

Archiving where exactly

note

This part of a journal was created as a result of a practical needs - it is simply easier to bind 3 booklets of around one hundred pages, than two where one is almost two hundred alone .

However, it makes perfect sense to divide this research - making process in three phases.

Friday, the 13th of June, 2025.

Interiors Buildings Cities

MSc3/4 | *Palace*

Prof. Daniel Rosbottom
Mark Pimlott
Susanne Pietsch
Sam De Vocht
Sereh Mandias
Amy Thomas
Dr. Jurjen Zeinstra

Students

Alessandra D'Acunto
Anna Klaver
Bruno Teles Xavier
Daan Franken
Dilek Zaid
Ertug Çiftçi
Iris Niederer
Jakub Nowak
Jenny Fang
Jiarui Xing
Jur Sinia
Laura Tijchon
Liren Chu
Maksymilian Bernady
Maksymilian Jaszczuk
Margaux Lomax
Romain Tournon
Sem Verwey
Silas Windrich
Stanisław Kilian
Veronica Danesin
Yueyi Liang
Yunke Li
Yuqing Zhang

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Post P1 | Thoughts and comments

The general feedback about the proposal was rather positive.

The tutors insights were focused mostly on the feature of a large roof covering my rooms with tiny remarks on the rooflight construction, which was not a surprise for me as I knew it was not entirely correct from the very beginning, but I kept on working for the final outcome.

I found one comment to be particularly insightful - one about testing the different densities of shelving layouts in the room; it might be useful for solving some difficult decisions coming along with engaging into deSingel's existing structure.



Herzog & de Meuron - Depot Auf dem Wolf in Basel, 1989

Maks PA

cloister or bus carriage

Hidem tram shed

How is rooflight constructed? J.

not dense enough? → how to fit more D.
shelves.

segments → dense to less dense D.

Where are the services in the building? D.

↓
under ceiling - too low (almost touching
the ducts)

is it a large roof? D

+ sketch the crits / comment on top
of the project,

02 - 01

Developing the *Archive*



Undated image of deSingel, Library Royal Conservatory Antwerp

Developing an Archive

VAI

The Flanders Architecture Institute (VAI) represents architecture as a subject and a discipline in Dutch-speaking Belgium. It seeks to provide a meeting place for everyone who wishes to make, share and experience architecture, through its engagement with exhibitions, lectures, debates, events and publications. The VAI offers an important critical framework, through which to consider contemporary Flemish architecture, producing a biennial yearbook and curating the Belgian Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale.

Since 2018, this active participation with contemporary architecture has been extended through its appropriation of the Flanders Architectural Archive. This collection, originally built up by the Province of Antwerp but now addressing Flanders as a whole, holds more than 180 private architect archives, including those of Léon Stynen, Bob Van Reeth - AWG, Christian Kleckens, Bataille-Ibens and many others.

The relation between the archive and the VAI's other activities is a developing one. It will be the task of this project to consider what might be the role of the extensive historical material and technically defined conditions of the archive as an integral component of the wider public mission of the organisation.

De Singel

The VAI is currently based at De Singel, a modernist cultural campus on the Southern periphery of Antwerp's historical centre. In 1958, the Ministry of Public Works commissioned architect Léon Stynen to design the first phase of this ambitious complex, a new Conservatoire as an extension to the Antwerpsche Vlaamsche Muziekschool. It featured a pavilion shaped like an open figure of eight with rooms overlooking two inner courtyards. In 1979, work began on the construction of phase two, becoming the expanded deSingel Cultural Centre and including a series of performance space for music and theatre as well as a television broadcasting centre. In 1987 the building was extended again, based on a design by Stynen and his assistant Paul De Meyer, with additional space for the Conservatoire and a small public foyer. In 1995, Stéphane Beel was tasked with drawing up a masterplan for the reorganisation and extension of DE SINGEL and the Conservatoire, finally leading in 2010 to the opening of a major extension to the complex, part of which houses the office and exhibition hall of the VAI.

A New Home

With the addition of the archive, the institute has now outgrown this space. The archive is housed in a separate

Archiving Architecture

2024-25 MSc3 AR3A1100
Brief 03

building in the centre of Antwerp, which we have visited, and which is not fit for purpose. In 2021 the VAI launched a competition, through the Flanders Bouwmeester Open Call, to create a new home for itself, incorporating both its more public activities and the archive, within a redundant church, Saint Hubertus, in Berchem, Antwerp. This competition was finally abandoned due to cost and unclear political motives, even after a winner for the competition was chosen.

This history is the starting point for our project. The VAI needs a new home. We propose to take a different starting point, which is to build on the relationships and potential synergies that already exist between the VAI and De Singel, as a means by which to engage both institutions but also as a catalyst to rethink the condition and environment of the building itself. While De Singel is an important venue for the arts, its relationship with both the city and its public is an ambivalent one. The complex has a distant and introverted character and its public spaces often feel under utilised. Core uses, such as the television studios, have been abandoned and the complex as a whole feels in need of a new sense of purpose and engagement. The Beel extension ultimately does little to amend these senses, indeed it could be said to exacerbate it, with its large, empty circulation spaces and its ambiguous relation to the ground and the city.

Over the remainder of the course each of you will develop a project to define a new, unified home for the VAI, incorporating the needs of the archive, alongside its other public and administrative roles. The starting point will be the competition brief written in 2021. This adds other possibilities for public and community engagement to the organisation's core activities. However that brief is for a standalone building. Working in response to the existing complex of De Singel, and perhaps the VAI's existing spaces there, you may feel you need to critique, adapt and develop the brief to engage with the situation as you find it and the possibilities it offers. This may engage, to one extent or another, the larger condition of De Singel and the other organisations that occupy it, or might focus on the VAI as a defined entity within or in response to it. This breadth of starting point also offers a significant degree of flexibility in your approach. You may choose to extend De Singel, create a new structure that relates to it in some way, or perhaps work entirely within its existing body. An ambition might be to redefine its relationship with the city and its surroundings, while understanding its own identity and typology and enjoying its modernist sensibility.

To Begin

As a beginning, we would like you to explore, document and represent De Singel, as a developing body and as a situated one, describing the relationships between it and its context historically and now, with an understanding of potential future developments. In the next weeks we will ask you to refine your own brief for the project and to test the scale and possibilities of your interventions.

By P2 we expect you to have a strategic direction and an outline form for your proposals, presented through models and drawings, from which you can establish a developed architectural proposal across the scales of interior, building, city and landscape by the conclusion of the course.

Public

- Reception and counter: 100m² (incl. separate sanitary facilities and seating)
- Exhibition space/multifunctional space: 200m²
- Reading room: 200 m² (cf. current reading room 96m², is too small) (keep reading room and library divided, small separate group study room)
- Library: 200 m² (books and visitors' workstations) (keep reading room and library divided)

Total: 700m²

Additional

- Staff workspace 300m²
- Large workplace for archive employees is 12.5 m² assume 10 = 125 proposal: 300m² (+/- 30 employees including interns, temporary employees, etc.)
- Large workstations with archives 3.5 mx 3.5
- Standard office spaces
- Focus spots
- 1 large meeting room 80m²
- 1 small meeting room 30m²
- Kitchen, bathroom, dressing room 150m²

Total: 560m²

Archive ~ 80%

- Storage Packaging material: 120m² (near archive, depot, office)
- Loading and unloading space: 150m²
- Waiting depot (=emergency depot): 100 m² (storage of non-exclusive archives, bulk pallets)
- Triage space correct - contaminated material: 60m²
- Quarantine (storage of contaminated material): 120 m²
- Cleaning space (processing contaminated material): 60 m²
- Pre-depot (storage of own material): 60 m²
- Processing (processing of own material): 60m²
- Digitization space (own material): 60 m² (new)
- Restoration studio (own material): 60 m²
- Depot storage: 2,500 m² (Currently 1,500m, growth in recent years 470m in 5-7 years > per 5y 400m > 10y > 20y with expensive storage systems)
- Taking into account climate class for paper
- Climate class photos separate space; 100 m²
- Bulk storage
- Storage in racks and planning cabinets
- View depots: too (in the underground term, 125m is visually attractive, desire to collect more 3D objects) > this could be a 'regular depot box' with a transparent wall in front
- Server space 10m (not on functional schedule)

Total: +/- 4000m²

TOTAL ~ 5260 m² Palace

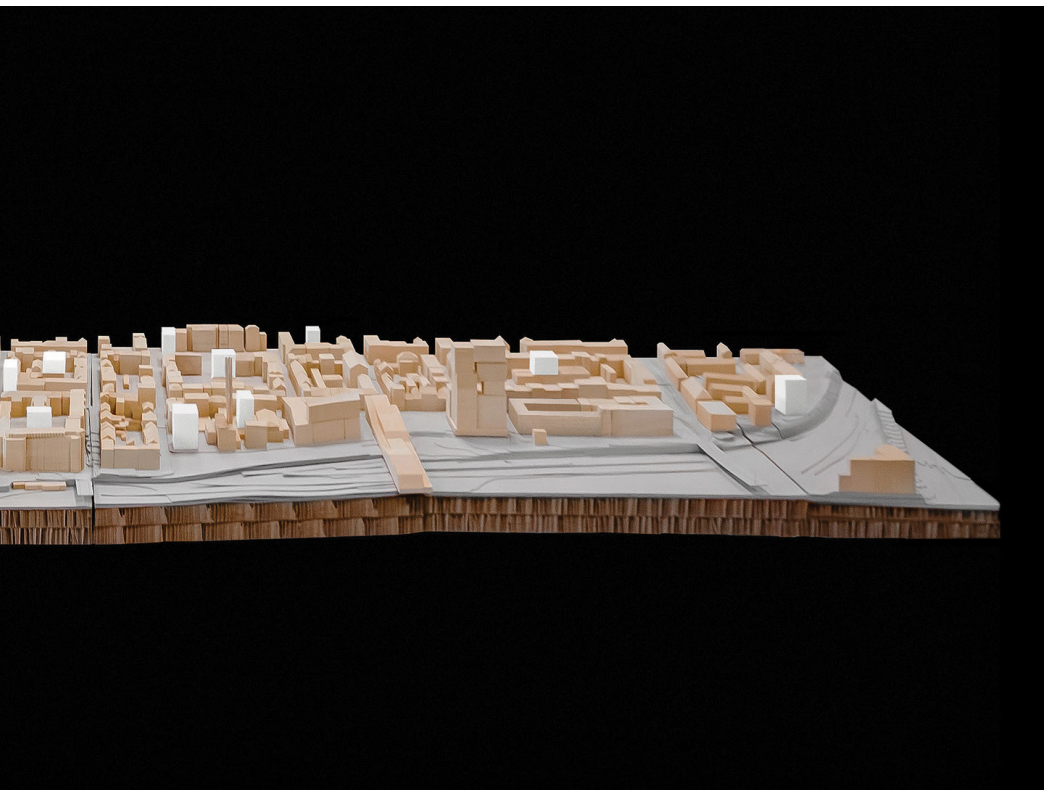
not actually a well written brief

Situating the archive | deSingel

We started off with the second quarter with preparing a strategy for coming weeks. That includes regrouping and assigning ourselves some tasks. I joined the group being responsible for a general site model.



RESEARCH	3D MODEL	SITE PLAN	BUILDING MODEL
ANNA	BRUNO	ALESSANDRA	JENNY
SEM	DAAN	MAKS B.	ERTUG
LIREN	DIEK	SIGAS	SEM (From week 22)
IRIS	YUEYI	CAURA	JAVAB
MARGAUX	JUR	STANISLAW	MAKSI
		YUDING	VERONICA
		JIRUI	YUNKE
			ROMAIN



reference model by Stefan Costache, Diploma Studio Sergison, USI AAM, 2024

NAi. At a glance

In the first week of a new brief, we visited the Nieuwe Instituut's (NAi) archive facility, where we have been given a concise, but insightful tour. According to the guide, the NAi depot in its concept was supposed to establish a visual division between a heavily trafficked Rochussenstraat and the Museumpark, while keeping an actual connection through an arcade in the ground floor, where the entrance was supposed to be located. The depot volume is lifted from the ground, providing a passage, while still keeping the core on a side for the deliveries.

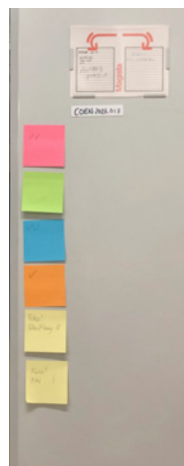
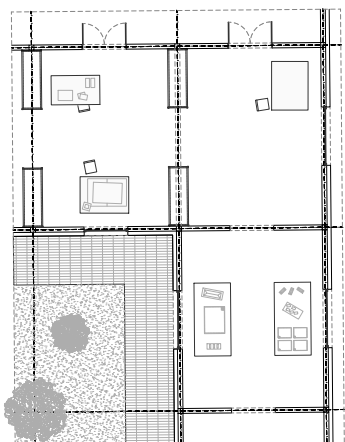
Depot's longitudinal plan imposed a certain organisation of archival programme (quarantine, evaluation, predepot) in a linear logic, affecting the unorthodox spatial organisation of the collected materials, which enhances the storage efficiency of similar sized materials on the racks. The meta-organisation (coding, etc.), however remains

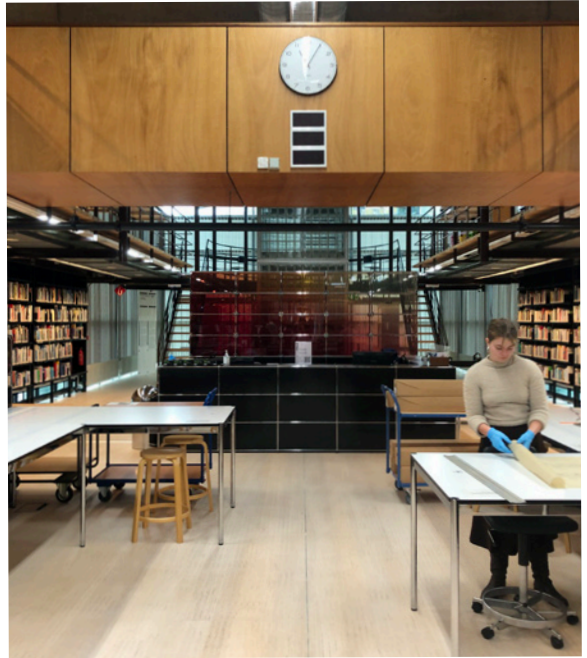
unchanged from the method the architect used to archive him/herself. The largest objects need to be stored in the Van Nelle Fabriek annex.

