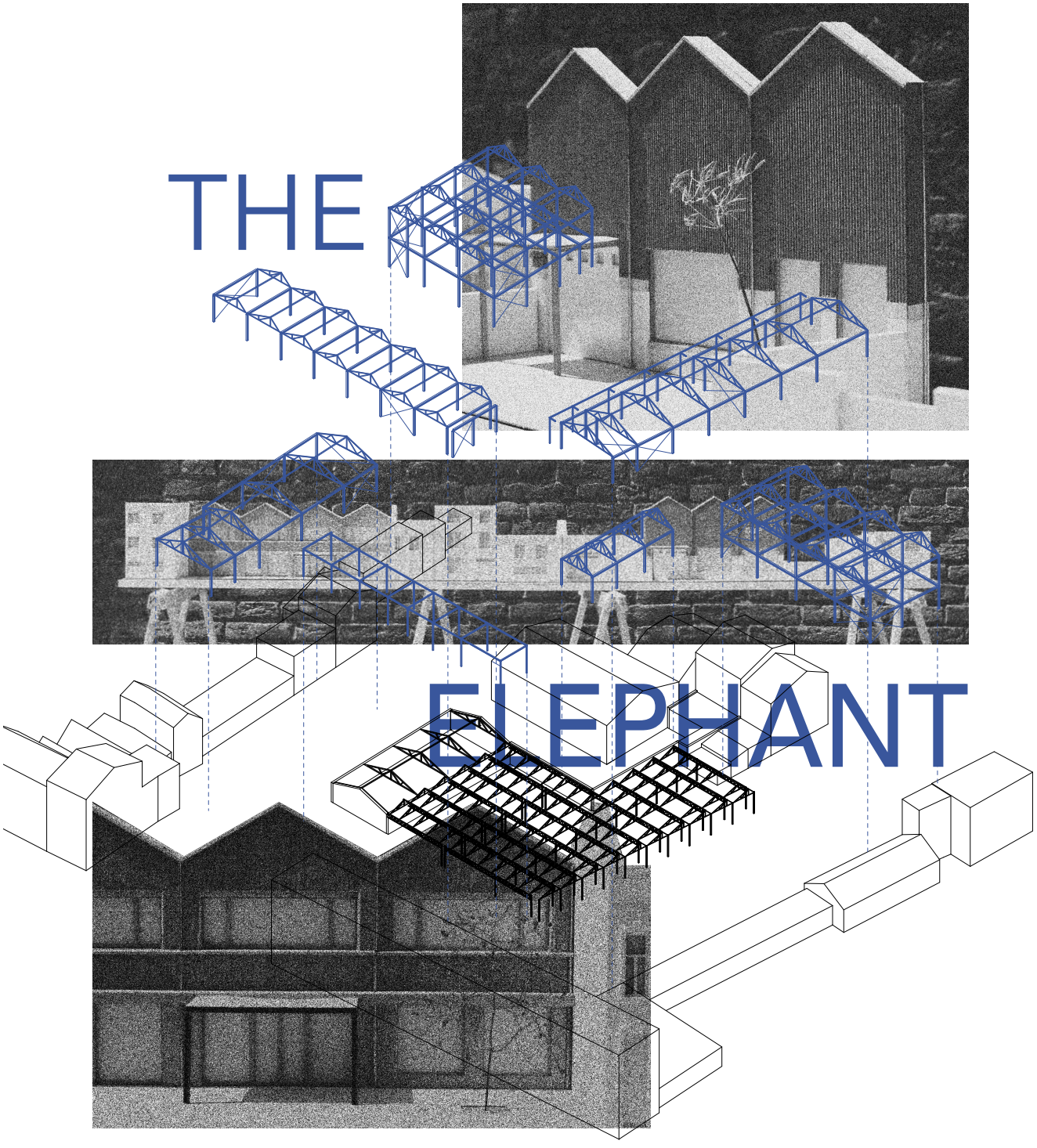
REINTERPRETING THE ELEPHANT



RECLAIMING CRAFT IN THE CITY

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Urban Architecture
Graduation studio
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As an architecture student, I've always been deeply fascinated by industrial architecture. These structures are purpose-built to efficiently process raw materials and prioritize functionality over aesthetics.

During my visit to Liege, I couldn't help but notice the remnants of its industrial past, particularly in the Bressoux neighborhood. Many of these industrial buildings, though decayed, can still be seen, although they are often inaccessible. However, upon zooming out from street view to an aerial perspective, a whole network of industrial ruins unfolds within the building blocks of Bressoux. These structures, characterized by their unique morphology and frequent use of garage doors, sparked the question: Could these buildings be a form of integrated industry within the building blocks themselves?

Through extensive map research, we discovered indications of a significant number of these buildings. However, on-site visits revealed that many of them were concealed behind inconspicuous facades or closed garage doors. In response to this, the urban mining group coined the acronym U.P.I.C. (Unidentifiable Possibly Industrial Complexes) to refer to these elusive structures. Upon further reflection, we assigned the term "elephant" to these buildings, representing their hidden presence and enigmatic nature within the urban landscape.

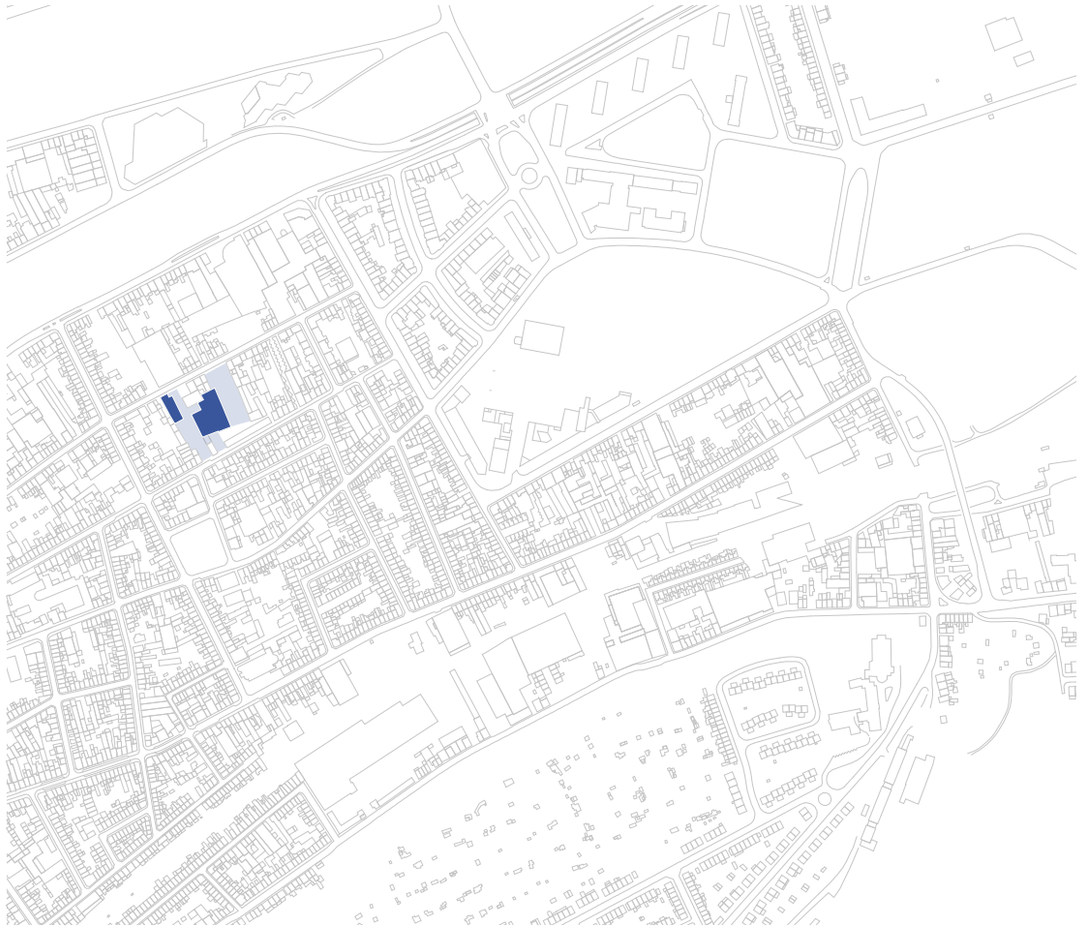
1.contrast between industry and dwelling, Simon Muntz

REINTERPRETING THE ELEPHANT
RECLAIMING CRAFT IN THE CITY

1. An elephants facade, Simon Muntz

To kick off our research, Thijs and I embarked on a collaborative endeavor focused on the reclaimability of on-site materials. We selected four vacant industrial buildings as our case studies and gathered information through various means, including examining old floor plans, delving into archival materials, and conducting on-site visits.

Our primary objective was to gain a comprehensive understanding of these buildings. We delved into their inner workings, examining their operational mechanisms, construction techniques, and the potential for material reclamation. By thoroughly exploring these aspects, we aimed to identify the possibilities and challenges associated with reclaiming materials from these structures.



1. 1.2000 map case studies, author

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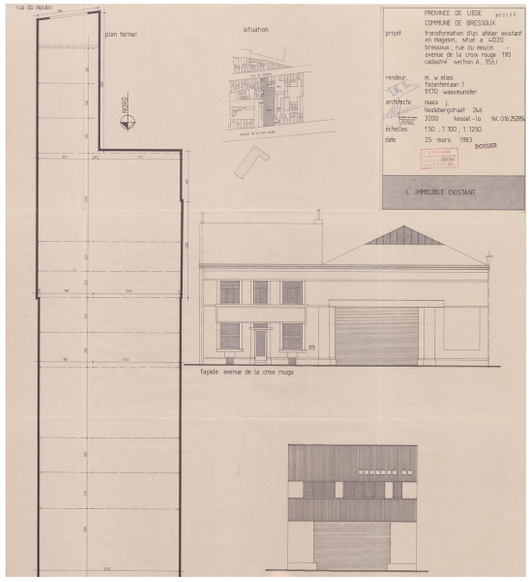

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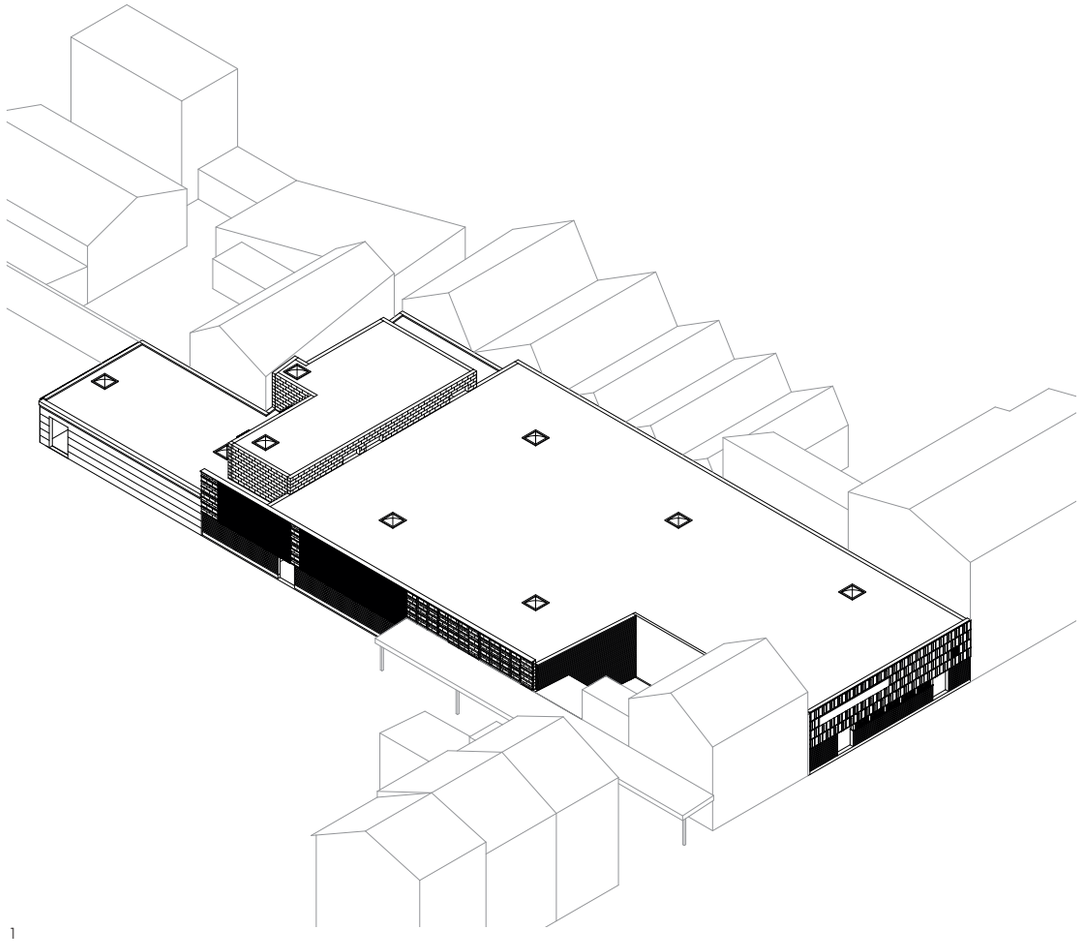
1. interiors of one of the case studies, Thijs Reitsma
2. archival drawing of one of the case studies, J. Maes
3. gathering information of materials, author
4. gathering information on materials, author

The next step in our research was to map the buildings and translate our findings into 3D models, models which could help us understand the buildings better and research the feasibility of reclaiming the materials within the building.



