the STUDIO of TOMORROW

research magazine

Romée Rodriguez

fall 2022

As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown. As an architect, you design

“As an architect, you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown.”

Norman Foster

WHAT'S

INSIDE

01

from *the Editor*

Welcome to the latest edition of the magazine, where we explore the exciting and rapidly evolving topic of flexible working as a new norm for architectural offices.

As the world of work continues to change and present challenges and opportunities when it comes to creating functional and efficient, yet healthy and inspiring work environments. In this edition, we dive into the topic of flexible working and explore the ways in which it is and could – or rather should - be implemented in architectural offices in the Netherlands.

I have chosen the magazine format for its visual and creative potential to present information effectively. Through case studies, images, diagrams, and info-graphics, we can better explain our research.

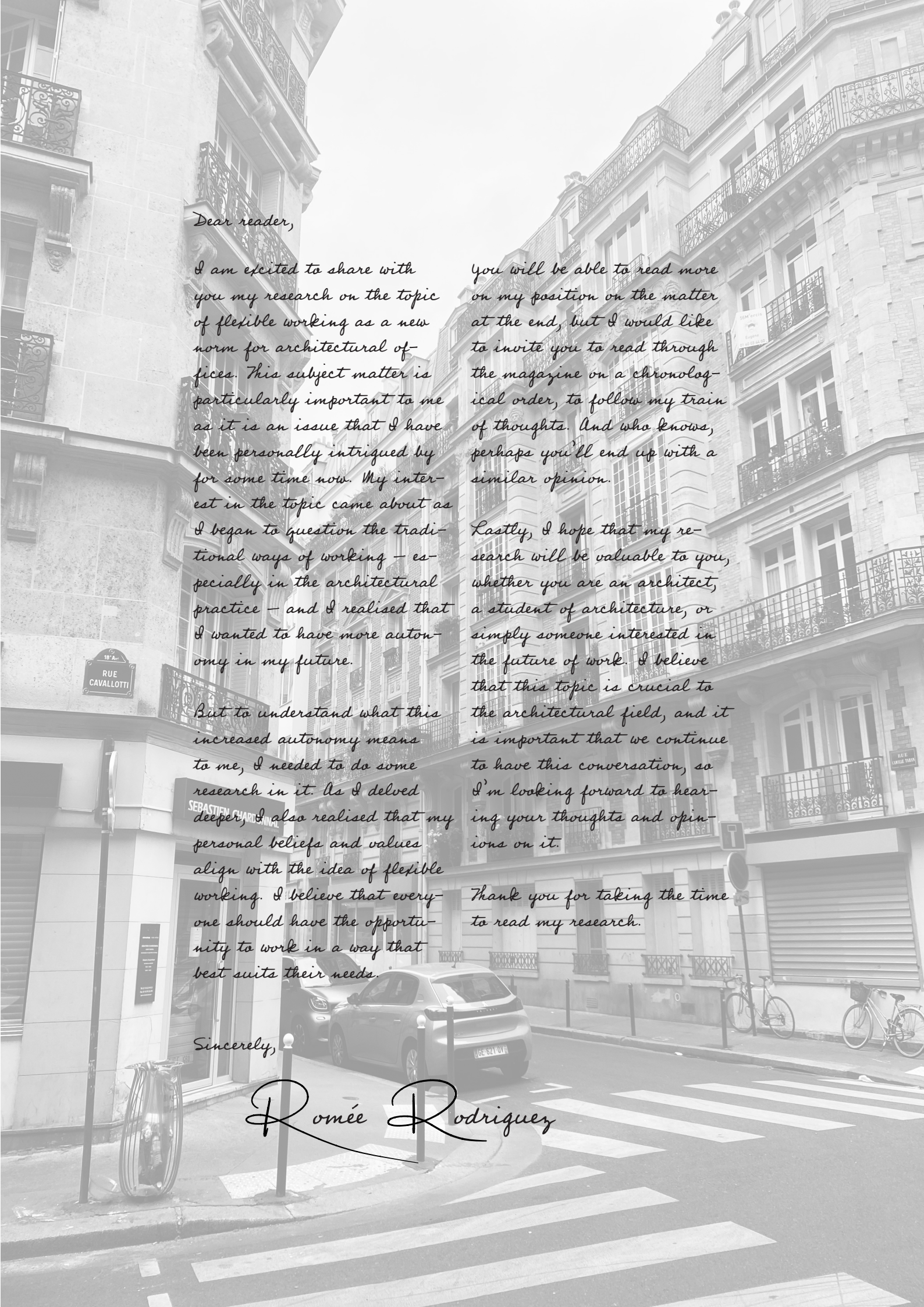
Overall, the format allows for a more creative and subjective writing style, including personal observations, which can provide a more romantic perspective on the topic.

It provides the flexibility to combine both objective and subjective elements, making it ideal for presenting research in architectural practice.

You will find a range of articles and features that explore the current working environments in architectural firms. I have conducted case studies in two different studios, through the methods of plan analysis, observations, and interviews, to gain insights on the current workspaces. Moreover, the interviews have ultimately helped getting an understanding of the architectural needs and preferences regarding the (flexible) working environment of architectural studios. Lastly, I have gathered ideas and proposals of what flexible working should look like and how it relates to the interior design of studios.

I hope that you find this issue informative and engaging, and that it inspires you to think more deeply about your future way of working.

Happy reading!



Dear reader,

I am excited to share with you my research on the topic of flexible working as a new norm for architectural offices. This subject matter is particularly important to me as it is an issue that I have been personally intrigued by for some time now. My interest in the topic came about as I began to question the traditional ways of working — especially in the architectural practice — and I realised that I wanted to have more autonomy in my future.

But to understand what this increased autonomy means to me, I needed to do some research in it. As I delved deeper, I also realised that my personal beliefs and values align with the idea of flexible working. I believe that everyone should have the opportunity to work in a way that best suits their needs.

Sincerely,

Romée Rodriguez

You will be able to read more on my position on the matter at the end, but I would like to invite you to read through the magazine on a chronological order, to follow my train of thoughts. And who knows, perhaps you'll end up with a similar opinion.

Lastly, I hope that my research will be valuable to you, whether you are an architect, a student of architecture, or simply someone interested in the future of work. I believe that this topic is crucial to the architectural field, and it is important that we continue to have this conversation, so I'm looking forward to hearing your thoughts and opinions on it.

Thank you for taking the time to read my research.

Figure 1: Factory floor[14]

Designing Work-spaces for the Modern Era

An Introduction to Flexible Working in Architectural offices

"People throughout the Netherlands are urged to work from home and/or spread working hours as much as possible, and also not to organise meetings at work for more than 100 people."

– Bruno Bruins, minister of medical care, on the measures regarding the COVID-19 virus (12-03-2020)[1]

02

So it has been announced, and so it happened. For over two years, not just the Netherlands but the entire world participated in a mandatory social experiment that required everyone to work from home. Even though the corona-virus measures have been lifted, remote working has not completely disappeared. Multiple studies have been conducted on the effects of working from home on employee productivity, mental health, and work-life balance, among other aspects. It only takes one Google search to find numerous articles indicating that working remotely is and will continue to be the new norm[2,3,4]. The flexibility - the freedom - that comes with working from home, once tasted all its benefits, is difficult to relinquish.

But flexible working was a trend even before the corona-virus crisis. Before industrialisation, which occurred from the mid-eighteenth to early nineteenth century, one's working hours depended on external factors, such as the weather. The flexibility to work when possible and when needed was abandoned when people became part of and subordinate to the routine of machinery. That same system was also applied outside the factory floor; workers clocked in and out at the same time and took breaks at similar intervals. It was taken to such extremes that even the physical workplace transformed to function like a machine, with employees all working in a coordinated fashion as parts of one whole[5].

Luckily, much has changed about the way of working thereafter, but workplaces still adhere to old standards. Yes, there is better lighting and ventilation, ergonomic chairs and desks, but, by and large, little has changed. Evolution - yes; revolution - not yet[6]. By virtue of developments in technology, new ways of working and communication are possible. Technology offers opportunities today that weren't available yesterday. People nowadays have a new kind of freedom and with it a new meaning to workplace flexibility. One is able to work whenever, wherever.[7]

Figure 2: Office Structure as Machinery[3]

Figure 3: Renaissance Art Studio[5]

Figure 4: Architectural Studio from the 50s[14]

This raises the question of whether an office building is still requisite. Technological advancements have empowered individuals to work from virtually anywhere, eliminating the need for a centralised physical workspace. This new-found flexibility not only enhances work-life balance, but also fosters greater autonomy, and reduces the need for daily commutes, thus reducing the carbon emissions.[8]

However, through various reasons, it can be argued that offices will continue to be required. For one, there are practical considerations, such as the fact that a hotel room or home often is not able to facilitate all the employee's needs. There are also more compelling psychological reasons, with the primary one being that people are inherently social creatures and, therefore, have a need to belong somewhere - to something. This longing becomes tangible through a symbol: the office. It embodies a company's values, image and goals, serving as a place where people come together for the same purpose. A place where one can encourage and inspire another to be creative, share ideas, and share a cup of coffee.[9]

Moreover, studios are places for creative work, where (nowadays) computers, models and sketches are all placed on the same table[10]. They are meant to foster creativity and collaboration. Studios are places for learning together - where the 'learning organisation' is more than just the sum of all individuals[11].

The roots of the studio lie in the Renaissance when a studio consisted of a master and several assistants and apprentices[12]. Together they worked on projects that were published under the master's name. It was a place where one would learn by doing[13].

Today, architecture studios do not differ much. But to create such a learning-working environment, flexibility is essential: it is the only way to respond to new influences, ways of thinking, and to listen to employees' needs. Flexible working, however, needs flexible settings; places that can change to accommodate whatever is happening now or tomorrow.

In a field that values adaptability, creativity, and forward-thinking, the integration of a more flexible way of working, including where, when and how one works, seems only fitting.

If flexible working is going to be the new norm for architecture practices, how will it be implemented in the existing structure? What needs to change today, to allow flexible working tomorrow? From an architect's perspective, the relationship between flexible working and the workplace becomes key. It raises the question how flexible working will affect the physical working environment. In other words, the main question of the research is:

How will flexible working be translated into the physical workplace of architecture offices?

Figure 5: Architectural Studio from before AutoCAD[15]

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references & footnotes

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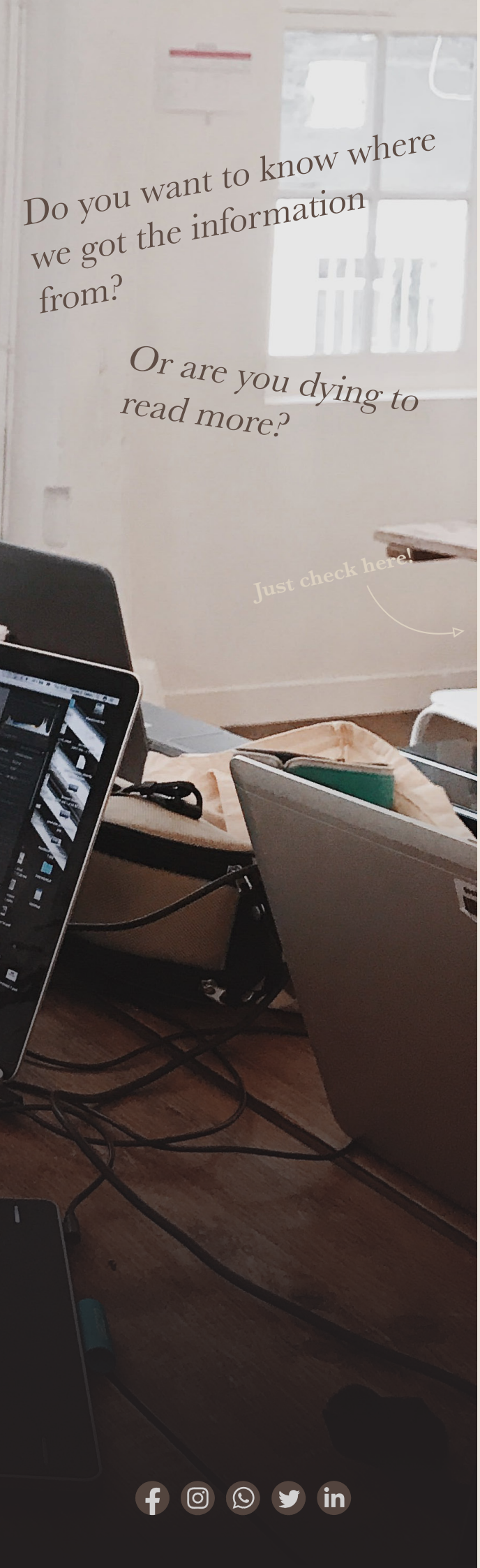

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03

From Analysis to Proposal

A Three-Layer Methodology to Understand the Workplace

To know what needs to change, one first needs to know what is. Thus, to fully grasp the meaning of flexible working in architecture offices, it is essential to first understand the present situation. Two case studies - both in the Netherlands - will be used to gain a better understanding of how architecture offices operate. This research will examine the use and facilities - including how these are designed - of architectural studios and how they are adapting to the trend of flexible working.

Moreover, the case studies will also give a glimpse into what the workspace could look like when flexible working is implemented, considering its users' needs and desires.

The first case study is Beltman architecten in Enschede, a 150-year-old architecture studio with nineteen employees. The office was chosen as a case study due to its traditional nature. Its century-and-a-half-long existence suggests deeply ingrained operational practices that have endured for generations. Furthermore, its relatively small size implies a potential limitation in both resources and inclination to adopt more contemporary or innovative work approaches, such as flexible working.

On the other hand, the second case study, Vakwerk in Delft, offers a stark contrast. It was selected due to its distinctly contemporary and innovative character. Vakwerk, a modern and young - five years old - architecture studio, stands out for its unique features, including shared office spaces and a capacity up to 120 people. In contrast to Beltman's traditional nature, the choice of Vakwerk as the second case study suggests that its relative newness may make it more receptive to new work methodologies, technologies, and emerging industry trends.

Through the examination of these diverse office settings, the aim is to gain a thorough understanding of both the existing status quo and formulate a plan for integrating flexible working practices within architecture offices throughout the Netherlands - and perhaps even internationally. Ultimately, the knowledge acquired from these case studies will play a pivotal role in addressing how to seamlessly adapt flexible working into the physical workspace of architecture offices.

In order to attain a comprehensive grasp of the subject and derive significant conclusions, the research methodology for the case studies will encompass a three-tiered structure. These layers will build upon one another, progressively shaping a non-holistic, yet unified understanding of the matter at hand. This multi-faceted approach will reveal recurring patterns that will ultimately coalesce to provide a coherent insight into the complexities and potential benefits associated with the integration of flexible working in architecture offices.

"How do we get to understand the workplace of today?"

LAYER 1

PLAN ANALYSIS

The first research layer entails plan analysis, wherein the physical layout and design of the workplace is scrutinised. For this layer, one full day out of the five designated for the entire case study is allocated. Two primary themes will be focused on: functions and interior, with a specific examination of the sub-themes '*physical environment*', '*spatial layout*', '*functions/ zones'*, '*openness vs. closeness*', and the '*workstations*'. This analysis encompasses the spatial configuration and incorporates various components inherent in interior design, such as lines, form/shape, pattern, light, colour, and texture/material[16]. Utilising the floor plan and photographic documentation, these two central themes will shed light on the current workplace aesthetics and operations, while the analyses of the sub-themes will provide a comprehensive view of the existing situation.

LAYER 2

SPACE SYNTAX

The second layer of the research, dedicated to comprehending the impact of the physical space on individuals within architecture offices, will span two days of intensive investigation. This layer will employ the method of space syntax to delve into the physical effects of the office environment. Space syntax is a science-based, human-focused approach that researches the relationships between spatial layout and a range of social, economical and environmental phenomena[17]. The analysis will be conducted by closely observing users, meticulously tracking their movements and activities manually, with the aid of a custom code system designed specifically for this research. An illustrative example of the designed space syntax coding method can be found on pages 20-21. The activities are aligned with the various functions identified in the first research layer, reflecting the typical activities expected during a day in an architectural office.

By merging the insights garnered from this layer with those from the preceding one, the discerning of the patterns will be commenced, primarily focussing on the utilisation of the physical workspace and its influence on its users.

LAYER 3

INTERVIEWS

The third research layer, which involves conducting interviews with the users of the case studies, will extend over the two remaining days. The interview comprises five main questions, and there's flexibility to pose additional sub-questions, ensuring a thorough exploration of each user perspectives and experiences. The interview questions are provided on page 23 for reference. The outcome of these interviews will be diligently examined and then mapped onto the floor plan. This mapping process will serve to reinforce and underscore the intricate relationship between the physical workspace and the perspectives of those who engage with it.

This last layer, alongside the analyses undertaken previously, contributes to the formation of the second research pattern, offering an in-depth insight into the current situation and underlying rationales. The interviews will also provide valuable insights into the changes and improvements that the users desire to see in their office.

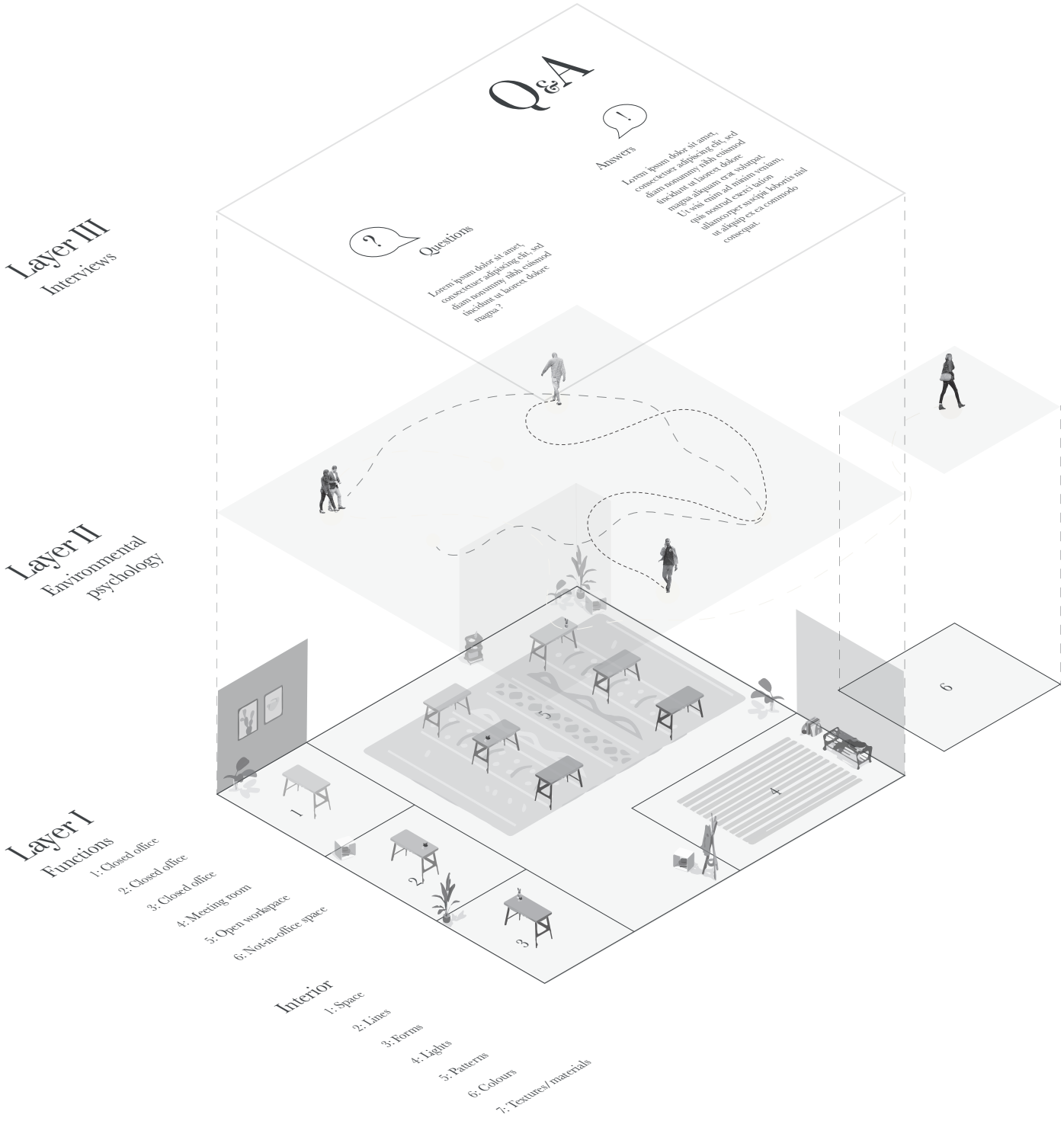

Figure 6: Methodology layers

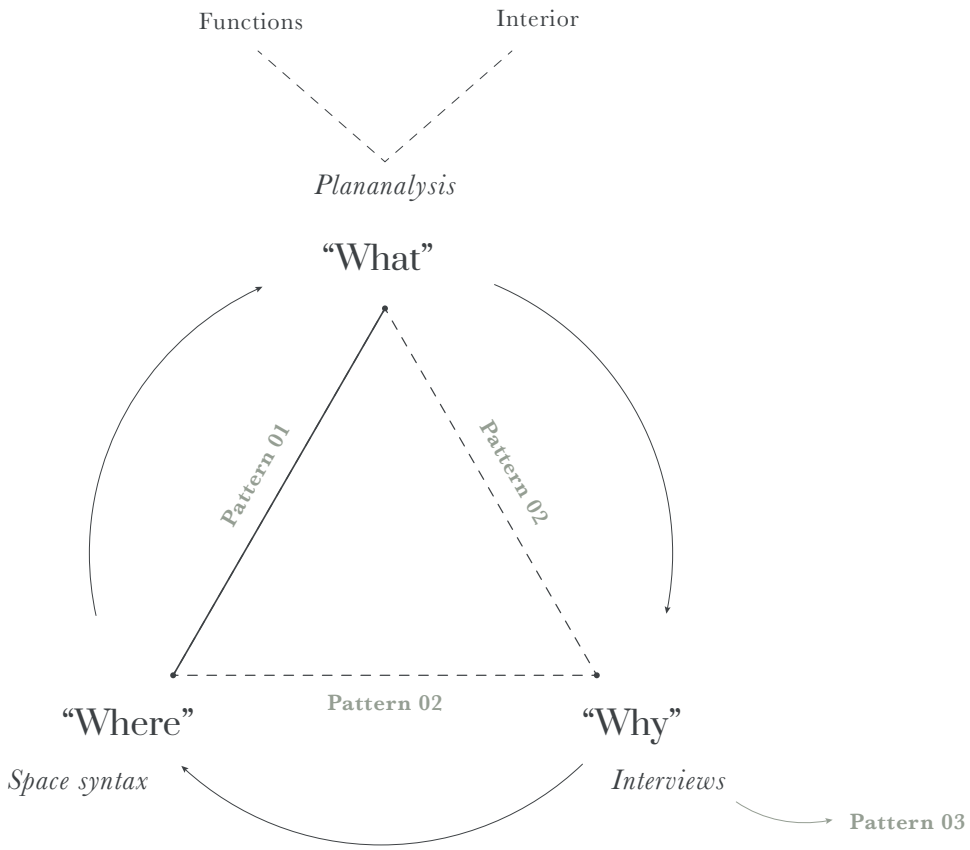

Figure 7: Unifying Triangle

Through these three layers, a triangle of understanding will be formed, with the three pillars being '*What*', '*Where*', and '*Why*'. This triangle – and the unifying circle that leads to it – is the first essential step to understand what needs to change from the current situation, in order to allow flexible working.

The second step unfolds within the third research layer. The fifth main interview question plays a crucial role in uncovering the specific needs of the participants in the case studies. For each case study, an overview will be compiled of the responses to this final question. Subsequently, a comparative analysis of these responses will be performed, leading to the compilation of a list of features that are deemed essential for the '*ideal*' architectural office environment.

This comparative process will reveal conclusions that transcend the specific case studies, identifying the common features that are instrumental in meeting the requirements of flexible working in architecture studios. These features can be combined into one or multiple possible scenarios. These scenarios will, in turn, contribute to the formulation of a programme for an architectural office design, including the needs - in other words, the features - that can effectively facilitate flexible working.

This programme will be translated into a collage created from the programme features – the centre fold in this magazine – to visually represent the conclusions of the research. Moreover, this poster and programme will function as direct input for the design.

To sum up, the methodology of the research for the case studies will consist of an analysis of the physical workspace on three different layers, that build on top of each other. The combination of the multiple layers will lead to three patterns: the first two creating a non-holistic, yet unifying picture of the current state. The last pattern will help identify the (multiple) scenario(s), composed by a list of features that will meet the requirements to accommodate flexible working in architecture offices. These conclusions will be combined in an overall collage, presented as the centre fold of this magazine.

CHICAGO

references & footnotes

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Footnotes

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THE CODIN

EXPLANATION SPACE SYNTAX METHOD

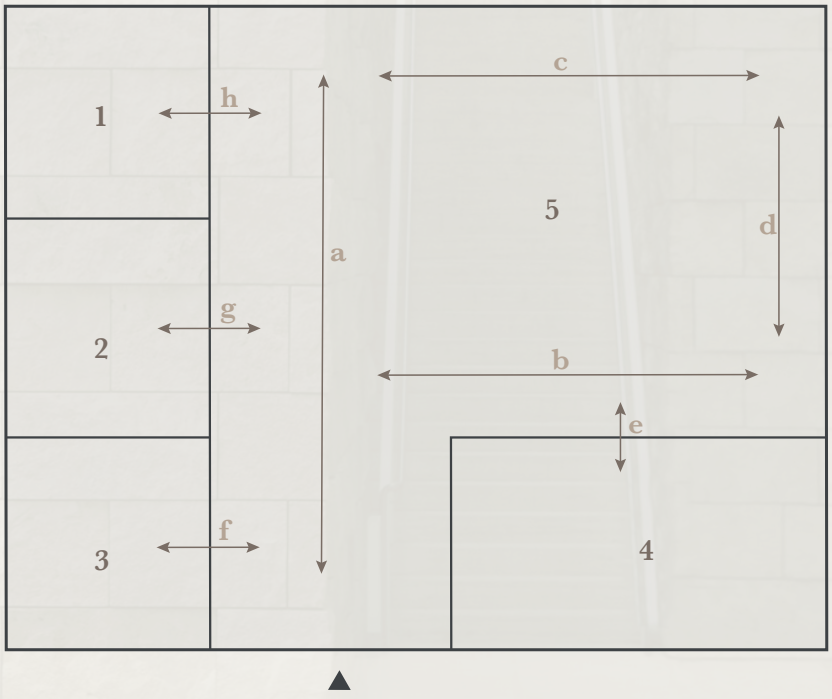
1. Each room within the building is assigned a number, each route is designated by a letter, and each possible activity is represented by a symbol.

2. The subsequent stage involves meticulous tracking of activities and movements within the observed individuals. To achieve this, the observer must strategically position themselves within the office to maintain a comprehensive view. Movement records include details such as the origin and destination room, chosen routes, and the purpose of each activity.

3. For a precise portrayal of office utilisation, it is imperative that observers dedicate a minimum of two days to their observations, adjusting the duration according to the office's size.

4. The final step entails transferring all tracked movements onto the previously prepared floor plan. It is crucial to depict each movement separately within the diagram to ensure an accurate representation of workplace utilisation emerges.

G METHOD



FUNCTIONS – numbers

1: Closed office

2: Closed office

3: Closed office

4: Meeting room

5: Open workspace

ACTIVITIES – symbols

■ Work

● Meeting

▲ Call (meeting)

★ Break

▽ Kitchen

□ Bathroom

ROUTES – letters

Any questions about the method?

EMAIL
thecodingmethod@gmail.com

www.thecodingmethod.nl

The third research layer involves a fusion of the floor plan with insights gleaned from interviews. Responses to the interview questions will be gathered and visually represented in circular graphs, strategically positioned on the floor plan in alignment with the respective functions. These graphical depictions serve a dual purpose: they shed light on the sentiments and perspectives of the functions concerning the physical environment, while also illuminating the specific needs and improvements they seek for their current functions. The prominence of words within these graphs directly correlates with the frequency of their occurrence in the answers, providing a clear visual representation of the most prevalent themes.

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THE QUESTIONS

1 *"Describe me a standard working day"*
(activities, work hours, etc.)

2 *"Describe me a standard routine through the office"*
(where you work, sit, call, meet, etc.)

3 *"What is your opinion of the current physical workplace?"*
(what works and doesn't work for you)

4 *"If you could change anything about the physical workplace, what would you change or add?"*

5 *"Describe me your ideal way of working"*
(where, when, how you want to work)

Research Realities

Unmasking the Boundaries and Limitations of the Methodology

In the pursuit of valuable insights, it is crucial to recognise the limitations inherent in the chosen research methodology. These constraints not only shape the research but also offer opportunities for reflection and potential solutions.

LIMITED SCOPE

It's imperative to recognise that this research primarily focuses on the relationship between flexible working and the physical workspace. While this focus provides valuable insights into this particular aspect, it omits other critical factors, such as organisational structures and cultures, which significantly influence workspace dynamics. While the decision to narrow the scope was deliberate, this limitation means that the research does not offer a holistic overview of all aspects relevant to architectural workspaces. Instead, it aims to provide more generalised insights, focusing on the interaction between flexible working and the physical environment.

VARIABILITY IN CASE STUDIES

Another significant limitation arises from the differences between the two architectural offices studied in the Netherlands: Beltman and Vakwerk. These disparities encompass aspects like location, age, and the nature of office spaces, where Beltman follows a traditional setup and Vakwerk adopts a flexible office configuration.

This diversity shifted the research focus from quantity to quality. Rather than diluting the study, the examination of two significantly different architectural offices demanded a more profound analysis. The variations in location, and perhaps even political aspects, along with workspace configurations, enriched the findings, offering insights into how these factors influence the dynamics of architectural workspaces.

However, this in-depth analysis comes with its own limitations. The intricate disparities between the case studies may challenge the ability to generalise results across all architectural office settings, given the unique nature of the studied cases. Nevertheless, this approach provides a deeper understanding of flexible working in various architectural contexts.

TEMPORAL AND EQUIPMENT

One notable limitation pertains to temporal and equipment constraints, which impacted the ability to conduct extensive user observations. Ideally, these observations should have extended over an extended period, ranging from seven to fourteen days, to provide a more accurate representation of how the spaces are genuinely utilised. The constrained observation window may have potentially led to a less comprehensive understanding of workspace behaviours, as shorter time-lines might not capture all variations and nuances.

These constraints are mostly applicable to the Vakwerk case study, as their office building is somewhat complex to analyse, particularly when observing users, due to its spatial layout. Cameras could have supported the observations, but would lead to unequal treatment between both case studies.

In summary, these limitations, while inherent in the research methodology, play a role in framing the research findings and conclusions. Understanding these constraints is needed to interpreting the results in their proper context and appreciating the boundaries of the study's applicability.

05 Beltman architecten

Over 150 years ago, Beltman Architecten was founded by Gerrit Beltman in Enschede. This architectural office was one of the first Dutch architecture studios and played a significant role in shaping the city's industrial landscape.

During the late nineteenth century, Enschede was a thriving textile town, with four major textile families: Scholten, Spanjaard, Van Heek and Ter Kuile. Beltman was the architect of choice for these families, designing many of the factories, villas, and spinning mills that still stand today.

As the years passed, the Beltman family continued to lead the company for three generations, until it was passed on to non-family directors in 1967. Over the next few decades, the company went through several changes, but it continued to leave its mark on the architecture of the city, and its neighbouring towns.

In 1996, the company moved to its new iconic premises on Hengelosestraat: a building with a red façade, blue door, and yellow name sign in Gerrit Beltman's handwriting. It quickly became a symbol of the company's legacy, shifting its main image from the reputation on industrial architecture to its new iconic building.