The material is stored in the same, stable climatic conditions (17°C and low humidity level), which is not ideal - according to the ICAM* guidelines, but remains to keep the material intact.

NAi's reading room (library and collective study) is most likely open, however, there's a reservation system for study tables dedicated for the archival material research.

* International Confederation of Architecture Museums





Let's start from a Palace

Parallely to the site model, I started to think about where should I start with the VAI archives in the context of deSingel.

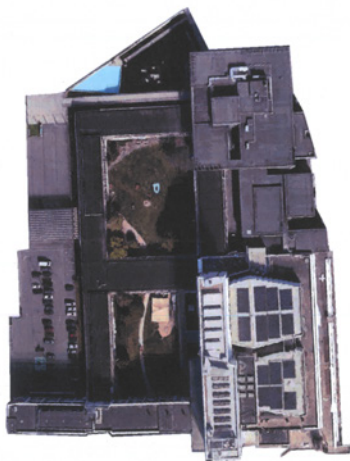
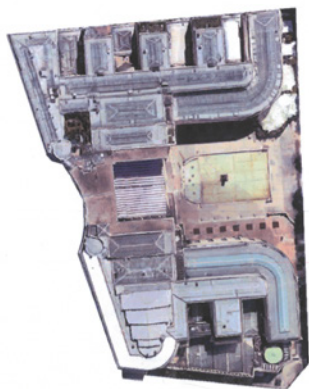
As a regular part of my initial workflow, I went through the examples of projects with similar scale (general area wise) from which I found the conversion of Palais de Tokyo (Paris) by Lacaton & Vassal to be the most comparable in both program and scale (an urban-block-like public building).

Somehow this project is in a group of common references for all of my designing attempts, so I thought that this compatibility is even metter

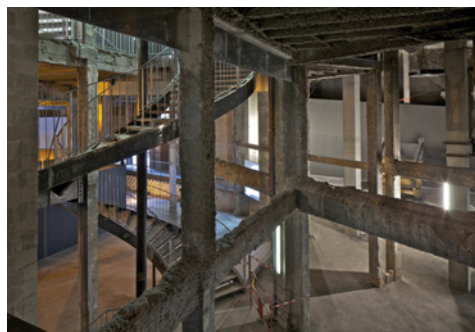
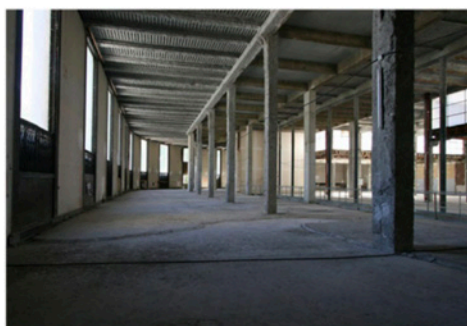
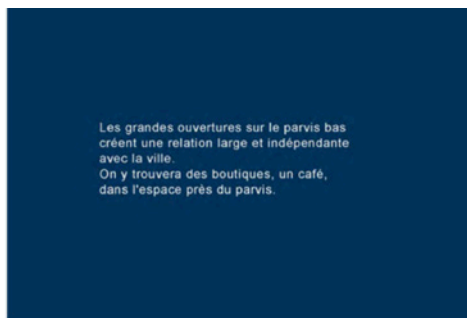
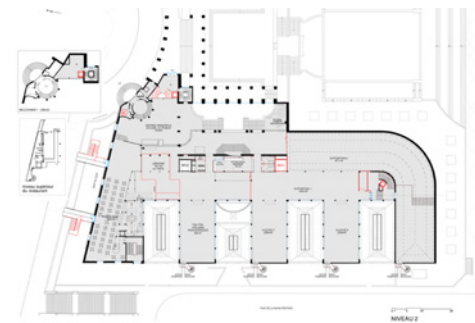
to merge thinking about the scale of the project with the general approach - or more of a gut feeling - being:

- building the least possible, while engaging and re-programming of what is already there

Palais de Tokyo was exactly something like that. The architects stripped the building down to its structural bone, reprogrammed the rooms, changed and simplified installations layouts and patterns and finally added something new only where it was necessary.



Scale comparison - Palais de Tokyo (Paris) and deSingel (Antwerp)



project photos and description from Lacaton & Vassal webpage

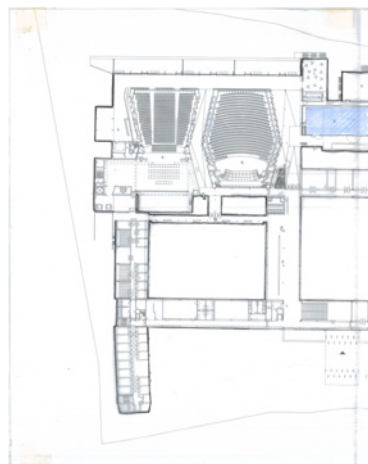
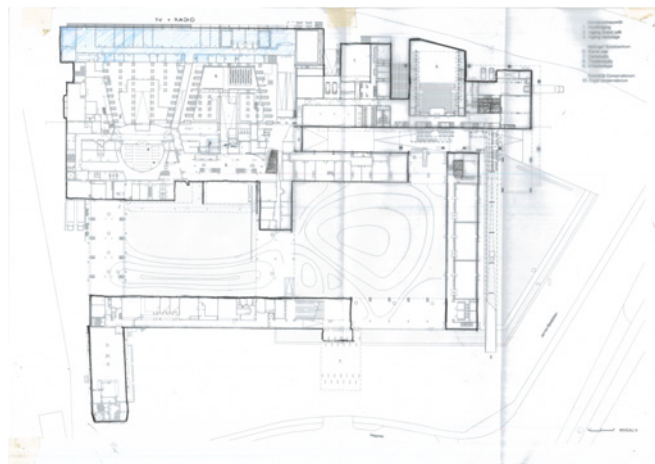
Seeking common ground

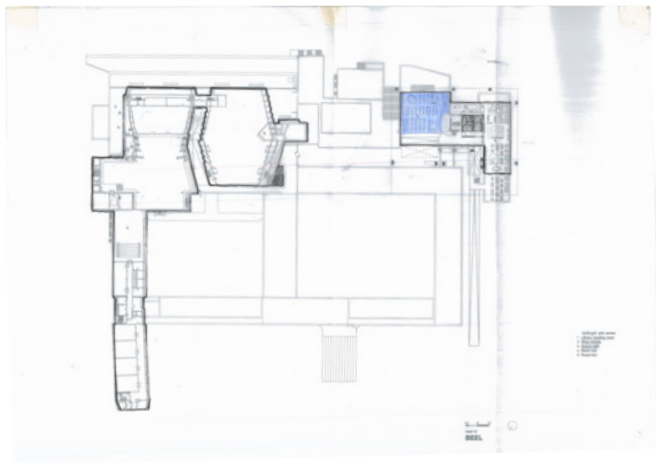
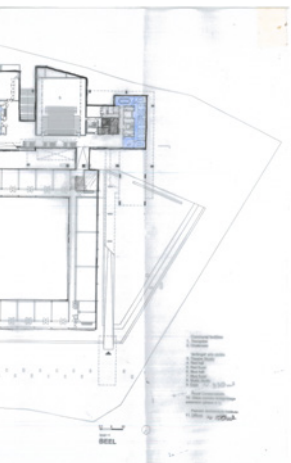
Trying to find the starting point, I started with quick tracing through deSingel plans in order to locate the spaces that VAI currently uses exclusively and partially; shares or could potentially share.

Guided by a simple gut feeling I have highlighted two existing cores - one of the original Leon Stynen's building and one of Stephane Beel's latter addition - as focal points, between which the design might be evolving further.

Also, the spaces on the very back of Stynen's ground level, occupied by the Radio 2 (and affiliated institutions), might be useful to arrange

later, however I do not know yet, what would be the ideal purpose for them. Maybe it could be the back of the archive; maybe offices of the VAI? What does it say of the project if I want to put the institution administrative core at the very back of its future headquarters? Do I need to care about it?





Using the Google Maps Streetview as a tool to explore the site in (meta)space and suprisingly... through time.

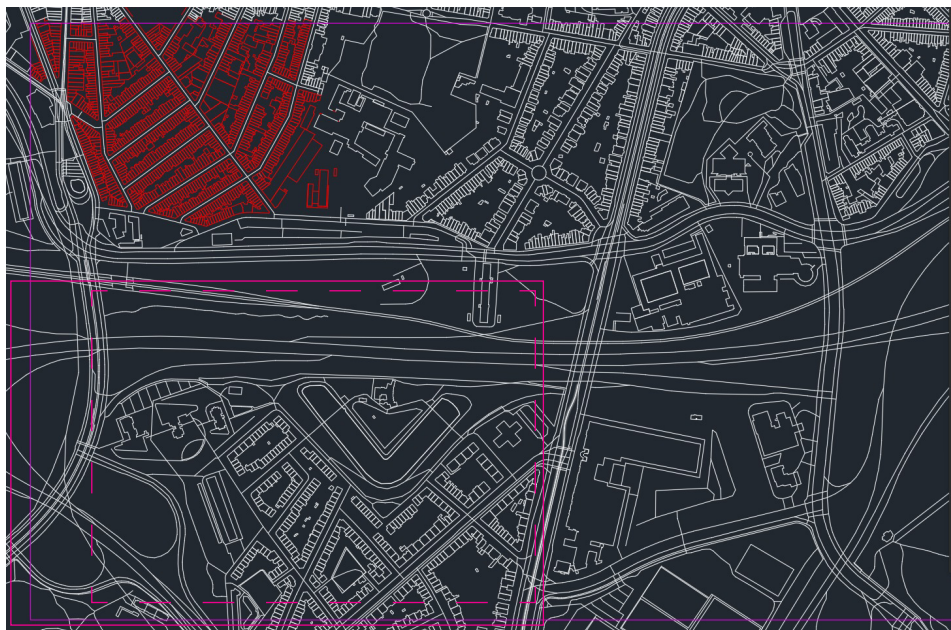
I think I can see two potential sites for the archive to be located around deSingel. According to the feasibility study VAI has already made, there is a place to build either from Jan van Rijswijklaan side, or in front of the building from Desguinlei side.





Site. In the making

In the group of six, we engaged on making the site model for the whole studio. We wanted it to be helpful to work with for the rest of our colleagues. Taking into consideration that most of us does not know where to place their archive, we decided to prepare a bigger area urban model but in a scale of 1:1250 - much smaller than initially expected (1:500).





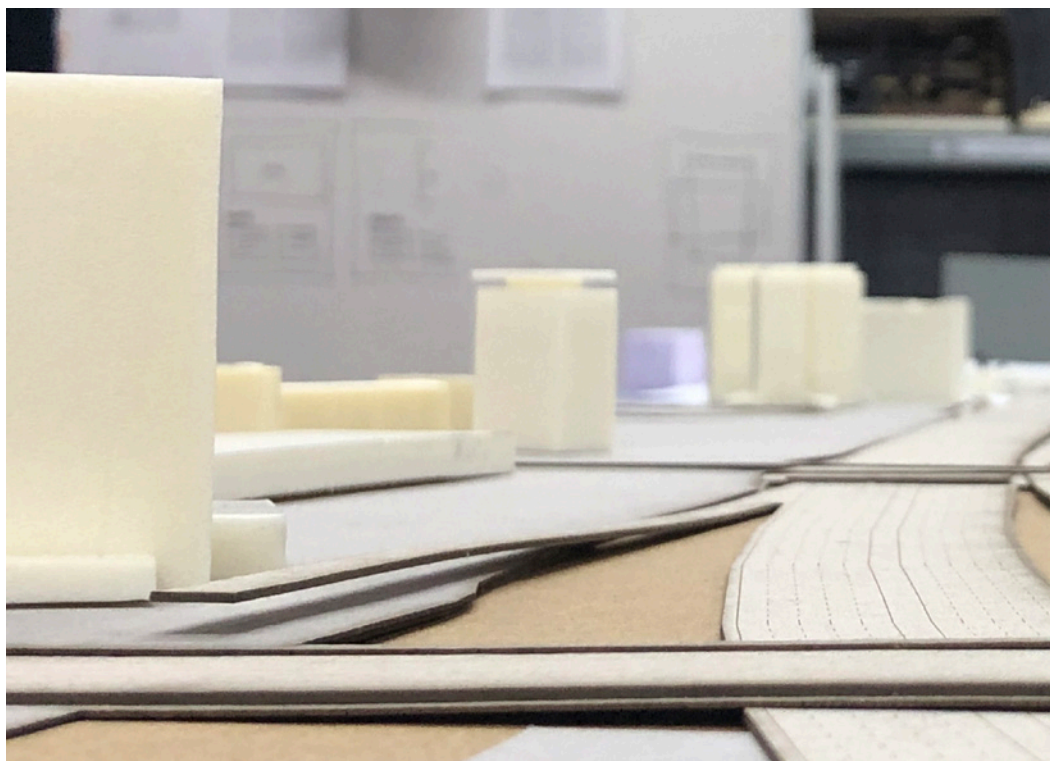
reference:

scale model 1:500; Interiors Buildings
Cities - Graduation Studio 2023/24





deSingel complex - the building of a sacle of an urban block





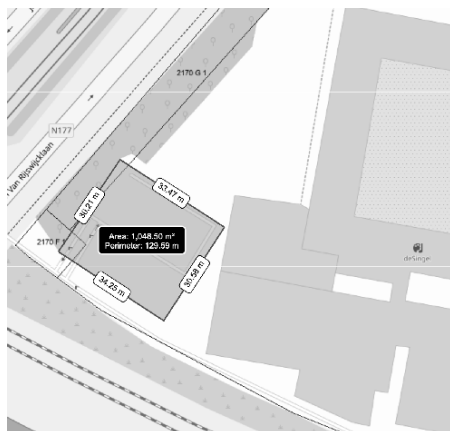
Just a little tryout

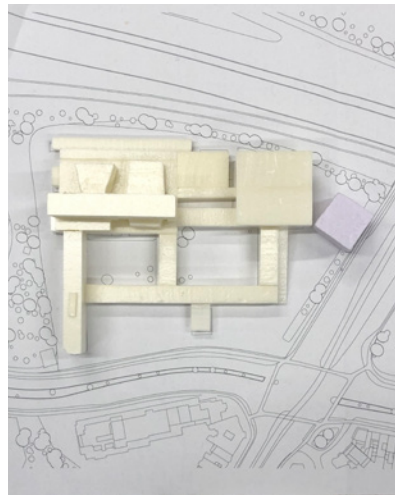
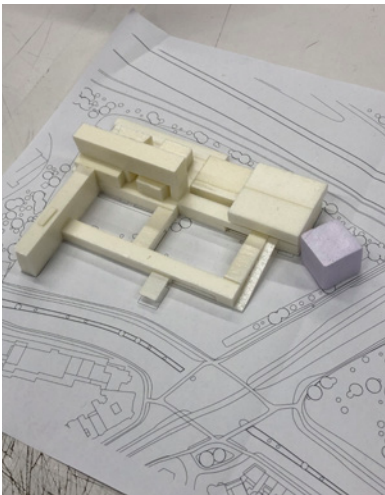
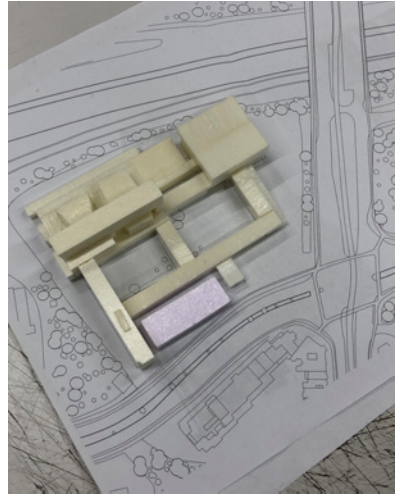
While preparing the site model I used a little of the time to prepare two tryout proposals for two volumetric possibilities to accommodate the programme of an archive given in the brief.

