the STUDIO of TOMORROW

process magazine

Romée Rodriguez

spring 2023

“Architecture should speak of its time and place, but yearn for timelessness.”

Frank Gerry

*Architecture should speak of its time and place, but yearn for timelessness. Architecture should speak of its time and place, but yearn for timelessness. Architecture should speak of its time and place, but yearn for timelessness.

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In this enlightening journey, I explore the critical junctures in shaping the research methodology, where the interplay of logic and intuition guided pivotal decisions. Dive into the serendipitous selection of intriguing case studies and the significant embrace of the space syntax method. Witness the transformative power of research, setting the stage for a harmonious fusion of methodology and design.

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INSIDE

01

from *the Editor*

Welcome to the latest edition of the magazine, where we explore the exciting and rapidly evolving topic of flexible working as a new norm for architectural offices.

As the world of work continues to change and present challenges and opportunities when it comes to creating functional and efficient, yet healthy and inspiring work environments. In this edition, we delve deeper once more into the topic of flexible working and explore the ways it should be translated into the physical work environment of architectural offices in the Netherlands.

I have chosen the magazine format for its visual and creative potential to present information effectively. Through case studies, images, diagrams, and info-graphics, we can better explain our research.

Overall, the format allows for a more creative and subjective writing style, including personal observations, which can provide a more romantic perspective on the topic.

It provides the flexibility to combine both objective and subjective elements, making it ideal for presenting research in architectural practice.

You will find a range of articles and features that explore the translation of flexible working into a design proposal. The activities in the faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment has been studied to determine the requirements for the design's programme. Furthermore, the design process is presented to understand how the final design came about. The final design - which will be the focus topic of the next issue - has been analysed, similarly as the two case studies in the previous issue. Lastly, final conclusions and reflections will explain to you the lessons I've learned throughout the last year, both on a research and design matter.

I hope that you find this issue informative and engaging, and that it inspires you to think more deeply about your future way of working.

Happy reading!

Dear reader,

I am excited to share with you my design proposal of the translation of flexible working into the physical workspace of architectural offices. This issue continues on the conducted research of flexible working as a new work norm for architects, particularly of those located in the Netherlands - although I believe it could (and should) be applicable internationally.

My interest in the topic came about as I began to question the traditional ways of working – especially in the architectural practice – and I realised that I wanted to have more autonomy in my future.

But to understand what this increased autonomy means to me, I needed to do some research in it. As I delved deeper, I also realised that my personal beliefs and values align with the idea of flexible working.

I believe that everyone should have the opportunity to work in a way that best suits their needs.

You will be able to read more on my position on the translation of flexible working into an office design, but throughout the magazine you will learn that I've learned a new way of designing - one that focuses on activities. Personally, I believe this is key to design anything, but particularly offices.

Lastly, I hope that my research will be valuable to you, whether you are an architect, a student of architecture, or simply someone interested in the future of work. I believe that this topic is crucial to the architectural field, and it is important that we continue to have this conversation, so I'm looking forward to hearing your thoughts and opinions on it.

Thank you for taking the time to read my proposal.

Sincerely,

Romée Rodriguez

Unveiling Architectural Innovations

An Introduction to Flexible Work Environments

02

In the previous issue, we delved into the dynamic world of flexible working, redefining the landscape for architects. Through a comprehensive exploration of two intriguing case studies, we embarked on a quest to unravel the current state of affairs in Dutch architectural offices. Surprisingly, discovered was a common yearning among the occupants of these seemingly contrasting studios: the profound desire for freedom of choice and autonomy. They longed to chart their work journey on their own terms, calling the shots on where, when, and how they toiled.

This intriguing revelation gave birth to a compelling design challenge: how does one create a physical environment that caters to the paradigm of flexible working? It was a moment of reckoning. I came to realise that the concept of flexibility isn't contingent upon the malleability of the physical setting itself – it's not all about modularity, demount-ability, or adjust-ability. Rather, true flexibility lies in the power vested in the individual, granting them the authority to determine how they want to work, whenever, and wherever.

With this new understanding, an inspiring metaphor took shape. Much like navigating a cityscape, where grocery shopping is a different quest from winding down with friends at a local café, the physical office environment stands as a steadfast backdrop. In this scenario, the users are the movers and shakers, adapting their surroundings to align with their ever-evolving needs.

Thus, an office designed to embrace the spirit of flexible working isn't about a mutable environment; it's about a fixed, nurturing backdrop that empowers users to change workspaces to the exact contours of their ambitions.

Figure 2: Office Structure as Machinery[3]

03

Revolutionising Workspaces

The Rise of Activity-Based Work-place Design

With ABW design, organisations create office space that matches the type of work (ie.: the activity).

In the modern office, office workers are no longer tethering themselves to one stationary, assigned desk. Instead, they are able to let their task help determine how and (and where) they complete it.

Several pivotal moments occurred while shaping the research methodology discussed in the previous issue. In those critical junctures, I often found myself at crossroads, relying on both logical choices and the guiding whispers of intuition.

For instance, when selecting the case studies, my instincts nudged me towards exploring an architectural office in my hometown, Enschede. An unexplainable gut feeling led me on this path, and serendipitously, *Beltman*, one of the Netherlands' oldest architectural offices, came into focus. This fortuitous encounter resulted in a fascinating duality: two case studies with divergent time-lines - one rooted in hundred-fifty years of tradition, the other a pioneer of innovative office concepts.

The decision to employ the space syntax method for analysing these case studies offers another example. Introduced to this intriguing approach during my early architectural studies, I seized the opportunity to incorporate it into my research methodology. Little did I know how significant this choice would prove to be.

As the research phase concluded and the design phase commenced, the need to translate research findings into a practical design proposal emerged. This transformation required precise measurements and data, a challenge met by conducting further research. By examining my own interactions within the architecture faculty - where I worked, what activities I engaged in, and the corresponding spatial requirements - the foundation for the program's design elements began to take shape.

This research journey unveiled the potency of the activity-based workplace design method, a design approach rooted in understanding the intricacies of work-related activities and the spaces that best nurture them. It is the bridge that connects the world of architectural research to the practical realm of design, fostering a seamless integration of thoughtful methodology with creative implementation.

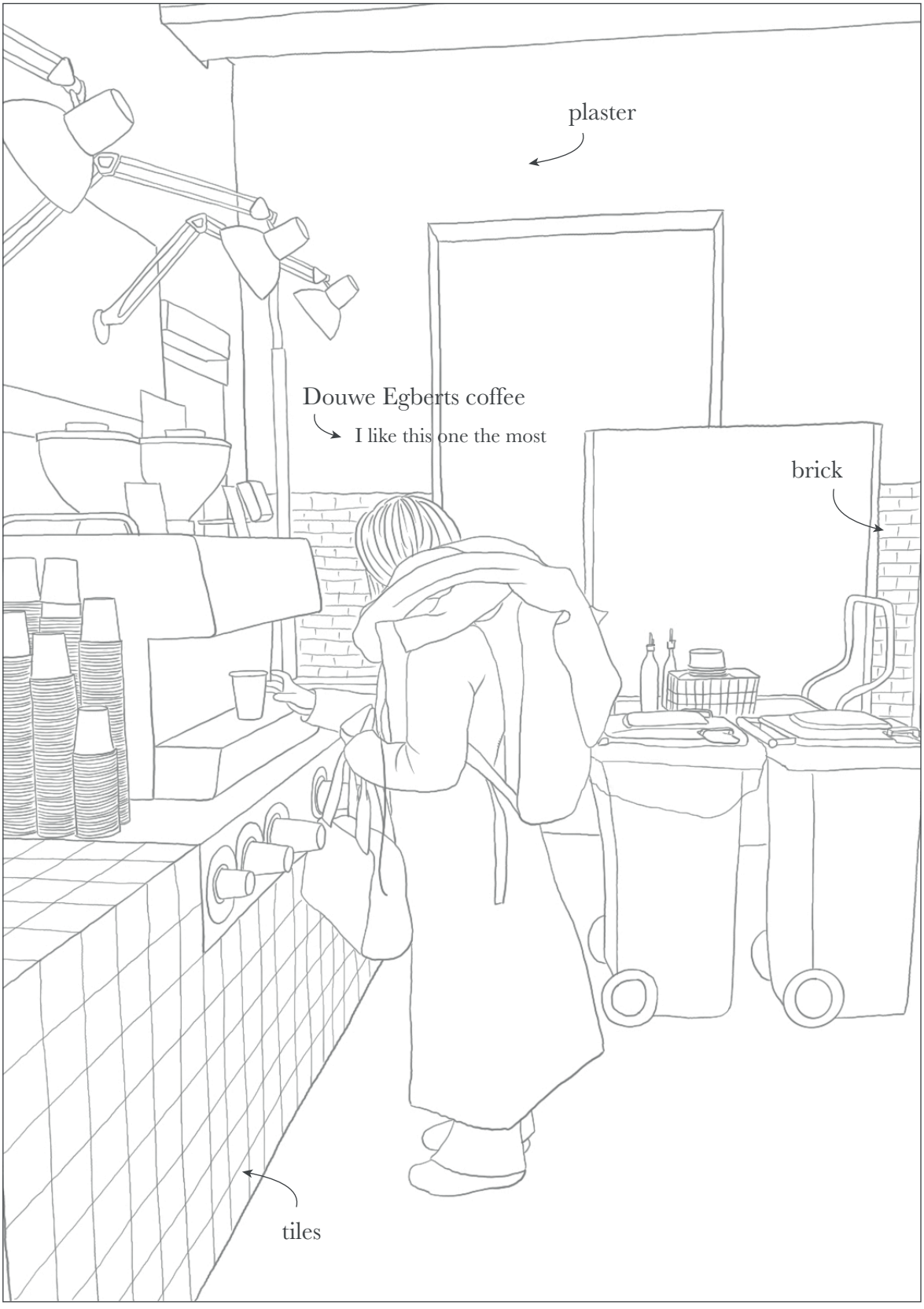
Main entrance

Arrival at faculty

09:00h

Ketelhuis

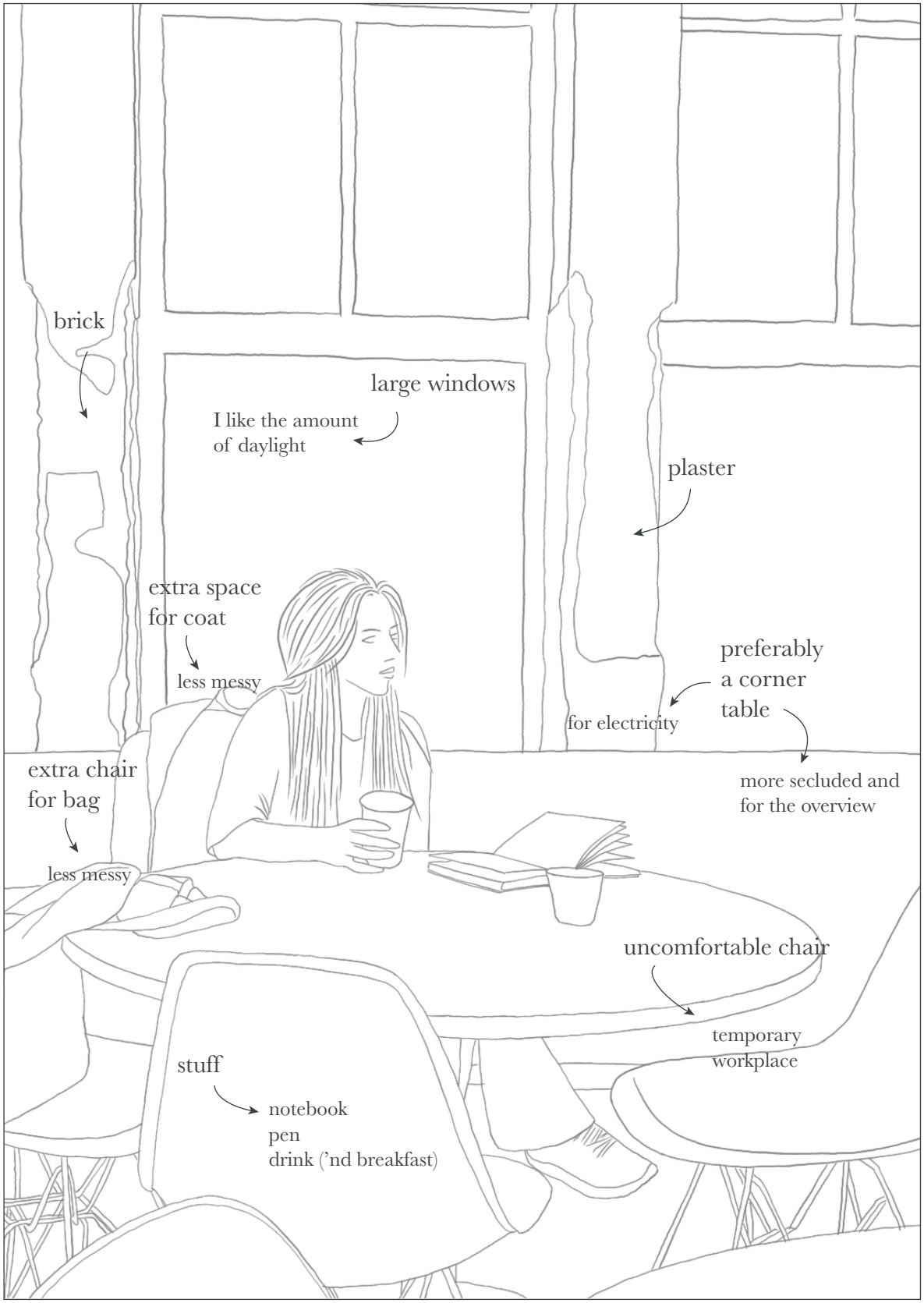
Break - getting coffee



09:05h

Espresso Bar

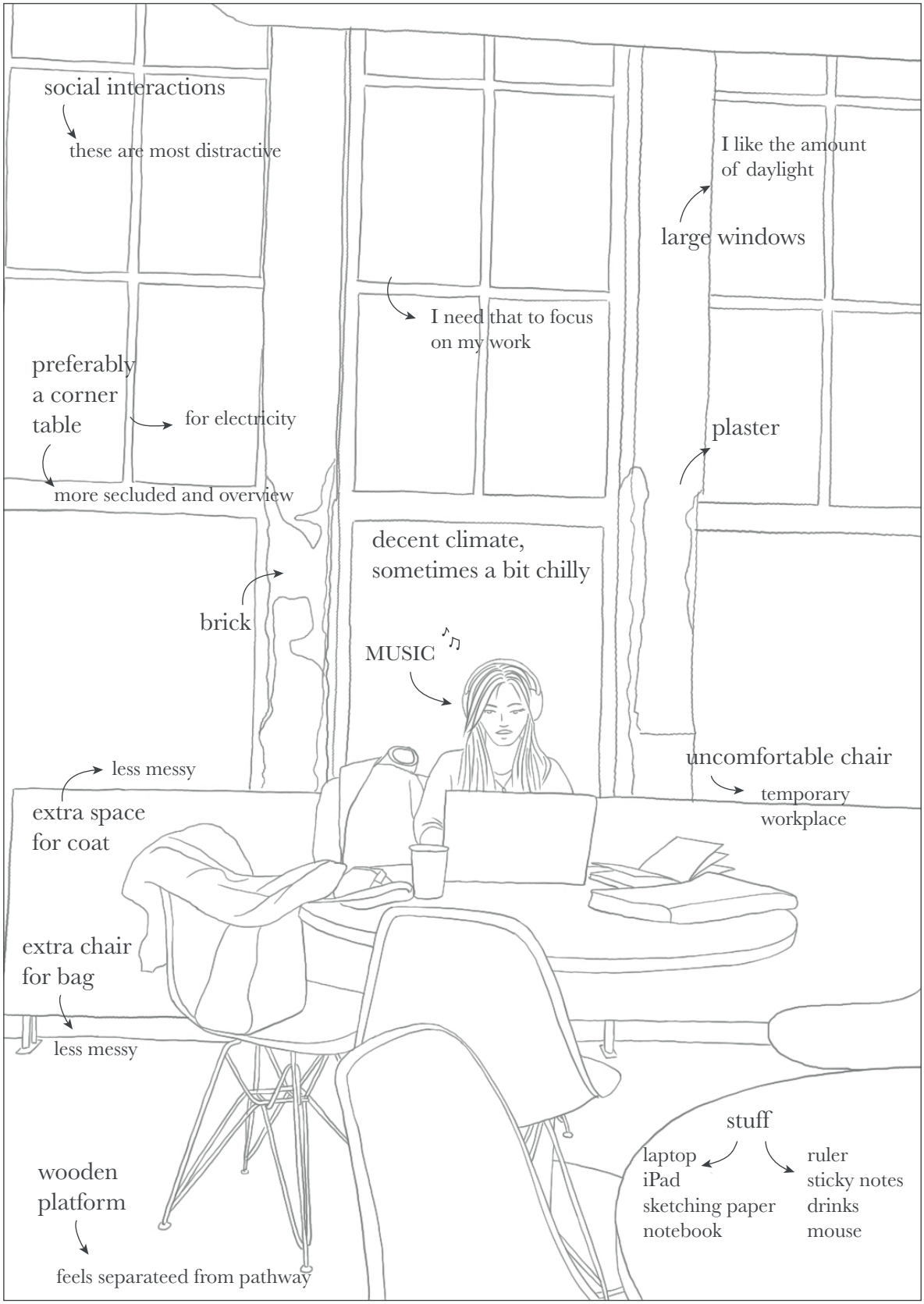
Meeting



09:00 - 10:00h

Espresso Bar

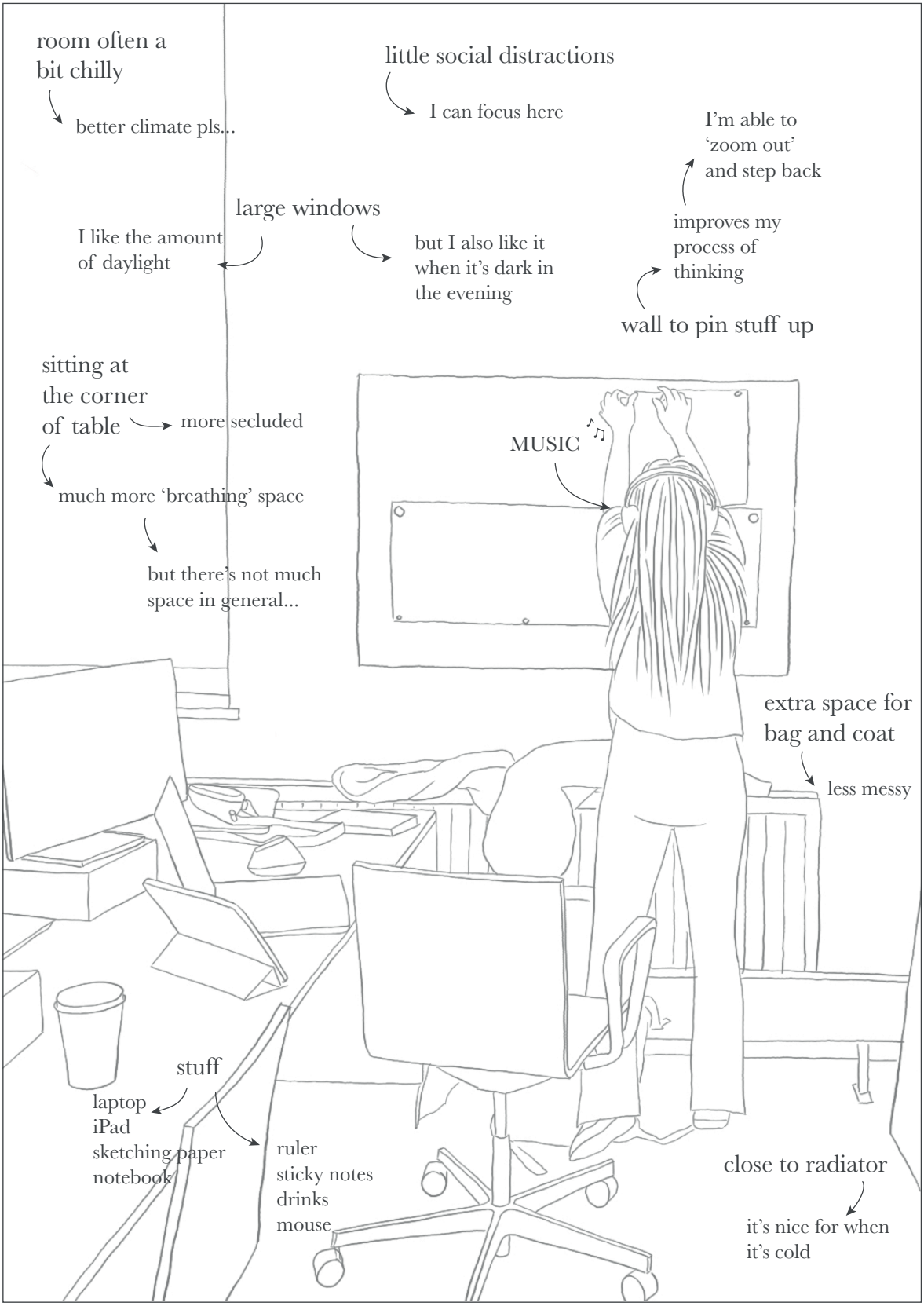
Work - writing/reading/research (low-medium concentration)



10:00 - 12:30h

Computer space

Work - writing, reading, research (high concentration)

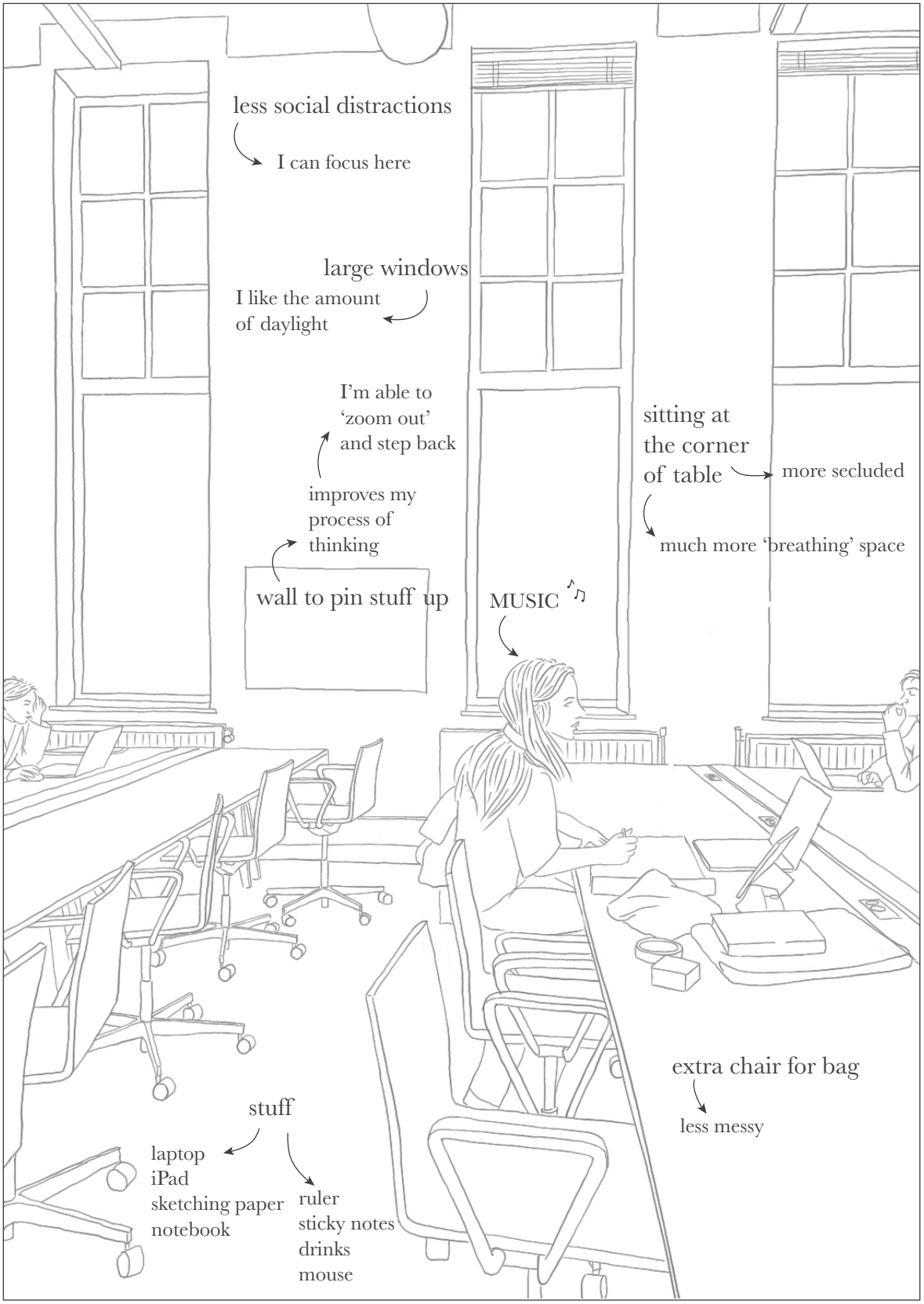


10:00 - 12:30h

Computer studio space

Work - sketching/designing (medium-high concentration)

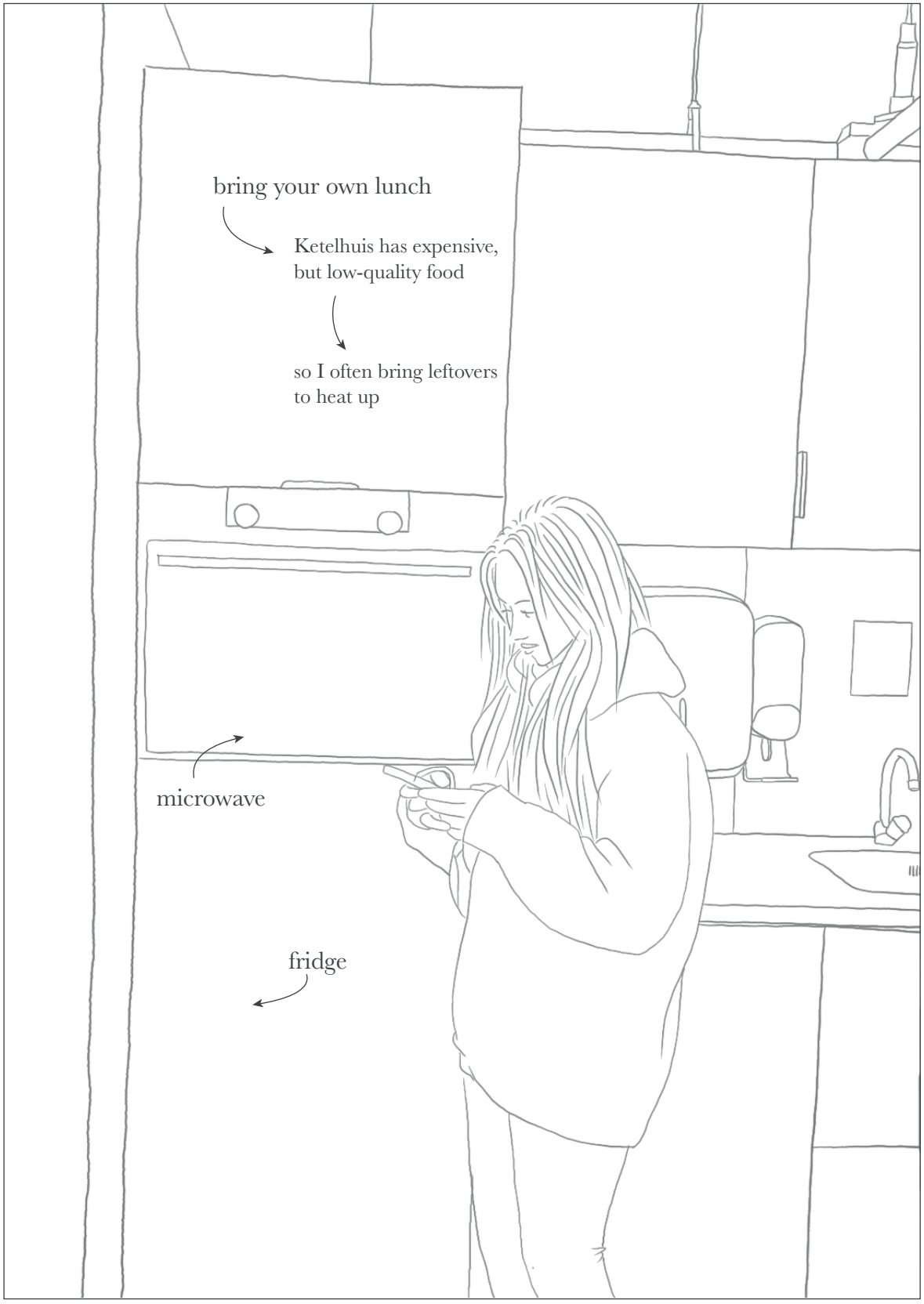
Tutoring



10:00 - 12:30h

Pantry

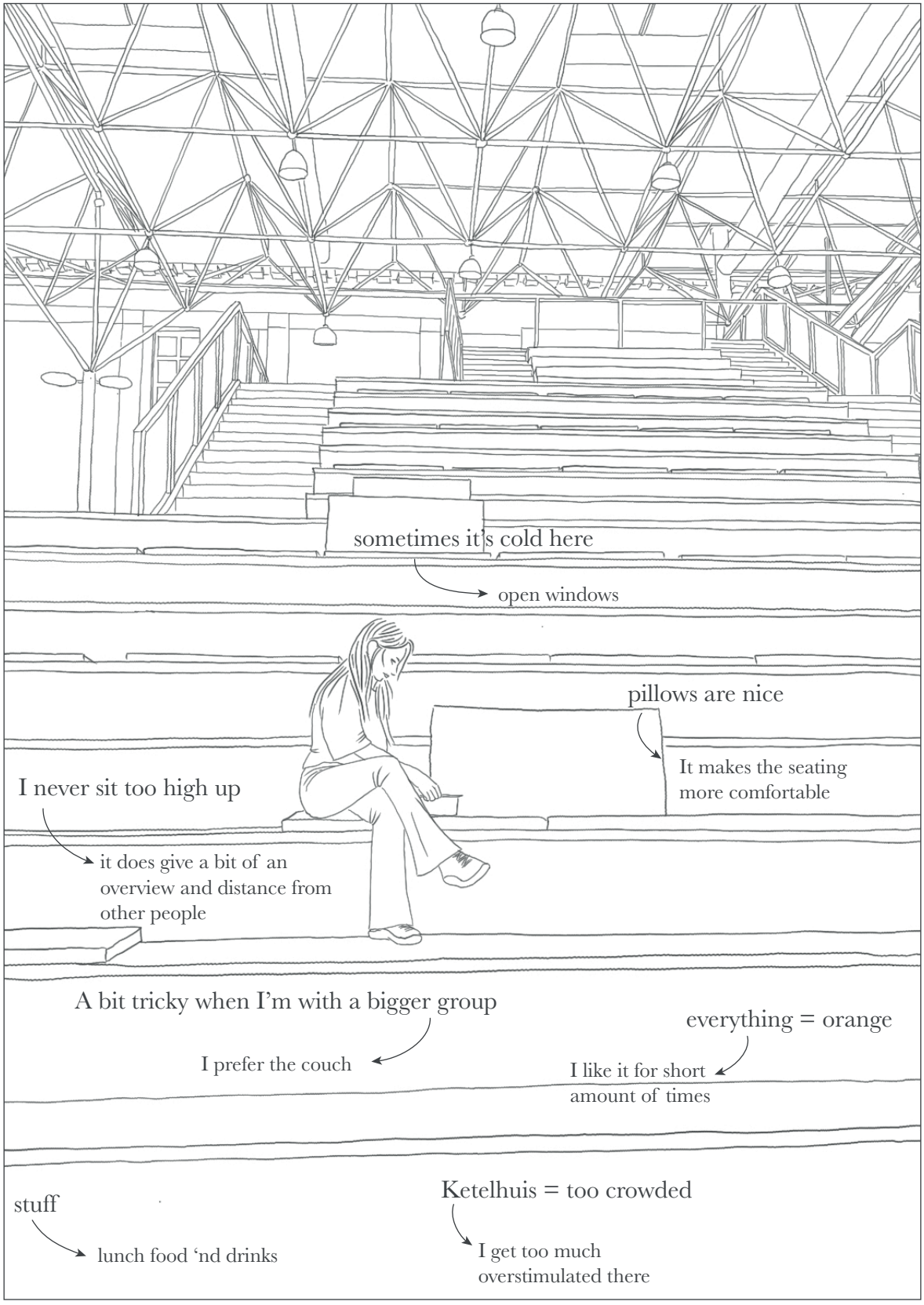
Preparing lunch



12:300h

Orange Hall

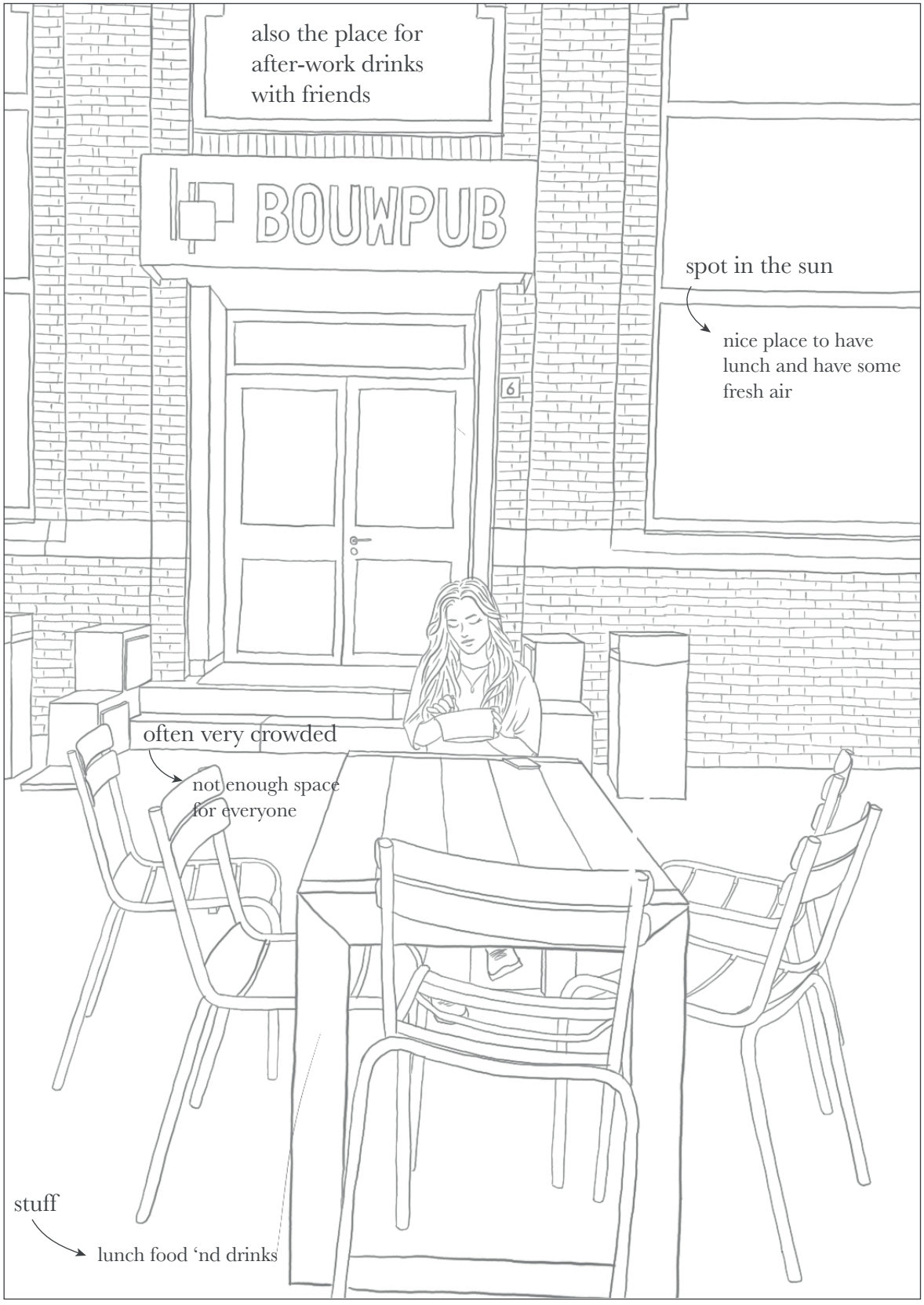
Lunch (winter/cold and rainy days)



12:30 - 13:30h

Bouwpub

Lunch (summer/warm days)



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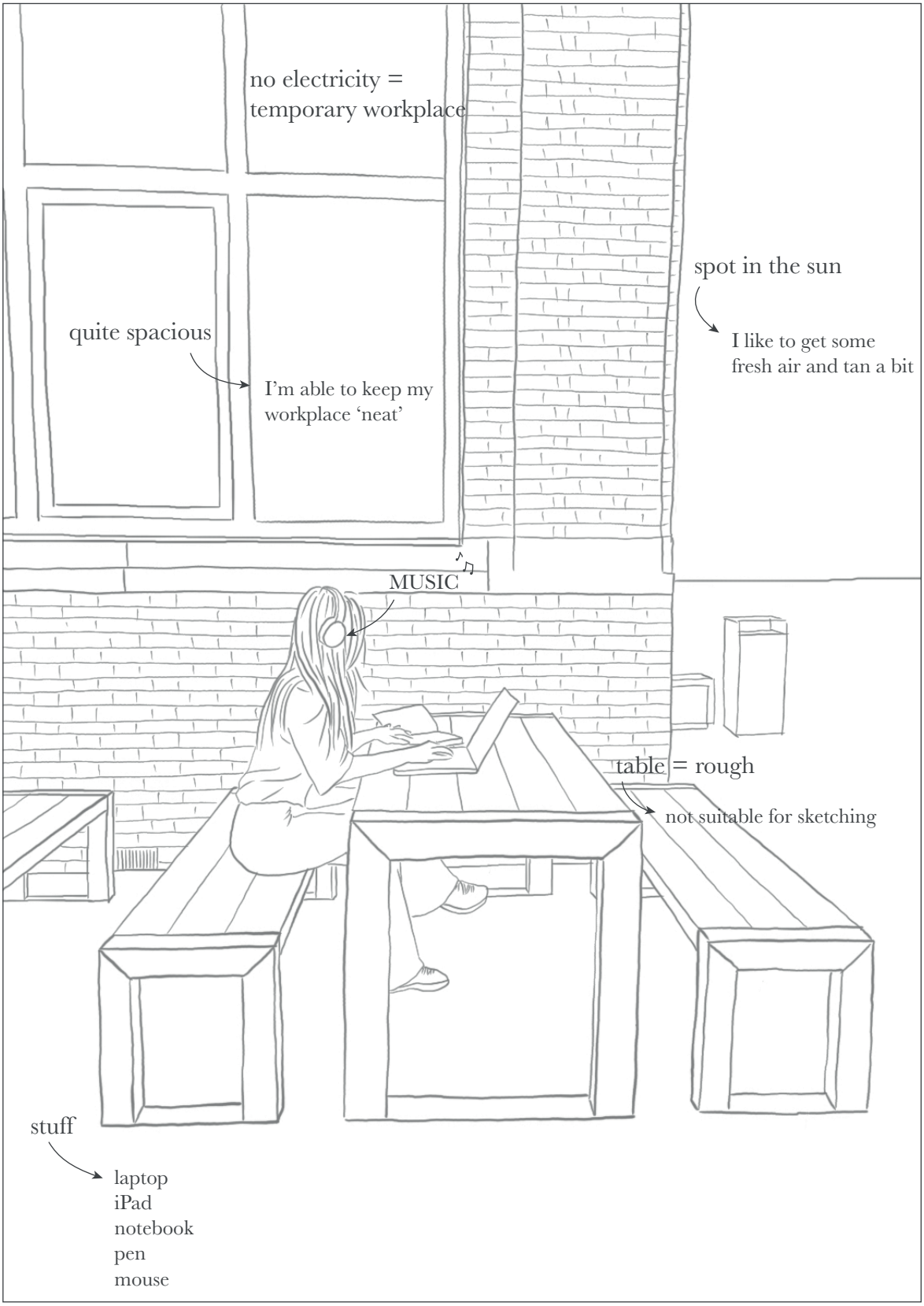
Bouwpub

