LEARNING LAB

Rethinking Økern secondary school

Diploma by Thea Platou & Maria Brox The Oslo School of Architecture and Design 2021 Supervised by Gro Bonesmo and Johanne Borthne

We want to extend a special thank you to our deeply knowledgable supervisors - architects Gro Bonesmo and Johanne Borthne for the inspiring discussions throughout the process, architects Karl Otto Ellefsen and Halvor Ellefsen for their valuable input for our mid term reviews, architects Erik Langdalen and Ingrid Dobloug Roede for fascinating discussions on values and preservation issues, city antiquarian Janne Wilberg for her interest in our diploma thesis, operations technician Helge Bakko for showing us every corner of the building, The Oslo School of Architecture and Design for providing a solid academic framework and to our enduring families for their loving support.



TABLE OF CONTENT

- 06 Abstract
- 10 Program
- 12 Structure
- 14 Exhibition posters

LEARNING LAB

- rethinking Økern secondary school

Learning Lab is a proposal for a new secondary school at Økern in Oslo. The project explores the potential of inhabiting a building from the past with a program for the future, and is a counter-proposal to the practice of building new before exploring the potential of existing structures in the locality.

Building schools

Oslo's School Needs Plan for the period 2022-2031 shows that eight out of ten planned school projects in Oslo are either delayed or postponed.¹ The budget for building and rehabilitating schools in Oslo is only half of what it was ten years ago.² With the capitols rapid population growth, the need for schools is increasing beyond the current capacity. The strategy to solve this problem is currently to build temporary barrack buildings, with a planned service life of only 25-40 years.³ These types of buildings have few to no requirements for architectural and spacial qualities.

As we know that our physical surroundings affect our wellbeing and behaviour, we question what consequences the downscaling and neglect of one of society's most important social infrastructures will have on future generations, local communities and society in general. How does the idea of the temporary school affect their sense of pride and belonging?

Through the project Learning Lab, we will rethink and explore the potential of what a future oriented school might look like. A school dimensioned for growth

and flexibility. Through reusing a structure where the main idea has been to last and expand into the future, we wish to make a proposal for a new culture hub for the local community.

Case study - Two opposing ideologies In 2019 Refstad primary school in Oslo was demolished, only 14 years after completion. The school is now being rebuilt as a new structure on the same plot.

On the neighboring site lies a 20.000 square-meter building from 1967. The building is a good representative of the post-war industrial buildings which have been characteristic of the area. Designed by the renowned Norwegian architect Geir Grung to serve as the new headquarter for the rapidly growing fur industry, the project holds great architectural and cultural-historical values. Grungs idea was to design a building that could expand and grow - a building for the future. As the fur industry is today a tradition of obsolescence, the building met the same faith. Many of its intended qualities are today well hidden behind added light structures, as the building currently serves as a temporary media production center. The property was recently bought by OBOS, Norway's largest housing developer. Their wish is to demolish the building and use the plot for housing development. The tabula plena approach to the urban site seems questionable due to the buildings large CO2 footprint as well as the fact that it is in good condition. We think there will be lost potential if the

demolition proposal is put into practice.

The two neighbouring building sites, Refstad primary school and The former Center for Fur are clear representatives of two opposing ideologies. While one has little to no intention of future life and architectural qualities, the other is future oriented and built with the intention of lasting and expanding. They both were/are situated in Oslos largest urban development area where extensive growth is expected and where more schools are also being planned at the moment. One of them is Økern secondary school. As the project is still in the planning process we see this as a good opportunity for a counter proposal.

Our base is an existing building in need of a suitable program and a school program in need of a suitable structure.

What if one could benefit from the already existing resource: The former Center for Fur, and create cultural capital as well as preserve the the identity of place through adaptive reuse? Utilising the size of the 20.000 square-meter structure enables us to create added value as the size allow for adding more program and create a culture hub in the locality.

Design process - Add and elevate

As the urban area is undergoing drastic development plans, we have chosen not to focus on the immediate context of the site. We have designed the project with an inside-out approach, focusing on the

inherent qualities of the building and what it could possibly represent in the local community.

The 20.000 square-meter building offers an overcapacity of space in relation to the school program, leading us to ask how the school could play a central role in the city. What does the school represent as a social infrastructure? The surplus space allows for the school to give back to the community in the form of extra space to offer a broader range of activities.

The structure is a five-story pre-fabricated concrete column- and beam structure, organised in a 12x12 meter grid. The deep plan measures 82x48 meters with large parts built into the sloping terrain. Grung designed the building for the then prosperous fur industry, with high quality materials and an idea of a building that would be able to adapt to the changing premises of the future. This means that we have a flexible general building base with specific architectural qualities.

The very heart of the building is the auction hall. A 400 square-meter room with a grand skylight hanging freely from large concrete girders that run across the building's roof. Another immediate quality is the two driveways that open up the basement floor, making it possible to create a drive in flexible basement.

Through our studies and analysis of the building we have discovered qualities and opportunities we wish to evolve on

and celebrate in the project. We believe that combining our findings with new interventions can create spatial richness and add value to the new school. Our ambition has been to intervene with minimal changes to create maximum effect. Interventions are made on the inherent premises and logic of the building.

1. Remove

Our first intervention was a grand cut in the roof, first floor and ground floor in order to bring daylight into the plan. The cut will follow the 12x12 meter grid and the logic of the construction. This intervention makes it possible to fit a multi-purpose hall and create spacious areas with daylight.

2. Replacing infrastructure

Two existing cores are replaced and another one added as an efficient layer of vertical circulation, washrooms and technical shafts. The main staircases are kept as they are in great condition and valued as material gems in the project.

Organisation

The project lies in a sloping terrain and meets the ground at three levels; the basement, the ground floor and the first floor. We have placed all program that will be publicly accessible on the lower areas of the building and more specific school areas on the upper areas.

With the idea of the lower part being accessible to the public outside school hours for sports events, courses and social gatherings. The upper part contains classrooms and communal areas and has a quieter atmosphere fit for concentration and work. Each floor is given a different character, both celebrating the existing qualities and adding new spatial connections.

A walk through

Basement: The former janitors apartment

is turned into a new public entrance and leads the way into a large multi purpose hall - a triple-height construction free space carved out in the center of the mass. A stage is added and support areas pushed out to the periphery of the plan. A new roof enables large hanging installations such as lighting and technology in addition to room-dividing elements. The existing car ramps are kept allowing for a wide range of events to take place underground. Sports events, concerts, fairs and other large public gatherings.

Ground floor: At the ground floor the cantina area overlooking the multipurpose hall has a seamless flow out in the schoolyard. The non-heretical free plan with flexible furnishing is a landscape in constant movement and change. The furnishing can be quickly remodelled and used for the local community on weekends and evenings. Three smaller boxes can be closed off. One for storing furniture and exhibition materials, a reception at the main entrance and the canteen kitchen.

Middle floor: Workshops in a row that can be used for educational purposes both during school hours and in the evenings by the greater community.

First floor: This floor has classrooms along the facades, encircling a common space in the middle with a library and open auditorium, liberating the existing auction hall hanging from above. A new glass roof draws light down into the open auditorium and learning landscape.

Learning Lab

The organisation of the main educational plans have derived from researching the school as a typology. While it has long been clear in office and housing that the typologies from 100 years ago no longer correspond to contemporary working and

living requirements, school buildings are still being planned and constructed based on outdated model space allocation plans. The current model is often manifested physically as rigid spaces, unsuitable to meet the need for a more diverse and inclusive education for our time.

Bartles & Pampe states in the book «Sustainability in School buildings» from 2021

«If the individually diverse talents and needs of all children and adolescents are to be accommodated, learning environments today must be able to meet dynamically changing user requirements. Functionally rigid spatial concepts, as represented by «one classroom = one class = one subject = one teacher» is no longer sustainable».

The old learning model is based on a 70%-80% teacher-centred learning, 15 % homework, 5-20% studying in pair or group-work. In today's learning model there is only 30% teacher-centred learning, then 30% individual learning, 30% learning in small groups, and 10% learning within the class. This new model opens for rethinking the school building and introducing new ideas for educational spaces. The learning landscape is an answer to contemporary ways of learning, with clusters of furniture, spaces for group work and single studying.

The second floor is primarily dedicated to the learning landscape with a variety of spaces and situations to choose from. The hanging auction hall - the former heart of the building - can be made into a grand auditorium. The space is opened up in an axis across the plan, emphasised by a new spacious balcony. A retracted balcony towards the south creates a new quality and moment in the learning landscape.

The variety of spaces in these two

educational floors allow for a more dynamic learning environment, flexible enough to meet the changing needs of the students. The open auditorium connects the two floors into one learning landscape, creating a gathering space centred around the hanging auditorium.

