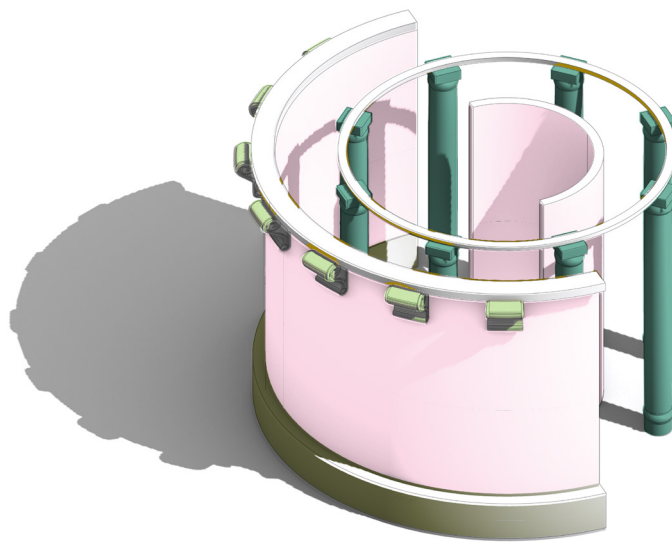# RE-ACCESSING

Recreating The Corner Tower As Public Building Through Methods Of Re-enactment

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RE-ACCESSING

Recreating The Corner Tower As Public Building Through Methods Of Re-enactment

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ABSTRACT

The thesis explores the corner tower as a prominent but inaccessible part of the urban fabric. The elaborate ornamentality that this typology represents resembles the monument. But unlike the monument the corner tower is private, accessible to the public only as a distant ornament. The private nature of the corner tower reduces it to an anonymous object. Built as a symbol of status it is now a historical remnant without obvious purpose, its visual identity unquestioned and spatial experience unexplored.

The project brings the corner tower to ground level, altered into an installation focusing both on visual identity and spatial experience. The theory of re-enactment as explanation for architectural development is applied in a series of methods to document and gradually alter the visual identity of the corner tower. Through a new architectural work, the symbolic meaning as well as the possibilities of the corner tower is presented.

The aim of the thesis is to explore the methods related to architectural re-enactment by reinterpreting the visual and spatial experience of the corner towers in a new work. The question explored in the thesis is; How can values and meanings be transferred from an original to a new work of architecture through methods of re-enactment?

A collection of corner towers in central Gothenburg is through the methods of quotation, paraphrase and spoliation documented, altered and repurposed in a new design project. Their spatial possibilities are elaborated and their decorative elements are reinterpreted through experimental design.

The design project consists of different installations, connected to the visual and symbolic values of the corner towers. The corner tower has through the methods of re-enactment been reinterpreted into a fortress, a series of follies and a watchtower. All three typologies are contesting the inaccessible nature of the corner towers.

Translated to a new context, the designs represent a fragment of the architecture history of Gothenburg. The focus is on the spatial possibilities of the corner tower as well as its ornamental nature. The result is a re-enactment of the corner tower, radically changed but still connected to the same visual identity that inspired it.

PROLOGUE

How can new architecture relate to what is already existing? Can the story of the old be told through the new, and if so, how?

This thesis takes its starting points in two different places. It is an exploration of a fragment of architectural history, the corner towers that were a common addition in the development of Gothenburg in the late 19th century.

The second starting point is the theory of re-enactment. Re-enactment explains the phenomenon of how architecture repeats, recreates and references itself. The theory of re-enactment can be applied to, and explain, both the frequency and the visual and symbolic language of the corner towers. Connecting the theory to strategies on referencing architecture opens a way to actively work with re-enactment.

The aim of this thesis is to apply the theory of re-enactment to the corner towers as subject matter. First, in order to create an understanding of their purpose as architectural object and space. Second, as a strategy to create a new architectural work that references the visual and symbolic identity of the corner towers.

Where lies the identity of a work of architecture? Can that identity be borrowed and manipulated to work as a point of reference for a new work. The research in this thesis is not exploring the identity of a single corner towers, but rather searching for the identity of the corner tower as phenomenon. The thesis both explores a fragment of architectural history and methods for using historical architecture as reference.

Exploring and documenting the corner towers from the outside, at street level allows the focus to be on perception, experience and symbolic value as well as their constructive reality. It allows for fiction to blend with reality and this fiction can lay the foundation for new creative work.

The methods of quotation, paraphrase and spoliation are chosen and developed to connect to the theory of re-enactment. They are all in line with re-enactments explanation of gradual alteration. The thesis explores how far alteration can be taken without breaking the connection in visual identity.

RE-ENACTMENT

In Make it Real - Architecture as Enactment, Jacob (2012) explains re-enactment with the example of the ancient Greek wooden temple being replaced with stone construction. The triglyphs, part of the Doric frieze, have no purpose in the stone temple but have remained as a representation, or reenactment, of the original wooden end beams.

In the same way, the wooden pegs that were needed to stabilise timber construction have been translated to stone guttae, a visual trace of an outdated function. Jacob (2012) claims that; "Through the unfolding of architectural history we see culturally, technologically or programmatically redundant fragments of architecture re-enacted. In each case, this re-enactment of a pre-existing image is a radical new iteration." (p.2) This introduces the idea of re-enactment as the relationship between the old and the new, the relationship between representation of the existing and the creation of something new.

Jacob (2012) gives two different examples on how to understand re-enactment. First, it can be understood as theatrical acting, "...by performing a visual vocabulary as though it were a script and a costume." (p.9) Jacob claims that "architecture performs through its representational, scenographic and symbolic qualities, which dramatise and communicate its narrative" (p.9)

Second, enactment is also the passing of a law. Jacob argues that architecture has its own legislative qualities. "Intentionally or not, architecture is the physical manifestation of societal will, an enactment of the intentions of government, policy, capital, societal convention and so on." (p.9). These examples of enactment applied to architecture shows how architecture impacts the physical reality of our everyday lives, both as a symbol but also in how "architecture permits and prevents the ways in which we use space". (p.9)

Myth and reality

In an attempt to explain the simultaneously mythical and real nature of architecture Jacob (2012) retell an anecdote by Woody Allen about the Great Roe; a mythical beast with the head of a lion and the body of a lion but not the same lion. "The Great Roe... embodies a strange and absurd condition where the conditions of fiction and reality are contained within the same physical entity." (p.1)

Jacob (2012) argues that it is impossible to separate fiction from reality in the Great Roe, there is no way of knowing which part is real and which part is myth. He then claims that architecture works in the same way.

> ...architecture, like the Great Roe, is simultaneously mythical and real. Mythical, in the sense that it is the invention of the society that creates it... Real, in the sense that it is the landscape that we inhabit. The perfect registration between these two states provides architecture with its own supernatural power: its prosaic appearance cloaks its mythic, imaginative origins entirely.
>
> *(p.1)*

He goes on to explain that the mythological parts of the world are our ideas and ideologies, "...the things we write, draw, say and think." (p.7)
In contrast to this, the real parts of the world are "...the stuff that we can touch, weigh, measure in an empirical manner - the physical facts of our environment." (p. 7)

What we draw is mythological and what we can touch and measure is real. Architecture, then, is clearly both. It starts as an idea, a drawing and grows into physical reality from this mythical origin. In his text The Great Roe, Jacob (2017) develops the relationship of architecture as object and architecture as drawing;

> If we imagine the drawing as a form of document, we can place it as both a form of documentation of something and as information that allows the production of something. Here both the drawing and the building are architectural information; information realized in different states.
>
> *(p.183)*

The building is derived from one set of information and in itself turns that information into reality. As Jacob (2012) claims in Make it Real;

> It falls to architecture to make the imaginary real. Architecture, real in its physical presence, is at the same time also an imaginary thing... The actualisation of the imaginary into the real is architecture's fundamental mode, its inescapale condition as medium.
>
> *(p.7)*

Repetition and trend

Jacob (2012) claims that architectures ability to create physical reality from myth works to bring architectural history into the present. "In its freewheeling rewriting of the past, architecture uses history as a slingshot into the future. It endlessly re-stages itself, self-consciously folding its own past into its future, rewriting its own myth into its very fabric." (p.3)

But architecture also repeats the existing architecture to make an argument for its own existence;

> At the same time it legitimises its new propositions by embedding them within lineages of existing languages, materials and typologies. The re-enactment's repetition of the existing helps to naturalise the shock of the new, declaring itself an inevitable product of historical circumstance. Architecture, then, mythologises its own creation while making a historical argument for itself and proposing a future world – all within the substance of its own body.
>
> *(p.3)*

This relationship between the existing and the new might explain how an architectural style or trend emerges. New architecture makes an argument for itself by repeating the existing and, Jacob (2012) claims that;

> This rhythmic repetition across architecture's surface and through its body generates a hypnotic effect. Once may be exceptional, twice is coincidence, three or more and the serial nature of architecture begins to operate, each iteration reinforcing its fabrication of reality, its manufacture of the commonplace.
>
> *(p. 14)*

Jacob (2012) calls this effect *mimetic hypnosis*, "It's real because it's everywhere, its endless repetition hypnotises us into seeing it as a natural truth." (p. 13)

Repetition and radical change

Although re-enactment can be described as a repetition of existing architecture in the creation of the new, it is concerned with change and development from the existing as well. In The Great Roe, Jacob (2017) says that;

> At any given time it (architecture) projects its historical situation – the great teeming mass of narratives that prefigured its existence – into the contemporary world. And in doing so it fundamentally rewrites that history, splicing and sewing the narratives together to make a radical new proposition for the future.
>
> *(p.179)*

According to Jacob (2012), the task of repetition in itself can lead to radical change;

> The tongue-twister, for example, by juxtaposing similar-sounding words and then demanding their speedy repetition, delivers a radical loss of fidelity to the original as the words collapse into noise. Repetition, then, does not necessarily condemn us to the production of direct simulations, but can be a method by which radical change is achieved.
>
> *(p.14)*

Re-enactment and methods of reference

Re-enactment is explained as a phenomenon through which architecture repeats, re-writes or changes itself. The past is written into the future and the ever-changing narrative is legitimized by the physical reality of architecture. Jacob (2012) writes about how fragments are taken from their context and used as strategies in the creation of something new;

> We could see architecture's re-enactment of history in the present as a kind of anachronic radicalism. Here, fragments of history are sucked out of their chronological order, emptied of their historical context, to make them available as devices, strategies, images and forms that can be piped full of other narratives and re-tasked to perform with alternative intent. These re-formed references, at once familiar and made strange, can then be deployed to validate and manifest a version of the present. Through re-enactment, architecture rewrites itself, making fictions a part of the real landscape that surrounds us.
>
> *(p. 3)*

The question remains how the architect can use these fragments of history as devices, strategies, etc. What are the methods for the architect to make architecture rewrite itself?

Sam Jacob Studio - One thing after another
2016

This project was commissioned by Sto Werkstatt for the Clerkenwell Design Week. The projects starts with an original object, a garden shed, that has been 3d-scanned and reproduced in a larger scale. Placed inside the original shed is another replica, this one in a smaller scale.

The purpose of the project is, according to Jacob, (2017) to try the possibilities of 3d-scanning and digital fabrication.The project is *"...exploring the inputs and outputs of information between digital and physical worlds."* It is also a comment on originality and replica, and how architecture gets reproduced from referent to reference. The project questions the state of reality of the replica. Jacob (2016) emphasizes the relationship of the different versions in terms of originality;

Arranged one inside the other, the array of sheds within shed from the outer enlarged version through the original, then to a smaller edition inside. Is this the same building inside and outside of itself? Are they digital reflections forward and backwards?

With regards of the information collected from the scanned original, the new versions are perfect replicas. Upon production the scale and material are transformed, *"...the original building is both replicated and made different."* The placement, as the title of the project says, one after another, makes the different versions question the reality of the others.

Sam Jacob Studio - Pasticcio Tower
2017

The project was realised for the 2017 Chicago Biennal. It is directly concerned with using past architecture as reference for a new work. Jacob (2017) explains that *"the tower is composed of varied architectural references fused into a new whole: A new kind of tower made out of fragments of history."*

The project is the product of two architectural references. First, Adolf Loos' Doric column, an unbuilt competition proposal from 1922, remarkable in that the proposal was an object, rather than a building. It consisted of a single column, scaled to the proportion of a tower. Second, the Tribune Tower designed by John Howells and Raymond Hood, *"or specifically the fragments of other buildings– architectural relics of historic, significant or curious significance – embedded in it."*

The tower is at the same time a new building and a combined inventory of references collected from the Tribune Tower. The project is described as *"using the Tribune's fragments as an architectural reference library, stacking each piece like an architectural game of Exquisite Corpse."*

The project illustrates the connection from the stock of existing architecture to the creation of new architectural works, how the past projects itself into the future. Jacob (2017) claims that *"...architecture is not something that we create out of thin air but something that already exists, just waiting for us to discover it."*

QUOTATION

Quotation is a linguistic term meaning a direct replication of a written text or spoken word. Within the field of architecture, the term is understood as a design strategy. Elizabeth Keslacy writes in her paper Avant-Quotation (2017) that *"Quotation is part of a constellation of borrowed terms that we use to understand modes of reference in architecture, including citation, allusion, paraphrase, parody, pastiche and copy."* (p.290)

Pointing out that quotation is a term borrowed from the studies of language, she elaborates on the difficulties concerned with applying quotation on architecture and visual arts. Whereas the purpose of a textual quotation according to Keslacy (2017) is to take a part of material and *"repeat it, unaltered but recontextualised"* (p.290), quotation as architectural strategy is not as clear in its function.

> *...The form of a textual quotation – i.e. written language – is always perfectly preserved from origin to copy. A quote is the perfect reproduction of pure content, and admits no deviation. In contrast, form and content is not nearly so neatly separable in architecture and other visuo-formal media. Indeed, the form and the material of media are often central to the content that an element or a building can be said to have.*
> (p.295)

Possibilities and limitations of quotation

In Architectural Doppelgängers, Inez Weizman (2012) writes how the LIDAR laser scanner has the possibility to record a building down to a fraction of a millimetre. Combined with the technology of 3d-printing, she argues that *"...there now seems to be the very real possibility that a building – any building – can be scanned and then remade as a perfect mirror of itself."*(p.19)

However, Weizman claims that even with the technology of the LIDAR, the perfect copy is by definition impossible. She refers to Walter Benjamin, saying that a replica is lacking due to its removal from the original's placement in time and space. Furthermore, even if it were possible through technological advances to create a building that it a *"mirror of itself"*, there is still the question of authorship that remains unresolved. Keslacy (2017) raises the issue of authorship in architecture. A quotation must acknowledge its source. While a textual quote has its origin with an individual author this does not apply as easily to architecture;

"The question of authorship is infinitely more complex in architecture, owing to shared styles and codified languages, the proliferation of mass-produced elements, the increased engagement with vernacular forms, understood to be unauthored, and the difficulty in attributing a particular form of detail to an individual architect or built work for all but the connoisseur or specialist."

(p.295)

Quotation as architectural strategy

The technology exists to perform the first step of an architectural quotation, to gather exact information about the original. However, as Keslacy points out;

> *To repeat a form in a different material, at a different scale, surrounded by different elements or in a new context is to perform a different act than the exact repitition required by the practice of quotation.*
> (p.295)

Quotation implies a perfect replica. However, even in the attempt of perfect replication, material, scale and location will be altered. Quotation as strategy is flawed. Keslacy also makes a comment about a intentional alteration of the source material in asking, *"...what does it mean to render a Doric column in chrome?"* (p.295). Perhaps a distinction should be made between accidental and intentional alterations and the strategies of (flawed) quotation and paraphrase.