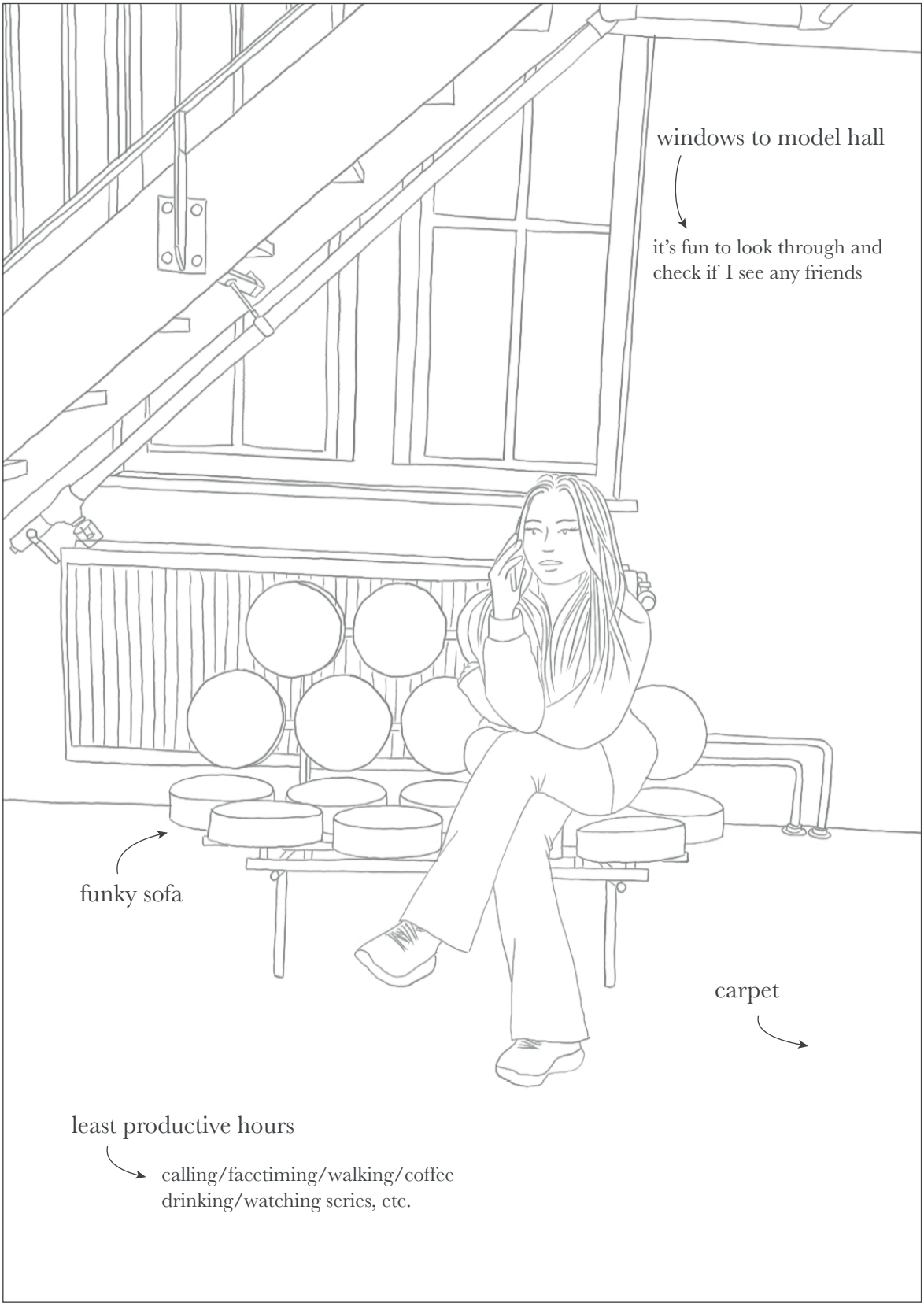
Work - writing/reading/research (low-medium concentration)



13:30 - 16:00h

Hallways

Break - coffee and walks

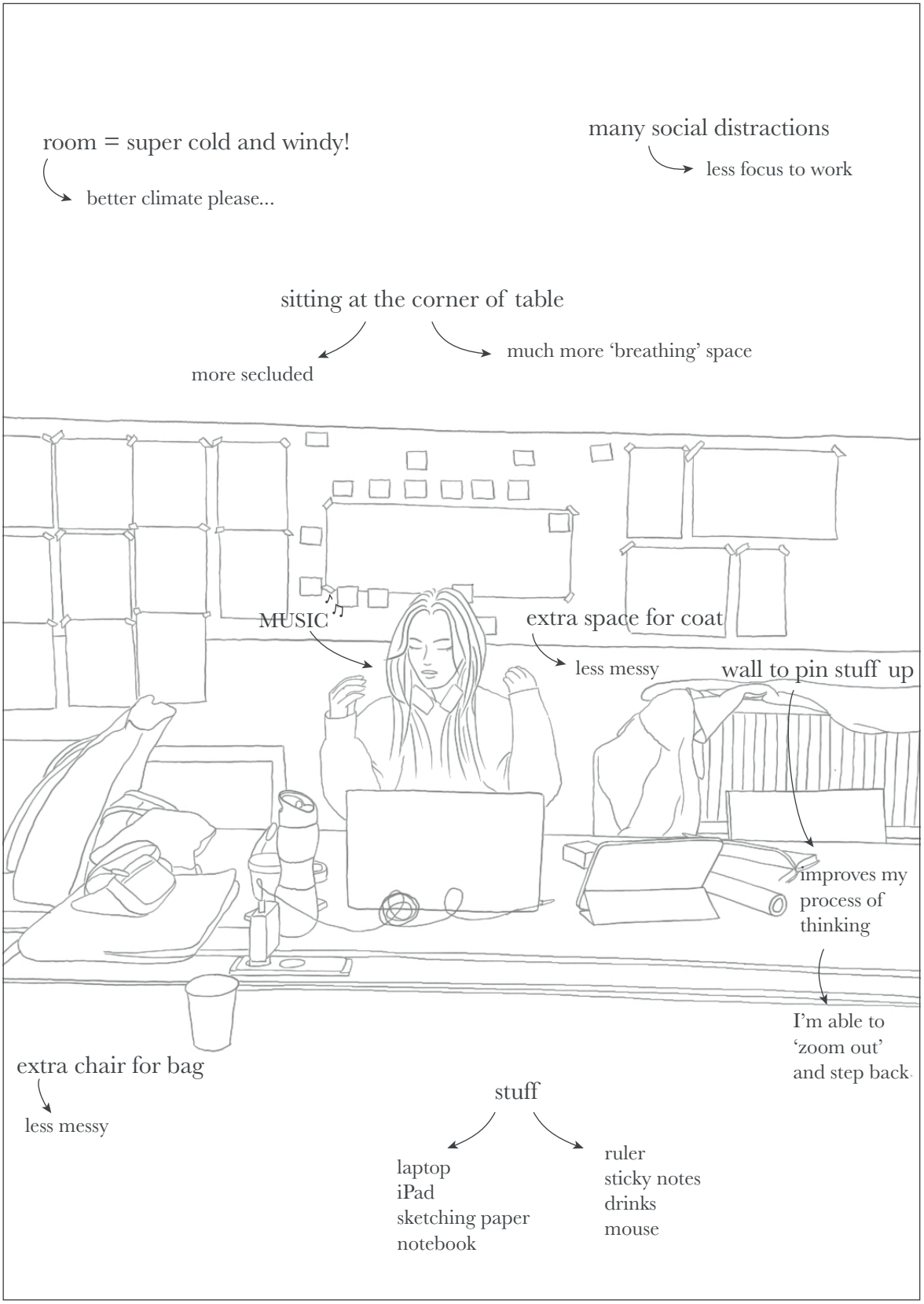


14:00 - 16:00h

Explore Lab studio space

Work - sketching/designing (low concentration)

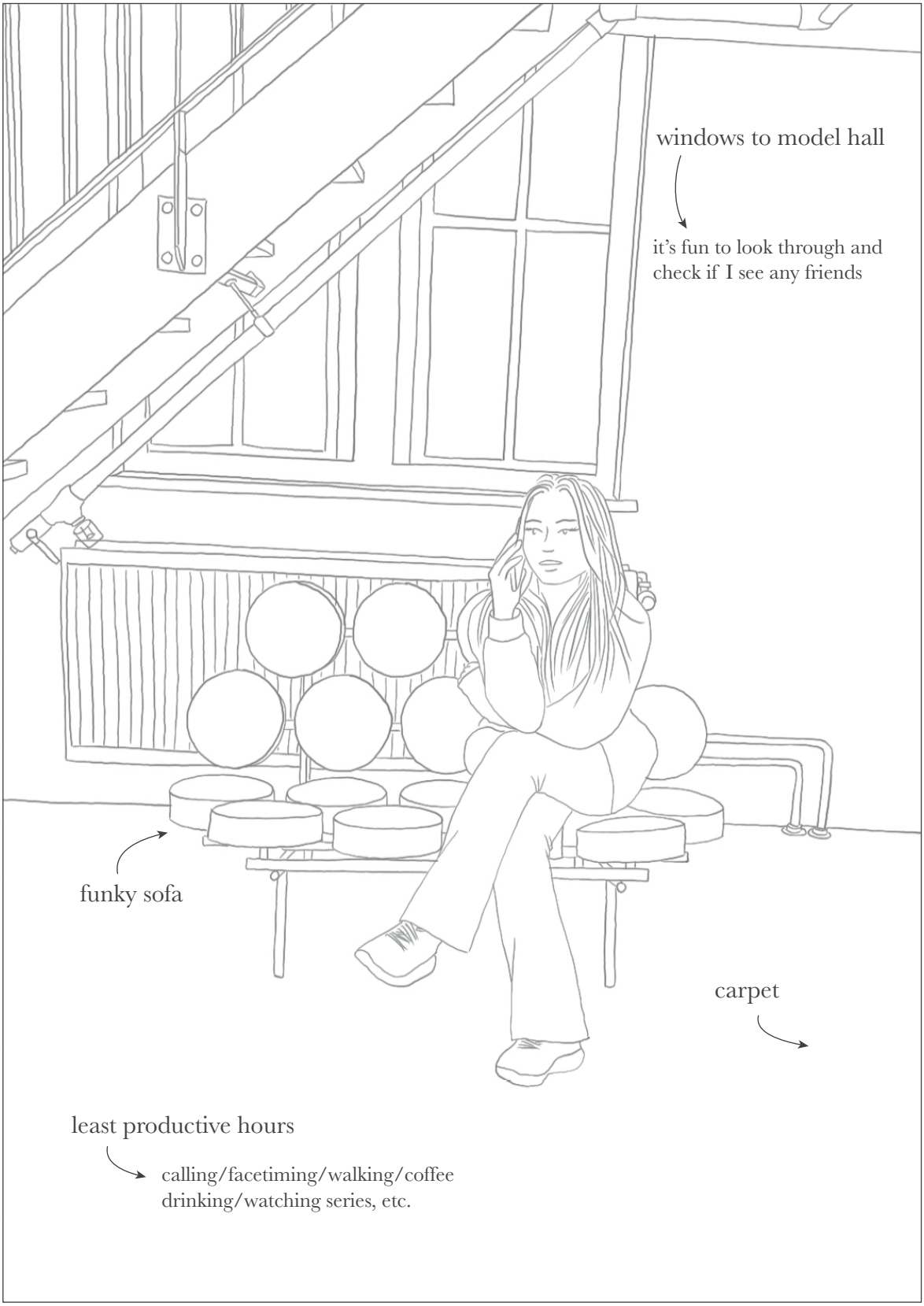
Tutoring



16:00 - 18:00h

Hallways

Break - coffee and walks

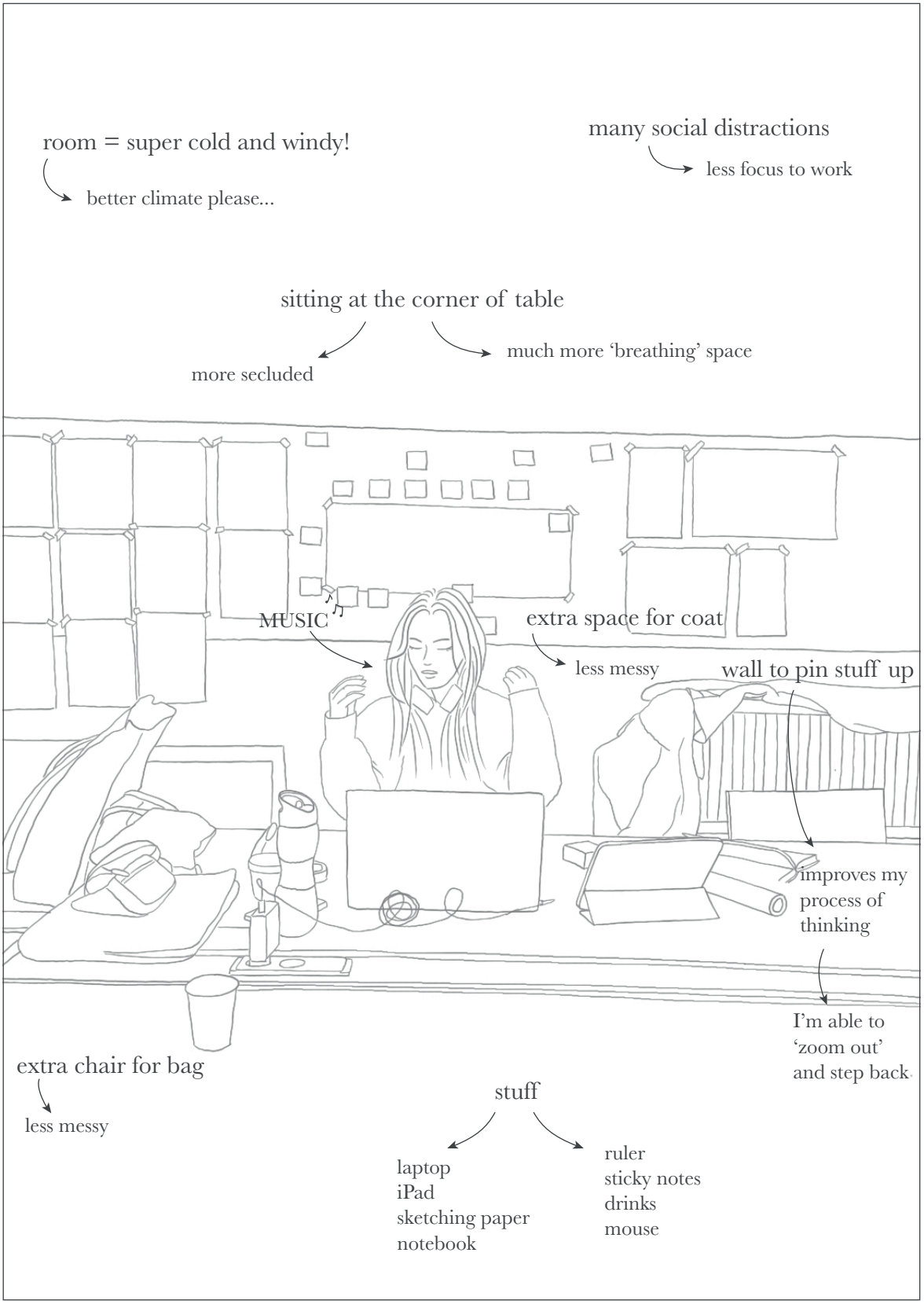


14:00 - 16:00h

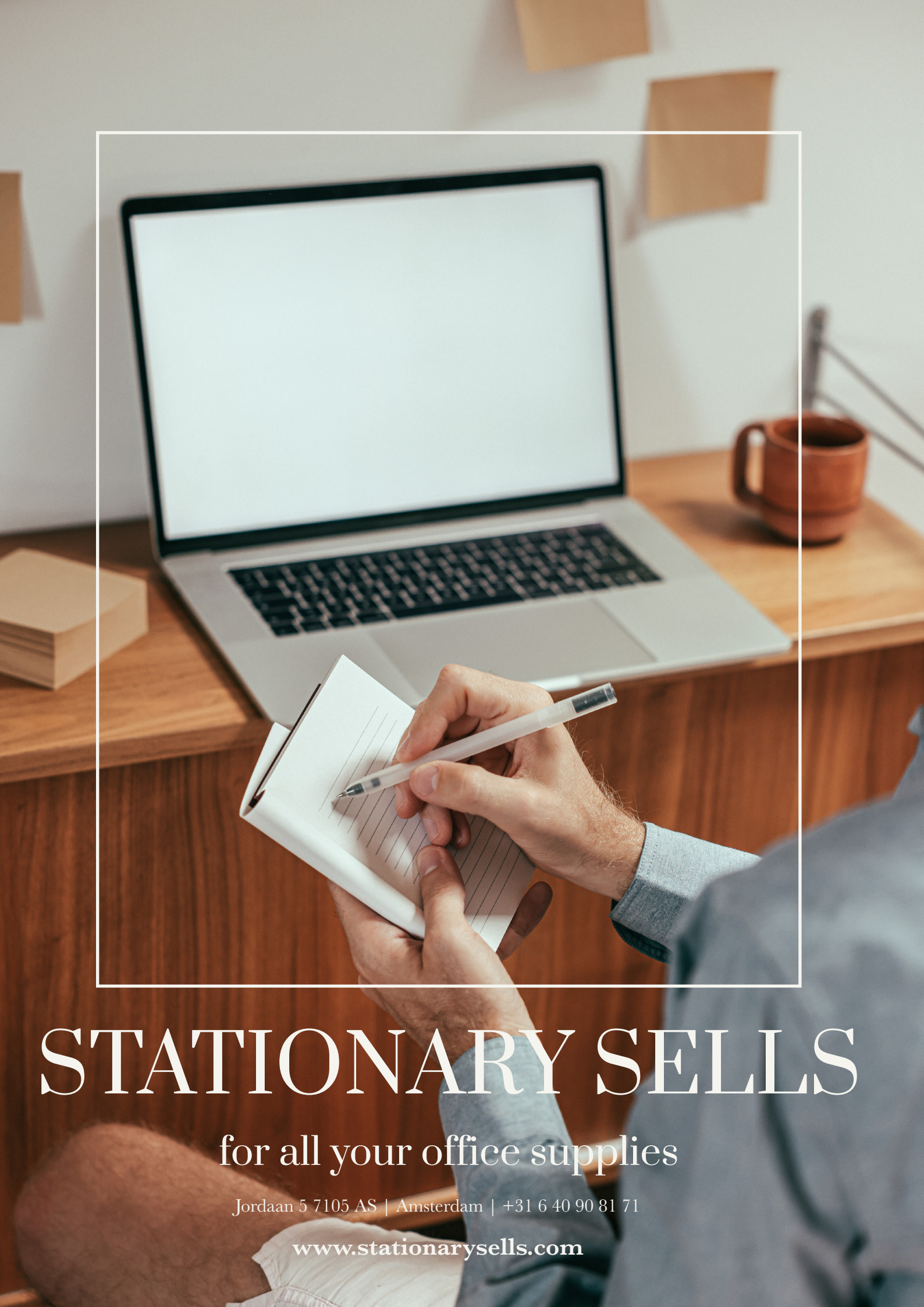
Explore Lab studio space

Work - sketching/designing (low concentration)

Tutoring



16:00 - 18:00h



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The Reflective Journey

A Glimpse into the Design Process

In this article, we embark on an intricate journey through the design process. We delve into the labyrinthine passages of concept development, scrutinise the nuances of spatial layout, and present a diverse array of drawings that showcase the evolution of the design. The goal is to provide a comprehensive analysis of this design odyssey, offering insights into the creative journey that have far-reaching implications.

The process analysis is not only a reflection on the past but a visionary tool for the future. It serves as a mirror that reveals the strengths and weaknesses of my design process, enabling me to better understand my creative journey. These lessons will become the guiding lights, illuminating the path in my future endeavours. As I navigate the intricate web of design, I'll uncover the intricacies, challenge the conventions, and cultivate the unique design philosophy. This analysis is a testament to the transformative power of design, shaping us into more thoughtful, innovative, and insightful creators as we venture into the next steps of our careers.

04

Presentation 2

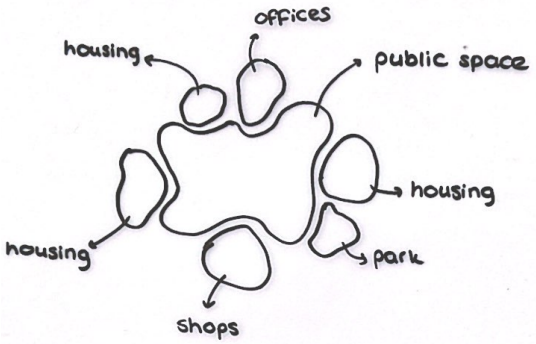
The P2 presentation marks the initial go/no-go point in the graduation year. This presentation revolves around the culmination of research conducted during the first half of the graduation year. The presentation entails an explanation of the research methodology, highlights key findings, and underscores the most significant conclusions reached.

While the first part of the graduation year is primarily devoted to research, it is crucial to establish a meaningful connection between this research and the eventual design. The question arises: How will the research findings influence the design process?

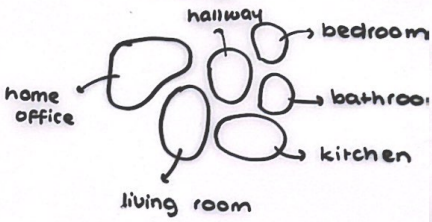
As a result, the P2 presentation goes beyond the mere exposition of research outcomes. It also elucidates the relevance of this research within the context of the design process, with a particular emphasis on the initial design concepts. This includes an introduction to potential design locations, the overarching design concept, and the presentation of preliminary design sketches.

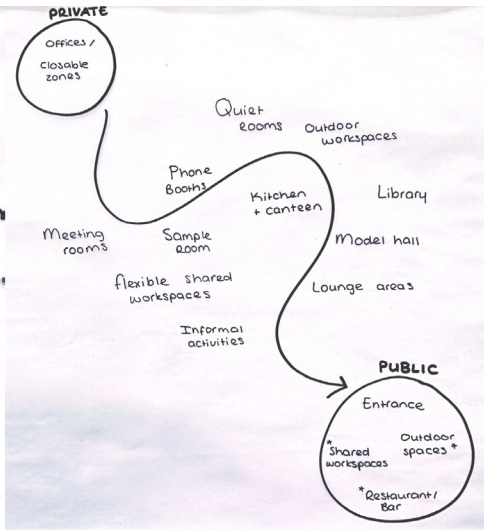
Metapnor :

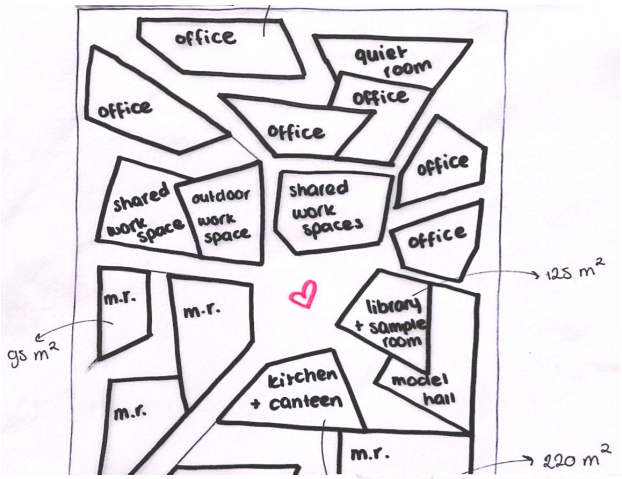
"City"

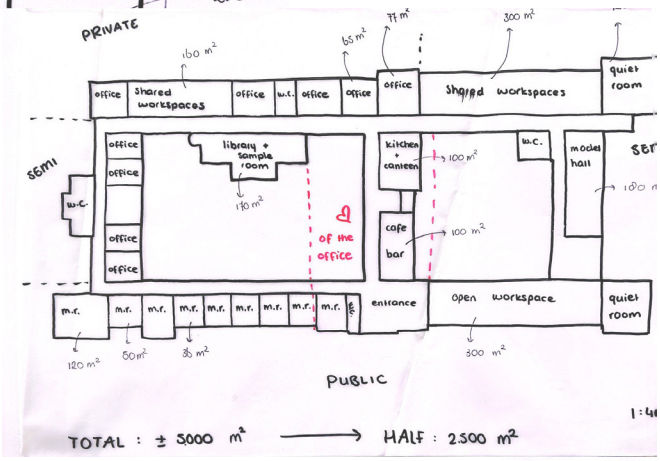


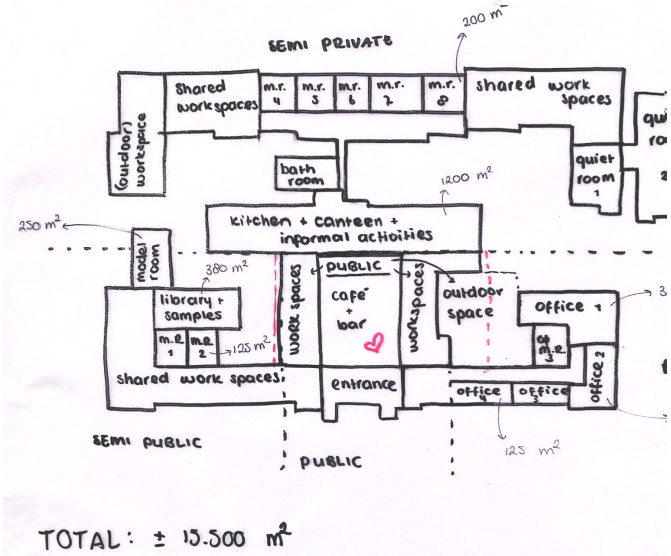
"Home"

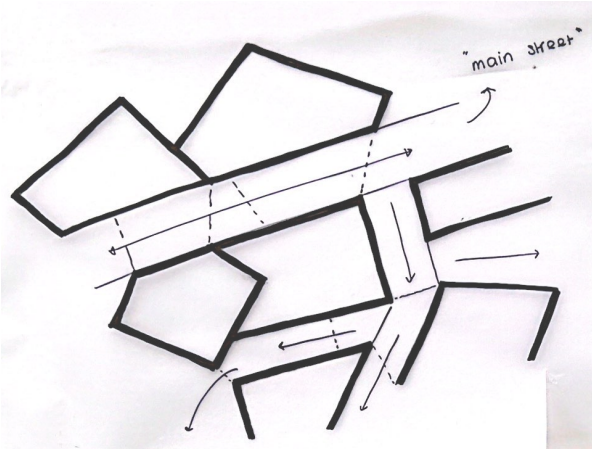


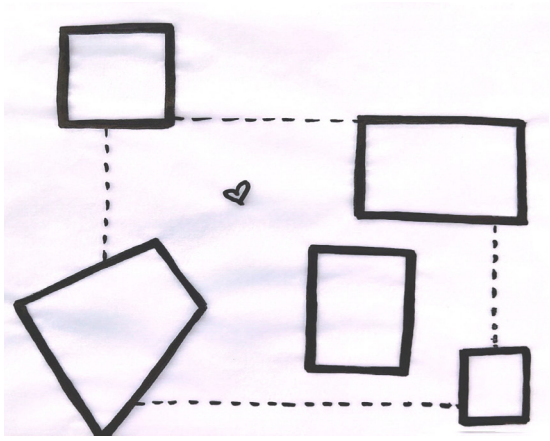


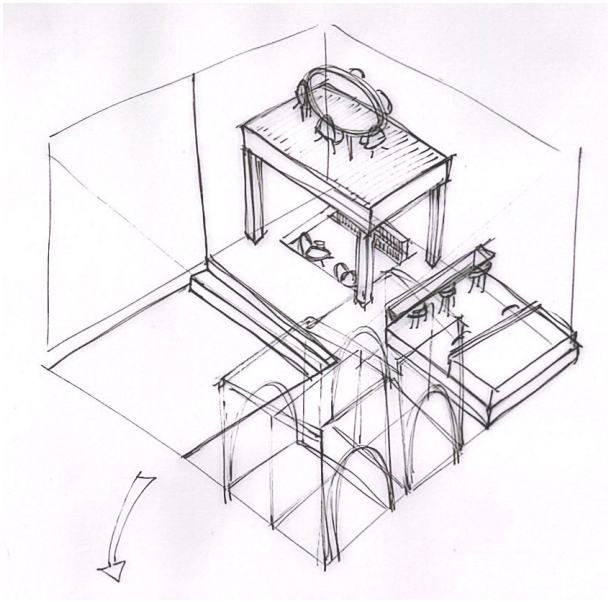


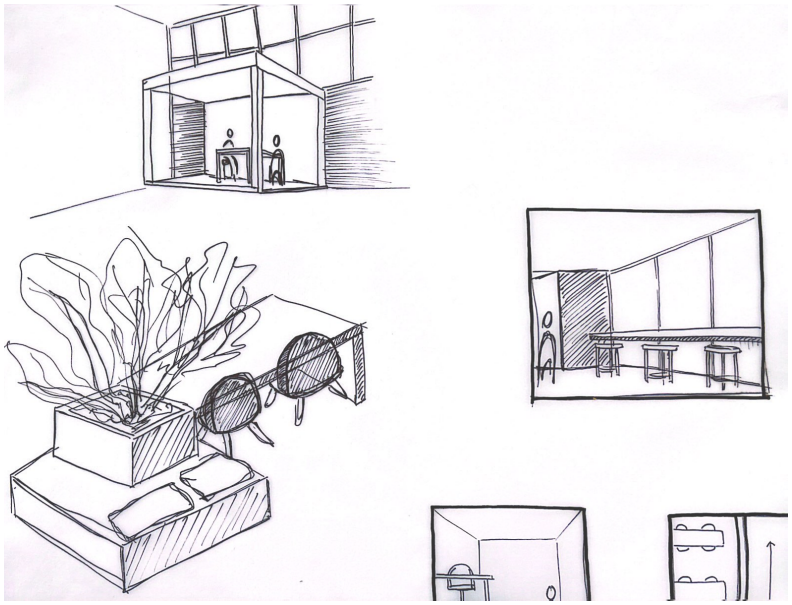


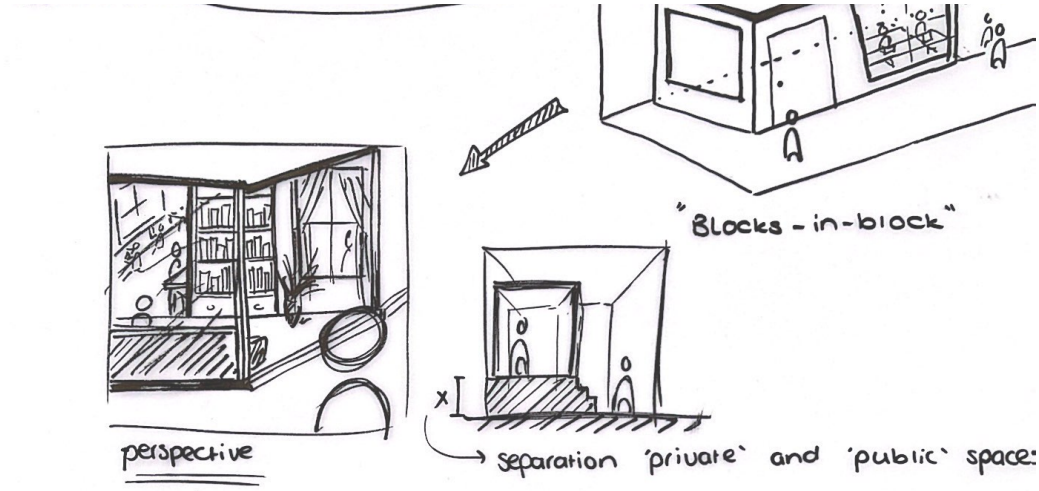


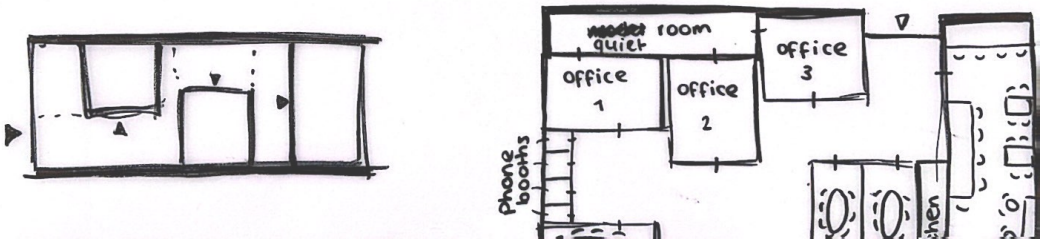

"main street"








"Blocks - in - block"
perspective
separation 'private' and 'public' space:


office 1
office 2
office 3
Phone booths

Presentation 3a

After the initial checkpoint, commonly referred to as P2 (Presentation 2), the design phase of the graduation project kicks into high gear. This pivotal moment marks the official green light for the project, and it's when the creative journey truly begins.

During this phase, the primary focus revolves around three fundamental elements: the determination of the design's location, the concept development of the design project, and the meticulous crafting of a conceptual design proposal. This multifaceted endeavour is one that encapsulates a thorough exploration of all five essential domains: space and form, materials,structure, and climate considerations, the intricacies of function and route planning, as well as the project's relationship with its site and broader context.

In essence, from P2 up to the third presentation, which takes on an informal character and typically involves one's design and building technology tutor, the emphasis is on exploration and experimentation through design. It is a research-driven process by design. The creative journey unfolds as you immerse yourself in a comprehensive investigation of each domain.

I find that this phase is not only about design in the traditional sense but a holistic, multidisciplinary exploration. It's about pushing boundaries, challenging preconceived notions, and ultimately crafting a project that seamlessly integrates these diverse elements into a harmonious whole. It is a dynamic, evolving process that serves as the foundation for the eventual realisation of one's graduation project, providing the necessary depth and breadth to bring one's creative vision to life.

After Presentation 2, my journey into the realm of design took an exciting turn as I delved deep into the guiding theme of the project. The guiding theme, as Elise van Dooren writes in her paper, forms one of the five generic elements of any design process, and was one I experimented first with. This iterative approach allowed me to thoroughly explore and dissect the different themes, enabling me to mould it into a visual concept.

The objective of this exploration was not just to find a spatial concept for its own sake but to create a framework that could seamlessly accommodate the various activities integral to the project. These activities, as you may recall from earlier in this issue, were carefully defined and substantiated through rigorous research. It is essential to emphasise that the guiding theme and the activities are intrinsically connected, and my mission was to harmonise them effectively.

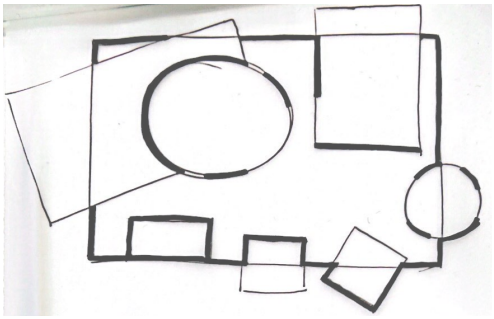
From previous design projects - and in particular those form the design studio *Van Gezel Tot Meester* - I know I design best when having a clear spatial principle that serves as a capstone for the design.

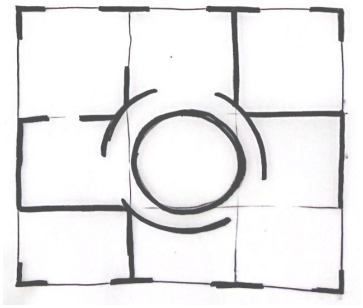
Thus, in these first initial weeks, I created and explored different options. Soon, I found myself to a crossroad where I was drawn to two markedly different variations. These two distinct paths encapsulate the diverse possibilities that lie within the realm of design.

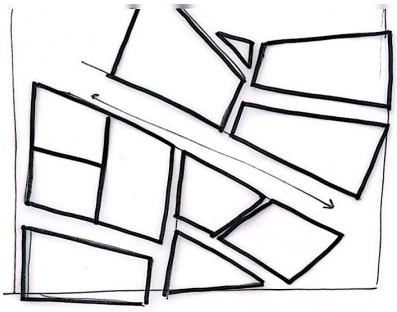
The first variation can be aptly seen as a spatial principle that embodies *order*. It hinges on the concept of '*blocks within a block*'. This approach, which adheres to a structured and organised framework, aims to create a harmonious and well-defined spatial arrangement. Rectangular elements are nested within a primary one, creating a sense of order and hierarchy.

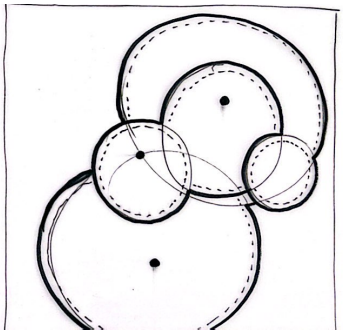
In contrast, the second variation embodies a more *chaotic* aesthetic. This approach takes inspiration from a multitude of sources and employs a mix of rectangular and circular shapes. Unlike the first variation, this approach eschews a rigid grid or order system. Shapes are placed in an apparently random fashion, creating a dynamic and visually stimulating environment. The use of both rectangular and circular elements adds an element of surprise and contrast to the design.

