

Reuse Zürcher Zentralwäscherei Workbook



This booklet gives an insight into the working process and the results of the ‚Atelier Esch‘ at the Accademia di Architettura in Mendrisio. The object of our investigation - future scenarios for the former ‚Zentralwäscherei Zürich‘ - proved to be very productive and inspiring, we think. Perhaps the brochure will also encourage us to think again about the planned demolition of the bulky building?

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the ‚Liegenschaftenverwaltung der Stadt Zürich‘ (Real estate administration). Director Astrid Heymann and her team willingly granted us access and provided us with plans and information, Anna Menti repeatedly guided us through the labyrinthian complex, making contacts and opening closed doors. The tenants of the countless rooms in the building also let us in. We would like to thank the ‚Verein Zentralwäscherei‘, the ‚Schul- und Sportdepartement der Stadt Zürich‘ (Education and Sports administration), and the coworking space ‚Blue Lion‘. Jörg Lamster and Remo Niklaus, experts for sustainability from ‚Studio Durable‘ shared their intimate knowledge of the building complex with us, Pascal Angehrn and Nina Hsu from Baubüro In Situ helped and advised.

Colleagues Daniel Niggli, Stephan Popp, Lilitt Bollinger and Daniel Buchner were patient guides through their wonderful buildings, and Roland Früh’s explanations of the idea and concretion of the Sitterwerk inspired us.

The architects and professors Marco Zünd, Marco Bakker and Christian Inderbitzin were exciting, committed discussion partners during the reviews. And the Accademia di Architettura of the USI provided the inspiring context for the journey of discovery that this semester represented. The greatest thanks, however, go to the students who embarked on this journey!

Philipp Esch

Silvio Schubiger

Michaela Türtscher

Students

Diletta Aprile
Manon Arduino
Lorenzo Barbera
Martina Bianchini
Joel Elias Brynielsson
Chiara Cavagna
Alessandra Cavallaro
Iole Corbo
Lorenzo Giordano
Christoph Grüter
Stellan Gulde
Egil Kahlbom
Chiara Maisto

Ginevra Martinelli
Morgane Moutarlier
Francesca Muggli
Julien Orozco
Margherita Pagani
Rachele Righini
Giulia Romagnoli
Luca Roncaglione
Alberto Rossini
Alain Scarpa Christophee
Federico Stefanoni
Giacomo Vanetti
Caterina Zatti



Why reuse?

„Das Ziel ist eine Deckung aller Überlegungen zu einem Ergebnis, das definiert, aber durchsichtig ist und das mehrschichtige Netzwerk der Beziehungen bestehen lässt.“

Hermann Czech, 'Abwechslungen', 1973

If something already stands where we are planning something new, we can replace the old with the new - or preserve the existing in order to relate the coming to it. That we should strive for the latter is an imperative of the times - after all, we can no longer afford architecture that is not sustainable. That is why reuse tasks should be adequately represented in architectural studies.

However, dealing with the existing building stock is not only worthwhile for reasons of sustainability. It shows us ways to expand architecture as the 'art of spatial interrelationship' (Fritz Neumeyer) by one dimension: the 'art of temporal interrelationship'. By integrating what is already there and building on it, our work is not obscured but enriched, in the sense of Robert Venturi: „It is the difficult unity through inclusion rather than the easy unity through exclusion.“

Study object: „Zürcher Zentralwäscherei“

With a lot of character, but no historical significance

The chosen object of study, the Zurich Central Laundry, is ideal for practising strategies in dealing with existing building fabric. The building complex is itself the result of a long process of development, but unencumbered by historical or artistic significance. This facilitates an unsentimental approach. At the same time, the strong, bold structure in the hall area gives the building character, so that one definitely makes friends with the brittle existing structure: this facilitates emotional access.

The size and heterogeneity of the ensemble force situational, concrete assessments and actions and prevent abstract, rule-bound thinking; and finally, the presence of past changes facilitates the invention of future changes.



Accessible and full of life

But the property was also ideal because it was accessible to us, so that we could let the rooms work on us, hear them, feel them and smell them, experience them in sun and rain, during the day and at night. The owner - the property management of the city of Zurich - allowed us to move our studio on site for just under a week. This was all the more thankful because the house is not lying idle, but is being used intensively on an interim basis. The activists from the ‚Verein Zentralwäscherei‘ granted us access even though their building site was in full swing, and a number of users of the studios also opened their doors for us.

History

The ZWZ central laundry was built in 1967 with the purpose of replacing the previously owned laundries of public hospitals and thus achieving greater economic efficiency.

The Canton of Zurich, as the leaseholder and operator of the central laundry, built the facility. One of the decisive factors in the choice of location was to use the waste heat from the adjacent waste incineration plant of the city of Zurich in order to be able to secure the energy requirement in the long term.

The facility comprises a single-storey shed, a covered delivery and distribution area, a stacking warehouse for incoming laundry in the basement, a 6-storey operations building with administration, recreation rooms, sewing room, warehouse, and more. In 1968, a structural extension was realised for the provision of linen ready for dispatch as a storage reserve, by adding a storey to the supply and delivery wing on Josefsstrasse.

The central laundry had been in operation without interruption since the start of operations in 1967, with a steady increase in capacity from an initial 15 tonnes per day to a final 35 tonnes.

The steadily growing order volume required the construction of new production areas through an extension for dirty laundry sorting, which was put into operation at the end of 2009.

Just under 10 years later, it was clear that due to the medium-term closure of the Josefstrasse waste incineration plant and for the purpose of optimising operations, the ZWZ would move out of the property on the Josef site. Against this background, the Liegenschaftenverwaltung Zürich (Zurich real estate administration) decided to take back the building prematurely on 1 January 2019.

prototypical issues

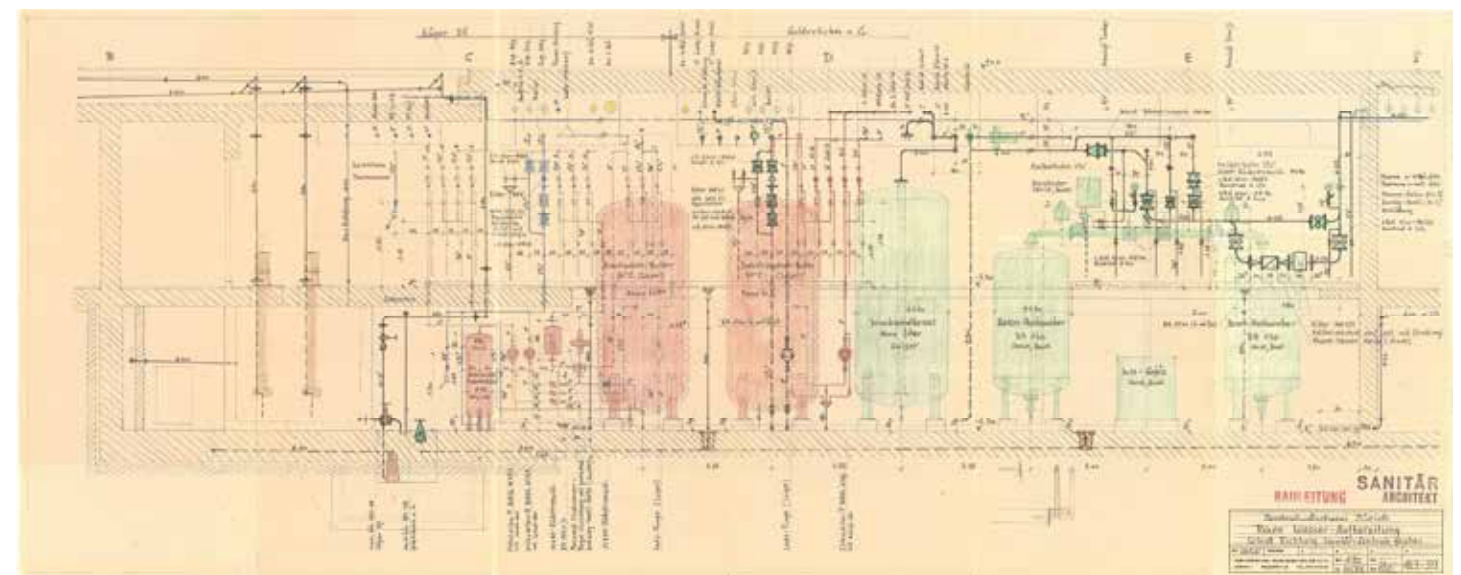
Industrially used building complexes are mostly ‚forbidden cities‘, standing stubbornly and bulky in the post-industrial, mixed-use city. How can they not only be integrated, but opened up, turned inside out so that they face the urban space?



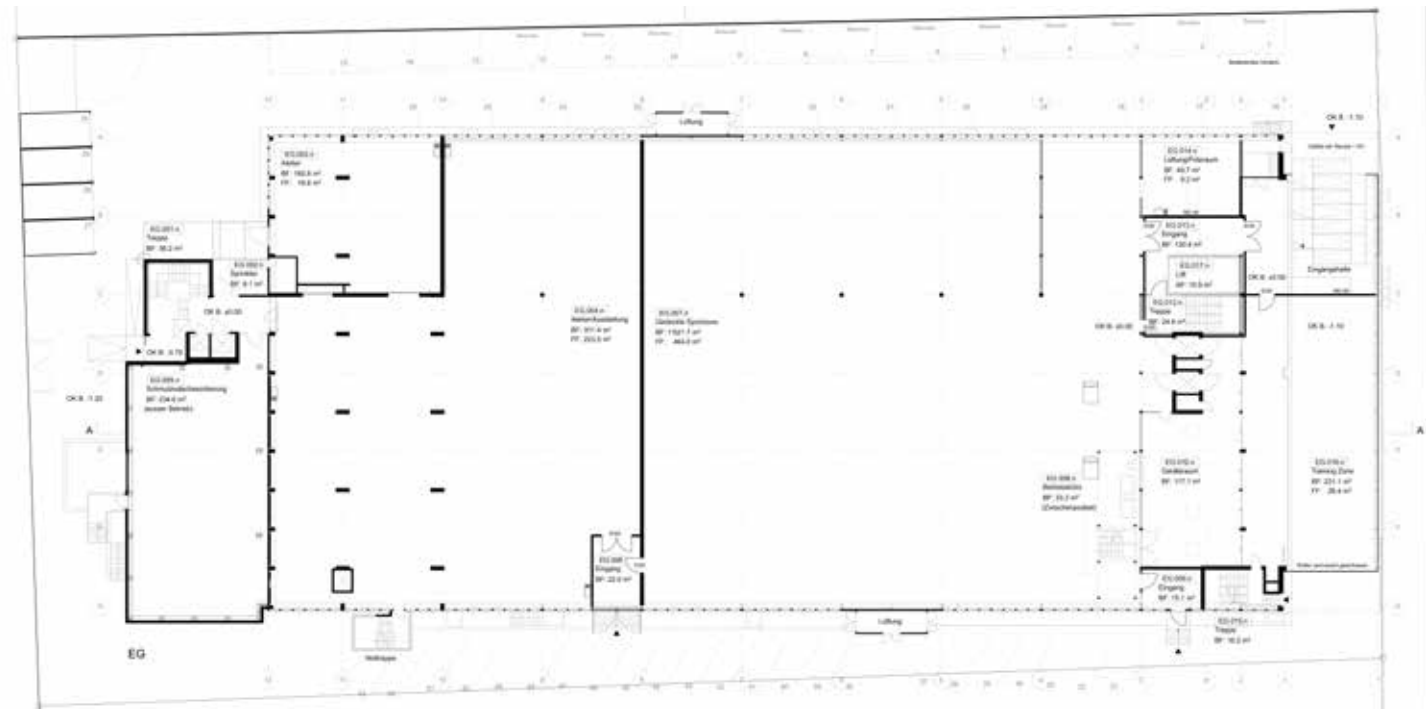
Zentralwäscherei Zürich, 1967



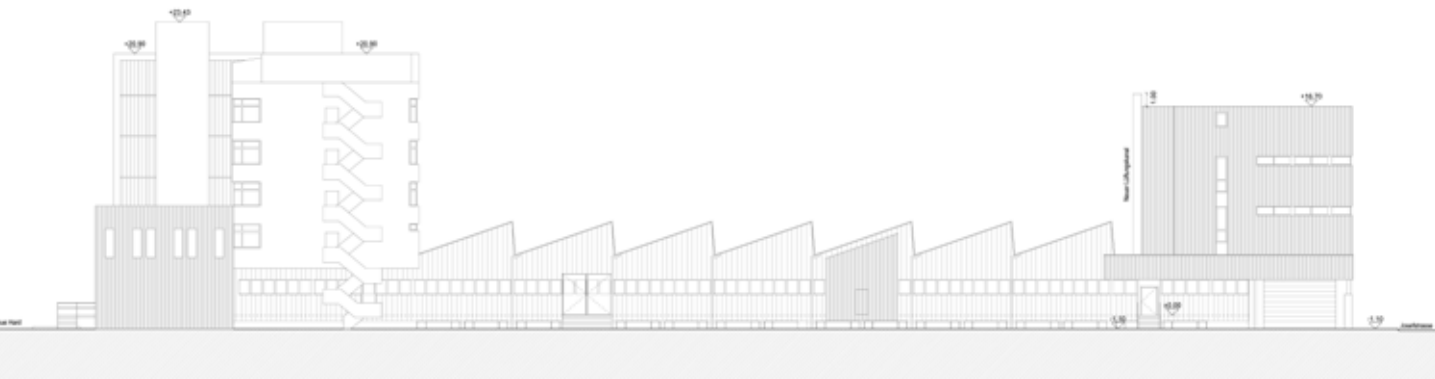
Zentralwäscherei Zürich, 1978



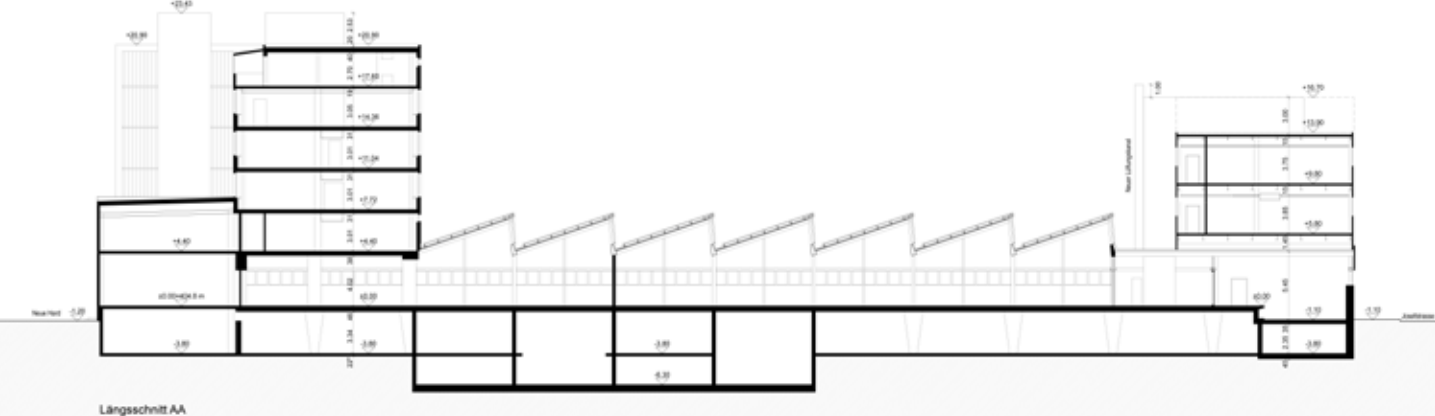
Zentralwäscherei Zürich, scheme of the water treatment plant, 1965, no scale