First, in the front of deSingel's northern walls as three storey high, longitudinal hall.

Second as a five to six storey high cubic tower in the place of current deSingel parking at Jan de Rijswijklaan.

Both of those proposals, however, are not satisfactory to actually consider them for this moment as there are no imaginable, feasible connections with the deSingel structure.





First comments

A random recollection of the group tutorial as introduction to the new brief:

- *deSingel is disfunctional in its current condition;*
- *crucial to examine the edge condition;*
- *think about efficiency in terms of the fabric instead of the economic;*
- *what should the archive do on top of its base program / brief?;*
- *deSingel is about corridors;*
read: Robin Evans – Figures, Doors, Passages;
- *everything is a corridor but is it a structural DNA?;*
- *maybe the current shuffle of programs is already a good thing?;*
- *reorganisation of the V&A can be a starting point and a catalyst for the real condition of deSingel;*
- *reorganising organisations through the question of how they use the space they have been given;*
- *anecdote – in the M HKA project it was more carbon efficient to actually just build a new building;*
- *if building within deSingel – you need to learn to critically analyse the existing condition;*

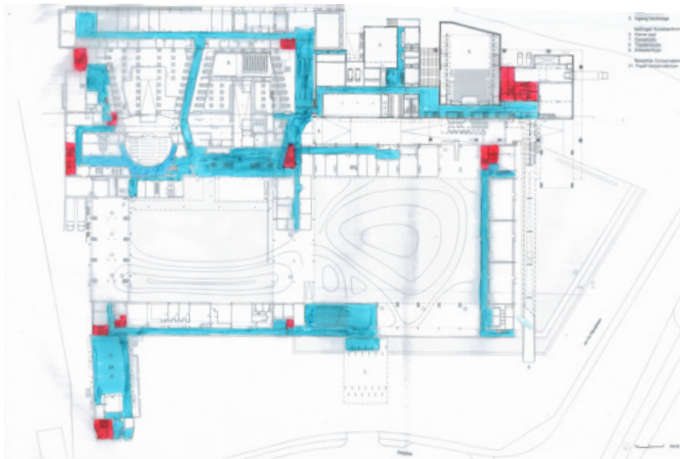
Tracing through the amalgamate

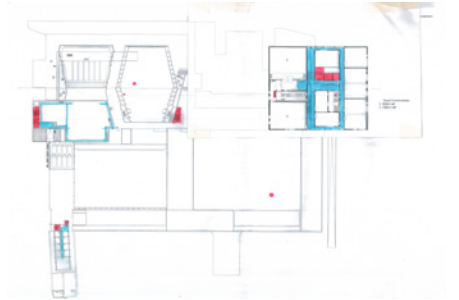
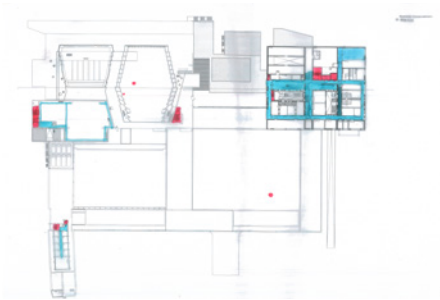
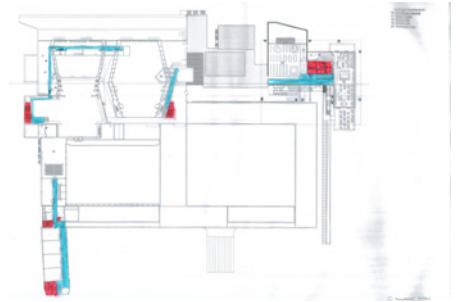
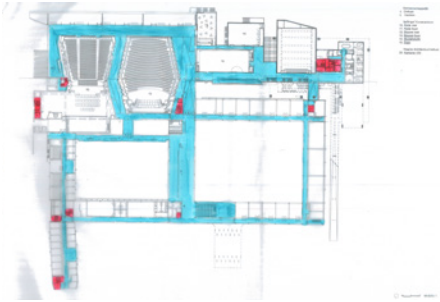
In order to get to know the building better, I decided to focus on the what is connecting all the bits of scattered institutions around in this amalgamate of programmes and spaces.

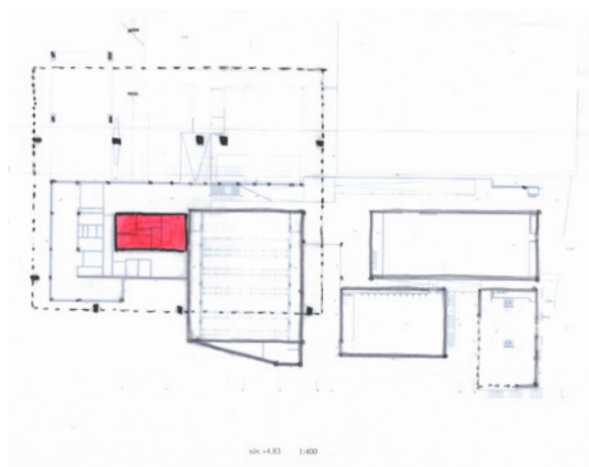
By tracing the circulation areas I managed to discover from looking at the plans only, that most of the building's ground and first floors are basically longitudinal corridors of different width.

Especially Beel's addition, seemingly not having much sense in the distribution of particular spaces, has a lot of communication as kind of blank spaces in the layout, connecting what is supposedly to be "full" volumes.

Intrigued by this vagueness of the Beel wing, I wanted to find out more about its structural system.







By browsing through the city's digital archive (Felix Archief) I managed to find the plans of every floor, including the basement ones.

Apparently, the Beel wing consists of individual structural system for each of the larger volumes. The upper part is elevated by massive columns it interlocks with the rest of the building at the core. The eastern parts of the wing are supported on its own column grid and stand on separate foundations almost entirely. The western and central parts, however, have an extensive basement level underneath;

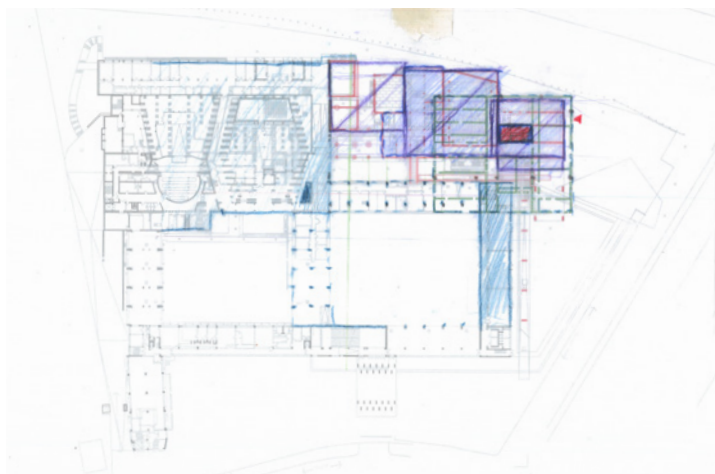
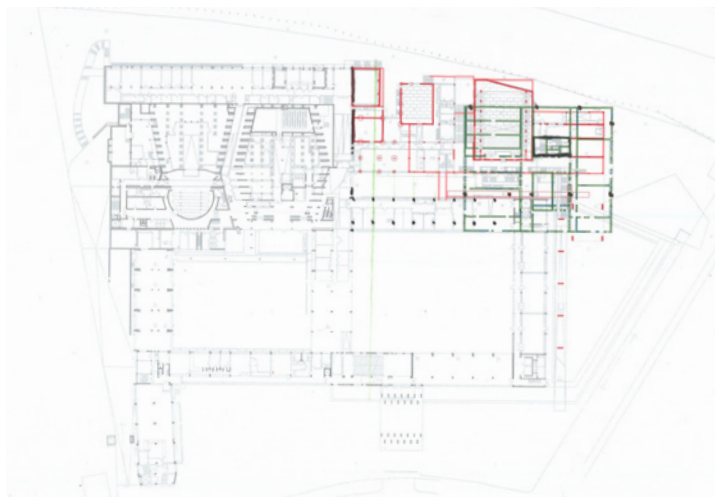
Thinking about how to intervene in the wing with my design I cannot see the scenario where the upper (table like) part, fragment could be cleared for any new structure incoming.

Neither could the western fragment of the lower part, due to the basement levels and existing retention walls, being extremely difficult and expensive to remove.



I see some potential unfolding for the eastern, lower part to be altered, however I cannot progress without knowing more about how the rest of the building operates.

The superposition of so many structural systems at once appear to be probably too complex to be understood only by the drawings. There might be necessary for me and the whole studio to have structural model of the whole deSingel.



Second review

During my second tutorial I was encouraged to push my investigations of the existing to trace what are the “empty spaces” between original condition of deSingel and Beel’s addition; and between the lower part (Beel laag) and higher part (Beel hoog) of the Beel building;

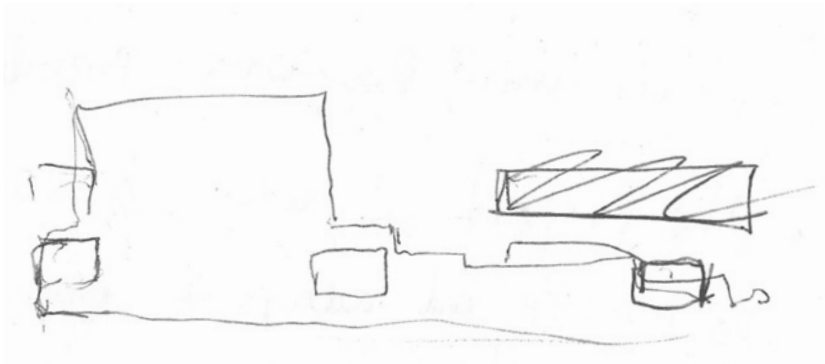
To put more focus on the gaps and voids that occur and what I can do with them or how to learn from them .

There has also been a comment posed about how the building will benefit from getting rid of the lower fragments. What happens after the demolition? What do I get? How does it relate to the

edge condition of deSingel’s site next to the motorway.

Finally, I have heard to investigate “what can I already take out of the brief” accordingly to what is already there in deSingel, in order to be sure where to precisely remove the existing.

Daniel mentioned that from his experience of working with the archive projects, the area of 500 square meters is the most optimal for the archival space (room?) in terms of how the those institutions operate (organise their collections).



Turns out – Beel was sometimes right

While investigating what is a waste, and what is actually useful, I re-discovered Beel's humble passage, connecting two wings of Stynen's building. I consider it now to be a productive addition – Beel has enhanced the original functional layout by adding a clear, simple element. Almost an *invisible touch*.

That cannot be said about the latter extension both in the building logic and its appearance, however, when looking at the pictures of the construction works it becomes evident that it is mostly the current wooden cladding to impair the visual effect.



The first addition of Beel, photographs from architects' webpage



construction image found in the web, it is actually a big concrete frame



Towards first conclusions

The next week I spent at investigating the existing programme more thoroughly, I have traced the areas of individual spaces (rooms and halls) as well as the combined clusters of same programmatic use.

After seeing an actual potential in reconfiguring some rooms for the new uses, as some of them match the areas desired in the given brief, I began to expand my investigation to other spaces in the whole building to see, where the programme glitches with its current location.

I have discovered that deSingel office cluster, located in the ground floor - partially under the main “spine corridor” and partially under the conservatorium rooms - is a latter addition made probably by Paul de Meyer, and that they were never a part of the original concept of deSingel - that was initially set to be the *extended landscape* - but an *ad hoc* intervention to facilitate growing capacity issues at the time.

Looking at the archival aerial photo I thought that my proposal for an archive building might include an attempt to reconnect deSingel to its very initial idea, considering the irreversible alterations of the landscape's condition.



archival photo, around 1980s

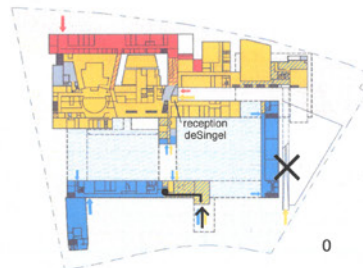
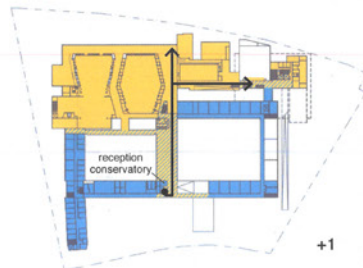
PART I - General Study of the Entire Building and Site



Figure 1.3.45 (middle): Exhibition case VAI (flickr.com, 2015).



Figure 1.3.46 (bottom): Grand Café (© Luca Beel, SBA).



3.5. Accessibility and routing

The building has two main public entrances: the entrance of the original building at the Desguinelei and the entrance of the new building by the outside rampart along the van Rijswijkdlaan.

Because the outside rampart has an inclination more than 5%, and therefore doesn't comply with the regulations concerning accessibility, disabled people need to enter the building by the Desguinelei. An elevator at the start of wing A gives access to the level +1.²⁴ From this level the main public functions and the access to the horizontal tower are accessible.

²⁴ The connection between the main entrance and the elevator on level 0 happens by a small ramp inside the building. This ramp is also to steep, but is now used as most accessible entrance.