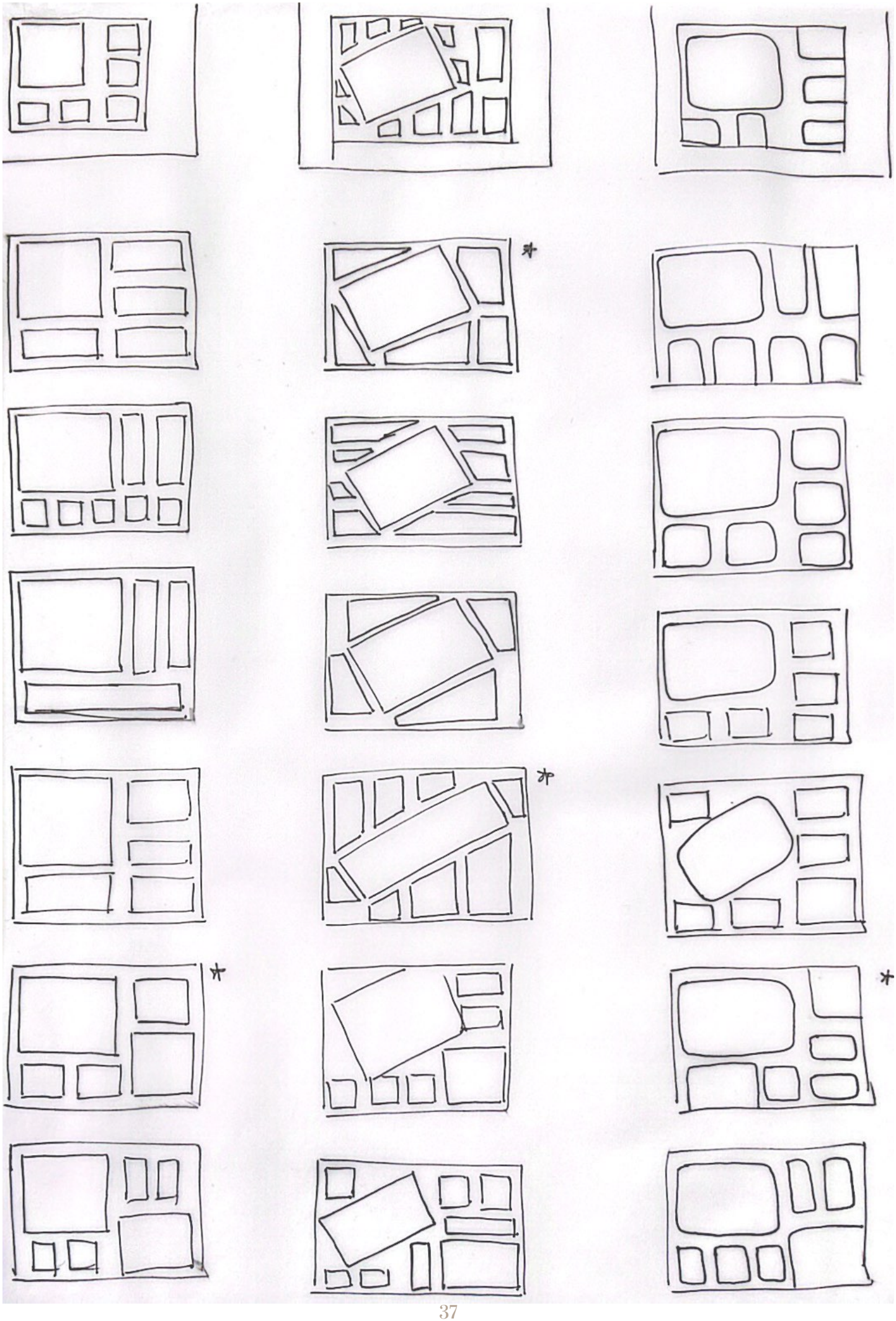
The duality of these two variations exemplifies the creative spectrum that design offers. On one hand, there is the elegance and clarity of structured spatial principles, while on the other, there is the energy and dynamism of a seemingly chaotic arrangement. Each variation has its unique strengths and potential to evoke distinct emotional responses and user experiences. However, it was concluded in the previous issue that each of the case studies had a heart of the office, which was evidently designed differently - either through the use of colours, or through architectural elements. Thus, I saw more opportunities and possibilities fitting for the design proposal with the latter variation.

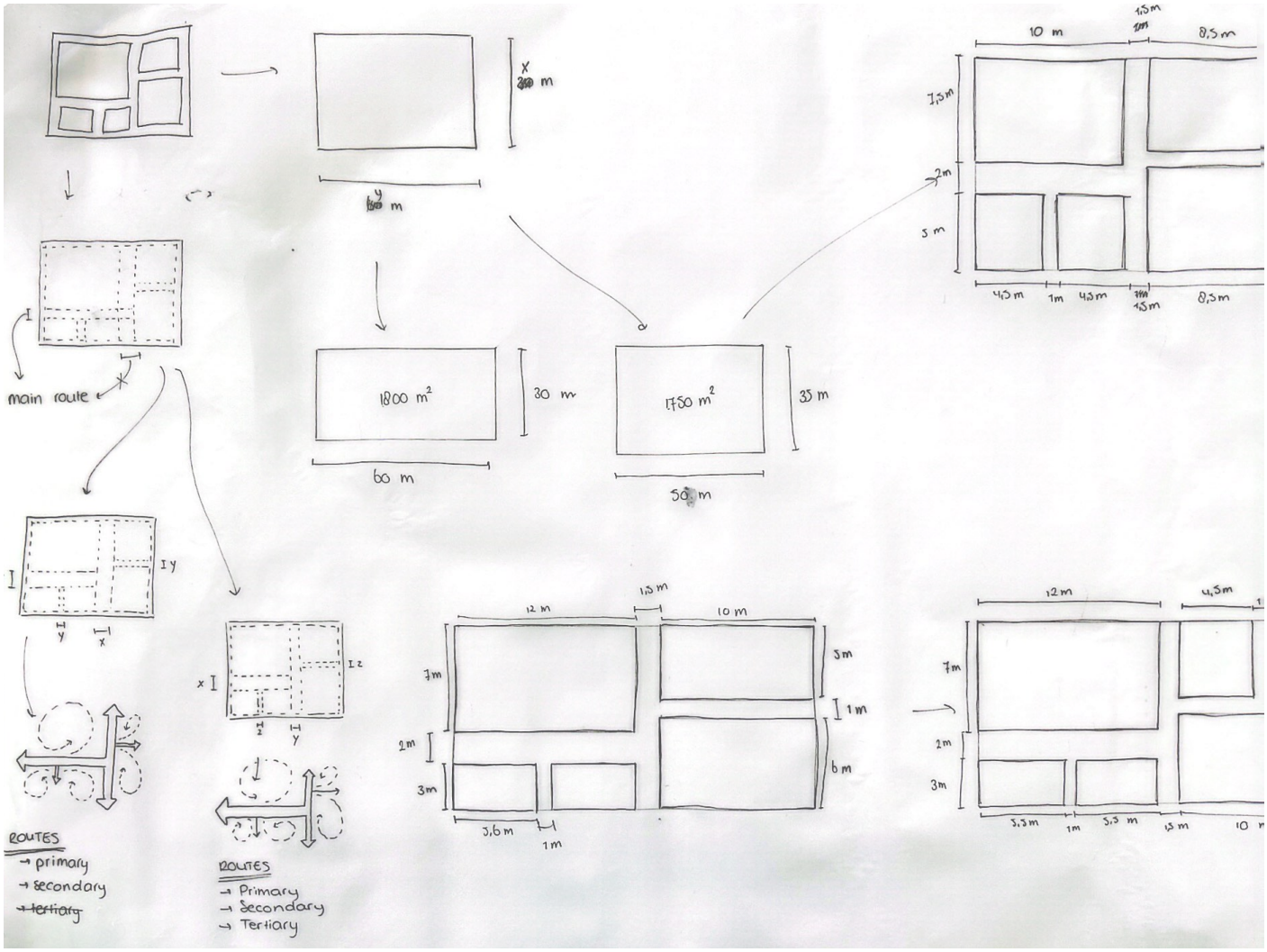


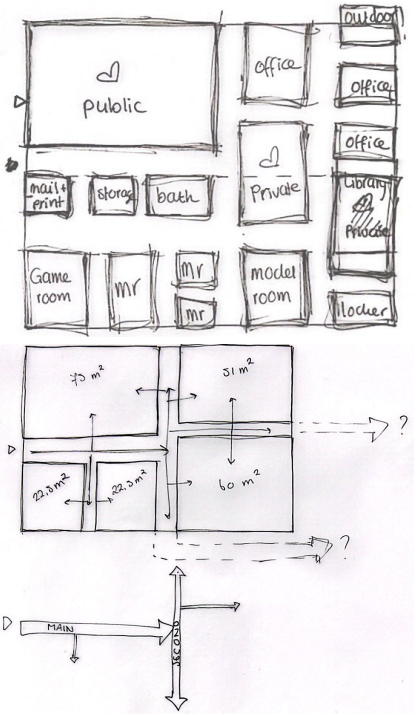








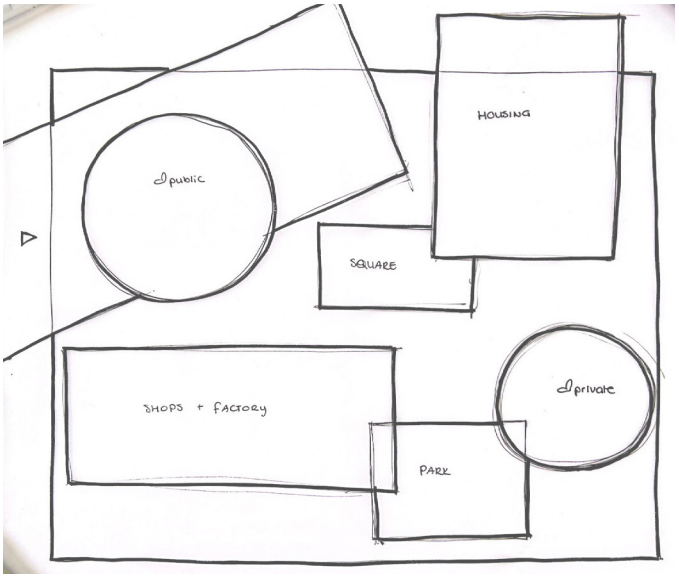




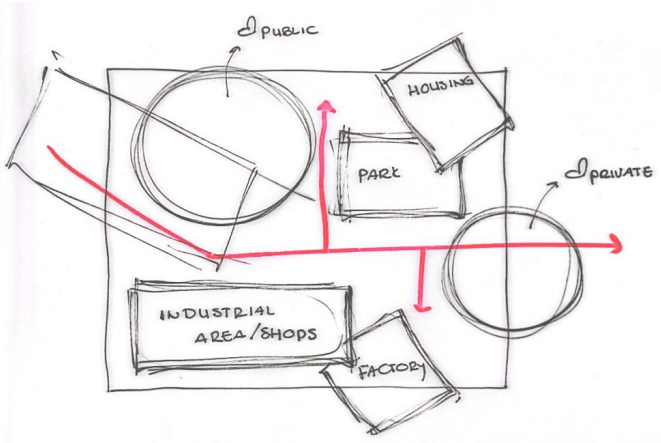
Despite my initial intuition and the arguments in favour of a more *chaotic* spatial approach, I found myself intrigued by the first spatial concept, and I decided to experiment with it to explore its potential. It was a curiosity-driven decision to see where this path might lead me. However, as I delved deeper into this spatial configuration, I soon realised that it imposed certain limitations on my creative process. To be perfectly honest, I began to find it somewhat monotonous.

While working with this approach, I began to envision the potential of designing distinct '*blocks*' within the larger framework. I saw the merit of employing a *grid* as a guiding structure to help organise the multitude of functions and spaces. This seemed like a logical solution to ensure clarity and order in the design process.

Yet, this approach presented its own set of challenges. First, I grappled with fitting each function into appropriately sized blocks, often resulting in smaller blocks than I had initially envisioned. Second, I faced the task of arranging these blocks in a way that was far from mundane or uninspiring. Finding that delicate balance between structure and creativity proved to be a stimulating but complex endeavour.



So, I decided to delve deeper into the second spatial concept, translating it into initial design sketches. These sketches served as my canvas for exploring various possibilities in terms of function placements, or rather, activities. The functions I sought to incorporate into the floor plan were informed by the findings from the previous research.

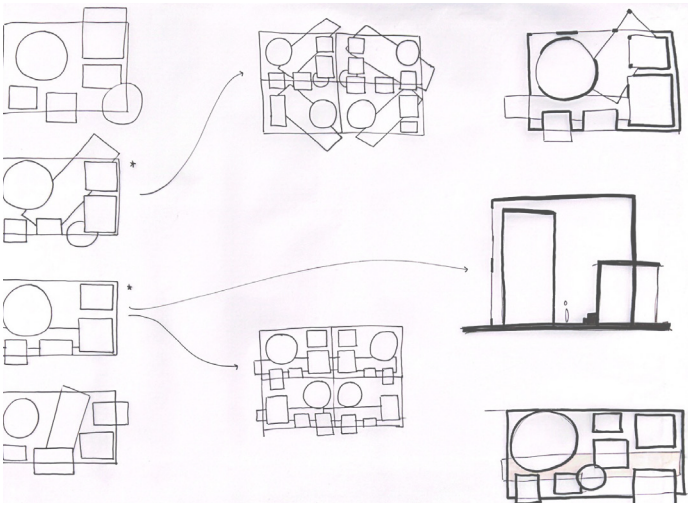


First and foremost, there's the *housing district*, home to the offices. This district represents the professional hub of the space.

Then, the *shop and factory district*, a dynamic zone where individuals can engage in creative endeavours within the modelling space, while also drawing inspiration from an array of books, samples, and exhibitions.

The *square* emerges as a central meeting area, fostering interaction and social connection. It functions as a vibrant hub within the layout. Additionally, the park area offers a serene retreat for relaxation or outdoor work, bringing a touch of nature into the workspace.

The project also features two distinct '*hearts*' of the office space. The first, a *public heart*, bears a resemblance to the *Vakwerkhuis* restaurant concept. This space acts as a communal gathering point where office residents and visitors come together, whether it's for dining, meetings, or collaborative work.

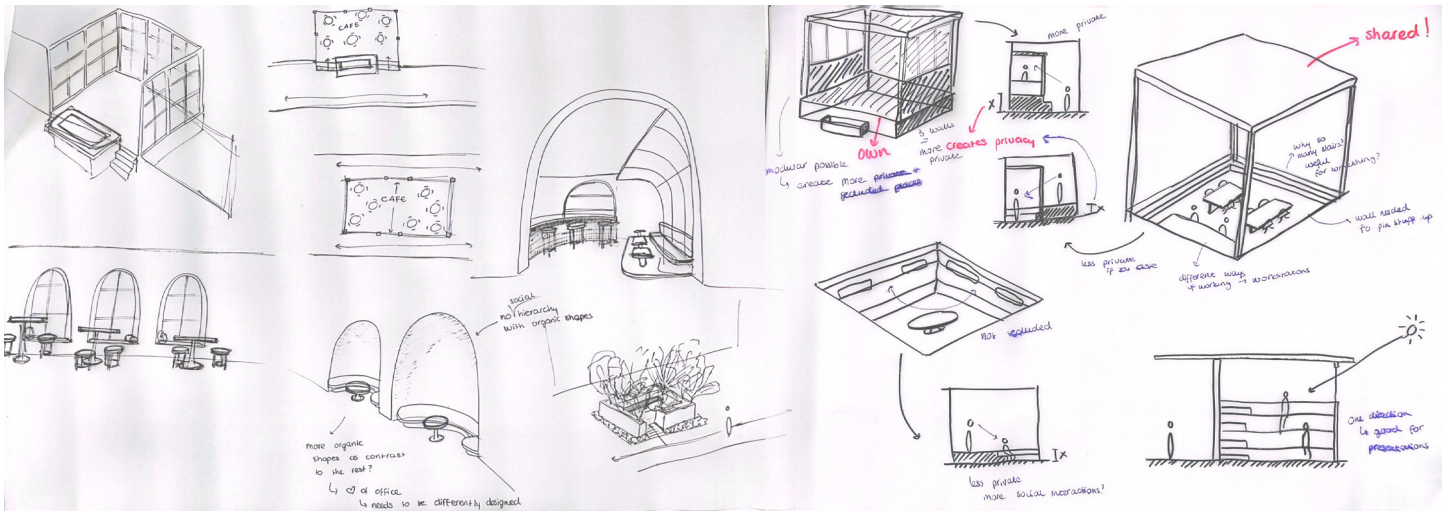


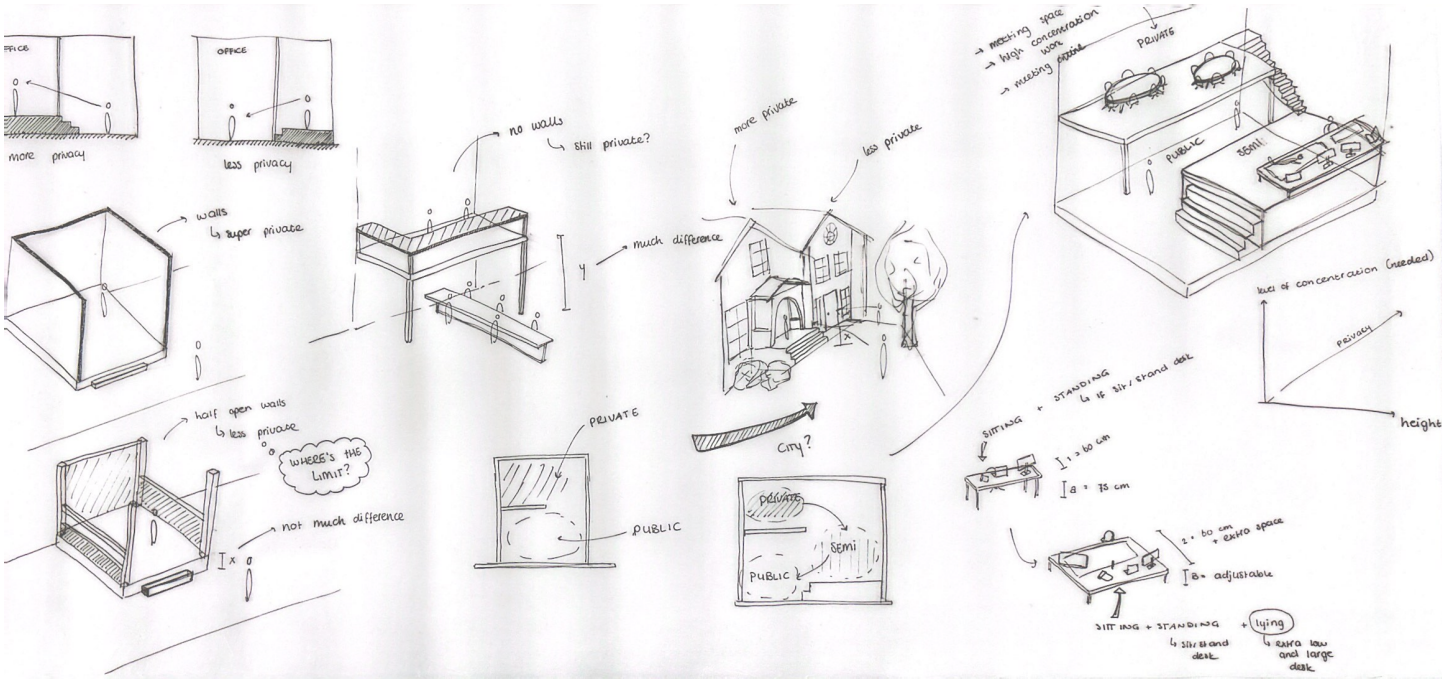
Conversely, the *private heart* serves as a multifunctional space exclusively for residents of the office. Here, larger presentations can be hosted, it doubles as an additional lunch venue, and serves as an informal meeting space for those who call this place their professional home.

I conducted parallel experiments, focusing on both the functions and the architectural design of the circular-shaped *hearts* and the remaining functions, particularly the workspaces. The aim was to establish a set of guiding principles that would facilitate the design process. These principles helped in making decisions about when to use a platform, when to adopt an organic or rectangular design approach, and whether these choices aligned with the public or private nature of the functions they represented.

For example, in crafting the design for the café, which is a part of the public heart, I drew inspiration from the Espresso Bar at the Architecture Faculty. These experiments unfolded through various forms of visual representation, including floor plans, sections, perspectives, and isometric drawings. The constant process of reflection was pivotal, helping me understand the rationale behind my choices and actions. Essentially, I was on a quest to discover design rules that could serve as my compass throughout this creative journey.

Reflecting on my past experiences, particularly the second design project of *Van Gezel Tot Meester*, I recognised that I excel when there are specific rules to adhere to. These rules provide me with a sense of direction and a structured approach, eliminating the need to rely solely on my designer's intuition.





Nonetheless, the sheer magnitude of possibilities presented a formidable challenge, making it difficult to thoroughly explore every potential avenue. In response, I revisited the two initial spatial concepts that had been the foundation of my exploration. I subjected them to a fresh evaluation and, intriguingly, decided to merge them to chart a new direction. After experimenting with several variations, I discovered a spatial layout that resonated with me. It possessed a delightful balance between playfulness and organisation, setting the stage for further development.

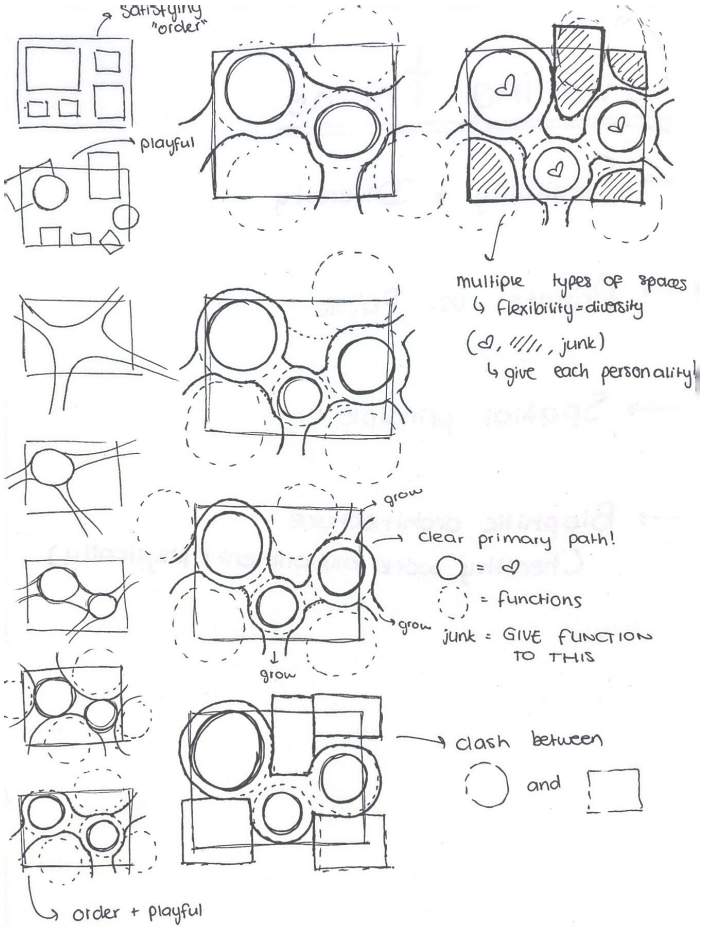
This layout opened up exciting possibilities for me to extend this design principle, drawing upon the valuable insights garnered from my prior experiments. In no time, I found myself not only with a spatial arrangement that I found aesthetically pleasing but also a complementary set of design rules to accompany it.

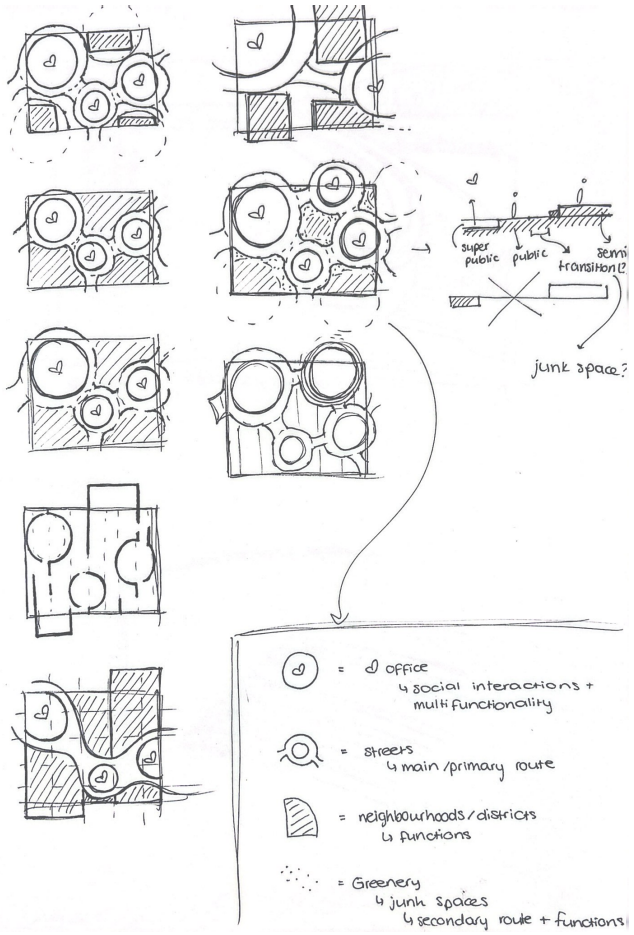
To gain a deeper understanding of the concept of *publicness versus privateness* within the functions, I categorised them along a scale. I introduced the user types (*owners, residents, and visitors*) into different '*zones*'. This categorisation led to the formulation of two design rules: firstly, the more private the function, the higher its placement in the structure, and secondly, the more private the function, the greater the use of softer materials.

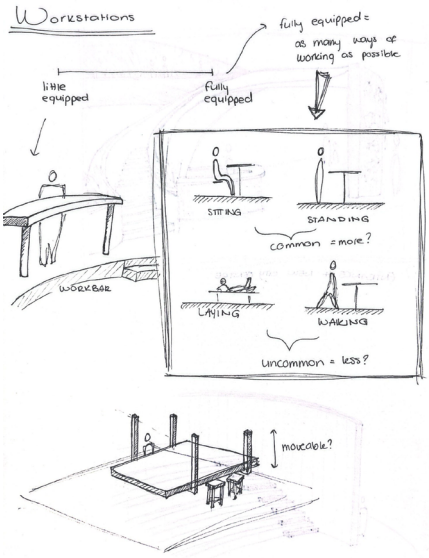
Much like my earlier approach, I harnessed various drawing techniques to experiment with a spectrum of workspaces, considering different modes of working, such as sitting, standing, reclining, and even walking. Additionally, I took into account one of the conclusions from my research, which emphasised the varying equipment requirements for different workstations.

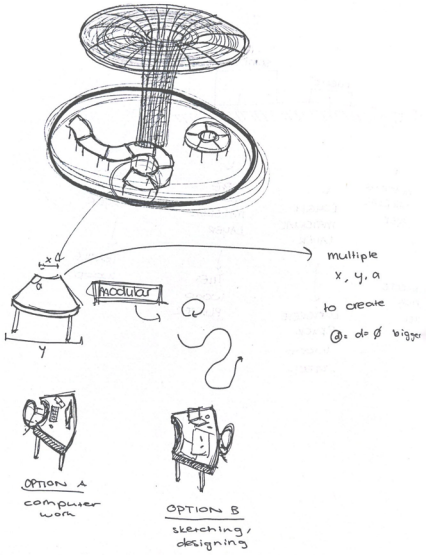
Concurrently, I embarked on a journey to experiment with different heights, harmoniously integrating multiple functions and floors. I thoughtfully aligned materials with the distinct zones, thereby tailoring the experiences to their respective purposes.

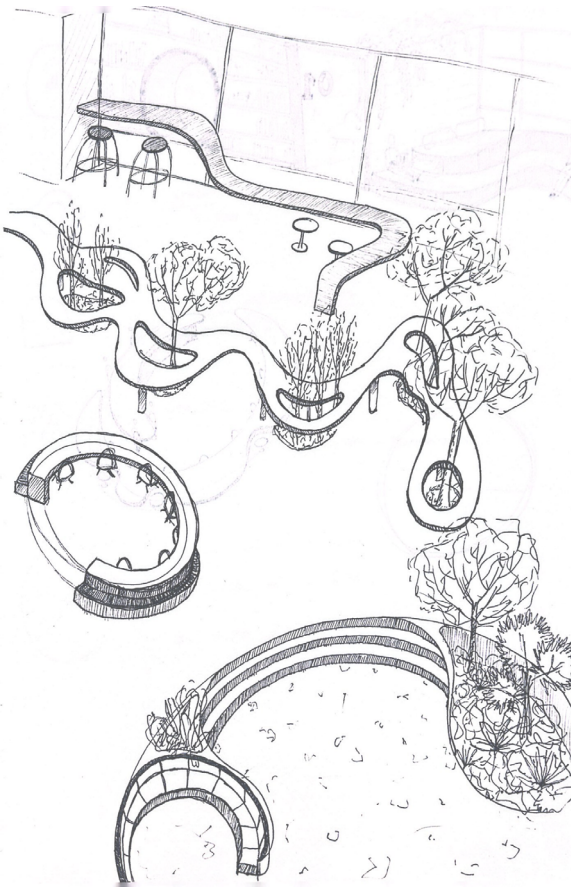
Simultaneously, my exploration of workspaces deepened. I endeavoured to accommodate various modes of working, designing tables, and tailoring each space to meet the specific requirements of different work styles.

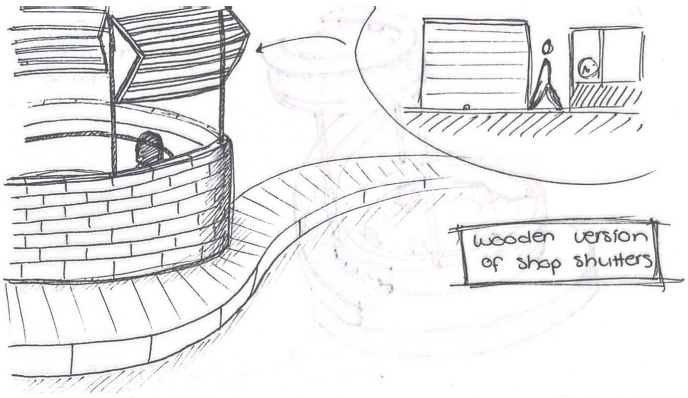


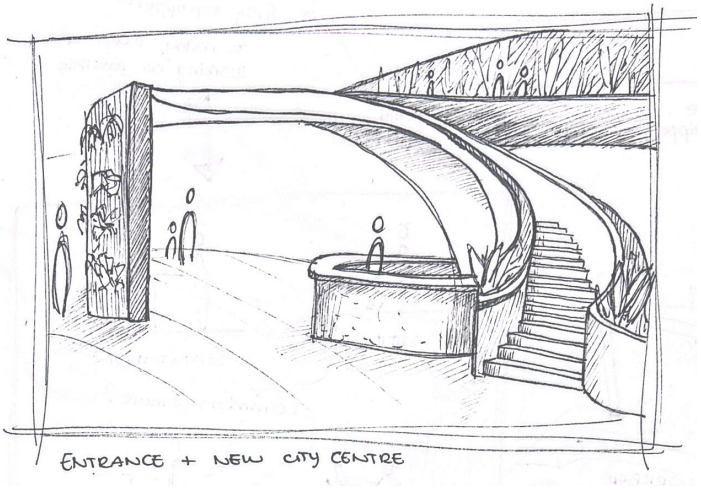


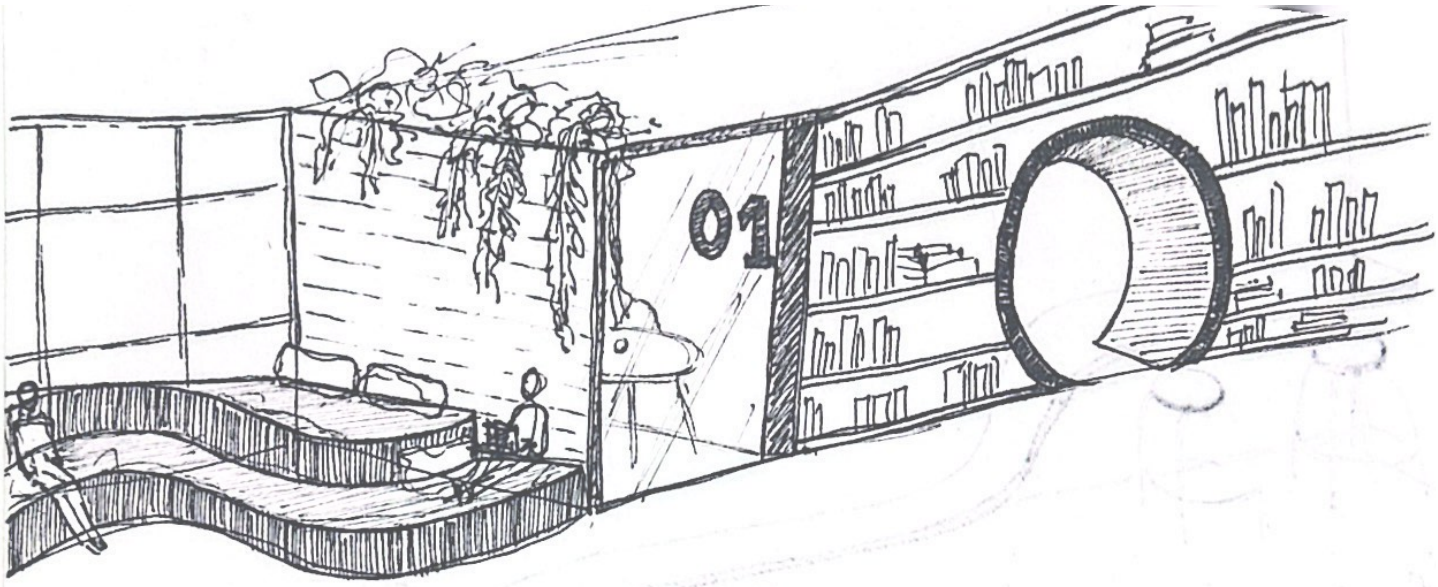

Workstations
fully equipped =
as many ways of working as possible
little equipped
fully equipped
SITTING
STANDING
common = more?
WORKBOX
LAYING
WALKING
uncommon = less?
moveable?


modular
multiple
x, y, a
to create
a: d= Ø bigger
OPTION A
computer work
OPTION B
sketching, designing




wooden version of shop shutters

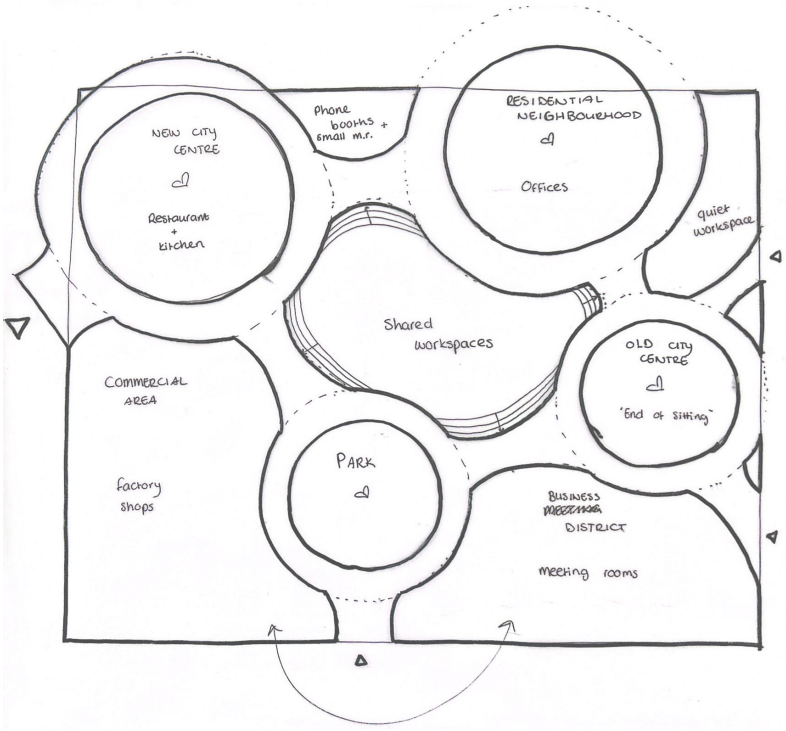

ENTRANCE + NEW CITY CENTRE

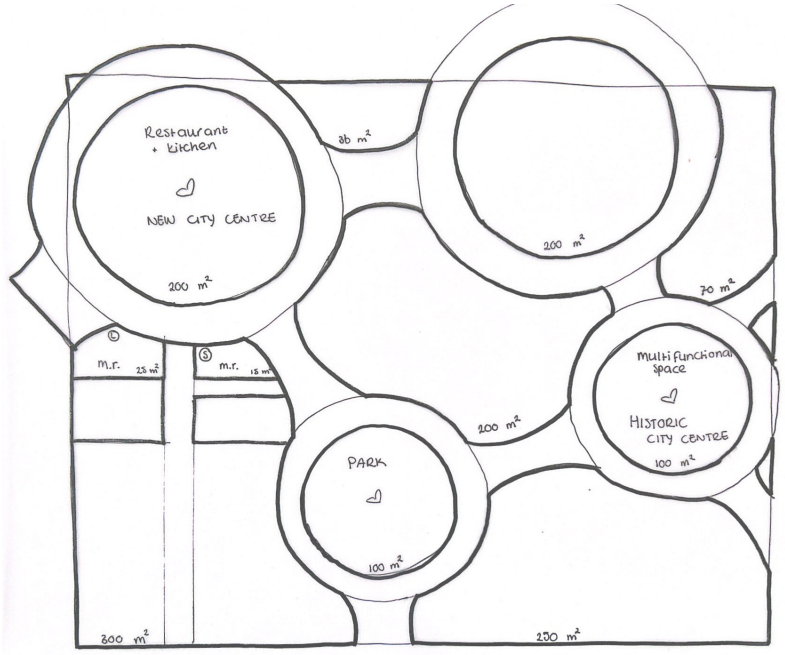

01

In the process of consolidating all the various elements, such as the functions or districts, the emerging design rules, the diverse approaches to working, considerations of public and privateness within the functions, and the shapes, propelled me toward the creation of entirely new floor plans.

However, as evident in the accompanying drawings, I made a rather unconventional, but unconscious, choice. I veered away from the conventional rectangular shapes that had previously defined the functions. Instead, what took centre stage were the four distinctive *hearts* of the project and the interconnected route that wove them together. As a result, non-spaces were created, which would become home for the *districts*.

This transformation opened up a wellspring of inspiration. The four *hearts* and the connecting route offered an abundance of potential, not only in terms of visual appeal but also in their functional implications. It was as though I had uncovered an entirely new dimension in the project, one that promised an exciting and dynamic experience.





As I continued to explore this approach, it became clear that this departure from the conventional rectangular lay-out was a pivotal turning point in the project. It allowed for a more organic and interconnected design, fostering a sense of unity and coherence that resonated with my overarching vision. The unconventional shapes of these districts breathed fresh life into the project, igniting my creativity and sparking a sense of anticipation for what lay ahead.

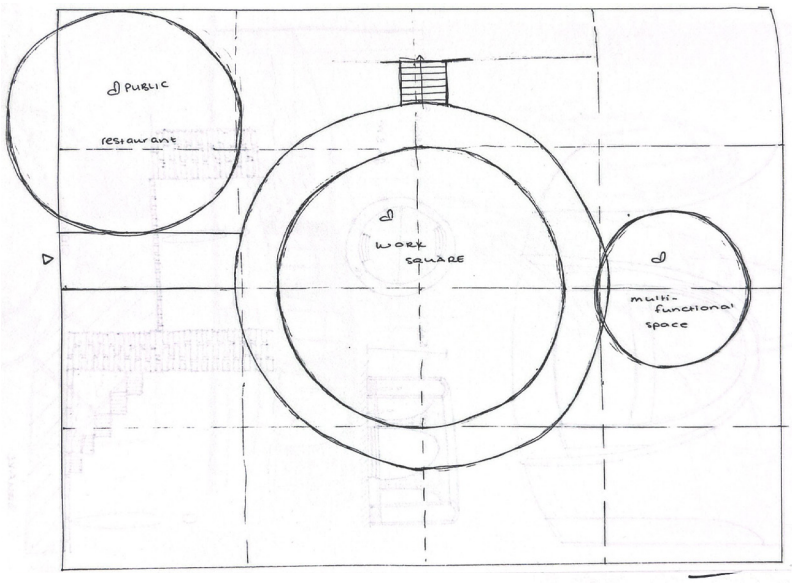
Nevertheless, I came to the realisation that my initial plan of creating four distinct *hearts*, as opposed to the original two, didn't align with my earlier arguments and intentions. Consequently, I reconfigured the floor plan, opting for a layout that featured three *hearts*. In addition to the public and private *hearts*, a new hybrid *heart* emerged, blending the characteristics of the *square* and the *park*, thereby establishing a semi-public *heart* positioned at the centre of the office space.