In 2019, Koert Helmes and Esther Mastenbroek took over the company, bringing new energy and ideas to the business. This transition also marked a significant change for the company, as it moved a second time - from its iconic red building to one of Gerrit Beltman's designed spinning mills.

While the building has lost its original function, it now serves as a home for multiple companies in the creative sector. Together with their team of seventeen employees, Helmes and Mastenbroek are writing their own chapter in the rich history of Beltman Architecten.

The current team at Beltman is made up of a diverse group of individuals, each bringing their own unique skills and expertise to the table. At the forefront of the team are the five architects and designer, who lead the design process and bring innovative and creative solutions to each project. They work closely with the seven engineers, who ensure that the designs are not only visually stunning, but also structurally are feasible to build. The two project leaders oversee the entire processes, from concept to completion, and ensure that everything runs smoothly.

Providing support to the rest of the team are a dedicated financial manager, who takes care of the financial aspects of the company and projects, an administrative and HR employee who manages the day-to-day operations, and an assistant manager who helps with the organisations and coordination of the team.

With their combined experience, knowledge, and talent, the team at Beltman is dedicated to creating exceptional architecture that not only meets the functional and aesthetic needs of their clients but also has a positive impact on the surrounding community. They strive to create spaces that inspire, engage and delight, and will continue to push the boundaries of design to create truly innovative and iconic buildings.[18]

Age
151 years

Location
Enschede

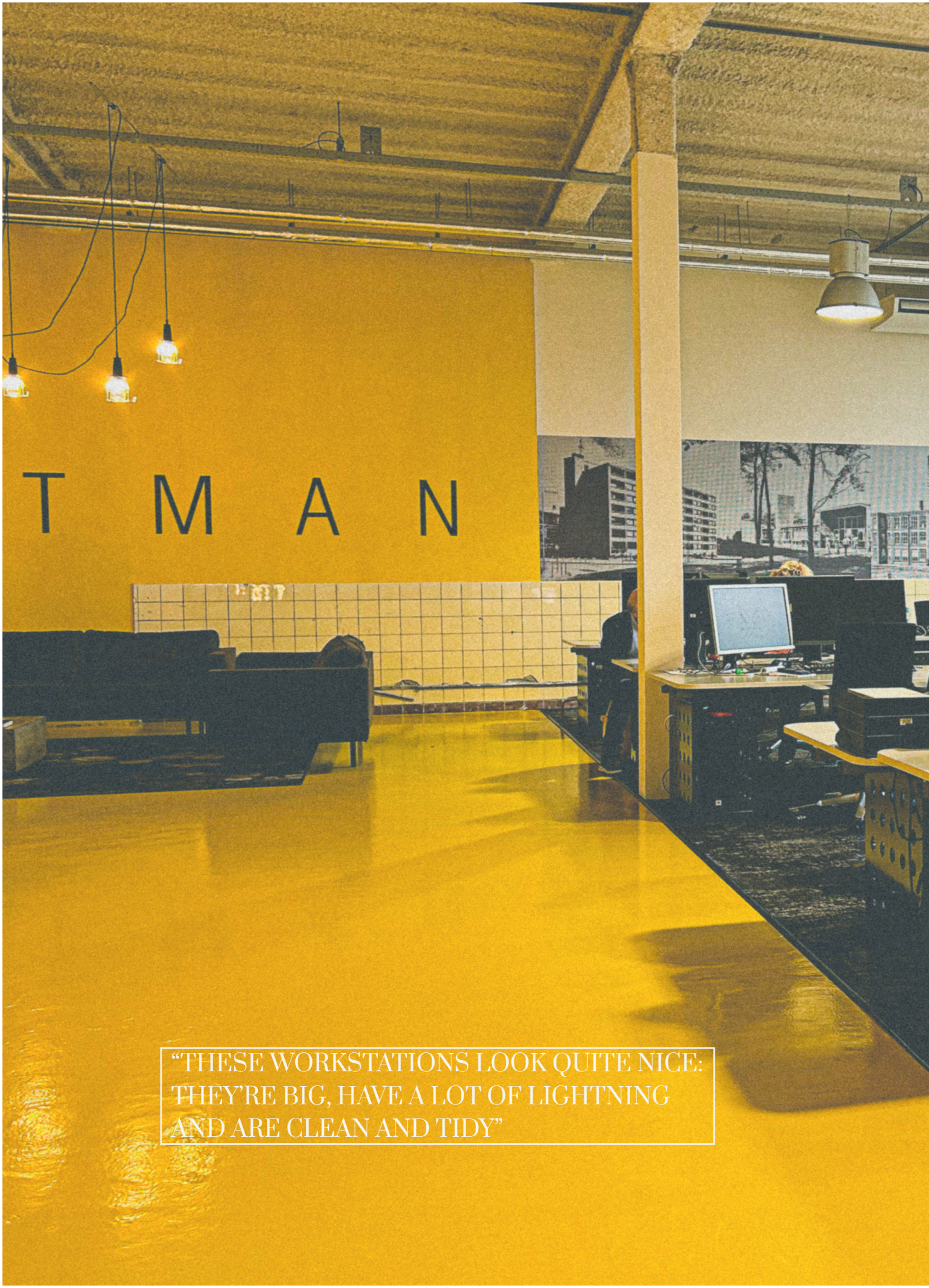
Founder
Gerrit Beltman

Size
19

Projects
Residential
Healthcare
Education
Interior
Utility
Renovation
Reallocation


“We think from
meaningful spaces”

"UPON ENTERING, WHAT STRIKES ME MOST IS THE YELLOW PATH THAT DRAWS MY ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY TOWARDS THE BACK OF THE SPACE"



"THESE WORKSTATIONS LOOK QUITE NICE: THEY'RE BIG, HAVE A LOT OF LIGHTNING AND ARE CLEAN AND TIDY"


B E L
the art of living

"WHAT A LOVELY LOUNGE CORNER.
I WONDER HOW OFTEN PEOPLE SIT HERE"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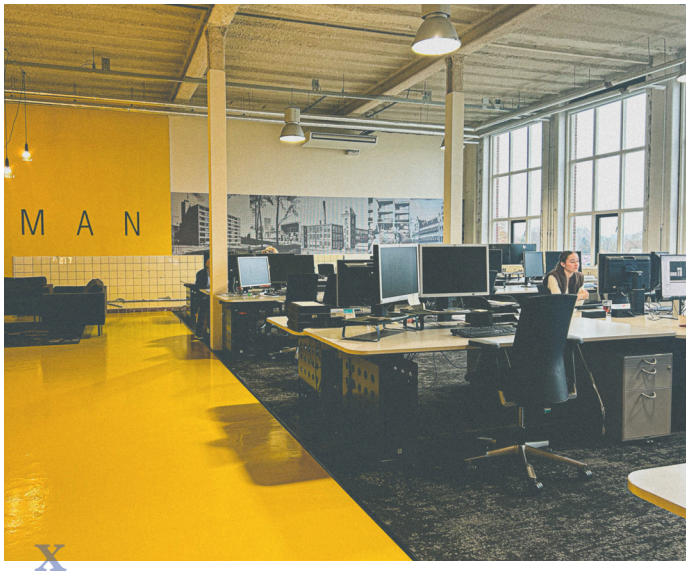

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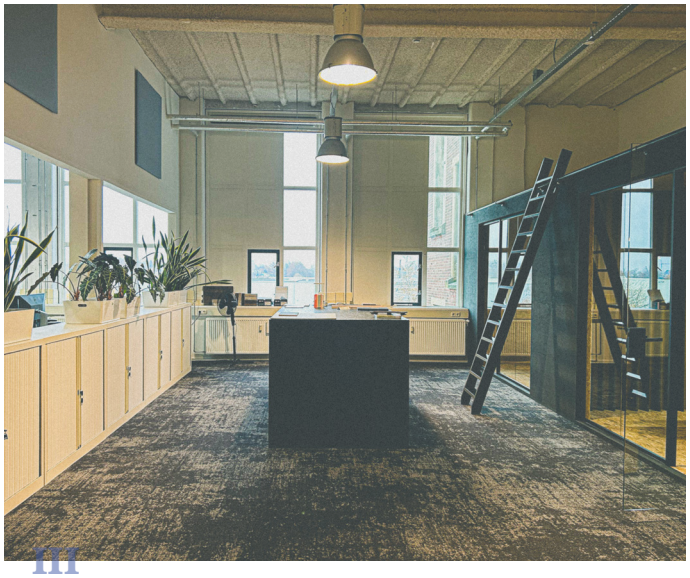
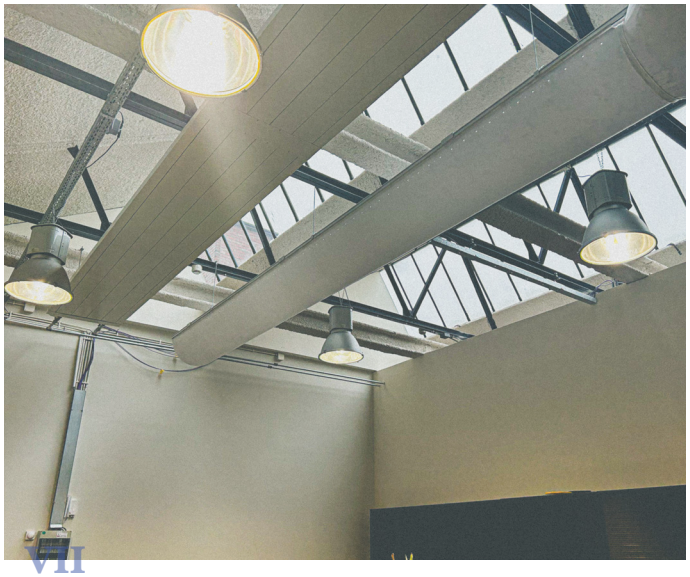


III

IV



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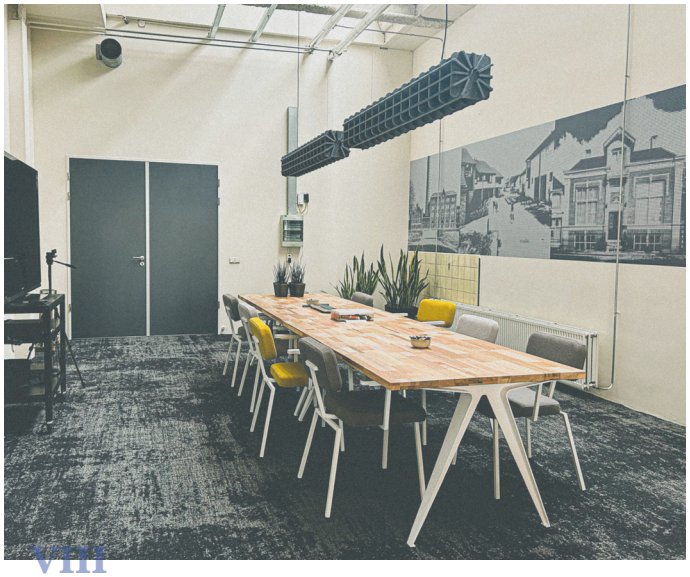
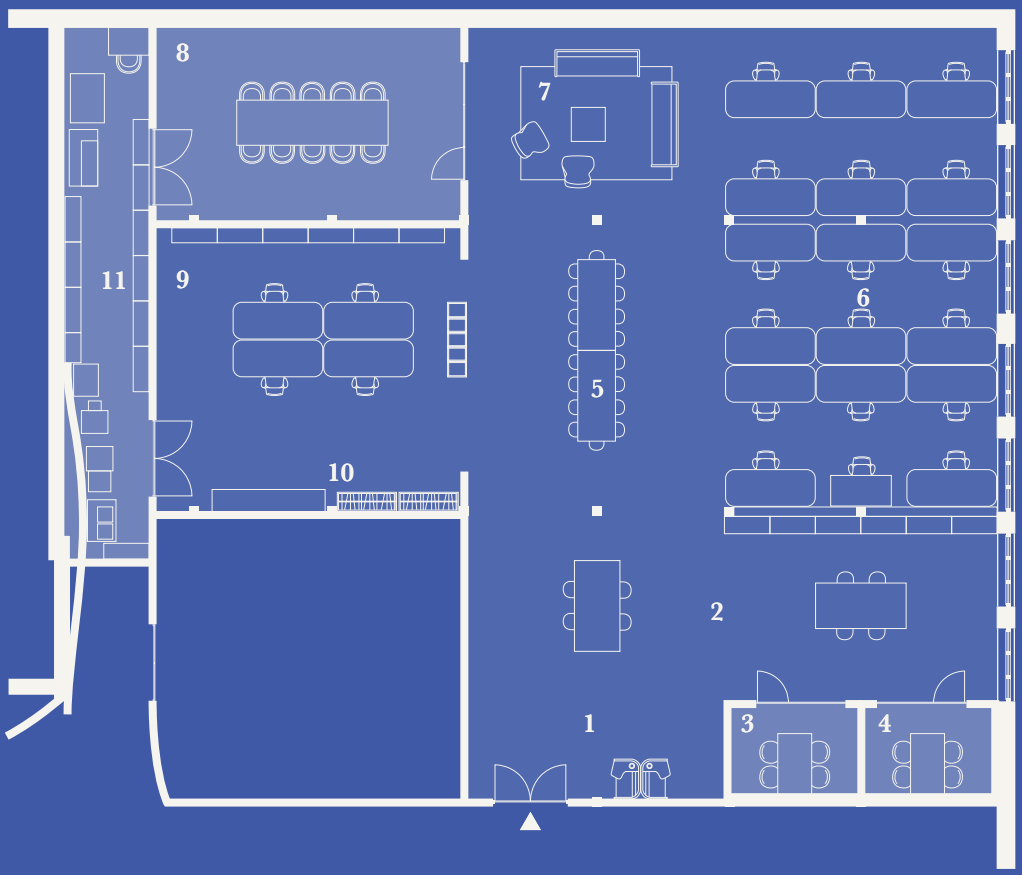


VIII

XI

XII

Plan analysis



0 1 2 4 6 m

LEGEND
1: entrance
2: open flexible working space
3: closed meeting room
4: closed meeting room
5: lunch/coffee area
6: open fixed working space
7: lounge area
8: closed meeting room
9: open fixed working space
10: kitchen
11: storage room

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Beltman's office space is located in a re-purposed old spinning mill, now home to multiple companies in the creative sector. The square-shaped space boats a high ceiling and large window lot on the right, emphasizing the open floor plan and providing natural light to the workspaces.

The office is well-organised within an open floor plan, and constructive columns divide the open space into smaller sections.

The interior design features a clear colour palette, with the use of black, white, and yellow and incorporates plants that are scattered throughout the space to give the office a more homelike and greener atmosphere. Soon, the top of the phone booths will be covered with more plants to increase the use of greenery and create a more emphasized connection to the outdoors.

One of the more prominent features is the yellow-coated floor that draws the eye of the beholder to the back, where one can see the yellow wall and big, black letters that spell 'Beltman'. On either side of this 'yellow zone', the interior design is more toned-down, through the combination of black and white carpeting, walls, and furniture.

The amount of daylight that comes through the windows flood the office with natural lighting, particularly in the workspaces. As one moves further into the office, away from the windows, the light becomes dimmer and the space becomes more reliant on artificial lighting. Above the workstations and the kitchen, skylights are located, though not as effective as the windows.

Additionally, the space is equipped with two air conditioners to keep the space warm during the winter months, and cold during summer. Besides the carpeting on the floor, acoustic panels have been mounted onto the walls in order to help regulate the acoustics in the open space.

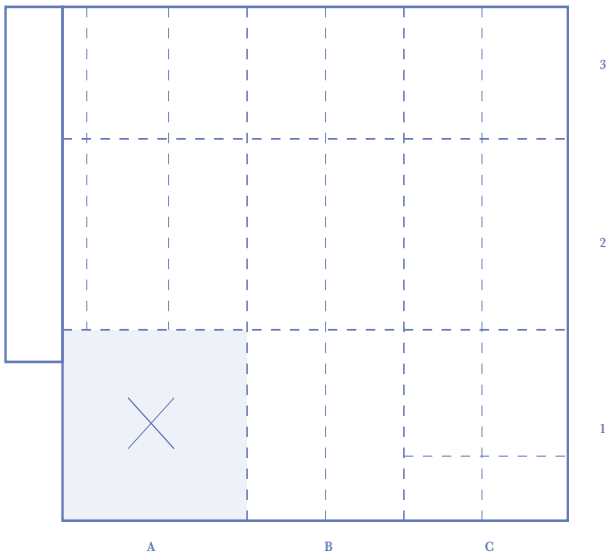


Figure 8: Grid structure

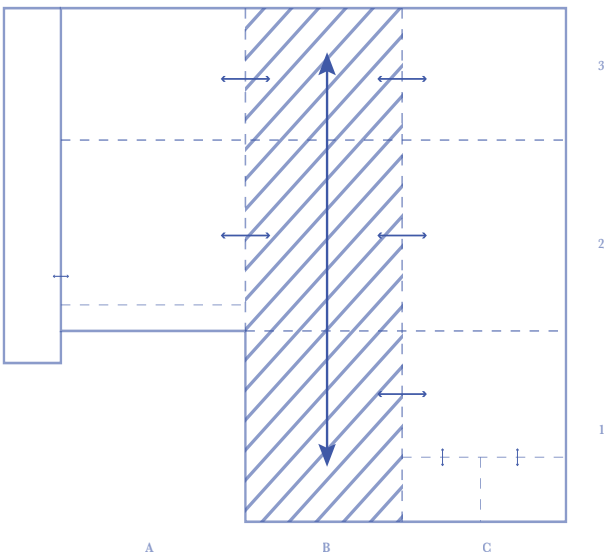


Figure 9: Route zone

SPATIAL LAYOUT

The office space is characterised by a distinctive grid structure and is composed by nine nearly identical compartments, as illustrated in figure x.

A closer examination of the placement of the structural columns reveals a sub-section of the primary grid - each compartment roughly measuring seven by seven meters - which orientates the division more vertically (columns) rather than horizontally (rows).

Notice that the grid excludes the storage space, which operates outside the grid structure. This omission underscores the office's integration into the larger spinning mill, suggesting its participation in a different spatial language.

The grid serves as the foundational framework, meticulously placing functions within the compartments, to which various activities have found their designated place, and leading to the creation of defined zones.

Specifically, Rows A and C exhibit a consistent interior design that primarily accommodates workspaces and meeting rooms. In contrast, Row B takes a distinct materialisation approach, focusing on informal functions while seamlessly serving as a central 'thoroughfare' connecting all functions. On the other axis, Column 1, particularly near the entrance, acts as a transitional area between the public space (the hallway connecting the office to the rest of the building) and Columns 2 and 3, where rather 'private' office spaces are situated.

FUNCTIONS AND ZONES

The floor plan offers a clear depiction of how functions are strategically placed within the office, tightly intertwined with the underlying grid structure. The visual evidence within the photos underscores a profound connection between the grid, interior design choices, and the arrangement of functions. For instance, functions intended for shorter stays are thoughtfully designed with sleeker materials and adorned with a brighter yellow colour palette. In contrast, areas designated for longer stays feature softer materials that enhance acoustics and are adorned with more subdued colour schemes.

Rows A and C predominantly share a similar layout, primarily designated for workspaces and meeting rooms. The key distinction lies in the balance between these two functions: Row C leans towards accommodating workstations, whereas Row A takes on a more pronounced focus on meeting rooms.

In contrast, Row B serves as an exception, housing the entrance, lunch table, and lounge area, all of which are informal functions. This diversity in functions serves to sub-divide the office space into three discernible zones. What's particularly noteworthy is how these variations in functions seamlessly interact with the interior design, accentuating the creation of these distinct zones within the open floor plan.

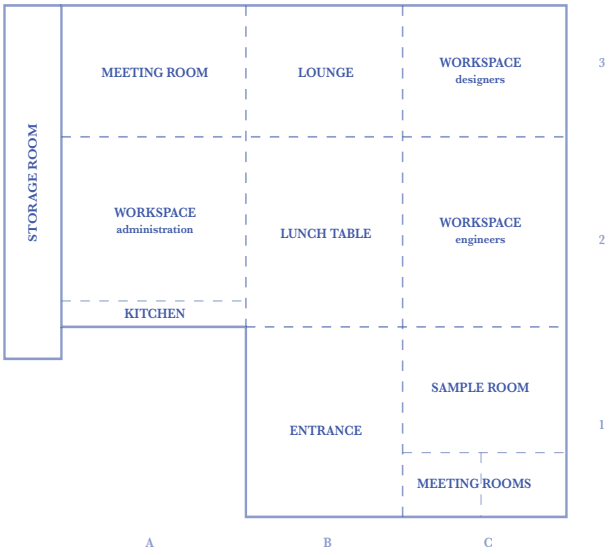


Figure 10: Functions within grid structure

Upon a thorough analysis of the functions and their respective allocations, it becomes evident that thirty-four per cent of the total office space is designated for workstations, essentially constituting a third of the office's area. Furthermore, Beltman has thoughtfully allocated fourteen per cent of its space to accommodate meeting rooms and phone booths.

The amalgamation of the kitchen and the lunch table collectively occupies twelve per cent of the office space, an area that roughly matches the square footage allocated for meeting rooms and the entrance.

In sum, all informal spaces together amount to twenty-five per cent of the entire office space, effectively representing a quarter of the office's overall area.

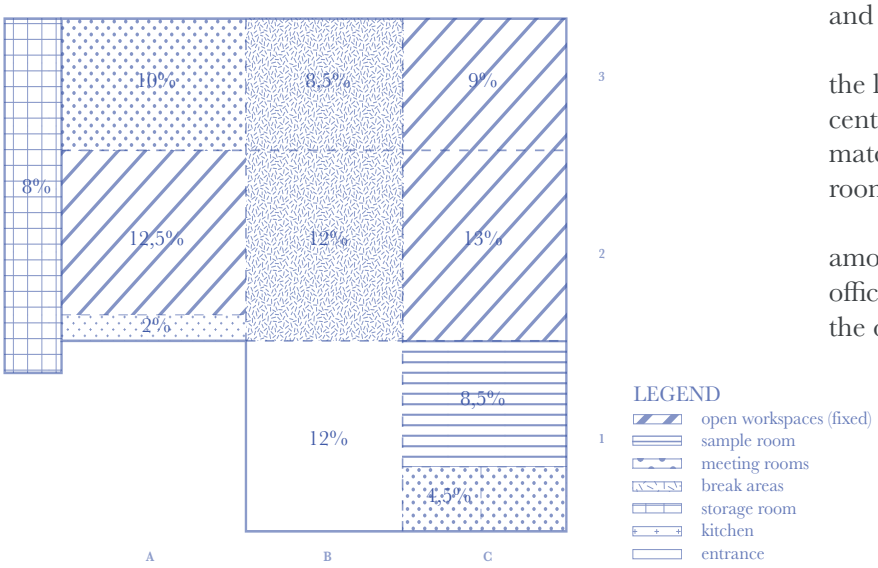


Figure 11: Zones within grid structure

OPENNESS VS. CLOSENESS

Upon entering the office, one is immediately struck by the sense of spaciousness. The layout offers a remarkable openness, allowing one to almost fully grasp the entire office space upon entering. This immediate visibility extends to nearly all sections of the office, with the notable exception of Row A.

Even though approximately thirty per cent of the office is physically enclosed by walls, this percentage feels significantly less due to the strategic use of glass walls in the meeting rooms. The transparent partitions provide a sense of connectedness and a visual extension of the space, contributing to the overall impression of openness and expansiveness within the office environment.

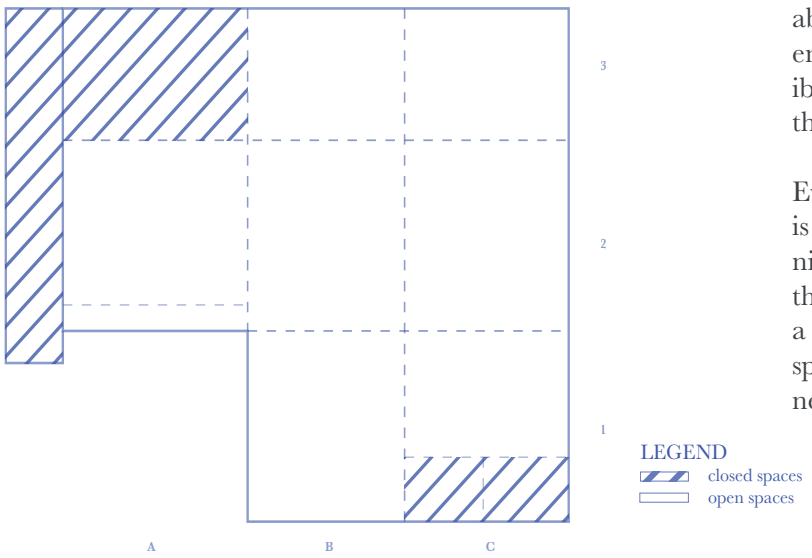


Figure 12: Openness vs. closeness

WORKSTATIONS

Beltman's office features a total of twenty workstations, one dedicated for each employee. These workstations are designed with the individual needs and preferences of employees in mind. Each workstation is fully equipped, and includes a spacious desk, an ergonomic chair that can be adjusted for optimal comfort, and dual computer screens. The layout of these workstations is thoughtfully organised to create a collaborative and efficient working environment.

The arrangement follows a logical pattern, with designers and architects seated together, as well as engineers in close proximity. Junior employees are placed next to their mentors or 'buddies' to encourage easy access to guidance and support. Project leaders and those who frequently move around the office are strategically situated near the main aisle for quick access to the rest of the team. This set-up ensures that each employee has the resources and support needed to excel in their role.

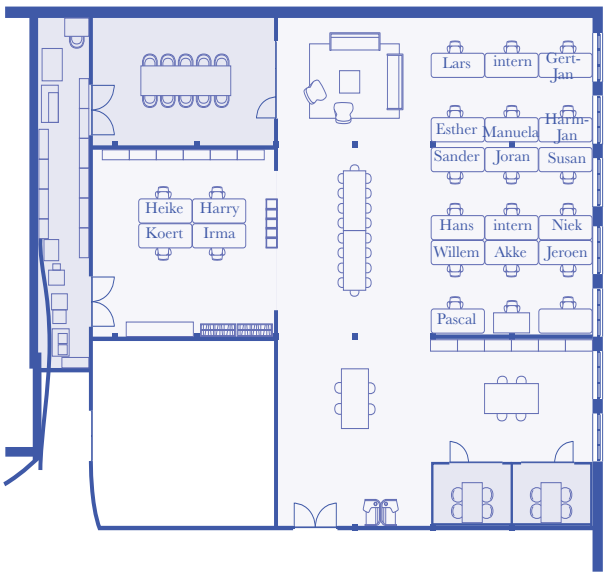
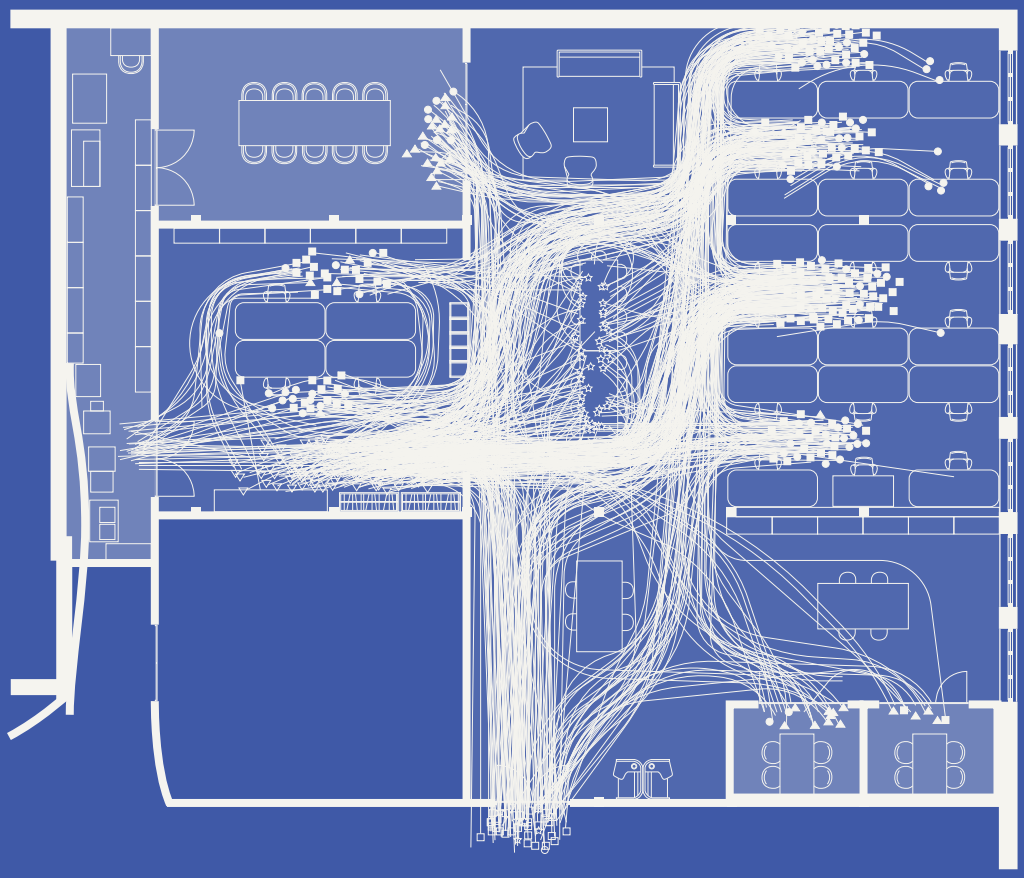


Figure 13: Fixed workstations

Space syntax



0 1 2 4 6 m

LEGEND

- ● meeting
- ■ work
- ▲ call (meeting)
- ☆ break
- ▽ kitchen
- □ bathroom

ROUTES

Row B serves as the central route zone within the office layout. The main route originates from the entrance and extends towards the lunch area, where it then divides into two directions. To the left, it proceeds to the kitchen, and to the right, it continues toward the workstations.

The initial part of the route primarily follows a vertical orientation, maintaining a straightforward path until reaching the first crossroad, which happens to be the busiest juncture in the office layout. At this point, the route transitions to a horizontal orientation, symbolising the close connection between the kitchen and the workstations.

Upon this directional shift, the main route further subdivides into smaller, less congested routes. These secondary routes primarily lead to the workspaces in compartments C2 and C3, establishing a second and third crossroad at the boundary between rows B and C. These crossroads correspond to the destinations reached by the secondary paths.

Notably, the entrance, kitchen, and workstations are the most interconnected functions within the office, a characteristic reflected in both the primary route and the number of activities conducted in these areas.

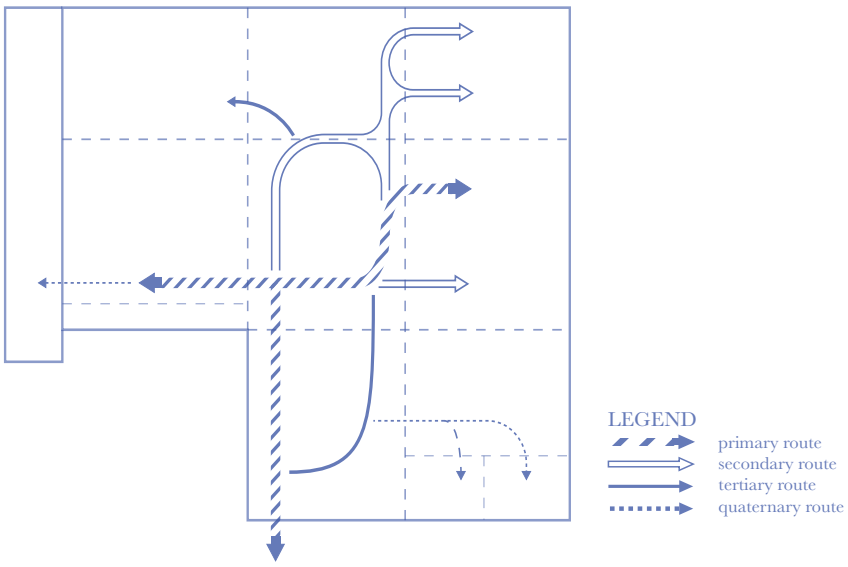


Figure 14: Routes

ACTIVITIES

In the previous research layer, it has been established that each function within the office occupies a specific position. The analysis of space syntax now reveals that individuals tend to engage in specific activities in particular areas of the office.

