



a space of **REFLECTION**

Unravelling colonial histories and allowing space for peaceful dialogue

FEB 2024 - APR 2025

AR3AI100
Independent Group
MSc Architecture
Delft University of Technology

A project by Nynke Stam

A Space of Reflection:

Unraveling stories and starting dialogue on Dutch colonial history

February 2024 - April 2025

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MSc Architecture

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Sabina Tanovic
& all other *friends of the project*

Cover by Nynke Stam, model: Frank Stapelbroek

For all stories that may not be forgotten.

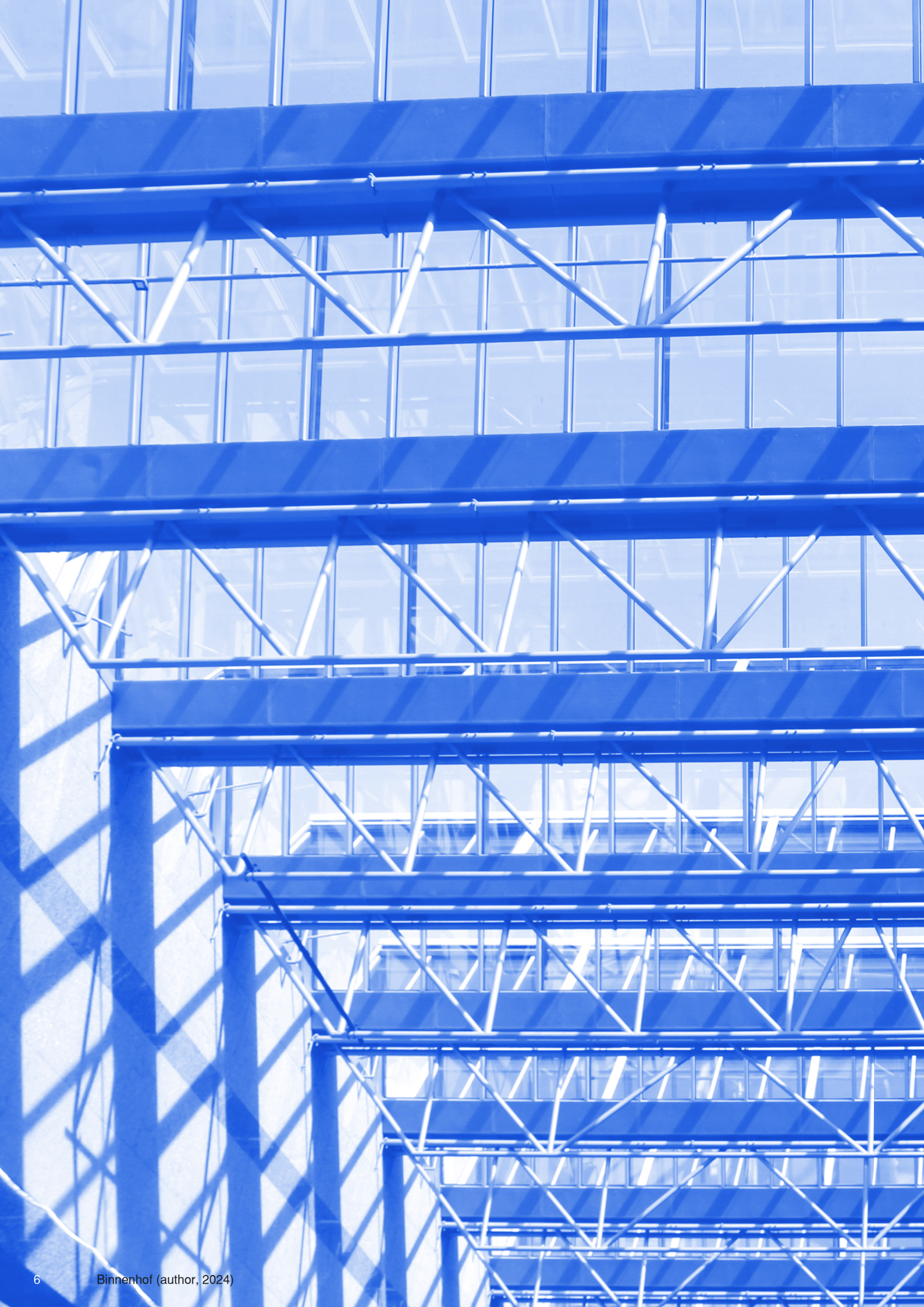


1931 - 2019

Dear Oma,

I imagine your childhood in the Dutch East Indies was rather carefree, playing in the sun underneath the palm trees. But things changed when you were ten years old and the Japanese invaded. They decided to put all Dutch-Indies people, like you, in internment camps. What was it like to live in such camps with thousands of other children and women? Being oppressed, abused, humiliated and traumatized; being frightened for your lives. And after World War II ended, you still had to remain inside camp walls, because the Indonesians declared their independence and didn't want anything to do with the Dutch anymore. Together with most Dutch-Indies and Indo-European people, you and your family took the boat to The Netherlands. How did it feel to be forced to leave the country you grew up in? What was it like to arrive on the other side of the world, your 'new home' that felt nothing like home yet? And did it hurt that your trauma was being silenced, because there was no room for stories from the Dutch East Indies over here? There are so many questions that I have, and it hurts to know you will never be able to answer them. But perhaps, through stories of people who experienced something similar, personal belongings from your childhood or the paintings that you've made, I can somehow get more grip on what you have experienced. And I feel the responsibility to ensure that stories like yours will never be forgotten.

Love, Nynke



Manifesto

History is not black and white. There is no such thing as ‘one truthful narrative’ about a past, which is why we should be critiquing the way the Dutch ‘Golden Age’ has always been represented in the Dutch public domain. The one-sided and whitewashed narratives undermine the dark side of this history and leave many stories of people from different communities to be unheard, stories that are just as valid and should not be forgotten.

The city of The Hague plays a crucial role in this complex and controversial history, because the city embodies numerous historical stories that have to do with Dutch colonial history, many of which have left its physical traces the built environment. But it is important to realize that history is not just something from the past, it has everything to do with the present and even the future. There is, still to this day, a variety of institutions that played crucial roles in our colonial history, but take very questionable responsibility for it.

It is time to realize that these centuries in our history, were more than just a ‘Golden Age’ of wealth and flourishing art. It is time to be critical on the one-sided and whitewashed narratives that are represented in the public domain, and the figures that are put on pedestals in our public space. It is time to expand the historical narrative by inviting other stories and perspectives into the conversation, especially narratives that have been unheard or swept under the carpet for too long. Then, we can finally get a more honest and complete image of this past. It would allow for people to engage with the variety of narratives and provoke dialogue.

As a woman with Dutch-Indies roots, this history is part of my cultural heritage, actually just as much as it is part of the cultural heritage of other every citizen in Dutch society. Being a designer, I see it as my responsibility to explore ways in which we can use design thinking in creating a more honest and complete image of this complex history. The aim is to complement the dominant whitewashed narrative with numerous of unheard stories from a variety of communities, and to use design as a way of provoking peaceful dialogue on the topic of Dutch colonial history. A space that enables us to reflect upon it.

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Preface

*As **space of reflection** is a project that aims to give a more honest and complete image of Dutch colonial history, by unravelling hidden narratives and giving voice to stories that have been unheard or unacknowledged, while offering space for peaceful dialogue in which the public can reflect on and position themselves in the context of Dutch colonial history. The project is located on Het Plein, right in the democratic heart of The Hague, around the corner from Binnenhof and Mauritshuis.*

Initially, the project started with the intention to design a memorial for the shared history between Indonesia and The Netherlands, but along the way this intention changed. My design question became as follows:

*How can the design of an **affirmative memorial** on Het Plein in The Hague, unravel hidden histories about the Dutch colonial past, in and by which, **peaceful dialogue** is being provoked in a socially sustainable way?*

Through research and analysis of the social-historical, theoretical and site-specific context, I came with a design response: **A space of reflection**. This booklet bundles the conducted research, analysis and final design.

Despite the fact that design and research took place parallel to each other during the entire process, this booklet is ordered in a way that first addresses historical and theoretical research, after which the site specific context of Het Plein is analysed, followed by the design response. At the end of this booklet, I will take a moment to reflect on the process and the project.

For the historical research, a timeline has been conducted to give an overview of the shared history between Indonesia and The Netherlands, which also enables to see this history in relation to the bigger picture of Dutch colonial history in general. In this first chapter is mentioned how history is not that black and white: people might have different

perceptions from the exact same historical event, giving examples of the variety of narratives that relate to the history of the Dutch East Indies.

In the second chapter I describe my research trip to Indonesia. My aims, program and findings are discussed, supported by pictures. In addition, I added conducted research on Indonesian vernacular architecture, the Toba Batak to be more specific, since I learned about this typology during my trip and it eventually inspired my design.

The next chapter forms the theoretical framework of my project, looking into the relation between the monument and society, added by research of theories on affirmative memorials and agonistic spaces. I end the chapter by diving into the current societal discussion of slavery memorials in the Dutch public space, which has to do with the separation of 'The East' and 'The West', giving the example of the Slavery Monument that is to come in The Hague in 2025.

The following chapter is a thorough analysis of The Hague and its physical traces of Dutch colonial history, after which we zoom-in to the design location: Het Plein. Historical context is given by addressing the buildings and spatial elements at the square, while also linking it to the role these elements play nowadays. More thorough analysis is done for the former Ministry of Colonies and Mauritshuis, two buildings with a very strong link to Dutch colonial history, which will play crucial roles in my design.

Eventually, I translate the conducted research and analysis into a design response. This design consists out of three major spatial interventions: a wooden pavilion on Het Plein; an underground connection from this pavilion to the *former Ministry of Colonies* building and *Mauritshuis*; and an 'open archive' within the former Ministry of Colonies building. The overview of this design, as well as more specific elements per spatial intervention, are represented through text, diagrams and drawings.

The booklet ends with *A space of my own reflection*, in which I take a moment to reflect on the project and the process I went through.

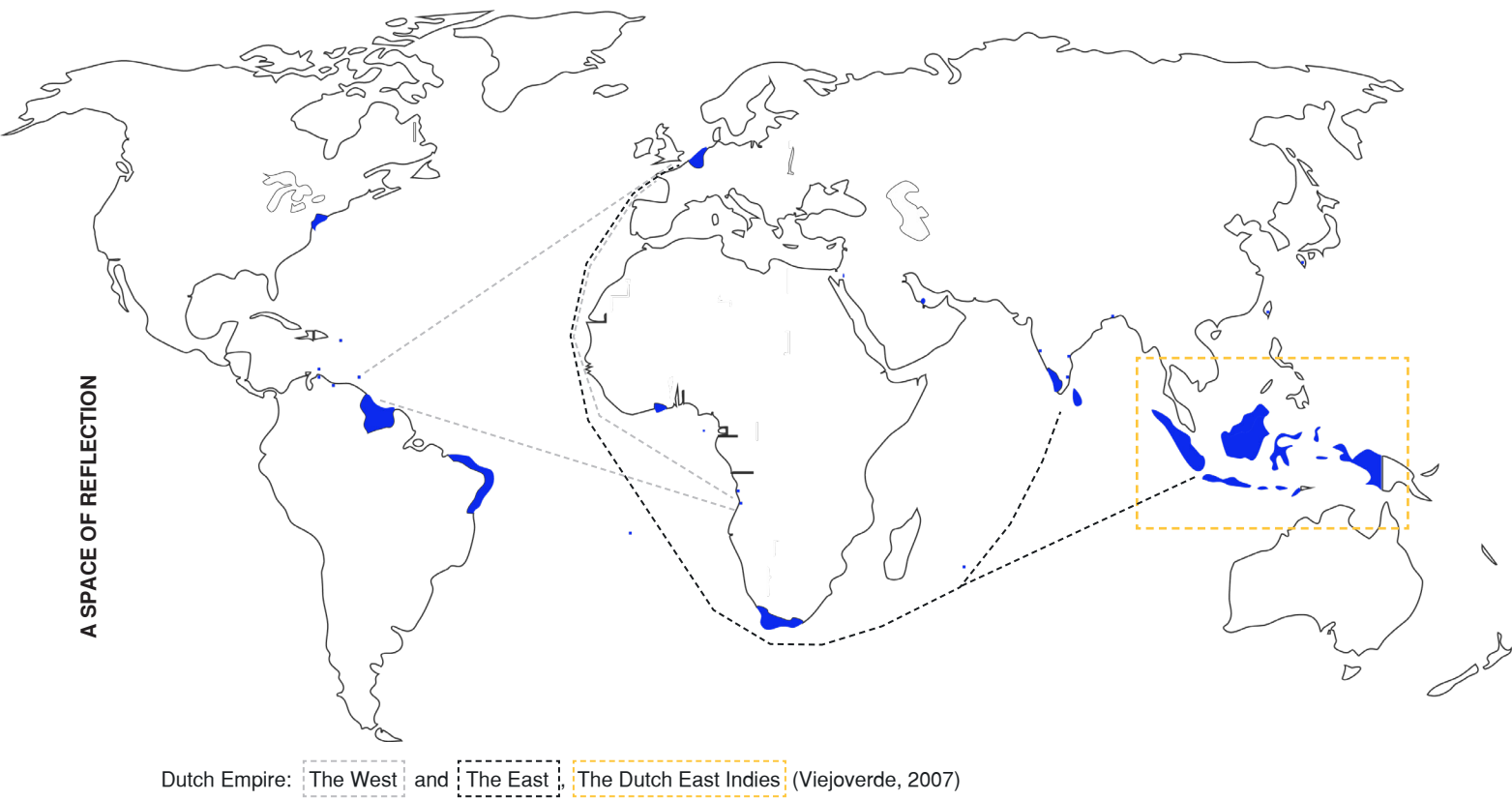
Act I.

History as a grey zone

A SPACE OF REFLECTION



A SPACE OF REFLECTION



Historical context

Colonialism is the act of settling in a foreign area and taking authority over it (Colonize Definition and Meaning | Collins English Dictionary, 2023). Colonizers tried to justify their acts by claiming to have a sense of legal and religious obligation of controlling the land and culture of Indigenous peoples, since the latter were seen as barbaric and savage nations that needed to be 'helped' (Blakemore, 2021). The Church has historically been rather involved in the encouragement as well as the participation in takeover and exploitation of lands and labour. It was already in the 15th century that popes of Catholic churches openly laid out how colonization was a necessity in saving souls and seizing lands for the growth of their religion (Blakemore, 2021).

Though The Netherlands might be a fairly small country, at one point in time we ruled over many overseas areas, as is visualized in the figure above. It was during the 15th century that European countries, such as Portugal and Spain, started to explore new trading opportunities, colonizing civilizations outside of their continent. Other European nations followed soon, starting a competition between those countries (Blakemore, 2021).

The Dutch joined this competition at the beginning of the 17th century, when founding the East Indies Company (VOC) in 1602 and West Indies Company (WIC) in 1621 (Knaap, 2015). Both, the VOC and WIC allowed wealth, knowledge and art to flourish in The Netherlands. For this very reason, we started referring to this period in history as 'the Dutch Golden Age' (Pound, 2021). And this narrative is still the predominant one in the Dutch public domain, causing this well-known pretty side of our history to disguise the darker pages, which exist of

slavery, oppression, displacing people, racism, violence, wars, and much more.

As is shown in the figure on the left page, the VOC and WIC navigated around the globe using different routes, roughly dividing the Dutch colonies into 'The East' and 'The West'. In the latter, the WIC used an approach of 'triangular trade', where the Dutch would bring weapons to Africa and trade it for gold, ivory and slaves, which were then brought to the America and the Caribbean islands. The African slaves were sold to plantation owners, in exchange for sugar, coffee and tobacco (Mr. Chadd, n.d.).

The VOC was mainly focussed on the trading of goods and spices from the southern African and Asian continent, but soon after Dutch power increased, exploitation and slavery started to occur on plantations. After bankruptcy in 1800 the Dutch state took over the colonies. The Dutch East Indies was a unique colony in 'The East', since it gained a lot of income for the Dutch Kingdom, it knows a history of conflict and bloody wars, but also because from 1900 many Dutch people decided to come here for settling down and starting a new life. During the Indonesian Independence War, which was right after World War II, many groups of people from the (former) Dutch East Indies society came to The Netherlands, causing a large number of people in our current Dutch society to have a direct link to this specific history (Docukit, n.d.).

In the following pages, I have conducted a timeline on the shared history between Indonesia and The Netherlands, mostly based on the timeline from *In Haar Voetsporen* (Nuberg & Bohang, 2020), and complemented with data from *De Oorlog van de VOC en WIC* (Knaap, 2015).

1509

Portugal and Spain find shipping routes to Malacca (Malaysia) and the Mollucas

1602

Founding of the VOC
(Dutch East Indies Company)

1511

Portugal conquers Malacca

1300-1500

Kingdom of Majapahit

The Age of Discovery

1500

1600

1596

The first Dutch trading ships arrive at Bantam, Western Java



(Rijksmuseum)

1609

The VOC gives the task of building Fort Nassau on Banda Neira, without permission of local leaders. Citizens attack the Dutch and hereby kill general Verhoeven en fourty of his soldiers.



Banda Islands (Rijksmuseum)

1740

Mass murder on the Chinese in Batavia, committed by the VOC

A period full of trading and colonial wars in the Indonesian archipelago

1621

Revenge on the murder of general Verhoeven: Jan Pieterszoon Coen commits genocide on Banda

The Dutch Golden Age

1700

1628

The Kingdom of Mataram besieges Batavia

1667

The Dutch conquer Makassar, Cornelis Speelman is the leading general

1619

The Dutch conquer Jakarta, with leading general Jan Pieterszoon Coen



Jan Pieterszoon Coen (by Jacob Waben)

1906

Seventh Bali-expedition of the KNIL, during which the monarchs and their nationals die since they would rather die than surrender to the Dutch

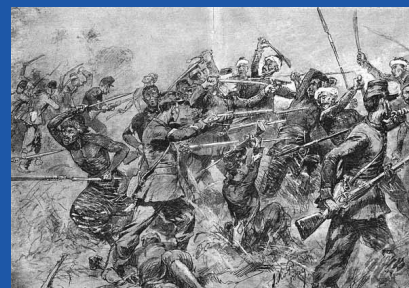
1808

Jalan Raya Pos (the Great Post road) has been completed after a year. Thousands of forced laborers died during the process

1873-1942

Aceh-war

Dutch colonial government fights against the rebellious population of Aceh



(Beeldbank NIMH)

1800

Bankruptcy of the VOC

1825-1830

Java-war

Resistance to colonial domination, leader of this war is Javanese prince Diponegoro

1800

1900

1863

Abolition of slavery by the Dutch

1836

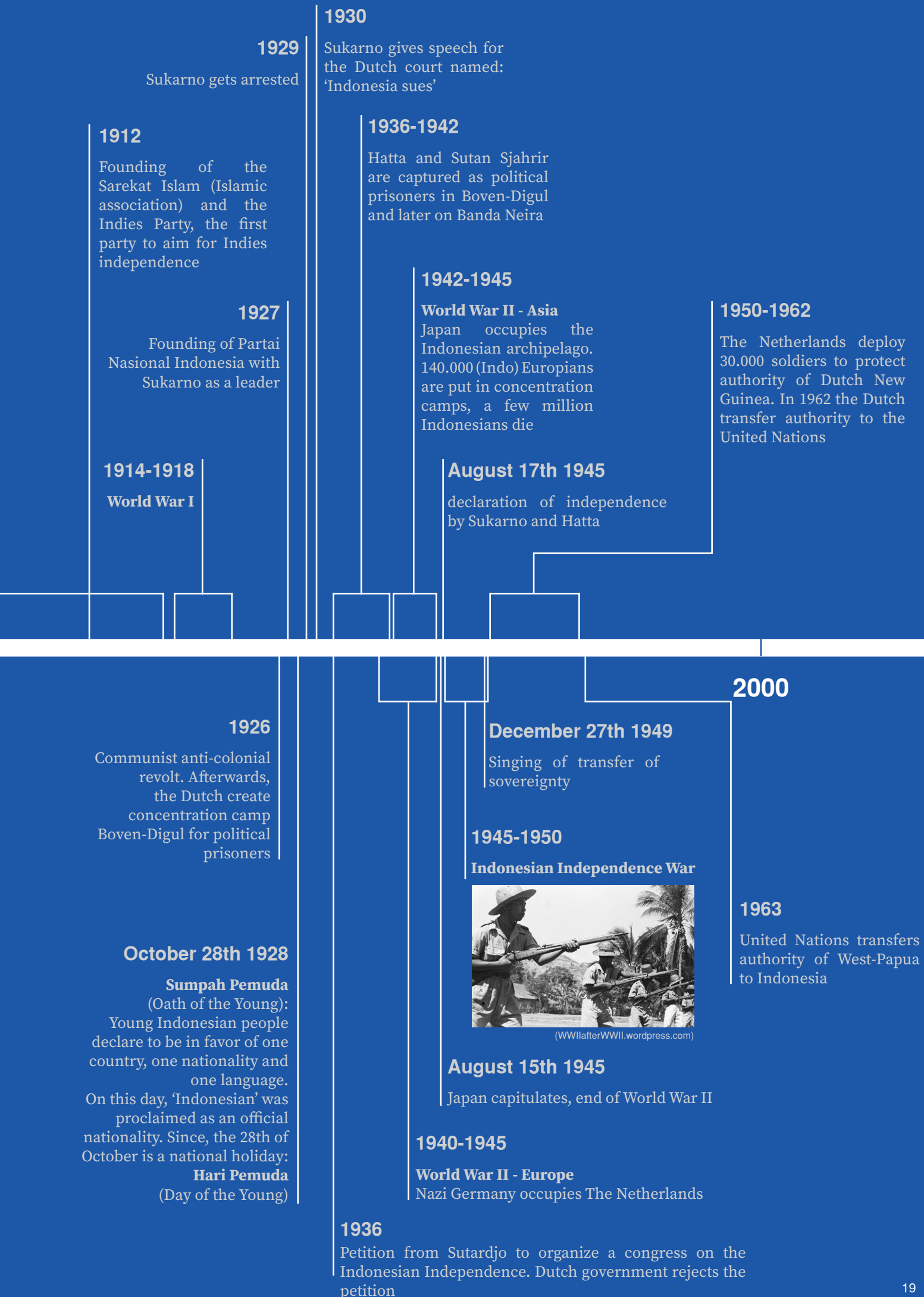
The Dutch East Indies Army receives the royal predicate and becomes the KNIL (Royal Dutch Indies Army)

1817

Pattimura gets killed because of his resistance to the Dutch authority

1814

Founding of the Dutch East Indies Army (KNIL)



A palette of perspectives

A SPACE OF REFLECTION



The *Submission* of Prince Dipo Negoro to General De Kock (Pieneman, 1830)



The *Arrest* of Pangeran Diponegoro (Saleh, 1857)

Java-War

1825 - 1830

1825 until 1830 marked the period of the *Java-War*, which started with a revolt against the Dutch East Indies government under the guidance of Javanese Prince Diponegoro. The massiveness and impact of the revolt came as a surprise to the Dutch, and so, general De Kock was sent to quell the unrest (Gosselink, 2024). It ended up being a bigger task than expected, and it eventually took a 5-year war that would cause about 200.000 Javanese and 15.000 Dutch soldiers to die. It was at the end of 1829 that the Javanese started to realize they will be defeated. The official ending was on March 28th in 1830, when Prince Diponegoro was invited to Magelang for negotiations about the ending of the war, with the promise that the Javanese prince would be granted freedom. However, the Dutch weren't completely honest and decided to arrest and banish Diponegoro right after the negotiations (Gosselink, 2024). This event is captured in the paintings on the previous pages.

Two paintings, two perspectives

The same historical events, can be perceived differently depending on the unique position and experience of a certain individual or specific groups of people. The two paintings on the previous pages give a great example of this phenomenon: both paintings capture the event on March 28th which marked the ending of the Java-War, but it is interesting how these paintings differ. The left painting, *The Submission of Prince Diponegoro*, is the original one, made by Dutch painter Nicolaas Pieneman in 1830. However, another painting of this exact moment in history was made a little 30 years afterwards. This painting, made by Indonesian painter Raden Saleh, portrays a slightly different scene of the same event.

In the first painting we can see a Dutch flag waving on the roof of a highly detailed piece of architecture, which are seen as symbols of national proud. The light in the painting puts focus on the Dutch commanders, causing to put less attention on the Javanese whose faces are hardly shown. Only their body language is used to show their emotions of feeling 'defeated by the Dutch'. The commanders are standing on a higher level compared to Prince Diponegoro, visualizing that the Dutch are in power.

In the Indonesian painting however, there is no Dutch flag or detailing in the architecture, taking away the prestigiousness that was shown in the first painting. It is clear how Saleh decided to put more focus on the Javanese people in the way he highlighted parts of the painting. An interesting detail can also be seen in the way the Dutch commanders are portrayed: with heads that are too big for their bodies, suggesting their arrogant attitude. The most empowering element of this painting would be how Prince Diponegoro looks fairly empowered with his head held high.

Oma

1931 - 2019



My grandmother (in Dutch: *oma*) was born and raised in the Dutch East Indies, since her Dutch parents couldn't find a job in The Netherlands and decided to move to 'The East'.

When my grandmother was 10-14 years old, she was captured in three different Japanese internment camps, where she experienced horrible things. After the Japanese capitulation she had to stay in these camps; now because they needed to be protected from the people outside of the walls: Indonesians who declared their independence. In 1946, she and her family came to The Netherlands. The rest of her life, she mainly stayed silent on her youth in the Dutch East Indies, because it was inevitably linked to traumatic experiences. My grandmother past away a few years ago, which left us with many questions about her childhood in the Dutch East Indies. Questions that will never be answered...

Narratives

In the documentary the *Als ik mijn ogen sluit*, a number of elderly women told about their childhood in the Dutch East Indies, which was similar to the one of my own grandmother. They also mention their experiences in the Japanese internment camps, which were horrible and traumatizing to say the least (van Huystee, 2024).

But as the earlier mentioned comparison of the two paintings clearly showed that history, a seemingly objective matter, is way more nuanced than we might have thought. History has to do with perceptions and narratives, causing the same historical events or time periods, to be viewed differently and therefor creating a notion of multiple 'truths'. This also goes for the shared history between Indonesia and The Netherlands, meaning that there are way more narratives than just the ones from Dutch-Indies people like my grandmother. There are over two million people in Dutch society who have a direct link to the shared history of Indonesia and The Netherlands, many of which come from all these different communities (Stichting Nationale Herdenking 15 augustus 1945, n.d.). I tried to speak to a variety of these communities in order to get a better understanding of this palette of narratives. This would then give me the opportunity to place these stories in relation to each other, allowing me to gain a more complete image of this specific past and the traces it is still showing nowadays.

There are many *Indo-Europeans* (people who have mixed Indonesian and European blood) present in Dutch society. After talking to people from this community, I noticed the Indies culture is still actively being brought to live. Food is a popular way to do that, and also the annual *Tong Tong Fair* in The Hague is a good example in which that clearly shows.

But it wasn't all a pretty story for the Indo-Europeans. Despite the fact that they were perceived pretty high up in the social hierarchy back in the Dutch East Indies (Radstake, 2023), it was very difficult for them when they came to The Netherlands after the Indonesian Independence. They expected to be welcomed as Dutch people, but nonetheless, society in The Netherlands wouldn't really accept these 'coloured' people as Dutch. Above that, their entire identity was based on a culture and a country, that was now non-existent. It is important to understand how such complex histories can have multiple types and layers of victimhood (van der Aa et al., n.d.).

I also spoke to Etljo Ockeloën, someone who is a descendant of an *Indo-African* soldier in the Royal Dutch Army (KNIL). Apparently, in 1836 the Dutch made an agreement with the king of the Ashanti to bring a number of African recruits for the Royal Army in the Dutch East Indies. They were called the ‘Black Dutchmen’ and their stories have, until today, been massively underexposed (Kessel, 2005). But these African people haven’t been the only non-Dutch soldiers who fought for the KNIL.

In the documentary *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* (van Citters, 2023), I learned why there are so many Moluccans in Dutch society. In this documentary Daan van Citters and Joenoes Polnaija go to Indonesia to find out more about their personal link to the Dutch East Indies history through the experiences of their grandfathers. Joenoes has Moluccan roots and told about how his grandfather was forced by the Dutch to fight in the Royal Dutch Army against the Indonesian Independence. But the story doesn’t end there. When the Dutch had to give up on their colony, they brought the Moluccan soldiers to The Netherlands as a reward, ‘just temporarily’. They could pick one family member to bring with them, the others they would see back when then returned to the Moluccans. But they never got to return. The Dutch have placed these Moluccan communities outside of our society, for example in barracks of former World War II internment camps. They were not allowed to work, making it impossible for them to integrate into Dutch society (van Citters, 2023).

Another community with a complex narrative is the group of Dutch soldiers from who fought in the KNIL. In the same documentary that I just mentioned, Daan van Citters learns more about his grandfather who was a Dutch commander in the Royal Dutch Army, and the horribly violent ‘police actions’ that he was in charge of during the Independence War. The Dutch government back in the day, decided to use propaganda in order to make this war seem less

bad and bloody than it actually was. In the documentary *Selling a Colonial War* (Radstake, 2023) is mentioned how Dutch boys were brought to the Dutch East Indies under false pretences. Also, there weren't that many other options for 18-year old Dutch men but to serve for the army. It was the bloodiest war in Dutch history and horrible things have happened, yet the memories and perceptions on it very much differ within this community. You had ex-soldiers who 'exposed' the committed war crimes by the Dutch soldiers (Radstake, 2023), or men who have been traumatised for life by this war. But there are also many ex-soldiers who have been proud of serving the army until their last days (Het Leven van Toen, 2017).

And there are so many more communities involved in this history, from native people in the archipelago to the Asian community, and from Arabs to Non-Dutch Europeans. These are groups of people that all have their own narrative, most often one that hasn't been properly acknowledged. It is, however, impossible for me to capture all these narratives. But what I did realize when researching this palette of narratives, was that speaking to people in Dutch society only, wasn't sufficient to get a more complete image of this past. The stories of people related to this history, who didn't end up in The Netherlands, are also valid and relevant for a better understanding of this historical tale. With my Dutch nationality and growing up in The Netherlands, I am aware that I got taught a rather one-sided and whitewashed story on this history. This unwanted 'Dutch bias' is something I need to take into account when positioning myself as a designer in this graduation project, especially since I want to look beyond the narrative that was familiar to me, and dive into the variety of stories and perspectives that haven't been properly acknowledged. This is why I decided to visit to Indonesia, and dive into the historical narratives I can find over there, as well as researching the traces this history has left onto current Indonesian society.



(van Huystee, 2024)

Als ik mijn ogen sluit

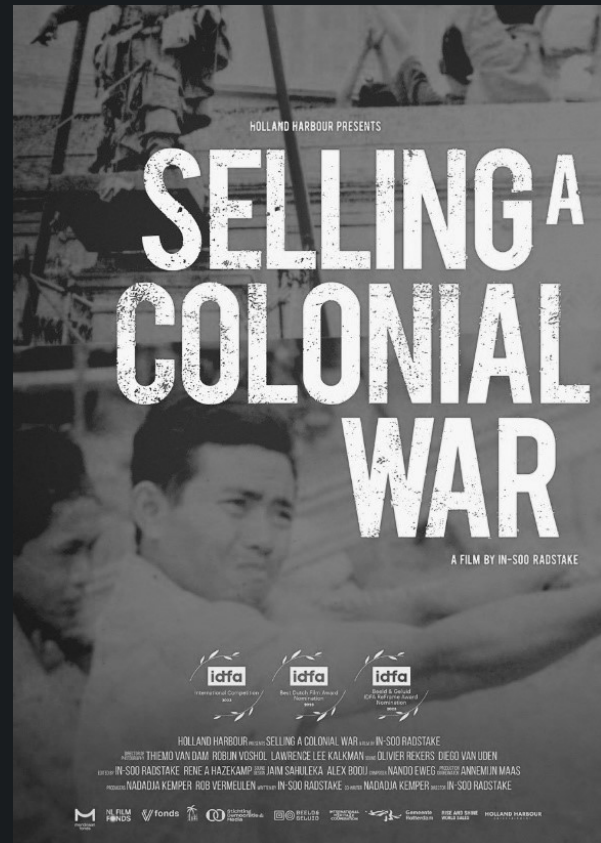
In this documentary thirteen women are interviewed who grew up in the Dutch East Indies and were captured in Japanese internment camps during World War II, when they were only a child. The scars that were left, are still present in the lives of these women. In the documentary their personal experiences are supported with drawings that were made by women and children in the camps, enabling the viewer to actually imagine what life in these camps was like.



(van Citters, 2023)

Kleinkinderen van de Oost

In this documentary, Joenoes Polnaija and Daan Citters, two actors from the movie 'De Oost' return to Indonesia. Daan's grandfather was a commander in the KNIL, but also Joenoes's grandfather (who was Moluccan) fought in the KNIL army. They recognized each other's intergenerational traumas. It was an emotional and confronting journey, where friendship and trust are key.



(Radstake, 2023)

Selling a Colonial War

"During wars, the truth is the first thing to die."

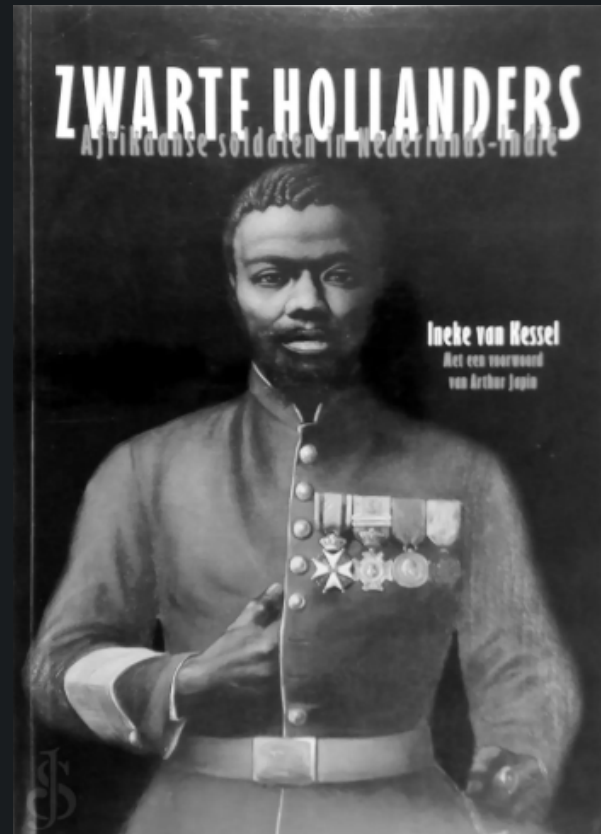
In this documentary is shown how deception, censorship and propaganda were used to 'sell' the Indonesian Independence War to Dutch society, keeping up with the idea of a 'justified' war using terms as 'police actions'. This documentary manages to show this war and its history, in the political and international context. In the documentary a number of experts, differing in background and expertise, are speaking up, enabling to get grip on the variety of narratives involved in this complex part of our shared history.



(Nuberg & Bohang, 2020)

In Haar Voetsporen

This book is the Dutch translation of *The Journey of Belonging*. In this book Lara Nuberg (Indo-Dutch writer and historian) and Lala Bohang (Indonesian writer and visual artist) explore what binds them together and whether their lives are somehow connected by 350 years of Dutch presence in the Indonesian archipelago. They connect time and space through a collection of stories, letters, photos, drawings and questions.



(Kessel, 2005)

Zwarte Hollanders

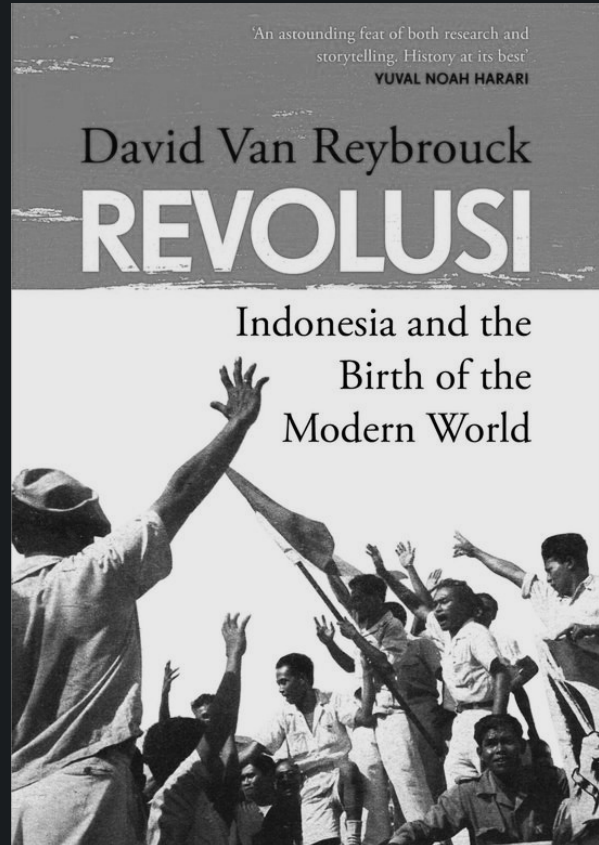
In this book the narrative of the Indo-African community comes to light: in the 19th century the Dutch took thousands of African men to the Dutch East Indies and trained them as soldiers for KNIL (the Royal Dutch Army). These 'Belanda Hitam' (= black Dutchmen) started families with Indonesian women, and so the Indo-African community was born. Descendants from this community are currently mainly found in The Netherlands, Indonesia and Ghana. The book serves as a group portrait, based on retrieved archival research and conversations with descendants.



(Oostindie et al., 2022)

Over de Grens

A book about the Indonesian Independence War in 1945-1949. Written by multiple researchers, addressing the different events that occurred, the 'strategy' behind them and the influence it had on the Indonesian people as well as the Dutch. In this book different perspectives are highlighted and history is being told by multiple researchers with each their own expertise and viewpoints. On a critical note however, this research was conducted in the name of the Dutch government so while reading it is important to be aware of the interests and intentions of this book.



(Van Reybrouck, 2020)

Revolusi

David Van Reybrouck interviewed around 200 people who experienced the period of the Indonesian Independence War themselves, from different background and with different perspectives. All these narratives and memories were combined into a story about the birth of a new country, with blood, pain and hope.

Act II.



ASPACE OF REFLECTION

A trip to Indonesia

A SPACE OF REFLECTION



Jl. H. Agus Salim (author, 2024)

Aims

With my design I want to give room to the variety of perspectives and different groups of people that were involved in the shared history between Indonesia and The Netherlands, and present to society a complete image of the complex shared past of Indonesia and The Netherlands. I want for the design to connect these different groups of people and give space for understanding one another, within their context and experience. I aim for my design to provoke a peaceful and socially sustainable dialogue in society.

With my Dutch nationality and growing up in The Netherlands, I am aware that I got taught a rather one-sided and whitewashed story on this history. This unwanted 'Dutch bias' was something I would need to take into account when positioning myself as a designer in this graduation project, especially since I wanted to look beyond the narrative that was familiar to me, and dive into the variety of stories and perspectives that haven't been heard and properly acknowledged. Some of these narratives were impossible to find in The Netherlands, and so, I decided it would be of great value for me to go research these 'missing' narratives in Indonesia.

The narratives are to be found in personal stories, but also in general societal perception of this history and the traces that this history has

left on the built environment. The Dutch have left many colonial heritage buildings and public spaces. Understanding how Indonesians perceive these buildings and spaces, and how they make use of them, would give me interesting insights in the Indonesian narrative. Also, many national monuments and statues were constructed right after the Indonesian Independence. These objects and spaces would tell a lot about the general public narrative that is being told to Indonesian society.

I decided to visit five big cities on the island of Java, since these cities used to form the heart of the Dutch East Indies colony, at least through the eyes of the Dutch Kingdom. I am aware of the limitations of this trip, since Indonesia is way bigger than 'just' the island of Java. Even on Java itself, there must be differences between bigger cities and smaller villages. I am aware that my attempt to get a better understanding of Indonesian narratives, doesn't automatically provide me with a complete palette of narratives. However, I do think the insights of this trip, are of great value for my graduation project.

In addition, I would like to address that there is also a more personal touch to this trip: my grandmother was born and raised in the Dutch East Indies. By visiting Indonesia, I was hoping to find part of my roots and family history.



Program

Jakarta

26 April - 1 May & 13 May - 14 May

Visited:

Kota Tua (Old Town)
 Central Jakarta (Monumen Nasional, other monuments, Menteng)
 Pusat Dokumentasi Arsitektur Indonesia
 Universitas Indonesia
 My grandmother's former house
 Cideng (former internment camp 'Tjideng')

Spoke to:

Angeline Basuki from Museum Arsitektur Indonesia
Febriyanti Suryaningsih director at Pusat Dokumentasi Arsitektur Indonesia
Paramita Atmodiwirjo professor at the Architecture Department of Universitas Indonesia
 PhD candidates at the Architecture Department of Universitas Indonesia
Alle Azrin local Indonesian

Semarang

1 May - 4 May

Visited:

Lawang Sewu
 Tugu Muda Monument
 Kota Lama (Old Town)
 Museum Kota Lama
 UNNESS University Campus (to give a Guest Lecture)

Spoke to:

Budi Sunarko local Indonesian

Group discussion with:

<i>Dr. Ardiyan Adhi Wibowo, S.T., M.T.</i>	}	Architects
<i>Dr.rer.nat Ari Rahadini, S.T., M.T.</i>		
<i>Andi Purnomo, S.T., M.A.</i>		
<i>Dr. Nina Witasari, S.S., M.Hum.</i>	}	Historians
<i>Dr. Putri Agus Wijayati, M.Hum.</i>		
<i>Dr. Drs. Agustinus Supriyono, M.A.</i>		
<i>Dr. Lelu Dina Apristia, S.S., M.Hum.</i>		



Surabaya

4 May - 7 May

Visited:

Tugu Pahlawan Surabaya & Museum Sepuluh Nopember Surabaya
Museum Pendidikan Surabaya (Museum of Education)
Old Town Surabaya
Central Surabaya
Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember (ITS) University Campus
'Handels Vereeniging Amesterdam Kantoor te Soerabaia' (HvA) building

Spoke to:

Anggra Ayu Rucitra lecturer at the department of Interior Architecture at ITS
Students from the department of Interior Architecture at ITS
Bambang Soemardiono professor Faculty of Architecture at ITS

Yogyakarta

7 May - 10 May

Visited:

Jogja National Museum
Museum Benteng Vredeburg (only from outside) & 1 March 1949 Monument
Taman Sari
Malioboro street
Tugu Jogja
Kota Baru

Spoke to:

Hayfaza Nayottama and two friends, local Indonesians

Bandung

10 May - 13 May

Visited:

Gedung Sate & Monumen Perjuangan Rakyat Jawa Barat
Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB)
Goa Jepang (Japanese Cave) & Goa Belanda (Dutch cave)
Jalan Braga
Gedung Merdeka
Asian African Conference Museum & Asia Africa Monument

Spoke to:

Arham Mauriyat local Indonesian
Bambang Setia Budi Architecture lecturer at ITB
Yasmin Azizah former student Architectural History

Findings

A SPACE OF REFLECTION



Kota Lama, Semarang (author, 2024)



Jakarta History Museum, Jarkata (author, 2024)



Kota Tua, Jarkata (author, 2024)



Hotel Majapahit, Surabaya (author, 2024)



Kota Lama, Semarang (author, 2024)



Surabaya Youth Center (author, 2024)



Kota Lama, Semarang (author, 2024)



Kota Tua, Jakarta (author, 2024)



Museum of Education, Surabaya (author, 2024)

During my trip I noticed how most Indonesian people I met, don't seem to feel much sentiment towards the shared history between Indonesia and The Netherlands. Colonial heritage that the Dutch left behind, in the form of buildings, squares and infrastructure, are mostly seen as positive things. The buildings are perceived to be beautiful and of a high technical quality, and the same goes for infrastructure. There have been periods in the Indonesian history when very little attention was paid to the preservation of these heritage objects, but over the last decades a movement can be seen where colonial buildings are being restored and renovated. However, the degree to which this happens, differs per city.