The roof can be turned into an educational roof garden as an extension of the learning landscape. This landscape contains a greenhouse and educational areas in close connection to the experimental gardens.

Conclusion

In the process of rethinking Økern secondary school, we have discovered that the school is a program well suited for fitting into existing structures. We think that the strategy of reusing built structure for new school buildings could be a win win both in terms of sustainability and preservation of the local history as well as the possibility of spatial richness and added value to the school.

We believe in the idea of a Learning Lab as the new culture hub at Økern, as a place both the locality and the future generations can benefit from.

- 1 The total budget was 1,7 billion in 2021 against 3,5 billion in 2013-2015. Ruud, Marianne. "Oslo Høyre foreslår en milliard mer til skolebygg hvert år" Utdanningsnytt. 11.11.2021 https://www.utdanningsnytt.no/hoyre-osloskolen-skolebehovsplan/oslohoyre-foreslar-n-milliard-mer-til-skolebygg-over-to-ar/302558
- 2 Intisaar, Ali. "Oslo-skole må rives 14 år etter at den ble bygd". NRK. 02.05.2019 https://www.nrk.no/osloogviken/oslo-skole-ma-rives-14-ar-etter-at-den-ble-bygd-1.14536138
- 3 "OBOS har kjøpt stor eiendom i Oslo" Fremtidens Byggenæring. 15.12.2020 https://www.fremtidensbygg.no/oboshar-kjopt-stor-eiendom-i-oslo/

PROGRAM

ARCHITECTURAL PROGRAM

Adaptive reuse of a concrete building from 1967. Through our studies and analysis of the building we have discovered qualities and opportunities we wish to evolve on and celebrate in the project. We believe that combining our findings with new interventions can create spatial richness and add value to the project. Our ambition has been to intervene with minimal changes to create maximum effect. Interventions are made on the inherent premises and logic of the building.

FUNCTIONAL PROGRAM

Through the project Learning Lab, we will rethink and explore the potential of what a future oriented school might look like. A school dimensioned for growth and flexibility that also serves as a soscial infrastructure in the local community. How can the new grand school be a recource for more than just the students? The surplus space allow for the school to give back to the community. Through reusing a structure where the main idea has been to last and expand into the future, we wish to make a proposal for the school as a new culture hub for the local community.

Right side: Funcitonal program. Existing requirements for school buildings has been our starting point for developing Learning Lab. Grey boxes describe the standard area requirements for a secondary school, dimentioned for 1080 students. The white boxes are our notes and modifications from early in the prosess.

Area description	Quantity	m² per	Total	Notes	Our notes	Ceiling height min	Noise	Connection to	Malleable/Non-	Introvert/	Light/dark	Modifications
General learning areas (class- and group rooms)	1080	2.5	2700	v		Normal - 2,7	Low	Additional area	malleable Malleable, but	Introvert	Light	Avoid the traditional
General leaf ling aleas (class- and group rounts)	1000	2,3	2700	*		Normal - 2,7	LOW	home area	needs space for traditional lectures with teacher and 30 students	introvert	Light	hallway classroom solution. Create diverse spaces in- between
Additional area home area	1	180	180	x	Should there be home zones at all? Pupils or different ages could benefit from mixing, like siblings do. They learn to take care of the younger and learn from the older.	Normal - 2,7	Medium	General learning areas (class- and group rooms)	Malleable	Introvert	Medium	Common space used for diverse activities
Student wardrobes and bathrooms	1080	0,525	613	x		Normal - 2,5	Medium	General learning areas (class- and group rooms).	Malleable. Some requirements (see standard requirements document for more details)	Introvert	Dark	Exposed placement to avoid bullying
Workplace for educators	98	7		Work place/team room, 11 students per teacher		Normal - 2,7	Low	General learning areas (class- and group rooms)	Malleable. 1,4m desk. Groups of 4-6 teachers.	Introvert	Light	Accessible for students, easy to reach out to a teacher with problems
Total - Home area Auditorium	1	160	160			Tall - 2,7	High	x Free placement	X Malleable, partly	Extrovert	Dark	Could be rented out to the public and used for large gatherings of students. Possibly for culture events
Library	1	420	420	х		Normal - 2,7	Low	Free placement	Malleable	Extrovert	Medium	Open to public in the evenings. Media services (3D print, sewing machines etc)
Music	1	260	260	х	Open for band rehearsal and small concerts outside school hours.	Høy - 4,0	High	Free placement. Needs support storage areas etc.	Malleable. Acoustic requirements.	Extrovert	Dark	Diverse rooms and additional program in connection to stages.
Arts and crafts	1	440	440	х	Open for the public. Amplify.	Normal - 2,7	Low	Free placement. Close to library?	Malleable	Extrovert	Medium	Amplify this program. Make a ceramics room with oven. NB heat and pipe. Technical
Technology and design	1	186		Co-use with science		Normal - 2,7	Low	Common space/canteen	Malleable	Extrovert	Medium	Think about possible use after school hours
Science	1	186		Co-use with technology and design		Normal - 2,7	Low	Preparation and growth	Malleable, partly	Extrovert	Medium	Think about possible use after school hours
Preparation and growth room	1	50 260	50	Space for 5 groups of 4		Normal - 2,7	Low	Science	Malleable, partly Malleable, partly	Extrovert	Medium	
Food and health, including dry goods storage and laundry-/ironing room		260	260	space for 5 groups of 4 students in kitchen. Dining space make up 80 m² and added to common space		Normai - 2,7	Medium	space/canteen	Malleable, partly	Introvert	Medium	
Heating kitchen for the Activity school and canteen	1	76	76	x		Normal - 2,7	Medium	Common space/canteen	Malleable, partly	Extrovert	Medium	Think about possible use after school hours, especially for sports- and culture events
Common space/canteen	1	400	400	x		Tall	High	Food and health	Malleable	Extrovert	Light	
Sports	4		1360			Tall - 7,0 free height above the whole sports court	High	Front desk and some food supply	Non-malleable	Extrovert	Dark	Can be joined into one multi-purpose sports hall
Areas for specially organised teaching	1	100				Normal - 2,7	Low	Free placement		Extrovert	Medium	
Total - Common learning areas Lobby	1	60	3872 60			X Normal - 2,7	x Medium	X Main entrance	X Malleable	x Extrovert	x Light	х
Front desk	1	60	60			Normal - 2,7		Main entrance	Malleable	Extrovert	Light	
Offices	1	180	180	x		Normal - 2,7	Low	Staff wardrobes	Malleable. 1,4m desk. Groups of 4-6 teachers.	Introvert	Light	
ICT operation and assistance	1	18	18			Normal - 2,7	Low	Accesible for both staff and students	Malleable	Extrovert	Light	
Rest room Meeting room	1	16 40				Normal - 2,4 Normal - 2,7	Low	Offices Offices, easy access for parents	Malleable Malleable	Extrovert, used for meetings with parents	Medium	
Copy room	1	20	20			Normal - 2,2	Medium		Malleable	Introvert	Dark	
Staff room	1	120	120	40 m² dining space is added to common space/canteen		Normal - 2,7	Medium	Offices	Malleable	Introvert	Medium	
Staff wardrobes Remote storage archive	1	110		x Can be removed if electronic archives		Normal - 2,2 Normal - 2,2	Medium	Offices Free placement	Malleable Malleable	Introvert	Dark	
Total - Administration and common areas			644	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
School health services	1	80	80	x		Normal - 2,7	Low	Accessible for students and public for meetings with parents, but not exposed			Light	
Total - Supportive services			80			x	x	x	x	x	x	х
Storage Workshop	1	40	40			Normal - 2,2	Medium	Free placement Tool shed	Malleable Malleable	Introvert	Dark Dark	
Tool shed	1	32	32			Normal - 2,2 Normal - 2,2	-		Malleable	Introvert	Dark	
Waste room	1	60				Normal - 2,2	High	Side entrance	Malleable, partly	Extrovert	Dark	
Cupboard Classing center	1	20				Normal - 2,2		Free placement	Malleable partly	Introvert	Dark	
Cleaning center Total - Supportive areas	1	40	40 232			Normal - 2,2	Medium	Side entrance	Malleable, partly	Introvert	Dark x	x
Sum		8,33981				x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Area per student, rehabilitation	1080	7,9	8532	x	This means that the program will meet the area norm for m² per student.		x	x	x	x	х	x
Culture room/black box/theatre stage/cinema/concert room				x	Invite the public into the building after school hours. Create more creative spaces for the students the learn and evolve in the daytime.	Tall	High	Needs supportive areas. Wardrobes, rehearsal room, storage, music	Non-malleable?	Extrovert	Dark	Stage opening 12m.
Workshops and supportive rooms for theatre stage				x		Normal - 2,7	High		Non-malleable?	Extrovert	Medium	D th.
Garden/kitchen garden				х	Added program to Food and Health subjects	Outdoor. Some indoor rooms with low to normal ceiling height - 2,2		Basement or ground level, easy access			Dark	Roof top garden. Not available outside school hours to avoid vandalisation
Bike parking				x	Promote a healthy activity level and green transport	Outdoor	Medium	Entrances and wardrobes	Malleable	Extrovert	Light	
Skateboard and scooter ramps				х	Promote a health activity level	Outdoor	High		Malleable	Extrovert	Light	

WORK PLAN

Base

We started the diploma semester continuing our invesigative work form the prediploma. Through modelbuilding, reference studies and drawing we will got to know both the school program and the case study building and established a base for the upcoming project.

