



Rijksmuseum
Amsterdam

Restoration and Transformation
of a National Monument

Paul Meurs
Marie-Thérèse van Thoor

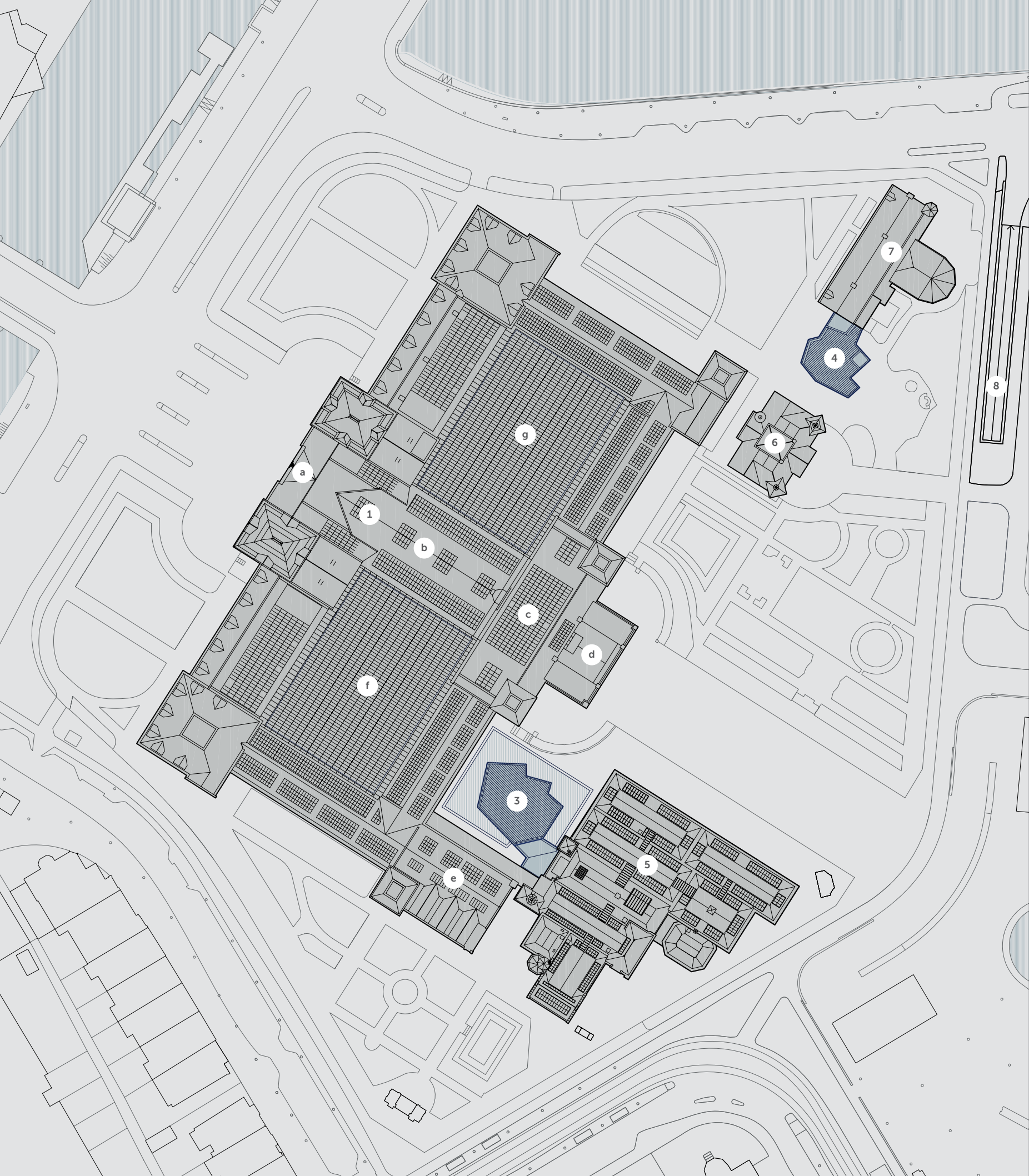
