



settlement roosenberg

P5 Reflection

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Rethinking Roosenberg studio

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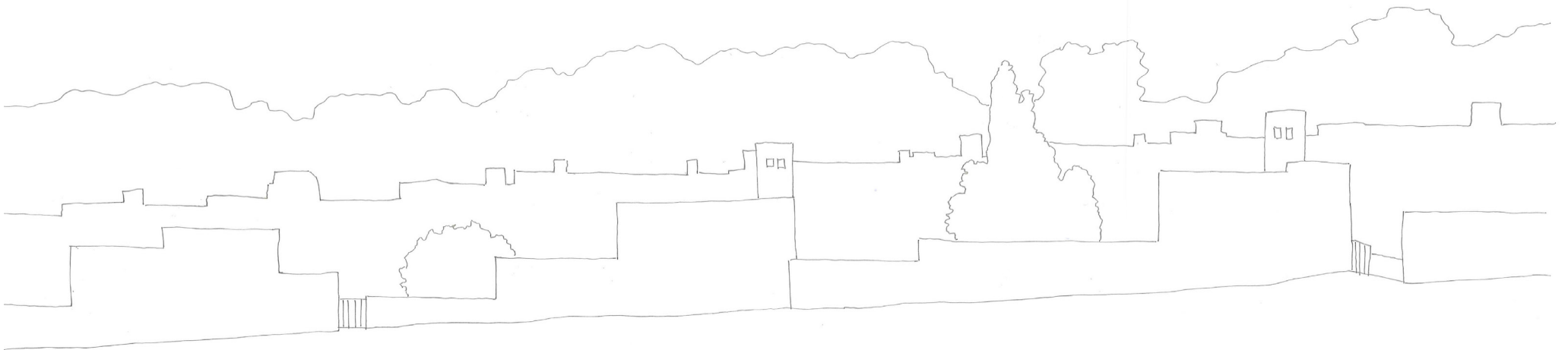
MSc4 Interiors, Buildings & Cities



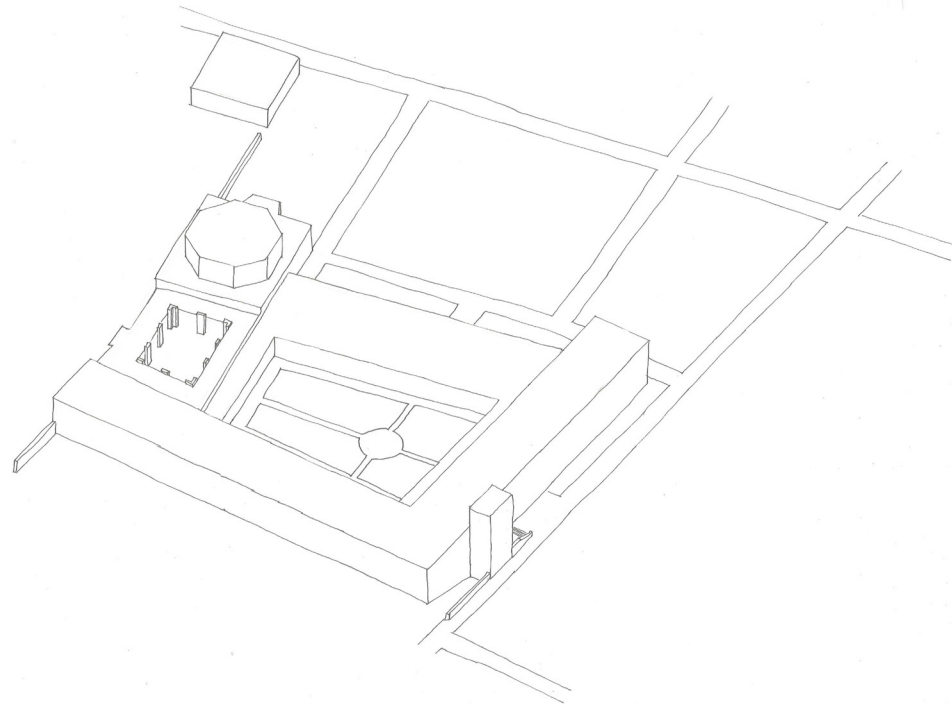
*It is necessary to be in tune with the age and with the surroundings, to see inspiration in the task itself, if the requirements of that task are to be translated into an architectonic language creating a unity of all the different factors.*

*At the same time the architect must have an ability to imagine and to create, an ability that is sometimes called fantasy, sometimes dreams.*

Jørn Utzon  
1948



## assignment



Abbey Roosenberg and care: intentions and desires.