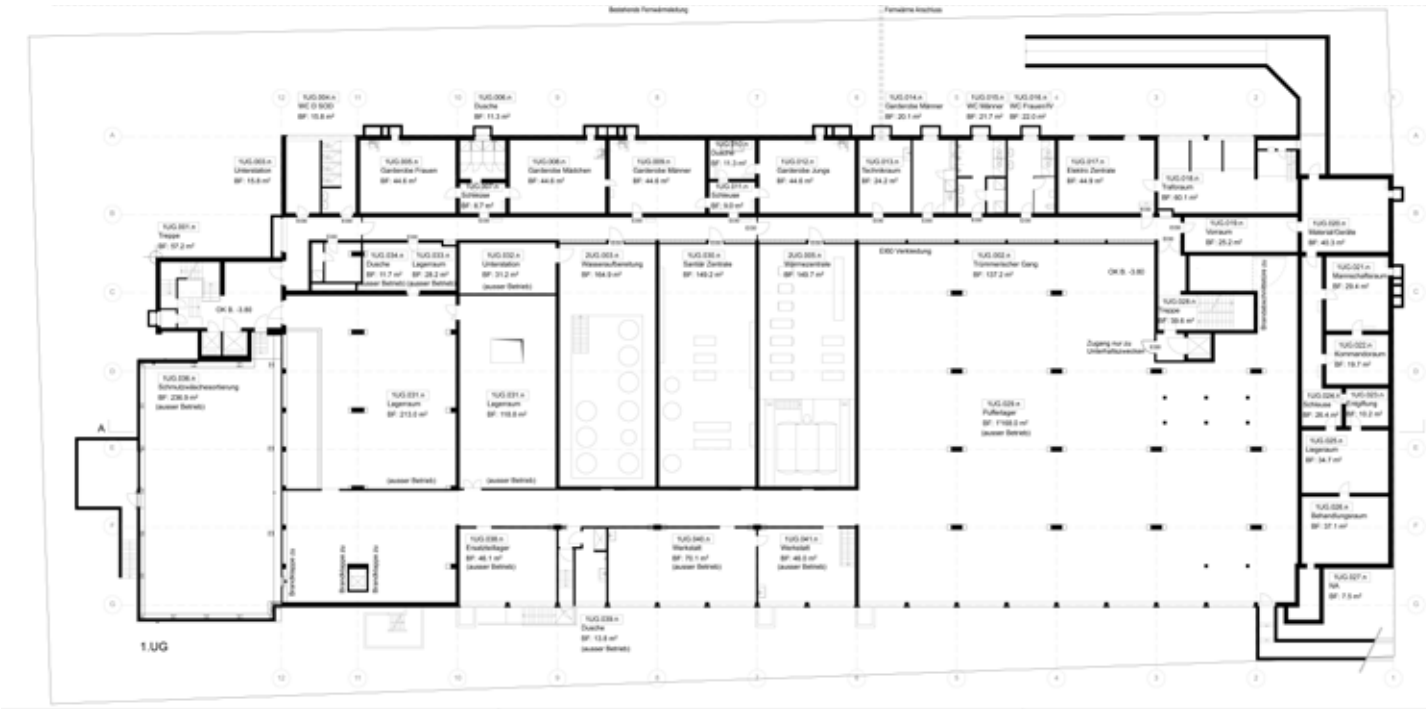
Ground floor



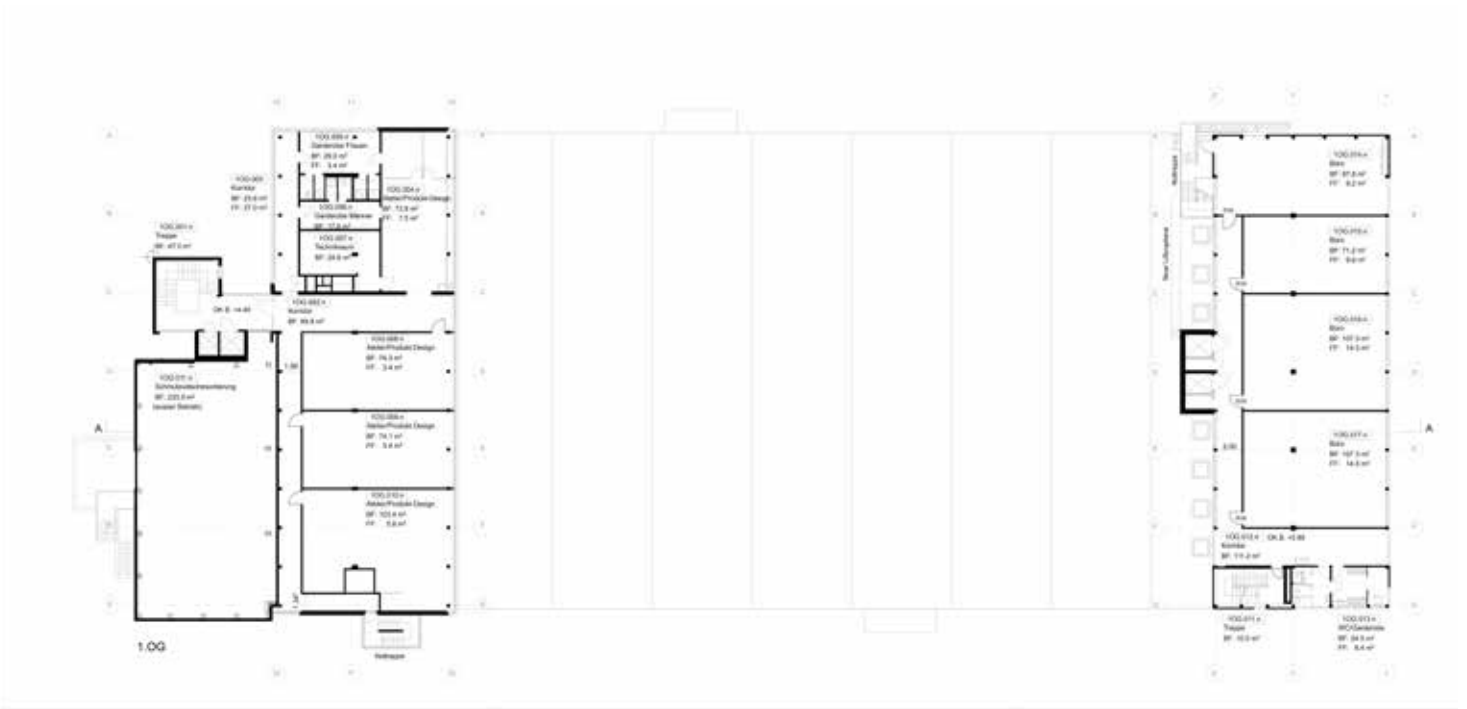
Longitudinal facade



Longitudinal section



Basement



First floor

Scenarios for future use

Right in the middle

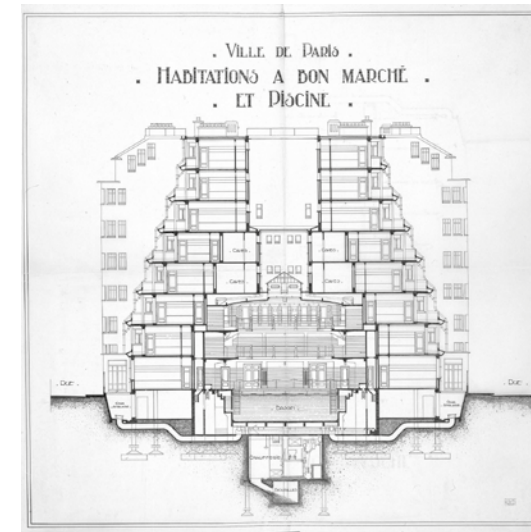
No place in Zurich's urban area has developed more dynamically in recent years than the outer industrial quarter where the ‚Zentralwäscherei‘ is located. The building is right in the middle of it, surrounded by the hustle and bustle of the city. This makes it much easier to come up with ideas for future use. Because there are already enough people in the area, you just have to give them a reason to make the place under investigation their own.

Two tensions

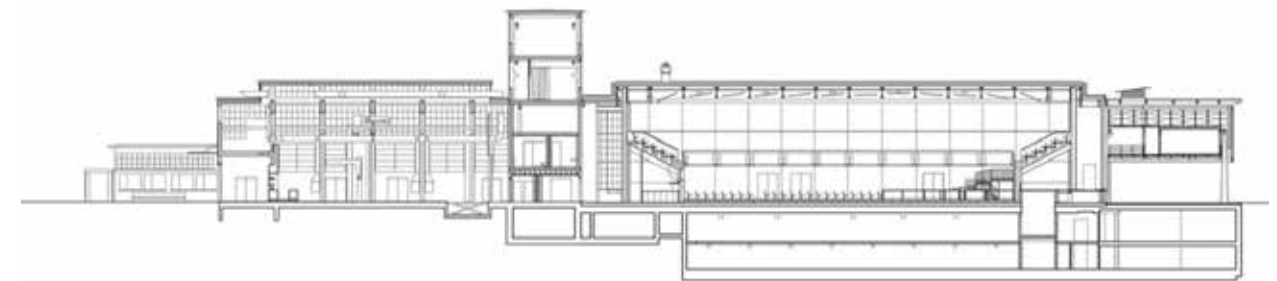
This semester's assignment dealt with two tensions: the tension between existing substance and structural change, but also the tension between different, even discrepant uses. Four possible scenarios were presented for selection. On the one hand, they were to show the adaptability of the building complex, which had once been designed exclusively for the cleaning and care of huge quantities of laundry. On the other hand, the proposed space programmes were also intended to stimulate reflection on how large, hybrid-use buildings can radiate on the life of their urban surroundings.

Hybrid use

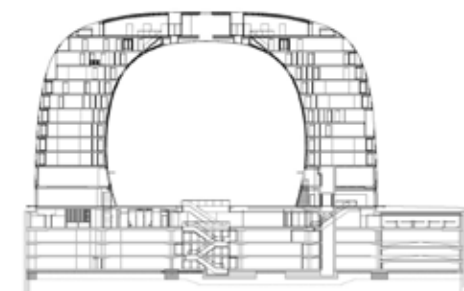
Some of these scenarios were very close to reality: for example, the - not particularly compatible - combination of a swimming pool and flats for the elderly precisely reflects the wishes of the neighbourhood's population, which they had expressed in the course of a consultation process. The second scenario, the removal of the municipal and cantonal parliaments from the medieval town hall, also has a real background. Particularly stimulating in this case was the great discrepancy between the dignity of the institution and the informality of the industrial building. The hypothetical use as a music school and conservatory was based on the inspiring reference cases in the immediate vicinity (conversion of the Toni dairy into the ZHdK University of the Arts by EM2N Architekten and temporary concert hall for the Tonhalle in the Maag area by Spillmann Echsle Architekten). How commercial and residential use can be combined was the subject of the fourth scenario.



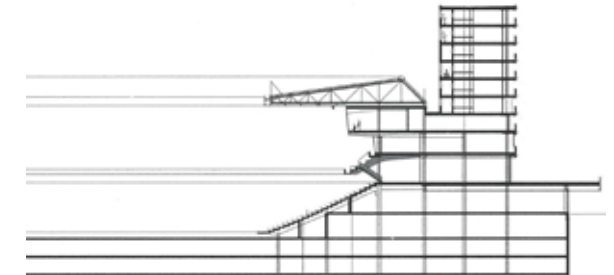
Hybrid of housing and swimming bath
(Immeuble de la rue des Amiraux à Paris XVIIIe, 1913–1930, Henri Sauvage)



Temporary reuse of old factory buildings (Tonhalle Maag, Zurich, 2015–21, Spillmann Echsle Architekten)



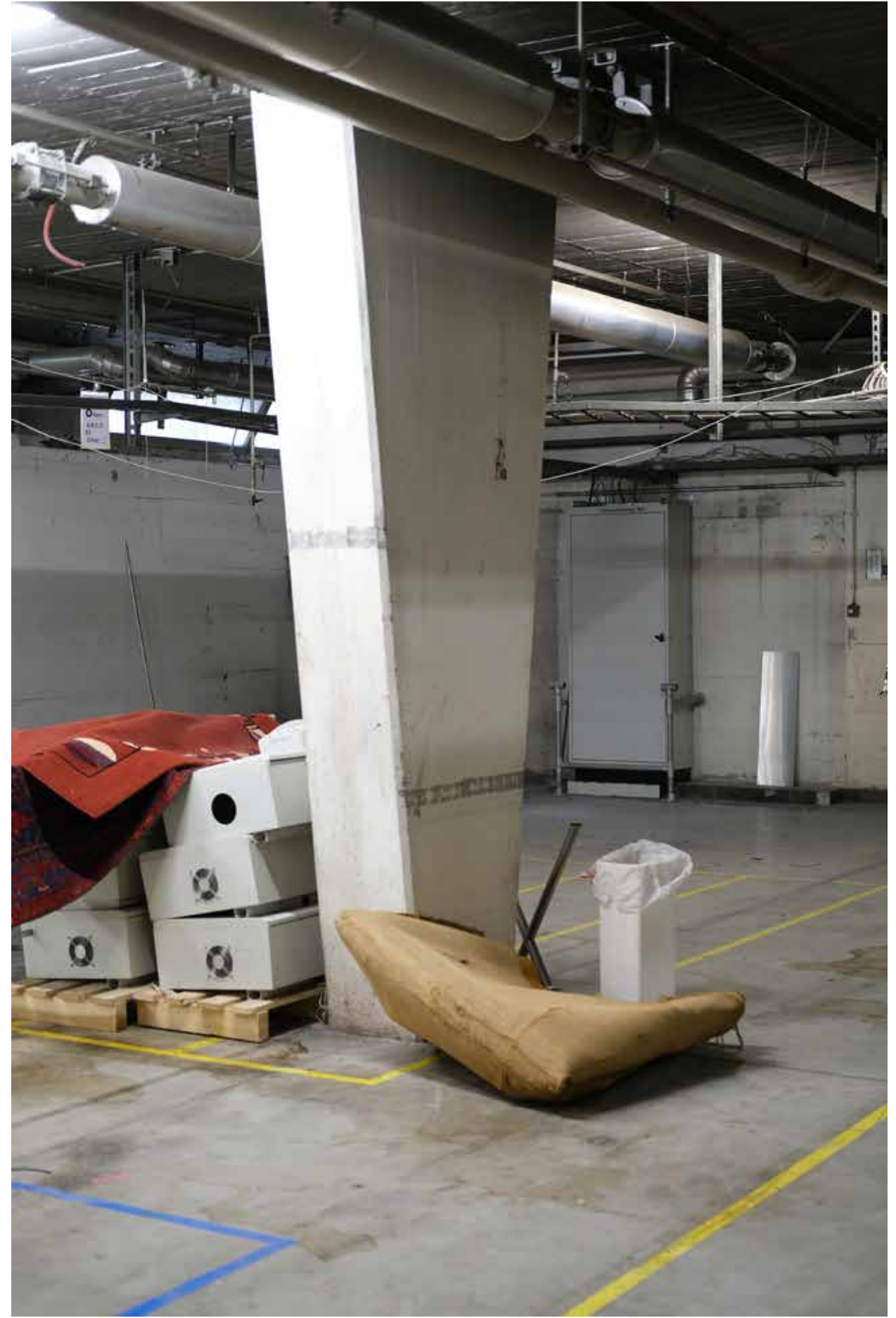
Hybrid of market hall and housing
(Market hall, Rotterdam, 2014, MVRDV)



Hybrid of sports stadium and home for the elderly
(St. Jakob, Basel 1996, Herzog & de Meuron)



Conversion of a school complex into a conservatory
(Pole de dance et de mystique, Versailles, 2017, Joly & Loiret)



Method and process

Synchronous design

By their very nature, design processes are not linear: they follow neither a clear direction from the large to the small nor a clear principle of exclusion, separating the unimportant from the important. That is why the method of 'synchronous design', as taught by Prof. Astrid Stauffer at the ZHAW, became the methodological reference. Here, design is pursued on different levels, at different scales and in different genres, side by side, i.e. 'synchronously'. Hypotheses on design are gathered in the form of image, text, plan, structural model or historical analysis. Theses are formulated for different areas of investigation and resolutely put forward without these theses already being congruent. This only happens very gradually in the course of the semester.

