

Studio Jan De Vylder
universum carrousel journey
RE-NOW-RE

Mise en scène

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¹Under construction

²Dauerprovisorium

³Mise en scène

⁴Umarell Café

¹Under Construction

A mock-up is a part cut out of its whole. It is a fragment which has clear borders and is, through its location, surrounded by a new context generated by the event of building.

The main purpose of the mock-up is to offer a site of exchange and negotiation between builders, architects, clients and engineers. In the preparation phase, I looked at the mock-ups as laboratories of traces of making and I focused on the tension that is formed at the limits of the fragments.

Everything that isn't drawn is a small possibility of freedom.

Normally, the architects draw and the builders build. This is the contemporary procedure of building. The architectural historian Mario Carpo names it the Albertian Paradigm.

Since Alberti:
*Modern thinker is not allowed to make and modern maker is not allowed to think.*¹

Therefore the working drawings of the architects required to become more and more precise, almost trying to build the building on paper before it was built for real. One can almost imagine the labour behind the act of building a brick wall, when all bricks are precisely drawn.

That raises many questions and reveal a clear conflict. Authorship wise, what if the building is not the exact translation of the drawing? Who's the author of the building then ?

*We make drawings to design things we know no drawing can and will ever control.*¹

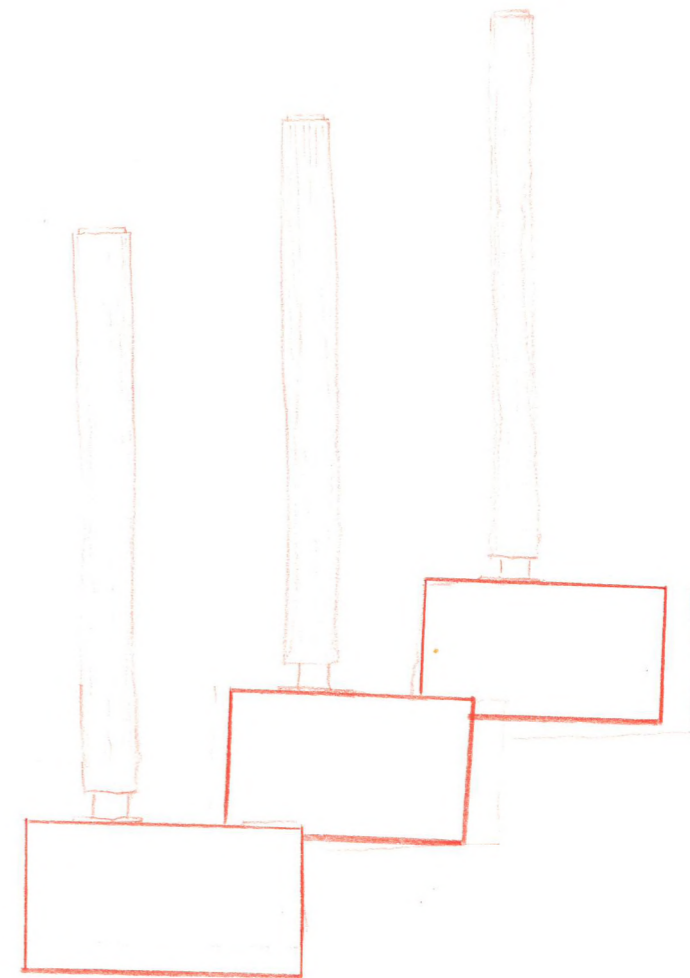
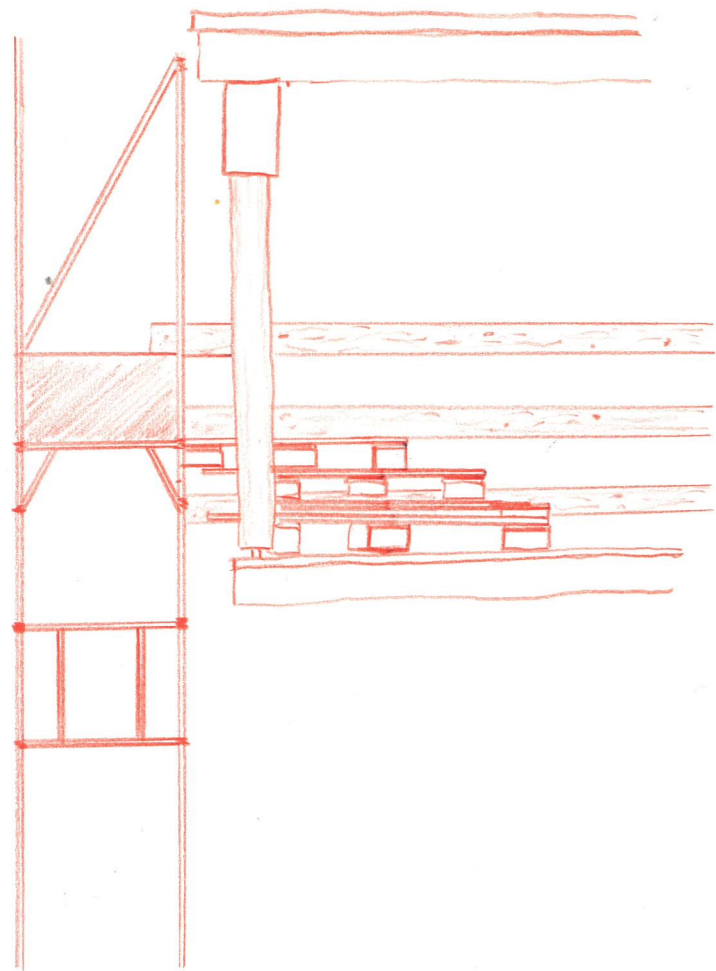
The construction sites are not an achievement of a design process, they are turning points. The architects prepare it by drawing, calculating, planning but it still seems to be impossible to control it completely. This increasingly since designs become more complex, and involve more people or new specialists in the construction process.

Around the mock-ups, there is plenty of those opportunities to make more out of the elements that are available around. By adding a fence on a roof or by putting some furnitures under it, the builders are the first users and reveal a playful and direct way to do so.

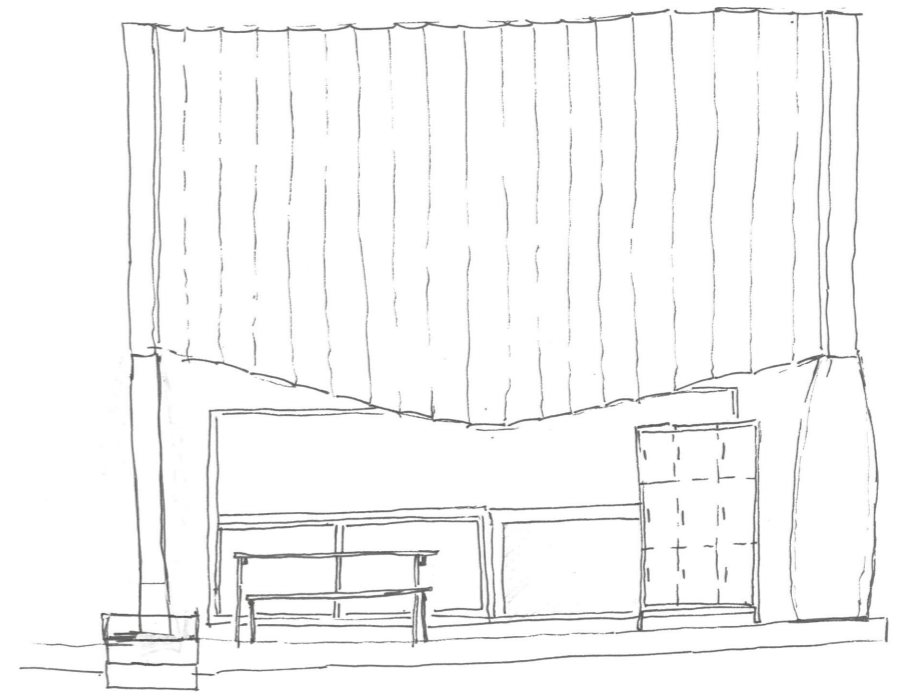
The mock-up of Eglistrasse has two façades^{19/20}. The front one that is designed to «stand for hundred years» and the back side that is easily removable and adaptable elsewhere in a few months. A dialogue between different temporalities is generated.