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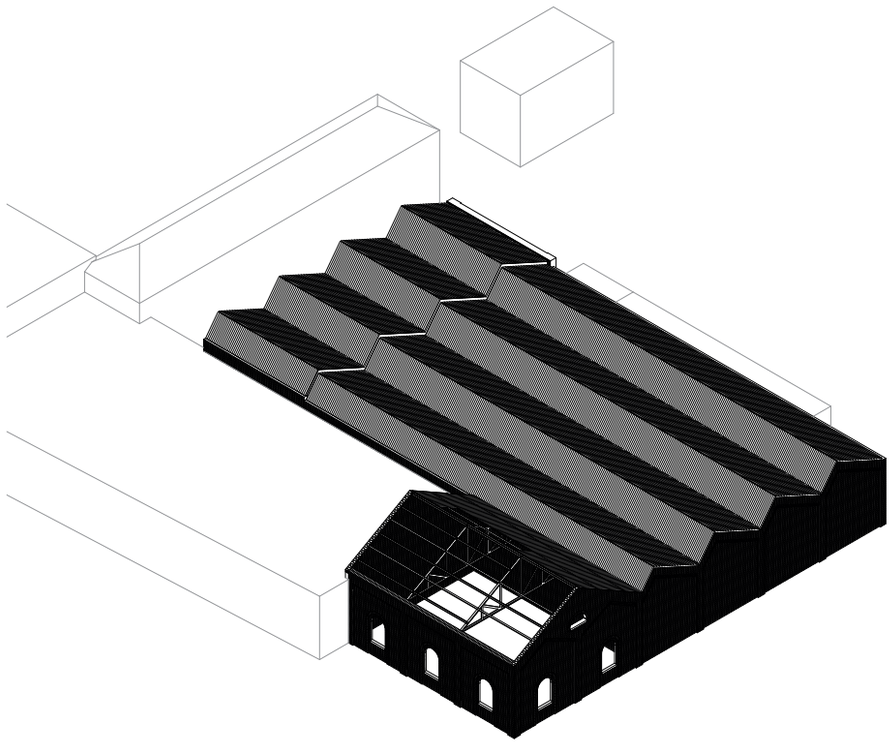
1. 3D model of Av. de la Croix Rouge 266, author
2. 3D model of Av. de la Croix Rouge 190, author



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1.3D model of Rue Winston Churchill 229, author
2. 3D model of Rue de Porto 13, author

During our research, we employed various methods such as measurement, brick counting, and drawing upon reference projects to meticulously map out all the materials and their sizes within the selected industrial buildings. Throughout this process, one particular aspect caught my attention—the structural elements that defined the roofs of these buildings. The presence of pitched and sawtooth roofs stood out to me the most. These distinct roof designs often indicated a need for ample natural light within the industrial spaces. This feature hinted at the buildings' industrial nature, as it was common for such structures to require abundant natural lighting for their operational processes. The roofs, with their unique shapes, served as a testament to the historical and functional significance of these industrial buildings.

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1. reoccuring roof structure in Bressoux, author
2. uncommon industrial roof structure in Bressoux, author

As our research progressed, my focus shifted from solely reclaiming materials to a deeper exploration of the essence of the “elephant” structures nestled within the urban fabric. These buildings possessed a distinct architectural language that set them apart from their surrounding context. The elephant, in my perception, transcended being merely an industrial building; it represented a unique approach to integrating a program and its architectural requirements within a residential area.

The elephant structure symbolized more than just its industrial function. It embodied a thoughtful response to the challenges of harmonizing different architectural needs within a residential setting. By studying the elephants, I began to appreciate the significance of their presence and the architectural value they brought to the surrounding neighborhood. To understand the significance of the elephant it is important to know how these elephants came to be and how they settled themselves within the urban fabric.

1. elephant’s courtyard, Simon Muntz

To understand the elephant it is important to trace back the cities history. In the 19th century, Europe entered the era of mechanisation and Liège became a powerful industrial centre whose growth was linked to mining and the metallurgical industry. In 1837, the Vieille-Montagne company was created and set up their main headquarters upstream of Liège. Growth spread to downatream of the city when industrialisation took place. In order to export these products the city was planned to make it better adapated to traffic movement, the advent of the railway thus transformed the urban landscape.

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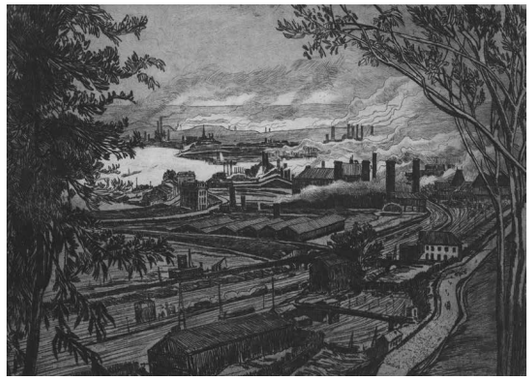

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1. lithograph, View of Liège, 1843, Collection Galerie Wittert
2. etching, Meuse Valley,1939, Collection Galerie Wittert

With the return of peace after the second World War, Liège recovered and the factories were working at full capacity, making the 1950's prosperous. However, when recession came the coal mines were forced to close. Over a twenty-year period, between 1960 and 1980 Liège lost two thirds of its jobs in traditional industry. The serving economy slowly replaced the traditional industry resulting in the steel-making industry heading to closure of its furnaces in 2009.

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1. industrial remains of the blast furnance HFB Ougree, author
2. industrial remains of the blast furnance HFB Ougree, author

During the same period the city of Liège underwent the modernization of its buildings, rejuvenation and major roads piercing the city. More apartment blocks rose into the skyline of the city such as the Droixhe plain. However, the post-industrial city is still visible within the urban fabric. Abandoned industrial buildings, rather ruins, are scattered throughout the neighbourhoods of Bressoux and Droixhe. The buildings that were once the core of the city are now labeled as elpehants - unidentifable structures that lost its functions.

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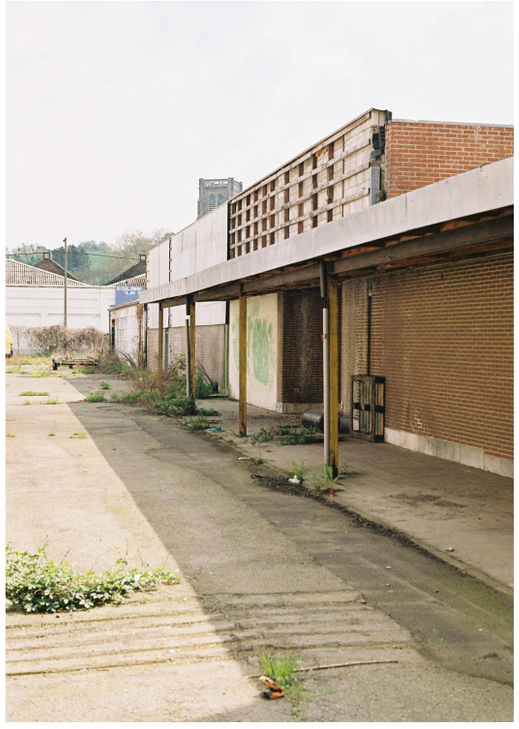

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1. decay and abandonment in Bressoux, author
2. abandonment of an industrial building in Bressoux, author

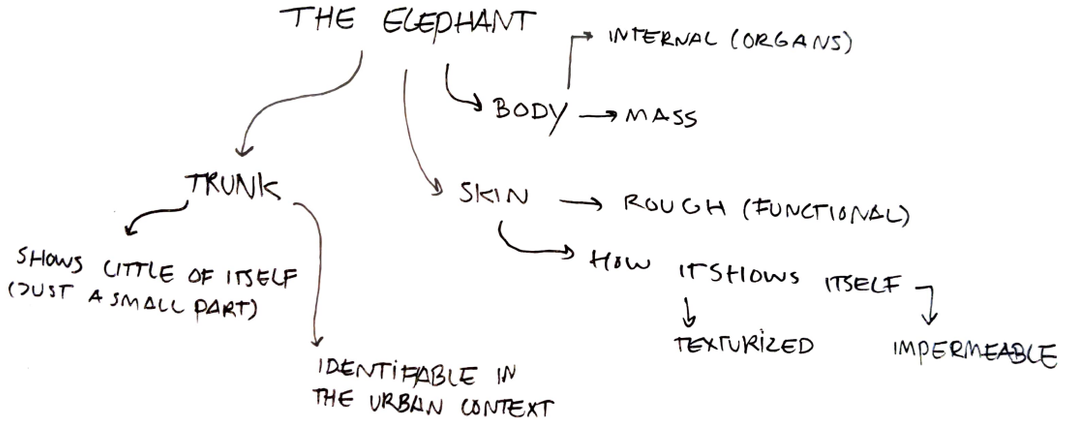
To further comprehend the essence of the “elephant,” I deconstructed it into three key themes: the trunk, the skin, and the body, each representing different aspects of these structures.

The trunk symbolizes the most identifiable and recognizable part of an elephant. In the context of Bressoux, the trunk represents how the building is positioned within the urban fabric. It signifies the building’s front-facing aspect that is visible from the street, while the bulk of the structure remains concealed behind it.

The skin of the elephant encompasses not only the materialization of the façade but also its roughness and practicality. The skin is a reflection of the building’s exterior, conveying its character and response to its surroundings.

Lastly, the body refers to the overall volume of the building and its direct context. These elephants often reveal exposed materials, such as brick walls and ductwork, which contribute to their distinct aesthetic. Additionally, their design incorporates sloped roofs that allow natural light to permeate the interiors, emphasizing the im-portance of daylight within these industrial spaces.

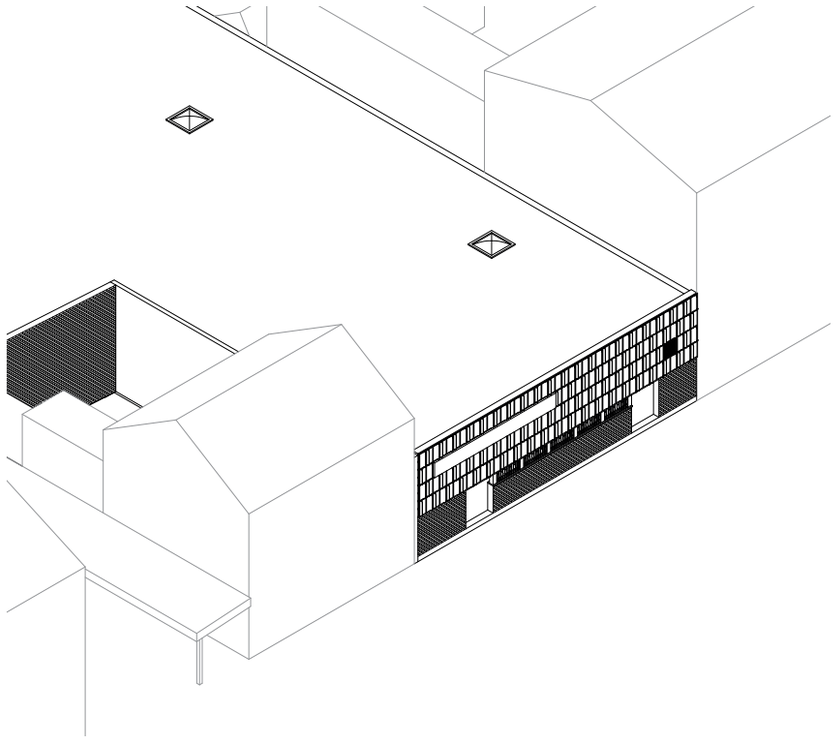
By examining the trunk, skin, and body of the elephant, we gain a comprehensive understanding of these structures and their significance within the urban fabric, en-compassing their placement, material expression, and functional aspects.