Figure 1.3.47: Scheme accessibility (M4).

CHAPTER 3 - Architectural and Functional Analysis

The clear routing of the building has disappeared due to the different extensions. Many dead ends exist in the building and functions blend into each other. To make it to some extent possible to orientate yourself in the building, the different building blocks got a name. The routes to main entities (such as the halls, the library, the exposition room, ...) are signposted. The reception of the Conservatoire is located on the first level and directly visible from the entrance hall. The reception of deSingel is positioned near the logistic entrance of deSingel on level 0 and somewhat hidden.



Figure 1.3.48: Signposting (MH, 23/05/2014).

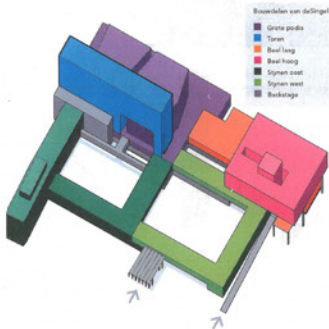


Figure 1.3.49: Scheme building blocks (Antwerp: deSingel).

4. Analysis of the building program

4.1. Different functions spread through the building

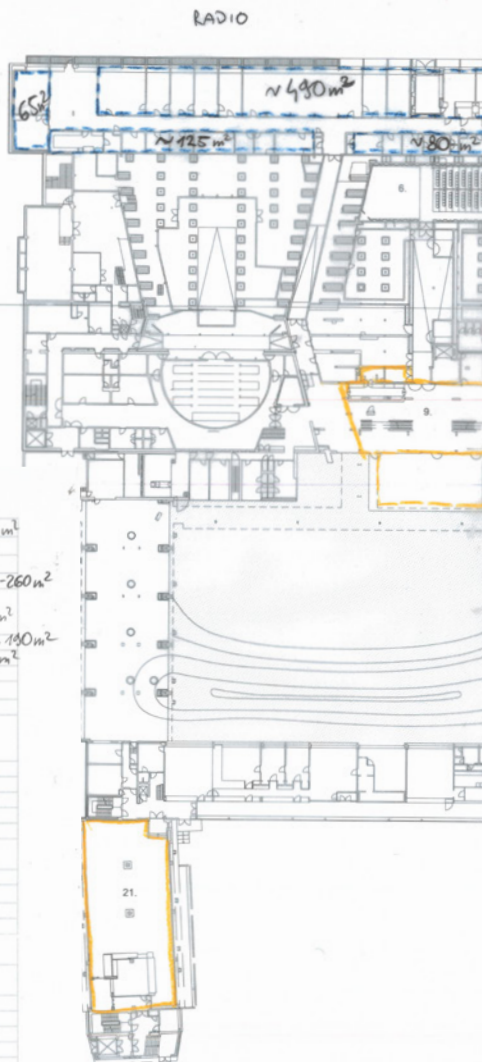
The following schemes give an overview of the different functions of the rooms. A scheme is made for every reference level, each time for both the situation in 1980 (after completion of the original building) and the situation today. The information in the schemes of 1980 derives from the drawings and descriptions of the design made by Stynen and De Meyer. The schemes of the situation today are based on the room list made by deSingel.

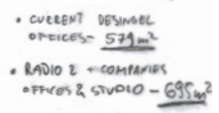
The following schemes show that in the current situation clusters of functions are spread through the building. These clusters follow broadly the structure of the different users (cfr. supra): the Conservatoire-deSingel-Radio 2. In the attempt to make a clear description of the different functions, the description corresponds with the zones of the different users. The location of a room in the buildings is mostly explained by orientation and the name of building blocks (cfr. bookmark).

Name	Size m ²	Description
Total	5157.25	
Public	700	
Reception and counter	100	incl. separate sanitary facilities and cf. current reading room 96m ² . is too small; keep reading room and library separate; small separate group study room
Exhibition space/ multifunctional space	200	
Reading room	200	
Library	200	Books and visitors' workstations
Additional	872.25	
Staff workspace	300	
Large workplace for archive employees	300	12.5 m ² per employee (+/-30 employees, including interns, temporary employees, etc.)
Large workstation with Standard office space	12.25	3.5x3.5m
Focus Spots		
1 large meeting room	80	
1 small meeting room	30	
kitchen, bathroom, dressing room	150	
Archive	3585	
Storage packaging material	120	near archive depot, office
Loading and unloading space	150	
Waiting depot	100	emergency depot, storage of non-exclusive archives, bulk pallets
Tirage space correct - contaminated material	60	
Quarantine	120	Storage of containment material =
Cleaning	60	Processing of containment material
pre-depot	60	Storage of own material
processing	60	processing of own material
Digitization space	60	own material
Restoration studio	60	own material
Depot storage	2500	Currently 1500, growth in recent years 470m in 5-7 yrs > per 5yr 400m with extensive storage system, paper climate class
Climate class photo storage	100	
Bulk storage		
Storage in racks and planning cabinets		
View depot	125	visually attractive, desire to collect more 3D objects, this could be a regular depot box with a transparent wall in front
Server space	10	not on functional schedule

Corresponding Existing space Size m²

V&I Office ~220-260m²
 Expo 315m²
 Designel 19 ~ 190m²
 Blue Foyer 19 ~ 190m²
 Punk studio 200m²



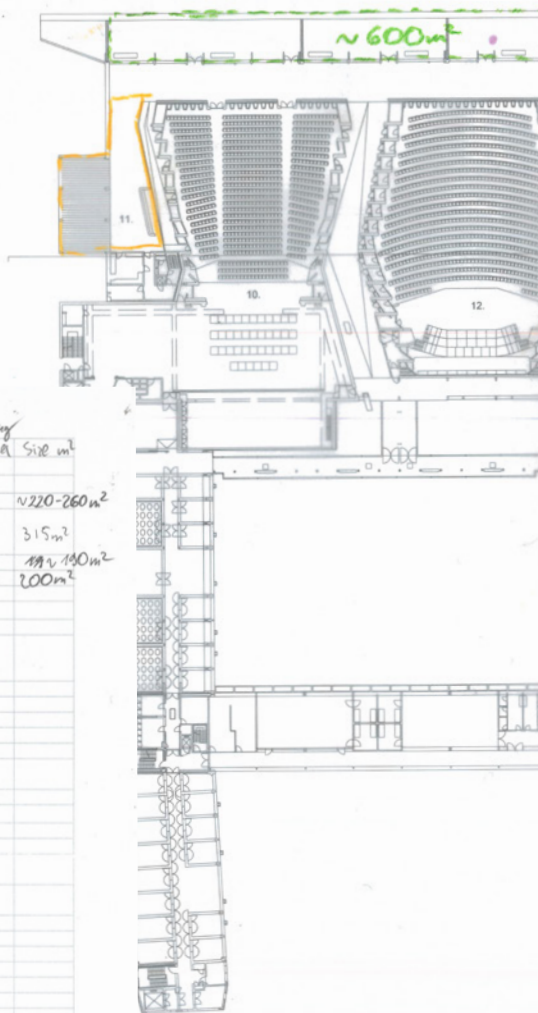


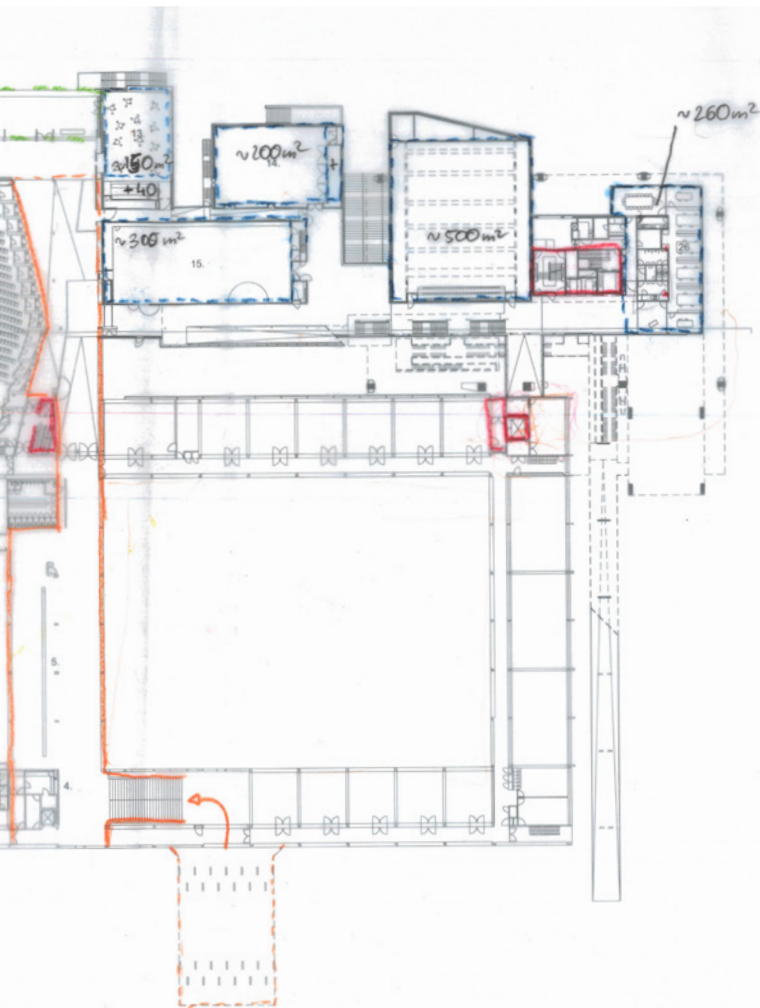
- CURRENT DESIGNER OFFICES - 579 m²
- RADIO 2 COMPANIES OFFICES & STUDIO - 695 m²

Name	Size m ²	Description
Total	5157.25	
Public	700	
Reception and counter	100	incl. separate sanitary facilities and cf. current reading room 96m ² . is too small; keep reading room and library separate; small separate group study room
Exhibition space/ multifunctional space	200	
Reading room	200	
Library	200	Books and visitors' workstations
Additional	872.25	
Staff workspace	300	
Large workplace for archive employees	300	12.5 m ² per employee (+/-30 employees, including interns, temporary employees, etc.)
Large workstation with Standard office space	12.25	3.5x3.5m
Focus Spots		
1 large meeting room	80	
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kitchen, bathroom, dressing room	150	
Archive	3585	
Storage packaging material	120	near archive depot, office
Loading and unloading space	150	
Waiting depot	100	emergency depot, storage of non-exclusive archives, bulk pallets
Tirage space correct - contaminated material	60	
Quarantine	120	Storage of containment material =
Cleaning	60	Processing of containment material
pre-depot	60	Storage of own material
processing	60	processing of own material
Digitization space	60	own material
Restoration studio	60	own material
Depot storage	2500	Currently 1500, growth in recent years 470m in 5-7 yrs > per 5yr 400m with extensive storage system, paper climate class
Climate class photo storage	100	
Bulk storage		
Storage in racks and planning cabinets		
View depot	125	visually attractive, desire to collect more 3D objects, this could be a regular depot box with a transparent wall in front
Server space	10	not on functional schedule

Corresponding
Existing space Size m²

VAI Office ~220-260m²
Expo 315m²
DeSingel 190m²
Blue Foyer 190m²
Muck studio 200m²





Gemeenschappelijke

- 4. Ortohal
- 5. Vestibule

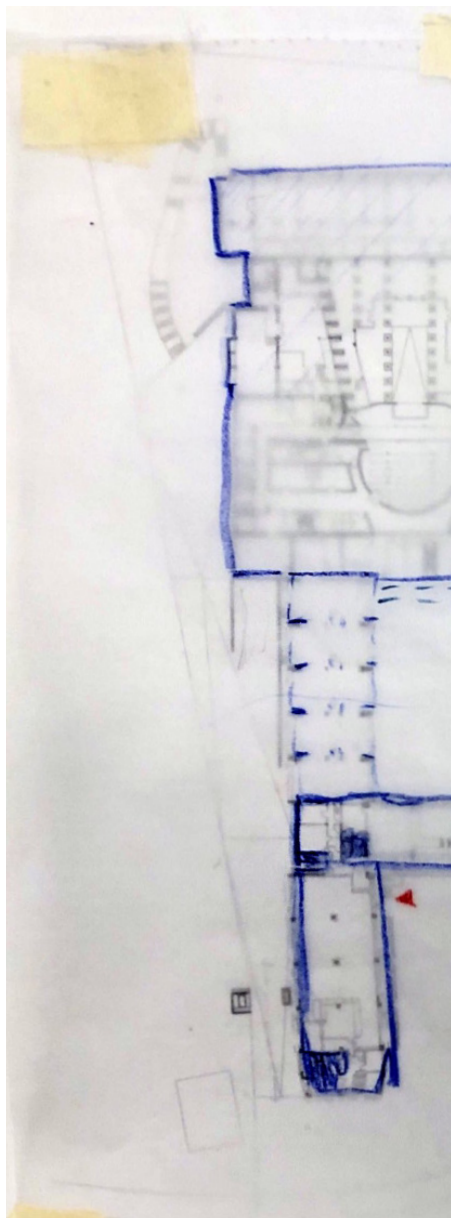
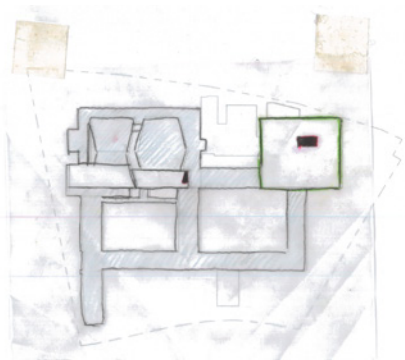
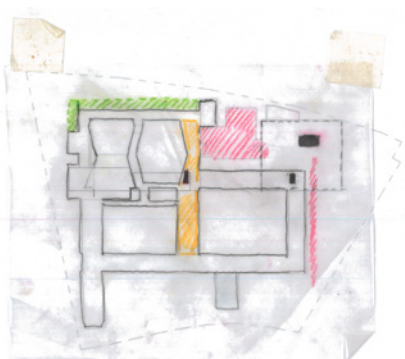
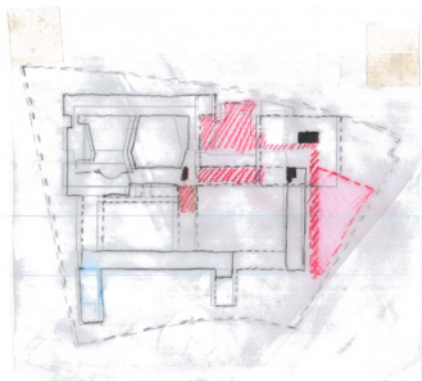
'deSingel' Kunstcentrum:

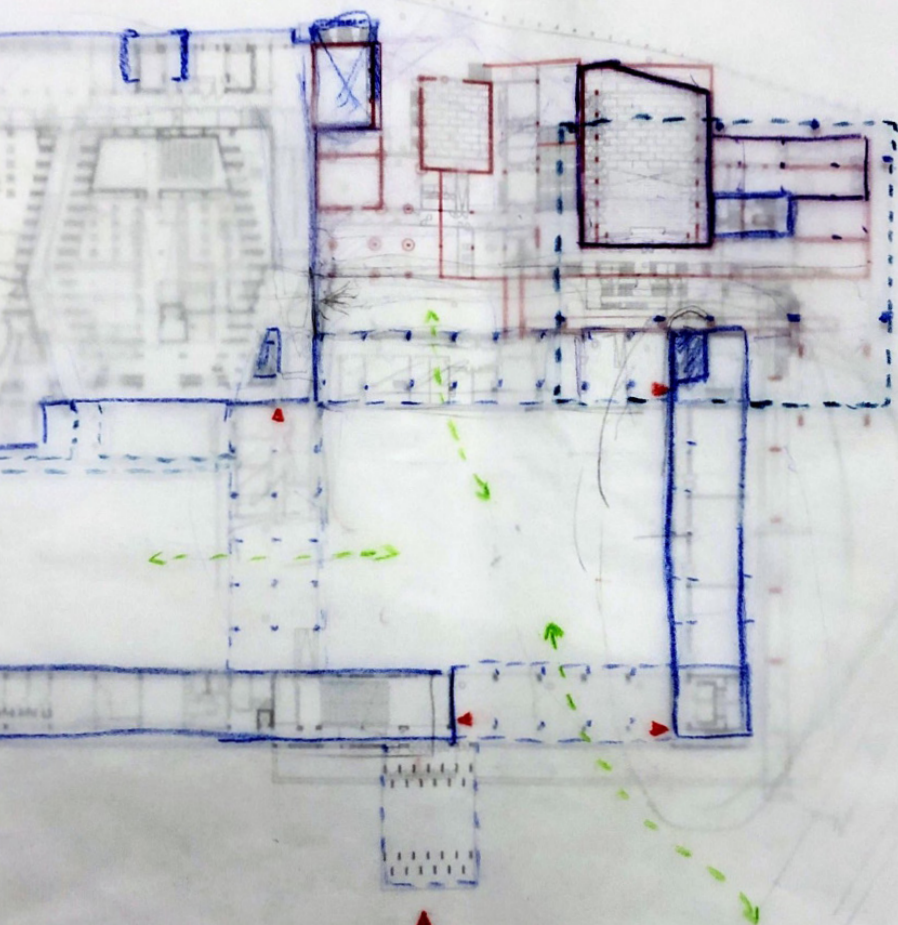
- 10. Rode zaal
- 11. Rode foyer
- 12. Blauwe zaal
- 13. Blauwe foyer
- 14. Musiekstudio
- 15. Expo

Vlaams Architectuurinstituut:

- 26. Kantoren VAI

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 NIVEAU 1





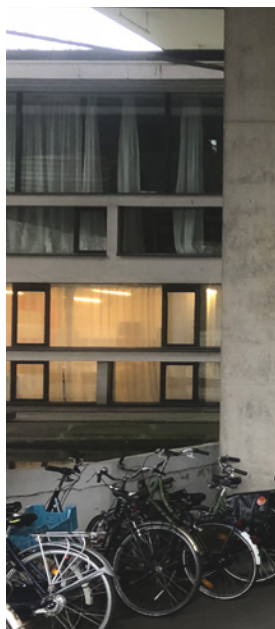
BUSSING CONSERVATORIUM
ENTRANCE

Second excursion

On the week 2.5. I went back to Antwerp to visit deSingel to explore it once again as my definite site for the archive.

The next pages are partially an inventory of spatial moments that could not be read from the plan or section, and partially a photo-essay following the absurdities and shortcomings of deSingel in its present condition. They capture the fragments where de Meyer's and Beel's extensions glitch in their internal logic and clarity or where the building underdelivers in form, aesthetics or relation to its current territorial context.

I kept the composition of these images at random, exactly as how I perceive the façades of Beel's addition.





the pool or pond



actual deSingel entrance (bay)



it clearly has some logic but...

...everything is very confusing at first



entrance lobby and connector



general feeling of in-between nothingness

lower Beel - basement level



lower Beel - Expo “foyer”



basically just a big red corridor



the area of engagement between VAI and the public

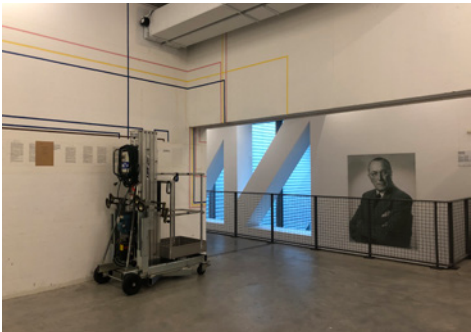
from level 1 to level 2



yet another entrance



upper Beel



outside condition - Desguinlei street



the courtyard





a view towards the potential intervention

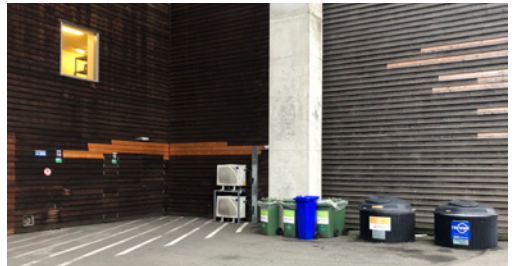
outside condition - E34



*white cladding seems nicer, as it doesn't
turn mossy green...*



outside condition - Jan van Rijswijklaan



whether it ever was a feature, the motorway has apparently ceased to be one.



How much to demolish

The visit became a crucial part for me to confront what I have done so far in terms of site and context analysis, my initial gut feelings and references I had in mind.

In need for some sort of recapitulation, I decided to set the first certainties, i.e. the parts I am willing to “demolish” for my proposal. This helps me in releasing it out of my thought system, clarify my intentions for this project and imagine a proper replacement.

In terms of the configuration of the lower Beel, with the exception of the Auditorium Hall, I consider the demolition of the existing structure as an optimal solution. The volumes between Stynen’s part and Beel’s tower are to be reorganised from the outset, and therefore the existing layout must be dismantled in its entirety.

In order to facilitate the initialised passage underneath the complex, I want to propose the relocation of deSingel offices to the southern office section, which is currently occupied by external tenants and Radio 2 Antwerp.

Additionally, in order to establish a connection between the complex and the rest of the city, I consider the removal of territorial obstacles (ponds) from the northern and western side of deSingel. The resultant space could then be repurposed as an entry plaza from the Beel Tower side.



archival photo, around 1960s



archival photo, around 1980s



“YellowRed” – how to draw re-use

With a suggestion of applying a clear drawn differentiation between what I intend to demolish and add came a recommendation of the book *Yellowred* published by USI Mendrisio as a guide and lookbook.

The intentions come in following color coding scheme:

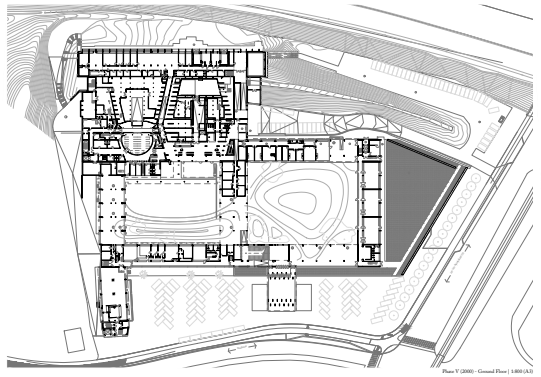
black is for existing and final situation

yellow is what is for demolition

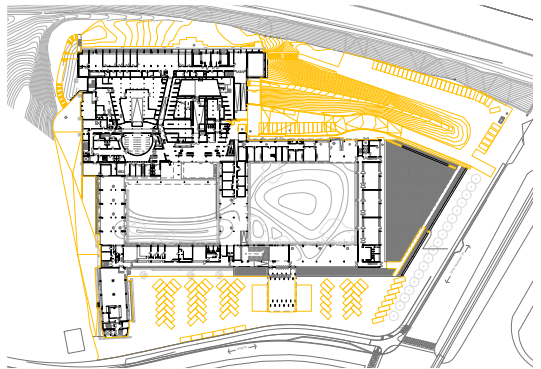
red is what is for demolition;

Funnily, these are also colors of the Belgian flag.

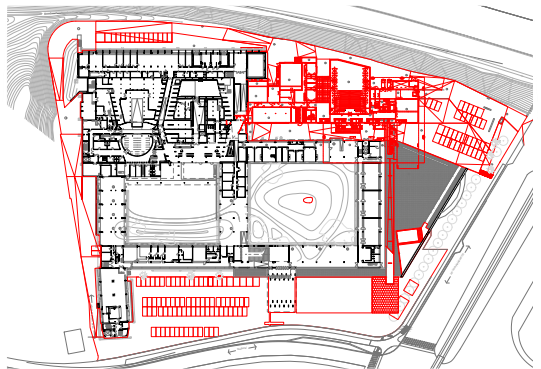




Plan V.0000 - Ground Floor 1:800 (A3)



Plan V.0001 - Distribution - Ground Floor 1:800 (A3)



Plan V.0002 - Addition - Ground Floor 1:800 (A3)

Pre-Christmas moods and phone tutorials

The weeks preceding Christmas were both festive and intense. Cultivating the collective studio culture we organised ourselves a Christmas dinner.

Week after that, there was still some collective and individual work to do. For me personally it meant a first programmatic proposal applied as a layout in a situation plan. For the collective, the week meant a time for preparation of the deSingel research boards - meaning all the material produced so far related to the site, displayed in the studio space, with clear information - a collective tool of reference.

Due to my personal rush to catch a plane back home for Christmas - I had to run out of the studio before actually getting a tutorial. Surprisingly, I managed to get a brief conversation about the project over the phone with Susanne.

Thanks for the effort, Susanne (and Silas :-).

