

Rokin Revisited

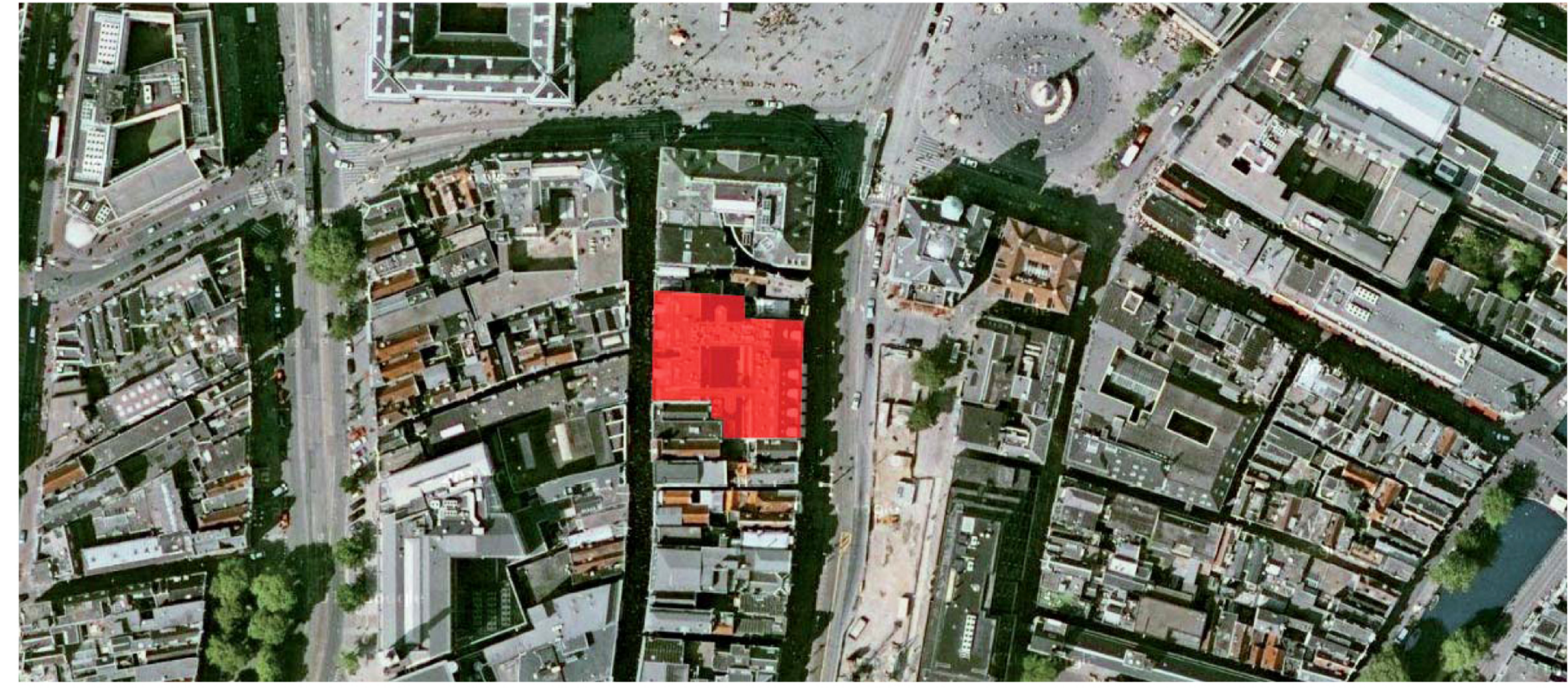


Rokin seen from the Dam

The Amsterdam inner city with its medieval urban structure has always been a popular destination for tourists from all over the world. The canals, warehouses and the unconstrained lifestyle have become the trademark of the city. Especially this last property has become dominantly visible in the inner city structure. Since the 60's and 70's the city's sex and soft drugs policy attracted many tourists. These industries flourished and gave Amsterdam the characteristics of an 'open air theme park'. This tendency initiated the debate about the use and image of the monumental inner city. This development forms for a large part the social context for the design of a commercial building in the centre of the Amsterdam inner city, located between the Kalverstraat and Rokin. The building should take position in this debate and make a statement about the future of the inner city.

