POETICS OF CONSTRUCTION

4 Acts
of
Adaptation
for
a
School
in
Anderlecht

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MASTER THESIS 24-25

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(Adaptive Reuse)

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AIMI HAYASHI   *presents*

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at

The Thesis for
Master of Interior Architecture (Adaptive Reuse)
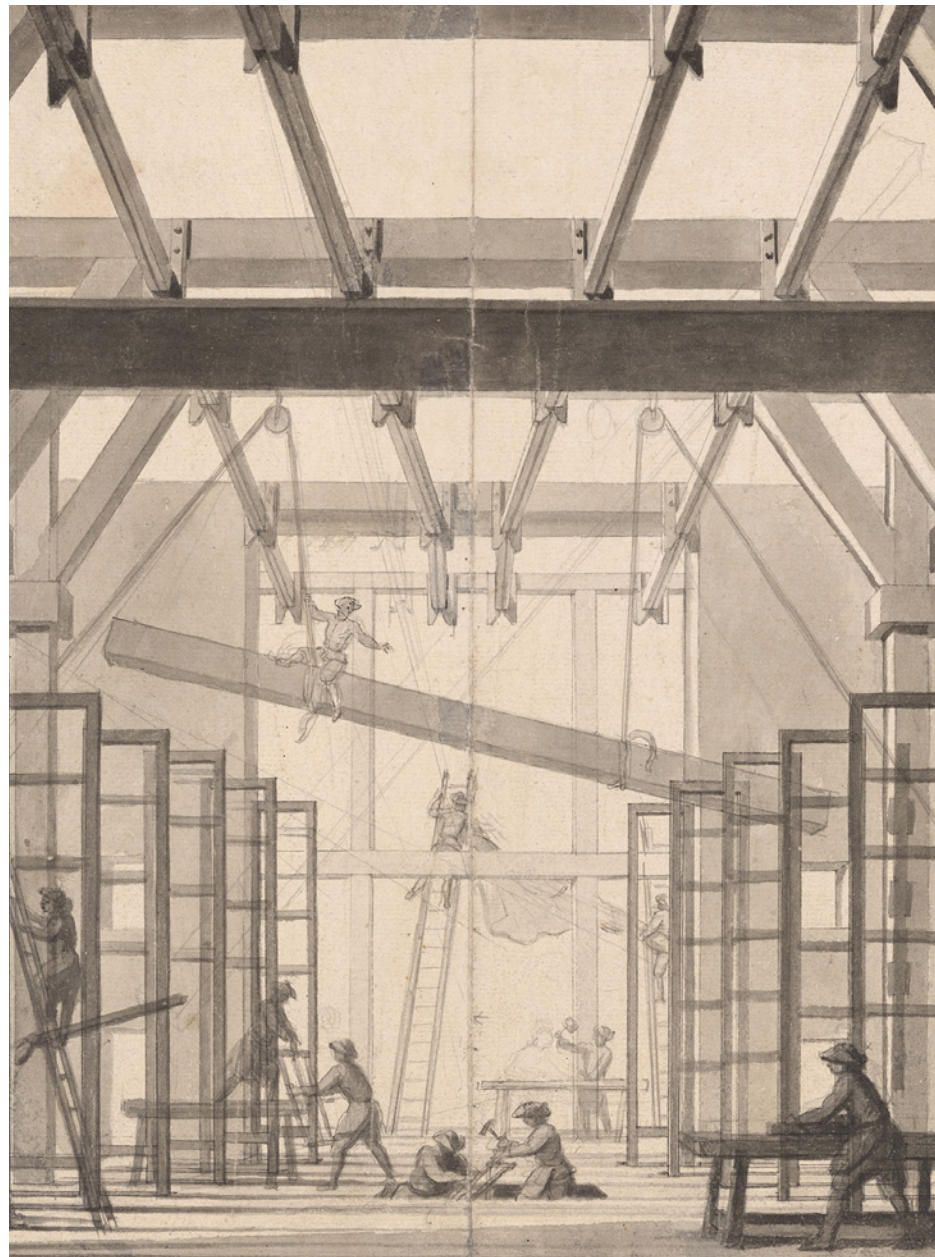
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Figure 1. Jean-Auguste Patour: *Perspective View of the Mechanical Works and Construction of a Theater (1736)*

This thesis explores adaptive reuse as an ongoing process, with continuous and evolving acts, interpreting multiple theatrical phenomena within architectural practice to challenge the conventional before-and-after architecture model.

To investigate how this concept can be operated in practice, the design proposal reimagines an art school in Anderlecht, Brussels. The school consists of a cluster of buildings from different eras, which has continued to metabolize through informal adaptations and repairs over the past century. Rather than implementing a large-scale intervention all at once, the proposal adopts a phased approach aimed at guiding the school toward a more resilient and improved condition for its future use while preserving the spatial and historical complexity that defines its unique character.

The research part of the thesis supports this methodology by examining the benefits of this process-based adaptation from different perspectives, integrating architectural case studies and theoretical discourse.

By integrating theatrical concepts not only as metaphor but also as methodological inspiration, this thesis draws a mediation point where spatial poetics and architectural tectonics meet. In the end, the objective is not just to celebrate the construction process itself, but to seek a way to foster a deeper connection between people and the site, where architecture is not just built, but continuously grows with its users.

Figure 2. Stage Photo of DekaLog (2024)

In the summer of 2024, I watched a theatrical performance "Dekalog" at the New National Theater Tokyo.

Originally created by Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Kieślowski, this drama consists of ten episodes depicting the lives of residents in an apartment block in 1980s Warsaw.[1]

For this stage adaptation, architect Shizuka Hariu designed a dynamic set that transformed between each episode. The scaffolding-like scenography allowed the audience to witness the stage crew reshaping the space during the entr'acte (intervals between acts).

Observing the props being brought in and the set layout shifting, this open process invited the audience to speculate about the upcoming characters and unfolding narratives. The act of witnessing or seeing a space actively transform enhanced our sense of anticipation.

Introduction

Viewing adaptive reuse as an ongoing process rather than a fixed before-and-after condition has become a central focus in recent architectural discourse. Belgian architect Jan De Vylder argues that architecture today should stand momentarily as an "entr'acte" of the theater, to help us understand that we are just in an in-between phase of the time, one that may fade away in the future.[2] In this way, design moves beyond the binary of "to build" or "not to build" and architecture becomes a humble and dialogical act of passing built environments into the future.
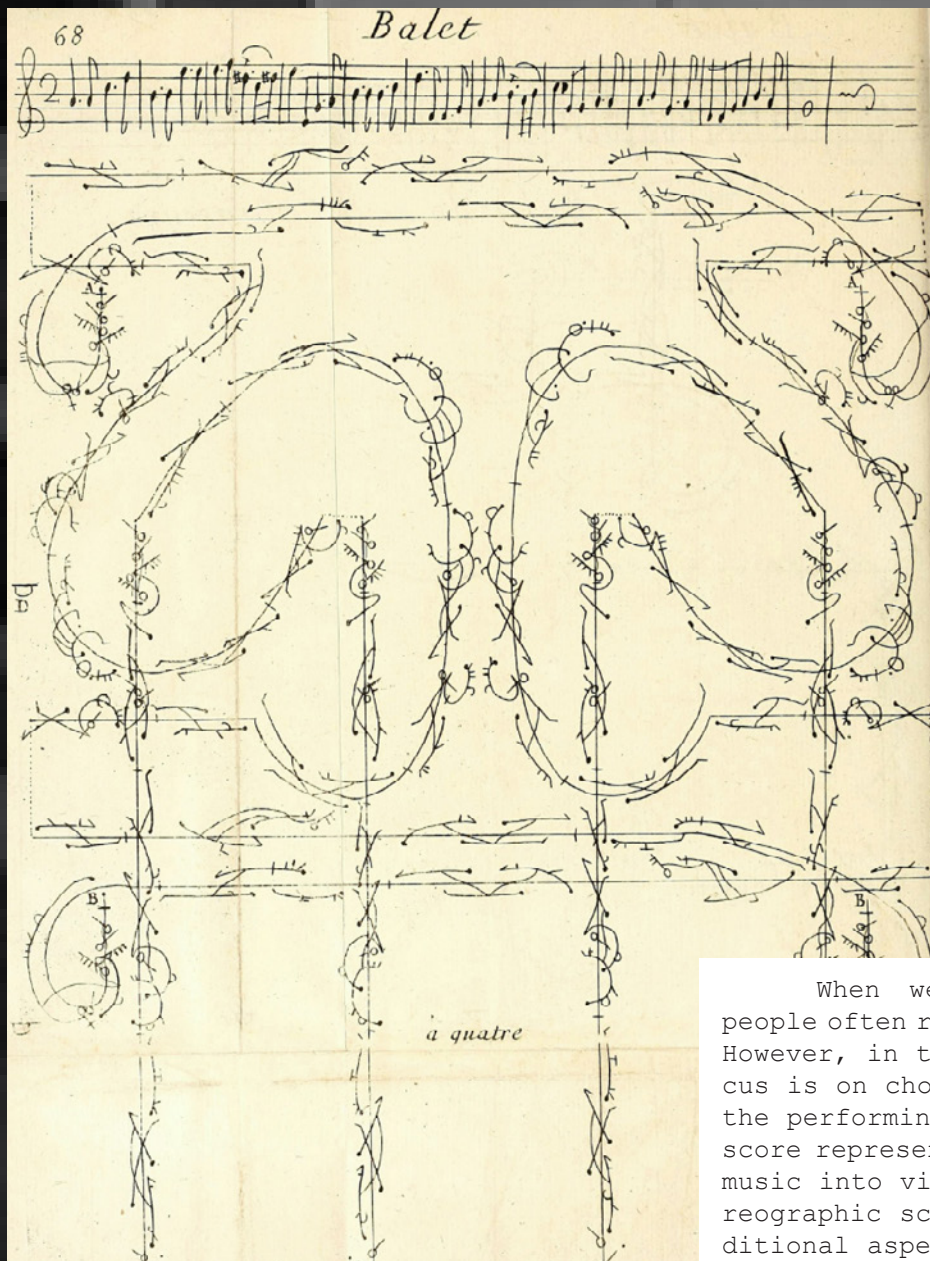
This raises an essential question: how should the "entr'acte" in architecture be designed? Moreover, the question arises as to whether the process of adaptation can possess architectural strength to challenge the conventional "before-and-after" model of the projects.

My thesis explores theatrical phenomena such as the "entr'acte" as metaphors for architectural practice, framing architectural adaptation as a continuous transformation shaped by the act of construction. The project envisions an intervention at the GO!school voor beeldende kunsten Anderlecht, a part-time art school in Brussels for students of all ages. The school consists of a complex of buildings constructed across various historical periods, forming a layered assemblage that has metabolized over time through informal adaptations and repairs. Rather than pursuing a comprehensive restoration, by adopting a process-based approach, it allows the school to evolve gradually while preserving its unique spatial and historical complexity, ensuring a more improved future use.

Furthermore, the structure of this research itself, which traverses both architectural and theatrical disciplines, embodies a form of pragmatic poetry where urban settings can be read as a stage full of unexpected situations and people as actors within it. The metaphor here is not merely a reference, but rather a tool that can be used to evoke an alternative imagination in architectural projects.

Regarding the structure of the thesis: due to its multidisciplinary nature — traversing architectural discourse, theoretical references, and insights from theatre and performing arts — the main discussion is presented in the main body of the text. Indented smaller text is used to introduce supporting material that broadens the scope of the discourse. The core argument can be followed by reading only the main body, allowing for multiple ways of reading depending on the reader's interest or focus.

01 Hariu, Shizuka. 2024. DEKALOG. July. Accessed March 15, 2025. https://www.shsh.be/en/home/0/173/DEKALOG.
02 De Vylder, Jan, interview by Sofie De Caigny. 2024. Audiorecording boekpresentatie en panelgesprek Gevonden architectuur (January 25).

Figure 3. Raoul-Auger Feuillet: Recueil de dances (1700)

When we discuss "scores", people often recall musical scores. However, in this context, the focus is on choreographic scores in the performing arts. If a musical score represents the conversion of music into visual symbols, a choreographic score incorporates additional aspects. It outlines the dancers' movements and how they interact with space and rhythm. Thus the temporal elements are layered, structuring the choreographic score.

A choreographic score can also be seen as a set of instructions that guide the creation of a performance, generating movement through the body.[3] At the same time, it offers one possible entry point into the origin of the creative process, serving as a way to document the work and allow it to be passed on—to future dancers, artists, and spectators alike.

The dual nature of the choreographic score, the temporal layered structure and its role as a communication tool is central to understanding its essence.

Unfolding the Palimpsest

The development of the site began with Jules Vandenpeereboom (1843-1917), a Belgian politician and statesman, who acquired the property in the late 19th century. Located directly in front of Collegiate Church of St. Peter and St. Guido (French: Collégiale Saints-Pierre-et-Guidon), a priest's house dating back to the 16th century was originally located on the site. Recognizing the potential of the location, Vandenpeereboom chose to demolish the historical structure and, in 1890, commissioned the construction of a new residential building for himself.[4] This marked the first significant transformation of the site, embedding a layer of bourgeois residential architecture into its historical fabric.

Following Vandenpeereboom's death in 1917, the house transitioned from private to public use according to his will. It was repurposed to house the Army Archives Commission, reflecting a shift in the building's role within the urban and institutional landscape of Anderlecht. In the decades that followed, the property was transferred to the ownership of the Flemish Ministry of Culture. After a period of restoration, the ministry officially established a Fine Arts School on the premises in 1971.[5] This moment marked the formal founding of what is now known as the GO! School voor Beeldende Kunsten Anderlecht.

The next important expansion occurred in 1991 when the neighboring ASAR printing works declared bankruptcy.[6] The school took possession of the outbuildings, which represented a substantial addition to their site and remains an integral part of the school's current spatial configuration. These series of transformations, spanning from private residence, institutional archive to current educational facility, illustrate the layered and adaptive history of the site, a narrative that continues to evolve.

I interpret this evolution as a score of the site. This is because to understand the historical transitions and current conditions of the site is more than an analytical exercise to invent a new concept intended to completely overwrite the existing fabric. Rather, it is a way to engage with the layered time in the site as a living text.

03   Franco, Susanne, and Gaia Clotilde Chernetich. n.d. Dancing Museums Glossary. Edited by Ariadne Mikou. Accessed March 15, 2025. https://www.dancingmuseums.com/artefacts/score/.
04   Commune d'Anderlecht. n.d. Ancienne propriété Vandenpeereboom. Accessed April 1, 2025. https://www.anderlecht.be/qr/1015-vandenpeereboom.
05   Ibid.
06   Reflex City, Tout Bruxelles dans un site. n.d. Ancienne maison Vandenpeereboom. Accessed April 1, 2025. https://www.reflexcity.net/bruxelles/communes/anderlecht/place-de-la-vaillance/maison-vandenpeereboom.

While as mentioned earlier the term "score" is commonly associated with a musical notation as a translation of the music into visual symbols, in this research, I refer to a choreographic score that conveys the intentions of the body movements to be enacted within a space and the rhythm and relational setting. From the early notational systems of Raoul-Auger Feuillet in the 17th century to the contemporary choreographic practices of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, choreographic scores have served as a means of recording the pathways dancers trace across the floor, offering insight into the spatial composition of a performance. The temporal transition is understood as a constructed and layered phenomenon, and it is this similarity which I identified with reading the palimpsest of the site and thus the reason I refer to it as a score of the site.

In Hannah Arendt's The Life of the Mind, Arendt argues that time should not be understood merely as a sequence of cause and effect. Rather, she cites the thought of Nietzsche and argues that time construct crumbles under the weight of the no less factual insight that "Everything passes"—that the future brings only what will have been, and thus everything, I would say including architecture, "deserves to pass away." [7] In this context, architectural proposals must also acknowledge their impermanence, adding yet another layer to the score that will inevitably be transformed and never remain in a fixed state.