Keywords

In order to conceptually differentiate different strategies of re-use, keywords had been compiled, which were assigned to built examples from the individual lifeworld of the students in a first exercise.



'Deep drilling'

Together, they compiled a plan of the building stock from archive plans, which was checked and supplemented on the object. During the Study Week, the participants roamed through the buildings for several days and documented their findings. So-called 'deep drillings' were made at 12 particularly informative sites, which were meticulously documented in cut-out models, text and plan. This exercise required looking at a section of a building from very close up - it was instrumental in making friends with the unappealing structure and proved particularly productive.

Reality check

The building physicist Remo Niklaus (Durable Planung und Beratung), who examined existing buildings with regard to embedded energy and greenhouse gas emissions, gave decisive advice on how to optimise projects in terms of sustainability. Visits to various successfully converted buildings in Winterthur, Zurich, Basel and St.Gallen led to lively discussions with their authors about the potentials and limits of reusing building fabric.

Teamwork, space programme as catalyst

Working in a team of two required intensive dialogue. Even when choosing the space programme (from four prepared scenarios), an important directional decision had to be made together. However, the specification of room programmes did not serve the training of correct fulfilment, but rather the rapid approach to the very everyday world that could move into the building.

Reading Circle

At regular intervals, texts were read together that address the 'applied theory' of conversion: 'Le Preesistenze ambientali' by Ernesto Nathan Rogers, 'Alles ist Umbau' by Hermann Czech, 'Usus/Usures, How things stand' by Rotor, and 'Occasion' by Jan de Vylder. The latter text in particular became very important, reflecting in a very vivid, applied way the double meaning of both the English and French understandings of 'Occasion'. Occasion in the sense of a bargain purchase. If one can acquire a used car suspiciously cheaply, one will examine it as suspiciously as joyfully. Can this suspicious to joyful curiosity be transferred to the structural alteration of buildings? The question of 'Occasion' became the real leit-motif of the second half of the semester. From week to week, the opening question was: Which Occasion had been recognised, and what had been developed from it?

Guests

Various guests who are very familiar with questions of re-use, both practically and theoretically, accompanied us this semester. Marco Zünd (Buol & Zünd Architekten, Basel, Prof. University of Kaiserslautern) accompanied the 2nd intermediate review, Prof. Marco Bakker (EPF Lausanne) and Christian Inderbitzin (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology) the final review.



Conclusion

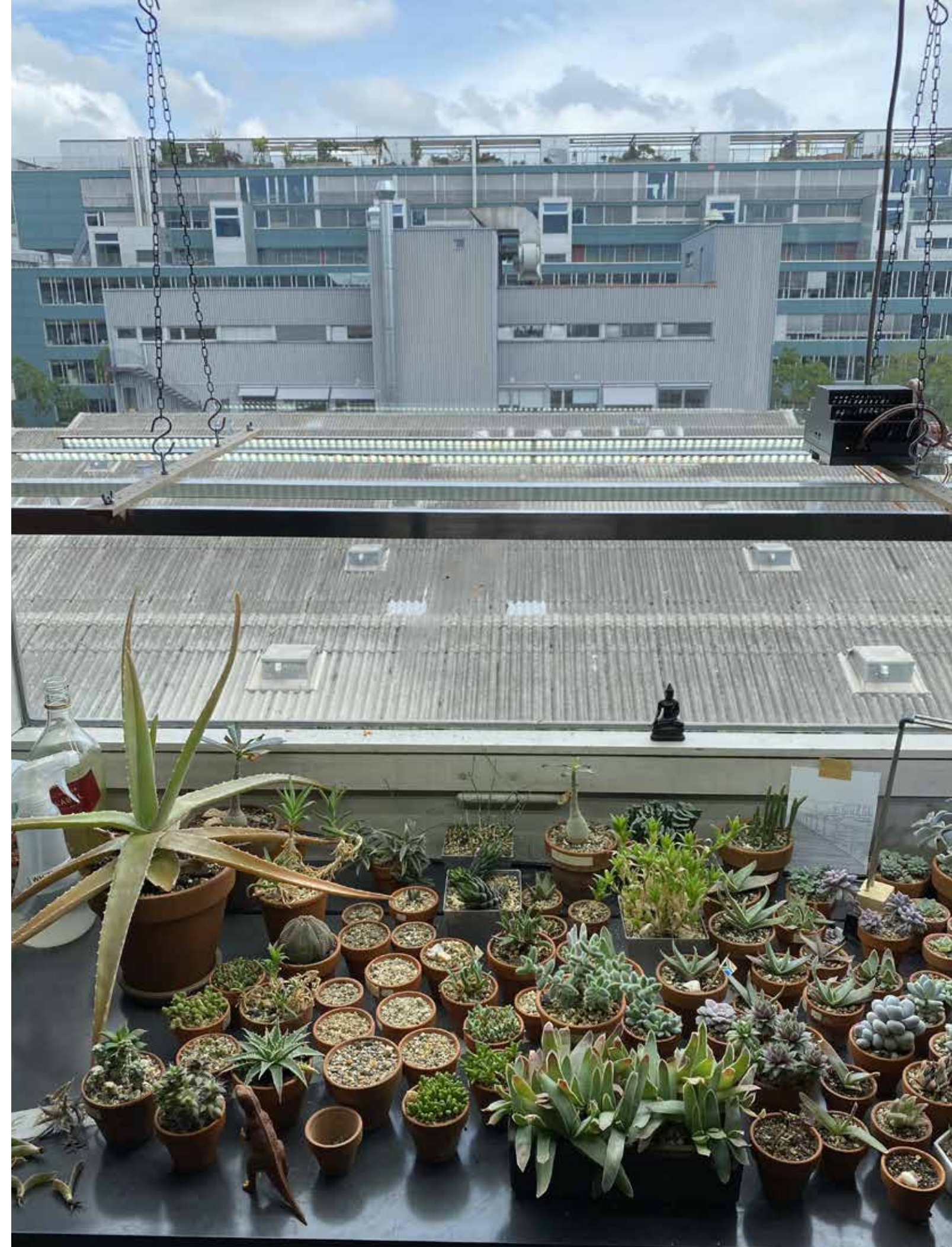
„Call it changing rather than rebuilding. Because perhaps architecture only has to achieve change. And with the term changing, we leave the recurring difference between building and rebuilding. It is always about changing the circumstances. Ultimately.“

Jan de Vyllder, 'Occasion', Werk, Bauen und Wohnen 3/2015

How great the need is for spaces for creative work and what kind of life emerges in this socially discreetly moderated but architecturally formless framework: both impressed and inspired us in the days when the studio was in operation on site. However, we did not want to make this informal and temporary use of the house the subject of our investigation, but rather a long-term reshaping and reprogramming: a new house in which the old remains present.

Many new houses have emerged this semester, in which the old has always remained - sometimes more of it, sometimes less. We were thrilled by this diversity. It says a lot about the creativity, empathy and commitment of the students - and it says even more about the potential of the bulky, dishevelled building complex! That is why we would like to call on all those involved to use the coming years of interim use for a process of reflection. Wouldn't much more be gained by preserving and continuing to use the complex than by demolishing it? Is the freedom of the tabula rasa really worth more than the loss of identity and character? Besides, are we still allowed to demolish such a structure at all, given the greenhouse gas emissions and mountains of rubble it creates?

Perhaps this semester's work will help us to recognise the future that lies dormant in yesterday. Perhaps in ten years' time we will drive past the Central Laundry and look at a building complex that inspires us with its boldness and at the same time unsettles us, because it seems a little as if it has always been there... Then a lot would have been achieved!



Keywords



INFILL



Théâtre de l'Oriental, Vevey, 2014, Architectum

Nel 1834, il „Théâtre de l'Oriental“ era diviso in tre parti: la cappella cattolica, la chiesa parrocchiale e, in mezzo, il cortile con la scala centrale. Più tardi, questa disposizione è stata offuscata dall'aggiunta di annessi legati a molteplici trasformazioni e cambiamenti d'uso del sito: scuola, teatro, cinema, accademia di danza e infine di nuovo un teatro. Quest'ultimo incarico ha permesso il ritorno della tipologia di base in tre parti del piano. Le diverse strategie adottate evidenziano le stratificazioni e sono perfettamente integrate nella patina esistente dell'edificio.

Manon Arduino

RINNOVAZIONE



Fittja people's palace. With an objective of contributing to an economic and socially sustainable solution for public housing, the strategy of the architects (Spridd) was to look again at the already there, to identify existing values rather than suggest major alterations. The extensive survey resulted in a proposal for a modest, low-cost renovation and technical upgrade that is hardly noticeable and was based on reinstating—rather than altering—lost qualities of the welfare state's housing scheme, both in terms of shared space and facilities as well as a generous interior upgrade of the apartments. *Change without change.*

Stellan Gulde

SOTTRAZIONE



New BABI, Losanna, 2015, Bakker & Blanc

Il progetto è la conversione di una prigione situata nel centro storico di Losanna in uno studio di architettura. L'edificio, originariamente concepito come abitazione, era occupato da dieci celle della prigione dalla sua inaugurazione nel 1931. Tutti gli elementi superflui sono stati spogliati per recuperare la struttura originale, consentendo spazi di lavoro trasversali e conservando alcune delle celle originali, testimonianza della precedente funzione dell'edificio. La tipologia delle celle è ancora distinguibile attraverso le cicatrici visibili sui pavimenti dove una volta c'erano i muri.

Julien Orozco

RIPROGRAMMAZIONE



Set in a former church in Copenhagen, the Absalon community center is a non-profit institution where locals are given the chance to meet and socialize in new and casual ways. The generous space formerly used for worship, now houses a large variety of public activities like dinners, yoga, parties and ping-pong. Through relatively small interventions, like changes in colour, lighting and the addition of a few access routes, the church has been adapted to the diversity of its new users and activities, while its programmatic function as a meeting place in the city has been revived.

Egil Kahlbom

Keywords

SOTTRAZIONE



Le pareti segnate da lapilli di acciaio ardente e annerite dal fumo hanno abbandonato il proprio posto aprendo la strada al movimento dei corpi e all'aria. Le vecchie fonderie Teskid a Torino sono state spogliate del loro abito semi-opaco e trasformate in un parco urbano post industriale. Di quei vecchi capannoni chiusi restano puntuali relitti. Echi di un passato strutturante per la città, oggi strutturano lo spazio segnalando una presenza nel paesaggio urbano. Uno solo dei mastodontici tetti offre ancora riparo, caricando il parco Dora di potenziale. L'area coperta offre le condizioni ideali per l'appropriazione dello spazio, diurna e notturna, risultando in un luogo perennemente vivo e frequentato.

Alain Scarpa

RIPARAZIONE



Ca' Granda, Milano
Grande complesso ospedaliero del XVI secolo, è stato restaurato e ricostruito in seguito ai bombardamenti della seconda guerra mondiale. I progettisti hanno scelto di applicare due metodi di intervento: per anastilosi, ovvero ricostruzione filologica dello stato preesistente con materiale originale, o ex novo, data la scarsità di materiale e la rilevanza storico-culturale.

Giacomo Vanetti

MUTAMENTO DI PERCEZIONE



La Rotonda della Besana nasce come complesso cimiteriale dell'Ospedale Maggiore di Milano. Con le nuove norme di igiene, la sua funzione cambia: caserma, fienile, cronario, lavanderia dell'ospedale fino a spazio espositivo; ad oggi la chiesa è diventata sede del MUBA (Museo dei bambini) e bistrot. Da spazio recintato non molto amato dai cittadini, la Rotonda della Besana tramite un semplice cambio d'uso e una maggiore cura dell'area verde del cortile, muta il suo aspetto nei confronti della città: adesso è un' „isola protetta“ in cui sia i bambini che gli adulti possono rifugiarsi dal caos cittadino.

Giulia Romagnoli

INFILL



The seaplane hangar on Holmen – a large, wide building originally used for the construction of large, navy seaplanes. It is originally designed in 1921 by architect Christian Olrich, and is one of the first pre-stressed concrete structures of its size in Denmark. The infill is framed by three white steel structures and between them lay common work areas. The room ranges between two and four stories in height and each structure is “dressed” with large parachute fabric curtains, which allows for the inner spaces to be opened or closed-off from the rest of the communal office space.

Joel Brynielsson

RIPROGRAMMAZIONE



La Centrale Montemartini ospitava il primo impianto pubblico per la produzione di energia elettrica di Roma. Dopo la caduta in disuso nel 1963, nel 1997 alcune opere conservate nei Musei Capitolini vengono trasferite lì. Nell'intervento la parte fisica dell'edificio non viene cambiata, viene decisa unicamente una nuova funzione che comprenda l'aggiunta minima di elementi leggeri richiesti dal nuovo uso. Il progetto decide di utilizzare le macchine come sfondo per valorizzare le opere classiche, permettendo però allo stesso tempo di mettere in scena anche queste all'interno del percorso museale.

Chiara Maisto

DEMOLIZIONE – RIUSO



La storia della basilica di San Giovanni in Conca a Milano racconta di un vero e proprio desiderio architettonico di permanenza. L'architettura è stata in grado di sopravvivere agli stravolgimenti dei piani regolatori svolti durante il periodo del secondo dopoguerra. Nonostante la chiesa sia stata sventrata oggi assume una nuova identità. I suoi resti oltre a raccontare la stratificazione temporale della città definiscono una nuova area pubblica esterna che conduce all'antica cripta. Il costruito non costituisce più uno spazio ma un luogo caratterizzato da un forte rapporto scenografico. Il riutilizzo della facciata, ricollocata nel nuovo tempio Valdese in via Francesco Sforza, crea un ulteriore stato di tensione tra passato e presente. Lo smantellamento della facciata e la sua successiva ricostruzione sono stati eseguiti più che per una questione ecologia per una questione architettonico-artistica. Questa scelta progettuale racconta la volontà di preservare un simbolo riconosciuto dalla comunità. Il decorso di questa architettura mostra come siano sfaccettate le possibilità di relazione con l'esistente.

Alessandra Cavallaro

STRATIFICAZIONE



L'Hadrianeum, costruito da Antonino Pio in onore del padre nel 145 d.C. in Piazza di Pietra, ha subito delle modifiche formali e funzionali legate ai mutamenti della società e dell'economia di Roma. Da luogo di culto divenne il fulcro del commercio capitolino quando, nel 1695, Innocenzo XII affidò a C. Fontana il progetto del Palazzo della Dogana delle Merci di Terra: un nuovo corpo di fabbrica che inglobava per metà le colonne in stile corinzio. Nel 1925, con il progetto della Camera di Commercio di V. Vespignani nove colonne furono liberate dalla facciata del Fontana e il podio del tempio venne scavato e isolato verso la piazza.