The lack of sentiment also explains how it is possible that this colonial era sometimes even gets romanticized in the 'Old Towns' or in cafes, mainly to attract tourists.

Besides visiting colonial heritage buildings, I was also interested in understanding the monuments and statues in the public space, many of which referred to the period right after the independence. I was amazed by the enormous scale of most of these places, as if the heroic message of survival and independence was superimposed on the spectator. A strong message that the heroic narrative of these monuments entail, which is also a familiar sentiment for many Indonesian communities, is the phrase of 'Unity in Diversity'. Indonesia is an incredibly diverse country, with multiple official religions and numerous ethnical communities spread over thousands of islands. But it was those differing communities uniting, which resulted in defeating the colonizers. Where the colonizers tried to 'divide and concur', Indonesians decided to unite. This is a phrase that will stick in my head forever.

It was clear how the first president, Soekarno, had reached his goal of creating nationalist statements in the public space. But I also learned how many of these monuments are not necessarily being used to commemorate history, but rather places used for leisure, since they are located in pleasant parks with high spatial quality. And it makes sense, since I couldn't find that many alternative (green) public spaces in most of these cities.





A SPACE OF REFLECTION



Monumen Nasional, Jakarta (author, 2024)



Monumen Nasional, Jakarta (author, 2024)



Tugu Lapangan Banteng, Jakarta (author, 2024)



Monumen Panglima Besar Djendral Soedirman, Surabaya (author, 2024)



Monumen Gubernur Suryo, Surabaya (author, 2024)

A SPACE OF REFLECTION



Monumen Gubernur Suryo, Surabaya (author, 2024)



By speaking to some of the experts, as well as experiencing it myself, racism seems to be a very big problem in Indonesian society. The concept that 'all good ideas to come from Europe and other Western countries', is somehow rooted into their society. I can't help but think it must have been a result of centuries of occupation by countries who implemented this (colonial) mindset.



“I think it’s important to point out that racism is not something that always existed. Discrimination is universal, but to legalise it as a system that a certain group of people was meant to serve the other half of the world, that is something that was installed by colonialism, and at the end of colonialism that was reinforced through ‘scientific’ racist ideas. Racism was borne out of colonialism, not the other way round.”

Valika Smeulders

Rijksmuseum's Head of History
(Pound, 2021)

In addition to the research on narratives, I also found massive inspiration in the architecture I saw around me. Especially the architecture at the ITB campus really spoke to me, designed by Dutch architect Henri Maclaine Pont. Unlike most of his Dutch colleagues, Pont took the effort to thoroughly research the local architecture and communities, and in this design really showed the honesty and purity of the chosen construction materials. During my visits at Architecture departments of the different universities, I learned about Indonesian vernacular architecture, the Batak Toba typology to be more specific. When I was walking around at the ITB-campus I could see how vernacular typologies had inspired Pont to emphasize the importance and dominance of 'The Roof'. These aspects definitely inspired me for my own design project.



ITB Campus, Bandung (author, 2024)



ITB Campus, Bandung (author, 2024)

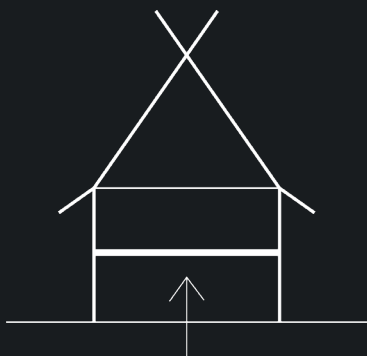
Indonesian vernacular architecture

When I visited Indonesia, I learned about vernacular architectural typologies. Although, typologies differ very much per island or area within the enormous country, there are seven common features of the Southeast Asian-type vernacular house that can be distinguished (Schefold, 2003):

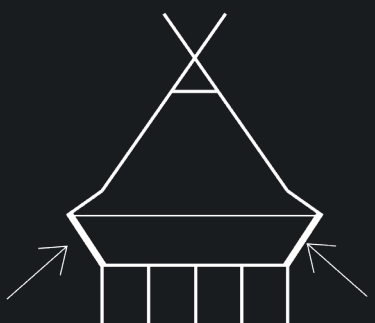
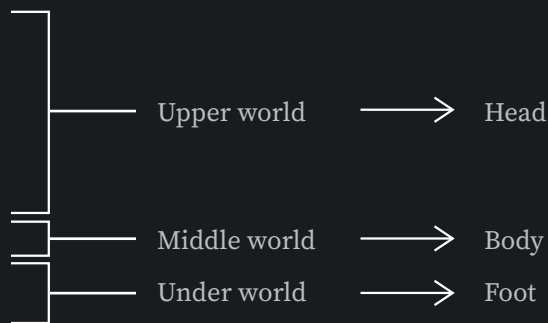
1. The tripartite house;
2. The multi-levelled floor;
3. The outward slanting gable;
4. Outward slanting walls;
5. Gable finals;
6. The saddle-backed roof;
7. Differential treatment of root and tip in the use of timber.

Some of these characteristics, which eventually inspired my design project, are visualized in the following diagrams.

A SPACE OF REFLECTION



1. The tripartite house (Schefold, 2003)



4. Outward slanting walls (Schefold, 2003)



5. Gable finals (Schefold, 2003)

One of the vernacular typologies that I got told about multiple times in Indonesia, was the Toba architecture, the *Toba Batak house* to be more specific. The housing typology has a interestingly shaped roof, which dominates the architectural language of the building, and contains a lot of symbolism.

The specific Toba typologies can be found on the island of Sumatra in the regions around lake Toba (Domenig, 2003). The housing typology ('Batak Toba house') originates from a granary typology, creating two sub-categories within the Batak Toba architecture (Domenig, 2003):

1. **Ruma** = 'house'
2. **Sopo** = 'open' building; structure that has no walls
The granaries belong to this category, most of which have no sitting floor within the structure. There are also Sopo buildings that do have a sitting floor, but still no walls to create interior space. The covered outdoor space underneath the uniquely shaped roof, served as village meeting places where people would gather (Domenig, 2003).



1. *Ruma sisampuran* from Tomok, Samosir (Domenig, 2003, Figure 3)



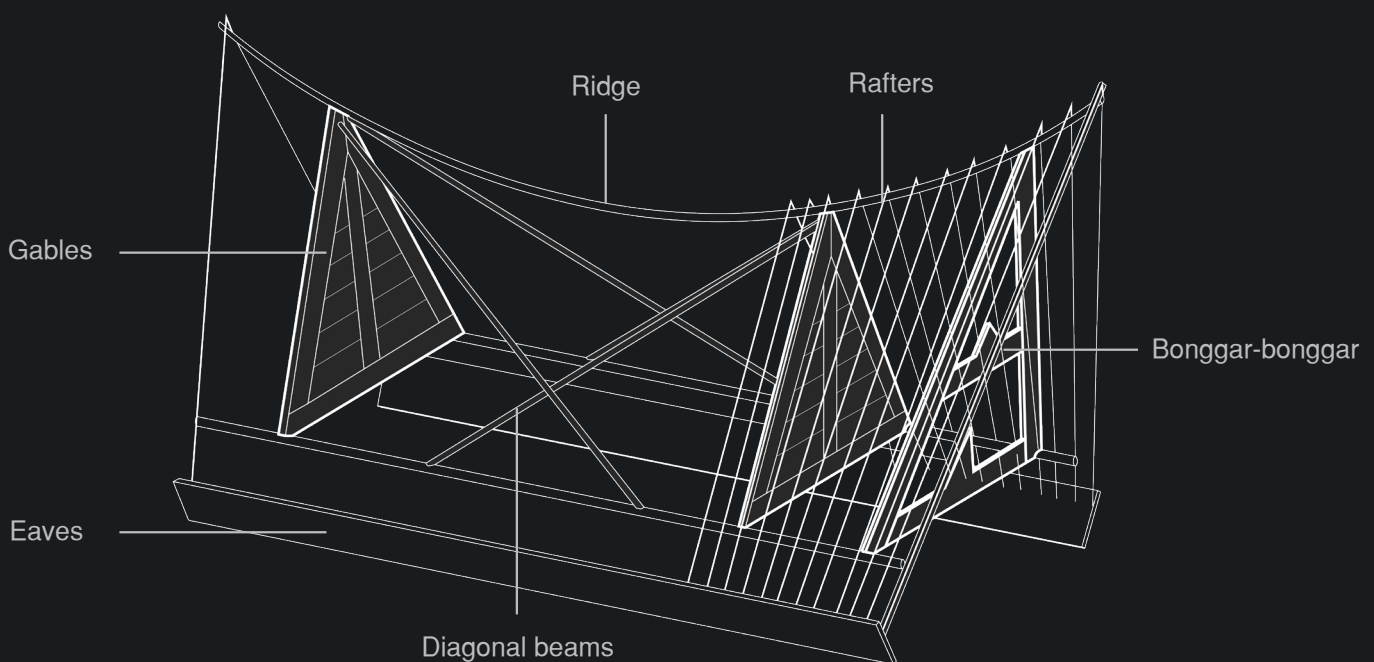
2. *Sopo granary*, Lumban Pea, Uluan (Domenig, 2003, Figure 1)

Toba Batak ruma

I decided to study the *Toba Batak ruma* typology a bit more thoroughly. I was fascinated by the shape of the roof and how it structurally worked (see diagram at the bottom of this page) and its symbolical meaning. When I look at the structure I see craftsmanship and I for detail, as if the columns and beams are braided into one another. A balance between art and honesty of the structure, which consists out of local materials.

I also notice a sequence of spaces: the so-called ‘under world’ or ‘foot’ of the building is compact and low, originally animals were kept here (Schefold, 2003). A narrow entrance allows people up into their house, climbing a ladder that is either externally placed (see image of the *Ruma sisampuran* on the previous page), or one that is hidden within the footprint of the building and demands for a piece of floor to be taken out (see physical model of *Ruma sitolumbea* on the right page) (Domenig, 2003). After this compact intimate space, you enter the house and find yourself in a relatively large and open space, covered by a high roof. The relation between this intimacy and openness is a rather interesting and powerful one.

The case study of the Toba Batak ruma, allowed insights in how the structure works and its symbolic meaning. The discussed features and values have, in one way or another, inspired and influenced my spatial design decisions of the project.



Roof structure Toba Batak (Domenig, 2003)



A SPACE OF REFLECTION



Physical model of the Toba Batak Ruma sitolumbea typology (author, 2024)

I do have to be aware that this research was not sufficient to actually draw very objective conclusions, due to the many limitations. Firstly, I only visited five big cities and no smaller villages in the country side. The narratives and perspectives on this colonial history, can be very site-specific and even differ per family. In addition, the traces (physical and mental) left on the island of Java are also somewhat different from the other Indonesian islands. Every island or region has their own relation to the Dutch colonizers and their influence. Above that, it is important to have stated I mainly talked to experts on the topic, such as historians and heritage experts, who might have different views on the topic than the average Indonesian citizen. Despite these limitations, the findings of my trip were incredibly valuable.

During my trip to Indonesia I have seen and done more than I expected, but most importantly: the insights I gained from this trip are beyond what I could have imagined beforehand. My schedule was fully packed, in terms of meetings with people as well as visiting places, buildings and monuments. The combination of 'observing' and 'talking' was incredibly valuable for the research of my project and allowed me to gain very important insights into the topic of the shared history between Indonesia and The Netherlands. I feel confident that this trip has allowed me to better position my design project within its historical context and enabled me to include the narratives related to this past, which cannot be found in The Netherlands. I also realize that the insights I gained, are of massive inspiration for further development of my project.

Act III.

Monuments, theories & society

A SPACE OF REFLECTION



A SPACE OF REFLECTION



Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin (author, 2022)



Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin (OLIN, n.d.)



Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain, London



Statue of Jan Pieterszoon Coen, Hoorn



Peerke Donders en de Geknielde Lepralijder, Tilburg

Monuments VS society

The interaction between society and a monument in our public space, is a two-way street. Firstly, the narratives represented in our public spaces have a massive influence on societal perception on certain topics. But this interaction also goes the other way around: people tend to take a certain degree of ownership over the design. In the last decades, a transition has been initiated in which we seem to go from free-standing 'statue-monuments' towards 'spatial' monuments. This spatiality caused these monuments to become actual public spaces themselves, inviting the public to use it as a space rather than a monument per se (Stevens & Franck, 2016), which is a phenomenon I also experienced at the monuments I visited in Indonesia. 'Spatial' monuments like the *Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain* in Hyde Park, London, and the *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* in Berlin, are good examples of this theory. Despite the latter memorial to be very well-known, still many people perceive the concrete slabs as elements to sit on, step on or play hide-and-seek in between. For the Diana Memorial Fountain, many people don't even know this place has memorial value. It is a very pleasant public space, where children play in the water while others have a nice picnic

next to it. The spatial quality of a memorial site is crucial for the way in which society engages with it, but it also shows how a site can serve as a public space and a memorial at the same time (Stevens & Franck, 2016).

But the societal interference is also shown in the fact that many monuments have been cladded, damaged or even taken down over the last few years. KNAW brought out a report in which they addressed a few of these controversial monuments; the statue of *Jan Pieterszoon Coen* in Hoorn and the statue of *Peerke Donders en de Geknielde Lepralijder* in Tilburg are such examples. In the report it is mentioned how, in the case of Pieterszoon Coen, the critique revolves around the person who is being represented; this former commander who did bad things, but yet, he has been put on a pedestal. Society has critique on the heroic image and incomplete narrative that such statues represent. In the case of Peerke Donders, the controversy mainly addresses the choice of form and design elements that portrayed the leper in an insulting way. And so, not only the message itself but also how it is communicated, matters to the public (KNAW, 2023).

Some memorials seem to be both ‘spatial’ and ‘controversial’, for example *Monument Indië-Nederland* in Amsterdam. This popular place for leisure used to be the former Van Heutsz Monument, honouring a man who was a controversial leading commander during the Aceh War. It is interesting to mention how socialist sculpturer Frits van Hall intentionally designed the monument in such a way, that its meaning could change overtime due to societal interference, stating that he was prepared for a change of name or meaning of the controversial monument (Stam, 2023). The fact that societal perception will change and develop overtime, forces designers to think of memorials not just as static objects in the present that refer to the past, but more so as elements that allow the existence of the past in present as well as future times (Tanović, 2015). Because memory that is being represented in a memorial, is inevitably subject to fluctuations in (re-)interpretation overtime (Buckley-Zistel & Schäfer, 2014).

In many cases, this re-interpretation arises when ‘new’ (read: other or unheard) narratives get involved and speak up. Many monuments impose just a one-sided message on their visitors, enabling us-versus-them thinking, and setting boundaries for people to either feel included or excluded. These type of memorials are categorized by Buckley-Zistel as *imposing memorials* (Buckley-Zistel, 2021).

In my project however, I aim to offer a space that doesn’t provoke black-and-white thinking by imposing a singular narrative onto the visitor, but rather a space in which there is room for nuance and multiple narratives parallel to each other, from which the visitor can draw its own conclusions. Buckley-Zistel also mentions two other types of memorials: *counter memorial* and *affirmative memorial* (Buckley-Zistel, 2021). Especially the latter is an interesting one that suits the intentions of my graduation project.



Monument Indie-Nederland (author, 2024)



Monument Indie-Nederland (author, 2024)



Monument Indie-Nederland (author, 2024)

The affirmative memorial



Kigali Memorial Center, Rwanda (Visit Rwanda, n.d.)

The *affirmative memorial* typology addresses that commemorating is an imperative act. In contrast to the earlier mentioned *imposing memorials*, the affirmative ones are often spaces where clear context is given to the historical event that is addressed. Sometimes this means that there is a plurality of perspectives being represented, allowing visitors to see the variety of stories in context to each other and in relation to the bigger picture, encouraging them to put things into perspective and position themselves.

These memorials aim to convey meaning by using symbolism and stimulation of different senses (Buckley-Zistel, 2021). The typology implements strategies that help visitors to engage with the memorial in an interactive way, instead of using a one-dimensional confrontational manner. Very often, visitors will have to explore, and therefor *experience*, the memorial site, causing them to actively become part of the performance. This allows for the spectators to become agents in the memorialisation process (Buckley-Zistel, 2021).

The feature of an 'open archive', is one that implemented often in these kinds of memorials. Sometimes, this is done by putting names of victims on the wall, other times there is room for a more personal touch, using portraits or personal items to be displayed in order to give voice to the victims of a certain historical event. These archival memorials aim to store information as well as making it accessible for the public eye (Buckley-Zistel, 2021).

A good example that embodies the above, is the *Kigali Memorial Center* in Rwanda. The Center exists of three permanent exhibitions: the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, a children's memorial and a historical exhibition on genocide worldwide, allowing for the spectator to see the specific story of the Tutsi in relation to the bigger context of genocide in general. It therefor enables to confront the ideas that lead to genocide, rather than the families of perpetrators who were responsible for it. (Kigali Genocide Memorial, n.d.).



Kigali Memorial Center, Rwanda (Visit Rwanda, n.d.)

In addition, the Center offers gardens, an education centre and the Genocide Archive of Rwanda, an open archive that displays portraits of victims. The memorial site is not just focussed on historical events that have occurred, but also aims to strengthen community resilience against division, hopefully preventing future genocide to happen. (Kigali Genocide Memorial, n.d.).

But despite the fact that this memorial typology offers context, a multiplicity of perspectives and refuses to impose a strong one-sided narrative onto the spectator, the designer does have a clear objective in mind on what the memorial should be doing, and uses the memorial to guide society into ways of remembering, often based on liberal ideology. This means that the affirmative memorial, despite its core values of pluralism, openness and freedom, inevitable also ‘imposes’ (Buckley-Zistel, 2021).

Very often, the affirmative memorial aims to stimulate debate, not only on the specific

painful and complex past itself, but also on its consequences in present and future society. This automatically expands the meaning of the memorial to go beyond remembering only, but also relates to democratic and societal context in which it is situated. The debate can take place in different forms: from lectures to films, from workshops to tours, but focus lays on creating awareness and urging visitors to take responsibility in preventing future violence (Buckley-Zistel, 2021). Most monuments will provoke discussion and critique inevitably, especially the ones that address controversial and complex topics. But it is interesting to learn about a memorial typology that actively seeks to provoke dialogue in a rather considered and socially sustainable way, instead of causing discussion by imposing one-sided narratives and promoting black-and-white thinking, which would only further increase polarization. It inspired me to think about how memorials can perhaps not only provoke this peaceful dialogue, but also offer space for the dialogue to take place.



Speakers' Corner, London (The Royal Parks, n.d.)

The agonistic space

In a world where society is massively increasing, addressing complex and controversial topics in the form of a memorial, will inevitably provoke discussion. And so, I see opportunity for my design to not only offer space for remembering difficult histories as such and representing its variety of narratives, but also a space that offers room to discuss these stories, and the debate that might occur as a result of this highly sensitive memorial. Or more in general: a space to house the peaceful public debate on the broader spectrum of complex and controversial social-political topics, where unheard voices can speak up and room will be given for dialogue in a socially sustainable way.

I will implement theories on designing *agonistic spaces*, defined by Chantal Mouffe as being a space within a democratic political environment in which the (inevitable) variety of positions and opinions are permitted space for dialogue and discussion (Mouffe, 2007). These theories however, have mainly stayed within the academic sphere, and not too many practical examples can be found yet. Although, there is one valuable existing reference: *Speakers' Corner* in London, where people are allowed to speak freely and start a public debate on any topic of their liking.

In order to establish such space in the public realm, it is important to bring the memorial closer to the people by letting it somewhat merge with the public space.

The difficulty of the agonistic space is that it has little to do with tangible design decisions, but more so with the processes that are involved in the establishment as well as the use and meaning of a space. It is therefore very important to constantly be aware of your role as an architect. To what degree do you design and to what degree do you leave it up to the public and involved communities?



Winning design Slavery Monument, The Hague. Artist: Buhlebezwe Siwani

Trans-Atlantic Slavery Monument, The Hague

Small breakthroughs have been accomplished over the last years in terms of taking responsibility for the darker side of our colonial history. Official apologies for our colonial and slavery past were given by Mark Rutte and King Willem Alexander, but also on a more local level: mayor Jan van Zanen publicly apologised for the colonial and slavery past of The Hague in 2022 (STROOM Den Haag, 2023). Even though steps are small, there now seems to be a momentum of changing social-political perception on this history, and a new memorial space should engage in this discussion. In the beginning of 2023, STROOM Den Haag wrote an advisory report to the municipality of The Hague for a slavery monument that is to come in the city. In this report they pleaded for one collective monument representing the colonial history of ‘The East’ as well as ‘The West’ (STROOM Den Haag, 2023). Vicent de Boer from STROOM however, explained to me that the municipality neglected this specific advice from the report. Instead, they proposed one monument that represents the Trans-Atlantic slavery history, so only ‘The West’. The municipality also decided to change the advised location into a site around the corner of Lange Voorhout (V. de Boer, personal communication, 4 April 2024). This monument is expected to arise in 2025.

Slavery Monuments in The Netherlands

Initially, I had planned on designing a memorial space that addresses the topic of the shared history of Indonesia and The Netherlands. But the more research I did on this past, the more I started to realize that the specific history of the Dutch East Indies, was actually strongly related to the bigger story of the Dutch colonial past. This then raised the critical question why my design should really ‘exclude’ parts of these colonial narratives that enhance the complete image of our Dutch colonial past? Perhaps, showcasing the entire palette of narratives related to the bigger context of our colonial history, results in a more honest and complete representation of this complex and painful past. Addressing the connection between these storylines could allow for a better understanding of differences and similarities in the variety of narratives, hopefully bringing the (now somewhat polarized) groups of descendants from ‘The East’ and ‘The West’, closer to each other.

But we should wonder why a collective memorial like the one I am envisioning, hasn’t been proposed so far. The Slavery Monument in The Hague is only one of the many examples in Dutch cities where ‘The East’ and ‘The West’ are represented separately, as if these are two histories that have little to do with each other. So why are we currently not designing a collective monument in which painful events from the colonial era within different communities are acknowledged? When diving into this societal debate and speaking to some of the communities of descendants, it mainly stood out that it might have to do with the current lack of acknowledgement for the individual communities and histories. Perhaps, once we properly acknowledge the painful events that happened to descendants from these specific communities for their part of this history, sometime in the future there will be room for a collective monument or memorial space.

My design will be located in The Hague, which will be further elaborated on in the upcoming chapter. Taking into consideration that a Trans-Atlantic slavery monument will arise in this city in 2025, I see potential for my project to fill the gap on creating a memorial space that has to do with the history of ‘The East’.

However, I do see a lot of value into bringing the seemingly separate histories of ‘The East’ and ‘The West’ together as soon as communities of descendants are ready for sharing their painful histories into a collective memorial. For my design it means that the memorial space will have a certain flexibility that allows future potential of adjusting the monument into a space that commemorates the entire Dutch colonial history, including stories of not only ‘The East’, but also ‘The West’.

Act IV.

The Hague

A SPACE OF REFLECTION





A SPACE OF REFLECTION



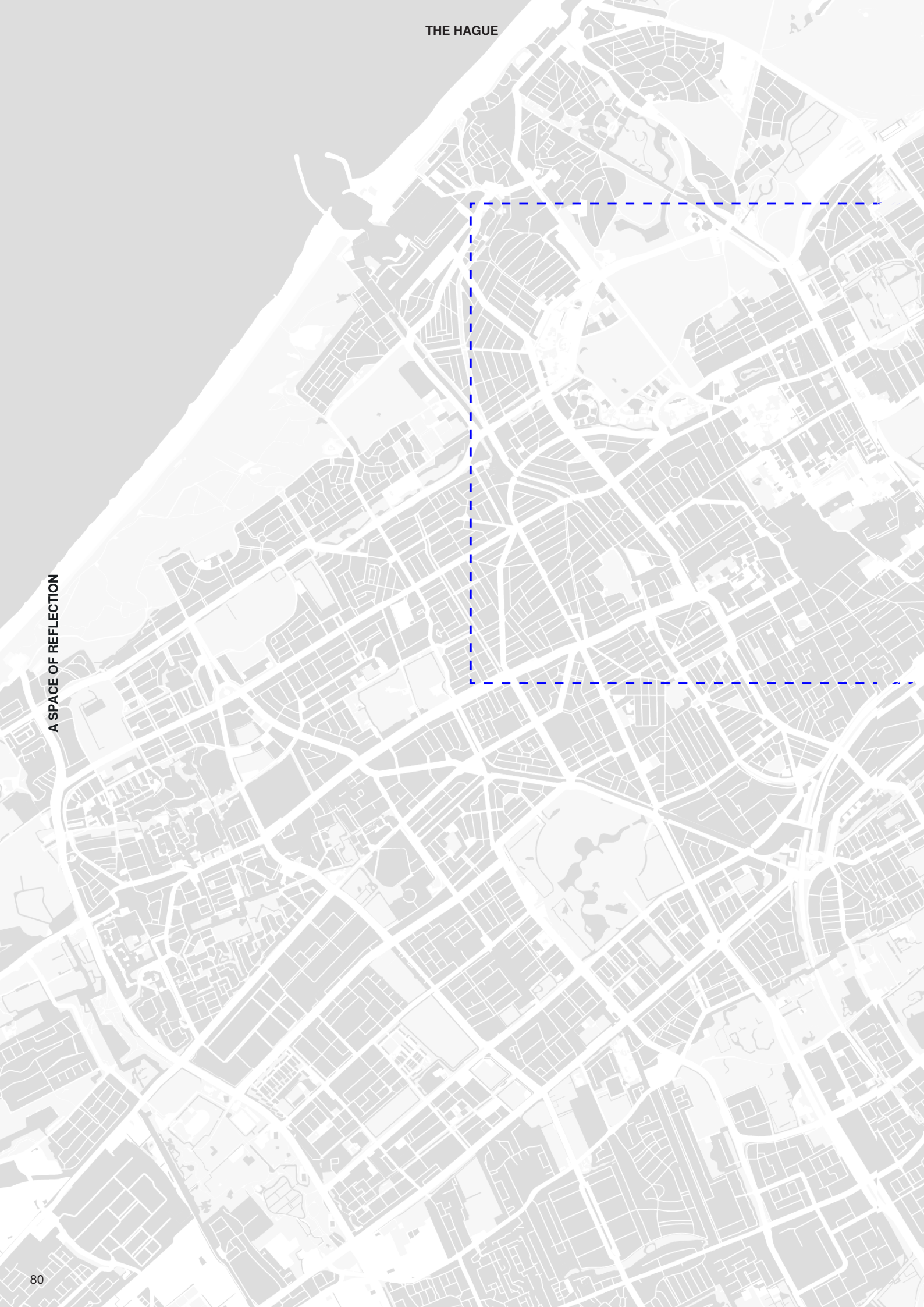
Mauritshuis from Hofvijver (author, 2024)

A City of Paradoxes

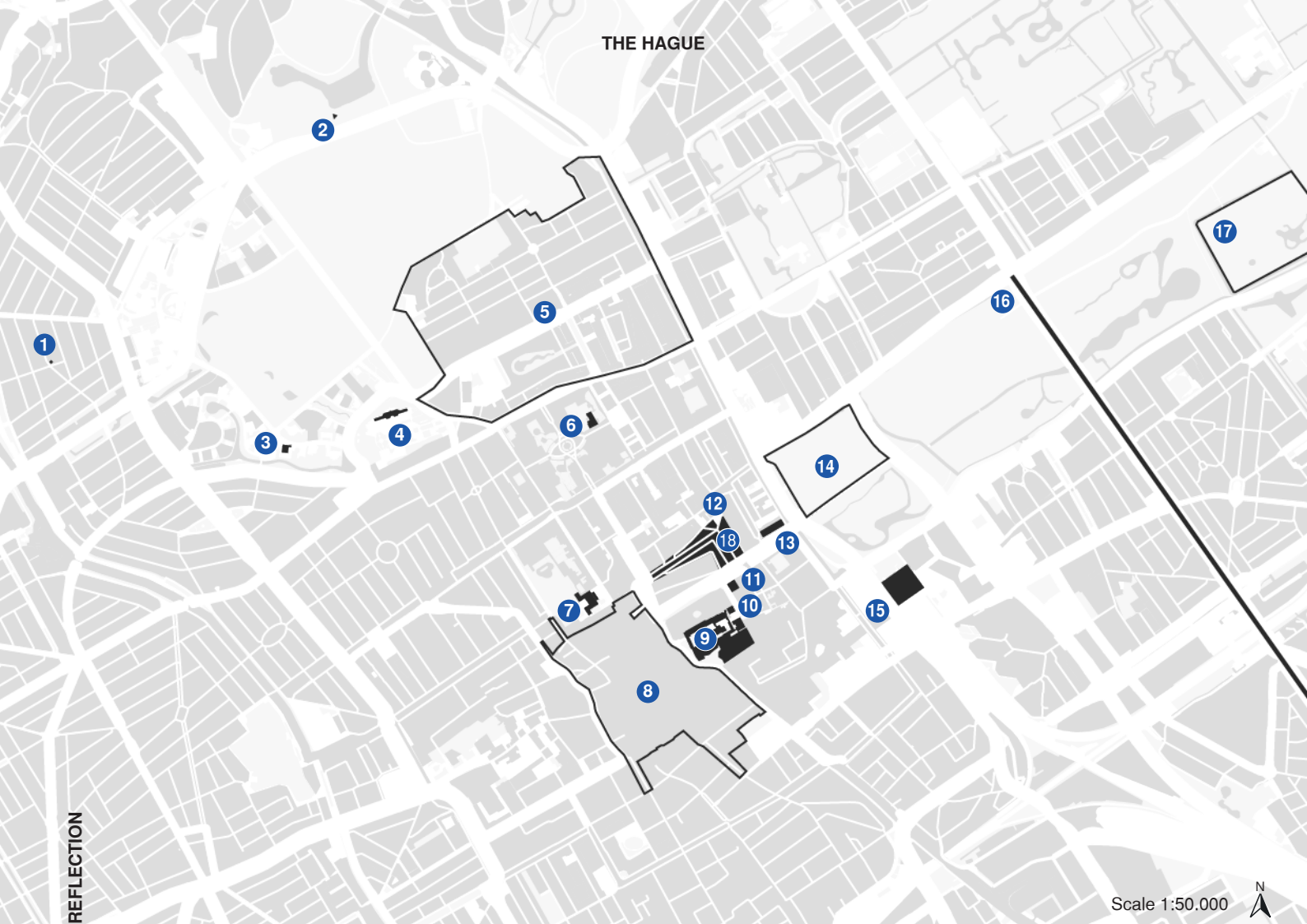
The Hague is a city with (international) allure: the heart of our democracy and the ‘City of Justice’, where multiple Royal Palaces are located. With the government being situated here, it is the place from which policies were made for conducting and legitimising slavery and colonial thinking. Meanwhile, The Hague is also the city that houses the largest communities of descendants from the shared history between Indonesia and The Netherlands. Despite the attitude of ‘democracy’ and ‘justice’ that prominent institutions and our government feign to have, they are taking questionable responsibility towards our colonial history. In other words: The Hague is a city with many faces in regards to this past, making it a perfect decor for my design task.

In the public space of The Hague, still many traces can be found that refer to our colonial history, such as Mauritshuis, street names in the archipelago neighbourhood and many more, as I discovered during my interview with *Rizky Kalebos* (R. Kalebos, personal communication, 13 March 2024). The represented narrative is rather one-sided and whitewashed, and many people seem to be unaware of the symbolic and historical meaning of the elements that refer to this specific time period.

In order to get more grip on the location and types of spaces and elements in our built environment, which somehow refer or relate to Dutch colonial history, I decided to start mapping them. In addition, I also tried to map potential sites for my design assignment and research their spatial qualities. When I started this graduation project, I envisioned my design location to be spacious in order to give room to the complex and sensitive topic to sink in, and allow the spectator some headspace. A place of calmness that allows for peaceful reflection. However, during the first period of research, I concluded the ‘park’ locations lacked a certain degree of visibility and urgency. I started to realize that, perhaps, my *Space of Reflection* somehow had to link to the bigger picture of the urban fabric and should critically address the numerous references we can find to our Dutch colonial history, as well as the fact that many of the important institutions that relate to it are hardly taking responsibility for this past. The mapping exercise allowed me to find a powerful location that matches the relevance of the topic I’m addressing in my design.







- 1 Indische Tantes statue
- 2 Indisch Monument
- 3 Indonesian Embassy
- 4 Peace Palace
- 5 Archipelago neighbourhood
- 6 Museum Sophiahof
- 7 Palace Noordeinde
- 8 City centre
- 9 Binnenhof
- 10 Mauritshuis
- 11 The Hague Historical Museum
- 12 Lange Voorhout
- 13 Supreme Court
- 14 Malieveld
- 15 The Hague Central Station
- 16 Laan van Nieuw Oost-Indië (*New East Indies Lane*)
- 17 Palace Huis Ten Bosch
- 18 Slavery Monument - memorial for Trans-Atlantic slavery (2025)

THE HAGUE



1 Indische Tantes statue



2 Indisch Monument



3 Indonesian Embassy



4 Peace Palace



5 Archipelago neighbourhood



6 Museum Sophiahof



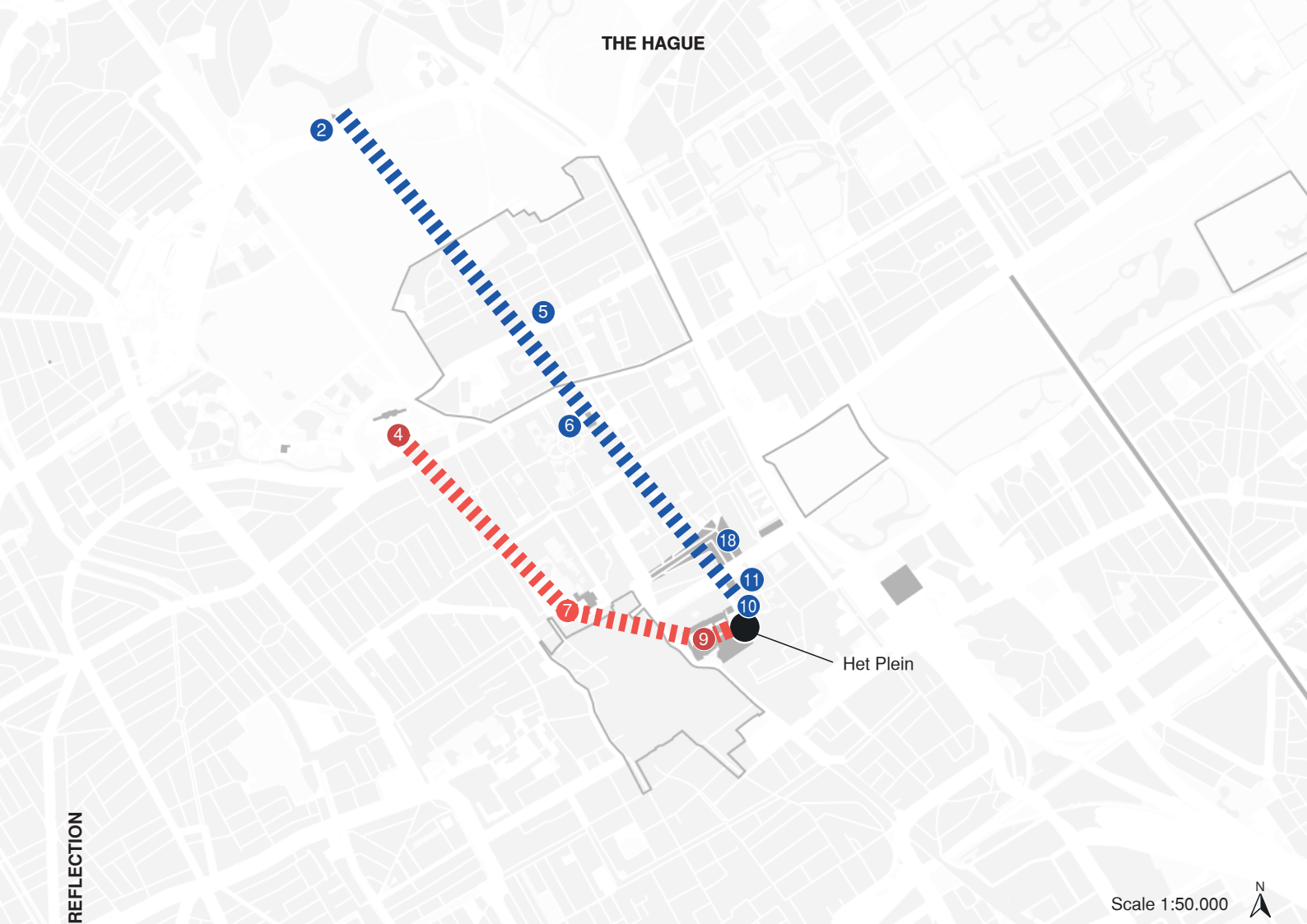
7 Palace Noordeinde



9 Binnenhof



10 Mauritshuis



Scale 1:50.000



- 1 Indische Tantes statue
- 2 Indisch Monument
- 3 Indonesian Embassy
- 4 Peace Palace
- 5 Archipelago neighbourhood
- 6 Museum Sophiahof
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- 18 Slavery Monument - memorial for Trans-Atlantic slavery (2025)

Mapping the city

As previously mentioned, The Hague knows many elements and places in their public space which, directly or indirectly, refer to our Dutch colonial history. During the mapping exercise I was also on the look-out for interesting potential sites for my *Space of Reflection*. The design should be located within the beating heart of the urban fabric, linking the complex and confronting past of the Dutch East Indies, as well as other parts of the Dutch colonial tale, to current governmental institutions or locations. A statement needs to be made in order for questions in society to rise and finally giving a proper stage to the narratives of this past that have been somewhat undermined. But where could this statement be best made? I tried to divide the mapped places into roughly two categories:

1) Direct Reference

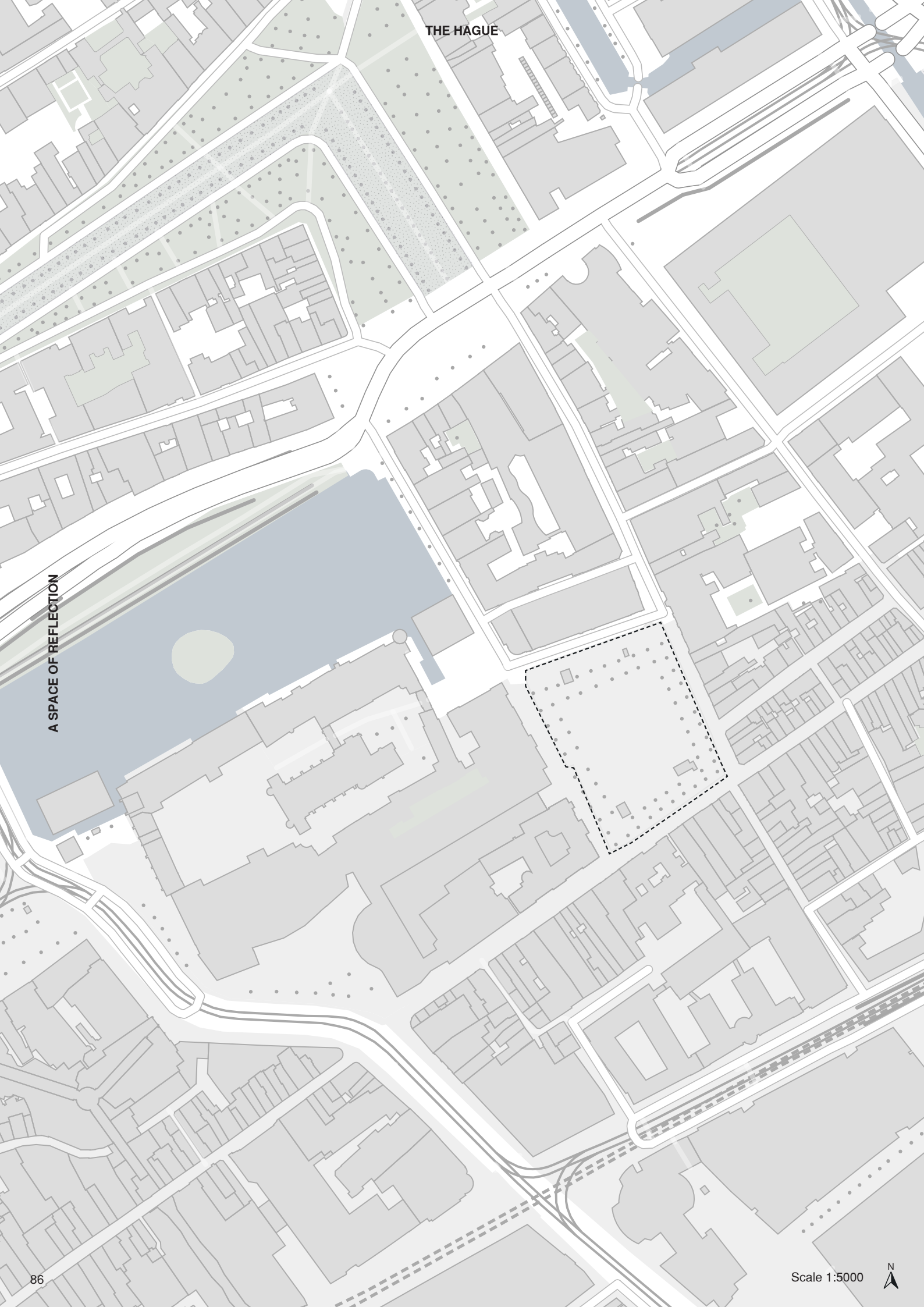
Spaces and elements that clearly refer to the Dutch colonial history by their name, form, meaning or programme.

