

THE FUTURE BANK

a new public figure

NATIONAL BANK
OF BELGIUM

MSc 4 - Interiors Buildings Cities

Mark Pimlott - Jurjen Zeinstra - Matthijs Klooster - Christien Janssen



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INTERIORS BUILDINGS CITIES

Msc 3/4
2021/2022

Mark Pimlott
Jurjen Zeinstra
Matthijs Klooster
Christien Janssen

PROJECT JOURNAL

Bart Vos
4442261

THE FUTURE BANK

National Bank of Belgium
de Berlaimontlaan 3,
1000 Brussels, Belgium

Introduction

The future Bank: a new public figure
redefining the monofunctional and enclosed office block

In this year of the graduation studio, Interiors Buildings Cities, the Future Bank is being explored. Set in Brussels, the project will address the transformation of the National Bank of Belgium. This can be described as a vast, triangular urban block of 91,000 square meter that is located in the city centre of Brussels. The building acts as a conglomerate that is built from out different time zones. The main part is designed by Van Goethem in the 50's of last century, showing a 200 meter long columnar façade. The building is surrounded by a mix of old and new development, including the gothic 13th century Cathédrale Saints-Michel-et-Gudule with a connecting park, residential building blocks and a busy car oriented Boulevard de Berlaimont. The building needs to tackle a 8 meter sectional shift since it stands on the border of the lower and upper brussels.

Seeing the bank as part of the business culture, is something that took my interest. The bank is physically connected with financial business areas which are being criticized for being monofunctional and how they divide the city.

This let me to look for a new approach for the vast urban banking block. How it will improve its connection with its surroundings and give new life to the building and the area. This new approach leads to a new image of the institution of the bank, going from a secured, unreachable building to a more friendly and permeable building. The goal is to improve the ground floor by inviting new institutions, and created open public facilities. These facilities mainly consist of (co) working spaces, lecture halls and exhibition spaces. By changing this ground floor, its role within the context changes, and the work environment for the bank employees will be changed. The bank employee will now enter a lively building, due to different program and their visitors.

This assignment is addressing the National Bank of Belgium, but can be seen as a case study for the recreation and transformation of bank buildings, or even office blocks in general.

Brussels

Brussels can be seen as a fragmented city with different district. The city is known for its historical and static buildings, and has a mix of different architectural styles. One of the major influences in the city is the financial, and business district, also due to the positioning of the European Union within the city. Since the National Bank of Belgium fits within this area, deeper research on the business institutions, on a social and architectural way is done. Other aspects of Brussels that are taking into account are the cultural layer and the more local layer, including the residents and close by institutions like the university's.

While looking to the history of the business districts, we see that the bank is not only as a system, but also physically linked to it. The bank is a continuation of the Administrative centre, which can also be connected with the known financial centre, Noordwijk. These areas

are being criticized for being monofunctional blocks, that area dividing different areas of Brussels. Looking into the history of these areas, you see that is dates from modernist 70's urban plans, where thousands of households were abandoned and lots of land was demolished. The aim was to make a Manhattan-like urban plan. In the end only 8 towers were made, but still the area consist of modernist monofunctional office blocks. To respond to this notion of looking at business institutions, a new organisation of the program and its architecture is necessary, while aiming for new mixed life in the bank.

How can the bank, as a part of the business culture in Brussels, integrate with its surroundings, create new collaborations and become a permeable building?

The city of Brussels

From swamp to city

Brussels started out as a small settlement by the river Senne, supposedly in the 10th century. It is said that the name Brussels originates from the word Broekzele, which translates to 'settlement in the swamp.'



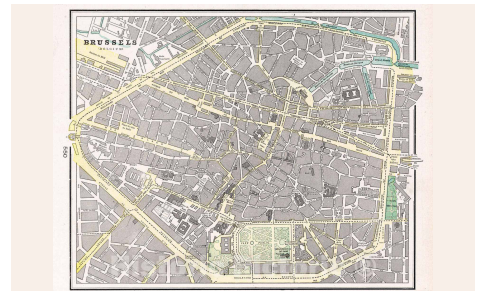
A Grand Place

The Grand Place was referred to in 1147 as the 'lower market.' Situated close to the port on the Senne and along an important road, the marketplace did well as a bustling center for trade. The entire Grand Place was rebuilt with its beautiful flamboyant gothic design, after it was bombed in 1695.



Building the city walls

The first city walls were placed around Brussels in the 12th or 13th century. When the city started to expand beyond the walls, a stronger fortification was placed. These are the walls that gave the center of Brussels the (somewhat) pentagon shape it has today.

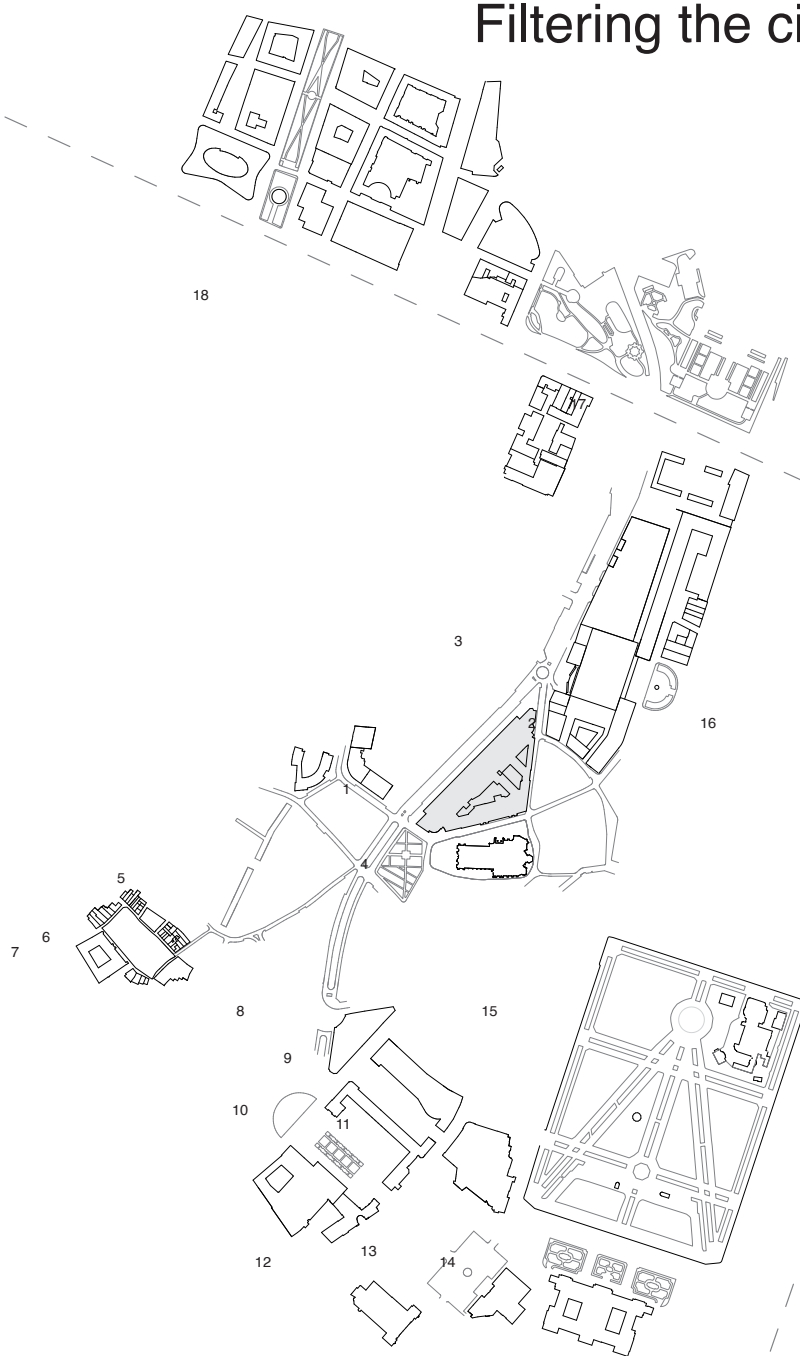


The European Union

Since 1952 the European Union was created. Brussels became the city to harbour this Union due to its history of being a state between France and Germany, its location on the border between the Latin and Germanic cultures, and because of its central location between major metropolitan cities in the west of Europe.



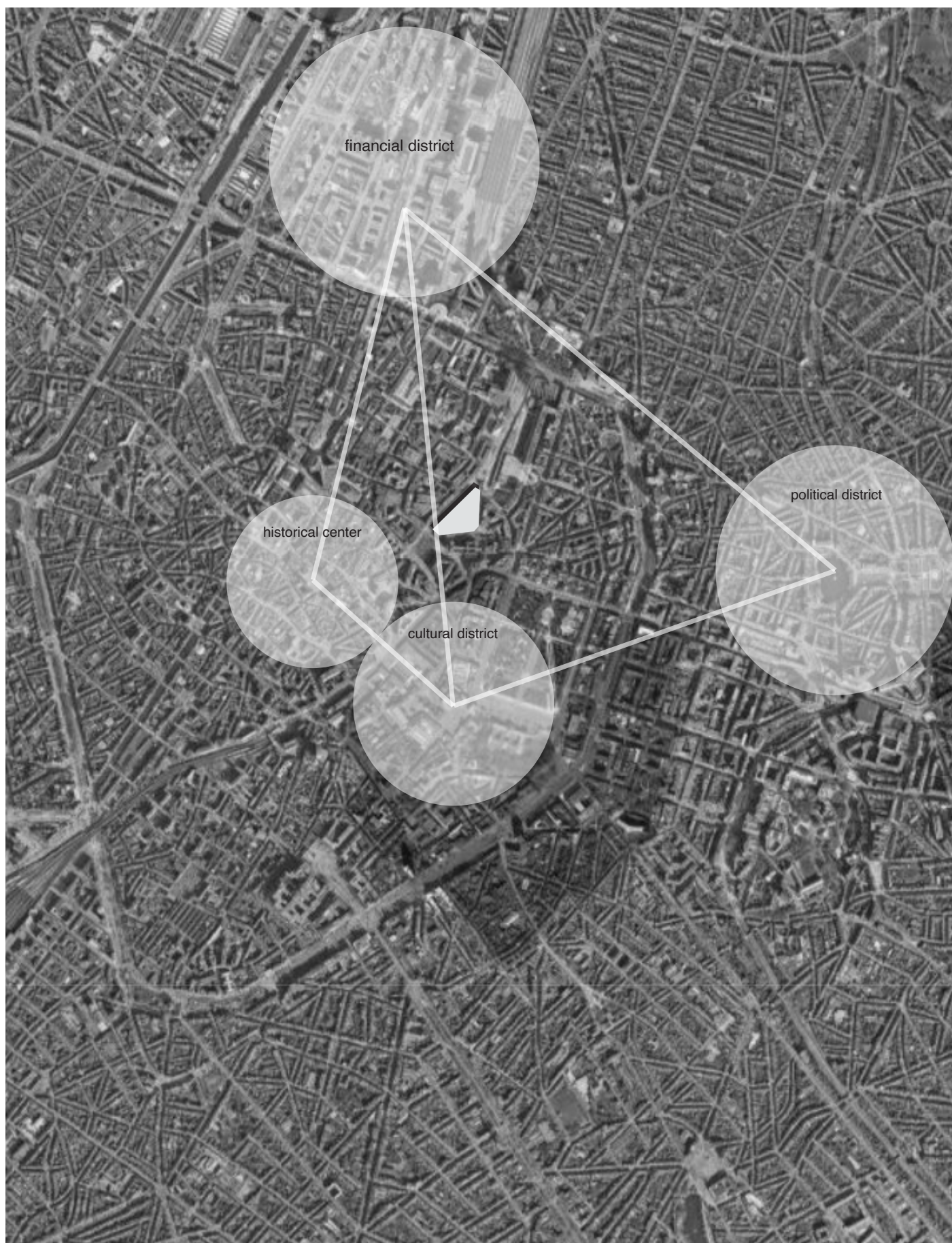
Filtering the city



- 1 National Bank of Belgium
- 2 Congress column
- 3 Administrative Center
- 4 Cathedral of St. Michael and St. Gudula
- 5 Galeries Royales Saint Hubert
- 6 Grand-Place
- 7 Brussels Town Hall
- 8 Brussels Central Station
- 9 Galerie Ravenstein
- 10 Mont des Arts
- 11 Bozar
- 12 Royal Museums of Fine Arts
- 13 Place Royale
- 14 Royal Palace of Brussels
- 15 Royal Park
- 16 City centre Pentagon
- 17 Botanical Garden
- 18 Koning Albert II Laan, Noordwijk

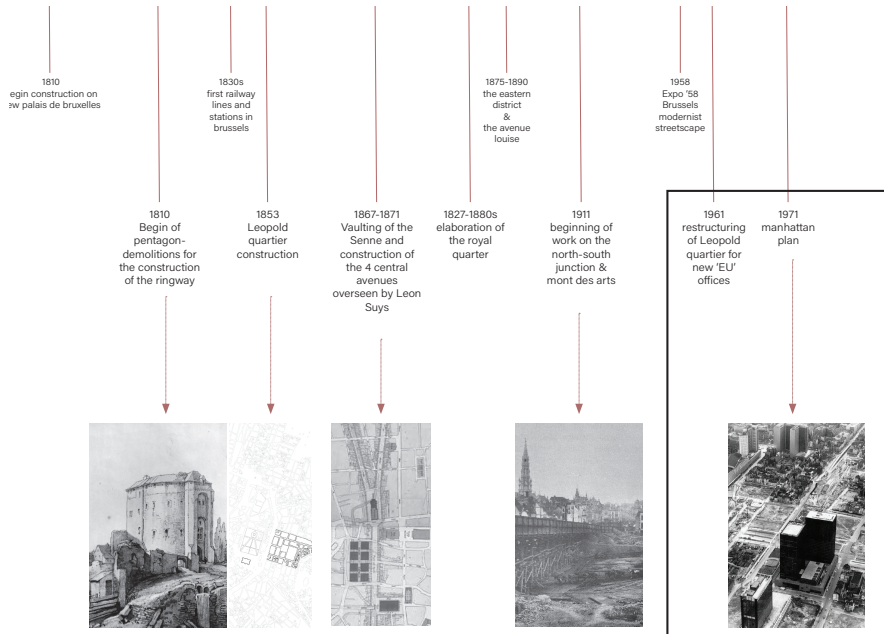
The districts of Brussels

Brussels can be seen as a fragmented city with different districts surrounding the bank. The financial, political, cultural and historical centre are all zoned within the city, bringing a clear division of program and use. The bank is situated in the middle, and could blend, or merge, with some of these districts.



Business Districts

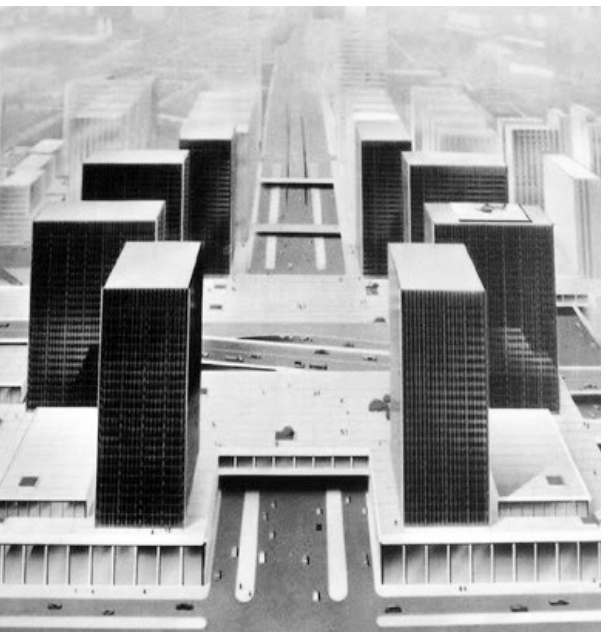
New development with the accompanying destruction



Research Booklet

Business Center Noordwijk

'Manhattan Plan'



'The so-called 'Manhattan Plan' was a project from the 1960s to build a World Trade Centre in the Brussels North Quarter. It was described as ambitious and futuristic, the 'modernisation' of Brussels for short. Driving forces included politician Paul Vanden Boeynants and businessman Charly De Pauw. More specifically, the plan involved three special development plans (BPAs) of three municipalities (Brussels-City, Schaerbeek and Saint-Josse-ten-Noode) that provided for the expropriation and complete demolition of a 530,000 square metre area of the city. However, the result - **THOUSANDS OF EXPROPRIATIONS, DOZENS OF HECTARES OF FALLOW LAND AND (BARELY) THREE OF THE EIGHT PLANNED WTC TOWERS** - was not quite as planned.'

**Expropriation and
complete demolition
of a 530,000 square
metre area of the city.**

**‘Modernist CIAM
doctrine’**

Charly de Pauw, supporter of the Manhattan plan. Still from the Brussels Biennale of Modern Architecture short movie ‘Manhattan, Brussels’



The demolition of brussels, Still from the Brussels Biennale of Modern Architecture short movie ‘Manhattan, Brussels’



Administrative Centre



Brussels' Administrative Centre: An Uncontrollable Urban Tumor?

FailedArchitecture, 2013.

Construction of the RAC-CAE started in 1958 on the former location of the popular quarter 'Bas-Fonds'. This neighborhood, perceived as insalubrious and dangerous at the time, was **DEMOLISHED** to make way for a building site of the underground North-South railway axis. When the area was vacated soon after, a substantial **TABULA-RASA DEVELOPMENT** opportunity emerged, virtually unknown to central parts of European cities. A group of architects, including Lambrichts, Van Kuyck, Riquier and Gilson, was asked to design an office complex which was to become a symbol of Belgium's unity by providing working space for all – both French and Dutch speaking – of the state's civil servants. The architects came up with a **HYPER-FUNCTIONALIST** proposal consisting of three towers on an elevated terrace, the construction of which was haunted by problems and took almost 25 years.

Even before the last tower was finally completed, the complex was **HEAVILY CRITICIZED** for being such an enormous, **MONO-FUNCTIONAL BLOCK**, completely dividing this part of the city center. Its public space, shaped by concrete slabs below towering glass facades, didn't manage to attract the crowds and the complex subsequently failed to integrate into the city's physical and mental urban fabric.

the complex was heavily criticized for being such an enormous, mono-functional block, completely dividing this part of the city center.



Still from 'Historical Images of the RAC-CAE' - FailedArchitecture, 2013.



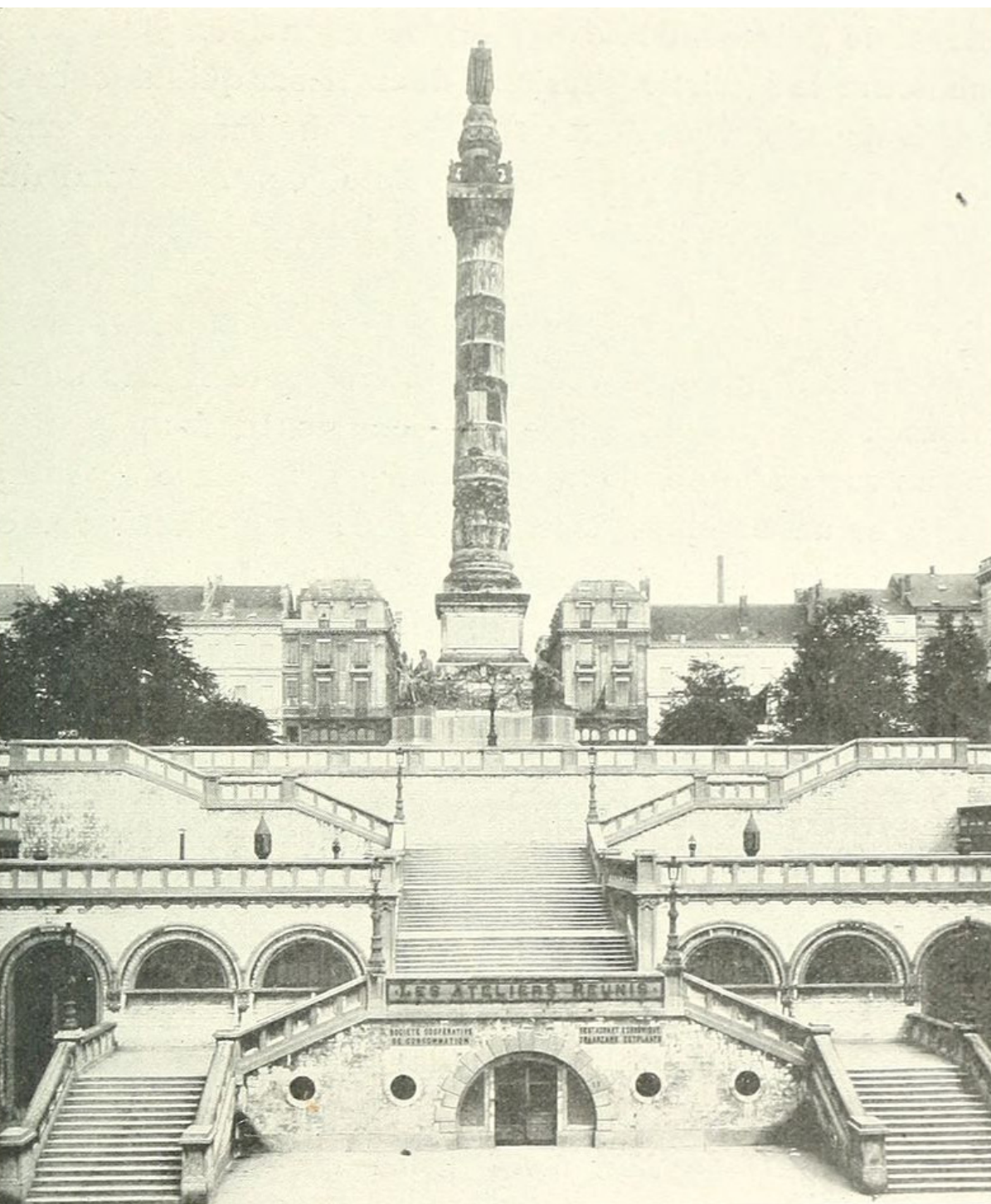
Future development

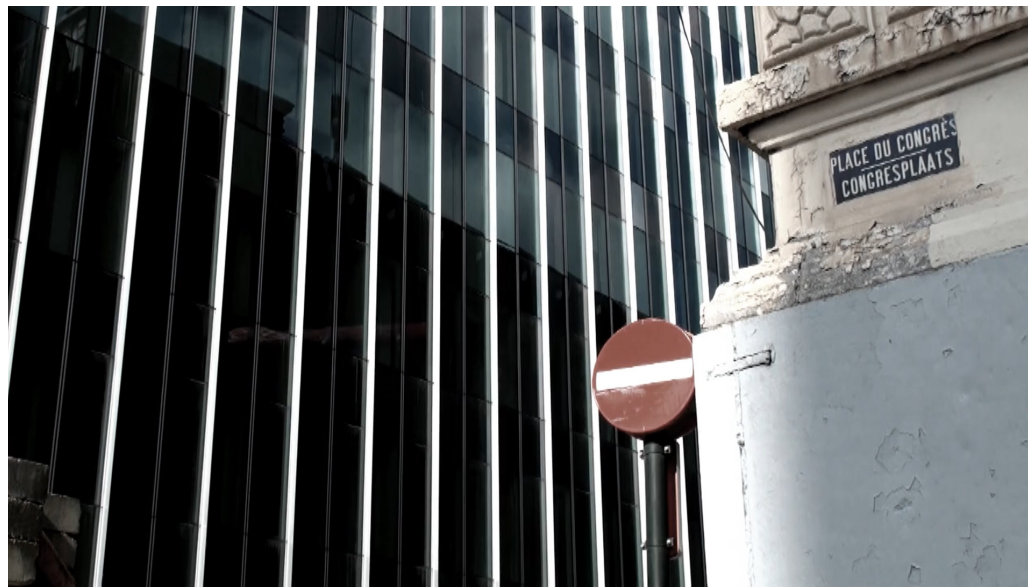
The new development creates space for a school, apartments and a few public spaces. Aiming to become a more lively area, but still within uninviting building blocks.

Congress Column

The Congress Column is a monumental column in Brussels, which commemorates the creation of the Belgian Constitution. This monument is situated on the upper hill that with a view on the city that gives the site of the bank a more monumental stately and historical character in between big office buildings.

Monumental Congress Column next to Administrative Center





Place du Congres - Congresplaats

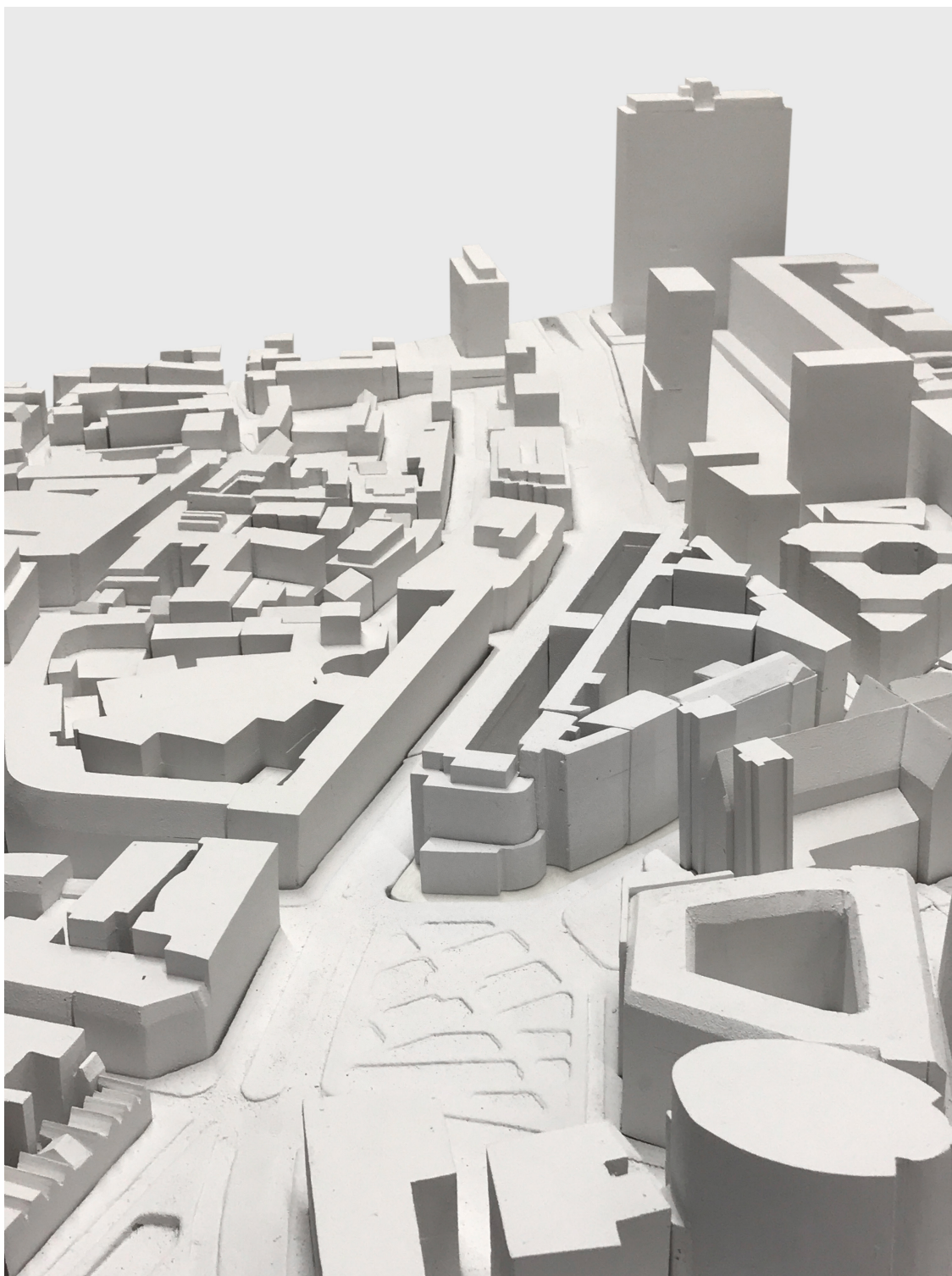
A monumental stately and historical character in between big office buildings.



A continuation of the Business Districts

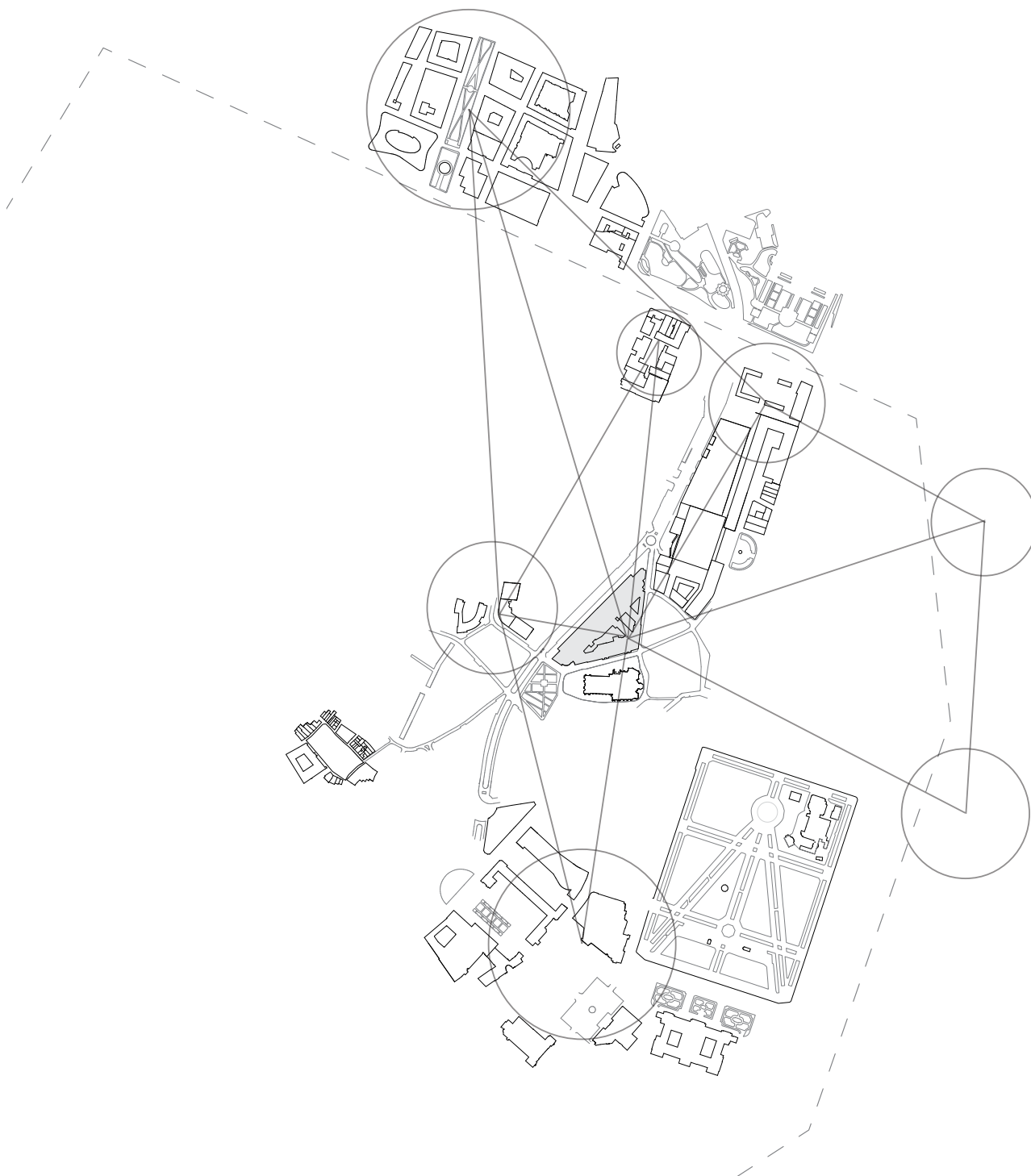
Approaching the bank as a continuation of the business districts, with its accompanying destruction of housing in the history and the monofunctionality it now has as a building block, what acts as a area that divides parts of the city.





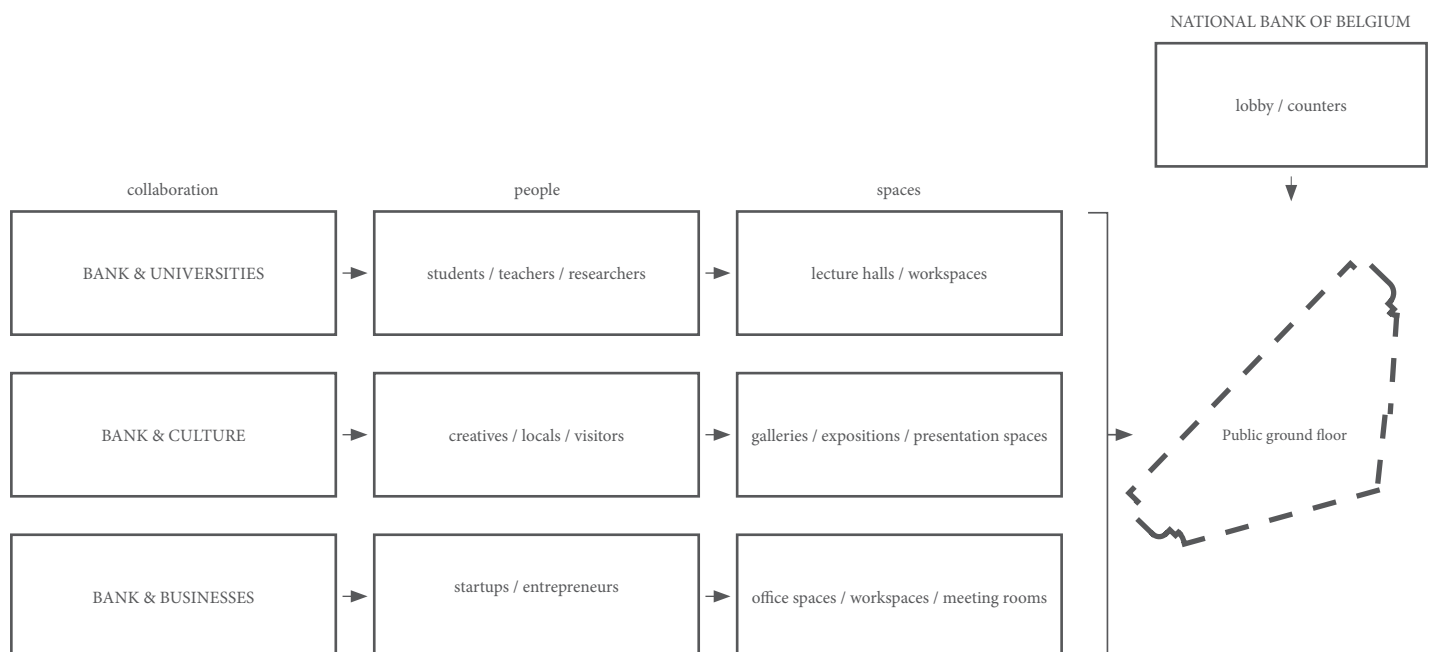
Bank in relation with other parties

Since the bank is situated in the middle of different districts, it could use this program to improve the use and quality of the bank and its surroundings. Creating collaborations, by providing space and sharing its knowledge.



Merging program into a public ground floor

Using the different districts, areas, institutes that are surrounding the bank building, to invite new people, new knowledge, new program and spaces. Resulting in a new type of bank with new relations in public use and act as an assemblage of different stakeholders and parties.



Integrating with business institutions

New activity within the bank

Businesses

- Startups / entrepreneurs
- Office spaces / Workspaces / meeting rooms

The bank will offer space for new startups and initiatives to have their first office. The bank promotes these initiatives and give them a showcase to the city for them to expend.



WeWork, Weihai

WeWork has the goal to offer coworking spaces to entrepreneurs, startup companies, freelancers, and even larger enterprises. The company grew rapidly since its establishment, making it one of the largest and most visible coworking chains in the world.

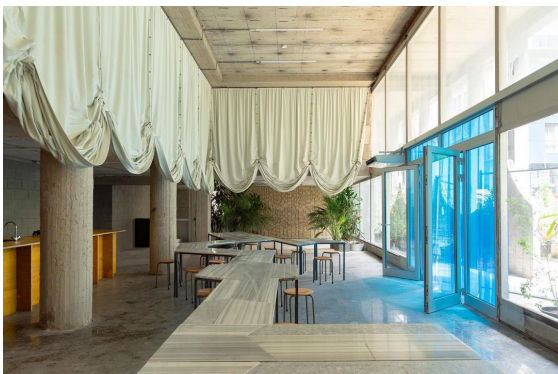
Pakhuis de Zwijger, Amsterdam

Platform for creation and social innovation. We started programming on the city, our country and the world of the future.