The choreographic score is inherently complex due to its multi-layered composition. This complexity partly explains why choreographic scores are relatively rare compared to musical scores, because dancers can learn repertoire more efficiently through embodied practice, passed directly from choreographer to dancer rather than from documentation. However, according to the performance theorist Bojana Cvejic, this method causes the inheritance of choreography to be accessible primarily to communities with highly technical, specialized training. It echoes the traditions from classical ballet's masterclass format, where dancers imitate and repeat movements based on a fixed, often idealized model as demonstrated by the choreographer or an authorized dancer.[8]

In recent years, however, there has been growing interest in developing new ways to archive, and transmit contemporary dance, thanks to digital technologies. While a detailed history of choreographic notation is beyond the scope of this thesis, I would like to highlight the work of Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, particularly her project A Choreographer's Score[9], developed in collaboration with Bojana Cvejić whom I mentioned earlier. This project combines newly written texts, video recordings, interviews, illustra-
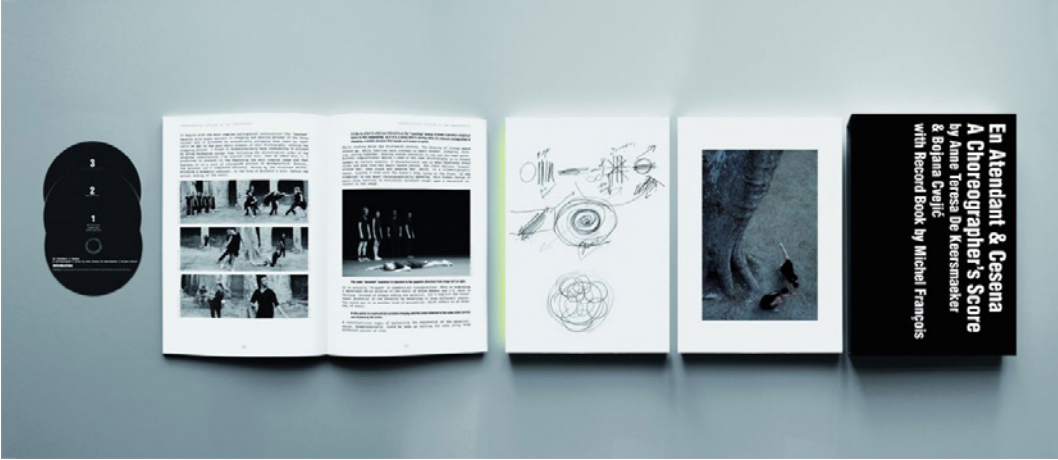
4

5

07 Arendt, Hannah. 1981. The Life of the Mind. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 428.
08 Cvejic, Bojana. 2016. "A Choreographer's Score: Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker." In Transmission in Motion, by Bojana Cvejic, edited by Maaike Bleeker, 52-53. London: Routledge.
09 De Keersmaeker, Anne Teresa , and Bojana Cvejic. 2012. A Choreographer's Score: Fase, Rosas danst Rosas, Elena's Aria, Bartók. Ghent: New Goff.

tions, archival footage, personal notes, and performance-related documents such as reviews and program notes which Cvejić describes as "archaeological findings"[10]. Together, they create a multi-layered score that transmits choreographic thought and intention, not merely for dancers to intimate the aesthetic attributes of a style, but for dancers and non-dancers to understand the underlying conceptual structure of the work.

In this way, a score for a choreographer functions much like a drawing does for an architect: both serve to translate spatial intention into communicable form. One illustrative example from De Keersmaeker's early career supports this idea. In the early 1980s, while living in New York and developing her early works, she had limited access to studio space, as it was too expensive for her at the time. With only one hour of rehearsal per day with her partner, she turned to her notebooks, developing much of the choreography at her kitchen table. This is how she began to use the score in her work as a tool for imagining space in the absence of a physical rehearsal environment.[11]

Like designers work on drawings to study and examine the spatial concept before construction, De Keersmaeker's scores serve as a medium to convey her intention in the choreography which is more than just to visually deliver the physical movement. In both cases, the score can be considered not only as a tool for documentation but also as a common language, a medium for creative communication.

Historical Score of the Site

Inspired by the concept of a score, I created a series of diagram illustrating the evolution of the site. It combines aerial photos with the graphic showing the building footprint from 1945 to the present. The diagram reveals that the academy on the site has not changed rapidly or all at once, but rather gradually, through small and partial transformations over time, which shows a layered history of continuous adaptation. However, beyond the changes to the academy itself, the process also reveals the urban characteristics of the Anderlecht neighborhood as well: the gradual decline of green and public spaces, the coexistence of residential and factory uses, and an industrial environment shaped by a car-oriented culture and a legacy of production.

10 Protopapa, Efrosini . 2015. "A Choreographer's Score: Fase, Rosas Danst Rosas, Elena's Aria, Bartók." Dance Research Journal 80-81.

11 Protopapa, Efrosini . 2015. "A Choreographer's Score: Fase, Rosas Danst Rosas, Elena's Aria, Bartók." Dance Research Journal 80-81. Hesters, Delphine. 2025. Exhibition Booklet of "Body of Work - Unfolding Fase". Leuven: STUK 1-2.

House of Belgian politician Jules Vandenpeereboom Former priest's house

Collegiate Church of St. Peter and St. Guido

1944

The ratio of open areas is larger than the building footprint.

Jules Vandenpeereboom (1843–1917), a Belgian politician and statesman, acquired the property in the late 19th century. It was formerly a priest's house. At present, the site is not densely built but characterized by greenery and gardens, with a single row of houses.

It is likely the loading area of the factory

The large garden of the former house still remains to this day

Printing company ASAR built its factory and office
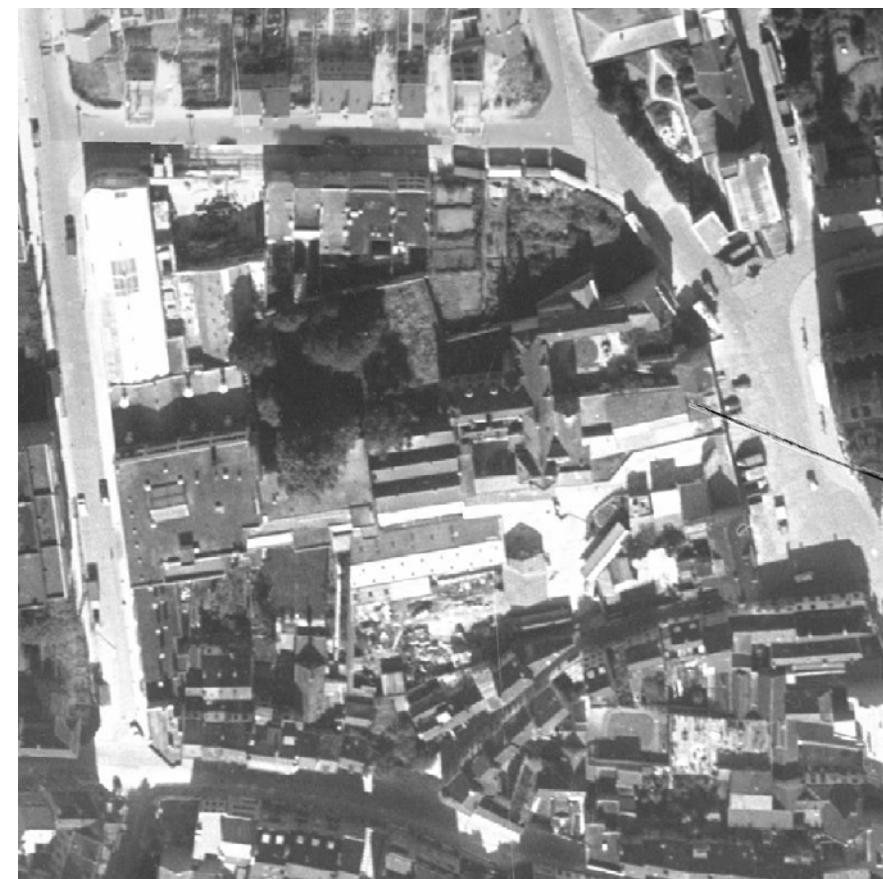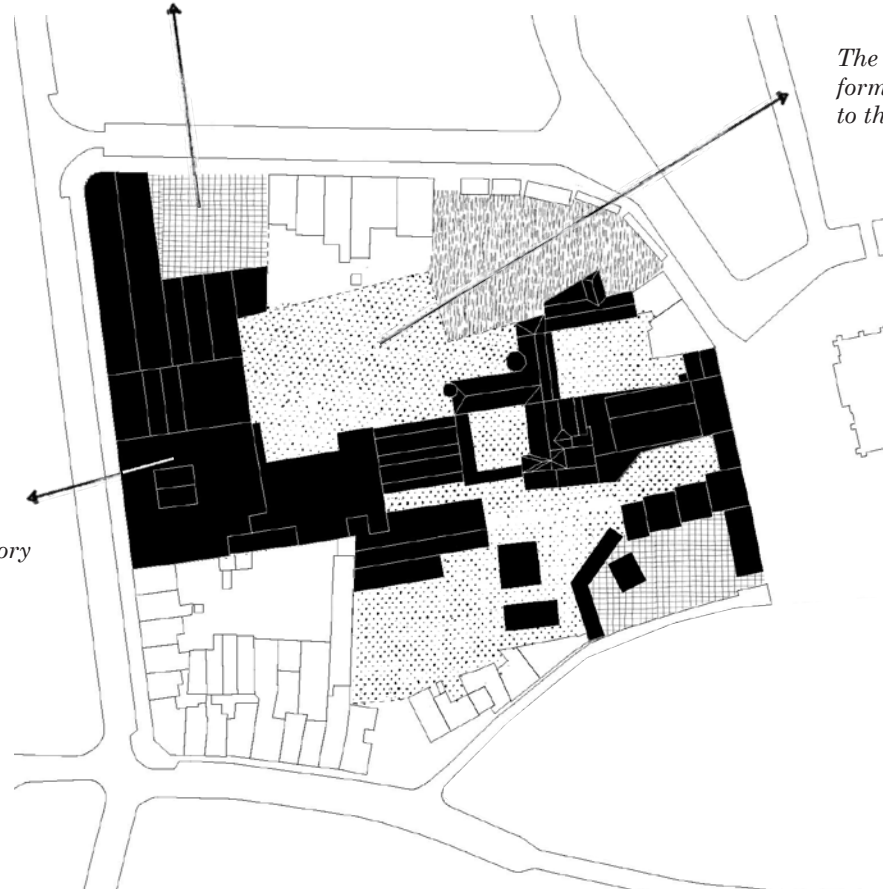
The Army Archives Commission uses the former house.

The house of Vandenpeereboom was repurposed to accommodate the Army Archives Commission, reflecting a shift in the building's function within the urban context. A publishing building was later constructed, and residential houses gradually occupied the rest of the plot.

The loading area of the factory converted into an interior space

The industrial building was built on the former garden of the house
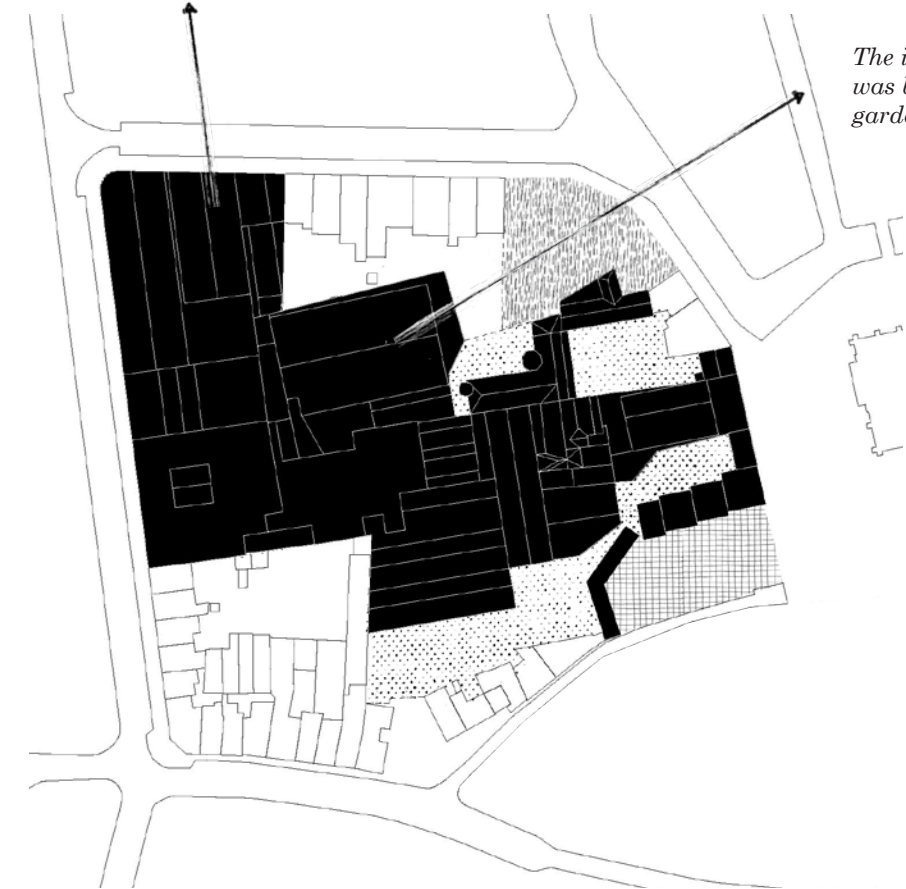
The ownership of the building transferred to the Flemish Ministry of Culture

The printing company expanded its building within the plot, and the area is now largely occupied by its structures. Even the plaza in front of the church is no longer green, and the open-air space appears to function as part of the industrial complex rather than serving any public use
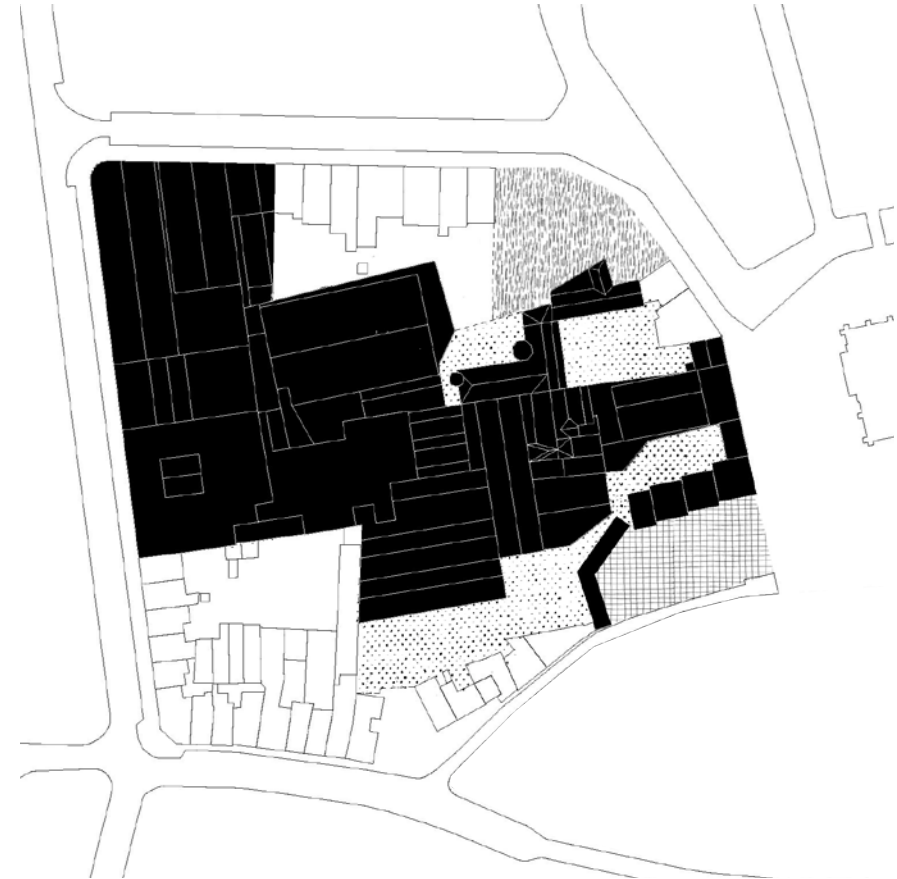
1971
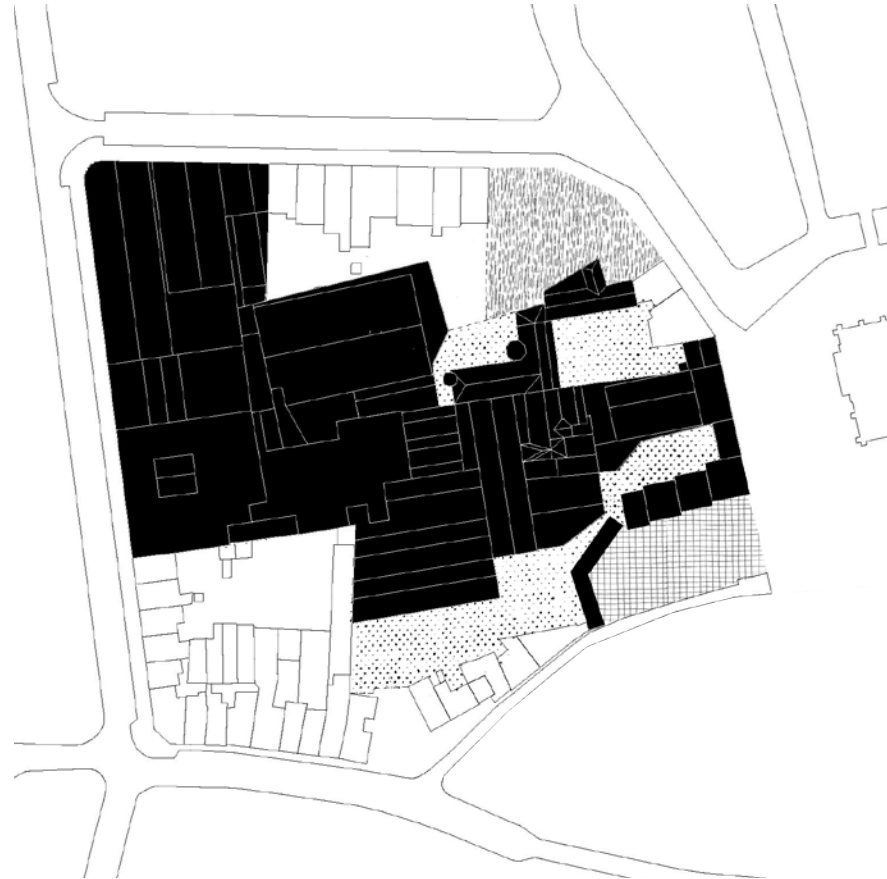
Industrial elements such as pipes or conveyor shafts can be seen on the roof
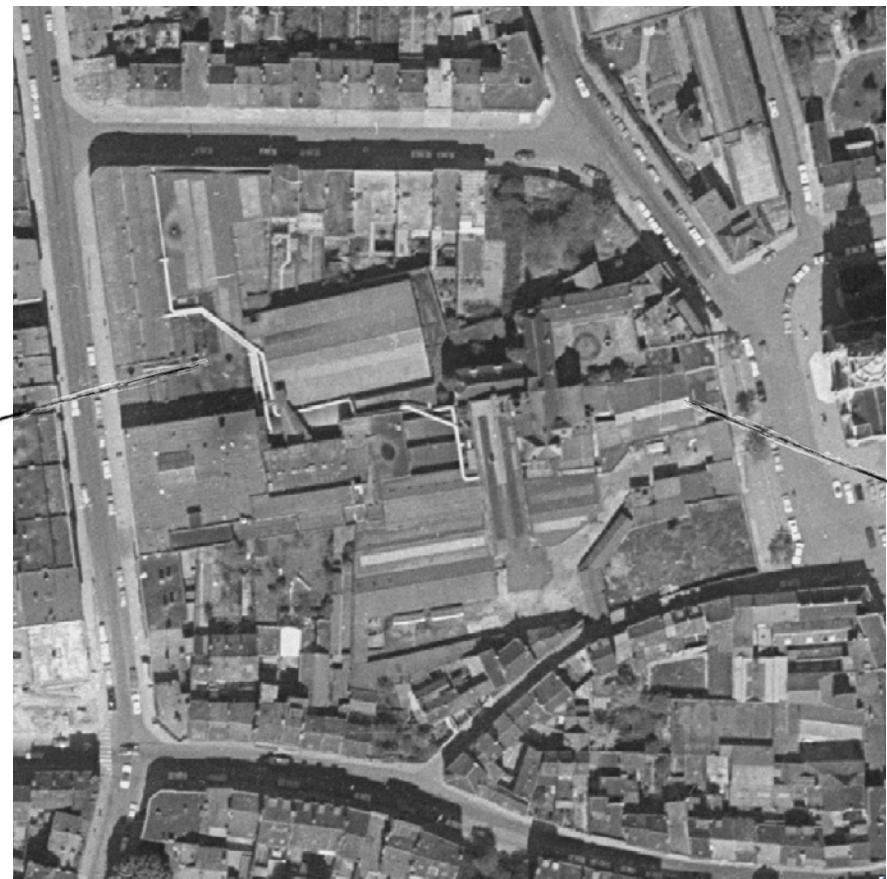
Art academy has established

