

The group of Spolia

BRICOLEUR'S PERSPECTIVE

A Study of Appropriation and Architectural Language

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INTRODUCTION

Understand what to keep from the perspective of a Bricoleur

In order to intervene responsibly within the site-specific situations and inhabitants, it is important to study the context of the area. Analysis of architectural language and appropriation of the space results in “localization” of a certain context and helps to understand the cultural traditions and the identity of the place. Architectural language, when studied in different time regimes, shows the evolution of architectural motifs. The reading of the language is not limited to just the level of a building, but is being extended to the perspective of the entire street, which represents the image and idea of a place. We have to understand the composition of the facade in order to indicate the hidden architectural rules to follow. Additionally, the way people feel in the built environment reflects in their activities. Investigating human appropriation of space is a continuing concern within urban and social disciplines and has received much attention recently. It is important to study this multidimensional concept of appropriation, in order to design spaces where people feel positive and balanced relationship with their

surroundings, the same as places that have a potential to be positively appropriated rather than alienated.

We joined the topics of architectural language and appropriation under the statement “the street is a bricolage”, meaning that the street is a composition of both. Our case study is a zoom in of this statement showing that a house is a composition of architectural and appropriation items that all have a potential to be a spolia. Case study is also a definition of different ways of appropriation in public and private spaces under the influence of typology, user-ship and ownership. Appropriation and architectural language are tightly connected with each other, because appropriation usually emerges from the physical environment, the same as the architectural language is affected by people habits and usage of the space.

DEFINITIONS

Bricolage, Appropriation and Architectural language

Bricolage. Bricolage is a result of mixed harmonious and intruding elements of different essences (time and place-wise) that coexist together. Bricolage could be understood and studied on different levels – from the perspective of a house, street, neighborhood or city. An element without a context does not have positive or negative connotation and cannot be labeled neither as an alien or regional. Consequently, in order to understand the level of localization, the comparison on different levels should be conducted. The levels are as following: typological, historical, social, economic and cultural.

Architectural language. Architectural language is the vocabulary of diversity composed by basic architectural elements, such as roof, windows, doorways in buildings, particularly constituent elements of the facade. The language contains motifs and meanings about specific time and geographical context, that ensures a coherent and unity in an ensemble of a building.

Appropriation. Appropriation is generally understood as a physical action that one proceeds to take surroundings into possession. It is a prevailing multi-dimensional concept in studying urban-social landscapes and it is tightly connected with the theoretical fra-

mework of assemblage. Temporary appropriation could be understood as an identification of elements and actions through which people make something their own. While assemblage thinking is looking at the relations between those different components. Yet the term appropriation of the built environment is not completely defined in the research studies of the urban design. However, it is agreed that by the means of appropriation people inhabit the public space. The appropriation is what gives citizens the right to fully use and manage their everyday life within the urban environment.

There is also a legislative definition of appropriation being an act of making a private property, but this is not going to be examined here. Besides physical action, there is psychological appropriation that is interiorized at one’s thoughts. If the regulations or various prohibitions does not allow individual to take an action of appropriation, the intention stops at one’s thought level and it could result in “any further interest in the built environment” or even be expressed “through the forms of vandalism, destruction and so on”.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is a ‘bricolage’? According to the definition, is the street a bricolage?
- What is the visual logic among the facades in the street in terms of architectural language?
- What are the patterns of appropriation in the site? Why do people appropriate spaces?

- What is a Spolia? What are the criterias for an object to be spoliated?
- What are the factors that influence architectural languages and appropriations on facades?
- What are the relationships between architectural language and appropriations?

THE STUDY OF RUE DES BASSINS
Duality, permanence and transformation

Rue des Bassins was a street that demonstrated “duality” in terms of permanence in the buildings. In the northern side of the street, which belongs to a residential plot, buildings are more ‘stable’, while the southern side of the street, as it is a mixed-used plot of residential and industrial uses, transformations are more rapid as the industrial buildings are more vulnerable to changes and rapid rebuilding occurs. These different rates of transformations across the same street resulted in an interesting streetscape that is very different from the other streets from Anderlecht.



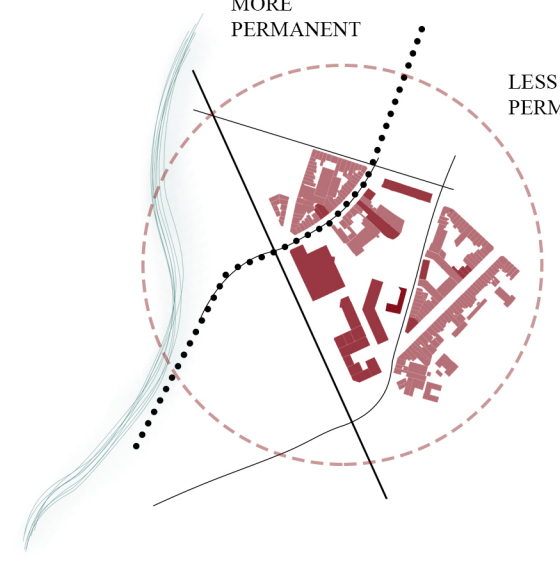
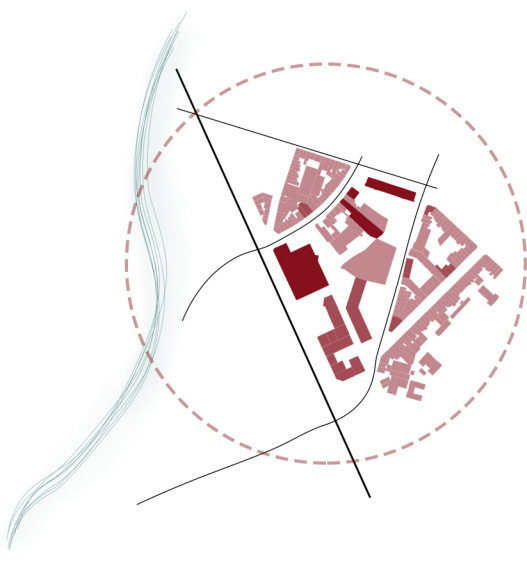
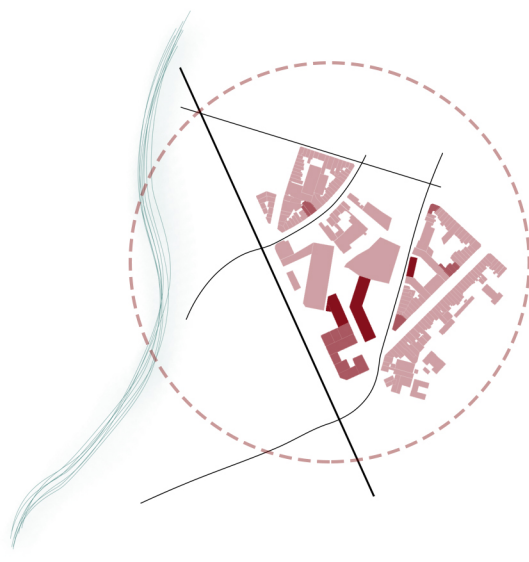
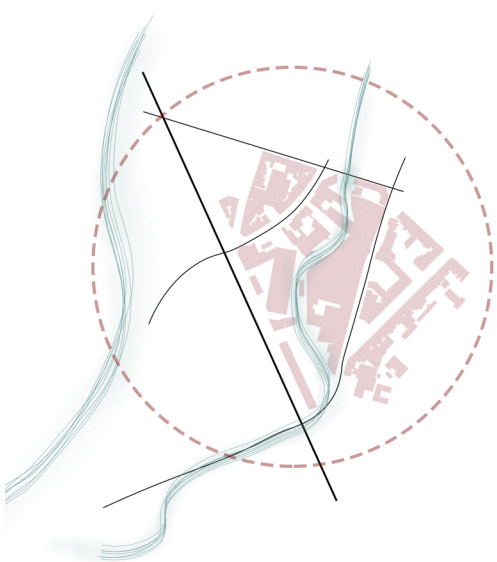
1930s

1970s

1980s

1990s

2019



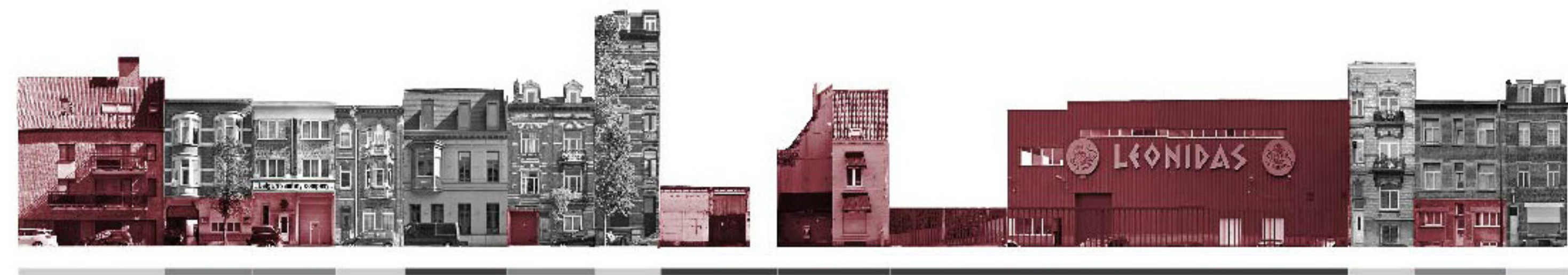
FRAGMENTATION OF THE STREET
The order of bricolaging in the street

For the typical street of terraced houses in Brussels, each house tries to adapt to the language of the neighbours in the street by picking up the rhythm, facade frame proportions and composition despite of their variation in style and materials. This order ties all the building along the street to create a bricolage: that each individual building are articulated differently but still responses with each other.

Due to the mixed typologies in Rue des Bassins, fragmentation happens in the street when the facades reflects different uses of spaces which the openings serve. For example, a factory building like Rotor requires a relatively longer, horizontally stretched window to illuminate the large space it contains, while a residential building usually have smaller and vertical windows for the rooms that are comparatively in scale. In the following part, we will investigate the compositional logic and contradictions in Rue des Bassins from facade analysis in rhythm, facade frame and composition.



Northern Side of the Rue des Bassins



Southern Side of the Rue des Bassins



Northern Side of the Rue des Bassins



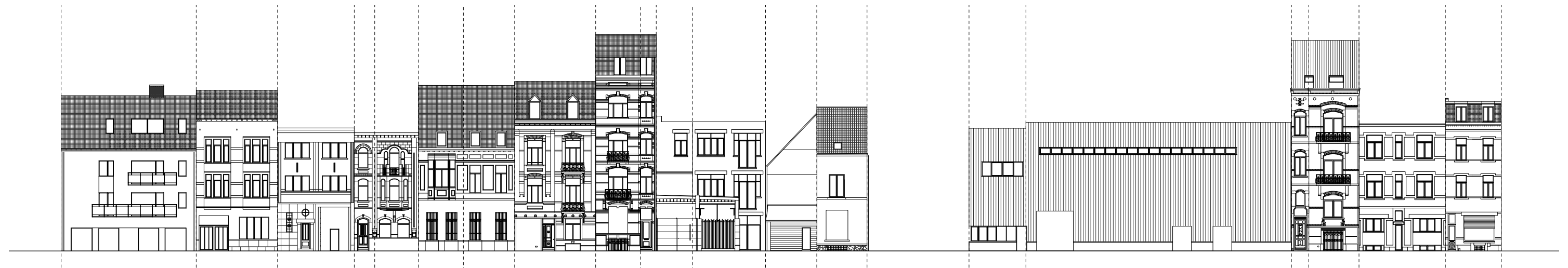
Southern Side of the Rue des Bassins

COMPOSITIONAL LOGIC

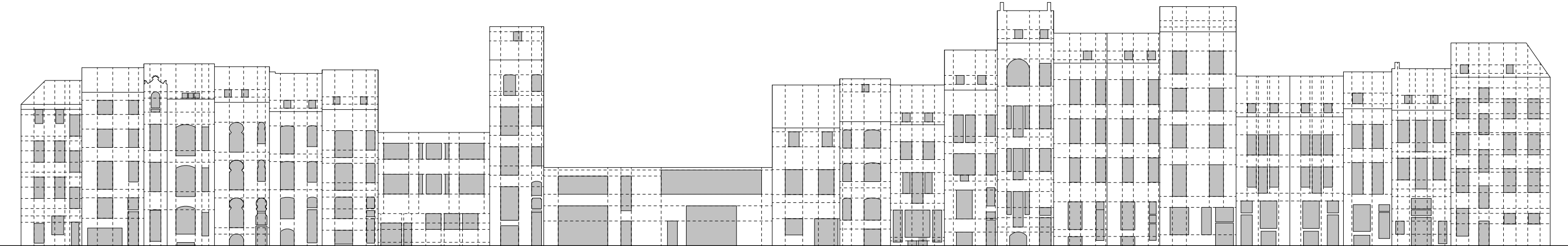
Rhythm 1:400



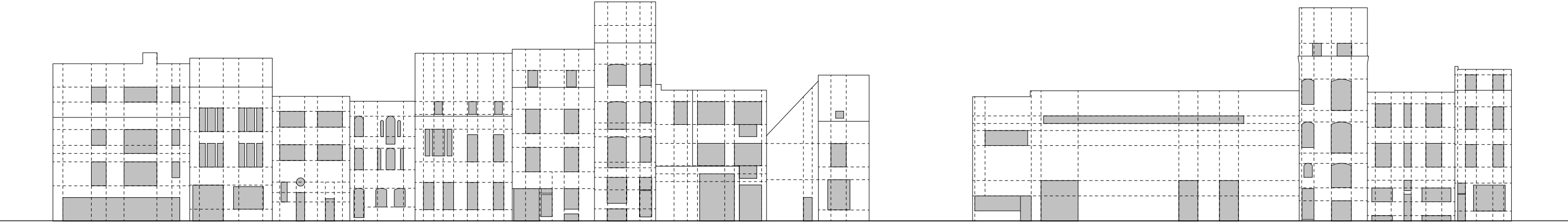
Northern Side of the Rue des Bassins



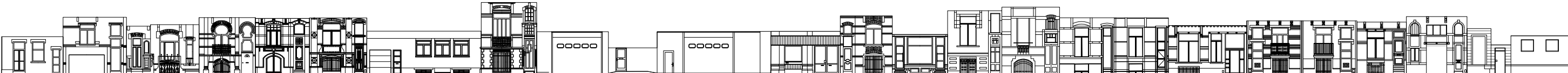
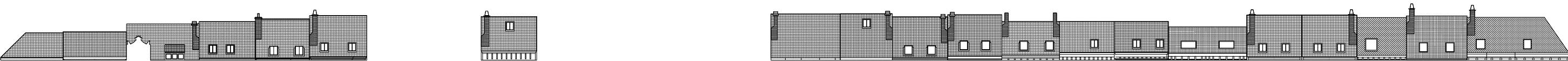
Southern Side of the Rue des Bassins



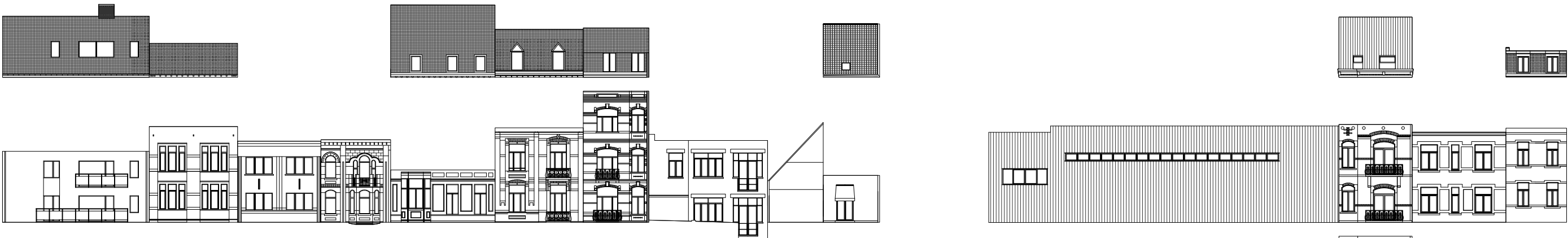
Northern Side of the Rue des Bassins



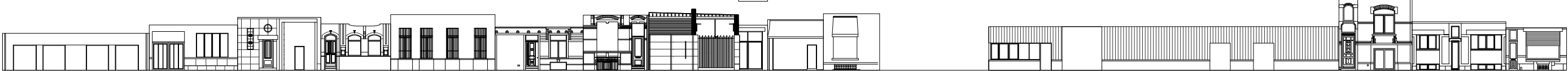
Southern Side of the Rue des Bassins



Northern Side of the Rue des Bassins



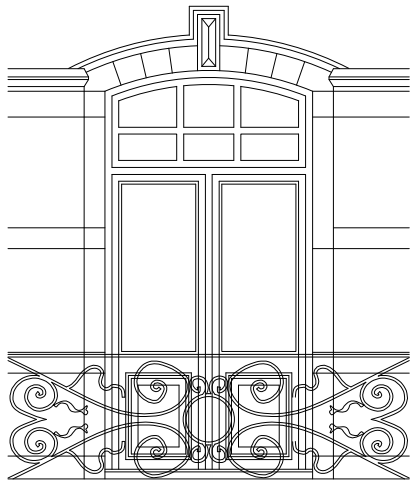
Southern Side of the Rue des Bassins



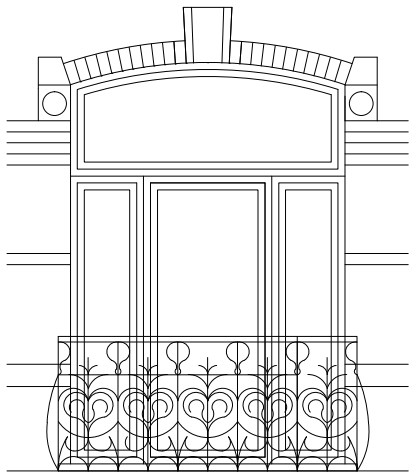
SERIATION OF ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Elememts of architectural language and its evolution

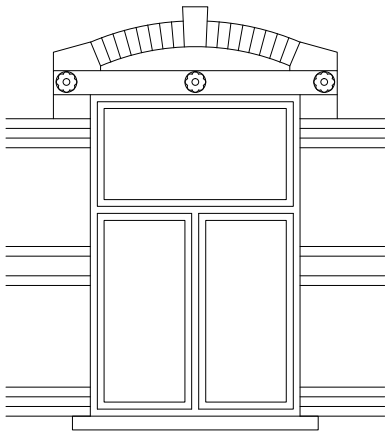
Despite the variation in style and materials in each building, the coherence and unity of the assamblage is ensured with the aid of architectural elements from the basic elements of railings, doorways and windows. This part of the research displays the catalogue of architectural elements that are found from rue des Bassins, to demonstrate the the vocabulary of diversity in the area while forming a lineage.