Quotation, documentation and recreation

In The Great Roe (2017), Jacob writes that;

> *If we imagine the drawing as a form of document, we can place it both as a form of documentation of something and as information that allows the production of something. Here both the drawing and the building are architectural information; information realized in different states.*
> (p.183)

Here, both drawing and building are understood as information. If quotation is to be understood as replication regardless of medium, this should include replications such as photography and even the documentational drawing.
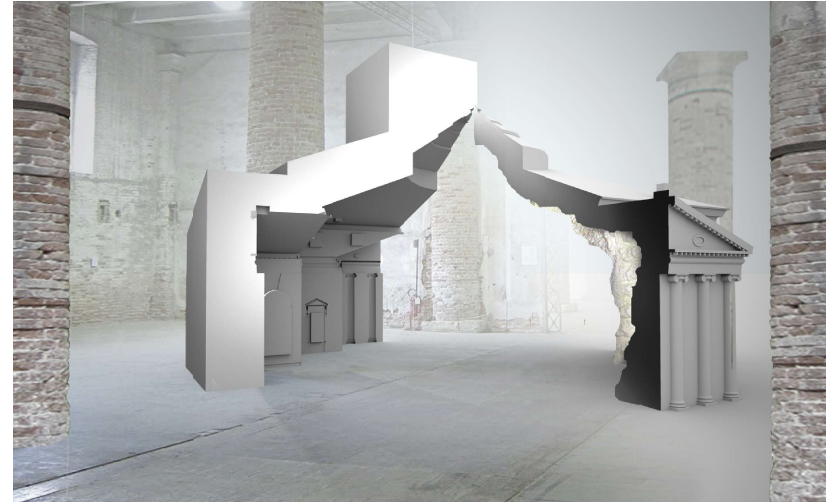

Figure 3. Installation view, The Museum of Copying (Jacob 2012). Reprinted with permission.

FAT - Villa Rotunda Redux
2012

This was part of an installation on copying at the 2012 Venice Architecture Biennale, Basulto (2012) describes it as *"a five meter high facsimile of Palladio's Villa Rotunda that explores the Villa as both a subject and object of architectural copying."*

The process of reproduction is described in an article on Divisare.com (2012). A quarter of the building is reproduced in a CNC-cut mould and a spray-foam cast is taken from the mould. The two reproductions are then arranged opposite eachother to form the structure of a building;

> *The cast and mould are arranged as an installation, displaying the process of fabrication as well as the qualities of positive and negative, of interior and exterior and the abstractions and fidelities of the original Villa, set one against the other.*

The project makes a comment on copying as a creative act, the Villa Rotunda chosen for its history of already generating several imitations. In an article by Frearson (2012), director of FAT, Sam Jacob is quoted saying that;

There is a history of copies of the Villa Rotunda that have been important staging posts for architectural culture. We hope to extend this history and explore how copying something is, strangely, a way of inventing new forms of architecture.

This installation is at once copy, documentation of an original architectural work and an original work in its own right.

As an exhibition piece, rather than a part of the built environment of a city, the issue of authorship is addressed. Within this setting, the source is acknowledged and the connection to the architectural source is an important part of the identity and meaning of the work.

This project shows a way of documenting an architectural work through the method of creating a replica. There are no intentional alterations made to the source material and the differences in replica in relation to original are the results of the methods of documentation and replication.

PARAPHRASE

Paraphrase, as well as quotation, is a term borrowed from linguistics. However, it differs from quotation. While quotation is understood as an exact replica of the original, the paraphrase alters the original, extracts its meaning but expresses it in new words. It is a rephrasing, an alteration of the original form. Still, however, the content is kept true to the identity of the original.

An explanation is given by Leth (2023) in his article The Possibility of Paraphrase;

> Paraphrase... does not render the whole meaning or the full effect of the original formulation, nor is it meant to replace it. It lays only claim to bringing out an implicit and essential aspect of the meaning of the original formulation as it appears in the text.
>
> (p. 493)

Leth's article concerns the use of paraphrase in poetry but can be applied to architecture as well. In the description of an exhibition on Paraphrase, Mautner (2016) writes that paraphrase is;

> ...an artistic dialogue that is located somewhere between transcription, variation, perception, and improvisation. Almost every form of art is actually a paraphrase. As a rule, an artwork is not created without a basis on a model; it is situated within an artistic tradition.

This quote explains the higher degree of liberty in the practice of paraphrasing compared to quotation. This less rigid strategy might be easier translated from its origin in linguistics to the practices of art and architecture.

Possibilities and limitations of paraphrase

Both Leth and Mautner's quotes implies that paraphrase is more than just documentation or replication of a source material, it is also a method of commentary and re-interpretation.

Looking back at Keslacy's (2017) reservations about quotation as architectural strategy, paraphrase as strategy does not encounter the same difficulties. While both intentional and unintentional alterations from the original work, such as a change of scale or material, results in a flawed quotation, selection and translation are inherent in the practice of paraphrase.

Paraphrase as architectural strategy

The questions of authorship raised by Keslacy still remains unresolved within the strategy of paraphrasing. This might be resolved differently depending on what the original work to be paraphrased is. If, as Mautner claims, all art is paraphrase because of its connection to an artistic tradition, perhaps it is permissible to recreate a Doric column in chrome, as exemplified by Keslacy. However, if the source material paraphrased is a singular work of architecture rather than an architectural language or tradition, perhaps a more careful strategy of paraphrasing is required. In Leth's words, to bring out an essential aspect of the original, and in doing so keeping the visual cue of original authorship.

Looking at paraphrasing as an artistic or architectural strategy, there are clear similarities to Jacob's theory on re-enactment. As Matuner (2016) argues, a work of art can as a rule be traced to an artistic tradition. If architecture *"end-lessly re-stages itself"*, in Jacobs terms, surely this can be understood as an artistic paraphrase, a relationship to past works represented in the new.

Paraphrase and radical change

Jacob (2012) writes that repitition serves to cement ideas. Paraphrase, situated in, and perpetuating an artistic tradition, works to repeat ideas and develop artistic or architectural languages. But according to Jacob repetition can also generate radical change. The strategy of paraphrase means re-formulating and re-interpreting an original work. While an initial act of paraphrasing still relates to, and in some measure reproduces, the meaning and appearance of the original, a series of small deviations from the source material can eventually lead to radical change.

Charles Moore - Piazza D'Italia 1978

Piazza D'Italia, according to Brake (2015) an icon of postmodern architecture, is a public place in New Orleans. It was meant as a memorial to the Italian citizens of New Orleans. Brake (2015) writes that *"It was a monument to the achievements of Italians, so it references Italian culture directly – the country's architecture, urbanism, and geography are all represented."*

In his essay on Piazza D'Italia, Furmansky (2024) calls the project a *"retro-futuristic portrait"* and gives an account on the alterations, or paraphrases, Moore has developed from classical architecture;

> Ionic orders were hollowed out to accommodate piping and fountain manifolds that flow into the scaled-down Adriatic Sea below. Corinthian orders were to be adorned with leaves rendered spectacularly in illuminated neon gas that cast the Italian peninsula in a soft, polychromatic glow.

Keslacy (2017) describes Moores strategy as a *"...gaming with the classical language"* in that he *"referenced triumphal arches, Roman fountains, and the classical orders, rendering them in neon,* stainless steel, and water jets." (p.290) The project explicitly references a variety of classical architecture. The intentional alterations made to the classical language as source material can be described through the strategy of paraphrase. The alterations are a dialogue with the original, a translation of material and composition that still visually relates to the original.

SPOLIATION

The general understanding of spolia is as the removal of an (architectural) object from one context and applied to another. The most common case of spolia is the insertion of ruins or remains from demolished buildings into new buildings. In Reuse Value, Kinney (2011) offers an explanation of the action of spoliation in that it *"... entails a forcible transfer of ownership. The spoliated object... is denuded of its portable assets... and the assets – the spolia – are taken as booty or salvaged." (p.4)*

However, there are more ways of understanding spolia than as the physical removal of objects. Kinney (2011) explains the terms spolia in se and spolia in re coined by Richard Brilliant;

Richard Brilliant's aphoristic distinction between spolia in se and spolia in re expanded the field of spolia from material (in se) to virtual (in re) objects. Although Brilliant coined the phrase specifically to describe the 'reuse' of an older style in third-century Roman reliefs, spolia in re invites application to other forms of non-physical taking-over, such as quotation and reproduction.

(p.2)

Possibilities and limitations of spoliation

Brilliant (2011) explains the strategy of spolia as the incorporation of a work of art or a fragment of art in a new context, either by physically removing it from its original context or by replicating an original and adding it to a new context. *"In effect, spoliation constitutes a form of identity theft, because the identity of the borrowed original in whatever form taken retains some associative value, even if only in the visual authority of its imagery." (p. 168)*

Spolia in re, then, is closely connected to quotation of architecture. As pointed out by Kinney (2011), spolia in re, just as quotation faces the sensitive question of authorship;

Although the taking of spolia in re does not harm their original context – on the contrary... 'metaphorical' taking by citation leaves the primary context intact and tends to elevate its stature – it can involve theft of authorship. Plagiarism is the limit case in which quotation turns from the respectful ascription of authority into plunder.

(p.5)

Spoliation as architectural strategy

Brilliant (2011) claims that spolia in architecture has gained popularity and explain that a reason for this can be because of an interest of exploring the ornament of the past rather than creating a new language of ornamentation;

Contemporary architecture – that is, buildings of the last twenty or thirty years – shows an increasing interest in the reuse of architectural pieces...This phenomenon may be explained, on the one hand, by a search for a new ornament, and on the other hand, by a new interest in place. Although various tendencies in contemporary architecture betray a new interest in ornament, the modernist polemic against ornament continues to exercise an influence. In this sense, spolia present a welcome opportunity to exploit a wealth of formal accents without having to develop one's own decorative vocabulary.

(p.223)

This explains the use of spoliation as concerned with the visual identity and value of the spoliated object or motif. Both spolia in se and spolia in re can be used as strategy to incorporate a historical language of architecture in new works.

Spoliation and context

Spoliation entails a change of context, both temporal and spatial. Brilliant (2011) writes that *"spoliation reintroduces the past and the 'other' into the present..." (p.168)*. Similar to this, Meier writes in a chapter in Reuse Value (2011) that *"the spolia are meant to relieve the shock of the new..." (p.229)*. Both these statements are reminiscent of Jacobs statement that architecture folds its past into the present.

Spolia relates the history of the old in the context of the new. In terms of spatial context, Meier (in Resue Value, 2011) describes two different methods of spolia. One is a reconstructivist version where spolia is reinstated in their original version, such as in the restoration of the Frauenkirche in Dresden. The other he calls a deconstructivist practice where spolia is integrated in a new work in a formally unusual way that "testifies to an unorthodox conception of history." (p.229) This shows how the spatial composition of spolia can be used to tell different stories in relation to the temporal context.

Hild und K - Klostergarten Lehel
2009

The project is a monastery building in Munich, transformed to a residential complex. The stone window arches that were previously lining the first floor windows were removed from the demolished original building and placed in new locations in the new building.

Meier (in Reuse Value, 2011) presents a principle of spolia saying that the preserved original parts of a demolished building should be reintroduced in the new architecture to give a connection to the history of the place. He gives the example of Klostergarten Lehel, where the Neo-Romanesque windows of the original building have been reintegrated in the new facade. *"They give the impression that they have always been there, as if the facade around them had merely been renovated. The self-evidently contextual use of spolia rarely achieves such an impression of the continuity of place." (p.232)*

This project is an example of *spolia in se*; the physical removal of an architectural fragment from one context to another.

Bovenbouw Architectuur - A birthday cake for Ghent University
2017-2018

This project was part of an exhibition on the history of Ghent University. The project consists of a collection of Ghent university and campus buildings that have been reconstructed in plastic foam and stacked into a *"festive cake"*.

In the project description by Bovenbouw Architectuur (2018), is described how *"A short walk through the bottom layer offered a wild perspective on the familiar buildings."*

This project is an example of spolia in re, a theft of visual identity rather than a theft and removal of the original object. Spolia in re is dependent on replication and has obvious similarities with quotation as strategy. The re-contextualisation and rearrangement of historical objects, however, is typical of the strategy of spolia.

CORNER TOWERS

The history of the corner towers

The development of the area south of the moat in Gothenburg started with a new city plan in 1866. In Guide till Göteborgs Arkitektur, Caldenby (2006) writes how this area was developed into a stone city after a continental model with a striking regularity. The typical city block was 60 times 120 meters. Usually the block would be divided lengthwise and then into six estates on each side. The corner estates were the largest ones. This can be seen as part of the explanation for the increasing popularity of the corner towers. They would both work to emphasize the regularity of the urban space and to highlight the grandeur of the corner estates.

In an article at stadshem.se, Roos (2021) describes how the stone city of the late 19th century at the beginning followed the neorenaissance ideal but during the 1890's the style changed and the architectural ideal shifted from the Italian palace to *a more fantastical fortress-like look* (own translation). This style is named eclectic because of the incorporation of elements from previous epoques. The stone houses from this time were ornamented with joyfully designed spires and towers.

The purpose of the corner towers

A prominent feature of the eclectic style of architecture is the corner towers and they were a common element in the stone city. However, although a lot has been written about the corner towers visual impact on the facade, their spatial purpose is rarely mentioned. As Roos (2021) points out, attic floors were not common at this time with the exception of the occasional servants room. The piano nobile of these houses was located one or two stairs up and the top floor (which would have access to the towers) was not as valued. This raises the question what value the corner towers had in terms of spatial use.

It seems as though the corner towers were created without their spatial function being of much importance. Their function appears to have been as ornament and as symbol; to enhance the grand architecture that was in style and to highlight the larger corner estates.

The corner towers as ornament and symbol

Contemporary writings on buildings from this epoch tend to focus on the corner towers as an ornamental addition. An article from Historiska Hem (2024) describes the 1890's eclectic style as a *"...fanciful architecture with turrets and towers..."* (own translation). A comparison with castles and palaces is common. Caldenby (2006) describes a prominent Gothenburg building, the Hertzia from 1901 as a *"merchants palace with corner towers and onion domes"* (p.42, own translation) and writes that the towers on the KFUM-house from the 1890's contribute to its appearance as a fairytale castle. This shows how the corner towers function as ornament but also as a symbol for riches or status.

Figure 5. Linnégatan, ca. 1930
https://samlingar.goteborgsstadsmuseum.se/carlotta/web/object/794334

THE CORNER

In *Fasaden & Stadsrummet*, Wultz (1991) describes different shapes of corners and their effect on the urban space. He separates between the compact and the dissolved corner in terms of massiveness and between the pointy corner, the frontal corner and the expansive corner in terms of shape.

The compact corner seems to be the obvious base for the corner tower, with the purpose of the tower to enhance the feeling of compactness. As for shape, corner towers are mostly found on frontal or expansive corners. This naturally places the center of the corner towers facade at angles with the building facade and gives an interesting asymmetry to the facade of the corner tower.

THE TOWER

The dome

In A Dictionary of Architecture, Pevsner et al. (1966) explains the structure of the dome. The dome structure is divided into a drum, a dome and a lantern. If placed on a square base the dome also contains a pendentive to mediate between the square and the circular or polygonal shape of the drum. The section of the dome can be segmental, semicircular (hemispherical dome), pointed or bulbous (onion dome). The dome can also be divided in sections on a regularly polygonal base, then called domical vaults or umbrella domes.

The spire

A spire is structured the same way as either a pyramid roof or a polygonal or conical roof. Björk et al. (1988) explain that the factor that decides if it is a spire is the relation of the height to the width.