In 1971, the ministry officially established a fine arts school and this moment marked the formal founding of what is now known as the art academy of this plot nowadays, GO! School voor Beeldende Kunsten Anderlecht.
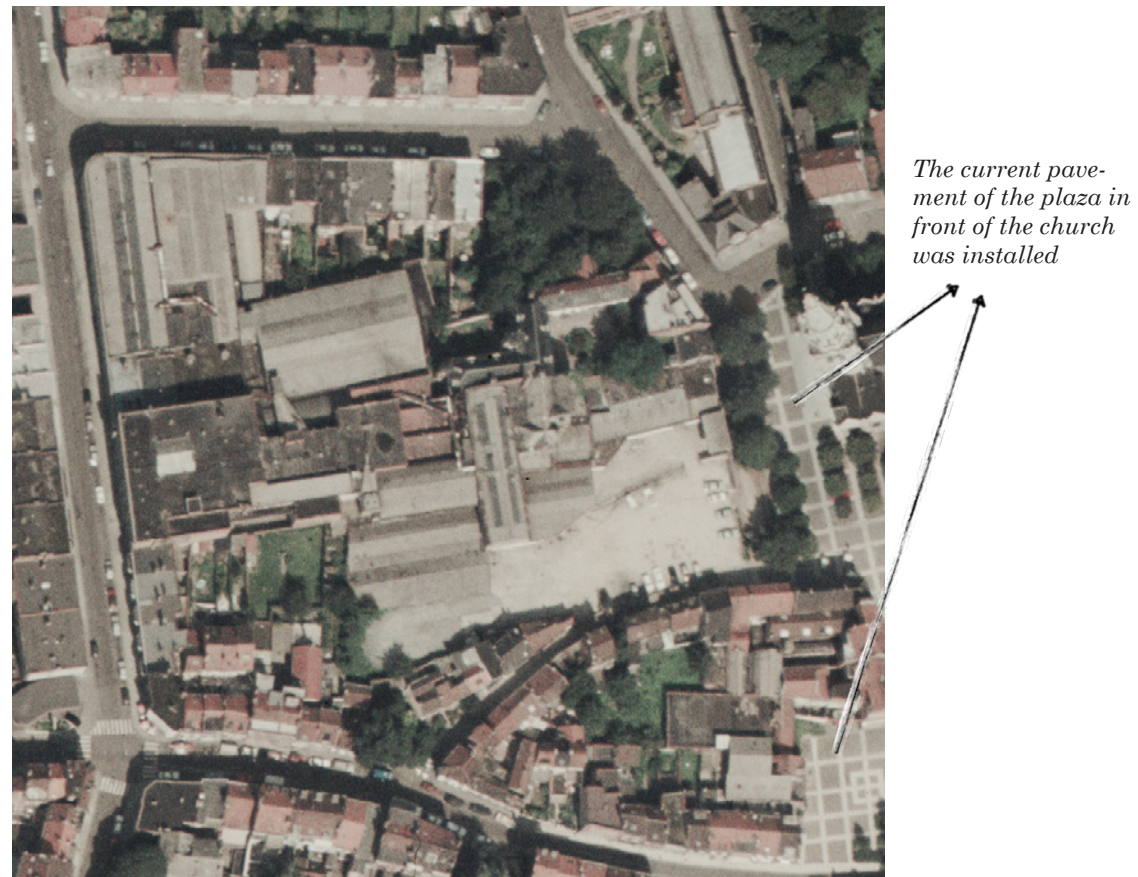
1977

Many cars are on the street, reflecting the city's industrial character and car-oriented culture.

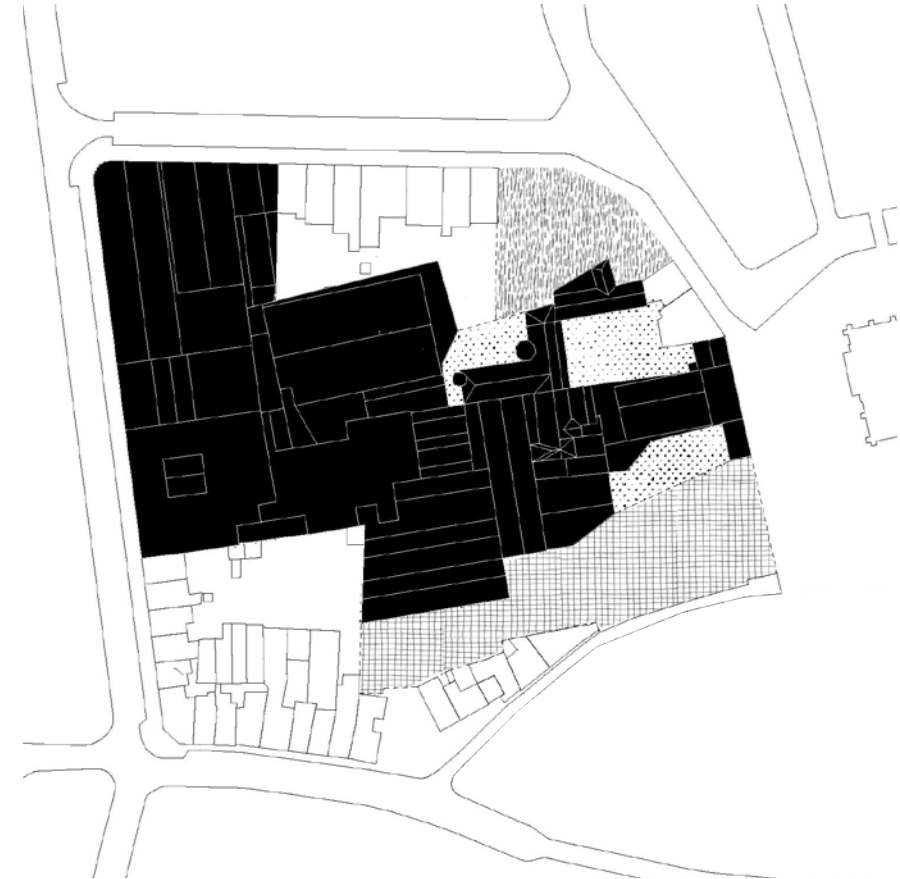*No significant changes occurred in terms of building configuration, but cars began to occupy the streets.*

Several buildings were cleared, space start using as a parking area

The current pavement of the plaza in front of the church was installed

It appears that some public development took place around the public space: the plaza in front of the church was paved, and a parking area was created.

The industrial building of the former printing company was integrated into the school, shaping the character of its current spatial identity.
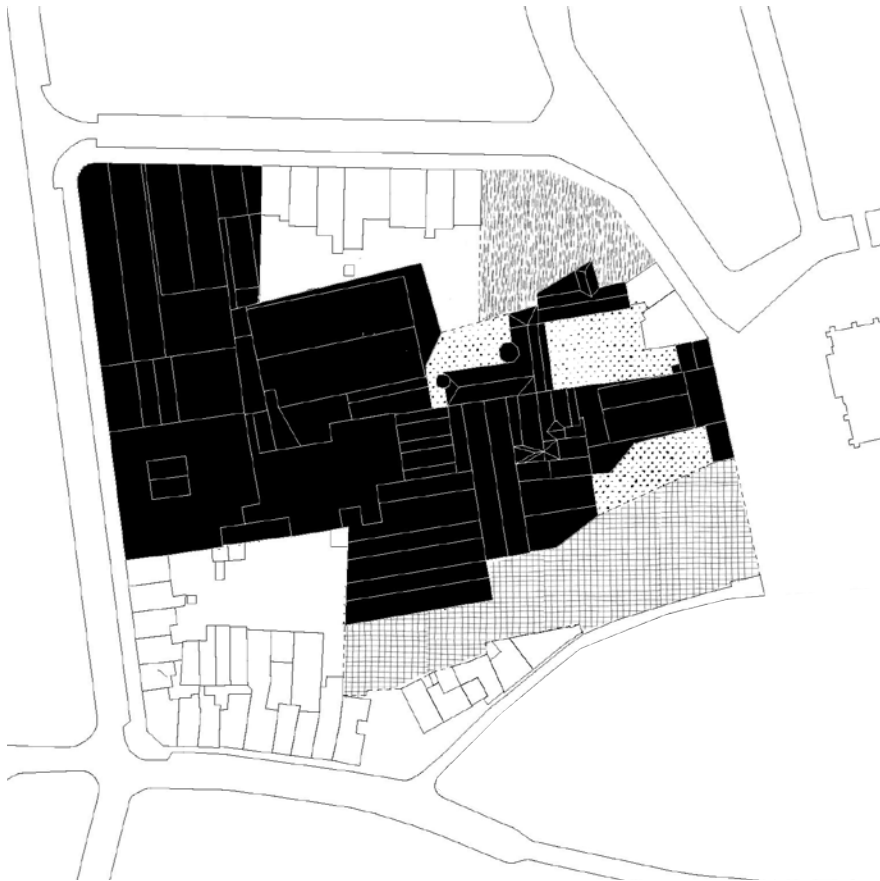
A significant change occurred in 1991 when the neighboring ASAR printing works declared bankruptcy. The school acquired the outbuildings, which constituted a substantial addition to the site and remain an integral part of the school's current spatial configuration.

The urban landscape, much as it appears today, had already taken form, characterized by heavy car presence and actively used parking areas

Several buildings at the center of the plot were demolished

*The courtyard that is now occasionally used for events, but it remains mostly empty*

The school underwent a process of transformation: several industrial buildings at the center of the plot were demolished, space bacame academy's courtyard. Many of the remaining industrial structures are in a state of decay, and the school is preparing a competition for their renewal.
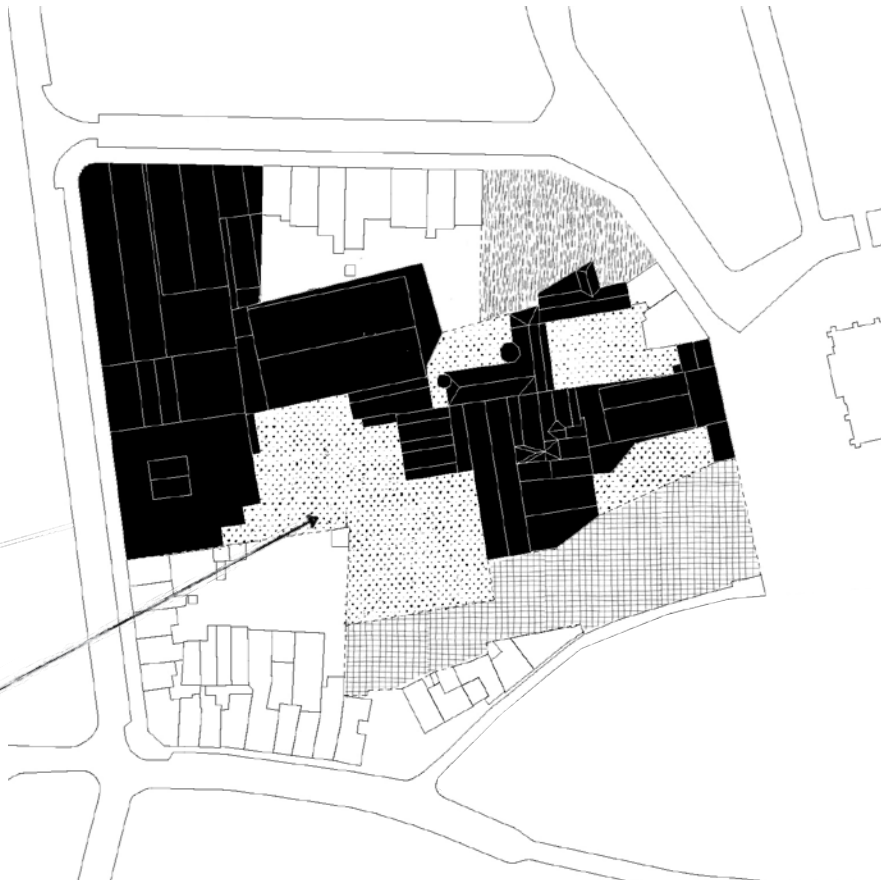
Sidenotes: Found Traces (or, Pepper's ghost)

Pepper's Ghost is a theatrical illusion technique named after John Henry Pepper (1821-1900) who popularized the effect at the end of the 19th century.[12] By positioning a live object or person off-stage and reflecting it onto the stage, it creates the impression that something not physically present is appearing before the audience.
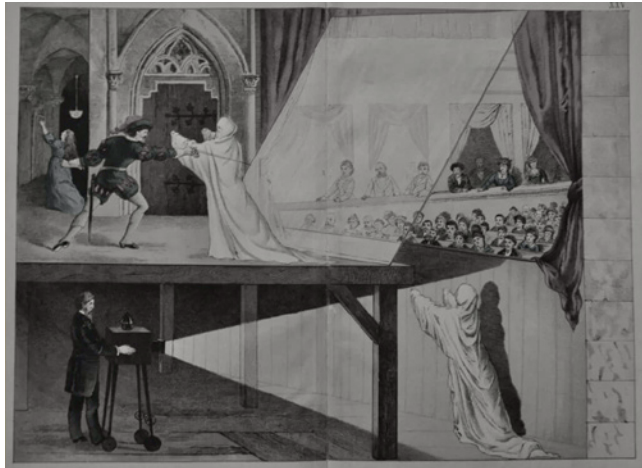

Figure 6. The Pepper's Ghost Illusion (1882).
Image from Mary Evans Picture Library.

Because of its character of layered history with multiple functional diversions and spatial adaptations, as discussed in the previous chapter, many traces from the past remain on the site. I call them ghosts which silently appear in front of us and speak of their existence without voice.

This idea of elements from history returning to the present aligns with the concept of hauntology. The term was first introduced by French philosopher Jacques Derrida in his 1993 book Spectres of Marx.[13] Hauntology refers to a range of ideas indicating the persistence of elements from the social or cultural past like ghosts. In the words of Colin Davis, it is "that which is neither present, nor absent; neither dead, nor alive."[14]

So how do I deal with these ghosts on my site? Perhaps they are just subtle traces which most people may overlook or even never notice. However, once you recognize them, you cannot help but wonder where they came from and what happened in the past. In my design proposal, I do not attempt to manipulate or enhance these ghosts. Instead, I let them remain quietly, embedded in the margins as tricks or gimmicks with a little sense of humor to surprise people. They continue living in the shadows, waiting to hack the present, waiting for someone to notice their existence.

Figure 7.
A lonely door suspended in midair

Figure 8.
The path once traced by heavy printing trolleys

Figure 9.
The faded name of the printing company

Figure 10.
The shadowed silhouette of the past buildings

12   n.d. Art terms - Pepper's Ghost. Accessed April 3rd, 2025. https://www.moma.org/collection/terms/peppers-ghost.
13   Derrida, Jacques. 1994. Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International. New York: Routledge.
14   Davis, Colin. 2005. "Hauntology, spectres and phantoms." French Studies 59 (3): 373-379.

The practice for performance arts or theater doesn't follow a linear path.

For example, a contemporary dancer might take what's called a "contemporary dance" class, but also explore classical ballet, jazz, improvisation, yoga, anatomy courses or other approaches. Anything that expands the capacity of the body can become part of the process. Moreover, beyond the physical training, what matters is the quality of the movement, how it feels and how the mind responds to it.