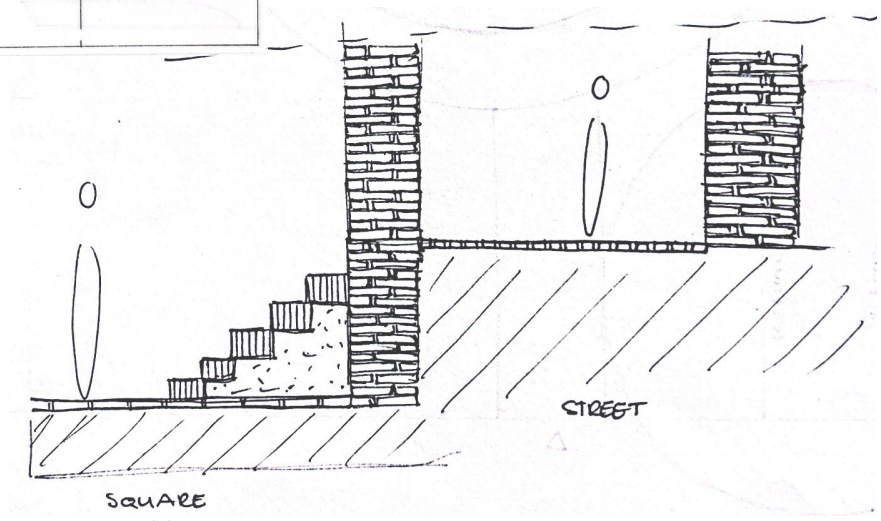
Recognising the need to distinguish between these *hearts* and the broader *districts* within the design, I undertook further experimentation with the floor plan. This exploration led me down a path that placed greater emphasis on the semi-public *heart*. Drawing inspiration from its semi-public nature, I found myself drawn to the imagery of a colosseum, an idea that sparked a significant shift in my design direction. This pivot breathed fresh life into the project, providing me with new-found inspiration that, in turn, fuelled the generation of detailed concepts and material ideas.

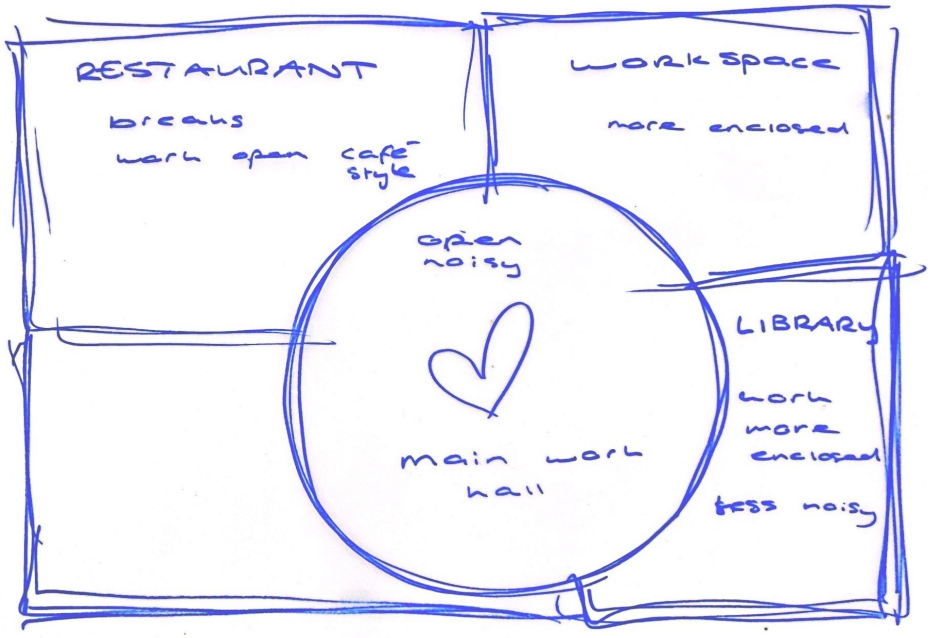
At this juncture, I had officially designated the project's location: the Kabelfabriek in Delft South. Following a site visit and analysis of the warehouse, I made a crucial discovery - a grid structure inherent to the space. This grid quickly emerged as a key element in my design, and I harnessed its geometric potential to concretise the floor plan. It served as a framework for placing functions and determining the precise dimensions of the various spaces within the design.

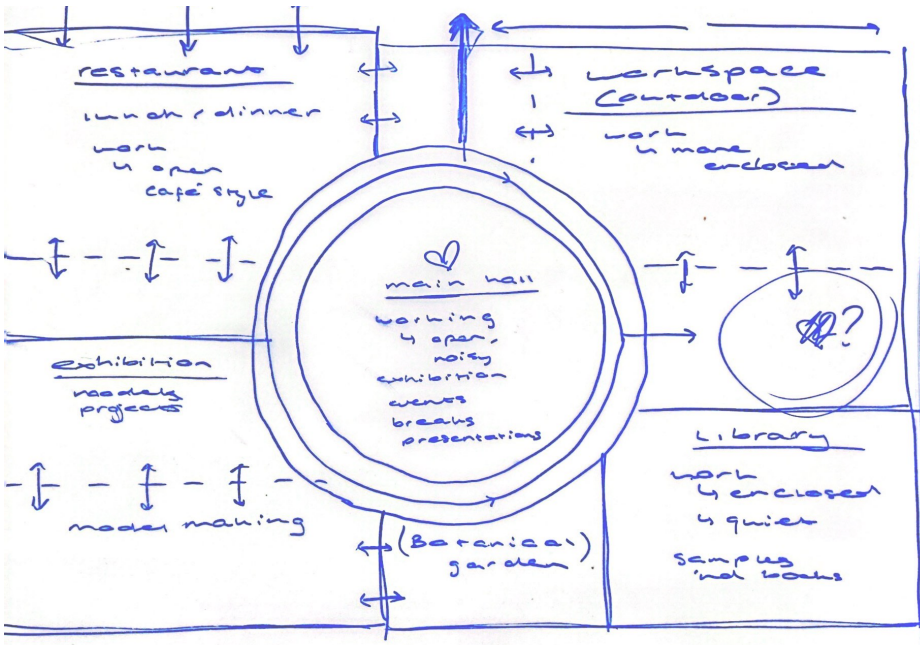
Yet once more, I found myself facing a creative impasse. To break free from this mental block, I chose to adopt a radically different design approach. As I had previously done on a different design project, I took a step back and closed my eyes, allowing my imagination to take the lead. I began to jot down my visualisations: what I saw, how individuals would interact within the various spaces, where their journeys would lead them, and the atmosphere that would envelop these spaces.

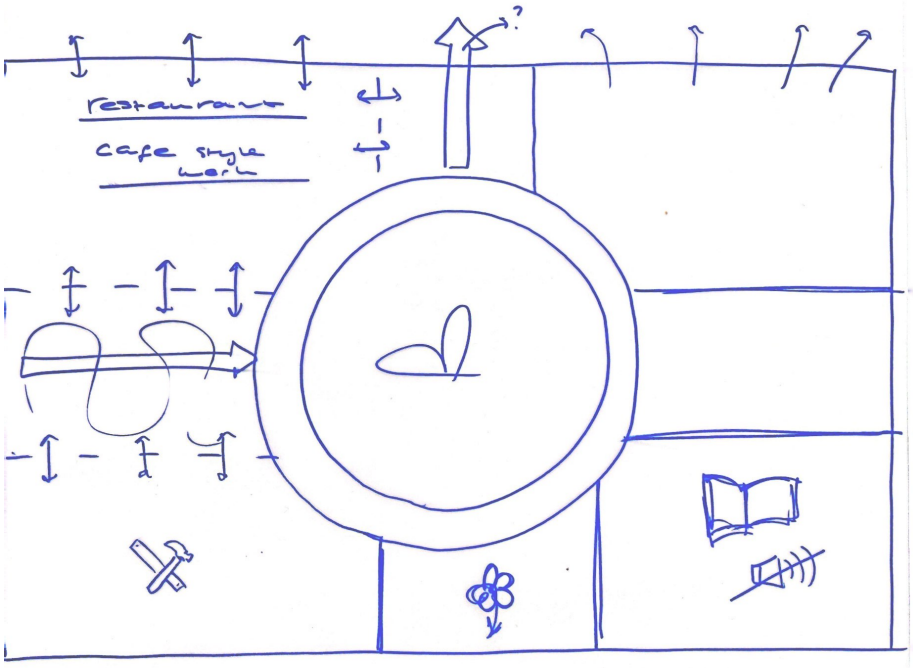
By delving into these questions and merging them with relevant references, I worked towards the upcoming presentation. This approach was a fresh departure from my usual methodology, breathing new life into my creative process.



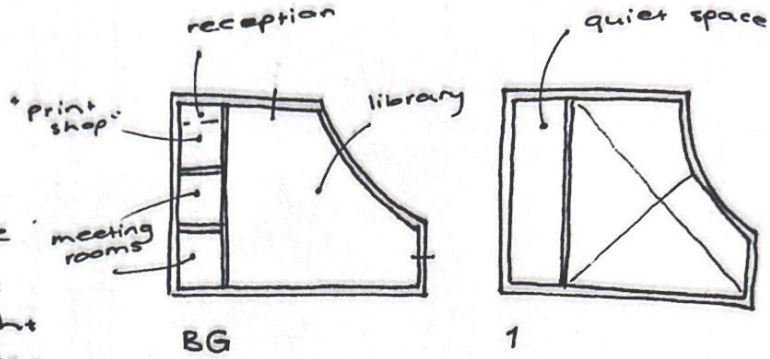



RESTAURANT
breaks
work open cafe style
WORKSPACE
more enclosed
open
noisy
main work
hall
LIBRARY
work
more
enclosed
less noisy


restaurant
lunch / dinner
work
& open
cafe style
workspace
(outdoor)
work
& more
enclosed
main hall
working
& open,
noisy
exhibition
events
breaks
presentations
exhibition
models
projects
model making
(Botanical)
garden
Library
work
& enclosed
& quiet
sampling
and books

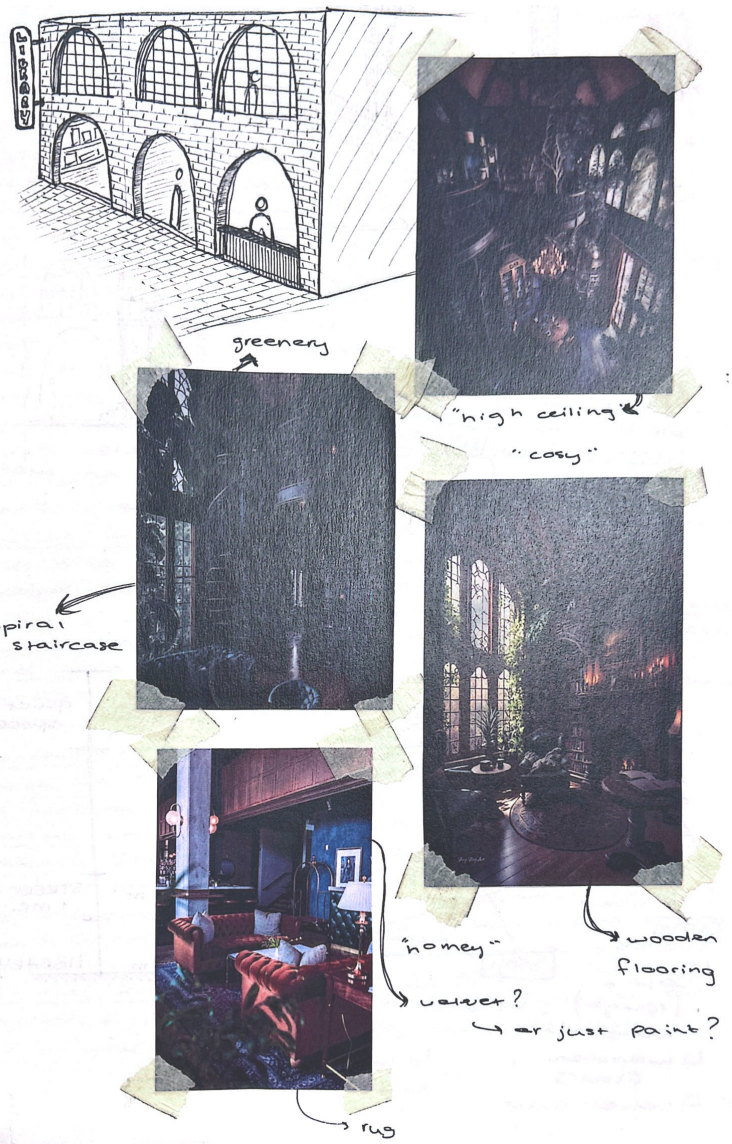

restaurant
cafe style
work

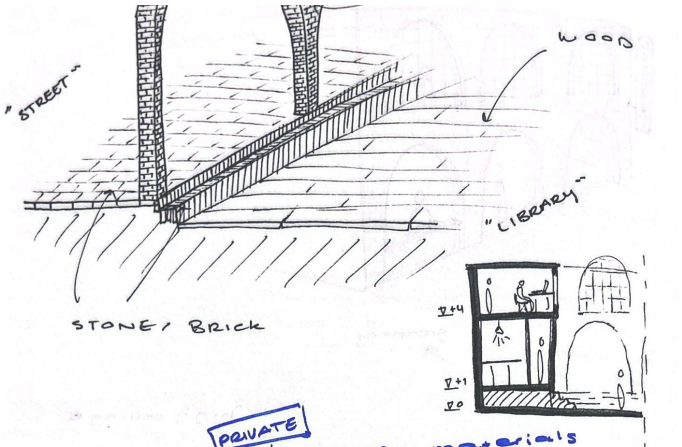
LIBRARY

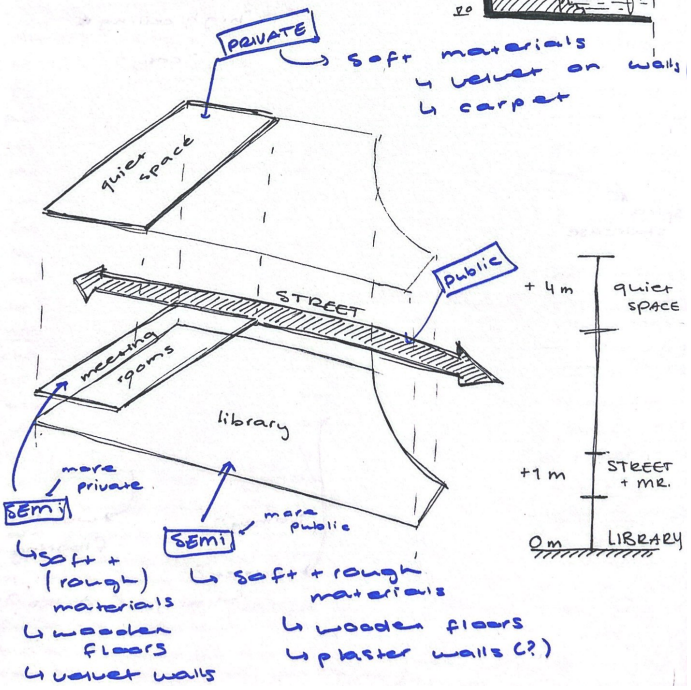


BG 1

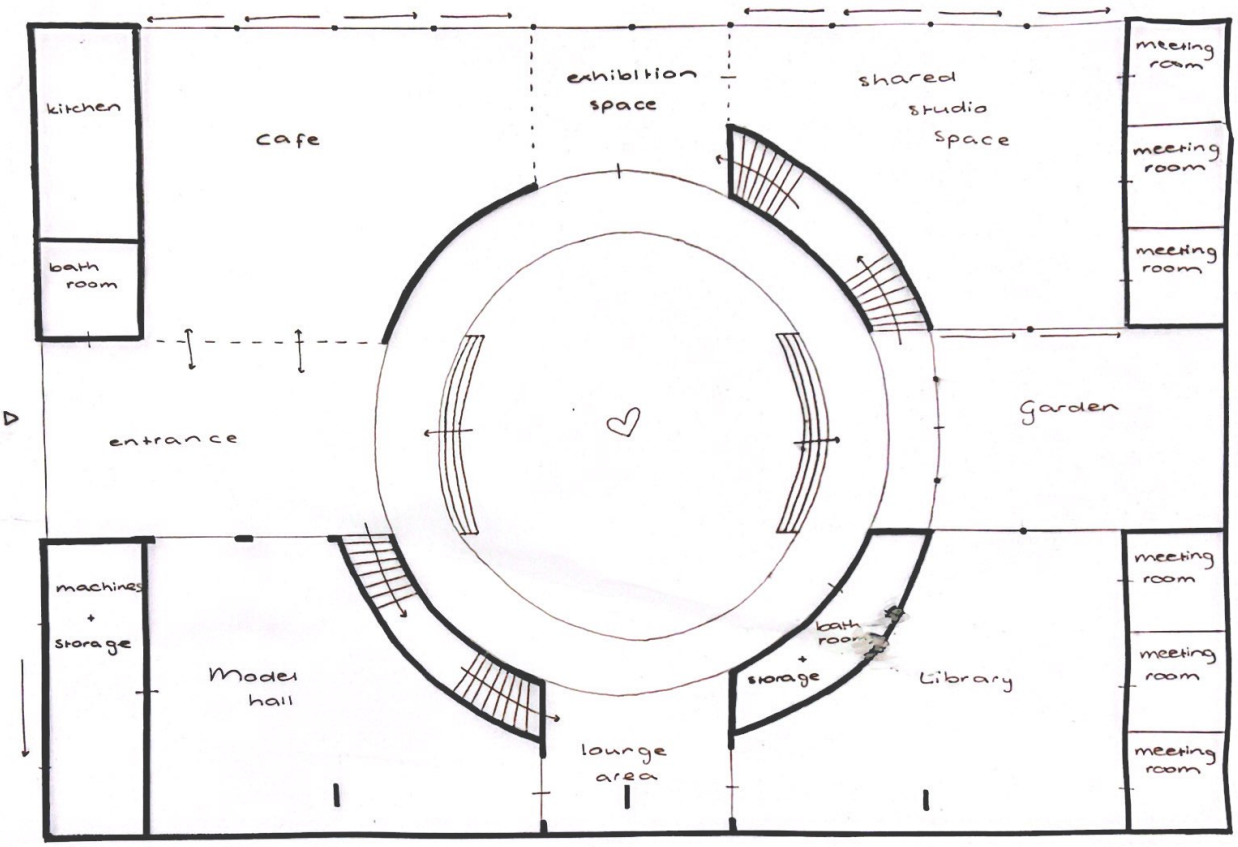
"Upon entering the building, I pass the reception - which is located on my right side. There's a person sitting there, behind a counter. Next to it, I see the entrance to the library and 'sample shop'. Through the two arches I get a peek on what lies behind. It's clear the library is accessible to everyone, but a certain seclusion is almost made tangible. You can feel it, hear it, see it. The space is darker, homey and cosy. A couple of steps are there to bring you away from the main 'street', and to harden the boundary between the 'public space' and still public, but more closed off library. The room, once entered, has quite a high ceiling; but because of a darker ceiling, the space feels and is bordered and enframed. The library's walls are painted dark, forrest green - which makes you focus on the colours of the books, and the decorative lightings here and there. All the way to the back is a huge bookcase, and behind it, a staircase that brings you to the quiet space. In the middle of the space, a lounge area has been created, with a huge rug, a sofa, comfortable chairs, pillows, and a table. This really emphasizes the cosiness of the library. Along the curved wall, multiple shelves are to be found, that hold many samples of materials. However, because of the darkness of the space, it is a bit tricky to properly look and see the exact colours of the materials. Luckily, along the right wall, underneath the quiet space, two meeting rooms are placed, where one can see the samples under better lighting and even discuss them with a client. A third room is used to hold printers and a copy machine. The 'printshop' is where one may also find mail, ~~[illegible]~~ and easels to create mood - and material boards. It would also make sense if one could get stationary here, but it might not be handy, because the space is accessible by anyone - in theory."


greenery
"high ceiling"
"cosy"
spiral staircase
"homey"
velvet?
↳ or just paint?
wooden flooring
rug


"STREET"
wood
"LIBRARY"
STONE/ BRICK

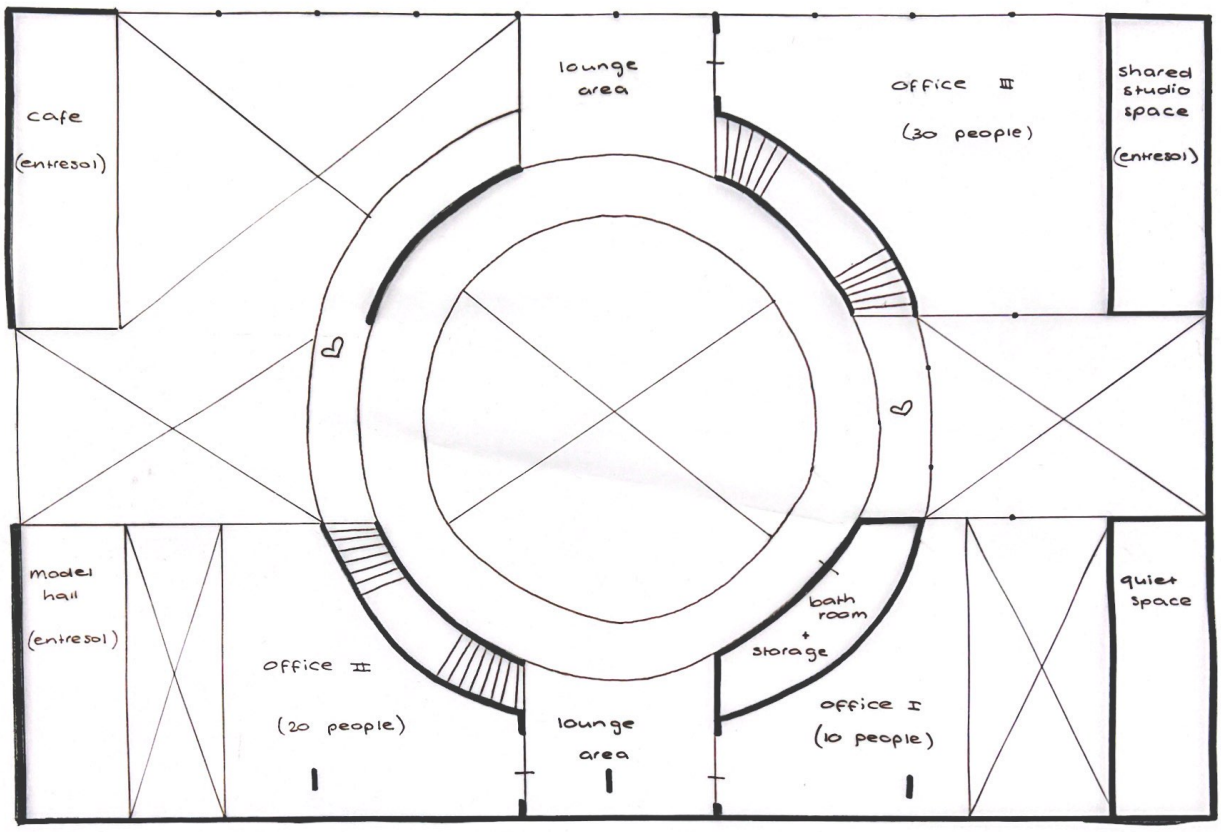

PRIVATE
↳ soft materials
↳ velvet on walls
↳ carpet
quiet space
STREET
public
meeting rooms
library
SEMI
more private
SEMI
more public
↳ soft + (rough) materials
↳ wooden floors
↳ velvet walls
↳ soft + rough materials
↳ wooden floors
↳ plaster walls (?)
+4m
quiet space
+1m
STREET + MR.
0m
LIBRARY

Presentation 3a



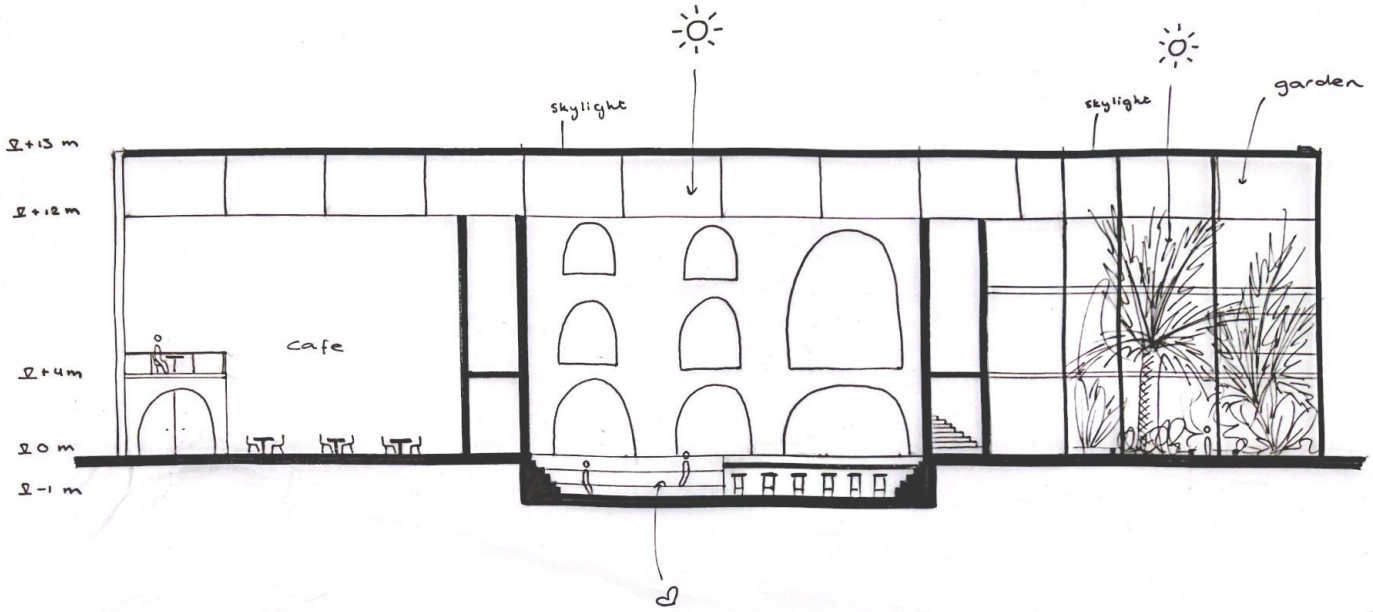
GROUND FLOOR

1:200



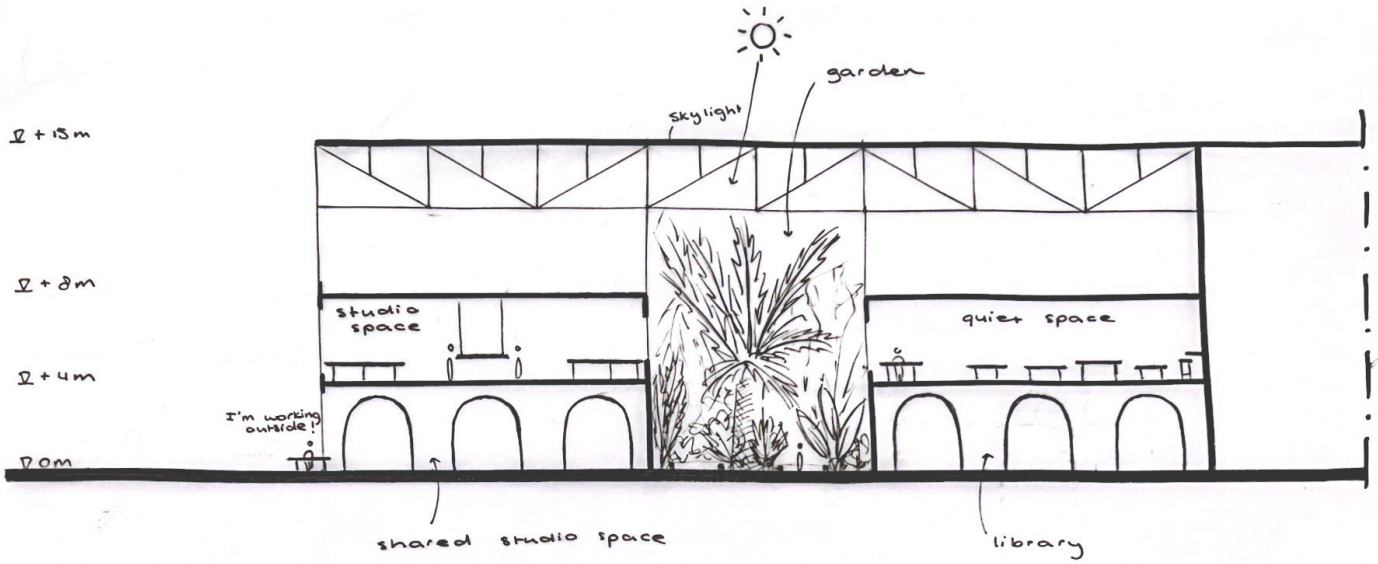
FIRST FLOOR

1:200



SECTION E-W

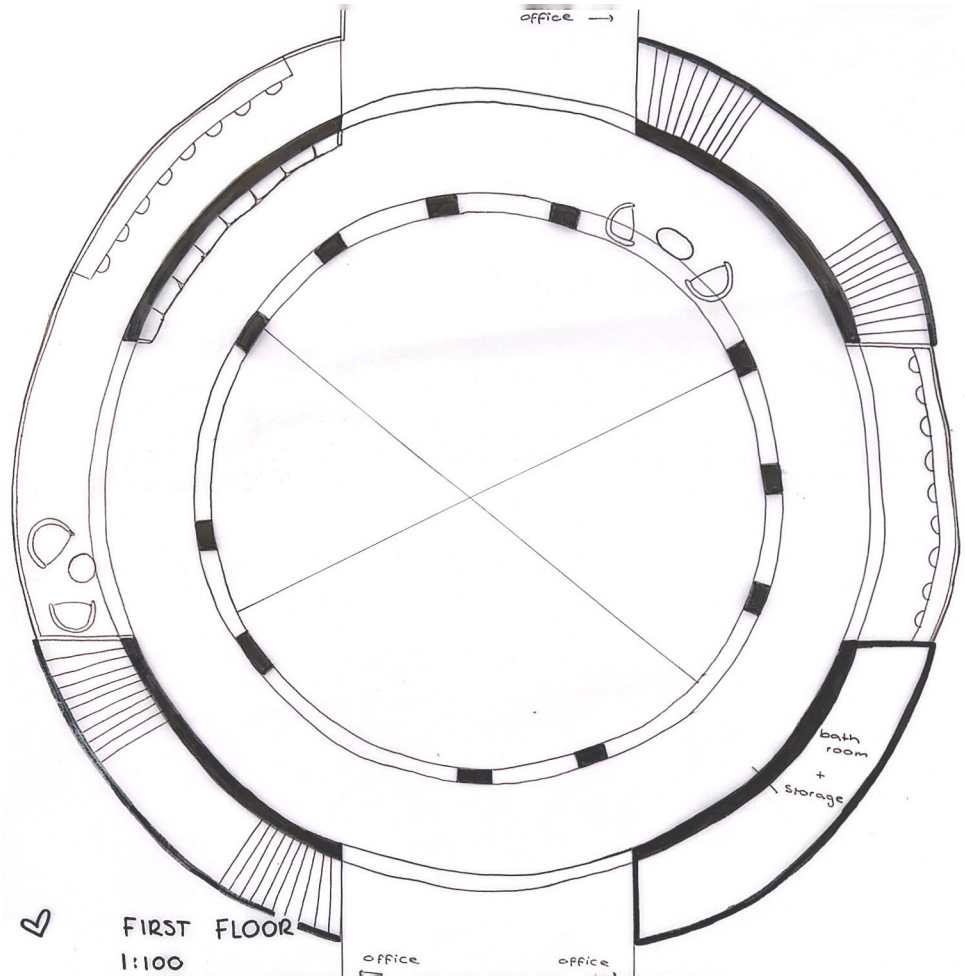
1:200



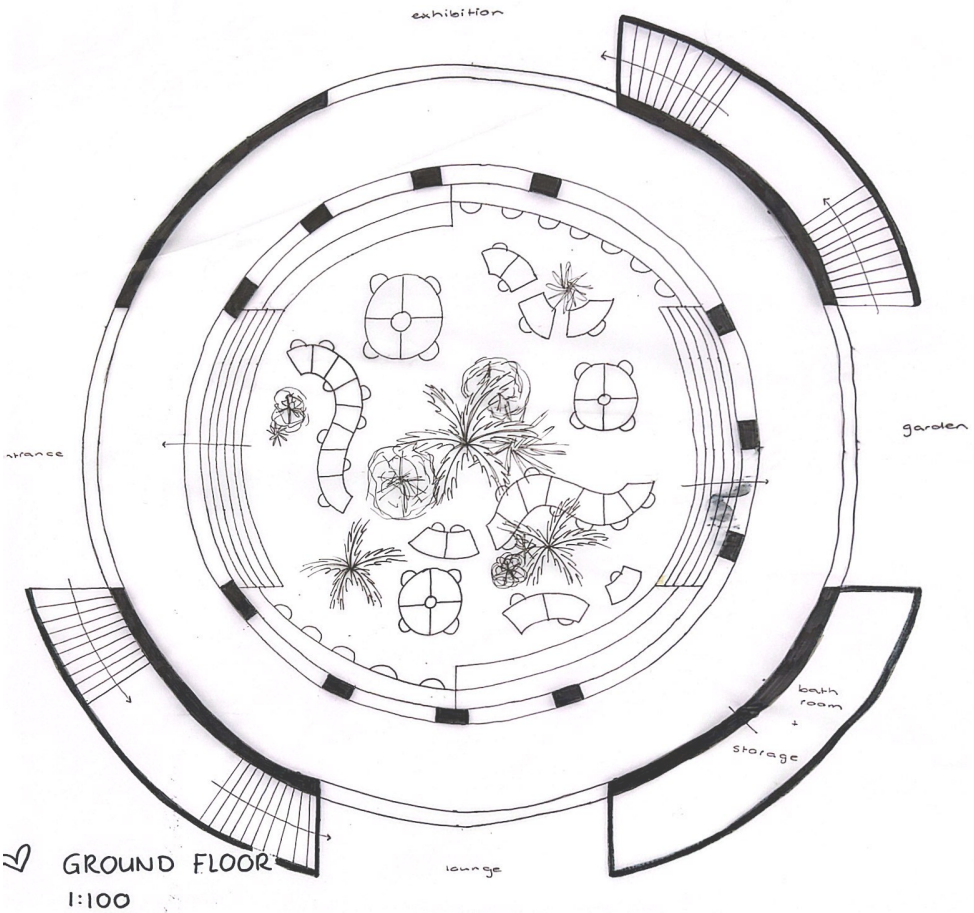
SECTION N-S

1:200

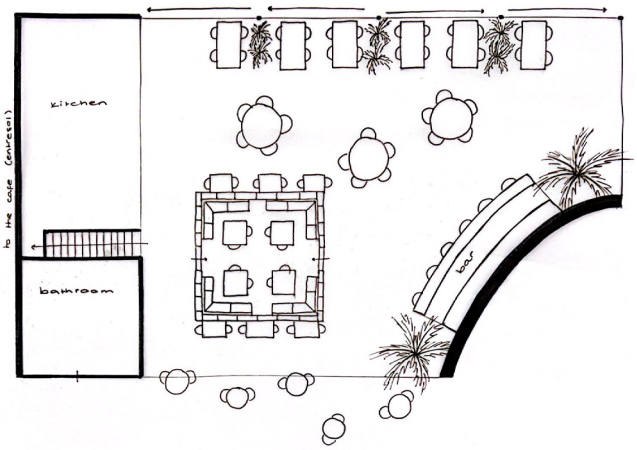
N



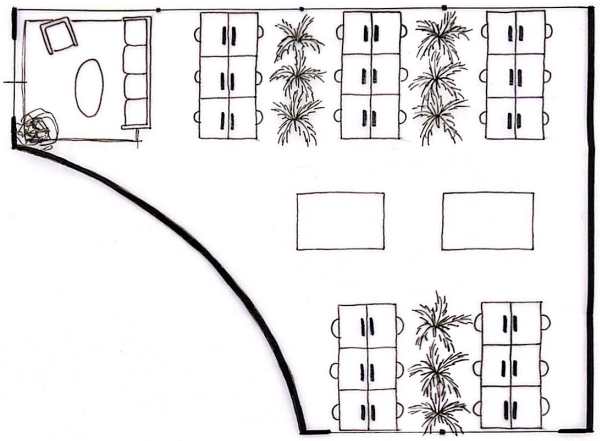
FIRST FLOOR
1:100



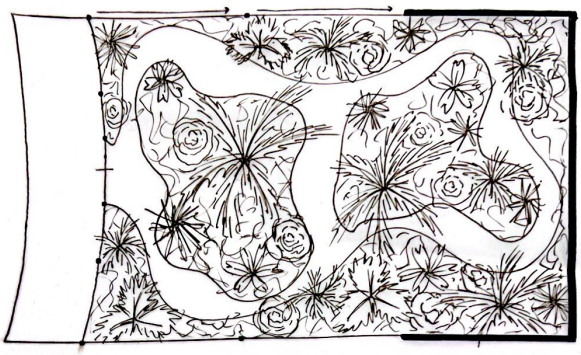
GROUND FLOOR
1:100



CAFE GROUND FLOOR
1:100



STUDIO SPACE - OFFICE III
(30 people)
1:100



GARDEN GROUND FLOOR
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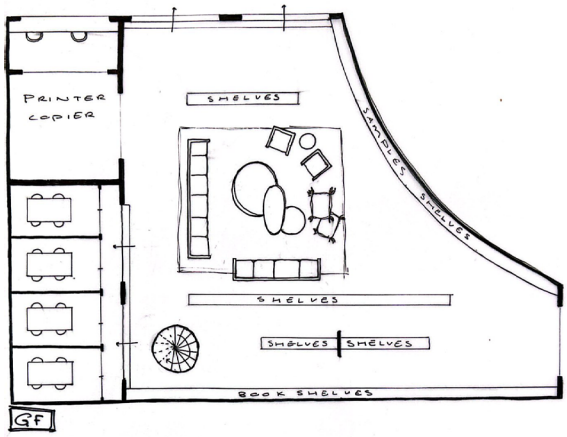
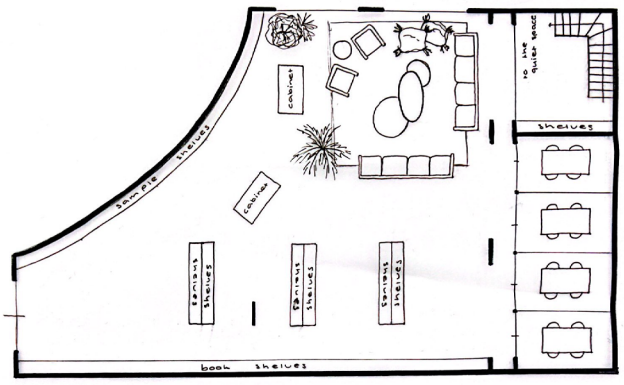


LIBRARY + SAMPLES
↳ reception + printer + meeting rooms + lounge



LIBRARY GROUND FLOOR
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Presentation 3b

Certainly, the P3 is a pivotal juncture in the design process, representing a transition towards the realisation of the project. This informal presentation is a platform where initial design concepts that have been explored and experimented with, gradually converging into a coherent design proposal, are presented to the tutors. It is a milestone in the development of the project.

All three tutors - the design, building technology, and research - are present to give their professional opinion on both the design thus far and the implementation of the research conclusions. They provide a comprehensive perspective on the project. Their collective feedback and insights are invaluable in shaping the direction of the design.

During the P3 presentation, the project received constructive feedback that served as a guiding light for the subsequent phases of the project. This feedback was not only encouraging but also instrumental in refining and enhancing the design. It pinpointed areas for improvement, clarified design principles, and introduced fresh ideas. This collaborative feedback was a testament to the synergy that emerged when different areas of expertise converged.

