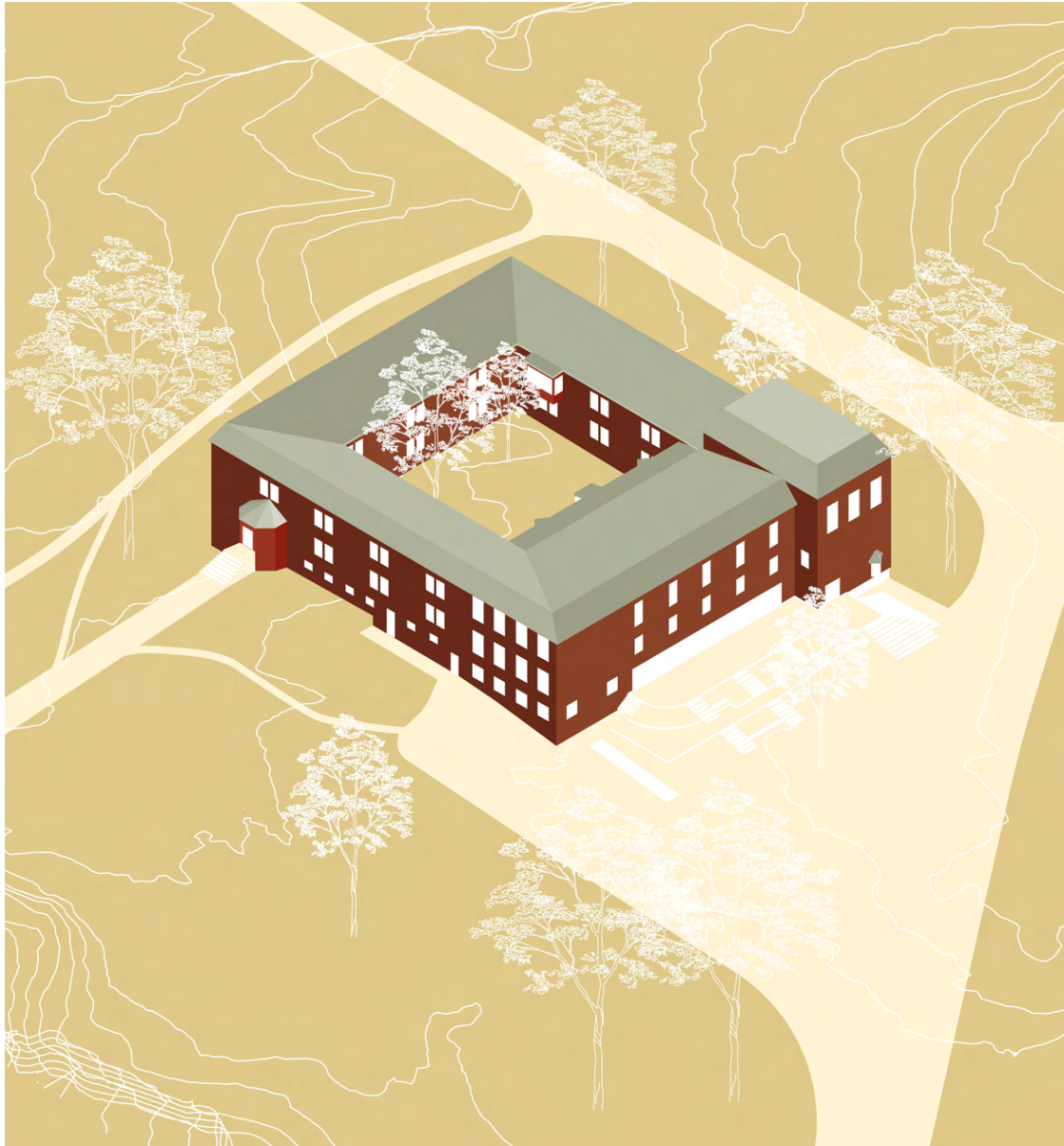


PAST EDEN:

Reversing the narrative of adaptive reuse from the past to the future



Lovisa Andersson
2026

Architectural experimentation
Chalmers School of Architecture
Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering

Examiner Daniel Norell
Supervisor Sara Olsson

Past Eden:

**Reversing the narrative of adaptive reuse
from the past to the future**

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Master thesis

Chalmers School of Architecture
Department of Architecture & Civil Engineering
Architecture and Urban Planning, MPARC
Architectural Experimentation: Before and After Building

Examiner: Daniel Norell
Supervisor: Sara Olsson



CHALMERS
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

ABSTRACT

Historically the pragmatism of necessity and scarcity have been reasons for adapting existing buildings to accommodate for changing needs, a practice called adaptive reuse. Increased interest in the practice in the 70's due to raised awareness of the necessity to conserve resources generated alternative approaches (Wong, 2017). The extent expanded and introduced transmission of past narratives and preservation of heritage, which is the prominent approach within theory on adaptive reuse (Plevoets & Cleempoel, 2023).

This thesis criticizes adaptive reuse for its nostalgic tendencies, which are problematized and explained through the constant exposure to crisis and fatalistic narratives that render the future hopeless. This predisposes seeking certainty and stability in the known condition of the past (Bauman, 2017). The nostalgia emerges from a lack of hope for the future.

Through the concept of crisis the thesis aims to challenge conventional strategies of adaptive reuse. The principles of *aemulatio*, an adaptive reuse approach aspiring to preserve the intention of the model while surpassing the original (Plevoets & Cleempoel, 2019), is applied to the development of the strategy. The aim is to reverse the narrative from focusing on the past to the future, anticipating contingency as potential instead of limitation.

The theoretical framework consists of Lacaton & Vassal's analysis of the existing, separating the continuous and changeable through the concept Hardware/Software by KOSMOS and two built cases; Thoravej 29 by Pihlmann Architects with cyclical transformation on all scales and Spore Initiative Auditorium by AFF Architekten that embraces patina as potential. The four approaches synthesize in a strategy of how to approach the existing through critical subtraction, addition and reconfiguration.

The strategy is investigated through transforming the Old Court of Appeal situated in Renströmsparken, Gothenburg. The good condition and few interventions to the original design by Hakon Ahlberg in 1948, makes it subject to investigate the absence of nostalgia. The vision for the area as an epicenter for art, culture and humanities have shaped the program; a space for creation and sharing of knowledge through artistic practices in a public realm with interventions extending from urban scale to furniture.

KEYWORDS

Crisis, Contingency, Potential, Hope, Cyclical

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AIM

This thesis derives from an observation of a nostalgic pattern in previous theses and the literature on adaptive reuse. It questions the development of the practice and its tendencies to focus on the history and past narratives of the building, since it emerged from pragmatism and necessity to preserve resources. This thesis aims to investigate an alternative approach that enables current or new narratives to proceed into the future and accommodate continuous use and adaptation.

THESIS QUESTIONS

- (1) How can the practice of adaptive reuse be reworked to avoid nostalgia and focus on future narratives?
- (2) How can the reconfiguration within a project create new possibilities while conserving resources?

DELIMITATIONS

Though the thesis is discussing the concept of crisis, it is merely used to describe and problematize the development and nostalgia imbued in adaptive reuse. It does not aim to solve any crisis, as the complexity of the systemic interconnectedness of crisis exceeds the scope of this thesis by far.

The thesis is academic work and does not physically intervene with the building, which limits the analysis to be theoretical. Such a project would require destructive processes to test durability and properties of components, as well be an iterative process as the project proceeds. Therefore, the thesis is limited to the potential of the spatial organization, which is the important part of the investigation for the thesis.

The thesis is about:

Adaptive reuse
Pragmatism, potential and contingency
Material and future narrative
Nostalgia

The thesis touches upon:

The climate crisis
Speculation

The thesis is not about:

Aesthetics
Economic aspects
Historic or heritage preservation

DICTIONARY

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Adaptive reuse: | Architectural approach to retrofit existing buildings to new situations and needs. Securing them for continued use and relevance. |
| Crisis: | A critical phase or moment impending change. This thesis acknowledges it as a neutral notion, though commonly considered negative. |
| Speculation: | A process where land value exceeds the value of the property, causing buildings to be rendered obsolete prematurely, demolished and reconstructed in pursuit of financial return. |
| Presentism: | Ahistorical understanding of time only concerned with the present so that the past and future are rendered meaningless. The present is considered an infinite continuum. |

METHOD

Emerging from the **discourse (1)** of the thesis, explaining the development of the practice, the nostalgia and problematizes the current condition, the thesis is then investigated through an iterative process of three (2 - 4) intertwined phases;

The **theoretical framework (2)**, essentially based on studies of approaches and concepts from projects and practices identified as pragmatic and future-oriented due to the lack of literature on the topic. However, the theory additionally addresses the assessment and development of the design strategy, by applying a strategy originally meant to be applied to design.

The design strategy, developed through aemulatio and building upon the original intent of adaptive reuse, aims to set overarching principles for how to approach the existing condition. Through **situating (3)** the project within the

context of the transformation of the Old Court of Appeal, the strategy is refined to the specific building through the approach, subordinate to the strategy.

The strategy and approach are tested, iterated and developed further through the fourth phase, presented in a refined **result (4)**. Experiments are completed through appropriate mediums like sketches and refined drawings, illustrations, digital models and visualizations, eventually synthesized in a project, additionally presented with physical models and drawings of the entity.

To **conclude (5)** the thesis it is summarized and discussed through its outcomes and contributions to the discourse.

BACKGROUND

Adaptive reuse

The practice of *adaptive reuse* has existed since *time immemorial*. Due to construction being expensive and requiring labor- and resource intensive work, historically existing buildings were adapted to meet new needs and remain relevant (Plevoets & Cleempoel, 2019). Due to technological development and industrialization both cost and labor decreased, favoring new construction as it was able to meet more specific requirements. However, during the second part of the 20th century the awareness of the necessity to conserve resources was raised, which increased interest in the practice of adaptive reuse. The extent was expanded with the introduction of alternative approaches, where the transmission of past narratives and history of the building became essential (Wong, 2017). This related adaptive reuse to the practice of heritage preservation which directed the discourse towards how to approach the new versus old. The pragmatism in the original practice received little attention in literature and architecture history, causing the approach concerned with the historic narrative to be prominent in the theory of adaptive reuse (Plevoets & Cleempoel, 2019, p.8).



Figure 1
Open source

Crisis and nostalgia

The notion adaptive reuse was first noted in 1973. This coincides with the global oil crisis, which was the cause of the increased awareness of conserving natural resources that led to the interest in the practice (Wong, 2017). Crisis is a concept that is defined as the exception to what is considered as the "normal" situation (Crijns, 2021, p.171). It is a state that should be undone, solved or overcome, with the aim of exiting the exceptional condition and return to the previous or a stable phase. Wong (2017, p.35) interprets that "[...] change to or within an existing structure necessitates a reckoning of that order". The order being the current configuration and the reckoning the transformative process. Considering the order to be a stable state of the building, adaptive reuse can be seen as the exceptional state impending change, connecting adaptive reuse to the concept of crisis.

The understanding of crisis as exceptional is insufficient within the current sociopolitical context (Crijns, 2023). With globalization and increased dependency crises such as recessions, pandemics, natural disasters, conflicts etc. are succeeding each other, causing crisis to have become an intrinsic condition to the existence of modern societies (Lefebvre, 2014, cited in Gabuer et al. 2022, p. 11). Through media we are successively exposed to crises and the fatalistic narratives they entail, which renders the future uncertain and causes an inability to imagine prospects for the future (Crijns, 2023). In times of uncertainty, we are prone to seek stability and order in the past (Bauman, 2017). However, the *status quo ante* is a distorted understanding of what has been affected by the selective memorizing and forgetting. The nostalgia we are experiencing are biased by the illusion of "the good old days" (Bauman, 2017).

According to Boym (cited in Bauman, 2017) the nostalgia derives from "[...] an affective yearning for a community with a collective memory, a longing for continuity in a fragmented world". Historically the built environment has induced a sense of continuity and stability. When buildings had outlived their function, they were either retrofitted or went through a slow and incomplete destruction (Cantacuziono cited in Plevoets & Cleempoel, 2019, pp.7-8). Speculation (see dictionary, eds note) have accelerated the destruction and detached the expected lifespan from the technical. In favor of profit buildings are demolished prematurely, a system that wastes resources and emits unnecessary emissions (HouseEurope!, 2025).

The building industry, responsible for approximately 36% of carbon dioxide emissions (HouseEurope!,2025), is a main contributor to the climate crisis. The transition necessary in the industry require the *modus operandi* to change - to endure a crisis. As previously stated, the return to a past state is neither possible nor desirable. The ambition must be to succeed the present condition.

[02] **THEORY**

THEORY

How to approach...

...the issue

Potential in contingency

The concepts of crisis and temporality are interconnected through ideas about progress, renewal and contingency (Crijns, 2023). As past and present conditions are known, the idea about contingency is provided to relate to the future. Contingency has throughout the past two decades been rendered negative, caused by connecting it to the concept of *risk* (Crijns, 2023, pp. 87-88). The probability and severity of future scenarios become quantifiable estimations measurable against the present, where the fatalistic narratives mentioned in the background contribute to *presentism* (see dictionary, eds note) and *crisis thinking* (Crijns, 2023, p.88). Crisis thinking is an urgent and reactive mindset that not only lacks critical thinking but also has a negative impact on our imaginative ability.

Through reversing the sentiment this thesis *approaches the issue* by anticipates contingency as a positive and exciting notion. Situating the theory within the practice of adaptive reuse, the potential of the existing and how it can be transformed for the future is investigated, starting with *how to approach the strategy*.

...the strategy

Aemulatio

In the book *Adaptive Reuse of the Built Heritage* Plevoets and Cleempoel (2019) introduces aemulatio. It is a strategy within adaptive reuse that questions the modern frameworks' advocacy for a distinction between old and new. Aemulatio acknowledges history as an iterative and ongoing process, which allows for interventions to deviate from the preservative approach. The strategy instead aspires to preserve the intention of the model, aiming to surpass the original (Plevoets & Cleempoel, 2019). Aemulatio is not applied to the project, but the strategy itself, aiming to build upon and surpass the original intention of adaptive reuse.

As mentioned in the background, adaptive reuse emerged from necessity and pragmatism. The intention was to enable continued use of existing buildings with limited resources (Wong, 2017). Today we have great access to resources, both material, technical and knowledge-wise, but the climate crisis requires a restrained and responsible use. The original intention for parsimony remains, but the means to approach adaptive reuse has evolved. This allows great potential to surpass the original model.

“Never demolish, never remove or replace, always add, transform and reuse”

- quote from the manifesto of Lacaton & Vassal from their book *PLUS*, authored in collaboration with Frederice Drout (cited in Huber, 2016)

...the project



Figure 2
Transformation of G, H, I Buildings, Grand Parc, 530 Units,
Social Housing. Lacaton & Vassal with Frédéric Druot and
Christophe Hutin

Lacaton & Vassal

The French architecture studio approaches their projects from the current condition of the building. Anne Lacaton emphasizes the importance of allocating time to make the effort of carefully examining the existing to understand the possibilities and deficiencies. This becomes the point of departure for the projects (The Pritzker Prize, n.d.). Through the percept to “never demolish”, they add to, transform and reuse the existing to optimize the configuration and increase the use. Their careful analysis and critical approach make more out of what already exists while covering all three aspects of sustainability. (The Pritzker Prize, n.d.). Their pragmatic and frugal approach emphasizes the potential through preserving the values, not the history, of the existing.

Hardware / Software - KOSMOS

In the competition to transform three high-rises in the South-west of Zurich, KOSMOS Architects approached the existing buildings through developing the concept Hardware/Software (Kitaev, 2024). Separating the Hardware, the rigid system that is continuous, and the Software, the temporary and changeable system within, the potential of the one-off structure to accommodate continuous adaptations were investigated. The transformation aims to identify an open system within the existing material order that is realized through strategic interventions and partial demolition (Kitaev, 2024, p.97). The openness in the Hardware is utilized through the Software, that allows the spaces to comply with specific requirements. The approach not only responds to changing needs within the existing structure but requires the occupants to continuously assess and configure the space according to their needs. It allows the occupants to create their own narratives in the building and provides the agency to change the narrative without intervening with the Hardware. The approach is sprung from KOSMOS stance that architecture is more than the built, concerning the uses and users of the buildings (Kitaev, 2024, p.101).