1. dissecting the elephant diagram, author

THE TRUNK

The trunk symbolizes the most identifiable and recognizable part of an elephant - how it communicates directly to the street. The trunk is the small part of the elephant that can be seen from street level and covers the mass of the building that is hiding within the urban block. The trunk of these elephants already hints to an industrial use due to the use of materials and the lack of facade openings.



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1. axonometric drawing of the case study Av. de la Croix Rouge 266, author
2. the trunk of the case study Av. de la Croix Rouge 266, author

The facade of the elephant structure facing the street distinguishes itself from the surrounding urban fabric in two distinct ways. Firstly, it is characterized by the use of materials and proportions that differ from neighboring buildings. Industrial buildings, driven by practical considerations, require larger openings for transportation or vehicular access. As a result, the openings in the facade of these structures appear disproportionate when compared to the surrounding buildings. Often, these openings take the form of roller doors, providing a subtle hint of the building's industrial purpose.

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1. constrast between domestic and industrial architecture in Bressoux, author
2. typical roller door in the area of Bressoux, author

Secondly, the facade sets itself apart through a setback. Many industrial buildings are intentionally positioned further back within the urban block, creating an outdoor space that can be utilized for storage or parking purposes. This setback distinguishes these structures from other buildings in the area and allows the elephant to assert itself within the urban fabric. Given the limited availability of outdoor spaces in the neighborhood, it is primarily the industrial buildings that claim and define such spaces, making the elephant structure easily recognizable. These distinct characteristics of the facade, namely the disproportionate openings and the setback, contribute to the unique identity of the industrial buildings and highlight their industrial heritage within the urban context.

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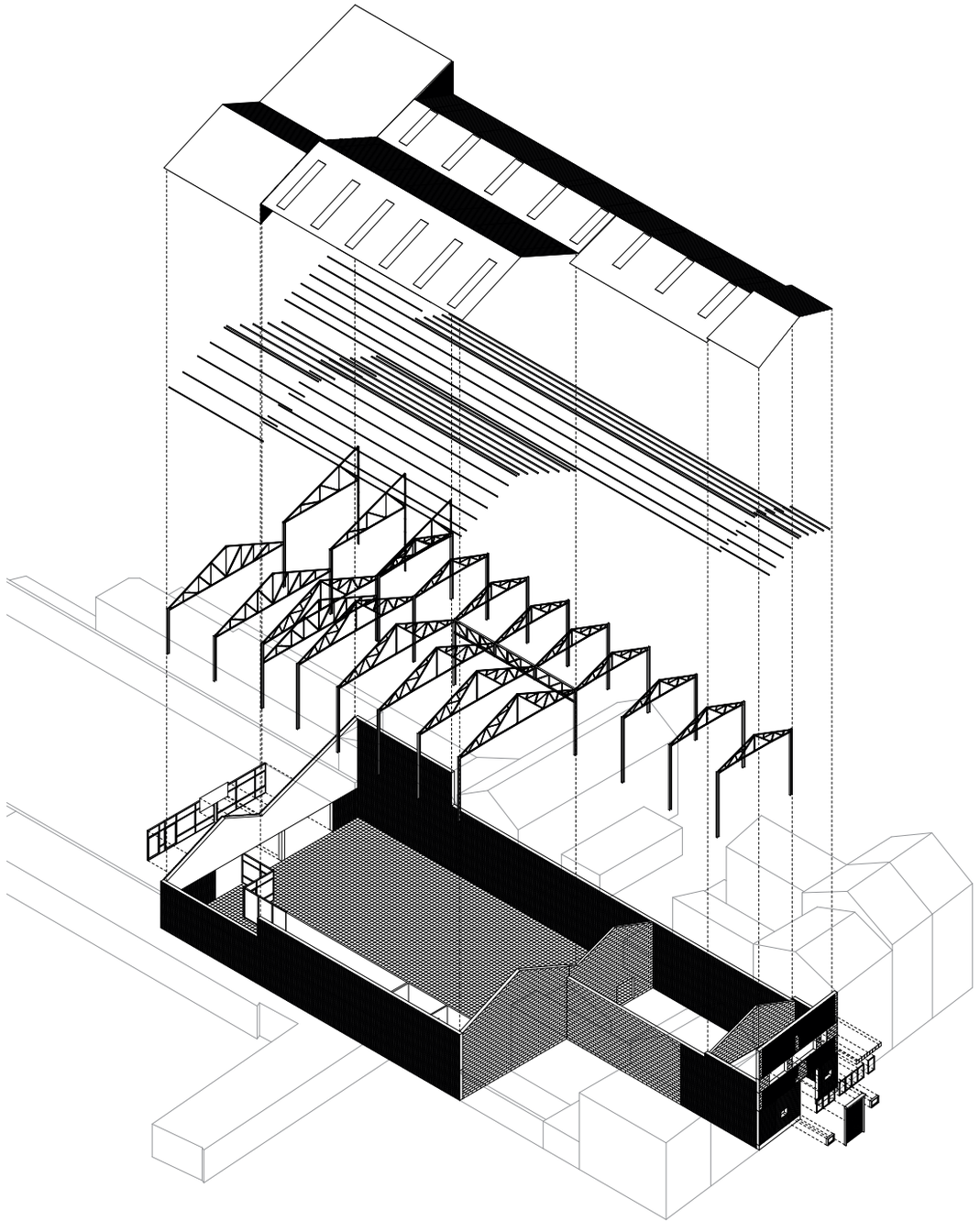
1. elephant with a set back on site, author
2. abanonded industrial building set back into the urban fabric, Thijs Reitsma

THE SKIN

The skin of the elephant metaphorically represents the protective layer that envelops and shields the body of the elephant, which in this context refers to the materials used in industrial buildings. Industrial buildings, characterized by their utilitarian nature, often employ heavy and durable materials that serve a practical purpose, primarily offering protection from external elements such as weather conditions.

In the context of the “elephant” buildings within the urban fabric, the use of industrial materials distinguishes them from other architectural structures in the surrounding area. The robustness and practicality of these materials create a visual language that speaks to the building’s industrial character, highlighting its purposeful design and functionality.



1. axonometric exploded view of a case study, author

In the context of industrial buildings, a common design approach involves the use of different materials for the plinth and the upper portions of the structure. This design strategy serves both functional and aesthetic purposes.

The plinth, which refers to the lower part of the building that connects with the ground, typically utilizes heavier materials. The choice of heavier materials in the plinth is driven by the need for impact resistance. As industrial buildings often involve the movement of heavy machinery, equipment, and goods, the plinth must be able to withstand potential collisions or impacts. By using robust and durable materials for the plinth, the facade remains intact and less prone to damage when subjected to such impacts.

1. duality of materials, author

On the other hand, the upper portions of industrial buildings often feature lighter materials, commonly cladding. Metal cladding, for example, is frequently employed as it offers several benefits. Firstly, it enhances the durability of the building by providing resistance to water penetration and protecting against other climatic conditions. This helps maintain the structural integrity of the building over time. Additionally, cladding materials can contribute to the aesthetic appeal of the structure, allowing for various design possibilities and adding visual interest to the facade.

The juxtaposition of heavier materials in the plinth and lighter cladding materials in the upper portions creates a distinct visual contrast and highlights the functional considerations of the building design. It demonstrates a thoughtful approach to material selection, ensuring both practicality and architectural expression in industrial architecture.

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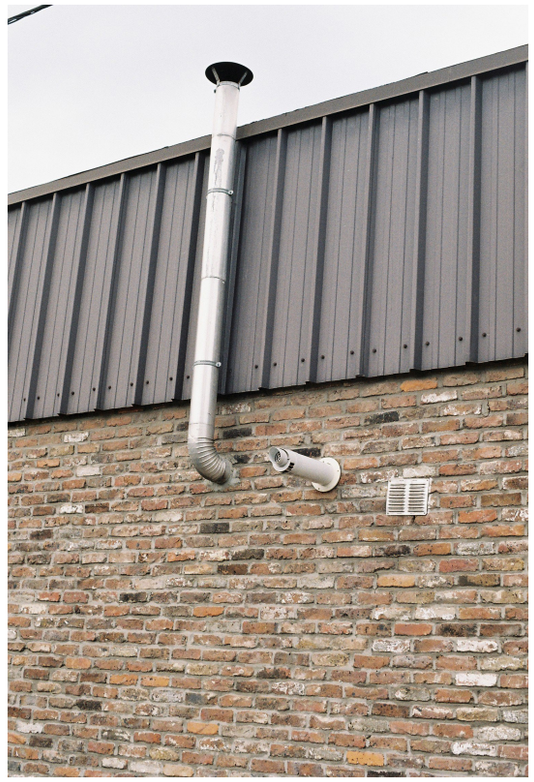

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1. representation of an elephants facade - brick, corrugated panels and a rolling shutter door, author
2. duality of materials, author

THE BODY

The body of an industrial building, likened to the body of an elephant, refers to its internal structure. One characteristic feature that sets industrial buildings apart is their sawtooth roofs. This specific roof design was a practical decision driven by the need for controlled lighting conditions within the building.

Sawtooth roofs are characterized by a series of sloping surfaces with vertical windows or skylights on one side, resembling the teeth of a saw. The primary purpose of this design is to allow indirect daylight to enter the building while minimizing direct sunlight. This lighting arrangement was particularly advantageous for industrial activities that required precise work or machinery operations.

By using the sawtooth roof design, industrial buildings could benefit from ample natural light without the potential drawbacks of excessive heat or glare caused by direct sunlight. The vertical windows or skylights on the sloping surfaces of the roof enabled the controlled entry of daylight, creating a well-lit interior conducive to the tasks performed within the building.

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1. visible roof structure, Thijs Reitsma
2. saw tooth roof structure on site, Thijs Reitsma

As a result of this emphasis on controlled lighting, industrial buildings often have minimal openings in their facades, apart from the essential rolling shutter doors used for access and transportation of goods and equipment. The focus on functional efficiency and lighting requirements prioritized the internal working conditions of the building, leading to a more enclosed facade design.

The presence of sawtooth roofs and limited facade openings in industrial buildings reflects the careful consideration given to the specific needs and operational requirements of the industrial processes taking place within. This distinct architectural feature contributes to the unique identity and practicality of these buildings, making them easily recognizable as “elephants” within the urban landscape.

1. visible roof construction in a vacant industrial building, Thijs Reitsma

Industrial buildings are frequently characterized by their open floor plans, which provide flexibility for various uses and the movement of large materials and machinery. The absence of interior walls or partitions allows for easy reconfiguration of the space based on the specific needs of the industrial processes or activities taking place within.

The open floor plan concept promotes a sense of spaciousness and adaptability, enabling efficient workflow and accommodating the movement of equipment, materials, and personnel. It allows for unrestricted circulation and facilitates the smooth flow of operations within the building.

To support the open floor plan, industrial buildings often feature visible steel structures with larger spans. These structural elements are designed to provide the necessary stability and support for the building while minimizing the need for interior columns or walls that could obstruct the open space.

1. prominent steel structure in a vacant industrial building, Thijs Reitsma

The integration of the elephant into a new design requires careful consideration of its valuable aspects and the adaptation of its ideas to align with the requirements and context of modern society. Some ideas may hold architectural value and contribute to the design's success, while others may need to be reimagined or left behind. Here are some key considerations:

Preservation of architectural heritage: The industrial buildings, represented by the elephant, carry a historical and cultural significance. Preserving their architectural elements, such as the distinct facades or structural features, can be valuable in showcasing the industrial heritage and adding character to the new design. Balancing preservation with modern functionality and aesthetics is essential.