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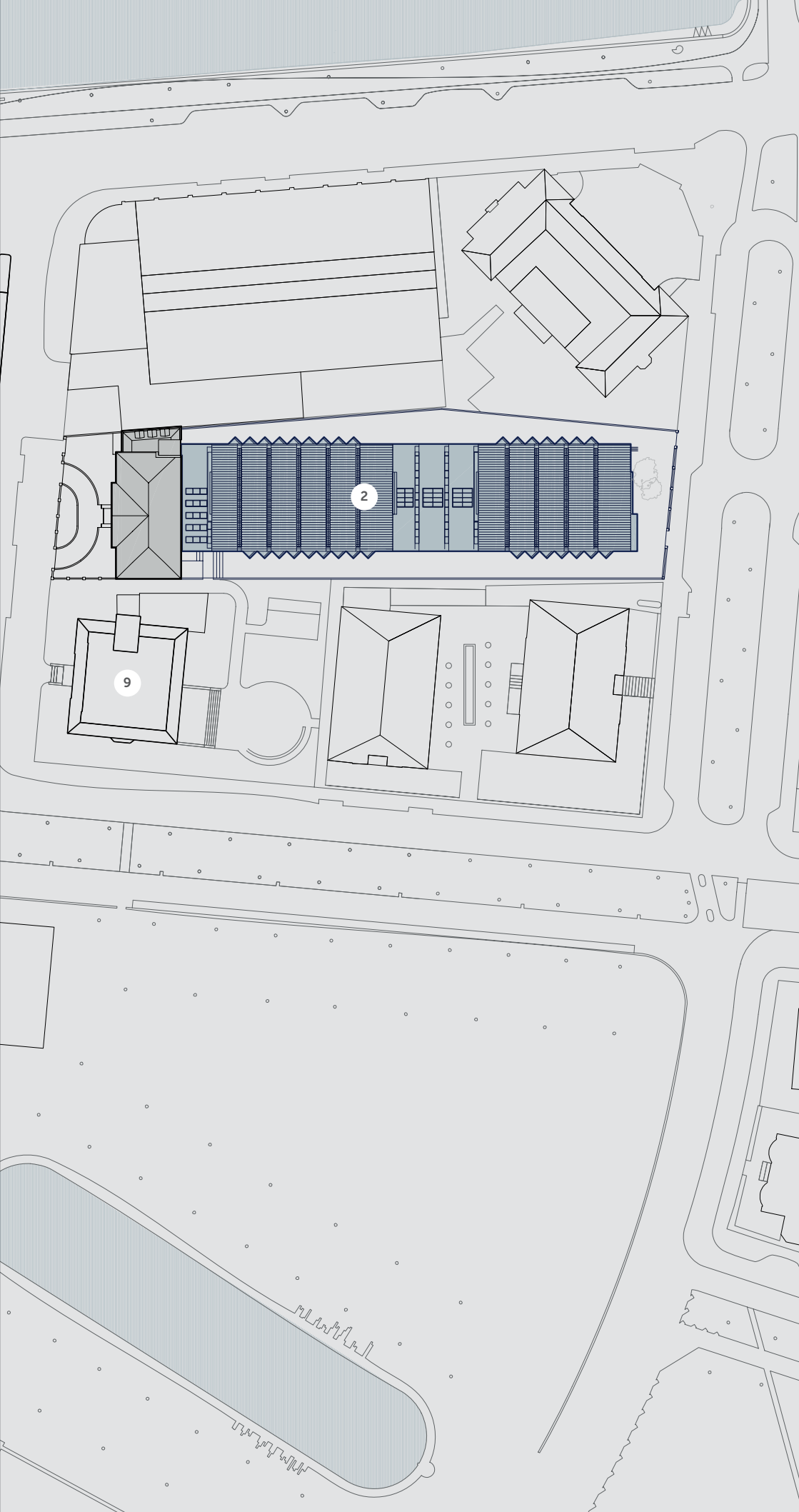
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1 Main building (main floor)

