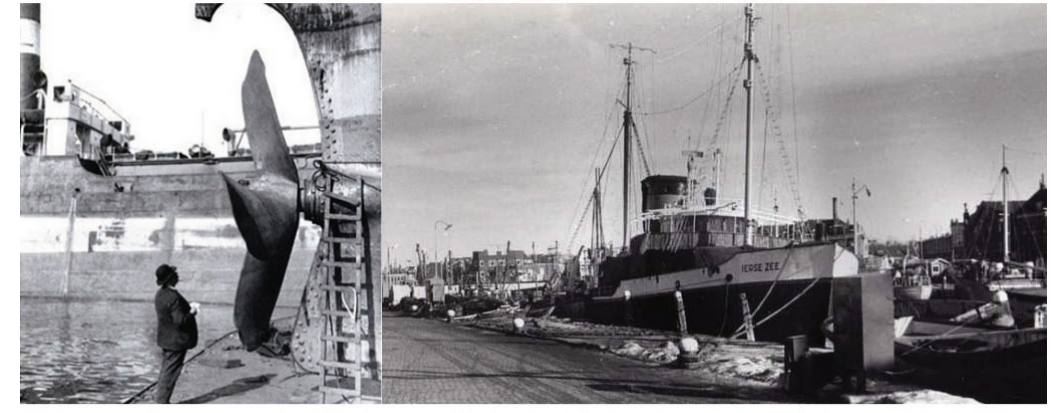


# AMSTERDAM SCHOOL OF CRAFTS

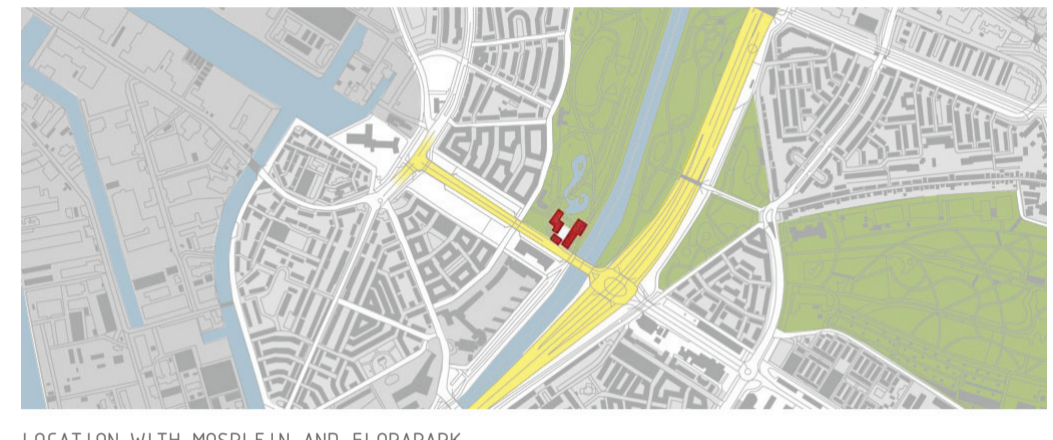
a new educational environment for crafts and practice

## Area and Location

Amsterdam North came to be through the building of shipyards and wharfs. Workers were housed in garden villages which belonged to industrial companies. Nowadays these neighborhoods are still quite intact, although new development is heading upon them. The industrial areas along the riverside and the centre of Amsterdam North are the first to be redeveloped. The old shipping and crafts atmosphere will be kept, however new industries have to find their place in order to provide jobs. Another problem is education; there are more school drop-outs than anywhere else in the Netherlands. Mainly groups of VBO pupils encounter and encourage problems.



The former centre of Amsterdam North is the Misplein area, a market square surrounded by small shops and cafés, next to the Florapark. This is unfortunately a slightly used park currently, which is barely connected to the main axis in the area that slices through the "Misplein" square. This location offers an opportunity for improvement in the neighborhood as well as a great spot for a crafts school. Directly in touch with the industrial developments and urban society on the edge of a park, pupils can gain the benefits of both sides. On its location this school can physically be a bridge between the park and the market square while showing crafts to the passer-by. The school adds a bakery and sports hall to the area and can be used as a neighborhood centre.



## Target Group

The inhabitants of Amsterdam North have always been working in craft industries. They were educated in a practical way to work with their hands. Nowadays there is a quest for people who are still capable of real practical crafts. Therefore the idea rose for a new school of crafts, more or less like the old craft schools which were abandoned approximately 25 years ago. Lower education has become more and more theoretical and practice is socially under appreciated. When a solid basis and a good reputation for crafts and practice is established, a quest may be fulfilled and the amount of drop-outs might decrease. That leaves a task to design an inspiring, protective and social learning environment.

To make this learning environment inspiring to the pupils, we need to consider their way of learning. According to several social studies, VBO schools were less successful in educating these pupils because their main focus is on theory. An overall sense of importance to theory and less to practice derived from social pressure and the labor market of the past 10 years. Crafts pupils are estimated to learn mainly from examples, each other and their master.

