

KONTRAPUNKT

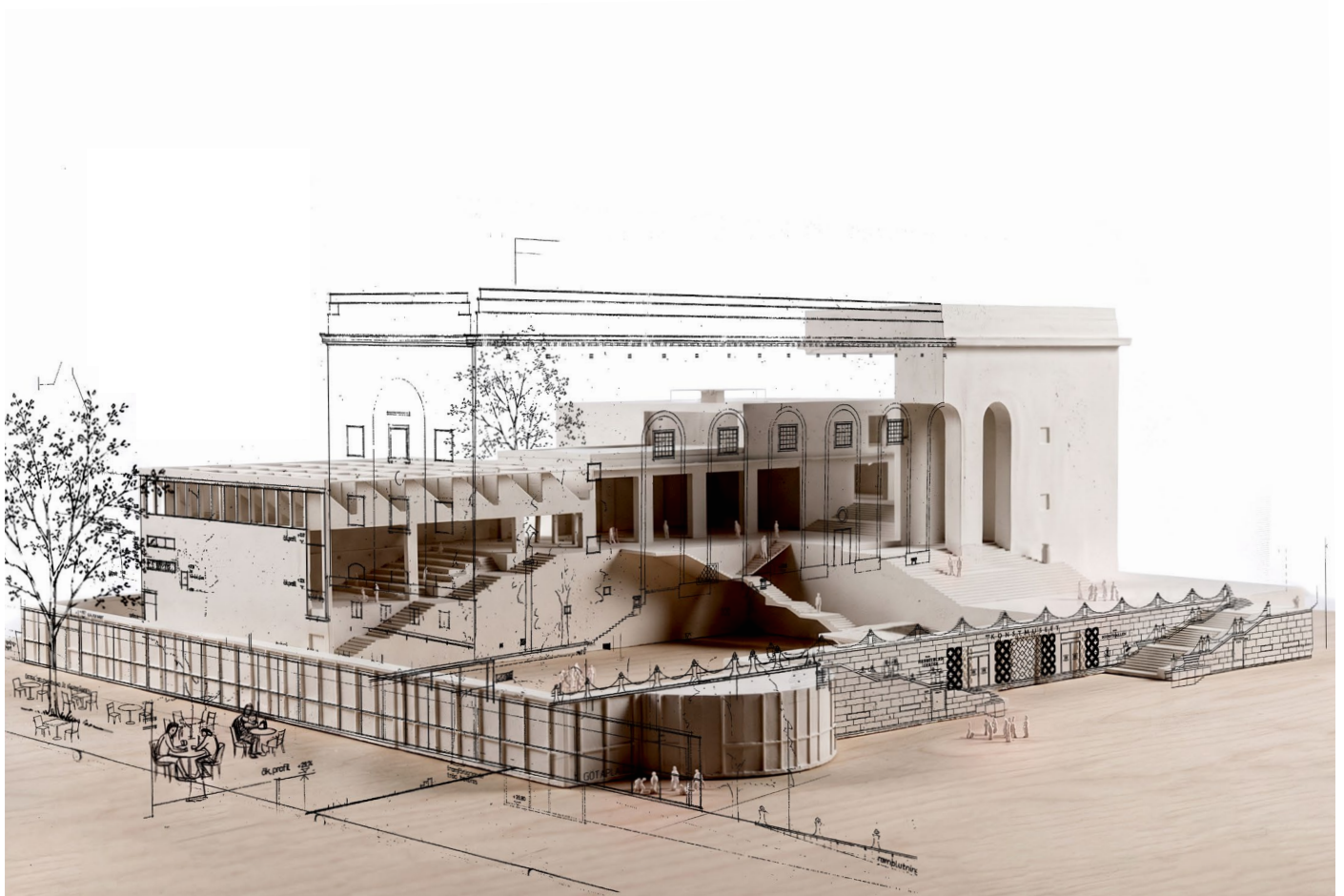
A voice of reason
for the Gothenburg Museum of Art

Chalmers School of Architecture -
Department of Architecture &
Civil Engineering
Master Thesis - 2026

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Examiner: Mikael Ekegren

Supervisor: Filip Rem





CHALMERS
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

-2026-

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ABSTRACT

The Gothenburg Museum of Art is currently facing a major redevelopment. An architectural competition has been concluded, and the winning proposal entails the construction of a new extension building together with the demolition of an existing part of the museum known as Etagera. Built as an extension in 1968, Etagera currently serves as exhibition space.

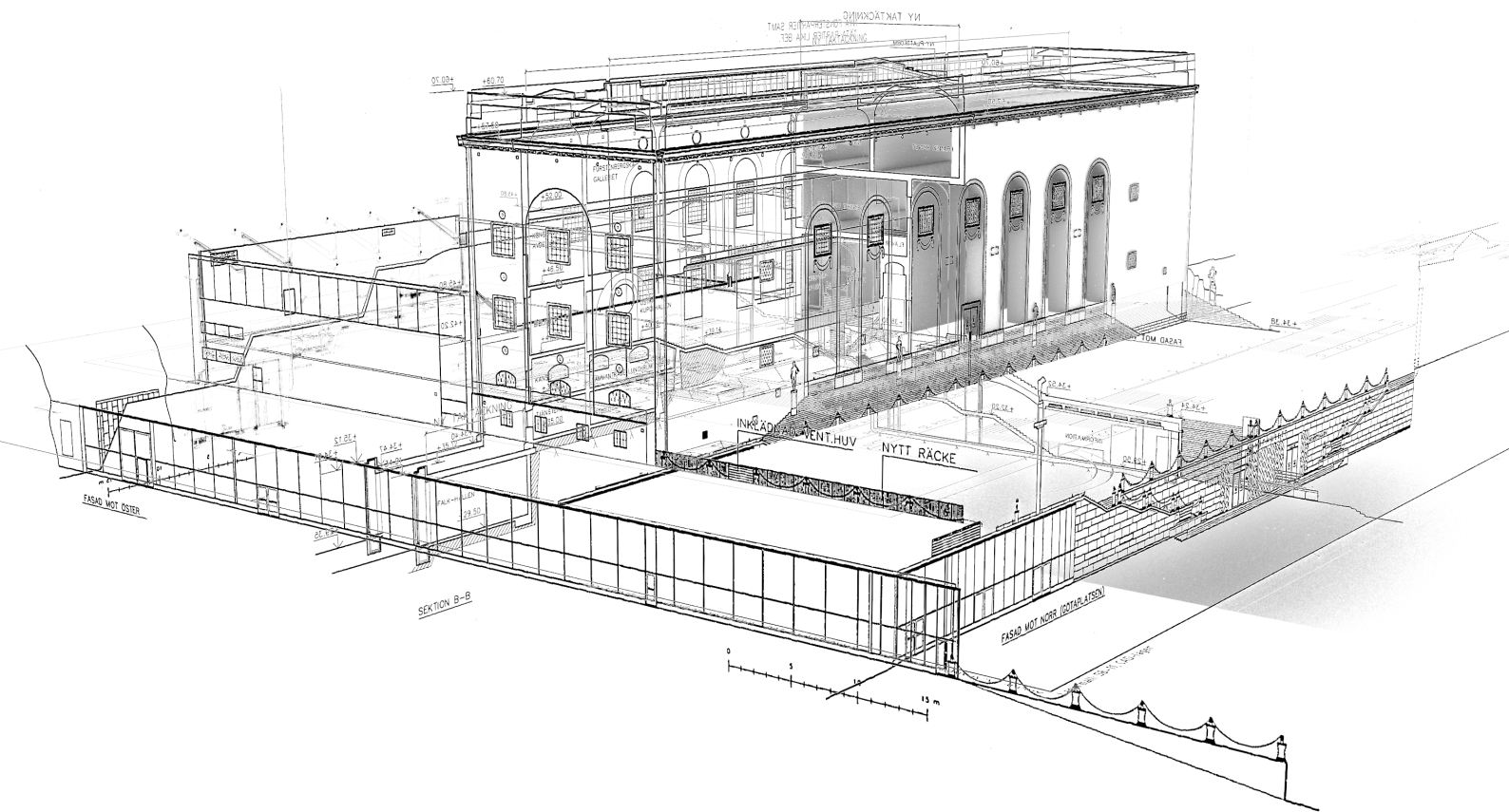
Viewing Etagera as a resource in the redevelopment rather than an obstacle, this thesis proposes an alternative future. It asks whether it is possible to retain Etagera while addressing the problems and needs cited as reasons for redevelopment, while also fulfilling the goals and visions outlined by the competition.

Through comparative diagramming and conventional architectural tools such as modelling, sketching, and drawing, a research-by-design approach shaped the process. The project draws on theories of adaptive reuse and argues that an architectural counterpoint is necessary to create a dynamic and coherent whole.

The result is a proposal in which Etagera is altered to accommodate new functions within the museum structure, its spatial configuration is redesigned, and an additional extension is introduced that contributes to the already built complex composition of the museum. Through layering and alteration, spatial conflicts are addressed and the different parts of the museum operate as architectural counterpoints that together form a coherent whole. The project contributes to the ongoing debate on the future of the museum by presenting an alternative direction for its development.

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All figures in this thesis are made by the authors unless otherwise stated.



Maybe the building has been waiting for another addition to work to its full potential?

INTRODUCTION

According to Carl Elefante (2007), former president of the American Institute of Architects, "the greenest building is... One that is already built."

Beyond the energy and materials embedded in an existing structure, buildings also carry cultural value. They accumulate memories, meanings, and relationships over time that cannot easily be replaced once lost. History has repeatedly shown that the demolition of buildings is often followed by regret. When structures are removed, not only physical resources disappear, but also parts of the collective memory embedded in the built environment.

The Gothenburg Museum of Art is facing redevelopment through a new complementary extension. The planned new building entails demolition of an existing part of the Museum (Etagerna). Etagerna is an extension to the original building which in its current state serves as exhibition space. An architectural competition concerning the museum was held during 2023–2024, with a winning entry by the architectural firm Barozzi Veiga, in collaboration with the Stockholm-based office Hermansson Hiller Lundberg, announced in 2025.

On the adjacent property, on the north-east side of the museum, in close connection to Etagerna, the University of Gothenburg plans to gather all its arts-focused programs in one location. The new facilities for the art school is called Nya Konst (New Art).

This master thesis will explore the possibility of retaining Etagerna, while still fulfilling the goals and visions outlined by the competition. This also entails adding yet another extension to the museum.

It will also explore how an alteration and re-programming of Etagerna could support new social and public functions within the museum structure which could enhance and contribute to the social sustainability visions intended by the Nya Konst project.

PURPOSE

AWAITING COMPLETION

The benefits of retaining Etagera could be argued for ecologically, socially and culturally. It is therefore important to explore how to propose an alternative future for the Gothenburg Museum of Art that retains the existing extension.

In its current state, the extension works poorly in its spatial configuration with the main arguments for demolition of Etagera being the conflicting flows of art, staff and visitors together with an illegible and unaccessible spatial layout.

However, it has never been properly examined if and how yet another extension could improve the spatial configuration and solve the conflicting flows.

If solved, the thesis will hopefully serve as a substantial input to a public debate on which direction the city of Gothenburg should take in relation to the future of the museum.

Quotes of inspiration

"The Gothenburg Museum of Art currently has two extensions, including the one by White Arkitekter, so why not propose yet another addition to contribute to the museum's dynamic structure?"

(Föreningen FASAD, n.d.)

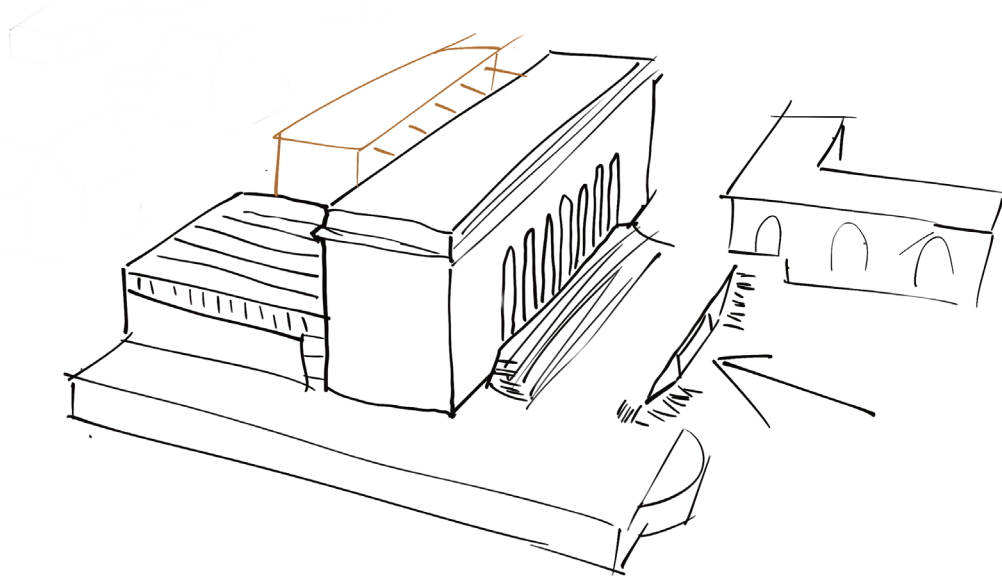
"By bringing all the arts together in new, purpose built facilities at the Näckrosen university campus, it will become an important part of the interdisciplinary meeting place for the humanities, arts, and culture being created there".

(Akademiska Hus, n.d.)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How can a project be designed that retains *Etagerna* and proposes yet another addition to the Gothenburg Museum of Art and becomes a viable alternative to the demolition of *Etagerna* and the museums future development?

How can we reactivate the original spatial qualities of *Etagerna* to support new social and public functions within the museum structure?

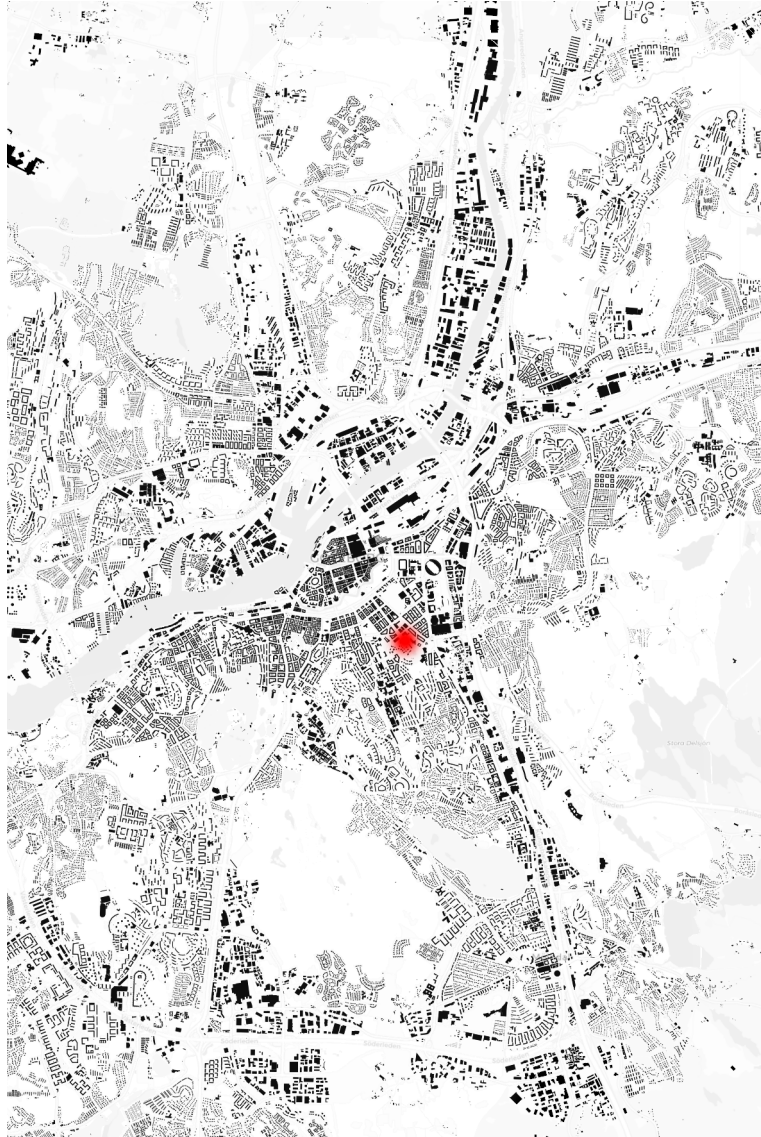


BACKGROUND

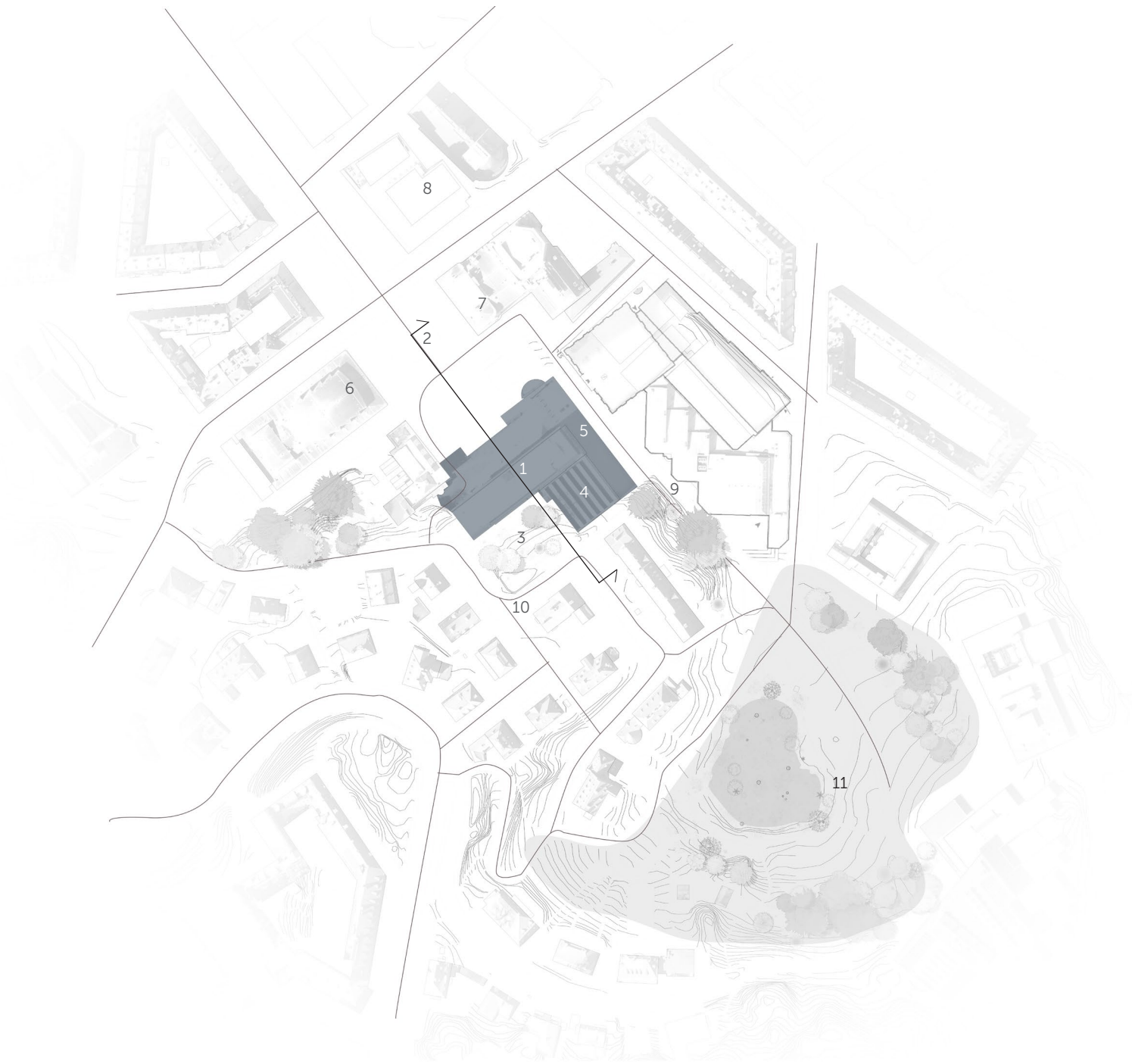
CONTEXT



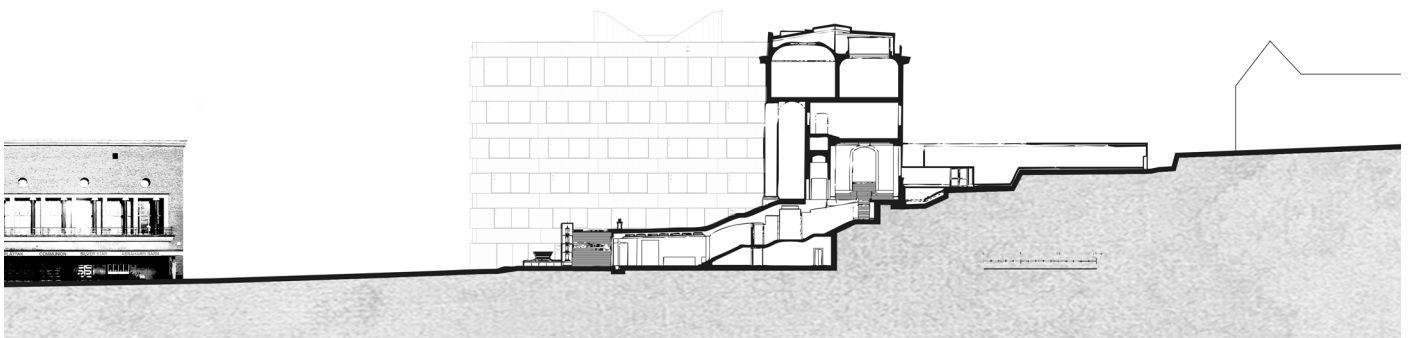
Gothenburg - Sweden



Götaplatsen - Gothenburg



Site ①



Landscape section 1:1000



Gothenburg Museum of Art - North
Original building 1
Götaplatsen 2



Gothenburg Museum of Art - South



Gothenburg Museum of Art - South
Plot - 3



Gothenburg Museum of Art - West



Gothenburg Museum of Art - East
Etagera - 4
Falkhallen - 5



Gothenburg Museum of Art - Southwest



Gothenburg City Concert Hall - 6



Gothenburg City Theater - 7



Gothenburg City Library - 8



Campus Näckrosen - Fågelsången - 9



Lorensberg Villa district - 10



Renström Park - 11

Original building



Entrance



Entrance to the sculpture hall



The sculpture hall

Etagerna



Top floor

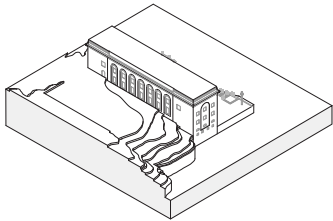
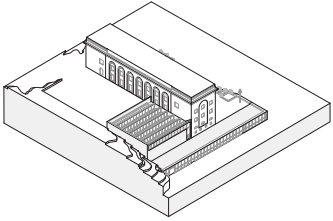
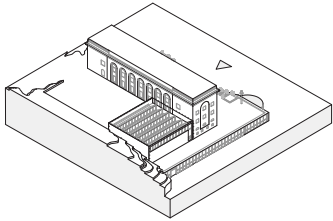
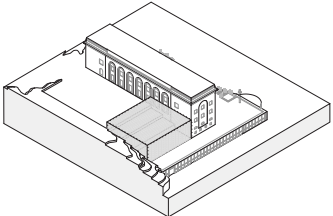


Staircase



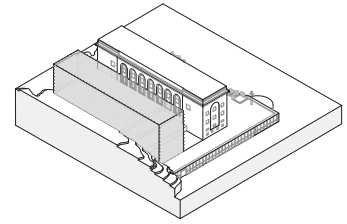
Connection from original building

HISTORICAL TIMELINE

1923 -The original building	The Museum of Arts main and first building, designed by Arvid Bjerke and Sigfrid Ericson, was constructed at Götaplatsen for the Jubilee Exhibition (Antiquum AB, 2015)	
1968 - First extensions	The extension of the Gothenburg Museum of Art (Etagerna and Falkhallen) was designed by Rune Falk for White Arkitekter and has served as exhibition halls for temporary exhibitions. (Antiquum AB, 2015)	
1996 - Layering continues	The new entrance opened and moved the museum's main entrance closer to Götaplatsen, while the art remained in place. (Antiquum AB, 2015)	
2021 - New needs	After conducting two prestudies concerning new needs within the museums organisation and structure, the City Council decided that the Museum of Art should be rebuilt. They also suggest the demolition of Etagerna. (Göteborgs Stad, Higab, & Sveriges Arkitekter, 2023)	

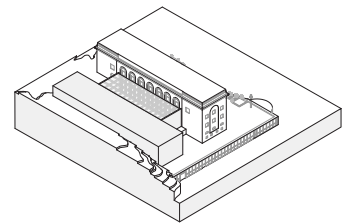
2022 - The competition starts

Higab invites entries for a competition concerning the Gothenburg Museum of Art. 6 different architect offices were invited, they all suggested demolishing Etagerna in their final proposals.
(Göteborgs Stad, Higab, & Sveriges Arkitekter, 2024)



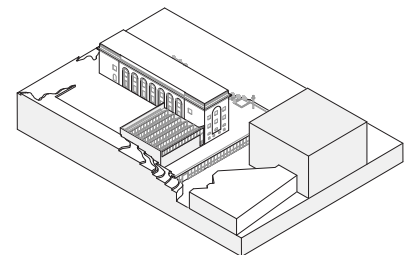
2024 - Future as of now

The architectural firm Barozzi Veiga, in collaboration with the Stockholm-based office Hermansson Hiller Lundberg, was selected as the winner of the competition for the Museum of the Future. Their proposal will be further developed together with the Museum of Art and Higab. According to the current schedule, the museum will close in 2028 and reopen in 2032.
(Göteborgs konstmuseum, n.d.)