Diletta Aprile

RIPROGRAMMAZIONE



La conversione a museo dell'ex-birrificio lungo il fiume Mera, nella zona ex-industriale della Bottonera a Chiavenna è la trasformazione di un sistema di architetture minori in un aggregato di funzioni culturali. L'area è una vasta corte definita su tre lati dove s'innestano, mantenendo intatto l'impianto originario, tre corpi principali: il museo, con l'aggiunta di un nuovo vano scala esterno, la biblioteca e uno spazio dinamico coperto. Il progetto distingue le integrazioni moderne dalle parti antiche conservate, nella scelta sia tipologica (scala), sia materica (cemento armato) per il nuovo, mantenendo la muratura in pietra e serramenti in legno per il preesistente.

Federico Stefanoni

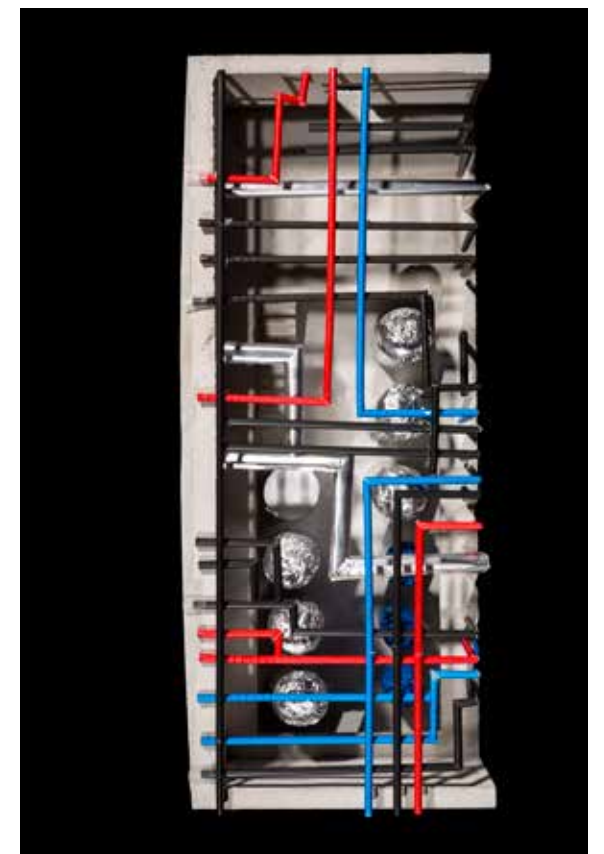
„Deep drilling“
„Passare al vaglio“



Joel Brynielsson & Egil Khalbom



Diletta Aprile & Martina Bianchini



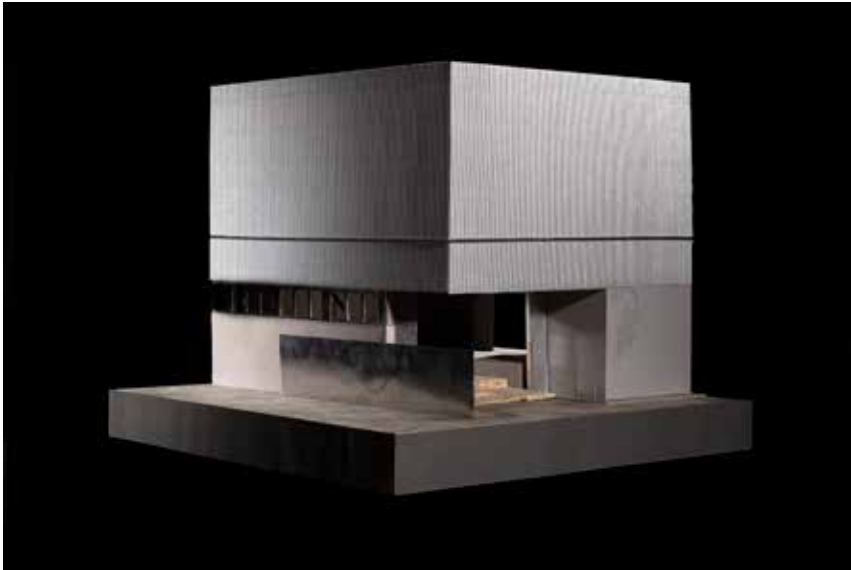
Christoph Grüter & Federico Stefanoni



Chiara Maisto & Giulia Romagnoli



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Rachele Righini & Alain Scarpa



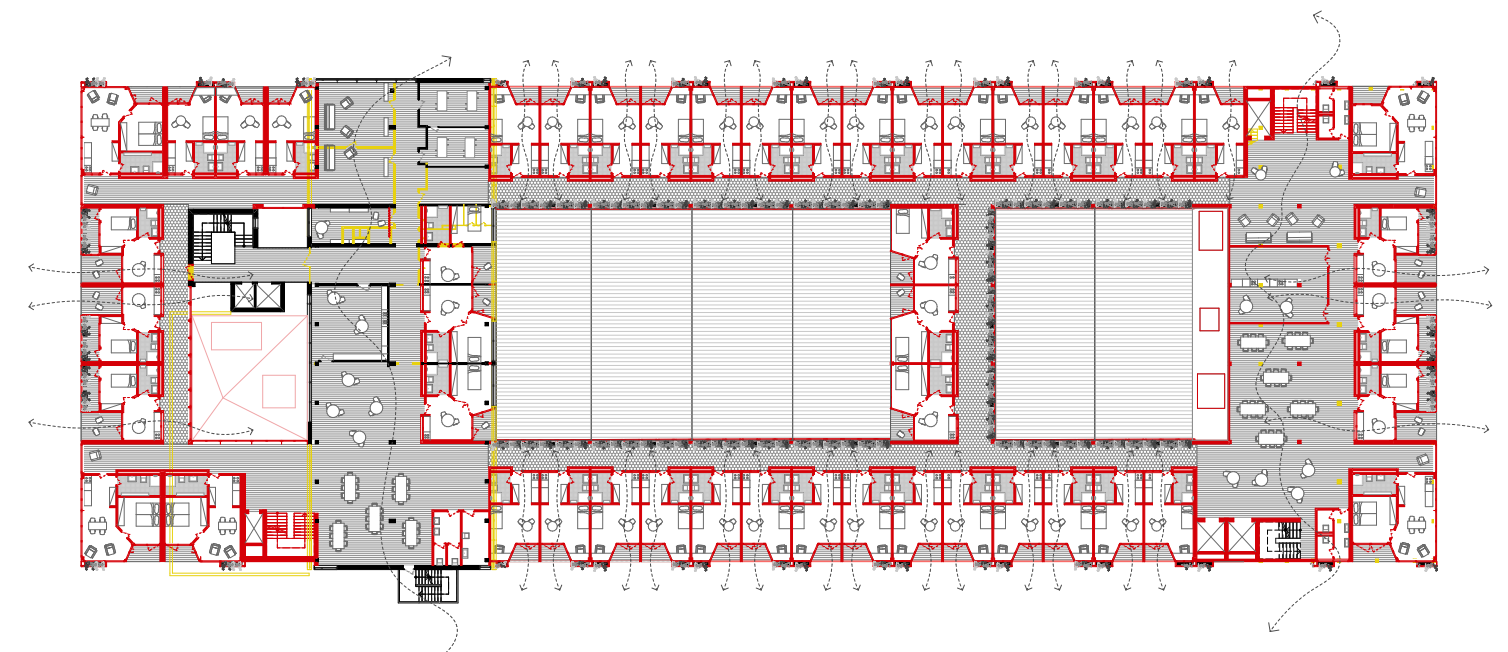
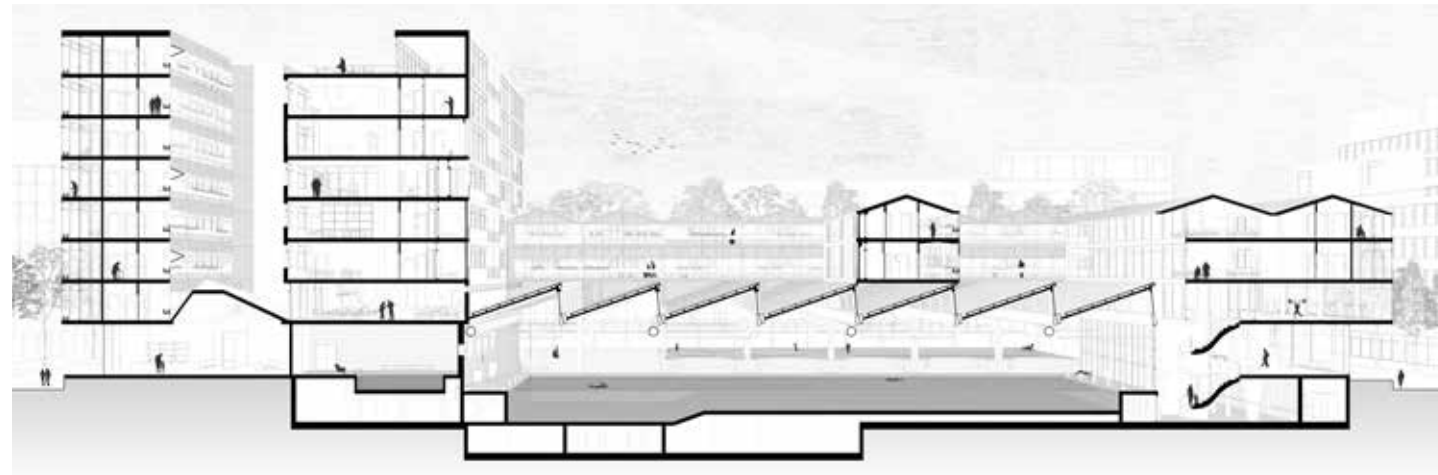
Alessandra Cavallaro & Giacomo Vanetti

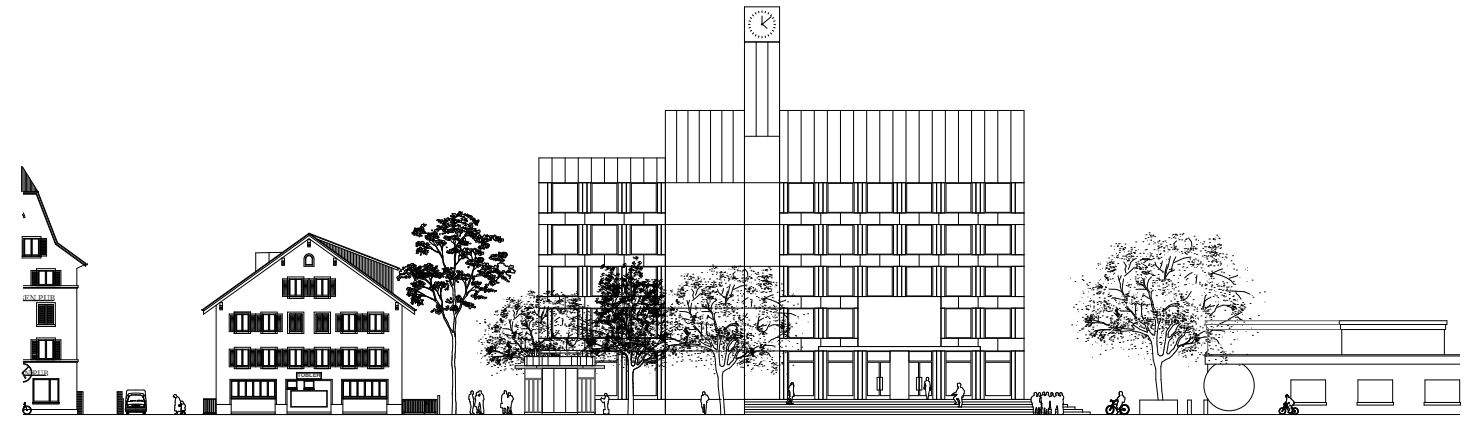
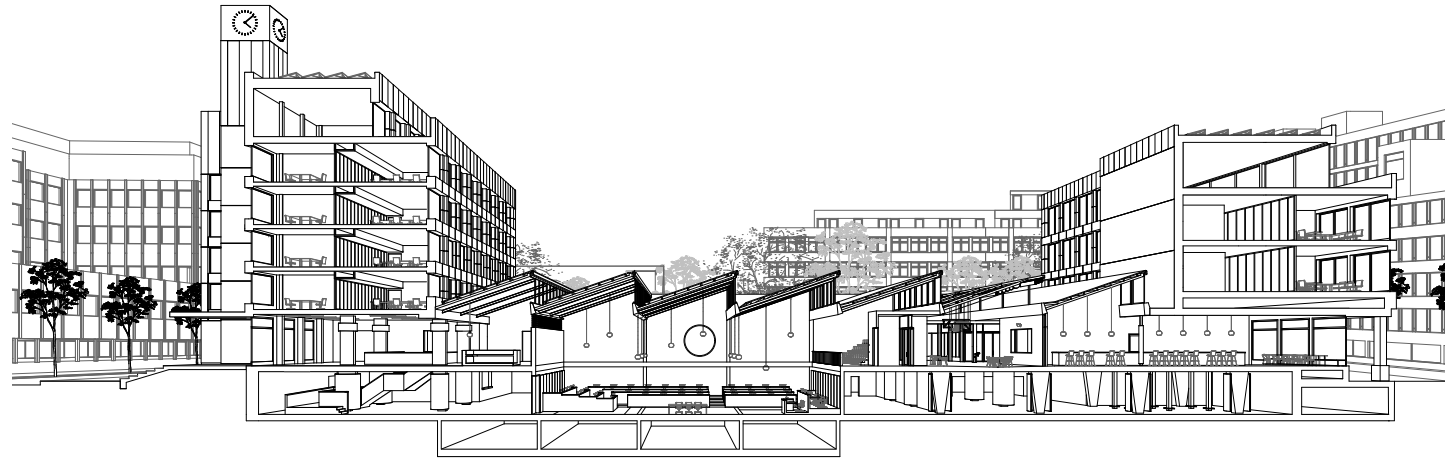


