



TU Delft

2025/2026
6295886

Urban architecture Studio

The Help Network

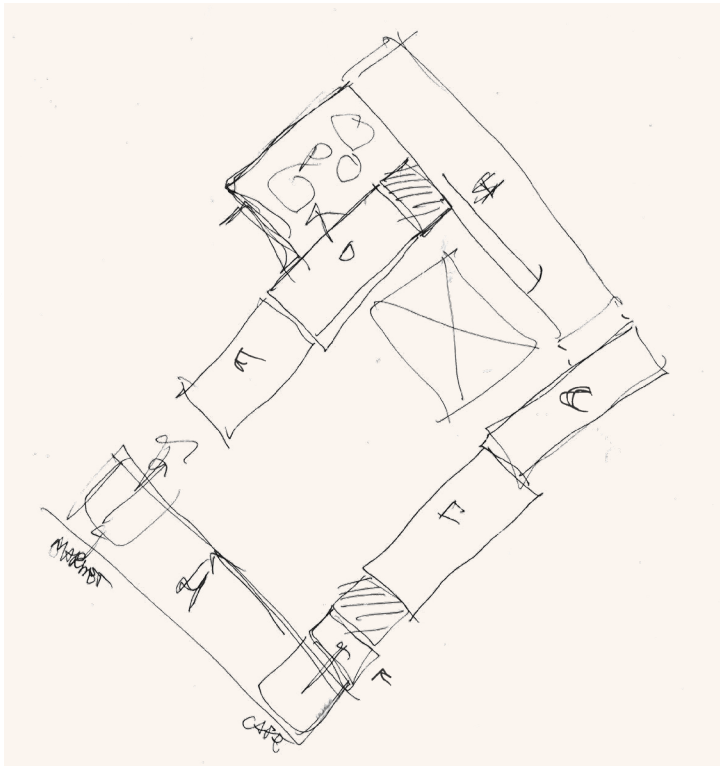
An architectural approach to arrival

To my family, for their constant support, patience, and encouragement throughout this journey.

To my friends, for the conversations, laughter, and moments of relief that made the difficult days lighter.

To my tutors, for their guidance, critical insights, and continuous encouragement throughout this research.

Thank you.



Conceptual sketch of the plot

The Help Network

An Architectural approach to arrival

Graduation Report

6295886

Urban Architecture Studio - 2025/2026
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Embed

Transform

Layer

Identify

Relate

Distribute

Sequence

Enable

Dignify



Arrival

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View of Rue Ropsy Chaudron



View of the Abbatoir from Rue Hyevaert

01. Arrival

Heyvaert: an entanglement of cultures



Coming to Heyvaert for the first time can catch you off guard. The streets run hot with traffic, lines of cars that never seem to end, and a public life that doesn't sit still for a second. It feels like too much and, at the same time, hard to look away.

Nothing seems settled here, the neighbourhood shows itself in motion, in trade, in the constant give-and-take between people, what they do, and the space they're doing it in.

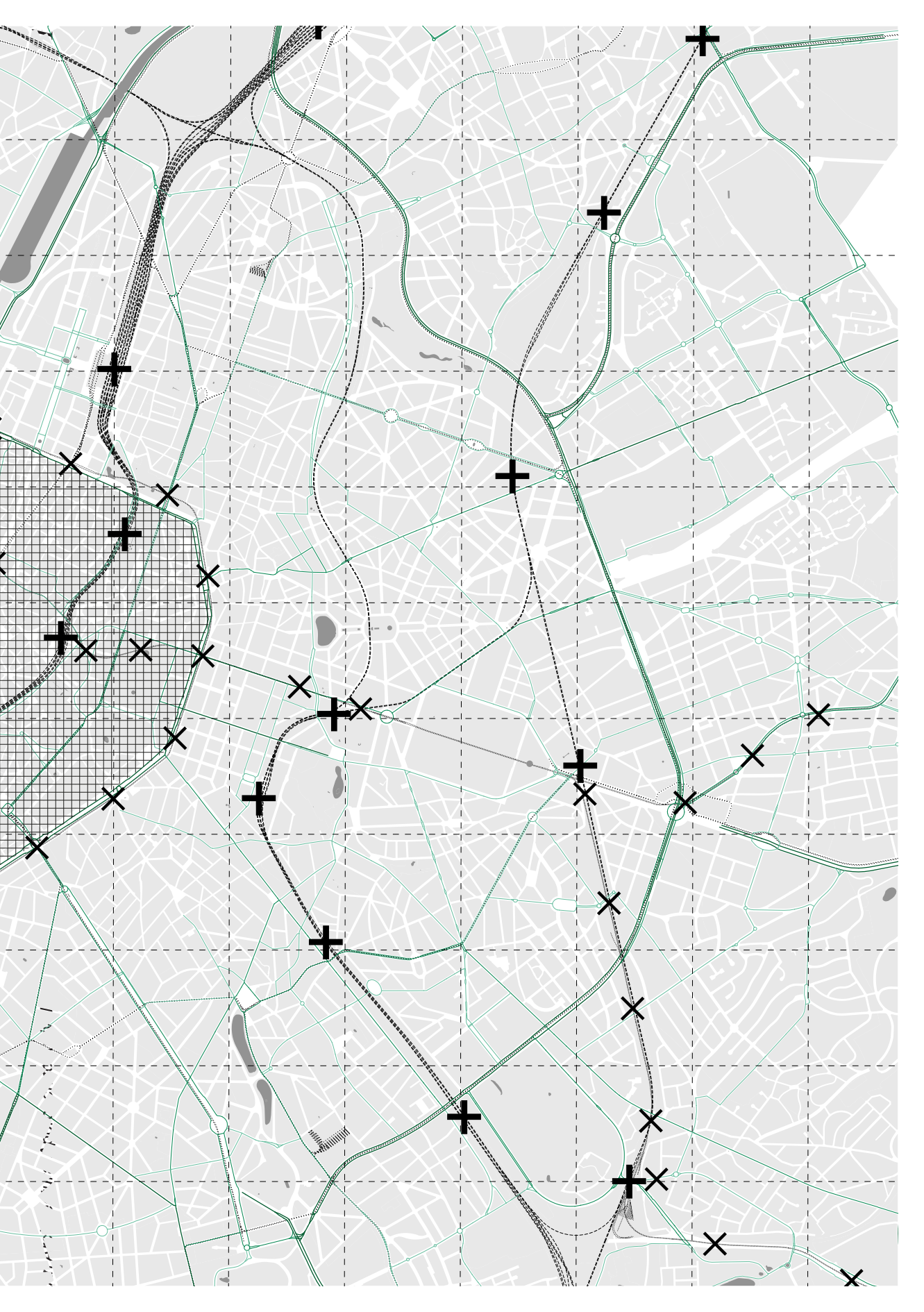
Just outside Brussels' city centre, Heyvaert has for a long time been tied to making and selling. From the early nineteenth century onward, workshops, industries, warehouses, and small businesses moved in and stayed, building up a tight urban patchwork where workspaces and homes still press close together. Still, Heyvaert's identity doesn't come from the building stock by itself.

The tone of the area comes from the people who live and work there. Ghanaian, Algerian, Arab, Turkish communities, among many others, have left their mark, and the result is a social setting shaped by difference, cohabitation, and ongoing change. Instead of neat cultural boxes placed side by side, Heyvaert reads more like an entanglement, where ways of living, working, meeting, and feeling at home overlap, rub against one another, and mix. That complexity shows up in how space gets taken up every day. Shop displays creep onto the sidewalk. Markets push into the street.

Talk carries across doorways and edges. Music, religious chants, signage, colours, and goods leak into the open and become part of public life. Through these ordinary moves, the neighbourhood keeps getting remade, pointing to a city built in layers instead of by a single plan, worked out through negotiation instead of laid down from above. So arriving in Heyvaert isn't only arriving somewhere on a map, it's running into a condition. Making sense of it means getting past the first hit of impressions and learning to read the social, spatial, and temporal layers that sit together there. This is the terrain in which the following research takes its place.

Map of Brussels and its infrastructures







View of Parc Alphonse Lemmens, Heyvaert



View of Chaussée de Mons



Street Vendor in Heyvaert



Street vendors in Rue Ropsy Chaudron



View of Rue Odon

01. Arrival
How to understand Heyvaert



(Rue Ropsy Chaudron)LOCATION 2: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/j2fdmBvbRiMLHFdz5>

Street vender: name=AGOS (one man working alone)

Tous les jours 4 ans 5h40-19h du matin , starts his day at the café du coin / Monday only day off

« Dans ce quartier, il a le monde » :')

6mois 1ans fusillades au métro

"Ça a trop diminué" talking about the business of the boucher

"La rue elle est belle" (super positive guy)

" Rénovation c'est joli "

The spot he s on is not his but the landlord " le laisse s'installer sur cet espace privé "

Loves contact and meeting people

« I m free » salary:1,700/1,800€ a month

"wanna go back to Africa"

"Je suis le fou du quartier"

"Les voitures c'est fini- il faut que ça change/ on va pas continuer à polluer"

"Les gens de la périphérie vont etre pousses encore plus loin/ les gens du centre vont prendre leur place"

solution: Donner plus de pouvoir d'achat aux gens et les preparer a avoir un emploi

" People like me, we are the million, don't forget us"

Transcription of a conversation had in Heyvaert

How does someone act when they are a guest?

For some, it starts with a simple hello and a thank you. For others, it means arriving with a small gift, paying close attention, or holding back at first, watching and taking things in before jumping into the conversation. Whatever form it takes, the gesture carries the same message: you are stepping into a place that already has a past, a rhythm, and its own ways of knowing.

In architecture, that way of entering can become a working method. Showing up in a neighbourhood like Heyvaert asks for more than skill at reading buildings or charting urban patterns. It calls for patience, for careful observation, and for a real effort to grasp how people actually live in, move through, and make use of space.

An architect is not encountering a blank site, they are entering a world already formed by layers of practice, ties between people, and everyday acts of claiming and adapting. That stance matters most

in places commonly framed with the vocabulary of intervention and renewal. Too often, urban change begins with fixed goals and outside ideas, where the neighbourhood is treated as a problem that needs fixing instead of a situation that needs understanding. When that happens, the messy reality gets flattened, local experience is ignored, and existing ways of life are pushed to bend to logics that did not grow there.

Heyvaert contains plenty of examples of this pattern. Recent strategies have argued for pedestrianisation, greening efforts, and big spatial upgrades. Even when these plans come from good intentions, they can still bring in answers that sit at a distance from the daily realities of the people who live and work in the area. Participation narrows, and the neighbourhood is expected to match visions that were drawn up somewhere else. Because of that, this research chooses another starting point. It does not begin by delivering answers, it begins by asking. Instead of laying out futures in advance, it tries first to see and understand what is already there. The goal is not to speak for the neighbourhood, but to work with the needs, routines, and hopes of those who experience it every day.

So, understanding Heyvaert becomes a matter of where one stands. It means admitting what is uncertain, staying with complexity, and avoiding the urge to step in too fast. Only then can architecture shift away from imposition and toward engagement, shaping responses that grow out of the place as it is, not as it is imagined from the outside.

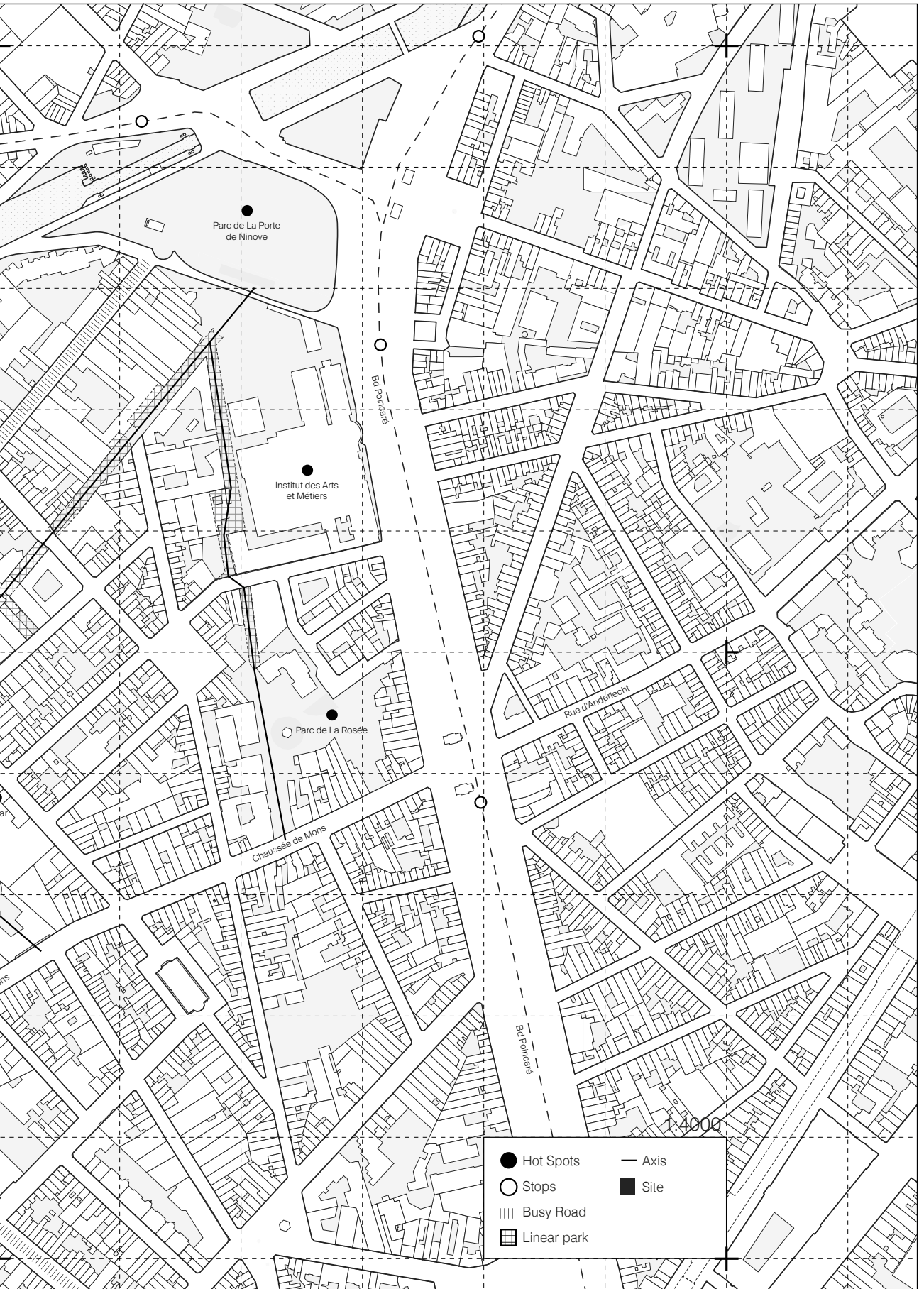


View of Rue Ropsy Chaudron with the site of intervention in the background



Street murales in Heyvaert





Approaching Heyvaert is not immediate, and it is not self-explanatory.

No single interpretation opens the neighbourhood at once; instead, it comes into view slowly, as an accumulation of layers formed through intersecting histories, cultural trajectories, economic arrangements, and everyday spatial routines. What first reads as disorder starts, under sustained attention, to show itself as an intricate field of relations and shared ways of living. Working in such circumstances calls for something beyond analytic description. A stance is required.

For the architect, the task is not only to identify possible interventions, but to understand where intervention reaches its edge. That involves holding back the urge to compress complexity into a clean story, to apply ready-made answers, or to settle conflict too quickly. Often, the most consequential architectural contribution is quieter: sustaining dynamics already in motion,

View of an outdoor market stall



01. Arrival

Nine Principles for Structuring Arrival

strengthening local modes of practice, or intentionally keeping room open so that others can take part. This stance matters outside Heyvaert as well.

At a moment when urban change repeatedly produces standardisation, displacement, and sameness, architectural practice faces a persistent difficulty: how to engage difference without neutralising it. The approach developed through this project is therefore presented as a wider frame for practice, one that favours attentiveness over certainty, adjustment over command, and involvement over prescription.

The manifesto should be read in that light. It does not offer a catalogue of settled answers, and it does not claim the status of general law. It operates, instead, as an orienting device, a set of principles that can help the architect move through uncertainty, mediate competing demands, and stay answerable to the specificities of place.

What it proposes is a manner of working, not a predetermined end. The nine points that follow organise both the project and this book. Taken together, they outline a gradual act of positioning, moving from looking to acting, and from comprehension to intervention. They call for an architecture that is situated rather than laid on top, responsive rather than directive, and able to meet the conditions of contemporary urban life without translating them into reduced narratives.

Rather than supplying definitive answers, these principles propose a practice grounded in listening, critical presence, and ongoing negotiation. They are not offered as directions for designing Heyvaert, but as a means of learning how to enter it.

View of the site's facade on Rue Ropsy Chaudron



Brussels is often read through the tightness of its urban fabric. Compactness sets the tone: long and narrow parcels aligned in continuous rows, blocks packed to the point where pauses or gaps are rare. Street fronts, too, generally insist on unbroken edges, so that what sits behind them is pushed inward and held deep inside an almost saturated built field.

Against that background, the Heyvaert site reads as an exception. Instead of arising from the familiar logic of the enclosed perimeter block, it begins as an open plot and then, over time, is occupied through successive building additions. Yet this step-by-step infill never resolves into total closure.

What remains is a central void, an interior courtyard that stays open to view and weather, and spatially unfinished within the surrounding density. This courtyard is not secondary, it is the site's main spatial figure. It works at once as



02. Positioning

Embed

Working through the existing urban fabric



View of the site's facade on Rue du Bateau



Aerial view of Rue Ropsy Chaudron in 1975

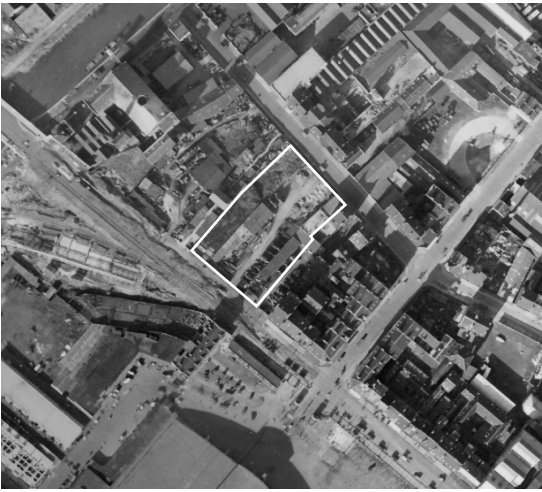


leftover space and as linkage, holding traces of the gradual occupation while allowing a measure of porosity within the block. What initially registers as incompleteness, or a fragment left behind, can also be understood as a latent openness contained inside a dense setting.

Topography further distinguishes the site. Between Rue Ropsy Chaudron and Rue du Bateau there is a height difference of about three metres, introducing a vertical break into what otherwise reads as a largely flat urban order. That change in level makes the site behave less like a single continuous ground and more like an internal landscape, where thresholds shift and access points, as well as spatial interpretations, depend on the direction of approach.

Placed beside the section, historical photographs clarify how these conditions have been produced. The images register a slow movement from openness toward partial occupation, and from a more clearly industrial program toward a layered, piecemeal appropriation. No stable end state is presented; instead, the site appears as something continuously built, adjusted, and reworked.

To embed a project here, then, is to engage a fabric that is simultaneously typical and anomalous, typical in its intensity of urban density, anomalous in the persistence of its incompleteness. Between closure and openness, between continuity and interruption, the project begins to locate its position.



