ON CONNECTIVITY

A2O-ARCHITECTEN

texts

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This book offers readers some insight into the world of a2o-architecten.
It explains why a2o's designs and buildings are connective. It connects the 'now' with the past and the future, with the importance of context and the autonomy of architecture. It connects engagement, craftsmanship and imagination in a contemporary way. The work is situated in Belgium and the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion.

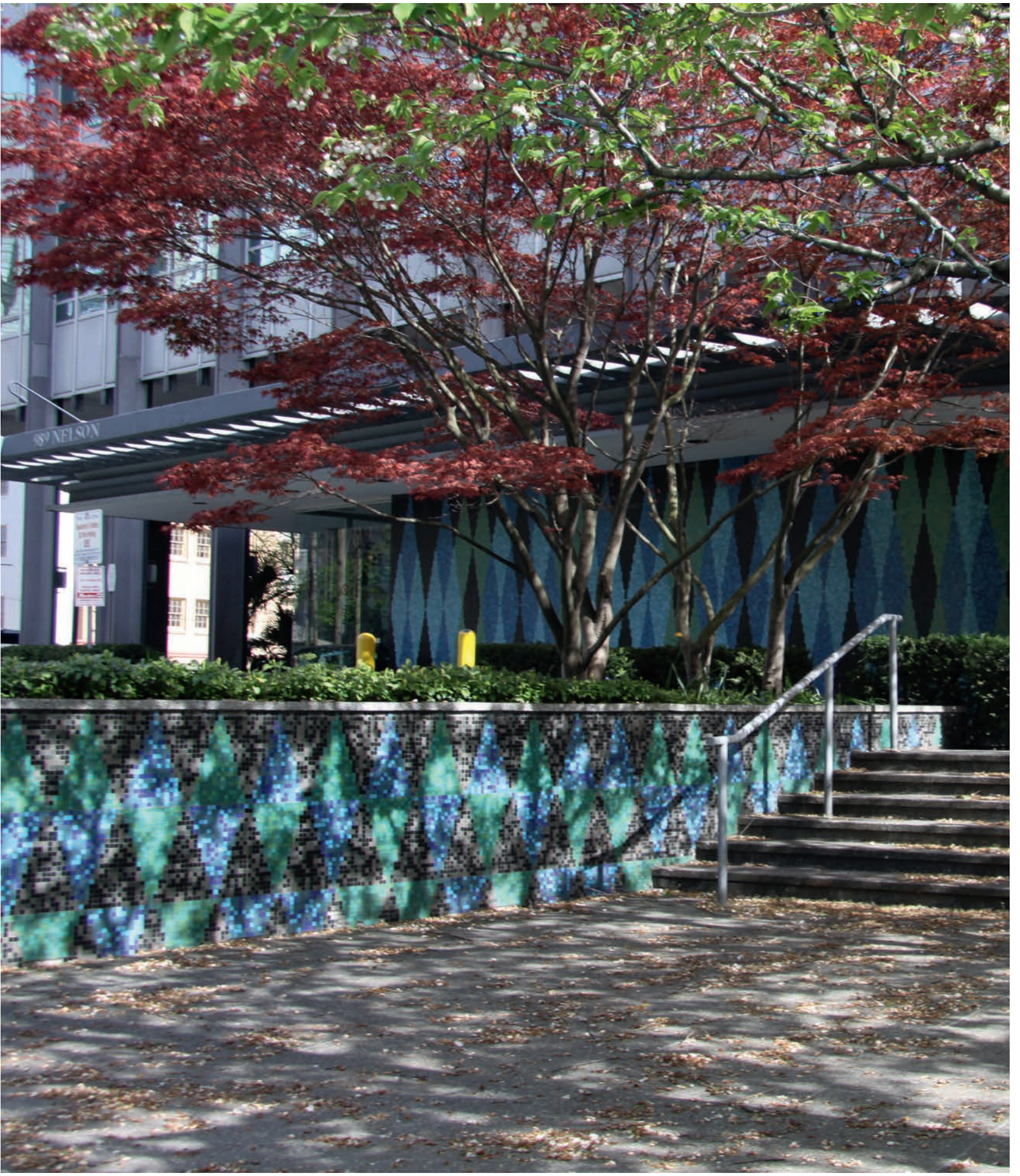
a2o's architecture occupies an area of tension between two realities, which also play a central role in this book:
The main story, the leitmotiv, about its philosophy and the creative process. And the particular, the tangible, about contemporary themes and architecture.

The two storylines are interwoven throughout the book, allowing text and images to make their own connections. This is a book about *connectivity*, about how a2o's philosophy wants to be embedded in today's sociospatial reality. Connections that make us reflect on expectations, let us dream about the perfect place to live or to work.

The story is enriched by the work of Nick Ervinck, an artist who creates large installations, sculptures, prints, drawings and animations. In his work, Ervinck explores the boundaries of those different media. Ervinck's philosophy matches a2o's idea of 'connectivity'. Interaction with the public is essential: after all, the power of imagination lies with the beholder.

So please join us in this story and make connections, even where these may not initially have been intended: the connections transcend the single thought time and again.

a2o-architecten


NELSON

TORRE DE DAVID, CARACAS. PHOTO: IWAN BAAN

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Can we learn from inhabitants?

Engagement

Residential Landscape
Transparent Compression
A New Face
Public View

Can we learn from inhabitants?

Angelique Campens

In the last 200 years, city dweller numbers have increased from 3 percent to over 50 percent of the population, and by 2050, 75 percent of us will be living in cities. The current urban landscape remains a mishmash of different entities, because cities mostly develop organically. In Flanders, the landscape is dominated by ribbon development along the routes of communication. In 1968, the Belgian architect and urban planner Renaat Braem wrote an essay and indictment of Belgian post-war spatial planning entitled *Het lelijkste land ter wereld – The ugliest country in the world*. Braem declared there was a choice: either continue with a traditional 'laisser-faire' approach and its continued devastation of the country and whatever remains of culture, or pursue a new form of politics, inspired by science, based on technology, and focused on a process of complete renovation. He calls for a new formulation of the objectives of urban design, objectives that will serve the common people rather than serving the interests and private profits of a small number of sharks.

It is only in recent decades that attention has (increasingly) been paid to thinking about urban planning in Belgium, as organisations in Flanders have become all too aware of the preciousness of space.

Today, Belgium wrestles – like most of the world – with the prospect of demographic explosion, mass migration, and any number of ecological tensions that will inevitably impact on accommodation, the environment, public space, and mobility. To improve the quality of our surroundings, we must look at our heritage, at nature, and at physical structures such as soil, relief, soil hydrology, and landscape.

Both architects and artists are playing an ever greater role in finding answers to these questions. They do so at sym-

posia and think tanks addressing issues of heritage, demographic explosion and planning. One of their conclusions is that there is a need to look across the borders for better urban planning, to the expanded area of the Rhine-Meuse-Scheldt delta, which might include Brussels and Wallonia, and parts of France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Braem referred to this need in his essay from 1968: “Concerning the basis, the economic substructure, it seems to me that it is impossible not to take account of the fact that Belgium is leant against the industrial region of the Ruhr, the industrial zone of Northern France, and the metallurgy of Luxembourg, as well as being well-connected to Dutch industries, roads, streams and channels.”

Modernist notions of creating ideal cities for people have generally failed to adapt to the needs of the people. Usually, a successful city allows inhabitants to be what they want to be and live how they want to live.

Architects can learn from the inhabitants who use the space. One radical example is Torre de David, the third tallest skyscraper in Caracas, built but never completed by the architect Enrique Gómez. This office building was left abandoned in 1993 following the death of developer David Brillembourg and the economic crisis in Venezuela. Today, 750 families live there illegally, making their home in an unfinished building without elevators, electricity, or running water. Families have decorated and adapted according to community needs, building walls, shops, and leisure facilities. Through engagement and by developing their own craftsmanship, squatters have built a self-sustainable social community for themselves without the supervision of architects.

Listening to inhabitants and ‘listening’ to the space are central to the work of a2o-architecten in Hasselt, Belgium. Their office occupies a symbolic position in an international region with links to the surreal, post-industrial Belgian landscape and its network of ribbon roads and city centres.

Working from within the cross-border Euroregion zone, they ask the question how to improve our quality of life, not just in the city, but also beyond. Founded in 2000 by Jo Belen, Jo Berben, Ingrid Mees, and Luc Vanmuysen, a2o has now expanded to include 7 partners (Jo Berben, Huub Donkers, Stefaan Evers, Bart Hoylaerts, Ingrid Mees, Wout Sorgeloos and Luc Vanmuysen,) and 35 staff. a2o values the group above the individual, and they explore the issue of how to expand cooperative thinking. They also want to know how architects can be enabled to recapture

the lost essence, to go back to the roots of pure craftsmanship and work more closely with materials. As Richard Sennett suggests, we can all learn the skills of an instrument maker or musician through hours and hours of practice, but commitment and time are key: “the craftsman exemplifies the special human condition of being engaged”.

Long-term vision, engagement and respect for our surroundings are essential to a2o’s thinking. In addition to ‘engagement’, conceptual keywords include ‘smart plan’, ‘evocative’ and ‘appropriateness’ (sustainability). The question now is to see if and how these keywords can help provide possible solutions to the planning difficulties currently faced in urban and rural areas.

a2o proposes a ‘smart plan’; a plan that strives for simplicity (and yet also complexity) in craftsmanship. Flexible thinking is crucial, and when designing a new building, they are already thinking ahead to the possible future renovation of the building. To this end, they employ a skeletal structure and (in a way that matches the way in which the Torre de David is used), they design hybrid buildings that offer a counterbalance to the near ubiquitous mono-functional buildings that surround us. In Leuven, for example, a2o has built student homes that can later be transformed into apartments or even offices (Guesthouse Herman Servotte, KUL, Leuven, 2003–2005). Back in 1966, with his *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, Robert Venturi was already proposing the need for an architecture built to accommodate change over time. That need has persisted, but what other ways may there be for exploring solutions?

Existing space, landscape and buildings are always the starting point, and a2o looks to integrate architecture within the landscape and the urban context. More specifically, they aim to construct buildings that are appropriate to the context, where all aspects of the building are connective and affiliated. a2o is interested in how different cultural actors look at space and context, and they work together with artists, such as Nick Ervinck, as well as philosophers, designers, sociologists, and filmmakers, in a variety of combinations that seek to find appropriate forms of cooperation to suit particular contexts.

To learn from inhabitants, architects need to develop their senses. They need to develop an attitude aimed at ‘appropriateness’. ‘Appropriateness’ only exists when there is a relationship between the needs of the user, the client and the site. Eschewing ‘displaced’ or ‘uprooted’ architecture, a2o started listening to the space, to the social, scientific,

cultural and historical background of the site and is considering its heritage, producing context-sensitive architecture that takes the residents into account.

In 2008, a2o underlined this attitude by moving into a former grain silo which they converted into their base of operations. The building and location both illustrate their way of thinking and manner of working. Facing the Albert canal (which connects Antwerp with Liège in northeastern Belgium), they literally look out over the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion.

The project follows their four key working concepts: ‘engagement’, ‘evocative’, ‘appropriateness’ and ‘smart plan’, or sticking to the essentials. They have taken the existing construction and integrated a new function without losing the soul of the former building.

Nestling by the canal side, a2o inhabits a place for designing and thinking about urban planning and architecture. It is only a matter of time before they contribute to the public debate with their field of expertise.

(1)

Engagement
On profundity and a sense of perspective

REFERENCES

(1) cover
Geert Van Istendael (1995), *Architectuur en Geweten*, p. 105, vzw Architectuurwijzer

(2) Maastrichtersteenweg, Hasselt (2007–2008)
Attention for high-quality subsidised housing in the centre of town. The staircase that reaches all levels of the two volumes was built as an open indoor/outdoor space, clad with wooden strips. This results in an attractive semi-public opening up at all levels.

(3) John Thackara (2010), *Plan B Ontwerpen in een complexe wereld*, p. 17, SUN Statements, Amsterdam, SUN Publishers.

In *Architectuur en Geweten* (architecture and conscience), published in 1995 by VZW ArchitectuurWijzer, Geert Van Istendael (1) states:

" …It is extremely foolish to adapt something as permanent as a building (stone, wood, iron, concrete) to something as transient as the casual needs of a particular moment. It is just as silly as getting married because you happen to have fallen head over heels in love. No, it is sillier, much sillier. Demolishing a house is more difficult than getting a divorce. And there is no such thing as secret adultery in architecture. The architect's conscience must be carpeted wall-to-wall with modesty. It is expressed in various ways. There is technical skill. This is not what I doubt. But time and again I see architects getting hopelessly addicted to the trend of the moment. In this, they are completely unreasonable. Whoever dares to contradict them, is an idiot, backward, grown up in the sticks. There is no room for arguing, because there is no argument behind the trend, only a dogma. A pitiful smile is the unfashionable opponent's lot, and tomorrow the trend will be different again, but just as unrelenting.
This would not be so bad if architects wrote poems or performed pop songs. Bad poetry and bad music quickly disappear in the beneficent silence of oblivion. Buildings stay. Bad buildings should fill the architects' consciences, press upon them, hurt, massively, relentlessly, for years and years and years, exactly like bad buildings, obstinate poor buildings, it's all they can do – fill the shy passer-by's perspective. And irritate and hurt, even though this passer-by no longer realises, because he has been numbed for too long. A waterproof roof, some comfortable rooms, a useful kitchen, it need not be more…."

One who has studied architecture, has learned a craft. The most important choices to be made in practice, are choices about engagement. The 'craft' can be learned, engagement is an attitude. We, as architects, constantly make choices that affect the environment. Architecture is a public matter. We believe therefore that the power of restraint is much more important than the desire to shine. We think that the public role is a serving one.

In an increasingly sensitive context, the social, cultural and ecological footprint of a building is no longer without consequences. Solidarity, cultural embedding and participation are indispensible. Space, labour and resources are precious (and in the case of resources, finite). Every design action must be justified. (2) Nothing can be free of engagement.

Thorough engagement implies being able to say 'no' to assignments that favour quantity above quality.

- We must be critical against the constant consumption of space.
- We must cherish urbanity.
- We must look for systems that allow us to treat ecology, privacy and accessibility with respect within the urban context.
- We must develop sufficient social spaces. Not only in the streets, but also in buildings, like smart collective spaces.
- We must redefine green spaces. Not only 'ornamental green', but also 'for use and decoration' like in our cities during the Middle Ages. Green as food, green as wasteland to play, green as shadow, green as a meeting place, as a city's lungs.
- We must bring the qualities of the countryside into the city, to entice people to come and live in cities. This way, the city will renew itself.
- We must share work, living, traffic, green, food, health care and education, thus 'remixing' the city.
- We must combine existing elements in a new way, and search for new connections.

We will need to design 'connectively' to promote accessibility of the city. This way, the city becomes recognisable, interpretable and attractive. The city is searching for new beauty. The scientific power of research in the field of building technology, building physics, and energy and materials science has never boomed like it does today. New developments abound in journals on architecture and technology. Integrated, smart solutions are possible. Sustainability and technology are no longer mutually exclusive. But the baseline remains that we should concentrate more on people than on things.

In *Plan B, ontwerpen in een complexe wereld* (Plan B, designing in a complex world) (3), John Thackara explains a method that could work for a city today. He describes how, in a delicate way, a city's uninspired developments can be adjusted. Not with grand visions of the future, moralism, or major new efforts. But by fine-tuning the life-supporting systems. Thackara: "We should learn to think with a great sense of nuance, connect (think connectively), act and start processes." Complex systems such as our cities can no longer be directed or planned from the top down. Today, we are able to adjust small integrated systems with microscopic detail. Systems that might remix an entire city tomorrow. Thackara incites us to be resolute by:

(2)

– Thinking about the consequences of design activities before carrying them out, and looking very carefully at the natural, industrial and cultural systems that constitute the context of our design activities.
– Taking into account the materials and energy flows for all systems that we design.
– Giving priority to human action and not to treat humans as a ‘factor’ in a larger whole.
– Delivering added value to people instead of systems.
– Treating ‘content’ as something you do, not something you sell.
– Treating local, temporal and cultural differences as positive values, instead of obstacles.
– Focussing on services, not on things, and no longer flooding the world with useless devices.

Thackara states that the transition to sustainability causes a cultural shift. A shift towards ‘lightness’ as a cultural criterion for the changes that need to be made. Not like in flight or in a dream, as something irrational. But as looking at the world from a different perspective, a different logic and with fresh methods of knowing and verifying. Lightness is then accompanied by precision and determination. It is the fresh view of a designer-craftsman who reveals the hidden.

This shift should take place with a certain slowness and thoroughness. It is usually a question of teamwork; by sharing implicit knowledge among craftsmen. This methodology is at odds with the mechanical and the transitory. The joy of looking for connections is an innate quality of the designer-craftsman. It constitutes the system in which head and hands work together: the idea and the sketch. It finds its bliss in the concrete and is therefore universal.

LANDSCAPE PLAN. PHASE 1 ‘GULDEN BODEM’

Residential Landscape

Master plan for new urban development
Gulden Bodem
Sint-Truiden, Belgium
2008–2017

The master plan aims to unite the peripheral and agricultural areas around Sint-Truiden's town centre in a sound way. Alternating country zones and residential zones is a strategy to, on the one hand, bring and keep the characteristic countryside close to the centre of Sint-Truiden, and on the other hand to provide sufficient space for compression. To achieve these objectives, our master plan attempts to mediate between countryside and built-up area.

The urban expansion concerned, is grafted onto the countryside's morphology. Citizens will have to be able to still experience the countryside's characteristics. The boundary with the countryside is pushed forward. The original countryside consists of meadows and fruit culture, with small, sometimes even historic, orchards. The name of the location speaks for itself: 'gulden bodem' (golden soil).

GROUND PLAN ‘GULDEN BODEM’

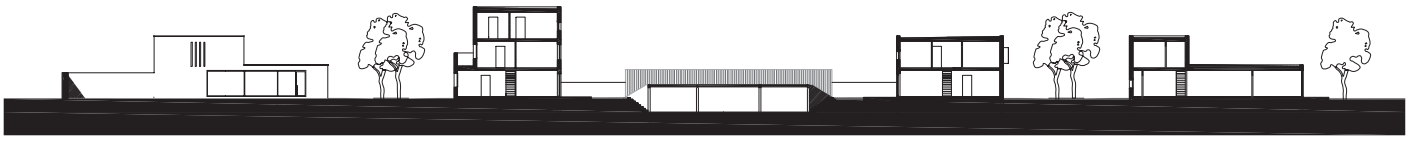
0 100 m

The project area is wedge-shaped and is located between two ribbon roads that leave from the town centre. The town's spatial structure plan opts for a soft link, supported by sufficient amounts of vegetation. In our view, the green space is interpreted as opening up the existing countryside and enriching the countryside vocabulary, using a few targeted interventions in terms of water management, occupational quality, et cetera. The wedge shape is not cut by the opening up of the residential zones. The residential zones do not generate any traffic that does not belong there. Some of the old tractor tracks are reused as soft links for cyclists and pedestrians.

From this mosaic of meadows, orchards and built-up zones, a transition is made between the town of Sint-Truiden and its surrounding countryside, consisting primarily of small villages and landscape development.
The residential zones are characterised by typologies that seek a relationship with the countryside. They have a small scale and a view of the green fields. Each residential zone distinguishes itself by a unique morphology and each 'green field' is determined by the relationship with the surrounding countryside elements.

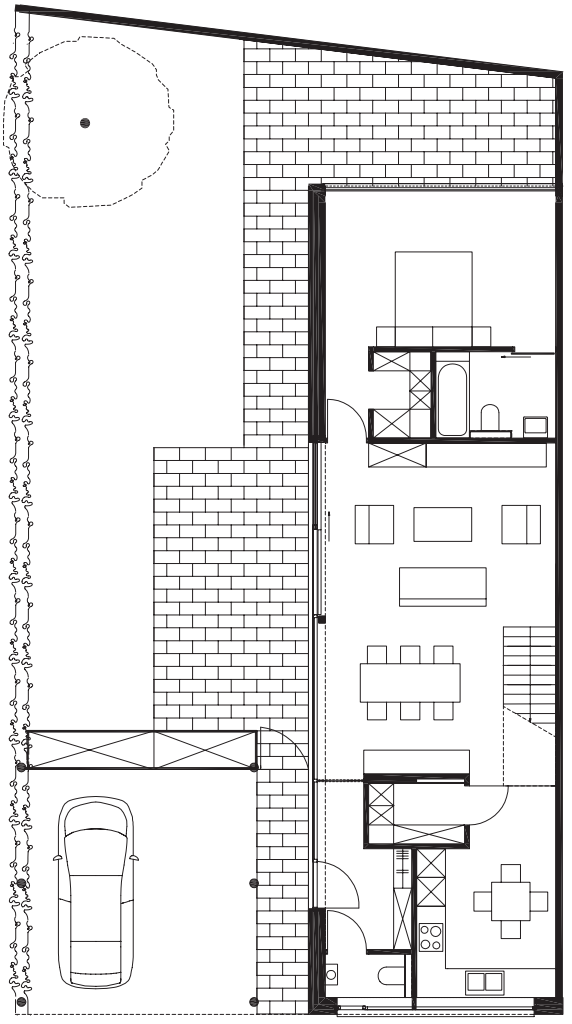
The entire development takes place in three phases. In the first phase, there is a mixture of patio houses, residential houses and some small communal housing projects. In the case of the patio houses, the boundary between houses and countryside consists of garden walls and hedges. The residential houses face the square and a private garden. The small communal housing projects consist of stacked apartments with very large balconies, completely surrounded by the countryside.

Special attention has been paid to lifelong living. Some of the houses have been designed in such a way that they can be split. When the children have left home, the upper floor can be closed off and accessed separately.

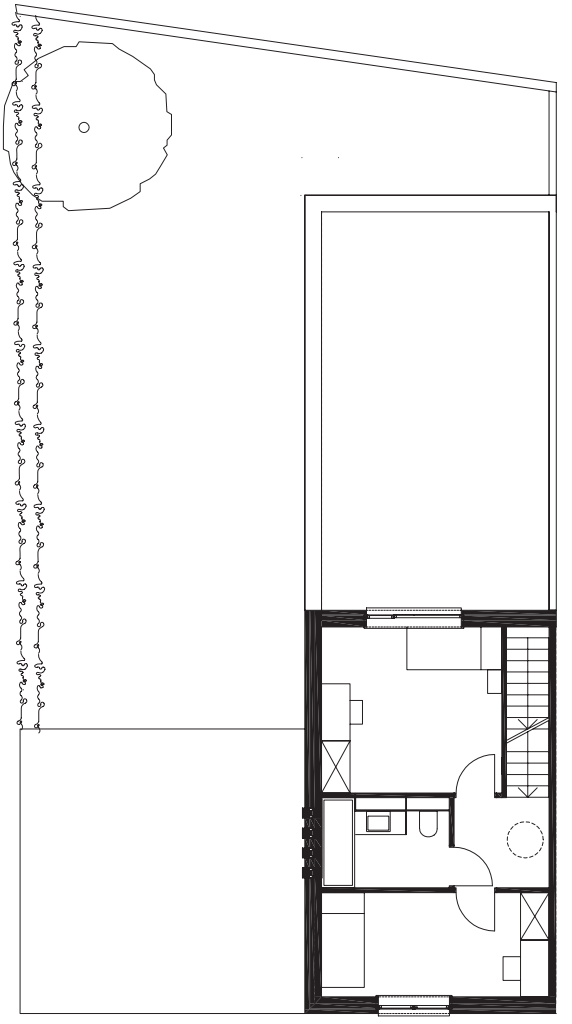


SITE CROSS-SECTION

0 10 m



GROUND FLOOR OF SCALABLE HOUSE



FIRST FLOOR OF SCALABLE HOUSE

0 2 m

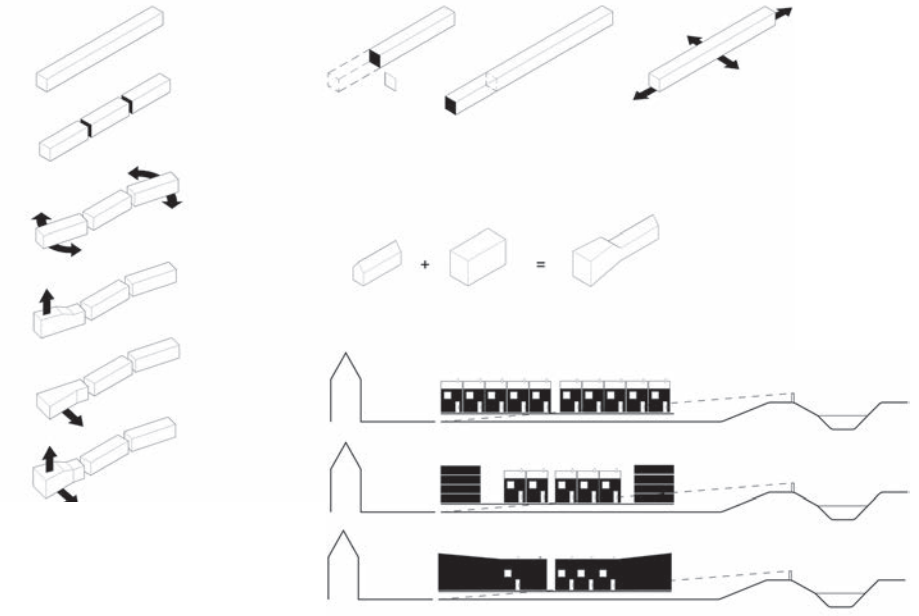
VIEW OF GREEN FIELD

LIVELY STREET IN RESIDENTIAL ZONE

PERSPECTIVE ALONG MAIN AXIS OF SION SITE

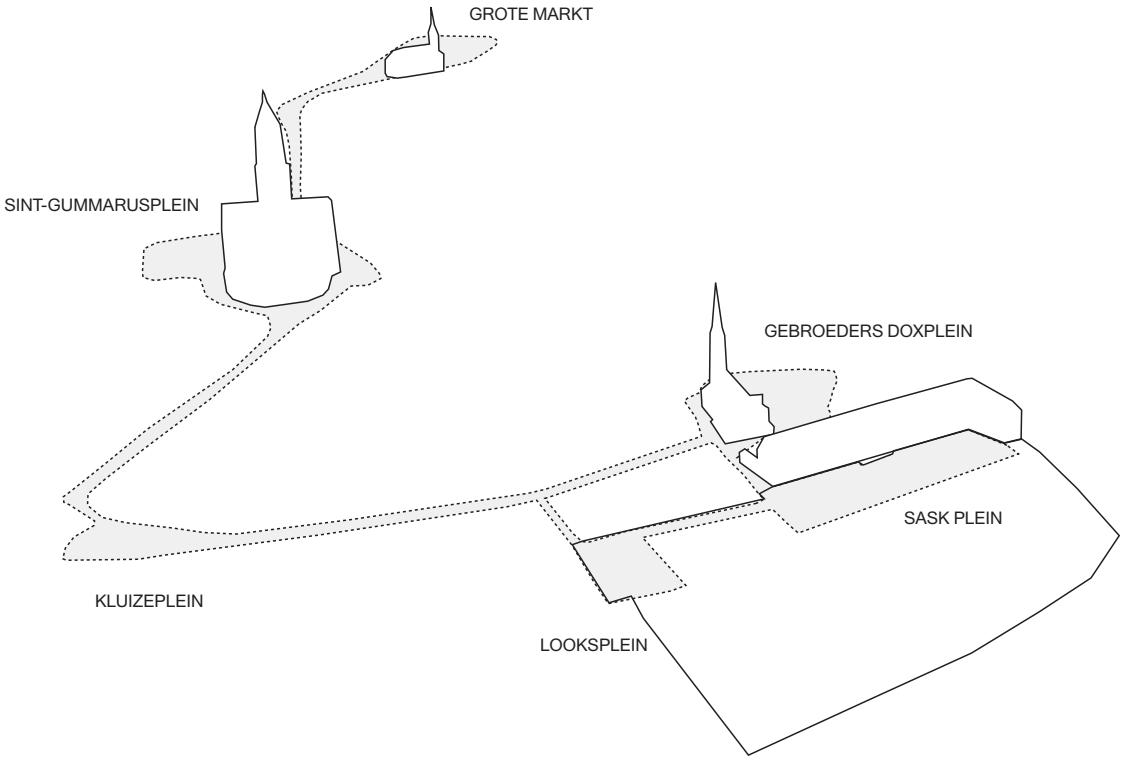
Transparent Compression

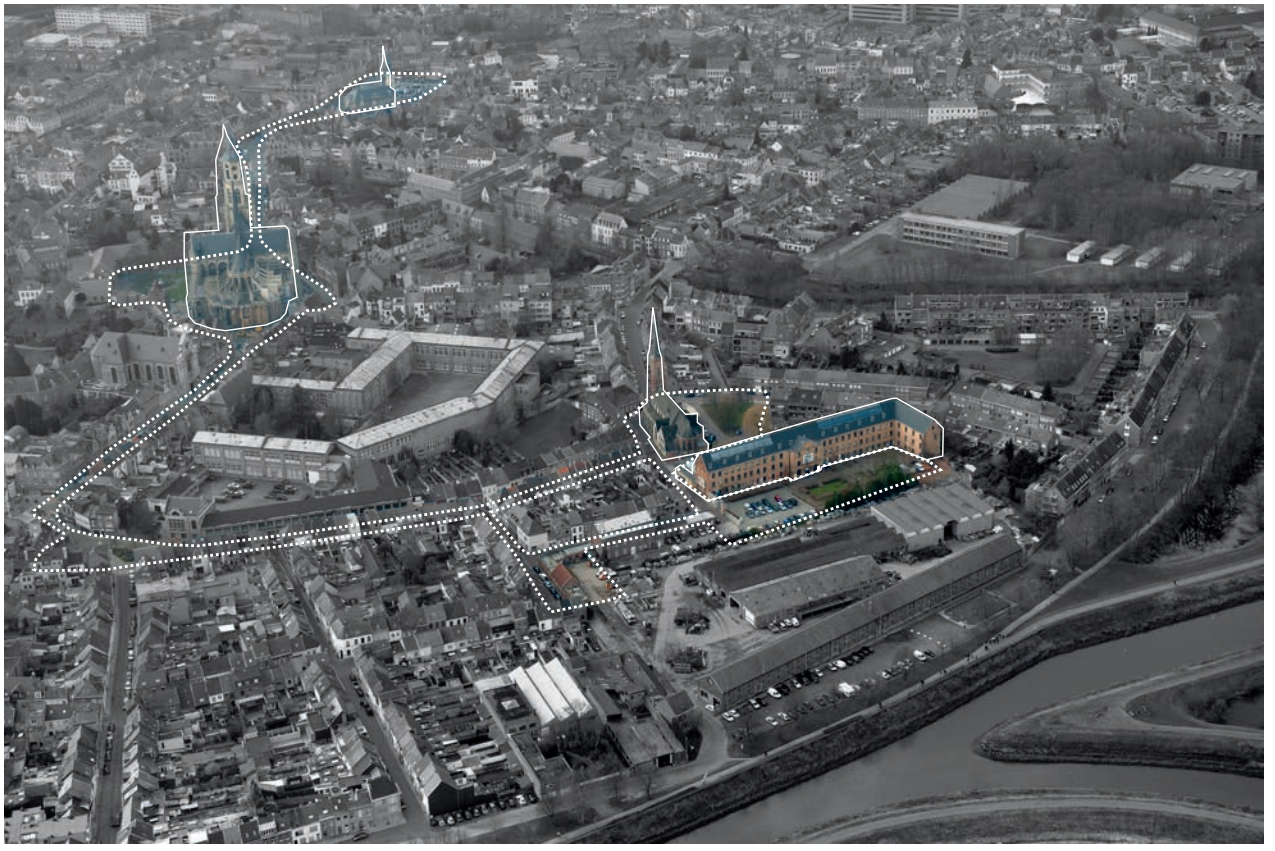
Master plan for 144 housing units, an extension of the academy and a design for the public domain Sion
Lier, Belgium
2010–2017



The design for the Sion project comprises a set of interconnected streets and squares in the centre of Lier and consists of a diverse housing programme.
The site is located on the eastern side of Lier, bordering on the old ramparts, where two small rivers – the Grote Nete and the Kleine Nete – merge. It is a location where the water structures and soil conditions allowed hardly any building in the past.
From the top of the ramparts, a few metres above the surrounding land, the view of the countryside and the town centre is very open. The master plan here creates the link between the centre of Lier and the nature-based character of the ramparts and the Nete valley.

The design is characterised by a high degree of layering. The ‘urban’ scale is adopted from the town, while the countryside strengthens the relationship with the water. The banks are linked by a small pedestrian bridge, and the view of the countryside





ANALYSIS OF LINKED SQUARE SPACES

from the Classicist building that houses SASK (the visual arts academy) is retained. The scale of the medieval town is preserved in the rhythm of parallel strips perpendicular to the ramparts and linking the ramparts, the city gate and the Sion site.

The plan includes a number of small squares, linked to the existing squares in town like a string of pearls. The plan, playing with exciting short-cuts, special niches and closed perspectives, provides high-quality living quarters, play areas, et cetera.
The relief of the terrain is used to guarantee accessibility from the ramparts. On the edges of the project, solutions seamlessly connect to the existing situation. This can be by allowing gardens to border on other gardens, or by completing the construction of an existing building block with a new facade.

De building strips define the intermediate area. This results in a stretched space with a two-sided orientation. On the one side there is the town, on the other side the Nete valley. At the extremities, the orientation of the houses is turned at right angles, and the squares (at the town side) and the banks of the Nete (at the ramparts side) receive a striking facade. The strips have been divided, creating short-cuts and informal paths.
The blocks are staggered a little, or turned slightly, to give the interspace the proper scale and direction. A building strip contains single-family dwellings, council apartments as well as regular apartments.

The facades have a uniform design, their colours being adapted to the town's colours. Entrances were emphasised, south-facing roof terraces were built in. The far ends of the building blocks are funnel-shaped. Wide, open views of the town of the countryside. Facades and roofing are both made of ceramic material and their colours are matched. The facades of the transections are consistently white. This lends a homogeneous character to the area. Light, accessibility, and privacy appear obvious conditions. During the design process, special attention was paid to these concepts. In particular to ensure sufficient pleasant daylight, by a proper orientations. Ensuring accessibility by consistently using entrances without thresholds and providing apartments that can be accessed by wheelchair users, and lastly guaranteeing a good balance between the public and the private character. The entire location is a pedestrian zone, thanks to a large underground car park.
In addition to this project, there will be an extension of the academy at the end of the SASK square. This contains a number of workshops, classrooms and studios for the visual arts. This building has a modest presence and follows the contours of the site.

The public domain is a mixture of green zones and paved squares, suitable for all target groups. The small-scale approach ensures a contemporary fit in the urban context, as well as a compression of the town, while retaining sufficient public meeting places, linked within a single urban district.

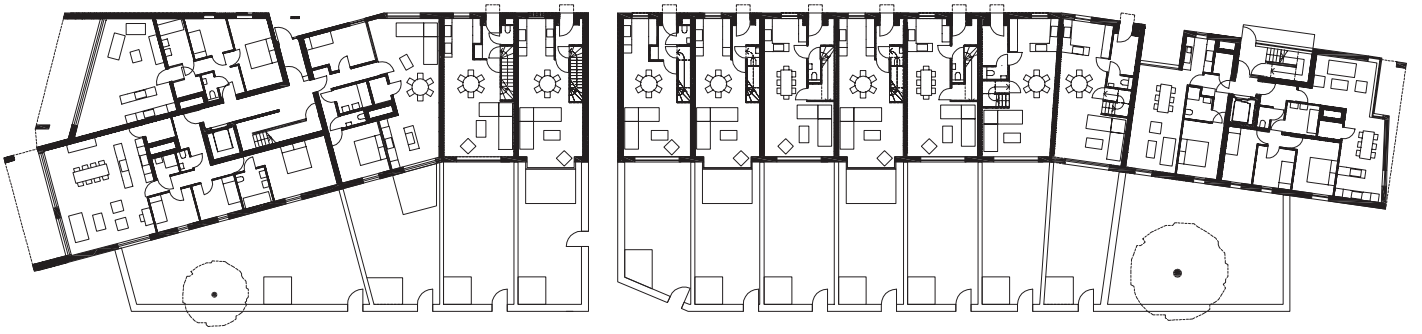
NICK ERVINCK – EGATONK, 2009

AERIAL VIEW OF LIER. NEW SITUATION

MASTER PLAN SKETCH

SITE CROSS-SECTION

0 20 m



CONCEPT FLOOR PLAN. GROUND FLOOR

0 10 m

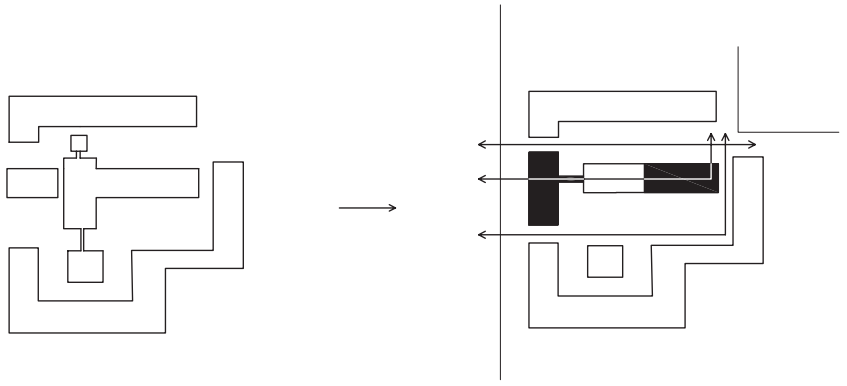
SASK EXTENSION FROM SASK SQUARE

INTERIOR OF SASK EXTENSION

NEW WING. PHOTO: GREGORY HUWART

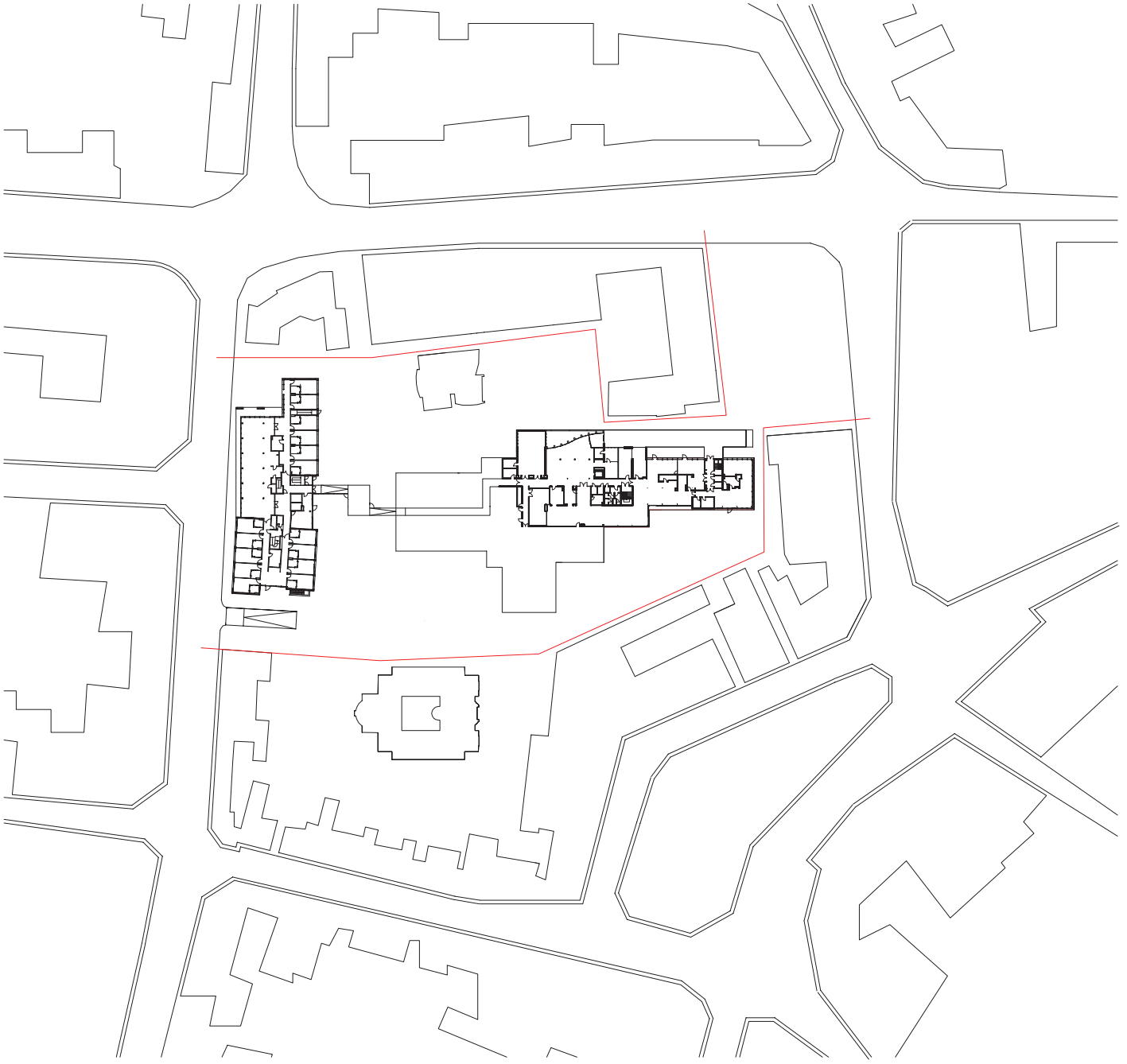
A New Face

Renovation and newly built part of the Sint-Jozef rest home
Neerpelt, Belgium
2005–2015



The combination of living, health care and services is becoming increasingly important.
Living together is caring together. This poses a manifold task: a technical task (building), a planning task (quality of the environment), and a social task (social interaction and permanent participation).

The Sint-Jozef residential and health care centre is located in the middle of the village, enclosed by a block of houses. This situation offered the inhabitants a quiet living environment, but also created an isolated existence, which had an effect on their social involvement.
In addition to renovating the existing building, the urban development situation was revised by adding new buildings on both sides (at the Onderwijslaan and the Kloosterhof), which link up again with the village structure of Neerpelt. The connection between the existing buildings and the new ones, is provided as a



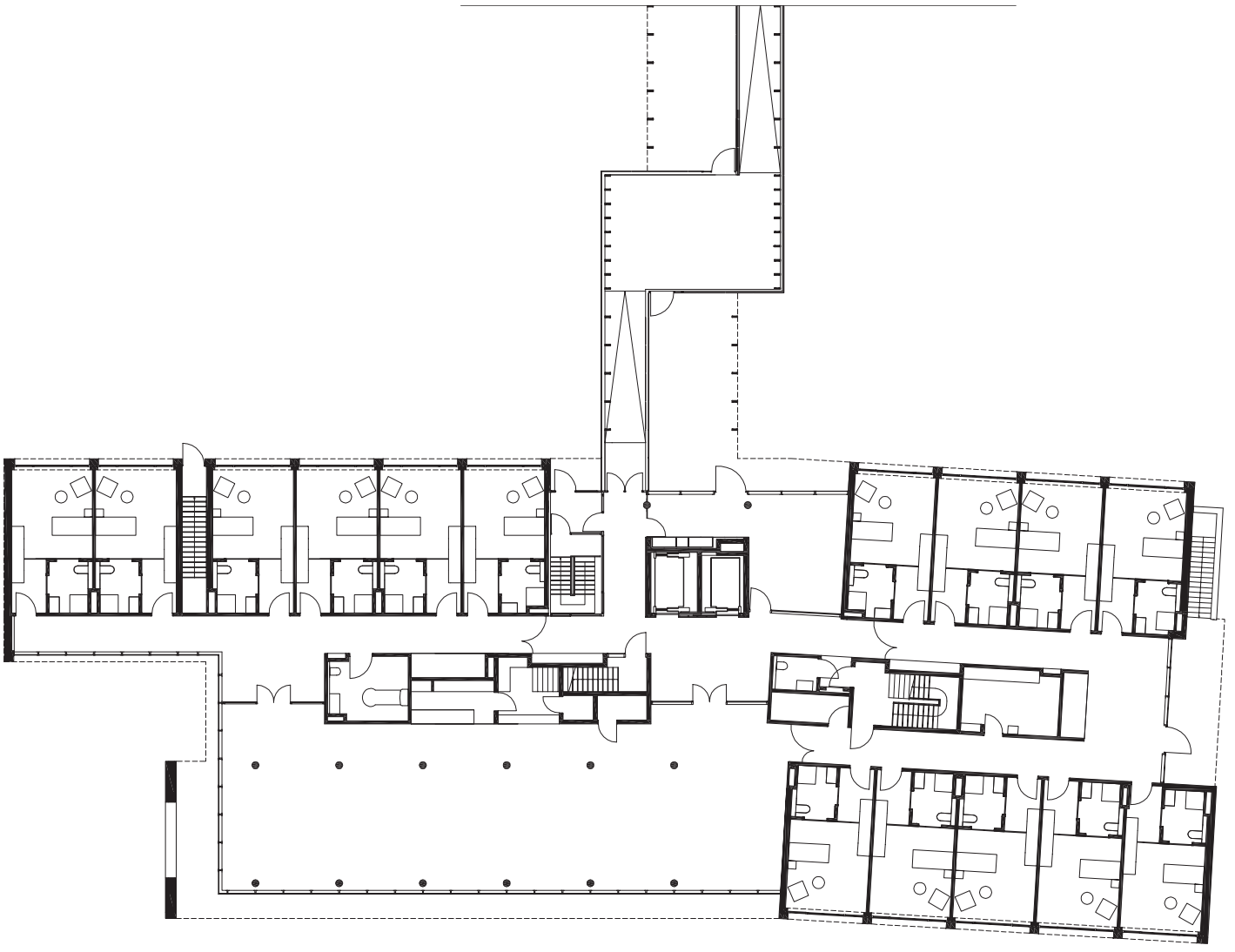
NEW SITUATION

0 50 m

double-T intersection. This intersection houses a glazed veranda with direct access to the communal outdoor space and the terraces.

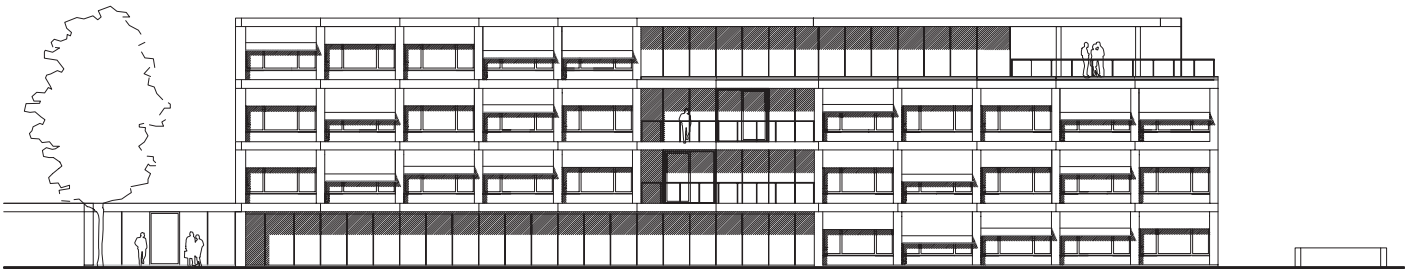
Considering the limited mobility of the inhabitants, the communal functions are linked to the outdoor areas with a public character. These areas have an entry-friendly, accessible nature. The entrance near the Sooi Willemsplein has a large porch. The entire site is a restricted-traffic zone and laid out as a strolling park. By creating a connection between the Sooi Willemsplein and the Onderwijslaan, access to the inner area is guaranteed. The back becomes the front.

To support the coherence of the renovated rest home, the same materials and colours were used for both buildings. The range of colours is primarily based on white and light grey, combined with warm wood elements. The glass surfaces in the rooms are maximised, to emphasise the relationship between indoor and outdoor. For the renovated part, the existing structure was retained and a system of corridors with rooms on both sides was installed. In the new part, this traditional corridor structure was abandoned and the rooms were given a nice anteroom. The use of public rooms as accommodation is optimised. Based on the familiar domestic scene: the kitchen-cum-living room is centred around an open-plan kitchen. All of this helps create a recognisable, homely atmosphere in the health care centre.



GROUND FLOOR. NEW WING

0 10 m



STREET FACADE

0 10 m

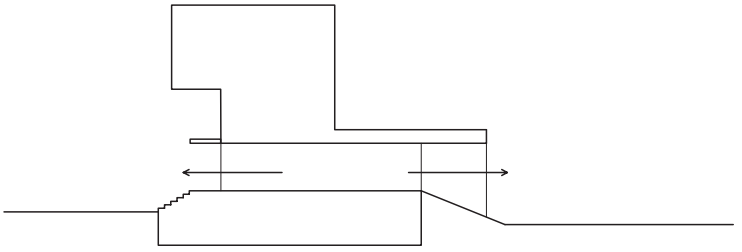
FACADE FRAGMENT. PHOTO: NIELS DONCKERS

VIEW OF INNER GARDEN

HOUSE IN BLANKENBERGE, BELGIUM

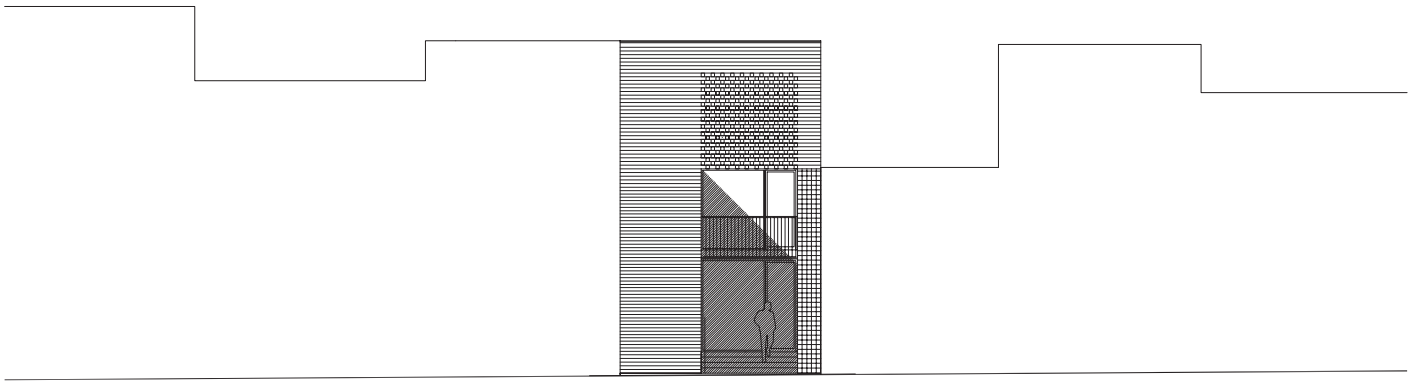
Public View

Design for a house in the station district
Hasselt, Belgium
2006–2010



A high-quality station environment and sustainable mobility developments are a theme in every Belgian city today. Within the framework of station development in Hasselt, design agency West8 drew up a master plan. The master plan provides for developments directly related to the station itself, but also in the peripheral zone. Just like in the other regional capitals, the station district is becoming an increasingly essential part of urban life. This also intensifies the relationship between the city districts adjacent to the station.