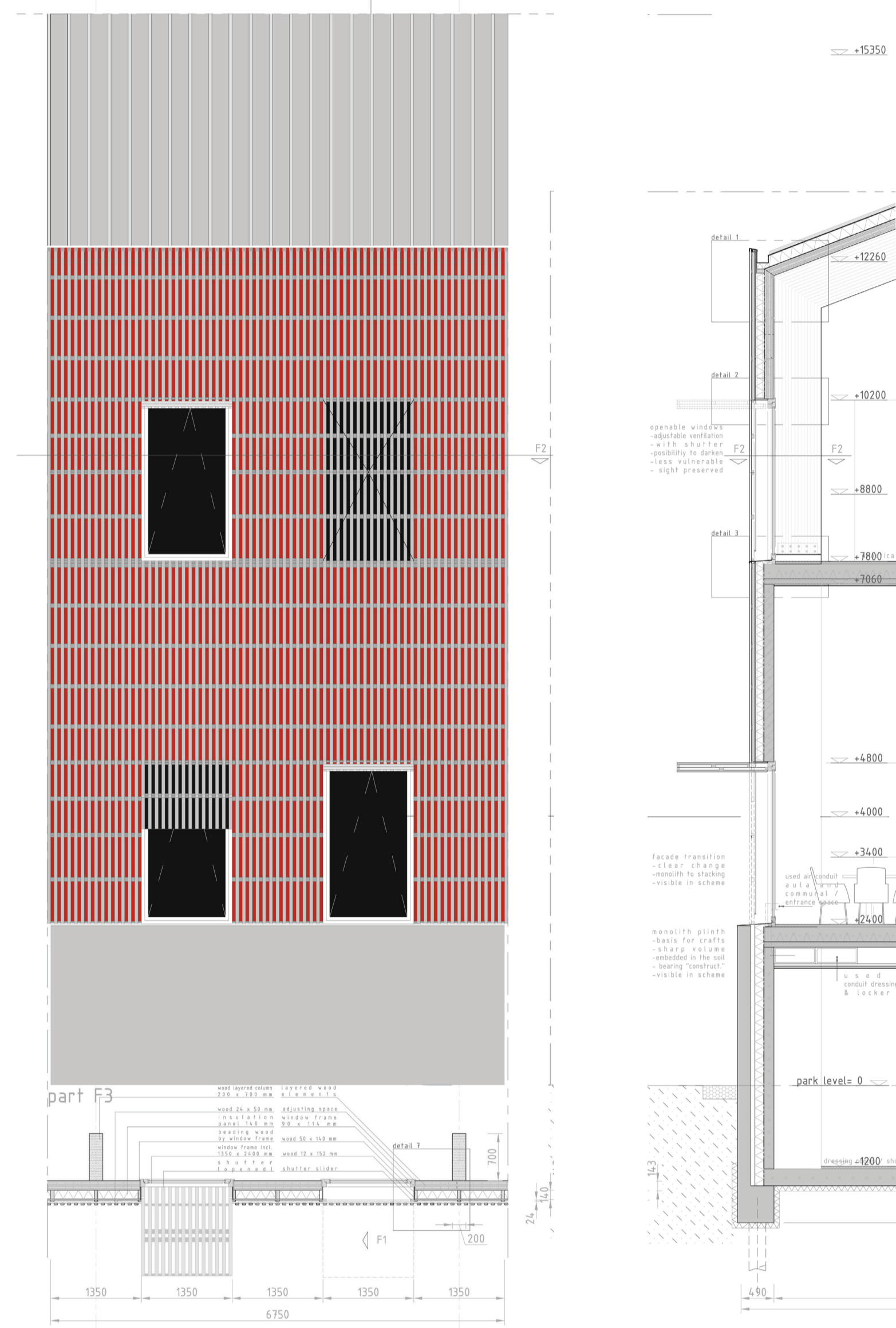
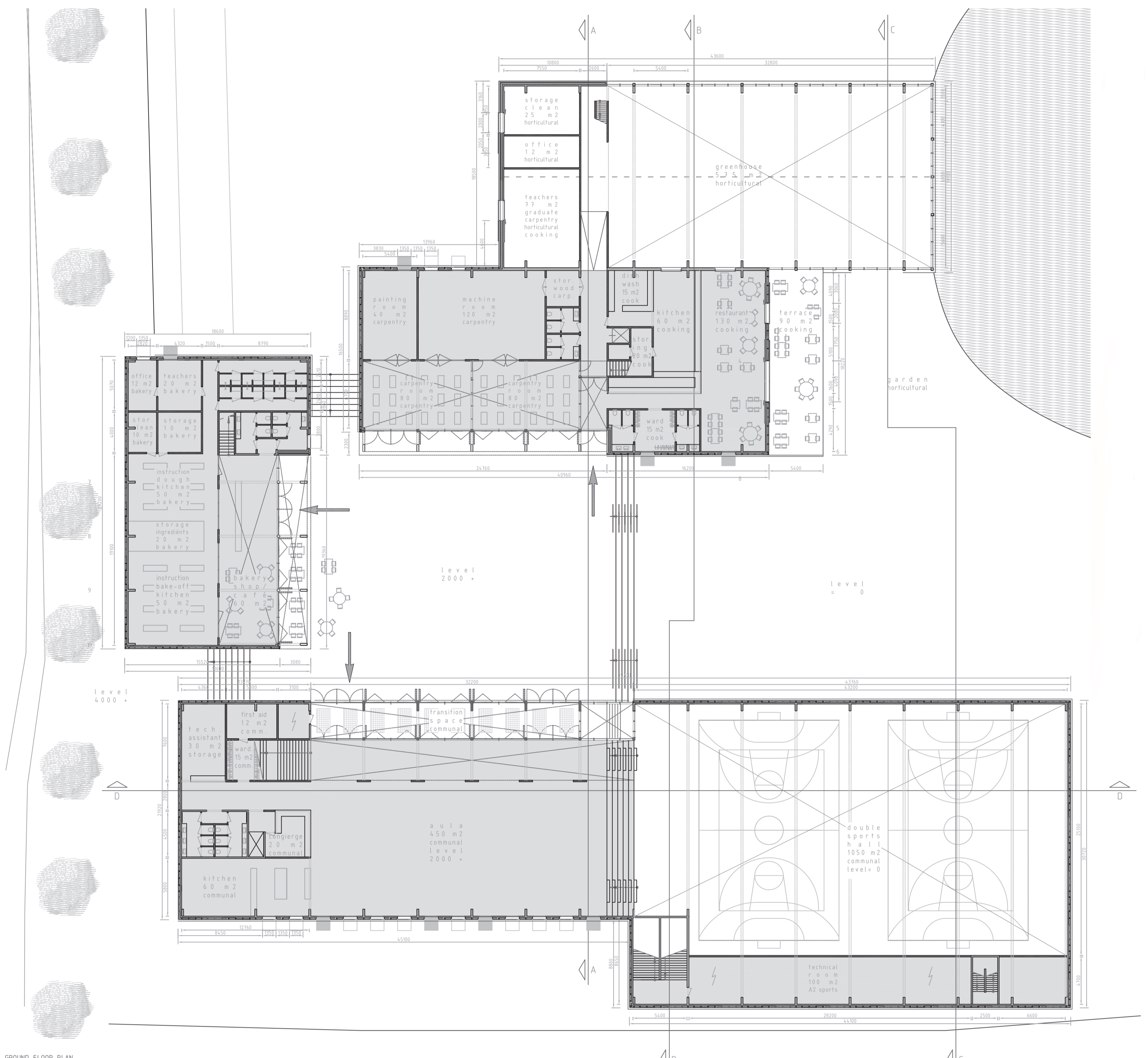