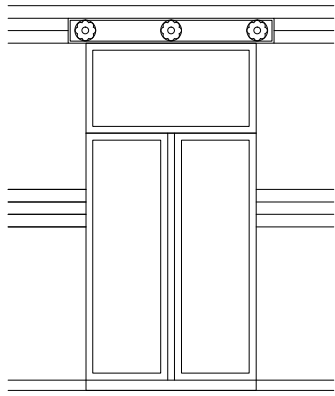
41, Rue des Bassins
First Floor



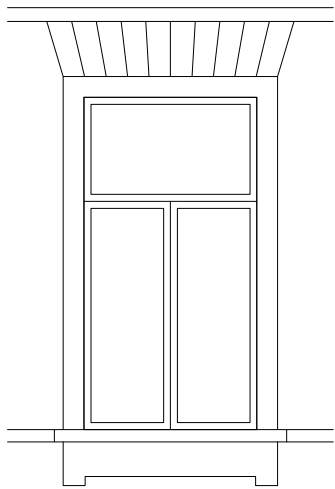
32, Rue des Bassins
Second Floor



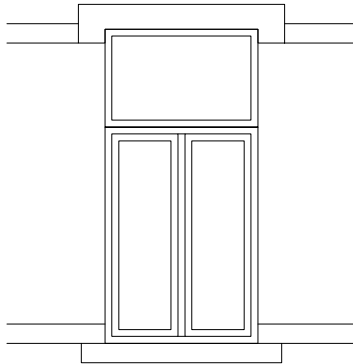
11, Rue des Bassins
Second Floor



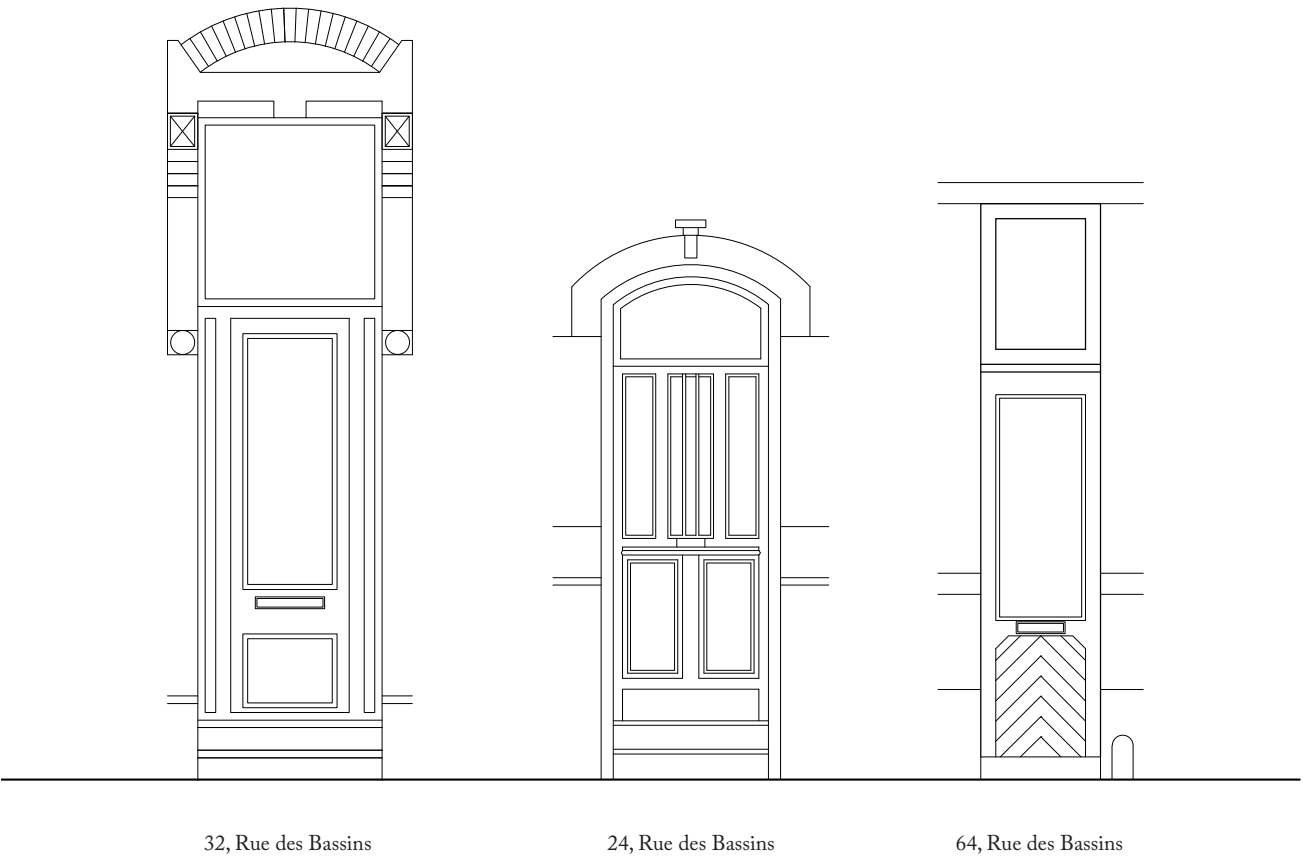
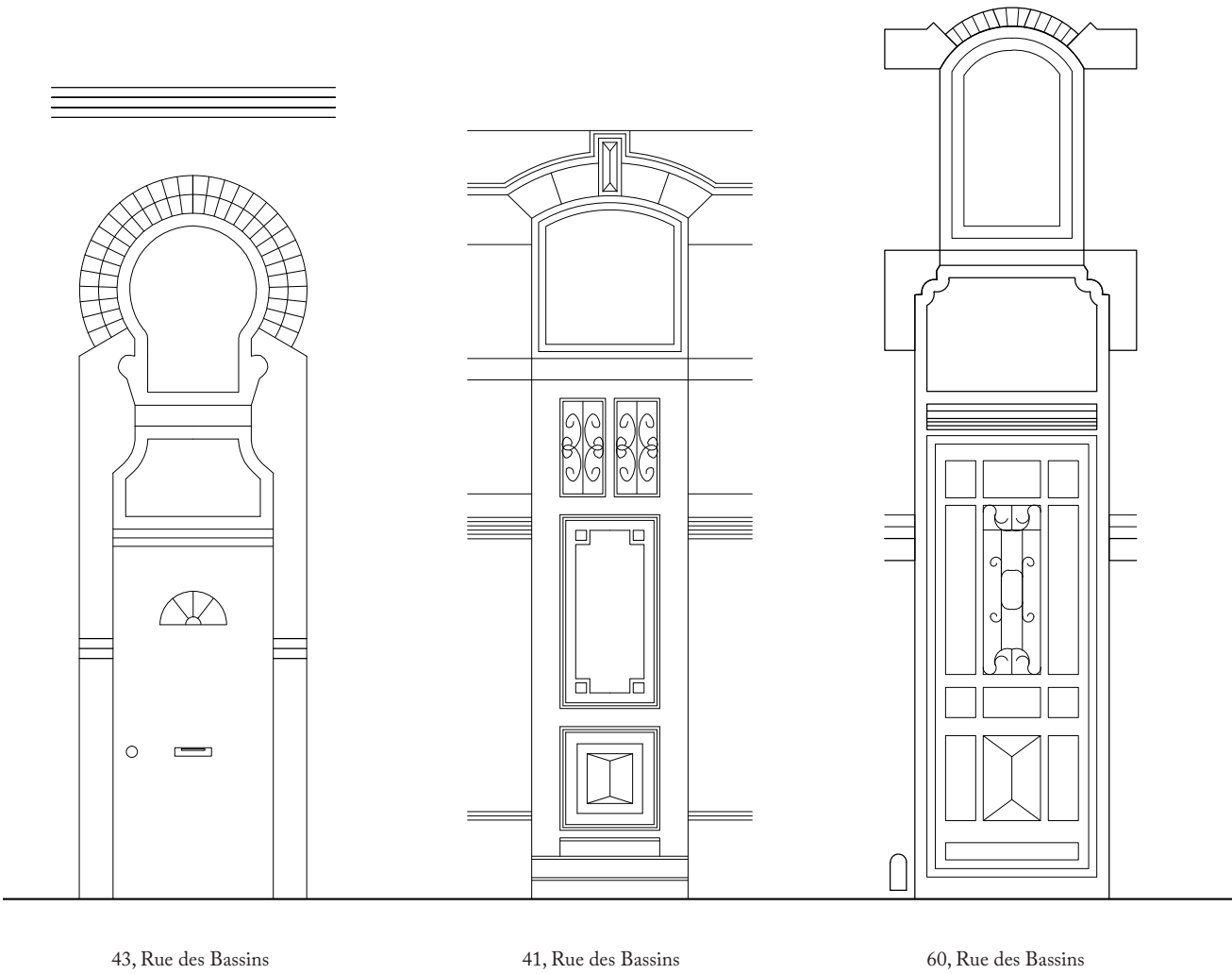
5, Rue des Bassins
Second Floor



16, Rue des Bassins
First Floor



64, Rue des Bassins
First Floor



HOW TO CREATE STREET AS A BRICOLAGE
Strategies - Working block hidden behind living block



In order to create a street bricolage, an individual building should respect the order of the street regardless of their typologies and use. By understand the rhythm, proportions and facade frames in the street, there are two ways of treating the facade in mixed-use buildings in order to corrulate with the architectural language of the others.

The first solution could be done by placing the working space behind the living area, which the disproportioned facade of the industrial part of the buidling could be hidden from the street facade. This buildings usually have a separate entrance to the working space in the street facade. Since most of the buildings in the street of Rue des Bassins are domestic buildings, some of the mxied use buildings in the street adopted this strategy in order to adapt to the context.



Rue des Bassins 30, 1070 Anderlecht



Rue des Bassins 11, 1070 Anderlecht



In this building, the facade facing the street adopted the materiality of bricks in response to the neighbouring domestic terrace houses. The garage door is placed in the facade, which provides access to the industrial part at the back through a courtyard.

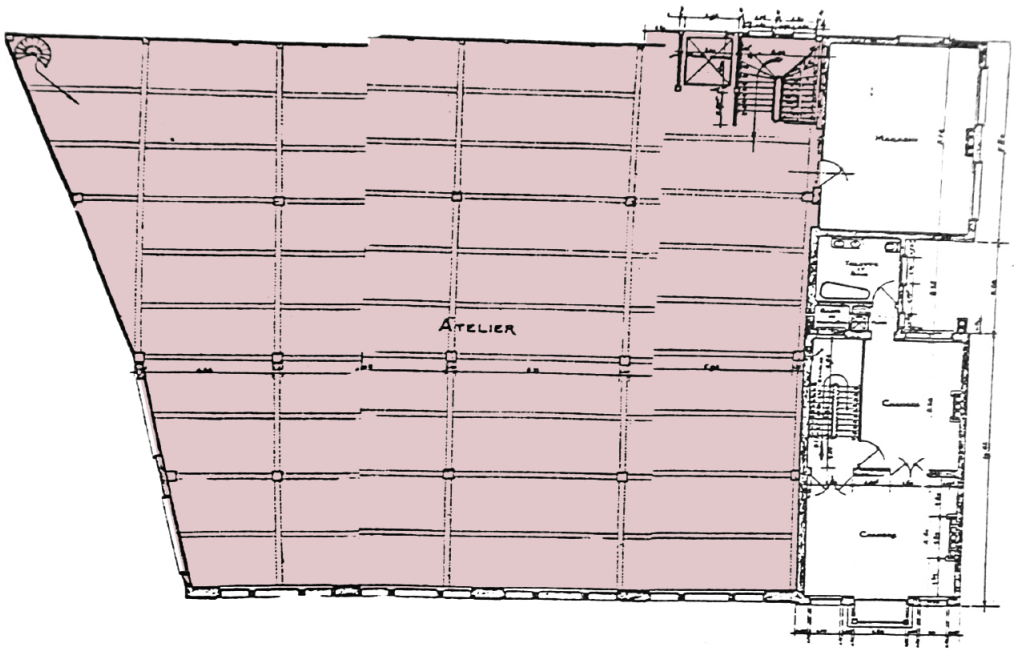
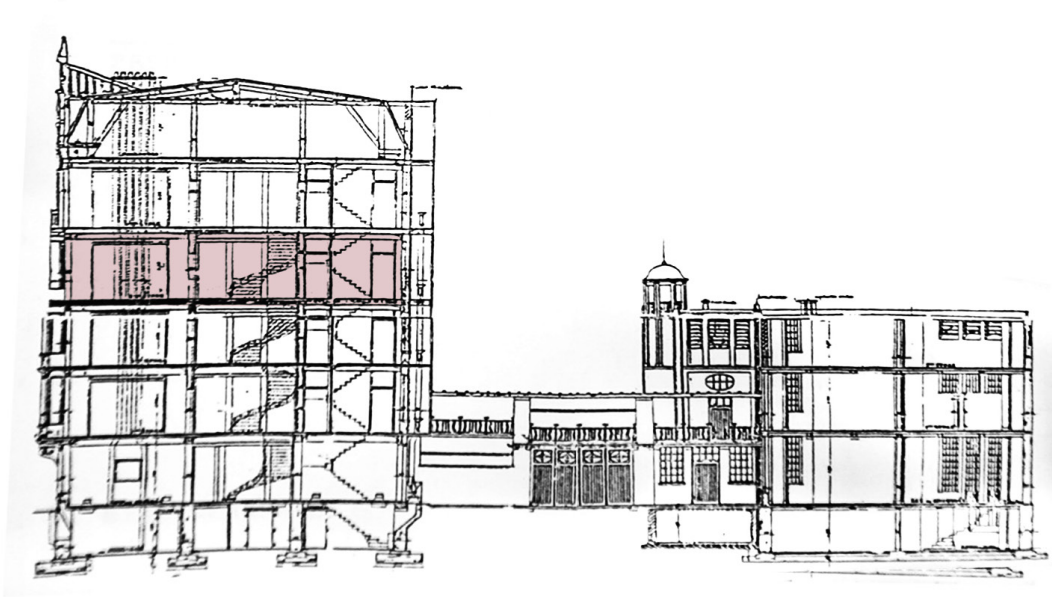


This facade not only adopts the materiality of the neighbours, but also follows the proportions and rhythm of the neighbours with a symmetrical composition and alignment with the neighbours with ornaments. People who live and work in this building share the same entrance. The workers access the industrial building behind through a courtyard.