Dancers are often encouraged not to simply reproduce a form, but to adapt it, to express it in their own way. As French choreographer Boris Charmatz has said, "if every gesture is connected to the way in which one perceives the world, symbolic activity and a critical mind consequently fall within this type of training called 'technique.'"[15] In that sense, if there is such a thing as technique for performance, it's built up like scaffolding structure, by overlapping practices.

Scaffolding the Concepts

This chapter explores the advantages of process-based architectural adaptation to support my design project from three points of view, focusing on its potential for economic flexibility, continuation of building usage, and participation of the community. These three aspects are examined by a combination of theoretical concepts and case studies from Belgian contemporary architectural practices.

From an economic perspective, project phasing allows flexibility in the planning of the project. It can be paused, adjusted, or reconfigured when the conditions change, which corresponds with the idea of "correctability" proposed by Japanese critic Hiroki Azuma. The idea suggests that social systems should be understood as fluid and open to continual revision.[16] As a case study, I review the project CHAPEX by AgwA and A JDVIV. Here the architects approached the project by embedding a margin for correction throughout its development from the competition phase through to realization and even into its potential future transformation.

The concept of phased construction also offers practical benefits in terms of building usage. The project for case study is the Karreveld project by AgwA, which involved transforming a former office building into a school. The project was divided into two phases, with essential parts completed in the first phase and the remaining elements finalized in the second phase. This approach ensured the school could operate without delay, and the architect established a unique on-site reuse design approach to envision it as well. The idea of "building while in use" allows for the gradual change of functions and spaces, without interrupting the life ongoing in the site.

Lastly, I explore the effect of the process-based approach on the community. By dividing construction into phases and human-scale interventions, it creates opportunities for neighbors to witness, observe and even participate in the construction of the building. A series of architectural practices by Decoratelier and Ouest architecture address this concept from different perspectives, demonstrating how their project frameworks can facilitate building the relationship between a site and neighborhood, transforming local residents into "urban actors"[17].

By analyzing these three concepts with aligned case studies, the following sections will show how the architects envision them in their projects including the design methodologies and attitudes that I will incorporate into my process-based design proposal.

15 Charmatz, Boris, and Isabelle Launay. 2011. Undertraining – On A Contemporary Dance. Dijon: Les Presses Du Reel 62.
16 Azuma, Hiroki. 2023. Philosophy of Correctability, Translated by Aimi Hayashi. Tokyo: Genron. 67.
17 Damsin, Stephane, and Jan Haerens. 2023. "TEATRO, LO TUYO ES PURO." Practices in Research (#04): 131.

3.1 Philosophy of Correctability

Today, the trajectory of architectural projects has become increasingly difficult to predict. Global conditions are changing at a dizzying pace, impacting on the cost of construction and overall project timelines. At the same time, technological developments offer digital design tools (such as BIM or parametric modeling tools) that seem to reduce uncertainty by enabling architects to make "correct" decisions in real-time. These tools aim to minimize mistakes and streamline processes. However, one must ask, is this the right way to respond to the ambiguity in architecture? Should we strive to clarify everything in order to avoid making the "wrong" choices, or can ambiguity itself be embraced as part of the architectural process?

Japanese critic Hiroki Azuma addresses the question in a broader societal context where mistakes are increasingly less tolerated. He explores the concept of "Correctability", arguing that communities and societal rules should not be seen as fixed entities, but rather as dynamic constructs shaped by the continuous processes of revision.[18]

Azuma uses the metaphor of a children's game at a playground to illustrate his point. In contrast to the idea that rules come first and players follow, communities come first, and rules emerge as the game progresses. Yet, he critiques even this view as too static. In reality, he argues, rules change, communities shift, and the game itself transforms.[19] The logic of correctability proposes that it is through the successes, failures, and repeated acts of correction by those involved that both the rules and the community take shape.

This idea interestingly aligns with the architectural project Chapex, a refurbishment of the Palais des Expositions in Charleroi, undertaken by the collaborative team architecten jan de vylder inge vinck and AgwA (referred to as AjdvivgwA). I examine this project through the writing of Marie Pirard who was part of the project team where she revisits how the process of the project was shaped its relationship with "externalities"[20] , not only in economic terms, but also in how architectural decisions were negotiated through a constantly evolving set of constraints.[21]

According to the project review by Eleanor Beaumont, the building, which includes a vast postwar exhibition hall with over 66,000 square meters of floor space, was originally constructed in the 1970s to showcase European heavy industry. As that industry declined, the building became largely unused.
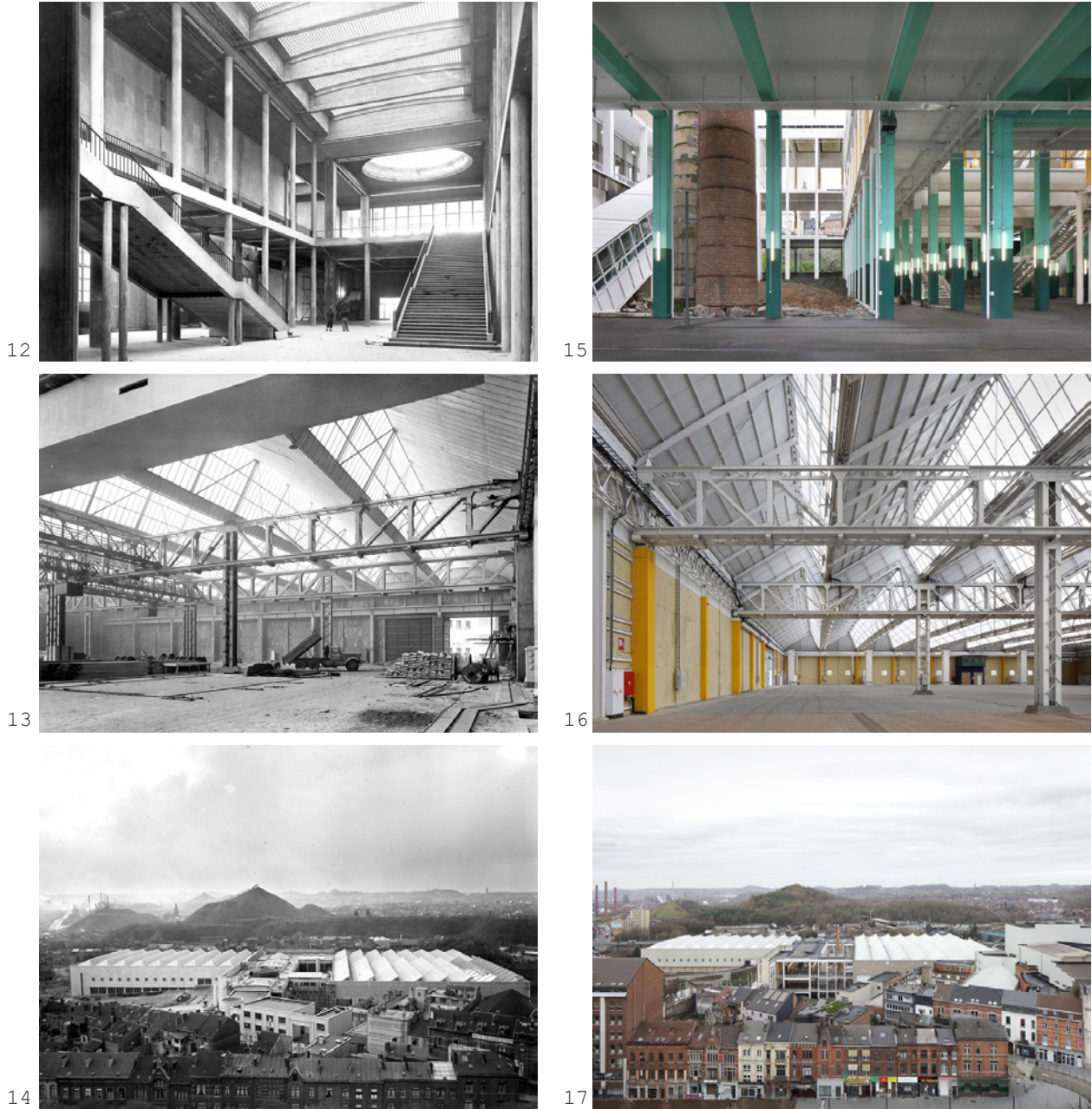

Figure 12-14. the Palais des Expositions built in the 1950s. Collection Archives Ville de Charleroi
Figure 15-17. Project Photo in 2024 Credit: Filip Dujardin

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18   Azuma. Philosophy of Correctability. 67
19   Ibid.
20   Pirard, Marie. 2021. "Living with externalities - The refurbishment of Charleroi's Palais des Expositions in a post-growth context." Practices in Research 2: 28.
21   Ibid. 46.

The design competition in 2015 required a zero-energy reno-
vation of the central lobby and the addition of underground
parking. However, the available budget—roughly 450 euros/m²,
compared to a standard of 1350 euros/m², made these ambitions
unrealistic.[22]

The design team responded to the requirement in their own
way, which I call the first act of "correction" that happened.
Instead of implementing a full renovation, they proposed to
open the central space into a terraced park connecting the
city. Rather than build new underground parking, they repur-
posed existing interior spaces which is capable of supporting
heavy loads as they had previously hosted car exhibitions. The
budget savings was were redirected toward practical needs,
like asbestos removal.[23]

Through the construction process, they encountered sev-
eral externalities. However, according to Pirard, the archi-
tects "accepted and appreciated to be in the fray, dealing with
the network of multidisciplinary actors surrounding the proj-
ect."[24] The externalities were introduced into the design pro-
cess rather than being treated as problems to solve or twisted
at mediation point. For instance, the unexpected discovery of
embankments hidden behind the peripheral walls was transformed
into a landscape feature. Or the new façade design, which re-
sembles a building-sized collage made of plaster, was driven
by energy performance regulations. As Pirard notes, a lot of
further decisions in the internal design process were out-
sourced. They were not defined by the decision of an architect,
or by the necessity to fit with a "winning concept"[25]. Instead,
choices were guided by the discoveries on site, the literal
application of a regulation, and budget restrictions. The out-
come was shaped by a dialogue between intention and accident,
echoing the logic of correctability.

The idea of the creation by reacting the externality has re-
semblance to a typle of dance practice, Contact Improvisation, a
postmodern dance practice developed by Steve Paxton in the 1970s
and still taught in many dance institutions today.[26] What makes
Contact Improvisation unique is that it cannot be performed by a
single dancer; it requires a duo or group. Dancers explore movement
through shared weight, touch, and a heightened physical awareness
of each other. The performance evolves through improvisation, con-
tinuously changing in response to each dancer's actions. Much like
the design process in Chapex, the dance does not follow a fixed
script but emerges through real-time negotiations and mutual re-
sponsiveness. Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker highlights a compelling
aspect of improvisation, the balance one must maintain between

Figure 18. Steve Paxton and Nancy Stark Smith, in a Contact
Improvisation performance(1980).Photograph by Stephen Pete-
gorsky

22   Beaumont, Eleanor. 2024. Breaking convention: Chapex in Charleroi, Belgium, by AgwA and Architecten Jan
     de Vylder Inge Vinck. February 19. Accessed April 12, 2025. https://www.architectural-review.com/build-
     ings/breaking-convention-chapex-in-charleroi-belgium-by-agwa-and-ajdviv.
23   2024. A JDVIV, AgwA architects CHAPEX. July 10. Accessed March 18, 2025. https://divisare.com/proj-
     ects/507008-a-jdviv-agwa-architects-filip-dujardin-chapex.
24   Pirard. "Living with externalities". 45.
25   Ibid. 39.
26   n.d. About Contact Improvisation (CI). Accessed April 12, 2025. https://contactquarterly.com/contact-im-
     provisation/about/.

creativity and receptiveness, between speaking and listening. Some movements are chosen deliberately, while others simply "happen" to the dancer. At times, they are dancing; at other times, they are "being danced."[27] In both architecture and dance, authorship becomes a shared process. The boundary between choreography and improvisation, or between concept and output, gets blurred. Creation is no longer an independend act, but a dynamic exchange shaped by interaction, awareness, and the unknown.

In contrast to the deterministic approach which I questioned at the beginning of this chapter, the project presents a framework that resonates much more strongly with the realities of architectural practice today, which contains various factors that cause indeterminacy and uncertainty. It shows how architecture can remain responsive to the unpredictable, where design is not locked into predetermined outcomes but remains open to adjustment, delay, or even reinvention in the middle of the process.

Moreover, the future of the project remains very open-ended. It will be determined outside the hands of the architects. The architects left many blank, rough material finishes and undecided programmatic spaces, with minimal intervention—allowing future users, maintenance teams, and stakeholders to continue adapting the building over time. The terraced park, for instance, can be imagined in various ways: as a foyer space for conventions, a public event area such as a market, or even a children's playground. If environmental changes accelerate and car-dependency continues to decline, the parking spaces may one day be transformed back into exhibition halls once again or repurposed for entirely new uses. For now, however, the architects have allowed it to remain as a visible reminder of the past century's industrial capitalism. As Eleanor Beaumont notes in her review, "The paradox that this building had to both be low energy and accommodate 700 cars is made bizarrely visible."[28] As De Vylder asserts, architecture "is a way to question how we can keep things open and free for our next generation."[29] This ambiguity is not a flaw, but rather a deliberate gesture. The project resists the urge to close. It enables its future to be negotiated and shaped by those who will inhabit and use it.

In conclusion, "correctability" emerges as a foundational design strategy, one that can even go beyond the conventional idea of "flexibility". It not only allows physical spaces to remain changeable, but also enables the design process itself to be modifiable, embracing unforeseen circumstances and human error, with the capacity to adjust the scenario over time, embracing ambiguity as a productive condition.

Figure 19. Fieldwork sketches and photographs at Chapex. Photographed by the author.

27 De Keersmaeker, Anne Teresa, and Salva Sanchis, interview by Wannes Gyselinck. 2017. An Improvisation with Gravity (February 26). Accessed April 12, 2025. https://www.rosas.be/en/news/740-an-improvisation-with-gravity.
28 Beaumont. "Breaking convention: Chapex in Charleroi, Belgium"
29 De Vylder, interview by Sofie De Caigny.

3.2 Building while in use

A theatrical production Triptych by the Belgian theatre company Peeping Tom connects the acts of the performance through fully exposed entr'actes. At the end of each act, an actor remains alone on stage while technicians enter to construct the next set. Other actors join and move as if choreographed: they clean the floor, remove walls, add new carpeting and furniture, transforming the space in front of the audience's eyes.[30] Rather than serving as static interludes, they are fully integrated into the performance, emphasizing a continuous evolution of the stage where something is always in progress. As the company's name implies, the audience becomes a witness of the production process, often hidden but this time laid bare on stage.

The process-based construction holds similar theatrical dimensions which means the project becomes not only about drawing the vision outcome, but also about carefully shaping of the process and how it is revealed to users. In a practical manner, process-based construction can blur the boundaries between demolishing, building, and inhabiting. Due to its gradual nature, there is no clear division between the "before" and "after" states of a project. Construction can occur while parts of the building are being demolished, while it remains in use, or while it is reconfigured to adapt to new functions in the background. This approach not only situates the project within a fluid and temporal framework but also proves to be practical in terms of efficient space use of space. In the contect of adaptive reuse, it is often argued that a project should not be approached as tabula rasa but rather as palimpsest where the traces from the past must be adressed.[31] However, from a broader perspective, it is not only the spatial traces that matter, but also the presence of the occupants, those who have occupied the space and those who will continue to live or use it in the future. Architects must take these factors into consideration as well by not only building for space itself but also constructing narratives for the continuous lives.

Brussels based architectural office AgwA challenged this aspect in the project Karreveld. It was a project to convert an office building from the 1970s to a new secondary school. According to the project review by Mathias Bouet, the building used to be the administrative offices of Takada, a large pharmaceutical company from Japan. After they left, the buildings were acquired by two neighboring municipalities in 2016, Molenbeek-Saint-Jean and Berchem-Sainte-Agathe, since both needed to respond to the severe lack of space for secondary schools in the region.[32] Their plan was to refurbish the building into

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30 2021. Triptych (Live Stream). Performed by Peeping Tom. International Theatre Amsterdam. April 3rd. https://ita.nl/en/shows/triptych/1521490/

31 Machado, Rudolph. 1976. "Old buildings as Palimpsests: Towards a Theory of Remodeling." Progressive Archtecture 11: 46-49.

32 Bouet, Mathias . 2019. "From the temporary to the permanent." Architecture in Belgium 276: 49.

a school and because of its urgent need, the project was divided into two phases. The first phase was to set up the minimum equipment required to welcome the school on site such as installing a series of classrooms in one of the existing buildings. Then a second phase provides for the addition of a new volume which consists of a new sports hall and cafeteria.[33]

When AgwA participated in the first phase, there were two main concerns. The first was a serious lack of time. AgwA submitted their proposal in January 2017, and it was approved a month later. By September of the same year, the classrooms had to be in use[34] — less than seven months from proposal to occupation. The other was the big uncertainty about the future as they were not sure if they would be able to participate in the second phase at that time. Their answer was to keep the project within the site and keep it manageable. To do so, they reused as much as possible of the elements already in place such as modular partition walls, woodwork, ceilings, lighting, and heating. Other new additions which were necessary to make the building fit to house a school, such as a second emergency staircase and an outdoor playground, were also built in assembled timber. This meant the elements can be dismantled and moved in future if it is necessary.[35] This method made it possible to complete the project within a short timeframe while allowing for future adjustments and enabling simpler site management.