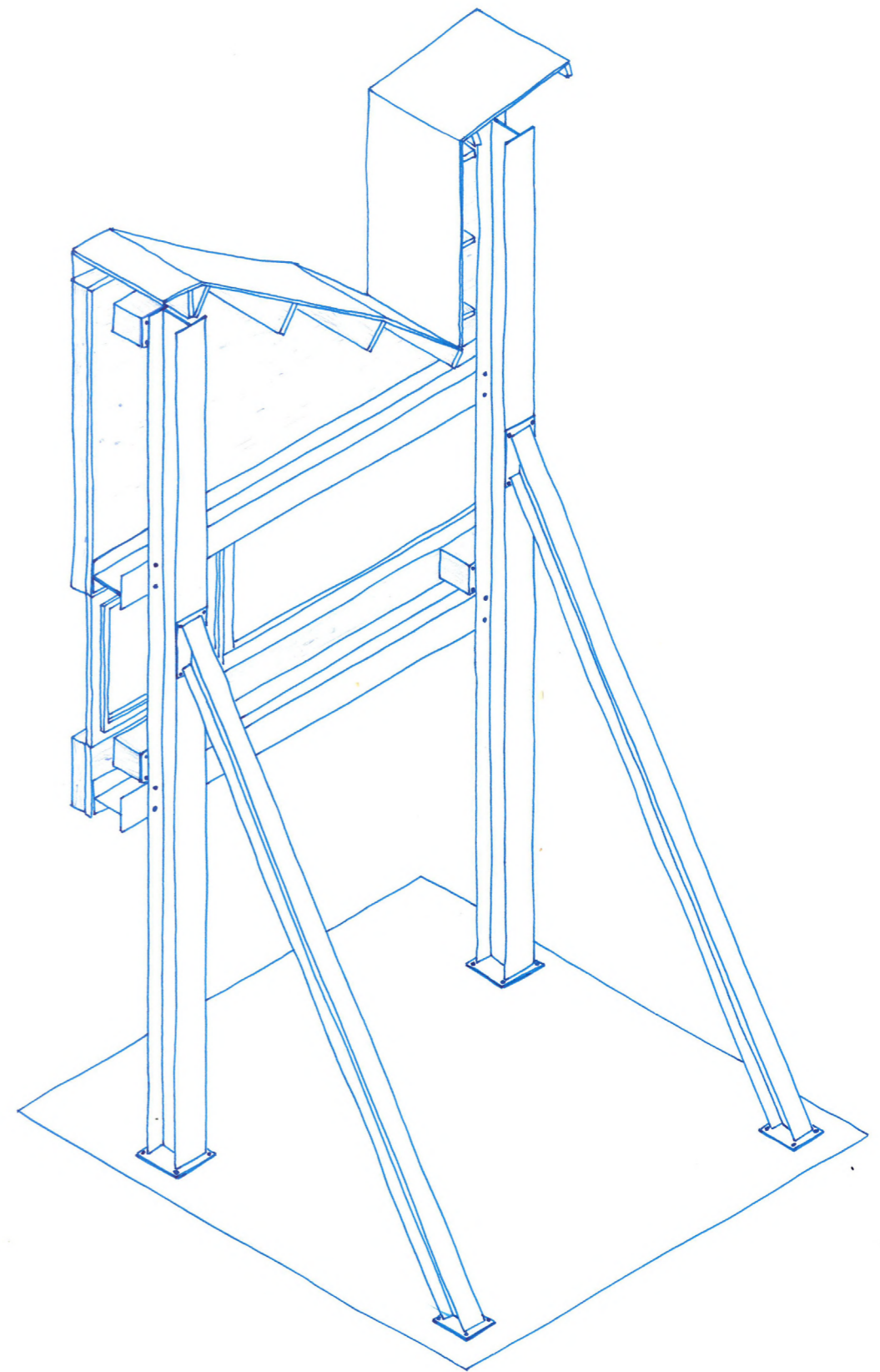
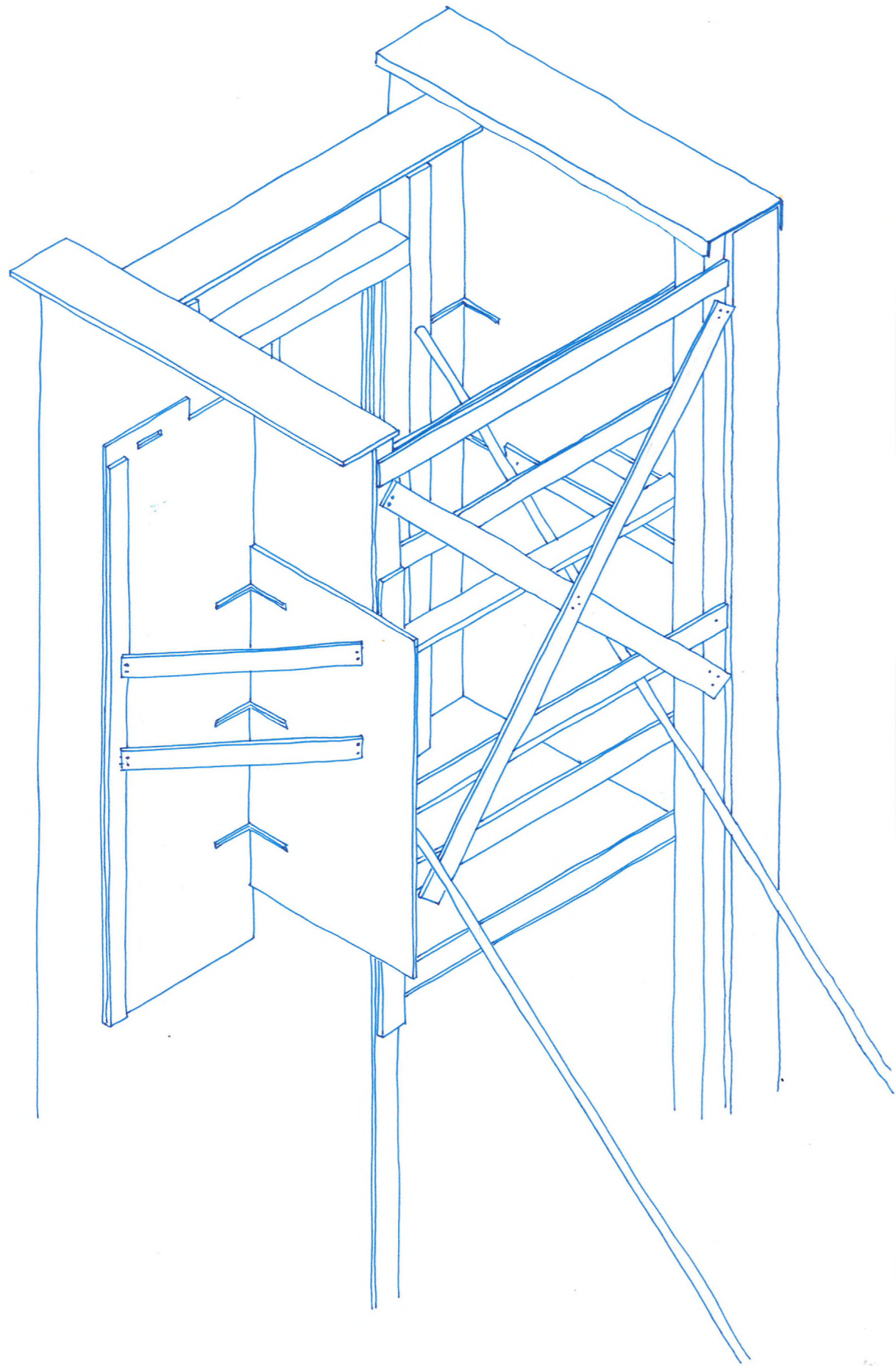
*The status of the Dr. Stephan à Porta Foundation do not permit the sale of its properties on Eglistrasse. The life cycle of these buildings is thus given special attention. Construction and materialization are shaped under the criteria of durability and low maintenance.*²

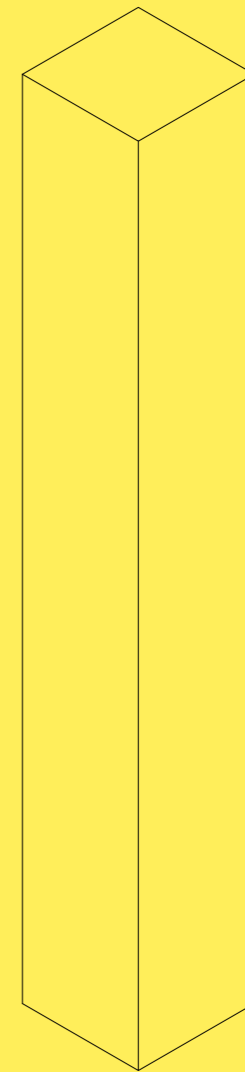
Long life spans of materials and low maintenance are criteria for a durable building. But wasn't it also the criteria that shaped the previous building at Eglistrasse before it was torn down ?