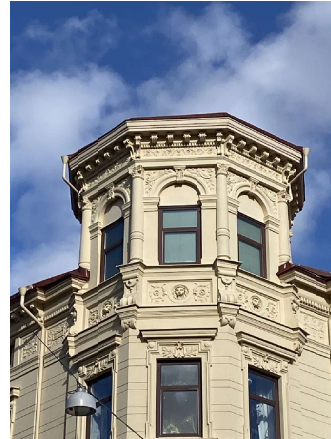# REENACTMENTS

Figure 6. Corner tower at Esperantoplatsen

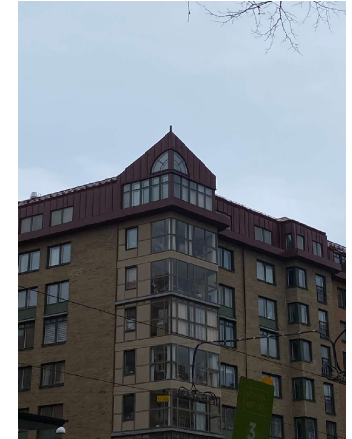Figure 8. Corner tower

Figure 10. Corner tower at Rpinsgatan

Figure 12. Modern corner tower on Linnégatan

Reenacting famous icon

Arguably, the dome in iself is a re-enactment of church- or temple architecture. It is out of the ordinary and visually prominent in the cityscape. Anchoring an architectural work in history legitmizes its existence. It is also a symbol of grandeur and it is therefore natural that its inspiration comes from grand sources.

Reenacting language

The re-enactment of the classical orders is perhaps the most common re-enactment. This language is of course not unique to the corner towers. The corner tower at Viktoriagatan as well as the entire building it belongs to is re-enacting classical greek architecture.

Reenacting nearby icon

Most architecture re-enact their surroundings to some extent. The special status and placement of the corner towers gives the opportunity to have them re-enact extraordinary architecture. They can re-enact the language of church as well as castle or temple.

Reenacting local context

The corner tower depicted here is newer than the first trend of corner towers. It is a later addition, and it is a re-enactment of the historical context of its location.

Figure 7. Corner tower 11 and Santa Maria del Fiore dome

Figure 9. Corinthian columns. (Raddato 2014). CC-BY-SA 2.0.

Figure 11. Skyline Prinsgatan

Figure 13. Silhouette of corner tower

The dome at Esperantoplatsen is visually similar to the dome of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, drawn by Brunelleschi. This visual connection anchors it as a historical re-enactment and a symbol of greatness.

The corner tower is adorned with corinthian pilasters which in combination with its almost freestanding structure and shape makes it in itself a reenactment of a greek temple.

The corner tower at Prinsgatan re-enacts the language of Oscar Fredriks kyrka by using the same angles and visually blending into the same skyline.

Linnégatan has several corner towers lined up and any new architecture needs to relate to this context. The result are as exemplified here, modernized re-enactments of a historical trend.

THE CORNER TOWERS AS SUBJECT MATTER

The corner towers were created in a large enough number that they became a defining feature of the cityscape and they remain as such today. Although this thesis only focuses on the architecture of Gothenburg, the history of the corner towers looks the same in several other cities, for example Stockholm and Copenhagen.

The corner towers can be read as an architectural trend, as ornament, as a symbol of status. For this thesis, three inititial findings work as provocations that lay the foundation for the laborational work and to which the final design responds.

Provocations

• The location of the corner towers. The most important aspect of this is the resulting lack of access. They are a defining part of the city structure and in some places even define the skyline. They are ornamental but always seen from afar and at a strange angle. They symbol importance but are also a symbol of exclusion. How can the symbol of the corner tower be made inclusive?

• The volumetric identity and spatial possibilities of the corner towers. The corner towers are large rooms, usually round and often domed. The volumetric identity results in a spectacular space. If there was a use for this space originally or if there is today, it is private and cannot be guessed from the exterior. How can the spatial possibilites of this typology reach its potential?

• The decorative elements of the corner towers. The corner towers are usually adorned with decorations such as pilasters, corbels or sculptural windowframes. These are carriers of identity for the individual corner towers as well as visual traces of a past era. How can contemporary architecture to relate to this kind of ornamentation?

Corner towers as re-enactments

The corner towers are themselves re-enactments. They carry re-enactments of historical fragments of the greek and roman temple and their shape and placement re-enact the castle, the church and the palace.

They are also re-enacting each other, the existence of one legitimising the creation of the next. The repetition of this leads to the creation of an architectural trend, or a mimetic hypnosis in Jacob's terms.

Beyond this they are re-enacting societal and political will in symbolising the status of the buildings they belong to.

AIM

There is very little information to be found on the corner towers, both as a group and in individual cases. They are visually prominent but they are private and are therefore inaccessible. This gives them a fictional element. They are ornamental and a symbol of status but tell no story other than this. This gap in knowledge about their interior and their spatial purpose leaves a void that can be filled with a fictional narrative.

The theory of re-enactment offers an explanation about how and why architecture repeats itselfs in terms of language, material and technical solutions. However re-enactment is described as a phenomenon, not a method. In this theory, architecture in itself has the agency and the ability to repeat and transform itself. As such, it is best applied to analyse the architecture that already exists. To create something new from this a method is needed. While re-enactment in itself is not a method it can be used as such, by connecting it to the related stategies; quotation, paraphrase and spoliation.

The aim of this thesis is to explore ways for existing architecture to be reinterpreted into new architecture by using methods of reenactment applied to a selection of corner towers in Gothenburg.

The thesis question is;
How can values and meanings be transferred from an original to a new work of architecture through methods of re-enactment?

DELIMITATIONS

The thesis is concerned with architecture as motif, visual identity and symbol. It is not part of the thesis to analyse the constructional elements of the buildings explored. Neither are the construction methods for the new design project in focus. Methods for replicating architecture are mentioned but the focus is not on the technical solutions of replication.

One main point of this thesis is to work actively with the lack of access to the corner towers and to document them as they are commonly experiences, from a distance. This means that only the exterior of the existing corner towers are have been documented as the interiors are not accessible.

METHOD

The aim of the project is to create a new architectural work, based on a fragment of architecture history.

After an initial phase of cataloguing a collection of corner towers, the source material is processed in three laboration phases based on the theory of re-enactment. The laborative process will lead from inventory of the existing, through the process of re-enactment to the presentation of a new architectural project.

Catalogue

This phase is an introduction to the laboration phases. Through city walks, photography and studies of permit drawings from Stadsbyggnadsförvaltningen a collection of corner towers in Gothenburg are selected and collected in a catalogue along with their location in the city. The corner towers selected are all from the end of the 19th or start of the 20th century.

Quotation

This phase is concerned with methods of retrrieving information about a number of corner towers as well as ways of reading and interpreting this information. The explorations highlight what information is available and when it is lacking. This phase also focuses on the interplay between fact and fiction in architectural documentation.

As mentioned before, the act of quotation has been borrowed from the realm of textual works and is rendered complicated when applied to the discipline of architecture. A textual quotation is an exact replica, a copy of the original text.

In architecture an exact quotation is impossible. Although the term is used to describe the documentation, the ambition is not to create an exact quotation or copy. The lack of access to the corner towers is highlighted rather than overcome. The focus during this phase is to embrace the flawed quotation. The quotation will allow for deviation due to: lack of information, mistake and necessary abstraction.

The flawed quotations have been developed through comparing attempted quotations in different media and with different techniques. This means that there is an element of fiction in the quotation, as different media naturally will tell different stories about what it is documenting.

Paraphrase

In this phase the qualities of the investigated buildings are evaluated both in terms of their visual identity and as artifacts that can be repurposed to make a visual connection between the new and the historical.

The paraphrase, just as the quote, is meant to relay the meaning of an original source. The paraphrase, however, is not an exact replica but has been rephrased and thus altered from its orignal source. Paraphrase too is a term borrowed from language studies. While the quotation entails exact replication of an object paraphrasing offers the liberty of creating one's own version of it.

In linguistics, the paraphrase is intended to rephrase an original statement without altering its meaning. Just as quotation deviates from its definition when it is applied as an architectural strategy, paraphrase in this context is allowed a wider deviation from its source matieral. During this phase, the material from the previous phase is reiterated and gradually altered, with the purpose of finding the *tongue-twister* of radical change, as coined by Sam Jacob.
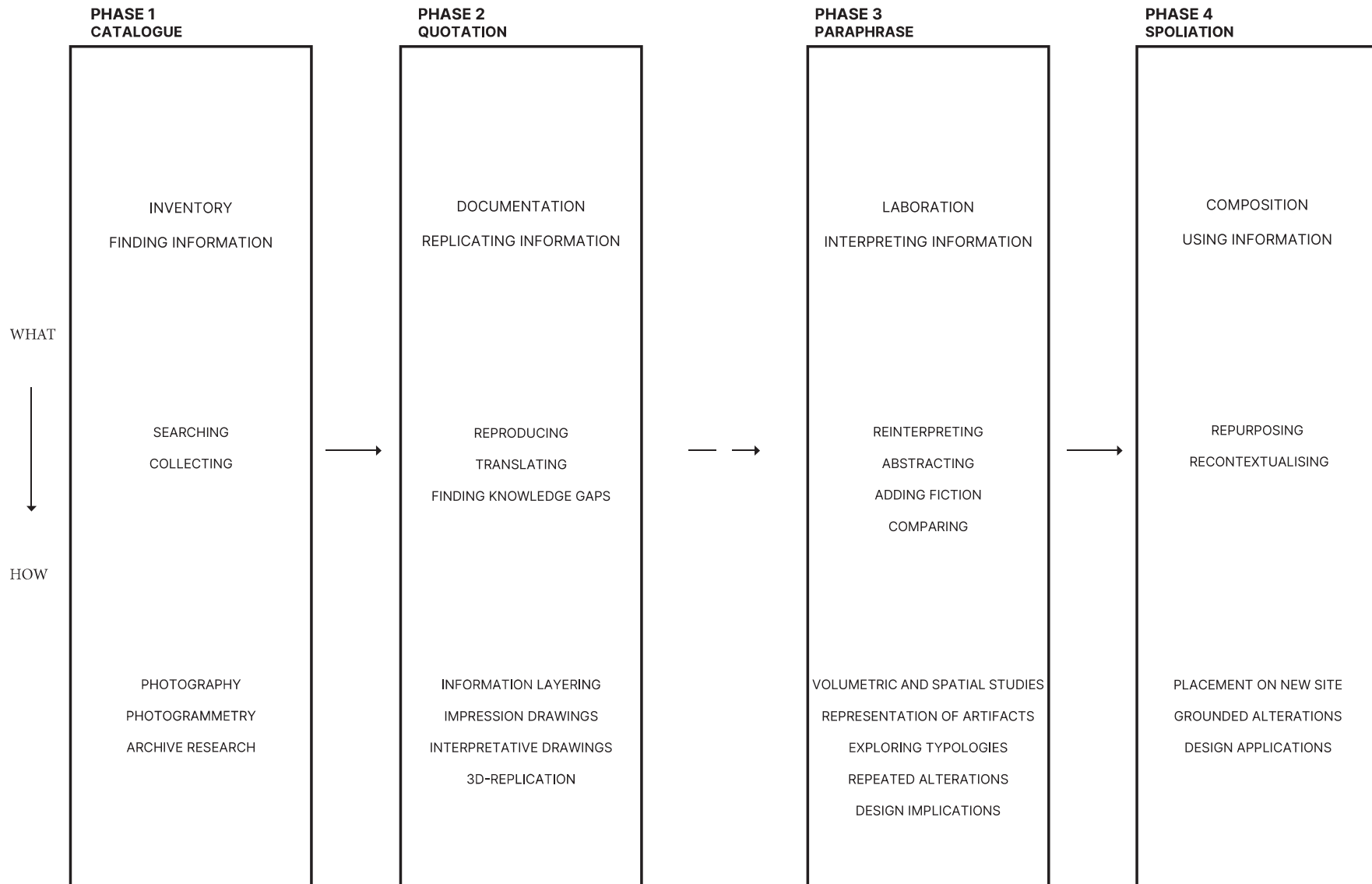
Spoliation

This phase is where exploratory laborations become grounded in the creation of something new.

Most commonly, spoliation is understood as the physical removal of a building or fragment of a building and added to a new context. Here, however, Richard Brilliants idea of *spolia in re* is applied. Rather than demolishing the corner towers, their visual values and possibilities are extracted through replication and reassigned to a new concept. This strategy is a form of identity theft, but one that is intended to add value to the original rather than harming it - a tribute, rather than a plundering, of the old.

The focus here is on repurposing, grounding the project again in a new context. The elements extracted from previous phases are gathered and applied to a new narrative, on a new site and with new programs or purposes.

METHOD DIAGRAM

	PHASE 1 **CATALOGUE**	**PHASE 2** **QUOTATION**	**PHASE 3** **PARAPHRASE**	**PHASE 4** **SPOLIATION**
WHAT	INVENTORY FINDING INFORMATION	DOCUMENTATION REPLICATING INFORMATION	LABORATION INTERPRETING INFORMATION	COMPOSITION USING INFORMATION
	SEARCHING COLLECTING	REPRODUCING TRANSLATING FINDING KNOWLEDGE GAPS	REINTERPRETING ABSTRACTING ADDING FICTION COMPARING	REPURPOSING RECONTEXTUALISING
HOW	PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTOGRAMMETRY ARCHIVE RESEARCH	INFORMATION LAYERING IMPRESSION DRAWINGS INTERPRETATIVE DRAWINGS 3D-REPLICATION	VOLUMETRIC AND SPATIAL STUDIES REPRESENTATION OF ARTIFACTS EXPLORING TYPOLOGIES REPEATED ALTERATIONS DESIGN IMPLICATIONS	PLACEMENT ON NEW SITE GROUNDED ALTERATIONS DESIGN APPLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION CATALOGUE

The catalogue phase lays the foundation for the other phases. in this phase the subjects are found and selected and the first information is gathered. The phase consists of a collection and mapping of a number of corner towers in Gothenburg as well as archival studies to find information about their origins.

The catalogue is not exhaustive but a collection of corner towers, found and selected in a series of walking tours through the city. As shown in the map, the often appear in clusters, in parts of the city that were developed during the same time.

The original permit drawings have been retrieved from Stadsbyggnadsförvaltningen. In some cases the architect and year of construction have been clearly annotated but in some cases this information could not be found.

1. JÄRNTORGET 6
2. TREDJE LÅNGGATAN - LINNÉGATAN
3. TREDJE LÅNGGATAN - LINNÉGATAN
4. FJÄRDE LÅNGGATAN - LINNÉGATAN
5. FRIGÅNGSGATAN - LINNÉGATAN
6. BERGSGATAN - LINNÉGATAN
7. PRINSGATAN - NORDHEMSGATAN
8. FJÄRDE LÅNGGATAN - VÄRMLANDSGATAN
9. ANDRA LÅNGGATAN - NORDHEMSGATAN
10. KUNGSGATAN - INGENJÖRSGATAN
11. SURBRUNNSGATAN - STORA BADHUSGATAN
12. STORA BADHUSGATAN - SKEPPSBRON
13. PACKHUSPLATSEN 2
14. SÖDRA HAMNGATAN - LILLA TORGET
15. TORGGATAN - POSTGATAN
16. SANKT ERIKSGATAN - ÖSTRA HAMNGATAN
17. ÖSTRA LARMGATAN - TRÄDGÅRDSGATAN
18. BASTIONSPLATSEN - STORA NYGATAN
19. STORA NYGATAN - LILLA KUNGSGATAN
20. ÖSTRA LARMGATAN - DROTTNINGGATAN
21. BASTIONSPLATSEN - STORA NYGATAN
22. KUNGSPORTSAVENYN - PARKGATAN
23. PARKGATAN - CHALMERSGATAN
24. STORGATAN - GÖTABERGSGATAN
25. ERIK DAHLBERGS GATA - STORGATAN
26. VASAPLATSEN - STORGATAN
27. VASAPLATSEN - STORGATAN
28. ERIK DAHLBERGS GATA - STORGATAN
29. ENGELBREKTSGATAN - KARL GUSTAVSGATAN
30. ENGELBREKTSGATAN - VIKTORIAGATAN
31. ENGELBREKTSGATAN - ERIK DAHLBERGSGATAN
32. VASA KYRKOGATA - ASCHEBERGSGATAN
33. ENGELBREKTSGATAN - ACHEBERGSGATAN
34. VASAPLATSEN - VASAGATAN
35. VASAGATAN - KUNGSPORTSAVENYN
36. SÖDRA VÄGEN - ENGELBREKTSGATAN

Figure 14. Catalogue of corner towers.

