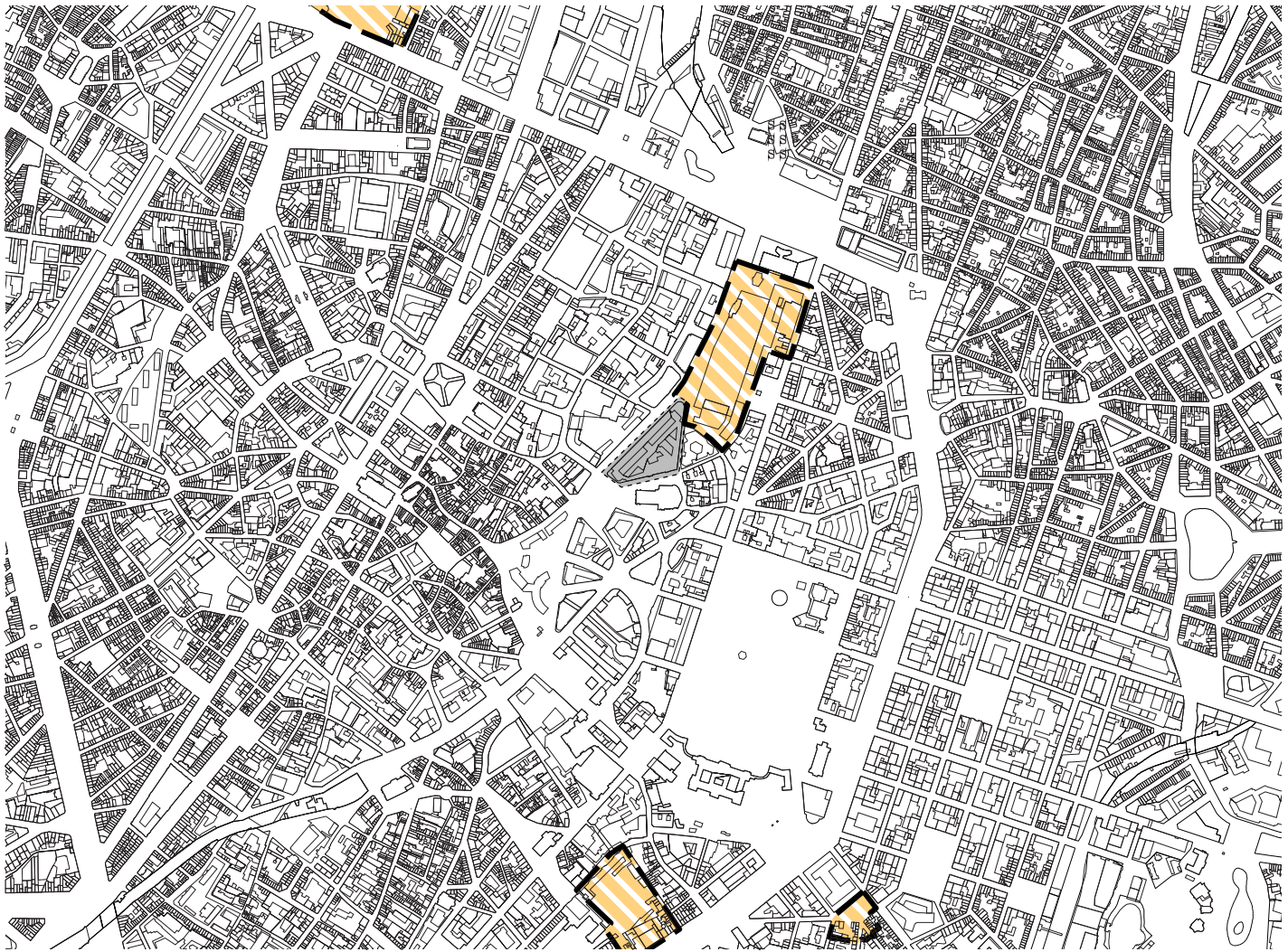
The mixed-use plan is composed of areas in orange and places of great diversity. On the map, these areas are predominantly located between residential and administrative areas, acting as a nexus between the different uses of the city. These neighbourhoods and buildings are highly adaptable to changes in the social and economic environment; and are home to substantial employment and housing opportunities.

COMMERCIAL SPACE BOUNDARIES



In the commercial core the ground floors of buildings with priority for retail are allocated to commercial uses. The use of upper floors for commercial purposes may only be permitted where local conditions permit. The use of upper floors for commercial purposes may only be permitted where local conditions permit and after the acts and works have been subjected to particular publicity measures.

AREAS OF REGIONAL INTEREST



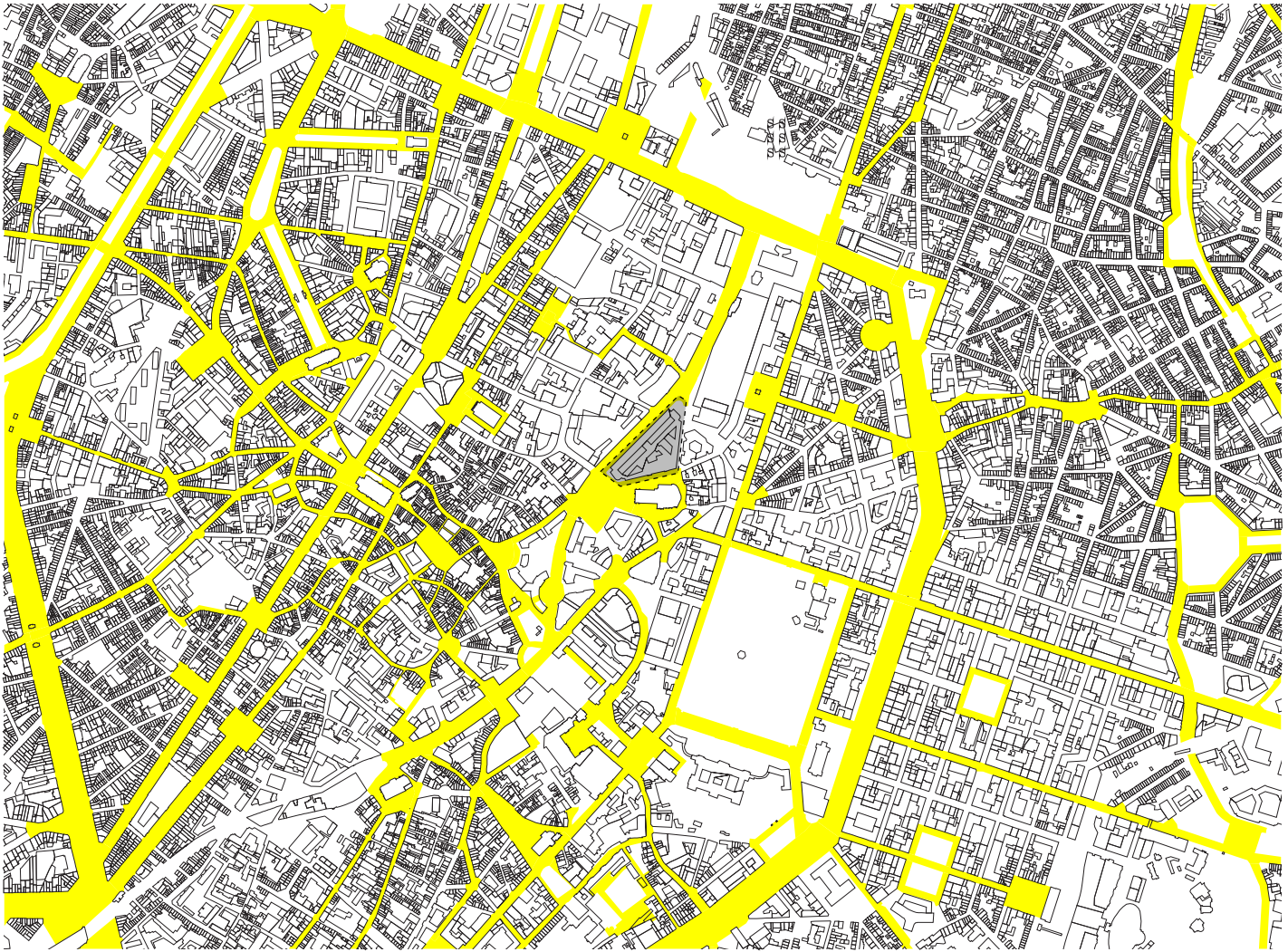
This plan defines the programmes for the allocation of areas of regional interest. Their development is determined by the special spatial plans drawn up following the Ordinance on Spatial Planning and Town Planning provisions. In the absence of such plans, only the following acts and works are authorised according to the prescription of the high-mix zone and the programme of the affected areas, after these acts and works have been subject to special publicity measures.

GREEN AREAS



The plan of green areas shows the different parks and vegetation areas open to the public. This plan shows the lack of these spaces in the area of the national bank. Throughout the process of redesigning the bank, we will try to solve this, giving the community more green spaces for recreation and retreat.

STRUCTURING SPACES



We can find the structuring spaces within the urban context, marked in yellow. These zones show the potentialities and possibilities of open space landscapes, intending to use them in a new spatial landscape infrastructure device of integrative socio-spatial value. In the plan, all the planned and existing galleries since the end of the 18th century are marked with the letter “G”. These galleries create a network of connections within the urban fabric connecting different squares, streets, and emblematic buildings.

THE CITY OF BRUSSELS PUBLIC TRANSPORT



This plan shows the different public transport options near the national bank - from buses to trains and subways. On tour, we noticed that the area around the bank is well served by underground and bus. Due to the location in the city's administrative area, there is no shortage of transport options, which adds value to the project site. The new development could accommodate new functions that attract people, which could be reached thanks to the excellent transport connections.

COLIVING & COWORKING AREAS



Coliving is a contemporary concept of shared accommodation that remote workers embrace in search of flexibility and freedom. With the rise of freelance jobs, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, more and more people are free from the constraints of a 9-5 office job and can design their lives based on new paradigms. As can be seen from the map, in the direct vicinity of the bank, there is not much in the way of coworking and coworking spaces, so it could be deduced that by redeveloping the urban block of the bank, such spaces could add value to the project.

RESTAURANTS



Currently, there are not many restaurants or bars to be found in the bank's vicinity. Restaurants and bars are elements that attract the public. With this type of offer, streets tend to be very busy throughout the day as they offer a service to the community. As mentioned before, the area around the block was not very busy as there were not many leisure or relaxation options in the area. Adding restaurants could contribute to reactivate not only the bank block but also the surrounding area, where new projects are being created.

SUPERMARKETS



In the same way that catering helps attract the public, the public needs other essential services such as supermarkets. With new residential developments being planned in the neighbourhood, the creation of supermarkets and other basic necessities such as pharmacies, drugstores and so on will contribute to creating this new mixed-use district.

UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS



In the immediate vicinity of the bank are several university and school buildings. As can be seen on the map, these are scattered around the area, outside the administration area, rather than together forming a campus as we can see in other cities. The different buildings are well connected by public transport and close to the city centre rather than on the city's outskirts.

STUDENT HOUSING



In Brussels, students tend to live in shared apartments or studios due to the little amount of student residences. This map shows the scarcity of student residences in the area. This is strange because of the high number of educational buildings in the vicinity. A student building in the new layout could be an asset. In addition to the new shops and restaurants, a student residence with a public library and youth centre could attract new people to the neighbourhood.

GALLERIES AROUND THE NATIONAL BANK

THE CITY OF BRUSSELS

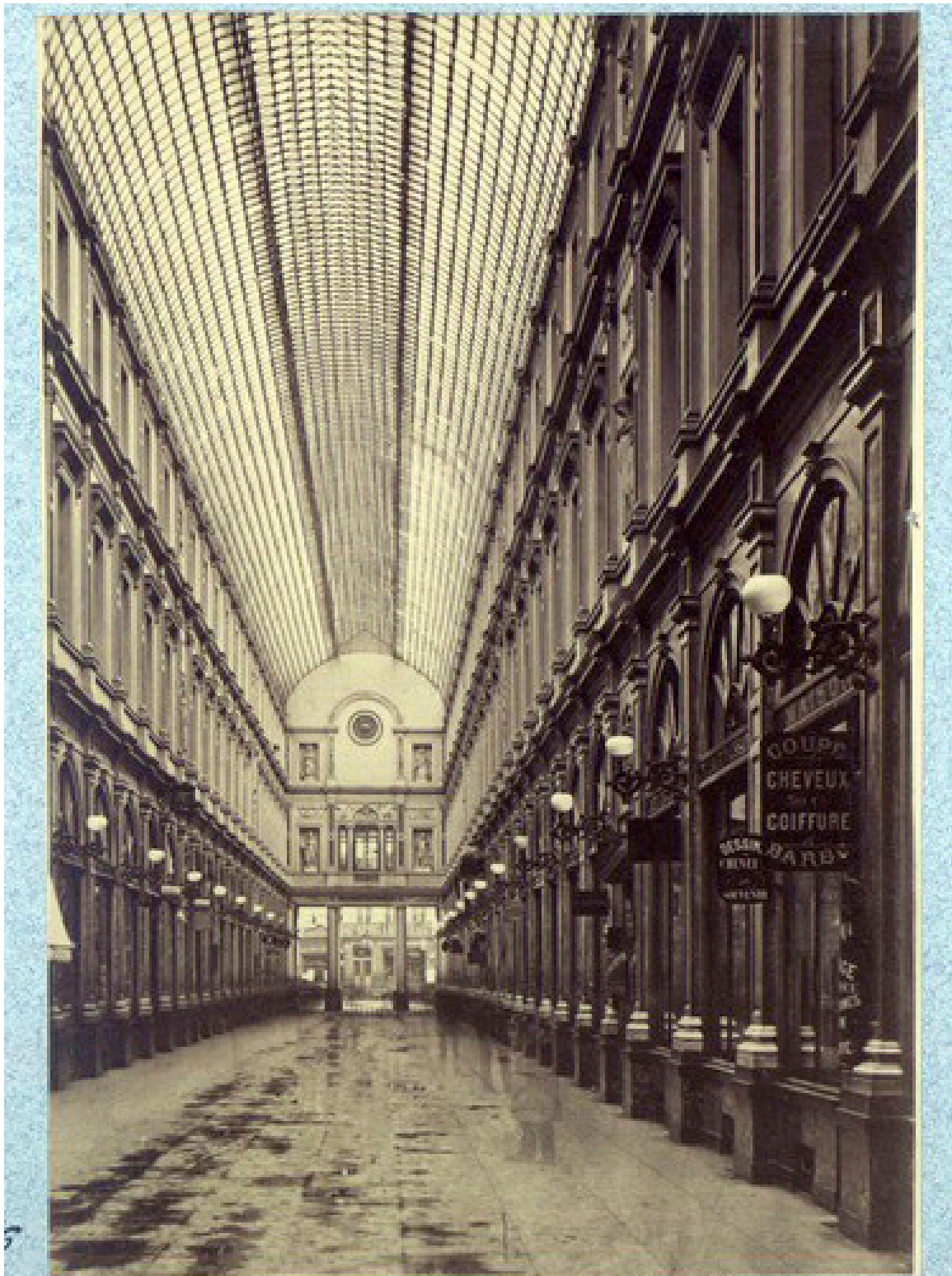
THE GALLERIES OF BRUSSELS



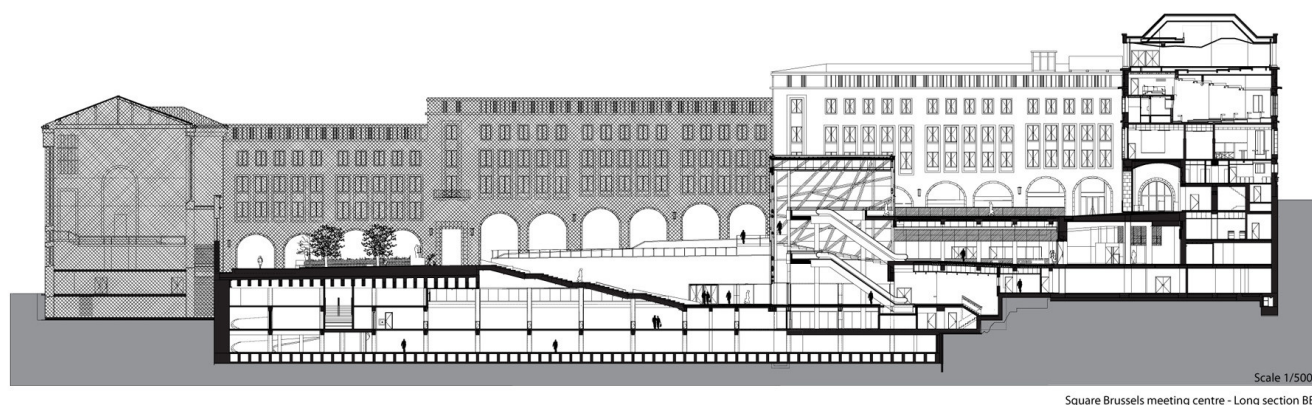
Initiated around 1837, the project of the young architect Jean-Pierre Cluysenaer was designed to rehabilitate a poor neighbourhood by erecting a building that could host dwellings, shops, cultural spaces and areas to stroll. Construction work began in 1846 and the official inauguration took place on 20 June 1847, in the presence of Leopold I.

With these Galleries, Brussels gained a monumental arcade and joined the ranks of great European cities like Paris and London, ahead even of Milan, Moscow, and Berlin. This project, connecting the upper and lower parts of the city, rehabilitated a very poor neighbourhood.

Formerly known as the "Umbrella of Brussels", this Florentine Renaissance-style arcade remains the most beautiful testament to the city's commercial development before the advent of department stores. The ingenious glass roof supported by a series of self-supporting arched arches has fish-scale style tiles to allow for better ventilation and prevent any condensation.



*Bruxelles
Galerie St. Hubert.*



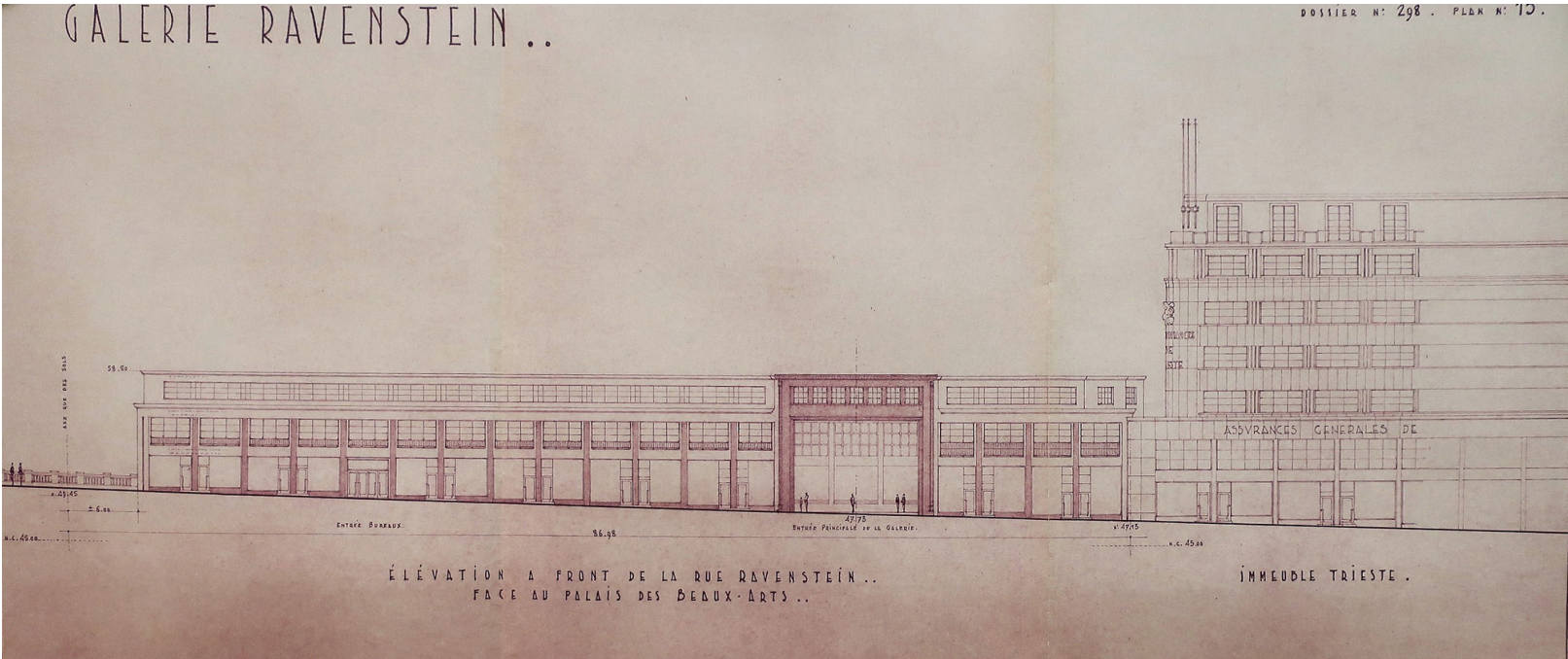
The owners, descendants of the founders of the Galeries, continue to run the premises while preserving the urban mixing intended by Cluysenaer. The buildings were listed by the Bruxelles-Capitale Region in 1986. In 1939, the Cinéma des Galeries was created, and in 1950, the Théâtre Royal des Galeries was transformed with the help of René Magritte, who designed the ceiling.

Since 1995, many renovation works have taken place: the façades, the glass roof, the Théâtre du Vaudeville, the Théâtre Royal des Galeries, flats and offices and a newly launched hotel, the Hôtel des Galeries... The tenants themselves contribute to the development of the building by turning some of the flats into decorative jewels.

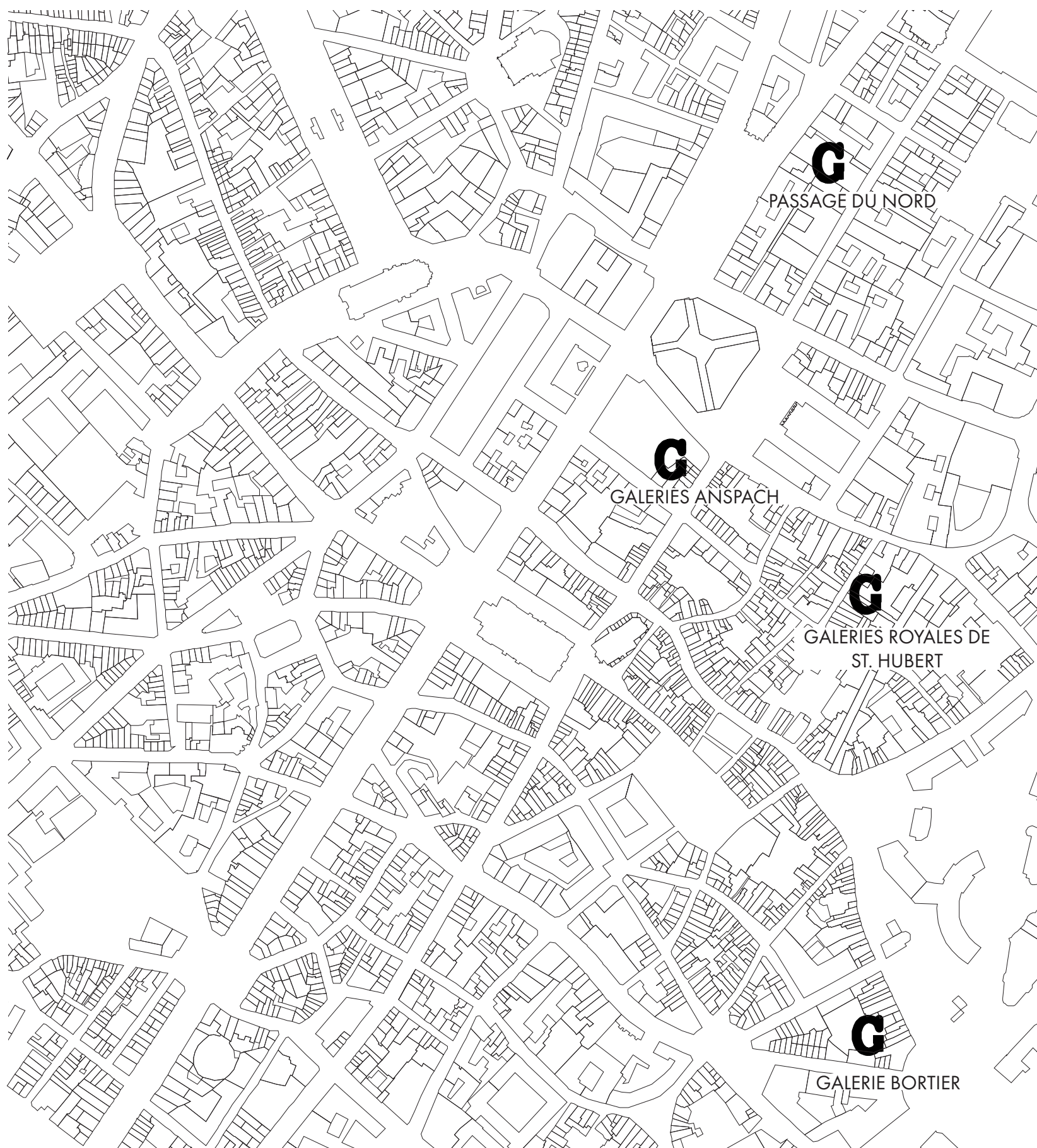
The gallery included shops, auditoriums, cafés, restaurants and apartments. The place to be seen for the fashionable, right away, the Royal Galleries of Saint Hubert drew a wide audience, attracted by its luxury brands, elegant cafés and cultural spaces. These included the Théâtre du Vaudeville, the Cinéma des Galeries and the Taverne du Passage, called the Café des Arts until 1892 and the meeting place for painters and writers of the time. The colony of French refugees, like Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas, Edgar Quinet and others, would also gather there. The Surrealist painters and artists from the Cobra group were regulars at the venue.

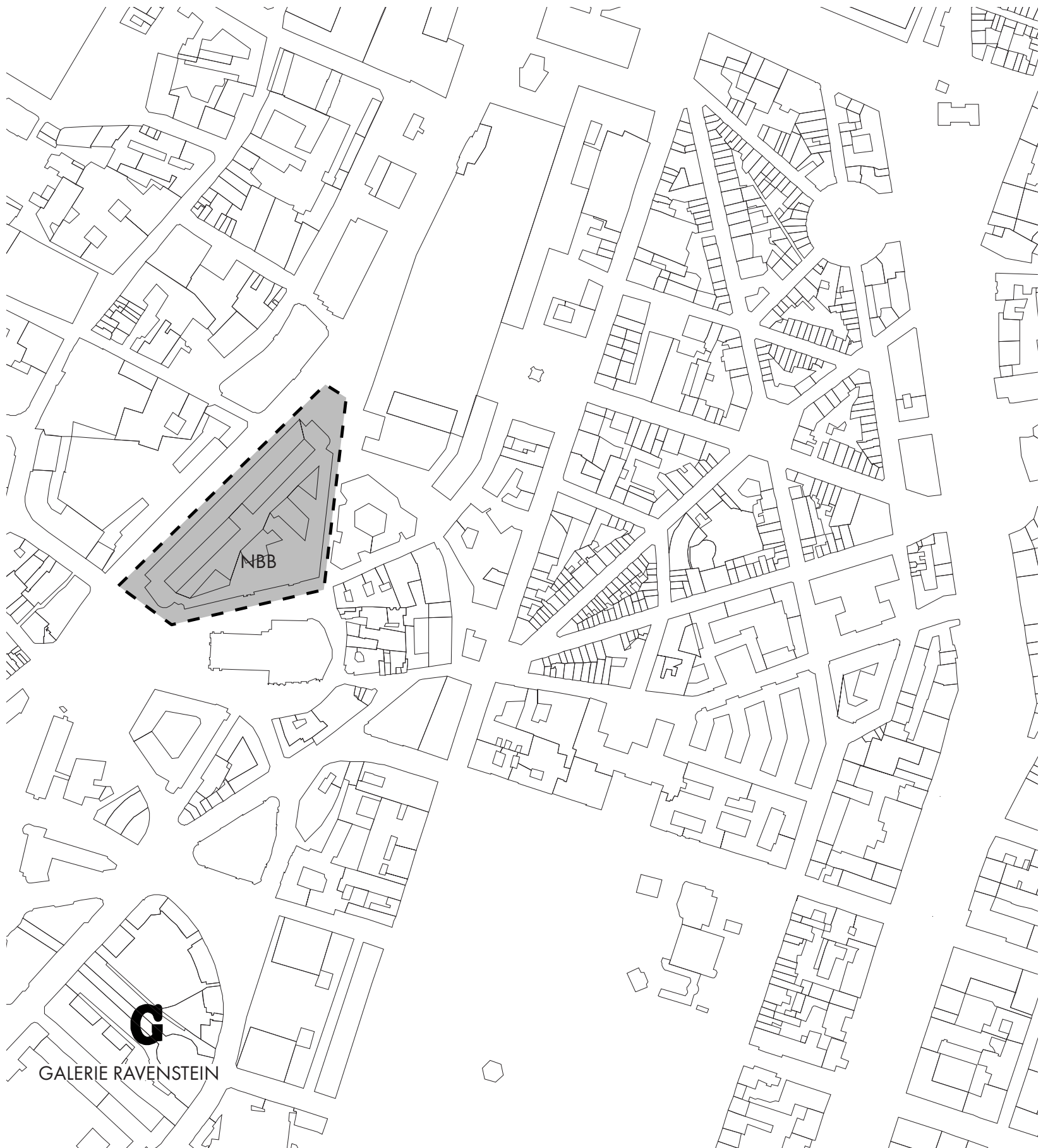
A commemorative plaque recalls the first showing of the Lumière brothers' motion picture camera on 1 March 1896, in the former dispatch room of the La Chronique daily newspaper (above Pâtisserie Meert, Galerie du Roi).