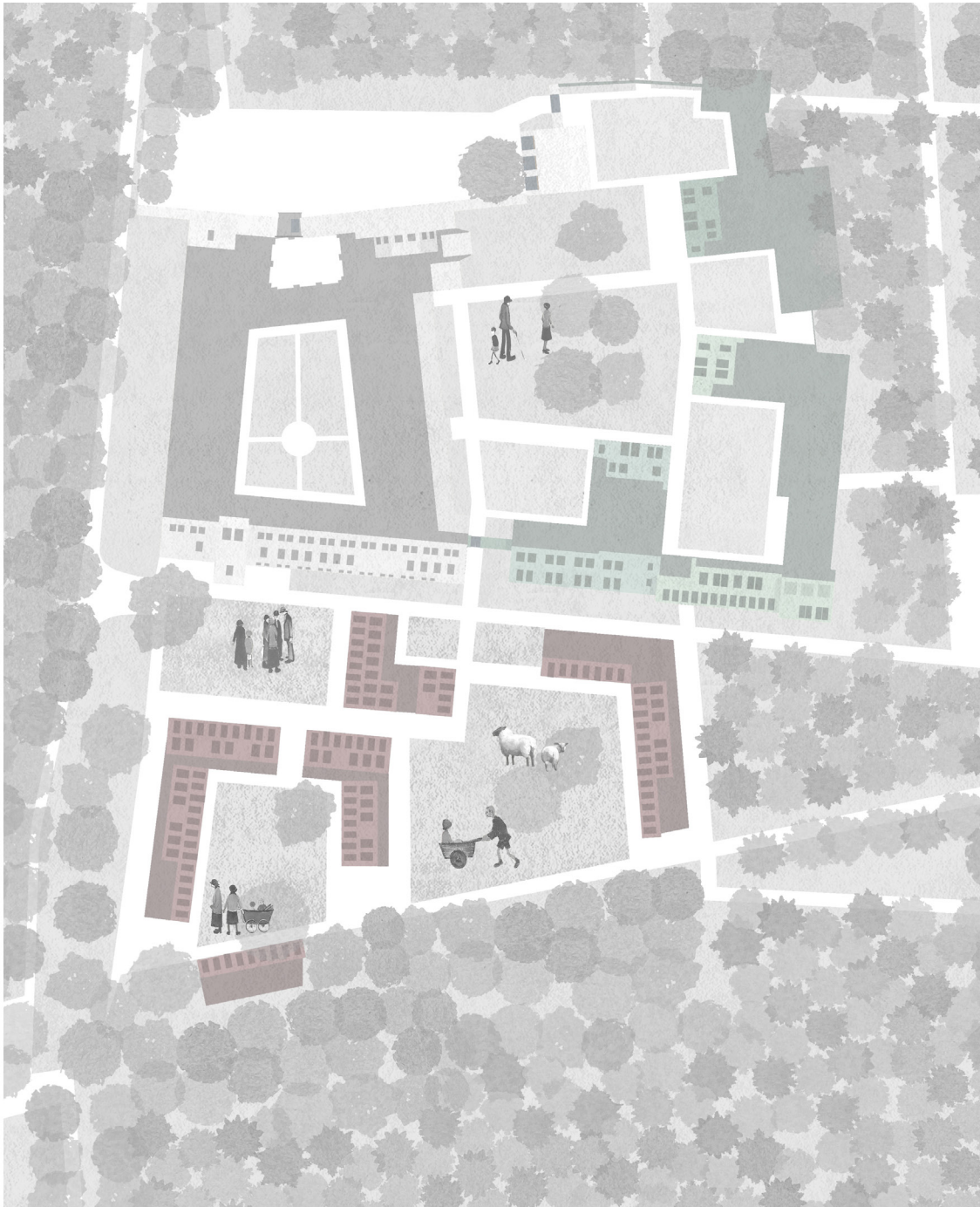
Our studio started with a given site, a given building and a given assignment: the proposal of a care home in or next to the Roosenberg abbey by Dom Hans van der Laan. It was up to us to decide what the best strategy would be: to adapt, extend or add to Roosenberg abbey for the new purpose of a care environment.