1. L ENDERS
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8. 1904
9. 1891
10. F O PETERSON & SÖNER 1902
11. HANSON & LÖFMARK 1910
12. E KRÜGER 1897
13. L ENDERS 1901
14. A W EDELSVÄRD 1853
15. F O PETERSON &SÖNER 1902
16. A C PETERSON 1875
17.
18. H HEDLUND 1908
19. AC PETERSON, C CRISPIN 1897
20. P J RAPP 1853
21. C FAHLSTRÖM 1912
22. 1882
23. H CORNILSEN 1897
24. J A WESTERBERG 1884
25. H CORNILSEN 1897
26. 1876
27. H CORNILSEN 1896
28. 1890
29. 1892
30. C FAHLSTRÖM 1882
31. 1888
32. 1916
33.
34. 1888
35. 1888
36. H CORNILSEN 1897

Figure 15. Permit drawings of catalogued corner towers.
Retrieved from Stadsbyggnadsförvaltningen.

CASE STUDY
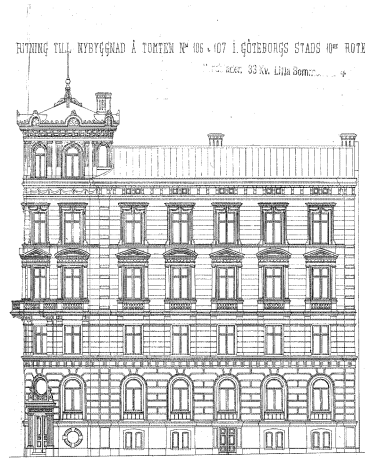
Figure 16. Elevation F W Hasselblads Hus (Peterson 2012).

5400 mm

1100 mm

2150 mm

3500 mm
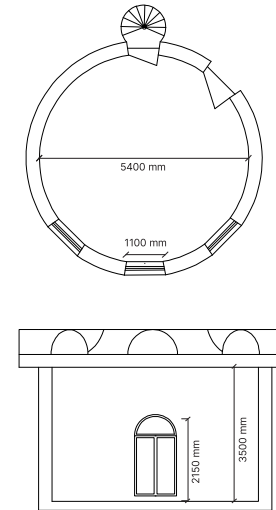
Figure 17. Plan and section.
Interpretations based on original drawings.
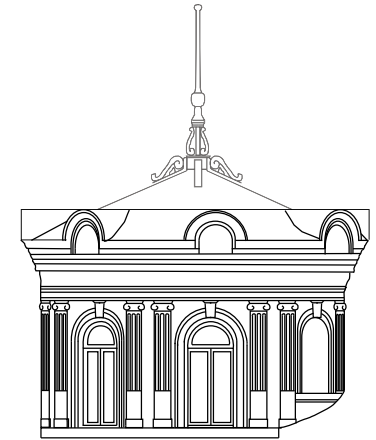
Figure 18. Elevation.
Interpretations based on original drawings.

F W Hasselblads hus

F W Hasselblads hus was designed in renaissance revival style in 1875 by Adrian C Petersson as a warehouse for the merchant firm F W Hasselblad & Co. It is located at the corner of Östra Hamngatan and Sankt Eriksgatan in Gothenburg.

The building originally contained a warehouse and offices with apartments on the top floors. Through several readaptations the building has been used for residence, office, storage and warehouse. (Lönnroth, 2003; Svensson, 2018).

The permit drawings to the left show a remodeling in 1948 by the architect firm F.O. Peterson och Söner. The entire building was transformed to office space. The corner rooms were used as offices or exhibition rooms but both the access and the use of the corner tower is unclear.

The drawings below are from a remodeling in 2006 by Kanozi Arkitekter. The ground floor was turned into restaurants while the rest of the floors became apartments. In these drawings the tower is shown to be an extention to the apartment below and in use as a private library.

The drawings above are interpretations of the original drawings. The room is measured to have a diameter of 5,4 meters which gives it an area of just over 20 square meters. The height of the room is guessed at to 3,5 meters, based on the facade drawings.

The room is circular with an octagonal logic for window and door placement. The meeting with the adjoining roofs cuts the facade off leaving room for three centered full size windows and two smaller windows. The original drawings show a low sloped roof in the shape of a conical spire and adorned with a windvane. These elements have either been removed or were never built according to the drawings. The roof of the building today is flat.

INTRODUCTION QUOTATION

The quotation phase is concerned with creating a first understanding of information, through documentation and replication. In this phase both information and lack of information is sorted and replicated. The relationship between original and reproduction is explored as well as media for reproduction.

The limits and possibilities of quotation are explored. Focus is on the subject matters as they are normally experienced. The quotation is not documenting only objective fact but also experience and perception.

Whereas the purpose of the catalogue is to take large scale inventory, the quotation phase takes inventory on a more detailed and fragmented level. An inventory of bulding parts, shape, logic and visual identity is extracted from items from the catalogue. This inventory will represent the corner towers as typology. This phase goes beyond case study and is a study of pattern and collective identity.

DOCUMENTATION

Figure 19. Corner tower 3
Photograph

Figure 20. Corner tower 3
Photogrammetry
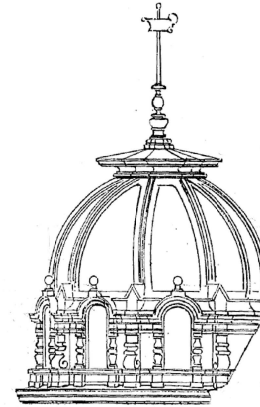
Figure 21. Corner tower 3
Permit drawing, retrieved from Stadsbyggnadsförvaltningen

Figure 22. Corner tower 3
Rendered replication

Photography

Photography is the most convenient method for documentation. The catalogue consists of photografhs as they are easy to read and accurate representations of the corner towers.

However, photography does not only represent the corner tower, it also highlights the lack of access through the angle of the photography. The camera represents the object as it is encountered, in this context from a distance and at an angle.

Different media capture different information. Photography captures material and detail as well as the situation of the corner tower in its context. The placement of the camera is part of that context, the corner tower is represented in relation to the camera.

Even considering the distance and angle, photography is probably the most accurate medium for documentation. It creates an instantly recognizeable replication of the corner tower, from every accessible angle.

Photogrammetry

For the representation through photogrammetry, the app Polycam has been used. This method, same as photography, have been applied from street level although here a lot more information has been collected from different distances and angles.

An important difference between photogrammetry and photography is the interpretative agency of the photogrammetry app. Photogrammetrical information taken from the same angle as the photograph is interpreted and results in a recreated image of the facade from a more straightforward elevation view.

The representation of material detail suffers greatly due to the distance of the documentation. This also creates a result where information is warped. The elevation of the corner towers looks more like fabric then a facade of brick and stone.

Original drawing

The original drawings are pencil drawings that have been scanned. They are drawn in varied degrees of detail and the degree of preservation and legibility also varies. For the sake of this project, the drawings of the corner towers have been cut out of their context as part of larger facade drawings but besides this they have not been altered.

The accuracy of the original drawings in relation to the current buildings vary greatly. Some corner towers clearly have been altered from their original state. Other comparisons of original drawing and current building seem to indicate that the corner tower never was constructed exactly as it was intended to.

The most imporant information retrieved from these drawings is the shape and proportion of the corner tower; information that becomes distorted in other methods of documentation.

Flawed quotation

The flawed quotation is the attempt to replicate the corner tower based on previous information. This can be both two- and three dimensional, at the scale of a model or an entire building.

As a quotation, the ambition is to make an accurate replication of the information given. However, lack of access or mistakes and necessary abstractions will give the flawed quotation its own visual identity. It is rather a re-enactment than a perfect replica.

The flawed quotation can be developed to give more detailed information than all other methods of documentation. This information, however, is fictional, an interpretation rather than documentation. Even in following the clues given by other methods of documentation, the flawed quotation will be deviating from the truth in the attempt to fill gaps in information.

INTERPRETATIVE DRAWING

Placed next to each other are the original drawing, a document showing what should have become, and the interpretative drawing, an earnest but flawed representation of what is. The interpretative drawing is a flawed quotation, twisted to a degree from reality due to lack of access to the building.

The combination drawing is the fictional child of these two semi-realities. It is not quite true to the original document and not quite a true representation of what is. In itself it talks about the layers of reality and fiction that are always a part of reproduction.

Perhaps Sam Jacob's (2012) argument about architecture as the Great Roe has its place here. The Great Roe has the head of a lion and the body of a lion, although not the same lion. The interpretative drawing seem to exist within the same kind of paradox.

Which side of the drawing is real and which is myth, to use Jacobs words? The original drawing informed the creation of the architecture as real, physcial object but it does not exactly fit with that reality. The documentational drawing is aiming to be and exact replica of the existing building but based on scarce information it is flawed and inexact.
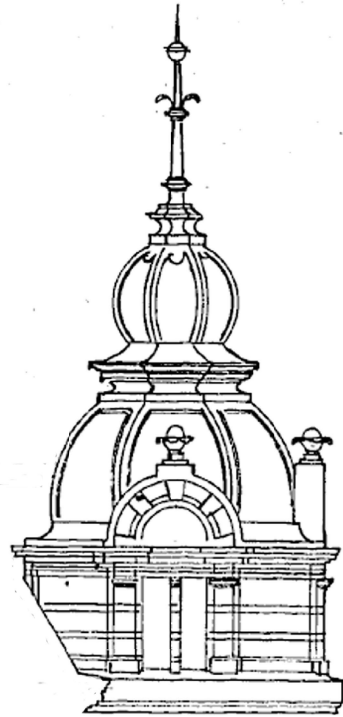
Figure 23. Corner tower 2
Permit drawing, retrieved from Stadsbyggnadsförvaltningen

Figure 24. Corner tower 2
Own drawing

Figure 25. Corner tower 2
Own drawing and edited permit drawing

Original drawing

The original drawing shows a corner tower with a broken facade where the tower would meet the roof of the building it belongs to. Being part of a larger facade drawing, the corner tower is not shown from its front facade, which is at an angle to the rest of the building.

The original drawing differs in several details from how the corner tower appears today. It shows heavier ornamentation and more detail in shape than what is represented in the actual building. At the same time, the materiality is barely hinted at.

Documentational drawing

The documentational drawing is a mediation of the original drawing and photographs of the building. It carries interpreted information from two sources, the information taken from where it was most easily and accurately reproduced.

The shape has been reproduced from the orignal drawing whereas ornament has been removed or altered based on information from photographs. The material has been reproduced from photographs. The corner tower has a rich materiality and even some pattern masonry that is not represented in the original drawing.

Combination drawing

The combination drawing highlights where the two documentations differ from each other. The documentational drawing is a recreation centered on the front facade. It heals the broken symmetry of the original drawing by representing the building from another angle.

The combination drawing shows the heavy ornamentation of the original drawing combined with the materiality of the reproduction drawing, combining what is and what was intended.

LACK OF ACCESS

Figure 26. Corner tower 2 and 3 with surroundings

Angle of documentation

The angle of documentation shows the challenge of capturing the real story of the facade and shape of the corner tower. Photographing the corner towers results in a representation in frog's perspective. The height of the building combined with the width of the street determines the angle that the buidling is captured in. Photography at a larger distance from the building results in a better angle but detailing gets blurred out with the distance.

Since the corner towers are usually at an angle to the facades of the building, the diagonally opposite sidewalk offers the best place for photography.

Silhouettes

The representation of the corner towers in silhouette show how the lack of access affects their expression. It also tells a story about their visual identity, both as a group and as individual architectural works.

The silhouettes show only the outline of the shape and the windows, as seen from street level. Photographs have been interpreted to place the front facade in exact center while the warped reality of the frog's perspective have been kept. This method of representation highlights the visual logic that several corner towers share as well as the cases where this logic does not apply. For all their ornamental individuality, there is a clear familiarity between them. Most but not all have a circular or octagonal base. Several contribute to a diverse and playful skyline.

In the silhouettes, the effects of the frog's perspective are amplified. The walls are floating on lack of information, their base obscured by the restraints of the perspective. The facades appear warped, standing on two legs, the shape of the roof dissolves and the fenestration appears logical and disassembled at the same time.

Figure 27. Silhouette drawings of corner towers from cataloguee

VISUAL IDENTITY

CYLINDER

OCTAGONAL PRISM

CUBE

SEMISPHERE

CONE

PYRAMID

TRIANGULAR PRISM

ELLIPSOID

BULB
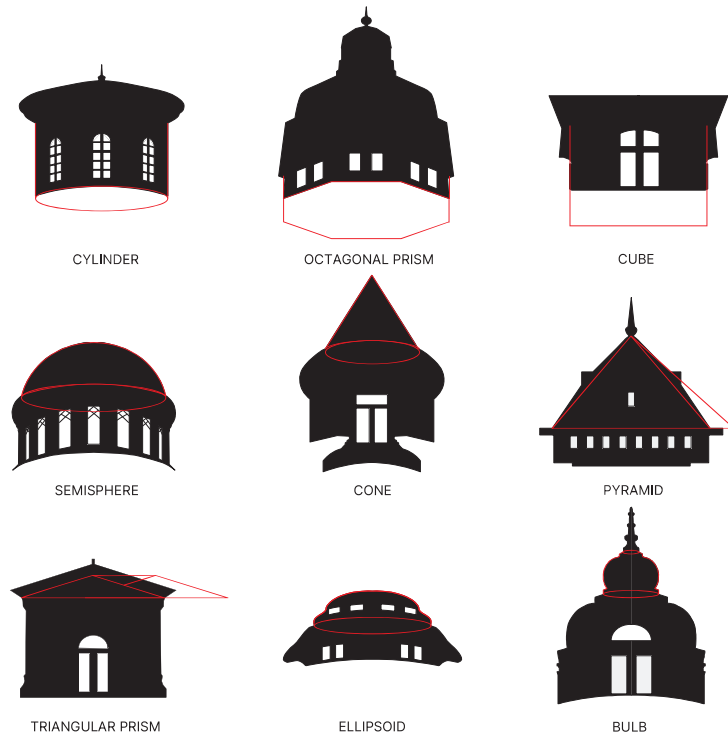
Figure 28. Silhouette drawings with volumetric analysis

Figure 29. Silhouette drawings with artifacts

Volumetric identity

What ultimately defines a corner tower is its placement but besides this there are several parts that are carriers of identity either at group level or individual level. The building elements, such as the domes and spires, are visually important aspects of the corner tower.

The corner towers, as almost freestanding ornamental addendums are not constrained to rational geometry. Their volumetric identity is varied, and in itself ornamental.

The rotunda

Looking past pure shape and exploring the corner towers in terms of volumetric typology, the most common is the rotunda; a circular or polygonal room, often wiith a domed roof.

While some of the corner towers have a rectangular base, most of them are either circular or octagonal. Arguably, this is also the typology that best carry the identity of the corner towers as a group.

Ornamental identity

On an individual level, each corner tower has its own carriers of identity in the shape of decorative additions to the facade and roof. The ornamental identity is built from these additions, called artifacts in this project.

The combination of the silhouette representing the volumetric identity and the artifacts depicting the ornamental identity, the image of the corner tower is almost a full representation. Even with materiality and physical context removed, they are easily recognizable.

The artifacts

The artifacts are the decorative details of the corner towers. They are unique to each corner tower. To this group counts pilasters, arches, corbels, modillions and windvanes.