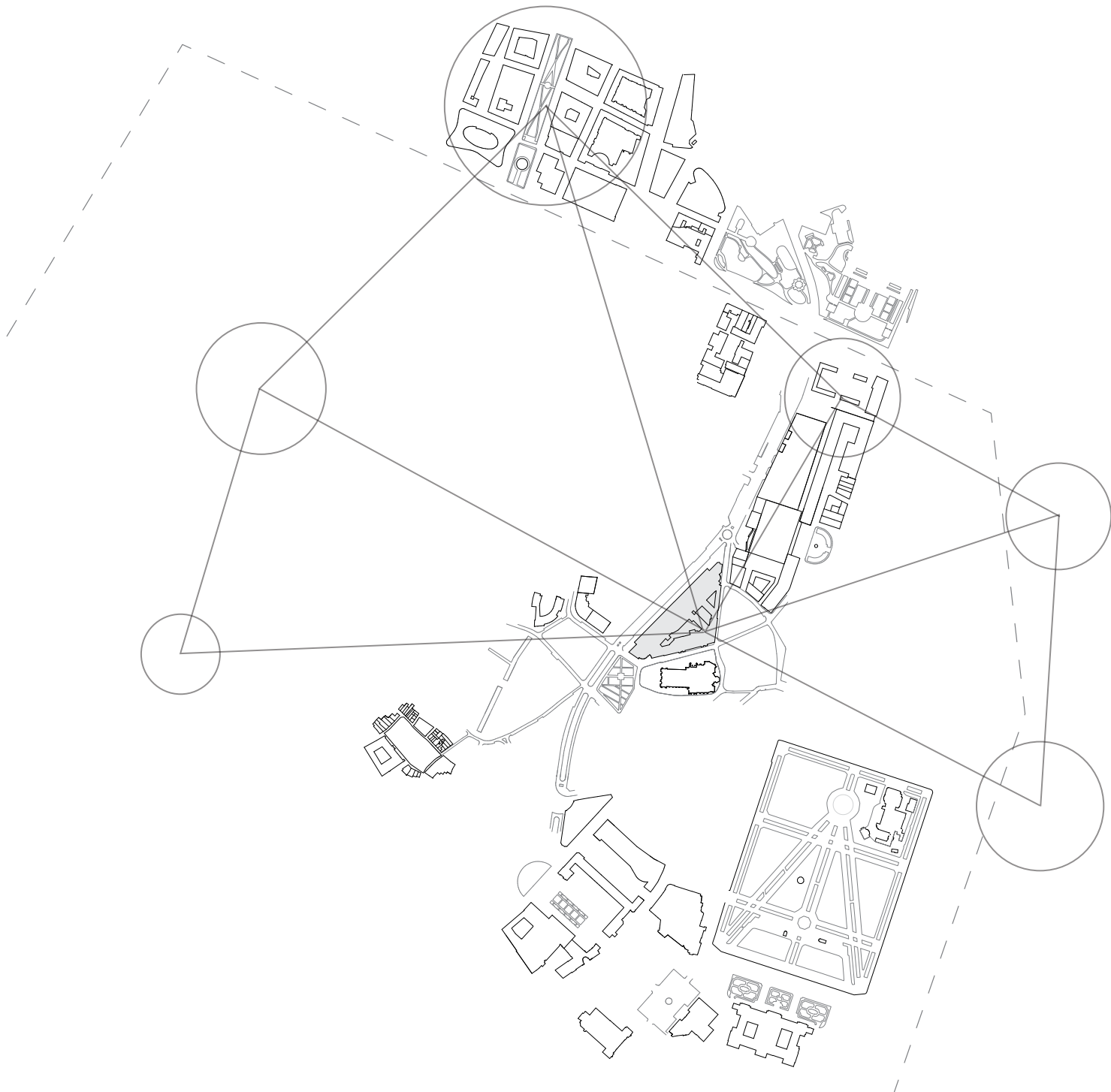


Unique national and global stage, with a focus on bringing people together and enhancing the impact of projects that contribute to the development of a more sustainable, fair and future-proof society.

Partnerships / Collaborations: Governments, knowledge institutions, businesses, entrepreneurs, citizens' initiatives and civil society organisations can associate themselves in various ways with our platform and the activities of Pakhuis de Zwijger and its annexes. The cooperation with organisations and individuals may vary from editorial, content and/or financial partner to sponsor or co-producer. Or just friend or donor. The content and intended impact are always paramount.



Stam Europa is a public space bringing a new type of program in the area while curating conditions for dialogue between the inhabitants and the large institutions of the neighbourhood.



Lokettenzaal, showcase for art

New activity within the bank

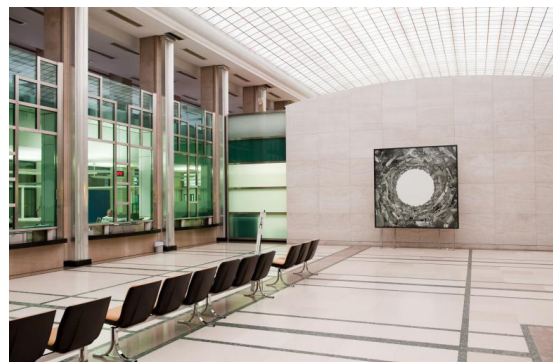
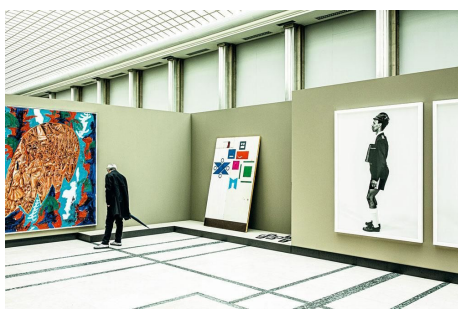
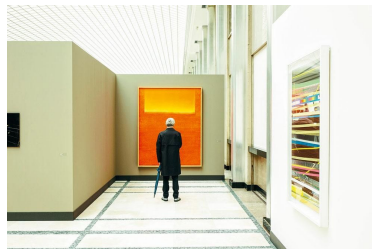
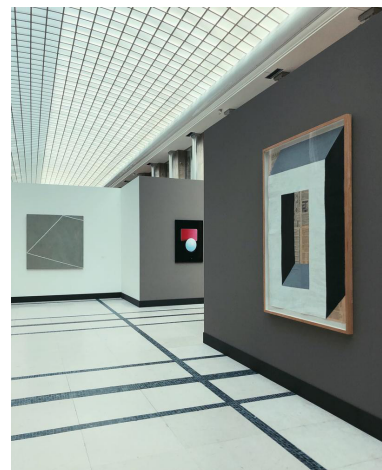
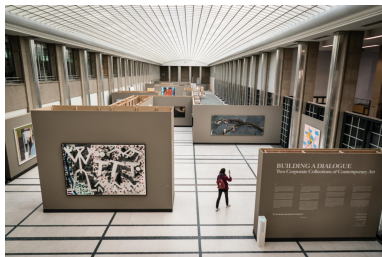
Culture

- Creatives / locals / visitors
- Galleries / Expositions / Presentation spaces

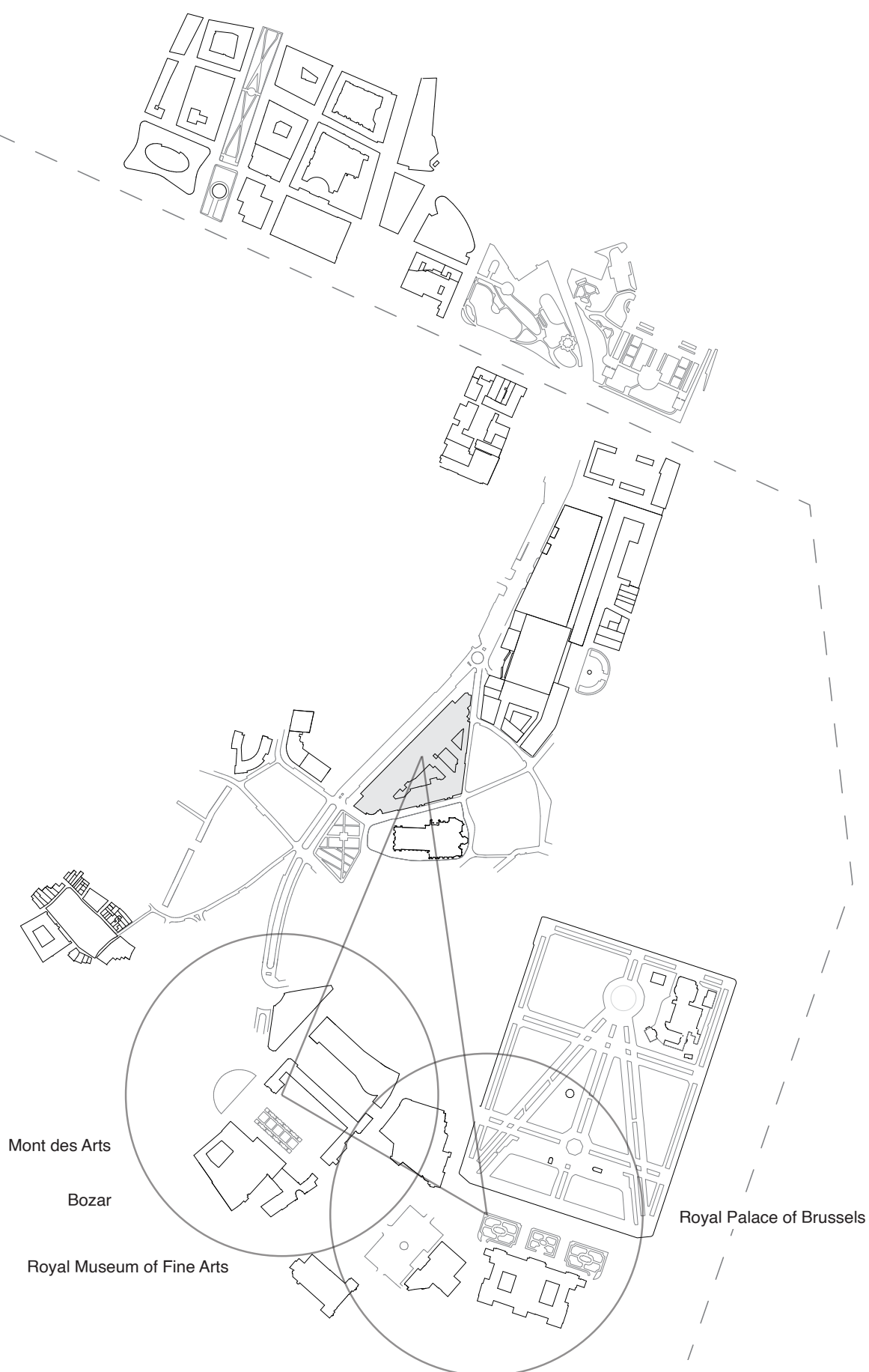
Exposition for arts and new innovations, external parties + using the banks art collection.
Using the art for an inspiring (working) environment, and bringing new and other life into the building.



(UN)COMMON VALUES: The contemporary art collection of the National Bank of Belgium celebrates its 50th anniversary with a joint exhibition with the Banco de España



Relating to art and cultural institutions



Study and lecture spaces in the bank

New activity within the bank

Universities

- Students / teachers / researchers
- Lecture halls / Workspaces

Creating a practical relationship with universities and the Bank by providing spaces and sharing their knowledge. It will promote working in the financial industry and lower the barrier between study and working. The place become more vivid by inviting students, researchers and teachers into the building.



Université Saint-Louis - Brussels

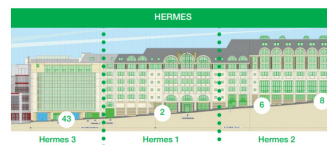


KU Leuven, Campus Brussels
T'Serclaes-, Hermes gebouw



T'Serclaes gebouw: hoofdingang, studentendiensten, faculteiten

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Verdieping -1 | ▶ B Studentenrestaurant |
| Geplivoers | ▶ C Cursusdienst |
| | ▶ D Bibliotheek |
| Verdieping 1 | ▶ A Studentenverenigingen & studentenbegeleiding |
| | ▶ B Studentenadministratie |
| Verdieping 3 | ▶ A Dienst Informatica (ICTO & helpdesk) |
| Verdieping 4 | ▶ A Faculteit Rechtsgeleerdheid |
| | ▶ B Faculteit Letteren |
| Verdieping 5 & 6 | ▶ Faculteit Economie en Bedrijfswetenschappen |



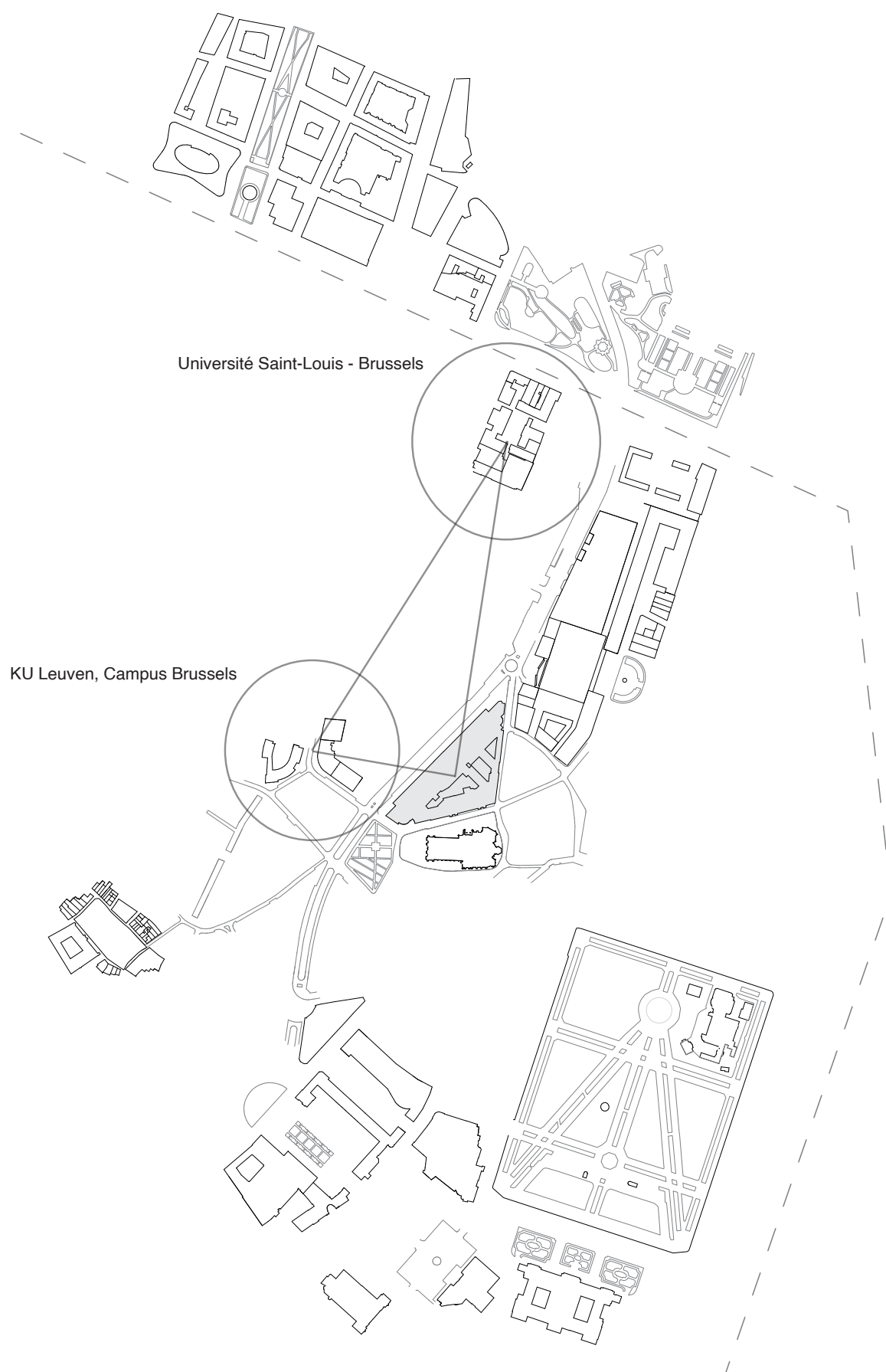
Hermes gebouw: leslokalen

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Verdieping 0 | ▶ Sandwichbar |
| Verdieping 1 t.o.m. 8 | ▶ Leslokalen |

LOKAALAANDUIDINGEN

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Verdieping | 5104 Verdieping 5, voorkant Hermes 1, Deur 4) |
| Verdieping | 1= voorkant Hermes 1&2 |
| | 2= achterkant Hermes 1&2 |
| | 3= voorkant Hermes 3 |
| | 4= achterkant Hermes 3 |

Colaborating with Universities



A community with exchanges

New activity within the bank

Businesses

- Startups / entrepreneurs
- Office spaces / Workspaces / meeting rooms

The bank will offer space for new startups and initiatives to have their first office. The bank promotes these initiatives and give them a showcase to the city for them to expend.

Shared bicycles / transportation / package delivery hub



Communal garden, gardening, events, waterbuffer,



The cooperative makers district

ZOHO, Rotterdam - Makers district
Innovative, creative and cultural businesses who need space, identity, inspiring workplaces and interaction with other entrepreneurs.

Key words:

Knowledge, skills and a network.
Creative retail, coffee bar, jazz venue and restaurants.

OVER ONS

KATSHOEK biedt ruimte aan ondernemers die elkaar versterken en enthousiasmeren.



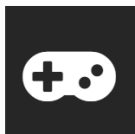
OP DE KOFFIE BIJ DE BUREN

Een belangrijk element is dat iedere ondernemer iets komt brengen. Kennis, kunde en een netwerk. Iedereen kan bij elkaar aankloppen. Dat kan fysiek én **digitaal**.



AMBITIEUZE ONDERNEMERS

De ondernemers in KATSHOEK staan model voor wat de *Katshoeker* is – altijd bereid om te leren en om kennis direct weer te delen. Pionieren en innoveren vormen de basis voor nieuwe ideeën en groeiende bedrijven.



GLOBAL BUSINESS, LOCAL FUN

Een *Katshoeker* adopteert zijn omgeving en investeert in de community. Met z'n allen hebben we veel plezier: van bootcamp tot kerstdiner. Wat ons bindt is hard werken, internationale ambitie en liefde voor Rotterdam.



BOTTOM-UP

KATSHOEK werkt hard aan het tot stand brengen van een volwaardig bedrijfsverzamelgebouw. Het parkeerdek biedt ruimte aan evenementen en bindt ons met de omgeving. We sluiten niets uit en we staan open voor ideeën uit onze community, en daar buiten.

Meer informatie? **Neem gerust contact op.**

WAT WE DOEN



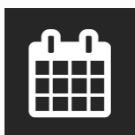
DIVERSE WERKRUIMTES

Wij bieden werkruimte aan bedrijven en freelancers, van starters tot ervaren ondernemers. Doorgroeien is altijd mogelijk! Er is voldoende ruimte beschikbaar om dit te kunnen faciliteren. **Bel of mail** voor een rondleiding en meer informatie over prijzen.



COMMUNITY

Een toegankelijke werkruimte en een open werksfeer zijn essentieel. Samen ondernemen en samenwerken vinden we belangrijk. Samen lunchen en lekkere koffie drinken ook. Het team van KATSHOEK is regelmatig in gesprek met huurders over wat zij willen toevoegen aan de community.



EVENEMENTEN EN VERGADERINGEN

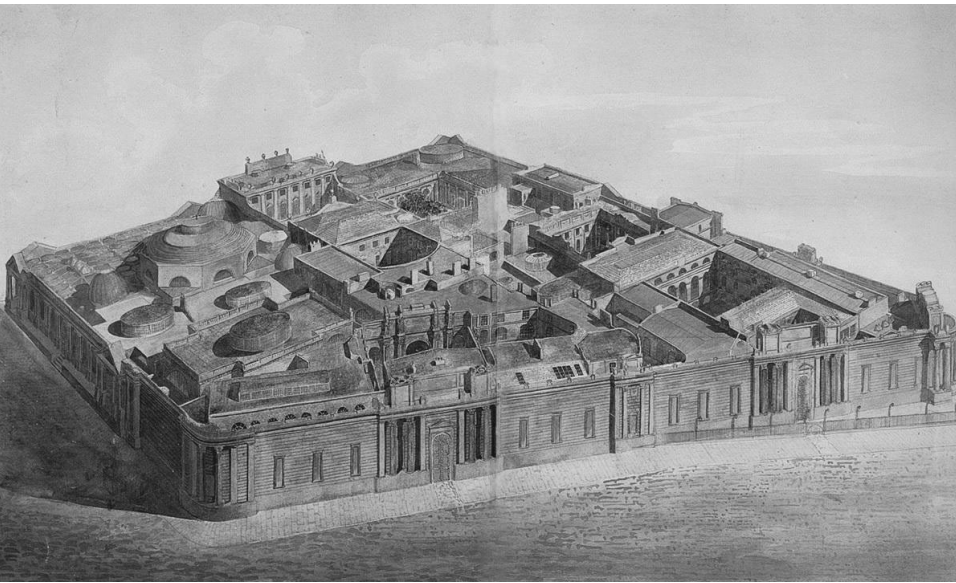
KATSHOEK biedt verschillende mogelijkheden om **evenementen** te organiseren en te faciliteren. Daarnaast beschikken we over meerdere vergaderruimtes, die ook toegankelijk zijn voor externe partijen. **Informeert** gerust naar mogelijkheden en prijzen!



NIEUWS

Meer weten over wat er van dag tot dag gebeurt in het gebouw? Volg ons op **Facebook**! Per 1 september 2014 verschijnt op deze site een blog waar we alle kennis van onze community gaan delen.

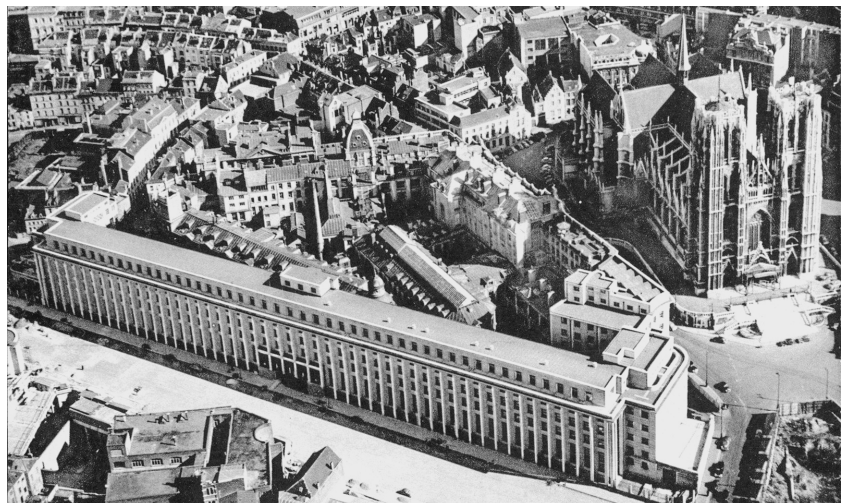
The bank as an urban block



The building progressively expanded to occupy a whole block, an isolated island composed of a series of profoundly different rooms arranged around several courts.

Bank of England, London

The National Bank of Belgium is a complex collection of buildings that form a building block. The facades facing outside are static, formal and closing the triangle shape, whilst the inside is diverse and more domestic. How would this urban block be functioning if the outside is opened up? Would the bank lose its strong image? Would the surroundings come to life?



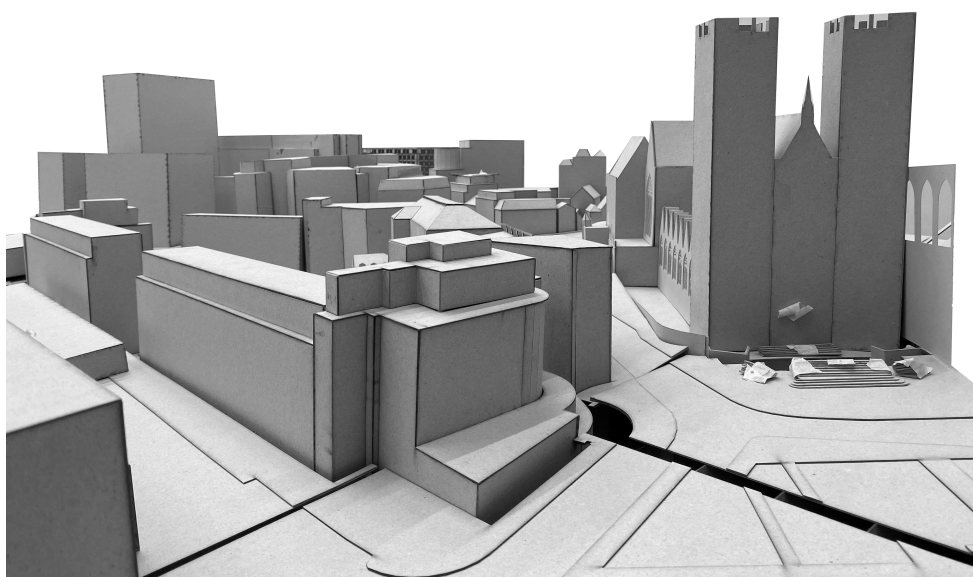
Nationale Bank van België, Brussels

**Triangular
urban block of 91,000m²**



200m long, columnar facade

8m sectional shift



Arrival from the city

Analysing the different perspectives fromout the city.

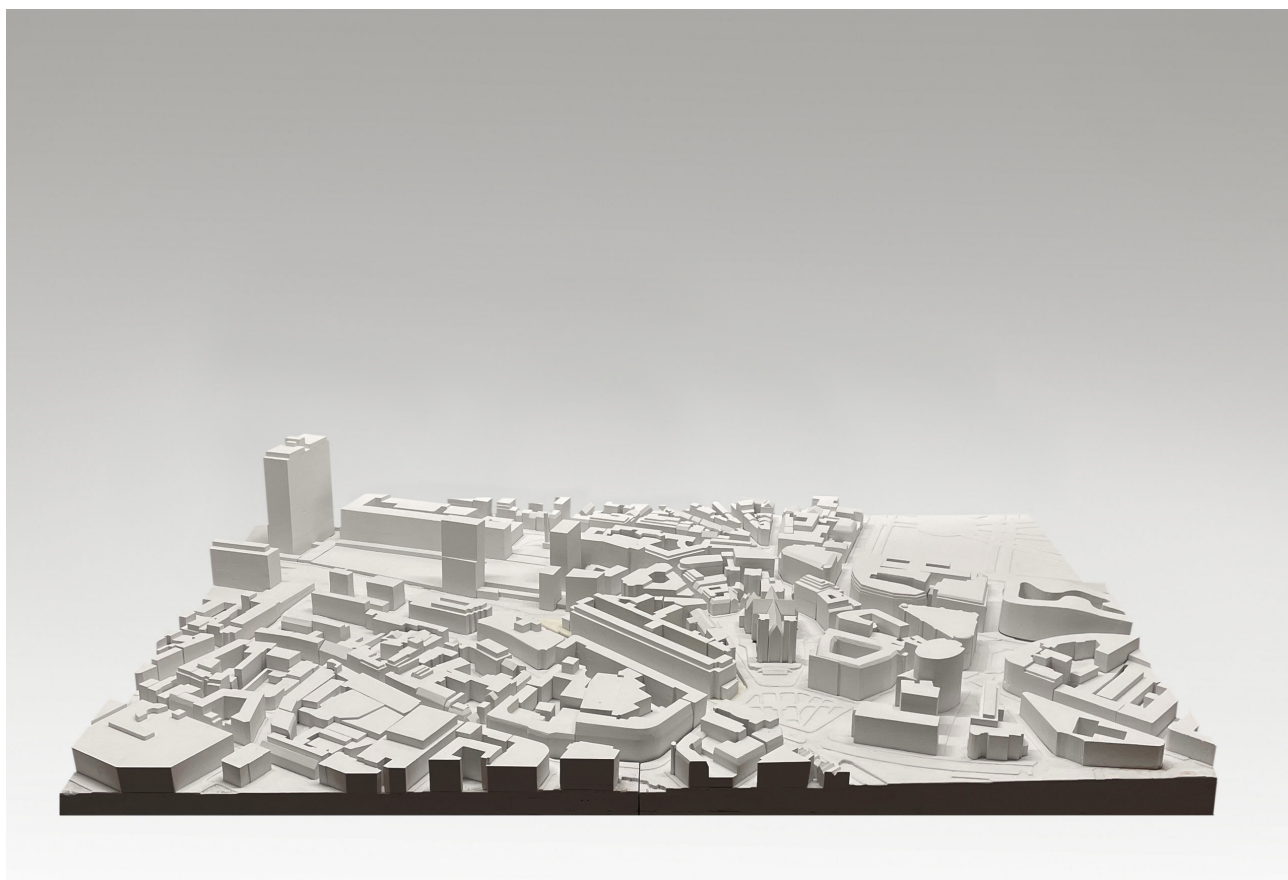


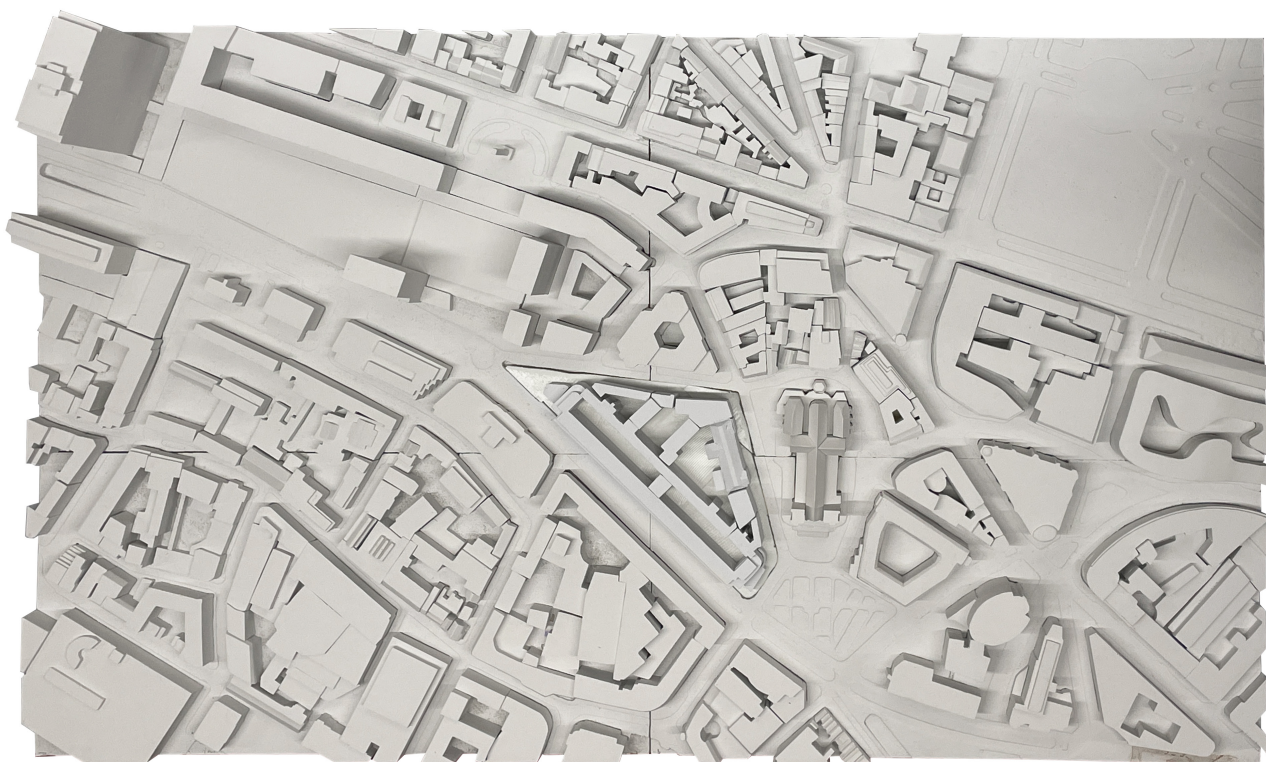
Cathedral of St. Michael and St. Gudula and the parc

The park is currently focussed only on the Cathedral, leaving the bank not part of the public route



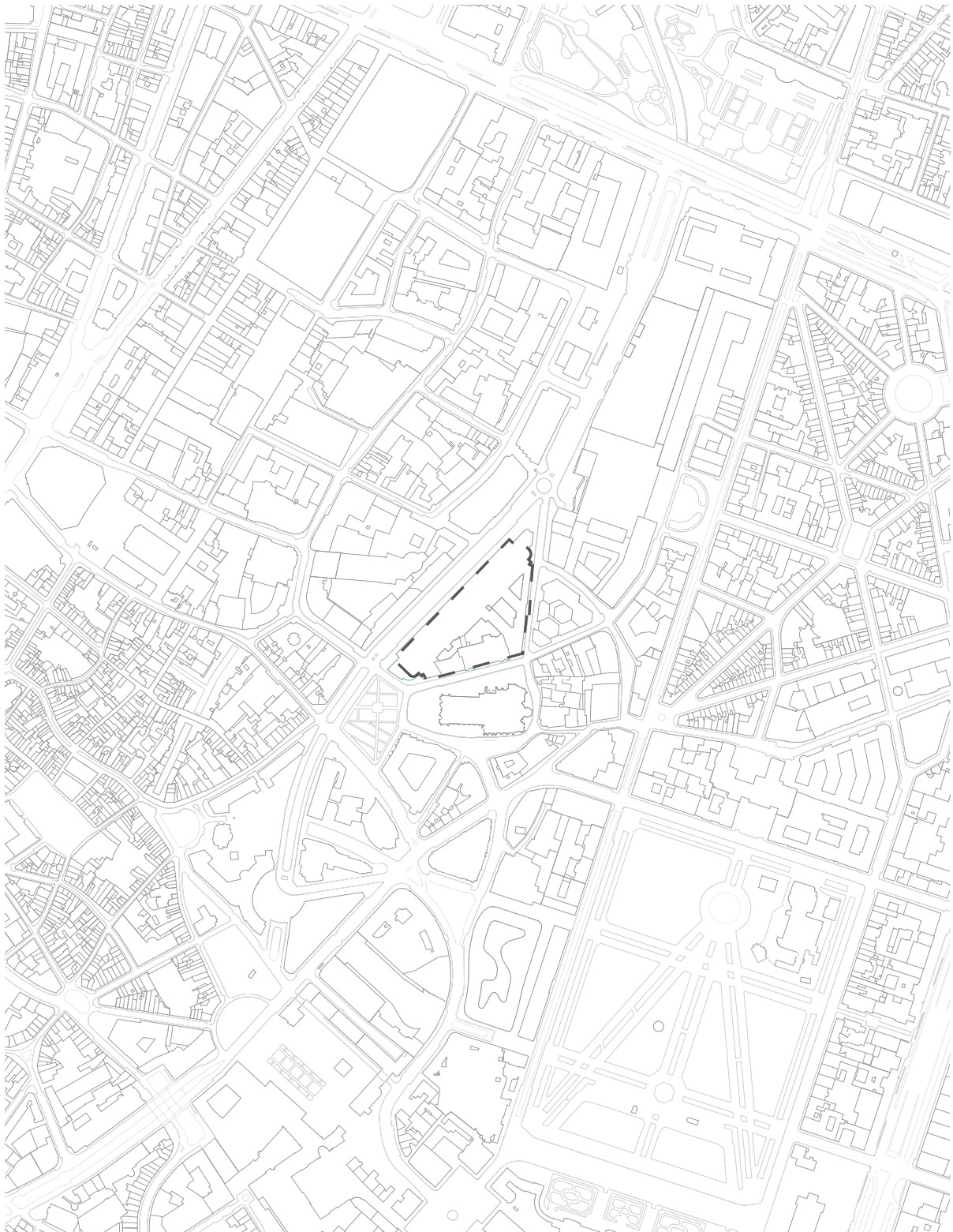
A figure in brussels





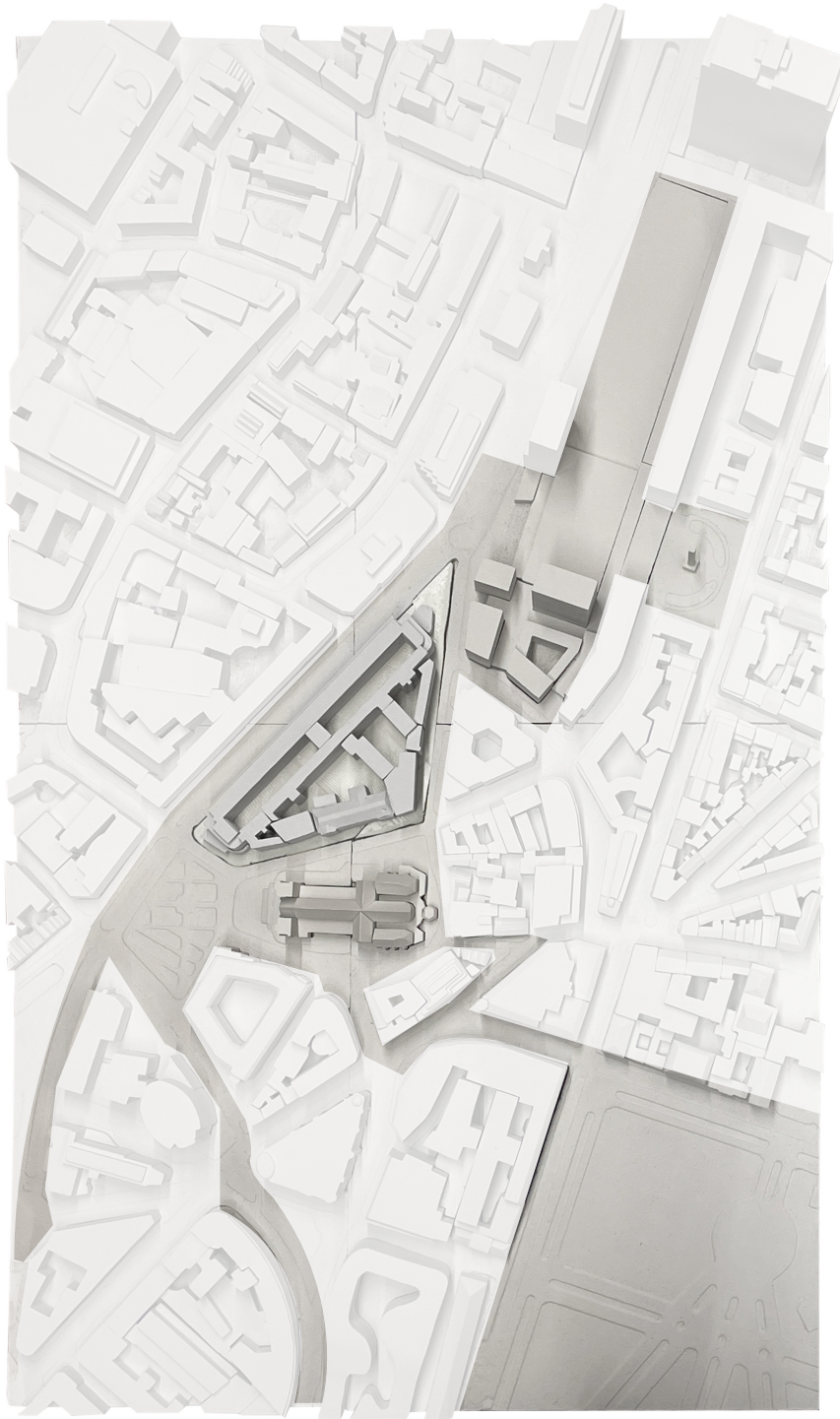
Multipurpose, permeable bank building

A more permeable building is needed to make these collaborations possible and attract the new life in the building. Shifting the image of the bank from an imposing, static and unreachable building to an inviting and friendly institute.



