Erich Schäli

The Hotel in the Center of the World

A lobby and its entrances

Project

Masterthesis ETHZ HS21 - Durability: Light Touch Marriott - Prof. Silke Langenberg | Prof. Adam Caruso
Assistants: Reto Wasser, Orkun Kasap, Emilie Appercé, Claudio Schneider
Diploma Team: Natalie Klak, Carmino Weber, Grégoire Bridel, Remy Carron

Light Touch Marriott
Project
Masterthesis
Erich Schäli

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Prologue - A building designed for the car

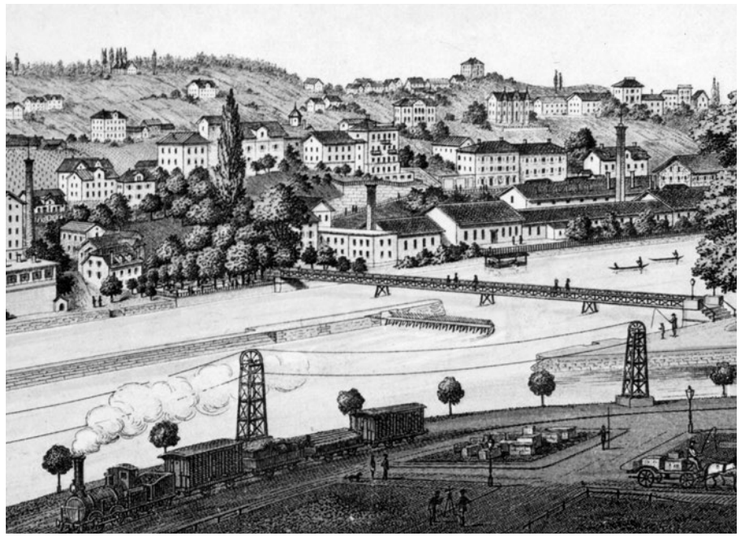


The Marriott Hotel was errected in 1972 - originally as Hotel Zurich - with the financial support of swissair. It happened in the context of an infrastructural renovation of the roadsystem to suit the now dominant role of the car. This led to a series of constructions in the immediate surrounding of the building which today leaves it almost as an island between the axis of Neumühlequai and Wasserwerkstrasse. Also it promoted a direct connection between the Airport in Zurich-Kloten and the site which from there can be reached in about 10 minutes. In 1990 an extension was built that is connected via passarelle and reaches up to Stampfenbachstrasse. Today the dominance of the car is again questioned when the city vote for a widespread pacelimit of 30km/h as part of the Richtplan 2040.



Today the building is owned by Marriott, a hotel chain that occupies the tower as well operating the buildings base. This leads to a clientel that is almost exclusively connected to the function of the hotel. Most of Zurichs inhabitants don’t even bother to visit the building as it is mentally disconnected from the city and only perceived as an object viewed from the distance. The physical reality shows the opposite: Thanks to its multi-directional basis and many entrances the building embodies a great potential to be opened for the greater public. For the buildings future the project asks: In what ways can the building be perceived? How can it again be part of the (mental) urban landscape? The project traces this potential by following six protagonists from street-level as they approach the building and enter a newly opened public space.

Prologue - An everchanging view on the Limmat



Wasserwerk Zürich at the Drahtschmidli 1878 (J.J. Hofer)

Up until the millenium the riverbank of the Limmat was mainly settled by buildings that were using its power to drive production. The functions were using the river to get rid of their waste-water.



Sihlhochstrasse in Zurich-Enge ca. 1995 (Baumann, Heinz; ETH Bibliothek)

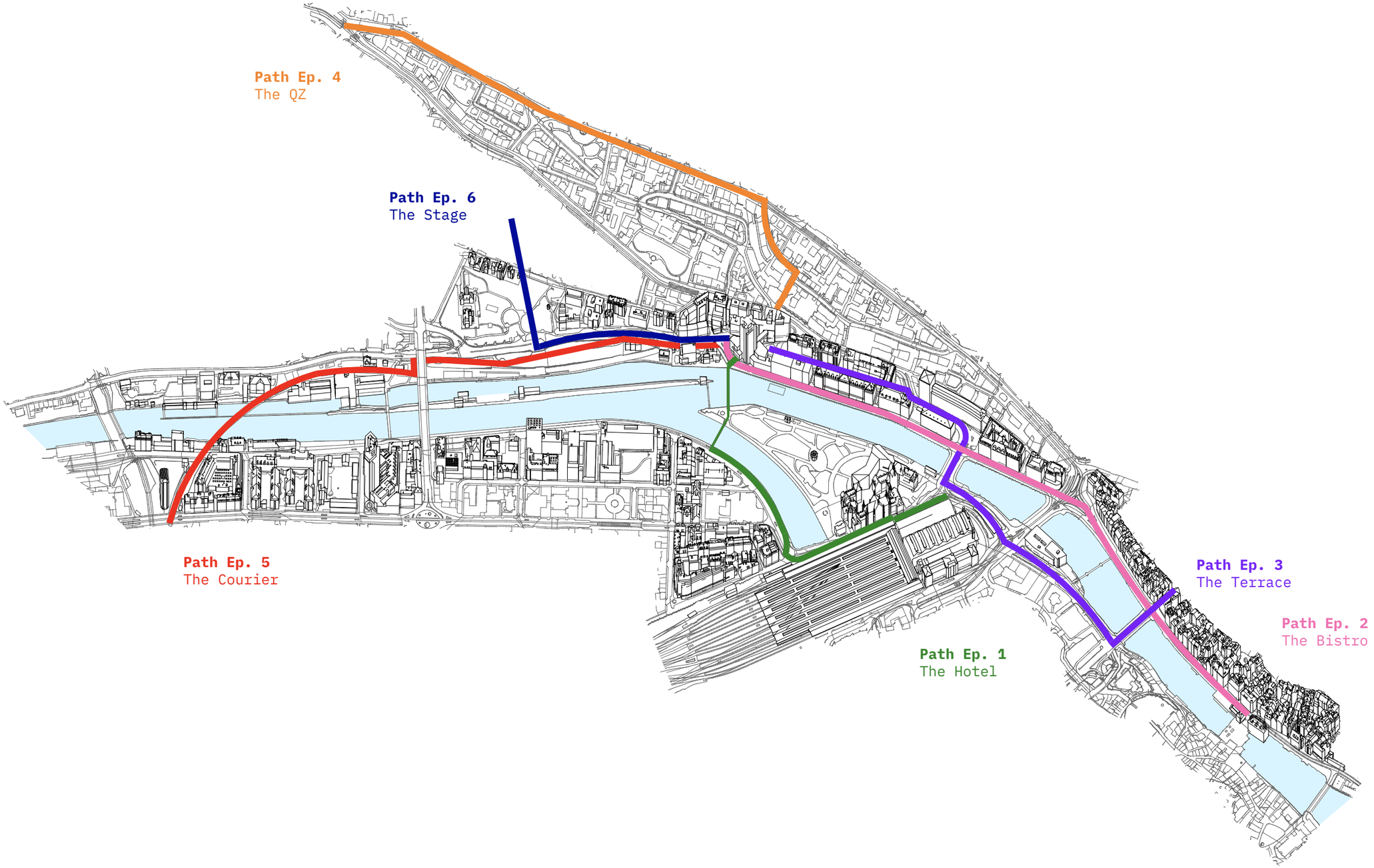
During infrastructural renovation in the post-war period the riverbed was simply perceived as a gap in the urban fabric and an easy way to plan freeways with a minimum of demolition required. The Hotel was built towards the end of that period and embodies this modernisation-spirit.



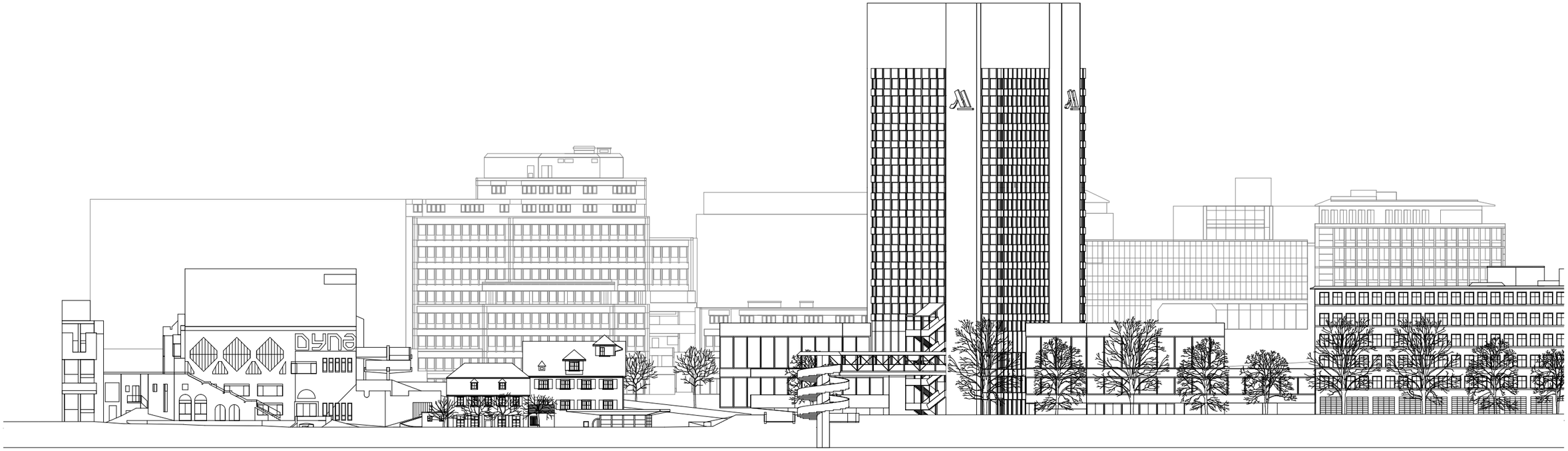
Riverbath Oberer Letten, across the Züribahn before demolition (ETH Bibliothek)

Today the Limmat is perceived as a local recreation area. The riverbed attracts people from all around the city. The Lettenbad became one of the most popular public spaces in the city during summer. The city is pushing for a reappropriation of the adjacent streets next to Limmat, such as the Limmatquai which today is mostly car-free. A similar approach should be applied to the Marriott Hotel that also resembles part of this infrastructure.