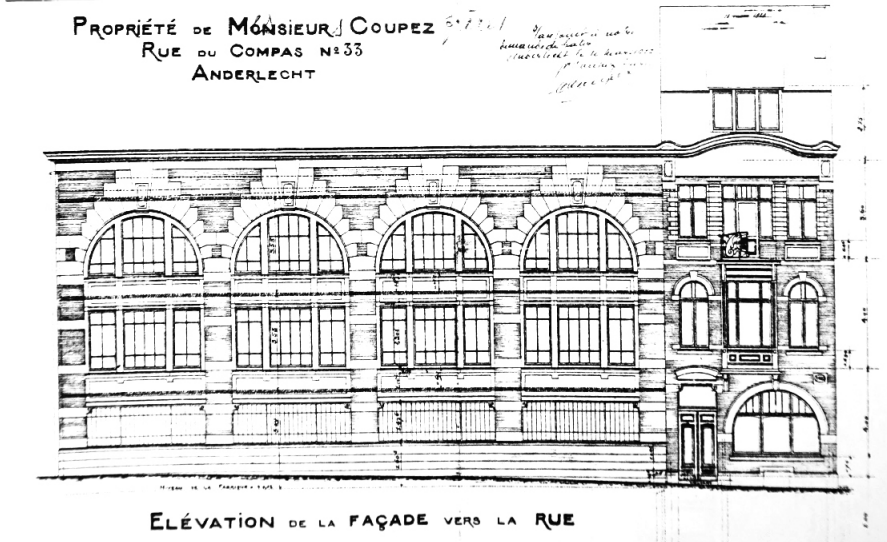
HOW TO CREATE STREET AS A BRICOLAGE
Strategies - Contradiction between facade and interior space



Some buildings are designed with ornamented facades which does not express the dimensional logic in the interior space, such that The facade did not ‘honestly’ reflects the different uses of spaces which these windows serve. For example, the Cigarette factory in Anderlecht picks up the order of the street with the aid of ornamentation and architectural elements from domestic buidlings. In another factory buidling in Rue du Compas 33, the facade have 4 high vertical windows that maintain the order of the street, despite of the large and undivided industrial space behind. Both buildings demonstrated the ‘disconnected relationship’ between the facade and the interior space, that one could hardly tell the difference between industrial buildings and domestic buildings



Ancienne fabrique de cigarettes Saint-Michel
Rue Lambert Crickx 24, 26, 28

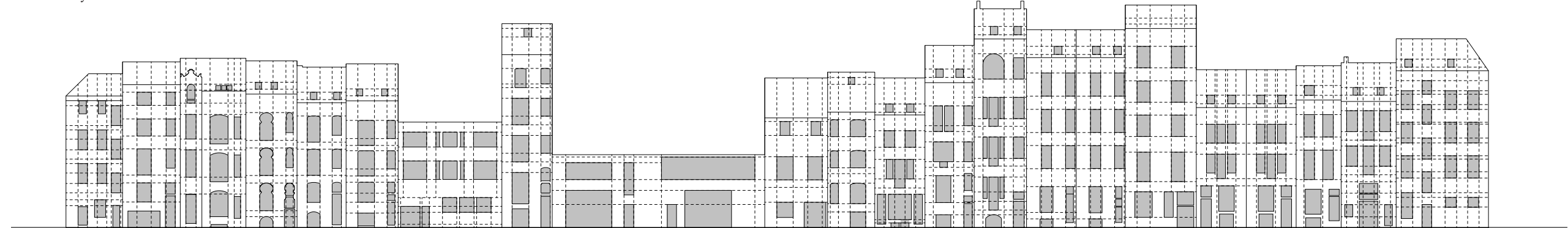


Rue du Compas 33, 1070 Anderlecht, 1923

HOW TO CREATE STREET AS A BRICOLAGE
Overview of the north elevation of Rue des Bassins



Rhythm



Facade Frame

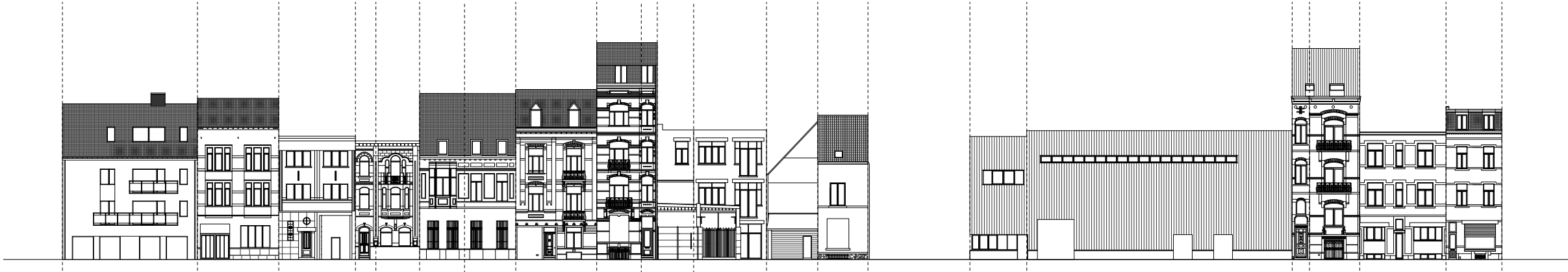


Composition

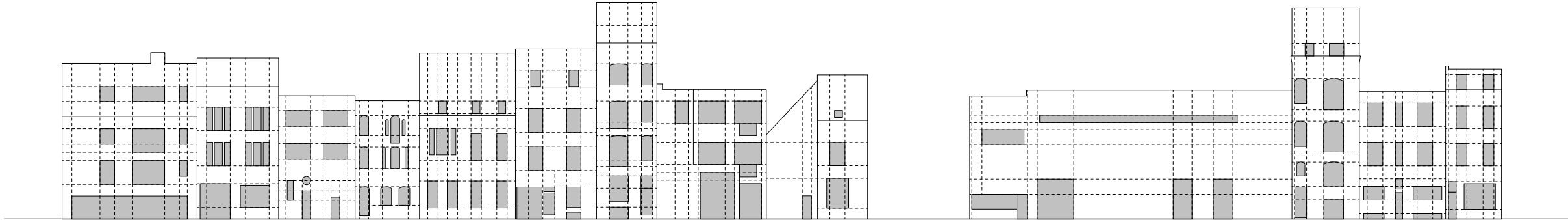


Appropriations

HOW TO CREATE STREET AS A BRICOLAGE
Overview of the south elevation of Rue des Bassins



Rhythm



Facade Frame



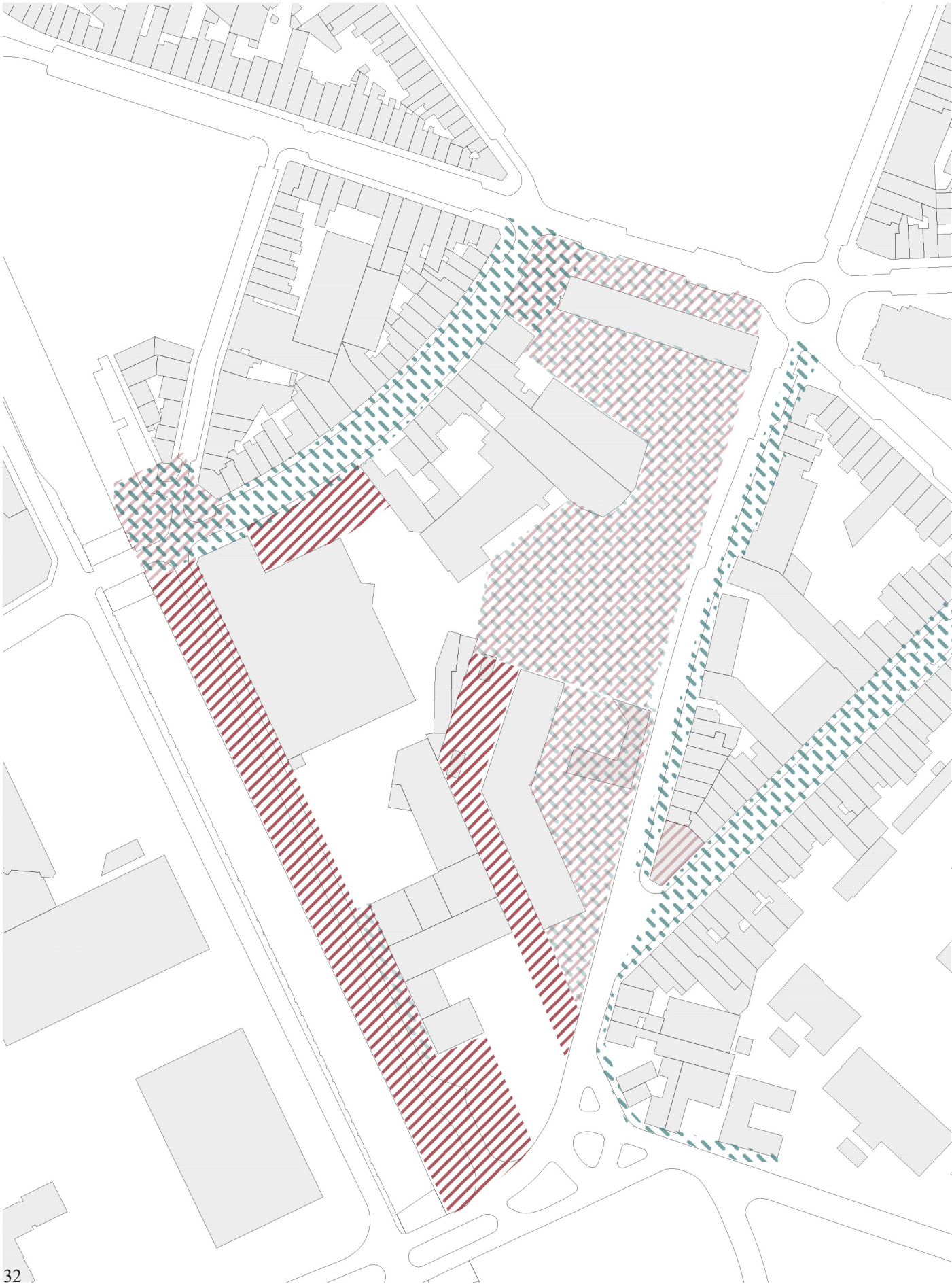
Composition



Appropriations

APPROPRIATION VS. ALIENATION *Traces of appropriation and alienation of the area*

Appropriation usually emerges from the physical environment, the cultural context and regulations that allow to occupy the space. Every trace of appropriation is stamped with an affective mark which indicates either the attraction or rejection (alienation) of a space.



High intensity of appropriation



Low intensity of appropriation



Low intensity of alienation



High intensity of alienation



MODES OF THE APPROPRIATION
Appropriation by the locomotion through the space

Appropriation by means of locomotion through the space is expressed by the different activities - walking, driving, cycling, playing, sitting, etc. The typology of the buildings, the same as architectural language, triggers different activities in the spaces. Residential streets encompass more variety of activities than industrial ones. Kids play around with bikes and roller skates, using the semi-public spaces around their houses or the parks, adults walk to reach public transportation or to go home.

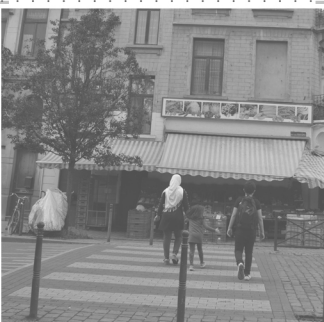
Rue du Previnaire



Rue Emile Carpentier



Rue des Bassins



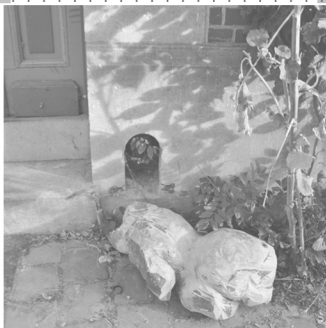
MODES OF THE APPROPRIATION
Appropriation by the personalisation of the space

The appropriation by means of personalization is a form of self-expression and show one’s personal preferences. Example of this form of appropriation could be seen mostly in balconies and windows with the implementation of plants or curtains in order to soften a bad view and create a sense of privacy. Then, the sami-public space in front of the facade also shows some ways of personalizations by the disposition of furniture or other decorative objects.

Rue du Previnaire



Rue des Goujons



Rue Emile Carpentier



Rue des Bassins



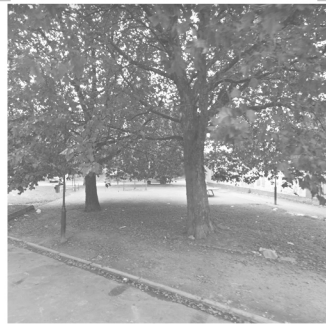
MODES OF THE APPROPRIATION
Appropriation by the means of expropriating

The appropriation by means of expropriating creates a sense of alienating atmosphere of the street. Industrial street - Rue du Previnaire - character shows a higher level of alienation because of the absence of attractive public spaces. On the contrary, residential areas also have some particular locations that show sign of alienations. Laying waste, food leftovers, lost objects, bikes, etc. are examples of traces of expropriation.

Rue du Previnaire



Rue des Goujons



Rue Emile Carpentier



Rue des Bassins

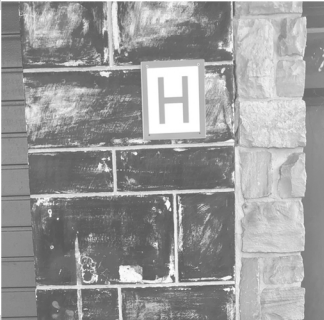


MODES OF THE APPROPRIATION
Appropriation by the means of making the space more habitable

The appropriation by means of making the space more habitable could be seen in the public space by the implementation of benches or bins, as well as lamp post to increase safety in the neighbourhood. Additionally, trees and other types of greenery create more pleasant atmosphere around the site, which triggers more various activities in the public spaces. Facades also shows this type of appropriation - electricity wiring, cables and satellites dish that adds more comfort to one's lifestyle.

Rue du Previnaire

Rue des Goujons



Rue Emile Carpentier



Rue des Bassins



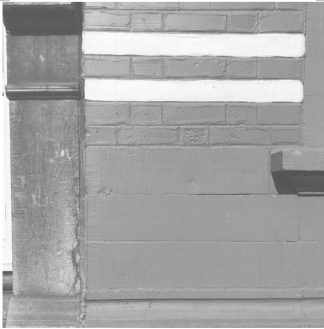
MODES OF THE APPROPRIATION
Appropriation by the means of rematerialisation

The appropriation by means of rematerialisation shows the way people adjust space according to their needs and understandings of aesthetics (personalisation). Rematerialisation usually happens within the changes of ownership. Rematerialization could indicate not only positive appropriation, but also alienation. It could be also seen as a statement (grafitti, for example).

Rue du Previnaire



Rue des Goujons



Rue Emile Carpentier



MODES OF THE APPROPRIATION
Appropriation by the means of conveying rules

Appropriation by means of conveying rules - defining space as owned by means of regulations. Used as an indicator of traffic law which applies at all times on a specific street, the disregard of which may constitute a violation. Usually, fixed additive element which is set by the authorities. However, in some cases could be initiated by the inhabitants to show the possession of the space.

Rue du Previnaire



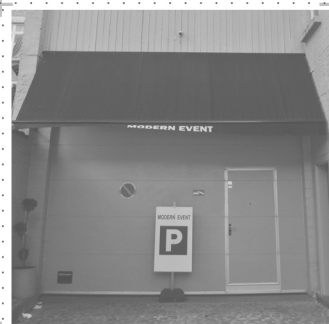
Rue des Goujons



Rue Emile Carpentier



Rue des Bassins

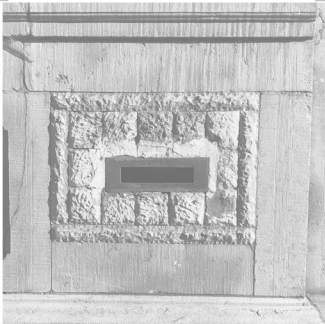


MODES OF THE APPROPRIATION
Appropriation by the means of marking off as possessed

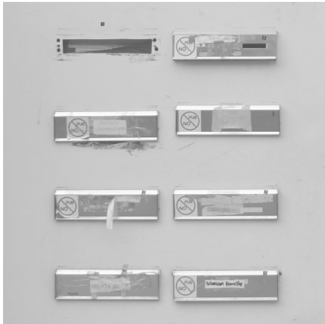
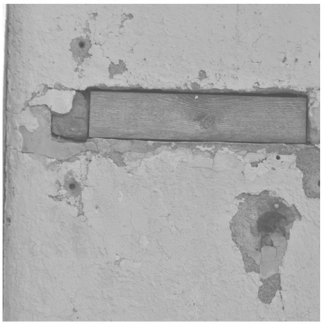
Appropriation by means of marking off as possessed could be either temporarily or long term. The changes mostly are initiated by the owners. In the domestic street the examples of this type of appropriation could be marking off the parking spots, adding letter boxes, house numbers, etc. In the industrial street - shop signs, roller shutters, parking ticket machines, etc.

Rue du Previnaire

Rue des Goujons

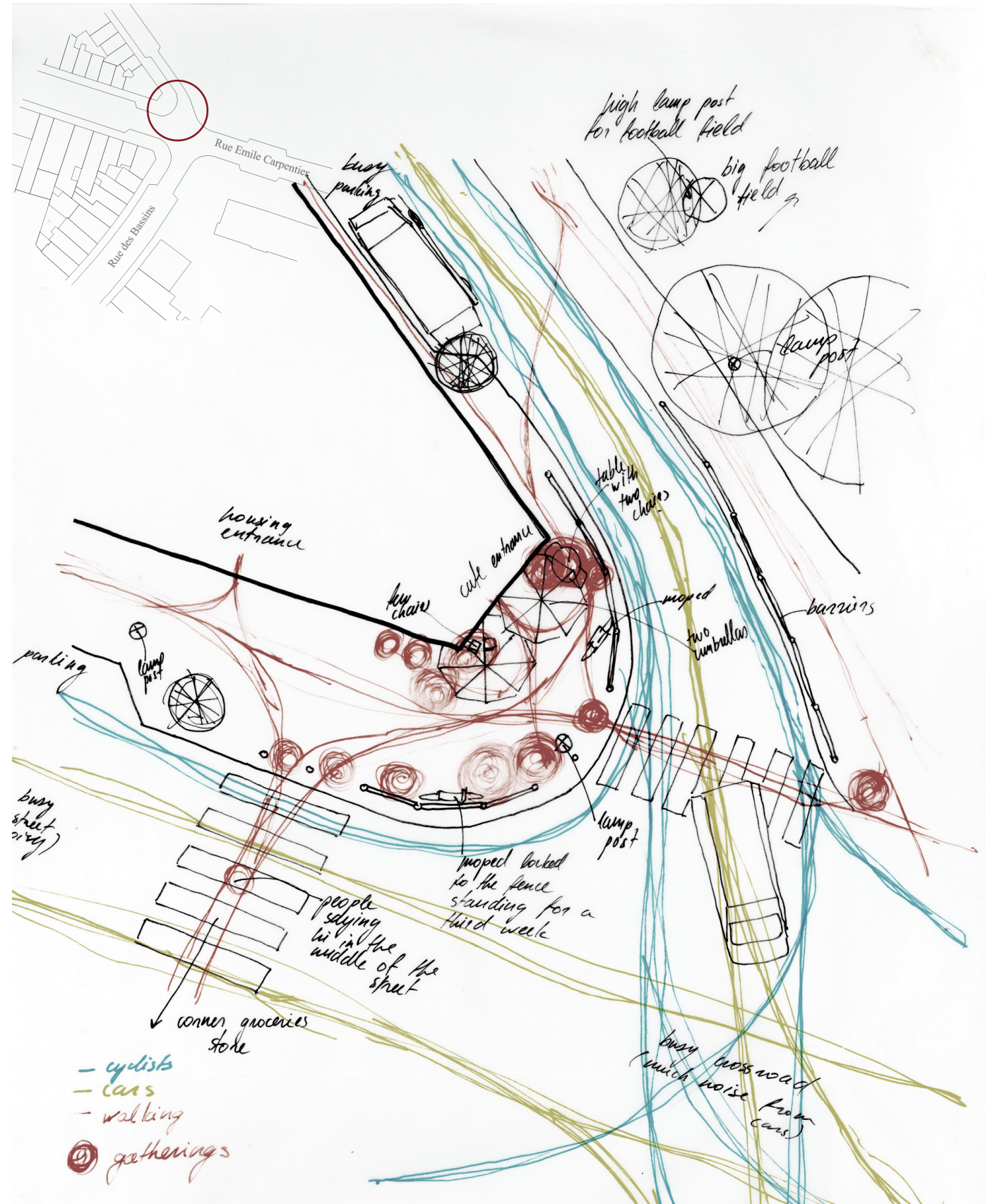


Rue Emile Carpentier



APPROPRIATION OF PUBLIC SPACE

Corner cafe



Traces and habits (fieldwork sketch)



Non fixed (temporary) elements of expropriation - cans, leftovers, boxes. Easily removed, changed, picked up. Indicates that the space is used often, but not looked after.