This finding re-affirms the presence of defined zones within the workspace, shaped not only by interior design choices but also by the utilisation of space.

Further observations have identified three primary types of meetings: internal, external online, and external offline meetings.

Internal meetings consistently occur at the employees' workstations, whereas external meetings transpire within the designated meeting rooms, comprising both the conference room and phone booths. Additionally, phone calls are predominantly conducted in these meeting rooms. While occasional phone calls take place at individual workstations, most employees opt to use the conference room or phone booth. In cases where these are occupied, some individuals choose to take their calls outside the office.

Delving deeper into the analysis of activity types and their relationship to the office's functions, notable is that all breaks occur within a specific area – the lunch table. This space stands out as the physical and social hub of the office. Following the workspaces and the kitchen, it emerges as the second most frequently utilised function within the office. It serves as a symbolic boundary between work and relaxation and is a communal space where employees collectively enjoy coffee breaks and shared lunchtime moments.

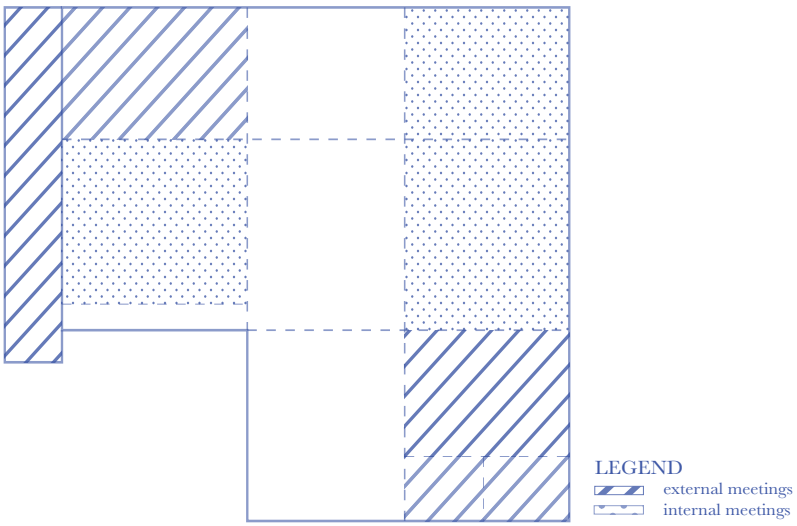


Figure 15: Meeting

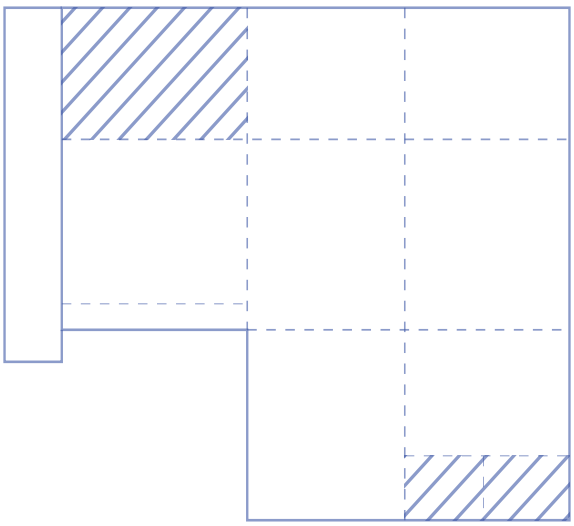


Figure 16: Calling

"I notice that people sit for a longer period, especially some people. I also see that when they finally do get up, they like to combine different activities; they go to the bathroom, grab a coffee, and go chat with a colleague all in one trip."

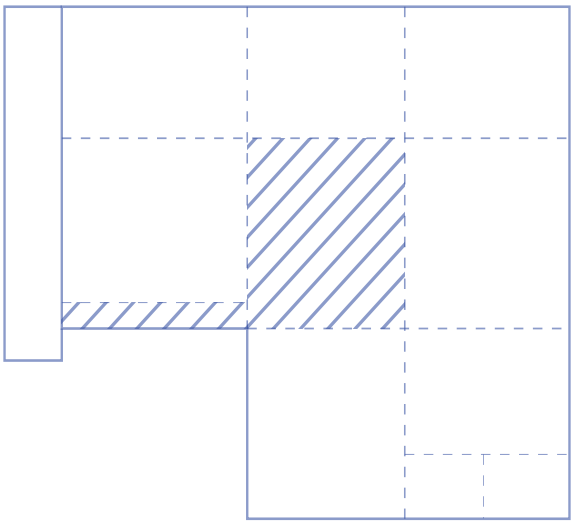


Figure 17: Break

Analysing the observed activities and excluding the area designated for walking, three furniture pieces are identifiable within the office that remain unused. These include the two standing tables located in the entrance and sample area, as well as the couch situated in the lounge area.

While the entrance area primarily serves its intended function of allowing individuals to enter and exit the office space, it appears that the table in this section sees minimal to no utilisation.

"The kitchen is used quite frequently; they sure do like their coffee!"

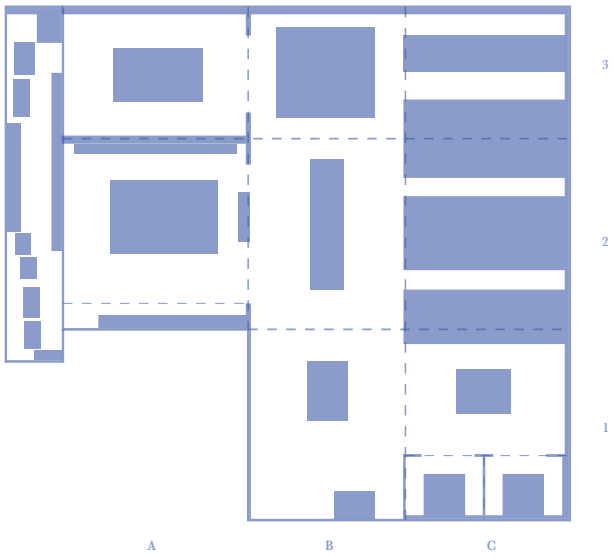


Figure 18: Nolli map

NOLLI MAP

In this final analysis, a Nolli map approach is adopted, which is commonly used to map and comprehend the accessibility and flow of a city[19]. In this context, it serves to document the flow within the office space, focusing on two distinct types of activities: passive activities, which encompass all seated tasks, are represented by the blue colour, while active activities, such as walking, are denoted by the white areas. The calculations reveal that sixty per cent of the office space is designated for active activities, while the remaining fourty per cent caters to passive activities.

Notably, the middle row, Row B, is predominantly comprised of areas designated for active activities, while Rows A and C, with the latter being the most pronounced, feature a greater proportion of spaces intended for passive activities.

When the Nolli map is layered onto the floor plan, a distinct correlation between the spatial flow and the positioning of various functions becomes evident.

Notably, the areas around the furniture in Row B feature a more extensive walk-able space, in contrast to, for instance, the workspaces in Row C. This disparity in space utilisation can be attributed to the intricate interplay between the grid structure and function placement. Because the furniture is thoughtfully arranged within the grid, it creates a more 'open' area around it, contributing to the overall sense of airiness and spaciousness throughout the office space. Row B, situated at the centre of the office, benefits from the presence of active spaces around its informal functions and is thus aptly designated as the '*route zone*'.

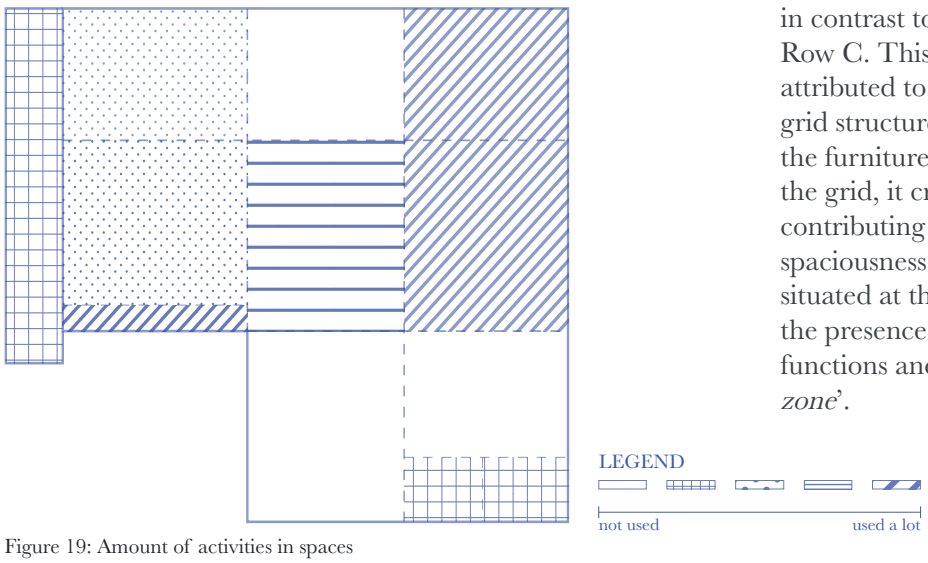


Figure 19: Amount of activities in spaces

Space Syntax

all codes listed

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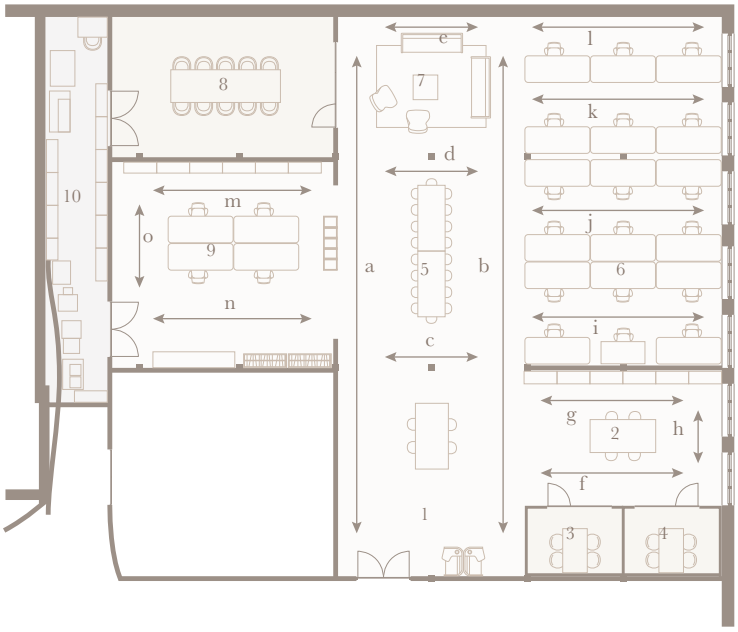
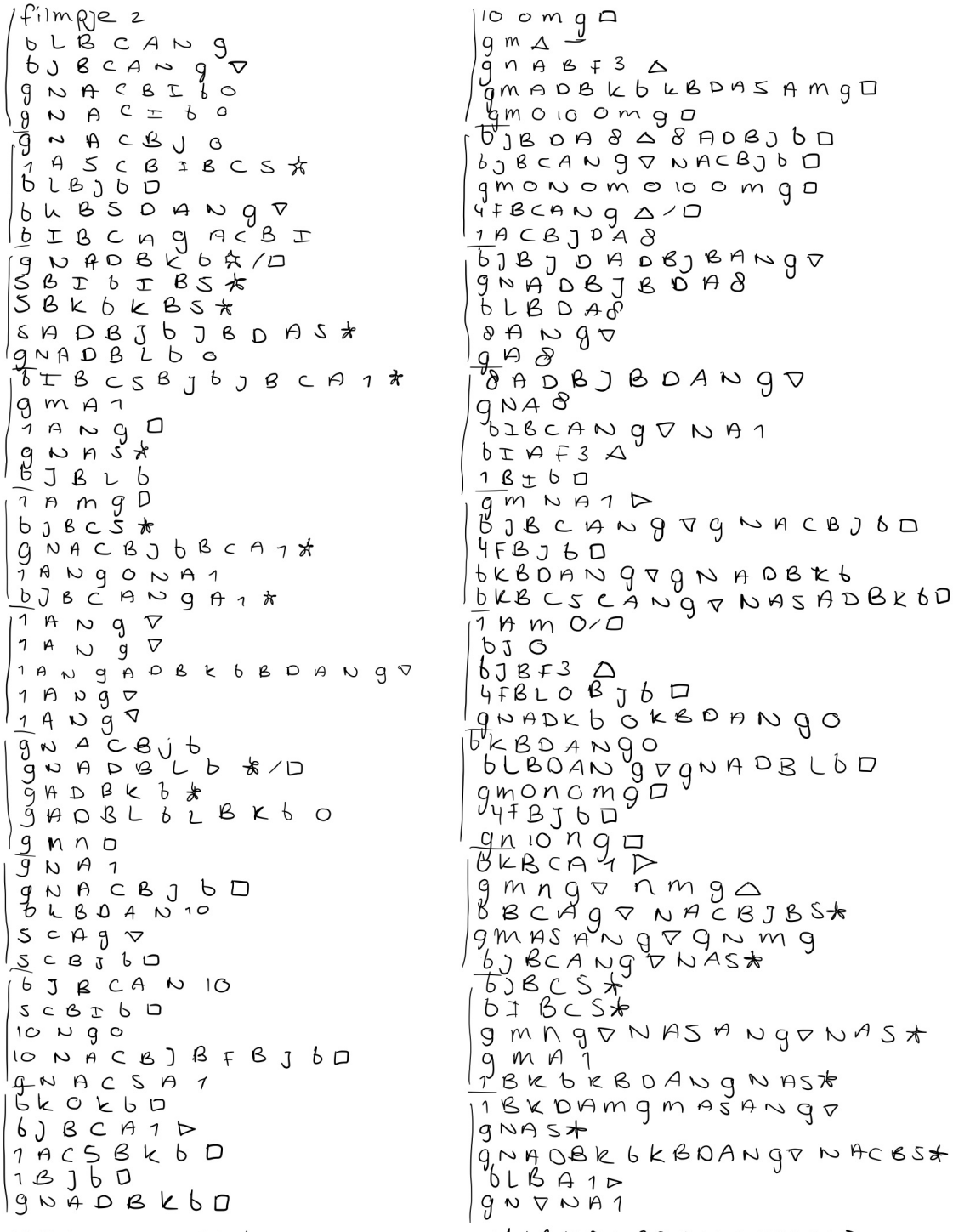


- Work
- Meeting
- Call (meeting)
- Break
- Kitchen
- Bathroom

Day One

filme 2



Day Two

Interview with

Koert Helmes

"Pinterest is my porn."

Could you describe me your typical workday?

"My workday is a bitch. I am not autistic, but I do value structure. Of course, I am my own boss, and I can arrange my day however I want. I like the idea that 8 o'clock is 8 o'clock. It becomes ingrained in your bio rhythm at some point.

Moreover, I'm very busy with meetings; I get many calls, and support and manage project assistants. I have also discovered a very commercial side to myself, which is why I do 'look' for the phone."

Your work week doesn't seem to end on a Friday?

"True, I do have a pretty big commitment to my projects; so it's kind of like, we're not artists, but it's not work either. You don't let work go. I often say: *"Pinterest is my porn."* So when my wife comes downstairs I always quickly put it away. To which she says '*oh you are busy with your work again*'. So, no my work doesn't stop at 17h."

You work at the office a lot and are also often away for appointments, but you also work from home occasionally, how does that work?

"Well I don't know if I'm a good example in that respect, because I always adapt very quickly to situations and surroundings. I'm not very critical either.

I have young children, so it's a bit difficult for me to work from home. When that first lock-down was declared, I said: '*Nice that you are going to work from home, I am not going to work from home.*' My children don't understand that and frankly, my wife doesn't understand that either. So I prefer to work at the office."

You've had two different workstations, which did you prefer and why?

"I liked Lars' workplace a lot. Esther and I arranged it so that we would sit close to one another and would be able to easily discuss business when needed. I also liked that no one could look at my screen. You know, reading a newspaper, watching football - no one can see what I was doing. But I am on my phone all the time and I became a disturbance for the rest.

Also Lars as a new talent, I thought he should be amongst the others. So then I moved, and actually I'm fine with it. It's closer to the coffee machine. However, sometimes I find it a bit clumsy when people come waltzing in, making coffee and chatting to each other while I'm having an online meeting."

What do you think of the open floor plan?

"In our old office on Hengelosestraat, we did have some sort of a division. If I had to ask the structural engineers something, I had to walk all the way upstairs and they would be arranged in some sort of cubicles, created by cabinets. I'd walk in as a 'youngster' with questions and they'd be like, '*Yes well, it's difficult and there's no time, blablabla.*' So that created a barrier. You actually want all the people to sit together, no walls or anything. And preferably, no storeys and as single-floor as possible."

And so that's why there's no division in workspaces?

"No exactly, however, you do notice that at some point it's practical for certain people to sit next to each other. For example, Niek as a trainee supervisor next to the trainee."

How come do you think people actually use spaces as they're intended? So for example, that people only use these phone booths to make phone calls?

"It is mostly because of convenience. I saw Lars using the sit-stand desk a couple of times. Indeed, if I'm preparing a presentation, I like to isolate myself in one of the meeting rooms. But other than that, I don't use functions in multi-functional ways. I think people don't really have the need, for example, for a high-concentration workspace. I already find it relatively quiet in our meeting rooms."

Precisely because you move a lot during the day, would you be the one who would sit in different places, if possible?

"I am always stuck with this stupid computer that limits your flexibility. I would say that it is perhaps the biggest limiting factor, although you do have a fully equipped workstation, with two screens and your personal settings. It would be more accessible, though, if other spaces also had computers.

Like the cupboards - which are really just nonsense - the size of your desk just allows you to huddle stuff. I am the biggest sinner in that. It's like my in-box, it's like a disease: for every mail you send, you get four in return."

"I am always stuck with this stupid computer that limits your flexibility."

Do you have something general about the physical workplace that works and doesn't work well for you?

"Well, we wanted to create zones in the office space. So, the workstations close to the window, and break spaces in the middle, and everything else, such as the meeting room and the administrative workspaces, would be on the left. The sofa was of course very 'hip', but nobody actually sits there. Somehow, it doesn't work.

We moved from one of those standard 'shitty' office buildings, with those 2.6m system ceilings. I'll never forget, when Esther and I came to look at this place and then when we came back into our old office, it felt like we really had to walk like *crouched*. So this is already quite a step forward.

Of course, I always see examples of a massage table, a ping-pong table, or a football table. That looks all pretty cool."

What do you think about everyone having a fixed workstation?

"Traditionally that came because everyone had a drawing table with personal settings, which was more convenient. Later, we got computers, but they were also not that flexible so that one could go to another computer and take their settings with them. So, it grew out of practicality from history. Nowadays, it makes much more sense to have flexible workstations. Only it has to be useful for the people too. We renovate many offices, and the board of directors often say: '*we have to work differently and more innovative*', but it has to be practical for people too. And flexible workstations might be useful if you work together in fixed teams. But as a designer, you are involved in many more projects, with different colleagues. So which group do you sit with then?"

Are the standing tables, the lunch table and the sofa used at all?

"I wasn't under the illusion that people would sit on the sofa much, I intended it more for the atmosphere and as decoration. At a certain point, the question whether the sofa should come at all rose, but then everyone said '*what? The sofa should come for sure!*'. It's more decorative and occasionally we do sit on it; I sometimes see Niek calling there. The crazy thing is that we thought, now that we have grown in size, that the coffee table would be too small to fit everyone. And there were also some complaints that people would like to stand during breaks, so we got the higher tables. But still, everyone just sits at the lunch table. That's kind of the culture anyway and you can't get that to change very quickly."

The office is quite open, why is that and did you consider dividing the space further anyway about everyone having a fixed workstation?

"When we were new in this office, we had the cupboards between everything, and we changed that once because we had to add more workstations, so all the cupboards were moved more to the front. There was never any objections to the newly created open floor plan.

We also find it cosy, nice, spacious and well-organised. It gives an airy feeling. Again, nobody complains about it either. We did consciously cover these workspaces with carpeting, to regulate the acoustics. Koert preferred to have coating everywhere, but in consultation we decided that improving the acoustics of the office space was more logical."

"Nowadays, it makes much more sense to have flexible workstations."

Esther Mastenbroek

How do you feel about working from home?

"I'm easily distracted. I live right in the centre, so if some crazy person walks by, I'm already looking out of the window. So I prefer to work at the office, alongside my colleagues. It also allows me to ask questions or advice much quicker."

Would you change places more often if your equipment would allow it?

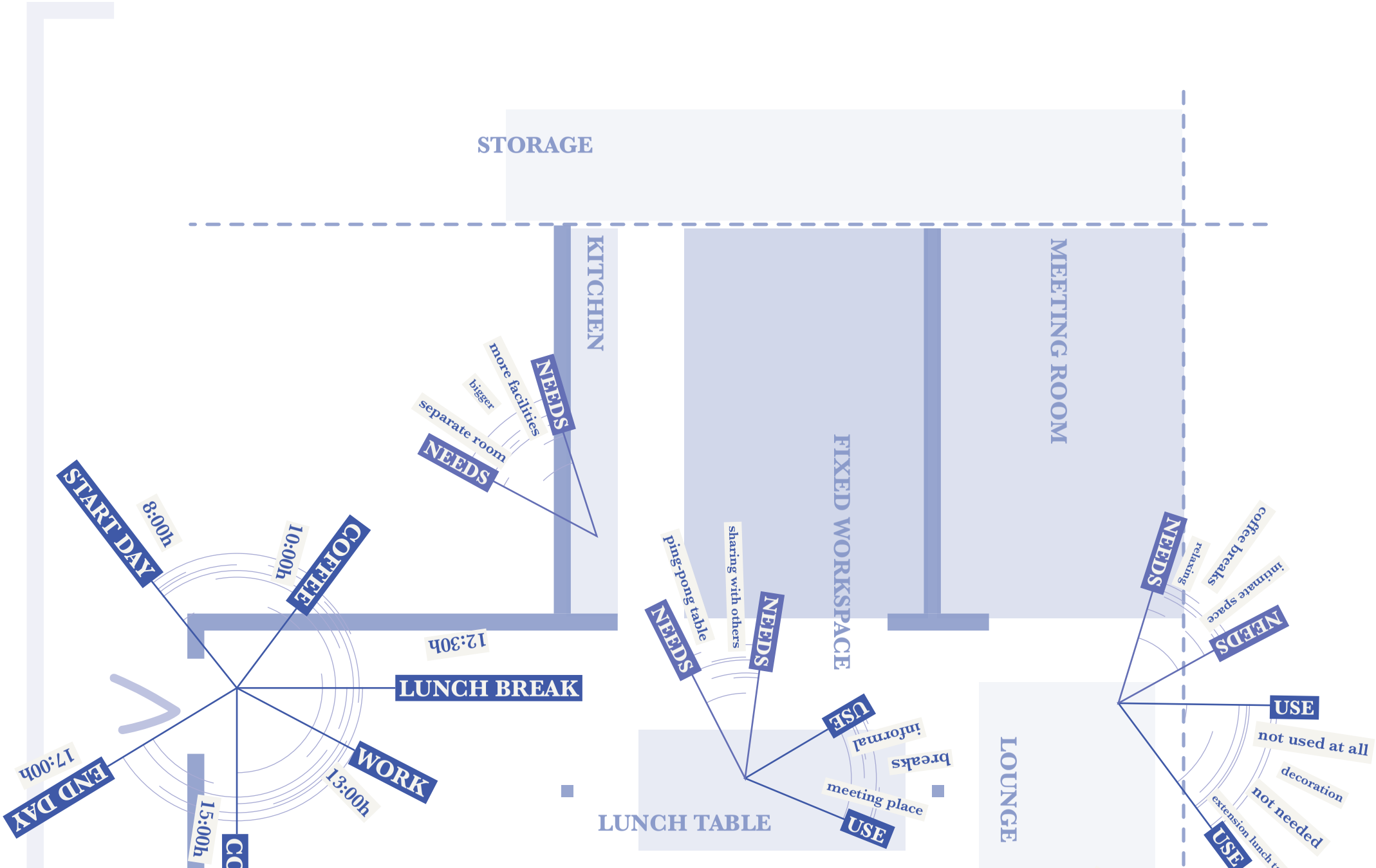
"I do like it, when I'm in a project and working on big heavy models, to sit in a good spot with good equipment around me that support my work-flow. So I do like having my own place. Although, I did used to change sceneries everyday when I still studied and I enjoy it a lot - and my back too - if I can change my way of working easily."

in a good spot with good equipment."

That sofa doesn't seem to be used, why do you think that is?

"I think because of two things. For one, because I feel like you put yourself on a pedestal, sitting differently then your colleagues. And two, is that if everyone fits at the lunch table, why would you sit somewhere else?"

Interviews


STORAGE
KITCHEN
FIXED WORKSPACE
MEETING ROOM
LUNCH TABLE
LOUNGE
NEEDS
more facilities
bigger
separate room
NEEDS
START DAY
8:00h
10:00h
COFFEE
12:30h
LUNCH BREAK
WORK
13:00h
15:00h
END DAY
17:00h
NEEDS
ping-pong table
sharing with others
NEEDS
USE
informal
breaks
meeting place
USE
NEEDS
coffee breaks
relaxing
intimate space
NEEDS
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not used at all
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extension lunch
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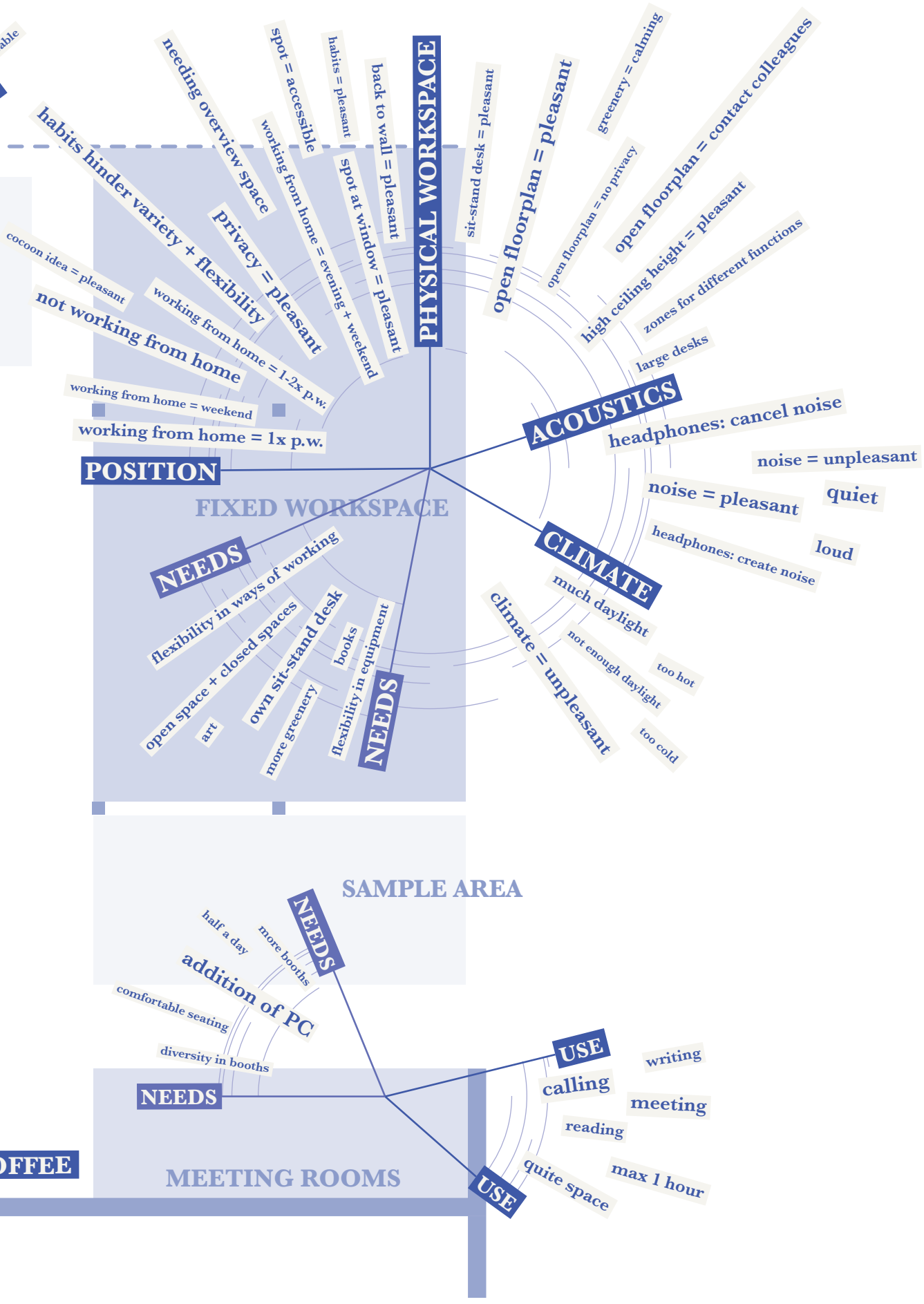

Figure 20: Interview answers onto floor plan

FUNCTIONS

Beltman's office layout, often described by interviewees, encourages a sense of connectivity among colleagues, facilitating spontaneous social interactions and effective communication. The open plan setup is noted for supporting a flat organisational culture. It also features defined zones, accentuated by the grid structure, which help in smoothly transitioning between work and relaxation.

These are not the only remarks from the interviews. Some interviewees also highlighted challenges associated with the open plan, such as increased noise levels. The introduction of hybrid working prompted the addition of two phone booths intended for online meetings.

However, they are mainly used for phone calls, and when multiple individuals engage in phone conversations simultaneously, the noise level can become disruptive. As a result, occupants often opt for the meeting rooms to have their calls, highlighting the need for a sufficient number of private phone call spaces and effective acoustic solutions within open-plan offices.

Additionally, the lunch table is frequently referred to as the office's social hub - a place to gather. The lounge area, though an extension of this central heart, remains underutilised. While the lounge has the potential to serve as a spot for short coffee breaks, the interviews suggest that few individuals take the initiative to use it regularly, leading to a perception of the lounge as more of a decorative feature than a functional one.

Interviewees expressed varied views on shared office spaces. Some raised concerns about privacy and potential competition when sharing an office with other architectural firms. Yet, there is an underlying appreciation for the diversity of faces encountered within the building each morning. Respondents proposed a potential compromise, emphasizing the value of sharing certain facilities with other occupants while maintaining the desired privacy within the office.

WORKSTATIONS

The interviews consistently highlight Beltman's provision of extra-large desks for its employees. It becomes apparent that these generously sized workspaces comfortably accommodate and offer ample room for tasks like drawing, sketching, and arranging large A1 posters, which seems to be a luxury that no one wants to miss. The adjustable nature of these workstations allows employees to tailor their setup to their preferences, ensuring a high degree of comfort and a sense of personal space with a degree of privacy.

Thus, these fully equipped workstations boast a multi-functional quality. They enable the efficient use of resource-intensive software and provide an advantage in terms of personalised configuration, which can include the computer, desk, and chair. While this level of personalisation is beneficial, it becomes clear that it can also foster a sense of routine. Once employees establish a preferred configuration, they are less inclined to change their workspace. As a result, these well-appointed and personalised workstations contribute to the development of consistent work habits, making it challenging to alter established routines.