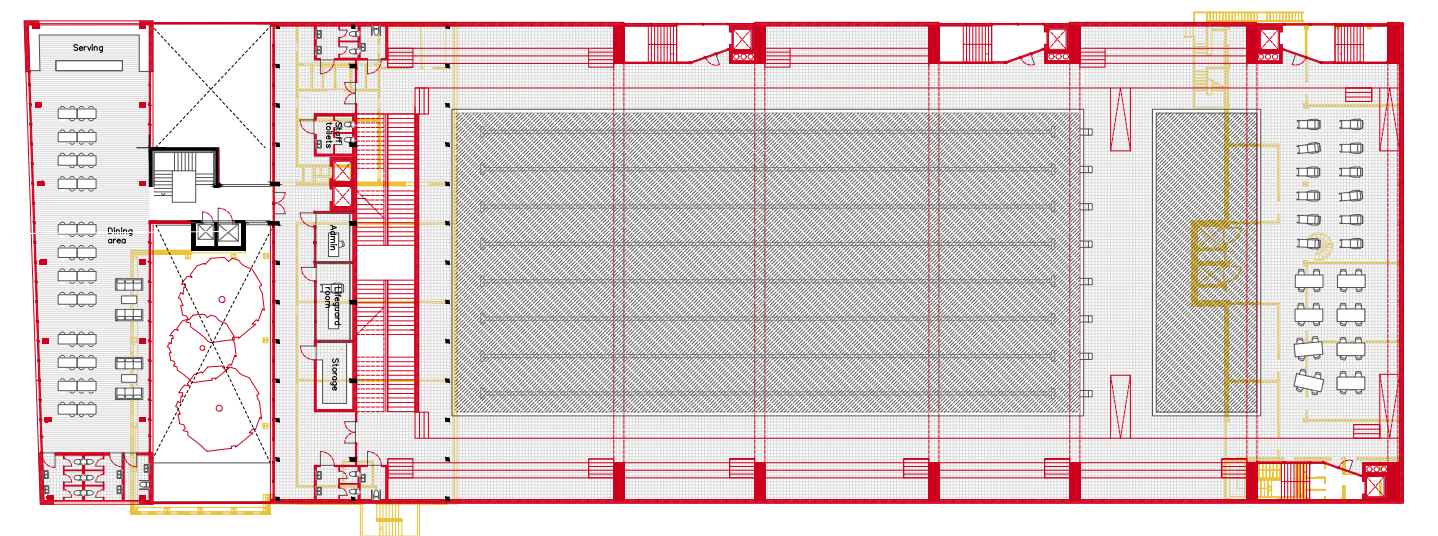
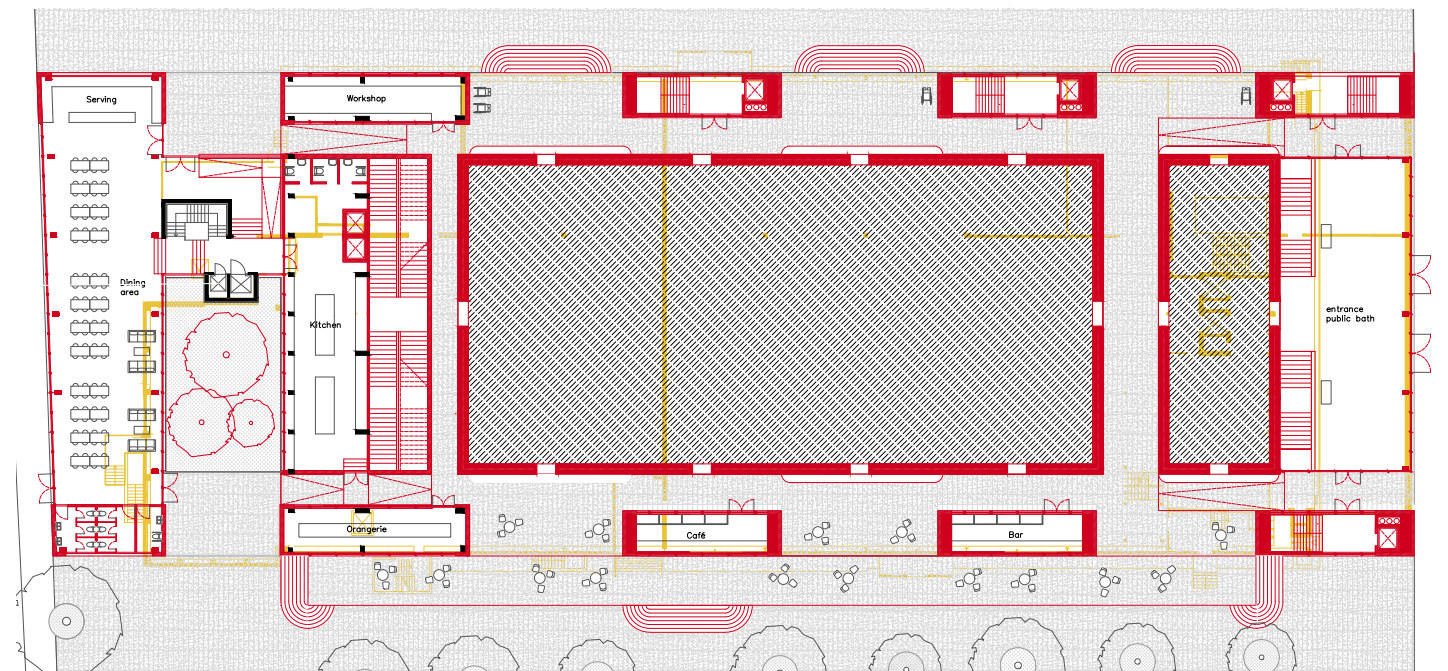
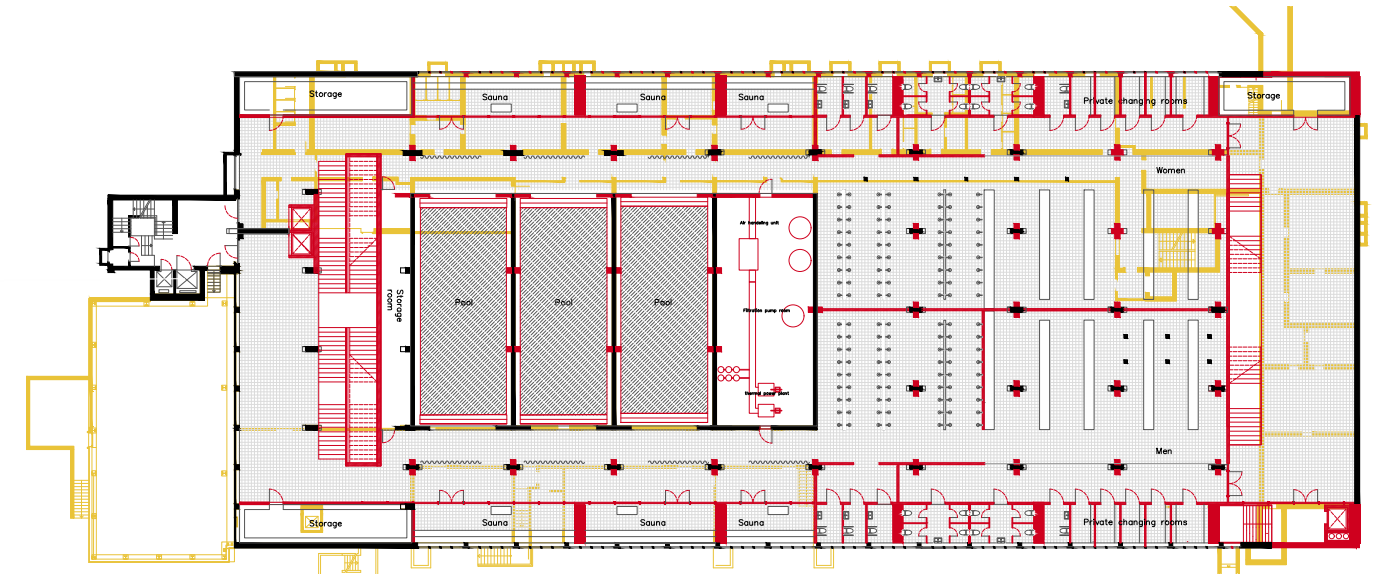
Iole Corbo & Lorenzo Giordano

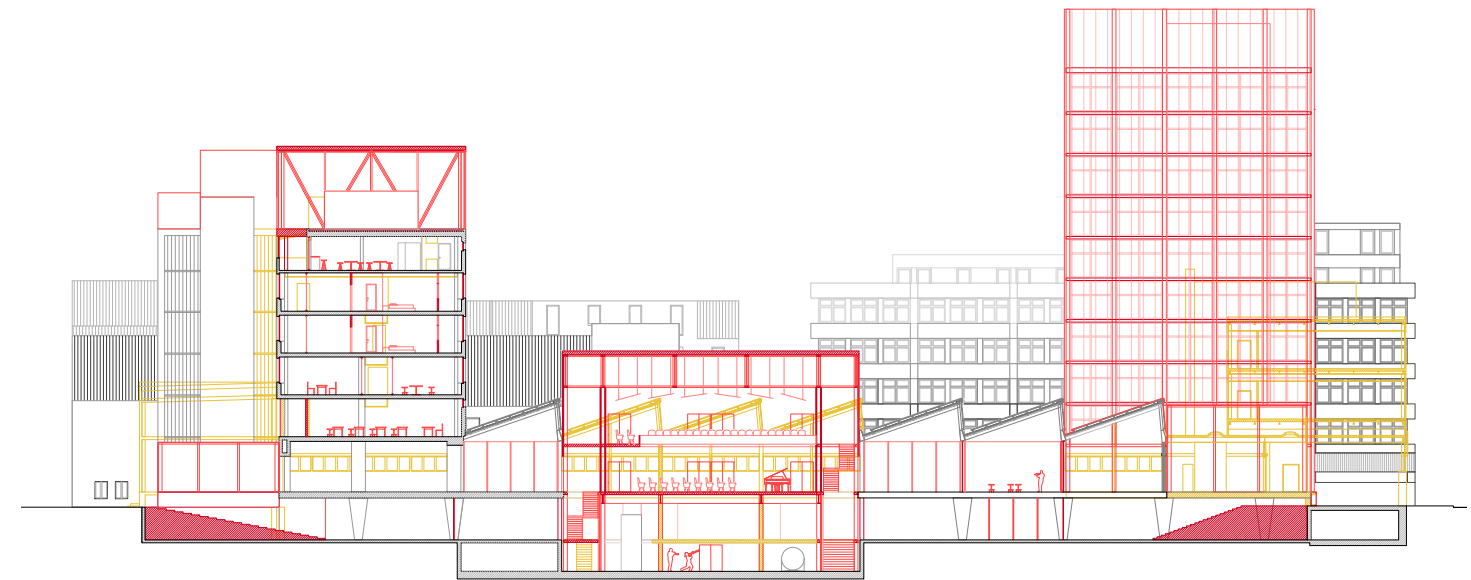
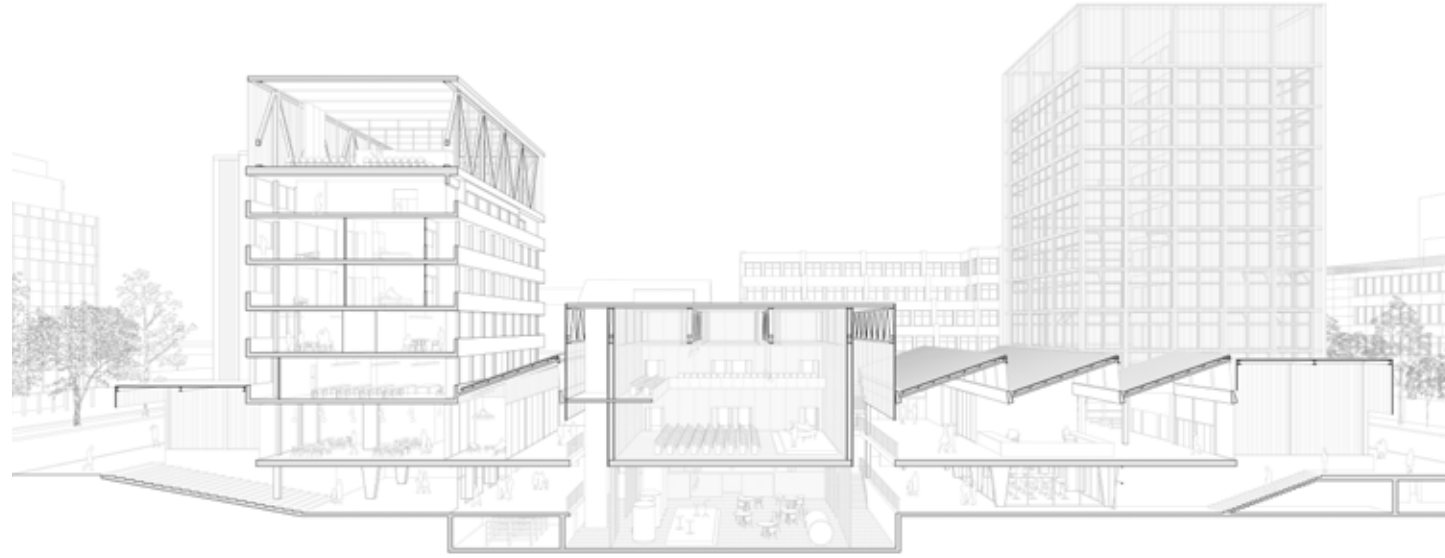
Projects