The Hotel in the Center of the World

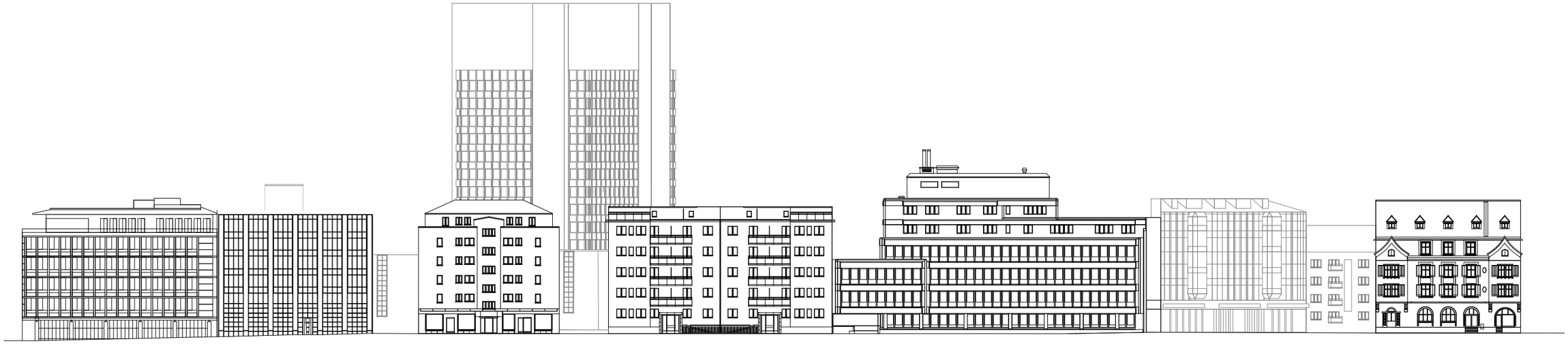


Hotel



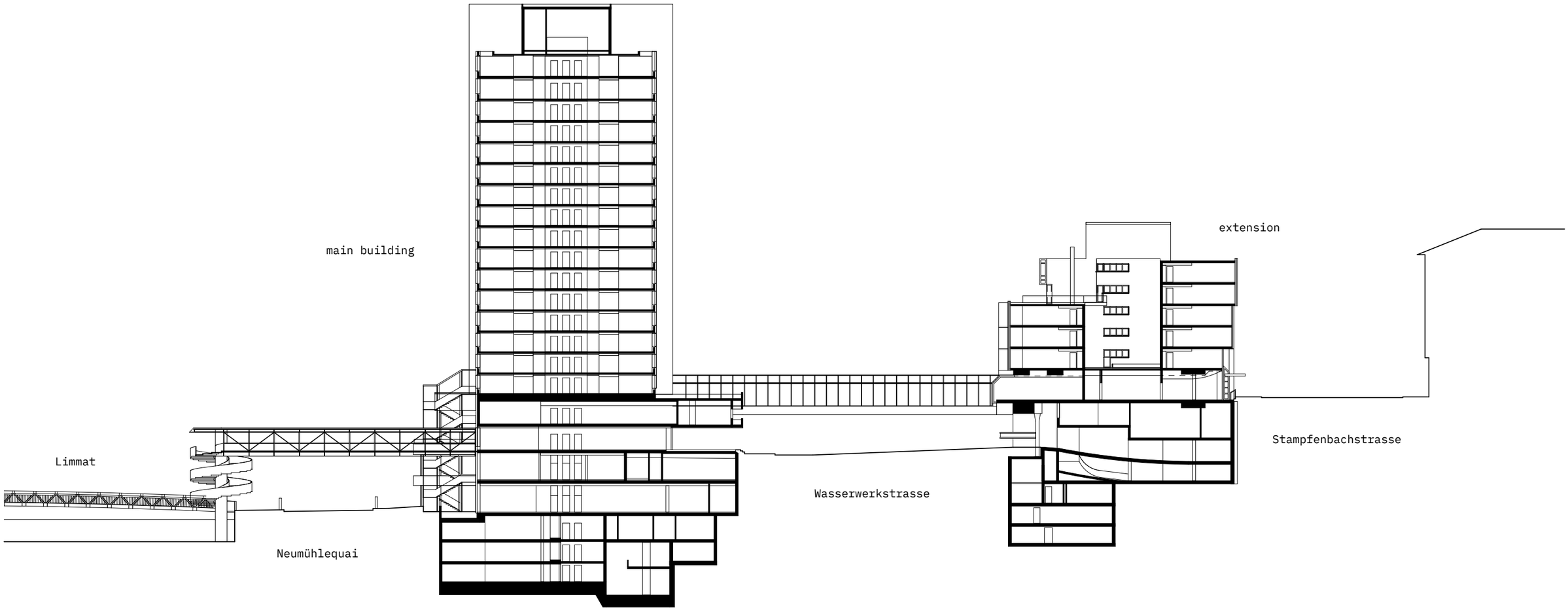
Elevation Limmat

Hotel

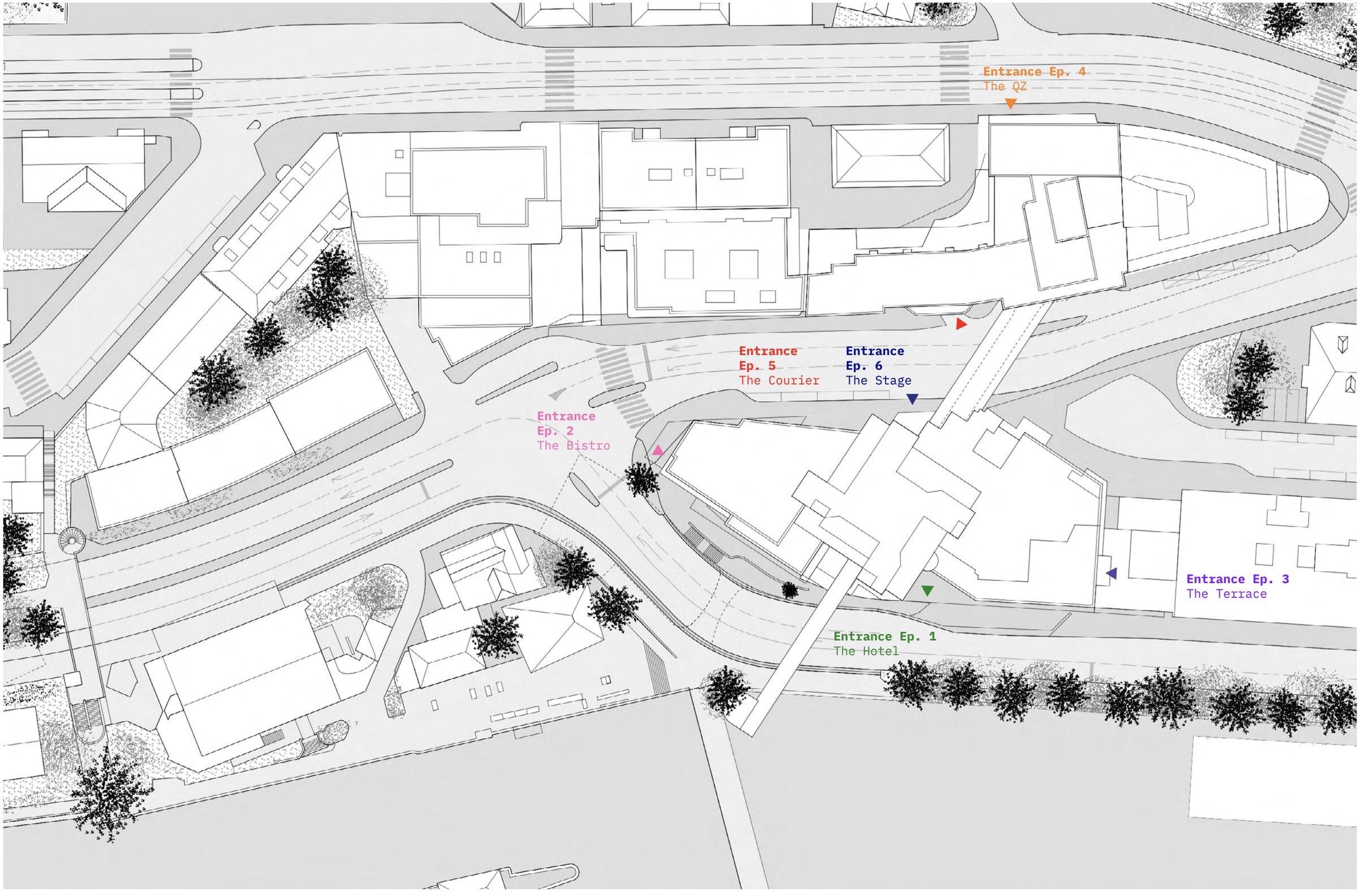


Elevation Stampfenbachstrasse

Hotel



Section



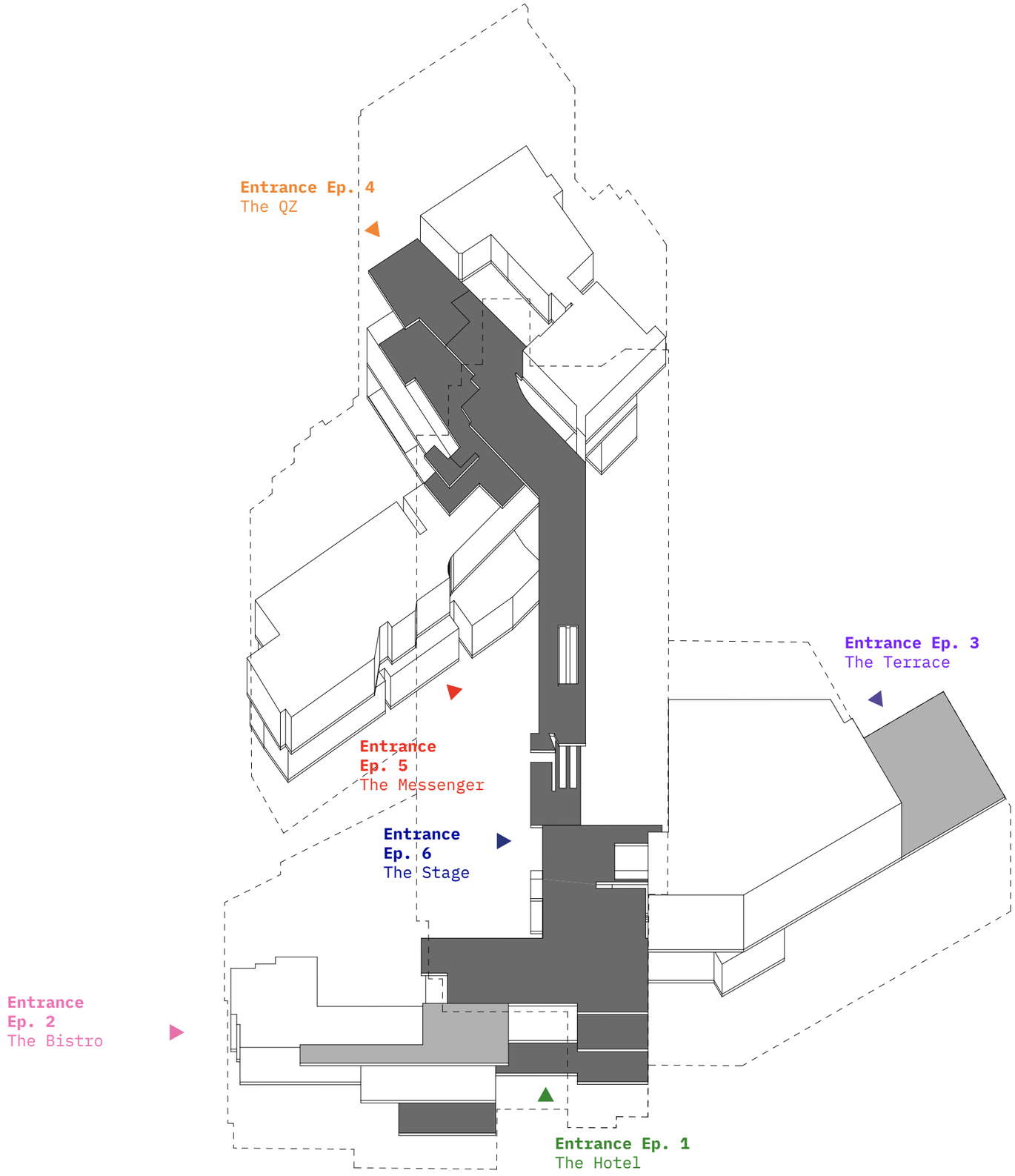
Roofelevation

Lobby - Public Landscape

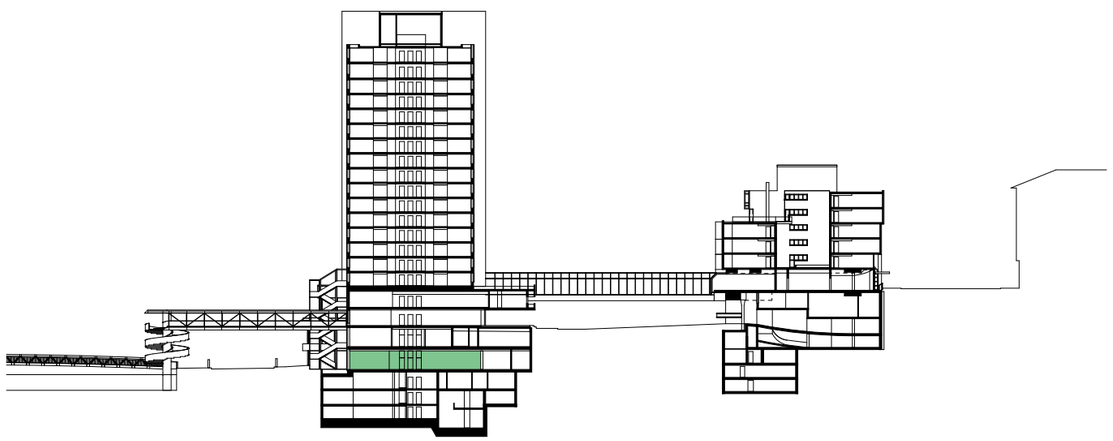


Hotel Lobby (Private Archive Spögler)

The notion of the hotel lobby is expanded into the whole circulation space of the two buildings. The area becomes the main public space that serves different functions as an access but that can also be used as an extension to them. A general change of flooring is performed. The carpet which is changed regularly as part of the buildings renovation is replaced with a more permanent material (stone tiles), also to represent the continuity of space.







Episode 1: The Hotel

It is shortly before 2 o'clock when our protagonist reaches the main station of Zurich. He has just arrived from Geneva, where he met with a few of his business partners. Between the meeting and his train journey there had only been enough time for a small sandwich, snatched up on the way to the platform. During the three hour voyage, hunger plagued his mind. Luckily the train began to slow down, giving view to a series of office buildings on his right. He tried to find a restaurant between the glowing signs of the offices passing by. After the train had finally arrived, the protagonist makes his way to the hotel, which the firm had booked for him. A colleague had given him a series of instructions to find the hotel, ensuring him it would be visible from afar. He begins to follow the described route along the Museumsstrasse, passing by the Landesmuseum and crossing the Sihl, where he notices an intense smell. Below the roof of the platform he recognises a bright food cart with the words, DIM SUM written on it and a smiling face printed on the side, must be a Chinese snack bar. Still hungry from the long train ride he considers getting in line, with his briefcase under his arm and suitcase by his side. But as he looks to his right, a tall figure looms over the trees. Recognising the hotel he decides to continue, to check in and deposit his luggage. Crossing the street hastily, avoiding cars and trams, he can see the Platzspitz from the Sihlquai. Straight ahead the bridge his colleague had described comes into view. He could see a few people relaxing on the walls of the island. Around them the water flow varied, sometimes calmly, then turbulently due to the defensive construction guiding the water. A smaller bridge follows the previous and ends where a blue spiral stair starts. It circles up to another bridge of similar size and look, that leads right into the heart of the building. After crossing an underpass the protagonist arrives at the hotel. He enters the lobby through rotating green doors, passing the lifts and finally reaching the reception. To his right the facade opens up allowing him to look outside, where the terrace with greenery of a cozy cafe or bar is visible. Previously it had been a taxi station, the receptionist explains, in the midst of going through the formalities. Maybe skipping the Chinese snack bar was the right decision after all.