What is remarkable in this case is that for the architect's team, the idea of reuse is not only an ethical act from either an environmental or economical perspective, but also a pragmatic approach to construction, as highlighted by the project architect Benoît Vandenbulcke's quote , "the interesting thing is that reuse favors work rather than the circulation of materials"[36]. He continues that it offers a means to confront an uncertain situation, although reuse does not always necessarily simplify the construction process as it requires specialized skills beyond those needed for working with newly purchased materials.[37] In other words, architects consider the on-site reuse just as a design strategy rather than a goal to achieve. Harold Fallon, another architect from Agwa gives a warning about the growing trend of reuse from this perspective. He picked the fact the quantification of the material reuse is used as a project evaluation method and said "At Karreveld, we quantified after the fact. During the process, we simply observed what was there and thought about what to do with it."[38] And he continues "It is great that we can quantify the reuse rate. But if that's all there is to it, and people do it out of a sense of duty, it's doomed to failure."[39]

Figure 21. Partitions reinforced by plywood panels. Photographed by Pierre Gréaume
Figure 22. Classroom finished in the first phase. Image from the official website of AgwA. Photographer and date unknown.
Figure 23. The new wooden fire escape staircase. Image from the official website of AgwA. Photographer and date unknown.

33 AgwA. n.d. 1811_KARREVELD 2. Accessed April 25, 2025. https://www.agwa.be/en/projects/1811_KARREVELD/212/.
34 Bouet. "From the temporary to the permanent."
35 Burquel, Benoit, Harold Fallon, and Benoît Vandenbulcke. 2023. "KARREVELD SCHOOL, FROM TEMPORARY OCCUPATION AND REUSE STRATEGIES TO PERMANENCE AND A LAYERED IDENTITY?" "As Found" International colloquium on adaptive reuse BOOK OF ABSTRACTS 22.
36 Vandenbulcke, Benoît, and Harold Fallon, interview by Lorène Morenval. 2024. "DEVELOPING AN ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE FROM WHAT IS ALREADY THERE." The architecture of reuse in Brussels. Bouwmeester Maître Architecte. 77.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid. 78.
39 Ibid.

His resistance to the idea of quantifying reuse somehow echoes the caution towards the recent philosophical and social movement known as Effective Altruism advocated by Peter Singer. According to him, Effective altruists can "live modestly and donate a large part of their income to the most effective charities, or choose the career in which they can earn most, not in order to be able to live affluently but so that they can do more good"[40] , which means their theory is based on calculating benefits and prioritizing actions based on measurable outcomes. While this approach makes ethical acts more objective, according to Japanese professor Asa Ito, a director of Research Center for Future Humanity at Tokyo Institute of Technology, it also risks tying actions to chase numbers without considering the means, ultimately making them unsustainable in the long term.[41]

Lastly, as Harold Fallon mentions reflecting on the project Karreveld, "When you start out, you draw up an overall plan, and then it becomes a series of micro-projects that must be considered as a whole."[42] Their approach was selective intervention within a broader master plan, like connecting dots that together create an entire spatial quality adapted to new uses. For example, the former office corridor, which was too wide for a school, was kept as it was so that it could become more than just a passageway. It now acts as an interior space where students can place tables and "actually use the space."[43] Another example is the sports gym added during the second phase, which was placed in a way that allows it to open separately outside school hours, helping the project connect with the neighborhood.[44]

This highlights one of the key perspectives in concluding this chapter. When the project is conducted in process-based adaptation, even when interventions are divided into different phases, each phase must remain connected to the others, and the new spatial relationships must function as a coherent whole rather than being treated as isolated acts. In this way, process-based adaptation becomes not only a gradual method of construction but also a powerful design strategy for achieving spatial improvement across a large site, even when each intervention is relatively small in scale. The site for my design project shares a similar situation with Karreveld, a school located in a dense urban neighborhood of Anderlecht with ongoing education programs. I aim to apply the lessons by designing the phases to avoid shutting down the school entirely during renovation. At the same time, the series of interventions can layer up to create an improved spatial environment.
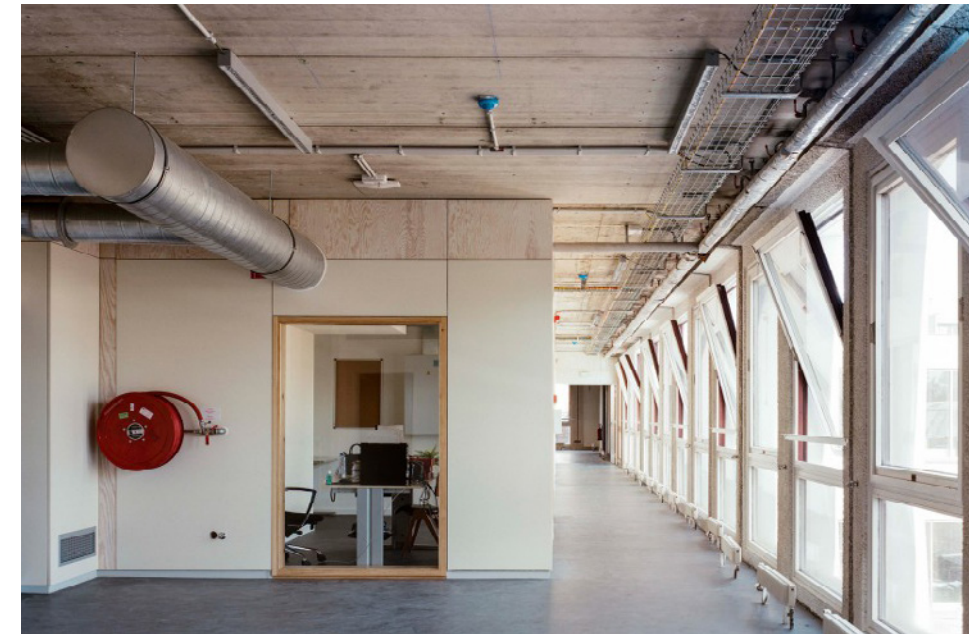

Figure 24. Administration office, and reuse of existing partition walls.
Photographed by Séverin Malaud

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40   Singer, Peter. 2016. The Most Good You Can Do. New Haven: Yale University Press 4.
41   Ito, Asa. 2021. What is "altruism"?, Translated by Aimi Hayashi. Tokyo: Shueisha. 25. Vandenbulcke, Benoît, and Harold Fallon. 78.
42   Ibid.
43   AgwA. 1811_KARREVELD 2.
44   AgwA.

3.3 Inclusive Community

   A community-inclusive approach is widely discussed in architectural discourse, yet it should go beyond physically opening a site to the neighborhood. It is not enough to just provide space. Instead, the conditions that allow community participation to happen must be considered. My assumption is that process-based adaptation aligns well with the idea of involving the community, as each intervention can be kept at a human scale, fostering the possibility of physical interaction between the construction process and the people. In this section, I explore two architectural practices based in Brussels that focus on building relationships with the community. One is Decoratelier, and the other is Ouest architecture.

   Decoratelier, founded by Belgian scenographer Jozef Wouters, shifts the role of the designer from top-down author to a co-creator, engaging the community in imagining and shaping their own environment.[45] His atelier, Decoratelier in Molenbeek, Brussels, embodies this ethos of shared authorship. The place is more than an atelier or workshop, which functions as a platform in dialogue with its neighborhood and artists, with Wouters acting as instigator and curator.[46] Currently the place also houses community restaurant Cassonade with an interior made from a repurposed set from a Flemish TV show. Launched by residents to provide meals for those in need during Ramadan 2021, Cassonade has since evolved into a weekday restaurant supported by the solidarity-based payment system and more than 50 volunteers.[48]

Figure 25. Fieldwork sketches and photographs at Decoratelier. Photographed by the author.

45   Delbecke, Jasper. 2021. "Secret Gardens, Ritualistic Renovations and Modernist Failures: On the out loud building of scenographies by Decoratelier." Performance Research 26 (1-2): 94.
46   Ibid. 93
47   Smits, Enzo. n.d. Commisions Photography. Accessed April 14, 2025. https://enzosmits.com/Assignment
48   n.d. Cassonade. Accessed April 14, 2025. https://www.cassonade.be/.

The frameworks Wouters builds through his projects are visibly understandable and easily shared among participants, regardless of their background, through the DIY approach. An another of his architectural projects is FLOW, a temporary outdoor swimming pool along the Brussels canal. It was developed in collaboration with POOL IS COOL, a Brussels-based non-profit organization that addresses the complex challenges of outdoor swimming in the city and works to create environments where everyone can enjoy outdoor pools for both sport and social activity.[49] The construction of the project was carried out with over 50 local youths, many facing social or educational challenges.[50] The participants could gain hands-on experience through accessible construction methods for "a design that consists of repeated patterns of identical wooden pieces, made from reclaimed and sustainable wood, that are tailor-made to fit re-used metal rack" which can be assembled by simple techniques. This method not only made it possible to build the structure together with participants but also "enables future adjustments, disassembly and reuse, supporting a sustainable vision."[51]

Moreover, the process of building together creates open communication among those involved. As Wouters reflects, "During and after construction, conversations took place about public space, privacy, police brutality and exclusion. Just last year these young people were barred from the Belgian coast; this year they are building a radically inclusive swimming spot in their own city."[52] According to their project survey on 2023, at that time FLOW had grown to include 40 staff members, among them 22 operational staff who were mostly young people and students. The project is not only for sharing the construction process and physical space as a result, but also the responsibility to sustain it. For example, they created a role "chef FLOWers" who autonomously coordinates their teams for the day to oversee welcoming the swimmers, maintaining the cleanliness of the pool, and managing the kiosk operations.[53] Through this model, even after the construction completion, the project continues to offer young people opportunities to reflect on the meaning of community and act for it in reality.

The idea of providing accessible tools which can be both physical and intangible that enable everyone to communicate and participate in the process, aligns with Austrian philosopher Ivan Illich's concept of "tools for conviviality." He argues that tools are essential to social relationships, and to the extent that one masters their tools, they can invest the world with their own meaning. Convivial tools are those that give each person the opportunity to enrich their environment with their imagination. [54] In this sense, such tools allow people to engage with a place in their own way and help them form deeper and more personal connections with the space.

49 n.d. ABOUT POOL IS COOL. Accessed May 6, 2025. https://www.pooliscool.org/.
50 n.d. Open air swimming pool FLOW. Accessed April 14, 2025. https://www.miesarch.com/work/5382.
51 Ibid.
52 2021. POOL IS COOL. July 1. Accessed April 13, 2025. https://www.pooliscool.org/event-content/2021/7/1/flow
53 2023. FLOW 2023 FULL REPORT AND THE RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC SURVEY. December 15. Accessed April 25, 2025. https://www.pooliscool.org/news/2023/12/15/flow-2023-report-and-survey-results.
54 Illich, Ivan. 1973. Tools for Conviviality. New York: Harper & Row 34.

Figure 26. FLOW on construction. (06.06.2021) Photographer unknown.
Figure 27. FLOW completion. Photographer and date unknown.

The scale of participatory projects must remain manageable and controllable and in this aspect, a process-based approach proves especially fitting, as construction is divided into segments, not only in terms of time but also in scale. This segmentation allows the project to accommodate human-scale level of involvement with participants. It also enables room for feedback and reflection between phases, and enables the dialogue between designers and users to happen. By breaking down the process, it can increase the opportunity for the neighbors and occupants to contribute in both the physical and social construction of the project.

While Decoratelier adopts a common tool as a foundation for involving the community, Ouest architecture reveals another approach to achieving it. Ouest architecture is an office that challenges urban density and advocates for the impact of a series of small-scale interventions resulting from modest commissions.[55] The architects state that they are guided by "the fascination of exploring the hidden and the ambiguous. Nuances and comprehensive complexity as ways of approaching the unexpected, the intriguing, the mystery and ultimately the fictional."[56] As a result, their work creates situations that encourage unexpected encounters by reconstructing relationships within the building and surrounding the urban scale.

Their project Théâtre Le Rideau de Bruxelles is an example of this in practice. The theatre originally consisted of five disconnected buildings, each from a different historical era and functioning independently.[57] The design by Ouest restructured these fragments into a new ensemble. The courtyard, which was previously used as a circulation for users passing between different buildings[58], was transformed by the architects into a box-in-box, a precise geometric volume formed by four glazed façades with wooden mullions that add warmth to the space. It makes the audience detour around to reach the theater hall from the entrance, passing through the small foyer and corridor to the cafeteria instead of following a direct and monotonous path. The architects made the circulation intentionally longer, requiring the audience to turn several times to the different directions. Though the entire space is small and difficult to keep enough distance from the public street in front of the building, this extended flow of journey effectively shifts the mood from the busy exterior to the theater.

28

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55   De Walsche, Johan, Christine Fontaine, and Wouter Van Acker. 2023. "Beyond the mandate of the architect." Practices in Research 213.
56   Damsin, Stephane, and Jan Haerens. 2023. "TEATRO, LO TUYO ES PURO." Practices in Research: 130.
57   Ouest architecture. n.d. Théâtre Le Rideau de Bruxelles. Accessed April 14, 2025. https://ouest.be/projet/rid/.
58   Ibid.

Figure 28. Facade from the street Photographed by Johnny Umans
Figure 29. FView from the foyer to courtyard
Photographed by Johnny Umans

The character of the theater community is defined by its dual nature, open yet closed, which allows performers to feel safe expressing their ideas while the audience can immerse themselves in the environment and focus on the stage. The concept of the theater community as discussed by the author aligns with the ideas by Japanese philosopher Hiroki Azuma. He reflects on the nature of contemporary community and mentioned that "a new form of solidarity shouldn't rely on either simply open or closed participation. It's not about strictly following fixed beliefs or ideologies, as that would close off the community. Nor is it about accepting new members without any rules, which would just leave the community open without direction. Instead, it requires an attitude that continually redefines what is important, adjusting it as needed, while maintaining a sense of consistency in a paradoxical way."[59] In this context, the intervention of the glass courtyard is simple yet integrated successfully, creating a transparent yet secured, gradual boundary for the community.

The architects explain, in their architectural practice, from an urban point of view even in the small scale projects, "the awareness of the neighbors, of the surrounding city can lead to finding answers not only for oneself, one's client, one's plot, but also for what is happening around."[60] In the case of Le Rideau, the function of the theater is integrated with the surrounding neighborhood. Instead of installing a full kitchen in a limited space, the theater asks the shops and restaurants in the neighborhood to cater food for events, so that the interior space can be kept for communal purposes.[61] In this sense, the theater is a part of a larger urban ecosystem, pulsing through its connection with the city, extending beyond its physical structure to involve and engage the local community.

As the text by De Walsche et al says, Ouest breaks with the traditional approach "by upscaling projects by seeking dependencies, encounters and interaction, rather than by defining huge programmes."[62] Instead of delivering the rigid and completed building, by leaving certain functions unfinished, their practice serves spaces that facilitate shared experience.

When the author visited the theater on 26th April 2025, by coincidence, an open-mic event was being held by the OFA COLLECTIF (an local association supporting the youth) in the theater space. Upon passing the corridor around the glass courtyard and arriving at the theater hall door, half covered by a curtain, I entered and immediately sensed the energy hidden behind the door, where the young participants were presenting their original rap, stories, and poems. It was working as a safe platform for sharing self-expression, visually demonstrating that the theater can be more than just a performance venue.