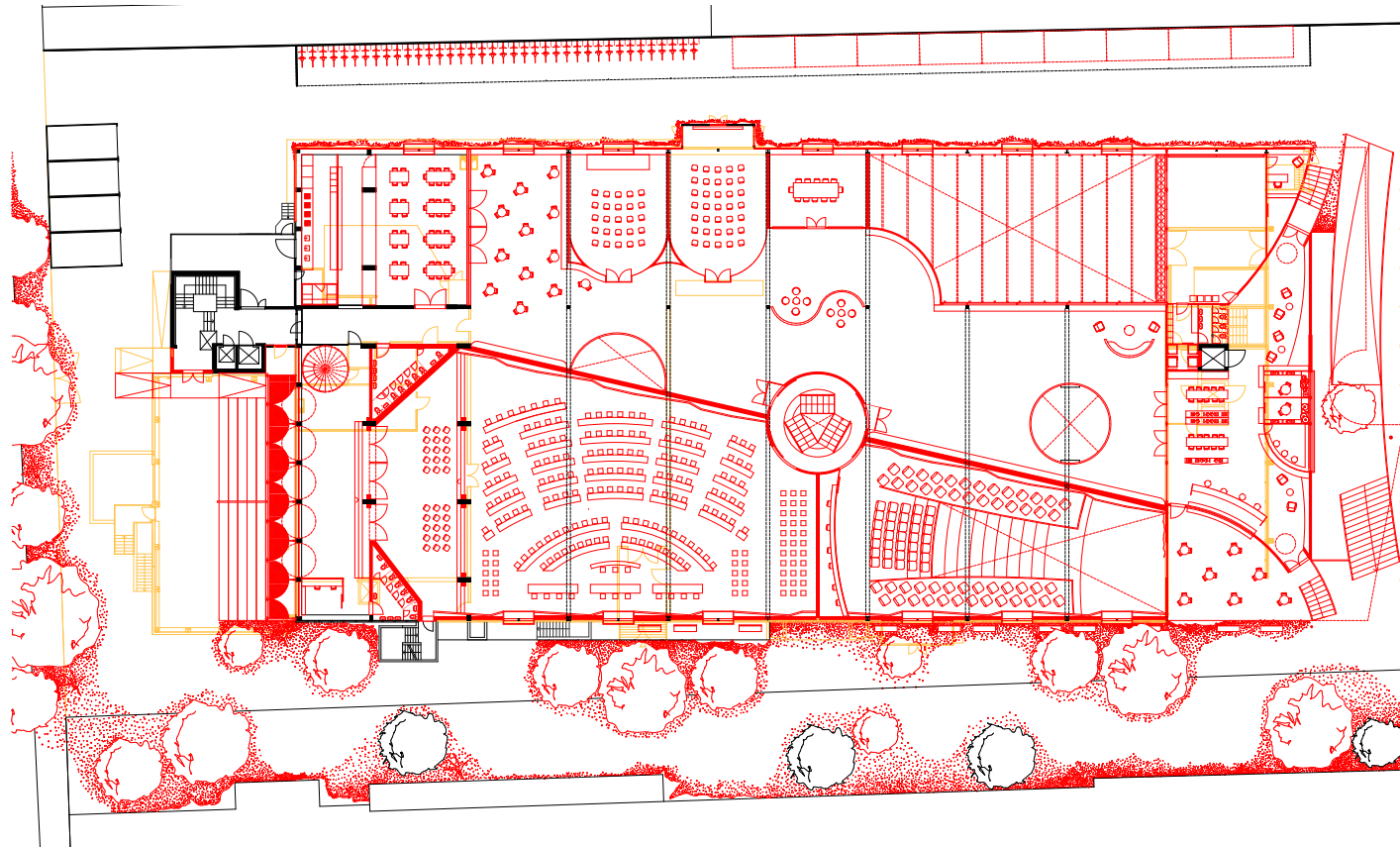


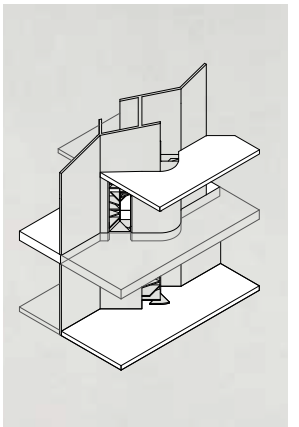
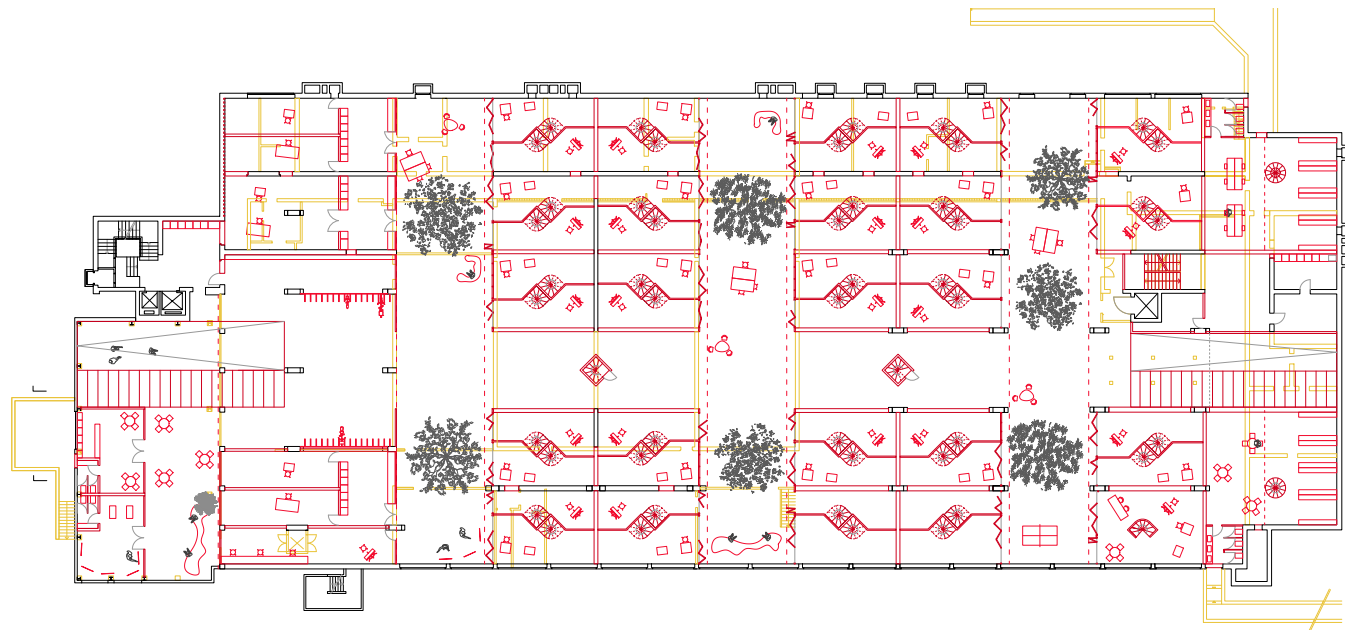
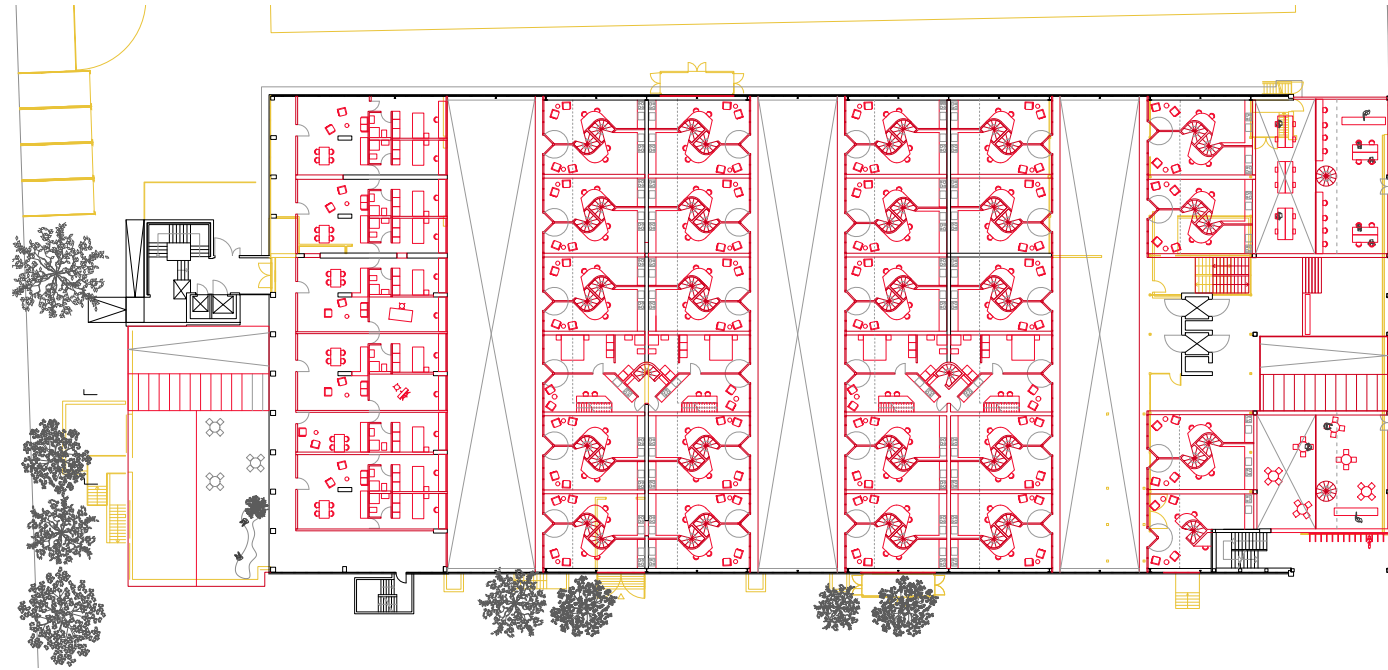
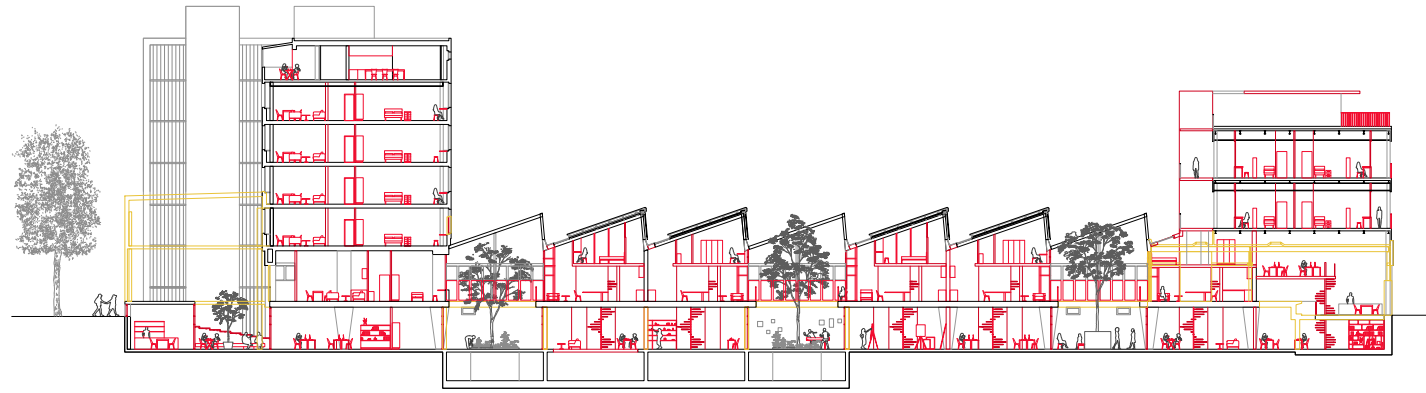


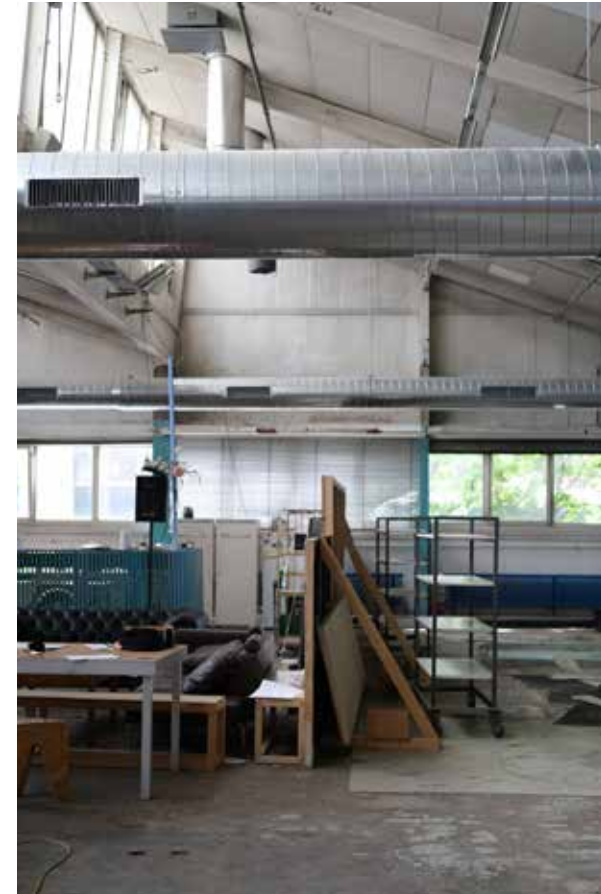
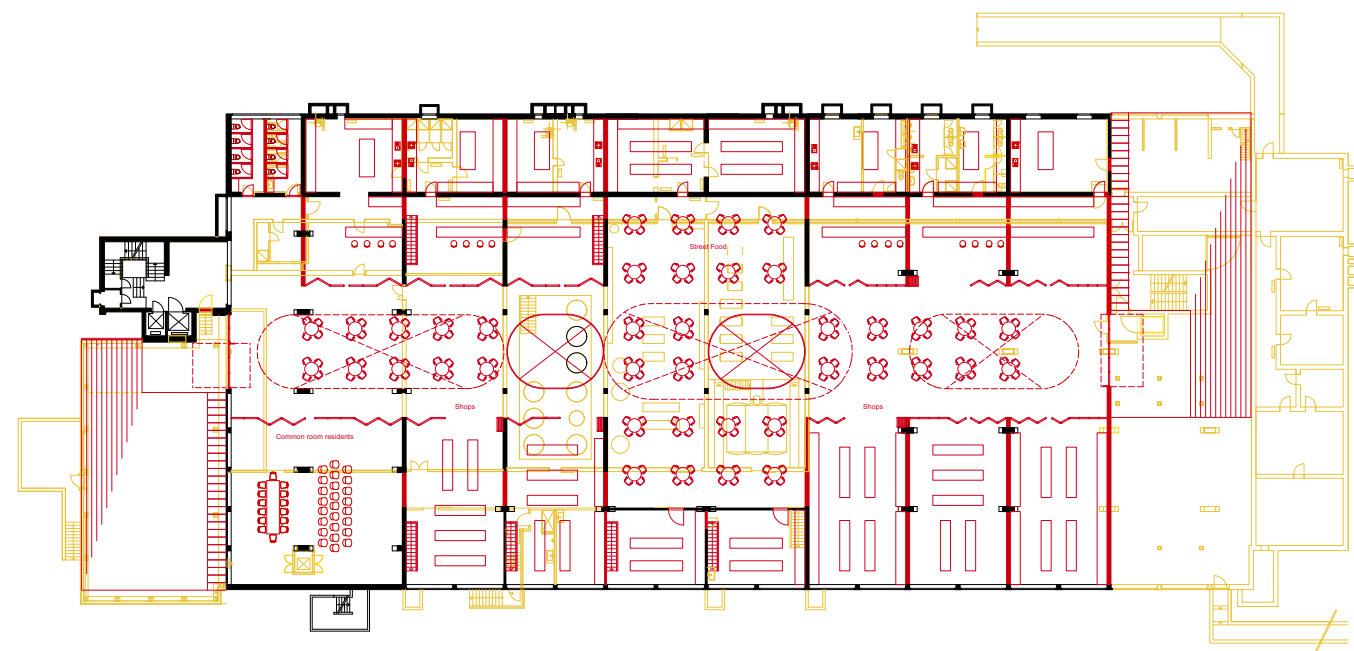
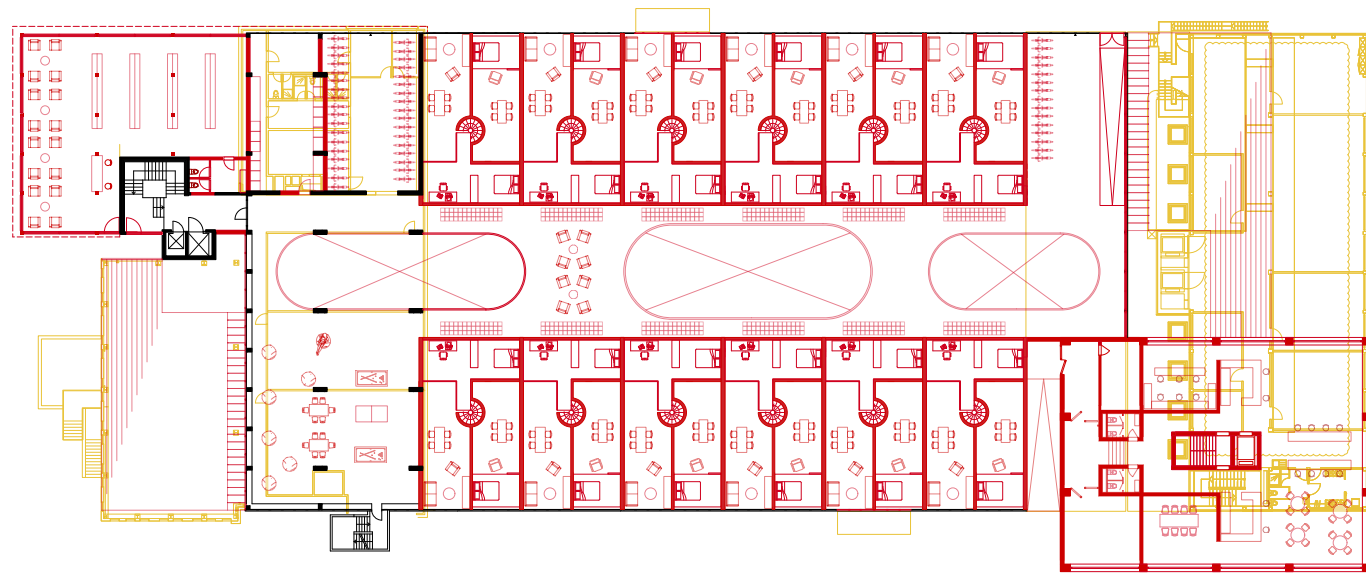
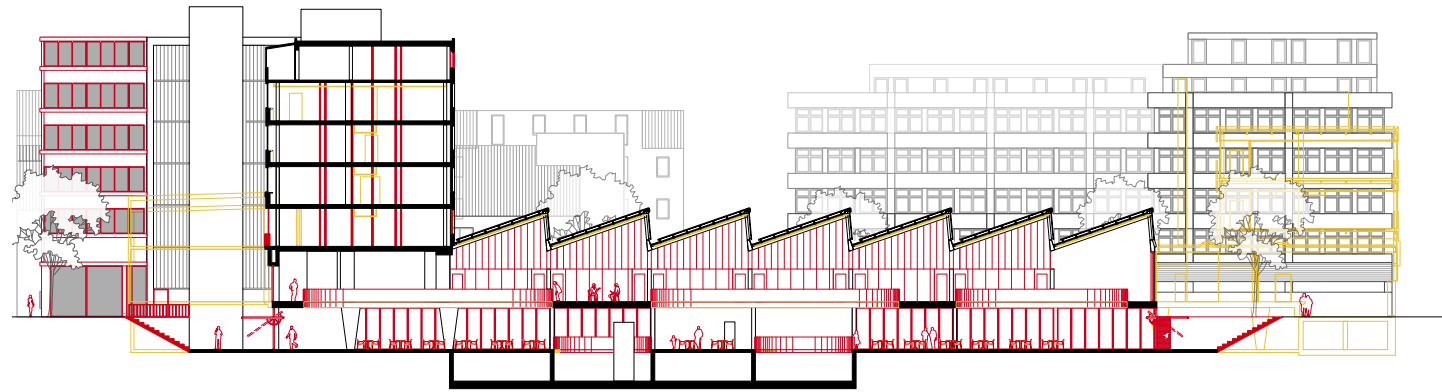