Reimagining functionality: The practical layout and spatial efficiency found in industrial buildings can inspire innovative solutions for the new design. The open floor plans, adaptable spaces, and efficient circulation patterns can be repurposed to accommodate contemporary needs while maintaining a sense of flexibility and functionality.

Materiality and aesthetic language: The industrial materials and their rugged, practical aesthetic can be reinterpreted to create a unique architectural language for the new design. Incorporating elements such as exposed steel structures, brick walls, or metal cladding can pay homage to the industrial character while achieving a visually appealing and contextually appropriate design.

Sustainable design: Modern society places a strong emphasis on sustainability. Integrating sustainable practices, such as incorporating energy-efficient systems, utilizing recycled or reclaimed materials, and promoting environmental stewardship, can enhance the value of the design and align it with contemporary societal and environmental concerns.

Community integration: Considering the surrounding urban fabric and the needs of the community is crucial. The new design should harmonize with the existing context and provide spaces that benefit the community. Balancing the industrial aesthetic with the comfort and livability of the surroundings can contribute to a successful integration of the elephant into the urban fabric.

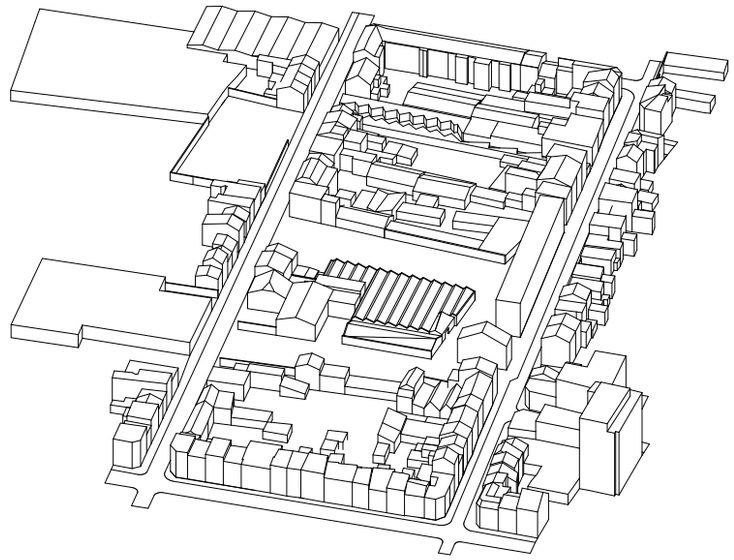
By critically evaluating the ideas of the elephant and adapting them to suit modern society's needs, the design can embrace the essence of the industrial heritage while contributing to the evolution of the built environment in a meaningful and relevant way.

REINTERPRETATION OF THE ELEPHANT

Choosing an existing vacant elephant as the core of the design is a thoughtful and sustainable approach. By reusing what is already there, you can showcase the potential of the industrial building to the neighborhood while respecting its historical and cultural significance. This approach aligns with the principles of adaptive reuse, promoting sustainability and preserving architectural heritage.

Addressing the existing elephant involves analyzing its characteristics, both architectural and structural, and understanding its spatial qualities. By studying the building's form, materials, and unique features, you can identify its intrinsic value and determine how to enhance and integrate it into the proposed design.

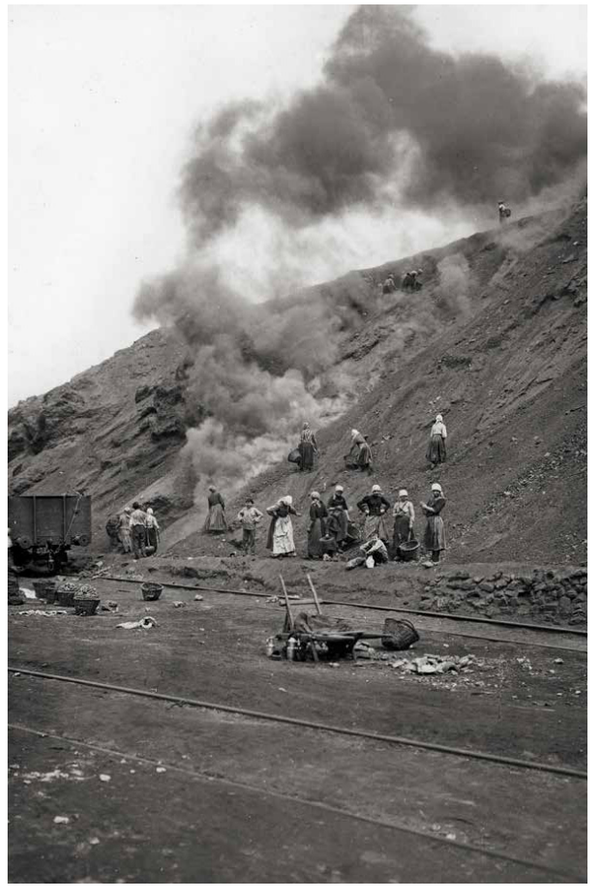
By addressing the existing elephant in a strategic and sensitive manner, you can create a design that revitalizes the building, brings value to the neighborhood, and contributes to a sustainable and vibrant urban environment.



1. chosen plot axonometric, author
2. industrial building on site, Thijs Reitsma

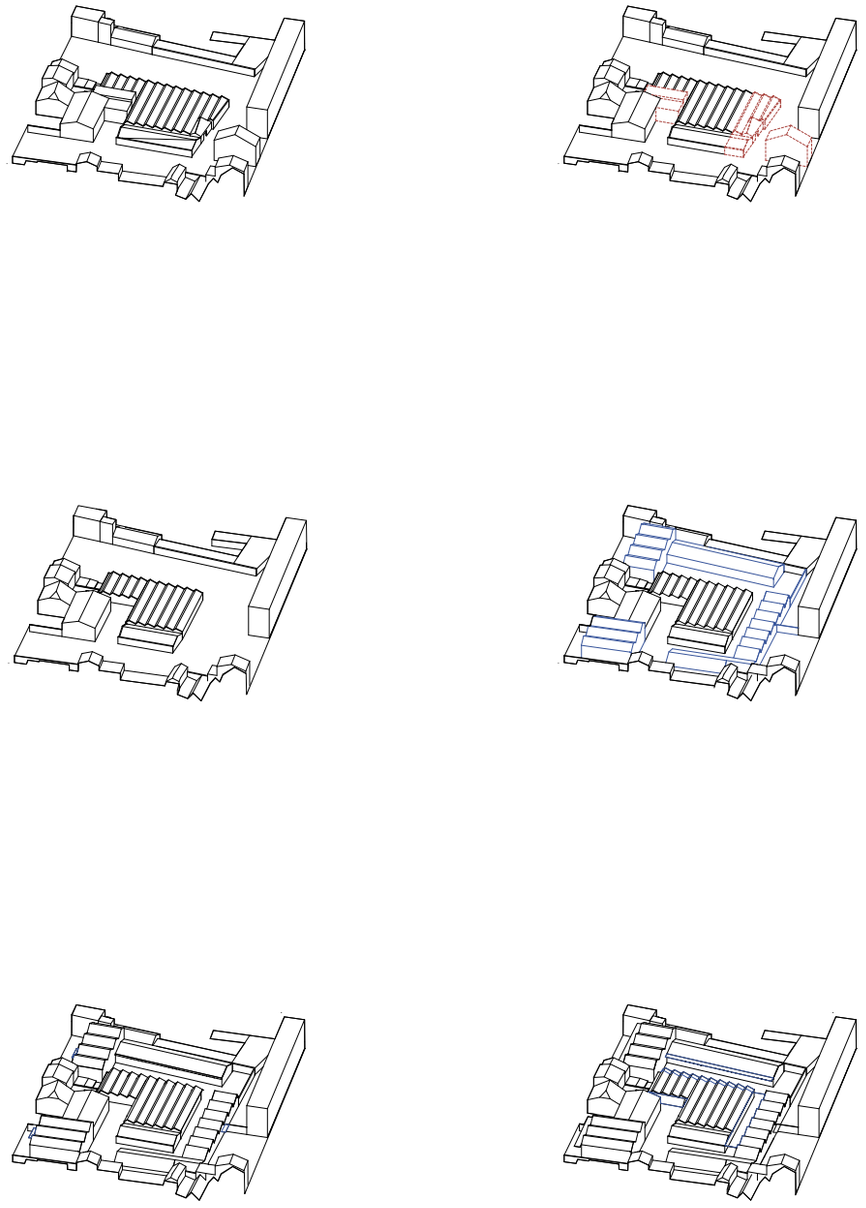
Proposing a craft school in the post-industrial city of Liege that focuses on breaking the language barrier and preserving craft culture is a commendable idea. Such a school can play a vital role in revitalizing the neighborhood, empowering the younger generation, and fostering community engagement.

By combining the educational aspects of a craft school with a focus on community engagement and job opportunities, the proposal has the potential to make a positive impact on the neighborhood and contribute to the revitalization of the post-industrial city, hence the title - reclaiming craft in the city.