While the artifacts are unique they are often visually related to each other. They are usually re-enactments of the classical orders and might also be re-enactments of each other.
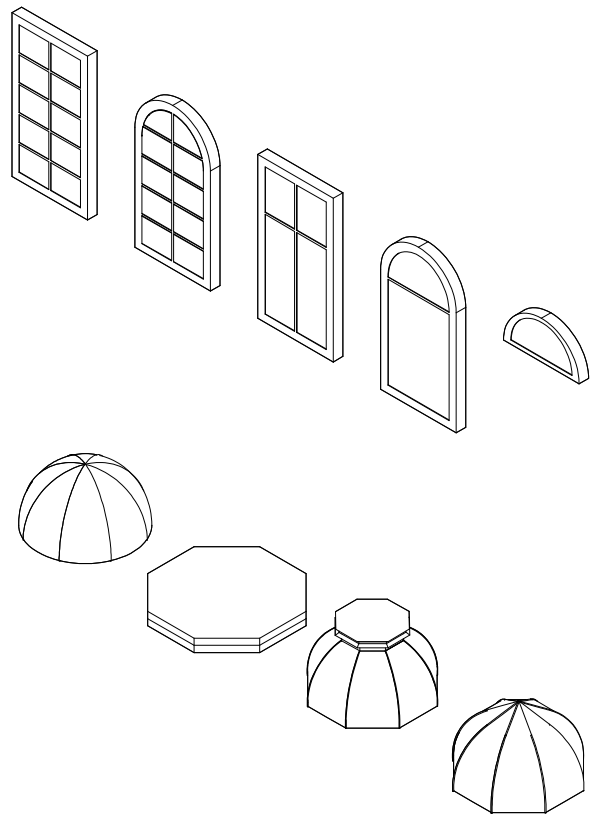
Figure 30. Inventory of modular parts

Carriers of identity

The drawings above are not carriers of identity of any specific corner tower but rather carries conglomerated information of several.

The different version of roofs, walls and windows as well as the artifacts can be added to combinations that are both new architectural works and representations of existing corner towers.

The drawings above are not replicas but modules extracted and abstracted from several corner towers, a catalogue of objects derived from the catalogue of the corner towers. These can be used as building blocks in further re-enactments.

Corner tower disassembled

The disassembled corner tower to the right is one individual case, nr. 3 from the catalogue. The individual pieces here are all taken from the same context.

Placing those pieces back together would create a quotation, an attempted replica whereas using the images above would create a paraphrase, a new work inspired by a collection of historical works.
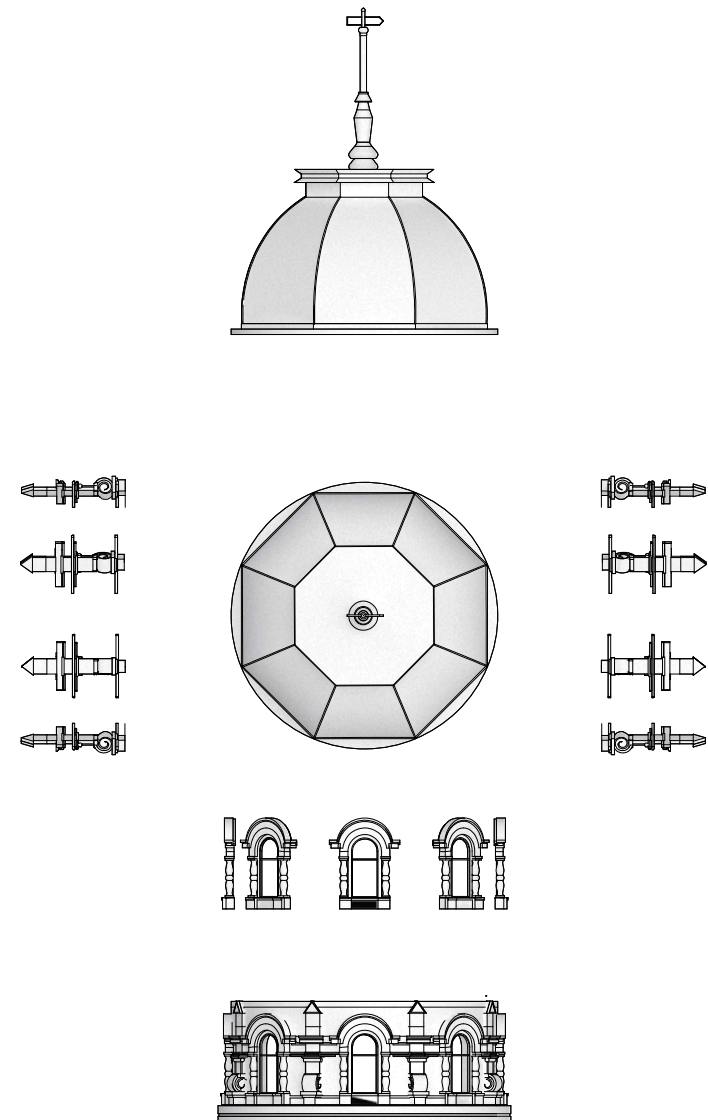
Figure 31. Corner tower 3 disassembled

INTRODUCTION PARAPHRASE

Paraphrasing is about selecting and reinterpreting information. This phase is about exploring the visual identity of both individual fragments and the typology of the corner tower as a whole, stretching the information to incorporate new truths without losing the connection to the original.

The paraphrase phase is also about discovering and elaborating design implications. In this phase, the next step from documentation is taken. Here the focus is on exploring how information can be used, rephrased and partially altered.

While the quotation phase focused on documenting and understanding the source material, this phase is laborating with how that information can be used in the creation of a new work of architecture.

IDENTITY DIAGRAM

The identity diagram is a laboration to find what gives a building its identity. The diagram separates volume, artifact and materiality as well as levels of detailing. Illustrated are both the volumetric qualities of the corner tower and the importance of material and ornament as carriers of identity.

In this laboration not only what gives the corner tower its identity is explored but also in what ways the original can be manipulated and still retain its identity.

The first version visualised is the Replica, an example of a flawed quotation. It represents the information of the original corner towers volume and materiality down to a detailed level and the information is abstracted by necessity, The same can be said for the version named Materiality removed. Although stripped of information, it carries all the information a clay render or 3d-printed copy could replicate. It is a quotation representing the flaws of these media.

In the version where the artifacts have been removed, a more deliberate abstraction has been carried out. Here a selection has been made about which information gets removed and which remains and in that sense it is a paraphrase of the original.

The versions with details remaining and artifacts remaining are related to the strategy of spoliation in re. Here, details have been removed from their context and places on their own, as an artificial ruin. They are at the same time a partial quotation of the original and a paraphrase; a re-phrasing of a building to an installation. While being stripped of thier identity as building due to the removal of walls and roof, they still carry the visual identity of the original corner tower.

The abstracted version is the only version that has been altered at a detail level. This is the flawed quotation taken to its extreme, a deliberate rephrasing of the visual information.

The diagram shows the difference in identity between the corner tower as typology and the individual corner towers. The abstracted version as well as the version with the artifacts removed still carry the visual identity of the corner tower as typology but the visual connection to the individual tower are at least almost lost. At the same time, the version with only the artifacts remaining have lost its identity as corner tower but is still visually connected to its source.
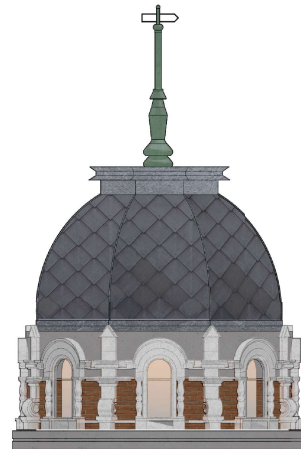
REPLICA
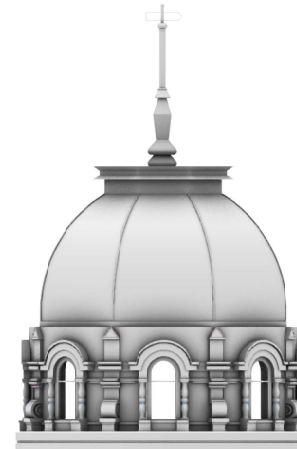
MATERIALITY REMOVED

ARTIFACTS REMOVED
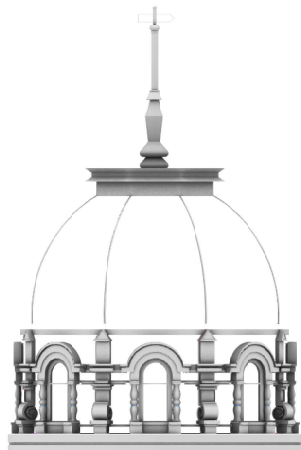
DETAILS REMAINING

ARTIFACTS REMAINING
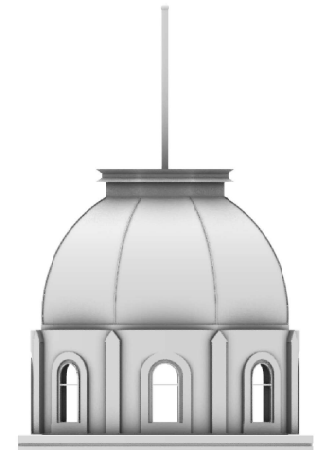
ABSTRACTION

Figure 32. Corner tower 3, identity laborations

REALITY AND FICTION

Front facade

Windows and ornaments accomodating for the meeting with adjacent roof

Meeting with adjacent roof: no facade and no windows

Circular room but octagonal logic in window placement
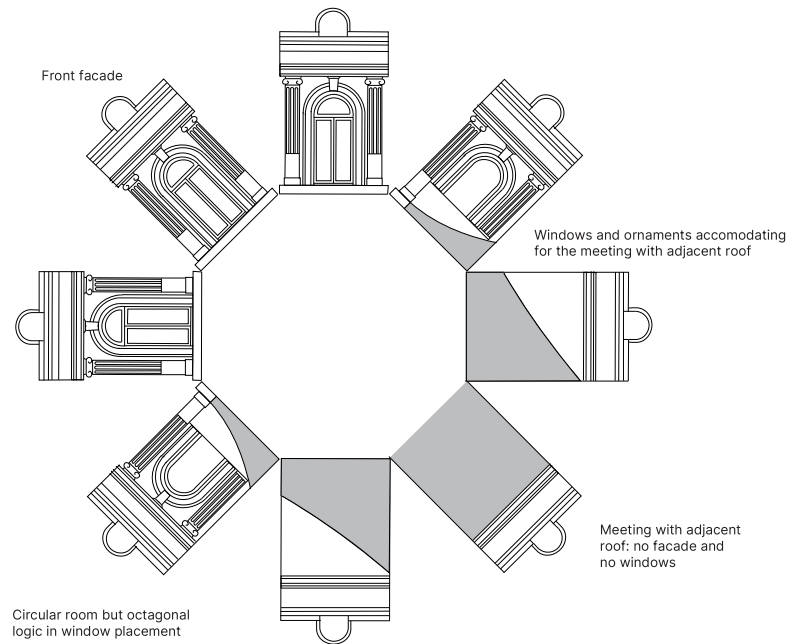
Figure 33. Corner tower 16, illustration of meeting with roof

Figure 34. Corner tower 16, facade alterations

The information gap

The meeting with the adjacent roof structure cuts off the facade of the corner towers. As an object it is incomplete, with a window placement having to break its own logic to accomodate the meeting. In the case illustrated below the windows first change size on the sides further from the front facade and finally disappear from their logical place on the corner tower's back side.

The cut in the facade is an approximation based on photographs and original drawings.

The symmetry and decoration of the facade disappear where the corner tower meets its current context. Removed and added to a new context as a freestanding building this leaves an empty space in the reality of the building.

Adding fiction

Where there is a blank space in the quotation of the building an element of fiction is added. The obvious fiction is to fill in the broken facade according to the existing pattern of the building.

However, another stategy could be to apply the lack of information as information in itself and highlight the brokenness of the building.

Another strategy is to add a new element to the empty space. This could be a simple healing of the cut with modern design but also creates the possibility to utilise the fiction to create something surreal.

SPATIAL POSSIBILITIES OF THE ROTUNDA

SEQUENCING   STACKING   SCALING
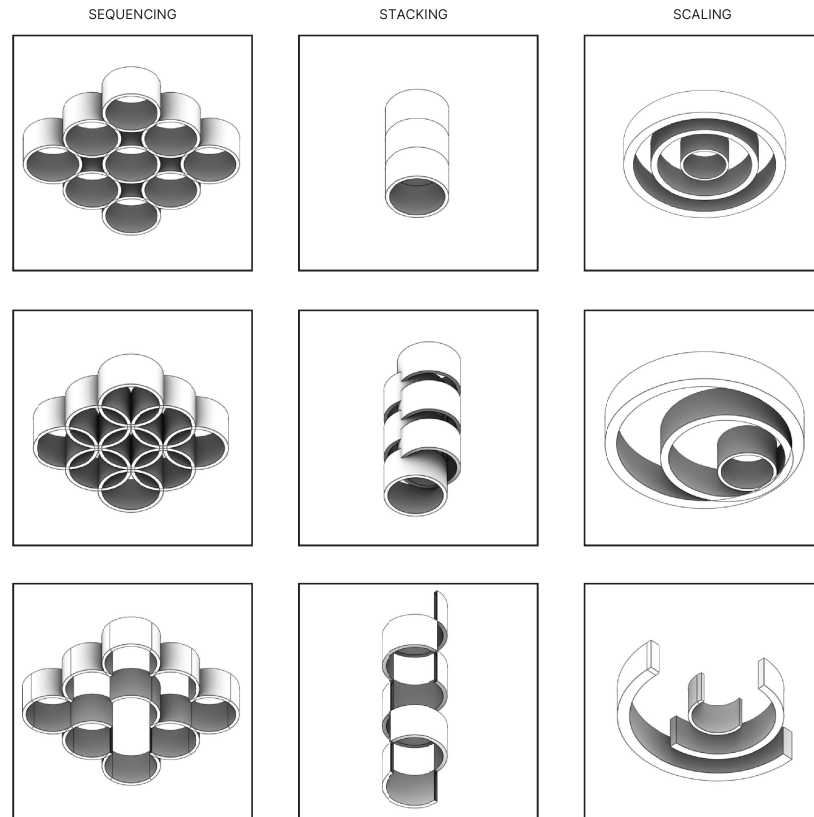
Figure 35. Modular configurations

Figure 36. Collage of rotunda interiors

Modularity and the circular space

The rotunda as object carries the visual identity of several corner towers. However, exploring the corner towers as objects leaves the experience and possibilities of the round room unexplored.

In the same way the artifacts can be taken from their context, copied and placed in new configurations, the freestanding round building can be removed from its context and repurposed as a module in different configurations. Working with the experience of the round room is in itself can be used as a design strategy, the movements and volumes explored by organizing modules of round rooms in different ways.

In this laboration, the strategies of sequencing, stacking and scaling the round module are tried out in different versions, with the modules over-lapping or being sliced in half. The result shows different paths of movement and spatial qualities as well as different volumes created from repetitions and modifications of the cylindrical module.

This diagram shows a series of design implications based on a limited source material. This illustrates how a series of small alterations in replicating a source material can lead to radical change.

Spatial experience of the rotunda

As the interiors of the corner towers are private and not accessible no information about them have been documented. The interior in this way is a blank slate, a fictional aspect of the corner tower that can have any information applied to it.

The symbolic value of the rotunda is important. It is a space that is also an event, the volume of it giving it importance not only as object but also as space.

The collage is made from famous rotundas from other contexts, to visualise what the fiction of the corner tower interior could be.