With the constructive input gathered during P3, the project now enters the next stage of development, heading towards P4. The feedback from P3 is taken into account and thoughtfully integrated into the design process, ensuring that the final presentation will reflect a more refined and well-rounded vision. P3 served as the turning point where initial ideas transformed into a coherent, yet conceptual design proposal, setting the stage for the successful completion of the project.

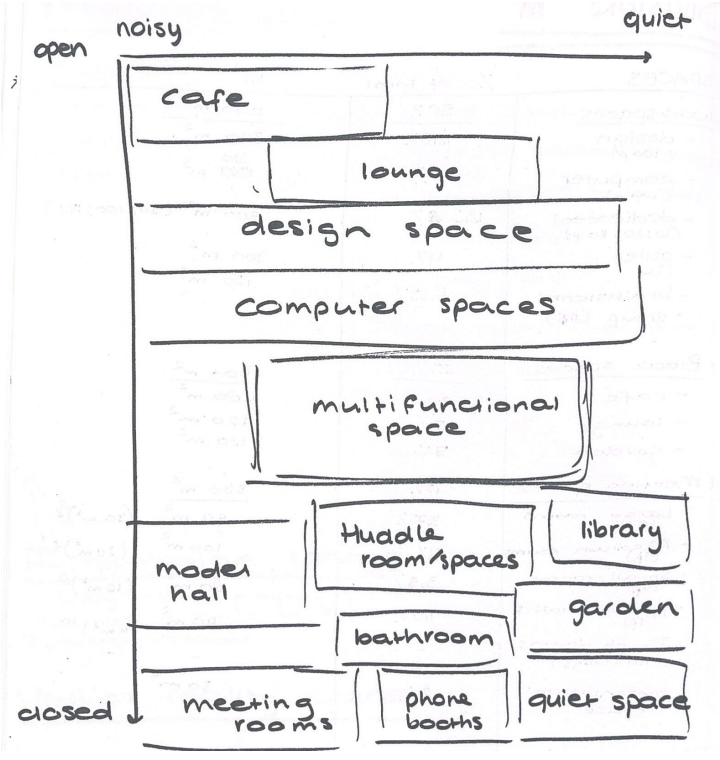
A critical point of feedback was the lack of clarity regarding the design concept. It appeared that the project was not anchored by a clear guiding theme, and the different design rules created thus far, lacked cohesion. While the concept may have made sense to me, it was apparent that it did not provide a strong, unifying theme that could effectively guide the entire design project.

In light of this, as I set out to reconfigure the spatial layout, I also took the time to reflect on and reconsider the previously established design rules. This process represented a crucial step in redefining the project's direction, with the aim of bringing together the disparate elements and forging a more cohesive, well-defined design concept that would underpin the project's continued development.

In relation to this feedback, was the notable issue that surfaced due to my emphasis on activities and the desire to design based on them (aka. activity-based workplace design), as opposed to traditional functions. However, upon reflection, it became evident that my design was not aligned with this intention.

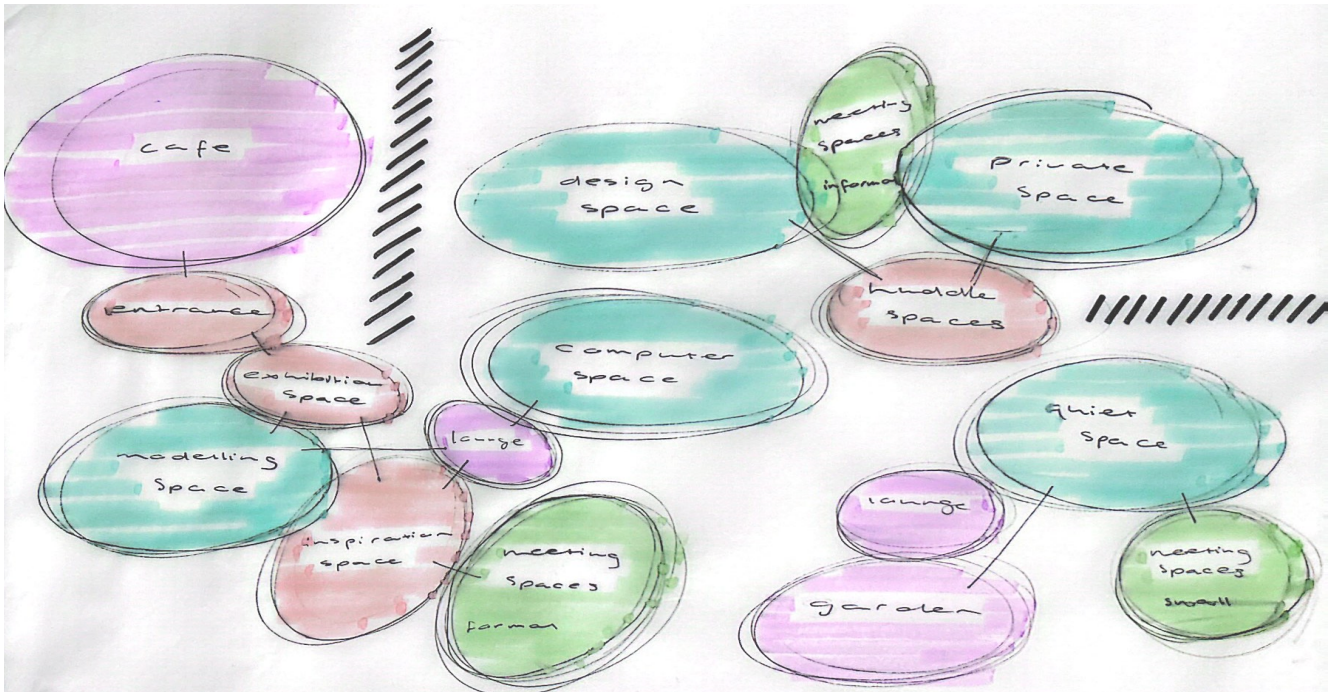
Instead, I had implemented another concept that had emerged from research, which proposed that an office space should operate akin to a city. In this city-like model, individuals are the adaptable components within a fixed environment, with designated areas serving specific needs or activities. This concept was aptly referred to as '*the office as a city*'. This was also emphasised by the use of the names for each space, such as the *factory*, for the modelling space, or the *square*, which is essentially an open-plan workplace.

Regrettably, the implementation of this concept did not yield the desired results, and confounding the design even more, ultimately leading to a design that left much to be desired.



Upon the realisation that I had overlooked the implementation of activity-based design (ABD) as the central design methodology, I circled back to the project's program and undertook a comprehensive reconsideration of the functions. The aim was to transform them into activity-driven spaces. For instance, the *factory* was re-imagined as the *modelling space*, the *work square* assumed the role of the *designing space*, and the *studio areas* were redefined as the *private space*.

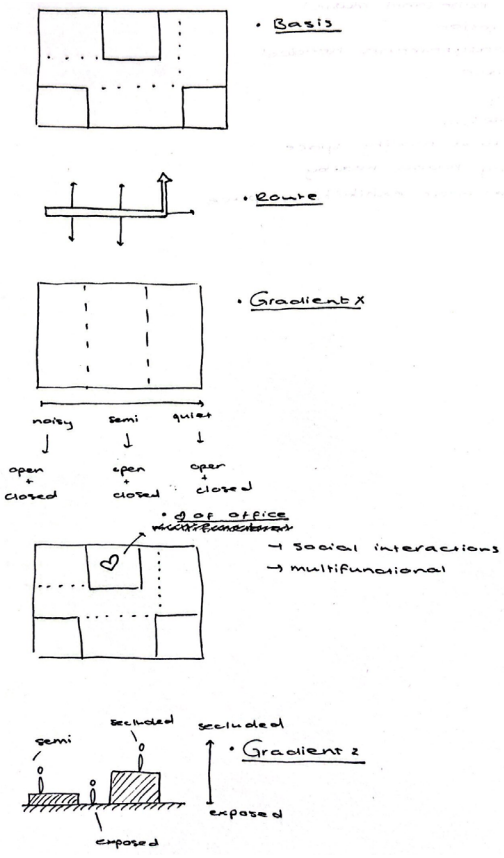
At this juncture in the design process, I remained steadfast in adhering to my established design rules. This necessitated the creation of a new scale, delineating the spectrum from public to private. I embarked on the task of comprehending the interrelationships between various activities, seeking to determine which activities naturally complemented one another and should be situated in close proximity. This exploration involved experimentation with conceptual layouts and the strategic placement of activities, with the ultimate goal of achieving a meaningful categorisation.



After a period of rigorous experimentation, an epiphany emerged. I concluded that the multiple activities could be thoughtfully organised based on their noise production and the level of noise tolerance in each zone. This insight paved the way for the emergence of the three distinct sound zones, thereby bringing a novel dimension to the design's organisation.

The introduction of these three distinct sound zones brought a renewed sense of clarity to the design concept. This clarity prompted a thorough re-evaluation of the design rules I had previously established. It became apparent that some of these rules posed challenges when attempting to harmoniously integrate them, with a few even appearing contradictory and potentially muddling the overarching concept. Consequently, I embarked on a process of reassessment, highlighting the importance of certain rules while identifying others that could be set aside.

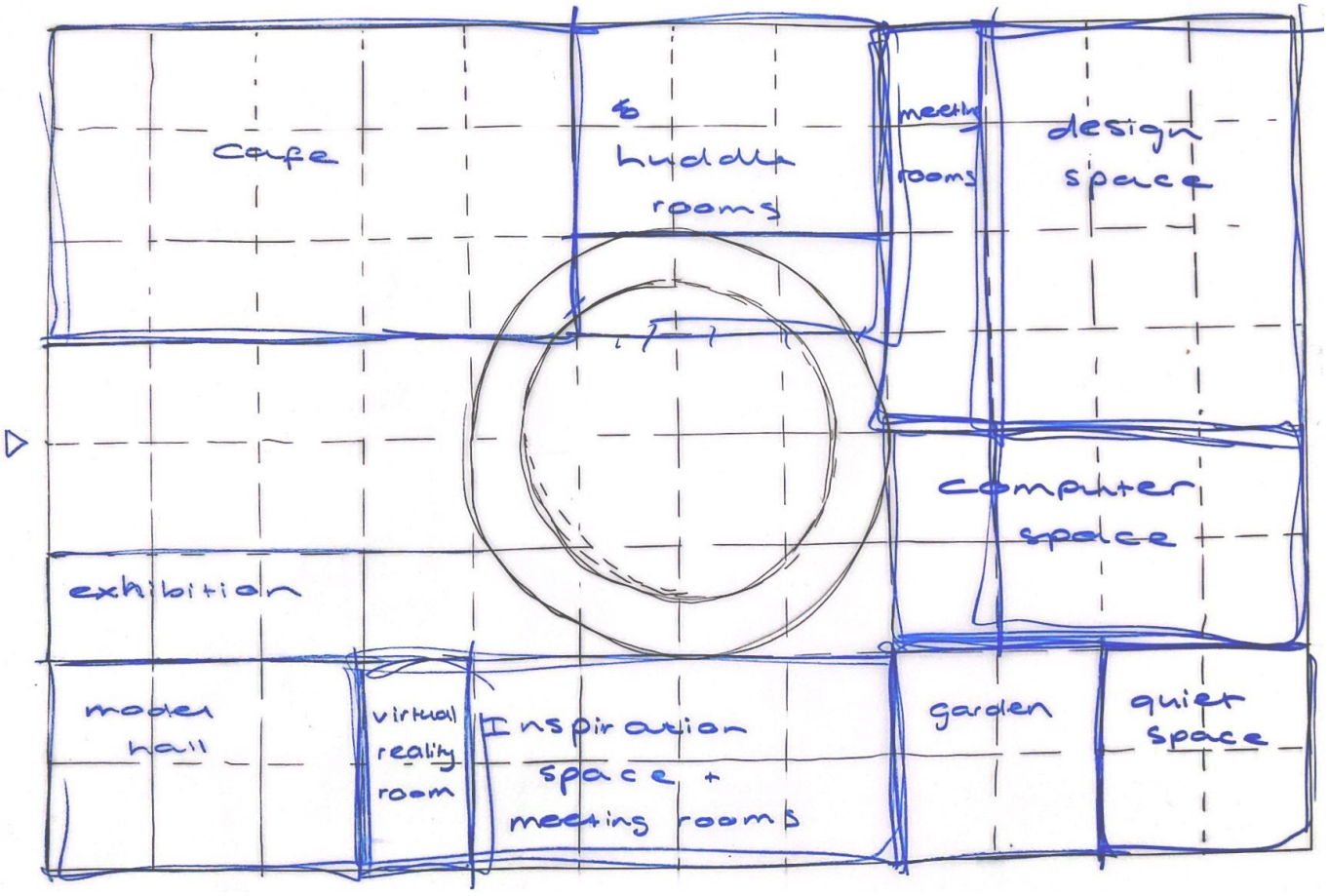
This journey of re-evaluation taught me an invaluable lesson – that sometimes, what initially seemed like a solid foundation for the design may no longer hold true. It underscored the dynamic nature of the creative process, where adaptability and a willingness to reconsider and revise are essential to navigate the ever-evolving design landscape.



With the emergence of the three sound zones and the re-evaluation of the design rules, new floor plans are explored, seeking most of all a clear spatial layout that enhances the concept, without confusing it.

Another significant revelation during the P3 presentation was the observation that the design appeared to be a compilation of disparate ideas. The various spaces didn't seem to coalesce into a unified design language, lacking a sense of coherence. The *colosseum* at the centre of the office space was noted to be overly dominant, overshadowing the other spaces and leaving them with limited 'breathing space'. The feedback from the tutors suggested a need to rebalance the spatial arrangement and allocate more room to the surrounding spaces. Consequently, it became evident that a substantial redesign was in order, with the resizing of the *colosseum* to allow for more expansive areas adjacent to it.

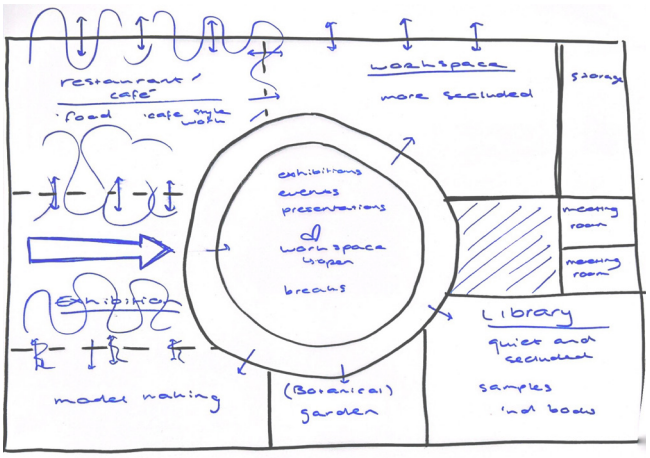
In an effort to address these concerns, a difficult decision was made – to let go of a beloved aspect of the design. The *colosseum*'s walls were removed, transforming it into an open and circular square. However, this redirection ultimately left the design feeling somewhat unsatisfying.

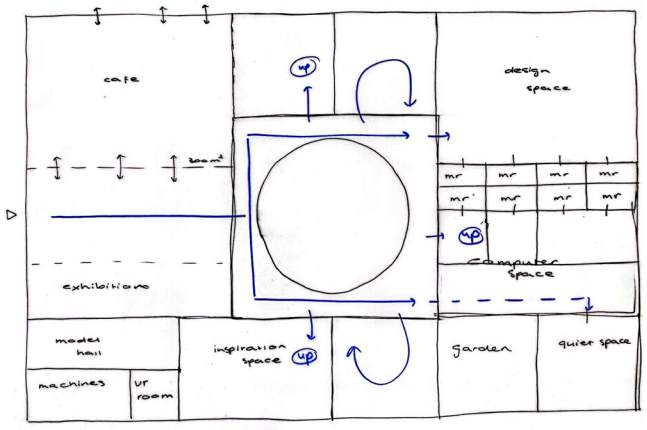


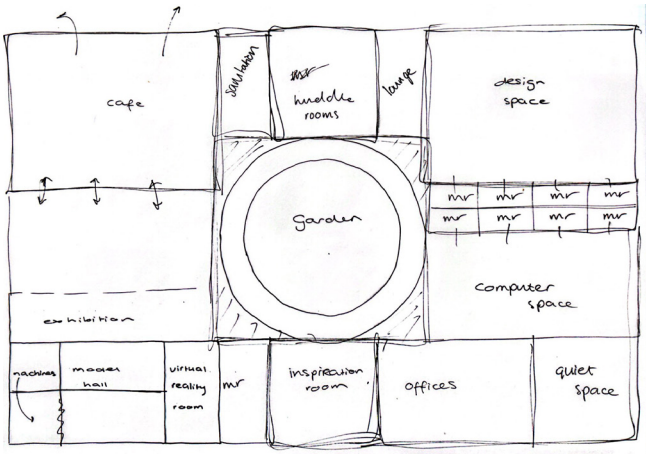
And so commenced the arduous quest for a spatial layout that not only aligned with the project's concept but also brought personal satisfaction. This challenge was a rigorous undertaking, one that ultimately resulted in the postponement of the P4 presentation. However, before delving into the specifics of this postponement, I'd like to take you on the journey that led to the final spatial layout, as it is a compelling narrative that highlights both the strengths and weaknesses of my design skills.

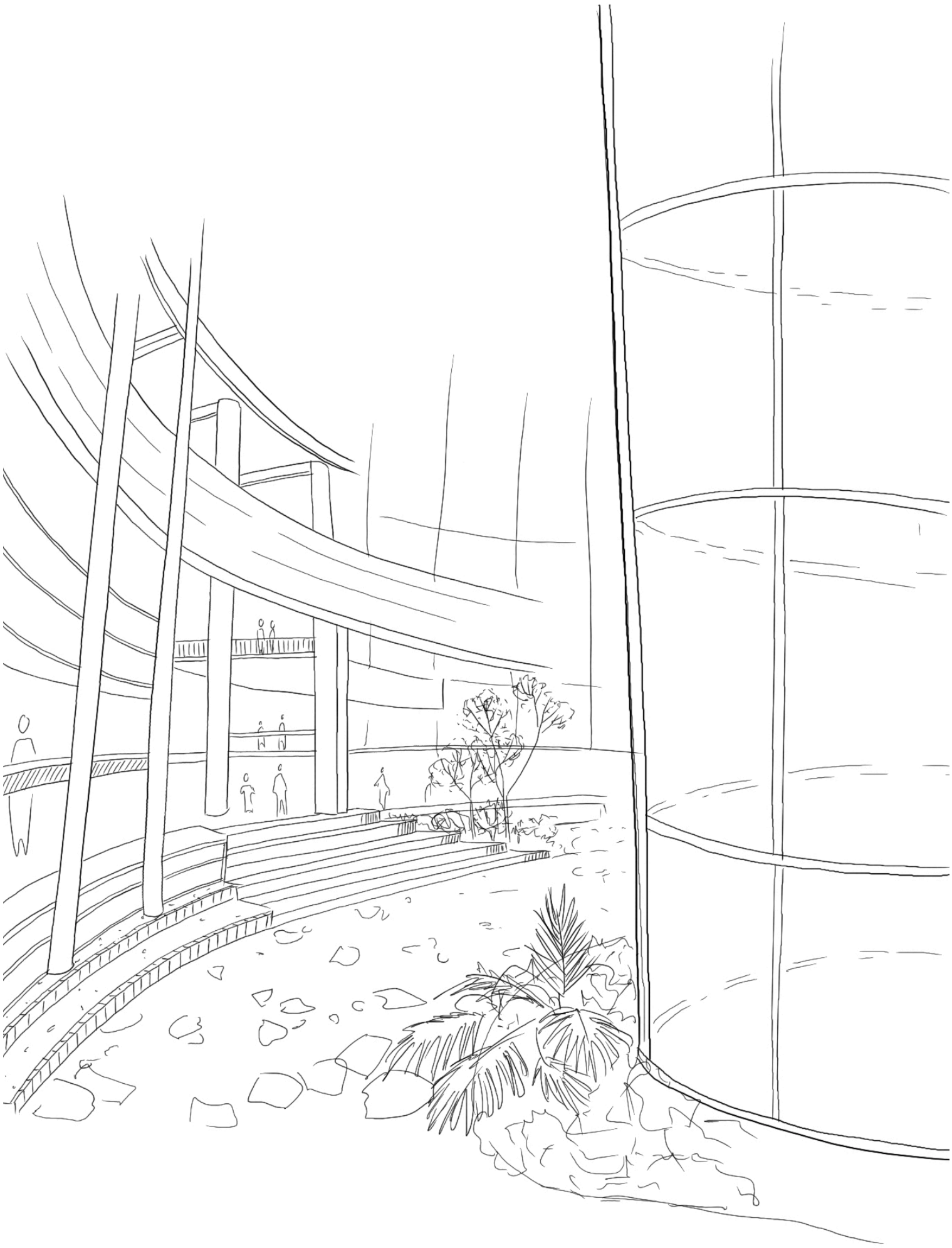
With the removal of the circular square's walls, a sense of direction was lost. What could this central area be – a workspace, a garden, or something entirely different? Responding to feedback that the initial circle was overly expansive, I decided to reduce its size, liberating more space for the adjacent functions. A major change was the transformation of the primary pathway around the *centre*; once circular, it evolved into a square. This adjustment facilitated the creation of orthogonally shaped spaces, in better alignment with the nature of the activities and easier to furnish.

The introduction of these new space shapes opened up a realm of possibilities, offering flexibility and fresh potential layouts for the project. It was a pivotal juncture in the design process, marking a shift in the project's direction and the path toward the ultimate design solution.





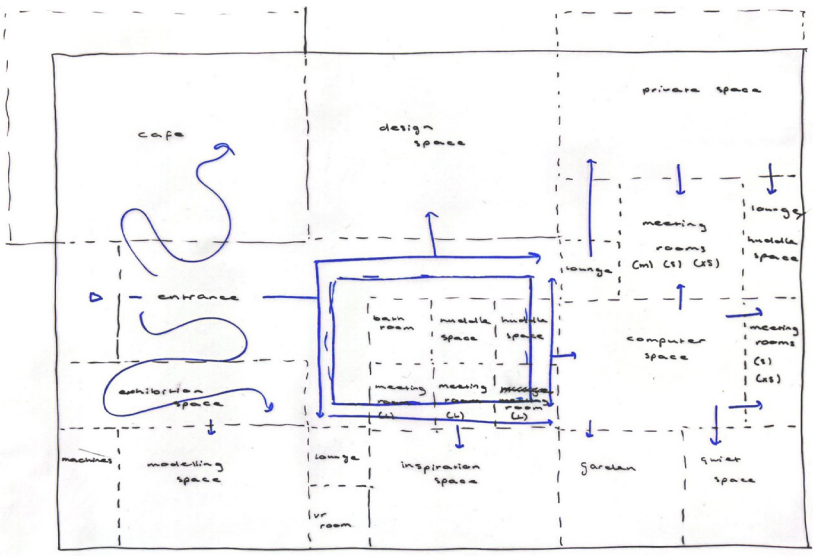


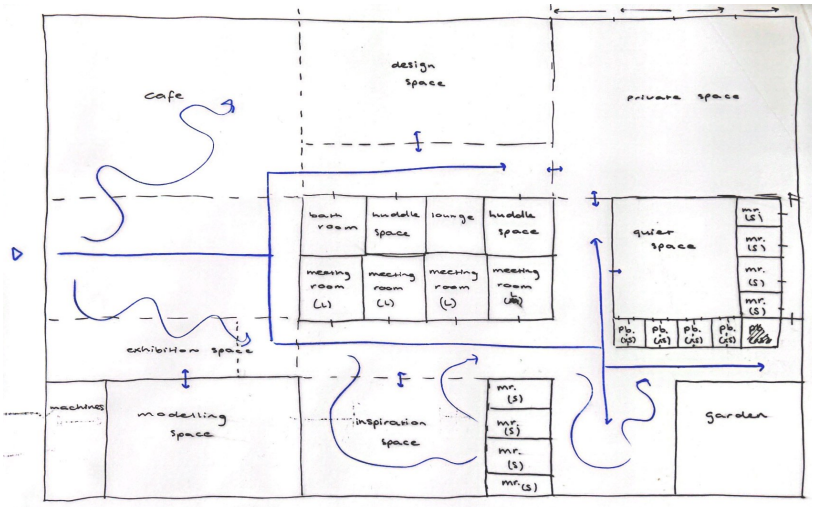


Despite numerous iterations and variations, I reached a point where I had to confront the realisation that I couldn't provide compelling reasons for the inclusion of a circular element in the design. It appeared to introduce unnecessary complexity into the design process, a sentiment that was echoed by feedback received during tutoring sessions.

Consequently, I made the decision to replace the circular centre with a rectangular shape. This change, however, raised new questions – what purpose would this new central shape serve within the warehouse? To address this, I sought references in the hope of gaining clarity and a well-defined vision for this element. This shift also led to considerations about the user's movement within the office and the route they would follow.

An integral aspect of the design requirements was the creation of an efficient route, one that didn't necessarily need to be the most optimal but should serve as the primary path for users. To explore this and test the myriad layout variations, I once again embarked on a series of experiments, using the route as a guiding framework to refine the overall design.





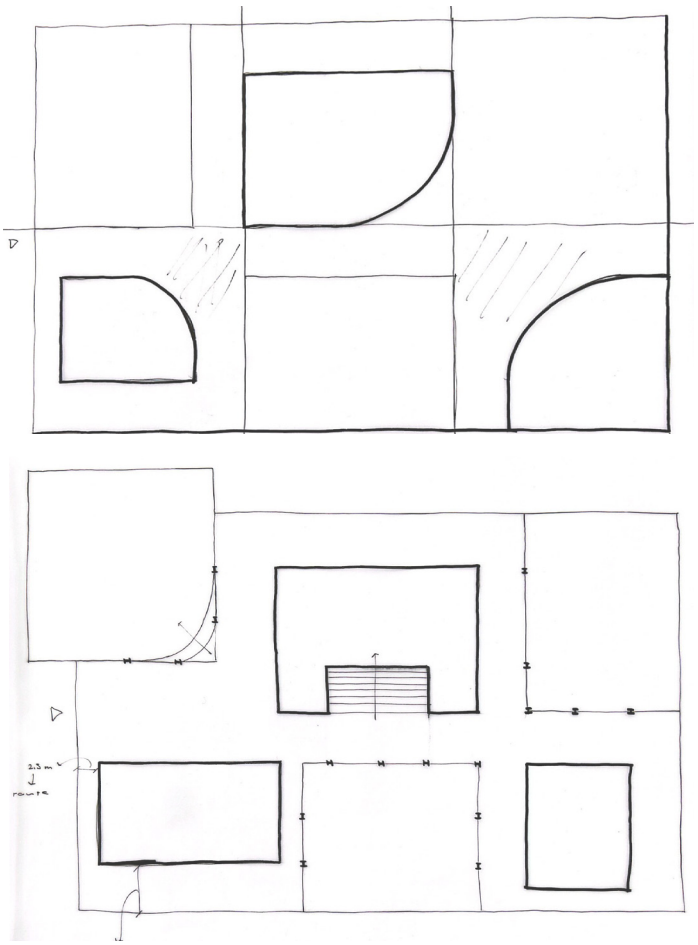
Consequently, I made the decision to eliminate circular shapes from the spatial layouts, opening the door to multiple alternatives. Gradually, I loosened my grip on the previously established design rules, allowing myself to focus solely on discovering the ideal concept for the spatial layout.

Following the guidance of Elise van Dooren, who outlined several potential variations, including the grid, block-in-block, collage, strips, and more, I embarked on an exploration of virtually every conceivable variation.

Selecting the warehouse as the design's location posed a unique challenge. I felt bound by its distinctive genius loci, characterised by the open space and the existing grid structure. I recognised the potential monotony that could arise from rigidly adhering to the grid, as was evident in the initial attempts labelled as '*order*'.

As a response, I had initially veered towards a more playful and chaotic concept. However, I remained keen not to disregard the warehouse's grid completely, so I set out to experiment with various concepts that harmonised with this grid structure.

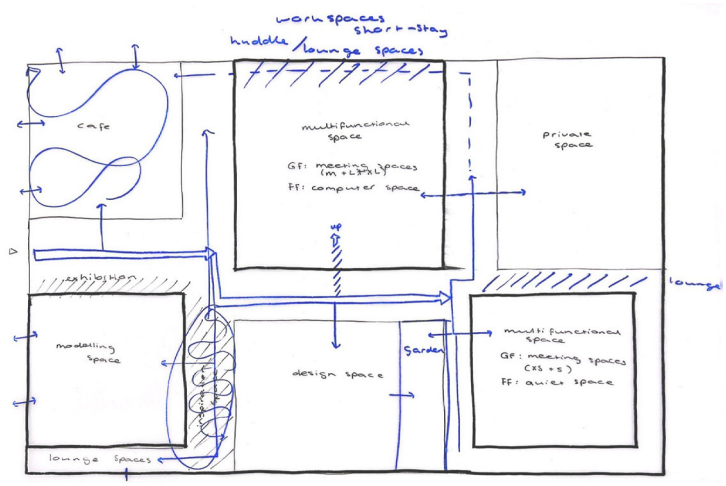
By seamlessly transitioning between floor plans and 3D modelling, my goal was to craft a compelling and engaging spatial layout. Throughout this journey, I kept in mind the need to balance the division of activities and the three distinct zones, which sometimes became more prominent than at other times, all while ensuring the visual appeal and aesthetics of the design. This iterative exploration marked a dynamic process of trial and discovery, ultimately guiding the project toward an exciting and well-considered design solution.

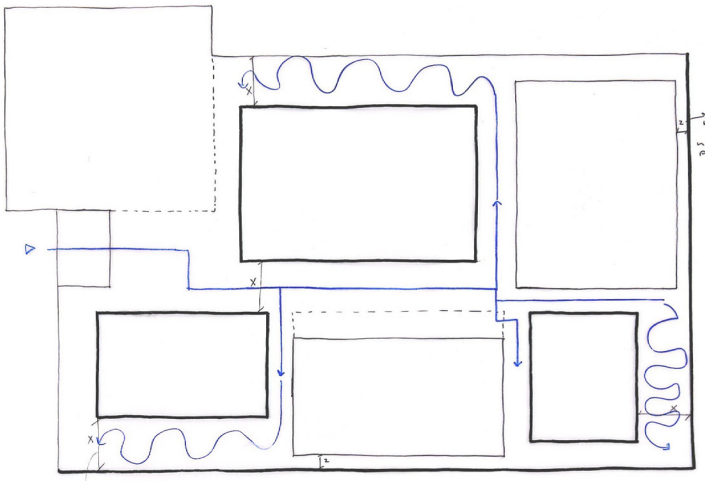


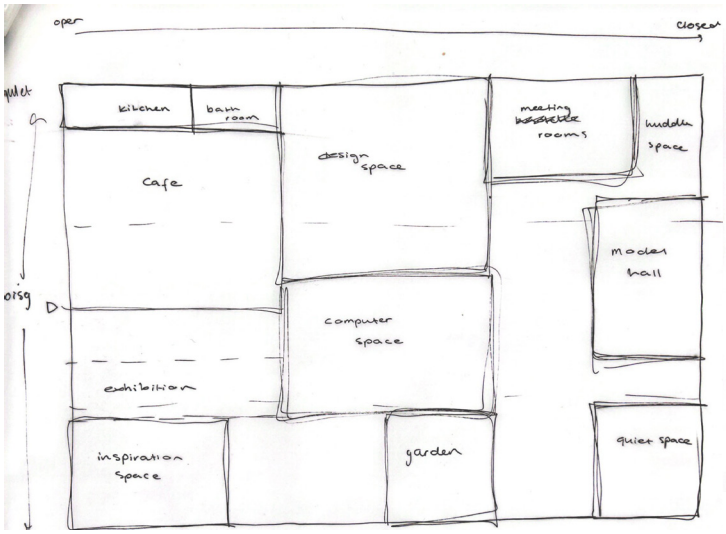
During this phase, I found myself inundated with a multitude of potential options and a sea of design variations. The sheer volume of choices led to a disorienting sense of direction. What's more, I allowed the opinions of those around me to exert more influence than my own. Some saw potential in rounded corners, while others favoured simplicity, symmetry, or the interplay between openness and closeness. But the million-dollar question remained: what did I envision?

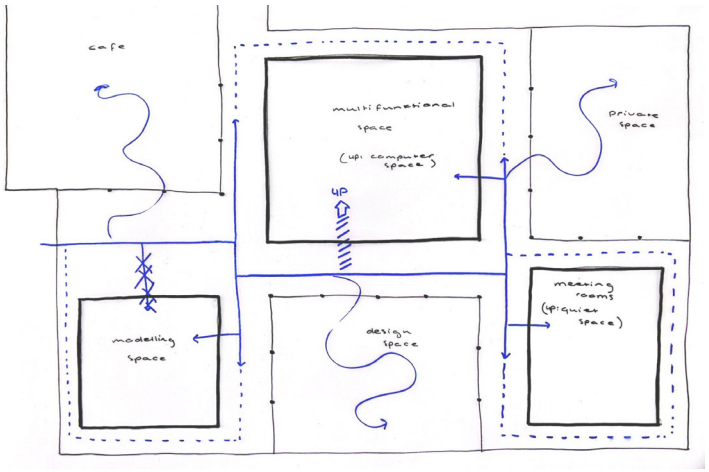
This uncertainty extended not only to my design but, more crucially, to my own thought process. As the P4 deadline loomed on the horizon, with roughly three weeks left, the mounting pressure became almost suffocating. It left me feeling paralysed, akin to a creative block, similar to a writer's block. Despite being fully aware of the situation, I found myself unable to break free from it. It reached a point where I was figuratively frozen on the sofa for an entire weekend.

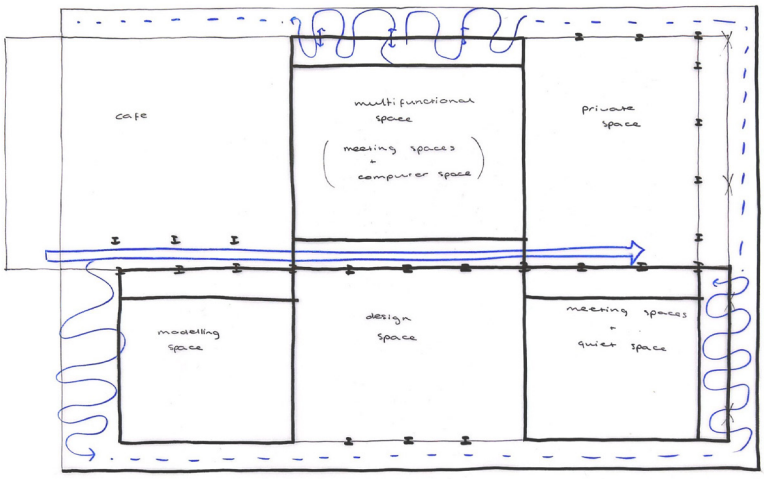
However, my nature doesn't incline me to give up easily. I allowed myself the weekend to grapple with feelings of being lost and disheartened by the project. But as Monday dawned, a renewed determination took over, ushering in a fresh start and a resolution not to succumb to the overwhelming challenges.

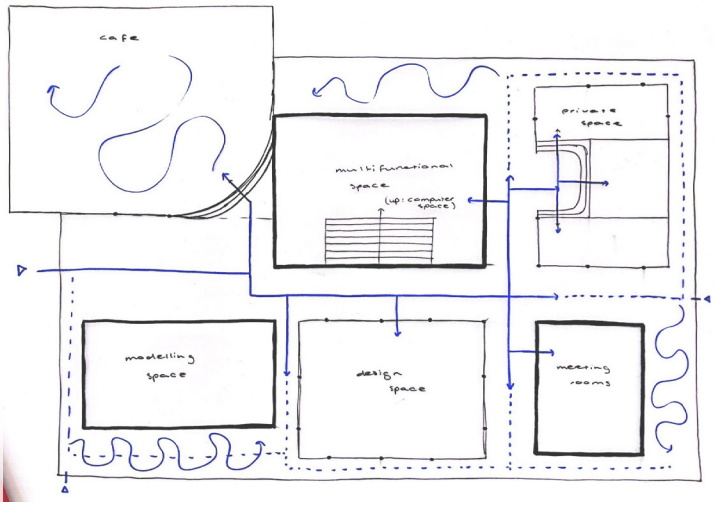

work spaces
short-stay
huddle / lounge spaces
cafe
multifunctional space
GF: meeting spaces (m+L+XL)
FF: computer space
private space
up
exhibition
modelling space
design space
garden
multifunctional space
GF: meeting spaces (XS+S)
FF: quiet space
lounge spaces

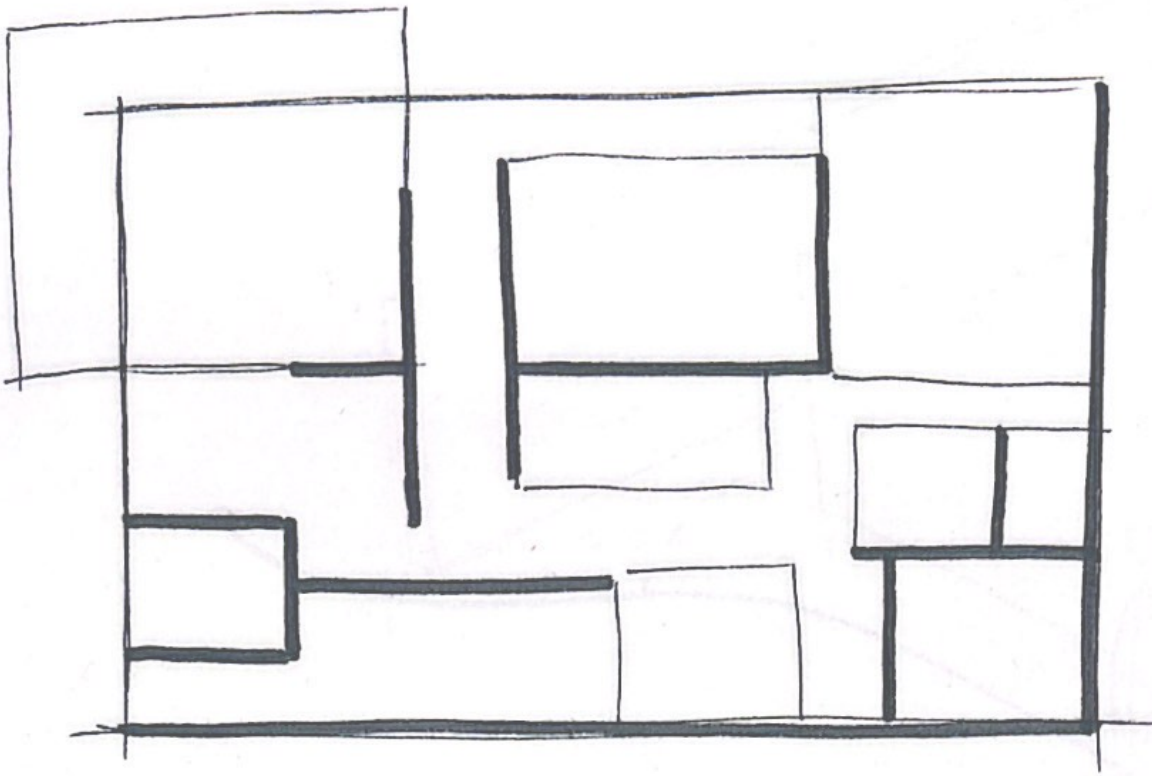


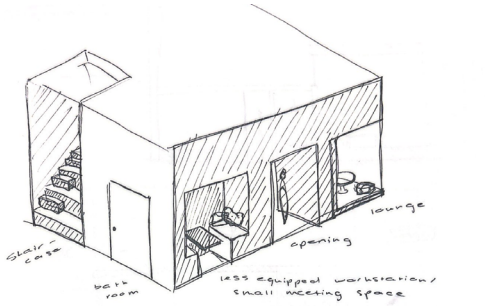

open
closed
kitchen
bath room
cafe
design space
meeting rooms
huddle space
model hall
computer space
exhibition
inspiration space
garden
quiet space

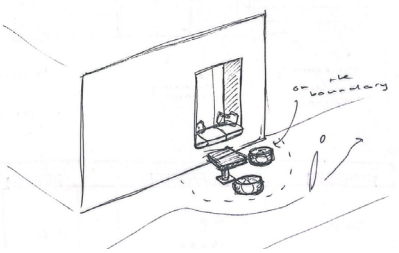

cafe
multifunctional space
(up: computer space)
up
private space
modelling space
design space
meeting rooms
(up: quiet space)

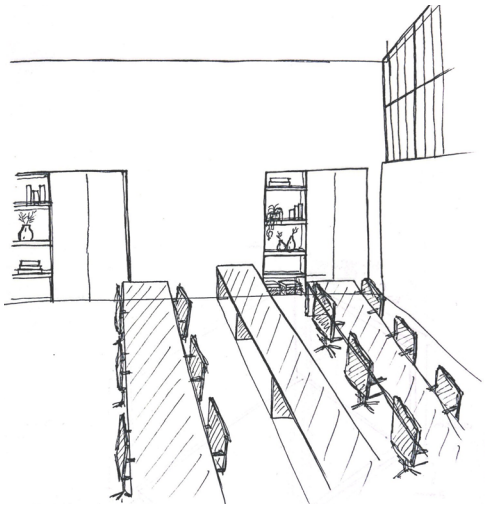

cafe
multifunctional space
(meeting spaces + computer space)
private space
modelling space
design space
meeting spaces + quiet space


cafe
multifunctional space
(up: computer space)
private space
modelling space
design space
meeting rooms









And so, I spoke and followed through. Since I was at my parents' place, I accompanied my mum to her office, as I occasionally do to work there. After a full day's work, I had a revised version that truly satisfied me. It appeared to align perfectly with my intentions. It fully embraced the grid, incorporated the division of the three sound zones, and played around with a multitude of walls. Additionally, it featured a pathway that seamlessly interconnected all the spaces into a primary route.