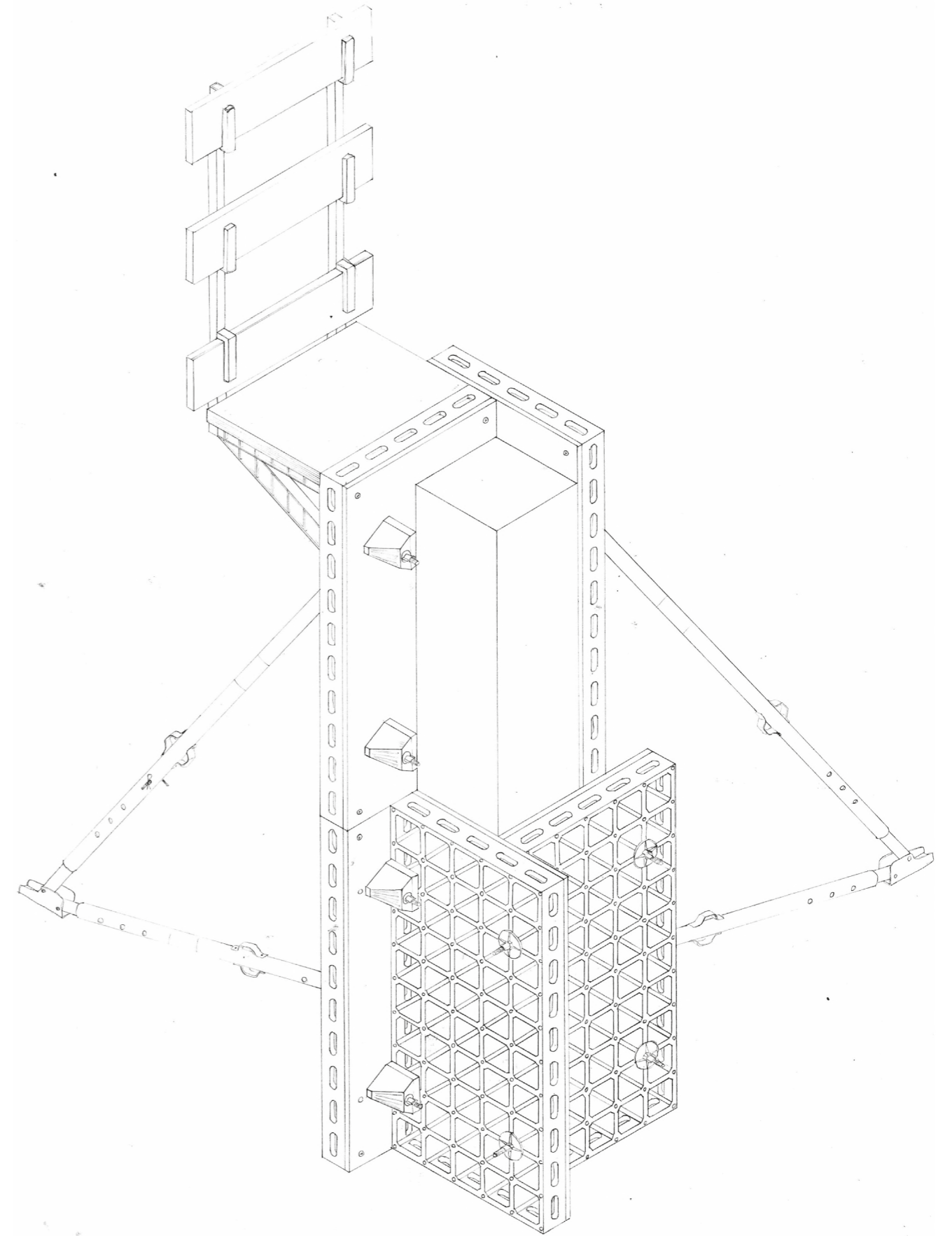


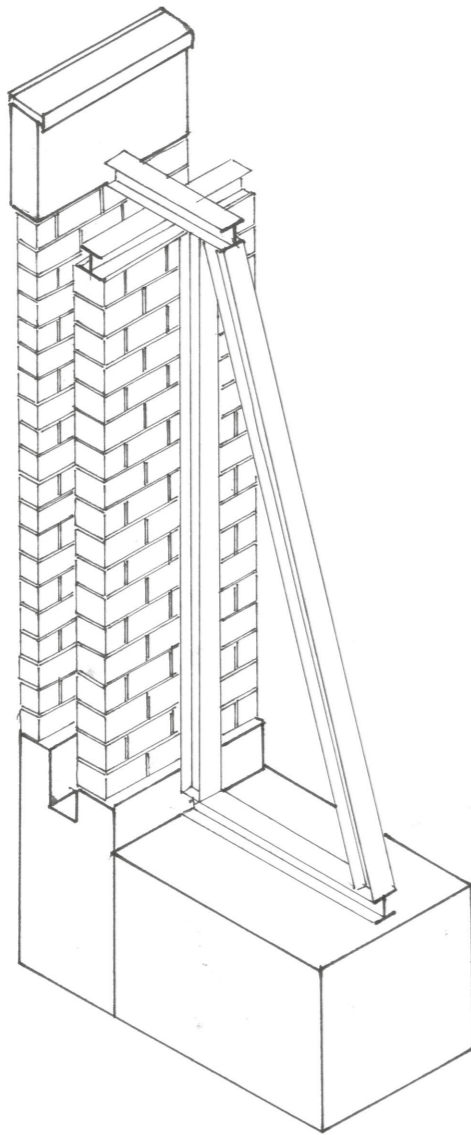


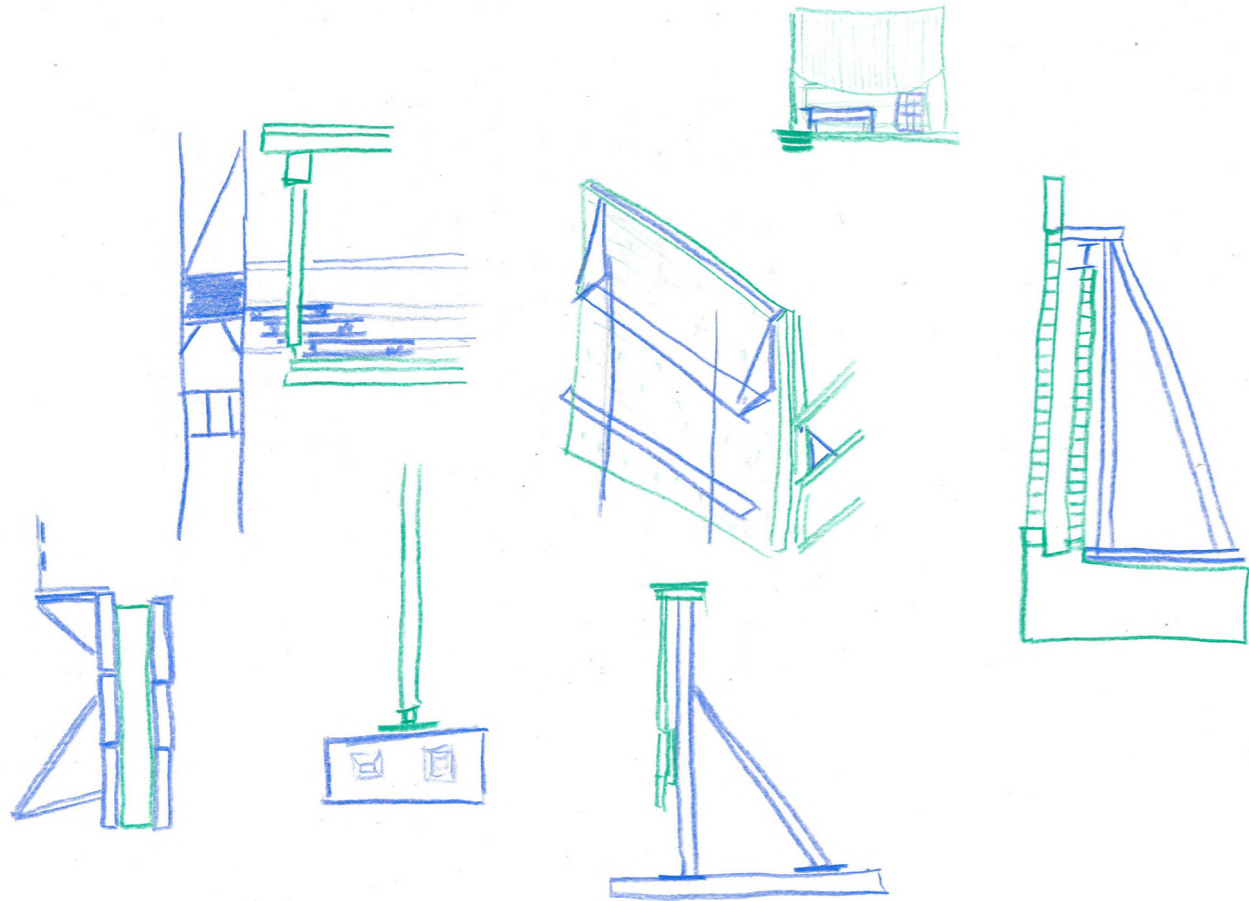
















² Dauerprovisorium

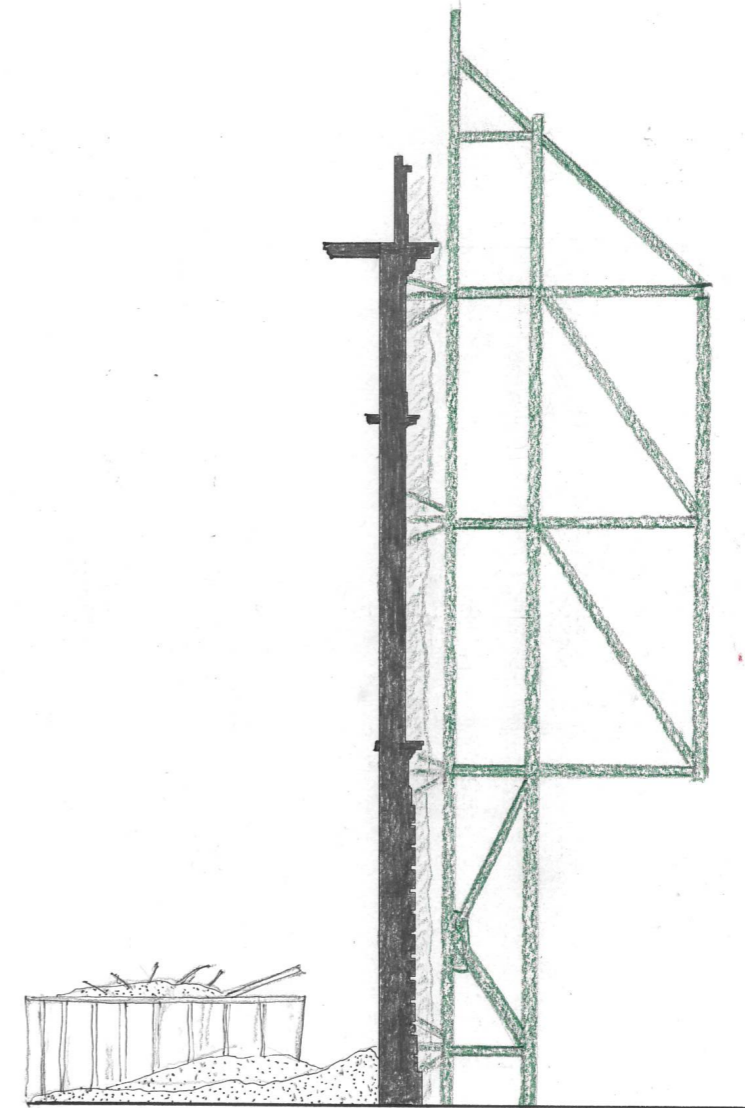
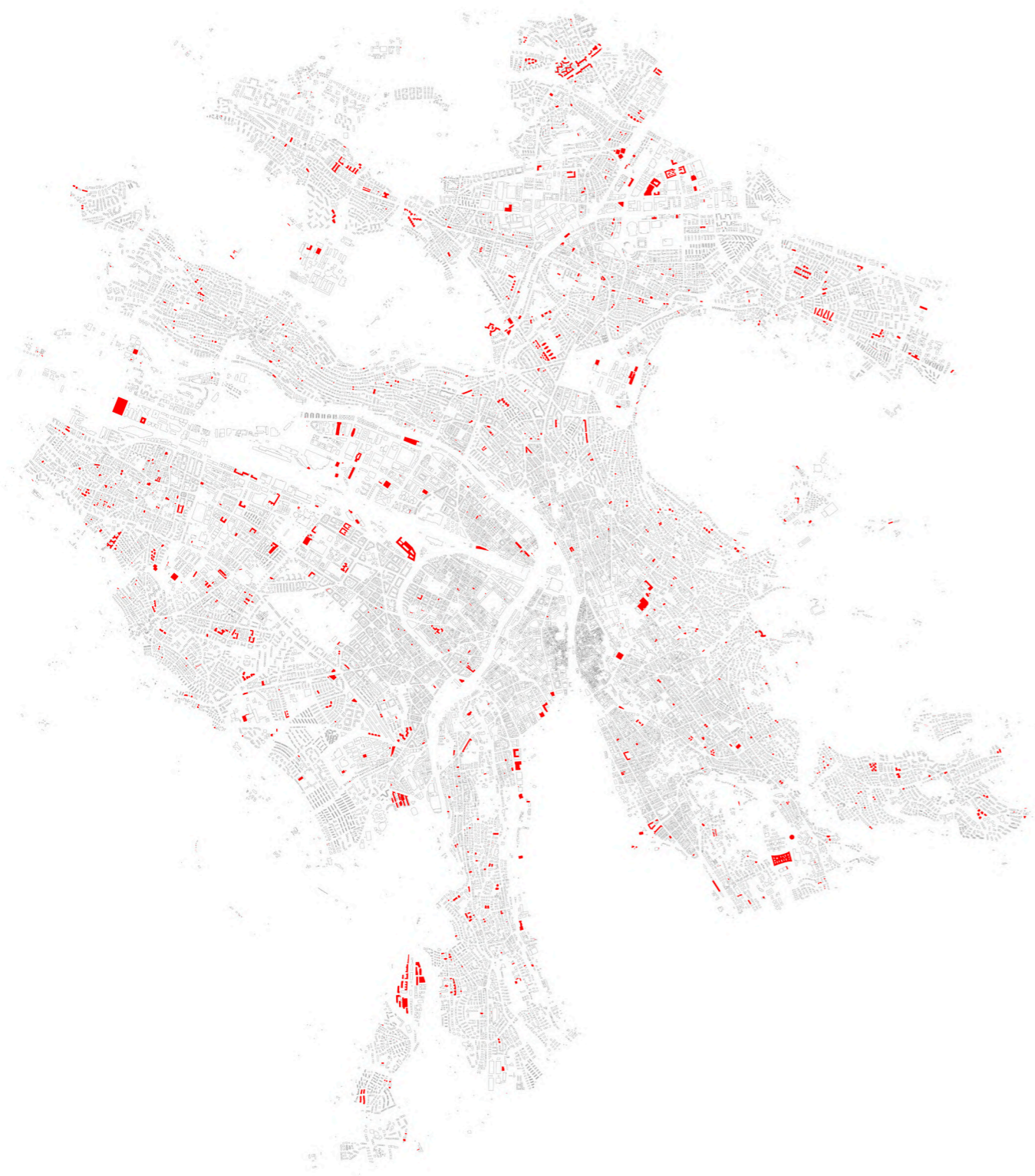
The map of Zurich is scattered by red dots, notifying a change, a transformation within the built environment of the city. The accuracy of the map is temporary, as the city is constantly developing. Construction sites have a real presence in the city.²⁵

Since its construction in 1871, the Zürich railway station has undergone continuous changes. The railway tracks gradually disappeared to finally free the main hall of its former purpose. Instead, all sorts of temporary services and activities took places. Baggage offices, waiting rooms, hairdresser and even a cinema were standing in the main hall. The 150 years old station stood against many projects which would have induced its demolition. Some of those projects would have required to close the station to the public for sometimes up to 40 years of construction site.

But the station needed to keep assuring its main function. So instead, it constantly reacted to the new demands with smaller or bigger adaptations, whilst always letting the passengers getting on and off trains no matter what.

The current construction site is happening due to the big project of refurbishment on the main building's south wing. The owners (SBB) work together with the architects from Aebi Vincent Architekten to plan and to carry out the very complex construction site duration. It involves building in an existing and protected structure in addition with the difficulty implied by the fact that the station is still in use during the construction. It still sees 500'000 people passing everyday days.