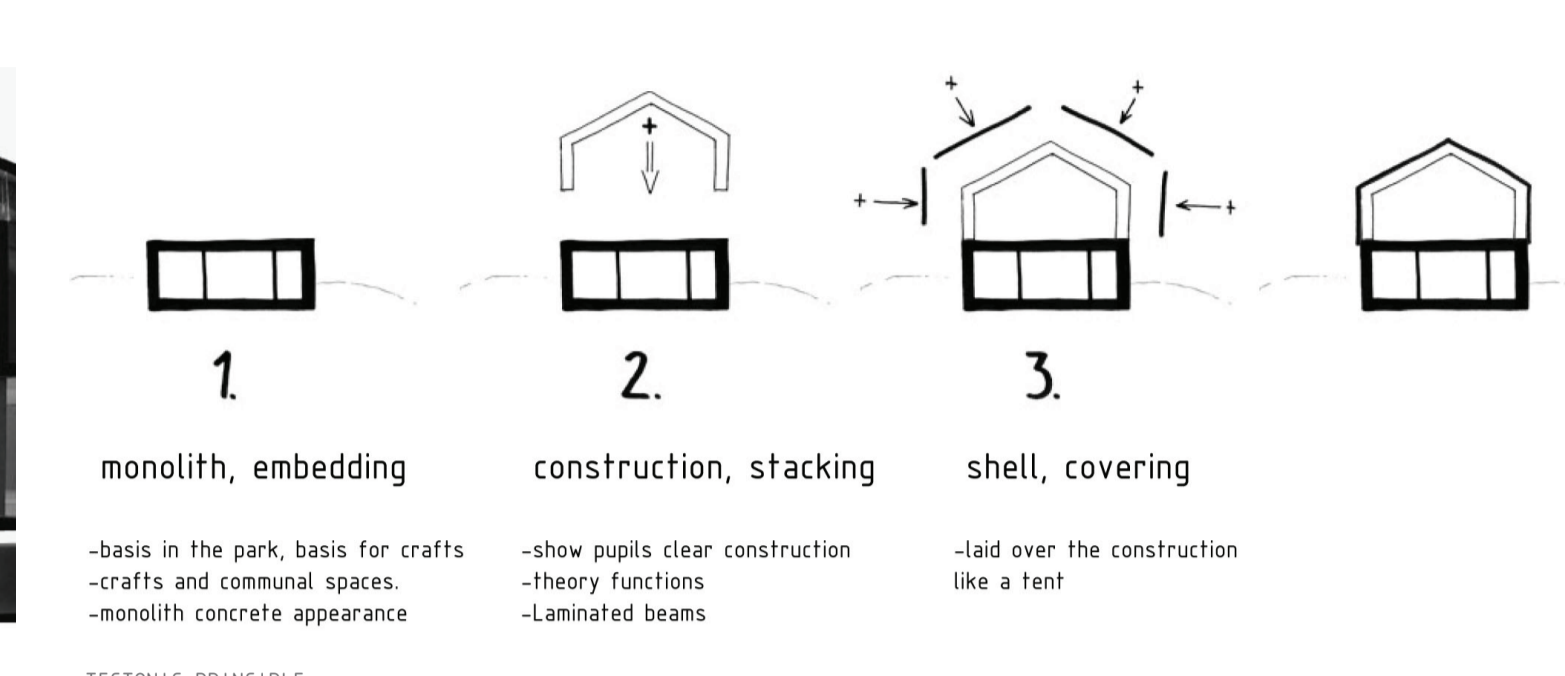
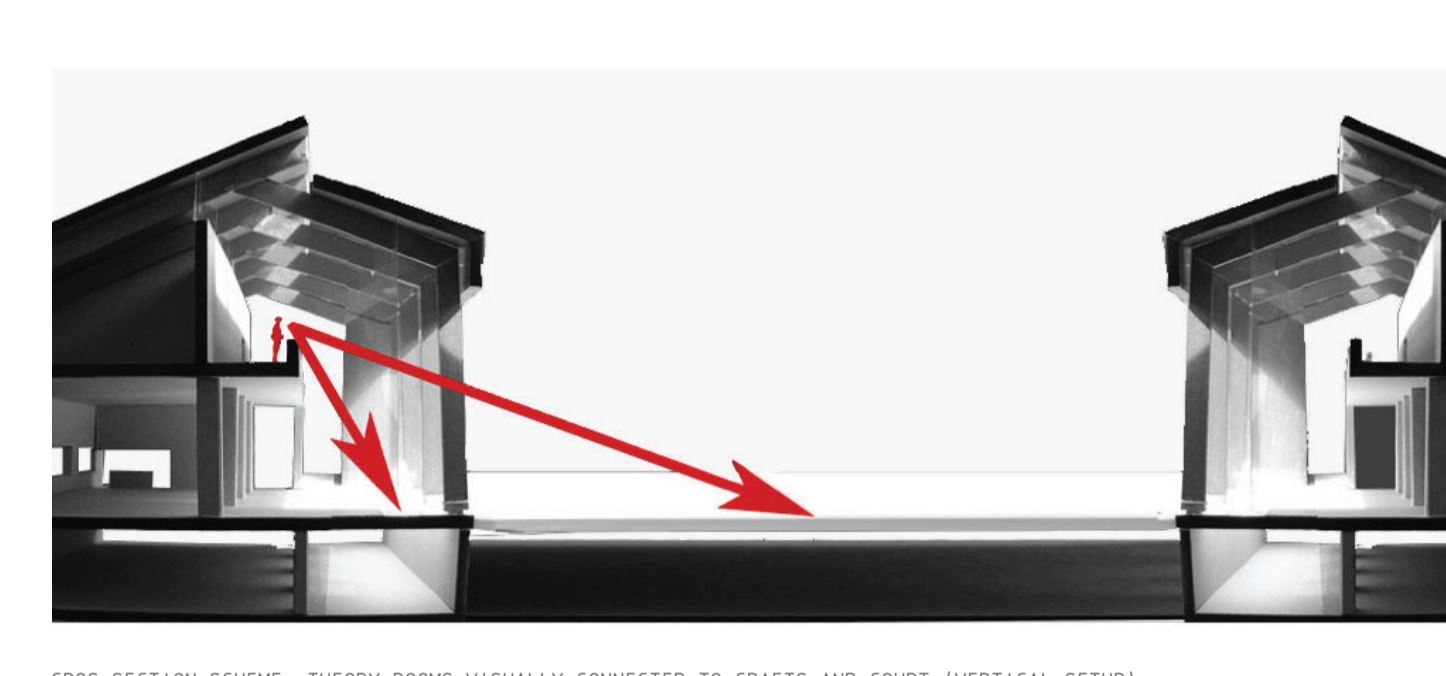
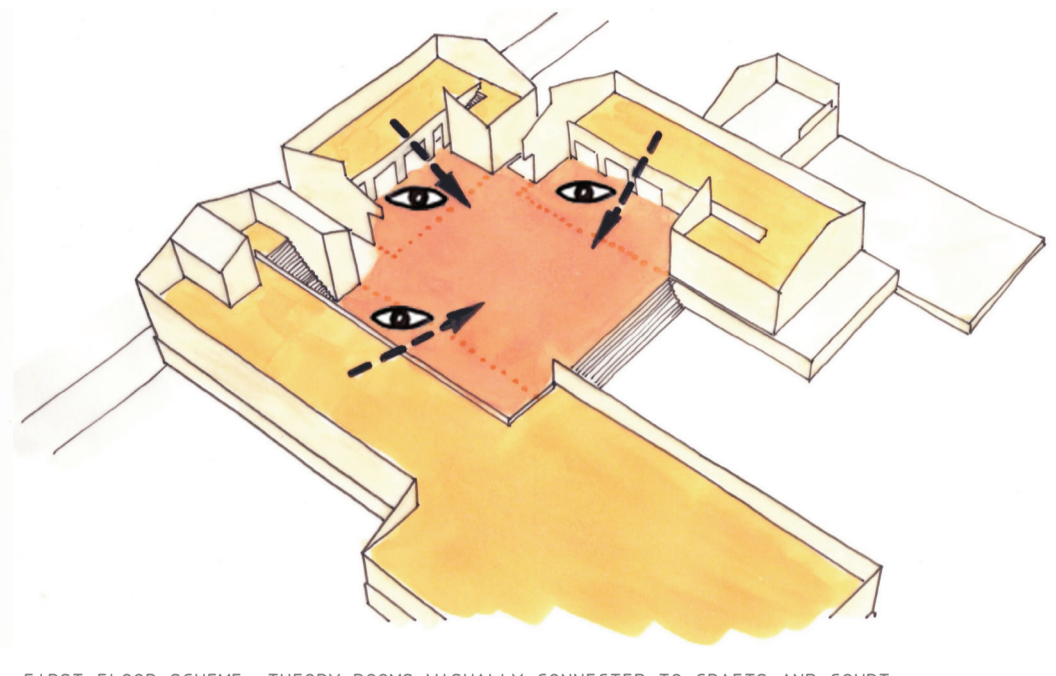