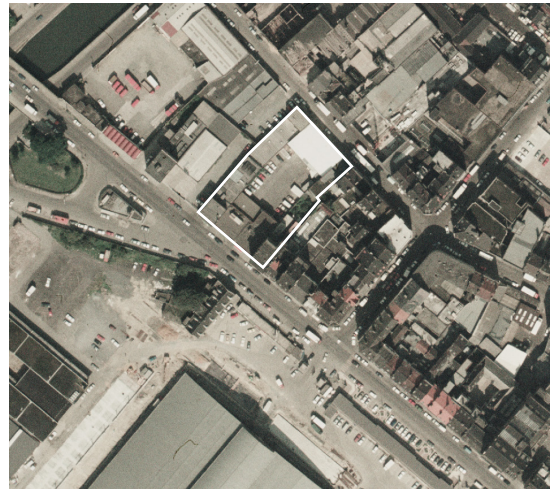
1930



1977



1953



1984

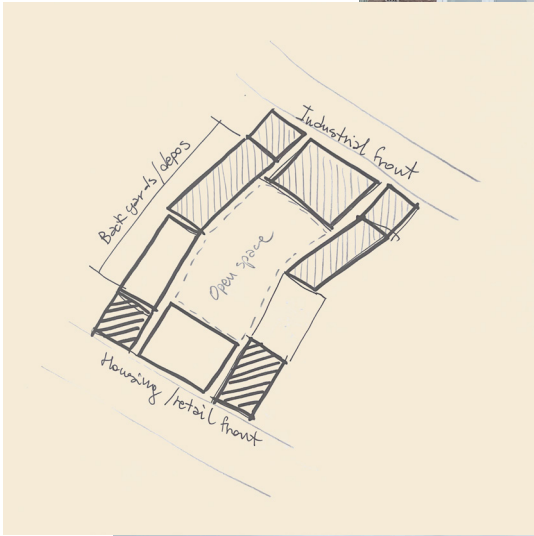


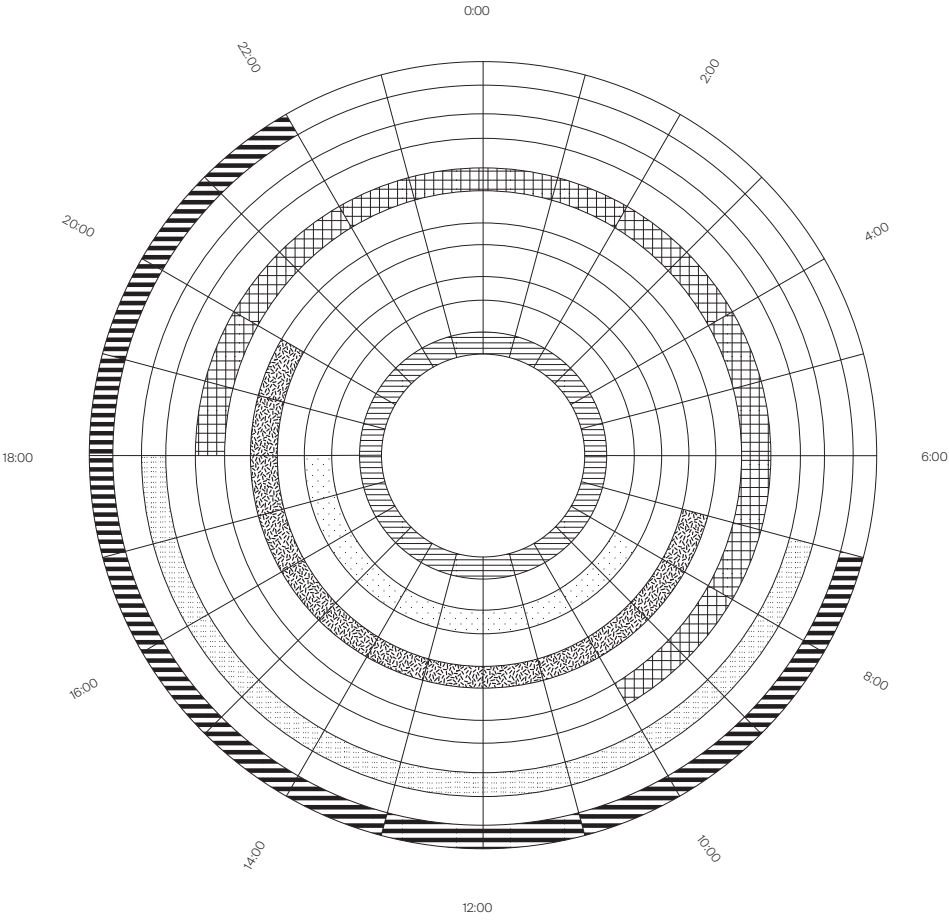
1971









2025

Site trip photos of the building





Temporal opening diagram

-  Commerce
-  Employment agency
-  Daycare
-  Housing
-  Rental agency
-  Public passage access

02. Positioning

Layer

Coexistence of temporal and spatial conditions

Heyvaert is not only a condition that unfolds along a timeline, but also through various changes that happened throughout the years, leading from the neighborhood's industrial past to the highly stratified urban and social condition of today.

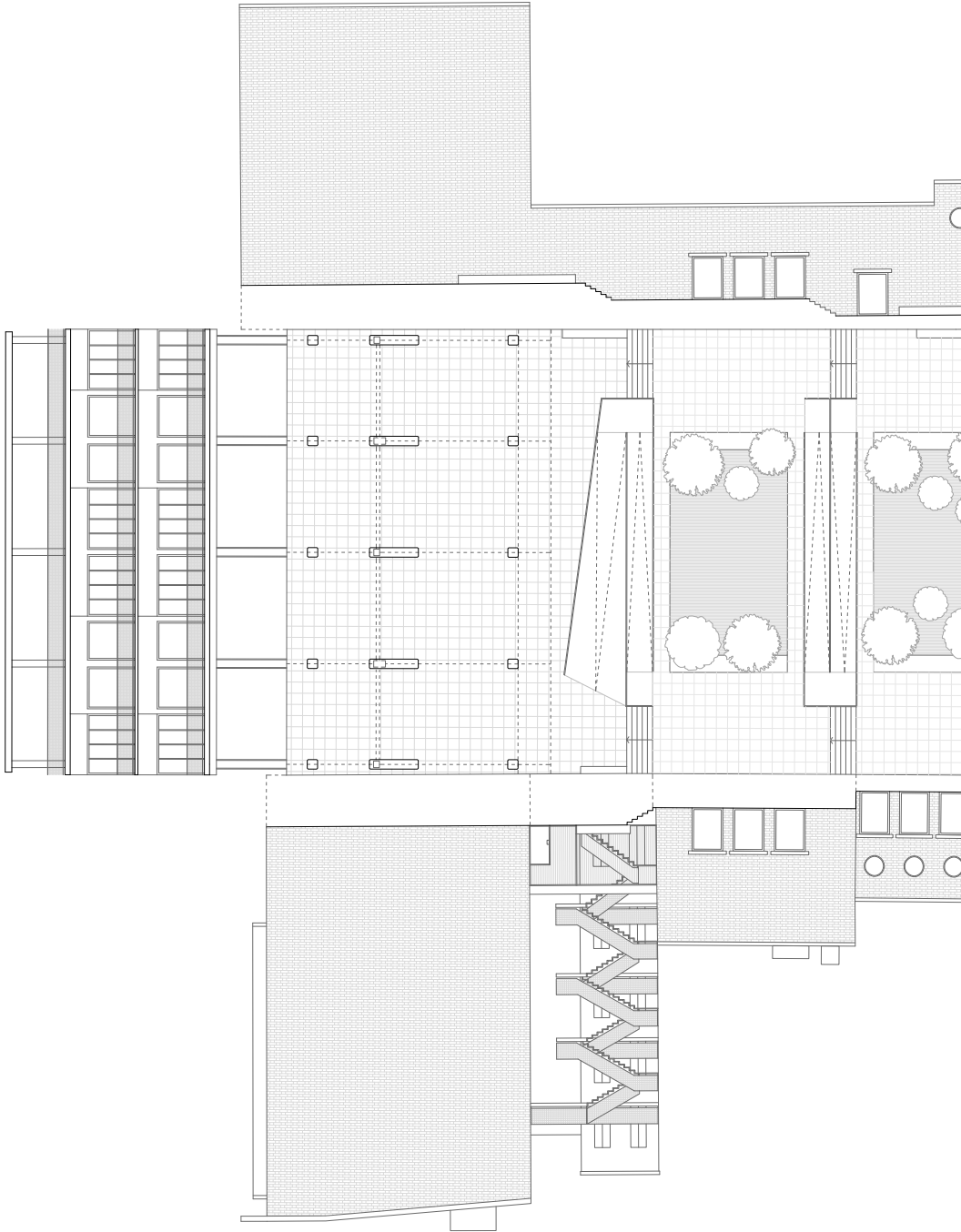
Situated in the greater canal district of Brussels, Heyvaert was one of the strong development areas of the second part of the nineteenth century, when the second industrial revolution occurred in the city. The canal allowed to concentrate a wide array of productive activities there: factories, warehouses, slaughterhouses, workshops made the neighborhood one of the major industrial zones of Brussels. With such an extensive productive background, the workers' quarter emerged, giving way to a dense urban tissue where labor, dwelling, and movement were all interrelated.

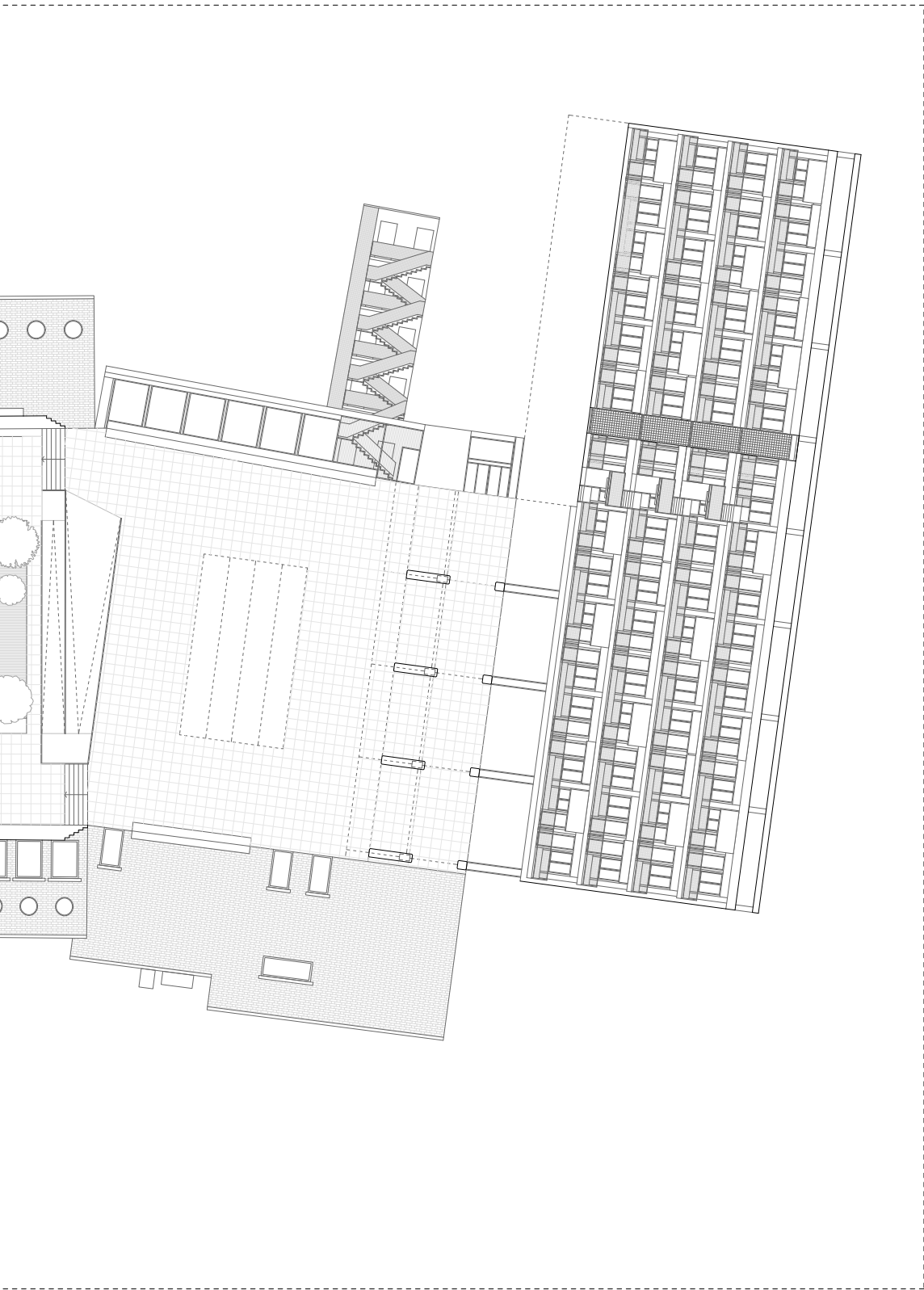
Beginning from the second half of the twentieth century, this productive zone slowly lost importance; numerous productive activities disappeared or relocated to other areas, leaving a large number of vacant buildings that soon attracted new kinds of users. Since the 1970s, small enterprises, informal economies, cultural practices and other activities occupied the buildings and transformed them according to their needs.

In addition, the area became home to a particular kind of activity: international car exports business that took place in the neighborhood's warehouses and garages. Today, the business in question is what makes Heyvaert internationally known. The second-hand car business links the city to wider global exchanges, namely towards West African countries. In this way, the use of the place changed from industrial production to trade and commercial activities.

Finally, Heyvaert always used to attract migrants. Successive waves of migrants coming from Southern Europe, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle-East, Eastern Europe, among others, populated the area, layer upon layer, making the

Unfolded elevations - 1:300





social and cultural fabric of the neighborhood extremely diversified and complex. The process did not consist of displacement but rather of accumulation of new layers of migrant communities, thus forming multiple cultures within the same area.

All of this creates a particular kind of stratification that exists in Heyvaert. Different uses intersect here, existing infrastructures get continually transformed in order to accommodate new activities, spaces change their meanings. For example, shops spread onto the streets, warehouse spaces become places for international exchanges, while living functions are combined with commercial and logistical ones.

Therefore, in contrast with the previous understanding of Heyvaert as a linear trajectory from one state to another, now it can be considered a site where different temporalities occur simultaneously. Traces of previous systems still persist and at the same time are transformed into something new. Thus, Heyvaert can be seen as a condition of superimposed temporalities that becomes the basis of the site analysis for my project.



Neighbouring facades sketches

To identify within Heyvaert, it is necessary to go beyond the mere analysis of the city fabric in order to identify its operative structure. Identification in Heyvaert is not about defining types for the sake of definition; it is rather an attempt to understand and articulate in spatial terms the multiple types of existence, production, and transition that are already there in the neighborhood.

In the project, this identification takes place in terms of the distinction made between domestic, productive and collective programs, which are not isolated types, but rather integral parts of the overall spatial ecosystem. The first element that is identified is the housing type – the type that enables the negotiation between stability and transition in the neighborhood. In this regard, two existing blocks of houses are renovated, making them the foundation on which the overall structure is built. Additionally, a new housing block for the extended families is added to the fabric, providing longer-term accommodation that hosts up to five people.

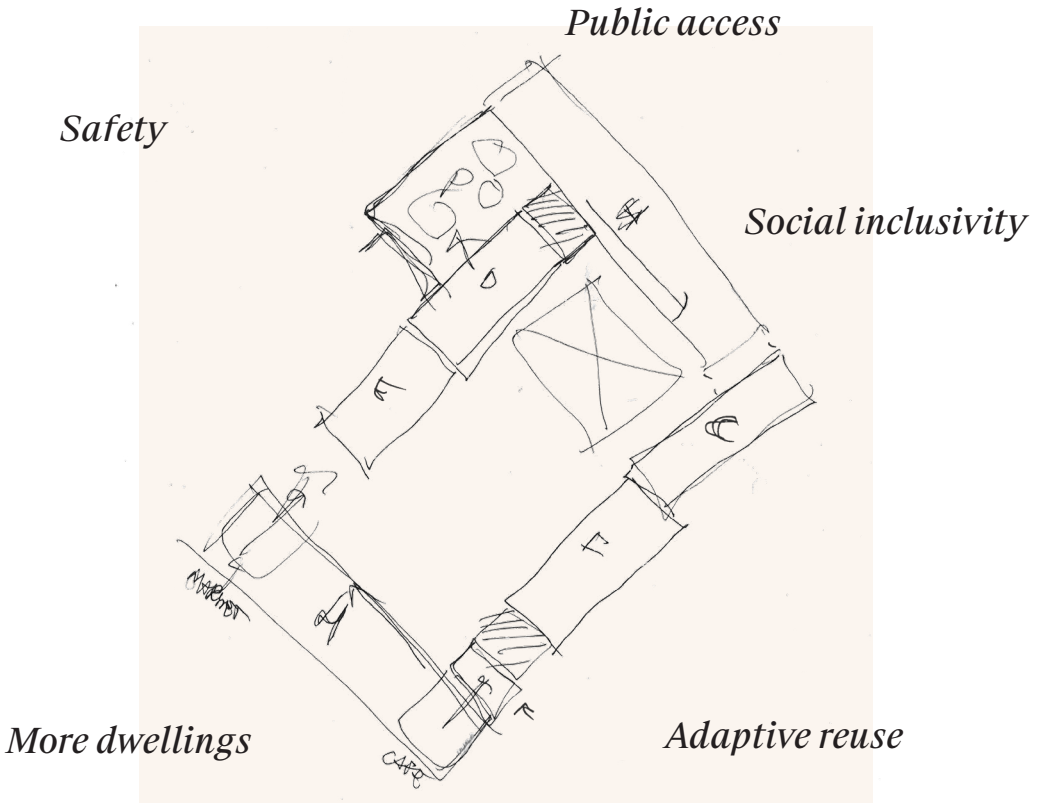
Parallel to the aforementioned residential program, another type of habitation is provided – temporary dwelling typologies in the shape of studios. They respond to the conditions of arrival, transition and mobility in the area and provide an option for a stay of one to three months. Thus, a continuum between permanency and temporariness is established through these two types of habitation.

Public/semi-public programs, namely those related to the social processes of arriving to

02. Positioning

Identify

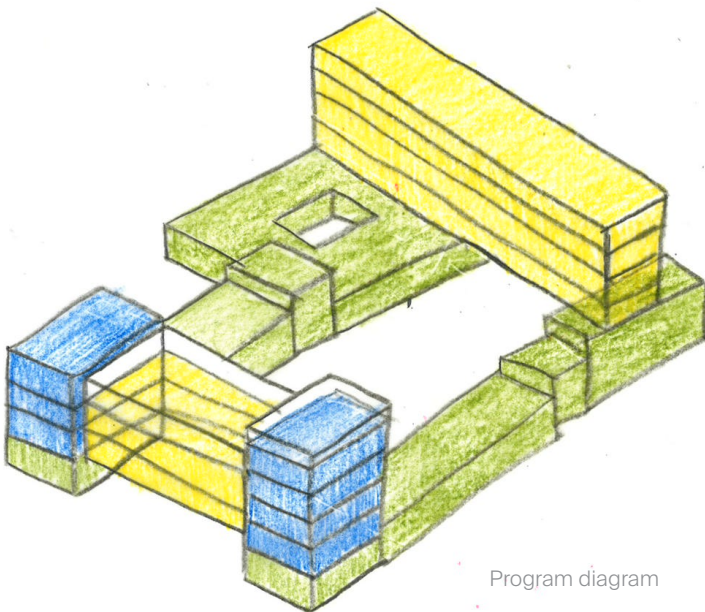
Defining a system of spatial typologies



Heyvaert, constitute the next layer that is identified within the structure of the site. Employment agency, rental agency, training center and a day care facility make up the core of this infrastructural layer. All these programs respond to four crucial moments within the cycle of arrival, namely access to work, access to housing, development of new skills and child-care. Far from being separate entities, they form an interconnected network of services that operate in a holistic manner within the overall spatial ecosystem of the project.

Along with all the mentioned elements, the existing street condition is kept intact in order to preserve continuity between the past, present and future of the neighborhood. This is ensured by maintaining and expanding the current commercial activities that take place along the street front, namely a supermarket, import/export shop and a café. As before, the building will contribute to the economic porosity of the area through its ground floor public functions, thereby enabling the continuation of the existing dynamics.