Bau im Bestand. Baustelle im Betrieb.¹

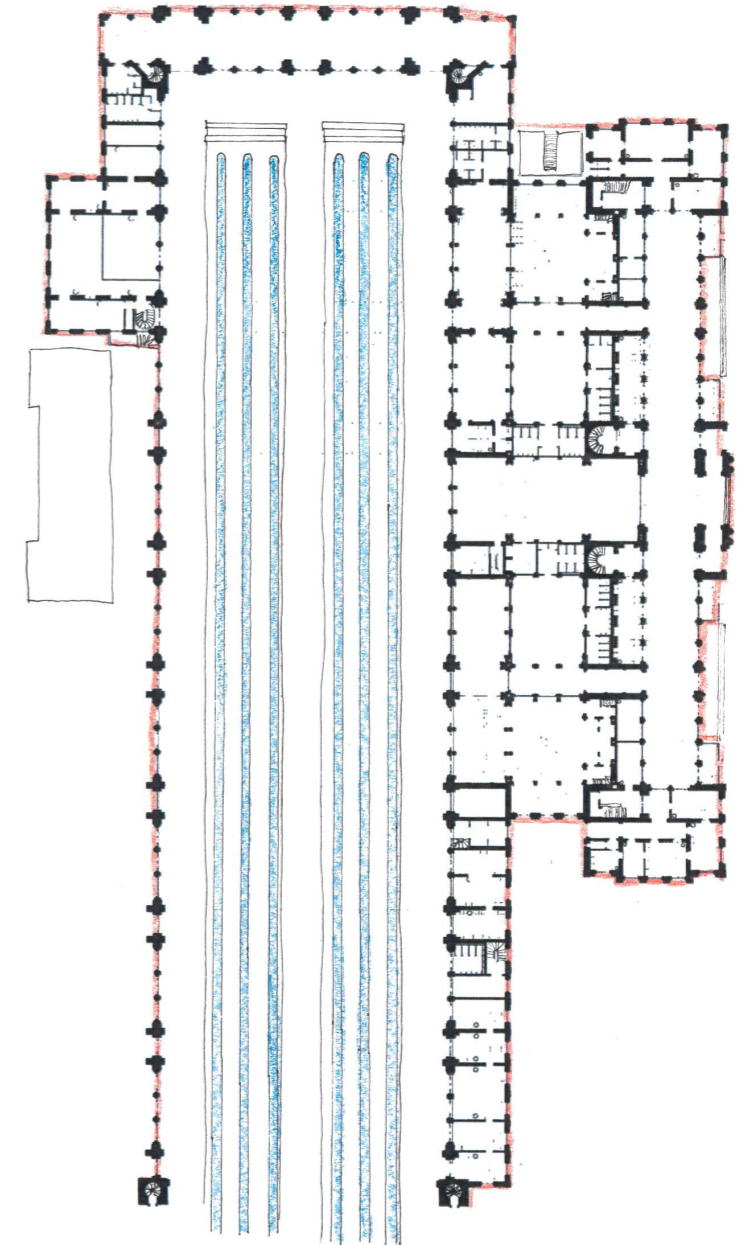
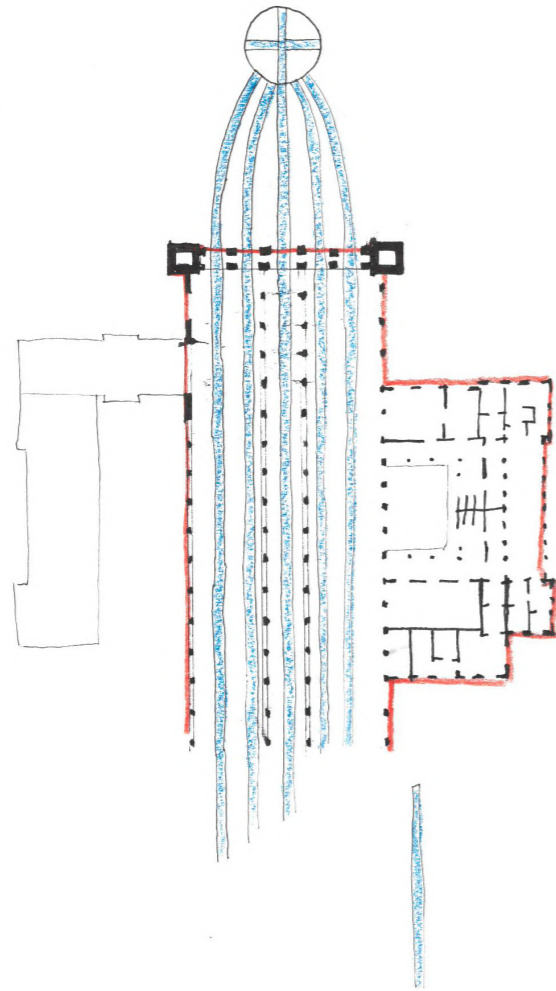


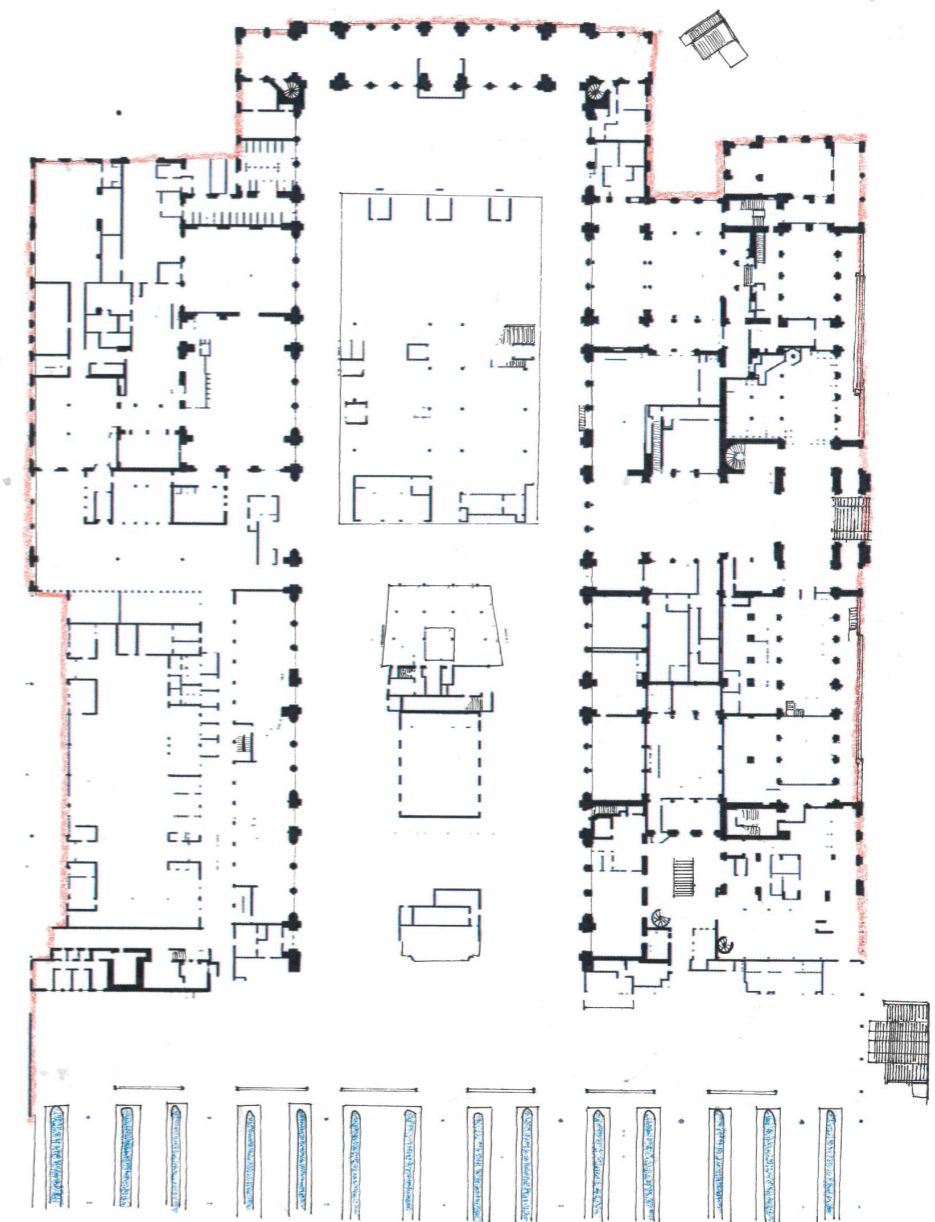
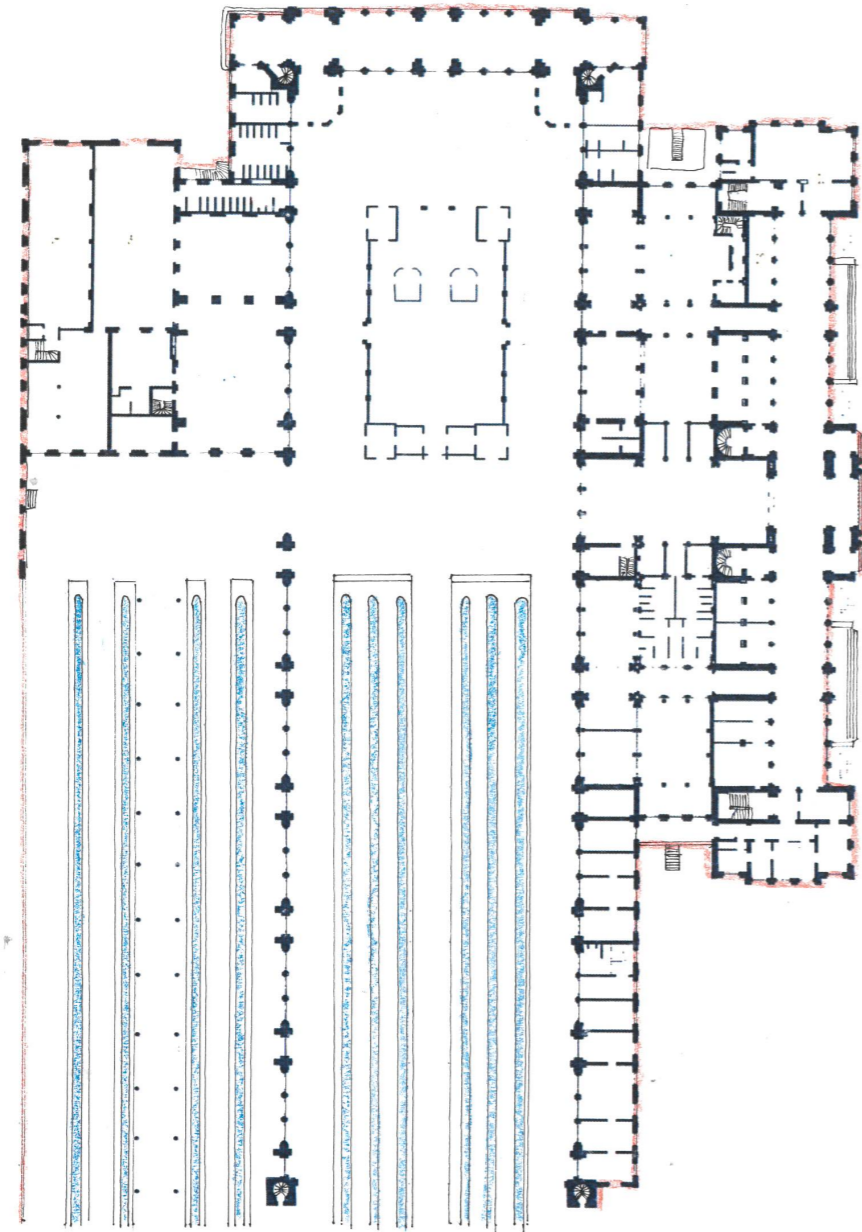