Conclusions

Pattern 1

Beltman's distinctive office layout is characterised by a grid structure that divides the open floor plan into distinct zones. This grid system's influence extends to both the interior design and the placement of various functions within the workspace. Rows A and C share similar designs and primarily house passive activities, with Row C serving as a designated work zone. In contrast, Row B features a different materialisation and is primarily dedicated to informal activities, offering ample space for these functions. All functions are interconnected through this central middle row, establishing an efficient and clearly defined route zone within the office.

The grid structure is deeply integrated into both the functions and interior design of Beltman's office. This integration contributes to the creation of diverse zones within the workspace, which, in turn, enhances the overall efficiency of the office layout. Furthermore, this grid aligns with the type and number of activities occurring within these zones.

The use of fixed workstations at the office reflects a historical tradition of providing employees with a personal drawing table and customised settings. This practice was retained even with the shift to stationary computers, as the fixed workspaces offered practical advantages.

Despite technological advancements that allow for greater flexibility, the current fully equipped workstations at Beltman remain fixed for each employee. These workstations are highly versatile, accommodating a wide range of tasks and limiting the need for employees to change their physical workspace. This setup provides each employee with a personalised space, fostering a sense of ownership and routine. Once these routines are established, they can be challenging to alter.

Meetings at Beltman are categorised into three types: internal, external online, and external offline. Internal meetings typically occur at individual workstations, while external meetings are primarily conducted in designated meeting rooms.

Pattern 2

Positioned at the centre of the office, the lunch table serves as the heart of Beltman's workspace. It functions as a vital meeting place, fostering relaxation and social interaction among employees. While the addition of a sofa was a well-received idea and intended as an extension of the lunch table, its location in relation to the main table appears somewhat distant. This spatial separation, combined with a perceived social obligation to conform to group behaviour, means that employees typically choose to sit at the lunch table rather than on the sofa. Like the established routines associated with fixed workstations, this social pressure reinforces the practice of taking breaks at the lunch table rather than the high table or on the couch.

Beltman's office layout features an open floor plan, a feature valued for its ability to foster team bonding and encourage social interaction. However, the open floor plan also has its drawbacks, particularly increased noise levels when multiple people are engaged in discussion. As a response to this issue, various interventions have been implemented, including the placement of acoustic panels on the walls and carpeting on the floors within the workspaces. Additionally, two phone booths were installed in the office to accommodate the growing number of online meetings, driven in part by the impact of COVID-19. Despite these measures, there are instances when all meeting rooms are in use, leaving employees with limited options for private calls or meetings.

Lastly, the employees at Beltman value the opportunity to interact with different people when arriving or leaving the building, appreciating the diversity of perspectives and social interactions this sharing arrangement offers. However, privacy remains a significant concern, especially when sharing office space with other architectural firms. The potential for competition in a shared workspace necessitates a careful balance between privacy and the fostering of more social interactions. Sharing certain facilities, such as a kitchen and canteen, is viewed as a viable solution to maintain privacy while promoting social engagement.

Pattern 3


PHYSICAL WORKSPACE
office + 1-2 day(s) home
1-2 days office + mobile office
shared office + home
flexible work hours
working from home = evenings (flexible work hours)
own office
office + 3 days home
WHERE
large kitchen
conference/ meeting rooms
phone/small meeting booths
outdoor workspace
greenery

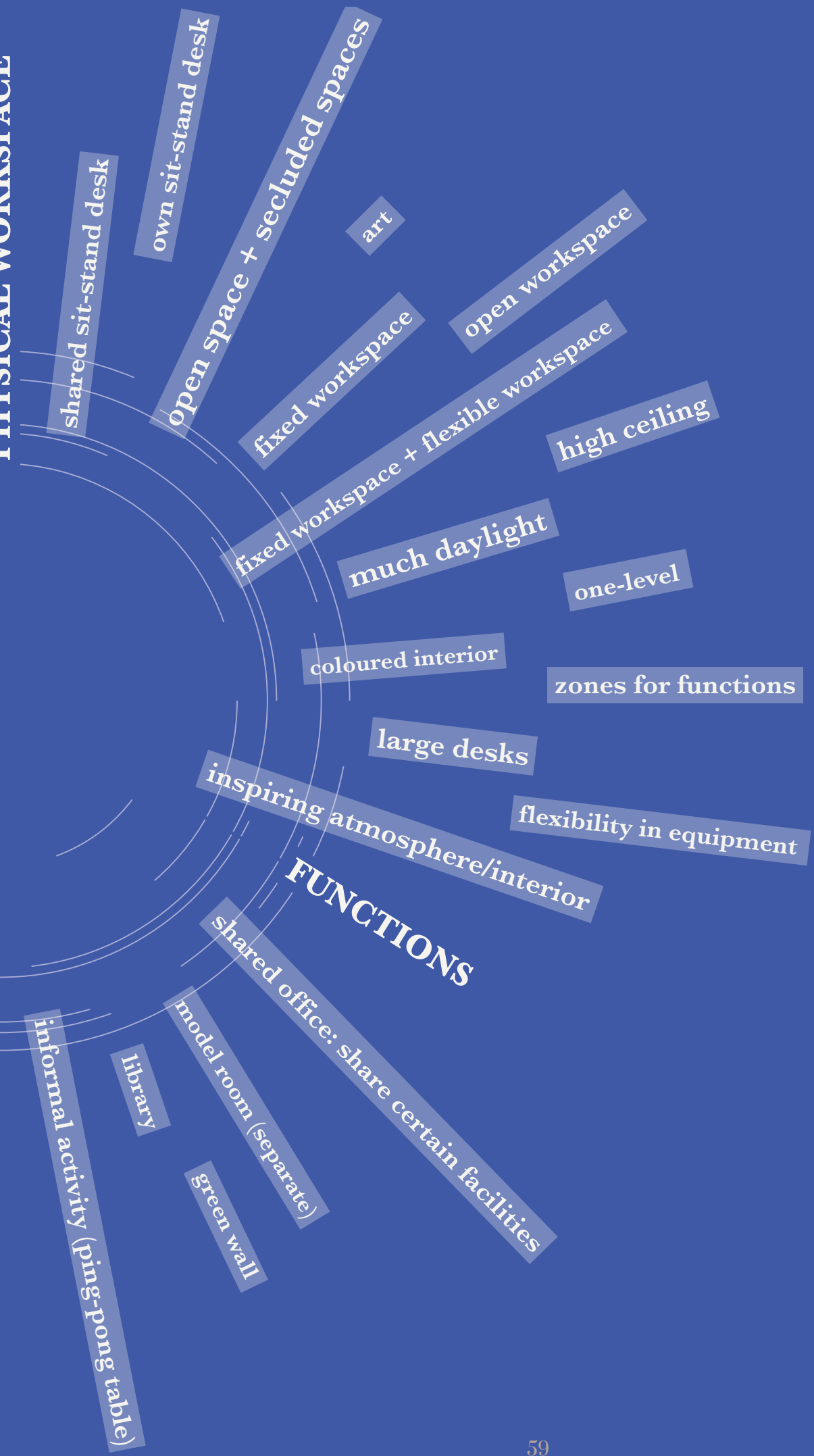

Figure 21: '*Ideal*' office

CHICAGO

references & footnotes

Bananaweg 20 7512 RT | Enschede | +31 6 78 90 23 71

www.chicago.nl

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RomCom

Rodriguez Communications

Coomansstraat 12a | Delft | +31 6 81737948

www.romcom.com

06 Vakwerk

It started with three people, all working for quite some years at Mecanoo and all growing up as renowned architects. Ellen has grown up from intern to partner over a period of almost two decades, of which nine as a partner. Francesco had worked at Mecanoo for twenty-two years in multiple roles and in 2007 he became co-owner of the company. Paul started working at Mecanoo immediately after finishing his architecture studies and has worked a total of fifteen years at the company. And like Francesco, he became co-owner of the studio in 2010.

But after all these years, the three of them were ready for a new challenge. Thus, in summer 2017 Vakwerk was founded. Together, they have over sixty years of experience in the architectural practice and have realised a wide variety of projects that contribute to society.

Vakwerk is located in Delft, in *Het Ketelhuis*, which used to provide the energy supply for the Technical University of Delft for a long time. In 1967, the last operator of *Het Ketelhuis* retired, leaving the building and the associated machinist's house abandoned.

Where those who could see through the rubble, graffiti and pigeon droppings, were surprised by the monument's beauty. The halls crowned with riveted iron Polonceau trusses, the brick chimneys on the motley tangle of gabled roofs and the façades filled with huge three-piece windows, with or without masonry intermediate posts.

Each section of the building has its own character and together it creates this 'picturesque setting' along the Schie.

Innovations and changes in function made *Het Ketelhuis* redundant as a literal source of energy. But a figurative one was still possible. With the redevelopment of *Het Vakwerkhuis*, the company has brought new energy back to the old *Ketelhuis* and created a hub for creative people to work together.

They have created a place for '*Vakwerkers*' (employees of architectural office Vakwerk), but also for others. Their goal was to design a shared workplace that is changeable and dynamic and being part of it themselves makes for an inseparable connection between what they want to achieve and what they can offer to '*Vakwerkhuis*'. It is shaped by their '*Residents*' – a diverse group of people, all with one common denominator: creativity.

Vakwerk's latest project is a new hospital 'Bravis', located near Roosendaal, and together with architectural office Cepezed, they form 'Team aan de Schie'[20]. Another project is 'De Klepperstee', a renovated recreational park in which the focus lies in creating an indoor/outdoor relationship, with tiny houses and a designed landscape.[21]

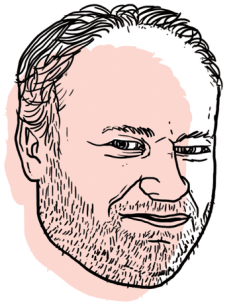
Age
5 years

Location
Delft

Founder
Ellen van der Wal
Francesco Veenstra
Paul Ketelaars

Size
32

Projects
Residential
Healthcare
Education
Offices
Cultural
Reallocation



"That's how we do it!"

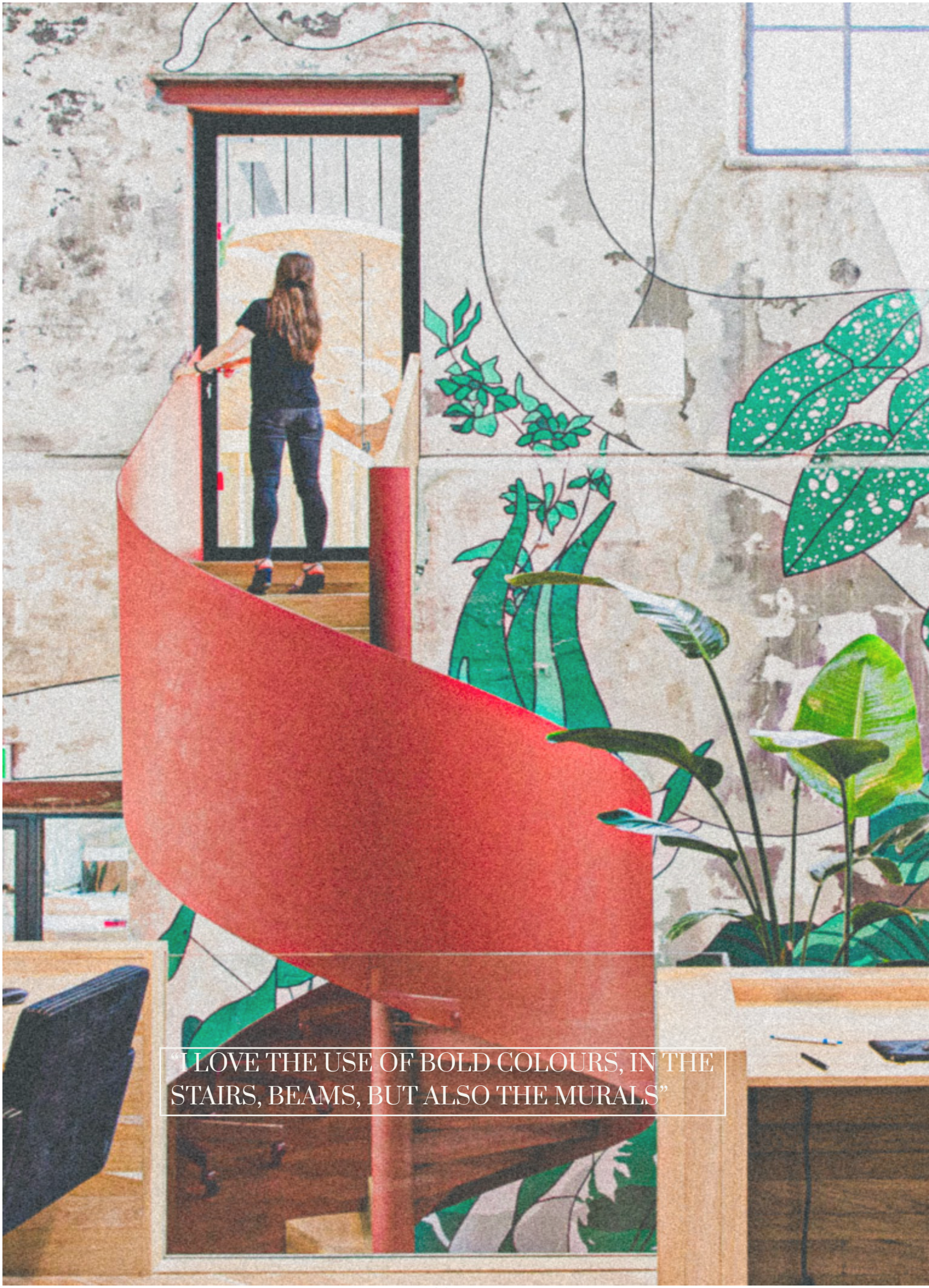
"As a committed entrepreneur, we feel ownership of the transitional assignment."

"We inspire, listen and keep asking about wishes and dreams."

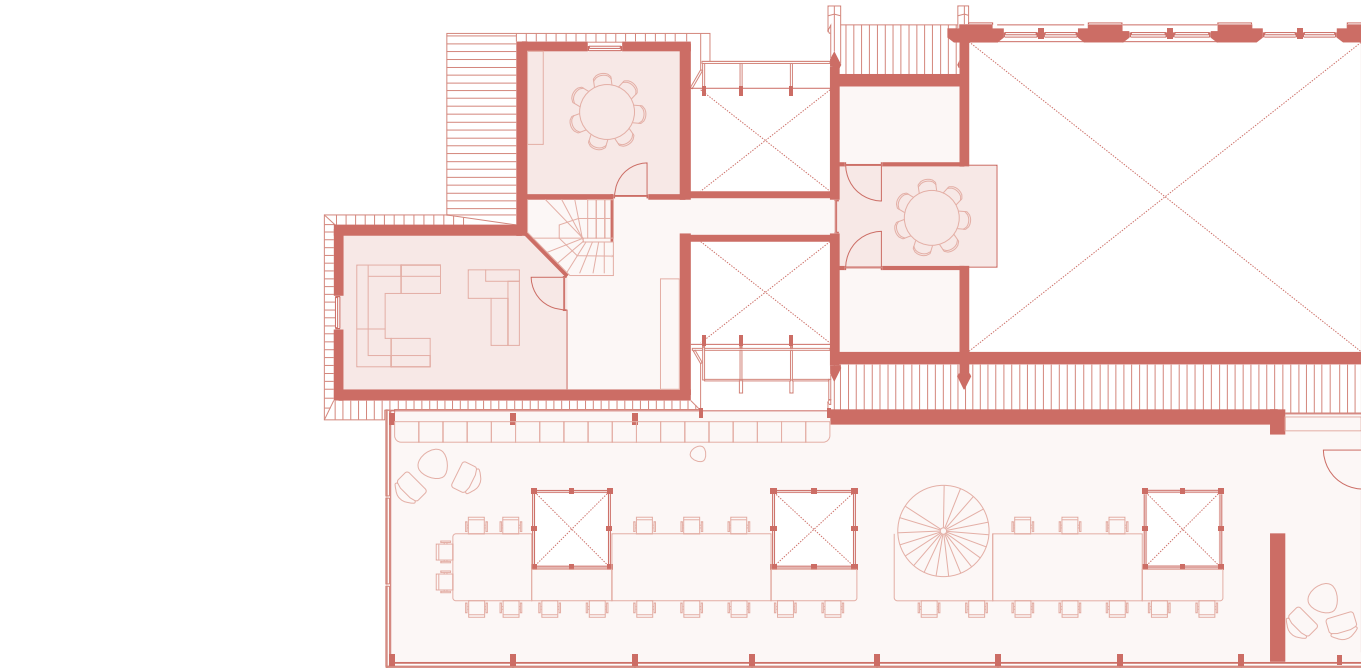

LOXAM

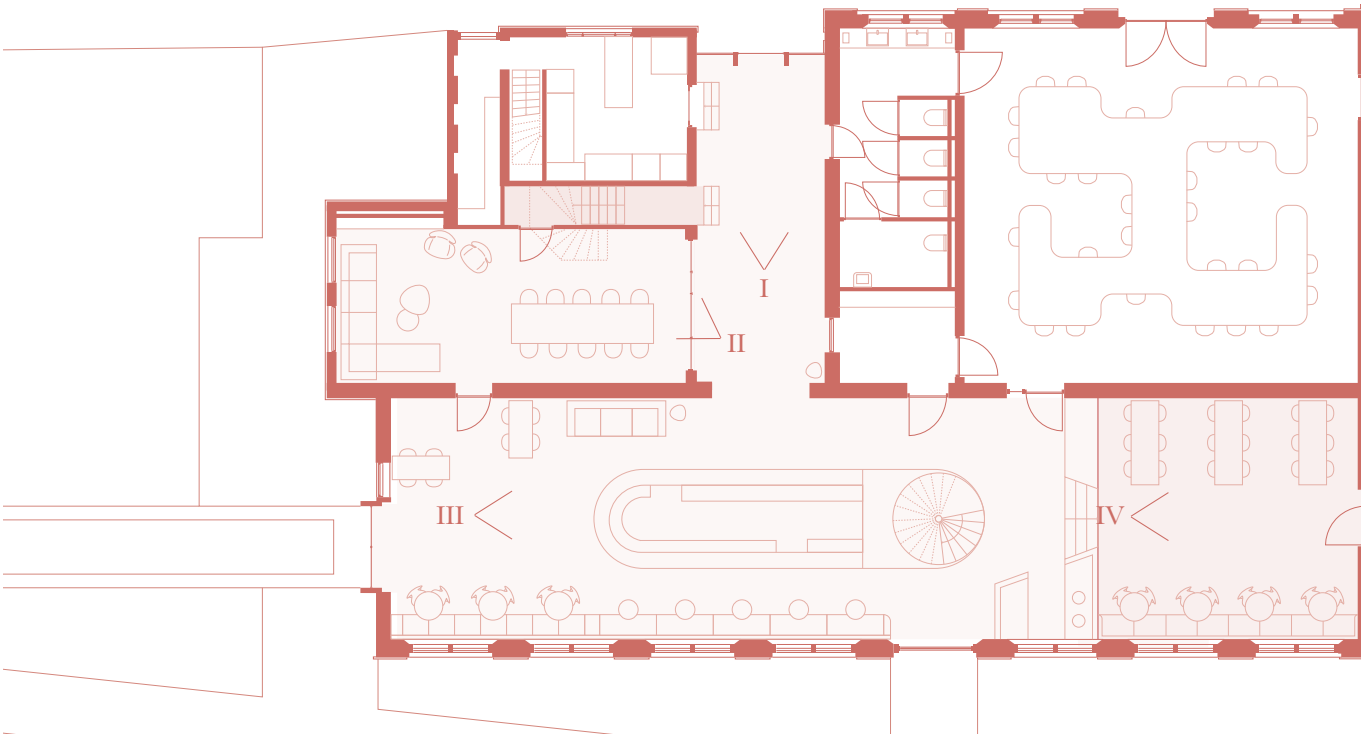
"EVEN THOUGH I ENTERED THE BUILDING, IT STILL FEELS LIKE I'M OUTSIDE. THE ENTRANCE REALLY EMPHASIZES AN IN-DOOR-OUTDOOR KIND-OF STYLE"

"WHAT A LOVELY OFFICE DESIGN. ALL THE PLANTS GIVE THE INDUSTRIAL ARCHITECTURE A CERTAIN *SOFTNESS*"



"I LOVE THE USE OF BOLD COLOURS, IN THE STAIRS, BEAMS, BUT ALSO THE MURALS"

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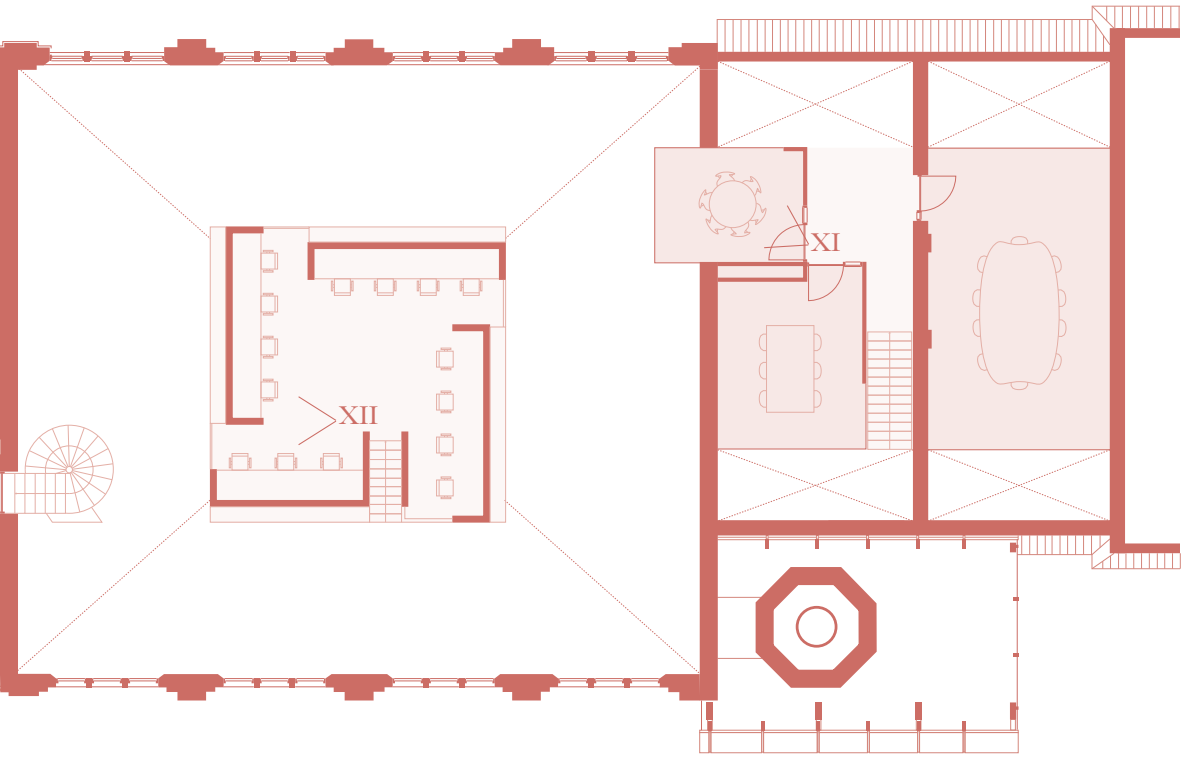
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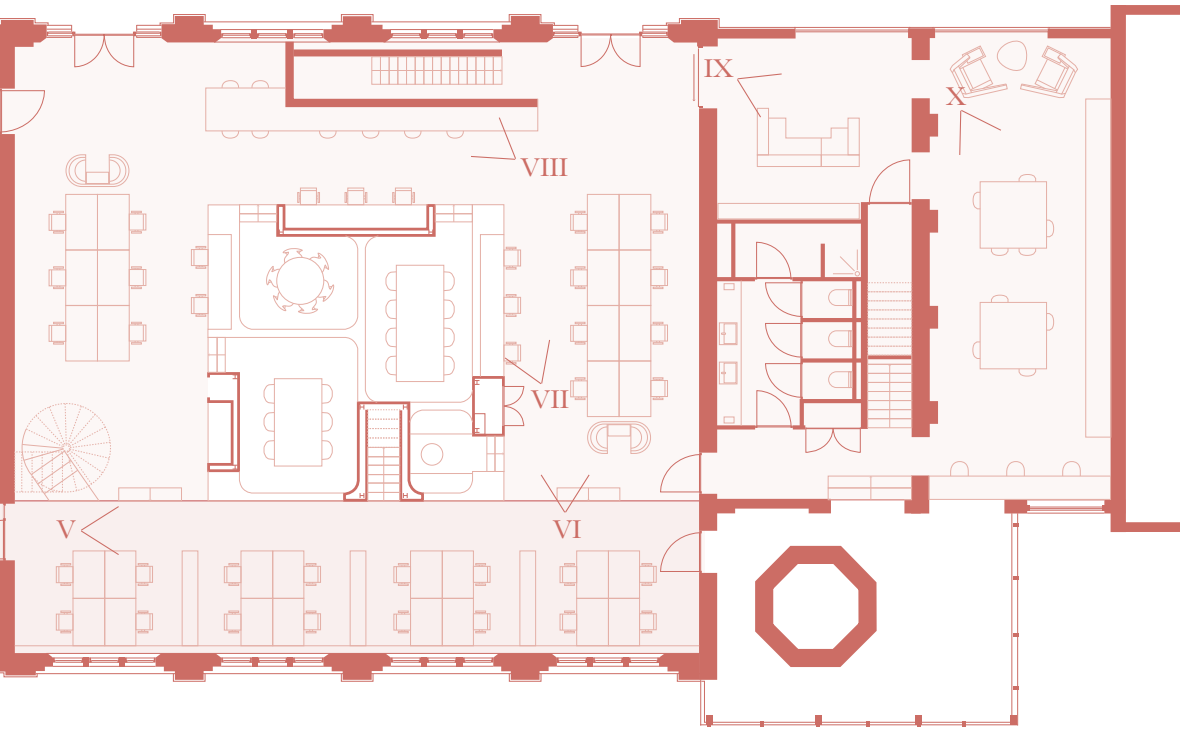
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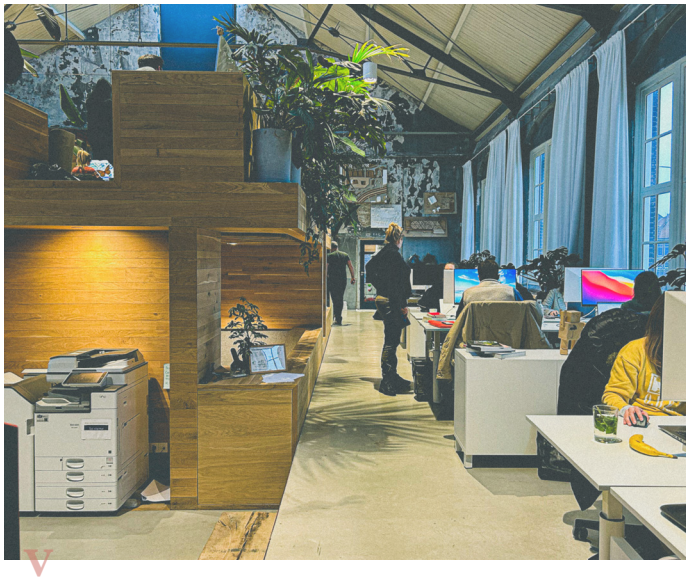

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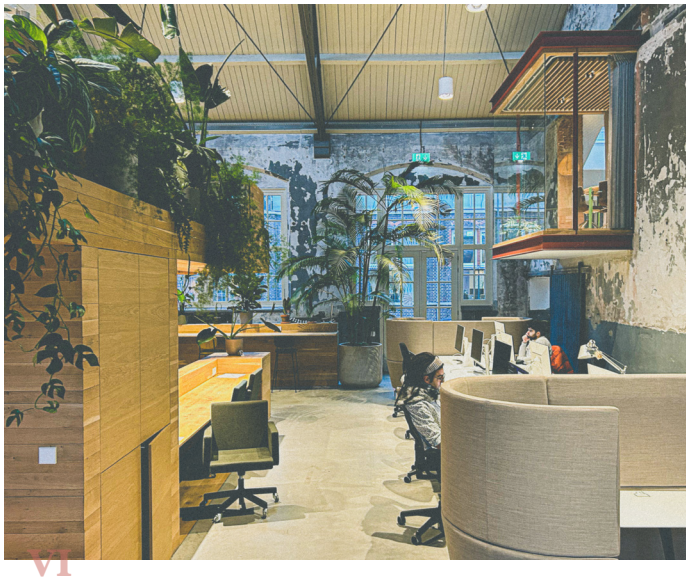

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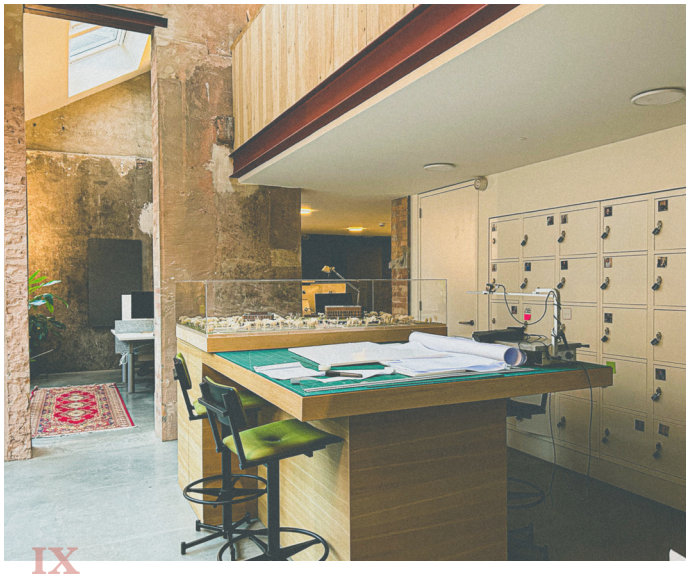

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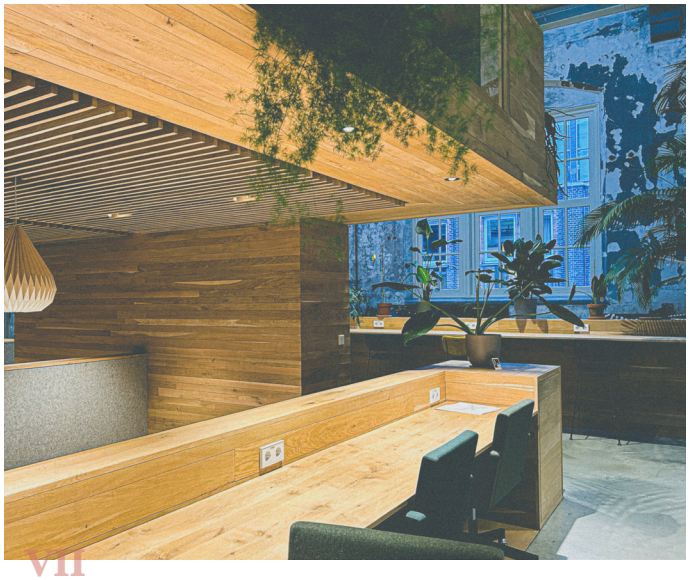

