

The Price of History

**„Permakulturelle Flächenumntuzungsstrategie“
or Helmut the hospitable hospital**

Chair of Affective Architectures
Chair of the History of Art and Architecture
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Master Thesis of Marco Steinacher

After a mere 23 years, the Kantonsspital Baden was declared unfit for its use. And although the building was described as flexible and easy to convert at its opening, the decision was made to build a brand new hospital, right next to the existing one.

Although the KSB AG, the owners of the new building, explains here again how easy it will be to upgrade it to increased medical standards in the future, it is already expected that the new building will have to be replaced again. For this purpose, the plot on which today's hospital stands will be needed. Referring to an idea of crop rotation, the KSB AG calls their strategy 'Fruchtfolgeflächennutzung'. It is an unnecessarily complicated way of saying how sustainable it is to replace a building every 50 years. In contrast, an alternative strategy is proposed: The permakulturelle Flächenumnutzungsstrategie, inspired by the idea of permaculture and the responsible use of buildings as a resource. Because how can it be that it is not possible to convert and continue to use a building supposedly characterized by its high flexibility?

Nobody dares to intervene or formulate a counter proposal, because of the complexity of the topic and the uncooperative stance of the KSB themselves, especially because the hospitals in the canton Aargau have been privatized. And people think the building is ugly. But demolishing a building in advance cannot be the solution from an ecological, economic and historical point of view.

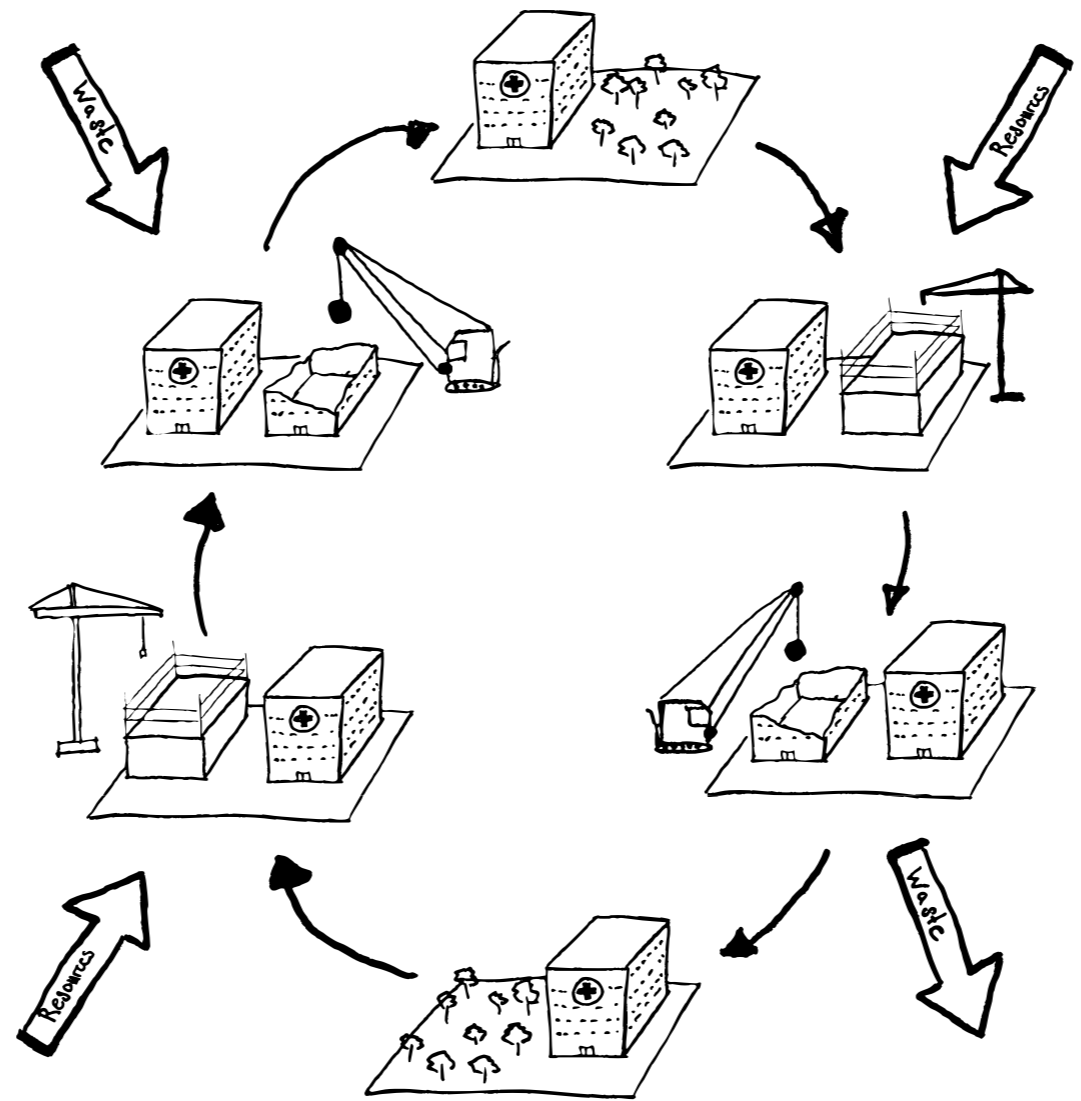
By accepting the fact that the new hospital will be completed in 2024, the old building becomes vacant. The building's organisation is mainly determined by the separation of a plinth and a slab. Instead of always constructing new buildings on the hospital grounds, the plinth of the building can be used for future extensions and temporary uses. The slab will provide residential space.