2) Indirect Reference

Buildings of institutions that have a big social-political impact in general, but also massively influenced what happened during our colonial history. The institutions that made important decisions and regulated these, but nowadays take questionable responsibility of their role in the colonial system.

As a matter of experiment, I tried to connect the mapped dots that fit into these categories, and noticed that two strong axes arise. These lines seem to meet each other on a very interesting location: *Het Plein*, which is a square located in the heart of The Hague, around the corner of Binnenhof and Mauritshuis.

A SPACE OF REFLECTION

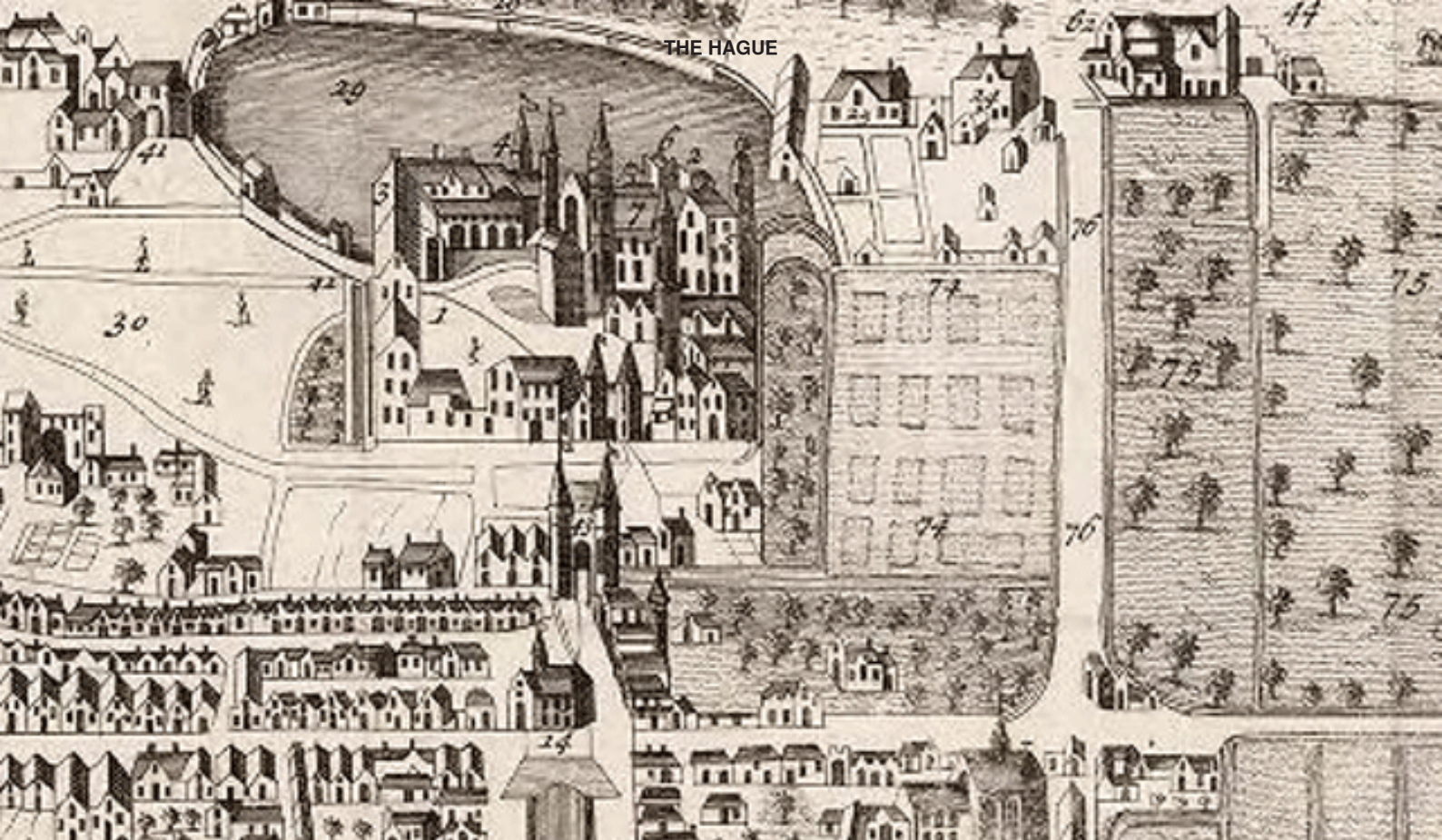


Het Plein



Het Plein (author, 2025)

Het Plein, is an interesting field of tangible references to the Dutch colonial era, located around the corner from *Binnenhof*, where the Dutch government is located. An institute that was involved in and legalized the colonization process of many oversea areas. Nowadays, the government still takes questionable responsibility towards this specific past. Also *Mauritshuis* can be found at Het Plein, a controversial building that relates to slavery in Brasile and now showcases art pieces from the so-called 'Dutch Golden Age'. At the square, the *former Ministry of Colonies* building is located, which is currently in use by the government. Also Sociëteit de Witte and the (former) Ministries Justice, Foreign Affairs and Defence can be found at Het Plein. At the centre of the square a statue of Willem van Oranje is placed on a high pedestal.



Halfway the 13th century, Dutch counts started to build their castles on and around the Binnenhof area, leaving the space that we currently know as 'Het Plein' to serve as gardens of these castles; partially ornamental gardens and partially vegetable gardens. The latter types of gardens were collectively called 'Kooltuin' or 'Cabbage Garden' (Geschiedenis van Den Haag, 2010).

Some centuries later, during a period of fast growth of the city, plans were made to fully fill the former gardens with houses and other buildings. But Frederik Hendrik, governor of The Hague, disagreed with these plans and motivated that The Hague needed a majestic city square (Geschiedenis van Den Haag, 2010). Frederik did however, give some pieces of land around Het Plein to two of his good friends. This allowed Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen to build the Mauritshuis on the corner of the square, next to the Hofvijver, and Constant Huygens received some land in the south-east corner of Het Plein, at the location that now houses the Ministry of Justice. Both houses had grand gardens (Bureau

Bouwtijd, 2021). Leaving the rest of the square empty, allowed for Het Plein to be the first ever Dutch square, creating a monumental cachet for the governmental city (Geschiedenis van Den Haag, 2010). At the centre of the square a 14-meter tall statue of Willem van Oranje was placed on a high pedestal, designed by sculpturer Louis Royer and revealed in 1848 (Buitenkunst Den Haag, n.d.). Interestingly enough, the statue was originally faced towards the East side of Het Plein, but in the 90's they changed his orientation into the direction of Delft, the place where he was murdered.

With the increasing number of cars, the city saw potential for Het Plein to serve as a major parking location, as is shown on the archival photo from 1975. But in 1980 a two-level underground parking garage was constructed, allowing for the square to have a more open and walk-friendly character now the cars were moved out of sight, emphasizing with the grandiose spatial qualities the square originally had (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021).



L.M. (Loek) Tangel, Collectie Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, 164.569

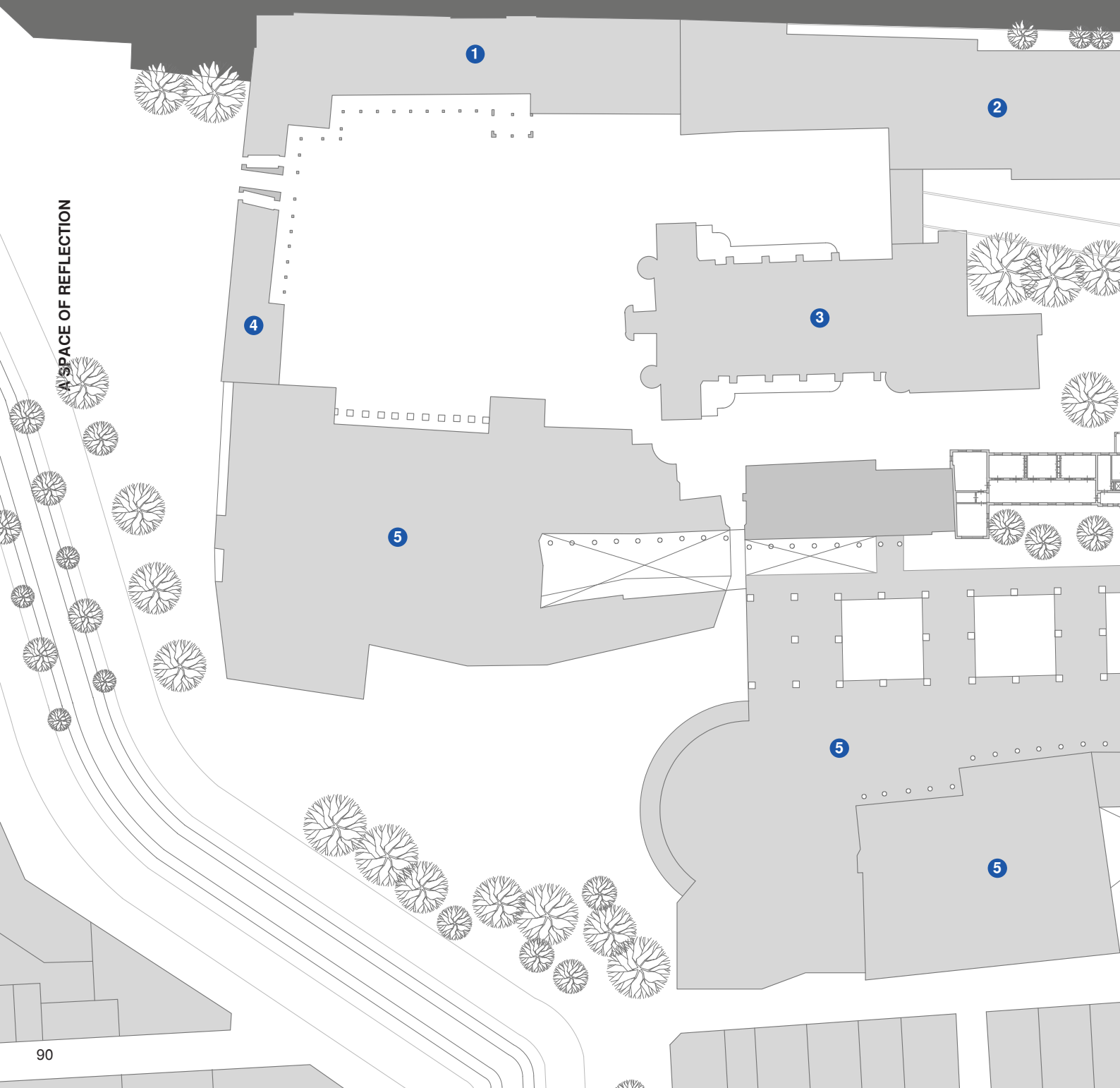
A SPACE OF REFLECTION



(G.J. (Gerard), Dukker, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, D-03020)

Binnenhof

- 1 Eerste Kamer
- 2 General Affairs
- 3 Ridderzaal
- 4 Raad van State
- 5 Tweede Kamer
- 6 Former Ministry of Justice
- 7 Former Ministry of Colonies



- 8 Ministry of Defense
- 9 Logement of Amsterdam
- 10 Sociëteit de Witte
- 11 Mauritshuis
- 12 Statue Willem van Oranje
- 13 Parking houses
- 14 Bars & restaurants



Binnenhof

The *Binnenhof* complex consists out of different departments, as is shown in the site map. In Dutch democracy, citizens can vote for representatives from different parties, who will end up in the *Tweede Kamer*. Here, the chosen people of the political parties can propose changes or introduce new laws. Then there is the *Eerste Kamer*, a collective of ministers who can approve or reject the proposals of the *Tweede Kamer*. The department of General Affairs, is the ministry of the Minister-President, coordinating government policy and responsible for communication from the government (Rijksoverheid, 2010). The *Ridderzaal* serves as the decor for the yearly King's speech on the third Tuesday of September, where the King reflects on the previous year in our country and announces the new plans of the parliament in the upcoming year.

The former *Ministry of Justice* and the former *Ministry of Colonies*, are now part of the *Tweede Kamer* complex, housing offices for members of different political parties. The latter ministry will be further elaborated with a cultural historical research.

Since 2021, a massive renovation started at Binnenhof, which will take at least until the end of 2028. These renovations also influence different elements on Het Plein: during the renovation period big parts of Het Plein are inaccessible because they transform into construction sites. But also after renovation, some spatial elements will be different and buildings directly facing Het Plein will have been renovated. Due to the fact that Binnenhof houses our government, it has been incredibly difficult throughout my graduation project to retrieve specific information and drawings of these renovations. I have therefor decided to take the situation of September 2021, right before the big Binnenhof renovation, as a starting point for my project.

Buildings around Het Plein

Although, Binnenhof frames the institutes of our Dutch governmental system, there are also some buildings outside this complex that play roles in our current democracy or house departments of our government. Some departments and ministries are relocated to locations further away, nearby The Hague Central Station, but some are to be found in other corners of Het Plein.

The *Ministry of Defense* for example, which can be found at the bottom of Het Plein, is located in a building that originates from 1746. In 1820 the Department of War was housed in the building, a department that further expanded over the years and grew out to the Ministry of Defense (Ministerie van Defensie, 2014).

On the East side of Het Plein we have the *Logement of Amsterdam* building (or 'House of Amsterdam'), originally used to welcome representatives from Amsterdam who had to come to The Hague for official meetings with the States of Holland (*Tweede Kamer*, 2014). Afterwards, the building housed a variety of functions, amongst which: housing the Ministry of War and from 1849 until 1984 serving as the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. At the beginning of this century, the building was restored and the *Tweede Kamer* became the new user, since they were in need of more office space (*Tweede Kamer*, 2014).

Around the corner of this *Logement* building, we can find *Sociëteit de Witte*, a fairly prominent private club which was founded in 1782 and was housed inside the current building at Het Plein since 1870 (*Sociëteit de Witte*, n.d.).

The club shares part of the building with the expansion of *Mauritshuis*, a museum of 'Golden Age' art that originally was limited to the space of *Mauritshuis* itself, the house located next to *Hofvijver*. *Mauritshuis* will also be addressed more in depth later in this chapter, since it plays a crucial role in my graduation project.

Spatial elements

Besides the governmental institutions, there are also some spatial elements on Het Plein that are interesting to look at for my design project. First of all, there are four ‘parking houses’ located on the square, placed in each of the corners. Two of them are slightly bigger, also offering an elevator into the underground parking. The houses are mostly transparent and have distinct blue coloured window frames.

As mentioned in the history part of Het Plein, the central element around which the square seems to revolve, is the 14-meter tall statue of Willem van Oranje. Although, the statue represents the ‘father of our fatherland’, it also represents the Dutch Royal family in general. A family that played crucial role and had lots of responsibility in the Dutch colonial history. The apparent importance of the statue is not only emphasized by its height, but also visualized by the way surrounding spatial elements are organized and oriented.

There is, for example, this circular walking lane on the edge of the square, formulated by a number of Linden trees, almost forming this sort of ally in between the green. The lane is situated around its centre point: Willem van Oranje. Many of the Linden trees on Het Plein were planted around 1971, some of the smaller trees were placed many years later. A tree research report of the site however, addresses how the quality of the trees has strongly reduced due to lack of fertile soil and also lack of space for the roots to grow, because of the underground parking garage (Terra Nostra, 2022).

Besides the trees, also street patterns play a big role in the hierarchy of spatial elements on the square. There is a large variety of patterns all around Het Plein, but the stones around the statue are of a darker colour and a pattern that is not ongoing or endless, but rather one that circles around a centre stone. On the next page, pictures can be found of the variety of street patterns.

A variety of faces

Due to the fact that the area of the square has a great deal of importance for the Dutch democracy, Het Plein is a known place for smaller protests and manifestations, though the bigger ones are often kept away from this site and have to take place on, for example, Malieveland.

The visible history of the site, despite being inevitably linked to Dutch colonial history, also attracts many tourists to the square. Therefore, Het Plein also functions as a popular place for leisure, attracting people from outside as well as the everyday citizen of The Hague, offering plenty of bar and restaurant options in the east corner, many of which have outdoor terraces on the square.

Het Plein has a rich history and currently functions as a vibrant public space with many faces, making it an interesting site for my design. In this field of tensions, I aim to make a political statement with my project that critically addresses the topic of our colonial past, and offers space for the public debate, right in front of the buildings that house the very institutions who not only have a historical link to this past, but also, to this day, take questionable responsibility for it. Especially the North-West corner of the square poses an interesting site for the intended political statement, since it enables a visual and even physical link to the former Ministry of Colonies, Binnenhof and Mauritshuis. And so, this is the corner of Het Plein into which I will zoom-in further.



Het Plein, looking at South-East corner (author, 2025)



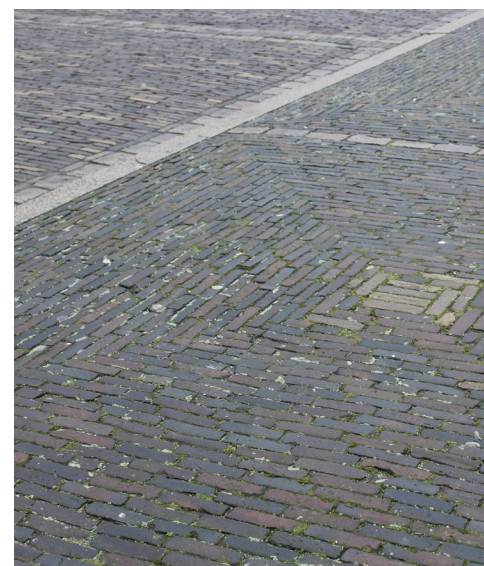
Street patterns (author, 2025)



Street patterns (author, 2025)



Willem van Oranje (author, 2025)



Street patterns (author, 2025)



Het Plein, looking at North-West corner (author, 2025)



Street patterns (author, 2025)



Street patterns (author, 2025)



Parking house (author, 2025)



Willem van Oranje (author, 2025)

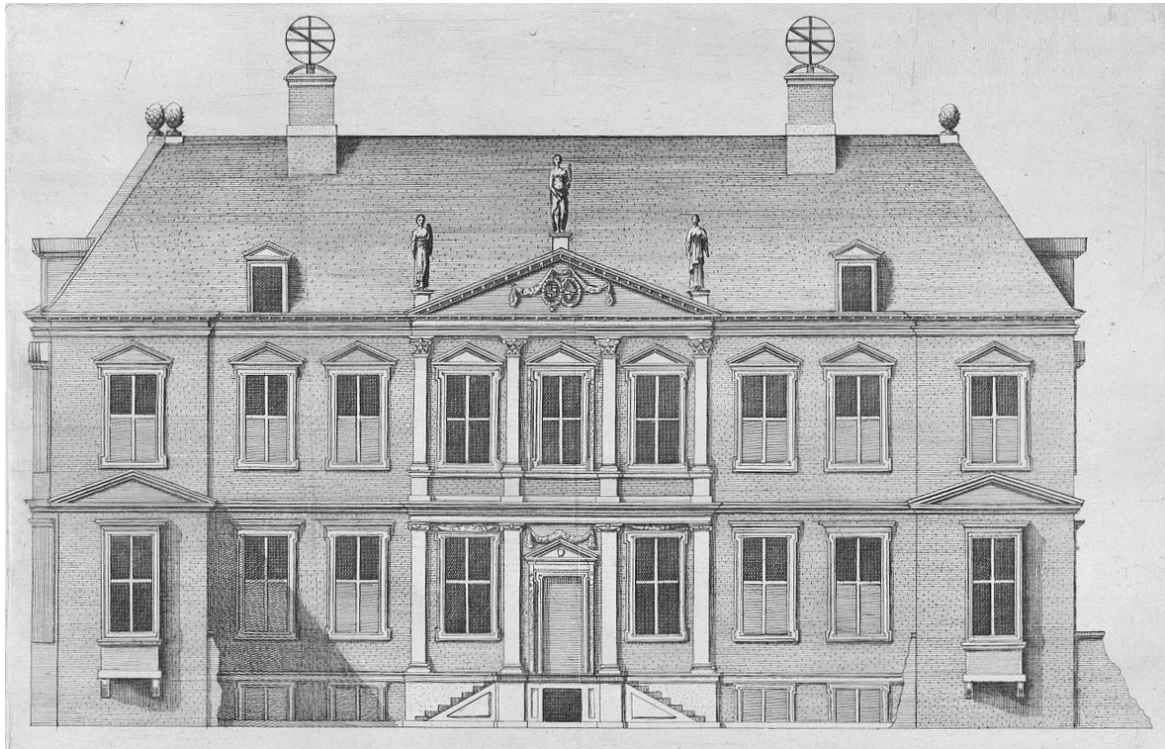
The Former Ministry of Colonies



A SPACE OF REFLECTION

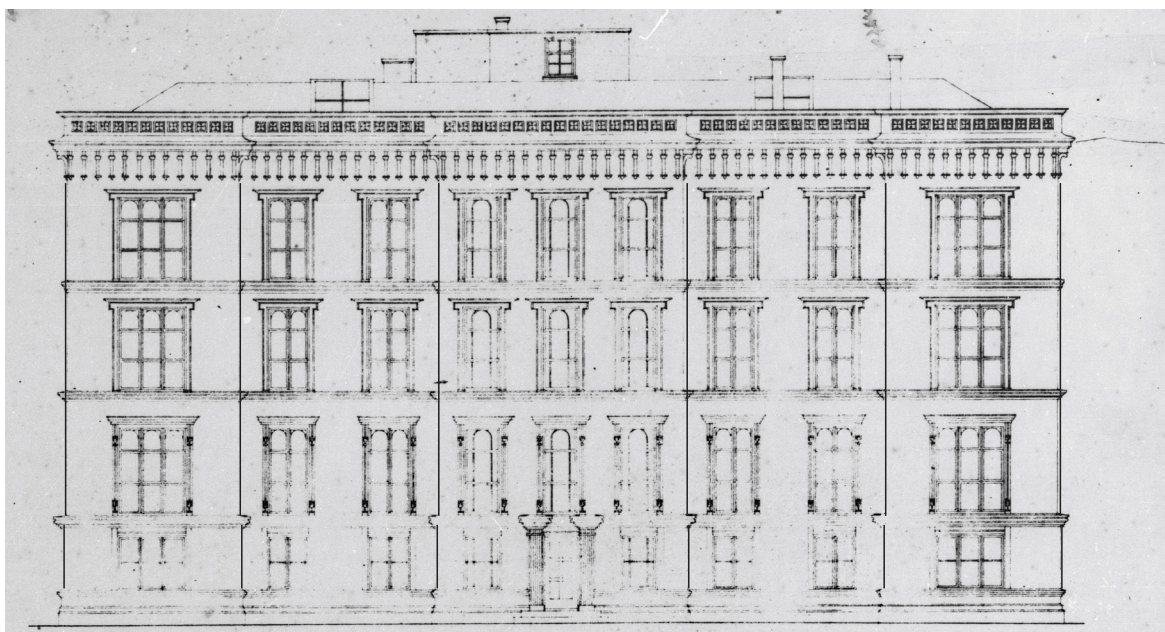
For thorough analysis and understanding of this building, I mainly made use of the *Cultural Historical Report*, written by Jacqueline de Graauw from Bureau Bouwtijd (2021). This chapter can be seen as a summary and analysis of the most important findings from the Cultural Historical report, helping us to get a better understanding of the historical context of my site, as well as helping me decide how I want this building to play a role in my design project.





Front elevation former Huygenshuis - 'Old' Ministry of Colonies

(Drawing of Matham, T. after design of Post, P.J.. (1637). Collection of Rijksmuseum, object number RP-P-OB-33.336.)



North-East Facade former Ministry of Colonies,

(NA, 4.RGD, inv.nr. 431.1 Tekening 1)

The 'new' Ministry of Colonies

On the South-West side of Het Plein, Huygenshuis was located, which functioned as the Ministry of Colonies building from the 1830's. This old building became too small for the fast-growing ministry and so, plans were made to construct a bigger building to house all functions and people related to governing the Dutch colonies. Huygenshuis was eventually torn down in 1876. This building however, served as an important inspiration for the design of the 'new' Ministry of Colonies building by Willem Nicolaas Rose, who happened to be born on Java, the Dutch East Indies. He actually came up with a bigger-scaled plan to transform the Binnenhof area, but only parts of it have been constructed, among which the Hoge Raad and Ministry of Colonies building. In the National Archive images on the left page we see a comparison between Huygenshuis (the 'Old' Ministry of Colonies building) and the design of the new Ministry of Colonies building by Rose. Besides similarities on the façade, also the original U-shaped floor plan and elegant columns on both sides of the front door in Rose's design were a direct inspiration from Huygenshuis (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021).

Architect W.N. Rose was a fan of ornaments and argues how these ornaments should always be a derivative product of their function. This vision is also visible in the design of the Ministry of Colonies building, as well as the inspiration he took from Karl Friedrich Schinkels' Bauakademie. The sketch design however, had to

be adjusted due to major money cuts. Most of the adjustments were made in the access routes and, due to lack of space, the attic was transformed into a proper 3rd floor causing the disappearance of most initial façade ornaments. This caused for the realized design in 1861 to differ from the initial drawings (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021).

The Ministry of Colonies was one of the first modern office buildings in The Netherlands, at least the first office building designed for housing a 'Ministry'. The spatial design was modern for its time in terms of routing and flexibility: by using foundation arches, enabling openings or even potential removal of interior walls. The large double-glazed windows allowed lots of natural light into the offices and helped work quality inside the building.

The materials that Rose used were also seen as relatively new: a zinc roofing, wrought iron roof- and floor beams for enabling thinner floors, and cast iron for the roof structure, consoles and window frames. Unfortunately for the latter, the material characteristics of expansion and weight turned out to be a bad decision, and so the window frames were replaced with wood. (In a later renovation in the 80s, the frames were replaced with aluminium.)

Rose implemented cavity walls for the exterior (insulation) as well as for the interior, in order to place pipes of water drains, and the ventilation- and heating system (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021).

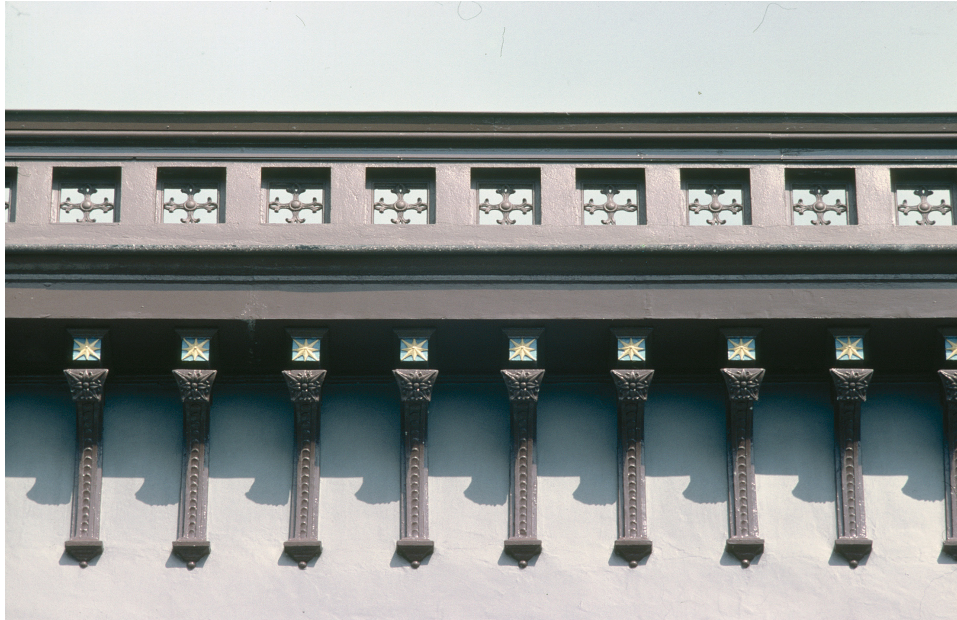
Exterior



(G.J. (Gerard), Dukker, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, D-03021)



(G.J. (Gerard), Dukker, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, 501.951)



(G.J. (Gerard), Dukker, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, D-05074)



(G.J. (Gerard), Dukker, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, D-05071)

Interior

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Hallway on ground floor
Photo by Jacqueline de Graauw (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021)



Hallway on second floor
Photo by Jacqueline de Graauw (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021)



Corner office
Photo by Jacqueline de Graauw (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021)



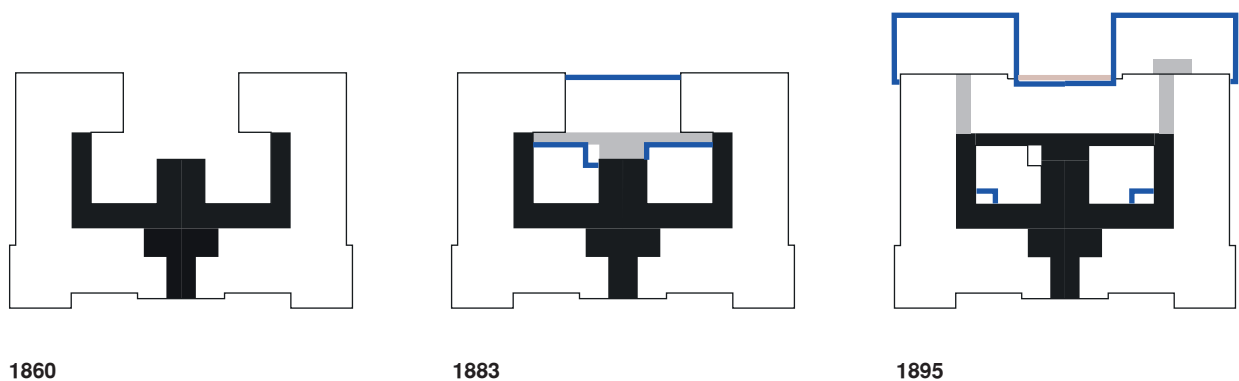
Former archive space on ground floor level
Photo by Jacqueline de Graauw (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021)



Hallway on first floor
Photo by Jacqueline de Graauw (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021)



Room N°12 - former kitchen
Photo by Jacqueline de Graauw (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021)



Transformations over time

The Ministry of Colonies was built between 1859-1861, but it was only 21 years later an expansion for the building was needed; the E-shaped floorplan transformed into a more symmetrical shape, enclosing the open courtyard into two separate courtyards. The expansion was built in the same style as the original building, giving the impression that this part already belonged to the building from the beginning. In 1895 the building was expanded again, adding two wings on the back side. In 1916 an expansion was added; a seemingly separate building, which served as an access route between the Ministry of Colonies building and the rest of Binnenhof (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021). This expansion is now marked as 'Building C' of the Binnenhof complex, and is not included in drawings of floor plans when we look at the current Ministry of Colonies building, also known as 'Building K'. The connection between

these buildings was established on the first floor in the left back wing of the Ministry of Colonies. The construction of the parking garage underneath Het Plein in 1980, had no direct impact on the Ministry of Colonies. But a little while after, in the late 90's, a renovation took place which was focussed on connecting the different parts of the Binnenhof complex with a glass hallway. For the former Ministry of Colonies building it meant that the entrance of the building will be located in the left back wing of the building (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021). It is interesting how the historical least important corner of the building, now served as the main access into the building, connecting it with other parts of Binnenhof.

Over the years it wasn't only the physique of the Ministry building that transformed, but also the



official name and function. From the beginning of this building until 1940, the building served as the *Ministry of Colonies* (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021). However, during World War II it was used as the main office of Johann Baptist Albin Rauter, leader of the Dutch SS and its police forces, making him responsible for deportation of 100.000 Jews (Koll, 2023).

After the War, from 1945-1949 (which is also the period of the 'police actions' in Indonesia) the ministry renamed as the *Ministry of Overseas Territories*. After the Dutch officially acknowledged Indonesian independence, the ministry served as the Ministry of: *Union Affairs* (1949-1953), *Overseas Territories* (1953-1957) and *Overseas Affairs* (1957-1959). From that moment on, the Ministry of Internal Affairs was housed in the monumental building, until they had to

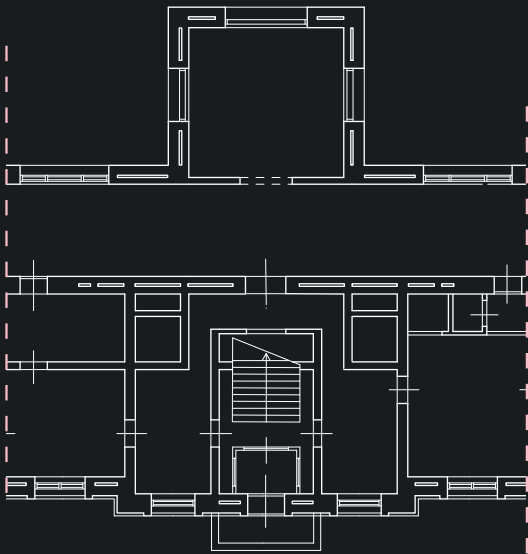
leave due to renovations. When these renovations were finished in 1980, the building was used by the Tweede Kamer from the government. Offices of different parties were located throughout the building until 2021, the start of the renovation of the entire Binnenhof complex (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021).

The former Ministry of Colonies building is now part of a list of 'Wrong Heritage', due to the controversial colonial history which we currently look at with a different perspective. This piece of heritage forces us to reflect on our current societal perception and values. The former Ministry of Colonies is there for beholding a 'High Monumental Value' status (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021).

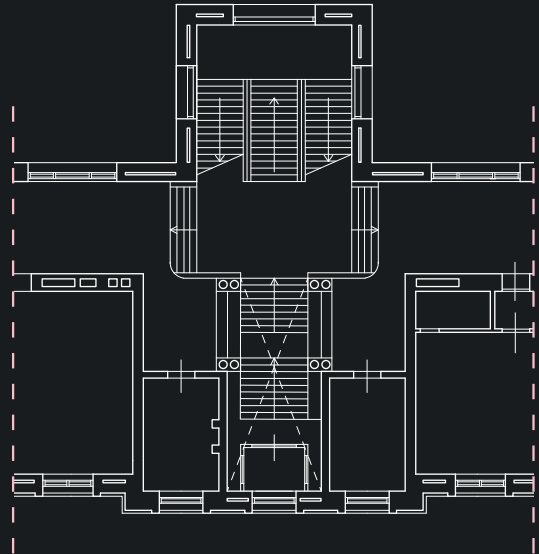
The Entrance

If one would enter the Ministry through the front door in 1860, the visitor was immediately guided onto the first floor, because of the prominent staircase right behind the door. It made sense to invite the important visitors of the building upstairs right away, since the first floor was the most prominent one. Rose's original intention was to place a double-sided platform staircase outside the building that would lead to the front door, meaning it would take up less space for the staircase inside

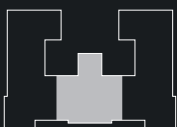
A SPACE OF REFLECTION



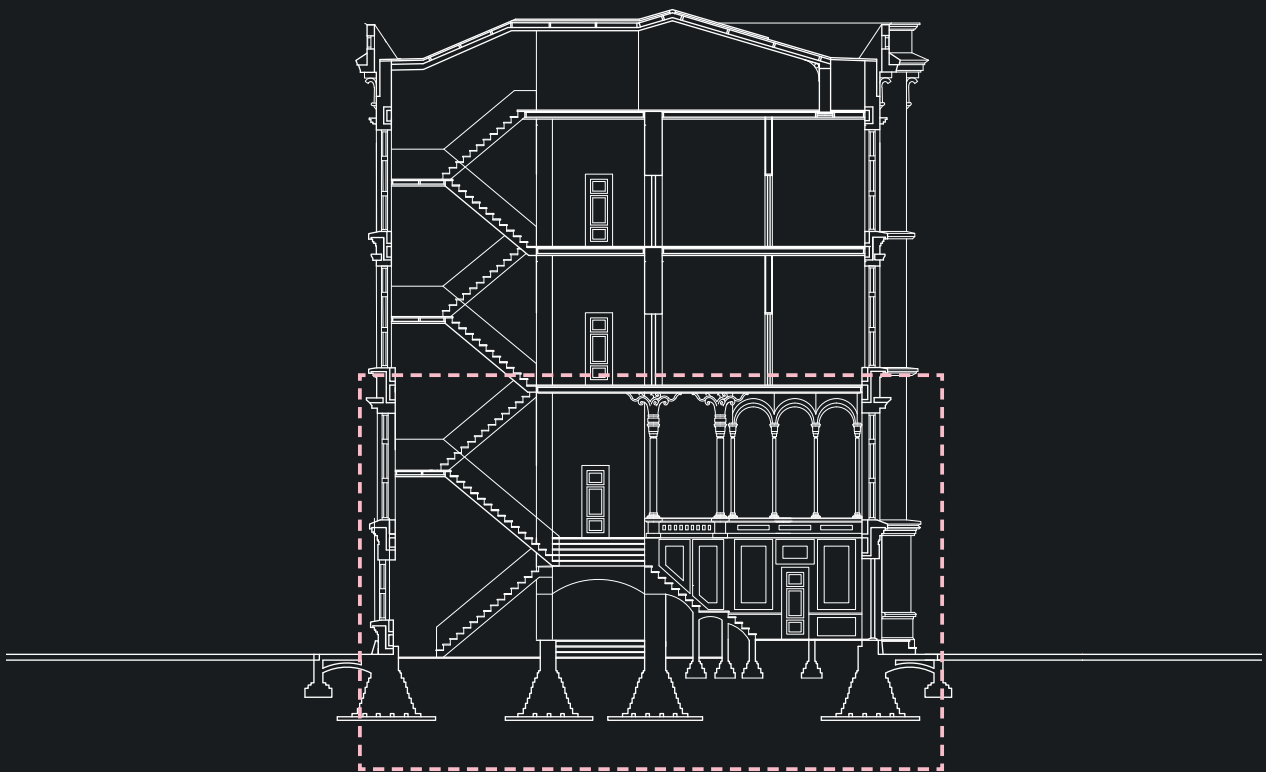
Original Entrance 1860 - Ground Floor 1:250



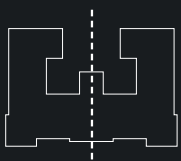
Original Entrance 1860 - First Floor 1:250



the building to go all the way up to the first floor. However, due to budget cuttings, this original idea had to be adjusted. It resulted in a steep staircase that didn't have enough space to reach the floor above, resulting in an awkward mini-staircase into both directions of the hallway on the first floor, to bridge the height. If you were to walk from the one part of the hallway, to the other side, you would have to cross the stairs (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021).