- a Great Hall
- b Gallery of Honour
- c Night Watch Gallery
- d Vermeer extension
- e Library
- f West courtyard
- g East courtyard

2 Atelier Building

3 Asian Pavilion

4 Entrance Building

**5 South Wing (Drucker extension
and Fragment Building)**

6 Director's villa

7 Teekenschool (Drawing School)

8 Entrance to underground storage tunnel

9 Mannheimer Villa







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The opening of the refurbished Rijksmuseum will not have escaped many people's attention in the Netherlands. The press has been full of praise for the outcome of over ten years of restoration. Within a few months more than a million people had already visited the museum. For the worlds of architecture and heritage conservation, the renovation of the Rijksmuseum has been a fascinating exercise. It represented a combination of seemingly irreconcilable objectives: the restoration of one of the most important monuments of the nineteenth century and the assignment to create a major contemporary museum. The latter is apparent in the building's entrance atrium, for example. According to one of the pieces in this book it can best be compared with an airport terminal. There was, moreover, the challenge to link the museum up with the city again, notwithstanding security requirements and management of large numbers of visitors.

The Design & History research group of the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of Delft University of Technology studies interventions in important Dutch buildings, generally monuments, that explore or push back the boundaries of ideas on heritage conservation and architecture. In December 2010 the book *Zonnestraal Sanatorium. The History and Restoration of a Modern Monument* was published.¹ Zonnestraal is a splendid example of the problems involved in preserving modern architecture that was not built to last for ever. The study of the 'Grand Projet' for the Rijksmuseum is a logical sequel. The design choices leading to the compelling result are explored and mapped out. The result demonstrates how fascinating and sometimes hard it is to revitalize a heritage site when the design process is underway. The research was possible thanks to support from the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science and of Infrastructure and the Environment. Contractors that worked on the new Rijksmuseum also generously supported the publication. Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos, Van Hoogevest Architecten and the Rijksgebouwendienst (Government Buildings Agency) made material available. Sincere thanks are due to the Programme Director, Peter Derks, who supported the initiative for this book from the very start. A debt of gratitude and appreciation is also due to the feedback group, chaired by Jos Bazelmans, who provided substantive support to the editors.

Karin Laglas

Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment
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On 13 April 2013, the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam reopened after a renovation process that had lasted more than a decade. The building, which originally dates from 1885, was designed by architect P.J.H. Cuypers (1827-1921). In the space of over a century, the building underwent numerous major and minor renovations, prompted by lack of space, growing visitor numbers and changing ideas about museum design. The end result of all those renovations was a labyrinth that was no longer able to fulfill its role as a national museum for the public. The recent adaptation had a very ambitious aim which, translated to the building meant the most radical approach: modernization instead of preservation or improvement.¹ This was combined with ambitions regarding the building's status as an embodiment of national identity and a cornerstone of cultural infrastructure. Accordingly, the renovation turned into a prestigious, national project, with international allure. In 1999 the project received a major boost in the form of the Kok government's 'millennium gift' to the Dutch population. The gift was intended as a financial catalyst to prepare the Rijksmuseum for the new millennium for, as the prime minister put it, 'the Netherlands has many museums of international standing, but there is only one Rijksmuseum'.² One year later, in 2000, the new Rijksmuseum was one of the nine 'Major Projects' listed in the *Ontwerpen aan Nederland* (Designing the Netherlands) memorandum. The main aim of this architectural memorandum was 'to strengthen the contribution of the design disciplines to spatial and architectural tasks by means of "customized" government participation in concrete projects'.³

Within this ambitious context, the design task for the new Rijksmuseum spanned many different scales and domains. First of all there was an urban design task: to improve the building's relation with the city and in particular Museumplein. This also encompassed a solution for the entrance and the design of the underpass that cuts the museum in half over two floors. The second task concerned the restoration of Cuypers' monument, including reinstating the lucid structure and deciding how the decorations might be brought back in the interior. Then there was the task of modernizing the museum and making it suitable for large numbers of visitors. This involved the routing, public facilities, security and the internal climate. The challenge for the new Rijksmuseum was to strike a balance between the sometimes conflicting interests of city, monument, museum, collection and public. This was reflected in the mottos devised during the course of the project, such as 'Onwards to Cuypers', 'Continue with Cuypers' and 'Back to Cuypers'.

This book focuses on the planning process for the new Rijksmuseum, with special attention for the evolution of the design and the associated history of ideas. What became of the objectives in the architectural memorandum? How did opinions on the intervention evolve from the concept for a master plan in 1996 to the realized project? To what extent were all those diverse ambitions regarding the city, the monument and the museum realized? What was the role of the designers? How did the design evolve in a complex and ambitious context involving a great many interested parties, and what effect did this have on the design process from the first sketches to the ultimately realized renovation? Curiosity about the answers to these questions was the motivation for this book. This study is based chiefly on

the primary sources behind all the visions, the plans and the execution. Interviews were also conducted with many of the architects, advisers and experts involved. Yet completeness was an unattainable goal and we consequently had to make choices and be selective. One important choice, for example, was to focus on the main building of the vast Rijksmuseum complex.