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XI

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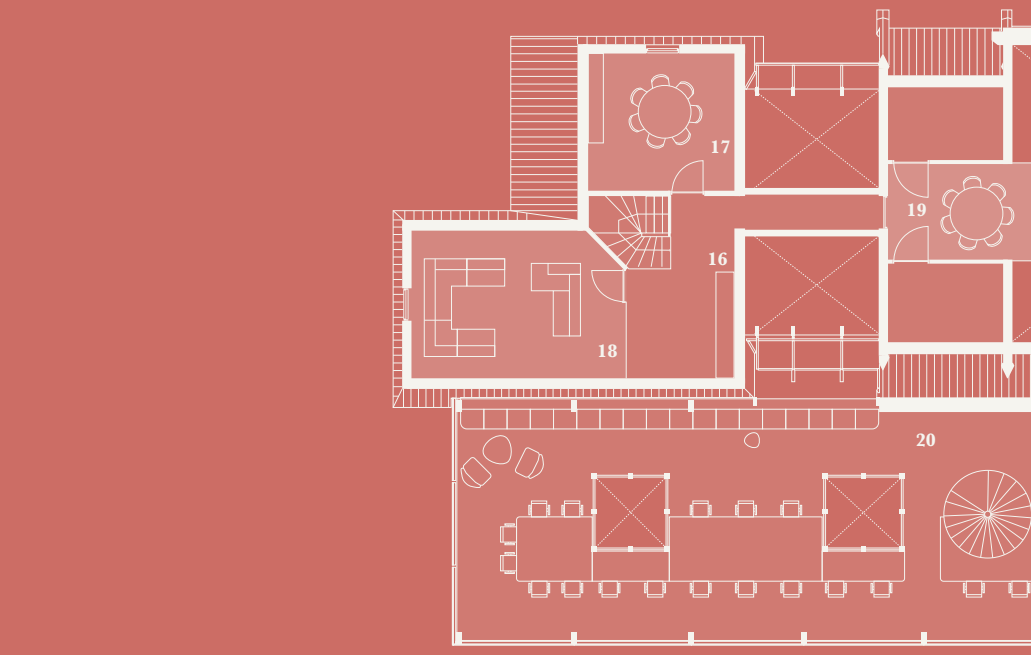
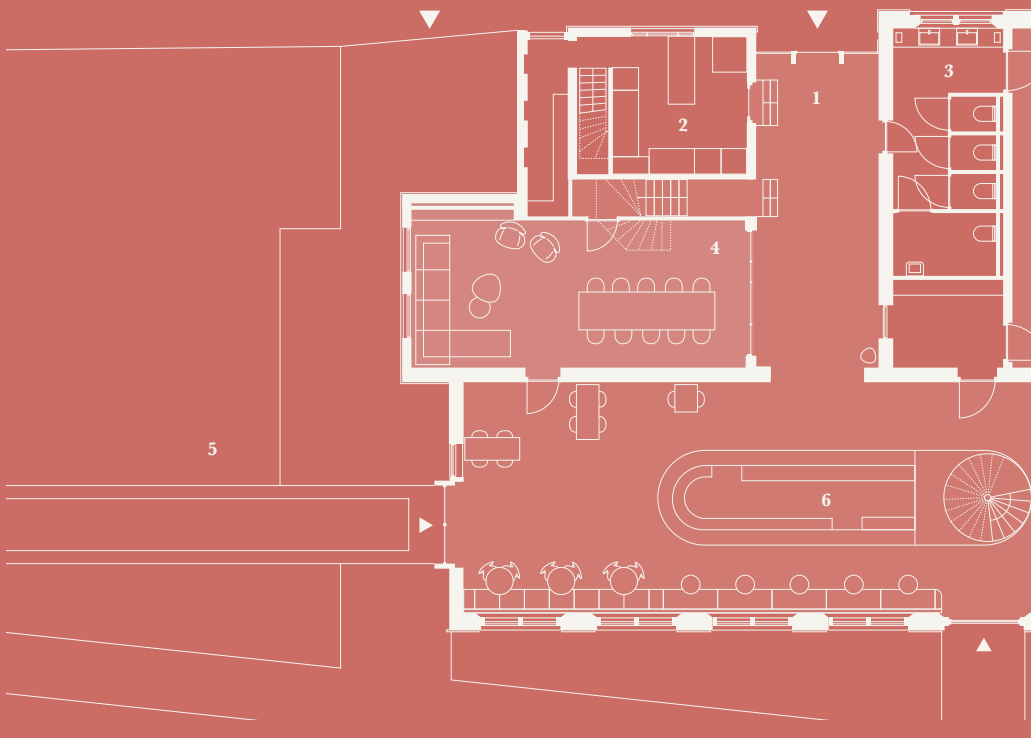
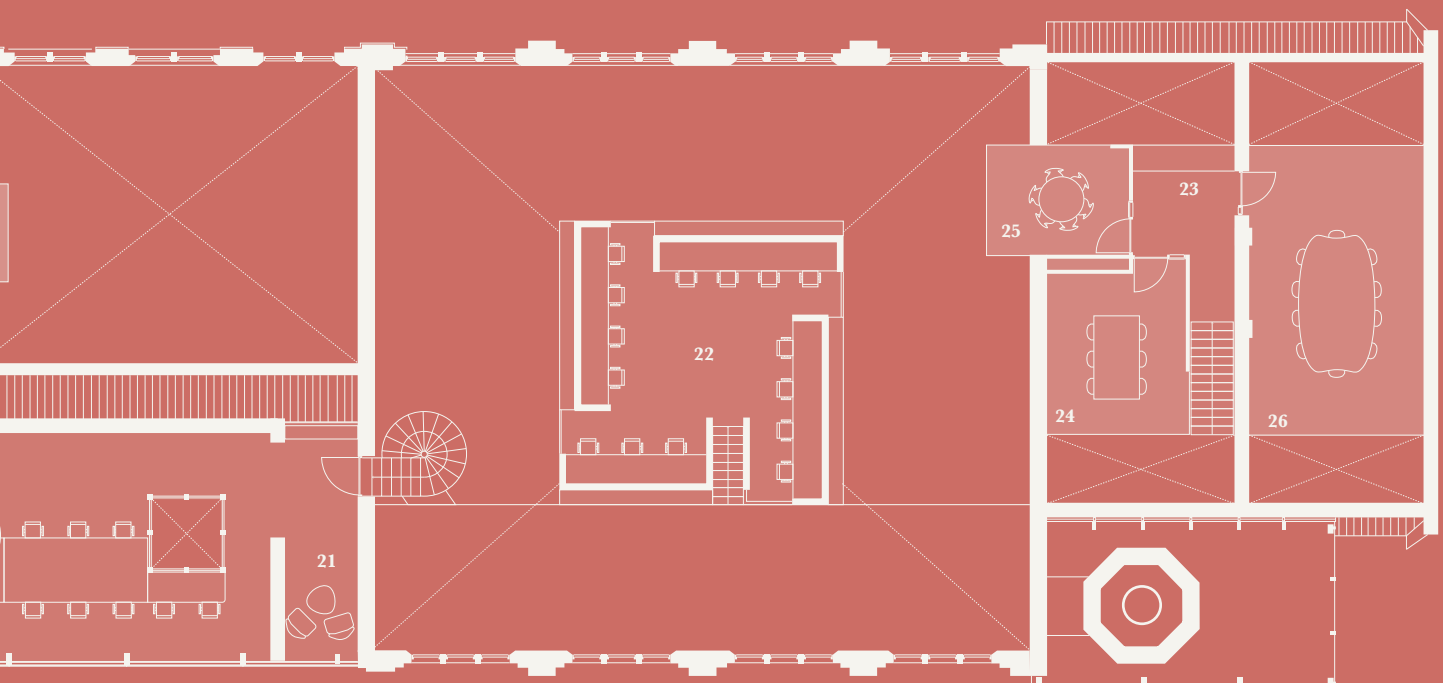
Plan analysis





LEGEND

1: entrance
2: storage room restaurant
3: bathrooms restaurant
4: closed meeting room
5: garden restaurant
6: cvrestaurant
7: restaurant
8: closed meeting room
9: open shared working space
10: open shared working space
11: open meeting rooms
12: closed working space
13: lounge area
14: bathrooms
15: closed meeting room/multifunctional space
(under construction)
16: hall
17: closed meeting room
18: closed lounge area
19: closed meeting room
20: open working space
21: lounge area
22: open working space
23: hall
24: closed meeting room
25: closed meeting room
26: closed meeting room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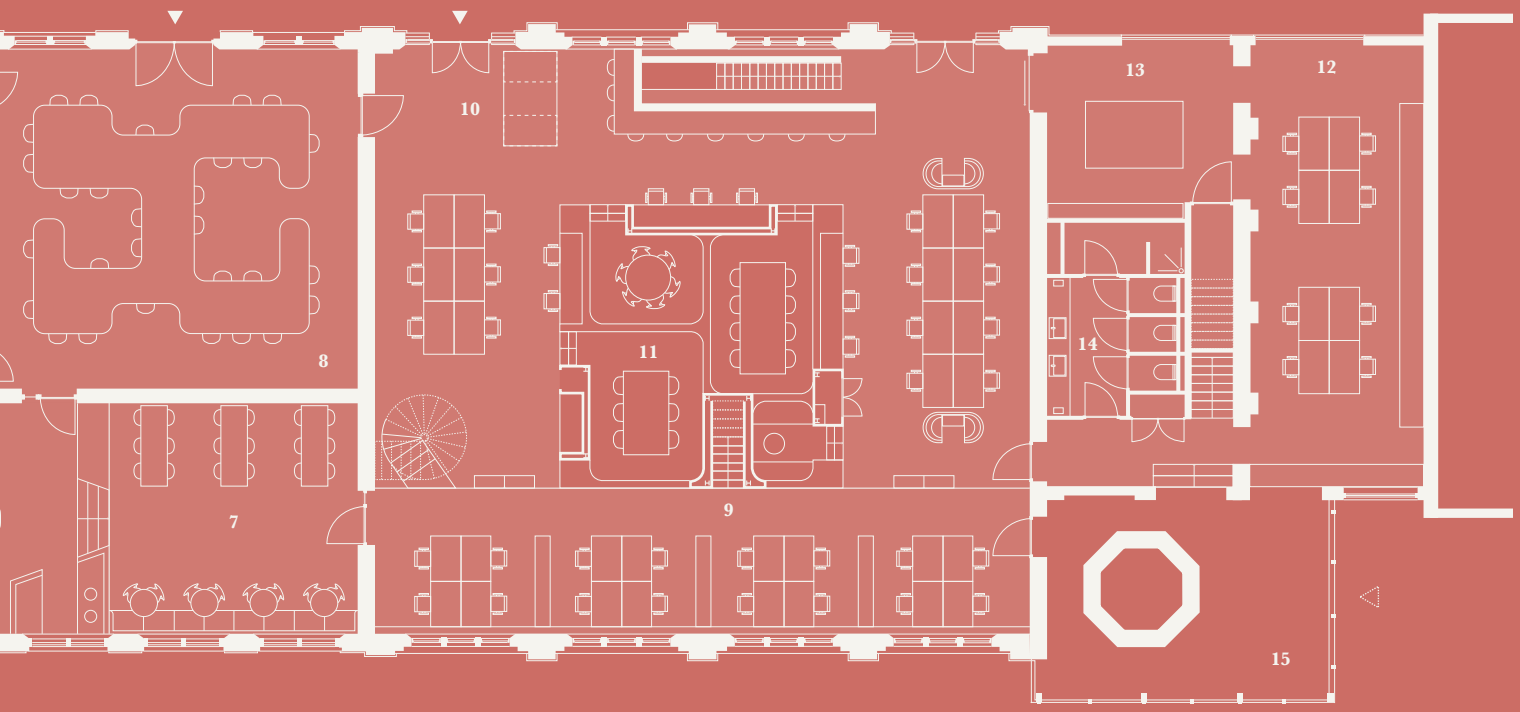
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PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Vakwerkhuis is a two-storey structure with a rich historical background rooted in its original functions as a boiler room and machinist's residence. These roots are still discernible today, notably in the interior design and layout. The building originally consisted of two separate units, but through Vakwerk's (the architectural studio) reallocation efforts, it has been transformed into a single cohesive structure.

Despite undergoing renovation and the addition of a second floor, the exterior of the building was preserved as faithfully as possible. The interplay of old and new elements is evident in the material choices and interior design. Old features, such as exposed beams, brick walls, and concrete flooring, remain visible in various areas. New additions are characterised by materials like wood, red steel, and glass. These modern interventions, resembling monolithic elements, are thoughtfully integrated within the industrial shell of the building. The juncture of old and new is often marked by transparent glass elements, such as the meeting rooms that seamlessly blend with the original walls.

Throughout the building, including the so-called '*arendsnest*', numerous plants and wall paintings contribute to a warm and somewhat jungle-inspired ambiance. These natural elements create a striking contrast with the overall industrial aesthetic.

The primary workspace benefits from ample natural light, thanks to large windows and a skylight that allows daylight to enter both from the sides and above. Conversely, the '*garage*' relies more on artificial lighting due to its limited access to natural light. Additionally, the *garage*'s ceiling height is noticeably lower, as it is situated beneath a meeting room, in contrast to the main workspace, which enjoys a full ceiling height.

WORKSTATIONS

The office exclusively employs flexible workstations, which can be categorised into five distinct types. The first type is fully equipped, featuring a screen, a standard-sized sit-stand desk, and ergonomic chair to ensure the comfort and ergonomic needs of all employees throughout a full workday. These workstations are situated along the walls and windows on the ground floor, within the *garage*, and on the first floor above the restaurant.

The second type of workstation also includes a screen, elongated table, and comfortable chair and can be found in the *arendsnest*. On the ground floor around the *arendsnest*, one can find elongated desks without screens - the third workstation type. The fourth type is the work bar adjacent to the stairs leading to the basement.

The fifth and final type stands apart from the first four because it is designated as shared workstations. These workspaces are located on the ground floor of the *arendsnest*, within the multi-functional booths, and consist of regular tables, and benches or chairs.

SPATIAL LAYOUT

Initially, defining a clear grid for the building might seem like a challenging task. At first glance, the structure appears to be a conglomerate of individual rooms brought together. This arrangement is a reflection of the building's history. However, upon closer examination, the building can be divided into three distinct compartments.

The leftmost part of the building seamlessly integrates the old machinist's house and the former battery hall, which now serves as the restaurant. The central compartment houses the main workspaces, including the *arendsnest*. The rightmost compartment, which is the smallest, is occupied by the old *garage*. The first floor introduces some variations to this division, especially within rooms like the meeting rooms, emphasizing the harmonious relationship between old and new elements.

On a more social level, the building can be categorised based on the degree of privacy and public access in its various rooms. Broadly, the structure can be separated into two wings. The left wing encompasses the restaurant, the kitchen, and the meeting rooms, both on the ground floor and upstairs, making it a relatively public area. In contrast, the right wing, comprising the workspaces and additional meeting rooms on both floors, is more private in nature.

However, within these wings, a more nuanced classification can be established. For example, some functions, like certain meeting rooms, may require a subscription or an additional fee for access, blurring the line between public and semi-public spaces. A similar division can be observed in the right wing, where the *garage* and the workspaces in the rear section are reserved exclusively for *Vakwerkers*, creating a distinction between private and semi-private areas. The boundary between (semi-)public and (semi-)private spaces is marked by the wall that separates grid compartment A from the central compartment, B.

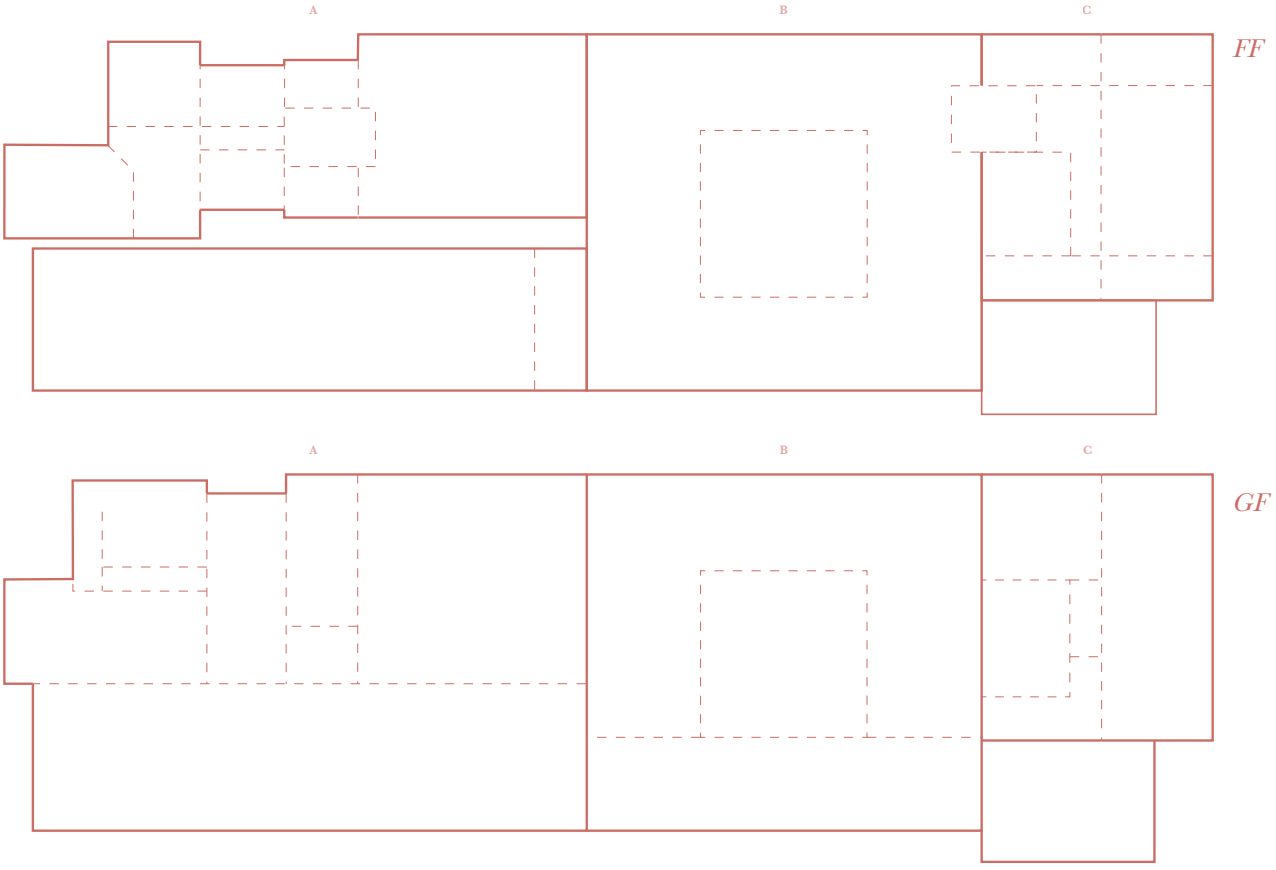


Figure 22: Spatial layout

FUNCTIONS AND ZONES

The building features two storeys, with the ground floor housing an array of distinct functions. In contrast, the first floor primarily caters to meeting rooms and workspaces, embracing a dual functionality approach rather than multi-functional spaces. Workspaces are granted the lion's share in comparison to other functions, occupying around fifty percent of the entire office area.

When examining the functions in the context of the two wings of the building, a closer analysis reveals two distinctive cores. Each wing features a core that integrates a bathroom and storage space. These cores are exclusively positioned on the ground floor and remain unconnected to any structural cores.

The office demonstrates its dedication to versatile and adaptable spaces by reserving fourteen per cent of its floor area for multi-functional zones. These areas serve a multitude of purposes, including work, meetings, or breaks. At the same time, the building designates a substantial twenty-eight per cent of its interior to meeting rooms. It's worth noting that this percentage encompasses multi-functional spaces, which, in addition to meetings, cater to various other activities.

The restaurant area, occupying fifteen per cent of the building, stands as a vibrant hub within the office. Highlighting the fact that the restaurant isn't just a dedicated dining space, it, instead, serves a multifunctional role, with the ability to adapt to different activities, sometimes transforming into a workspace or a meeting space. Similarly, the spacious meeting room, along with the ground floor of the *arendsnest*, also showcases a multifunctional essence. These spaces are highly adaptable and can be reconfigured to cater to a range of activities as needed.

By considering the functions of the different spaces, the degree of publicness versus privateness, and the specific type of functions hosted within these spaces, it becomes apparent that multiple zones can be created within the office. The restaurant, the large meeting room, and the ground floor of the *arendsnest* are examples of spaces that exhibit true multi-functionality, successfully adapting to various uses and providing a dynamic environment for the office's diverse activities.

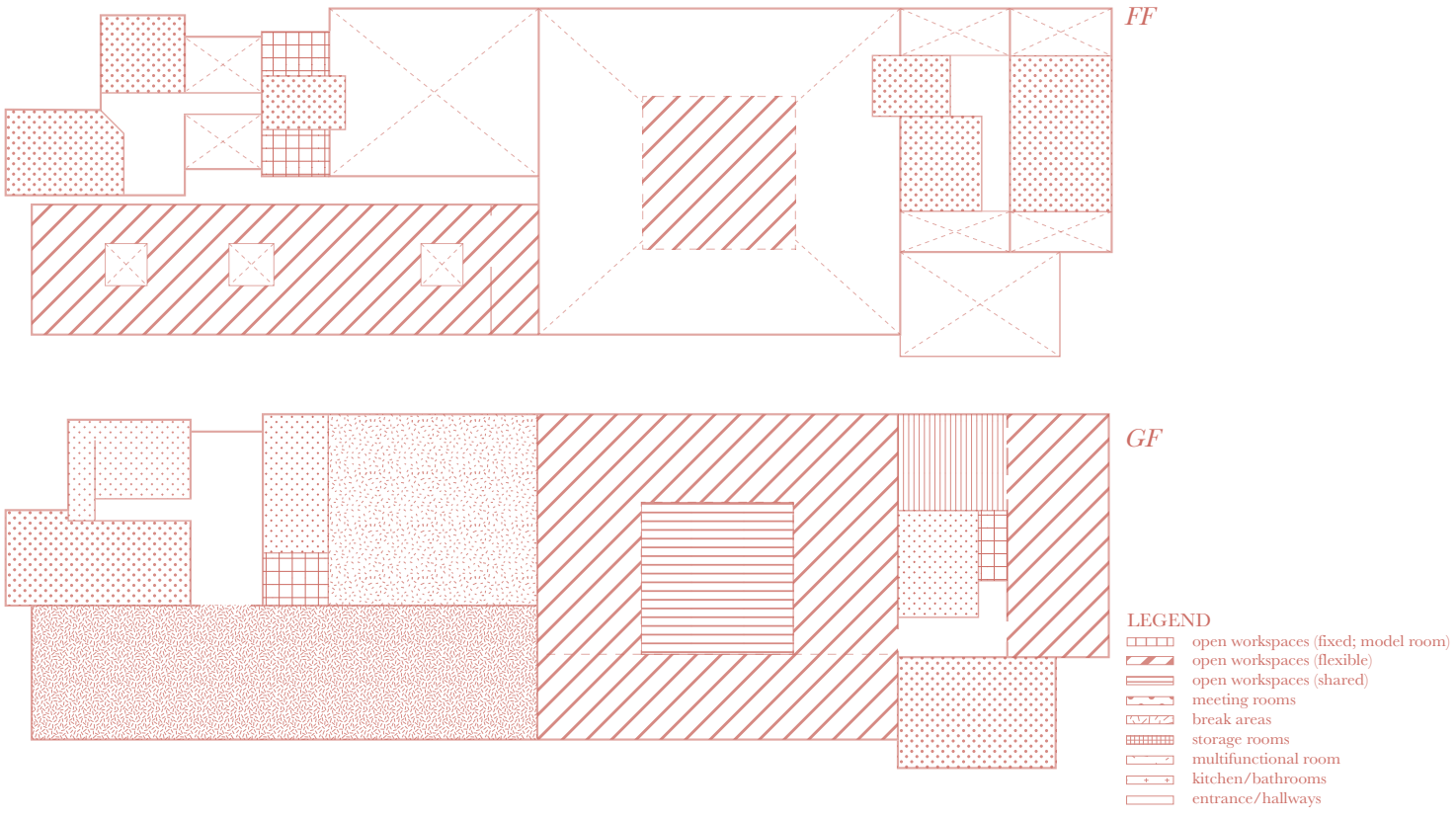


Figure 23: Functions

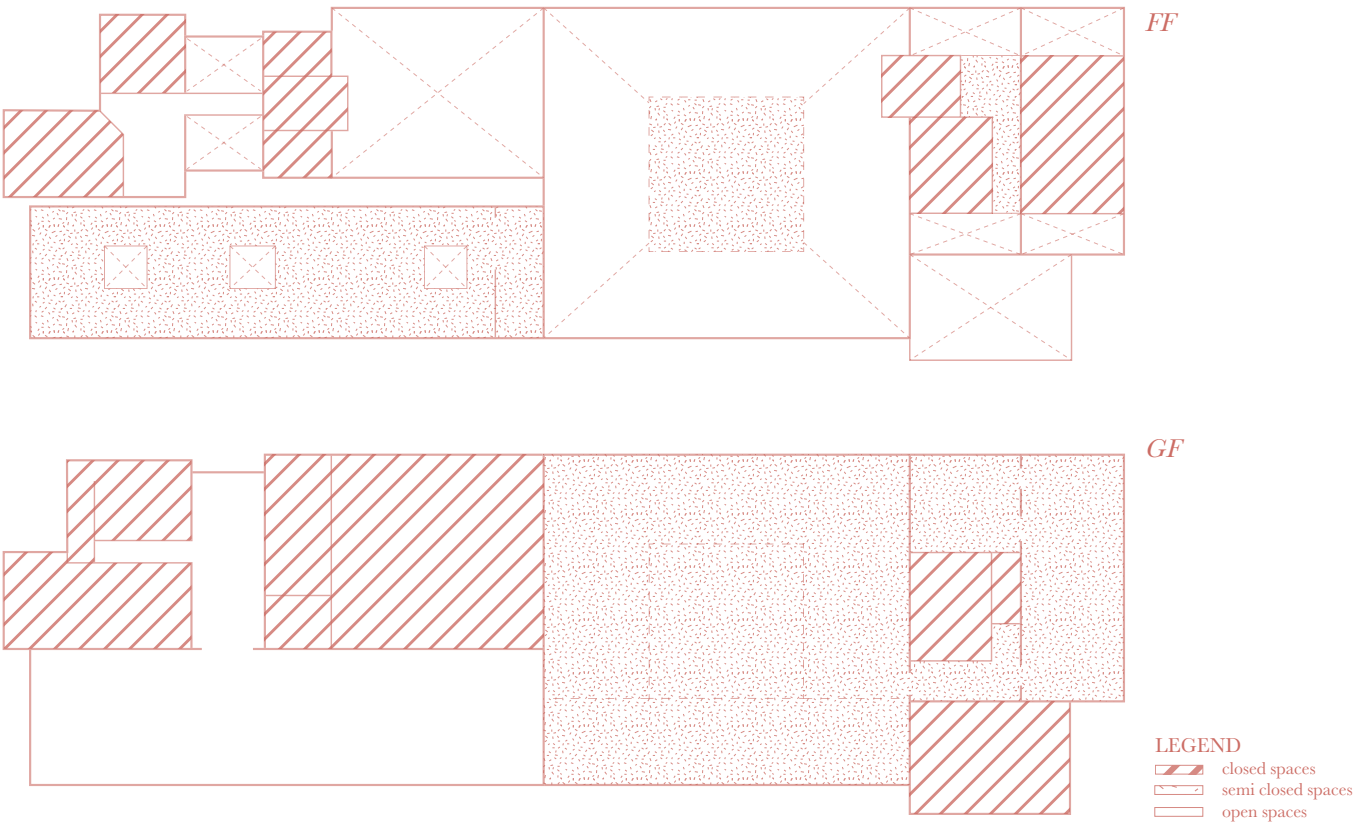


Figure 24: Openness vs. closeness

OPENNESS VS. CLOSENESS

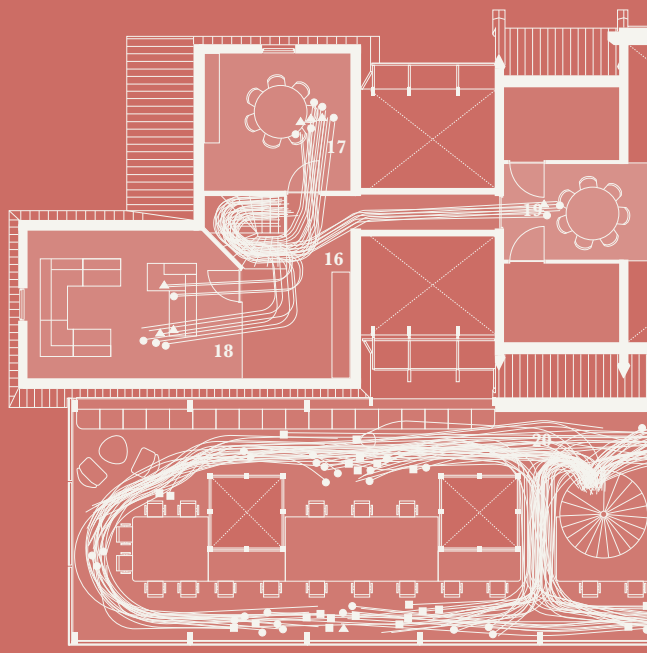
As previously mentioned, the building presents itself as a collection of distinct rooms that have come together to form a cohesive whole. When delving into the floor plans, considering the interplay between open and closed spaces while keeping the grid structure in mind, it's evident that the delineation isn't always straightforward. The balance between openness and closeness can be nuanced, requiring a more refined perspective.

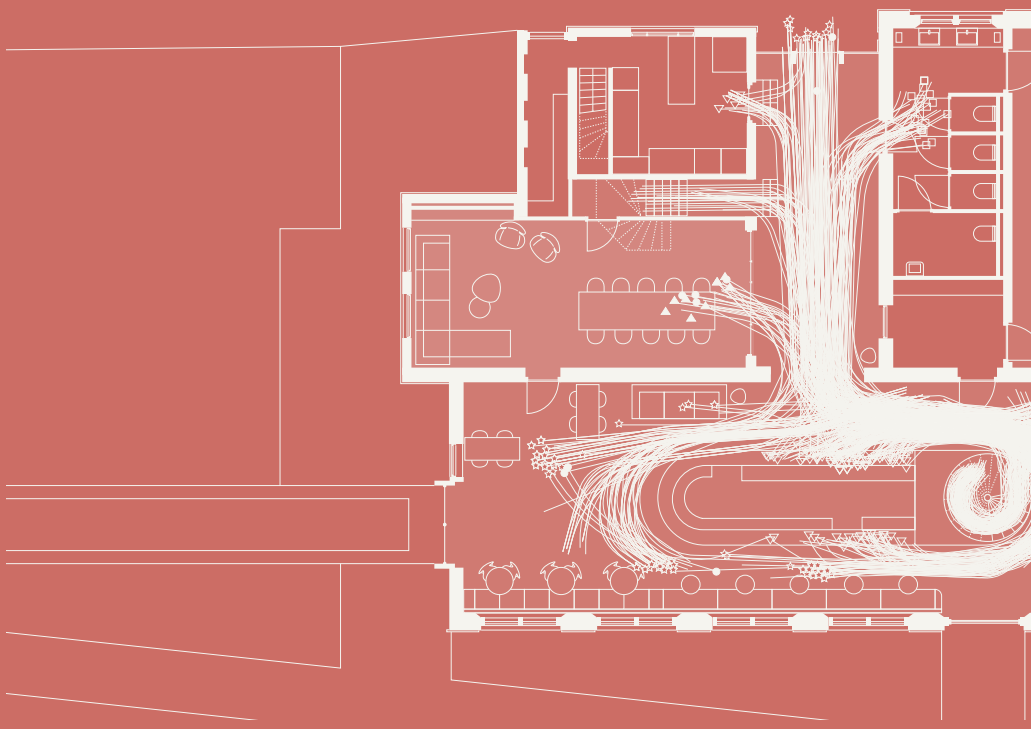
By segmenting the building into two wings, each wing can be individually analysed, allowing the opportunity to categorise spaces as either open or closed. However, given that these two wings effectively comprise a single structure, the situation becomes somewhat more intricate. The boundary between the left wing and right wing, marked by a wall and a door, creates a natural partition. Thus, the right wing itself can be regarded as a closed room.