## proposal?

A location, a program: let's start.

Even while working on an assignment that seems fixed in program, site and framework, I think it is important to be critical about the broader question. Is the assignment that is proposed suitable or realistic?

The main question that I struggled with was the isolation of care in the woods, secluded from other social context. Placing care in a wider social context, preferably in the city, is a strategy that has been encouraged lately; to make it possible for people to live longer at home. For me it was hard to imagine to make an architectural monument and a shared landscape part of a private institution. The monument and the landscape: two elements that should not be owned but shared by all, common. These thoughts were supported by the pilot project Collective living in a collective landscape, on which Bovenbouw among others worked, and the notion of the Commons, described by Lieven de Cauter. It has been found useful to strengthen and support the thoughts about the relevance of the broader question within this project with recent theory.



*It comes from Latin communis “in common, public, shared by all or many; general, not specific; familiar, not pretentious,”*

*But, it comes originally from the Proto Indo-European word \*ko-moin-i- “held in common,”... hence it means literally “shared by all”.*

*Acts of ‘commoning’, of re-appropriation of the commons are needed, use not property is what counts.*

Lieven De Caeter

*Common Places: Preliminary Notes on the (Spatial) Commons*





## useful reference

Building, architect, theory.

One of the very important given conditions of this project is the building, Roosenberg abbey, and its architect Dom Hans van der Laan. Van der Laan was not just an architect; he was a spiritual man who wrote extensive theory about how man should relate to nature, how we should make architecture readable and who also developed a whole mathematical system to be able to dimension and compose all the architectural elements in harmony with each other.

Later on in the process it was unavoidable to compare all the decisions in the design to how Van der Laan did it in his abbey. The framework provided by the abbey and Van der Laan is both a great starting point but also a bit dangerous or misleading. The main goal for me was always to make a livable, contemporary care home while benefiting and relating to the existing context. Van der Laan sometimes threatened to be too influential; sometimes he overshadowed my own thoughts on what a care home on this site should be and my ability and freedom as the architect of this new addition.