Fixed elements of appropriation - awnings, additional lights, roller shutters. Appropriation by the means of making the space well maintained during the different times of the day and different weather conditions. The change of those additive elements is rare and low.



Semi-fixed elements of appropriation - promotional signage. Appropriation by means of place-marking. Semi-fixed additions designed to encourage people to enter. The change is moderate, usually depends on the ownership.



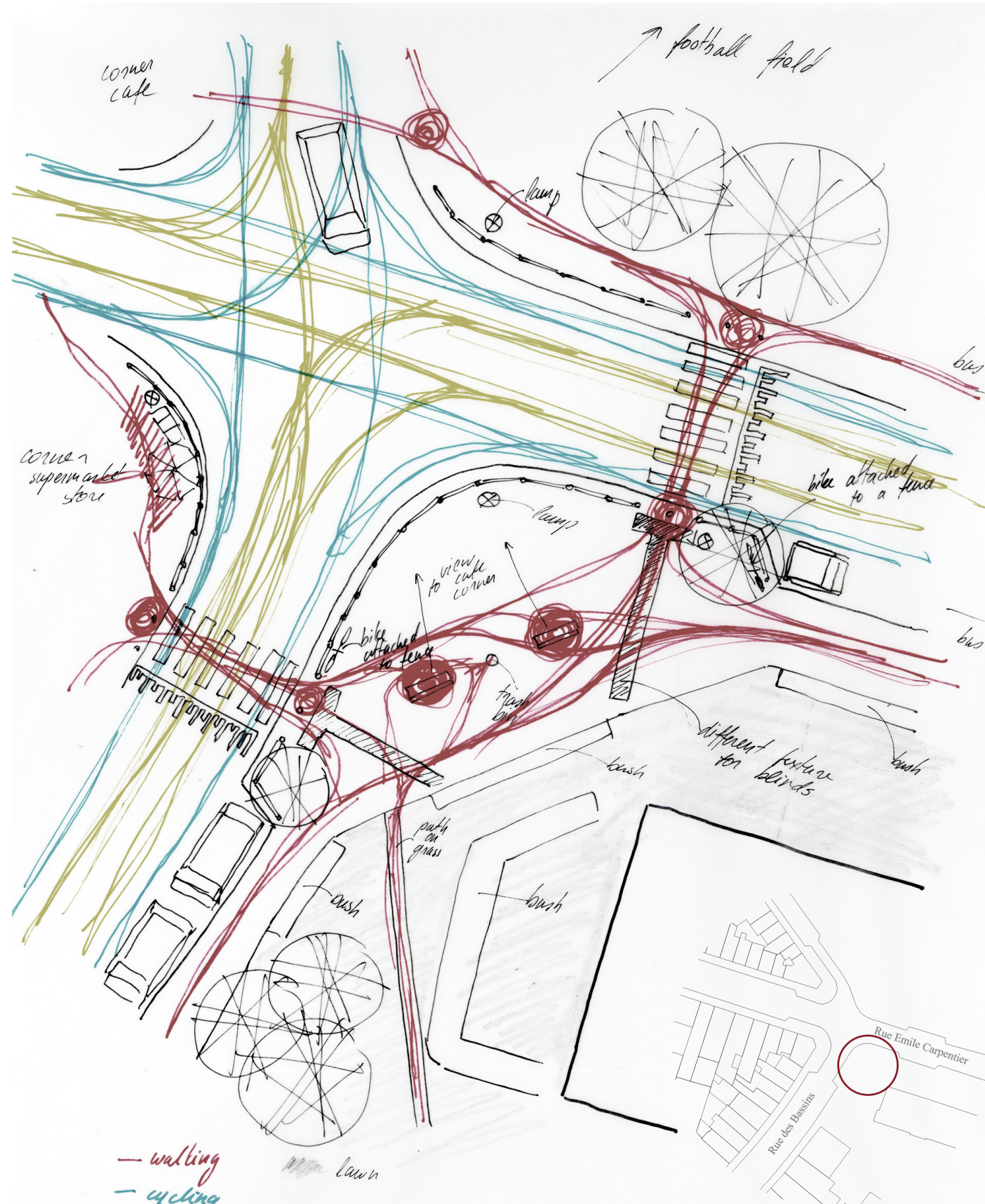
Non-fixed elements of appropriation. Appropriation by means of locomotion as well as violating the rules. Indicates much vehicular traffic nearby, as well as not enough parking spots.

Traces of appropriation

Time spent observed: 30min. Usership: 14 adult men gathering, 26 people passing by, 4 cyclists passing by, many cars. Ownership: Moroccan man who lives in the neighbourhood.

APPROPRIATION OF PUBLIC SPACE

Corner



Traces and habits (fieldwork sketch)



Non fixed (temporary) elements of appropriation - parked bikes, cars, motorcycles. Easily removed, changed, picked up. Indicates that the space is used often and changes quickly. Defining space as appropriated by distributing personal items.



Non fixed (temporary) elements of appropriation - warning signage. Appropriation by the means of indicating a potential hazard, obstacle or condition requiring special attention. Located because of the good location and visibility for the drivers.



Non fixed (temporary) elements of appropriation - locomotion through the space. Appropriation by means of occupying space by activities.



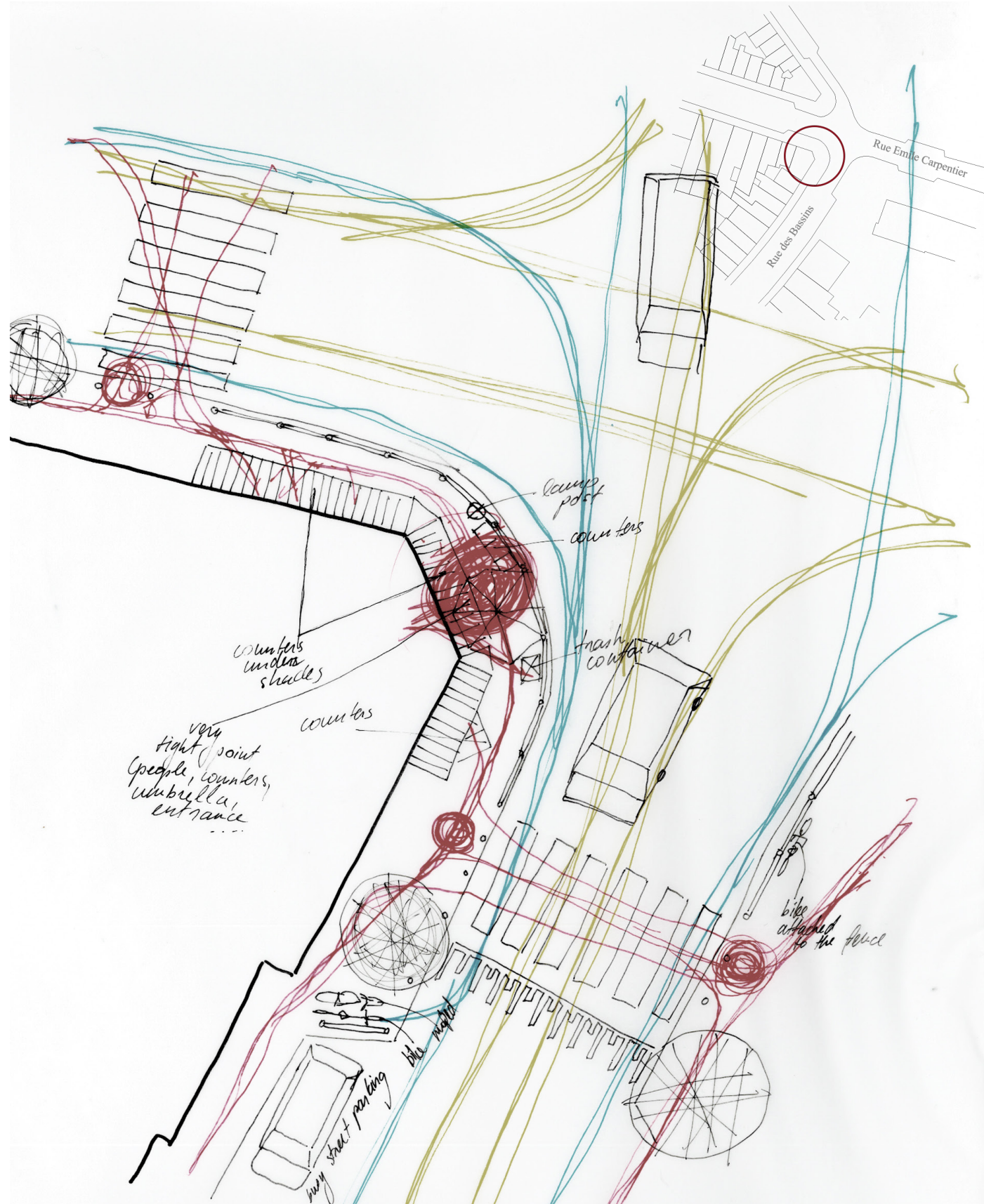
Non-fixed elements of appropriation. Appropriation by means of maintaining.

Traces of appropriation

Time spent observed: 30min. Usership: 3 adult men and 2 women sitting and talking, 1 senior sitting and smoking, 5 kids and 11 adults passing by, 5 cyclists passing by, many cars.

APPROPRIATION OF PUBLIC SPACE

Corner shop



Traces and habits (fieldwork sketch)



Non fixed (temporary) elements of appropriation - market stalls. Easily removed, changed, picked up. Indicates that the space is commercialized. Defining space as appropriated by distributing personal items.



The appropriation by means of rematerialisation shows the way people adjust space according to their needs and understandings of aesthetics (personalisation). Rematerialisation usually happens within the changes of ownership.



Semi-fixed elements of appropriation - promotional signage. Appropriation by means of place-marking. Semi-fixed additions designed to encourage people to enter. The change is moderate, usually depends on the ownership.



Non-fixed elements of appropriation. Appropriation by means of maintaining..

Traces of appropriation

Time spent observed: 30min. Usership: 5 adult men and 8 women buying groceries, 2 of them with kids, 2 young girls buying fruits, 12 adults passing by, 6 cyclists passing by, many cars.
Ownership: Moroccan family who lives in the neighbourhood

APPROPRIATION OF THE STREET

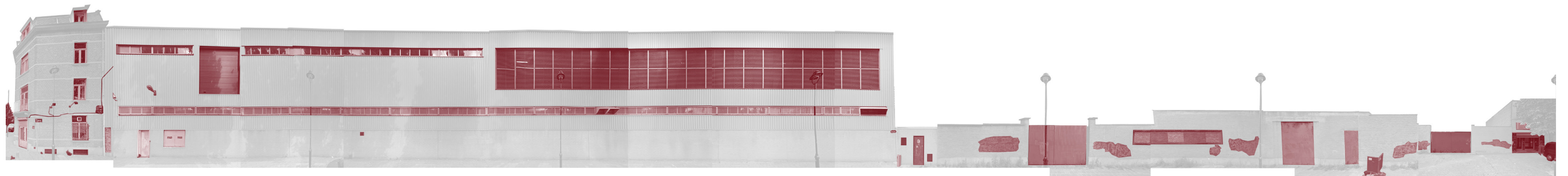
Residential vs. Industrial



Appropriation of residential street - Rue des Bassins (Northern side)



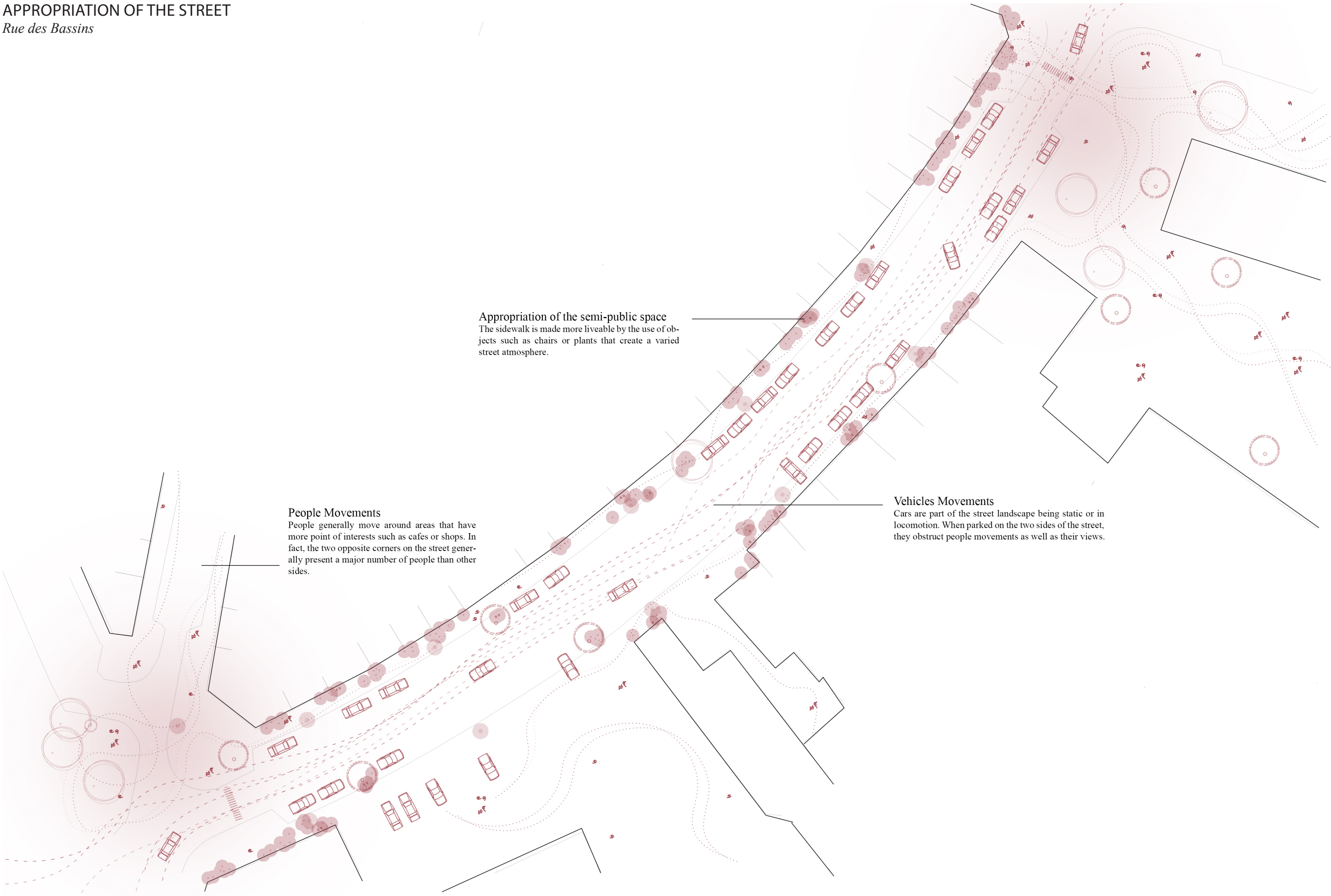
Appropriation of mixed street - Rue des Bassins (Southern side)



Appropriation of industrial street - Rue Prévaire (Eastern side)

Visual complexity analysis indicates that the level of appropriation is more intense on the domestic street - Rue des Bassins (Northern side). The intensity of positive appropriation diminishes as the typology changes to the industrial. Finally, in the street of Rue Prévaire (Eastern side) the appropriation shifts to alienation. It could be speculated that domestic street is appropriated more positively than industrial one in terms of ownership and usership. Industries in this area change considerably often meaning that owners do not invest into making the space attractive for a long term, there is no attachment between subject and object. Additionally, users of the space are mainly workers from outside of the neighbourhood, thus, they do not invest in something that does not belong to them. Clients are not supposed to stay in the area for a long time, therefore, there are no public places for gathering that needs plea-

sant environment around them. If the user has a feeling that the space belongs to someone other than himself, this results in alienation of the facade and the space around it. However, if the business is owned by the people from the neighbourhood (usually, small businesses in the ground floor of the building), the positive appropriation increases. In the residential streets the appropriation is tightly connected with the self-realization that also affects the intensity and the variety of the appropriation process. In conclusion, the intensity of appropriation is tightly connected with the typology and modes of property. It is important to mix working and living functions in order to avoid alienation of the street.



CASE STUDY

Architectural language of facade

Eclecticism

The eclectic architecture evolved in Brussels from 1860 until the First World War. The neoclassical style slowly changed and the facade transformed into an asymmetrical composition. One narrower part - where the corridor and staircase are located - and a bigger one - where the rooms are located. Each house presents differences in terms of decorations that are influences of different past styles. This is the result of several trends that are combined in the eclecticism. The main materials used are :

Street Facade / Garden Facade

If the two façades, street and garden, are largely pierced with bays, there are nevertheless great differences in their composition. The garden façade in the 19th century is not considered as a real façade. Not intended to be seen, it is the subject of very little research and care.