The book opens with a consideration of Cuypers' creation and his ideas for the building and the surroundings. An overview of the history of the museum's use and its subsequent construction history reveals the urgency of the intervention, as articulated in the Masterplan Ruijsenaars Rijksmuseum of 1996.⁴ The description of the evolution of the executed design for the intervention and restoration follows the design process from four perspectives: intervention, restoration, interior and surroundings. Several design firms were involved in these operations, Spanish architects Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos, Van Hoogevest Architecten, the French firm of Wilmotte & Associés, and Copijn Tuin- en Landschapsarchitecten. In its totality, the new Rijksmuseum is the result of all their efforts and comprises every level of scale, ranging from the city, the infrastructure, the garden and the civil engineering works in and around the building, to the finer details of finishing and furnishing. How did the ambition of the Major Projects relate to the varied interests and spatial dimensions of the task? What was the outcome, including in light of international projects and developments?

One example of the dilemmas and contradictions that arose during the design process, concerned the task of ensuring the optimal conservation and presentation of the exhibited objects. This led to technical interventions in terms of the architecture, structural engineering and above all building physics, which were very difficult to reconcile with the desire to preserve and restore the monument. On the other hand, the preservation of intrinsic and highly valued elements of the original architecture clashed with the museum's most important task, the display and conservation of the collection. Cuypers' design, referred to in this book as the Cuypers concept, included a carefully modulated daylight penetration in all the rooms in the building. The Rijksmuseum was originally a daylight museum with a very deliberate choreography of light and dark. The interplay of top lighting and side lighting provided the interior with the necessary illumination, and from the windows it was possible to get one's bearings in every direction around the building. But in the twenty-first century it is sufficiently well known that direct daylight is harmful for museum collections. Did this mean that the restoration of the Cuypers concept, an important component of the renovation and restoration plan, was irretrievably at odds with what were regarded as the indispensable wishes and requirements of the custodian of this important collection?

Another aspect of the renovation, and of the Cuypers concept, was the reinstatement of the spatial structure of the original design, in particular the reopening of the filled-in courtyards. The removal of non-presentational functions, such as offices, studios and storage spaces, made more room for gallery exhibitions. At the same time it was necessary to improve the entrance, together with the associated public functions, and to raise it to a level appropriate to the present day. The architects' desire to move the entrance to the underpass was difficult to reconcile with the passageway and the original spatial concept of the building as a gateway building that was literally and figuratively designed as a linking axis between the city centre and Amsterdam-Zuid.

The new Rijksmuseum also acquired a new museological presentation. In the old Rijksmuseum, five sub-museums effectively told their own story. The current presentation is an integrated display of Dutch national history and visual and

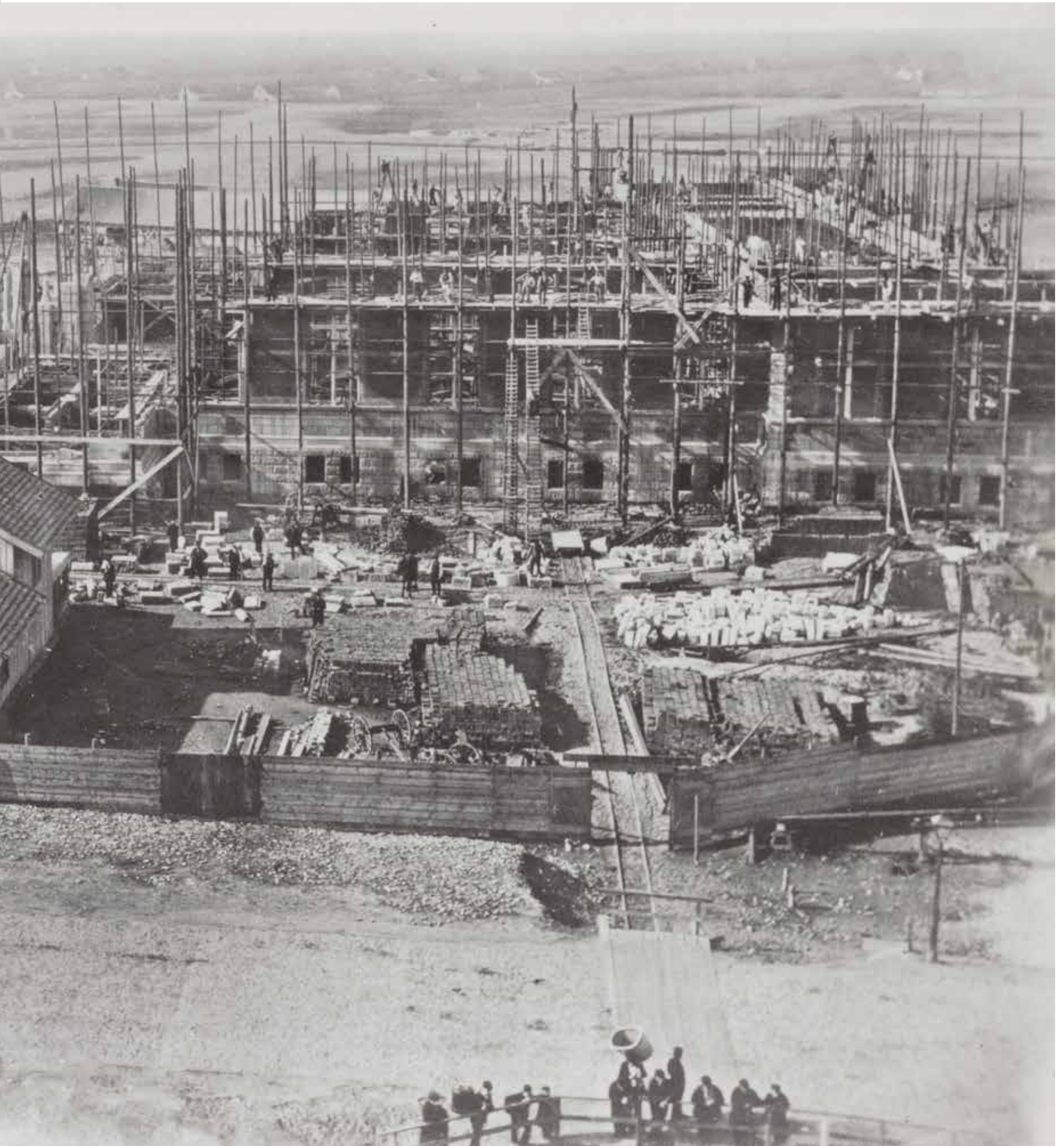
applied arts that sets the Rijksmuseum apart from other national museums around the world. The interior design by Wilmotte added an extra layer to the building, which had to relate both to the monument and to the contemporary intervention by Cruz y Ortiz.