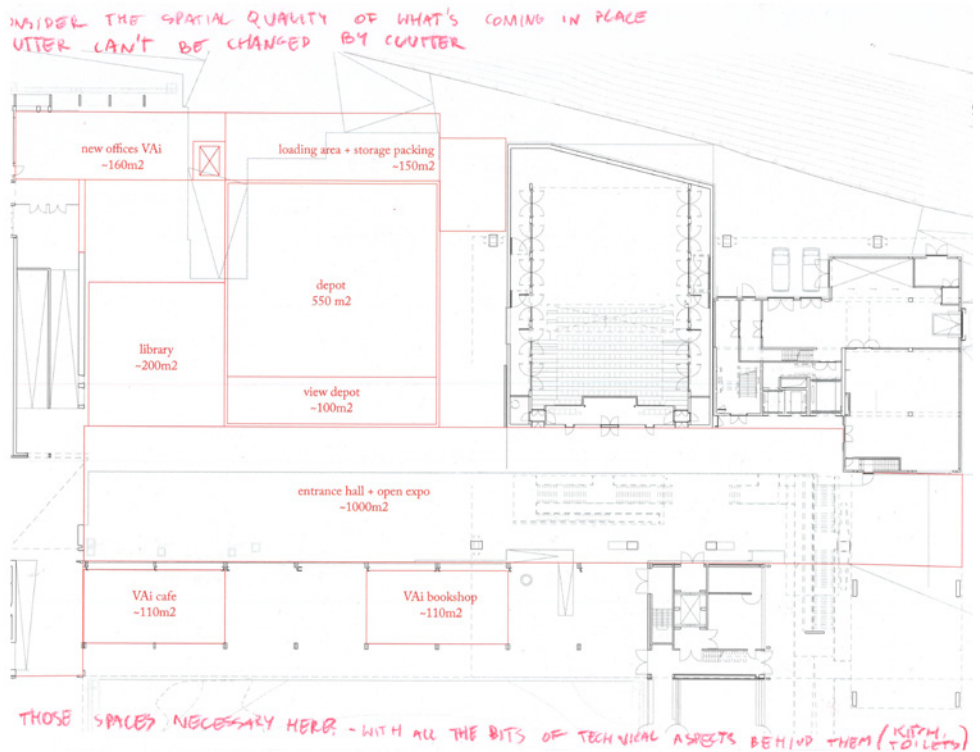




The current entry "plaza" imagined as fully covered with glazed roof

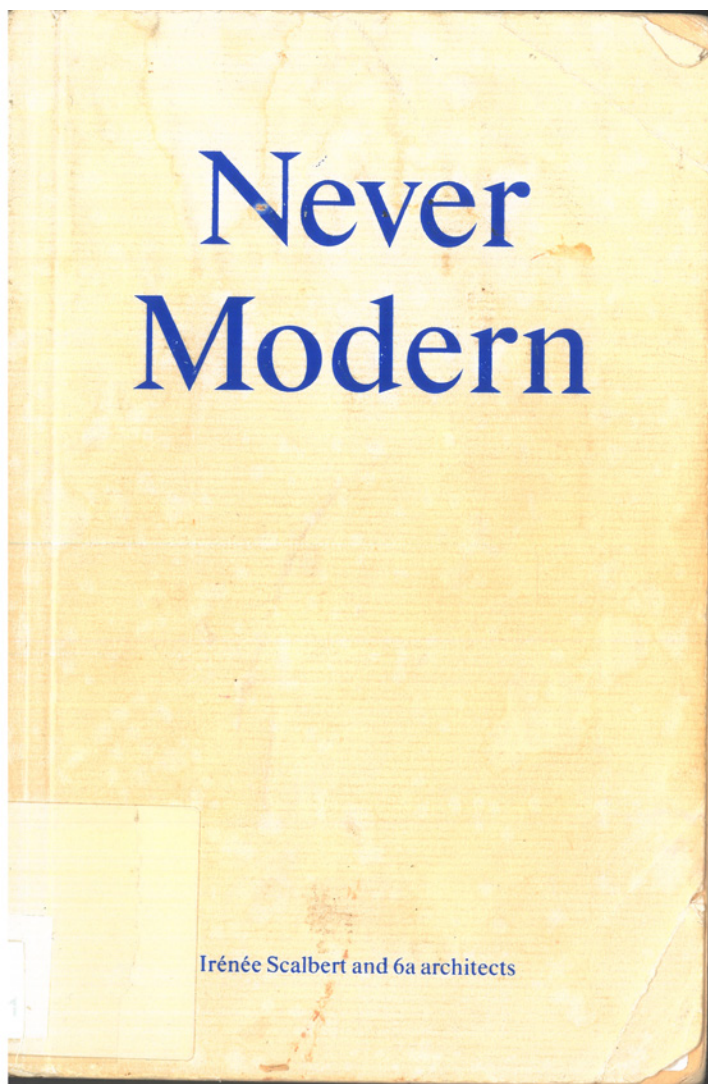


Happel Cornelisse Verhoeven - Museum Lakenhal, Leiden



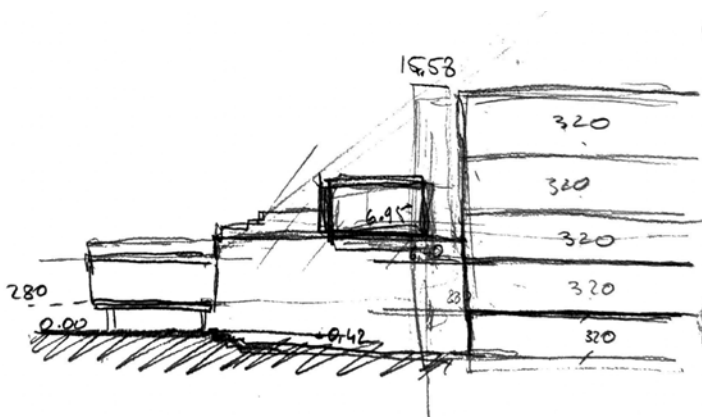
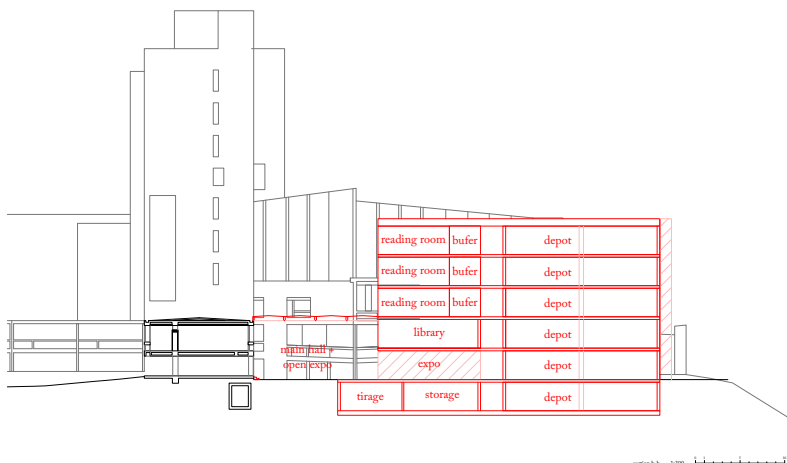
Probably a very important book

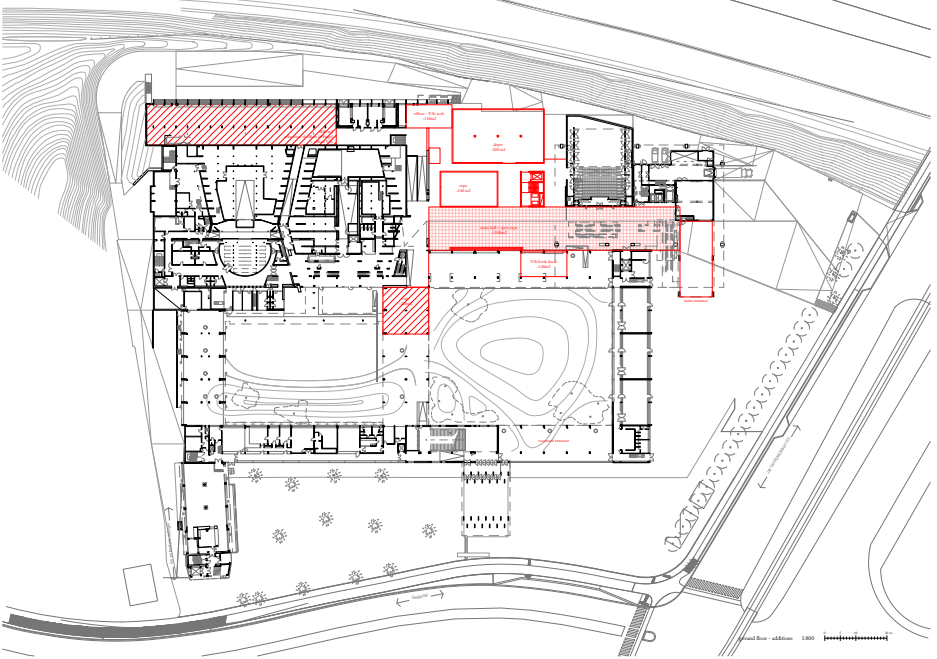
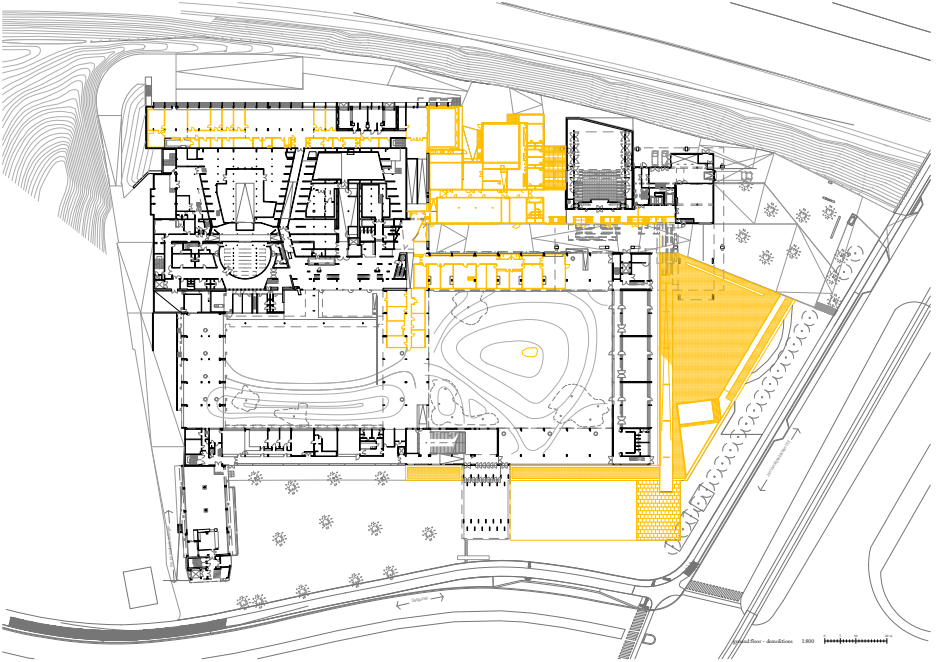
Around-Christmas read of *Never Modern*; for loosening up the thoughts; for some new reflections

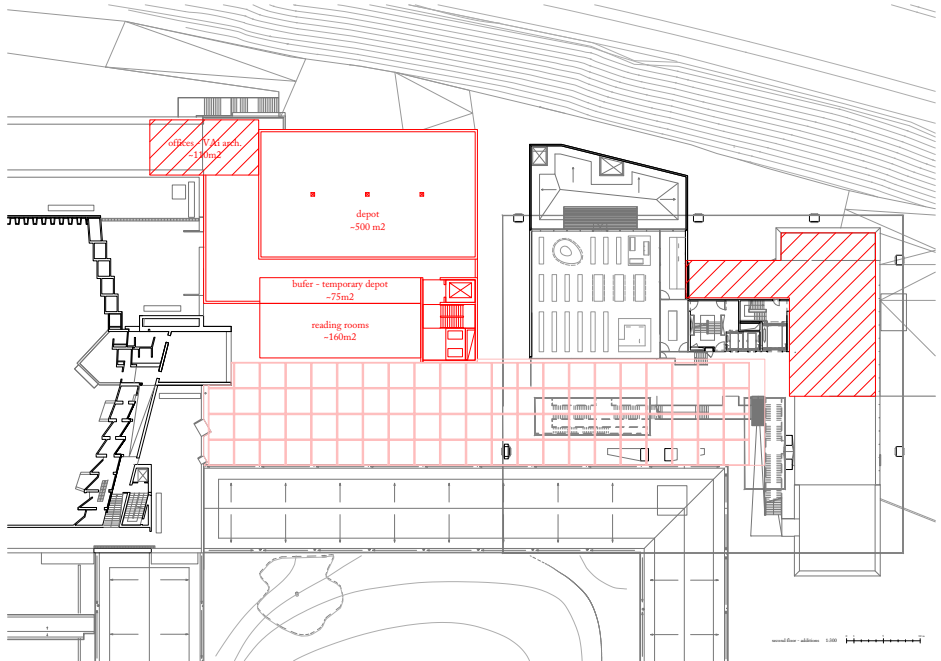
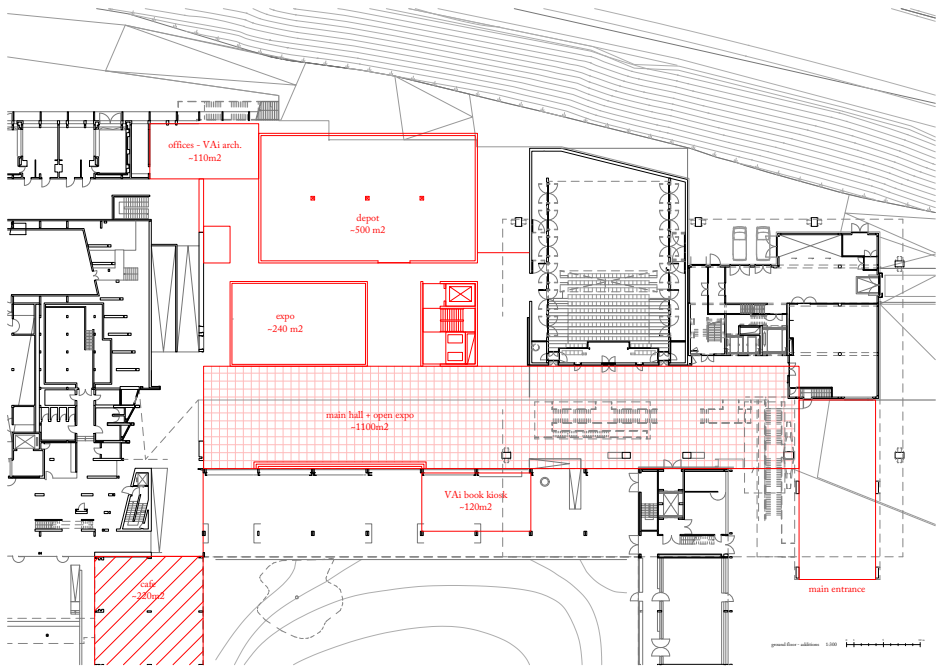


Another testifies to the fire. Yet another shows the modest furnishings of a bedroom in 1972. Unlike at the Lisson, there are no people in them and lives remain conjectural. Who took the photographs, in what year, and for what purpose: so much remains unknown. The 18th-century canvas remains visible, as do some of the stitches. But the lives have gone and the traces of occupancy are growing faint. As in the set of a *bricoleur*, events, traces of occupation are made available as signs for design. 6a repeated to me a phrase that I once said and had forgotten, namely that bricolage may be, quite simply, the making of things in the full and liberating awareness of how little we know. The pictures in the archive achieve precisely this: they liberate us in making us aware of how little we know.







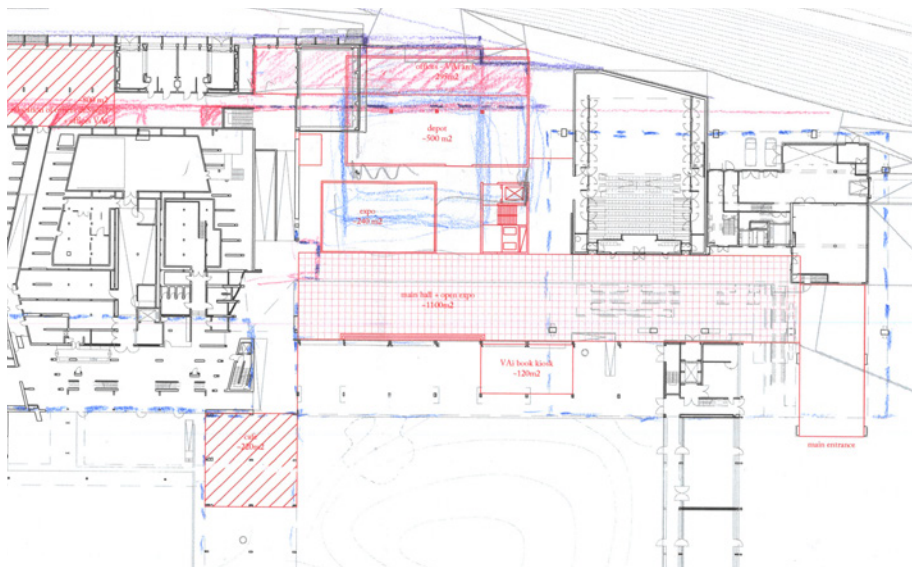


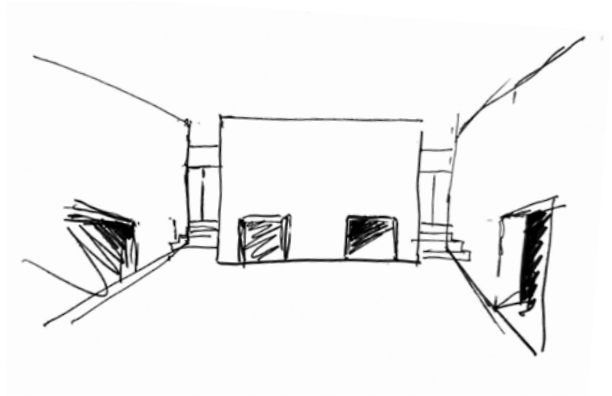
Reorganising

The crit concluded for me with two general remarks:

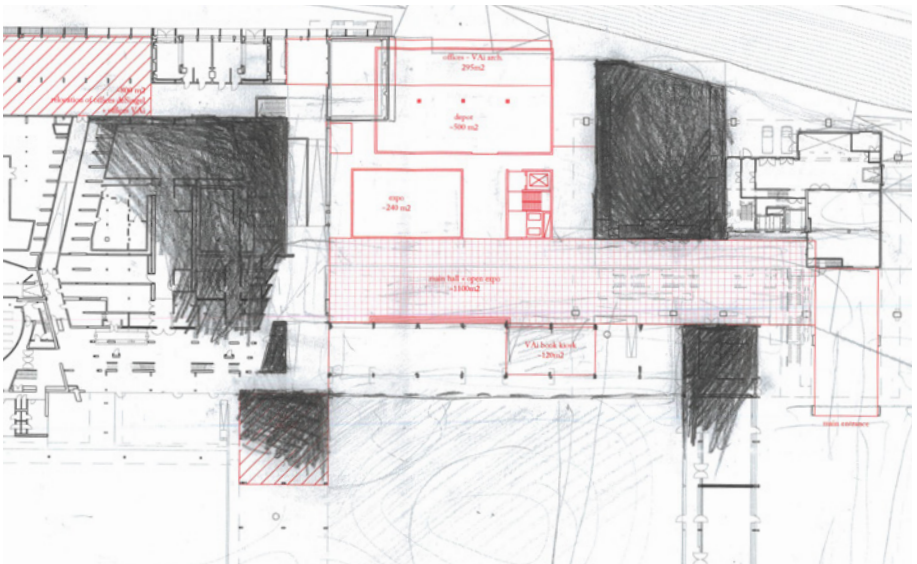
- 1 - To move the corridor from under the exposition space to between the back of the expo and the VAI offices - that would enhance the clarity of the project in terms of the circulation;
- 2 - To consider the spatial relation of the main hall, how does it work with the other volumes and therefore, what is the experience of the entrance;

That resulted in a rather major change in how the spaces need to be organised on the upper floors. As following steps I worked with sketches and the brief spreadsheet, specifically to rearrange the acquisition processing rooms sequence.