Balcony

Art Nouveau influenced the production of balcony and window railings, gates, hand-rail and other ornamental work are made of wrought iron and are not only functional elements but also serve as decorations inspired by nature. Those elements are the most recognizable feature of this architectural style.

Limestone

Besides the white stone, the blue limestone strongly marks the history of Belgium architectural tradition. Limestone occupies an important place in the structure of the building and it is considered a noble material. Known for its high mechanical strenght, it is generally used for the lower part of the building - plinth - and windows or doors - lintels. Limestone headbands alternated the brickwork creating a dynamic facade composition.

Cuisine Cave

The cellar kitchen was located on the basement level behind the small window at the level of the sidewalk.



Cornice

The cornice is he horizontal decorative molding that crowns the facade. It has the function of throwing rainwater free of the building's walls

Dynamism

The facade is not flat. It involves re-entrant elements that create a dynamism in the composition. Usually, also the use of sculptural elements help creating a lively facade.

Door

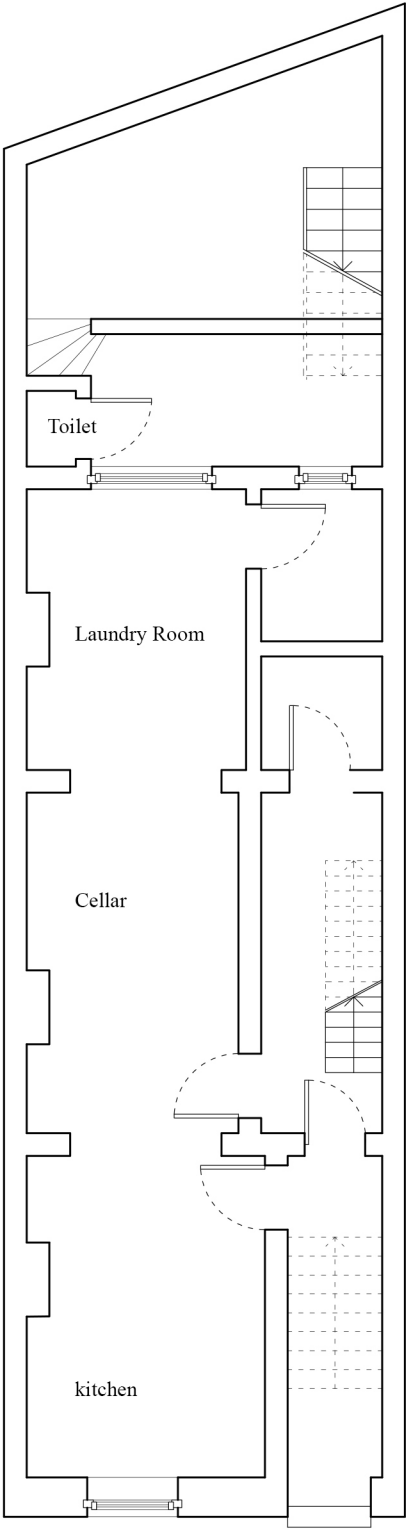
The exterior doors are usually made of oak or fir. Generally, the decorative motifs of the door respond to those of other facade elements such as window frames, cornice, etc. As other decorative components of the facade, the door presents decorations inspired by nature patterns. Access to the house is by a porch with one or two outside steps in front of the entrance door.

Boot scraper

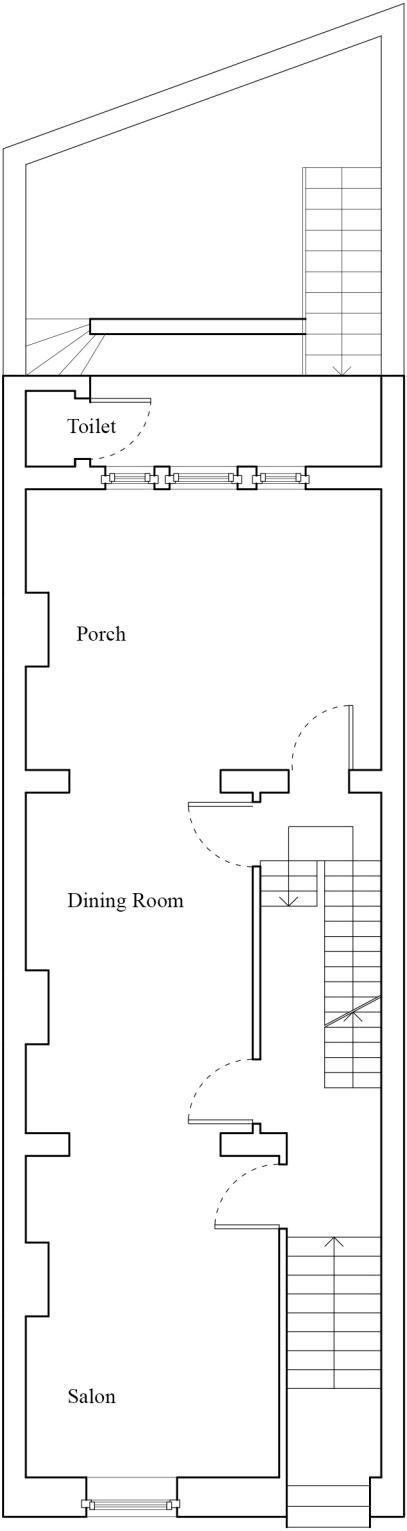
The boot scraper - decrottoir - is a small arched niche at the base of entrances that serve to clean the mud off shoes before entering the house. They have been implemented from the 18th century and are almost like a pre-cursor to the modern door-mat. Like any other metallic elements in the facade they also serve decorative function complementing the overall design of the building they are attached to.

Appropriation of facade

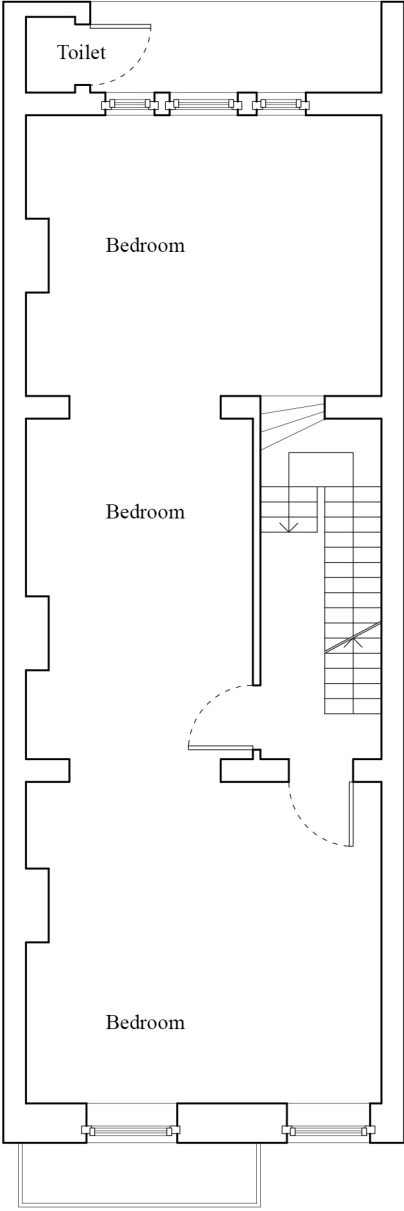
Appropriation by means of conveying rules - defining space as owned by means of regulations - Used as an indicator of traffic law which applies at all times on a specific street, the disregard of which may constitute a violation. Fixed additive element.