What pleased me even more, especially at that time when I still placed higher value on the opinions of others than my own, was that the tutors seemed content with my satisfaction.

However, they still saw ample room for improvement. The new layout inspired me across various aspects of the project, prompting me to delve into experimentation through different forms of drawings - a promising sign, in my view.

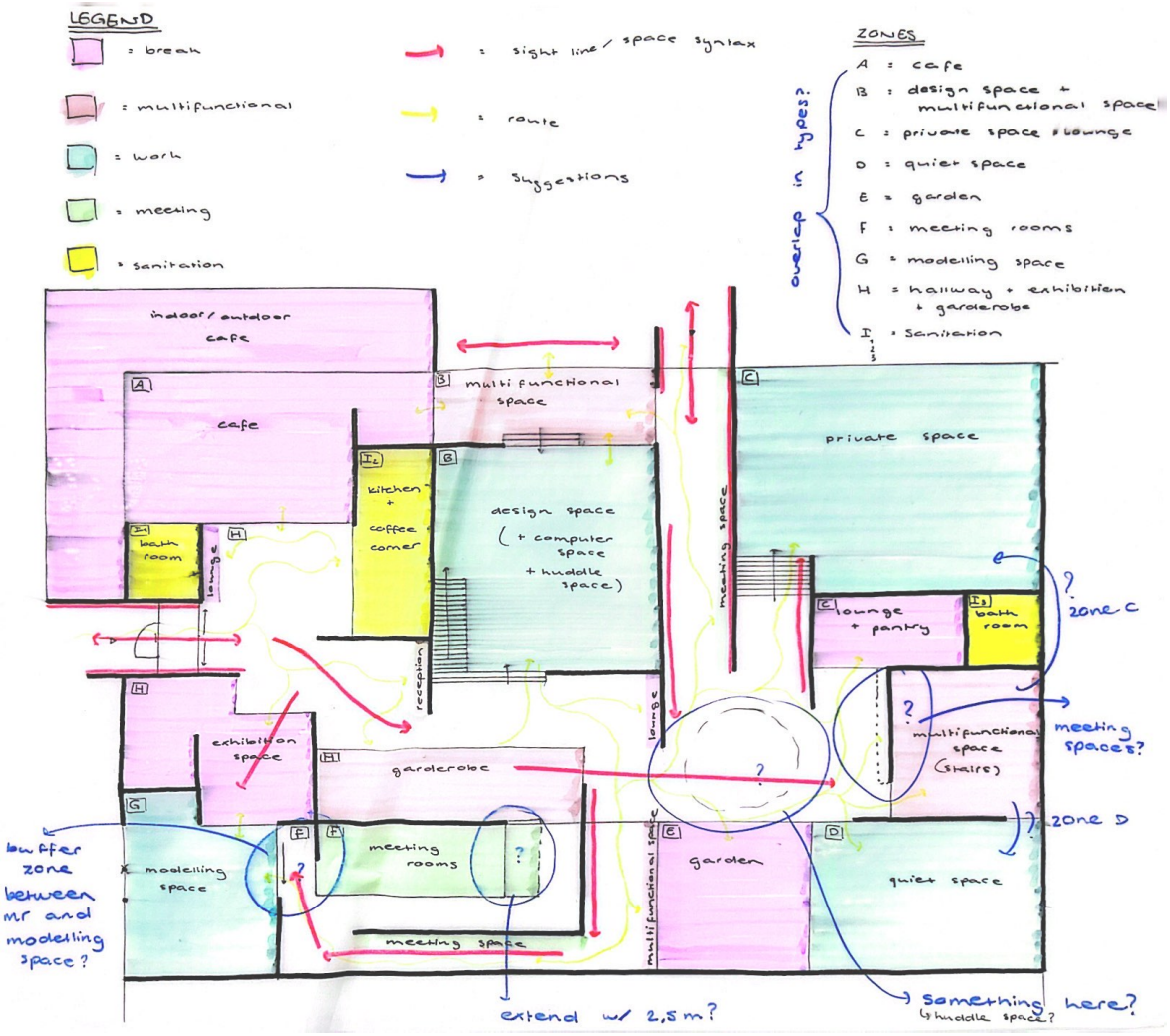
This newly conceived spatial layout underwent several iterations and adjustments. These modifications were informed by in-depth research into the flow of the office, my intentions for guiding users through the design, and the framing of various activities.

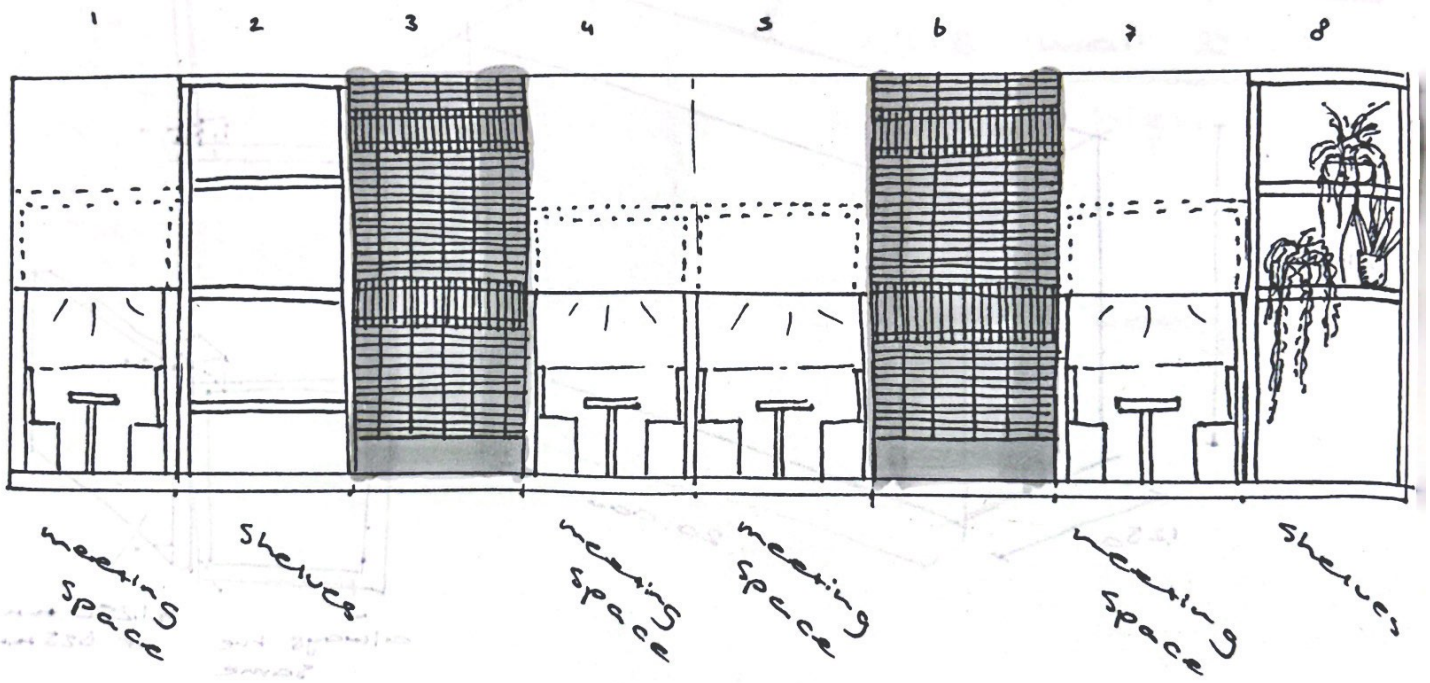
For instance, I aimed to implicitly ensure that visitors would predominantly occupy the first zone of the office, similar to the arrangement at *Vakwerkhuis*. I also considered which activities required a more enclosed and secluded setting versus those that demanded openness and accessibility. Additionally, I had to factor in the specific physical environments that certain activities necessitated, such as natural daylight or particular ceiling heights.

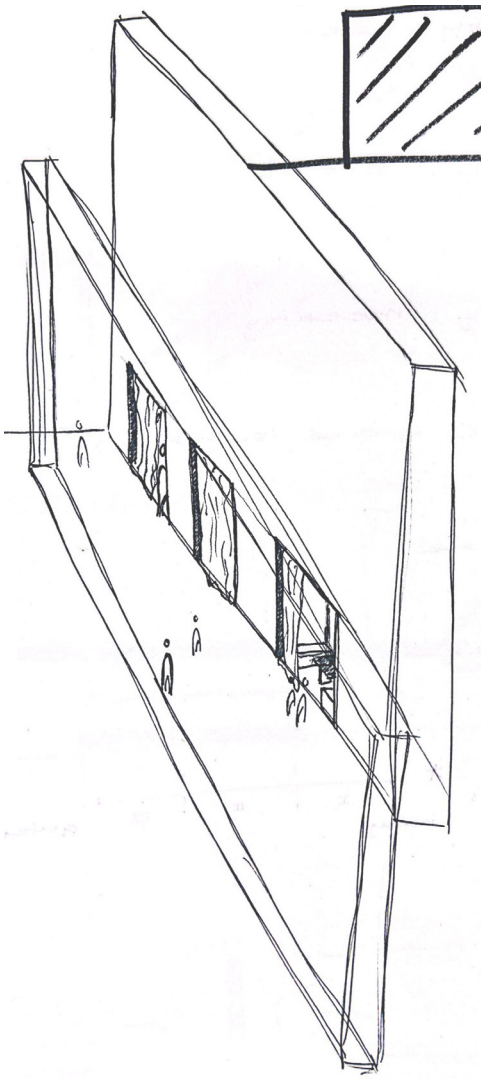
Thus, a cycle of adjustments within the floor plan ensued. I continuously scrutinised the route and meticulously arranged all activities within their respective zones, re-evaluating their placements in accordance with my vision and the prerequisites and characteristics derived from the research conducted in the previous article. The positioning of walls, including their orientation and length, was fine-tuned and optimised to align precisely with my design objectives and the desired user guidance through the building.

Nonetheless, this process consumed an extensive amount of time, perhaps too much. The quest for perfection in the floor plan, or the spatial layout, was a compelling drive, resulting in a disproportionate allocation of time towards this aspect, at the expense of other essential tasks like building technology, detailing, facade design, and more. Although I had finally reached a point where I was content with the design concept and brimming with inspiration, it became apparent that it would be practically impossible for me to tackle all domains within the time frame. Nonetheless, I received advice from everyone to make the attempt, as they believed I could manage it.

It's crucial to recognise that it isn't in my nature to simply meet a deadline for the sake of meeting it. I've invested too much effort throughout my entire architectural education to now rush through my graduation project. I hold a strong sense of pride in the research I've conducted, the stance I've developed on flexible working as a work norm, and how this should be translated into a design proposal. Consequently, I firmly believed that it would be a disservice to both myself and my project to rush it over two weeks just to meet the P4 deadline, particularly when it would come at the cost of neglecting my physical and mental well-being.







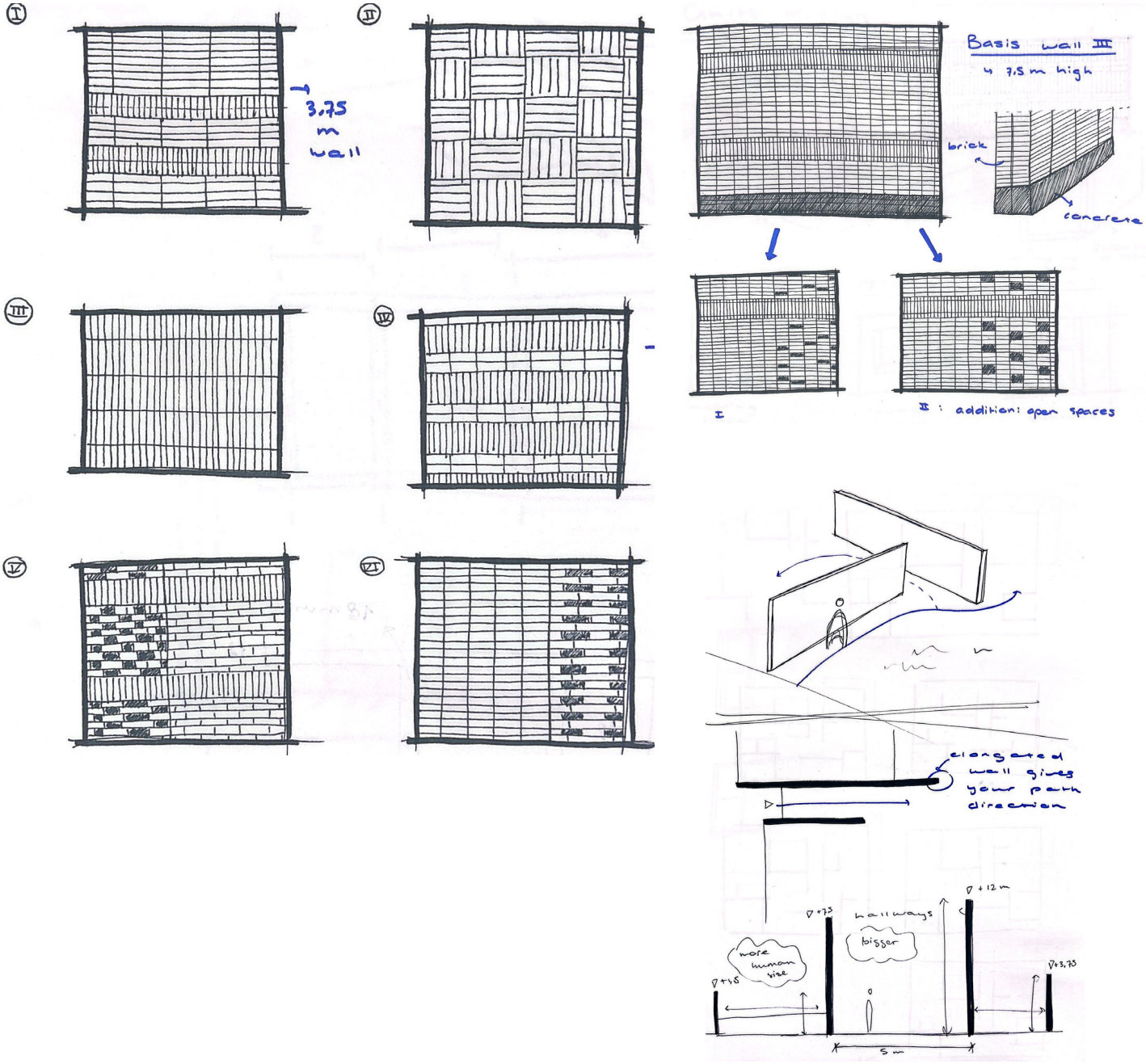
The decision to postpone P4 brought a sense of relief and opened up new opportunities for me. I saw it as a chance to delve deeper into various design aspects. This extended beyond the ongoing development of the floor plan to encompass experiments with materials and interior design.

I also recognised the importance of dedicating more time to refine the route within the design. The route, while being a pivotal component in the design, symbolised more than just its physical existence; it had a profound influence on the flow of users through the building.

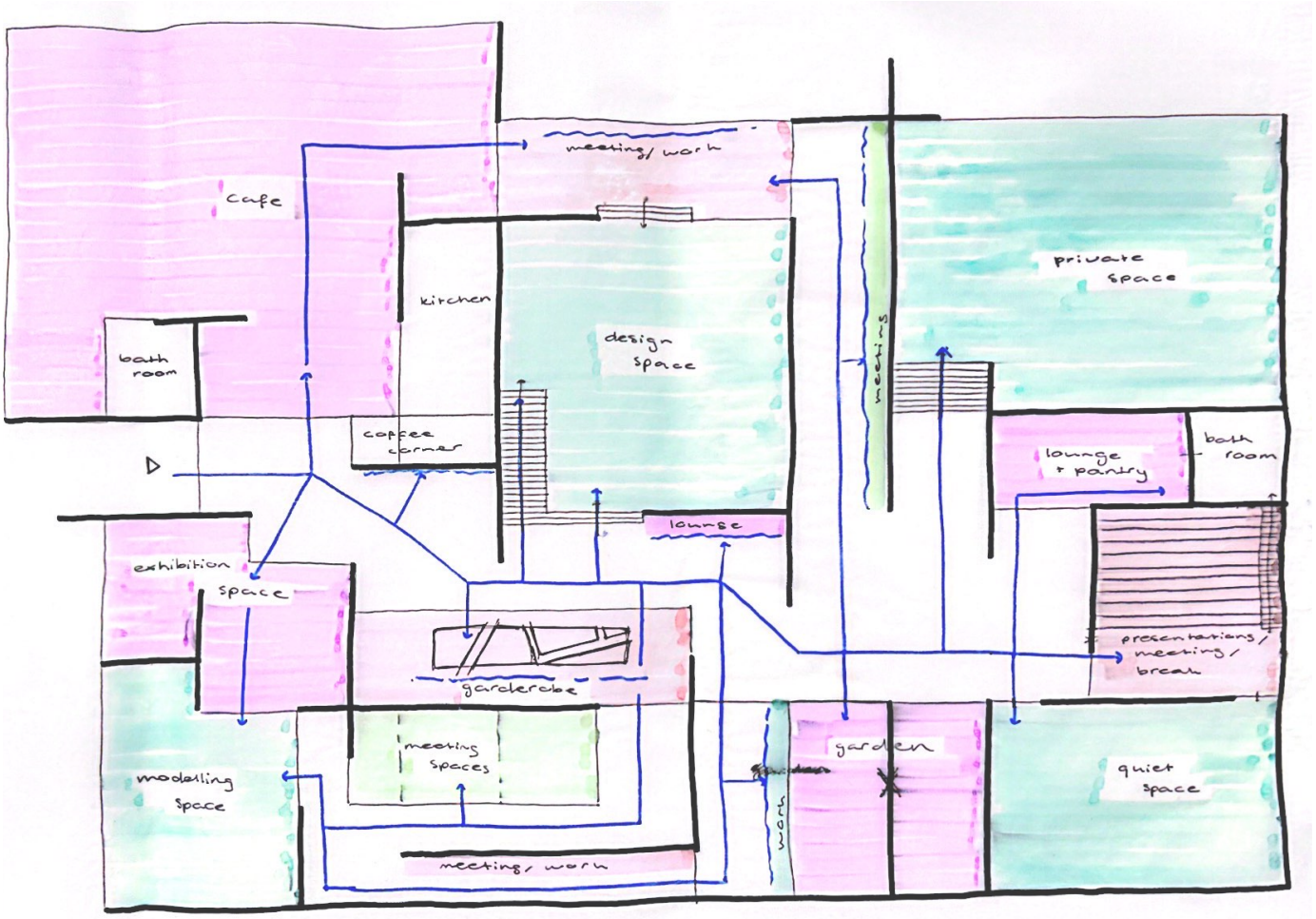
My aspiration for the spatial concept and route was to create a design that was visually pleasing yet elegantly simple, one in which the design's underlying concept could be easily discerned. In retrospect, this particular goal had been a continuous source of pressure throughout the entire process. However, I believed that the new spatial layout, with walls strategically directing people as if I were a puppet master and creating purposeful spaces between these walls, would facilitate the realisation of this goal.

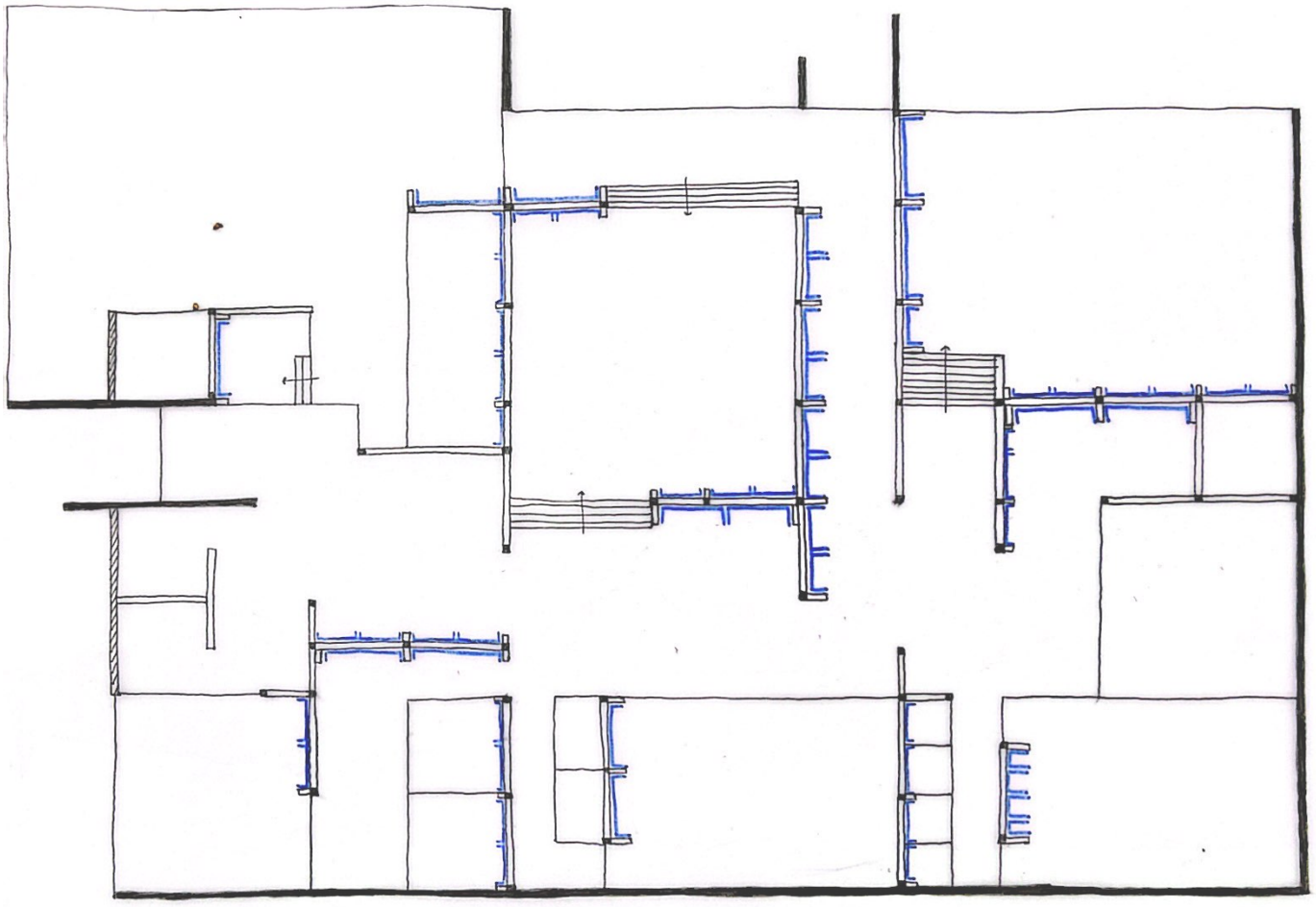
At that time, I hadn't yet realised that the profusion of design variations had a dual impact. On one hand, it signified my commitment to developing this aspect thoroughly, but on the other hand, it posed a risk of diverting my attention from other critical aspects. Fortunately, with the absence of deadline pressure and the introduction of the new spatial concept, inspiration flourished, and ideas began to manifest across various design domains.

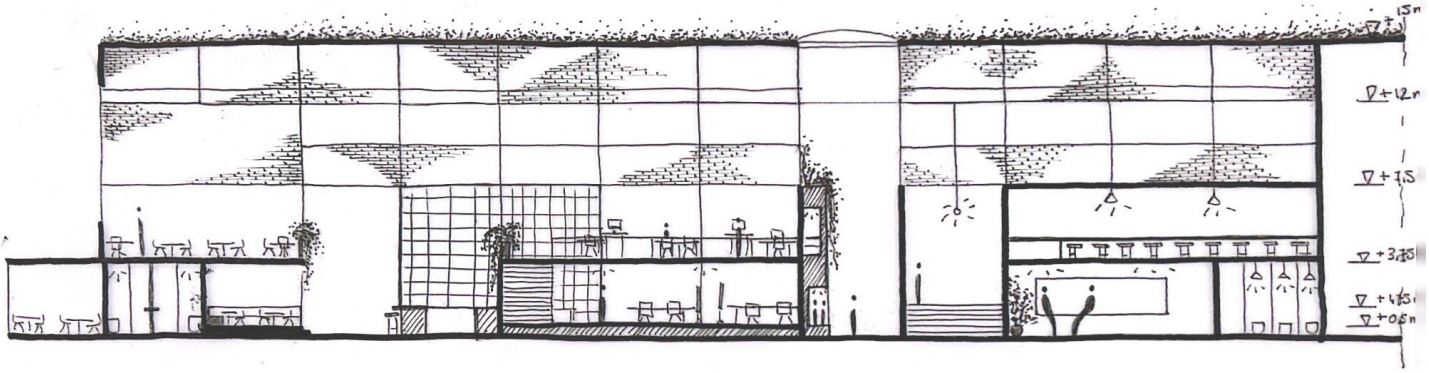
Consequently, I found myself more capable of simultaneously working on multiple design domains. Decisions regarding material choices allowed me to explore various options for creative experimentation. Although these ideas initially existed as separate entities, I gradually merged them into a cohesive and comprehensive design, which I ultimately presented during the second P3 presentation.


I
3,75 m wall
II
III
IV
V
VI
Basis wall III
↳ 7,5 m high
brick
concrete
I
II : addition: open spaces
elongated wall gives your path direction
hallways
bigger
more human size
5 m
terras
outside workspace
route
↳ concrete!
entrance
connection other office building
brick 2 layers
+ profile steel construct
5m
5 m
200
250
electra + data
3000

Presentation 3b



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+12m
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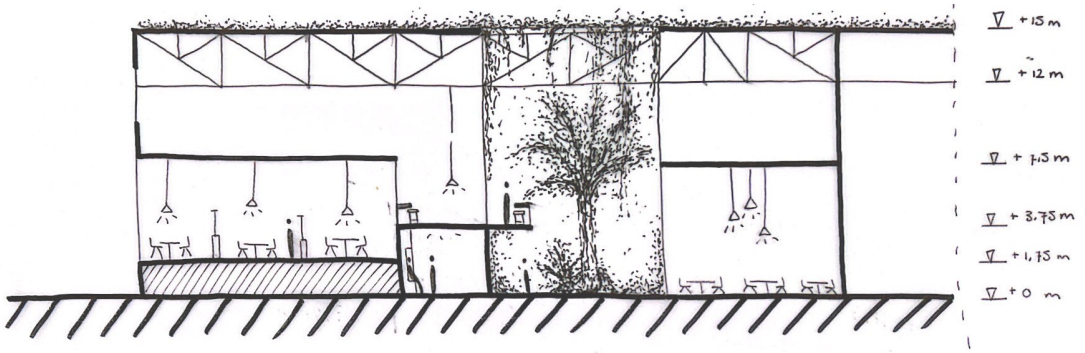
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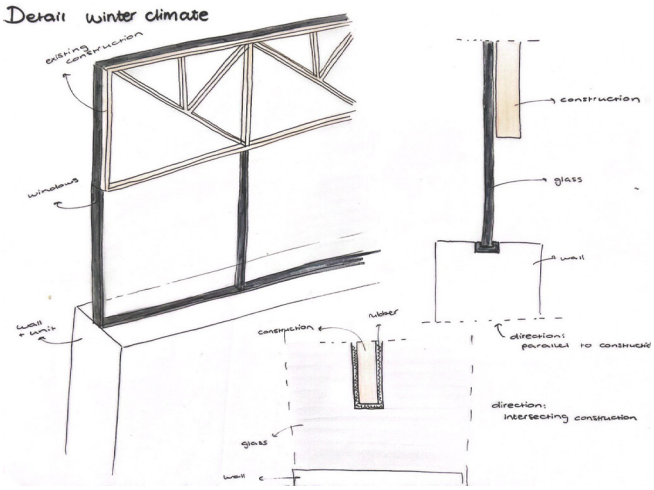
Detail winter climate
existing construction
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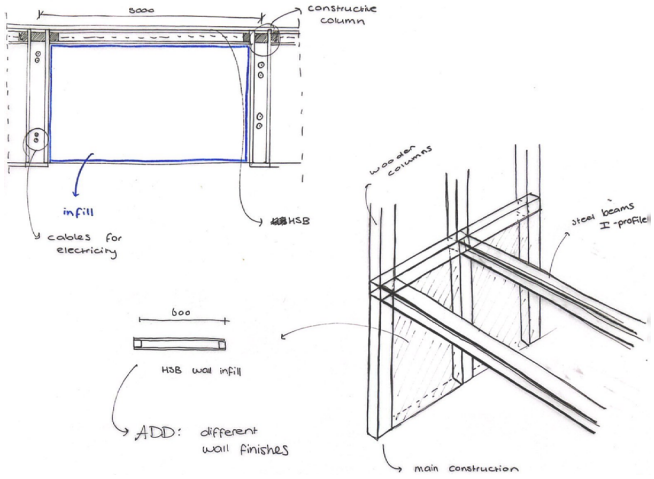
5000
constructive column
infill
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wooden columns
steel beams I-profile
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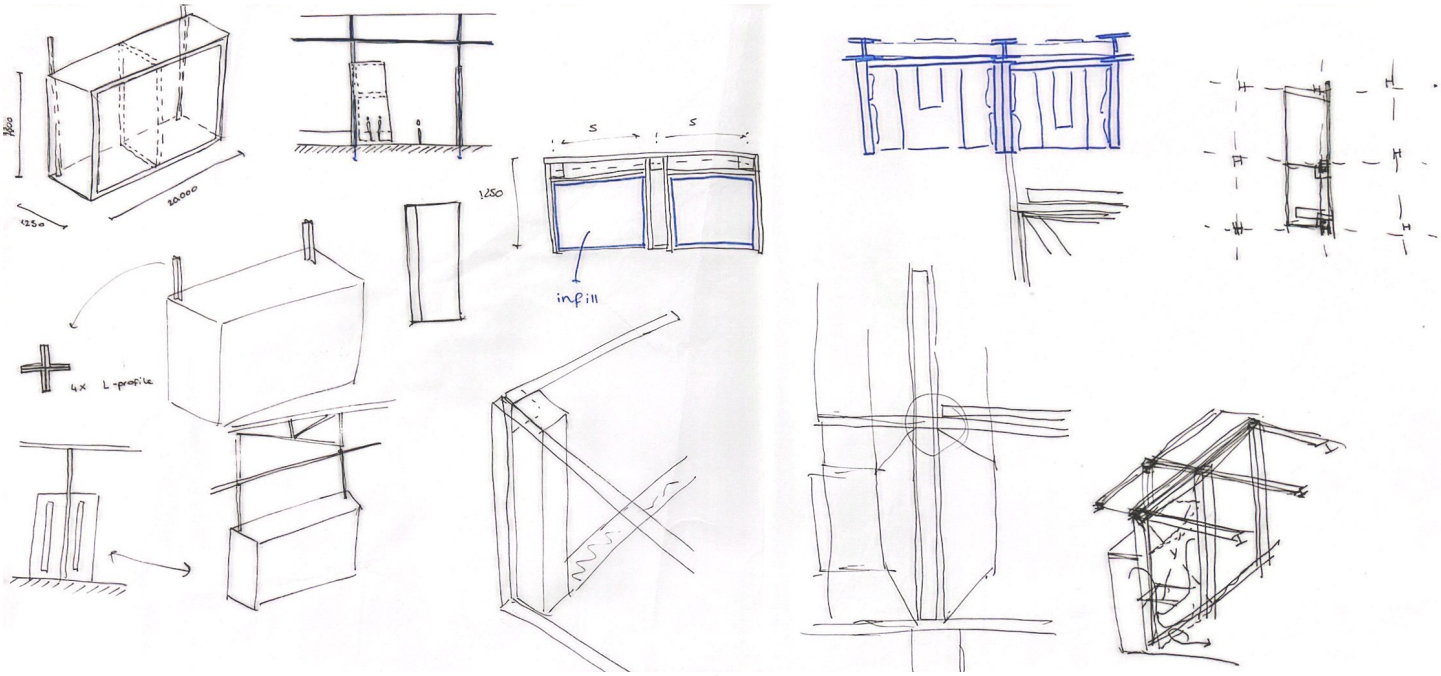
HSB wall infill
ADD: different wall finishes
main construction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Presentation 4

The second P3 presentation retained the same core purpose and format as the earlier presentations in the design process. However, it held an additional layer of significance, for it would be the final tutoring session before the commencement of the eagerly awaited summer holidays.

This particular presentation offered a unique opportunity to gather all the tutors together, enabling me to showcase the current state of the design proposal. It was a moment to engage in a comprehensive discussion about the project's progress and chart a course for the next steps to be taken during the upcoming summer months.

This last phase of the design process stands as a pivotal juncture on the journey toward the much-anticipated P4 presentation. P4, as the culmination of the design trajectory, is the moment when the final design is unveiled, thoroughly assessed, and critically judged. In essence, it serves as the second and ultimate go/no-go moment, the point at which one's eligibility for graduation is officially determined.

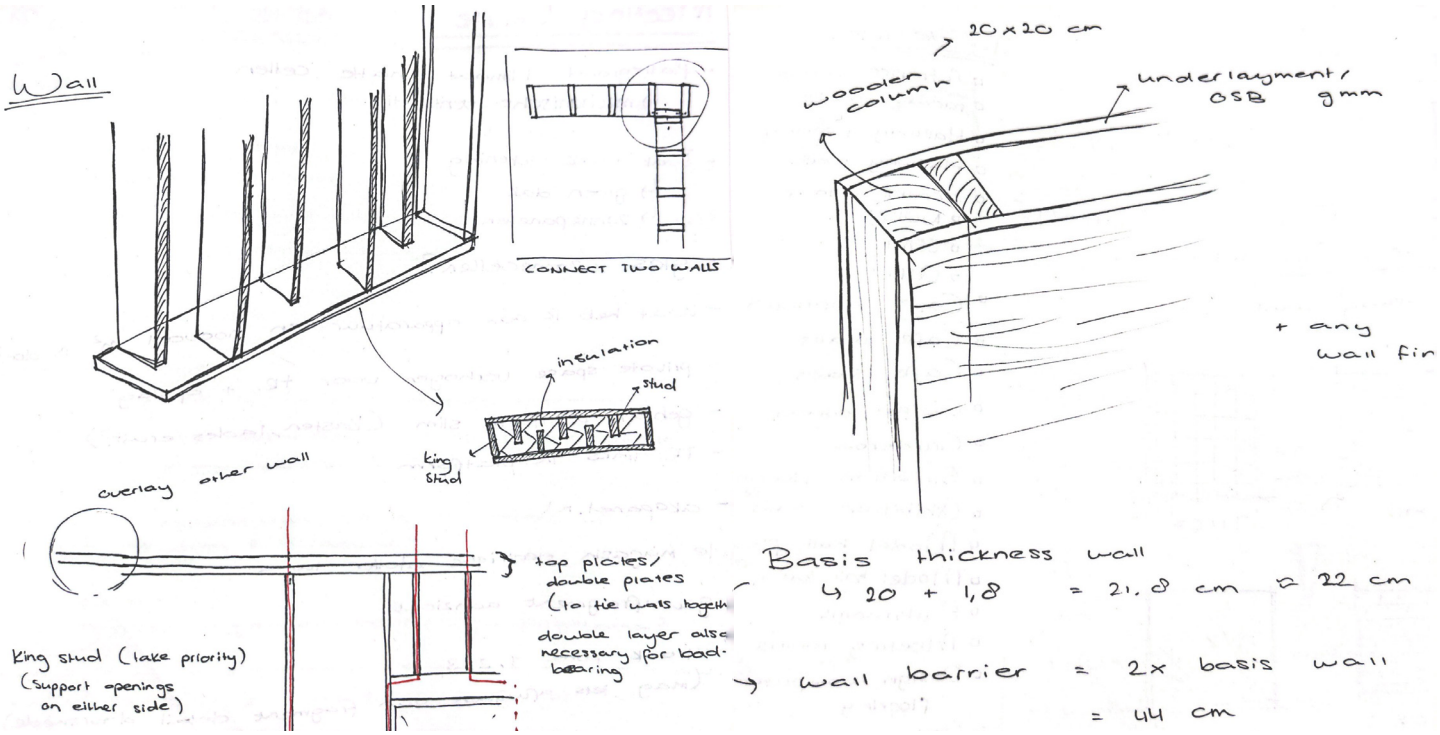
Once successfully passing this decisive milestone, graduates embark on a pivotal month-long period. During this time, they diligently implement the final feedback, refine their design, and prepare to eloquently present their meticulously crafted research and design project. This comprehensive process, punctuated by rigorous evaluations and iterative improvements, leads to the culmination of their academic journey.

Following a much-needed break of two-and-a-half weeks, I set a clear goal for myself: to dedicate the entire month of July solely to the building technology aspect of the design.

Given that the model hall machinery at the faculty was unavailable, I enlisted my dad's assistance in constructing two essential models. The first, a 1:10 scale model, was designed to serve as an exemplar of one of the units. It played a pivotal role in helping me grasp my vision for the furniture and materials within the design.

Complementing this, the second model was crafted at a 1:2 scale. Its purpose was to convey the constructive concept underpinning these units. As I had already determined the construction method for the office's walls, this process of designing and building the models led me to a vital conclusion: implementing the same structural framework as the walls for the units would be a judicious choice. However, the units required an added layer of flexibility and demount-ability. The creation of the 1:2 model played a crucial role in enhancing my understanding of the building method.

Because I had acquired a thorough grasp of the wood framing as the chosen construction method, I later found myself well-prepared to make any necessary adjustments with confidence and precision. This hands-on experience proved invaluable in refining the design's technical aspects.