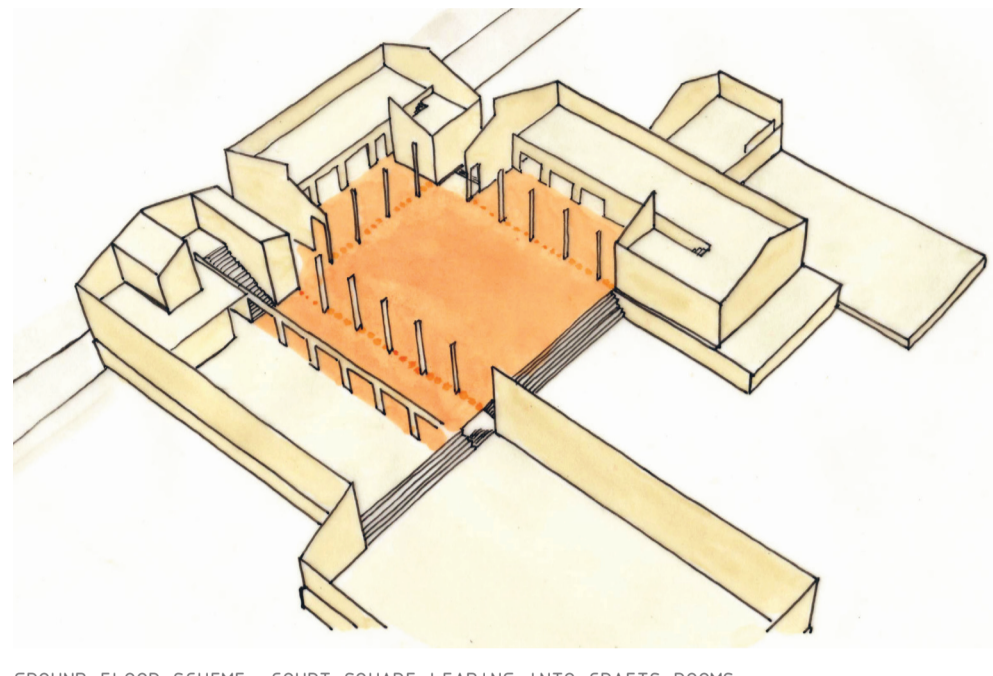
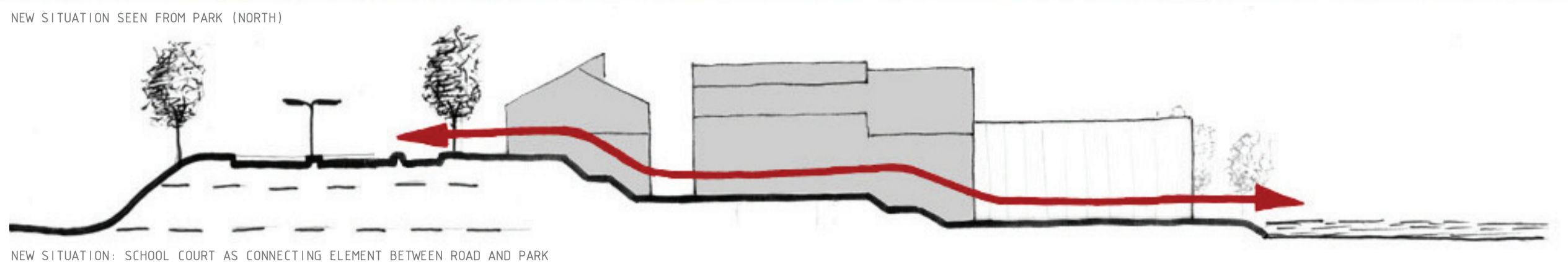