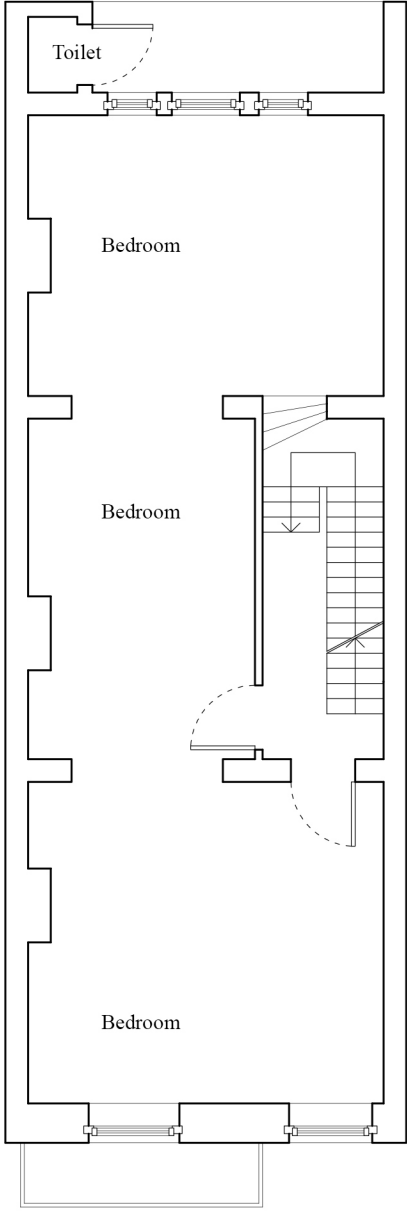
Basement



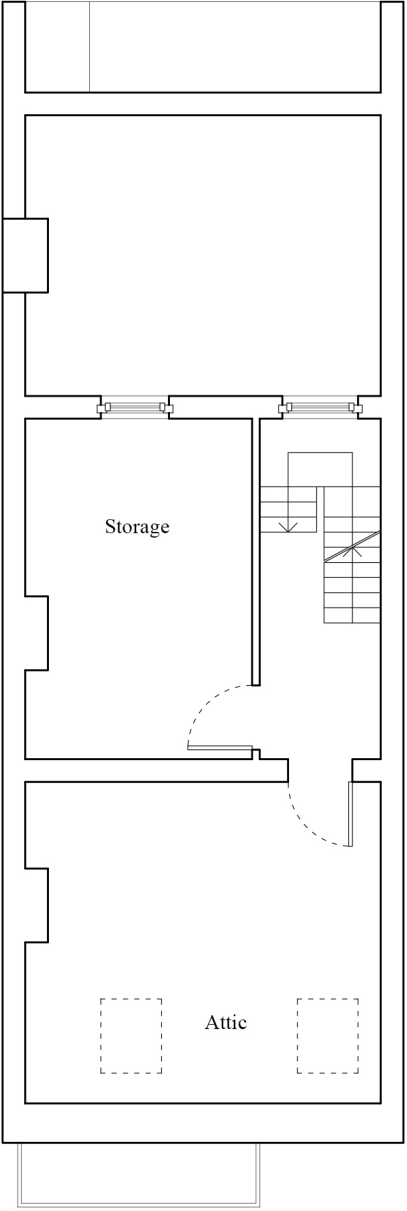
Groundfloor



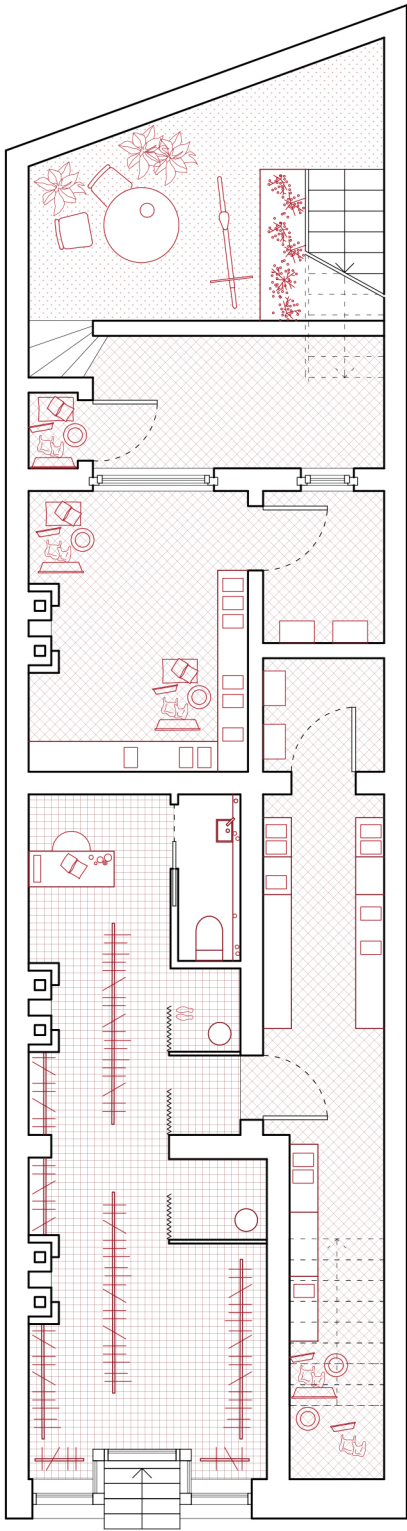
First floor



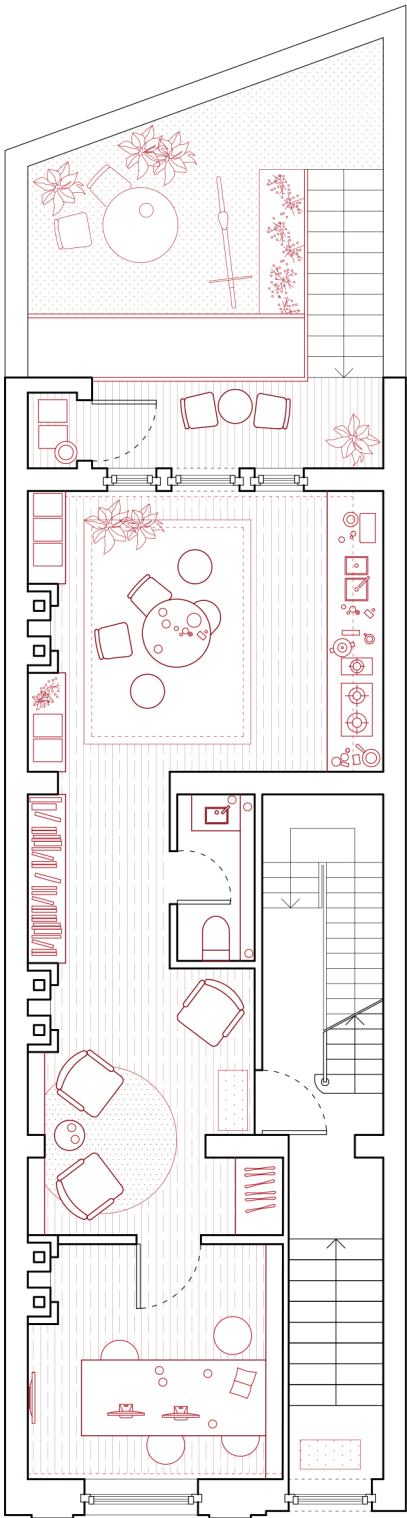
Second floor



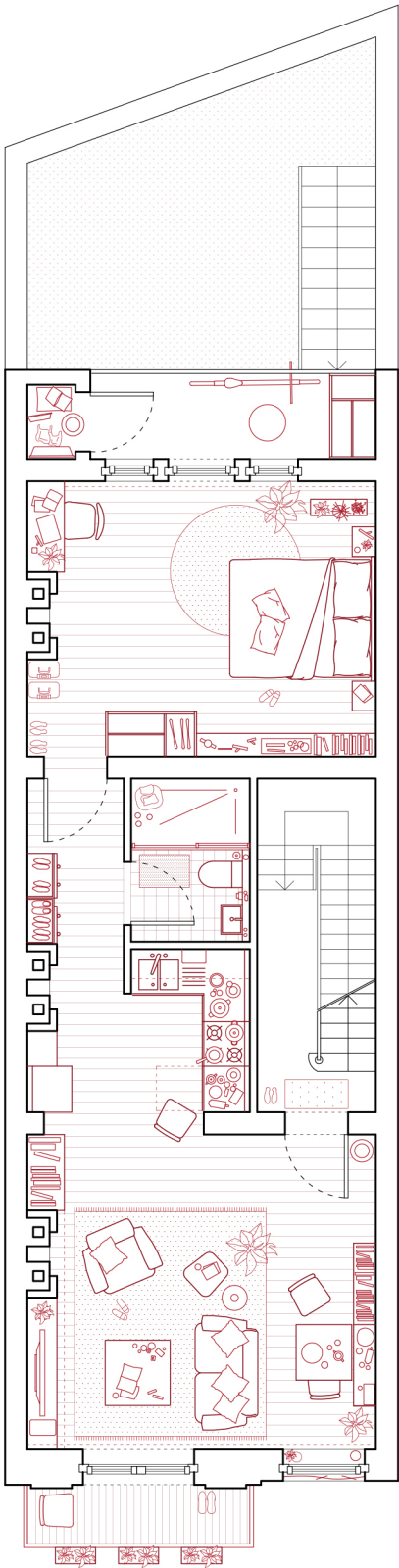
Third floor



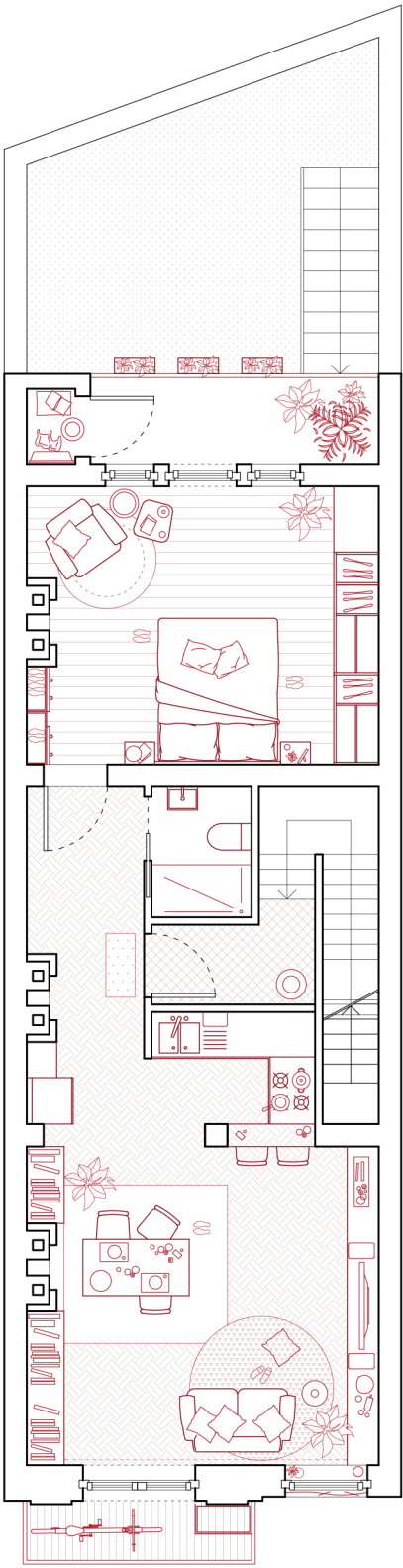
Basement



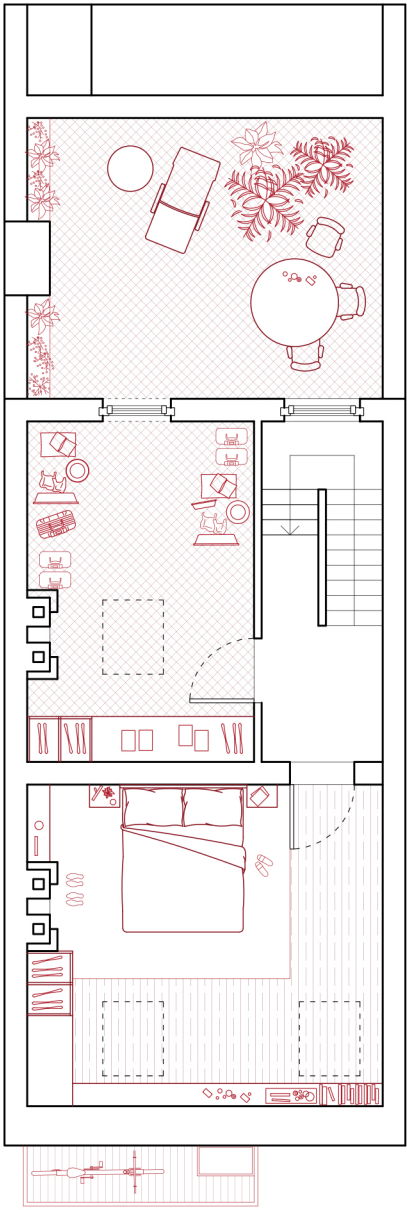
Groundfloor



First floor



Second floor



Third floor

CASE STUDY

Architectural language of plans

Organization

The “basic type” house has a very general and simple organization. Generally three rooms are located one consecutive to the other, where the basic form of living take place. After the second world war, due to economic changes, the typical house of one family was transformed into individual apartments with implemented facilities in every floor. The main characteristic of this dwelling is its small width of façade (around 6 metres). This width results from the conjunction of two factors: the dimen-

Bedroom

The bedroom is located in the back side because it is the brightest area of the house and it is facing the back garden.

Fireplace

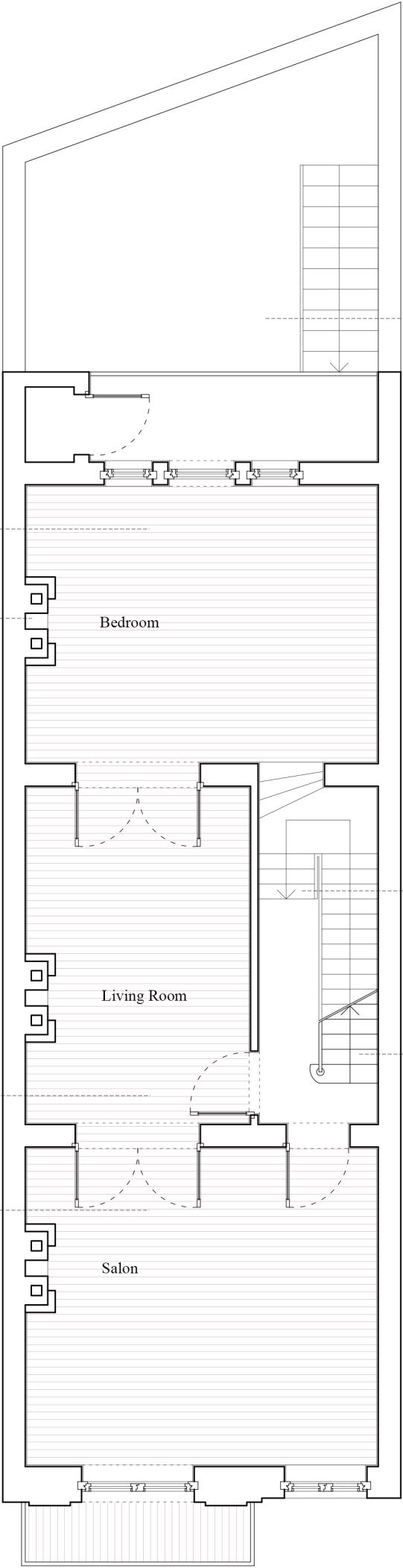
Every room has a fireplace that serves the necessity of heating, cooking, and heating water for laundry and domestic uses. They are also used for the relaxing ambiance they create. The structure in brick contains the fire in a firebox or firepit; a chimney or other flue allows exhaust to escape.

Living Room

The living room is located in the middle of the house and it is connected to the basement kitchen via kitchen lift.

Salon

The salon is facing the street and it is used only for special occasions. The living rooms usually have great ceiling height, significant width (4 to 5 metres) and are mainly lit by large glazed bays. These rooms are also richly decorated and ornamented. From 1900-1910, the conventional ranking between the façade rooms and the back rooms starts to evolve: the salon or dining room are found at the back façade and no longer at the front façade as in the 19th century.



Rear Garden

In 1848 the building regulations of a low court was made mandatory. This court is lower than the garden which is generally retained by the construction of a rain water tank.

Corridor

The corridor with stairs is generally located next to the rooms and always along one of the structural side walls. The main staircase is generally in marble. The handrail is generally in brass, wrought iron or polished or varnished wood (mahogany, oak or walnut).

Staircase

In the middle of the coach entry, a porch leads into a hallway which houses the start of the main staircase, often decorated, leading to the upper floors. This stairway is double flight with an intermediate landing. Apart from the main staircase, there could be other service stairways, such as a dumbwaiter and sometimes even a lift.

CASE STUDY

Appropriation of plans

Window frame

Appropriation by means of making the space habitable. Windows serve the function of letting light and air inside the house, but they are also decorative elements. They define the connection with the exterior, depending on inhabitant's requirements and facade composition. Windows could be seen as physical barriers, however, they also provide visual connection within inside and outside. The posi-

Wall partitions

Appropriation by means of reshaping the space according to the different requisites of the inhabitants. Partitions are the most flexible type of walls, they provide privacy and separation according to one's needs. They change considerably often in comparison with other types of walls.

Necessities

Appropriation by means of making the space habitable. Necessities are items that help to fulfill one's basic needs. The quality of items could be seen as an indicator of wellfair. The disposition of furniture is a form of self-expression but it is strongly connected with the predetermined arrangement of the spaces. Necessities make the space functional. The example of necessities could be bed, toilet, basic kitchen furniture, etc.

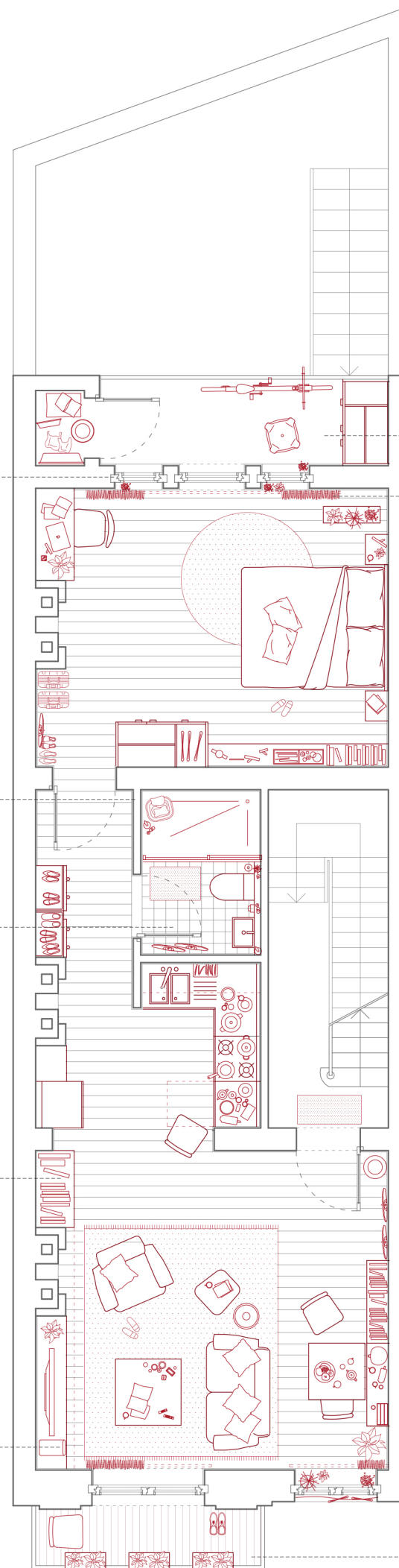
Accessories

Appropriation by means of personalization of space.

The choice of decorative accessories is a form of self expression and it is influenced by one's taste. Usually, objects are more than material possessions because of the emotional bond they create. They not necessarily showing the wealth or status, but rather create the space more pleasant for the people who inhabit the space. Accessories make the space attractive. The example of accessories could be

Amenities

Appropriation by means of personalization of space. Amenities usually evolve into a lifestyle and make the space comfortable. The example of amenities could be tv, internet, washing machine, dish-washer, microwave, elevator, garage, etc.



Balconies used as storage

Appropriation by personalization - defining space as owned and appropriated by distribution of personal items. In this area balconies are mostly used as additional space to the house because of the relatively small apartments that do not have enough storage space inside.

Curtains

Appropriation by means of distancing and personalization - curtains determine the level of privacy and imply decorative function - . Looking from the street, windows are brief and fleeting gateway to an imagined interior and curtains add the filter on it. Curtains make facade vibrant and introduce dichotomies such as excess and necessity, obscurity and transparency, permanency and temporality. Semi-fixed additions.

Clothes

Appropriation by means of utilitarian purposes. This could be an indicator of lower income neighbourhoods. The higher the income, the more decorative features are present. Otherwise, it is just serving the need of more space.

Balconies used as social space

Appropriation by social activities. The balcony is not only used as a storage but it is also considered a micro-space where a collection of different daily activities take place.

CASE STUDY

Architectural language of section

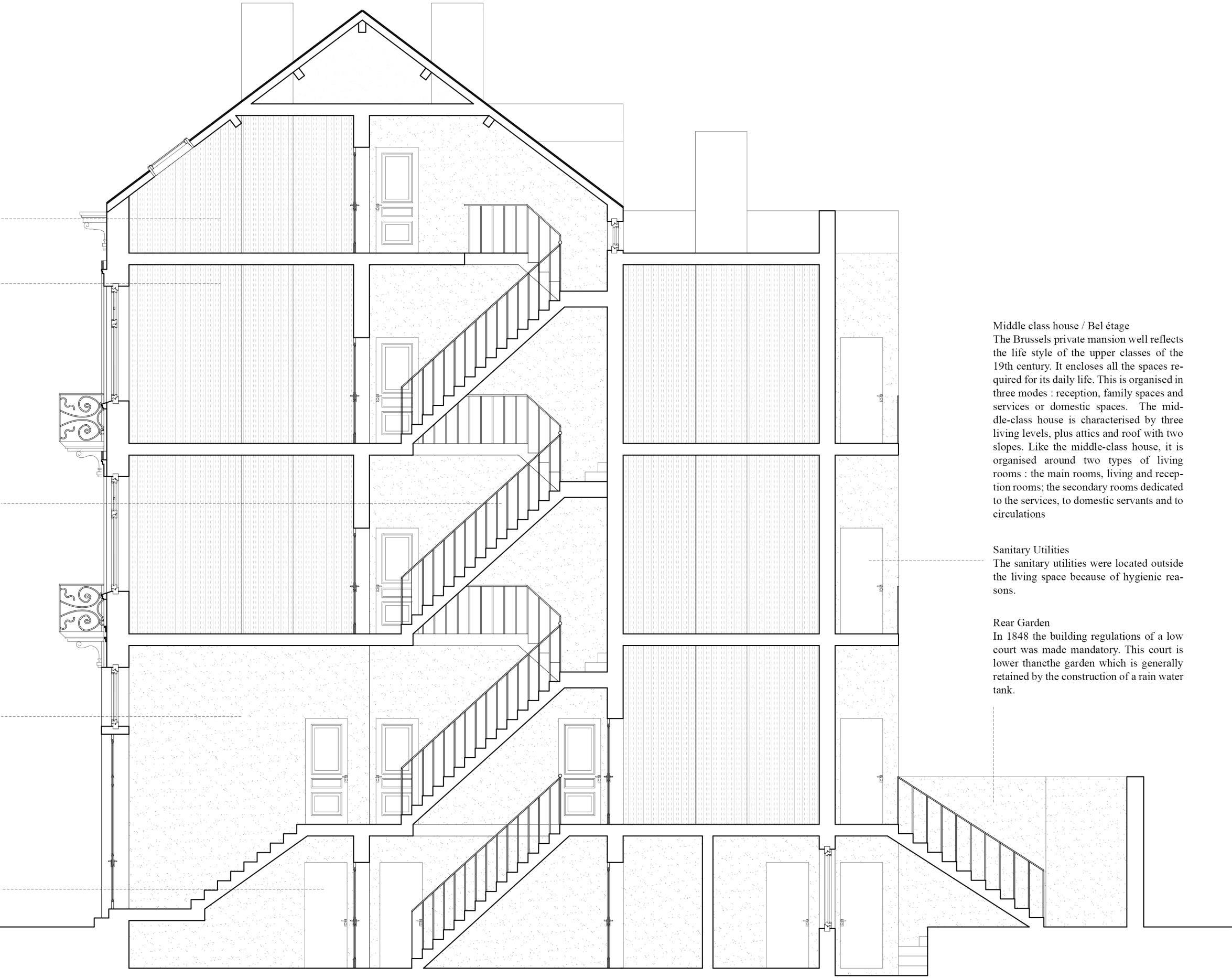
Attic
space dedicated to house staff. The rooms are smaller and less high. No decorative elements.

First / Second Floor
The first floor has generally a living space comprised of three rooms in succession. The distinction between the living rooms and the secondary rooms is made according to a longitudinal division which separates the house into two distinct spans in the ratio 2/3 – 1/3 - readable also in the facade. This composition is enhanced by a side vehicle passage crossing in a third span. If the stairwell and the circulations are amplified and richly decorated, the most important spaces make use of a very decorative language.

Staircase
In the middle of the coach entry, a porch leads into a hallway which houses the start of the main staircase, often decorated, leading to the upper floors. This stairway is double flight with an intermediate landing. Apart from the main staircase, there could be other service stairways, such as a dumbwaiter and sometimes even a lift.

Ground Floor
The ground floor is slightly raised from the street level and it is accessible by the coach entry, hallway, staircase with two flights in the service span, three rooms in succession in the rest of the width. Some steps provided in the hallway raise the ground floor around 60cm and so give the living and reception floor a certain intimacy in relation to the public space.

Basement
Kitchens-cellars located in the basement, semi-buried and lit naturally. These kitchens-cellars also open on the ground level to a low court on the garden side



Middle class house / Bel étage
The Brussels private mansion well reflects the life style of the upper classes of the 19th century. It encloses all the spaces required for its daily life. This is organised in three modes : reception, family spaces and services or domestic spaces. The middle-class house is characterised by three living levels, plus attics and roof with two slopes. Like the middle-class house, it is organised around two types of living rooms : the main rooms, living and reception rooms; the secondary rooms dedicated to the services, to domestic servants and to circulations

Sanitary Utilities
The sanitary utilities were located outside the living space because of hygienic reasons.

Rear Garden
In 1848 the building regulations of a low court was made mandatory. This court is lower than the garden which is generally retained by the construction of a rain water tank.

CASE STUDY

Appropriation of section

Attic

Appropriation by means of transforming the function of the space. In the past the attic was used as a storage place, but currently its use changed into another living part of the house.

Wall partitions

Appropriation by means of reshaping the space according to the different requisites of the inhabitants. Partitions are the most flexible type of walls, they provide privacy and separation according to one's needs. They change considerably often in comparison with other types of walls.

Amenities

Appropriation by means of personalization of space. Amenities usually evolve into a lifestyle and make the space comfortable. The example of amenities could be tv, internet, washing machine, dish-washer, microwave, elevator, garage, etc.

First / Second Floor

Appropriation by means of making the space habitable for more than one family. Each floor is generally divided into diverse apartment so as to answer the needs of more people. The organization of each apartments show one's personal needs and taste.

Necessities

Appropriation by means of making the space habitable. Necessities are items that help to fulfill one's basic needs. The quality of items could be seen as an indicator of wellfair. The disposition of furniture is a form of self-expression but it is strongly connected with the predetermined arrangement of the spaces. Necessities make the space functional. The example of necessities could be bed, toilet, basic kitchen furniture, etc.