THORAVEJ 29

**by Pihlmann Architects
Copenhagen, Denmark. 2025.**

The transformation of this former factory from the 60's located in Copenhagen treats all the available resources as valuable assets. Removed components are stored on-site as a material bank with the intention of reusing as much as possible in the final project. Through a pragmatic approach to the components, considering their physical properties instead of conventional use or aesthetic value, they are processed to different degrees. Some are kept in the building as found, while others are processed into new material configurations. As a result, 95% of the initial building was reused or recycled in the project, decreasing both waste and emissions compared to new construction. The cyclical approach is applied on all scales, from structure to furniture. In some cases, the scales are permuted – as seen on the photograph to the left where a cutout of a slab becomes part of a table.

(Pihlmann Architects, 2025)

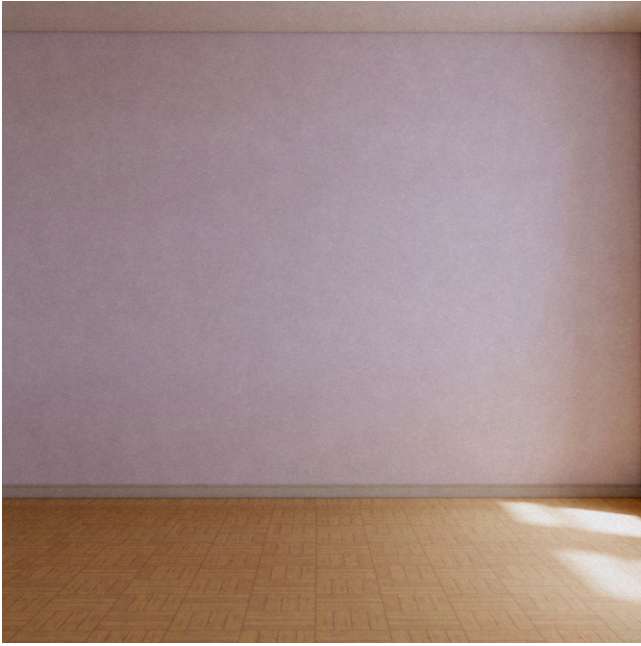
SPORE INITIATIVE - AUDITORIUM

**by AFF Architekten
Berlin, Germany. 2023.**

Part of a greater project and material context that praises the properties and natural aging process as a sustainable approach, these industrially produced chairs are revitalized. In the 50's they were mass produced and commonly found in public buildings, but due to reluctance to traces of wear there is an abundance on the resale market. Collecting chairs from various places and accepting the wear, the project balances functionality, aesthetics and sustainability. This introduces a new perspective and challenges the discourse about contrasting or merging the past and present, embracing a pragmatic ad hoc approach and adding a foreign material narrative. The Spore Initiative however is a new construction but introduces reclaimed material to add character to contrast the new and add character to the project, as well as economic reasons.

(AFF Architekten, n.d.)

DESIGN STRATEGY



■ Existing



■ Subtraction



■ Addition

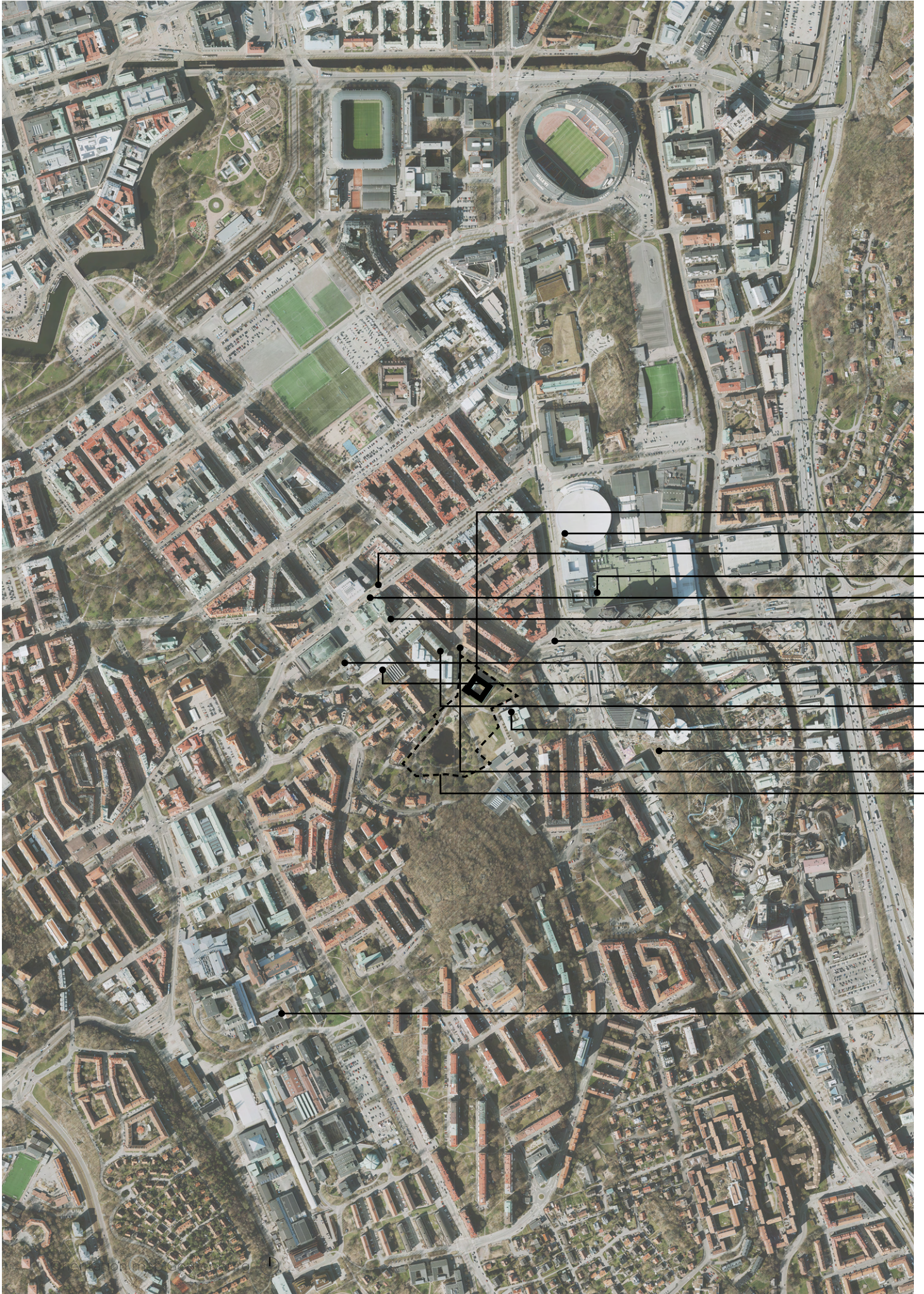


■ Reconfiguration

Color coding for the drawing material

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Existing | <p>The current condition of the building is examined to understand the structural, spatial and material prospects. Through identifying lacks and possibilities, the spatial and connective properties can be assessed for what interventions can increase the user value. The transformative process starts with a tendentious analysis to emphasize potential of the existing instead of the existing per se – already the analysis focuses on the future instead of present or past.</p> |
| Subtraction | <p>Driven by creating new spatialities and connections in between, the critical subtraction aims at increasing the long-term potential for use without further extensive interventions by increasing the adjustability and robustness of the system. Left-over materials generated in the process are available to be reused, but subtraction is not a tool to gather material. The subtraction is informed by the initial analysis.</p> |
| Addition | <p>To fill structural gaps caused by the subtraction or enable the use and connections of the spaces created, new matter is introduced to the project. Addition is driven by necessity to aid new configurations and should be limited.</p> |
| Reconfiguration | <p>The material subtracted from the building is reused within the project in a cyclical approach. To increase the manageability, it is processed on-site and moved to the new position. The amount of process depends on the material properties but focuses on future possibilities of continuous reuse rather than material integrity, as it does not equal usability.</p> <p>When applicable, reuse beyond the building's reconfiguration is considered. As the matter is foreign to the building, it could be considered an addition even though it is not new production, but as the approach aims for sustainability all reused material is considered reconfigured.</p> |

[03] **SITUATING**



CONTEXT - SITE

The Old Court of Appeal

| | |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| Adress | Olof Wijksgatan 6 |
| Plot name | Lorensberg 21:1 |
| Coordinates | 57°41'46"N 11°59'02"E |

| | |
|---|---|
| — | The Old Court of Appeal |
| — | Scandinavium |
| — | Lorensbergsteatern |
| — | Svenska Mässan |
| — | The public library |
| — | Gothenburg City Theatre |
| — | Korsvägen |
| — | Gothenburg Concert Hall |
| — | Art Museum |
| — | Artisten |
| — | Gothenburg University Library, Campus Näckrosen |
| — | Liseberg |
| — | Västlänken new entrance |
| — | Campus Näckrosen - Renströmsparken |

— Chalmers Johanneberg campus

Vision Näckrosen

Renströmsparken, the green area around campus Näckrosen has since the completion of the university library in 1954 been part of Gothenburg University's educational development (Akademiska hus & Göteborgs Universitet, 2018). The library is still located in the area, accompanied by the faculty for humanities and the faculty for art.

In the proximate area of the park there are many important cultural institutions apart from the university - they can be seen in relation to the selected building on the map to the left. Gothenburg University and Akademiska Hus, which are the property managers of the buildings, released a report for a vision plan for the area (Akademiska hus & Göteborgs universitet, 2018). Campus Näckrosen is stated as "[...] a transboundary epicenter for humanities, art and culture. An area for differences in the center of Gothenburg" (eds translation). The development is affected by two ongoing projects in the immediate area. The first is the refurbishment and addition to the art museum and the other the infrastructure project Västlänken, a new metro system to connect Gothenburg. One of the stations, Korsvägen, is planned to have an entrance in connection to the square in front of the building.



CONTEXT - BUILDING

| | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Architect | Hakon Ahlberg | |
| Building year | 1948 | |
| Function | 1948 - 1992 | Court of Appeal |
| | 1994 - 2020 | Gothenburg University |
| | 2020 - current | Vacant |
| BTA | Apr. 3600 m ² total | |

The Old Court of Appeal

The Court of Appeal was built in 1947-48 due to an increased workload. With time the supplied space became insufficient. In 1992 an extension to the building was denied, eventually causing the Court of Appeal to vacate from the building (Hovrätten för Västra Sverige, 2022).

Two years later, the building was claimed by Akademiska Hus that to current date possesses the property. It was used for educational purposes and became a part of Campus Näckrosen in Renströmsparken. An addition was done to secure accessibility in the building, extending the glazed façade toward the courtyard and adding an elevator and ramp. The building has been vacant since 2020 due to the construction of Västlänken adjacent to the building. Upon completion, activity is planned to resume.

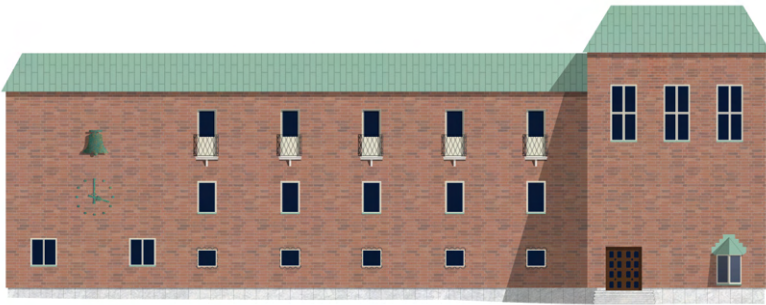
As seen on the orthophoto on the left, the building is enclosed around a courtyard. The building was intended to provide privacy, causing it to have a reserved expression and being anonymous in the area. The red brick façade is strictly organized with windows punctured in the brick structure and placed in an outer position. The main entrance is placed in the protruding part in the southwest corner. Except for the extension from the 90's the original design of the building is kept in an exceptional condition, making it an interesting subject to challenge the concept of nostalgia.

The following chapter presents the building in its current condition through drawings, photographs of the exterior and interior as well as an inventory of components within the building. It is concluded with presenting the approach; a situated version of the strategy on how to approach the specific transformation of the Old Court of Appeal, that becomes a guiding tool for the experiments in the result.

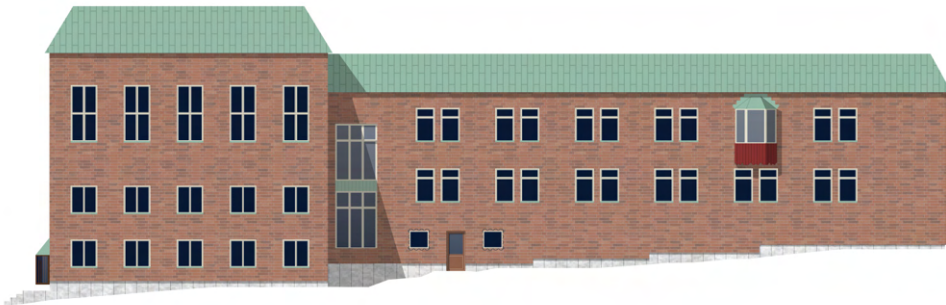


Site
scale 1 : 1000 (a4)





Elevation northwest
Scale 1: 400 (a4)



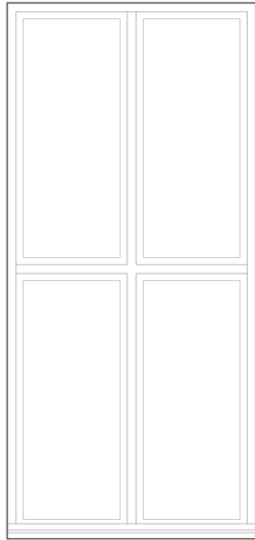
Elevation southwest
Scale 1: 400 (a4)



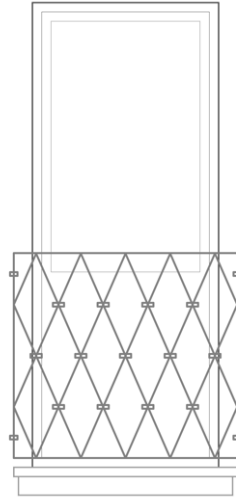
Elevation northeast
Scale 1: 400 (a4)



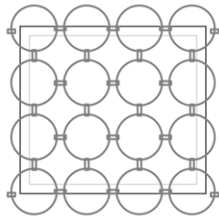
Elevation southeast
Scale 1: 400 (a4)



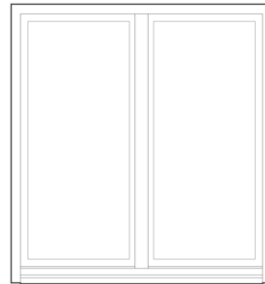
I. Window 1400 x 3000 (2450)
16 st
Seen in pic. d