Nowadays, the Galerie du Roi is home to the Museum of Letters and Manuscripts and honours the greatest men and women of art, history, music, the humanities and science.



THE GALLERIES OF BRUSSELS





GALERIES ROYALES SAINT-HUBERT



The Royal Galleries of Saint-Hubert are a complex of glazed shopping arcades in the centre of Brussels, Belgium. Designed and built by the architect Jean-Pierre Cluysenaer between 1846 and 1847, they precede other famous 19th-century European shopping arcades, such as the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan (Italy) and the Passage in St Petersburg (Russia). Like these, they have identical regular façades, with distant origins in the long, narrow courtyard of the Uffizi in Florence, with glazed shop windows separated by pilasters and two upper floors, all in the Italianate style of the Cinquecento, under an arched roof with glazing and a delicate cast-iron framework.

The architect decided to sweep away a labyrinth of poorly lit alleyways between the rue du Marché aux Herbest and the rue Montagne aux Herbes Potagères and replace a wasted space where the bourgeoisie hardly ventured with a covered

shopping gallery of more than 200 m long. The galleries consist of two main sections, each over 100 metres long, and a smaller side gallery (Galerie des Princes/Prinsengalerij, meaning 'Princes' Gallery'). A colonnade separates the main sections (King's and Queen's Gallery) where the Rue des Bouchers/Beenhouwersstraat crosses the gallery complex. At this point, there is a discontinuity in the linear perspective of the galleries. This "curve" was deliberately introduced to make the long perspective of the galleries, with their repetition of arches, pilasters and windows, less tedious.



GALERIE BORTIER



The Bortier Gallery is a shopping gallery designed by Jean-Pierre Cluysenaer. It was built in 1847 and opened the following year. It is located in the city centre of Brussels, between the Mont des Arts/Kunstberg and the Grand Place/Grote Markt, not far from the more monumental Royal Galleries Saint-Hubert. The owner is the City of Brussels, and the services of the Territorial Administration manage the gallery. The gallery is built in neo-renaissance style and is a fine example of the everyday use of cast iron and glass.

Initially, the shopping centre was part of the Marché de la Madeleine/Magdalenamarkt complex, a covered market also designed by Cluysenaer. The façade of the rue de la Madeleine, in Flemish Baroque style, predates the construction of the shopping centre behind it. This façade dated from 1763 and was salvaged from the Hôtel des Grandes Messageries, a townhouse located on that site.

The gallery owes its name to an investor named Pierre Bortier. He proposed to the city of Brussels the construction of the Marché de la Madeleine/Magdalenamarkt. This covered market had its main entrance on rue Duquesnoy. Starting from the Hôtel des Grandes Messageries, located in the rue de la Madeleine, the gallery passed through the rounded southern end of the market at its first-floor level and ended in the rue Saint-Jean/Sint-Jansstraat. The Madeleine market was demolished in 1957 and replaced by a modern assembly hall, leaving only the original façade in place. The Bortier Gallery was thus separated from the market building. Badly degraded, it was renovated in 1974 and again around 2010. The place is now almost entirely occupied, except for an art gallery, by stalls and second-hand booksellers.



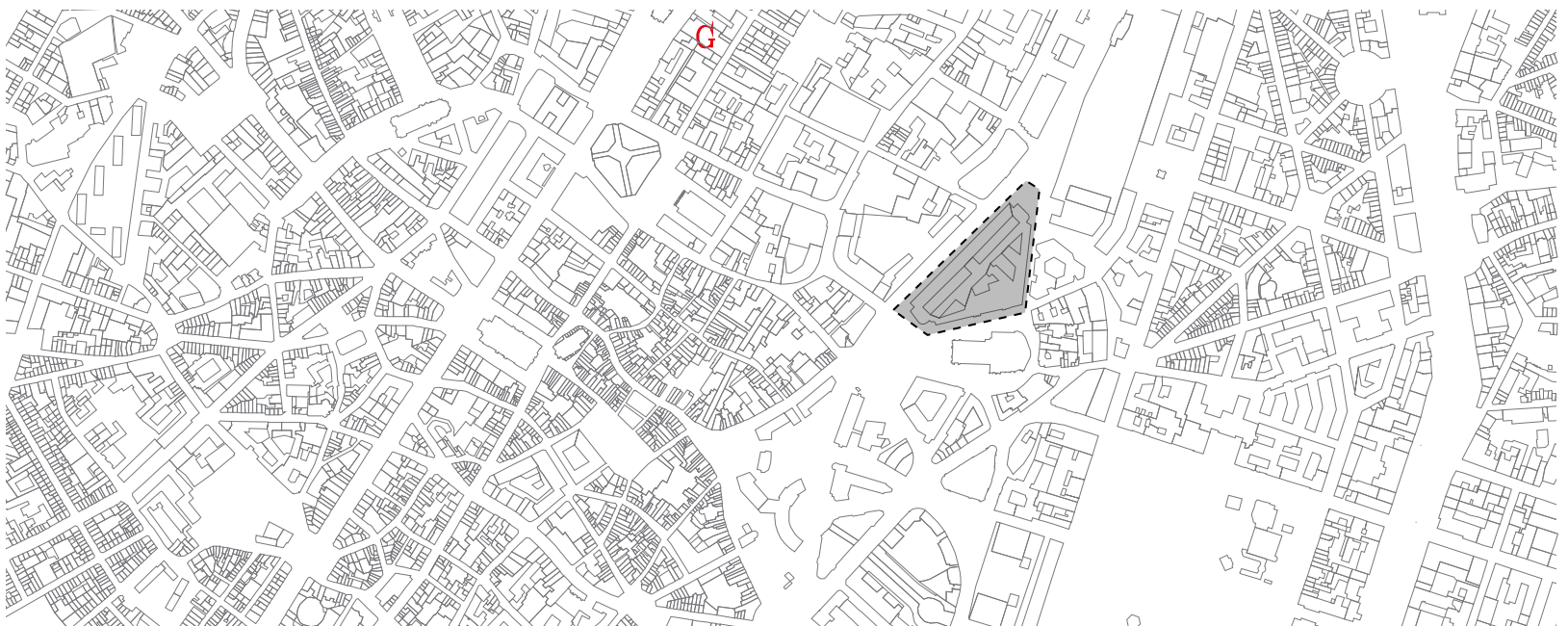
PASSAGE DU NORD



In the 19th century, the fashion for commercial galleries was born in Europe, mainly in Paris. Between 1820 and 1860, Brussels was also affected by this craze for covered passageways: during this period, ten or so buildings were built, of which only three remain today: the Galeries Saint-Hubert, the Galerie Bortier and the Passage du Nord. The latter is one of the new buildings that gave the central boulevards their face.

This passage represents the “gallery street” type: the presence of caryatids and a profusion of curved decoration are its main attraction. The use of sculptures, which is relatively rare in passages, shows a specific luxury and contributes to the animation of the perspective. A glassed-in link between two busy shopping streets, the Passage du Nord is built on six levels and is 70 metres long and 6 metres wide. It was designed with typical 19th-century eclectic taste. The façade on Boulevard Adolphe Max is now devoid of

the two domes that extended the façade. These architectural elements were removed at the beginning of the 20th century. This façade was renovated in 2000 and 2001. On the first floor, four groups of children, created by the talented sculptor Desenfants, support candelabras topped with lanterns. These groups were meticulously reconstructed as part of the renovation of the façade. The gallery’s interior is enhanced by the presence of 32 caryatids, the work of sculptor Joseph Bertheux. The variety of poses and attributes indicate modern allegories: Metallurgical Industry, Commerce, Marine, and Astronomy, alongside Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, and Decorative Arts. These statues are, in fact, four repetitions of the same series of eight statues.



GALERIE RAVENSTEIN



The Galerie Ravenstein leads to the Gare Centrale, functioning as an essential pedestrian link between the Ville Haute and the Ville Basse (the upper town and the centre of Brussels). It is integrated into a vast four-storey office building.

Its original aim was to give a new impetus to the neighbourhood, which had been badly affected by the destructive works on the north-south junction. Conceived as a shopping arcade that could accommodate 81 shops, it was built between 1954 and 1958 in international style, according to the plans of architects Alexis and Philippe Dumont, who designed the nearby Shell office building. From Ravenstein Street, a vast portico gives access to a staircase under a dome which compensates for the ten-metre difference in height between the two roads. The gallery seems to continue the tradition of the grand covered arcades so characteristic of the 19th century. Like them, it has been

fitted with a zenithal lighting element in the form of a raised concrete and brick vault in the gallery itself and, in the atrium, an impressive concrete dome inlaid with over a hundred glass bricks arranged in concentric circles. Many Brussels citizens and travellers continue to use this gallery, which still houses shops, restaurants and cafés.



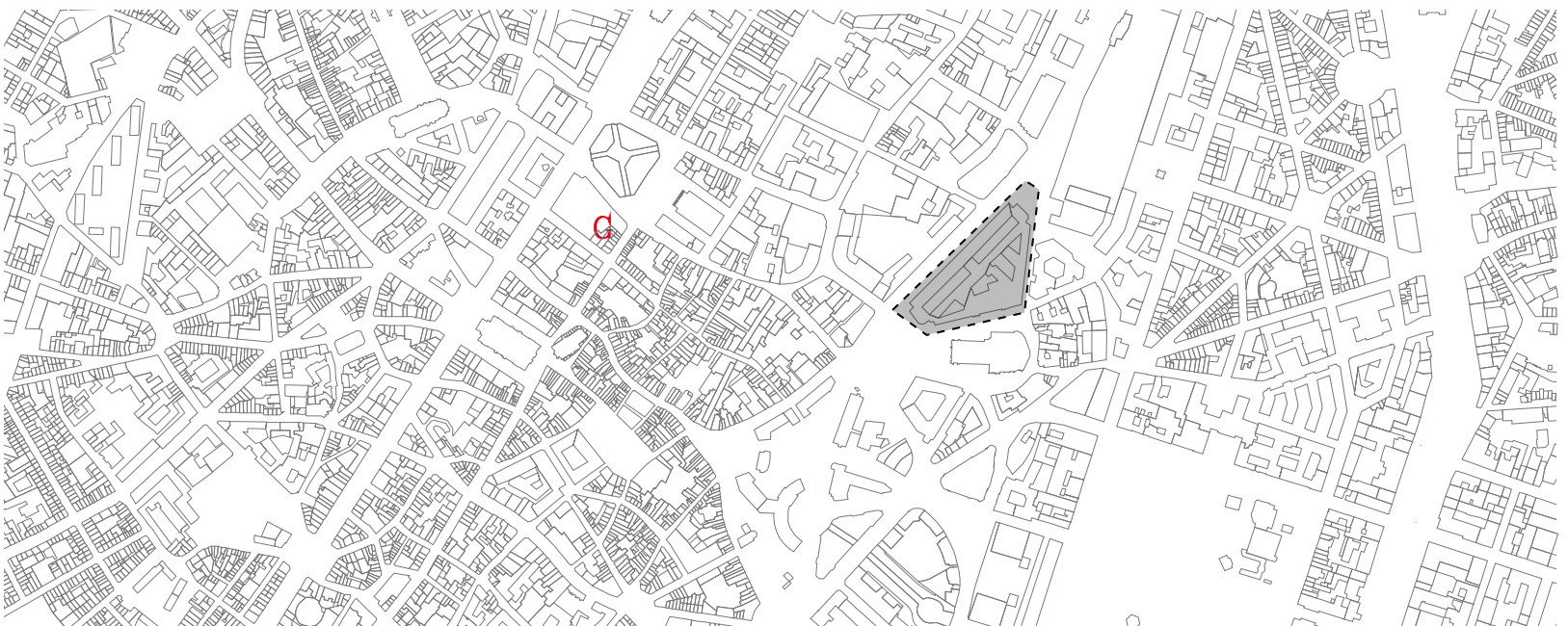
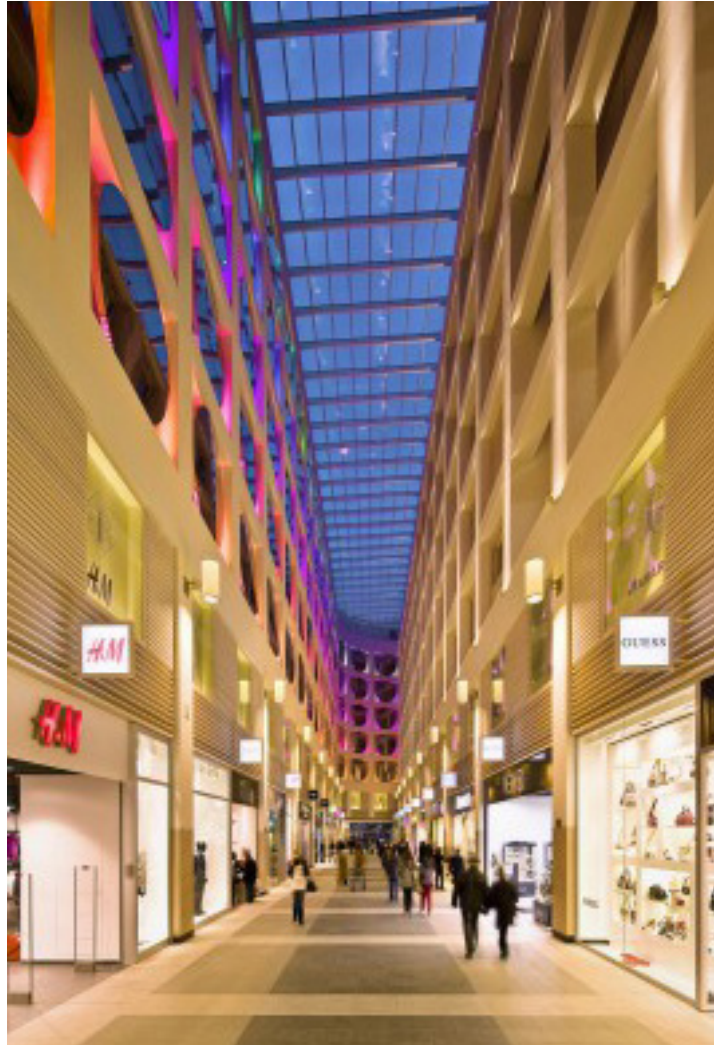
GALERIES ANSPACH



Commercial complex originally called "Grand Bazar du Boulevard Anspach", then "Galeries Anspach" and occupying the major part of the block between rue Grétry, rue des Fripiers and rue de l'Évêque.

The current complex is a result of an amalgamation of various buildings, dating from the end of the 19th century to the present day. The initial building was erected at the corner of the boulevard and rue Grétry, on the site of the Hôtel de Suède, according to plans dated 1897 by the Liege architect Fr. Petit. It was widened towards rue Grétry by the same architect in 1899, and then in 1911, facing the boulevard, by adding three bays to the left of the existing seven. In 1903, the architect Victor Horta was commissioned to enlarge the building at the rear, with facades on rue de l'Évêque and rue Grétry, the latter being enlarged again to the right in 1913, at the same time as the rest of the building was raised. Finally,

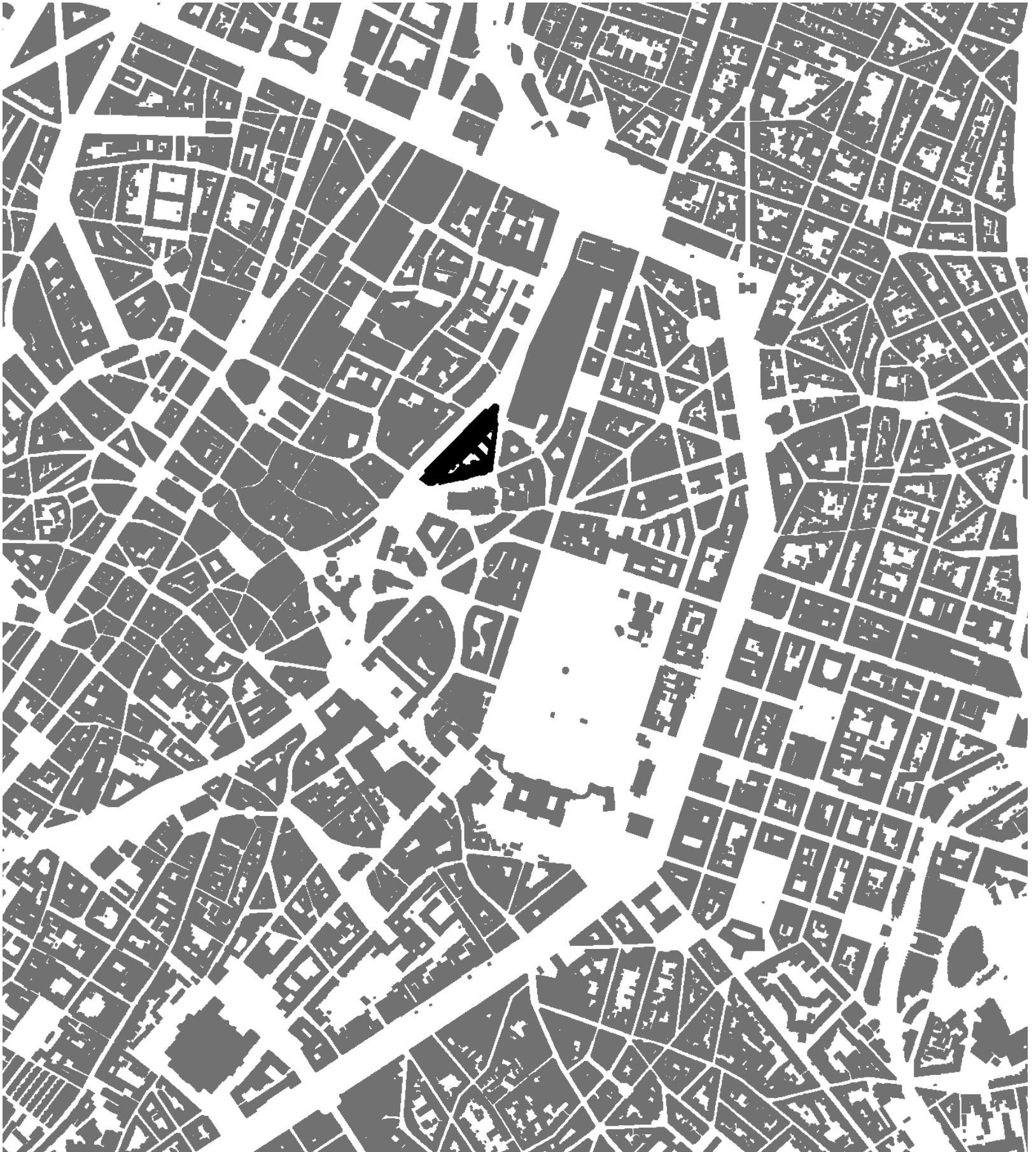
the architect M. Polak added a new façade to the complex, towards rue de l'Évêque, in 1926-1927 and in 1935 he built the corner of rue de l'Évêque and rue des Fripiers. The shops closed in 1983 due to bankruptcy and were completely refurbished in 1984, inside and out, for their new purpose.



III INTERVENTION

ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATE

BUILDING ANALYSIS





1. 200m long facade; columns block the views

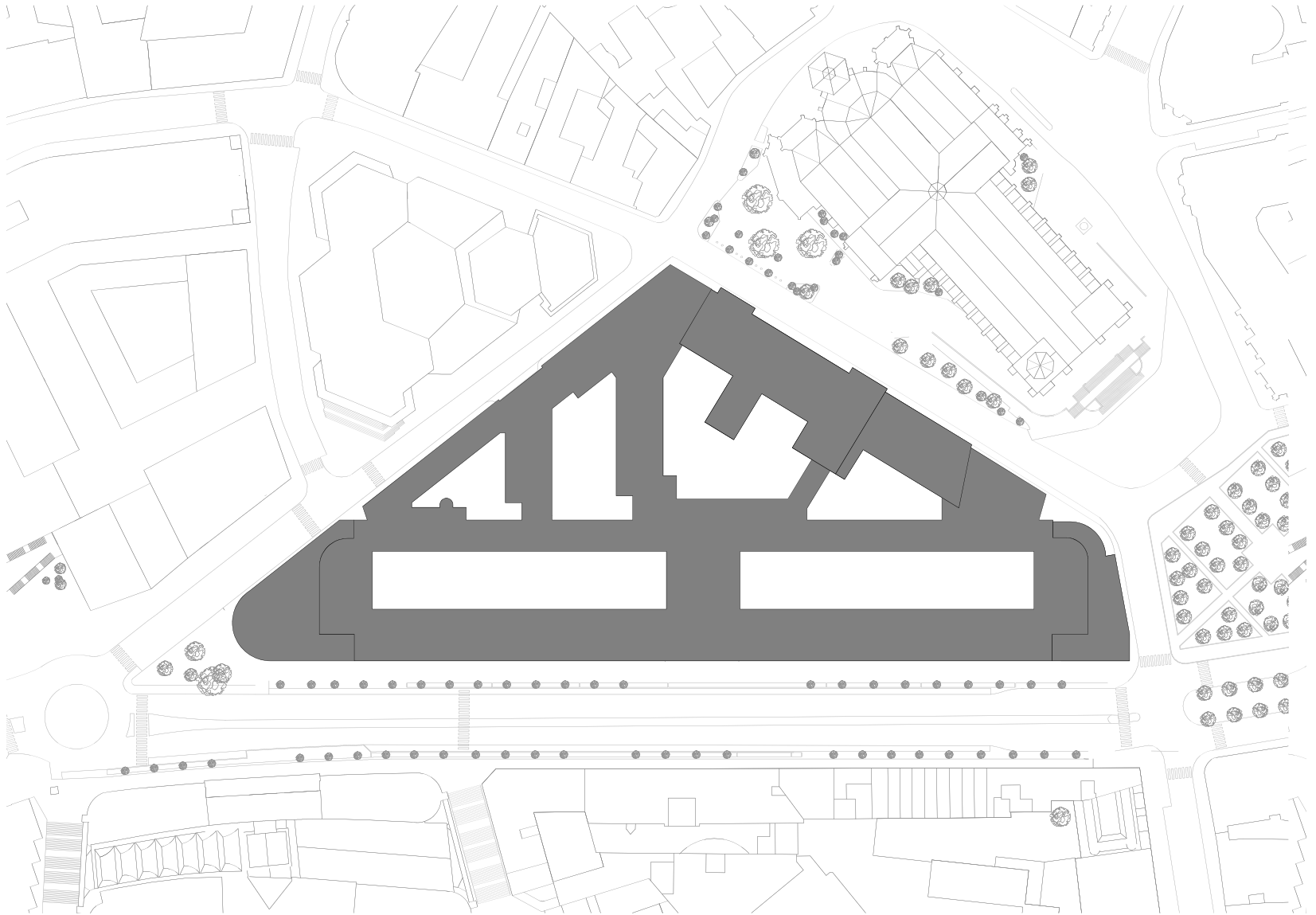
2. Parallel façade, also long, is monotonous and in deteriorated condition

3. Dark, unused and dim courtyards

4. Misused public space in front of the palace

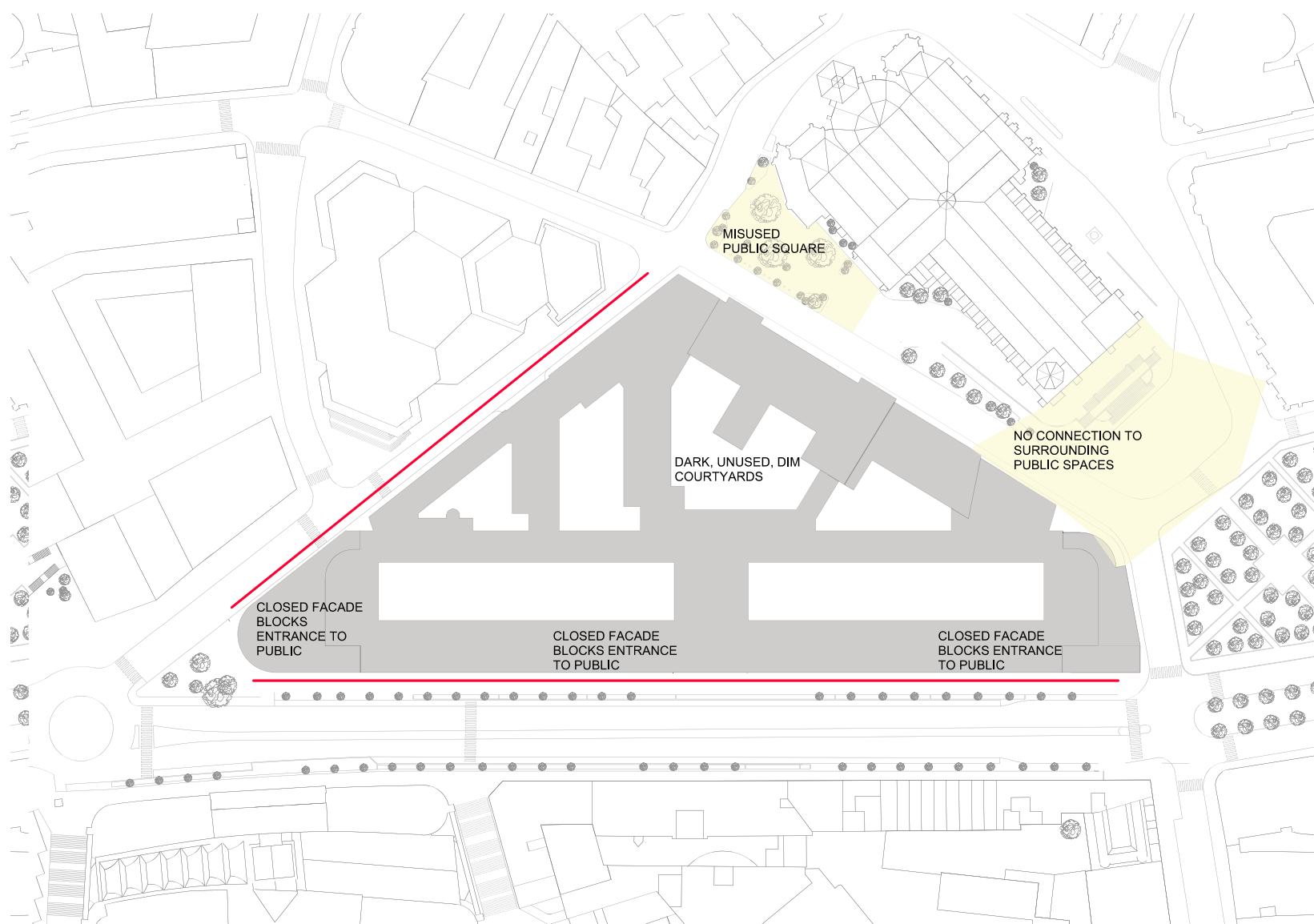
5. Abandoned public spaces
(ongoing project)

6. Police station in state of disuse,
emits a bad odor
(ongoing project)



Pictogram - Current state

The plan shows the bank complex in its present situation. The colonnaded façade faces the Boulevard de Berlaimont, while the historic façade of the palace faces the cathedral. To the south, the closed façade faces the cathedral square. To the east are the most recent parts, dating from 1963, facing the new police station project.