Concentrating on the building technology aspect of the design wasn't limited to designing the construction and creating models. It also involved a meticulous consideration of the materials to be used. However, scouring the internet for inspiration failed to ignite any enthusiasm within me.

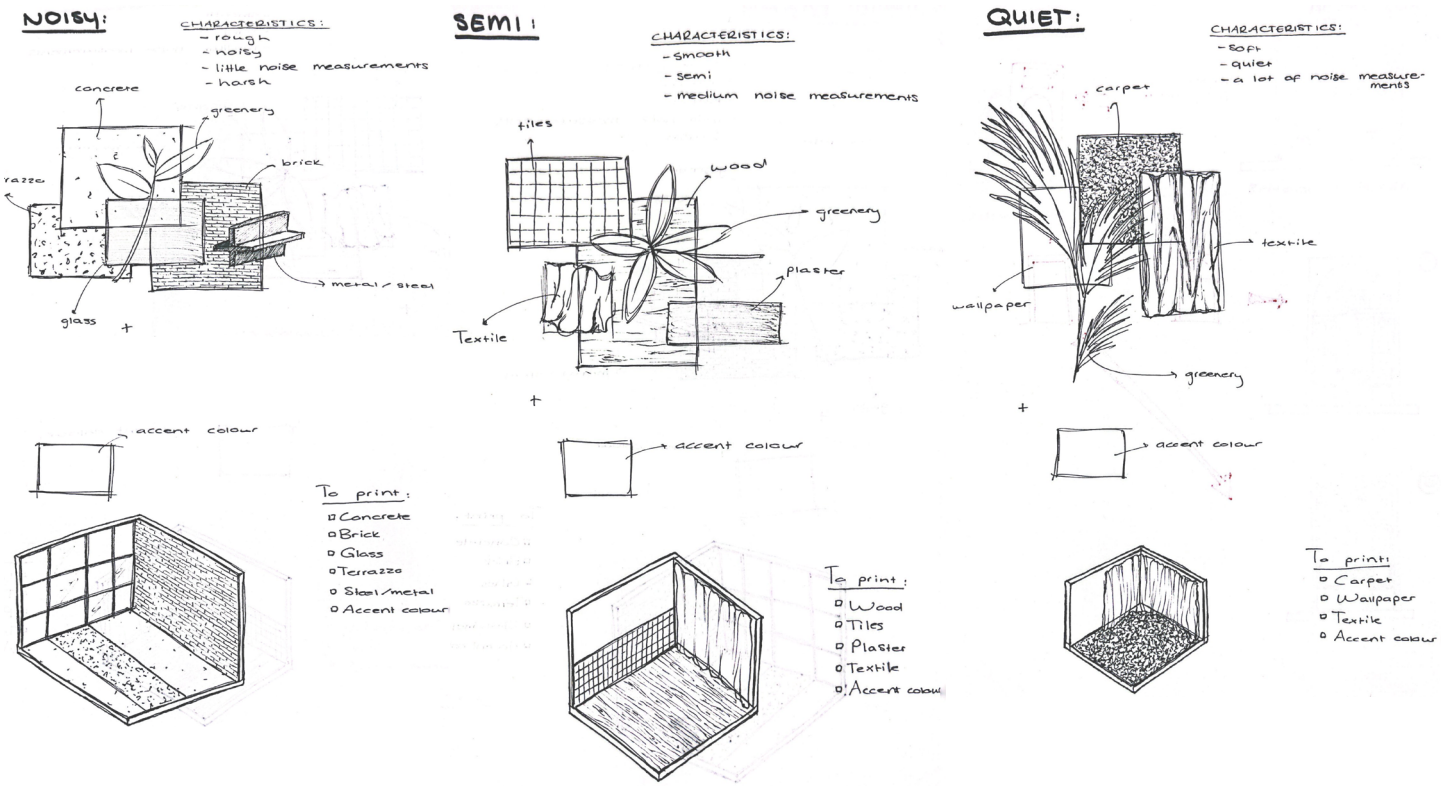
As a result, I took an analogue approach, visiting various shops in person with the hope of finding both inspiration and tangible material samples that could be integrated into the design. By this point, I had already developed some preliminary ideas for a colour scheme. However, a clear and cohesive vision was still eluding me.

Feedback received during the second P3 presentation underscored the need for greater clarity in both the design concept and the associated design rules. It was pointed out that there appeared to be two primary concepts that, while promising individually, might not necessarily complement or enhance each other. The recommendation was to choose one and fully commit to it: either the concept of the three sound zones or the concept of the walls as a spatial feature.

Recognising the imperative for a more focused overall project concept, I knew precisely what needed to be done. The solution lay in selecting one primary concept – in my case, I opted for the sound zones as it was a conclusion derived from the activities research – and taking this chosen concept to its utmost extreme.

As I delved into deciding on the colour and materials scheme during the summer, I contemplated three potential scenarios: selecting three distinct materials for each zone while maintaining the same colours, opting for the same materials in different colours, or a combination of both. Ultimately, I settled on using the same colours for the materials but introducing unique accent colours for each sound zone.

Armed with these decisions, I brought colour samples along when shopping for material samples and meticulously crafted material boards. This hands-on approach allowed me to visually and tactilely assess how all the materials harmonised when presented together, greatly enhancing the design process.

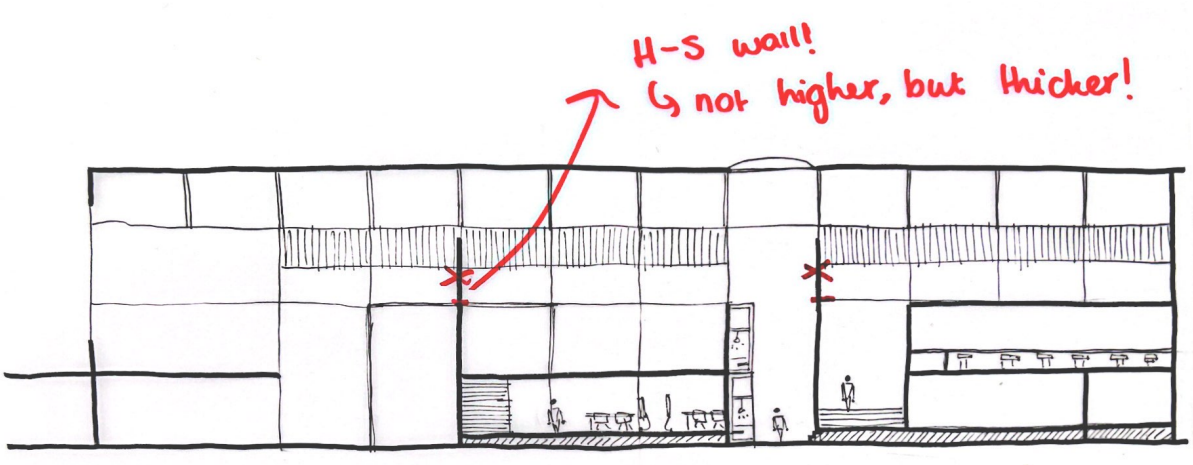


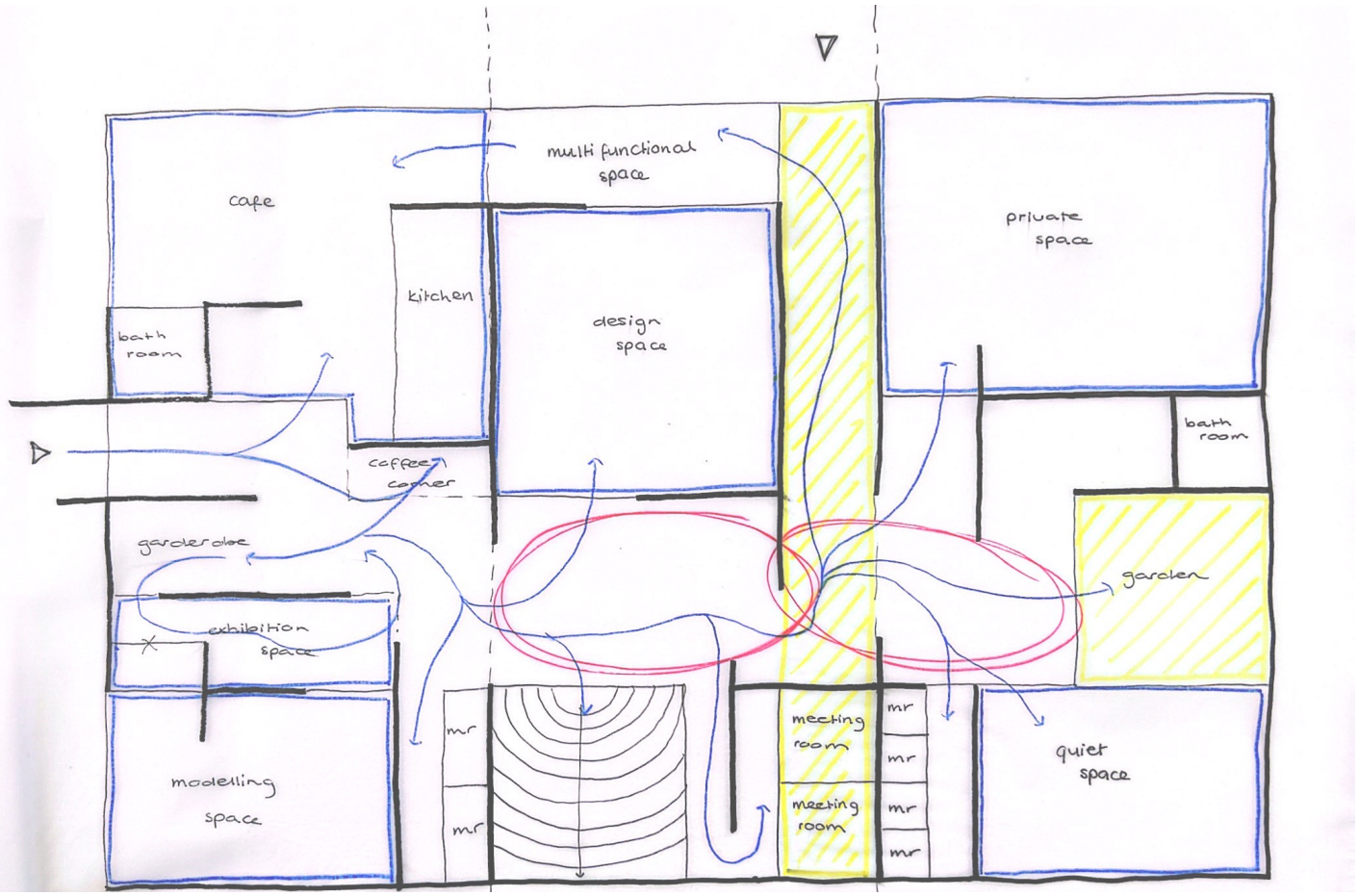
The need for a more focused design concept led to a critical realisation: the activities were not as cleanly divided into three zones as initially envisioned, with noticeable overlaps, particularly in the lower half of the office. To rectify this issue, I opted for a new approach, delving into various solutions to address this concern. This led to the introduction of the exploration of zone borders, aiming for unmistakable demarcations between the zones.

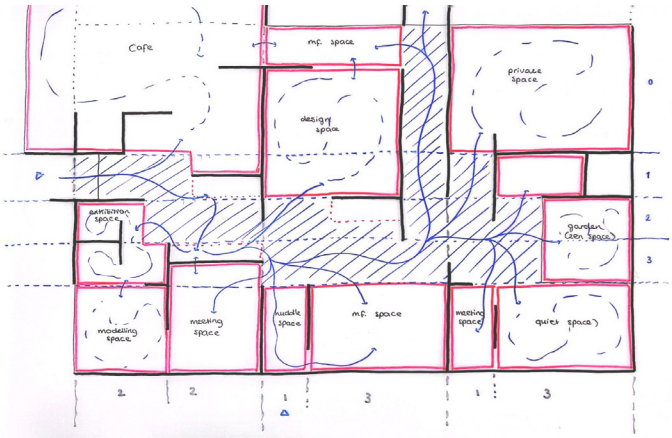
In my pursuit of clarity, I initiated a series of floor plan adjustments, reorganising the activities to ensure they conformed to the three designated zones. While this initial effort provided some improvement, I remained dissatisfied. The challenge stemmed from the placement of walls, which framed these activities and still left the impression that some activities belonged to a different zone. The root of this issue lay in the design and implementation of the route, emphasising the pivotal role it plays in the design's cohesiveness. Properly designed, it would reinforce the creation of the three zones.

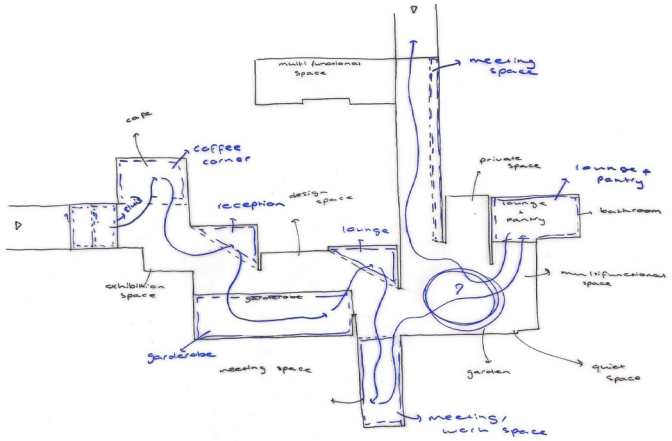
To address this concern, I began by outlining the specific requirements and objectives of each zone border. The idea took shape to accentuate the restrictions placed on visitors entering the first zone. This initial border featured a substantial wall and a door, serving as a deliberate barrier to entry into the office zones (the second and third zones).

However, the second zone border demanded a different approach. To maintain an inviting and accessible atmosphere, I opted for the inclusion of a set of stairs. This design choice ensured that when individuals crossed this border, it would be unmistakably evident. The result of this decision meant that the third zone would be elevated, a fortuitous outcome that aligned with the notion that quiet spaces are often characterised by lower ceilings or, in this case, a raised floor.









Upon implementing the well-defined borders and the subsequent modifications to the floor plan, I had a feeling that I can only describe the sensation as a significant '*click*'. Gazing at the floor plan, I felt a profound certainty that this would be the final version, a moment of welcome clarity.

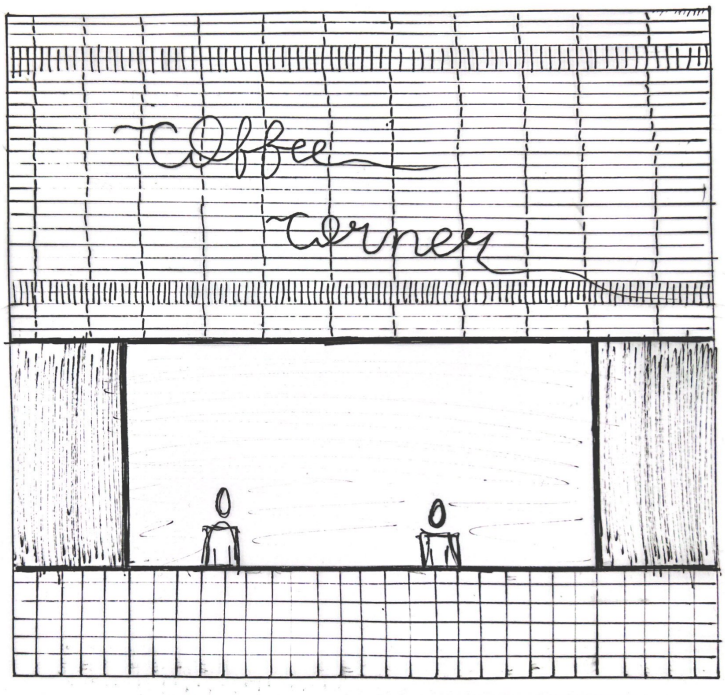
With this pivotal stage achieved, I directed more of my attention towards refining the path that would guide users through the space. I embarked on an exploration of its optimisation, weighing the options of how I wished to facilitate user movement through the office.

A comprehensive analysis of the design, leveraging the warehouse's grid structure and the spatial layout, enabled me to uncover a new-found sense of order and logic, aligning with my initial intentions from the project's inception.

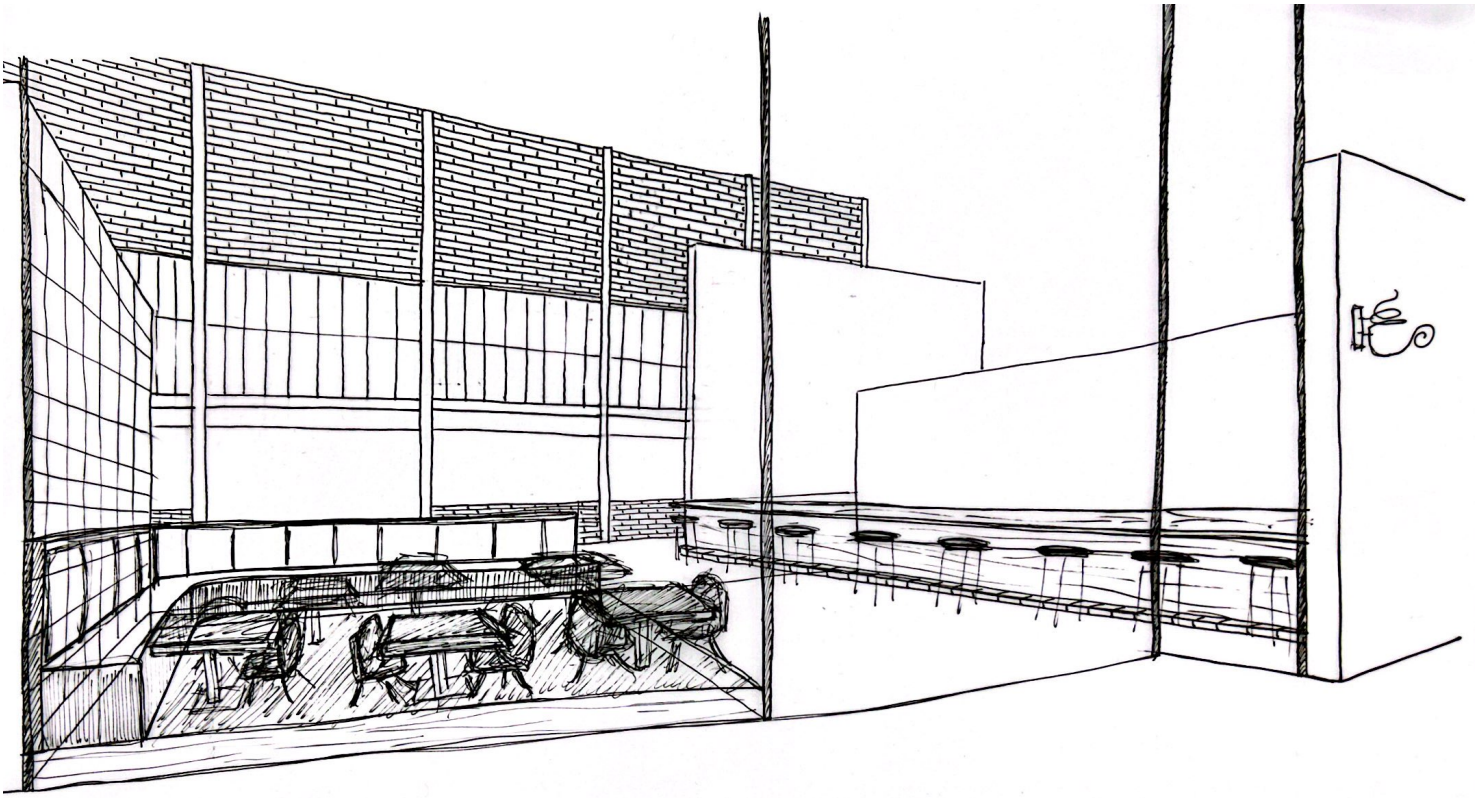
As I reached the midway point of August, I still had some time before the autumn semester was set to commence. It was during this period that my creative energy seemed boundless. Ideas and inspiration flowed so rapidly that my hand could scarcely keep pace. I found myself leaping from one idea to the next, from one drawing to another, occasionally leaving them unfinished as I eagerly moved on to the next.

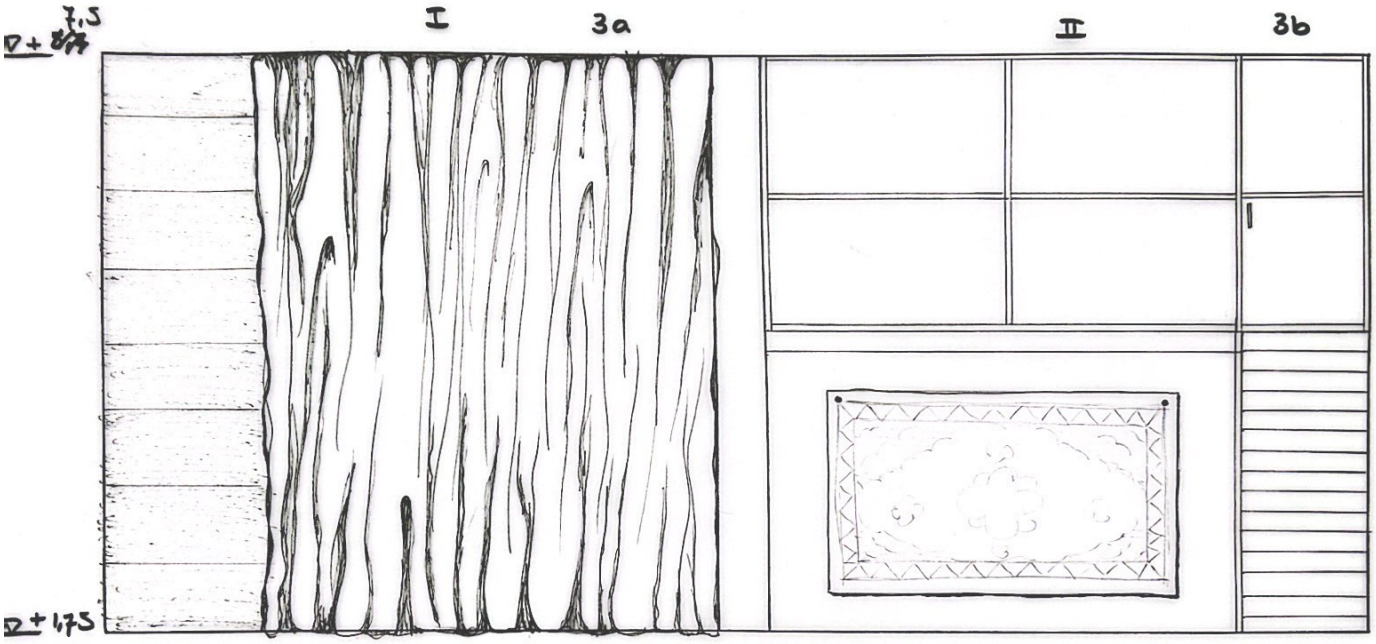
This whirlwind of creative activity felt quite unfamiliar, a departure from my usual structured approach. Rather than resisting it, I chose to embrace this chaotic burst of creativity, allowing my hand – and, by extension, my mind – to lead me wherever they pleased. This phase of the project, marked by its exuberance, had actually begun prior to the second P3 presentation but truly flourished during the summer months. Witnessing the project come together brought me immense satisfaction.

Moreover, the relative solitude of this period compelled me to rely on my own judgment. With few people around to seek opinions from, my primary source of guidance was self-reflection. This sense of self-reliance persisted throughout the project, even when the university's activities resumed and I had the opportunity to consult with others. I found that I no longer needed outside input. In fact, I occasionally found myself in disagreement with others, a departure from my usual approach. I had cultivated a clear vision for the project, and I stood firmly by it.



With the groundwork firmly established, I could now dedicate my attention to exploring and experimenting with the layout and design of each individual space. To accomplish this, I predominantly employed perspectives as my creative tool. Leveraging the 3D digital model in addition to the physical 1:50 scale model I had constructed as a foundation, I sketched out various permutations and tested ideas. This encompassed considerations such as materials, placement of furniture, window arrangements, and more.





Existing wall

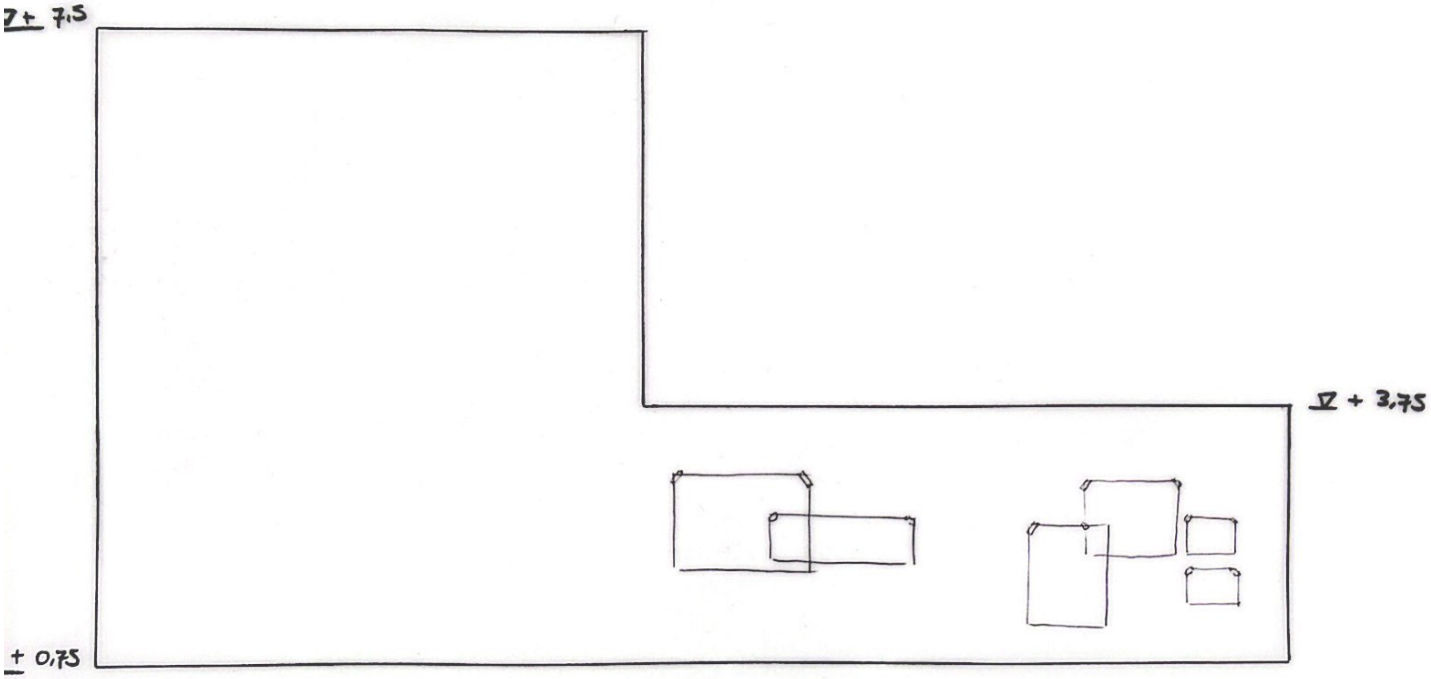
Concrete wall with drape

↳ textile = good for noise measurements

New wall – private + service

Upper part wall = glass

lower part wall = wallpaper (+ wall rug) and staircase

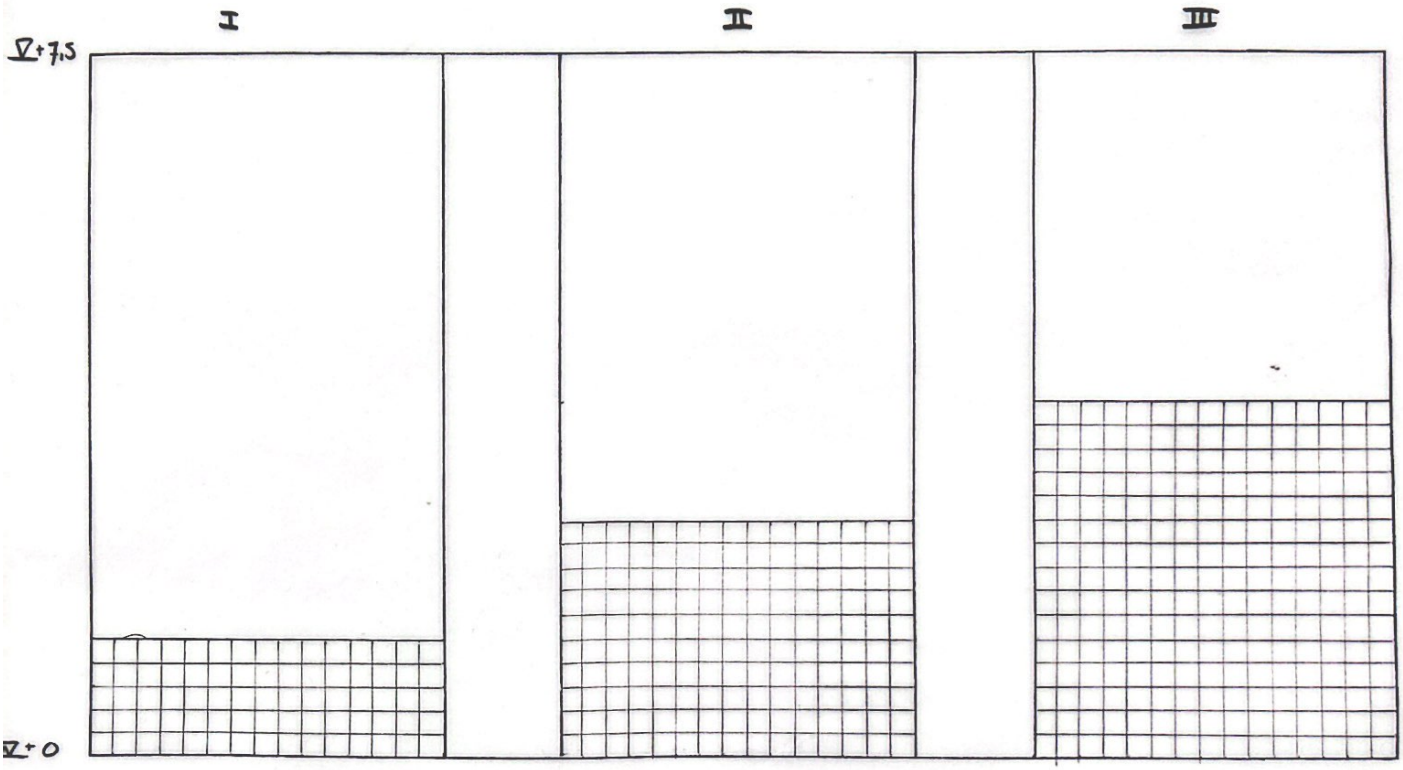


plaster

↳ enough space to pin stuff up on walls

Hallway wall

SEMI ZONE



Height = 1,25 m

↳ too low

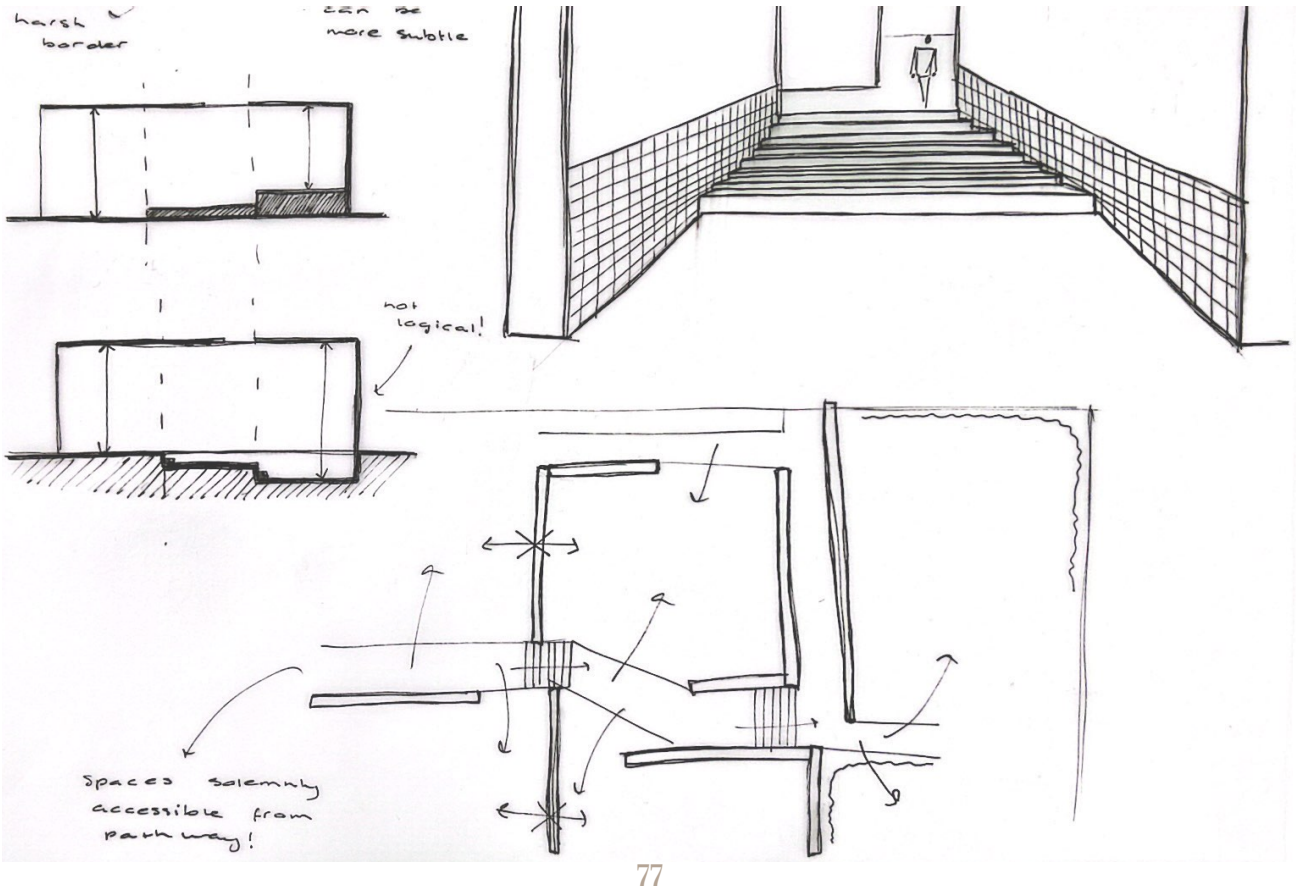
Height = 2,5 m

↳ I like the asymmetry

Height = 3,75 m

↳ same height as wall

upper part wall = plaster
lower part wall = tiles

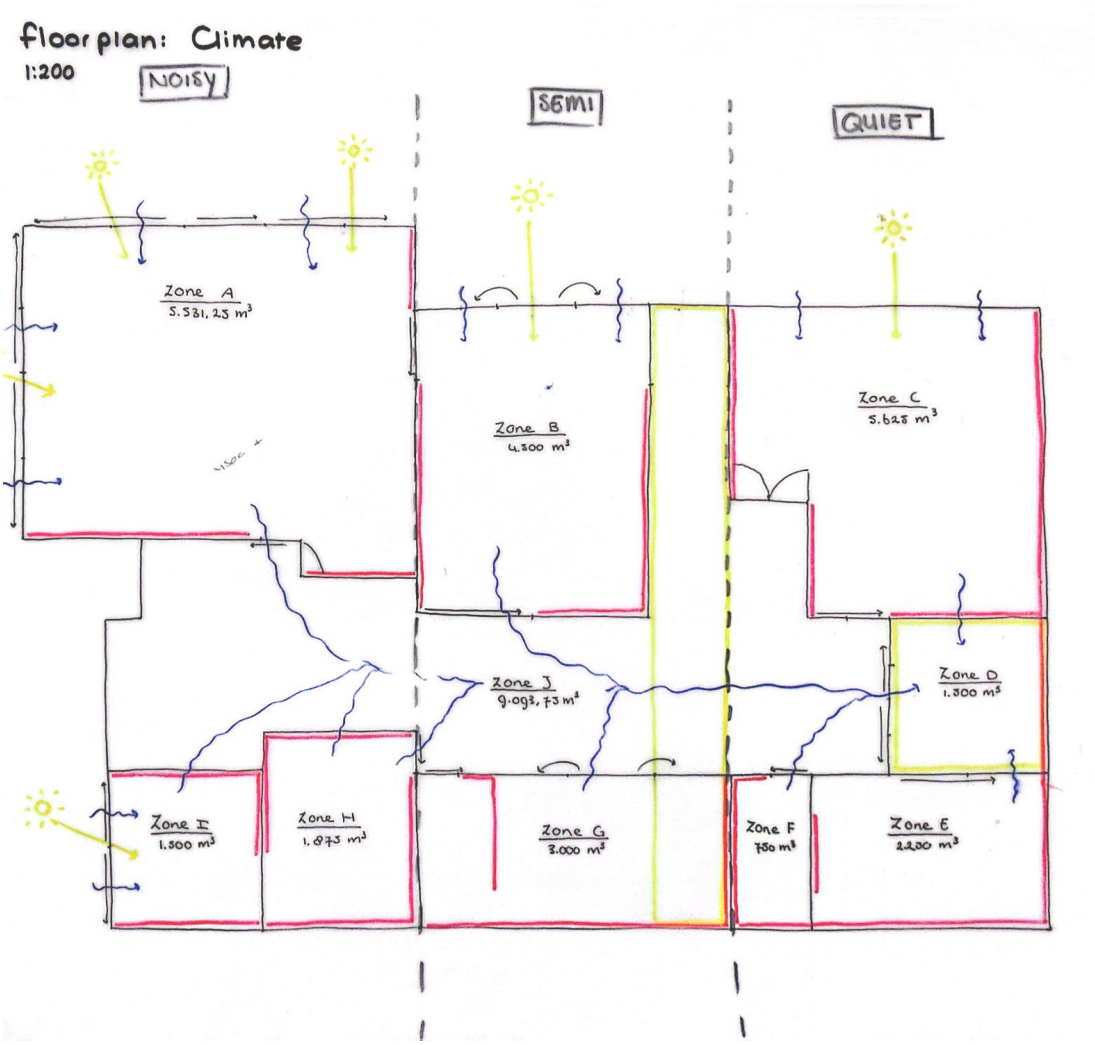


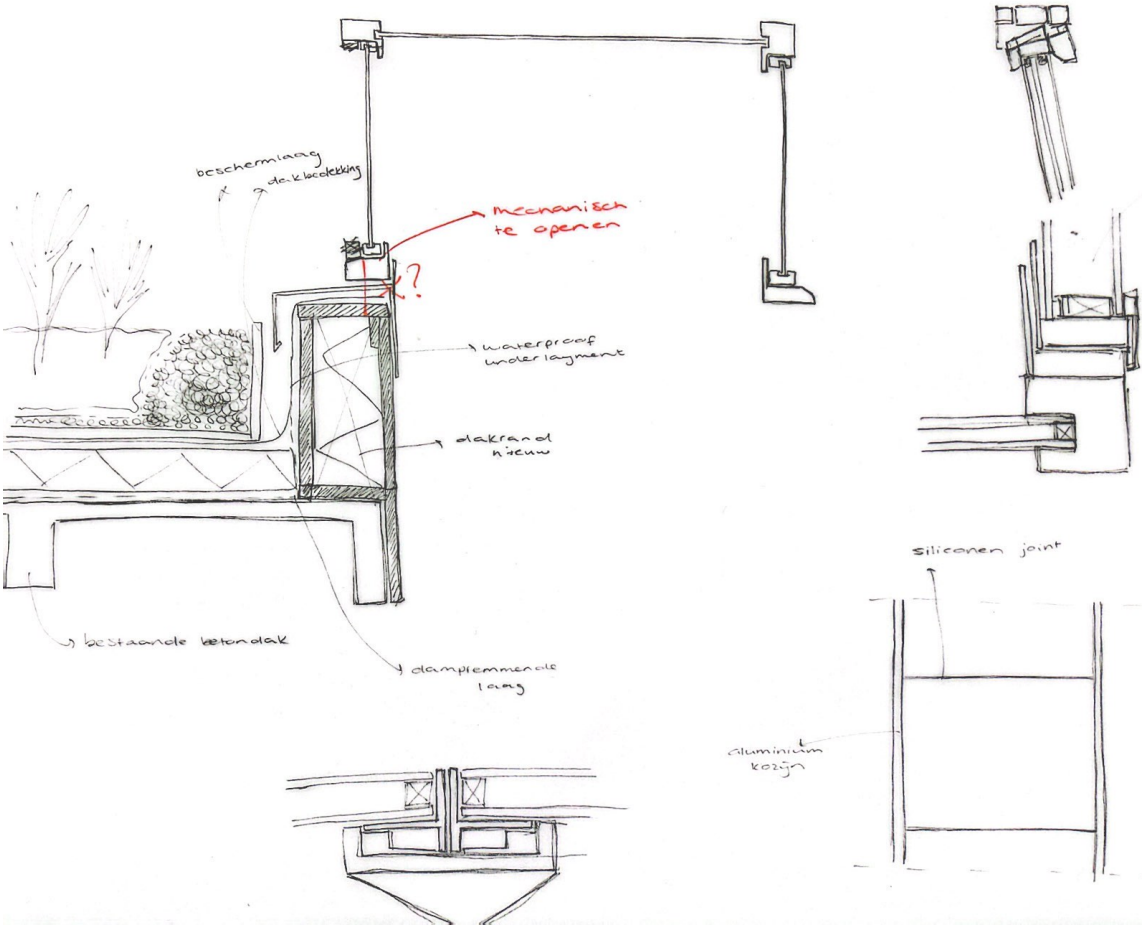
While I had already made numerous decisions concerning the building technology aspect of the design, there were lingering questions, primarily revolving around climate control and detailing. To address these queries, I sought guidance from Christien Janssen, the climate tutor, and embarked on a journey to explore potential climate design solutions.