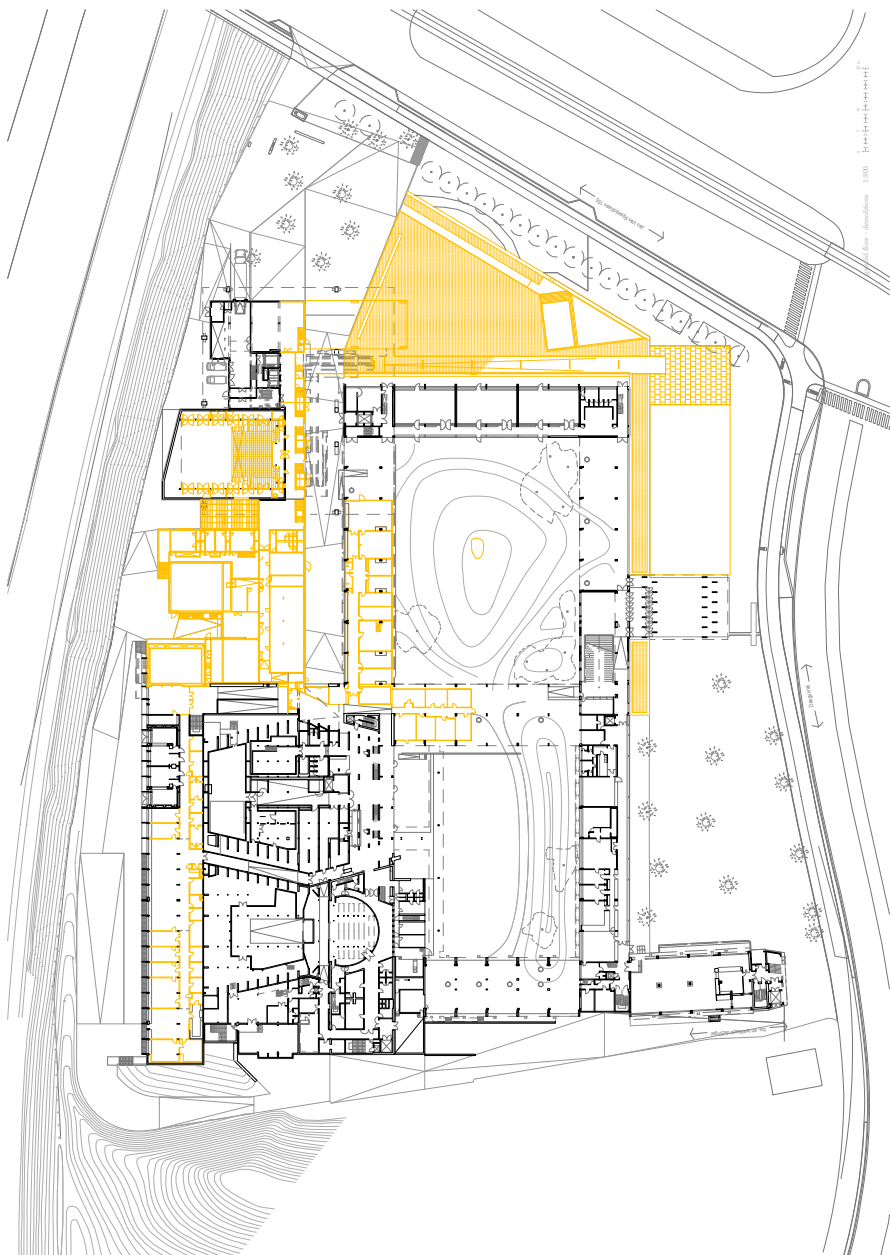


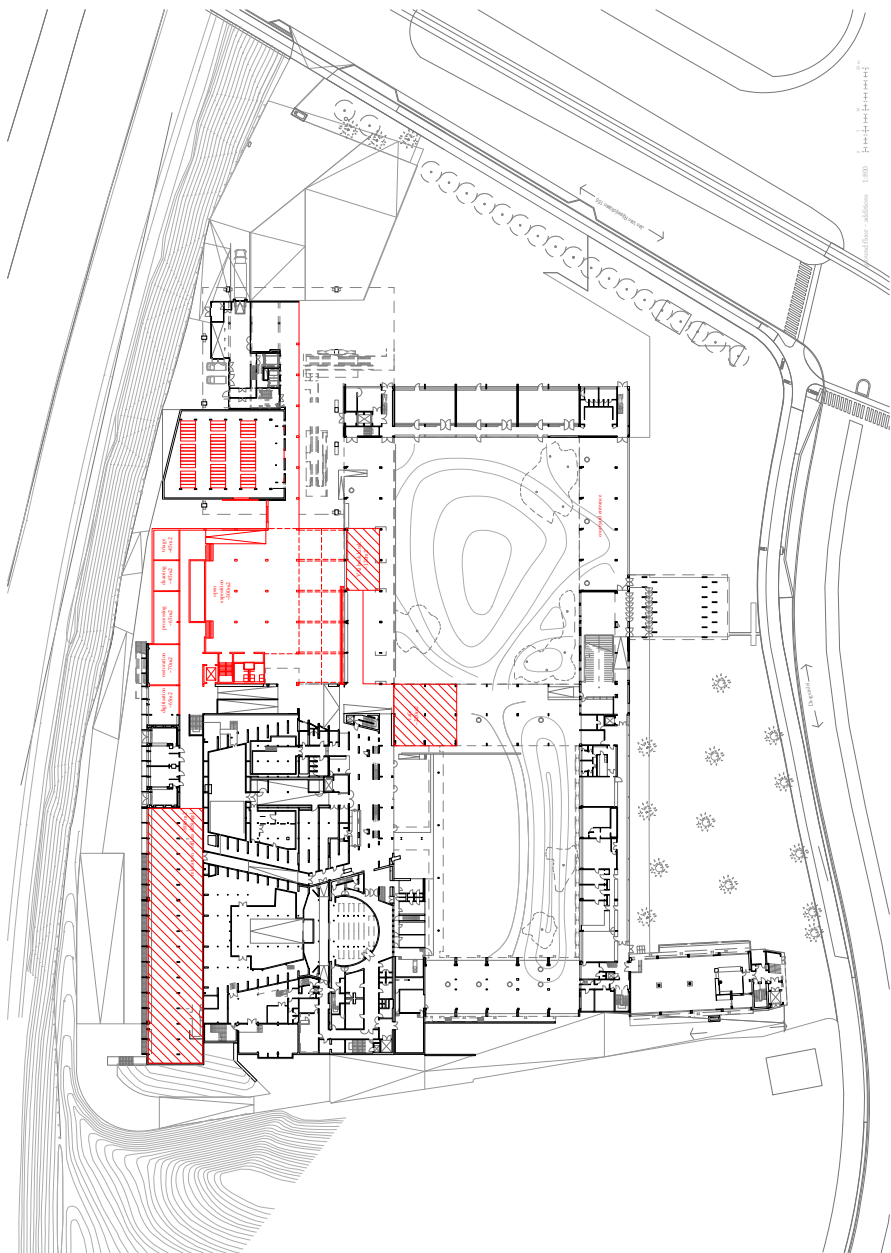
Main hall/ expo situation re-imagined

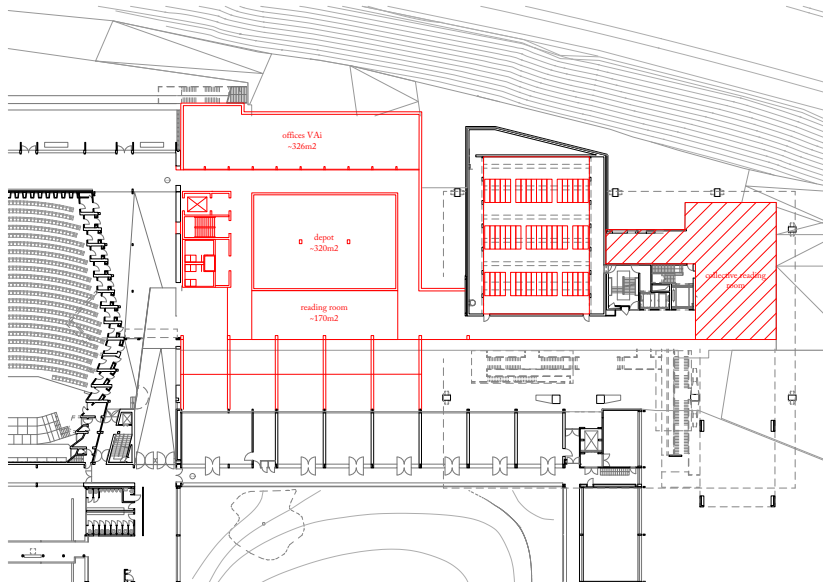
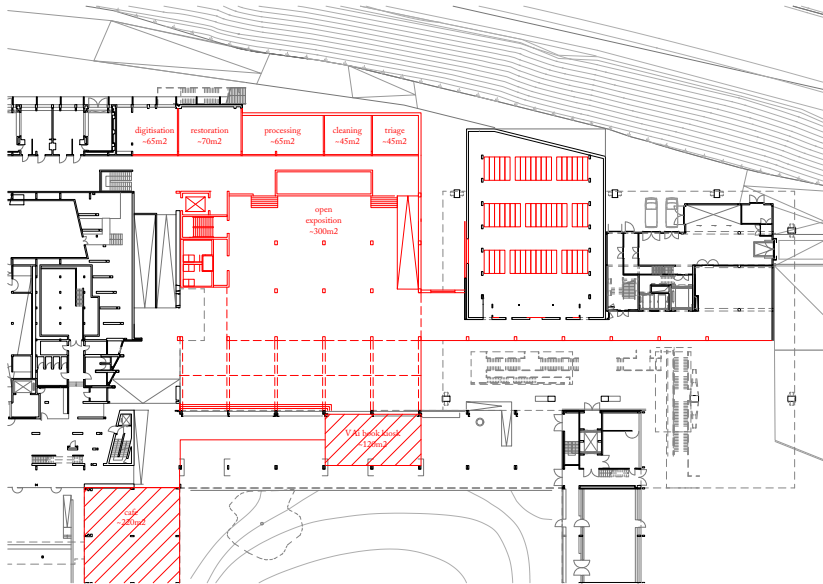


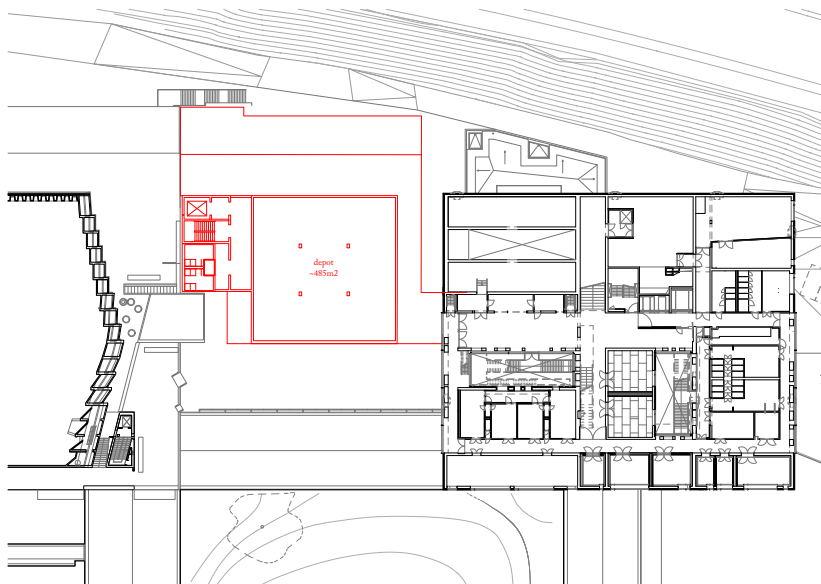
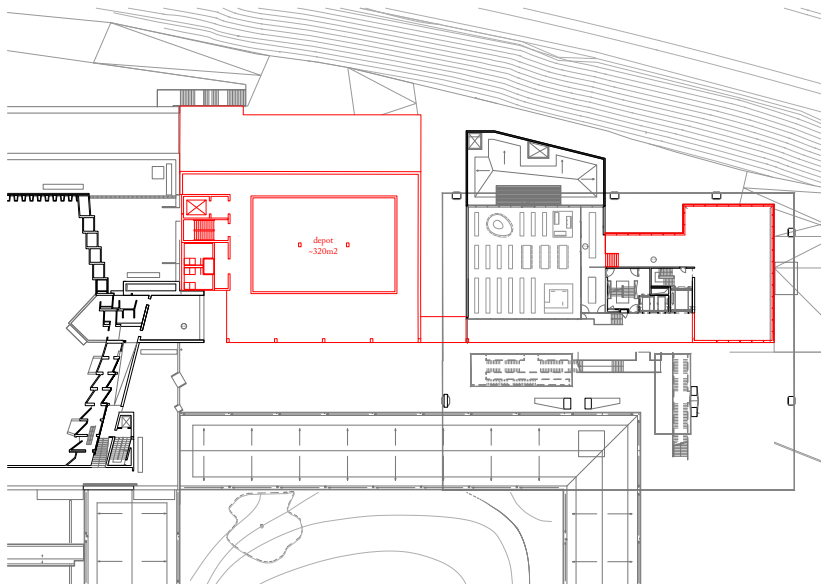
Name	Size m ²	Description
Total	5157,25	
Public	700	
Reception and counter	100	incl. separate sanitary facilities and seating
Exhibition space/ multifunctional space	200	cf. current reading room 96m ² , is too small; keep reading room and library separate; small separate group study room
Reading room	200	
Library	200	Books and visitors' workstations
Additional	870,05	
Staff workspace	300	
Large workplace for archive employees	300	12.5 m ² per employee (+/-30 employees, including interns, temporary employees, etc.)
Large workstation with	12,25	3.5x3.5m
Standard office space		
Focus Spots		
1 large meeting room	80	
1 small meeting room	30	
kitchen, bathroom, dressing room	150	
Archive	3585	
Storage packaging material	120	near archive depot, office
Loading and unloading space	150	
Waiting depot	100	emergency depot, storage of non-exclusive archives, bulk pallets
Storage space correct - contaminated material	60	
Quarantine	120	Storage of containment material =
Cleaning	60	Processing of containment material
pre-depot	60	Storage of own material
processing	60	processing of own material
Digitization space	60	own material
Restoration studio	60	own material
Depot storage	2500	Currently 1500, growth in recent years 470m in 5-7 yrs > per 5yr 400m with extensive storage system, paper climate class
Climate class photo storage	100	
Bulk storage		
Storage in racks and planning cabinets		
View depot	125	visually attractive, desire to collect more 3D objects, this could be a regular depot box with a transparent wall in front
Server space	10	not on functional schedual