Zürich


SB
1
9
9
V87




Solothurn
18 A
TAXI


Solothurn
18 A
TAXI




13


Hauptbahnhof
P
Museum für Gestaltung
HOTELS
Hotel X-TRA
Walhalla



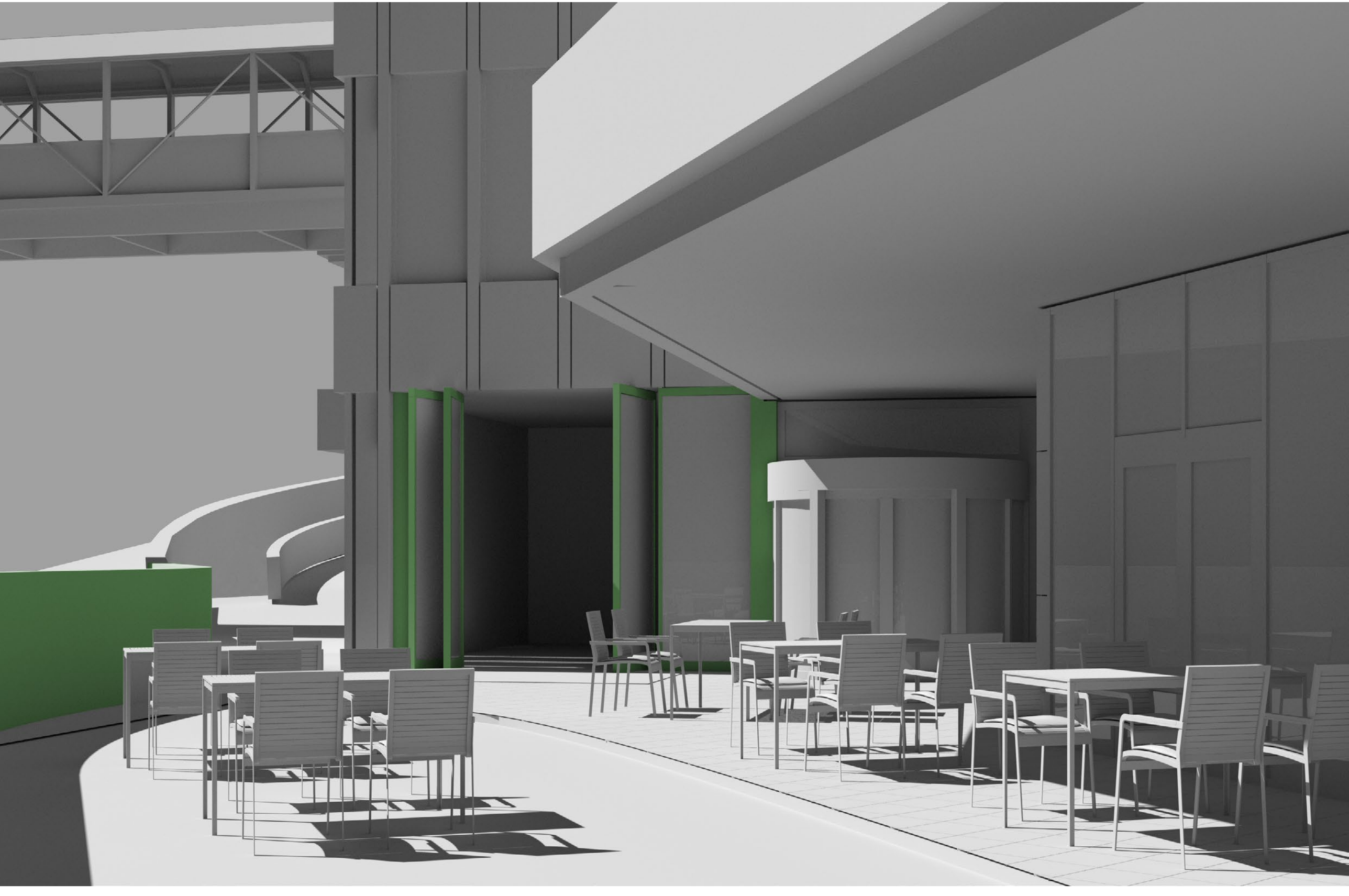












Entrance
Episode 1

Lobby

Detail D1

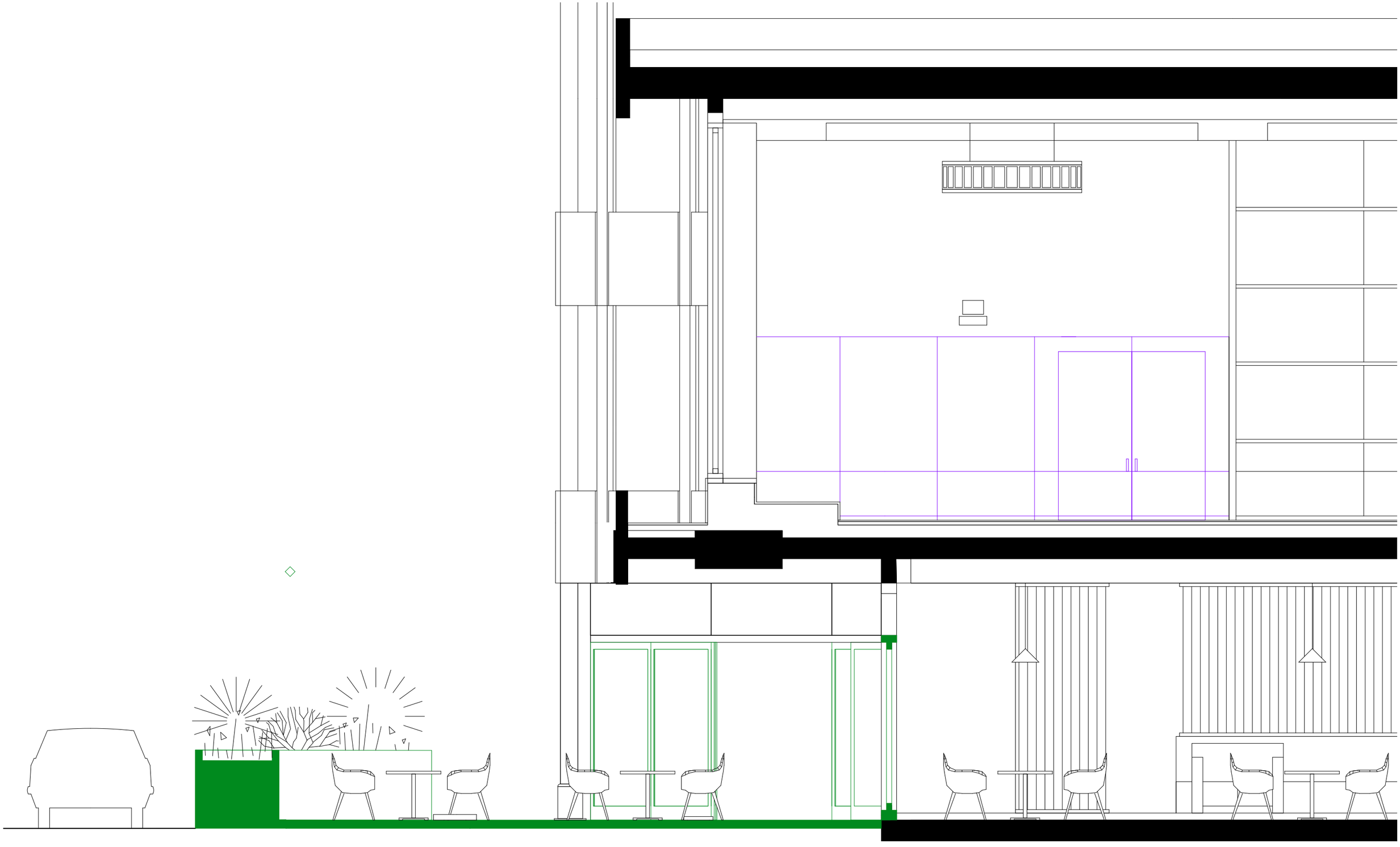
Terrace

Bar

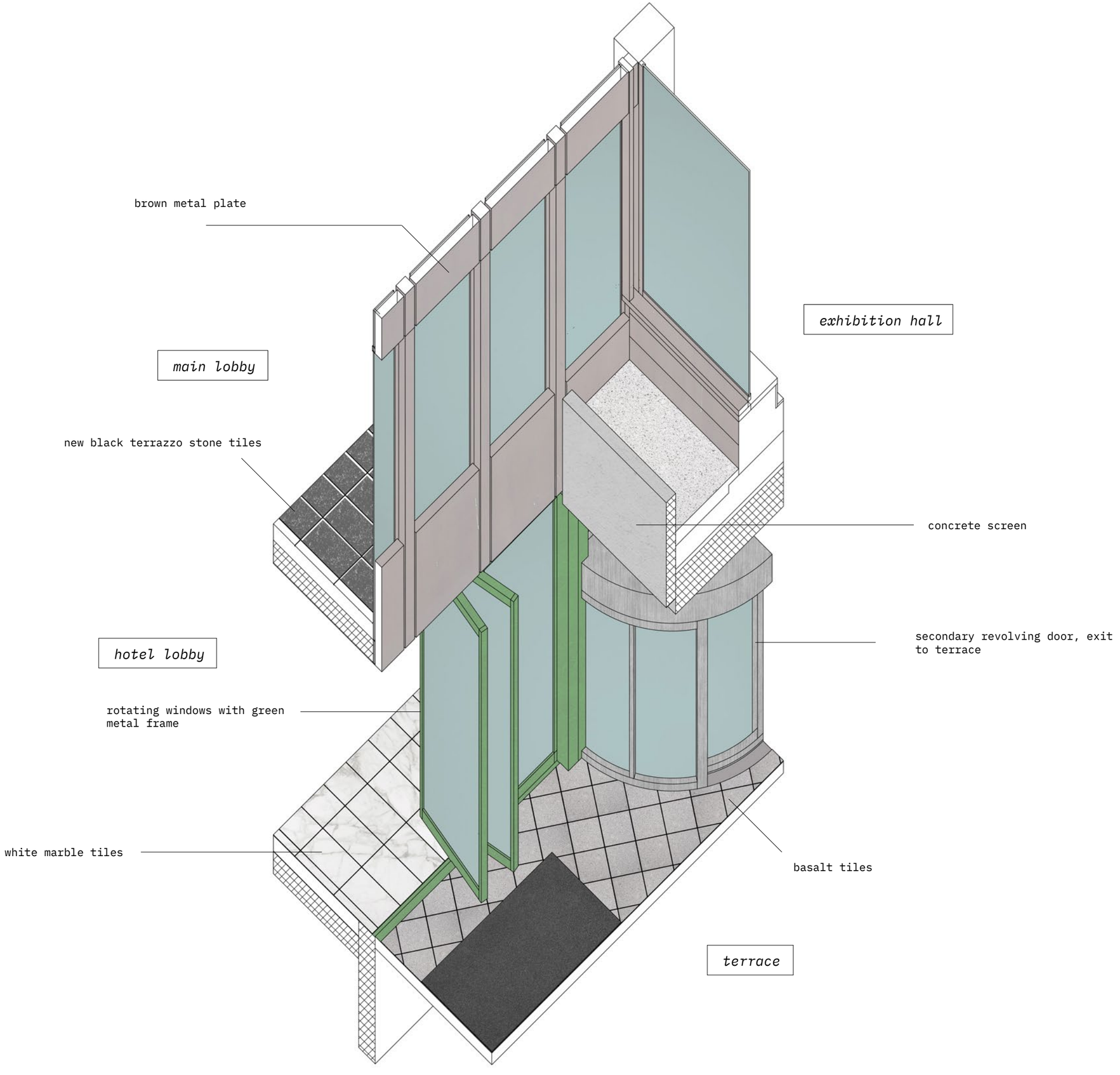
Section S1

Neumühlequai

2 5 10

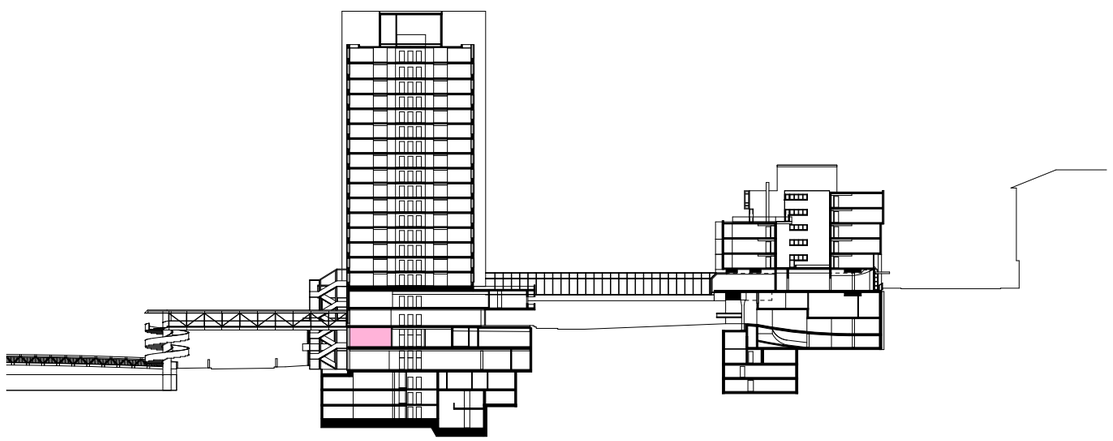


Section Terrace S1 1:50



Treshhold Detail D1





Episode 2: The Bistro

The protagonist is sitting on a bench on the Rathaus bridge. She had arranged to meet an old friend. It had become a tradition for her and her friend to meet up once in a while and discuss their lives during a long stroll in the city. The route had always been the same: they would start at the Rathaus, go along the Limmatquai reaching Central. From there they would continue northwards along the Limmat, until Escherwyssplatz or even farther, if they hadn't exhausted their topics of conversation yet. In 2004 traffic was banned from the Limmatquai and subsequently transformed into a promenade two years later. Nowadays only the trams are allowed to ride through it. As her friend arrives, they begin their stroll. They notice the ever changing restaurants and shops along the Limmatquai. Every building in the Niederdorf, especially the ones on the Limmatquai, offer shops or places to spend time on the ground floor. The Promenade is especially busy today. On the numerous walks over the years the two friends had always discussed the constant changes happening here. Along the years more and more buildings that sat in the riverbed, which had defined the character of this place, had finally lost their function after the end of the industrial period. The only remnants that tell of their existence are the bridges, evenly spaced, dividing the river into segments. After reaching the Walchebrücke, they continue northwards towards the Neumühlequai, a tree lined path vis-à-vis the Platzspitz. Nowadays this part of their route is heavily frequented by cars, driving in front of a backdrop of administration and office buildings. The protagonist and her friend imagine how this segment could look free of cars, transformed into a promenade. It could link the more frequented Limmatquai and Letten, with the Neumühlequai. They decide to stop at the recently opened bistro by the Drahtschmidlisteg. A solid, pink coloured canopy marks the entrance. A welcome alternative to the Dynamo, which is on the other side of the street and where finding a free table had become a challenge nowadays. The space is divided into two areas, that can be closed off from one another, yet share a kitchen. As they enter pink foyer to the restaurant they catch glimpse onto the similarly coloured access from the back side. It carries its own address and is connected to the outside through a blue staircase.