The complexity that arose at the level of the design had a lot to do with the manner of commissioning, organization and direction, which was realistically portrayed in Oeke Hoogendijk's four-part documentary, *Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum* (The New Rijksmuseum), broadcast by NTR in 2013. The results and the successes, as well as the conflicts, the delays, the setbacks *and* the emotions associated with the protracted process cannot have escaped anyone's attention. This book is not about that process of organizing and directing the project as a whole, but about the realized design and the work that went into shaping it. Organization and direction constituted the internal project context within which the design and the built result came about. In addition, the architects and contractors had to deal with an external project context consisting of numerous social and administrative factors, committees, advisory boards and individuals. Both the internal and the external project context had a varying impact on the results and thus became part of the design process.









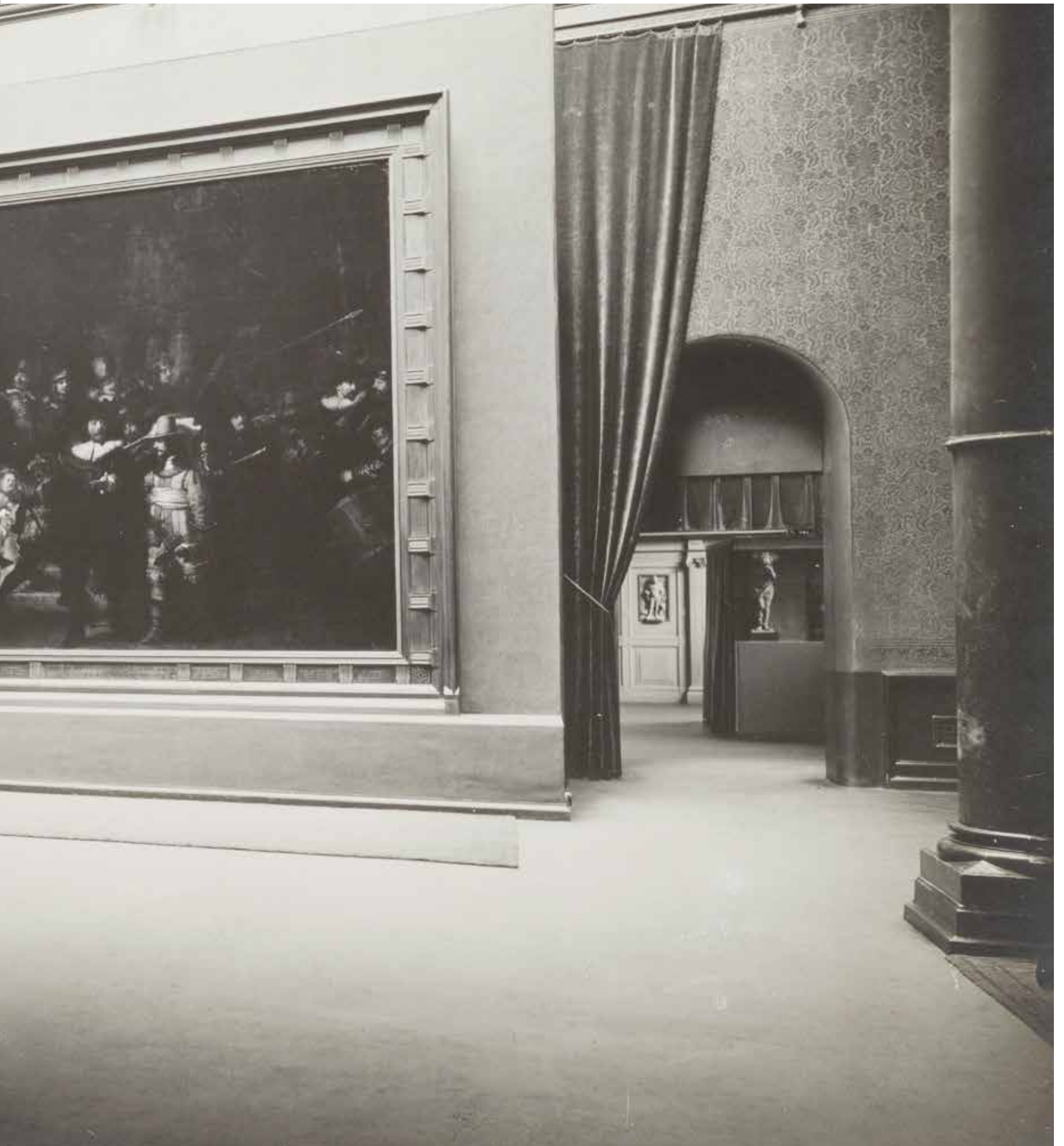












1863

- An architecture competition for the design of the King Willem I Museum is announced by the Kommissie tot Voorbereiding der Stichting van het Muzeüm (Preparatory Committee for the Foundation of the Museum), formed a year earlier by leading Amsterdam citizens. The museum is partly intended to commemorate the establishment of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands under Willem I exactly 50 years earlier.

1864

- Nineteen designs are submitted by architects in the Netherlands and elsewhere, including several by P.J.H. (Pierre) Cuypers (1827-1921). The first prize is awarded to Ludwig and Emil Lange from Munich, but the committee is so divided over their design that its secretary, J.A. Alberdingk Thijm, resigns, and the prize-winning plan is never carried out.

1875