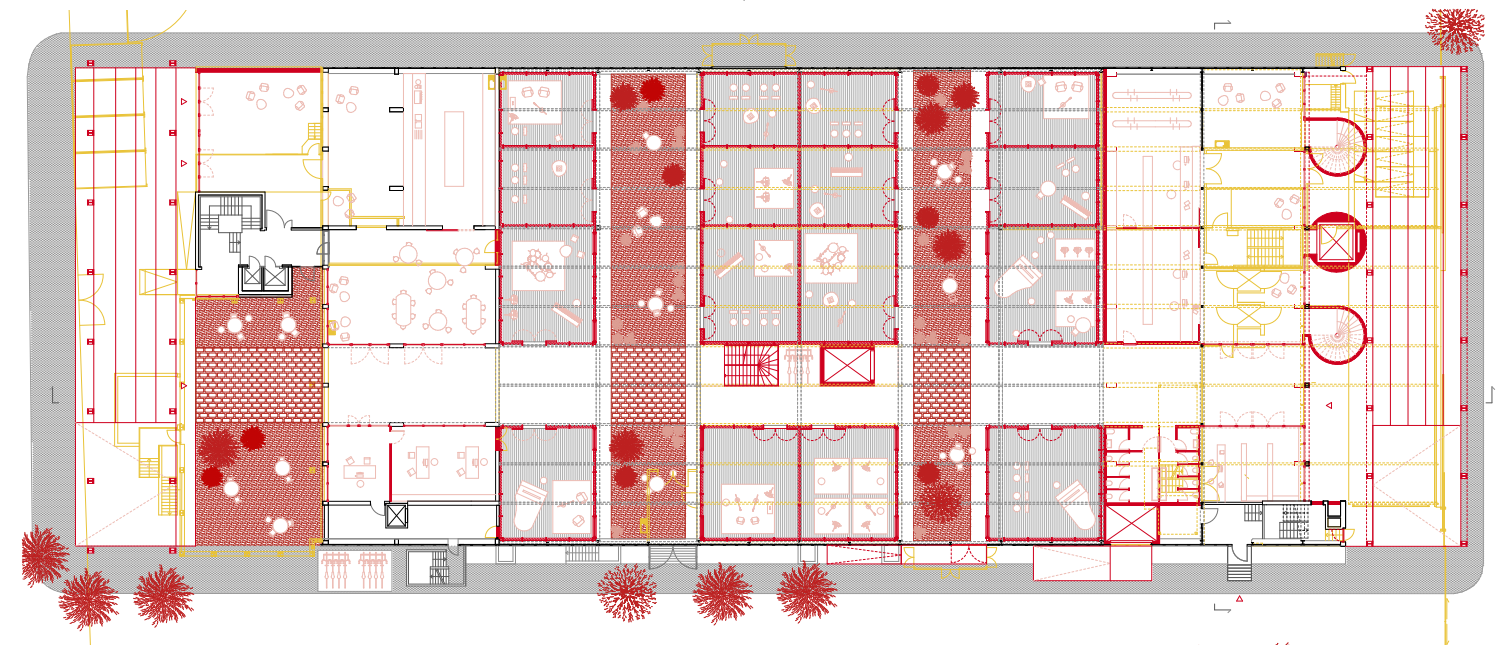
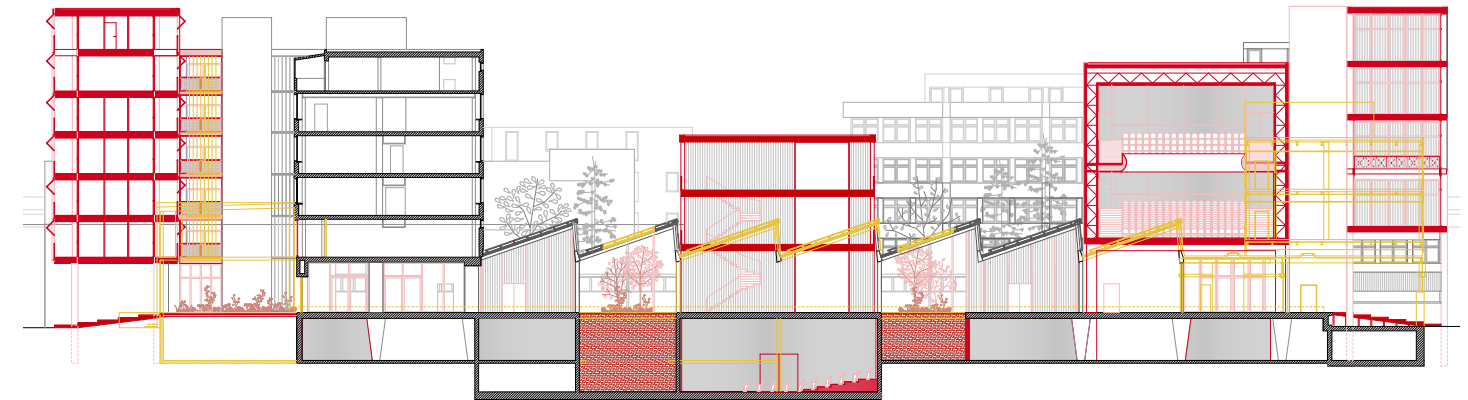
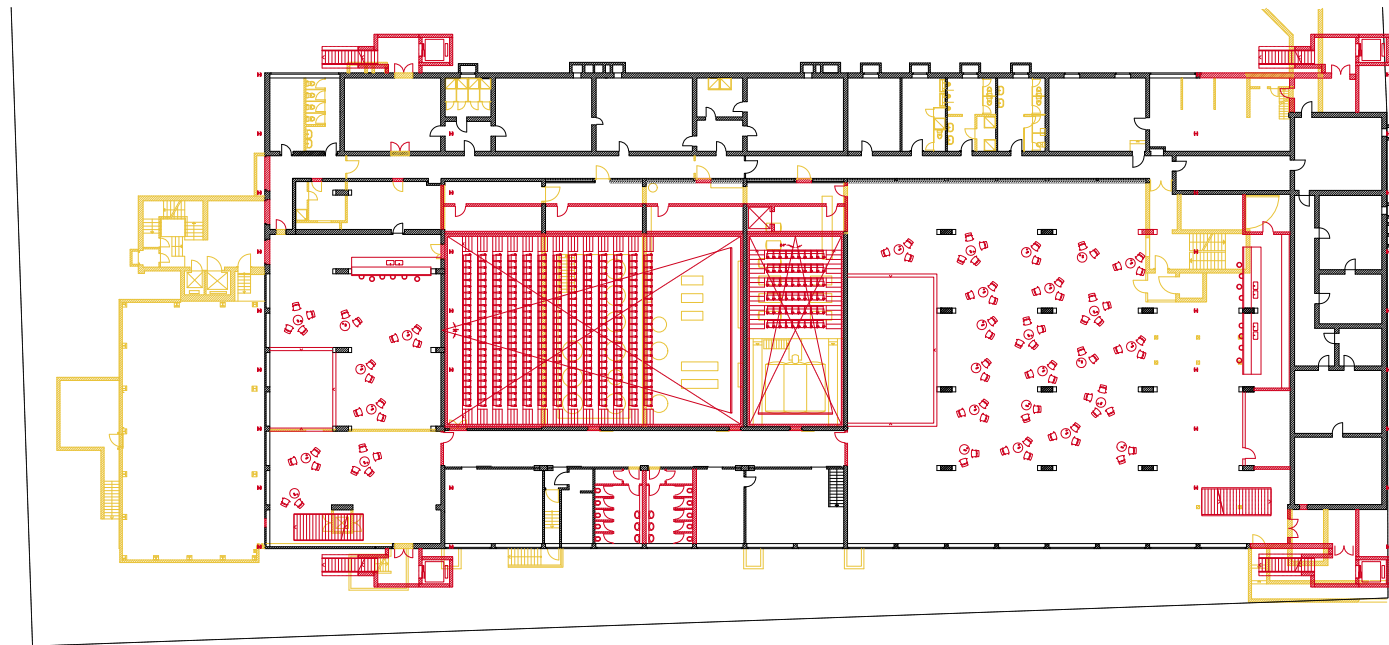
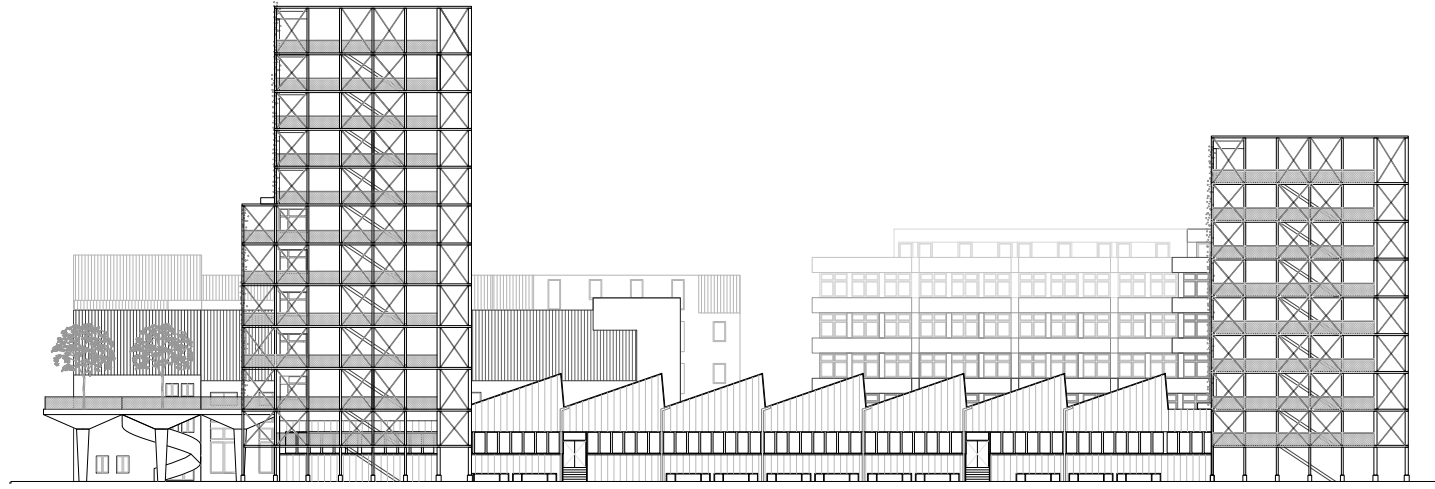


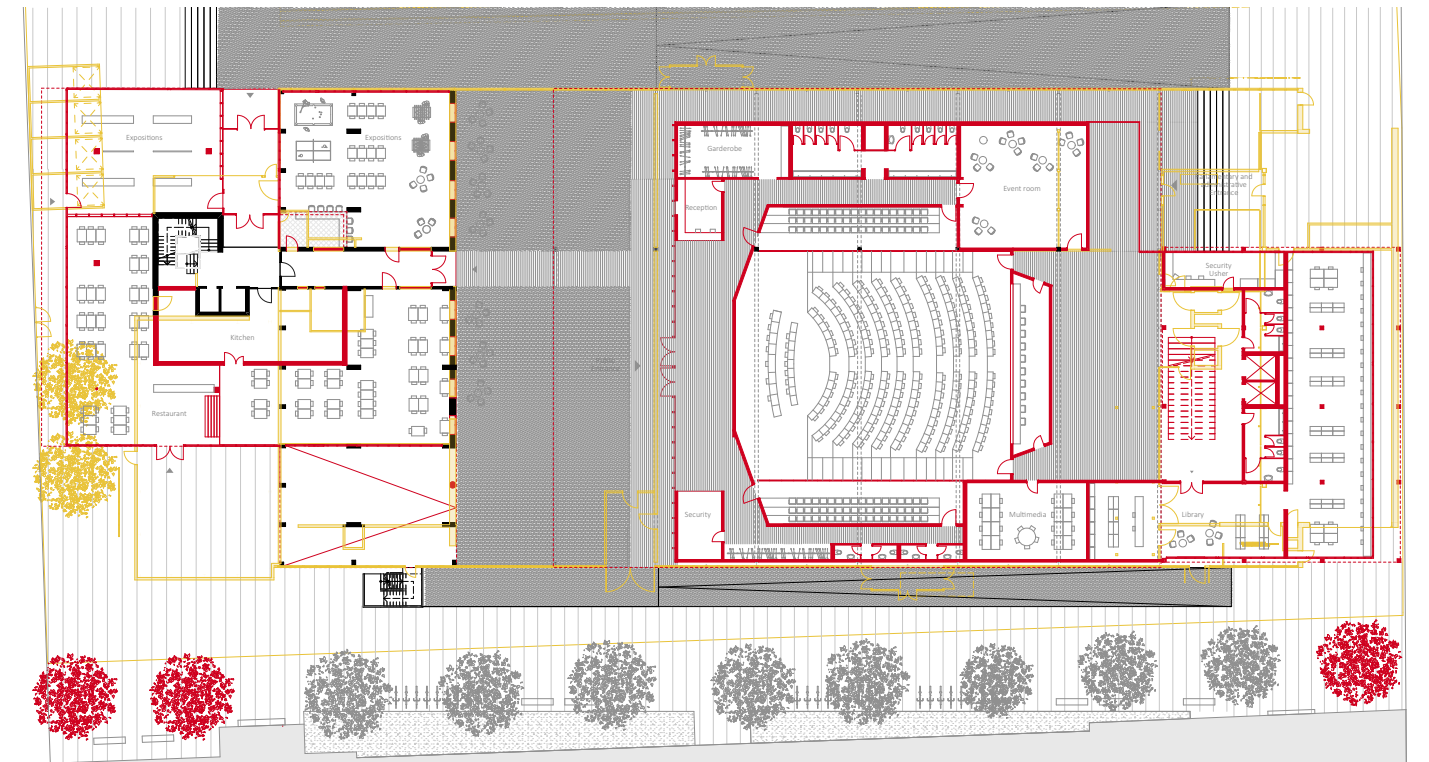
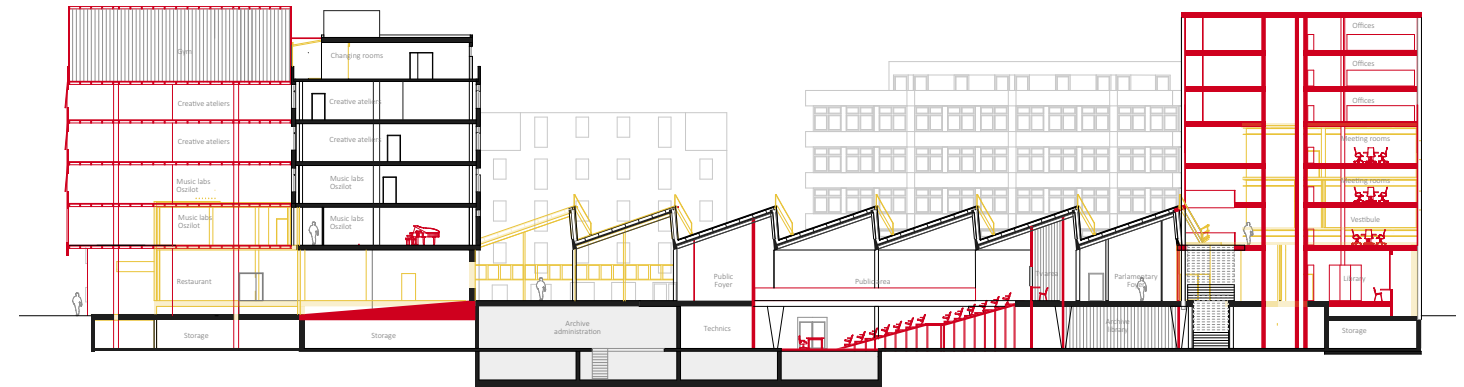