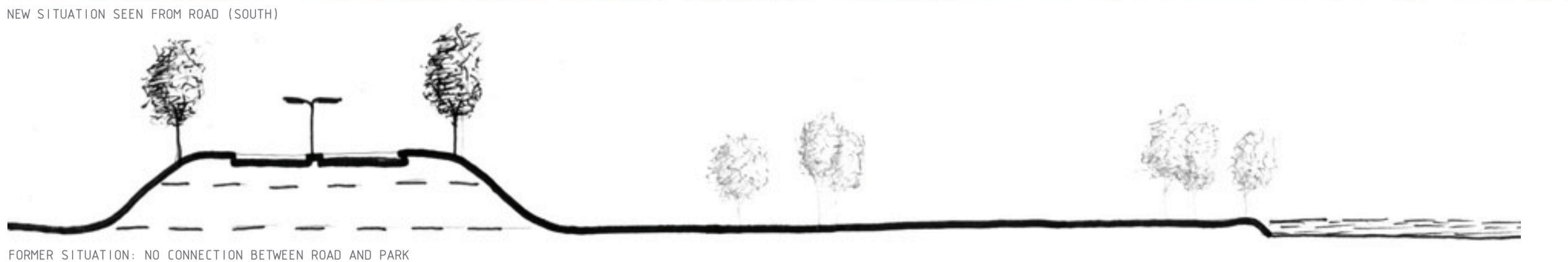
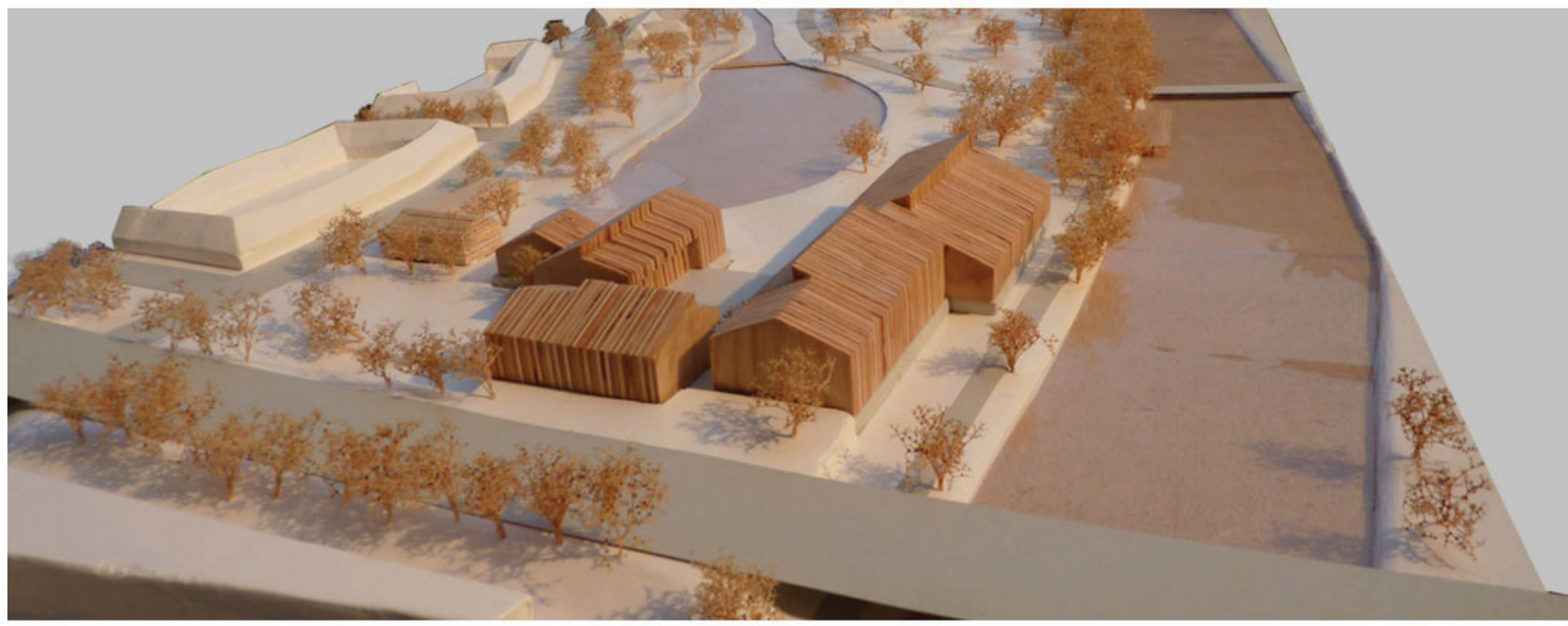
## Crafts