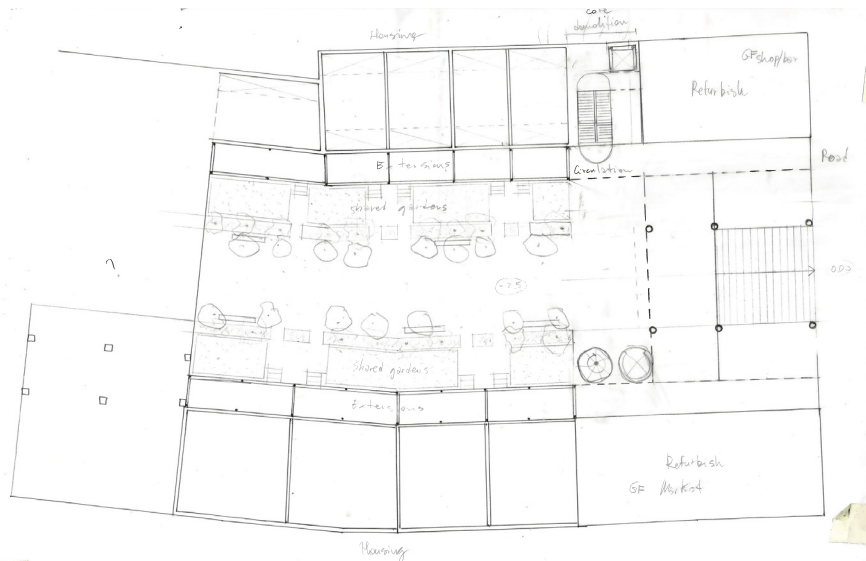
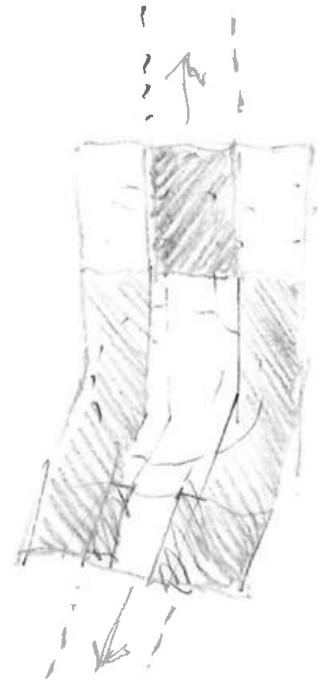
Lastly, the inner courtyard of the block constitutes the space of connection between all elements and the neighborhood itself. By linking the

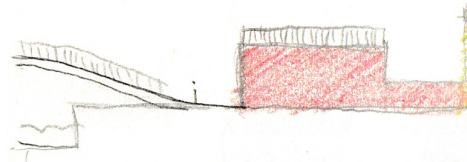


Program diagram

diverse programmatic components together and reaching out towards the rest of the urban fabric, the courtyard performs as an infrastructure of exchange between the internal and external environments, including the metro and the linear park nearby.

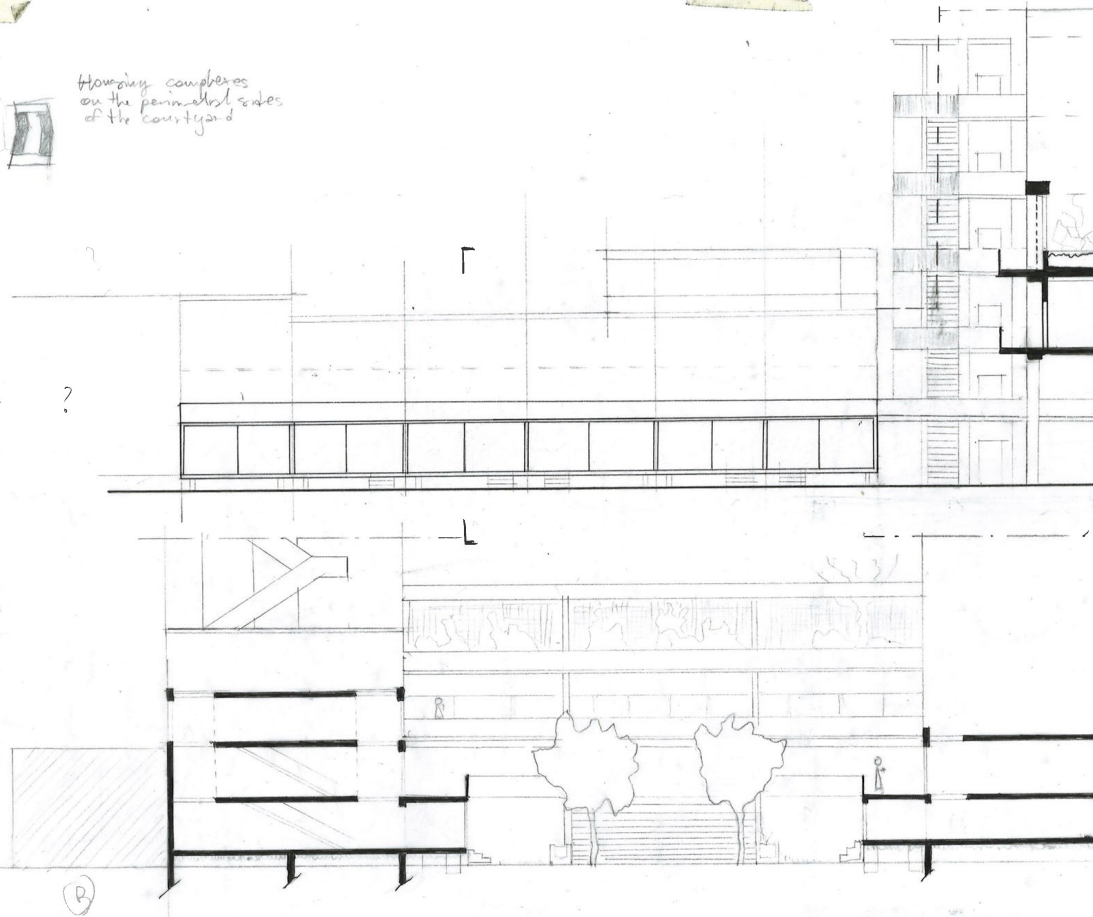
Therefore, in order to identify within Heyvaert, it is essential to create an interrelation between types that would acknowledge Heyvaert's condition of multiplicity.

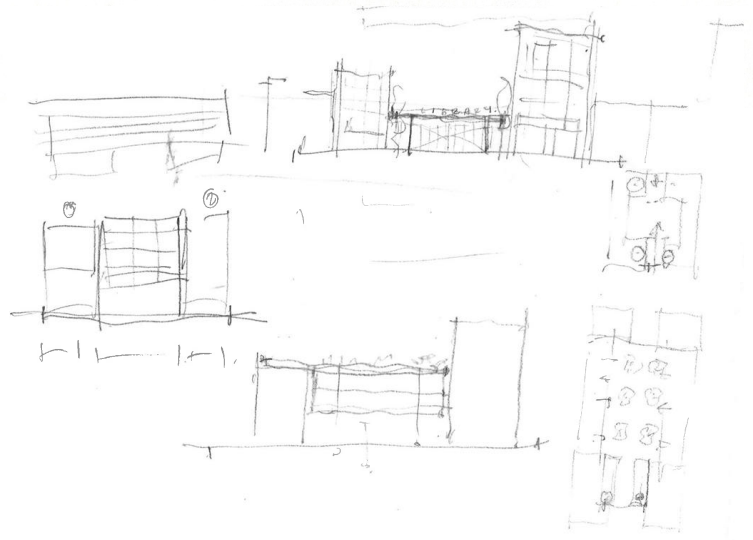
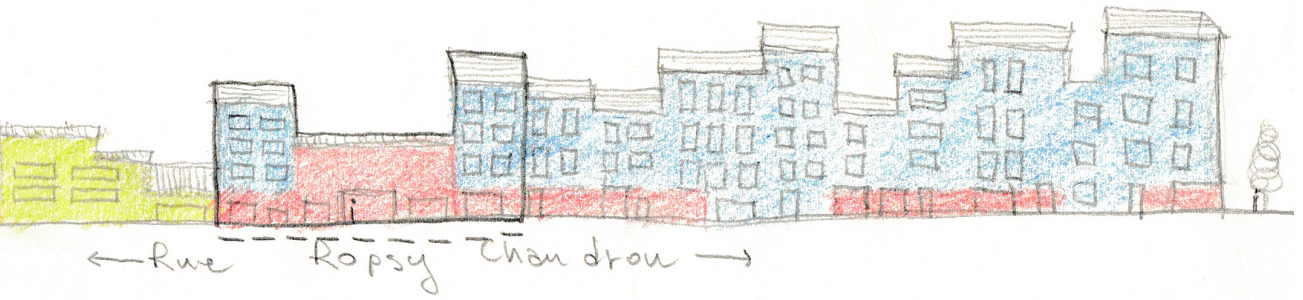




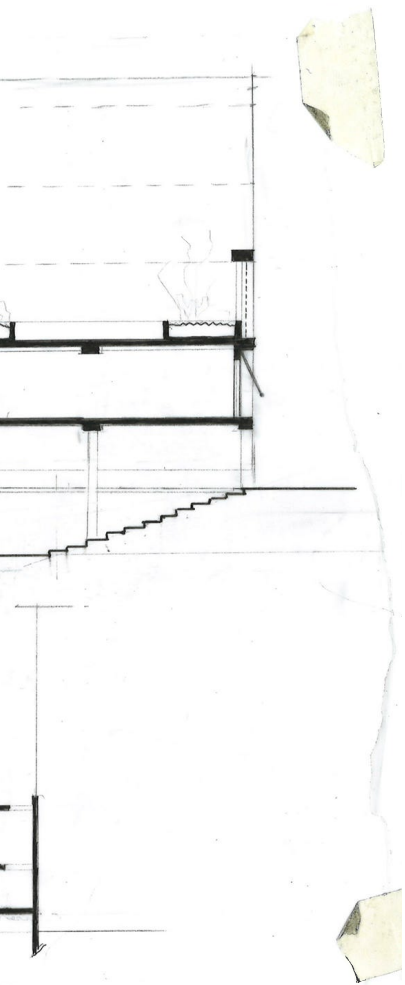
- Commercial
- Housing
- Industry

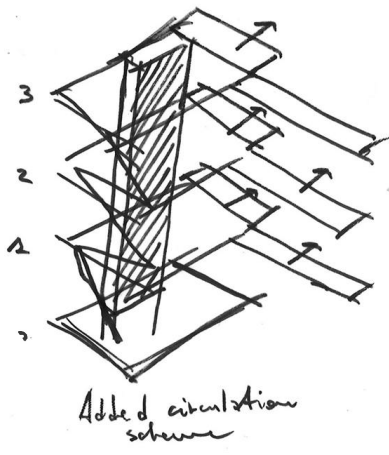
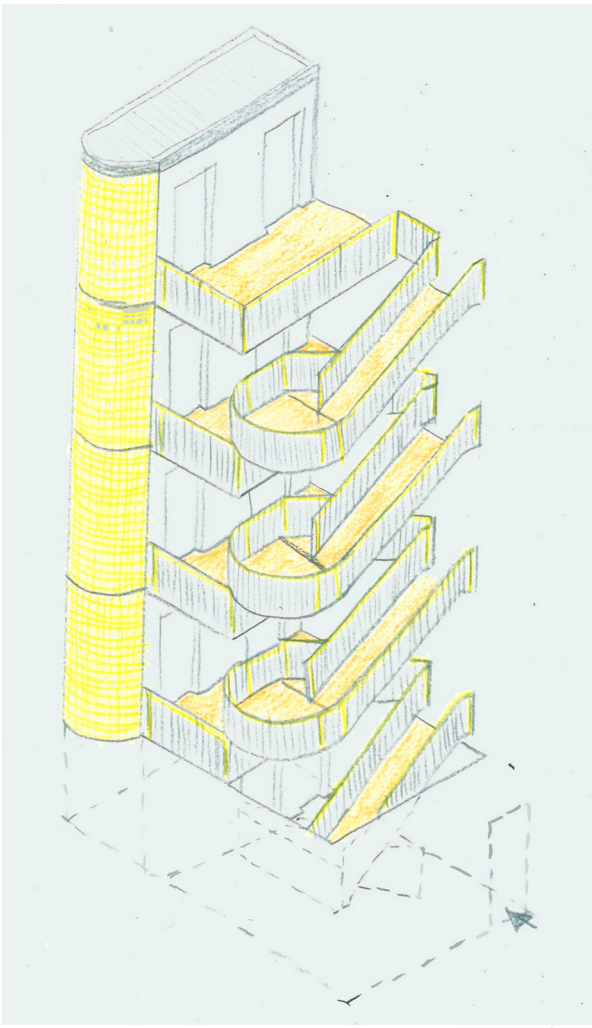
Housing complexes
on the peripheral sides
of the courtyard





Process sketches





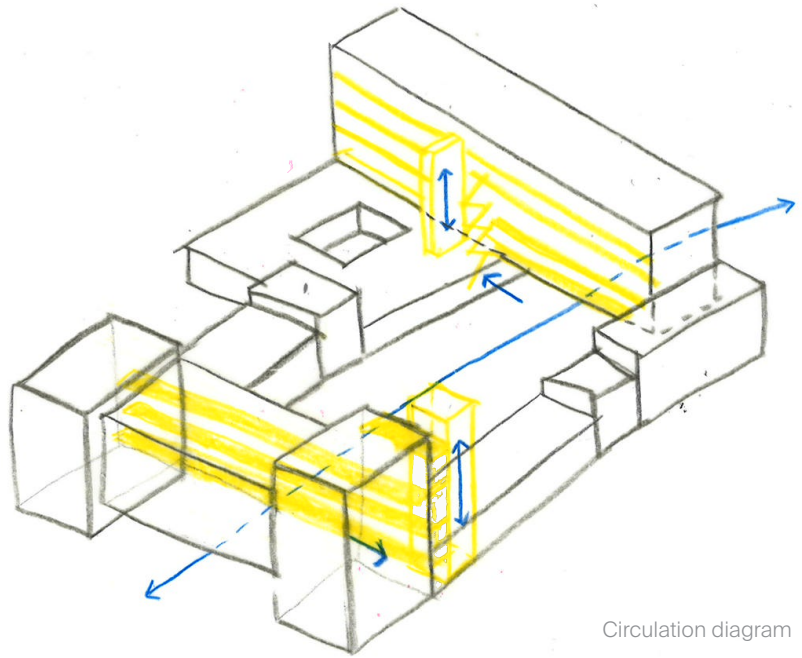
Circulation process sketches



02. Positioning

Relate

Building interdependence between spaces



Circulation diagram

Whereas the previous step sought to understand the different spatial typologies which make up the project, *Relate* looks at ways of building relationships between these and creating connections in a bigger urban context. For a neighbourhood like Heyvaert, where the social, economic and spatial are continuously intertwined, what makes the value of a space lie not in its isolated use but in its potential to relate to other spaces.

One way of exploring this aspect was by looking at the projected future extension of the Parc de la Petite Senne (Kleine Zennepark). This linear park project aims to extend through the canal district and up to Heyvaert. As part of the project, a new language of greening and of public spaces has been introduced into an area whose history has been predominantly related to industrial production and trade as well as dense urbanization. Though its purposes have been praised widely, it was interesting to see how its impact is seen locally in Heyvaert. In conversations with people in the neighbourhood, one would get different answers. Some people saw the project positively, some negatively, and most had never even heard of it.

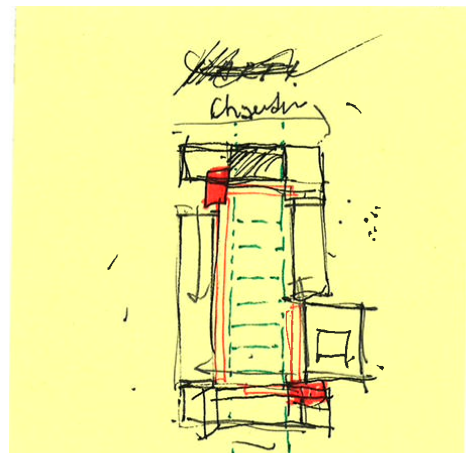
This brings us to our question: How does the future park relate to its environment? One could say that the current trend for big urban projects consists of moving from point A to point B. This logic tends to create an idea of the city as a place made of destinations, but not necessarily connections.

For this project, we propose another approach. Instead of thinking of the future park as a linear connection, we aim to think of it as a way to create connections and opportunities for exchange and encounters. We believe that the future park could be used as a starting point to build up a relationship with the rest of the area, establishing a connection of give-and-take instead of taking and imposing.

This way of thinking is translated in the way we design our interior courtyard, which, traditionally, has always been enclosed. In our proposal, we transform this private space into a more open and permeable one. The existing rear facades become our new fronts; we make the back the front, and create new entrance points, passages, and visual connections to create an environment where the interior of the block is part of the wider network of the city.

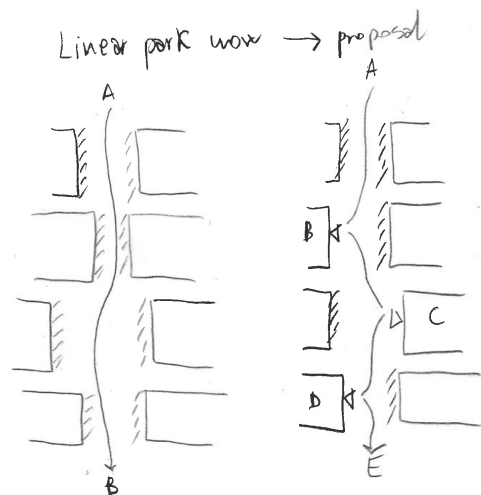
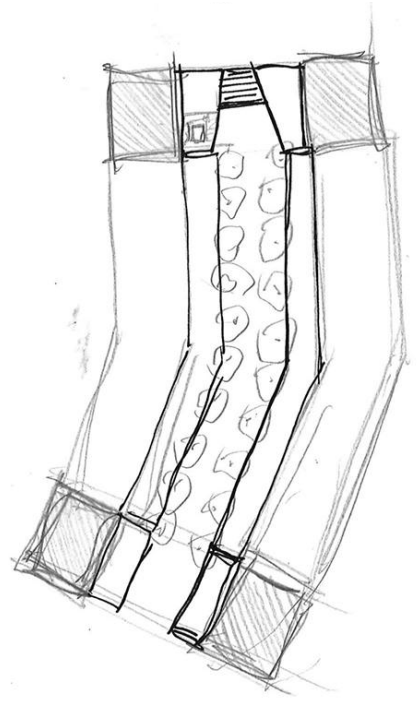
Circulations have a great role in this process of relating. By using two circulation cores, we ensure that we don't blur public and private functions but find the right degree of separation for them to coexist in the block. This means that programs like public facilities, housing and shared services all interact together through different routes while maintaining clear spatial boundaries and hierarchies.