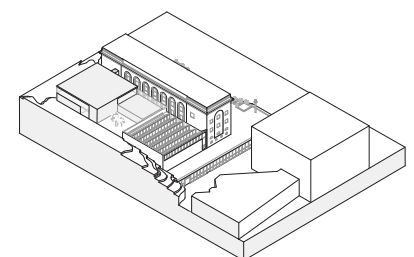
2025 - In a wider context

Nya Konst (The University of Gothenburg gathers all its arts-focused programs in one location, Näckrosen Campus) is planned to be finished on the property next to The museum, along Fågelsången, in close connection to Etagerna.
(Akademiska Hus, n.d.)

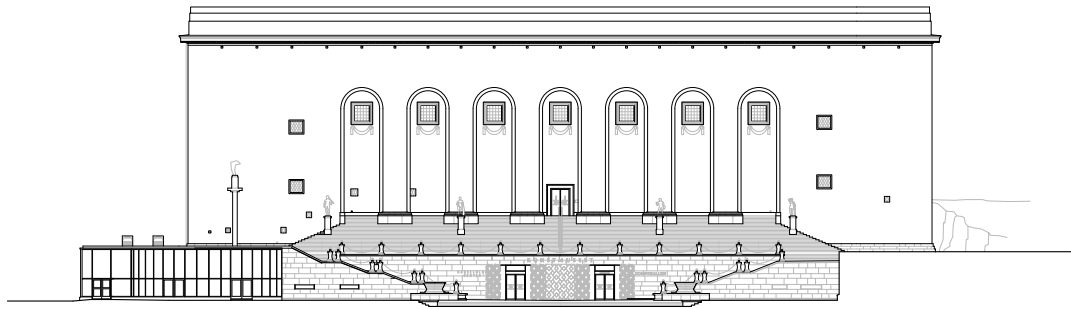


2026 - A voice of reason

Before construction starts, we present an alternative way forward for the Gothenburg Museum of Art that meets the needs and visions where tearing down is not an option.



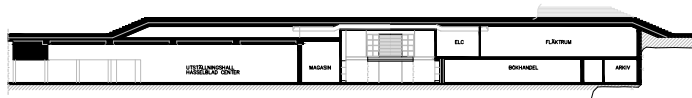
THE MUSEUM IN ITS CURRENT STATE



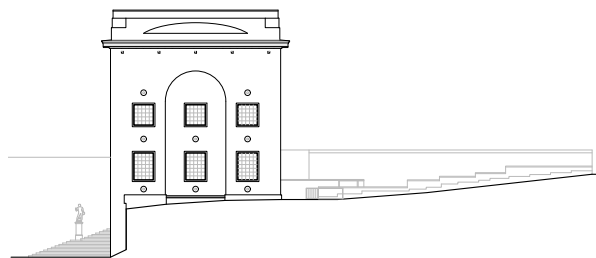
North facade 1:800



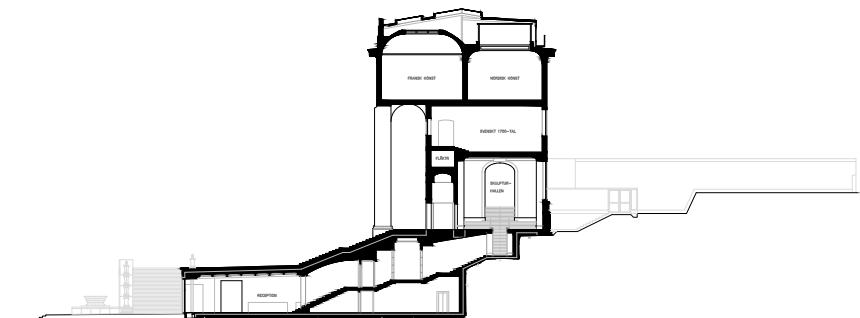
Section D - D



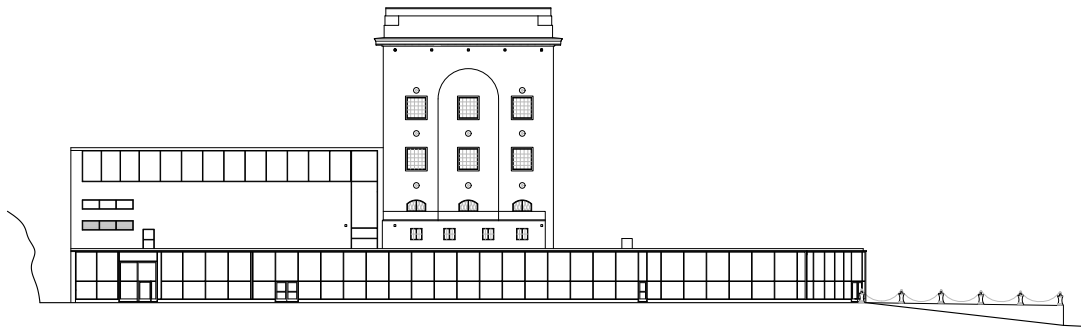
Section E - E



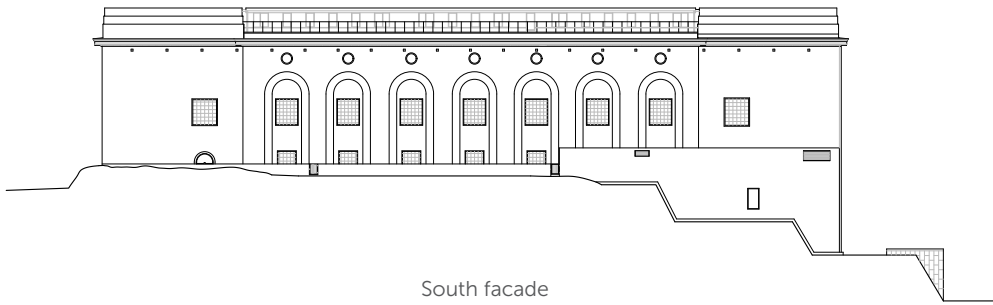
West facade



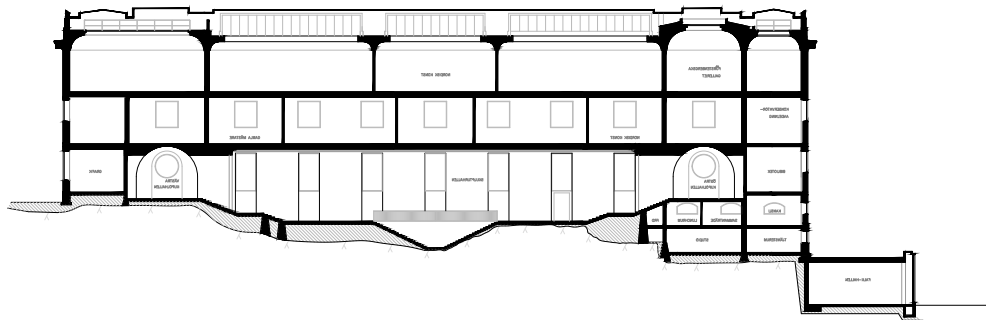
Section A - A



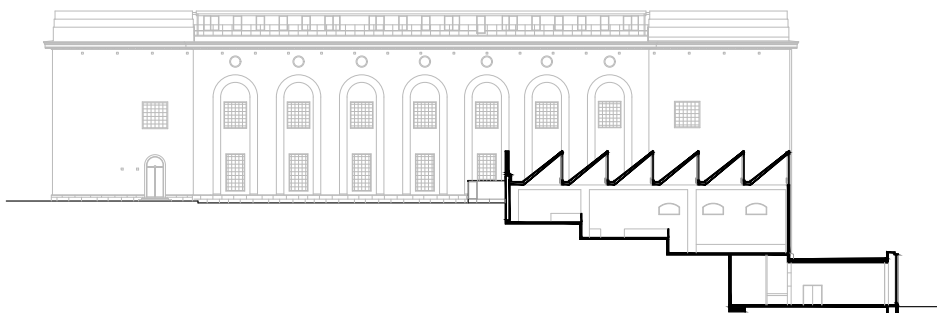
East facade



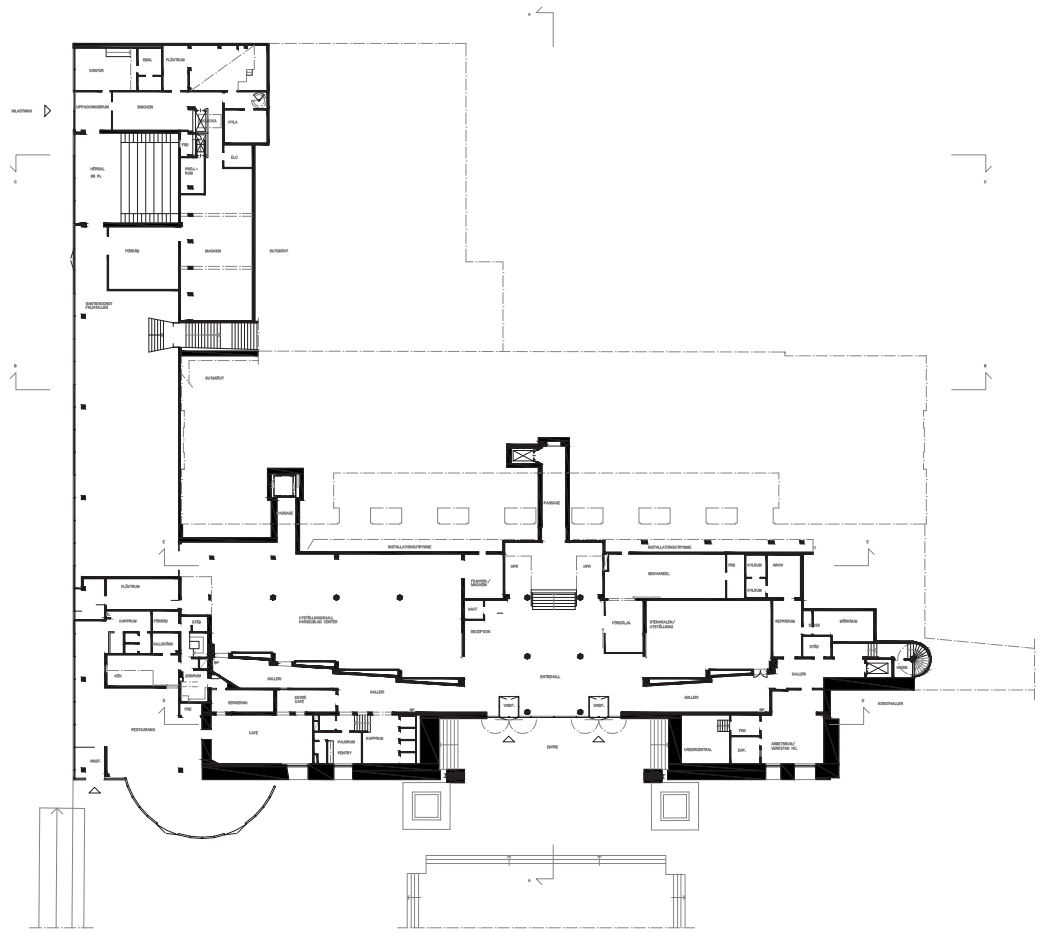
South facade



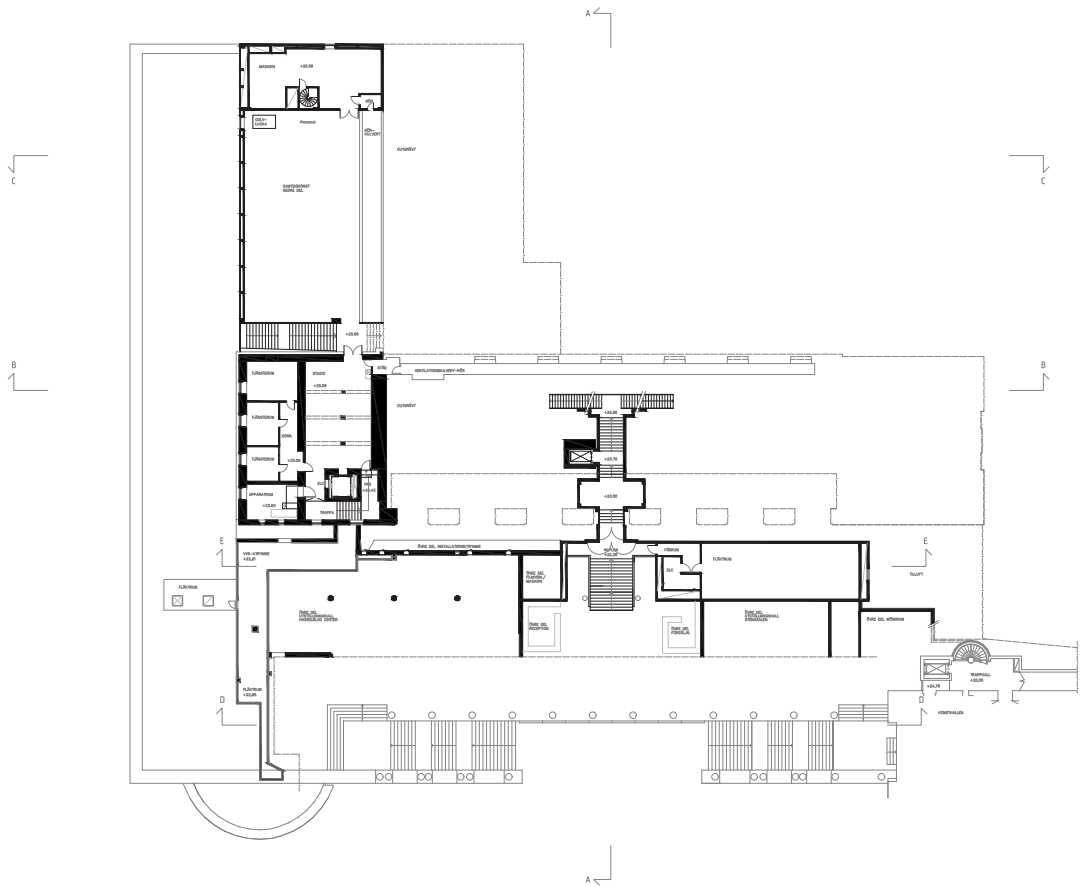
Section B - B



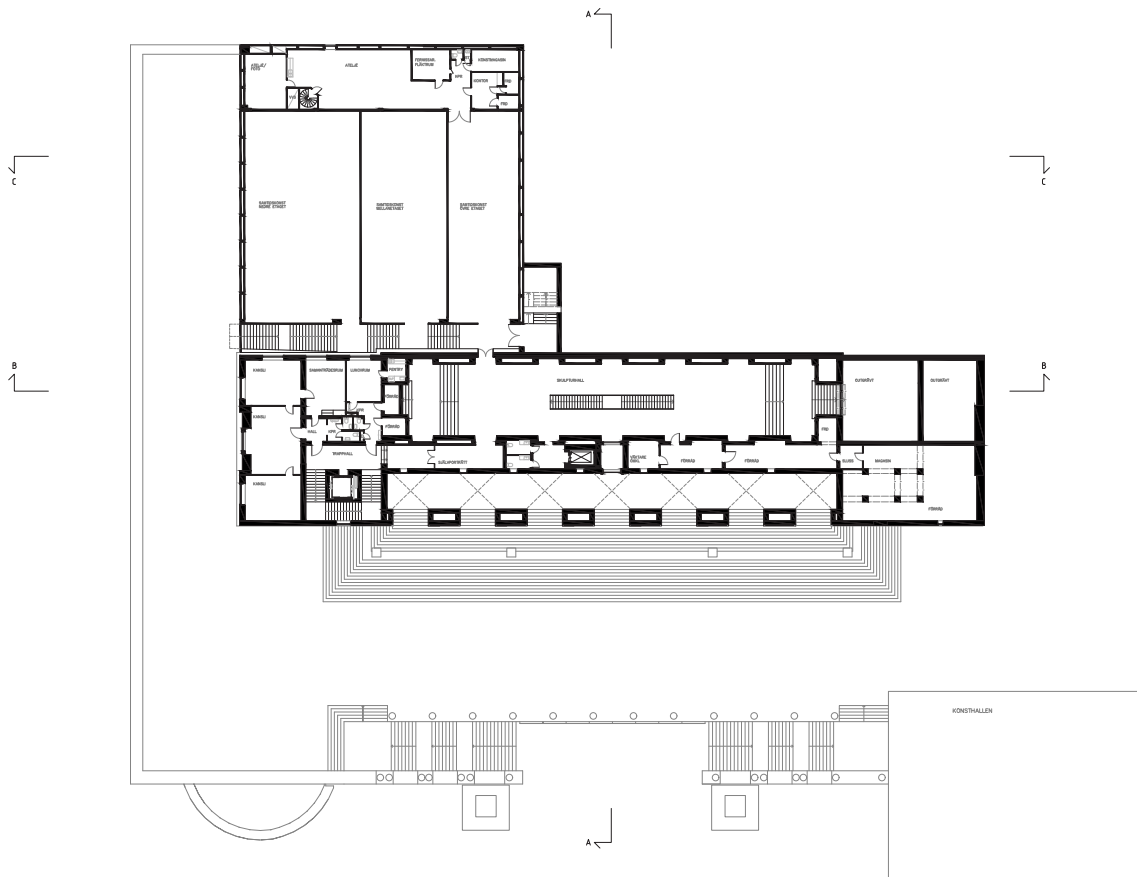
Section C - C



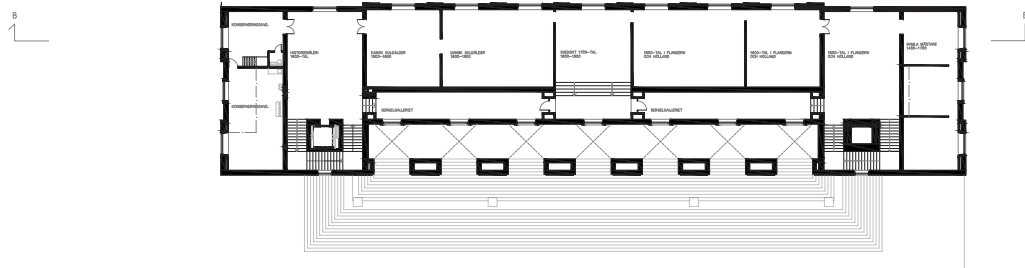
Groundfloor 1:800



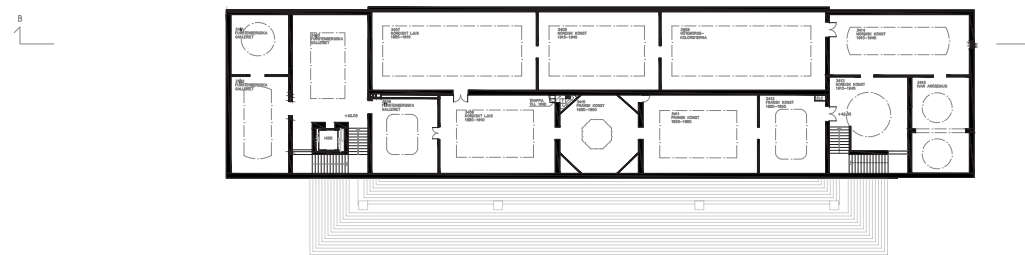
Floor 2



Floor 3.5



Floor 5



Floor 6

THE PRE-STUDIES

GOALS AND VISIONS

The need for a new extension to the museum is based on two pre-studies conducted by Higab in 2015 and 2021. According to Göteborgs konstmuseum (2025), the primary goals and visions of the planned redevelopment can be summarized as follows:

Increasing the possibility of borrowing artworks for temporary exhibitions

Expanding and improving flexible spaces for visitors

Improving art management through safe spaces for transport, storage, and conservation

Enhancing the working environment for staff

The pre-studies identify several structural limitations in the museum building (Higab, 2015, 2021). Only a very small portion of the museum's collection can be displayed. Intersecting circulation routes for visitors, staff and art transport create logistical inefficiencies and potential risks in the handling of artworks. Parts of the building also fails to meet contemporary standards for accessibility, orientation, climate control and fire safety. The entrance facing Götaplatsen is undersized and difficult to navigate, and staff currently work in dispersed spaces that were not designed as workplaces.

ETAGERNA

Already in 2015, the demolition of Etagera is presented as a possible scenario and it is considered to be the best way forward as it, in its current state, contributes to several of the challenges:

Conflicting circulation flows

Complex level differences

Inefficient art logistics

Unclear visitor orientation

Retaining Etagera is dismissed as it hinders the possibility of creating good architecture (Higab, 2015).

TRANSLATED QUOTES
FROM THE 2015 PRE-
STUDY BY HIGAB

“The technology
is there, but the
architecture is not.”

(Higab, 2015)

“Scenario 1 [entails the retaining of
Etagerna] does not provide good
conditions for enabling good architecture
and creating a coherent whole.”

(Higab, 2015)

“That the asymmetrical structure does
not relate to the original architecture
is not merely an aesthetic issue. It also
undermines the plan’s potential for clarity
and legibility.”