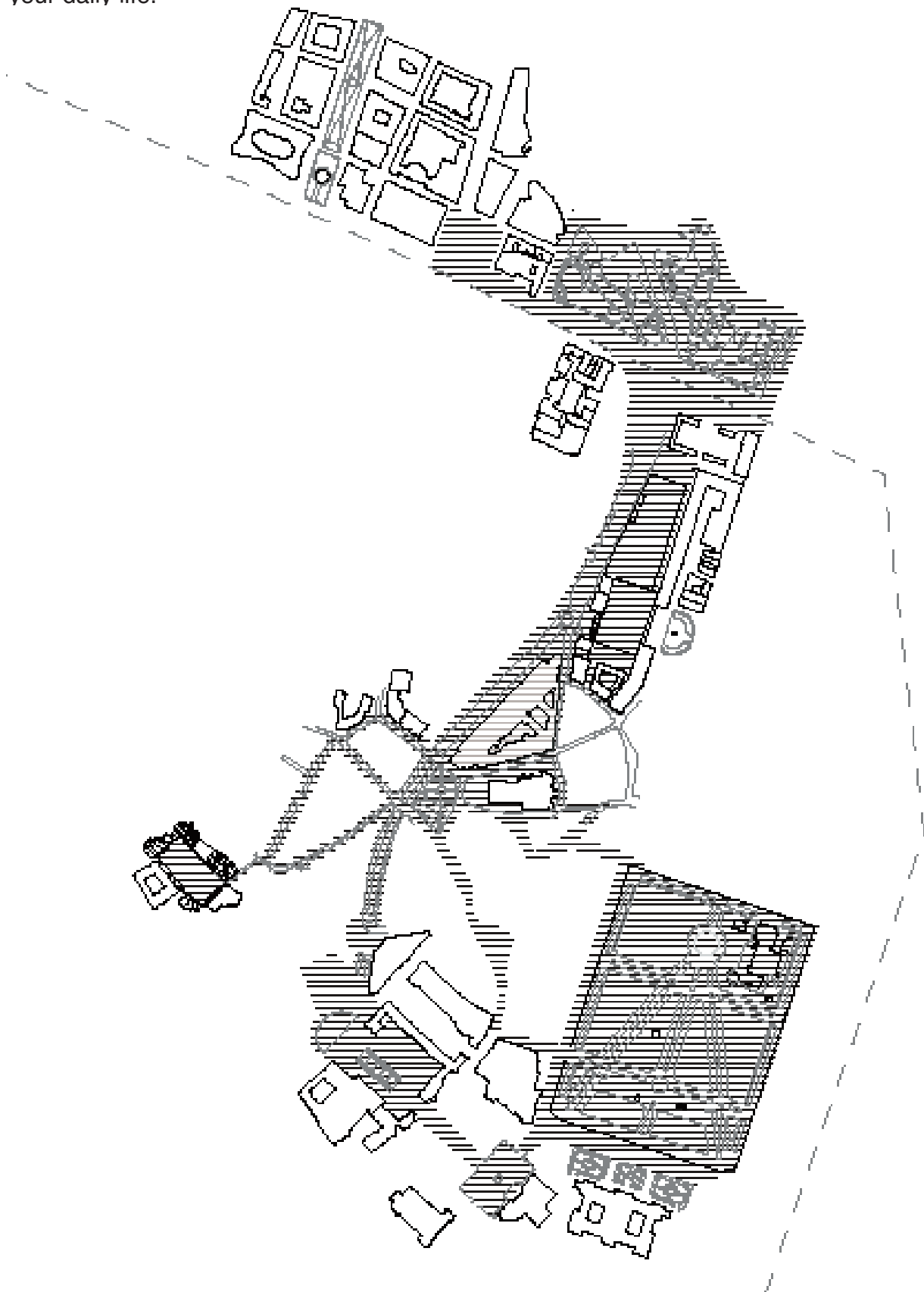
Walk around and through the building

The new program and change of permeability will contribute to public routes on a smaller urban scale. where not only a walk around the bank will be made, but also through the building.



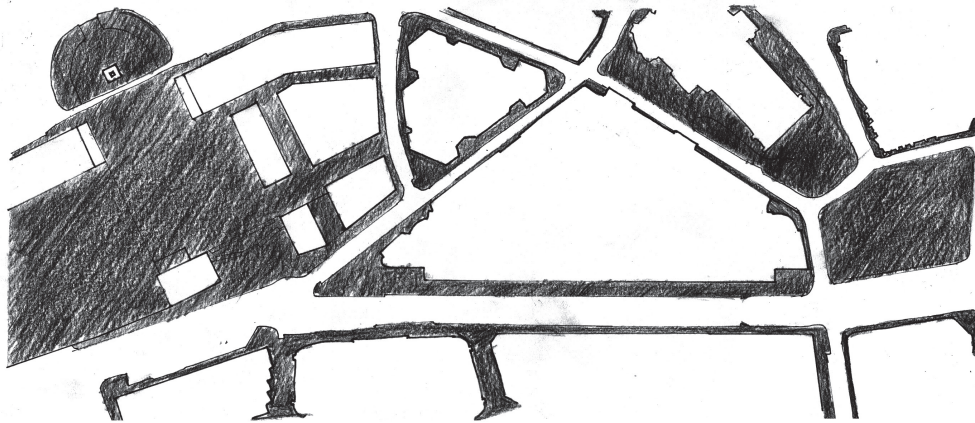
Public routes and spontaneous visits

The new program and change of permeability will contribute to public routes on a bigger urban scale, leading a visit to the bank to be an -intermediate- destination that can be a spontaneous part of your daily life.



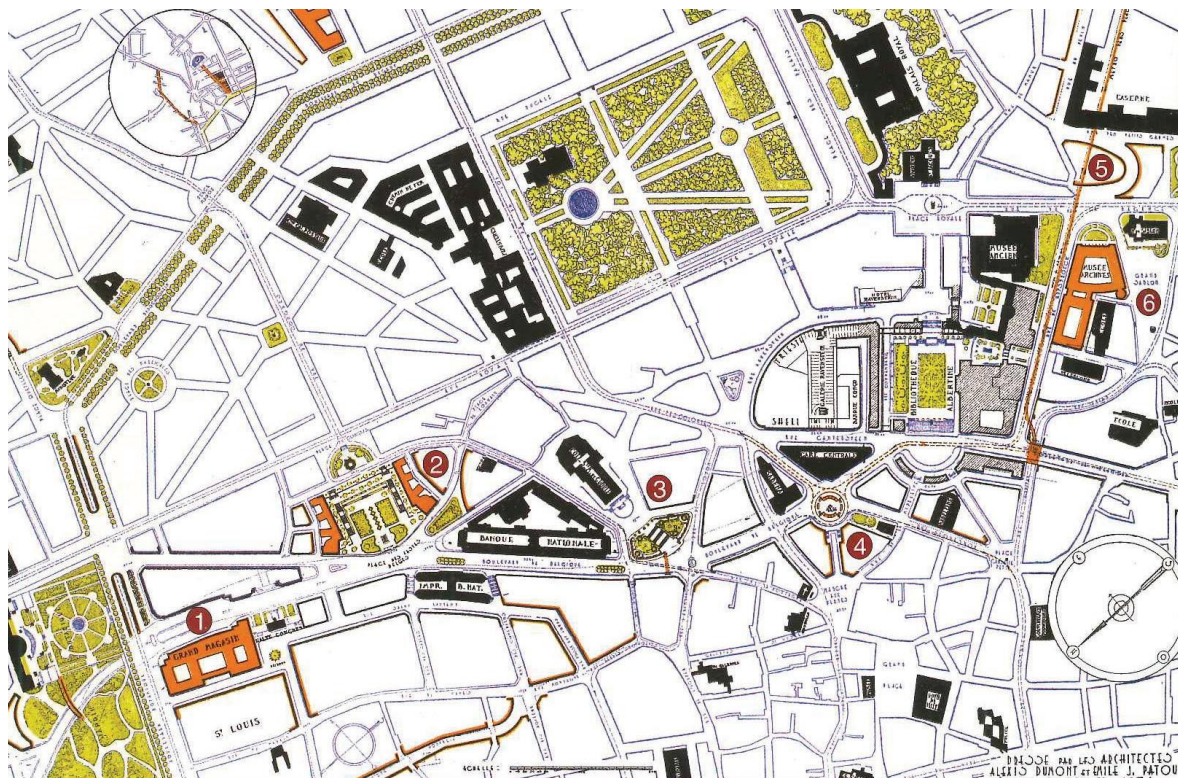
Pavement map

Pavement map showing the surrounding street and buildings by demarking the pavement and walking areas. The importance of the street at the front of the NBB is shown. This connects people from the north and the city center. The aim is to remain the central entrance to keep the historic value of the facade and keep the street alive.



The sites history

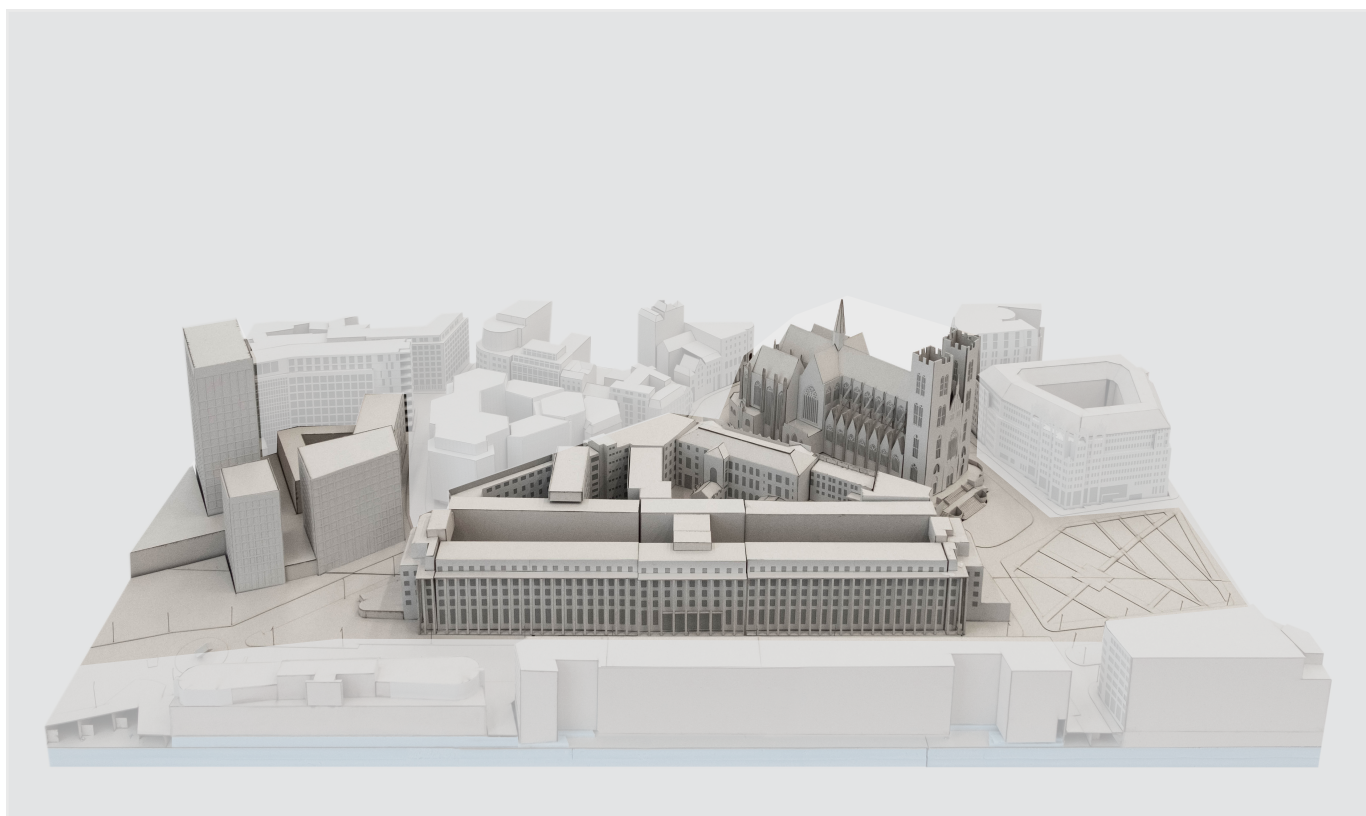
This historical map is showing the bank in relation to other public buildings together with the greenery. Just like the pavement map, this map shows the close relation with the park to both sides of the bank. The park in front of the cathedral is mainly focussed at the Cathedral and the north park is underused and not maintained in a proper way.



Proposal by Alexis Dumont and Emile Patoux for the 'Boulevard de Belgique' on top of the North-South connection, 1954

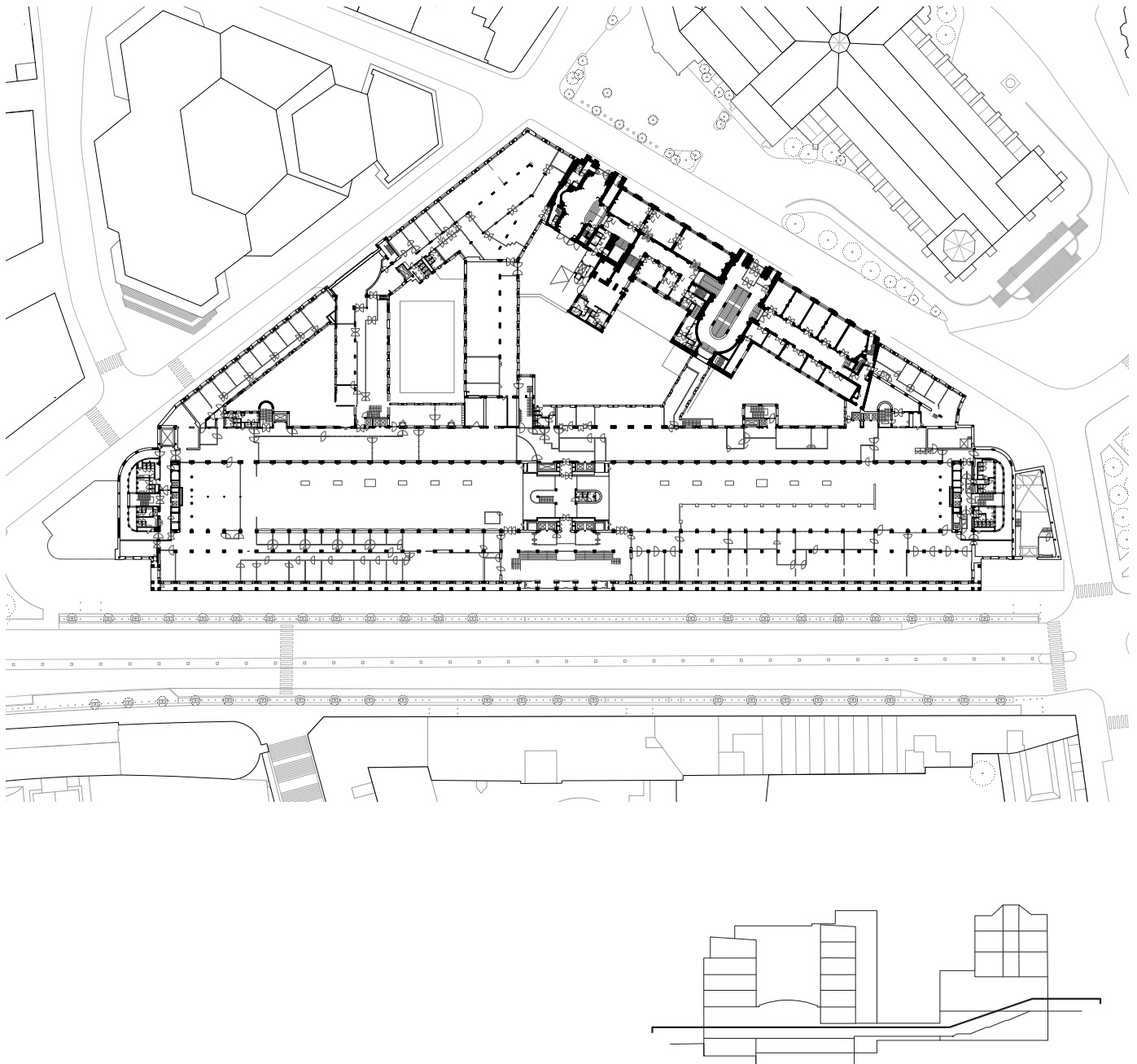
Life surrounding the bank

The cathedral and public square, together with the new development at the administrative centre brings new life and reduces the monofunctionality of the area.



The distributed ground floor plan

Focussed ground floor plan, Showing different parts of the bank, a conglomerate, different sizes, structures and accessibility



Addressing program in plan

To accommodate space for different uses, opened floorplans for flexible use and space for new program.



BUDA Art Factory, 51n4e

The National Bank of Belgium

Placed in a historical context, banks are changing over time. The main goal of the national bank is to create financial stability. With the aim of making a more public building, integrated within society that brings new life into the bank, the program and image of the bank will also change.

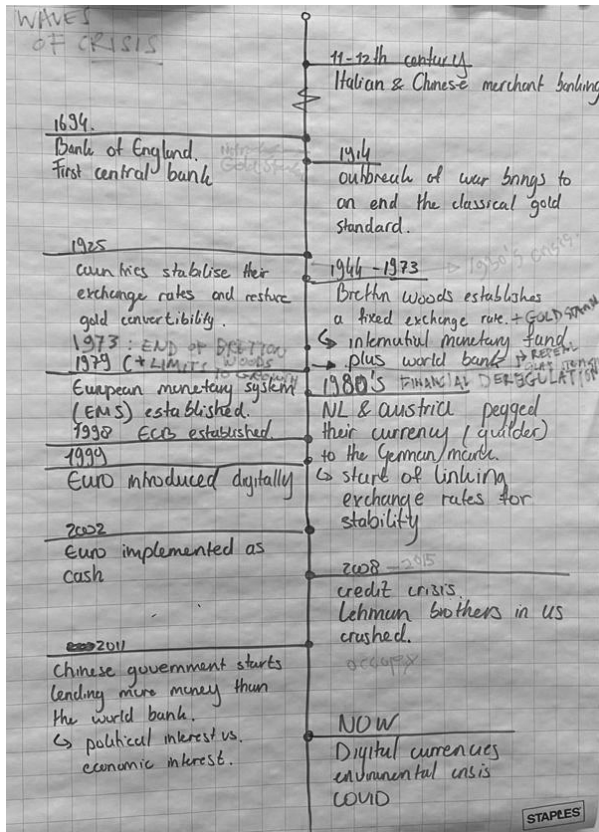
One of the new aspects that will be part of the future bank, is the flexible working space. These spaces are public, and will attract locals, students, entrepreneurs and employees of the bank. This gives the bank a more lively place, with different users

In the front plinth, space is created specifically for entrepreneurs with new initiatives and start-ups. This front plinth of the bank will change into a showcase for new businesses. In this way, the bank displays new initiatives who they promote, and give opportunities to starting businesses. The notion of the bank will change, since it

changes from an unreachable, static institute, to a more friendly welcoming bank that provides new spaces for different users. Next to these new offices for external parties, new lecture halls are created in the public ground floor. These spaces can be occupied by the universities, or other institutions.

The mixed program, and multifunctionality of the building will make sure the bank is a vivid and exciting place, where one is happy to go to, rather than anxious or not feeling welcomed.

Banking history



The banks Timeline

Merchant buildings

First central Bank

Gold standard

Crises

European Monetary System

European Monetary System

EURO

Credit crisis

Digital currencies

The new Central Bank

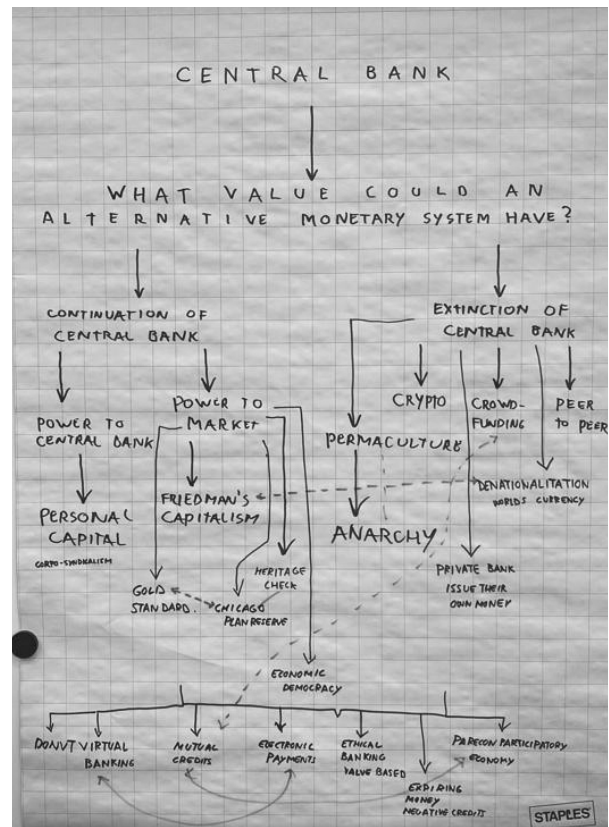
Power to Central Bank

Power to market

Extinction of Central Bank

Private Banks

denationalization



Associations with the Bank



The domestic bank, going back to its origin.

Feeling at home, creating a trustworthy place, trusting like family.

No overwhelming frightening bank,
Creating confidence in the bank,
Trusting the system, science and government.

New type of banking system, physically/visually and internal/organizational.

The bank type as an urban block, providing functions for the whole neighbourhood and city.

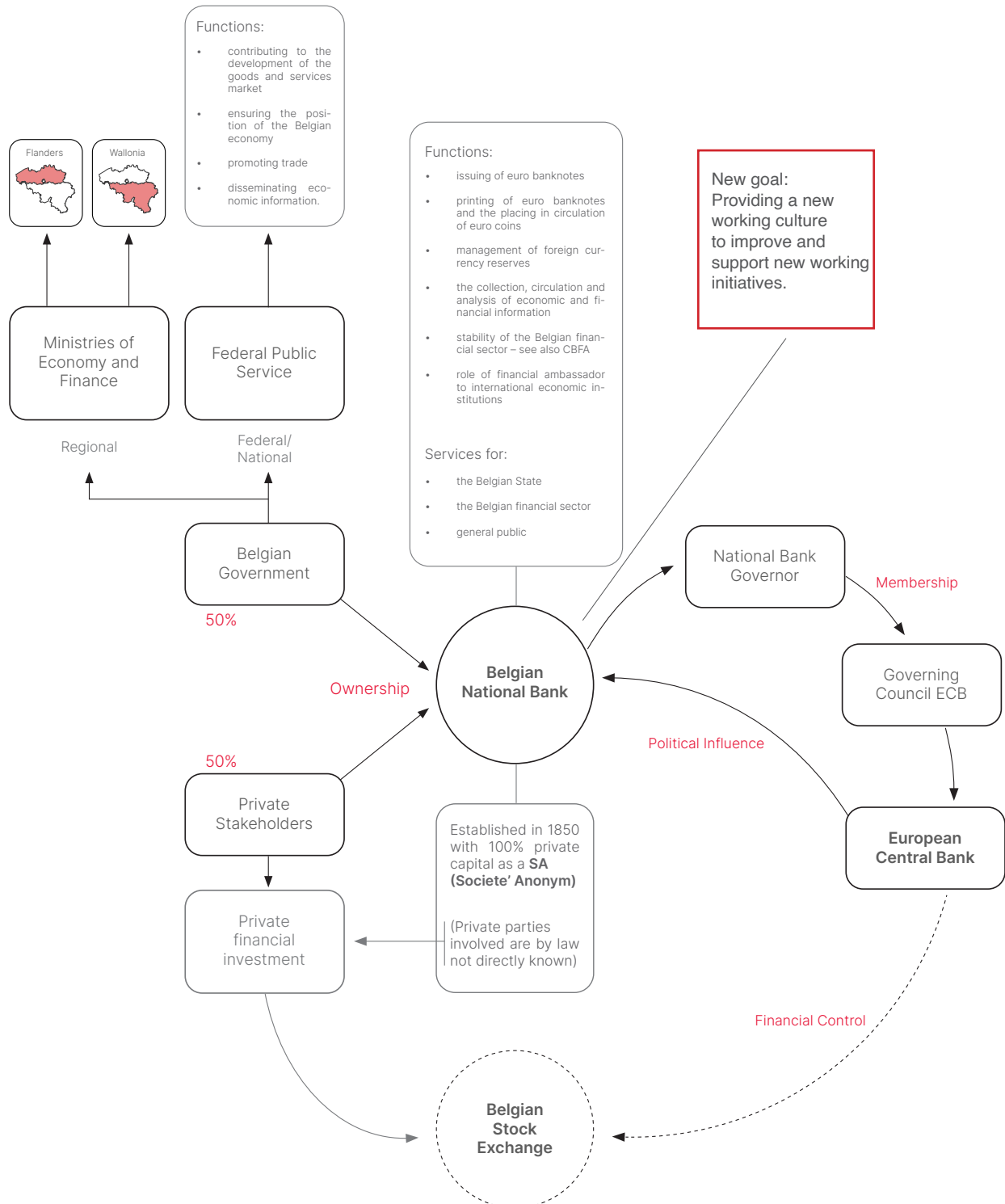
What is the action within the bank?

What does the bank do?

What activities are necessary, what can be left out, or left outside?

The (inter)national Banking system

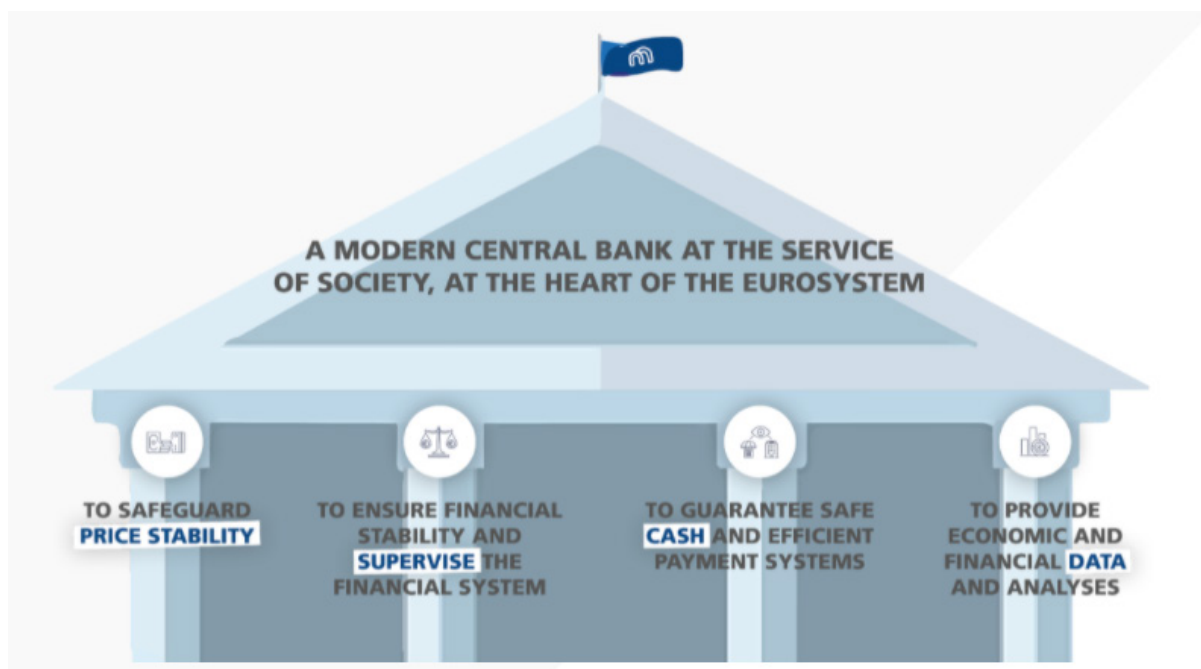
The main goal of the bank is to create a financial stability. Could the bank also reach this by improving the workspaces in cities, and creating new relations between industries by shifting the system and architecture of business offices?



Positioning the National Bank in a national and international system of political influence.

Current system of the NBB

*“As Belgium's central bank, we are committed to a
stable and sustainable economic financial environment.”*



To ensure financial stability and supervise the financial system
Financial stability and sound financial institutions are essential to ensuring well-being. That is why the Bank's second mission is to ensure financial stability and supervise the financial system.

At a microprudential level, the supervisory system rests on two pillars:

The supervision of banking, insurance and other financial institutions is entrusted to the National Bank of Belgium;

To ensure financial stability and supervise the financial system
Financial stability and sound financial institutions are essential to ensuring well-being. That is why the Bank's second mission is to ensure financial stability and supervise the financial system.

At a microprudential level, the supervisory system rests on two pillars:

The supervision of financial markets and consumer protection are the remit of the Financial Services and Markets Authority (FSMA).

New company type: Philips, a socially minded company

Back in 1900 Philips had been one of the first companies in the Netherlands to set up a **SICKNESS FUND**, which paid employees 70 per cent of their salary when they were off sick. Philips also created a child health clinic, a Philips pharmacy and a Philips midwifery service.

Next to healthcare, Philips also created a **PENSION FUND** for retirements, widow's and orphans.

As the company expanded, so it became increasingly difficult for employees to find suitable accommodation. Philips therefore decided to **BUILD ITS OWN HOUSING**. The area of the city now known as '**PHILIPSDORP**' was built between 1910 and 1923. The 800 or more houses were surrounded by extensive green spaces and the area had its **OWN SHOPS** as well as **SPORTS AND LEISURE FACILITIES**. By 1929 Philips had built nearly 4000 houses in Eindhoven.

A branch (which later became ETOS) was created in these new residential areas so that employees were able to purchase groceries and **HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE**.



Philips village in 1918

In 1920 the **PHILIPS ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION** and Development was set up and schools were built to provide nursery, primary and secondary education. In 1928 the Philips Boys' Industrial Training Program was also set up.

The company also provided recreational facilities for its employees. In 1913, the **PHILIPS SPORTS ASSOCIATION** (Philips' Sportvereniging, PSV) was set up. The purpose of this association was to 'promote participation in a range of different sports in the broadest sense of the word'.

'Every employee must receive attention – in the broadest sense of the word – and not primarily as a production factor but above all as a human being. The human factor must be a top priority in our personnel management'. - Frits Philips

How can the NBB learn from the approach of Philips?

In addition to sports activities, Philips also financed dozens of other activities, ranging from chess clubs to flower arranging courses. In 1929 the **'PHILIPS ONTSPANNINGSGEBOUW'** events venue was finished and ready for use. It included a reading room, library, billiard room, cinema, theater, and club rooms.

Amongst other things, the department was responsible for the implementation of social legislation and for providing facilities in the field of education, development and leisure. Whilst continuing to build upon its existing activities – in 1960, for example, the number of houses in Eindhoven owned by the company rose to 8,600,

almost a quarter of all housing in the city – the company also embarked upon new ventures.

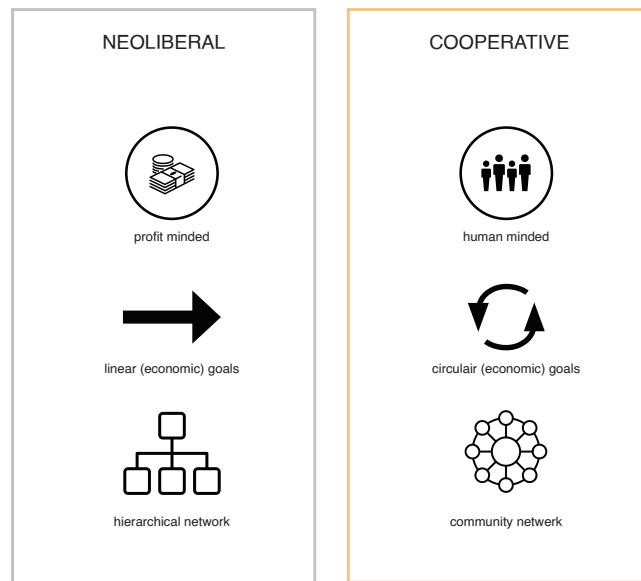
Major changes took place from the 1980's when most departments became independent or public, to match with the facilities that were already provided by the Dutch state.

Philips had cared dearly for his employees, providing them with affordable housing, study bursaries as well as sports and cultural facilities.

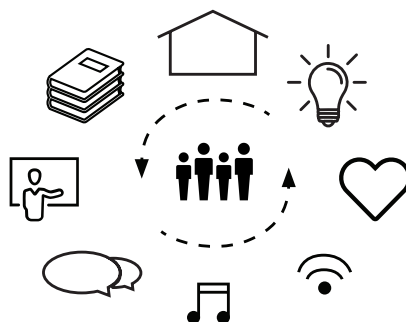


The cooperative mindset

A cooperation that is creating affordable facilities where members have equal ownership and control, and where the profits are invested back to the community.