As a mediator of these complex connections, the courtyard has a dual role. On the one hand, it acts as a link between the future park and the existing urban fabric, as a

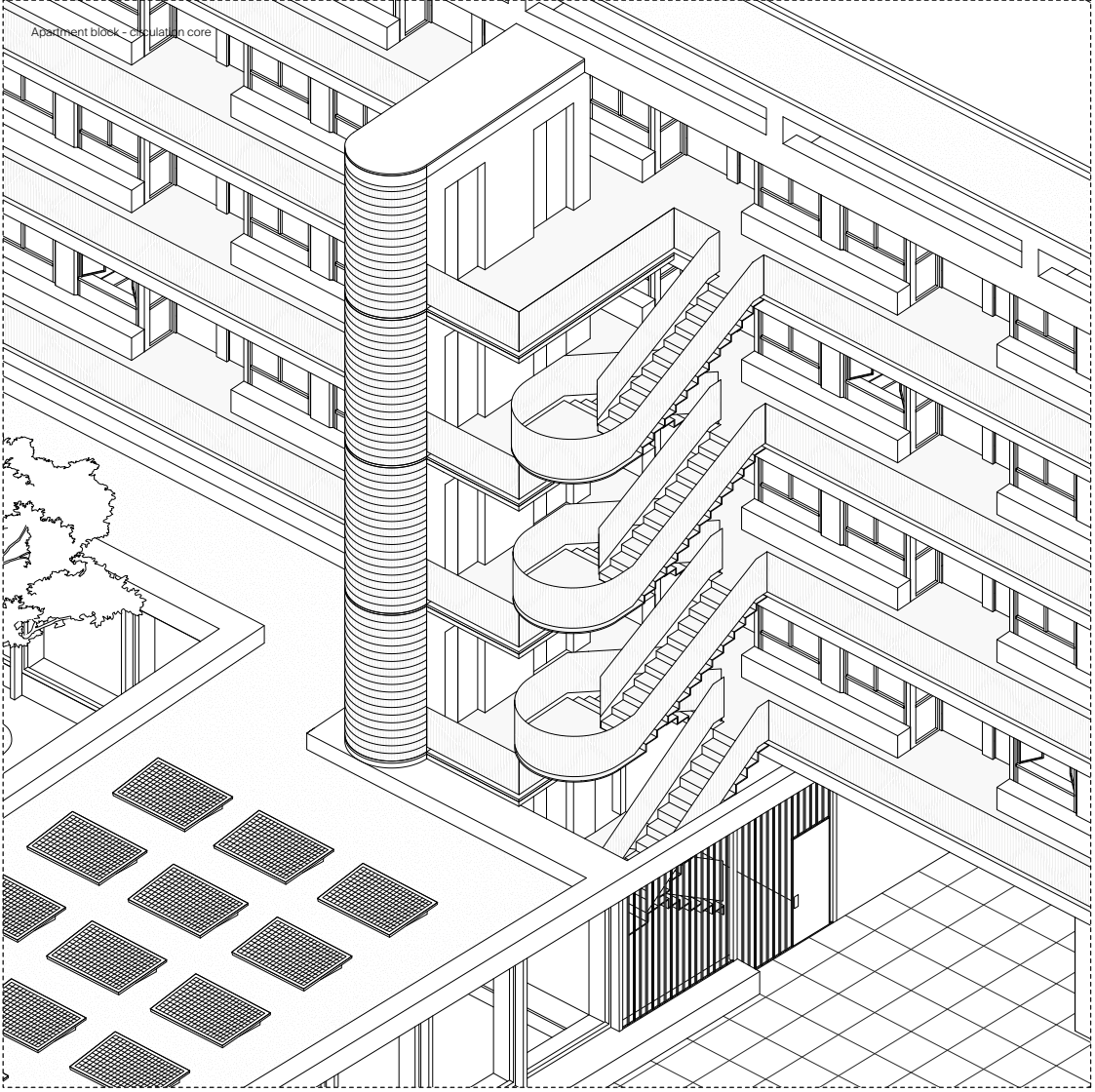


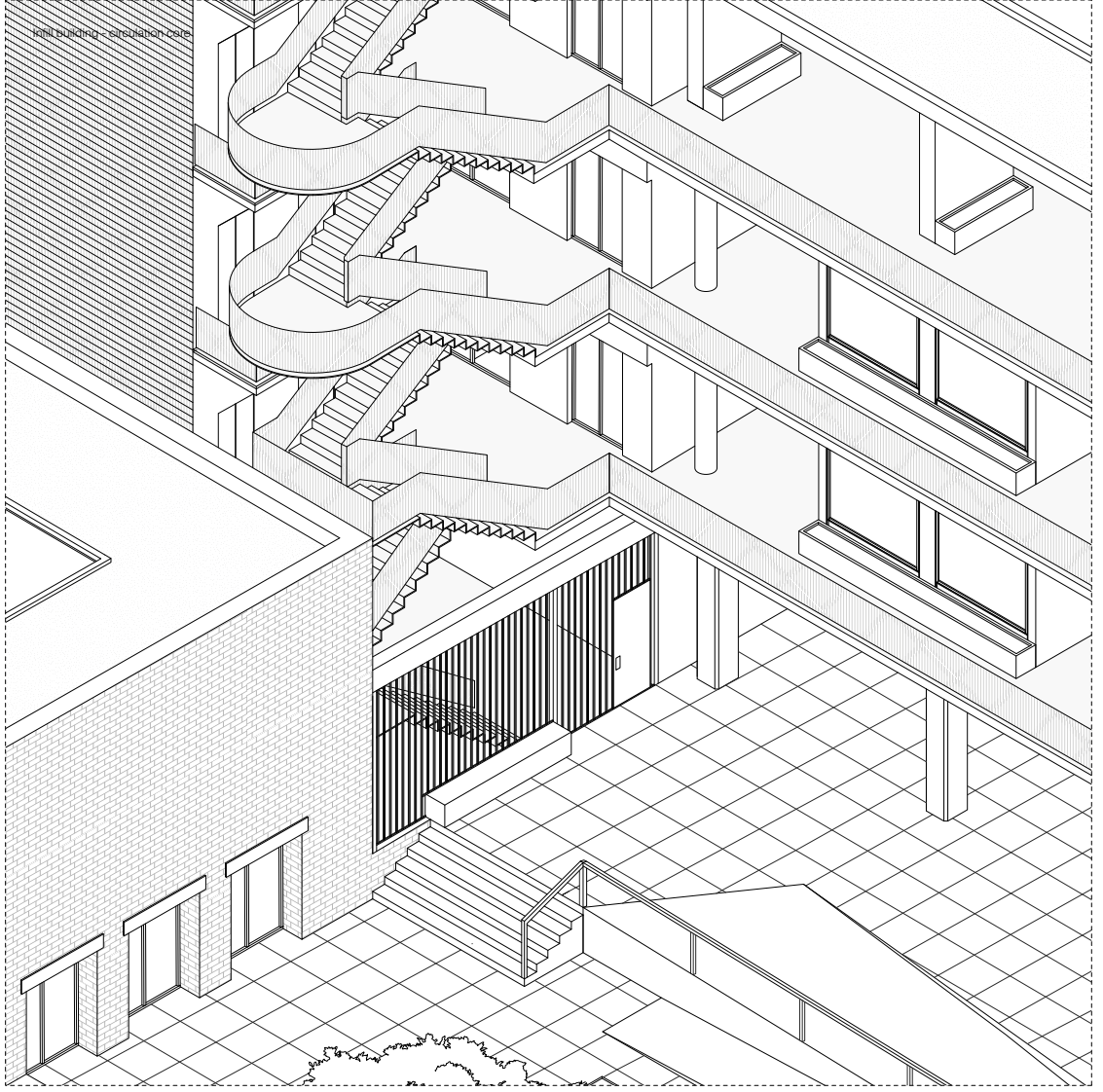
connection point between public services and residential areas, and as a series of thresholds between the neighbourhood and the dwelling of Heyvaert. On the other hand, the space has to maintain a high level of openness to guarantee good accessibility.

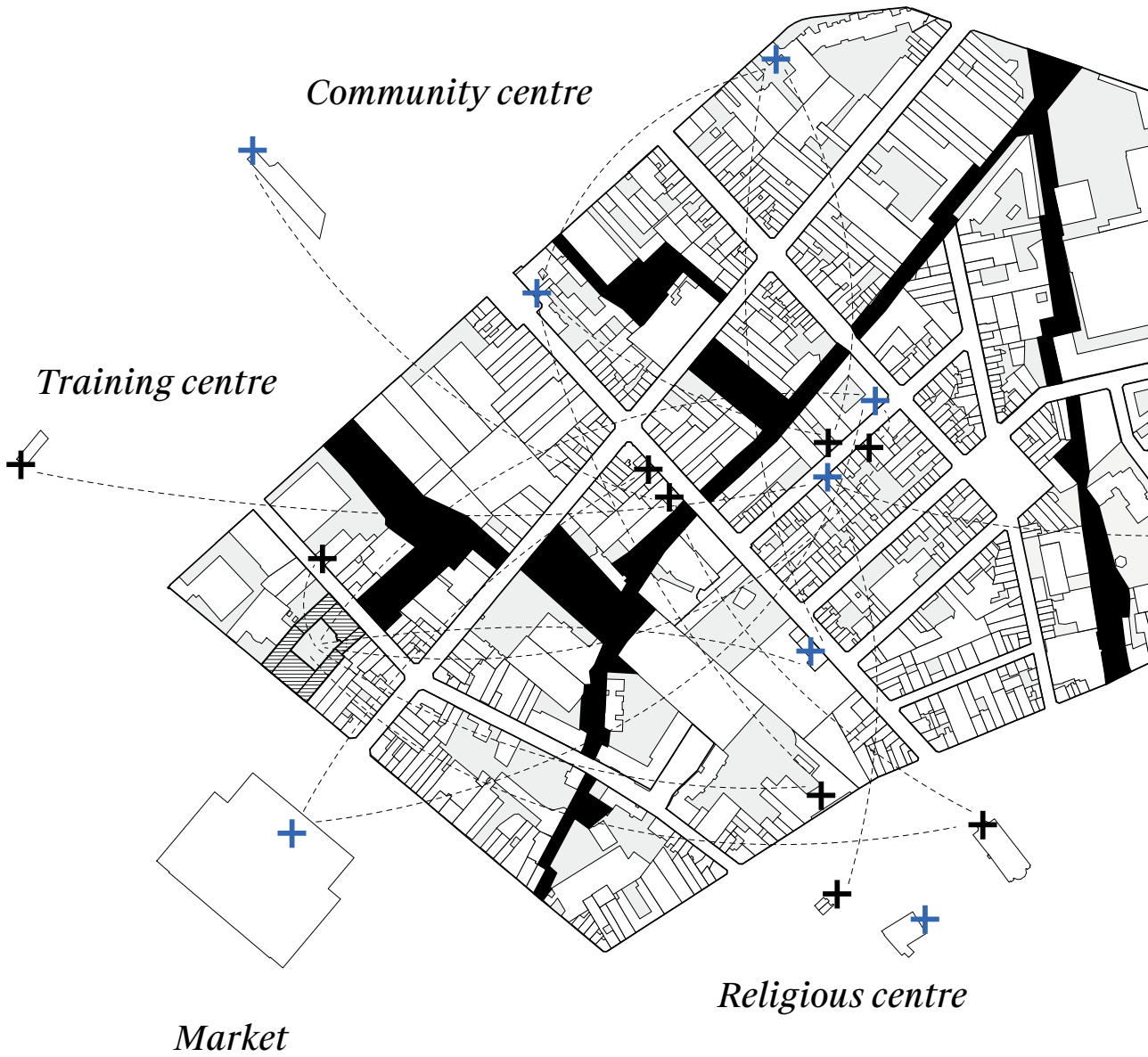
Here we take into account the issue of security and maintenance. In order to ensure that these issues are properly addressed in the space, we will regulate the passage through the park and the courtyard during the night-time.



Make the **back fronts** new *accesses*





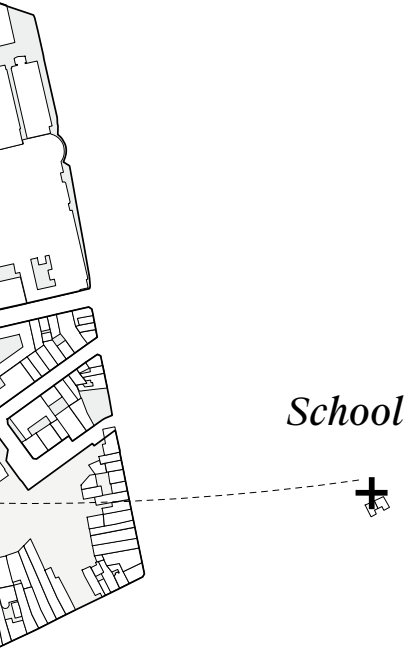


02. Positioning

Distribute

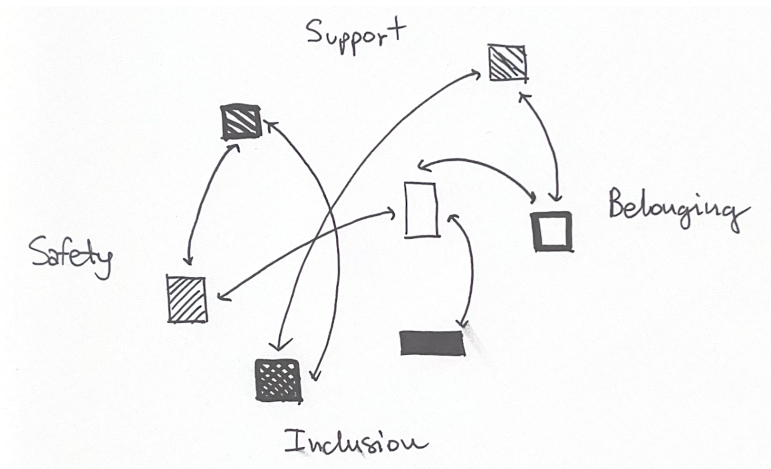
Establishing a Network Across the Neighbourhood

Employment agency



The challenges associated with arrival cannot be addressed by architecture alone. Arriving people need to find proper housing, get a job, receive proper education, build social contacts, navigate administrative procedures. All these activities depend on a wider range of participants, who exceed the scope of each building's activity. Therefore, the idea of focusing not on spatial but social relationships will expand the scope of the project.

As the result of my observations, the following idea has emerged: Heyvaert already has plenty of structures that can help in processes of arrival and assimilation. We have a training center, employment agencies, schools, churches, markets, community organizations, informal help networks. Each of them serves a certain useful purpose. All together, these structures compose some kind of system that helps to arrive in Brussels and live there successfully.



Process sketch about the Help Network

However, these relationships are often fragmented. They are working independently, but their goal and target audience are identical. In this situation, the Help Network will be aimed at revealing these relations and making them visible. It will try to make these relationships tighter and give a chance for these entities to cooperate.

Architecture here works as an instrument of highlighting connections. Some programs of the Help Network include such structures as the employment agency, rental agency, training center, and daycare facility. However, it doesn't matter how much function they perform themselves. These entities serve as focal points for other structures that provide support in arrival process.

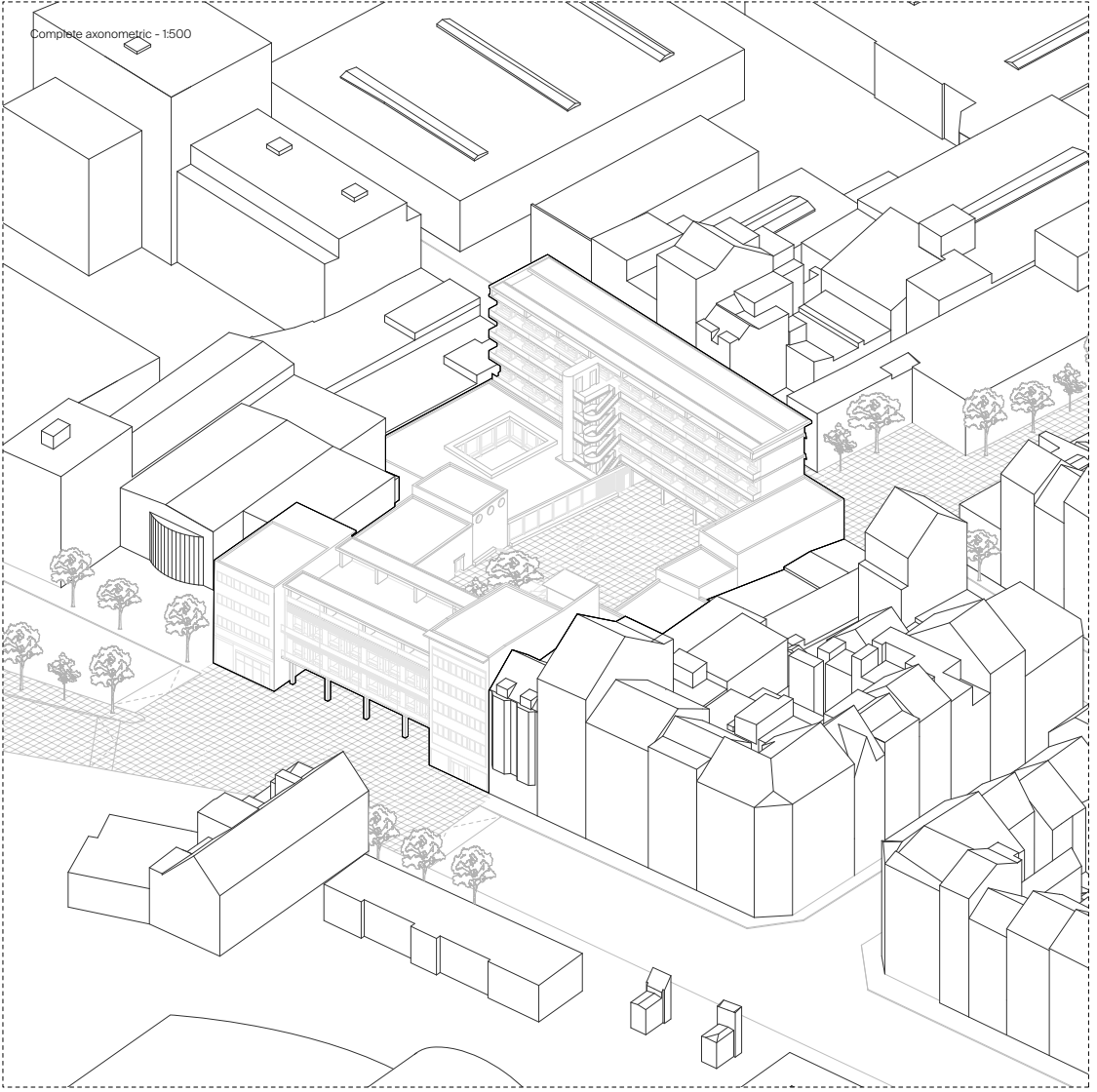
Thus, the architectural intervention in Heyvaert functions as an interface between these systems of care and opportunities. It gives a space for interaction, in which people can exchange information, make social connections, and get access to bigger support network. Architecture works at two levels – building level and neighborhood-wide network level.

Future extension of Kleine Zennepark is quite crucial in this strategy. As we talked before,

the project does not treat this park as a mere corridor. It sees this park as an opportunity to create additional relationships between the neighborhood and urban environment. Therefore, opening the courtyard to the park and creating additional accesses to it through block is vital for its further development. In this way, the closed space will become an intersection point of different flows.

Therefore, Help Network operates according to principle of distribution. Support and assistance in the process of arrival is not concentrated in one building or institution, but spread among different entities, actors, and relationships. The project tries to recognize that people's feeling of being a part of a society cannot be created with a single architectural gesture, but with creating connections with it.

To conclude, it should be mentioned that helping to distribute something is the key task of this intervention. To distribute means to help existing support structures to become more visible and closer to each other.





Similar passage conditions in Heyvaert





Rendered axonometric of the site

03. Transition

On Arrival

Positioning within The Help Network

To arrive means to find yourself in an uncertain condition. It is a moment of being between what has been left behind and what has not yet become familiar. Arrival is therefore not a single event, but a gradual process of orientation, adaptation, and integration into a new environment.

The Help Network is based on this understanding. Rather than presenting a final answer to the difficulties associated with arrival, it proposes a framework through which these challenges can be addressed collectively. The project is embedded within the existing social and spatial fabric of Heyvaert and builds upon the relationships, services, and support structures that are already present throughout the neighbourhood.

The site itself reflects a history of transformation and accumulation. Existing residential buildings are preserved and renovated, new housing structures are introduced, and a series of public programs are incorporated into the block. Together, these elements form a system capable of supporting different stages of the arrival process, from temporary accommodation and long-term housing to employment, education, social interaction, and childcare.

At the centre of this system is the courtyard. Traditionally hidden within the block, it is transformed into a shared urban space that brings together people and programs. More than simply an empty space, it becomes a common ground where residents, visitors, workers, and neighbours can meet through everyday activities and interactions.

Its significance is further strengthened through its connection to the future extension of the Kleine Zennepark. Instead of acting as a destination on its own, the courtyard becomes a point of exchange between the new public landscape of the park and the existing life of Heyvaert. New entrances and passages turn former rear façades into active fronts, allowing movement, visibility, and social interaction to enter the interior of the block. In this way, the project becomes part of a wider network of connections while remaining anchored in its local context.

The public programs are organised around this shared space. A daycare centre, employment agency, rental agency, and training centre all open directly onto the courtyard, creating a visible and accessible support structure. Along the street, the supermarket, import-export shop, and café preserve the commercial character of the neighbourhood and maintain continuity with existing everyday practices. Together, these functions establish a transition between public and private, collective and domestic, permanent and temporary conditions.

At the same time, the project acknowledges the importance of limitation. Architecture alone cannot solve every challenge, nor should every space be completely defined. In several situations, the intervention relies on small and deliberate actions, such as opening a passage, inserting a staircase, adapting an existing structure, or preserving unfinished conditions. These gestures are intended to encourage appropriation and future evolution rather than impose fixed outcomes.

For this reason, The Help Network is not understood as a standalone building but as a position. It proposes an architecture that works with existing systems rather than replacing them, and one that facilitates relationships rather than controlling them. By connecting housing, public services, shared spaces, and neighbourhood networks, it provides a framework through which arrival can be understood not only as transition, but as the beginning of belonging.

In a city increasingly shaped by mobility, migration, and cultural diversity, arrival becomes an architectural question. The Help Network does not attempt to solve this condition completely. Instead, it seeks to create the spaces and relationships through which it can be navigated collectively over time.