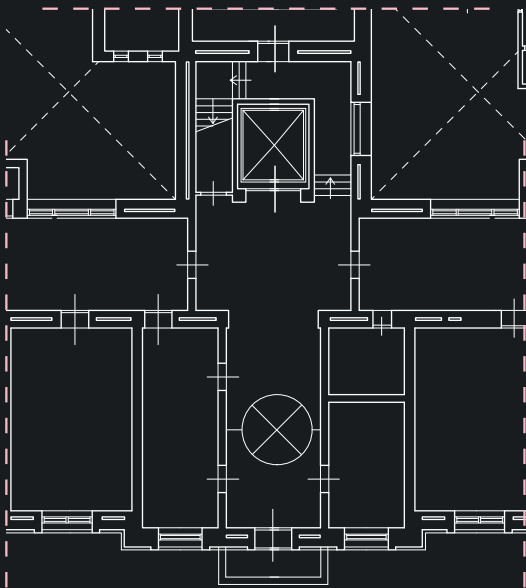


Original Entrance 1860 - Section 1:250

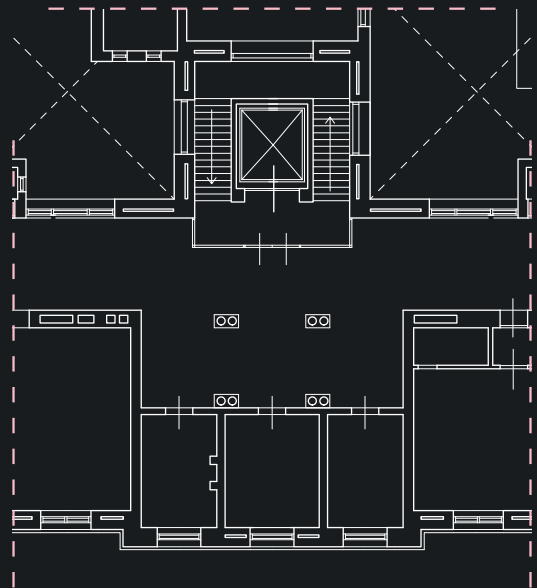


After many renovations through the years, the front door has somewhat lost its relevance, and also its prominent spatial character. The grandiose welcoming staircase is now replaced by a single-floor entrance with a turnstile door. In contrast to the original floor plan, the visitor is now welcomed on Ground Floor level of the building, instead of directly taking the staircase to the First Floor. The front door of the building is hardly ever used, since the main circulation takes place through the hallways that connect the former Ministry building with the other buildings of the Binnenhof complex

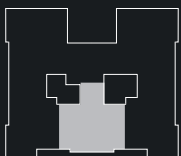
A SPACE OF REFLECTION



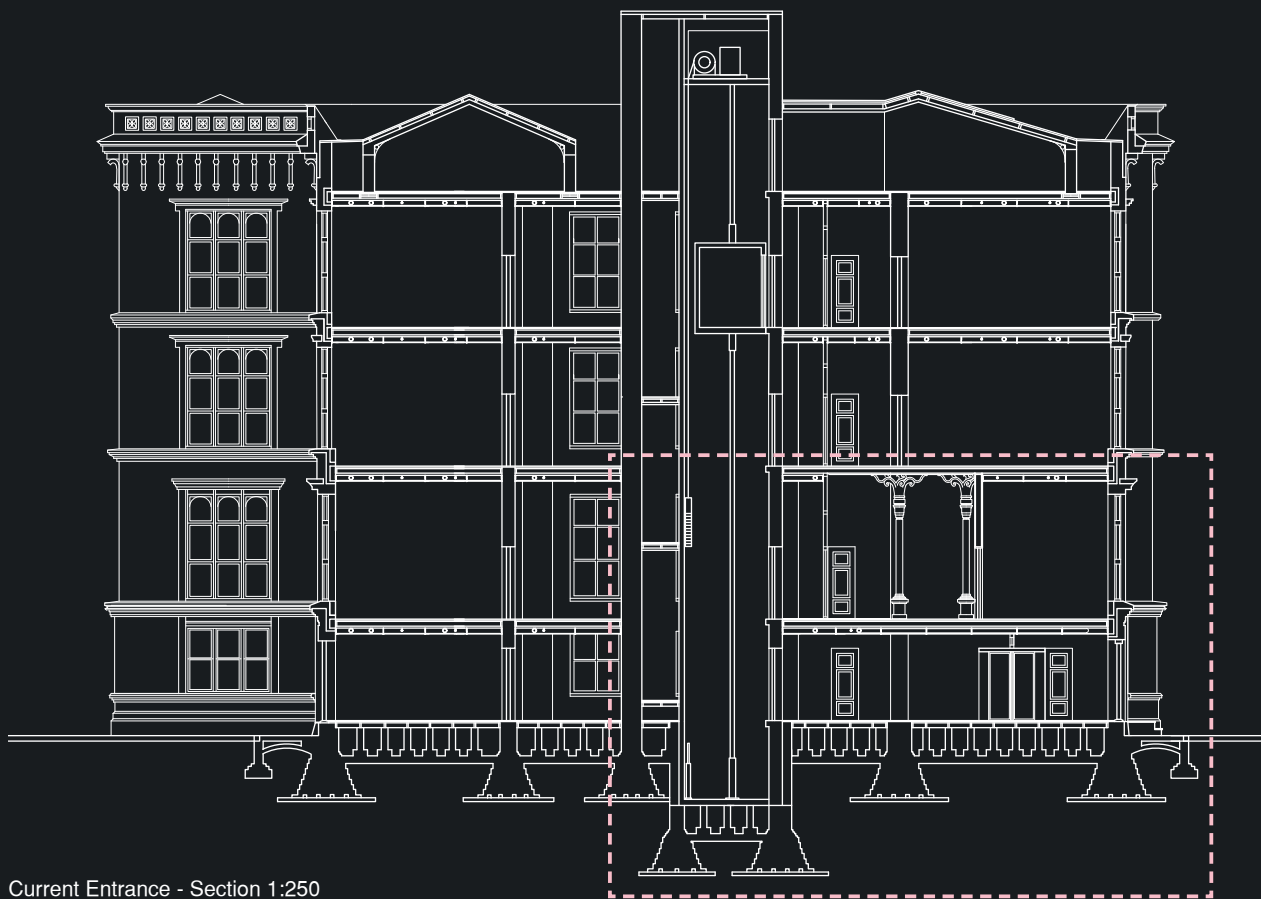
Current Entrance - Ground Floor 1:250



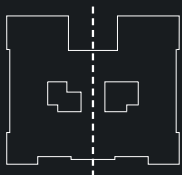
Current Entrance - First Floor 1:250



(Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021). The somewhat unused front door can be seen as a methafor for the building not being open and transparant for the public, hiding the dark histories that it embodies and placing our current government behind closed doors all over again. My design can be a statement that does invite people to explore (part) of this building, unraveling stories that have been hidden or swept under the carpet. Bringing the public closer the dark side of Dutch colonial history, as well as to the government that is in charge of our democracy.



Current Entrance - Section 1:250





First Floor, elegant cast iron columns
(D. (Dick) Valentijn, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, IvhB-0142)

As we see in the pictures of the first floor, besides the cast iron columns little is left from the grandiose entrance as it was once intended by Willem Nicolaas Rose. I see potential for my design to bring back some of the atmosphere and spatial quality of the original entrance, but in a new way. Bringing back this grande entrance, of a building where the front door has always been closed for the public, gives a strong statement of setting foot inside a building with such heavily loaded history. Referring back to the original spatial quality does not aim for 'honouring' the entrance that once was, meaning that the entrance should not end up looking

identical to the original plans of Rose. It should be more about restoring some of the elements and bringing back the prominent atmosphere, while combining it with (clearly) new spatial elements, materials and design decisions, as if they symbolize new narratives that are brought into the conversation. Inviting new materials into the interior in a way that we are confronted with this complex past and what role the Ministry played in it, enabling a dialogue between the 'old' and 'new'. A way of welcoming people into the building and the narratives related to it, celebrating the closed doors have finally been opened.



First Floor, elegant cast iron columns

(D. (Dick) Valentijn, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, IvhB-0143)

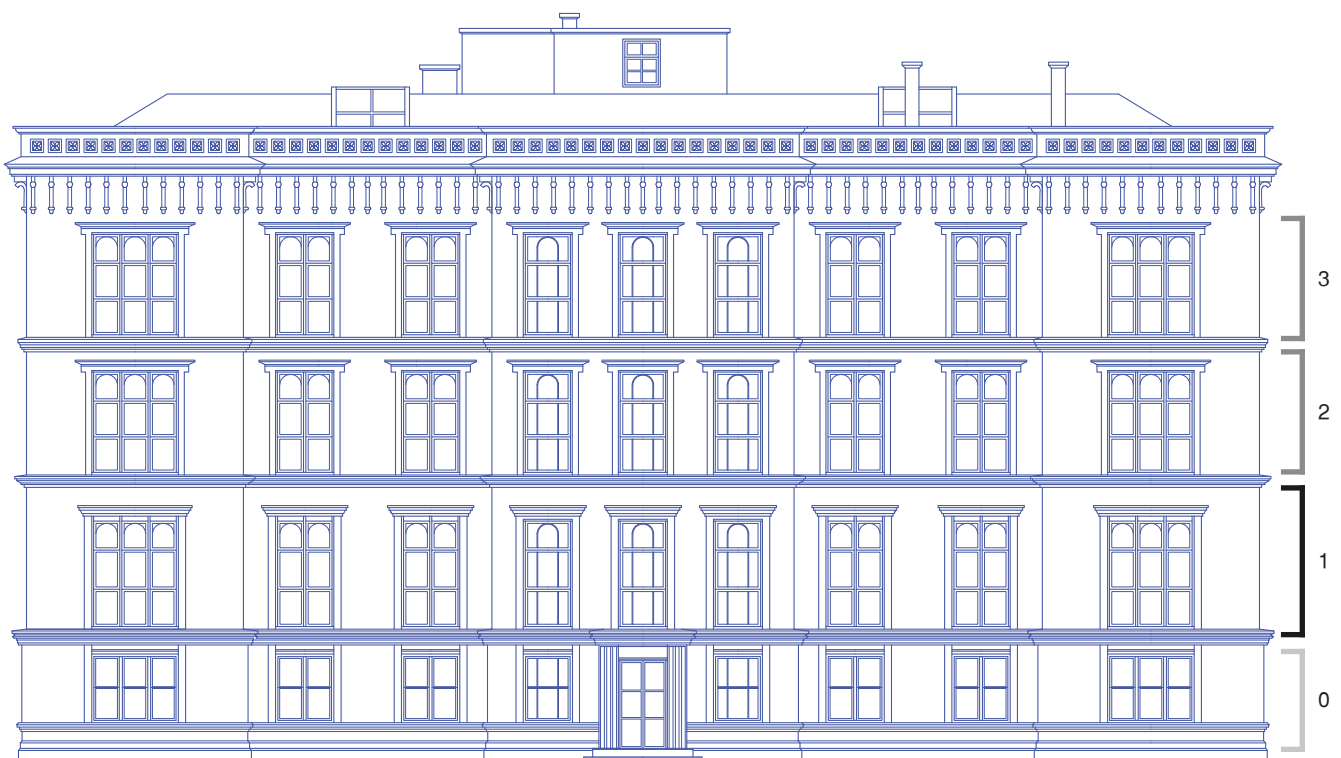
Hierarchy

In the building a strong sense of hierarchy was implemented. The ground floor was for facility personnel and archive storage, resulting in a very simple and sober interior design. The first floor was the most prominent one, serving as a floor for important calls, meeting rooms and housing the offices of the most important people of the Ministry of Colonies department in the front corners of the building, from which they could be exposed to natural light from two sides and proper views on Het Plein, Mauritshuis and 'Het Torentje' at Binnenhof. The second and third floor were meant for less important officials, which also translated into a less aesthetical and detailed interior design on these floors compared to the first floor. The attic was used for water storage (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021).

The hierarchy was not only emphasized by the interior finishes and height of the floors, also the

façade design (or windows to be more specific) played a role. You can for example see quite the difference in aesthetic appearance of the window frames on the higher floors compared to the windows at ground floor level. Additionally, also in the vertical axis a degree of hierarchy was visible in the façade if you look at the single, double and triple framed windows. As mentioned before, the most important offices of the Ministry were located at the front corners of the building. You can see the biggest windows were placed in these corners, showcasing the importance and status of these office rooms to the spectator outside (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021).

The Cultural Historical Report from Bureau Bouwtijd (2021) distinguishes three categories of hierarchy; A, B and C. In combination with the hierarchy of the floor, five different categories can be found inside the building:



Front Elevation 1:250

1 - A

1 - B

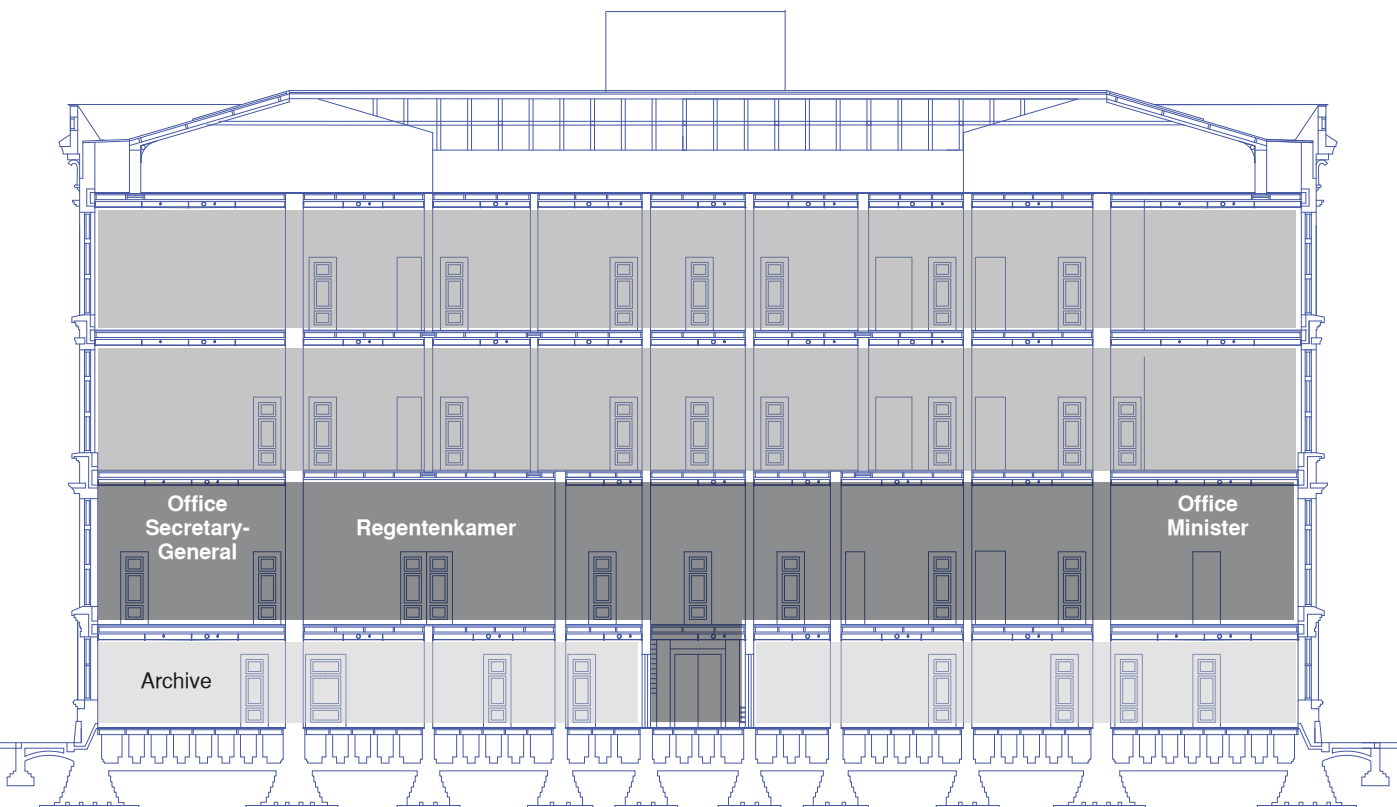
1 - C

2/3 - B

2/3 - C

This categorization shows, how the ground floor level seemingly did not really matter. After all, it weren't the important people of the Ministry who were making use of this floor, since it was meant to house supporting facilities such as archive storage, kitchen, steam machine and living- and working spaces for the concierge. The other floors, with the more important people were located literally above the workers on the Ground Floor level. The Ministry of Colonies building can therefore be seen as a metaphor of distorted power balance and oppression, an interesting notion which has influenced the role this building plays in my design.

A SPACE OF REFLECTION

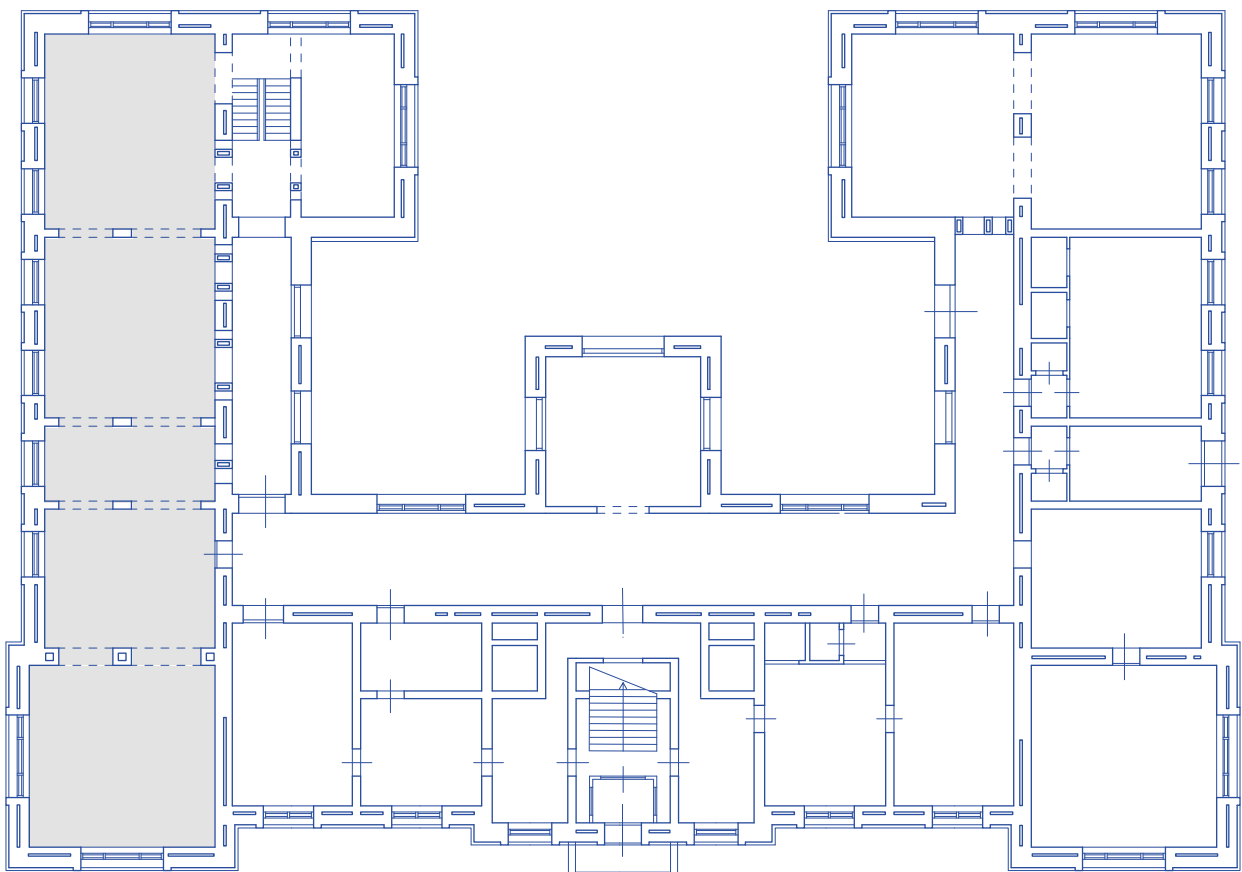


Longitudinal Section 1:250

Archive

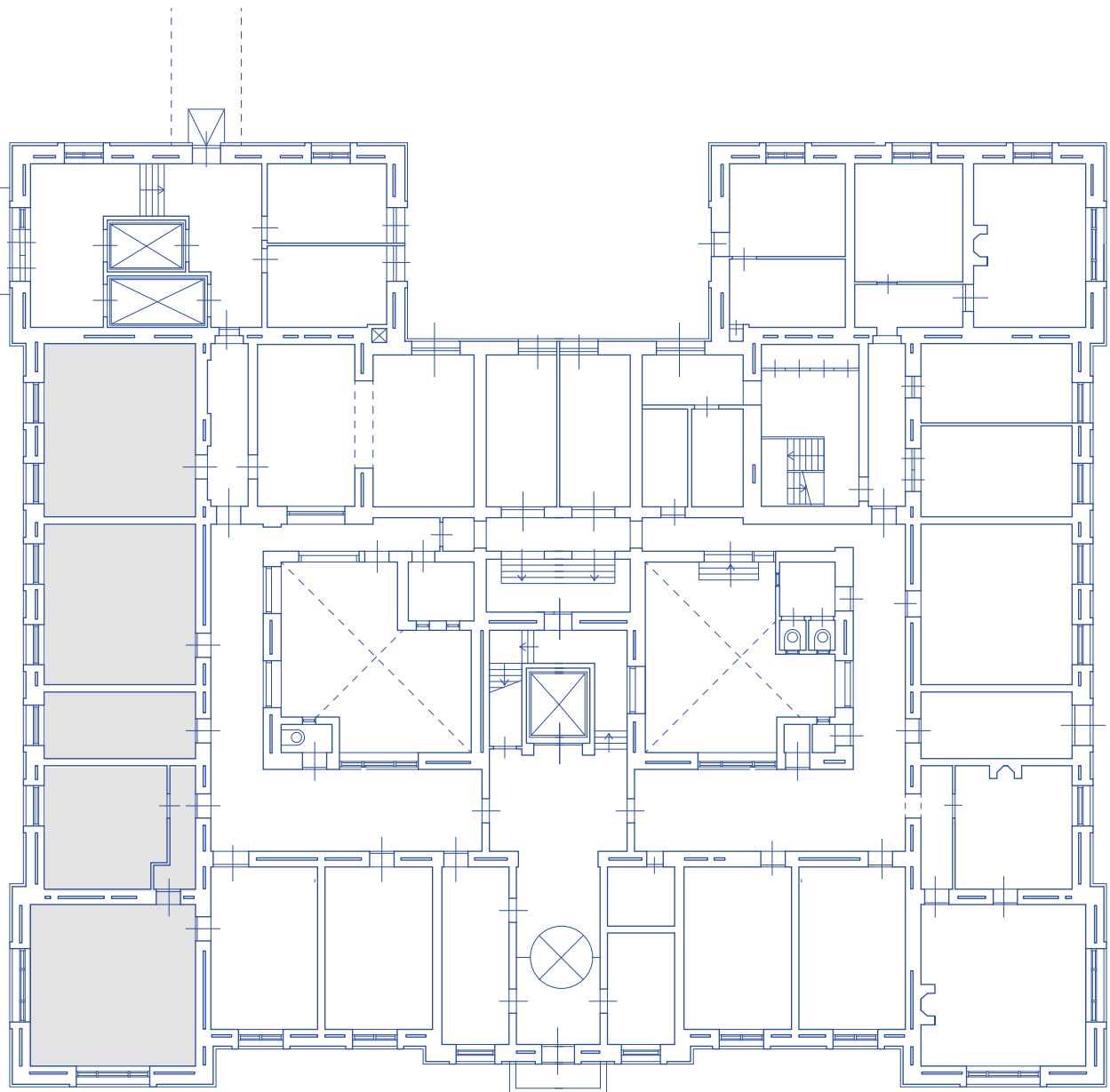
As seen on the Original Floor Plan, the Archive space was located on the left wing of the building. Besides a few columns that emphasize with the grid, it was one open space from the front façade all the way to the back of the building. In the current floor plan, we see that the open space has been divided into smaller spaces, which are currently serving as offices.

A SPACE OF REFLECTION



Original Floor Plan 1860 - Ground Floor 1:250





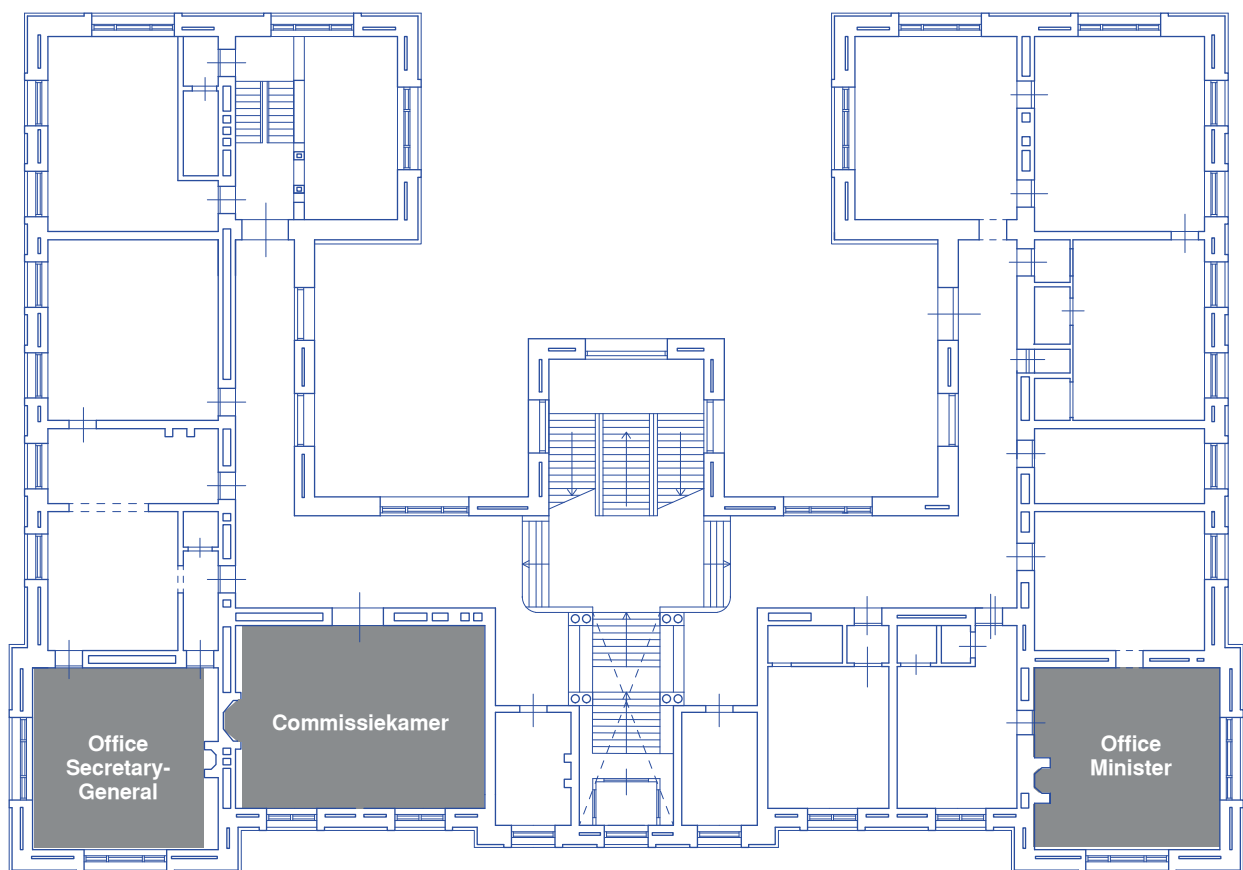
Current Floor Plan - Ground Floor 1:250



Important Rooms

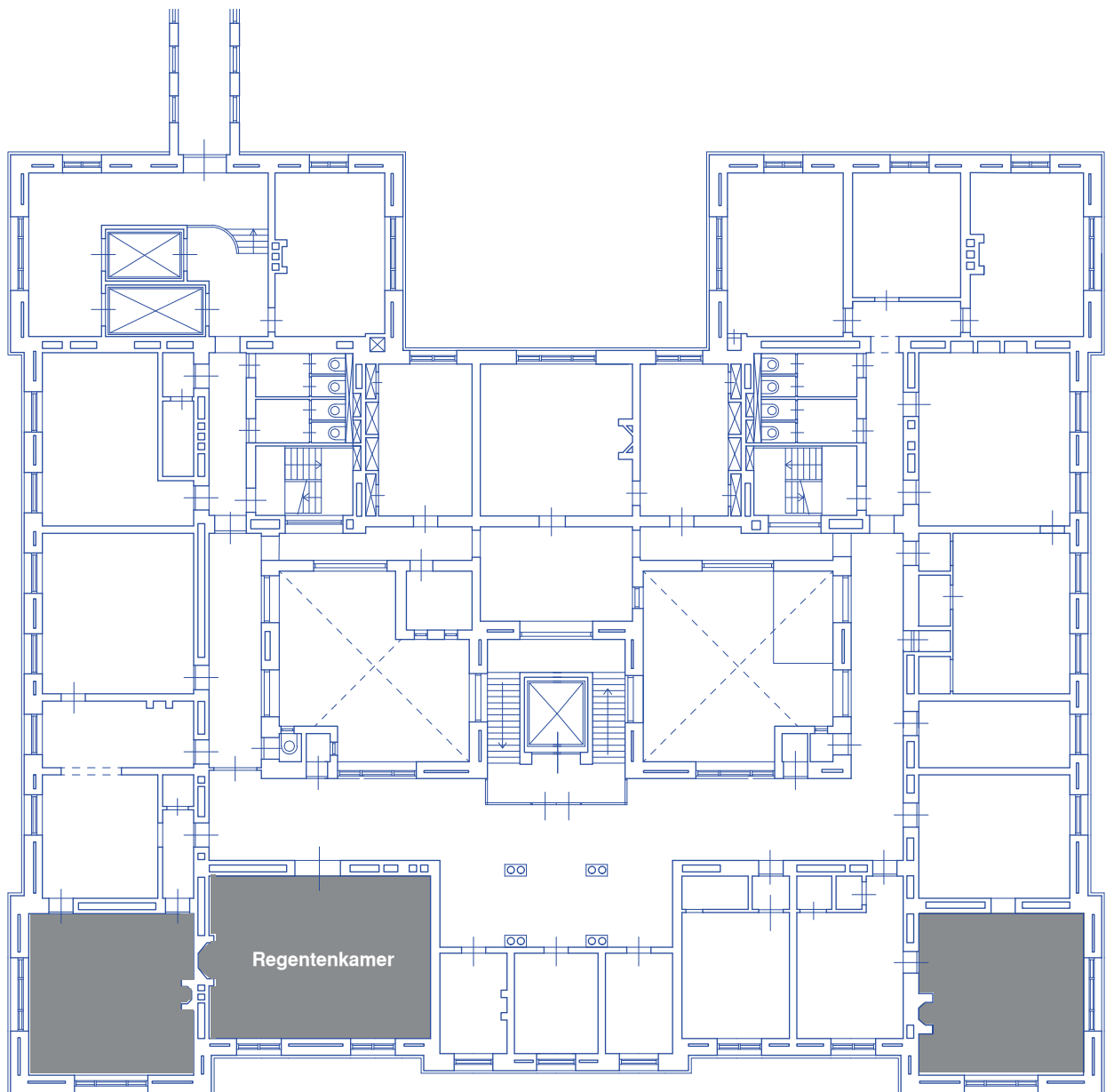
As mentioned before, the corner rooms on the first floor, were the most prominent ones. Big windows from two sides would allow a large amount of daylight to shine into the workspaces of the Minister and the Secretary General, as well as offering the best views of Het Plein and Het Mauritshuis. Yet, not these offices, but the Regentenkamer (or former 'Commissiekamer') has been concluded to be the most heavily loaded rooms of the building by the cultural historical report of Bureau Bouwtijd (2021).

A SPACE OF REFLECTION



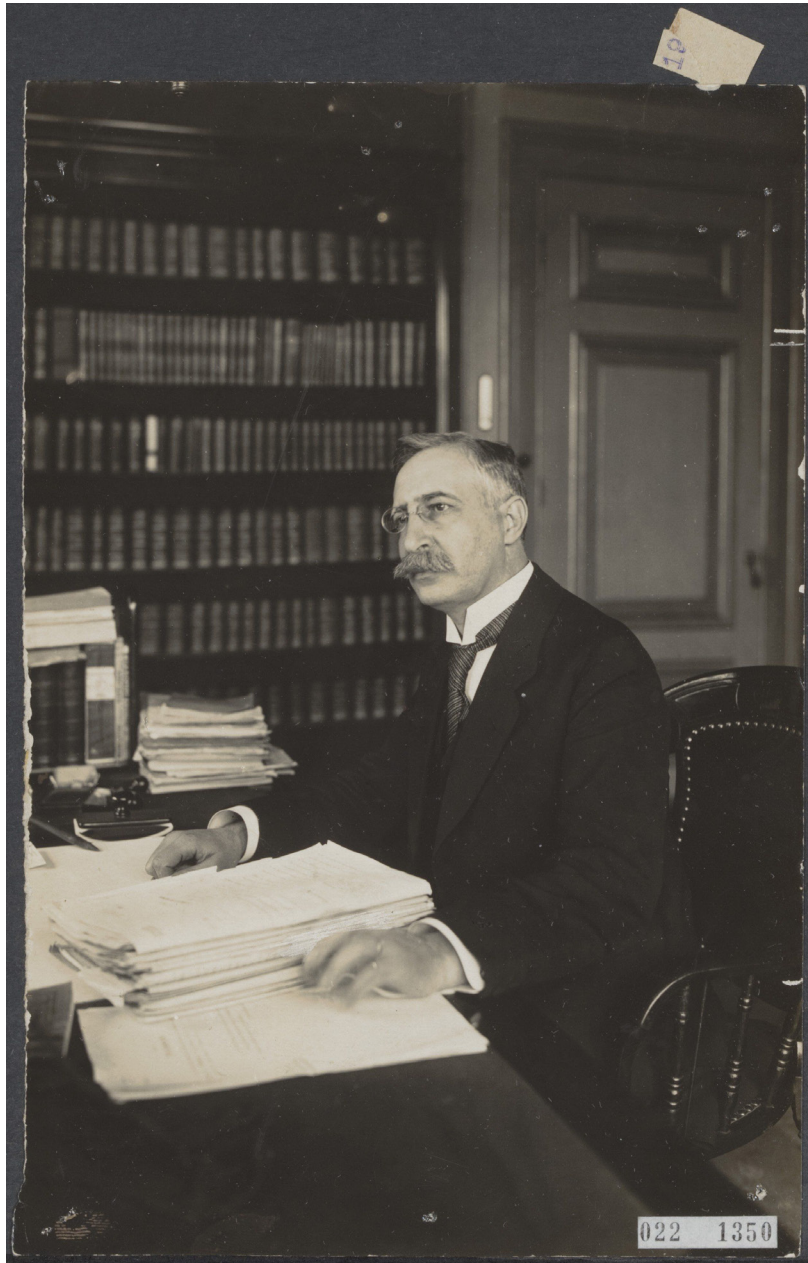
Original Floor Plan 1860 - First Floor 1:250





Current Floor Plan - First Floor 1:250





Secretary General Moresco Emanuel in his office
(NA, Fotograaf Vereenigde Fotobureaux, 1921, toeg.nr. 2.24.05.02, best.nr. 022-1350)



Council of Ministers in Regentenkamer
(HGA, Fotograaf E. Salomon, id.nr. 056456, picture taken before WOII)



Minister Koningsberger (1927) with title: 'The Dutch in their office'
(De Courant, Het nieuws van den dag, 8-4-1927)



Interior Regentenkamer

(D. (Dick) Valentijn, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, IvhB-0155)



Interior Regentenkamer

(D. (Dick) Valentijn, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, IvhB-0157)

Regentenkamer

Originally this space was called the ‘committee room’, but now we know it as Regentenkamer. The interior of this room is not the original way Rose designed it, it used to be way more plain before the space was renovated in 1898. Reason for this renovation was the fact that the Ministry of Colonies felt ashamed of welcoming important monarchs from the Dutch East Indies, and other important people that have high status in the Dutch colonies, into a room with such plain and simple interior (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021). And so, a very fast renovation was initiated, which had to be finished before the arrival of Dutch Indies monarchs. Many elements were added to the interior of the room, such as high chic panels on the walls, ornamentation on the ceiling, double doors with a quote above it, a mirror above the fireplace, a crystal chandelier and a number of portraits. The most prominent portrait is the one of Queen Wilhelmina, opposite of the fire place. But also the smaller portrait-panels are interesting, since they capture the faces of all former generals and governors of the former Dutch East Indies (Bureau Bouwtijd, 2021).



Portraits in Regentenkamer

(D. (Dick) Valentijn, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, IvhB-0154)



Detailed fire place in Regentenkamer

(D. (Dick) Valentijn, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, IvhB-0153)



Ceiling of Regentenkamer

D. (Dick) Valentijn, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, IvhB-0150



Corner details on ceiling of Regentenkamer

(D. (Dick) Valentijn, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, IvhB-0151)



Quote above the door: "There in the Dutch East Indies, something great can be established"

(D. (Dick) Valentijn, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, IvhB-0152)

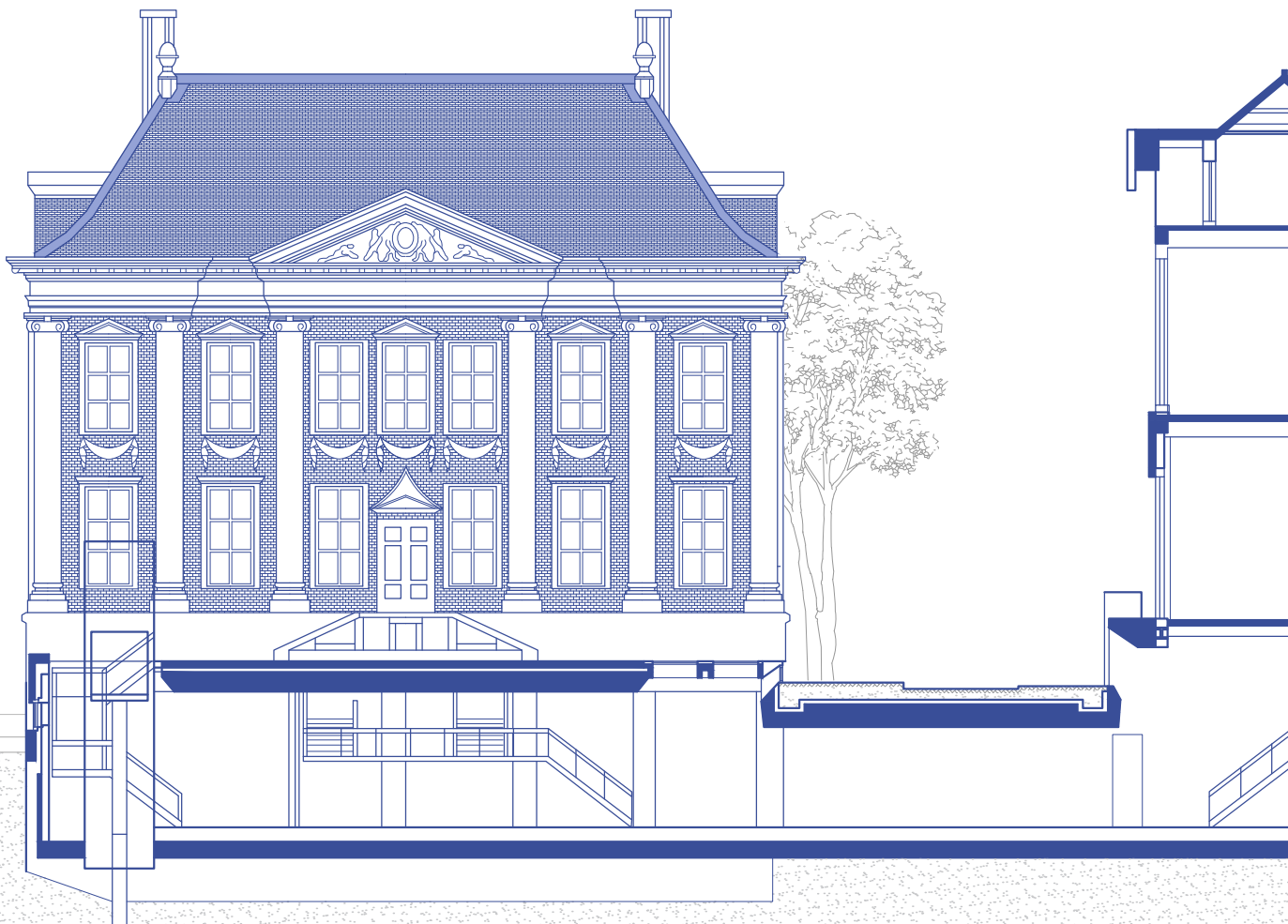
Mauritshuis

A SPACE OF REFLECTION





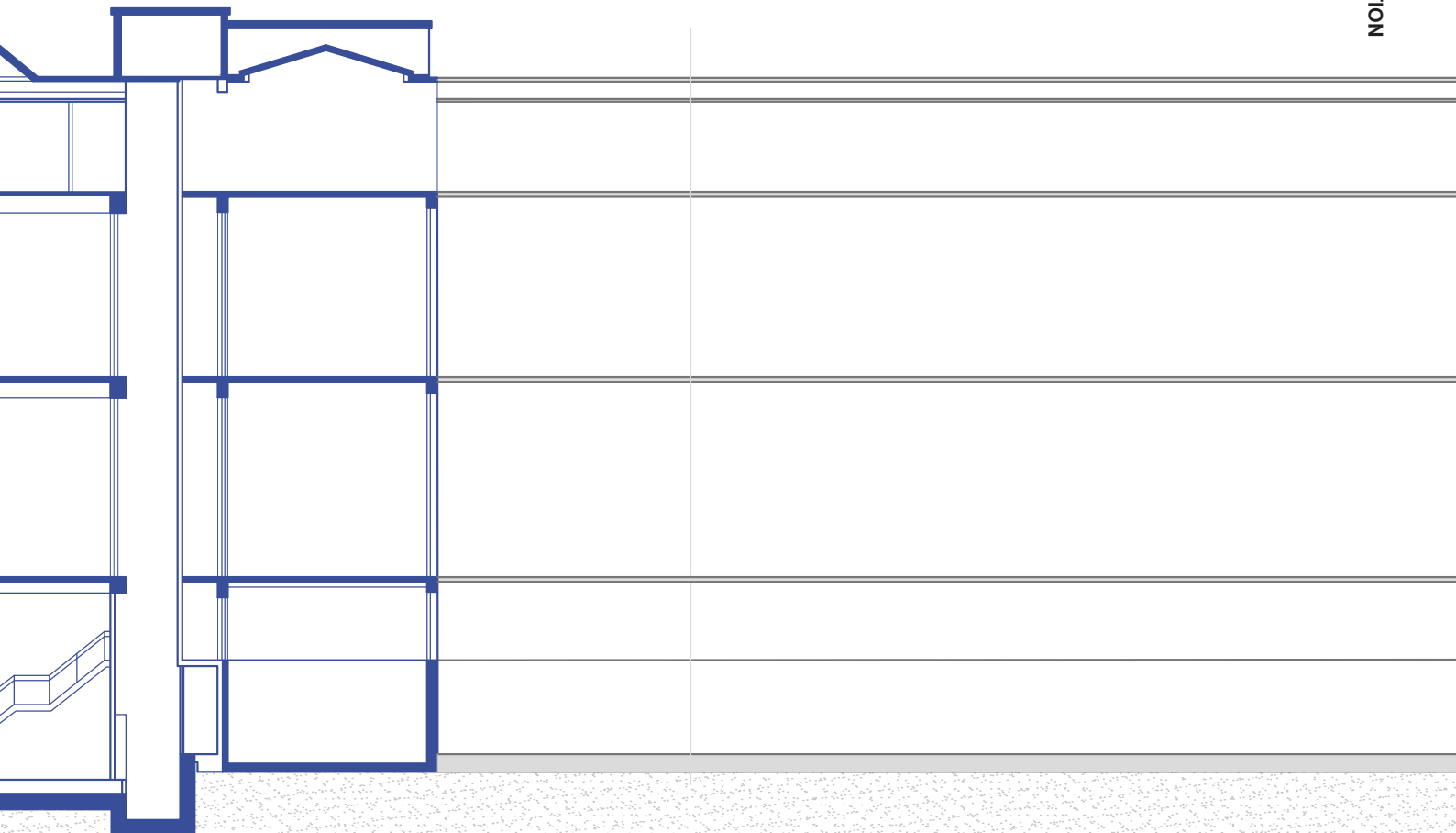
Mauritshuis is a well-visited museum with a world-famous collection of the Dutch Golden Age. The building was built halfway the 17th century, when it originally served as the living house of Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen, a former governor in the Dutch-Brazilian colony in name of the West-Indies Company (WIC). Maurits only lived here for a few years after which he moved to Germany, leaving the building to serve as a temporary house for himself, as well as other important governors, when visiting the city of The Hague. It was in 1795 that city-governor Willem V started the core of the art selection of this future museum, which have been temporarily stored in other places as well, before returning to Mauritshuis in 1822. Ever since, the building has been functioning as a museum, originally with artworks that belonged to the Royal Cabinet of Paintings, and on the ground floor level: the Cabinet of Rarities. Only in 1875 the entire building was used for showcasing paintings (Mauritshuis, n.d.).



Architect Johan van Campen chose the Dutch Classicism style for the design of the Mauritshuis, using classical elements like columns, capitals, cornices and tympanums. The symmetry of the facades is clearly shown, as well as the use of natural stones. Mauritshuis was one of the earliest examples of this architectural style in The Netherlands, after which many other buildings would follow (Mauritshuis, n.d.).