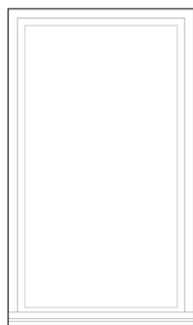
II. French balcony
5 st
Seen in pic. b



III. Window 1000 x 900
7 st
Seen in pic. c



IX. Window 1400 x 1500
16 st



X. Window 1000 x 1700
7 st
Seen in pic. b



XI. Window 1000 x 1800
112 st
Seen in pic. g



a. Entrance (NW)



b. Facade towards square (NW)



c. Details on facade (NW)



d. Meeting facade - roof (SE)



e. Courtyard



f. Courtyard: facade foyer



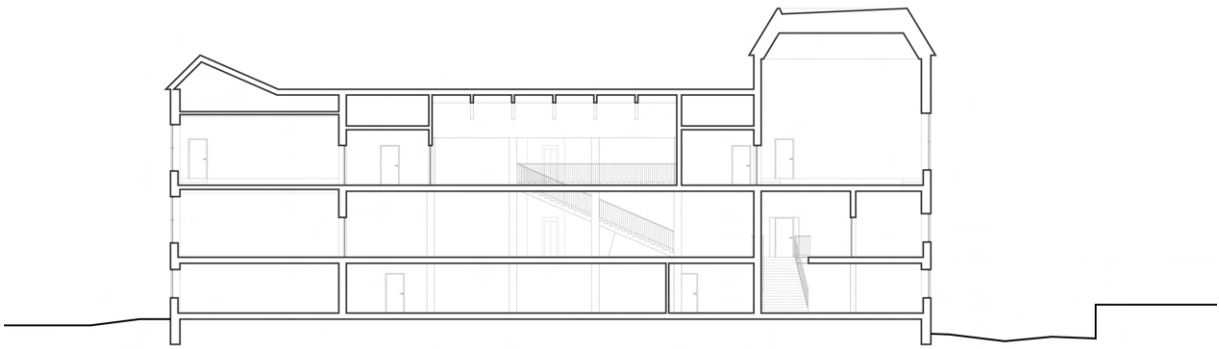
g. Prominent windows



h. Southeast facade



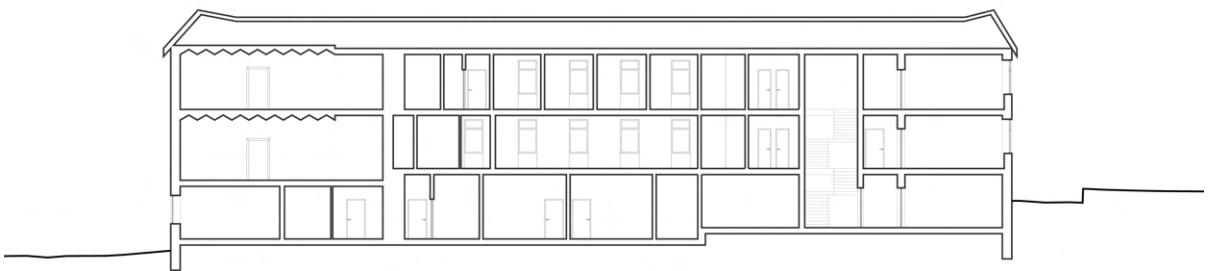
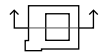
i. Staff entrance (NE)



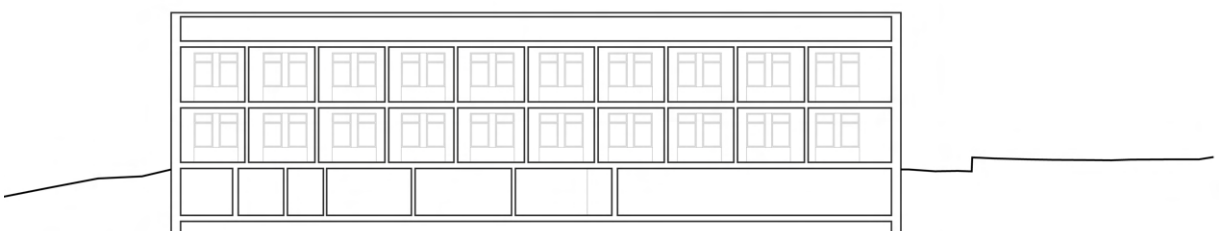
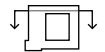
Section A
Scale 1: 400 (a4)



Section B
Scale 1: 400 (a4)



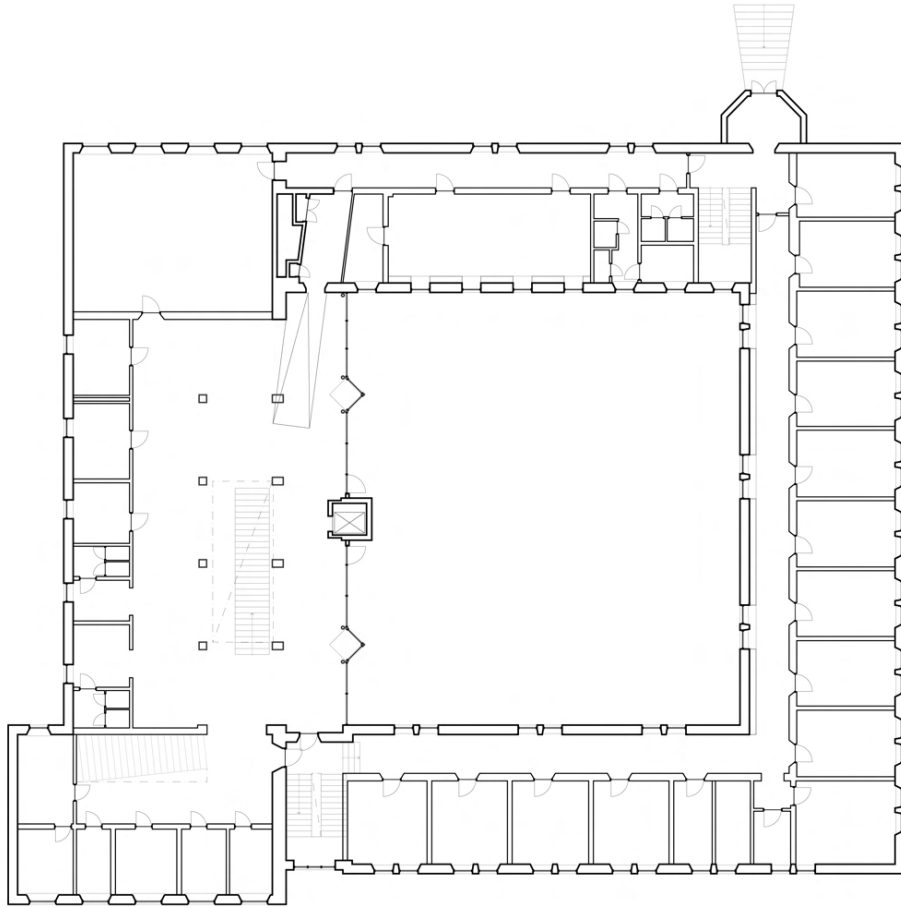
Section C
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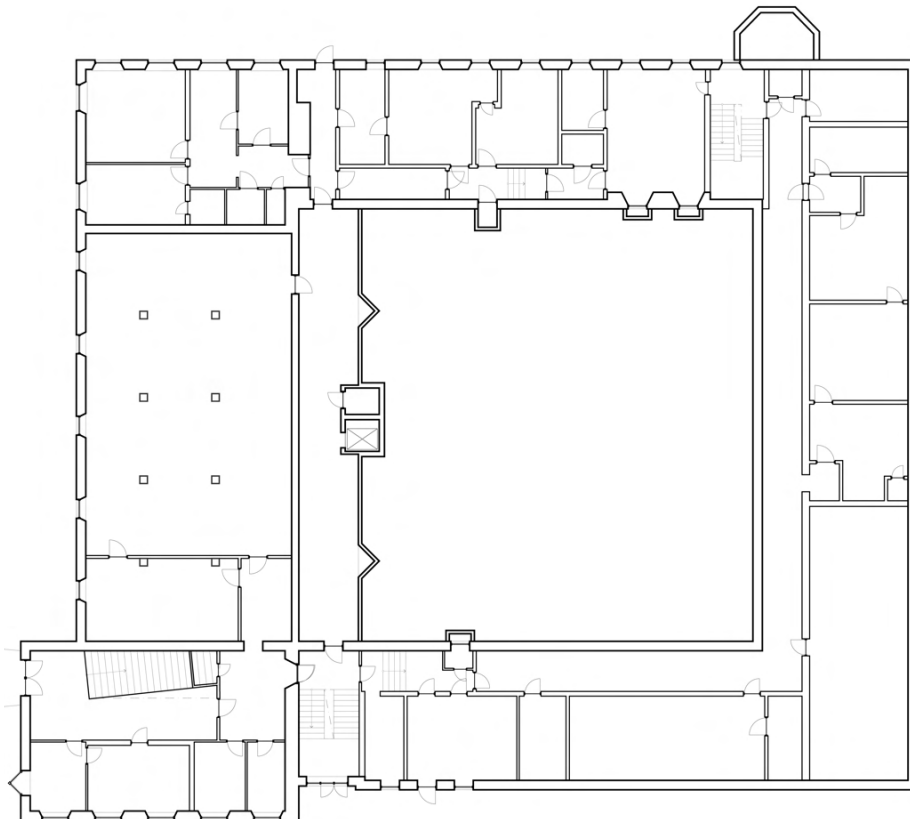
Section D
Scale 1: 400 (a4)

0 5 10m



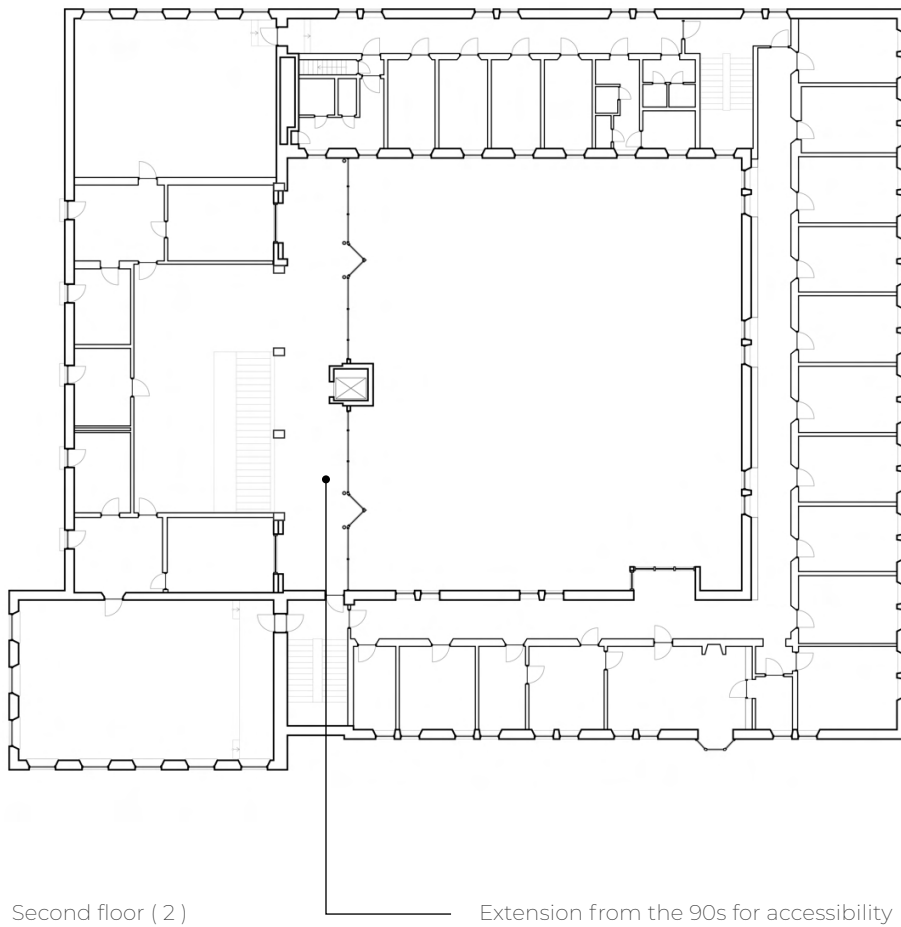


Entrance plan (1)
Scale 1 : 400 (a4)



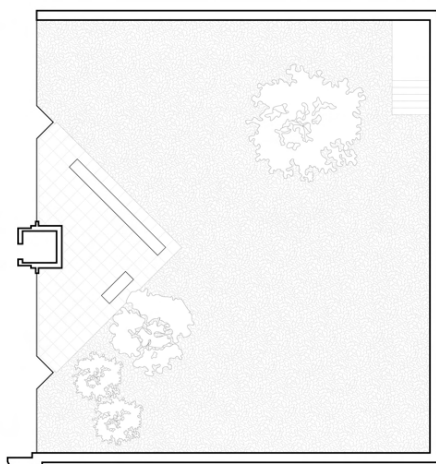
Basement (0)
Scale 1 : 400 (a4)





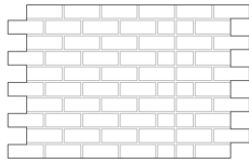
Second floor (2)
Scale 1: 400 (a4)

Extension from the 90s for accessibility

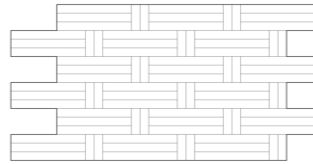
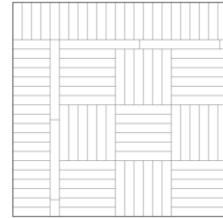
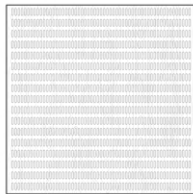
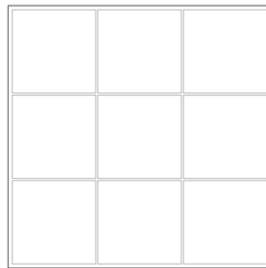


Existing courtyard (1)
Scale 1: 400 (a4)

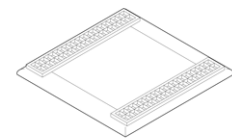
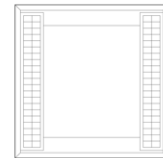
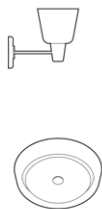
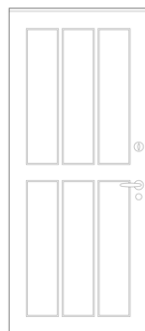
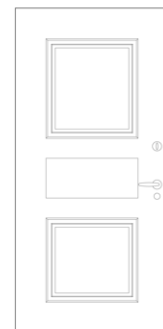
The plan is rigid with great part of the building consisting of an enfilade of offices with access from a thorough corridor. The office rooms are insufficient in size for modern offices as they are too large for a single office but too small to accommodate two. There are two staircases providing the building, one straight forward from the main entrance and the other in the opposite corner, with a separate entrance for staff in a red wooden protrusion. In the northwestern part of the building vertical communication is separate, as this initially was the public part of the building with the foyer connecting to the court rooms. The foyer is the only room that opens towards the courtyard, with a design and staircase with references to Asplund's city hall.