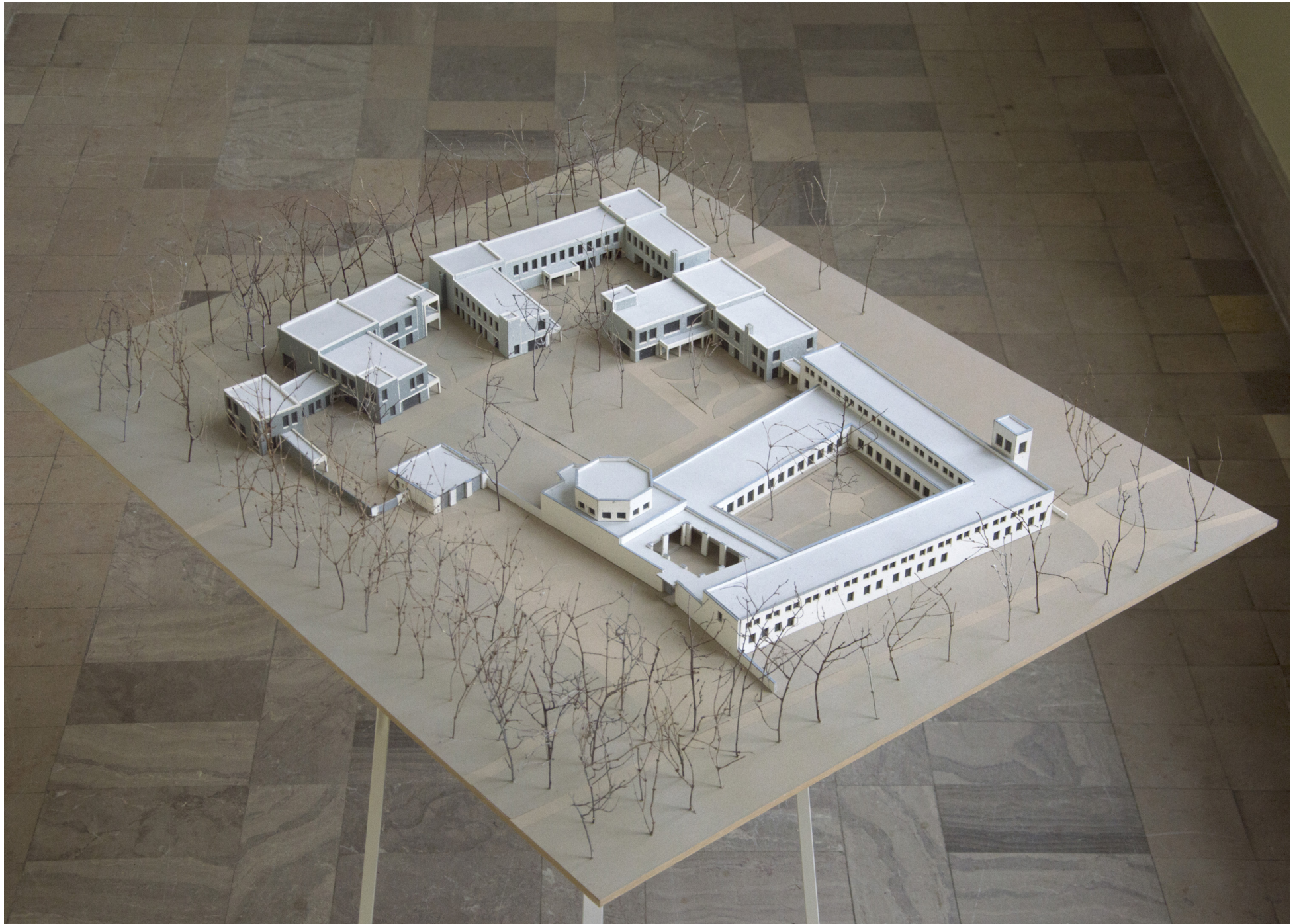
take it or leave it?

Atmosphere, theory and numbers.

I felt a threat of being soaked into the ideas of the Bossche School and Van der Laan and being unable to be critical of this framework within the context of developing a contemporary care home. This was the reason for me to study Van der Laans work and theory not thoroughly but to a certain extend.

I took the things that I found interesting and that had made the most impact on me while visiting his buildings as inspiration. I defined aspects that I really wanted to do differently than Van der Laan within the context of the assignment of a care home. For example, one of the things that I found necessary to approach in a different way was the relationship or mediation between building and landscape. On the other hand, the use of structure and light to make a building readable and guiding was an aspect that I admired about his work and tried to apply in my plan as well.