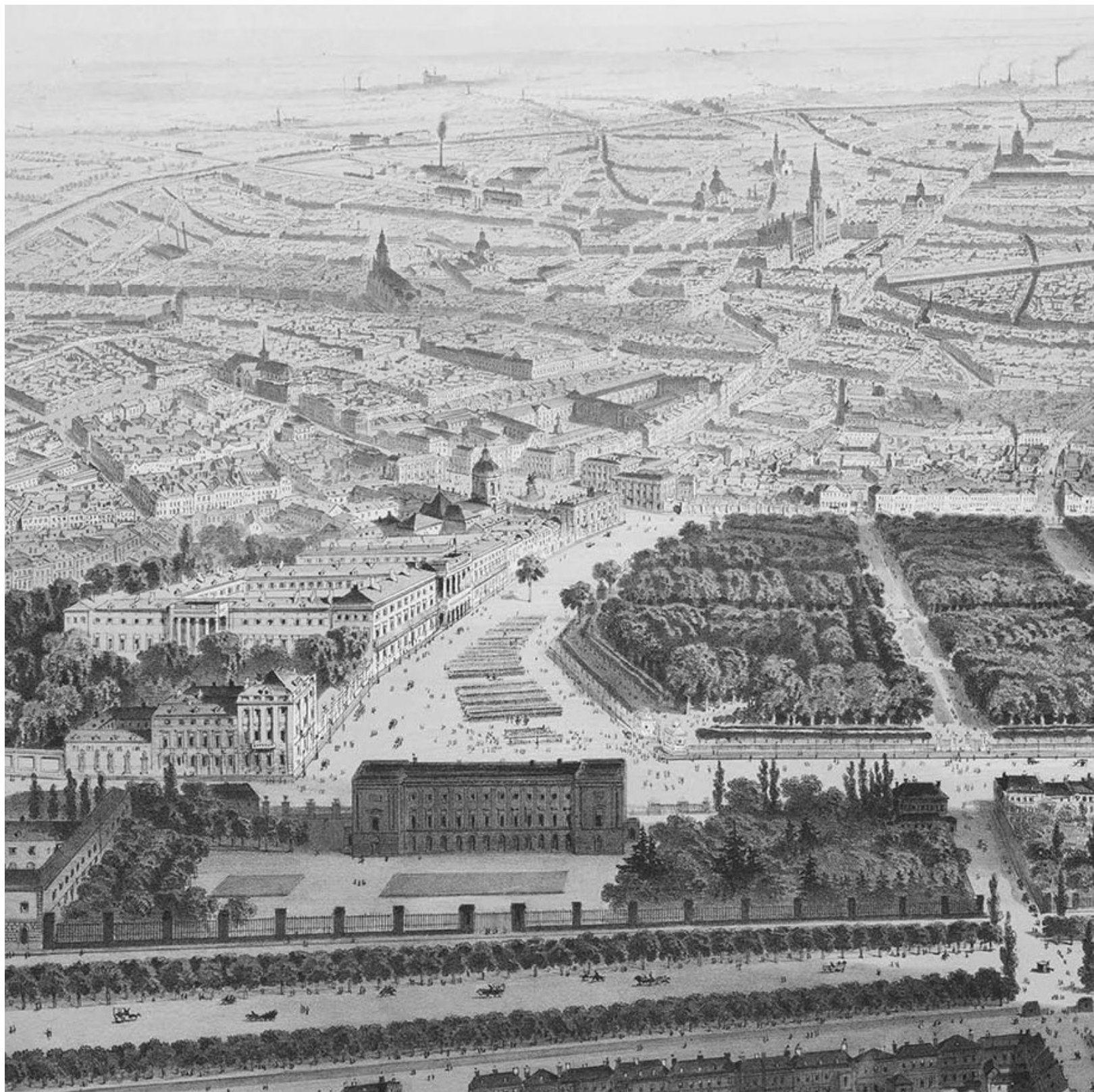


Pictogram - Current problems

This pictogram tries to analyse the different deficits that one can find in the current building. The first and most important would be the closeness to the street and the public. The current building is surrounded by a fence of about 2m, making it impossible to get close to the front of the building. To the street, the windows are also more than 2m high, so it is impossible to see from the outside what is going on inside the building. Next to the church, in front of the palace, there is a pleasant square, which is currently very badly used, as it is used as a car park and has no qualities for the neighbours, who could make good use of it. Inside the building, with the construction of the different appendices over the years, four interior courtyards of great height but tiny diameter were created. As a consequence, these are very dark and have hardly any quality.

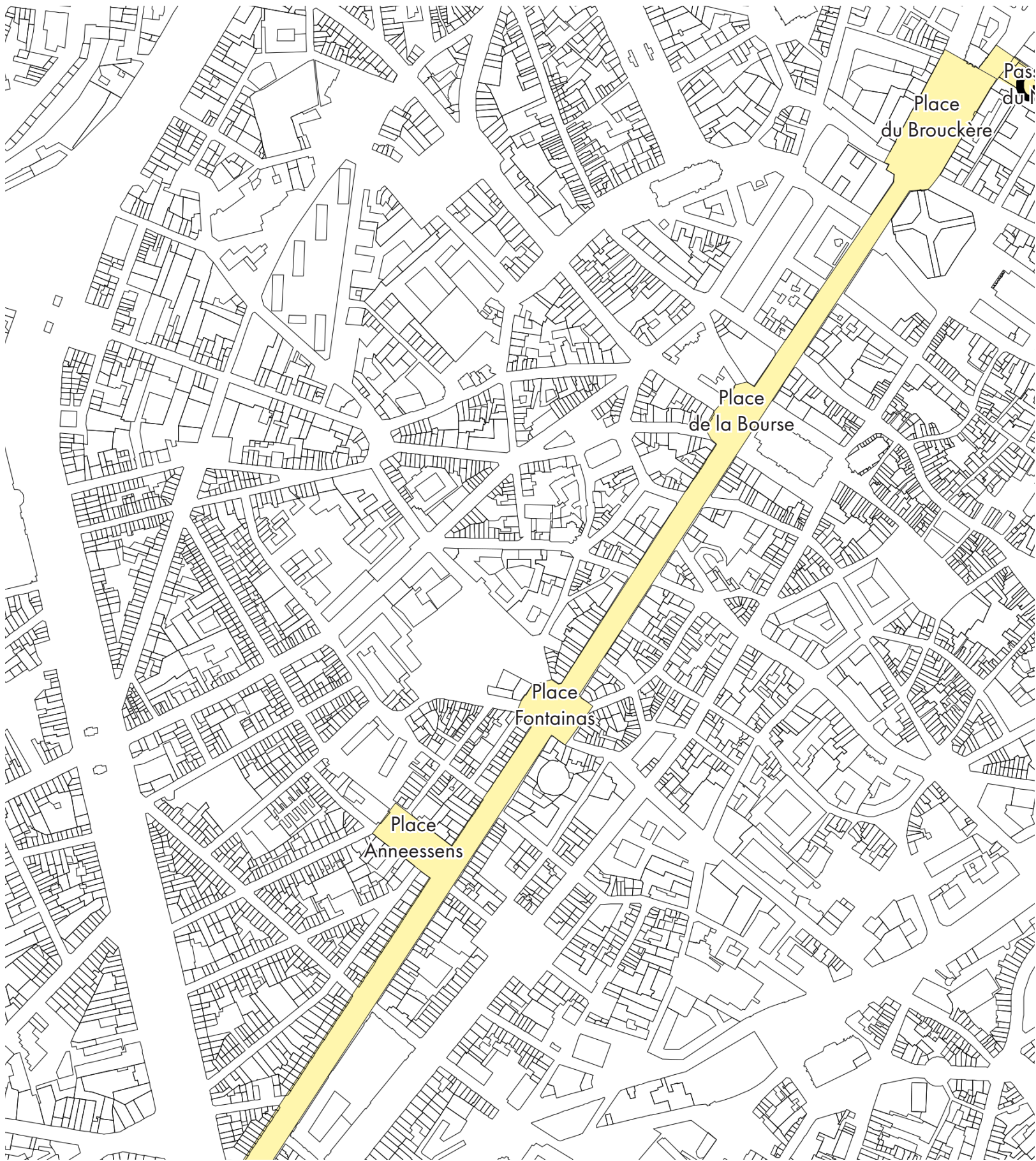
INTERVENTION URBAN APPROACH

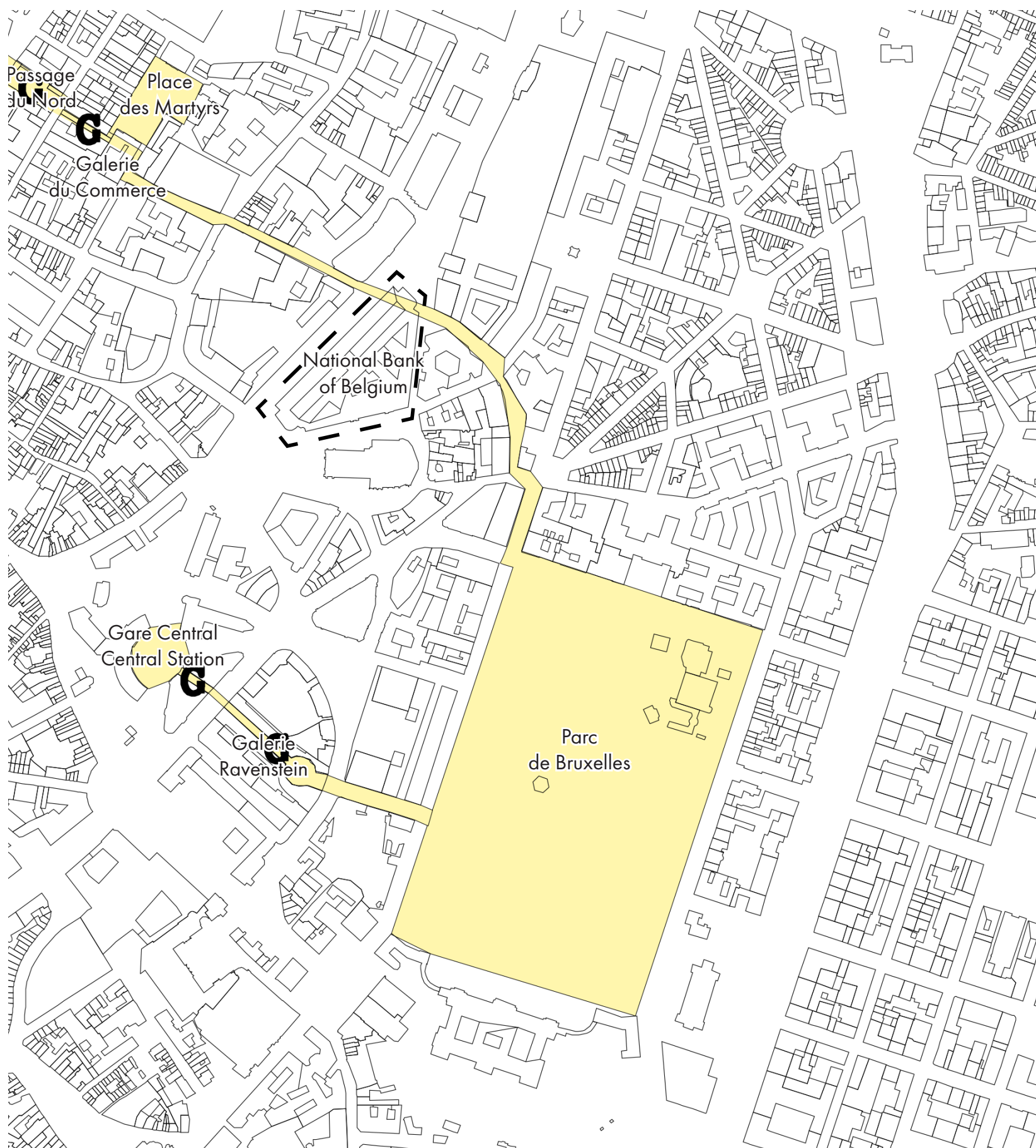
RETRIEVING THE HISTORICAL CONDITION



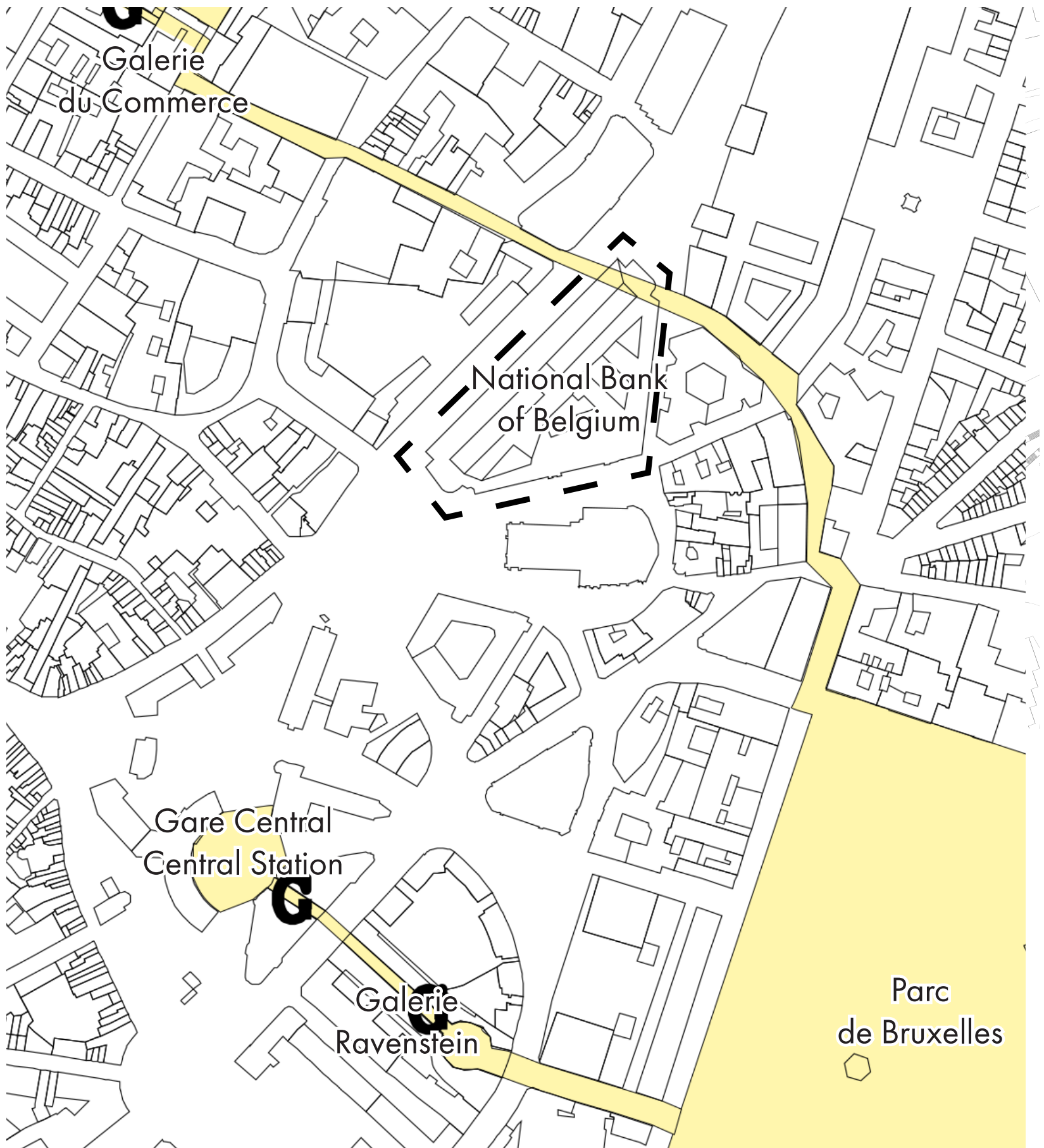


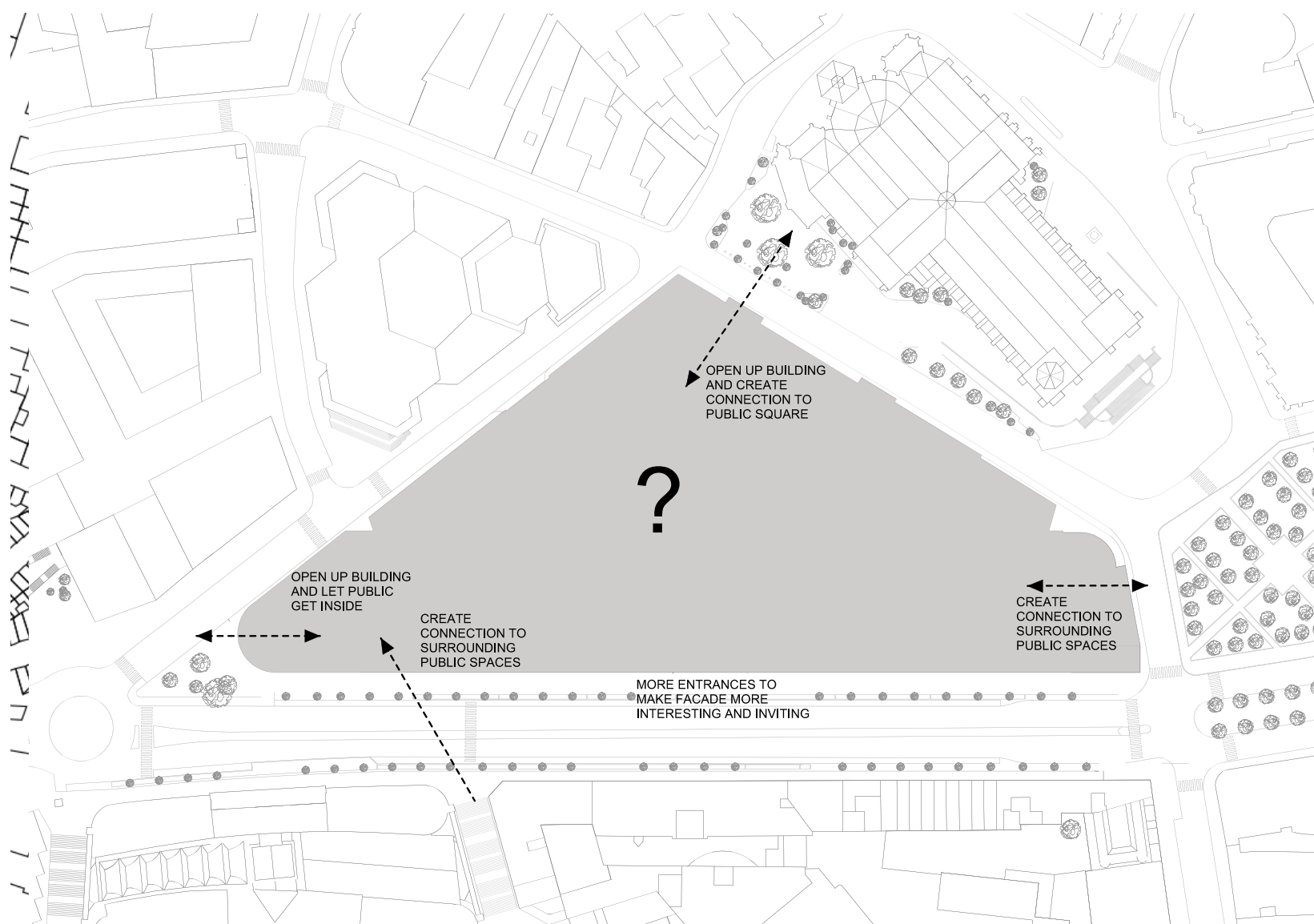
ROUTING THROUGH THE CITY





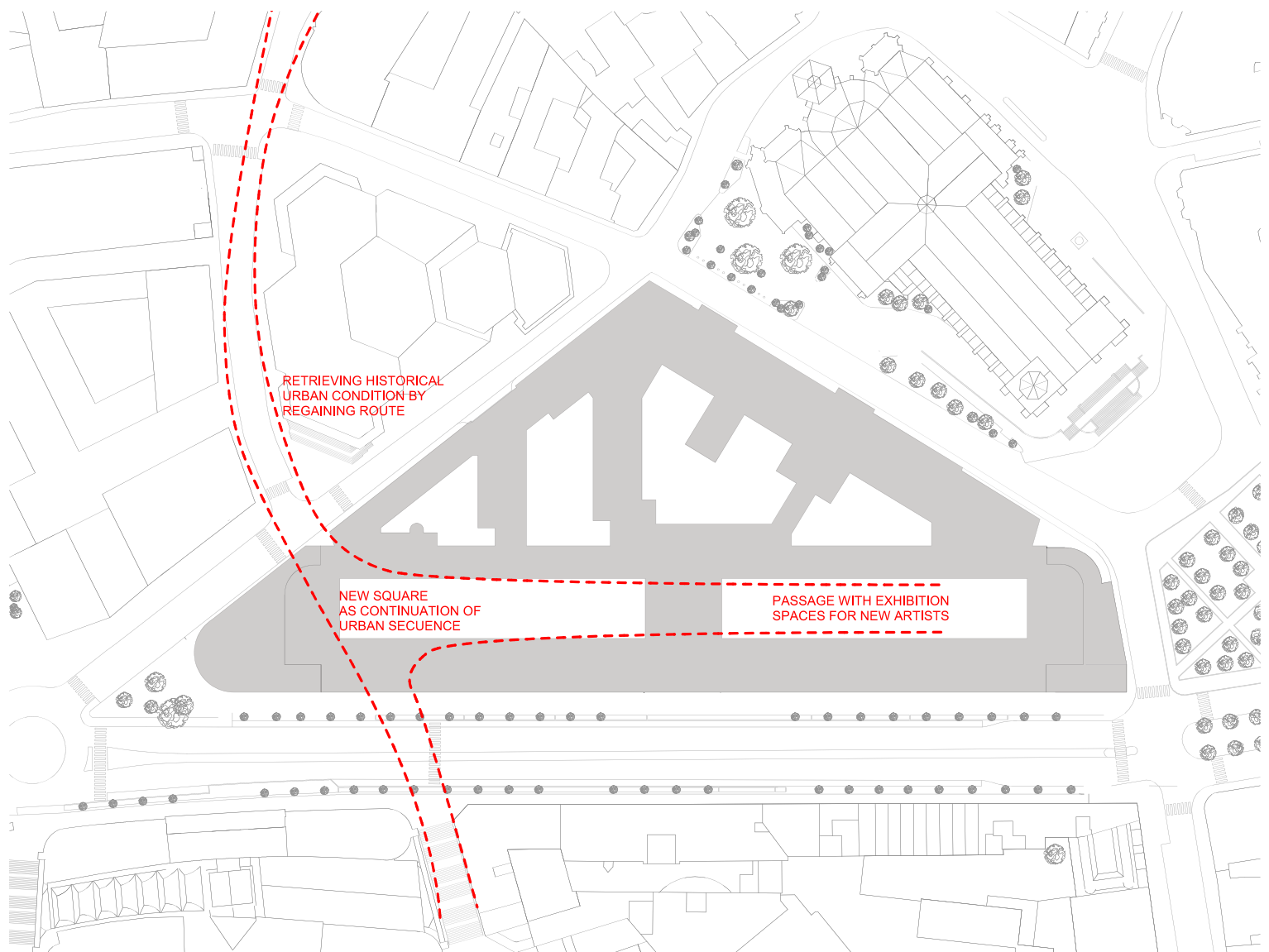
INTERRUPTION IN THE ROUTING





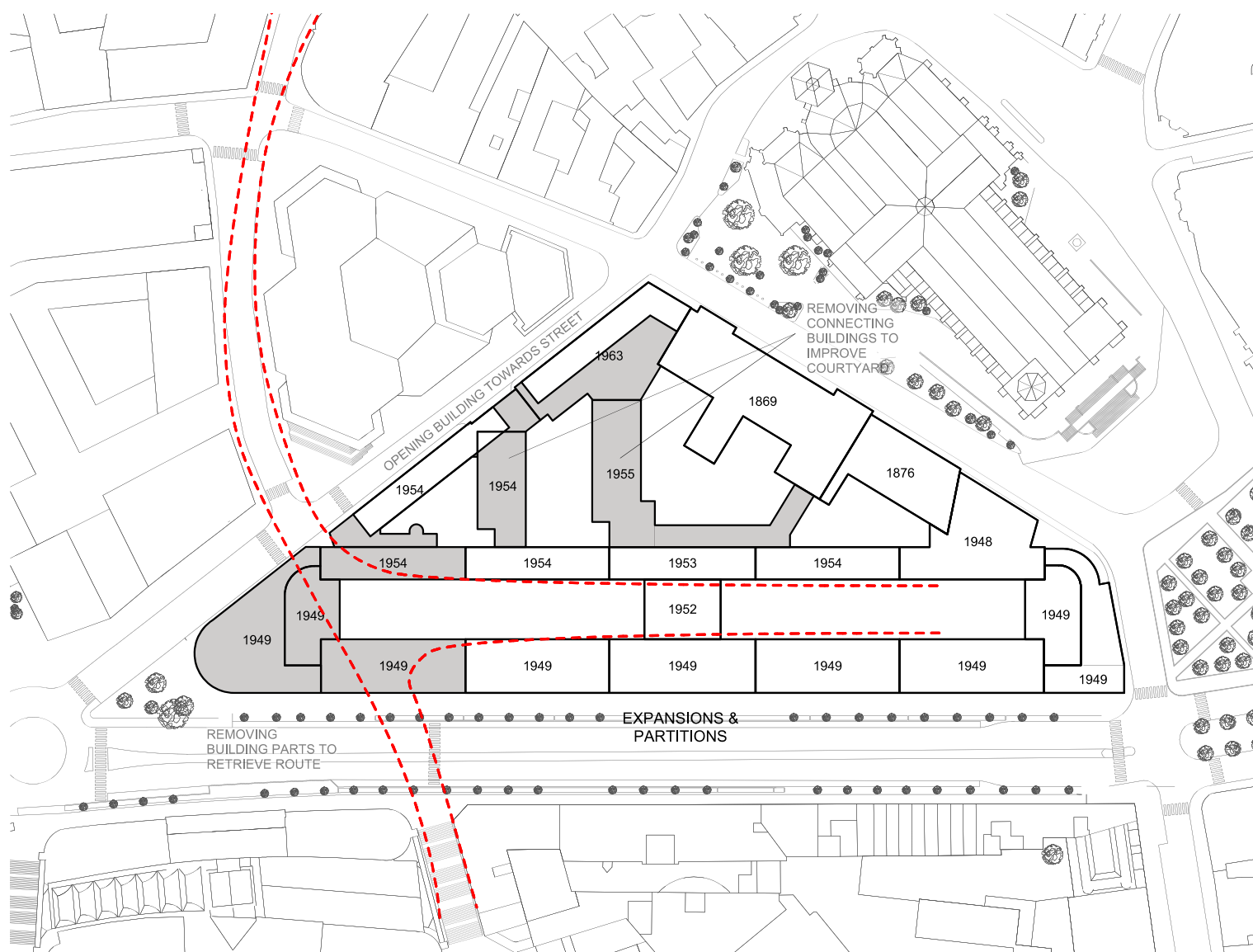
Pictogram - Goals for refurbishment
unscaled

The objectives of the redevelopment of the building are clear. The first is to re-live the historic street by cutting off the northern part of the building and connecting the two existing streets through a square. To create connections between the bank and the existing public squares. To create more entrances to the building, making it more attractive to the public and attracting more people.



Pictogram - Ambitions for refurbishment

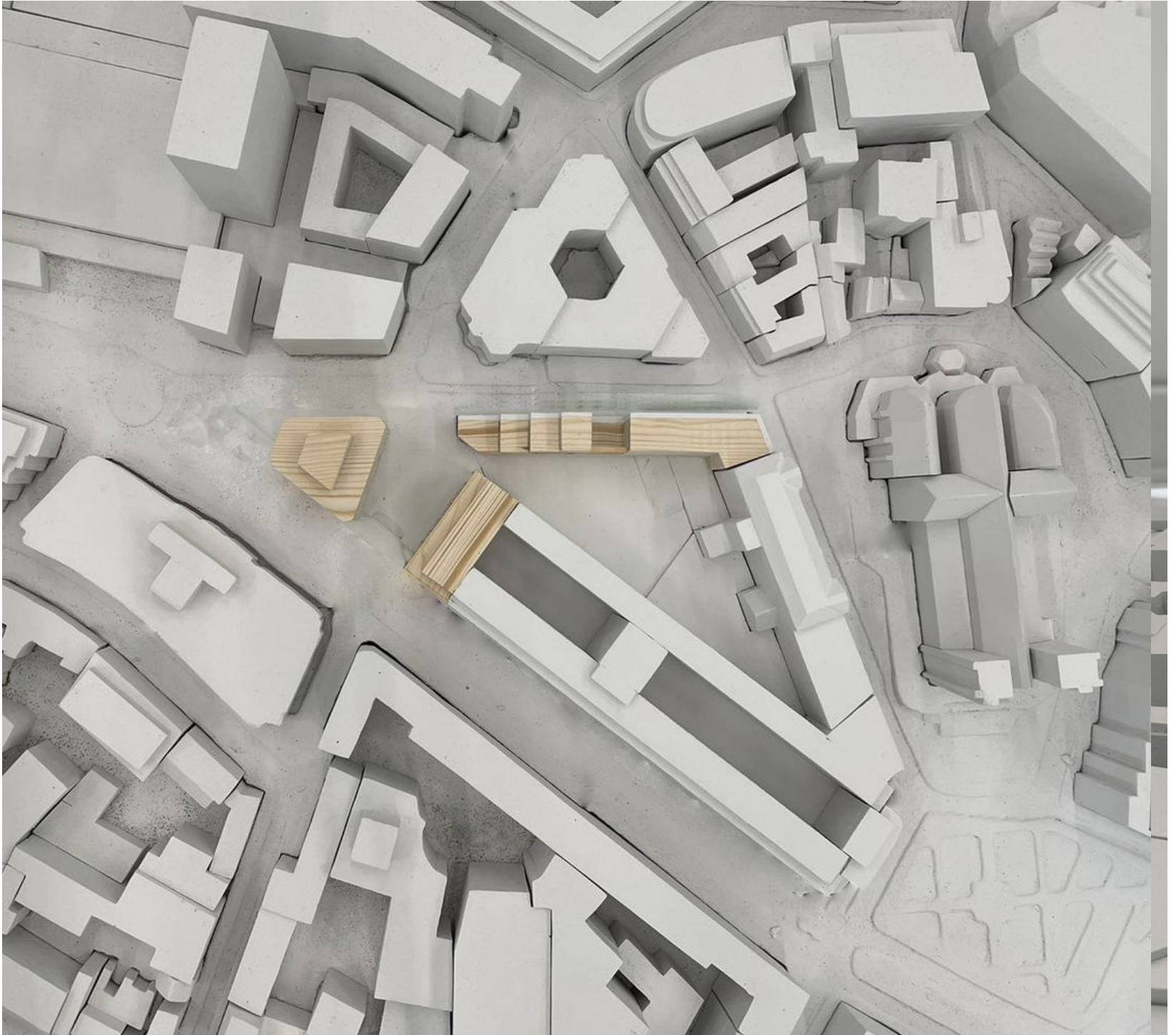
The main ambition of the project is the recovery of the historic route from Anspach boulevard to the central station square. by cutting off the northern part of the building, this opportunity can be used to create a public square, following the sequence of squares connected by the street as seen in the plan of the route. By cutting off the northern part of the building, this opportunity can be used to create a public square, which follows the sequence of squares connected by the street as seen in the plan of the route. The central bank building will have a new entrance from the square. In this way, the entrance will give the public access to the banking hall. This hall will also be refurbished and will have different public, catering and restoration functions, as can be seen in the city's other galleries.