In light of this, subdivisions have been made that mirror the configuration depicted in the figure. This segmentation applies to both the ground floor and the first floor of the building, helping to understand the spatial dynamics more comprehensively. Ultimately, the analysis reveals that sixteen per cent of the spaces are unequivocally open, twenty-seven per cent can be characterised as fully closed, and a substantial fifty-six per cent of the office occupies the middle ground, constituting a semi-closed state.

An essential aspect to note is that, despite its actual spaciousness and openness, the main workspace may not always 'feel' as such. There are a couple of reasons for this perception. Firstly, the presence of the *arendsnest* somewhat obstructs one's overall view, creating a sense of enclosure. Secondly, the *arendsnest* acts as a substantial, monolithic element at the heart of the room, which contributes to this feeling of reduced spaciousness.

Space syntax





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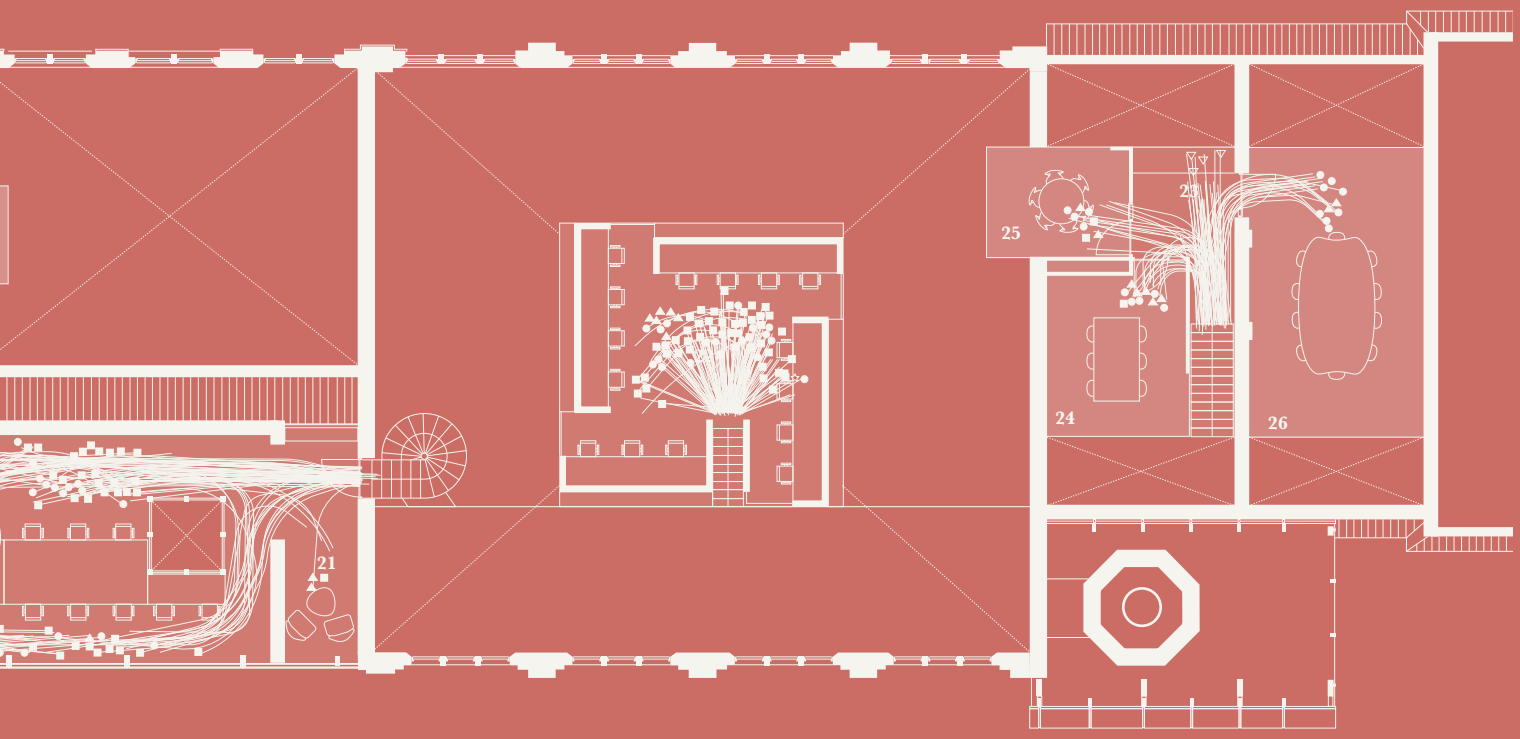
LEGEND
- ● meeting
- ■ work
- ▲ call (meeting)
- ☆ break
- ▽ kitchen
- □ bathroom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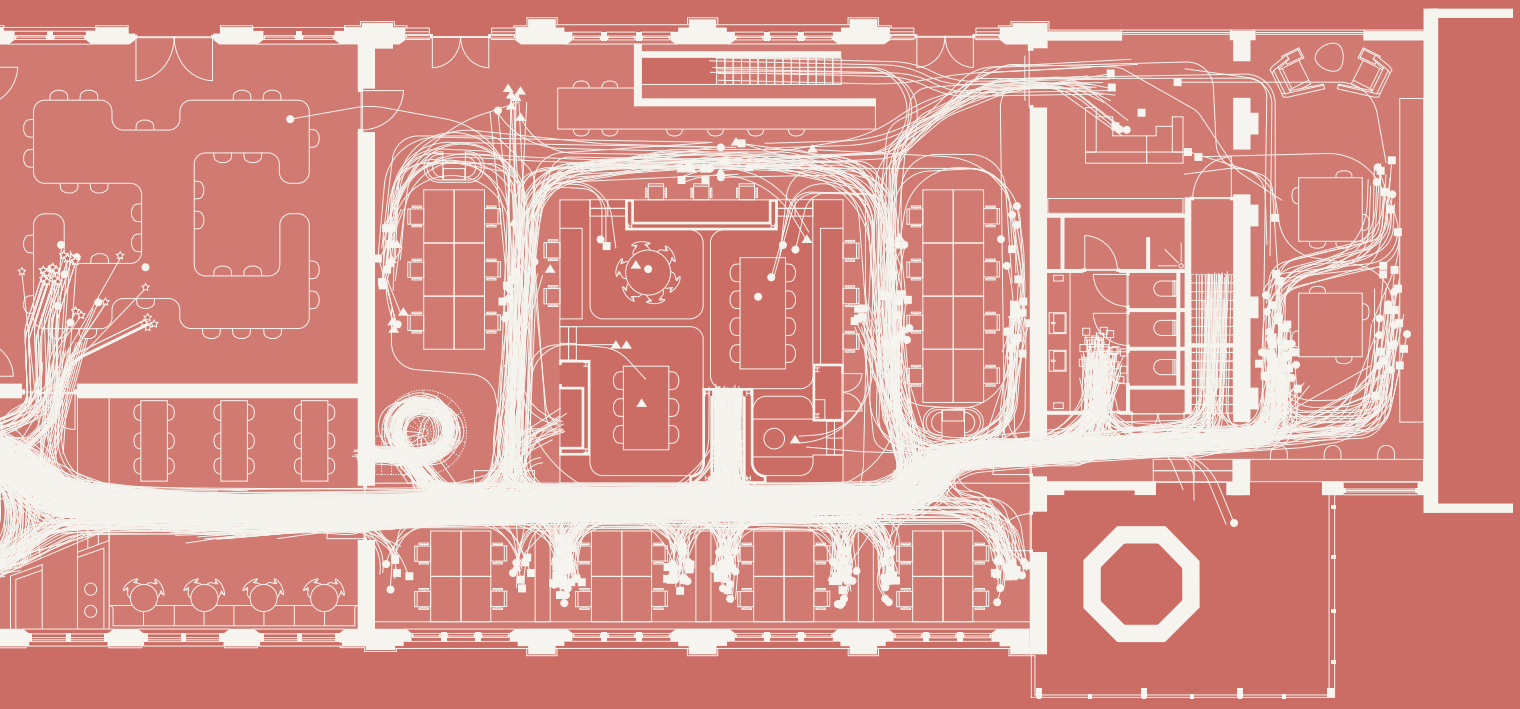


ROUTES

Observations shed light on a critical detail: while there are several doors leading to the exterior, there exists only one principal entrance, serving as the gateway to the entirety of the building. Beyond this threshold, all residents traverse through the restaurant area, dispersing into various workspaces, effectively diverging the primary route into smaller, less densely populated tracks.

As seen in the floor plan, the principal route commences at the entrance and carries through to the demarcation line between the public (left) and private (right) wings of the office. This main route is notably straightforward, with the sole branch leading to the staircase, granting access to the workspaces situated above the restaurant. Beyond this juncture, the primary route proceeds towards the rear of the space, featuring two key crossroads on either side of the *arendsnest* and the staircase leading to the *arendsnest*. In accordance with the principle that less frequently used pathways are situated farther from the main route, the gradient illustrating the connection between activities and workstation types applies equally to the various routes.

Understanding the reasons behind the frequent use of the main route is of paramount importance. On one hand, it can be identified as the most direct and efficient path, linking a majority of the functions within the office. On the other hand, the route's relatively high population density contributes to its pronounced prominence, resulting in the conspicuous "whiteness" in the space syntax diagram.

"On Monday all Vakwerkers seem to work together on the first floor."

"I see people walking around a lot and also quite frequently."

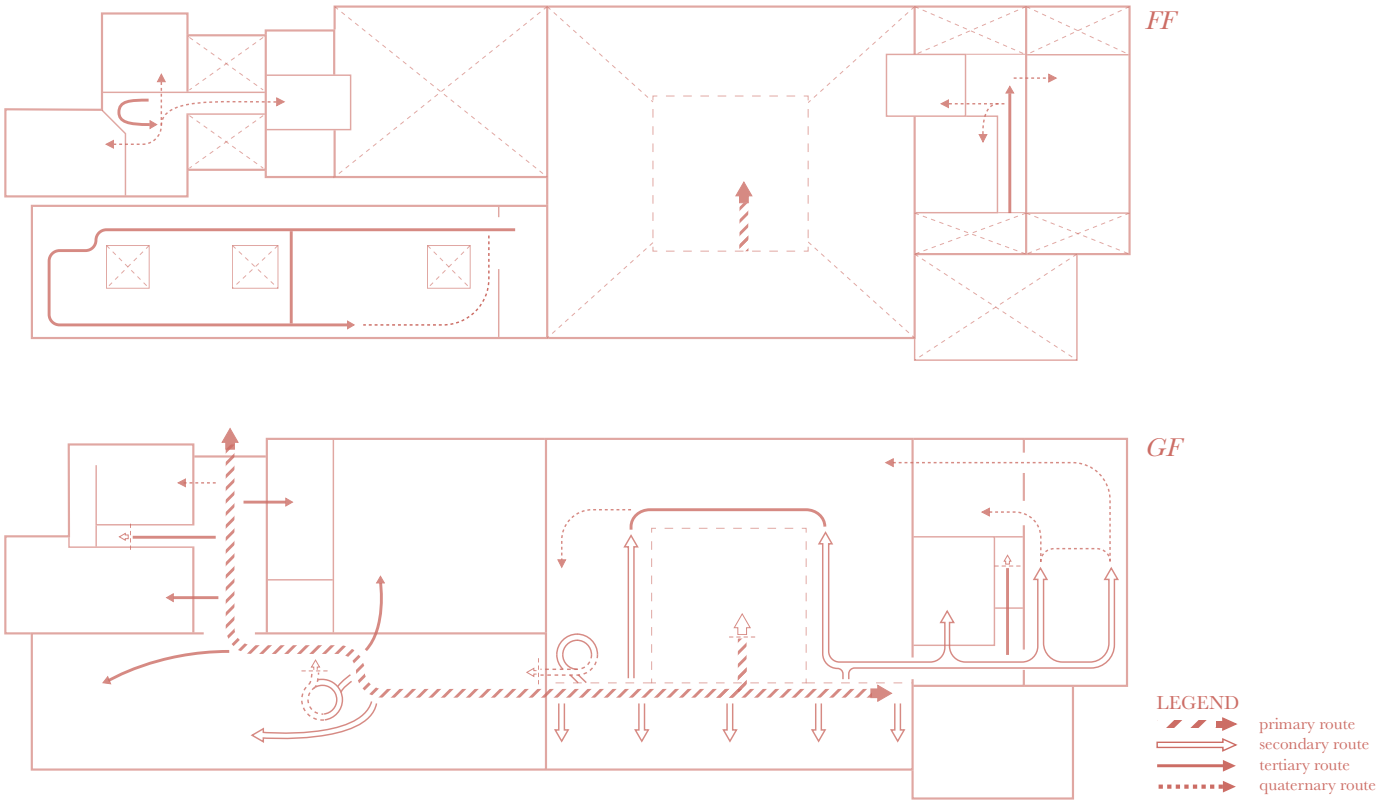


Figure 25: Routes

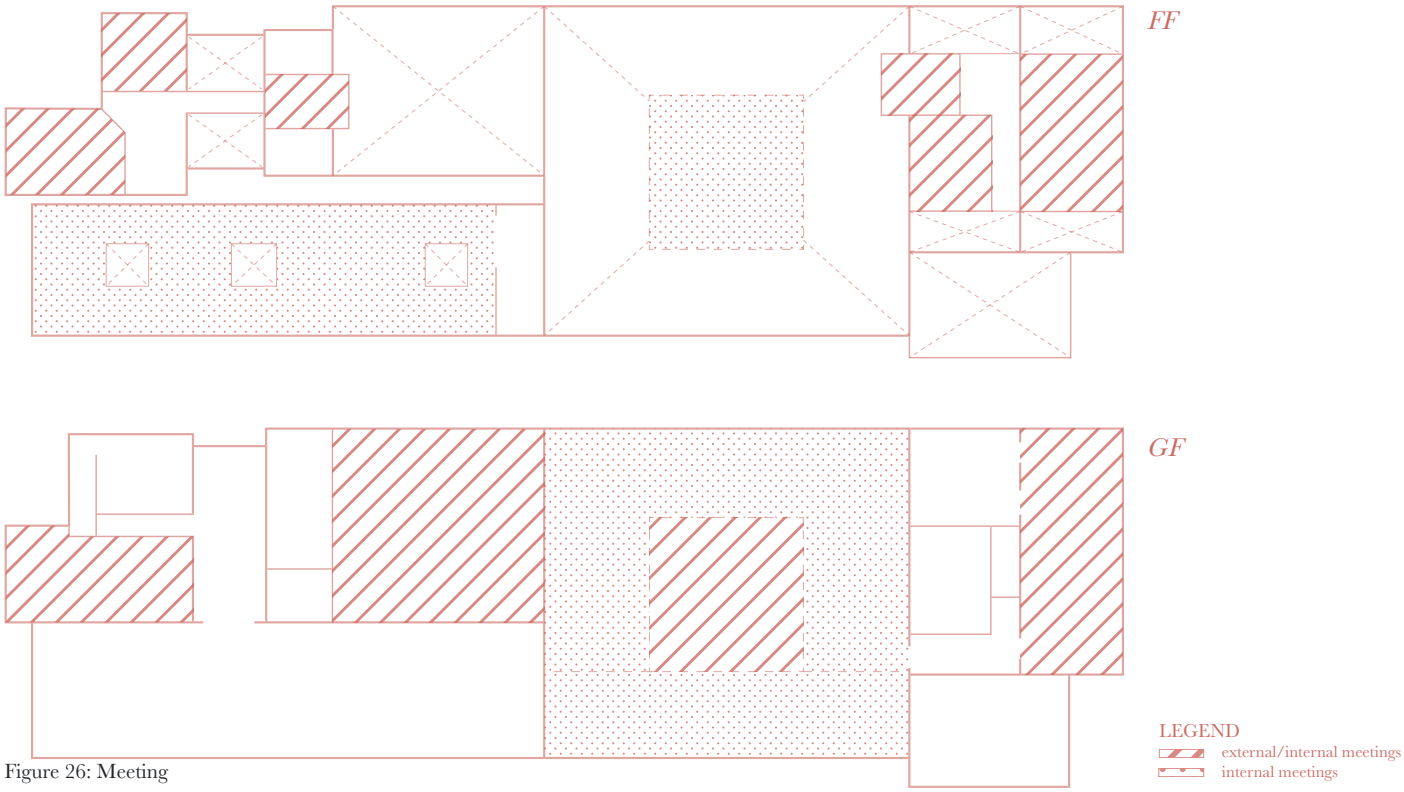


Figure 26: Meeting

ACTIVITIES

The office boasts a noticeable rhythm of activity and interaction. Employees can frequently be observed navigating the office space, taking short breaks for coffee or water, and often choosing a more relaxed route rather than a quick trip to and from their destinations. During these moments, impromptu conversations among colleagues further contribute to the dynamic atmosphere.

One observation is that on Monday, all *Vakwerkers* converge on a single workspace, the one located on the first floor above the restaurant. However, this space sees much less traffic on other days, leading to a noticeable contrast in activity distribution within the office.

A pattern emerges regarding the relationship between workstation design, the nature of tasks, and the activities they accommodate. Vakwerk's workstations are thoughtfully equipped to support a wide range of work styles and tasks. Workstations with enhanced features, like sit-stand desks and ergonomic chairs, tend to be occupied for more extended periods, emphasizing the connection between workstation design and the type of activities they foster.

At Vakwerk, three discernible types of meetings occur: meetings with external parties, internal meetings, and online meetings. External meetings are exclusively held in closed meeting rooms and the multifunctional rooms beneath the *arendsnest*. In contrast, internal meetings occur in both meeting rooms and at individual workstations. The choice between the two seems to hinge on the number of participants and the duration of the discussion. Generally, conversations involving two or three colleagues are likely to transpire at their workstations. When groups grow larger, and conversations extend in duration, they tend to relocate to one of the booths beneath the *arendsnest*. As for online meetings, they can unfold either in meeting rooms or at employees' desks. The garage stands out as a place where people seldom make calls or conduct online meetings.

Finally, it's worth noting that while it may not be immediately evident in the floor plan, there are several locations where employees have their lunch. The primary and most apparent choice is the restaurant. However, due to the presence of visitors also dining there, *Residents* occasionally find the restaurant to be crowded. As a result, the multifunctional room connected to the restaurant also doubles as a break area. When even this space becomes crowded, people turn to the booths of the *arendsnest* for their lunchtime gatherings, and shorter breaks appear to be relatively uncommon.

NOLLI MAP

A nolli map has been crafted to provide insights into the flow of the space and the ratio of passive to active activity areas. Initially, it might seem that there are fewer active spaces than passive ones, with much of the space, especially between walls and furniture like workstations, being infrequently used for walking. Moreover, the presence of the *arendsnest* significantly restricts one's field of view, making the walkable space appear smaller. However, calculations reveal a different reality, indicating that sixty per cent of the office is composed of active spaces, while passive activity spaces account for only forty per cent.

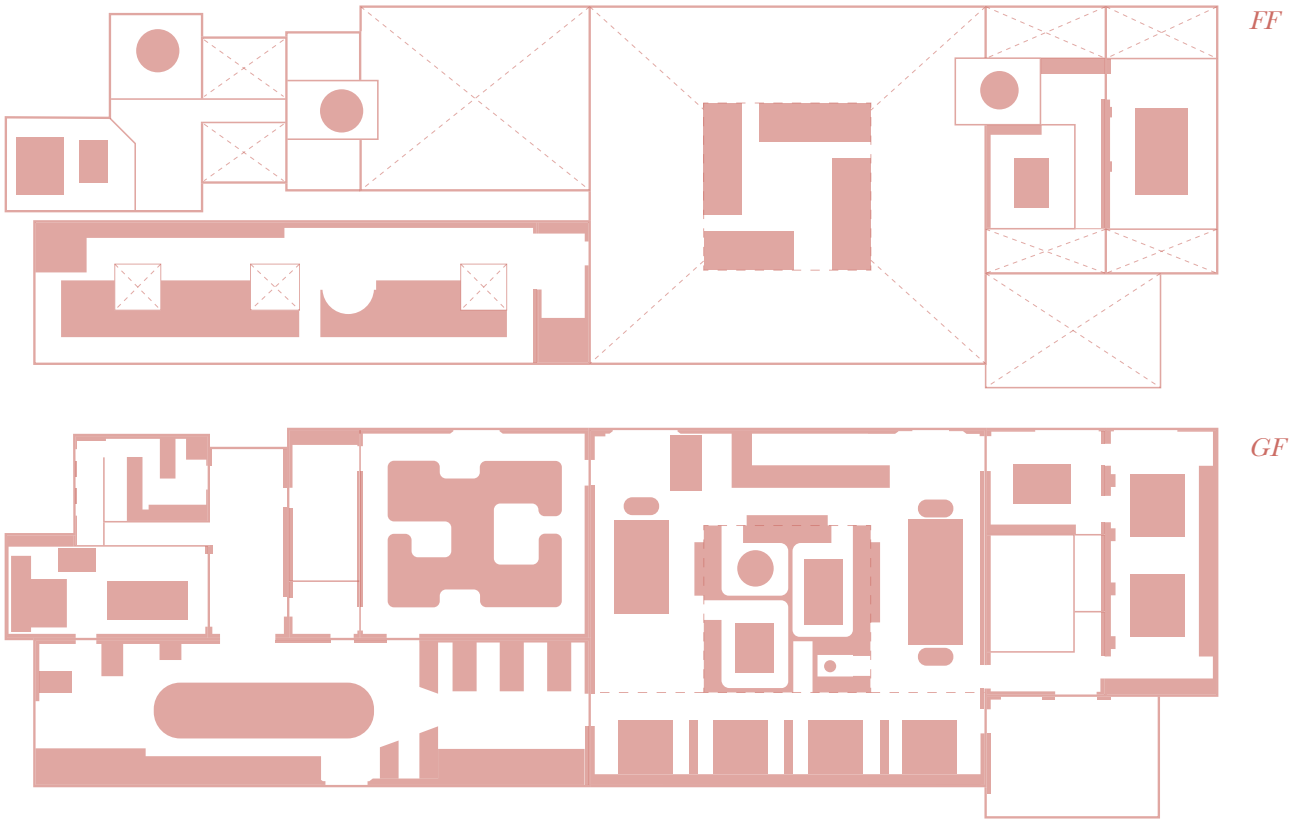


Figure 27: Nolli map

[20]Cepezed, "*New Bravis Hospital Will Be Designed by VAKWERK Architects and Cepezed,*" cepezed, September 20, 2022, https://www.cepezed.nl/en/news/cepezed-en-vakwerkarchitecten-ontwerpen-nieuwe-bravis-ziekenhuis/99055/.

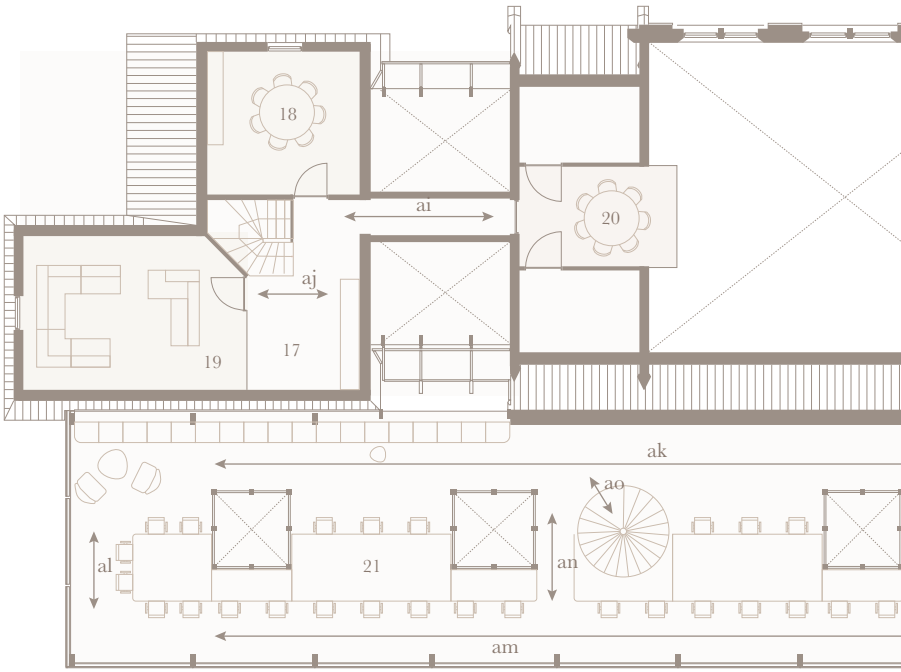
[21]Vakwerk Silo, *Vakwerk,* August 26, 2023, https://vakwerkarchitecten.nl/.

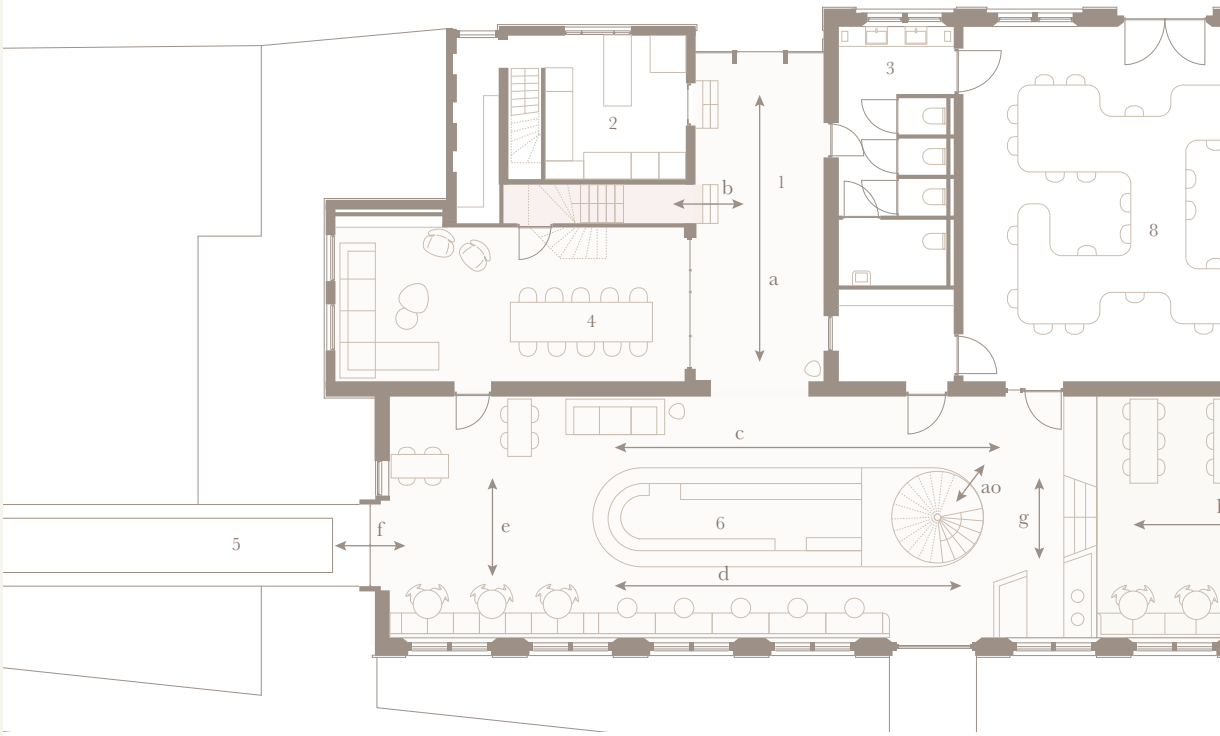
Space Syntax

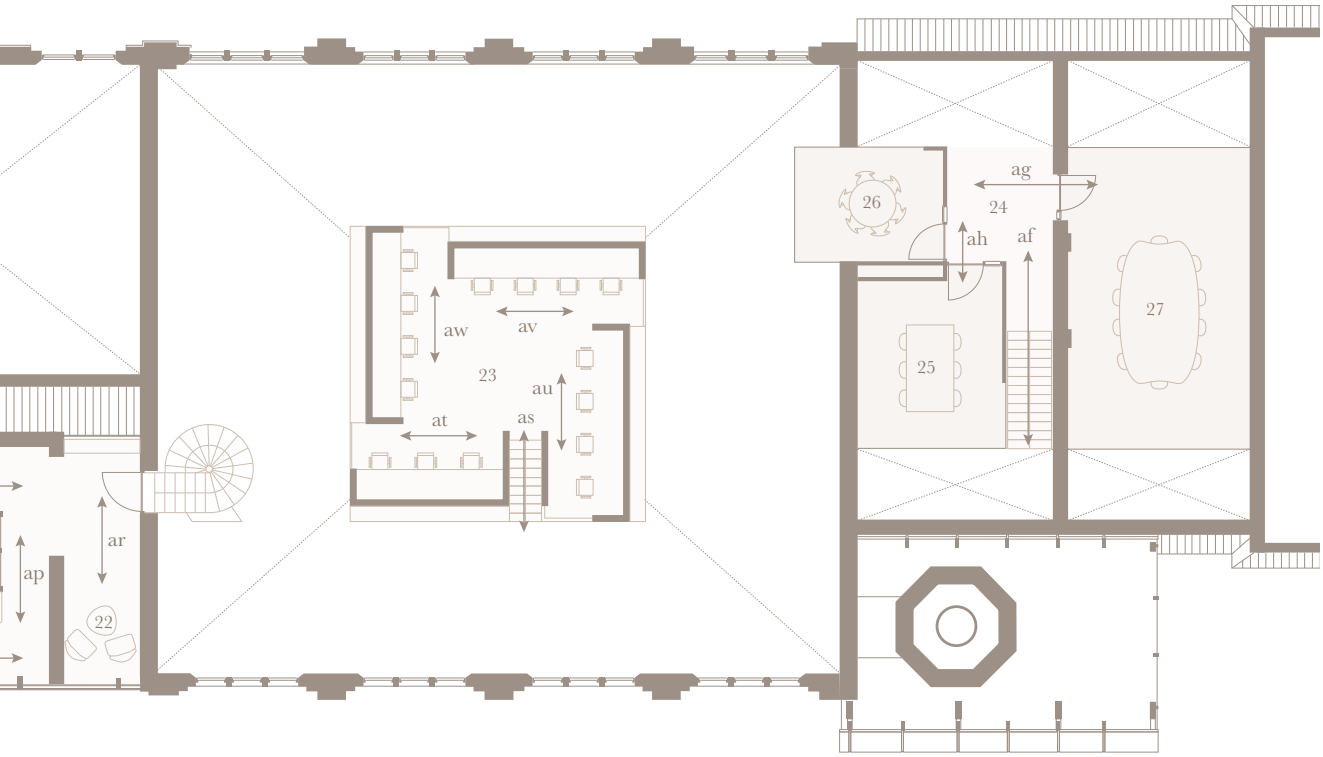
all codes listed

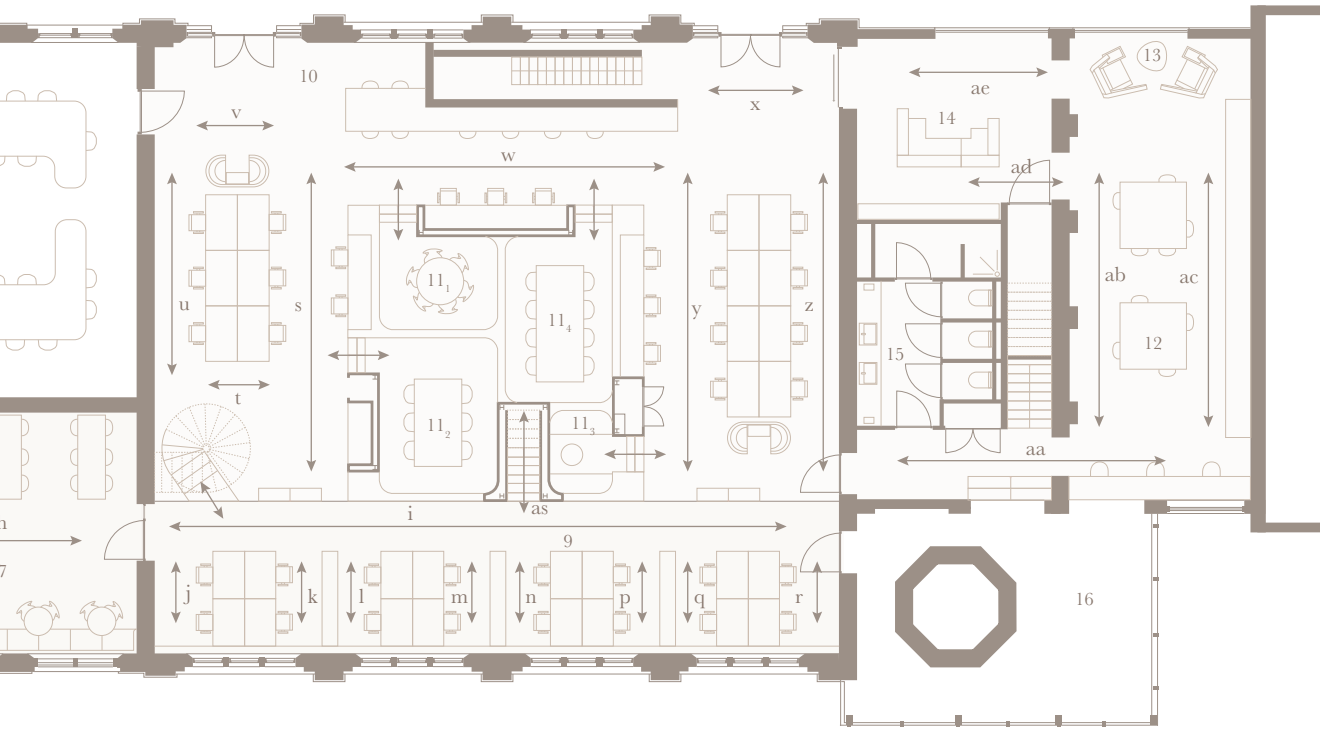
Kleine Binnenstraat 42 7309 AW | Deventer | +31 6 43 90 78 79