However, not only today's social context plays a role in the development of this new building: At the end of the 19th century a hotel-restaurant designed by Pierre Cuypers embodied the grandeur and sophisticated lifestyle of Amsterdam which has partially disappeared. This 'Hotel Polen' was located at the exact same plot as our building location and formed a meeting point for artists, businessmen and politicians. The building consisted of a coffee shop at the Kalverstraat and a hotel and restaurant at the Rokin side, which overlooked the outfall of the river Amstel. In 1977 the building was demolished because of a fire.

With the project '1012' the City of Amsterdam takes position in the above mentioned debate by proposing a decrease of the ordinary and an increase of the extraordinary with a representative strip through the inner city called the 'red carpet'. This red carpet follows roughly the direction of the soon to be completed North/South line and should contain a concentration of higher end fashion and gastronomy. This building, located on the red carpet, should endorse the City's ambitions in the form of a reinvention of the former 'Hotel Polen' and therefore it contains a varied and upscale mix of functions, including a hotel-restaurant. These functions are placed around a secluded public courtyard where one could escape the daily life bustle. Therewith it builds upon the typical Amsterdam courtyard tradition.



Hotel Polen, ca. 1970



Kalverstraat



Urban tissue



ground floor / basement

first floor

second floor

third floor

fourth floor

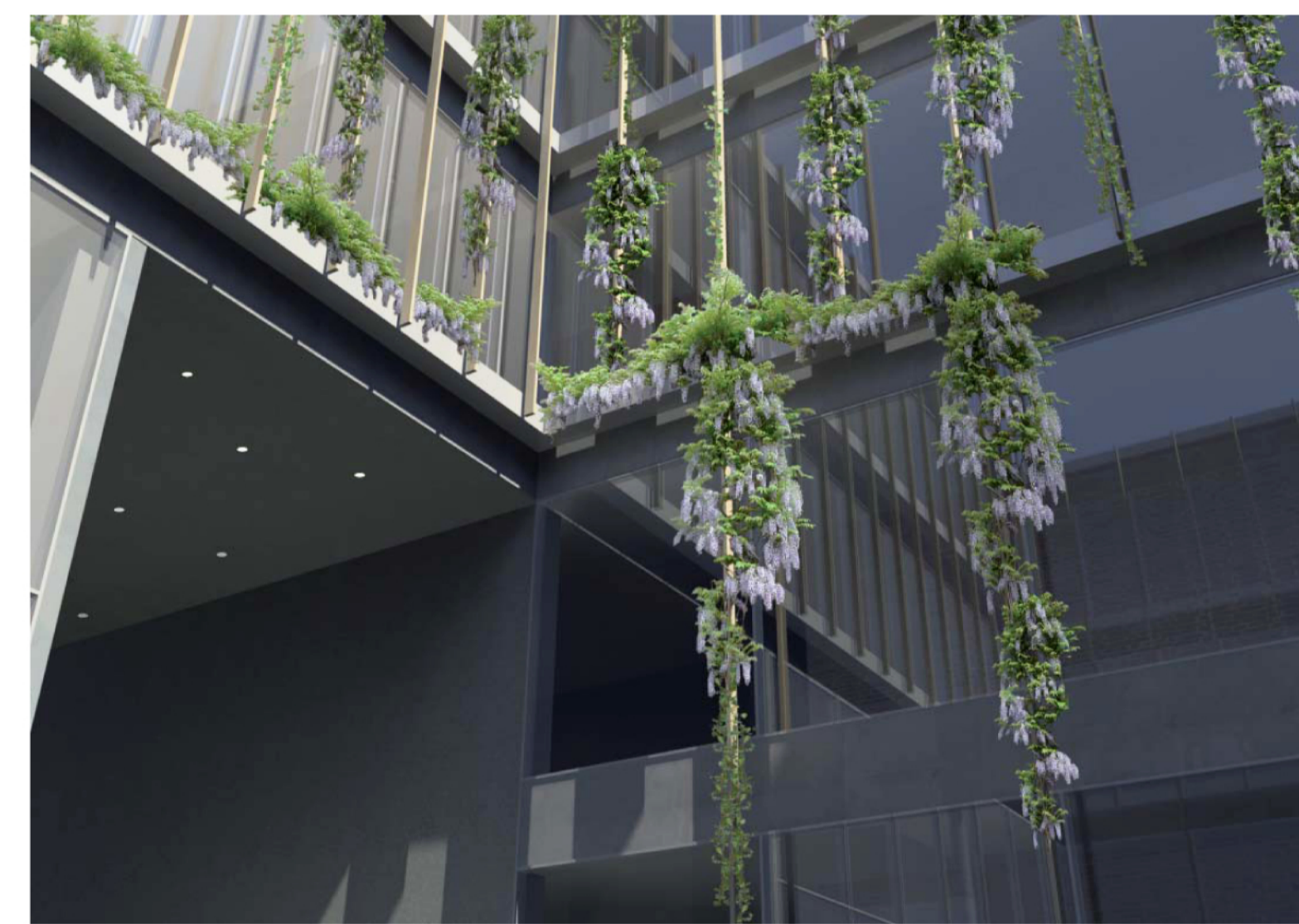
roof



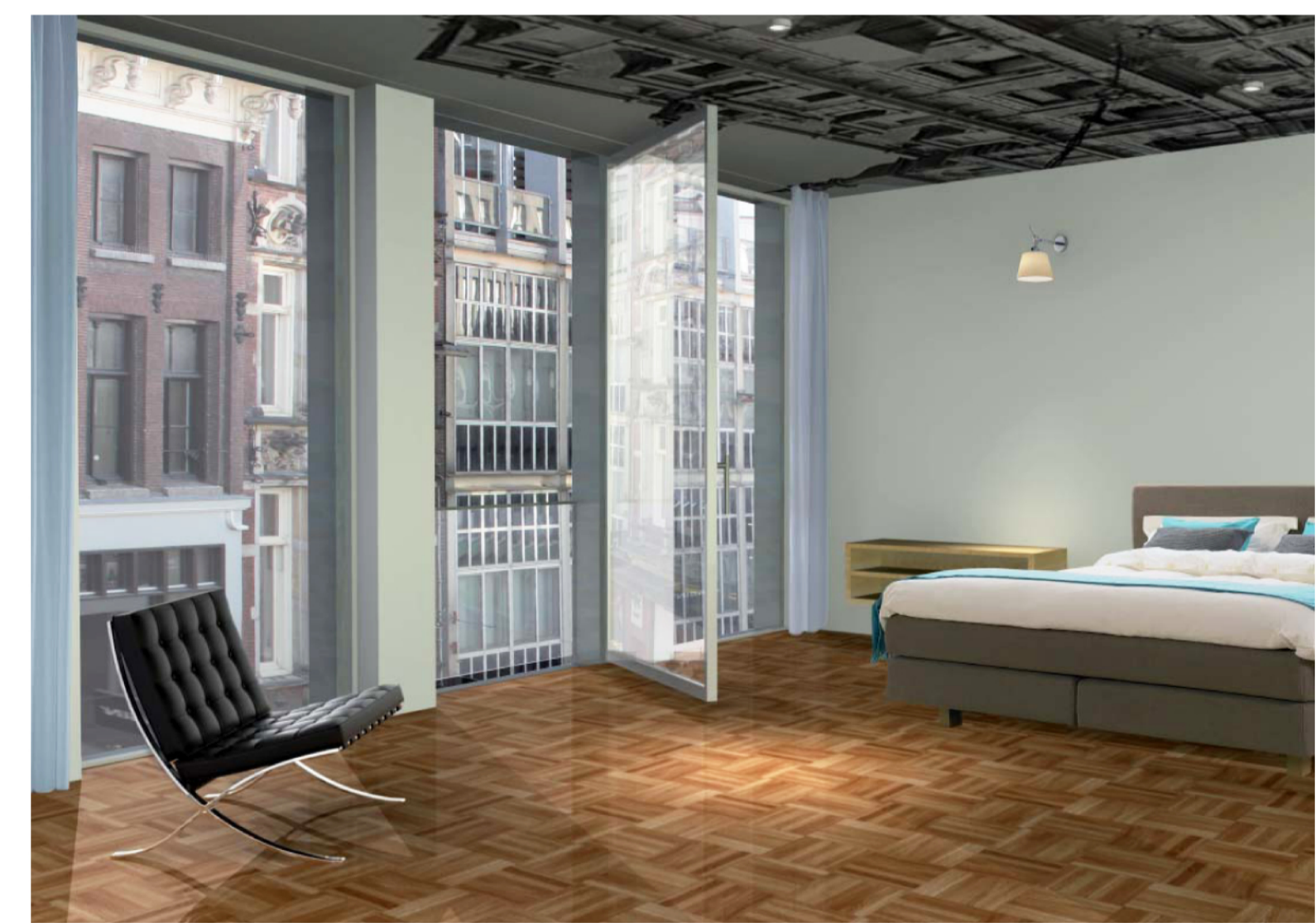