Pictogram - Partition and extensions of the building | Demolition plan

This plan shows the partitions of the complex building. It can be seen in which year each part of the bank was built and which parts are structurally separated from the others. This plan is crucial to see which parts of the bank can be demolished to make room for the new volumes of the new project. Once the bank's plans have been analysed and it has been decided which parts can be reused and renovated, it is proposed to demolish the remaining blocks that cannot be used in the future for different reasons.

DESIGN PROCESS | URBAN INTERVENTIONS





URBAN INTERVENTIONS



The Galerie Ravenstein leads to the Gare Centrale, functioning as an essential pedestrian link between the Ville Haute and the Ville Basse (the upper town and the centre of Brussels). It is integrated into a vast four-storey office building.

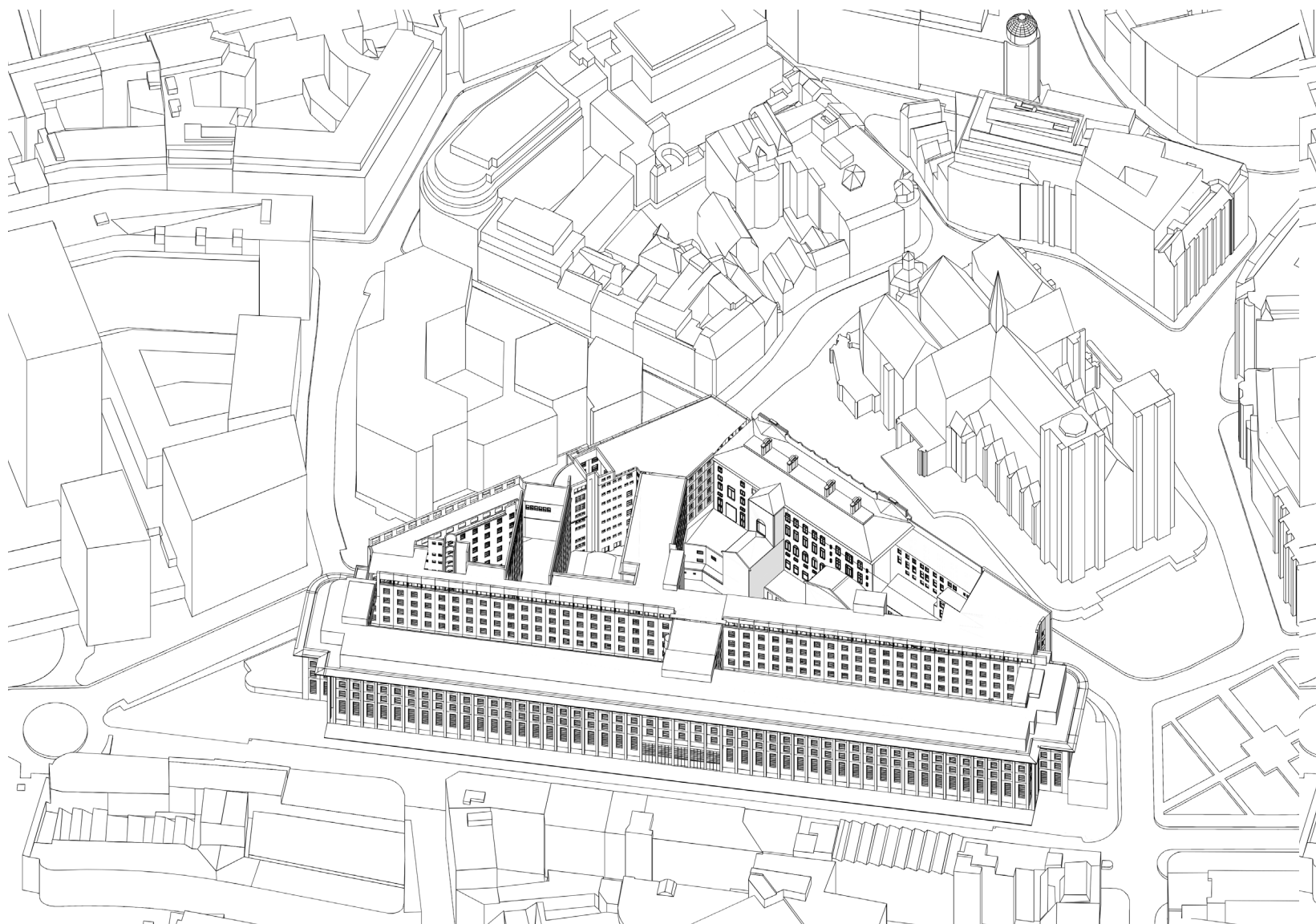
Its original aim was to give a new impetus to the neighbourhood, which had been badly affected by the destructive works on the north-south junction. Conceived as a shopping arcade that could accommodate 81 shops, it was built between 1954 and 1958 in international style, according to the plans of architects Alexis and Philippe Dumont, who designed the nearby Shell office building. From Ravenstein Street, a vast portico gives access to a staircase under a dome which compensates for the ten-metre difference in height between the two roads. The gallery seems to continue the tradition of the grand covered arcades so characteristic of the 19th century. Like them, it has been fitted with a zenithal lighting

element in the form of a raised concrete and brick vault in the gallery itself and, in the atrium, an impressive concrete dome inlaid with over a hundred glass bricks arranged in concentric circles. Many Brussels citizens and travellers continue to use this gallery, which still houses shops, restaurants and cafés.

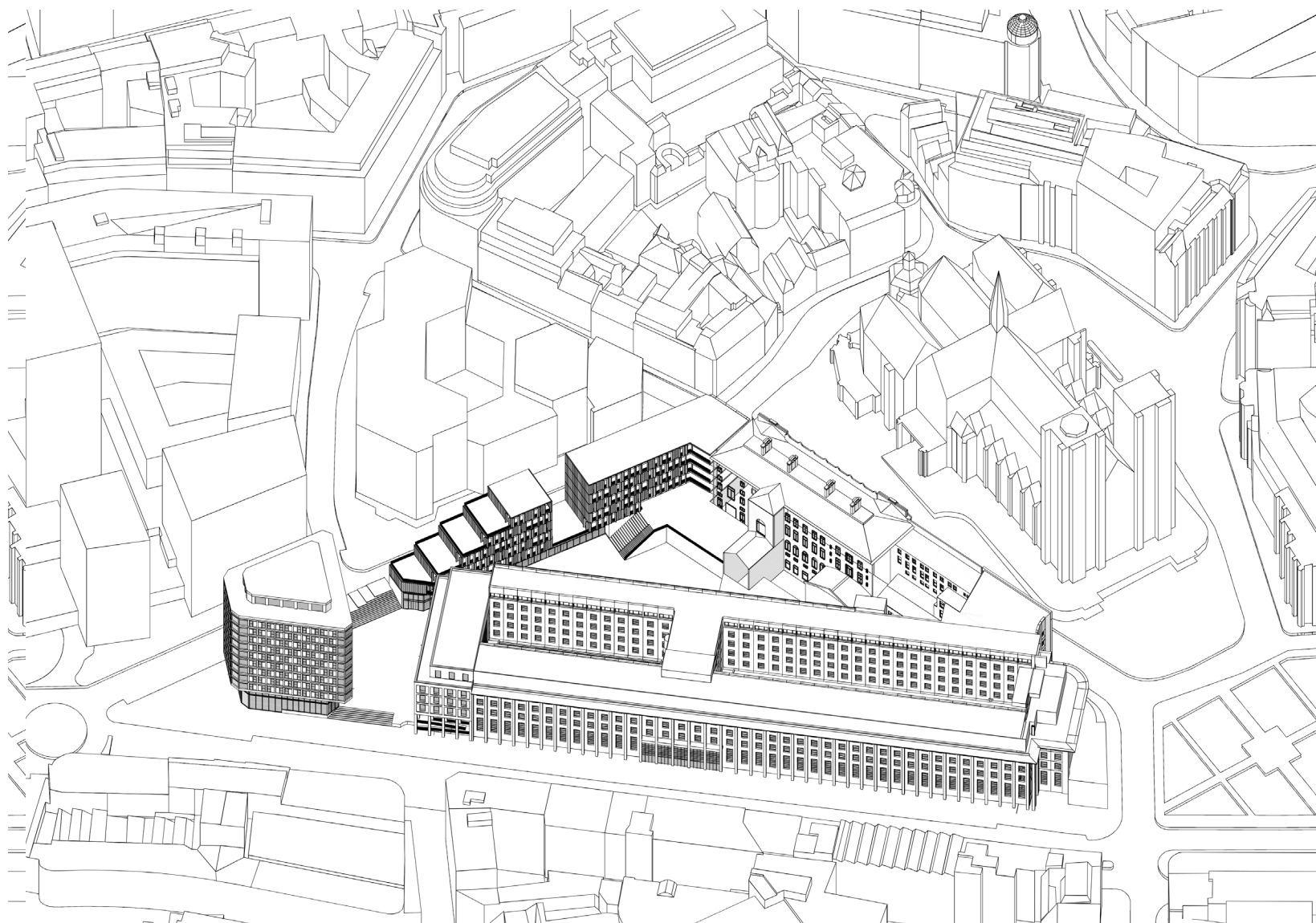








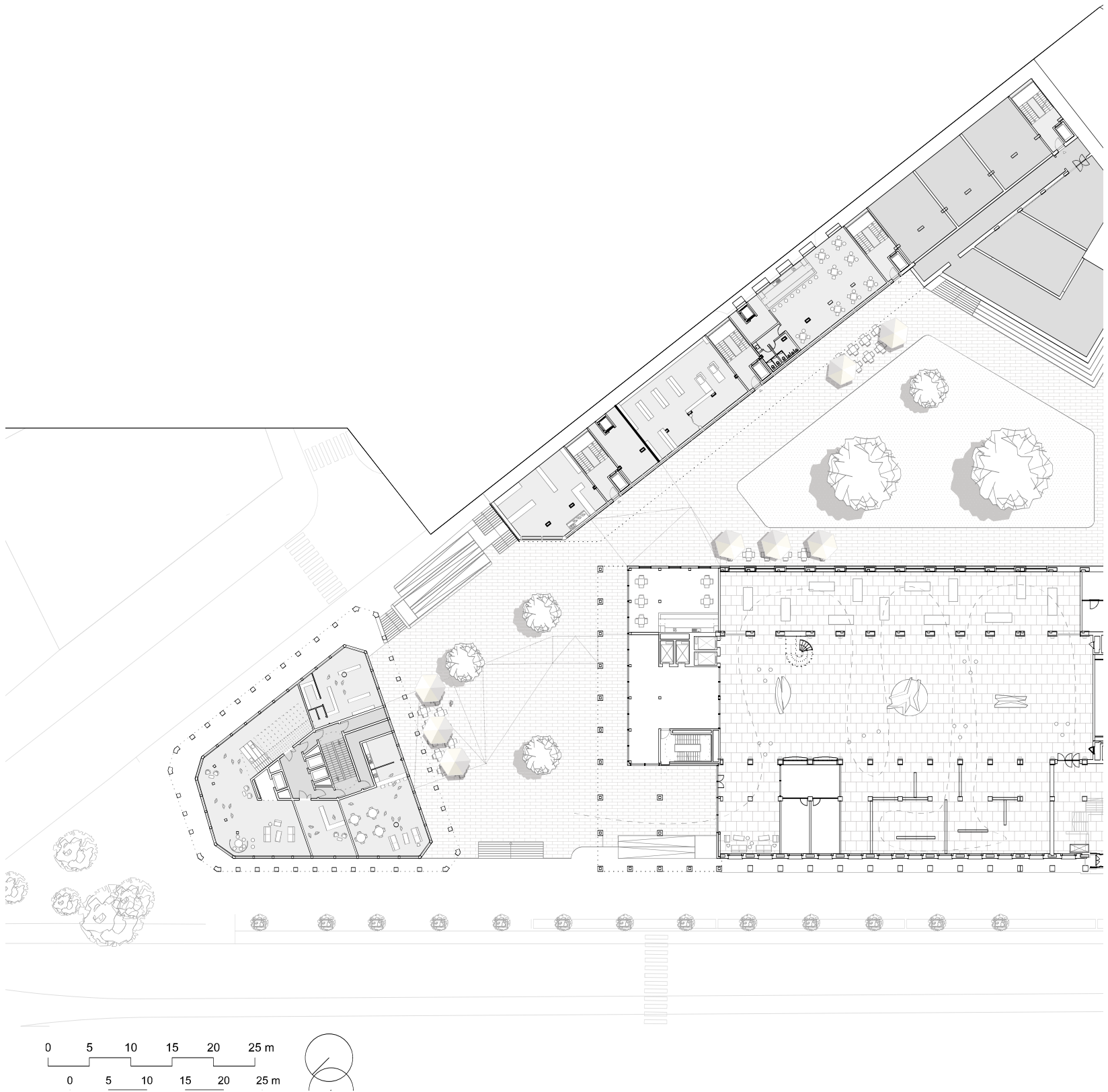
Pictogram - Ambitions for refurbishment

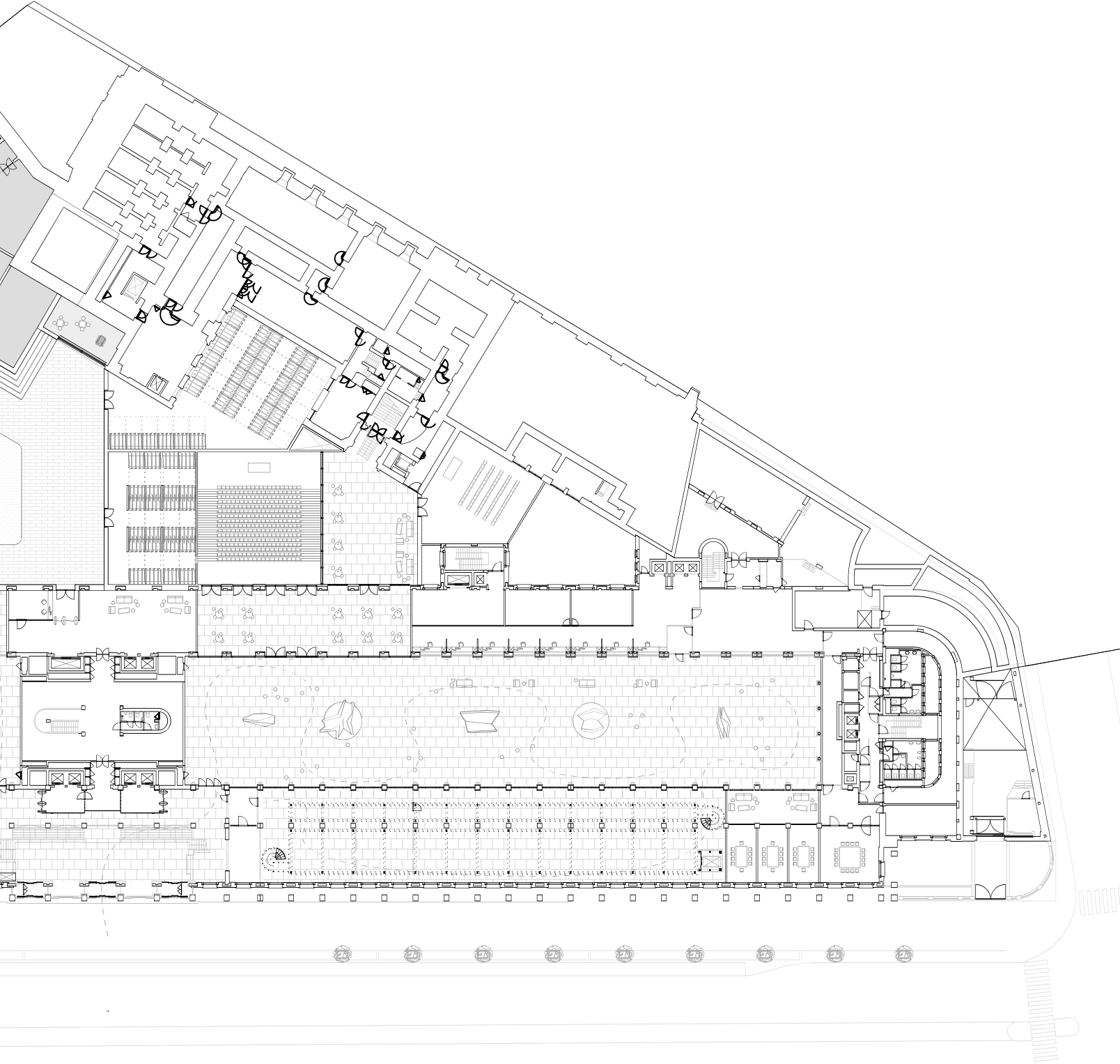


Pictogram - Partition and extensions of the building

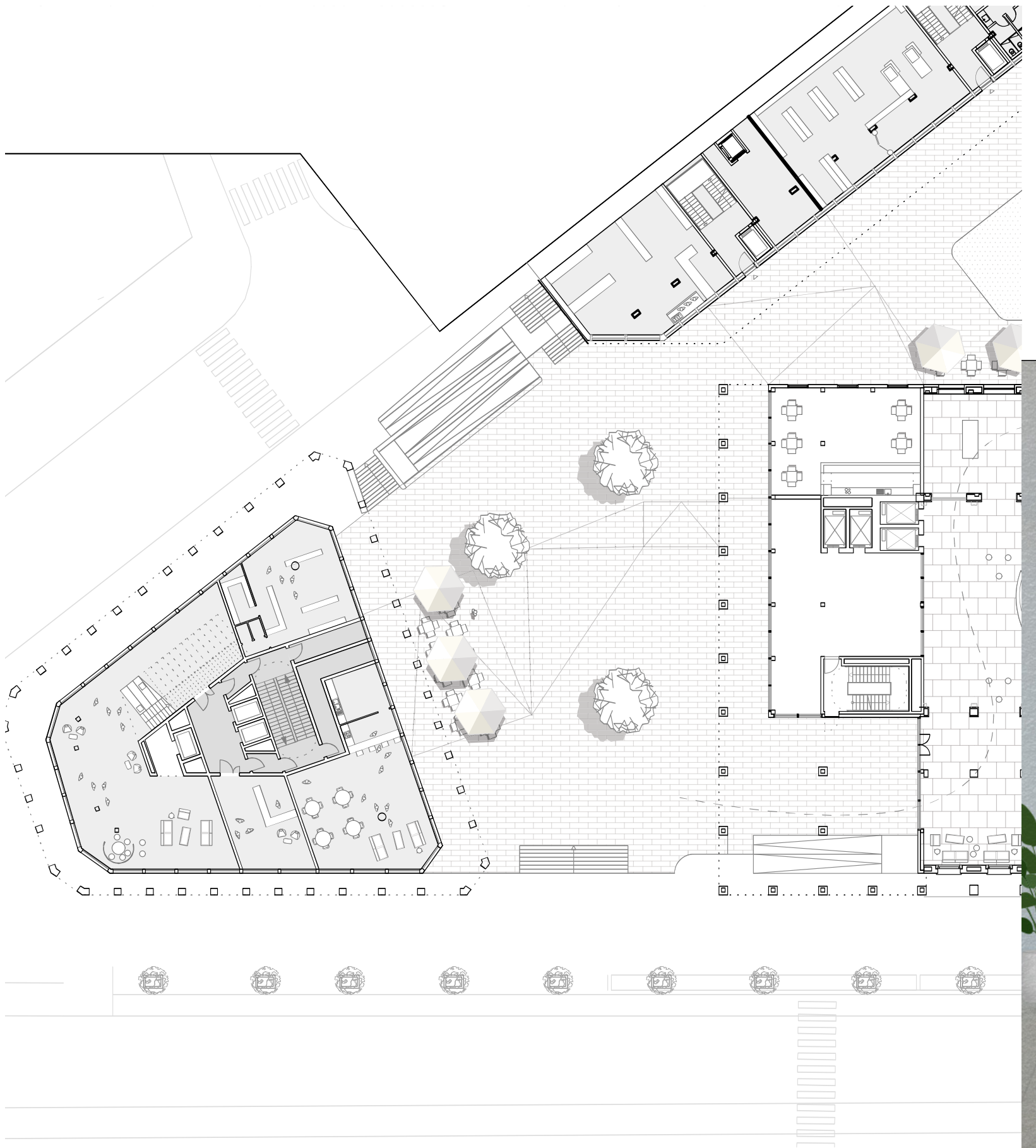
INTERVENTION INTERIOR RENOVATION BANK BUILDING

GROUND FLOOR





GROUND FLOOR - PUBLIC SQUARE

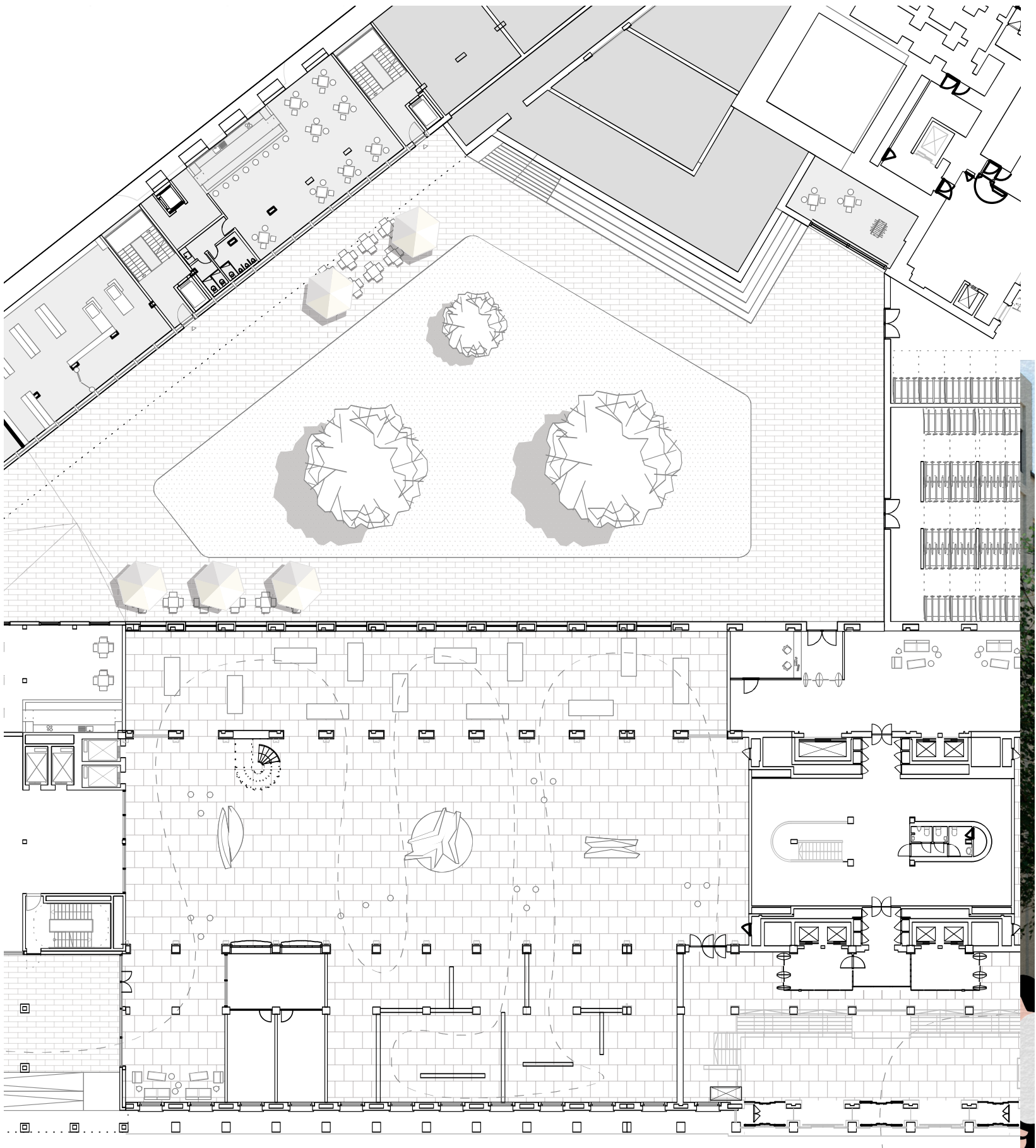


By cutting the building, the corner of the plot is entirely available for new volumes: the tower and the continuation of the residential building to the east form the new square. The square is adapted to the topography and connects Boulevard de Berlaimont with the Rue de la Banque. The square is on a slight slope to connect these streets. This new place will serve as a meeting point for the new inhabitants of the block, as well as for the bank's employees. Towards the square, the bank extends its building. It creates two new entrances to the building. one for the workers, marked by a glass window on both sides, visually connecting the exterior and interior of the building. In addition, a new, somewhat sheltered entrance is created for the exhibition space located on the first two floors of the building. The main objective of the intervention

is to revitalise the block, whereby the square also offers restaurant spaces, shops for basic needs and supermarkets for the new inhabitants of the block. The square will be used as a meeting point for the new inhabitants of the block.