I. Floor basement

II. Floor courtrooms
Seen in pic. a & cIII. Floor offices
Seen in pic. bIV. Wall panels
Seen in pic. e

V. Acoustic panel

VI. Ceiling boards
Seen in pic. fVII. Wall light fixture
Ceiling light
Seen in pic. dVIII. Door
Seen in pic. dIX. Door
Seen in pic. c



a. Hallway



b. Office room



c. View towards niche southern wing



d. Foyer



e. Court room (NW corner)



f. Courtroom in tower



g. Foyer extension



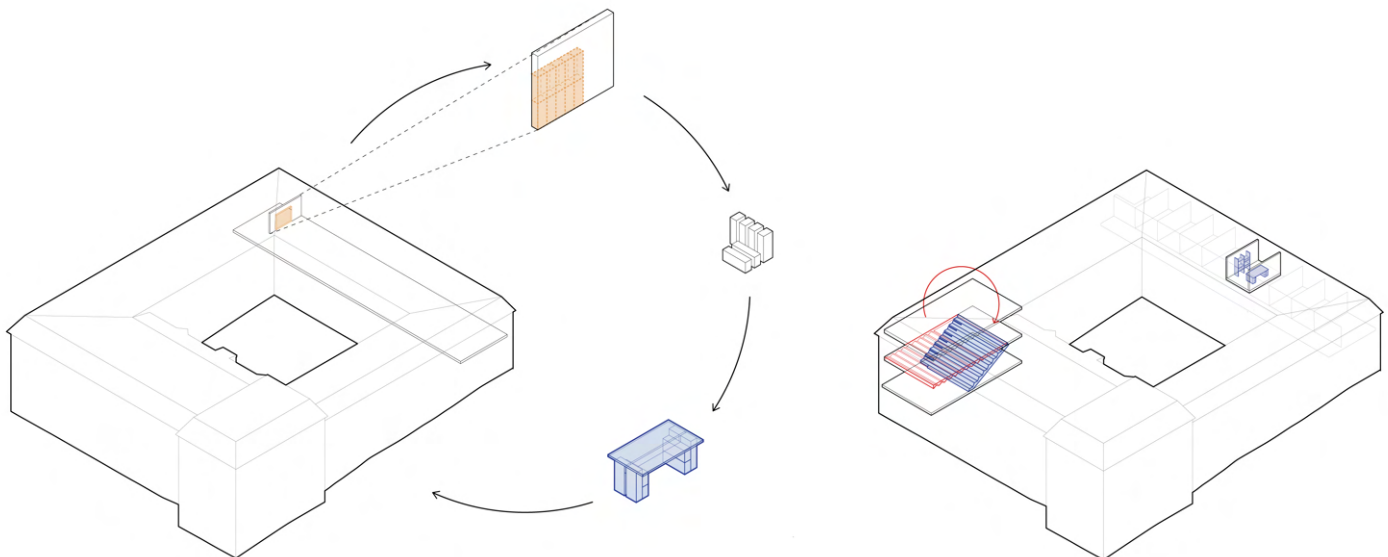
h. Stair in foyer



i. Basement

DESIGN APPROACH

The design approach is based upon the design strategy and theory but approaches the immediate building. Informed by the analysis, identifying the potential and deficiencies of the building, and situating it within the preferred program, four approaches that are aimed at project specific goals are developed:

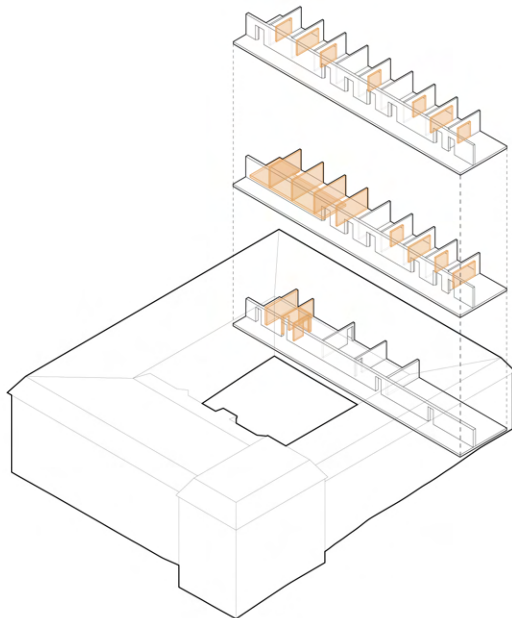


On-site reuse

An on-site cyclical approach to reuse, where the subtracted material is stored and if necessary processed at site. It aims to make the material more manageable and avoid partial demolition or disassembling to remove material. Depending on the component's physical properties different degrees and processes are used.

Scale

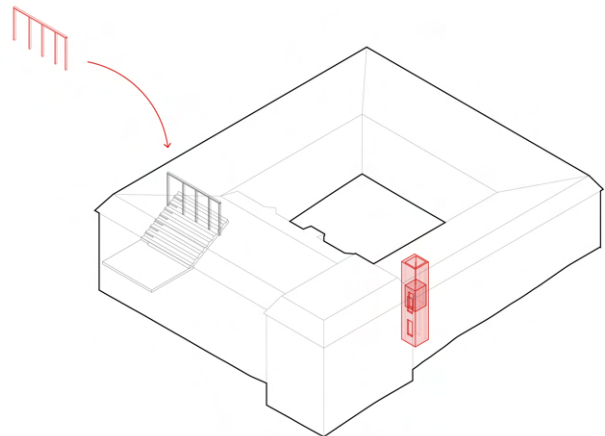
The design intervenes with all scales of the building – from urban to details and furniture. Spaces are reconfigured within defined rooms as well as the entity of the building and connection to the urban. The different scales help zoom in and out.



Enfilade

The old offices in southeast part of the building have a similar configuration as in KOSMOS project, making it appropriate for a similar approach. Spaces are opened up to accommodate a range of room sizes and combinations to adjust the software according to need.

Hardware / Software



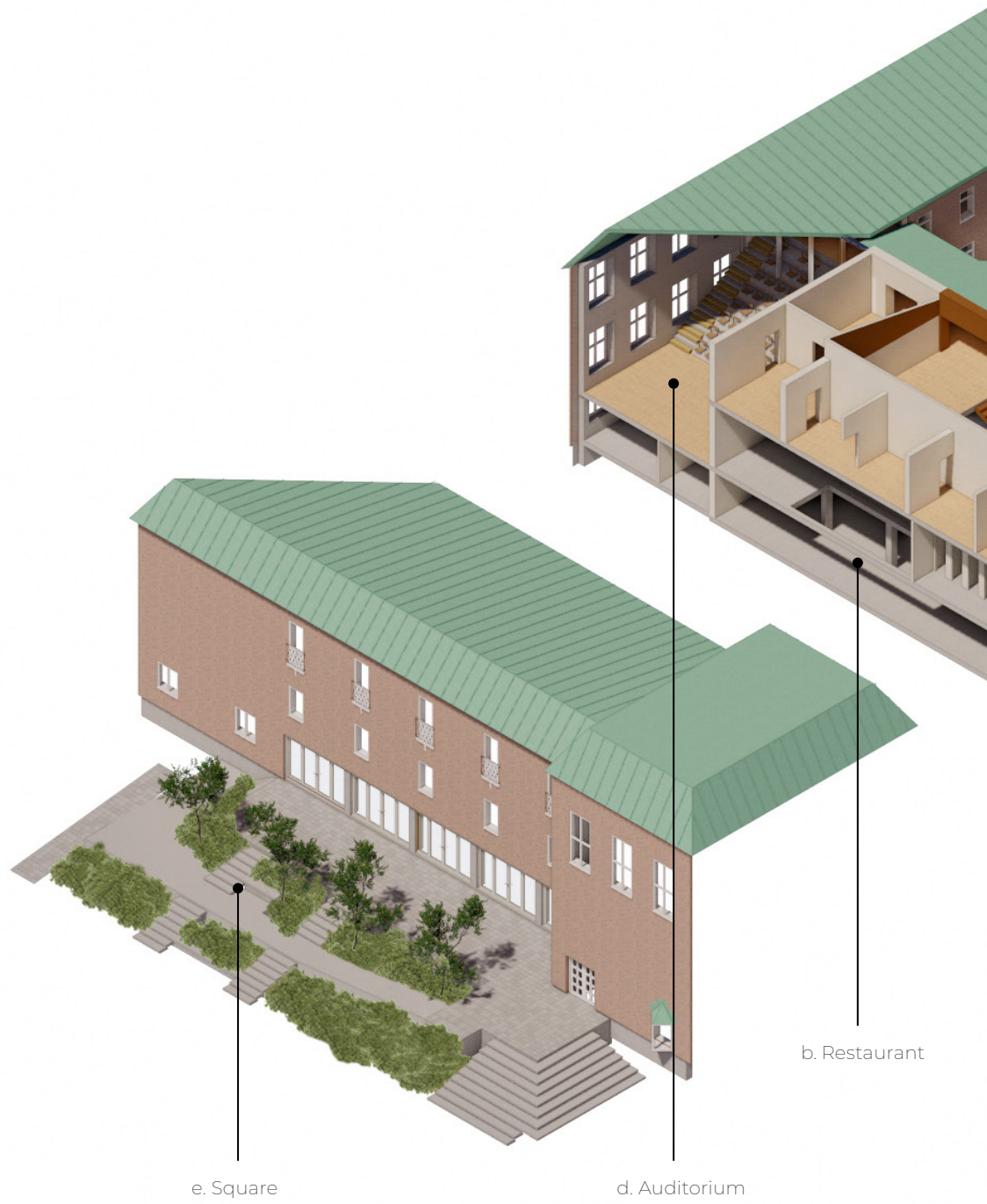
Addition

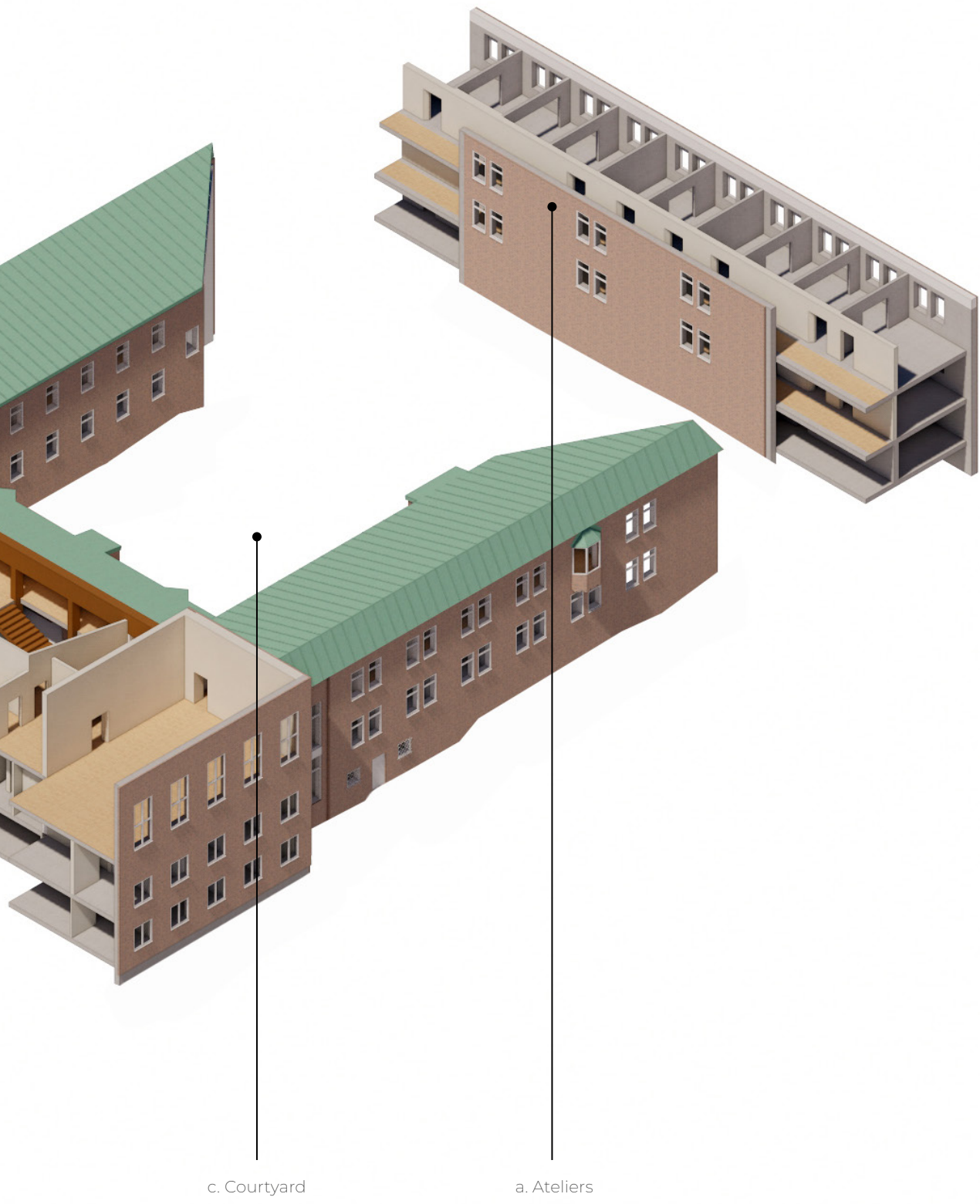
The reuse spans from structural elements and surfaces to furniture. To enable reusing components, additional structures or materials foreign to the building might be necessary for structural support, binding or reversible connections. In some cases, completely new elements are introduced to increase mobility, accessibility or when reuse is not a viable option - out of necessity. Additions aims at reuse, even if the reuse isn't from the building itself.

Spore Initiative Auditorium

[04] **RESULT**

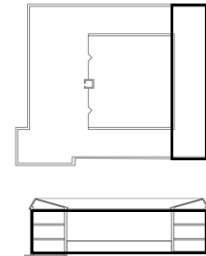
PROJECT OVERVIEW



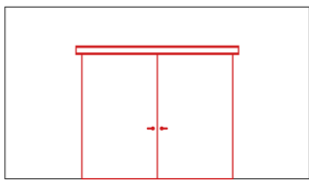


a. ATELIERS

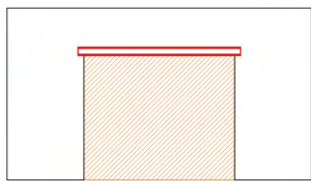
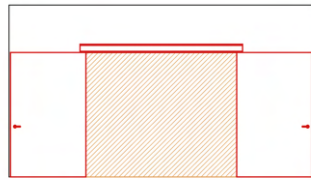
The enfilade becomes an open structure with spaces that through openings and double doors can be reconfigured in different constellations. Partial openness encourages the artists occupying the spaces to organize the spaces according to their assessed needs, making it an ongoing discussion and negotiation with possibilities and constraints. The subtracted material is processed at site and reused both within the ateliers, but also in other parts of the building. The material narrative and process are visualized to the right.



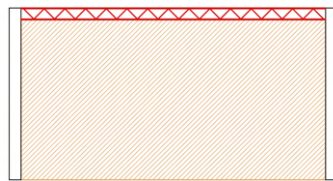
Legend



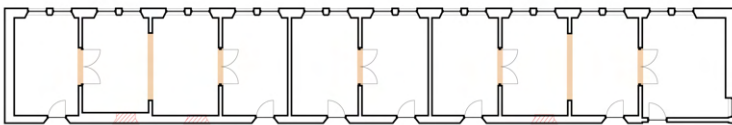
Double door



I - beam



Truss beam



Plan 1
Scale 1 : 400 (a4)



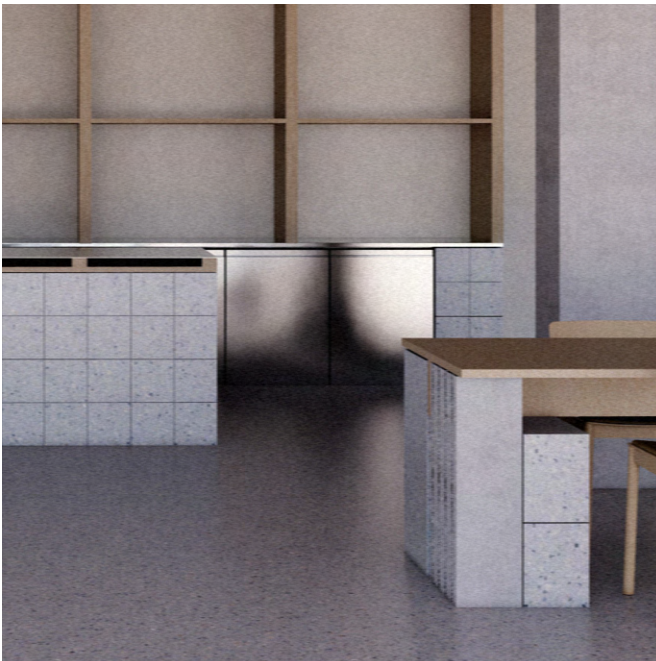
Section
Scale 1:400 (a4)



Cut-out of the wall



Processing of the cutouts to improve managability and enable reuse



Examples of the cutouts situated in their reconfigured context:

Left:
Counter and base for table

Right:
Surfaces on the courtyard



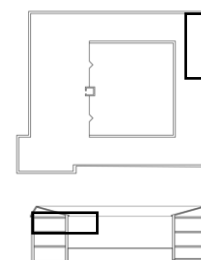


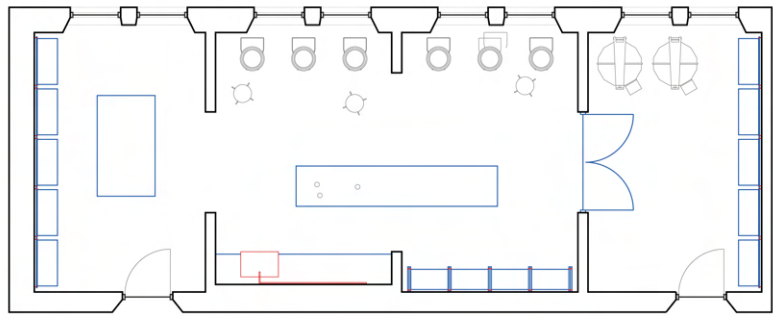
Visualization: spatial sequence and zoning, ceramic studio

Ceramic studio

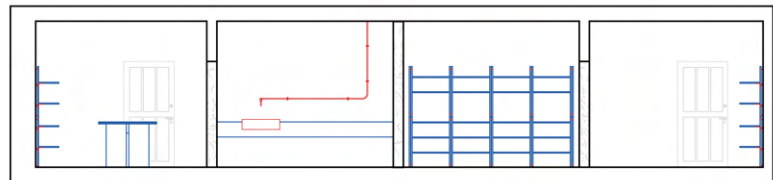
Showcasing the whole range of opening from the completely open, semi-open and semi-closed possibilities of the spaces, the ceramic studio is one example of how the open structure can be configured. The parts of the original partitioning are kept to create different zones and organize the different phases of the process.