One of the results is the creation of a new district to the south of the train tracks in the Runkst area. This master plan was also created by West8. Around a newly created park, a generous gesture in relation to the district, single-family dwellings and apartments are built.
In varying setups, shoulder to shoulder, as if this was a natural Belgian growth model, a team of 4 architect agencies



FACADE

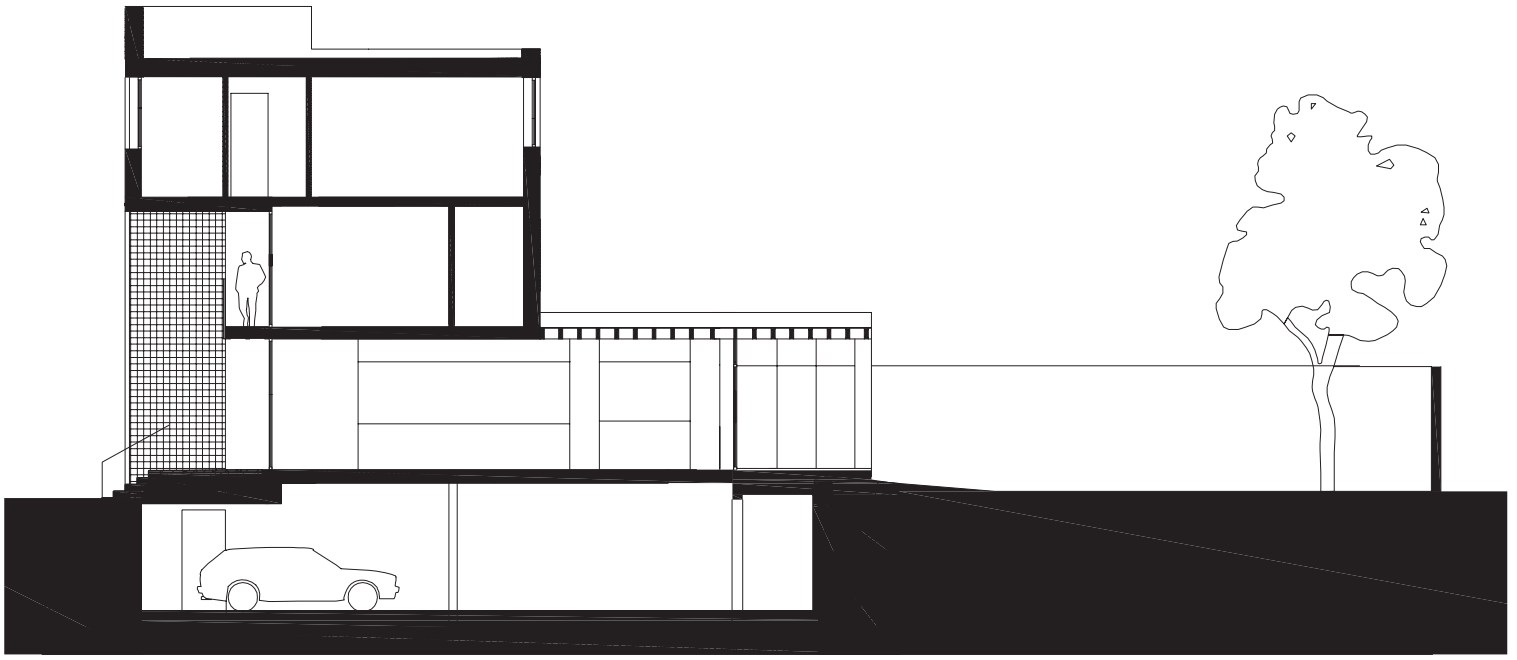
0 5 m

(m2-architecten, Cleuren-Mercken, Crepain-Binst architecten, and a2o) drew up the details. A composition of harmonically suited individual designs.

One of the houses is a three-storey single-family dwelling, built on top of a communal underground car park with individually lockable parking spaces. The house has a width of five metres. Sufficient for stacking a living area, an area for the parents and an area for two children's rooms on top of one another.
The house stands ostentatiously alongside the park, with an encapsulated balcony cut from the volume across two floors. The walls are covered with multicoloured ceramic tiles.

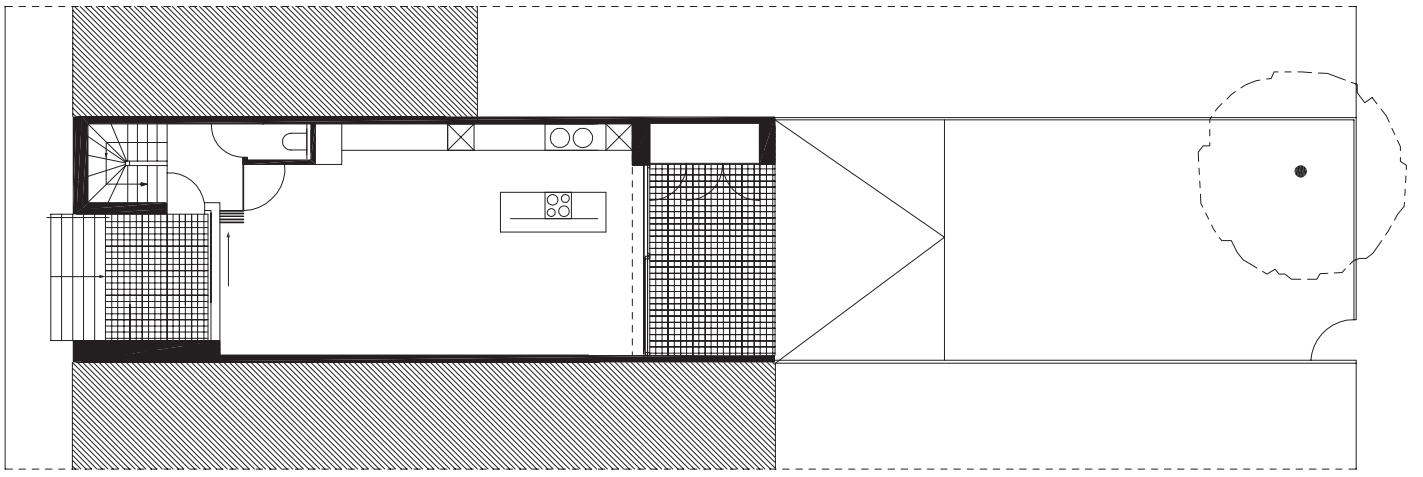
The balcony extends 70 cm above ground level and refers to the showy balconies on the Belgian coast from the period between the two World Wars. In those days, the inhabitants enjoyed a view of the parading citizens in the streets and on the fronts of Oostende or Blankenberge.

Here, in the Runkst district, previously stigmatised as the city's working class area, the owners now relax in the sun on their enclosed balcony, overlooking a park with cedar trees. This antechamber of their house is rich and inviting. The ground floor is deep and transparent. The height of the floor is spacious.
The floor plan is simple and comfortable. A single grand gesture places the house in the perfect position.
Here the new young citizen who commutes between Hasselt and Brussels, finds a spacious single-family dwelling at walking distance from the station in a new, pleasant environment.

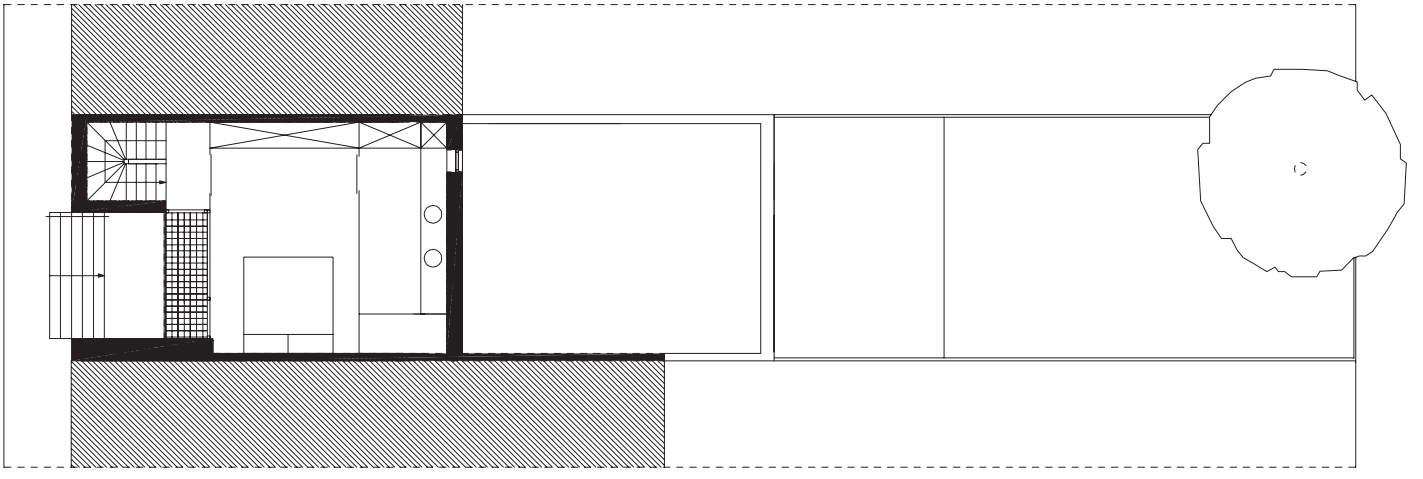


SECTION

0 5 m



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

0 5 m

NICK ERVINCK – NIARGTZAG, 2012

2

Quartier Canal

Appropriateness

Wooden Wing
Silent World
Street-facing Rooms
Hortus Conclusus

Quartier Canal

The Belgian landscape is scattered, with spatial entities such as the Flemish Rhomb and the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. These regions constitute our natural research domain. Within this domain, we – as architects – will need to come up with strategies for compressing urban areas, and where possible for developing the countryside.

The latter is of particular importance for the Euroregion, where the countryside dominates the urban zones. Powerful landscapes such as the Meuse valley, the rich soil of the undulating Haspengouw, the poor soil of the flat and sandy Kempen, are characteristic for this region. There is a need for research into the development of the countryside and the way in which we should approach the built-up areas. Within this framework, blindly partitioning open spaces – the art of parcelling that we Belgians have perfected – can never be part of a sustainability strategy, however 'green' the resulting buildings may be. There are urban and suburban areas in which less visible economic and social processes take place that can be used to truly work on sustainability.

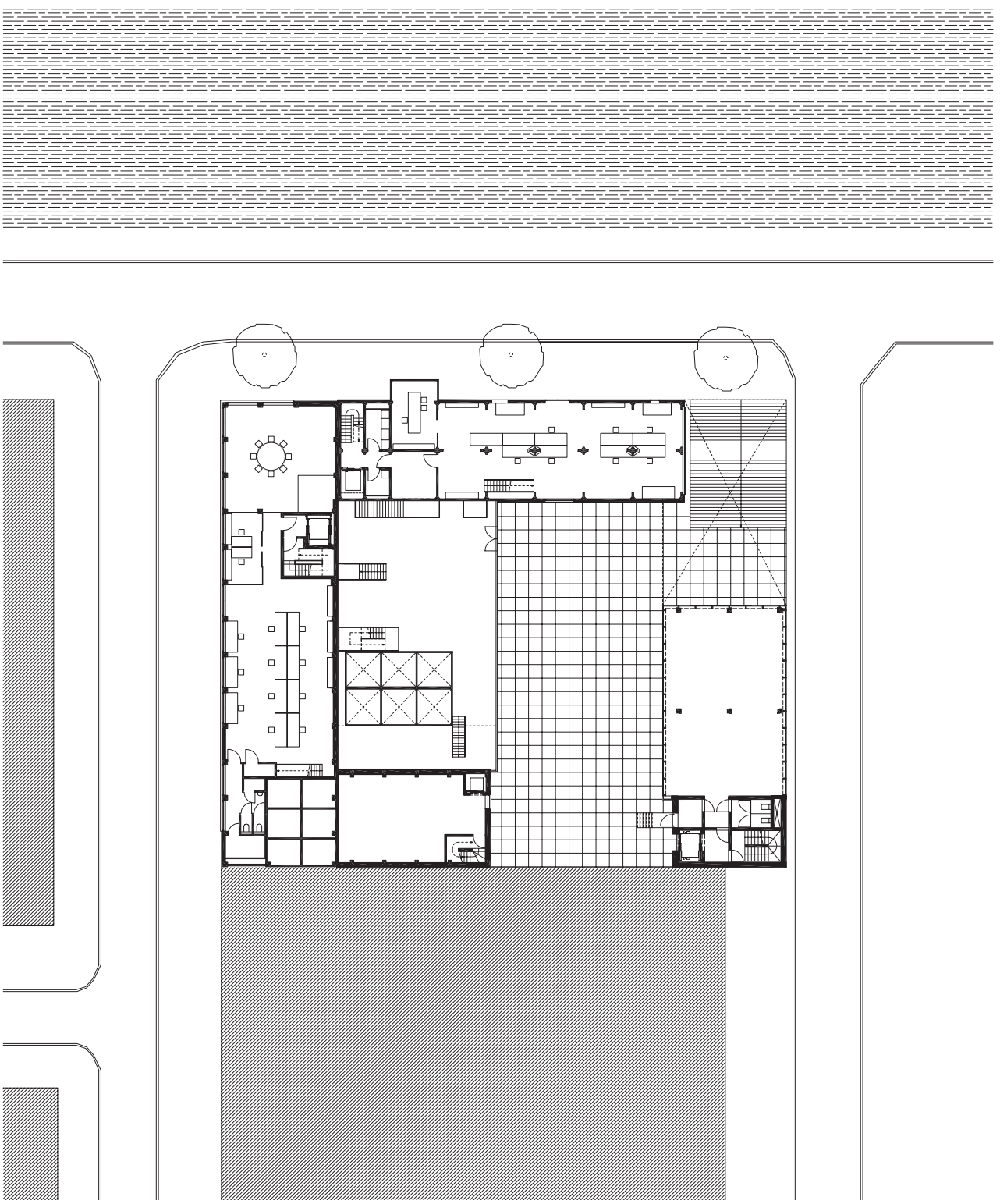
We shape our own mission, in the design and construction of our offices in the Hasselt canal zone, which was completed in 2008. We show our alternative work process, which is at odds with the urge of parcelling.
Having chosen a project in an unusual and unexpected context, it became clear how this can be achieved in a small town such as Hasselt, where the 'urban sprawl' is also present. The highly parcelled industrial zone, in which this project is situated, is an area in transition. Under the pressure of urban development, this area is merging with the city and is slowly becoming a city district. a2o joins this process of transformation and recuperation, and wants to work at the limits of what is possible. We call this district the 'Quartier Canal'. The merge with the city is not achieved by creating

QUARTIER CANAL

CULTURAL AXIS

1. QUARTIER CANAL
2. DE SILO
3. SCHOOL CAMPUS: ART SCHOOL
4. EXHIBITION ROOM Z33

0 500 m



DE SILO. FIRST FLOOR

0 5 m

a tabula rasa. The hybrid character of the city district is checked and developed. The mixture of functions is clear by the combination of industrial buildings, offices, laboratories, educational establishments and cultural developments, such as the arts centre, a former mill, which now houses a2o.

As can be seen from the way in which this building was renovated, connectivity is the permanent application of our investigative architecture practice. The challenge for Quartier Canal is setting up a project in which various links are made – socially as well as culturally and spatially.
In doing so, Quartier Canal steps into the tradition of projects such as the Buda island in Kortrijk and the Wiels site in Brussels.
The area is located on a spatial axis, which links the Begijnhof, the Z33 provincial museum for contemporary art, the provincial library, the art and architecture departments of the local University College with the canal zone – or Quartier Canal. It is the far end of the cultural axis that traverses the city. This axis can be developed by taking on a number of 'missing links', such as reappraising the public domain between its two extremities, improving cycling and pedestrian routes, making it easier to cross the outer ring road, adapting the public transport infrastructure (including existing bus stops), supporting the connections using appropriate signs and lighting; in short, upgrading the canal zone as a public domain. There is still work to be done, but the foundations have been laid.

In the meantime, the Quartier Canal has become a busy spot. The relative functional emptiness of this canal zone allowed such a development. At an earlier stage, the Muziek-O-Droom (MOD, a platform for music, performances and education) established itself in an adjacent building, surrounded by numerous deserted industrial premises. This music centre has since then been extended with the PHL University College's Pop and Rock Academy. At a stone's throw, a little further down along the quay, the creative enterprise zone 'Kaai 16' is developing.

Both Kaai 16 and De Silo are private initiatives and were created without any public funding. We transformed the site of the former grain processing company into an inspiring working environment. It is now a centre for applied arts and creative professions.
In addition to a2o-architecten it also houses Commun.sense (an advertising agency specialising in direct marketing), Kixx (e-marketing), an antiquarian bookshop, the Yar (Youth at risk) Vlaanderen social organisation, and the cultural organisations De Queeste (theatre company), Villa Basta (a

youth arts centre) and Studio Silo (multimedia training for youngsters).

Around the same time, in the city of Genk, the C-Mine project was launched in the buildings of the former Winterslag coal mine. It shows that the idea of the creative city is contemporary and ubiquitous. Performed with surgical precision and having sufficient support in society, it acts as a driving force behind urban renewal.

We have turned De Silo into a sustainable development experiment. We used the existing building as an exercise in recuperation architecture and the new parts as an exercise in prefabricated timber frame architecture.

De Silo has a spatial impact on the surrounding site. The building runs parallel to the Albert Canal. Apertures were made in the twelve existing grain silos and new floors were installed, which now determine the spatial dimensions of the architectural firm's offices. The incisions in the concrete – scars testifying to the brutal intervention – remained untouched. The other concrete surfaces were painted white to distribute the light, and thus create a clear and tranquil atmosphere. At ground level, the funnel mouths of the individual silos are still visible. The floor above has metal grids, providing a view into the concrete chutes. In the same brutal way, we cut the new window openings in the canal-side facade. The end facade was completely opened up and offers a view of the canal. A view that changes every day, with every season.
The steel stairs and the lift were painted red/black. All interventions in the existing building are visible, in their plain commonness.

The combination of existing and new materials makes you want to touch this not inherently cuddly building. We also allowed ourselves some luxury. Not the luxury that comes from the decadent use of materials, but luxury in the form of purely functional space: more than enough room to do research design, but also 'surplus space' that enables a drastic internal reorganisation of the building through relatively simple interventions.

Today, for example, two of the six levels serve as plateaus for the architectural teams. This may change from one day to the next. Lastly, there is also ample room for dialogue and a space for reflection. The latter effect is reinforced by the soothing interior, together with the view of the canal and the nearby set of locks. Anachronistically slow, the boats on the Albert Canal drag themselves from Liege to Antwerp and

FLOURMILL MENEBA 2006. PHOTO: PHILIPPE VAN GELOOVEN

DE SILO, 2008. PHOTO: NIELS DONCKERS

VIEW FROM THE MEETING ROOM

FACADE FRAGMENT GROUND FLOOR. PHOTO: NIELS DONCKERS

back. The building beside it has a little theatre, a book tower, a small restaurant and various studios.
It is now a new and creative nerve centre for the city.

The centre of the site will be a raised square. A south-facing enclosed outdoor space. This may be used as a semi-public space for a variety of events. In this scheme, the first level of De Silo merges seamlessly with the central public forum. The project also caters for studios and laboratory rooms, office spaces and an exhibition room.
Each in their own way, all parties involved will be working at the interface of art and architecture. One experiment leads to another. Connections between different domains and disciplines are made in De Silo.
Just like the district – at a larger scale – creates new links with the city, a2o's mission is shaped at the smallest scale.

DE SILO, QUARTIER CANAL, HASSELT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MTD

(2)

Appropriateness
On integration and identity

REFERENCES

(1) In Europe, Belgium has always been the country and Flanders the region where 'sprawl' – the proliferation of all kinds of urbanisation across the countryside – was able to thrive. (…) This separation of working and living intensified during the growth of the Welfare State in the period between 1950 and 1970. A sound housing policy fully supported non-urban individual living, while urban social housing received but little attention. Education, culture and service facilities followed the territorial distribution model.
Such planning can be regarded as an implicit way of urban development: it aimed consistently for an even spreading of infrastructure, housing and facilities, but at the same time paid little attention to their explicit urban development realisation. Authorities regarded themselves primarily responsible for the structural level: providing infrastructures, public domain and public facilities, aimed at economic expansion and the distribution of wealth. This urban development model can to some extent be called 'anti-urban'. (…)
André Loeckx and Els Vervloesem (2012)
Stadsvernieuwingsprojecten in Vlaanderen (2002–2012) – In trialoog met een weerbarstige werkelijkheid (Urban Renewal Projects in Flanders – In trialogue with a stubborn reality), p. 9, Brussels, ASP Editions.

(2) The city of Detroit, USA, is experiencing an exciting phenomenon that shows how a city can turn around in the course of time. The city has been suffering for years from the shrinking automobile industry, causing the city to decay. The number of inhabitants of the once thriving Motown (or Motor City) dropped by 25 percent in the last decade. Nevertheless, the population tries to recover after 40 years of decline and rampant crime. A great deal has been demolished and many houses stand empty. Buying a house in Detroit doesn't cost you money, but gets you money! Especially the suburbs and former industrial estates have been subject to degeneration. But there is also a surprisingly odd other side to the demise. Centrally directed urban development has little influence on what happens here. A number of places in town develop in an apparently autonomous way. In particular former industrial complexes seem to lend themselves to bottom-up development. Contrary to the authorities, the population does not ask for major investments in shopping malls, sports complexes, amusement parks or offices. Creative youngsters look for empty premises to set up small-scale shops. People survive by creating vegetable gardens in vacant lots, 'urban prairies' as they call them. Urban farms, small-scale market gardens, et cetera, are built. Sometimes, this is done on adjacent land that is not even owned by the user, but with the neighbourhood's consent. Lack of work forces people to provide for themselves. The brand is called 'Grown in Detroit'. It has become a sanctuary for new developments and social experiments. Detroit is a historically layered city upon which the foundations of the old and the new town develop. This experiment is centred around sustainable growth. In nearby Cleveland, a similar development is supported by the authorities. Here, the city farm product is a quality label product.
Social cohesion grows and a new urban fabric reveals itself. More than that: it is trend-setting. The ability to adapt and the creativity of our species, are unique. What happens is real, tangible and valuable. It makes us think about a new balance as well as a different future for the Western world. (photos Huub Donkers)

(3) Diagram Paul de Ruiter Architects

From a sociospatial perspective, someone who lives in a socially deprived situation can be said to exploit his environment. Whatever he can use, helps him to survive a little longer. This creates an unbalance in the biotope. It is a finite story.

In a certain social context, this type of exploitation is a survival mechanism. Situations such as this exist not only in developing countries, but also in our Western society. Perhaps not as explicitly, but they do exist: in deprived neighbourhoods, in 'non-places' scattered across large cities.

Social sustainability can be defined as a stable democratic society in which there is a future for everyone. Without exclusion or inequality, with sufficient interesting employment, ample opportunities for development, and no concerns about primary needs such as healthy living. Whoever lives in a sustainable social context, intrinsically exerts less pressure on the environment. The environment is no longer exploited, or 'used up' *unilaterally*. One lives in harmony with one's environment. A balance that guarantees abundance. The quality of the context then reflects the prosperity and well-being of its users. It says something about the level of our civilisation. It is the story of our history, our heritage.

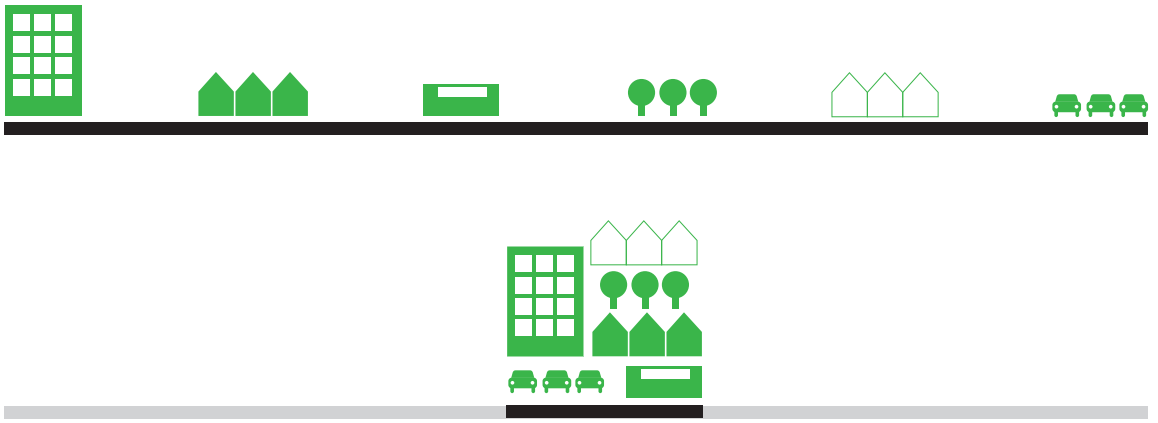
Man's natural habitat today is generally the urban context. (1) The city has become man's biotope. Looking after the city is therefore of the utmost importance in order to live and dwell in a socioecological balance. Building a caring city is also directly proportional to building a culturally rich environment. This is expressed in the quality of public spaces (streets and squares), the city's facilities, the embedding in large networks, care for green spaces in town, and good architecture.

There is therefore an inseparable link between ecological and cultural sustainability.

Loitering teens who terrorise a neighbourhood, gated communities, squares reduced to places of nuisance, attacks on tram or bus drivers, macho driving behaviour in youngsters, streets used as rubbish dumps, wastelands, squats: signs in a city that point to a life and a neighbourhood in unbalance. They are indicators of a survival strategy: searching for an identity, the desire to 'be part of it'. In the worst case, a problem of poverty, linked to mass unemployment.

The responses to excesses in the public space are clear. There is a demand for zero-tolerance policies and more police on the streets. Alternatives are few and far between. What is needed, is recognition that there is a social problem that is deeper than what comes to the surface today. The riots in London and Paris are the result of an uprooted society. One cannot label rioters as criminals and deport them to the countryside or their country of origin. On the contrary, one must be humble and search for a balance between social, ecological and cultural sustainability in the city. No-one would dare to resort to vandalism if they lived and worked in a participating, socially sustainable context. Nevertheless, conservative policies look for solutions primarily in repression. These are short-sighted policies, based on exclusion, a sign of cultural poverty, driven by populism.

We must evolve into a society in which there is another side to 'being entitled to': it also implies 'respecting'. This has more to do with culturally sustainable development than repression does.



(3)

(2)

In the architect's/urban developer's discipline, these problems are expressed in the quality of and care for the public domain, the environment and buildings. How to 'design' public space in such a way that citizens treat it with respect? Is it even possible to command respect by proper town and country planning?

A culturally valuable attitude is sustainable in itself. How respectful does one treat the environment? How caring is the attitude behind one's actions? It is like listening to what a place has to say, its heritage. This is seldom nostalgic, but almost always structural. What is left after this process of distillation, is the sustainable residue, the part that withstands the ravages of time. Structures are filled with scenography and meaning. They are expressive and form-sensitive. They are timeless and at the same time create a vacuum in the 'now'; they are a powerful reflex of the spirit of the times.
Today, these structures tell us about the ecologically fragile time in which we live, about the social and structural diversity in the city, about the city as a laboratory and about its hybrid development.

Today's task is not the search for added value in a material sense, but the search for value in the form of a new balance.

The question arises how serious the deprivation and the lack of sustainable development are in our Belgian cities. Wherever there are socially deprived areas in our large cities (Brussels, Antwerp, Liège, Charleroi), the urban fabric comes apart. There are many unoccupied houses, there are squats, cleanliness of the streets leaves a lot to be desired. These areas degenerate into non-places, places without meaning.

It is possible to exhaust the urban biotope. The problems in deprived areas in large cities are directly related to their physical context. This is particularly clear in early nineteenth-century neighbourhoods with poorly built houses, often with inadequate sanitary facilities, and a lack of social amenities (schools, child care, green spaces). These are the environments that no longer show a healthy urban fabric.
But a lack of attention to public spaces can also result in 'non-places' in prosperous environments in small cities. These are often places where modernity has come and gone, and emptiness remains. Examples include neighbourhoods around railways and places where major road infrastructures cut through residential areas. There is work to be done to turn these places into attractive neighbourhoods again. (2)

These days, sustainability in architecture is a theme that primarily encourages consumers to introduce technical improvements in their houses. The focus is too much on those who already live in affluence, and too little on the reconversion of deprived neighbourhoods. What remains is a fabric littered with scars. The demands made by citizens today, contrast sharply with the social stimuli that those who live in deprived neighbourhoods deserve. The city deserves more oxygen. The focus should be aimed on the city, not its periphery, in particular in Brussels. Relieving the pressure is also a task for Flanders: the surrounding area, which sends thousands of commuters to the city every day. It is Flanders' social obligation to invest in a socially sustainable climate in the city. This will also put the pressure on the periphery in a new perspective. It is appropriate solidarity. (3)

In Wikipedia, the concept of 'sustainable development' is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".
We believe that architecture also has a conscience. Acting conscientiously is a sign of respect and appropriateness.

A welcome approach to contemporary architecture would therefore be one that:
– converts the non-places in our cities into strategic projects.
– restores the missing links in our cities.
– looks for structural solutions to create a better link between living and working, and to encourage hybrid environments.
– is economical in the use of resources (materials and energy).
– shows participation behaviour (experiential) and does not turn its back on citizens.
– is context-sensitive (i.e. no uprooted architecture).

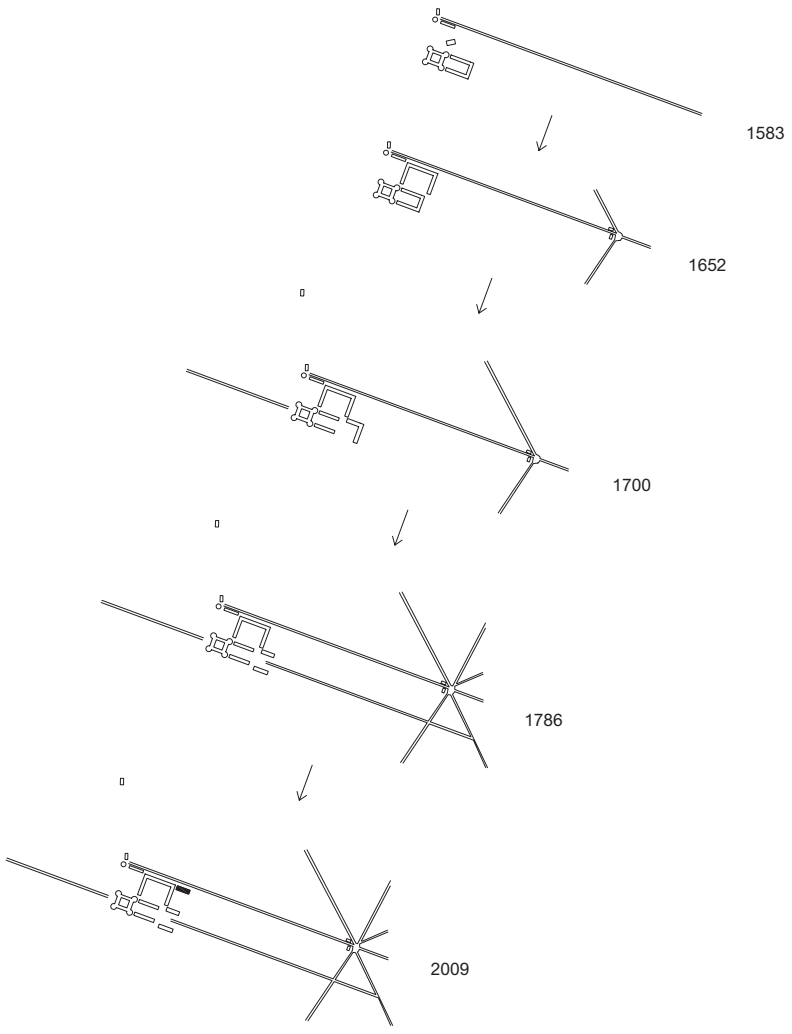
It is a design attitude that is connective, creates links, excludes nothing (is cognitive) and hence is associative.

Architecture that has an authentic character by thinking today with a view to tomorrow, is architecture that operates with respect for light and air, green and water (ecology), privacy (identity), and accessibility 'sensu lato'. Thus, we work on cultural sustainability that yields immediate results in social and ecological terms.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF ALDEN BIESEN. PHOTO: H. TIMMERMAN

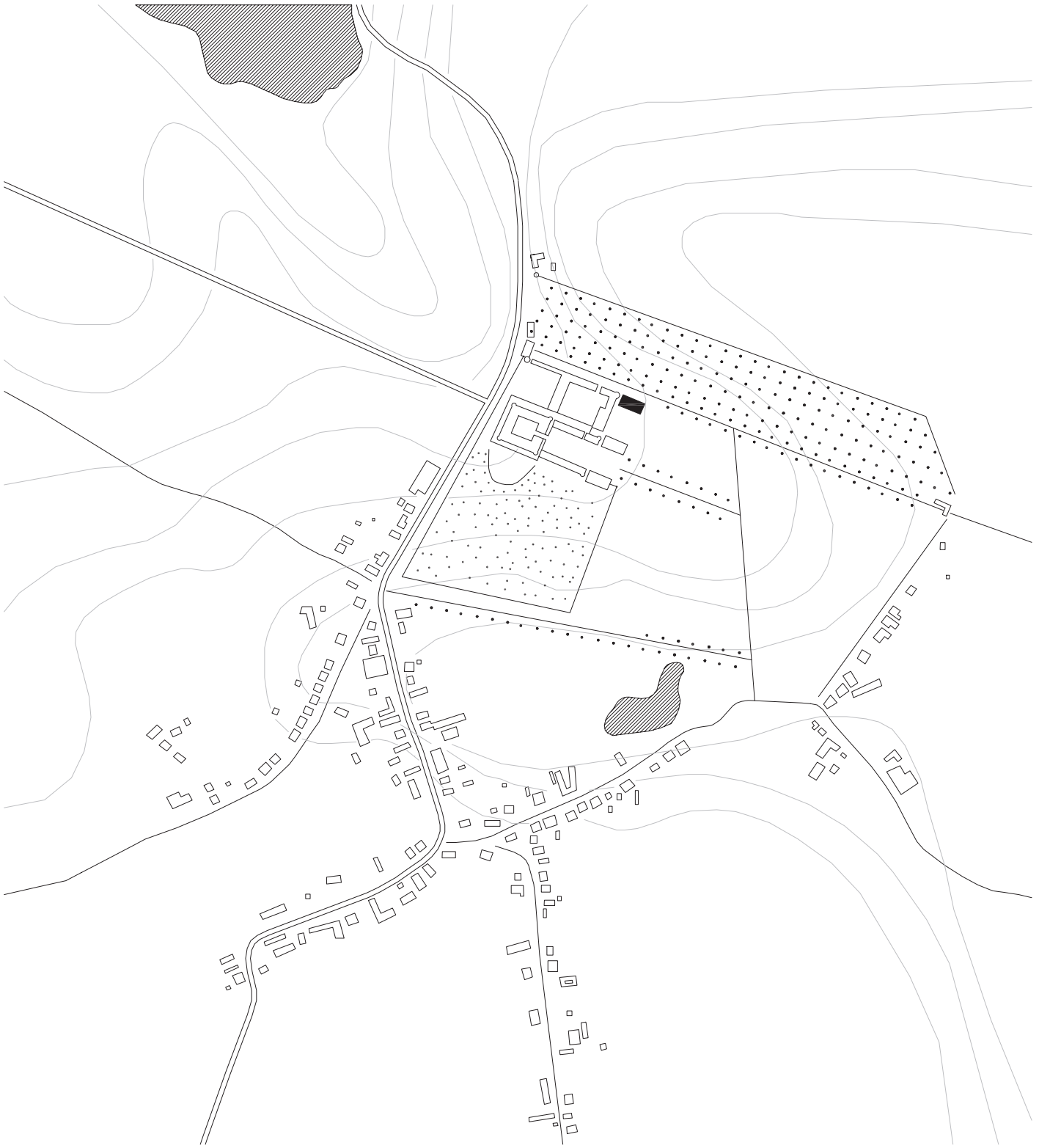
Wooden Wing

New logistic room for Alden Biesen.
Bilzen, Belgium
2006–2012
In collaboration with B.E.G.



The Landcommandery Alden Biesen presents itself as a ‘historic and cultural centre’ with a ‘seminar and conference centre’, a (cultural) tourist attraction and a meeting point for international networking. This translates into a location with an easily accessible, varied and complex (building) programme and a permanent and sometimes paradoxical interaction between the past and the present.
Commissioned by the Flemish Community, a2o was selected after an appeal to draw up a master plan for the development of the Alden Biesen location. This master plan includes “drafting a vision for an overall approach to which both present and future interventions in Alden Biesen can be related, in order to be able to add a meaningful layer to this historic site”. (Quoted from the brief.)

Our objective was to add coherence and interpretability within a multifunctional and accessible Alden Biesen. The plan was based on a number of general principles of unlocking the heritage,



SITUATION

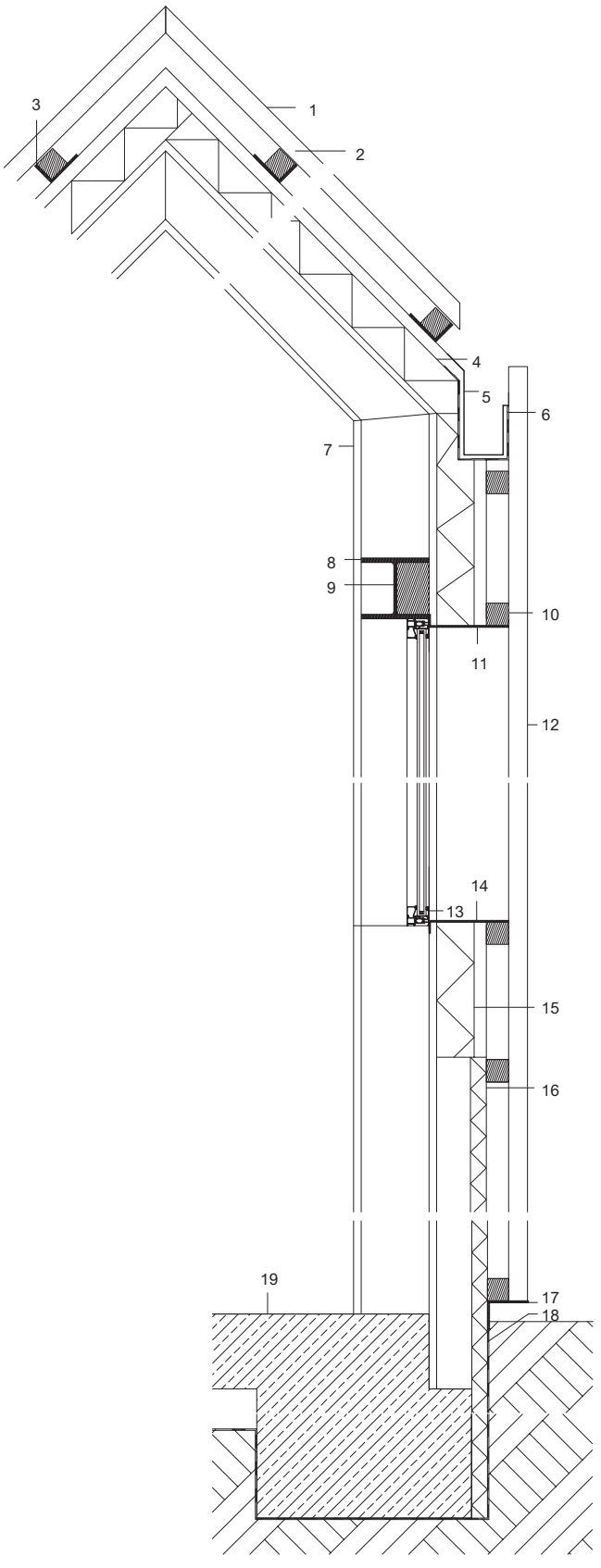
0 200 m

translating these into concrete terms for this monument, this historic site and this exceptional landscape.
The plan assumes that a heritage visit is first and foremost an experience. Visitors must be given the opportunity of visual and tactile – in short, sensory – contact with the monument. The experience of the *sense of place*, the character of the location, the aura of the poetry of the monument take a central position. One of the many interventions is explained here: a new storage house.

The wooden wing is the logistic room and a translation of the master plan. This room is linked to the existing configuration of historic buildings. The new volume constitutes a logistic extension to the group of buildings, but distinguishes itself by its abstraction and materials. The building is restricted in materials and details by merely providing a shape that creates space. This is a storage space for the machinery and tools used for the maintenance of the public estate.

The steel frame, which includes minimal facilities to make the construction weather-tight, forms the basis of the volume. The wooden elements complete the shape.

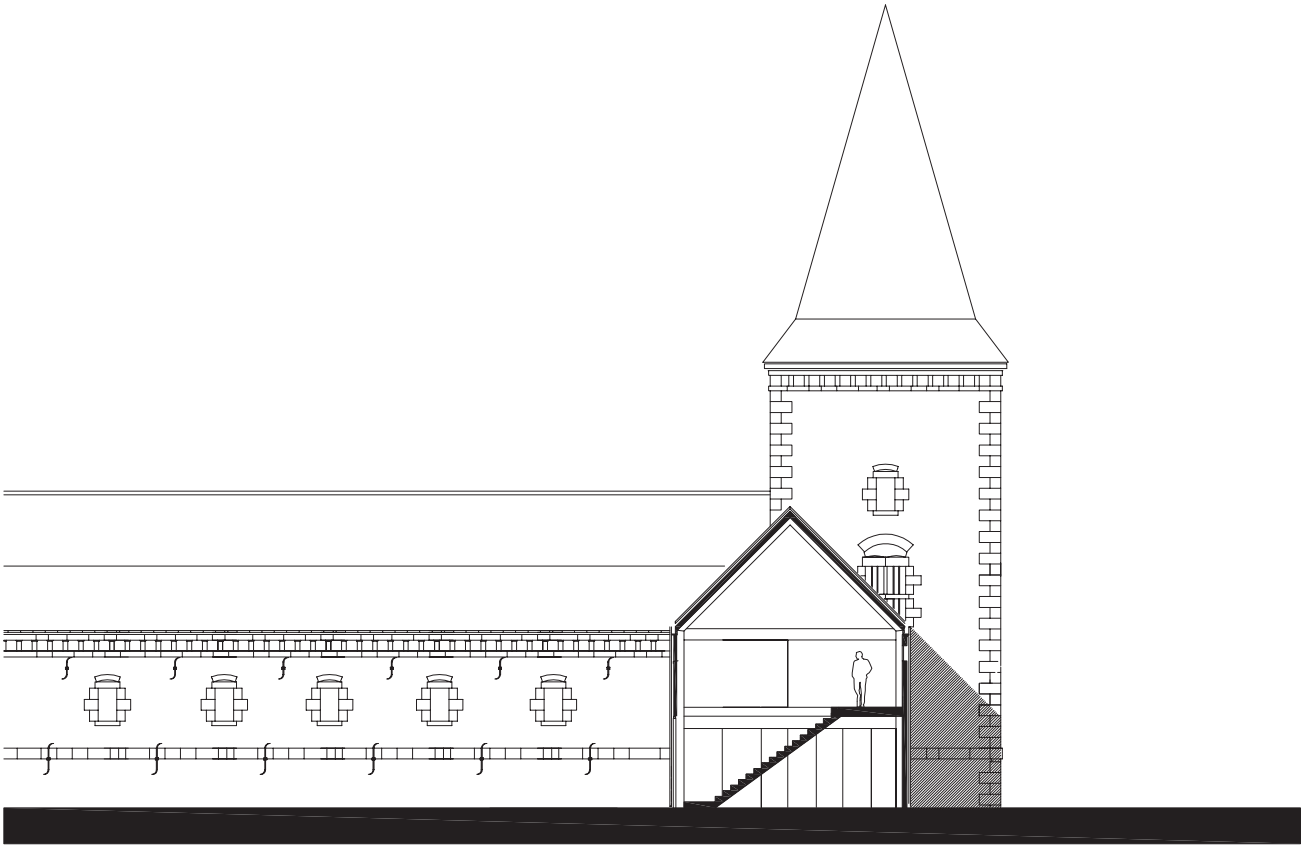
The simplicity of its shape is extended to its usage. Large folding doors make entry and exit of machinery easy. The facade apertures are covered by wooden cladding that acts as a filter. The newly added shape speaks the same language as the existing buildings, but distinguishes its role by the materials used. The building takes a modest attitude against the historic setting and the landscape. It is flexible in its use and can be disassembled.