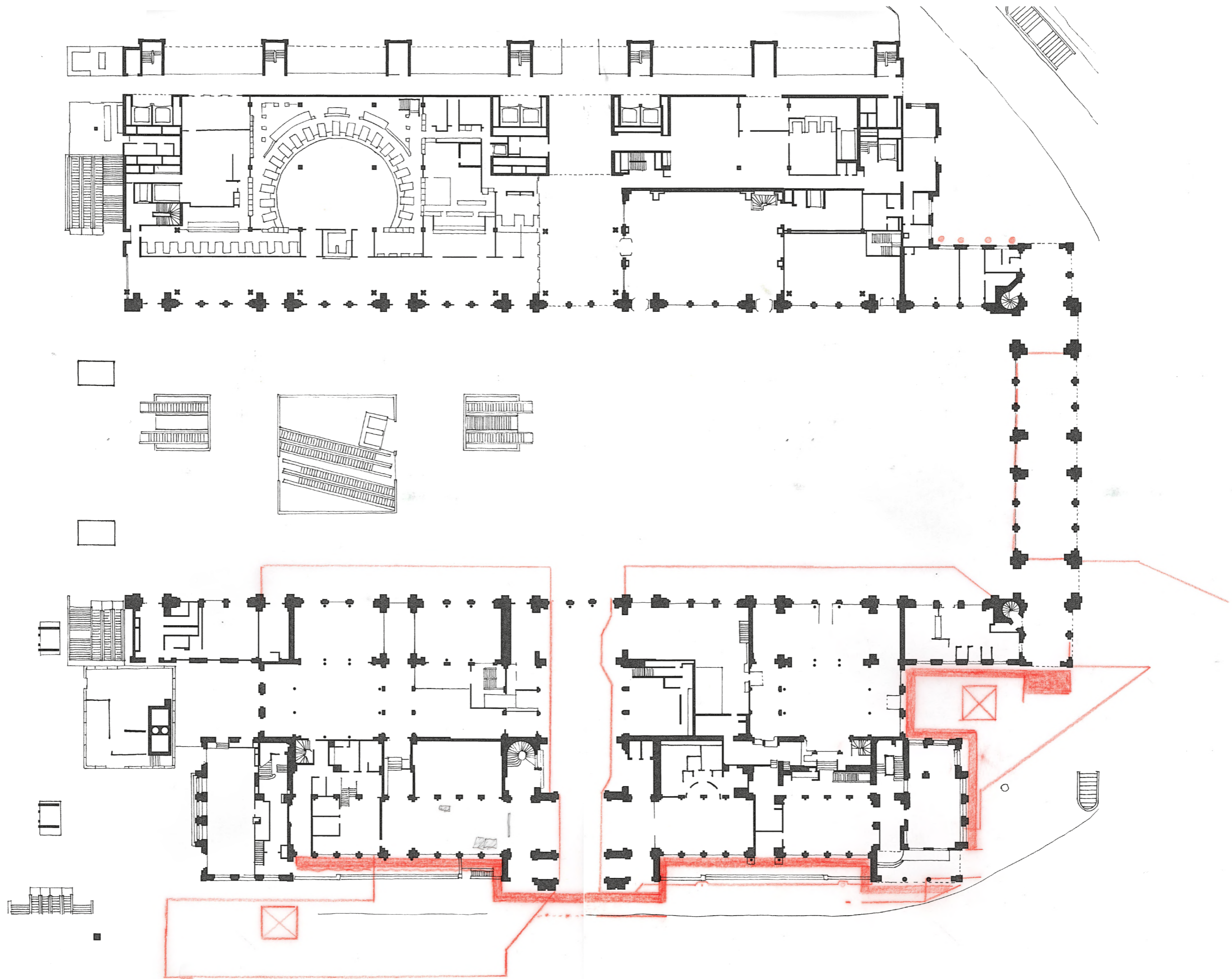
Zürich Hauptbahnhof, 1871, the clock is not yet installed