(Higab, 2015)

THE COMPETITION

TASK

From the pre-studies, a task was formed that involved a series of objectives and requisites. The following is an excerpt and simplification of those.

Entrance

Part of the task is creating a new entrance path for visitors through the complex, an illustrative example was made that involved excavating a path under the original building. The reason for this is to exclude the sculpture hall in the entrance path, restoring it to its original state.

Location of the Extension

The extension should be placed south of the existing building between the museum and the Lorensberg villa district. It should not be visible from Götaplatsen or Kungssportsavenyn, in order not to disturb the monumental facade of the main building.

Architectural Objectives

The new building should respect the cultural environment and maintain a high architectural quality. It needs to interact with the existing building and respect its cultural and historical values. At the same time, it should be a contemporary addition that enriches the museum.

Sustainable Development

The project should address ecological, economical and social sustainability. The museum should function as a long-term sustainable institution.

Demolition

Demolishing Etagera is described as a possible condition rather than a fixed requirement in the competition brief.

PROGRAM

PUBLIC

EXHIBITION
CAFÉ
AUDITORIUM
EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP
LIGHTYARD
NEW ENTRANCE

STAFF

WORKPLACES
LIBRARY
STORAGE
ARCHIVE
PROJECT ROOM
PRINTING
RESTING ROOM
MEETING ROOMS
PHONE ROOM
LUNCH ROOM

ART HANDLING

WORKSHOPS
WOOD
TECH
PAINTING

CONSERVATION STUDIOS
PHOTO
PAPER
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

ART STORAGE

LOADING
PACKROOM/ REGISTRATION
IPM
CLIMATE CONTROLL
WASTE

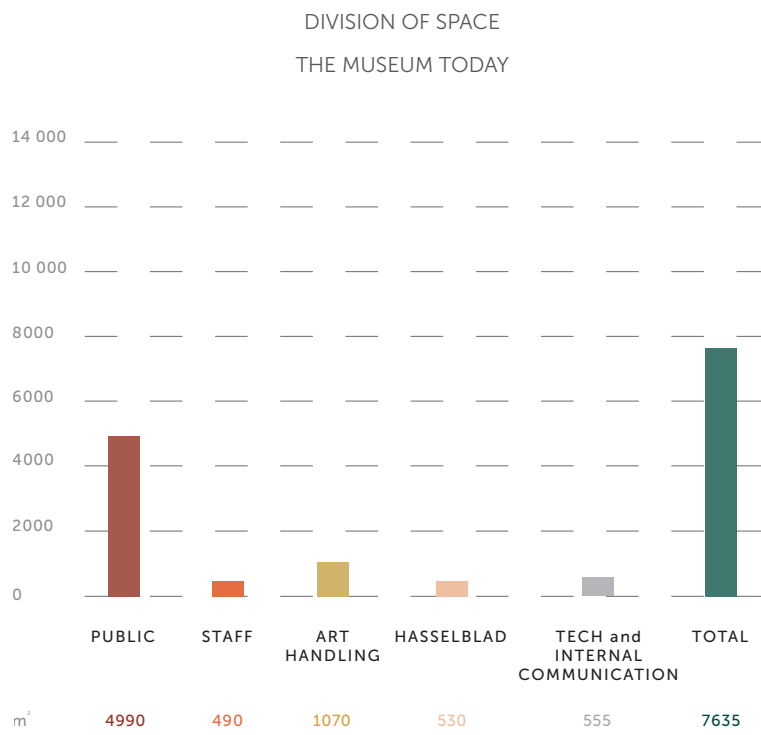
THE COMPETITION

SPACE AND FLOWS

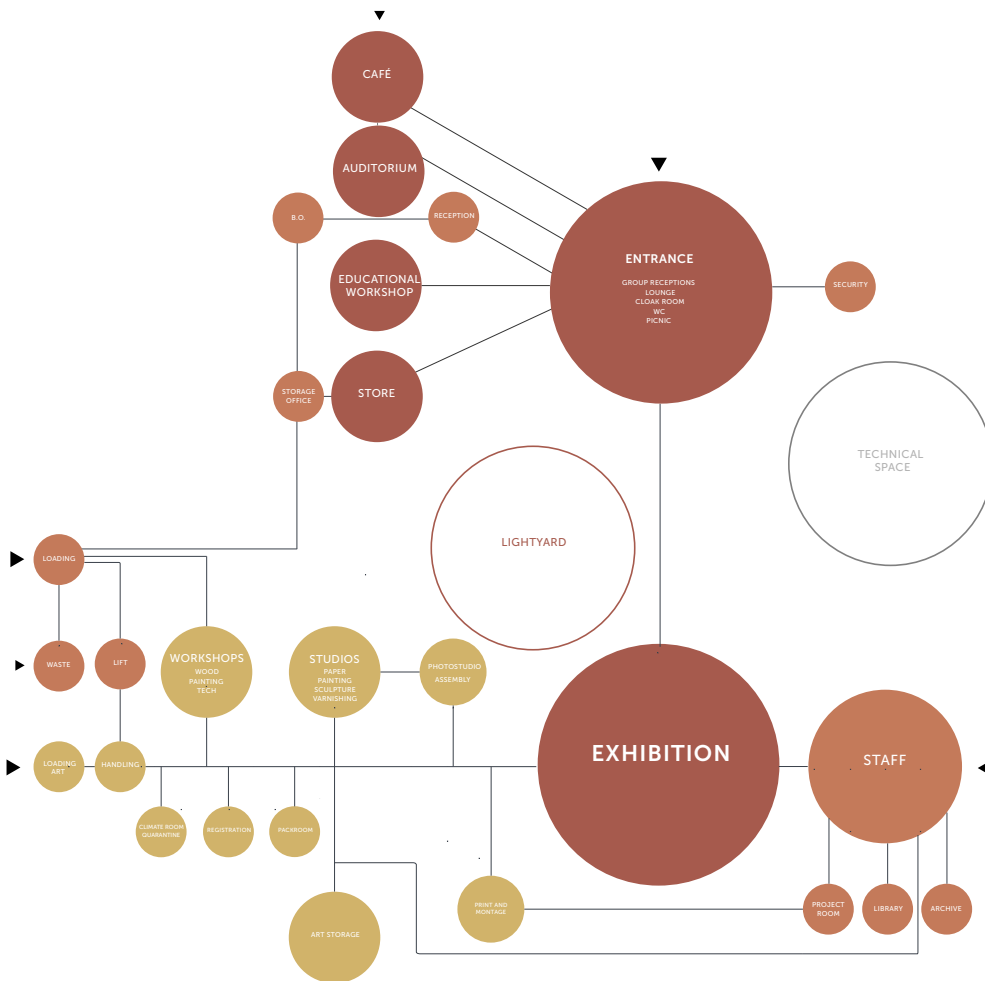
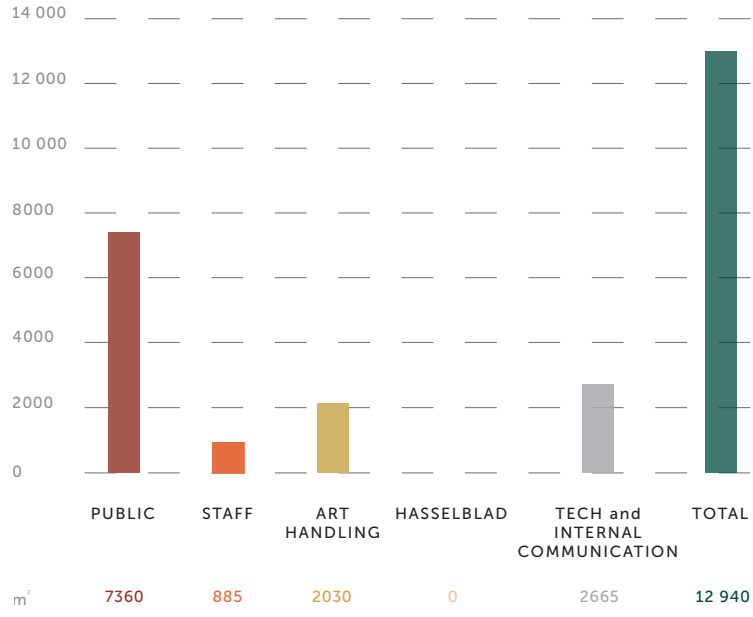
The competitors are asked to propose an extension of approximately 7,000 m² gross floor area (GFA) with connections between the new building and the existing museum and modify the museum to be more functional and contemporary. A large part of the additional space is for exhibitions, the museum holds approximately 70,000 artworks, but only a small fraction can currently be displayed at the same time.

An important principle in the new complex is that flows should be clear and should not intersect unnecessarily. The path of the visitor should become more legible and should not intersect with internal operations.

The following diagrams have been graphically reworked from originals in the competition brief.



DIVISION OF SPACE
THE COMPETITION BRIEF



SPATIAL RELATIONSHIP PROGRAM
THE COMPETITION BRIEF

THE COMPETITION

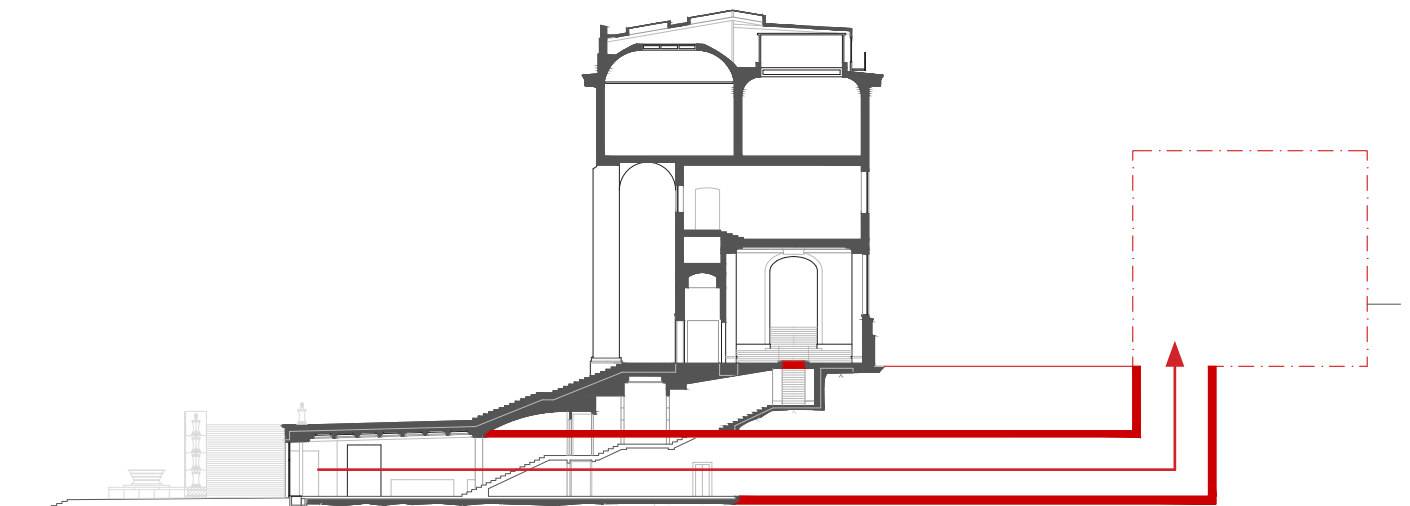
THE WINNING PROPOSAL

The winning proposal, Ansikte mot ansikte designed by Barcelona based office Barozzi Veiga together with Hermansson Hiller Lundberg, entails the demolition of Etagerna, as suggested in both the pre-study and the competition program, placing the new building as a lower elongated volume along the plot.

The entrance path follows the example given in the competition brief, through a tunnel under the original building and then rising in the new building before turning back towards the new light yard. The principle of which can be seen in the section diagram below.

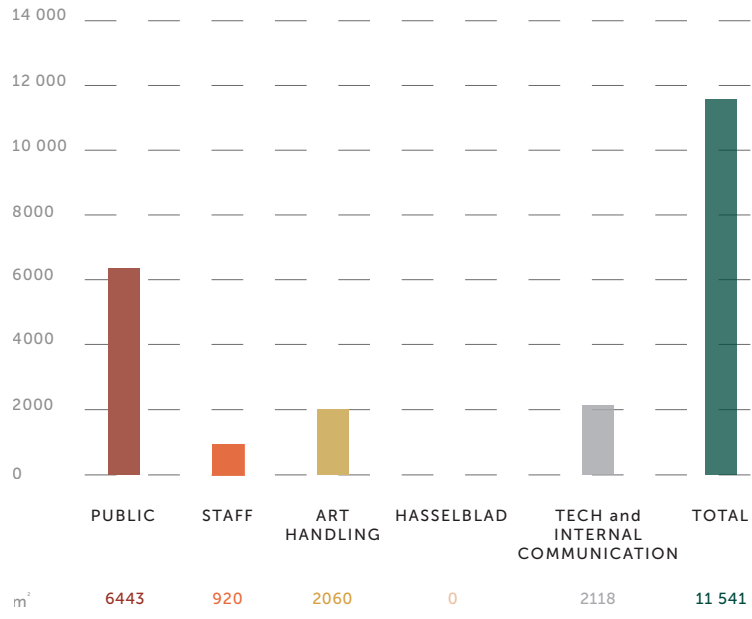
In terms of spaces, the winning proposal is approximately 1400m² below the area stipulated in the competition task, primarily achieved through combining functions. The configured flows mainly follows the guidelines, with the exception of the path of the visitors and staff intersecting, as a result of the staff still being partly placed in the original building. The path of art is also required to go through the light yard in order to reach the original building.

(Barozzi Veiga & Hermansson Hiller Lundberg, 2024)

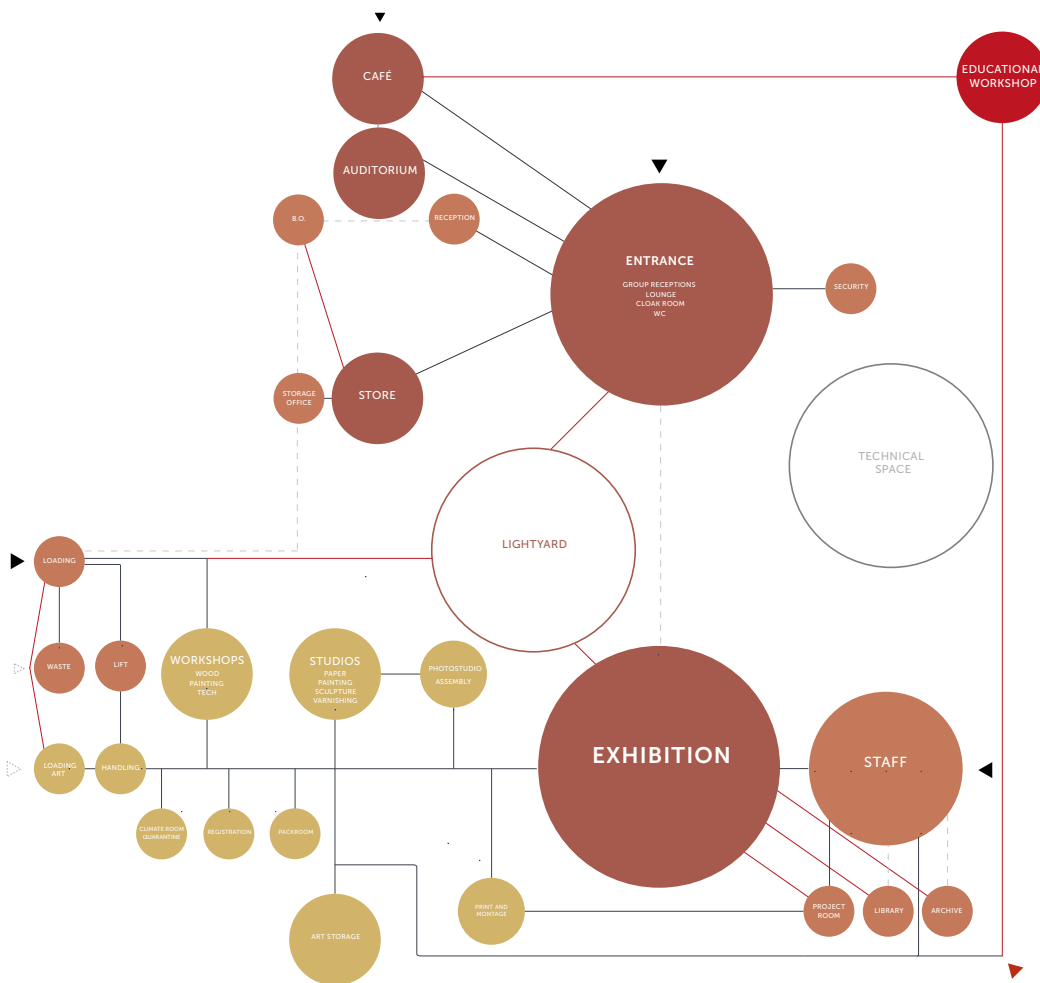


Entrance principle introduced in the competition brief
, also suggested by the winning proposal

DIVISION OF SPACE
THE WINNING PROPOSAL



Based on numbers from the proposal but categories have been changed for comparability.



SPATIAL RELATIONSHIP PROGRAM
ANALYSIS OF THE WINNING PROPOSAL

JURY STATEMENT

Following the competition, the jury released a statement where all the proposals were discussed and different solutions to the task were discussed in relation to the proposals. The following is a condensed version of that statement

Expression / Volume

Large and dominant volumes are considered difficult to reconcile with the existing museum and the surrounding villa district. Proposals that read clearly as additions and do not compete with the historic building are evaluated positively. Strong formal gestures can both strengthen and challenge this relationship. Perception of scale also varies depending on the point of approach, particularly between Ekmansgatan and Fågelsången.

Plan

Exhibition spaces are valued when they are flexible, well-proportioned and clearly place the artwork in focus. Locating exhibition rooms on the same level as the sculpture hall and lightyard improves orientation and visitor flow. Fragmented technical areas and vertically dispersed art handling create inefficient logistics. In some proposals, the spatial sequence leading to the artwork is considered unnecessarily long.

Urban situation

Integration with the surrounding city is an important evaluation criterion. Proposals that strengthen connections between the museum, the villa district and Fågelsången are assessed positively. Public spaces, greenery and generous plazas contribute to stronger relationships between the museum and the public realm.

Lightyard

The lightyard is seen as an important space for pause and orientation, a feature that is overall favored by the jury. While monumental spatial qualities can create strong experiences they also risk producing spaces that are difficult to use in practice, a general problem identified by the jury regarding the lightyard.

Circulation

Circulation solutions requiring openings in the existing facade are considered problematic as they may limit future development. Transitions between new and existing structures work best when they connect through communicative spaces, such as halls.

Fågelsången

Fågelsången is considered a strategic location with significant pedestrian movement. Strengthening the connection between the museum, public functions and this urban route is seen as an important opportunity.

Areas for Improvement in Ansikte mot Ansikte

The lift solution requires further development, and a clearer separation between art logistics and other service flows is needed.

(Göteborgs Stad, Higab, & Sveriges Arkitekter, 2024)

MAIN CHALLENGES

The following is an analysis and compilation of the challenges derived from the background.

Seperation of flows

One of the central challenges is to separate three different circulation paths within the building. Namely, the path of art, staff and visitors. The aim is to avoid intersecting circulation routes and create a safer and more efficient organisation of the museum.

Visitor orientation

Today, the building is perceived as difficult to navigate and the circulation routes are unclear. The visitor's movement through the museum should become more intuitive, legible and coherent. This could require a reimagining of the museum visitor route.

Art logistics

The museum must in the future be able to manage incoming and outgoing loans of artworks. This requires a new internal circulation systems for art which includes transportation within the building to related functions such as conservation studios, storage and archives, along with improved loading areas.

Cultural heritage

The museum building bears significant cultural and historical value. Proposals must therefore pay special respect to the original 1923 building, its context at Götaplatsen together with the sensitive urban context of Lorensbergs villastad.

Public place

The future of the museum entails a more public program where it should not only function as a gallery but also as an urban meeting place. The program emphasizes the need for public space in educational facilities, café and event space, causing a more challenging programmatic layout.

MAIN OPPORTUNITIES The following is an analysis and compilation of the opportunities identified.

Reduced area

The fact that the winning proposal was able to show that it is possible to greatly reduce the area needed opens up the possibility of retaining Etagerna and still fulfilling the requirements of the program without the need of an overly large extension and excavation.

Unlocked condition

The possibility of retaining Etagerna becomes possible since it's demolition was not a locked condition within the competition, even though it was clearly insinuated.

Cultural protection

Since Etagerna was deemed to not hold any significant cultural value, and is therefore not culturally protected, it becomes possible to alter it and bring back it's original spatial qualities in order to find a better use of it within the museum complex.

Public character

The programs emphasis on new public functions opens up the possibility of transforming *Etagerna* into a building with new social and public functions within the museum structure, which could enable the original spatial qualities to be reactivated.

Continuation

The history of the Gothenburg museum of art is a history of continuous additions and refigurations. The proposal will simply be a continuation of that history, possibly assisting in its apparent inclusion within the complex and in the creation of a coherent whole.

THEORY

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Questioning the notion of the demolition of an existing building with an outdated purpose opens up opportunities for sustainable transformation. Following Lewin and Goodman (2013), extending a building's life can contribute to both ecological and social sustainability.

ECOLOGICAL

To retain an existing structure rather than tear it down will withhold energy that's already invested in the building, and avoid emissions connected to extracting new material and construction of a new structure. (Lewin & Goodman, 2013)

SOCIAL

Since the project is situated in a culturally valuable historical context, tearing down can be sensitive. Preservation sustains collective memory and strengthens community cohesion by maintaining the physical markers of shared history and identity (Lewin & Goodman, 2013) The transformation of Etagerna through the reactivation of its original spatial qualities can create a socially and publicly available space that will contribute to cultural sustainable development and enhance the intentions of such by the Nya Konst project.

ADAPTIVE REUSE

For the transformation of Etagera, and of the character of our addition, we depart from the theory of adaptive reuse. The purpose for this is to understand different approaches in how to address alterations and additions to existing structures. How to relate to the existing in terms of expression, questions of hierarchy, and to establish a strategy for unification.

The term Adaptive reuse generally refers to the transformation of a building into one that serves a new use, this will be only partly true in the case of this project as the use of the altered building still needs to work within the same functional complex. Apart from this more practical dimension, adaptive reuse also aims to serve as a “[...] continuation of cultural phenomena through built infrastructure, connections across the fabric of time and space and preservation of memory — all of which result in densely woven narratives of the built environment with adaptive reuse as their tool.” (Berger et al., 2009).

The history of adaptive reuse goes all the way back to Michelangelo’s alteration of the ruins of the Baths of Diocletian into a church in 1561. The ruins colossal scale and monumental character was seen as a potential asset architecturally and as a temporal reference. This was a groundbreaking realisation and these types of questions would not be approached for another 400 years (Wong, 2017). Following WWI the notion of the protection of buildings was again approached in The Athens Charter 1933 where it was proclaimed that “architectural assets must be protected [...] if they are the expression of a former culture”. The Venice Charter 1964 extended the protection to modest works that “acquired cultural significance with the passing of time” and that they are protected “no less as works of art than as historical evidence.” (Wong, 2017)

CHARACTER AND CONTINUATION

At the outset of a process of adaptive reuse lies an understanding of the character of the host building. An initial assessment of the characteristics and defining principles of the host is needed in each intervention to animate its host and as a way of perpetuating its DNA into the future (Wong, 2017).