www.spacesyntax.nl



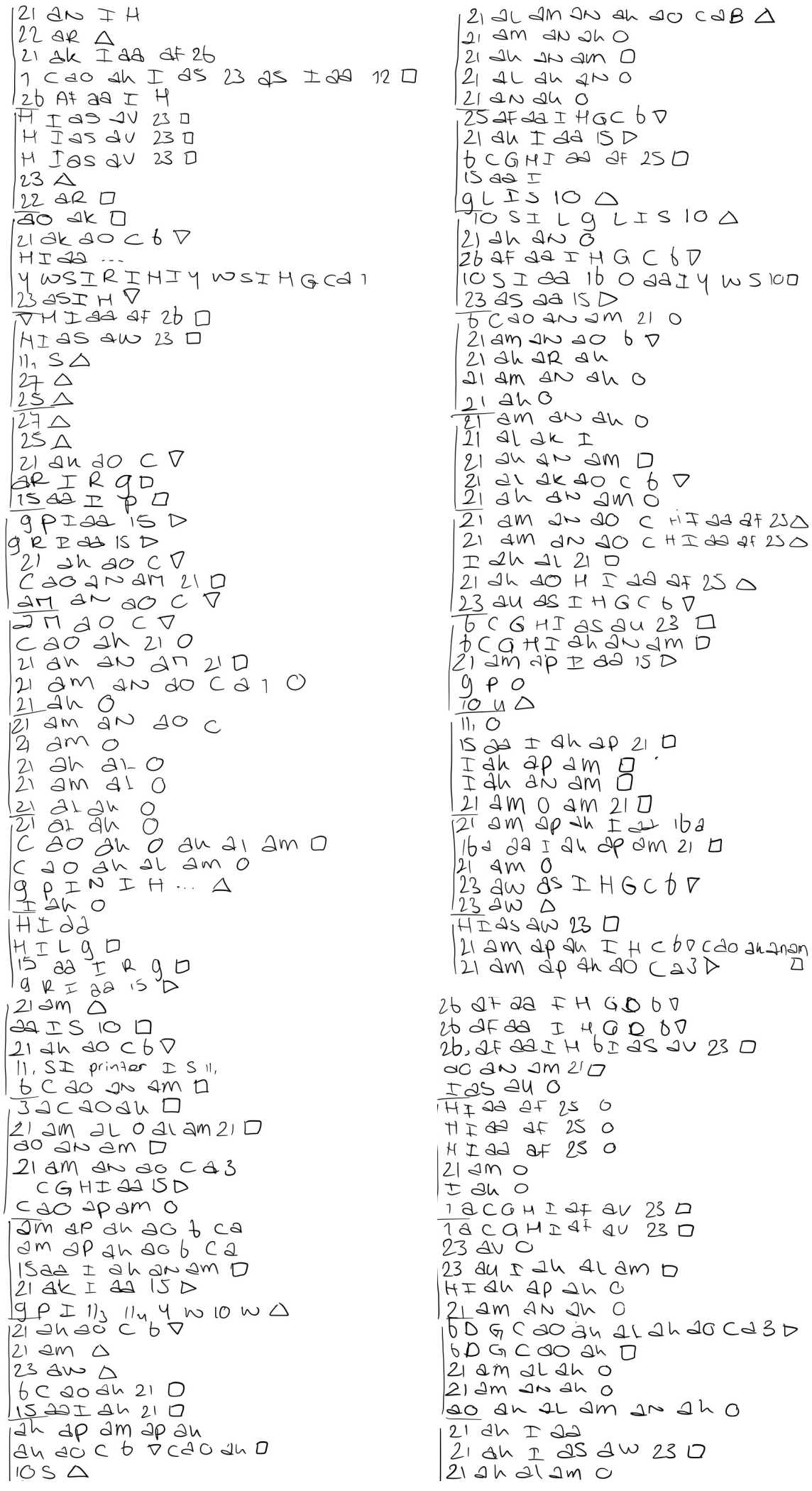






- Work
- Meeting
- Call (meeting)
- Break
- Kitchen
- Bathroom

Day One



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23 AV AS I H
23 AV O
HI AS 23 AS I S 10 □
21 AM AN AO b ▽
b AO AN AM 21 □
21 AK AO b ▽
b AO AH 21 □
21 AM AP AH I Y
23 AV AS I AA
23 NW △
HI H O
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AA I AS AV 23 □
23 AV AS I H G C b A 1
21 AM AN AO C A O
Q R I H G C A 1 *
21 AM AL AH O
23 AN AS I AA 15 ▷
21 AH AL AM □
AA I A H A P A M □
HI AH AO C A
21 AL AO C A O
21 AM AN AO C A O
21 AM AN AH I

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H C A 2 A C E D b *
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3 A C E D b *
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b E C A 4 △

8 H C A 3 ▷
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8 H A O 21 □
8 H C b ▽ C A 3 ▷
B A C O A O 21 □
3 A C O H I
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21 A O C A 3 ▷
21 A O G O H I
23 A S I H C b ▽
23 A S I H C A B 1 G O
23 A S I H C b ▽
b A B 1 G O
I H C A B 1 G O
b E C H
b E C A 1
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21 AH AL AM O
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H I AS 23
H I AS 23
12 AA I H
15 AA I AF 23 □
10 Z I S O S I 10 □
10 Y I H G C b ▽
23 AS I H G C A 1 *
23 AS I H G C A 1 *
b C G H I Y 10 *
H I R G □
H I Y W Z 10 □
15 AA I H G 8 *
10 Z W 10 △
H I AS 23

b D E b *
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b E D H I
b E D H I
b C b ▽
b C b H I
8 H I
I H O b ▽ D H I
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b E C
8 H C A B
8 H A B
8 H 8
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8 H A O 21 □
8 H A O 21 □
8 H C H 8

10 Z I H C b ▽
b D H D E C A 3 ▷
b H C A 3 ▷
3 A C H I
b C H I Z 10 □
3 A C b ▽
b C H I
15 AA I AH A I AM □
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11 3 △
11 Y □
b C H I AS 23 □
b C H I AS 23 □
G N O
G H I J O I H G □
11 Y I H C
G N I K O
15 AA I 11 3
AF AA 15 ▷
K I M G □
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G P I H C 8 *
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23 AS I AA 12 AA I Y X 14
10 Z I S I Z 10 □
12 AA 15 ▷
15 AA 12 □
23 AS I H G C A 1 *
21 AH AO C 8 *
21 AH AO C 8 *
21 AM AL AO C 8 *
21 AM AL AO C 8 *
21 AM AL AO C 8 *
21 AK AO 8 *
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b C H I
b D H I G C b ▽
I H C A 2 ▽
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I H C A 1 *
I H C A 1 *
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1 A b A 2 ▽
2 A C H b *
2 A C H b *
2 A C H b *
b H I □
b H I □
b H C b ▽
1 A C A O 21 □
1 A C I
b E D H I □
b C H I
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b C H I
b D O
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I H C A 4 O
b ▽ C H I
I H C A 1 *
b C E D H I
4 A C H 8 A O 21 □
4 A C H I N O
J I H b ▽ H I J □
C H I
21 A O C A 3 ▷
21 A O C A 3 ▷
3 A C b ▽
3 A C b ▽ C A O 21 □
b C A O 21 □
b H O
b H O
b H O
I I H C A 3 ▷
b D H D b *
b D H G C A 3 ▷
b D H A O 21 □
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21 I 22 12 22 I y w S I 21 □
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g h I S W y I 23 23 I 22 15 ▷
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12 22 I y w S I 2h 21
10 w y I m □
10 Z O
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12 2B 22 I H
12 2R 22 I H C 2 4
4 2 C H I 22 2B 12 □
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10 y I H △
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12 2B O
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g P I y w S 10 △
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10 4 O
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6 ▽ 6 C 2B 20 O
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8 O
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2U 2T O
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2T 2U □
14 x y I
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21 2m 2P I 2S 2U O

21 2h I y x 14 O
21 2h I y x 14 O
21 2h I y w O
15 22 I y w S □
14 x w x 14 □
1 2 C H I y 10 □
2 10 O
H I 22 12 □
H I 22 12 □
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12 22 I 2h 21 O
12 22 I 2h 21 O
12 x y I 2h 21 □
23 2S I 22 15 ▷
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20 2N 2m □
23 2U 2T O
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14 x y I 2U 2L 2P 21 □
23 2T 2U 21 □
21 2R 2L O
21 2L 2h I 2S 2W 23 O
23 2T I 2h 20 C H I 2S 2T □
21 2m 2P 2h I 2S 2W O
6 ▽ C 20 2h □
g n I H
g P O n g
g I 20 15 ▷
23 2S I H
23 2S I H
23 2S I H
g p I H 6 ▽
g g I N O I k O I g g □
21 2m 2L 2h I
21 2m 2N 20 22 15 ▷
6 ▽ 20 2N 2m □
21 2m 2N 20 C 2 B △
23 2T 2S I 2S 2U O 2T □
21 2h I 20 2F △
g P O
g L O
g L □
6 H I L g □
g L I H 6 □
23 2T 2S I 2S 2T □
21 2M 2N 2h O
12 22 I 2R 2K O
12 22 I 2R 2h O
? 2F 22 I 2h 20 6 ▽
21 2m 2P 2h I y x 14 □
6 20 2h I 22 2F
21 2R 20 G C 2 1
21 2R 20 G 8 O
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21 2h 2P 2m O

Machine = 3
2older 19 = 3
brug = 1
straat = 5
holen = 2
room = 3
muur = 4
woon = 3

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10 y I S I y 10 □
g P I P g □
H I y 11 □
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19 B 2 C H I 2S 21 □
19 B 2 C H I 2S 21 □
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112 △
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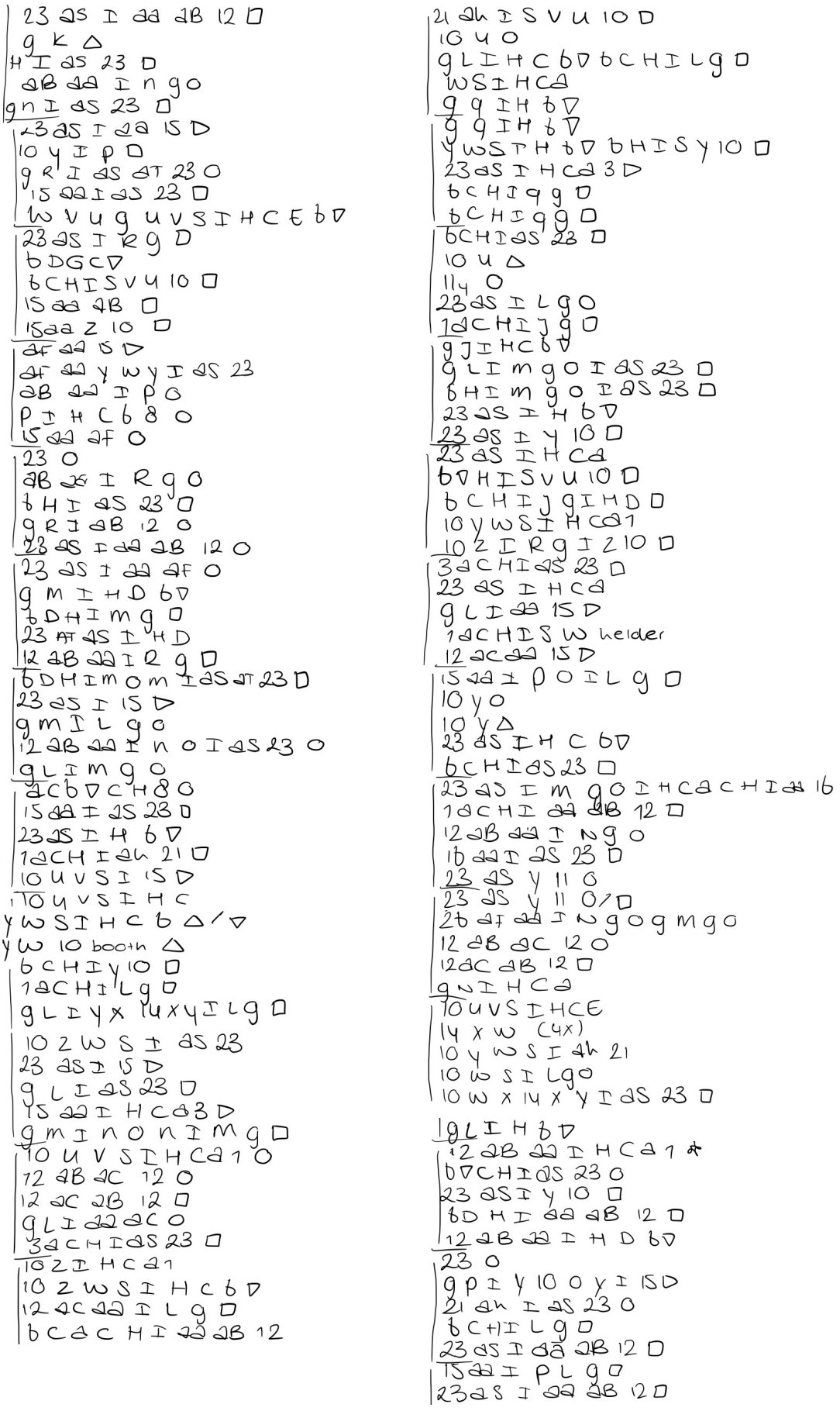
Day Two



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g p o
g g o
10 z o
10 y △
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12 dB dC 12 o
11, 8 I dd dB dC 12 □
g m I dd 15 ▷
15 dd I m g □
12 dC dB dd I L g o
10 z I y W 10 o
12 dC dB 12 □
11 W □
11 W △
11 w X welder w 11 □
10 z □
10 z I H
H I R g o
g R I L g □
H I m g □
10 z I H o b ▽
10 u △
b ▽ H I o g □
b ▽ o H I z 10 □
g g I H C b ▽
b C H I q g □
g g I N g □
g g I dd df 24 ▽
23 dS I H
g L m o
23 dS I H D b ▽
24 df dd I q g □
23 H I dh 21
g m I dd 15 ▷
21 dh I dS 23 □
10 W S I dS 23 □
15 dd I m g □
H I dS 23 □
11 w △
11 W S I H C d 4 △
24 ▽ df dd dC 12 □
12 dC dd df 24 ▽
11 S I N g I L o
g N I S 11
b ▽ C H I dd dB 12 □
12 dB dd I H C b ▽
df dd I R g o
15 dd I p L g □
23 dS I dd dB 12 □
g m I q o
10 booth v 4 10 □
23 dS I dh 21 □
10 y dd 15 ▷
g g I m g □
g L I S 11 S I L g □
15 dd y W v U 10 □
10 U v W y dd 15 ▷
g R I n o n I R g □
23 dS I R o
23 dS I H C d 3 ▷
21 dh I S 11 S I dh 21 □
g k I H C b ▽
d C d o dh 21 □
g m I H D b ▽
b D H I m g □
3 d C G D b ▽
b D G H I dS 23 □
21 dh I dS 23 □
g R I L g o g L I R g o
g L I dd df o
g R I dd dB 12 o
12 dB dC □
4 d C H I S W 11 □ / △
12 dB dd I y W S 11 I dd dB 12 o
df dd y 11 □
g g I N o
11 y I N o
g N I g g □
g N I H
g m I H D b ▽
g p o
b ▽ C H I N g □
10 w booth o
b C ▽ H I m g □
g L I H C b ▽
b C H I L g □
12 dC dB dd I H C b ▽
12 dB dC 12 o
12 dC dB 12 □
10 u △
b C H I dd dB dC 12 □
12 dC dB dd 15 ▷
15 dd dB dC 12 □
21 dh I dd 15 ▷
g L I dC dB 12 o
12 dB dd I H D b ▽
23 dS I dd 15 ▷
b D H I dd dB 12 □
15 dd I dh 21 □
10 w booth S I dh 21 □
10 w booth S I dh 21 □
12 dB dd I L g o
g L I dd dB 12 □
12 dB dd I L g □
15 dd y 10 □
10 y dd 15 ▷
12 dC dd I H D o C b ▽ C *
15 dd dC 12 o
12 dC dd I H D o C b ▽ C *
23 dS I S 11 S I dS 23 □
12 dC dB 12 o
g N I R I N I R g o
12 dB dC 12 □
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g L I H C b ▽
g R I J o I R g □
b C H I 2 10 □
g L y 11
23 dS I dd 15 ▷
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g L I dd 15 ▷
H I S W 11 □ / △
23 dS I H D b ▽ D H I dS 23 □
df dd dB 12 o 12 dd I H C d 1
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10 U S I dd df ▽
g L I dd 15 ▷
H I S W 11 □ / △
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15 dd I dS 23 □
15 dd I L g □
g R I L g □
10 U S I dd df ▽

bCHIaaaB 12 □
bCHIhg □
11 yILg □
10 wSIHCb▽
bCHIaa ac 12 □
bCHI as 23 □
gRINg □
af aa I P g O
10 zIHD b
bCHILg □
bCHIS w11 O
gPI as 23 □
23 as I M O I L O
10 u v △
bDHIZ 10 □
gnIHCa
10 uSw 11 O
11 wSu 10 □
gLIHCb▽
23 as IHCb▽
bCHI as 23 □
bCHI as 23 □
12 ac aB 12 O
12 aB aa 15 ▷
12 ac aB aa I S 11
SI aa aB ac 12 □
12 aB aa af 26 △
26 af aa aB 12 △/□
11 w △
12 aB ac 12 O
12 ac aB 12 □
gLIy 11 yILg □
gPIHCb▽
12 ac aB 12 O
23 as IS 11
23 as I y 11 O
bCHIP g □
10 uSIHCa1
11 SIHCa1
gPI aa aB 12 O
12 acaB aa I HDb▽
11 wSIH
12 aB aa I P g □
bCHI y 11 □
11 yIHCb▽
12 aB ac 12 □
gmILg O
23 O
gnI aa 15 ▷
15 aa
bCHIkg □
10 zIHCb▽
10 y O
10 2 O
bCHIZ 10 □
bCHIZ 10 □
g g O
b▽CHIy 10 □
10 yIHCb▽
15 aa af O/△ ?
23 O
gRI 11 IRg □
21 ah □
21 ah □
21 ah O
21 am □
21 am 21 ah aO cb▽
gR O
10 y △
12 ac aB 12 O
12 aB ac 12 □

bCHIaa aB ac 12 □
12 aB ac 12 O
12 ac aB 12 □
10 y O
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Machine = 2 8
zolder = 1 19
brug = 2 20
straat = 2 18
holen = 3 27
room = 2 25
muur = 2 26
woon = 1 4
ROOMS

23 △
23 as IHCb▽
bCHI as 23 □
gRIgOIHCa1
15 aa ZX aB 12 □
12 aB aa I P g O
10 z y 10 g
11y O
23 as I y w 11y O
11y wSI as 23
gLIRg O
gRI as 23 O
gPI aa aB 12 □
g g I N g O
12 aB aE XwHICaCEDO
12 ac aB 12 O
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gNIgINg O
gmINg O
12 aB aa IRg O
b▽CHIgg □
12 aB aa INg O
14 aE aB aa INg O
gRI aa aB 12 O
gRI aa aB 12 O
15 aa y 10 □
10 y aa 15 ▷
10 y aa af 24 ▽
24 af aa y 10 □
gNI aa aB 12 □
gNI aa aB 14 □
12 ac aB aE 14 □
14 aE ac 12 □
12 aB aa ILg O
23 as I aa 15 ▷
15 aa I as 23 □
12 aB ac O
12 ac □
10 w △
10 S O
10 S O
g g O
12 aB aa 15 ▷
12 aB aa 15 ▷
23 as I aa 15 ▷
15 aa IHC a 3 ▷
10 SIHCb▽ HI aa af O
10 SIHCb▽ HI aa af O
10 SIHCb▽ HI aa af O
3 aCHI as 23 □
15 aa aB 12 O
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23 as I aa 15 ▷
15 aa aB 12 □
12 aB aa 15 ▷
12 aB aa af △
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g g INg O
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12 ac aB 12 O
gLIHCb▽
g g ILg O
bCHILI aa 15 ▽
15 aa ILIRg O
gRILg □
12 aB aa 15 ▷
15 aa aB 12 □
HIZ 10 □
23 as IHDECa1
gNIRIHCa1
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gPIHCa1
gNIPg O
gLIgINg O
g g Img O/□
gLIPg O
gPILg □
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10 uVSIHCa1
10 zIHCa1
12 aB aE x y I P g O
gmI aa 15 ▷
gmIgg □
gPIHCb▽
bCHI aa aB 12 □
10 uTSI aa 15 ▷
15 aa IHCa3 ▷
12 aB aa 15 ▷
15 aa aB 12 □
11 wSHCa1
12 aB aa 15 ▷
15 aa Img □
15 aa Z 10 □
23 as IHDGCa
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Interview with

Ana Luiza Camargo

"At Vakwerk, we design together and working from home makes it more complicated."

Could you describe me your typical workday?

"Normally we start at around 9h. We don't have a fixed workstation, so we can choose where we want to sit. Usually I try to sit next to my teammates; just because it's handy for communication. We finish work at around 17:30-18h. We work Monday to Thursdays, but we have Fridays flexible. Whenever there's a deadline, we have four hours available to work on then. It works pretty well, I must say. You have to plan in advance, and aware your team so that everyone is present on Fridays. It is a way of working that works well, especially regarding the work-life balance. "

Do you like to work from home?

"I actually prefer to come to the office. I am more motivated when I'm around my colleagues. In architecture studios it is more difficult, especially during the initial phase of a project, to communicate when working from home. At Vakwerk, we design together and working from home makes it more complicated."

On Mondays you all work in the workspace on the first floor?

"That is something new; we've started doing that about three months ago. To have a feeling of '*we're one office*'. Because sometimes, you're in your own bubble, maybe with your team members. And you don't really interact with others because we work in such an open environment and workspace. There are a lot of people that are not part of our studio, so sometimes - especially when you're new - it becomes a bit more difficult to integrate in the company. "

What place do you prefer most?

"I like to be in the *arendsnest* the most. I prefer it more, although the not the quietest, I don't get distracted the as much. There are fewer people walking around there, because it's not part of the circulation. Plus, I like the view from up there; I see my colleagues easier. The acoustics in general could be improved though. "

Do you have the need for quiet spaces?

"Not per se. I developed the skill to be in my 'bubble' when I need to focus. And I work well with music on. What distracts me the most are movements. So when I really need to focus, I go up the *arendsnest*. It does depend on the phase of the project that I'm working on. In the initial phase, you really need to focus and create something, and therefore need to be more within your own bubble and focussed. But once you're in a more technical phase, you only need to produce, I don't mind to stay downstairs. "

What about the garage?

"I like that too. Me and my team often sit there if we want to sit together and colonise the space. I like it, because it's quite warm and quieter."

What would you like to change or add to the office?

"We could work on the acoustics, but a part of that, I'm actually quite happy. For the co-working space, we feel that people don't have many rooms to reserve for a meeting, or for a call. So it often takes place at the desks and then you can hear everything. It's a bit annoying. Some extra phone booths would help, along with solving the acoustic issue. "

What do you really like about the space?

"I definitely like the architecture and the plants; it makes the space happier and pleasant. It feels a bit industrial and cool. There's this thing that - we as architects - appreciate and that is the design and art on the walls. We have a lot of natural light, which can be a bit annoying during summer when there's too much sunlight and you really have to close the drapes. "

Would you like to work outside or is that something that you already do?

"Not really; working on a screen with the sunlight makes it a bit tricky. So I don't think that would work for me. But I do, during summer, and when I need to make phone calls or send some emails, grab a chair in the garden. I like that we have that possibility. But, when working longer periods of time, you need good chairs and that is more difficult to achieve outside."

There seems to be many different types of facilities, (how) do you use them?

"We use pretty much everything. We don't have a fixed place, so we really try to shuffle around. For informal meetings and don't have to book a room, we use the booths underneath the nest. That works pretty well, especially with spontaneous meetings. "

"Changing workstations everyday makes you more active."

What do you think of the flexible workspaces?

"I think there are pros and cons. I must say, initially it was a bit strange for me, also with the co-working concept. But, I quite like it now. I adapted to it and I think it makes your day-to-day life less boring. You arrive and there's always something new. I remember from former jobs, that I always had my fixed desk and space and it was always there. Everyday became the same and that becomes boring sometimes. Changing settings and views, it helps my motivation and productivity. In winter times, I struggle a lot with the weather, and therefore I like that every day is different from the other. Changing workstations everyday makes you more active, I would say. "

Now that you've experienced co-working, would you go back to a more 'traditional' office concept?

"If needed, sure. I think we can always adapt eventually, but for now I'm quite happy with the co-working concept and wouldn't want to change that."

Regarding the noise in the main work-space, would you like a dedicated quiet area, for example the garage?

"I think that would've been nice. For me, it works better, but it's a bit of difficult thing to achieve. I find flexibility super important. One day I require a quiet space, but another day, I work with a colleague and I'm the one making the noise. So because our work changes so much, it's a bit hard to set spaces for certain activities. "

So you like the fact there are multiple types of workstations?

"Yeah, you sit according to your needs, because they can vary from day-to-day. It's thus more finding solutions in the architecture, or the spaces or variety of spaces. For me, that's why this office works so well. Depending on what I need, I choose to sit some-where. "

What do you like about the office?

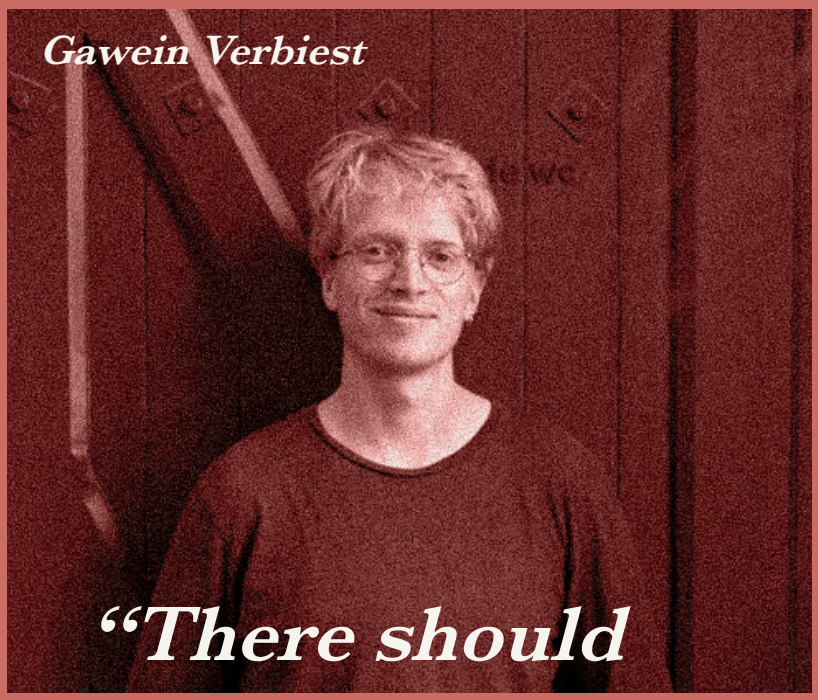
"I mostly like that the interior creates a nice atmos-phere and really uplifts your mood. We optimised the space as much as possible. And I really like the plants. I couldn't do without them and they're the key to the atmosphere. Having the contact with natural elements helps a lot for the well-being. "

Does a fixed workspace fit well with the architectural practice?

"I've worked many years with a fixed workspace and I kind of like it. It becomes your safe space and you can make it yours. But I think, because of the kind of work we do, it changes so much from day-to-day. You change teams so much, the type of work, it doesn't make much sense to me anymore to have fixed work-spaces. I liked shifting to flexible workspaces."

"I find flexibility super important."

Begona Garcia Giner



be a diversi-ty to the office space.”

What do you think of the workplace here?

“Theoretically, I do like the idea of having separate spaces, though I want them to still be connected. So I think they’ve done quite well here. There should be a diversity to the office space, like there is here. ”

There are indeed many different types of facilities, do you use them too?