Zunfthaus zur Zimmerleuten
Restaurant 1.Stock


4
30


MENU




Central


Pfister








Promenade
Urania
City Parking
Globus
Hauptbahnhof


EMA
WALCHE







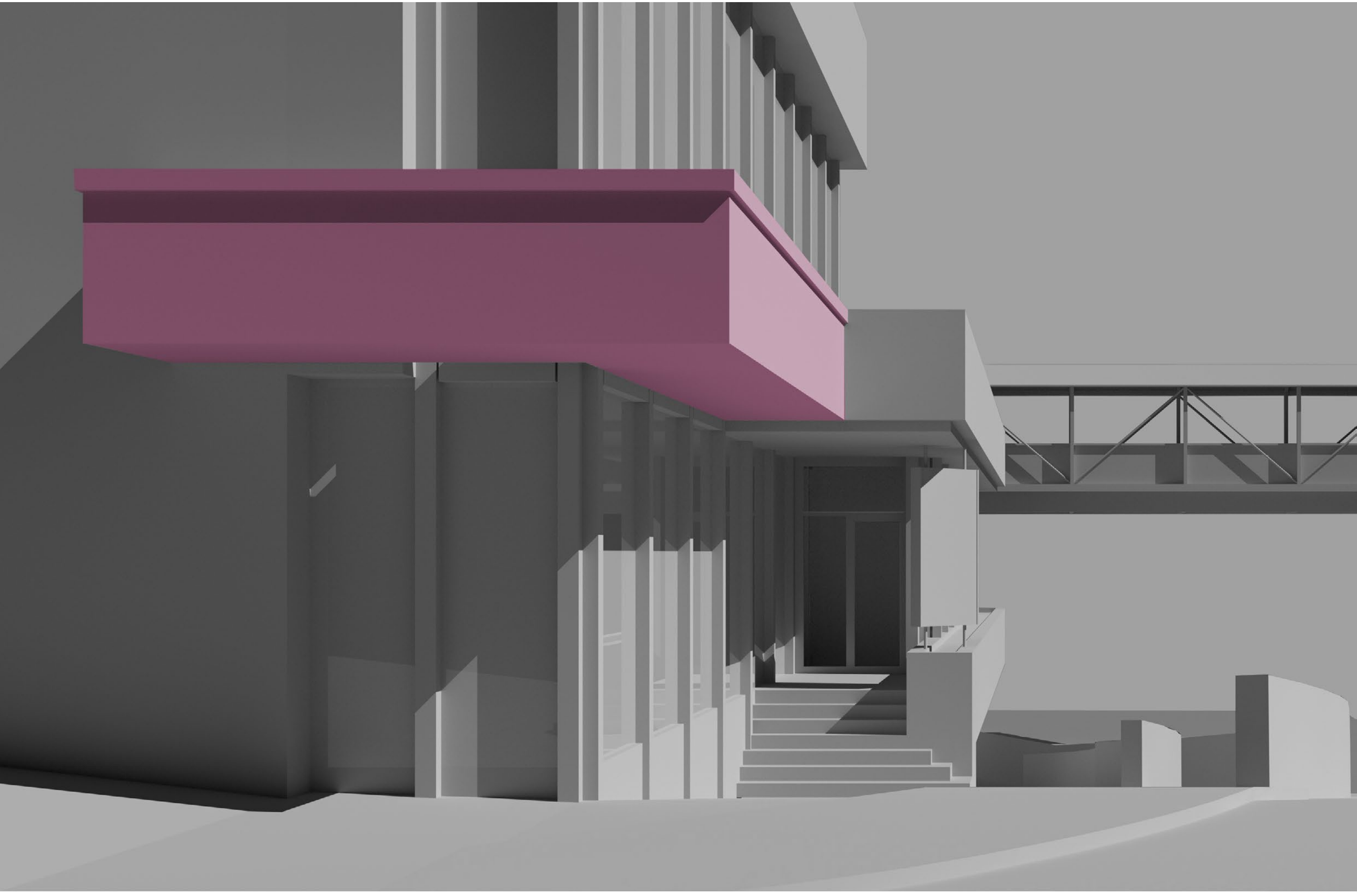







Drahtschmidlisteg

exil

Wasserwerkstrasse

Kitchen

Lobby

Restaurant

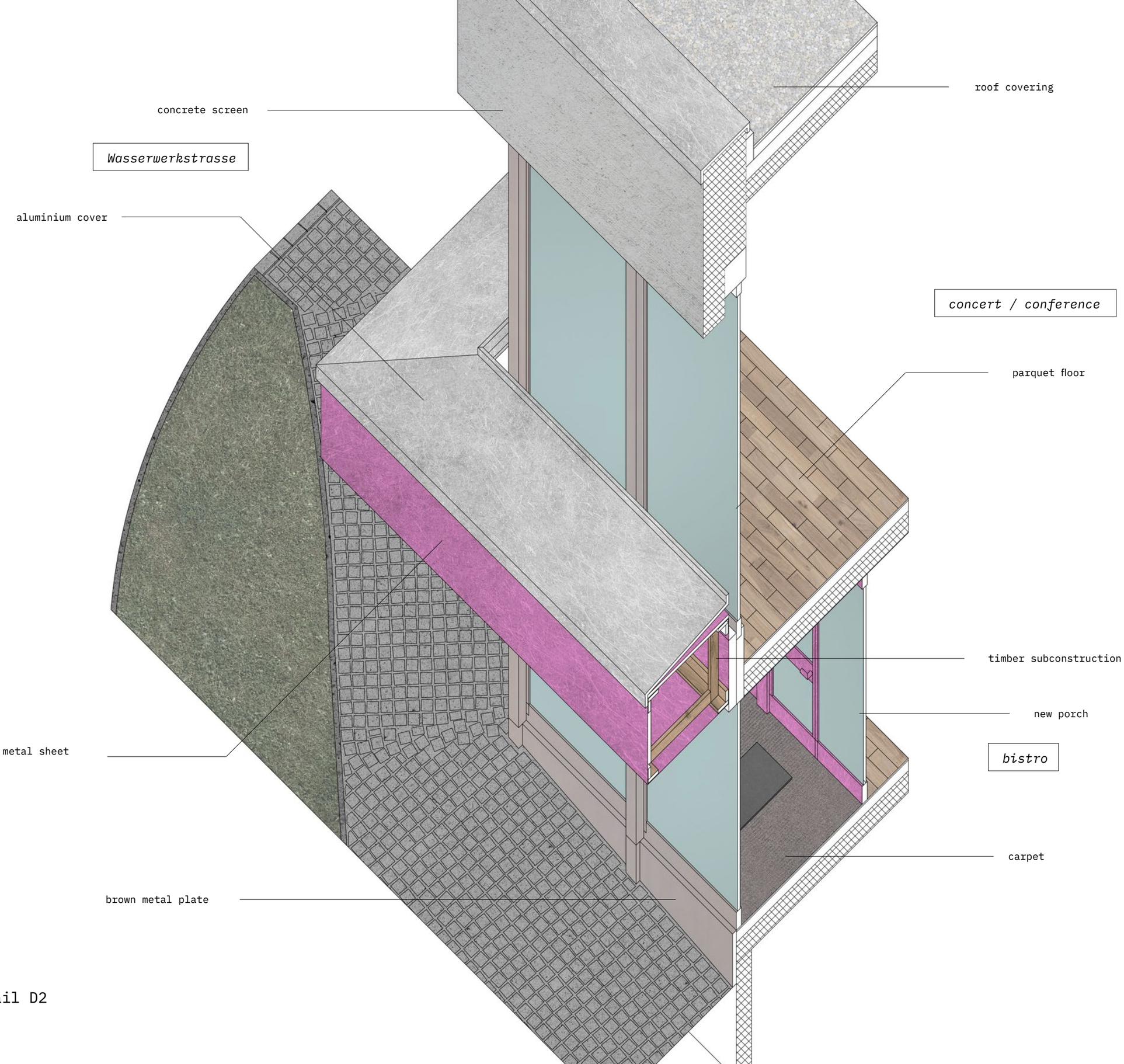
Bistro

Entrance
Episode 2

Detail D2

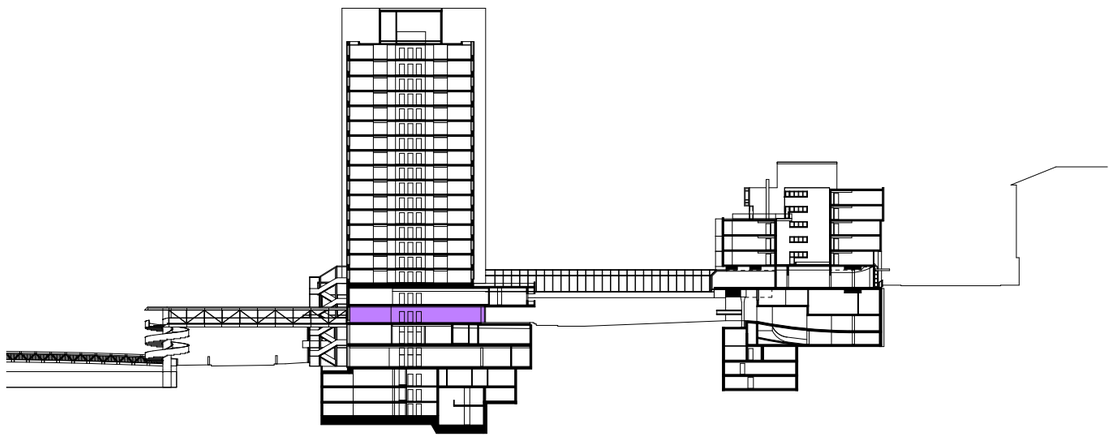
Neumühlequai

2 5 10



Treshhold Detail D2





Episode 3: The Terrace

The protagonist finds himself on the number 11 tram going towards the city centre, from Hegibachplatz in Kreis 8. He has arranged to meet his group of friends to celebrate the end of the work week. Stepping out at Stampfenbachplatz he heads through an archway on to Walchestrasse. A welcome contrast to the heavily frequented Stampfenbachstrasse, flanked on either side by tall rows of buildings leading the way towards the hotel. Every now and then the view on the left opens up to the lower level of the Neumühlequai and over the Limmat towards the Platzspitz park. On the balconies decorated with delicate balustrades, potted plants have been placed by the inhabitants. On the left side, trees and bushes adorn the entrances of the houses. Between the buildings there is a narrow gap with a staircase that leads to the elevated Stampfenbachstrasse. The protagonist stops occasionally to peer on to the different levels behind the rows of buildings, finally arriving at the end of the street. Here he spots a little square to the right, with its cobblestone pavement and shading trees. On the other side of the street the view behind a covered bicycle storage opens towards a big violett sign with the letters ‘Terrasse’ written on it. From there a small ramp leads to a platform, from which he can see a framed view down to the Limmat. The evening sun shines on the parasol filled area, where he finds his friends, who have already ordered drinks and saved him a spot. His friends have just come back from viewing an exhibition in the Marriott Hotel. For the longest time the large room had only been used by the manager of the hotel and occasionally been booked for conferences. In collaboration with diverse urban initiatives there had been an attempt to open the space up to the public and organise a variety of events. The hall offers space for large installations and exhibitions, or as a venue for big audiences and received a new entrance now with a solid canopy that leads into a lighter windbreak. After attending such an event there was a wish to linger a bit outside, in the fresh air, so the owner decided to transform the roof over the adjoining entrance of the parking garage into a terrace.


freiheit
FILMPLAKA


Stampfenbachplatz
ZVV
Movie
RESTAURANT


Walchestrasse
ZH 105363


P
ZH 669411




Walche-Str.


MARRIOTT


P
Zentrale Parkuhr
2 Std.