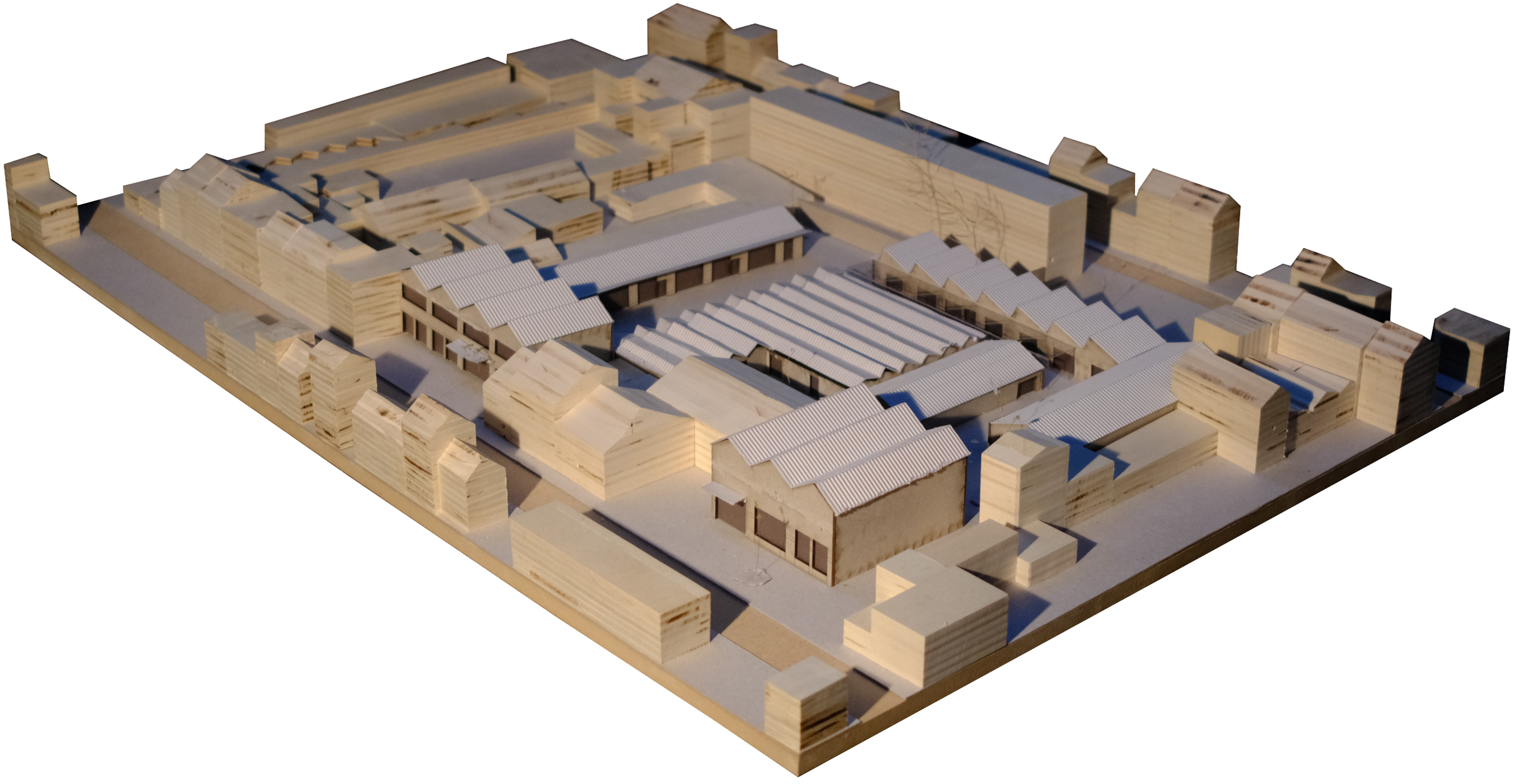


1. Photograph, Crassier d'Angleur, Vieille-Montagne, Liège,Vieille-Montagne Fund

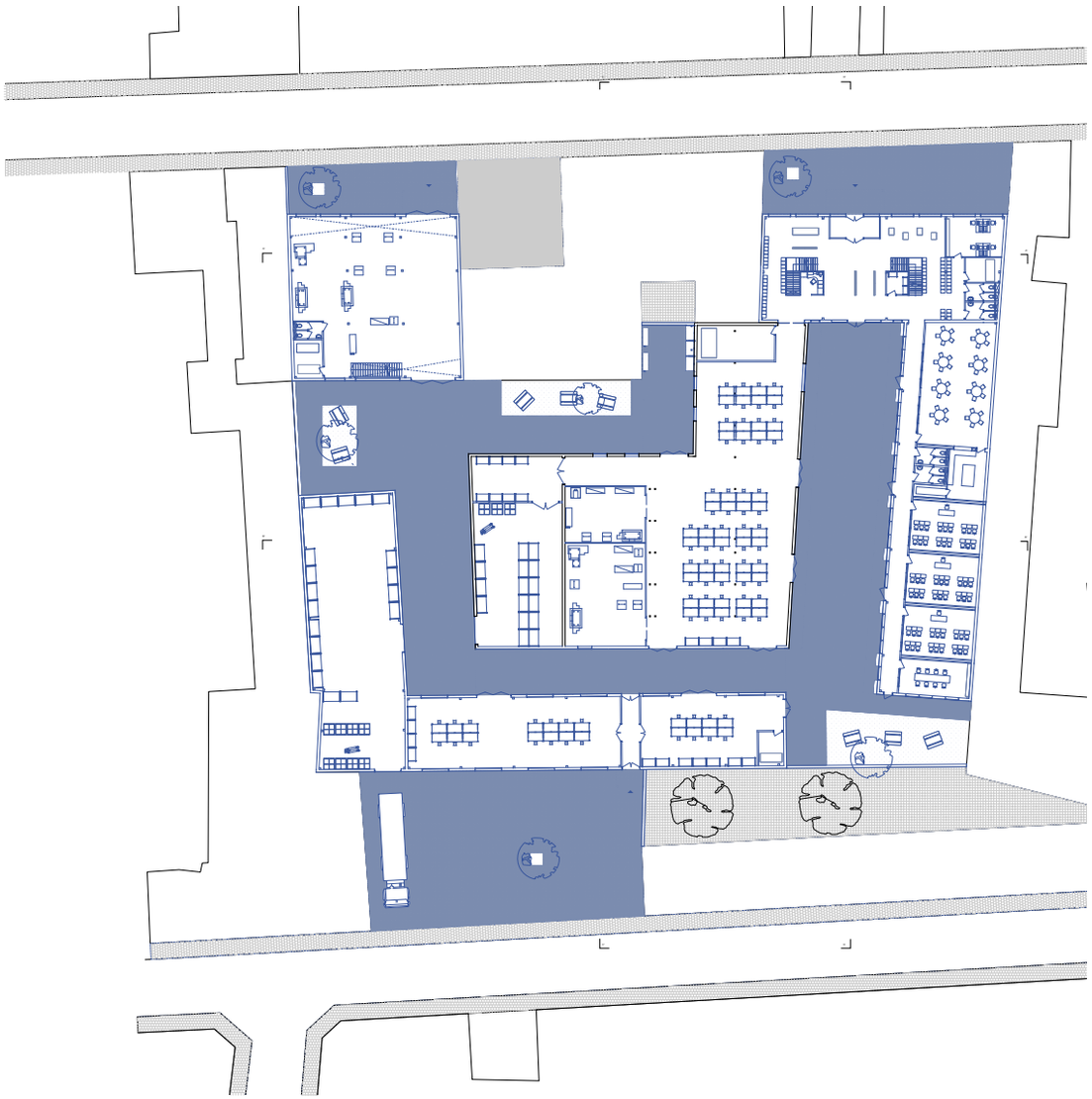
The proposed craft school utilizes the existing elephant structure and the surrounding plot to create a cohesive space. To accommodate the needs of the craft school, a small portion of the elephant will be removed, and the materials from it will be repurposed for the new building. Additionally, a neighboring building will be taken down to free up more space on the plot. This allows for the implementation of five new volumes, three of which are strategically placed to close off the openings of the plot. The remaining two volumes follow the outline of the plot, creating an inner courtyard through the offset arrangement of the buildings, similar to how elephants align themselves. To enhance visibility, canopies are added to the three volumes that serve as entrances, making the building easily recognizable from various angles. Furthermore, the inclusion of canopies within the plot enables a covered pathway throughout the entire area, ensuring a dry passage for the user.



1. isometric development plot, author



1. 1.200 model craft school, author



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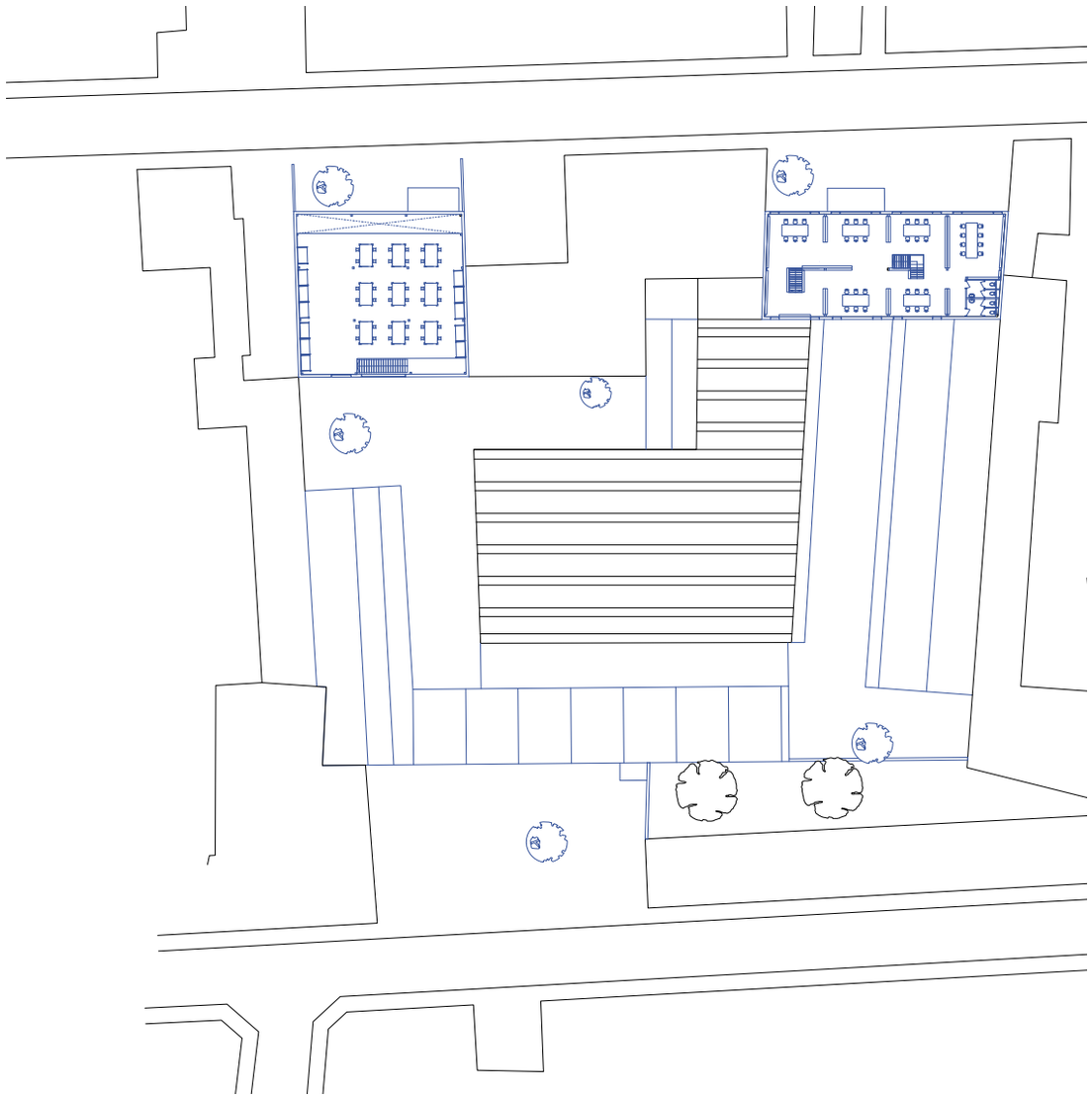

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1. 1.100 plan - ground floor, author
2. 1.100 plan - first floor, author

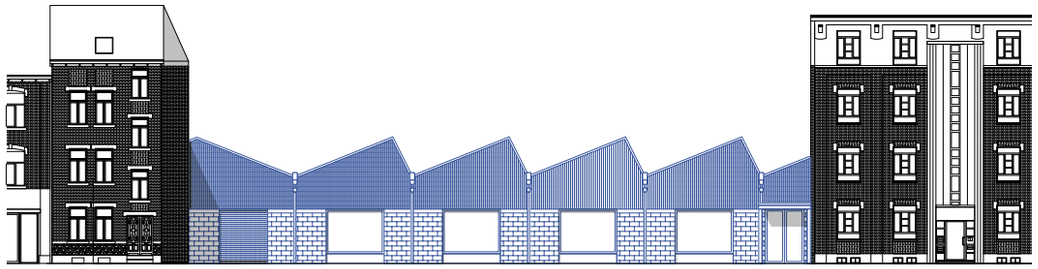
The three buildings located in the plot's openings are designed to resemble an elephant and reflect the aesthetics of an industrial building. This choice is intentional as it aligns with the existing architectural language familiar to the neighborhood. By incorporating industrial design elements, the project maintains a sense of familiarity and avoids gentrifying the area with unfamiliar materials and structures. The aim is to create accessible architecture that resonates with the people of Liege, ensuring that it remains relatable and meaningful to the community.

The construction of both the buildings and the canopies in front incorporates reclaimed steel structures obtained from donor buildings. This design choice serves multiple purposes that align with sustainability principles and pay homage to the existing structures.

Firstly, using reclaimed steel structures promotes sustainability by repurposing materials that would otherwise go to waste. By giving these steel structures a new life in the craft school project, valuable resources are conserved, reducing the environmental impact associated with new construction materials.

Secondly, incorporating reclaimed steel structures allows the craft school to celebrate and honor the actual shape and form of the donor buildings. This design approach preserves the architectural history and character of the original structures, creating a connection between the past and present.

By utilizing reclaimed steel structures, the craft school not only embraces sustainable practices but also showcases the unique and authentic shapes of the donor buildings. This integration of reclaimed materials adds a layer of character and story to the overall design, creating a visually interesting and environmentally conscious space.



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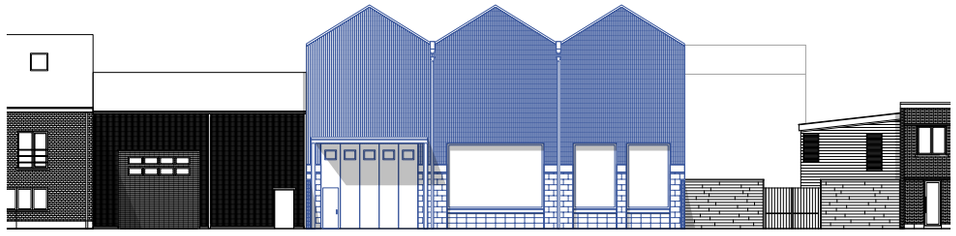

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1. 1.100 elevation atelier entrance, author
2. 1.100 elevation workshop entrance, author
3. 1.100 elevation school entrance, author

The three entrances are thoughtfully designed, paying attention to the elephant's trunk and skin. Each of the facades is intentionally set back from the building line, resulting in a spacious public area in front of them. This open space can be used for various activities such as traffic flow and work-related tasks. It echoes the characteristic gesture observed in elephants and contributes to the integration of the craft school within the existing urban fabric.