59   Azuma. Philosophy of Correctability. 76.
60   Damsin, Stephane, and Jan Haerens. 132
61   Architects of Ouest. Unpublished Explanation during Building Tour of Théâtre Le Rideau, March 9, 2022.
62   De Walsche, et al. "Beyond the mandate of the architect." 214
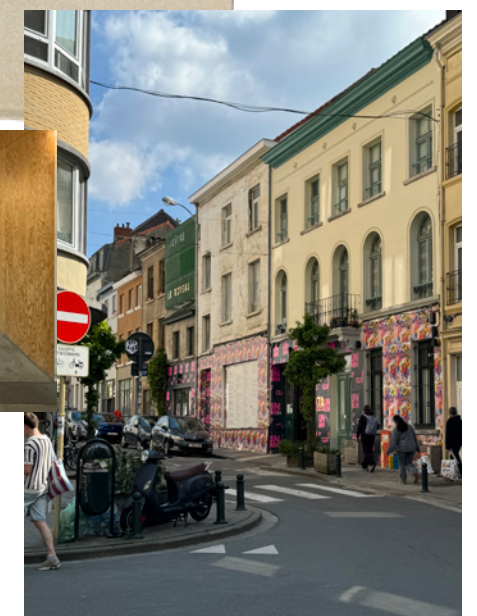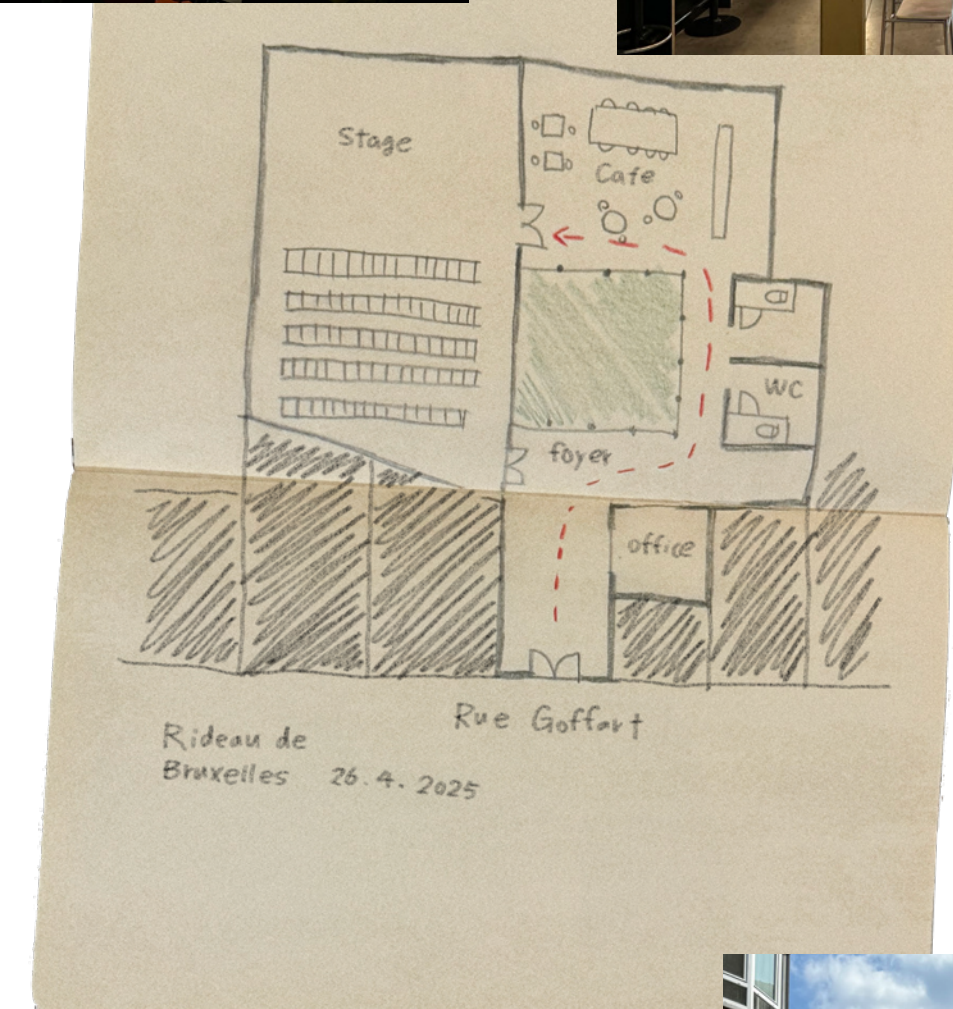
Figure 30. Fieldwork sketches and photographs at Théâtre Le Rideau de Bruxelles. Photographed by the author.

In conclusion, Decoratelier develops frameworks using accessible construction process that invite local neighbors to actively participate in it, while Ouest's practice redefines the relationship between architecture and the city, embedding it within the urban fabric. However, both approaches share a common foundation allowing space to develop over time through user interaction. As the architects from Ouest describe, these approaches reflect a "very tangible and pragmatic discipline by definition, with an understanding of urban fictions and narratives, approaching architecture as both a setting and an actor in our daily urban tales."[63]

A community-inclusive projects is one that embraces the ambiguity where the audience can transform into an actor to participate, imagine, and shape their environment. By carefully crafting the story between each intervention and its users, the practice can facilitate unexpected encounters, acting as catalysts for the growth of community.

63   Damsin, Stephane, and Jan Haerens. "TEATRO, LO TUYO ES PURO." 131

Scaffolding the Concepts

This paragraph outlines the initial steps I've taken to integrate the concept of process-based adaptation discussed in the previous chapters into a practical architectural design. Belgian construction sites have always been a source of inspiration for my research. In Japan, where I grew up, construction sites are usually enclosed by temporary fences or sheeting, concealing them from the streets until the completion. In contrast, construction sites in Belgium are often open and visible to the public, stimulating the imagination of people to envision what will be built there. The constructions are projected as urban landscapes rather than temporary foreign objects in the city. This led me to collect an archive of construction elements I encountered throughout the city, which I can later translate into my design.

In Japanese theater, 見立て (Mitate) is a concept that refers to the act of reinterpreting or repurposing something by presenting it on stage. The term literally means "to treat something as" or "to make something into" and is used to describe the practice of transforming an object, scene, or action into something different from its conventional or literal meaning.

One example is a scenography for the theater production 夕鶴 (Yuzuru), designed by Japanese scenographer Kisaku Ito. This stage set is considered a masterpiece for its extreme simplification of Japanese spatial beauty, demonstrating the poetic, representational nature of folktale drama. The arched frame surrounding the stage was designed to resemble the curves of snow and tundra slipping off a roof, symbolizing a snow-covered region. The small country house is represented without any traditional architectural elements. Light screens are placed in front of a large folding screen at the back, which serves as the outer wall of the house, suggesting a small room for weaving at the rear of the house.[65]

Mitate is a way of suggesting deeper meanings through abstraction, metaphor, or symbolic representation, which ecoes with the way I observe construction sites as urban scenography.

Figure 32. Scenography of Yuzuru: design drawing.
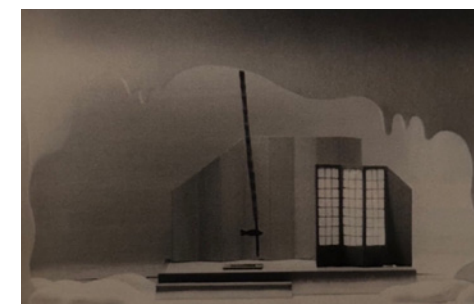
Figure 33. Scenography of Yuzuru: Production photograph.

Figure 31. One Flat Thing, Reproduced, Choreographed by William Forsythe(2006), Photogrphed by Rahi Rezvani

Scenography is a means to visualize the landscape on the stage. It also serves to convey intangible elements, such as the emotions of the performers or the underlying concept of the work, helping to create a specific atmosphere.

William Forsythe is a choreographer known for deconstructing ballet movements and transforming into new representation.[64] However, his philosophy is often reflected in the way he uses scenography as well. For example, in his work "One Flat Thing, Reproduced" he draws the interaction of multiple dancers and the tables on the stage. The dancers explore the different levels and dimensions, dance on the surface of the tables or play around their legs underneath. As the title suggests, the everyday element, the table, is here translated into an abstract device to facilitate unexpected movements on the stage.

The necessity of reinterpretation in scenography shifts our perception of everyday elements. By witnessing the interaction between scenography and performers, the audience is invited to rediscover the meaning of spatial elements, exploring the space through a new lens.

64   Lefebvre, Olivier. n.d. Ballet pushed to the edge. Accessed April 2, 2025.
      https://numeridanse.com/en/publication/ballet-pushed-to-the-edge/.
65   Ito, Hiroko. 2011. Representation and Form - Kisaku Ito and the scenography of the Showa Period,
      Translated by Aimi Hayashi. Tokyo: Waseda University Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum 42-43.

However, my research is not limited to simply embrace the construction element as beautiful scenery. They serve as a necessary vocabulary to embody process-based adaptation and provide practical insights to understand local construction. From a wider perspective, approaching the architectural field through the construction site can shift the focus from how the things look like to how the things are made. As Kenneth Frampton suggests, "The tectonic remains to us today as a potential means for distilling play between material, craftwork and gravity, so as to yield a component which is in fact a condensation of the entire structure."[66]. In other words, the approach can go beyond observing the physical construction elements, aiming to understand the cultural and technical context in which the building is constructed. The construction archive is, to borrow his words again, "the presentation of a structural poetic rather than the representation."[67]
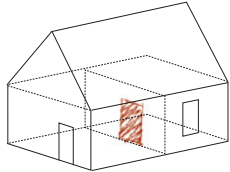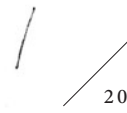
Construction Archive List

The process of archiving the construction elements can be divided into three steps.

(1) Walking around the city and taking pictures of the construction sites that capture your attention intuitively.

(2) Translating these photographs into sketches, and through the process of detailing, understanding the composition of each element and how it is equipped and used.

(3) Exploring further possibilities beyond what is observed. For example, scaffolding used as a temporary storage for construction components might be reimagined as a space for public presentation to introduce the project to the community by exhibiting material or physical models.

(1) and (2) appear in the archive. (3) may occur in the process of translating them into design proposals, or they may remain in the same use as in the archive.

In my design proposal I explore how the construction elements can transcend their conventional industrial roles. These elements can reveal the process of building, and furthermore, contribute to the project in a playful way, shaping both the design and the experience.

66   Frampton, Kenneth. 1983. "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance." In The Anti-Aesthetic, Essays on Postmodern Culture, edited by Hal Foster, 28-29. Washington: Bay Press.
67   Ibid.
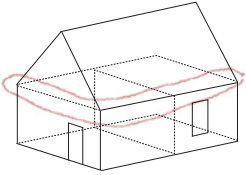
TITLE   Acrow Props

LOCATION   Source Internet

SITUATION   Cut openings (windows, doors)

/ 20

U-Head Detachable Support
To support the joist or bearing

Prop Pin
Structurally engaging both the outer and inner props tubes

Inner Tube
∅ 48.3 mm (t 3.6-3.9 mm)
Holes spaced at 142.5 mm
To provide height adjustment

Outer Tube
∅ 60.3 mm (t 3.6 mm)
With rolled thread allows for precise adjustment of prop, within specified range

Prop Nut
A handle-equipped zinc plated cast steel nut to finalize the prop height adjustment

Prop End Plate
t 8 mm
Providing shoring prop to other vertical elements

- Top adjusting wing nut
- 2x6, 2x4 or cables receivers
- Top Board Bracket
- Predrilled Holes for fastening to deck
- Adjustable for member
- 125 cm
- 130 cm

1. Soil excavated from the site

2. Layer compacted with tools

3. Plywood formwork

4. Dry, remove the formwork

TITLE	Temporary Storage		4
LOCATION	SITUATION		/20
Brussels, Belgium	Securing materials		

Brick wall to open

Logistic Plan for construction site

Public Road

Delivery Route

On site Parking
Store
Construction Office

Sub Constractors
Laydown area 1
Store
Laydown area 2

Crane 1

Crane 2

Scaffolding

Temporary placed removed brick
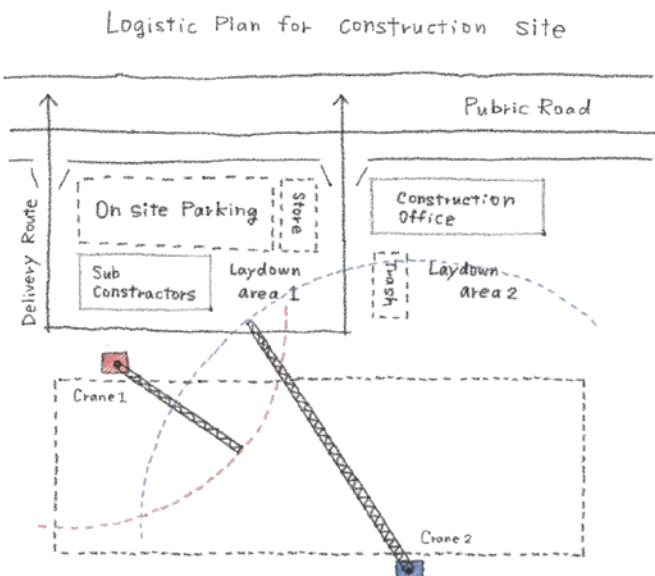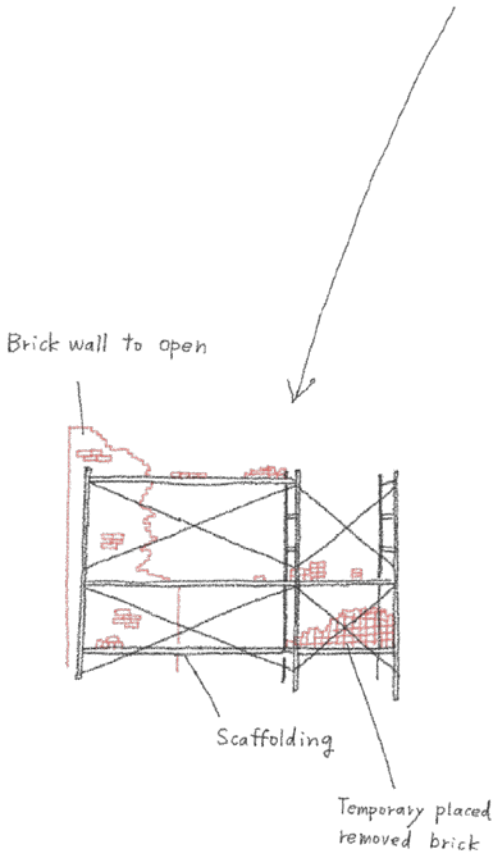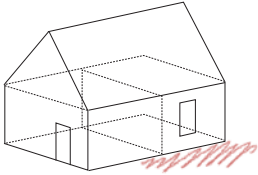
TITLE	Access Scaffolding		5
LOCATION	SITUATION		/20
Hasselt. Belgium	Vertical circulation for façade treatment		

3.05m Double Guardrail Frame

1.655m Single Tube Beam

Standard

Tie Anchor

3.05m single Guardrail

Stick to wall

Stair Flight

Base Jack

Ledger Beam

Stair Handrail

Landing

Entrance Step

3050 mm

1655 mm
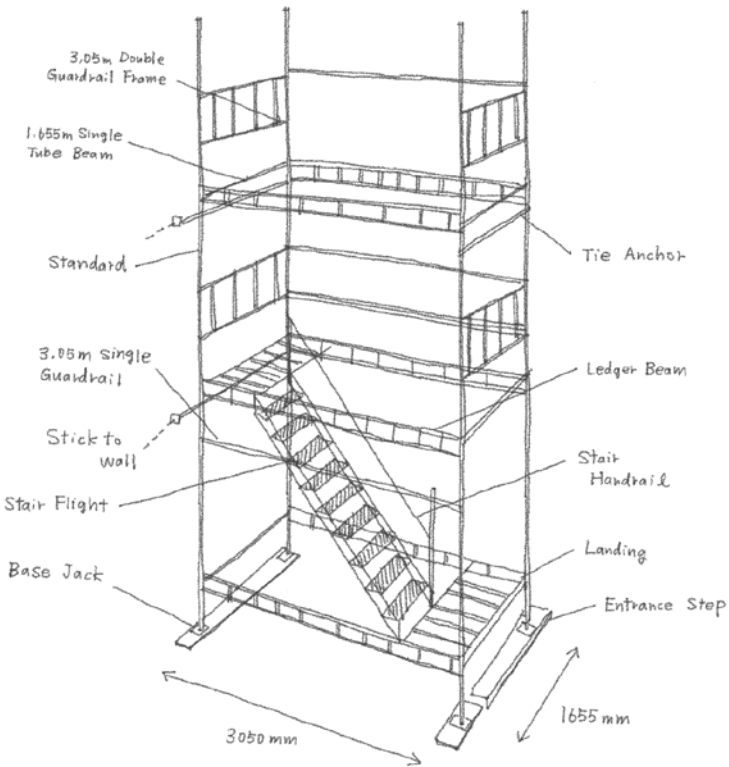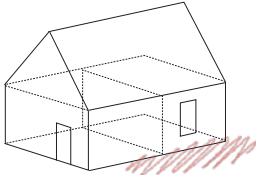
TITLE					
Façade Retention Steelwork					6
LOCATION		SITUATION			
Brussels, Belgium		Preserve façade during demolition			/20

MONUMENT STABILITY CONTRACTOR

StabiL

ryx STABILITY SOLUTIONS
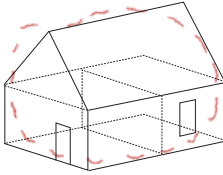
TITLE					
Portal Base Tower Crane					7
LOCATION		SITUATION			
Brussels		Urban Temporary Occupation			/20