DETAIL

0 20 cm

1. VERTICAL WOODEN BOARDING, 30 × 50 MM, 600 MM
2. HORIZONTAL WOODEN WATERPROOF RAFTERS
3. STEEL L-SECTIONS
4. SANDWICH PANEL WITH THERMAL INSULATION AND CORRUGATED STEEL PLATE
5. TAPERED ZINC GUTTER BOX
6. EPDM RUBBER WATERPROOF SLAB
7. HEA 140 STEEL SECTION
8. HEA 100 STEEL SECTION
9. WOODEN BLOCK
10. HORIZONTAL WOODEN WATERPROOF RAFTERS
11. ALUMINIUM END SECTION
12. VERTICAL WOODEN BOARDING 30 × 50 MM, 600 MM
13. ALUMINIUM JOINERY, THERMALLY INTERRUPTED
14. ALUMINIUM END SECTION
15. SANDWICH PANEL WITH THERMAL INSULATION AND CORRUGATED STEEL PLATE
16. THERMAL INSULATION
17. L-SHAPED STEEL SECTION
18. WATER-SEALING LAYER
19. CAST-IN-PLACE REINFORCED CONCRETE SUPPORT STRUCTURE



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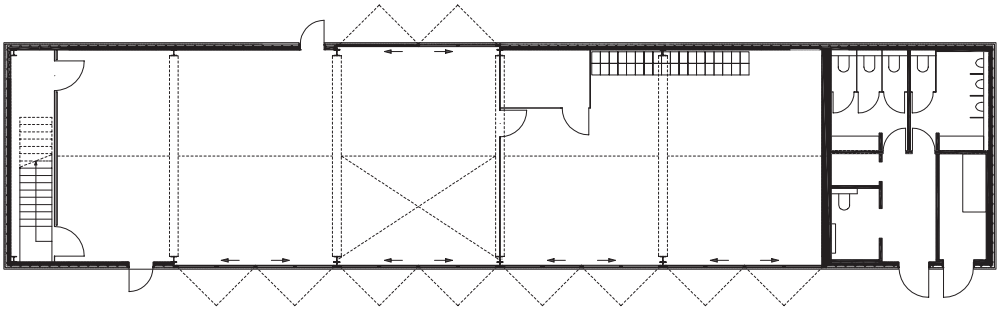

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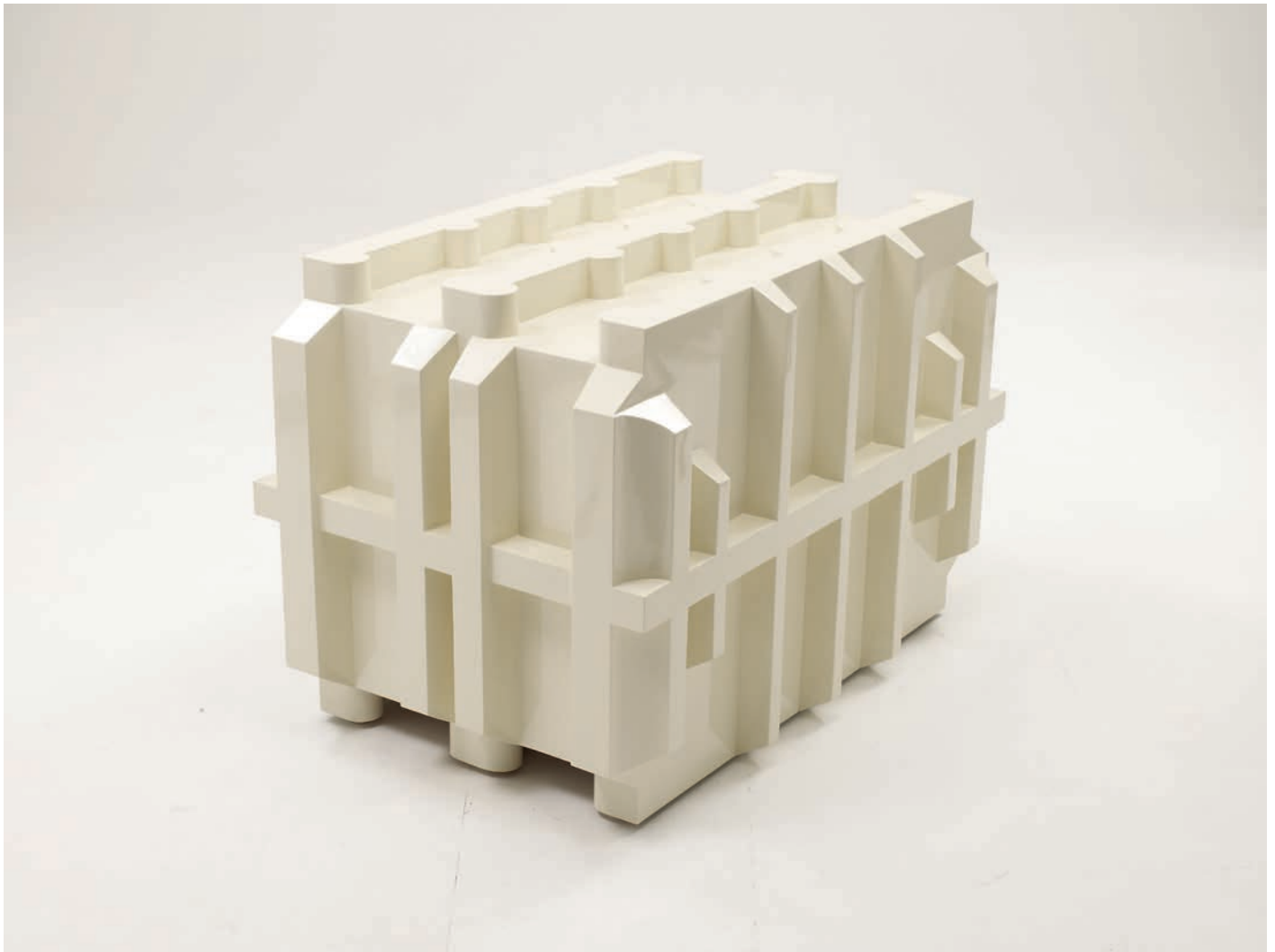
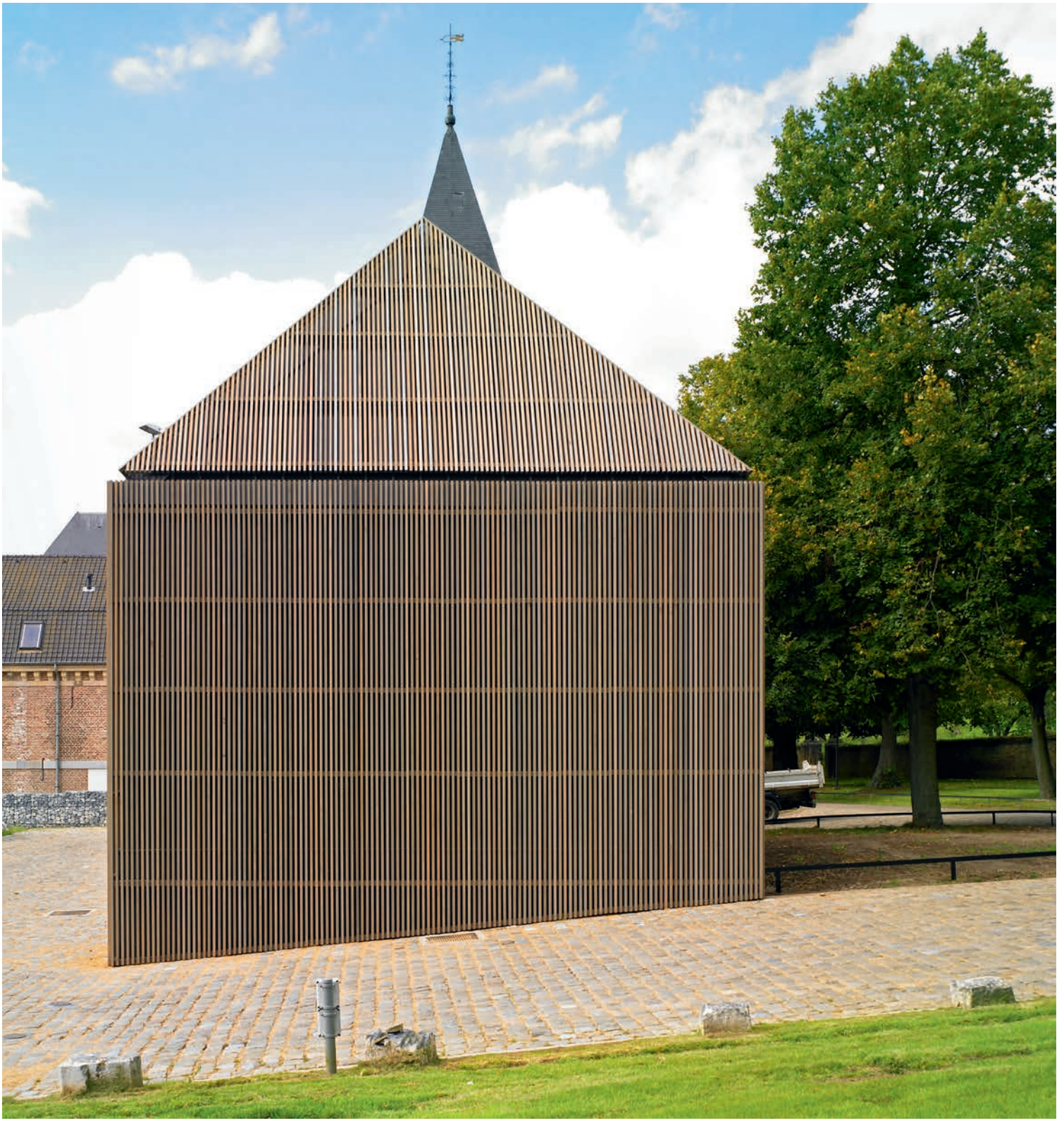


NICK ERVINCK – DARCHINOX, 2002–2007



END FACADE. PHOTO: NIELS DONCKERS

MAASTRICHTERALLEE. PHOTO: NIELS DONCKERS

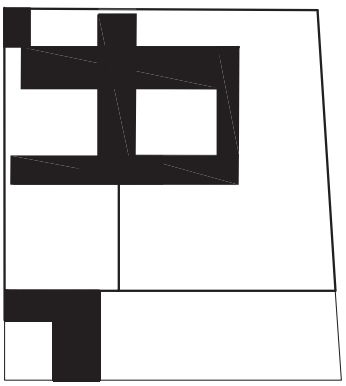
LONGITUDINAL FACADE. PHOTO: NIELS DONCKERS

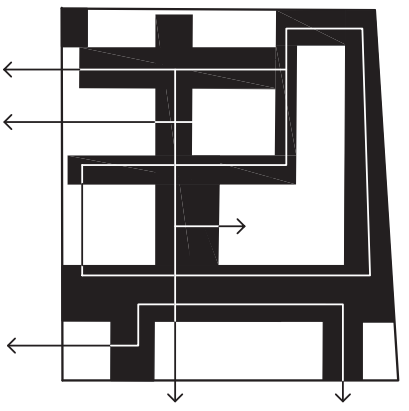
LANDSCAPE PANORAMA. PHOTO: ANDRÉ BERTLES

MEETING CENTRE – CHAPEL CONVERSION. PAINTED CEILING BY NICK EERVINCK

Silent World

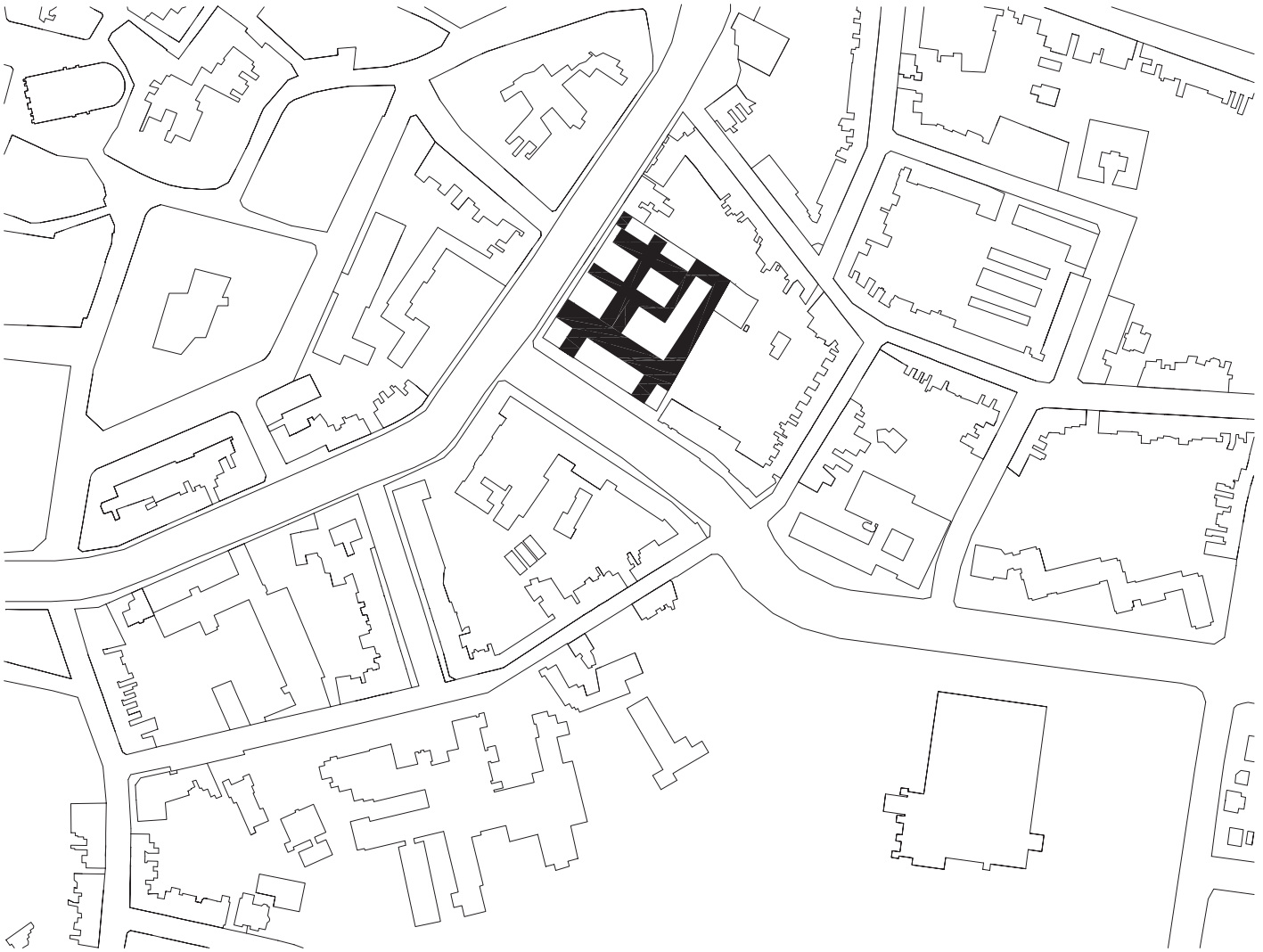
Conversion of the former convent of the Order of St. Clare into a health care centre with a rest home and service flats
Hasselt, Belgium
2008–2013





On 6 June 2004, the Colettine Poor Clares vacated the building. The former enclosed convent, situated on the Guffenslaan in Hasselt, is absent from the street scene. Its buildings are hidden behind a 4-metre-high wall. The walled premises are divided into quadrangles. The buildings were subsequently raised around courtyards. The southern part contains the enclosed convent complex. The northern part contains the chapel and the section of the convent that is open to visitors.

The design is characterised by a high degree of austerity. The number of building materials is limited. The building techniques show a rigorous simplicity: no concrete lintels or floors, but spans made of elliptical arches, or floors made of boards on wooden beams, decorated with motifs referring to tapestries. Everything is submerged in an atmosphere of modesty, simplicity, even a certain degree of poverty. A building method that has defined the soul of the building complex.



SITUATION

0 100 m

In the search for a new use for the convent, the ‘health care’ theme was a deliberate choice. A secular extension of the ‘contemplative care’ that the sisters always represented. Today, the complex is a residential and health care centre, with service flats and public meeting areas, such as the redesigned chapel, the new ‘living room’ of the health care centre.

The entire complex is encapsulated in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity. The new design is based on the importance of the walled gardens, and thus retains the spatial structure of the location. Continuing from the former convent gallery, users pass through the newly built parts. The circumambulation is clear and easily recognisable. The walk is extended equally logically in the gardens of the courtyards. Natural light accesses the corridors indirectly through skylights and decorative openwork in the walls.

This new perambulation creates two new gardens, around which care rooms have been situated. The concept ensures that all rooms face the gardens. The immediate and fully open relationship between the care rooms and the gardens, results in a special experience. There is an abundance of daylight in the rooms. The courtyard gardens are pivotal to the experience. The garden design aims for living with the seasons: colour and scent, shadow and light. Sensory experiences, mild stimulation for the elderly living here.
The entirely new part within the convent walls has a wooden facade. Without creating a sharp contrast with the existing buildings, the intervention is nevertheless recognisable. Old and new have been linked in an appropriate way.

The premises have been extended. New buildings, leaning against the outer convent wall, were added. The new volume contains the service flats. The service flat units are stacked as individual cells, a reference to the cells in the former convent. The new building volume is U-shaped, its location creating another courtyard garden. This garden is raised above street level and marks the natural boundary with the public area. It heightens the sense of privacy.

A suitable location for every health care function was found in the existing convent complex. The boundaries between public, semi-public and private derive logically from the existing situation and create interspaces that can be used for meetings within a protective environment. Design and materials are in keeping with the existing formal idiom of the previous convent and retain the atmosphere of security and silence exemplified by the Colettine Poor Clares.

NICK ERVINCK – YARONULK, 2009–2010

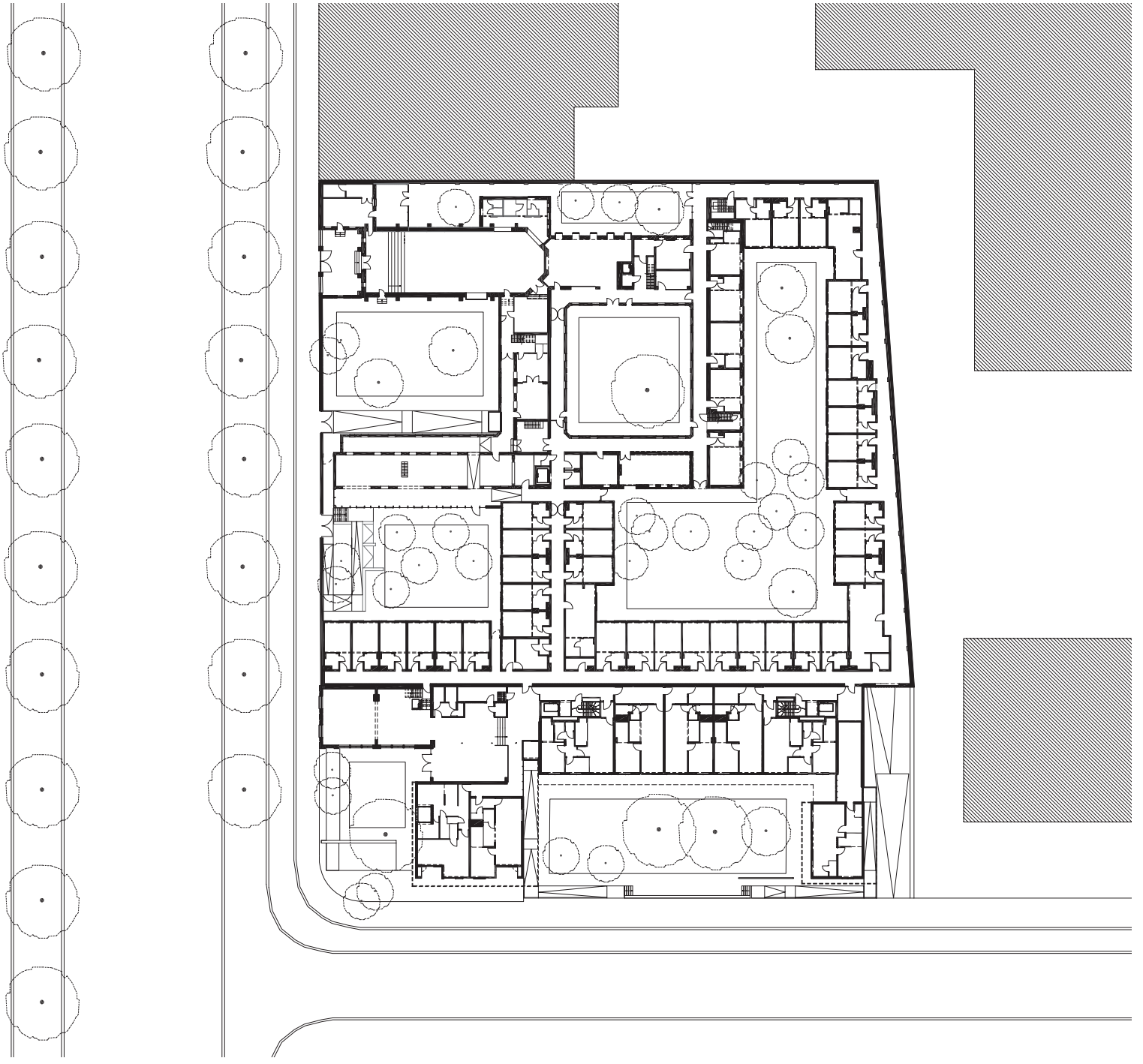
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF EXISTING SITUATION, CLARENHOF

SECTION

0 20 m

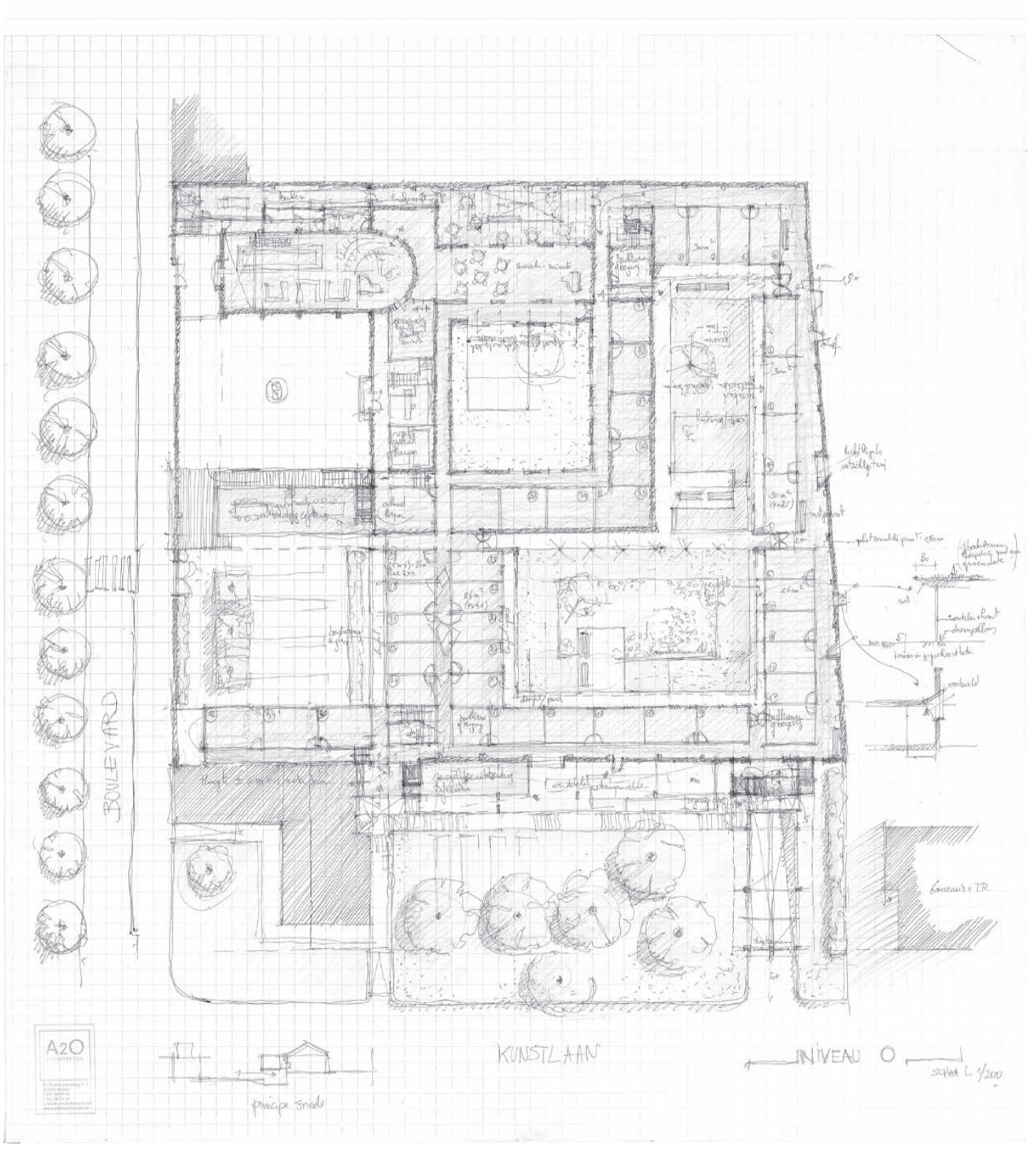
FACADE

0 10 m

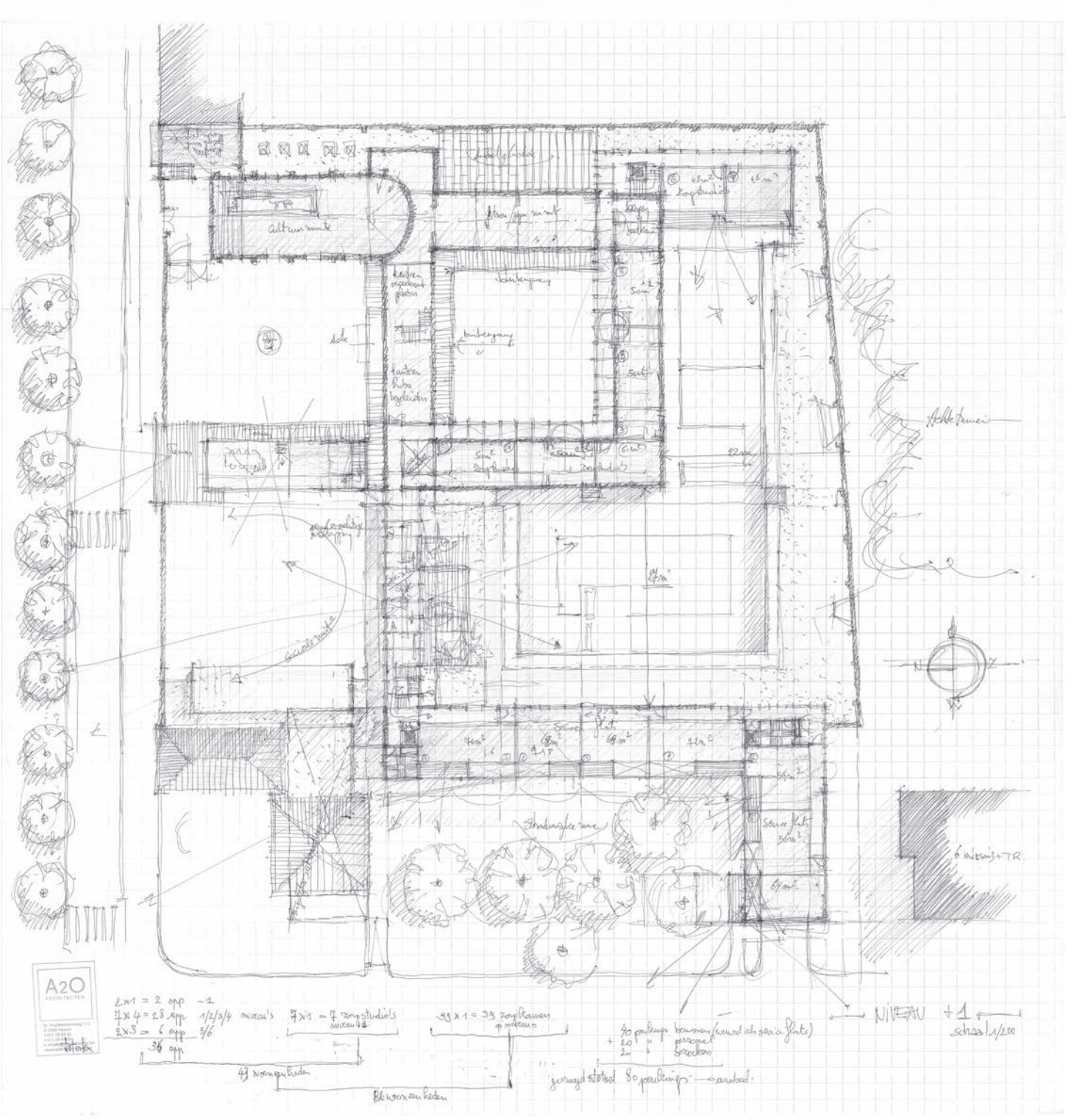


LOCATION CONCEPT

0 10 m



GROUND FLOOR SKETCH



FIRST FLOOR SKETCH

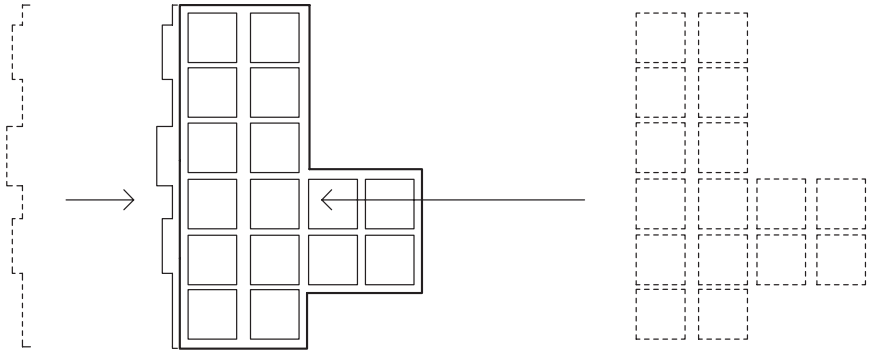
BREACH FOR CONNECTING CORRIDOR

ATMOSPHERE IN HEALTH CARE COMPLEX

CELLENBROEDERSSTRAAT. FORMER SITUATION

Street-facing Rooms

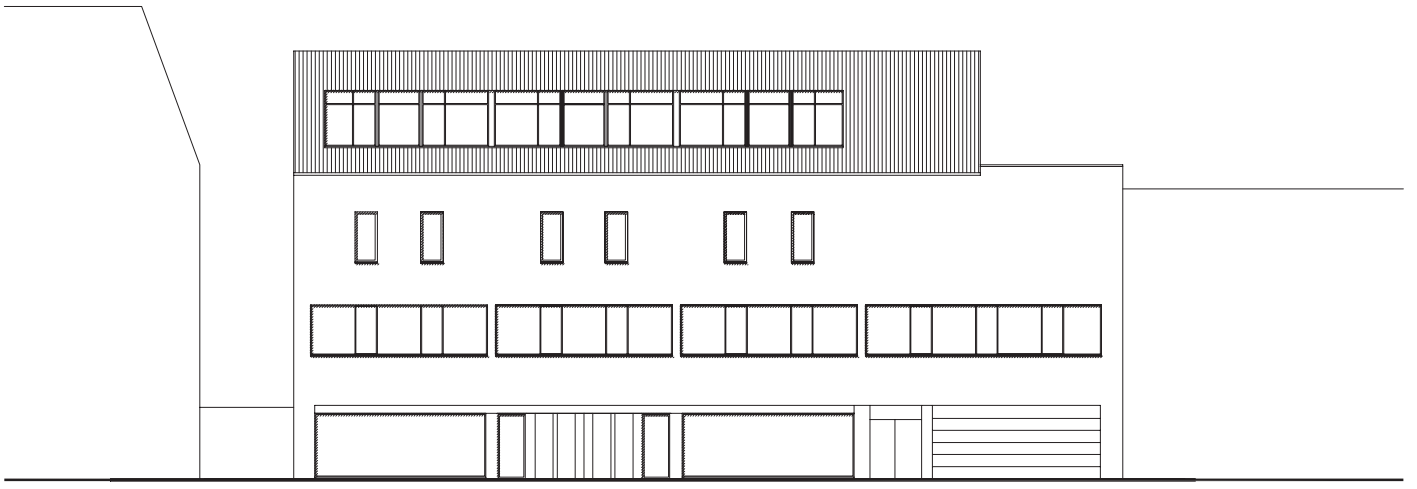
Conversion of Cellebroeders to student units and shop
Hasselt, Belgium
2012



The building on the Cellebroedersstraat in Hasselt is ready for a new lease of life, having stood empty for a while. The former shop, with storage on the upper floors, is located in one of the streets between the ring road and the Grote Markt in Hasselt. The existing facade emphasises the anonymous character of the street and fails to connect with adjacent buildings.

Our new plan includes an upgrade of the facade in terms of building physics and better integration of the building in the street. The wooden cladding extends to the top of the building and works with the window openings to create a new composition. Occasionally, the window frames break through the wooden cladding, interrupting the rhythm of the wooden facade.

The floors have been divided into student accommodation units. The units are separated by light walls and respect the existing facade apertures. Each room has a removable unit containing a



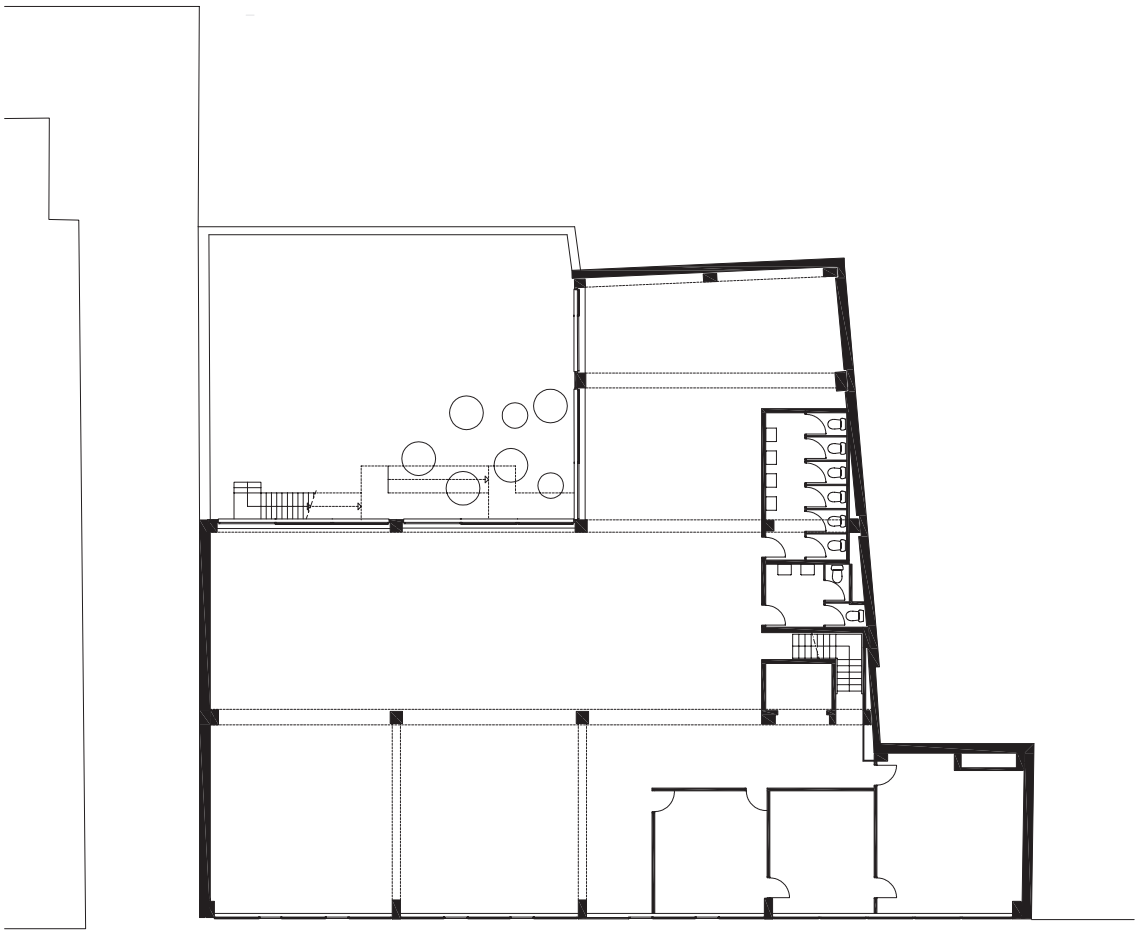
FACADE. FORMER SITUATION

FACADE. NEW SITUATION

0 5 m

kitchen, shower, and toilet. The top of the unit provides a space to sleep. The lay-out of the rest of the room is left to the students. The ground floor space facing the street gets a new commercial function.

Our approach in this case was more like a performance in town. Over a period of three months, the building was stripped and given a new dress. The temporariness of the performance was underlined by the materials used: a wooden facade, light walls, et cetera. Whereas one would expect that this approach is only possible inside, this project shows that it can also intelligently be applied to the outer shell. The building and the structure allowed such an approach. Another advantage of this method is that the internal interventions could be reversed tomorrow, if necessary. This would enable the building to be converted into offices, for example.



FIRST FLOOR. FORMER SITUATION

FIRST FLOOR. NEW SITUATION

0 5 m

NICK ERVINCK – EMISOLB, 2009–2013

STUDENT ROOM WITH BUILT-IN MODULE

CELLENBROEDERSSTRAAT. PHOTO: NIELS DONCKERS

FACADE FRAGMENT. PHOTO: NIELS DONCKERS

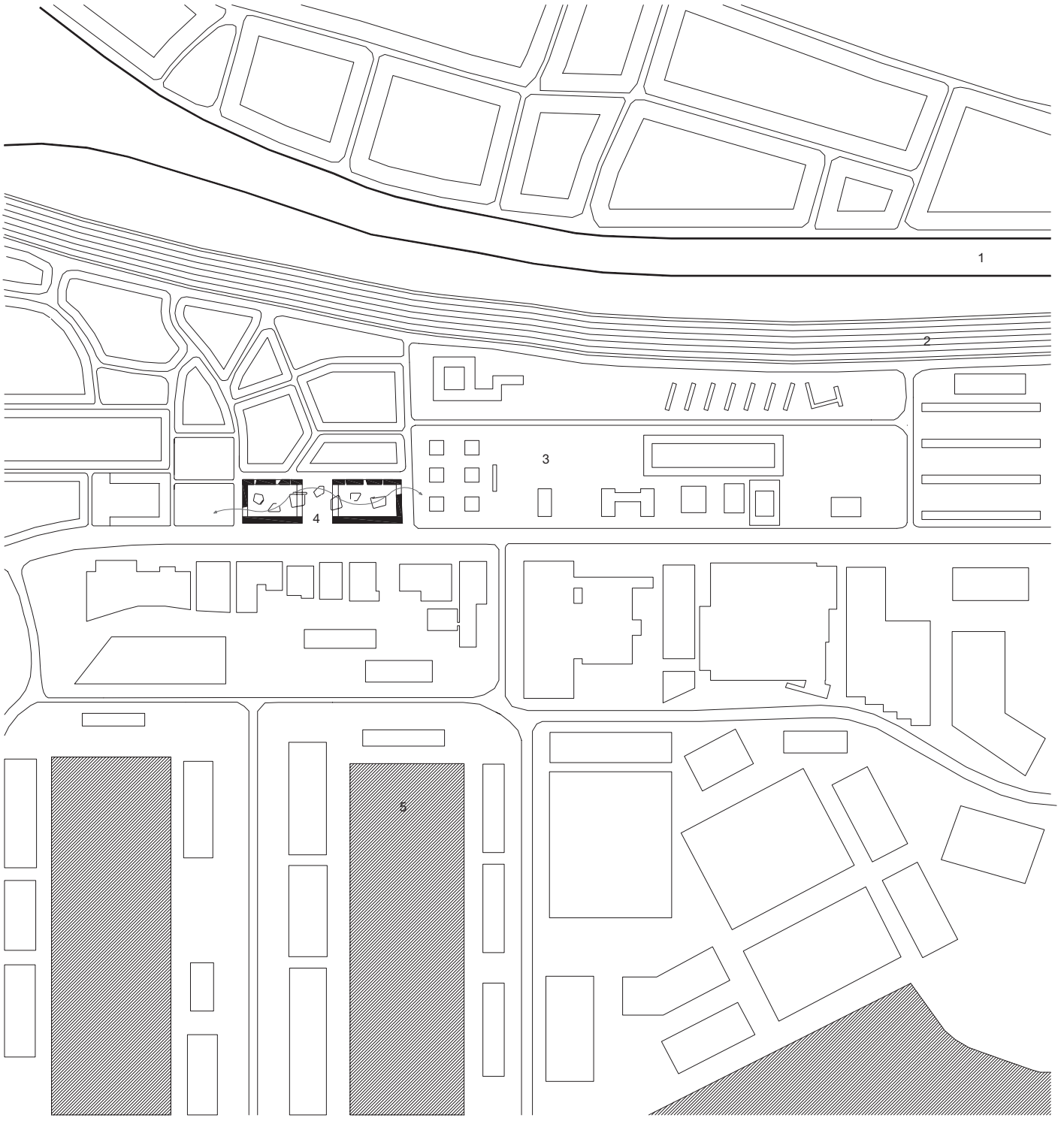
PUBLIC DOMAIN

Hortus Conclusus

New buildings for social housing and a community centre.
Luchtbal
Antwerp, Belgium
2011–2016
Competition – laureate
In collaboration with Ontwerpatelier Gebruers-Jannes bvba

‘Luchtbal’ is a district in the North of Antwerp, enclosed by the port to the North, the Albert Canal to the South, the A12 motorway to the East, and the Noorderlaan, a main connecting road with the port, to the West. The district is virtually cut off from the rest of the city. It is known for a variety of social housing projects. It is like a laboratory for the housing sector. The district shows the history of housing in the past hundred years. From garden districts around the turn of the century, to Wiener blocks from the period between the two World Wars, to modernist blocks from the sixties and seventies.

The Luchtbal district originated from the need for affordable residential and recreational quality in the peripheral industrial zone. During the initial years, the concept of garden districts was popular. Such garden districts created a sense of residential quality and cohesion. The later housing blocks, however, stand inwardly oriented, incoherently, in a ‘naked’ environment. Between these



SITUATION. LUCHTBAL SITE

0 250 m

housing islands, there is a great lack of high-quality public spaces and connecting elements. In addition to spatial inadequacies, they also suffer from enormous noise pollution. Hemmed in between two main roads, the noise is almost unbearable. The perception of quality of living here is therefore negative.
The district is now being renovated thoroughly. Its cohesion must be strengthened. One of the first new building projects was assigned to a2o after a competition.

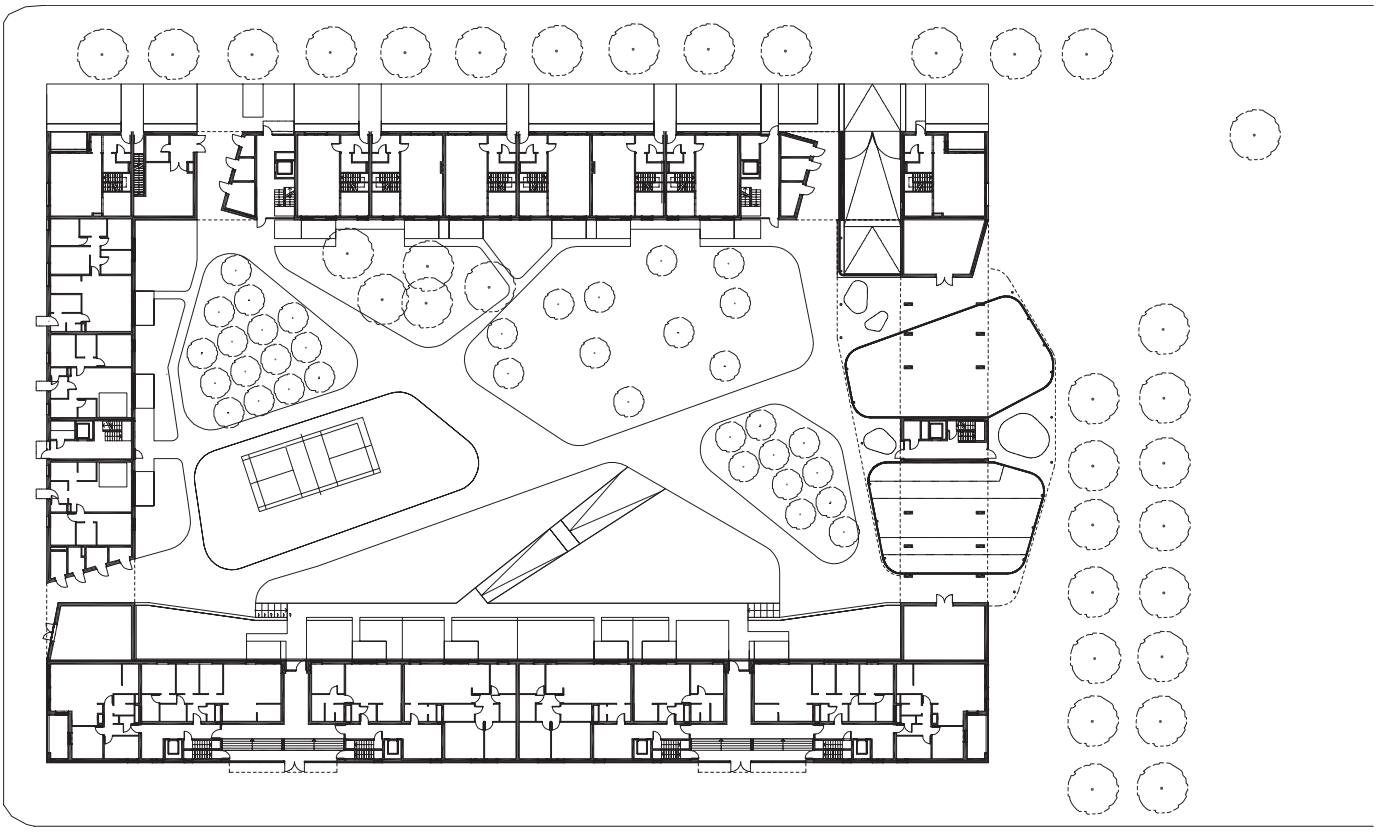
The concept for this new project is based on an enclosed urban garden. A functional volume of seven levels on the Noorderlaan, a lower building of two levels at the park side and three levels on the Canadastraat, a connecting street within the neighbourhood. A narrow ring of houses and apartments creates an internal space that can act as a sanctuary, providing shelter from the noise. The 'hortus conclusus' is a communal zone, a place for collective relaxation, providing a green view from the houses. The inner garden is landscaped, using the dug-up soil to create different height levels. The garden is meant for 'utilisation and decoration'. There are vegetable plots, an orchard, a playground, and an undulating sunbathing area. Working together with the inhabitants, a communal area is created, within which people of all ages will find a place. The garden has a public character and is accessible from the public domain. Social life in the inner area is not only stimulated by the carefully planned lay-out, but also by the various access points to the apartments in the inner area. The informal pattern of paths generates walking routes throughout the site, guaranteeing optimal 'passability'. The underpasses between garden and surroundings are provided with soundproofing surfaces, like sound locks in a theatre.

The building follows a strict structural logic. The dimensions of the houses allow the use of prefabricated elements. The free spans create flexible lay-outs. The facades are also designed as prefabricated panels. They translate the difference between exterior and interior world. The white outer shell is highly articulated. It faithfully respects the outlines of the building block.
The volume made of glass bricks, which houses a bicycle shed, escapes this strict logic. This volume links up with the small park, to create a connection with the next building block.
The facade is interrupted by transparent stairwells, allowing a view of the tiled interior: an artistic collaboration project with the visual arts cell of the 'Team Vlaams Bouwmeester'. A horizontal concrete profile for each level removes the building block's massiveness. The stairwells on the Noorderlaan are oversized. They render the building block highly recognisable and emphasise the location's accessibility.
The garden-side facades are more open. Instead of cut-outs, there are extending balconies. The ground-floor apartments have outdoor terraces, hidden in the undulating garden. To make the noise levels from the main roads bearable, all houses have their living spaces facing the garden. The level of social interaction with the garden is great, but the landscape architecture reduces the privacy impact.
The top two floors on the Noorderlaan are reversed and enjoy magnificent views across the port.

1. RING ROAD
2. RAILWAY TRACKS
3. HOUSING LABORATORY
4. HORTUS CONCLUSUS
5. PORT

SECTION

0 20 m



GROUND FLOOR

0 20 m

HORTUS CONCLUSUS

(7)

3

On connectivity

Smart Plan

Flanders House
Enclosed Village
db Isolator
Double Shape

On connectivity associative and cognitive

Eline Dehullu, Luc Vanmuysen

REFERENCES

(1) Jean-François Lyotard (1924–1998) was a French philosopher. While he is known as a postmodernist, he himself has made some qualifications. His ideas cannot be described as a system in which eventually everything falls into place (which is usually the intention of modern thinkers). Lyotard felt closely related to Ludwig Wittgenstein.

(2) In an essay from 1985 with the title 'The New Obscurity', the German philosopher Habermas made an attempt to characterise the welfare state (Habermas 1989). Where the welfare state has attempted – from the beginning of the 20th century – to find a balance between capitalism on the one hand and democracy on the other, this project must now be considered as having failed, Habermas believes. This failure was due both to the inability of national states to find an adequate response to the globalising economy, and to the state itself, which had become an administrative system and hence the core of the problem. Habermas looked for a solution in the new counterforces, such as those of the environmental and feminist movements, which could contribute to a redefinition of the good life, in order to recapture the ability to reflect and control that a vigorous democracy requires.

(3) The American philosopher Fredric Jameson tries to point out in particular the breach with modernism as a characteristic of postmodernism. In modernism, the culture of the elite reigned supreme, while postmodernism focuses on the culture of the masses. An important characteristic is that in postmodernism history is reduced to a cliché image that tends towards nostalgia rather than to true history.

(4) (…) To then arrive at the ultimate explanation of the entire hilarious event called Belgium: our talent for 'surrealism'. It is said to be in particular something in our genes: the madness, the urge to create wonders of the world that inspire ridicule elsewhere, the sense of the absurd, the shirking, the complex compromises, the bureaucratic logic. (…) It is undoubtedly a coincidence that the above-mentioned phantom Charleroi-Châtelet metro line leads us – of all places – to René Magritte's place of birth. And that the famous Strépy boat lift is located near La Louvière, a breeding place of 'Belgian surrealism', a stone's throw from the carnival town of Binche. It is definitely not a coincidence that the Brussels bourgeoisie in the 1920s introduced two Walloon surrealists into the gallery. There and then, the idea emerged to turn the absurd into state logic and to register the unbearable lightness of Belgium as a worldwide trademark.
Source: Visionair België – webarchief en forum van Johan Sanctorum)

(5) Guy Cleuren: architect, CleurenMerken, Bilzen

(6) The graft, Hasselt
Studies to stick an apartment onto the temporary facade of an existing apartment building.

(7) Numen / For Use
Installation in Begijnhoftuin Z33, Hasselt
Photograph: Kristof Vrancken

As 21st-century architects, we look around us and see a fast-moving world. We are inundated by stimuli, sensations and information. Nimble fingers effortlessly cut and paste, hop and photoshop, in a wireless environment. To find our way in the mass of data, we cannot read or study everything in detail. The Internet has forced us to think and understand differently. Faster, to be sure, but also fundamentally different. No longer from left to right, from top to bottom, word by word, line by line, and page by page. We browse and scan, zap and pick, from everywhere, to ultimately filter and select what catches or affronts our eyes.

Today's way of thinking is associative. Postmodernist philosophers such as Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida and Jean Baudrillard have tried to deal with this kind of thinking. Lyotard (1) considered computerisation as a key characteristic of postmodern society, in which broad access to information is a decisive factor. Over the past decades, knowledge itself has grown to become the most important power, which is accessible to large sections of the population. The Internet has democratised knowledge and science. Today's children play with knowledge. Modern thinking is therefore cognitive and excludes nothing.

Where the French philosopher Lyotard also emphasises that the rules of the games of science, politics (2) and art have changed definitively, that any form of unity and security has disappeared, that any coherence has vanished and that life has become a knot that cannot be disentangled – where the German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas (3) speaks of 'the age of obscurity' – and where the American philosopher Frederic Jameson refers to superficiality as the determining characteristic of postmodernism, we architects believe in the power of the associative and the cognitive. It is true that nothing is new in this world. What is presented as new, is either a repetition of the existing, or a rearrangement of known elements. We can only be original, innovative and authentic by – consciously or unconsciously – making a particular selection from what already exists, and by combining and associating different ideas and concepts, images and representations. Interpreting and repeatedly reinterpreting the existing, and continuously making choices, is an associative process. And from this association, something new, something authentic may arise.

The source, the authentic and the universal, the true and the honest, lies in the specific and unique aspect of each person and each moment. Authenticity has nothing to do with harking back to the past, or creating a faithful copy. Authenticity has everything to do with the present: being

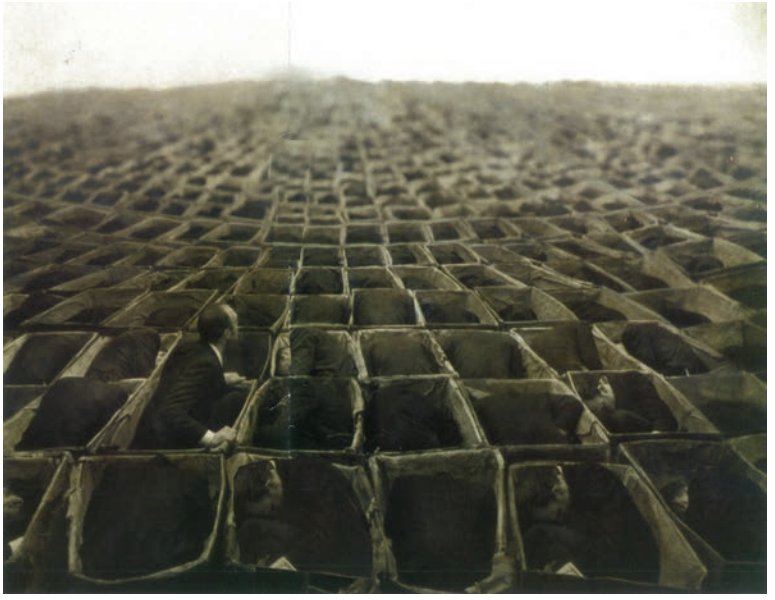
authentic means creating a vacuum in the here and now. To be authentic, we need to allow innovation.

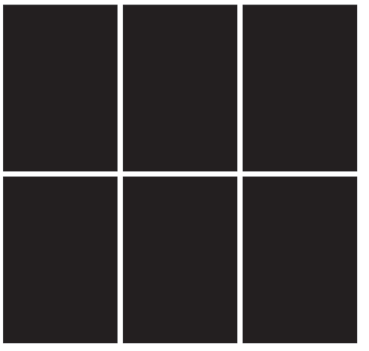
In the design process, we connect the ‘now’ with the past and the future. Designing is like acquiring an in-depth understanding at a moment of extreme concentration. Our architecture is not without roots, we consider the possible effects of each design choice. Unlike a modern design that is assessed merely on the basis of its intrinsic qualities and is unrelated, even breaks with its spatial and historical context, we believe that it is important to take into account the impact of the design on its environment, in time and space. This postmodern idea presumes a high degree of unboundedness and indefiniteness: we are aware of every effect, of all consequences. For design, there is not just one guideline to follow (a single style or ism), but there are countless routes to explore.

During the design process, we do not only make choices and compare different ideas. We do not push the selected ingredients through a strainer in order to arrive at the only correct design solution. Designing is not a simple process of addition, not a bare argumentation, and it does not merely follow scientific or hierarchical processes. We not only interrelate the choices, but connect them. The connections and relations, the edges and the points of contact between entities, which we allow to exist in their autonomy, are what we are interested in. We interweave the spaces, times, elements, and people. We make connections, junctions and short circuits.

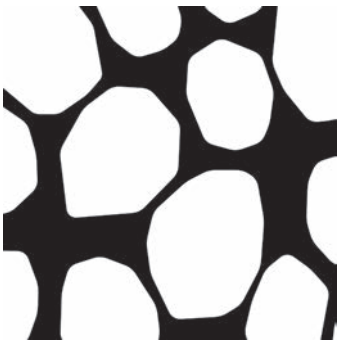
Designing is a connective activity. We create buildings that fit and we are aware of their effects on the immediate environment and the wider urban development context. A design that fits is by definition a sustainable design. For us, sustainable building is more than energy-efficient building. The overall quality for its users is much more important (and more sustainable) than mere energy efficiency. True sustainability arises when users attach value to the project, want to live and work there permanently and love it. True sustainability therefore comes from fulfilling the needs of the users, the client and the site, by connecting the people with the location. Sustainability is therefore inherent in connectivity.