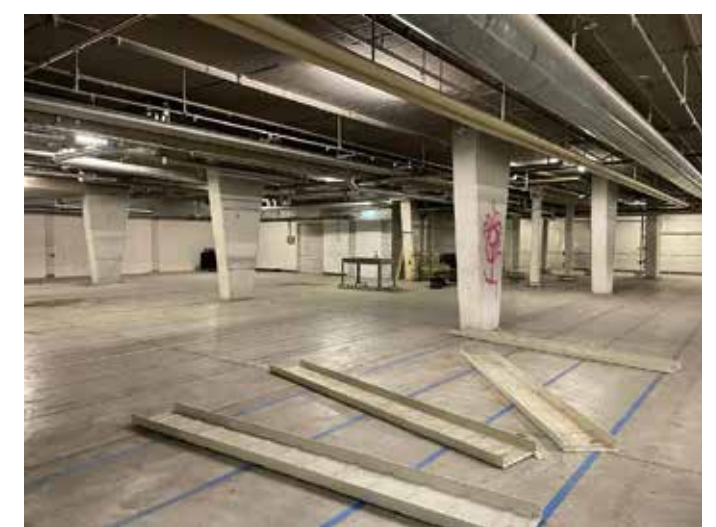
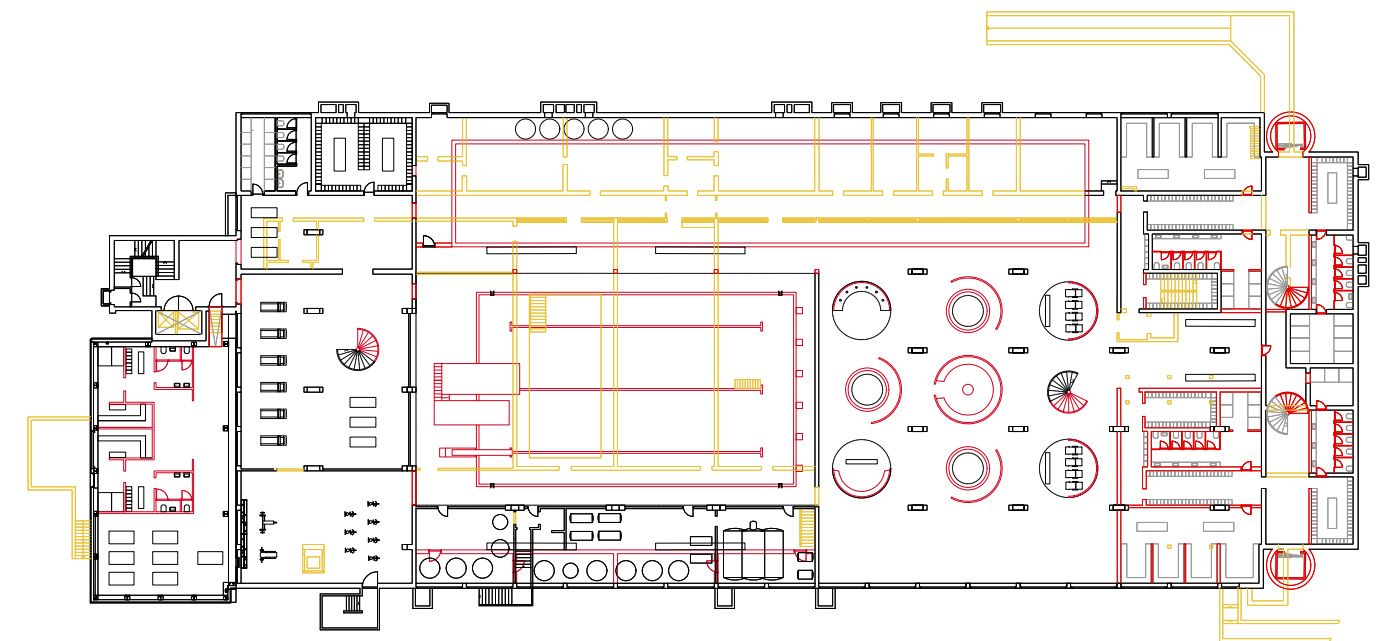
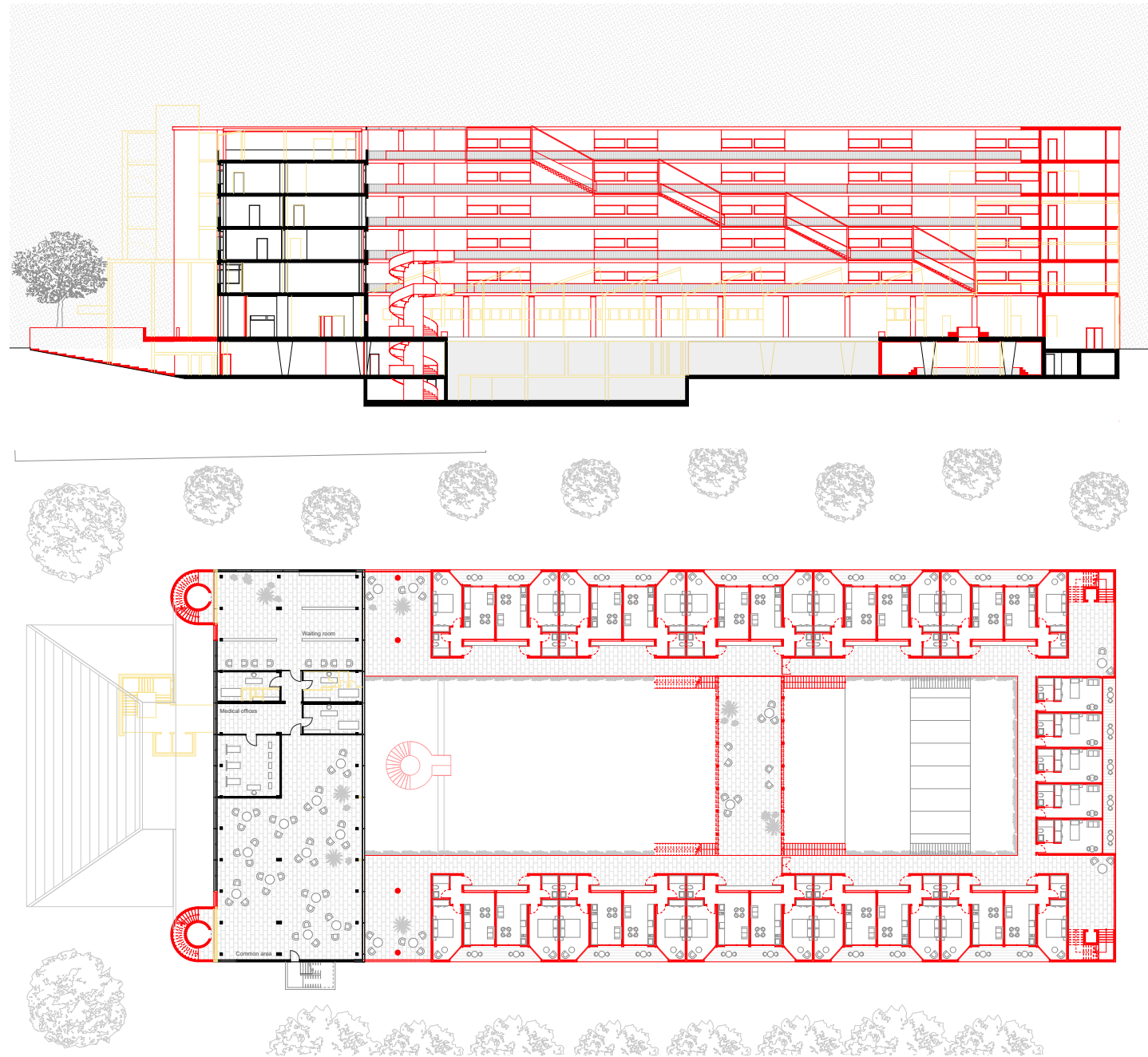


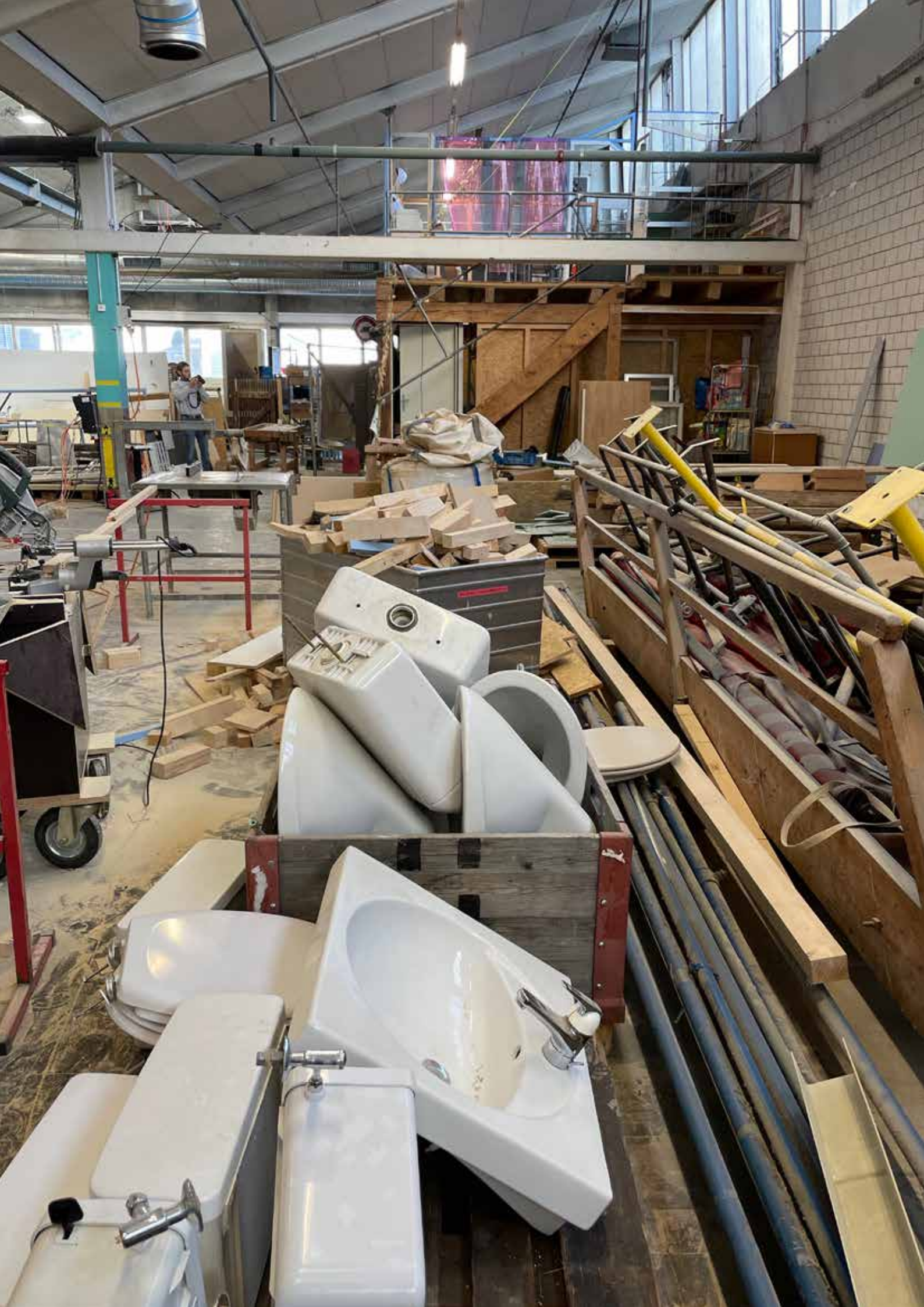












Concepts

„Zürcher Zentralwäscherei is kind of ugly. Luckily, for us to appreciate an occasion where the thresholds between the existing and the new blurs does not require much more than so. It does not have to show clear signs of patina, as long as it has character. It does not even have to be beautiful, as long as it entails humor. It may even be insignificant, but it has to have some strange detail, it can even be ugly, but it needs to act in an interesting way. Perhaps it has ceased to exist but is a ruin instead, a ruin with charisma. With the new contradictory programs of noise and voice now being introduced, the building is once again being tested, in order to conflict and expose its true inherent qualities.“

Chiara Cavagna & Stellan Gulde

„Standing together, collected by the perimeter of the plot and a public ground floor, the residency for elderly and the hall for swimmers. At first glance incompatible, but put in relation, unforeseen opportunities arise. Sharing ground, sharing structure, sharing light, sharing life, meeting points between the programs become not only points of friction, but opportunities for unforeseen qualities. A similar relationship occurs between the existing and the added structure. Standing side by side, spatial opportunities are born in both their meeting points and points of separation.“

Joel Brynielsson & Egil Kahlbom

„With the aim of bringing together an institutional and public program, the building is stripped to use its spatial and sensory qualities. The materials are reinterpreted. In the existing building, colour appears in every space. The colour of the raw materials or the one decorating the surfaces. The use of colour in the project characterizes the different parts of the program as a visual reference. The raw structure is left exposed through the joints. The addition of a new layer changes the perception of the space. The structure of the facade is wrapped by a new cladding. The shed is decorated and the institutional image contrasts with the interior world created.“

Manon Arduino & Julien Orozco

„The apparent incompatibility of the programs of public swimming pool and home for the elderly is suggested through a stratigraphic overlap of temporal and functional character. If the public swimming pool occupies the lower levels of the existing building, the home for the elderly rests on it with a new intervention, in a quiet coexistence with it. This overlap reveals a stimulating friction between spaces that can be traced back to the archetypes of Chiosiro (home for the elderly) and Industria (swimming pool), where like in a cloister in which only under the arcades community life proceeds, the spaces of the home for the elderly overlook the inaccessible surface of the sheds. The two realities are thus independently allowed to inhabit and revive an impersonal industrial building.“

Chiara Maisto & Giulia Romagnoli

Paper

Papyrus, Rainbow rosa, 80 g/m² and 230 g/m²

Papyrus, RecyStar extra-white, 100 g/m²

Font

«GT Super», Grilli Type

Print

Druckerei Krebs AG, Basel