GROUND FLOOR - COURTYARD

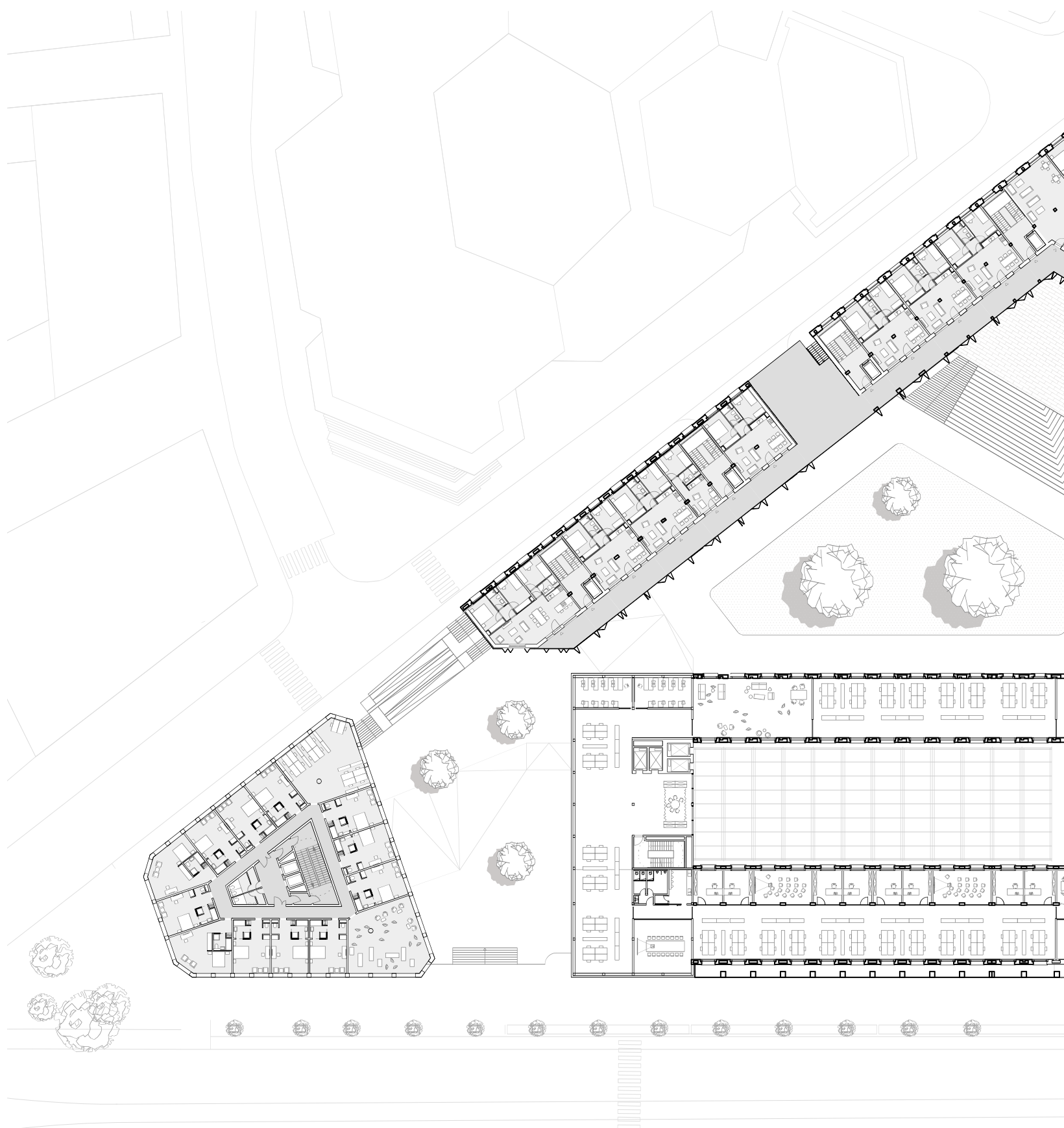


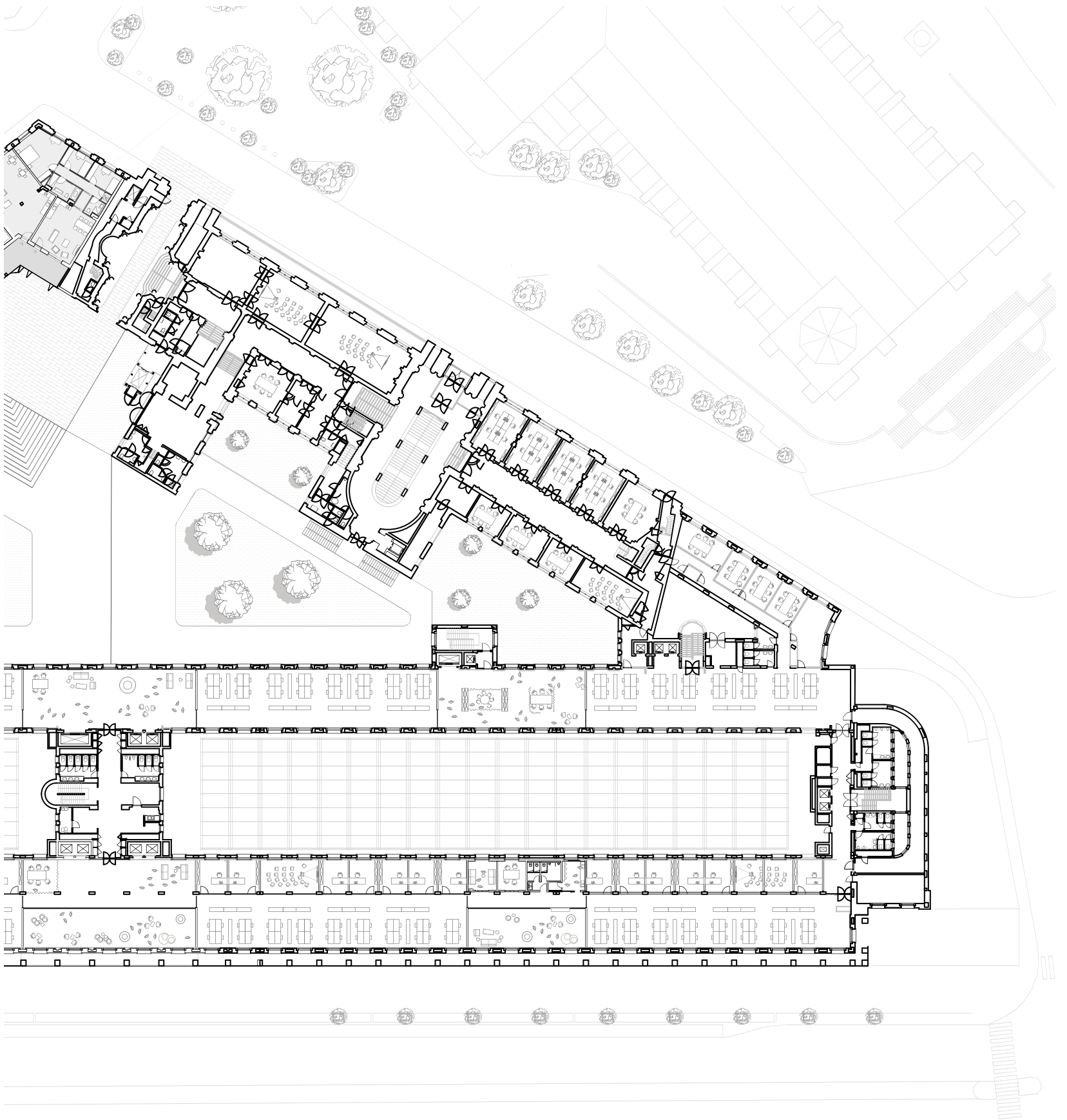
One of the project's goals from the beginning was to improve the inner courtyards. By removing the two annexes from the inner part, the inner courtyard "grows" and creates much more ample and brighter spaces. The new volumes create a connection to the new courtyard in addition to the square. The space is divided into several parts with different heights to deal with the height difference in the topography. The inner courtyard is divided into the public area for the inhabitants of the area, visitors and passers-by, while to the south, the courtyard for the workers is elevated and only accessible from the palace and the bank cafeteria. As in the square, the ground floor around the courtyard offers spaces for people. Supermarkets, cafés, a bike repair shop and bike parking facilities.

The palace building is currently in disuse. By restoring functions to this magnificent building, reactivating it and integrating it into the new block, a connection to the square is created by opening the existing doors. A new entrance/portal to the new courtyard is thus created.

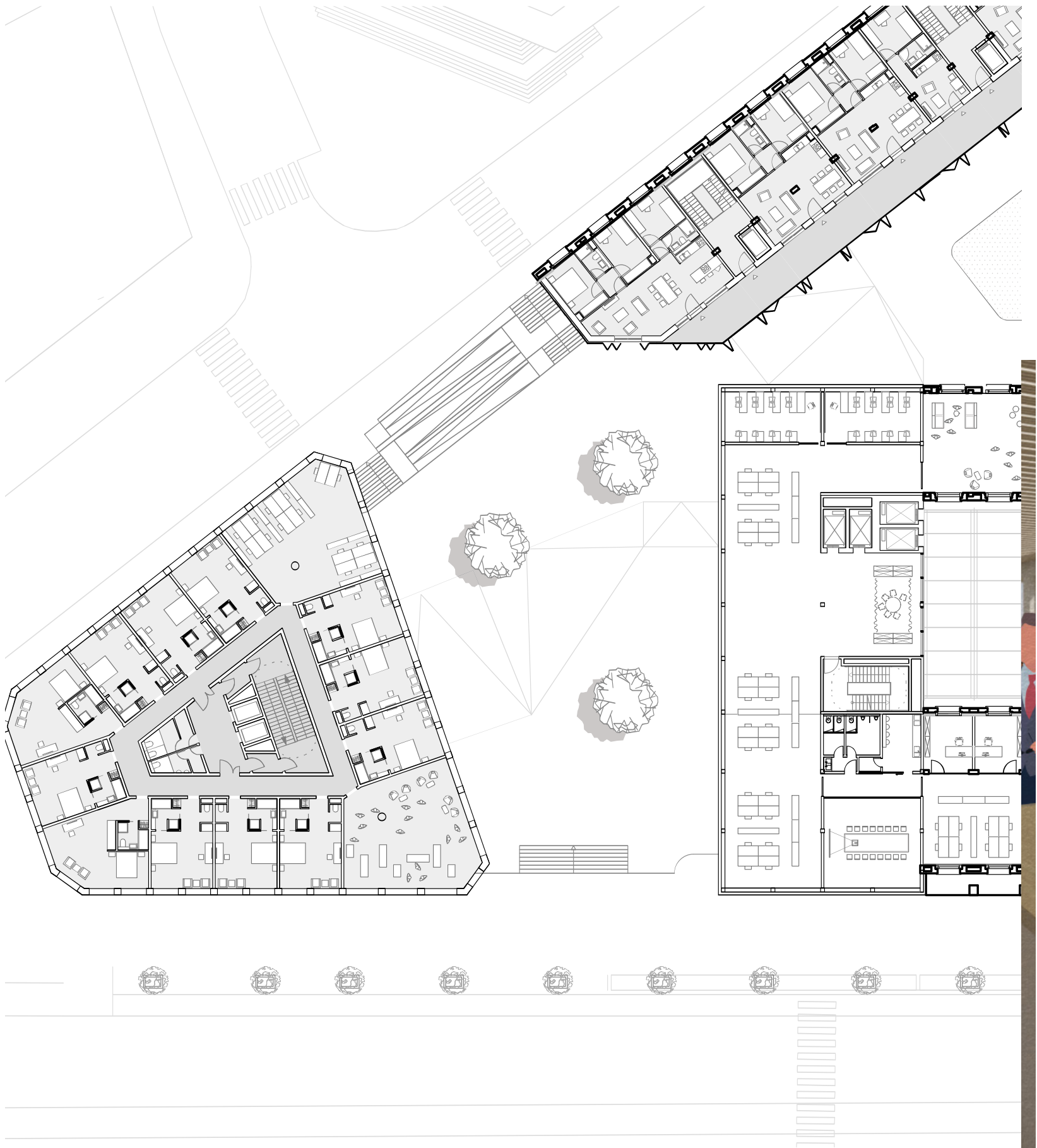


REGULAR FLOOR





REGULAR FLOOR - PUBLIC SQUARE

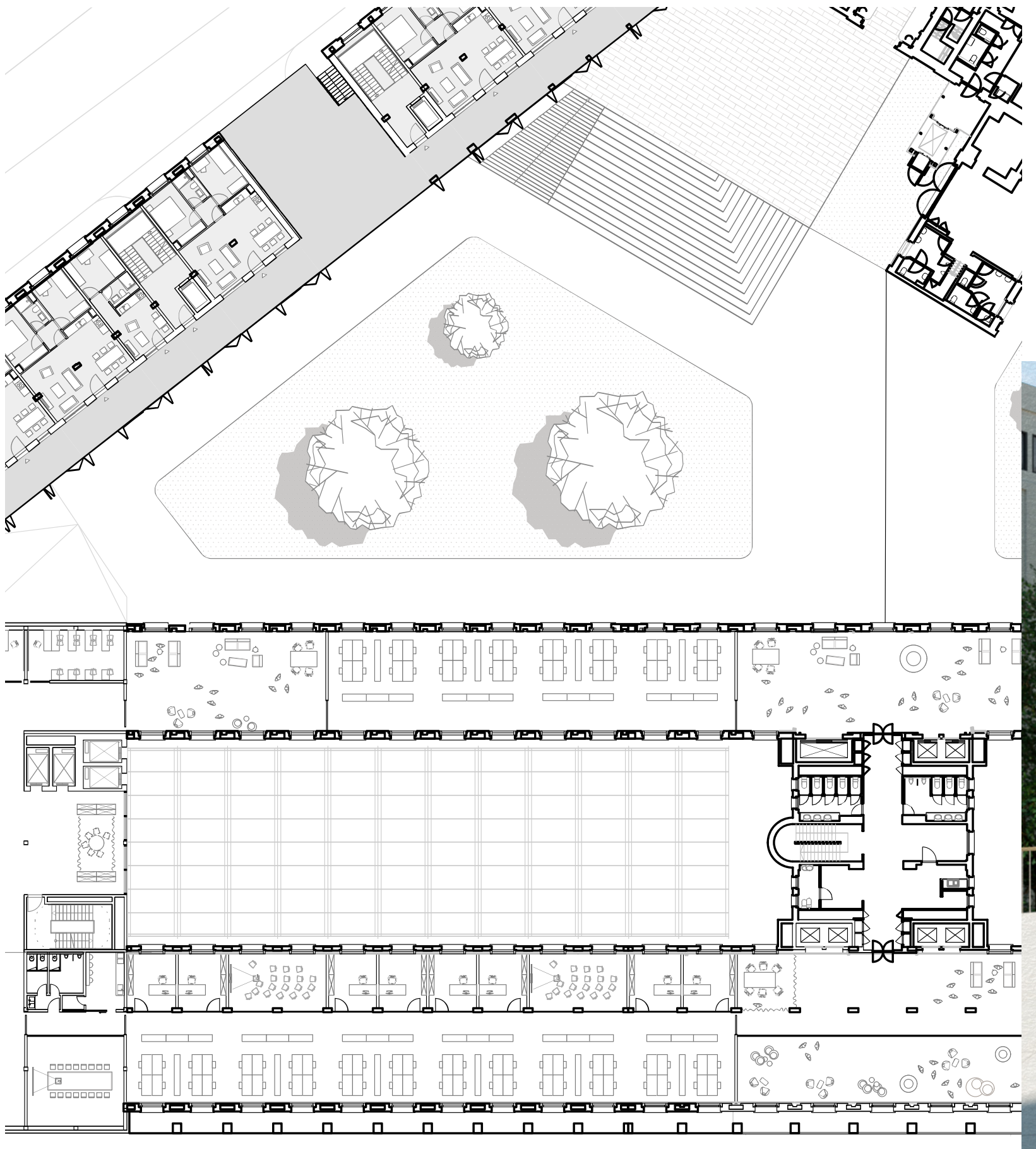


Around the square, the three buildings offer different functions. The tower houses public functions on the ground floor, such as the cafeteria, a public library and shops. On the upper floors, due to the lack of residential options for students, the symmetrical plan offers different-sized rooms for students as well as relaxation and study areas. The tower serves as an intermediary between the upper and lower levels. It is adjusted in height to the new Max Dudler development to the east, and next to the bank's new entrance, it slopes downwards, reaching the height of the buildings to the west. The new head of the central bank building houses new, much more spacious and luminous offices. The residence building to the east creates a system of terraces so that the building takes as little light as possible from the square. The dwellings

within this building fit into the remaining structure of the previous building. An extension at CLT enlarges these spaces and makes them capable of accommodating the different residences.



REGULAR FLOOR - COURTYARD



The new courtyard, in addition to offering public spaces for the new inhabitants and interns, the large courtyard offers better conditions for the workers. In addition to better ventilation, the large courtyard lets in much more light. This allows for a new system of office organisation. This system is very flexible, as in addition to creating more prominent, better lit and ventilated spaces, it offers the possibility of compartmentalisation through glass panels, creating semi-private spaces for meetings, courses and the like. As mentioned before, after its reactivation, the palace serves as a part of the new complex, creating new connections between public spaces.

From there, you can access the galleries, which lead to the different residences. In addition to providing shade, the trees serve as a visual barrier, giving a little more privacy to both the offices and the residential part.