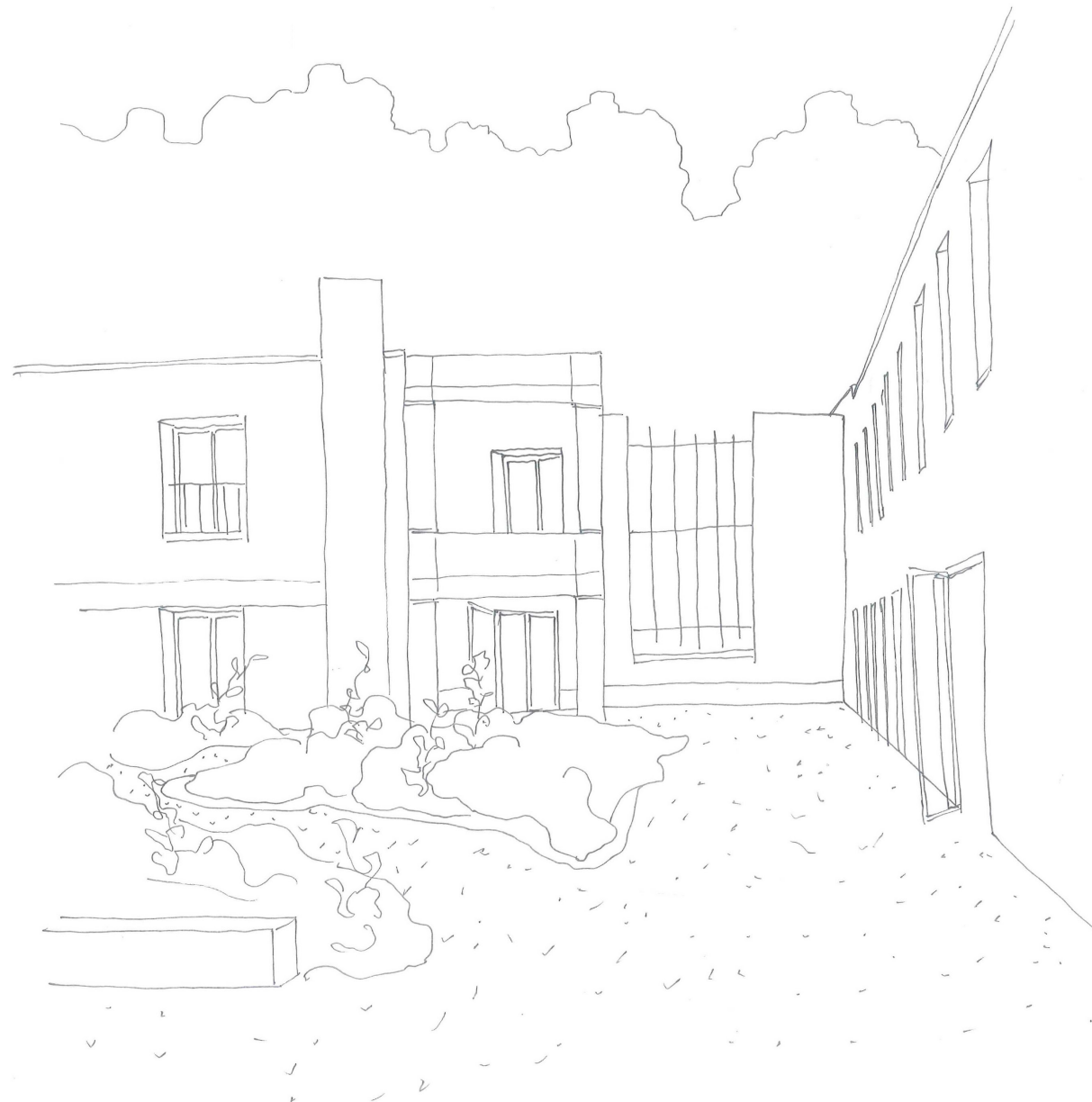
# i d e n t i t y

## Relations & representation.

A question I had to ask myself every week was: should my proposal be humble towards the abbey or can it be a bit stronger, with an own identity?

Identity has for me a lot to do with representation. The research to come to the right identity to the project leded to a study on representational methods. It was necessary to work in a picturesque way: building a lot of models, making images and sketches, to come to a good form of representation to visualize the identity of the project.

I use representation to understand my own project and to try to convince myself of the quality or effect of the things I am proposing, while it is also a means of making your proposal understandable to others. Looking back on all the conversations I had with my tutors, my fascination with representation and the time spend on it has I think always been of positive influence on the ability of my tutors to understand my proposal and to give useful comments.





# m a k i n g

Ensemble, buildings, interiors, details.

Working on different scales has been a method used to strengthen the identity that I wanted the proposal to represent.