Rendered view of the courtyard
Relationship between existing and new



Transformation in Heyvaert is not achieved from scratch. The site is already densely populated by buildings, infrastructure, and reminders of previous occupations. It means that there is no need to demolish everything and start afresh – the transformation here consists in adaptation of the pre-existing elements to incorporate something new.

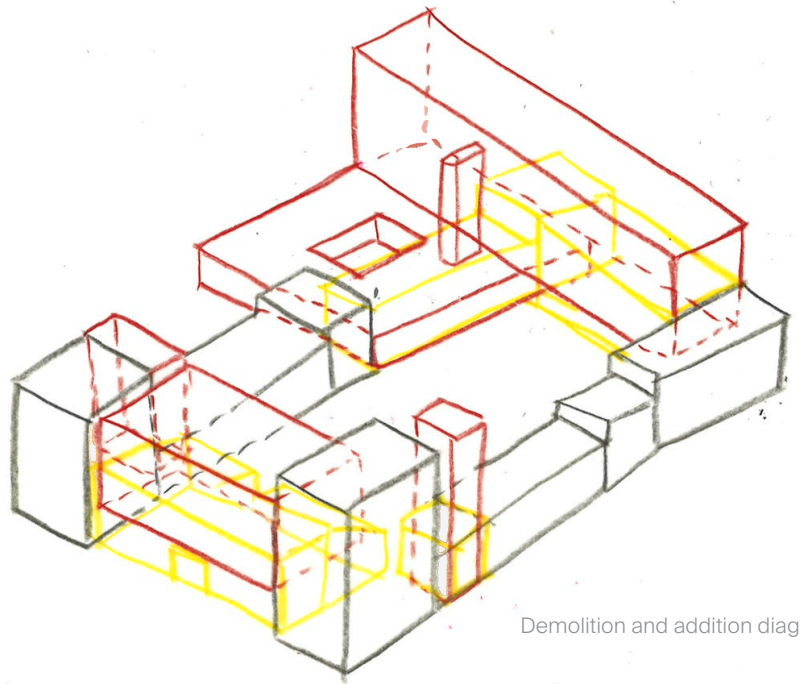
The existing buildings in Heyvaert are already valued not only because of their historical significance but also as valuable spatial resources. Therefore, the proposed project retains the structures that have been part of the history of the area. This way, the former warehouses and industrial buildings become the basis of the new system of occupations and form the core around which the project unfolds.

As for Rue Ropsy Chaudron, it already serves as a space for commercial activity – the presence of a café and a supermarket in addition to housing shows that it has a lively rhythm typical for an active urban space. In the proposed design solution, the current commercial buildings will be preserved and continue to perform their usual function, and their upper

04. Intervention

Transform

Adaptation through reuse and reconfiguration



Demolition and addition diagram

floors will be transformed into housing units. They will not remain isolated from each other and will participate in the unified housing system along with the newly erected buildings that will emerge in the courtyard between them.

In terms of adaptation, it is possible to mention a specific type of intensification that will affect the existing housing units. In fact, it consists in dividing large apartments according to the principle of co-living. While keeping enough space for collective spaces in order to stimulate social interaction between the residents, we plan to provide them with minimal sleeping quarters. Thus, even without adding volume, we will manage to significantly increase the number of apartments in the block and make the best of the pre-existing housing facilities.

It is not possible, however, to retain all the buildings on the site. Some of the pre-existing structures were too dilapidated due to prolonged vacancy and had to be removed for various practical reasons. Demolition of such buildings would also contribute to unlocking some underutilized areas of the city and would promote the transformation of Heyvaert block into a more dynamic space.

New buildings erected as part of the project show a contrast between the permanent and adaptable in architecture. They are based on the combination of two structural solutions: concrete plinth and a wooden superstructure above it. The former responds to difficult soil conditions of the site and houses all kinds of public functions that need to stay on the ground level. A





Facade collage on Rue Ropsy Chaudron

lightweight superstructure made of cross-laminated timber ensures better adaptation of buildings to changing needs of the community over time.

Transformation in Heyvaert is therefore not an action but a process. Existing structures are adapted to incorporate the new rather than being demolished completely; new buildings emerge from the logic of the site; and demolition happens only in exceptional circumstances when it is needed to unlock the latent potential of the area.

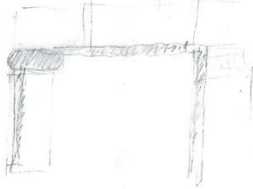
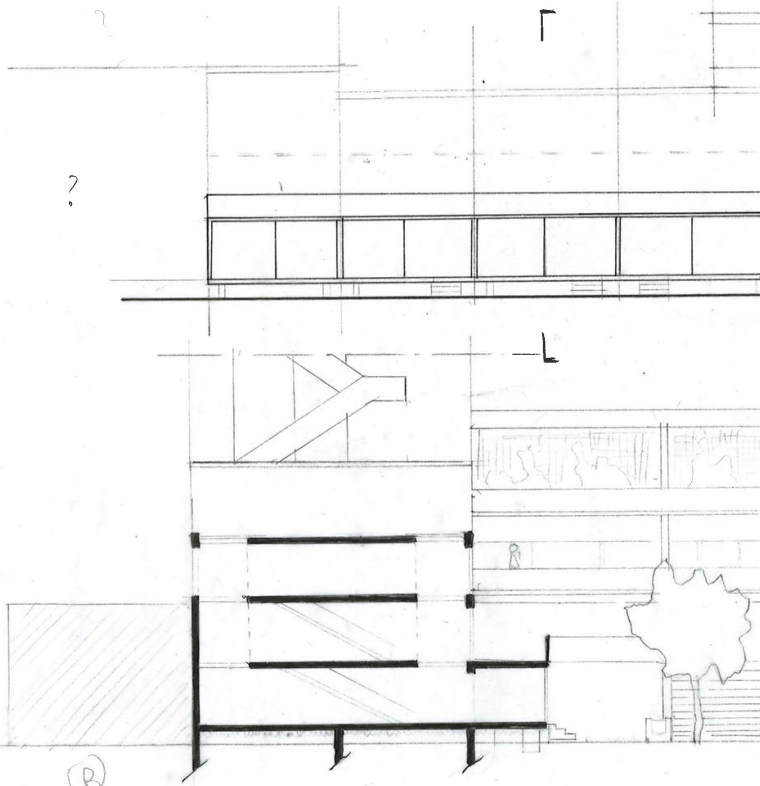
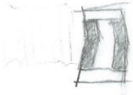


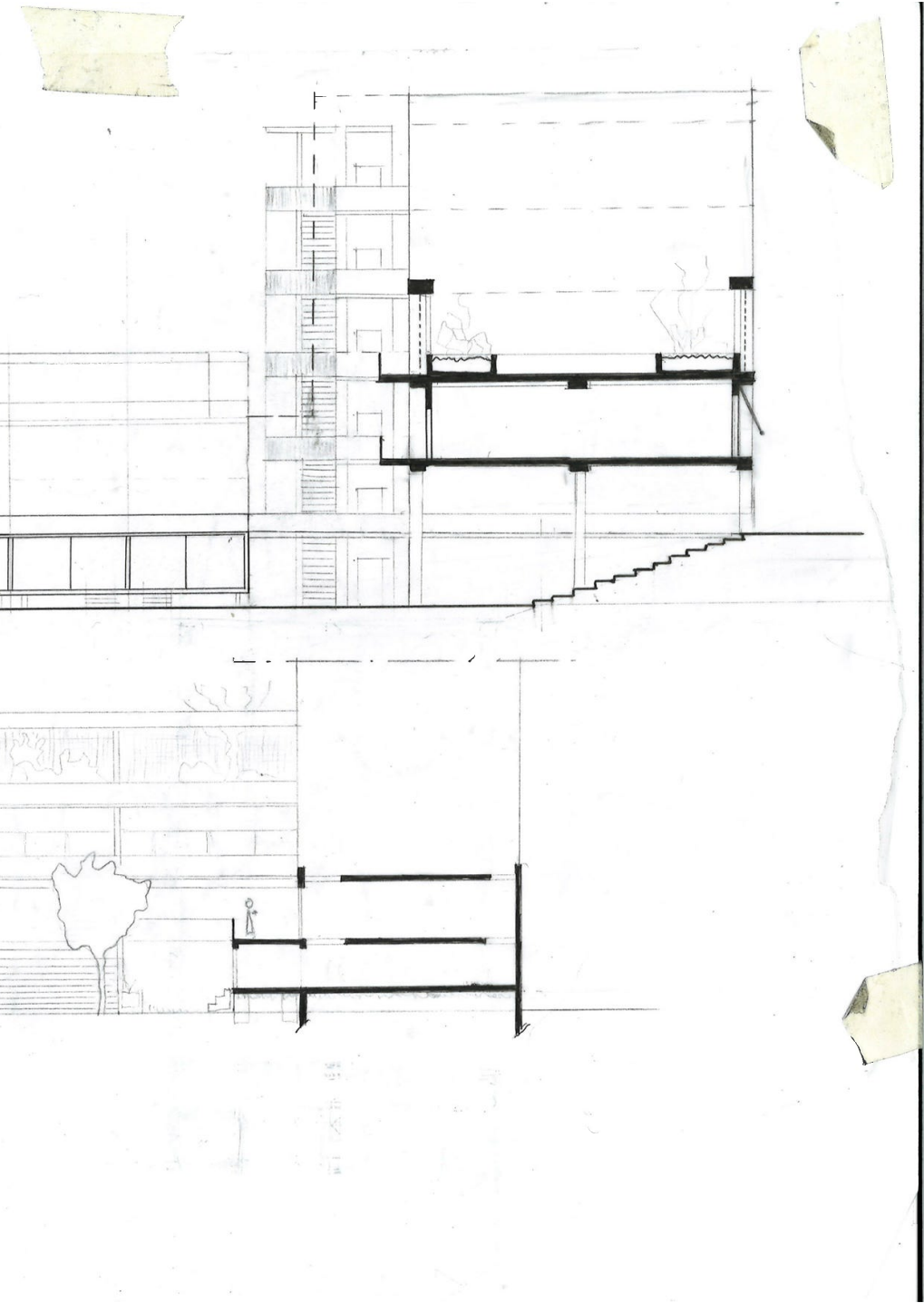


Facade collage on Rue du Bateau



Housing complexes
on the peripheral sides
of the courtyard





Process Sketch - initial ideas



Rendered view of the under passage

04. Intervention

Sequence

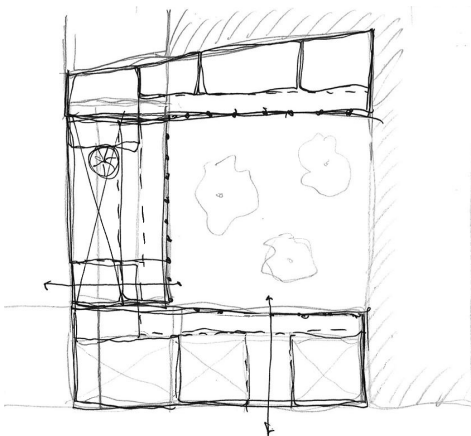
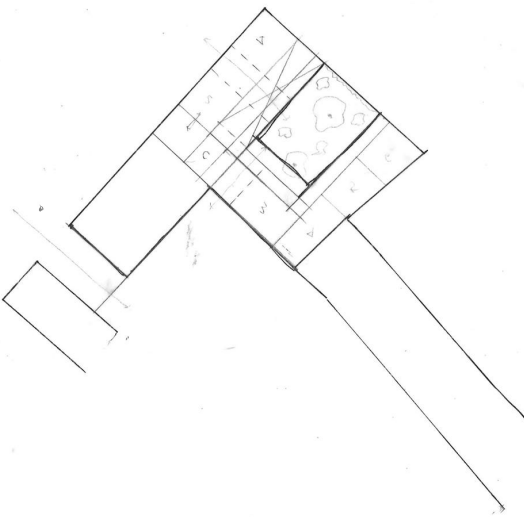
Structuring spatial progression over time

Arrival is not experienced all at once but through various stages, through a progression of spaces and experiences. For this reason, the sequence of spaces in the project is not only based on functional considerations, but also carefully designed to facilitate progressive transition from a life in common on the street level to a domestic sphere and support facilities of living.

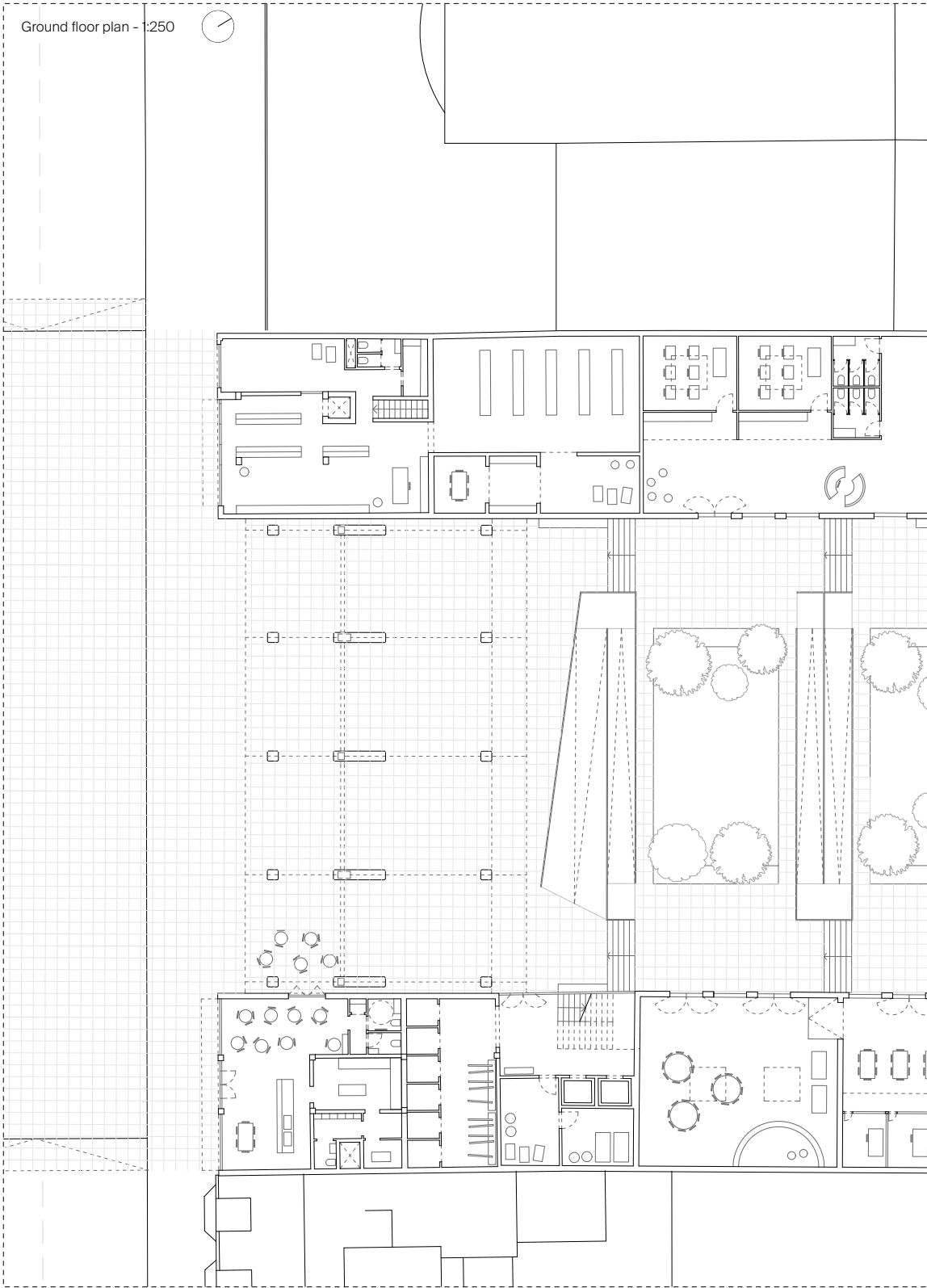
Thus, the project offers direct access to the courtyard from the public passage that is open during daytime, thus turning the courtyard into a kind of extended space, and making it an additional bridge that will connect the streets of Heyvaert and Kleine Zennepark, to be built in the future. Instead of being an enclave enclosed within a block, courtyard emerges as a space of urban everyday life.

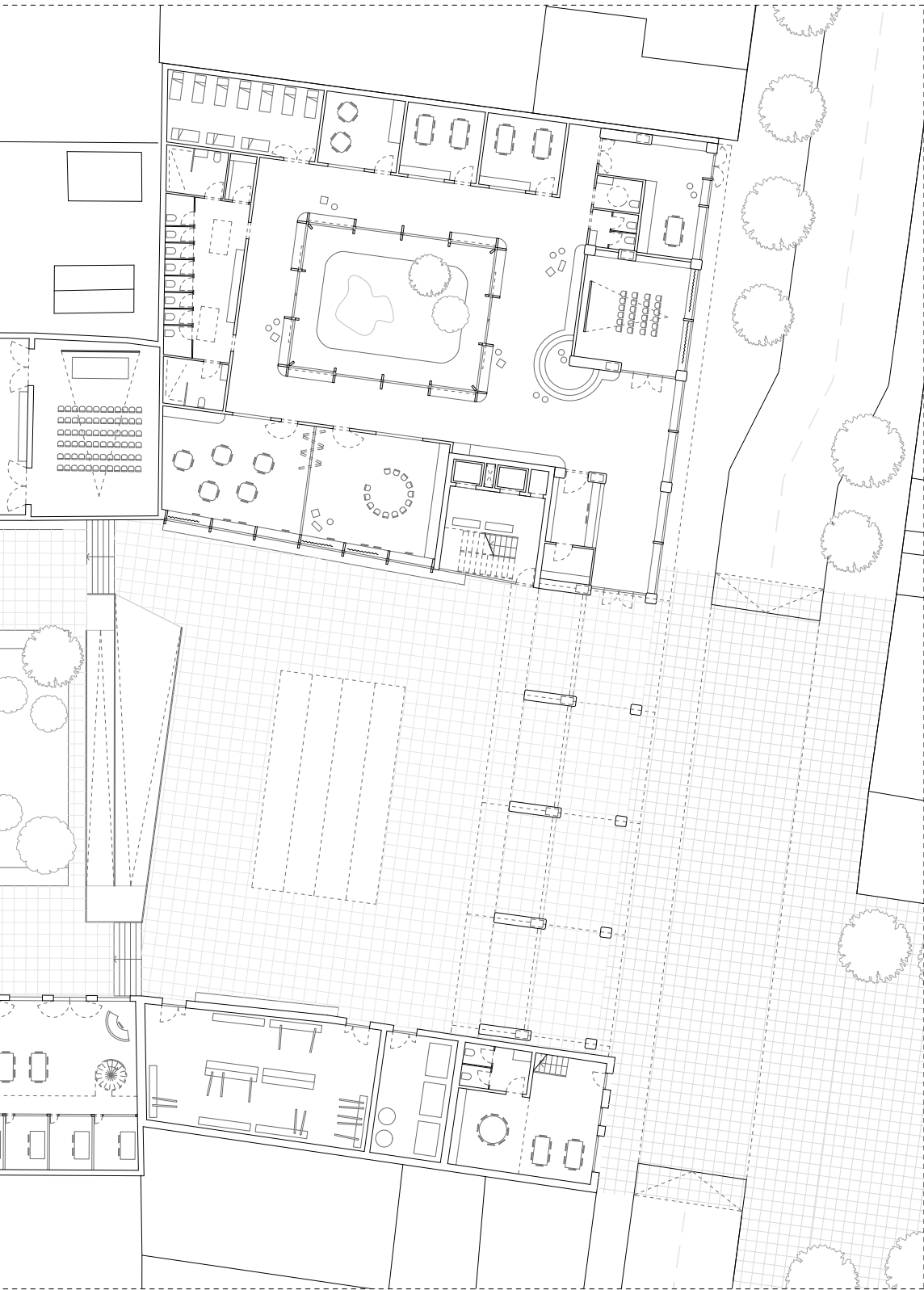
The structure of this sequence is based on the idea of 'eyes on the street', elaborated by Jacobs. Safety, in this case, is not ensured by isolation, but by presence and by the interrelation between people. That is why, the sequence is based on two ideas – the idea of continuous occupation and the idea of shared use. At different hours of the day, people will fill the territory in different ways; public, semi-private, and domestic programs will alternate and intertwine. Occupying different spaces during the daytime, but without any competition for them, will create a rhythm of occupation of space with some alternations and shifts.