Designers must lead an active life, taking part in everything that happens around them. Designing is being open, being conjunctive, not excluding anything. Designers allow themselves to be influenced. The influences that lead to a design, are based not only on exact scientific information (technical details and mathematical data), but are of a widely varied

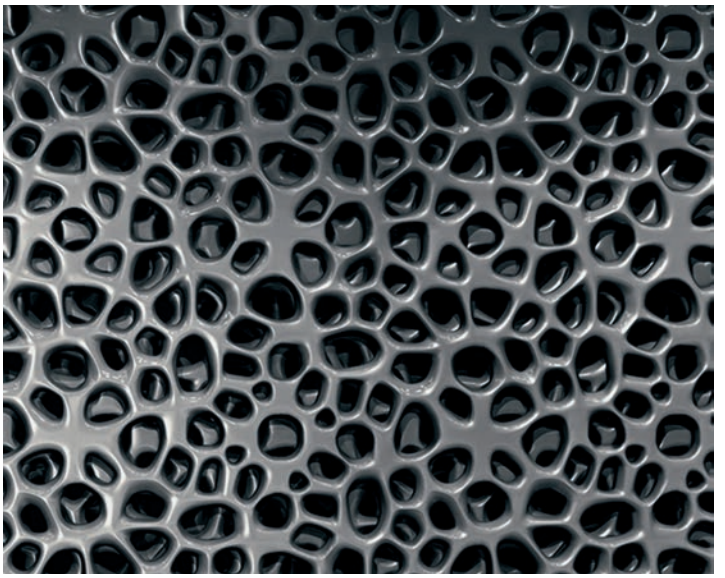




ISOLATION



CONNECTIVITY



(6)

(6)

nature: the social context, the history of the location. The designer's cultural background and his interpretation of beauty also play a role. It is impossible to shake off culture and traditions, habits and history. In our case, the designer recycles shapes from the unique Belgian surrealism and the Flemish clay. (4) You cannot avoid your individuality. Knowledge of the anthropological landscape (who we are, where we come from, how we live, how we work) contributes to the way in which a design fits into its environment.

In addition, a designer is also infected unintentionally, all the time, by banalities, prejudices, or his own conscience. Such contaminations must also be able to play a role. A designer is the receiver of all signals from his environment that may influence his design exercise. These stimuli inspire the designer to reflect on a spatial intervention.
The signals that he receives from his surroundings, inspire reflection, study and understanding. This shows the designer's social engagement. It shows his striving for perfection, for absolute completeness: 'Utopia'.

Architects no longer create their designs merely at their drawing tables or computers. Architecture is not created in an ivory tower. Architecture is embedded in society, because its serving role is essential: it offers people shelter, to live and to work. In this, architecture differs from art: art cannot be assessed with respect to this role. The only way in which architecture can be art, is in a 'polemic way', where – as architect Guy Cleuren (5) states – its relationship with beauty is constantly questioned.

However, architecture is not just about meeting man's basic need for shelter. It wants to improve man's quality of life, but also to provide 'joie de vivre'. Designing is therefore not just a matter of technical knowledge and craftsmanship to guarantee stability and reliability (firmitas), and of functionality to complete the programme (utilitas). It is also about feeling and intuition. About beauty (venustas). The classic ideal is never abandoned in architecture. Architecture is both reason and experience. It is like the mathematical exercise in which music is transformed into dimensions and proportions. Architecture creates obstacles (walls, partitions, windows, doors) to be experienced.

The continuous choices made during the design process, the interactions and connections, we try to fit into a 'matrix'. This matrix gives us a footing that enables us to confirm and justify our choices. Everything, each new project, is tested against the matrix. (6)

The Renaissance architect has been superseded and become impossible. The super artist/scientist no longer exists. No single person can have all knowledge. Our studio therefore does not have the name of just one person. That is why the a2o studio works as a team without a hierarchy, as a group of individuals with different nationalities and cultural backgrounds. The group is encouraged to exchange ideas and to colour outside the lines of architecture. (7)

(1)

(2)

(3)

Smart Plan
About simplicity and complexity

REFERENCES

(1) the water carrier (adaptation a2o)
(2) a2o, Town Hall, Heusden Zolder
The building has two fixed concrete cores with staircases and lifts, made from prefab elements that provide lateral stability to the construction. The visible steel structure on the roof already indicates that the building may not have an ordinary structure.
(photograph: Philippe van Gelooven
(3) Romanesque church, Abbey of Fontenay
Montbard, 1139–1147.
The Abbey of Fontenay is a former Cistercian abbey in Burgundy. This abbey was named after the fountains that decorate its gardens. The Abbey of Fontenay was founded by the holy mystic and monk Bernard of Clairvaux in 1118. The abbey church in Romanesque style dates from the time of its founder and was financed by the Bishop of Norwich. It was consecrated in 1147 by Pope Eugene III. In the nineteenth century, this 'super structure' was used as a paper mill.
The abbey was restored to its former glory at the beginning of the twentieth century.
(photograph: Henri Gaud)
(4) Vietnamese church, Kobe
(5) Michael Rakowitz – ParaSITE, 1998
Michael Rakowitz creates inflatable one-man plastic follies that can be attached to a building's ventilation system. The warm air not only inflates the folly, but also creates comfort.

In 1992, bOb Van Reeth made an innovative statement with his project for the publishing house of the Averbode abbey. It is a rational building with a clear and simple, but powerful architectural idiom. A 'house with a roof', constructed with black brick facades and a lead-covered roof. With its perfected dimensions, expressive details and special material qualities, it is rather brutalist, after the example set by his tutor Fons Hoppenbrouwers. In the same period, Michel Jaspers created the OMOB building in Hasselt. True to his predilection for American architecture, he created a building with an unambiguous architectural idiom. An atrium building with a clear structure, a functionally constructed facade in carefully tooled Mosan limestone and glass. With technically perfect detailing, the building was "complete". However much these two architects may be opposites, the buildings nevertheless show a similar approach.

Both buildings manage to fit perfectly into their context. They are both expressive and reserved. Instead of following the trends of the time, they are self-willed and testify to a very high level of craftsmanship. Bearing signs of a new modernity, picking up, as it were, the thread that was cut at the end of the nineteen-sixties. As if the seventies and eighties were an anomaly in our architectural history, far removed from narrative architecture. These buildings and their authors have had a major influence on our development as architects.

A traineeship with one of them and collaboration with the other constituted a training in craftsmanship, including a search for the right dimensions, a smart matrix. The design sessions started with an idea on construction (*when we worked on the V.A.C. with René Greisch, he declaimed: "gravity is the problem…"*). The search for structures with a flexible content, rational facade constructions and pure details (leaving out the superfluous) resulted in a 'smart plan'. A plan that could be used, one that did not determine but provided opportunities. As bOb van Reeth called it: 'the intelligent ruin'. This is a starting point for all buildings designed by a2o. It is part of every design exercise.

At first sight, a smart plan is a sound mathematical exercise. (1) But it is more complex than it seems. The set of dimensions not only constitutes the basis for the structure, it also carries a building's scenography (the experience). It is the exercise on an 'infrastructural design', a concept introduced by a2o. The interplay of proportions, organic unity, rhythm, scale and balance, constitutes the point of access to the secrets of architecture. (2) These instruments determine the building's spatial experience. This can be illustrated with two examples: one is historic, the other contemporary.

The Romanesque church of the Abbey of Fontenay (France, 1139–1147) is a unique building. (3) It has a floor of sand and no interior decoration or furniture: just space and daylight. The white limestone was stacked as if the church was carved from a single mass. The architecture was based on the elementary shapes of circle and square. Its axis is directed at the rising sun. The sun causes a reflection on the white stones. Inside, coolness pervades the room.
Although the building is completely stripped, and is therefore devoid of any furniture, statue or painting, artificial light or even a floor, it nevertheless emanates tremendous power.

In an expensive district, within a building block overshadowed by Tadao Ando's Rokko housing complex in Kobe (Japan, 1995), a temporary shelter was built for Vietnamese refugees. In the middle of the building block, a Vietnamese church was erected in five weeks, designed by Shigeru Ban.
It was made of cardboard tubes (abandoned formwork), with a roof construction made from light steel and canvas. There were sliding walls of double-walled plexiglass. It was a construction without any facilities: no heating, ventilation, doors or windows. The spacing of the columns, closer together or further apart, defined the space. The plexiglass walls controlled the demarcation of the space. They were usually open, making the place of worship and meeting an essential part of the location. The canvas construction filtered the daylight and defined the centre of the room.

Its true power was in the interspace between the building and the open living spaces (4), the veranda-like constructions made of waste material which the Vietnamese refugees had erected against the backs of the concrete houses of the Japanese. That's where they lived, had their plaster-cast saint's figures, washing

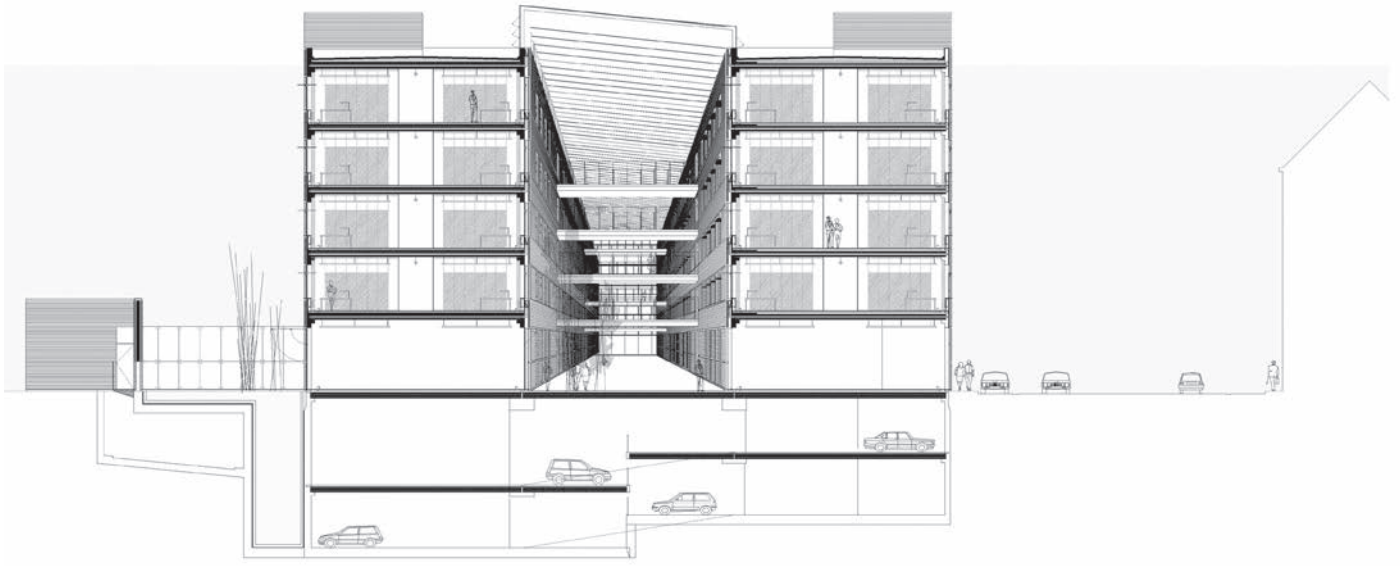
(4)

(5)

basins and drying racks, stoves, flower pots and long tables. The church is no longer there. It showed that the study of the ‘intelligent ruin’ and ‘infrastructural design’ go beyond the knowledge of how to stack beams and columns.

The two examples, these two extremes in terms of experience, could not have been created without a command of the many tools of architecture. The structure of a smart plan therefore seems simple. It looks like the result of the largest common denominator. In reality, however, it is very complex. We look for the most significant structural elements (gravity), facade (skin) and floor (plane of motion). For this, we as architects use our knowledge of forms as a scientific tool and the building undergoes a metamorphosis from the expected ‘*dull space*’ (*boring architecture*) to a ‘*perceptional melting space*’ (*blurring architecture*). In continuous interaction with a variety of elements in its surroundings, but also growing from the intrinsic power of architecture. Architecture that constantly reinvents itself and has a great experiential value. (5)

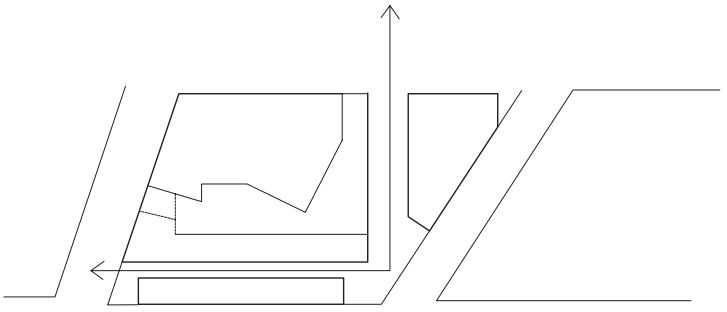
For every project, we focus on creating a ‘*smart plan*’ and for this we use the tools of architecture as a revitalisation of craftsmanship.



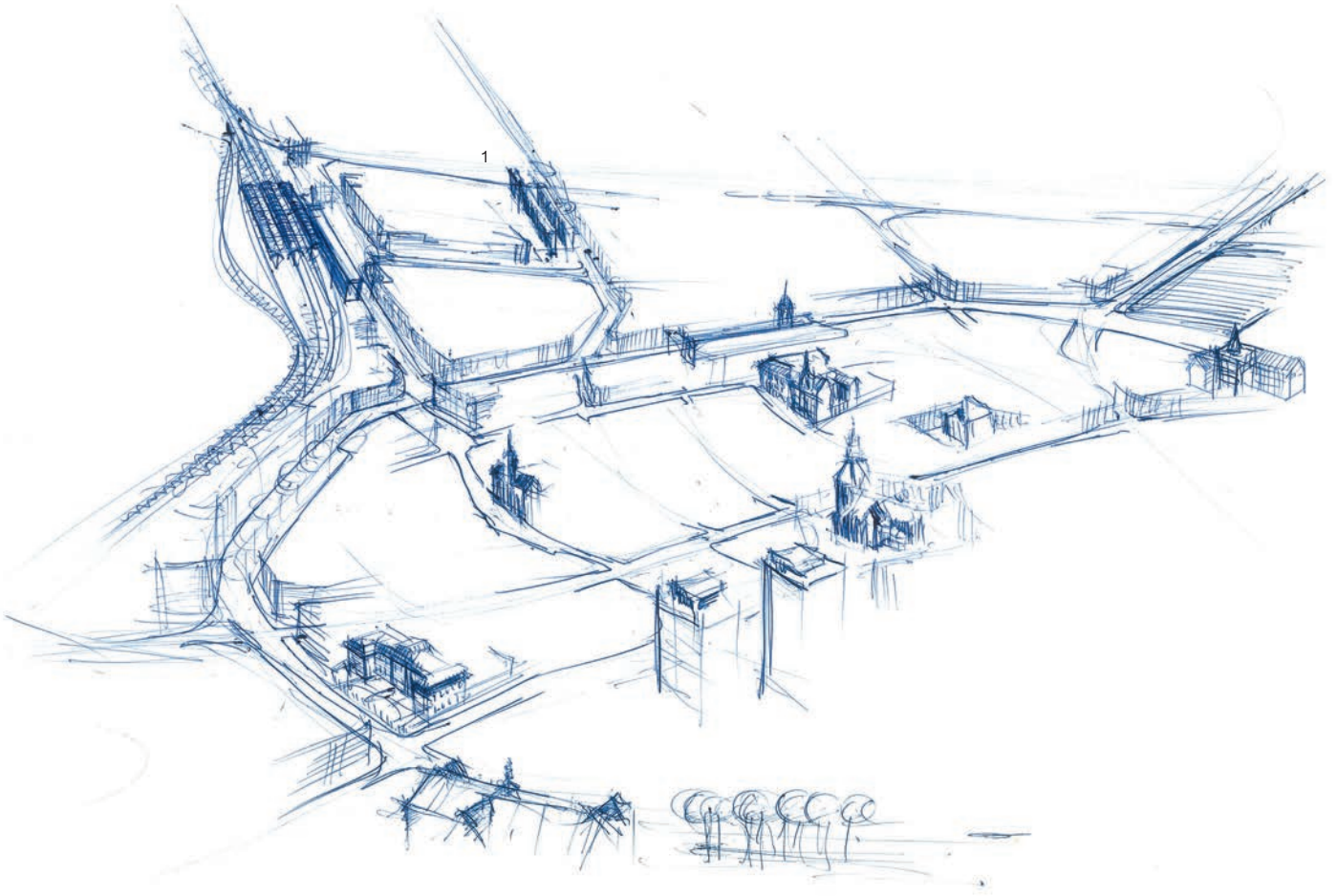
SECTION / PERSPECTIVE

Flanders House

New building for Vlaams Administratief Centrum
Hasselt, Belgium
1997 – 2004
Competition – laureate
In collaboration with bOb Van Reeth – AWG Architecten



In 1995, the then Minister for Finance, Public Health and Budget, Wivina De Meester, wrote a policy note in which she pointed out the government's leading role in the pursuit of high-quality architecture in Flanders. Using the image expressed by its public buildings, the region is able to present itself as a community that aims for quality in general. Establishing Flemish Administrative Centres, the Flemish Community wishes to create a 'recognisable presence' in each of the provincial capitals. The Flanders House in Hasselt should therefore be the concrete expression of what the Flemish Community stands for: openness, accessibility and sustainability.
Being recognisable is not just a question of design. The location, site, architecture, and the concept of the building combine to determine its recognisability. The importance of the location is its accessibility and it was not a coincidence that the area around the station was selected. A public building of such a size has a great impact on this neighbourhood. The centre became a lever

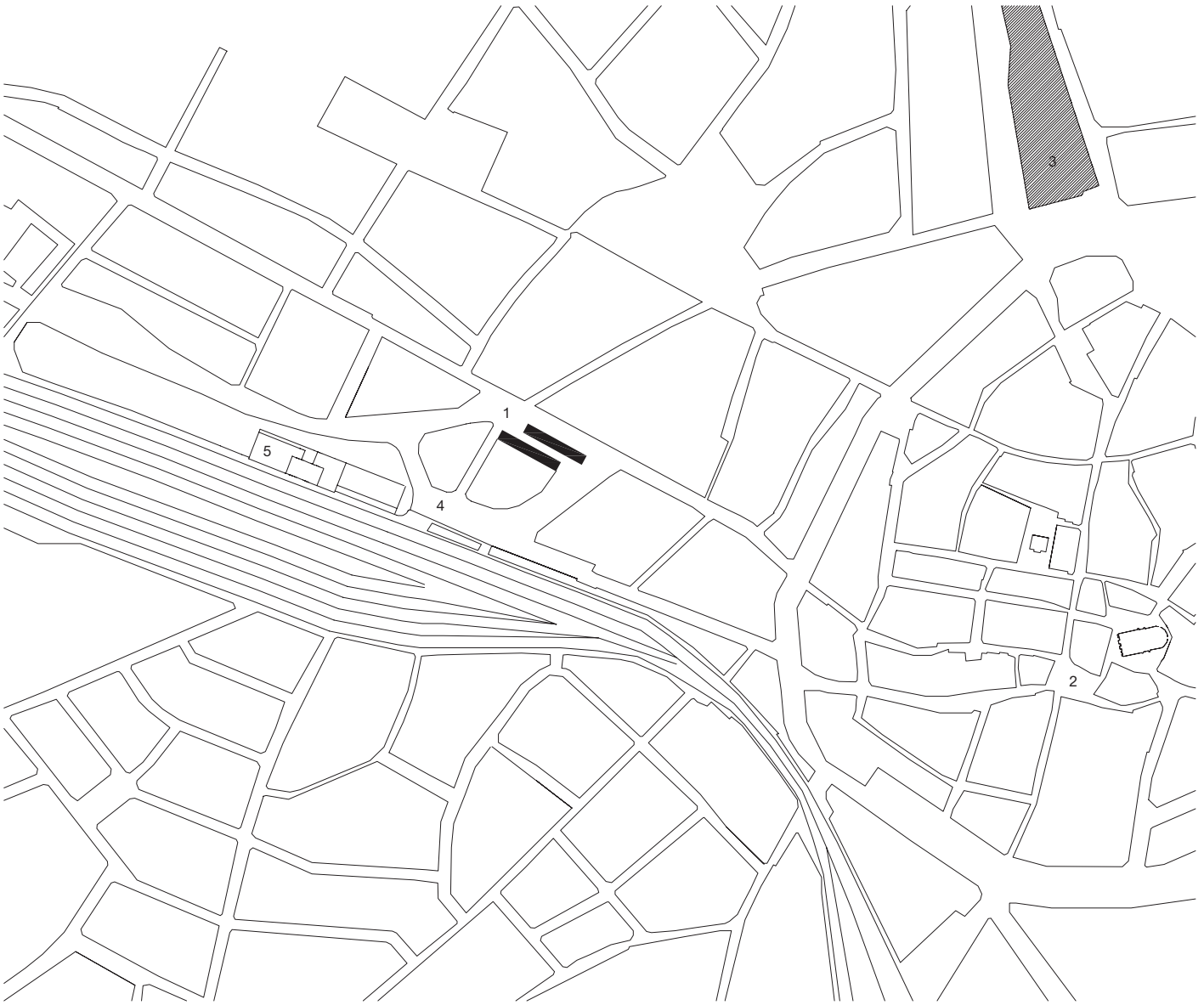


SKETCH FOR RELATION PLAN, HASSELT CENTRE

1. VLAAMS ADMINISTRATIEF CENTRUM

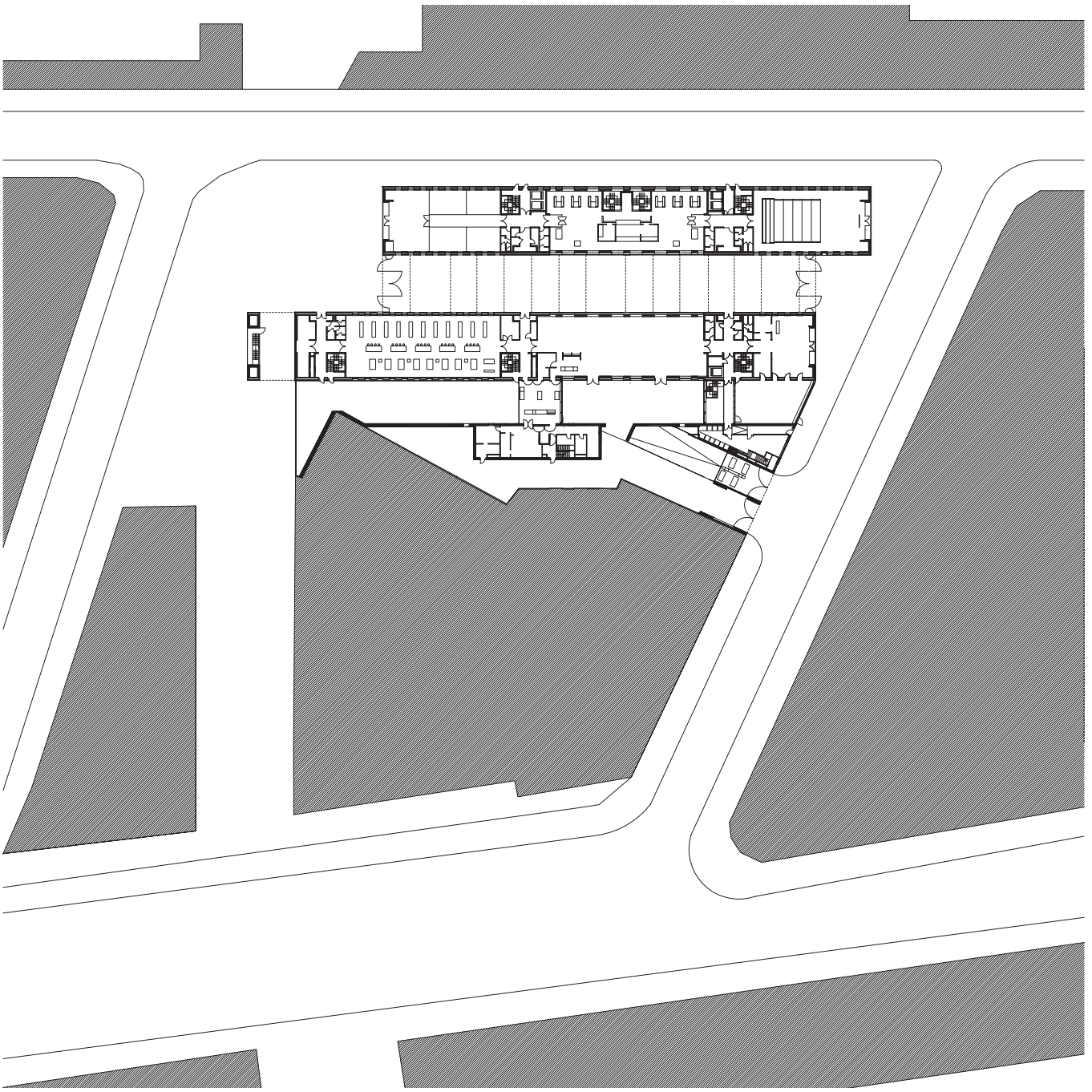
for innovation and has a structuring effect on the development of the district. It is an ‘urban sign’ within Hasselt’s city structure. The two parallel main buildings are intersected by a covered passage that provides access to the building’s public facilities and also constitutes a public walkway that is linked to the pedestrian and cycling routes of the surrounding streets and squares. This makes the centre as a public building an essential component of the public, social space of the city.

The orange/red facing brick have been glued together to form a monolith, a seamless fabric. The structure as a whole has been reduced to modular elements. This radical reduction of materials used, combined with the essence of construction and technology, have made this centre a sustainable building, with a transparent and compelling form. A construction that is ready to adapt to different purposes over time. Sustainability here concerns not only the material, but also the utilitarian aspect: owing to its functionality, ease of maintenance and high degree of flexibility. Mindful of the statement “the best air conditioning is no air conditioning”, a cooling system was developed that better suits the highs and lows of the outdoor climate, and makes use of the heating capacity of the structural elements of the building itself. The widened cavities of the outer walls hide a network of air ducts, which withdraws cold air from the underground car parks during the night and transports it through the cavities to push it into the structural system. This allows the building volume to cool down completely and to distribute this coolness in the rooms during the day. Instead of adding an air conditioning system to the building afterwards, the technology has been included in the design from the earliest stage: the large structural span necessitated the use of hollow vaults, which in turn could be used as air ducts. This eliminates the need for suspended ceilings and therefore constitutes an example of a transparent and sustainable construction method.



SITUATION

1. VLAAMS ADMINSTRATIEF CENTRUM
2. CITY CENTRE
3. PORT
4. RAILWAY STATION
5. COURTHOUSE

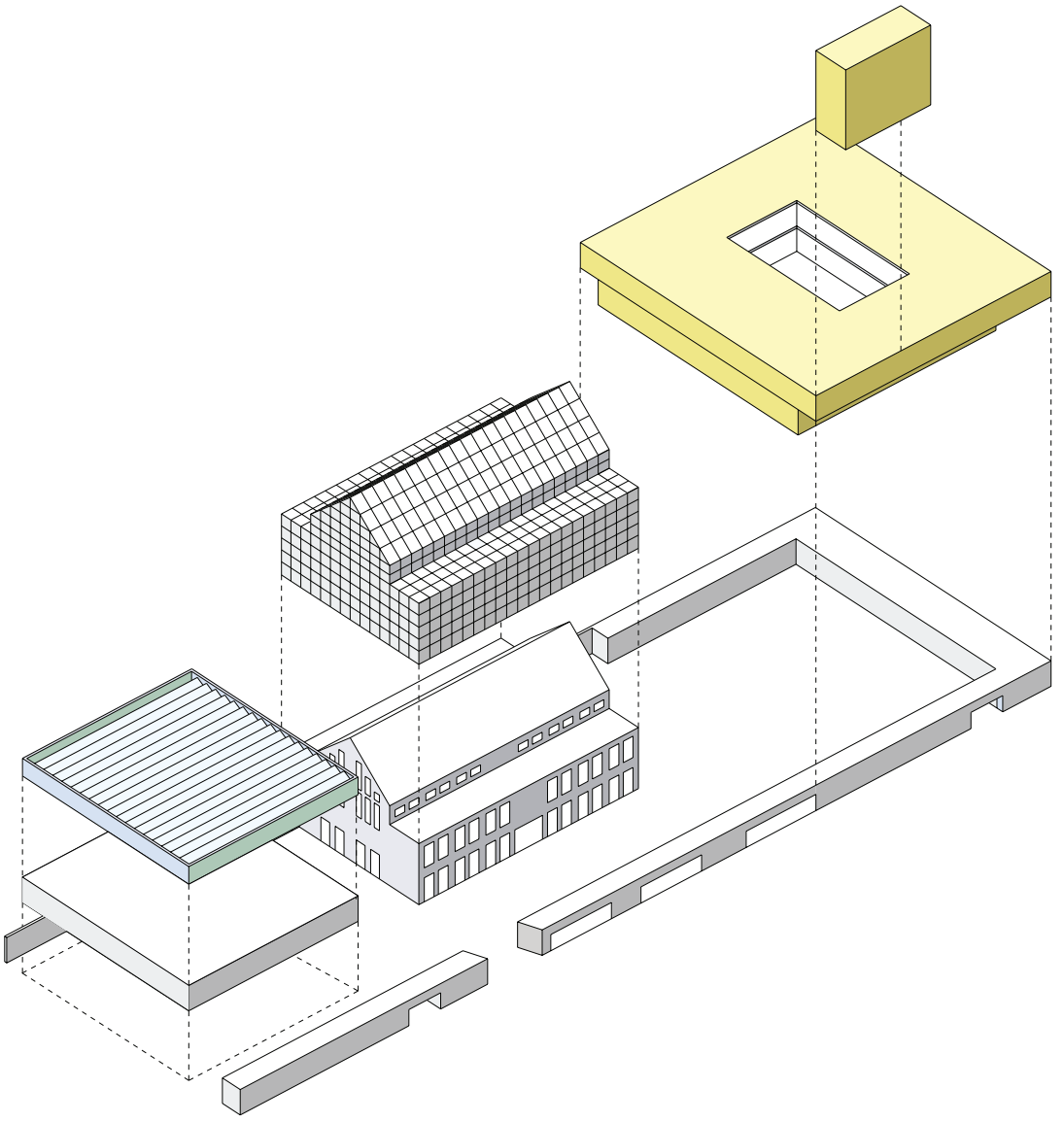


GROUND FLOOR

0 25 m

FACADE FRAGMENT. PHOTO: NIELS DONCKERS

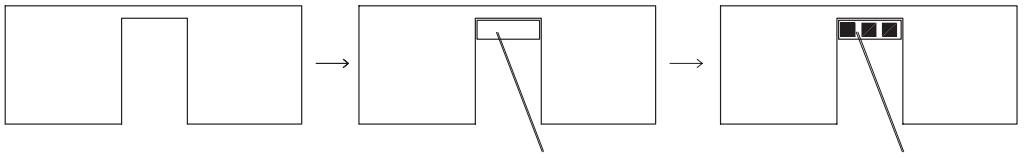
INDOOR PASSAGE. PHOTO: NIELS DONCKERS



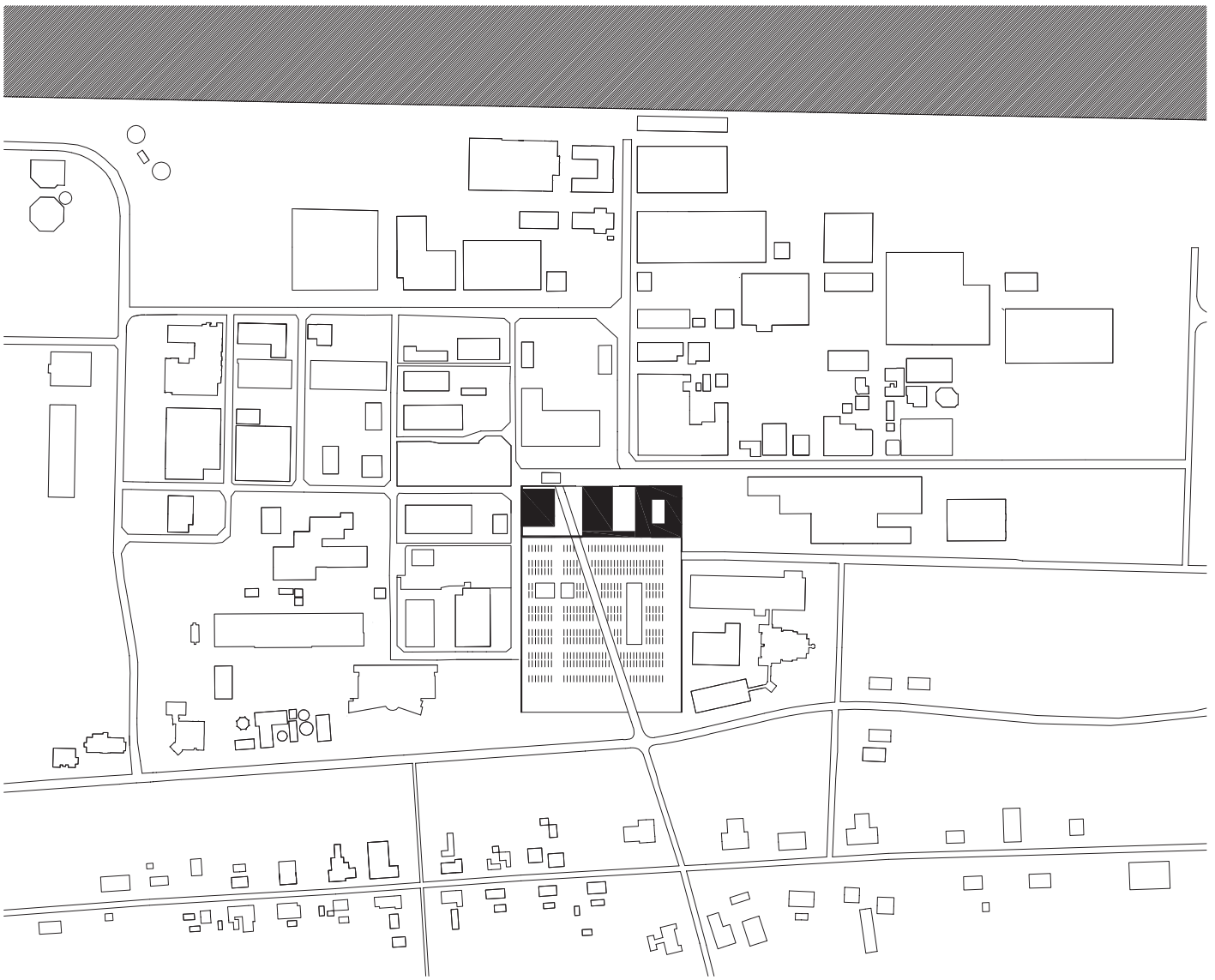
DIAGRAM

Enclosed Village

Combination of construction and renovation of an administrative building with a visitors' centre
Olen, Belgium
2011 – on hold
Competition – laureate



The location in Olen presents itself as an autonomous, self-centred entity. The site is like a village, composed of various buildings set in an orthogonal pattern. Roads and pipes cross the premises, constituting the infrastructure.
The public areas, including the entrance, parking facilities, reception, meeting rooms, and the restaurant, are difficult to recognize in the existing situation.
Our design creates a new centre and embraces in a single grand gesture the entry, car park, reception, service centre, and offices. This is a structural gesture, arranging the space and enhancing its interpretability, accessibility and security.
A large rectangle, set in the middle of the site, constitutes the centre – the first chamber. Within this rectangle, various spaces have been created. From the existing fabric, the diagonal access road has been retained. This diagonal has an organizing effect. The street ends in a new rectangle: the second chamber.



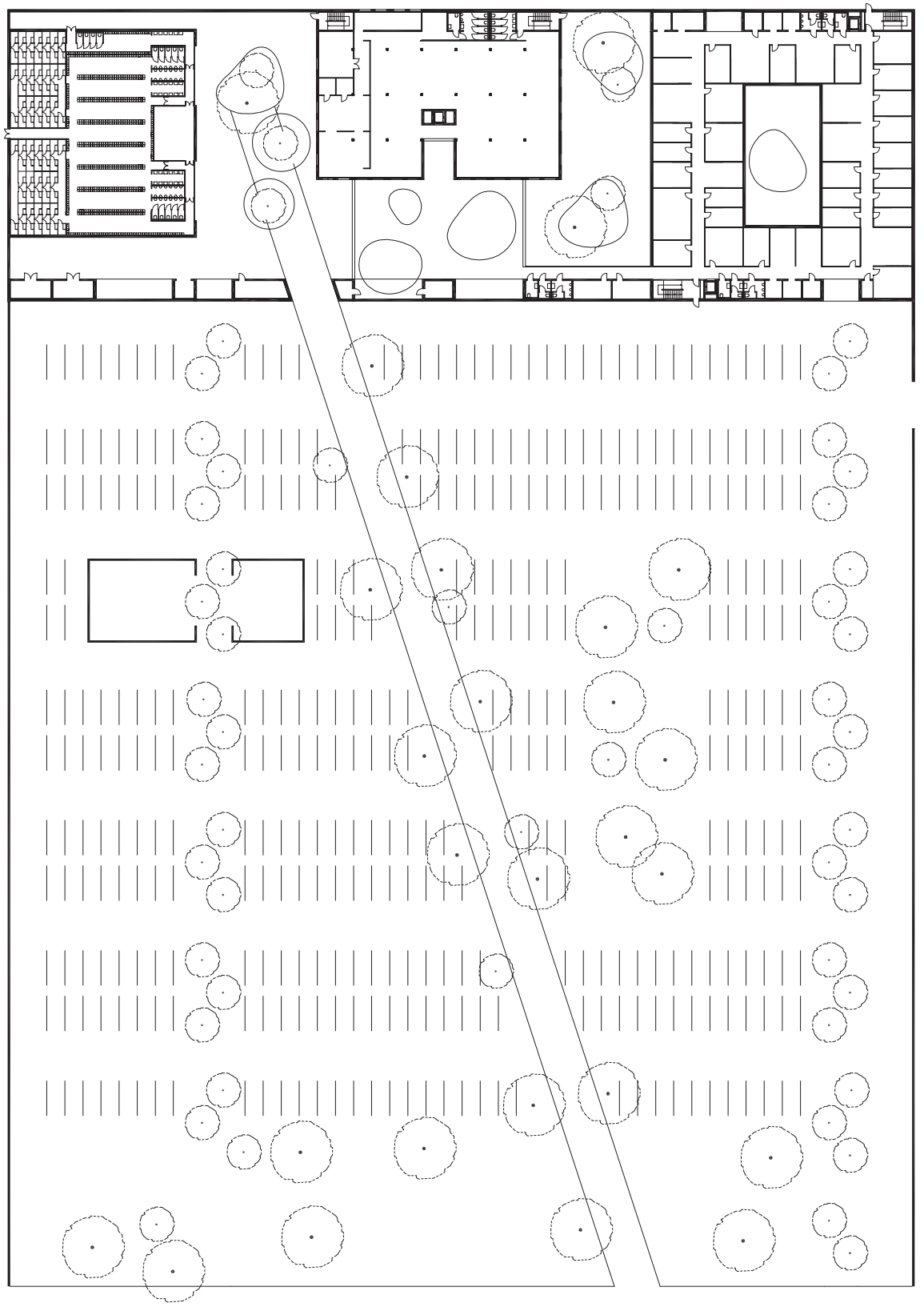
SITUATION

0 120 m

This square is a collection of a variety of functions and rooms, each of which has its own relation with the location and the various production units.
Three building volumes have been set within the second chamber. Disconnecting the various elements has made it possible to build in stages and to provide each building with a unique identity and character. This reinforces the concept of a village. Each volume has its own central space, acting as an interior chamber.

An important element of the second chamber is the central building, which was already present on site. Considering the clear, logical structure of the building, it seemed a good idea to retain it in the new design. It is given a new shell and the use of its innate qualities is optimized. In terms of energy levels, the building is able to match contemporary buildings. The ground floor incorporates the restaurant and supporting facilities. The exhibition room with reception area links two of the three outer chambers and gives the impression of a covered outdoor space. From this central zone, which is frequently used for exhibitions and events, one proceeds to the various other rooms. The remaining two volumes represent the service building and the administrative centre.

The focus of the design is primarily on organising space. Creating the main spaces results in interspaces that play a supporting role. At every level, these interspaces relate to the location's context, thus creating new connections and a clear structure.



GROUND FLOOR

0 20 m

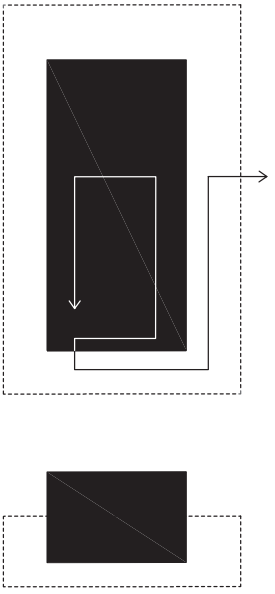
ENTRANCE OF MAIN BUILDING

SPACE IN BETWEEN

PARTY HALL INTERIOR. PHOTO: ELISE VANHEES

dB Isolator

Building a party hall with accompanying multipurpose foyer
Geel, Belgium
2008–2011
together with De Architectengroep, Geel



De Waai is located in the centre of Geel, opposite the town hall. The building is part of a cluster of public buildings with a cultural function, including a cultural centre, a library and a cinema. The creation of the new party hall is the first stage of the city renovation project that is to completely redesign the centre of Geel. The party hall itself is located in the upper part of the building. The lower part surrounds the hall on three sides with a column-based support structure. The row of columns is an almost classical design, with references to the existing town hall, but also constitutes a screen that controls and varies the openness between inside and outside. The transparency of the three facades guarantees the contact between foyer and public space. This emphasises the building's public function.

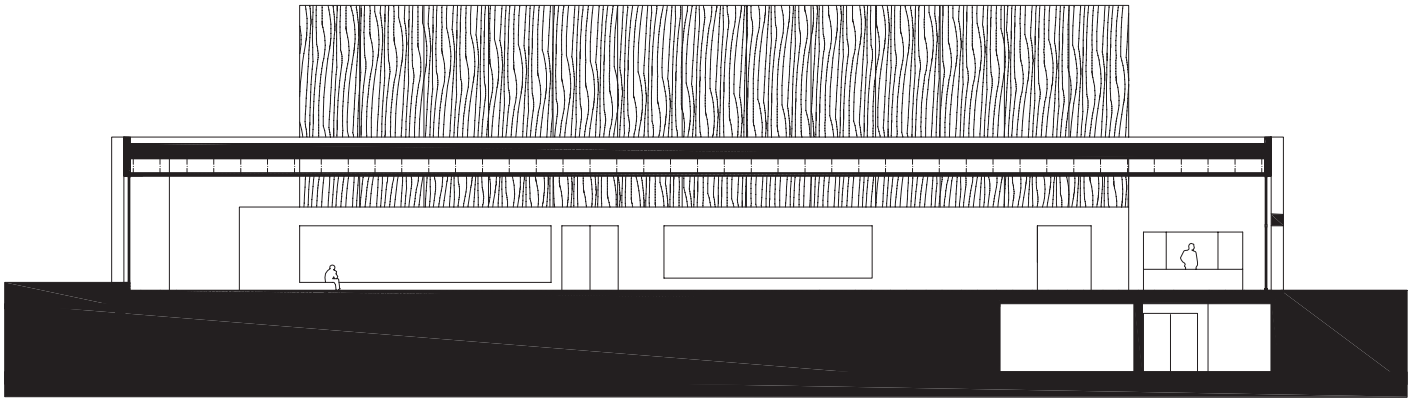
All support functions are located in the lower volume surrounding the hall. The functions occupy an additional shell enclosing the volume of the hall. In addition to storage space, it also provides

LOCATION

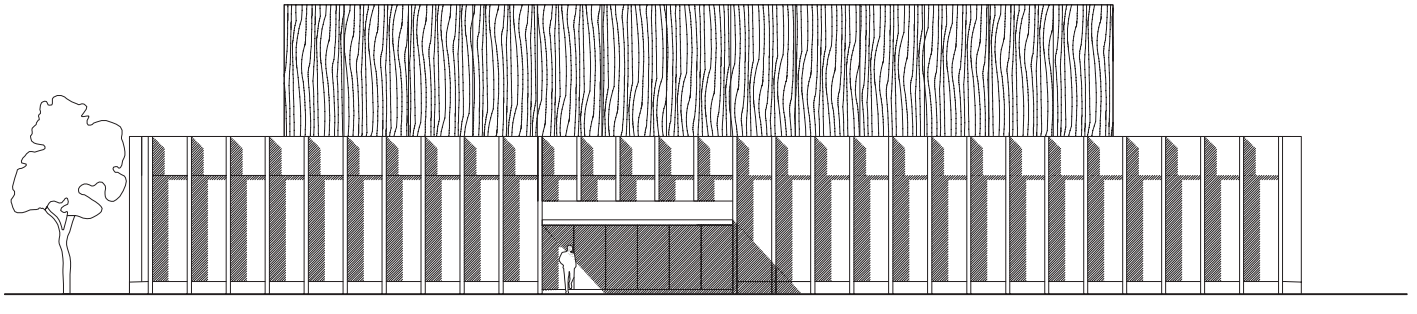
0 45 m

seating facilities and a cloakroom. The back of the building, which borders on another building, contains toilet facilities and storage rooms.

The entrance hall and the additional shell combine to act as soundproofing. The hall is enclosed by functional rooms that double as a layer of insulation. This way, the hall and the public space are cleverly separated.