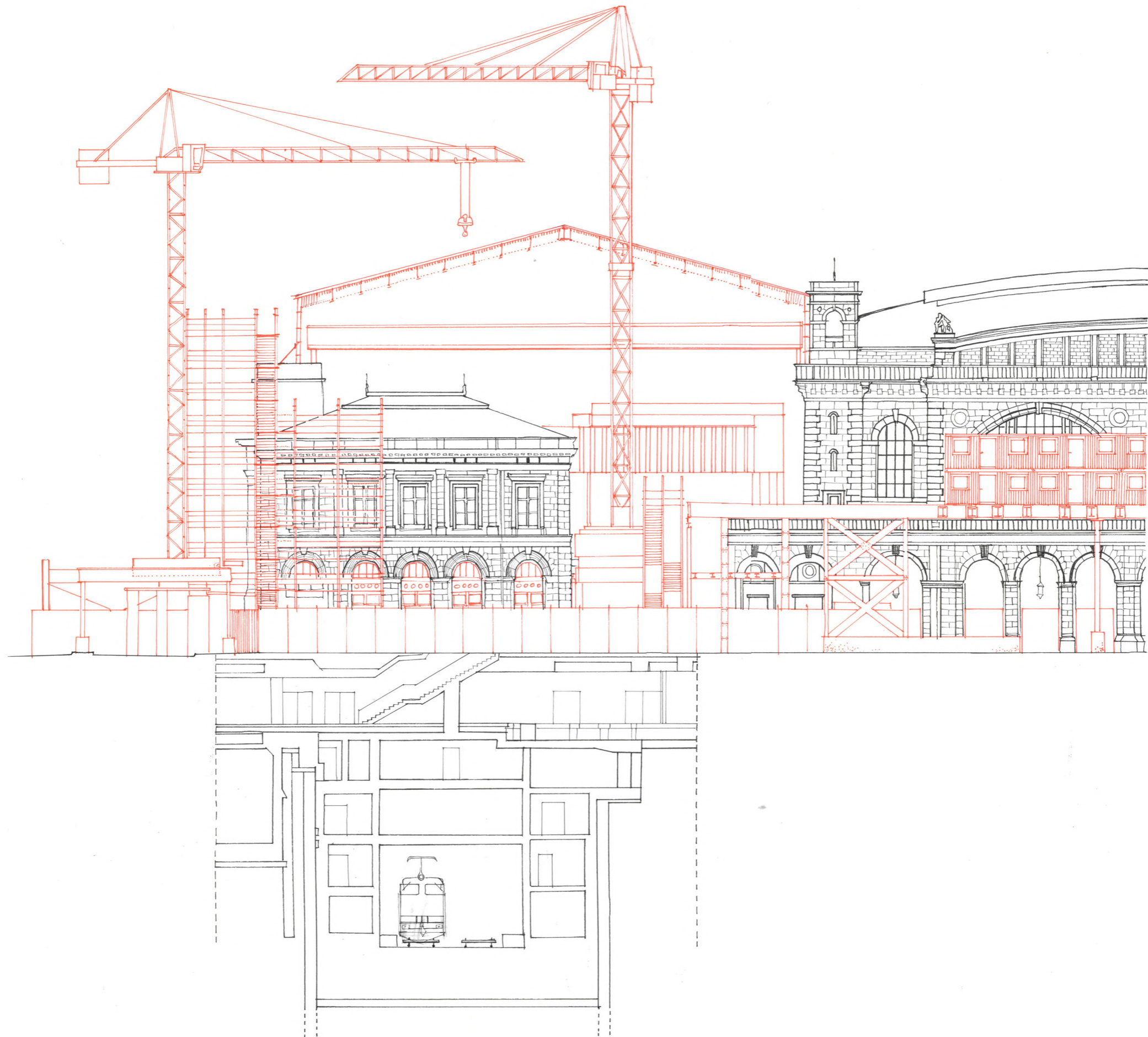


Zürich Hauptbahnhof, 1954-1976, Bahnhofkino







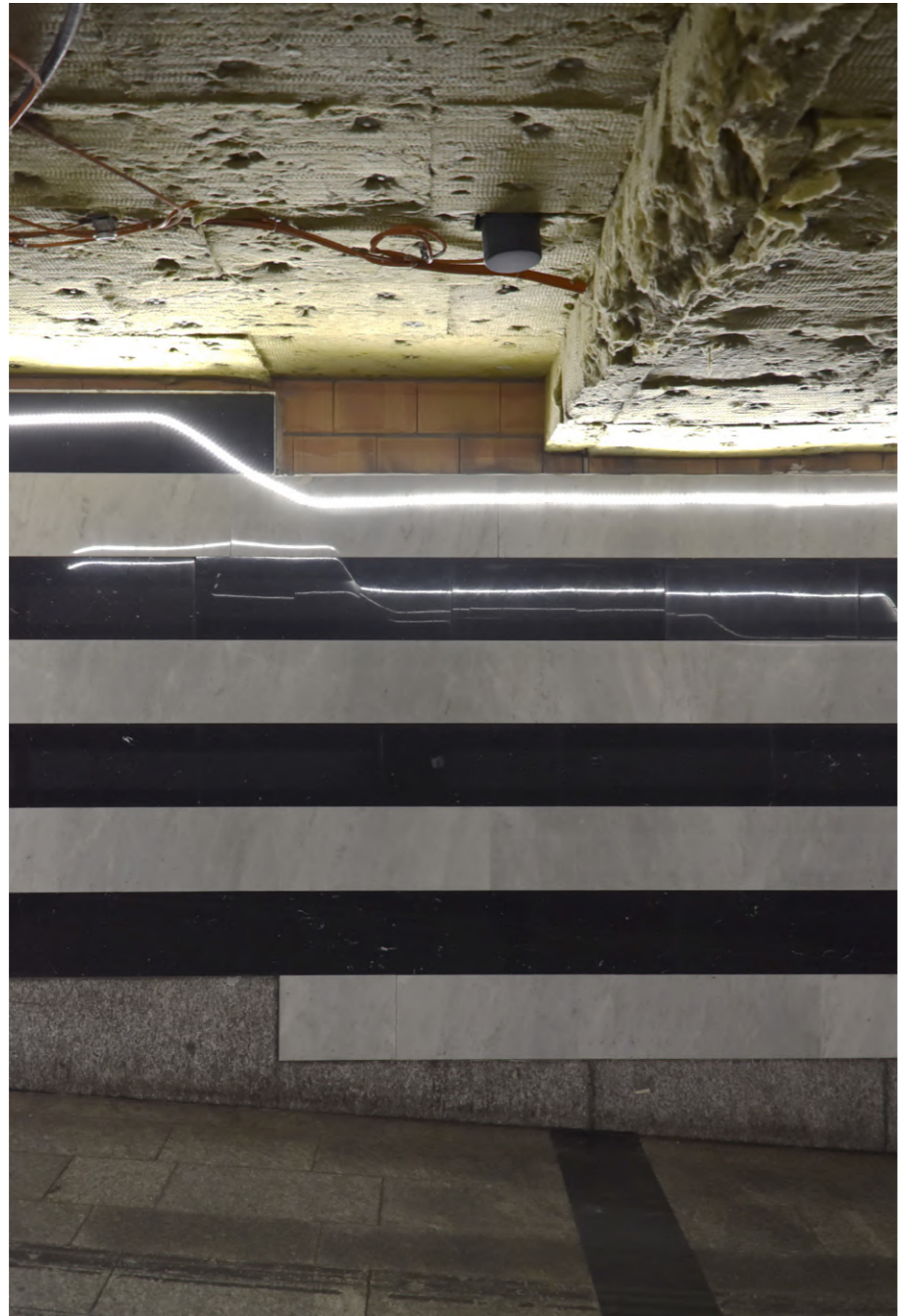


UMARELL

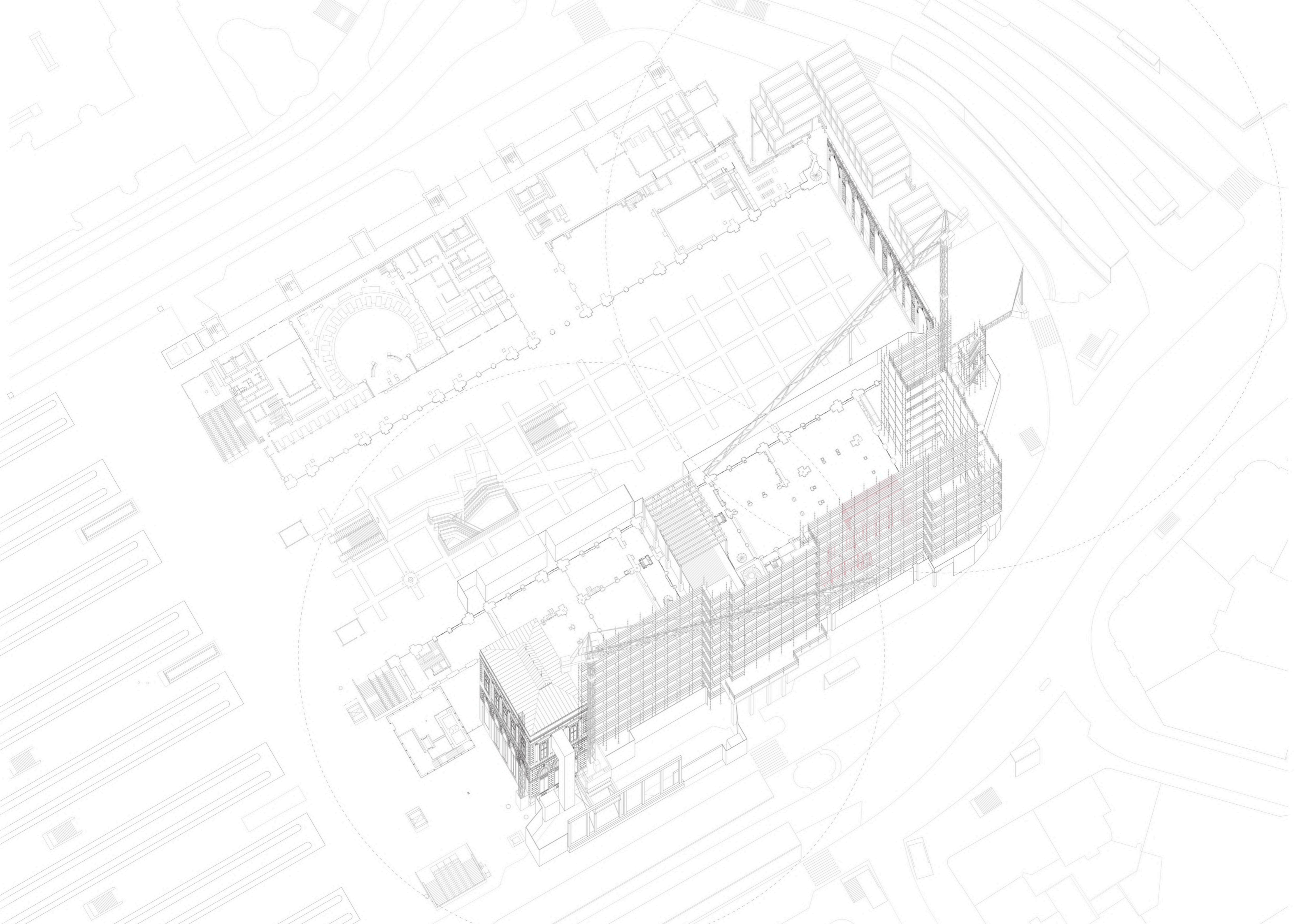
Is a term referring specifically to men of retirement age who spend their time watching construction sites – stereotypically with hands clasped behind their back and offering unwanted advice.

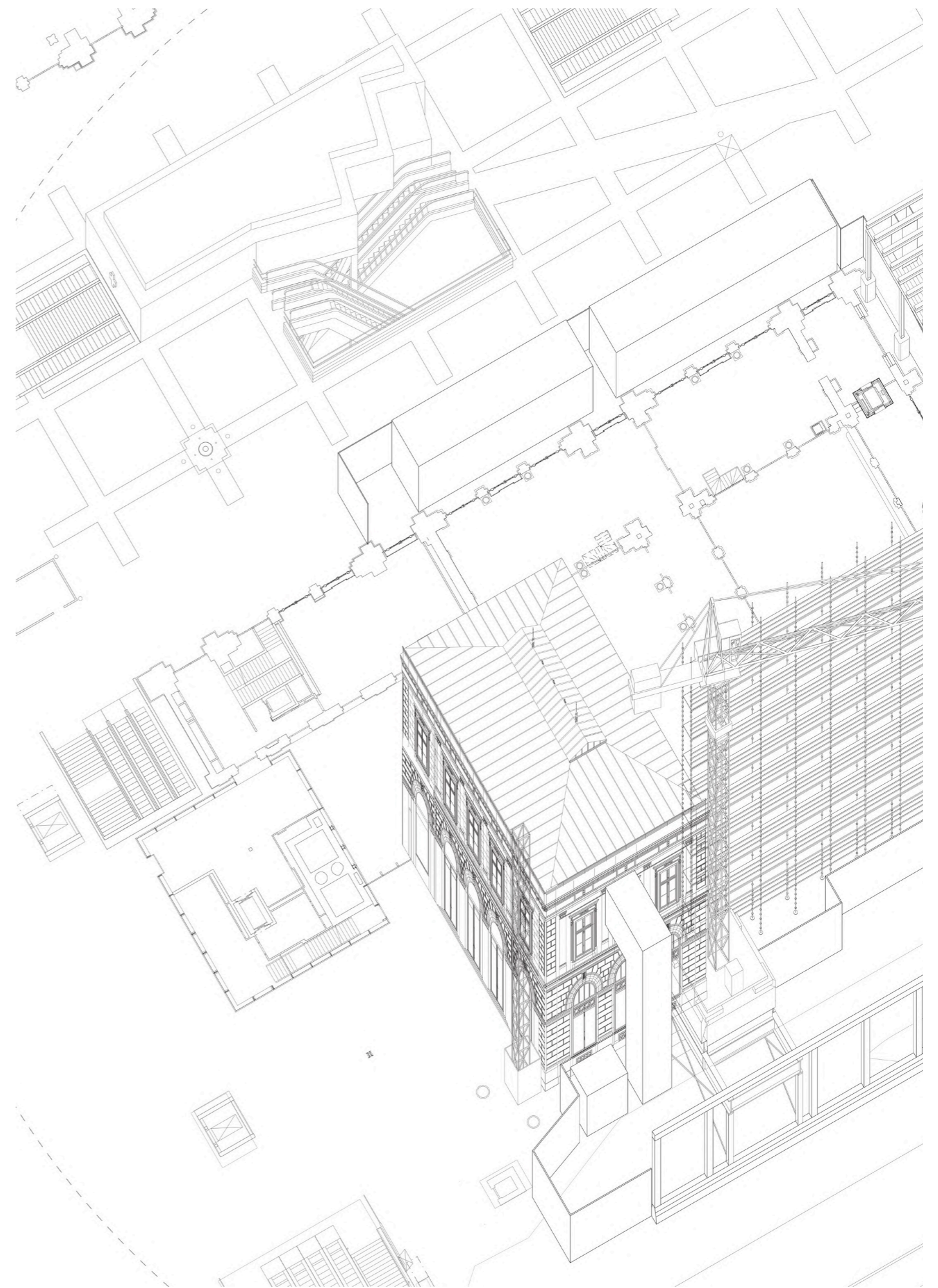


















³Mise en scène

C'est fascinant les chantiers. On comprend bien comment les bâtiments sont construits en les observant attentivement.

L'architecture n'est jamais autant familière que quand elle n'est pas finie.

Alors, on se demande encore comment ça va évoluer, quelle apparence la façade aura.

On se projète.

C'est un exercice éphémère car le jour d'après la façade peut être là, et les informalités du chantier disparaissent.

Mais certains chantiers durent. Ils sont suspendus entre ce qui vient de se faire et ce qui se fera encore. Tout une architecture précède celle promise par l'architecte. Cette pré-architecture est très directe mais bien pensée.

Ici, par exemple, une simple barrière permet l'utilisation d'un toit comme une nouvelle terrasse. C'est sûrement là-haut que les travailleurs choisissent de boire leur café le matin.

Certains éléments de chantier forment une couche supplémentaire à la façade, on dirait que la gare s'agrandit.

Un balcon? Un jardin d'hiver? Une cage d'escalier?

Même si les chantiers prennent souvent des dimensions impressionnantes, l'échelle humaine se retrouve partout, déterminant la hauteur d'une poignée, ou le poids d'un élément.

Les étais sont si maigres, et pourtant ils portent des charges immenses. Leur présence révèle la force de gravité qui s'exerce sur tous les éléments du chantier. Ils racontent l'effort de la construction.

Les chantiers font partie intégrante de l'environnement bâti. On les oublie parfois, on les déteste souvent, quand ils sont trop bruyants ou trop sales. Et la plupart du temps, on s'y adapte.

On passe à côté.

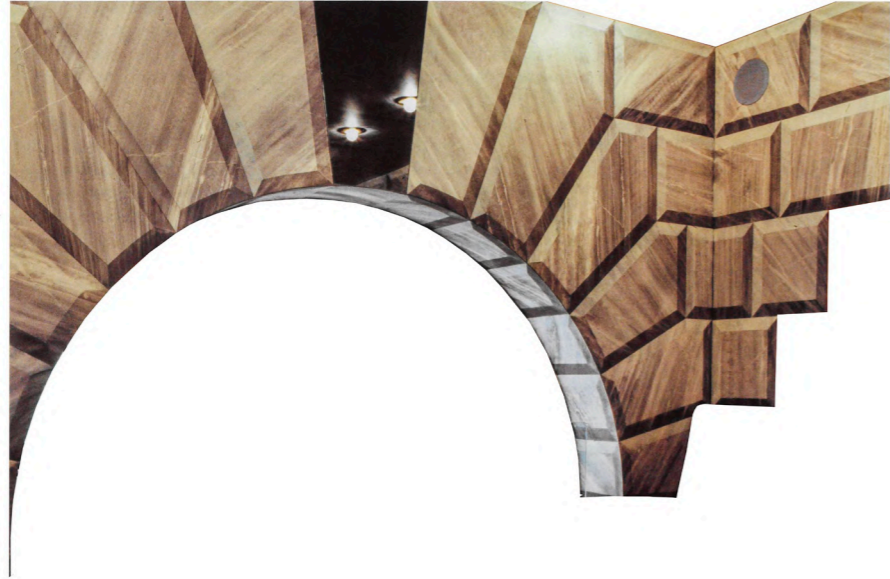
On change nos habitudes pour quelques temps.



Da Capo Bar refurbishment
Trix & Robert Haussmann, 1979-1980



South wings refurbishment
Aebi & Vincent Architekten, 2018-2023



Da Capo Bar refurbishment
Trix & Robert Haussmann, 1979-1980



South wings refurbishment
Aebi & Vincent Architekten, 2018-2023



⁴Umarell Café

Refurbished in 1980 by the Zurich designers Trix and Robert Haussmann, the Da Capo bar remains now enclosed in a wooden box, surrounded by the tumultuous construction site.

One must think about a precious treasure when looking at it.

A discovery of something that was already there. Let's say, a rediscovery.

The painted stones on the interior façades of the bar, echoes with the printed screen hanging in front the scaffolding, only a few meters away. The same painted stones saved the bar from being deconstructed. There was no way to dismantle the walls without damages on the paintings, and since the bar is recently a protected object, this wasn't an option anymore.

Therefore it stayed exactly where it was, inducing great effort and increasing even more the complexity of the construction site.

The former shiny bar doesn't look as shiny as before. Dust has settled on the seats instead of the customers.