The role of courtyard as the main stage of this sequence is particularly important. Thanks to the organization of its landscape, people have access

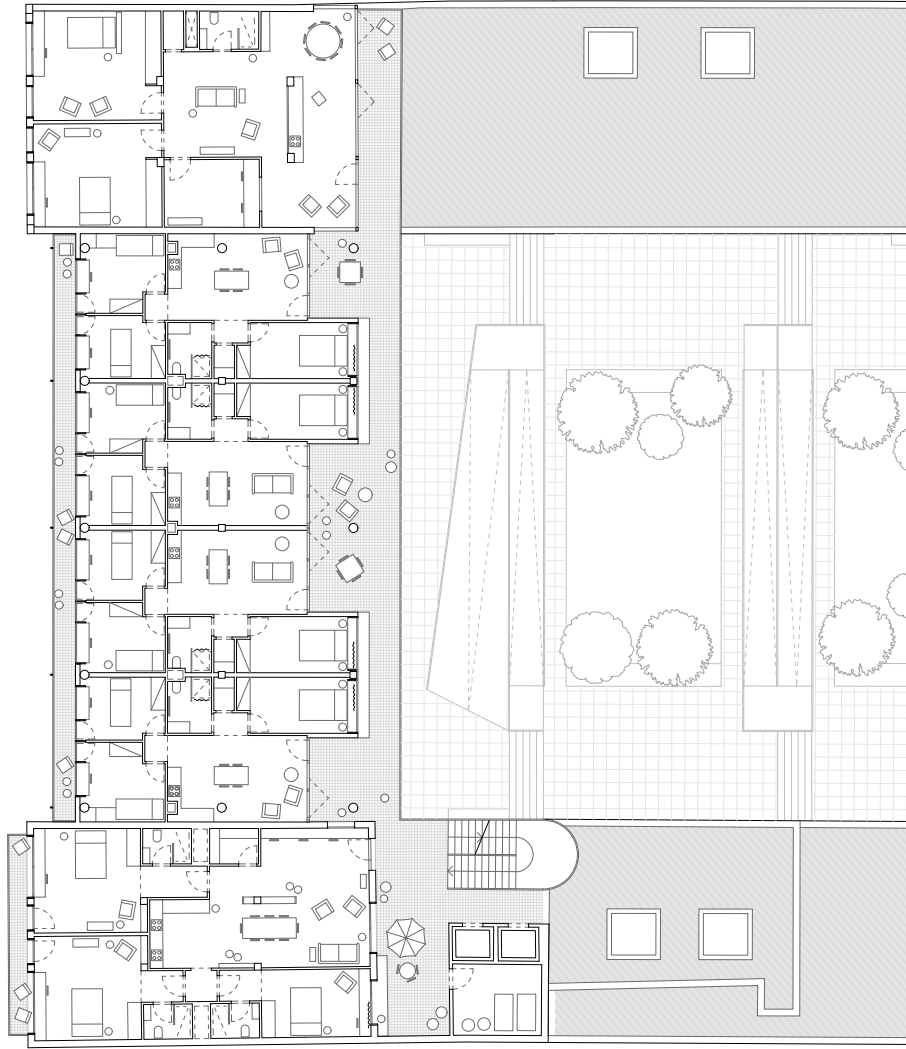


Ground floor plan - 1:250





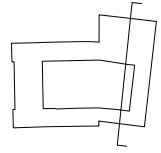
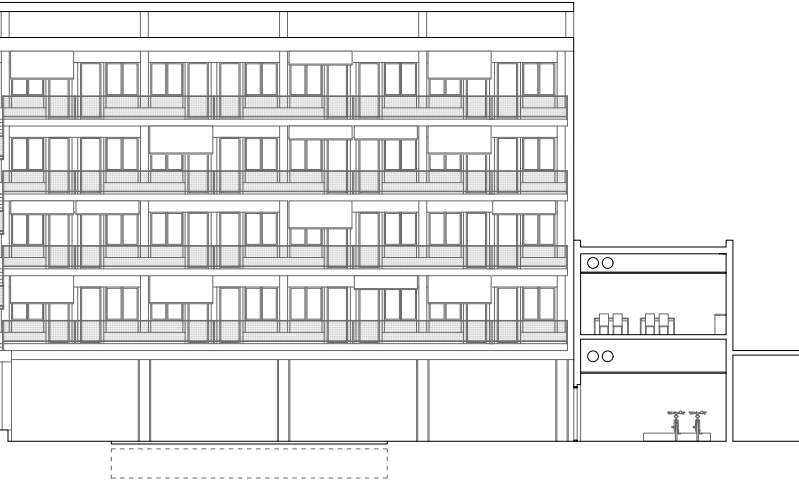
First floor plan - 1:250

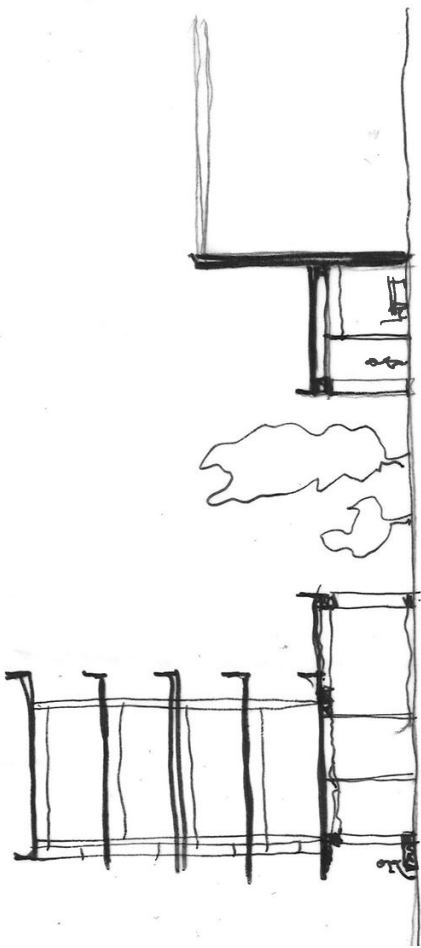




Transverse section - 1:250







Process sketch of the Daycare inner courtyard

to the social infrastructure: to the agencies of renting apartments, employment, vocational training, and to daycare. The distribution of these programs along the perimeter of the courtyard makes daily occupations here possible and visible, thus adding to the community life of the territory.

Residential buildings follow other rules: they are connected visually and spatially with public places, yet their entrance and circulations are independent from that of courtyard: residents do not share the same schedule.

Supportive services are embedded in this system and make up a part of it as well: bicycle parking provides sustainable mobility and makes the relationship with Heyvaert stronger. Facilities of waste management are integrated into the complex organization of the block so as not to dominate public space.

Courtyard becomes not only a space of transit, but also a space of urban life thanks to the organization of its landscape. Presence of greenery, benches, and spaces for informal meetings adds to the life of the space; a wet square located in front of daycare makes this space more diverse and season-specific. All these interventions turn the courtyard into the space of everyday life.

Yet the openness of the territory should be moderated by time control of access to it, because this aspect is also very important in order to provide security. Thus, night time closes the courtyard to public and makes its access possible only during the day time due to the installation of the gates

securing the courtyard and making its stewardship sustainable. Activity does not stop then: the supermarket operates all the time, ensuring some degree of surveillance.

Openness is balanced with the control of the access that is necessary to ensure proper maintenance of the site and safety there. Sequence as the organization of relationships through time creates an environment for public, social, and domestic life.



04. Intervention

Enable

Supporting use, adaptation and appropriation

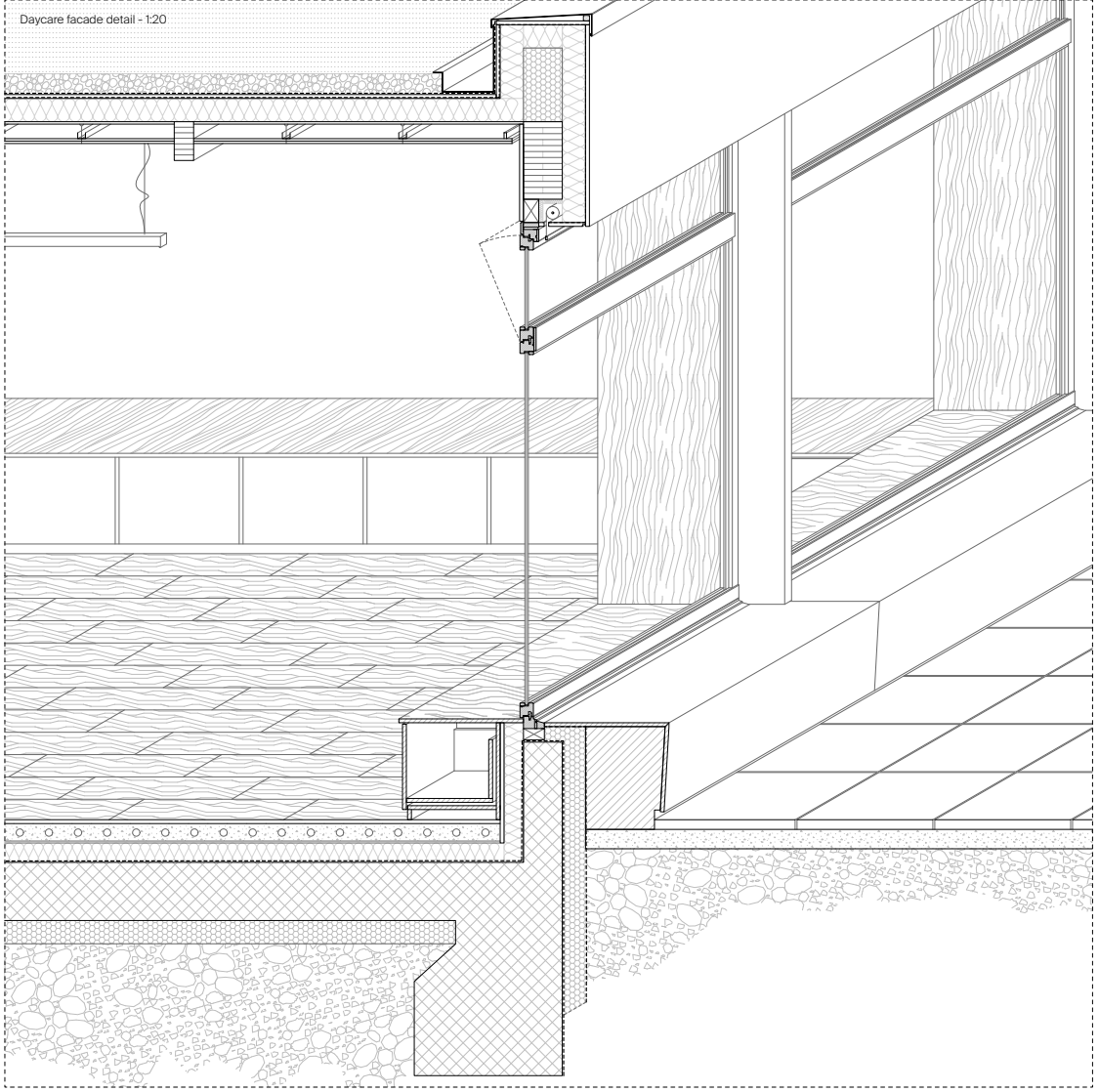
While transformation relates to the ability to adapt buildings, enabling means the ability to adapt life. It is clear that arrival is not a permanent stage for everyone. The project assumes that people arrive at different times, have diverse needs, different terms of staying in Brussels, and different degrees of familiarity with the environment. Consequently, architecture should remain flexible and able to adapt to these requirements and provide different ways of occupying spaces without imposing any specific lifestyle.

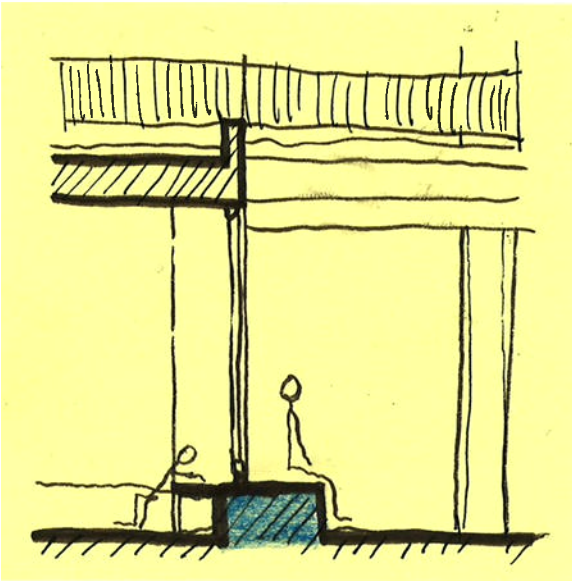
In such a way, one can trace this idea in the residential aspect of the project. Indeed, there are several blocks of studio apartments aimed specifically at temporary accommodation of those who move to Brussels to find housing, get employment or study there. These apartments help to immediately start living in new conditions that still allow communication with the rest of the project and the neighborhood.

However, arriving does not mean staying alone all the time. Hence, one can also note that the design of the project includes several communal spaces inside the blocks of apartments. They are placed on each floor and thus give people the opportunity to communicate, share their experiences, and build friendly relations.

Even the design of the façade itself is consistent with the idea of enabling. In other words, the design team perceives façades not as mere enclosures of living spaces but as places to inhabit, interact with, and appropriate.

For example, within studio apartments, there is a long bench that connects the entrances of two units, making them share a common threshold. People can talk there or even eat outside in good weather. Thus, the façade gives the opportunity for people to make acquaintances and build friendships.





The same approach is also used in designing the façade of the daycare facility. The façade includes a bench at its external part and internal furniture. In this way, the threshold of the daycare becomes thicker and helps both to interact with the external world and feel comfortable staying alone. Similarly, in the block of family housing, the façade is transformed into the planter that protects the privacy of the bedroom yet remains connected with the courtyard of the building. Furthermore, inhabitable window frames of Rue Ropsly Chaudron also include built-in desks to allow residents to be close to the façade and communicate with people from the street below.

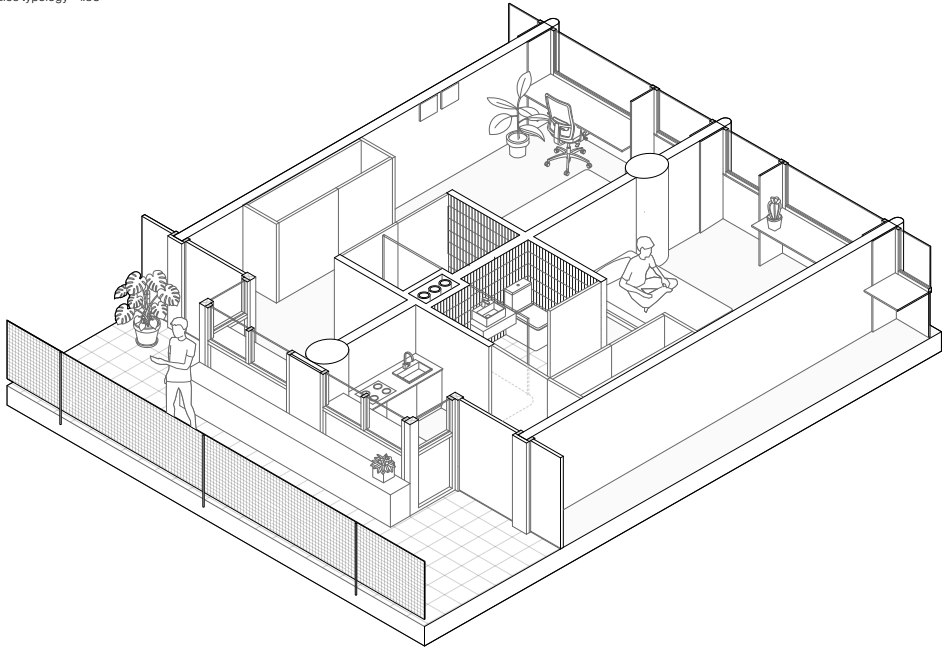
Thus, one can note that a special language is formed with the help of façades. These surfaces become inhabitable instead of just observable, giving the opportunity for people to meet, relax, and linger. At the same time, these elements significantly affect the performance of the building

in environmental terms. Because of their thickness, window openings can be left open without discomfort for occupants. Therefore, these elements promote cross-ventilation, and in such a way, social function and environmental efficiency are combined.

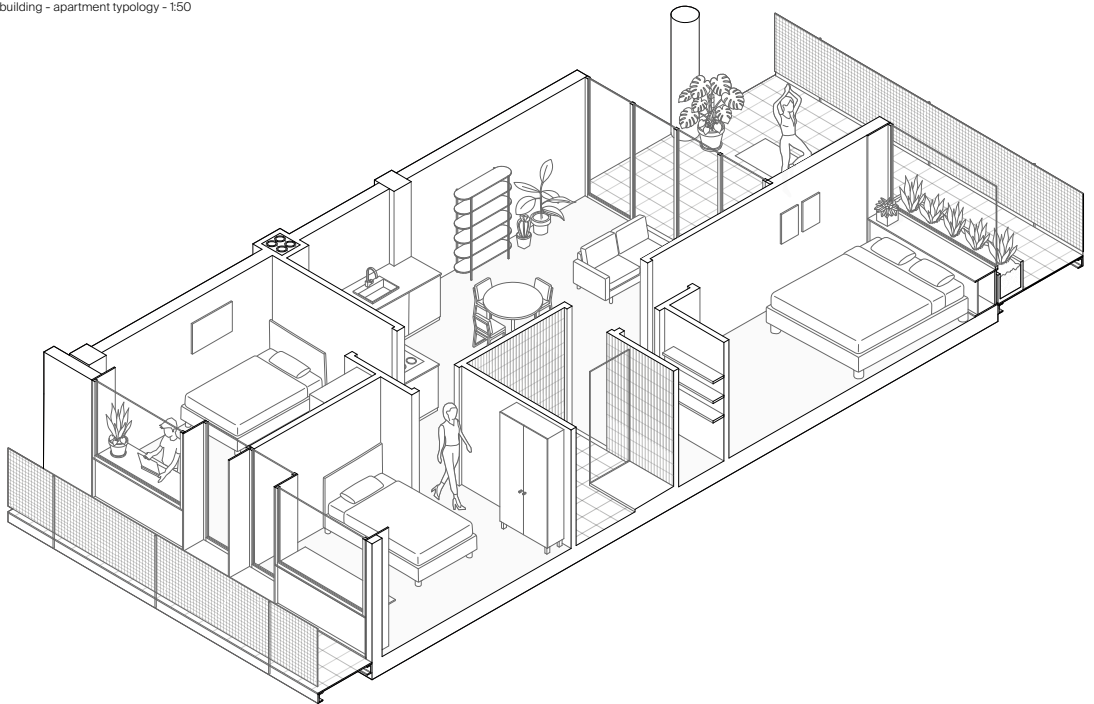
Finally, in the context of collective, the project suggests places where appropriation can take place. Namely, there is a rooftop garden that crowns the main block of housing. Thus, people can relax, chat, grow plants, and build their communities there. Being located higher than other buildings, the roof of this construction gives access to a kind of oasis of the neighborhood and helps strengthen relationships of its inhabitants.