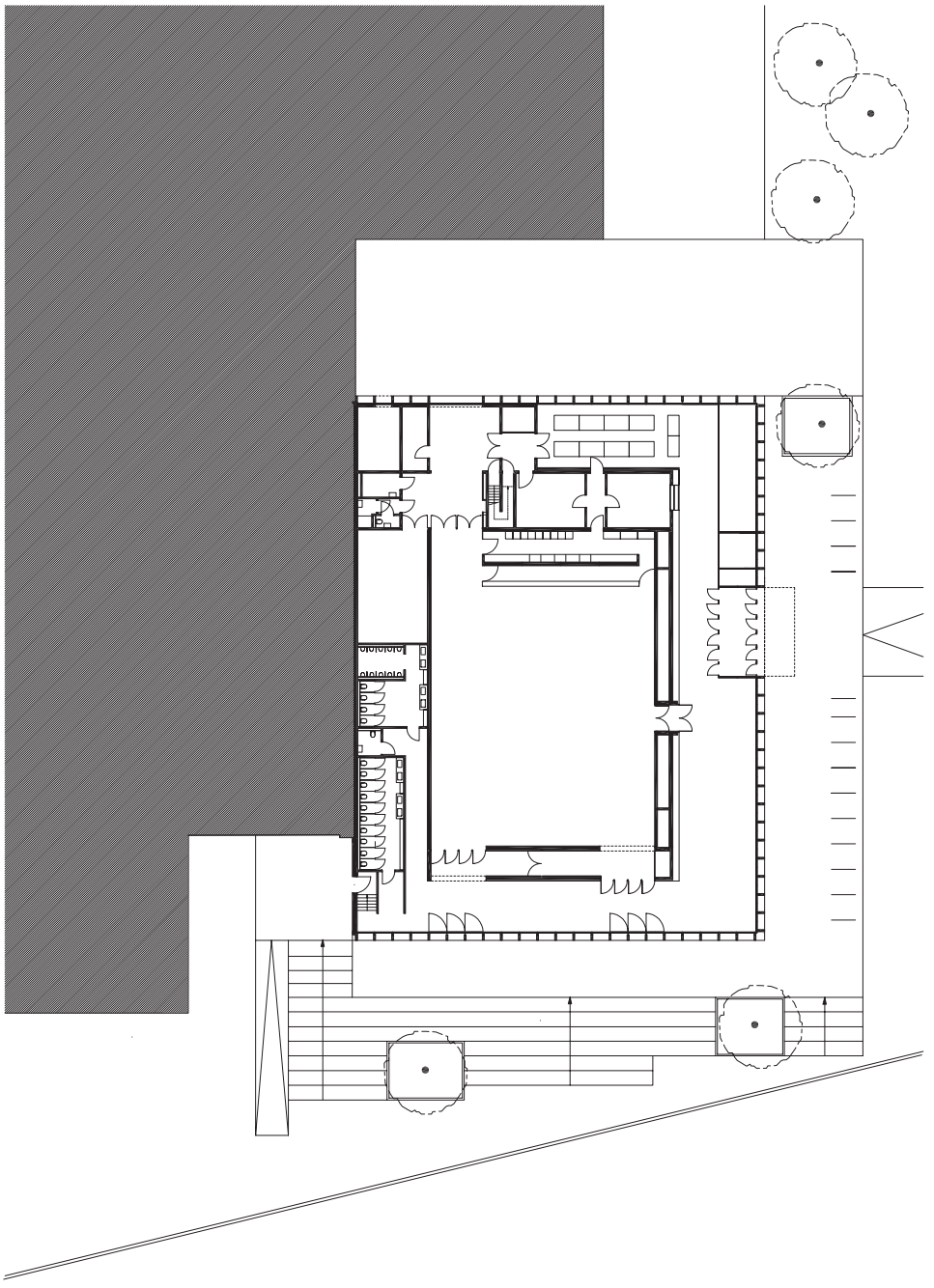


SECTION



FACADE ENTRANCE

0 5 m



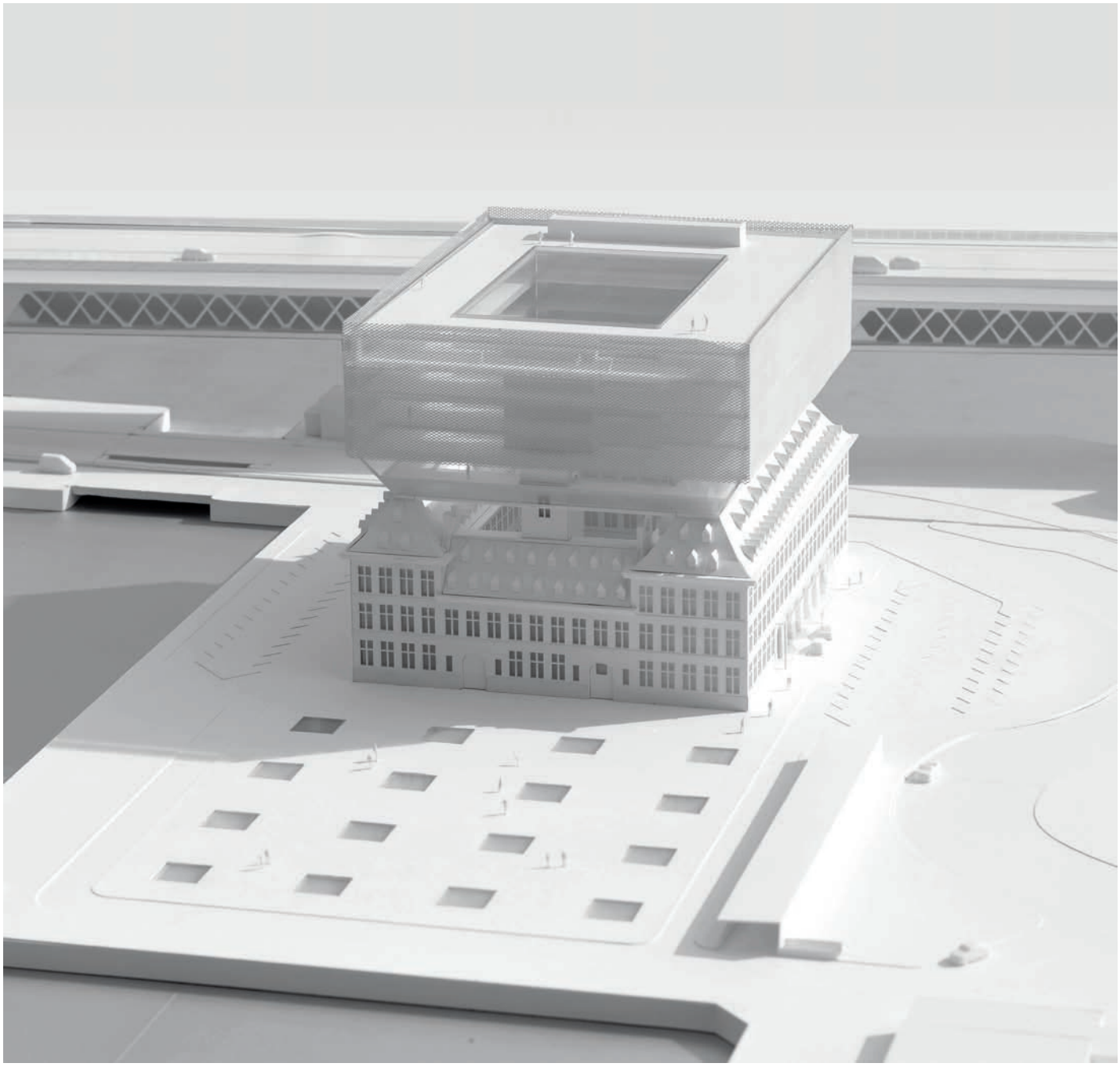
GROUND FLOOR

0 5 m

ACCESS FROM THE STREET. PHOTO: ELISE VANHEES

NICK ERVINCK – SIUTOBS, 2006–2007

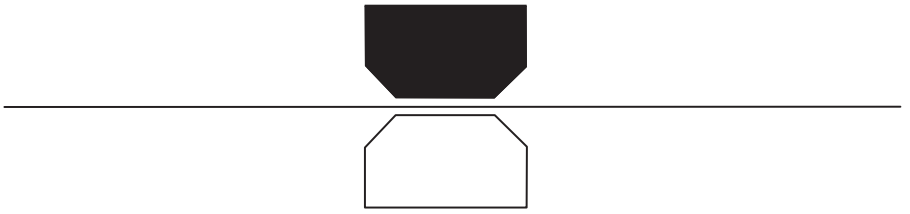
FOYER. PHOTO: ELISE VANHEES



MODEL

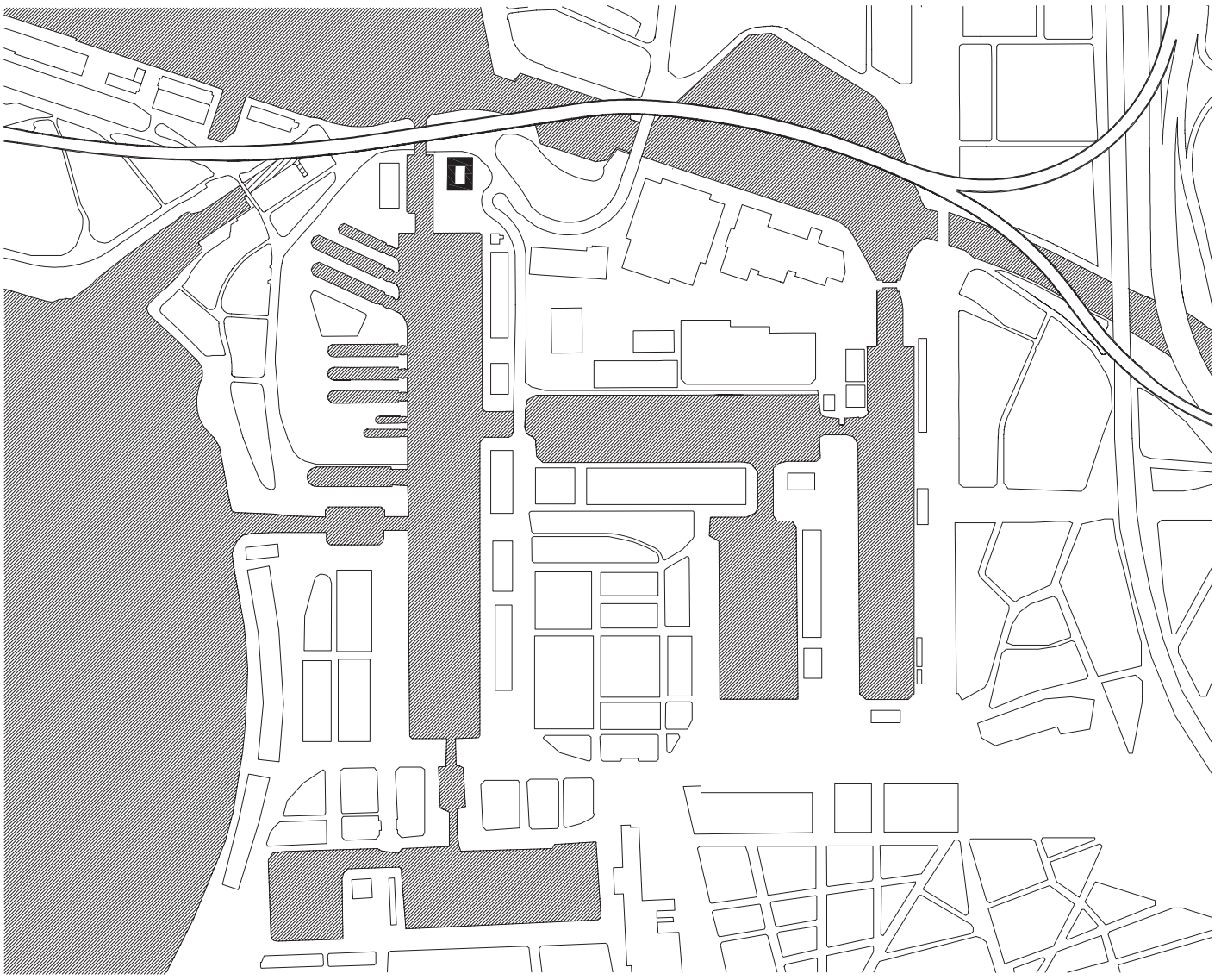
Double Shape

Renovation and extension of 'Het Havenhuis'
Antwerp, Belgium
2008
Together with Atelier Kempe Thill
Competition – not selected



The new Havenhuis will be one of the buildings that strengthen the unique character of the city of Antwerp and its harbour. Antwerp is building a future in which the mixture of the past and the present creates an idiosyncratic identity. The Havenhuis was given an international role. It is rooted in the history of the city and at the same time points to the future. The required renovation and extension of the existing building constitute, on the one hand, an architectural icon for the harbour. But it also engages in a dialogue with the city, without repressing the historic unity.

This building should not be the expression of how the outside world perceived architecture in 2008. It is not demonstration commission. This building should be the creation of a location where the harbour appropriates the world, based on one condition: trade.



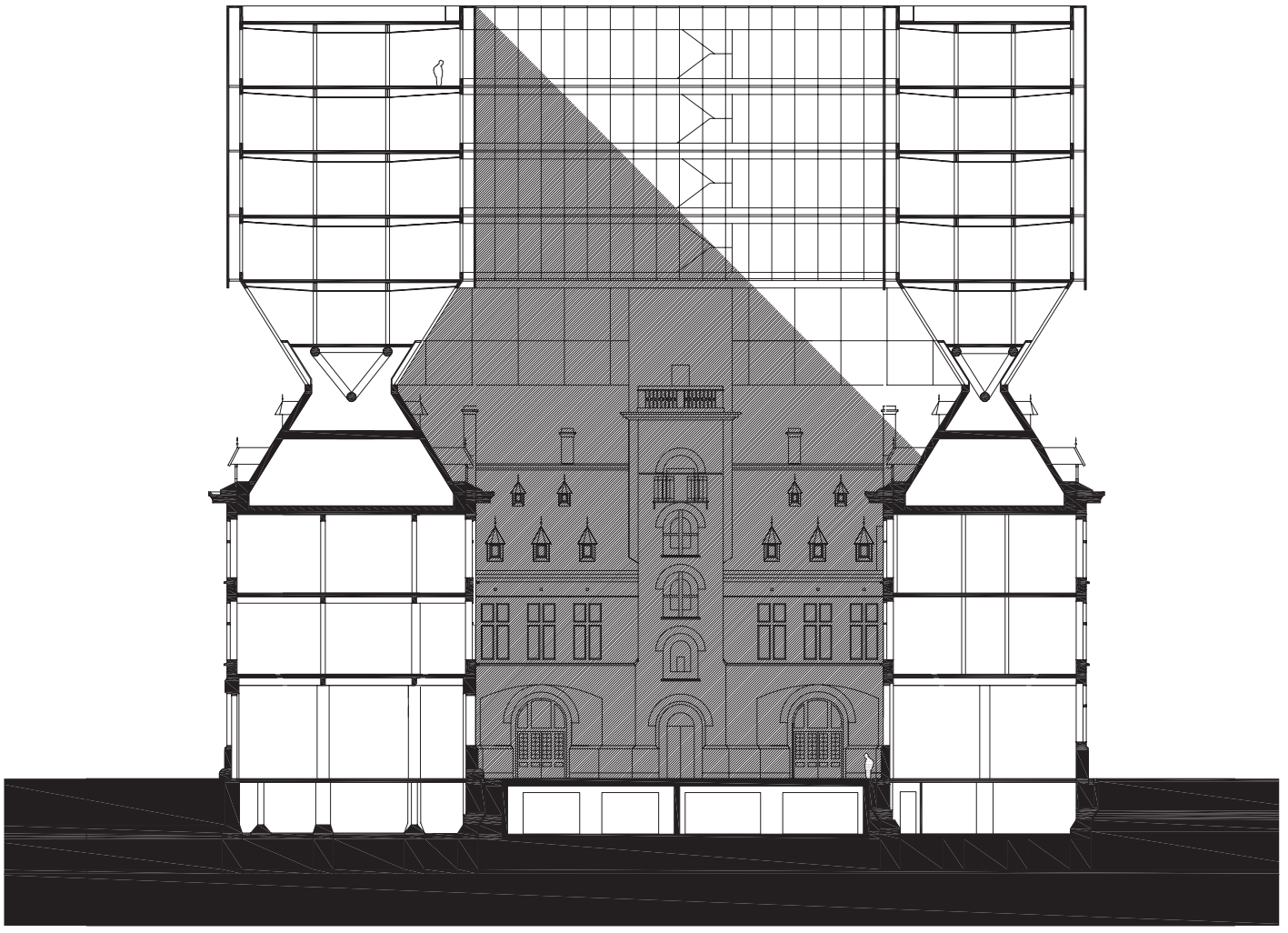
SITUATION

0 200 m

The existing building provides the perfect starting point for an extension. The current structure and organisation are transparent, clear, with high rooms and a pattern of openings in the facade that facilitate the pleasant access of daylight.
Our new design is literally built on what is there. The existing floor plan provides the starting point for the extension, using the Havenhuis's innate qualities. The extension reflects what is there and confirms the footprint and location. The contemporary additions to the city contrast with the existing historic architecture, but together create a new identity and unity of utilization and organisation.

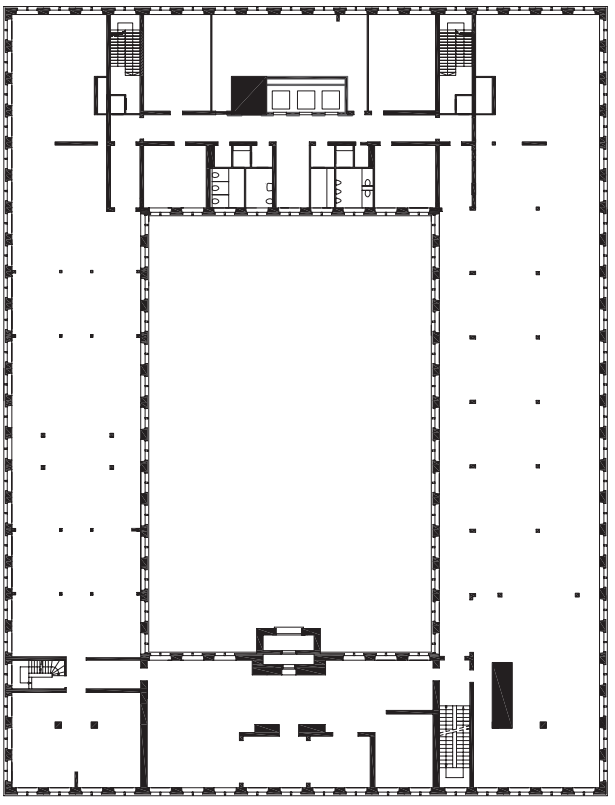
The present Havenhuis is a copy of the original late-medieval Hanse House. The Havenhuis no longer has a trading function, but acts as a fire station. The current building is a somewhat odd, hybrid construction of load-bearing masonry with a concrete structure. It can be regarded as a caricature of the original building.

The new shape is a reflection and a conscious artistic act. Not a stunt, but rather of a surrealist and Belgian nature. The extension smartly links with the old. It has a characteristic floor plan, in which all rooms are arranged around an inner court. The new volume continues this concept in a light steel structure. Completed fully in dry plaster constructions. The structure cuts through the roof en acts as a bridging element. The solution chosen shows the possibilities of vertical extension of a historic building. It confirms its role as a symbol of the international port of Antwerp. It is an addition to the city's skyline, at the spot where the old and new harbour meet.

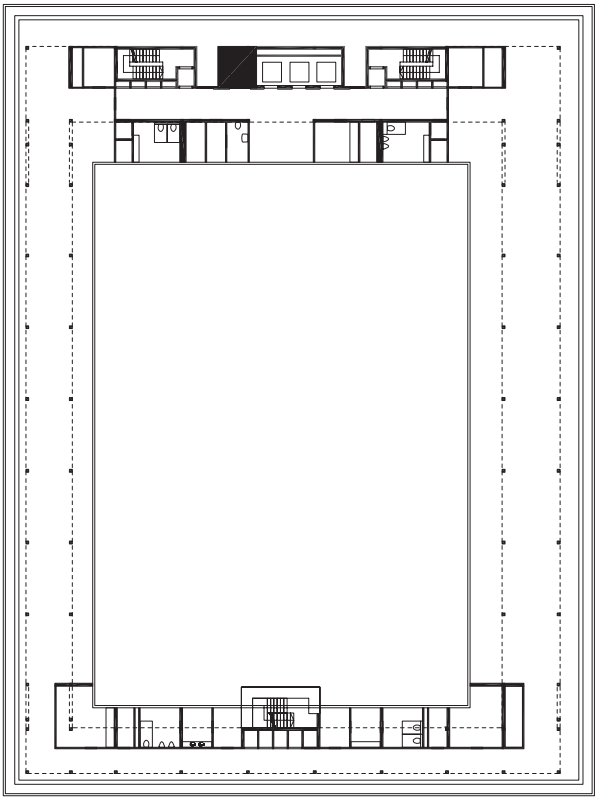


SECTION

0 10 m

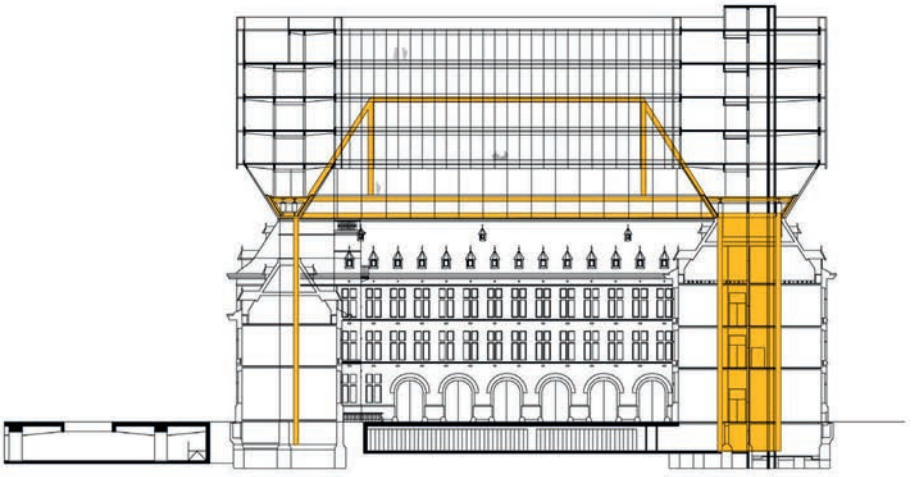


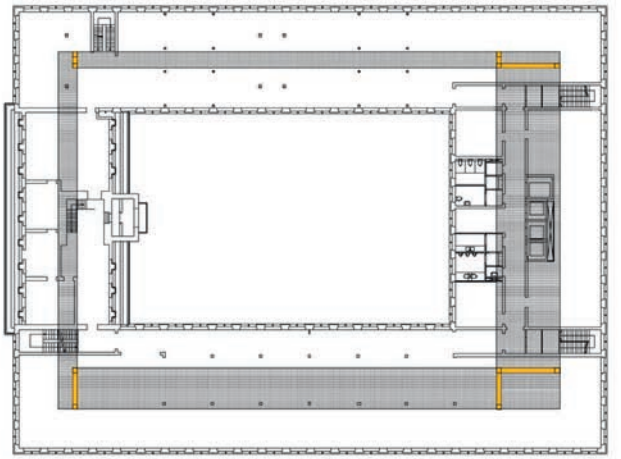
GROUND FLOOR

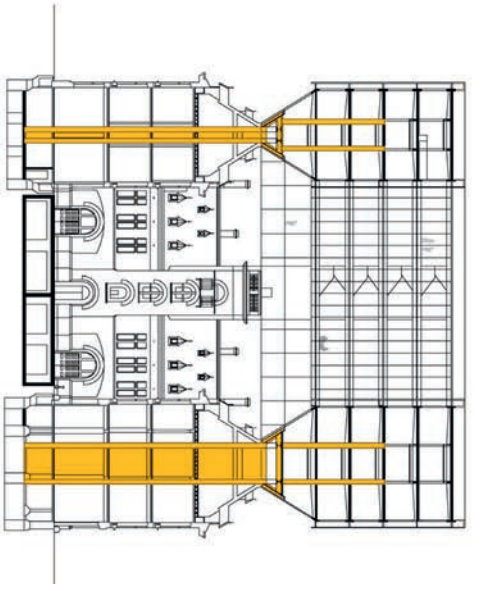


UPPER FLOOR EXTENSION

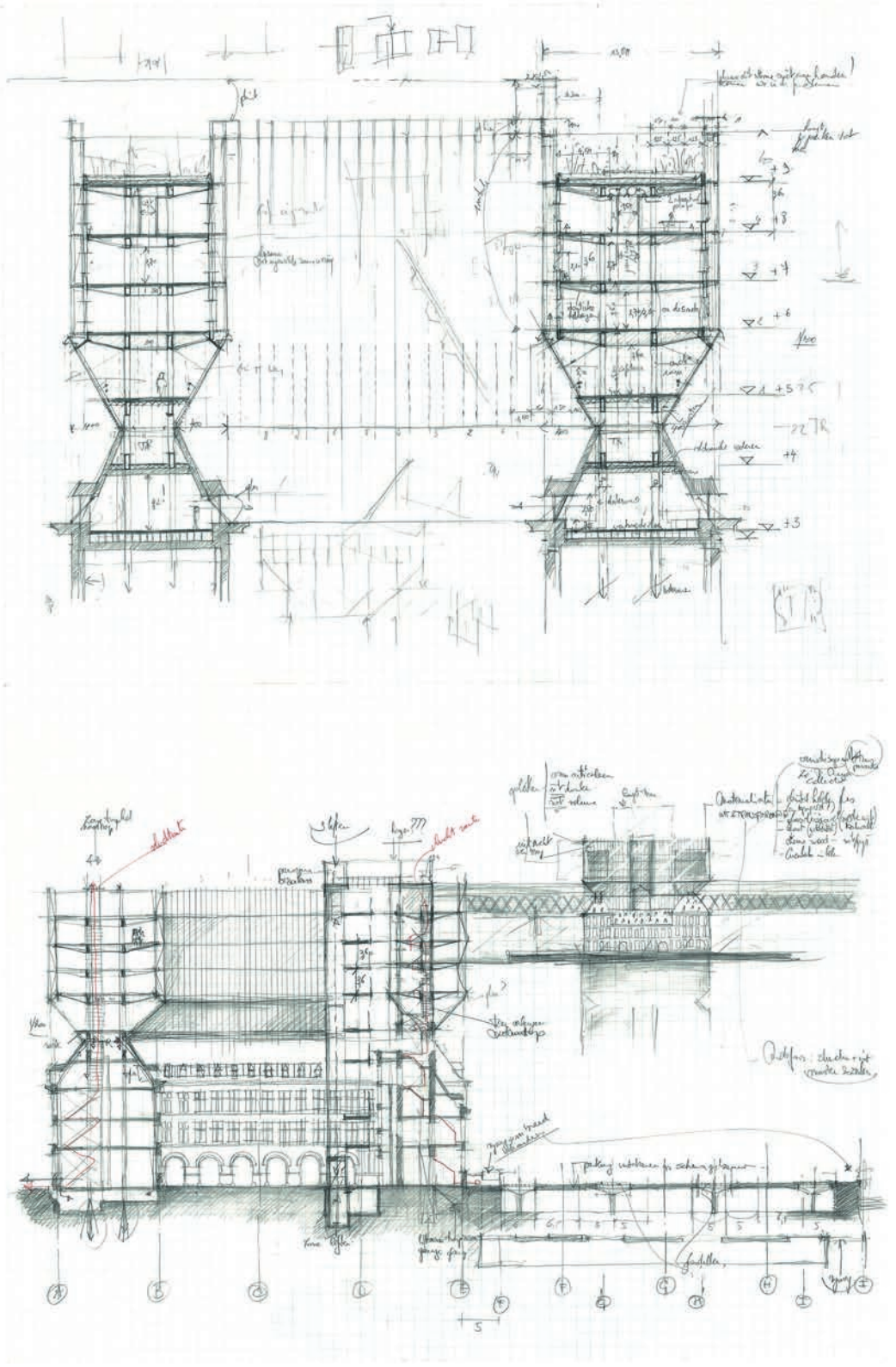
0 10 m



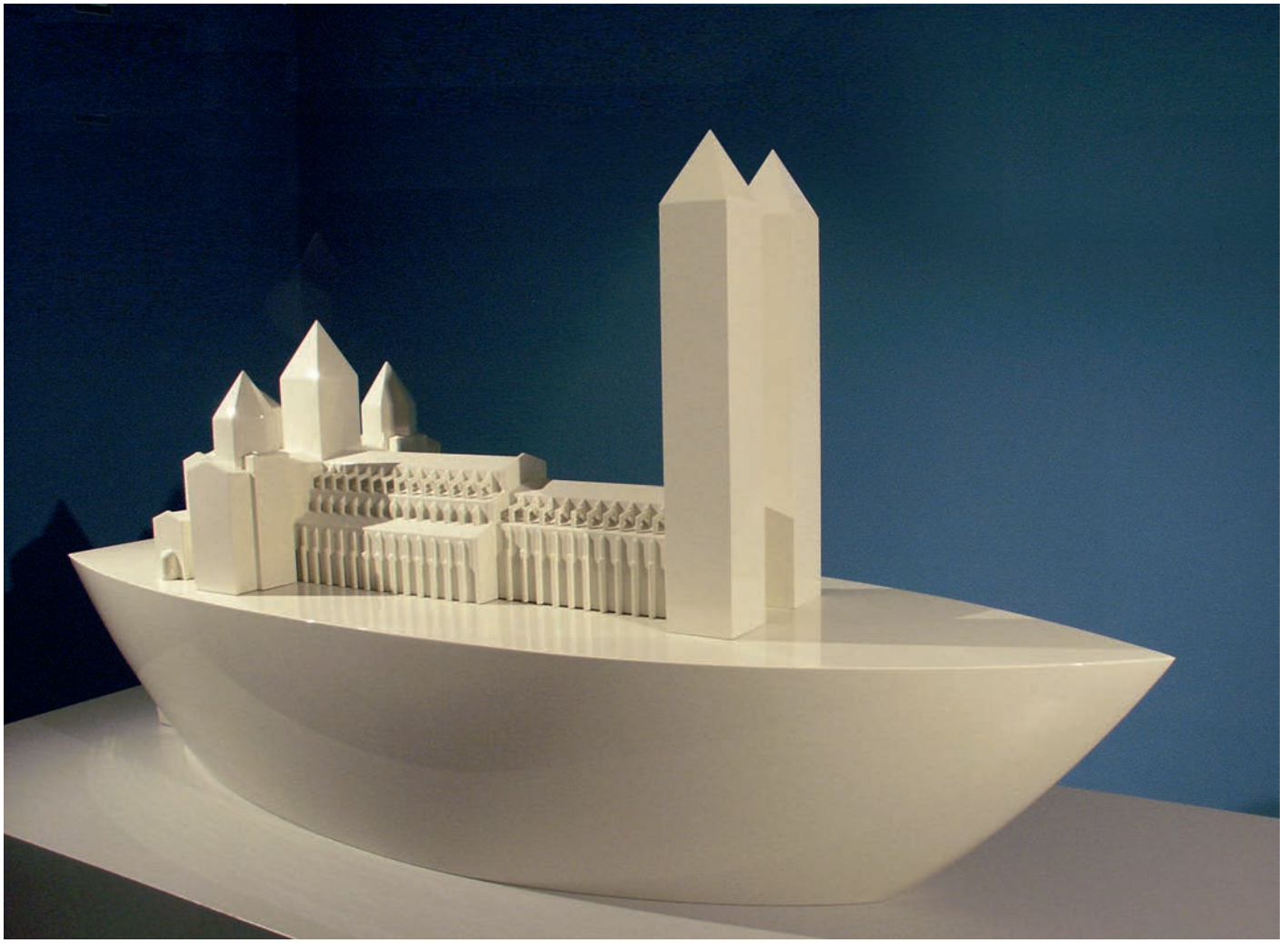




CONSTRUCTION PLAN



SKETCH



NICK ERVINCK – IEBANULK, 2004–2006

DOUBLE FIGURE

VIEW ACROSS THE OLD PORT

ICON FOR AN INTERNATIONAL PORT

TSUNEHISA KIMURA

4

Two Rooms

Between virtual and physical
Between sculpture and architecture

Two Rooms

REFERENCE

(1) Slogan of the Sint Lucas institute for architecture

Sketching the framework within which a2o designers operate, we think of two imaginary rooms. ‘design rooms’.
a2o is the instrument within which these rooms develop.
The first room is an imaginary space: ‘the environment’.
It is the environment in which we collect countless impressions of our sociospatial reality: all those stimuli that encourage us to reflect on spatial interventions. A designer is firmly rooted in reality. The days when he created his designs at the drawing table, are long gone. He is the receiver of social signals that may influence his design exercise.
This room promotes deepening, observation, study and evaluation. It is a space where social views on the use of land and space, and about the quality of space for living and working, are converted into new architectural and urban development principles. Here the social engagement of the designer is laid down with extreme consistency in new uncompromising leitmotifs. This can be applied to any spatial situation. It is the closed world of the designer in which he strives for perfection and completeness.
It is the search for ‘Utopia’. It is an explosive, flowing space within which architecture tries to develop as an autonomous discipline.

The second room is ‘the studio’. It is the scientific space in which experiments are carried out: the laboratory for research on the materialisation of architecture. This is the study of techniques, structures and materials, and of the integration of those components. It is an artistic world, a world in which the proposed architectural solutions constitute art, rather than representing art.

“architecture is art, or it is not architecture” *

This is where the discipline is developed. It is a complex space in which we are constantly searching for coherence between the elements that relate to the design process. The architect is able to reveal this coherence, to discard all incidental circumstances, and if necessary to create new relations. It is in this search for new links that the designer can be innovative and pioneering. This is where his discourse becomes concrete and interesting. It is an implosive space of ideas aimed at what is real.

NICK ERVINCK – YAROTUBE, 2007

Between virtual and physical Between sculpture and architecture

Nick Ervinck

REFERENCES

(1) Or, in the words of minimalist sculptor Carl Andre: “My idea of a piece of sculpture is a road… we don’t have a single point of view for a road at all, except a moving one, moving along it.”
(2) Ornament is a concept that Adolf Loos considered degenerative (see his *Ornament und Verbrechen*, 1913), but which contemporary architects such as Herzog & de Meuron, OMA, Jürgen Mayer H. and Toyo Ito embraced again in architecture.
(3) The tension between the massive character of the base and the sculpture that has come to life, was already described by Ovid (the sculptor Pygmalion wakes Galathea from a sculpted rock) and it was beautifully visualised by Bernini in the 17th century (half of Daphne’s legs are part of the base, the other half is free from it).

Shelter constitutes the basics of civilisation. Man instinctively searches for his personal space, which he subsequently occupies and protects. He demarcates this newly found territory with a shield, which safeguards him against environmental factors. However, not all civilisations organise ‘space’ in the same way, for the simple reason that they perceive it differently. Reality as we know it, is not an independent entity, but the result of a spatial organisation process in which perceptions are constructed by imagination and the mind. From my background as a sculptor, I try to translate this instinctive (and often subconscious) need for organising and dividing up space. Each time, I look for crossovers between different disciplines and paradigms: sculpture, architecture and design, the virtual and the material, tradition and innovation, the organic and the rigid, art and popular culture. Sculpting raw material does not result in formal constructions, but in human, relational connections; both as to medium and as to form.
The connection between my art and architecture lies in the pursuit of an understanding of matter and the search for maximum impact of the object in the space given. This way, the sculpture becomes an object of experience. No longer an autonomous entity separated from life. The sculpture has become an object that creates connections between space, architecture and the viewer. Sculpting, therefore, is connecting. The sculpture, as an object of desire of its creator and its audience, has

an aesthetic, art-historical, functional as well as social meaning.
In this artistic quest for new connections, my tools include sculptures, 2D and 3D prints, videos, digital drawings and installations. Evolutions in sculpting, like those in architecture, are driven by technological innovation and new materials. Innovative computer software and 3D printers have created opportunities – both in art and in science – that were once completely unimaginable. I apply such new technologies intensively, looking for extremes and the ultimate form. The latter hovers between the virtual and the material, incorporating a visual tradition, but also giving it a new body.
Although I am fascinated by the potential of the latest computer-aided design methods (computational design, generative art), my images do not merely consist of programmed codes, but also engage in interaction with the physical world. In the physical studio, I investigate matters that are virtually impossible, in the virtual studio the things that are impossible to realise. In this way, I constantly explore the extremes of every medium. I create moving, mobile structures, animated shapes that question the planned space. The increasing complexity of the technology used, forces me to cooperate with specialists from a wide range of disciplines.
Ideally, I would like to transform entire spaces and build gigantic installations, which people could enter and walk through. This is about creating a comprehensive space: building a unique, fully controllable space in which I have full command over ceiling, floor and interior. The result is a 'sculptural space' that can only be experienced fully by the viewer's movement.[1] My sculptures are therefore not constructed from a single point of view, they offer no rest to the eye and – because of this complexity – constantly appear to transcend the comprehensible.
In doing so, I look for monumentality, playing with architectural functions such as inside/outside, density/transparency, supporting/floating. My sculptures also raise questions regarding the construction and function of the ornament.[2] Digital software enables the sculptor to give an ornament a monumental status. The reference to the parasitical quality is an important aspect in the exploration of the boundaries between art and architecture.
My monumental sculptures are grafted, as it were, on buildings and thus illustrate the contrast between conventional architectural models (box) and virtual designs (blob).[3] It is a contrast between rigid and organic forms and between physical and virtual. The hard forms represent the physical world, while the soft, organic forms represent the digital, industrial world. Whereas many

architects support either the one or the other design school, I resolutely take this design to choose a third option: the synthesis of both. The blob and the box are like two identities that mutually attack, embrace, repel and merge. Instead of investigating only the medium of sculpture, I also try to express its existential conditions (mass, dimension, matter and gravity) in a radical way.

NICK ERVINCK – IENULKAR, 2004–2006

5 On craftmanship

Evocative

Staircase Scene
On Stage
In The Middle
Campus Address

On Craftsmanship

REFERENCES

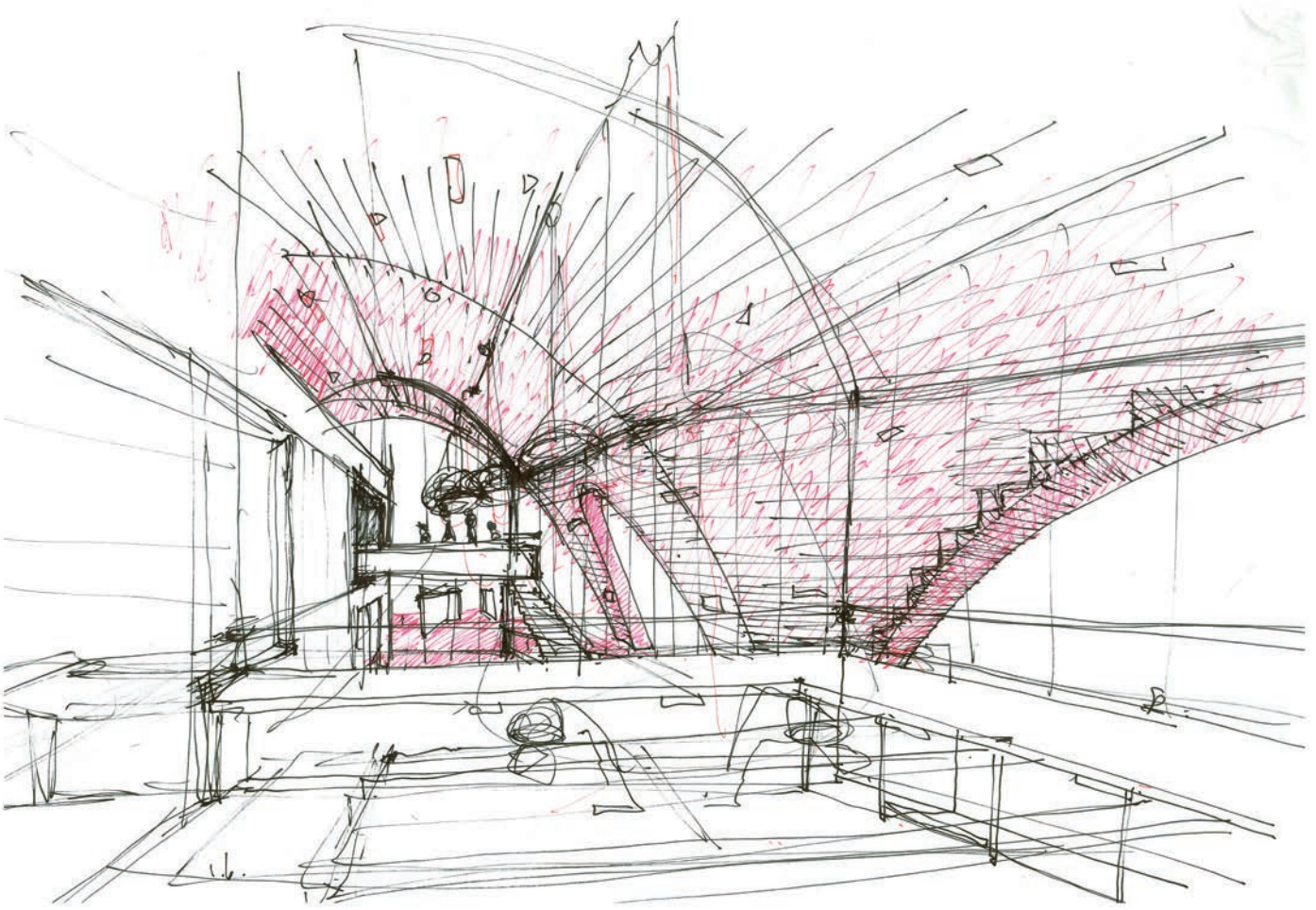
(1) Studio Mumbai
Founded by Bijoy Jain, Studio Mumbai is a human infrastructure of skilled craftsmen and architects who design and build the work directly. Gathered through time, this group shares an environment created from an iterative process, where ideas are explored through the production of large-scale mock-ups, models, material studies, sketches and drawings. Here projects are developed through careful consideration of place and a practice that draws from traditional skills, local building techniques, materials, and an ingenuity arising from limited resources. The essence of our work lies in the relationship between land and architecture, it requires coming to terms with the presence of the environment through the succession of seasons.

(2) Richard Sennet writes about cities, labour, and culture. He teaches sociology at New York University and at the London School of Economics.

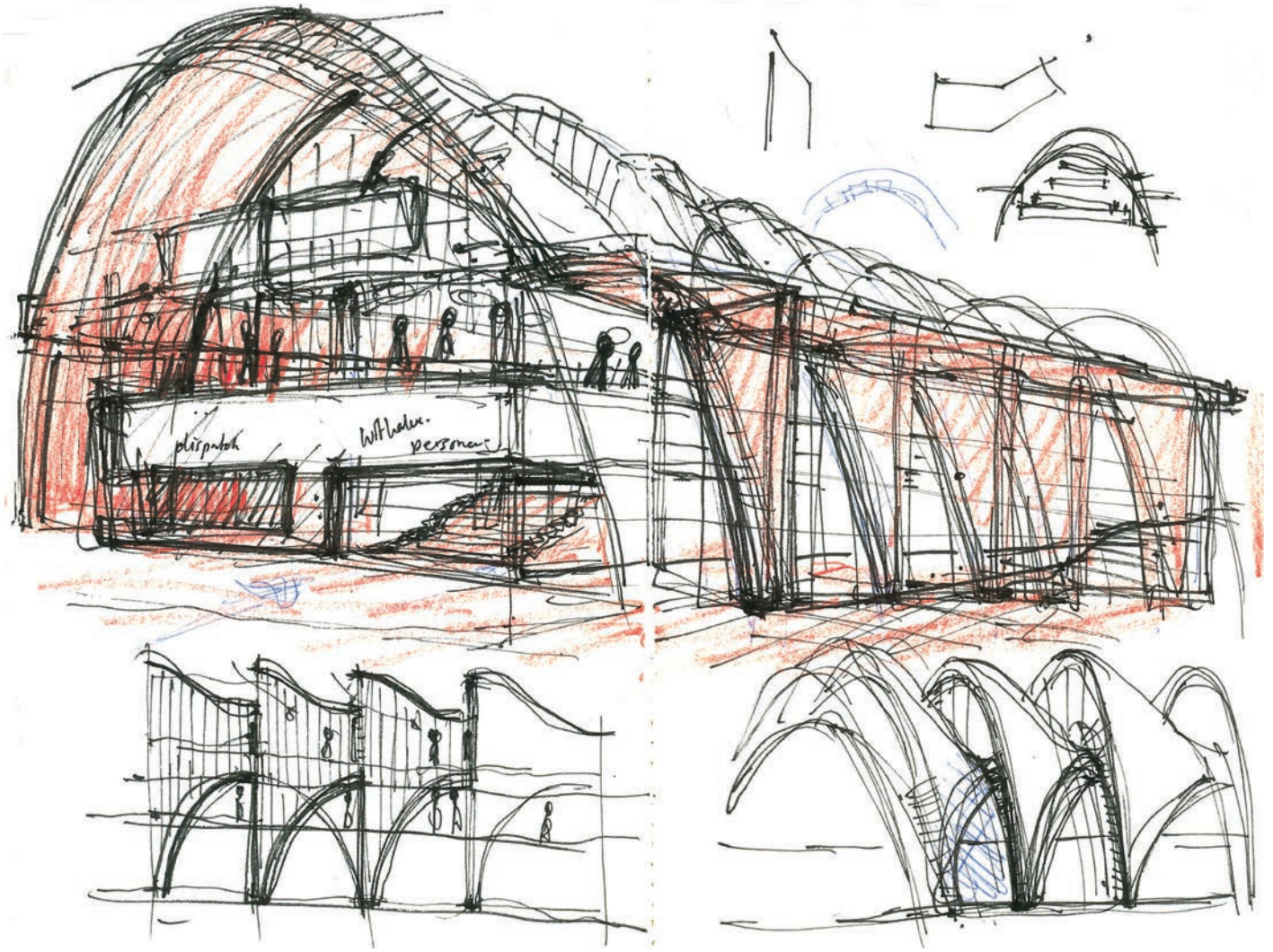
(3) The Craftsman names a basic human impulse: the desire to do a job well for its own sake. Although the word may suggest a way of life that waned with the advent of industrial society, Sennett argues that the craftsman's realm is far broader than skilled manual labor; the computer programmer, the doctor, the parent, and the citizen need to learn the values of good craftsmanship today.

Is it possible to intuitively create a new habitat? In a country like India, with fewer rules and regulations, it is. Studio Mumbai (1) shows us how it can be done. Their results are stunning. The Studio uses a process of organised participation, with embedded knowledge sharing. Designing and building is done by a single team. Experiences are shared instantly: during the interpretation of the site, the creation of large scale models, test setups, drawings, material studies, construction methods, and during the building process itself. Their method of operation is a balanced process, focussed on the location. It is characterised by the immediate exclusion of the superfluous, its economy, and the use of local materials and techniques. It focuses on the essential and is highly efficient.

The essence of Studio Mumbai's work is the relationship between the environment and architecture. Inspired by life, without prejudices or complicated regulations, the complexity of every site is revealed. The Studio operates intuitively, in an atmosphere of dialogue, in which solutions become evident. Craftsmanship, developed in modesty, internalisation and imagination. Compare this with the way in which



SKETCH FOR BRICK SHELL ROOF. OFFICE



STUDY SKETCH FOR BRICK SHELL ROOF

our Western world today deals with something as essential as a roof over one's head.
The added value of a Studio Mumbai team is clear: rapid and simple communication, maximum involvement, a perfect symbiosis with the site. They operate cost-efficiently, leaving a greater part of the budget to achieve a high-quality final result.

This example makes us wonder whether the time has come to explore new methods.
a2o strongly believes in the idea of cooperation. In a cooperative setup, people work together to achieve their goals and acquire what they need, but also to share responsibility in the world in which they live and work.
Herman Wijffels, former CEO of the Rabobank Group, wrote that cooperation is enjoying a revival. People see opportunities that they could not realise on their own. We are convinced that we are experiencing a transition from an industrial society to a new type of society. Wijffels calls this 'the organic society'. It is connected with the availability of new technologies, but in particular with the transition from large-scale initiatives to small-scale ones. Even though the Internet connects us into something huge, people continue to adhere to something tangible and manageable.

A small-scale approach demands urban development that is self-sufficient and autarkic, and neighbourhoods in which the citizens themselves manage the technical aspects such as energy, water management and waste processing. In this way, neighbourhoods are no longer attached to a larger entity through complex network, like 'hospital patients'. Concepts such as care, and social and cultural initiatives can be developed at neighbourhood level more effectively and efficiently (the social framework of neighbours and neighbourhood allowing the elderly to continue to live at home independently much longer). This would create a new social fabric, which Wijffels calls a 'circular economy'.

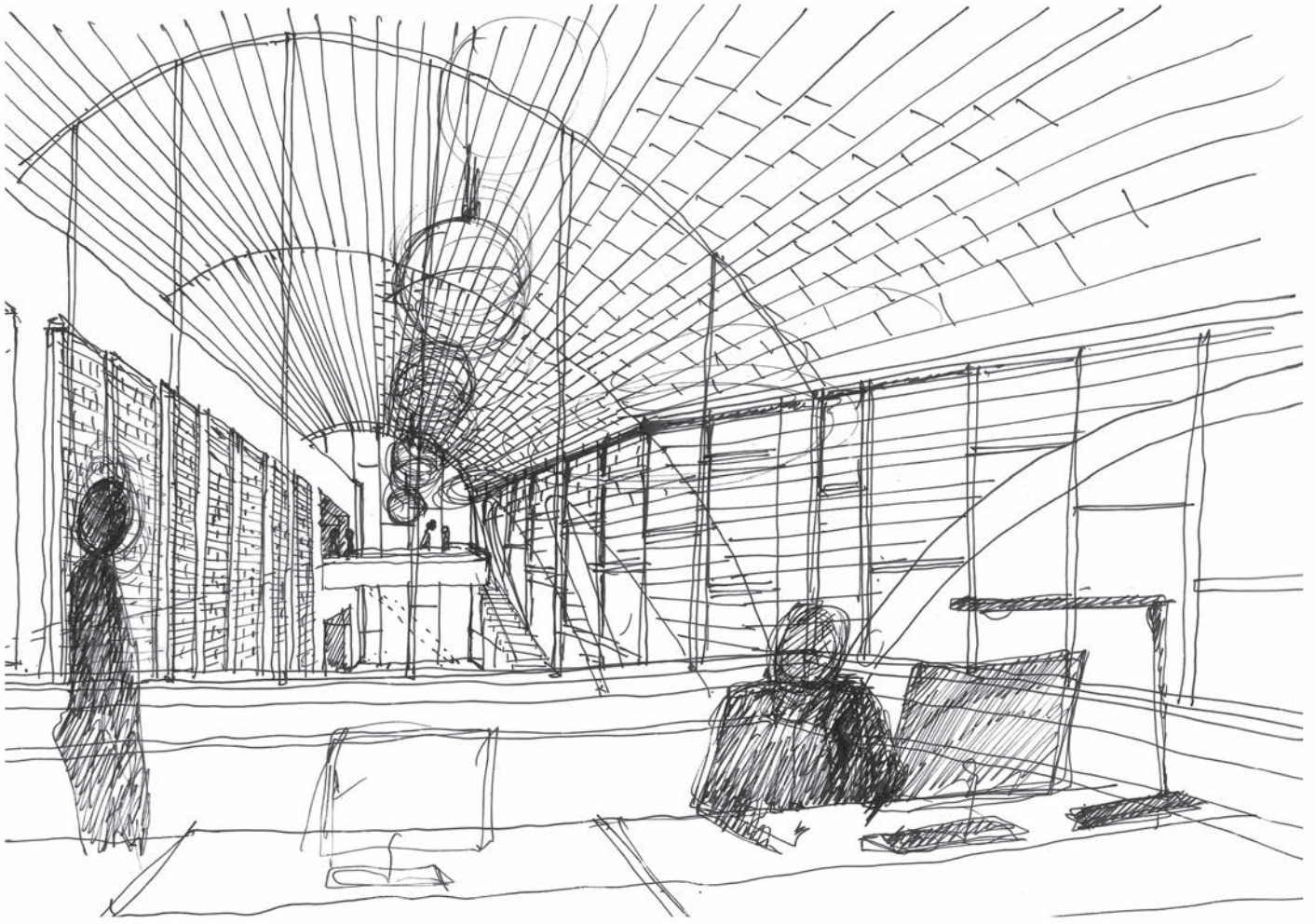
Managing such a 'small-scale' economy requires skills. It demands an integral approach, which continuously needs new contacts with other players in the process: various consultants, both technical advisers and social workers, cultural philosophers, visual artists, designers, etc. This enables us to develop crossovers and new insights emerge spontaneously. This cooperation is concrete and tangible, exact and determined. The academic world plays an important role in the contextualisation of an integral process of investigative design. The starting point is the commitment to quality (craftsmanship). This model greatly reduces the chance that living is transformed into a purely

financial product. It also guarantees that architecture retains its value.

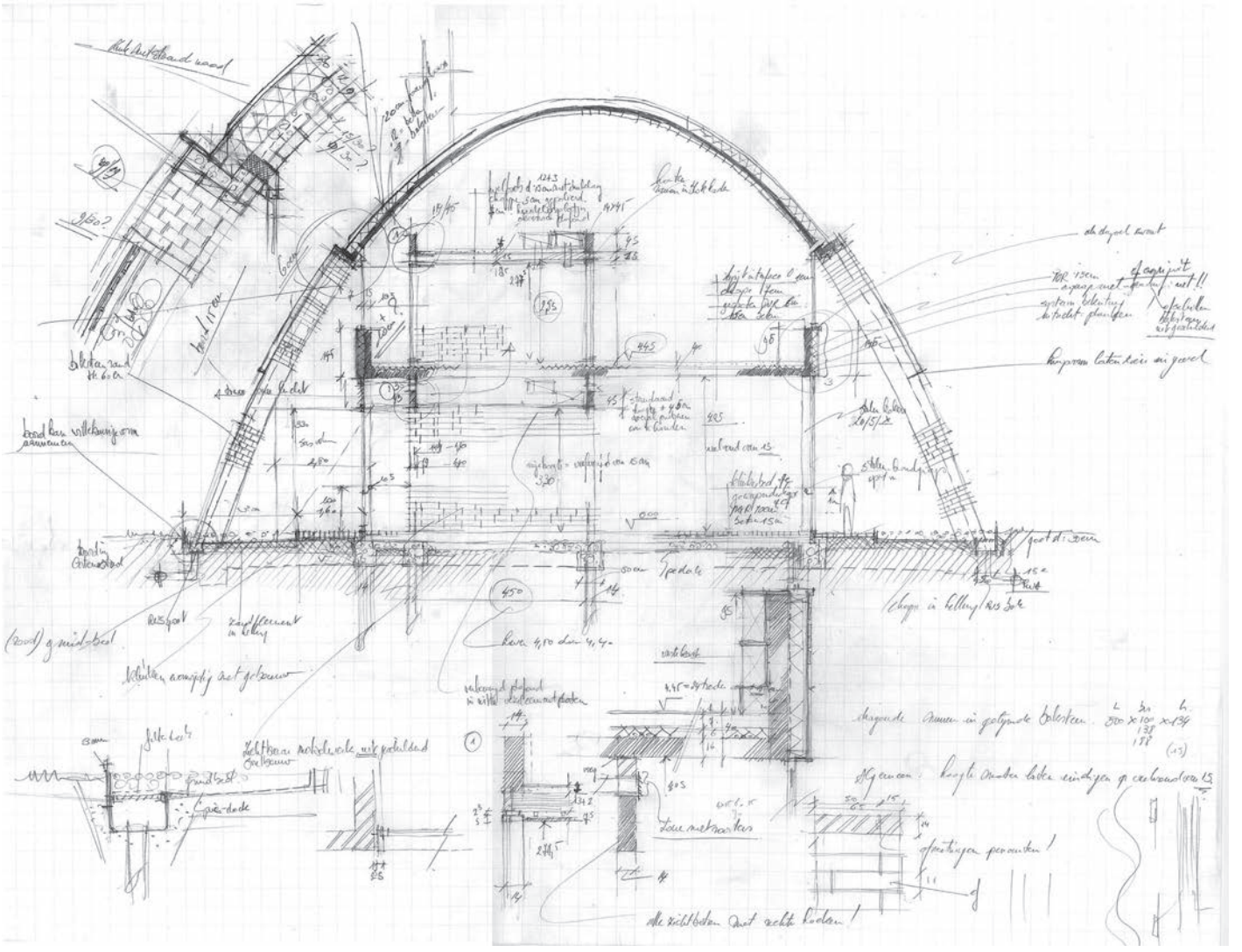
Architecture begins where space is constructed. After all, the idea of a painting is not the same as a painting. No architecture without craftsmanship. So architecture begins with the acknowledgment of craftsmanship.
Richard Sennett (2) wrote in 2009: “Craftsmanship names an enduring, basic human impulse, the desire to do a job well for its own sake. “Craftsmanship cuts a far wider swath than skilled manual labor; it serves the computer programmer, the doctor, and the artist; parenting improves when it is practiced as a skilled craft, as does citizenship. In all these domains, craftsmanship focuses on objective standards, on the thing in itself.(…) when hand and head, technique and science, art and craft are separated … the head then suffers; both understanding and expression are impaired.”