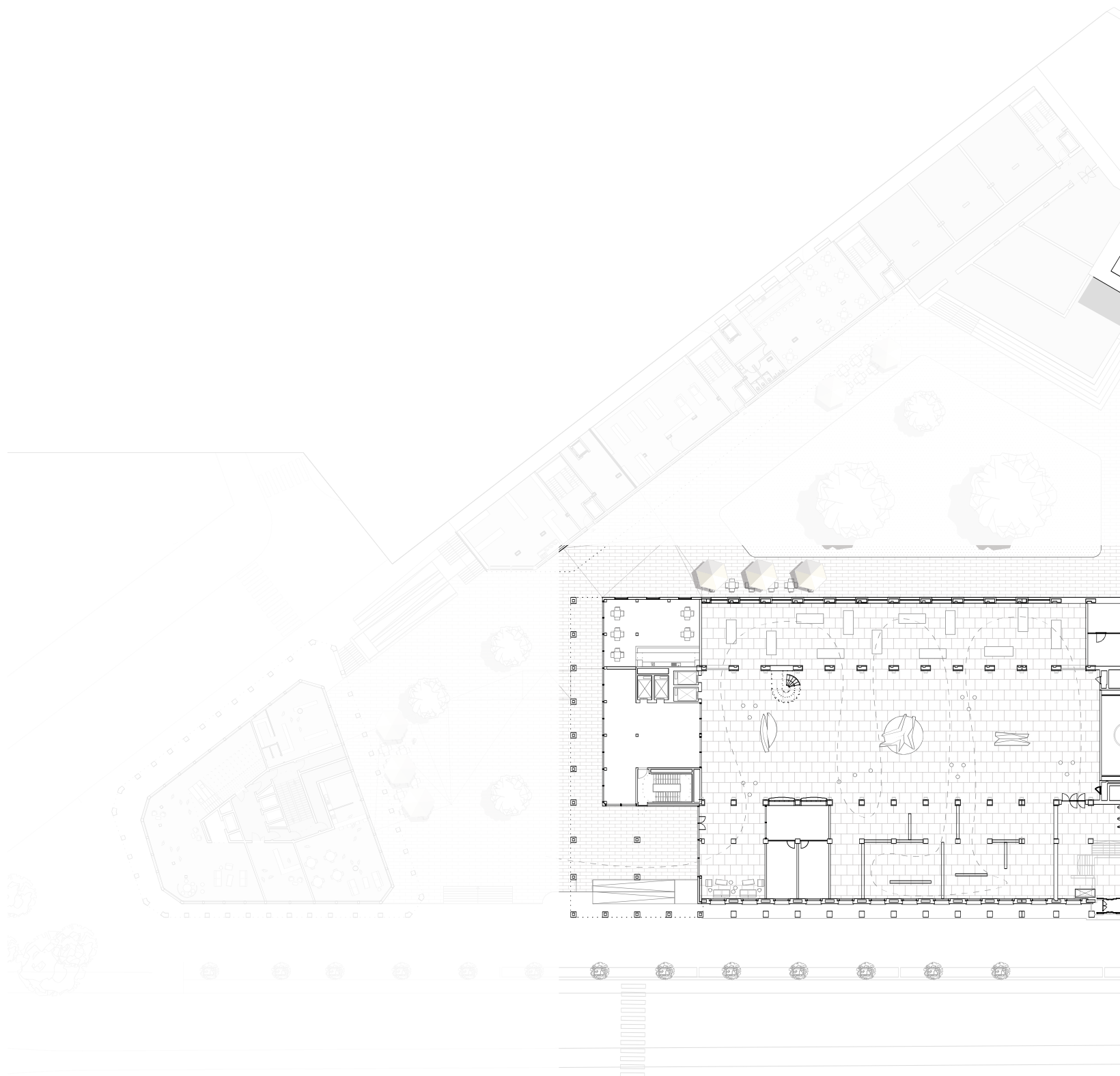


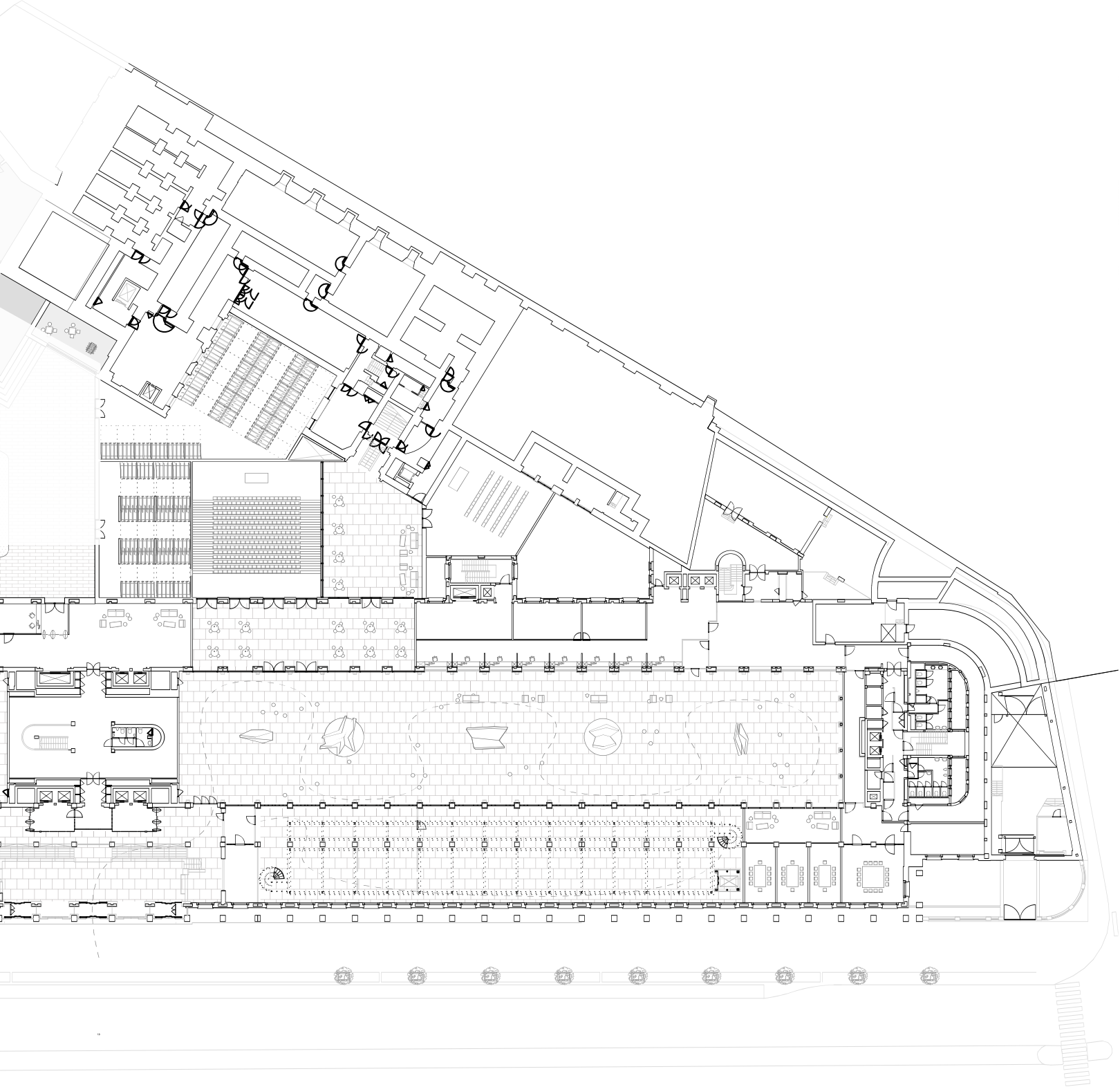
REACTIVATING THE PALACE



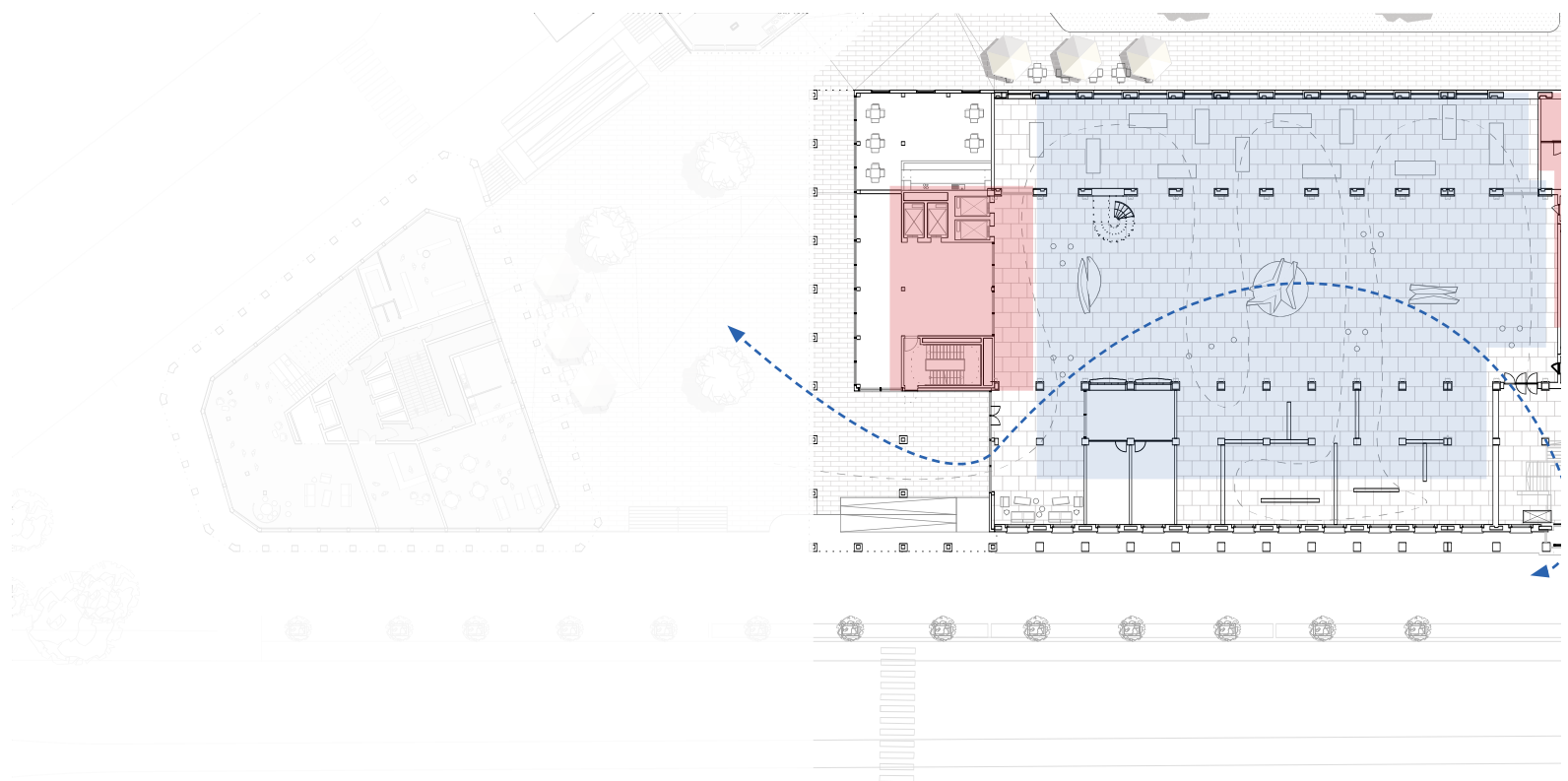





PUBLIC GROUND FLOOR IN THE BANK

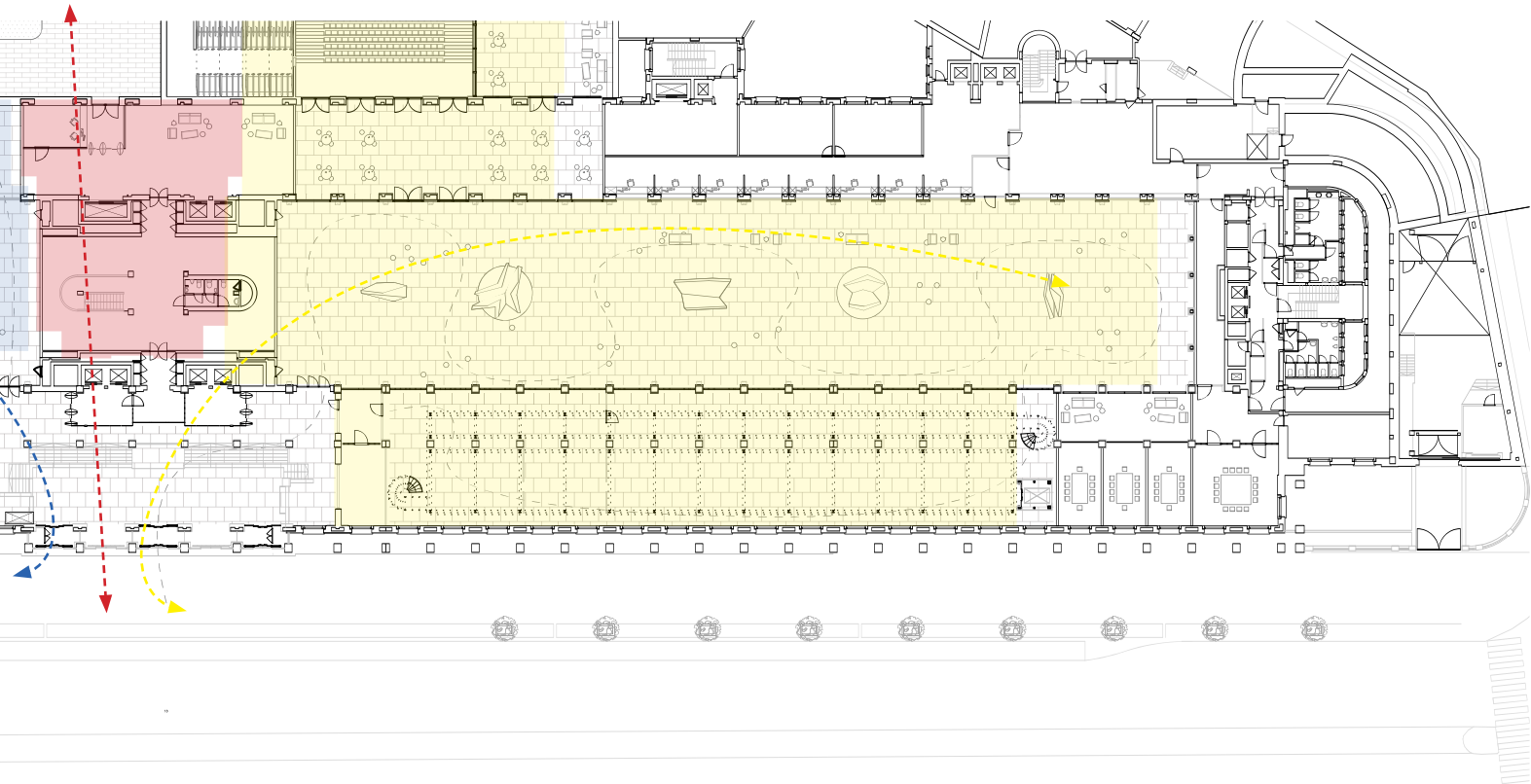




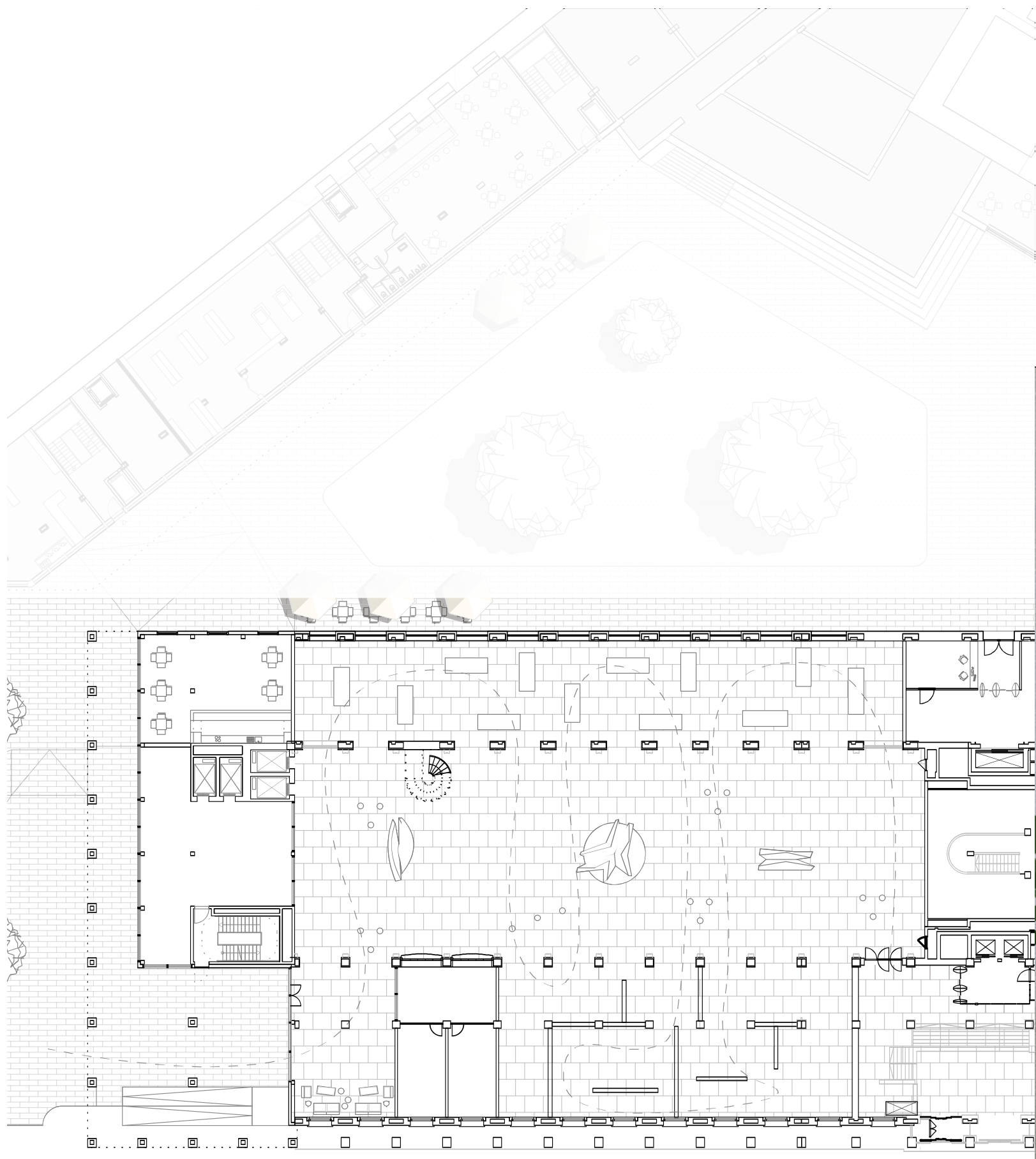
THREE DIFFERENT SPACES



-  EXHIBITION SPACE
-  BANK WORKERS ENTRANCE
-  MUSEUM AND EVENT SPACE

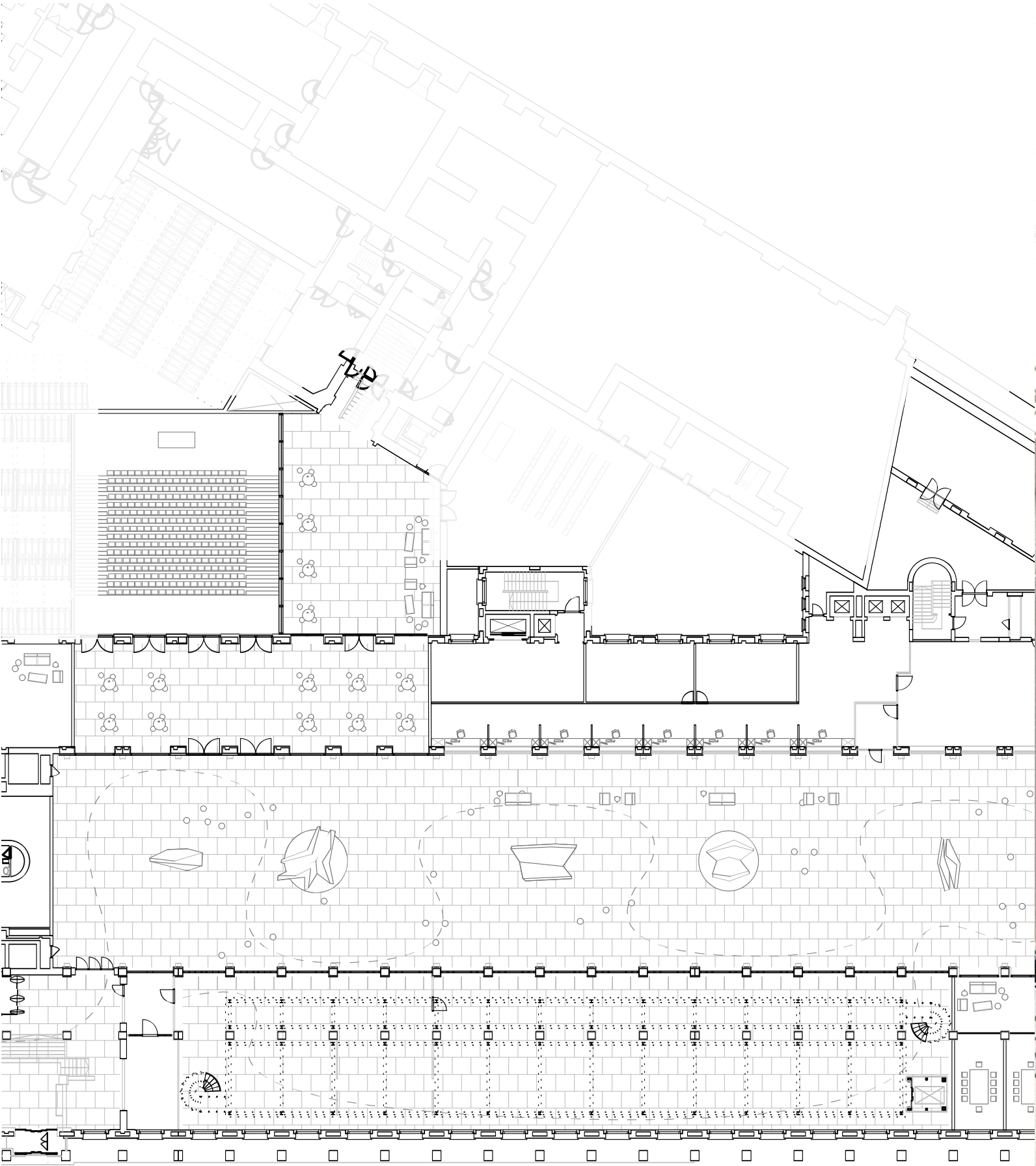


GROUND FLOOR - THE EXHIBITION SPACE



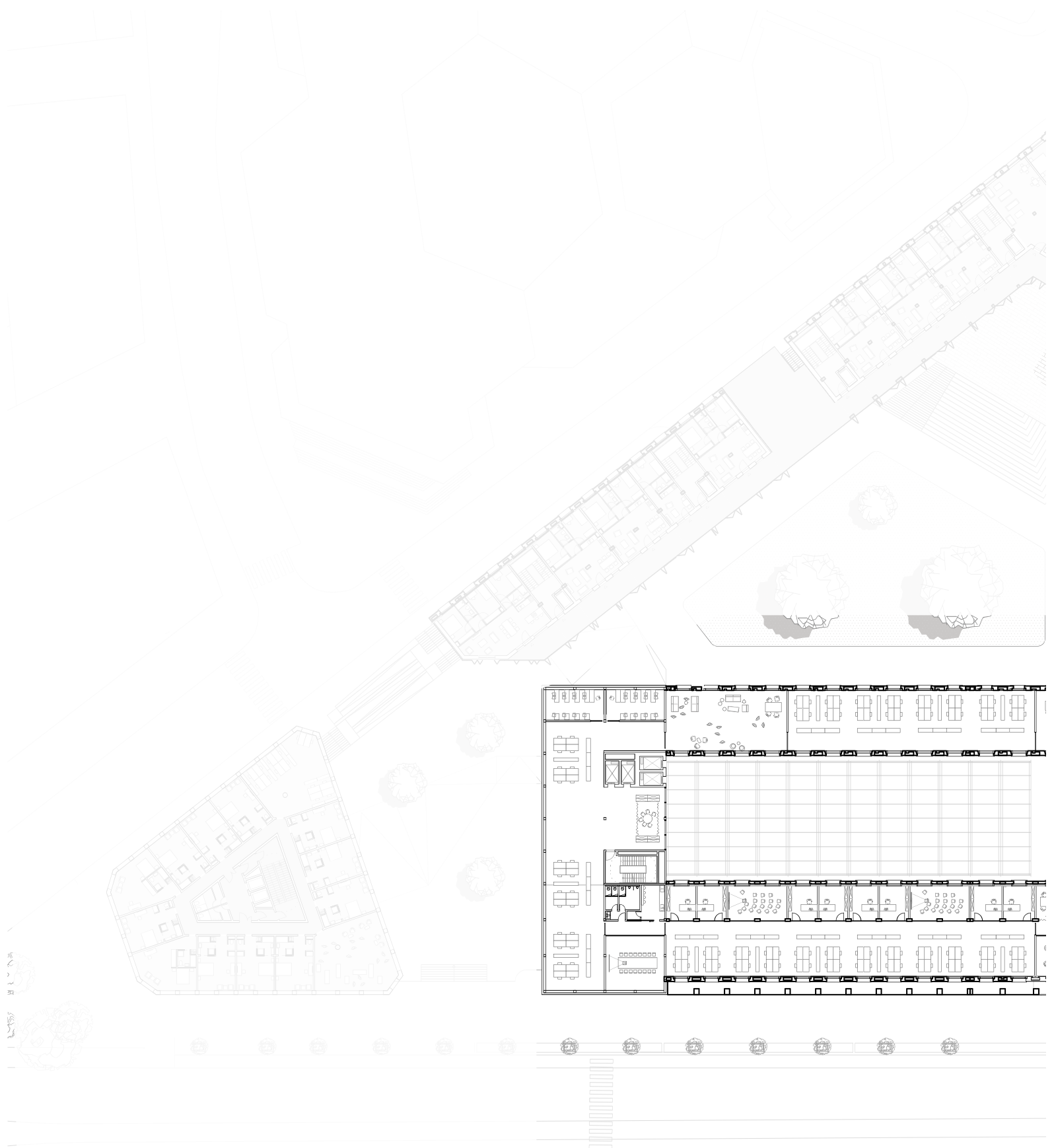


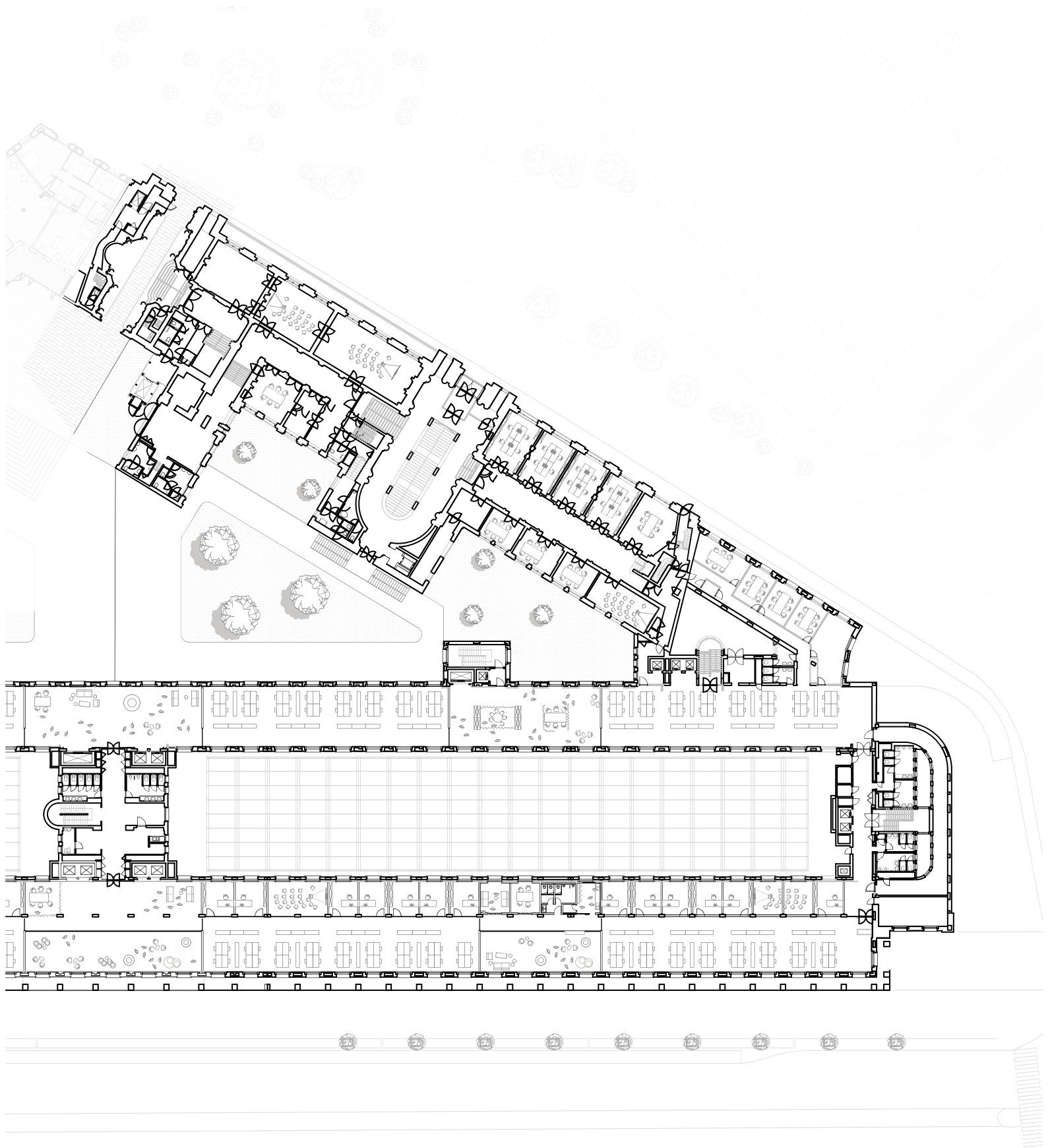
GROUND FLOOR - THE MUSEUM AND EVENT SPACE



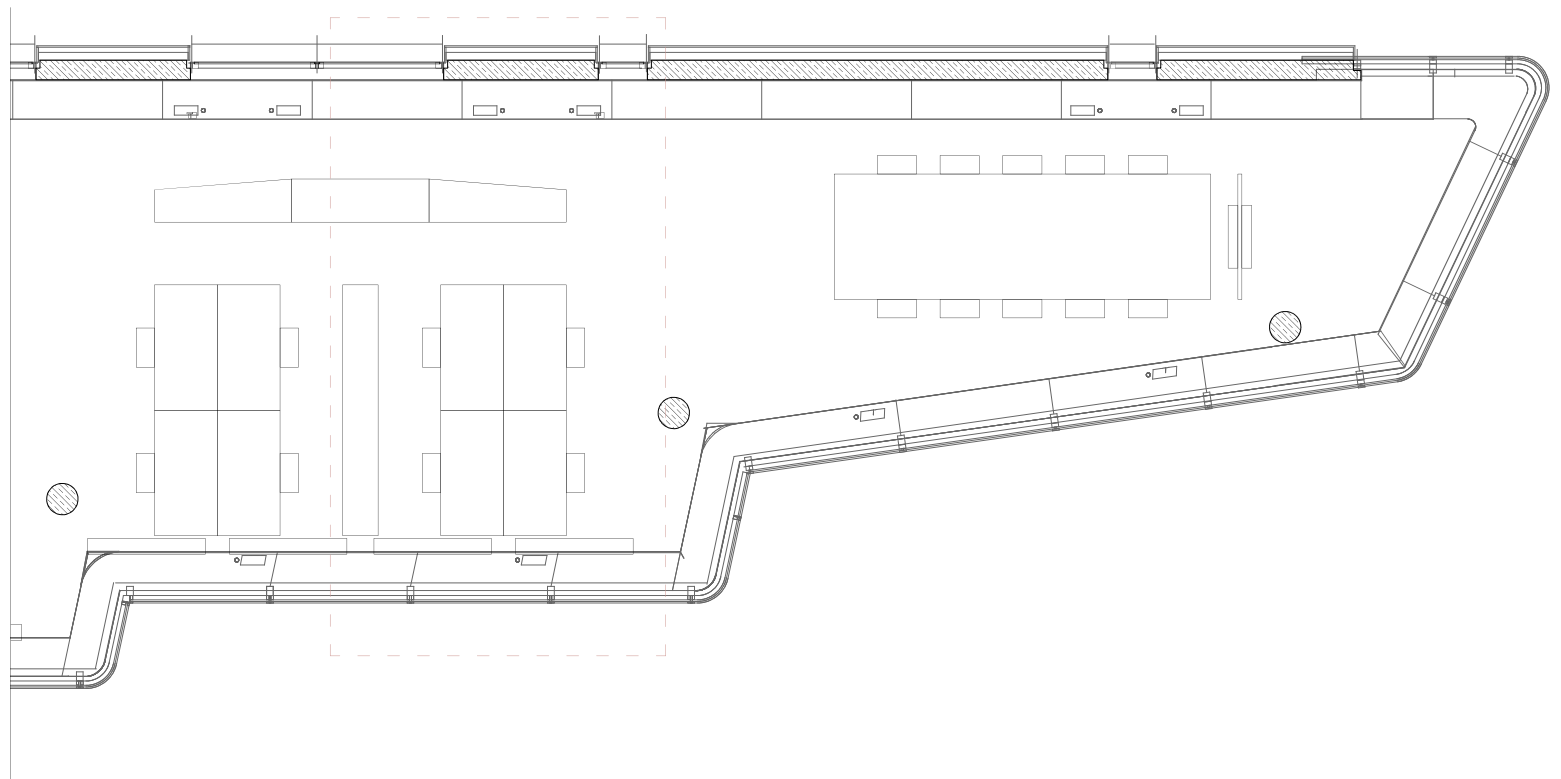


REGULAR FLOOR





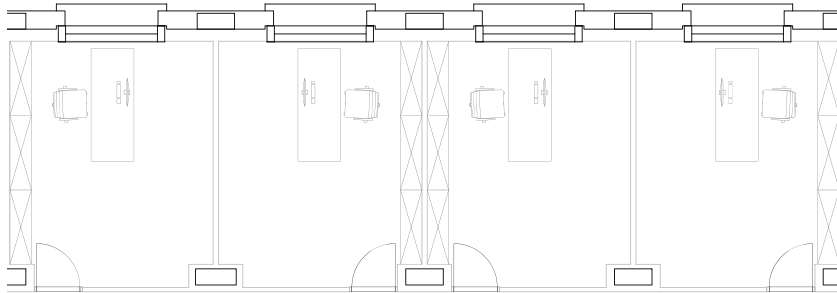
HADI TEHERANI OFFICE, HAMBURG - THE OFFICE SPACES



One of the first tasks we had to do in the graduation studio was to draw an office space. This could be from home, an office we knew or where we had worked. The chosen office was on the 4th floor of the office building where the HADI TEHERANI ARCHITECTS studio is located. Before starting my master's studies, I had worked in that office for two years, and the choice was because the working environment was perfect. The office layout consisted of groups of four desks separated by half-height shelves. The façade allowed for the installation of glass panels for zoning the office if necessary, but most of the floor was open-plan. The cross ventilation and good lighting were due to this organisation and the lack of interrupting walls. When designing the workspaces for the bank, this type of organisation seemed to be the right one, as it optimises

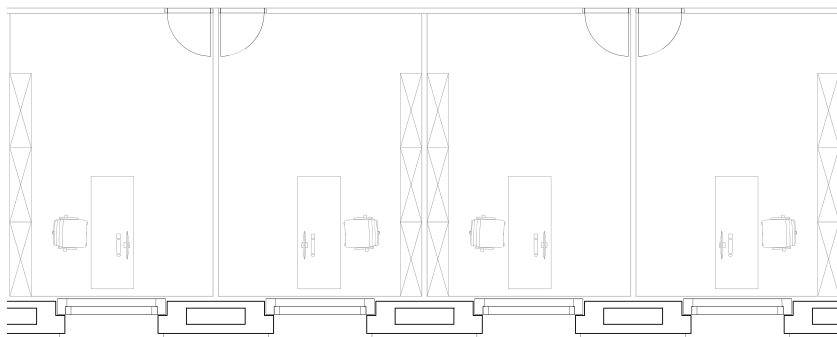
space, creates good working conditions and encourages communication between employees. The drawings in the first room helped me get an idea of the dimensions and spaces needed.

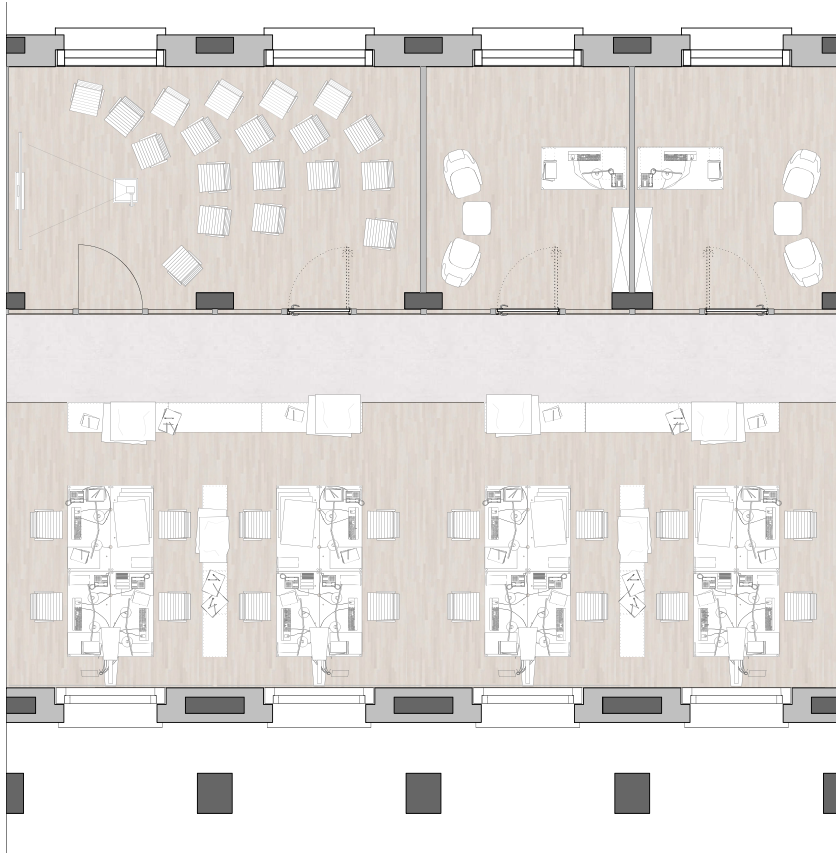




Actual situation:

- Long, hospital-like corridors
- Cell offices
- No cross ventilation/lighting



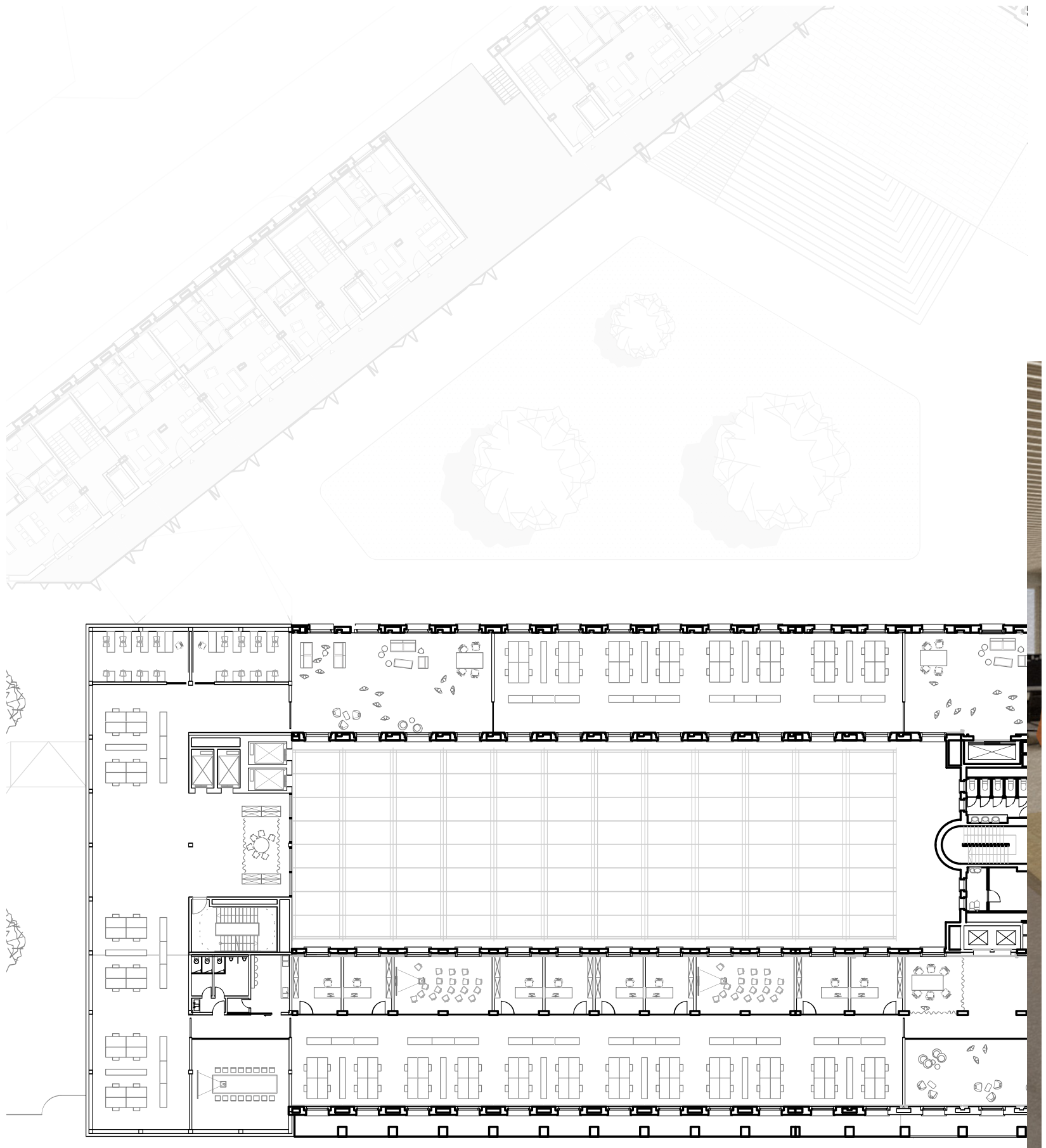


Ideal situation:

- Shared, open workspaces
- Cross ventilation/lighting
- +50% workspaces

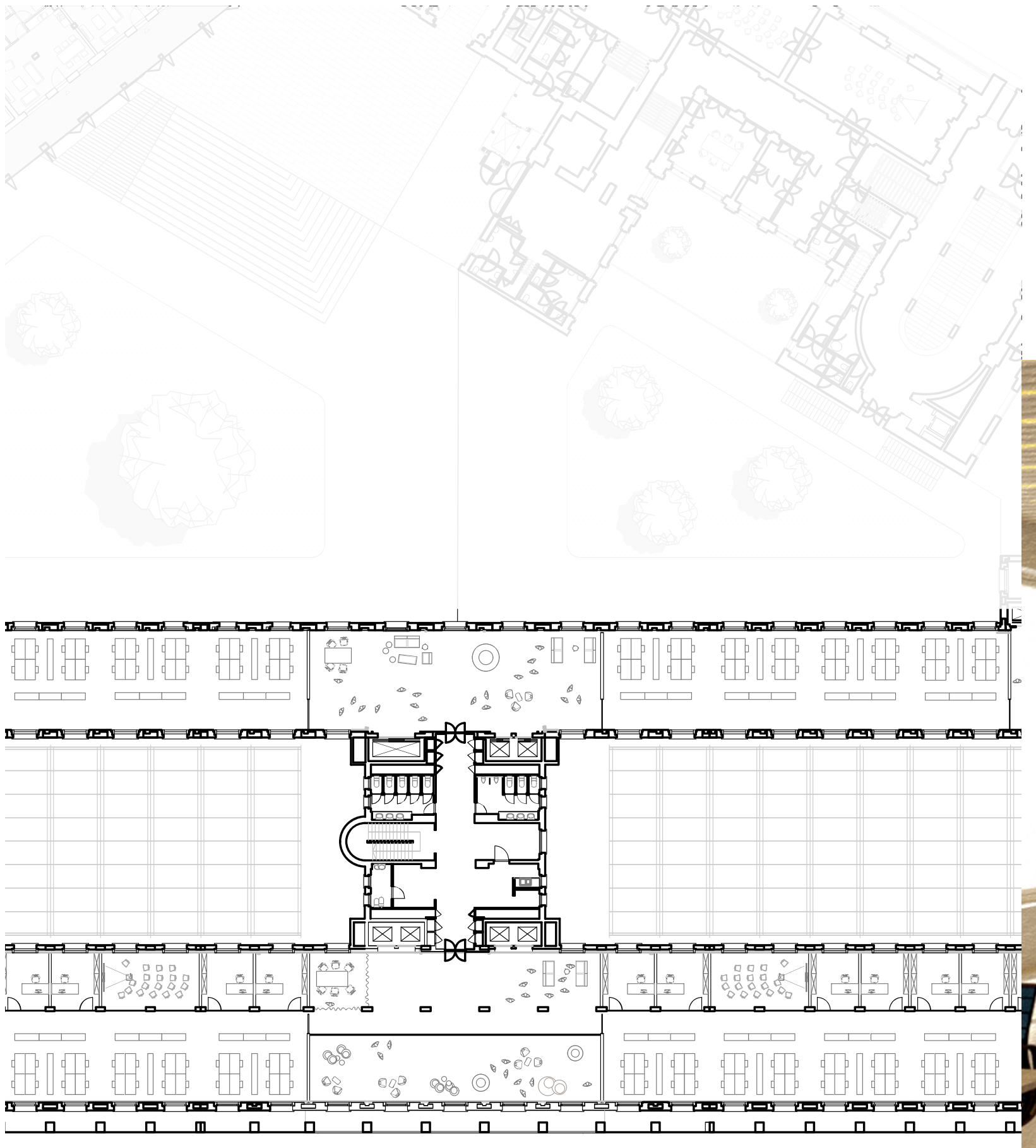


REGULAR FLOOR - THE OFFICE SPACES



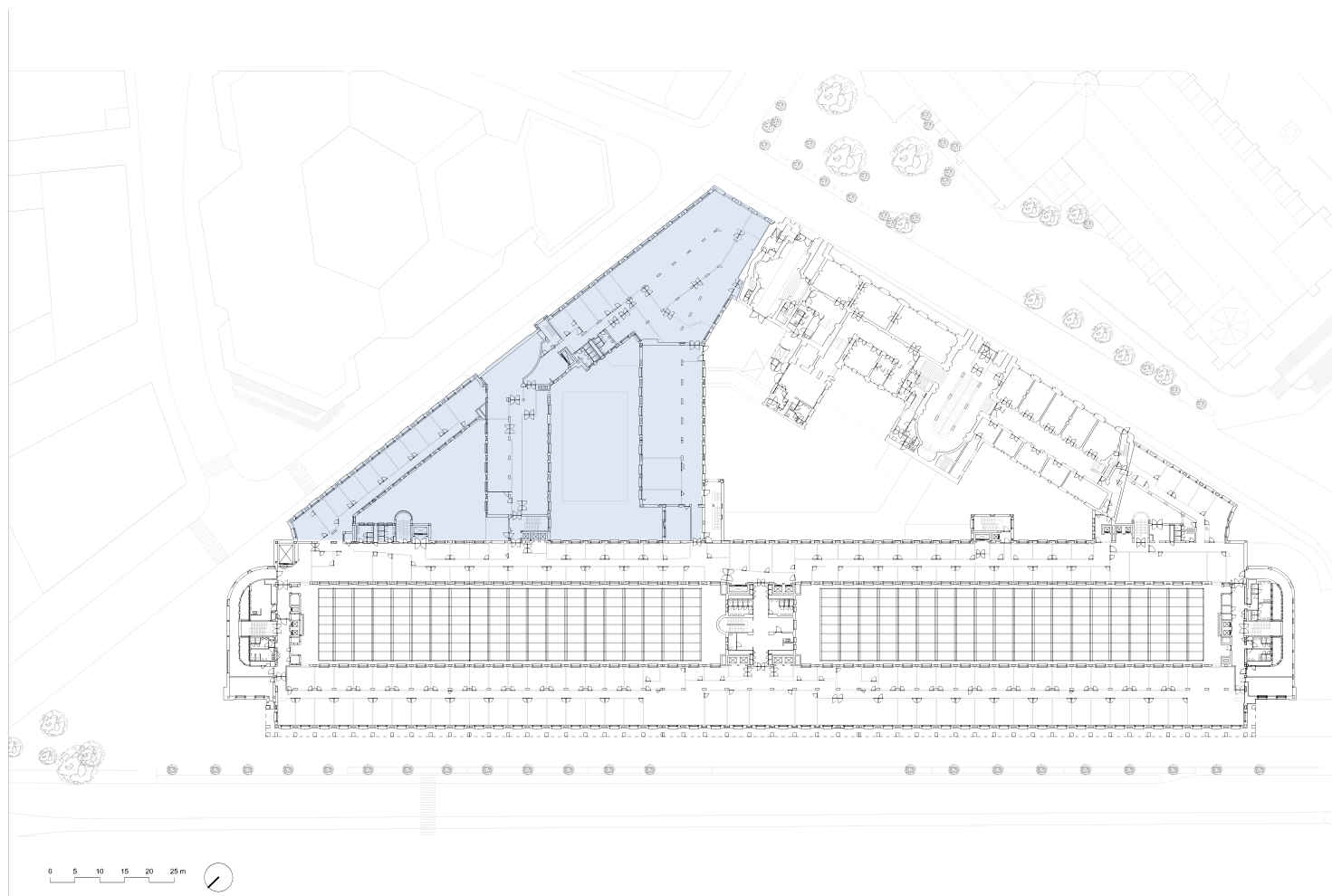


REGULAR FLOOR - THE OFFICE SPACES





INTERVENTION INTERIOR RENOVATION RESIDENTIAL BUILDING

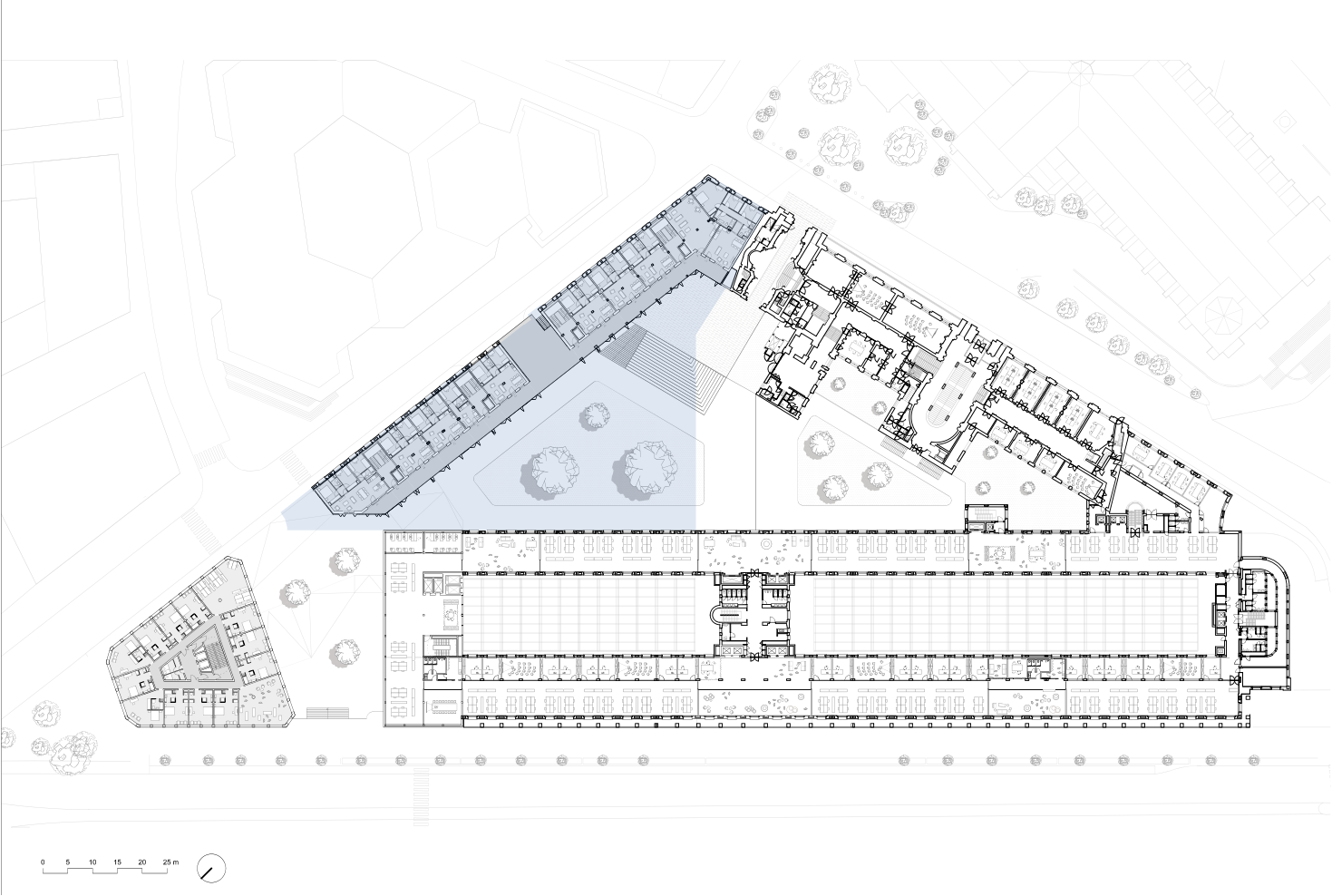


Pictogram - Focus on the residential building

The new residential building is located in the eastern part of the urban block. By analysing the plans of the existing bank, it can be seen that both the façade and the existing structure are in good condition and could be reused. Thus, the entire interior of the existing buildings is removed, and the “skeleton” is left. To this structure, an extension is added in CLT to reach a suitable depth to accommodate the residential functions. The floors and interiors are then installed in the new hybrid structure. Facing the street, the building maintains the existing façade, while towards the courtyard, the façade is lighter and more open.

The houses are accessible through galleries, which also function as terraces for the inhabitants. In this way, each house has its own outdoor space, creating an intermediate

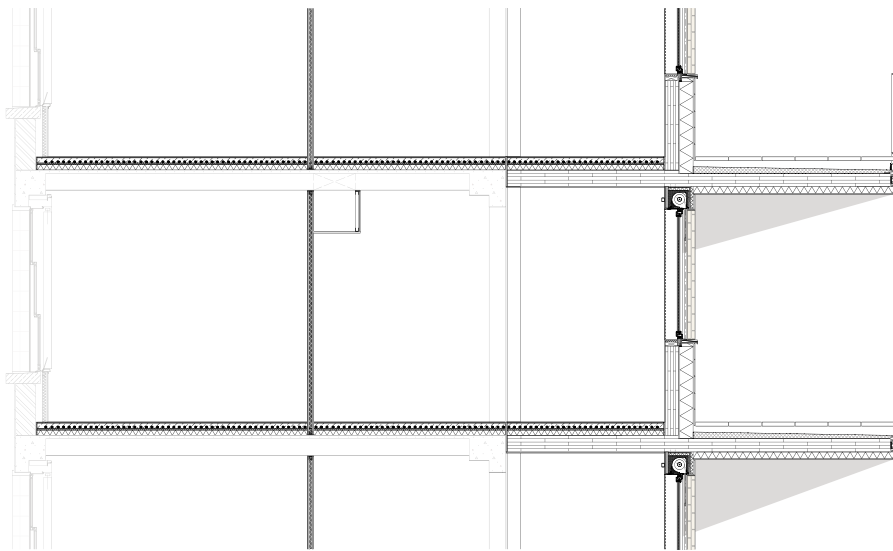
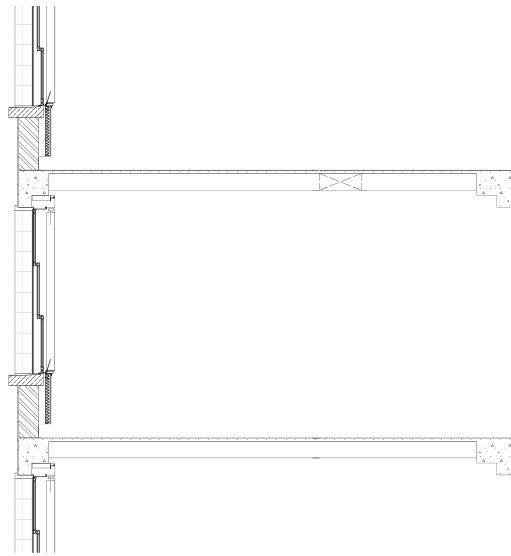
zone and increasing the privacy towards the bank’s façade. The new façade is composed of perforated metal panels. The principles of the other façades guide the design of the façade. The façade is divided into rigid elements, which reach the height of the parapet, and other movable elements. The aim is to give, besides a dynamism to the façade, the opportunity for the inhabitants to regulate the sunlight. This façade allows through the perforations the arrival of light. At the same time, it creates privacy.



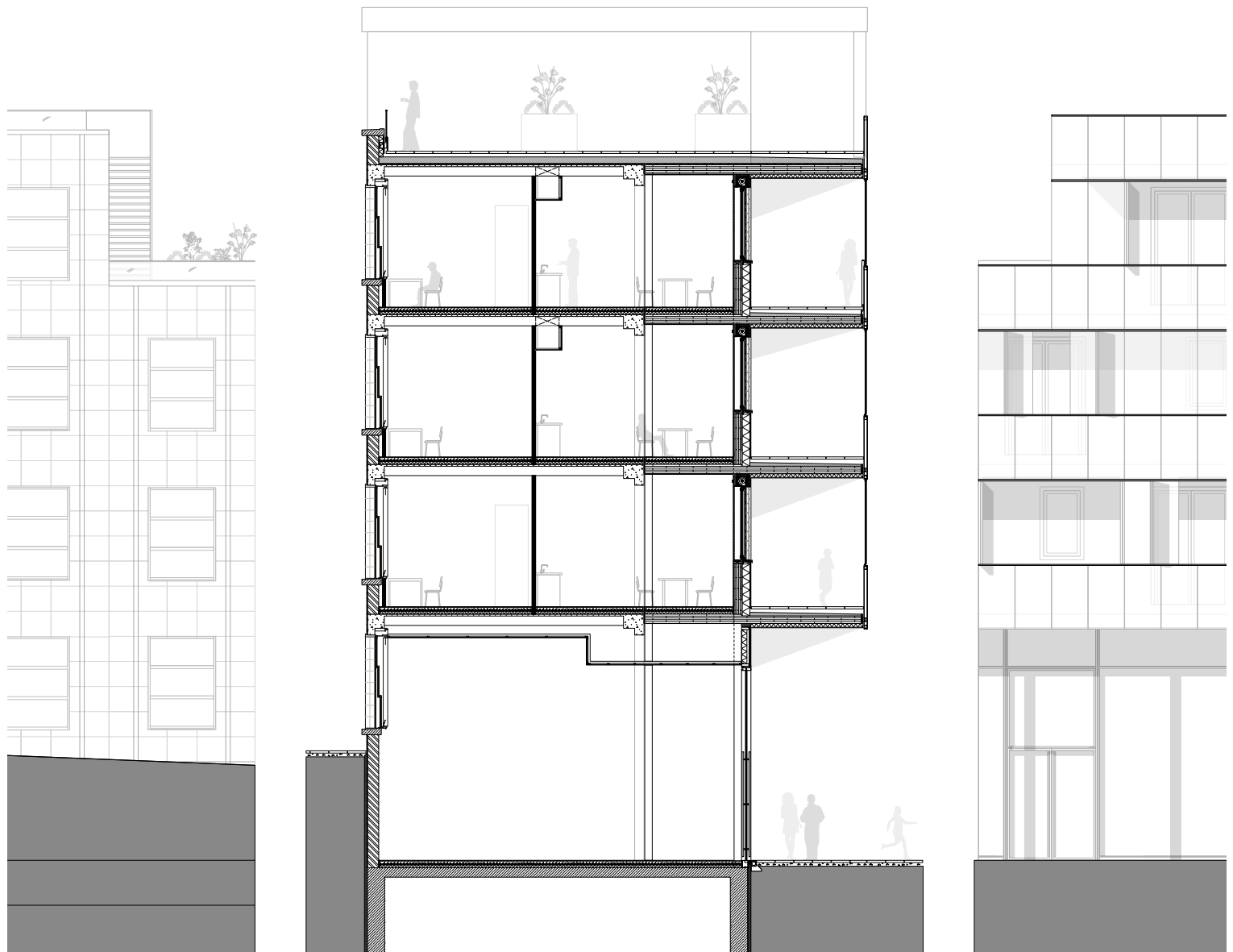


In order to preserve the image of the building and to better integrate the new residential function into the block complex, the existing façade and the structure on the eastern side are preserved. In Brussels, there are many examples of buildings, of which only the façade remains standing, supported and held up by large steel structures. In the case of the residential building, the façade, which faces the square, is terraced upwards so that the sun can shine on the square throughout most of the day and fill it with light.



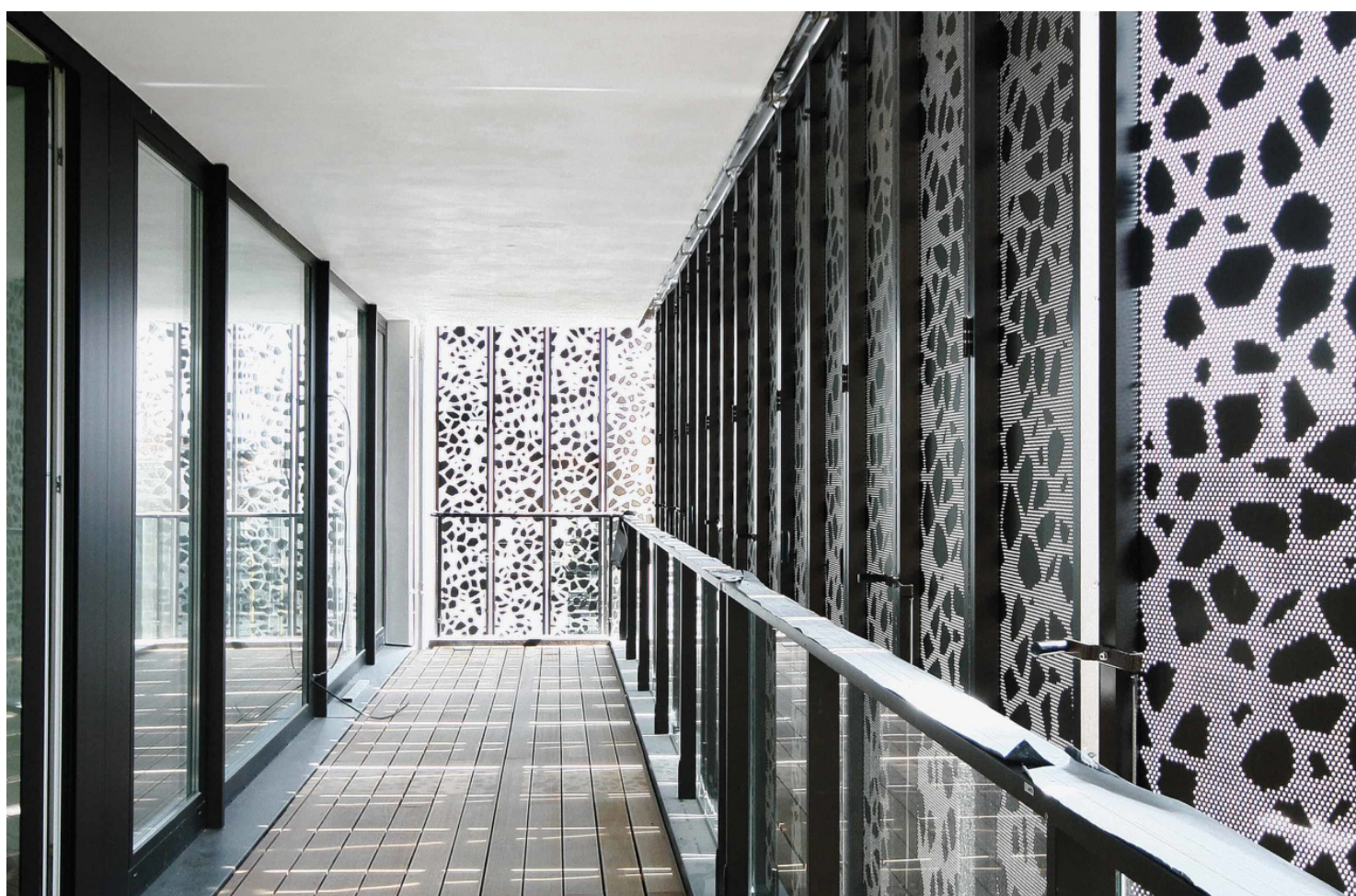


Pictogram - Reusing the existing facade and structure

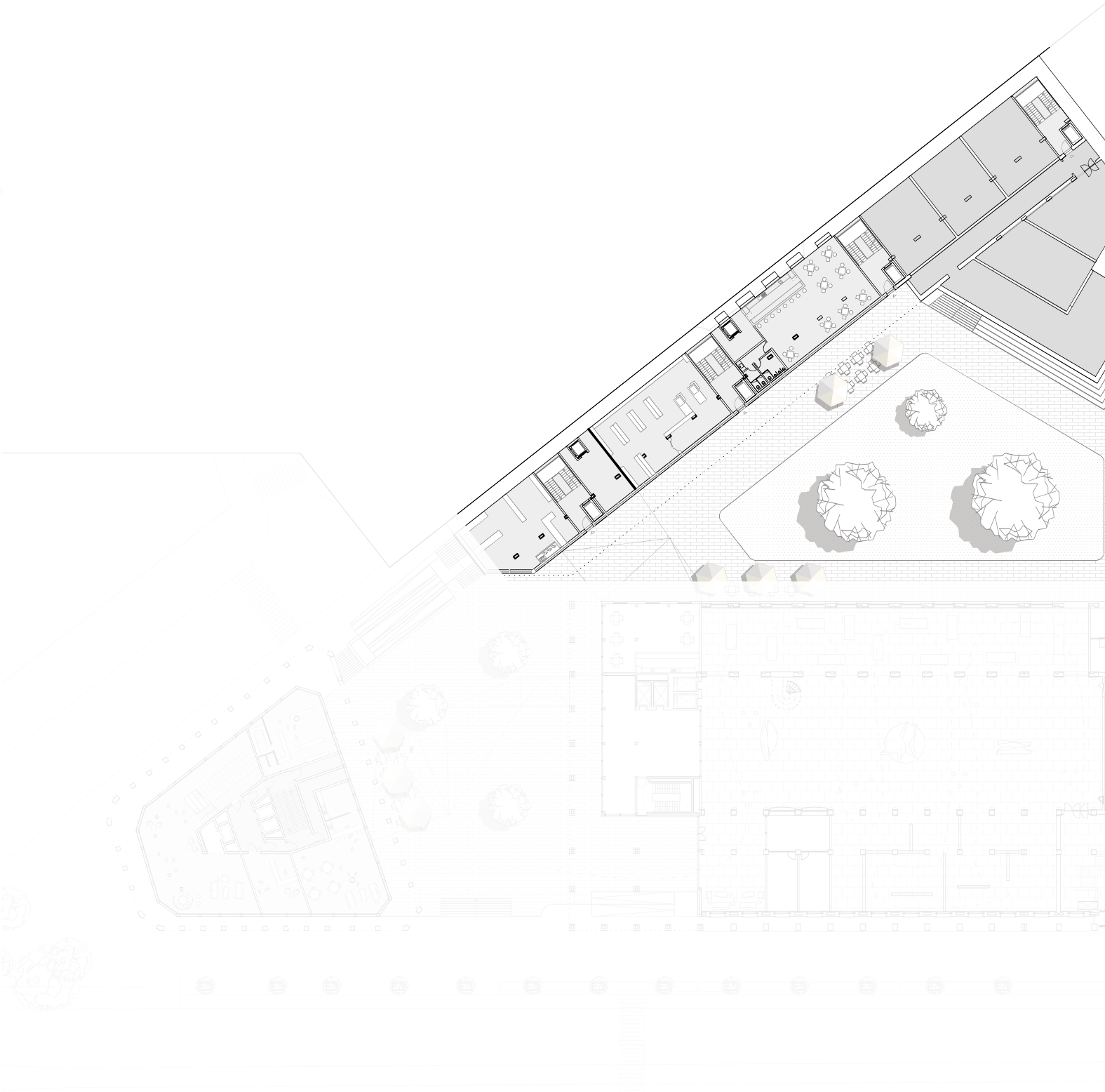


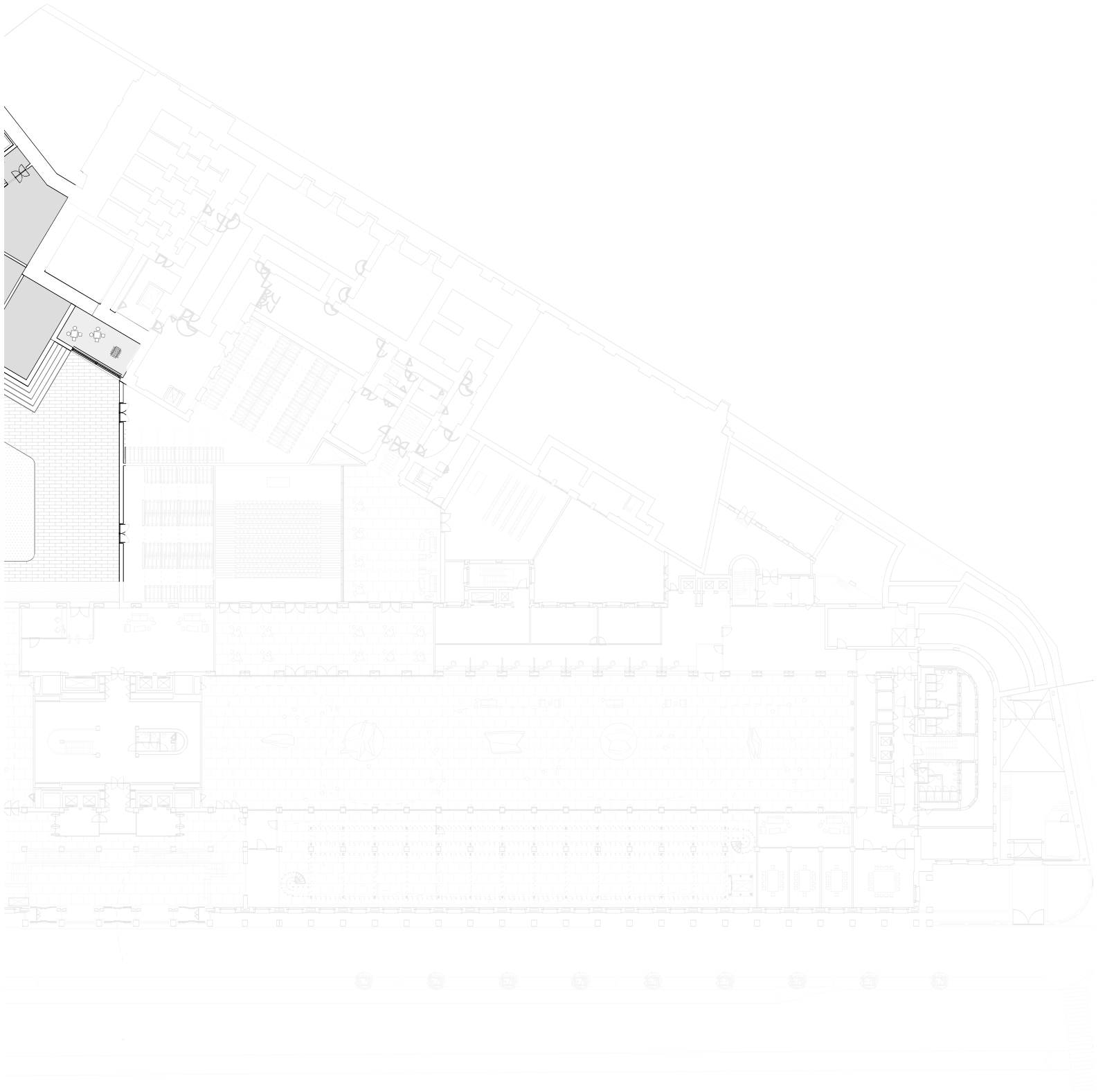
Detail - Old and new facades coming together