There is a quest for new craftsmen showing up in newspapers, profession booklets and even political parties' programs. Multiplicity in the way of making seems to be appreciated again, however we do live in a new era which asks for a new approach. In my opinion, to gain respect, crafts should be in the midst of society in a figurative as well as literal way. This school consists of four craft departments: knowing, carpentry, horticultural, cooking and bakery.

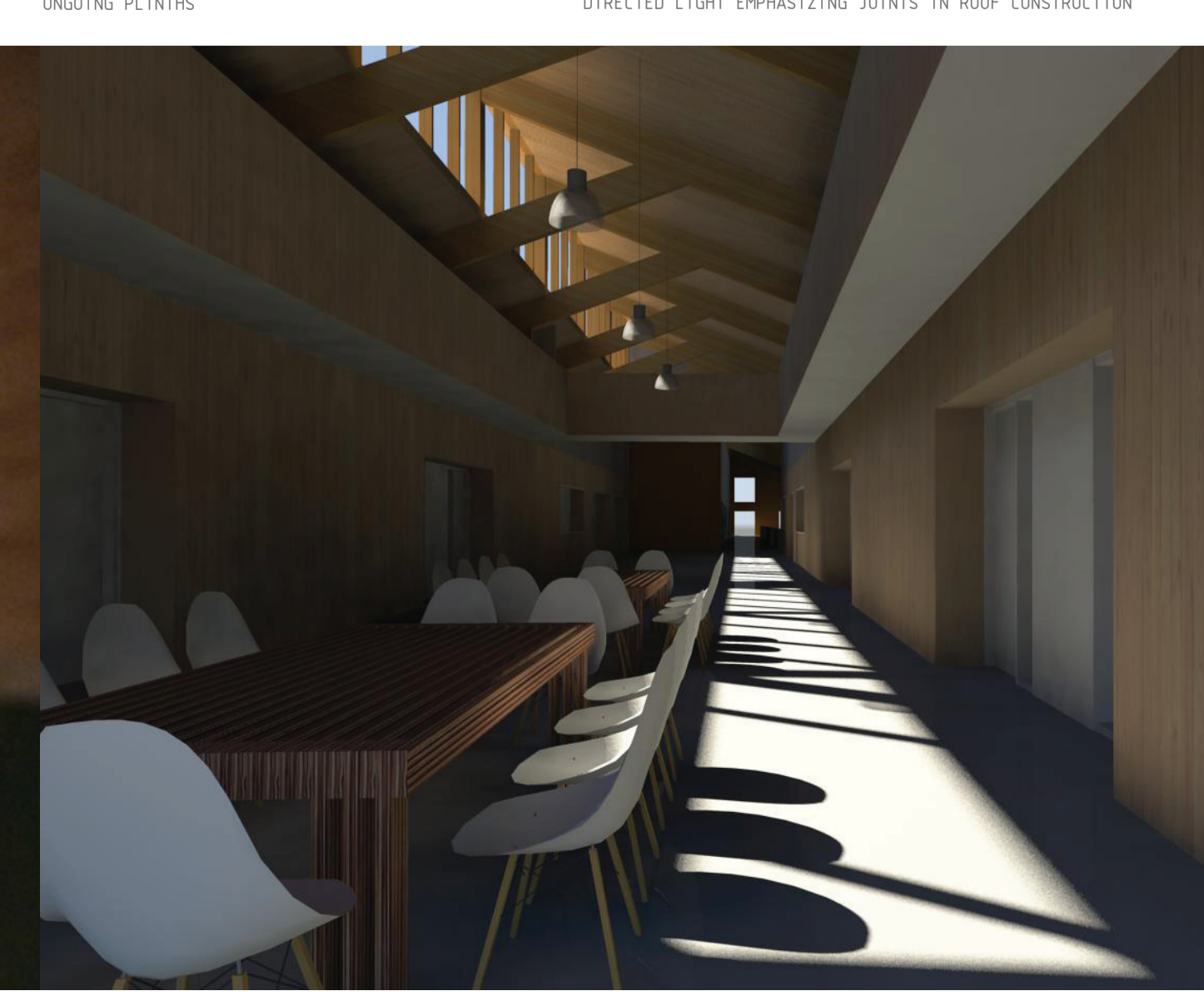
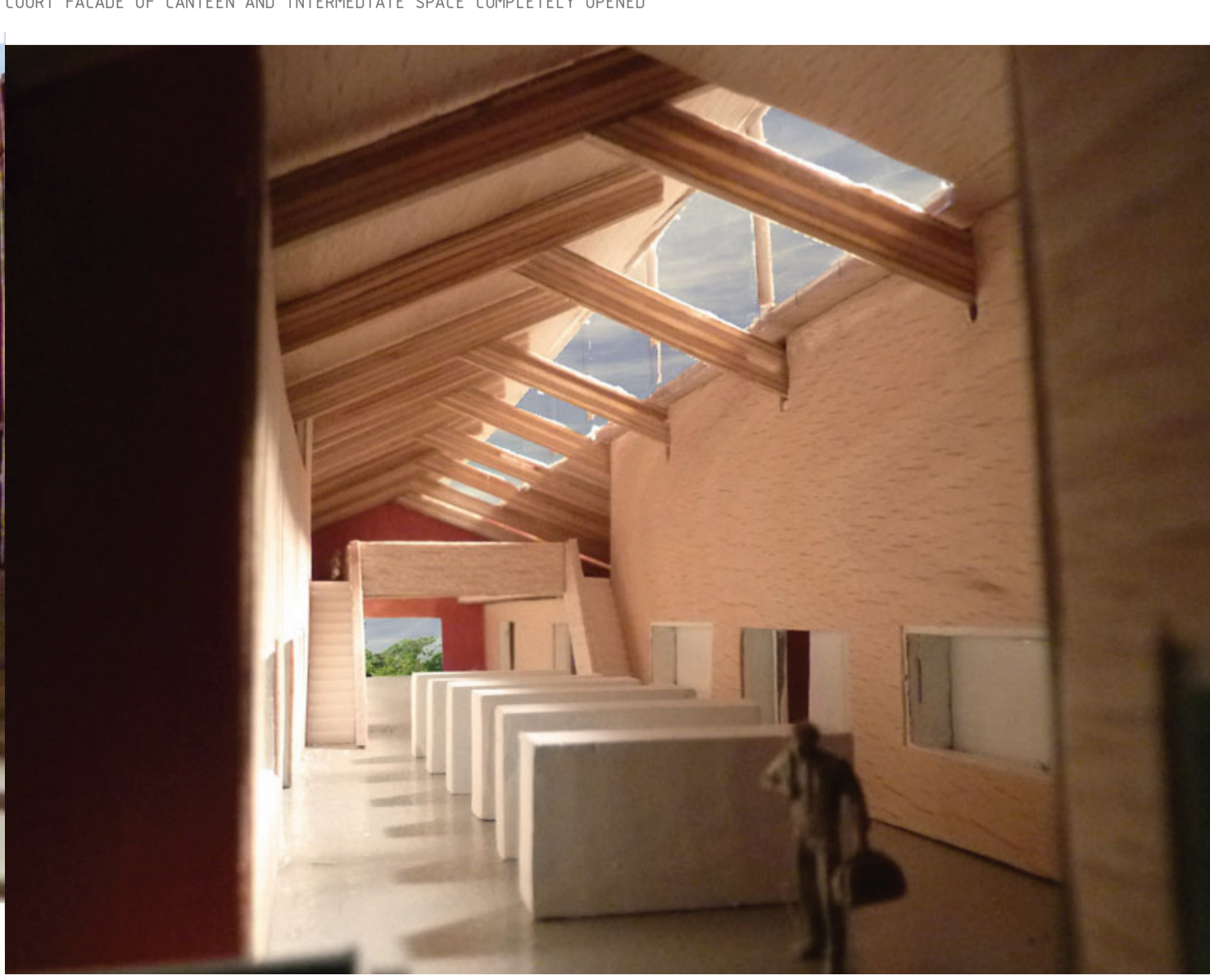
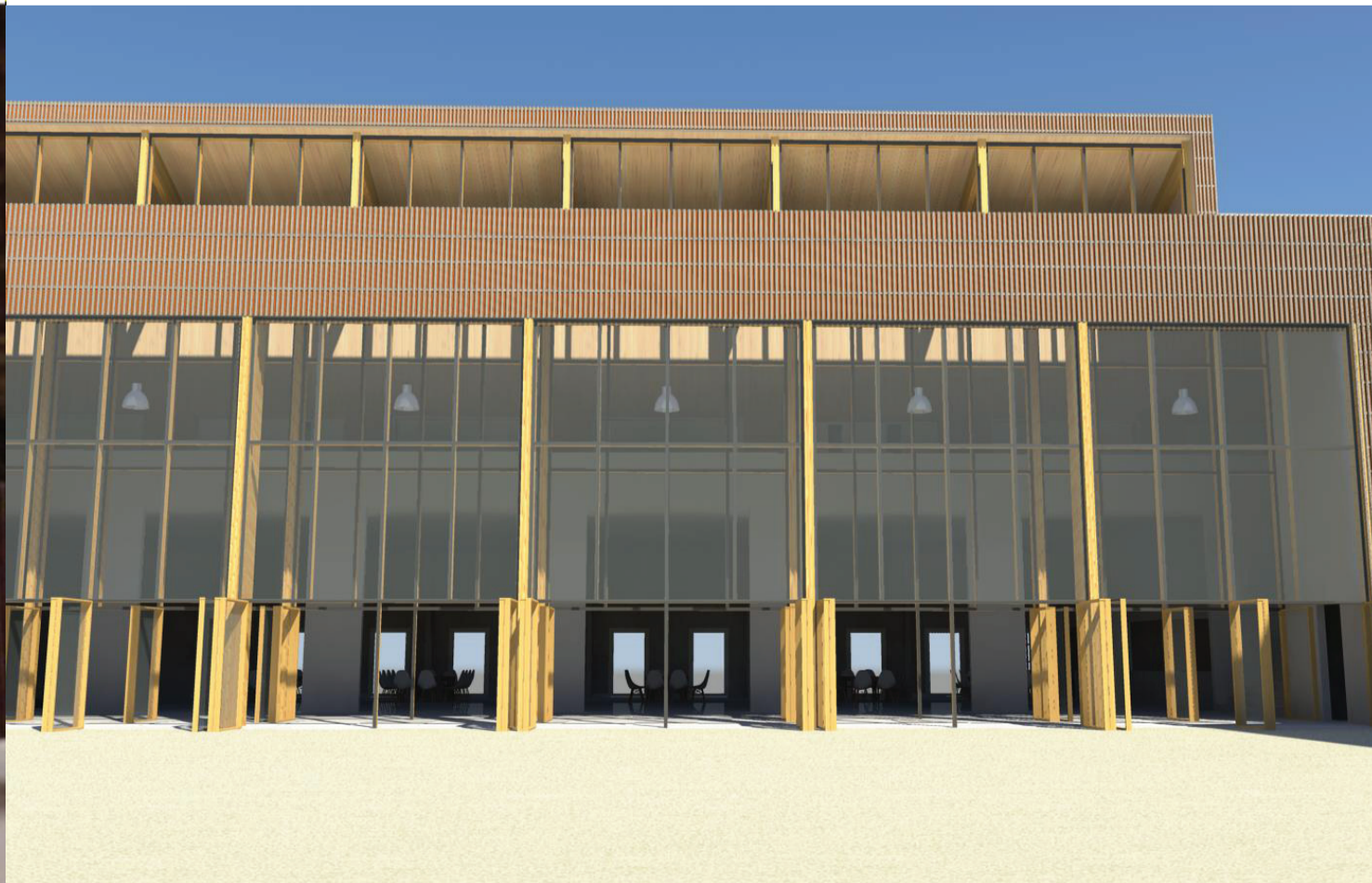
## Vision