The boundaries between the designer, the builder and the contractor must therefore remain vague. The designer is not only the one who eventually puts a facade on paper. He manages a process of simultaneous development. His work is integral and integrated. Within this context, there is not only a transfer of technical and functional information, but also of information of which the direct usefulness is not immediately clear, but which may nevertheless contribute to creative solutions. The methodology is adaptable, depending on client, assignment and context.
Sennet: “Craft has a collective agent. Workshops present and past have glued people together through work rituals, whether these be a shared cup of tea ... informal advising on the worksite; through face-to-face sharing of information. This is why we should not give up on the workshop as a social space. The craftsman’s workshop is one site in which the modern, perhaps unresolvable conflict between autonomy and authority plays out.”

Thinking about our designs and our craft on the one hand, and our role in them on the other, gives us architects insight into the processes that define our craftsmanship. This awareness acts correctively. We develop and grow. This is also the justification that we owe to society. We are externally focussed, addressing society. Architecture is instrumental and anonymous. From this grows greater self-awareness and knowledge to act properly and ethically.
The architect as a craftsman works with great involvement and personal motivation. There is a high degree of correlation between our personalities and our work. Our standards and values and our motivation determine our work.
A craftsman’s work (3) is intuitive and conscious, associative



OFFICE INTERIOR SKETCH



TECHNICAL SKETCH. SHOWROOM

and connective. His field of operation is a given context, in which he uses his experience and intuition to find solutions. Sennett describes the four stages of the intuitive process: “Arousal: How intuitive leaps happen”.

Stage 1: “Constructing clarity from obscurity: reformatting”. The craftsman intuitively feels that what is not there yet, may come. He feels the limitations and potential of the existing. The questions have been asked, curiosity has been provoked.
Stage 2: “Establishing adjacency” (connectivity). “Two unlike domains are brought close together; the closer they are, the more stimulating seems their twined presence.”
Stage 3: In the third stage, tacit knowledge is dredged into consciousness to do the comparing (association or connection). The creator is surprised.
Stage 4: The final stage is recognition that a leap does not defy gravity. If the technique is imperfect, this imperfection may still provide new insights and opportunities. The creation of something new is an intelligent process. It is investigating while designing. In his design process, the craftsman/architect develops the situations in which the ‘ground’ is prepared and connective thinking is developed.

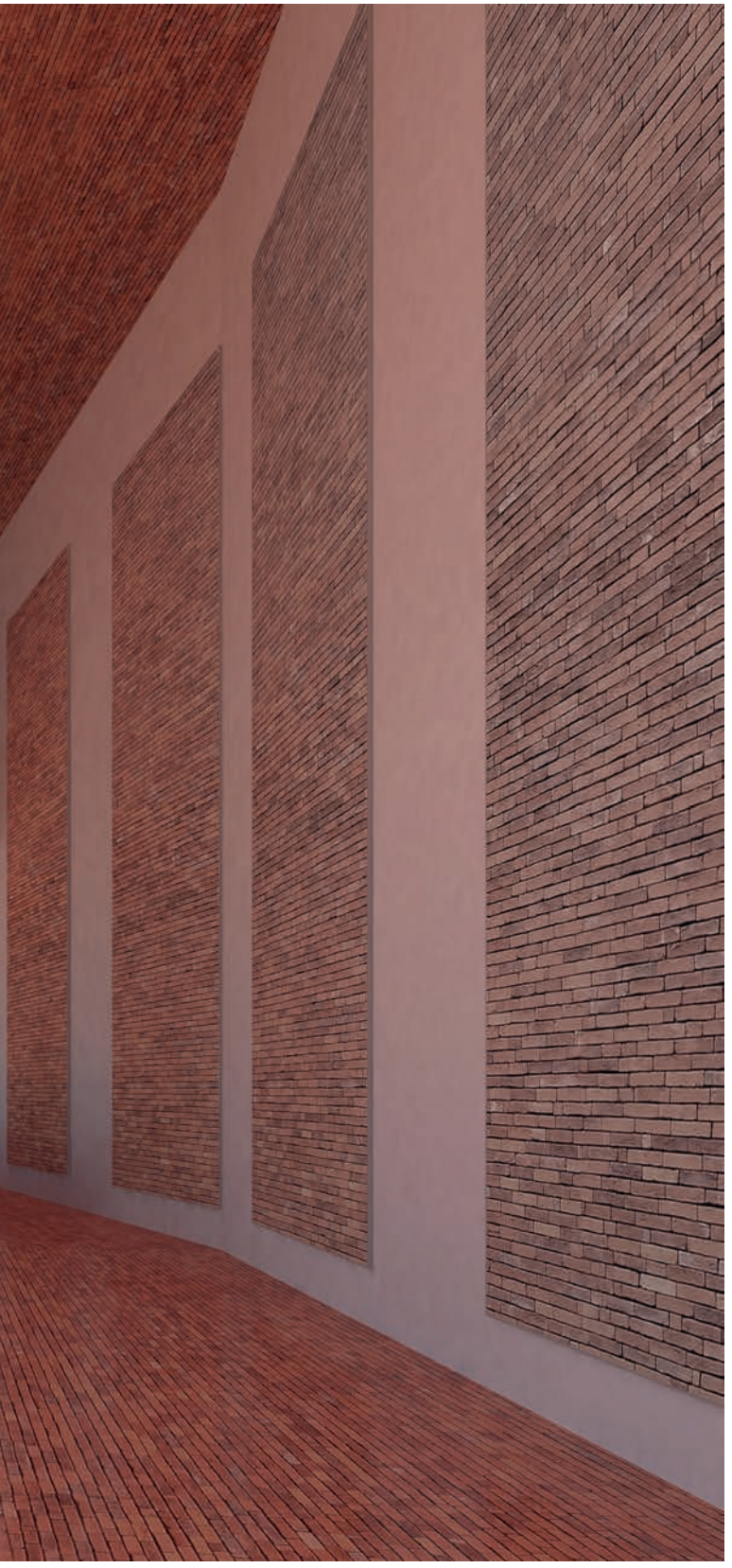
For these reasons, sketching is still important. The hand translates the mind. It acts fast, with immediate results. The hand/sketch is a perfect tool for reflection. It stimulates dialogue.
Today’s CAD (computer) applications separate the hand and the mind too much. Sketches are embedded in the mind. The experience and exercise (resketching time and again, on endless rolls of tracing paper) of sketching convert into subconscious knowledge. It is a process of ‘wearing in’. CAD designers may wonder how this process might also happen on the computer screen.

Sennett considers resistance as a border. This border is a productive environment. We develop skills at the border. Craftsmanship can also be made impossible and resistance may build up that admits of no investigation. Resistance is one of the frustrations that thwart craftsmanship.
Craftsmanship is often looked for at the wrong level, especially in housing projects. The basic qualities of a good house – such as sufficient floor space, high ceilings, or ample daylight access – determine the quality of a house. Nevertheless, there is an increasing number of standards and regulations, and as many technical aspects, that measure the level of ‘comfort’ of a house in one way or another. This is a false value measurement: it has nothing to do with the sustainable aspects of a house, and certainly not with

the architect's craftsmanship. Sales strategies and ticking off administrative lists determine the quality of living. Attention focuses on the 'gadgets' instead of the basics. As a result of this strategy, apartments get smaller and smaller, laden with gimmicks, and a minimum of living quality. It is the architect's duty to oppose this, to oppose the resistance that admits of no investigation. Intelligently dealing with standards and regulations, and focusing on the basic qualities of a house, that's what constitutes our task. Developing skills: "identify with the resistance, adopt an open attitude, temporarily suspend the desire for closure, have patience and stay with frustrating work". (Sennett) Because growing hurts.

Lastly, slowness is probably the most important condition for craftsmanship. Quality is always the motive for craftsmanship. Craftsmanship demands slow-moving time that learns and allows reflection. Resistance starts slowly. In the discourse on craftsmanship, motivation is more important than talent. Anyone can reach a high level of craftsmanship. It is a democratic process and offers possibilities. In an era which may see the end of unbridled growth, is there a desire to make the concept of craftsmanship again the key to a creative and social economy and a new architecture and urban development?

SHOWROOM AND OFFICES, OUDENAARDE



SITUATIONAL SKETCH. OFFICE AND SHOWROOM LOCATION, OUDENAARDE


BASSTEEN AAN DE SCHELDE

(2)

Evocative
On spatiality and tangibility

REFERENCES

(1) Design for Regina Mundi school building, location and image
(2) The Mousetrap, Frank Lloyd Wright
(3) Qatar Embassy, Brussels. Because of the residential nature of the surrounding area in which the new embassy was planned, a modest visual language was used for an optimal correspondence to the typology of a large house with a front garden. On this site, the embassy and the consulate are represented by two different buildings. The embassy has a more outspoken formal idiom, while the consulate was included in the location's landscape design. The representative character of the embassy's formal idiom is shaped by linking the layering of facade elements from Qatar's cultural heritage with elements from our own heritage.
(4) Sketch of Bach score, Fons Hoppenbrouwers

Every design evokes an atmosphere: an image of something that does not exist yet. Even when it integrates fully into its surroundings, the eventual image is a new experience. This happens also if it is an imitation or a reformatting of known materials.
Architects are often inspired by a previous architectural experience, by a recent or historic building. But we also let ourselves to be inspired by a good book, a film, an interesting exhibition, a beautiful photograph or a public debate. How do we arrive at a subject? How does the transition between inspiration and creation work? What tools do we have?
All this may happen in a very explicit way, on the basis of a solid philosophical foundation: an idea that represents the project.
It can also be achieved by following an explicit design strategy.
Or on the basis of a high level of craftsmanship, with a distinct feel for materiality.

We draw our inspiration from a thorough knowledge of architectural history: respect for the classic methods/tools of the search for beauty. We study these tools, reinterpret them and then build in a modern tradition. We work on a tradition in which context, connectivity and craftsmanship are central.
Using a few examples, the link is made between a classic tool, a historic building (with the architectural history as a source of inspiration) and a reinterpretation of this tool in a contemporary application. In doing so, we use four applications:

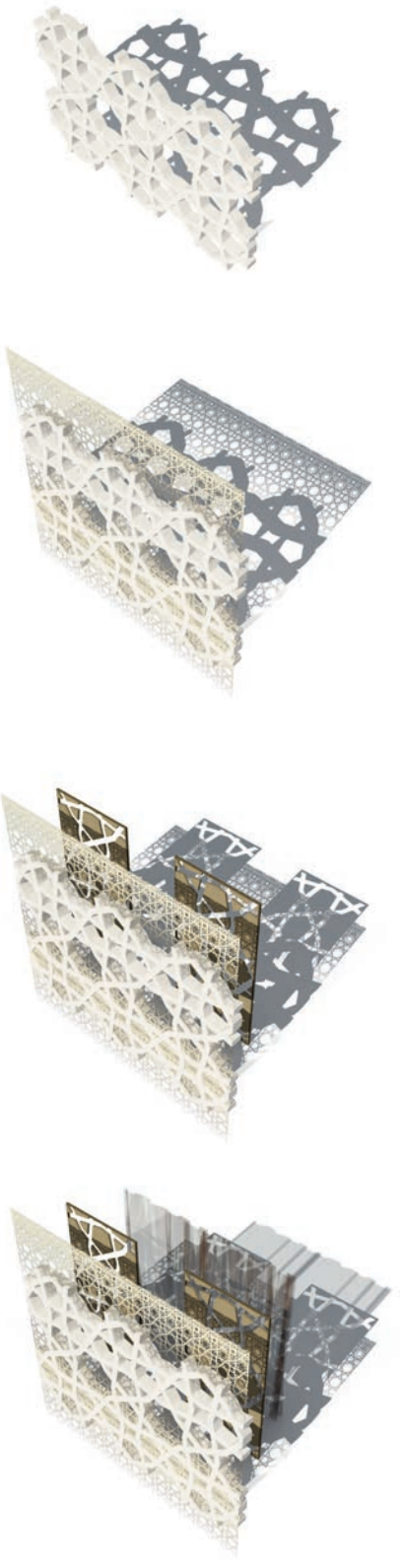
'The in-between' is a technique in which the invisible is made visible. This technique was recuperated in a modern way in the Sant'Elia school in Como, Italy, designed by Giuseppe Terragni. The technique was previously used in many of Andrea Paladio's buildings, or more explicitly in Piranesi's 'campo marzio'. Terragni's nursery school is a classic example. Even today, it can still serve as a model for contemporary school buildings.

The building (1934–37), a local school consisting of a single level, is located on the corner of a building block. It embraces the premises and separates the playground from the street. Apart from the entrance facade, opened up in a fragile way, the street-facing facade is closed. The volume in white plaster is articulated. Its shape is pure. The playground side, on the other hand, is dynamic. The open facade is made up of superposed surfaces and volumes in opposition. In the centre, there is a walkway.
It takes one to the roof level, which also serves as a playground.
Individual porches have roll-up canvases that are used as sunblinds for the classrooms. Full-height glass door facades link the classrooms to the playground, demarcating outdoor classes. Small awnings, coming out of the volume, provide shadow or emphasise the entrances. The trees have been planted exactly so as to contribute to the management of space and the playground. All design actions are focused on leaving space 'between' the various building sections, thus filtering both space and light. They create an atmosphere that allows ample daylight into the building, while keeping it cool.

The design for the 'Regina Mundi' school building in Genk (1), Belgium, attempts to apply these techniques in a similar way.

A second strategy is the technique of the 'revision of space'.
A revision starts by initiating spatial connections. The experience of architecture consists of a system of space and movement. A technique that was perfectly mastered by Frank Lloyd Wright. His work is full of the architectural expressions in this field. The 'Mousetrap' (2), a gift store in San Francisco (1949), is a miniature Guggenheim and bears witness of an expert command of the relationship between movement and structure. The building is many times smaller than the Guggenheim museum in New York, but it provides an equally powerful spatial experience. The architect takes you by the hand and challenges you. The gift store does not have a shop window, only an opening in the facade with a semicircular top (like a mouse hole). The architect takes you inside, into an enclosed building and guides you informally along a shallow spiral incline three storeys up. Daylight falls on the white walls from above, creating an overwhelming experience. The slanting surface is also the sales area. Movement, space and function are completely amalgamated.
In the design for the University Campus in Diepenbeek and the design for the school of higher education in Bruges, Belgium, circulation provides the spatial guidebook for the building.

Then there is the strategy of 'recuperation and transformation'. This is characterised by a sustainable attitude, building on the ruins of what once was. In an old European city, for example, one sometimes digs through two thousand years of history in order to build something. Often, existing buildings are combinations of building components from different eras. The city is layered. The context of a historic city is therefore compelling. There are also many less compelling contexts.



(3)

Think of the grain silos (from the 1950s) that now accommodate our office. Locations where we work, locations with a history. It is essential to regard these locations as living matter. It is seldom useful to demolish something and replace it by something new. Our initial reaction is always: *Can we reclaim this?* The economic use of space and means is a healthy motive. The abundance of possibilities and means should not be translated immediately into concepts that turn the location – and hence the past – into a 'tabula rasa'.
An analysis of the situation is the initial design action. This includes the recognition of the essence of a location, the building, the structure and the dimensions. We strip and complement what is necessary to achieve a properly functioning building by contemporary standards. Applying this strategy, we add a new, modern layer to the city and promote an explicit connectivity.

In the project for the master plan, renovation, extension and restoration of the Virga Jesse College, the strategies of recuperation and transformation constitute the basis of the design.

The above-mentioned strategies are explicit expressions of the treatment of space. The final strategy concerns the importance of matter: 'colour, shape and matter are adapted to one another'. In 'Questions of Perception', an A+U publication on architecture and phenomenology, Steven Holl states:

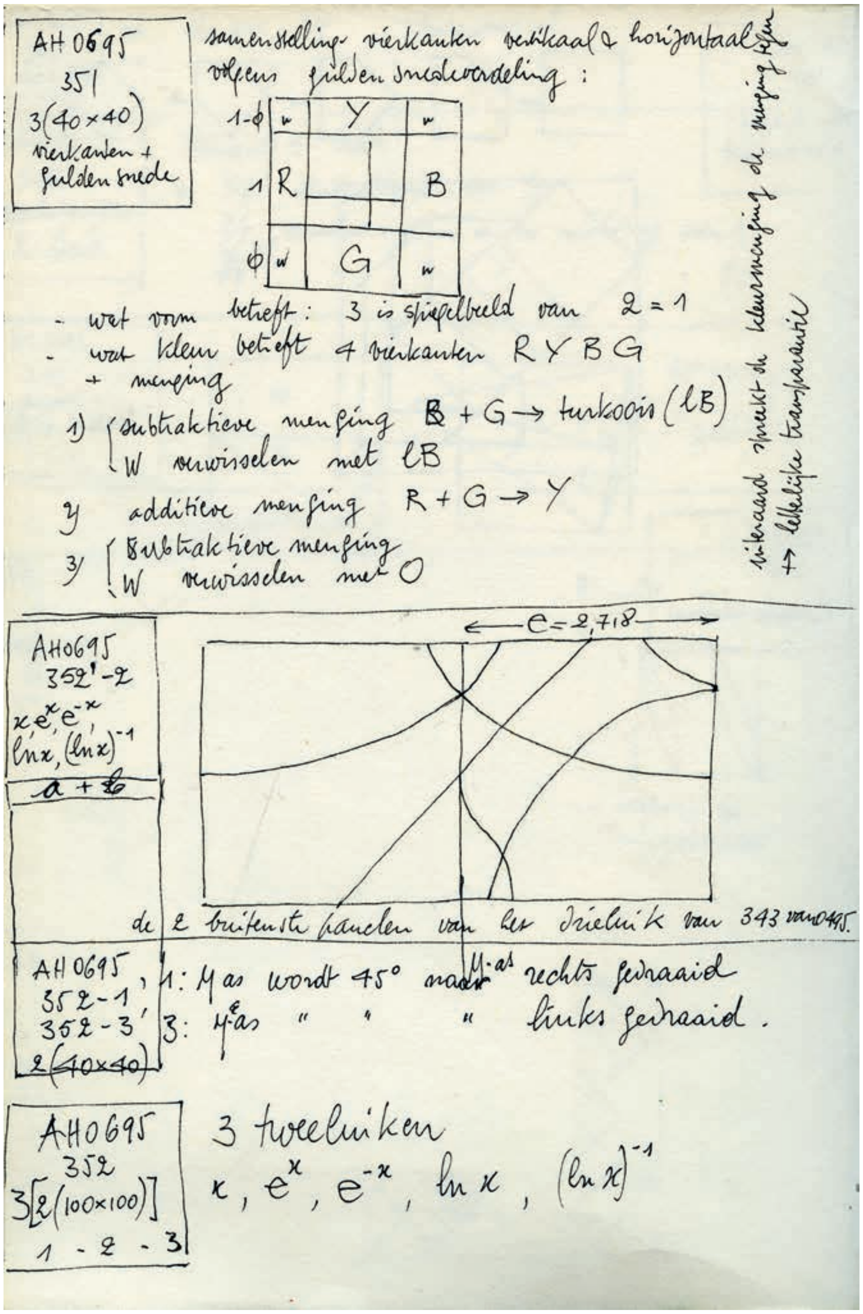
$$\frac{\text{Material x Sound}}{\text{Time}} = \frac{\text{Material x Light}}{\text{Space}}$$

Just like the echoes in a stone cathedral increase the awareness of its vastness, geometry, material, and space, the atmosphere is modelled by matter, colour and shape.

It need not be confirmed that controlling sound (also noise pollution), daylight and artificial light (also light pollution), and colour (also advertising images, garish buildings, graffiti, traffic signs, etc.) is one of today's key themes.

For architects, this often translates into a search for silence, slowness, relaxation for the eye and for the ear.
Peter Zumthor is an unequalled expert in creating this balance. This can be experienced explicitly in his Kolumba Museum in Cologne, Germany, and Therme Vals, in Switzerland.
The simultaneousness of controlling shape, matter and colour is necessary to be able to generate (3) such an all-embracing experience. They work together and support each other, resulting in a minute controlling of emotions. The scenography is meticulous. It is comparable to the way in which a violin builder handles an instrument; it serves the musician, but it is the musician who chooses the violin.
In the same way, our architecture is serving. The user selects the space in which he wants to stay. There is also a mathematical relationship between sound, shape and colour. Fons Hoppenbrouwers' graphic work (4) shows how a score by Bach can be converted into shape, proportion and colour.
The transformation of the main hall in the Hasselt Cultural Centre shows how we combine shape, colour and matter into a comprehensive scenography.

We build our knowledge of design techniques by practising investigative design. That is why for us, architecture is first and foremost a craft, a profession. Architecture also puts things into perspective. Because experience has taught us that if we don't like the design in the end, we start again, in spite of all our research.



AH 0695
351
3(40×40)
vierkanten + gulden snede

samenstelling vierkanten vertikaal & horizontaal volgens gulden snedeverdeling :

1-φ	w	Y	w
1	R		B
φ	w	G	w

- wat vorm betreft : 3 is spiegelbeeld van 2 = 1
- wat kleur betreft 4 vierkanten R Y B G
  + menging

1) { subtraktieve menging B + G → turkoois (lB)
   { W verwisselen met lB

2) additieve menging R + G → Y

3) { subtraktieve menging
   { W verwisselen met O

vierkant spreekt de kleurmenging de menging tegen
→ letterlijke transparantie

AH0695
352'-2
x, e^x, e^{-x},
$\ln x, (\ln x)^{-1}$
a + b

← e = 2,718 →

de 2 buitenste panelen van het drieluik van 343 van 0495.

AH 0695, 352-1, 352-3
2(40×40)

1: y-as wordt 45° naar rechts gedraaid
3: y-as " " " links gedraaid.

AH0695
352
3[2(100×100)]
1 - 2 - 3

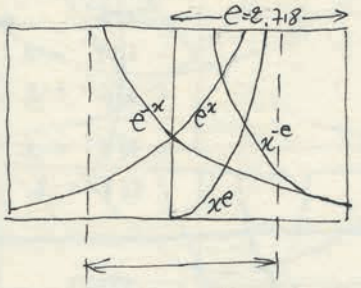
3 tweeluiken
$x, e^x, e^{-x}, \ln x, (\ln x)^{-1}$

(4)

AH0695
353'
2(40×40)

superpositie van 1, 2 en 3 van 352'

AH 0695
354'
2(40×40)
e^x e^{-x}
x^e x^{-e}

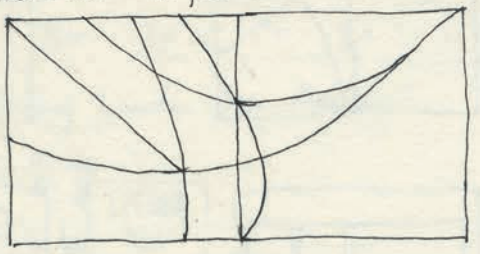


AH 0695
355'
e^x e^{-x}
x^e x^{-e}

355' is middenzone van 354'

356' = 354' 45° gedraaid naar rechts

AH 0795
356'
e^x e^{-x}
x^e x^{-e}
45° gedraaid



AH0795
354

AH0795
356

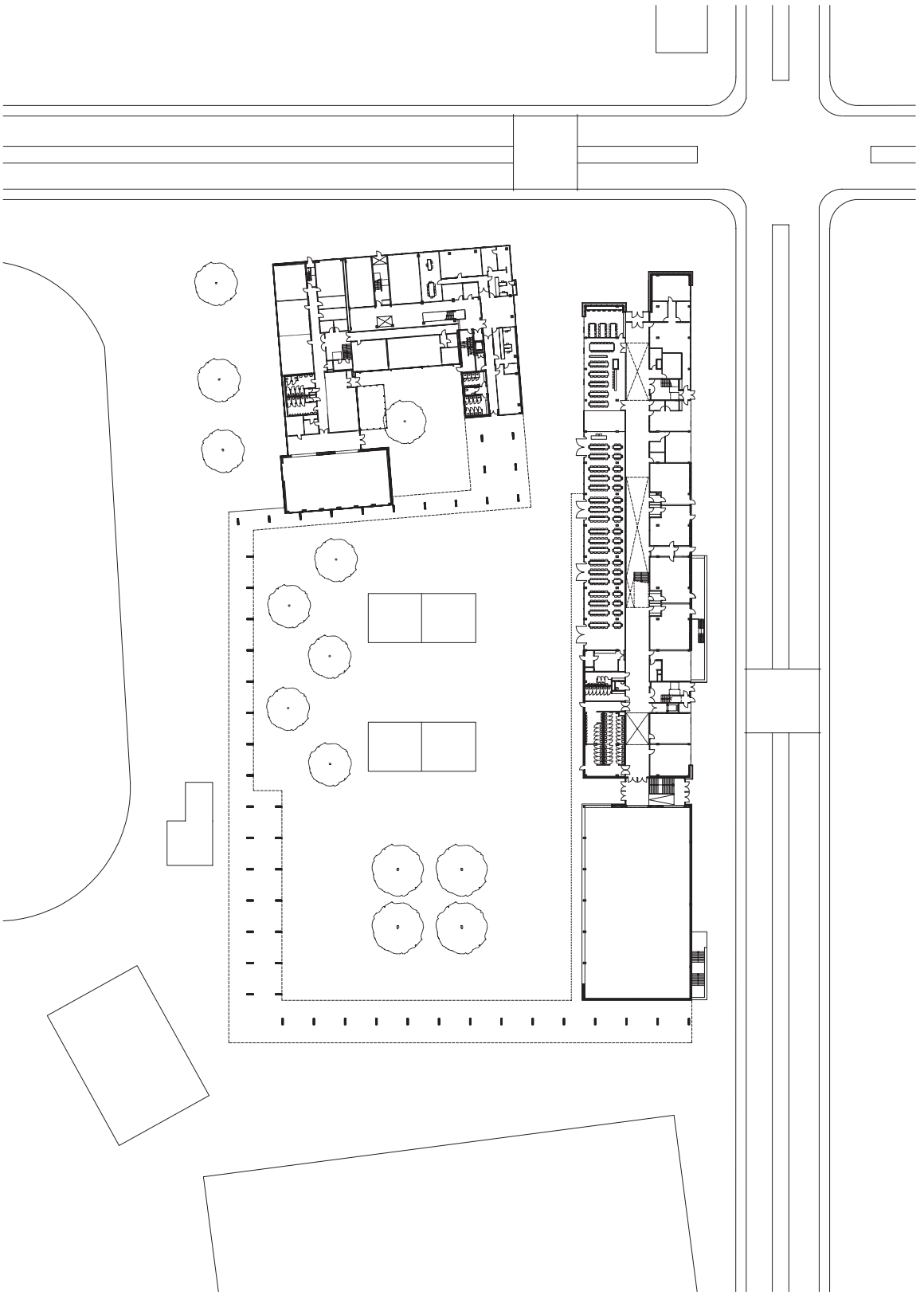
AH0795
357'

variatie 354'

superpositie 354' 180 90° gedraaid	superpositie spiegelbeeld 356'-1 & 356'-2
superpositie 354'-1 + 356'-1	superpositie 354'-2 + 356'-2

AH 0795
358'

(1)

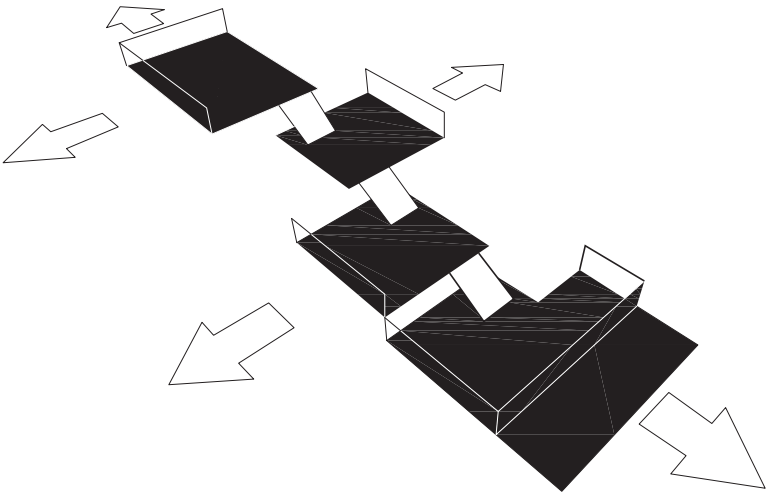


(1)

NEW KHLIM BUILDING, DIEPENBEEK

Staircase Scene

New building for Commercial Sciences and Business Administration
Limburg Catholic University College
Diepenbeek, Belgium
2010–2012



The new college building (S block) on the Limburg Catholic University College campus in Diepenbeek is located alongside the central car park, where the Stiemerbeek brook cuts through the campus. The campus needs more structuralising signs. The location of the new building makes a modest contribution to this goal.

The building was designed as an elongated shape on four levels. As a result of clever allocation, this volume defines ‘interspaces’ with an interesting occupational quality. It also indicates how this area of the campus can be developed further in the future.
The parking zone in front of the building has a direct relation with the opened-up reception. From the reception, a wide staircase divides the building into two halves, thus forming the backbone of the design. The staircase extends the entrance area upwards and branches into an open space on every floor. Sometimes to the left, sometimes to the right of the staircase. These areas –

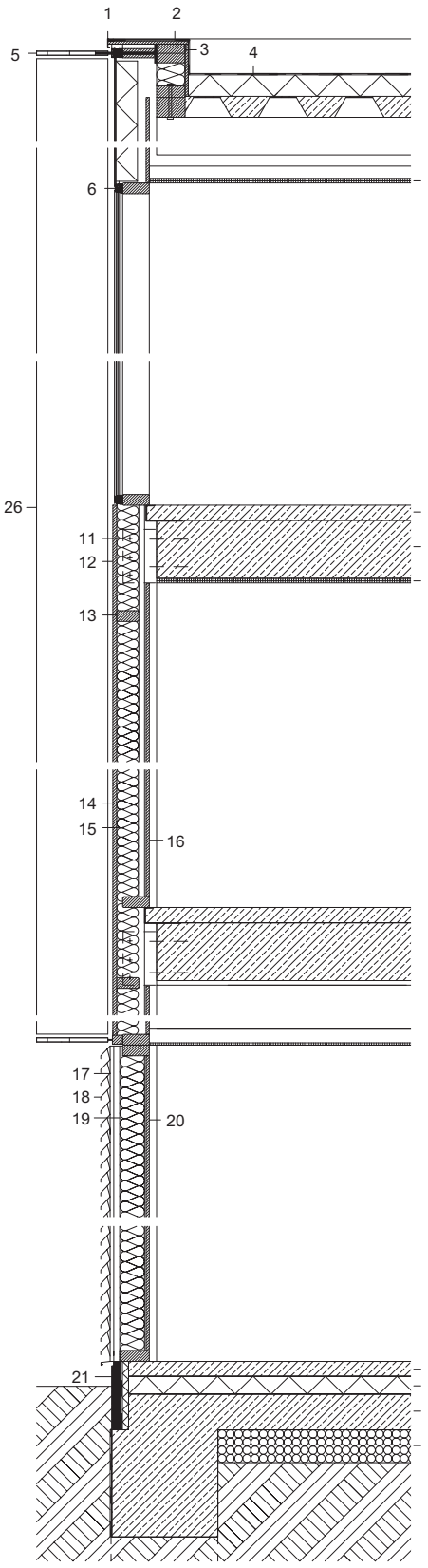
MASTER PLAN, CAMPUS DIEPENBEEK

1. PARKING AREA
2. EXISTING KHLIM BUILDINGS
3. EXISTING KHLIM BUILDING
4. GREEN PEDESTRIAN ZONE
5. STIEMERBEEK
6. PLANNED BUILDINGS
7. FITLINK
8. SPORTS ZONE

so-called study landscapes – look out across the surrounding land and allow daylight to enter in abundance.
The width of the staircase allows it to be used as a seating element and meeting place. Thus, the staircase is not merely a functional connective element between the floors, but an integrated part of the study landscape. It also provides an overview of the entire building. The building constitutes a system of space and movement.

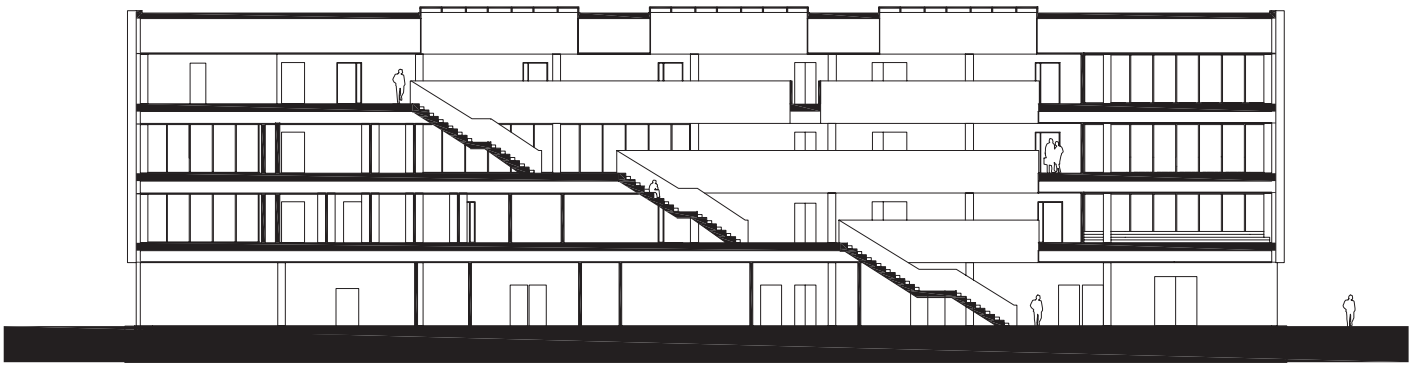
The building derives a clear shape from the structure with hollow-core concrete floors and a minimum of columns. A strict grid allows a flexible lay-out. The lightweight separating walls enable rooms to be partitioned or enlarged. The facade is also based on these dimensions. Depending on their orientation, facades are more open or more closed by keeping elements transparent or opaque. Vanes mounted perpendicular to the window jambs act as passive sunblinds. They also create a dynamic facade pattern.

This building, which was accomplished within a strict budget, has a clear lay-out both inside and out. And in spite of its stern formal idiom, there is a dynamic spatial experience that semantically embeds this encounter and exchange. This is a distinct learning environment.

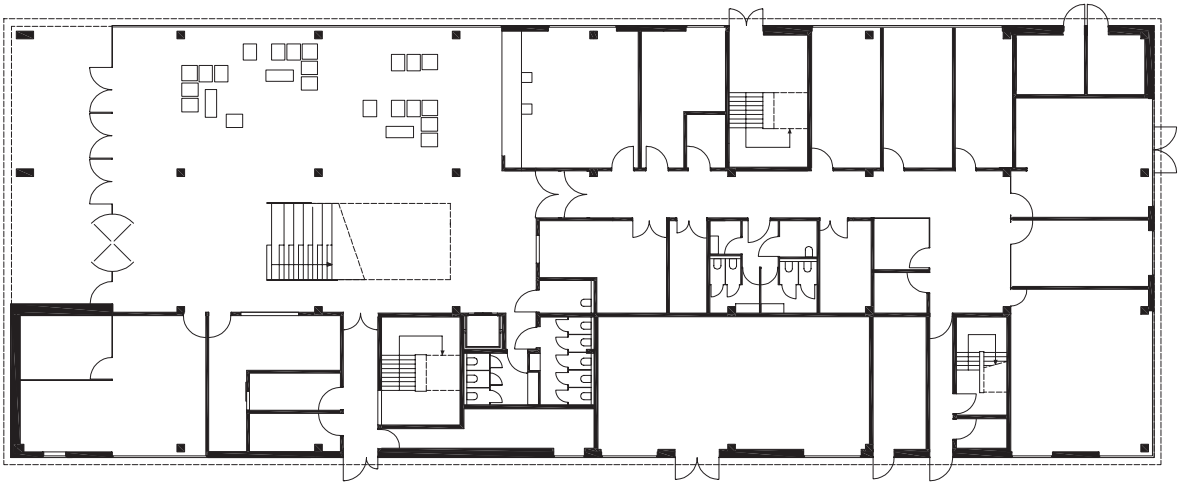


DETAIL 0 50 cm

1. ENAMELLED ALUMINIUM EAVES SECTION
2. WATERPROOF PLYWOOD 18MM
3. WOODEN RAFTERS
4. ROOF CONSTRUCTION: EPDM RUBBER SEALING – THERMAL PIR INSULATION 12CM VAPOUR BARRIER – STEEL DECK – SOUNDPROOFING
5. ENAMELLED HORIZONTAL SUNBLINDS
6. STRUCTURALLY GLUED GLAZING
7. DROPPED CEILING OF WOODWOOL CEMENT BOARDS
8. FLOOR CONSTRUCTION: VINYL 3.2MM – SCREED 5CM – SOUNDPROOFING
9. REINFORCED CONCRETE LOAD-BEARING FLOOR
10. WOODWOOL CEMENT BOARD CEILING
11. STEEL U-SHAPED SECTION TO ATTACH THE CURTAIN WALL SECTIONS TO THE CONCRETE SUPPORT STRUCTURE
12. ENAMELLED ALUMINIUM PLATE
13. WOODEN CURTAIN WALL SECTION
14. ENAMELLED ALUMINIUM PLATE
15. THERMAL INSULATION, MINERAL WOOL 12CM
16. PLYWOOD BOARD 18MM VENEER
17. STRUCTURAL SUPPORT FOR CLOSED SLATWALL
18. CLOSED SLATWALL
19. PLYWOOD 18MM VENEER
20. THERMAL INSULATION, MINERAL WOOL 12CM
21. PREFAB CONCRETE PLINTH
22. FLOOR CONSTRUCTION: VINYL 3.2MM – SCREED 8CM
23. THERMAL INSULATION, PUR 10CM
24. CONCRETE SLAB
25. CRUSHED STONE 25CM
26. ALUMINIUM VANE



SECTION



GROUND FLOOR

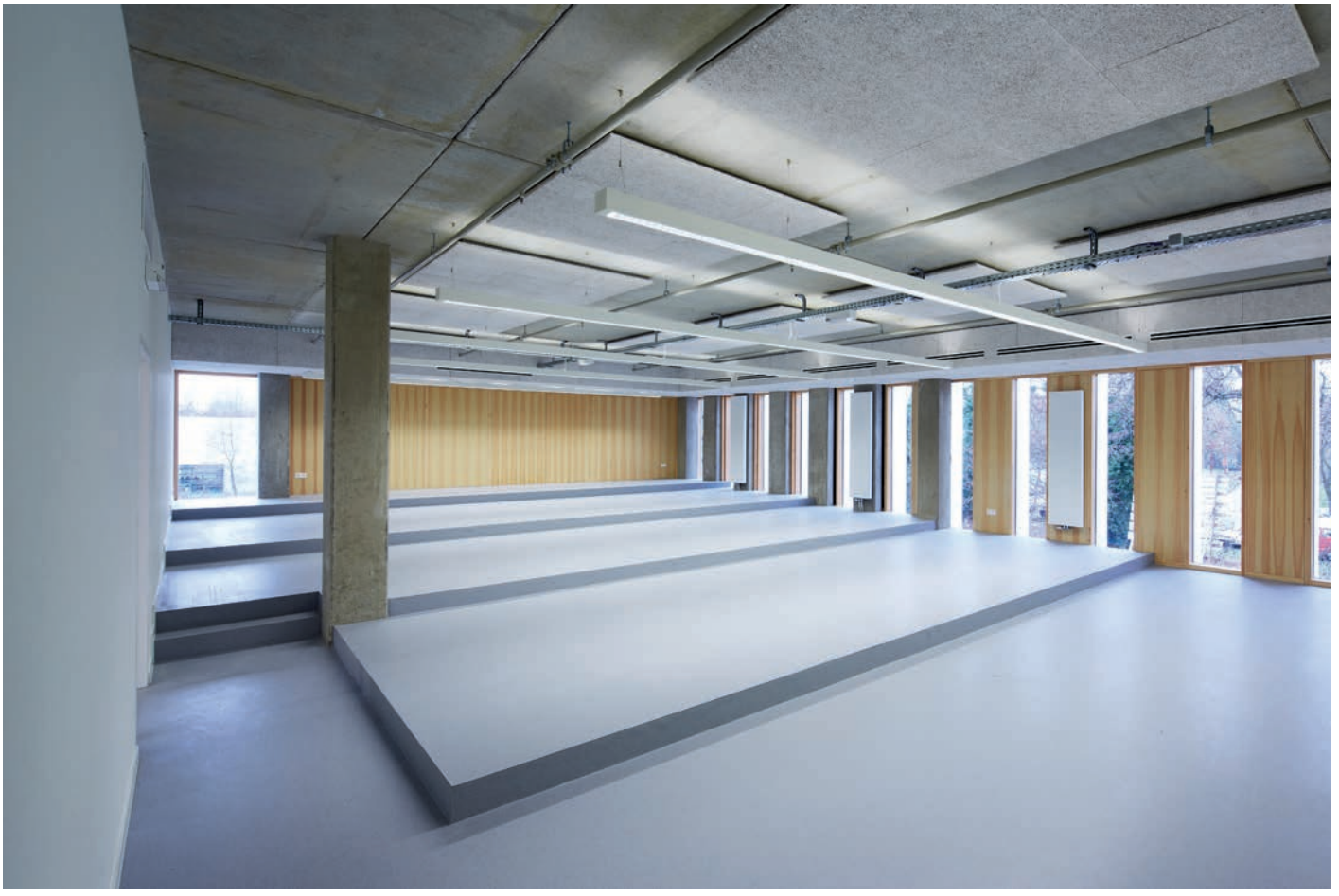
0 10 m

STAIRWELL, FIRST FLOOR. PHOTO: MARC SCHEEPERS

SITTING AREA. PHOTO: MARC SCHEEPERS

VIEW FROM STUDY CENTRE. PHOTO: MARC SCHEEPERS

NICK ERVINCK – YAROPRA, 2012

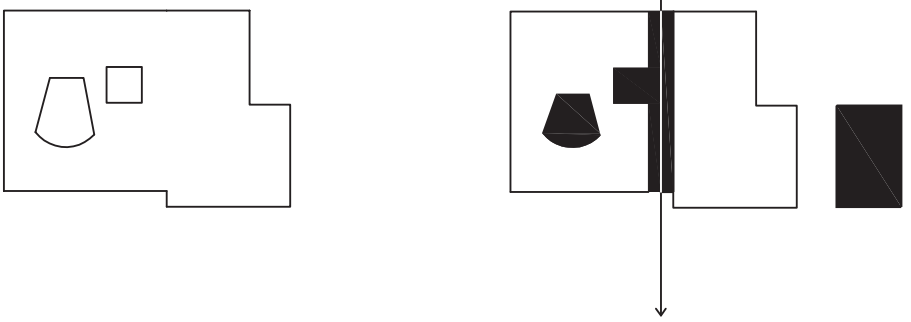


AUDITORIUM. PHOTO: MARC SCHEEPERS

HASSELT CULTURAL CENTRE. CITY PARK

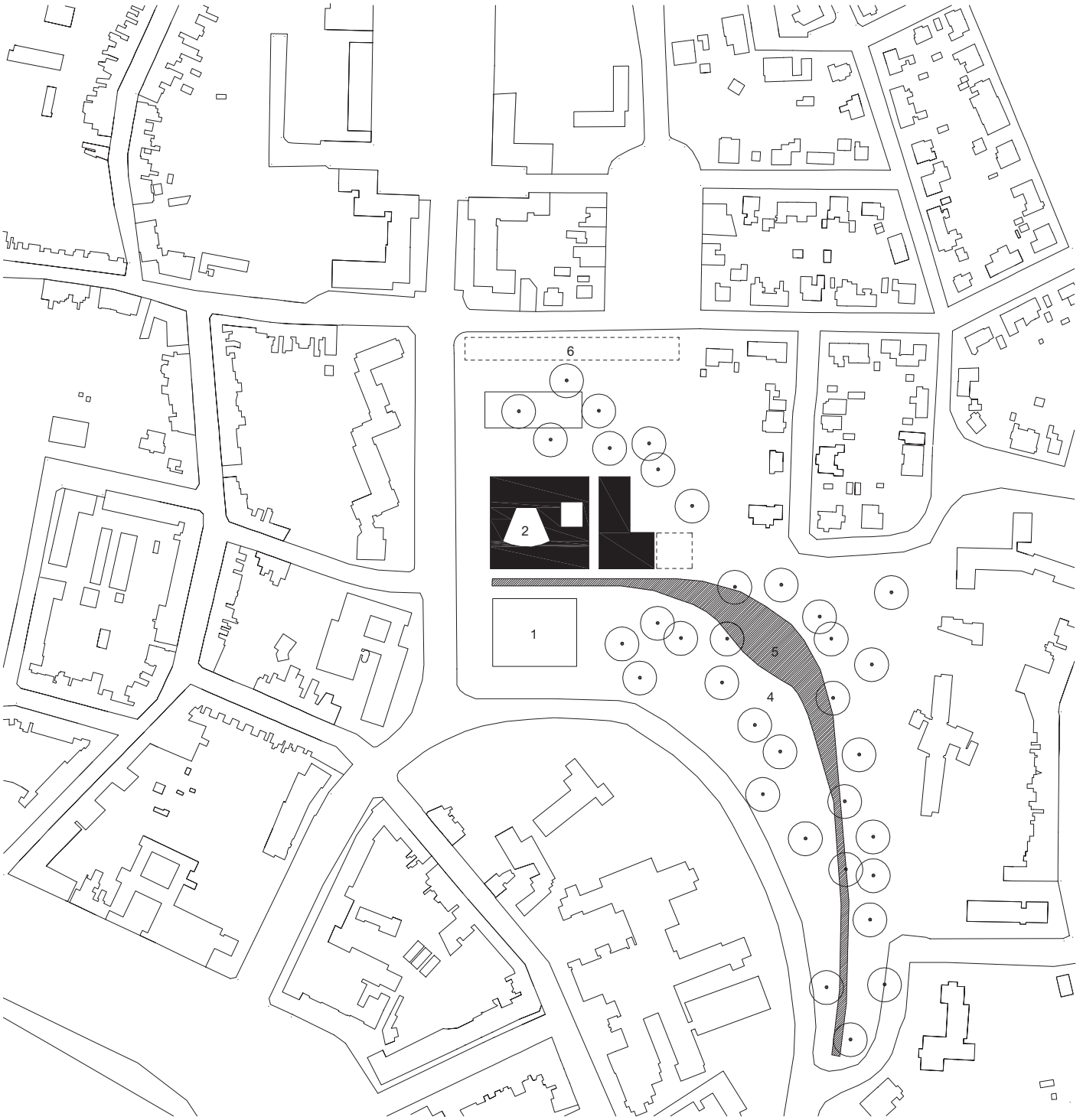
On Stage

Renovation of the main hall
Cultural Centre
Hasselt, Belgium
2005–2006



Hasselt's Cultural Centre was built in the late nineteen-sixties and designed by the architect Isia Isgour. The centre's design fits in a tradition of modernist architecture, analogous to the designs by the architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. All functions have been housed in a single volume, under a single roof. A volume, conceived as a table on steel columns, clad with large glass facades, allowing the outdoor space to transfer seamlessly into interior space, to optimise accessibility. The roof surface is pierced by the stage tower. Opposite this tower, the roof is pierced by a similar volume, to create a patio and to allow daylight to reach the centre of the building. These two gestures define the scenography of the building. The architecture and the interior are functionalist, averse to any ornamentation. A clear concept and definitely one of Isia Isgour's major works.

For more than 35 years, this centre was used intensively for a wide variety of purposes. The building had in fact reached its end



HASSELT CC MASTER PLAN

of life. Many small renovations had been carried out in the course of time, affecting the original concept. The character changed. The focus of activities is narrower today. New cultural centres develop in town. The Cultural Centre marks itself increasingly as a city theatre and exhibition hall.
An overall renovation was essential. In 1996, a master plan for the building and its surroundings was drawn up in collaboration with AAS Architecten (Luc D'hooge and Roos Werckx).

The new perception of the building arises from a new perception of the parkland surrounding the building. Today, the building is the centre of an entire city district. When it was first built, the area was much less built-up and the park had a more prominent presence. The master plan stops the erosion of the city park. The park needs to be reinforced, stripped of its dog playgrounds and fabricated facilities. An underground car park will be built and a polyvalent theatre square will be created in front of the building.

The primary concern was the renovation of the heart of the building: the main theatre. The hall needed various improvements: a greater capacity – from 800 to 890 seats – better acoustics, more involvement between audience and stage, and a larger, flexible proscenium.

From a previously open, 'arena'-like space, where to see and to be seen was of some importance, the hall was converted into a more enclosed area, exclusively focused on the stage.

To increase the hall's capacity, two side balconies were connected, creating a new full-size balcony. This new balcony was suspended in the room. The hall's volume was increased by raising the ceiling. The room is clad with a crown of folded surfaces, whose folds and profiles disperse the sound throughout the hall. The lines of sight in the hall have been improved, for example by shortening the side walls.

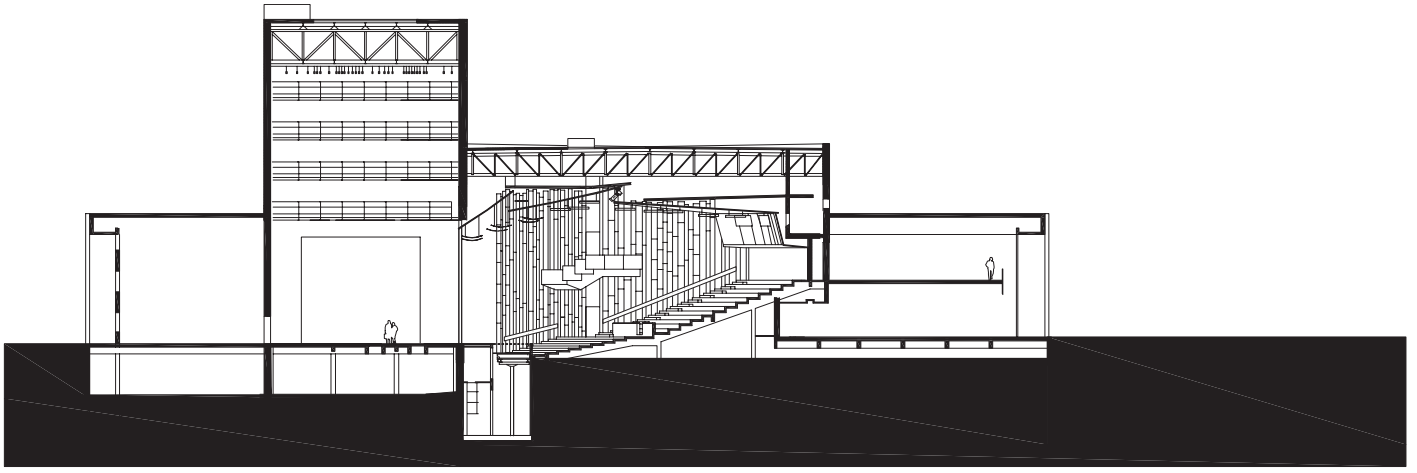
The orchestra pit has two stage lifts, allowing greater flexibility for the proscenium. This means that various stage extensions can now be made. There central zone can be partly closed, making it possible to play up to the centre of the room.