The materialization of the facades strikes a balance between capturing the essence of elephants and introducing a more public aesthetic. By incorporating larger window openings, the surrounding neighborhood is afforded a glimpse into the activities taking place inside the building, offering a fresh perspective to the elephant structure. Furthermore, each of the three entrances serves a distinct function and is tailored to accommodate different users of the building. This thoughtful design approach ensures that the craft school can effectively cater to the diverse needs of its occupants while providing an engaging and dynamic experience for the surrounding community.

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1. 1.50 model entrance, author
2. 1.50 model workshop, author

The south entrance of the building serves as a logistics entrance, enabling trucks to unload materials directly into the storage area. It also provides access to the atelier spaces for the students and serves as a convenient back door entrance to the plot. Reflecting its industrial functionality in terms of storage and craft, the facade of this entrance is constructed using traditional materials such as brick and corrugated panels. The color palette of these materials evokes the industrial aesthetic, blending harmoniously with the surrounding context. The roof design follows a distinctive sawtooth pattern, reminiscent of elephants' shapes, while also serving a practical purpose for the craft activities taking place inside. The addition of red steel canopies and eye-catching water drainages unifies the three different facades, creating a cohesive and visually appealing composition.

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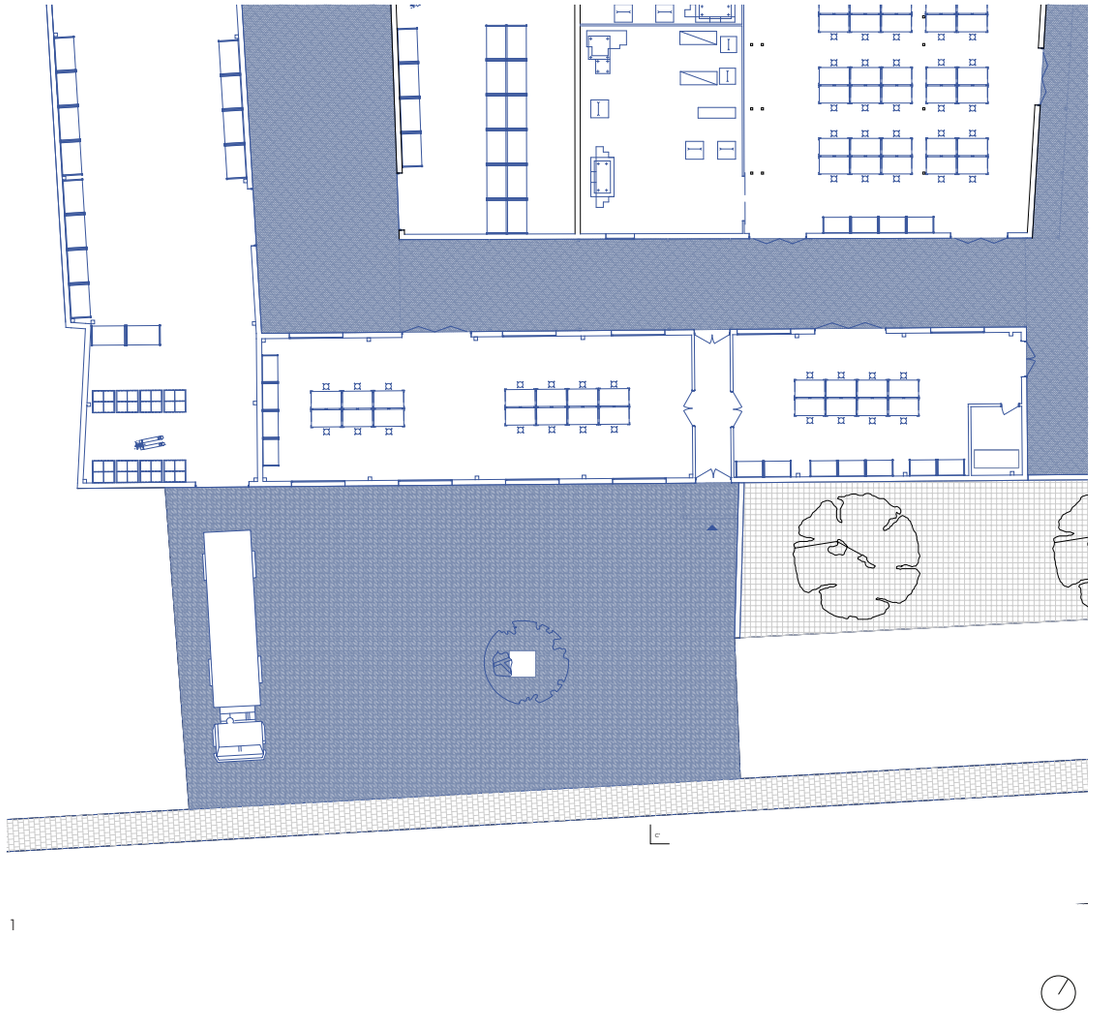
1. entrance atelier, author
2. HFB Ougree material reference, author

The inclusion of a glass canopy facilitates seamless movement for users between the atelier space and the craft hall. This design element allows for easy and convenient transportation of materials between these two areas. By providing a transparent connection, individuals can navigate freely while maintaining visual contact and ensuring efficient workflow between the atelier and craft hall. The glass canopy promotes a fluid and interconnected environment, enhancing the functionality and practicality of the craft school's spaces.



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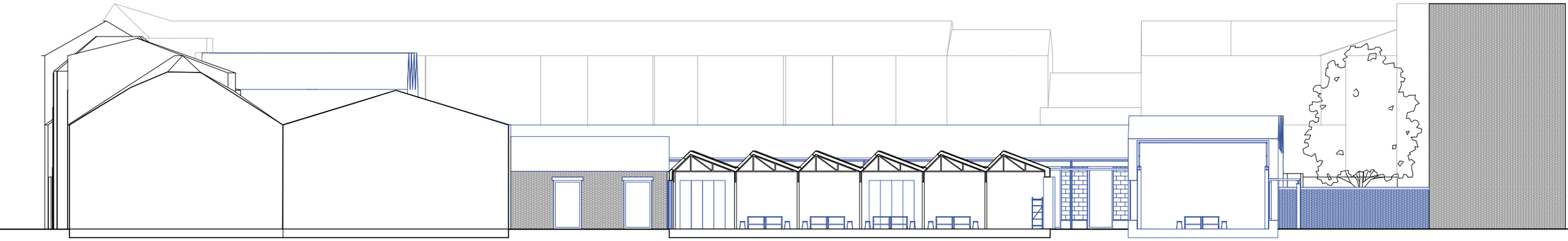
1. 1.100 floor plan atelier, author
2. connection atelier - craft hall, author

The craft hall is located within the existing elephant structure, which is well-suited for this purpose due to its industrial architectural style and the presence of a north-facing sawtooth roof. This unique architectural feature provides an ideal environment for the craft hall, as it prevents direct sunlight from entering the space. This is particularly beneficial for craft activities where controlled lighting conditions are desired. The industrial aesthetics of the elephant structure, combined with the practical advantages of the sawtooth roof, create a fitting and functional space for the craft hall within the craft school.



1. 1.100 section through atelier and craft hall, author

The north entrance of the plot features two distinct entrances that lead to the craft school, each showcasing different materials. Despite the variation in materials, both entrances contribute to the unified appearance of the building through their shared design concept and roof shapes. These entrances have a more public character compared to the south entrance, which is evident in their generous window openings.

One of the entrances leads to the workshop, serving as a space utilized by both students and interested individuals from the community who wish to learn about the craft school and engage in the art of craftsmanship. The materialization of this entrance reflects its purpose, with gray bricks of a larger format combined with blue-colored corrugated panels that pay homage to the existing elephant structure on Av. De la Croix Rouge 190.

By incorporating these distinctive materials, the craft school establishes a visual connection with its surroundings and creates a cohesive and recognizable identity for the building. The large window openings further emphasize the open and welcoming nature of the workshop entrance, inviting both students and the local community to explore and participate in the craft school's activities.

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1. 1.50 model workshop entrance, author
2. case study project, Thijs Reitsma

1. workshop entrance, author

The main entrance of the craft school stands out from the other two entrances due to its specific functions: it serves as the main access point to the school and also provides access to a library on the first floor. In terms of materials, this entrance employs a more domestic aesthetic, while still incorporating the concept of the elephant's skin. The lower part of the facade, known as the plinth, is constructed using a robust material such as concrete, while the upper section utilizes a lighter material, such as brick.

The choice of materials not only creates a visual contrast but also establishes a connection with the skin concept of the elephant. This design approach adds depth and texture to the facade, enhancing its overall appearance. Additionally, the roof shape of the main entrance serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it allows for the entrance of natural light into the library, creating a welcoming and well-lit space for studying and reading. Secondly, the roof design initiates a dialogue with the adjacent workshop facade on the same street, forming a cohesive and visually engaging streetscape.

In a nod to the elephant's characteristics, the design incorporates an intentional choice to make certain elements of the building's infrastructure visible to the user. This approach highlights the functionality and inner workings of the craft school, giving users a glimpse into how the building operates. Features such as water drainage systems, ductwork, and construction elements are deliberately left exposed, creating an honest and transparent aesthetic.

1. craft school entrance, author

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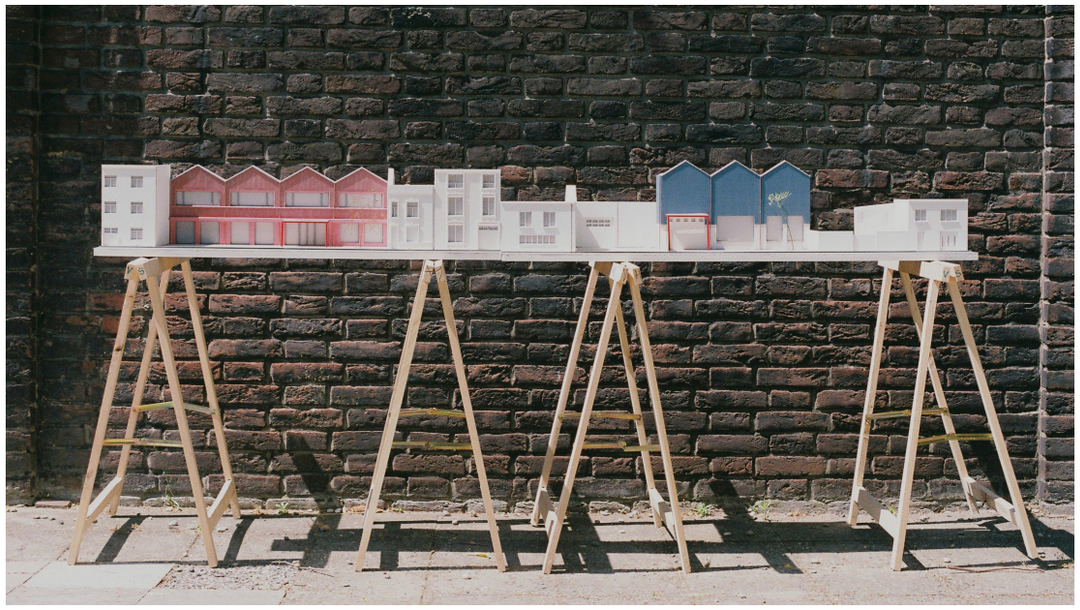

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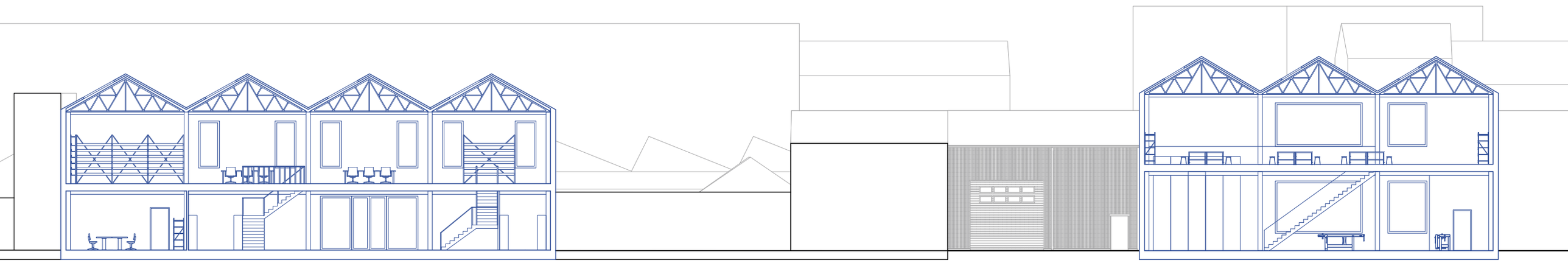
1. library of the craft school, author
2.1.50 facade model, author