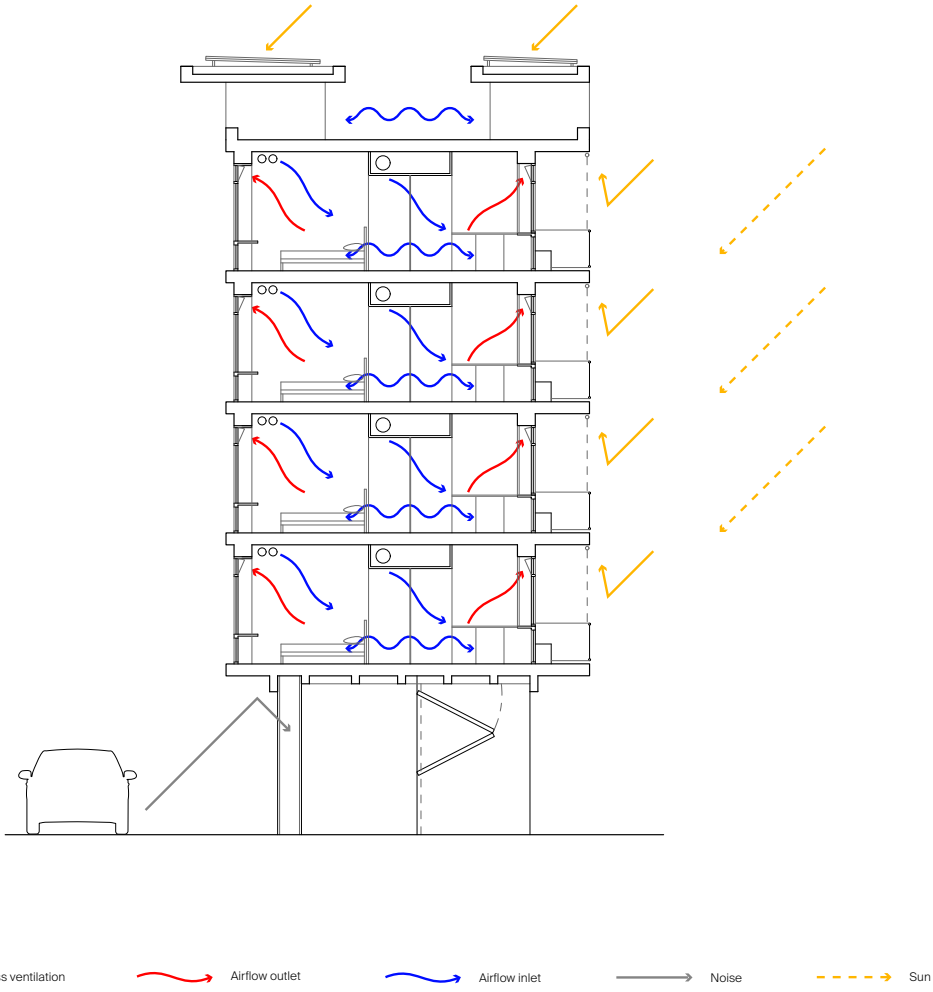
Consequently, one can see that to enable is not about imposing a certain way of using a space. On the contrary, it means creating the conditions for diverse kinds of activities.

Apartment block - studios typology - 150

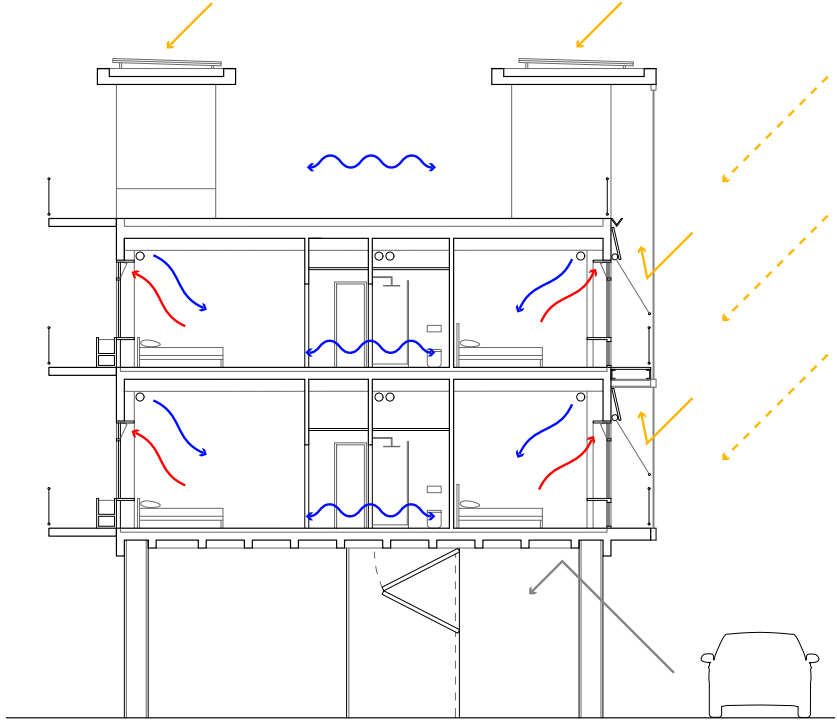


Infill building - apartment typology - 150





Climate section - Infill building



 Cross ventilation  Airflow outlet  Airflow inlet  Noise  Sun



1:33 Model - Facade fragment study and materialisation





1:33 Model - The renovation process illustrated by objects





Rendered view of the main entrance on Rue Ropsy Chaudron

04. Intervention

Dignify

Ensuring quality and presence in every condition

To dignify is to accept the fact that architecture must do more than simply house functions. Accommodation, public facilities, circulations, and all sorts of daily infrastructure should be built so that they welcome their inhabitants, treat them well, and make them belong. Dignifying architecture means that, in an arrival project like ours, the issue becomes an architectural problem. Dignity arises from the material and its spatial articulation.

In our approach, the problem of dignifying the neighbourhoods and the inhabitants' experiences involves using continuity and transformation at the same time. Instead of imposing alien architectural language, the existing qualities are enhanced and used in designing a new building program. Brick, concrete, wood, and openings are used to create an architectural dialogue between Heyvaert's industrial past and its future.

Existing brick buildings are kept and refurbished in an effort to dignify them. This means that traces of previous uses would remain visible but the quality of the spaces would improve. In this way, the existing fabric gets acknowledged and renovated at the same time and its past does not have to be forgotten.

The continuous concrete plinth serves as a base unit that connects everything that happens above. As an object and a structural device, it provides coherence to the whole complex. But in addition, it emphasizes that there is some common ground among all parts of the project. As a base of something important, it creates a stable, robust, and long-lasting foundation.

Above the concrete plinth, wooden

structures create a contrasting and light architectural language. The use of CLT timber makes it possible to construct the entire housing structure and to achieve the effect of lightness and warmth, which is appropriate for domestic spaces. Besides, CLT stands for sustainability and durability in architectural language.

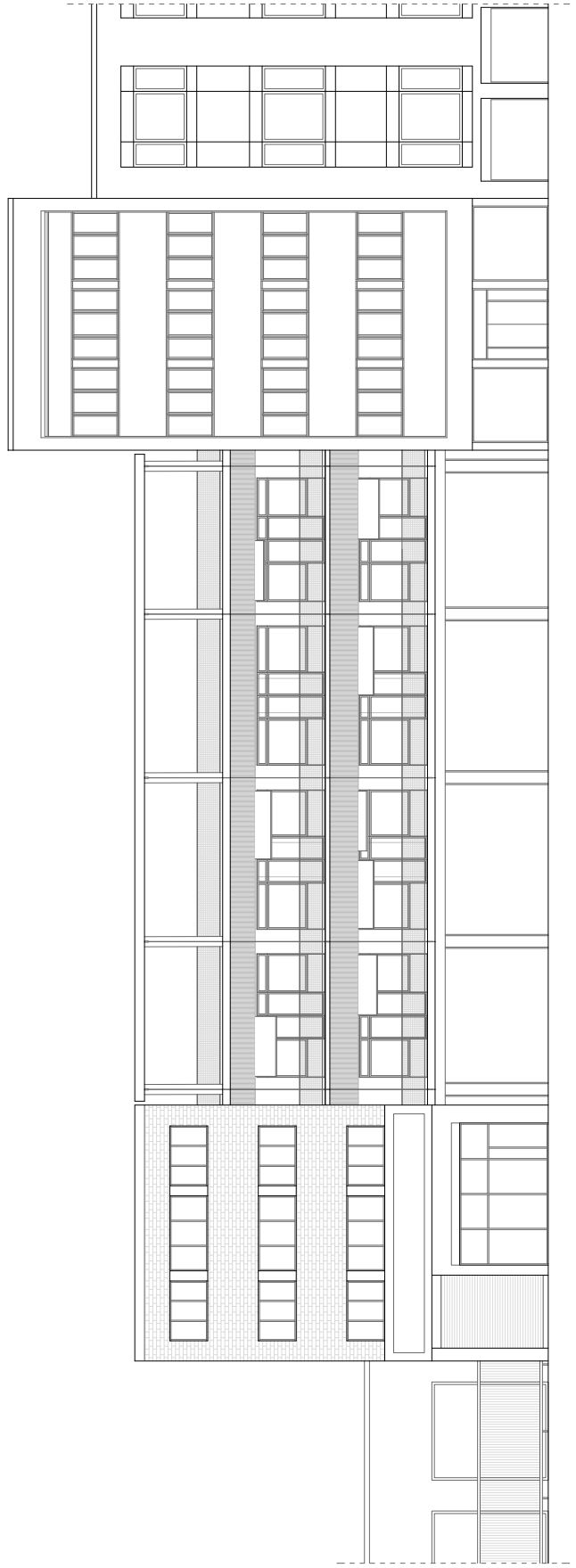
Finally, color is introduced into the project in a very selective manner as the element of orientation and identification. Yellow sunshades installed on the housing structure serve as a unique recognizable element. They help with movement organization and create clear points of entry but are much more than just sunshades. Moreover, the same yellow appears on window sills and openings on public and commercial programs.

White wooden frames of residential window openings create soft domestic atmosphere and create harmony in the composition of openings. Thus, we achieve hierarchical order of use and accessibility without resorting to any signs or additional instructions. Materiality is our main language of communication.

Inhabitable thresholds are another aspect that is used to enhance dignity. Benches, planter boxes, window seats, and thickened façades become points of interest, where the inhabitants can sit, observe, rest, talk to each other. In this case, the quality comes not from the scale of gestures or monuments but from small acts of recognizing importance of everyday activities.

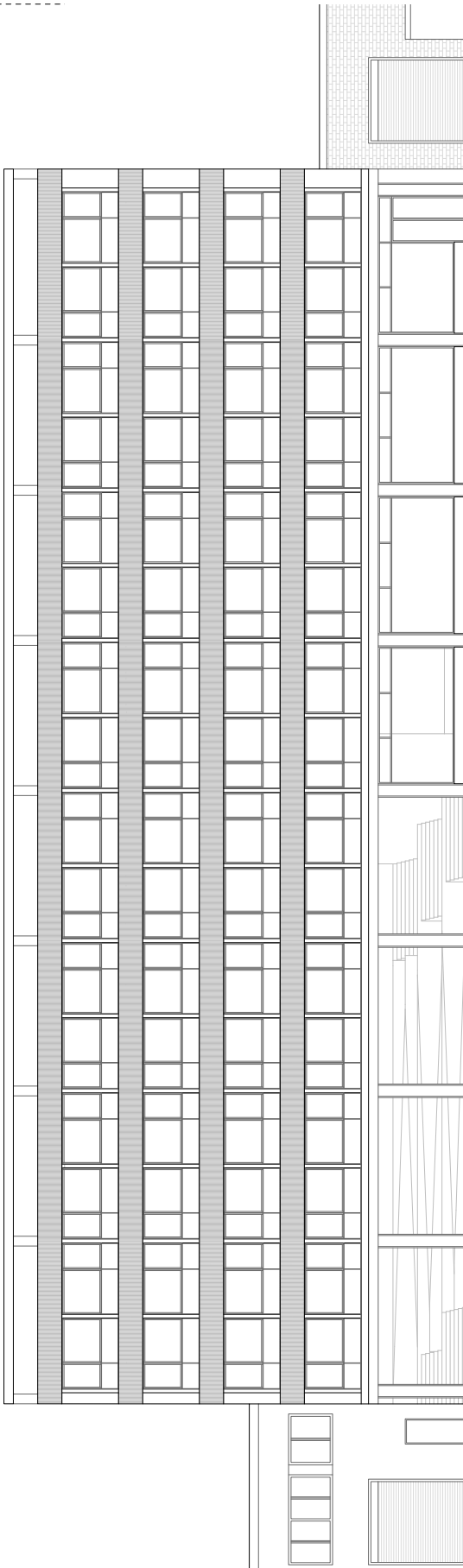
In summary, we claim that architectural dignifying of the project is achieved by means of its architectural quality.

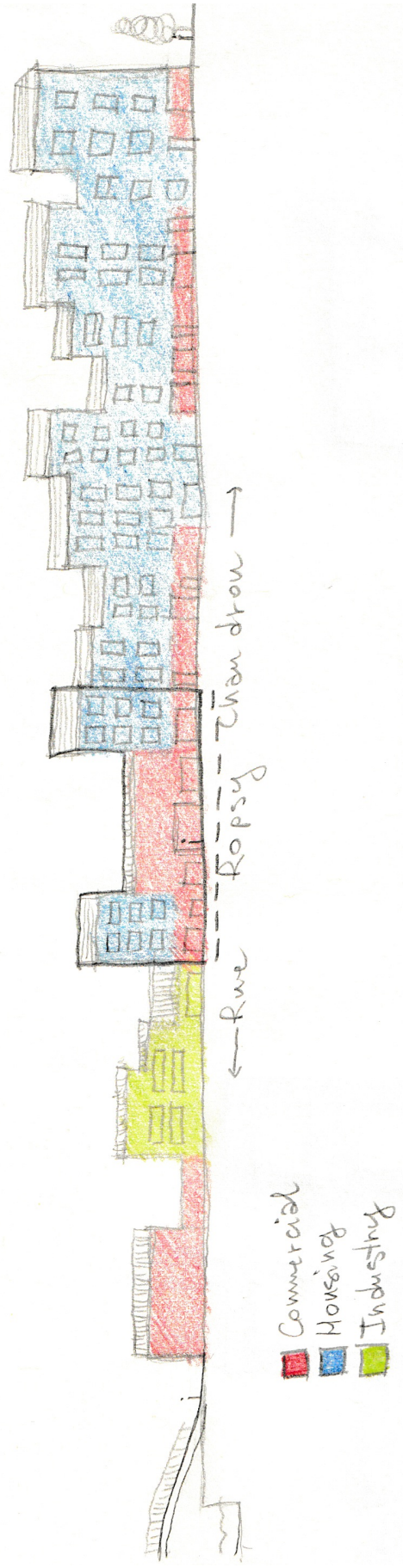
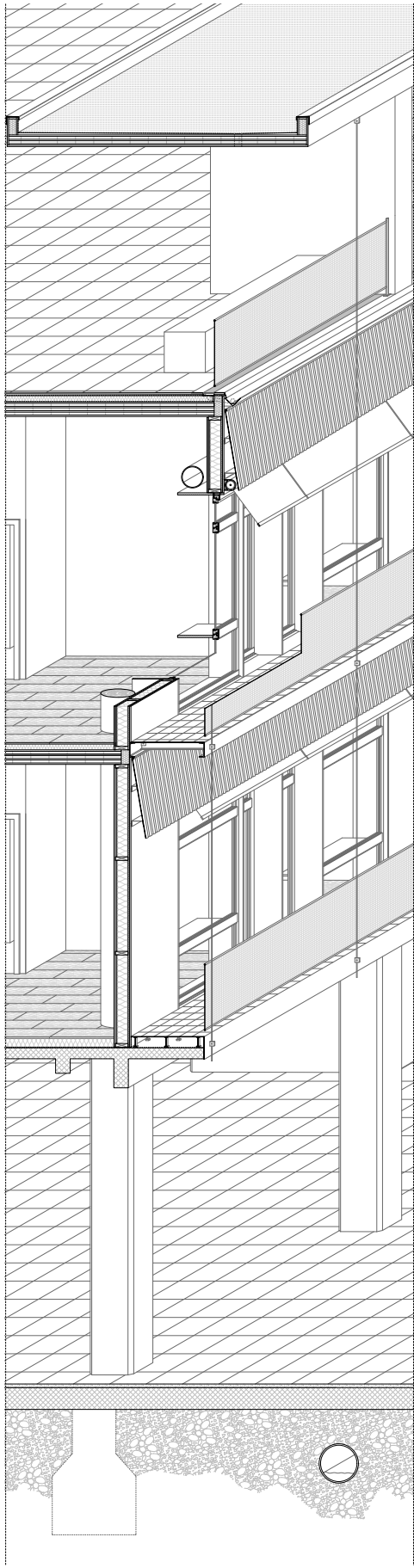
The continuity of materials, clarity of construction, and consideration of the residents' daily routine make every space part of the project valuable. The project achieves dignity not through exceptional spaces but through all of them equally – in the courtyard and in the houses, in the day-care facility, and at the commercial frontage.

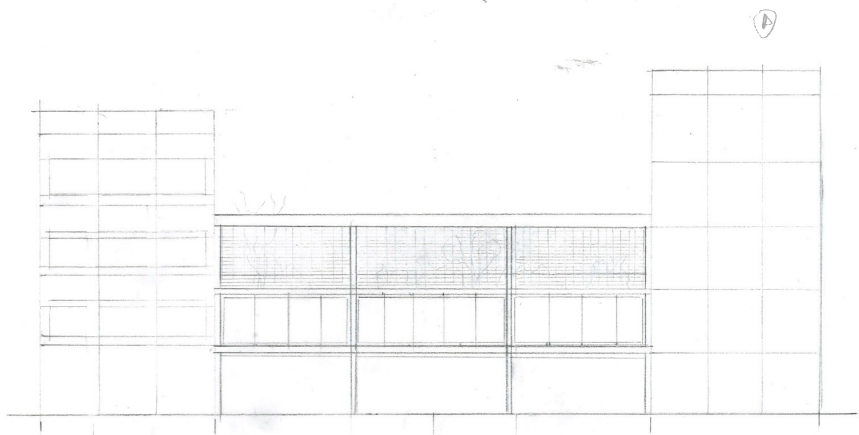
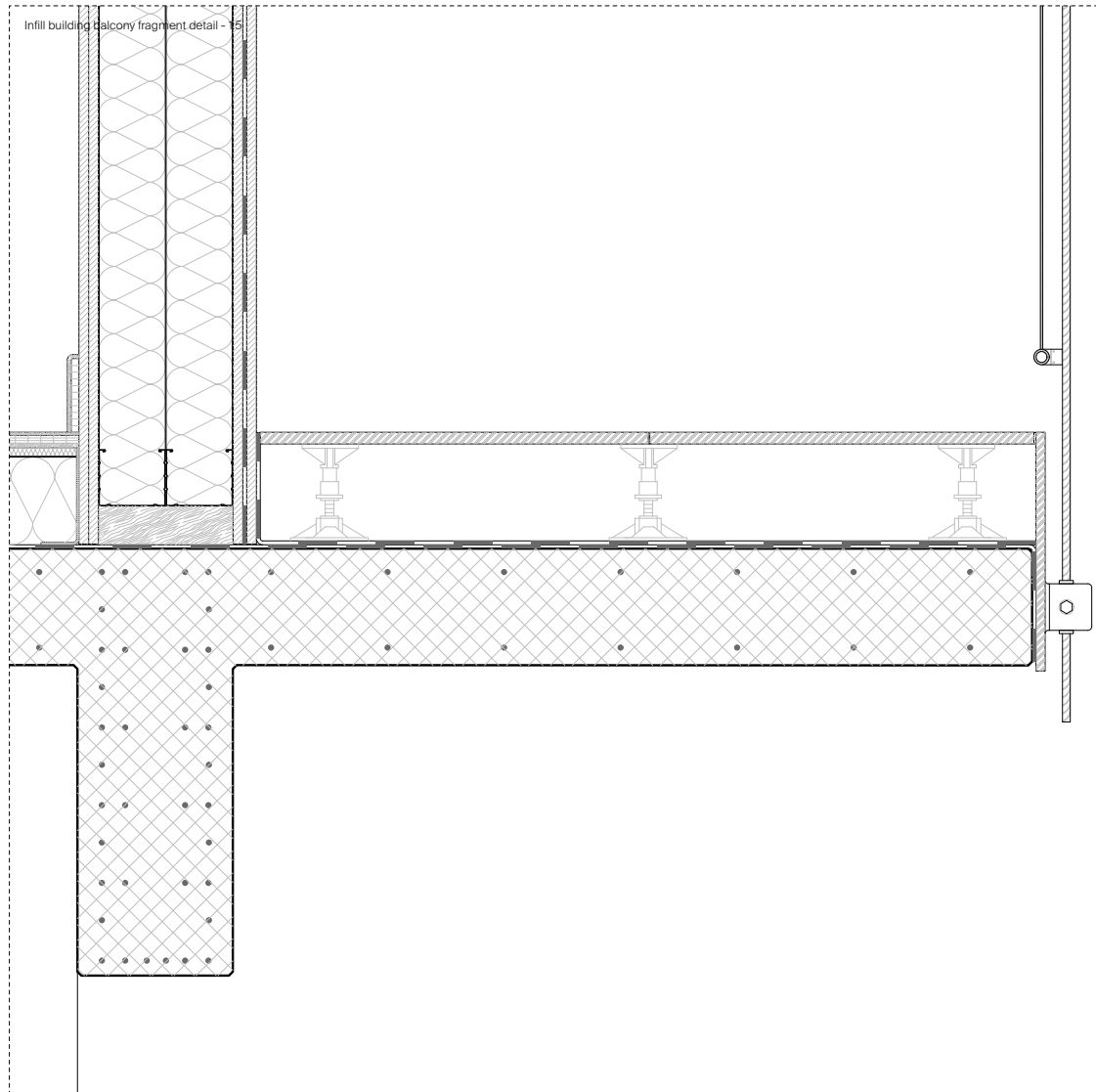


Rendered view of the main entrance on Rue du Bateau









Where the design of The Help Network is based on architecture of arrival, it is important to note that this architectural solution is the result of observation first and foremost. Not a single project could be initiated in the absence of some image of the city. What the architect sought to do was not start with an idea but rather try to observe and understand what it means to arrive in Heyvaert and how architecture can help to support this phenomenon.