These interventions have provided the theatre with more options and a greater capacity, as well as making the experience more intimate.
This intimacy is strengthened by the use of specific colours. The colours of the seat upholstery run from dark brown to bright yellow in the back of the hall, thus creating an optical shortening.

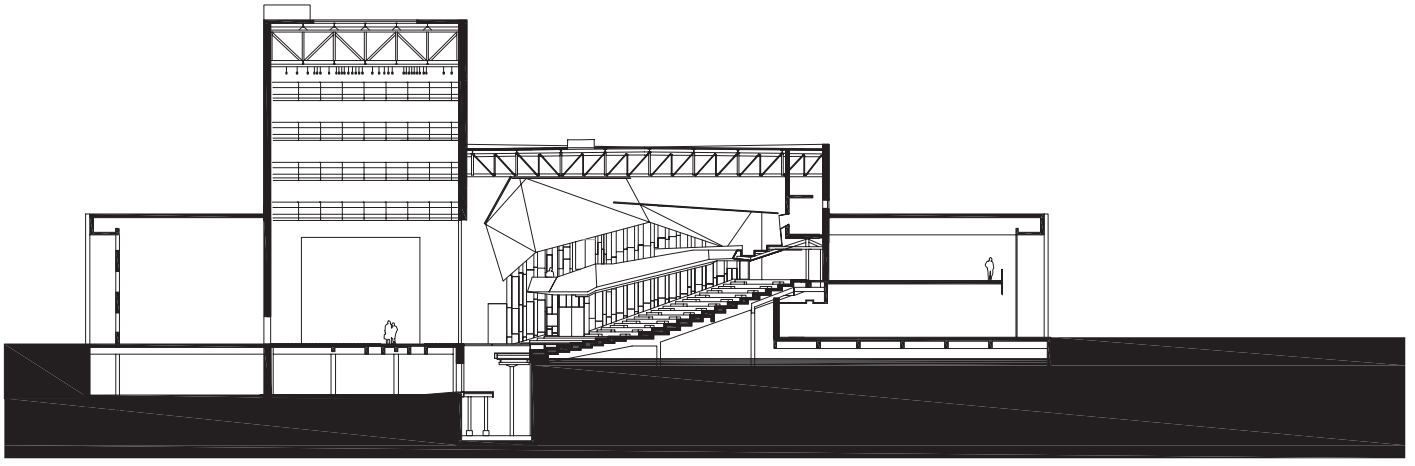
A second intervention concerns a cut through the building. An indoor passage, a kind of semi-public space, cutting right through the building. When the theatre square has been completed, this intervention will anchor the building even more firmly in the park.

The new hall and the indoor passage mark the start of a new image, a new role for the Cultural Centre in town.

1. EVENT SQUARE
2. NEW THEATRE HALL
3. CITY BAR EXTENSION
4. CITY PARK
5. POND
6. RESIDENTIAL BUILDING

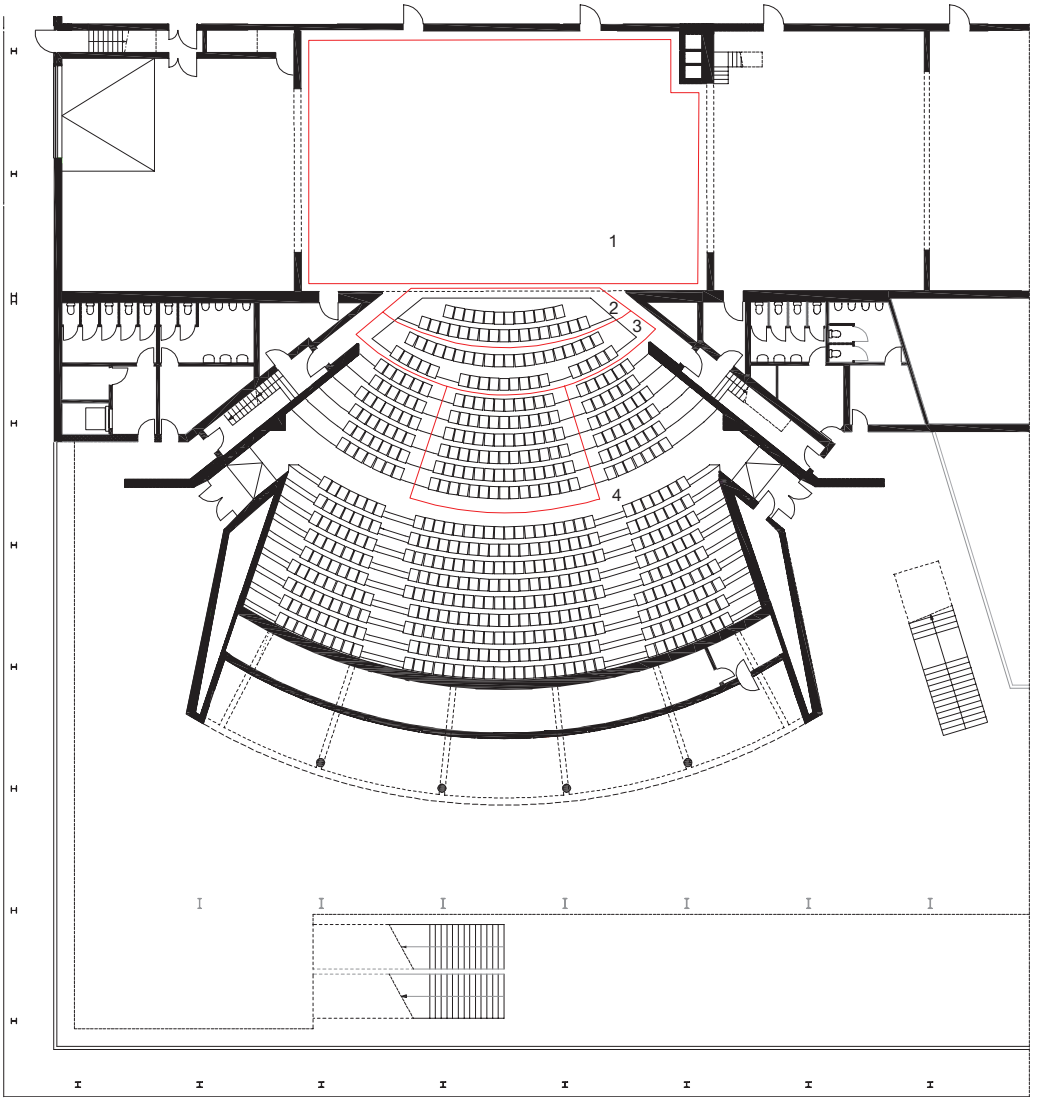


SECTION. OLD SITUATION



SECTION. NEW SITUATION

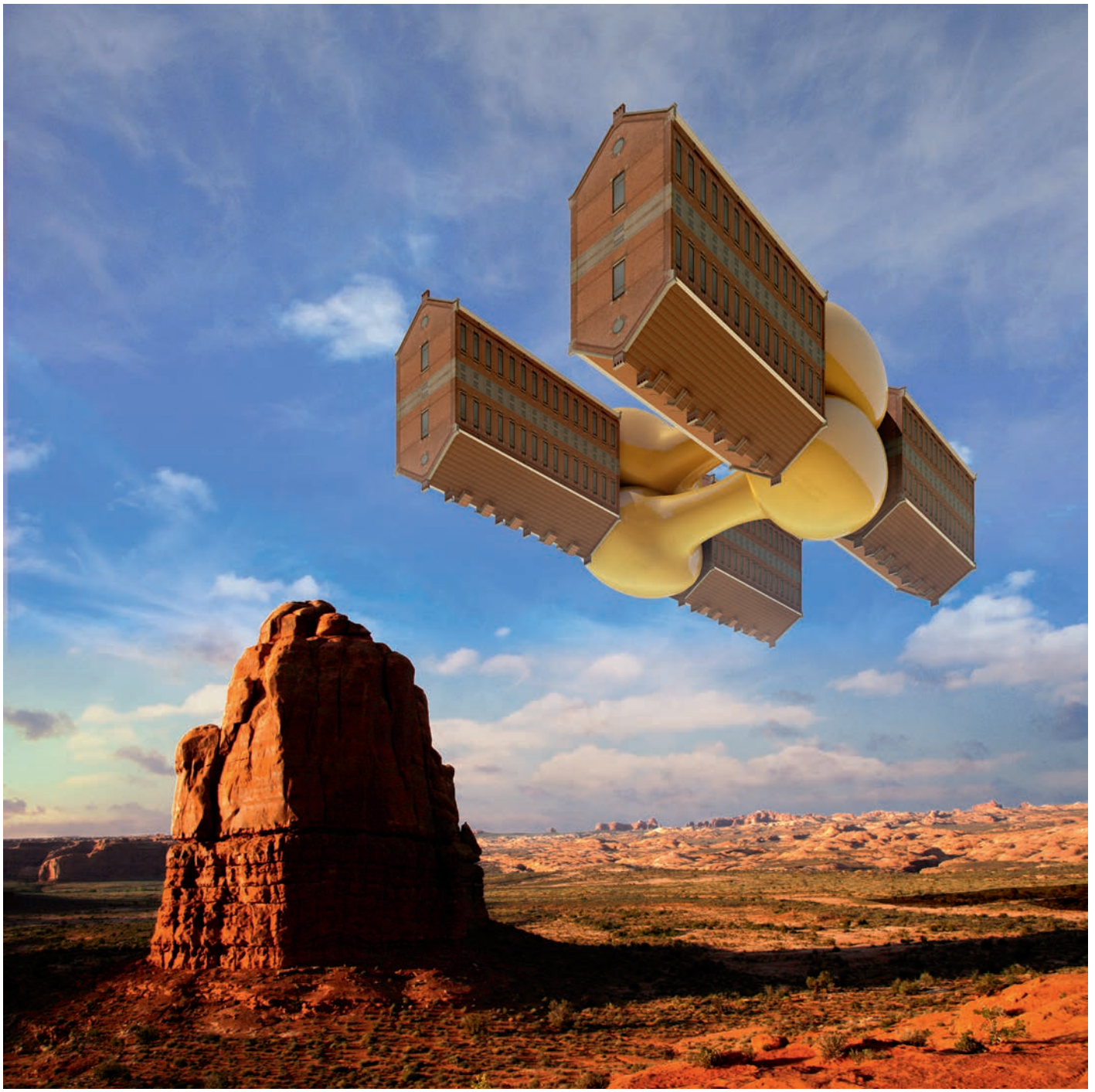
0 10 m



STAGE OPTIONS

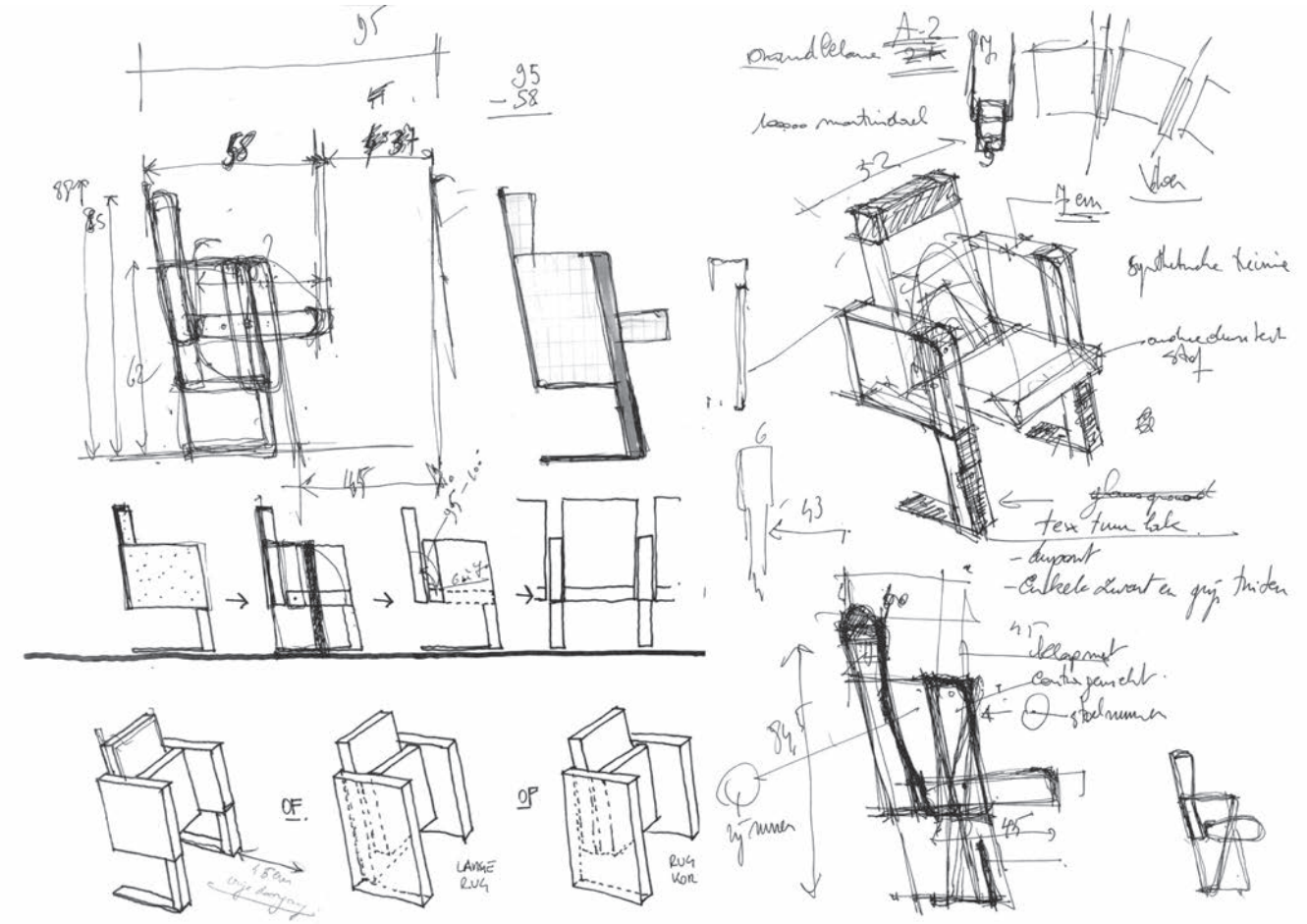
0 10 m

1. EXISTING STAGE
2/3. EXTENSION WITH STAGE LIFTS
4. POTENTIAL EXTRA EXTENSION



NICK ERVINCK – TRIAFUTOBS, 2007

HALL INTERIOR. PHOTO: ANDRÉ BERTELS



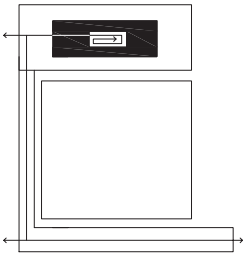
SKETCH FOR SEATS

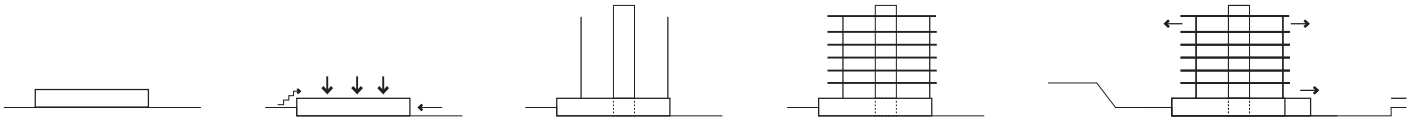
STAGE EXTENSION (2/3). PHOTO: ANDRÉ BERTELS

STAIRWELL

In The Middle

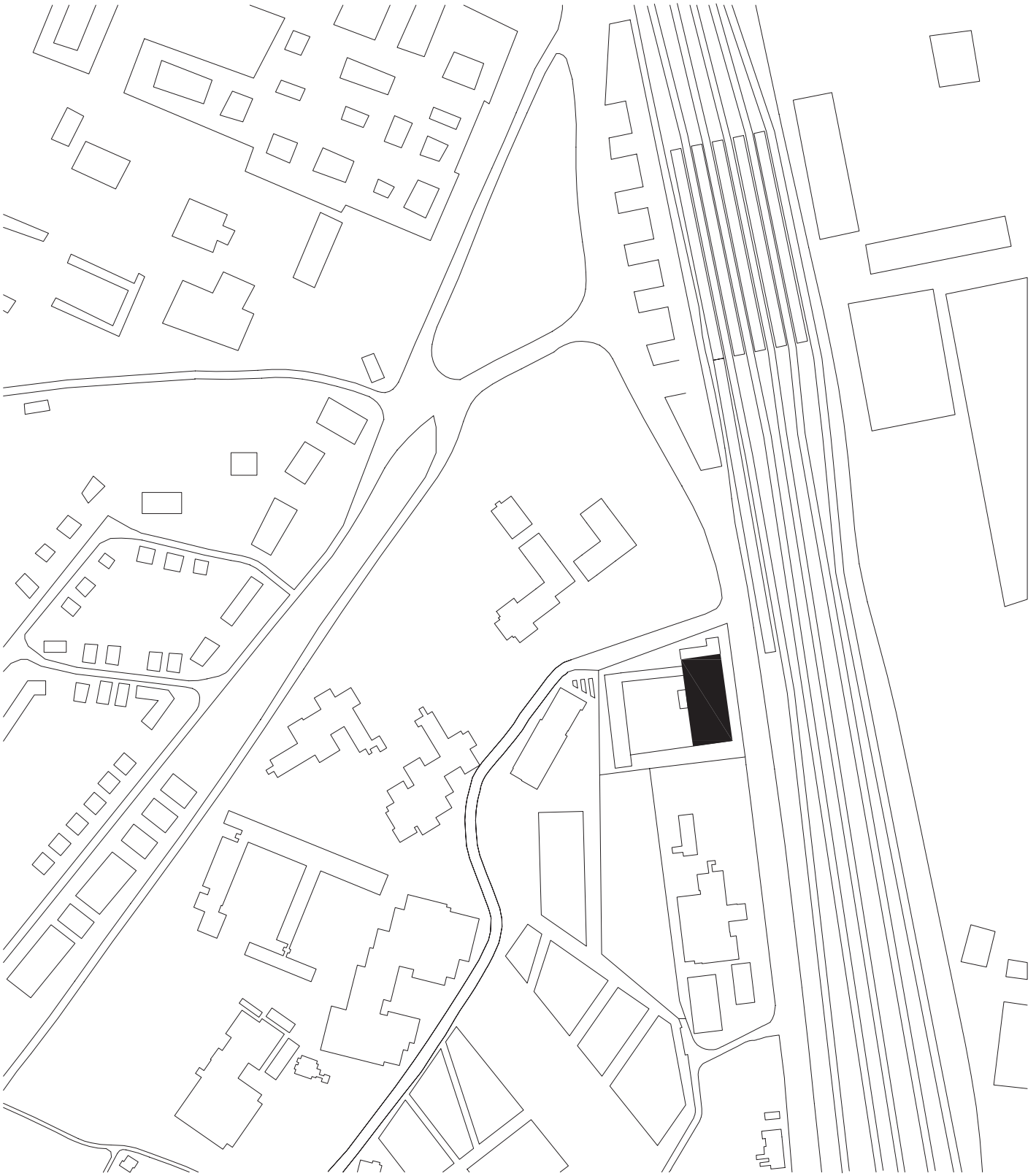
Design for an education and research building
Ter Groene Poorte campus, KUL
Bruges, Belgium
2012
Competition – not selected





The design for the education and research building has a prominent place on campus. Adjacent to the railway station, it will be the gate to the modernized campus.
In the proposed master plan, the campus lacks a heart. There is no central open space that can be used as an assembly or meeting place. Our design covers part of the car park, transforming it into a multifunctional space. A porch embraces the area and links the bicycle parking area with the entrance. The space in the middle – the parking zone – thus generates a lot of potential. The campus has been given a central space.

By responding to the various flows of traffic in the area, a suitable entrance has been created for every user. The porch indicates the student entrance. A shallow set of steps marks the pedestrian access from the station. The loading and unloading zone was hidden at the parking area side.



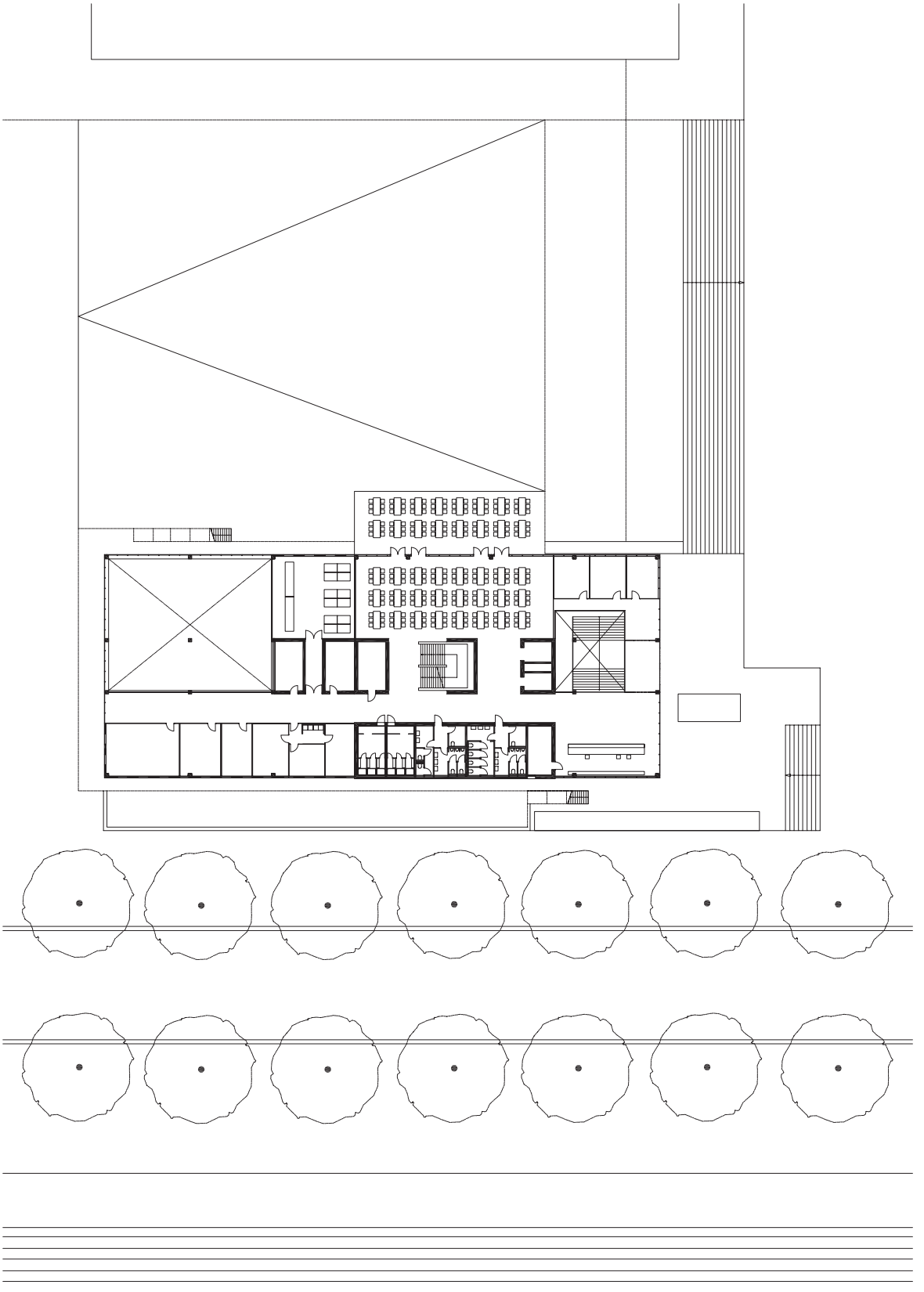
SITUATION

0 100 m

The deepened section constitutes the foundation. It has a massive construction. Staircases and surfaces that are connected to it, are all made from the same decorative concrete. The base is moulded into a plinth, thus creating a solid foundation for a polyvalent building.

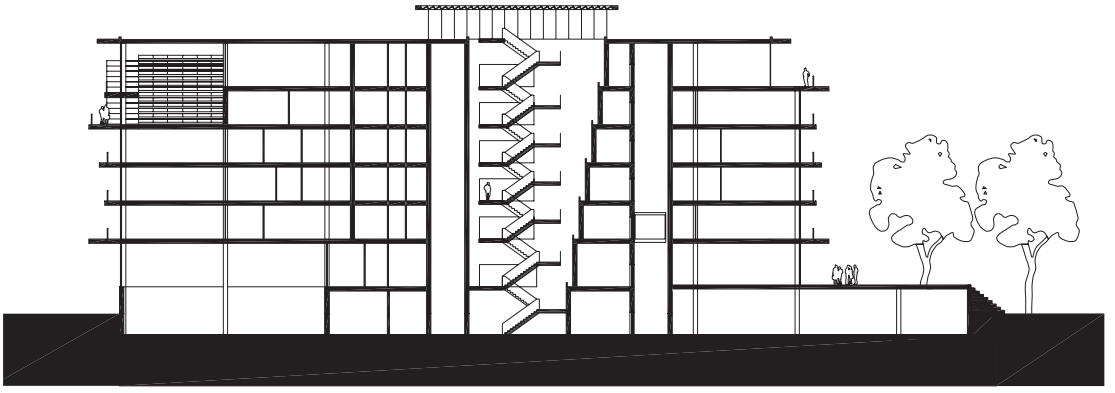
The structural work consists of prefabricated hollow-core concrete floors and a trellis of columns. The central staircase constitutes the heart of the project. The stairwell is wider than the stairway and widens towards the top. This ensures maximum daylight access and ventilation, as well as animating the building. Apart from the staircase, the core of the building consists of a double elevator shaft, toilet facilities, and a broadly dimensioned wiring duct, suitable for the school's research programme.

The building's new structure is outlined in the facade. All floors extend outside, to offer the appropriate amount of shelter on the sunny side. Depending on their orientation, there is a greater or lesser overhang. They also serve as escape routes towards the staircases on the outside of the floors. Setting up the routing and escape routes in this way, allows maximum floor space and a flexible lay-out.
Communal rooms were created at the top of the building. From this floor, students and staff have their breaks while enjoying an uninterrupted view of the conservation area of Bruges.
The building puts itself 'between' the campus and the city.
It acts as an interspace and becomes the new central heart of the campus.

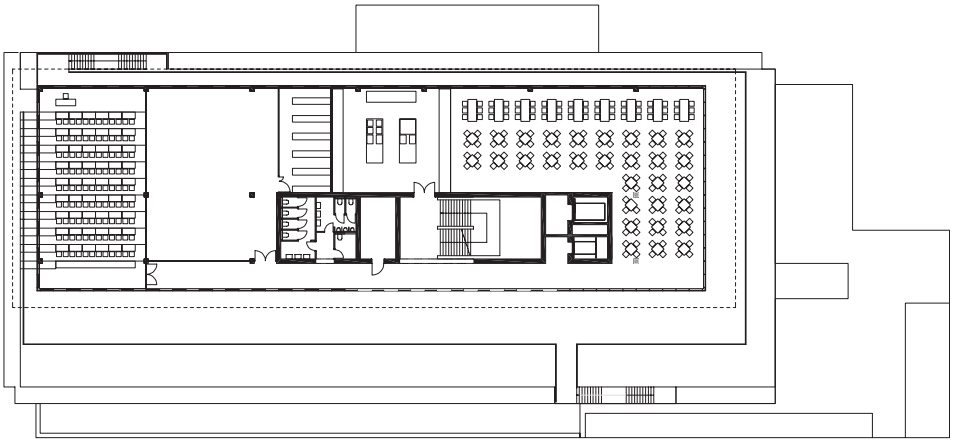


FLOOR ENTRANCE

0 10 m

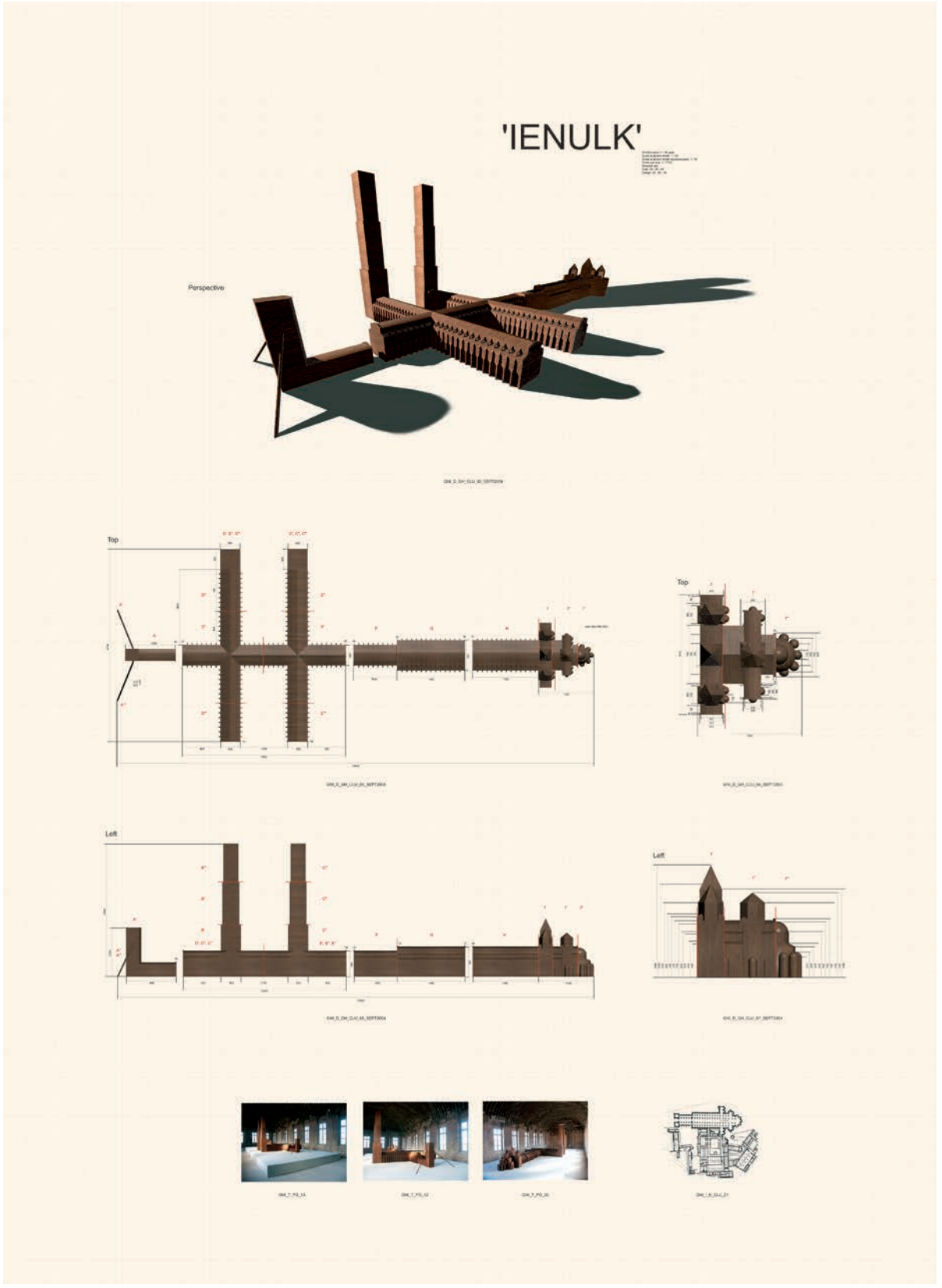


SECTION

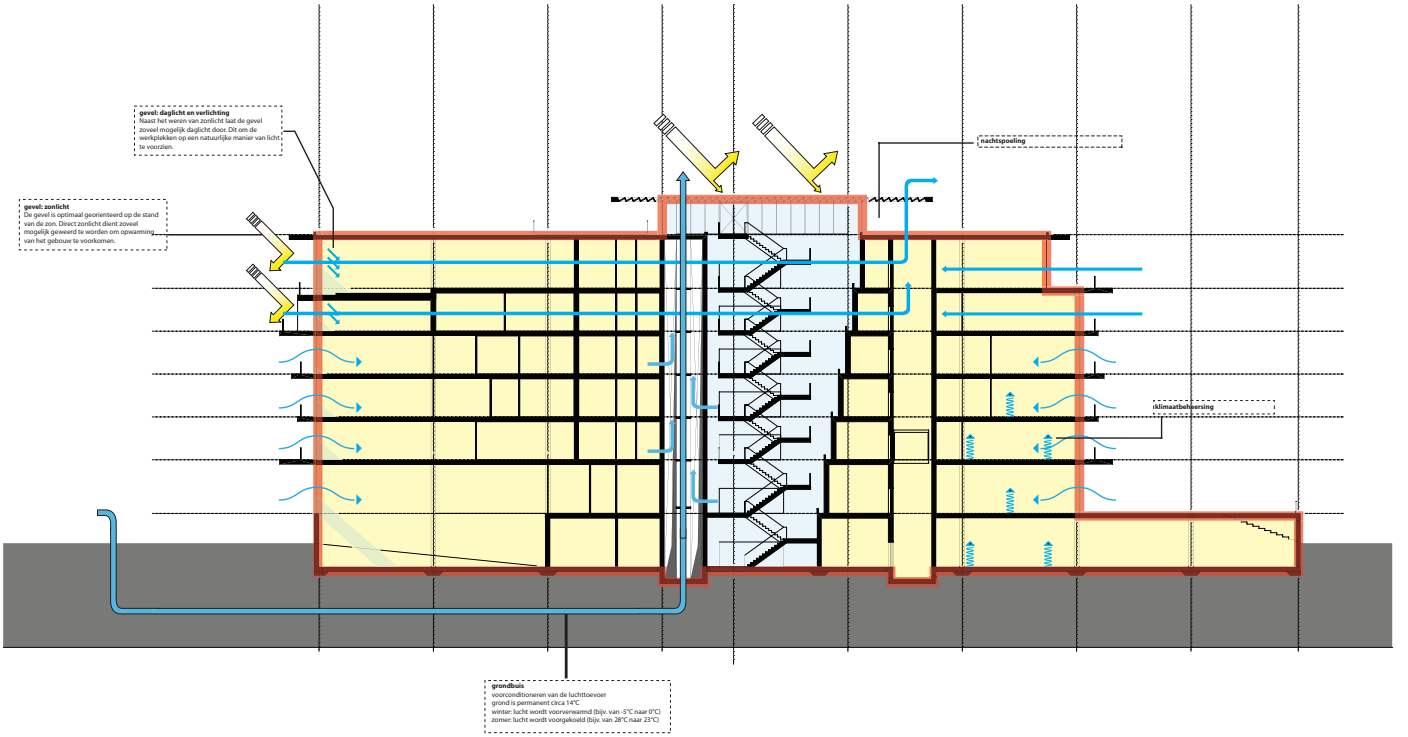


FIFTH FLOOR

0 10 m



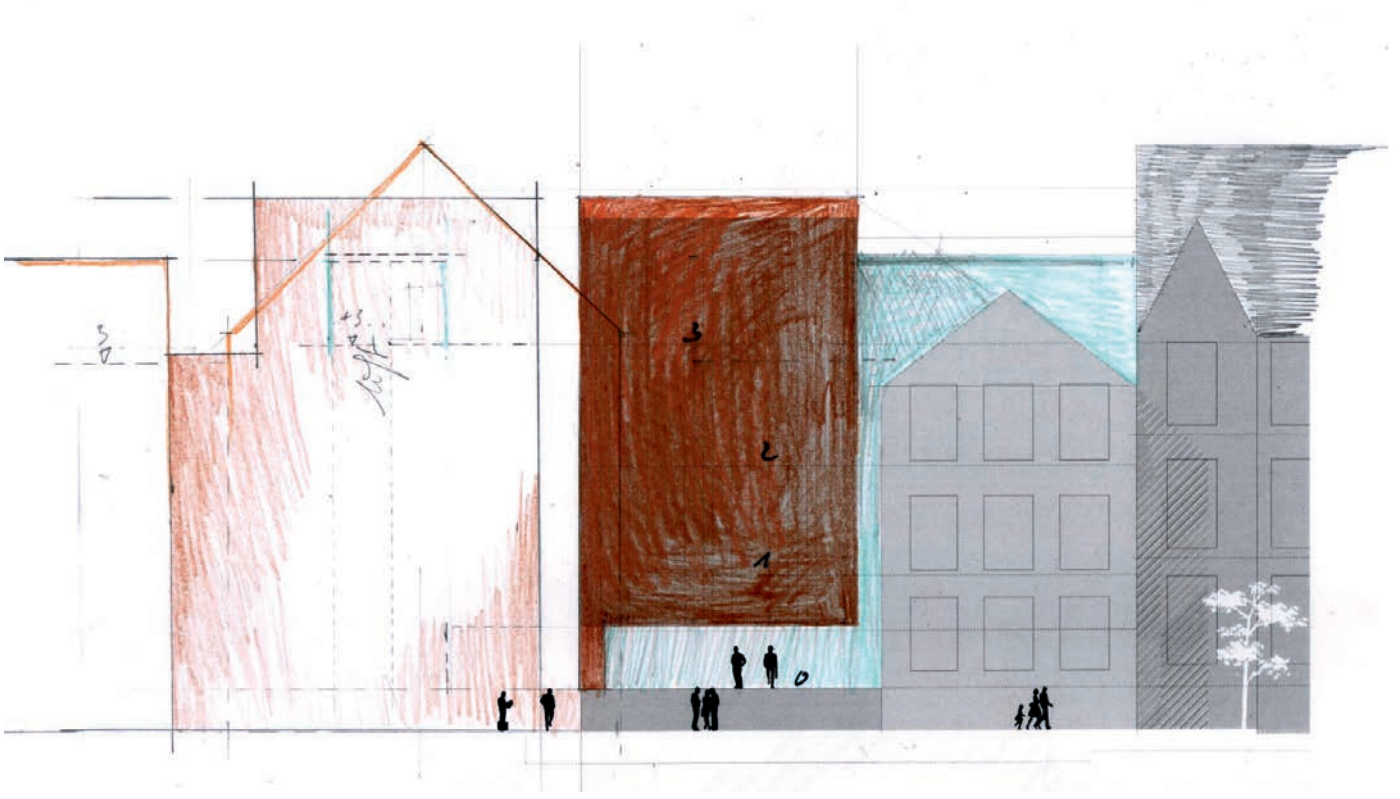
NICK ERVINCK – IENULKAR, 2004–2006



TECHNICAL BUILDING PLAN

VIEW OF THE SQUARE

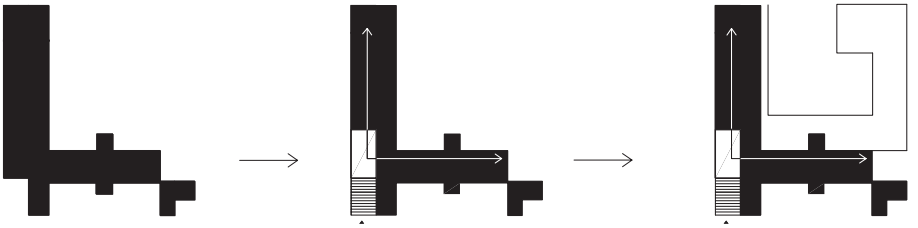
ACCESS FROM THE STATION



SKETCH OF THE ENTRANCE

Campus Address

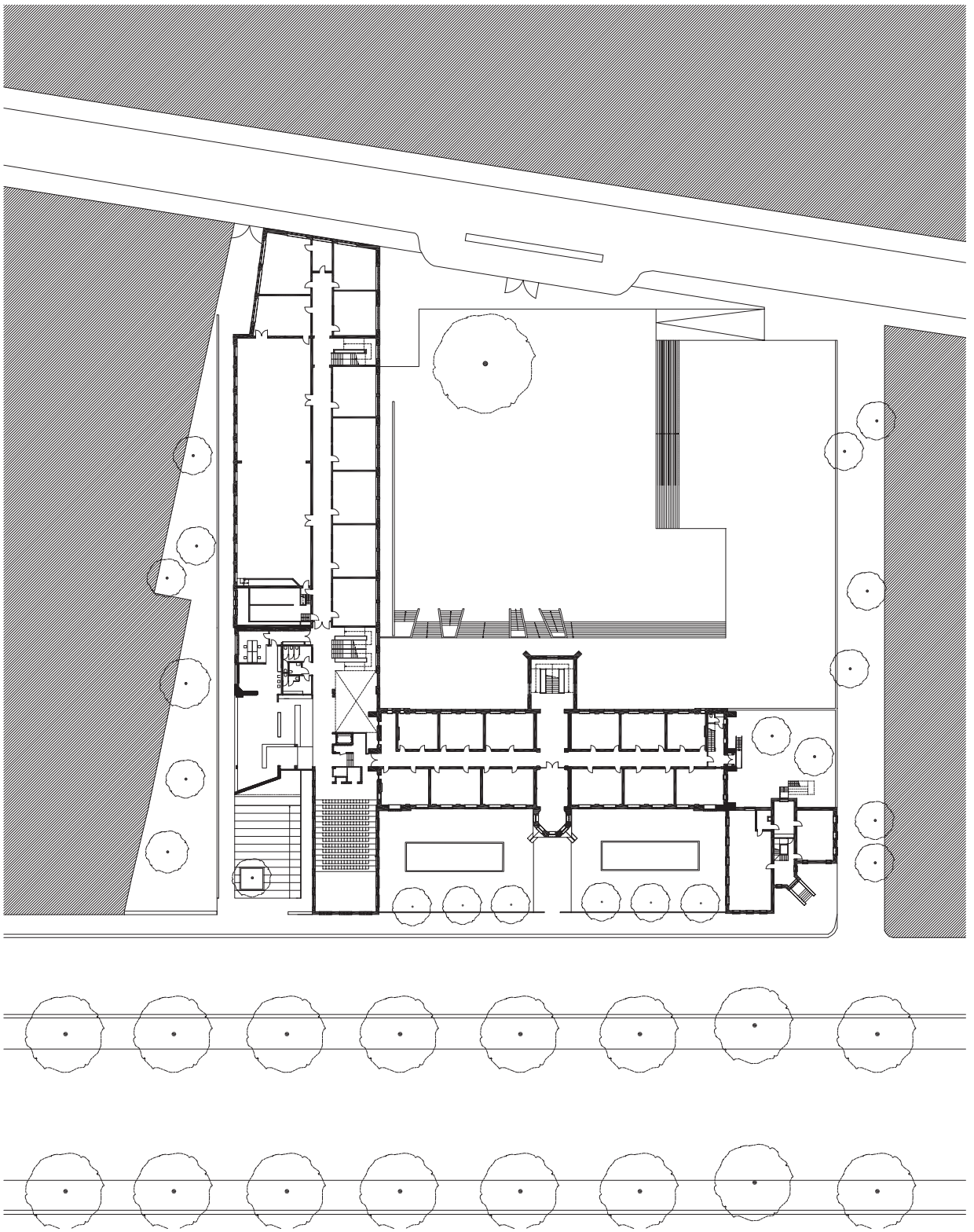
Renovation of college building with extension
Virga Jesse College
Hasselt, Belgium
2006–2012



The Virga Jesse College is clearly present in Hasselt's inner ring. Its neo-Gothic architecture translated the nineteenth-century urge of Catholic education to be emphatically present in the city.

Today, its mission is different. A school building needs to be flexible and must be able to adapt to the ever changing pedagogical and didactic trends. The brief was therefore to straighten out the building in terms of lay-out and building management.

This project explicitly creates a link between the 19th and 21st centuries. The project provides the appropriate infrastructure, centred around the student who wants to develop freely and unconditionally. It is not the appearances that prevail, it is the content that needs to convince. The monumental character of the 19th century has been emasculated. The school is no longer the reflection of 'knowledge is power', but of a young, open and inquisitive urban culture.



GROUND FLOOR

0 20 m

The boundary with the public domain will be tackled. The school gate symbolises the innovative nature. Cars are removed from the forecourt. The square is transformed into an urban garden. The fences will be less present. The emphasis is on the school's openness. The strategy of recuperation and transformation is applied at different levels, in order to arrive at an integrated design.

The key to the design lies in combining the building volumes from different periods around a single central entrance hall, which completely redefines the circulation through the building. This circulation within the renovated building is functionally clear, easily recognisable and starts around an oversized entrance zone. It is a kind of decompression chamber for the thousand students and a place for meeting and communicating.

To enable this opening up, a volume was added to the neo-Gothic main building. It defines the character of the location; withdrawn from the city boulevard, it creates the antespace. A shallow set of concrete steps leads to the entrance. The perforated steel plate marks the new entrance building.
The pattern of the perforations was based on a detail from one of the neo-Gothic windows in the main wing and also refers to the motifs stemming from Islamic culture (arabesques). They are interwoven with contemporary visual culture and it is exactly this free interpretation of the pattern that symbolises today's social diversity.

In the central entrance hall, two wings meet. It is also the location for the link to the new toilet area, which is in a sunken position in the corner between two wings. The roof creates the raised playing area and provides access to the ground floor with a set of striking staircases. These are a favourite hangout on the playground. The link between old and new is both subtle and contemporary because of the colour scheme of the concrete used.

In the wing extensions from the nineteen-fifties, the windows have been replaced. Together with teachers and a graphic artist, the window cladding was expertly designed. In the film 'A beautiful mind', the main character writes his thoughts on the windows of his college room. This act was recuperated as an idea. Texts referring to the blackboard of the past were added to the blinded windows: the teacher's notebook and the students' notes. After all, students are daydreamers. In addition to taking lessons, they sometimes also want to give vent to their ideas, against the background of the blue sky.

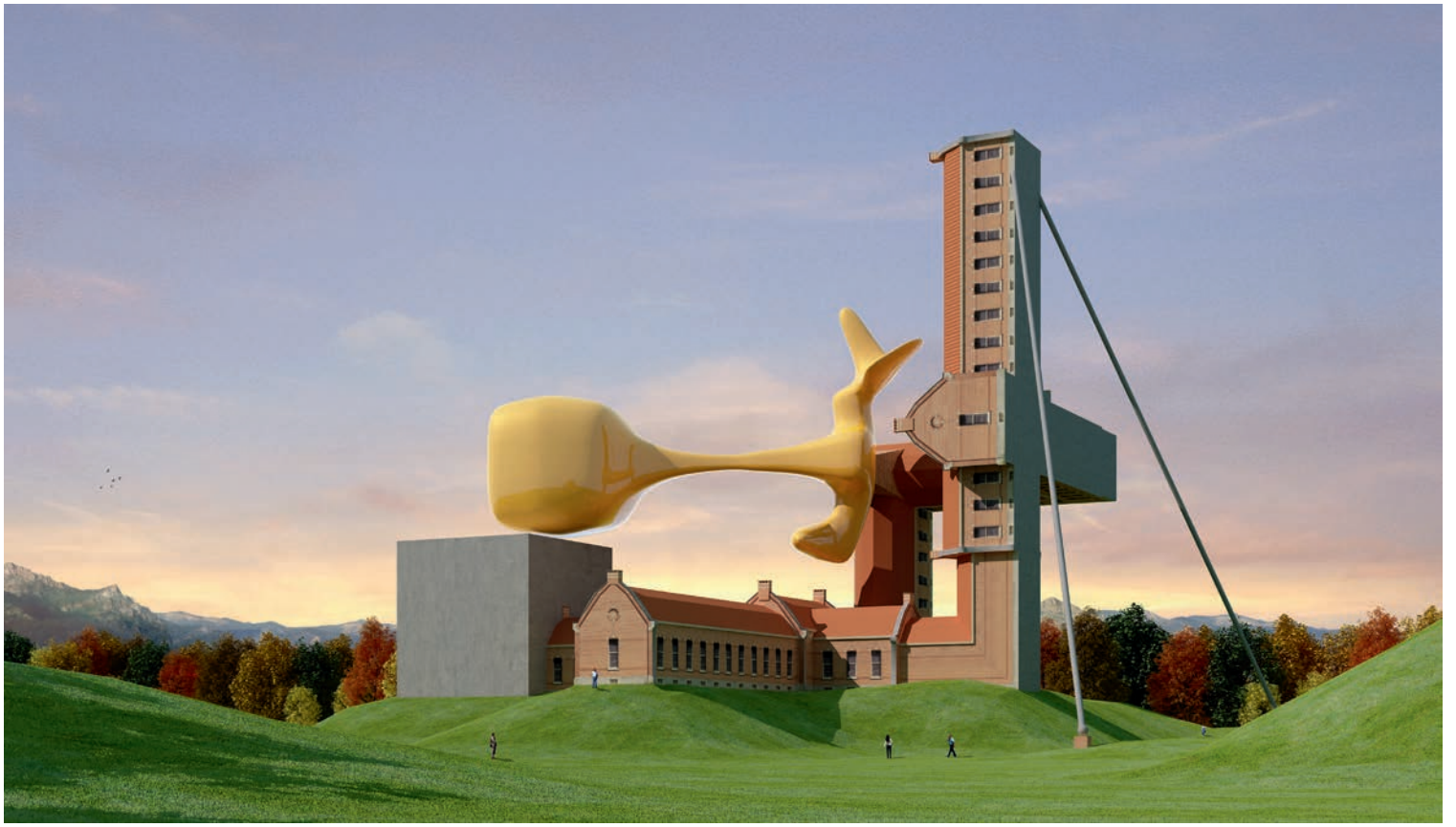
REAR FACADE. SCHOOLYARD AND STAIRCASE CROSS-SECTION

STREET FACADE

0 20 m

TOP VIEW OF SCHOOLYARD. PHOTO: ELISE VANHEES

ACCESS STAIRS TO SANITARY FACILITIES. PHOTO: ELISE VANHEES



NICK ERVINCK – SOLBAREGIAFUTOBS, 2004–2010

STAIRCASE INTERSECTION. PHOTO: ELISE VANHEES

ENTRANCE OF VIRGA JESSE COLLEGE. PHOTO: NIELS DONCKERS

(1)

Beauty and cornflour

Lieven van der Stock,
Licentiate of Philosophy, Director of SPIT, Leuven

REFERENTIE

(1) The site, located at the IJzermolenstraat and the Hollestraat, bordering on the ring road around Leuven, houses companies such as Spit, Wonen & Werken vzw, Velo vzw and others. The scale of this project is unparalleled for Belgium. On this industrial estate, 11,850m^2 of business premises are being created. Until today, there had never been any socioeconomic initiative of this scale. Credit goes to Spit Tewerkstelling vzw, who acts as the commissioning client, and the city of Leuven, which provides generous financial support.