This continuation, comes with and from the understanding that “everything that once was can never be again, and that everything that once was forms an irreplaceable and inextricable link in a chain of development”, as stated by Austrian art historian Alois Riegl as he acknowledged the effect of shifting contemporary ideas on the concept of artistic value (Wong, 2017).

This continuum lies at the core of adaptive reuse, architecture reflects functions and styles specific to the society and culture of its time. This creates a “visible patchwork narration – the physical manifestation of changing use over time” (Wong, 2017).

ADDITIONS

In relation to the preservation of additions to an original structure, the subject has been addressed by Cesare Brandi in his *Teoria del restauro* (1963) where he proclaimed that “an addition to a work of art is nothing more than new testimony to human activity and, thus, is part of history [...]”.

Furthermore, the utilization of several hosts raises additional questions, apart from their individual place in history, also the relationship between them, both physical and historical come into question. Under these conditions a unifying strategy is required that provides the structures with a singular identity (Wong, 2027).

When dealing with expansions and additions, these same considerations come into play, it is not simply a matter of expanding the space or refiguring through internal additions but also, in the same way, considering the context and its place in the continuum of the built heritage.

Two critical issues come into question, firstly the need to position the additions in time within an already defined character of form, material, organization and identity. Secondly, to position oneself and the design within the hierarchy of the existing. As such, the addition is always in some way derived from, or in response to, the host (Wong, 2017).

ALLUSION

When deriving form and character from older structures, the question of authenticity arises. According to Venturi and Scott Brown (2004), new architecture *can* refer to and coexist with the old rather than mimic, as a way of establishing an ongoing dialog.

Venturi and Brown view context as something alive and to work with the context is to help it be alive, to create an active engagement. Doing this can be as literal as simply using elements from surrounding buildings as a way of alluding to the context, but the allusion can also be "as fleeting as the flash of fish in water".

In general a certain level of discretion is preferable, however when designing the extension to the London National Gallery Venturi and Brown (2004) made the borrowing obvious, because of the relation between the buildings. The allusion is, however, done in a way as to not deceive, it makes it clear that it is a representation, not a copy.

SECOND VIOLIN

Second violin refers to the set of musicians in an orchestra that play the supporting part of the score, harmonizing and rhythmizing with the first violin, which plays the melody. It is not a question of skill, but rather about elevating the melody and creating a larger, more complex, soundscape.

The approach in adaptive reuse is similar to that of playing the second violin. About relating to the context as a way of elevating it and to create a larger, more complex, whole and about negotiating between the existing and the new (Wong, 2017).

GOTHENBURG LAW COURTS

Looking at Asplund's (1936) extension of The Gothenburg law courts it is very much an example of playing the second violin. It is responsive when adding a new layer, contributing to the cultural context without overpowering it.

When comparing the second to last version of the facade with the final one, it becomes clear the enormous difference small shifts in the design of the facade makes for the impression of the whole.

In the articulating lines, used to divide the facade into segments, the top one seems to be mainly concerned with the division of the segments whereas in the final version, where the segments have been simplified, the lines seem to be mainly used as a way of articulating the buildings relation to the existing one.

In terms of window placement, in the second to last version, the windows are placed in the center of the segments, indicating an independent position in relation to the existing. In the final version, the windows are instead pushed to the side. They make the building almost lean on the original structure, it needs it for balance. The windows themselves are also changed, whereas before the division of the windows were completely independent, in the final version the two buildings share more of a common expression as the proportion of the top part of the window are the same.



Figure 1. Gothenburg law courts second to last facade. (Asplund, 1935)



Figure 2. Gothenburg law courts final facade. (Asplund, 1937)



Gothenburg law courts

COUNTERPOINT

The concept of counterpoint originates in music theory, where independent melodic lines are composed in relation to one another.

Rhan (2000) describes counterpoint as follows:

"It is hard to write a beautiful song. It is harder to write several individually beautiful songs that, when sung simultaneously, sound as a more beautiful polyphonic whole. The internal structures that create each of the voices separately must contribute to the emergent structure of the polyphony, which in turn must reinforce and comment on the structures of the individual voices. The way that is accomplished in detail is ... 'counterpoint'."

Junod (2018) shows how musical concepts such as polyphony, harmony, proportion and dissonance have long been used to describe relations between music, painting and architecture. Rather than treating these analogies as literal translations, they can be understood as conceptual tools for discussing how independent parts interact within a larger composition.

Rather than dissolving difference into uniformity, counterpoint depends on the tension between autonomy and relation: voices may diverge, contrast or create moments of dissonance, yet they are held together through proportion, rhythm and harmonic structure. In this sense, counterpoint offers a useful analogy for architecture. It allows different spatial, material or historical layers to remain legible as distinct voices, while still contributing to a coherent whole.

MISSA PAPAE MARCELLI: I. KYRIE Missa Papae Marcelli: I. Kyrie is an example of musical counterpoint where independent melodic voices are woven together into a coherent whole.



Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (2016). Missa Papae Marcelli: I. Kyrie

METHODS AND TOOLS

METHODS

The goal was to propose an *alternative* future for the Gothenburg Museum of Art, in a reality where the future already is outlined, the choice of method was based upon that particular situation.

Reference analysis

A competition has been held and an actual project is being planned. Therefore analysing and comparative diagramming of Pre-studies, competition brief and suggested projects (competitors) permeated the process.

Scenario building

The museum has many different types of visitors and many different types of users and inhabitants, the method has therefore involved trying to imagine as many scenarios as possible to try to accommodate the needs of everyone.

Iterative design experiments

With there being a large number of factors to consider, the method has involved trying different solutions towards different goals in an iterative design process.

TOOLS

The approach was a research by design process that involved conventional architectural tools, such as sitespecific landscapemodelling, both physical and digital modeling, sketching, drawings and diagramming.

Analytical

Space syntax for circulating flows

Sunlight analysis

Comparative diagramming of the winning proposal, our design proposal, competition brief.

Documentation

Conventional drawings, Illustrations, physical and digital models

SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS

SCOPE

Drawn from the analysis of the main challenges of the competition brief, these are the focus points of the design proposal.

Spatial configuration

Focusing of accommodating the needs relating to the spatial configuration including the separation of flows together with achieving a clear visitor orientation, improving art logistics and an overall increase in exhibition space.

Coherent whole

Mediating between the stipulated desires of creating a contemporary addition and to respect the cultural heritage and character of the site and buildings of the museum complex.

Alteration

To strengthen the argument for retaining Etagerna, we will explore how the building could be transformed to serve new functions beyond its current use. Many of its original spatial qualities have been overlooked or forgotten over time. The intention is to revive these qualities and investigate whether the building can accommodate a more social and publicly accessible program, rather than continuing to function solely as an exhibition space.

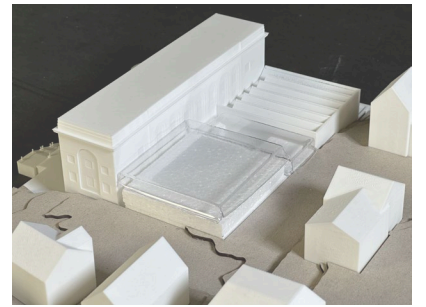
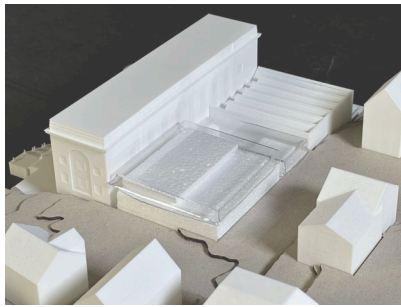
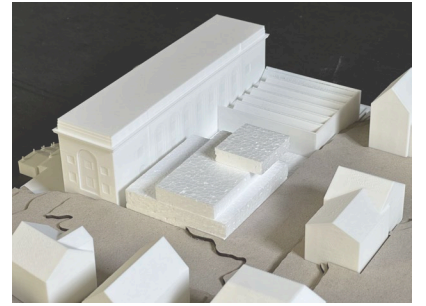
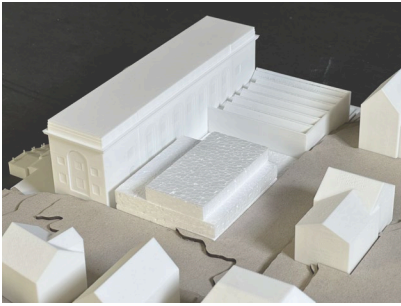
DELIMITATIONS

This thesis focuses on the architectural proposal, on a design exploration of an alternative scenario, limited to the focus points of the competition task and the approach chosen in terms of expression.

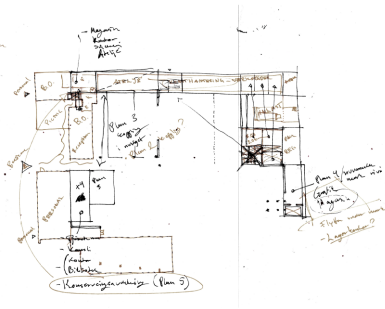
Not on a full technical detailing or cost calculation.
It excludes legal processes and governance.

PROCESS

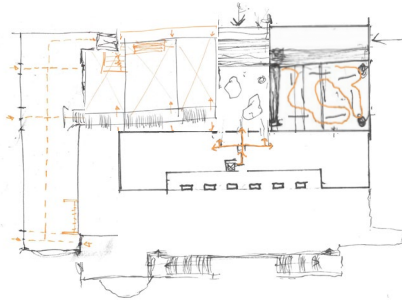
VOLUME



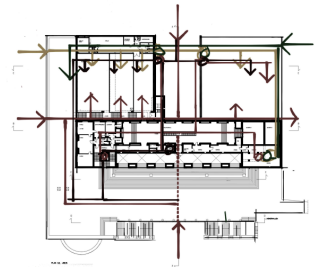
PLAN



Programmatic layout

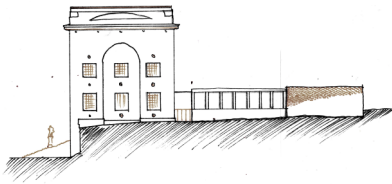


Directions



Circulation

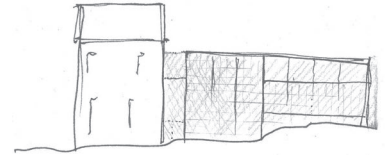
FACADE



Vertical division

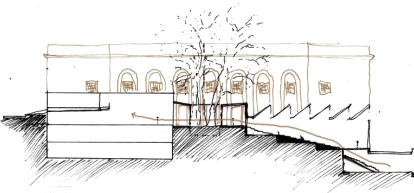


Horizontal division

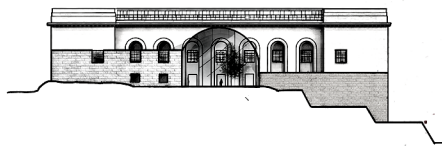


Openness

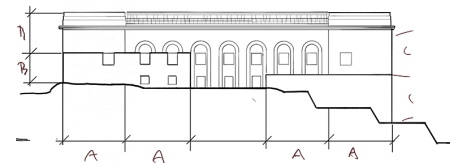
ALLUSION



Through movement



Through openings

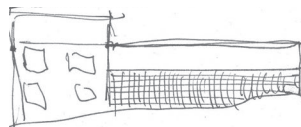


Through proportions

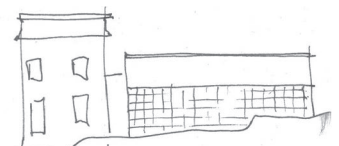
BRICK ARTICULATION



Vertical



Small scale

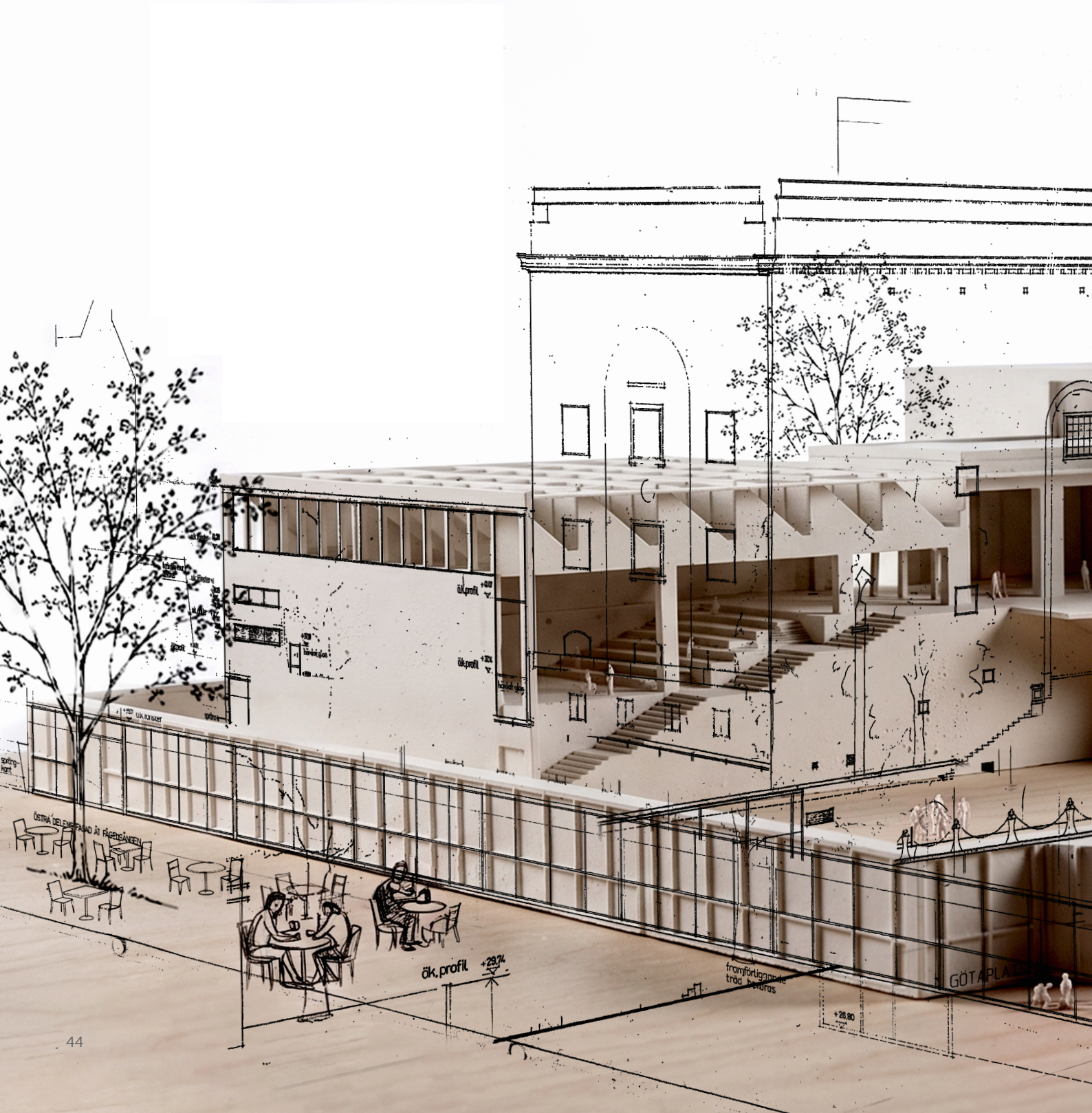


Large scale

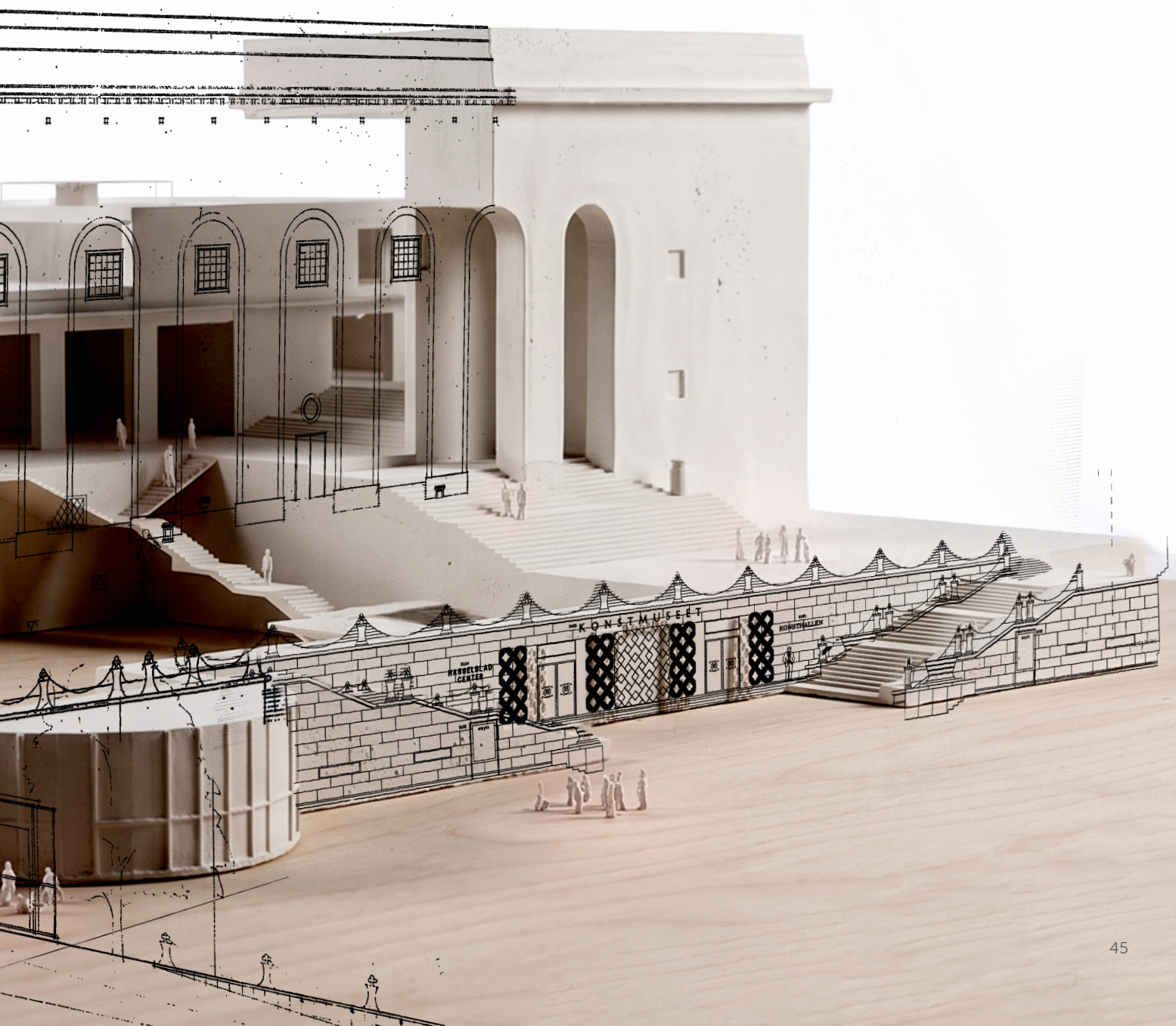
THE DESIGN PROPOSAL

KONTRAPUNKT

Kontrapunkt proposes a new composition for the Gothenburg Museum of Art, where existing and new parts are brought together into a clearer and more dynamic museum structure. The proposal retains and transforms Etagerna, introduces a new extension to the south, and connects the museum more strongly to Fågelsången (Nya Konst) and the Lorensberg villa district. The new addition is conceived as a contemporary counterpoint to the existing museum. Its structure and embodiment creates a building with its own presence, while its scale and position allow the original museum to remain the main character.



The intervention is organised around a central lightyard that becomes both an orienting space and a meeting point between the museum's different layers. Public functions are gathered along the visitor route, while art handling, staff areas and internal logistics are given separate and efficient paths through the complex. Etagera is reactivated as a social and educational part of the museum, opening towards Fågelsången and forming a new connection between the museum and the city.



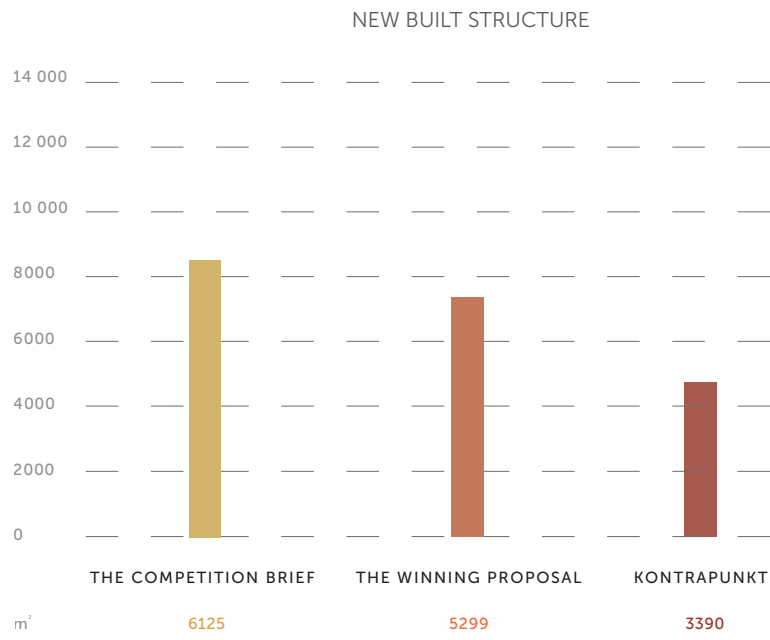
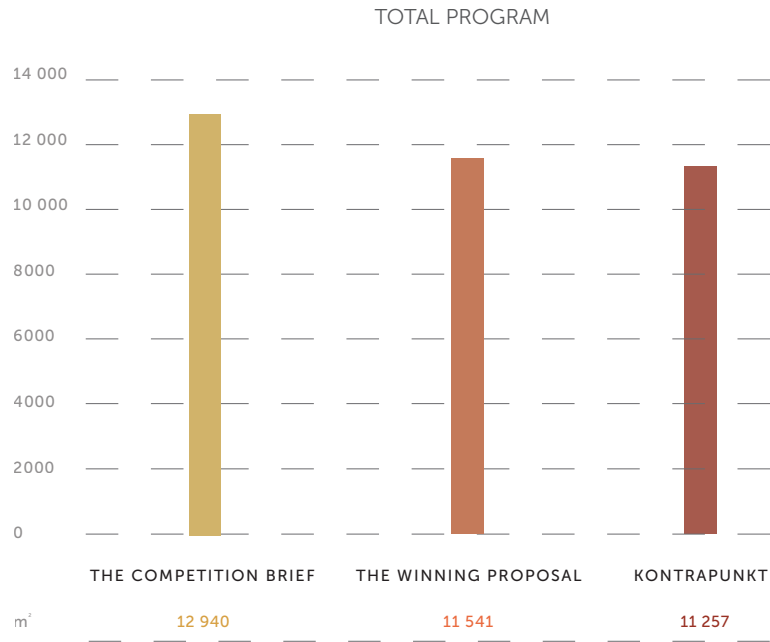




Illustration A - Aerial view of the complex

THE SITE



ANALYSIS

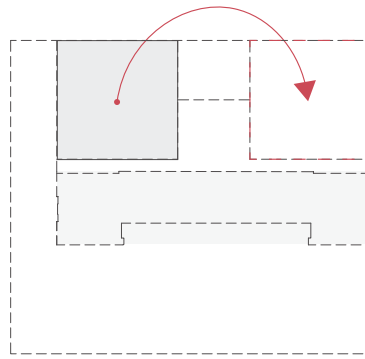
The plot is characterized by its hidden condition within a highly significant urban context. It is situated within Gothenburg's cultural core, surrounded by key institutions such as the theatre, the concert hall, and the Nya Konst complex. Despite this centrality, the plot remains somewhat detached from the main public flow. Located behind the original Gothenburg Art Museum, the plot connects indirectly to the city through Götaplatsen and Fägelsängen, the vital connection to Nya konst through Etagera. As such, it occupies a position between two contrasting environments: the intensity and activity of the urban center, and the calmer character of Lorensbergs Villastad.