PRIVAT






25












Terrasse

2 5 10

Delivery

Storage

Walchestrasse

Lobby

Exhibition-Space

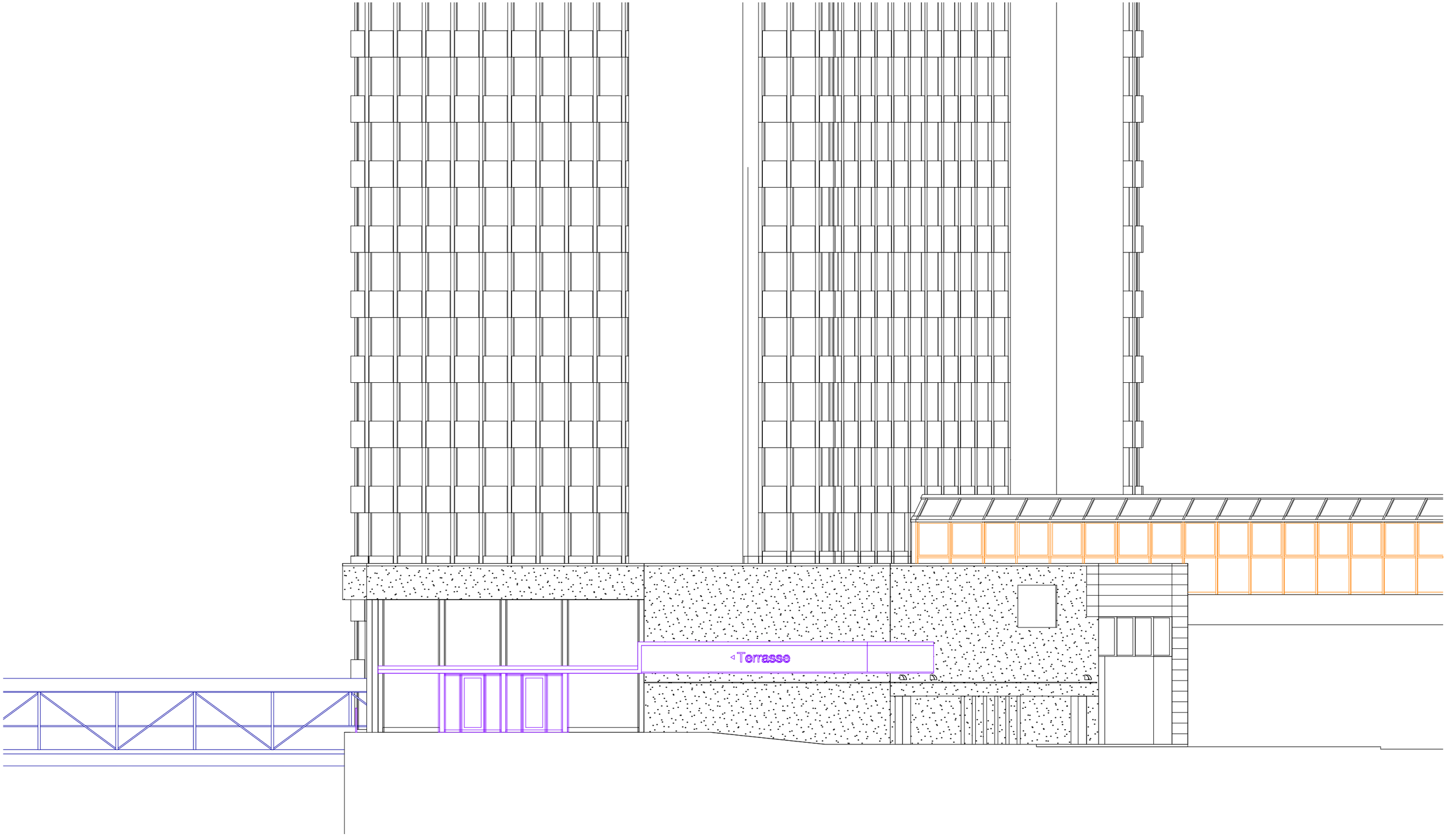
Detail D3

Detail D4

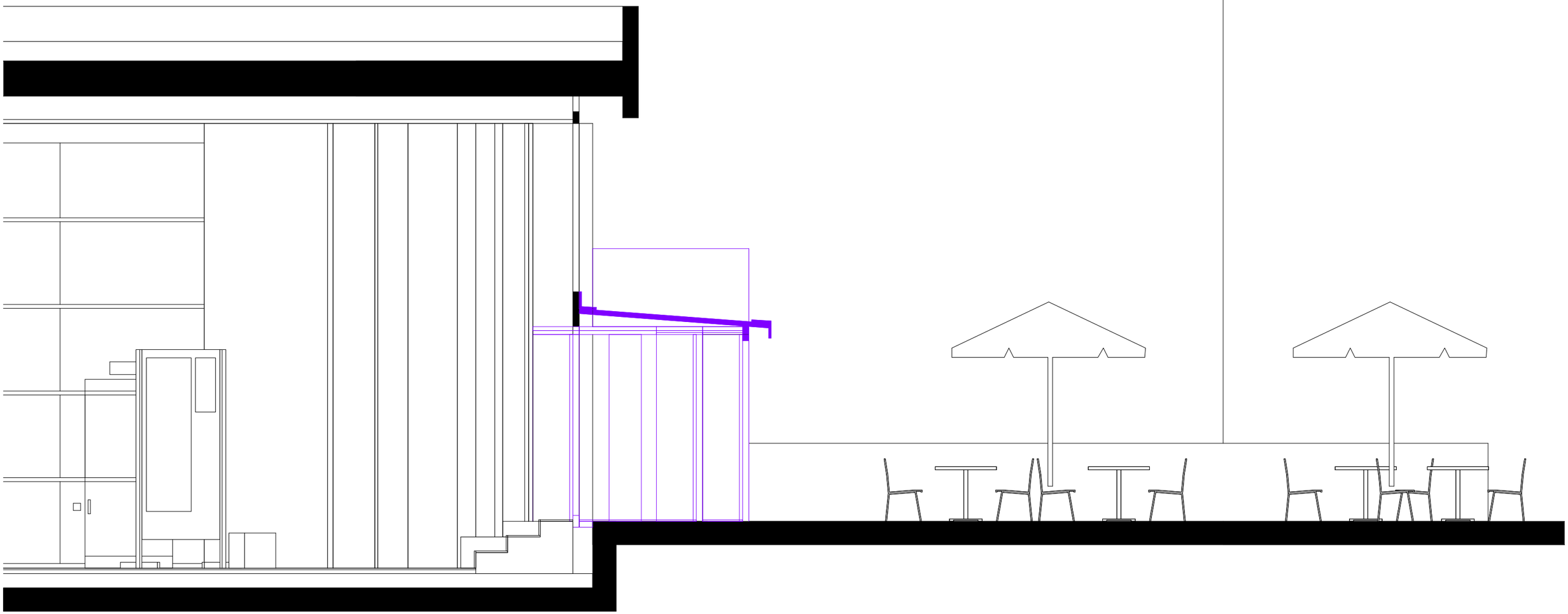
Entrance Episode 3

Section S2

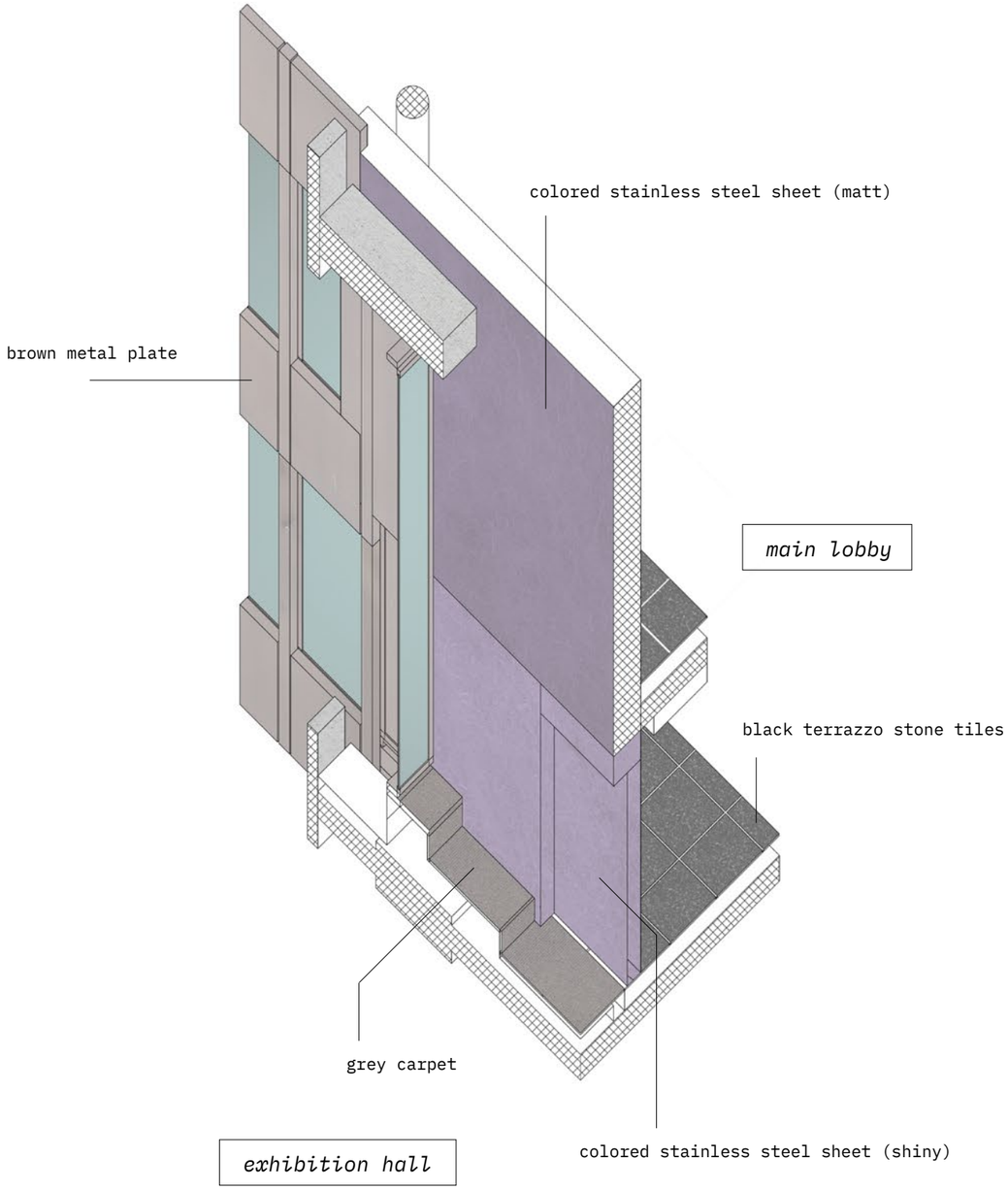
Terrace

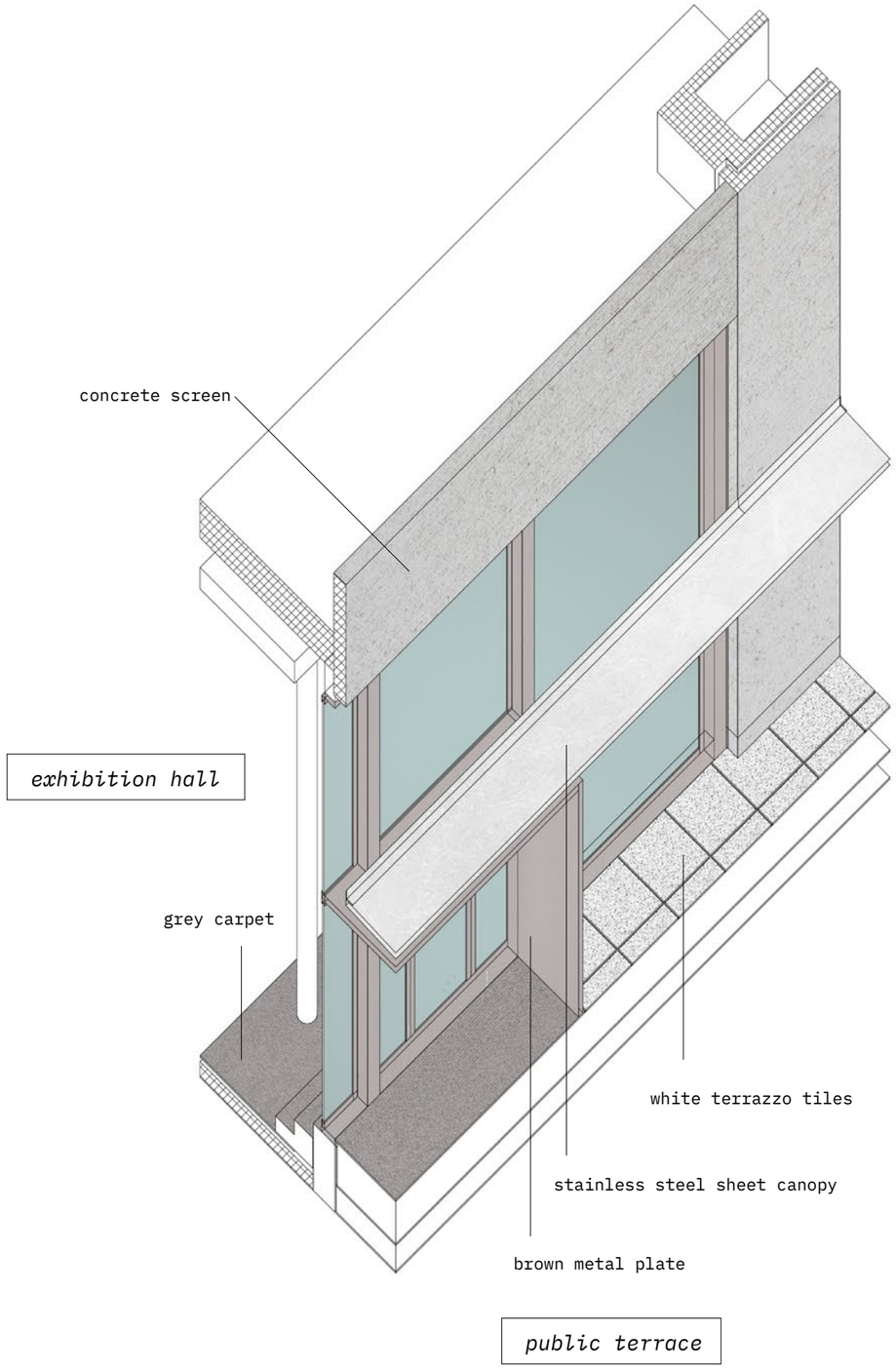


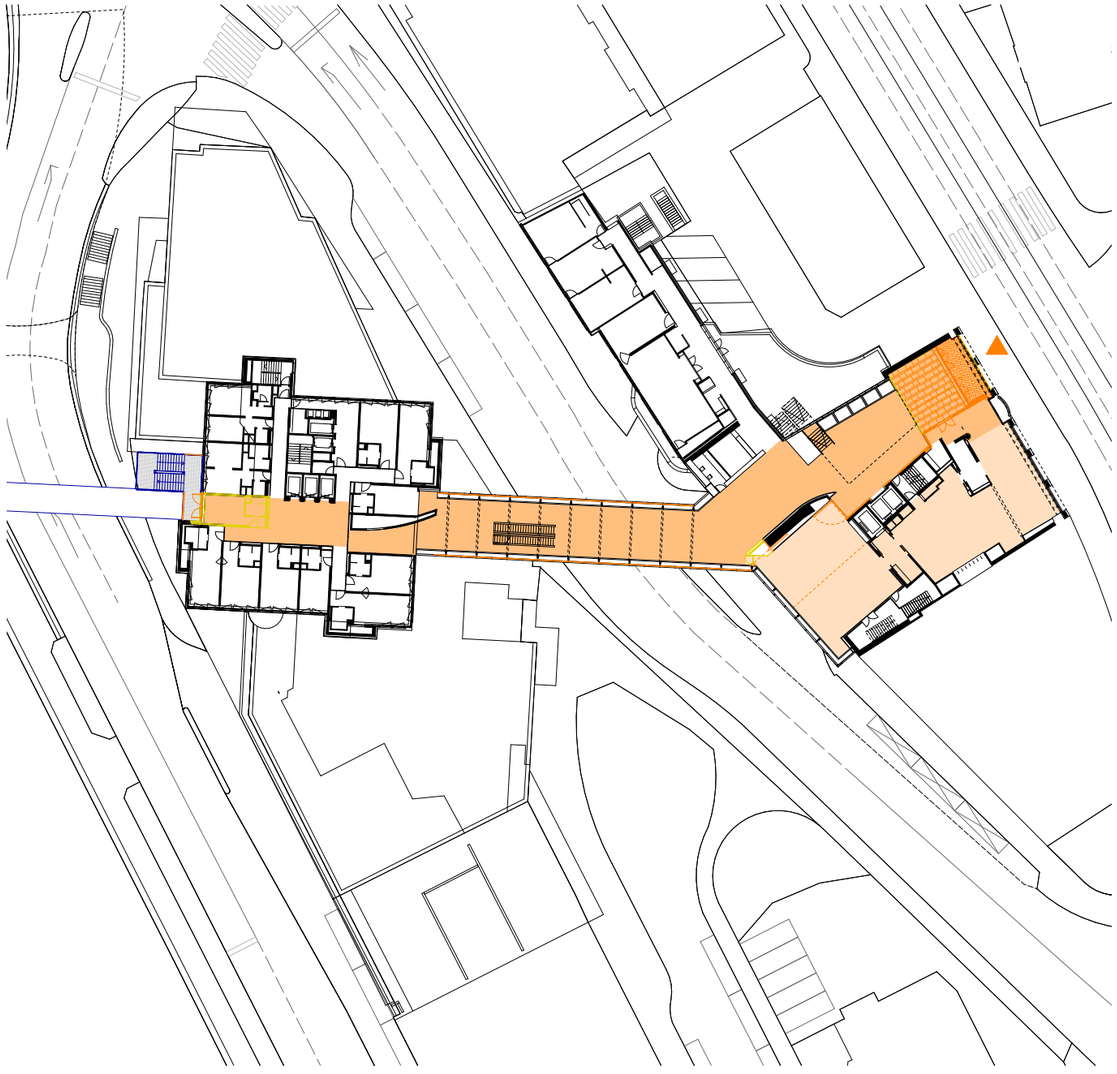
Elevation Terrace 1:150

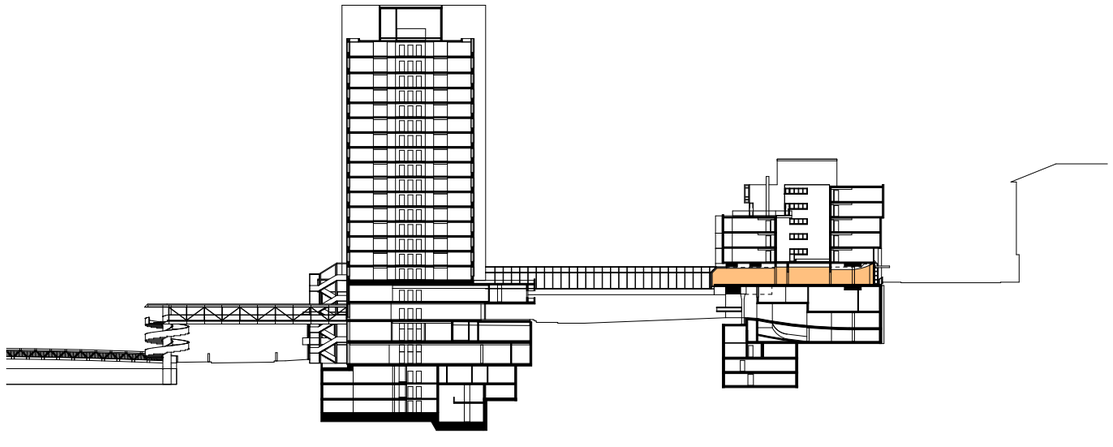


Section Terrace S2 1:50


colored stainless steel sheet (matt)
brown metal plate
main lobby
black terrazzo stone tiles
grey carpet
exhibition hall
colored stainless steel sheet (shiny)


concrete screen
exhibition hall
grey carpet
white terrazzo tiles
stainless steel sheet canopy
brown metal plate
public terrace





Episode 4: The Quartierzentrum

It has been said that Unterstrass never had a centre. The history of the neighbourhood has been that of a place to pass through, rather than lingering and resting. Since the beginning infrastructure, especially streets and roads, has played a decisive role. This part of the city has developed along one axis, in a way similar to a typical village, but without a centre. The protagonist has a rather optimistic view of the neighbourhood, where others see a lack of centre, she sees a multiplicity of smaller hubs. She has been living here for many years and accompanied the various changes over time. Many of these were part of the infrastructural reconstruction in the post war period. An especially severe change, was the construction of the express ways in the 1970s. The Bucheggstrasse has split the neighbourhood into a northern and southern part ever since. Another political exercise was the construction of the Milchbucktunnel, as it brought with it a disturbance for the existing buildings. The Milchbucktunnel triggered a redesign of the eastern part of the park on top of the tunnel. Nowadays it forms one of the many meeting points and recreational areas in the neighbourhood. The protagonist is meeting with other residents in the new Quartierzentrum, a centre for discussion on the neighbourhood for the residents. It is located in the extension building of the Marriott hotel on Stampfenbachstrasse. A collective lunch will be held there, after which a discussion on the newest urban and social developments of the area will take place. She gets on the tram at Schaffhauserplatz and rides along the Weinbergstrasse until Soneggstrasse. From here a quick stroll takes her down to Obstgartenstrasse. A wide stone staircase leads to Stampfenbachstrasse. The extension of the hotel has been rebuilt to form a orange portal into the building complex. A Passarelle over the Wasserwerkstrasse leads to the plinth of the tower on the riverside of the Limmat. Flanking the portal, the destination of the protagonist awaits her, the newly established Quartierzentrum Unterstrass. The Passarelles facade has been redesigned to open up in the summer. It has become a new public space. A place to stay a while, or hangout and at the same time the most direct path from the neighbourhood down to the Limmat.