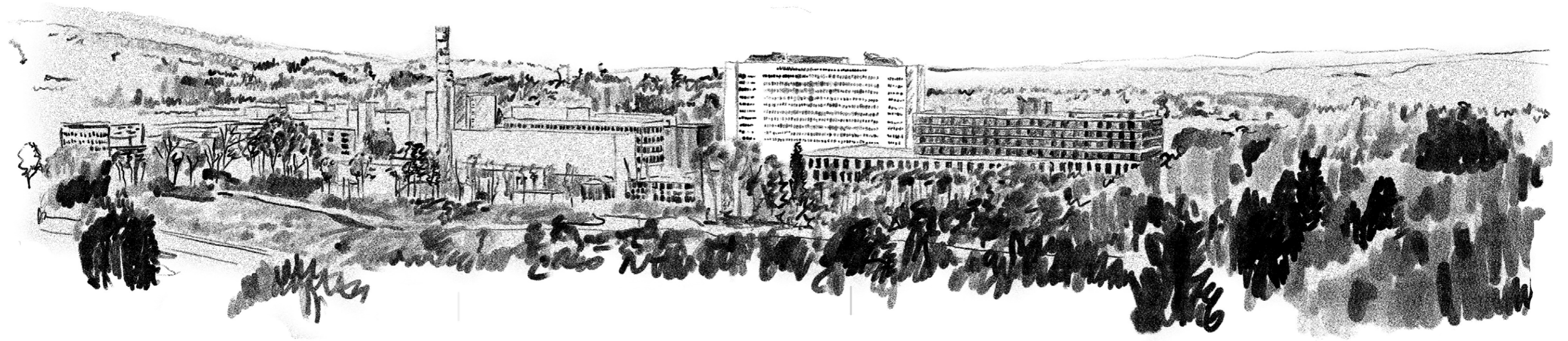
Where the plinth and the slab meet, an area with public functions and mutual uses is to be created, exploring the benefits of living in hospital. This breaks open the rigid structure of the plinth and enables the connection through the building.

As many hospitals can no longer keep up with medical standards. The project presents an alternative to demolition and explores the potential of dwelling in a hospital.



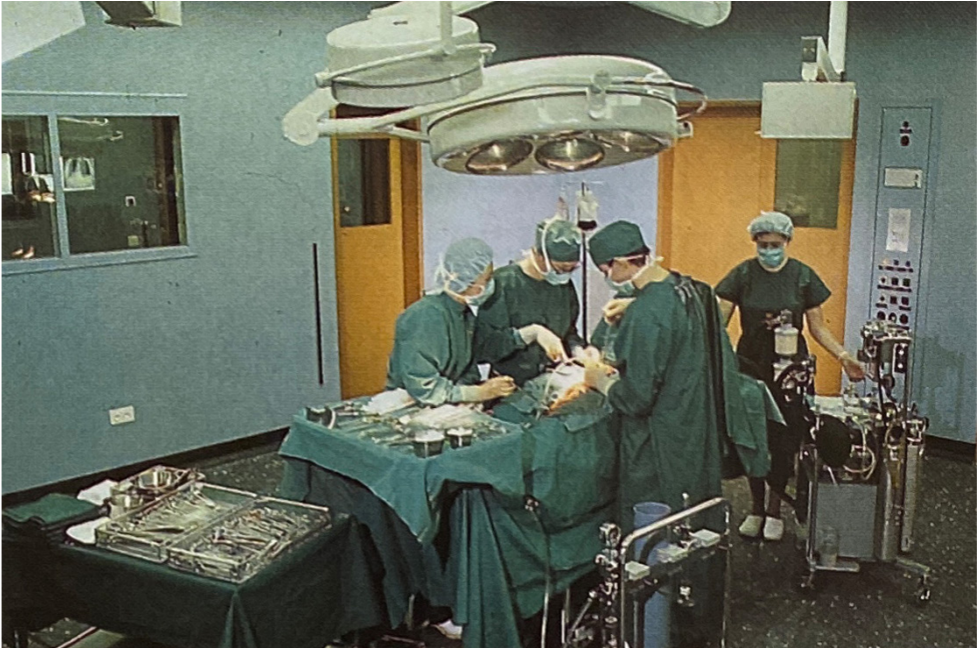
new hospital under construction in front of the existing hospital





sketch of the ksb campus







catchment area of the ksb