Project

With a base in our investigative work and findings we continued the semester with analysing both the existing building and the school program through drawings and models, exploring what possibilities lie within the existing building as well as in the educational program. First mid term review discussing our findings and directions for the next project phase.

Development

Developing the school project through sketches, working model in 1:100, 3D model. Second midcrit, followed up by the last phase of project development. Axonometric drawings of new elements.

Presentation

In the presentation phase we will be producing the material to best possible explain the project work.

STRATEGY / WORKING METHOD

Drawing and model making Both drawing, diagram- and modelmaking has been important working methods, both for illustrating our discoveries but also as a working tool. We have been working both in 2D-drawings, 3D-modeling as well as in

Writing

physical models.

Return to writing to ground our arguments, discuss our findings and conclude on our decisions.

Supervision

Make a clear structure in frequency of supervision and keep a close dialogue with our supervisor throughout the semester.

Reterences

In the prediploma we have established a reference catalouge where we will continue collecting material that we have find inspiring terms of the project; ideas, existing schools transformation projects, office buildings, kindergartens, city planning, etc.

General

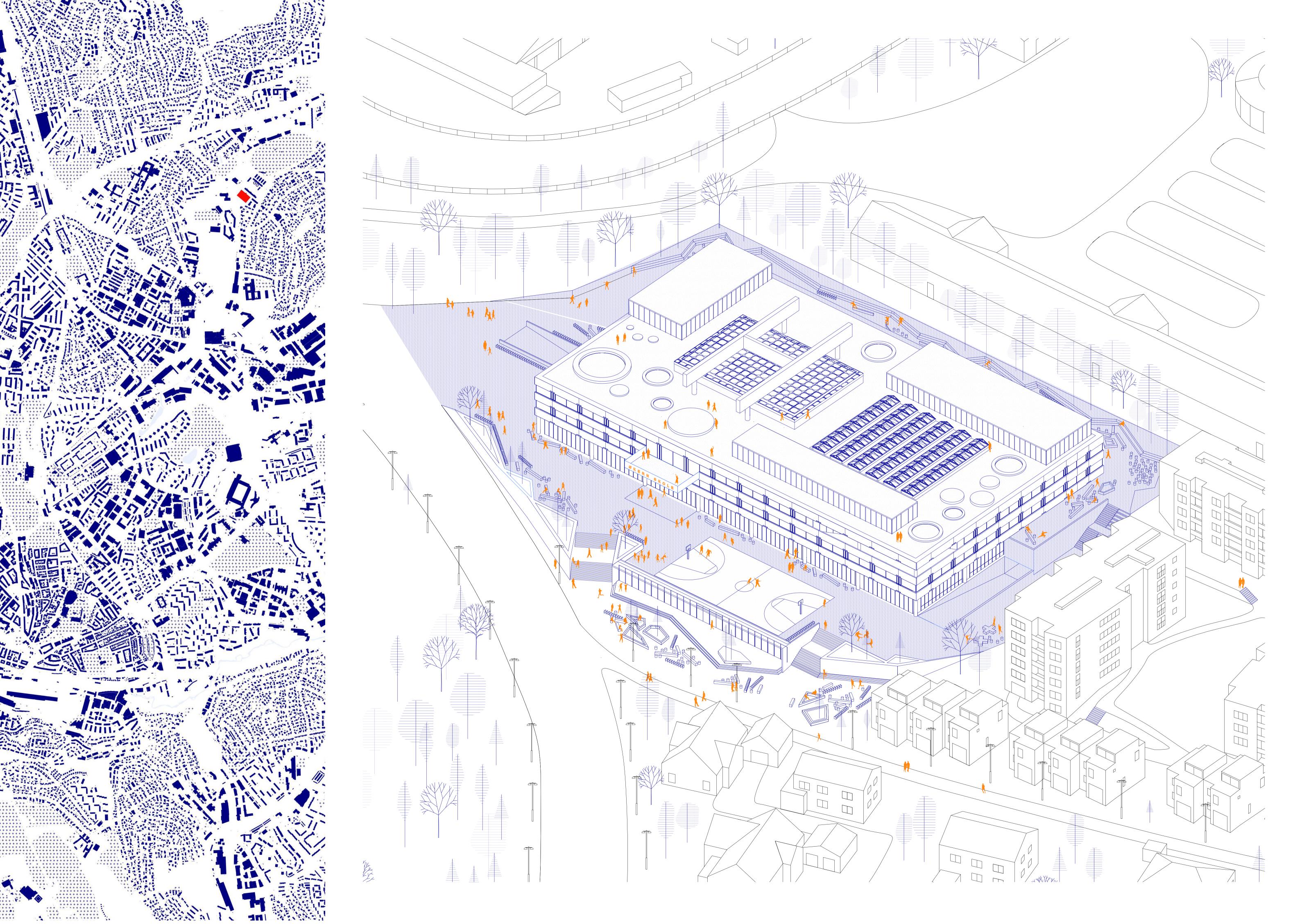
In order to push our project forward we will work parallel in all the different mediums to keep a steady creative working process and keep making discoveries throughout the whole semester.