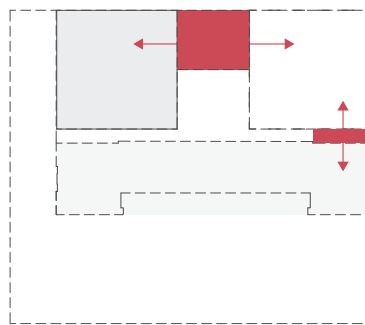
Illustration B - View from Ekmansgatan

THE PLOT

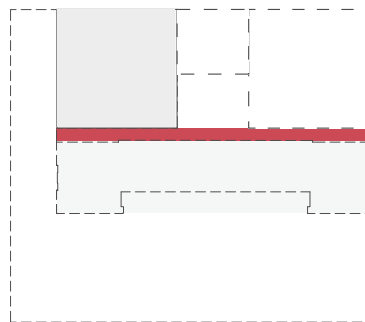
MIRRORING
ETAGERNA



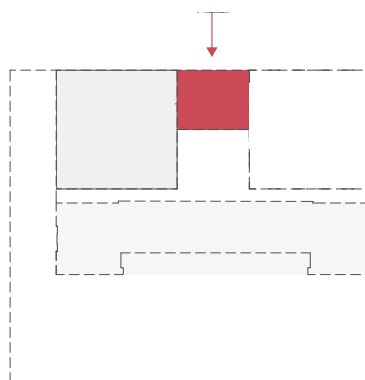
CONNECTING
THE VOLUMES
UNDERGROUND

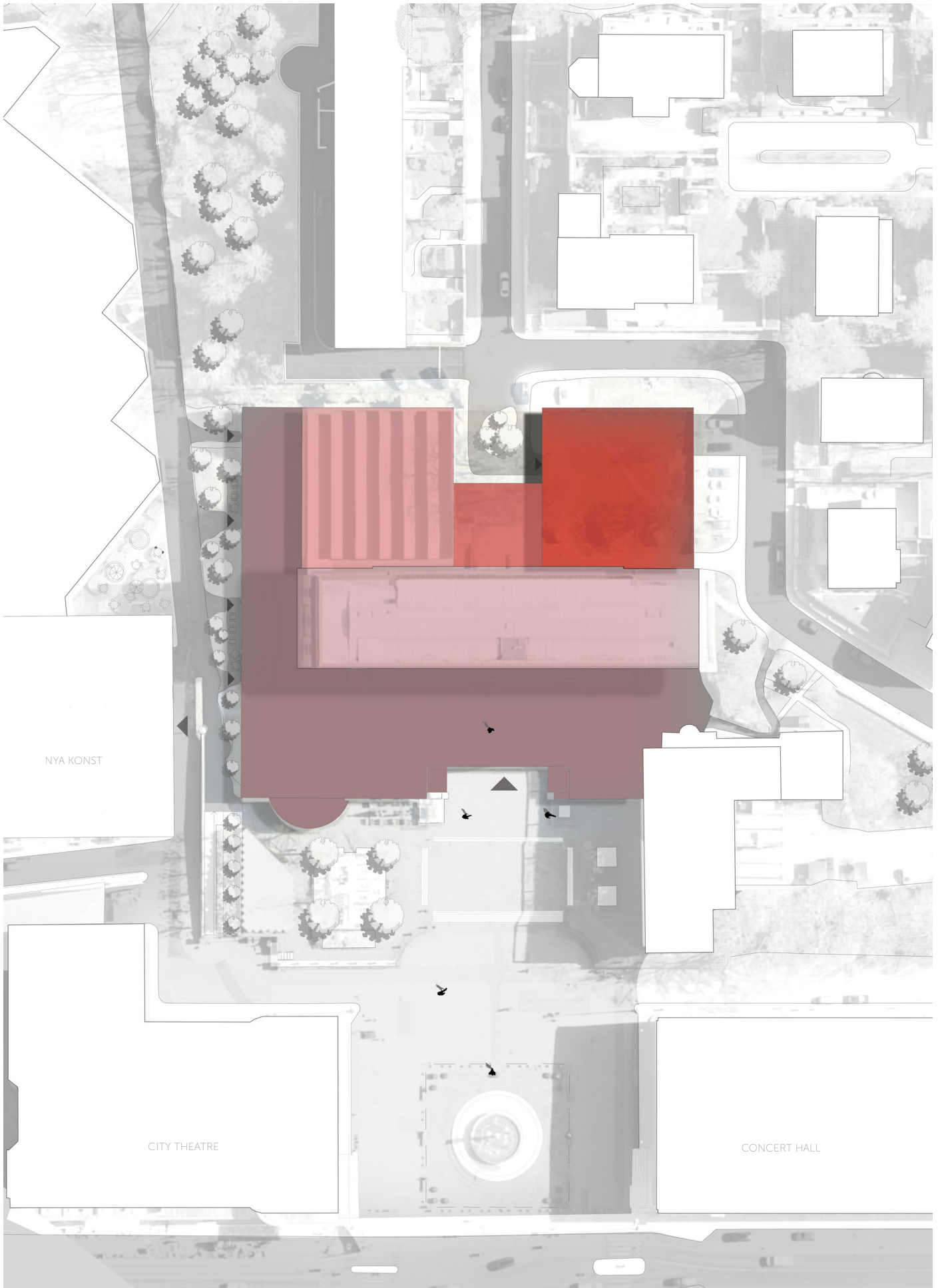


CENTRAL
LIGHTYARD



PARK THAT CONNECTS TO
LORENSBERG VILLA DISTRICT

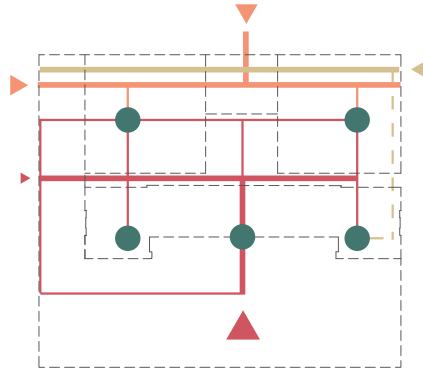




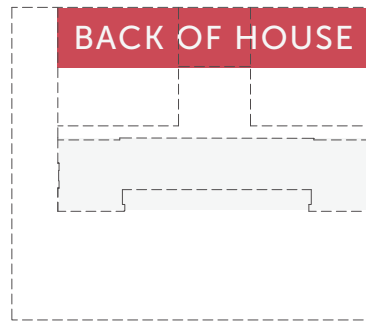
CIRCULATION

NON CONFLICTING FLOWS

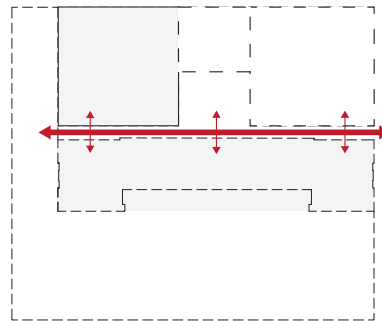
- PUBLIC
- STAFF
- ART HANDLING
- VERTICAL



CONDENSED BACK OF HOUSE



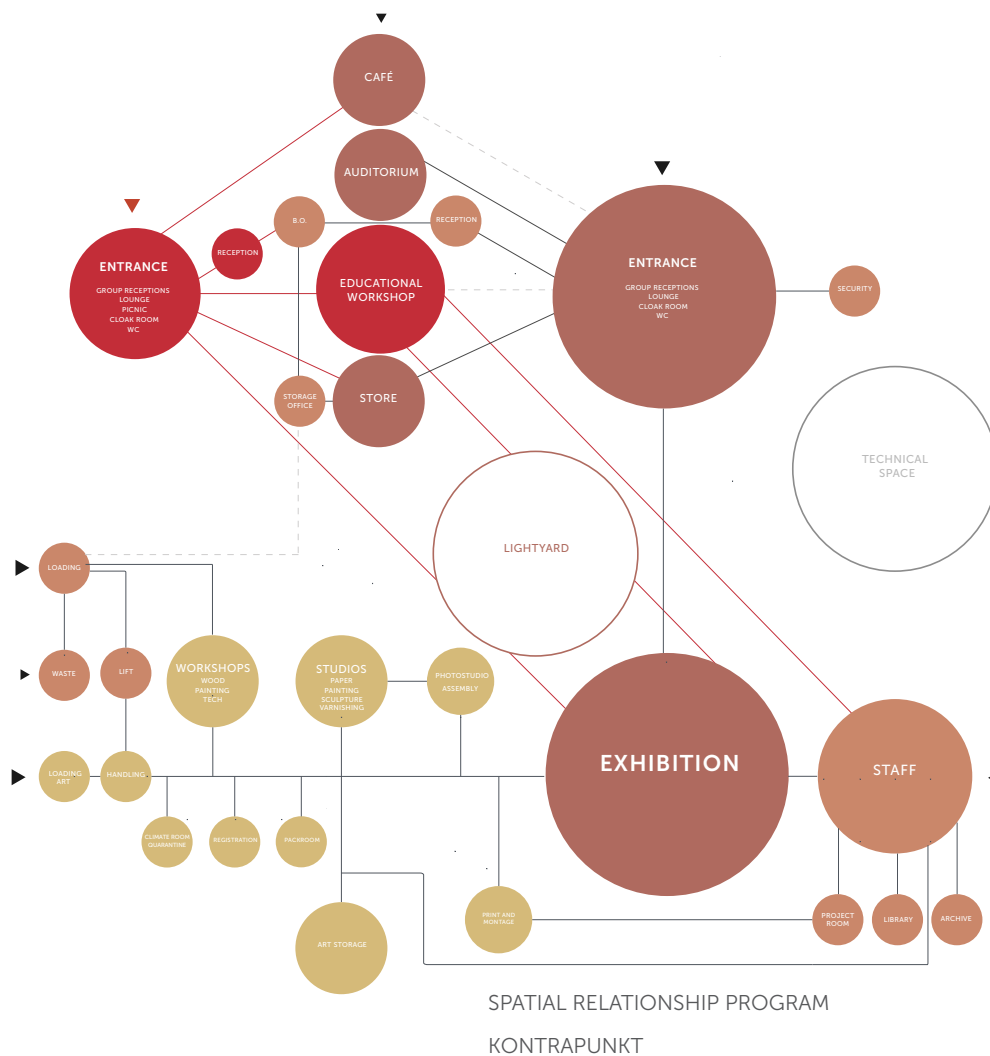
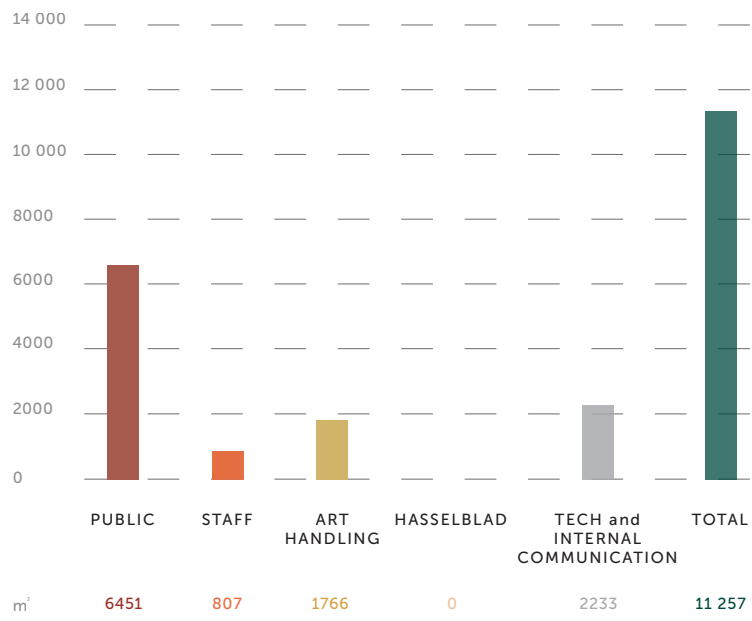
CONTINUOUS MOVEMENT THROUGH LIGHTYARD



DIAGRAMMATIC PLAN



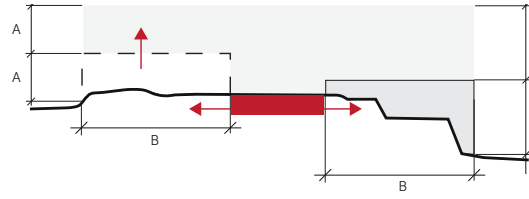
DIVISION OF SPACE



CONCEPTS

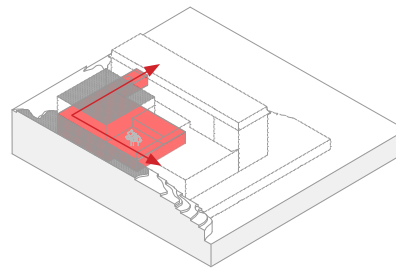
DYNAMISM AND HARMONY

To achieve similar proportions as Etagera in relation to the original building and to continue the dynamic character of the complex, the building rises above and connects underneath.



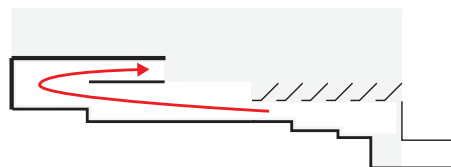
CONNECTING UNDER GROUND

In order to bind the building to the others within the complex and to achieve non conflicting flows, the building connects underground through excavation.



ECHOING CONTEXT

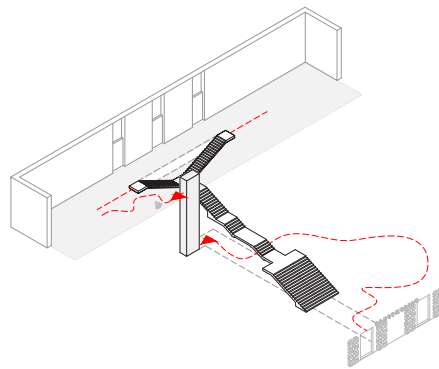
The extension aims to echo the movement and logic of both the Original building and Etagera, which in itself is an echo of the topography.



THE NEW ENTRANCE

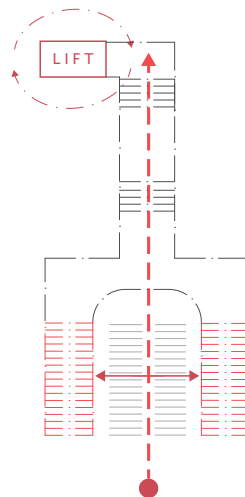
CURRENT

The current entrance hides the accessible path behind the staircase and the elevator opens up in the bathroom area before the sculpture hall



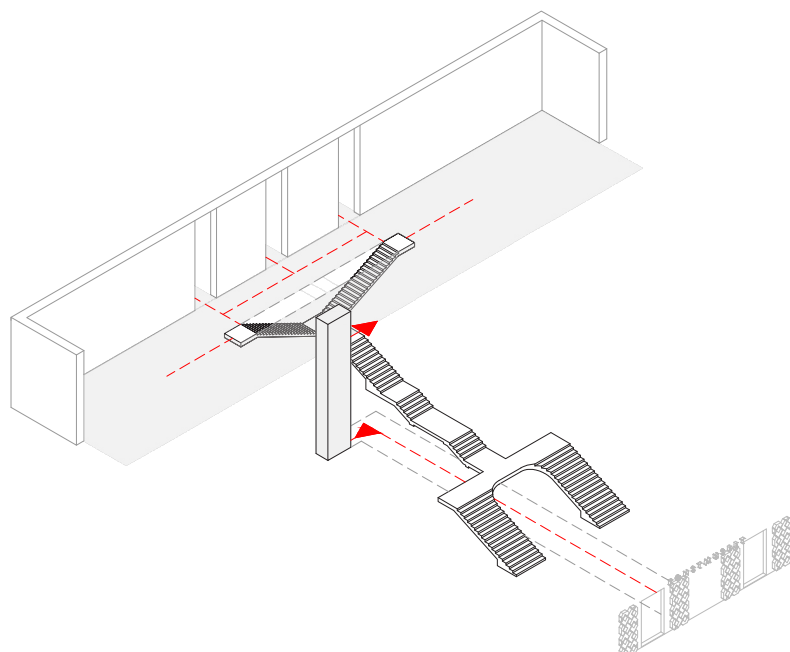
INTERVENTION

Splitting the staircase in two and flipping the elevator at the top



NEW

The new entrance highlights the accessible path by creating a strong axis towards the elevator. The elevator opens up to the center of the room, where the original entrance was in 1923. From there the sculpture hall opens up towards the lightyard



A CONTEMPORARY ADDITION

The goal with the expression has been to create a coherent whole, but in a way where the individual additions remain legible parts, continuing the dynamic character. At the outset lies a process of understanding the characters, the relationships and hierarchies within the built complex.

The approach in terms of hierarchical character is derived from the concept of The Second Violin, to find a tone that through architectural measures, such as form and material, clearly does not overshadow and compete with the structures but instead harmonizes and acts as a unifying measure.

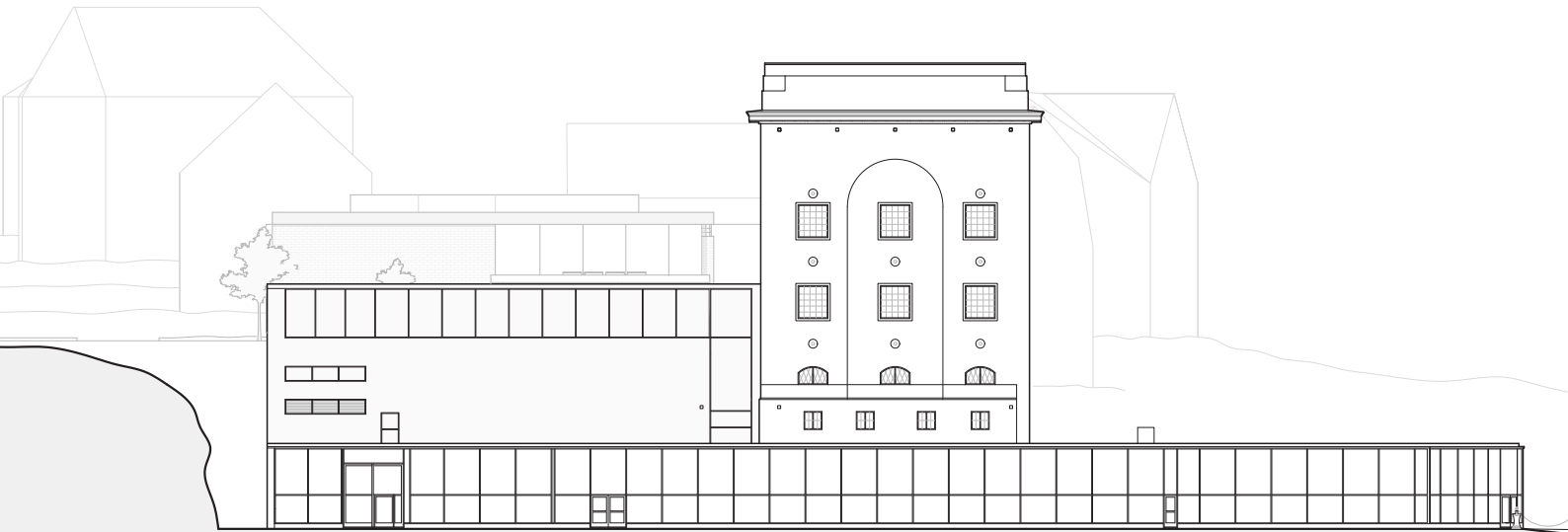
With there already being a number of additions, the options are limited to certain approaches for achieving a unified complex. The aim has been, similar to that of the theory of Counterpoint, to see the polyphony and to find a way to, through an addition, reinforce and comment on the voices of the individual structures contributing. The previous additions introduce their own languages in terms of tone, hierarchy, form, material, movement, and so on, and to be able to engage with them, only certain strategies become viable. The addition is a collection of those strategies.

As a way of emphasizing the experience of the building from that of a passive unifier to that of an engaging presence, that interacts with its surroundings, Allusion is used. Finding certain elements and languages in the structures and through repetition and continuation conversing with the existing, achieving not mimicry but a breath of life into the ongoing conversation.

Instead of dissolving the differences into uniformity, the addition emphasizes a continuum and avoids closure.