In this space the floor is stripped to avoid dust and make it easy to clean. The wood from the floor is processed and reused on the walls – the floor is combined with the acoustic panels from the courtroom in the northeast corner (see inventory IV) and becomes two different kinds of adjustable shelf systems.

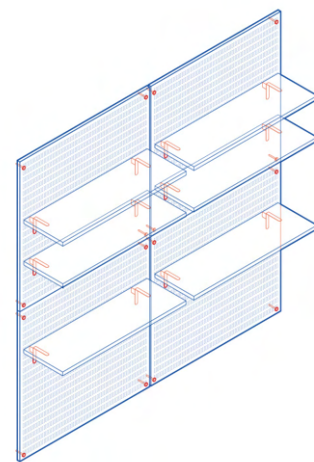
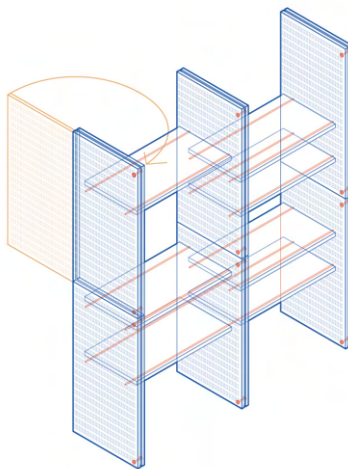
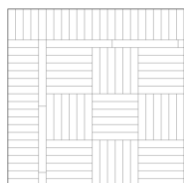
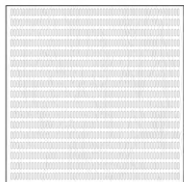




Plan
Scale 1:150 (a4)



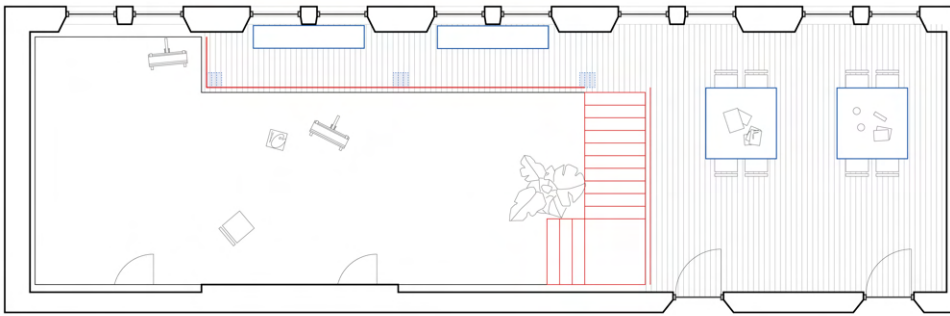
Section
Scale 1:150 (a4)



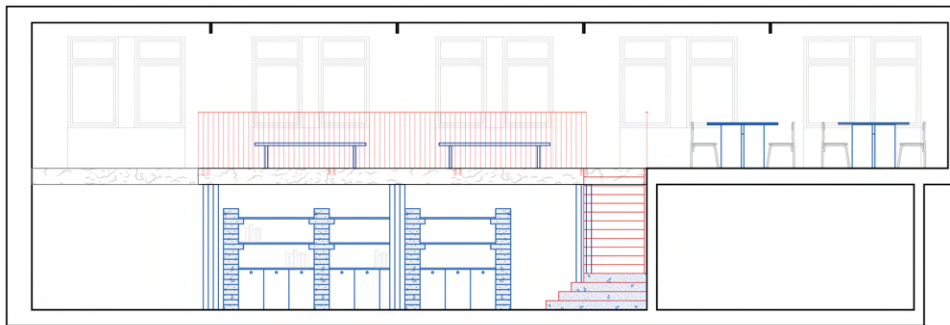
■ Top:
Inventory IV. Wall panels - mounting
Bottom:
Inventory III. Floor offices - shelves

Axo shelf systems
Free-standing

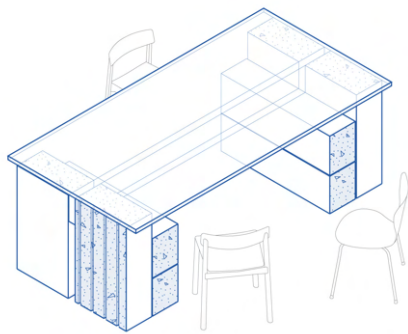
Wall mounted



Plan
Scale 1 : 150 (a4)



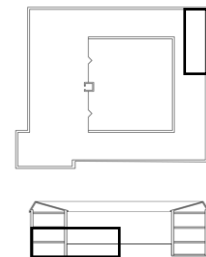
Section
Scale 1 : 150 (a4)



Axo table, visible in
visualisation(s)

Art atelier

Another configuration of the opening in the vertical, providing a softer light ideal for painting. The space is open, but the loft separates the space and creates two zones. To emphasize it further, the wooden floor is kept on the loft, while the basement does not have it to start with. Concrete cutouts are placed around the space - the base for the bookshelf, additional support for the overhang balcony and for the tables, that can also be seen in other spaces.



Visualisation art atelier

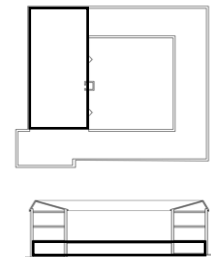


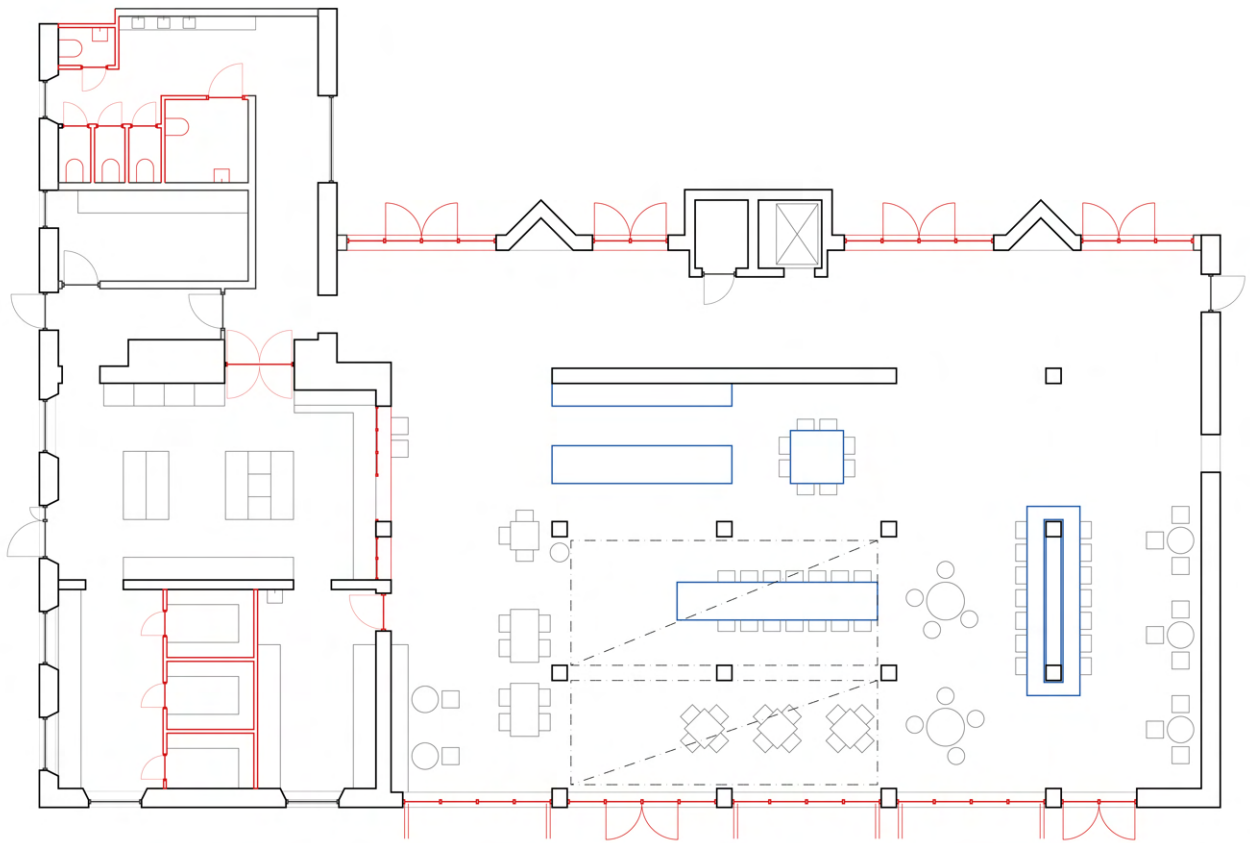


b. RESTAURANT

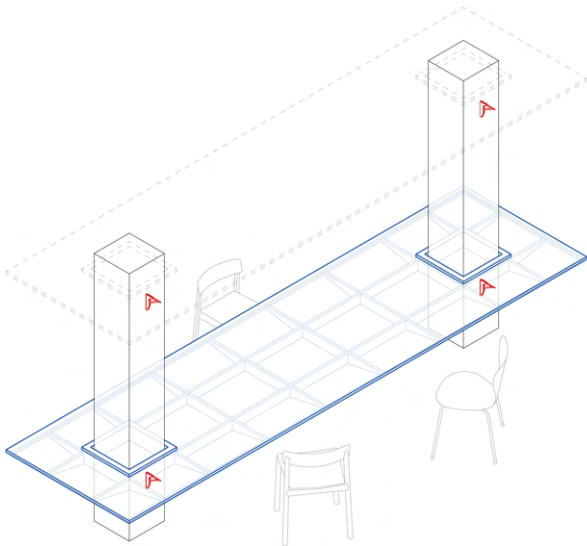
Placed in the previous basement – a dark, closed off space, as seen on the interior pictures on pg. 26, the restaurant adds potential to the building as a public attraction. Through subtraction the space becomes more connected to the context and becomes central for the building as a social node. The façades are opened towards the square and in the back, creating motion through the building and increasing daylight. The low ceiling height is dealt with by removing part of the slab, separating the space while visually connecting it to the foyer.

The reuse is showcased in the restaurant through using cutouts of the concrete and wooden boards for part of the furniture. The bar desk and big table in the center add character to the space. In the lower part of the room, a liftable table made of reused wood is introduced. It aims to make the space flexible for different uses, allowing events to smoothly transfer from seated to standing.

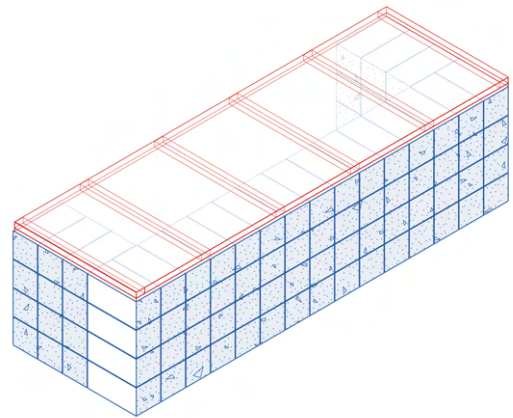




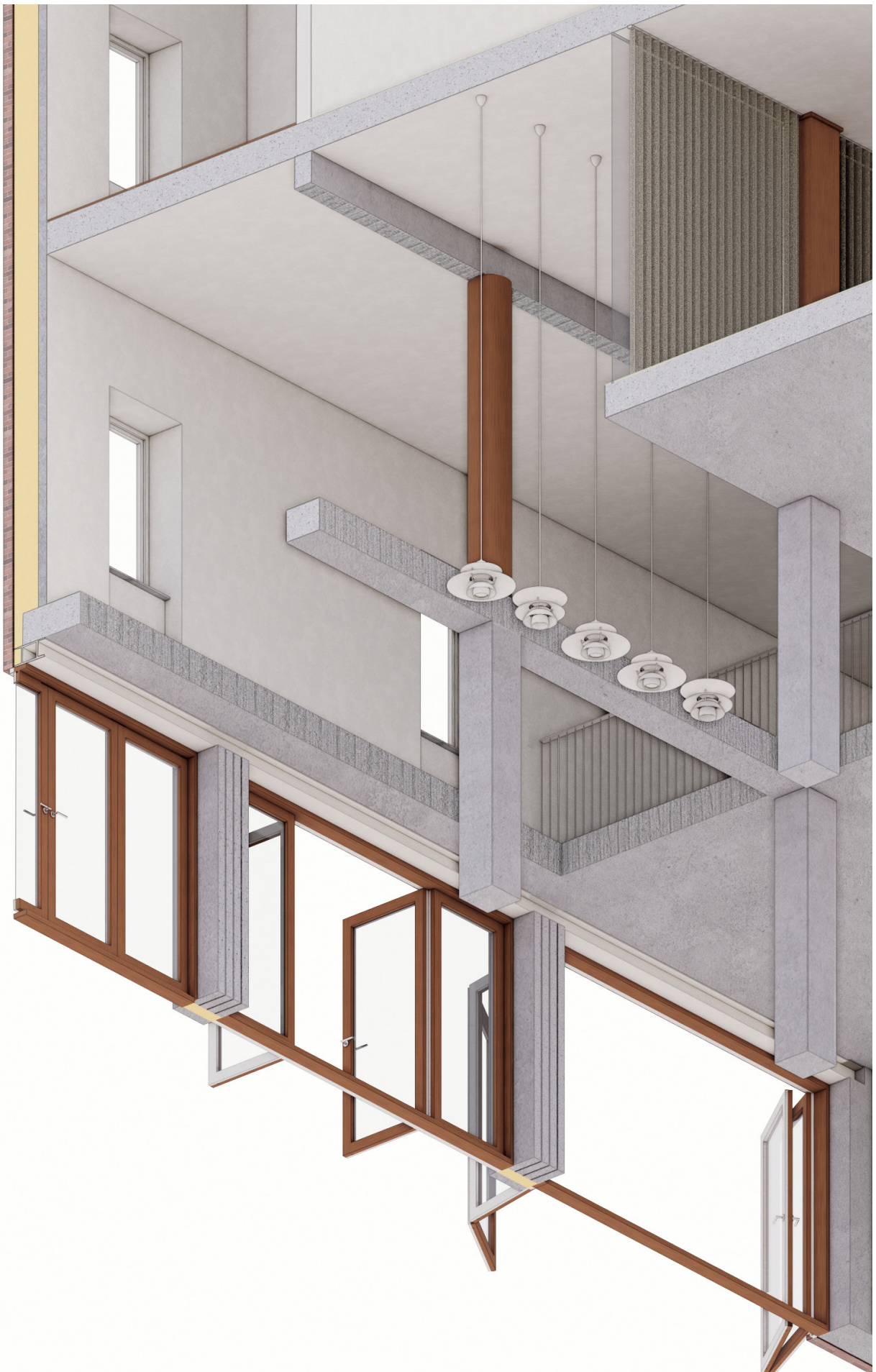
Plan restaurant and kitchen
Scale 1 : 200 (a4)