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The choice of decorative accessories is a form of self expression and it is influenced by one's taste. Usually, objects are more than material possessions because of the emotional bond they create. They not necessarily showing the wealth or status, but rather create the space more pleasant for the people who inhabit the space. Accessories make the space attractive. The example of accessories could be plants, paintings, candles, decorative pillows, etc.

Shop

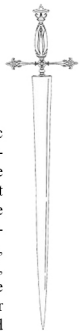
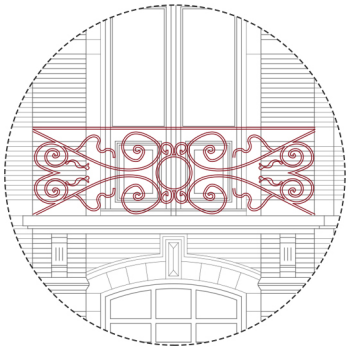
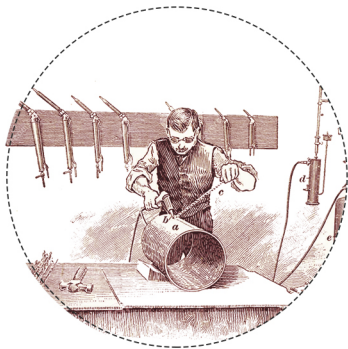
Appropriation by means of transforming the function of the space. In the past the basement was used as a servant space for the house with kitchen. Currently, this area could be used as other uses, such as a shop.

Mechanical Room

Appropriation by means of functional needs. A mechanical room or a boiler room is a room or space in a building dedicated to the mechanical equipment and its associated electrical equipment, as opposed to rooms intended for human occupancy or storage.



CASE STUDY
Potentials of spoliating



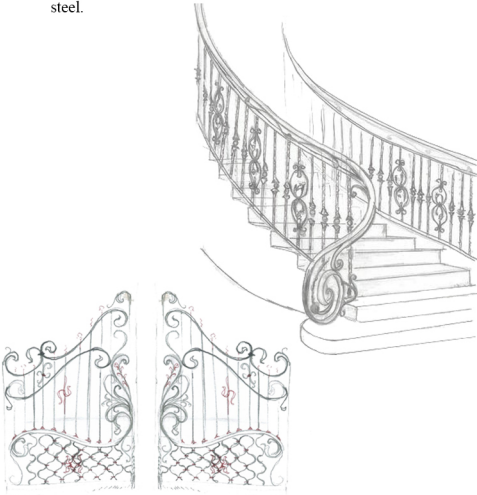
Wrought Iron in History

In its simplest definition ‘wrought iron’ is a specific type of iron, and the traditional material of the blacksmith, the clue is in the word ‘wrought’, which is the medieval past tense of the verb ‘to work’. Wrought iron literally means ‘worked iron’, which refers to the method of manufacturing the metal by working repeatedly under the hammer. Wrought iron is softer to forge, as it is workable at a higher heat than mild steel, making it more ‘malleable’ under the hammer. Before the Middle Ages, wrought iron was used primarily for weapons and tools, however, the medieval period brought with it a multitude of uses for wrought iron. It began to be used to cover doors and windows of buildings to protect against the attacks of raiders. But more prominently, wrought ironwork began to appear for decorative purposes. The popularity and use of the raw material wrought iron diminished with the growing availability of mild steel. Mild steel, which also has low carbon content, contains many of the properties of wrought iron. Because mild steel is cheaper and easier to mass produce, the raw material wrought iron gradually disappeared, until the last ironworks ceased production in the 1970’s.



Wrought Iron

Wrought Iron was widely used for decorative elements because of its ductile and resistance properties. An example of the use of wrought iron could be found in the Art Nouveau expression with flowing lines that characterized the architectural language. Today, wrought iron is no longer produced on a commercial scale, but is still made for replication, restoration and conservation of historical ironwork. Many products today described as wrought iron are actually made of mild steel. Products such as railings, gates, furniture, lighting and other ornamental work are produced of mild steel.



Wrought Iron Recycling Process

Wrought iron components can be removed easily from the site and for this reason there are different ways of reusing this material. Wrought-iron fences and their gates often have an innate beauty that can be used as decor for interiors as well as for exteriors. However, it could also undergo a recycling process. In fact, the recycling of metals enables to preserve natural resources while requiring less energy to process than the manufacture of new products using virgin raw materials. The steps required to recycle wrought iron are:

1. Collection
2. Sorting
3. Processing

To allow further processing, metals are shredded so they can be melted using comparatively less energy.

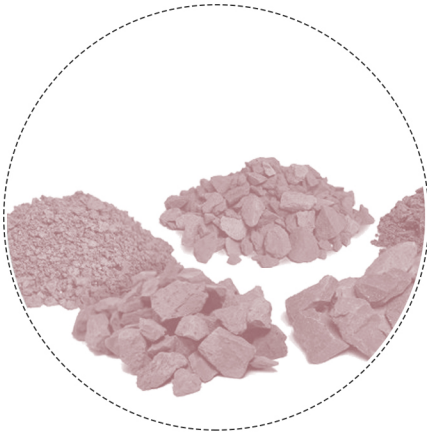
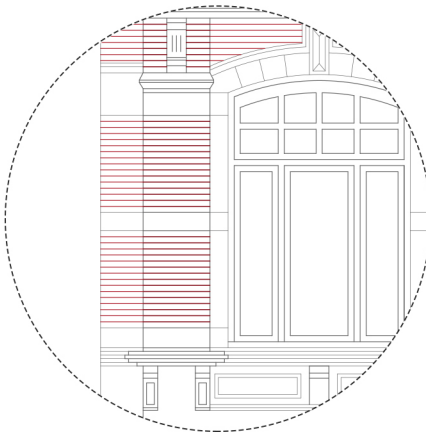
4. Melting
Scrap metal is melted in a large furnace.

5. Purification
Purification is done to ensure the final product is of high quality and free of contaminants.

6. Solidifying
Melted metals are carried by the conveyor belt to cool and solidify the metals. In this stage, they are formed into specific shapes that can be easily used for the production of various metal products.

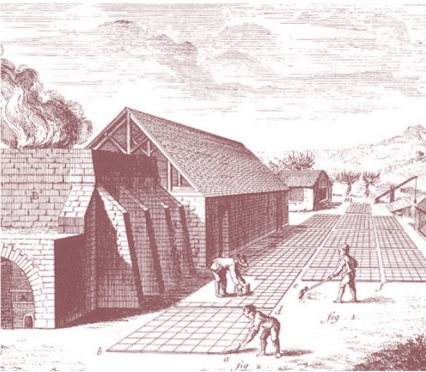
7. Transportation of the Metal Bars
Ready to use, metals are then transported to various factories where they are used as raw material for the production of brand new products.

CASE STUDY
Potentials of spoliating



Bricks in History

Man has used brick for building purpose for thousands of years. Bricks date back to 7000 BC, which makes them one of the oldest known building materials. The first bricks, made in areas with warm climates, were mud bricks dried in the sun for hardening. The greatest breakthrough came with the invention of fired brick in about 3,500 Bc. From that period until about 1885 bricks were made by hand. Once the Industrial Revolution broke out, the brickmaking machinery was introduced. Consequently, the number of clays that could be made into brick was greatly increased which influenced the production capacity. For reasons of speed and economy, bricks were increasingly preferred as building material to stone, even in areas where the stone was readily available.



Masonry Bricks

Brick masonry is a highly durable form of construction. It is built by placing bricks in mortar in a systematic manner to construct solid mass that withstand exerted loads. There are several types of bricks and number of mortars which can be used to construct brick masonry.

Types of Bricks

There are different types of brick used in the construction of brick masonry which include:

- Common Burnt Clay Bricks
- Concrete Bricks
- Sand Lime Bricks (Calcium Silicate Bricks)
- Fly ash Clay Bricks
- Engineering Bricks
- Other Brick Types (bullnose, channel, coping, cornice and hollow bricks)

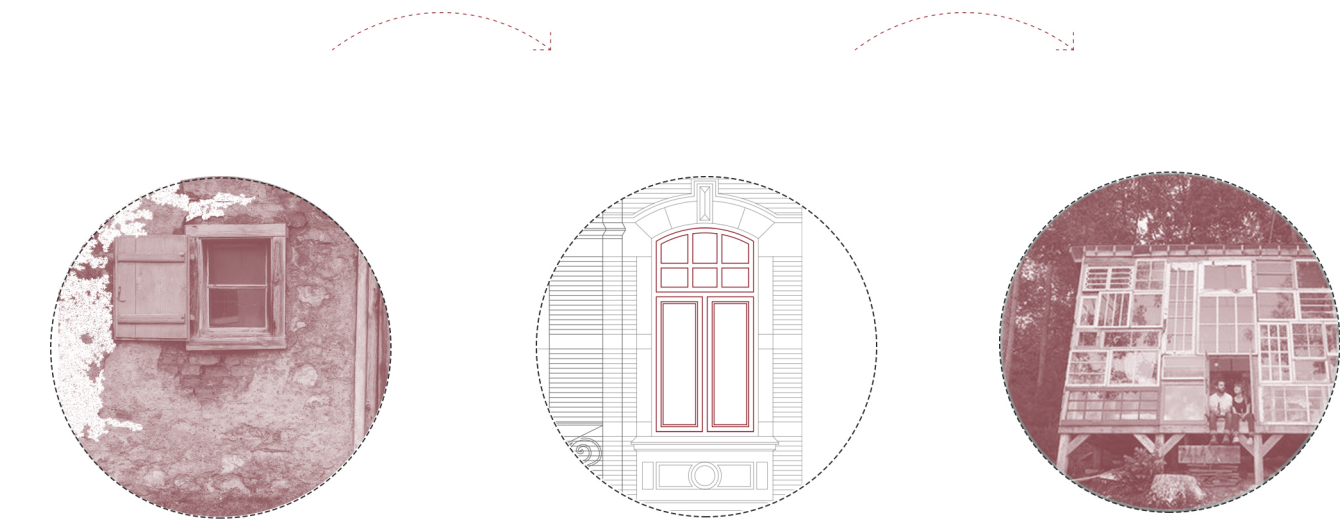


Bricks Recycling Process

Bricks are made up clay that offers several benefits which no other kind of construction materials can offer. Since brick is made of natural materials, which from the viewpoint of ecology, meet modern standards of sustainability. Since they are so common and used in large abundance, they often make up a large percentage of construction waste produced by demolition and remodeling projects. There are different ways of recycling bricks:

1. Reuse of old bricks for new building or for existing building restoration
2. Bricks can be crushed into brick chips (for use as a landscape material) and/or finer particles (for use in manufacturing road-base, track and drainage material, fill sand or new bricks).

CASE STUDY
Potentials of spoliating

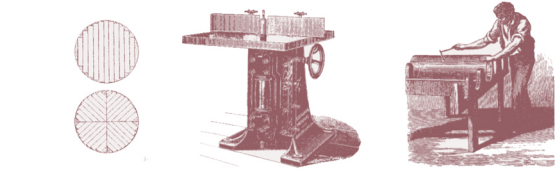


Window in History
In the first homes, windows were more than a decorative way to light the room. Originally, there was no glass, simply a crude opening designed to let fresh air in, smoke from the family's fire out, and light the space. When window framed were introduced, they were tailored only after the completion of the masonry. Later on, in the post-war period, window frames changed mainly in two respects, namely, the material of which they were made and the functional design of the sections. Before the Second World War, window frames usually were made out of wood and, in the interwar period, steel as well. The rise of the new material was accompanied by the development of new techniques to protect the frames against atmospheric and chemical agents.



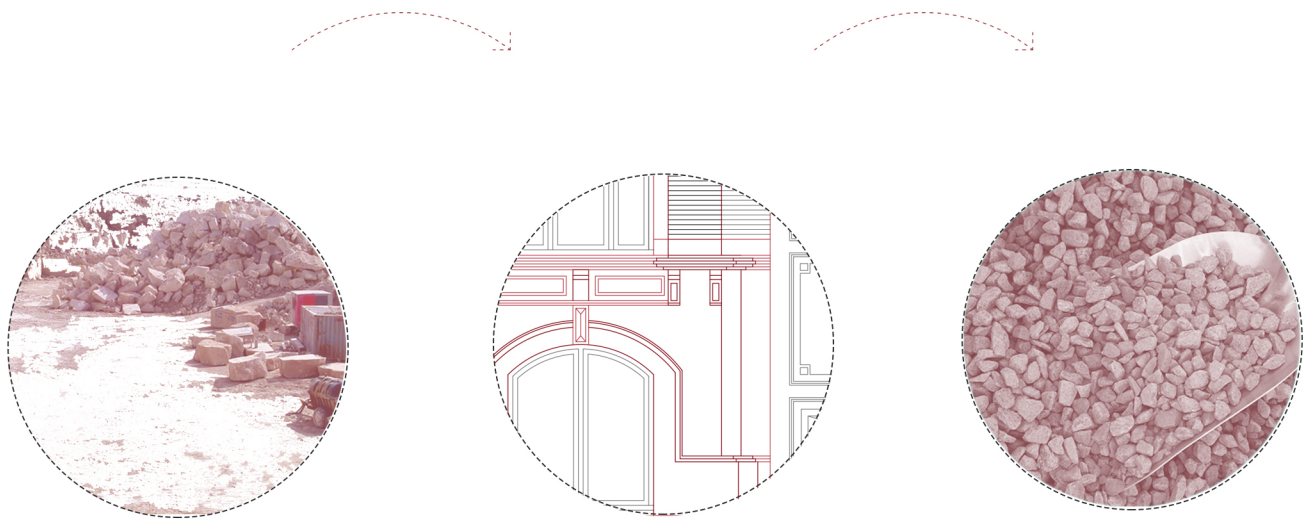
- Brussels Windows Typologies**
The window typologies in the area are very different because of the historical transformation that this architectural element has undergone during the centuries. Modern windows often mimic the historical tendencies by using modern materials such as aluminium. Some of the different typologies in the area could be:
1. The rectangular window with a double opening inward that is surmounted by a fixed transom. This example is a typical window of the Brussels house until the beginning of the XXth century
 2. Art Nouveau windows with three or four vertical divisions; the chassis accompanies the evolution of the façade towards asymmetry which distinguishes the wide span containing the living quarters of the narrow span that corresponds to the stairwell
 3. Art Deco windows with a geometric divisions and use of colored glasses, generally associated with the sash window and bow-window
 4. PVC , single or double glazing, they often distort the image of the old façades

- Windows Recycling Process**
There are different ways of recycling windows:
1. Recycle old window frames by converting them into something new and useful, such as decorative elements or furniture.
 2. Recycle old window frames by separating the different elements that could be reused in other ways. While it is easy to rethink wood, for glass may not be that simple. It can be melted and re-manufactured into fiberglass, incorporated into asphalt, and even combined into reflective yellow and white road paints. Broken glass can be combined with concrete to create terrazzo flooring and countertops. Some companies even use old glass for landscaping materials and other decorative applications.

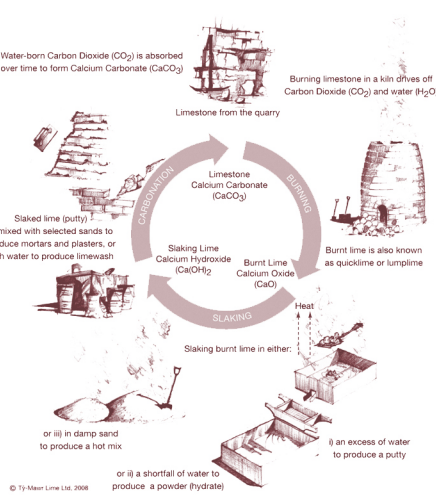


Images source
<http://patrimoine.brussels/liens/publications-numeriques/version-pdf/carnets-pratiques/le-chassis-en-bois>

CASE STUDY
Potentials of spoliating

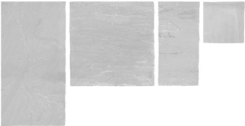


Limestone in History
Limestone is a sedimentary rock that has been utilised for thousands of years as a building material. Its availability together with its capability of easily being shaped make this material more preferred than others in the construction industry. Forming over such an extended geological timescale has resulted in different types of limestone, each with characteristic properties, ranging from chalk, ragstone and clunch, through to oolitic and liassic limestones, to dolomitic and carboniferous varieties.



Blue Limestone
Limestone is well used for construction of both strong and durable structures. Limestone blocks have high strength which is based on their property of relatively high density and the fact that they are compact as well.