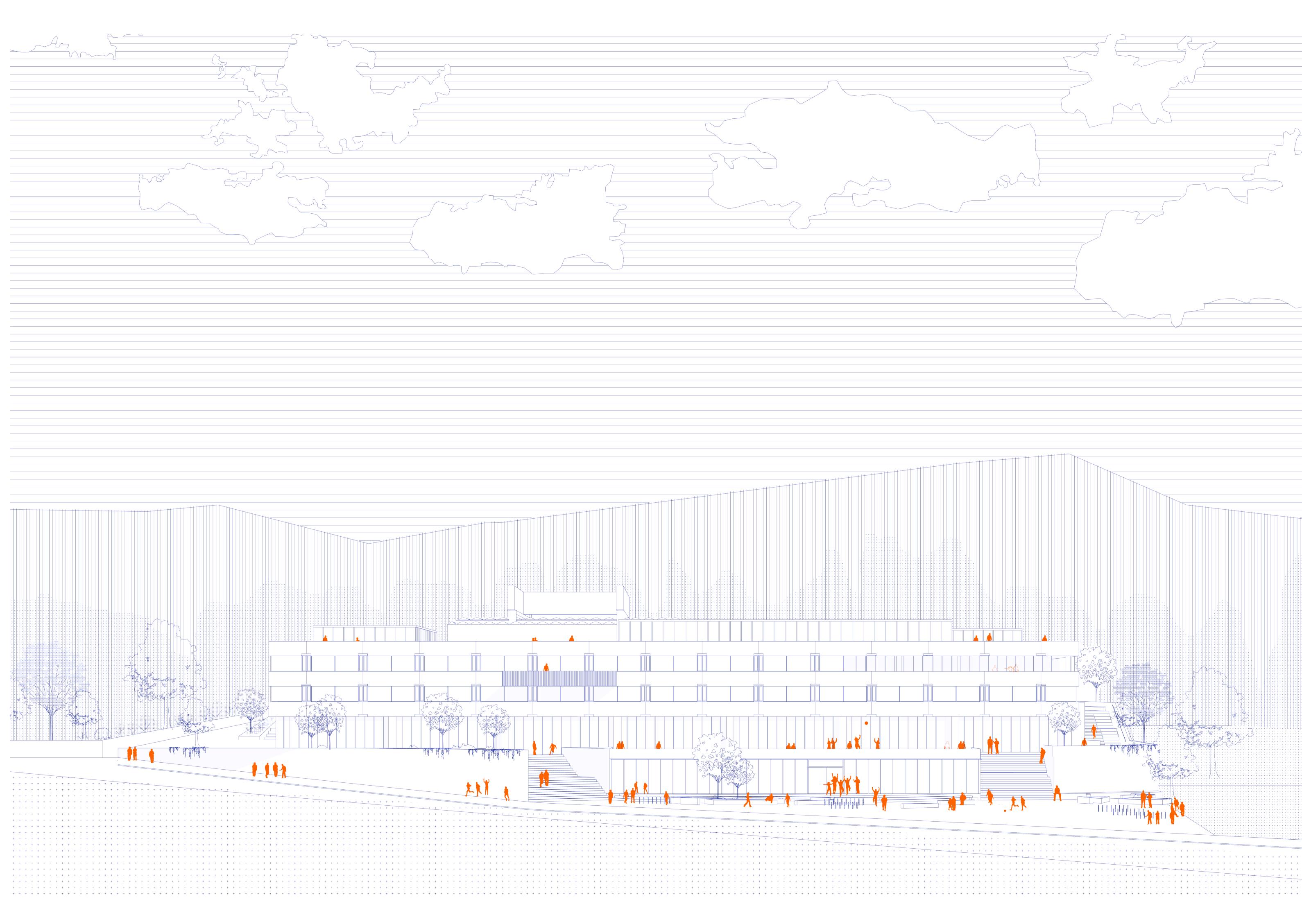
MATERIAL DELIVERY

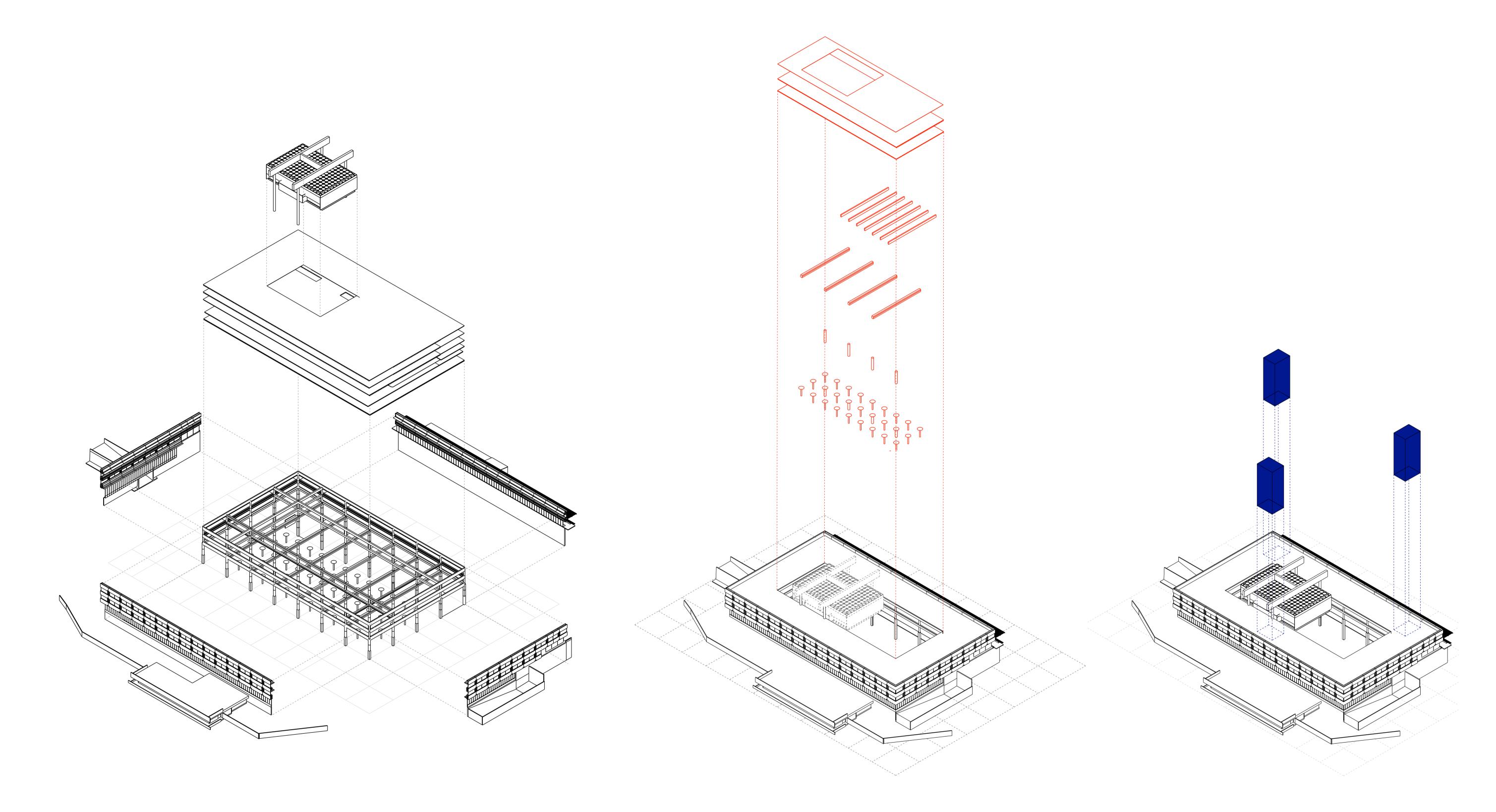
Plans 1:200 Sections 1:200 Elevations 1:200 Axonometric drawings of structures

Context model 1:500 Model 1:100 Building element models 1:100

Model photos Perspective views







EXISTING STRUCTURE

The structure is a five-story pre-fabricated concrete column- and beam structure, organised in a 12x12 meter grid. The deep plan measures 82x48 meters with large parts built into the sloping terrain.

REMOVE

Our first intervention was a grand cut in the roof, first floor and ground floor in order to bring daylight into the plan. The cut will follow the 12x12 meter grid and the logic of the construction. This intervention makes it possible to fit a multi-purpose hall and create spacious areas with daylight.

REPLACING INFRASTRUCTURE

Two existing cores are replaced and another one added as an efficient layer of vertical circulation, washrooms and technical shafts. The main staircases are kept as they are in great condition and valued as material gems in the project.