Tower Crane

Legs of crane

Foundation

Pedestrian

Car

59
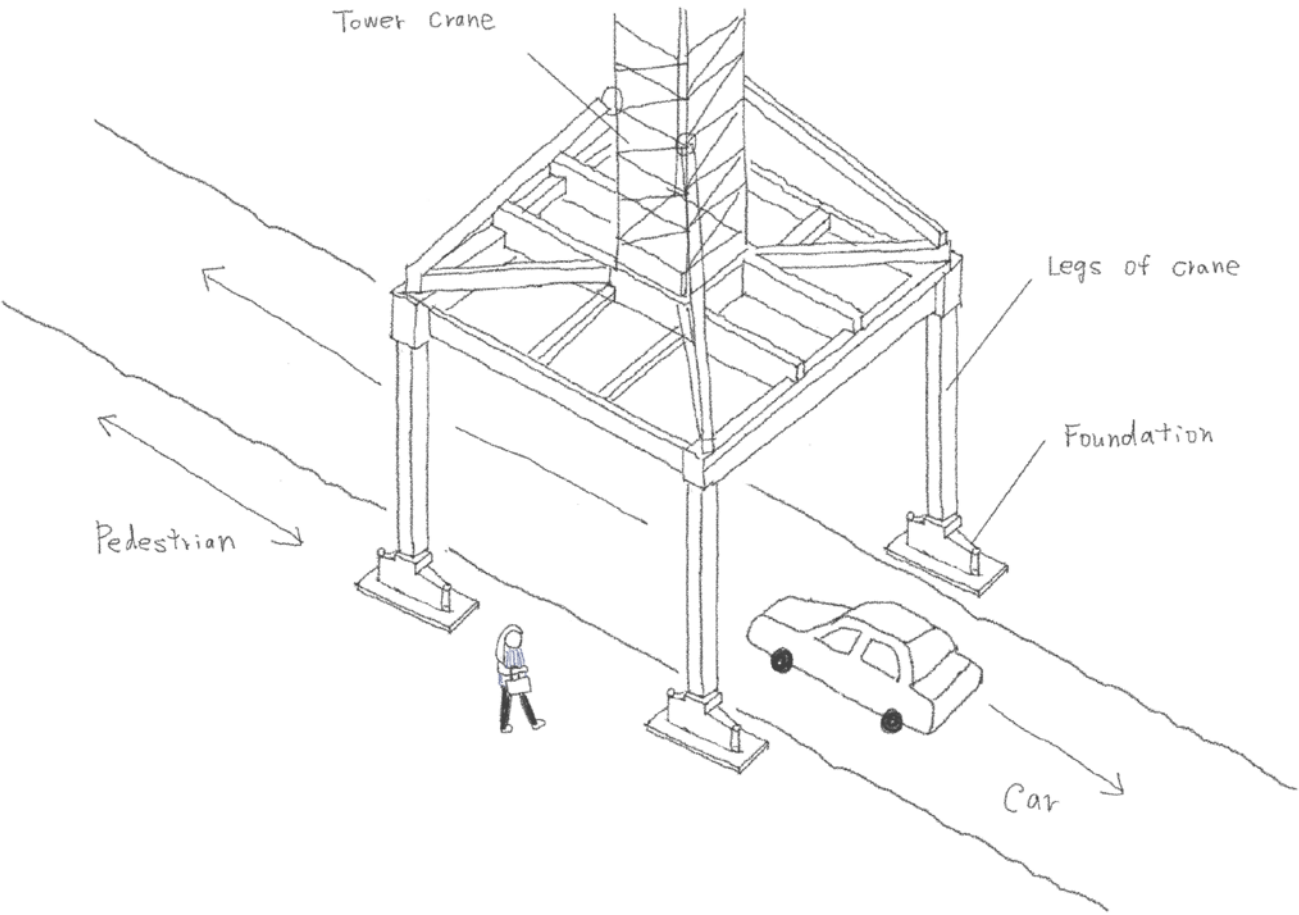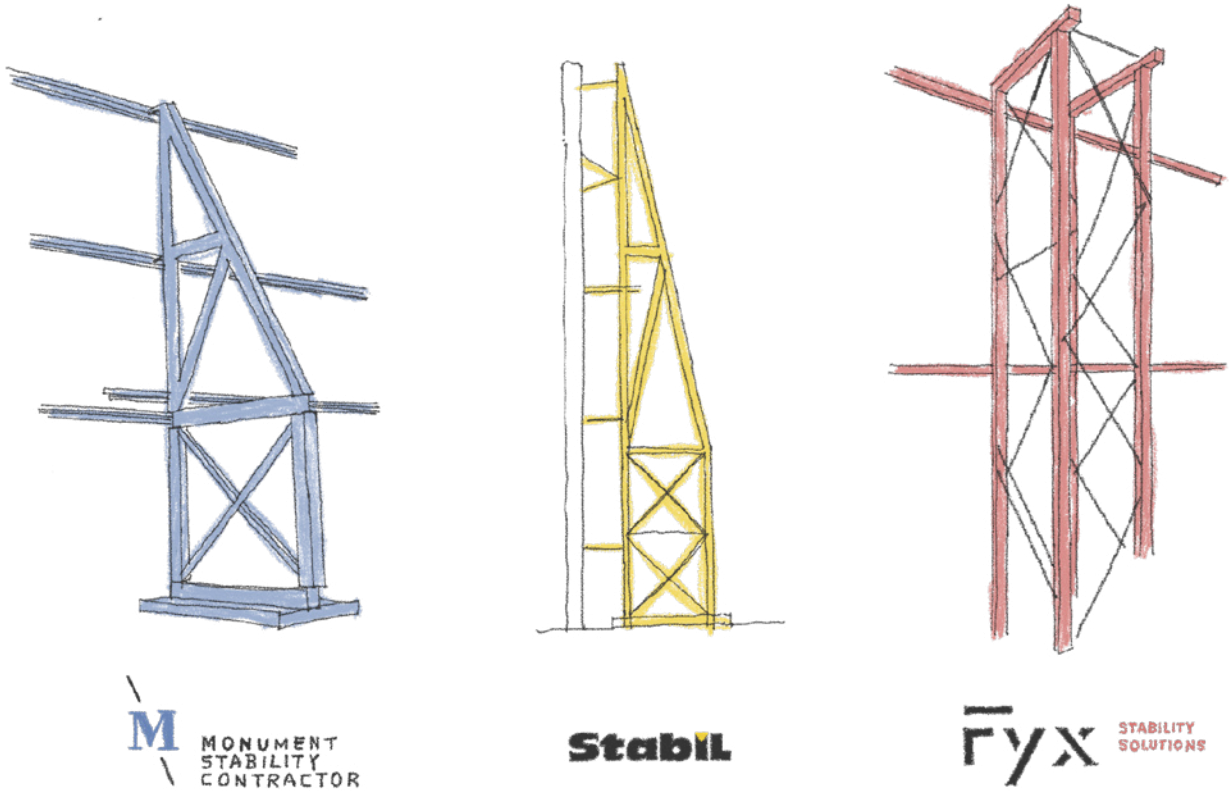
TITLE	Tower Crane				8
LOCATION		SITUATION			
Hasselt, Belgium		To move materials vertically / horizontally			/20

Trolley Mechanism

winch

Hoist

Main winch and monitors

Rear Pendant

Fore Pendant

Counter Weight

Turntable

Tower

Operator's Cab

Jib

Trolley

Hook block

TITLE	Full-scale Sketch on site				9
LOCATION		SITUATION			
Hasselt, Belgium		Mark actual propotions on site informally			/20

Detail Sketch Perhaps for sash

Sketch study for 1:1 scale stair dimension

1:1 sketch showing the location of the slab

In everyday life, "if" is a fiction. In the theatre "if" is an experiment.

In everyday life, "if" is an evasion. In the theatre "if" is the truth.

When we are persuaded to believe in this truth then the theatre and life are one.

This is a high aim. It sounds like hard work. To play needs much work. But when we experiences the work as play, then it is not work anymore.

A play is play.[68]

Peter Brook

Design Proposal

The quote on the left is from the book "The Empty Space" by Peter Brook, one of the most influential theatre directors of the 20th century. In this passage, he speaks to the transformative power of theatre—where fiction becomes experiment, not reality, but another kind of truth.

This chapter brings together all the material developed throughout the research into a final design proposal — from site analysis structured around the idea of the score, to conceptual and spatial analysis of contemporary architectural practices, and a design vocabulary shaped by elements archived from construction sites.

The proposal is mainly divided into four phases, each aimed at improving the environment of the academy in Anderlecht. It also includes an introductory context describing the current conditions of the site, and a kind of postscript projecting how the project might continue to evolve even after my interventions. Each phase of the proposal is presented as an "act," and the explanation unfolds like a theatrical script.

By incorporating a narrative structure, I hope this approach not only helps a more objective reflection on the project from my side, but also enables readers to experience the design process by immersing themselves in the drawing. Rather than simply going through a project brief, it invites them to explore the spatial logic, the transformation of spaces, and the relationships that unfold between them — not as passive spectators, but as if they were actors performing within the work.

Finally, it is important to mention a limitation I encountered during the development of this project: the absence of existing architectural drawings for the site. The plans presented in this chapter were reconstructed based on information I gathered independently, primarily through a combination of the building's available evacuation plan and site photographs I took during multiple visits. Although the resulting drawings are not fully precise, I note that the process of assembling them enabled a deeper understanding of the spatial context and played a crucial role in shaping the direction of the design proposal.

68 Brook, Peter. 1968. The Empty Space. New York: Atheneum. 140-141.

Prologue : Context

(The stage is set. In front of the academy)

Soft light of late afternoon casts a warm glow over the academy. In the heart of Anderlecht, just a few steps from the busy tramway, but here the noise of the city life is muted, with the serene plaza in front shared with a church and a beguinage.

(Entering the building)

The first thing that catches the eye is the layers of history and adaptation. The façade is a patchwork of materials and structures from different eras, repaired randomly in response to need. If you look closely, the details begin to speak. Silent traces from the past, whispering their stories.

See the sidenotes in Chapter 2 Score

(A teacher's voice coming from somewhere)

The classrooms, with their low occupancy, quiet between the hours, only the materials from the previous class show the vibrance left. All the classrooms are tucked at the back of the building, hidden from the outside world. Through a small courtyard behind the secretary's office, if you sneak quietly, catching a glimpse of the art conservation classrooms on the ground floor, where finally the living atmosphere of the class exists.

(The scene opens wide, the academy and neighborhood revealed)

The school is planning an upcoming competition to remodel the school. The buildings are aged and in need of care. But it's for more than that, a future vision for more interaction with the neighboring middle school. The goal is to cultivate a shared space and interactive curriculum, shaping the academy to reflect this narrative

Act 1 : Construction Hub

(The stage is set. The noise of construction fills the air.)

The construction begins. The construction hub is first designed by transforming the barn, once without purpose and used just as a passage for students to the main building.

(A closer look at the construction hub.)

The original exterior space in front of the barn now becomes temporary storage for construction components. Interior of the barn is transformed into a workspace for the construction team.

(A new path is created.)

As the original circulation is now occupied by the construction hub, a temporary path is formed next to the parking area, guiding visitors to the main building of the academy.

(The scene changes. A wall of the hub begins to transform)

A wall of the barn is partially open to the parking lot, revealing scaffolding wrapped in construction fabric, which can be closed at night. An interaction point has appeared, a space for the public presentation of the project exhibiting the physical models, material samples, and mock-ups.

(The audience is invited to look in.)

It also provides the neighbors with a glimpse of the ongoing work inside the hub, allowing them to anticipate the transformation taking place and sharing the curiosity of what is to come.
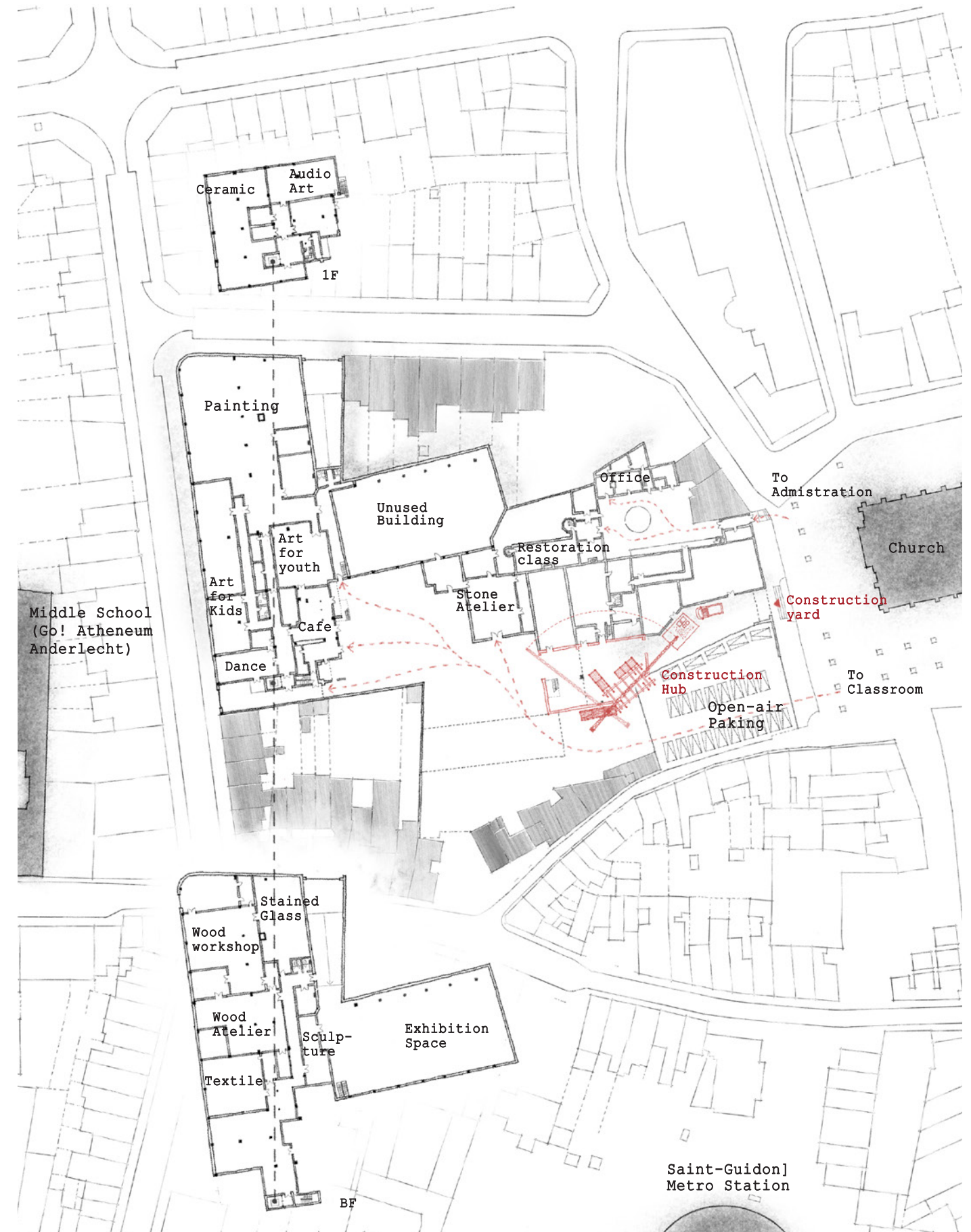
Act 2 : Spaces in Motion

(The sound of the car is heard from the street)

Anderlecht, a place where cars dominate, with one of the highest rates of car usage in Brussels. The neighborhood around the academy is no different, with a vast parking lot right next to the main entrance. Unfortunately, the first things visitors see are these cold metals on the asphalt, which does little to inspire an artistic atmosphere.

(The scene shifts, revealing a vision of change.)

To transform this space, the parking lot is moved to a part of the basement of the main building where a classroom and exhibition space are currently located. Thanks to the topography level changes around the site, the parking remains still easily accessible from the street at the back of the school.

(The scene continues, shifting the focus to the building next.)

The classroom and exhibition space are relocated from the dark and gloomy basement to a large industrial building at the center of the academy plot, currently unused due to its aging structure. This building will be structurally reinforced and transformed into flexible learning spaces. Fresh air and natural light enter through a suspended corridor above the space, allowing people to observe the classes from overhead.

(The space becomes dynamic, filled with activity.)

The space adapts to different classes, with curtain dividers shaping the size of the room. Movable storage units store the tools for each class, inspired by the building's history as a former publisher. There is always something happening in this new multi classroom, visible from the main courtyard, continuous learning and creation.
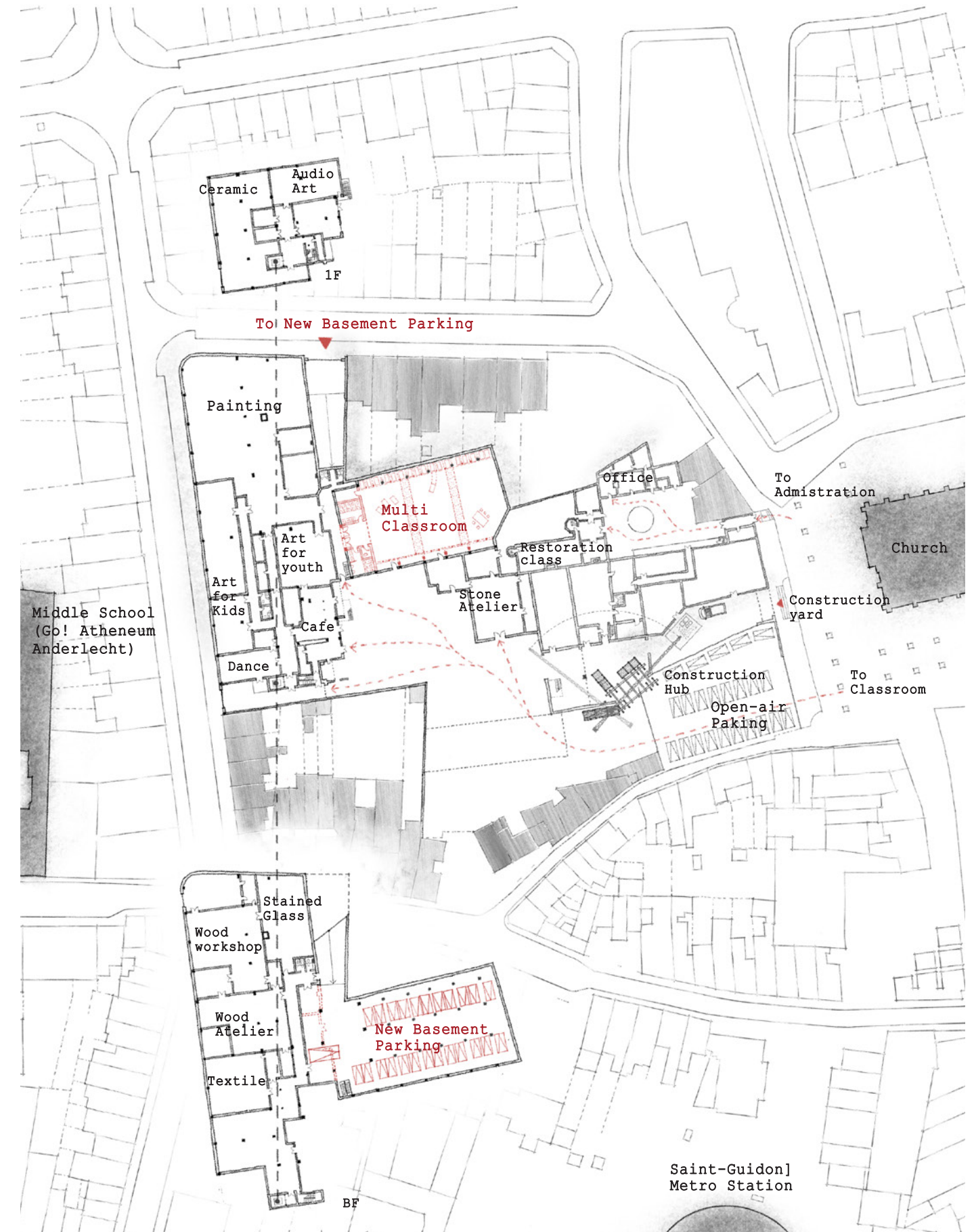
Act 3: Growing Commons

(The stage is transformed. The plot next to the school is now free.)