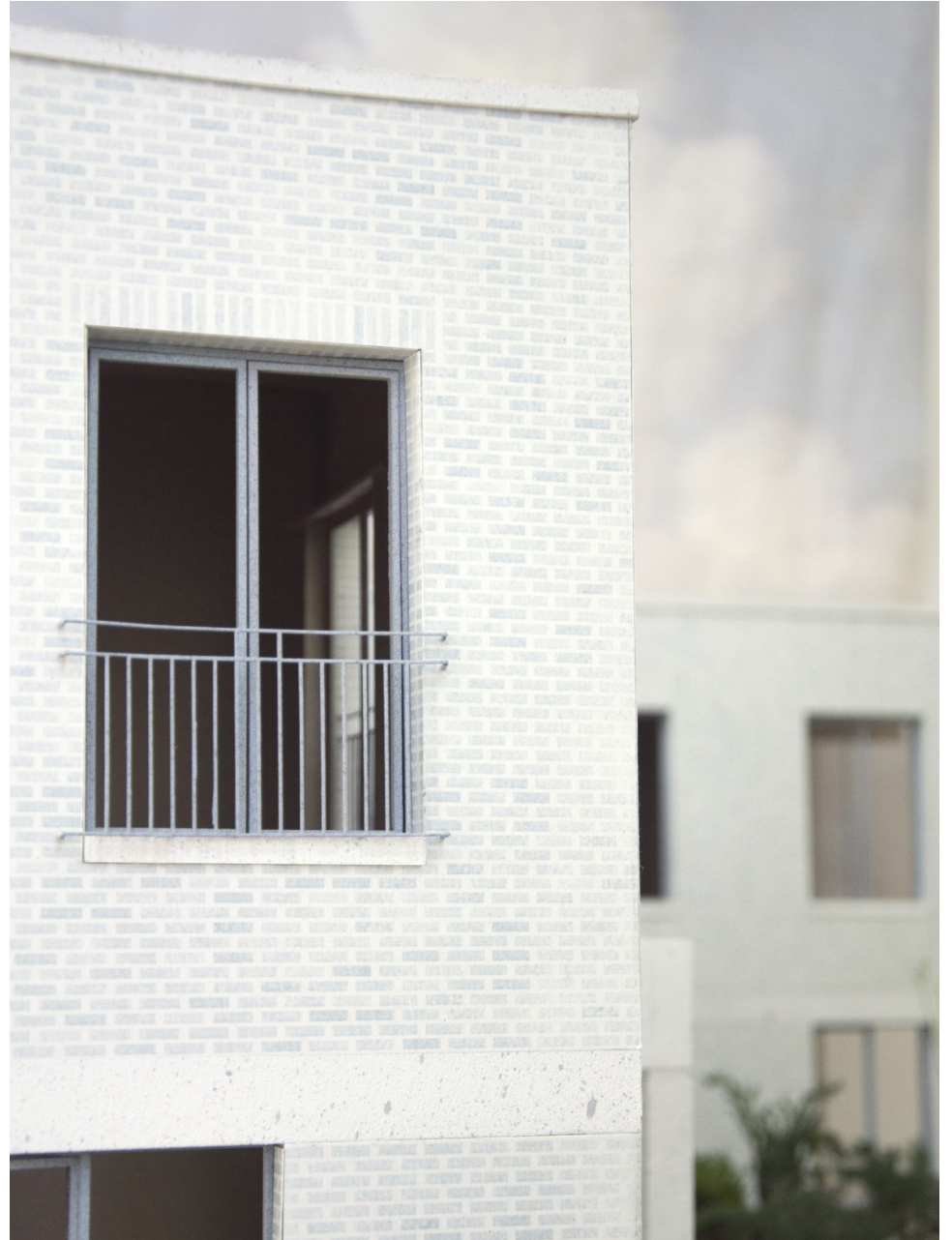
From the urban scale to the scale of the materialization of the surfaces in the exterior spaces, from the detail of the front door to the design of the routing; elements from different scales were tried to relate to each other.

I have experienced the early development of the exterior appearance to a detailed scale as positive. Designing the facades while thinking about how and drawing how it should be build in a technical drawing was a way to make things more concrete sooner.

Throughout the design process I would have liked to develop the design of the interior and detail more with the help of models. Working towards this P5, it is fascinating to notice how decision-making can be triggered by building and critically looking at models.











# i d e n t i t y

Looking back.

Overall, I have enjoyed having the feeling of developing a project independently. To work with your own time management, setting goals each week and to force yourself to be critical towards yourself. Working and developing a project to your own ambitions.

The apparent relation between theory and design in this project and the specific reference of the abbey have been experienced as difficult yet challenging. Working within a given framework but also adapting and extending this framework to fit the proposal of a contemporary care home has been a question that I have tried to answer in the best way possible, but that will probably stay on my mind for another period of time.