Since renovations in 2012-2014, the Mauritshuis is connected with the corner of Societeit de Witte through an underground foyer, which is shown in the drawings. In the original 'house' the permanent collection of the museum can be found, in the expansion on the other side of the street, there are more exhibition spaces, offices, a library, a museum café and the art workshops (Mauritshuis, n.d.).

A SPACE OF REFLECTION



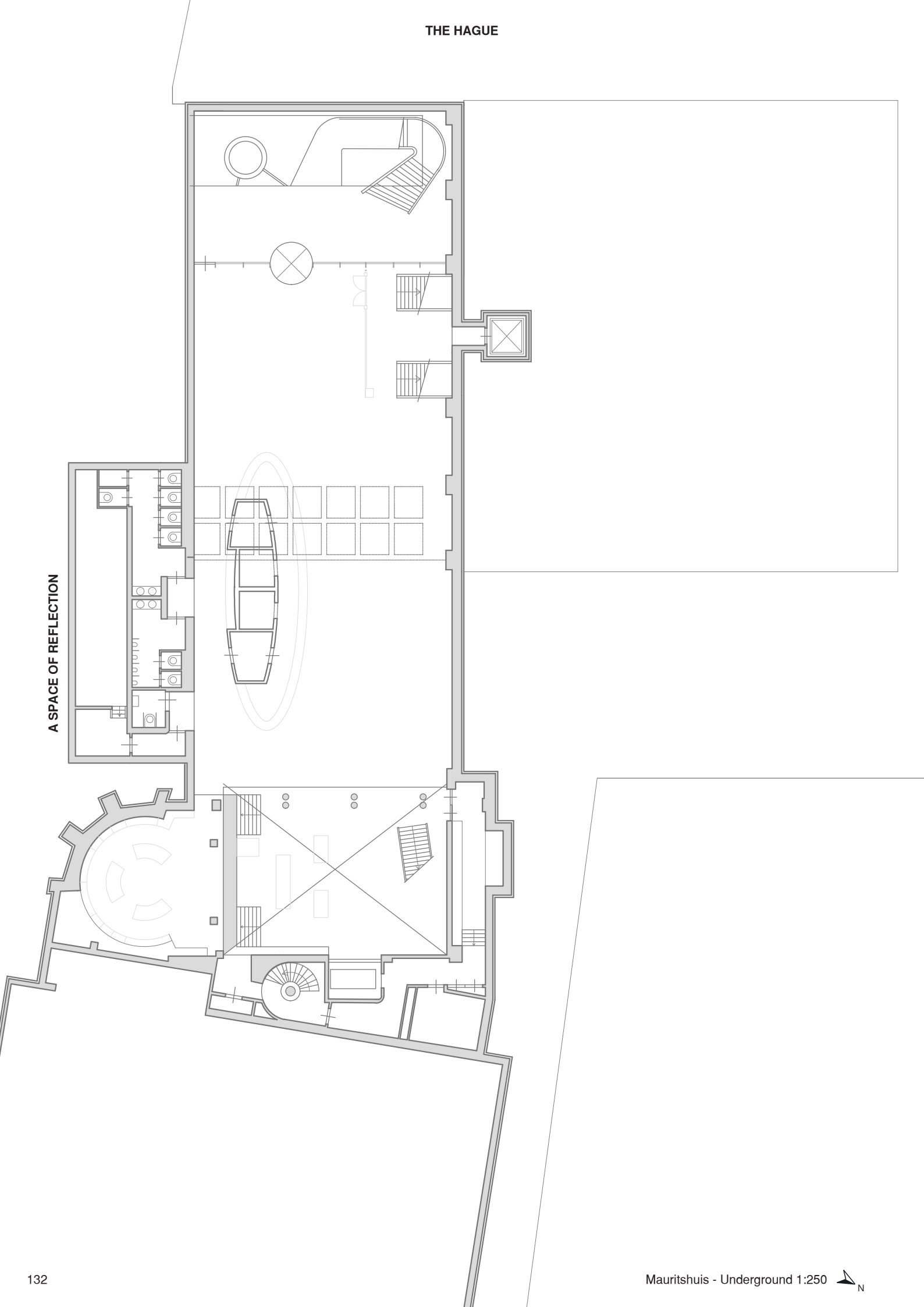
The nickname of this Mauritshuis is 'Sugarpalace', referring to the money sources of the governor that allowed this building to be built: slave trading, sugar trading and exploitation of people on sugar plantations. It is unclear how much money the establishment of this building costed, but it is speculated that we are talking about at least to be 640 times the yearly income of a regular craftsman back in that time, which says enough about the amount of money Johan Maurits retrieved from his colonial business in Brazile (Mauritshuis, n.d.).

A SPACE OF REFLECTION

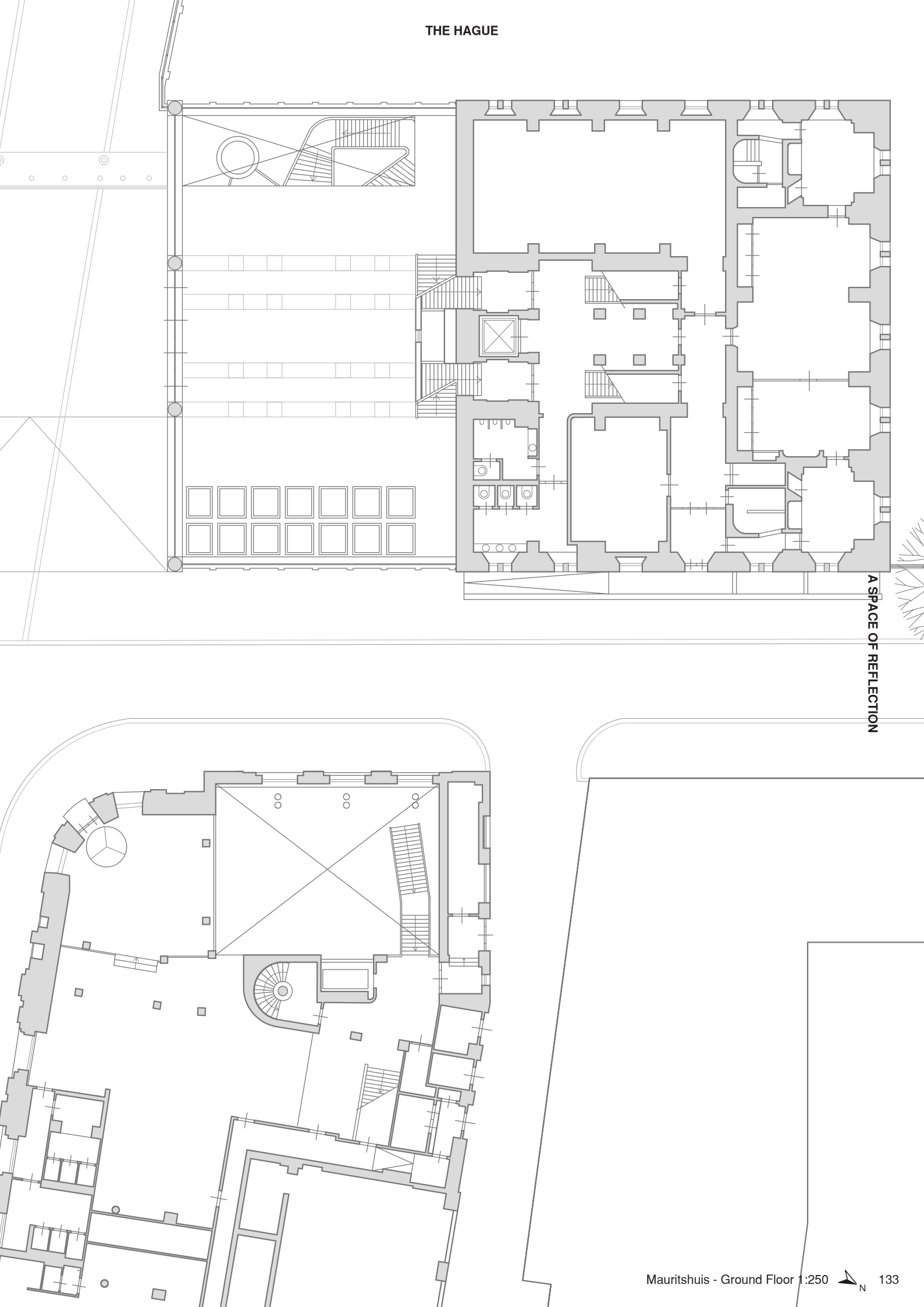


When visiting the museum, one gets very limited information about the dark side of the Dutch Golden Age, or the facts related to the establishment of this living house for a colonial governor. The art pieces are more so celebrated in ornamented interior spaces, hung up in chic golden frames. I see potential for my design to complement this pretty story with other, mostly darker, narratives related to this same past. Perhaps, we will look differently at these art pieces ones we know the complete story of the 'Dutch Golden Age', and are capable of putting things into perspective.





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Mauritshuis entrance (author, 2024)



Mauritshuis entrance (author, 2024)



Entrance foyer (author, 2024)

A SPACE OF REFLECTION



Museum shop and cafe (author, 2024)



Central hallway original Mauritshuis (author, 2024)



Exhibition room (author, 2024)



Exhibition room (author, 2024)



Explanatory text Mauritshuis (author, 2024)



Exhibition room (author, 2024)

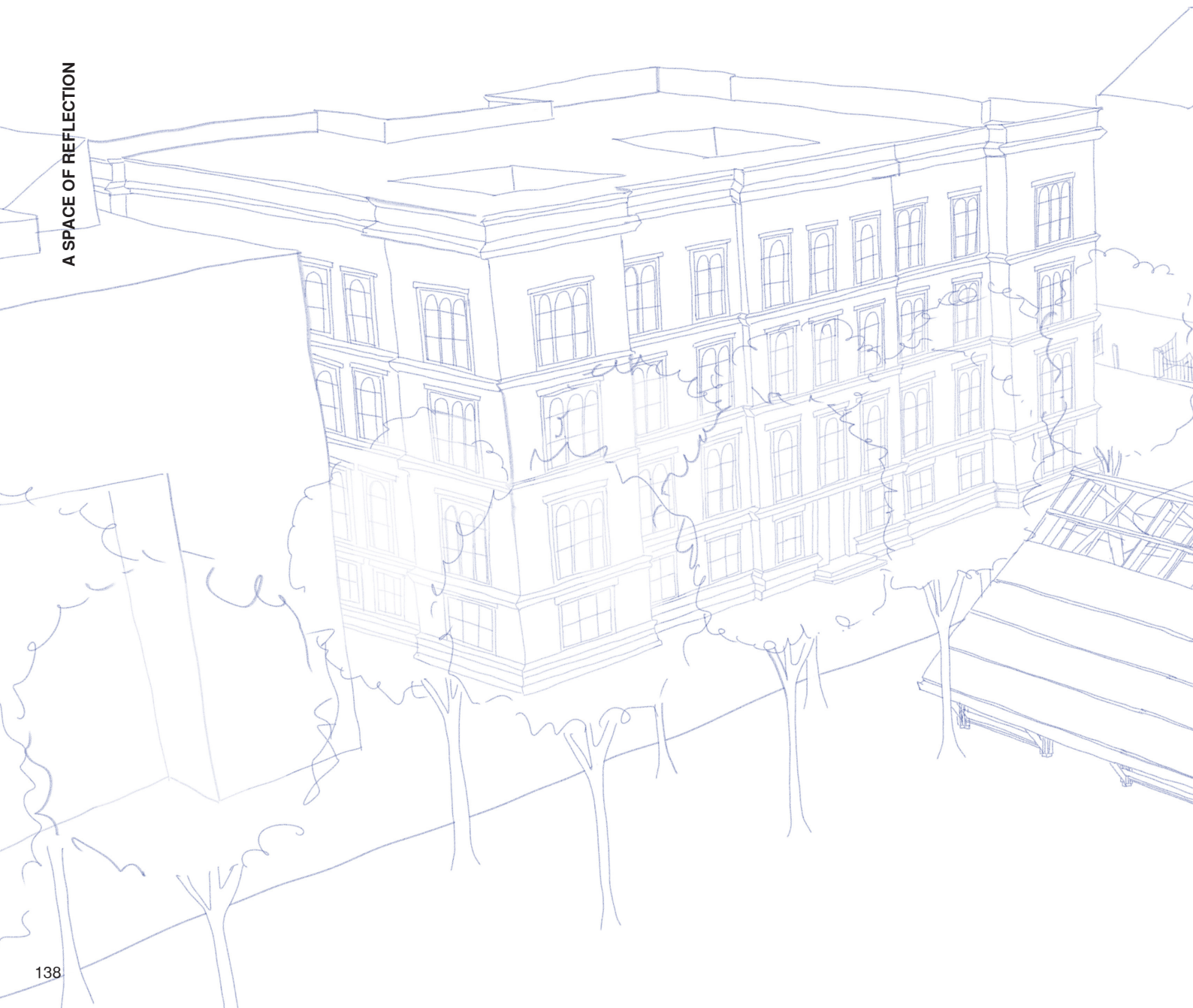


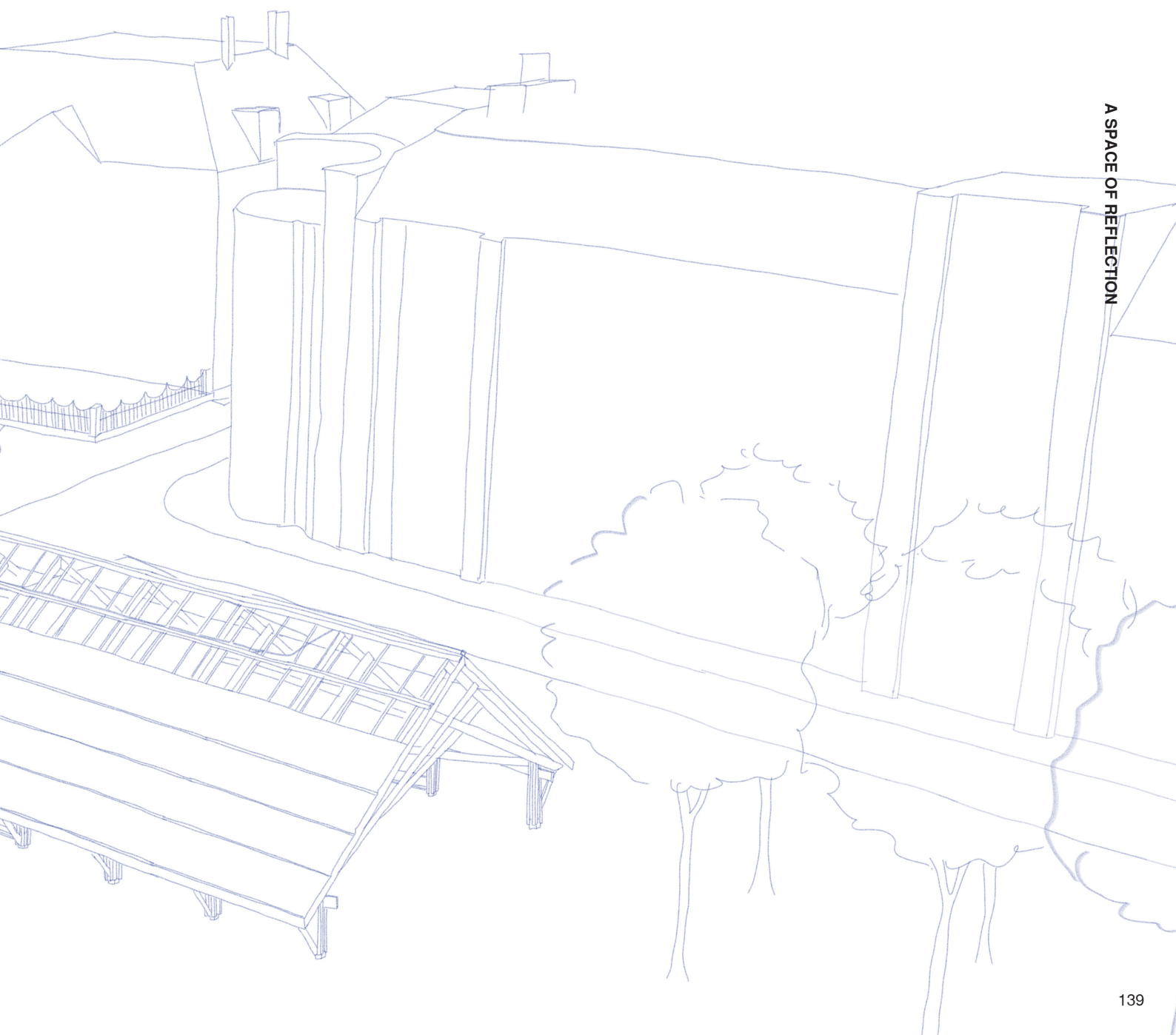
View from Mauritshuis to former Ministry of Colonies (author, 2024)

Act V.

The Design

A SPACE OF REFLECTION





A SPACE OF REFLECTION



Overview

- 1 House of Free Speech
- 2 Underground
- 3 Open Archive
- 4 Mauritshuis

Based on the social-historical, theoretical and site-specific research that I conducted, I came to a response in the form of a design intervention. My design response consists out of three new elements, which are then connected to the already existing *Mauritshuis*.

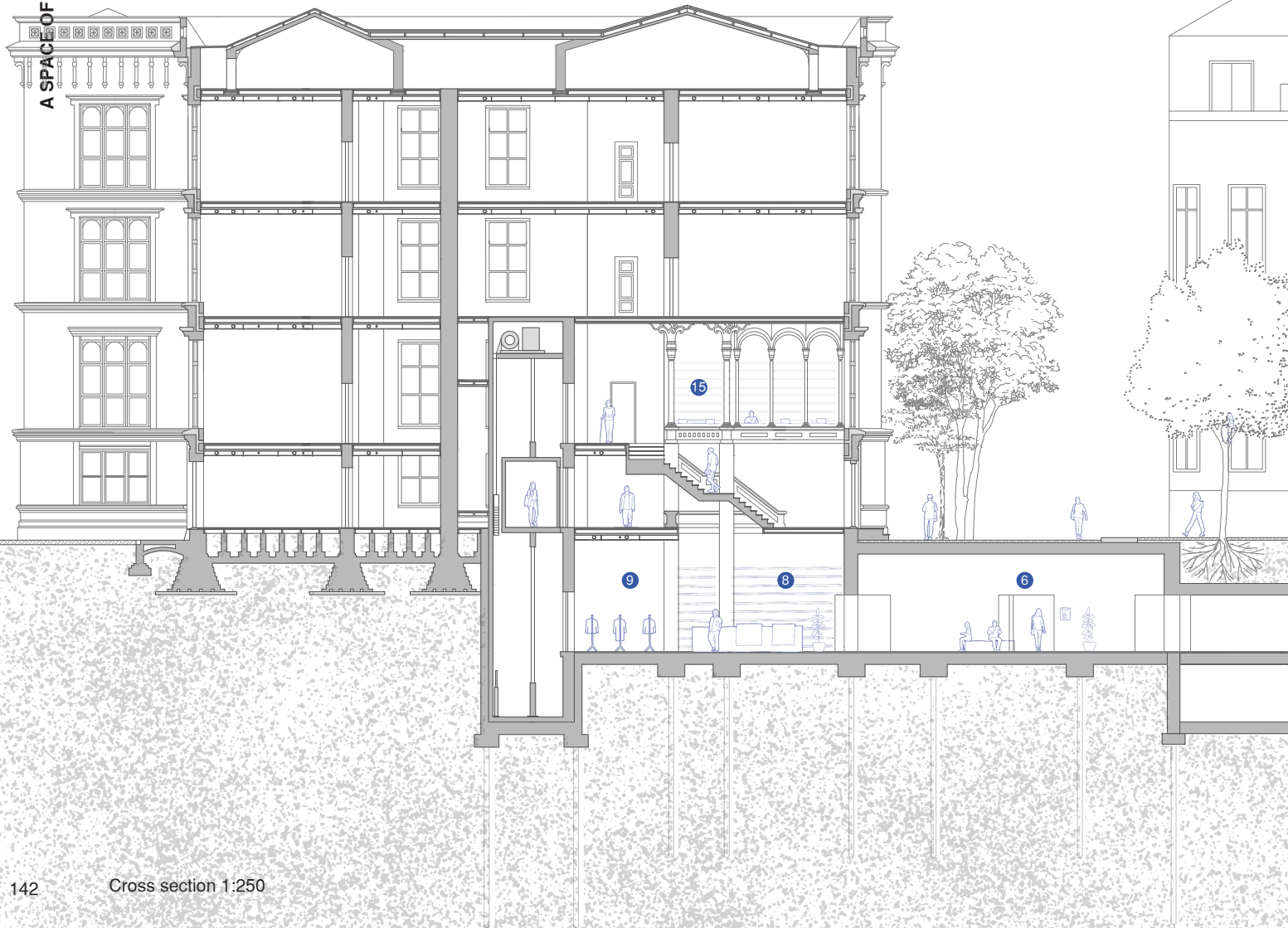
The first spatial element is the *House of Free Speech*, a wooden pavilion located on Het Plein. Underneath the pavilion roof, a staircase leads you down into the *underground*, where connections are made with the Former Ministry of Colonies and Mauritshuis. The tunnel that connects Mauritshuis with the two other buildings, could potentially serve as an exhibition space that does not only physically, but also symbolically connect the three institutes into a more intertwined story on our colonial past. The former Ministry of Colonies will finally open their doors and unravel (his)stories that have been kept away from the public or intentionally silenced, in the form of an *open archive*. Stories about the role of the former Ministry and the decisions that were made, but also space for unheard narratives to speak up about the consequences of the colonial era and the Ministry that was in charge of it.

The spatial interventions will be further explained in the following pages in terms of architecture, materialization, technical details, symbolic meaning and potential programme infill.

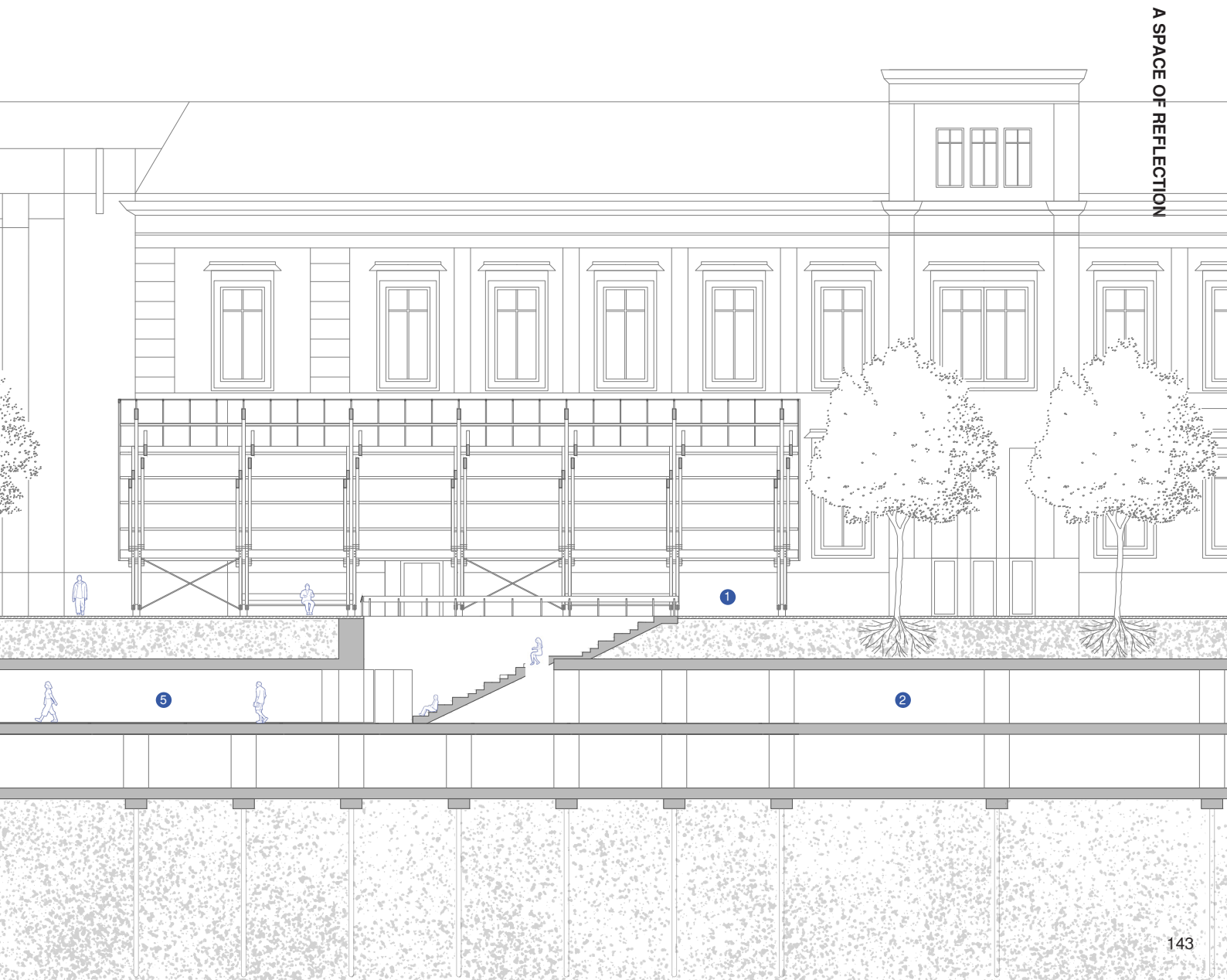
Programme

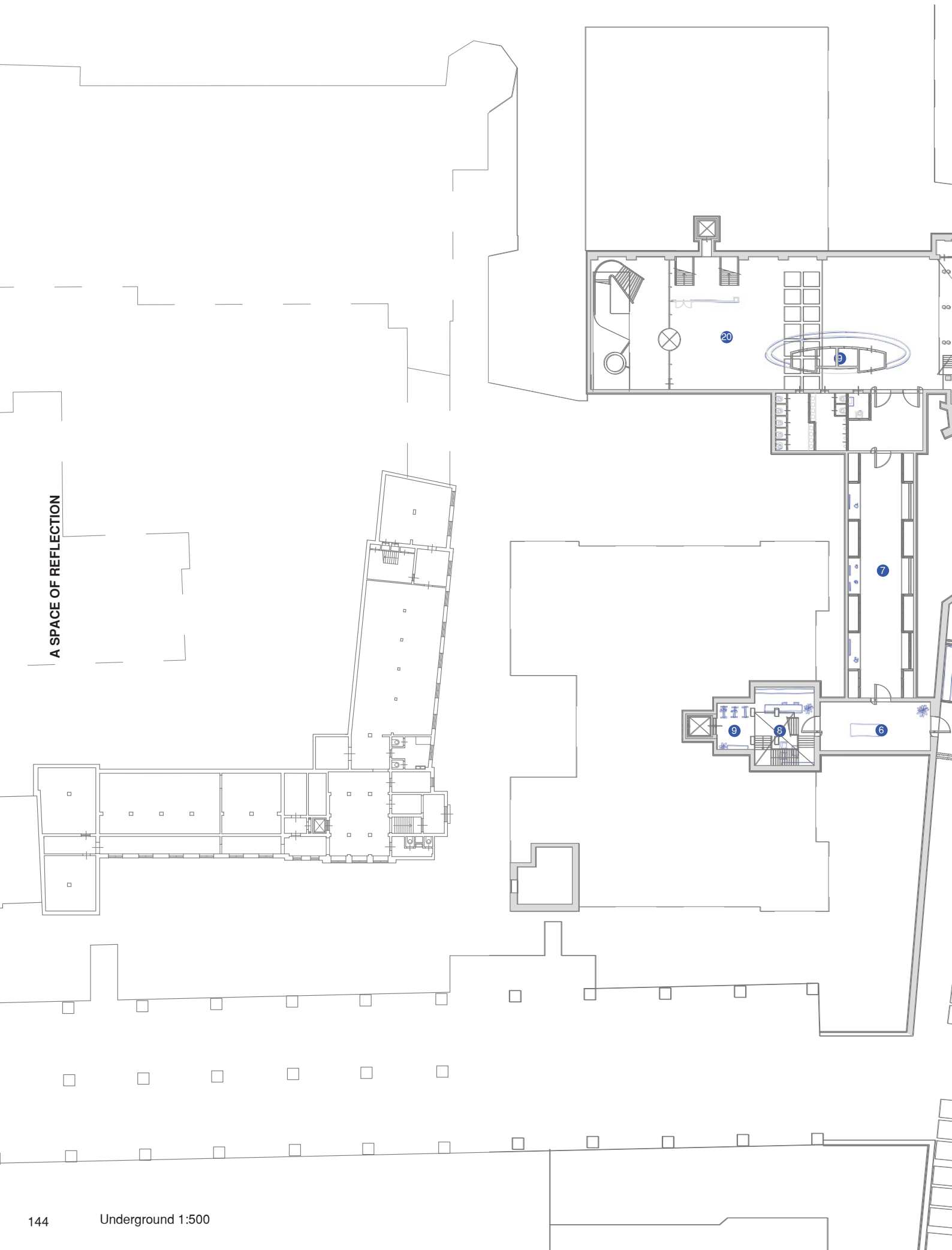
- 1 House of Free Speech
- 2 Parking garage
- 3 Parking garage circulation space
- 4 Storage space / back of house
- 5 Projection room
- 6 Orientation room
- 7 Underground exhibition space
- 8 Library entrance
- 9 Cloakroom
- 10 Experience room
- 11 Office
- 12 Interview room

A SPACE OF REFLECTION



- 13 Welcoming room
- 14 Archive of unheard stories
- 15 Library working space
- 16 Fomer Minister office
- 17 Archive space
- 18 Regentenkamer - Archive reading room
- 19 Former Secretary-General office
- 20 Mauritshuis museum entrance
- 21 Museum shop
- 22 Museum cafe
- 23 Workshop room
- 24 Exhibition space

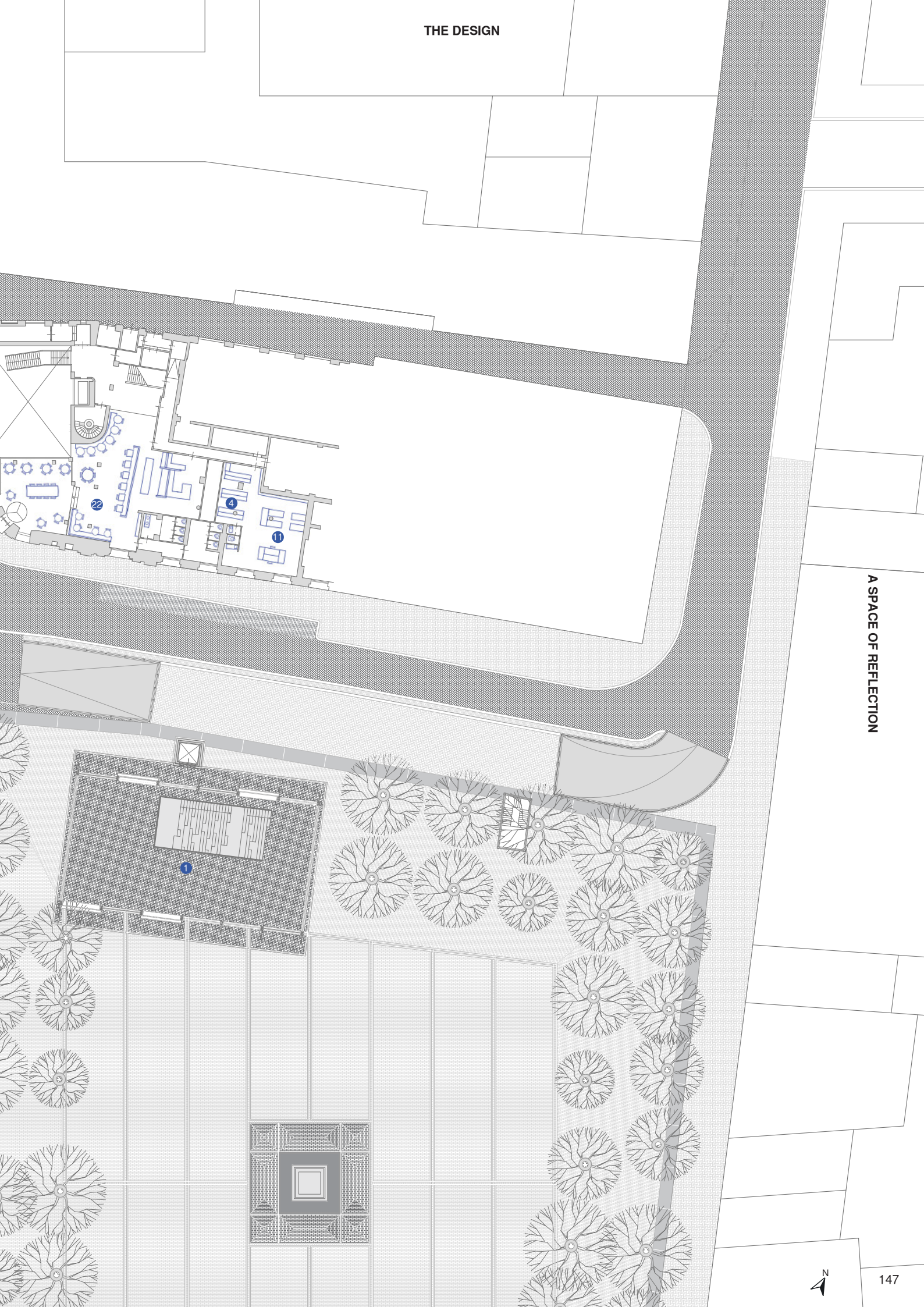








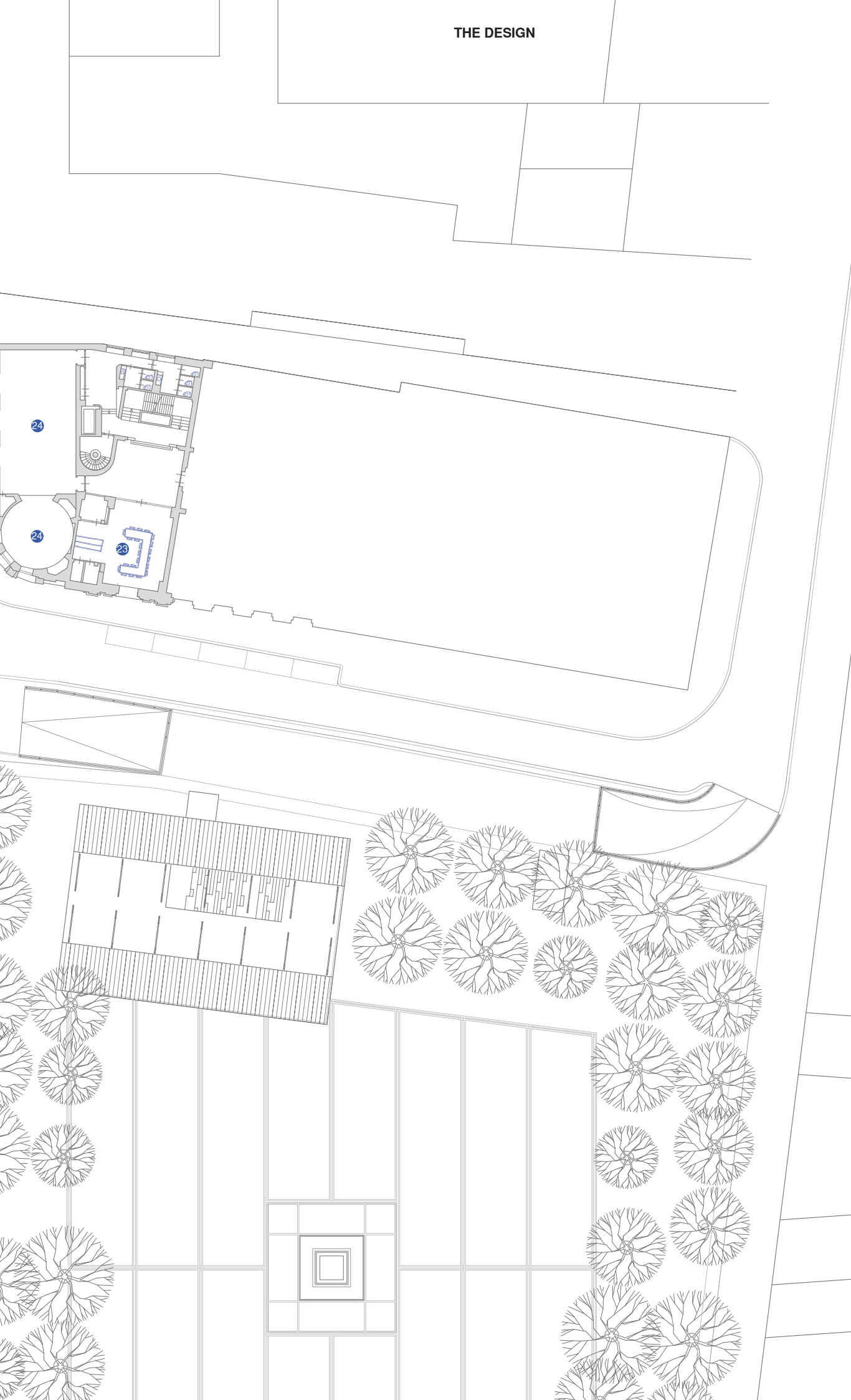
A SPACE OF REFLECTION



A SPACE OF REFLECTION







House of Free Speech



The House of Free Speech is a wooden structure located on the North-West corner of Het Plein. It somehow feels like the structure brings the statue of Willem van Oranje out of balance. Where Willem once used to be the centre point of attention, surrounded by a lane of trees and street patterns that emphasized with him being the middle point, there now is a this entity on the square that pulls gravity towards itself: “a roof”. That this pavilion distorts the previously existing balance of the square of the statue in the middle, is also seen in the adjustments in the street patterns (see site plan page 146-147). The roof is oriented in such a way that it starts to play

a role in the circular lane of Linde trees that goes around the square, as well as serving as a tunnel that puts extra focus on the former Ministry of Colonies building. The choice of a light structure from local Dutch oak, looks odd within the context of brick buildings and heavy structures in its direct surroundings. But the slim columns and lack of walls also establish a welcoming character. The beams and columns seem to be braided into one another, with a layered roof that covers the area like a soft blanket. Underneath the pavilion roof, a staircase invites you into the underground.



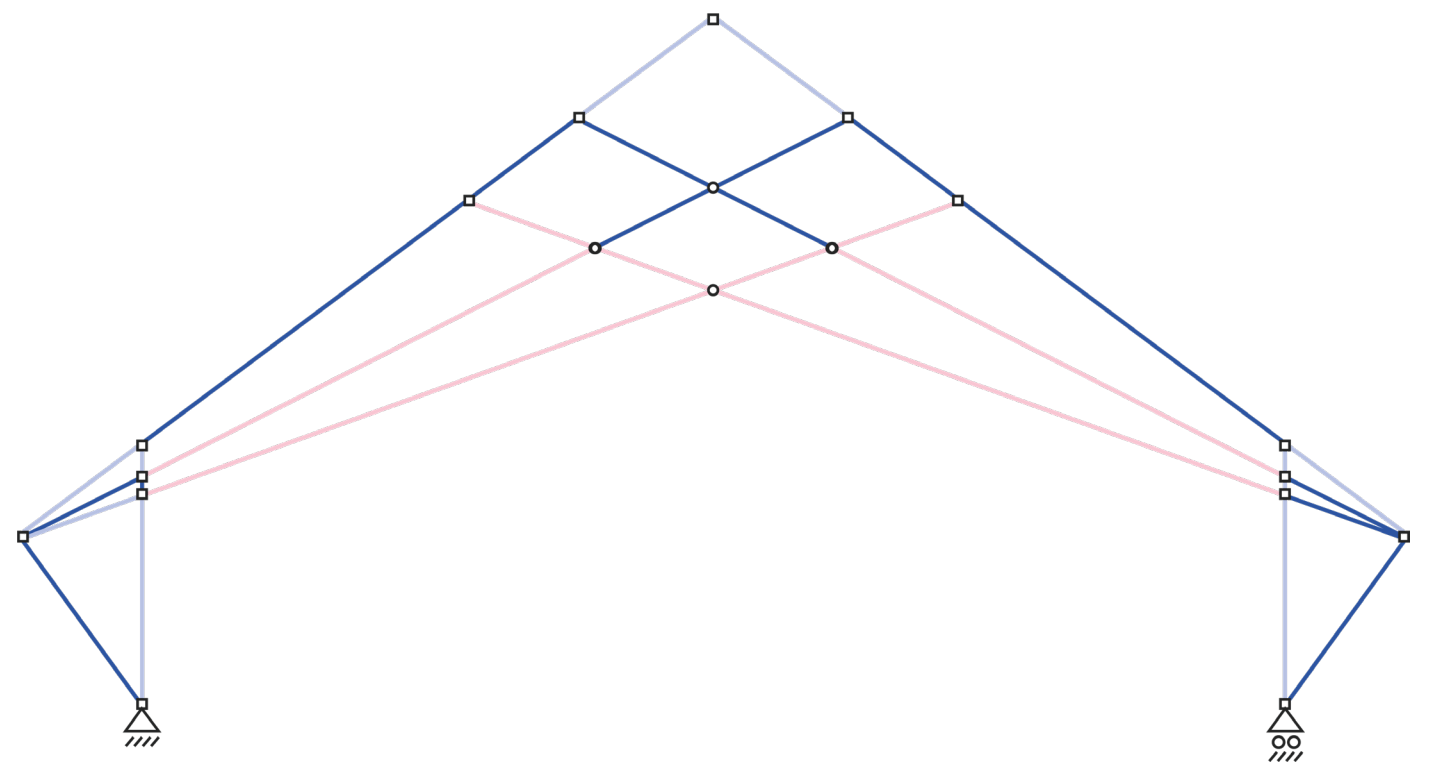
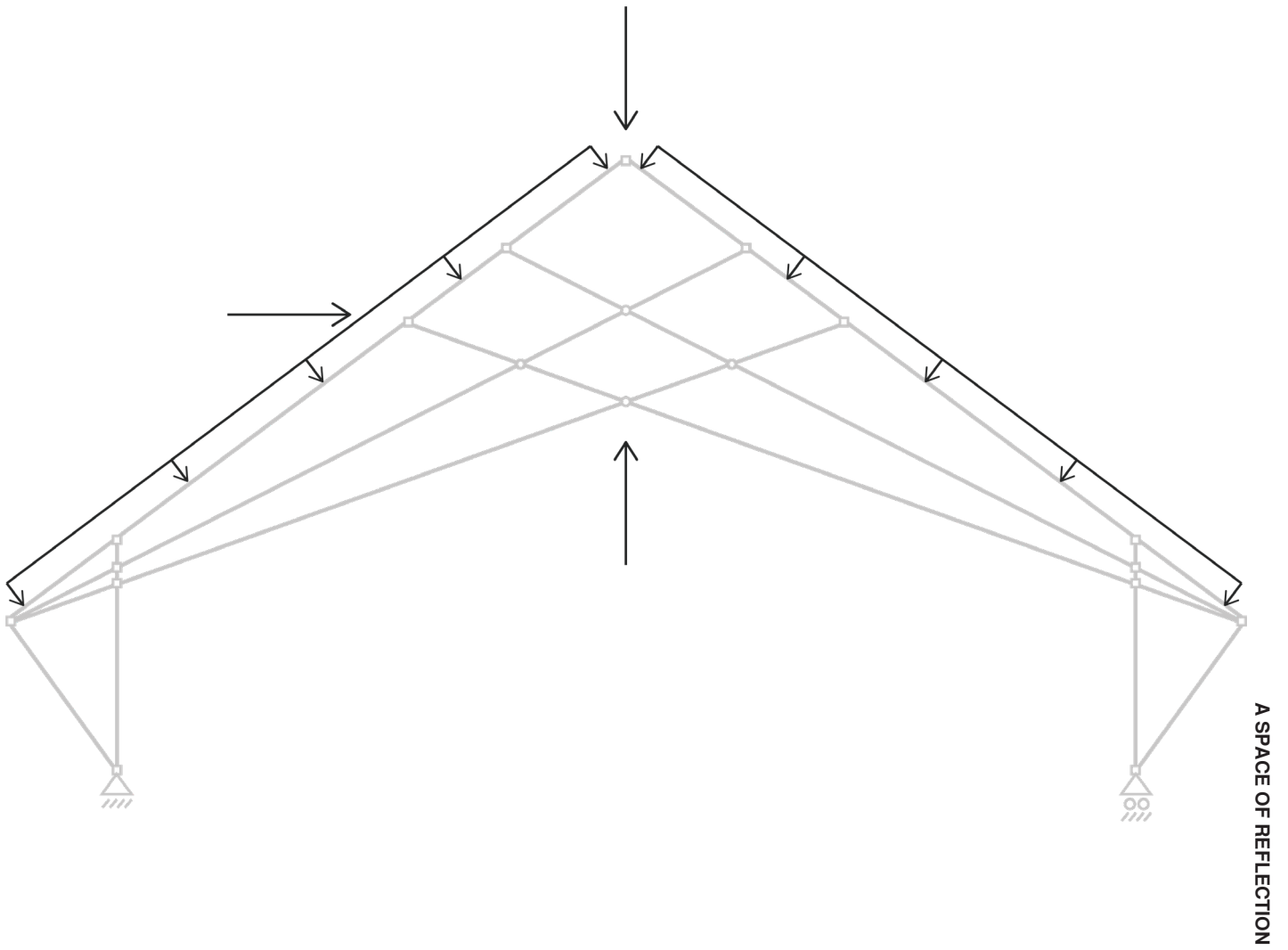




The wooden span, of which there are seven in total, have a unique shape and therefore questions may rise on how the forces in this pavilion structure actually work. I decided to test this in a Civil engineering computer program, called Matrix. In the programme I had to draw the columns and beams, but also decide where the moment-resistant and the hinge connections should be placed. Then I imagined what type of forces are possibly working on the pavilion span, which are mainly wind forces from above, the sides and underneath. There is also a constant weight of the roof resting on the wooden structure. I put the forces in the Matrix program and a very detailed set of data came out of it. Based on all this data, I determined whether each beam and column mostly deals with pressure or tension forces, in order to get a better understanding of how the forces flow through the structure. The detailed data set also allowed me to see on which 'zones' in the inclined beams, there is the smallest momentum. These zones are the very spots where the separate beams are connected to one another, in order to form a long diagonal beam. On the next page, this Japanese wood connection is visualized.