West facade 1:500



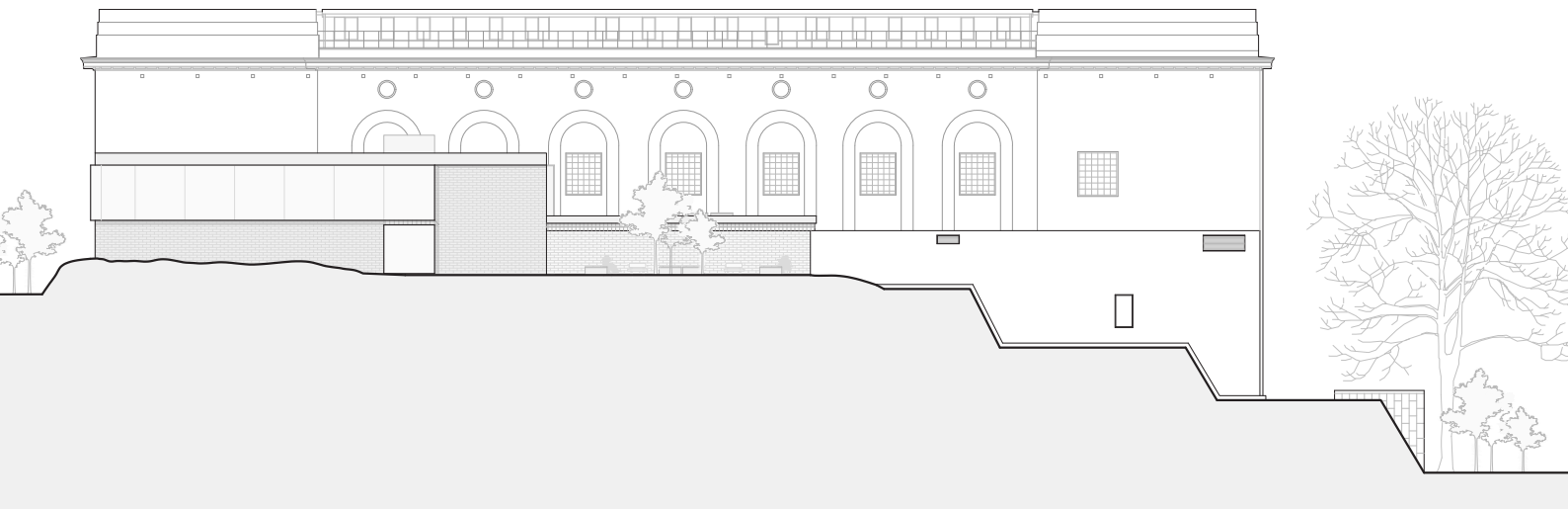
East facade 1:500



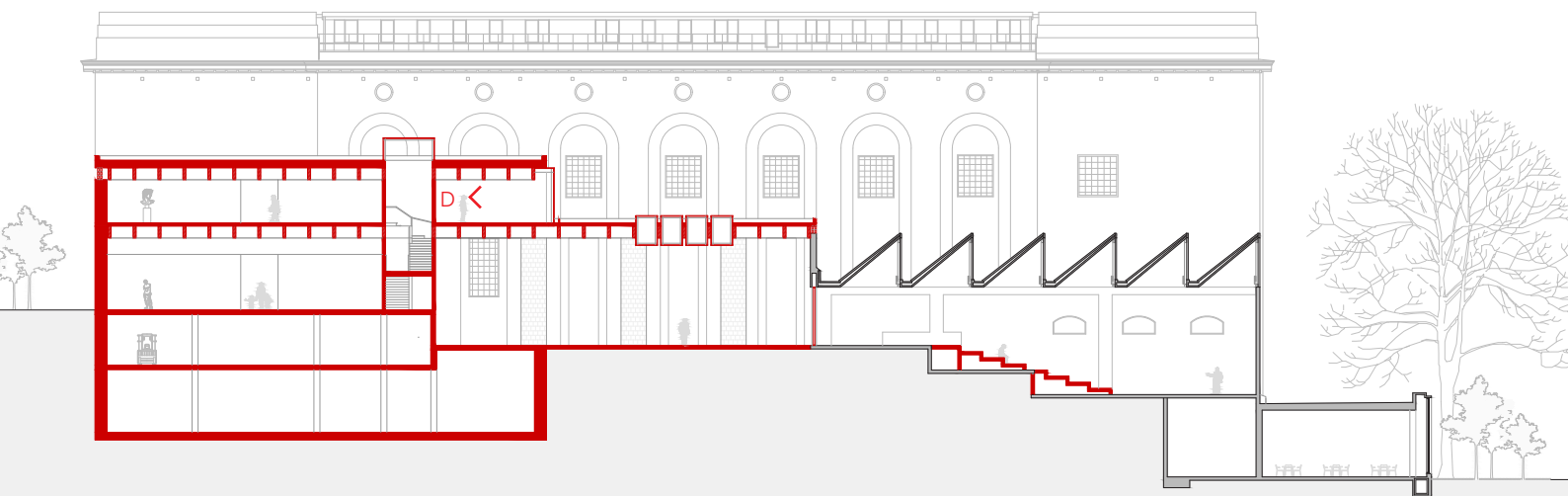
Illustration C - View from Dicksonsgatan



Illustration D - View top floor of the extension



South facade 1:500



Section D - D 1:500

EXPERIENCING COUNTERPOINT

The new addition is shaped through a series of architectural polarities: large and small, heavy and light, massive and transparent. These contrasts become a playful way of handling scale, materiality, and spatial experience, and can be understood as a form of architectural counterpoint.

On the exterior, the use of large brick elements enters into dialogue with the smaller brickwork of the original museum. The larger scale gives the addition a sense of weight and presence, while its restrained volume prevents it from overpowering the main character of the site: the original museum building. It is heavy, yet modest.

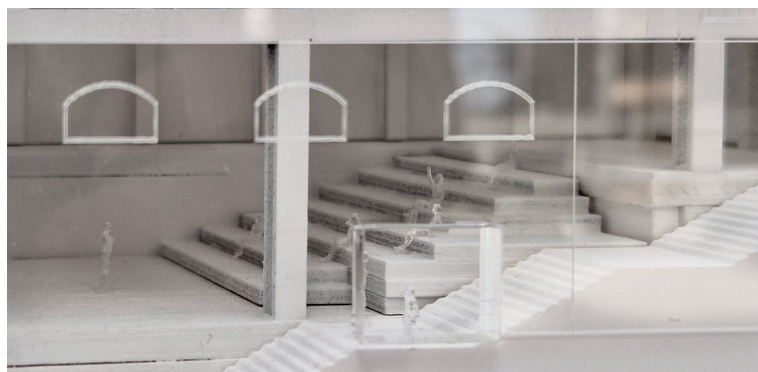
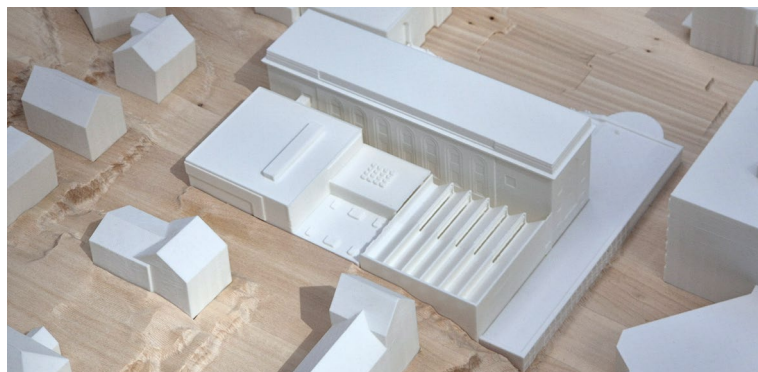
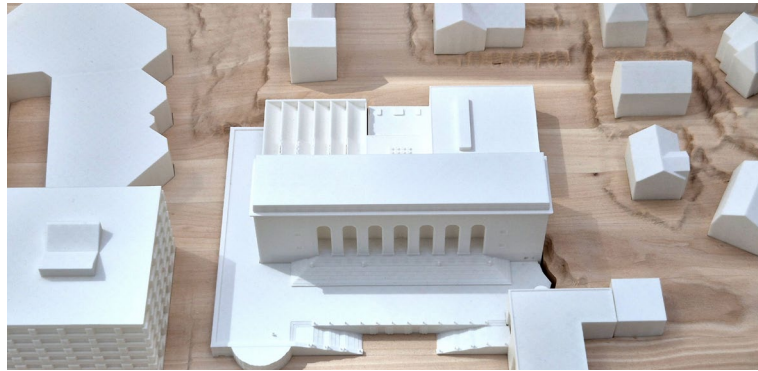
Inside, the thick brick pillars and large timber beams create a strong and almost monumental spatial volume. At the same time, the glass bricks allow light to filter through the structure, softening the mass and making the heavy ceiling appear lighter. The result is a space that is large, yet light.

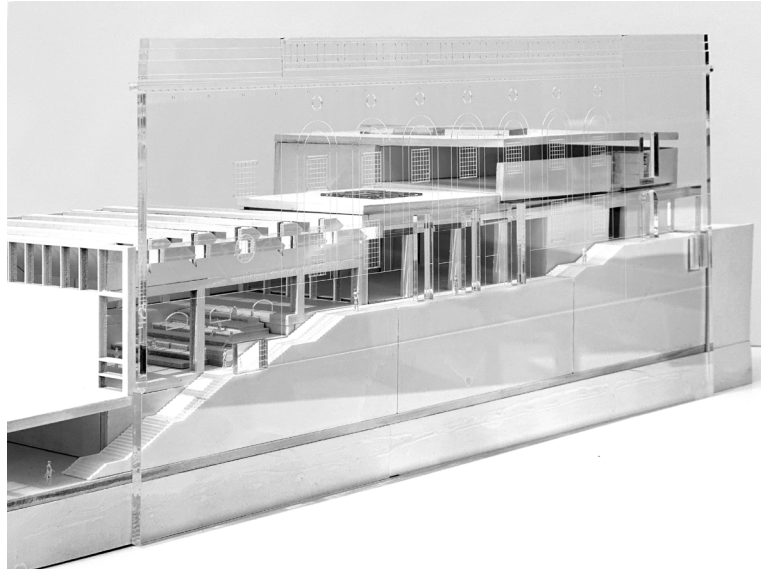
Through these opposing qualities, the addition does not seek to imitate the existing museum, but to complement it. It creates an experience of counterpoint, where tension, contrast, and balance work together to form a coherent whole.



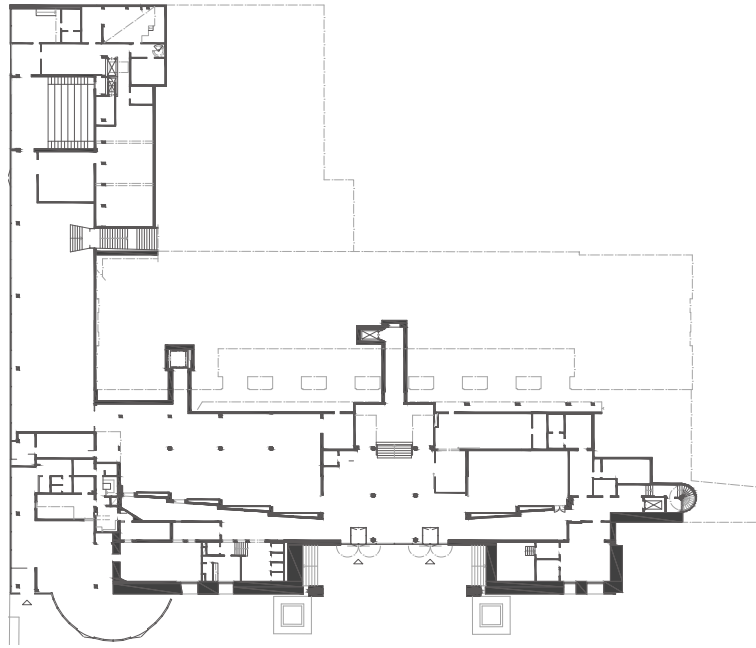
Illustration E - View from the exhibition yard into Etagera

MODELS





ORIGINAL PLAN

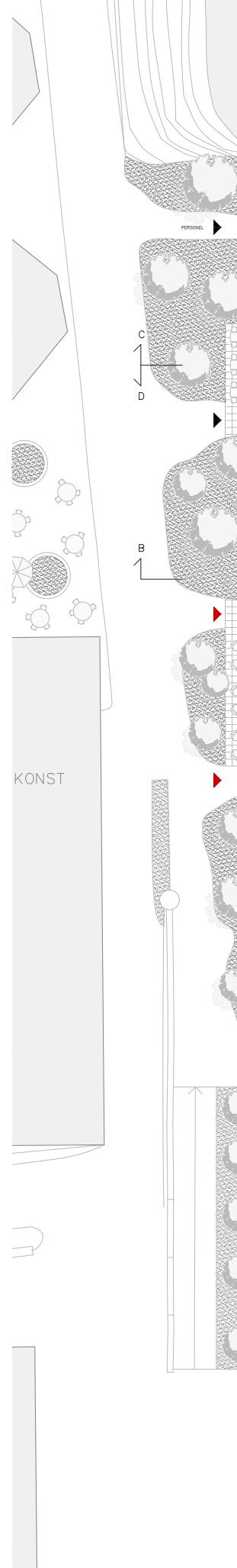


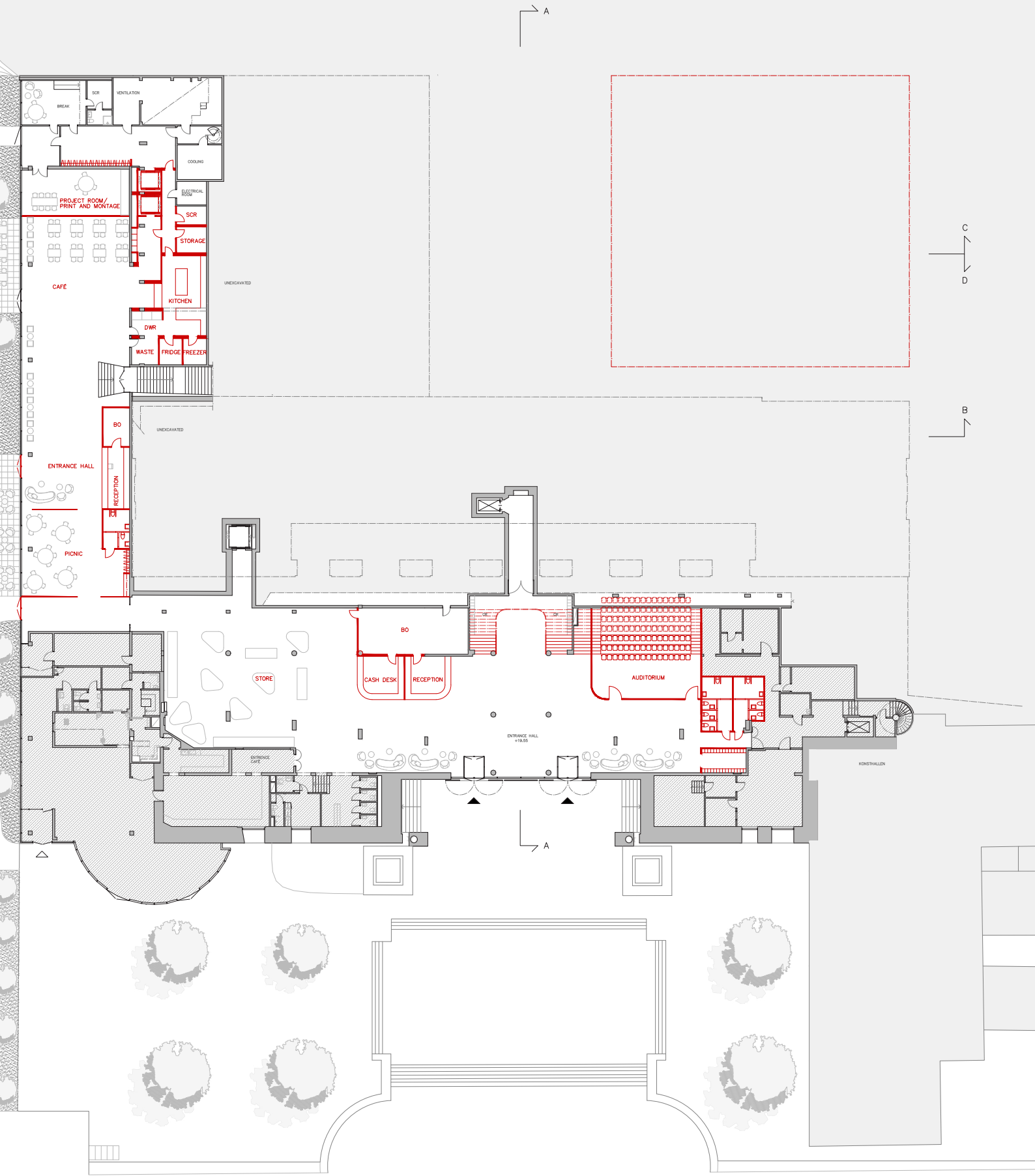
SPATIAL CONFIGURATION

At the entrance, the visitor is now, unlike before, guided straight ahead. To the right, set apart from the intended path, is the auditorium, while to the left lies the store, forming the final stop for the visitor. Along Fågelsången, public functions are positioned that the visitor crosses towards the end of the path. Here, a secondary entrance and new outdoor seating areas connects Falkhallen to the Nya konst project and further activates the street. This connection continues up to the second floor, where the educational workshop has been given an increased emphasis, occupying one of the levels of Etagera. The program of it has been expanded to include a stepped seating area and study spaces, creating an open learning environment that can also serve as pause area for visitors.

The final level of Etagera connects to the interstitial exhibition space between the three buildings, linking furthermore to the sculpture hall through new openings in the facade, as well as to the new extension. At this level, the extension concentrates the larger part of the studios and workshops, which now occupies an extended part of Etagera. Here, the extension also connects to the original building through an underground excavation leading to an elevator, the position of which was suggested by the winning proposal. This underground link enables a separated circulation flow between art storage, loading and the upper exhibition halls.

Further up, the extension contains two exhibition halls, both connecting back to the original building. At the top level, a pause space offers visitors a moment of rest and a view over the complex and city before continuing across the bridge to the original building, where a final overview of the complex is given.





Groundfloor 1:500

ORIGINAL PLAN

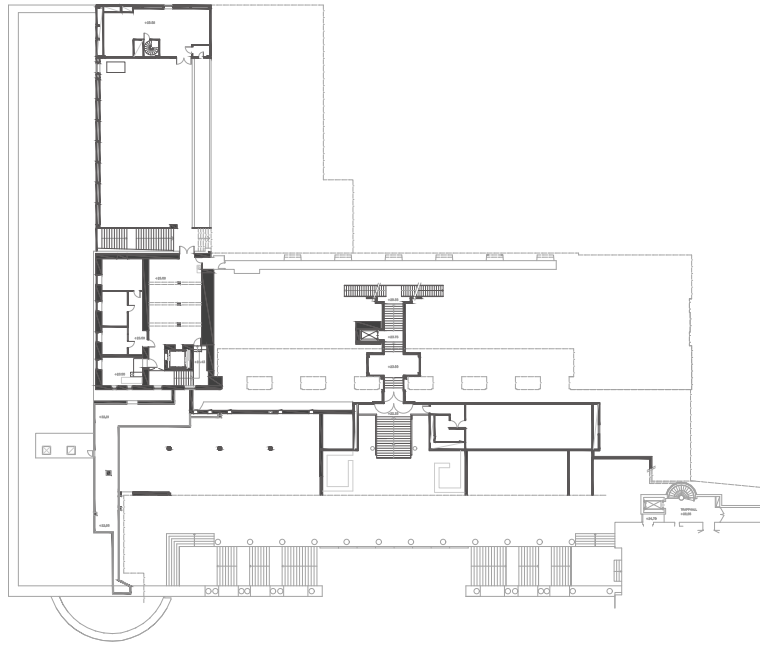
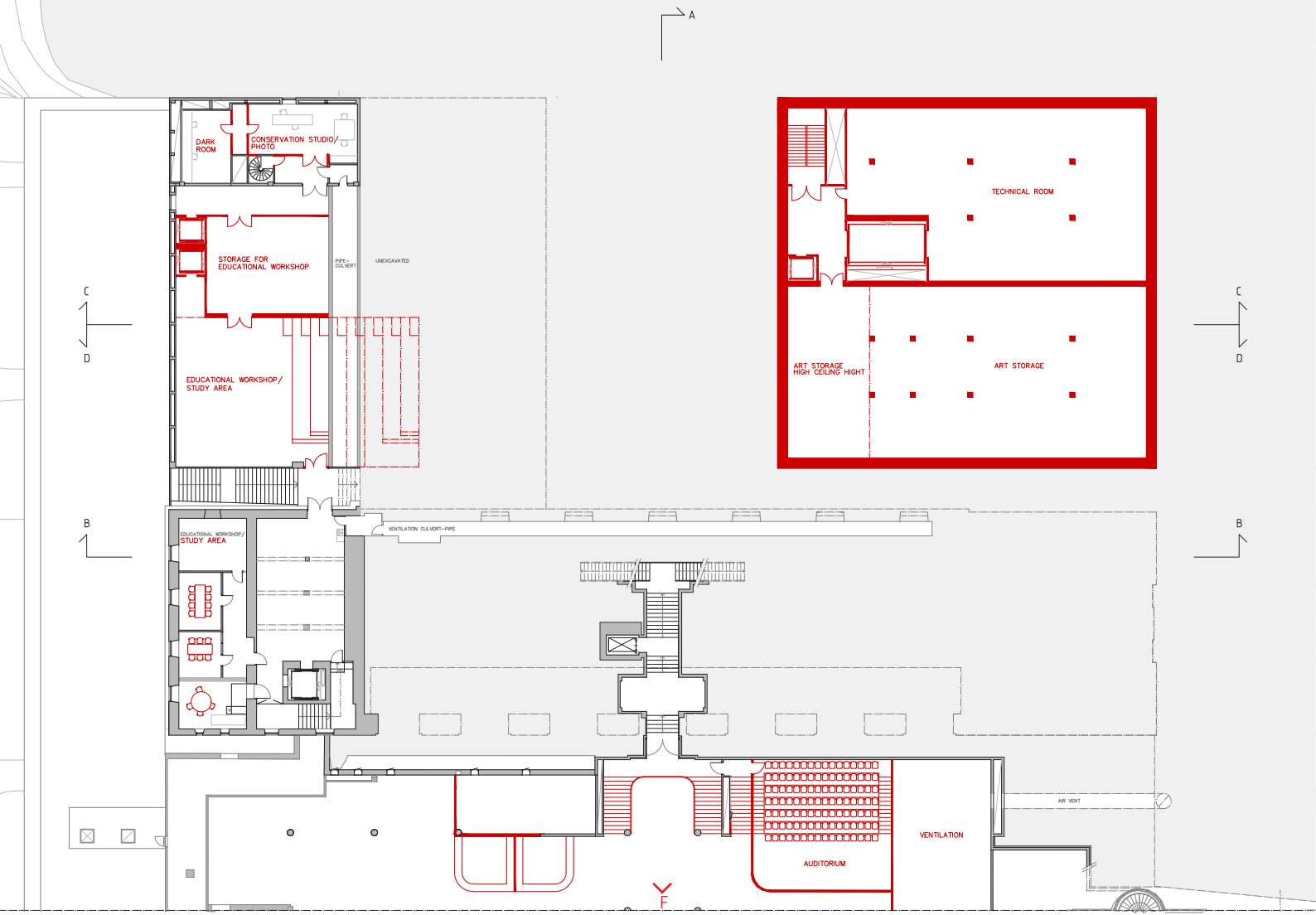
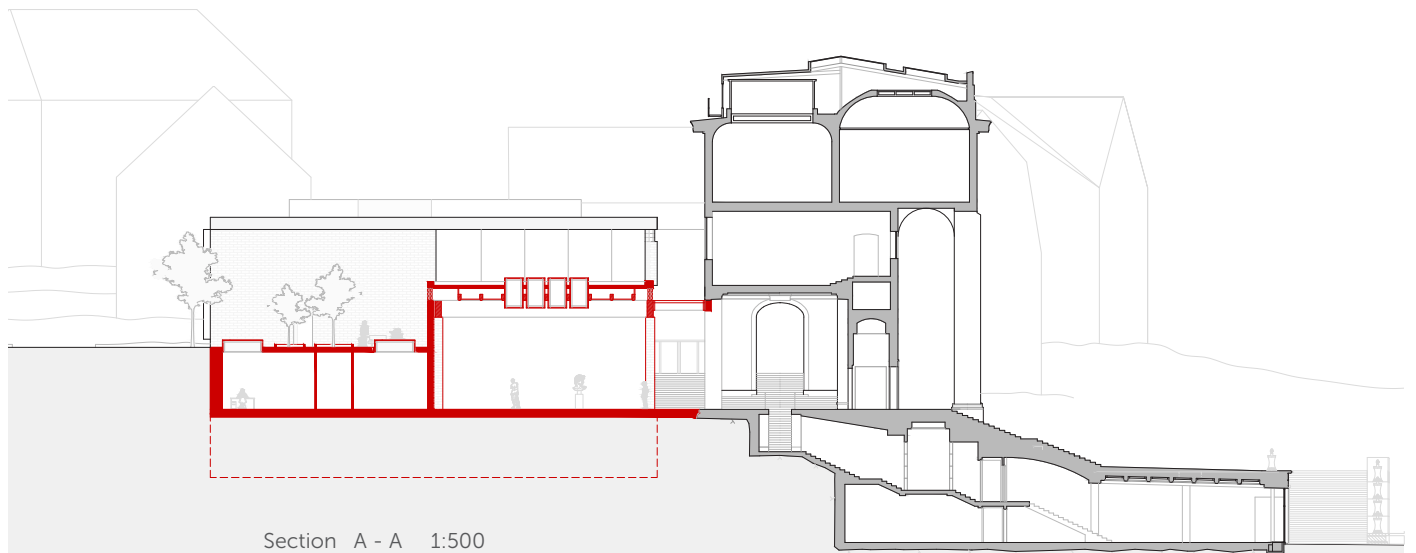