COOPERATION





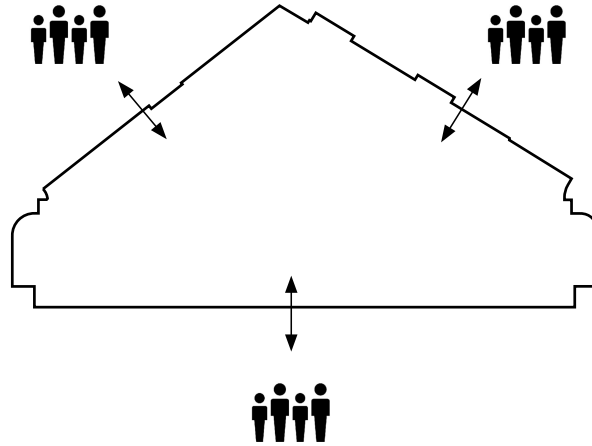
Cooperation Principles


Employees of the
National Bank
that use the
public facilities




Neighbouring
residents that use
the public facilities

New bank type: Multi-functional office building

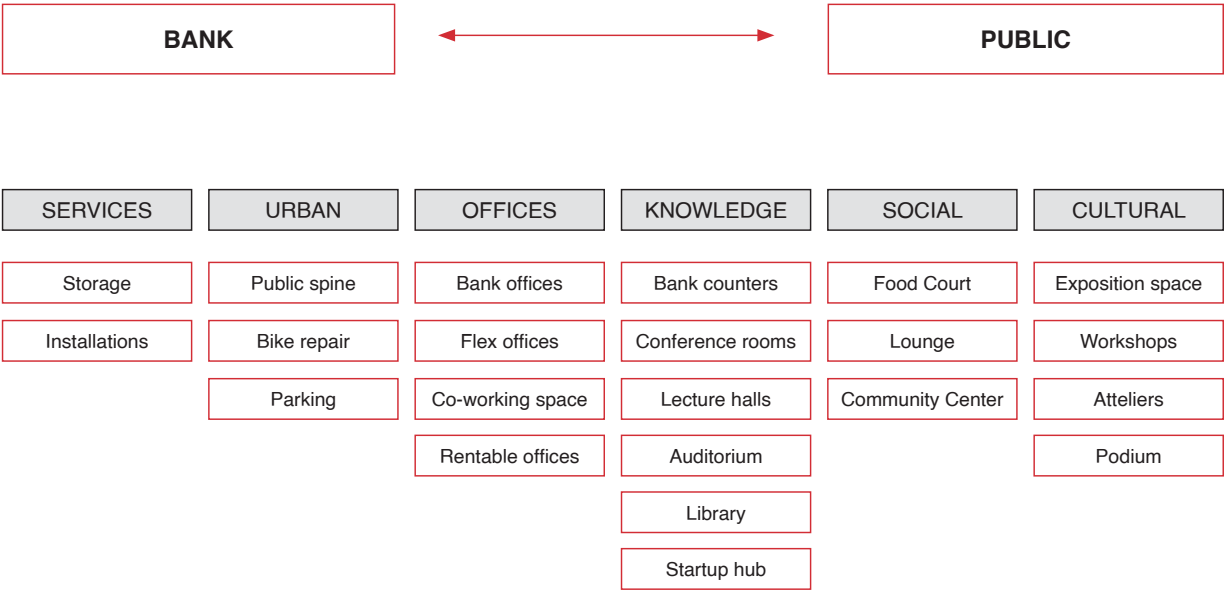


Multi-functional block

- Co-working program
- Public facilities
- Collaboration with Universities
and new initiatives/startups
- Exhibit its art culture and history

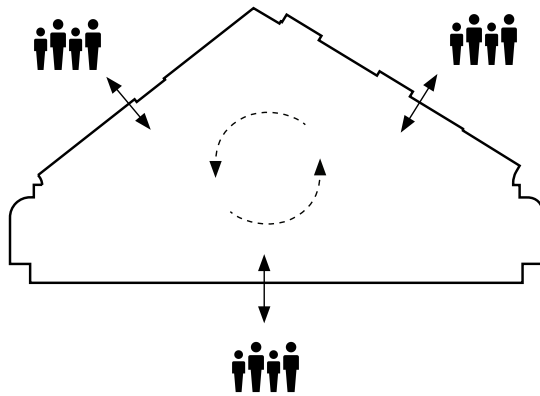


Public program

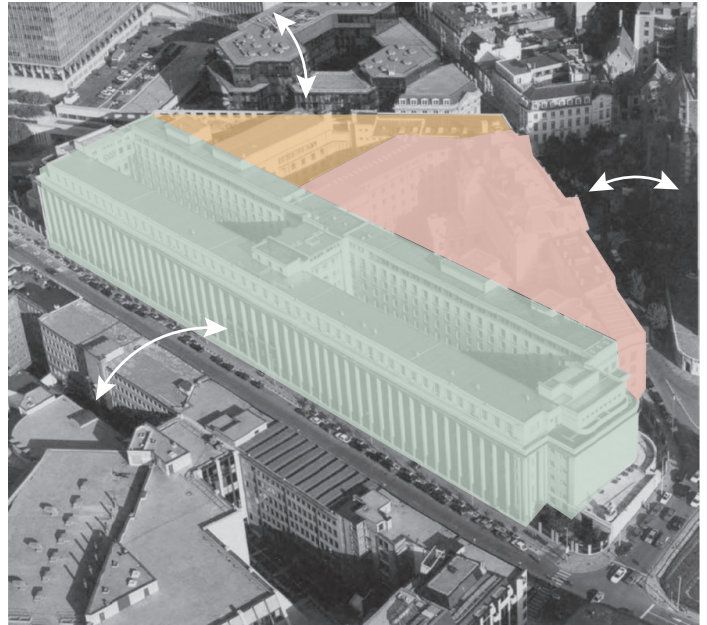


New program and architectural purposes

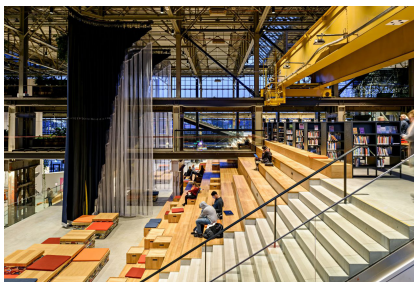
New program requires new architectural outcome. The references show potential ways of using space for the new public program that are focussed on mixed, flexible and open planning.



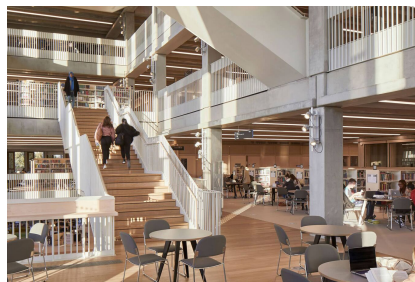
Sharing the bank building with the public



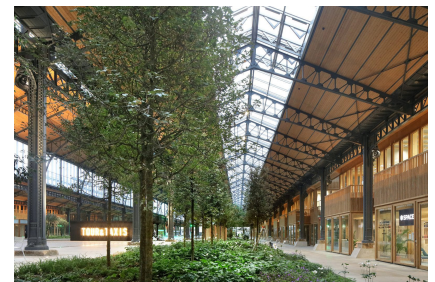
Give m2 back to the community



LocHal Tilburg - Mecanoo



Town House, Kingston University - Grafton Architects



Gare Maritime Brussel - Neutelings Riedijk

Public assemble

Covered city square

The building acts as a covered public space, housing amenities shared by the library, arts organisations and co-working facilities. In addition to areas for lectures and public events, the building has a number of 'labs' where visitors can learn new skills.

Multifunctional programme

Matrix of Interlocking spaces

Breaking up long-span rooms into interstitial spaces created structure. Promoting the idea of no spatial hierarchy or barriers, a colonnade invites people of all walks of life to walk through and intermingle with one another.

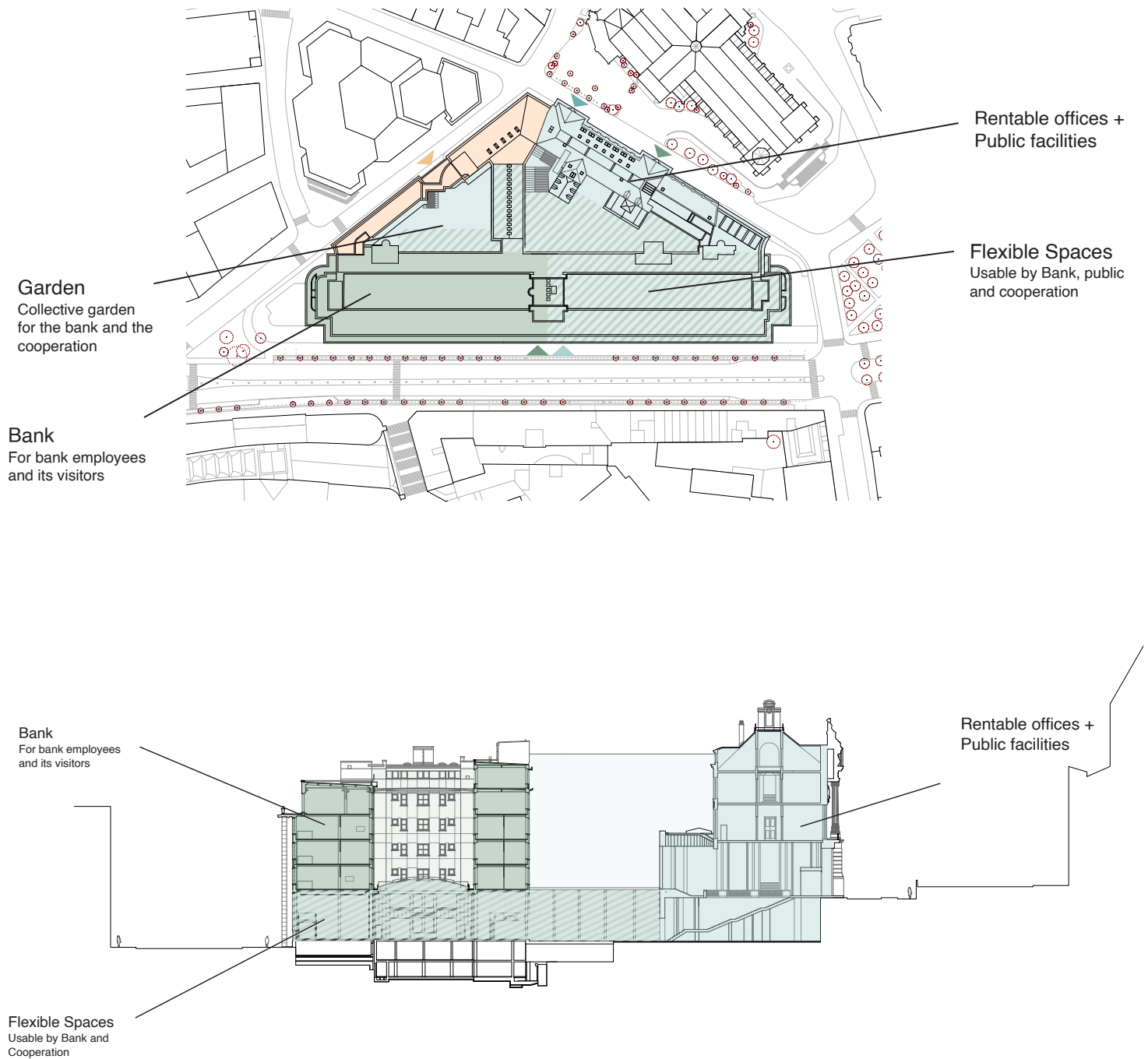
Open planning

Structure of boulevards and street, gardens and squares

The historic building has been transformed into a business centre where events can also be organised. It is a covered 'city' with squares, streets, parks and wooden pavilions.

Public program

These images show research on the different possibilities the accomodate the new public program.
The program is mainly focussed to be placed on the ground floor and seperated from the secured and private bank usage.



The Bank building

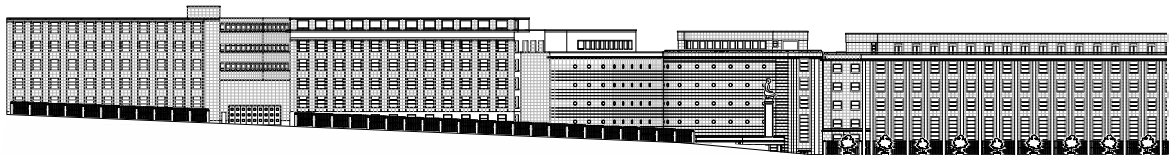
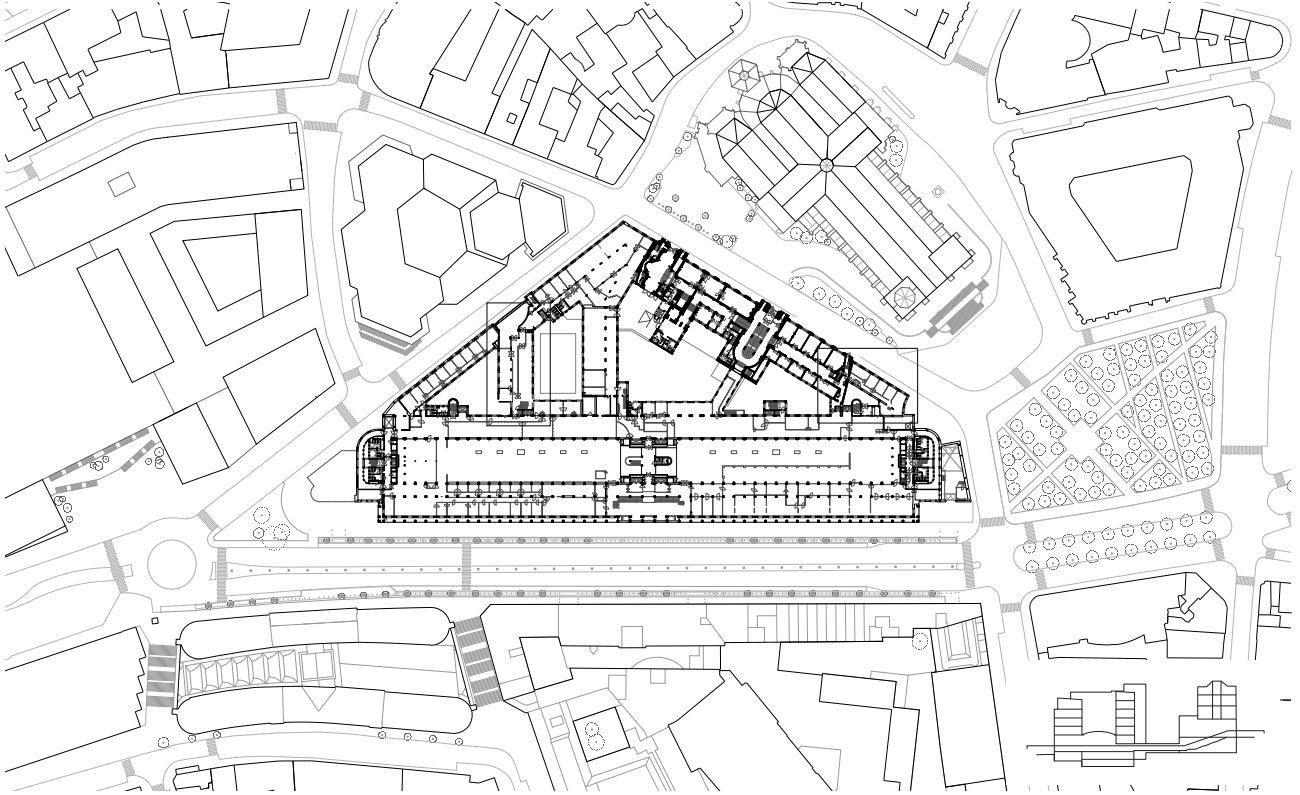
With the 200 metre long front façade, it is already visible what the size of the bank is. Being formed out of different fragments from out different time zones, the bank is acting as a conglomerate. Therefore parts are visibly, constructively and socially distinguished from each other and can be treated as separate elements. The bank acts as a labyrinth of spaces with different height levels and sizes which makes it a complicated building. A thorough analysis of the whole bank is necessary to fully understand the building, its perks and its weaknesses. Since the amount of square meter of the bank is huge, the building consists of more space then necessary. Therefore new program can be added to the building. Like described, this will consist of a public ground floor that consists of working spaces, a restaurant, rentable offices, exposition spaces, all connected by the banking halls and the new lobby space. One of the strategy's was to tackle the building was to find the soft

spots in the building. Parts of the bank that where not useful or had no quality. This design intents to have only a few interventions that will have a big impact on the whole building. One of that is increasing the courtyards to create new relations and improve daylight in the bank. And with that, breaking up the south corner of the courtyard, for a new entrance that is connected to the urban surroundings.

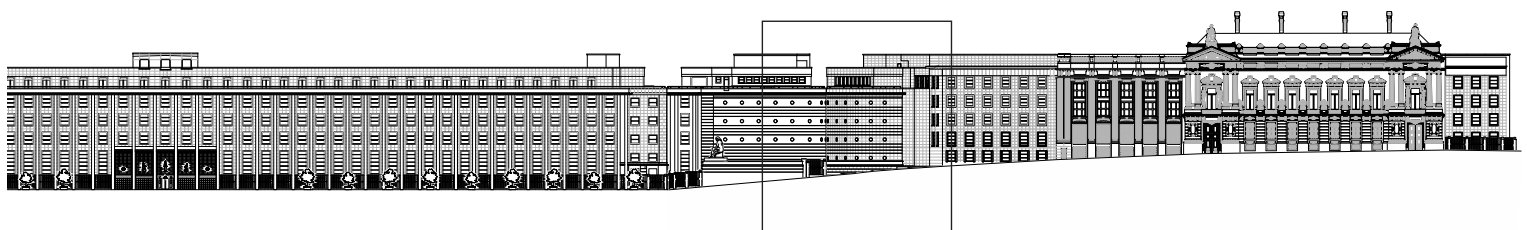
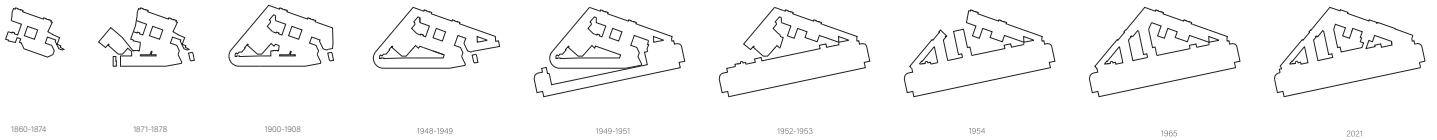
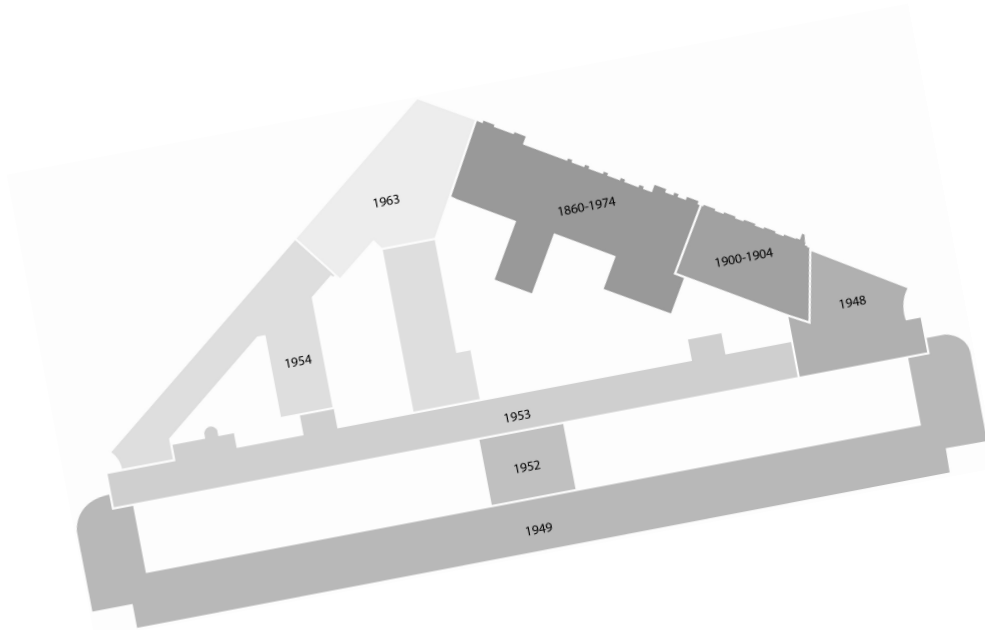
The bank has a vast and static appearance, all cladded with nature stone. To create a distinction between the new and the future bank, the use of wood is implemented. This gives the bank a more warm, friendly and welcoming appearance. This will be in contrast with the hard, cold, nature stone of the bank.

Analysing the bank

Finding the 'soft spots'



The bank is built in different fragments out of different time zones, acting as a conglomerate. Therefore parts are visibly, constructively and socially distinguished from each other and can be treated as separate elements.



Analysing the courtyards



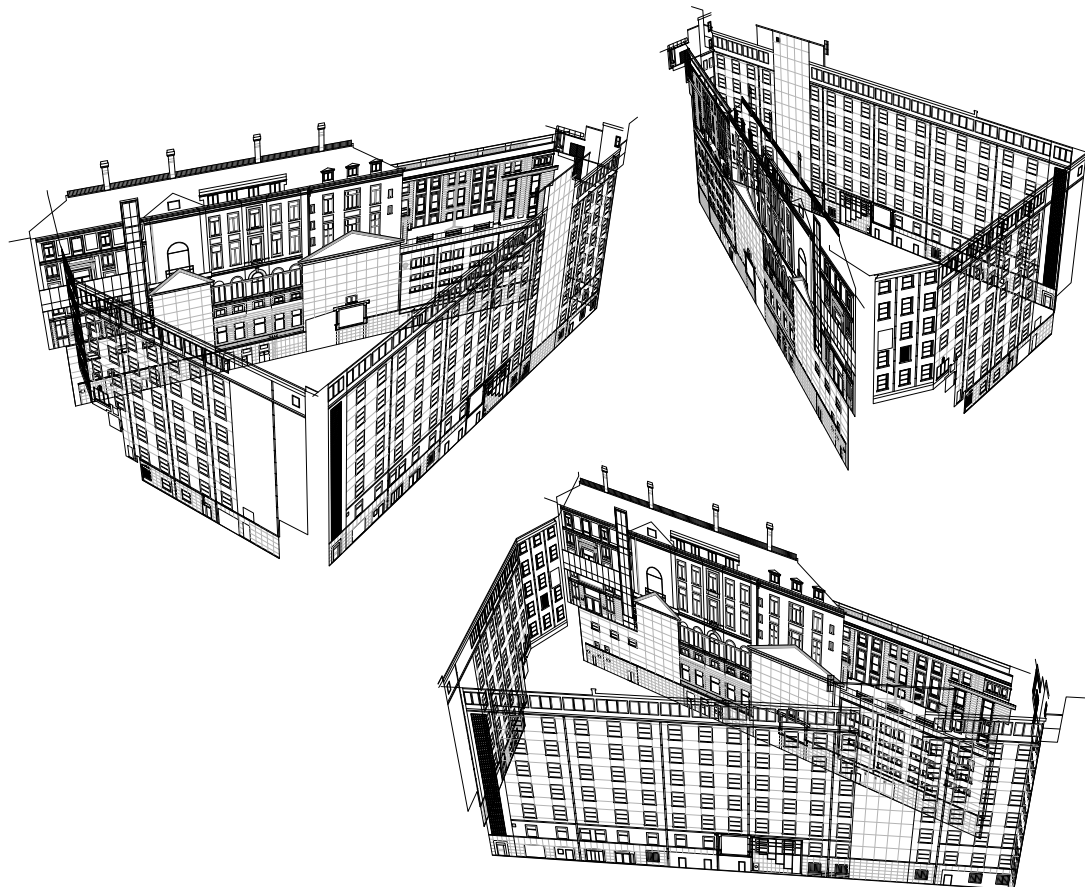
assembling

eclecticism

logistics

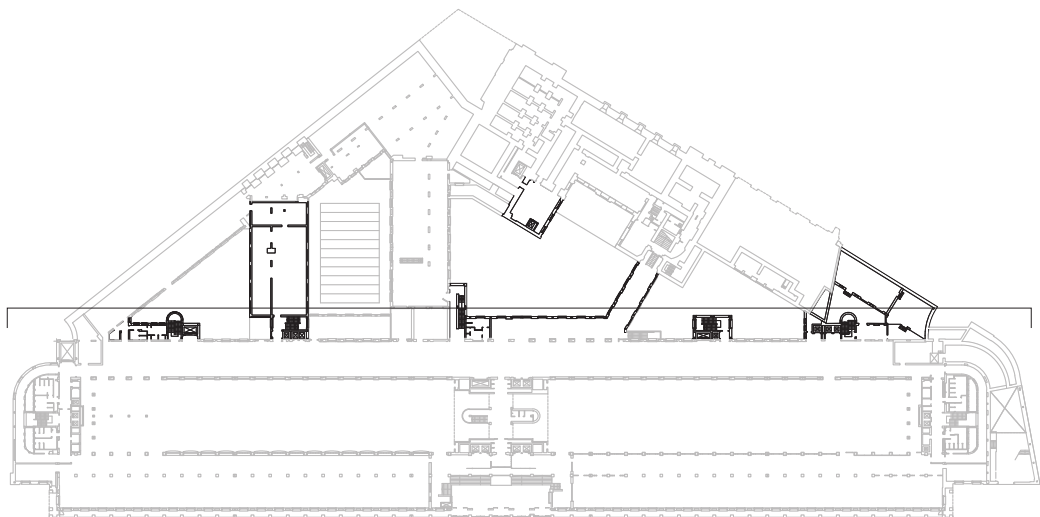
underused





Opening spaces

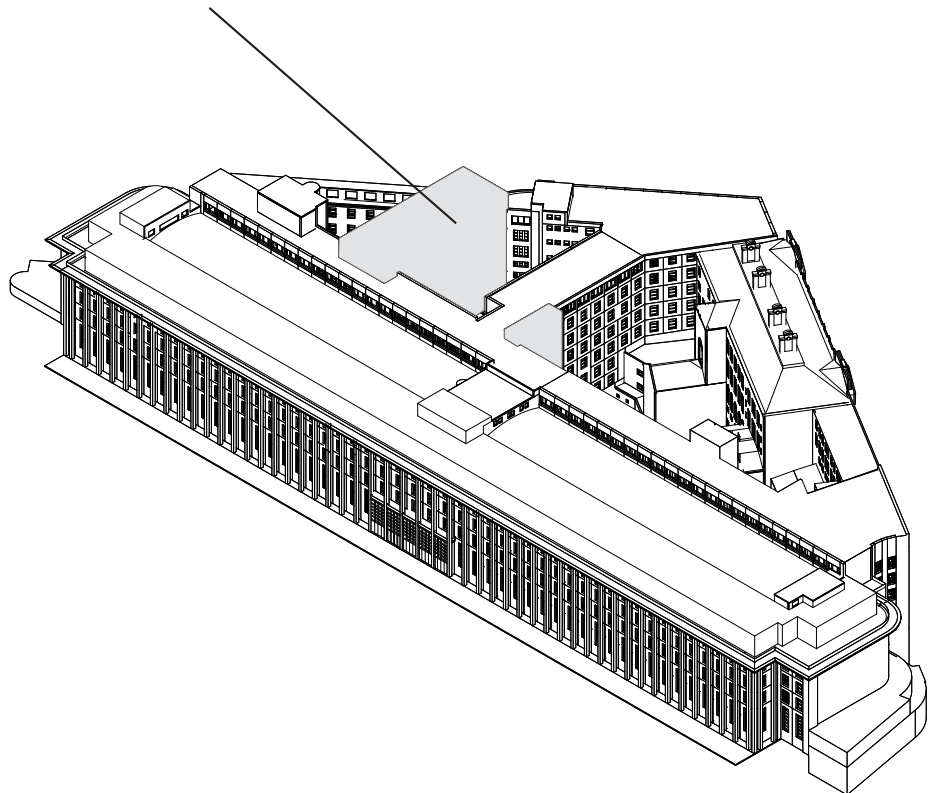
Opening space within the courtyards to create new relations and improve daylight in the bank.

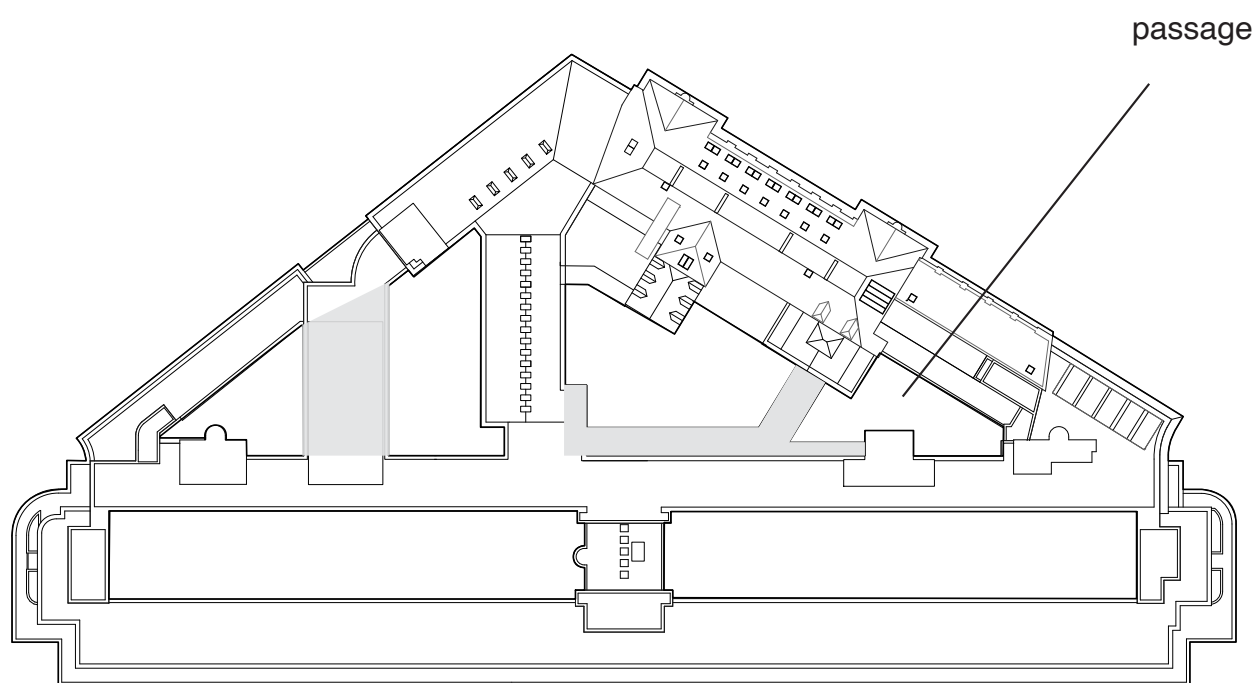




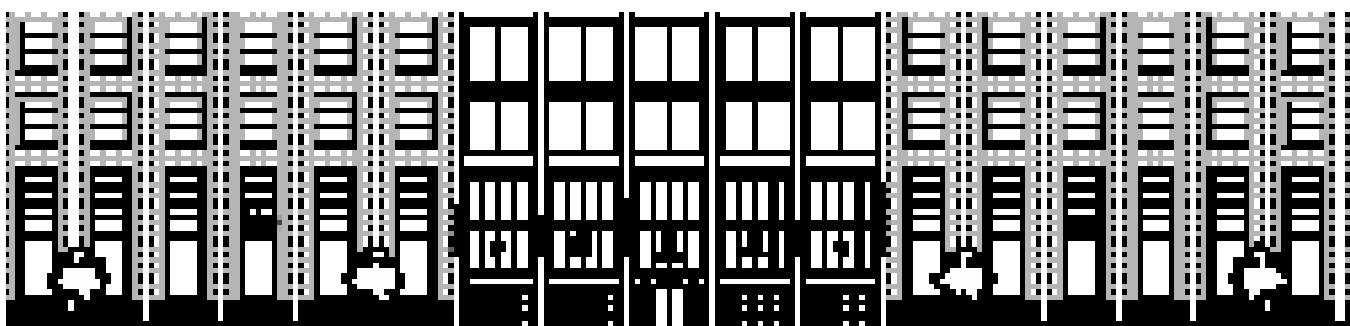
Creating space in courtyards

Office block



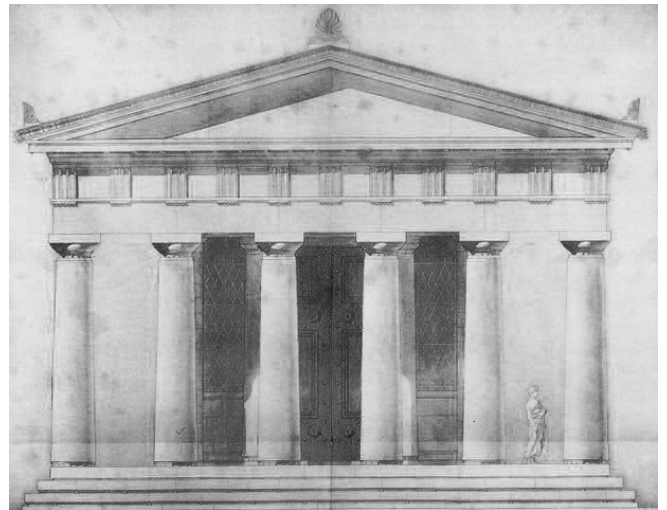


Representation of the Bank



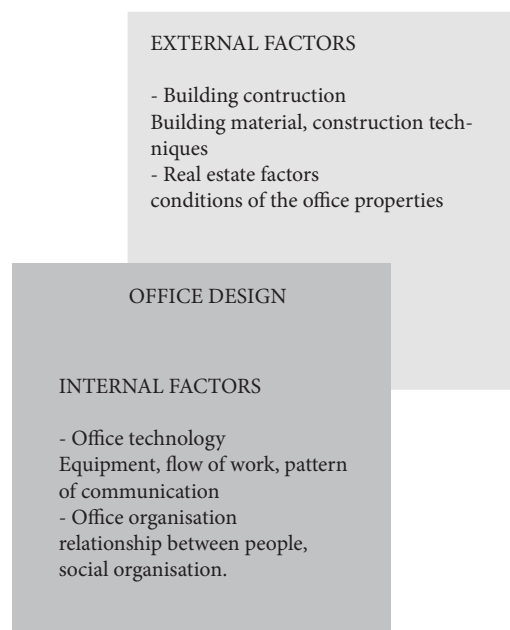
The influence of the image of a building in relation to society

In this text by Duffy (1980), it is describes how buildings reflect Society. They show social relationships such as ranks expressed in spatial terms in an almost unambiguous fashion. Although this reflection is not always correct. One of the reasons is that buildings are used as **STATEMENTS OF ASPIRATIONS**, or propaganda, rather than facts. The second cause of this confusion is because buildings are not a neutral medium. They create powerful associations that transcends and transforms what they contain.



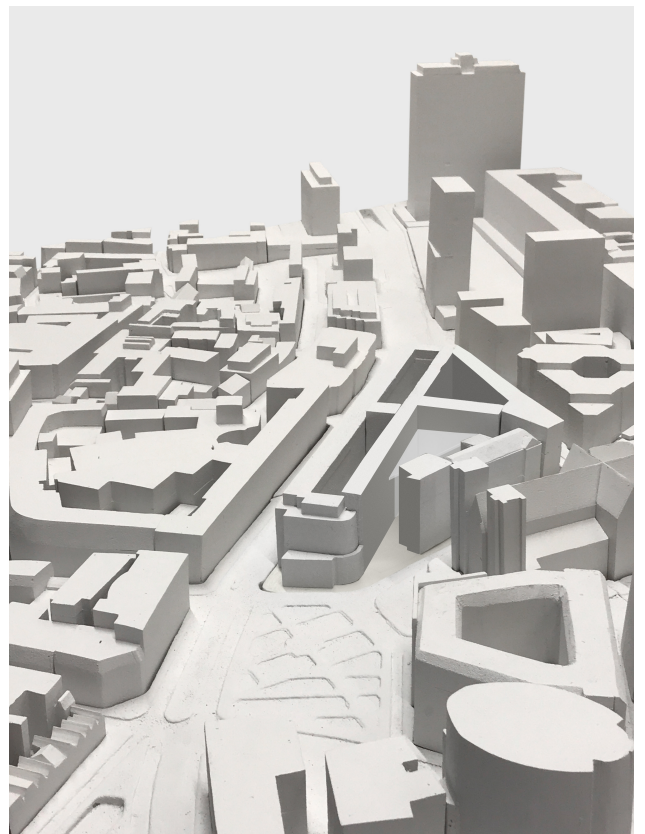
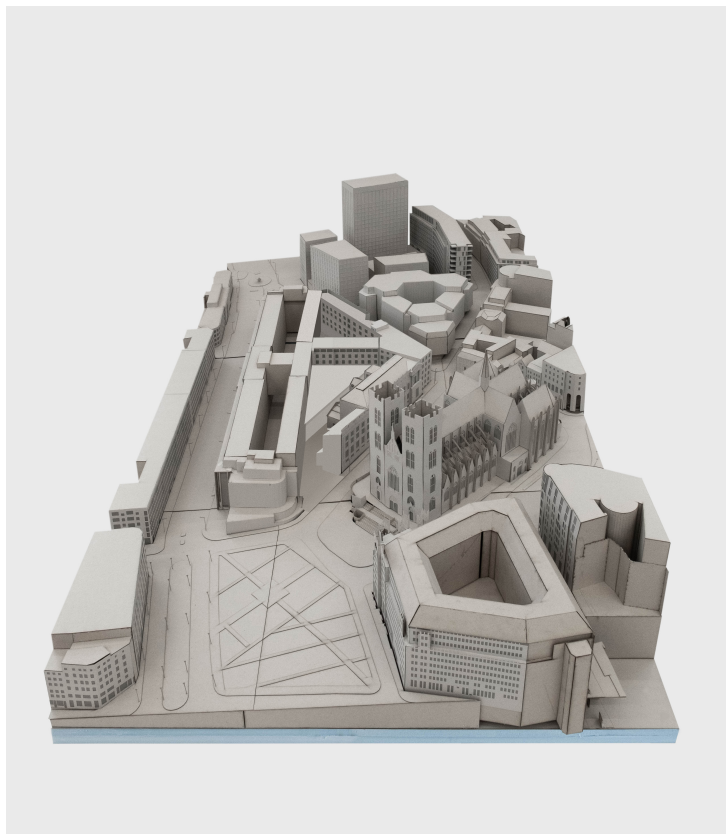
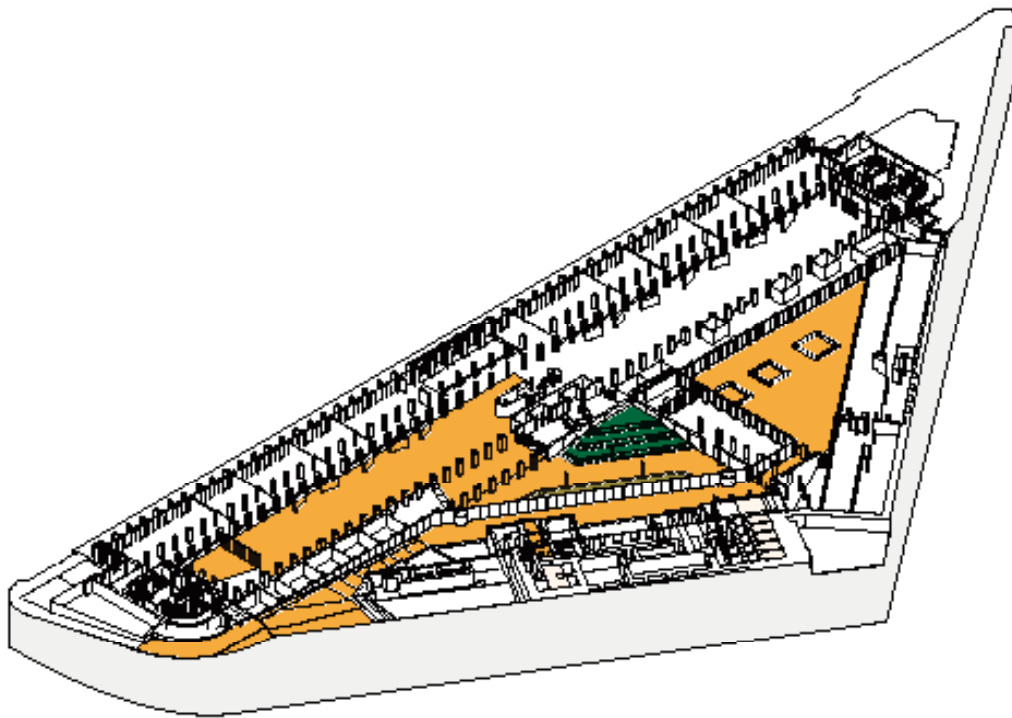
'Entasis' is the application of a convex curve to a surface for aesthetic purposes. "To stretch or strain tight". Creating the illusion of greater strength.