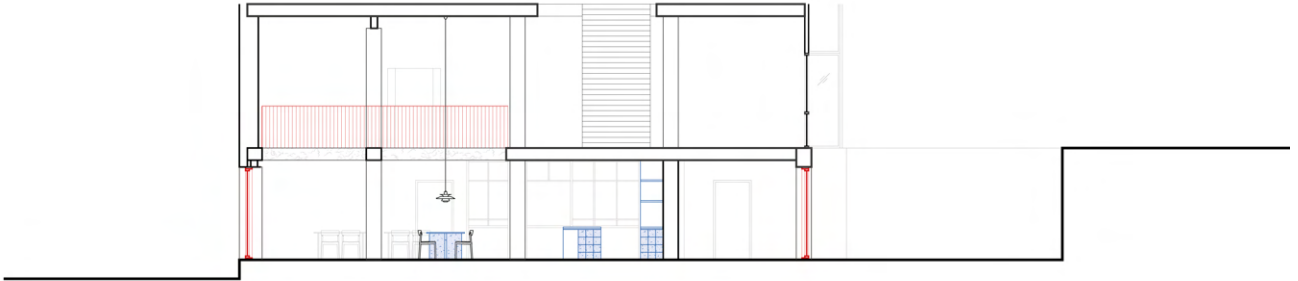
Axo liftable table: marked in plan



Axo counter



Fragment drawing: cut of slab between the restaurant and foyer



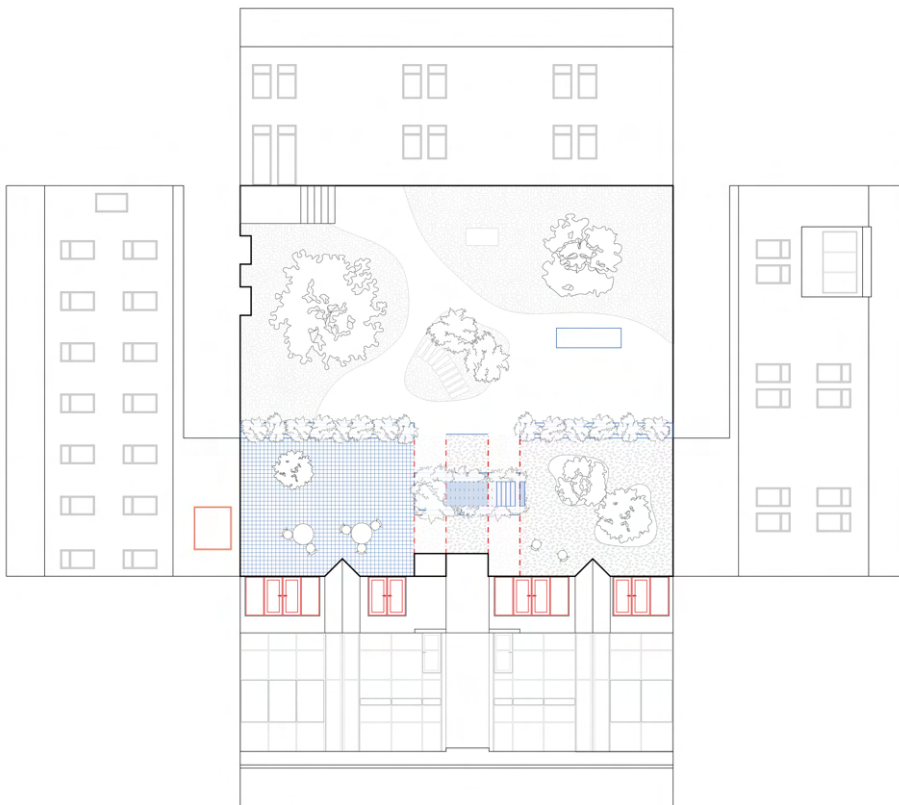
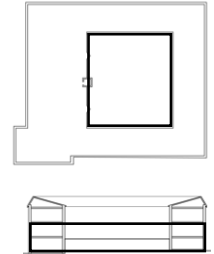
Section
Scale 1:200 (a4)



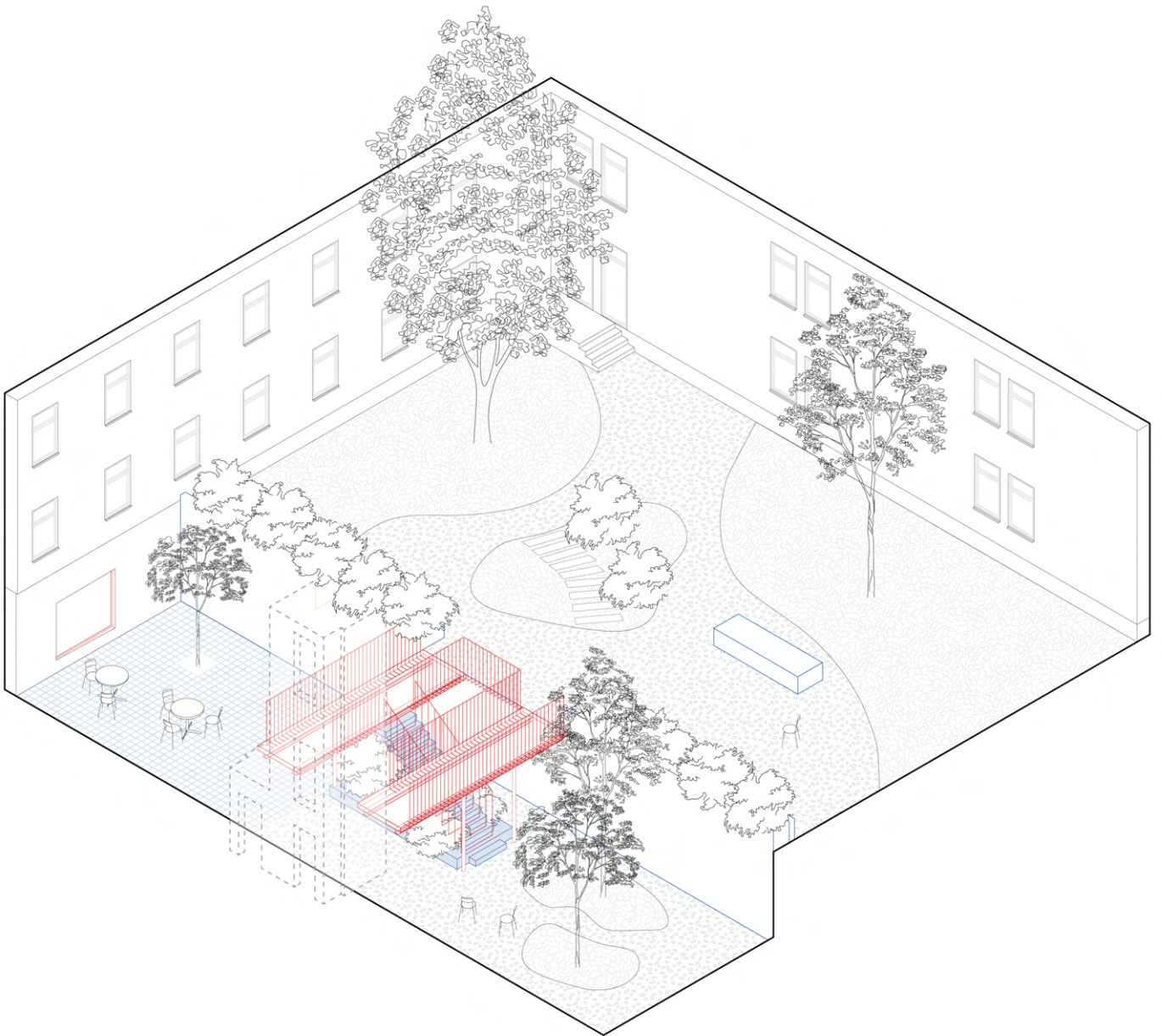
New facade towards plaza

c. COURTYARD

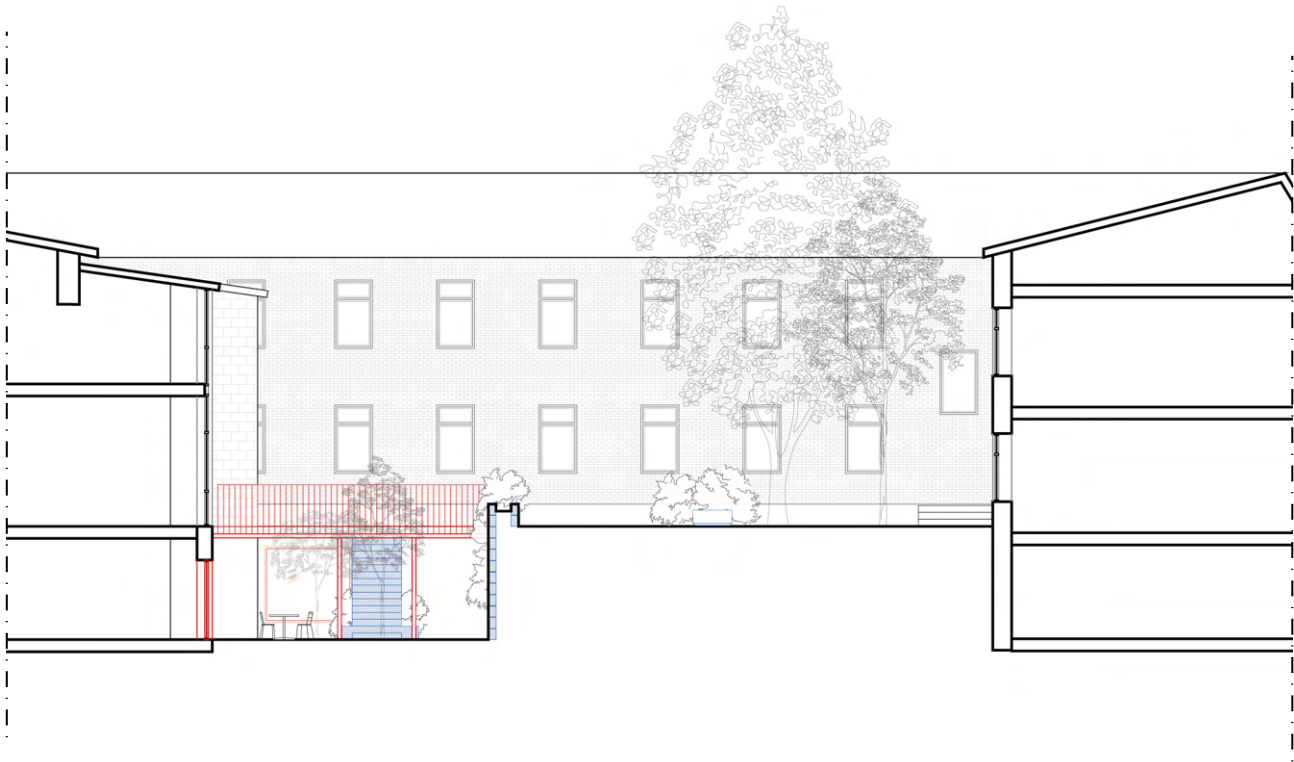
By excavating part of the courtyard, the conditions for the basement change to make it a usable space. The void is clad with reused concrete to create a contrast between the lower and upper part, which has a soft, green character. Divided by two added bridges that maintain the connection from the foyer, the void is separated into two parts with the staircase in the middle. The connection creates new sequences of movement through the building, creating an experience moving from the lowest to highest floor. The sunlit part of the void becomes a seating area for the restaurant, while the other part becomes a sculptural park that changes with the seasons, as interesting to move around as to linger in during the warmer months as to look out at during the colder ones.



Courtyard, plan unfolded with elevations
Scale 1 : 400 (a4)



Axo new courtyard



Courtyard, section
Scale 1 : 200 (a4)



Axo: new facade

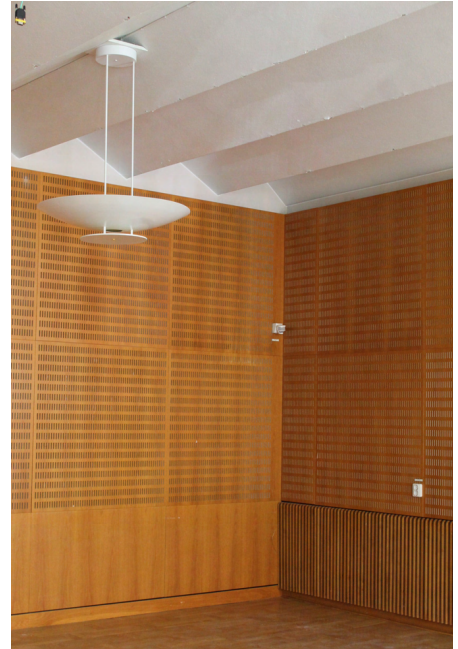
Visualization courtyard →



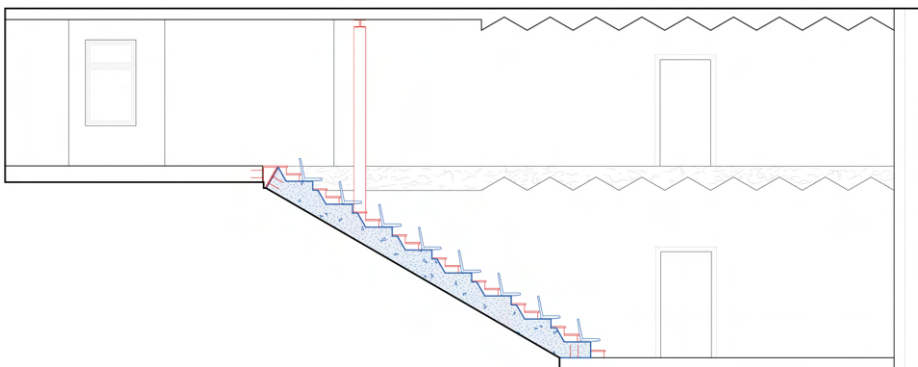
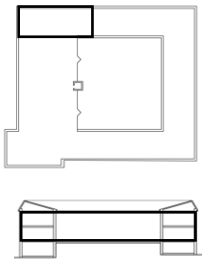
d. AUDITORIUM

The ceiling (see pic to the right) of the two identical rooms located on top of each other in the north corner of the building has a characteristic sick sack form. The auditorium – a big open space that connects the two floors and is used for bigger gatherings and lectures reuses the slab. It is cut and repositioned to utilize the form as steps to attach the reclaimed orchestra chairs to. The intervention changes the space completely, creating a new function as well as new connections to better utilize the spaces together.

The spaces were interesting separately because of the odd roof structure, but by connecting the two rooms and emphasizing the form, the room becomes essential for the character of the building and communicates the values of the approach and transformation.