Schaffhauserplatz
7
Wollishofen
18






ZONE
30








Volkmarstrasse
ups
Weltweite Dienstleistungen


Das Klima
danke Zürich
BVZ







Passage

Section S3b

Section S3a

Reception

Section S4

Multi-Use-Room

Quartierzentrum

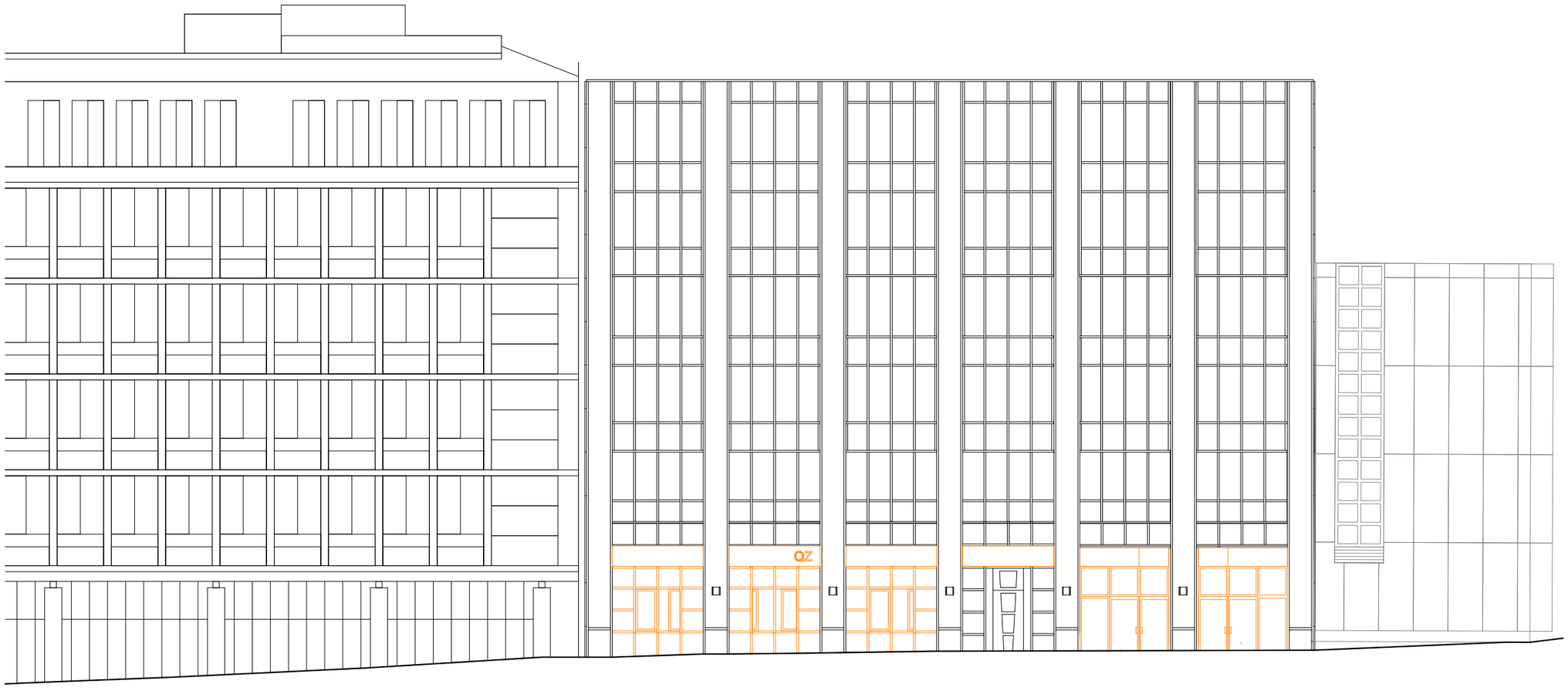
Detail D5

Entrance
Episode 4

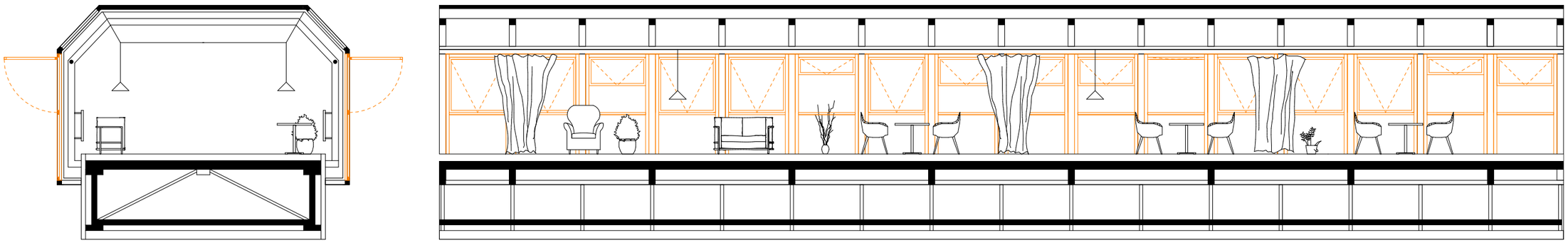
Wasserwerkstrasse

Stampfenbachstrasse

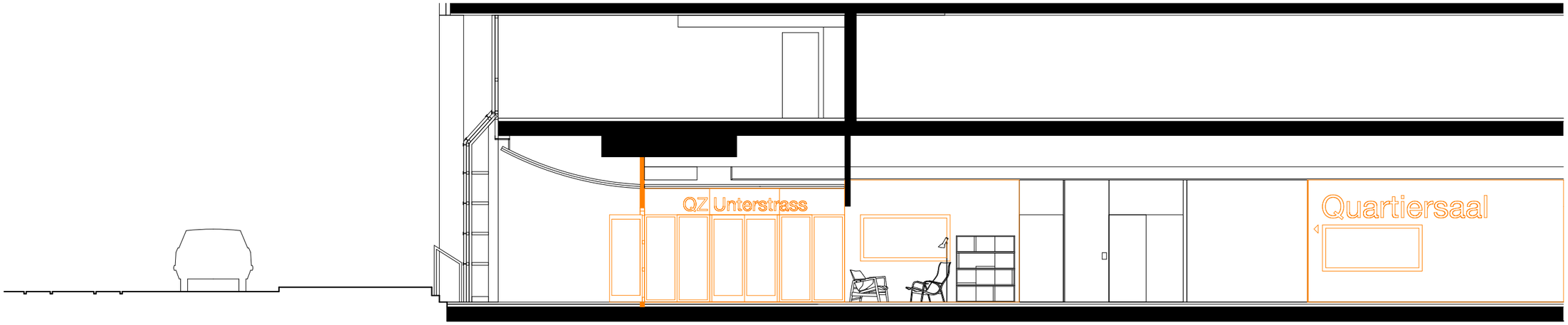
2 5 10



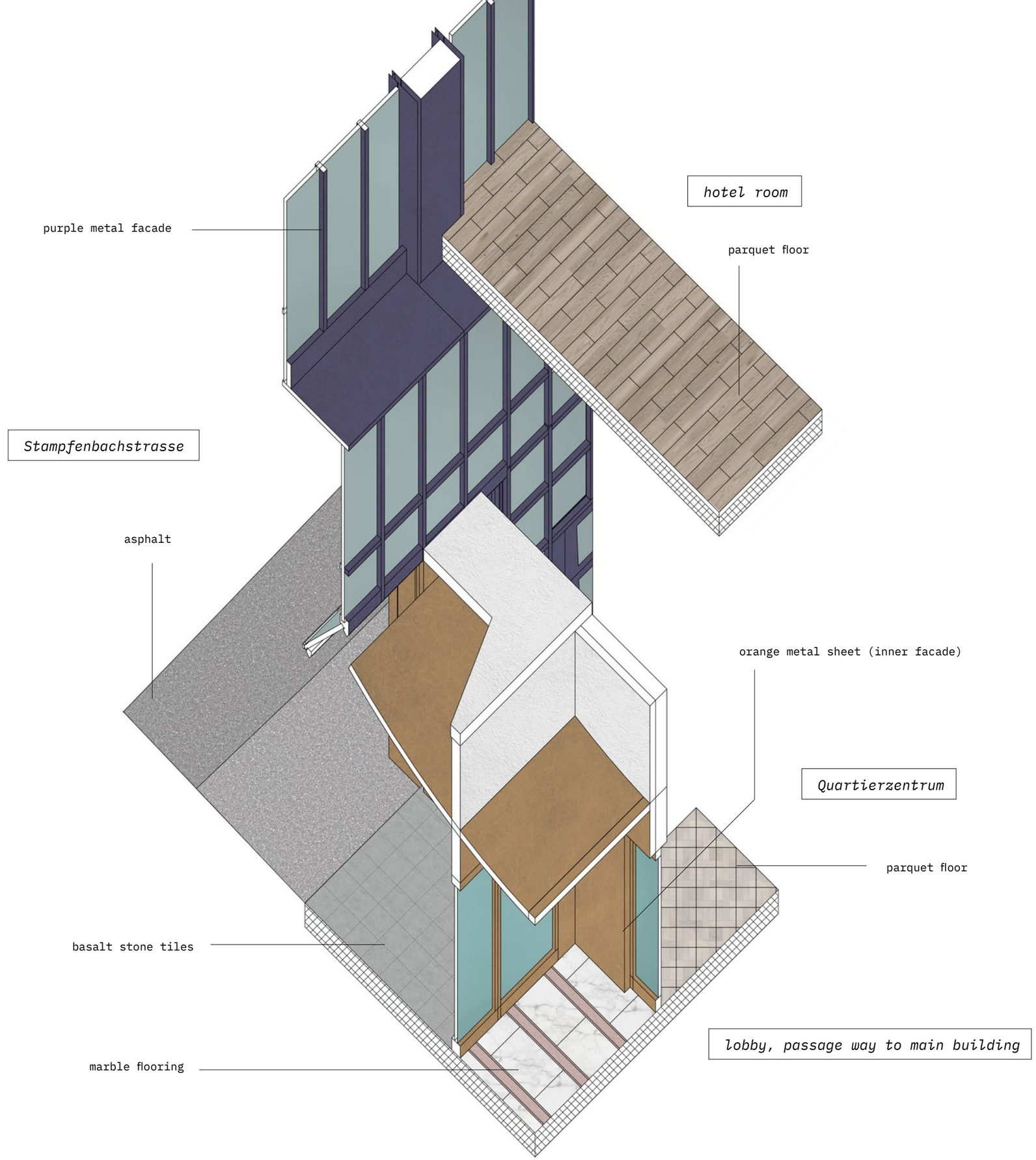
Elevation Stampfenbachstrasse 1:150



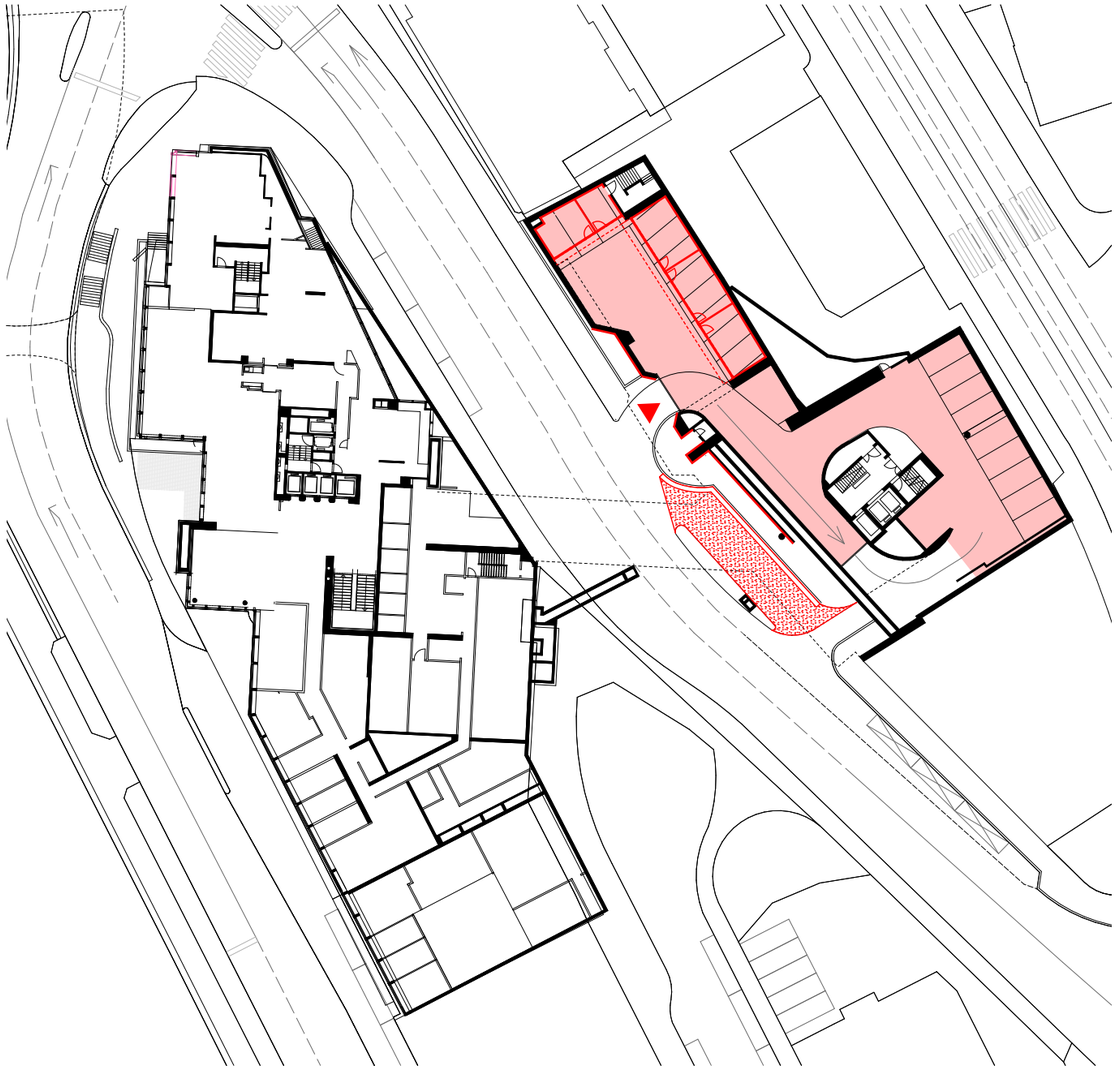
Section Passarelle S3a & S3b 1:150

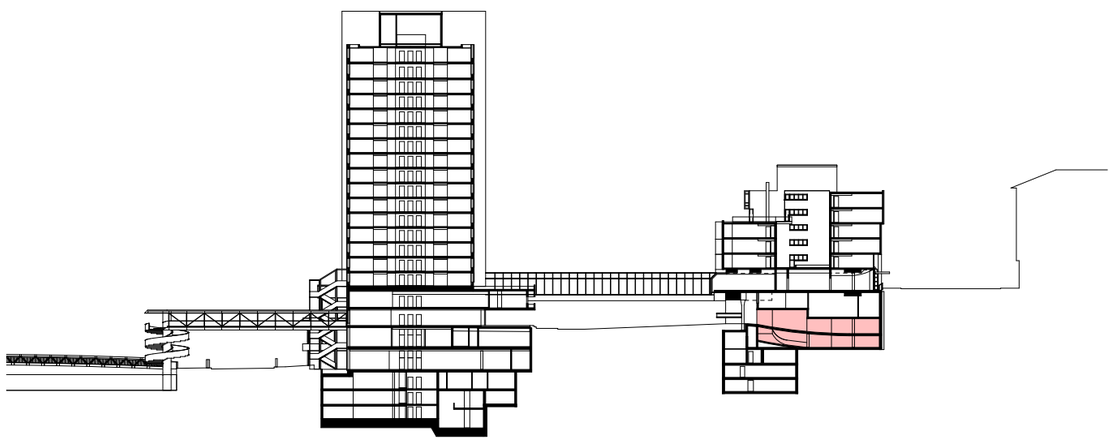


Section Quartierzentrum S4 1:100



Treshhold Detail D5





Episode 5: The Courier

The protagonist begins his daily routine and gets on the bicycle to make his way to work. He sees the city as a playground and has selected an occupation that allows him to combine his job with his joy for riding through the city. The ride begins at the ascent towards the Letten Viadukt. From there he follows the big arch over the Limmat. He passes the no longer working Letten train station, goes under the Kornhaus bridge and follows the Lux-Guyer-Weg to the courier centre. This route, filled with old infrastructural remnants serves as a kind of highway, the quickest path from A to B. Some years ago a huge project was conceived, that proposed a highway over the Limmat, leading to a large traffic node at the Letten. On his journey he encounters relics of the project, such as the now closed entrance to the highway tunnel. Soon after that he arrives at his employers headquarters, a bicycle courier nestled in a former parking garage. He enters the reception, where employees work at their desks, noticing the usual hustle and bustle as people come and go. At the counter he receives his route for the day. The company ships and stores its own products, while also offering a typical courier service. Before heading out he lingers a while in front of the building under the canopy of the Passarelle. He leans on the red wall in-between his co-workers and their bicycles. They discuss their routes over a cup of coffee. This little square in front of the building used to be the loading bay, but has now become a meeting point. Him and his colleagues are lone wolves during work, but after work they usually meet at the Letten. They want to attempt to dive into the river from the new bridge that connects the hotel to the Limmat.