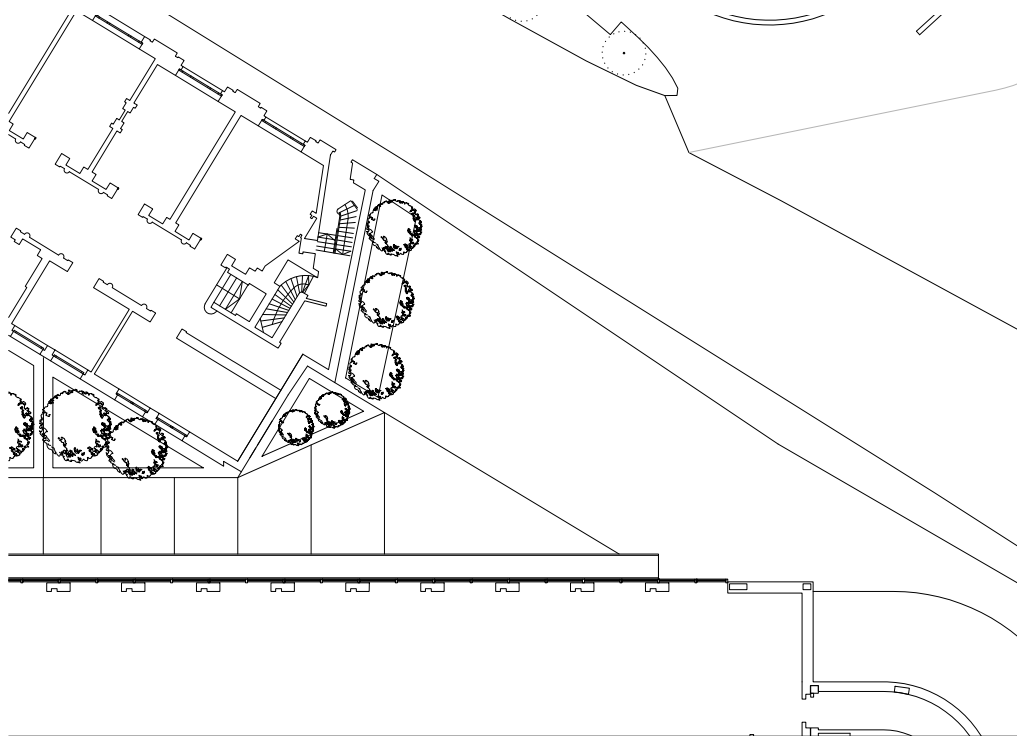
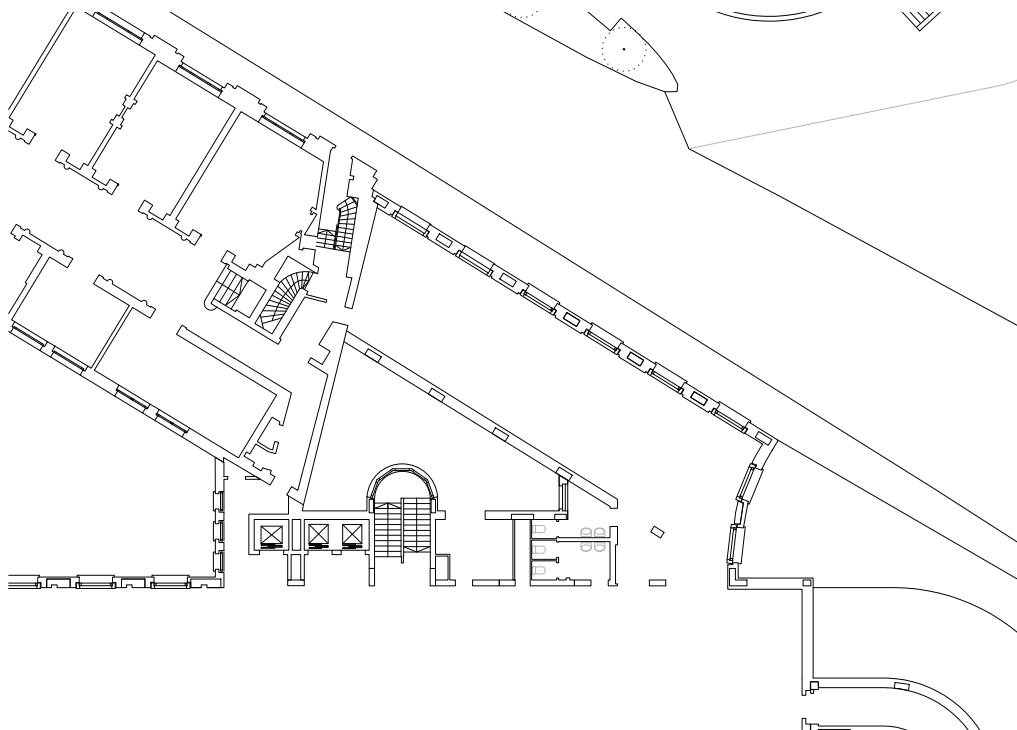
Buildings reflect society, e.g. ranks expressed in spatial terms



It is important to be aware of this phenomenon, buildings can have enormous impact on the branding of the company that occupies the building, or on the surrounding area/city just as it is described in *'Market landscape: Speaking between Financial Districts and the planet'*. This could lead to propaganda or an empty shell, **A GAP BETWEEN THE IMAGE AND REALITY**, their ability and lack of competence.

Opening to south





The Plinth and Public Spaces

The bank has a very powerful distant façade. Almost all the parts of the facades are gated. This emphasizes the safety and security of the bank. Since there is no storage of gold anymore in the bank itself, less security is necessary. The removal of the gates could result in a new image, that could become the new face that the bank wants.

The new program in the plinth will focus on innovation. It can be described as a knowledge Lab, external offices space or Startup hub. It is meant for new starting initiatives/creatives/thinkers that need a working space/atelier. Key words are: ateliers, offices, marketing, promo, retail, entrepreneurship, startup, co-working. The architecture will be made of a wooden structure, white painted, flexible in expansion (optional to add extra level) and has a Pop Up look. The new plinth breaks the long closed façade, and is able to create a link between street and Bank hall.

Another plinth is made by opening the south area in between hotel and main bank structure. Creating this new internal facade and plinth that is improved with new window frames and a more public curtain wall plinth. The new outdoor space is resulting in a fluid public spine, that gives air and lightness into the bank building that connects

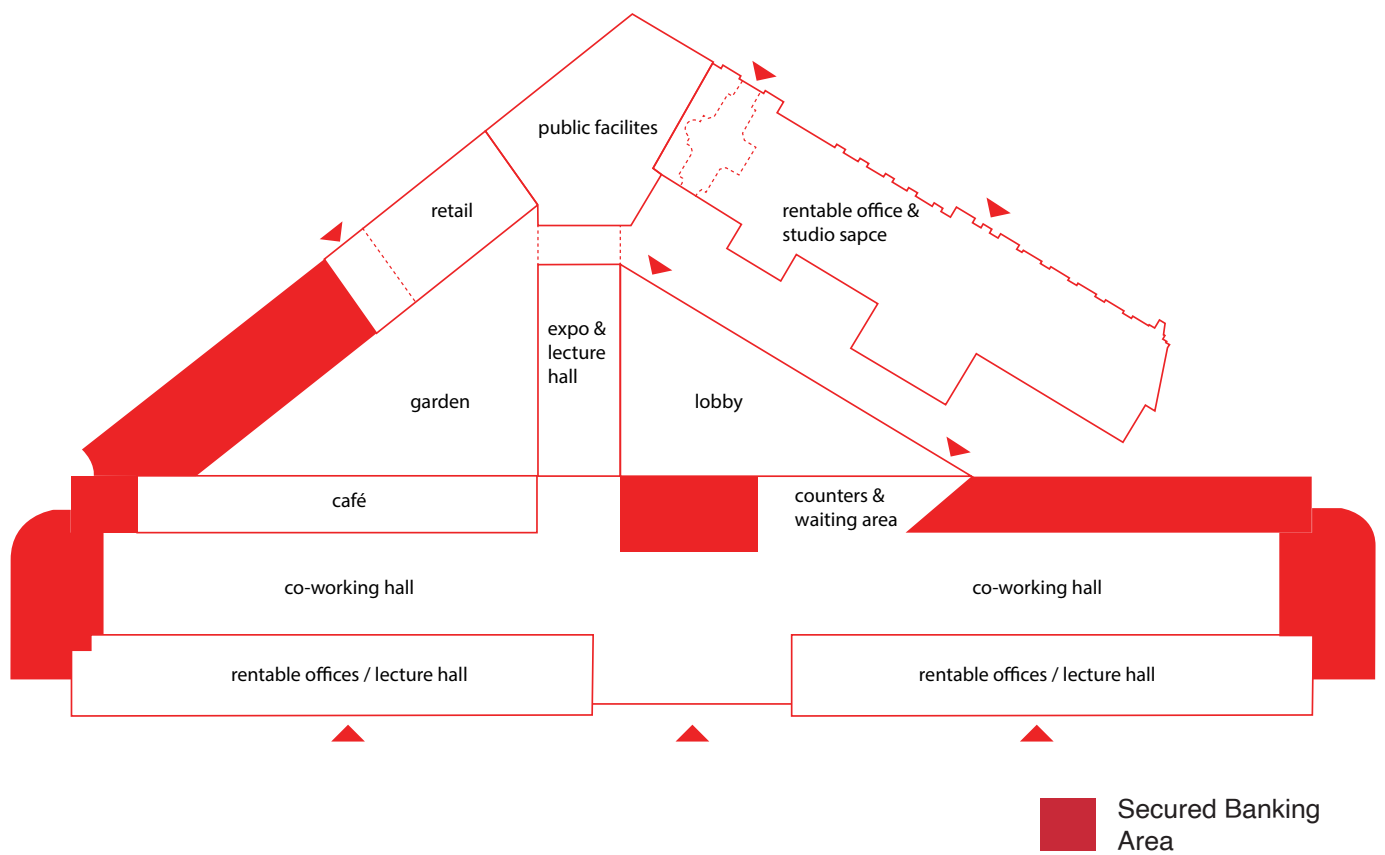
different spaces and contributes to the urban routes.

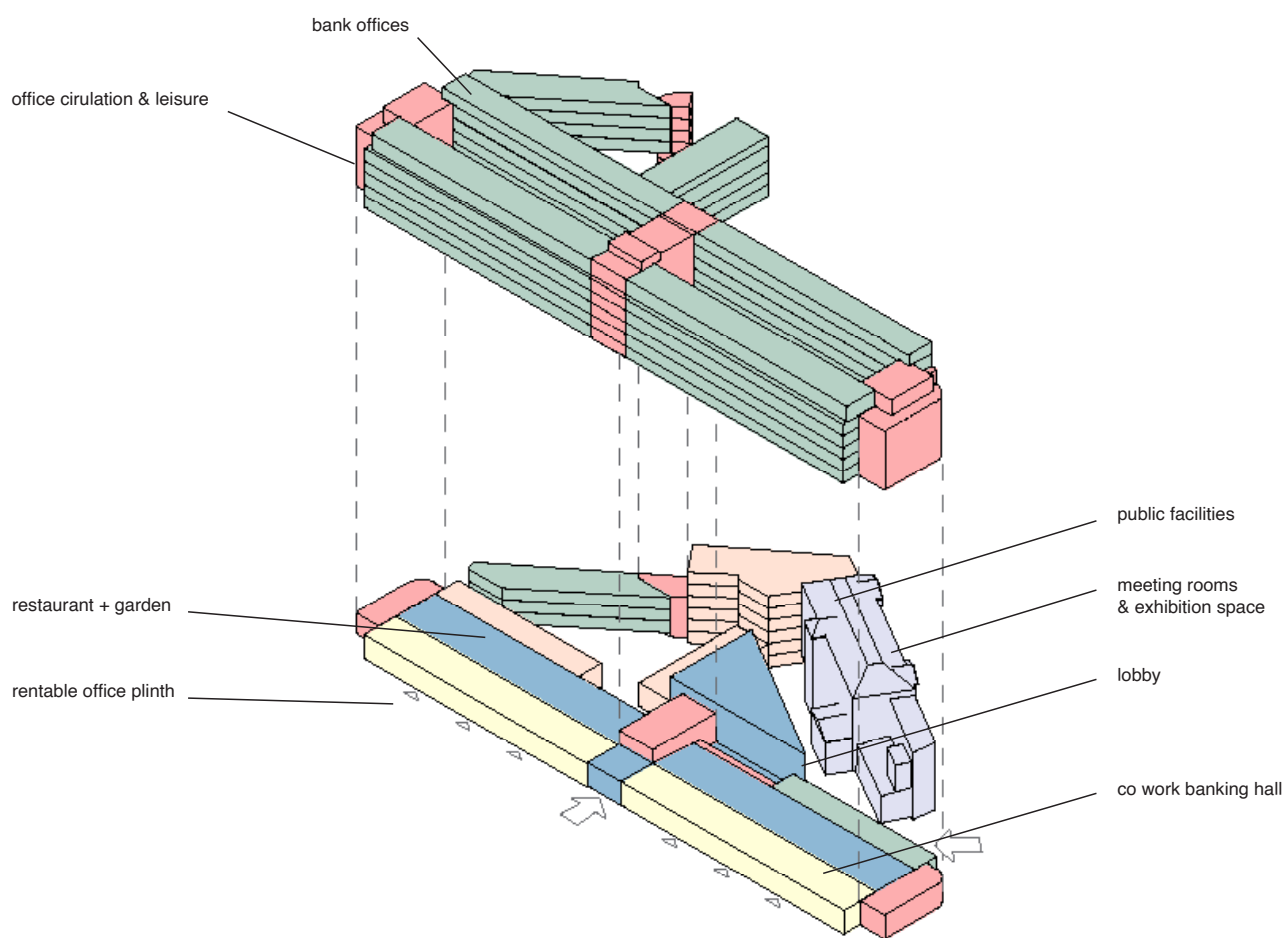
The Lokettenzaal is one of the most impressive spaces within the bank. The 'crystal palace like' ceiling shows lightness and openness within the bank. Because of the closed outside facade, the roof is left for natural light. The light gives a feeling of hope and endless possibilities, whilst being protected by the strong concrete columns and walls.

The lobby space, made out of a wooden structure and finishing, is situated in a hidden but prominent place in the heart of the bank. This volume act as a connector between different parts of the bank. As well as interior as exterior areas. The new atrium will be the new face of the bank. Acting as an equivalent to the existing banking halls, in an exposed way. This new Lobby space consists of a service desk, and flexible working, study or meeting spaces. The triangular volume is positioned to combine different interior and exterior spaces in an open spacious way.

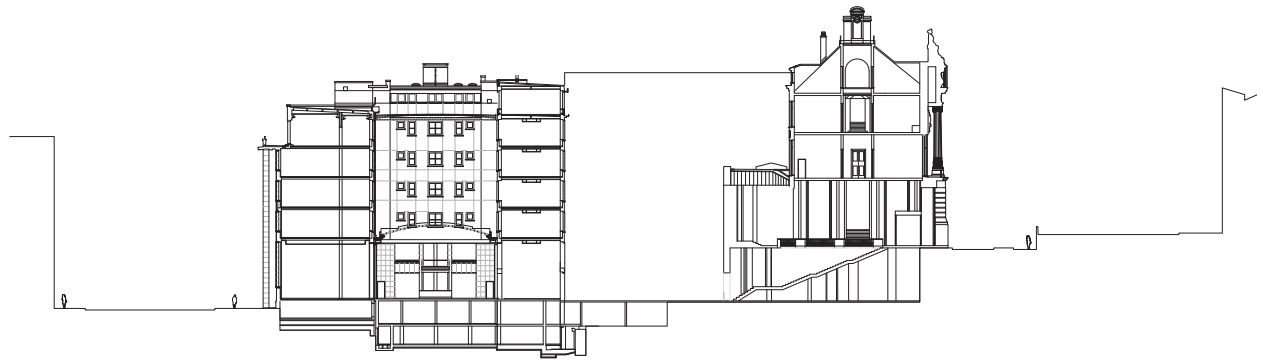
In the other courtyard the garden is placed, which is connected and overlapping with the exposition space and the restaurant. This garden will act as a relaxing space for public and employees of the bank.

Program





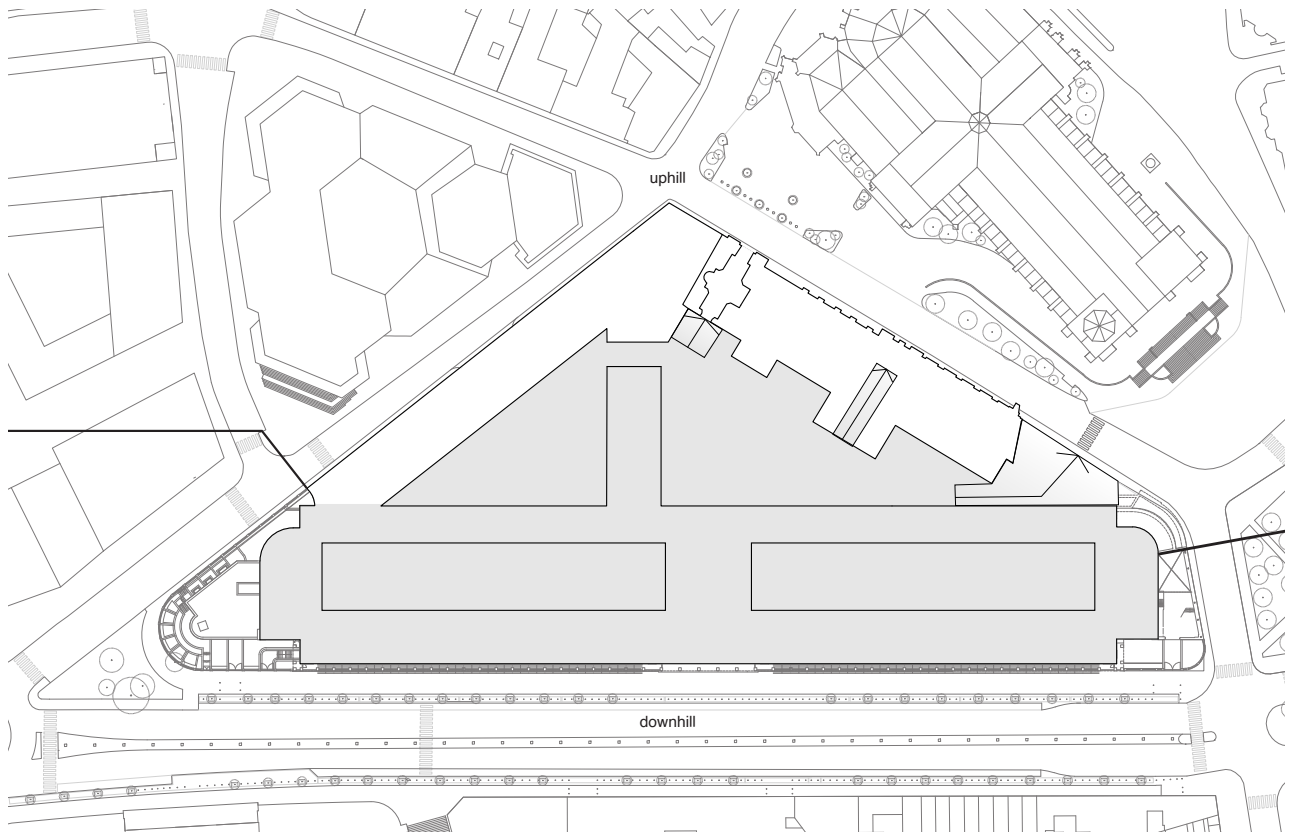
The public ground floor

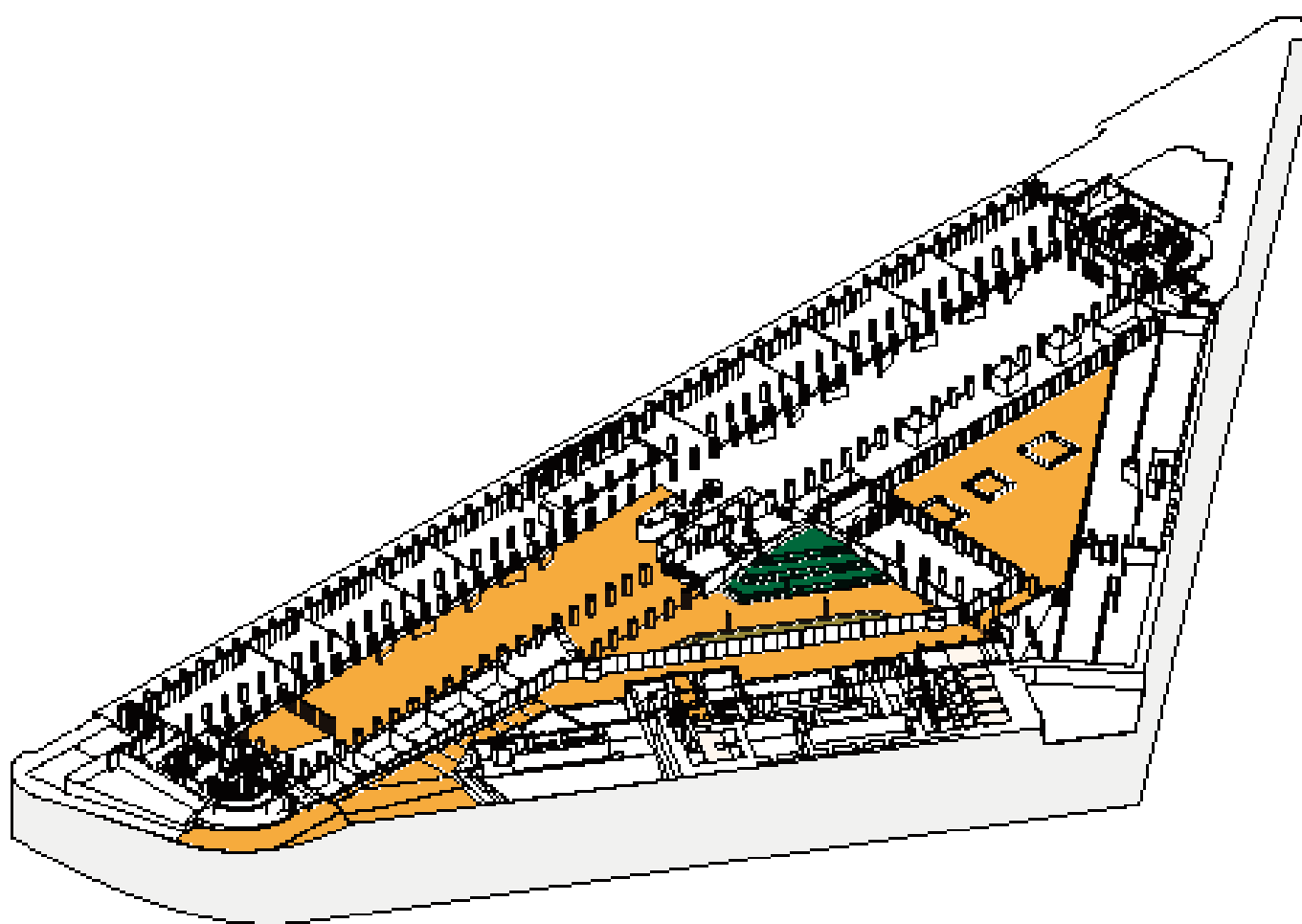


downhill

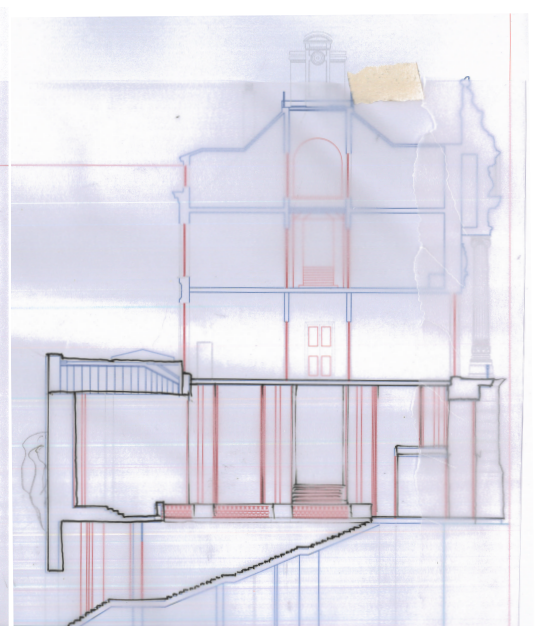
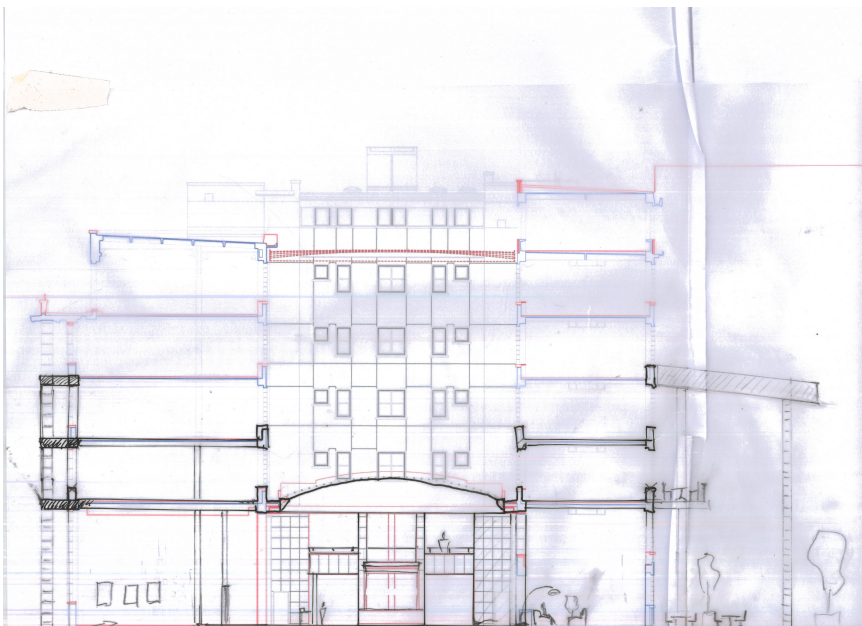
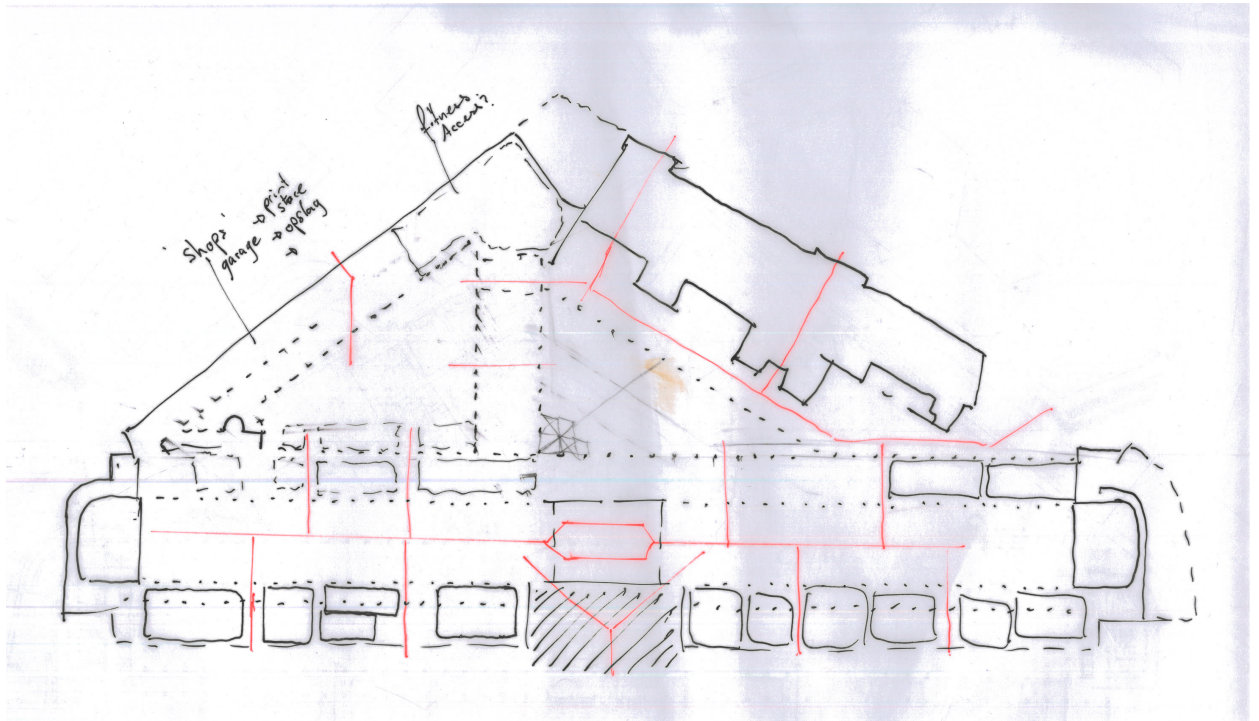
uphill

Covering the -1 level courtyard
to the level of the bank

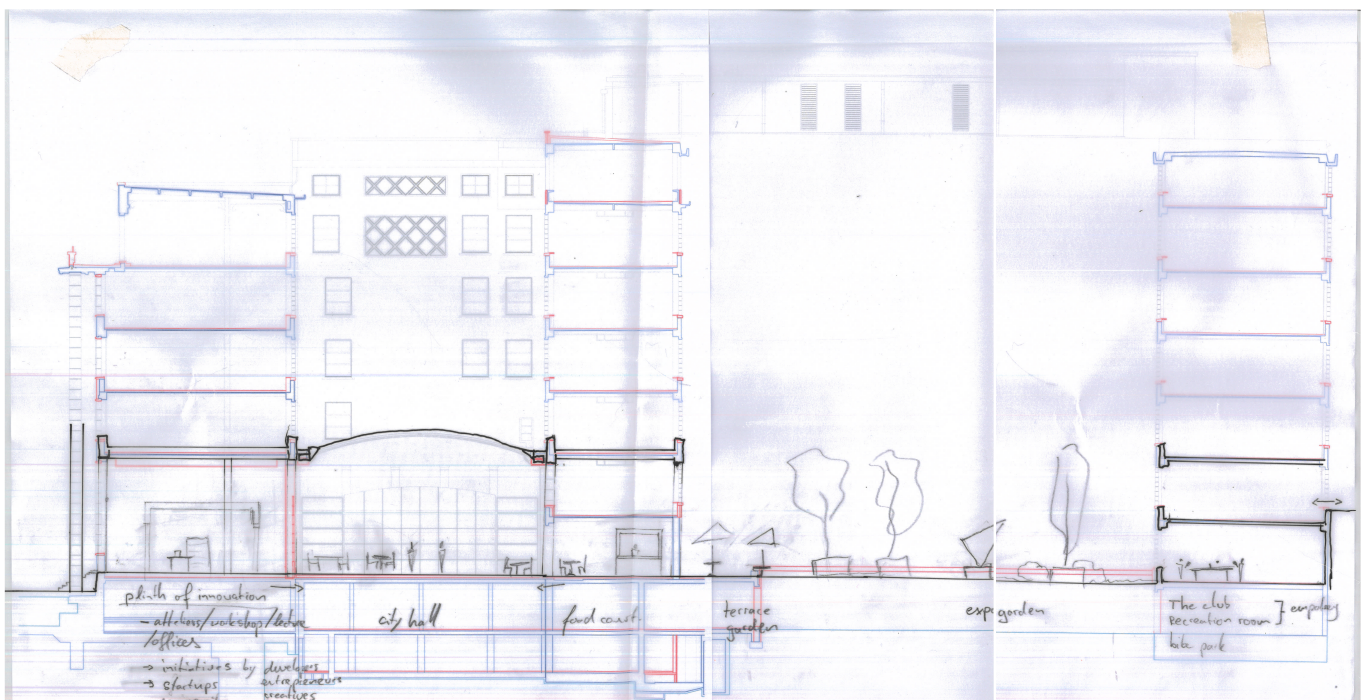
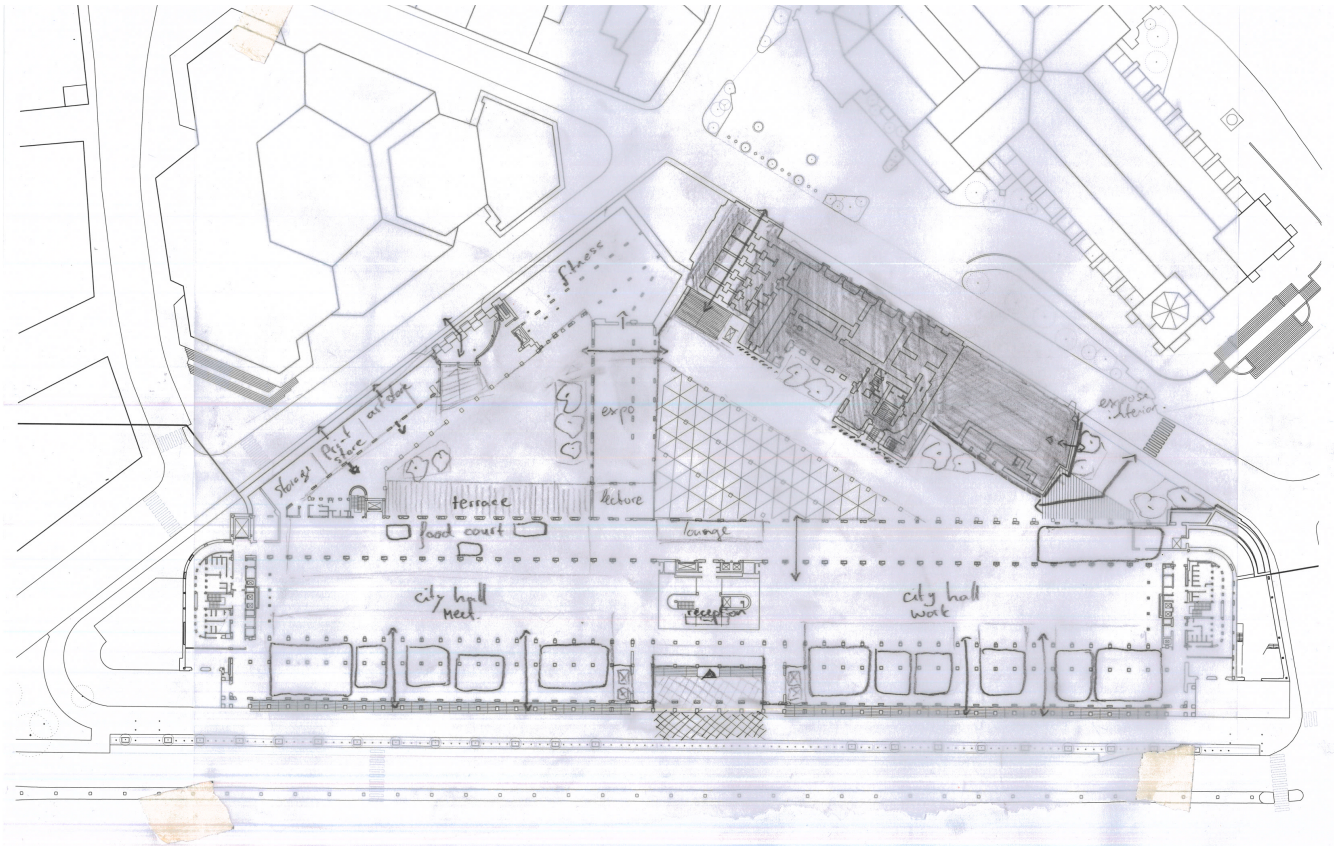




New Axis



New program with new relations



The current plinth

Almost all the parts of the facades are gated. This emphasizes the safety and security of the bank. Since there is no storage of gold anymore in the bank itself, less security is necessary. The removal of the gates could result in a new image, that could become the new face that the bank wants.