Illustration F - The new entrance



Floor 2 1:500



Section A - A 1:500

ORIGINAL PLAN

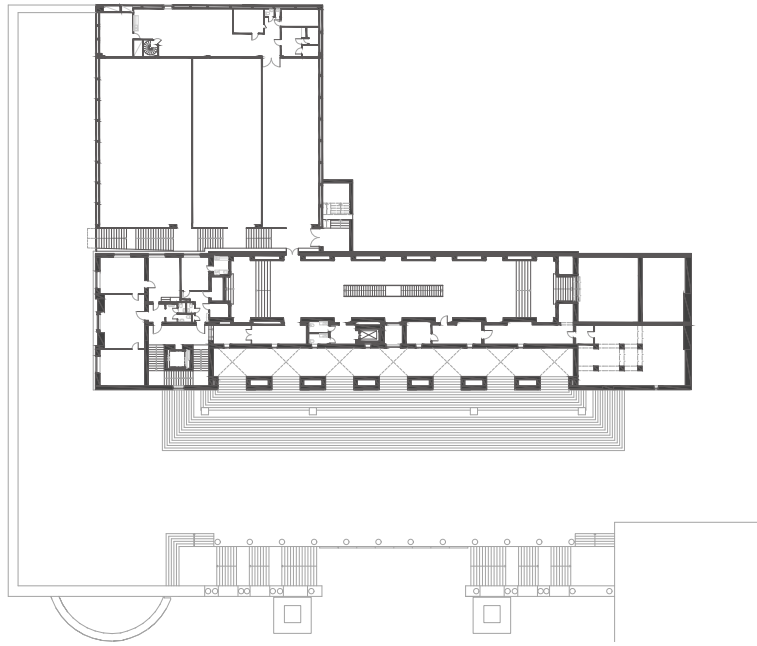
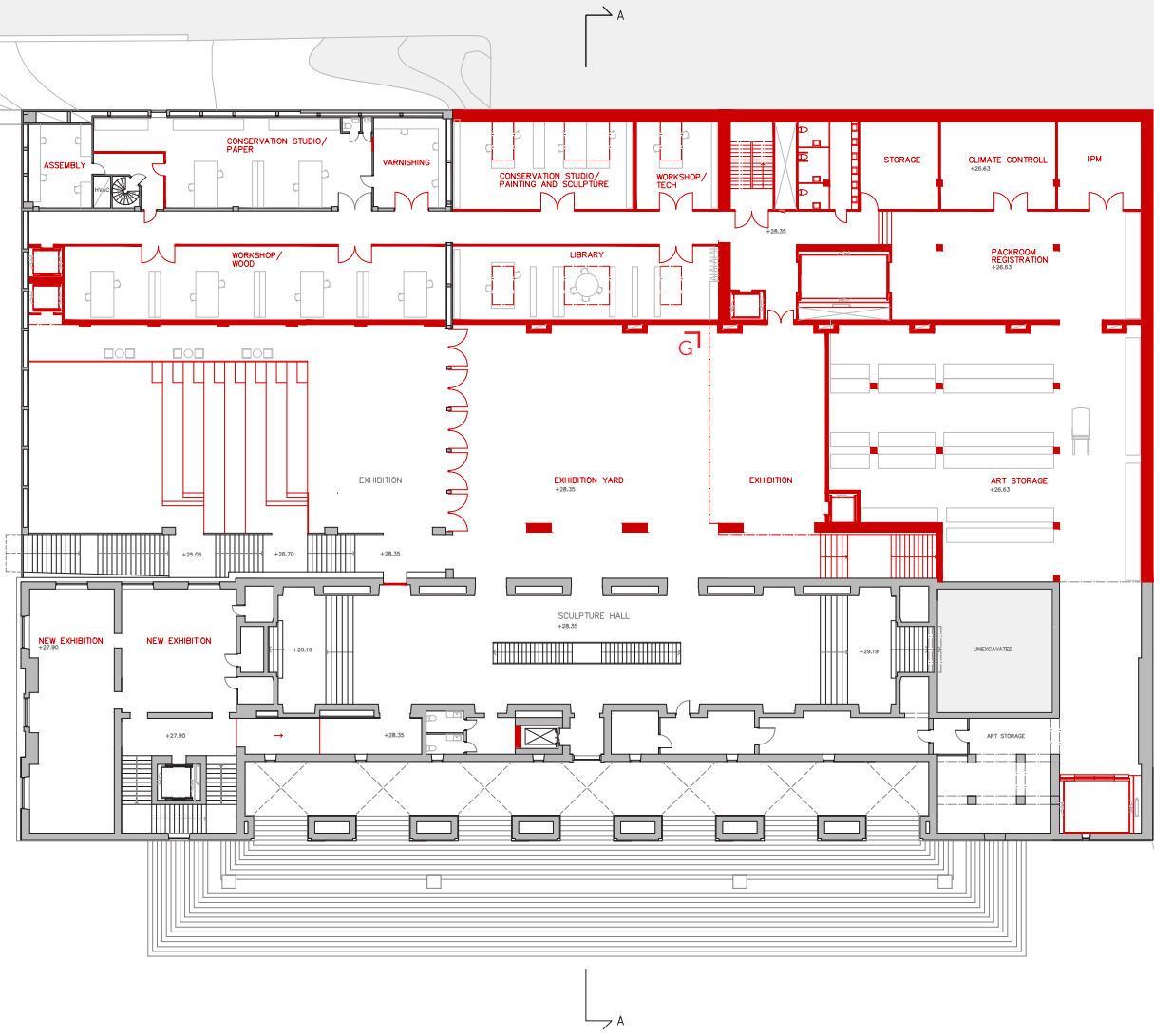
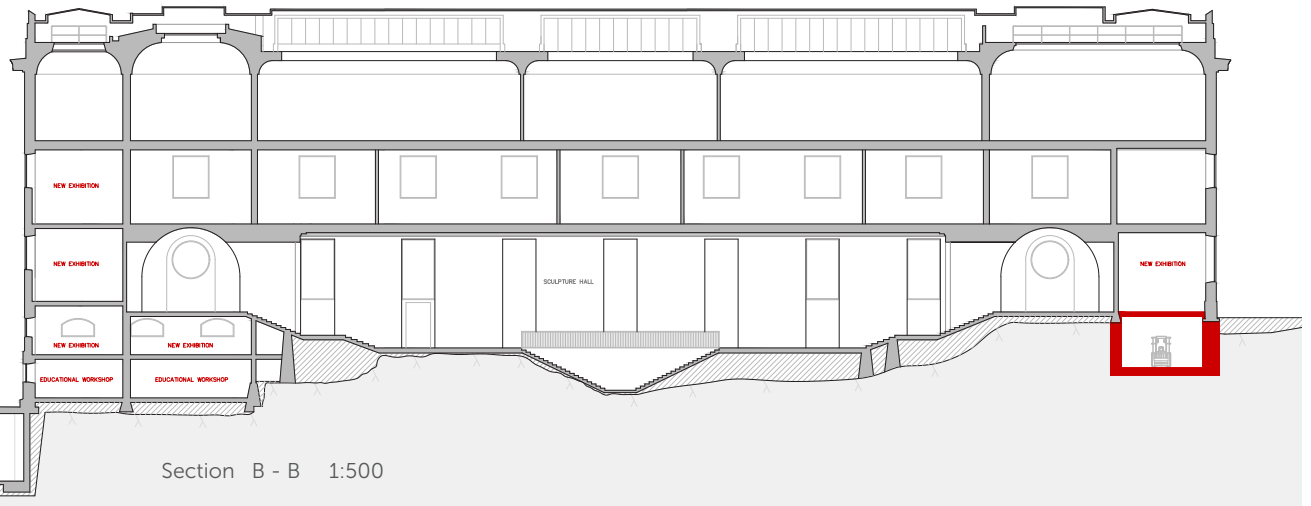


Illustration G - The exhibition yard



Floor 3 1:500



Section B - B 1:500

ORIGINAL PLAN

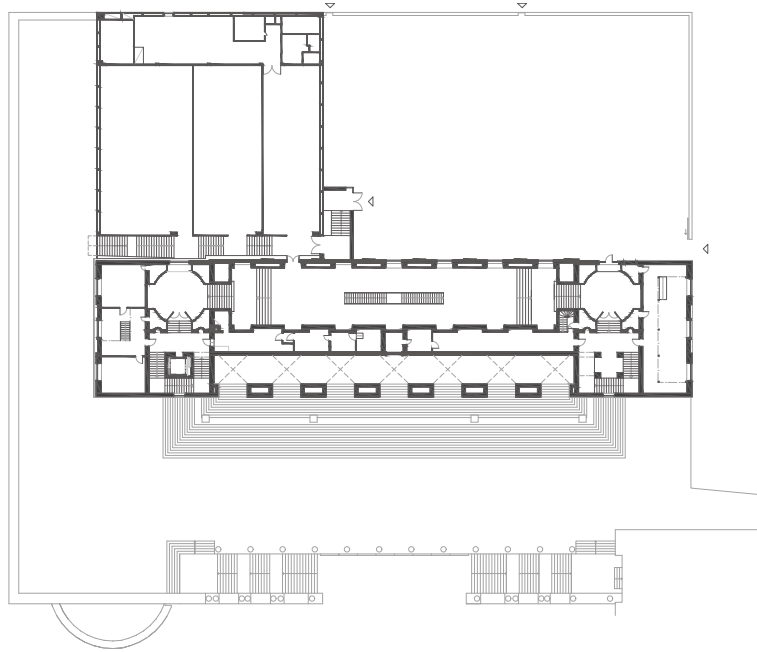
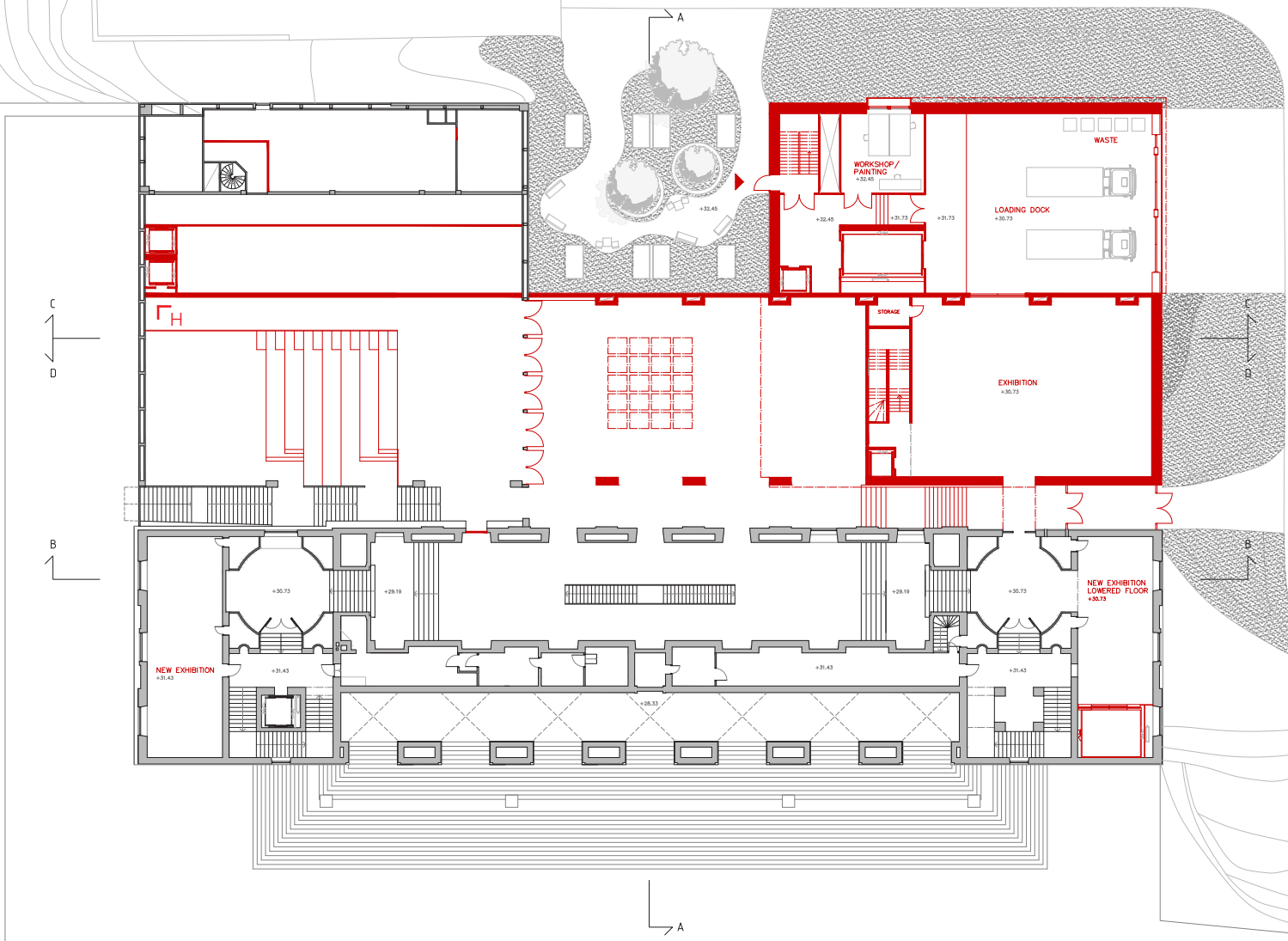
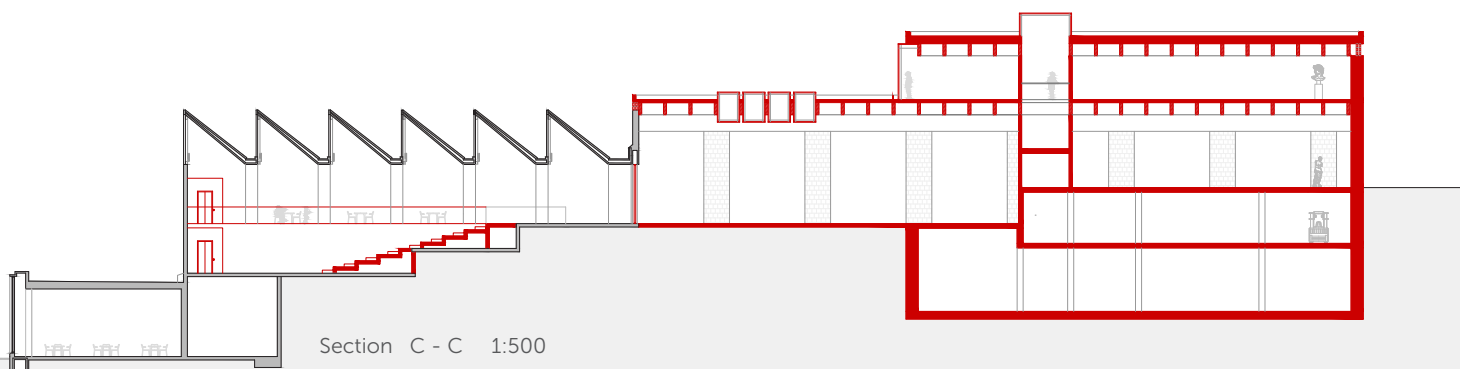


Illustration H - Etagerna

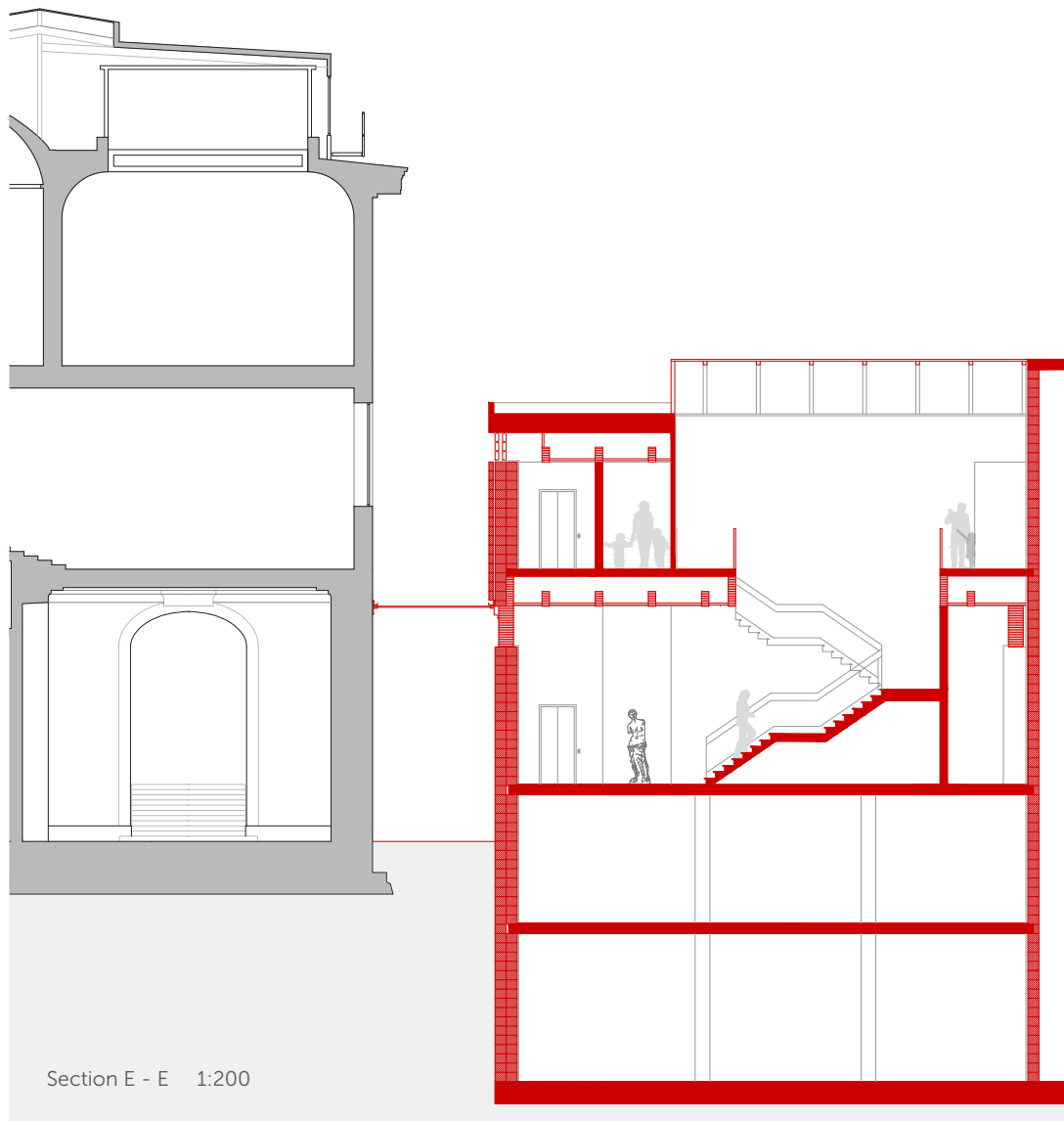
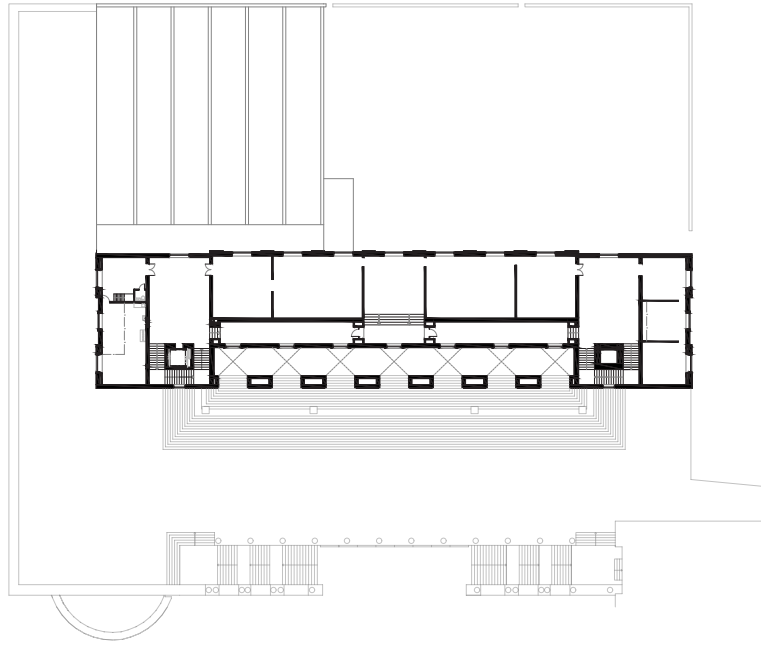