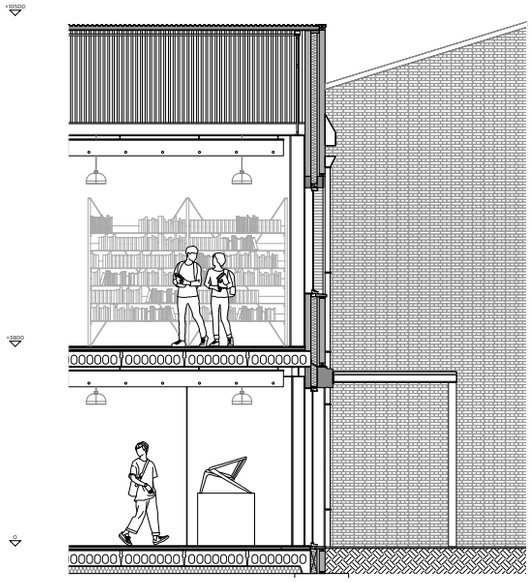
Although the two buildings share a similar shape, their distinct functions necessitate different considerations in terms of their sections. The workshop requires greater height to accommodate the machinery and allow for the passage of materials through the building. This vertical space is essential for the proper operation of the workshop and ensures that it remains functional and efficient.

On the other hand, the library requires additional height to create an open and spacious atmosphere, avoiding a feeling of clutter. A taller section allows for higher bookshelves, ample natural light, and comfortable reading areas. By providing sufficient vertical space, the library can cultivate a serene and inviting environment conducive to learning and exploration.

While the overall shape may be similar, the variation in section between the two buildings reflects their specific needs and functions. This thoughtful consideration ensures that each space is optimized for its respective purpose, providing a harmonious blend of functionality and comfort.



1. 1.100 section entrance - workshop, author



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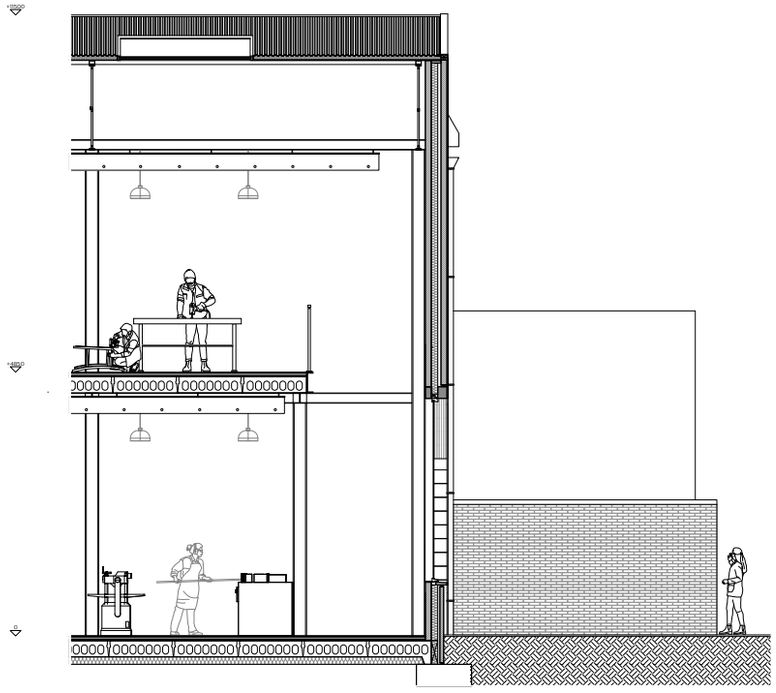

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1. 1.20 section school entrance, author
2. 1.20 section workshop entrance, author
3. 1.20 elevation school entrance, author
4. 1.20 elevation workshop entrance, author

The inner courtyard of the craft school serves as a vital connection point between the various buildings within the complex. It not only acts as a buffer zone but also provides an outdoor working space for students and faculty. The courtyard is intentionally designed to create a secure and enclosed environment, fostering social interaction and communal activities.

Considering the practical nature of a craft school, a significant portion of the courtyard is paved to facilitate the easy movement of materials between buildings. This practical approach ensures efficiency and convenience in the day-to-day operations of the school.

To enhance the overall ambiance and create a pleasant atmosphere, three specific areas within the courtyard are designated for greenery. These moments of greenery are strategically placed to consider the path of the sun throughout the day. By aligning with the sun's movement, each green area receives ample sunlight at different times, encouraging people to gather and interact in these specific locations. This thoughtful design encourages social cohesion by creating focal points where individuals are more likely to come together, promoting a sense of community and shared experiences. The courtyard, with its functional layout, paved surfaces, and strategically placed green spaces, offers a versatile and inviting space for both practical work and social engagement within the craft school.

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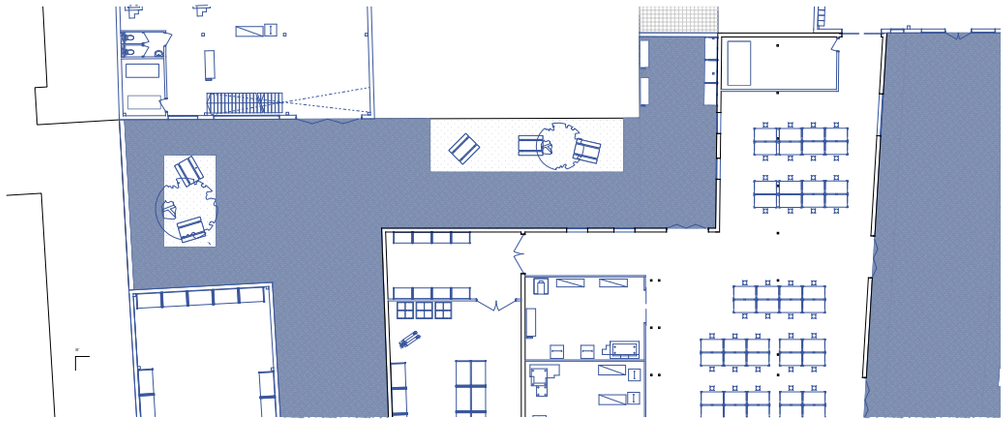

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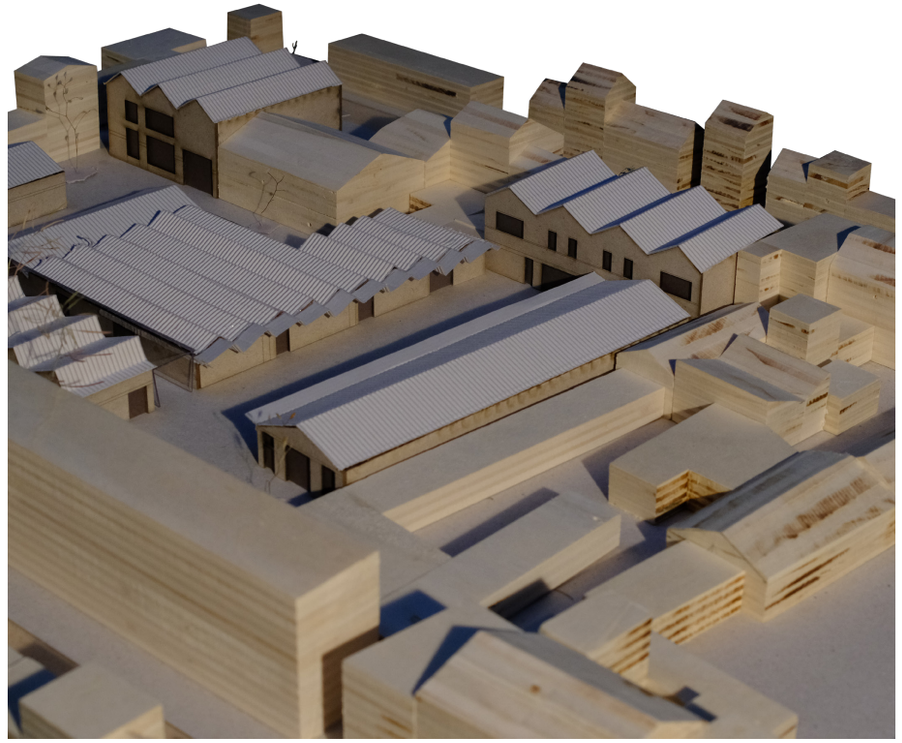
1. 1.100 plan showing the courtyard, author
2. 1.100 plan showing the courtyard, author

The canopy, constructed using reclaimed materials, serves as an essential feature in providing a covered passage between the buildings. Its purpose is to ensure that individuals can move comfortably and stay dry while navigating between different areas of the craft school. By utilizing reclaimed materials, the canopy not only fulfills its functional role but also aligns with the sustainability principles of repurposing and reducing waste. This eco-conscious approach adds an additional layer of environmental responsibility to the design.



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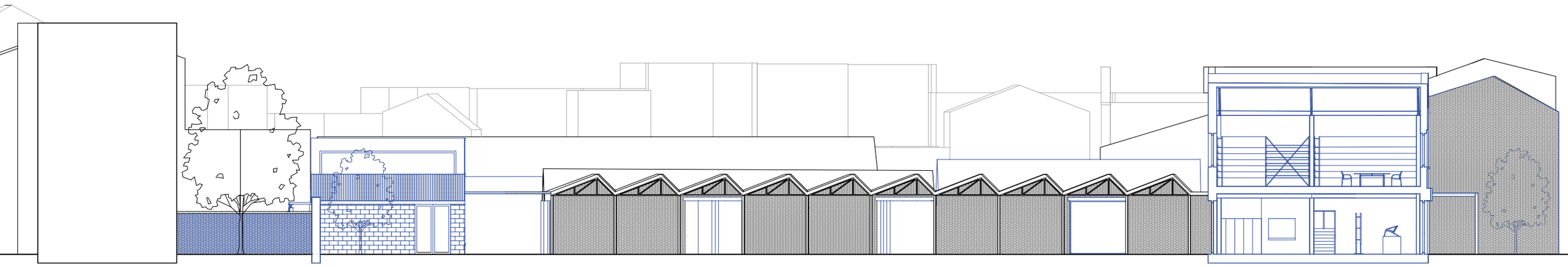