Changing the image of a facade

The Plinth

**Between public and
private**

**Property of the public
and building owner**

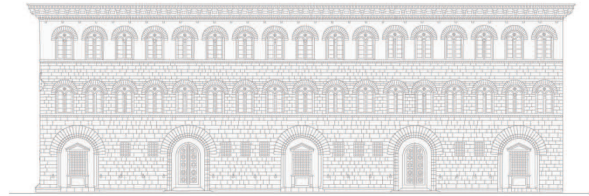
Who owns the plinth?



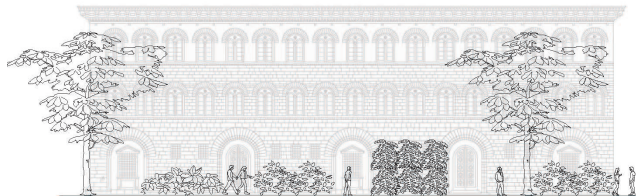
The social plinth study

The Social Plinth

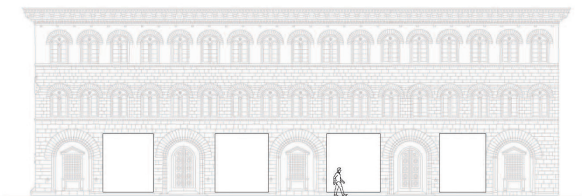
Not appropriated to one stakeholder



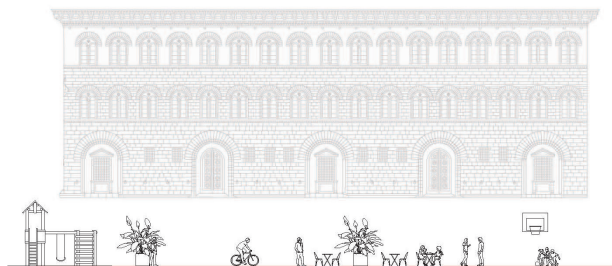
Providing its space for the whole city



Communicates with every visitor



Opening the plinth, making it approachable



Lifting the buildings initial function

The broken down bank building

Personal P1 Statement

The broken down bank building

Bart Vos

How can the flexible awning as part of a set of objects successfully embed social function in the monumental existing structure of the Belgian National Bank?

The awning can be seen as a temporal addition to the façade, that acts as a demarcation of the space which can be used for social functions. We know the awning as an addition to domestic and certain commercial spaces. It could lead as a transition space (exit, entrance or sidewalks) or permanent space (café, restaurant). The bank building is not often associated with the awning. Is this because of the monumentality and non-utilized façade, or because of the program behind the façade of the bank?

Through historical research, some bank building precedents with attached awnings were studied. For instance, The Presidency Chartered Bank of Bombay (1840), shows a well-balanced façade due to the combination of fixed cantilevers and the temporary addition of the build form of the awnings. The flexible awning can be seen as the counterpart of the rigid, heavy, formal and static image of the bank.

Will the future bank be representing the same image? Will it have a façade that shows power and stability? Or does it still have a front façade with a demarked entrance?

The bank could also be split-up in different buildings, and not even be accessible for visitors and without grand foyers. The bank could be occupied by many different company's that the bank invests in. In here the plinth could be socialized because of the many different public facilities that are created. The bank could also go back to its roots, a domestic bank with a living- and dining room and with a textile canopy that marks the entrance and blocks the sunlight.

These possible changes could shift the image of the bank, where the static bank building is broken down into an approachable and informal building that is formed by the façades its flexible cotton canopy.

**the awning
stands
in direct
relation to
its adjacent
structure.**

**a
demarcation
of space**

**counterpart
of the rigid,
heavy,
formal and
static image
of the bank.**

Collective P1 Statement

The half-public domain

Pascal Henle, Bart Vos & Ron Barten

The awning, as a temporary addition to the built form, acts as a demarcation of space in which informal activity¹ can take place. As opposed to the fixed attachments and cantilevers of large office and bank buildings, the shop and café act in a state of flux. Whilst active the awning along with benches, fold out chairs, planters, newspapers become elements which, arranged as a set, stimulate a social plinth.

Using a primitive construction² of an awning we arranged a series of configurations in which it becomes part of permanent, exhibition, waiting, transition or neglected space. The awning itself being defined by its minimal useful dimension; one at which it remains intimate at the scale of the individual whilst active at the larger scale of the building.

Never existent in isolation, the awning stands in direct relation to its adjacent structure. Creating a juxtaposition between the static and temporary, heavy and light, formal and informal. As observed, the awning as an attachment to a non-utilized building front, can only minimally activate social activity but rather acts as a demarcation of space. This demarcation remains ambiguous; its ownership and use being questioned

by its observers and is only given meaning by its associated furniture, signage, and activity. The space below becomes as important as the awning itself or perhaps the awning merely acts as a catalyst to the activity it frames?

By interiorizing the awning and removing it from its primary function as a shelter, these spatial implications are further enhanced. Placing it within existing, familiar spaces, we documented the ways in which the circumscribed space of the awning takes on a new meaning. Whilst never really activating space it creates an informal intimacy and the connotations of the coffee table and entrance door are altered.

How can the flexible awning as part of a set of objects successfully embed social function in the monumental existing structure of the Belgian National Bank?

¹ Activity which is not destined within a certain parameter or dictated by external voices.

² Reduced to its minimum - a white canvas stretched by a timber frame. Self-supported and flexible to enhance its portability.

**a
juxtaposition
between the
static and
temporary,
heavy
and light,
formal and
informal.**

**How can
the flexible
awning
successfully
embed social
functions in
the NBB?**

Experiments with the awning



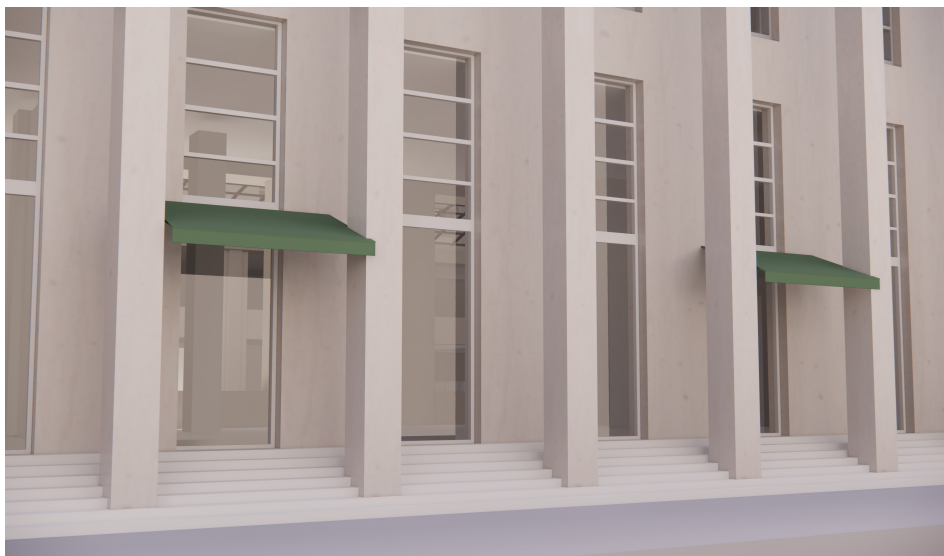
Awning in the **Café**, a place to meet, sit or grab some food and drinks. It is a social place that needs to be visual and recognisable.

Awning in the **entrance**, a walkthrough area, leading from one place to the other.



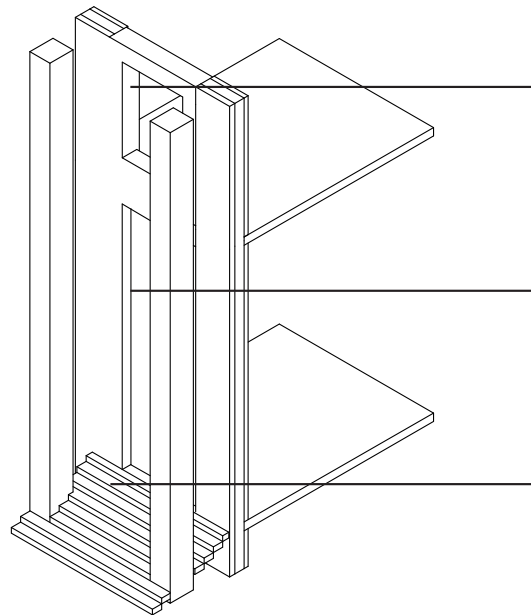
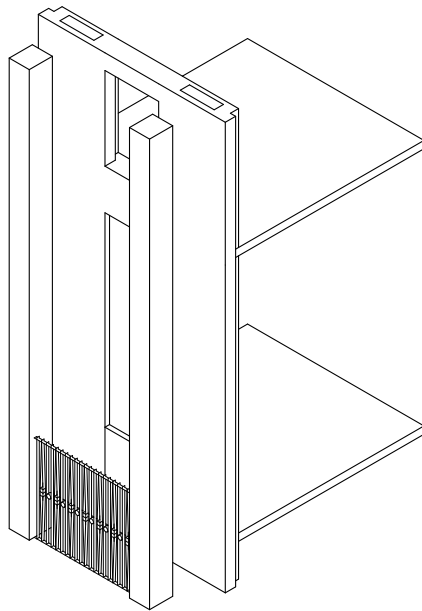


Inauguration de la Bourse, Brussels, 1873



Awning set up at the bank

The welcoming plinth



Expanded window
without adjusting
the structure.

Expanded opening
for new entrance.
With gable end to
support the structure

New stairs
inbetween
columns.



'Open door' offices

Integretion with secondary seating

Integration of various activities and functions in and around public spaces allows the people involved to function together and to stimulate and inspire one another. In addition, the mixing of various functions and people makes it possible to interpret how the surrounding society is composed and how it operates. With regard to this issue as well, it is not the formal integration of buildings and primary city functions but the actual integration of various events and people on the very small scale that determines whether the contact surface is monotonous or interesting. What is important is not whether factories, residences, service functions, and so on are placed close together on the architects' drawings, but whether the people who work and live in the different buildings use the same public spaces and meet in connection with daily activities.



Venice, a sittable city



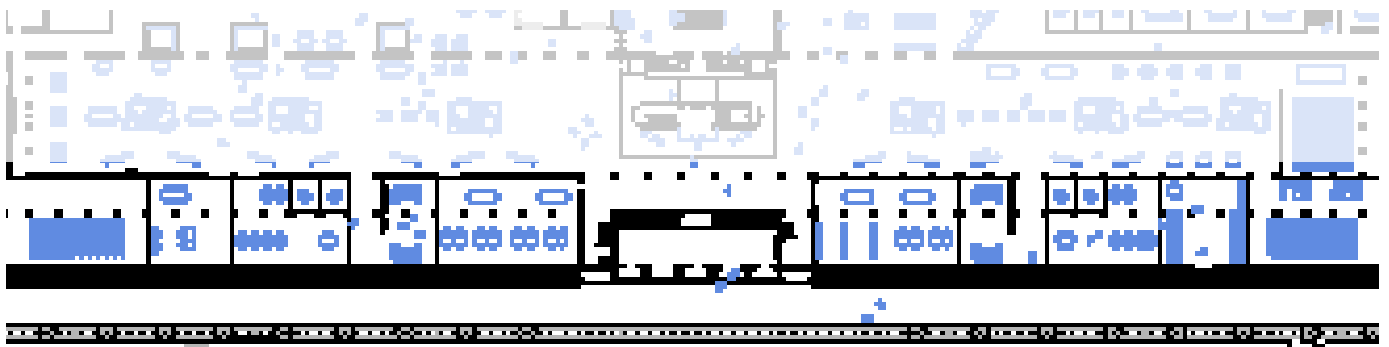
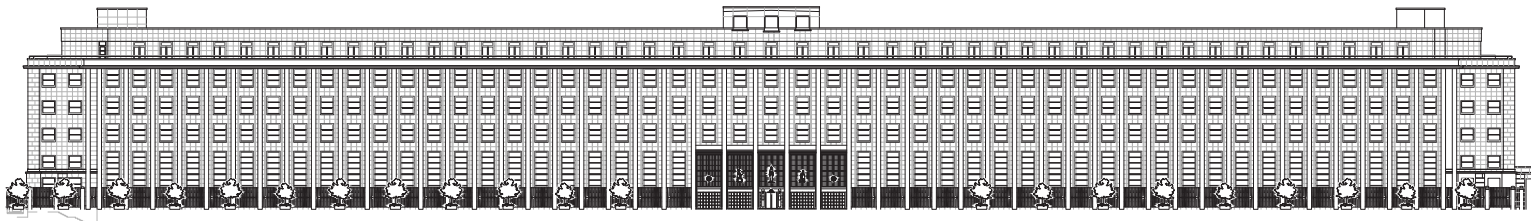
Jan Gehl - Life Between Buildings

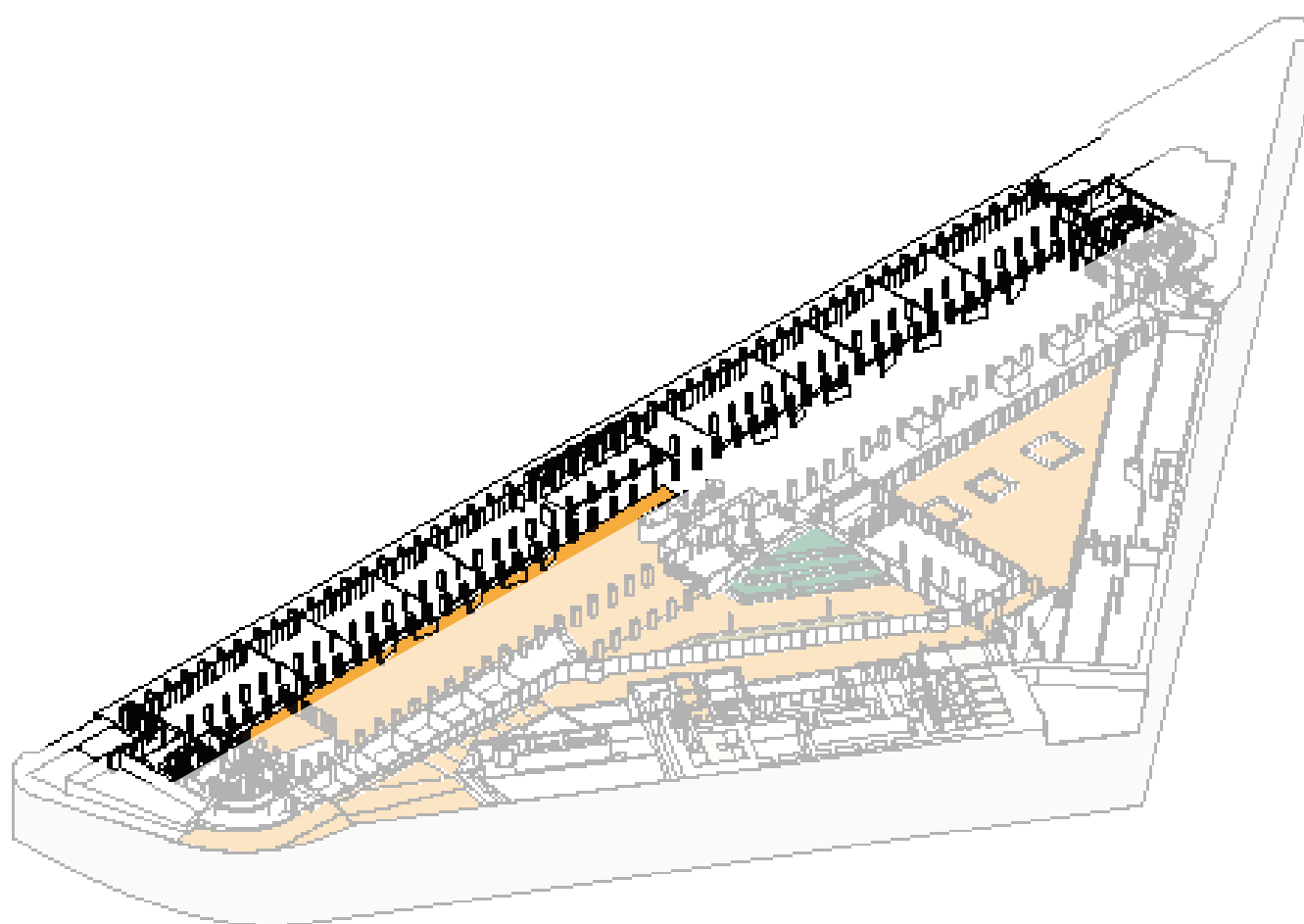


Friendly facade and improved streetscape

Open door offices in plinth

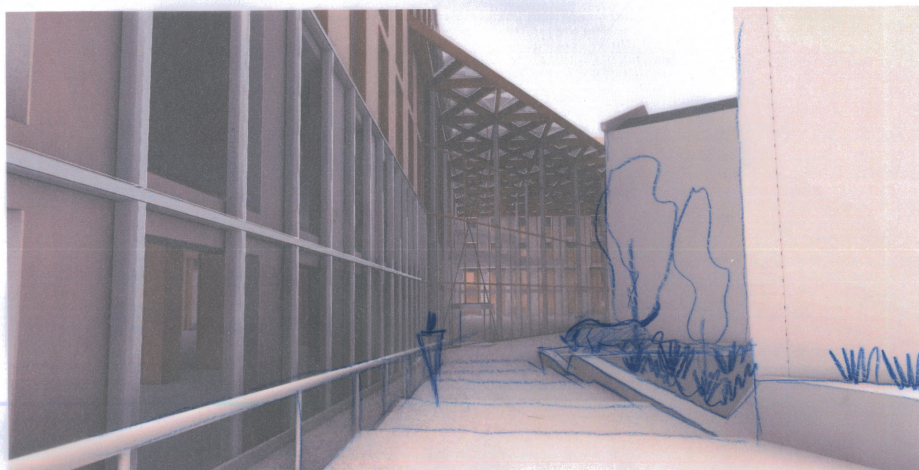
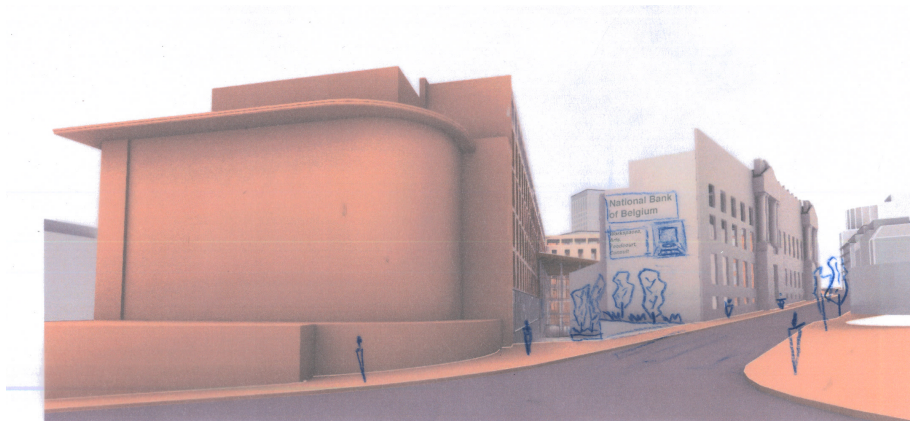
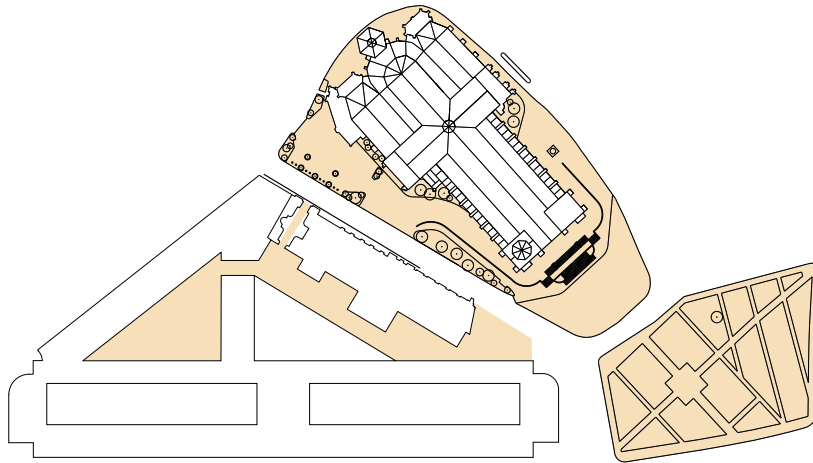
The new program in the plinth will focus on innovation. It can be describes as a knowledge Lab, external offices space or Startup hub. It is meant for new starting initiatives/creatives/thinkers that need a working space/atelier. key words: Ateliers/offices, Marketing, Promo, Retail, Focus, The architecture will be made of a wooden structure, white painted, flexible in expansion (optional to add extra level) and has a Pop Up look. The new plinth breaks the long closed façade, and is able to create a link between street and Bank hall.





Creating an internal plinth

Opening the south area inbetween hotel and main bank structure. Creating a new internal facade and plinth that is improved with new window frames and a more public curtain wall plinth. Resulting in a fluid Public spine, that gives air and lightness into the bank building.





Public interior

The Glass ceiling, a flipped facade.
A way to add light in the secured enclosed bank.

The Lokettenzaal is one of the most impressive spaces within the bank. The 'crystal palace like' ceiling shows lightness and openness within the bank. Because of the closed outside facade, the roof is left for natural light. The light gives a feeling of hope and endless possibilities, whilst being protected by the strong concrete columns and walls.



The postal Savings bank building, Otto Wagner 1907



Nationale Bank van België Lokettenzaal, Brussels 1948



Lokettenzaal, the scarce public space



Archetypical ticket hall



Central circulation



Secured passages



Unutilized internal courtyard



Unutilized lightbox

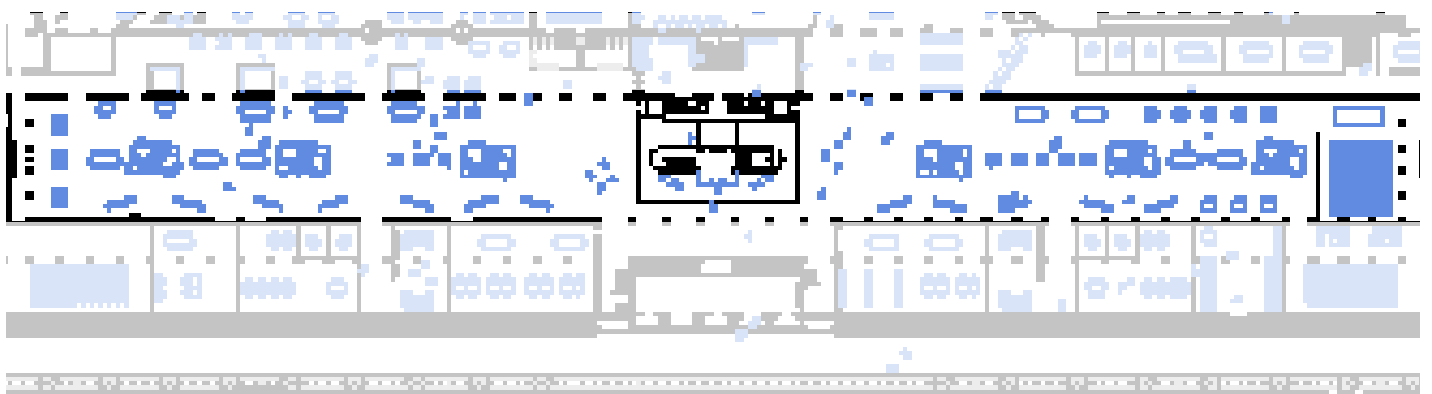


Visitors' destination

The new public space

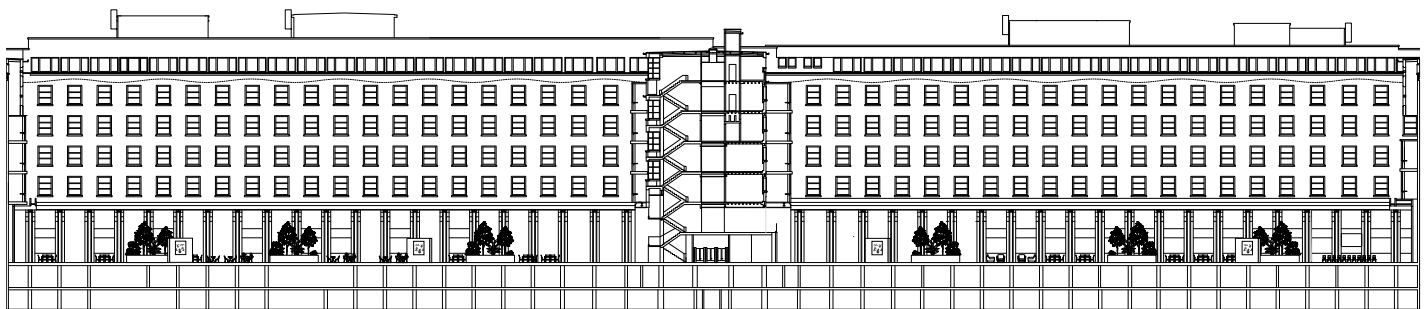


Bank x WeWork



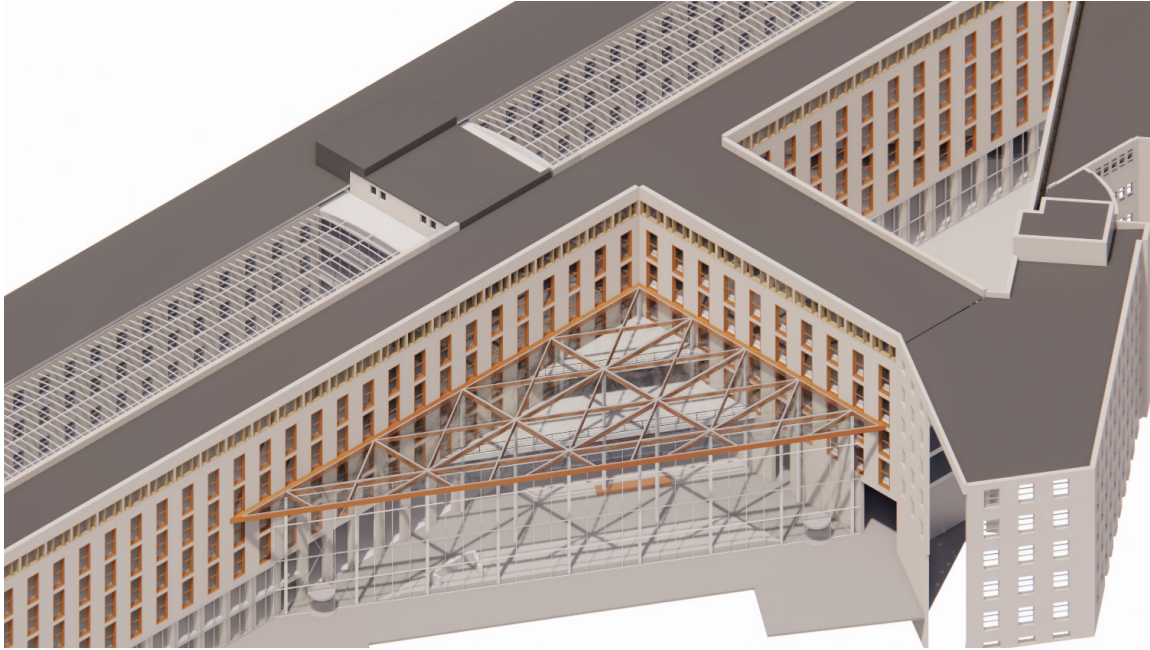


Bank x art exhibitions

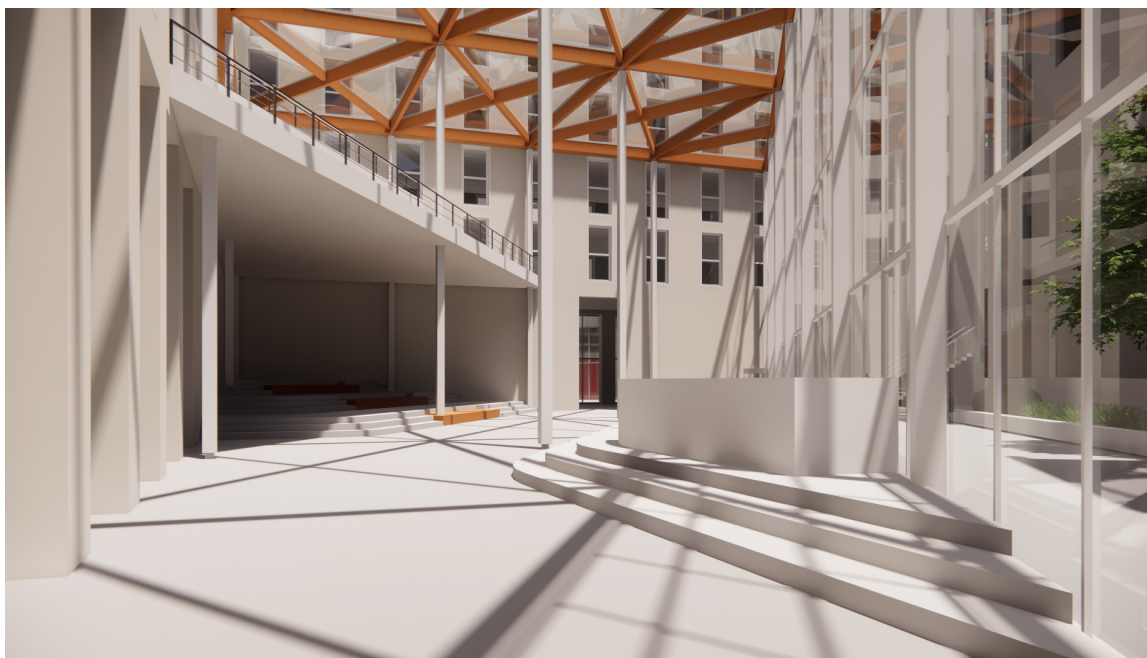


Equivalent of the banking hall

The new atrium will be the new face of the bank. Acting as an equivalent to the existing banking halls, in an exposed way. This new Lobby space consists of a service desk, and flexible working, study or meeting spaces. The triangular volume is positioned to combine different interior and exterior spaces in a open spacious way.