- Founding the museum is no longer a purely private initiative, but has become a matter for the national government. After the terms of reference are revised by the College van Rijksadviseurs voor de Monumenten van Geschiedenis en Kunst (Board of Government Advisers on Sites and Buildings of Historical and Artistic Importance), a new design competition was held. In late 1875, plans are submitted by the selected architects: L.H. Ebersson, H.P. Vogel and P.J.H. Cuypers. Cuypers submits two floor plan designs, as he did in the earlier competition, as well as multiple options for the façades.

1876

- Cuypers is appointed the official architect of the Rijksmuseum complex. Soon afterwards, preparatory work commences on the Stadhouderskade building site designated by the City of Amsterdam.

1877

- On 13 January, the first pile is driven for the main building. Meanwhile, the approved design is constantly being altered. Not only are the details of the façades and the towers modified, but the two entrances are also moved from the passageway to the side of the building facing the city centre, and a last-minute decision is made to expand the low-ceilinged basement into a full-sized souterrain.

1883

- Director's villa completed.

1884

- Cuypers draws up the detailed specifications for the gardens around the museum. This design has a large number of different sections, which combine to offer a survey of Dutch garden history from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. A year later a slightly modified, trimmed-down plan is approved, and work on the gardens begins.

1885

- The museum building is opened in the absence of King Willem III, who refuses to attend in protest against the final design. When the museum opens in the new building, it adopts the name of the organization that has managed the state art collection since 1815: the Rijksmuseum.
- The Oefenschool van de Rijksnormaalschool (Training School) opens in its temporary location, a wooden building in the garden.

1886

- The first building fragments are exhibited in the garden.

1892

- The permanent Oefenschool building opens in the east garden of the Rijksmuseum. This building, later to be called the Teekenschool (Drawing School), is designed to accommodate art education activities for children.