Limmatstrasse
Letten-








Zubringerdienst
gestattet

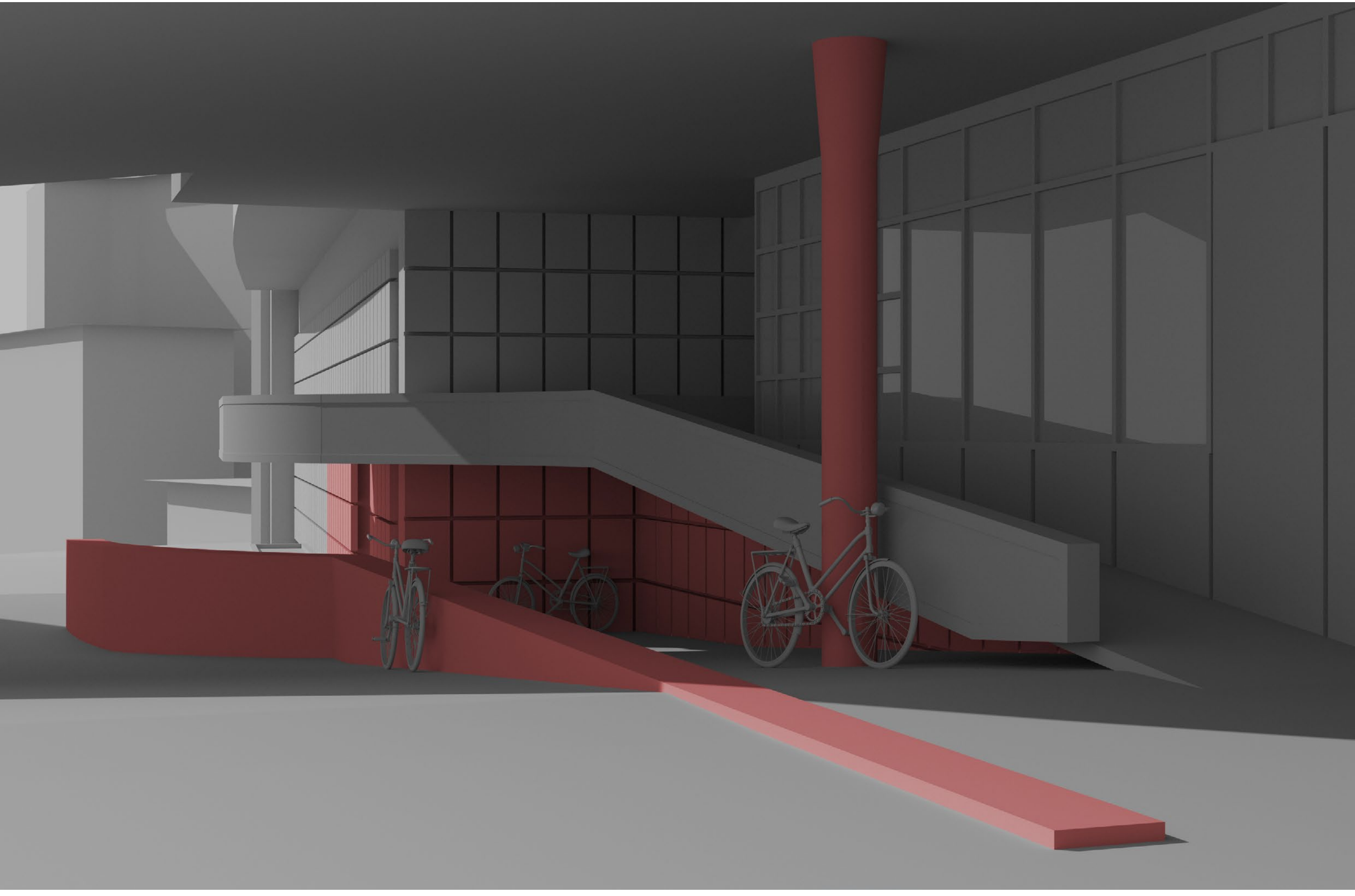












Storage

Main-Offices

Desk

Ramp to lower level

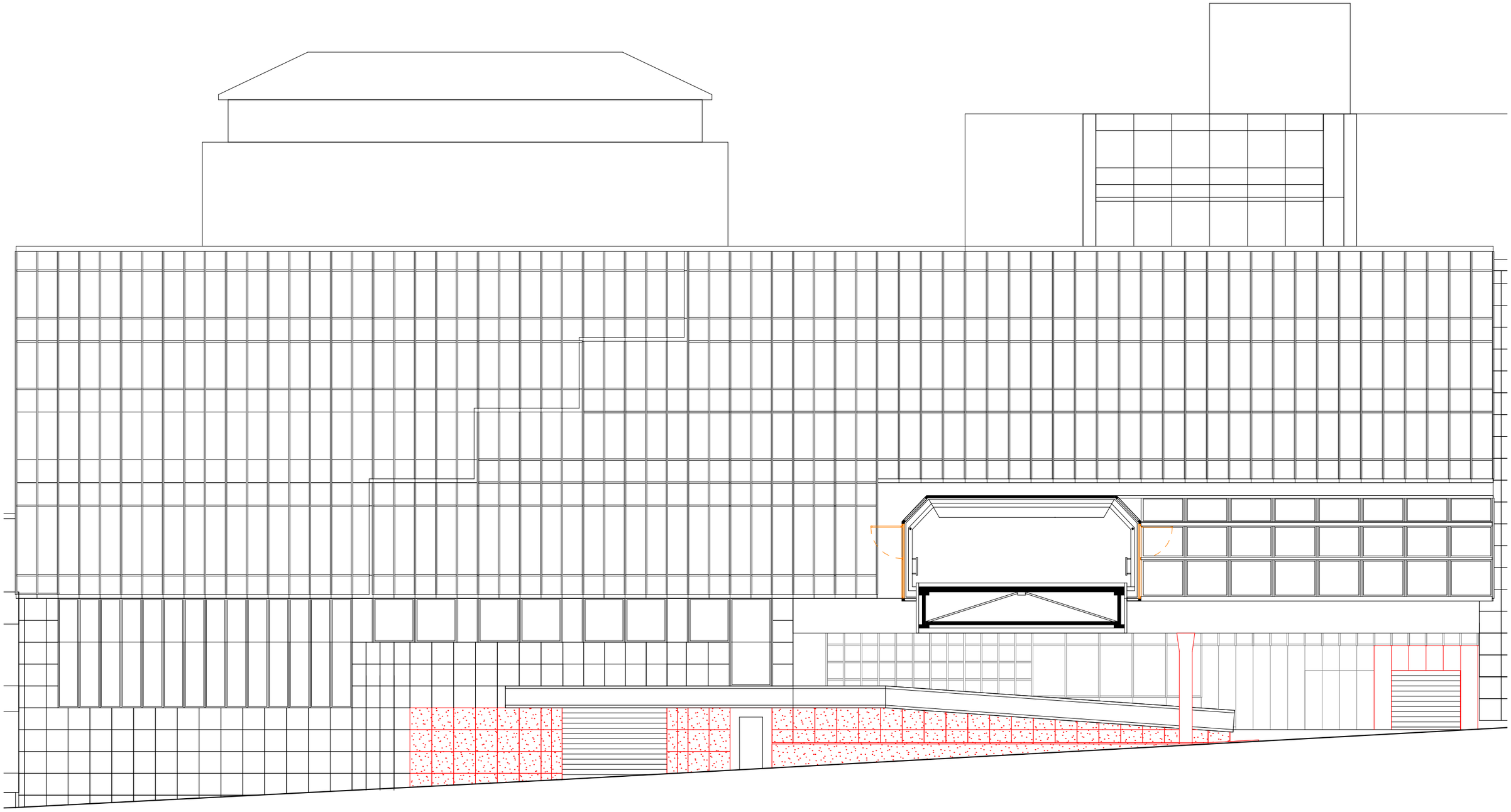
Gathering Space

Entrance
Episode 5

Section S5

2 5 10

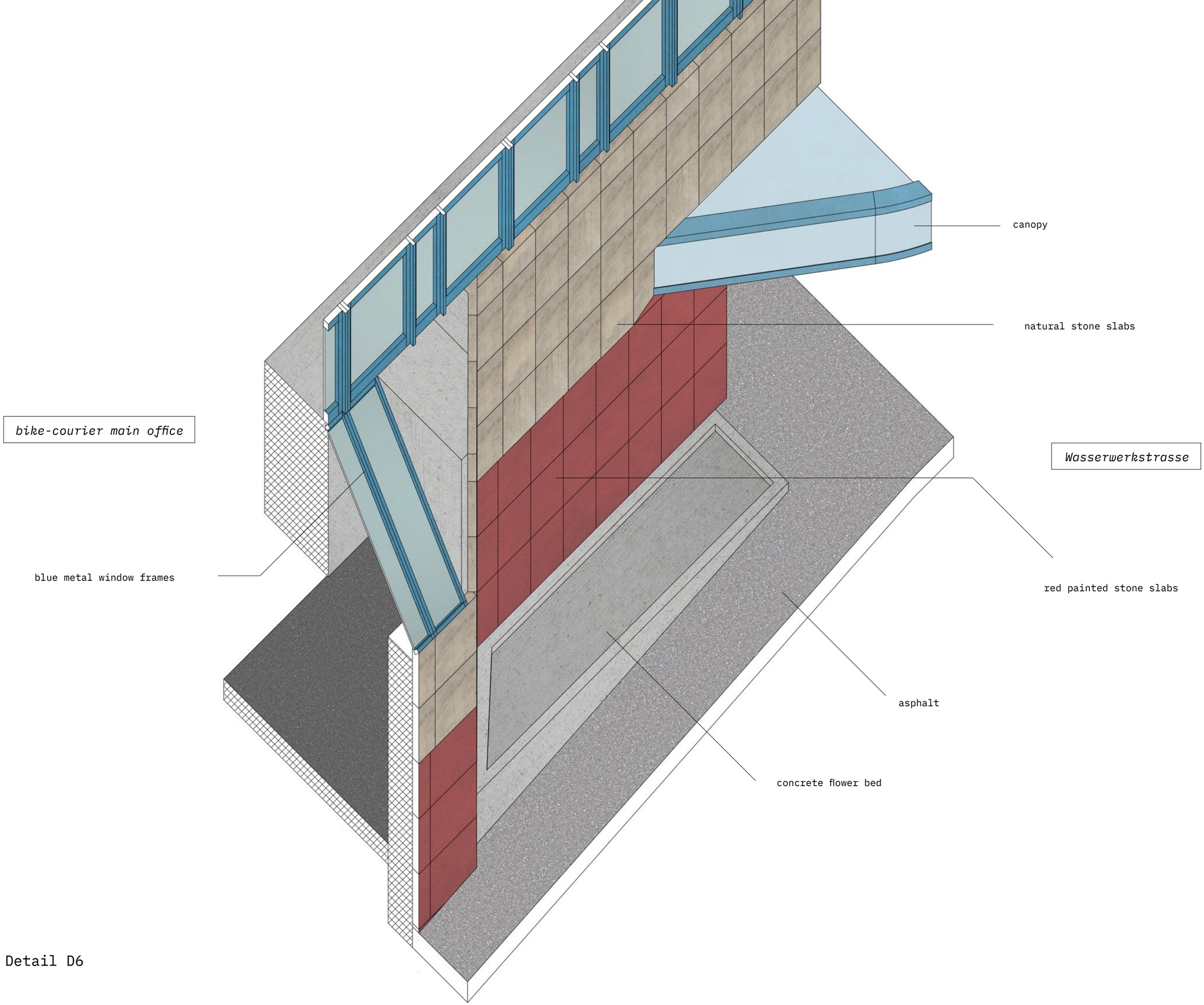
Wasserwerkstrasse



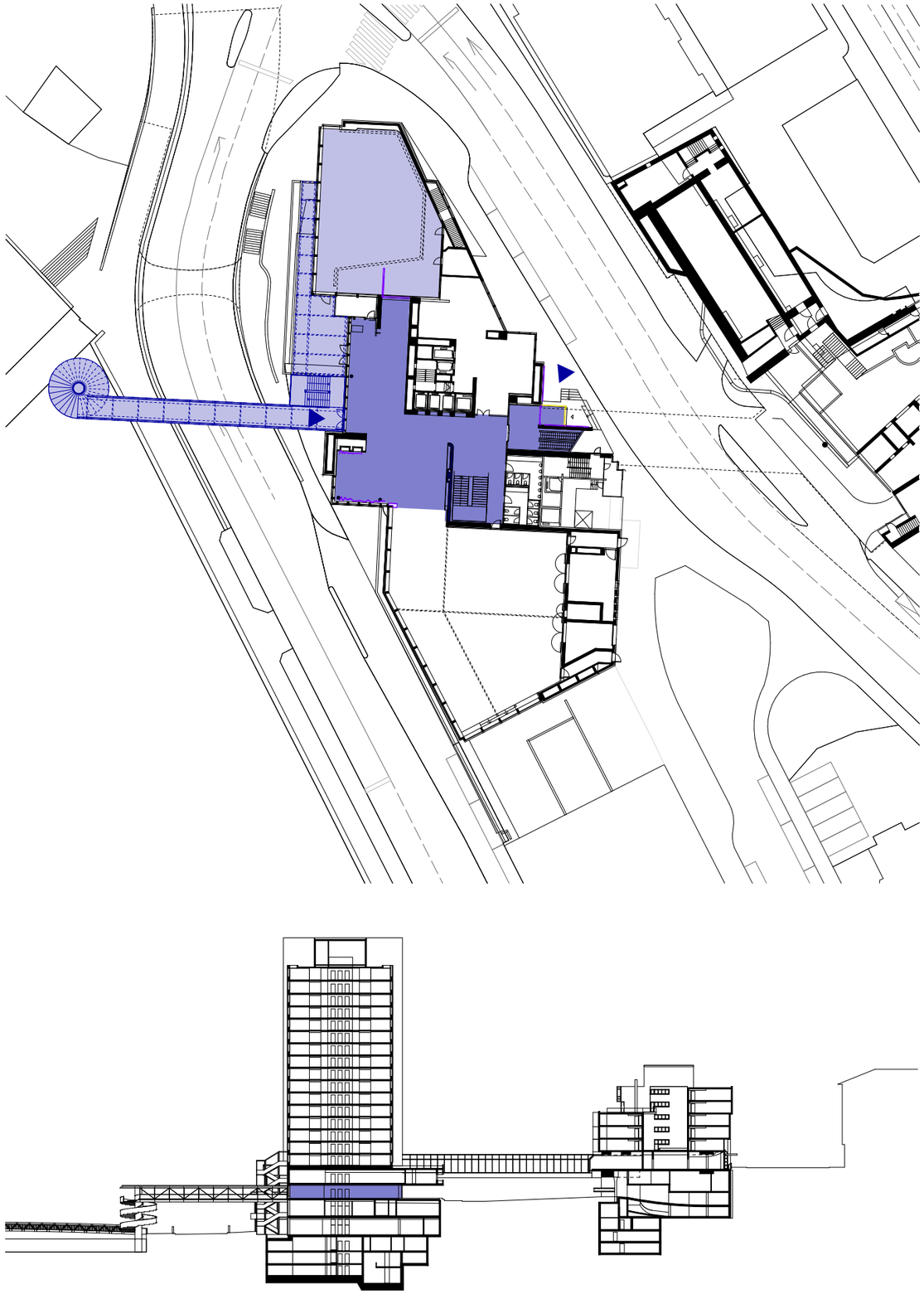
Elevation Wasserwerkstrasse 1:150



Section Bike-Courier S5 1:50



Treshhold Detail D6



Episode 6: The Stage

The protagonist has just arrived from Germany to play a concert in the newly renovated event hall of the Marriott Hotel in Zurich. The plane touches down just after sun set at the airport in Kloten. As they step outside his companion starts looking for a taxi. Meanwhile he takes a moment to breath in the foreign air and looks up at the high canopy of the airport. He knows that the airport was extended in 1970's at the same time as the hotel was built. Both were partially financed by swissair with the goal to digest the growing interest of tourists travelling to Zurich. At that time the building advertised its central location within the city. The Milchbuck tunnel was constructed, which together with the Schöneich tunnel, forms a direct connection from the airport to the hotel. Their brisk journey of a few minutes takes them through the tunnels and spits them out at the Wasserwerkstrasse, where they glance the Letten through the trees. Turning left a tall building appears in the twilight sky. They exit the car at the rear entrance under the Passarelle. This entrance is coloured in blue and framed by several posters of himself. After passing the little platform in front of the door, they enter the lobby, the centrepiece of the building. A large group of people have assembled around high tables. It seems an intermission between two concerts is taking place. Straight ahead the main entry shows the new bridge and brings further attendees into the building. Adjacent to the right a public terrace opens up to a view on the Limmat. The wall between the lobby and concert hall has been opened completely to allow a seamless transition of the spaces.


FZ46


MÖVENPICK
P


Zürich-City


Zürich-City
E41




Zürich-City
Bern
Luzern


60
1,8 km
Milchbuck-
Tunnel
Irchel



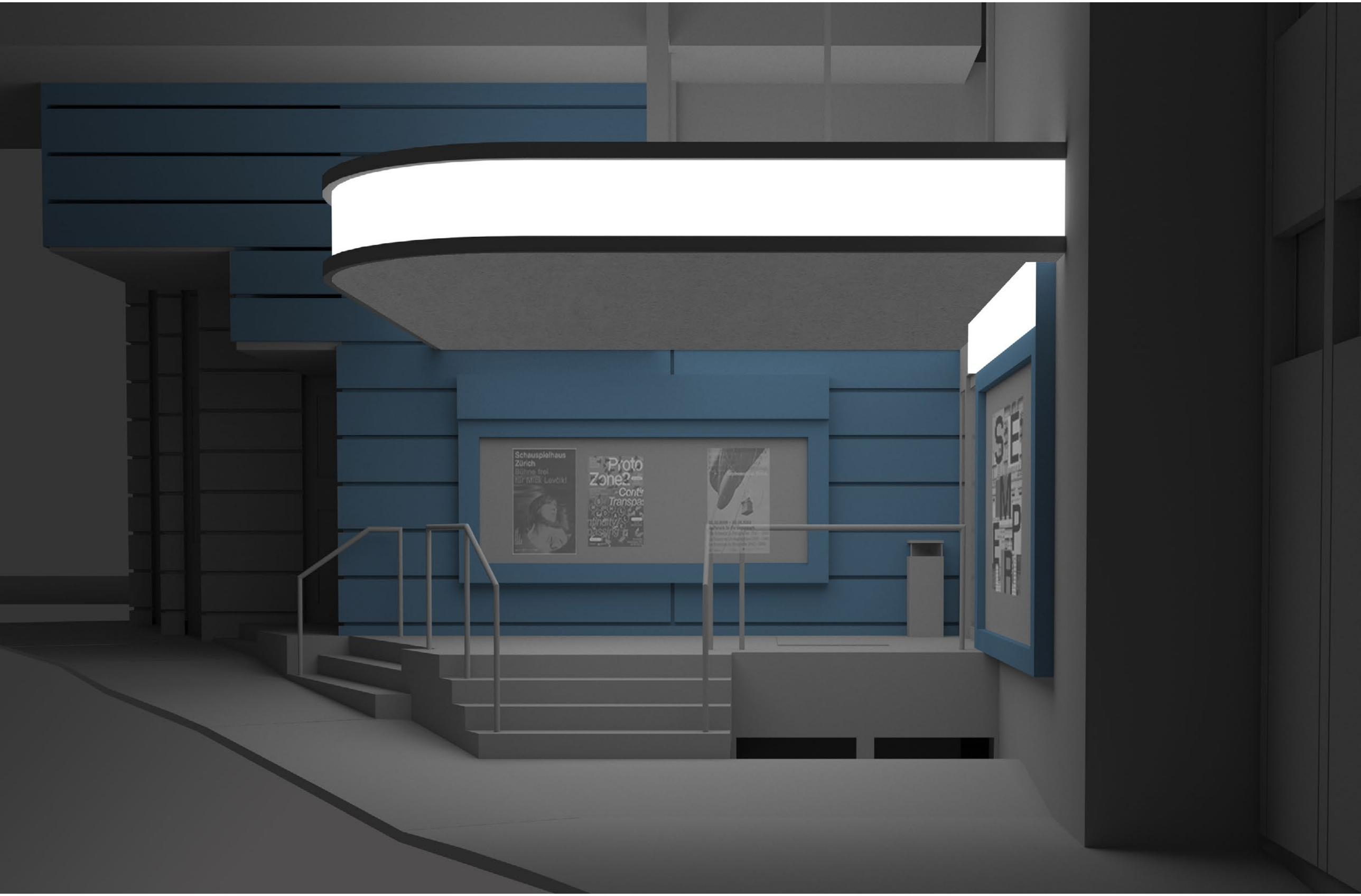

GENERELL
50
Zürich
(Letten)






Milchbuck-
Tunnel




Schauspielhaus
Zürich
Bühne frei
für Mitk Lewtik!
Proto
Zone?