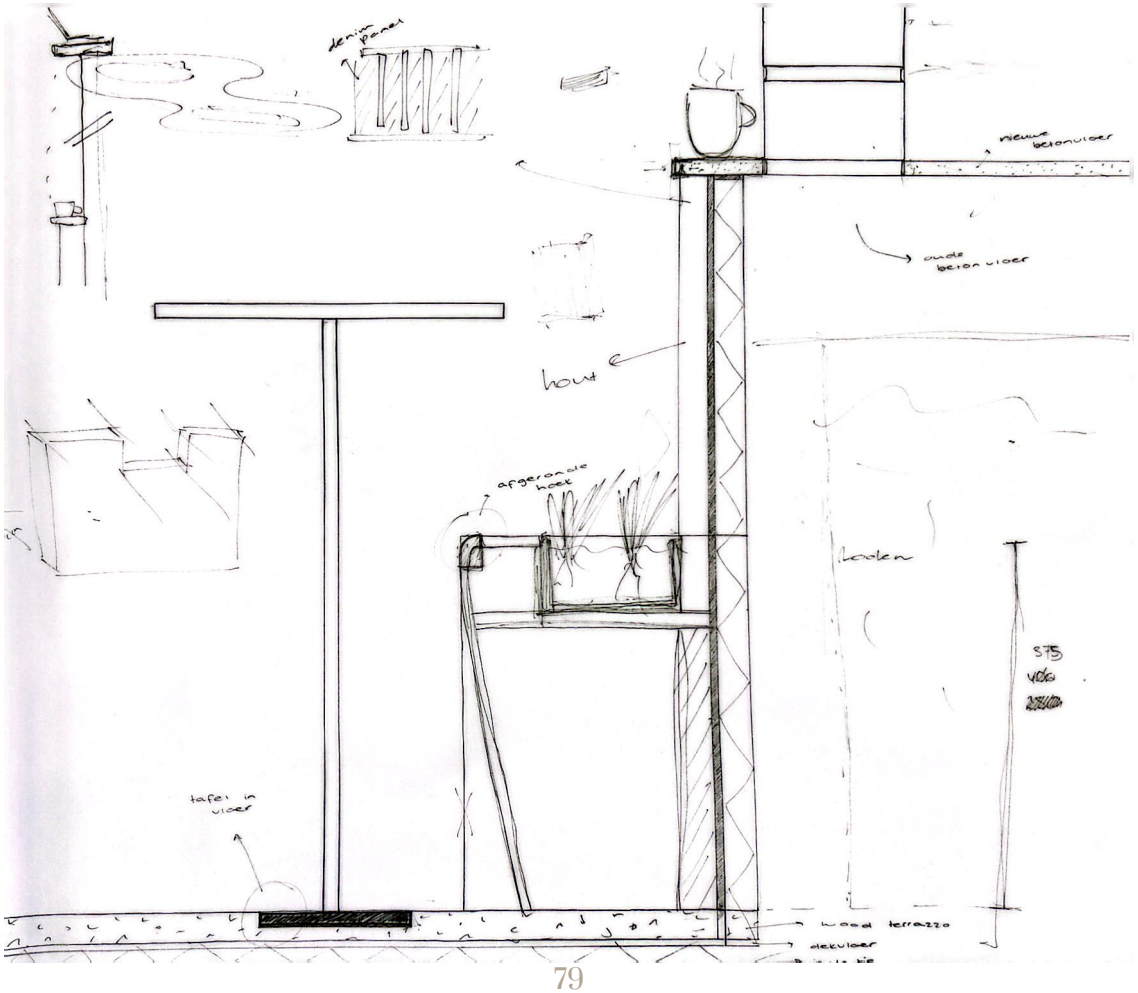
To gain a deeper understanding, I created a 1:20 scale interior fragment, which allowed me to identify areas with remaining uncertainties or issues in need of resolution.

One such instance involved the detailing of the elevated skylight, which had arisen as a serendipitous outcome while constructing the 1:50 model. Due to a shortage of cardboard, the warehouse's existing structure ended up divided into three sections, leaving precisely one grid size uncovered. Evaluating the effects within the model, I had no choice but to view this as a positive development, as it added value to the design and opened doors to multiple climate design possibilities. These included the potential to extend daylight deeper into the building and the opportunity to facilitate natural ventilation by adding operable windows connecting to the skylight.

Additionally, this interior fragment revealed areas that required further detailing attention. It also served as an inspiring catalyst for exploring other aspects of the design and zooming in on the specifics of particular sections, such as the cafe's extension.




beschermlaag
dakbedekking
mechanisch te openen
?
waterproof underlayment
dakrand nieuw
bestaande betondak
dampremmende laag
siliconen joint
aluminium kozijn


denim panel
nieuwe betonvloer
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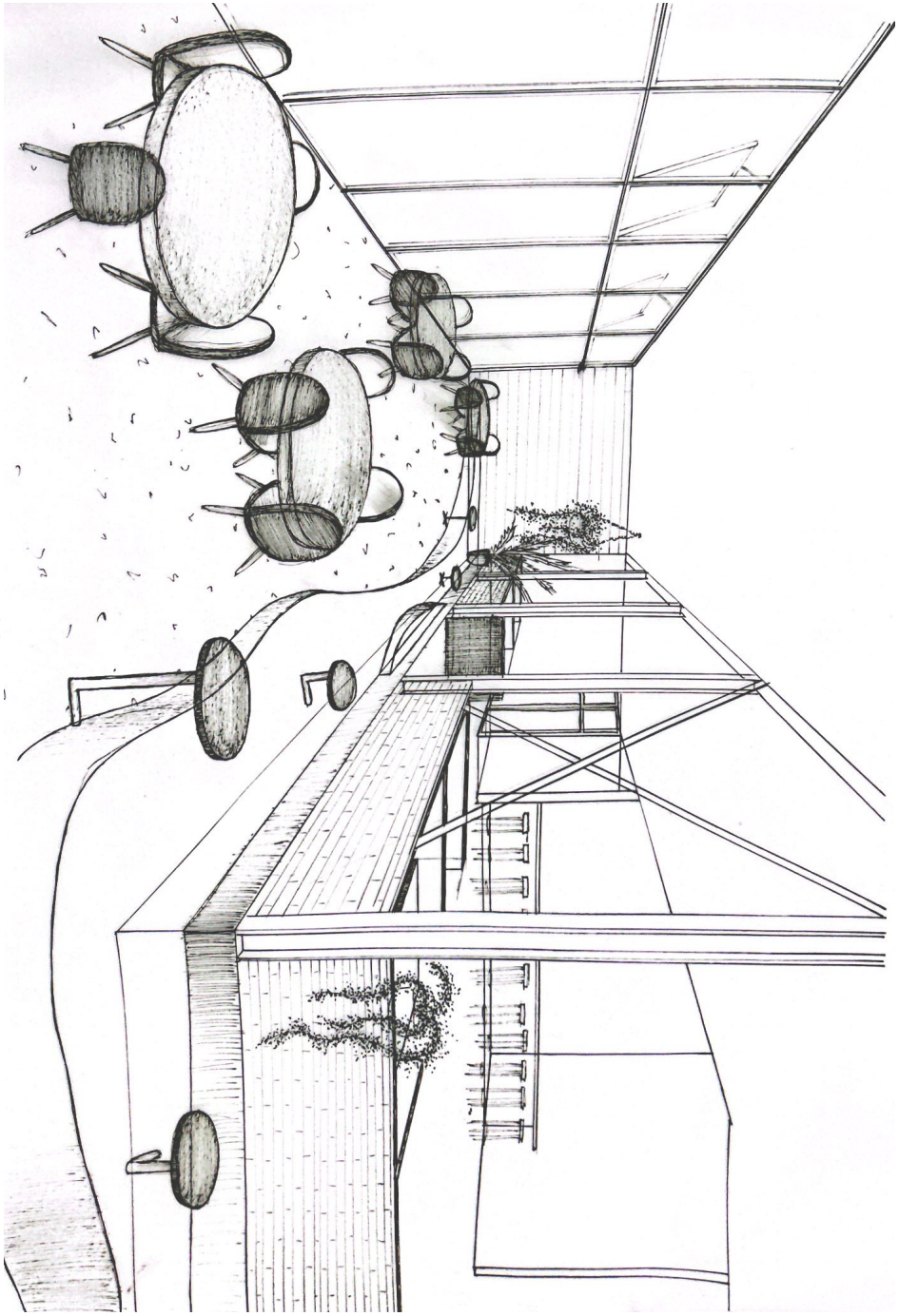
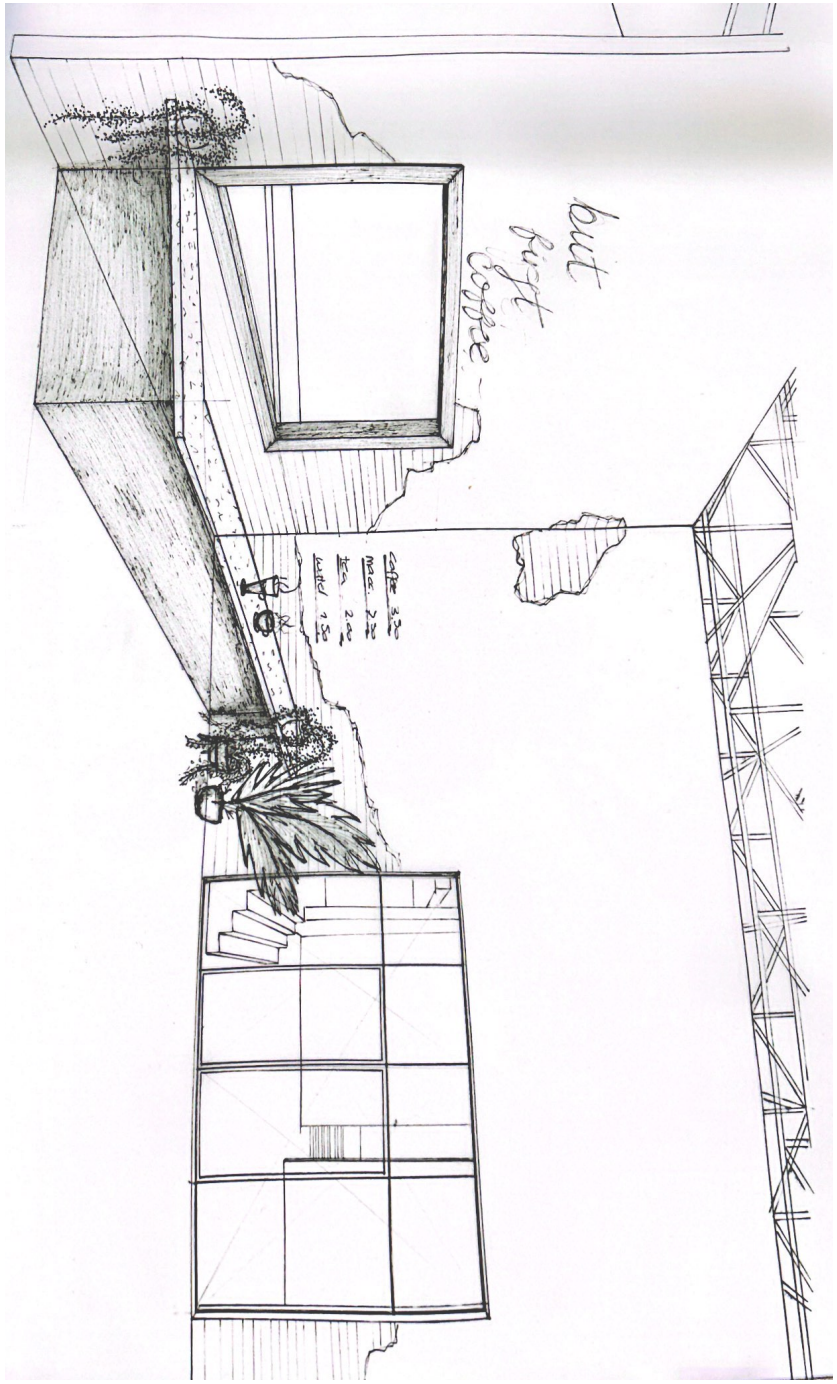
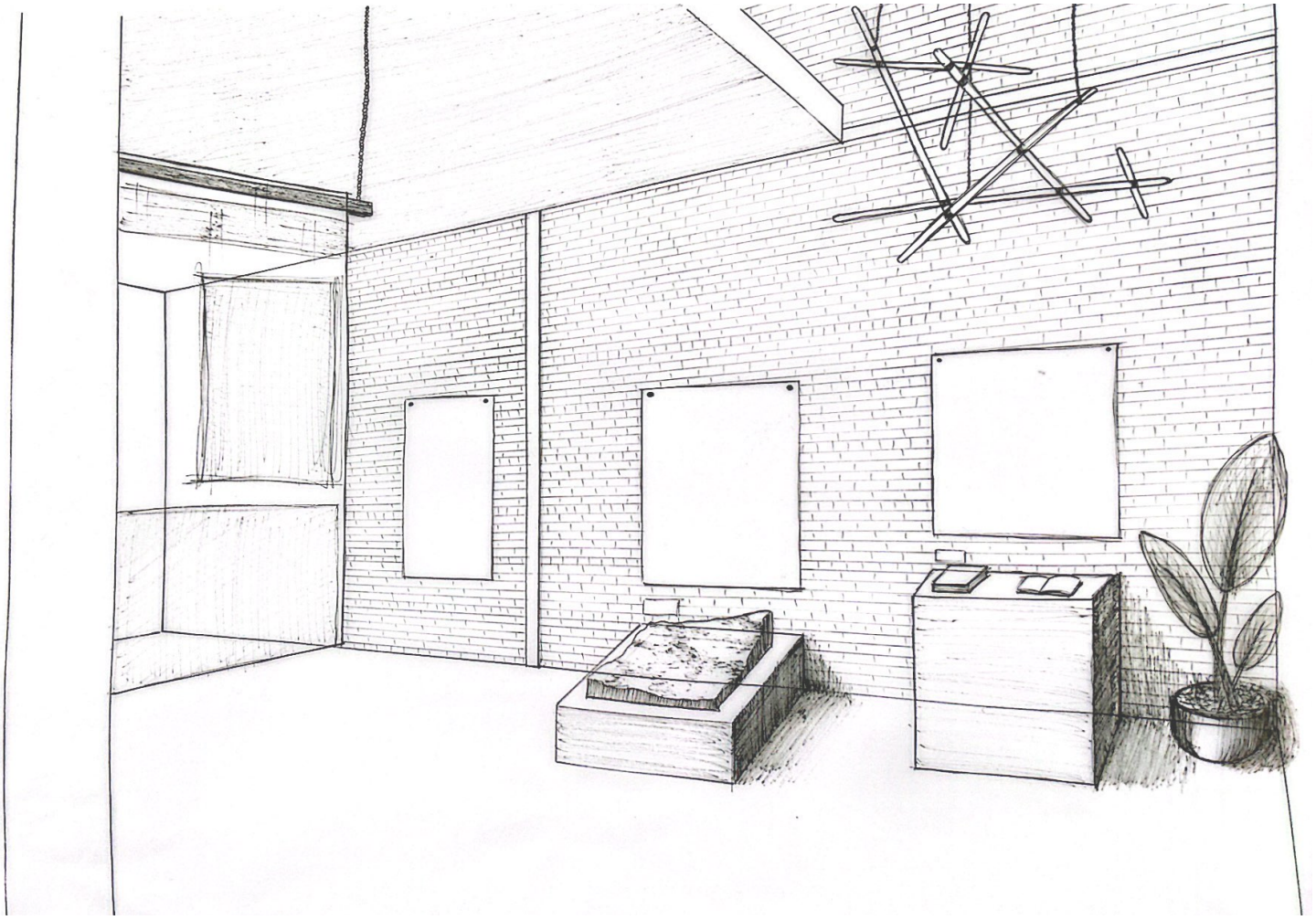
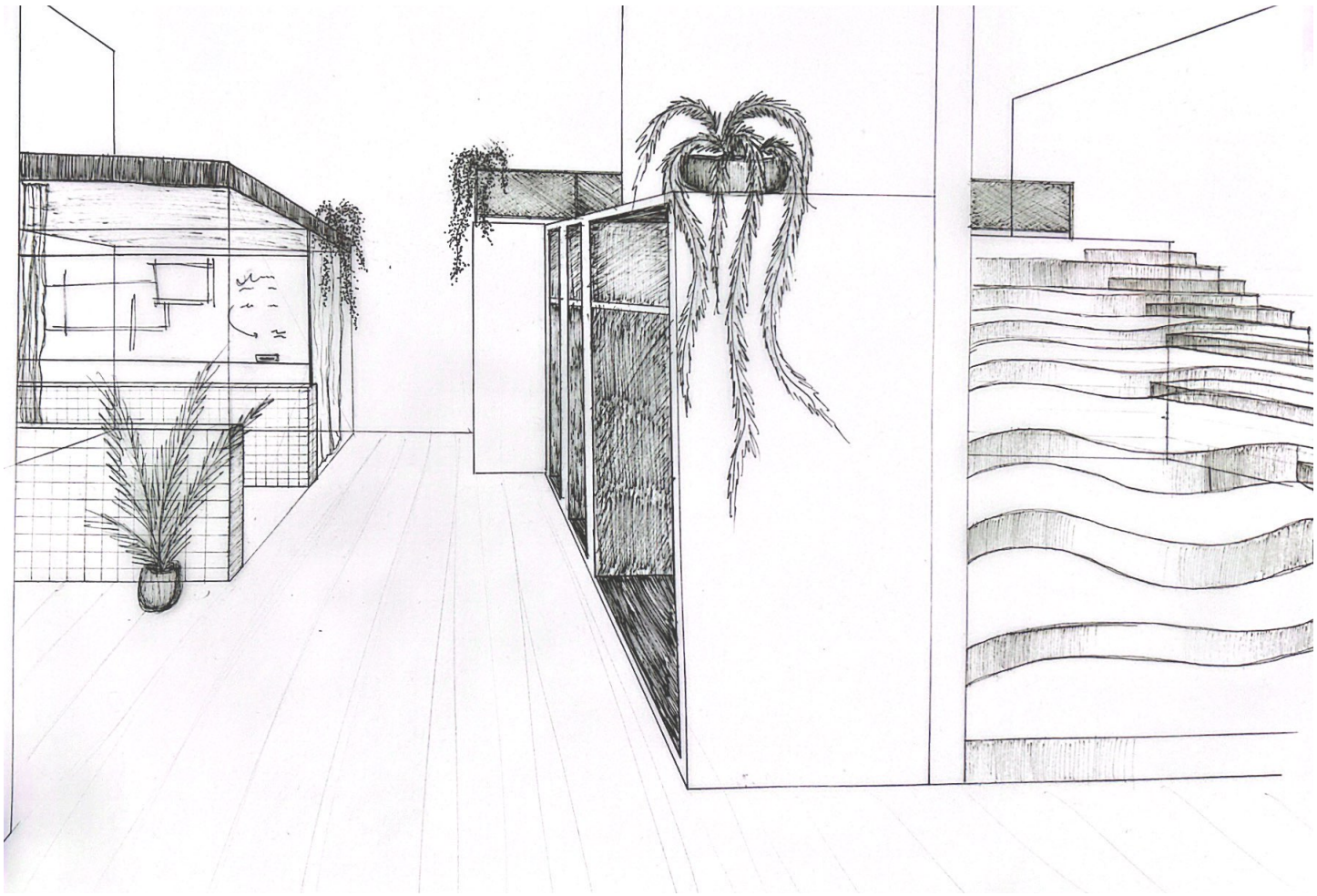
hout
afgeronde hoek
tafel in vloer
wood terrazzo
dekvloer

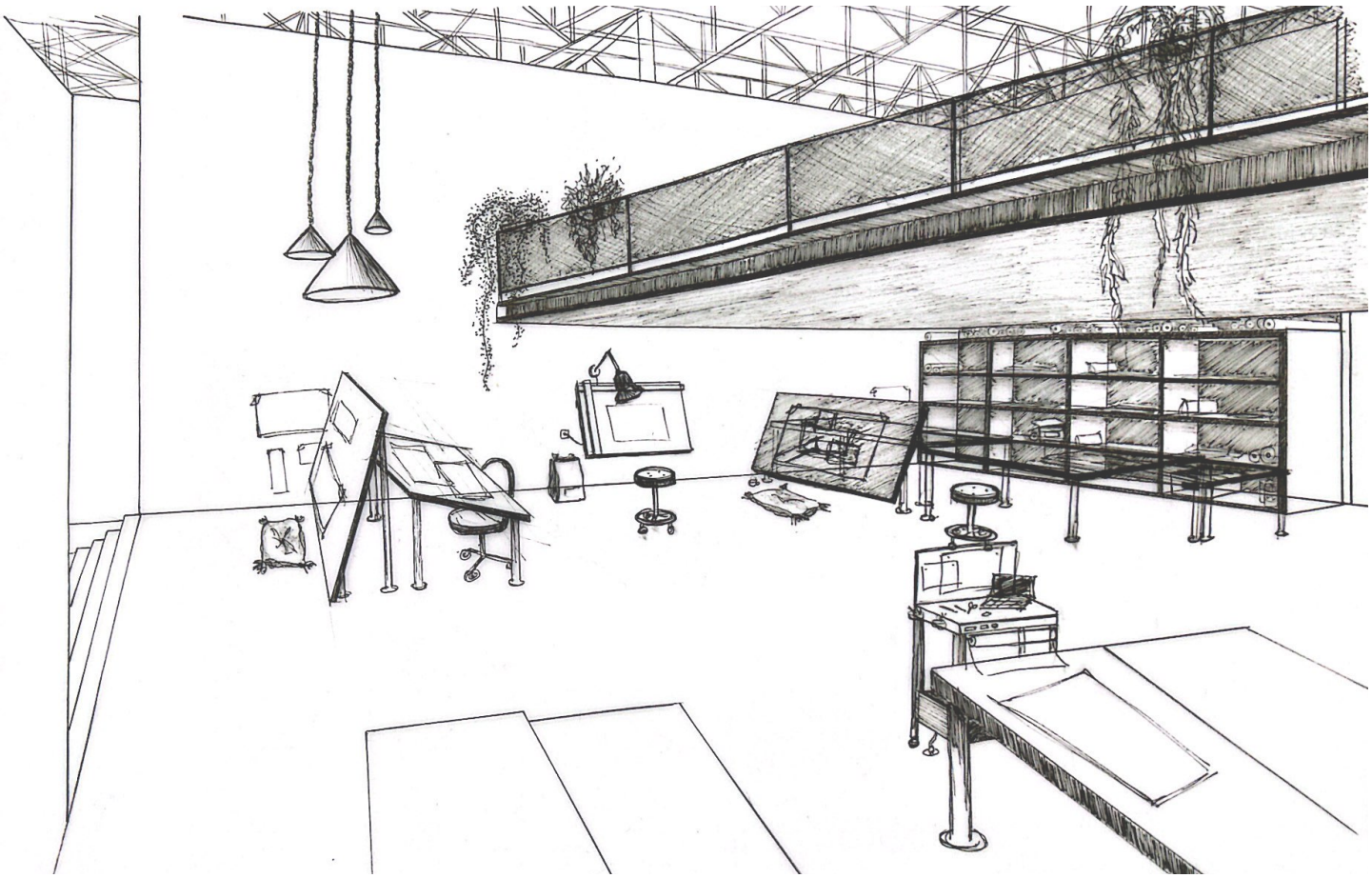
Presentation 4



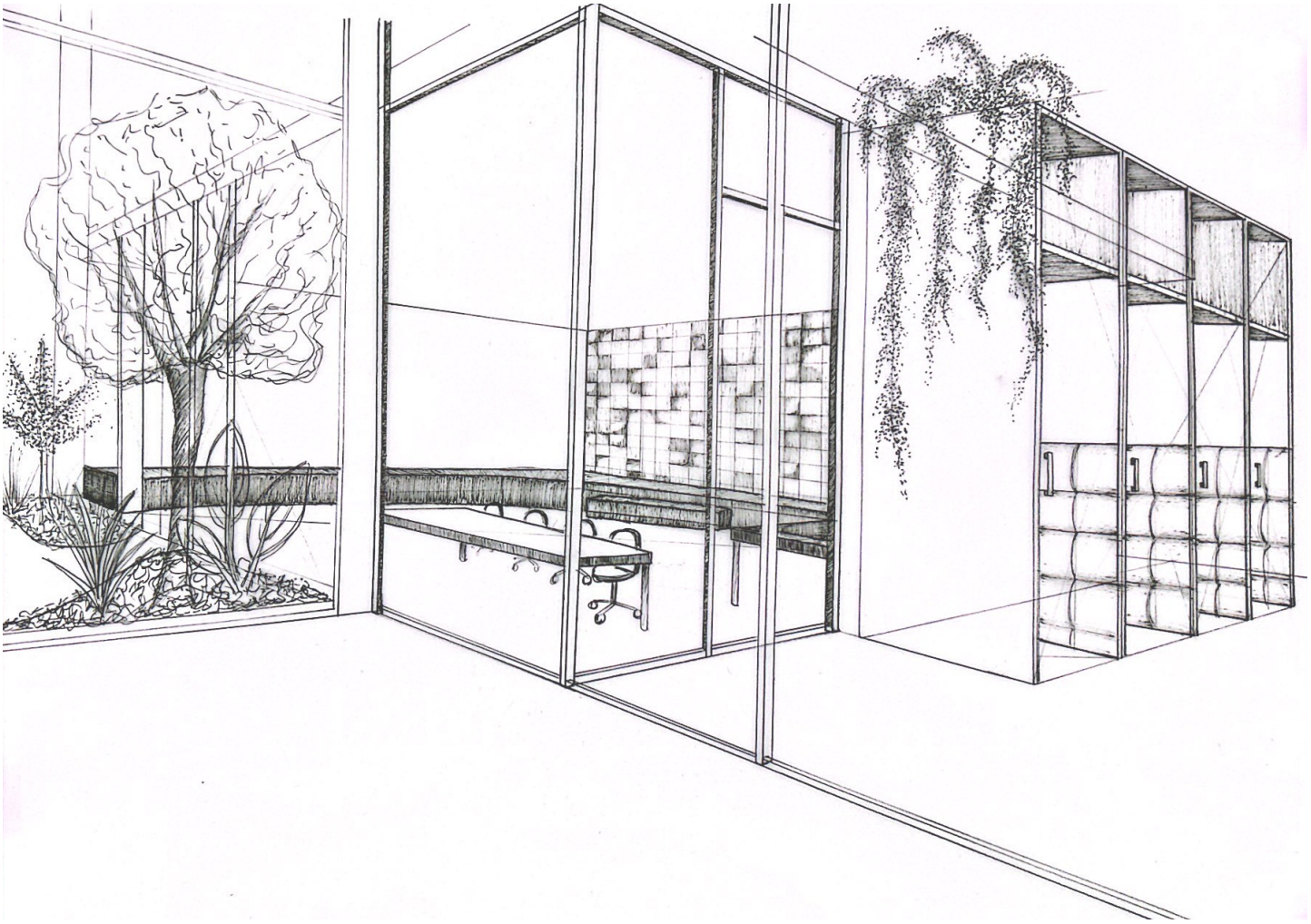


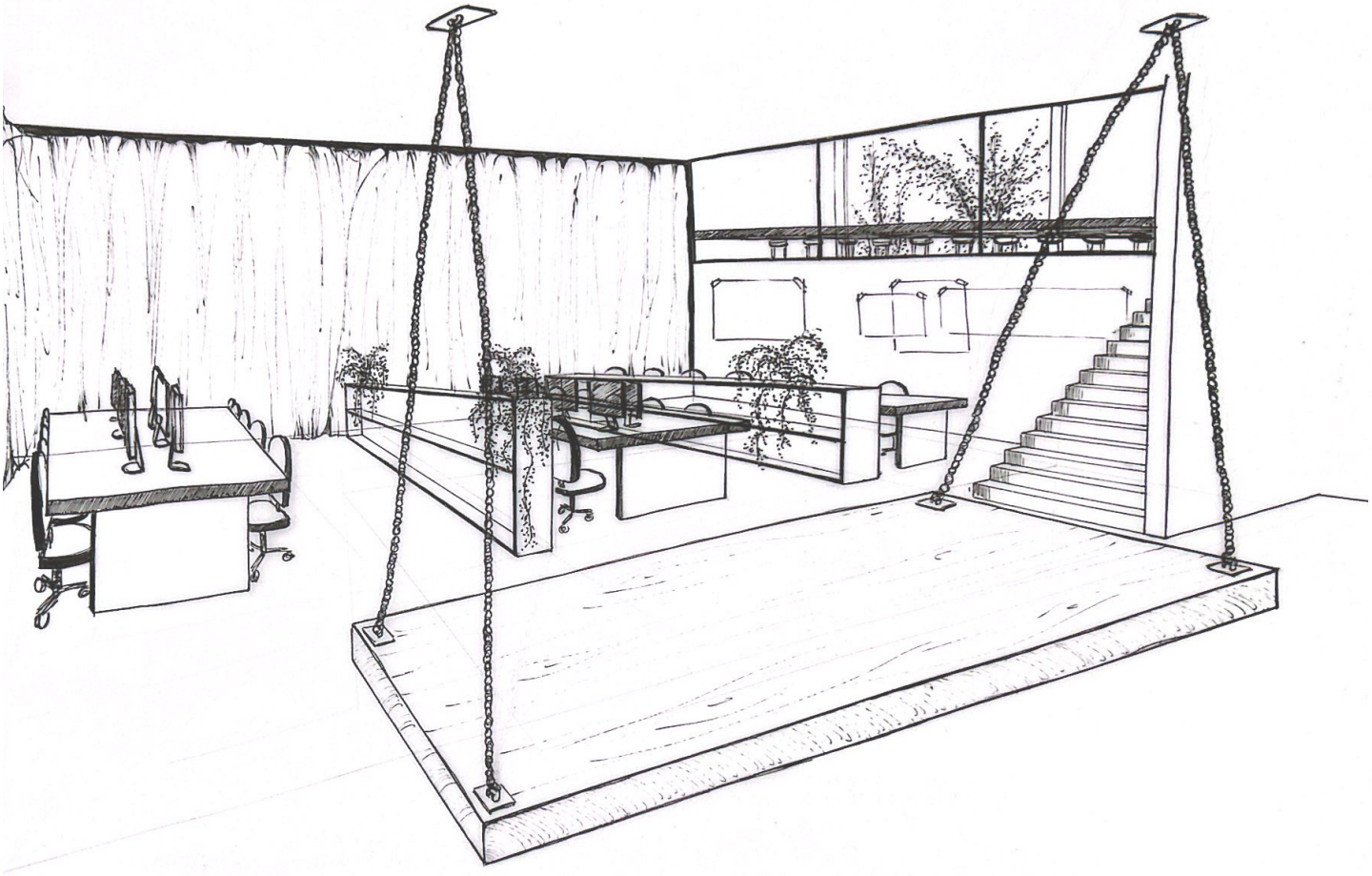






Studio 53
Architects Work
Quiet Space





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The Evolution of Design Philosophy

Lessons from a Year of Design Exploration

The design journey has been a voyage of revelations, as we meticulously scrutinise the labyrinthine twists and turns of the creative process, ultimately uncovering some fascinating insights.

In the embryonic stages of design, a curious conundrum emerged – choices that, with the wisdom of hindsight, appeared perplexing. As I delved into the intricate intricacies of spatial layout and floor plan experimentation, my quest was clear: to fathom the essence of functions. At the heart of this mission lay the ambition to bestow unique character upon two core components, imagined as circles. Yet, an enigmatic phenomenon unfolded; circles multiplied and dominated the design landscape, a paradoxical deviation from my original intent. It was an artistic choice that, in retrospect, defied logic.

Upon introspection, a deeper understanding began to emerge. The initial insecurities of the early design phase, coupled with the challenge of wrestling with rectilinear forms while preserving a playful touch, had steered me toward embracing a 'chaotic' spatial concept. In this creative process, for a fleeting moment, I lost sight of the imperative need for diversity, an invaluable lesson garnered from two captivating case studies presented in the previous issue. These cases underscored the vital importance of distinct design approaches for different zones, prompting me to question how I had momentarily overlooked this pivotal principle.

05

There's a paradox that's haunted many designers, and I've been no exception. A steadfast set of rules has always offered solace and security, as they provide a clear path to follow. But an epiphany struck - I'm the creator of these rules. With the evolution of a design, some rules may begin to lose their grip on reality, and that's the pivotal moment when you must bid them adieu.

As an architecture student, learning to confide in my instinct and honed skills is a journey of profound importance. It's a lesson worth learning and unlearning because the fluidity of design often beckons us to adapt, pivot, and innovate. Rule-bound design, while providing structure, can sometimes stifle the very essence of creativity - the freedom to 'go with the flow'. My obsession with rules, while perhaps well-intentioned, occasionally became the dominant narrative, eclipsing the true spirit of experimentation and exploration.

But my journey has been marked by an evolution in my design philosophy, one that's driven by the exploration of flexible working as a core concept and how it finds its place within architectural proposals. It took time for this to crystallise, yet when it did, a sense of ful-fillment and inspiration flooded in. This new-found joy of design stems from trusting instincts and intuition, allowing ideas to flow and flourish unencumbered by rigid rules.

In the realm of design, a good concept is like a guiding star – logical, omnipresent in all facets of the creation, and crystal clear. Anything that muddles this clarity doesn't belong.

And, it's also crucial to remember that you shouldn't only listen to your intuition but also to your design itself. Sometimes, your own opinions cloud your possibilities to listen to your design. For me, this means embracing changes, especially when it comes to determining design rules.

Flexibility is no longer an optional perk but a fundamental right for modern employees. The autonomy to choose where, when, and how work is done has become a cornerstone of workplace culture. This new work norm necessitates a paradigm shift in office design, placing activities at the forefront, thus embracing the activity-based workplace design method.

By intentionally crafting spaces tailored to distinct activities, flexibility gets a new dimension. While I, as the designer, suggest the how, it's ultimately the users' prerogative whether they seize the freedom to decide. The liberation lies in the power of choice. As the designer, my scope is confined to shaping the physical work environment. I do not possess the authority to dictate the where and when in which employees may choose to work.

Throughout this transformative year, I've delved deep into the realm of flexible working. As explored in the previous issue, the much-awaited transformation in our work environments is yet to fully unfold. I contend that the heart of this revolution lies in the adoption of flexible working as the new norm within architectural offices. This transition requires architects to ardently embrace the activity-based workplace design method.

Taking the time to comprehend the intricacies of work-related activities and the spaces that best foster them is paramount. It's equally crucial to decipher the unique needs that underpin each activity and its corresponding space. In the holistic tapestry of architectural design, this transition represents a pivotal chapter.

In retrospect, this past year has presented an array of challenges, juxtaposed by moments of elation and invaluable learning experiences. The final year of one's educational journey serves as a reflective mirror, illuminating the essence of one's identity as a designer. It tests your evolution, and forces you to confront your weaknesses, while nurturing your strengths – even those not yet fully realised. It's a transformative odyssey that sharpens your design ethos and hones your resilience, forging a path toward innovation and growth.

06 from *the Editor*

As I bring this issue to a close, it's been an incredible journey exploring the exploration process of the translation of flexible working into the physical work environment of architectural offices.

In the ever-evolving landscape of modern work culture, the concept of flexible working has garnered immense attention and support. Architects, like many other professionals, have found themselves at the crossroads of this paradigm shift. It is a movement fuelled by the desire for greater autonomy, mobility, and the freedom to structure work around individual lifestyles.

As I journey through the creative process, I embarked on a voyage of revelations, unveiling fascinating insights. At the genesis of design, an enigmatic conundrum emerged. What initially seemed like perplexing choices gradually unravelled into profound lessons.

As an architecture student, learning to confide in my instinct and honed skills is a journey of profound importance. The fluidity of design beckons us to adapt, pivot, and innovate. Rule-bound design, while providing structure, can sometimes stifle the essence of creativity - the freedom to 'go with the flow'.

This journey has been marked by an evolution in my design philosophy, driven by the exploration of flexible working as a core concept and how it finds its place within architectural proposals. A new-found joy of design stems from trusting instincts and intuition, allowing ideas to flow and flourish unencumbered by rigid rules.

Crucially, it's essential to remember to listen not only to your intuition but also to your design itself. Sometimes, your own opinions cloud your possibilities to listen to your design. For me, this means embracing changes, especially when it comes to determining design rules.

The path to flexible working in architecture may not be a seamless one, but it is undoubtedly a transformative journey. While it may not be for everyone, it is a collective aspiration, a vision of work that not only accommodates the demands of the profession but empowers architects to shape their work environment to their own creative rhythm. It is a testament to the adaptability and resilience of the architectural community, embracing change while retaining the essence of what it means to be an architect.

In closing, the exploration of flexible working in architectural offices reminds us that every space we design, every decision we make, is an opportunity for innovation. It is an opportunity to craft a future where flexibility, creativity, and collaboration thrive in harmony.

But the quest for understanding is far from over. In the next issue, I'll delve deeper into the research, sharing additional research requisite to translate flexible working into a design proposal for an architectural office, and shedding light on the intricate process behind this exploration. The aim is to offer a behind-the-scenes look at the challenges, surprises, and moments of insight that have shaped my project.

Together, we'll continue to examine the evolving landscape of flexible working in architecture, unearthing valuable perspectives from both professionals and employers. It's a narrative that's not just about spaces and schedules; it's about the people who shape them, the organisations that embrace them, and the future that awaits.

Thank you for being part of my journey thus far. I look forward to taking you along for the next leg of this exciting expedition.

Warm regards,

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