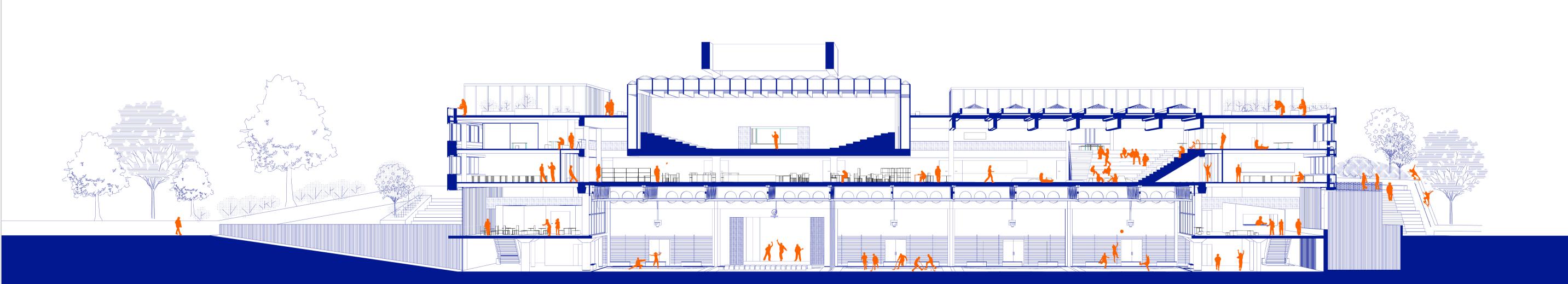


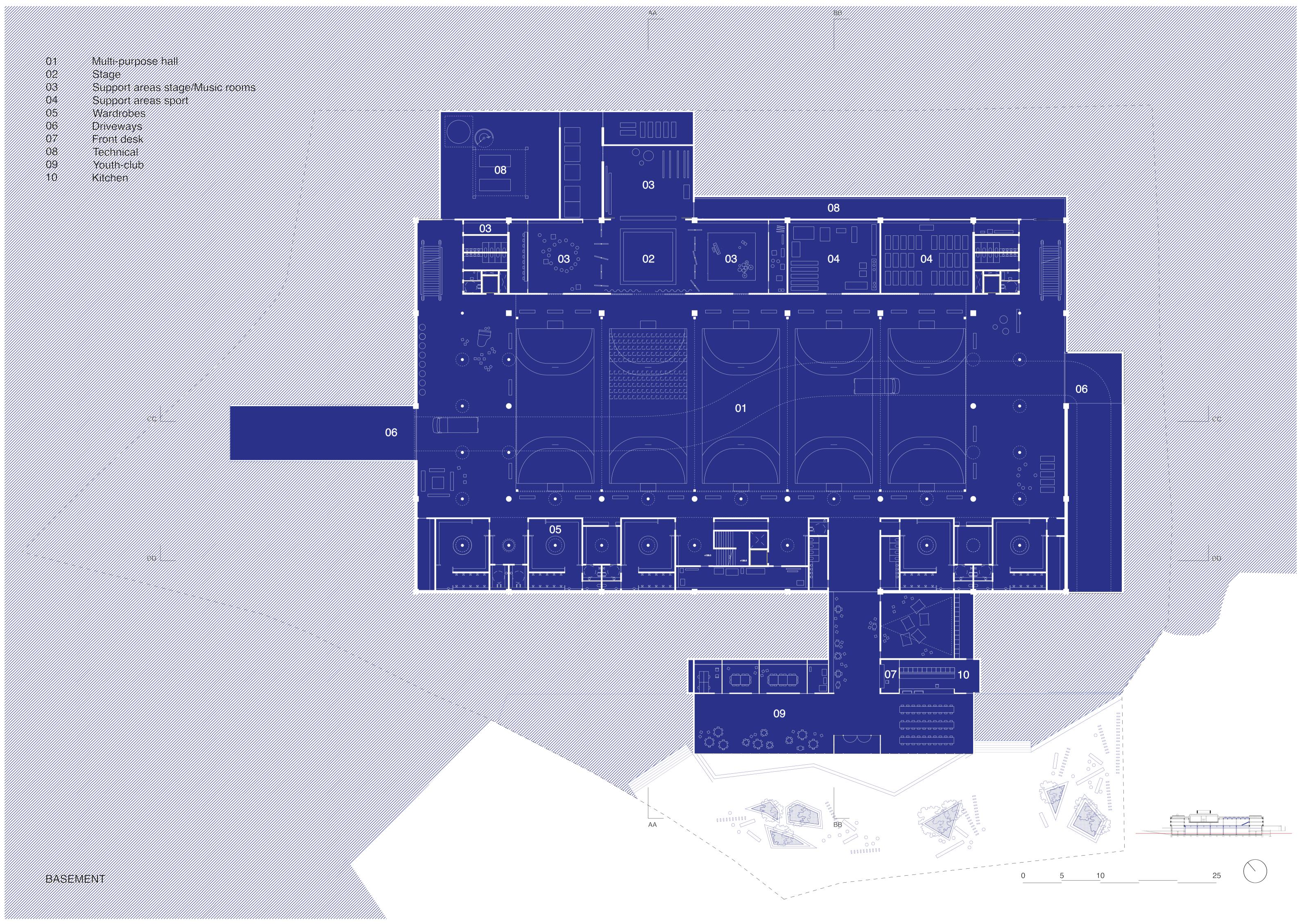


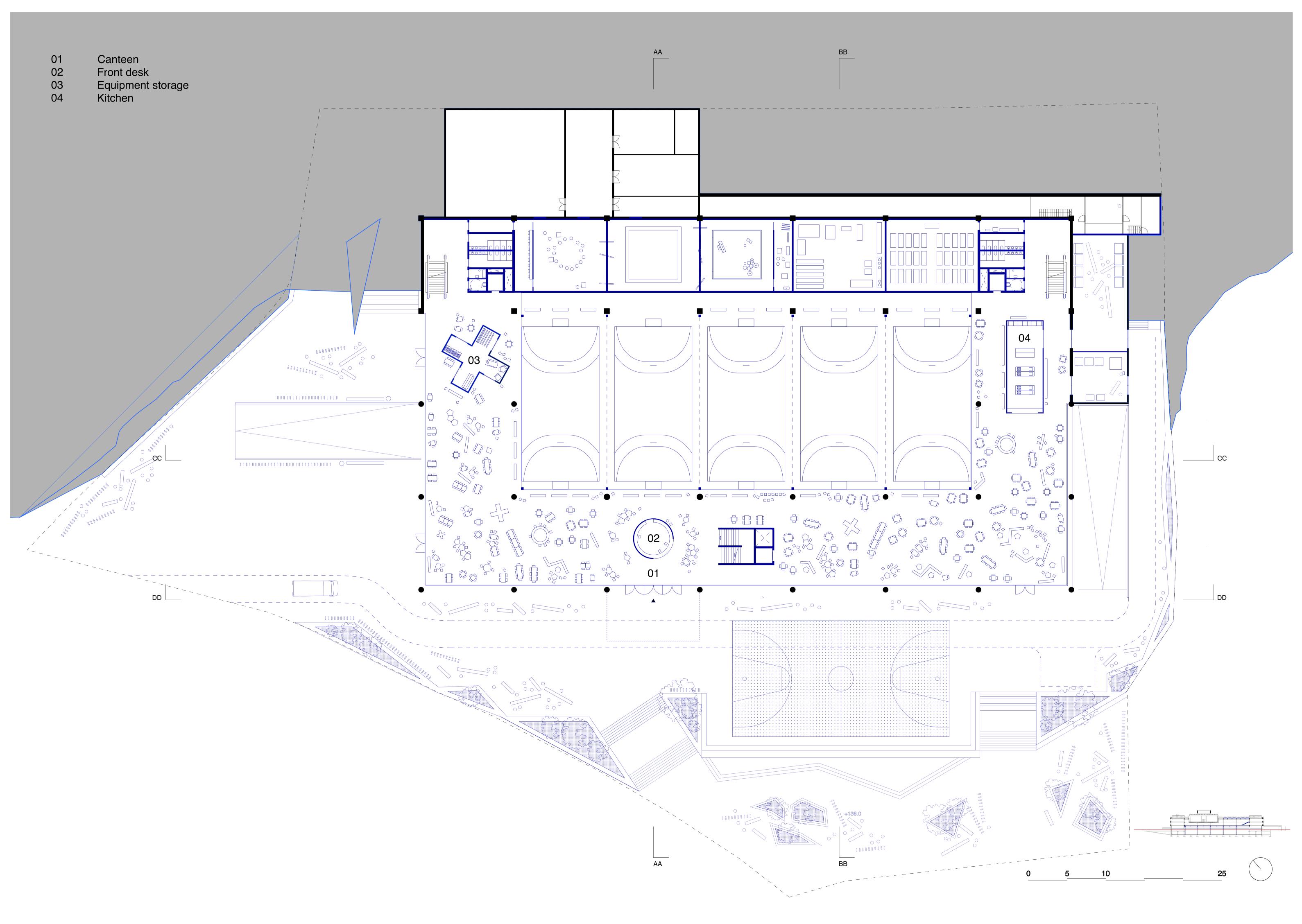


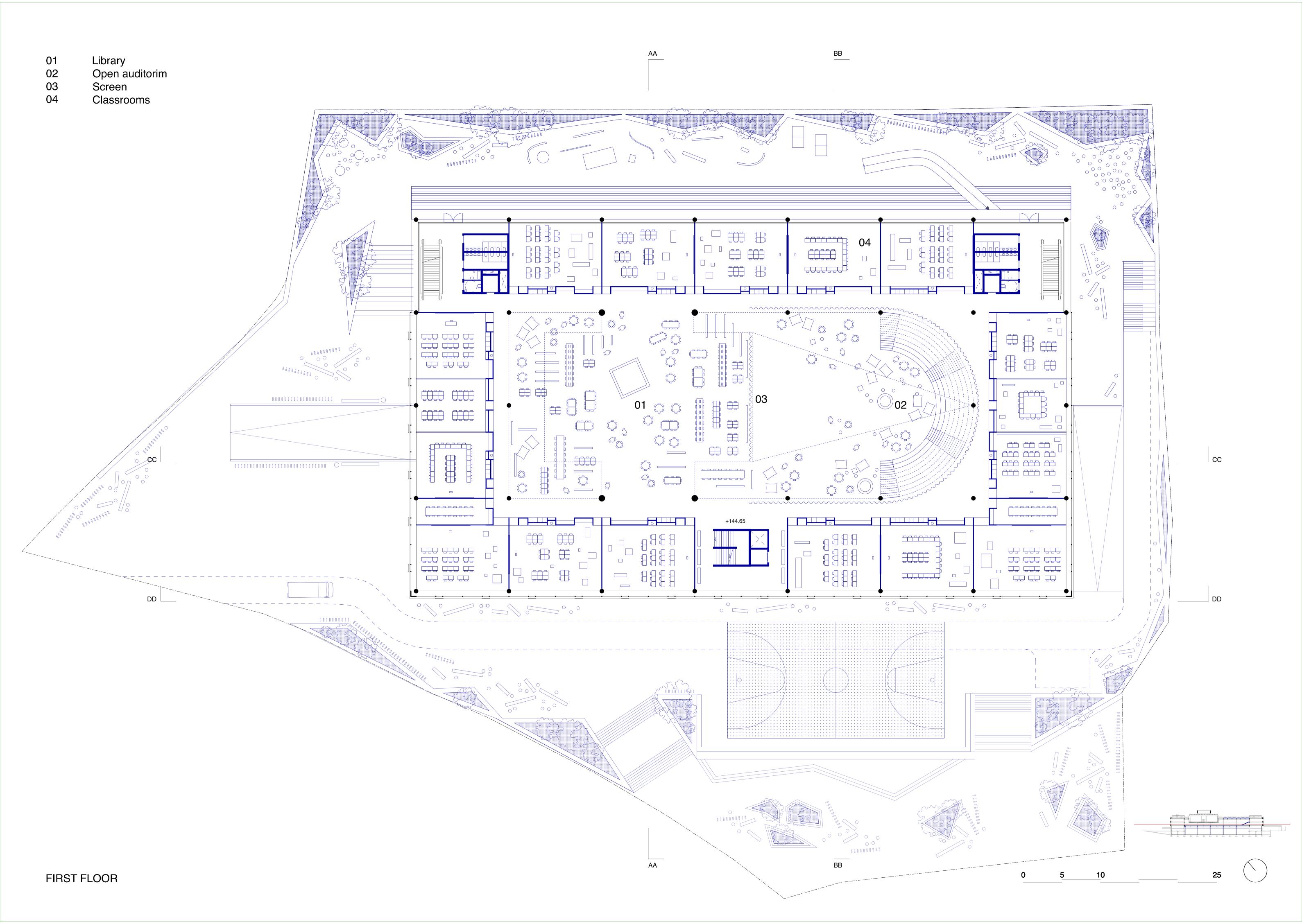
ENTRANCE

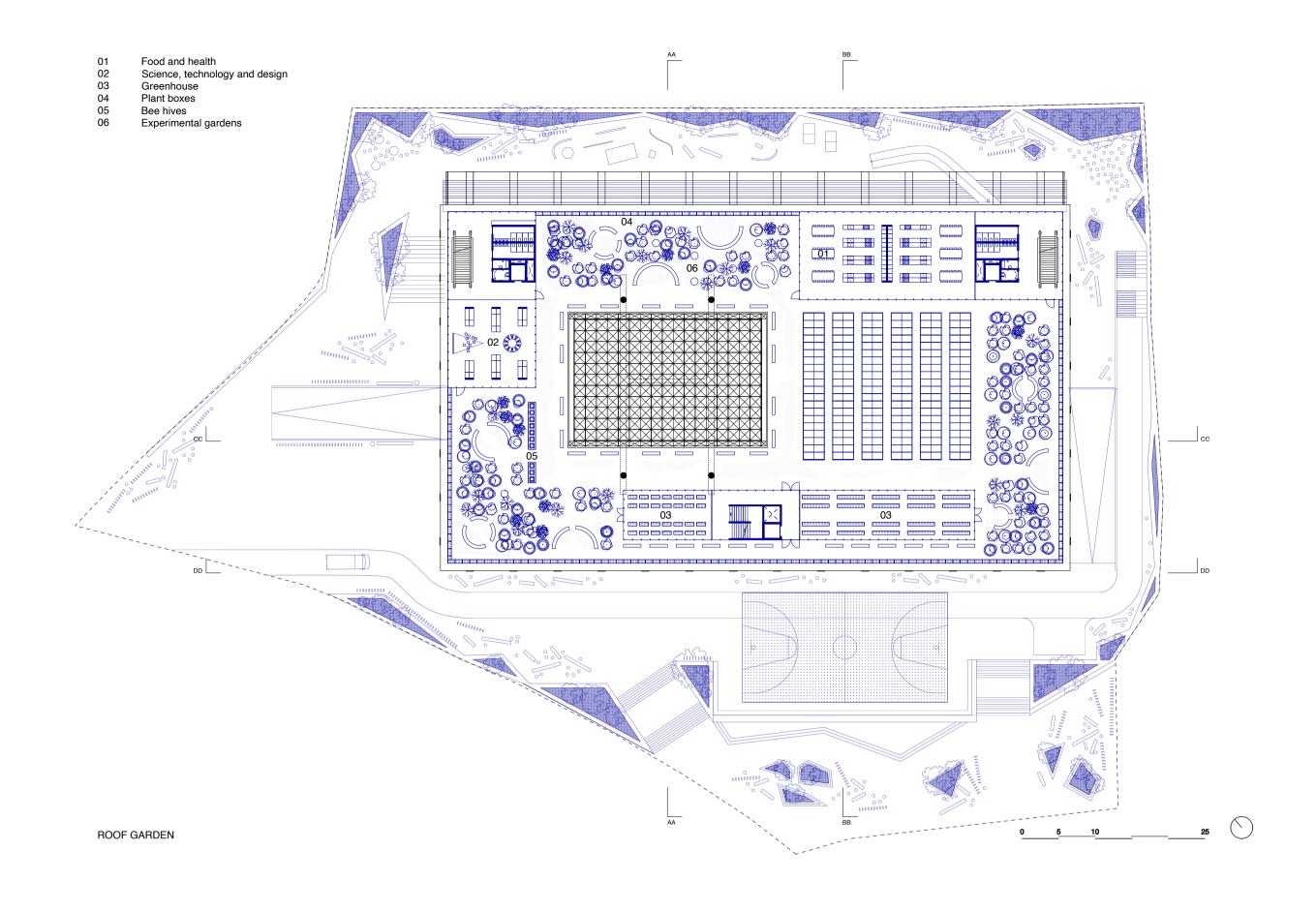
GROUND FLOOR CANTEEN LEARNING LANDSCAPE

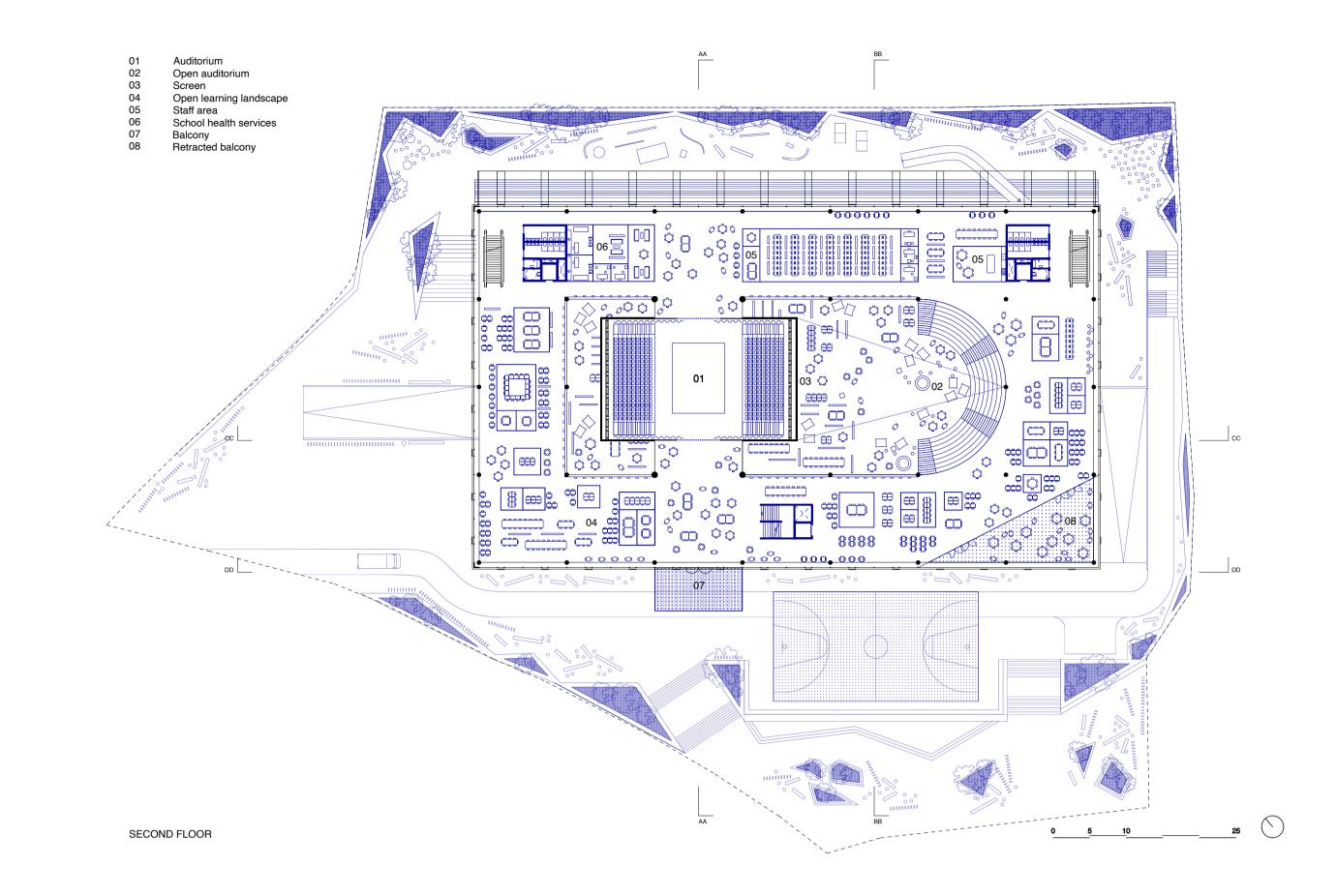


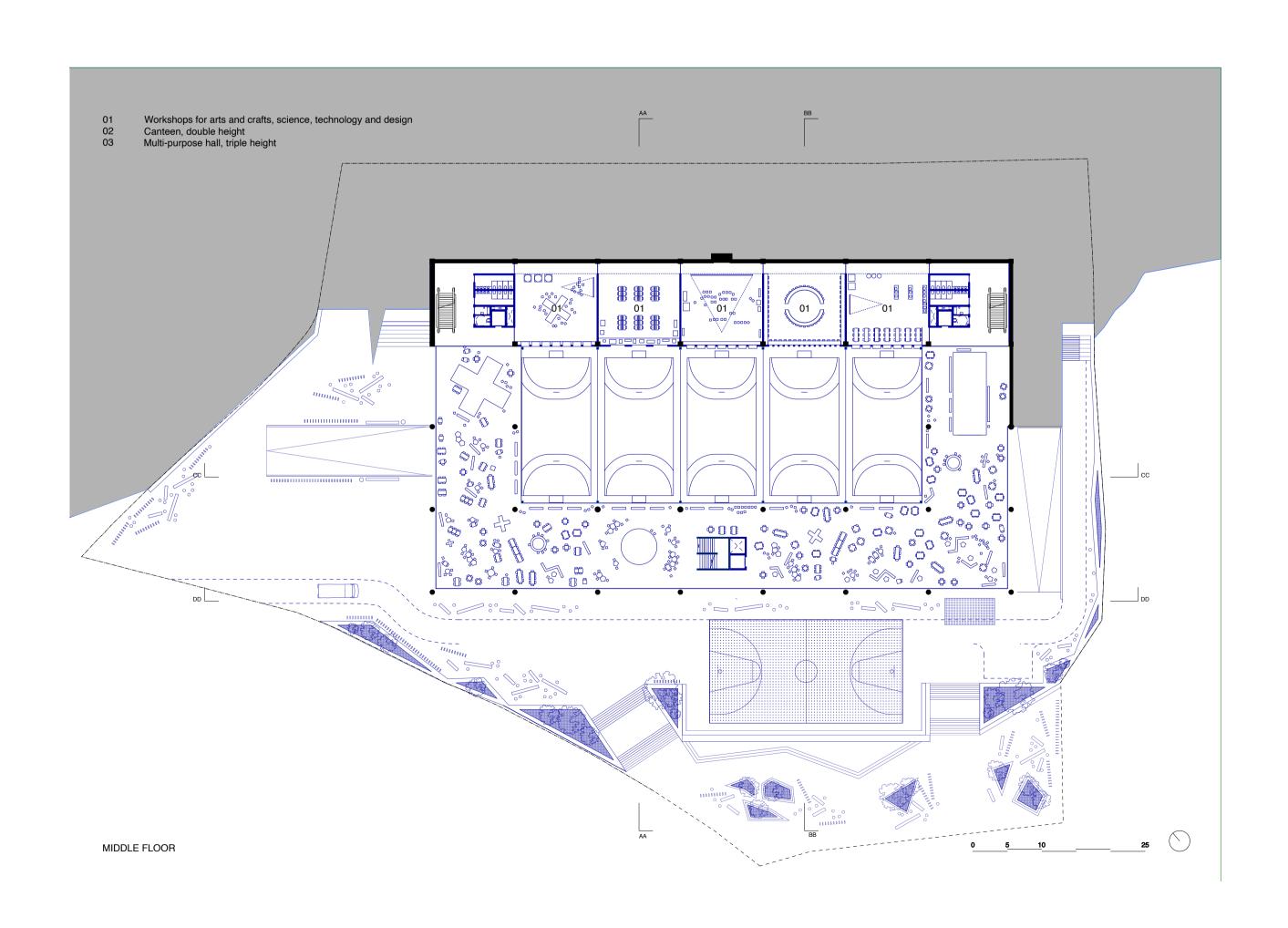


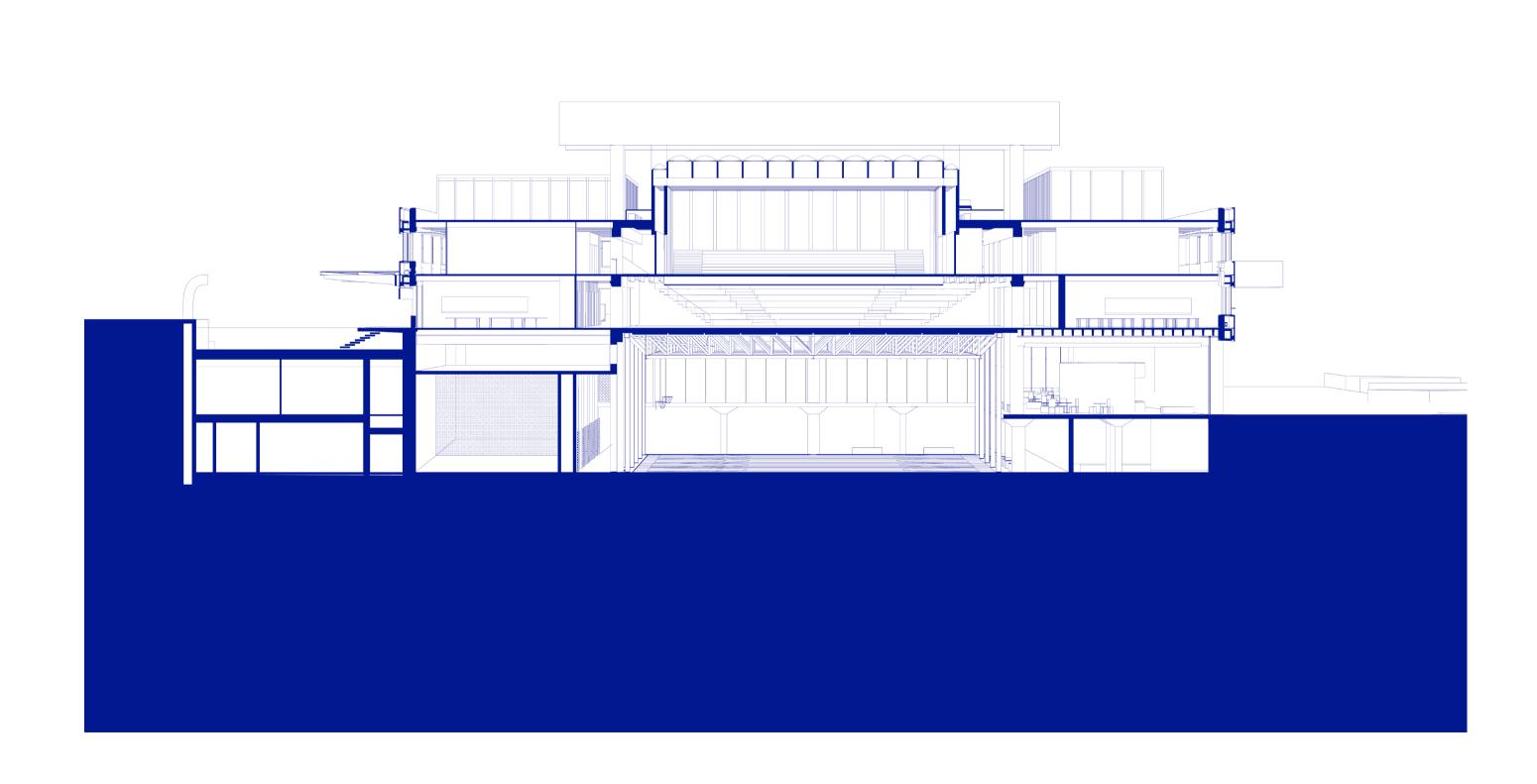


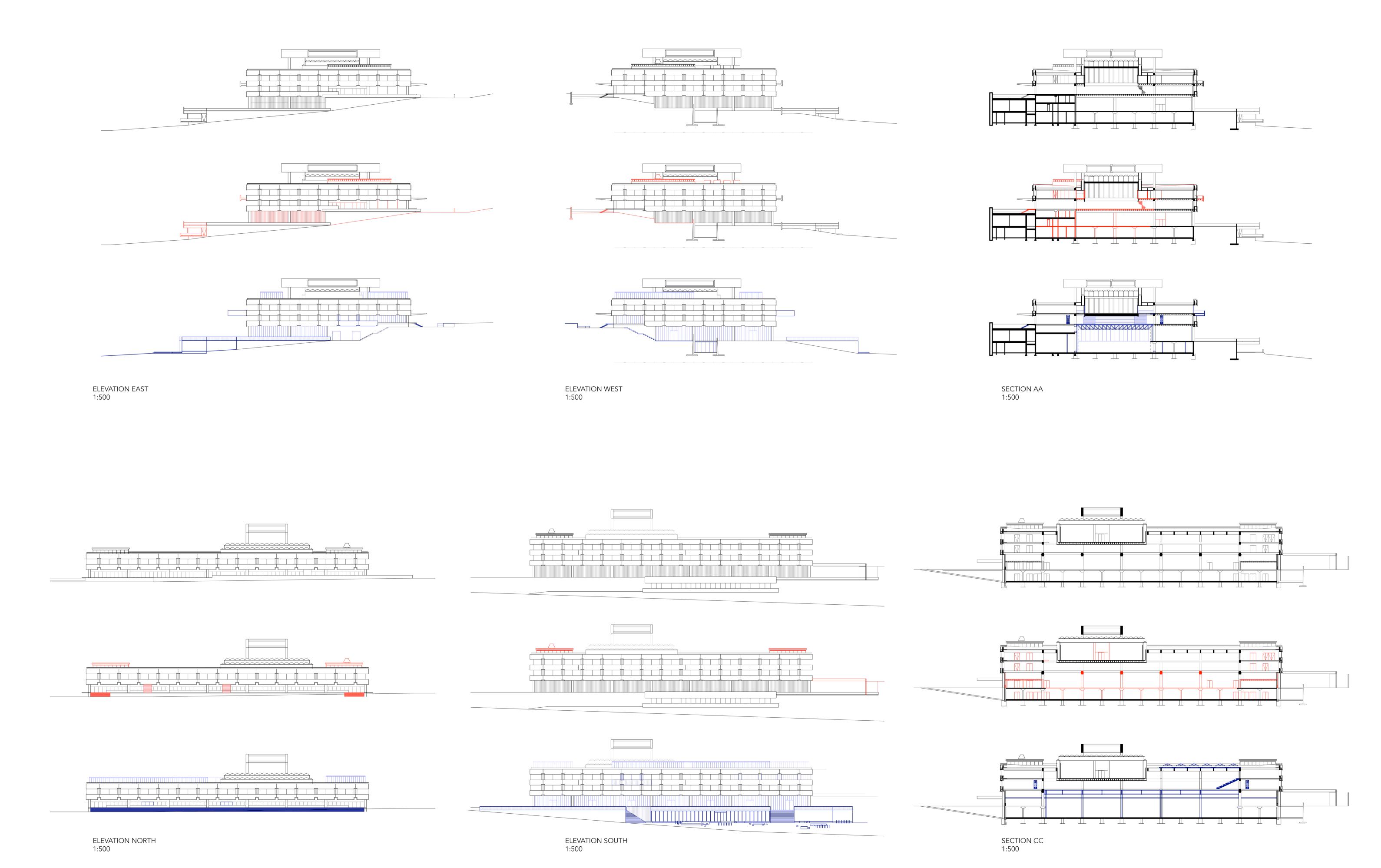






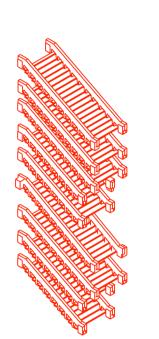