Issey Miyake shop



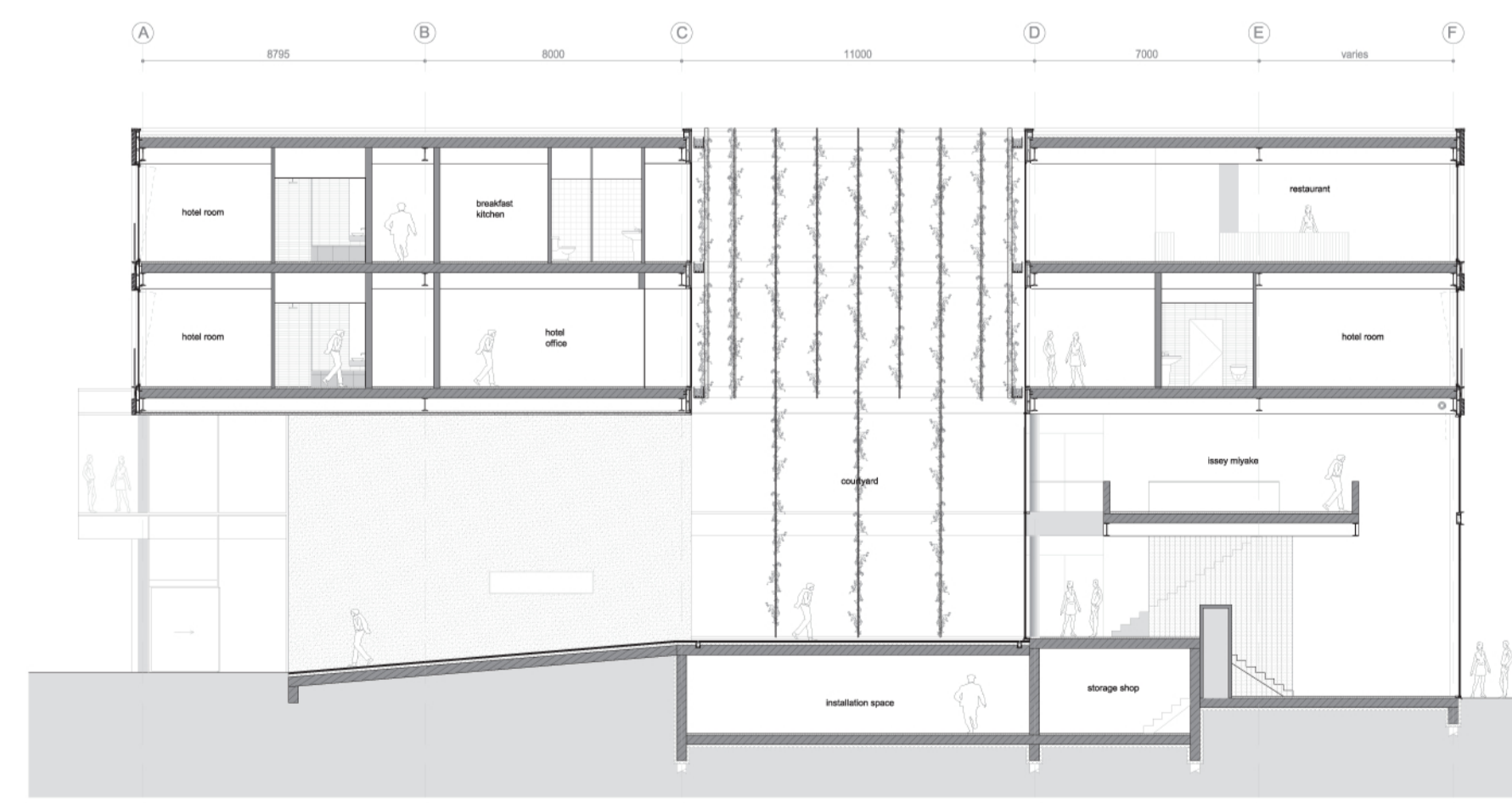
Reception hotel-restaurant



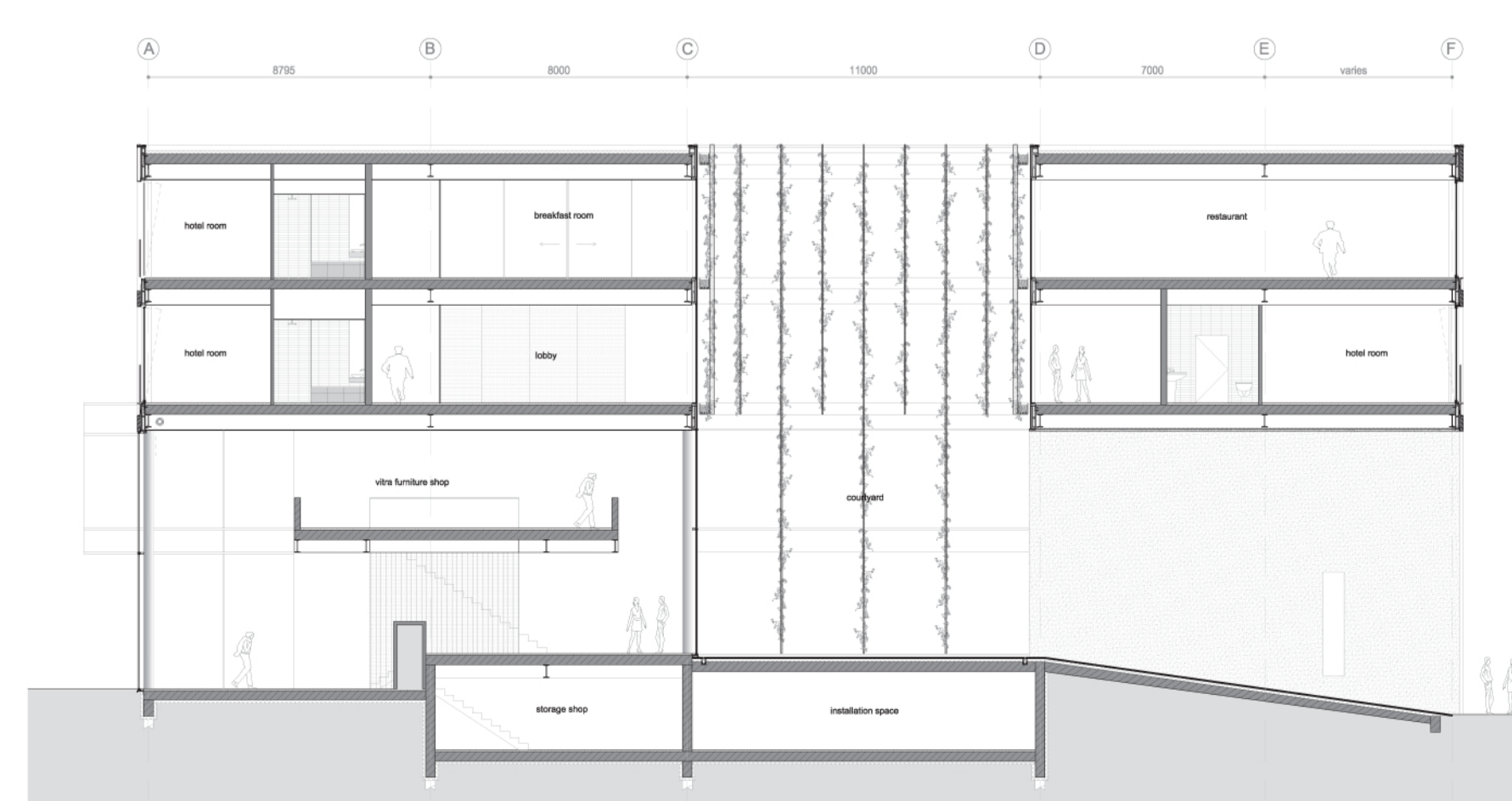
Inner courtyard



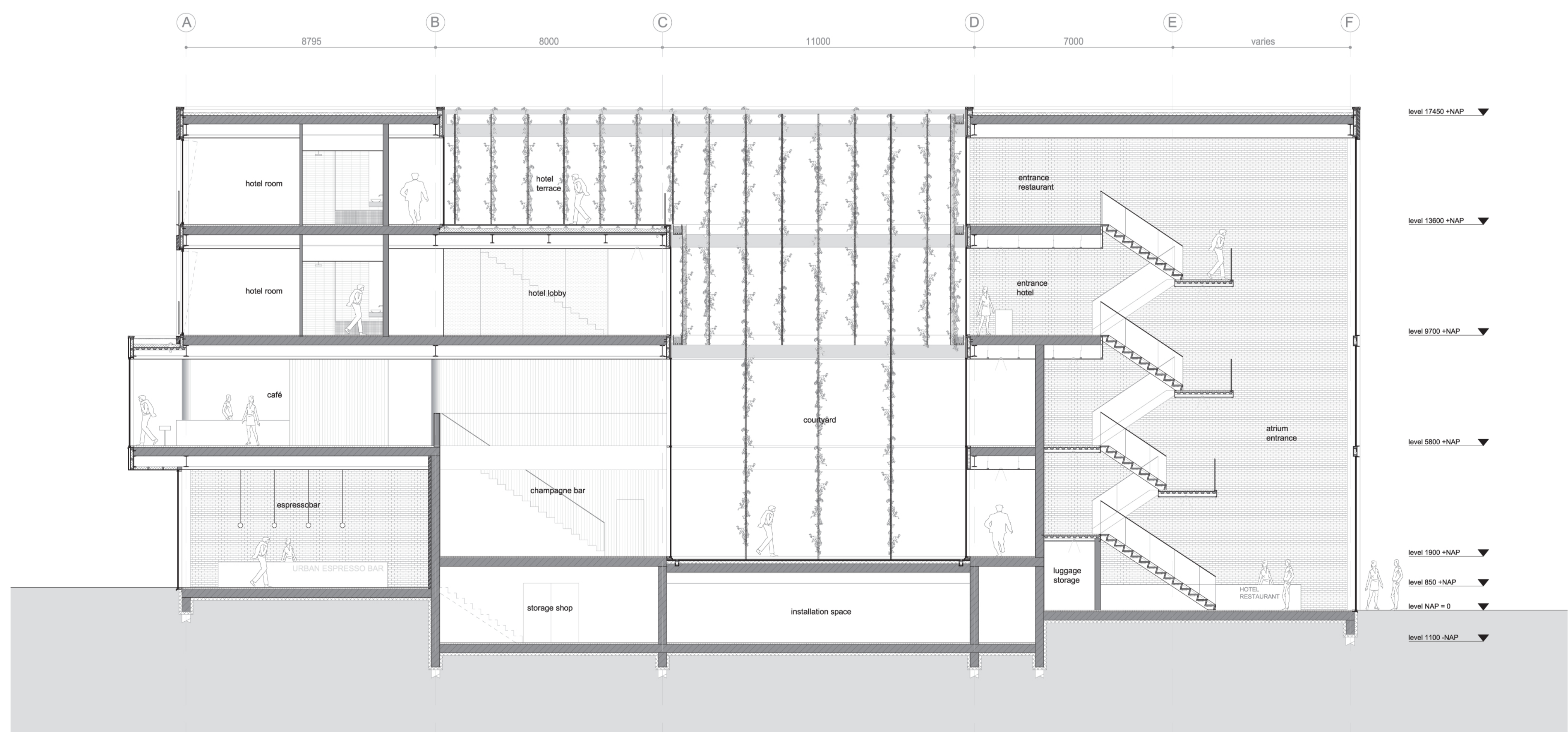
Hotel room



section b-b' 1:200



section c-c' 1:200



section a-a' 1:100

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Studio: La Boîte à Miracles - June 2010
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