The project shown here is a result of a mixture of the already mentioned entities. The context of that particular spot in Amsterdam North, craftsmanship in society, and "the school". Together they brought a renewed type. This type doesn't take an opposing stance towards its surrounding architecture, but tries to interpret the input that created it in a new way. In several circumstances it tends to bridge instead of being autonomous. Although there are several departments, this school acts as a whole. Most important starting point was that a school needs a heart. This heart, in form of a court square, is the centre of interaction. The craft workshops all have a direct and visual connection to it, showing the departments to each other and to passersby. The square is also a mediator between the raised road on the one side and the park on the other. This urban interior can be used publicly while during school breaks it will mostly be occupied by pupils of the school. The exposure of the square shows the inspiration found in cloisters and in colonnaded squares in southern Europe. The internal organization shows their influences as well. The galleries around the court, formed by the high roofs and rows of columns, act as extensions of the square leading into the crafts rooms, serving a place to hang out. The setup of the whole ensemble of departments is, next to the cloister and colonnade square as types, inspired by the U-shaped farm. The way the project is situated in the landscape, its use of rough materials, clear construction and rhythm, mainly derived from the latter type. The internal organization based on the way of learning, is oriented to the square and vertically build up by two atmospheres. The lower part is a concrete pedestal in and on which the crafts take place. This part also houses the spaces that are common, public and more noisy. On top of that, a construction of wood layered columns and beams is stacked. Showing the joints and knots pointed out by sunlight from the roof windows. Underneath this construction the theory functions are situated, topped off with a shell of wood layered elements, embracing the spaces. Through the workshops and hallways there's a constant connection between both theory and crafts and the square. Giving chances to show, but also to be inspired by surrounding crafts this school tries to emphasize the beauty of the pupil's future craft.