ABSTRACTION
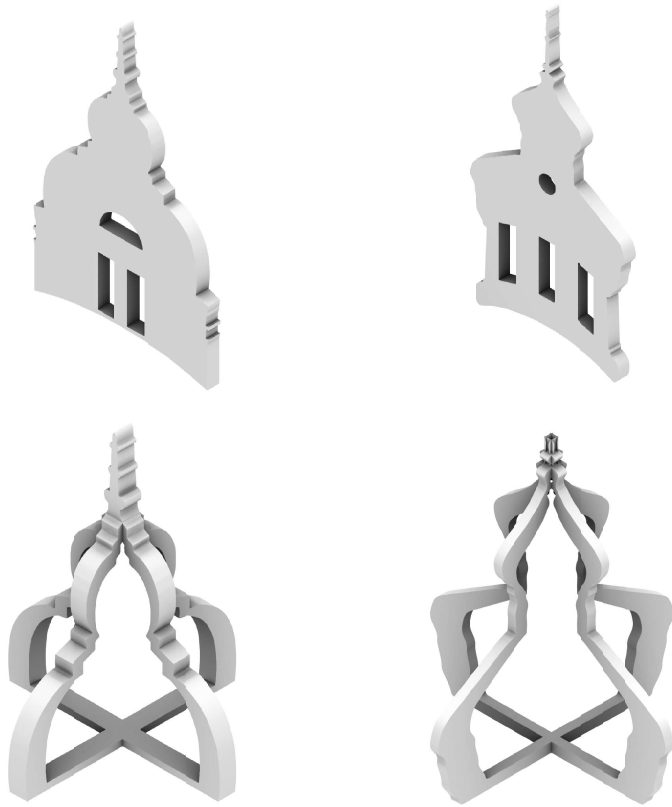
Silhouette and volume

The silhouette is part of the identity of the corner tower, an abstraction of its volumetric expression. Giving the silhouette a thickness and recreating it materially creates an installation somewhere between building and drawing. The silhouette becomes a physical object but with very different spatial qualities than the original corner tower it depicts.

The curve of the windows and foundation of the silhouette gives a visual cue that this is not only a replicated facade. The silhouette placed on ground level still tells the story of its original placement and visual experience.

The silhouette is reimagined as a spatial element by hollowing it out and placing a copy at a ninety degree angle. Here, only the silhouette of the dome has been used. The dome itself has become an accessible space, extracted from an interpretative drawing of the corner tower.
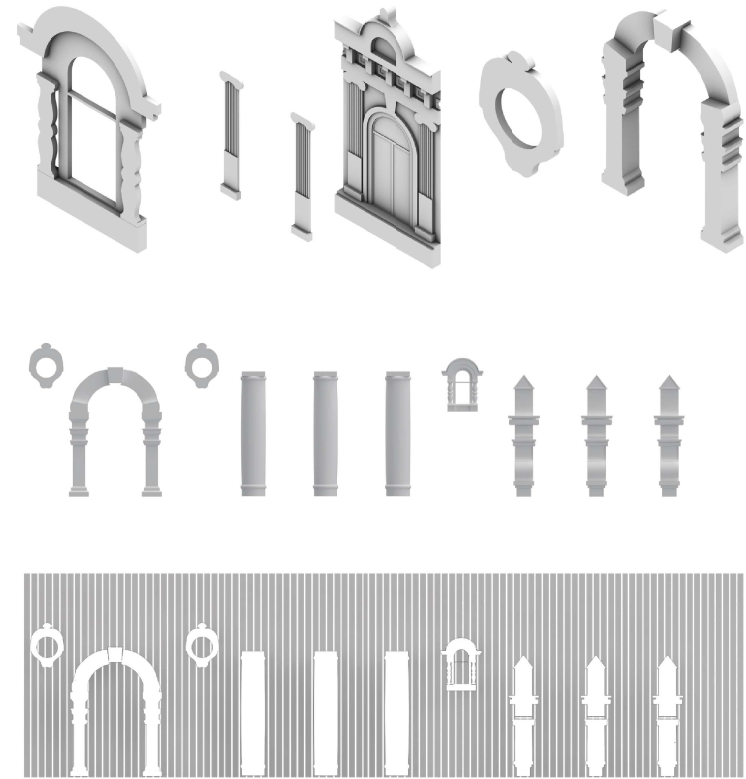
Positive and negative space

The artifacts are decorative elements with a sculptural quality. In an elevation drawing they lose much of their sculptural qualitites. Here, the elevation drawing has become physical object that carries the visual identity of the artifact only from one angle. Seen at a perspective, like the image above, the information is distorted and a new visual identity is created. The flattened artifact is a quotation seen frontally and a paraphrase, an alteration of reality, seen at an angle.

The flattened artifacts are in themselves freestanding, physical objects, sculptures without their original sculptural language. The elevation

view of the artifacts is what carries their visual information. Using that view to create a silhouette, a negative space in another structure, gives another layer of abstraction to the artifacts. They have been incorporated back into a wall but with as material reduction rather than addition.

The negative space artifacts are still ornamental but have been transformed from sculpture to drawing.

INTRODUCTION SPOLIATION

Spoliation means the theft and displacement of an architectural object. It is either a literal theft of object or a theft of identity. In this project, no physical object is removed from its origins. The spoliation is a theft of visual identity.

In the previous phases the visual identity of the corner tower has been documented and explored. In this phase it is taken from its origin and placed in a new setting, a new architectural project.

Spoliation in se, the physical displacement of an object, is usually concerned with artifacts or construction elements such as windows. Spoliation in re displaces a motif or an idea through replication. This invites to a broadening of the method, to spoliate typology or volumetric identity as well as artifacts.

Spoliation in re also gives the possibility to displace not only quotations in forms of replicated objects but also paraphrases of the original architecture. The combination of displacement and radical change is explored. The original is paraphrased and altered to a grounded architectural object in a new context and with a new purpose.

DESIGN APPLICATIONS
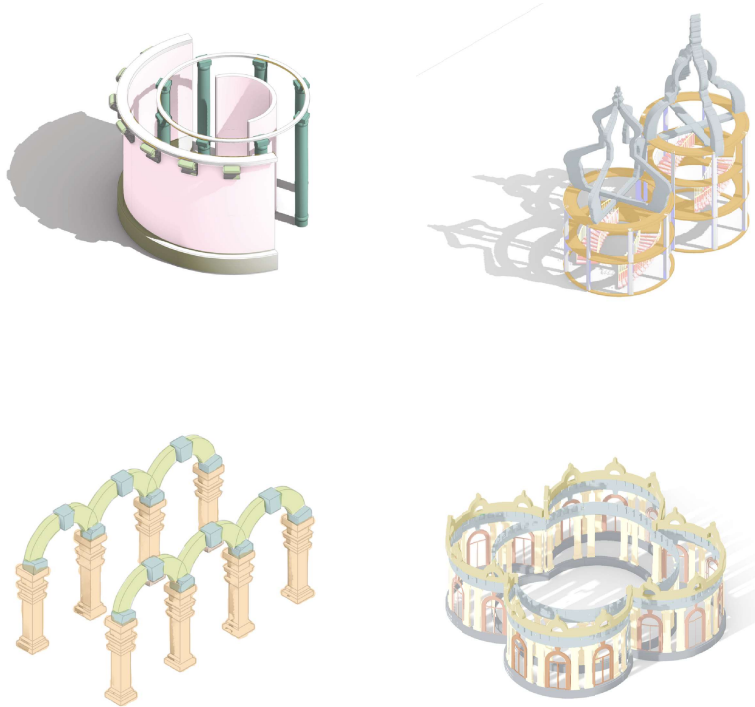
Figure 39. Design application drawings

Grounding the findings

The laborations in previous phases have been about understanding the corner tower and what can be extracted from it. This next step is about applying those findings toward a new design.

Fragments and abstractions of the visual identity of the corner towers, placed on ground level, can invite to relate and interact with the corner tower in different ways. They relate to the corner tower but are recontextualized, accessible.

Radical change

The drawings on the right visualise an attempt to speed up the phenomenon of continuous repetition resulting in radical change. Rather than using spoliation in the traditional way and steal and object the artifacts here have been replicated but in the replication they have also been altered to fit a new context. Here they are no longer only ornamental objects but also landscape architecture designed for interaction.

The alteration comes from the placement in a new context, the visual identity grounded in the meeting with purpose.

DOCUMENTATION
VISUAL IDENTITY
ALTERATION
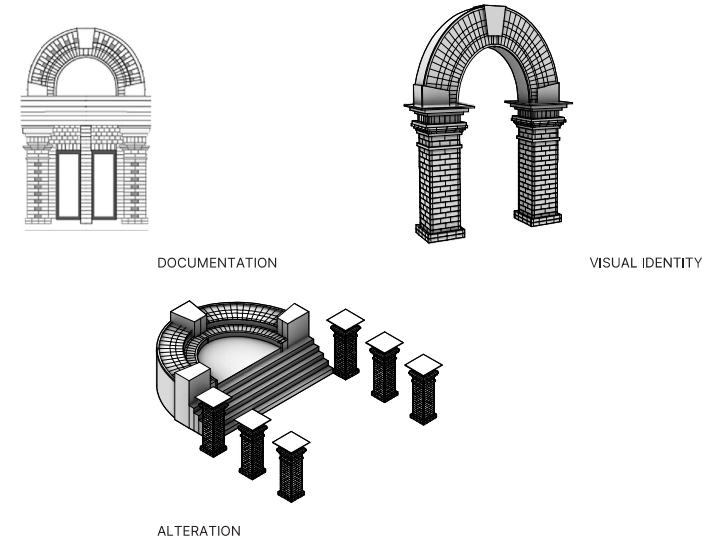
Figure 40. Alteration of vault from corner tower 2

DOCUMENTATION
VISUAL IDENTITY
ALTERATION
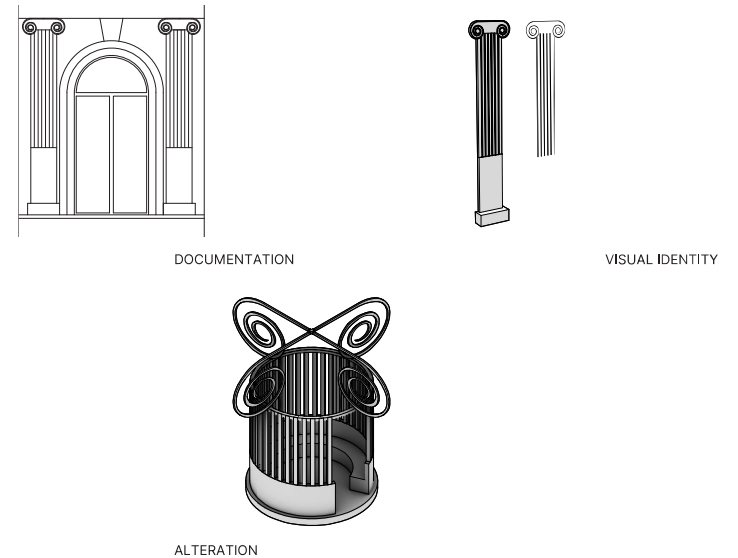
Figure 41. Alteration of pillaster from corner tower 16

TYPOLOGIES

This laboration is about looking for design implications derived from the corner towers, exploring what the values of the corner tower are and what their possibilities can be, in another context. This is done by comparing the corner tower's qualities and visual identity to other building typologies. What would the corner towers typology be if they were removed from their originial context?

The context of the corner towers

They are a part of a larger building and designed in a way to emphasize the size as well as the status of the building. They define the shape of the building they adorn and work as a navigational tool as they distinguish the corners.

They are in themselves relatively small, one room structures. Although connected to a building vertically, they are, as documented before, almost freestanding horizontally. They are ornamented in an elaborate, joyful way.

They are positioned at the highest points in their respective buildings, at the time of their construction competing only with church towers in terms of height. They define the skyline of their surroundings and they often have a fenestration that allows a view in every direction.

Comparisons

The identified context of the corner towers is compared to three different typologies, in which the values and qualities of the corner towers can be grounded.

The fortress: The fortress is the larger building that is both defined by and defines the corner tower. The corner tower is strategically placed to emphasize the size and shape of the fortress.

The folly: The folly is a pavilion with the main purpose of being ornamental. Shape, purpose and decorative nature of the corner tower all suggest that it has the same value as the folly, but in another context. Displaced and put on ground level, the corner tower becomes the folly's twin.

The watchtower: The watchtower is the building, or part of building, that reaches higher than the rest. It is design with the purpose of looking out, keeping watch over the landscape below. The high placement and the access to a view defines it.

THE FORTRESS
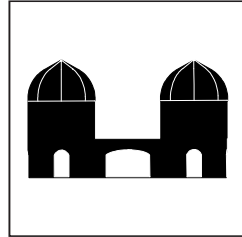
Figure 42. Fortress pictogram

THE FOLLY
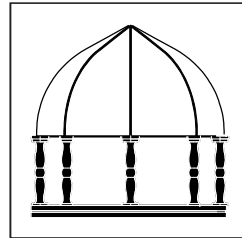
Figure 43. Folly pictogram

THE WATCHTOWER
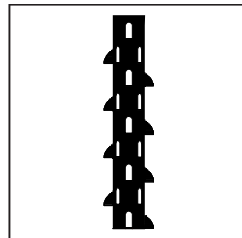
Figure 44. Watchtower pictogram

Figure 48

Figure 49

Figure 50

Figure 51

Figure 52
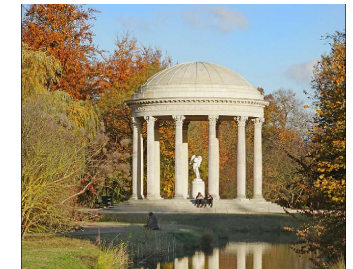
Figure 53

Figure 54

Figure 55

Figure 45. Borgholms Slott.
(Dahlström 2009) CC-BY-2.0

Figure 46. Uppsala Slott

Figure 47. Bohus Fästning

Figure 48. Temple of Ancient Virtue

Figure 49. Wolverton Folly.
(Carter, N 2021). Reprinted with permission

Figure 50. Temple de l'Amour.
(Dalbéra 2018). CC-BY-2.0

Figure 51. Aussichtsturm Hardwald.
(Bischof 2023). Reprinted with permission

Figure 52. Marsk Tower.
(Hjortshöj 2021). Reprinted with permission

SITE

Figure 53. Vasaplatsen from south border

Figure 55. Northern point of Vasaplatsen
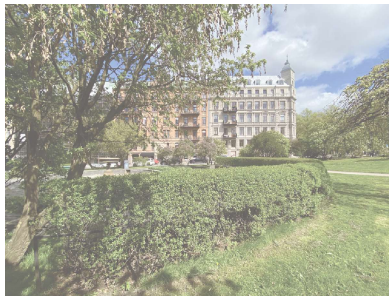

Figure 54. Vasaplatsen fountain and sitting area

Figure 56. Vasaplatsen and adjacent buildings

Vasaplatsen

The site was chosen in relation to the catalogue map, a place where corner towers are frequent.

Vasaplatsen, a small green area between Vasaparken and Kungsparken, was planned in the 1880's and finished in 1897. Surrounding it are the large housing blocks that are typical for the development in the late 19'th century. Every corner on the adjacent buildings is adorned with a corner tower.

The site is triangular, a leftover place where two rows of blocks meet each other at an angle. The site is mainly an open green area, edges with bus stops and a public restroom. The most prominent feature of the place is a large round fountain and sitting area in the middle of the site. The southern part has walking paths crossing the greenery while the narrower area toward the north corner only consists of a lawn.