Brief	Size m ²	Description
Total	4905	
Public	700	
Reception and counter	100	incl. separate sanitary facilities and seating
Exhibition space/multifunctional space	200	cf. current reading room 96m ² , is too small; keep reading room and library separate; small separate group study room
Reading room	200	
Library	200	Books and visitors' workstations
Additional	420	
Offices	160	
Large meeting room	80	
Small meeting room	30	
kitchen, bathroom, dressing room	150	
Archive	3785	
Archive studios	600	
Triage space correct - contaminated material	60	
Cleaning	60	Processing of containment material
processing	60	processing of own material
Digitization space	60	own material
Restoration studio	60	own material
Archive workstations	300	3.5m x3.5m
Depot storage	2900	
Waiting depot	100	emergency depot, storage of non-exclusive archives, bulk pallets
Quarantine	120	Storage of containment material +
Storage: packaging material	120	near archive depot, office
Depot storage	2500	Currently 1500, growth in recent years 470m in 5-7 yrs > per 5yr 400m with extensive storage system, paper climate class, with 100 m ² if climate class photo storage
pre-depot	60	Storage of own material
Extra	285	
Loading and unloading space	150	
View depot	125	visually attractive, desire to collect more 3D objects, this could be a regular depot box with a transparent wall in front
Server space	10	not on functional schedule







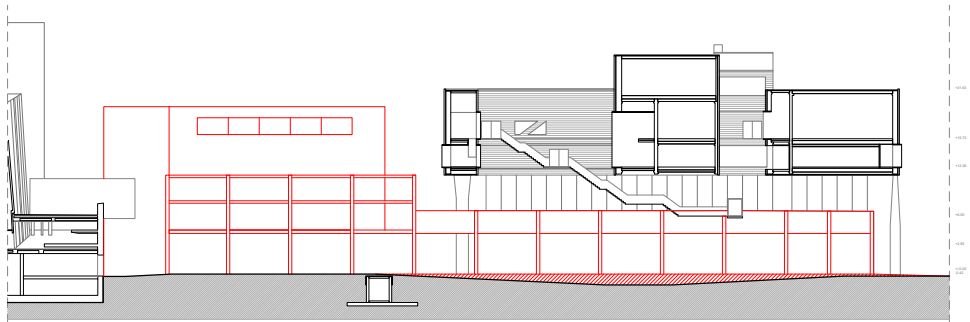




initial idea

- lookout tower?
- panorama as part of an archive
- live diagram
- model to reality

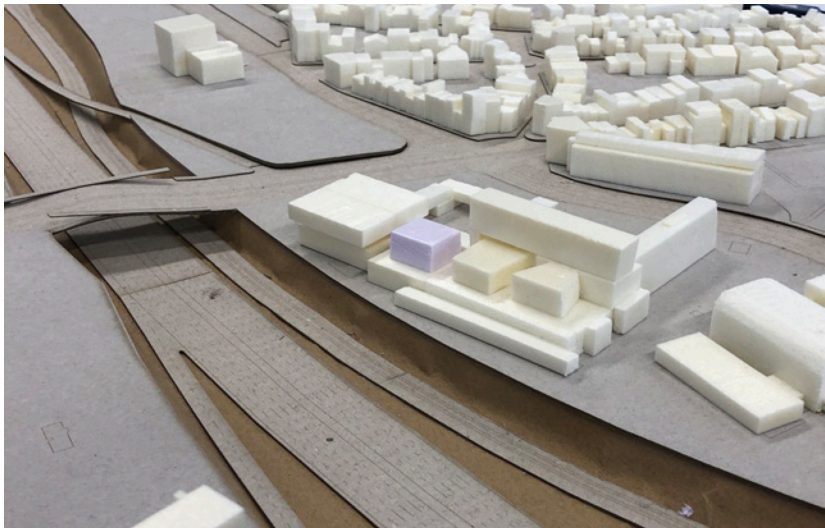
this sketch is dated 29th September 2024

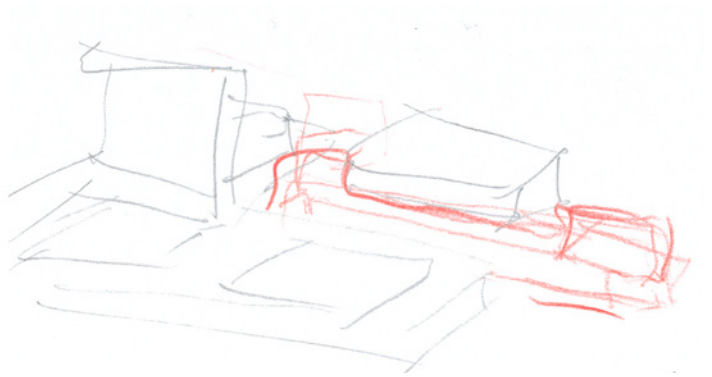


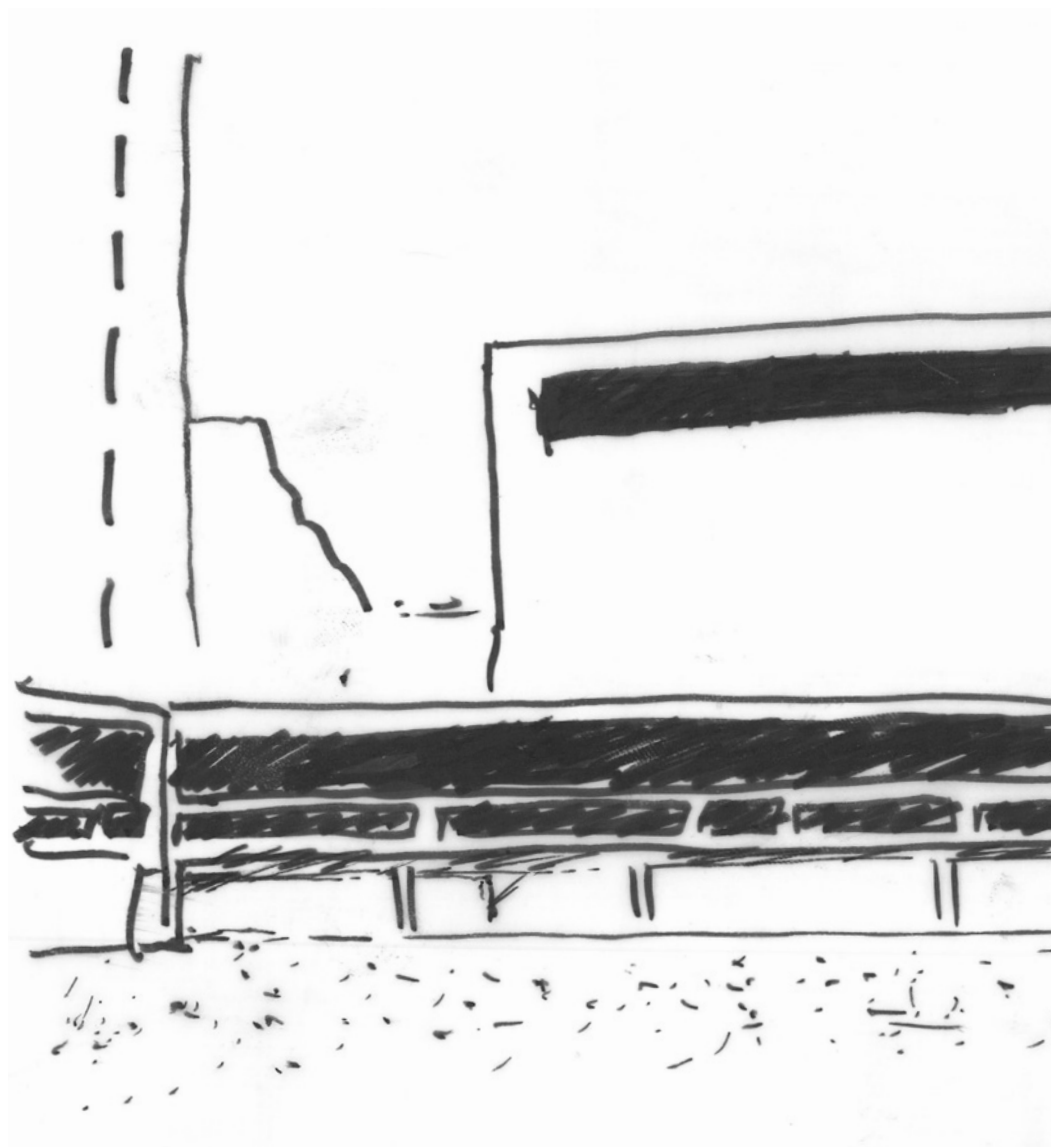
As infrastructure; and as an object

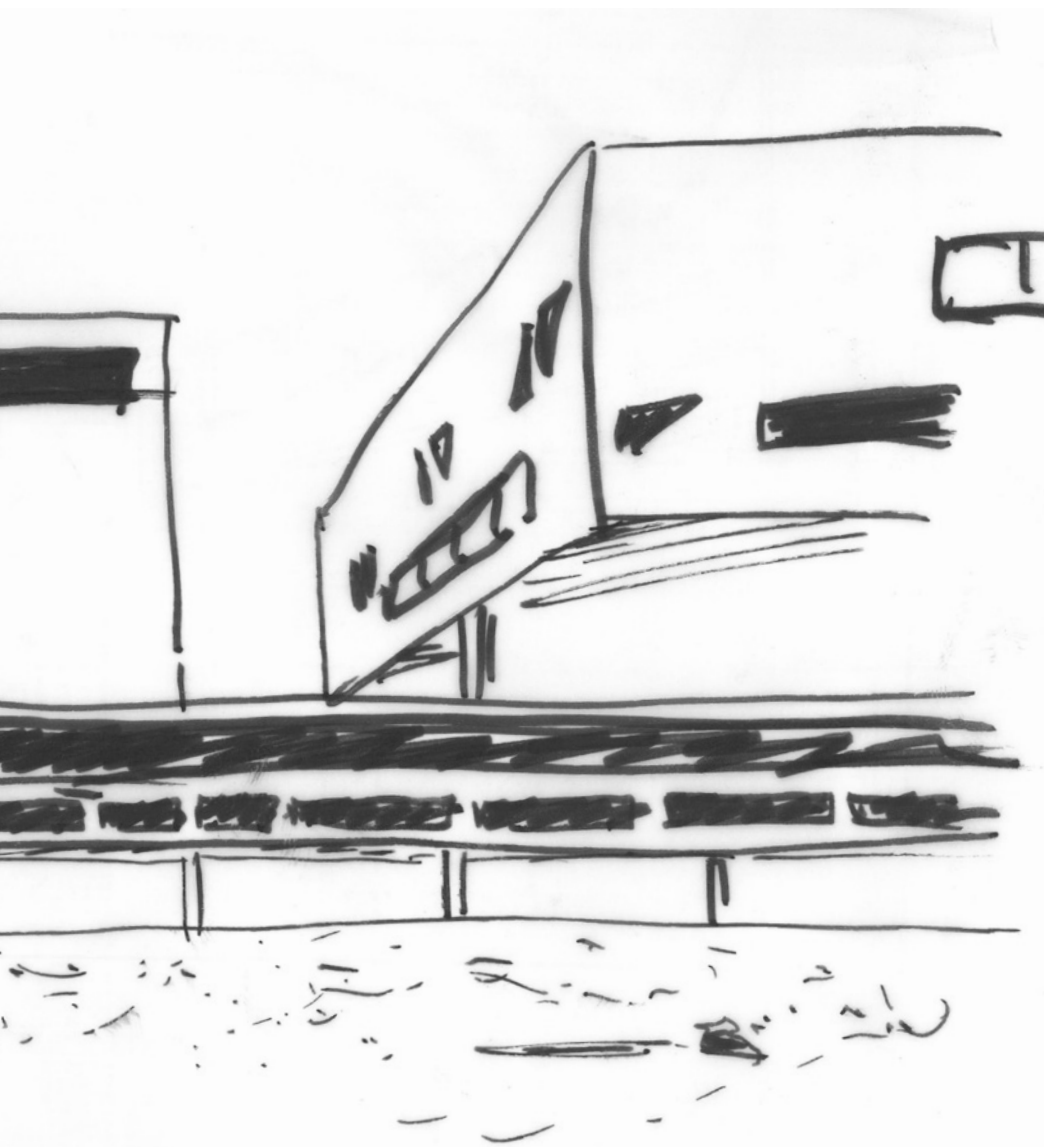
Suddenly the project got a clear division between its infrastructural character (as for the lower Beel and Stynen reconfiguration) and object presence of the depot rising from top of it all.

That lead to decisions concluding with the alignment to the other forms - two halls of Stynen and Beel's tower - working in an elegant sequence.









02 - 02

All Under One Roof