As already mentioned, the materials of the lower levels have a robust, strong and monolith appearance referring to the more industrial look of the area. Clearly visible detailing combined with the play of light, offer a subtle sense of scale in these relatively large rooms. The upper levels are completely build up of wood. Especially the combinations and finishes of the different elements, columns, beams and walls provoke the intimate atmosphere which differs a lot from the lower part of the building. Although these theory spaces have extraordinary heights and thick walls now and then, they do refer to the human scale. Detailing has been the answer. Plinths fluently go over in window frames, doors and cupboards revealing showcases for the pupils to show their achievements in crafts. Precise choices in accent coloring emphasize the shape of the volumes and the building as a whole. The sobriety of the ongoing wood only knows its exceptions when ways of use ask to be emphasized, by using color or deviating shapes like niches. The materialization on the outside works quite the same. The monolith concrete plinth acts like a pedestal for the crafts, embedded in the landscape of the park and stacked to the road. Large sliding shutters underline the massiveness. On top of that slightly indenting the wooden facade is found. Vertical battens form a seemingly ongoing house-shaped volume. Behind the surface of the battens there is a colored layer, which is to be seen when looking straight onto the facade. When looking along the surface the color fades away. This especially works out when standing on the square, the U-shaped volume lets the bright color fade away along the grey battens color into the park.



'A CHILD HAS THREE TEACHERS; FIRSTLY OTHER CHILDREN; SECONDLY, THE TEACHER AND THIRDLY, THE SPACE'  
Swedish saying, quoted by Olaf Seydel in Schulen in Deutschland, Westermann Foundation, Stuttgart 2004



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Crafts court with stairs seen from park

Theory rooms along locker and study room (teachers spaces on attic 1)

Theory rooms along study room (attic on top)

Attic, added space for teachers