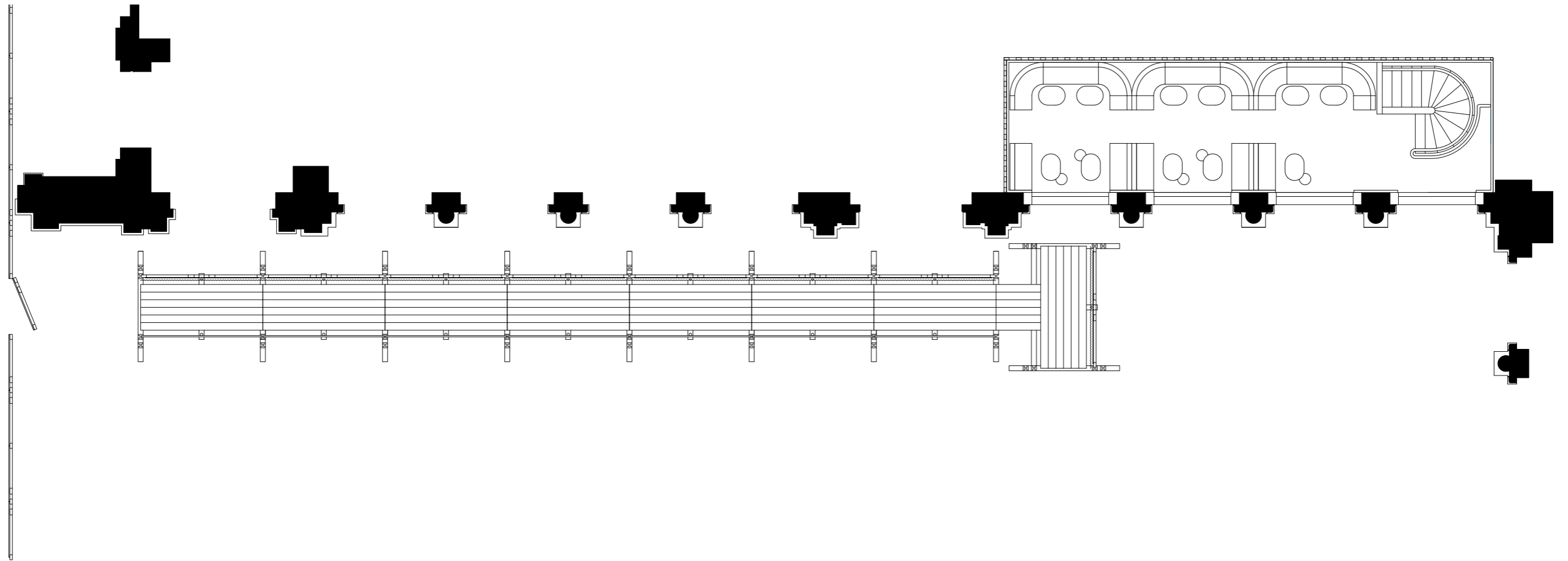
Umarell Café is a *mise en scène*, that aims to reframe the coexistence between the construction site and the station. An access connects the newly reopened Da Capo bar, now better known under the name Umarell Café. There, the curious ones may not only have a quick look, but also pass the opaque white fences of the construction site.

An authorized intrusion. A good voyeurism.

How can we do something which is so normal that it maybe doesn't even look like an architect was involved?¹

¹ Jack Self, Interview for CCA, The Practice as Project, 2021





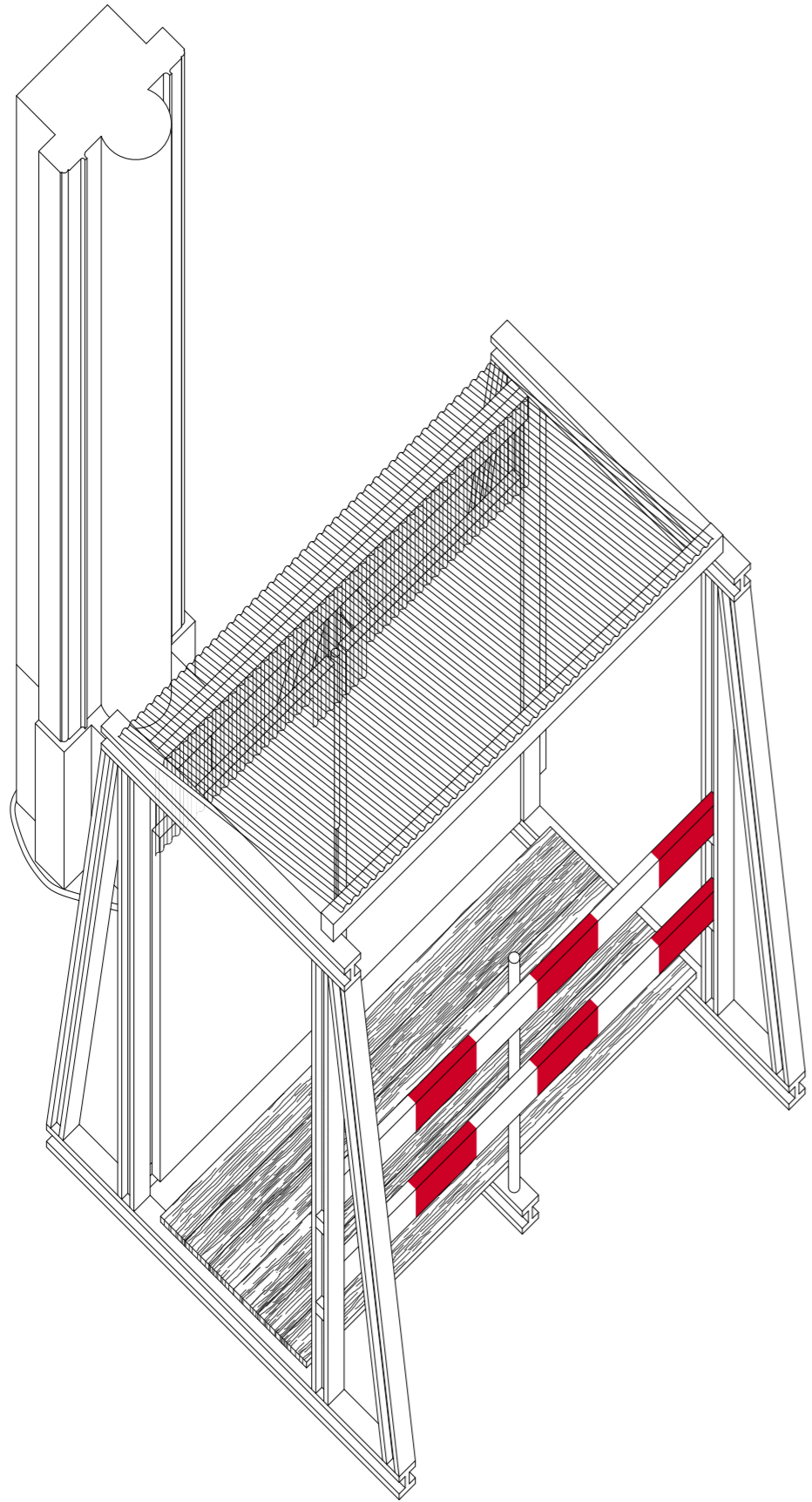


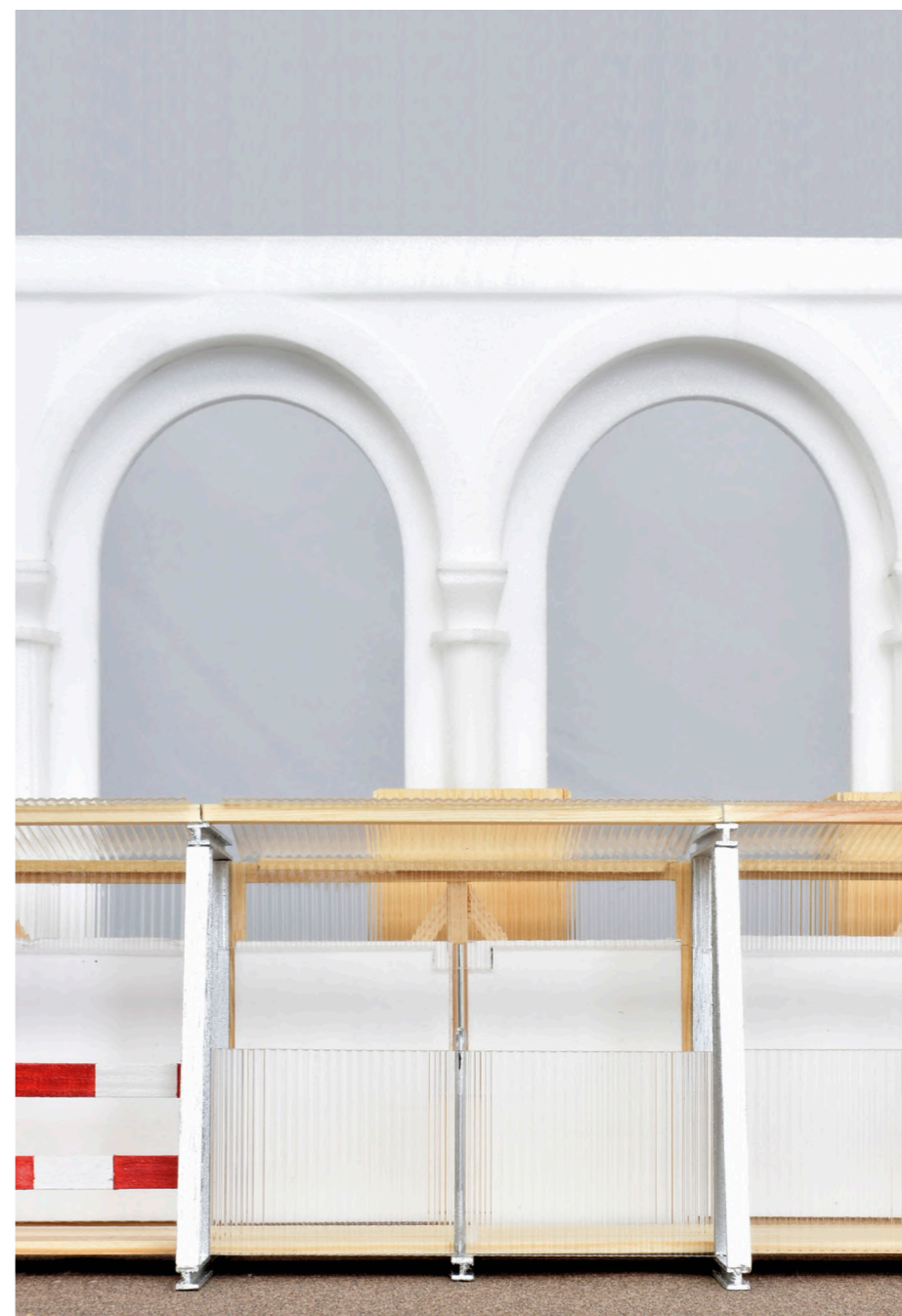
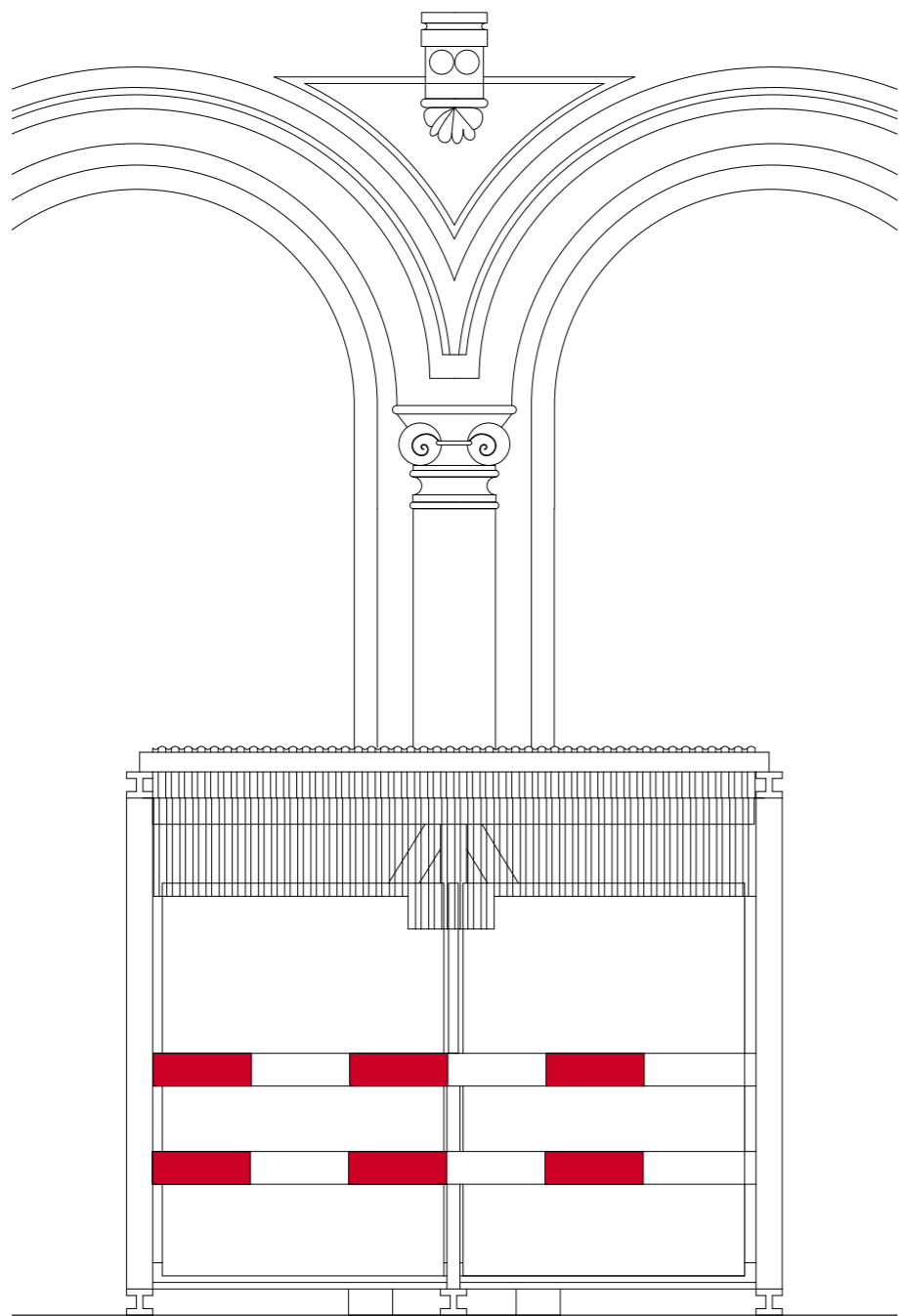
Entrance