The cars moved underground and the vast open-air parking lot is now gone. The ground is transformed into grass, becoming a public green space where people can relax. This green space can also serve as a venue for open-air exhibitions by the students in the academy, accessible to the public.

(The neighbors gather with construction gear in hand.)

The space further evolves into an open workshop space for participatory construction, inviting locals and students to join the project process. To define the boundaries with neighboring buildings, rammed earth objects are installed at the edges, built through the workshop. The furniture for the next act will also be crafted here.

(The scene continues with the voices of people chatting.)

Here the local people are no longer just observers of the project but active participants in shaping the environment. They contribute not only to the construction of physical space, but also to the weaving of community narratives through shared experience.
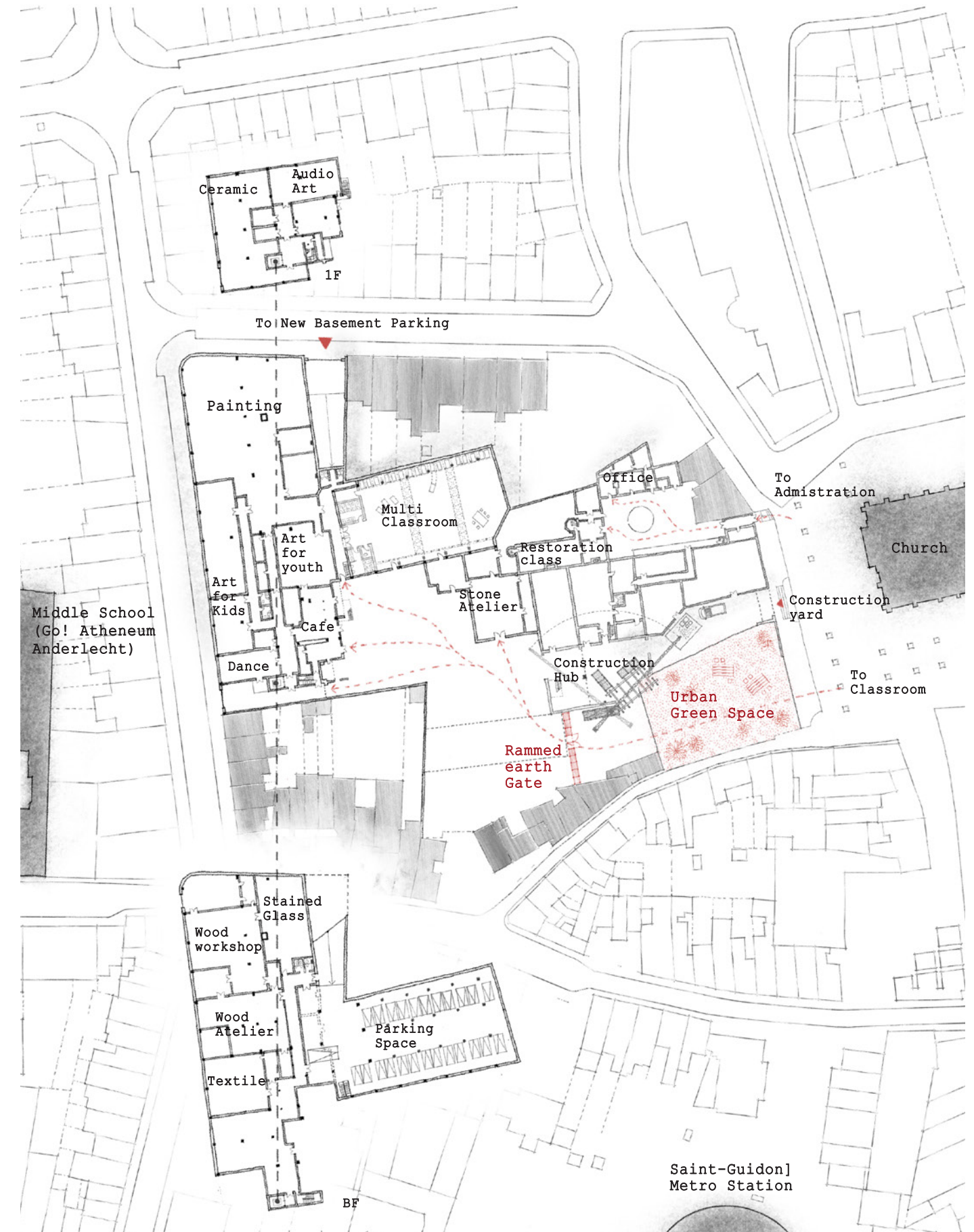
Act 4: Viewpoints

(The entire sets start transforms.)

A series of small interventions occur around the courtyard, the heart of the academy. They are starting to connect in unexpected ways. New spatial and visual relationships begin to take shape.

(The scene shifts to the façade of the main building)

The room on the first floor, once hidden behind temporary construction sheets, is transformed into a niche terrace. The terrace becomes a floating stage viewed from the courtyard, where people can watch performances, or, in reverse, a place to overlook the courtyard from above.

(The scene moves again, to the roof of the second building)

A rooftop seating area is installed on the roof of the reinforced building, accessible from the side. It offers another viewpoint over the courtyard and creating surreal scenery when viewed from the ground.

(Dancers from the class fill the courtyard with movement.)

Though the interventions do not directly touch the courtyard, they gradually activate it, giving a new sense of spatial use. Each corner of the courtyard now becomes a stage, unfolding the urban story. The roles of seeing and being seen blur here, as actors become the audience, and the audience becomes the actors.

Epilogue: And another curtain rises

Finally, the story from the past and the script I've written overlap in the academy.

The construction hub remains as a workshop space for the next repair of the building or for the craftwork in the classes. Students pass through this space daily as it is on the route to the main building, observing the ongoing process of creation, where something is always being made.

The garage door at the back of the academy is fully opened, providing better access from the neighboring middle school. The interaction between the two schools begins, providing young students with the opportunity to have artistic education. Even without attending the class, simply walking through the academy on the ground floor becomes the source of inspiration with unexpected encounters.

As the academy continues to evolve, the creation is no longer limited to fixed classrooms. The entire space now holds the potential to unfold the next narrative. There is no finale to this project, no state of completion; the academy awaits the next acts to be added.
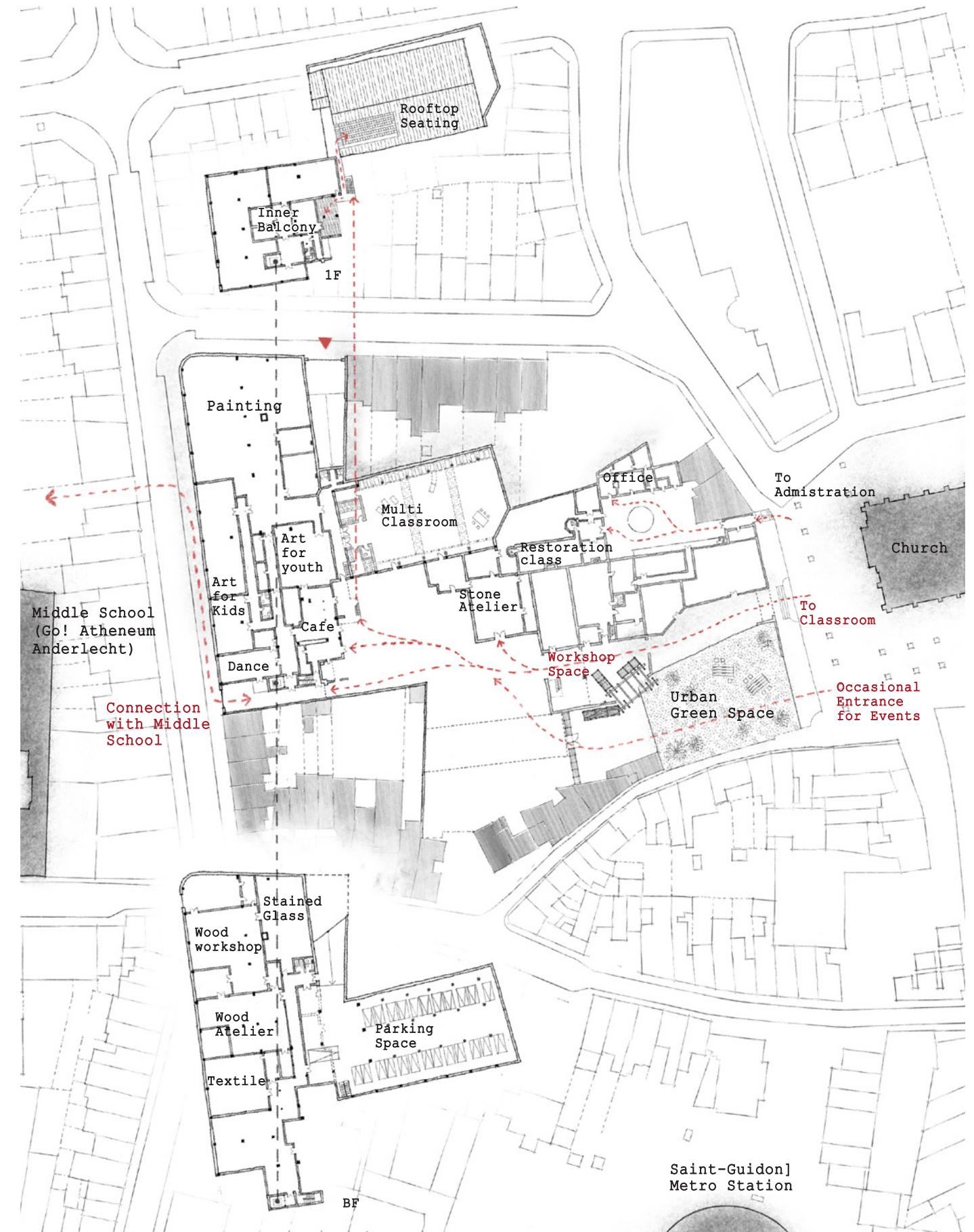
Conclusion, or Dénouement

The world is becoming increasingly unpredictable. Architects today, including myself, are exposed to indeterminacy and ambiguity. The idea of process-based adaptation is a counter vision of how to coexist with those uncertainties, where tackling a project from beginning to fixed outcome may no longer be sufficient. Process-based adaptation is a way to develop a project step by step, allowing direction to remain modifiable. Instead of resisting the change or completely surrendering to external forces, it is a way to adapt.

The references presented in the research were all examples of contemporary Belgian practices that illustrate how this approach is already taking place within the professional field. They offer both conceptual and practical strategies. Though the methods may differ, they share a common attitude: to allow the project to evolve through the process during design and construction, and even beyond, by keeping outcomes open-ended. Some projects rewrite the required scenario, some involve local participation, and some explore the reuse of materials with potential for future relocation. These practices also show a significant shift in the role of the architect, not only designing the building but also shaping the process itself, to make it resilient to unforeseen conditions.

For my design proposal, the theatrical concept was introduced as a metaphor at first to embrace those ongoing transformations of architecture in process-based adaptation. As Peter Brook said[69], inside the theater, fiction is another kind of reality, a way to dream, to experiment with what it would be like if another world existed. I applied theater as a driving force to shape my proposal based on the research. Moreover, the theatrical concept in this thesis offered me a way to follow the advice of architect and artist Jolien Naeyaert: "Instead of stepping OUT, step back IN your environment. Feel, hear, be, and design from here."[70] During the process, I was continuously "stepping in" through site visits, case studies, and city walks to study construction archives. Theater became a way to experience a space in a deeper sense as an actor, rather than seeing a screen from far away without sensory connection as an observer. In this way, the theatrical concept gradually evolved into a pragmatic methodology that bridges imagined narrative with real context and brings together the tectonic and the poetic through a narrative structure.

In summary, this thesis traced a continuous thread, from examining theoretical concepts of phased transformation, to exploring how these ideas were translated into a design proposal for the academy in Anderlecht with a theatrical methodology. Combining the research and design practice, the outcome is a comprehensive overview of process-based adaptation, where the structures are assembled, connected, and composed like scaffolding.

It is important to highlight that while this thesis demonstrates the possibilities offered by prosess-based adaptation, it does not aim to provide a fixed formula applicable to future projects, since the concept of process-based adaptation is inherently fluid and continuously evolving. Additional examples are likely to emerge in practice that reflect a similar philosophy. Thus, this thesis intends to serve as an initial foundation for understanding architecture through the perspective of process-based adaptation, a framework that will continue to develop and metabolize over time. For this reason, this section is also not framed as a conclusion in the conventional sense, but as a dénouement: a point where threads are drawn together, not to close the narrative, but to open it further.
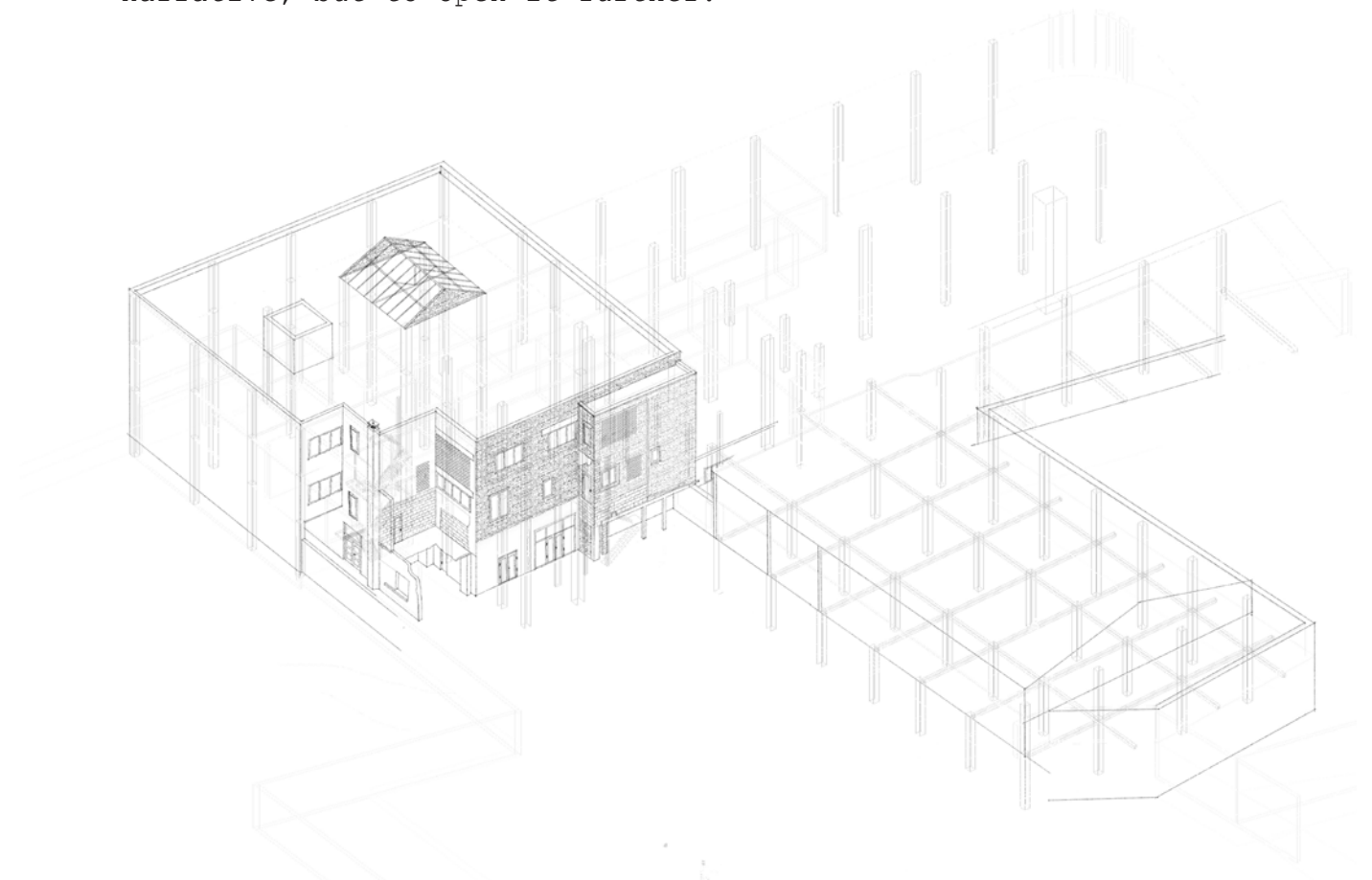
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70   Naeyaert, Jolien. 2022. Error. Errance. Eros, Translated by Colm mac Aoidh. March 9. Accessed May 6, 2025. https://a-plus.be/fr/error-errance-eros/.

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LIST OF FIGURES