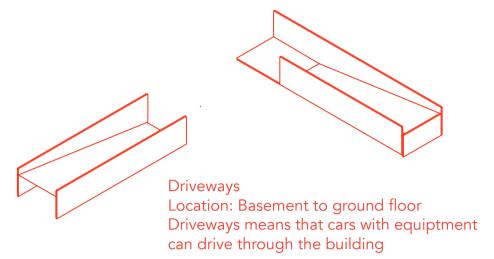


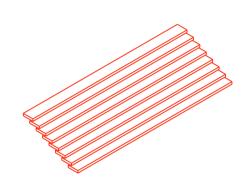


EXISTING ARTIFACTS TO KEEP

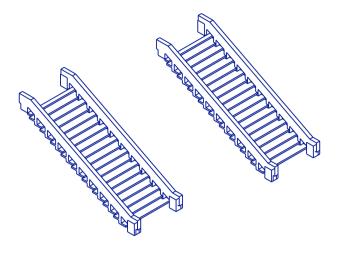
ADDED ARTIFACT



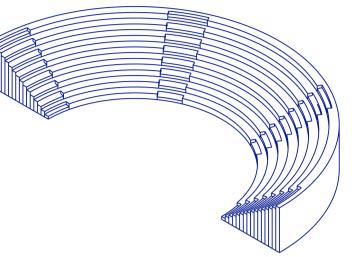




Outdoor stairs
Location: Basement to ground floor
These stairs were used as main entrance
stairs from the north side.

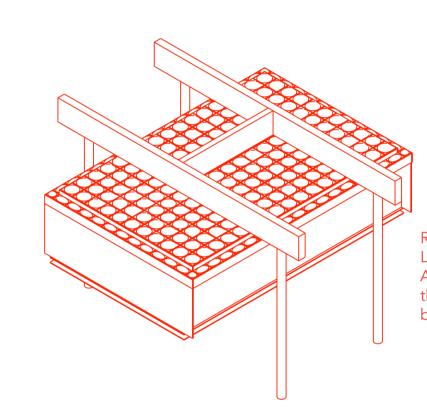


Main stairs
Location: second floor to roof
A new set of stircases are added to
acess the roof top