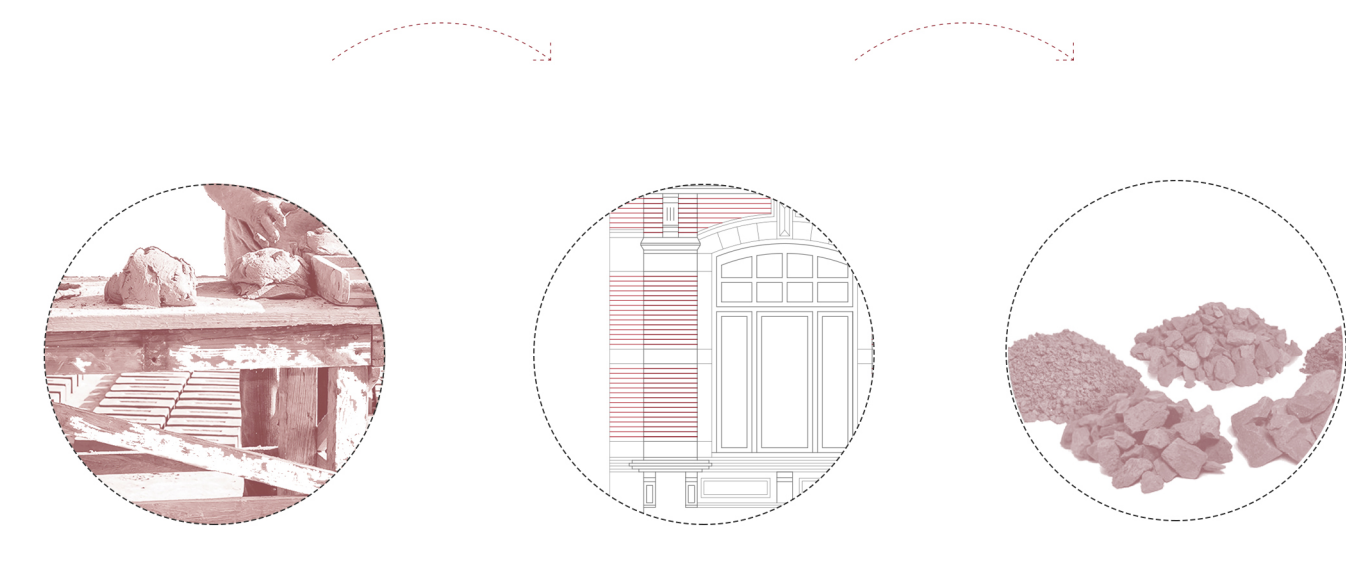
The stone characterizes many façades of the urban architecture of Brussels and other Belgian cities, and since the second half of the 19th century it has been used in various countries in Europe and overseas.



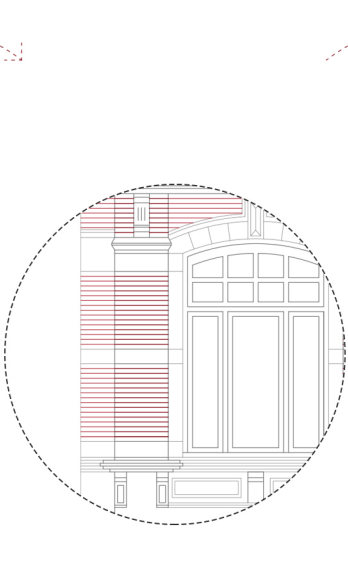
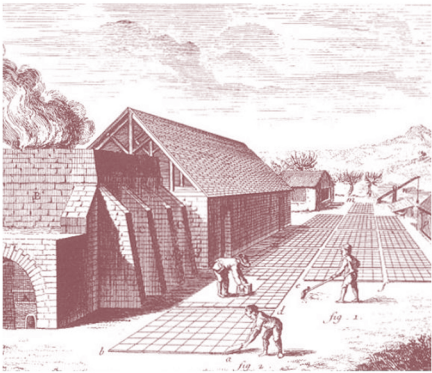
Limestone Recycling Process
A process used to reconstitute waste consisting of limestone building blocks or excavated limestone material into a suitable building/decorative material. The process requires the collection of waste limestone, building blocks or excavated waste, processing the waste by carrying out crushing and grading of the waste limestone, then further processing the waste aggregate into a suitably graded powder. The powder is then converted into a workable paste which can be moulded. The resulting reconstituted stone material is a hard, dense limestone material which can be cut, shaped and finished in a similar manner to natural limestone.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lime_\(material\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lime_(material))

CASE STUDY
Potentials of spoliating



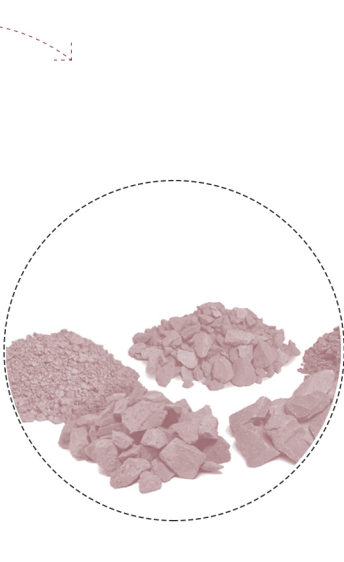
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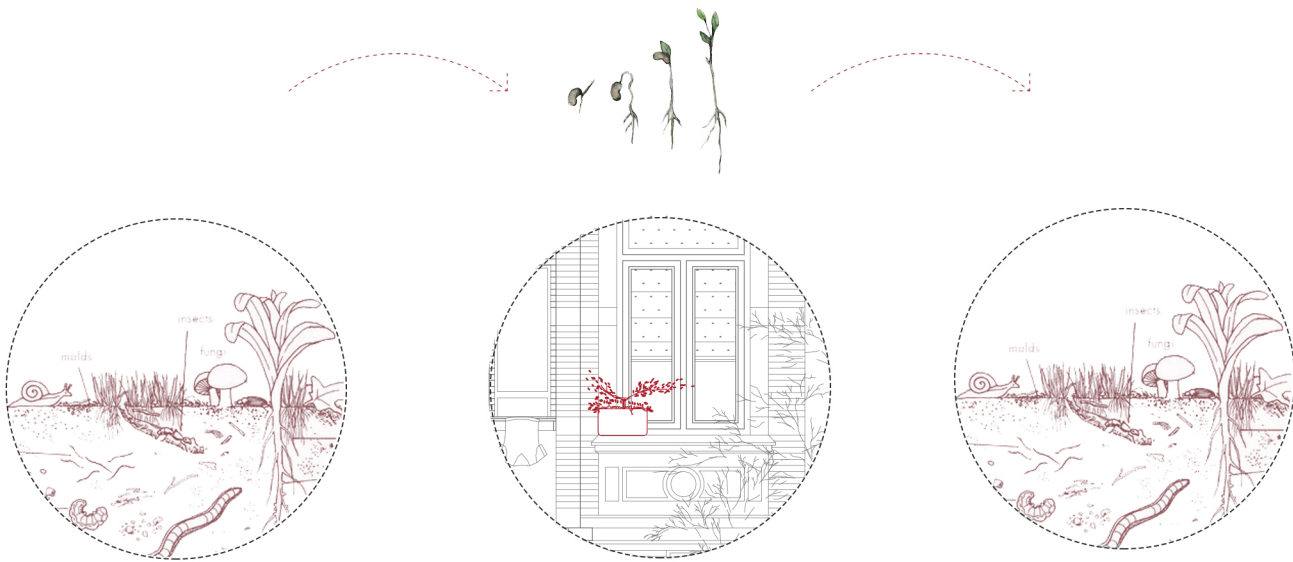
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CASE STUDY
Potentials of spoliating



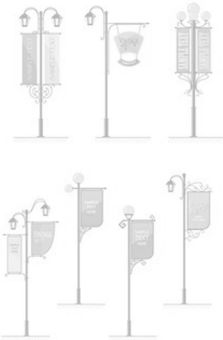
Plants
No matter how small front porches and balconies are, they can fit a few pots, whether on the floor or hanging from the rails. As a result, balconies are an extension of the interior space: an hybrid area that connects these two different realities - interior and exterior. Plants are a form of appropriation as well as a form of self-expression. They make the facade more pleasant and they create a sort of barrier between private and public.



CASE STUDY
Potentials of spoliating



Street Sign in History
Street signs can be traced back centuries to the day when the Romans were beginning to build cities and stretch their empire out far from Rome. These first street signs were very rudimentary stone structures, but they provided valuable information including direction and distance. Next came the multidirectional signs at intersections during the Medieval period. In the middle ages many towns and cities began to spring up in Europe and the paths to these centers intersected. At the intersections wooden signs would indicate which path would take you to which city. The advent of automobiles a few decades later posed a whole new set of logistics and increased need for road signs that provided warnings and improved driver safety. Italy was the first to create a complex sign system that could be used by car drivers in 1895.



Street Sign
Street sign play an integral role in providing communication and traveling safety among the street environment.

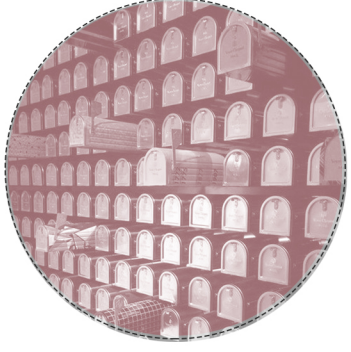
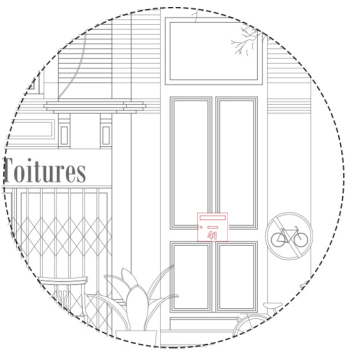


Street Sign Recycling Process
Street signs are easy to reuse because of the materials used, but mostly because they are simple to disassemble. There are different ways of recycling letter boxes:

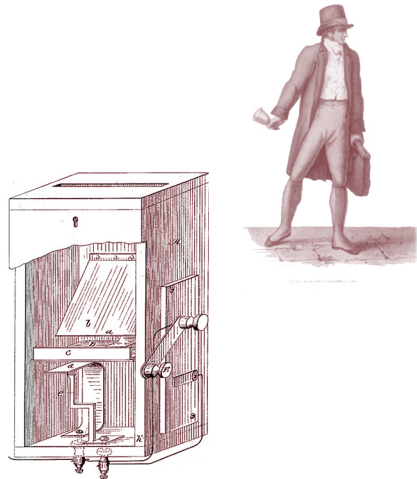
1. Reuse of street signs for interior or exterior decorations
2. Disassemblage of materials that are later reused for other purposes.



CASE STUDY
Potentials of spoliating



Before Road-Side Letter Boxes
Prior to the introduction of letter boxes there was principally two ways of posting a letter. Senders would either have to take the letter in person to a Receiving House (effectively an early Post Office) or would have to await the Bellman. The Bellman wore a uniform and walked the streets collecting letters from the public, ringing a bell to attract attention. Later, during the first pillar boxes appeared. This initial period, design, manufacture and erection of boxes was mostly the responsibility of local surveyors. In basic form all boxes were vertical 'pillars' with a small slit to receive letters.



Letter Box
Letter Boxes are a way of appropriation of one's space by personalizing the entrance of the house. Each of them is different in displaying a variety of personalities. They are an action of self-expression as well as property. However, they are a means of communication with the outside world.



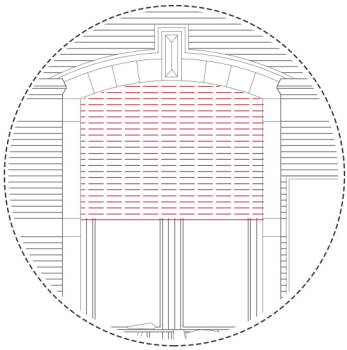
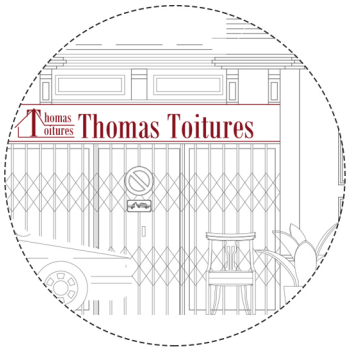
Letter Boxes Recycling Process
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CASE STUDY
Potentials of spoliating

CASE STUDY
Potentials of spoliating



Shop Sign in History

The use of commercial signage has a very ancient history. During the Medieval period, the use of signboards was generally optional for traders. Large towns, where many premises practiced the same trade, and especially, where these congregated in the same street, a simple trade sign was insufficient to distinguish one house from another. Thus, traders began to employ a variety of devices to differentiate themselves. Since the object of signboards was to attract the public, they were often of an elaborate character. Not only were the signs themselves large and sometimes of great artistic merit



Images source
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Signage#History>

Shop Sign

Shop Signs are a way of appropriation of one's space by personalizing the entrance of the shop and catching the attention of the people passing by. They are a strong economic and social means of communication. Signage is the design or use of signs and symbols to communicate a message to a specific group, usually for the purpose of marketing or a kind of advocacy. Signs are any kind of visual graphics created to display information to a particular audience. This is typically manifested in the form of wayfinding information in places such as streets or on the inside and outside buildings.



Shop Sign Recycling Process

Shop signs are easy to reuse because of the materials used, but mostly because they are simple to disassemble. There are different ways of recycling letter boxes:

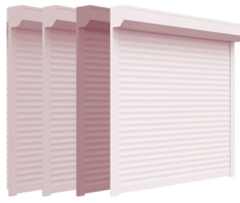
1. Reuse of shop signs for interior or exterior decorations
2. Disassemblage of materials that are later reused for other purposes.

Window Shutters in History

The first shutters came first glass windows. These were made of solid wooden boards. They were a little odd by today's standards, as they were designed to only cover the lower half of the window opening. Glass was a luxury, hard to get and relatively expensive, so usually only the upper part of the opening would have a glass pane. The shutter would be opened to let in light and air when needed. It was a simple task of folding the panel against the inside wall. They were often a feature and decorated individually. A bar would be placed across the panels when shut for security. It wasn't till the 1700s that people began to install two glass windows in the opening. With this improvement shutters grew to cover the full height of the opening.

Window Shutters

Window shutters are a way of appropriation by functional needs as well as by personalizing the facade appearance. Generally, their function is to repair the interior from light and air, but they could also have a decorative feature. The most common in the are is the roller shutter.



Window Shutter Recycling Process

Window shutters are easy to reuse because of the materials used, but mostly because they are simple to disassemble. There are different ways of recycling letter boxes:

1. Reuse of window shutters for interior or exterior decorations
2. Disassemblage of materials that are later reused for other purposes



Images source
<http://www.guidetoshutters.com.au/page/2/AHistoryofShutters.html>
<https://www.archdaily.com/641621/vegan-house-block-architects/557a54ae58eed6280001f0-vegan-house-block-architects-photo>

CONCLUSION
Influences



| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Residential | Mixed | Residential | Residential | Residential | Residential | Mixed | Residential | THOMAS TOITURES Construction industry | Mixed | Residential | Residential | Residential | Residential | Residential | Residential | Residential | Residential | Residential | Residential | Mixed | Mixed |
| Private owners | Workers Private owners | Private owners | Private owners | Private owners | Private owners | Workers Private owners | Private owners | | Workers Private owners | Private owners | Private owners | Private owners | Private owners | Private owners | Private owners | Private owners | Private owners | Private owners | Private owners | Workers Private owners | Workers Private owners Costumers |
| Residents | Costumers Workers Residents | Residents | Residents | Residents | Residents | Costumers Workers Residents | Residents | Workers Costumers | Costumers Workers Residents | Residents | Residents | Residents | Residents | Residents | Residents | Residents | Residents | Residents | Residents | Costumers Workers Residents | Residents |



| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|--|----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|---|----------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Residential | Mixed | Mixed | Residential | Industrial | Mixed | Residential | Industrial | Industrial | Industrial | Residential | Mixed | Residential |
| Private owners | DAVI Clothing Shop Since 2005 | Belgian Sanitary Company B.S.C. Since 1971 | Private owners | Sanitary Company Since 2000 | Private owners | Private owners | Artist Studio | Space for events | Rotor Since 2016 | Private owners | Workers Private owners | Private owners |
| Residents | Costumers Workers Residents | Costumers Workers Residents | Residents | Costumers Workers Residents | Residents | Residents | Artists Students | Workers Costumers | Workers Costumers Students Designers | Residents | Residents | Residents |

CONCLUSION

- The street is a bricolage in terms of the relationship between the architectural language and different modes of appropriation. At first sight, signs of appropriation seemed to be aliens in an existing context with a strong architectural tradition. However, after the analysis, the appropriation is just another layer of architectural language that coexists with the built environment.
- Every trace of appropriation is stamped with an affective mark which indicated either the attraction or rejection. This is influenced by the physical environment (architectural language and typology) as well as modes of property (ownership and usership). The dynamic changes in those dimensions affect the atmosphere of public space resulting in a low level of appropriation. Consequently, in a studied street, the highest intensity of appropriation happens behind the façade throughout which

people choose the level of distancing and self-expressing.

- Everything has the potential to be as spolia, as long as it could be recontextualized without diminishing its social, economic or historical value. The capability to be reused increases the potential of becoming a spolia.
- Identifying different ways of appropriation helped to understand the causes why people neglect some spaces. The main reason is the rapid change of typology and architectural language in relation to usership and ownership. This leads to a disconnection between the inhabitants and the space. The more people appropriate the space the tighter connections are being set.

EXISTING MODES OF APPROPRIATION

What are the different modes of appropriation in the Rue des Bassins?

- Appropriation by personalization - defining space as owned and appropriated by distribution of personal items.
- Appropriation by means of making space habitable. Reshaping the space according to the different requisites of the inhabitants.
- Appropriation by means of maintenance.
- Appropriation by means of distancing.
- Appropriation by social activities.
- Appropriation by locomotion.
- Appropriation by means of providing guidance - defining space as owned by means of regulations of transport strategy.
- Appropriation by means of burglary prevention - defining space as owned by means of marking off as possessed property and showing that it is being protected from vandalism and burglary attempts.
- Appropriation by means of indicating the location of a safety feature.
- Appropriation by means of marking off as possessed - either temporarily or long term.
- Appropriation by means of decorating and domesticating.
- Appropriation by means of utilitarian purposes.
- Appropriation by means of the need of being informed, educated and entertained.
- Appropriation by means of place-marking (defining space as owned and appropriated by the means of signs).
- Appropriation by means of expressing reachability.
- Appropriation by means of conveying rules - defining space as owned by means of regulations.
- Appropriation by means of laying waste.
- Appropriation by means of personalization of space. Defining space as owned and appropriated by distribution of personal items.
- Appropriation by means of rematerialisation.
- Appropriation by means of locomotion through the space.
- Appropriation by means of expropriating.

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SPOLIA
Chair of Urban Architecture

Gabija Rutkunaite, Michelle Ho, Sofia Montalti
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