Existing configuration



Section auditorium
Scale 1 : 150 (a4)



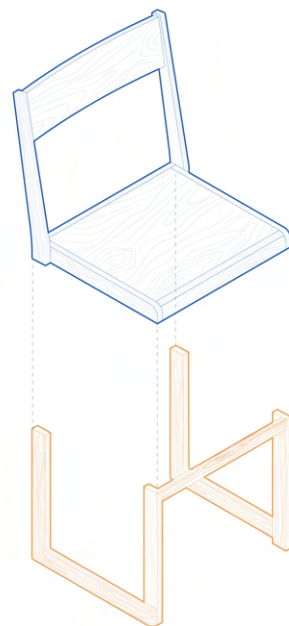
Orchestra chair
Sven Markelius
Svenska Möbelfabrikerna i Bodafors, 1931

Birch, molded back and seating

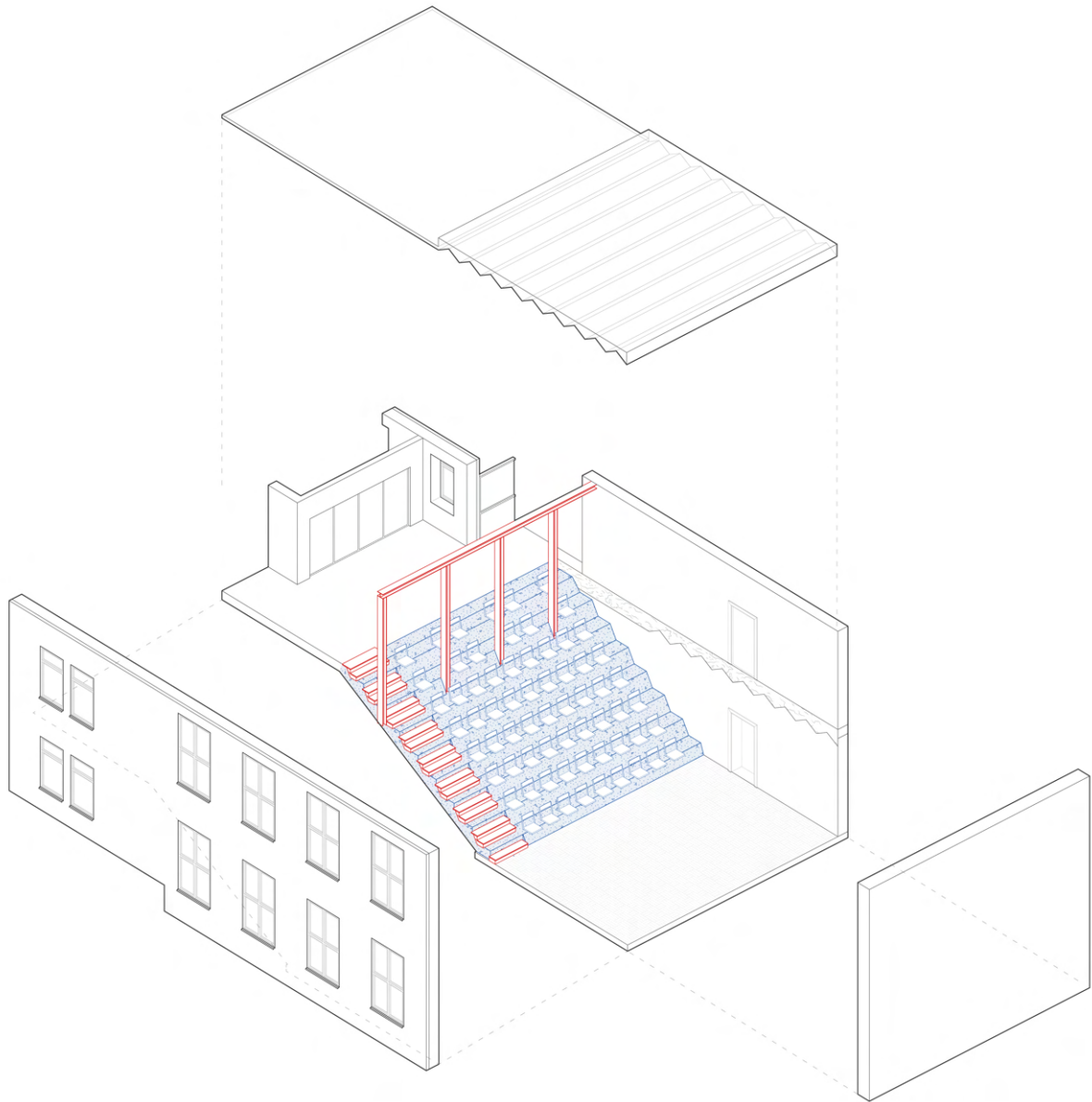
H 82 / W 46 / D 43 cm
Seat height 46 cm

Condition: Used
Amount: 66

■ The chairs are an addition to the project,
but they are purchased in a used condition





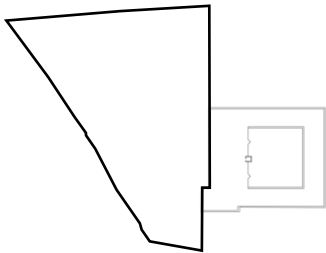


Axo auditorium

e. SQUARE

The stairs manage the terrain on the square and create a coherent urban space while meeting the new openings in the façade of the building. The previous landscape, before the area was extracted for Västlänken (see picture to the right) was centered around the road. The new configuration aims to prioritize pedestrians and spaces to linger, making the car subordinate. Cars are still able to pass through, but the hierarchy is implicit in the use of compact gravel and paving stones, where the edges flow into each other.

The terrain is shaped by reusing the soil that was extracted from the courtyard to avoid depositing. The concrete cover is cutouts from the building - having the reuse spill out of the building and become an urban gesture welcoming into the building.

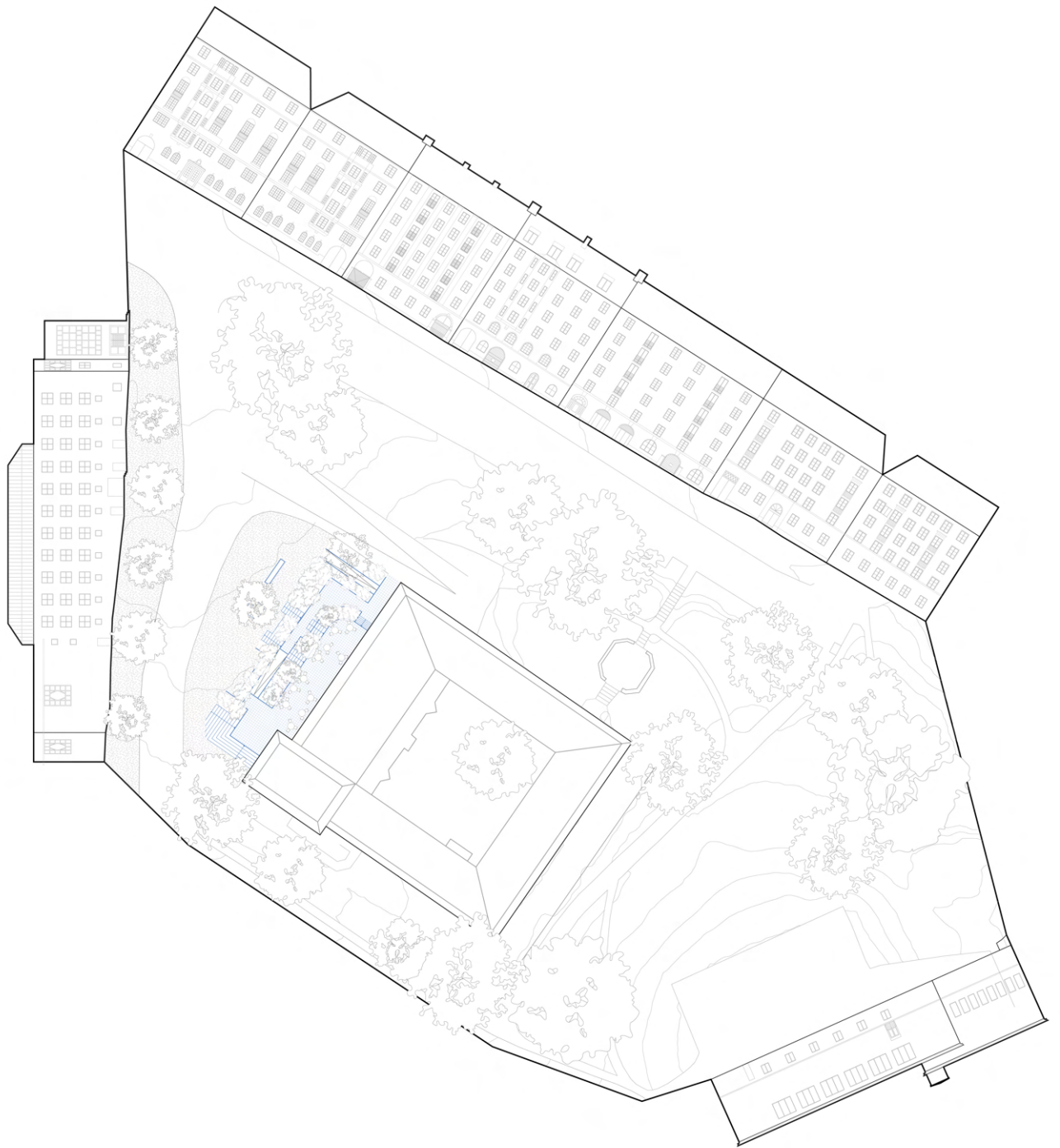


Existing condition





Axo stairs



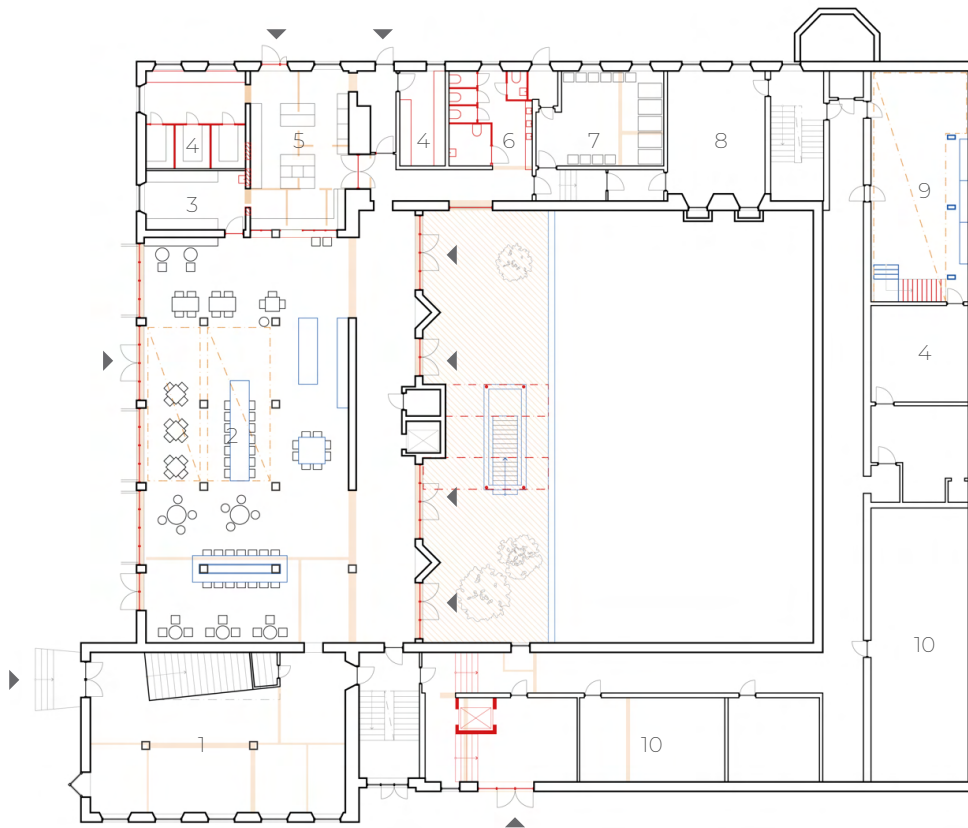
Plaza unfolded with surrounding elevations
Scale 1 : 1000 (a4)



Visualization square in front of building →



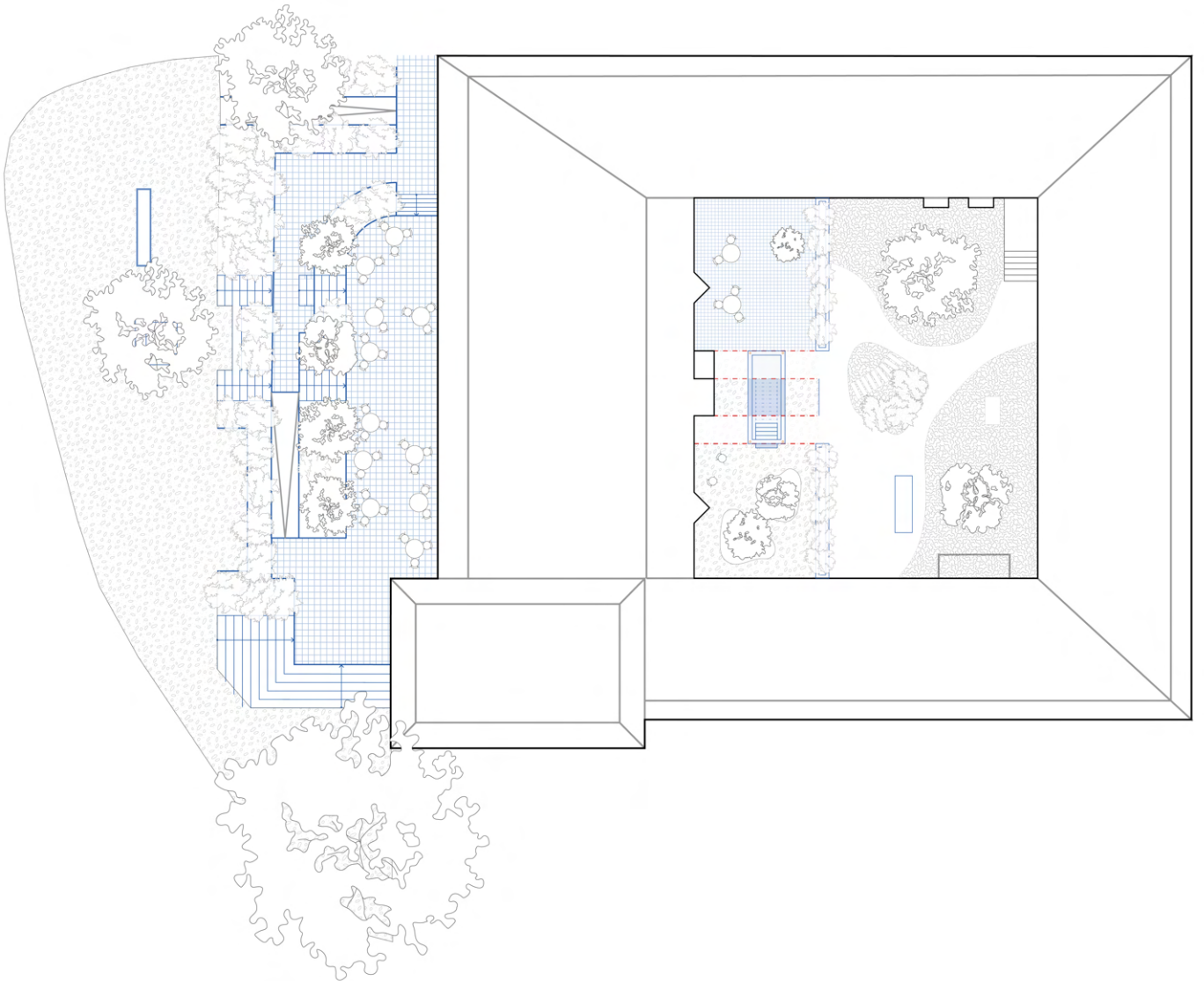
DRAWING SET



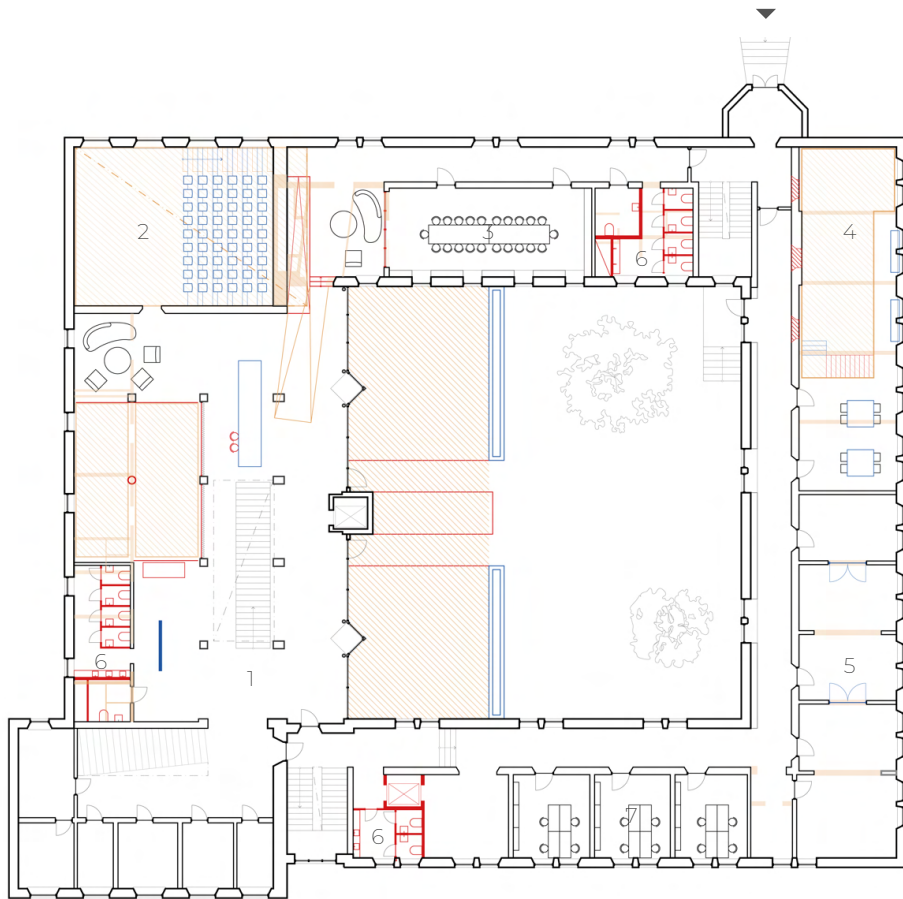
Basement (0)
Scale 1 : 400 (a4)