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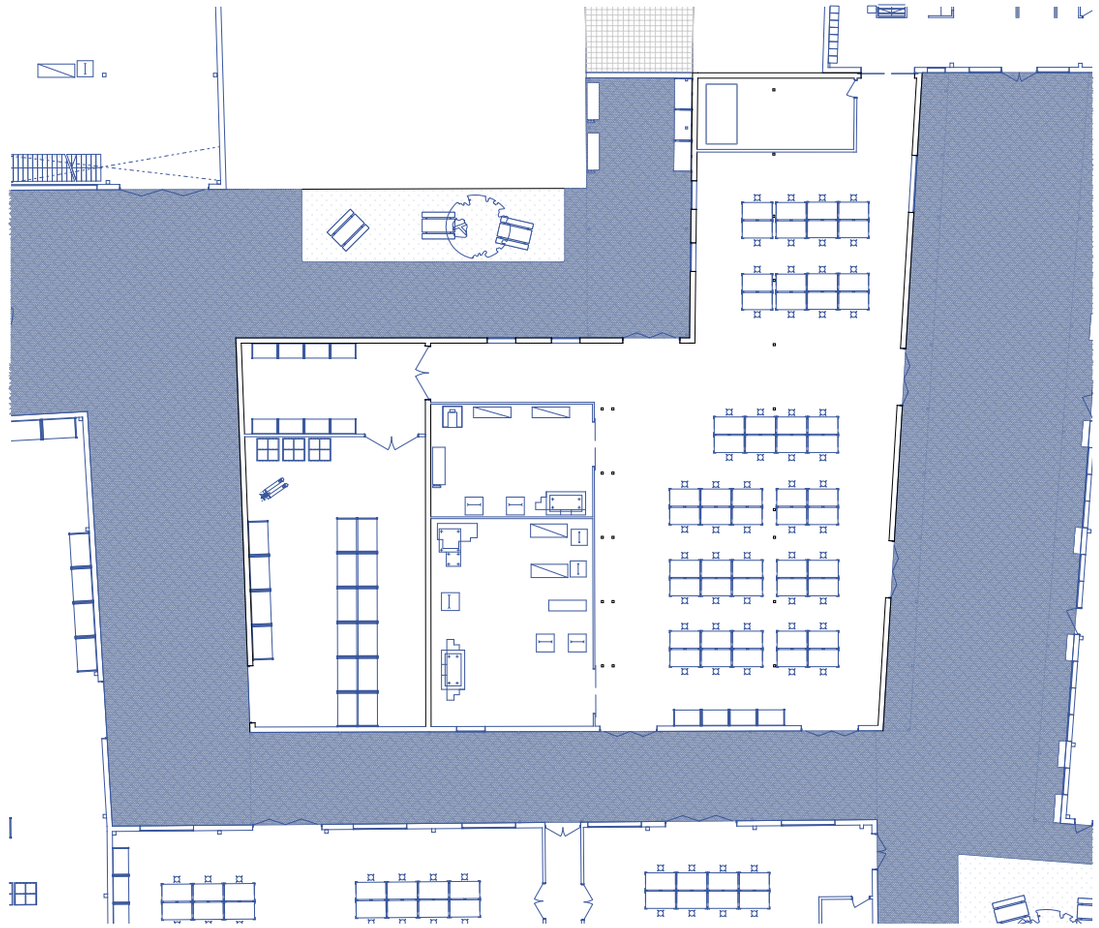
1. 1.200 model showing the courtyard, author
2. 1.100 section over the courtyard, author

The courtyard within the craft school is formed through a deliberate offset between the new additional buildings and the existing elephant structure, which functions as the craft hall. This carefully planned layout creates a central outdoor space that allows users to walk around the entire building, providing glimpses of the hidden elephant within the plot.

The design of the courtyard aims to engage users by offering them a visual experience and connection with the craft hall. As individuals navigate around the courtyard, they are provided with various vantage points to observe and appreciate the presence of the elephant structure. This intentional design element adds a sense of intrigue and discovery to the overall experience within the craft school.

By enabling users to walk around the entire building, the courtyard encourages exploration and enhances the overall engagement with the craft school's architectural features. It creates a dynamic and interactive environment where the hidden elephant becomes a captivating focal point, evoking curiosity and a deeper appreciation for the craftsmanship and design within the plot.



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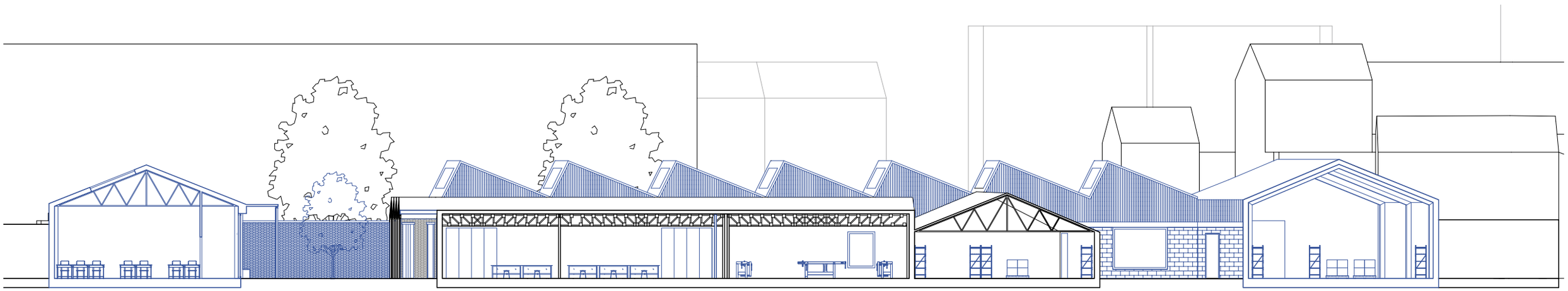

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1. 1.100 plan craft hall, author
2. 1.100 section classrooms - craft hall - storage, author

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1. greenery next to the craft hall, author
2. greenery inbetween atelier and class rooms, author

REFLECTION

As an architectural student I have always been interested in industrial architecture. The simplicity of the building and the impact that an industrial building makes on it surroundings has always fascinated me. When signing up for the Urban Architecture graduation studio I knew the assessment was in a post-industrial city where I, as an architect, would have to work with both the existing and the past. Because of my fascination I have always wanted to work with existing industrial buildings and figure out how we can preserve them in modern society yet keep their architectural value.

Upon first arrival at the site, I was kind of disappointed, although there were traces of industrial buildings there were fewer than I had hoped for. The industrial buildings that were visible were either occupied or not as fascinating. I quickly made a concession in how I perceived the studio and saw it as an opportunity to work with the existing and the genius loci of a post-industrial city.
Although I am very fascinated with material (culture) I decided to research the 'invisible city'; how and what is happening behind all the closed facades. While the research was very helpful and refreshing, I was missing out on the architectural aspect of the site, materials in specific. Meanwhile the group of Urban Mining redirected their research on the industrial buildings and their traces. When they were zooming out from street view to a birds view the industrial ruins unravel themselves and they discovered 'Unidentifiable Possibly Industrial Complexes' (U.P.I.C.), industrial building structures that are nestled within the building blocks. They later assigned the term 'elephant' to these structures; from street view all you could see was the trunk while the massive body was hiding within the building block.
This revelation sparked my curiosity for these industrial buildings once again, as it offered a new perspective on the site. Now, not only did I have the opportunity to explore the genius loci of the city, but I could also examine the remains of the post-industrial city- hidden industrial complexes and their architectural significance.

My obsession with industrial materials comes from how the materials are purely made to serve a purpose yet their aesthetic value to me is not to be surpassed. To work with these materials in my design I joined forces with Thijs, who had the same interests, to research a couple of abandoned industrial ruins on site and how their materials could be reclaimed to be used in a new design. Our approach was to analyse four industrial complexes and their materials and catalogue all materials that we could find in the building. The next step was to research how and in what way materials can be reclaimed, for this we picked the most common materials we found. While the research of the reclamation of materials was very insightful it became more of a practical research on how to process reclaimed materials. During the research I lost sight of my initial interest which was the material culture of the post-industrial city and how to deal with these industrial complexes in modern society. Taking a step back from the research made me realise that my interest was 'the elephant' -How does it function within the urban context? How do these elephants deal with material with respect to the surrounding? What is the spatial essence of the elephant? What works and what does not work for the elephant within the urban context? These were questions that arose from this interest and resulted in a new,

1. Bressoux, Simon Muntz

smaller scale, research.
This revelation within my research phase came a bit too late to me because I was too focused on the reclamation of materials, an aspect that seemed to restrict my design process. While only working with reclaimed materials was a challenge it did not suit my way of designing. As I proposed a craft school it seemed to limit my architectural decisions making my design a mere resemblance of what was already there and not adding any architectural value to the existing and most important, disregarding my own opinion on the material culture within the neighbourhood. While the research with Thijs was very practical the modelling of the buildings and the allocation of materials already answered some of my questions. During the practical research I saw these materials as loose elements – bricks and metal cladding is what defined an industrial building. However, taking a step back made me realise that it is not just about the exact materials being used but the separation of a heavy and light material. While the implementation of metal cladding serves a purposeful function, protecting the façade from weather conditions, it also made a separation between horizontality and verticality within the façade, giving the façade different layers. Another finding was how the elephants function within the urban context. While some of them are completely hidden, some elephants show their structure from different angles. The first observation was that the elephant barely touches the building line and is almost always set back into the building black, excluding itself from the street. The elephants were also showing themselves differently from different angles – different materials, colours and measurements made it so that the elephants from different perspectives could be perceived as different buildings. However, the roof shapes and how the building deals with materials makes a particular elephant identifiable from different angles.

A big obstacle within both research is that most buildings with inaccessible leaving me with nothing but an imagination about the interiors and the spatial essence of the structure. Looking at references of comparable buildings gave me a hint of how these elephants function from inside and what such buildings were lacking. Throughout both the research and design the question of how do I translate buildings that were merely made for crafts (read machines) to a building that would not only serve crafts but also function as a public building – how can the essence of the elephant be translated into a building that households both machine and humans and show this within the urban context. The answer to this question can be found in the final design, however, this is mere how I interpret the elephant and material culture hence the title: 'Reinterpreting the elephant: Reclaiming craft in the city.'
Throughout this studio I have learnt that taking a position within both the design and research is crucial for a coherent result. Although it seems obvious, themes such as material culture are hard to explain and need to be interpreted by the architect to give an actual definition to the theme. What the studio has taught me the most is that a design only matters when your story adds up. I believe that anyone can design a building if they really wanted to, but a building has so much more value to it when its core essence is well thought out.

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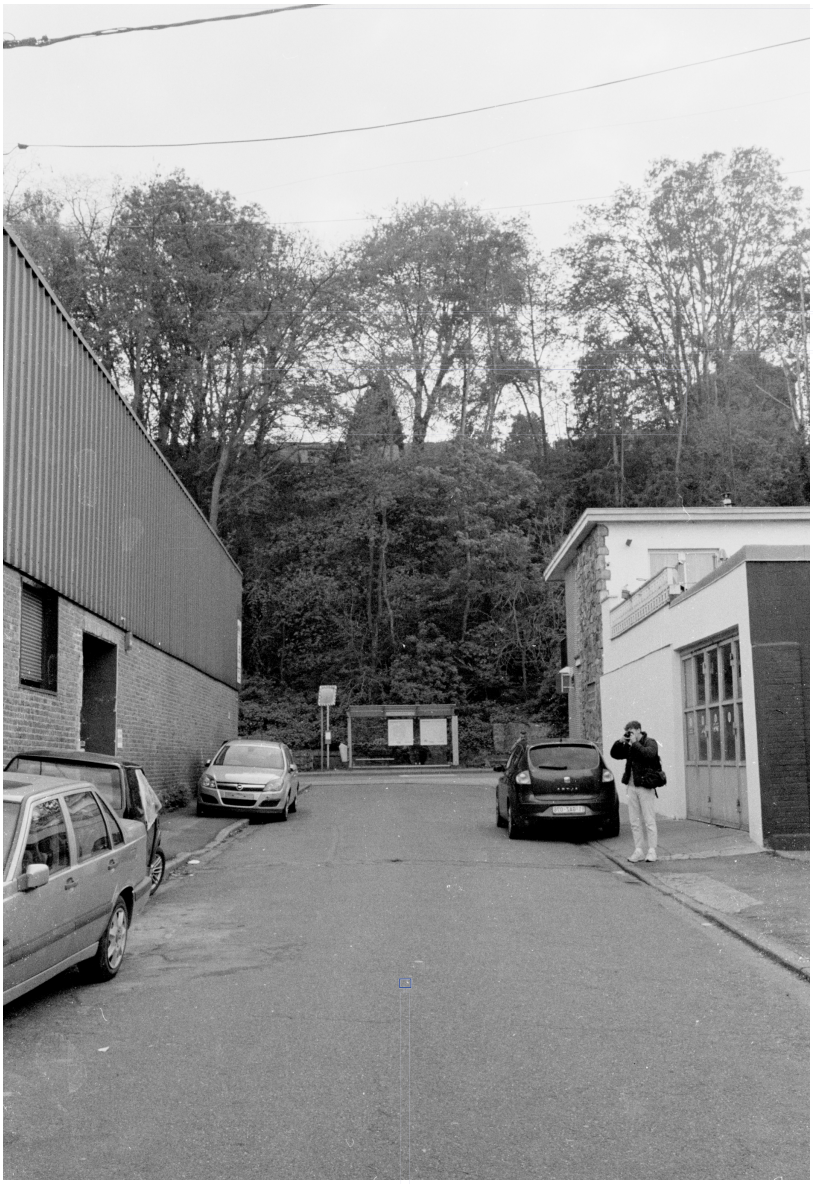

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