Passage









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The center is the
place where
everything happens

in contrary to
a perception perceived
as immobile and
backward.

What's "in" what's "out"?

What's "in front", what's
"in the back"?

What's interesting,
what isn't?

Why do children like
construction sites
so much?

Bauen = to build
to dwell
to cultivate
to take care
to grow

TO MAKE A HOUSE OF
CONCRETE

YOU NEED FIRST
A HOUSE OF
WOOD

What more could a
building be than
"just" being able to
stand for 100 years?

laboratory of experiment
reservoir of memories
incubator of stories
producer of knowledges

Albertian paradigm

Modern thinker is not allowed to make
and modern maker is not
allowed to think.

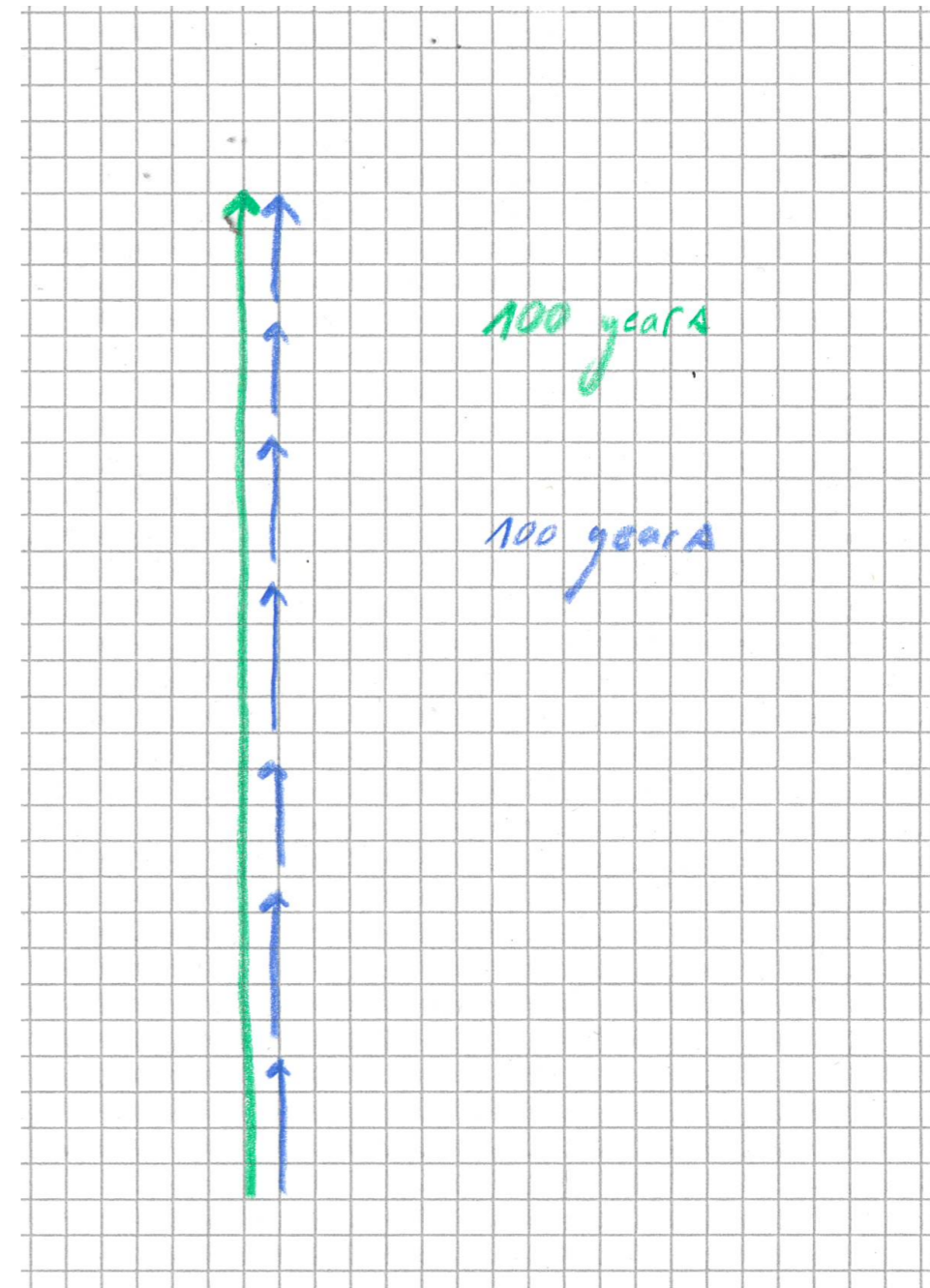
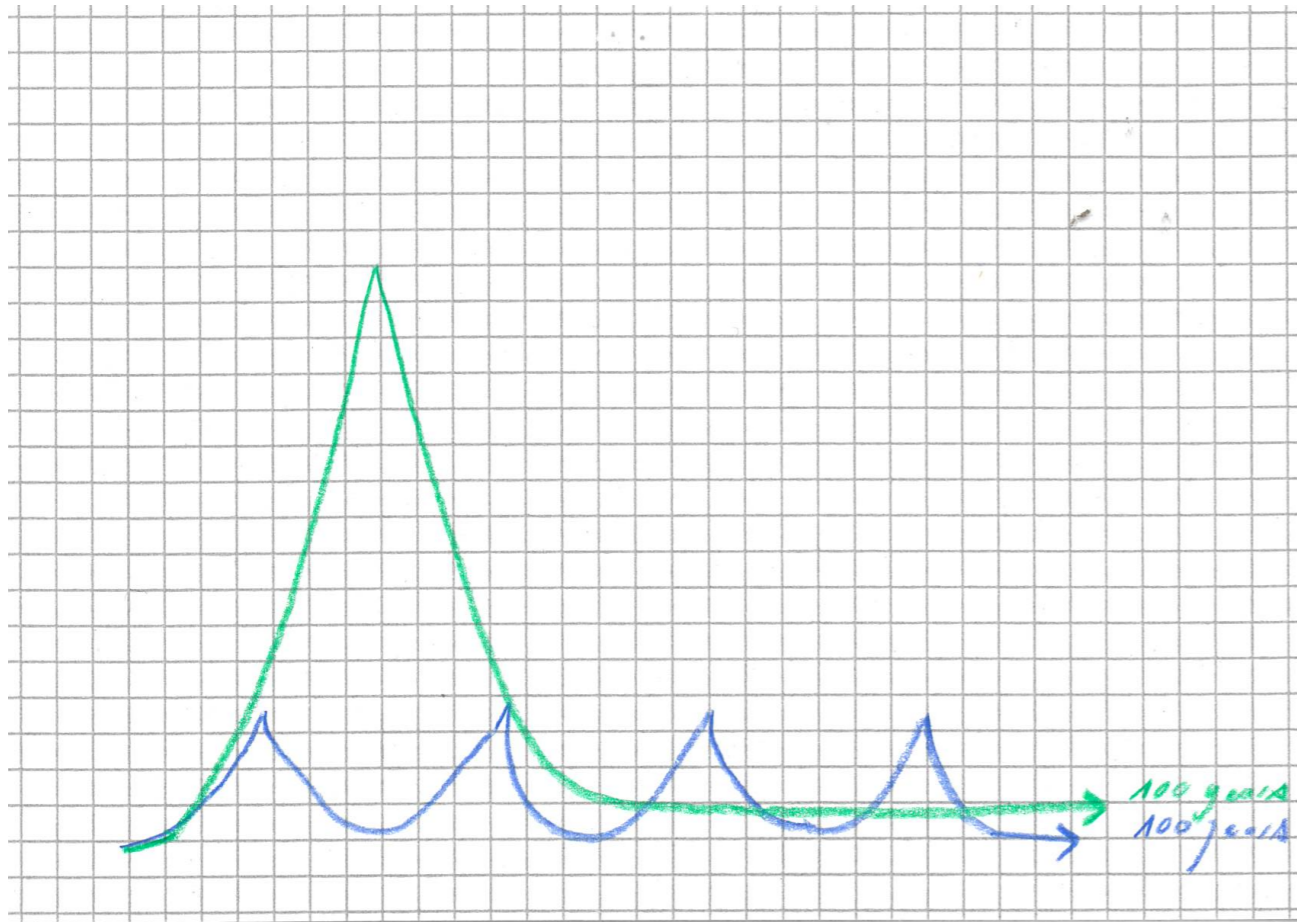
What if the
construction site
never disappears?

temporality
100 years
adaptability
life span
durability
(low) maintenance
knowledge
know-how
constructive truth
working drawings
building process

Albertian Paradigm
labour
Albertian Paradox
authorship
control
construction sites
complexity
transformation
opportunities
mock-ups
props

Umarcell (Bolognese dialect)

is a term referring specifically
to men of retirement age who
spend their time watching
construction sites, stereotypically
with hands joined behind
their back and offering unwanted
advice.



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Doch ohne Tobix
wär' alles nix