“I am currently working on a project with another person, so then you just do everything at the desk. But as soon as there are three or more people involved, you look for a separate place. I also sketch at my desk. I actually think a dedicated sketching spot is a good idea. ”

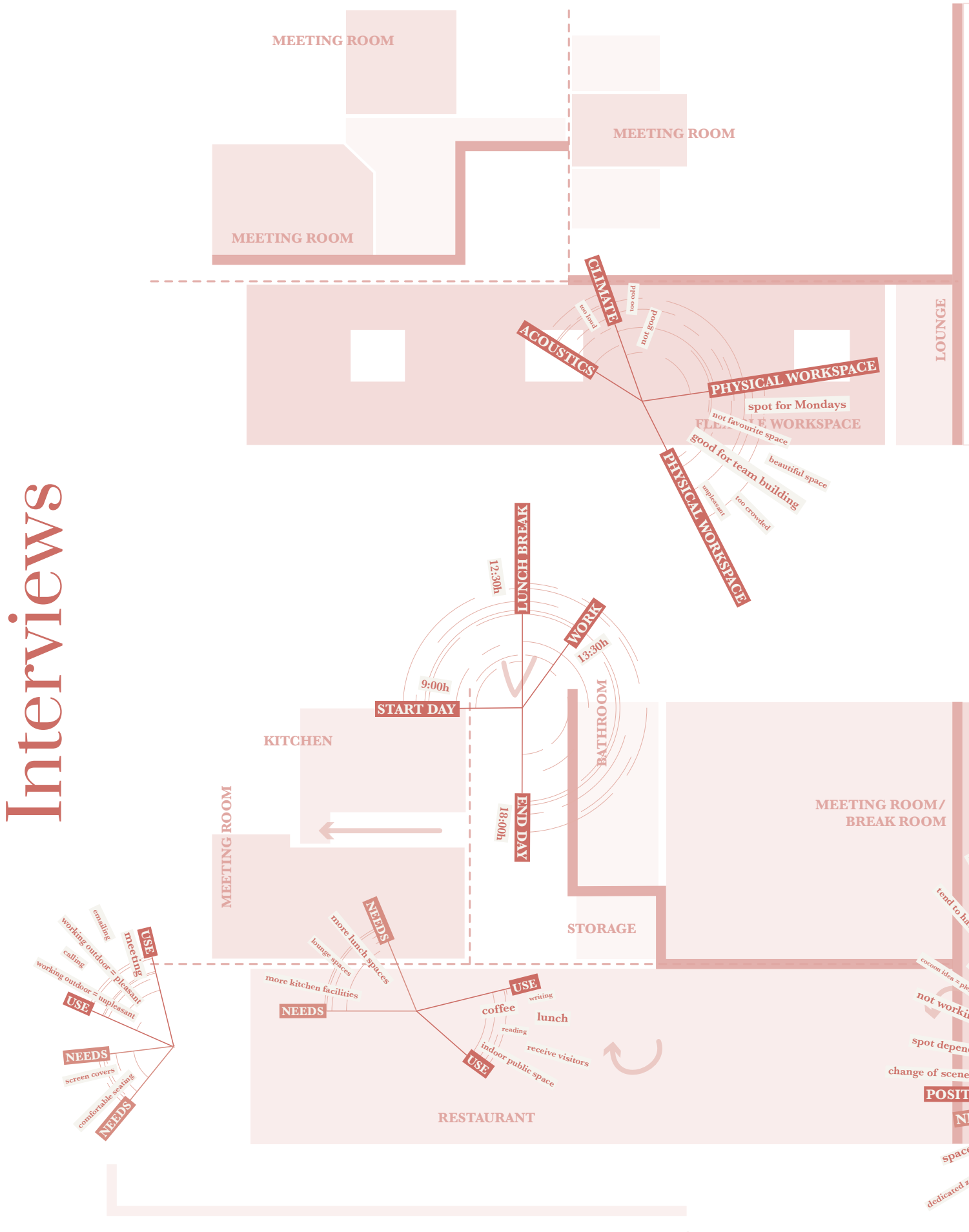
Would you like that?

“Yes actually I would. Also that if you see someone standing there, you can have a look and chat about their sketches, or vice versa. And sitting at your desk all day is also kind of boring. So I wouldn’t mind sketching somewhere for ten minutes and then going back. Then you’re still working, but you’ve got that change.”

You said you don’t have any particular workstation or space you prefer, how do you choose your place each day?

“It depends for one on where my colleagues are seated. I like to change a lot. If I have to do something alone, I go upstairs. If I want to talk, I find a place amongst many others. And it depends on the tasks that I have to do that day.”

Interviews


MEETING ROOM
MEETING ROOM
MEETING ROOM
LOUNGE
CLIMATE
too cold
too loud
not good
ACOUSTICS
PHYSICAL WORKSPACE
spot for Mondays
not favourite space
good for team building
beautiful space
unpleasant
too crowded
PHYSICAL WORKSPACE
LUNCH BREAK
12:30h
WORK
13:30h
9:00h
START DAY
END DAY
18:00h
KITCHEN
BATHROOM
MEETING ROOM
MEETING ROOM/
BREAK ROOM
STORAGE
emailing
working outdoor = pleasant
calling
working outdoor = unpleasant
meeting
USE
USE
NEEDS
screen covers
comfortable seating
NEEDS
NEEDS
more lunch spaces
lounge spaces
more kitchen facilities
NEEDS
USE
writing
coffee
lunch
reading
receive visitors
indoor public space
USE
RESTAURANT
L1

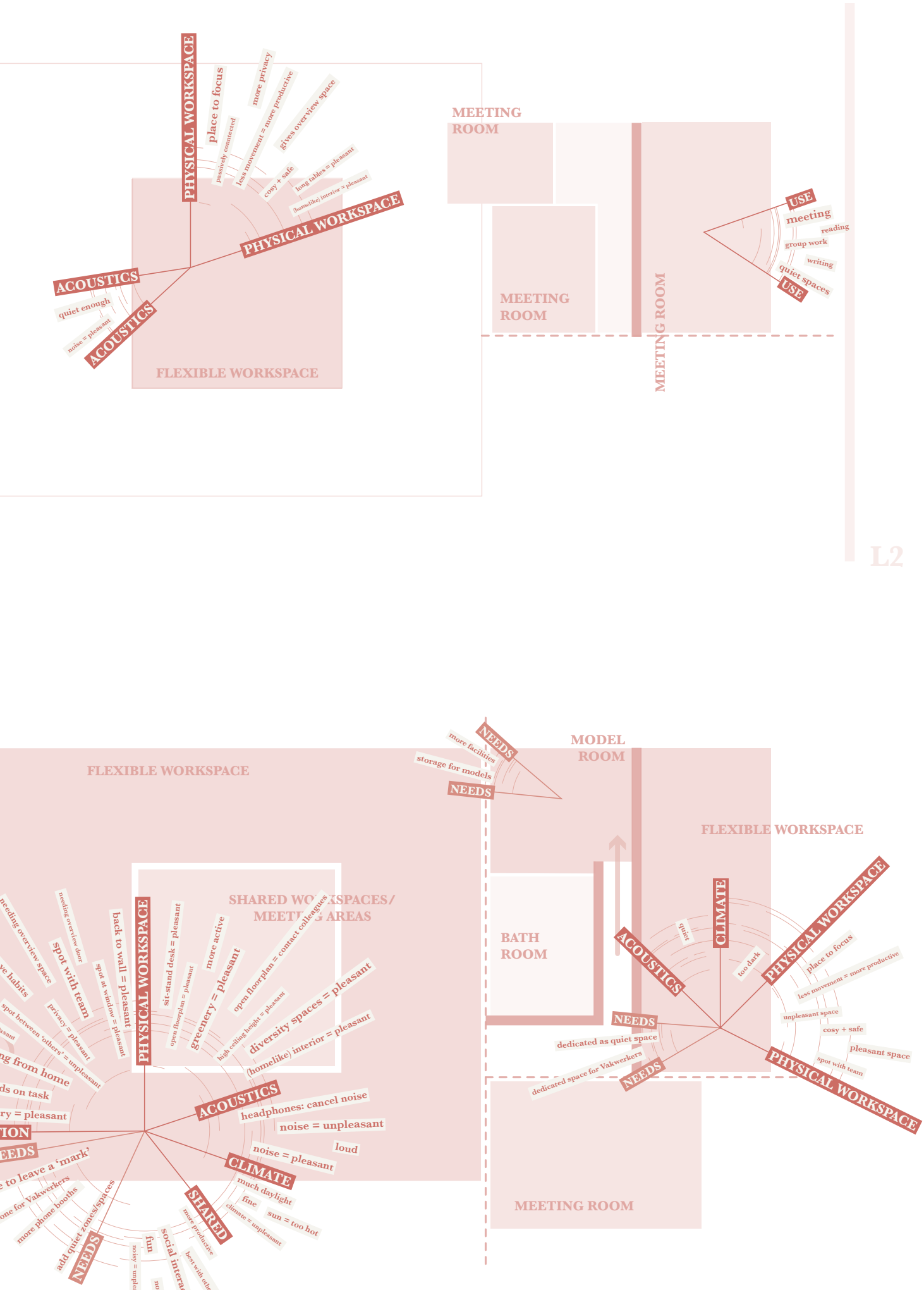


Figure 28: Interview answers onto floor plan

FUNCTIONS

Residents' responses indicate that during winter and on rainy days, they encounter a challenge – a scarcity of break spaces, particularly during lunchtime. So they seek refuge in the multi-functional rooms as an alternative lunch spot, primarily when the restaurant area finds itself teeming with visitors. Yet, the situation undergoes a transformation in the summer when the sun graces the outdoors, and *Vakwerkers* eagerly embrace the garden for their al fresco lunches.

The lack of designated lounge spaces for (shorter) respites, except for the restaurant itself, leads many *residents* to perceive their coffee breaks as their sole moments of respite from work.

Residents have shared insights into the dynamics of the restaurant area, describing it as a communal space that effortlessly brings people together. It not only acts as a convergence point for visitors and residents but also adeptly blurs the lines between public and private spaces. The restaurant serves as an interim workspace, a waiting area for clients attending meetings, and a place to savour a cup of coffee while breaking the monotony of work. However, the existence of a fully operational restaurant means that residents do not have access to a kitchenette, encouraging them to opt for meals from the establishment. The restaurant acts as a communal space that brings people together. It serves as a workspace, a waiting area for clients, and a coffee break spot. Not having a kitchenette encourages residents to order meals.

Insights from interviews reveal that the *arendsnest* is a favoured space for focused work due to its elevated location. The *garage* is quieter but lacks natural light. It's used - solemnly by the *Vakwerkers* - for focused work and occasionally plays background radio. Window-side workstations offer natural light but come with distractions from foot traffic.

Interviews show that workstations are chosen based on team proximity, task type, and climate preferences. Online meetings at workstations can increase noise. High windows bring in abundant daylight and slightly impact room temperature. However, the first-floor workspace sees limited use due to unstable climate conditions.

WORKSTATIONS

When asked about their preferences for choosing a workspace, responses consistently revolve around the idea of '*where my team is*'. While the flexible workspaces offer the freedom to switch workstations daily, the inherent social nature of people drives them to gravitate toward their team members - their social group. Moreover, as creatures of habit, some individuals often find themselves drawn to familiar spots unless a conscious effort is made to choose differently. The decision on which workstation to occupy depends on factors such as team location, the type of task to be performed, or even climate conditions within the physical environment.

As discussed in the previous section, it has become evident through interviews that online meetings and calls frequently occur at individual workstations, contributing to a continuous ambient noise level within the office. For some, this noise presents no issues, but many find it necessary to employ headphones to reduce the auditory distractions. This dynamic results in a consistent background hum of activity in the workspace.

Conclusions

Pattern 1

One can identify different zones in the office, which are based on where people like to sit for certain tasks. For instance, when people seek some focus, they go sit in the *arendsnest* or in the *garage*. There are multiple factors that come into place when deciding where to sit: 1) where the team members are, 2) depending on the task and what kind of work modus that requires, such as high concentration.

Some zones are quite popular, for example the *arendsnest*. It is a place where the noise created in this main workspace becomes a bit less. It feels more secluded, protected by the plants, far from the circulation, and because of its height, allows for a good overview of the ground floor.

The building can be divided into a left (more public) wing and a right (more private) wing. The left wing is more public, open and contains of functions that are used by and meant for visitors too.

The office uses flexible workstations only and can be distinguished into five different types. The first four types are all individual workstations, whereas the fifth type is shared. The better and more equipped the workstation, the longer people tend to stay. Also, the more activities take place.

There are three types of meetings identifiable at Vakwerk. External meetings take place in the designated meeting rooms or booths underneath the *arendsnest*. Both internal and online meetings may also take place at the workstations. The choice for internal meetings depends on both the number of participants and the duration of the discussions.

There's a clear primary route that starts at the entrance and goes through the border of the two wings towards the back of the building. Three crossroads are found around and at the stairs of the *arendsnest* that slowly diffuses the primary route. The further away a path is from the primary route, the less used it is. Therefore, the gradient representing the relation between the activities and the type of workstations, is also applicable to the routes.

There are a couple of multi-functional spaces that include different types of: workspaces (both individual and shared), meetings (internal, external, and online) and lunch places. Especially the latter one is a result of the fact that there aren't enough lunch spots for the residents.

Pattern 2

The co-working concept and flexible workspaces are generally well-received by *residents*. The shared office space also enlarges their social bubble, as they get to interact with (un)familiar faces from different companies on a daily basis. The restaurant, which serves as a transition zone, also brings the public space inside and allows *residents* and visitors to interact, particularly during lunch.

Additionally, the applied co-working concept might have been new for some, once gotten used to it, they are really enjoying the social aspects of it. Sharing the office space with different people and its combination with flexible workspaces, makes each day different from the other. The decision on what workstation to choose lies on where your team is, or the type of task or the climate (physical environment aspects).
In total, all workspaces take up around fifty per cent of the whole building. The different types of workstations provide for different types of activities (shorter or longer-stay) and thus accommodate multiple ways of working.

However, there are also some drawbacks the buildings's nature. During winter and on rainy days, there isn't enough space to take breaks, especially during lunch. There are also no lounge areas that provide for shorter breaks.

The restaurant can be seen as the heart of the office and brings the public space indoors. It allows people to connect and interact with both other residents and visitors. However, there aren't enough spaces for everyone to sit, especially in winter during the peak hours. Therefore, they need to use other rooms to have lunch and thus lack extra space for breaks and other informal activities.

Vakwerkhuis is a unique and dynamic space that balances the preservation of its historical elements with modern and functional design features. The office space is designed to support a variety of activities and multiple ways of working for not only *Vakwerkers*, but also other companies.

In terms of the grid and private vs. public spaces, the building appears to be a collection of multiple rooms placed together, showing the combination of old and new. It can, however, be divided into three compartments within different levels of privacy, with the left wing being more public, and the right – or office – wing being more private. Within these two wings, there are also distinctions between semi-public and semi-private spaces. The transition between these spaces is located on the wall separating the two wings. This border also relates to the where the main route starts to diffuse and split into smaller paths.

Pattern 3


PHYSICAL WORKSPACE
shared office + 1 day flexible work hours
shared office + home
shared office
own office
WHERE
large kitchen
lounge area
conference/ meeting rooms
phone/small meeting booths
outdoor workspace
greenery

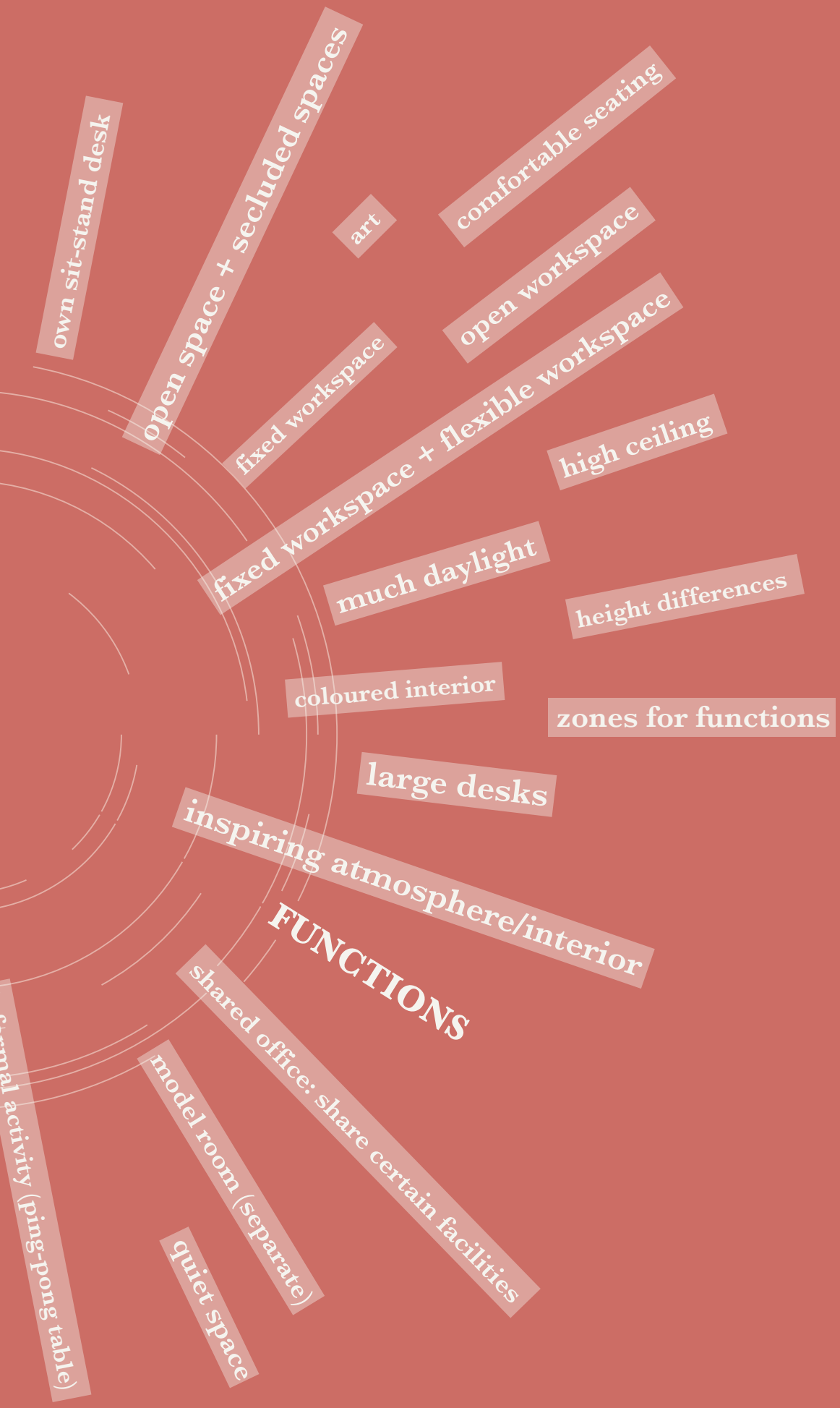


Figure 29: '*Ideal*' office

Designing for Flexibility

Conclusions on the Future of the Workplace

Pattern 1

Both Vakwerk and Beltman offices are situated within re-purposed structures, but Vakwerk's historical industrial character is more prominently preserved. Vakwerk artfully integrates the old and new elements, employing glass as a connecting medium where the industrial shell meets modern wooden monoliths and red steel. In contrast, Beltman's office minimises the visibility of its building's original function.

Where Beltman's office is characterised by the grid structure, Vakwerk presents a less structured grid, resembling a collection of interconnected rooms. However, both offices can be categorised based on the functional placement, creating distinct zones. Vakwerk notably distinguishes between a public area and a private office zone. Beltman, on the other hand, features an open floor plan divided into three rows by the central '*route*' zone.

Regarding workspaces, Vakwerk offers various workstation zones, each exuding a unique atmosphere. The choice of workstation depends on the task, requirements, or team location.

In contrast, Beltman allocates personal workstations to its occupants, discouraging them from utilising other spaces for different tasks or enhanced focus. While fixed workstations enable individuals to personalise their spaces and support a range of activities, they may also foster unchanging habits. Given the shifting norms towards flexible work arrangements, such routines may require reconsideration.

Another distinction arises in the proportion of workspace areas. Beltman designates only one-third of its office space for workstations, whereas Vakwerk reserves half of its office for workspaces. Vakwerk offers a solitary informal space, the restaurant, which constitutes fifteen per cent of the office, limiting opportunities for informal activities. Interestingly, both offices maintain an identical ratio between active and passive spaces, although the rationale behind Beltman's design is more apparent compared to the more nuanced approach taken by Vakwerk.

07

Pattern 2

Patterns emerge in both offices regarding routes. The journey from the entrance to the initial crossroads or border is straightforward. However, once the '*real*' office space commences, the path splinters in various directions, dispersing across the area. The paths farther from the central route witness less frequent use.

A parallel trend emerges in the relationship between workstations and activity levels. Well-equipped workstations tend to host longer stays and more activities.

Both offices foster social interaction in the *heart* of the office, found within the break area. This space serves as a hub for relaxation and meetings. Beltman's central lunch table occupies this role, while at Vakwerk, the restaurant acts as the gathering place, functioning as an indoor public space for *residents* and visitors.

Both Vakwerk's office wing and Beltman's complete office space ultimately adopt an open floor plan. This layout enhances team bonding and facilitates rapid communication but also amplifies noise levels, especially during multiple conversations. To address this, both offices employ acoustic panels on walls and carpeting at workspaces. Additionally, given the increased prevalence of online meetings due to COVID-19, two phone booths have been incorporated into the office layout.

At Beltman, the shared building arrangement creates more social interactions and diversifies the work environment. However, privacy remains a crucial concern, particularly in shared office spaces, which may sometimes lead to competition. Introducing shared facilities, such as a communal kitchen and canteen, can provide a solution to balance privacy and social interaction.

In the context of Vakwerk, the co-working concept and flexible workspaces are generally well-received by residents, offering them flexibility and interactions with individuals from various companies.

While the two offices differ in their approach to shared office spaces and flexible working, they both acknowledge the value of broadening social interactions and expanding their professional networks. Beltman adheres to more traditional practices with fixed workspaces, while Vakwerk embraces modern working methods, offering both co-working spaces and flexibility.

Ultimately, the offices agree that the nature of architectural work varies, necessitating diverse facilities for different tasks. Providing multiple ways of working, various workstations, and fostering flexibility are deemed essential. The ability to choose a different workspace, whether individuals opt for it or not, signifies an important aspect of a dynamic work environment.

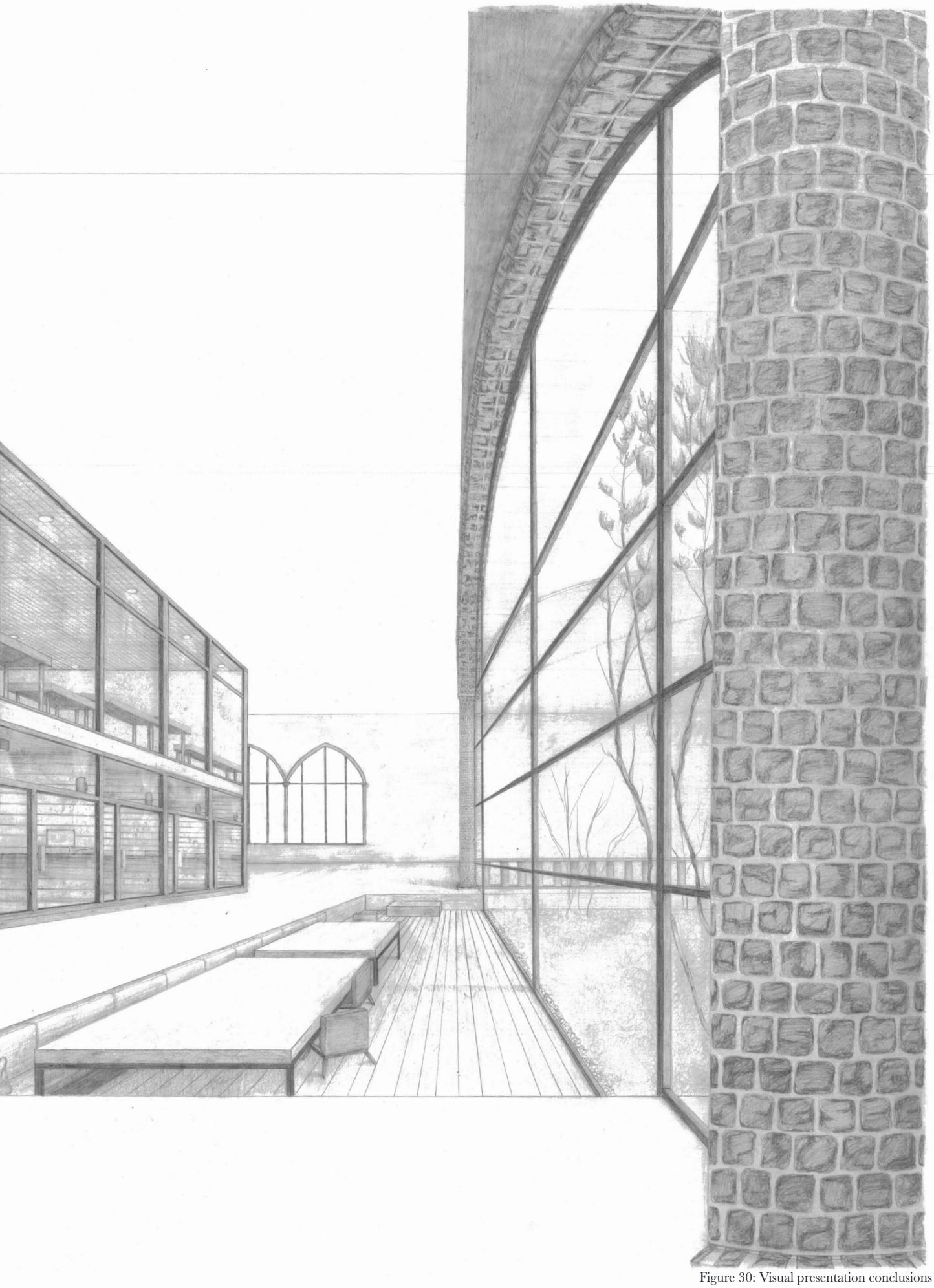


Figure 30: Visual presentation conclusions

Pattern 3

Through an in-depth analysis of interviews from both case studies and a subsequent comparison, two distinct scenarios have been derived that pave the way for a programme tailored to accommodate flexible working within architectural offices.

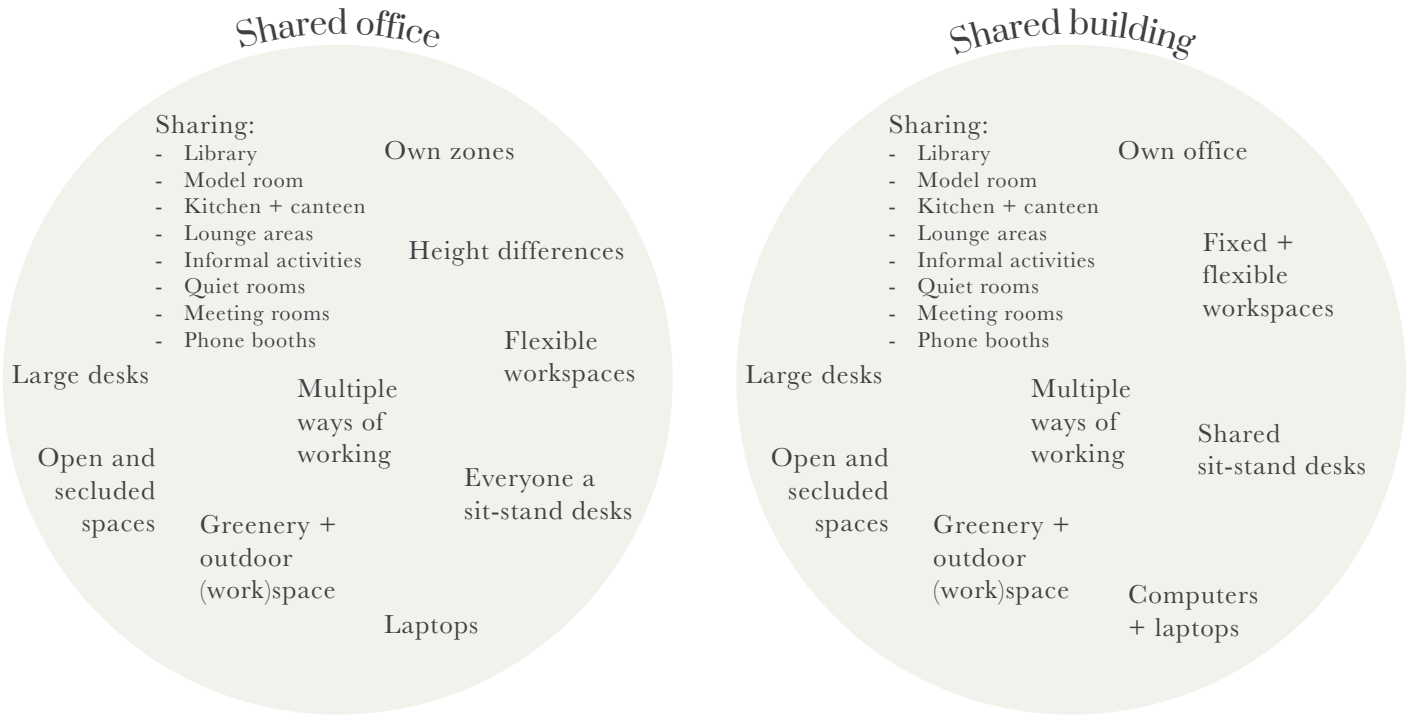


Figure 31: Scenarios programme for flexible working

While initially appearing as polar opposites, a more profound examination has unveiled striking commonalities between the two scenarios. These shared characteristics underscore the versatility of their designs, demonstrating that both set-ups offer the possibility to effectively support flexible working within architectural offices. This surprising revelation challenges initial assumptions about the divergence between the two case studies.

In this context, the shared building model, as opposed to the shared office concept, emerges as the more dynamic and flexible approach. It provides a broader spectrum of options, enabling architectural offices to tailor their workspaces to meet diverse requirements effectively. Therefore, our conclusion asserts that the shared building approach aligns more seamlessly with the evolving demands of flexible working in architectural offices, offering a foundation for future planning and design considerations.

Following the observations and a comparative analysis of the two offices, an analogy emerges. The structure of an office may be likened to either a *house* or a *city.* A house features discrete rooms with defined functions, whereas a city boasts multifaceted spaces with varying degrees of privacy, ranging from public to private. The needs of an architectural office, filled with creative professionals with diverse requirements, align more closely with the complexity of a city. The '*ideal*' office, as gleaned from interviews, mandates the provision of multiple work-styles, some shared with external parties and others reserved for in-house colleagues. The city metaphor aptly encapsulates these dynamic demands.

08 from *the Editor*

As I bring this issue to a close, it's been an incredible journey exploring the nuances of flexible working in the architectural profession.

In the ever-evolving landscape of modern work culture, the concept of flexible working has garnered immense attention and support. Architects, like many other professionals, have found themselves at the crossroads of this paradigm shift. It is a movement fuelled by the desire for greater autonomy, mobility, and the freedom to structure work around individual lifestyles.

As I embarked on this research journey, delving into the real-world dynamics of architectural offices, a curious interplay emerged. My study highlighted the distinct preferences, challenges, and innovations within the architectural field regarding flexible working.

One prominent revelation was that the majority of architects yearn for the liberty that flexible working affords. The freedom to choose where and how they work, accommodating diverse tasks and responsibilities, resonates with their ever-evolving creative and collaborative processes.

Yet, it became increasingly apparent that not all employers are equally accommodating. This disparity may not always be a matter of unwillingness but, in some instances, a financial constraint. The infrastructure, technology, and spatial adaptations required to facilitate flexible working can pose significant budgetary challenges for architectural practices.

The research unveiled a dual narrative — one of aspiration and the other of practicality. As architects continue to seek a work environment that adapts to their evolving needs and preferences, it is essential to acknowledge that the implementation of flexible working, as a new norm, may not be universal. There is no *one-size-fits-all* solution. The varying approaches I explored, from shared buildings to flexible office spaces, underscore the complexity of this issue.

For architects, as for any professional, the journey towards flexible working requires a delicate balance. It is the alignment of ambition with realism, as well as adaptation with fiscal feasibility. My research serves as a compass in this ever-shifting landscape, guiding architects and employers towards making informed choices that best suit their individual needs.

The path to flexible working in architecture may not be a seamless one, but it is undoubtedly a transformative journey. While it may not be for everyone, it is a collective aspiration, a vision of work that not only accommodates the demands of the profession but empowers architects to shape their work environment to their own creative rhythm. It is a testament to the adaptability and resilience of the architectural community, embracing change while retaining the essence of what it means to be an architect.

In closing, the exploration of flexible working in architectural offices reminds us that every space we design, every decision we make, is an opportunity for innovation. It is an opportunity to craft a future where flexibility, creativity, and collaboration thrive in harmony.

But the quest for understanding is far from over. In the next issue, I'll delve deeper into the research, sharing additional research requisite to translate flexible working into a design proposal for an architectural office, and shedding light on the intricate process behind this exploration. The aim is to offer a behind-the-scenes look at the challenges, surprises, and moments of insight that have shaped my project.

Together, we'll continue to examine the evolving landscape of flexible working in architecture, unearthing valuable perspectives from both professionals and employers. It's a narrative that's not just about spaces and schedules; it's about the people who shape them, the organisations that embrace them, and the future that awaits.

Thank you for being part of my journey thus far. I look forward to taking you along for the next leg of this exciting expedition.

Warm regards,

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