1898

- The first exhibition is held in the Fragment Building, an addition to the museum in the west garden.
- The exhibition areas in the souterrain are opened to the public.
- The passageway is opened to traffic.

1900

- The decorations in the Great Hall and the Gallery of Honour are completed.

1906

- Opening of the Vermeer extension, built specifically to house the *Night Watch*. Four years later, this extension is refurbished in a new attempt to improve the natural lighting of the painting.

1909

- Opening of the first section of the Drucker extension, designed by Joseph Cuypers (1861-1949), son of Pierre Cuypers. Building began in 1906.

1910

- Enough progress has been made on the gardens to open them to the public.

1919

- Opening of the second section of the Drucker extension, also designed by the younger Cuypers and built between 1913 and 1916.

1923-1937

- Large-scale renovation takes place under museum director Frederik Schmidt-Degener in cooperation with the Rijksgebouwendienst (Government Buildings Agency; Rgd), which assumes the management of the building in 1924. After the death of Pierre Cuypers, a start is made on removing and covering up some of the decorations in consultation with Joseph Cuypers, who succeeds his father as official Rijksmuseum architect. The settled wooden floors of the two courtyards are replaced by new reinforced concrete floors supported by piles. After the

renovation fewer works are exhibited in each gallery, and hence more storage space is needed. Parts of the lower level and the attic spaces are used for this purpose.

1931

- The passageway is closed to automobile traffic.

1946-1957

- Architect F.A. Eschauzier (1889-1957) oversees the phased redecoration of the main building and the Drucker extension. He responds to demands for an up-to-date style of presentation, better technical systems, and expanded public services. The east courtyard is converted into an exhibition area. Despite a shortage of space, the Rijksmuseum acquires the collection of the Museum for Asian Art. Exhibition galleries are set up for this collection on the lower level of the Drucker extension. The director's villa ceases to be used as an official residence; after the renovation, it becomes an administrative building. In the garden, the labyrinth from the original design is replaced by a French formal garden.

1958-1969

- After Eschauzier's death, the modernization of the building continues under former Chief Government Architect Gijsbert Friedhoff (1892-1970) and architects Dick Elffers (1910-1990) and Thijs Wijnalda (b. 1916). When almost all the galleries in the old complex are refurbished, work on filling in the courtyards is begun. In 1962, the 30 new galleries and an auditorium that have been built in the west courtyard are opened. Work on the basements beneath the passageway is also completed this same year. The first exhibition on the new upper levels in the east courtyard is held in 1969. In this same period, some of the main building's towers are converted into storage space. The administrative building is modernized and acquires a new storage area, meeting hall and car park.

1976

- An advisory committee is formed for the restoration of the garden. Since the Second World War, the garden has fallen into a neglected state, even as the Rijksmuseum complex has been thoroughly restored and renovated. Now, fresh attention is devoted to both the plantings and the restoration of the sculptures and building fragments. This project is carried out in collaboration with landscape architects from the office of Buys & Van der Vliet.

1980

- W.G. (Wim) Quist (b. 1930) is appointed by the Rgd as the Rijksmuseum architect.

1982

- The thoroughly reorganized Asian Art Department is opened.

1984

- The renovated Night Watch Gallery and Gallery of Honour are reopened. Some later renovations have been reversed, and the result comes closer to the effect of the original spaces. A few of Cuypers' paintings have been reconstructed, and the *Night Watch* is returned to its original location.

1987

- The former Security Institute on Hobbemastraat becomes a venue for exclusive Rijksmuseum affairs.

1993-1996

- The Drucker extension and Fragment Building undergo major renovation. New souterrains are added, old walls and ceilings are uncovered and partly restored, and these sections of the museum are connected to the main building's climate control system. After the reopening, the extensions are renamed the South Wing. The garden between the South Wing and the main building is also modified around this time. Echoing the theme of the Asian collection on display in the South Wing, Jan Boon designs a Japanese garden with gravel and a square pool.

1994

- The Rijksmuseum commissions a study of the possibility of closing the passageway. In a press release, it announces its intention to close Cuypers' passage to bicycle traffic so that it can serve as an entrance area.

1995

- Architect Hans Ruijsenaars (b. 1944) starts developing a master plan for the Rijksmuseum. It is hoped that this comprehensive view will make it easier to find solutions to infrastructural problems, the sense of clutter, and the shortage of space in and around the building.

1996

- Ronald de Leeuw succeeds Henk van Os as Rijksmuseum director.