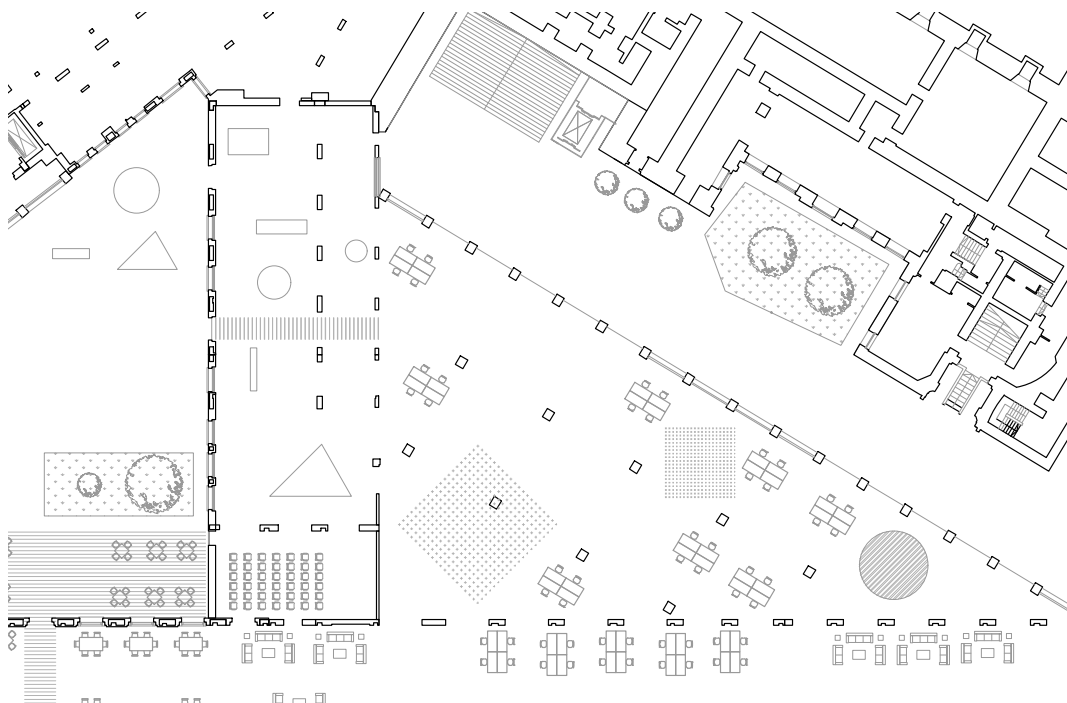


Independent wooden structure shows the banks new image

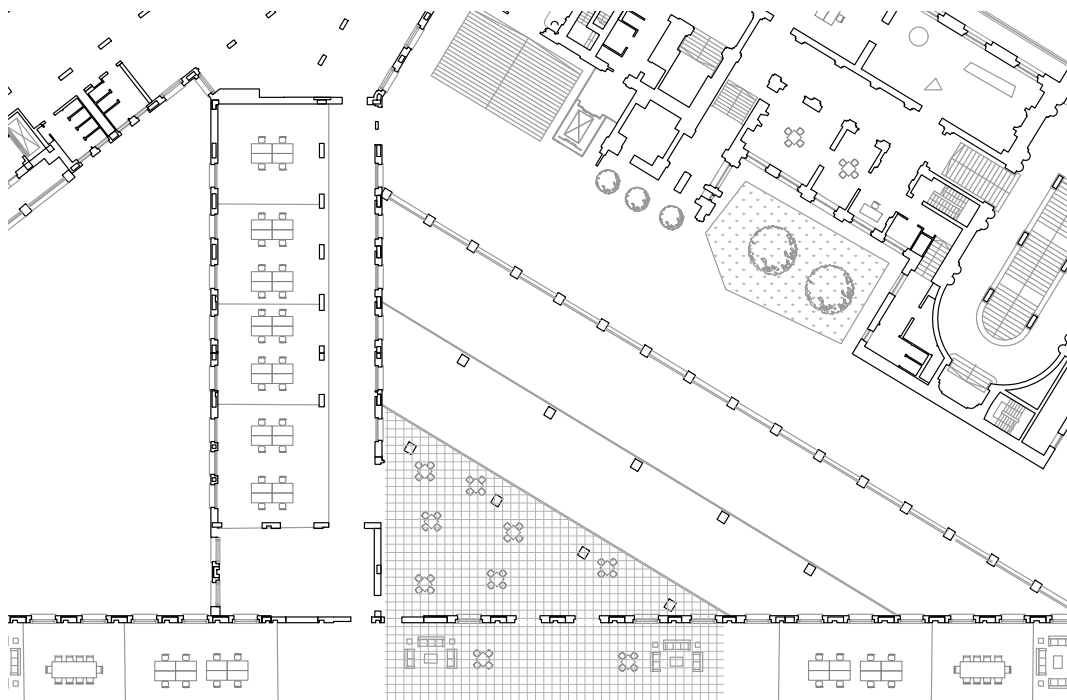


The Lobby space

Atrium
ground floor



Terraces
level 1





atelier oslo



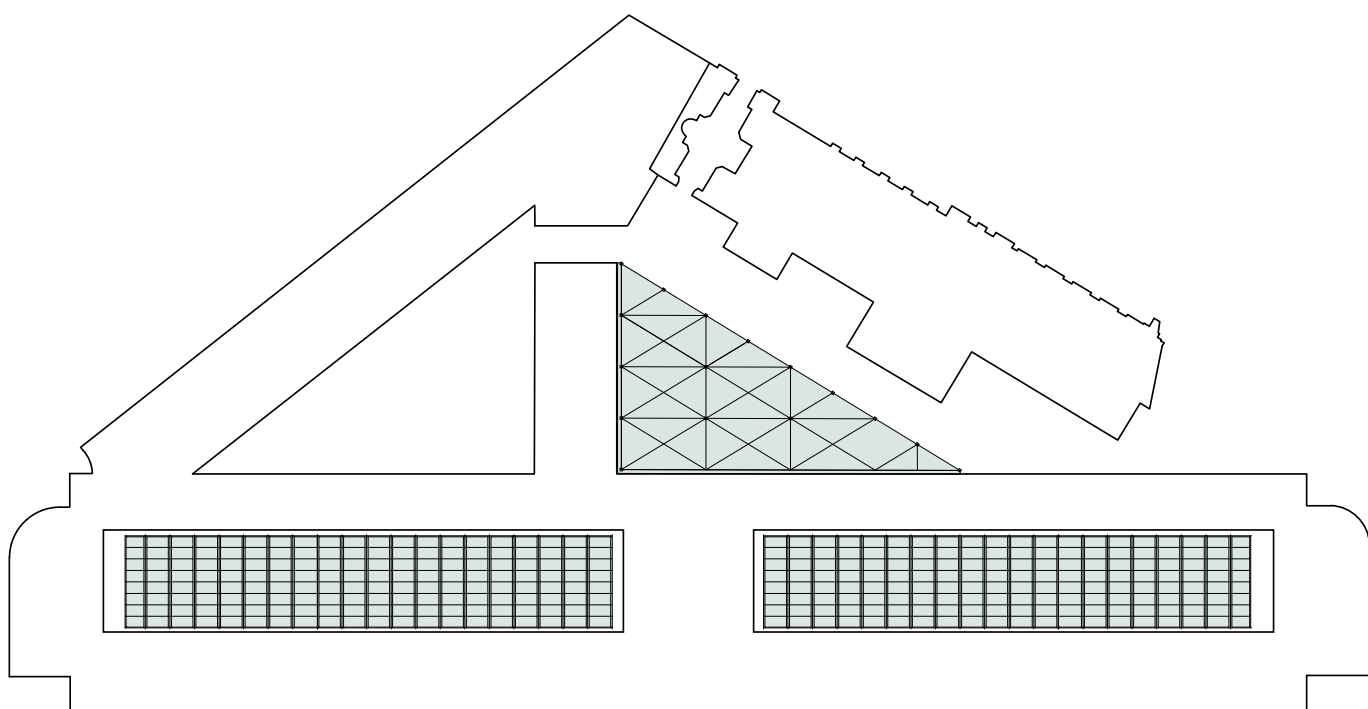
Powerhouse company, de zwarte hond -
assen station



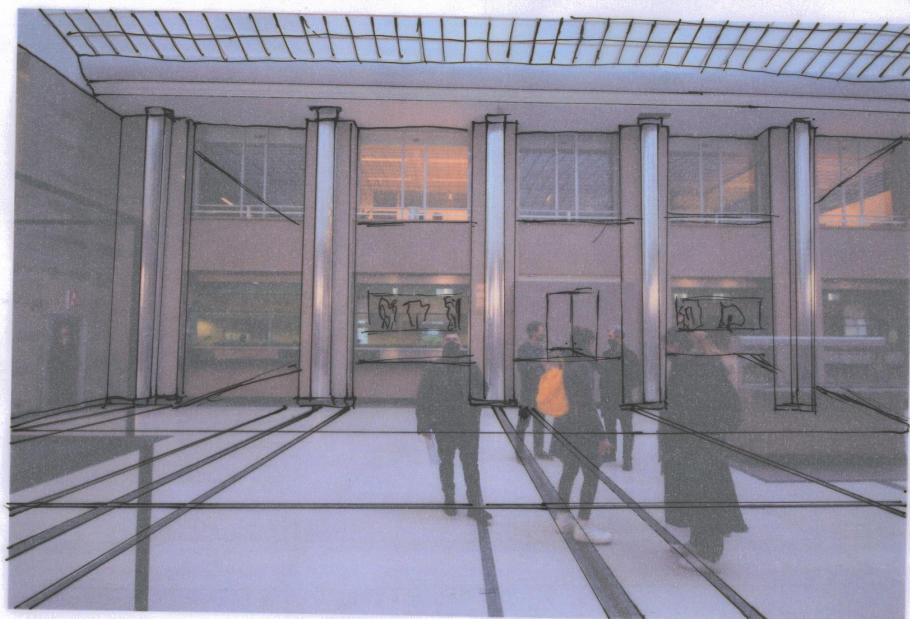
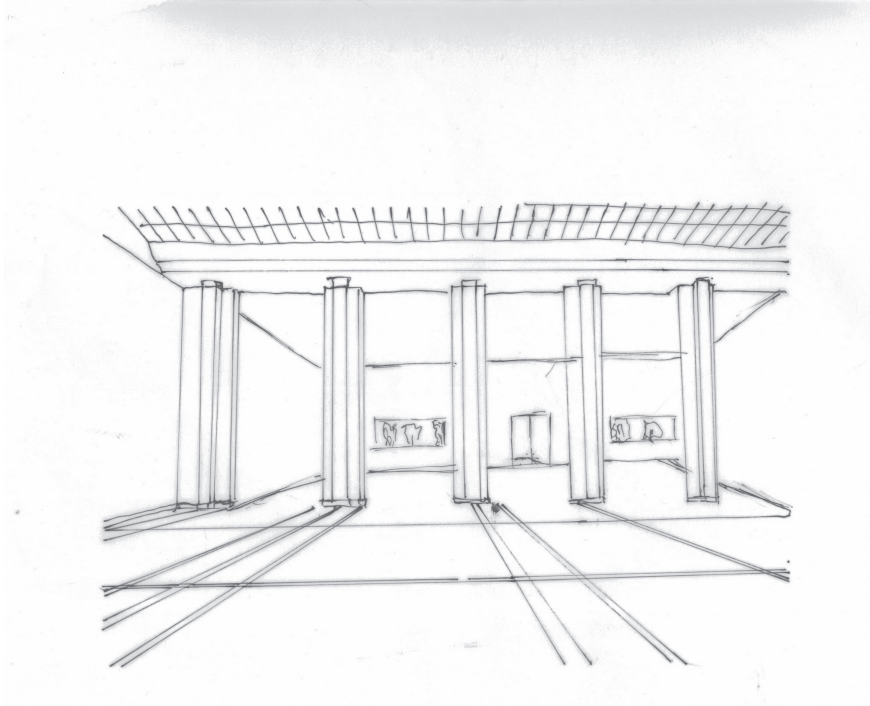
Ginkgo Architects. Úri 72. Historic restoration



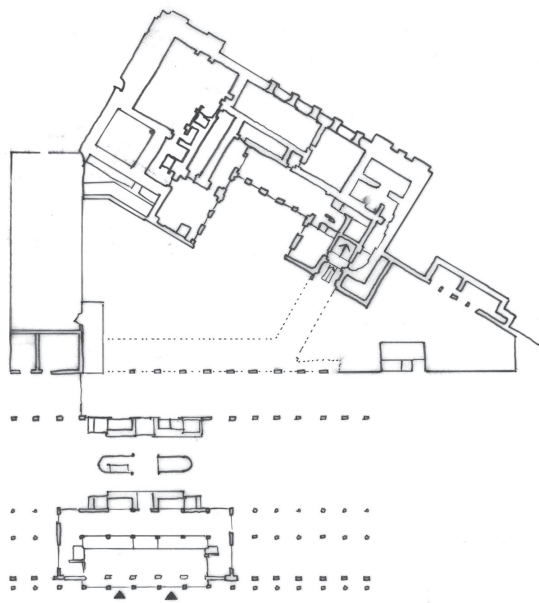
Q3 Academy - Ellis Williams Architects



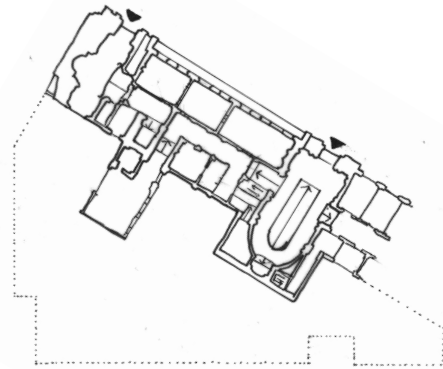
Opening the connection



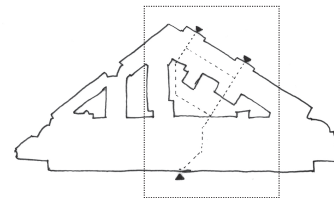
A public route



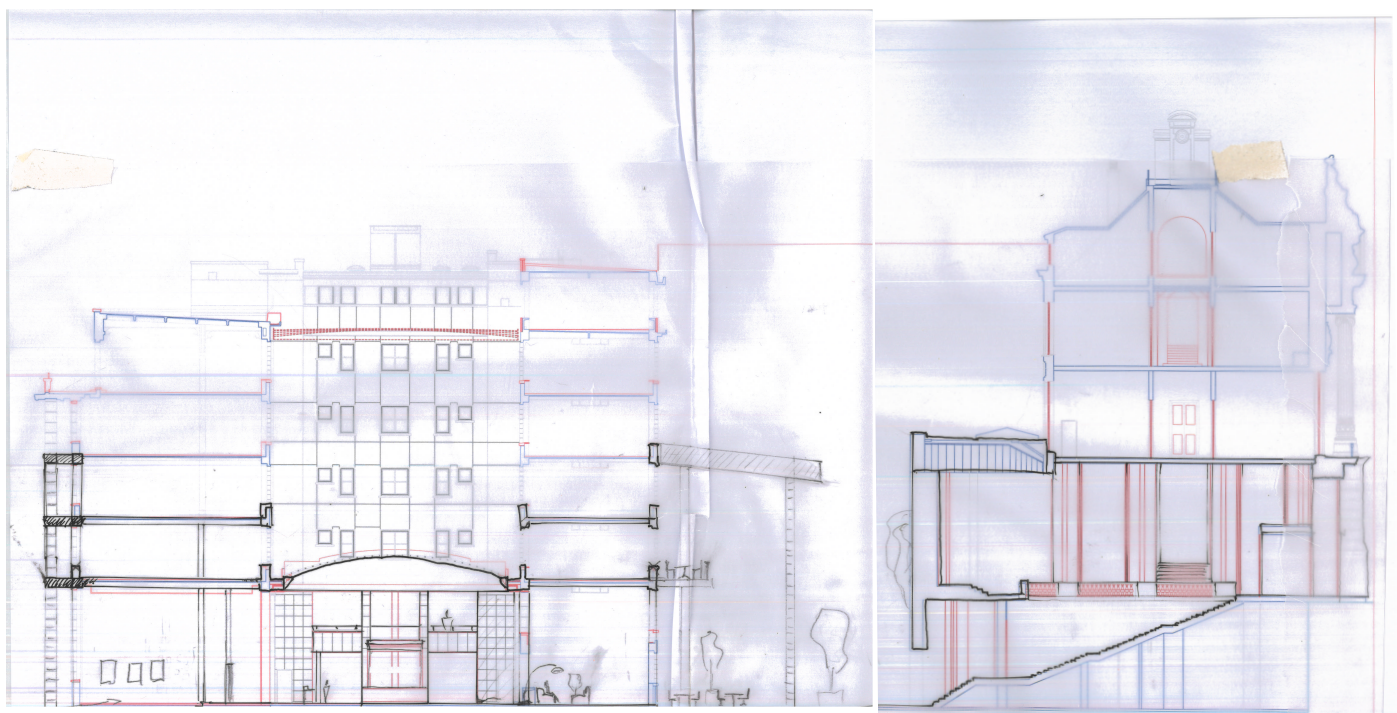
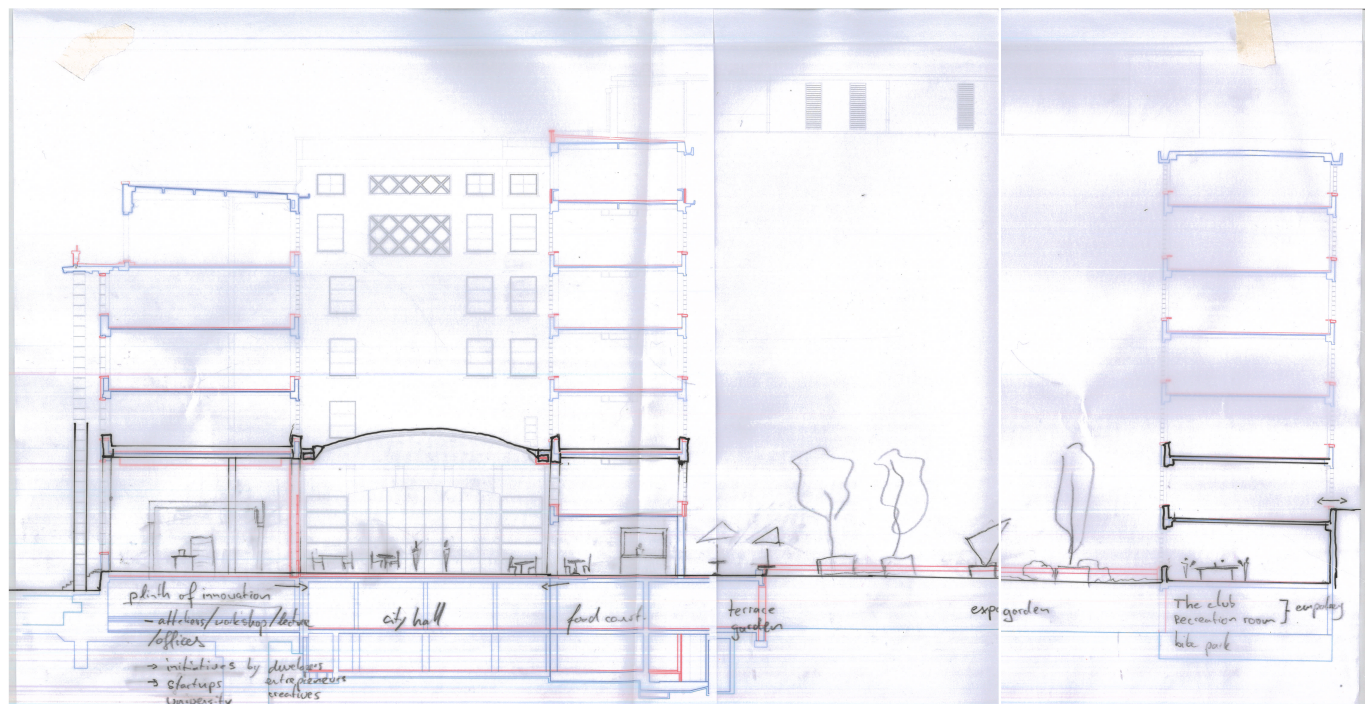
level 0



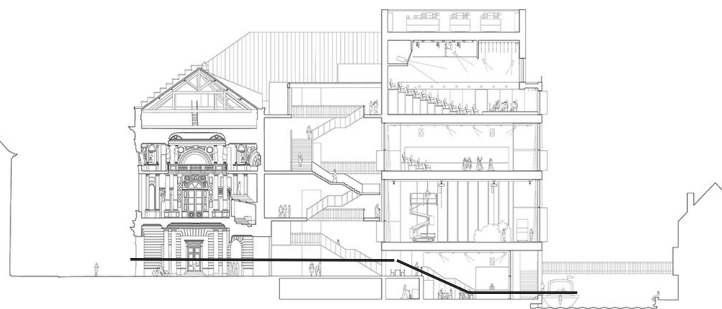
level 1



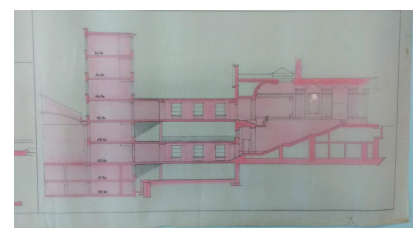
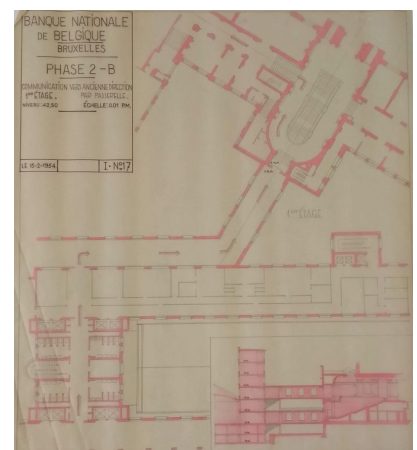
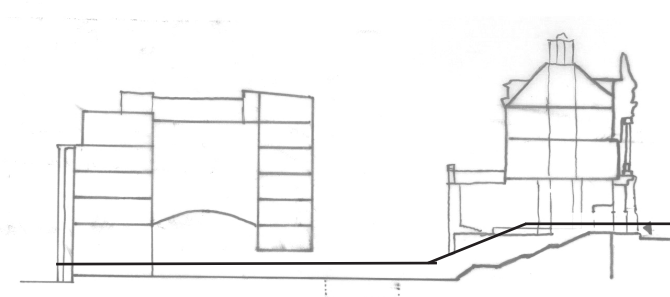
Public sections



passway

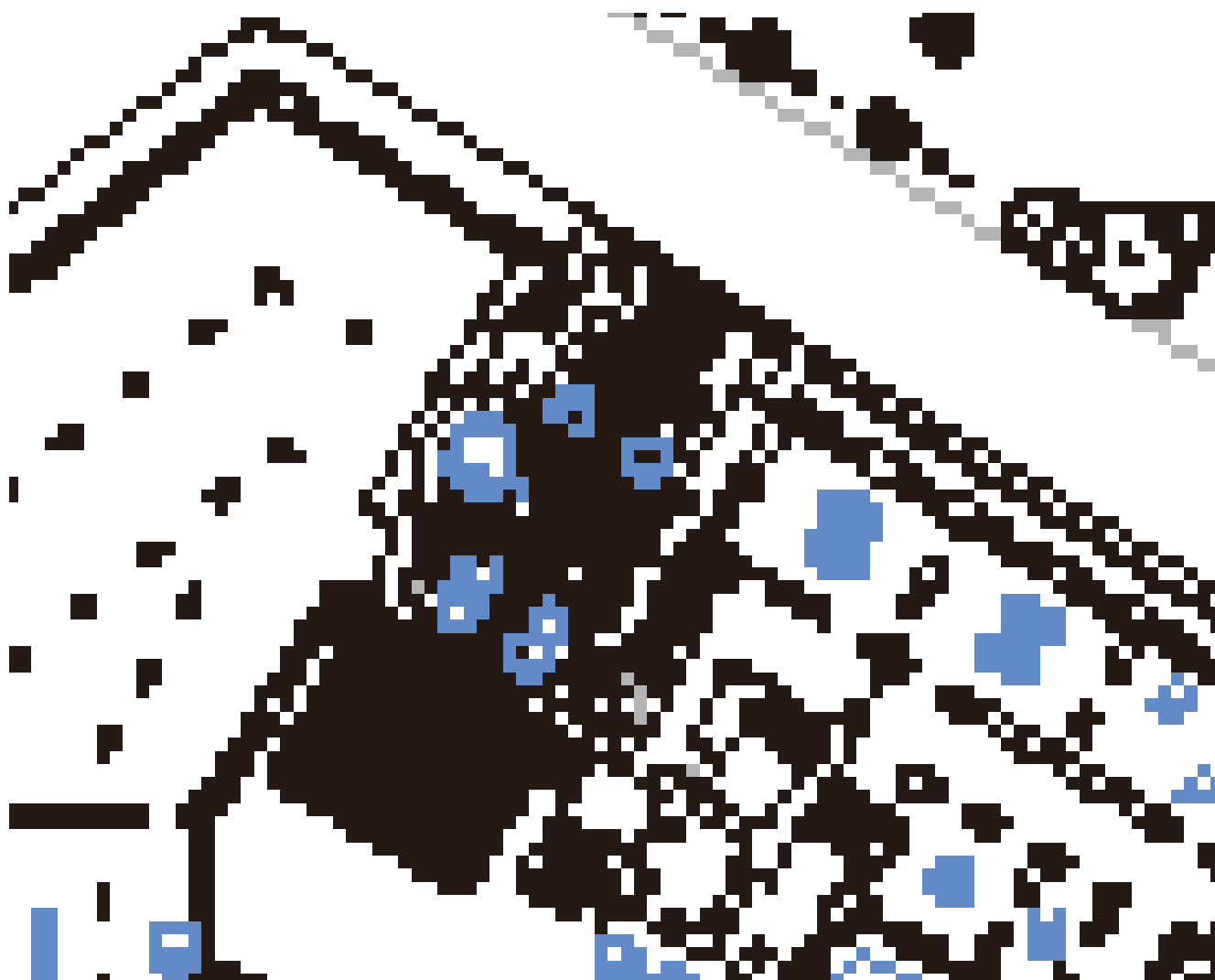


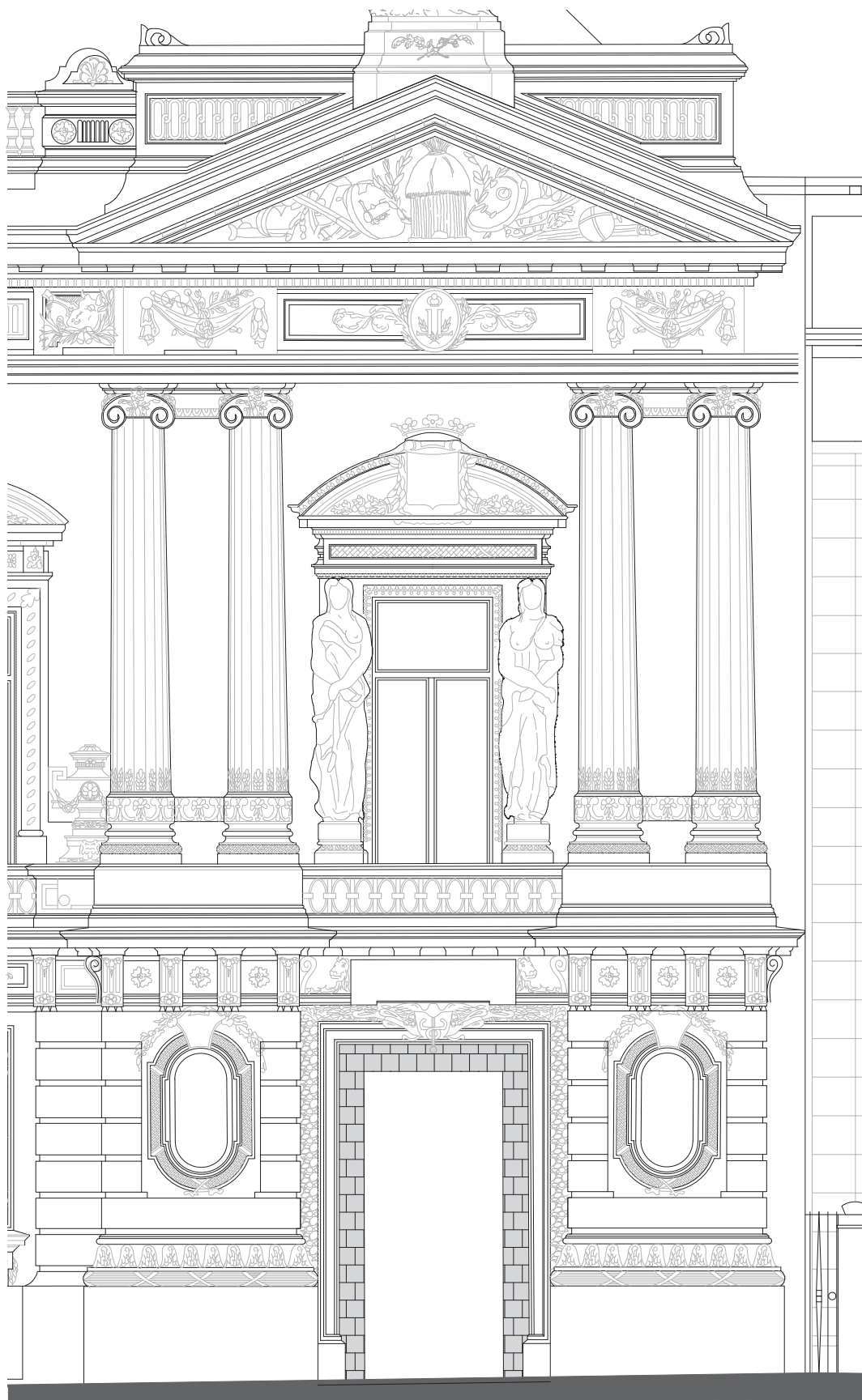
Opera, Music and Performance Arts Centre, Ghent - DRDH



Afb 2.98: Marcel Van Goethem, Plan en snede voor een tweede passerelle boven de bestaande passerelle. Bron: Archief Nationale Bank, plannen koker 605, Plans BNB 1(1948-1950), 23.01.27.55

Transverse section through typical blocks





Wander around to get inspired

Workspaces

The bank is mainly occupied by office spaces. These office spaces shifted through time, but mainly consisted of small closed door private office rooms or shared spaces with a maximum of 4 people, stitched together by a small and long corridor. The search for good office space is to look at the 'not-office' space, the 'anti-thesis' of work. Since a pleasurable environment outside your working screen hours have a big influence on your well-being. Therefore the new program with the public ground floor was created in this design. The security gates to enter the banking offices at the upper floors are situated in the middle of the bank, right in between the new public program, to let the employees mix with the new life that is occupying the bank. Once at the upper levels, where only employees can go, the relation with outside and the public is created again. This is done by improving the views on the public street, the new courtyards with garden and the

lobby.

To open up the working space visually, new longer sightlines will give the feeling of a big world to work in. This is done by getting rid of the 100 meter long small corridor that is surrounded by the small 'closed door' offices. Instead, aiming for a more open workspace with several closed door spaces for private meetings and work that needs an extra level of focus.

The new core of the bank will act as a living room. A relatively spacious place for active work, breaks and phone calls. The focus is to create a more open floor plan, to get escaped from the small office spaces, and tiny corridors. To improve the spaciousness of the area, strong sightliness through the banking hall, lobby, the public street and the opened courtyards. The choice is made to create just a few big meeting spaces rather than lots of fragmentated informal spaces, to create a clearer organisation, and to let people interfere more.

The workplace



Conference room



Informal lounge



Diverse meeting room



Semi-open office



Corner office



Private seating

Cellular Office design

The ground floor was a very occupied working space, where open spaces were divided by simple cellular office walls. Nowadays these spaces inside the main banking hall is underused, as well as the public space as the private office space.



The lively office.

Thuiswerken

After corona, the office may become a kind of clubhouse of the company



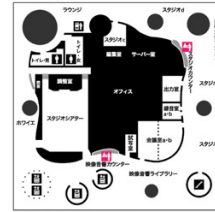
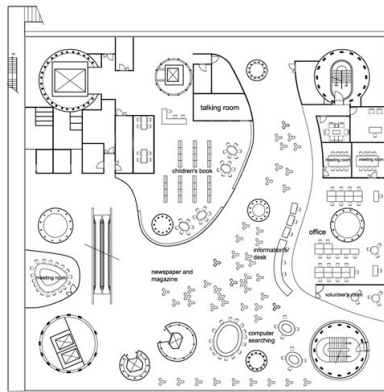
Een bijna leeg kantoor in Amsterdam. Het is onzeker of kantoren na de coronapandemie weer vol zitten. Beeld Werry Crone

TNO: "Working productively and with concentration at home, and mainly going to the office to meet colleagues, make social contacts and work together, that is the picture of the future that TNO researchers see emerging from the answers given by employees in their survey. The office will therefore become a '**MEETING PLACE**', is how TNO summarises it."

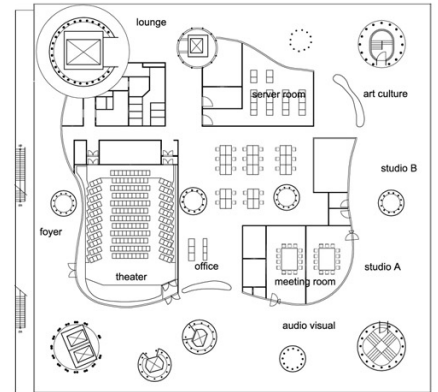
Afas: "The office will soon be our **CLUBHOUSE** where colleagues meet to inspire each other, develop themselves, stimulate each other and sometimes just have fun together. The office will primarily be a breeding ground for personal growth, having a coffee with a colleague or meeting business relations".



2nd information



7th studio



What is the clubhouse office?

Creating a hub for employees and visitors. Creating excitement in the dynamic office



Can the bank be a clubhouse office?



Sendai Mediatheque, Toyo Ito, 1995

Typical Plan

SMLXL, Rem Koolhaas

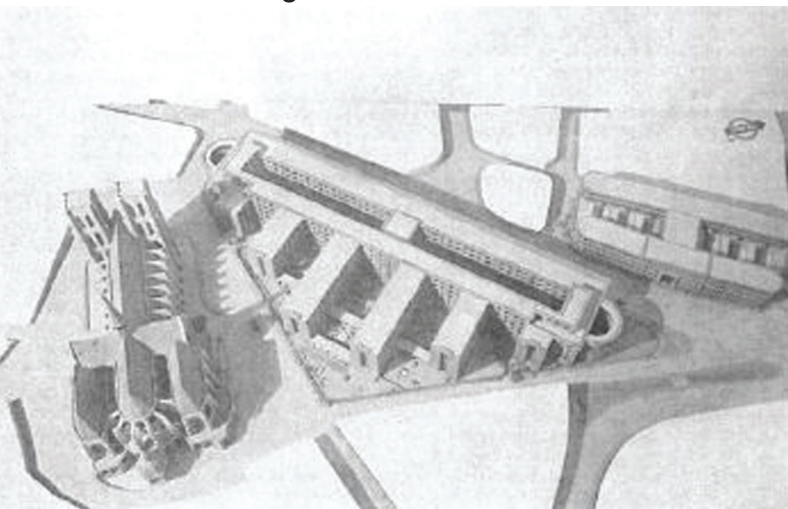
What type of floorplan is requested for the National Bank? A clear plan gives a good overview and often a efficient use of space. But is that the main goal for this assignment? Do we want to embrace the labirynth of the plan, or do we want to open up, and give clearness into the plan. Modernist plans are clear but often lacks of historic substance and new interesting encounters.

“Typical plan is a segment of an unacknowledged utopia, the promise of a post-architectural future”

“The massive office building with its standardized, repetitive, floors.”

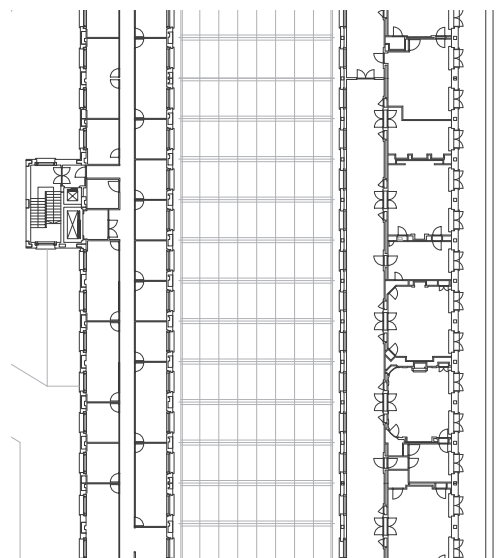
“The European office is thin, thin as its more historic substance”

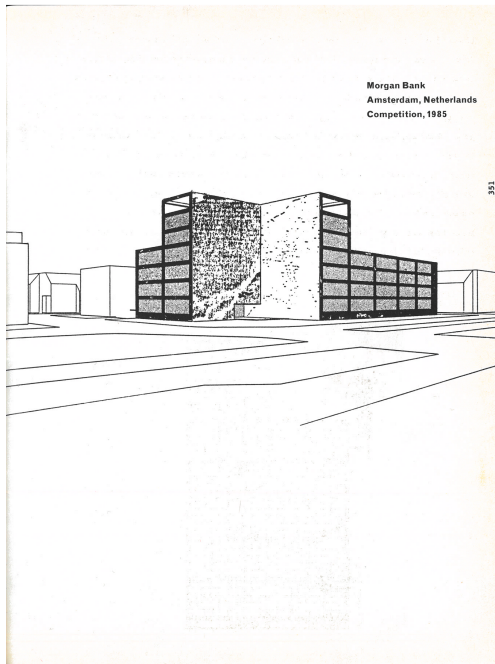
Would Project C have become the ‘utopisation’ of the Bank of Belgium?



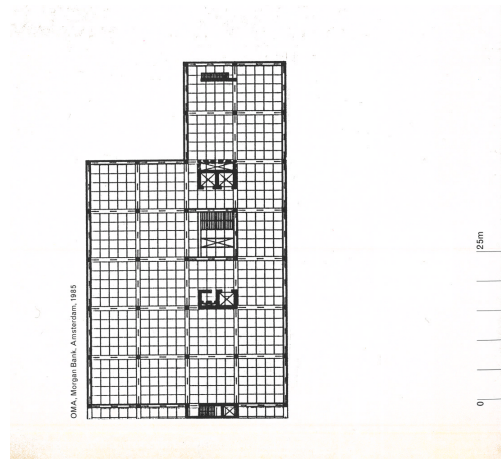
Project C - Plan van Goethem, 1948

The typical office plan of the National Bank





Morgan Bank, Competition OMA 1985 “A typically European 50/50 split.”



The notion of the typical plan is therapeutic; it is the End of Architectural History, which is nothing but the hysterical fetishization of the atypical plan. Typical Plan is a segment of an unacknowledged utopia, the promise of a post-architectural future.

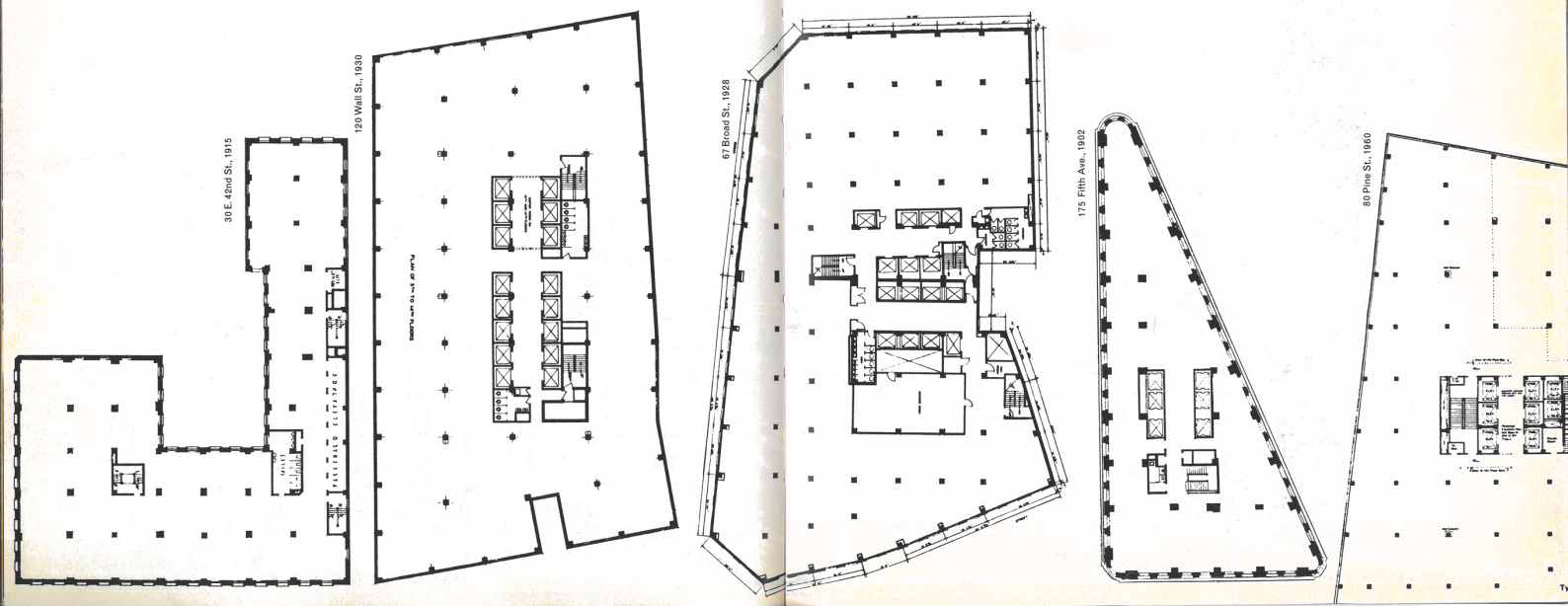
Just as *The Man Without Qualities* haunts European literature, “the plan without qualities” is the great quest of American building.