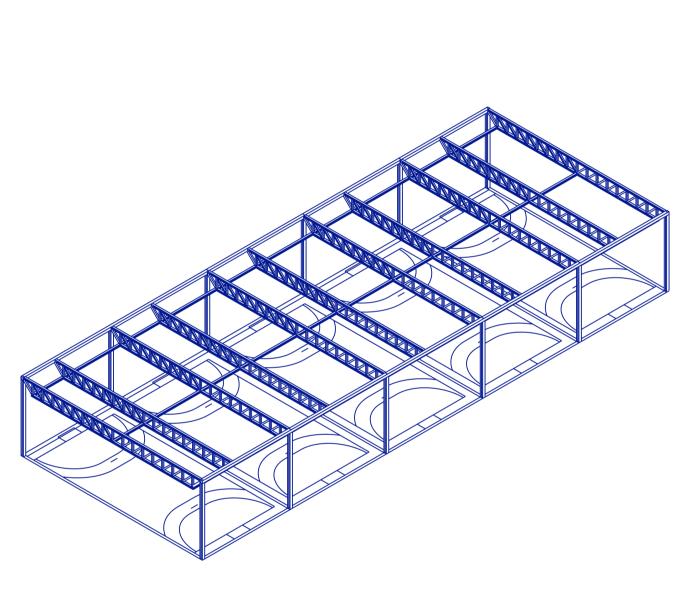


Amphi stairs
Location: first to second floor
Acting both as vertical circulation
and seating area, the new amphi
stair defines the open auditoium

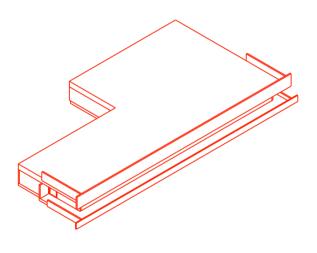




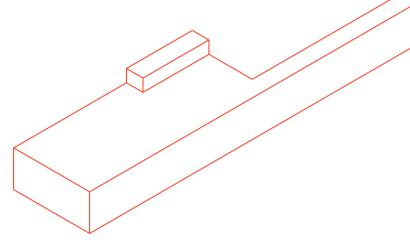
Roof girders and hanging auction hall Location: Second floor to roof A grid of skylights provide lighting to the former auction hall - the heart of the building



Skylights
Location: roof
Inspired by Grungs original drafts
of the building, more skylights are
added over the open auditoium



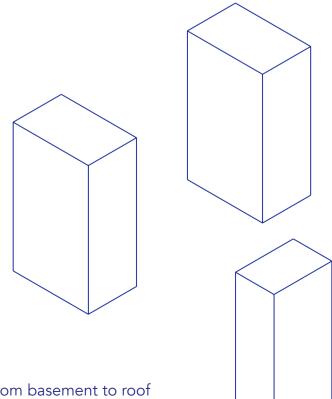
Penthouse
Location: basement facing south
Apartments for the buildings caretaker and
family. Today, a couple rents the space



Technical rooms
Location: basement and ground floor
Underground areas are used for technical
installations







Cores
Location: from basement to roof
New cores with elevators, technical
shafts and bathrooms are added.