- | | | | |
|---|------------------------|----|---------------------|
| 1 | Entrance / reception | 6 | Toilets |
| 2 | Restaurant dining area | 7 | Garbage room |
| 3 | Dish room | 8 | Changing room |
| 4 | Storage | 9 | Art atelier |
| 5 | Restaurant kitchen | 10 | Technical / storage |

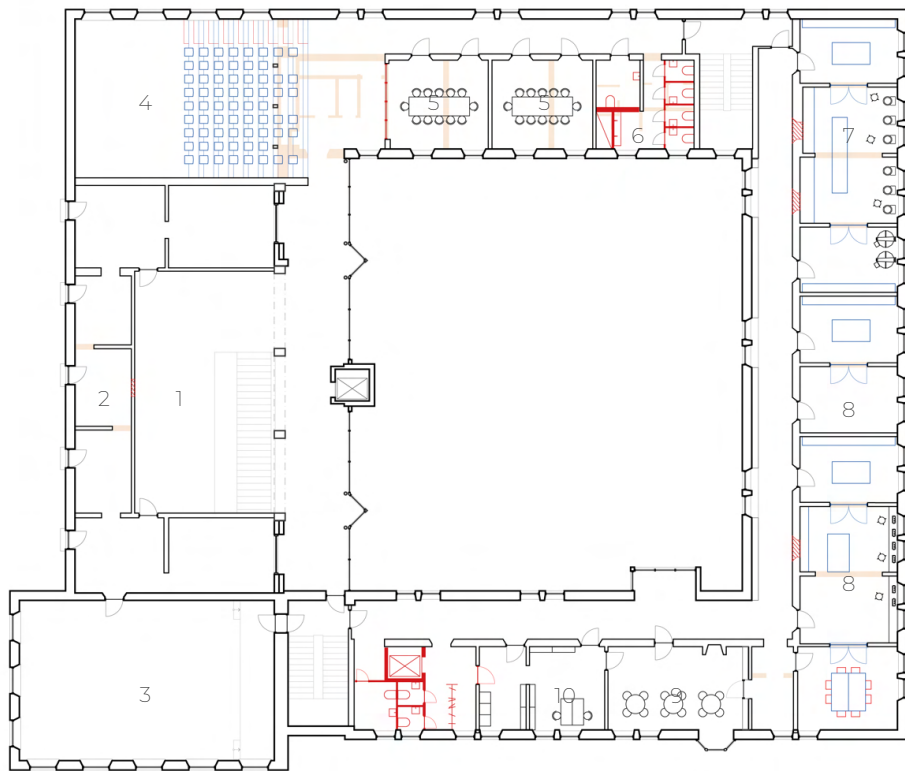


Plan exterior
Scale 1 : 400 (a4)



First floor (1)
Scale 1: 400 (a4)

- | | | | |
|---|-------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | Foyer | 5 | Atelier(s) |
| 2 | Auditorium | 6 | Toilets |
| 3 | Conference | 7 | Administration / offices |
| 4 | Art atelier | | |



Second floor (2)
Scale 1 : 400 (a4)



- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----|-----------------|
| 1 | Foyer | 6 | Toilets |
| 2 | Exhibition | 7 | Ceramic atelier |
| 3 | Exhibition / event space | 8 | Atelier(s) |
| 4 | Auditorium | 9 | Staff room |
| 5 | Conference | 10 | Administration |



New elevation courtyard



New elevation square

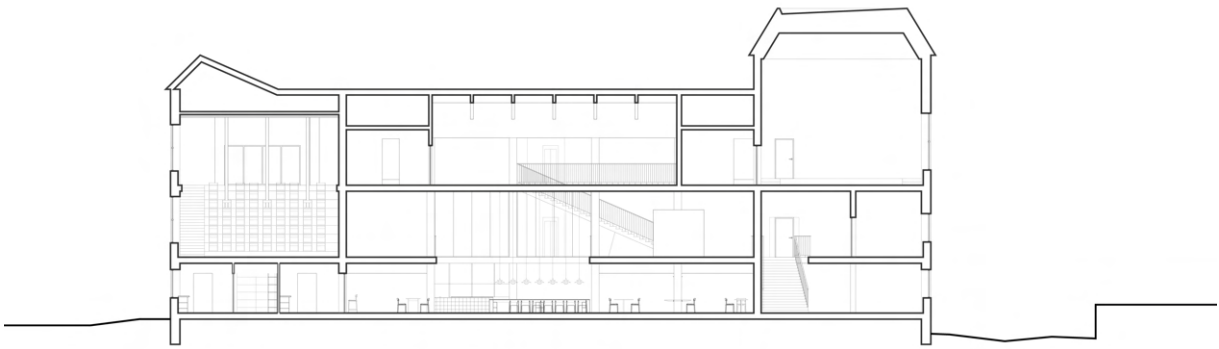


New elevation northwest
Scale 1 : 400 (a4)

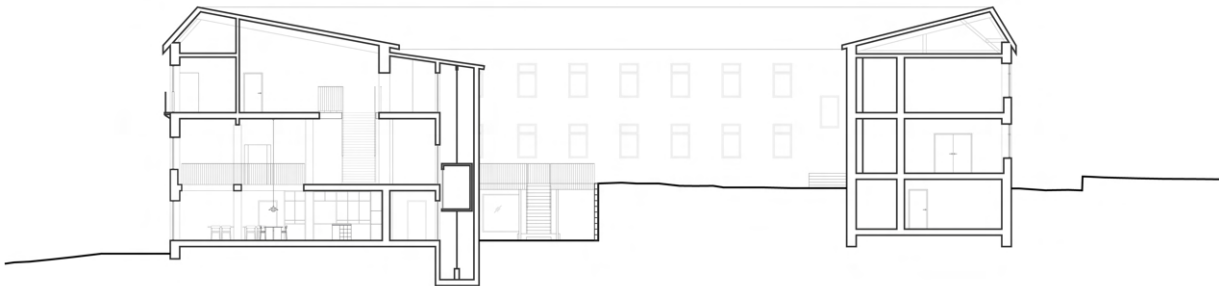


New elevation courtyard
Scale 1 : 400 (a4)

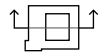
(Only elevations with interventions)



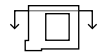
Section A
Scale 1: 400 (a4)



Section B
Scale 1: 400 (a4)



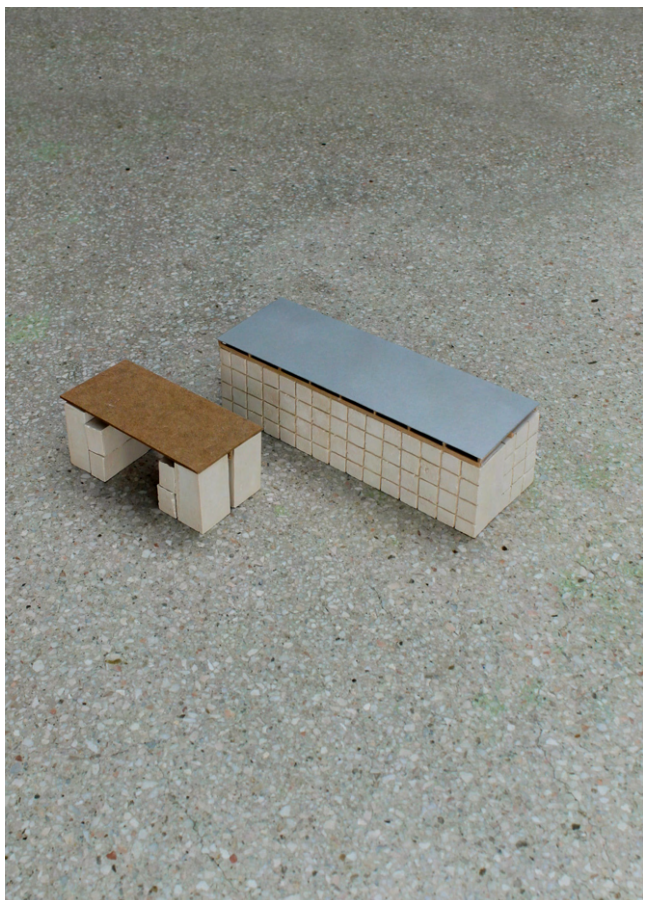
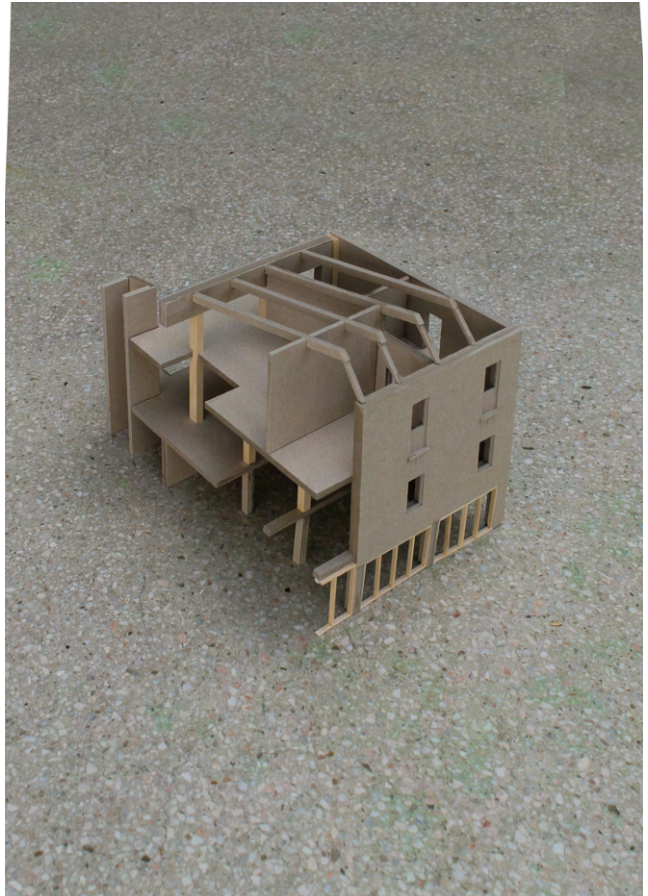
Section C
Scale 1: 400 (a4)



Section D
Scale 1: 400 (a4)

0 5 10m







Picture of exhibition

[05] **CONCLUSION**

SUMMARY

The thesis has attempted to answer the following questions:

- (1) How can the practice of adaptive reuse be reworked to avoid nostalgia and focus on future narratives?
- (2) How can the reconfiguration within a project create new possibilities while conserving resources?

The questions have been investigated and studied through theoretical and architectural research. As a result of the lack of the pragmatic and future-oriented literature within adaptive reuse, the theoretical framework of the thesis consists of a study of approaches and concepts that are pragmatic and focuses on future narratives. The strategies are explored and developed through architectural experiments carried out through drawings, illustrations, digital models and visualizations, eventually synthesized in a design proposal.

The project has been conducted on the Old Court of Appeals situated in a changing context, in great material condition and with few interventions to the original design, the building serves as a great example relevant to the discourse of the thesis. The project engages with several questions on several scales on how to approach the existing – from analyzing the conditions, managing subtracted material and the traces left.

The final proposal is presented in refined materials of the experiments as well as the entity of the building. Mediums chosen include the same as the experiments as well as physical models.

DISCUSSION

Reflecting on the process of developing the thesis, it began from navigating a personal crisis a few years ago about the extraction and destructive character of architecture – I lost hope for the future of the practice. Therefore, adapting and reusing what had already been built was the given course to conserve resources and aim for a more sustainable practice. While reading through old master theses on the topic I noticed a pattern that they tended to explore the history, preservation of heritage and past activities or narratives in the buildings. As the thesis developed in parallel with other alternative subjects, the problem of the nostalgia became evident through the reading of critical theory which resulted in the preference of the selected thesis questions.

The approach was challenging due to the assembling and navigation of several approaches, sometimes opposing each other, which required assessing and deciding how to relate them. The reliance on my perception to apply and accommodate the strategy becomes a limit for the thesis, as it inevitably makes it subjective. The assessment as well as the design project is driven by acquired knowledge both through my personal experience within the fields as well as literature and an understanding of the surrounding world.

The concept of crisis and how it could be used in architecture and adaptive reuse is abstract and might be complicated to grasp, but I see great potential in the use of the notion. It has been rendered negative through its connection to the consequences of acute situations like climate change, economic disruptions and conflicts. It is the fatalistic narratives entailed to the notion that creates a sense of urgency, which in turn affects our ability to act and think critically. However, crisis is simply a state impending change, without assessment of the outcome. Understanding the influence of our perception and how we project our thoughts on the world, we can add nuance to discourse and once again think critically about the situation - a shift we are in desperate need of.

For the benefit of the thesis and to provide a broader spectrum for the discourse it is short of nuance and disputes nostalgia completely. The general discussion should not be the complete opposite or situated in the extremes but require nuance and contextual perception, but by pushing the extremes the intermediate is extended.

History has an important role in society, and our heritage should be cared for, but time is a linear process, and we can't evade the future. Not all buildings can be considered of cultural heritage, but considering the circumstances of climate change, all buildings should be considered for adaptive reuse. The need for parsimony of resources necessitates rethinking how we employ our resources and focus on the potential instead of the limits of the existing. The built environment should be considered valuable simply for that feature; already being built.

To conclude this thesis focuses on the preservation of resources instead of past narratives or history. It aims at expanding the practice to be concerned with buildings that lack architectural, historical or cultural relevance. The thesis contributes to the discourse of how to manage our built environment and questions what adaptive reuse is and ought to be. However, I am afraid that it raised more questions than what it answered, but that can be equally as valuable as a contribution within a subjective field like architecture.

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FIGURES

Unless otherwise stated, figures were produced by the author.

Figure 1.

White, L. (2021). Man in black jacket holding white and black signage. [photography]. *Unsplash*.
<https://unsplash.com/photos/man-in-black-jacket-holding-white-and-black-signage-rTJJJgUQ11A>

Figure 2.

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AI APPENDIX

Googles built in ai was used to translate individual words, finding appropriate synonyms and phrasings. Photoshop's ai was used to harmonize objects in the afterproduction of visualizations.

No other ai has been used for neither text nor project.



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