From the late 19th century to the early 1970s, there is an “American century” in which Typical Plan is developed from the primitive loft type (ruthless creation of floor space through the sheer multiplication of a given site) via early masterpieces of *smooth space* like the RCA Building (1933)—its escalators, its elevators, the Zen-like serenity of its office suites—to provisional culminations such as the Exxon Building (1971) and the World Trade Center (1972–73). Together they represent evidence of the discovery and subsequent mastery of a *new architecture* (often proclaimed but never realized at the scale of Typical Plan).

The ambition of Typical Plan is to create new territories for the smooth unfolding of new processes, in this case, ideal accommodation for business. But what is business? Supposedly the most circumscribed program, it is actually the most formless. Business makes no demands. The architects of Typical Plan understood the secret of business: the office building represents the first totally abstract program—it does not demand a particular architecture, its only function is to let its occupants *exist*. Business can invade *any* architecture. Out of this indeterminacy Typical Plan generates character.

Raymond Hood, one of its inventors, defined the typical plan with tautological bravura: “The plan is of primary importance, because on the floor are performed all the activities of the human occupants.”

(Typical Plan provides the multiple platforms of 20th-century democracy.)



A-Typical Plan

The A-typical floor plan takes its full scope in contrast to the Typical plan. The entire volume reveals **A RECURRING OPPOSITION BETWEEN THE GENERIC AND THE SPESIFIC**, the standard and the customized, the low-key and the spectacular.

The changing definition of work demands a new conception of the office space: Increasing integration of informality, pleasure, and even play - notions often seen as the **ENTITHESIS OF WORK** - into the office has profound implications on the architectural evolution of the workspace.

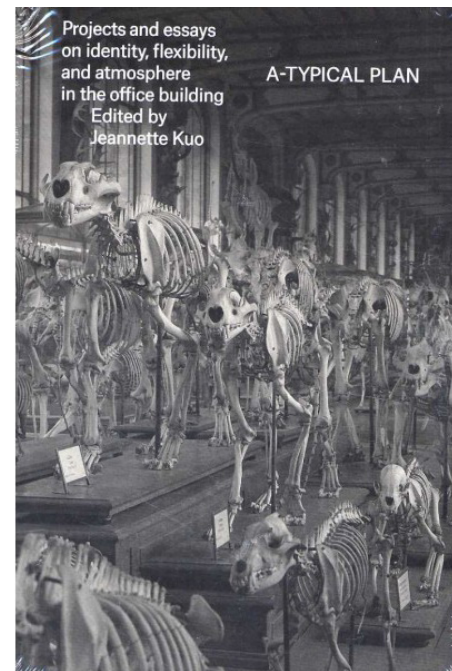
What is the nature of work today? How can architecture inspire and enable new exchanges in the workplace? Can architecture make work pleasurable? And lastly, beyond adapting to changing demands, can architecture also anticipate new possibilities and definitions of work?

The efficiency of the repetitive floors became equated with the monotony and depersonalisation of the workplace. The question is not whether we repeat, but what and how we repeat, and at what scale.

The plan its efficiency, marketability, as well as the corporate structure of the client, unfold primarily in the plan.

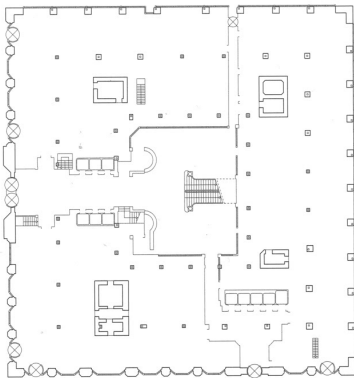
WHAT VALUES SHOULD WE USE TO EVALUATE THE PLAN TODAY? From informality to comfort to mobility, these new paradigms of the workplace point towards a dynamic and fluid environment that challenges our ideas of organization and typology.

The definition of working and productivity is changing over time. As more and more emphasis is placed on innovation and creativity, various modes of working - brainstorming sessions, video-conferencing, cross-disciplinary collaborations, telecommuting, etc. - have challenged the organizational and spatial definition of the office plan.



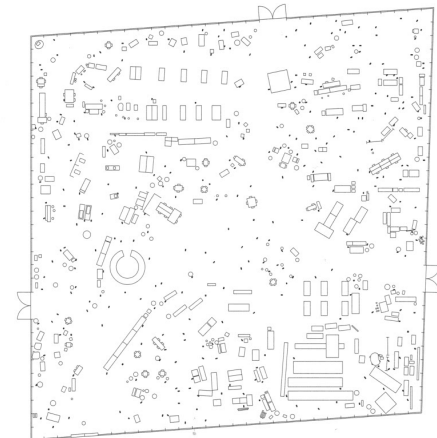
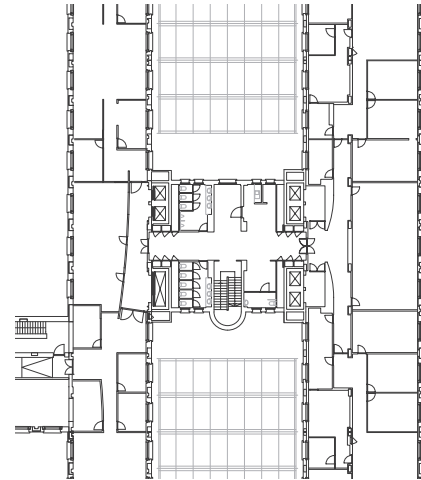
Next to that, the idea of work has also come to encompass activities beyond what is commonly associated with the office. Informal meeting areas such as lounges, cafes, even ping-pong tables, are **OPPORTUNITIES FOR CASUAL ENCOUNTERS** that may spark new ideas and collaboration.

Beyond the office: The entithesis of work.

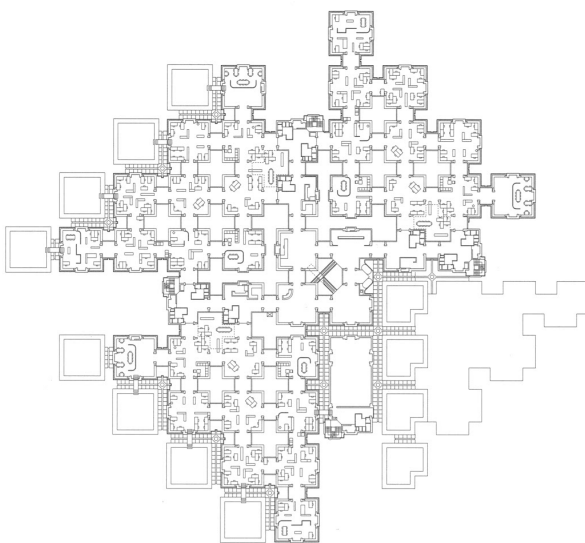


Rookery Building, Burnman & Wellborn, 1885
The spatial grandeur lobby with stair, the circulation that creates the encounters.

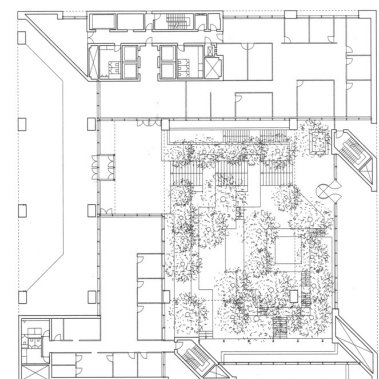
The A-typical office plan of the National Bank



Kanagawa Institute of Technology Workshop, Ishigami, 2004
The ultimate freedom in plan.



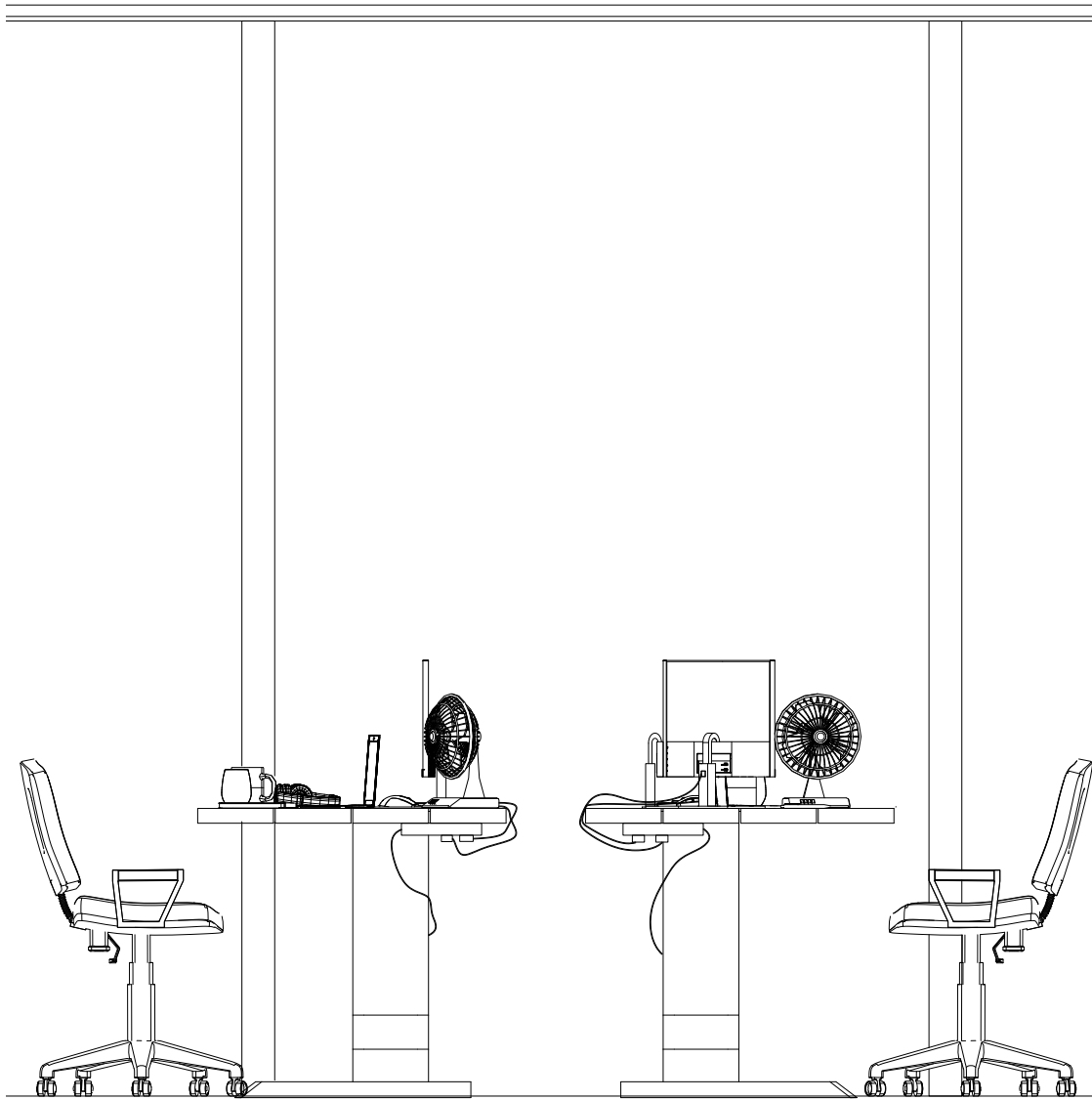
Centraal Beheer, Hertzberger, 1967
City life: Interior streets and cellular offices for intimacy & individuality.



Ford Foundation, Roche & Dinkeloo, 1963
Indoor public garden for informal meetings

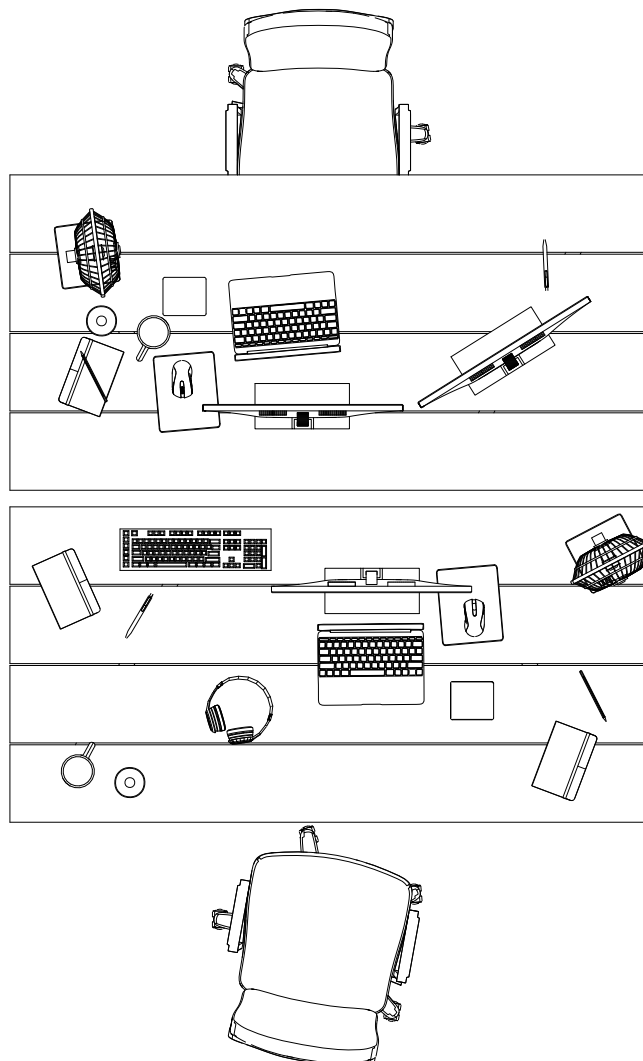
The desk

Looking at someone's desk is looking into someone's personality, a personality that copes with their working tasks and uses the available furniture and equipment. **THE CLEAN DESK** could display a well-ordered person that likes to have a white table with stuff straightened out orthogonal. The clean desk could also display a messy person, that needs **STRUCTURE** and a clear overview in order to work sufficient.





The working environment and working tasks are also determining the organization and layout of the desk. Working on the computer or reading in books change the positioning of **DESK EQUIPMENT** and working on your own desk is also different from working on a flexible office space. Lastly, people can **PERSONALIZE** their desk by adding photos or having food and drinking mug on their table. Although some of the needs for personalization is being fulfilled by digital screens.



The Larkin Building, Model



**Furniture,
as object**

Model, as object



The Larkin Building, Model



2.45m long model

Brick alinged columns



Confetti desk

**Fourteen lamps fixed
to tables**

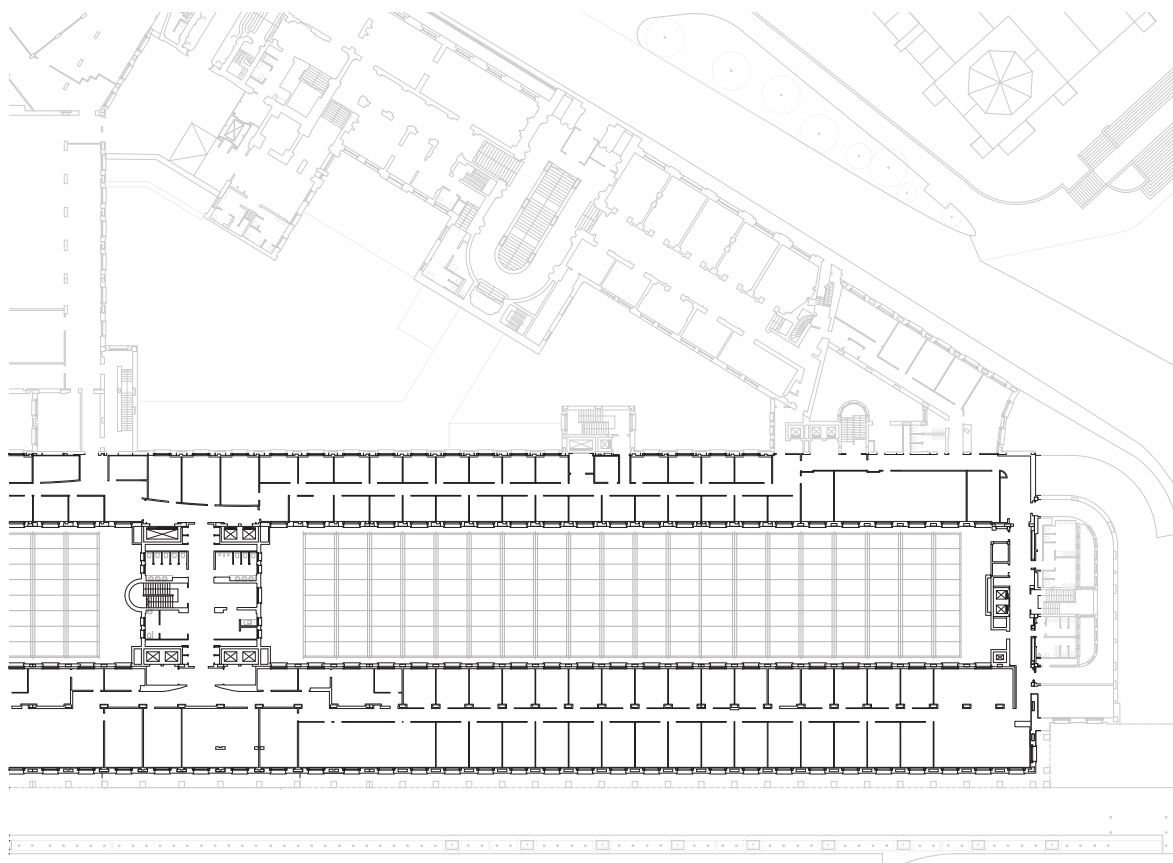
Personalised flowers

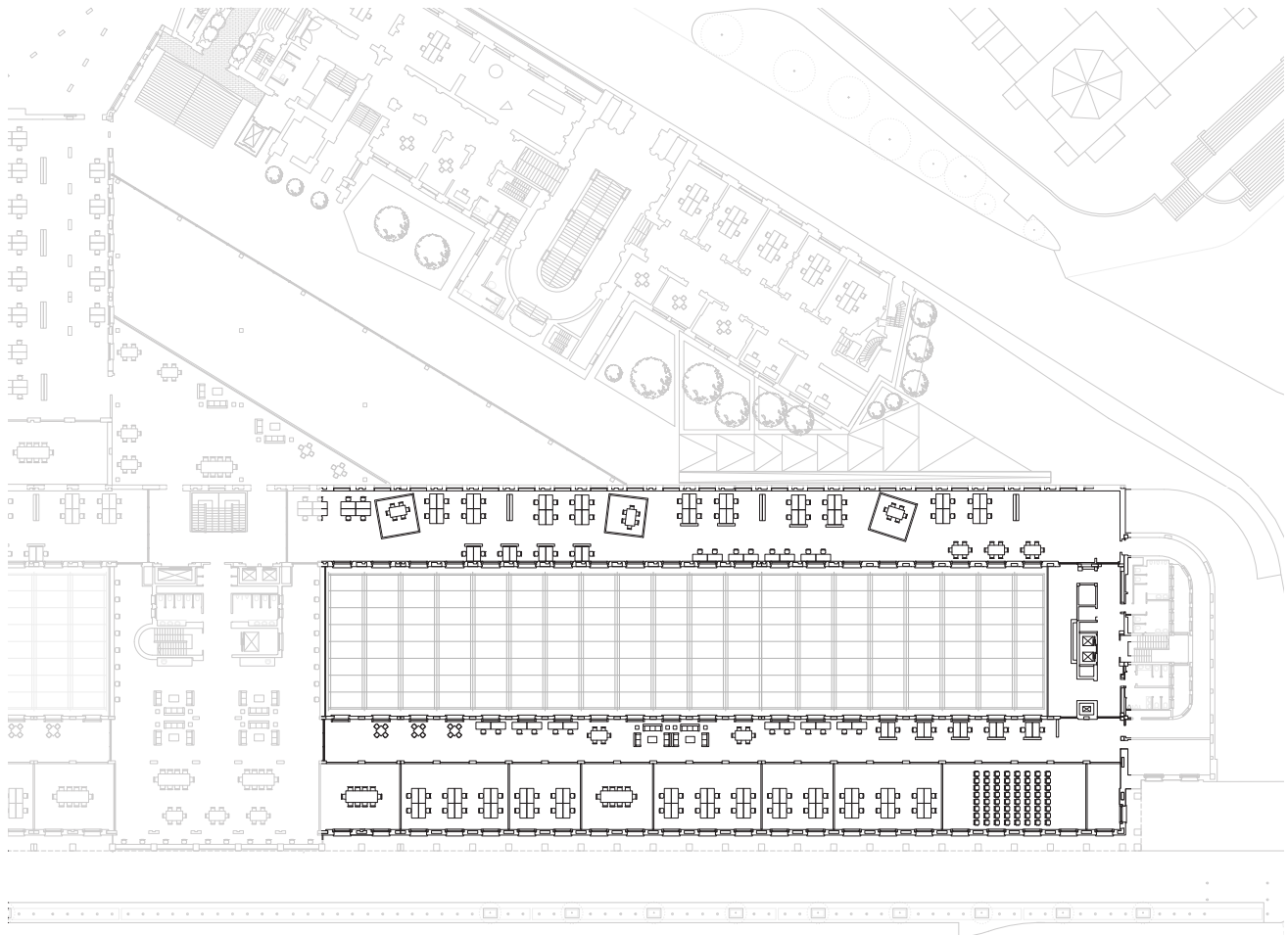
1mm thick armrest



The workplace

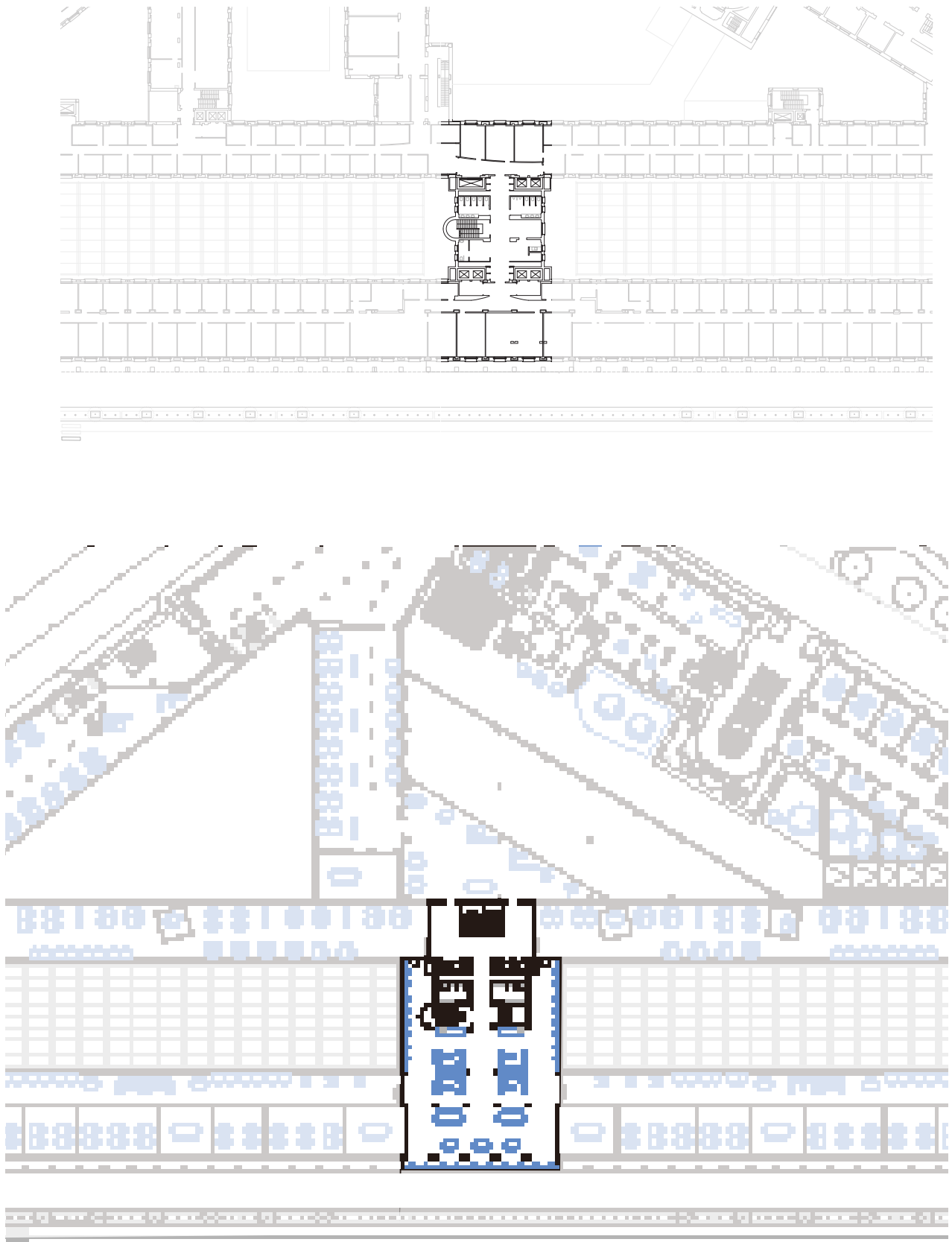
Getting rid of the 100 meter long small corridor that is surrounded by small 'closed door' offices. Creating a more open workspace with several closed door spaces for private meetings and work that needs an extra level of focus.

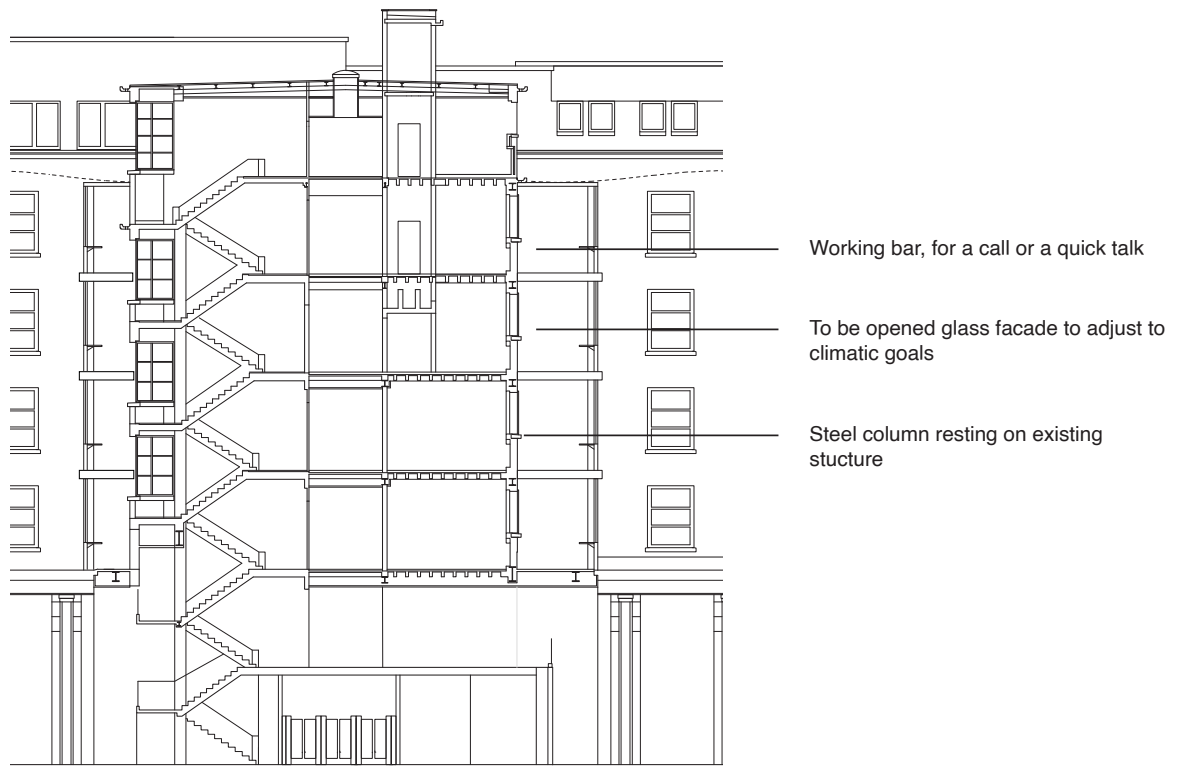




New core of the bank

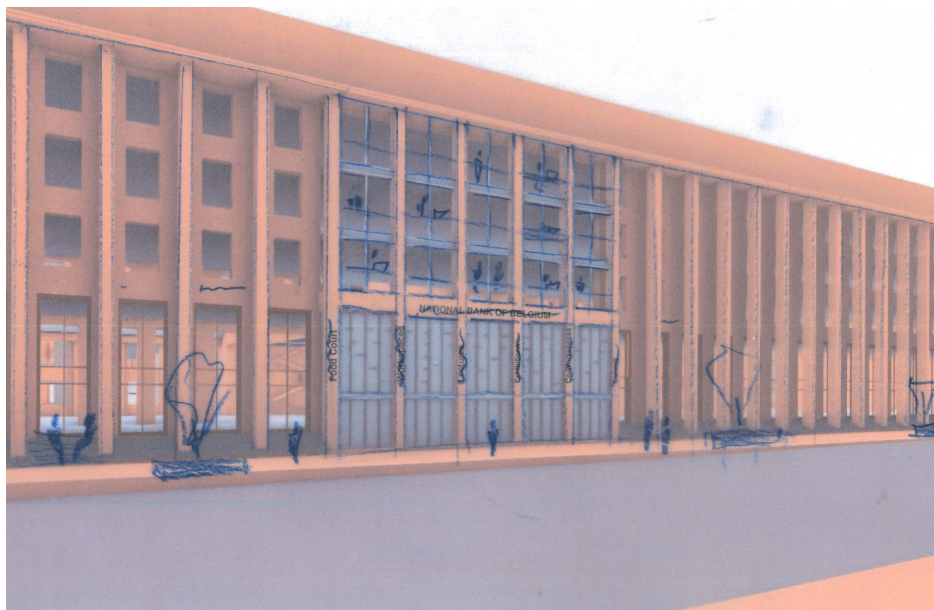
The new core of the bank will act as a living room. A relatively spacious place for active work, breaks and phone calls. The focus is to create a more open floor plan, to get escaped from the small office spaces, and tiny corridors. To improve the spaciousness of the area, strong sightliness through the banking hall, lobby, the public street and the opened courtyards. The choice is made to create just a few big meeting spaces rather than lots of fragmented informal spaces, to create a clearer organisation, and to let people interfere more.

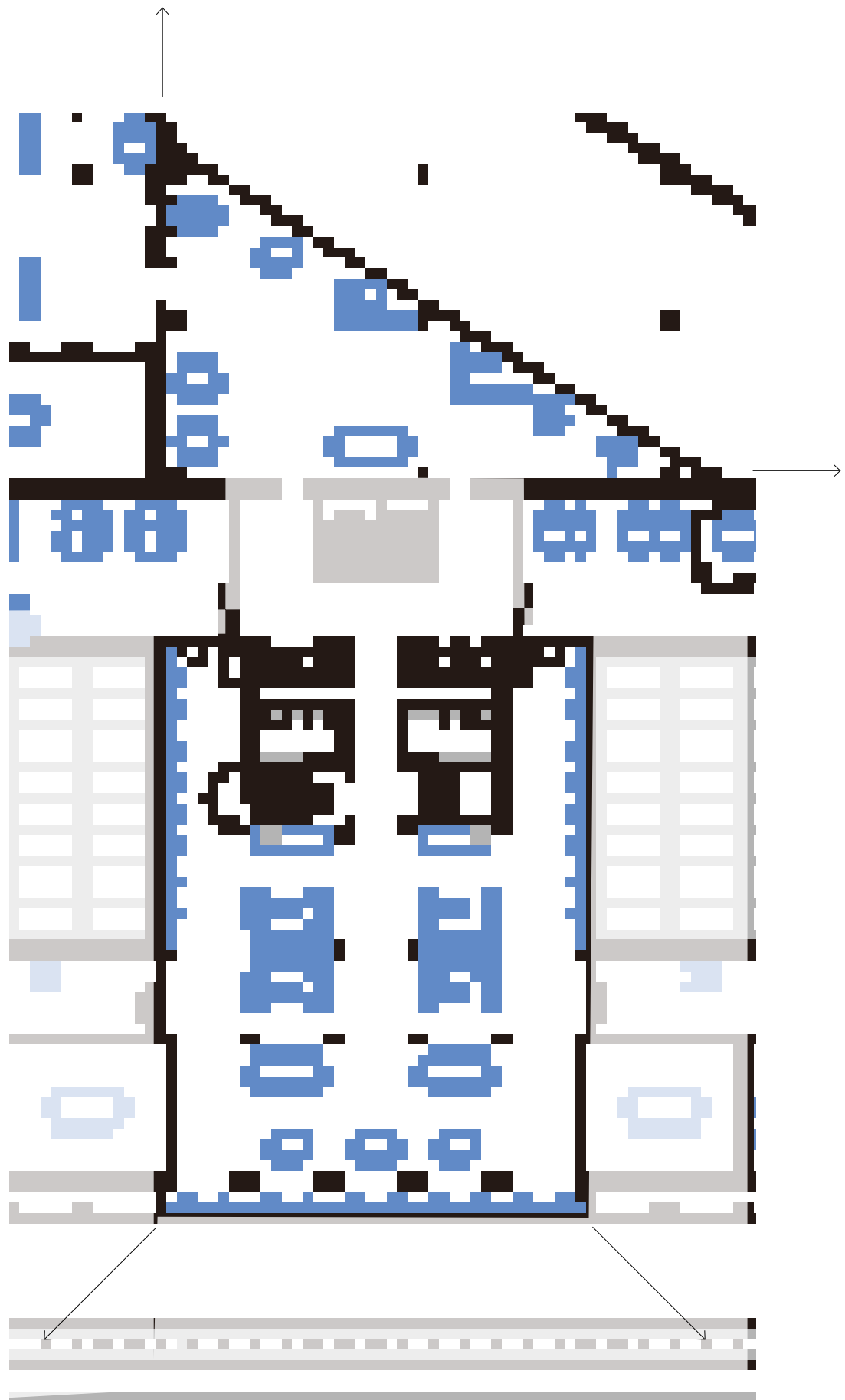




Extracted working space

The working space above the former entrance is pulled in between the columns, to create a viewpoint and relationship between the street and the workers. Exposing the program on upper floors.





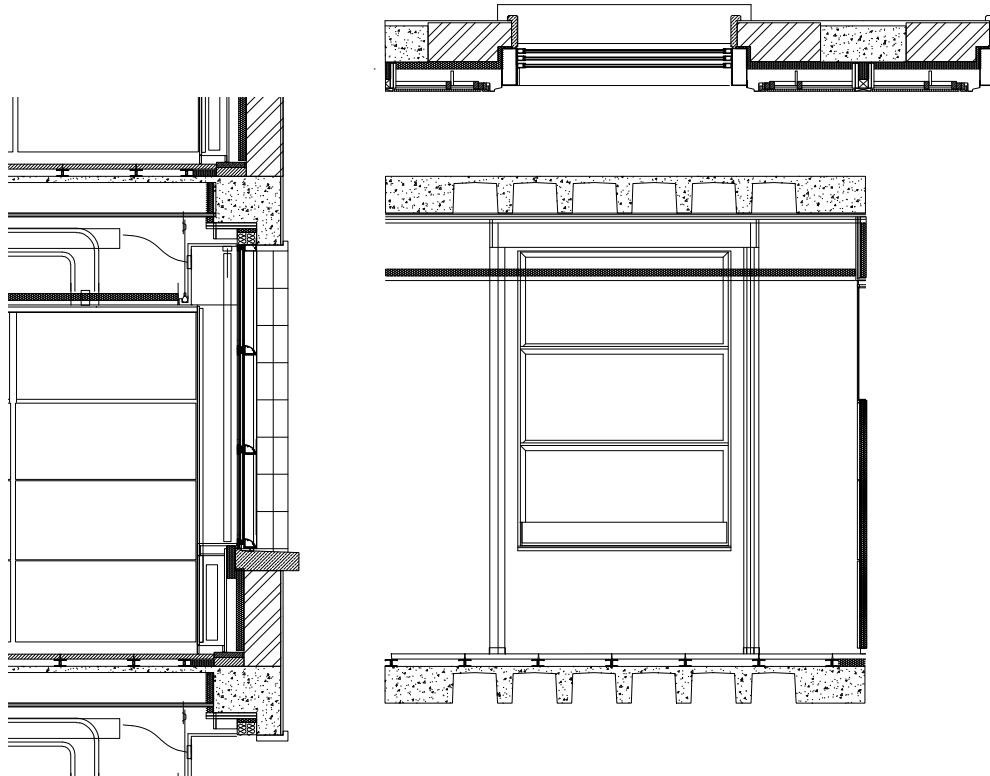
Structure of the working space

Stripping the facade to the concrete structure and making use of the full height to let in more light, and have a greater view on the courtyards and internal lobby space or lobby roof.



Old and new office interior facade

Existing office interior facade



New office interior facade