Bordering the university library and connecting several tram lines, there is a lot of movement around the area but nothing that invites to interaction with the place.
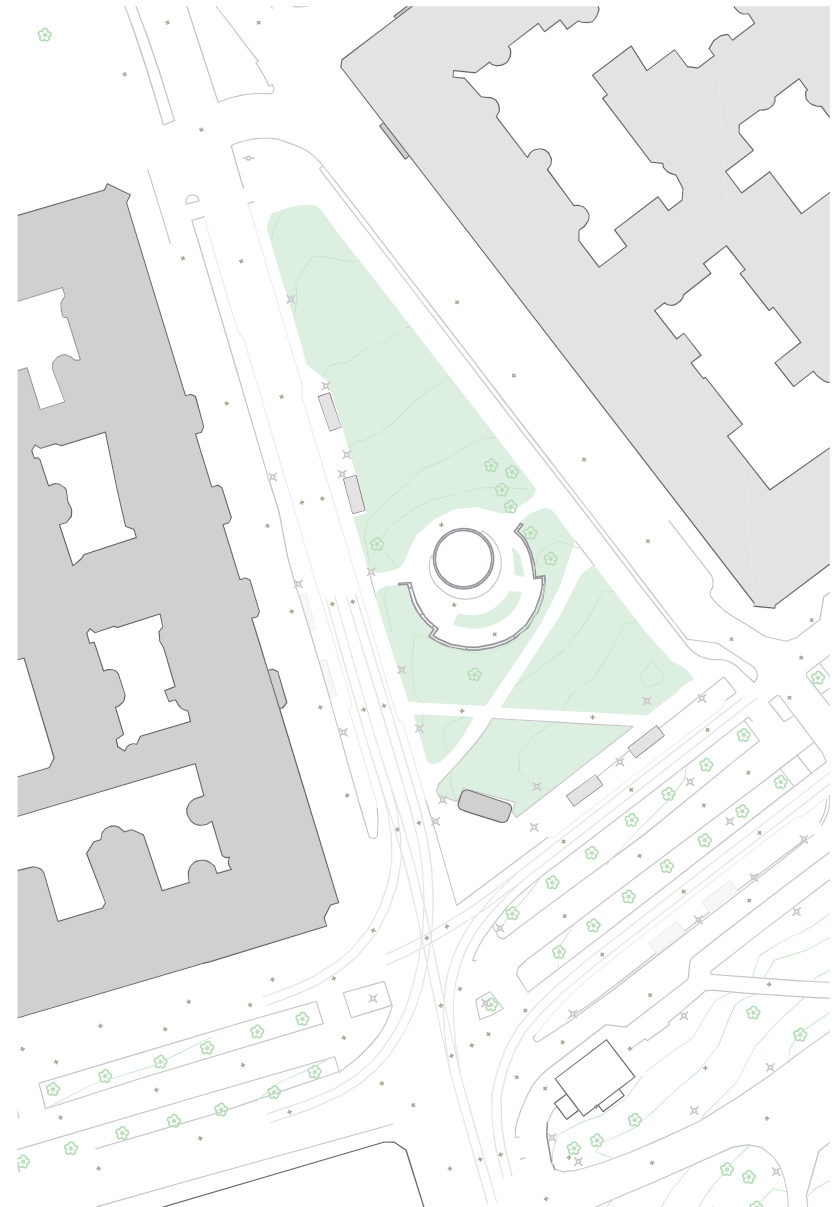
Figure 57 Site plan Vasaplatsen

REENACTMENT			CORNER TOWERS		RESULT
QUOTATION	PARAPHRASE	SPOLIA	PROVOCATIONS	ANSWERs	TYPOLOGIES
VOLUMETRIC IDENTITY	SPATIAL POSSIBILITIES	MODULARITY	LACK OF ACCESS	EXPERIENCE OF SPACE	THE FORTRESS
OCTAGONAL LOGIC	FICTION	MOVEMENT	UNEXPLORED SPATIAL POTENTIAL	EXPERIENCE OF MOVEMENT	
DECORATIVE ELEMENTS	VISUAL IDENTITY	ARTIFACTS	LACK OF ACCESS	SPOLIATING ORNAMENT	THE FOLLY
IRREGULARITY	ABSTRACTION	DECORATIVE ELEMENTS	ORNAMENT AS SYMBOL OF STATUS	REINTERPRETING ORNAMENT	
FROG PERSPECTIVE	OUTLINE	VIEW	LACK OF ACCESS	ACCESSING VIEW	THE WATCHTOWER
SILHOUETTE	VERTICALITY	SKYLINE	VERTICALITY AS SYMBOL OF EXCLUSION	VERTICALITY AS PUBLIC INSTALLATION	

INTRODUCTION PROJECT DRAWINGS

The project consists of the corner tower translated into the typologies introduced in the spoliation phase; the folly, the watchtower and the fortress.

The three different follies are extracted from the findings in the spoliation phase, through abstraction and alteration of the source material. They reflect the ornamental nature of the corner towers and in creating a place they create a relationship to this ornamentation.

The watchtower creates its own skyline reminiscent of that of the corner towers. It gives access to a high point over the city and a view. It is based on the modular exploration of the round room, a stacking of the rotunda. The stairs and are different on every level. In order to move from floor to floor the platforms will be placed differently and every floor gets its own identity. Here the question of access in itself became a generator for design.

The fortress is the larger of the constructions and this is about spatial experience. This structure is based on the circular space and octagonal logic as well as the method to work modularly with the rotunda. The fortress is about movement and experience; space, sequence, sightline, procession and destination. The specialness that space can be.

Each typology has its own relationship with the original corner towers and gives its own answers to the provocations mentioned.
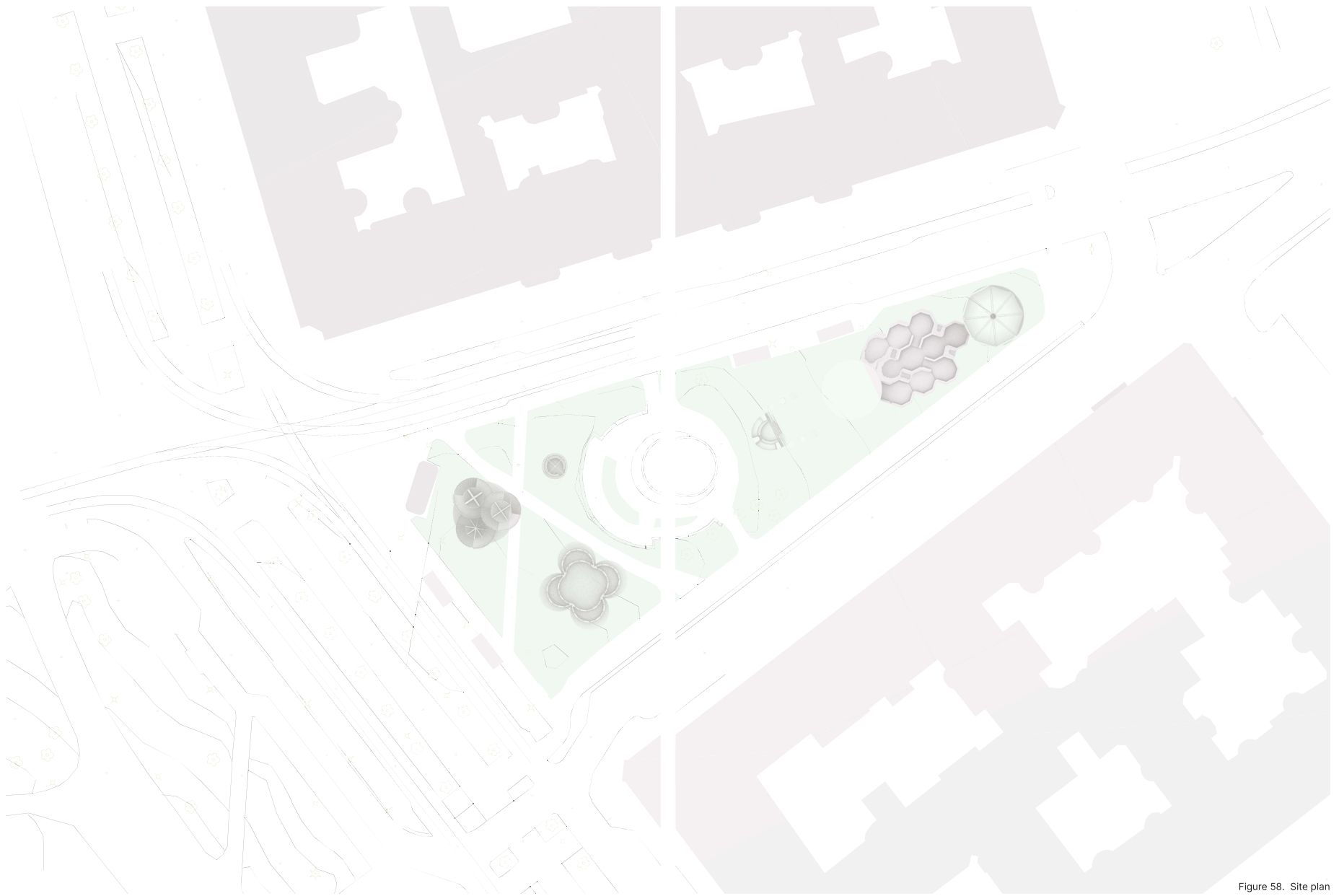
Figure 58. Site plan
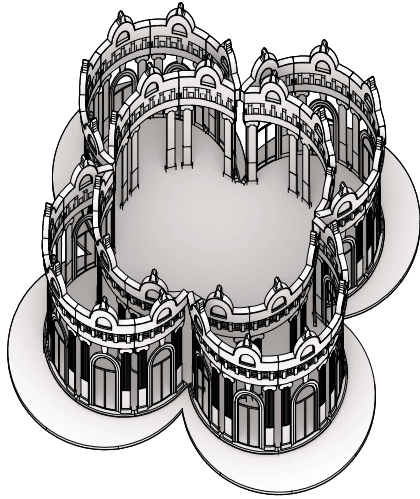
Figure 59. Folly 1 axonometric view
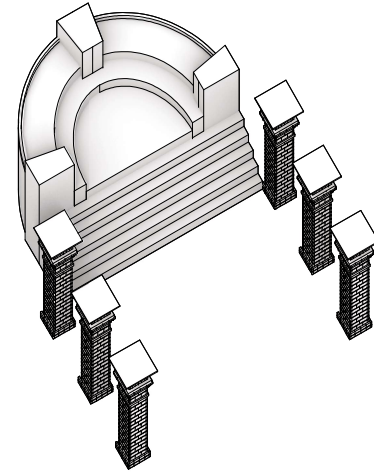
Figure 62. Folly 2 axonometric view
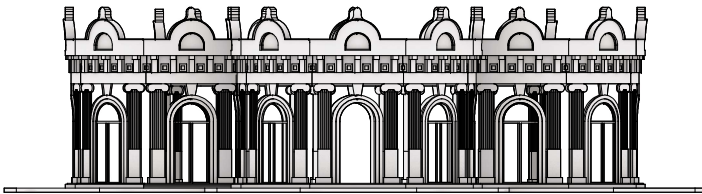
Figure 60. Folly 1 elevation
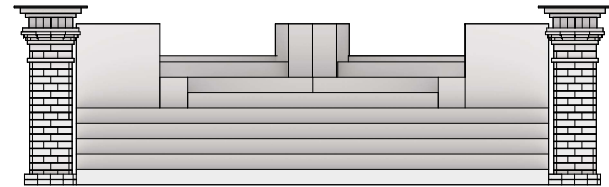
Figure 63. Folly 2 elevation
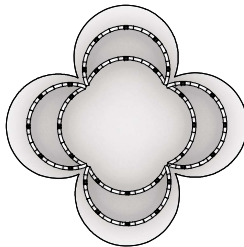
Figure 61. Folly 1 plan
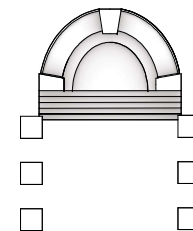
Figure 64. Folly 2 plan
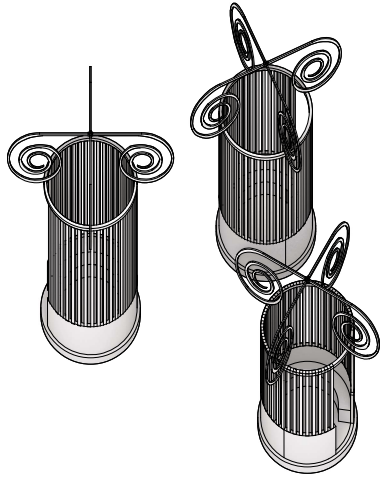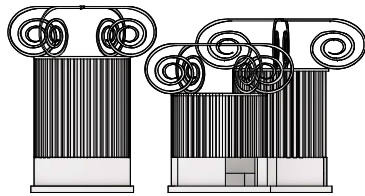
Figure 65. Folly 3 axonometric view
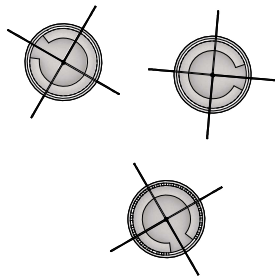

Figure 66. Folly 3 elevation

Figure 67. Folly 3 plan

Figure 68. Folly 1 interior view

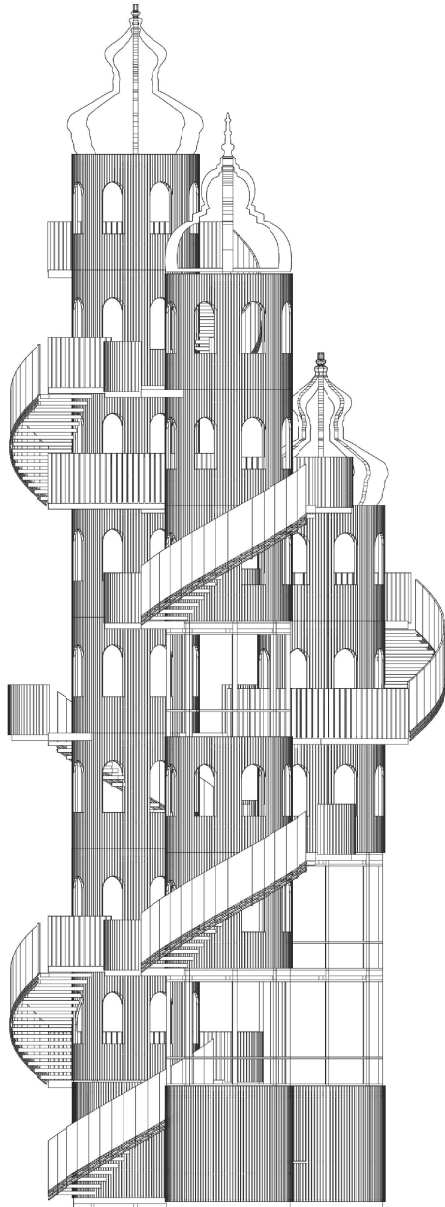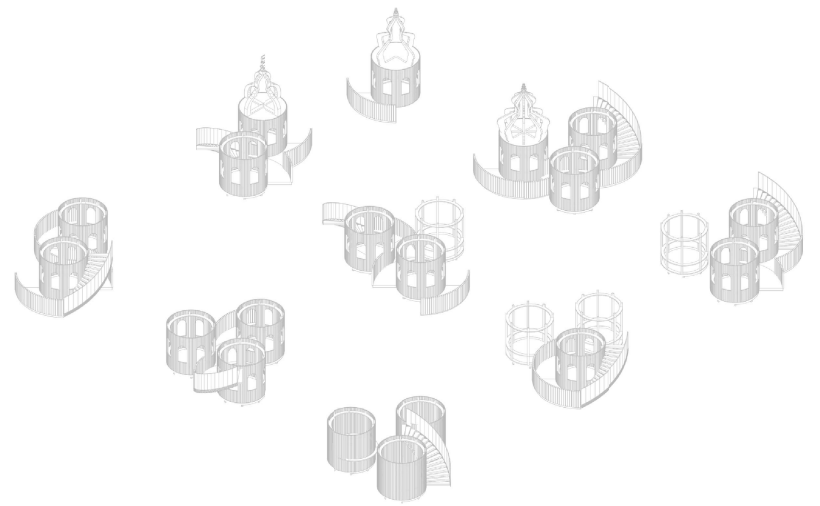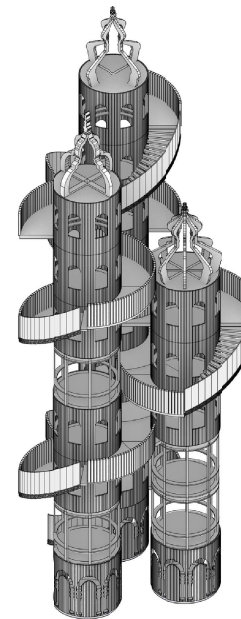Figure 69. Watchtower elevation