THE DESIGN

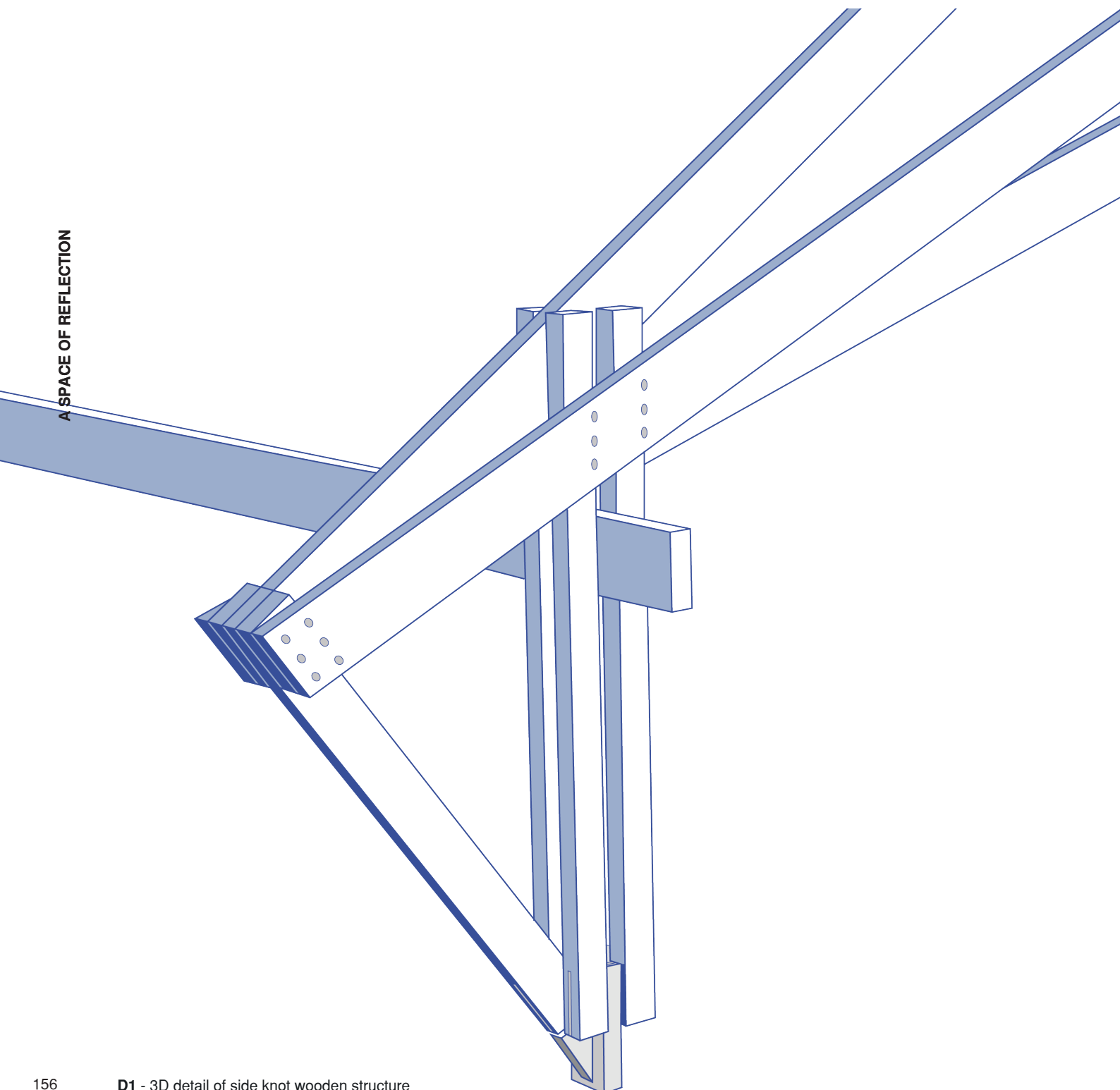


The pavilion structure is made out of Dutch oak wood, a local material from the Dutch country side. The structure consists out of quadruple vertical slim columns, with inclined beams positioned within and right against this aesthetic column element.

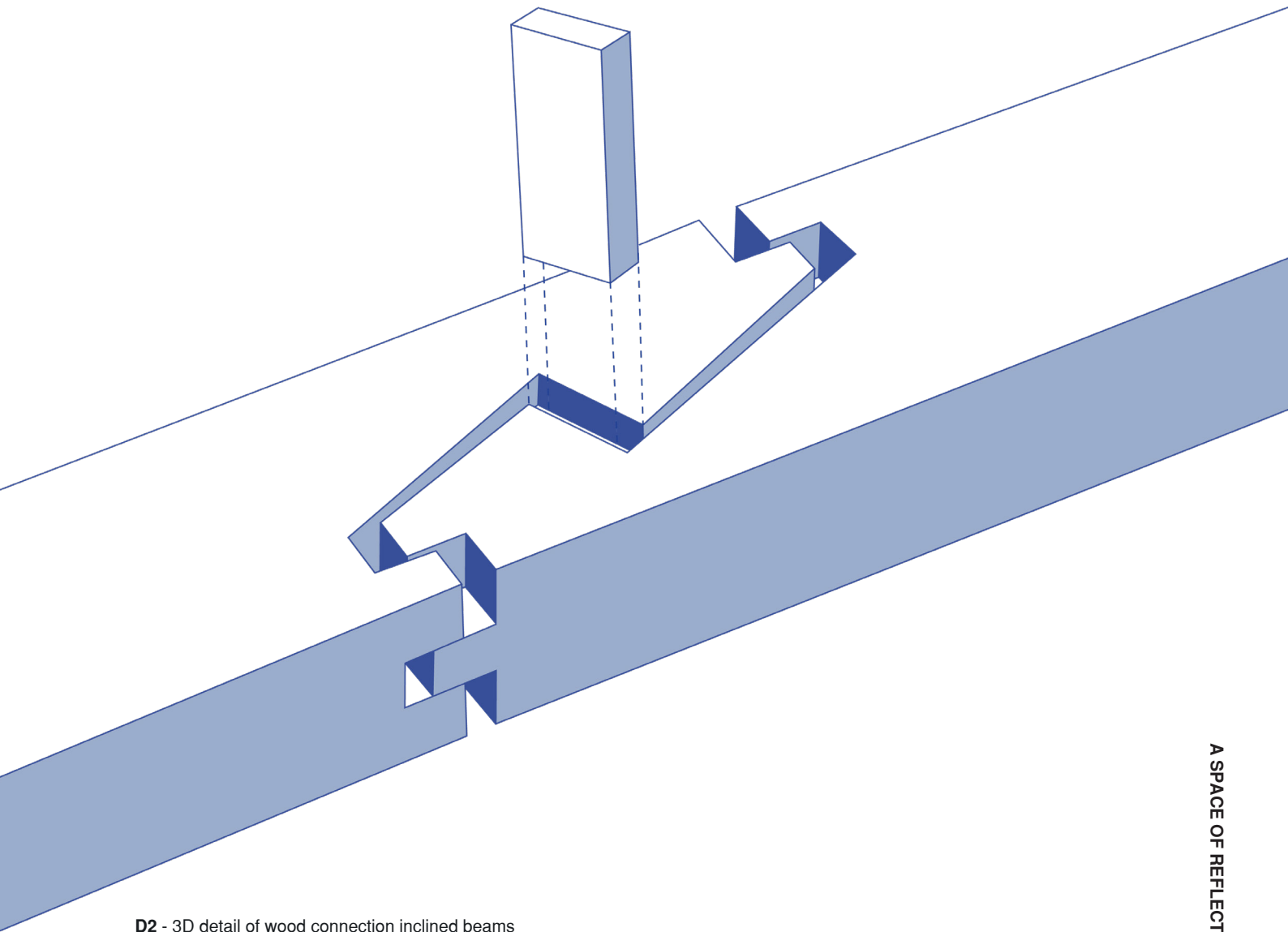
Beams and columns are braided together, as well as the left and right part of the span are braided together at the top of the structure. This act of braiding, which relates to the symbolic meaning of 'braiding histories together', allows for each beam to gain the attention it deserves. They all

collaborate in the act of holding up the roof, as well as creating a unique piece of architecture where the honesty of the structure is dominant for its spatial qualities. The inclined beams are made out of three smaller beams, connected through a Japanese joinery method, using a specific cutout and a rectangular wooden wedge to lock the beams together (see D2).

There are seven wooden spans in total that keep the pavilion roof up. Cross beams penetrate throughout the quadruple column elements of these seven spans, allowing for stability.

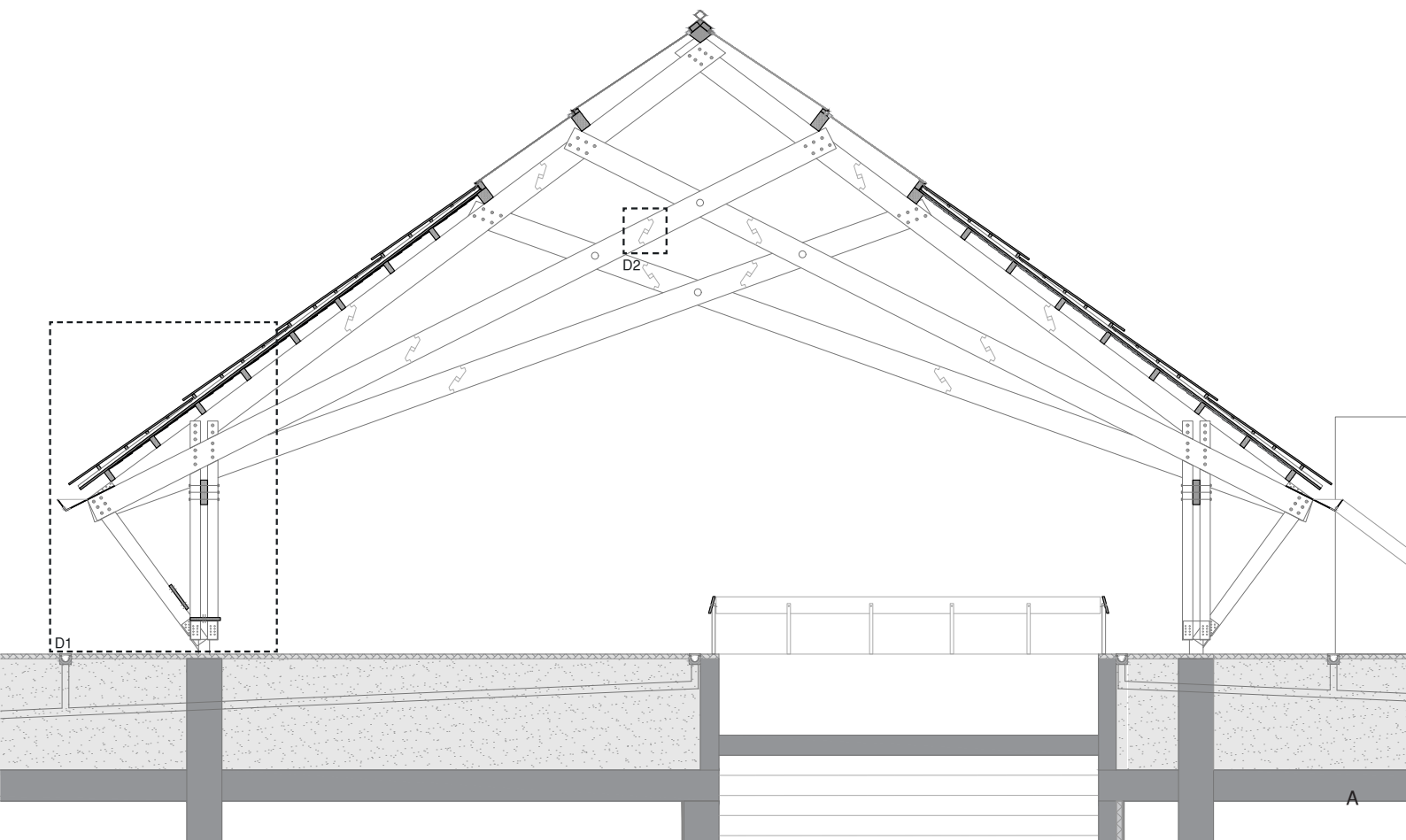


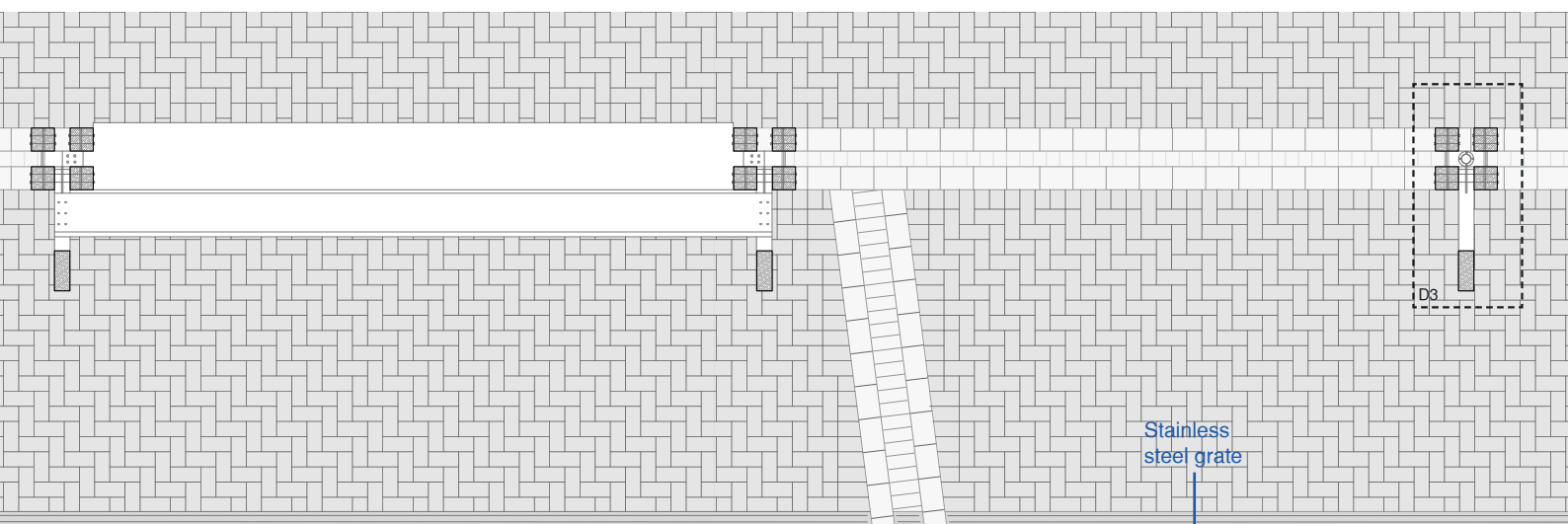
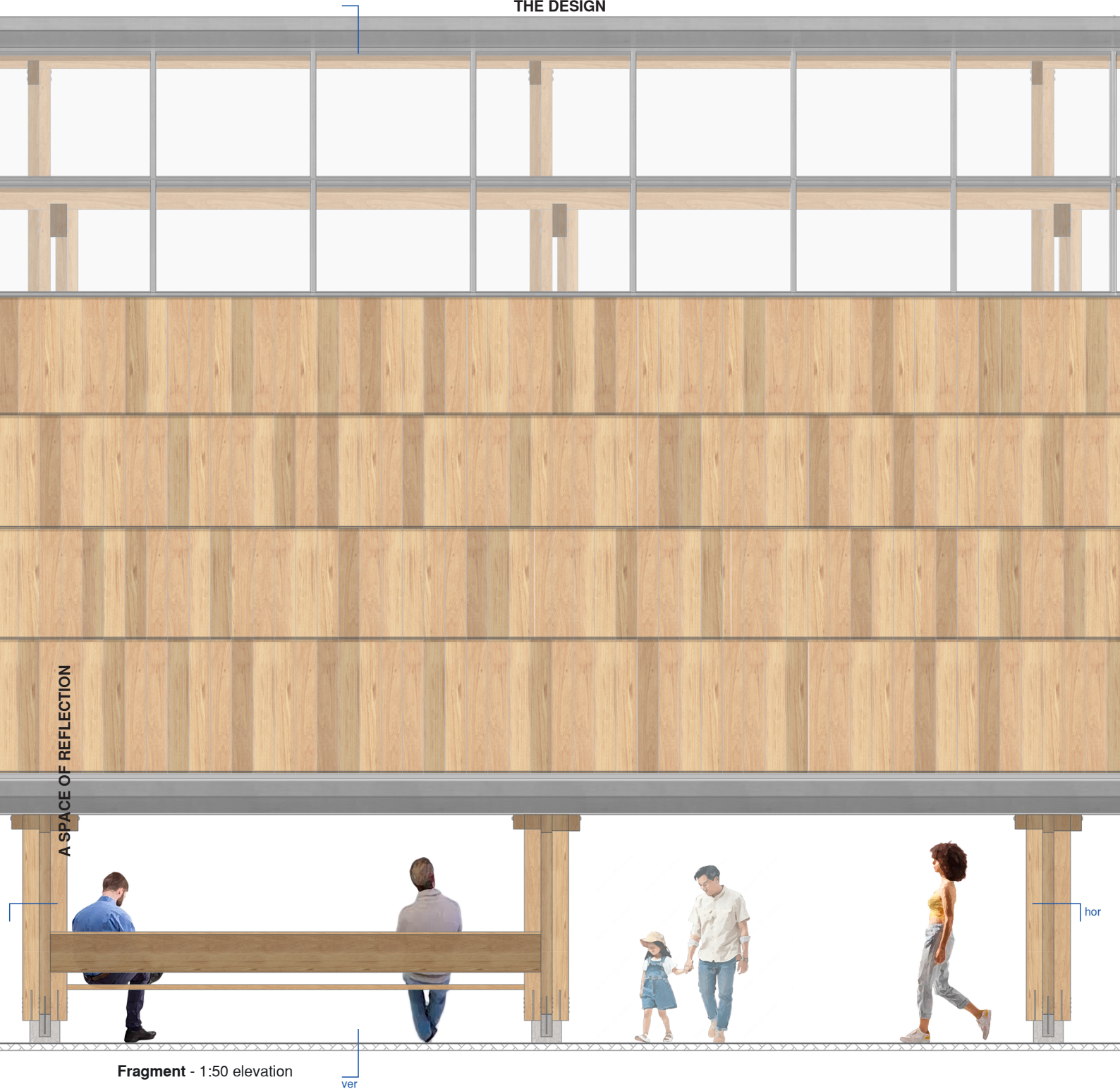
THE DESIGN



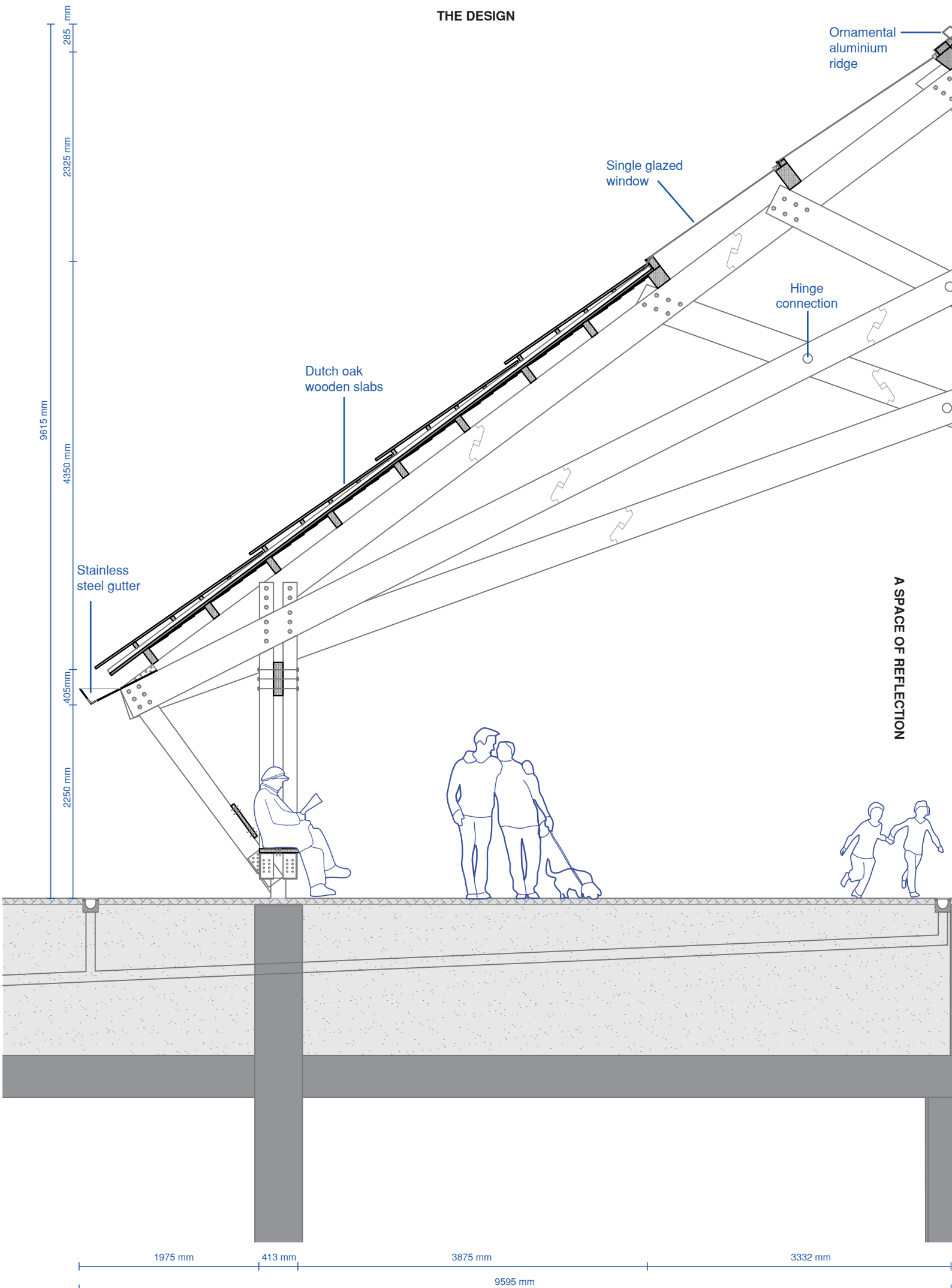
D2 - 3D detail of wood connection inclined beams

A SPACE OF REFLECTION

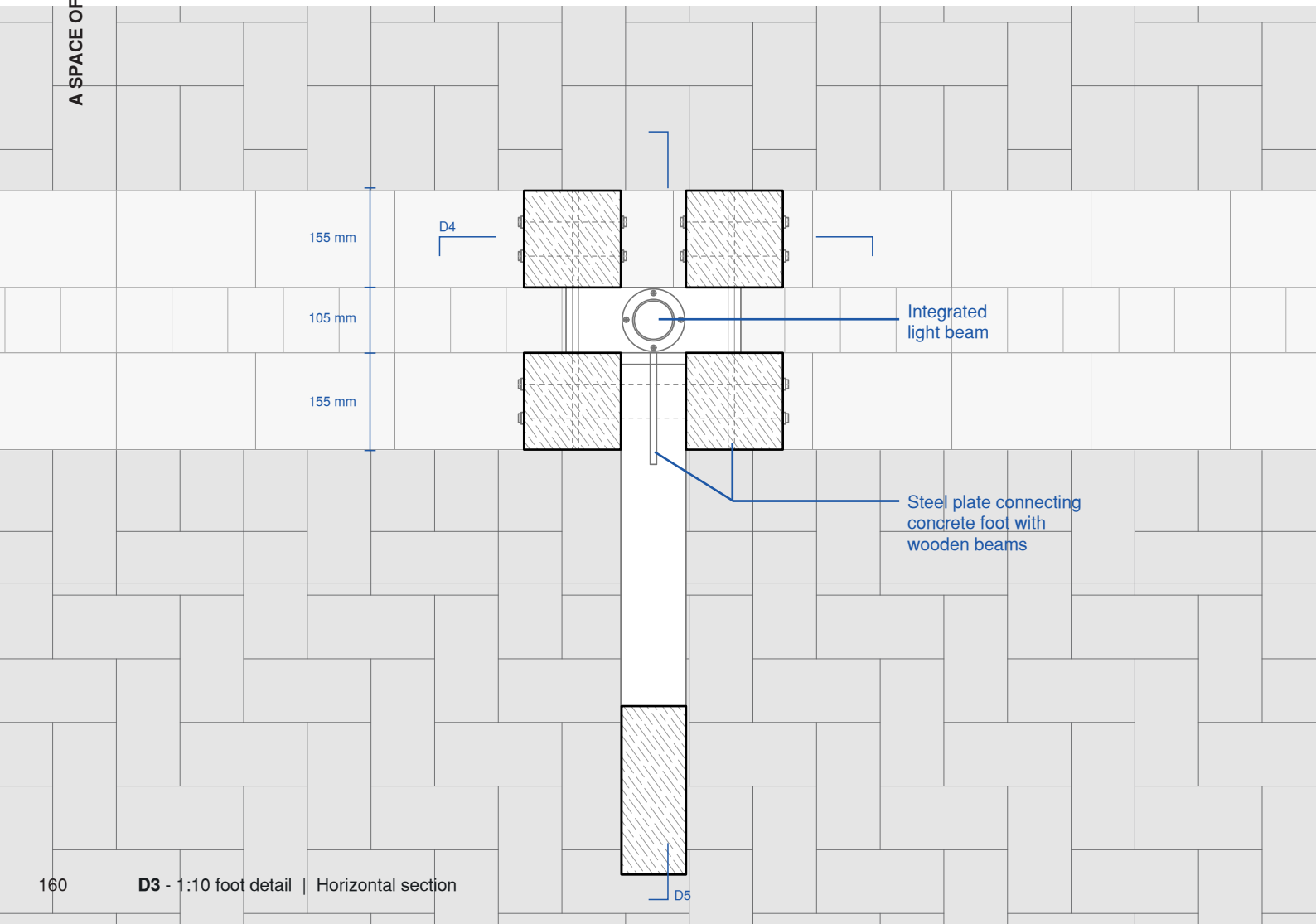
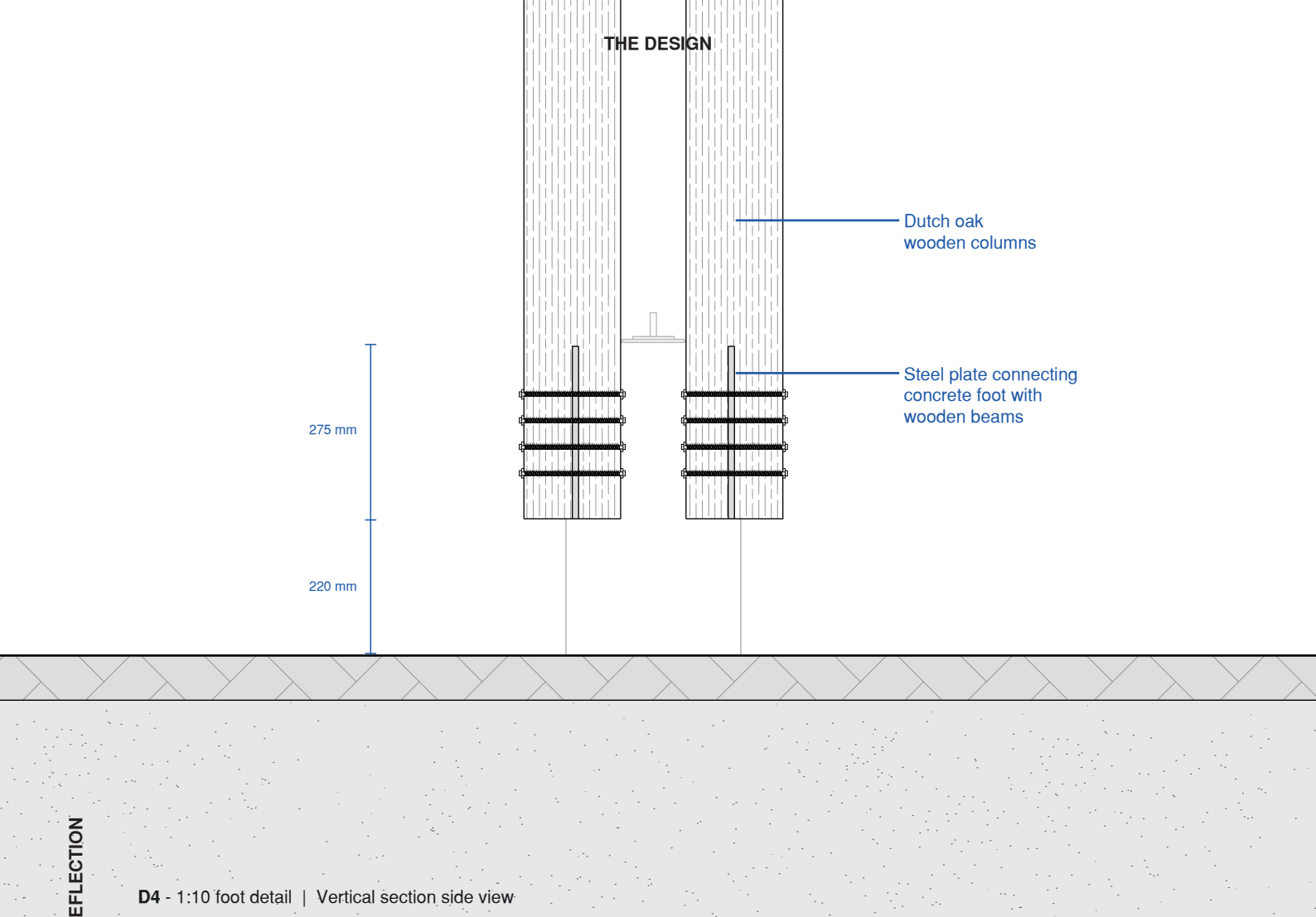




THE DESIGN

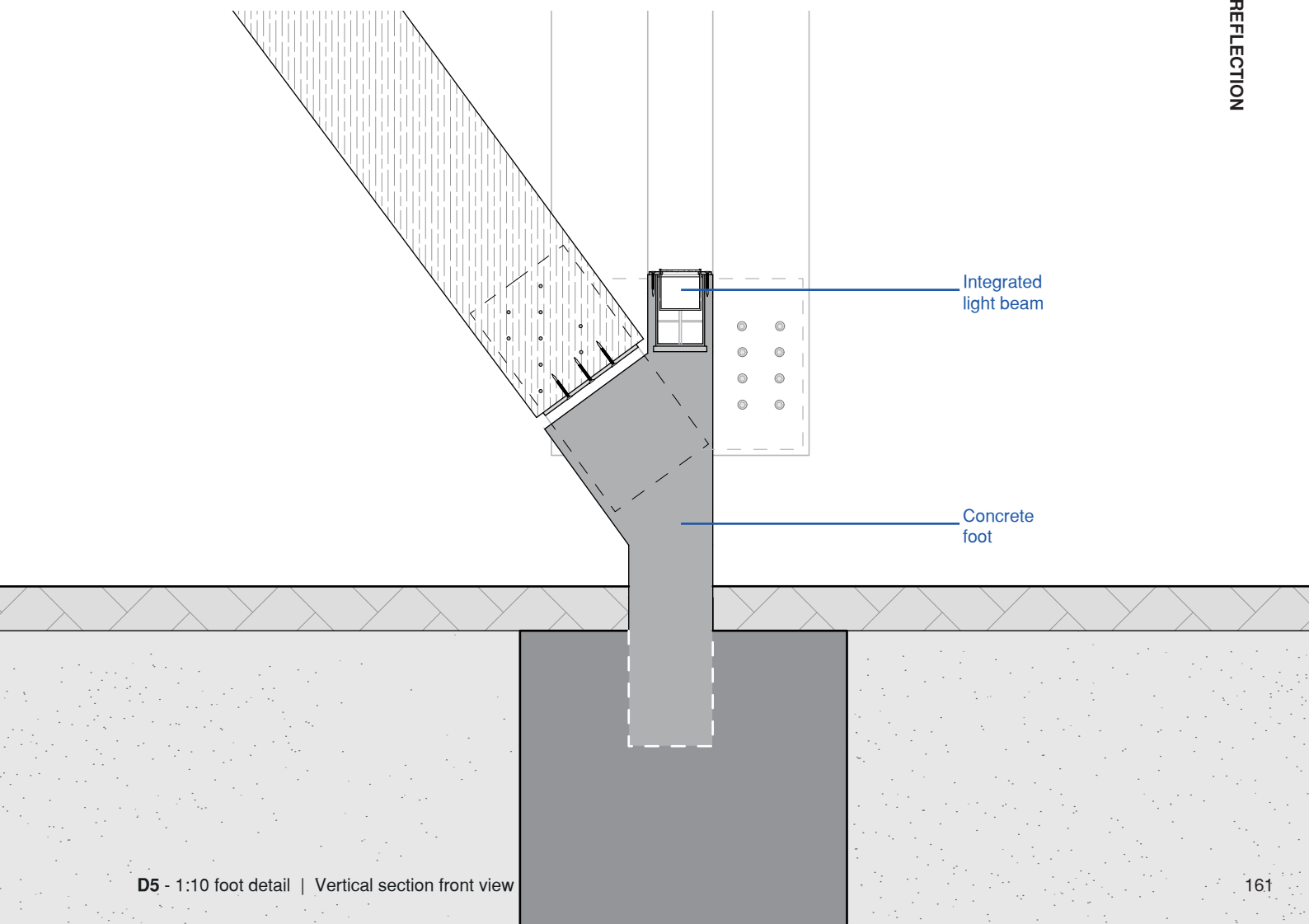


Fragment - 1:50 vertical section



The quadruple vertical wooden column element is held up by a prefabricated concrete foot, made out of very fine concrete. Because of the set-back of this concrete foot, in aspect the columns seem to somewhat float, visually lifting up the pavilion. The concrete foot also serves as the base for the outward inclined beam, which supports the overhang of the pavilion roof.

In the middle of the foot, at the heart of the column element, a light beam is placed. This allows for a very interesting aesthetics when the sun goes down and the lights are turned on, almost as if the pavilion structure is a lantern that draws attention to the area underneath the roof, encouraging people to explore the pavilion. On the next page an impression image can be found.