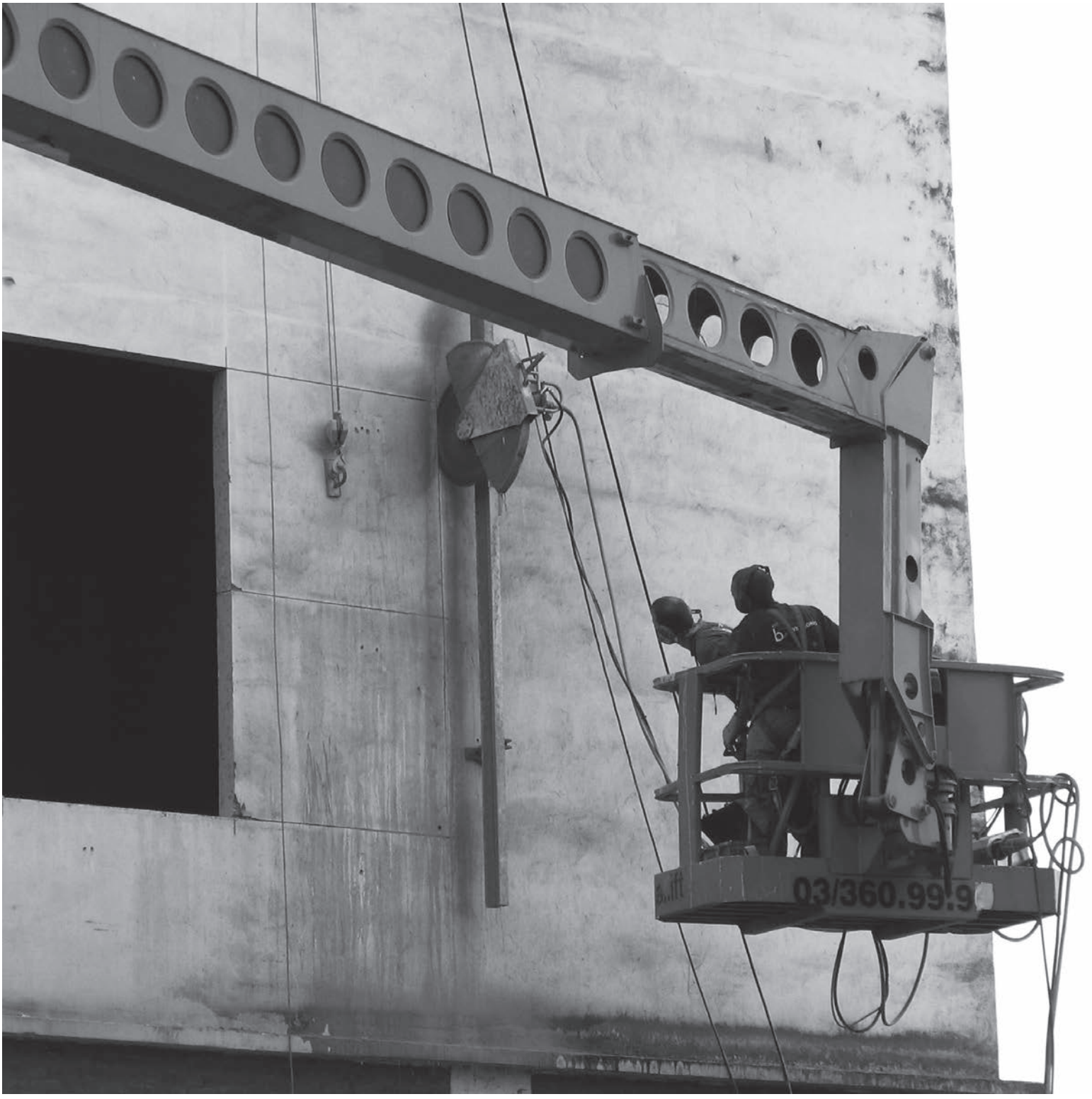
Architects often face tough challenges. It is their task to make connections. Architects connect not only their clients' wishes to what is technically feasible. They also connect a neighbourhood with the city, a house with its environment, the past with the future. But above all, architects connect people.

This last aspect is probably the most important. Eventually, their shelters against adverse weather have only one goal: to provide a space for the lives that will develop in these shelters over the next few decades. Buildings constitute safe havens, within which people live, work, enjoy, laugh, make love, eat, comfort, read, desire, look, think, roam, plan, dream and love.

An architect connects by devising liveable and workable spaces. Spaces in which plans are made, political decisions are taken, and all facets of life are shaped.

A good architect therefore also connects people with beauty. In a disenchanted world, man has a greater need for beauty. Beauty as an answer to existential doubts. The beauty of the moment, the beauty of each other. Architectural beauty cannot save the world, but it can make a contribution.

It is the architect's responsibility, in our sometimes turbulent society, to pick up the signals that matter. It is the architect's duty to be at the centre of life. Engaged, inspired, involved and connected.



DE SILO, CONNECTIVE ACT

BEFORE 2000

'T ROER
Kramerslaan, Hasselt
Building – 4 stages of a polyvalent space, day centres and offices, a home with night accommodation for 12 people with entrance and intermediary hall and an extension of the day centre for mentally disabled persons, in collaboration with ISB Engineering and Studiebureau Poelmans
Koninklijk Instituut Onze Lieve Vrouw Ter Engelen
1996–2008
3,020 m²
Delivered

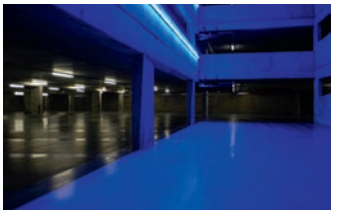
'SPORTVELD' HOUSING
Valeriaanstraat, Stevoort–Hasselt
Building 16 terraced and 5 detached houses, each with a carport
Kleine Landeigendom
1996–1997
105 m²/house
Delivered

VLAAMS ADMINISTRATIEF CENTRUM
Koningin Astridlaan, Hasselt
Offices for provincial services of the Flemish Government, in collaboration with awg architecten, Technum and BEG
Flemish government
1997–2004 – competition – winner
24,700 m² (16,347 m² above ground and 8,353 m² below ground)
Delivered

MERCEDES GARAGE HERMANS
Ekkelgarden industrial zone, Voogdijstraat, Hasselt
Design, building and extension of a Mercedes garage with offices and showroom
Hermans Etn. NV Hasselt
1998–2001
15,000 m²
Delivered

'KOORSTRAAT' HOUSING
Koorstraat, Kermt–Hasselt
Building 12 council houses
Kleine Landeigendom
1998–2001
105 m²/house
Delivered

'DE TESCH' HOUSING
De Tesch, Hasselt
Building 7 council houses
Kleine Landeigendom
1998–2000
800 m²
Delivered



PPP ST.-MARTINUS
Stationsstraat, Genk
Urban planning, including the building of and underground car park for 220 cars, in collaboration with Bart Lantmeeters and Technum
Genk city council – Democo – Cordeel
1999–2001
6,095 m²
Delivered

2000

'CRUTZENSTRAAT' HOUSING
Crutzenstraat, Kuringen–Hasselt
68 houses
Phase 1: 20 houses – Phase 2: 20 houses with underground car park – Phase 3: 28 studios + social centre
Cordium
2000–2015
Phase 1: 2,125 m² – Phase 2: 2,391 m² – Phase 3: 1,728 m²
Phase 1: preliminary design – Phase 2: final design and Phase 3: building commences 2013

PHL – CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION
Elfde Liniestraat, Hasselt
Renovation of reception area of central administration and construction of media and study centre, in collaboration with Stubeco and Libost-Groep
PHL University College
2000–2003
1,200 m²
Delivered

'KOORSTRAAT' HOUSING
Koorstraat, Kermt–Hasselt
13 apartments, in collaboration with Stubeco and Studiebureau Poelmans
Cordium
2000–2006
1,301 m²
Delivered

2001

KHLIM – CAMPUS OUDE LUIKERBAAN
Oude Luikerbaan, Hasselt
Building of polyvalent room and classrooms for the department of Applied Social Studies, in collaboration with Libost-Groep
Limburg Catholic University College
2001–2006 – competition – winner
2,500 m² divided into 5 subprojects
Delivered

PPP DE OUDE BRANDWEER
Grotestraat, Genk
City extension project with 38 apartments, underground car park for 63 cars and commercial units, in collaboration with Bart Lantmeeters
Genk city council – Demcor
2001–2005
4,350 m²
Delivered

DILSEN–STOKKEM HOUSING
Dilsen–Stokkem
Building of 15 council houses and 5 carports
Ons Dak
2001–2004
1,800 m²
Delivered

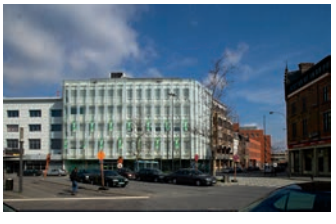
'DE VRIJHEID' RESIDENCE
Arendonk
9 luxury apartments, underground car park and commercial unit
Hooyberghs
2001–2005
1,400 m² (without car park)
Delivered

NAUTICAL SIMULATOR
Berckenlei, Borgerhout
Building of a simulator (with 360° projection) at the location of the hydraulic engineering laboratory in Borgerhout
Flemish government
2001–2005
300 m²
Delivered

2002

ALDEN BIESEN
Kasteelstraat, Bilzen
Drawing up a master plan and development of 6 subprojects, in collaboration with B.E.G.
Subprojects: transformation of former stables into a reception area and experience room, in collaboration with Madoc; Rearranging guest rooms in the northern and southern fore-castle; ground floor of the castle; orangery; foyer of the Riding School and newly built logistics room.
Flemish government
2002–2012 – Open tender – winner
Subprojects: 2,658 m²
Delivered

PATIO DE EENHOORN
Havermarkt-Ridderstraat, Hasselt
62 apartments with underground car park for 83 cars and 6 commercial units, in collaboration with architect J. Nelissen and Arcade
TV Goethals–Vangronsveld–VGV Vastgoed
2002–2007
11,445 m² (7,642 m² above ground and 3,803 m² underground)
Delivered



ACV HEADQUARTERS LIMBURG
Monseigneur Broekxplein, Hasselt
Building of an administrative headquarters and services centre for the provincial council of Limburg, in collaboration with Stubeco and Ingenieurskantoor Plessers
ACV-Hasselt
2002–2004
2,700 m²
Delivered

GUEST HOUSE – HERMAN RESIDENCE Servotte
Parkstraat, Leuven
115 student rooms (studios and apartments) and underground car park for 340 cars, in collaboration with awg architecten, BEG, ABT Lipski – Onno Janse
KU Leuven
2002–2005 – competition – winner
14,326 m² (5,013 m² above ground and 9,313 m² underground)
Delivered

VANSTRAELEN / NIPAU HOUSE
Koningin Astridlaan, Hasselt
Extension of second floor and top floor of a classified house
Barrosch
2002–2004
100 m² extension / renovation ca. 250 m²
Delivered

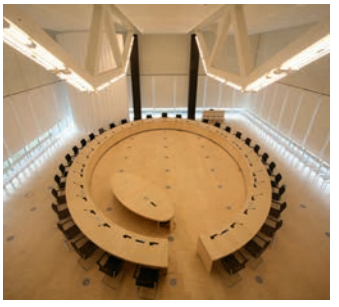
SADEPAN
Henry Fordlaan, Genk
Industrial building for the production of glues and resins, with accompanying office building, in collaboration with Libost-Groep
Sadepan Chimica
2002–2004
1,275 m²
Delivered

KU LEUVEN MEDIA CENTRE
Parkstraat, Leuven
Renovation of existing basement of the Faculty of Social Sciences into classroom, offices and audiovisual room
KU Leuven
2002–2004
780 m²
Delivered

KBC LICHTAART
Leistraat, Kasterlee
Design for a new branch office
KBC Bank NV
2002–2004
405 m²
Delivered

2003

EKKELGARDEN GATEHOUSE
Luikersteenweg, Hasselt
Gatehouse with 62 apartments, commercial units and underground car park for 81 cars, in collaboration with Technum and WSM Engineering
Ekkelgarden Park N.V.
2003–2007
16,834 m² (11,898 m² above ground and 4,936 m² underground)
Delivered



ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRE, HEUSDEN-ZOLDER
Heldenplein, Heusden-Zolder
New town hall for Heusden-Zolder, in collaboration with BEG
Town council of Heusden-Zolder – Dexia Bank Projectontwikkeling
2003–2008 – competition – winner
5,700 m²
Delivered

DE KEMPEN
Markt, Mol
Building a sports and instruction centre for the Special Youth Welfare Institute De Kempen in Mol, in collaboration with awg architecten and Technum
Flemish government
2003
1,900 m² (1,607 m² above ground and 293 m² underground)
Delivered

EXTRA MUROS
Marktplein, Heusden-Zolder
Creating offices in the former mine buildings
Extra Muros
2003–2005
300 m²
Delivered

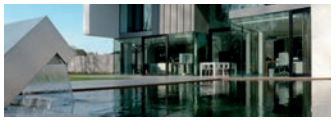
HUISVESTING 'NEERHAREN' HOUSING
Kasteelstraat, Neerharen
12 houses
Vlaanderen Bouwt (Kolmont Woonprojecten)
2003–2005
1,500 m²
Delivered

2004

'DE LELIE' RESIDENCE
Maastrichtersteenweg-Casterstraat, Hasselt
Building 27 housing units with underground car park in an urban environment, in collaboration with ISB Engineering
Vestio NV
2004–2009
3,491 m²
Delivered

'HENRY VAN GOMPELSTRAAT' HOUSING
Henry Van Gompelstraat, Leopoldsburg
12 housing units, in collaboration with de Architectengroep, Stubeco and Ingenieurskantoor Plessers
Vooruitzien
2004–2007
1,808 m²
Delivered

VAN ESBROECK-MAES HOUSE
Blanden
Construction of a family dwelling
Private
2004–2007
300 m²
Delivered

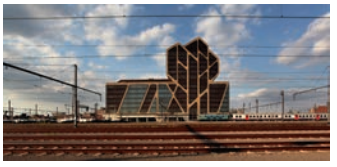


DRIESMANS HOUSE
Hoepertingse steenweg, Hoepertingen-Borgloon
Construction of a house
Private
2004–2009
Delivered

2005

CLARENHOF
Guffenslaan, Hasselt
Conversion of the former St. Clare convent into a residential health care centre including 44 health care rooms, 50 service flats, a grand café and an internal meeting hall in the former chapel, in collaboration with Arcade and Studiebureau Heedfeld
vzw Foyer De Lork
2005–2013
11,801 m²
In progress

RESIDENTIAL HEALTH CARE CENTRE SINT-JOZEF
Kloosterhof, Neerpelt
Renovation of the existing rest home (56 rooms), a new building (61 rooms) and extension of the car park, in collaboration with Architecten Hugo Roux and Dominique Timmermans, Stubeco and Ingenieurskantoor Plessers
vzw Sint-Jozef
2005–2014 – competition – winner
13,695 m²
Phase 1: delivered in 2012 – Phase 2: 2012–2014



HASSELT COURTHOUSE
Station district, Hasselt
New courthouse for the services that used to be spread across various locations – Eurostation, in collaboration with TV TWINS (J.H. Mayer, a2o-architecten, Lens°Ass architects)
Stedelijke Ontwikkelingsmaatschappij Hasselt NV
2005–2011 – competition – winner
23,000 m²
Delivered

TECHNOLOGY CENTRE
Science Park, Diepenbeek
Developing a semi-industrial building for research into new technologies, in collaboration with Libost-Groep and Marcq & Roba
vzw Limburg Catholic University College and Xios University College
2005–2008 – competition – winner
4,969.75 m²
Delivered

CULTURAL CENTRE – MAIN THEATRE HASSELT
Kunstlaan, Hasselt
Renovation of the main theatre (900 seats) of the Hasselt Cultural Centre, a building by Isia Isgour, in collaboration with Prinssen & Bus
vzw Cultuurcentrum Hasselt
2005–2006
550 m²
Delivered

PPP CAR PARK C-MINE
Wilde Kastanjelaan, Genk
Building an underground car park for 600 cars on the Winterslag mine location, in collaboration with Libost-Groep
Genk city council – Van Laere NV
2005–2006 – competition – winner
17,184 m²
Delivered

PROVINCIAL SECONDARY SCHOOL Diepenbeek
Stationsstraat, Diepenbeek
Addition of 12 new classrooms linked to the existing school building, in collaboration with Ingenieursbureau Peeters and Studiebureau Poelmans
Limburg provincial council
2005–2007 – competition – winner
978 m²
Delivered

KINDSHEID JESU BOARDING SCHOOL
Kempische steenweg
New boarding school building for 120 pupils, in collaboration with Studieburo De Klerck
vzw KASO Hasselt KJSJ
2005–2012
3,500 m²
Delivered

PPP COMMUNITY CENTRE PEUTIE
Vijfhoekstraat-Aarschotsestraat, Peutie
Building a community centre at ground floor level with 9 housing units above, in collaboration with Stubeco & Van Roey
Peutie town council – Van Roey Project NV
2005–2006 – competition – winner
1,200 m²
Delivered

2006

VANGRONSVELD-SWEELSSEN HOUSE
Gebrandenstraat, Kuringen – Hasselt
Renovation of the existing bungalow and new extension including swimming pool
Private
2005–2006
400 m²
Delivered

LEUS-GRAULS HOUSE
Binnenveldstraat, Diepenbeek
Building a detached family dwelling
Private
2005–2006
180 m²
Delivered

AZ VESALIUS
Hazelereik, Tongeren
Extending the ambulance hall, newly built kidney dialysis and palliative care wards, and extension of the cafeteria, in collaboration with Architectenbureau N. Boeckx
A.Z. Vesalius
2005–2006
1,500 m²
Delivered

VDAB HEADQUARTERS
Vissersstraat, Hasselt
Renovation and extension of the VDAB training centre
VDAB
2005 – on hold – open competition – winner
Phase 1: 1,500 m²
Competition entry

GENK CULTURAL CENTRE
C-Mine mine site, Winterslag-Genk
Renovation of existing mine building and adding a new polyvalent hall, in collaboration with Architectes Associés, BEG, Marcq & Roba, Prinssen & Bus
Genk city council
2005 – competition – not selected
25,000 m²
Competition entry

VIRGA JESSE COLLEGE
Guffenslaan, Hasselt
Drawing up a master plan and renovation of college building with extension, adding a new entrance, in collaboration with Stubeco and Ingenieurskantoor Plessers
vzw KASO Hasselt KJSJ
2006–2012
Entrance: 1,032 m² / san. fac.: 633 m² / master plan: 6,000 m²
Delivered

PHL – HEALTH CARE DEPARTMENT
Guffenslaan-Kunstlaan, Hasselt
Renovation front facade and converting classrooms into skill labs, in collaboration with Libost-Groep
Limburg University College
2006–2008 – competition – winner
Master plan: 3,200 m² / phase 1: 1,150 m²
Delivered

CAW – HOMELESS CENTRE
Hasselt
Salvatorstraat, Hasselt
Building a homeless centre with 75 emergency shelter places, in collaboration with ISB Engineering and Studiebureau Poelmans
CAW Sonar
2006–2011 – competition – winner
3,020 m²
Delivered

PABILO
Camille Huysmansplein, Bilzen
Extending the existing rooms with an additional floor to accommodate Pabilo, Chiro Bilzen and Seniorenwerking Bilzen, in collaboration with Architectenbureau Jos Dreesen, Libost-Groep and V2S
Kerkfabriek Sint-Mauritius Bilzen
2006–2010 – competition – winner
990 m²
Delivered

ES-TOOLING
Philipssite, Hasselt
Building an industrial hall and offices for a high-tech company, in collaboration with Stubeco and Ingenieurskantoor Plessers
E.S. Tooling
2006–2009
3,000 m²
Delivered

SPIT – SOCIOECONOMIC INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
Leuven
IJzermolenstraat, Leuven
Building an industrial estate for socio-economic activities in Leuven, in collaboration with Grontmij
vzw Spit Tewerkstelling
2006–2009 – competition – winner
11,600 m²
Delivered

'GREENGARDEN ' RESIDENCE
Grote straat, Genk
Living around an enclosed courtyard in the centre of Genk, in collaboration with ESA
Immo Jansen
2006–2008
2,340 m²
Delivered

CEDERPARK
Runkst-Hasselt
Building 52 houses, 21 apartments and underground car park in the station district of Hasselt, in collaboration with Bureau Cleuren-Merken, m² architecten and Crepain Binst Architecture, led by West 8 and in collaboration with Libost-Groep
Extensa Development NV
2006–2013
Phase 1 delivered

2007

‘DE KOLONEL’ RESIDENCE
Kolonel Dusartplein, Hasselt
Apartment building, in collaboration with Marc Creten
Kolmont Woonprojecten
2006–2010
627 m²
Delivered

BOEKT SPORTS HALL
Ubbelstraat, Boekt-Heusden-Zolder
Building a sports hall and a petanque hall in Boekt
Autonomous dept. of public works Heusden-Zolder
2006 – competition – winner
1,504 m²
Competition entry – not to be built

DE SILO – ENVIRONMENT FOR CULTURE AND CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Scheepvaartkaai – Vissersstraat, Hasselt
Newly built and renovated industrial premises in the context of reallocation of various business premises around a communal exhibition room, in 4 phases, in collaboration with Stubeco
a2o-architecten
2007–2014
5,000 m²
Phases 1, 2 and 3: delivered – Phase 4: 2014

‘MAASTRICHTERSTEENWEG’ HOUSING
Maastrichtersteenweg, Hasselt
8 apartments with underground car park, in collaboration with Horst-Betrac
Kleine Landeigendom
2007–2008
755 m² living space – 300 m² underground car park
Delivered

EXTENSION OF HOME CARE STORE – MEDIOTHEEK CM
Gouverneur Roppesingel, Hasselt
Extension of home care store, in collaboration with ISB Engineering and Libost-Groep
MSI Vastgoed NV
2007–2010
2,700 m²
Delivered

KTA 2 – ROYAL TECHNICAL COLLEGE HASSELT
Vilderstraat, Hasselt
Building new classrooms with communal room and playgrounds, in collaboration with Libost-Groep
Gemeenschapsonderwijs GO!
2007–2012 – open competition – winner
2,500 m²
Delivered

KTA 3 – ROYAL TECHNICAL COLLEGE HASSELT
Elfde Liniestraat, Hasselt
Newly built bakery school, provided with 6 practical training rooms, including changing rooms and commercial rooms, in collaboration with Libost-Groep
Gemeenschapsonderwijs GO!
2007–2012 – open competition – winner
1,100 m²
Delivered

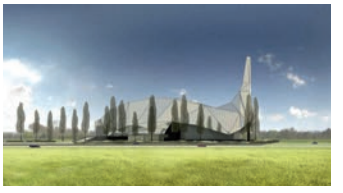
CAW – OFFICES ROZENSTRAAT
Rozenstraat, Hasselt
Renovation of the offices of the Centre for General Welfare in Hasselt, in collaboration with ISB Engineering and Ingenieurskantoor Plessers
CAW Sonar
2007–2013
2,143 m²
In progress

’T GLASPAND RESIDENCE
Frankinstraat, Herentals
Building 7 apartments with garages
Mrs. Lammens
2007–2008
680 m²
Delivered

VDAB SERVICES CENTRE HOUTHALEN
Guldensporenlaan, Houthalen
Building and fitting out the VDAB Services Centre in Houthalen
vzw Volksmacht
2007–2009
550 m²
Delivered

ROYAL MUSEUM FOR CENTRAL AFRICA
Leuvense steenweg, Tervuren
Renovation and new building for the Africa museum in Tervuren, in collaboration with Studio Scarpa, Simoni, Studio Langreca-colonna, Arcadis Gedas, Tecnobrevetti, Equilibri, Studiebureau Monumentenzorg, Architectuuratelier, Atelier Bruckner, Madoc and Latz & Partner
Federal government
2007 – competition – not selected
Competition entry

QATAR EMBASSY
Franklin Rooseveltlaan, Brussels
Design for a new embassy in Brussels
Sheikdom of Qatar
2007 – competition – not selected
2,500 m²
Competition entry



BIONERGA
Centre South, Houthalen
Building an energy plant, in collaboration with L-Groep
Bionerga NV
2007 – on hold – competition – winner
13,500 m²
Building permit applied for

2008

GULDEN BODEM
Luikersteenweg-Tongersesteenweg, Sint-Truiden
Master plan for new urban development with 170 housing units in Sint-Truiden
Liburni Projects
2008–2017
Master plan: 6 ha – 170 housing units – Phase 1: 7,800 m² – 59 housing units
Phase 1: building permit applied for

'VALERIAANSTRAAT ' HOUSING
Valeriaanstraat, Stevoort-Hasselt
21 houses – Phase 1: 12 houses – Phase 2: 9 houses
Kleine Landeigendom
2008–2014
2,714 m²
Phase 1: delivered – Phase 2: building commenced early 2013

DE WAAI
Werft, Geel
Building a party hall and adjacent polyvalent foyer room, in collaboration with de Architectengroep and IRS Studiebureau Depr.
Geel town council
2008–2011 – competition – winner
1,797 m²
Delivered

KASOG – REGINA MUNDI
Collegelaan, Genk
A new school for Regina Mundi in Genk, in collaboration with Technum
Katholiek Secundair Onderwijs Genk (KASOG) – AGION under the supervision of the Flemish government architect
2008–2016 – competition – winner
10,000 m²
Preparations for implementation

KASOG – ART SCHOOL
Collegelaan, Genk
Extension of the Art School in Genk, in collaboration with Technum
Katholiek Secundair Onderwijs Genk (KASOG) – AGION under the supervision of the Flemish government architect
2008–2016 – competition – winner
2,513 m²
Preparations for implementation

PHL – MOTHERS'HOME
Guffenslaan, Hasselt
Restoration of the former Mothers' Home, Building C of the Limburg University College
Limburg University College
2008–2012
Delivered

ANTWERP HAVENHUIS
Siberiastraat, Antwerp
New headquarters for the port authorities, in collaboration with Atelier Kempe Thill, BEG and Marcq & Roba
Antwerp municipal port authorities
2008 – open competition – not selected
16,000 m²
Competition entry

HEILIG HART TECHNICAL COLLEGE HASSELT
Hasselt
Drawing up a master plan and renovation of A and H buildings, teachers' common room and sanitary facilities of the Heilig Hart Technical College Hasselt, in collaboration with Technum
vzw Technisch Onderwijs Bisdom Hasselt
2008–2013
Tender

HUMBOLDT GRAMMAR SCHOOL
Trutzenberg-Kartäuserwall Cologne – D
Designing a music school with a concert hall in Cologne
City of Cologne
2008 – competition – not selected
2,944 m²
Competition entry

2009

FEDERAL POLICE HASSELT
Luikersteenweg, Hasselt
Renovating the existing offices and building new premises, in collaboration with Antea Group
Federal government
2009–2014 – competition – winner
3,388 m² extension
Tender

PPP DE WERFT
Lebonstraat, Palingstraat and Patronaatstraat, Werftzone S4 East and Werftzone S4 West, Geel
Mixed inner-city project (health care cluster (service flats, apartments, …), commercial, hotel, offices, residential, in collaboration with Ontwerpatelier Gebruers-Jannes
Geel town council – De Werft NV
2009–2018
34,500 m² (25,000 m² above ground and 9,500 m² underground)
Preliminary design

FOYER – HASSELT CULTURAL CENTRE
Kunstlaan, Hasselt
Creating a foyer with exhibition facilities, in collaboration with Stubeco
vzw Cultuurcentrum Hasselt
2009–2010
800 m²
Delivered

PPP GHELODROOM
Werft, Geel
Strategic innovation of public areas in Geel-Centre en Geel-West as driving force behind sustainable urban development, in collaboration with Ontwerpatelier Gebruers-Jannes, Libost-Groep and BRO België
Geel town council – THV Democo-DMI
2009 – competition – not selected
10,216 m²
Competition entry

2010

PPP SION
Sion site Lier
Development of 147 houses with underground car park and extension of the city art school, in collaboration with Grontmij
Lier town council – Sion Netezicht NV
2010–2017 – competition – winner
Art school: 850 m² – Houses: 22,000 m² – Underground car park: 8,500 m²
2013: work started on art school and phase 1 housing project – 2015–2017 – phase 2 housing project

PIVA – PROVINCIAL INSTITUTE FOR FOOD ANTWERP
Desguinlaan, Antwerp
Renovating the practical training restaurant and building a new wing for adult education, in collaboration with Ontwerpatelier Gebruers-Jannes en Technum
Antwerp provincial council
2010–2013 – competition – winner
3,264 m²
In progress

SINT-GERARDUS NURSING HOME
Plompaertstraat, Diepenbeek
Building a nursing home for patients suffering from neuromuscular complaints, in collaboration with Peeters-De Belder and TDE
vzw Stijn
2010–2013 – competition, winner
1,390 m²
In progress

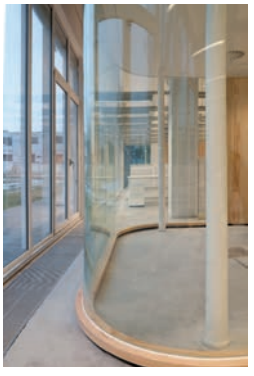
FOEDERER OFFICES
Gouverneur Roppesingel, Hasselt
Renovating and extending offices, in collaboration with V2S and ESA
Foederer
2010–2013
620 m²
In progress

SENTOWER PARK
Speeltuinstraat-Leemkuilstraat, Opglabbeek
Building an equestrian centre with indoor and outdoor rings, horse boarding house and hotel, in collaboration with Nova Zembla (execution)
ES Management
2010 –2013
19,750 m²
In progress

ENERGYVILLE
Science Park, Waterschei-Genk
Designing a sustainable research building for advanced energy technologies, in collaboration with architectenbureau Paul de Ruiter, PHL-Arck and Technum
KU Leuven
2010 – competition – not selected
20,000 m²
Competition entry

KHLIM – BUILDING S
S Block, Diepenbeek Campus
New building for the Department of Trade and Business Administration on the Diepenbeek campus, in collaboration with Establis Roeselare and studiebureau r. boydens
Limburg Catholic University College
2010–2012 – competition – winner
5,000 m²
Delivered

FORTIS TURNHOUT
Everdongenlaan, Turnhout
Restoration and renovation of Private Banking Center Turnhout, in collaboration with studiebureau r. boydens
BNP Paribas Fortis
2010–2011
3,000 m²
Delivered



OFFICES FOR THE HUMO EDITORIAL BOARD
De Magneet, Harensesteenweg, Vilvoorde
Organising the basic office building at the ground floor, for Humo, in collaboration with Gorik Ponette
De Vijver NV
2010
800 m²
Delivered

OFFICES FOR THE WOESTIJNVIS PRODUCTION COMPANY
De Magneet, Harensesteenweg, Vilvoorde
Additional design of the offices on the first floor, in collaboration with Gorik Ponette
De Vijver NV
2010
1,600 m²
Delivered

PPP OOSTMALLE
Lierselei, Oostmalle
Development of the town centre of Malle, in collaboration with De Architecten nv
Malle town council – THV Ontwikkelingscombinatie Westmalle Future (Democo, DMI, Willemen)
2010 – competition – not selected
Competition entry

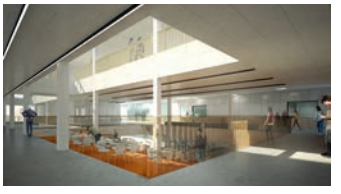
PPP DUNGELHOEF SITE
Dungelhoef site, Lier
Urban development project, in collaboration with De Architecten nv, ELD Partnership and A33
Autonomous department of public works AGB Stedelijk Ontwikkelingsbedrijf
Lier, SOLag – DMI Vastgoed
2010 – competition – not selected
Competition entry

KAAI 24
Voorhavenlaan, Gent
Building 88 housing units, in collaboration with ELD Partnership
AG Stadsontwikkelingsbedrijf Gent
2010 – competition – not selected
7,400 m²
Competition entry

2011

'LUCHTBAL' HOUSING
Luchtbal-Canadalaan-Noorderlaan, Antwerp
Replacing the existing buildings of rented council apartments by new council housing (approx. 110 housing units) and a community centre, in collaboration with Ontwerpatelier Gebruers-Jannes, Establis Roeselare and Arcade
Woonhaven Antwerpen
2011–2016 – competition – winner
11,275 m²
Preliminary design

PPP HAM-KWAADMECHELEN VILLAGE SQUARE
Dorpsstraat-Pater Geversplein, Ham-Kwaadmechelen
The design and building of 41 apartments with underground car park and commercial rooms, in collaboration with We Build
Ham town council – Dorpsplein bvba
2011–2015 – competition – winner
7,500 m²
Building permit applied for



ZOL EDUCATION CAMPUS
Schiepse Bos, Genk
New education campus for the Department of Health Care, in collaboration with Technum
vzw KHLim-vzw Kasog
2011–2015 – competition – winner
9,486 m²
Tender

HIPPODROME
Steylsstraat-Emile Delvastraat, Laken-Brussels
Building apartments with car parks and service flats in Laken
Hippodrome Projects NV
2011–2016
50,070 m²
Building permit applied for

2012

CELLEBROEDERS STUDENT HOUSING
Cellebroedersstraat, Hasselt
Student housing – 40 units and 1 commercial unit
Haumontex NV
2011–2012
2,100 m²
Delivered

CANADASTRAAT HASSELT
Genkersteenweg-Canadastraat, Hasselt
Master plan and architectural design for apartments and houses with underground car park
Jansen Real Estate bvba
2011–2018
Phase 1: 96 housing units: design sketch

UMICORE
Watertorenstraat, Olen
Newly built and renovated administrative building with visitors' centre, in collaboration with studiebureau r. boydens and Grontmij
Umicore
2011 – on hold – competition – winner
5,300 m²
Design sketch

CIPAL
Cipalstraat, Geel
Building the new headquarters of CIPAL in the technology zone, in collaboration with Establis Roeselare and studiebureau r. boydens
Cipal DV
2011–2014 – competition – winner
5,000 m²
Tender

YOUTH HOSTEL – APARTMENTS RUNKST
Spoorwegstraat, Runkst-Hasselt
Design and building of a youth hostel, approx. 46 apartments, 2,300 m² shell and design of the public domain, in collaboration with Antwerpse Bouwwerken, Reynders B & I and Bureau Cleuren-Merken
Hasselt city council – NV Soficom
2011–2012 – competition – not selected
3,460 m²
Competition entry

LIITC LAAKDAL
Nike site, Laakdal
Design of a logistic, innovation, incubation and training centre in Laakdal, in collaboration with Establis Roeselare, studiebureau r. boydens, Bopro and Blasco
IOK – Intercommunal Development Company for the Kempen
2011 – competition – not selected
1,536 m²
Competition entry

VISO HASSELT
Kleine Breemstraat, Hasselt
Design of a school building for Secondary Education, in collaboration with Establis Roeselare and studiebureau r. boydens
DBFM Scholen van Morgen NV – AG Real Estate
COPiD (CO-Production in Development)
2012–2016 – competition – winner
14,000 m²
Preliminary design

BERTEM APARTMENTS
Dorpsstraat, Bertem-Leefdaal
Building 17 apartments and underground car park
Waterpas Projects NV
2012–2015
2,360 m²
Building permit applied for

DEUSJEVOO
Houtparklaan, Genk
Creating an industrial building with studios and caretaker's house, in collaboration with Exact Engineering and Encon
Mine2
2012–2013
3,695 m²
In progress

SHOWROOM AND OFFICES VANDE MOORTEL
Scheldekant, Oudenaarde
Newly built showroom and offices in collaboration with Dirk Martens
Aldinvest NV
2012–2014
Showroom: 1,320 m² – Office building: 1,230 m²
Preliminary design

PPP ACHTER DE KERK
Burgemeester Gerard Bynenslaan, Genk
83 newly built apartments with underground car park and semi-public parking zone (280 parking places)
Genk city council – Cordeel
2012–2015
11,050 m²: 83 apartments and 9,000 m² parking places
Tender

VORMINGPLUS
Cellebroedersstraat, Hasselt
Renovation of the facades and reorganisation of ground floor
Vormingplus Limburg
2012–2013
1,078 m²
In progress

SINT-ODA
Overpelt
Master plan for replacement building for mentally disabled
vzw Stijn
2012 – competition – not selected
2,460 m²
Competition entry

KUL BRUGGE – TER GROENE POORTE CAMPUS
Ter Groene Poorte campus, Brugge
Newly built education and research building in Brugge, in collaboration with Establis Roeselare and studiebureau r. boydens
KU Leuven
2012–… – competition
11,800 m²
Competition entry

1999

EKKELGARDEN MASTER PLAN
Rapertingen, Hasselt
Master plan design for a new residential area in Rapertingen-Hasselt
Hasselt city council and Kolmont Woonprojecten
1999–2003
18 ha – approx. 480 housing units

2000

KERMT VILLAGE SQUARE AND PASSAGE
Kermt centre – Hasselt
Design of public area, village square and Diestersteenweg in Kermt, in collaboration with Libost-Groep
Hasselt city council
2000–2008

2001

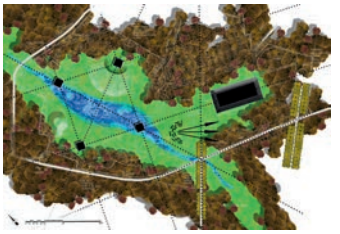
LU INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
Beveren
Competition proposal for volume plan and development of sustainable industrial estate LU Beveren
General Biscuits Belgium
2001 – competition – winner
86 ha

ALKEN-MAES INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
Kontich
Volume plan and development of industrial estate Alken-Maes in Kontich, in collaboration with G. Brutsaert
Alken-Maes Breweries
2001
100 ha

2002

URBAN DEVELOPMENT DESIGN ALKEN CENTRE
Centre of Alken
Infill project, housing and trade
2002–2003
+ 40 housing units

URBAN DEVELOPMENT DESIGN STEVOORT
Stevoort-Hasselt
Residential infill project
VMWS – De Kleine Landeigendom
2002–2003
ca. 40 housing units



PLINIUS
Pliniusbron, Tongeren
View on the development of a site at the Plinius Bron as a museum park in Tongeren
LRM – Tongeren city council – Flanders tourist board
2002 – competition –not selected

HET HAMEL MASTER PLAN
Lummen
Layout plan for a classified castle site
Private commission
2002–2005

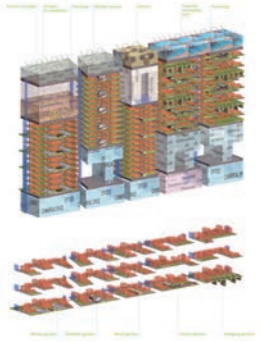
2003

KLOKKEPLEIN
Klokkeplein, Bilzen
Design and creation of an urban square in the centre of Bilzen, in collaboration with Bouwbedrijf Houben
Bilzen town council
2003–2008

RUNKST DICHTERBIJ
Sint-Truidersteenweg, Hasselt
Research design for the intensification of the public pedestrian route between Runkst and the centre of Hasselt
Bouwbedrijf Democo – Kolmont Woonprojecten
2003–2005

URBAN DEVELOPMENT DESIGN GUIGOVEN
Guigoven, Kortessem
Residential infill project
VMSW – De Kleine Landeigendom
2003–2005
ca. 60 housing units

URBAN DEVELOPMENT DESIGN NEERHAREN
Neerharen-Lanaken
Residential infill project
Vlaanderen Bouwt
2003–2005
12 housing units



OSAKA JAPAN
Osaka, Japan
Project for the development of a former railway site in Osaka (Japan), in collaboration with Alain Hinant
2003 – International competition – not selected
18 ha – approx. 480 housing units

SPATIAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN ALKEN CENTRE III
Centre of Alken
Spatial Implementation Plan for infill and reconversion project (housing, trade, recreation and nature) in the former brewery buildings
Alken town council
2003–2007

2004

PPP TIENEN
Lunevillelaan, Tienen
Competition project for council housing
PPP Wonen 2003 – Perceel Vlaams-Brabant (Flemish government)
2004 – competition – not selected

HASPENGOUW HERITAGE PORTAL
Haspengouw, Limburg
Visual, spatial interpretation of the concept of heritage portal, within the framework of the Haspengouw master plan
Limburg provincial council
2004

SPATIAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN KERKVELD
Meeswijk, Maasmechelen
Urban development design and Spatial Implementation Plan for a housing infill project in the centre of Meeswijk
Maasmechelen town council – VMSW Kleine Landeigendom
2004–2010
5 ha – 77 housing units

MASTER PLAN FOR MINING SLAG HEAP WINTERSLAG
Mining slag heap, Winterslag-Genk
Master plan for the transformation of the Winterslag slag heap into an urban and recreational attraction, in collaboration with Grontmij Limburg
Genk city council
2004 – competition – not selected

CLARISSEN MASTER PLAN
Guffenslaan, Hasselt
Study into the spatial development opportunities at the site of the former convent of the Order of St. Clare
Hasselt diocese
2004

2005

GENK CITY SQUARE
Centre of Genk
Design for a new city square for Genk, in collaboration with Arcadis Gedas
Genk city council
2005–2010

URBAN DEVELOPMENT DESIGN BERINGEN
Molenveld, Beringen
Housing extension project in Beringen
VMSW Vooruitzien Beringen
2005–2008
1,7 ha (site), 3,1 ha (study area) – 40 housing units

RESIDENTIAL ALLOTMENT, HEPPEN
Heidestraat, Heppen
Design for a residential allotment in Heppen
VMSW Vooruitzien
2005–2010
8 housing units

GROOTVELDBOS HOUTHALEN
Centre of Houthalen
Design for an infill project in the centre of Houthalen
Belvi nv
2005
5,28 ha – ca. 200 housing units

RESIDENTIAL ALLOTMENT, GODSHEIDE
Borggravevijers, Godsheide-Hasselt
Design and creation of application file for residential allotment in Hasselt
AP&D nv – nv Kempenland
2005–2008
4,3 ha – 58 housing units

N3 VISUAL TARGET STUDY
N3 between Leuven and Tienen
Visual target study for the N3 between Leuven and Tienen, in collaboration with Grontmij
AWV Vlaams-Brabant
2005

2006

BLAUWE BOULEVARD MASTER PLAN
Canal basin, Hasselt
Master plan for the public domain of the Blauwe Boulevard in Hasselt and development of a pilot project, in collaboration with SumProject and Arcadis Gedas
Hasselt city council
2006

STALEN HEIDE
Zwartberg-Genk
Council housing project, in collaboration with OMGEVING
Genk city council
2006 – competition – not selected

RESIDENTIAL ALLOTMENT, BERINGEN
Kruisbaan, Beringen
Design and creation of application file for residential allotment in Beringen
AP&D, Imwo Invest nv & Liburni nv
2006–2010
9,87 ha – 162 housing units

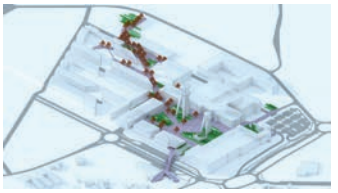
KERMETA
Kermt, Hasselt
Design for a residential infill project in the centre of Kermt
Dethier nv
2006
0,7 ha – approx. 40 housing units

CEDERPARK
Runkst-Hasselt
Typological studies into sustainable compression within an allotment model
Extensa
2006

URBAN DEVELOPMENT DESIGN
Neerharen
Dikke Hagestraat, Neerharen
Residential extension project
Lanaken town council
2006–2009
4,5 ha – 63 housing units

PROVINCIAL SPATIAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, EISDEN-LANKLAAR
Maasmechelen–Dilsen-Stokkem
Provincial Spatial Implementation Plan for tourist recreation project in Eisden-Lanklaar, in collaboration with SumProject and BDB
Limburg provincial council
2006–

TURNHOUT CENTRE
Grote Markt, Turnhout
Design for the Grote Markt in Turnhout, in collaboration with AAA
Turnhout city council
2006 – competition – not selected



C-MINE SQUARE
C-Mine site, Winterslag-Genk
Competition proposal for the central square at the C-Mine site in Winterslag, in collaboration with Arcadis Gedas
Genk city council
2006 – competition – not selected

2007

RESIDENTIAL ALLOTMENT, ALKEN
Langveld, Alken
Planning programme
VMSW Kleine Landeigendom
2007

BOCHOLT PRESBYTERY
Bocholt
Planning programme for the surroundings of the presbytery in the centre of Bocholt
Bocholt town council
2007–2008

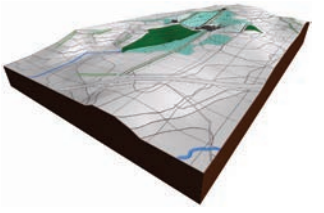
PLAN FOR THE CENTRE OF SCHERPENHEUVEL
Centre of Scherpenheuvel
Reorganisation of the public domain
Scherpenheuvel town council

2008

GULDEN BODEM
Sint-Truiden
Urban development design for a new urban development
Liburni Projects
2008–2010
6,05 ha – 170 housing units

TIENEN STATION DISTRICT
Station district, Tienen
Urban development design, in collaboration with OMGEVING amd AT-Osborne
Vlaams-Brabant provincial council
2008–2011 – competition – winner

OUD-DILSEN
Centre of Oud-Dilsen
Competition proposal for a housing infill project in Oud-Dilsen, in collaboration with Matexi
Dilsen-Stokkem town council
2008 – competition – not selected



SPATIAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR BAILIFF'S HOUSE
Kasteelstraat, Bilzen
Spatial Implementation Plan for a new use of the former Bailiff's house of castle domain Alden Biesen into living accommodation
Bilzen town council
2008–2011

SLEDDERLO MASTER PLAN
Sledderlo, Genk
Master plan for Groot-Sledderlo, in collaboration with SumResearch
Genk city council
2008 – open competition – not selected

2009

SPATIAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN,
ADELBERGPARK – DORP
Centre of Lommel
Spatial view and guideline for the design of individual projects
Lommel town council
2008–2010

DE NAYER CAMPUS
J. De Nayerlaan, Sint-Katelijne-Waver
Layout of a master plan for De Nayer campus and construction of a technical building
LUCA School of Arts, in collaboration with KU Leuven
2009 – open competition – not selected

2010

RESIDENTIAL ALLOTMENT, GODSHEIDE
Kapelveld, Godsheide
Design and layout of application file for residential allotment, in collaboration with Geosted
Haskoning
2009–2010
9,5 ha – 140 housing units

KCST SCHOOLS MASTER PLAN
SINT-TRUIDEN
Sint-Truiden
Research design
Sint-Truiden diocese
2010

LAYOUT OF CITY CENTRE STREETS
Centre of Genk
Reorganisation of streets in the centre, Phase 2 in Genk, in collaboration with Arcadis Belgium
Genk city council
2010–2013

2012

MOUTERIJPAD MASTER PLAN
Mouterijpad, Hasselt
Urban infill project (park and approx. 180 housing units)
Private client
2012–…
ca. 180 housing units

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Publishing this book was a long-cherished wish of a2o's. Now, the time was ripe: throughout the years, a2o has grown into a firm with a clearly defined identity. The search for this identity was by no means simple. Letting the concept of collaboration prevail over individuality, was a project that required time and patience. A process of vulnerability, interaction and openness.

Also a process of revolt, of stubborn perseverance. Resisting the model of unbridled growth. For many, this resistance seemed foolish. After all, it was like swimming against the tide. For us, happiness is the excitement that we experience when we have made a new '*connection*' in our design explorations. Or, as we can deduce from Michael Foley's words in his book '*The Age of Absurdity*': In the case of such an experience, everything is richer, stranger and more interesting. The eye sees more clearly, the mind thinks more keenly, the heart feels more strongly.

Then we don't need sexy new buildings that look as though they are stretching, leaning, twisting, turning, falling apart, about to burst into sail, about to take off, already in flight or even dancing. They are simply allowed to be there.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the successful completion of this project, from the early days until today. Firstly, all contributors. But also, and not in the last place, our clients, colleagues, consultancies and contractors with whom we have the pleasure of working together.

a2o thanks all present and former employees who worked on what has become an impressive list of projects:

(in alphabetical order) Kristien Ballet, Jo Belen, Mannfred Benditz, Gie Bleukx, Jan Bloemen, Johan Bobbaers, Françoise Boniver, Sarah Buntinx, Kris Buysmans, Ruth Byloos, Stéphanie Collier, Goele Cops, Suzy Coussée, Jef De Bièvre, Maarten De Cock, Bart de Lege, Danny Deferm, Cindy Degeling, Marie-Jeanne Deheuy, Brecht Delwiche, Karen Dirickx, Michèle Dirix, Huub Donkers, François du Toit, Bert Elsen, Stefaan Evers, Franca Faggio del Giglio, Fé Feys, Jo François, Toon Geusens, David Grauls, Annelies Hegge, Veronique Henderix, Fréderique Hermans, Margareth Ho, Roel Hofkens, Annemie Hören, Bart Hoylaerts, Petra Jacquet, Ronald Janssens, Michel Janssens, Joeri Jeurissen, Jan Kemper, Hans Kenis, Terence Lee, Christian Lemmens, Mieke Maes, Martine Maris, An Martens, Geert Martens, Silvia Mertens, Dimitri Minten, Killian Nekeman, Karien Paulissen, Michel Paszewski, Massimo Pignanelli, Katleen Pluymers, Gitte Put, Goedele Pyncket, Altin Ramabaja, Kirsten Reck, Kristof Ribus, Bram Rumbaut, Luc Santermans, Georg Schmidthals, Sabine Schonkeren, Ruud Smeelen, Nino Smeets, Kees Oskam, Wout Sorgeloos, Stefanie Thijs, Christoph Thys, Vicent Tornero Segura, Erwin Vaes, Taco van de Berg, Loren Van Lishout, Steven Van Esser, An Van Roosbroeck, Shanna Van Schaeybroeck, Stefaan Van Steen, Elena van Werkhoven, Tania Vandenbroucke, Katrien Vanderleyden, Tinne Vandeven, Tim Vekemans, Danny Verboon, Dieter Verdoodt, Joep Verheijen, Eva Vervoort, Percijn Vlaming, Thomas Vundelinckx, Peggy Winkels, Anne Wijnants.

a2o would very much like to thank everyone who has been involved in the realisation of this book, in particular: MER. Paper Kunsthalle, Aurelie Daems, Eline Dehullu, Angelique Campens, Lieven van der Stock, Clara Vanmuysen, Ludo Schouterden, Filip Leemans, Niels Donckers, Marc Scheepers, Bram Rumbaut, Elise Vanhees, André Berthels, Phillipe van Gelooven, Brecht Delwiche, Marie-Jeanne Deheuye, Michael Winters en Paul Nekeman.

This book could only be made because of the great commitment of both the editor and the designer: Hein Smedts and Studio Luc Derycke. The hours we worked on this book together, became increasingly pleasant and creative moments. For this we are grateful.

We want to thank Ingrid, Jo and Luc for their continued efforts to make a2o an exciting place to be.

De Silo – poort 2
Vissersstraat 2
B-3500 Hasselt

PUBLISHER
MER. Paper Kunsthalle
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B-9000 Gent

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ISBN EN: 9789490693879
D/2013/7852/154

www.merpaperkunsthalle.org
www.a2o.be

This book is made possible
by the financial support of:

Belfius Bank Hasselt
Bulvano NV
Democo NV
Driesen NV
Heijmans NV
Houben NV
NV Zumtobel Lighting S.A.
Reynaers Aluminium BV
Reynders B&I NV
Tarkett France Belux SAS
The Heating Company bvba
Vande Moortel NV
XatraX NV

Belgium