Floor 4 1:500

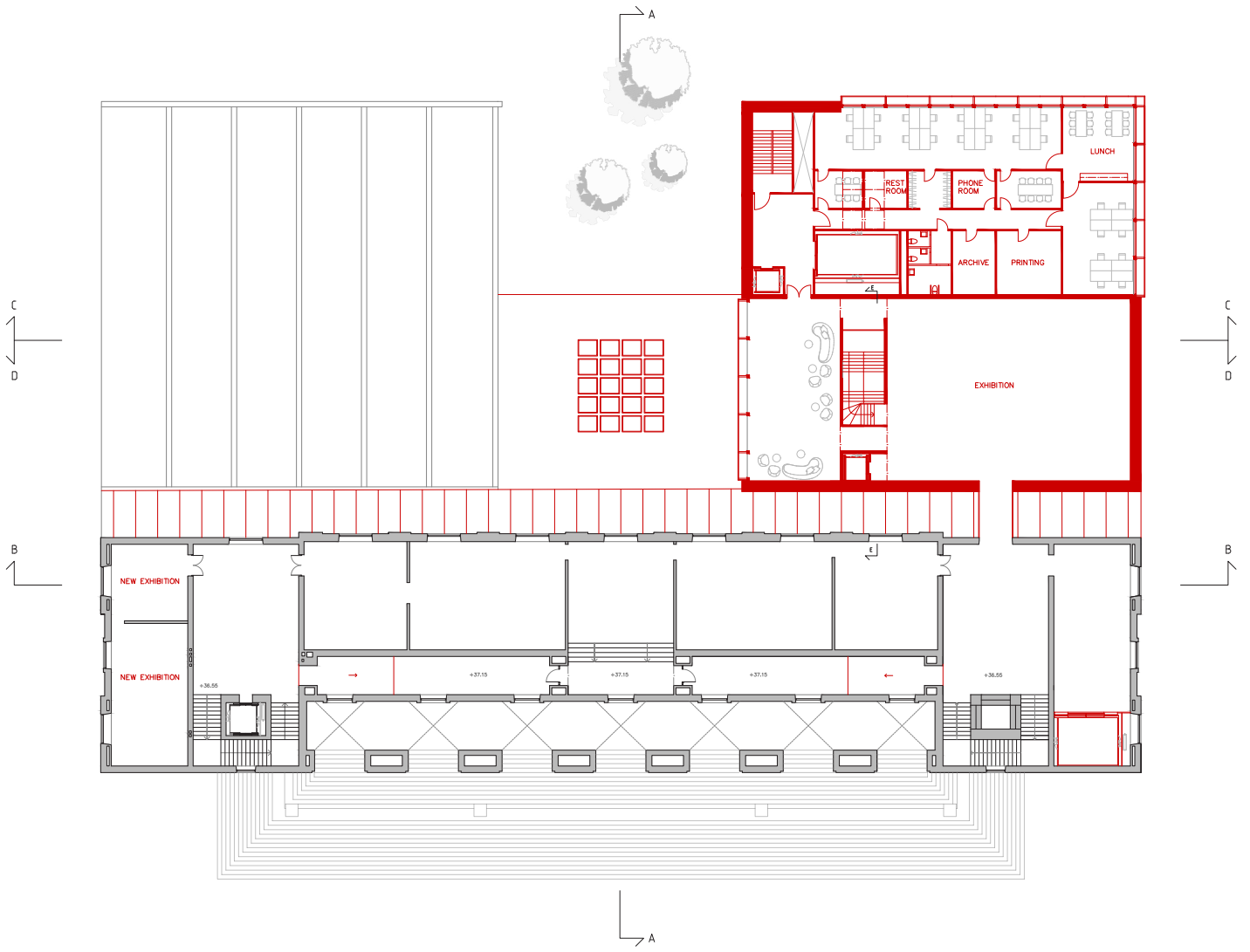


Section C - C 1:500

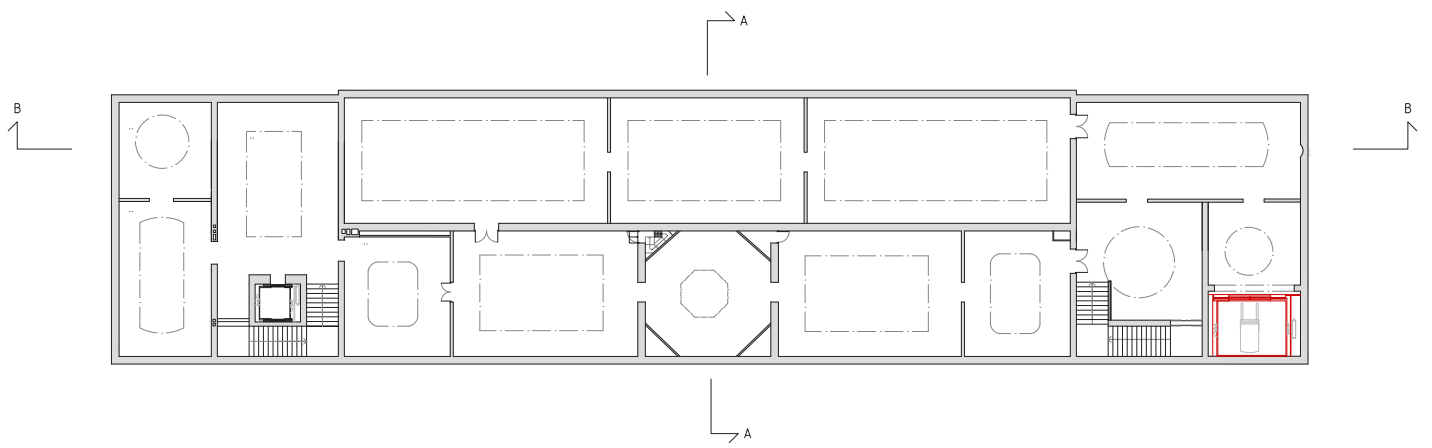
ORIGINAL PLAN



Section E - E 1:200



Floor 5 1:500



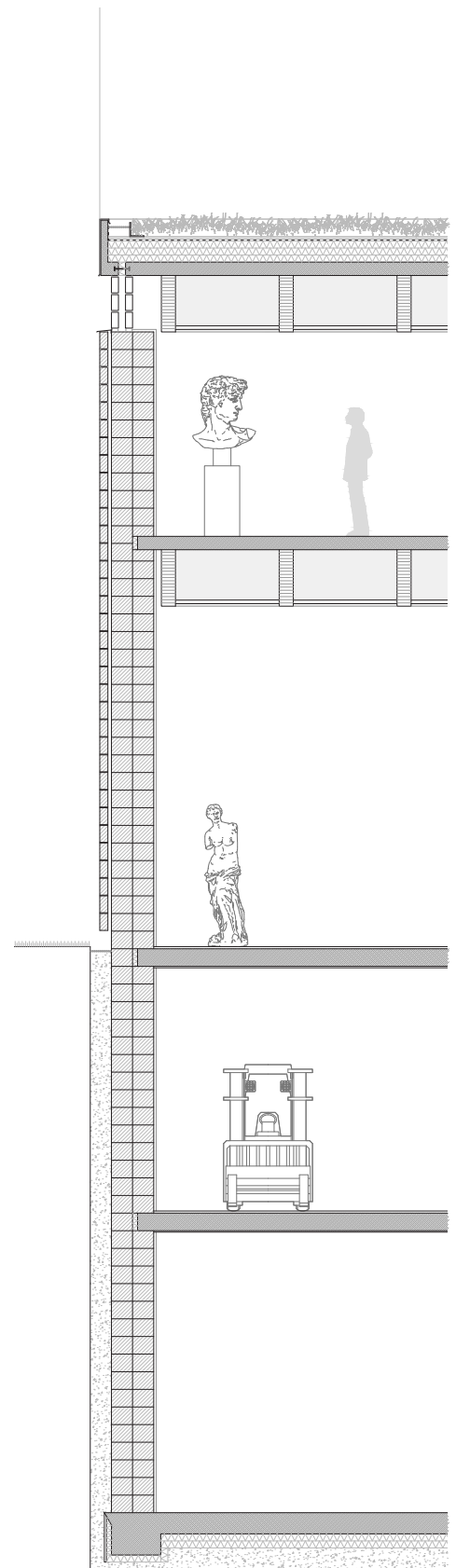
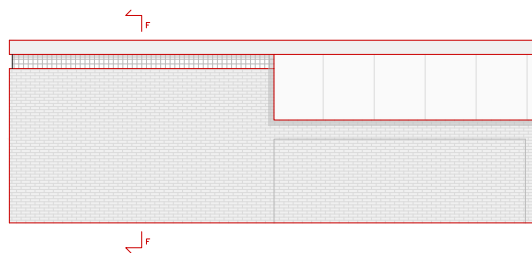
Floor 6 1:500

MATERIAL

The walls are composed entirely of perforated massive brick blocks, acting both as structure and insulation. The facade is in turn composed of large-format brick measuring 590 x 115 x 240, in part an allusion to the structure behind but also as an answer to a myth that the original building was made with extra small-scale brick as a way of appearing larger, more imposing, the extension instead aims to appear smaller, more approachable.

The internal structure is composed of wood and concrete. Wood as glulam beams and pillars with concrete flooring. Concrete is also used in the top part of the facade, clad in copper sheets.

Connecting the extension to the original building is a glass bridge. Layered glass sheets connected to two steel frames, which is attached to the extension and the original building on either side. The lightyard connecting the three structures are covered by a glass roof supported by layered glass beams, which in turn connect to the glulam beams in the extension and to the facade of the original building. Delicately connecting the structures through a light touch.



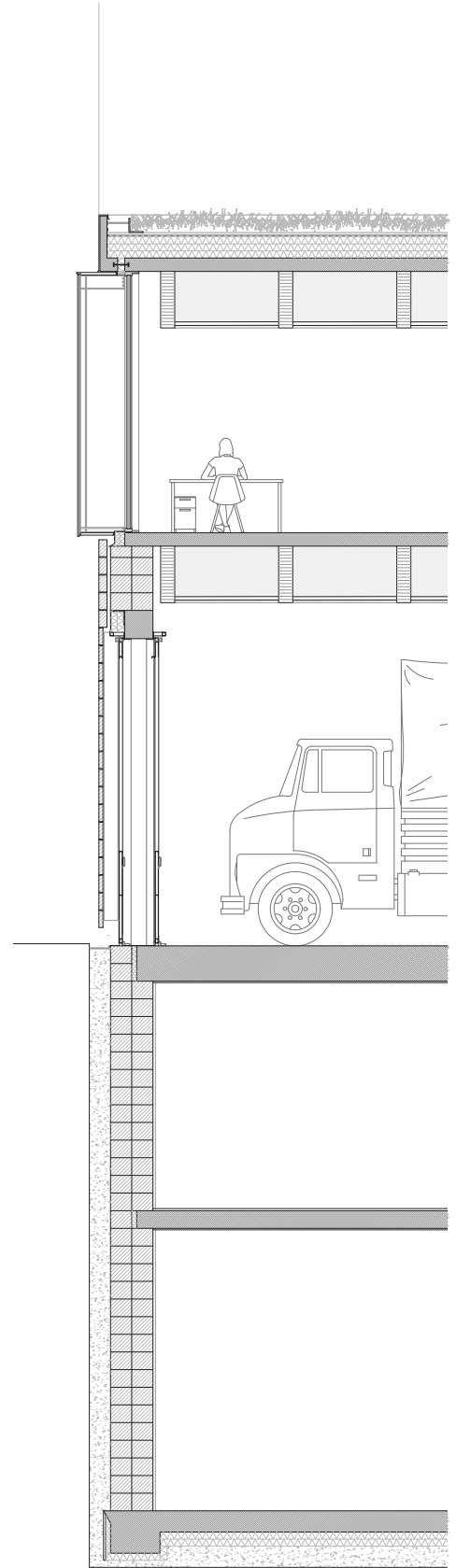
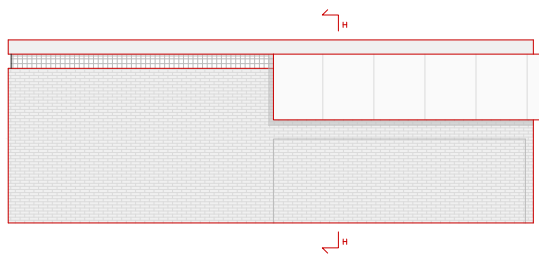
Section F - F 1:100



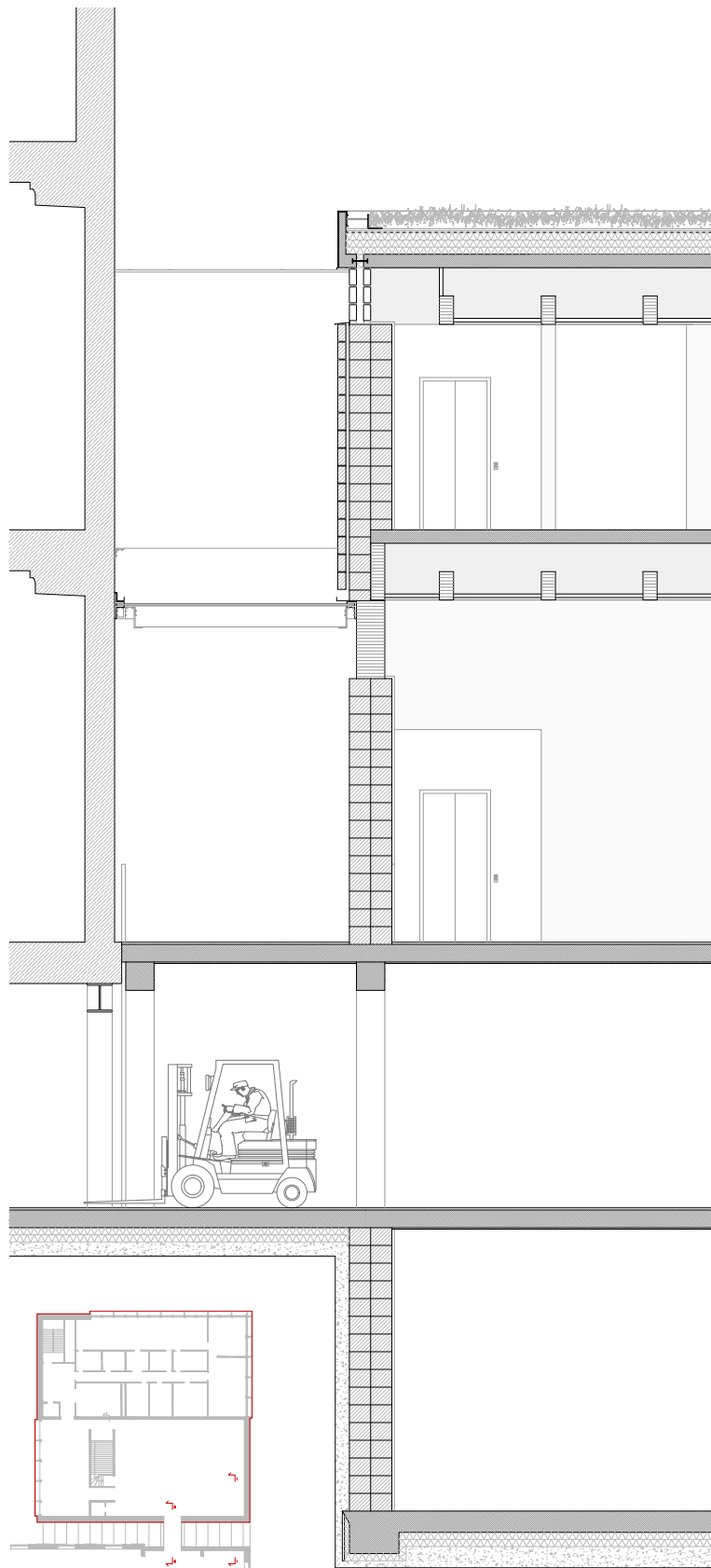
Section G - G 1:50



Facade strip



Section H - H 1:100



Section I - I 1:100

DISCUSSION

To reiterate the questions we are trying to answer, the first one reads:
How can a project be designed that retains Etagerna and proposes yet another addition to the Gothenburg Museum of Art and becomes a viable alternative to the demolition of Etagerna and the museums future development?

The main concern of the question relates to the overall possibility of yet another addition making it possible to retain Etagerna while still fulfilling the requirements and wishes of the competition brief. In terms of the program and circulation it is entirely possible, as demonstrated by the project and its spatial configuration. The project also shows that it is possible to achieve close to the amount of space as the winning proposal as-well as retaining Etagerna. The project is also not close to the maximum amount possible to build on the site, prioritizing a lower impact, and also the possibility of further development, over maximizing built space.

Another aspect of the question is the possibility of it being a viable alternative. One assessment of that possibility lies in the architecture, the quality of which, of course, lies in the eye of the beholder. That being said, and without overstating the result, it can at least be determined that it can not, as concluded in the pre-studies, be preemptively concluded that the retaining of Etagerna is in itself an aesthetic issue that limits the conditions for enabling good architecture and creating a coherent whole. The other aspect would be the consideration of the jury. Looking at the jury statements relating to the other proposals provides an insight into its considerations, which have also influenced the project. In line with the statement, the volume, in its mirroring of Etagerna rather than the original building, reads clearly as a complementary building and therefore less dominant. This also makes it less imposing in relation to the Lorensberg villa district, further emphasized by the connection made through the park. The integration within the urban situation is something favored by the jury, implemented by the project not only through the park but also through its connection to Fågelsången and the Nya konst project. The connections between the structures within the complex are placed in the lightyard, reducing it to a clear function, as an answer to the general problem of the lightyard often becoming a feature that would be difficult to use in practice. Lastly, in terms of spatial configuration the project provides the desired clear separation of flows, partly made possible through the excavated connections.

On the question of specifically how it can be designed, considering the sensitive cultural environment and the requirements of hierarchical character, the theories of Adaptive reuse, Counterpoint and Allusion have, as previously mentioned, been utilized. Adaptive reuse and specifically the idea of playing the second violin takes the requirement of the supporting character and adds nuance to the task, proposing mutual support whilst still avoiding undermining the initial requirement. Counterpoint goes beyond the hierarchy and considers all structures within the complex and the polyphony created, trying to embrace the dynamic character of the complex and finding a way to reinforce and comment on the voices of the individual structures contributing. The existence of four previous structures, namely the original building, Falkhallen, Etagera and the 1990-additions, all introducing their own languages both opens up the possibility of a new one but also adds substantial complexity in terms of its configuration and with more languages to consider only certain strategies become viable. To engage with those languages rather than simply consider them, Allusion is used to create an active conversation.

The second question reads:

How can we reactivate the original spatial qualities of Etagera to support new social and public functions within the museum structure?

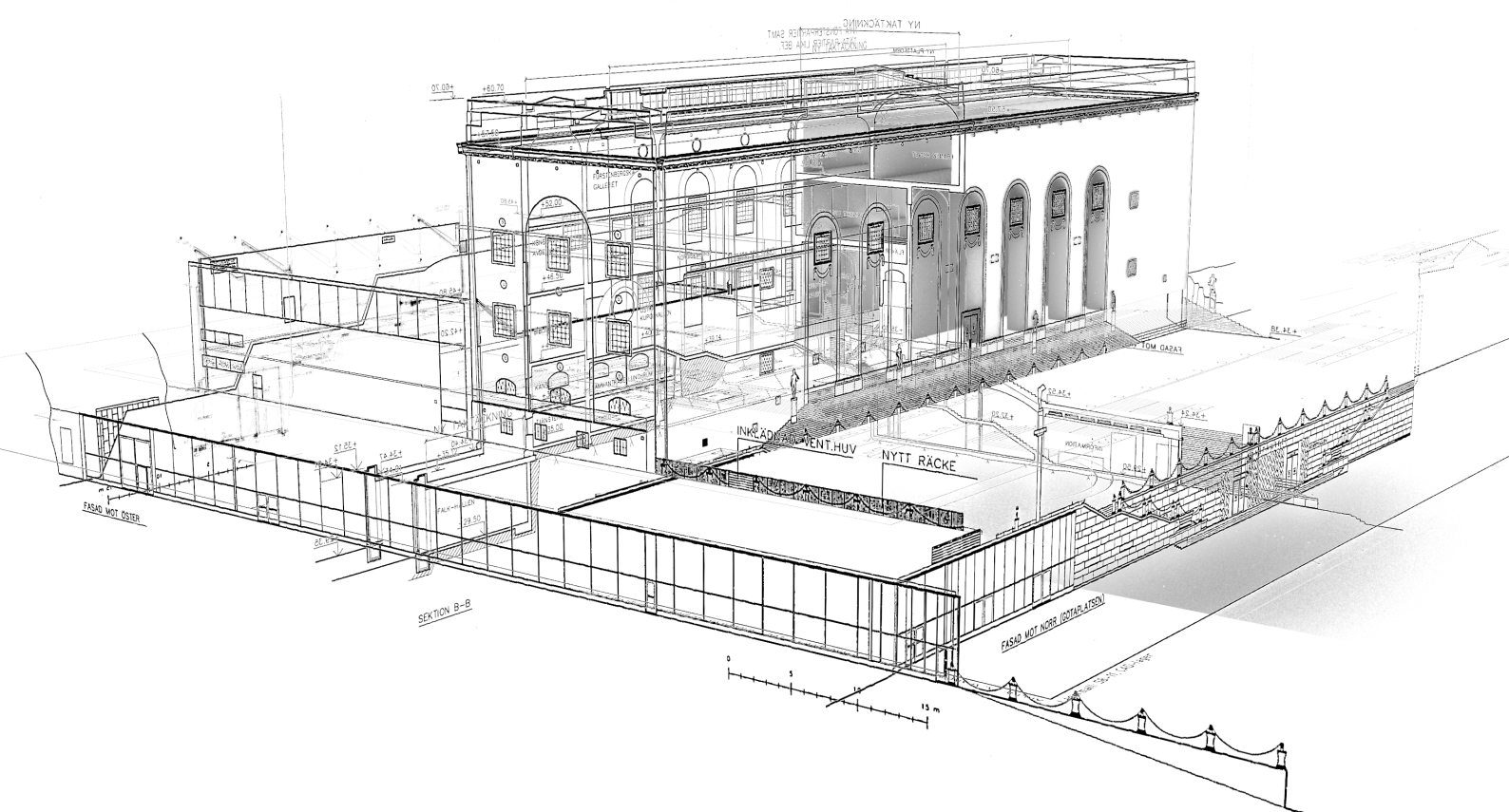
The original spatial qualities have been reactivated through the elimination of the inner wall and through opening up the windows, made possible by offloading the current functional requirements and introducing new social and public functions, namely an extended educational workshop and a stepped seating area. These introductions might be seen as a step away from the program and the intended purpose of the reconstruction and requires a refiguring of the functional idea of the complex. This is a limitation to the answer to the previous question on the possibility of the project becoming a viable alternative to the demolition of Etagera, as it requires an unsolicited functional refigurement with a subsequent integration into the daily workings of the complex. The spaces provided can however, when not in use as part of the educational workshop, provide the space for pause desired by the jury, in addition to the space allocated for this on the top floor of the extension. The spaces, and their position within the complex, also make the museum more responsive to the cultural environment surrounding it with the immediate connection to the Nya konst project and through the provision of a meeting point for its students.

CONCLUSIONS

The complexity of the project and the utilization of the three theories combined makes the project serve as an example and further development in the overall theory of how to work architecturally in relation to context and in a sensitive cultural environment. Each project of adaptive reuse and of additions to culturally important structures provides their own complications and questions and thereby the implications of the result is by nature limited. That being said, the possibility of learning from precedents, even hypothetical ones, should not be understated.

The fact that it is a proposal where the outcome is already decided makes the possible impact of the project more of a contribution to an ongoing debate where the immediate implication could be a reconsidering of other structures that could be worth preserving.

The implication for the specific situation of Etagerna relates to a suggested appreciation and reconsideration of the type of building it symbolizes. That is, buildings that serve as an expression of a movement or culture, a physical manifestation of a time lost and of the people that lived it. With the destruction of such structures, you lose the continuum of the built heritage and the collective memory embedded in the patchwork narration that The Gothenburg Museum of Art is an almost unrivaled example of.



STUDENTS BACKGROUND

"a tree... growth is from the centre towards the exterior... If only we had knowledge of many things, of the laws that govern the growth of matter... I believe that the great architects knew those thing"

Mario Ridolfi

Out of all the descriptions of architecture, this is the one I return to the most. The growth of matter and the laws that govern it. Ridolfi described his work as preparing a fertile ground from which good fruits could germinate. He meant it as a way of seeing architecture as a continuum of itself but I like to think of it as a way of describing its effect on people, preparing a reality where good fruits can grow. I try to imbue that way of thinking into my architecture.

Courses taken during Master

Politecnico di Milano:

053066 - Urban Sociology

059483 - Thematic Studio - Architecture, Infrastructure & Urban Form

053187 - Theory In Contemporary Architectural Design

059467 - Research Thematic Seminar: Housing

051727 - History and Theory of Contemporary Architecture

051612 - Architectural Design Studio

Chalmers:

ACE 380 - Sustainable Development and the Design Professions

ACE 400 - Architecture in the Anthropocene

ACE 480 - Building tectonics 1

Ludvig Janson

In one of the funeral chapels at Skogskyrkogården, Gunnar Asplund designed a pattern in the floor in front of the row where the closest mourners sit. It gives the eyes a place to rest in a difficult situation.

I think about that quite often.

With a background as a Scenographer, Actor, 3D-Graphics designer and middle school teacher, I use my own experiences as departure when facing a new design project. Trying to put myself in the perspective of the user, using narratives as a tool to understand, interpret and communicate. My ambition is architecture inspired by Asplund's Humane thinking.

Courses taken during Master

ACE 370 - Master's thesis preparation: Academic approaches and general structure

ACE 380 - Sustainable Development and the Design Professions

ACE 400 - Architecture in the Anthropocene

ACE425 - Master's thesis preparation: Design approaches and narratives

ACE 460 - Building on Context

ACE 515 - Building Tectonics 2

Ludvig Turegård

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AI - APPENDIX

AI has been used as a supporting tool for structuring ideas and selected adjustments of rendered images.

All architectural decisions, drawings, analysis and conclusions remain the work of the authors.

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