D5 - 1:10 foot detail | Vertical section front view





THE DESIGN

Dutch oak wooden slats	24
Timber framework horizontal	70
Timber framework vertical	45
Water resistant foil	
Oriented Strand Board sheets	28
Dutch oak wooden beams	175
Dutch oak wooden inclined beams for structure span	350

Overlaying wooden slabs for interior finishing

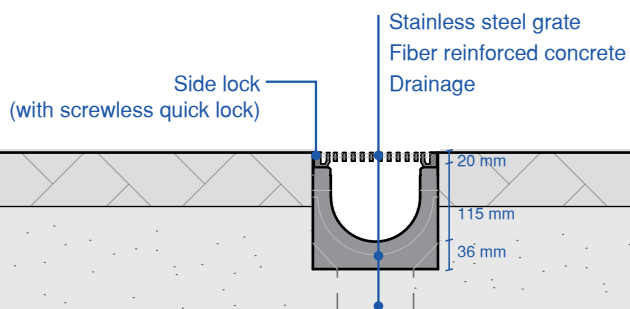
Triangular steel plates every 2 meters for extra stability of rain gutter overhang

Perforations in gutter for guided water flow into steel grate underneath

Stainless steel gutter attached to and resting on all 3 inclined beams in corner knot

A SPACE OF REFLECTION

D6 - 1:10 detail of corner knot

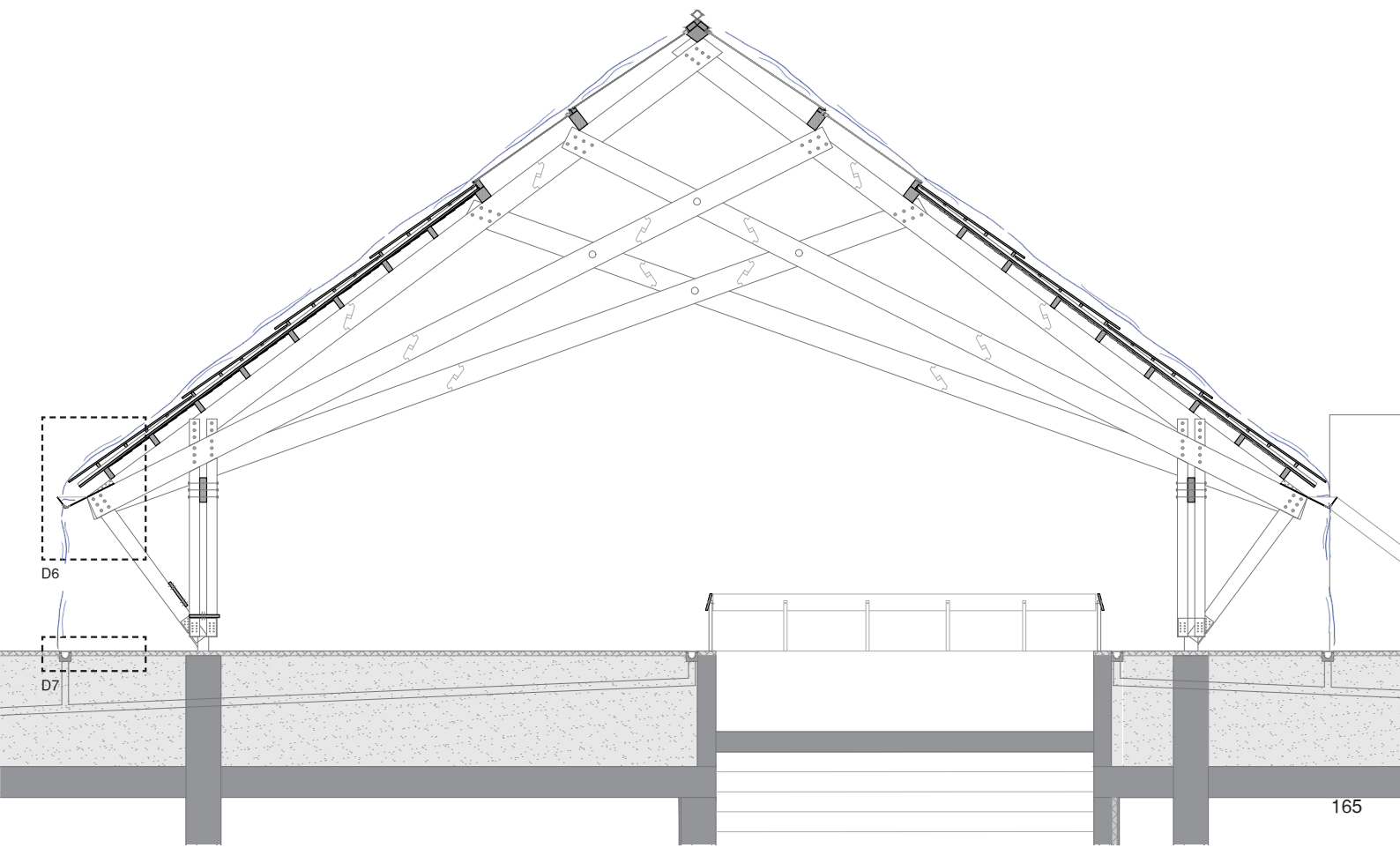


D7 - 1:10 detail of steel grate

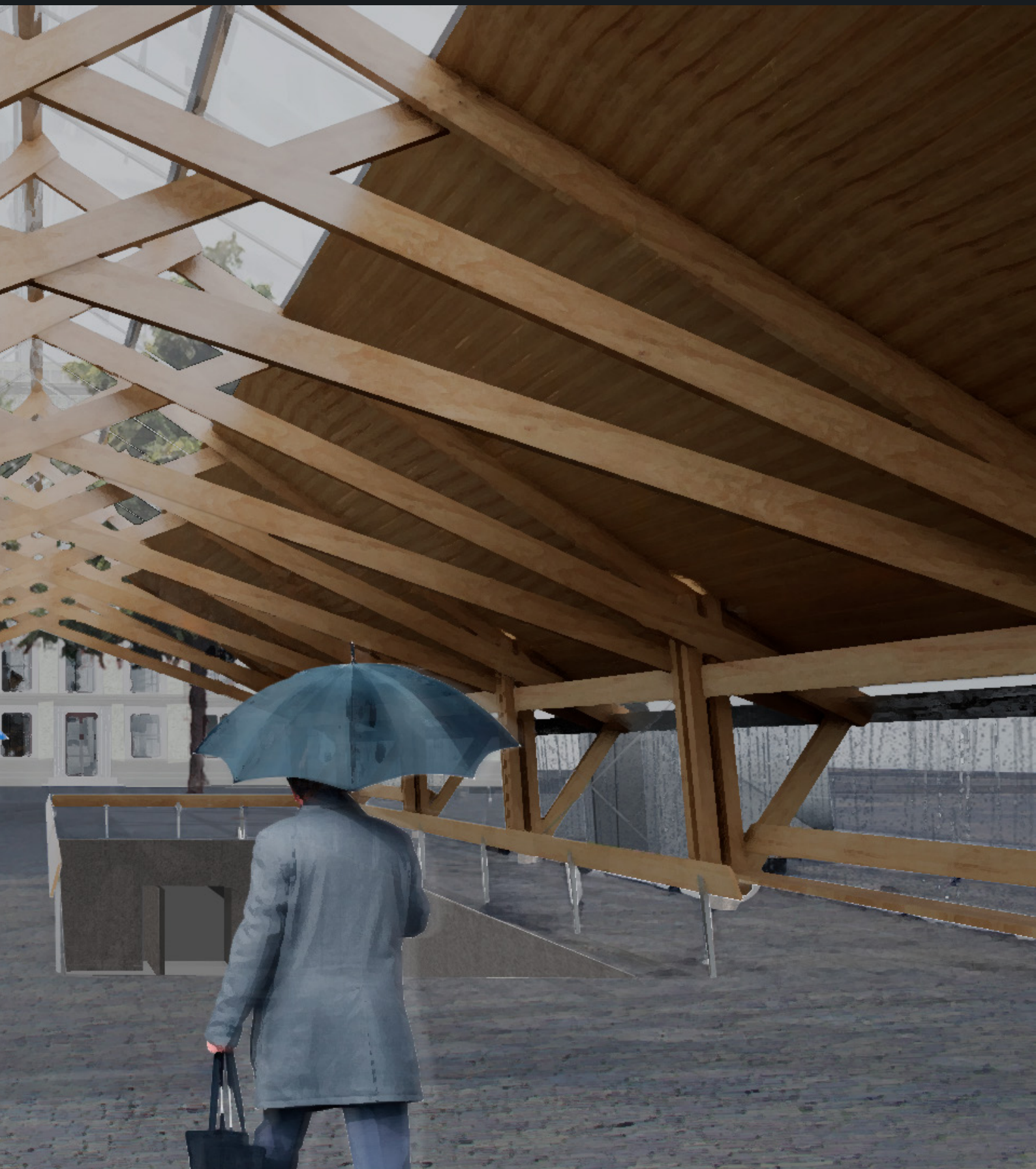
The steel rain gutter, running along both sides of the pavilion, visually 'frames' the wooden roof. The element belongs to the entire group of steel details of the structure which showcase how there is a constant dialogue between the wood and the steel: from steel pins that connect the beams, to subtle aluminium window frames that allow contrast between the 'open' and 'closed' part of the roof (see D8 on the next page).

The steel gutter allows for the most heavy rain splashes from the roof to be caught. But soon enough the gutter will overflow, enabling the water to calmly fall down into the steel grate in such a way, a smooth water curtain emphasizes the main orientation of the pavilion like a tunnel, putting focus onto the former Ministry of Colonies.

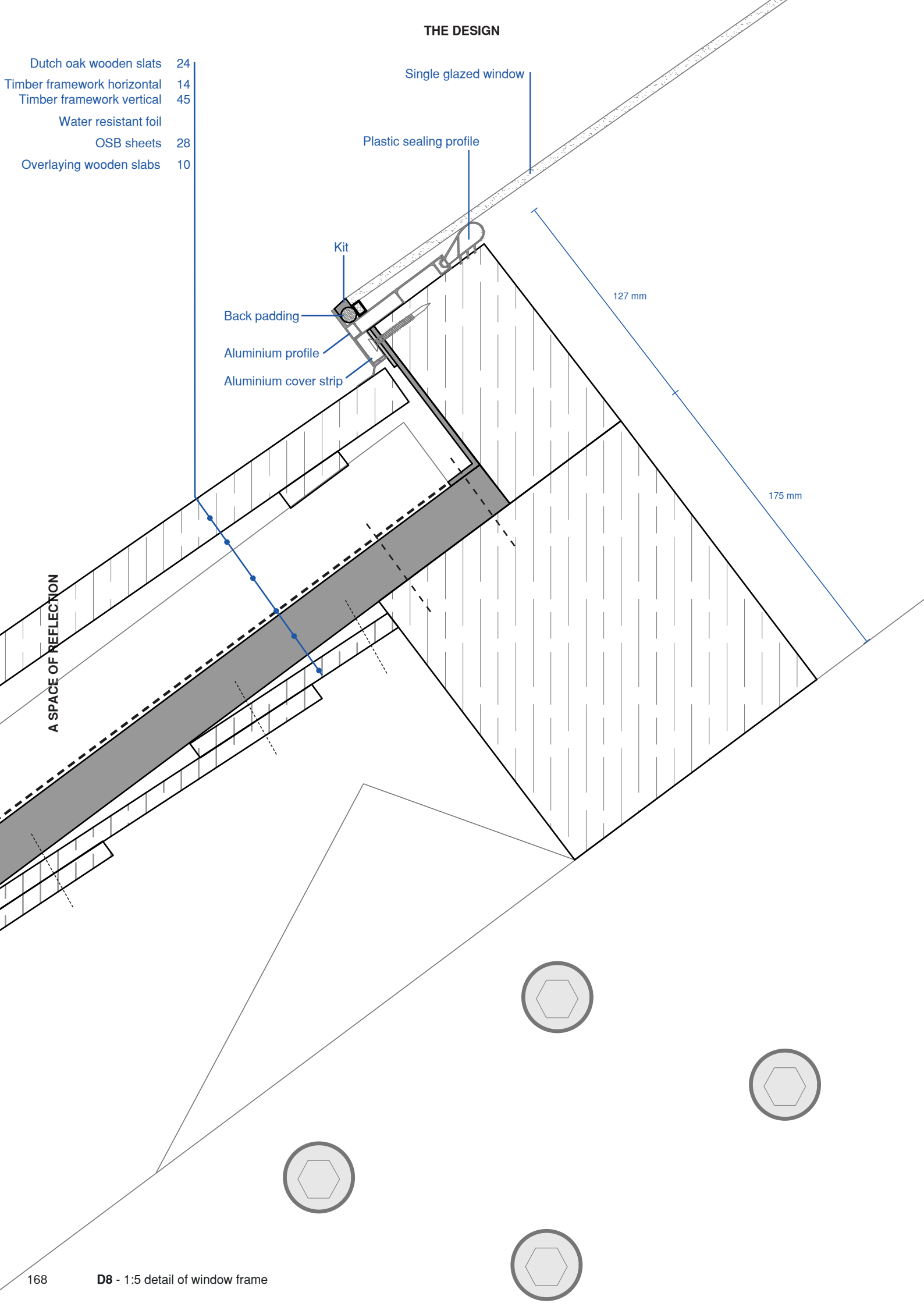
The stainless steel grate is not only used to capture the rain water, but also to create a border between the street stones underneath the pavilion roof and the stones at the rest of the square (see 1:50 fragment, horizontal section).





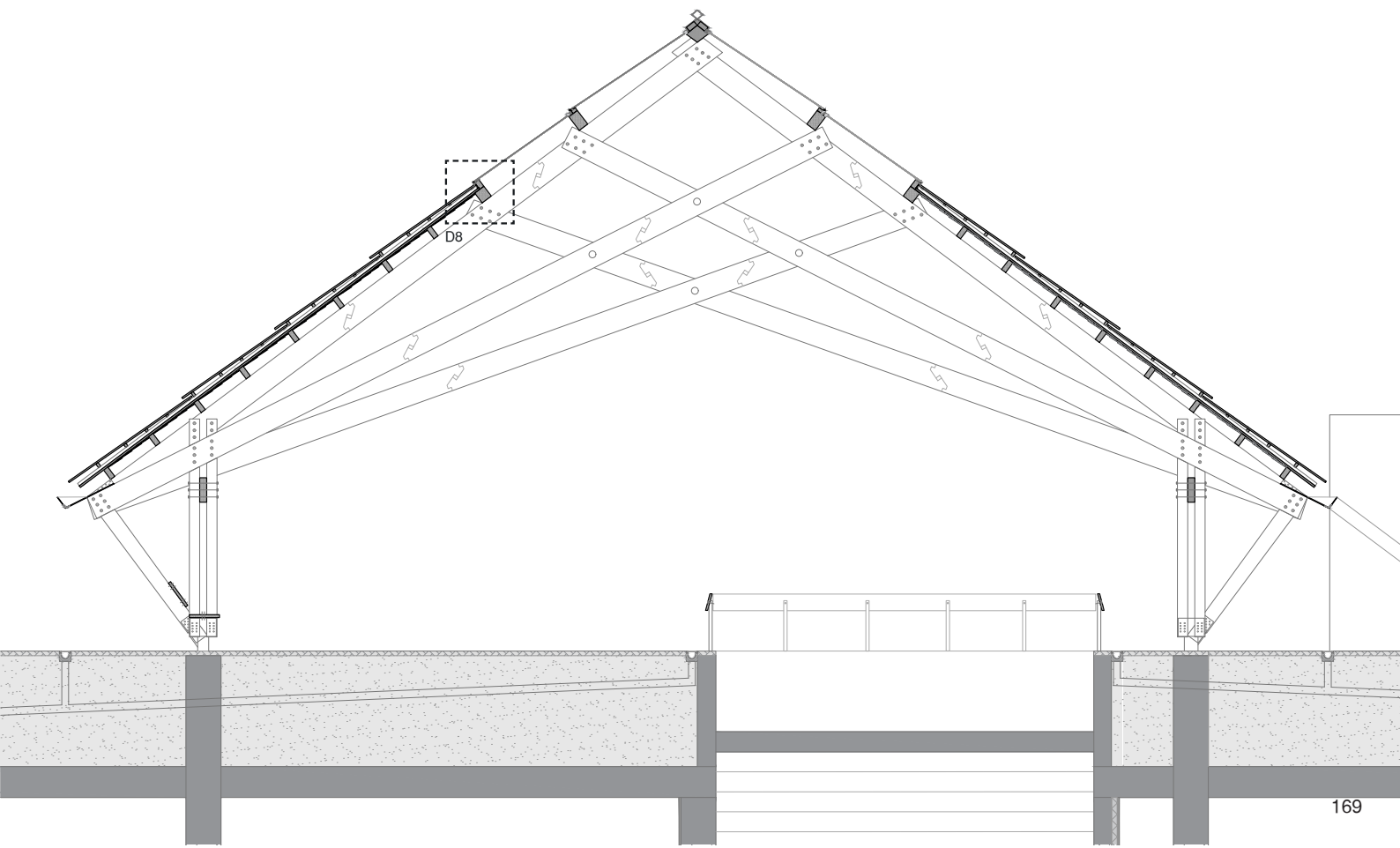


THE DESIGN



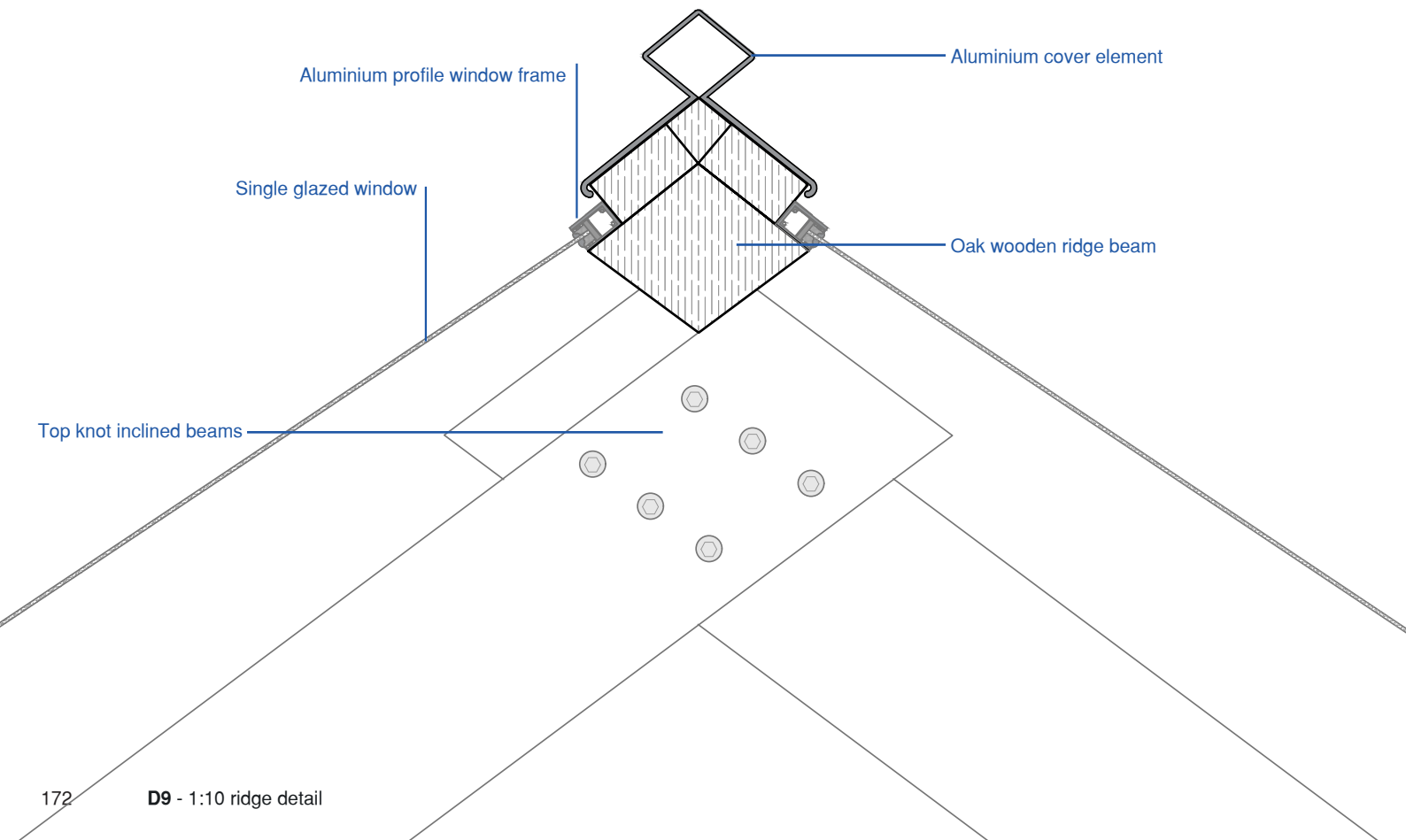
The design decision of the roof allows for interesting ways of the light penetrating underneath the pavilion. It emphasizes the braiding of the structural wooden beams and shapes the dynamic of 'sunlight' and 'shadow'. The fact that the lower sides of the roof are fully covered, and the upper part is transparent because of the windows, creates different levels of spatial quality underneath it. There are these more sheltered and intimate spaces on the sides of the pavilion, and a more open and light space along the central axe of the pavilion.

A SPACE OF REFLECTION









Aluminium profile window frame

Single glazed window

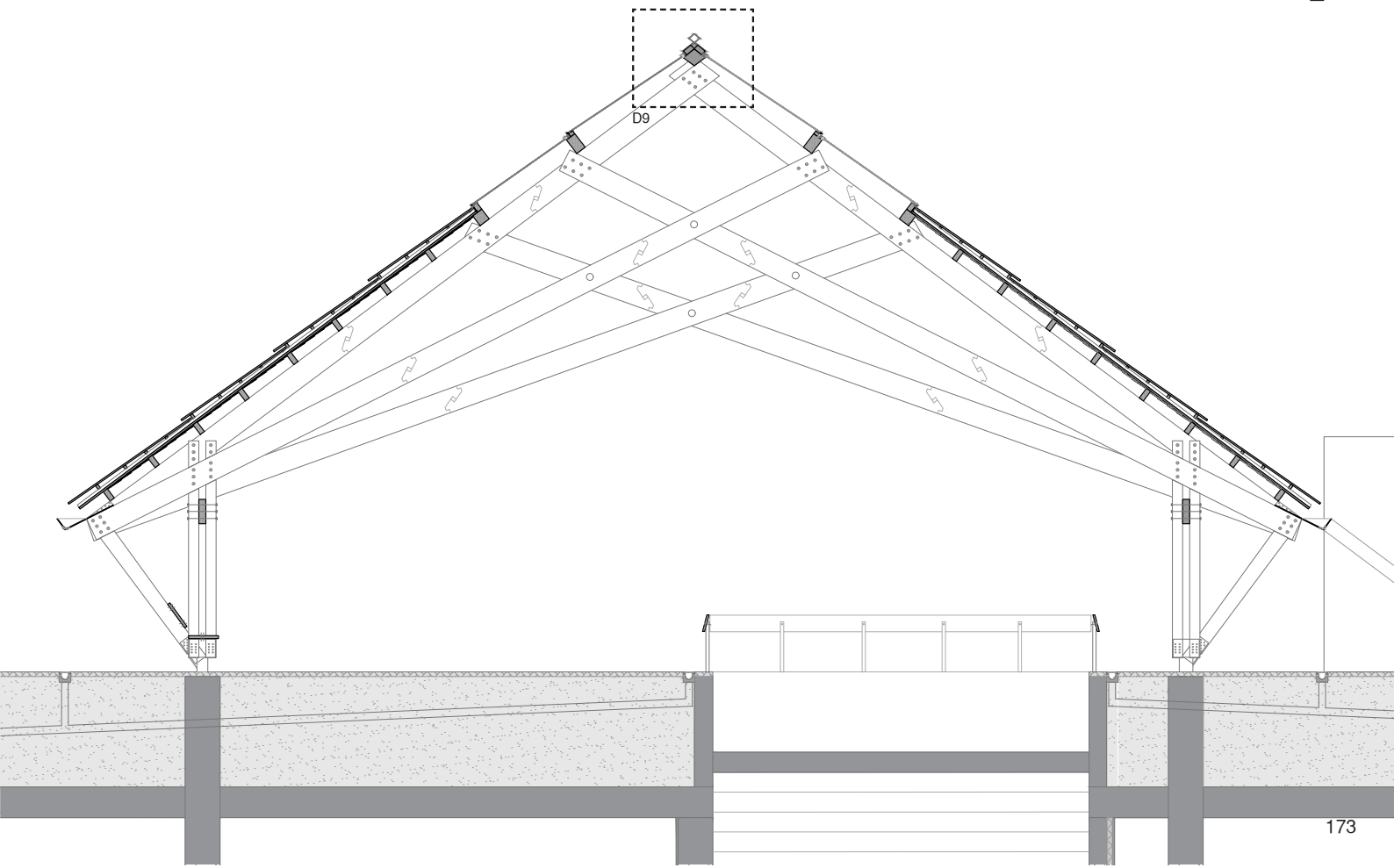
Top knot inclined beams

Aluminium cover element

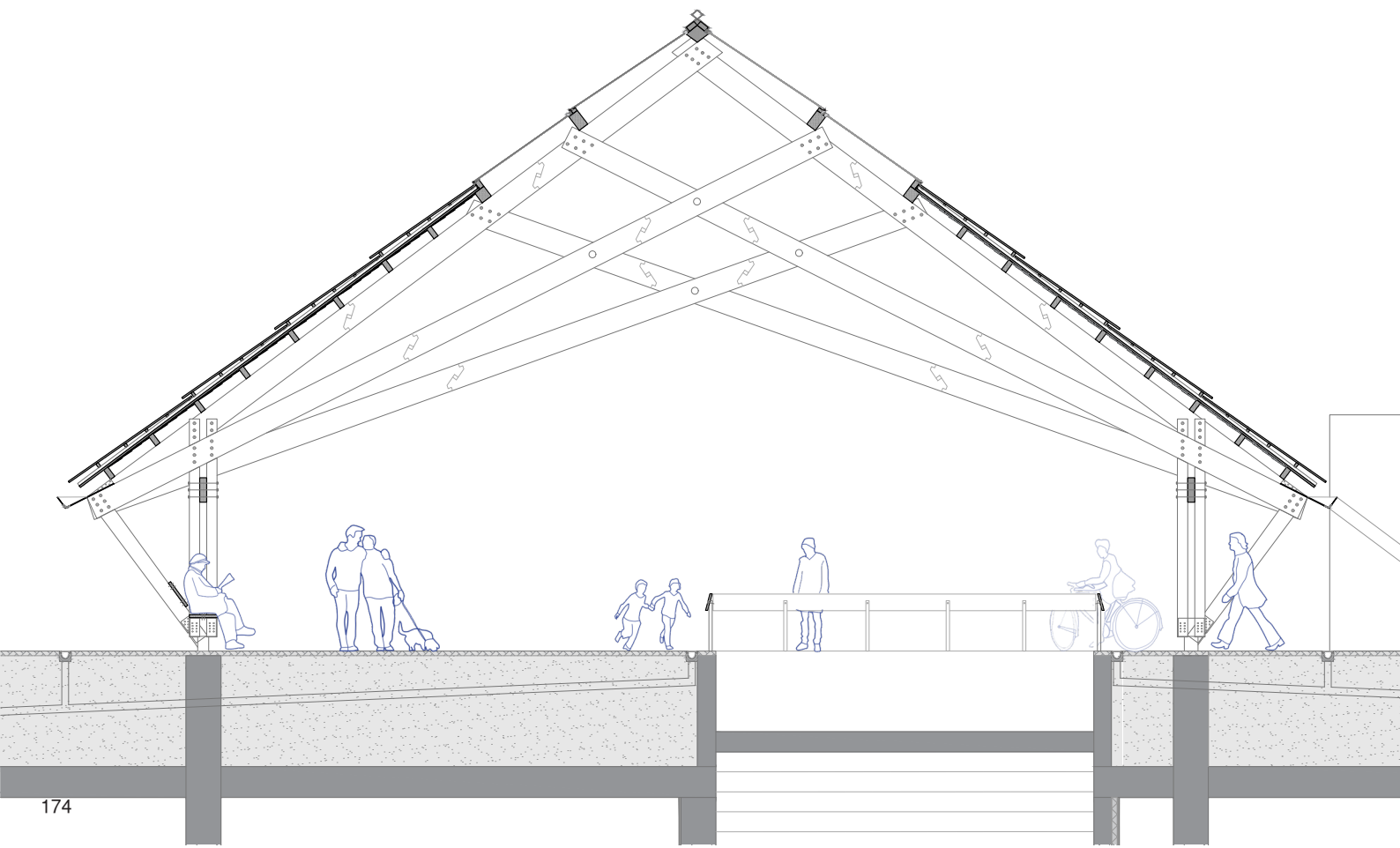
Oak wooden ridge beam

The ridge of the pavilion consists of a wooden beam, supporting pieces of wood and an aluminium element to avoid the wood and cracks in between, to fill with rain water. As is visible in the 1:10 detail, the aluminium plate has been bended into an ornamental shape. The ridge almost looks like a gentle person (aluminium element visualize the head and arms), protecting over the pavilion roof. The ornamental symbolic meaning of a technical element like the ridge, is inspired by vernacular architectural typologies, like the Toba Batak house that I mentioned in Chapter 2.

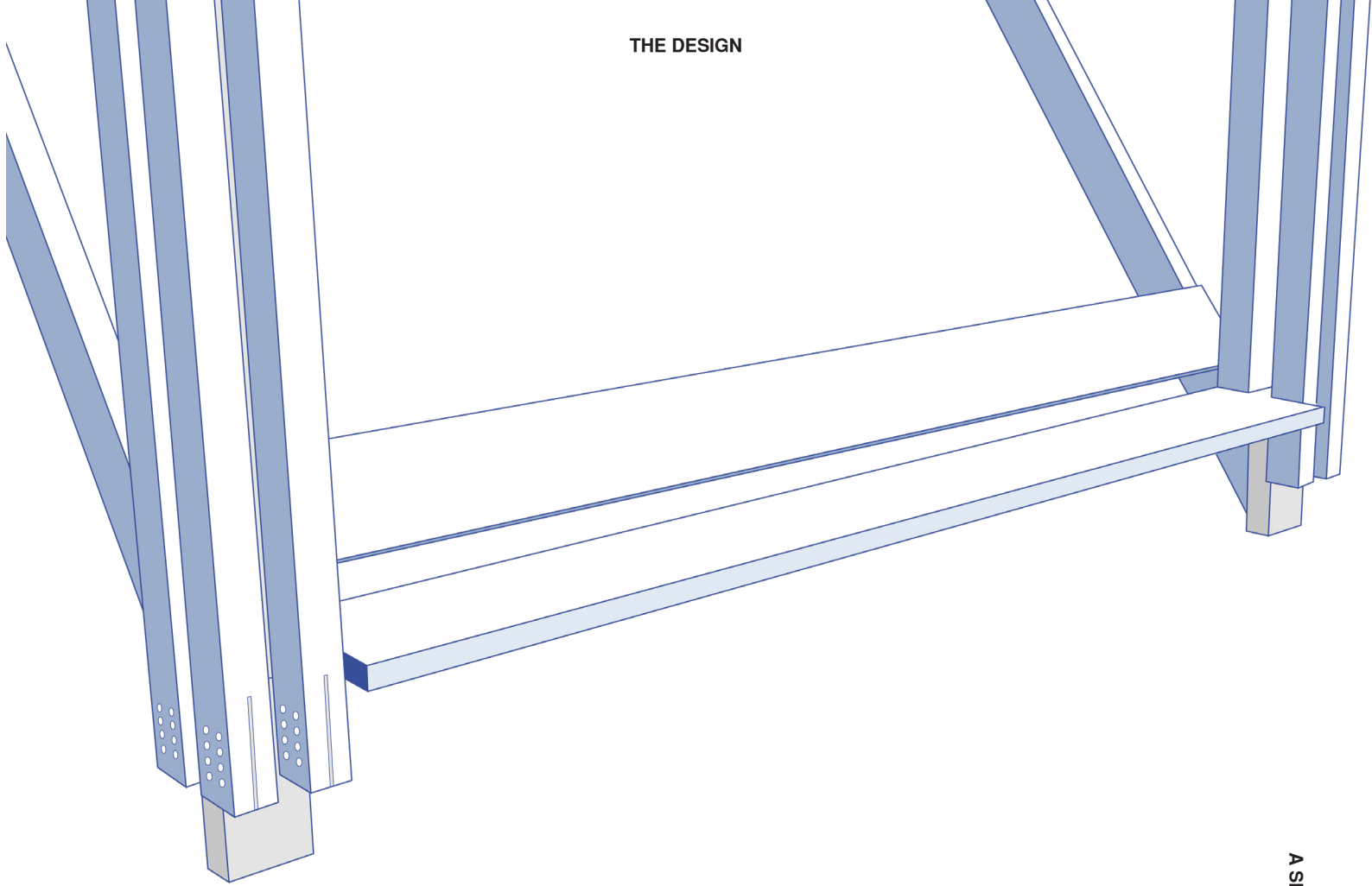
Despite the subtle size of the aluminium cover element in comparison to the rest of the wooden pavilion, the form and overdimensioning, do draw attention to the spectator. And so, this aluminium element can be seen as a cornice that is ornamental, yet has a modesty and simplicity that suits the architectural language of the pavilion.



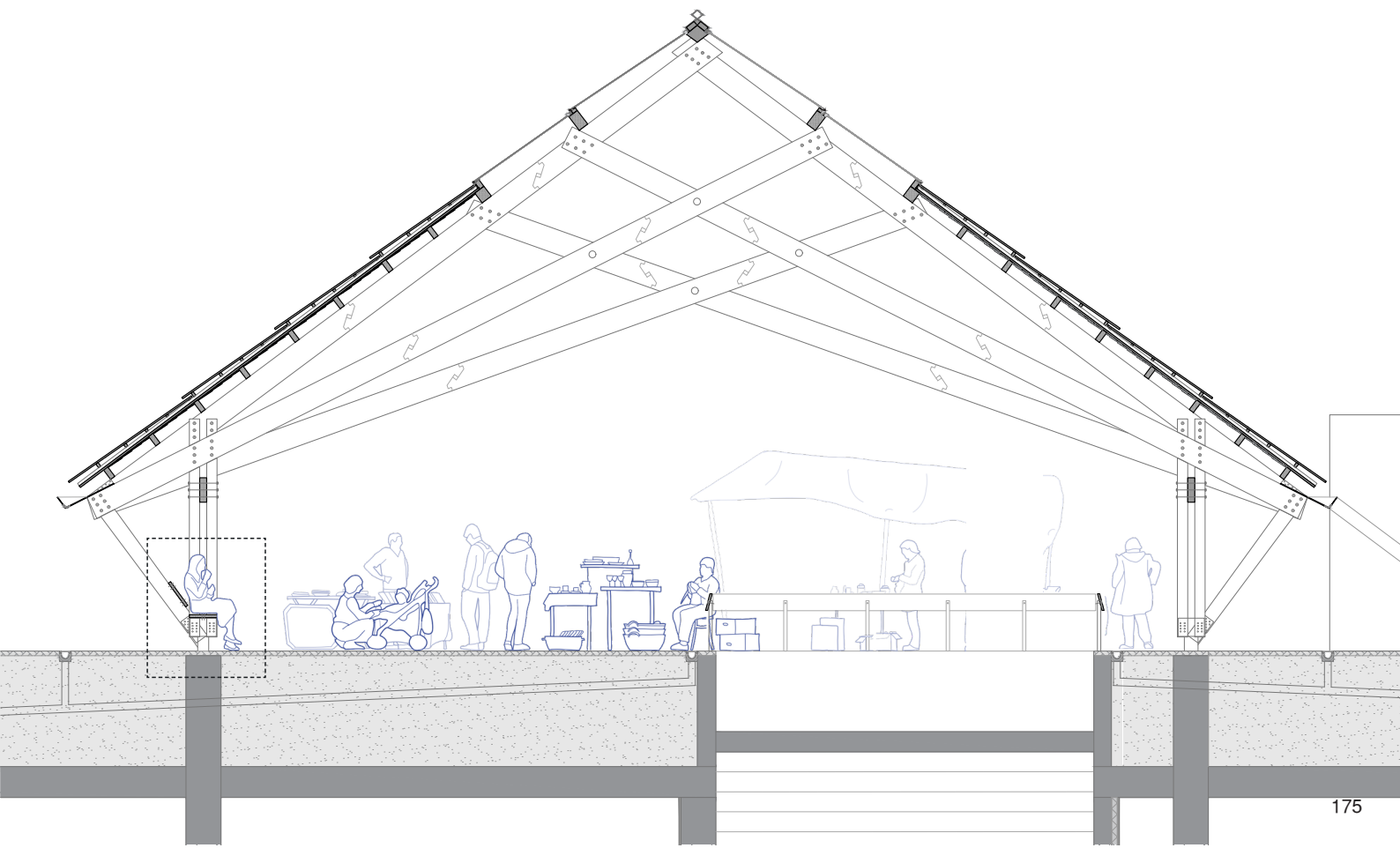
Integration of structural details and potential programme infill appear when we look into the flexibility the pavilion structure offers. The placement of columns and beams, for example, offer possibilities for street furniture to be integrated with the wooden structure. A long bench, including backrest, is placed inbetween two column knots. By orienting the bench facing underneath the roof, attention gets drawn towards things that are happening there. Whether it is a lovely spring day during lunch time or a busy weekend during market hours, there's a low barrier for any passer-by to sit down and engage with the wooden pavilion.



THE DESIGN



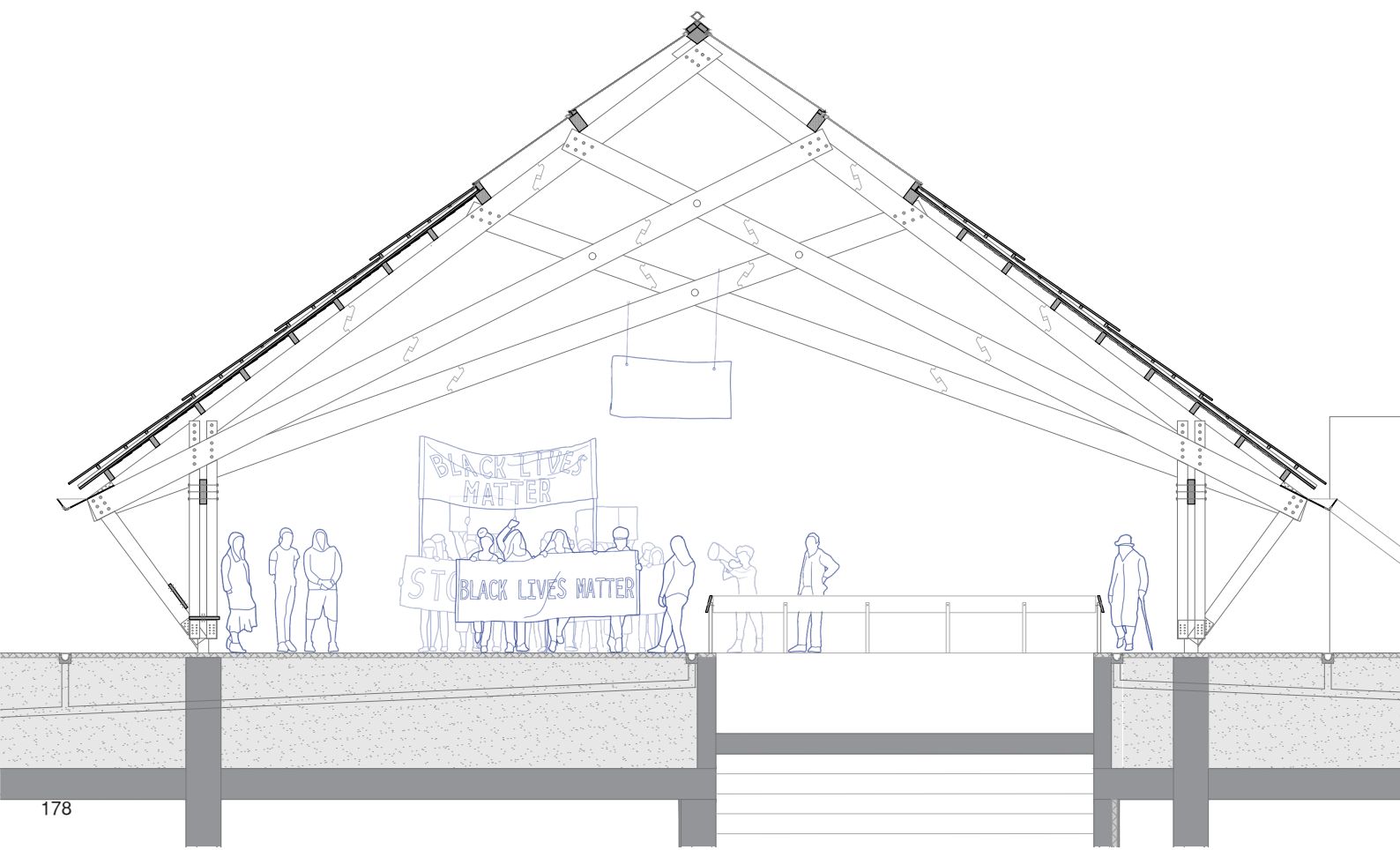
A SPACE OF REFLECTION

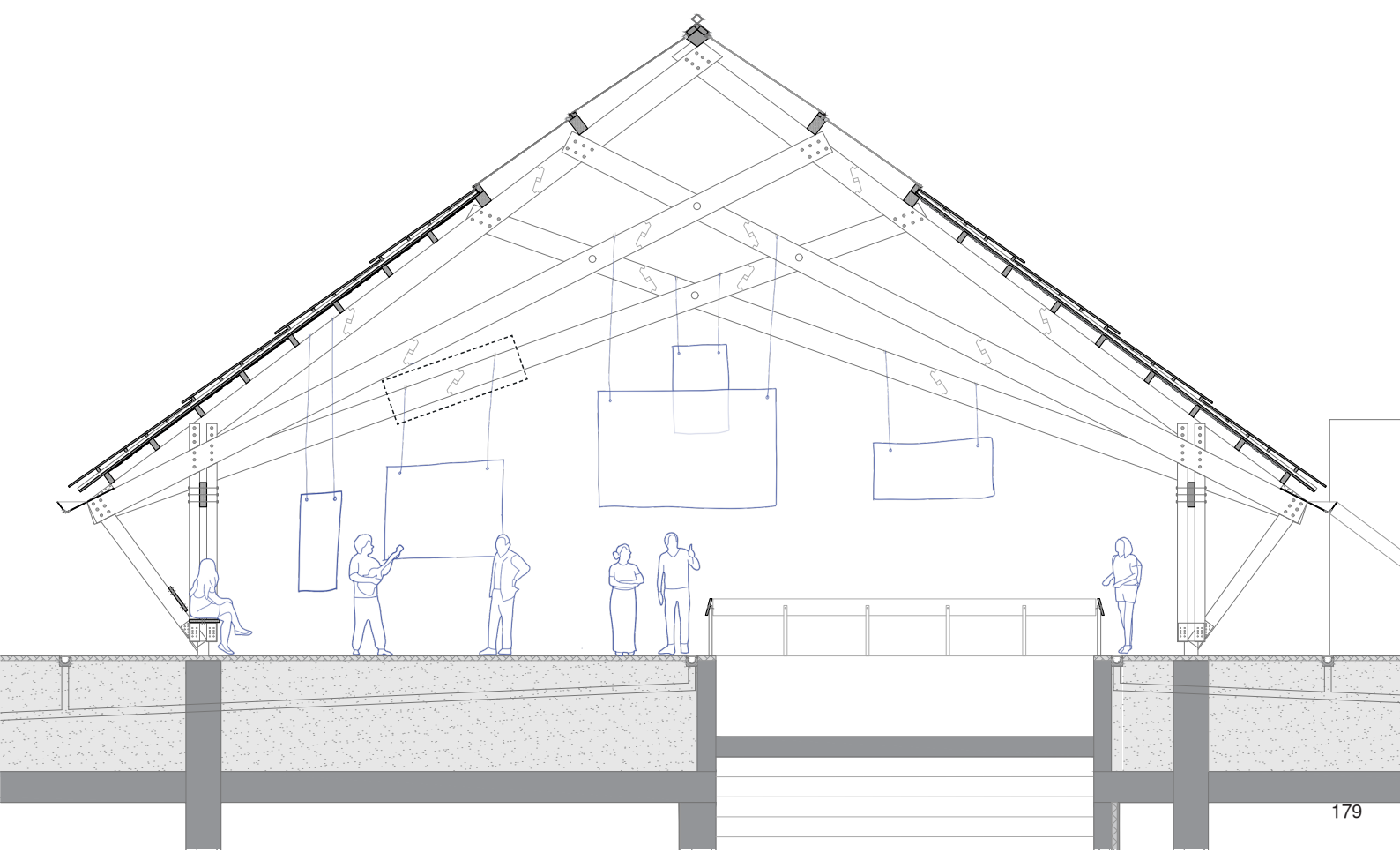
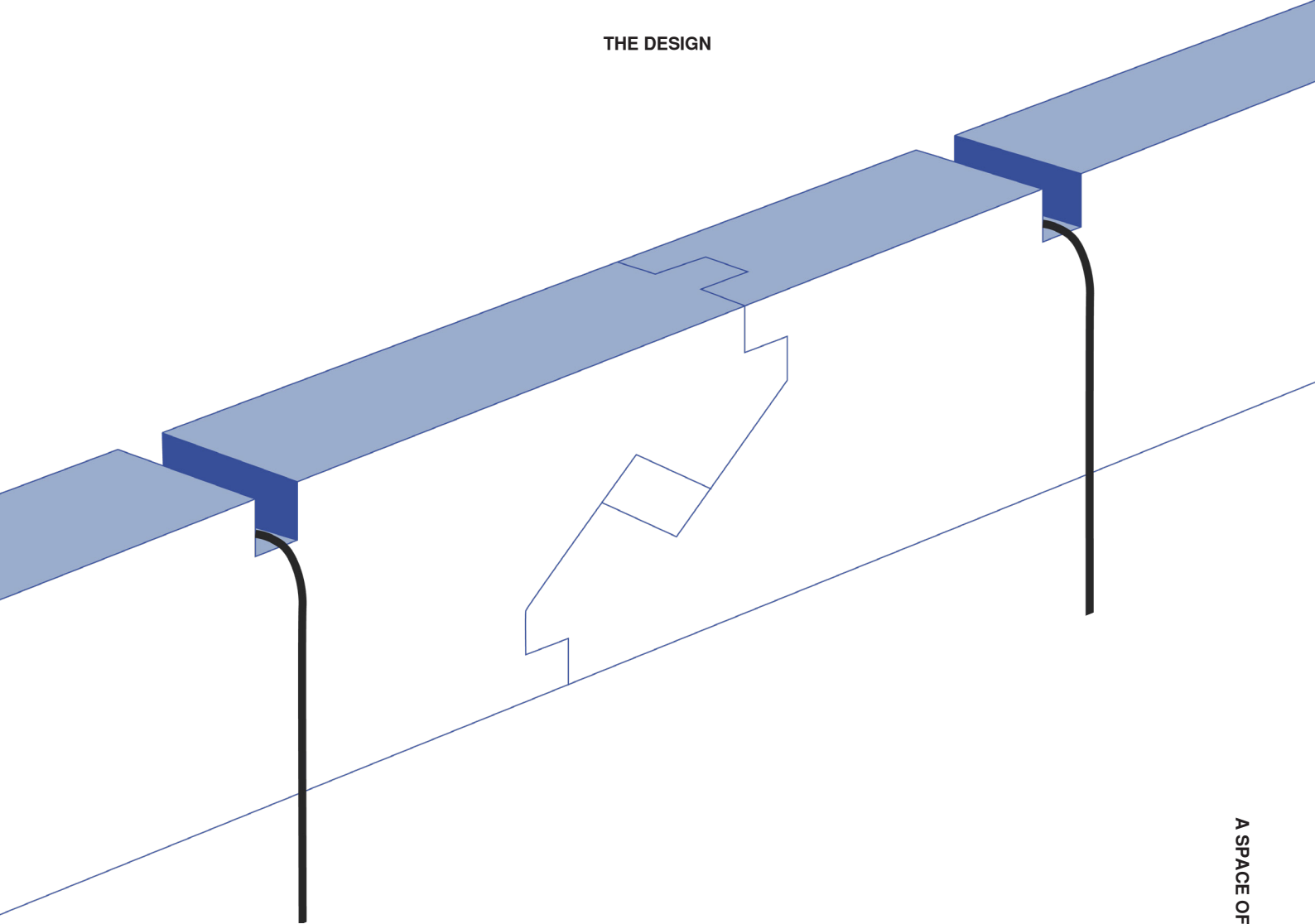






The pavilion as an agonistic space, offers a variety of programme infill underneath the roof. The tension that is created by the fact that Binnenhof is located right in front of the pavilion, allows potential for it to become a place where people can raise their voices. You can imagine a typical protest, or perhaps an outdoor exhibition or event. In what ways people want to raise their voices, is eventually up to them, but it is important that the structure can play a role in this act. In the inclined beams, holes have been made onto which elements can be hung, offering flexible layout potential for the wanted activity.