Wasserwerkstrasse

Entrance
Episode 6

Concert/Conference

Backoffice

Kitchen

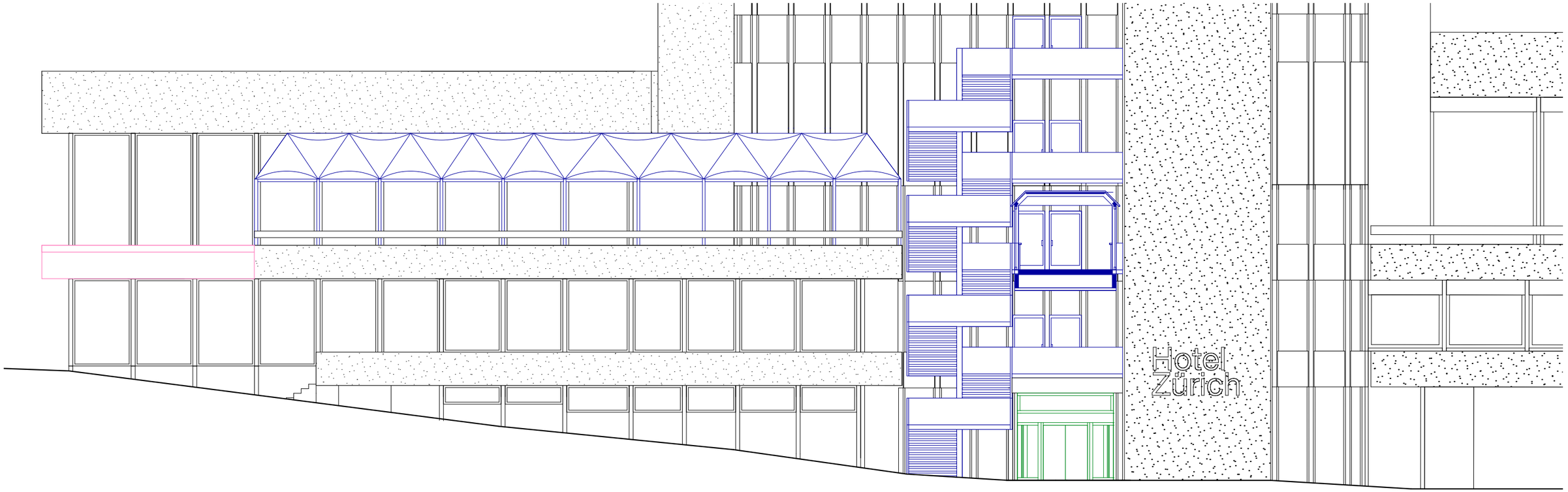
Lobby

Terrace

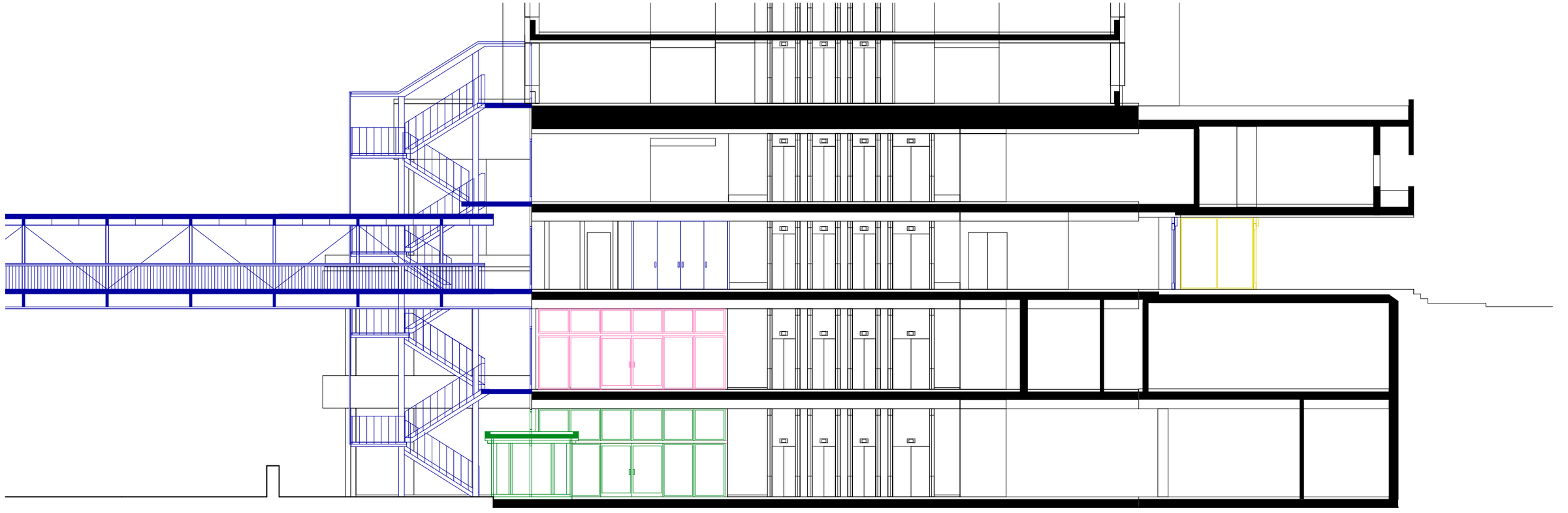
Detail D7

Section S6

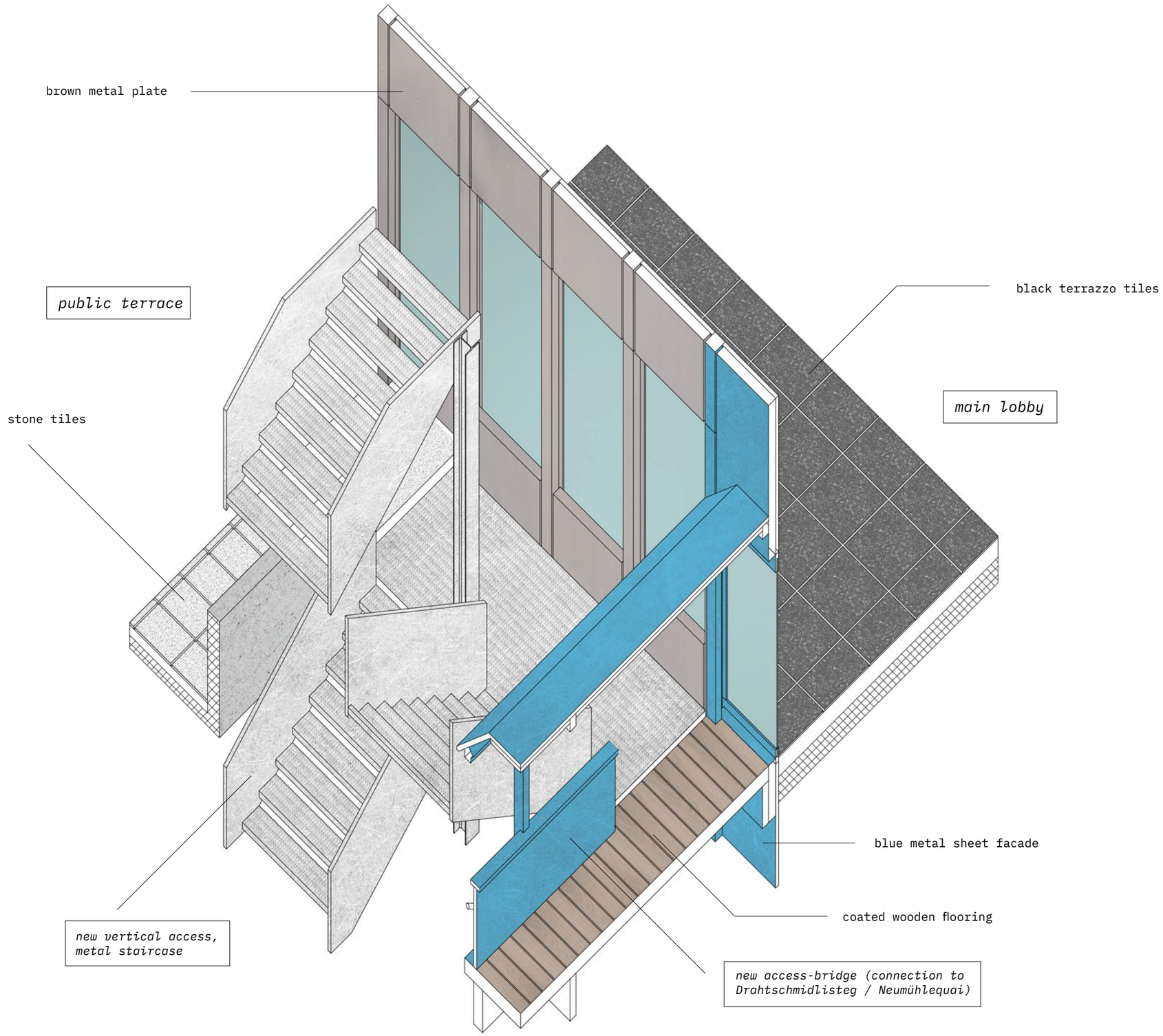
2 5 10



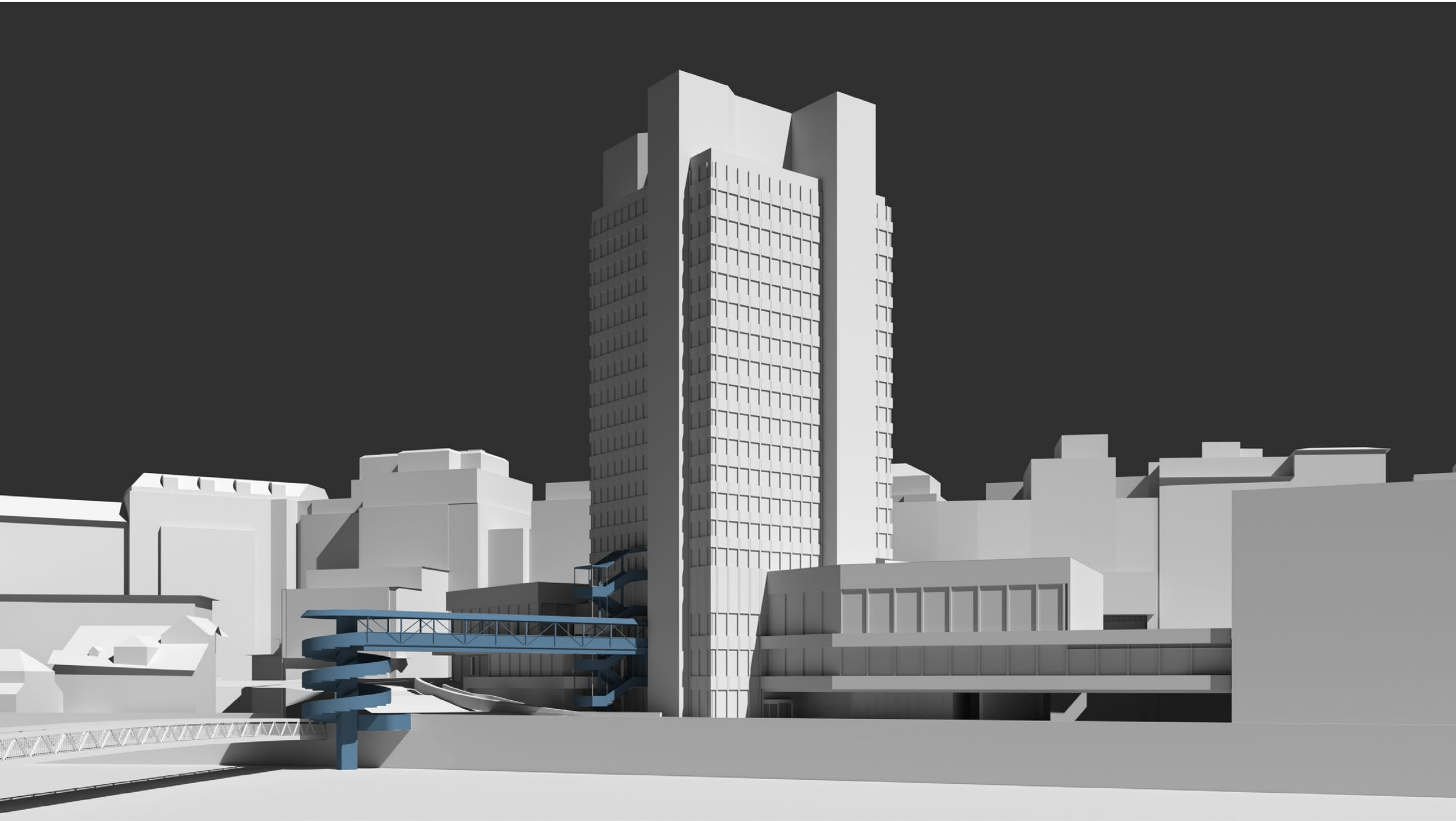
Elevation Neumühlequai 1:150



Section S6 1:150



Treshhold Detail D7



References



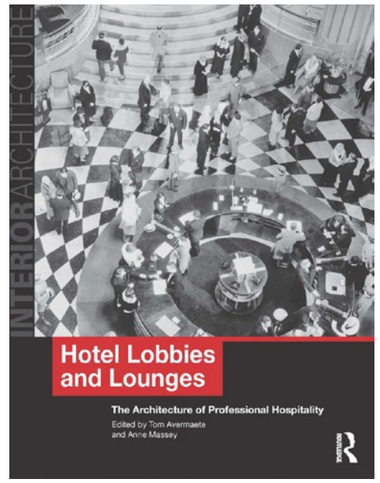
E. Bieri (1955)



J. Blanc (1993)



Kracauer, Siegfried (1977)



Avermaete, Tom & Massey, Anne (2013)

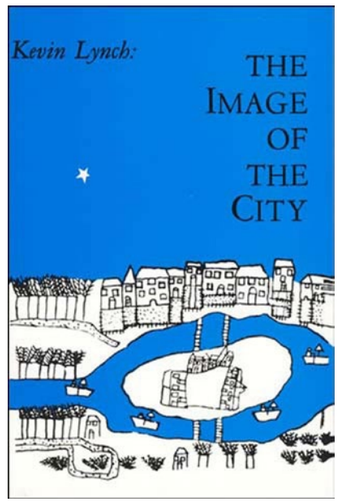
«Die Stadt Zürich erleidet einen sich rapid verstärkenden Substanzverlust. (...) Damit ist die Stadt Zürich an einem Wendepunkt ihrer Geschichte angelangt. Ihr quantitatives Wachstum ist abgeschlossen. Dies zu bejahen fällt heute insofern leicht, da man wie in vielen westlichen Ländern auch bei uns dem Wachstumsdenken skeptisch gegenübersteht. Mit diesem Bekenntnis zu einem Verzicht auf Wachstum verpflichtet sich der Stadtrat einem Leitbild, das sich nicht an quantitativen, sondern an qualitativen Zielsetzungen orientiert.» (Auszug aus der ‚Standortbestimmung 72' des Stadtrats der Stadt Zürich) S. 230

»Die typischen Merkmale der im Detektivroman immer wieder auftauchende Hotelhalle zeigen an, dass sie als Kehrbild des Gotteshauses gemeint sei. Sie ist eine negative Kirche und kann in diese transformiert werden, wenn man nur die Bedingungen berücksichtigt, denen die verschiedenen Sphären unterstehen. Hier und dort stellt man sich zu Gaste ein. Gilt aber das Gotteshaus dem Dienste dessen, zu dem man sich in ihm begibt, so dient die Hotelhalle allen, die sich in ihr zu niemanden begeben. Sie ist der Schauplatz derer, die den stetig Gesuchten nicht suchen noch finden, und darum gleichsam im Raume an sich zu Gaste sind, im Raume, der sie umfängt und diesem Umfangen allein zugeeignet ist.«
- S. Kraqauer (1977, S. 160)

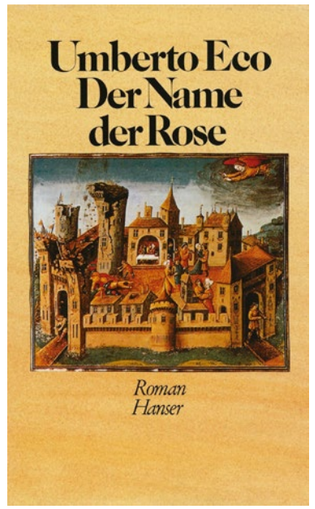
»The hotel lobby is a product of Western modernity. The anonymity of the hotel lobby – a space for circulation and display, for booking into a private bedroom, for hiding and being discreet, for lounging and waiting, for personal transformation – is a relatively recent type of architectural space that blurs boundaries between the public and the private. This is an interior form that is packed with potential – an anonymous place, the site of exclusion or inclusion, where public and private are divided, the life of the street and the exclusivity of the luxury hotel are clearly signalled by the hotel lobby.«
- F. Bollerey (S. 49)



Burckhardt, Lucius (2013)



Lynch, Kevin (1960)



Eco, Umberto (1980)



Calvino, Italo (1972)

»Eine erste Stufe des kleinsten Eingriffs könnte also darin bestehen, das Vorhandensein einer Landschaft oder einer städtischen Situation in die Wahrnehmung des Betrachters einzuführen oder eine vorhandene Wahrnehmung zu stärken. […] Einen Schritt weiter würde der kleinste Eingriff gehen, wenn er die Bereitschaft zur Wahrnehmung nicht nur wecken, sondern verändern würde. Wir nennen eine Reihe von Beispielen heutiger Künstler oder Landschaftsgestalter, die nicht durch Eingriffe in die Landschaft, sondern vermittels Eingriffen in die Vorstellung des Betrachters die Bedeutung der vorhandenen Landschaft verändern. Der kleinste Eingriff wäre in diesem Fall das Setzen eines Zeichens oder Signals.« (Burckhardt, 2013: 151–2) - L. Burckhardt

»Looking at cities can give a special pleasure, however commonplace the sight may be. Like a piece of architecture, the city is a construction in space, but one of vast scale, a thing perceived only in the course of long spans of time. City design is therefore a temporal art… At every instant, there is more than the eye can see, more than the ear can hear, a setting or a view waiting to be explored. Nothing is experienced by itself, but always in relation to its surrounding, the sequences of events leading up to it, the memory of past experiences.«

»Books are not made to be believed, but to be subjected to inquiry. When we consider a book, we mustn‘t ask ourselves what it says but what it means…«

»Die Hölle der Lebenden ist nicht etwas, was sein wird; gibt es eine, so ist es die, die schon da ist, die Hölle, in der wir tagtäglich wohnen, die wir durch unser Zusammensein bilden. Zwei Arten gibt es, nicht darunter zu leiden. Die eine fällt viele leicht: die Hölle akzeptieren und so sehr ein Teil davon werden, dass man sie nicht mehr erkennt. Die andere ist gewagt und erfordert dauernde Vorsicht und Aufmerksamkeit: suchen und zu erkennen wissen, wer und was inmitten der Hölle nicht Hölle ist, und ihm Bestand und Raum geben.« S. 191