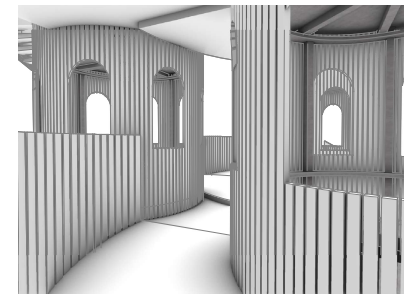Figure 70. Watchtower floors

Figure 72. Watchtower interior view

Figure 71. Watchtower axonometric view

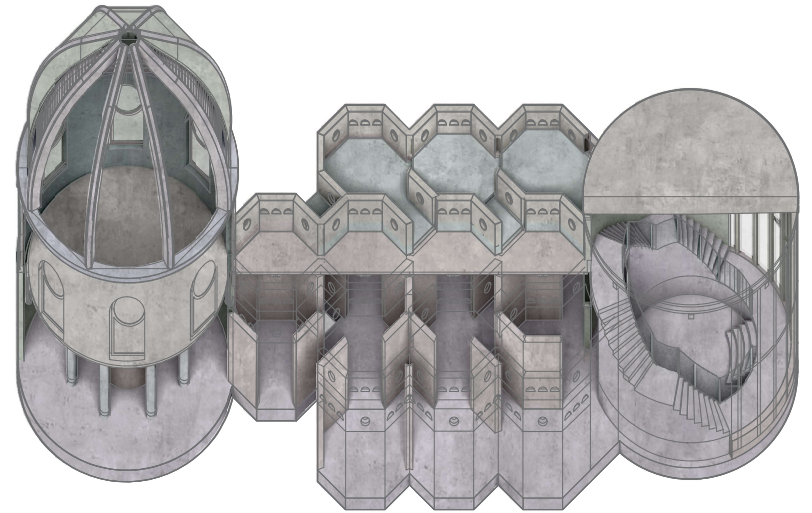Figure 73. Watchtower entrance view
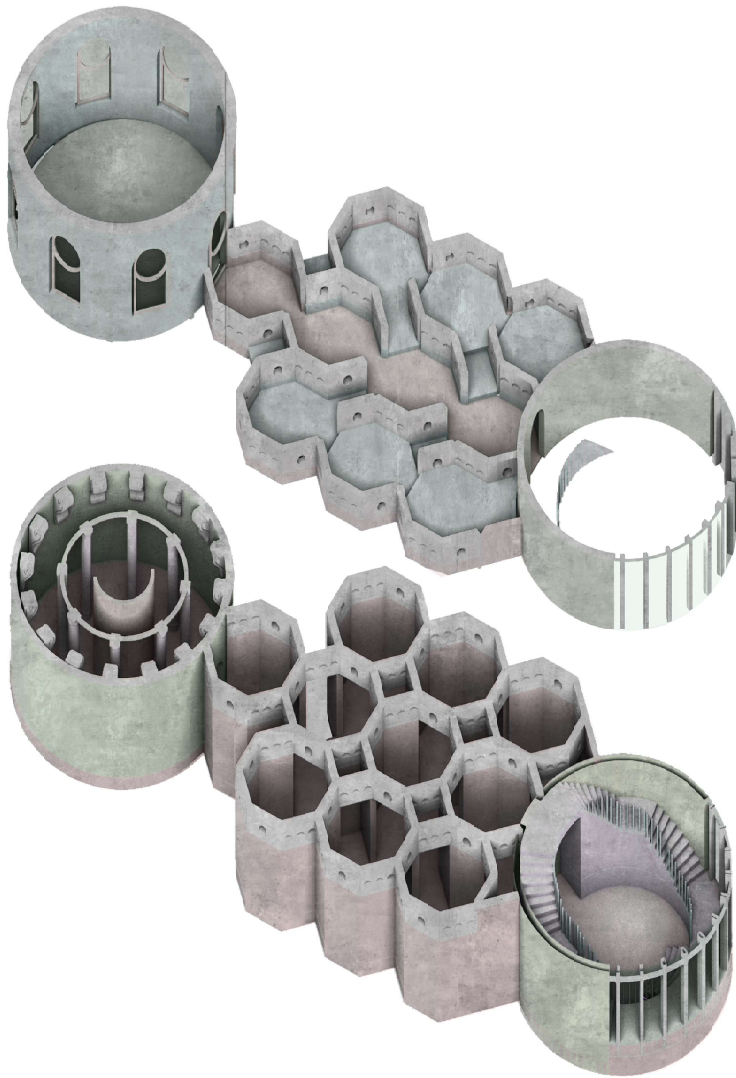
Figure 74. Fortress axonometric

Figure 75. Fortress section
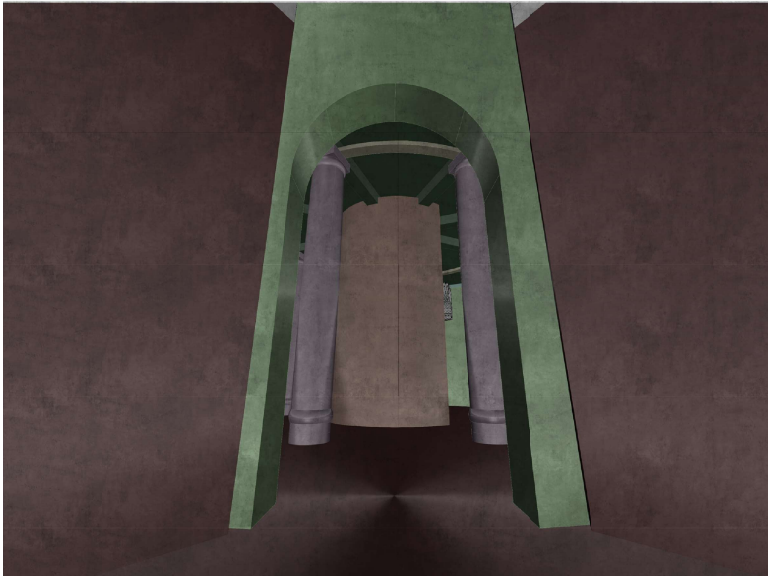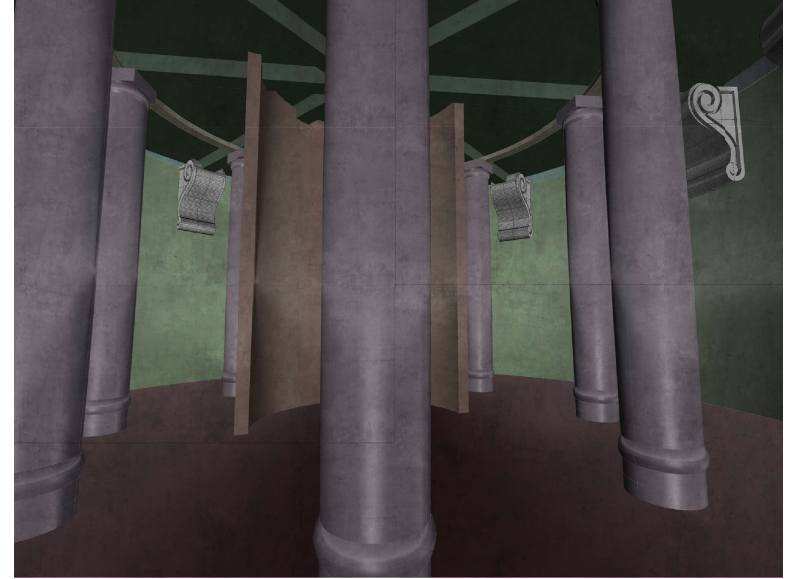

Figure 76. Fortress south elevation
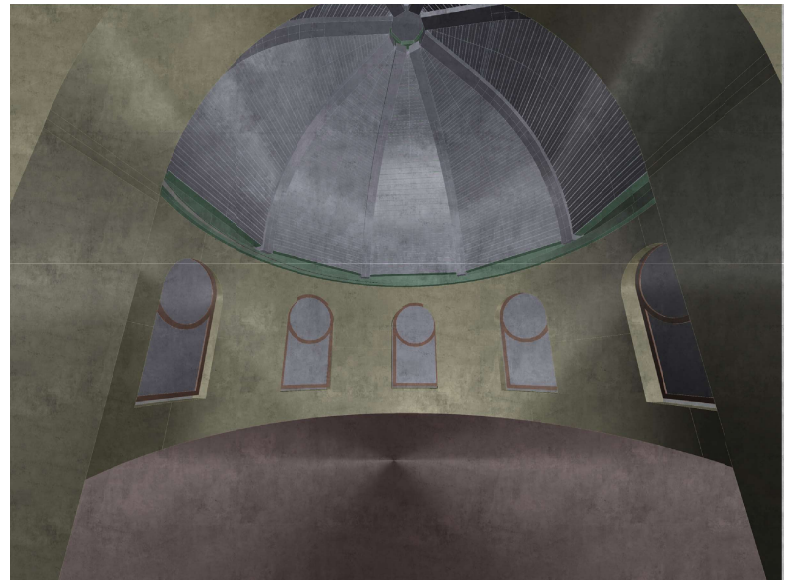
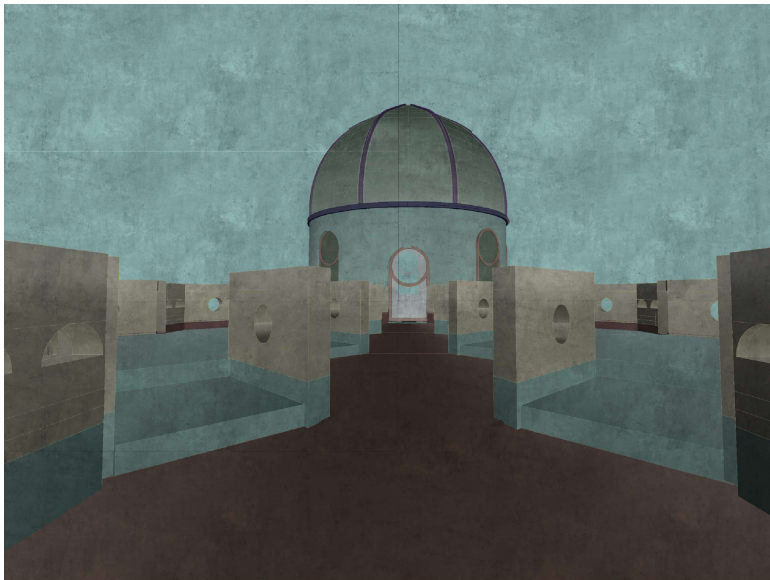Figure 77-80. Fortress interior drawings

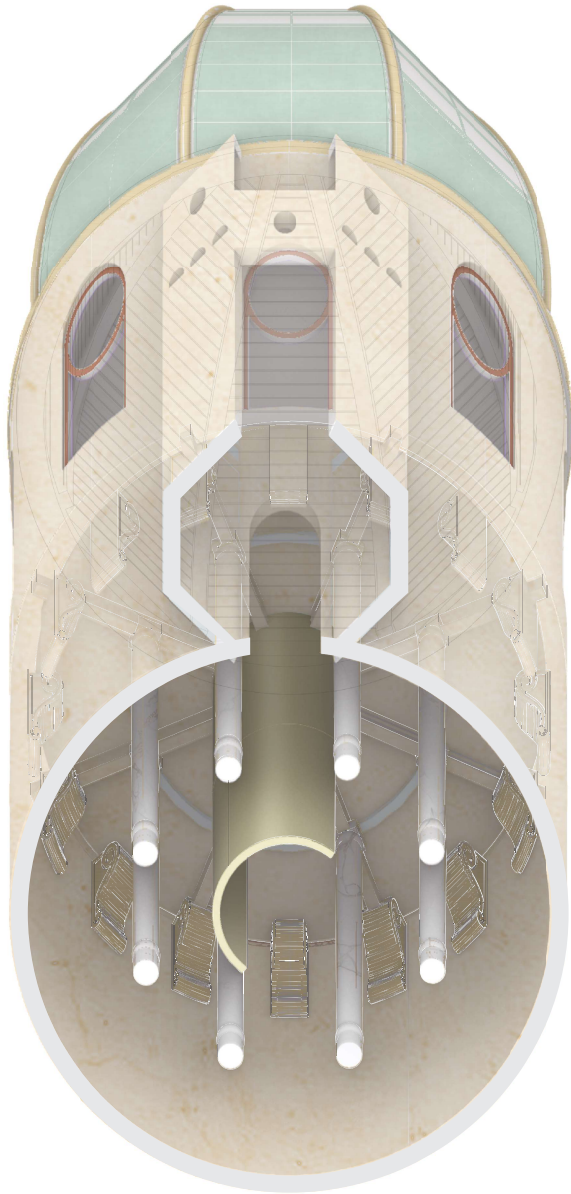Figure 81-84. Fortress interior drawings

Figure 85. Fortress rotunda axonometric

DISCUSSION

The corner towers as subject matter

The starting point of the thesis was the typology of the corner tower, visually interesting but generally overlooked in both permit drawings and literature and inaccessible to the public. The question of access cannot be solved in a literal way. Instead, what has been carried out is a project to challenge their anonymous nature. The lack of documentation or written information to be found about the corner towers indicates that lack of access leads to lack of attention. The project directs attention to the corner towers by using them as reference for a new design.

Re-enactment as method

The theory of re-enactment says that architecture legitimises itself by building on what already exists. Jacob describes re-enactment as a phenomenon that develops over time, almost accidentally. This thesis has used re-enactment in a deliberate way, mimicking the way re-enactment occurs by translating it into method. The project shows an extreme version of re-enactment, where the result of radical change through repetition has been an established goal from the beginning.

Re-enactment has been methodized and applied to the corner towers with a double aim; both to explore what is and to create something new. Analysing architecture through the theory of re-enactment can give an explanation to where the architectural idea came from and why it has been developed. By connecting the theory of re-enactment to method, using re-enactment as generator for the creation of something new, different findings are discovered. Architecture will be read and understood by its visual identity, its design implications.

Quotation is the straightforward relation to the existing, a reuse of an existing idea. Paraphrase is the interpretation and alteration of the existing, radically changing the original by recontextualising it. Spoliation can be both, the direct replication (or simply literal reuse) of an original and the alteration of the original by the introduction of a new context. All of these methods are inherent in the theory of re-enactment, but as methods they are actionable in a way re-enactment is not. By connecting theory to method, re-enactment becomes actionable. Starting with extracting information through quotation, in order to then alter and reapply the information, the design project is a re-enactment of the visual identity of the corner towers.

Working with and against lack of access

Although the lack of access to the corner towers was an important starting point for the project, the quest for access was never literal. Instead, by working actively with the lack of access, the corner towers are represented and understood just as they are perceived. The lack of access is highlighted to become a source of curiosity. Rather than documenting the actual, it is the possibilities that become the point of focus.

This is also where the possibility for radical change comes into play. The lack of access leads to a lack of information that opens the door for alterations and fictions to enter the design. This approach is in contrast to Villa Rotunda Redux, by FAT, that was presented as a reference. FAT's version of Villa Rotunda consists of a very thorough documentation. While still concerned with the altered version of an original, in this case it is not the documentation, but the replication process, that leads to alteration.

Typology as subject matter

The project has similarities with Pasticcio Tower and A Birthday Cake for Ghent University in that it has taken input from a collection of architecture, rather than from a single building. Both of the reference projects are the creation of something radically new by reusing already existing pieces of architecture. In the same way, the corner towers as typology has informed the design project as a re-enactment of a fragment of architectural history. This indicates that the method of re-enactment can be applied to larger historical or typological contexts than to only one building at a time. The method of re-enactment, documenting what is with the purpose of creating something new, can be an alternative way of understanding architecture.

Transferring value and meaning

The project aimed to expand the understanding of the corner towers by using their visual and symbolic information as foundation for a new work of architecture.

By defining the provocations of the corner towers and having the new design answer them the original values have been extracted and re-enacted. The meaning of the corner towers has been transferred to the new work by transferring their visual identity and their possibilities as space, volume and ornament.

REFERENCE LIST

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