

# ARTISANAT | FABRIEK

^ centre for craft and education in Anderlecht

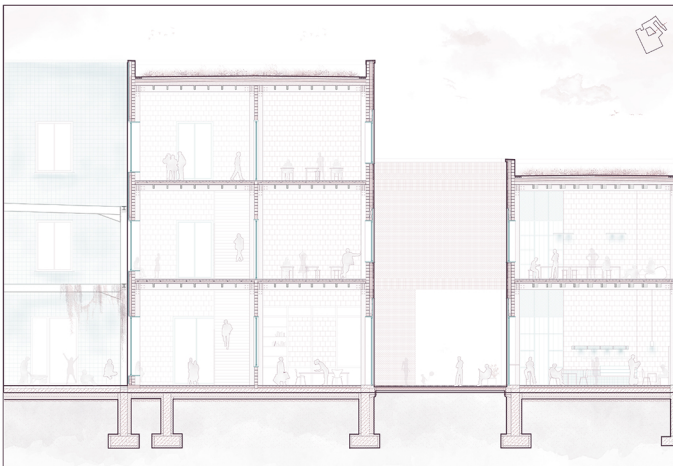
## SPOLIA / BRICOLAGE

A growing interest in a sustainable reuse of material resources has been encouraged by the urgency of searching for other possibilities that do not weigh on the geo-ecosphere but more on the anthroposphere. Thus, I believe an adaptive sustainable reuse approach could play a decisive role in an urban redevelopment and by stimulating new awareness on material reuse, plays a central role in generating new economic, cultural and social values.

## THE URBAN SCENARIO

The current urban and socio-economic status neighboring the Anderlecht site are utterly critique. Because of its hybrid geography caused by an inconclusive coexistence between the living and working, the area reveals both social and spatial fragmentations.

As I approached the urban plan phase, I started questioning which is the role of urbanism in reshaping the community. In a society characterized by the disappearance of communities and the rise of individualism, I believe that urbanism could play a decisive role in bringing a sense of place back to our cities. For this reason, the urban plan pursues a community-based approach that redevelops the neighbourhood and diversifies the economy, starting from the notions of productivity and creativity. By supporting a respectful attitude towards the existing, the urban proposal confronts the prevailing fragmentation by revitalizing an inner sequence of intimate public rooms that brings together a variety of new functions, promising a vibrant and variegated social realm to different groups of people.



## THE CRAFT CENTRE

The realization of a multipurpose craft centre offers the possibility to rebuild the community through the restoration of the culture of making, by exhibiting and inaugurating it as a process towards innovation. In a current scenario where productive sides of cities are kept out of the city centres, the Artisanat Fabriek performs as an active element within the city and engages truthfully with its social, historical and economic context.

Because “some of the most interesting conversation occur when there are opposing points of view” - G. Schafer-, the essence of the project has to be found in the constant dialogue among the old and the new. The adaptive reuse approach to the former Leonidas factory building does not only imply an interest in sustainability, but largely a search for a more complex architectural expression that brings past and future together in the architectural presence. I deeply believe that the architecture of the past has still an important place in our built environment. As L. Feireiss stated, the present has to be located between the past and the future: as we cannot deny what has once happened in the past, we have to look forward to the future. In these terms, I maintained part of the existing building bringing to it new functions and originality in space’s experiences.

For these reasons, the original steel structure is maintained and becomes the centerpiece of the design. Carrying the values of the original construction into the new ensemble, it defines the internal space organization and encourages the addition configuration: the new building adapts and shapes around it. By mimicking its grid, the new wooden structure (in the addition) aims to establish an association with the steel into a combined system among the corridor that goes all around the inner courtyard. This transitional space is not only the circulation core, but also a cross point where old and the new connects.

The old and the new differ in functions as well as materialization. In fact, while the existing accommodates the productive spaces, the addition combines areas for the community and the school. In terms of materialization, the first one has a more industrial character, while the latter reacts to the traditional street houses making use of bricks in a contemporary architectural language. After all, this dichotomy is seeking for an intriguing cooperation that could bring two apparently different structures into one.