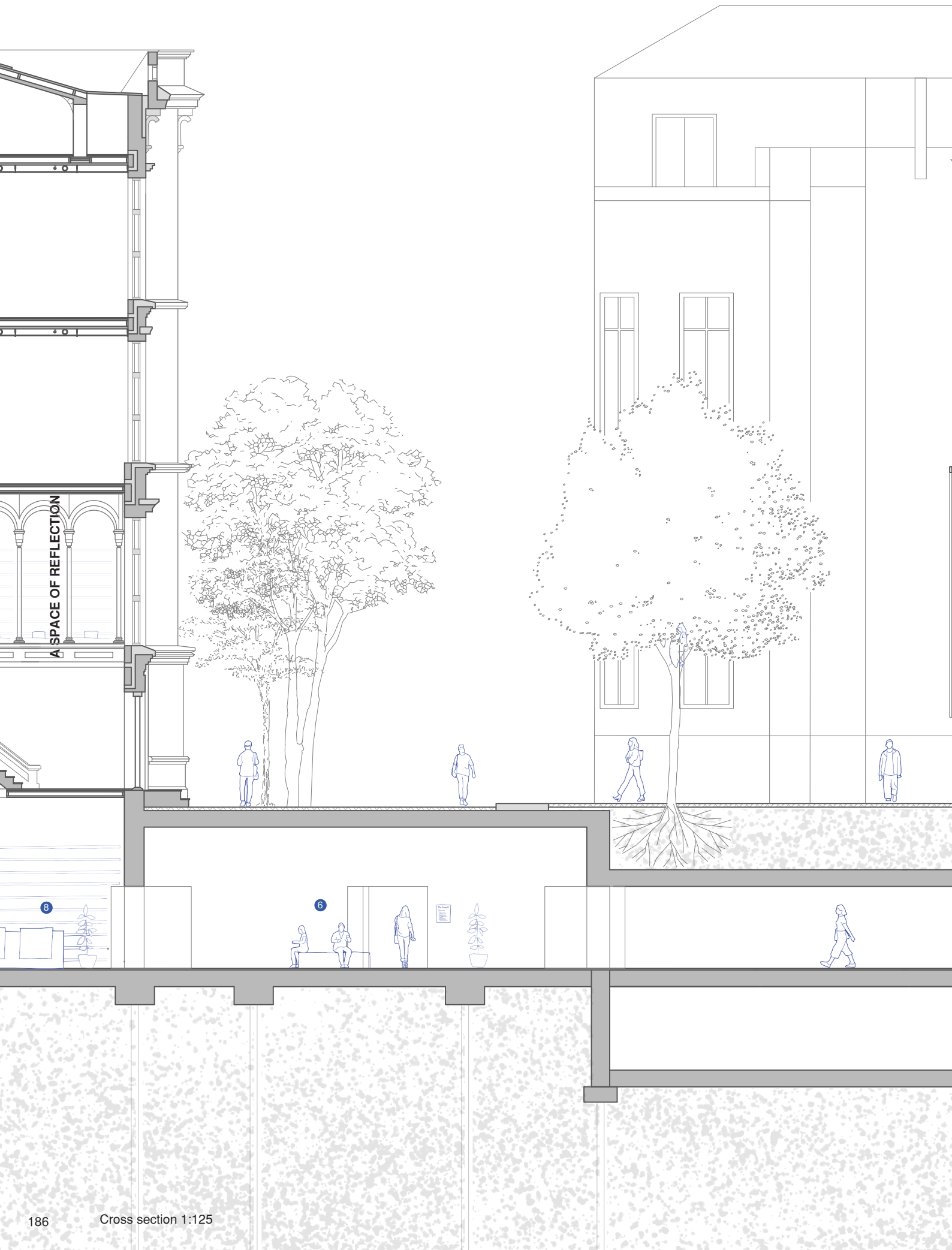
The Underground

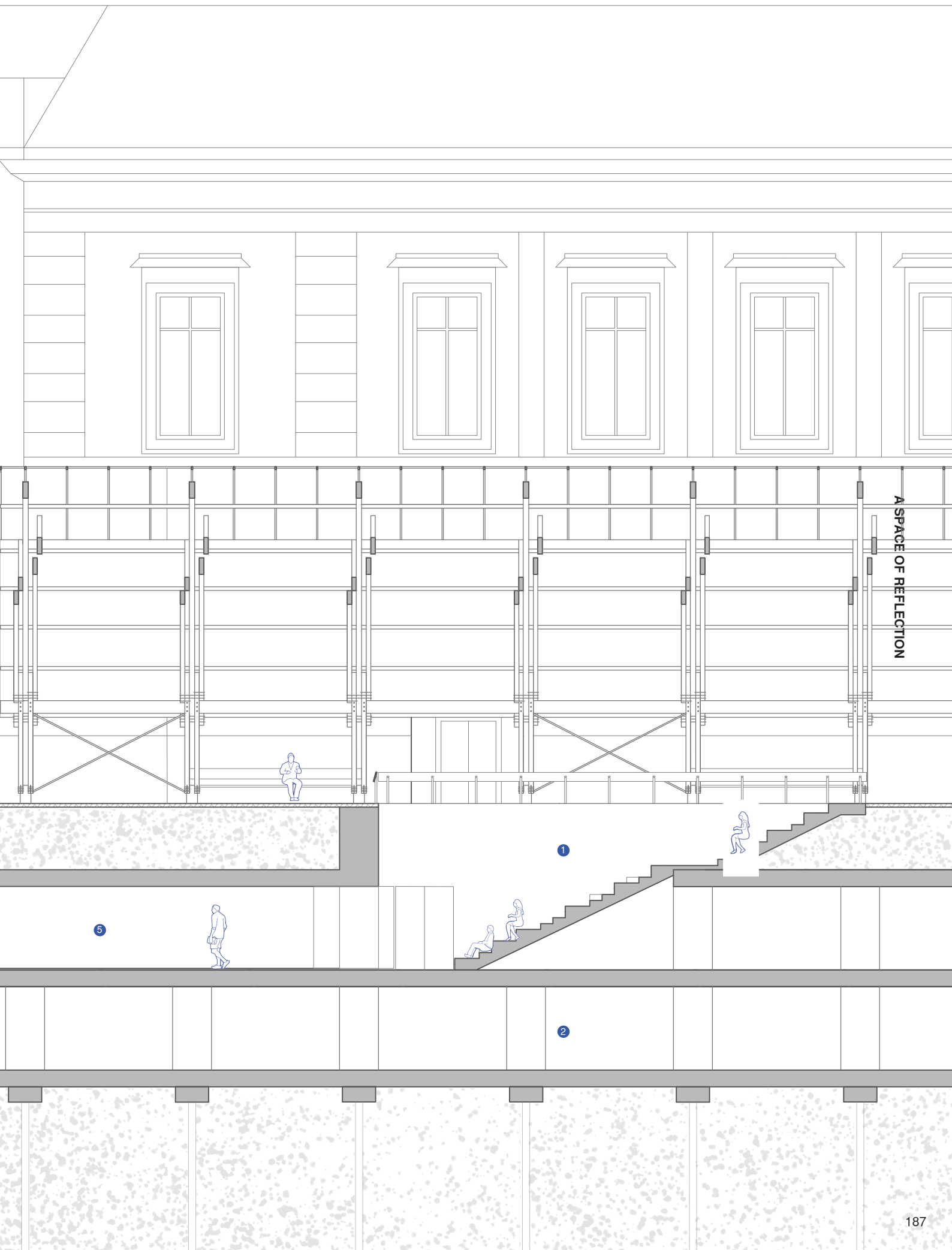


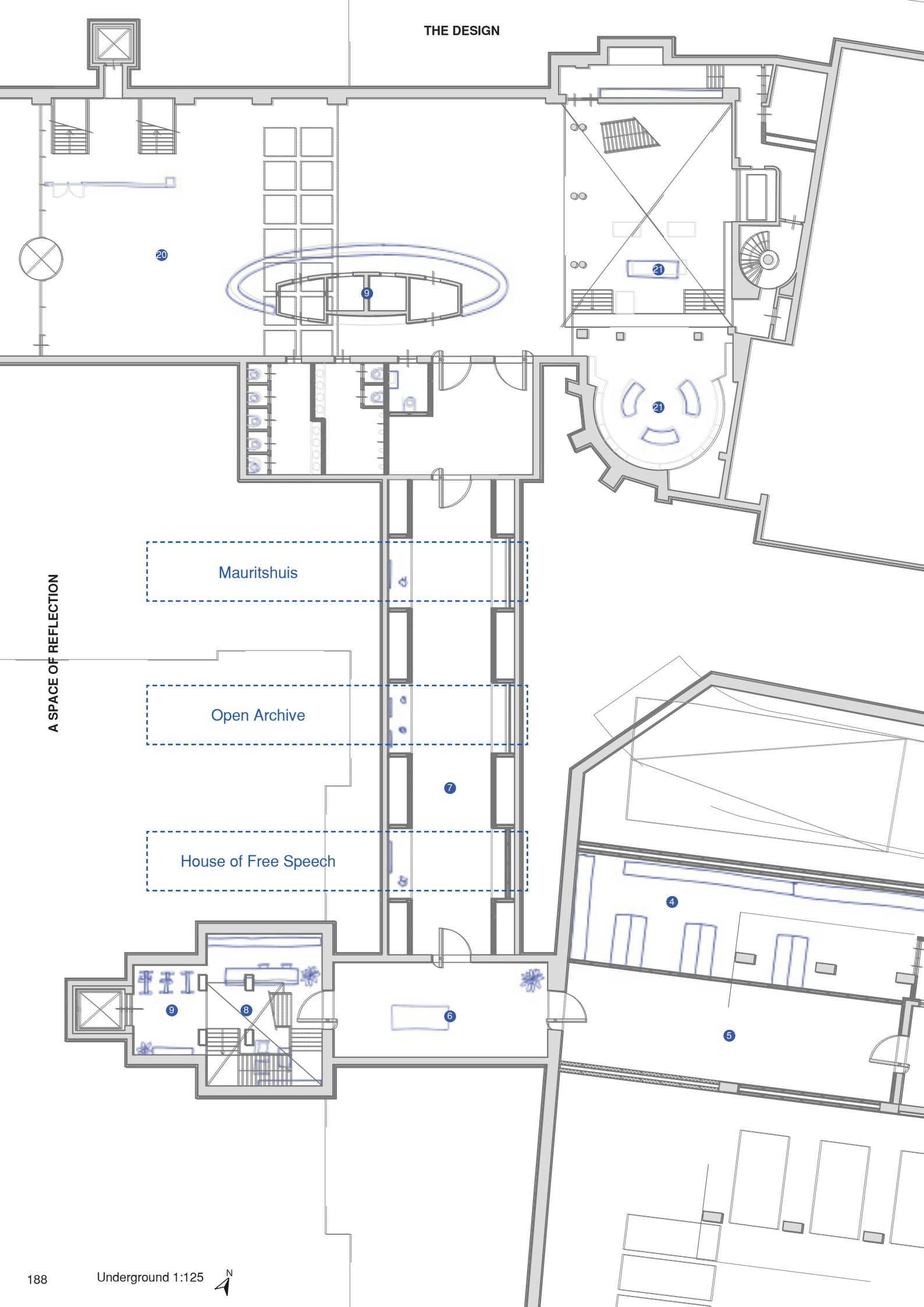
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When descending into the underground level, you walk through a heavy door, after which you enter a dark space: *the projection room*. In this room we can imagine a variety of things to be projected on the walls:

- Names of the millions of people in Dutch society who have a direct link to Dutch colonial history;
- Stories of certain communities or individuals, related to this specific past;
- Discussions or statements on current social-political topics that are somehow related to colonial history;

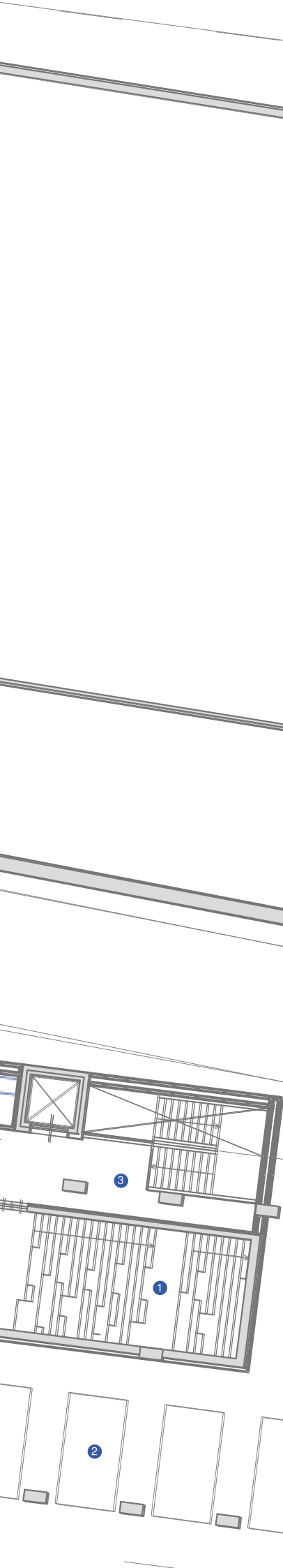
Besides the variety of possible projections, the space is also subject to flexible programme infill. Perhaps, nothing need to be happening in this space, or maybe the public dialogue from underneath the pavilion roof, needs a more intimate space for discussion to be held.

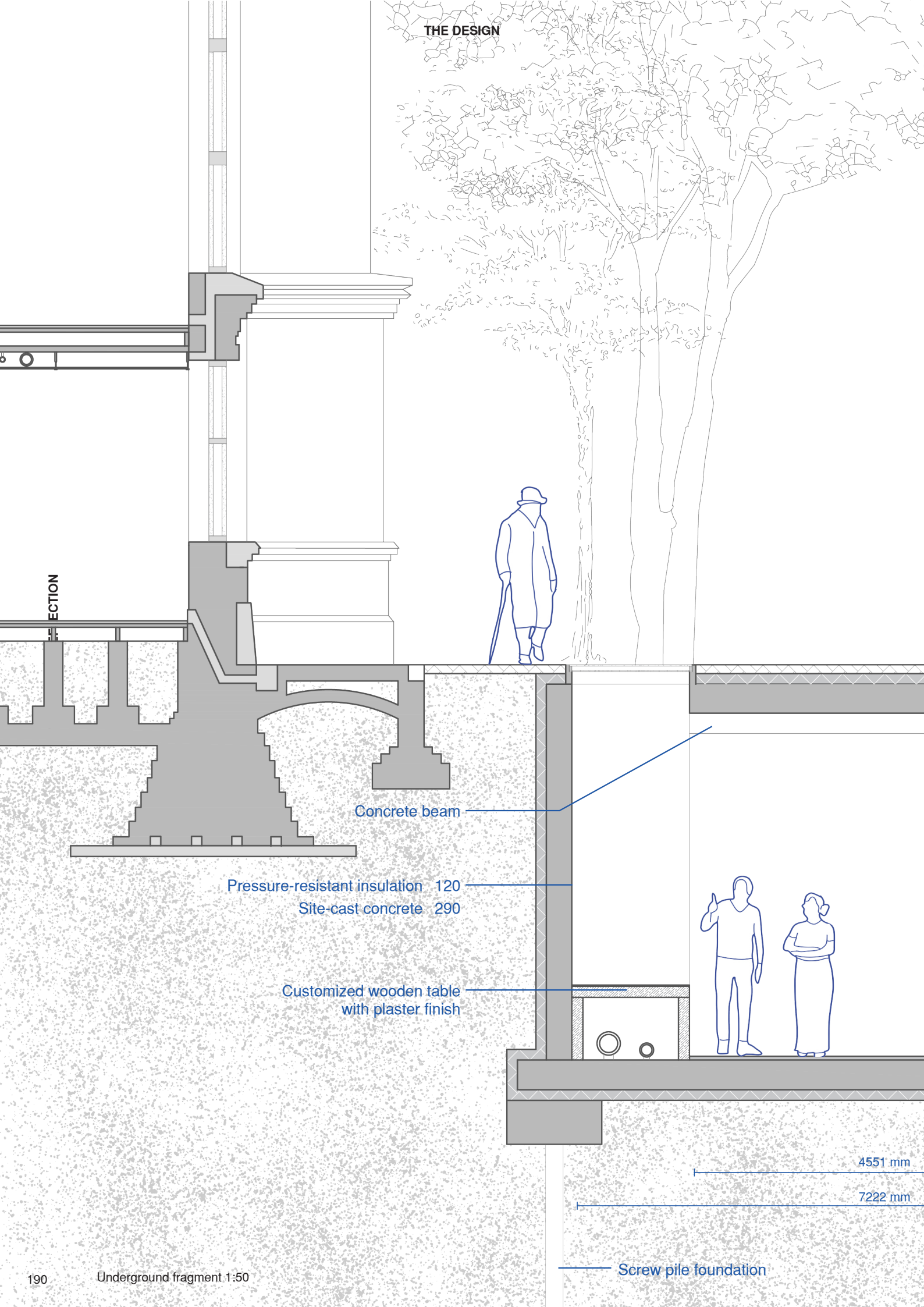
Next, you enter a small orientation room, explaining how this underground system connects the *House of Free Speech*, with *Mauritshuis* and the *Open archive* inside the former Ministry of Colonies.

Then, there is one more underground tunnel: the exhibition corridor that offers an alternative arrival to the underground Mauritshuis entrance. The long hallway has three 'pockets' each showcasing one or a few items from each of the three institutes connected by the tunnel: so one pocket for Mauritshuis, one for the open archive inside the former Ministry, and one pocket that showcases art, objects or themes that have to do with events or happenings at the House of Free speech (the pavilion). The underground corridor poses the objects of these institutes next to each other, because these are all objects and narratives that co-exist. It addresses that this underground passage isn't just a physical connection from the institute to the other, but also a symbolical connection that ties the stories together into a more complete narrative.

The pockets allow focus on the objects, by the way the light is designed. During the day, natural light is allowed to fall down into the hallway, while by night, artificial light spots bring attention to the art pieces.

The movement through the hallway is stimulated by the orientation of the tiles, and the rough plaster on the walls and ceiling. But this flow of movement is disrupted by the three pockets, offering moments of pause, causing the hallway to feel less long than it actually is. The walls behind the art pieces are the actual concrete of the basement, which was poured within a wooden frame work. You can see how the moulding of the wooden slats is seen in the concrete, which emphasizes how the natural light falls down onto the object.





SECTION

Concrete beam

Pressure-resistant insulation 120

Site-cast concrete 290

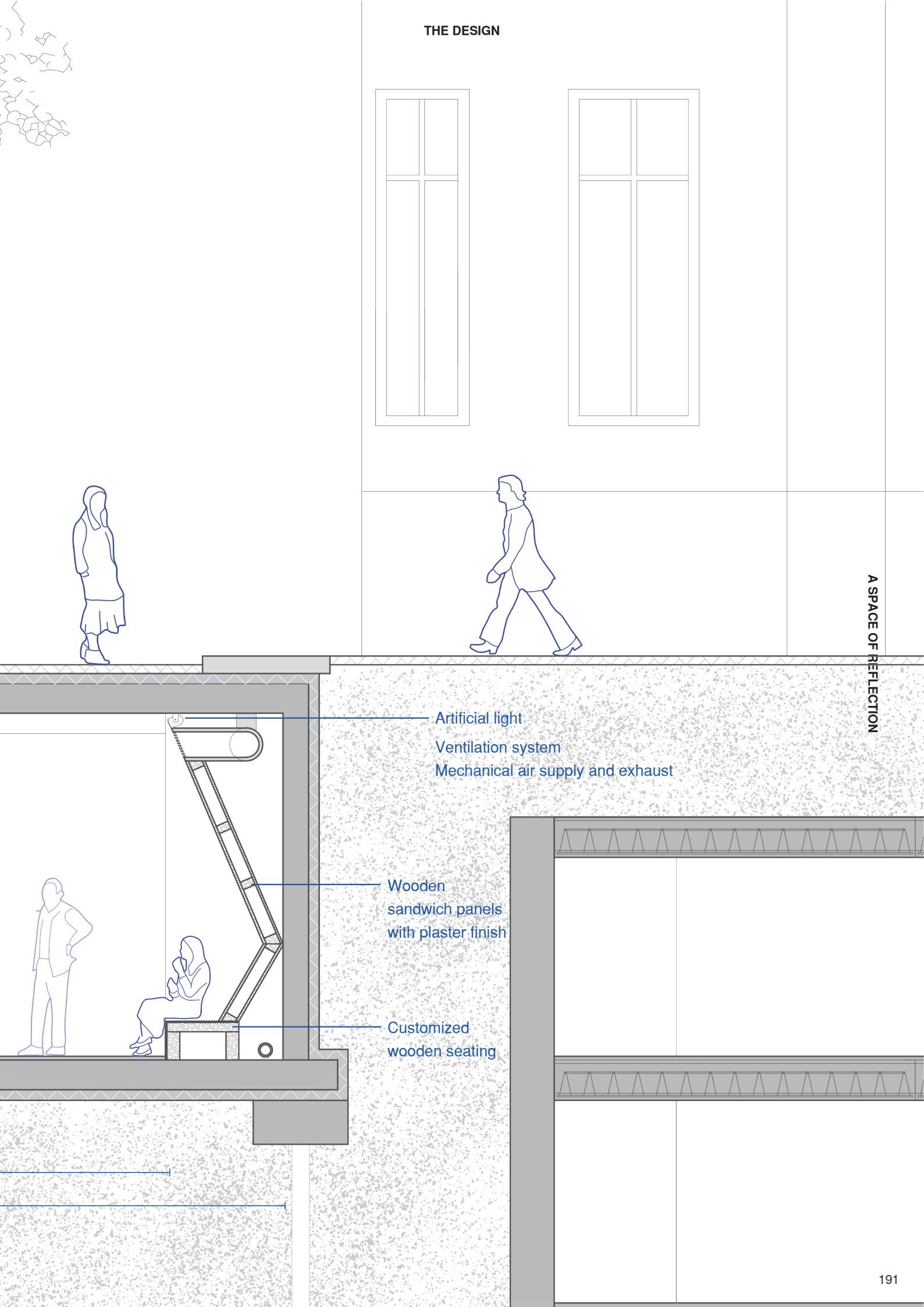
Customized wooden table
with plaster finish

4551 mm

7222 mm

Screw pile foundation

THE DESIGN



A SPACE OF REFLECTION

Artificial light
Ventilation system
Mechanical air supply and exhaust

Wooden
sandwich panels
with plaster finish

Customized
wooden seating





Open Archive





At the underground entrance of the former Ministry of Colonies, a triple-floored space unfolds. There is a welcoming desk where books can be borrowed from the library collection. Books give voice to unheard colonial narratives. When going up the staircase, you pass by at ground floor level, right behind the original front door of the former Ministry building. A door that was never to be accessed by the general public, even though the people working inside this building had, and still to this day have, a tremendous amount of power over our society.

The *Open archive* inside the former ministry building is divided into two themes:

- Archive of the Ministry of Colonies building
- Archive of unheard stories

The *Archive of the Ministry of Colonies building* is located on the first floor of the building, and as

we learned from the cultural historical report of this building, this first floor used to house the most prominent office spaces for the most important people of the ministry.

When you arrive at first floor level from the entrance, you enter a library working space. If you look at the image on page 194-195, it is visible how the interior design symbolises a dialogue between elements that refer to the character of the old and original building, and new elements of customized wooden furniture. Wood that refers to the pavilion on the square, but also wood as a new material that is invited inside the building, as a metaphor for allowing other narratives into the history of the former Ministry of Colonies. Along the hallway, one can find archival photos and text about the building, as well as glass doors that give a glimpse inside the working offices of the archive staff.



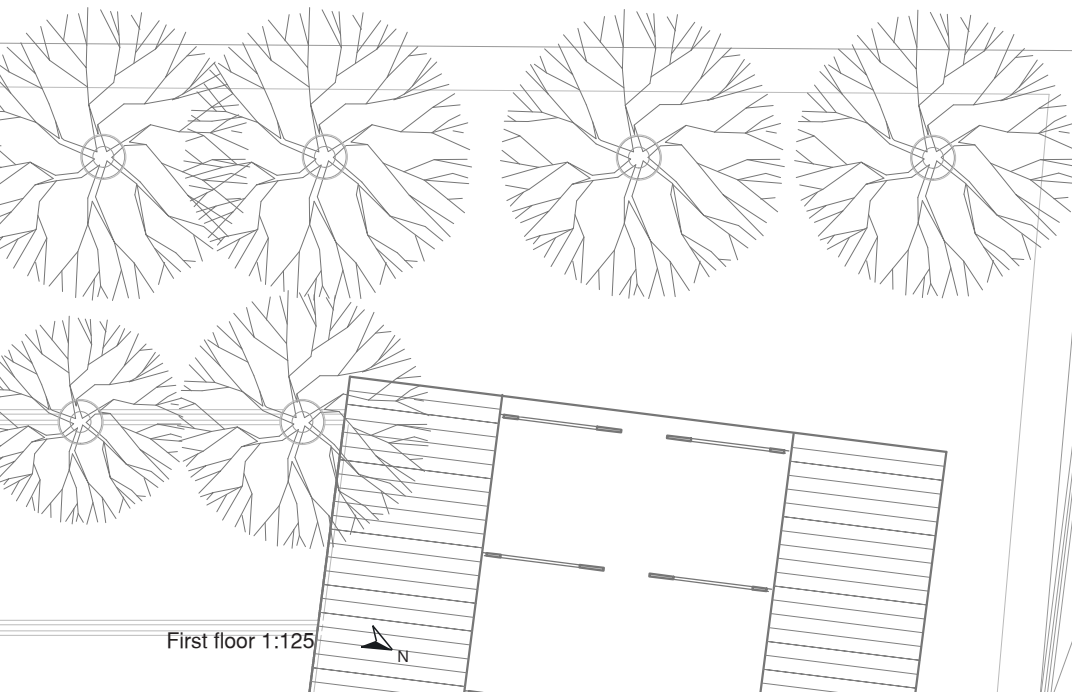
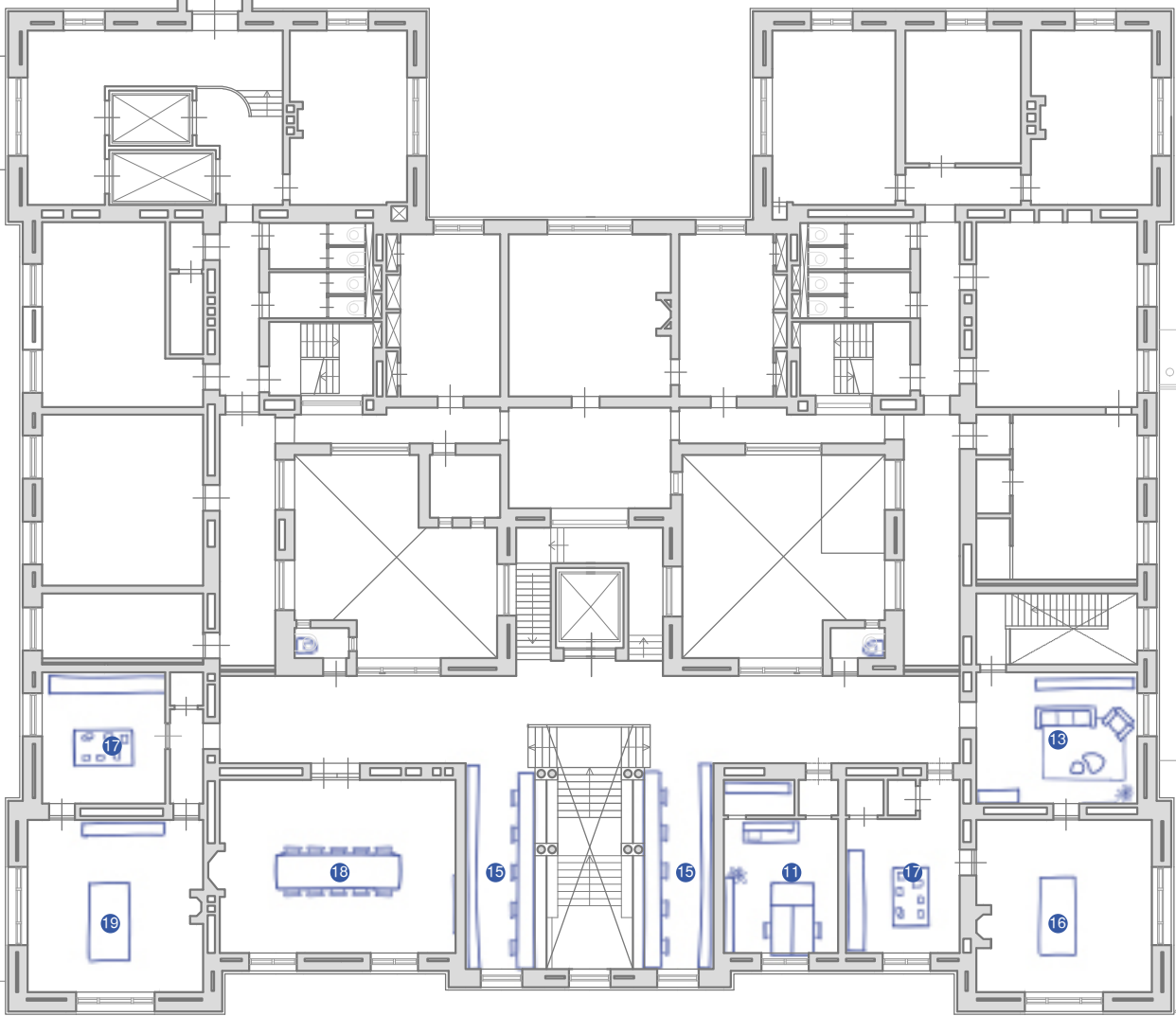
THE DESIGN

- 5 Projection room
- 6 Orientation room
- 7 Underground exhibition space
- 8 Library entrance
- 9 Cloakroom
- 10 Experience room
- 11 Office
- 12 Interview room
- 13 Welcoming room
- 14 Archive of unheard stories
- 15 Library working space
- 16 Fomer Minister office
- 17 Archive space
- 18 Regentenkamer - Archive reading room
- 19 Former Secretary-General office



A SPACE OF REFLECTION





The former minister office, located on the north-east corner of the building, is a prestigious looking room, way more ornamented than the sober character of the hallways. The décor of the room is kept intact, but the rest of the room is empty, except for a wooden table right in the middle, with a few documents on top (see page 202-203). These archival documents contain information about decisions that were made by the ministry, regarding the Dutch colonies. Every month other documents from the archive space, which is located next to this room, are placed on the table.

It gives attention to the large number of choices that were made, which had massive consequences for thousands of people across the world. When you look out the window, you get a glimpse of the pavilion outside and the rest of the square on this sunny day.

On the other side of the hallway, we can find the most heavily loaded room of the building, according to the cultural historical report discussed in chapter 4: the *Regentenkamer*. A room full of kitsch décor, with a questionable pink colour and ornamental wall elements as well as proper ceiling finishing. As mentioned earlier during the research part, the room was renovated in 1898 and its ornamentation (portraits on the wall, the quote above the door and the ceiling painting) are still very present. The *Regentenkamer*, a room in which prominent people from the Dutch colonies

were welcomed and important meetings were held, is now serving as a reading room of the archive. An archive where now research can be done to contextualize and critique the history of former Ministry, in relation to the unheard narratives and stories from people who faced the consequences of those decisions.

The new wooden table and simple chairs however, don't seem to fit the ambience of the room (see page 204-205). The original glass table has been replaced with a wooden one, and the chairs have been reupholstered, replacing the red cushions with *sisal weave*, which is made from the long leaves of the tropical agave plant. These pieces of furniture symbolize how new narratives are now allowed into this room, creating a new perspective on our history.

When one walks back through the hallway, you can look outside the window across the exterior courtyard. On the other side of the courtyard, windows give insight in the hallways of the Tweede Kamer, since the rest of the buildings still functions as office space for the government. One might even catch a glimpse of a politician walking by in the hallway. This reveals the friction within the former ministry building: a few of the spaces are used by the archive, unravelling hidden histories of decisions by our government. Meanwhile, in this very building, new politicians are making new decisions that will, once again, define our future.











Sculpture made to symbolise a World War II story from *Oma*.

Archive of Unheard Stories

On ground floor level, we can find the *Archive of unheard stories*. The archiving process works as follows:

1. People who have family objects or documents relating to Dutch colonial history, which they would like to be archived, can make an appointment with the archive.
2. Then, you bring the object with you to the appointment, and you will be interviewed in the interview room, about the story behind the object.
3. Photo and video material will be made and together with the transcript of the interview, the object will be put into the digital archive.
4. Afterwards, people have the choice to bring their object home again, or to donate it to the archive.

Donated objects and documents end up in the physical *Archive of unheard stories*. A number of fascinating items are showcased in the open space, next to and in between all kinds of other objects. Stories co-exist parallel to each other, just as is the case in actual society.





Epilogue

A space of Reflection is a spatial intervention, located on Het Plein in The Hague, that unravels and gives voice to historical narratives about Dutch colonial history that haven't been properly heard or acknowledged, in order to gain a more honest and complete image of this specific past. The project aims to provoke dialogue and allows space for the public to reflect upon this history, enabling them to position themselves within the bigger context of this complex and controversial past.

Het Plein serves as a field of tensions within the theme of this graduation project. The site is located around the corner of Binnenhof, the heart of our democracy where the government is housed. A government that played crucial role in decisions that were made during the Dutch colonial era, and a government that now still takes questionable responsibility towards this past. Around the square we can find a number of (former) ministry buildings, the former Ministry of Colonies being the most important one in relation to my project. On the north side of the square there is an exclusive private club ('Sociëteit de Witte') to be found, with next to it the Mauritshuis: a building built from money that was made out of slavery in Brasile, which now functions as a museum that celebrates art from the 'Golden Age'. Meanwhile the centre of attention on the square goes to the 14-meter tall statue of Willem van Oranje.

This interesting site, as well as the broad palette of research, analysis and exploration, have led to a framework that allowed for a spatial response to the social-political and site-specific context of the project. This spatial response consists of three major design interventions:

- A wooden pavilion ('House of Free Speech') located on the North-West corner of Het Plein, underneath which flexible programme infill is possible;
- An underground connection from the pavilion, to the former Ministry of Colonies building and the Mauritshuis Museum;
- And an open archive within the former Ministry of Colonies building that reveals unheard narratives and addresses the influence of the ministry that was once there.

This project shows how architecture can play a role in addressing sensitive social-political issues that seemingly have little relation to the built environment. The public domain, the public space being one of those domains, has massive influence on the way society perceives or deals with complex and controversial themes. And as designers we should take responsibility in addressing these topics.

A Space of my own reflection

Dear all,

When I started this journey over a year ago, I never expected the project to become what it has become. I have faced many questions along the way: Who am I, as a Dutch woman, to address the topic of colonial history? What are my views on memorials and commemorating history? What is my role as an architect; to design or not to design? And what if people disagree with what I'm doing? My graduation project was a journey in which I have struggled a lot with these questions, but eventually I managed to find my way in it, which led me to the design that I ended up with.

This project says a lot about me as a person and my positioning in relation to colonial history, as well as my views on architecture. Because I see architecture as a tool, one of the many possible tools, to address sensitive social-political issues. Architecture as a potential framework in which something bigger can happen.

This project is my response to the research and analysis of the social-historical, theoretical and site-specific context. And it was only towards the end of this journey that I started to realize that it was never about finding the best or 'correct' solution to the posed problem statement, but more so about finding a potential solution.

And now that there is a project, people will form opinions: they will agree or disagree, of which the latter might be scary. But at least, people will be able to ask critical questions about it and are enabled to reflect on it. Despite the difficulty of addressing a complex and sensitive topic like this, and the fear of doing it 'wrong', I have learned how important it is to still choose to work on such topics. Hopefully, this project will be an inspiration for others, and forms a starting point for designers and other experts. Because eventually, the importance of my project is not the design itself that I have created, but rather the conversation that it provokes.

Love, Nynke

Appendix

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friends of the project

Here follows a list of people who I consider to be ‘friends’ of my project. Most of them I have spoken to already, a few are still to be interviewed. Some of these people find themselves in overlapping categories, and thus, questions and themes from both categories will be combined into one interview.

People with a narrative

A SPACE OF REFLECTION

Located in The Netherlands

Mayke Giesen
Julian Roza
Melati Veerman
Siti Brandts
Eltjo Ockeloën
Gilang Ramadhan
Ilham Naharudinsyah
Aprisia Rasya Murran
Hamida Kurniawati
Jonathan
Grandfather Isabelle Hoek
Dekkershaghe Elderly home

3rd generation Indo-European Urbanism student
3rd generation Indo-European (Indonesian mother, Dutch father)
3rd generation Indo-European Architecture student
3rd generation Indo-European Architecture student
3rd generation Indo-African Architecture student
2nd generation Indonesian, PhD candidate TU Delft
3rd generation Indonesian PhD candidate TU Delft
3rd generation Indonesian Architecture student
3rd generation Indonesian former Architecture student
3rd generation Indonesian-Chinese Architecture student
1st generation Dutch soldier at KNIL during Independence War
1st generation Dutch-Indies and Indo-Europeans

Located in Indonesia

Alle Azrin
Budi Sunarko
Anggra Ayu Rucitra
Hayfaza Nayottama Auliarachim
Arham Mauriyat

3rd generation Indonesian, located in Jakarta
2nd generation Indonesian, located in Semarang
3rd generation Indonesian, located in Surabaya
3rd generation Indonesian, located in Yogyakarta
2nd generation Indonesian, located in Bandung

People with expertise

Located in The Netherlands

Sabina Tanović	Expert on Monuments & Memorials, and Memory Studies
Mo Smit	Indo-European architect and tutor, who did research in Indonesia
Maria Rey-Lamslag	Indo-European researcher and curator, background in Critical Heritage Studies (MA)
Sander Lugtenburg	Cultural historian and legal expert
Rizky Kalebos	Indonesian parents, background in Urban planning (MA), gives colonial walking tours through The Hague
Melissa Korn	Expert on food in relation to culture, identity and history
Paoletta Holst	Artist and architectural historian, PhD in late colonial architecture
Pauline K.M. van Roosmalen	Art and architecture history (MA), PhD at TU Delft History in Architecture in Indonesia
Vincent de Boer	STROOM Den Haag, responsible for 'art in the public space'
Remco Vermeulen	Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, advisor Indonesia
Jacqueline de Graauw	Wrote a cultural historical report of the former Ministry of Colonies building
Sander Nelissen	Renovating architect of the former Ministry of Colonies building during the current Binnenhof renovation

Located in Indonesia

David Hutama Setiadi	Researcher on colonial heritage, background architecture and art
Setiadi Sopandi	Architect, curator and lecturer
Dr Maulana Ibrahim	Architectural Engineer, cultural heritage on Ternate Island
Prof. Paramita Atmodiwirjo	Professor Universitas Indonesia department of architecture
Angeline Basuki	Museum Arsitektur Indonesia (previously worked at: Konsorsium Kota Tua Jakarta)
Febriyanti Suryaningsih	Director of Centre for Architectural Documentation
Yasmin Azizah	Background in architecture
Dr. Bambang Setia Budi	Lecturer ITB department of Architecture

It feels like everybody is holding a missing piece to the puzzle, a piece many others are not aware of. But once we all put our pieces together, the puzzle will be complete.

February 2024 - April 2025

AR3AI100
Independent Group

MSc Architecture thesis

Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment
Delft University of Technology

A space of Reflection is a spatial intervention, located on Het Plein in The Hague, that unravels and gives voice to historical narratives about Dutch colonial history which haven't been properly heard or acknowledged, in order to gain a more honest and complete image of this specific past. The project aims to provoke dialogue and allows space for the public to reflect upon this history, enabling them to position themselves within the bigger context of this complex and controversial past.