GROUND FLOOR



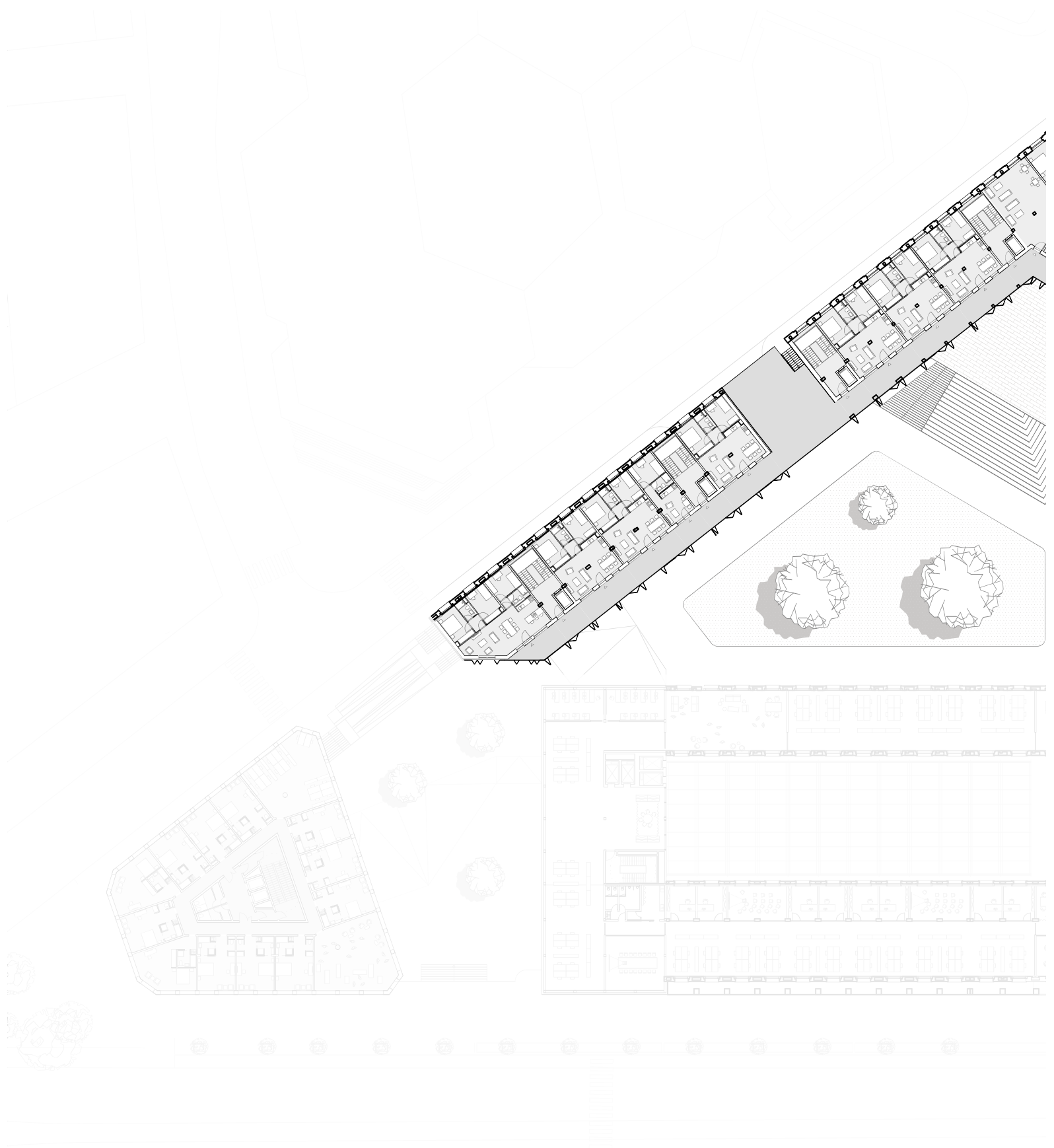


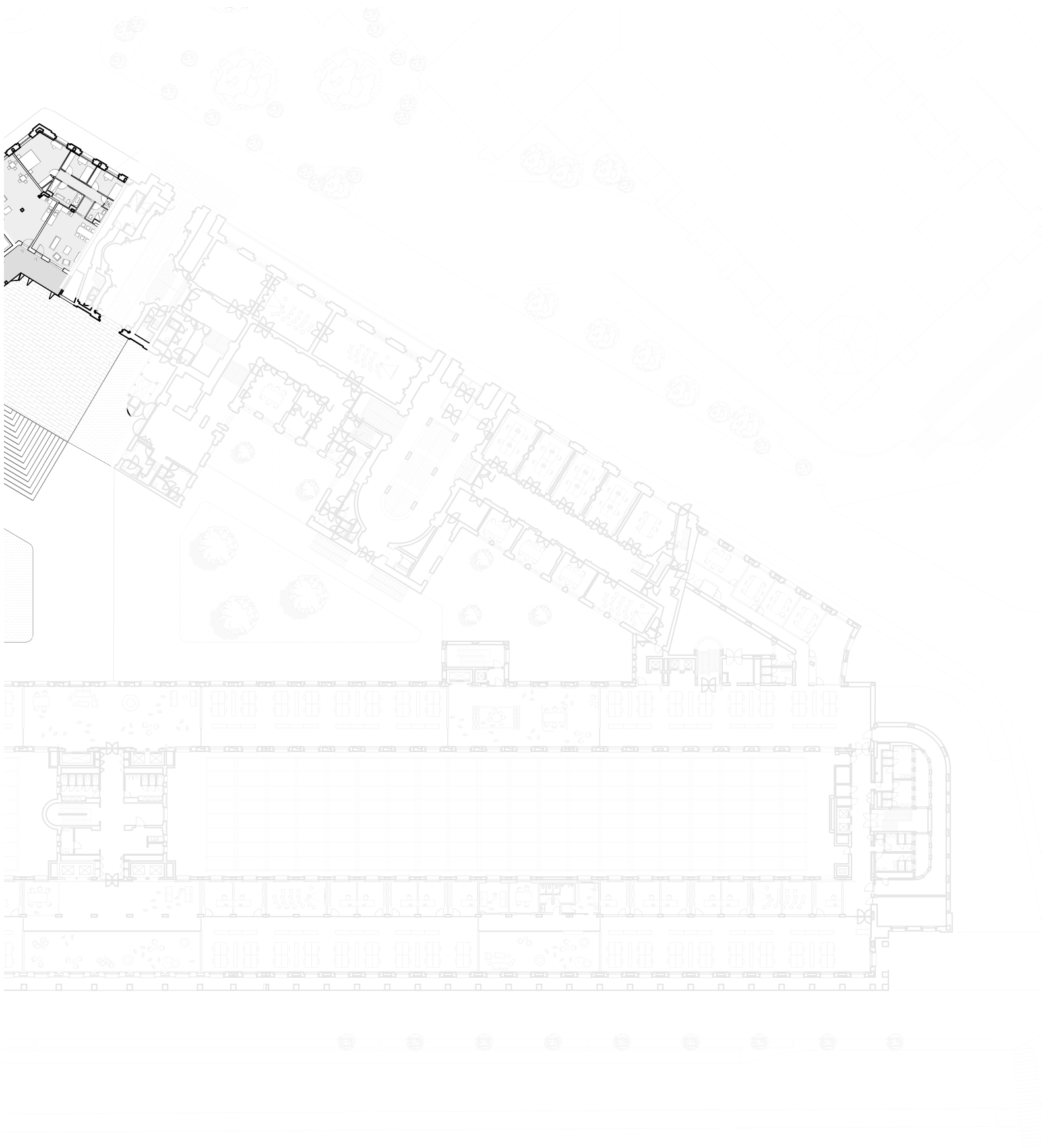
GROUND FLOOR





REGULAR FLOOR



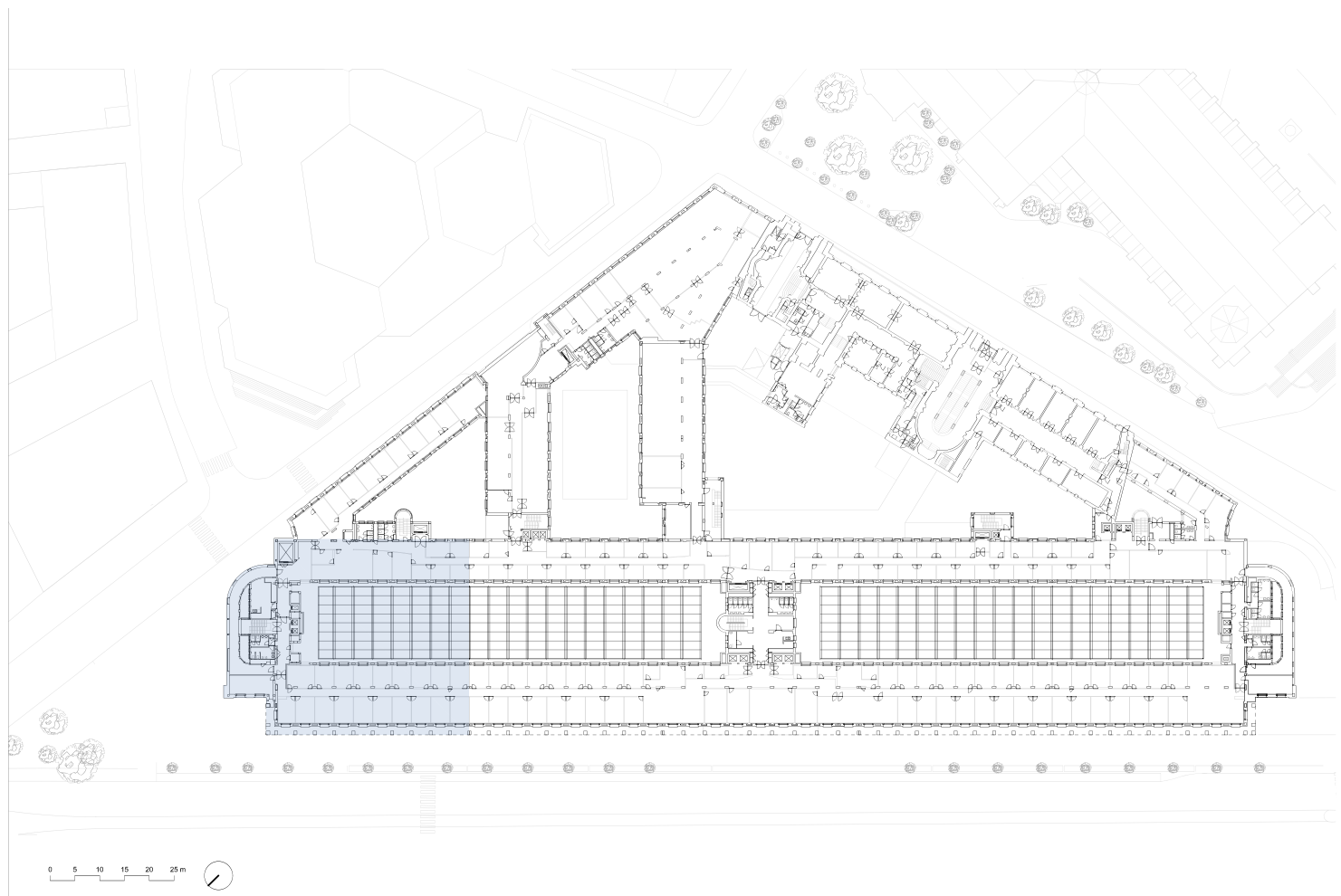


REGULAR FLOOR





INTERVENTION STUDENT HOUSING TOWER

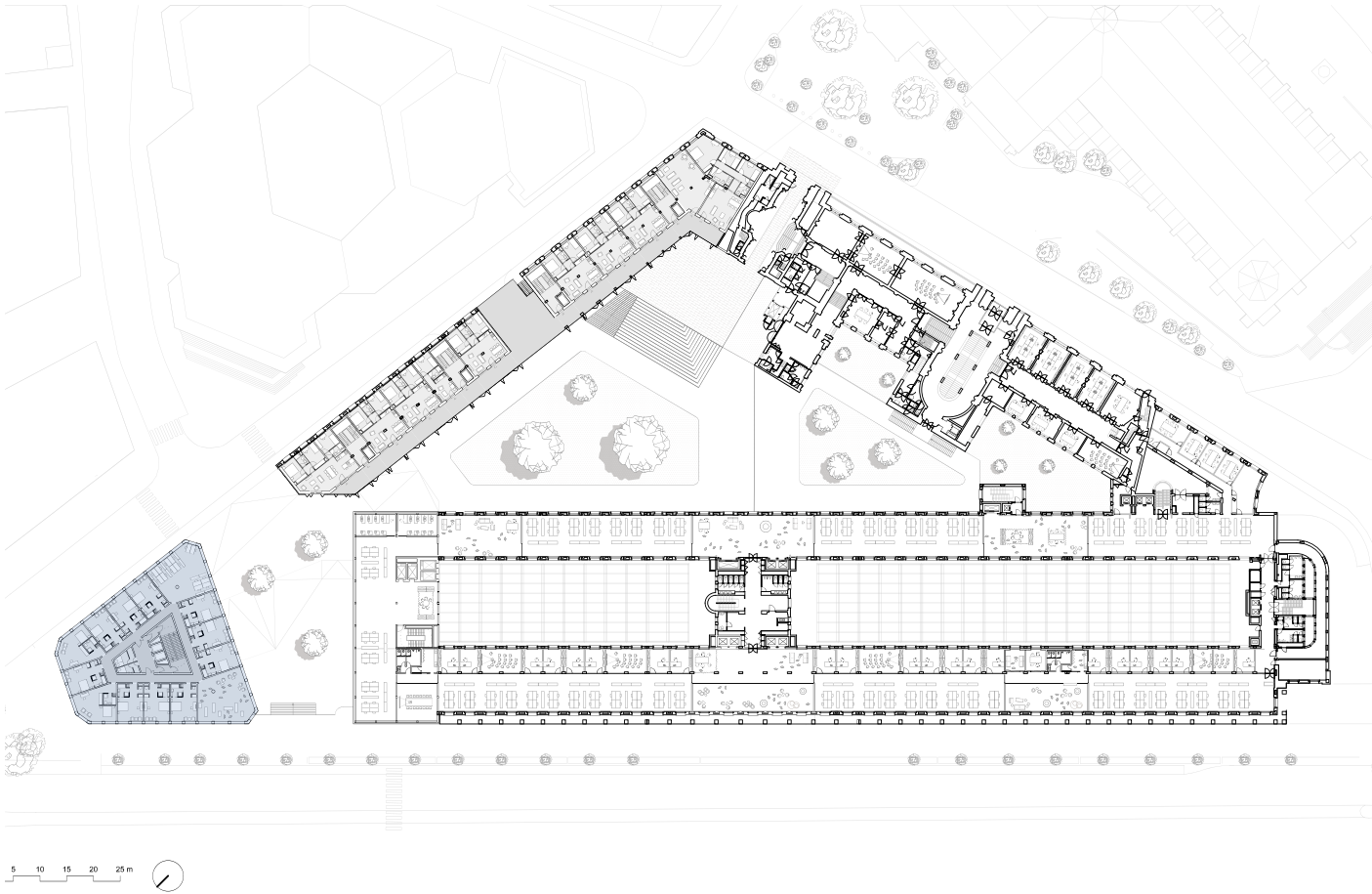


Pictogram - Focus on the tower

The last volume created is the tower housing the student residence. The cubature is created along the axes of the bank and residential facades. The rectangular shape aims to integrate the building with the new neighbouring volumes, while the façade makes it belong to the new bank ensemble. In this way, the building is integrated into the context in an ideal way, in dialogue with the neighbours and the bank.

On the ground floor, the tower offers public spaces such as a cafeteria, shops and a municipal library that extends over the first floor. The rest of the floors are dedicated to the creation of the student residence. Twelve studios are created in addition

to a study room and a common room per floor. On the top floor, the students have access to a gym with views of the city and a cafeteria.



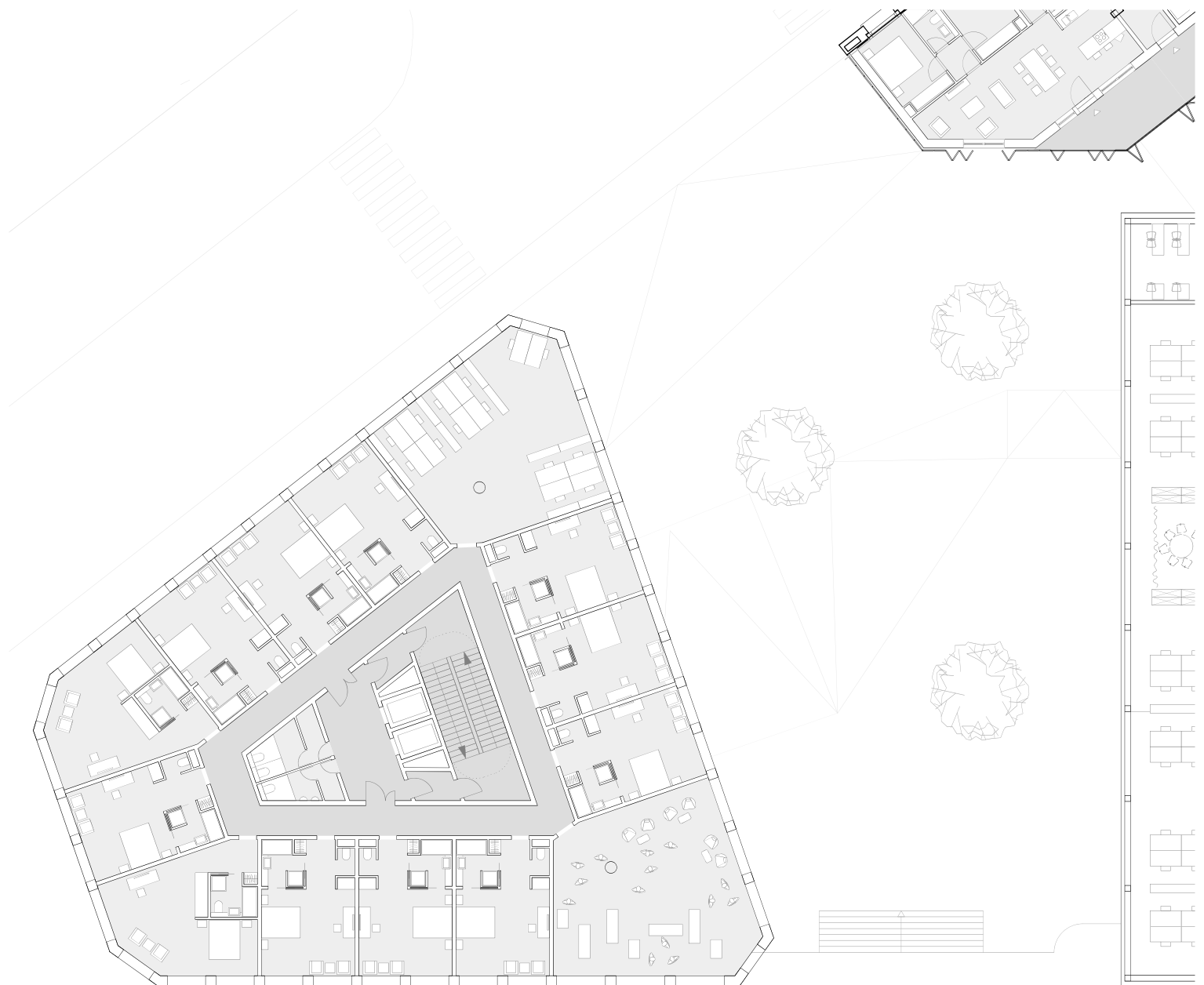








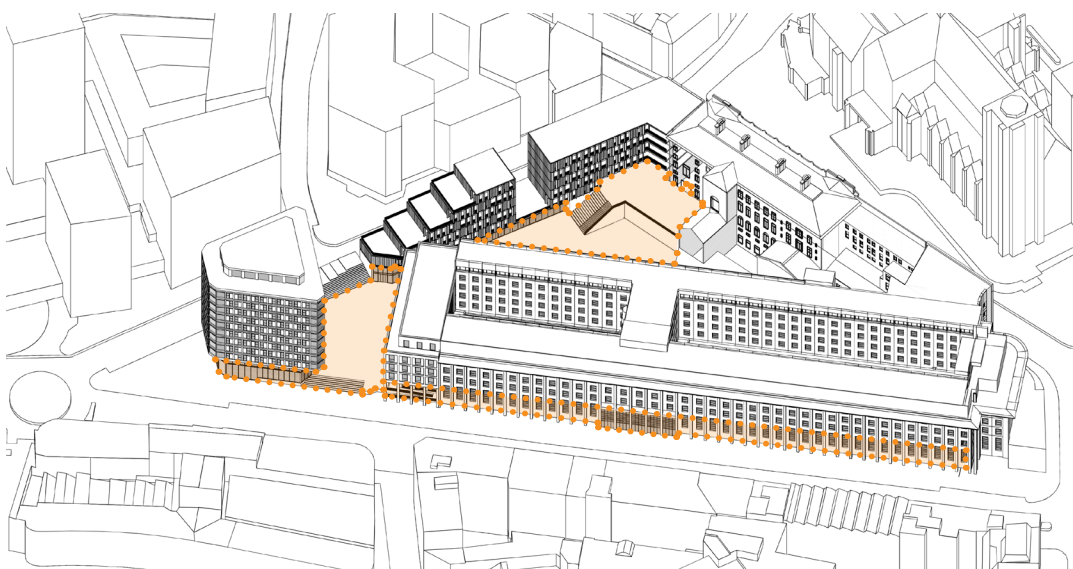
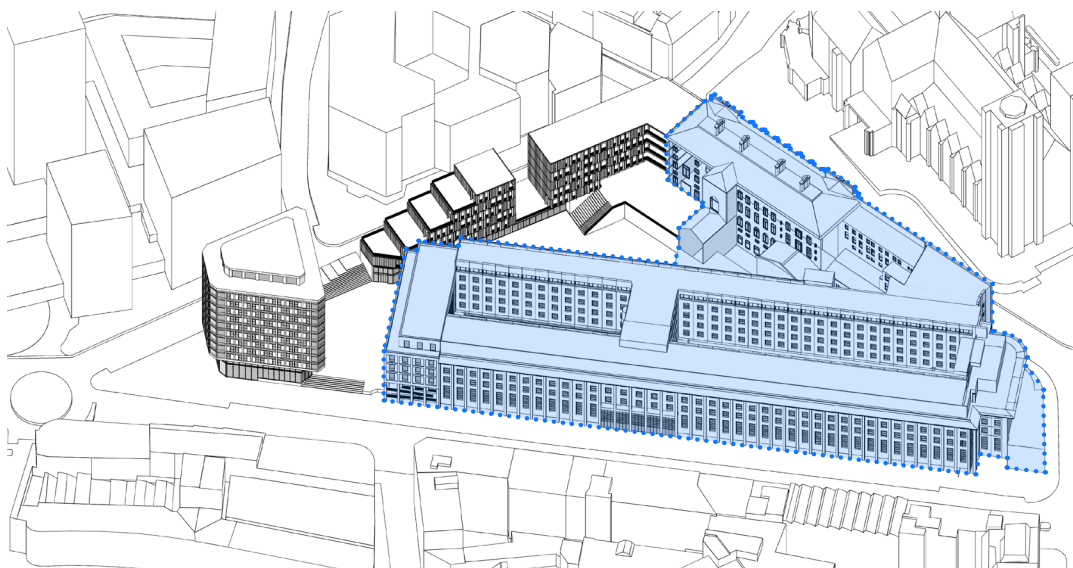
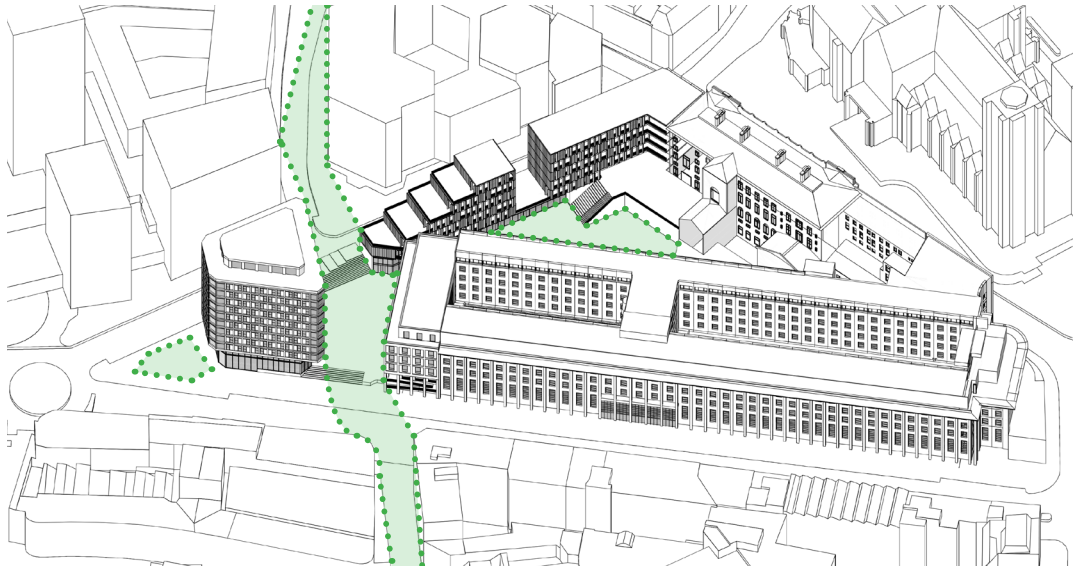








IV CONCLUSION



Who profits from this transformation?

The City

This refurbishment will improve the neighborhood by creating new public spaces for the new users and people of the surroundings. The mixed uses will attract new public and the urban block will be full of life compared to the previous isolated and gloomy bank complex

The Bank

A bank is not only financial institution anymore, besides of dealing with money and credit, it is an institution that provides a great variety of services, offering as well solutions to specific issues that affects the community

The Public

This remodeling means improvements for the neighbourhood, people from the surroundings, different generations gathering in the square, having spaces for the general public, exhibitions, meetings, etc. There will be new residential spaces students as well as social houses.



The Interiors Buildings Cities graduation study dealt with the topic of the Bank of the Future. The project deals with the transformation of the National Bank of Belgium located in Brussels, consisting of a vast triangular urban block of about 91,000 m². The bank is an imposing building with a colonnaded front façade some 200 metres long that rises in front of the adjacent boulevard. Over the years, the bank, like the surrounding context, has changed its shape. From its palatial beginnings in 1869 to the fortress it is today. Built to its limits, the introverted character of the complex reflects the historical need to secure Belgium's financial reserves within its walls. Since its completion, however, there has been a fundamental change in the demands placed upon it. Industrial functions, such as printing and storing currency, have moved out of the city or abroad. At the same time, finance is increasingly digitised.

The City of Brussels intends to declare itself a doughnut economy, and the city is moving away from traditional forms of economy. Brussels does not aspire to endless growth but to stability, equality and the well-being of the city and its inhabitants. For these reasons, the renovation project of the National Bank of Brussels is the ideal example of developing an innovative project that can serve as an example for similar institutions. In these times of social, economic and ecological change, and given the importance of these institutions, national banks could be seen as agents of change. Banks could use their high institutional power to implement changes that favour the social conditions of cities and their inhabitants, changes in more ecological and sustainable policies for the future, and changes in economic policies to help people and promote and finance exciting projects.

The National Bank has laid the groundwork for a redevelopment competition. The bank's main objectives are the renovation of the existing building, the improvement of working spaces and the creation of common areas for employees. This architectural renovation should also help the bank improve not only as a banking institution but also its public image. From the beginning of the project, in addition to these objectives set by the bank, objectives were set to improve the urban situation of the block, create new public spaces, add new participants and create a diversity that does not exist at the moment.

The design begins with research. First, the plans, sections and elevations of the building are studied. In this first analysis, we study the different layers of the bank, the structure, the circulation cores, the facades, the services and so on. It is concluded that some parts work well while others can be used for other functions or renovated. By studying the brief with the programme desired by the bank, it is observed that

of the 91.000m² that the bank currently has, only about 49.000m² is needed. What about the rest of the surface area?

The steps taken in the design, such as reorganising and redistributing the spaces, help us free up the bank's surface area, which is destined to accommodate new residential functions. These functions were fixed after analysing the urban context and seeing that they could help the revitalisation of the block. The new buildings and public spaces offer the city and its inhabitants new possibilities. They improve the quality of life, bring vitality to the block and attract new people and opportunities. The new and diverse complex creates new connections inside and outside the building, improving existing conditions. This project can be seen as a "gift" from the bank to the city, as it is giving back the space it has acquired over the years, and this space is destined for the improvement of the city and spaces for the inhabitants.

This project shows how large entities with large amounts of power, such as the national bank, can serve as an example of transformation. It can be seen as a win-win situation: the bank can finance its redevelopment by giving the city the land, providing new housing for its inhabitants and creating public spaces. Besides providing for the inhabitants, these spaces will attract many people and fill the place with life.

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