Arrival is defined by the layers of industrial past, migration histories, business, and other phenomena that take place in this neighborhood today. In this sense, the challenge facing architecture should not be seen as the need to transform the situation. On the contrary, it requires a capacity to relate to existing structures in terms of preservation and adaptation while allowing certain transformations in the context.

For example, old buildings can stay, and new structures can also be added depending on necessity. Public space

will be changed in order to make new conditions for accessibility and exchange possible.

A central element here would be the courtyard. Hidden within the block, the courtyard is supposed to be opened up to become an essential organizing factor of this development. With the help of new entries and paths, this space will be made to interact with the adjacent streets, future Kleine Zennepark extension, and more general network of the neighborhoods.

In its turn, such a configuration will allow one to consider the courtyard as public space, social infrastructure, and shared ground.

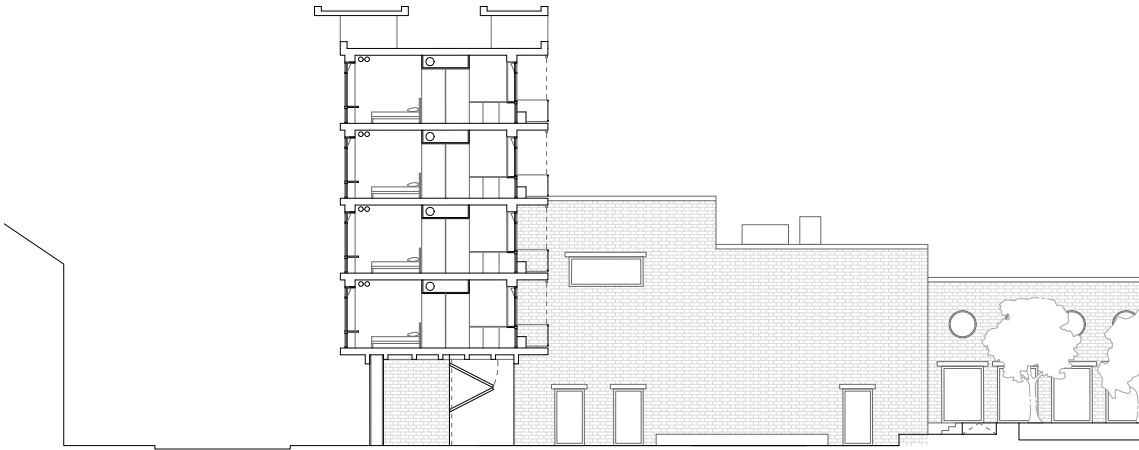
Around the collective space, one can find several complementary programs related to different aspects of arrival. There would be temporary housing, family housing, employment agency, rental agency, daycare center, learning center, among others. Meanwhile, existing business activity will continue.

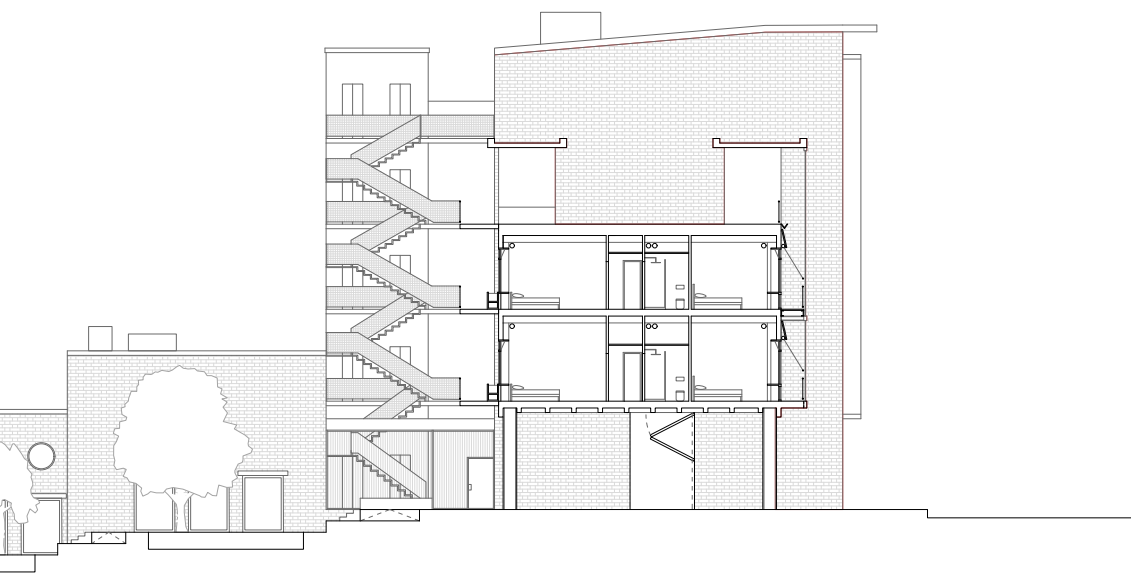
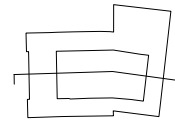
It is worth mentioning that The Help Network is characterized by distribution rather than concentration. All programs will be connected to support one another and create conditions under which a relationship may grow in time.

One may find this aspect characteristic at different scales of the project. Starting from its urban connection with the future park and moving further to such features as courtyard organization, inhabitable facade elements, etc., one would find out that architecture is being conceived as a framework rather than an entity itself.

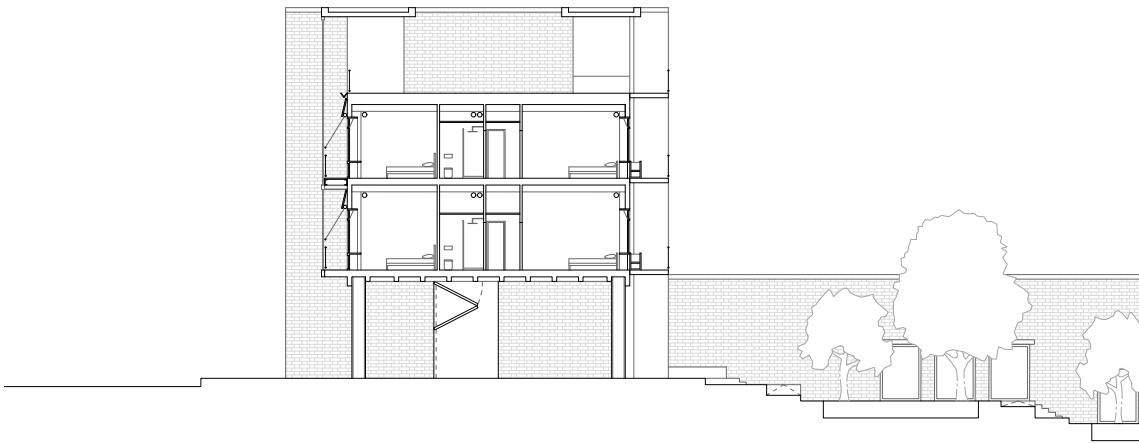
Through this balance between openness and permanence, individual needs and collective life, The Help Network seeks to demonstrate how architecture can participate in the ongoing process of making a place one's own.

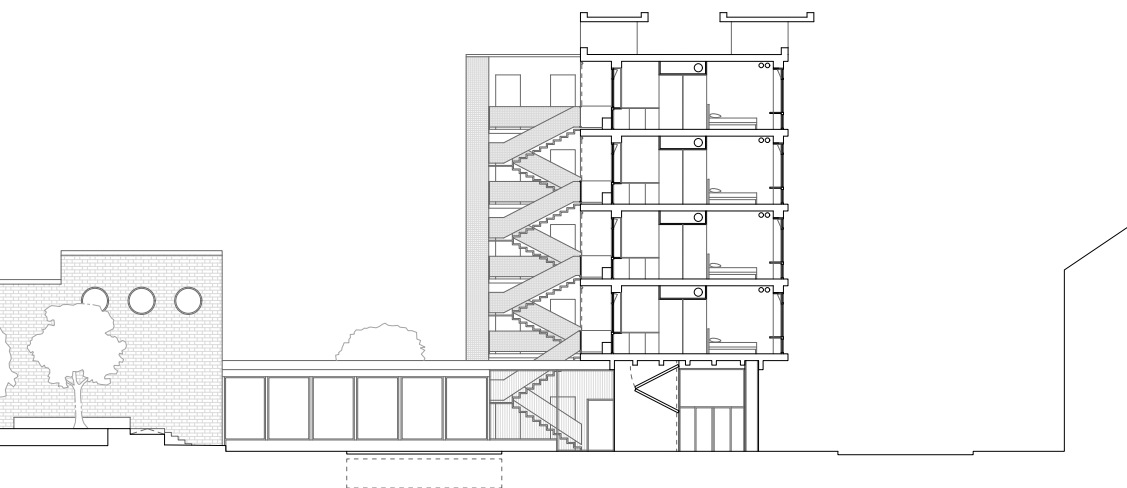
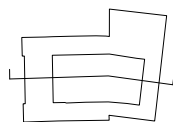
Longitudinal section - 1:250

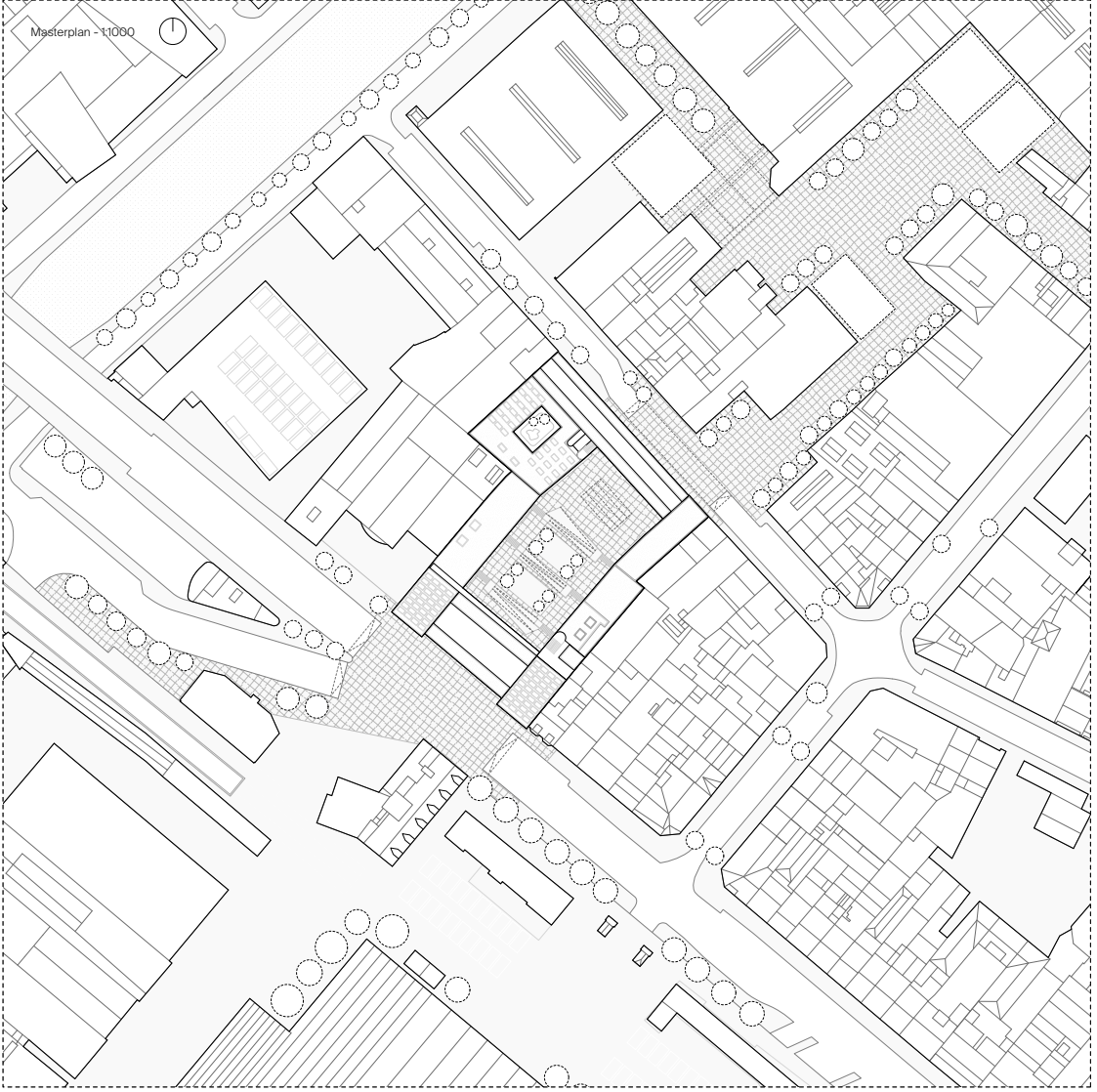


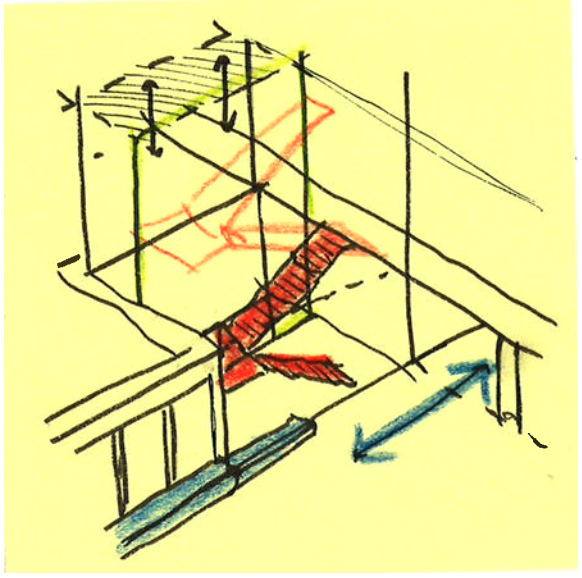
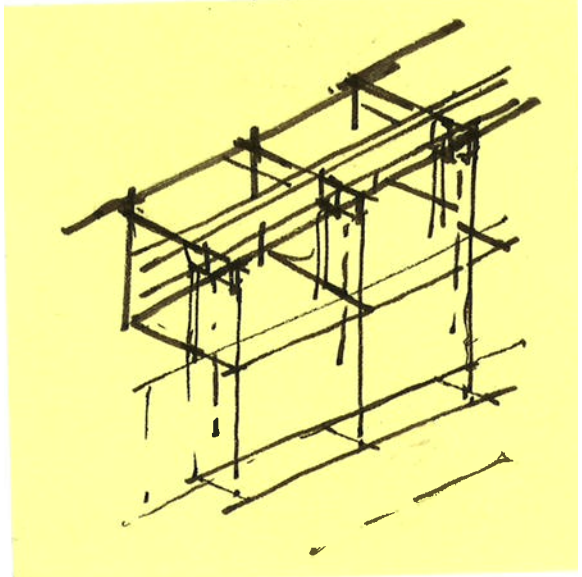


Longitudinal section - 1:250









“ *Architecture* must therefore learn not only how to **build**, but also *how to welcome* “

Arrival is commonly understood as a transitional condition, the point between departure and settlement. However, in today's urban environment, arrival appears to be a constant process rather than a one-off event. The constant movement between places, countries, cultures, and social realities defines the experience of arrival as a condition that does not cease after some temporary stage. Architecture fails to cope with this complexity and tries to reduce arrival to the problems of temporary accommodation and temporary public space that are to be overcome once people manage to settle somewhere.

Arrival, however, should not be approached from this perspective as something that must end sooner or later. On the contrary, it is a continuous process, which consists of various steps that need to be taken by people who have just arrived at their destination. Instead of addressing this issue in terms of what kind of

05. Departure

An architectural approach to arrival

place people will need, architecture should aim at creating conditions that facilitate arriving people's processes of establishing a new life.

Housing, employment, education, social services, mobility, and public space are all crucial elements of the arrival process that make people feel at home in a new location. Architects can do nothing about most of them and, nevertheless, they still should provide the necessary framework, allowing people to find and access these elements.

The project thus takes on the role of a mediator between existing infrastructure and arriving people, and it is important to understand that a successful project presupposes an ability to listen and observe rather than impose something on people and their situation. As a result, arrival architecture appears to be characterized by nine basic principles of design, the purpose of which is to ensure a flexible reaction to complex urban situations.

These principles are not a method and cannot be regarded as such; nevertheless, they can be used in a number of similar cases to achieve positive results. The significance of the principles does not lie in the actual form that they produce; it lies in the attitude towards complexity, which is to be developed while designing arrival architecture.

In other words, the principles described throughout this book help designers to adapt to local conditions and develop appropriate solutions that do not contradict the initial situation and allow people to live their lives

normally.

In order to design arrival architecture, one needs to understand clearly what arrival means in a certain case. The Help Network is a project that was created based on a number of factors that are typical for the area and represent the challenges associated with the problem of arrival there. However, they are not limited to the case in question and can be considered a general characteristic of arrival architecture in many cases.

The Help Network is therefore an attempt to provide a number of services that could make people feel comfortable in an alien environment and establish relationships, thus creating an opportunity to settle. Nevertheless, the Help Network is much more than that; it helps people get acquainted with one another, become visible, and interact. Architecture must therefore learn not only how to build, but also how to welcome.

To leave Heyvaert, however, is quite a different feeling.

The first impression of the neighbourhood was overwhelming and intense. Overcrowded streets, new rhythms, multiple languages, and various activities all seemed to overlap in such a way that it was difficult to understand what was happening. However, this seeming chaos quickly gave way to the recognition of an extremely well-designed system of relationships, routines, exchange practices, and occupations.

Throughout the whole research, the neighbourhood defied any attempts at creating one-dimensional narratives about it. As one definition emerges, another equally valid interpretation appears in the picture, revealing the complexity of this neighbourhood. Heyvaert is both local and global, constant and temporary, productive and residential. Its identity does not arise out of one clear-cut image; it

05. Departure

Leaving Heyvaert

A reflection on the course

is defined by the co-existence of differences.

In this context, it might be argued that the most valuable conclusion of this project is not the final architectural proposal, but rather the entire process of developing it. Designing a building was never a problem in this case. The true challenge consisted in understanding how to operate with architecture in relation to a specific context.

Returning to the metaphor of arrival, it becomes clear that being a guest implies the need for curiosity, attentiveness, and respectfulness. One must accept the fact that their perception is always incomplete and that understanding arises only after listening. This approach became central to the process of conducting the research and designing architecture.

The Help Network is one of the outcomes of this process of listening and trying to find the most adequate response. It might be seen as an attempt to capture the observed characteristics and relations through architecture and thus to reflect upon the process of arrival in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, it does not claim to be unique; there is no doubt that other approaches would yield different results.

The process of leaving Heyvaert necessarily entails some reflections on architecture. While buildings will never help to overcome social inequalities, to ensure full integration, and to avoid displacement, they have the power to reveal the network of relations that already exists within the communities

and facilitate cooperation and solidarity.

These thoughts can be seen as a summary of this project. This work is not an attempt to find one solution to the problem, but a series of efforts aimed at the development of an adaptive process of arrival, occupation, and participation. Today's world needs to adapt to increased mobility and diversity in cities, and in this context, the issues addressed in this project do not seem extraordinary anymore.

As the research comes to an end, the neighbourhood of Heyvaert stays unfinished and constantly evolving. Arrivals and departures continue to happen every day. The opening and closing of stores are never-ending processes, and courtyards keep being occupied. It seems that the neighbourhood is alive because it adapts to the people living in it.

Thus, to leave the project does not mean to finish telling the story. It merely means to leave it.

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