1997

- Construction work begins on a storage tunnel with a parking garage and exhibition space on the south side of the museum, based on a design by Ruijsenaars.

1998

- Museum director Ronald de Leeuw writes *The Rijksmuseum in the 21st Century. Policy Document Setting out the Master Plan for the Rijksmuseum*. One of his proposals for the new Rijksmuseum is to exhibit historical artefacts and works of art side by side.

1999

- The national government headed by Wim Kok allocates 100 million guilders to the renovation of the Rijksmuseum, calling it a millennium gift.
- Ruijsenaars resigns as museum architect. A year later, his master plan is published by the Rgd under the title: *Masterplan Ruijsenaars Rijksmuseum. Vooruit met Cuypers* (Onwards to Cuypers).

2000

- The new Rijksmuseum is listed as one of nine Major Projects in the architecture policy document *Shaping the Netherlands*, co-authored by the ministries of culture, planning, transport, and agriculture.
- The Rgd presents *Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum, structuurplan 2000*, a plan for the new Rijksmuseum that encompasses the entire complex, including the former Security Institute. This plan lays the groundwork for architect selection.
- Chief Government Architect Wytze Patijn and his successor Jo Coenen jointly announce the seven architecture firms competing for the role of lead architect for the project.
- The firms invited to participate in the competition are asked to develop a vision for the renovation of the Rijksmuseum that fleshes out the basic principle 'Back to Cuypers', understood to mean 'Continue with Cuypers'.

2001

- The Programme Board The New Rijksmuseum is founded.
- Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos is selected as the lead architect for the new Rijksmuseum. The firm's design concept garners praise from the assessment committee for its clarity and sound logistical solutions, partly on account of the passage connecting the two covered courtyards.
- Soon afterwards, Van Hoogevest Architecten is selected as restoration architect.

2002

- The Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (Foundation Restoration Studio Limburg; SRAL) begins exploratory colour research.
- Cruz y Ortiz and Van Hoogevest each submit a Preliminary Design (PD) for the Rijksmuseum. At this stage, the two designs have not yet been reconciled.

2003

- The main Rijksmuseum building closes and the removal of the collection begins. The South Wing is renovated and temporarily converted into an independent museum. Many works of art are put in storage in Lelystad for the duration of the renovation.
- Arcadis is selected as a consulting firm for structural engineering. Arup Madrid is responsible for mechanical engineering and building physics, in cooperation with DGMR and Van Heugten respectively.
- The New Rijksmuseum and the urban district of Oud-Zuid plan a series of regular meetings to discuss the latest developments in the renovation and restoration plans and the necessary permissions and renewals.

2004

- Wilmotte & Associés is appointed as interior designer for the Rijksmuseum.
- Three landscape consultancy firms present their visions for the Rijksmuseum garden. Copijn Tuinen Landschapsarchitecten is selected.
- Design work on the entrance area is called to a halt because the city authorities have rejected the plan.
- Cruz y Ortiz submit PD for the Study Centre (later to be called the Entrance Building) and the Teekenschool.
- The first stage of the Final Design (FD) for the main building is completed.
- The Information Centre designed by Cruz y Ortiz is opened. During the renovation, interested individuals can go there for information about the progress thus far.

2005

- On the site of the former Security Institute, building work begins on the Atelier Building designed by Cruz y Ortiz.
- The dismantling of parts of the main building is completed, and this makes it possible to begin the finishing work. Employees of the SRAL begin restoration work on the library.

2006

- The second stage of the FD is presented, and the building application is submitted.
- The excavation of the courtyards begins; separate planning permission is obtained for this part of the project.
- Preparations are made for the first tendering procedure.

2007

- Wilmotte presents its ideas for the interior of the exhibition spaces.
- The basements under the courtyards are completed.
- The Atelier Building is opened.
- The building permission course for the Rijksmuseum is completed: permission is granted for both the renovations and the new construction work.

2008

- The first tendering procedure is unsuccessful. Preparations begin for a new procedure, in which the work is divided into several parts.
- In collaboration with Cruz y Ortiz, Copijn develops a renovation plan for the museum garden based on Cuypers' original design.
- Wim Pijbes succeeds Ronald de Leeuw as Rijksmuseum director.

2009

- Underground civil engineering work begins. The building work has now been divided into parts, which are treated separately in the second round of the tendering process.
- At the initiative of museum director Wim Pijbes and Chief Government Architect Liesbeth van der Pol, Cruz y Ortiz develops a new design for the entrance area in the passageway. This modified design proves impracticable within the approved budget and timetable, however.

2010

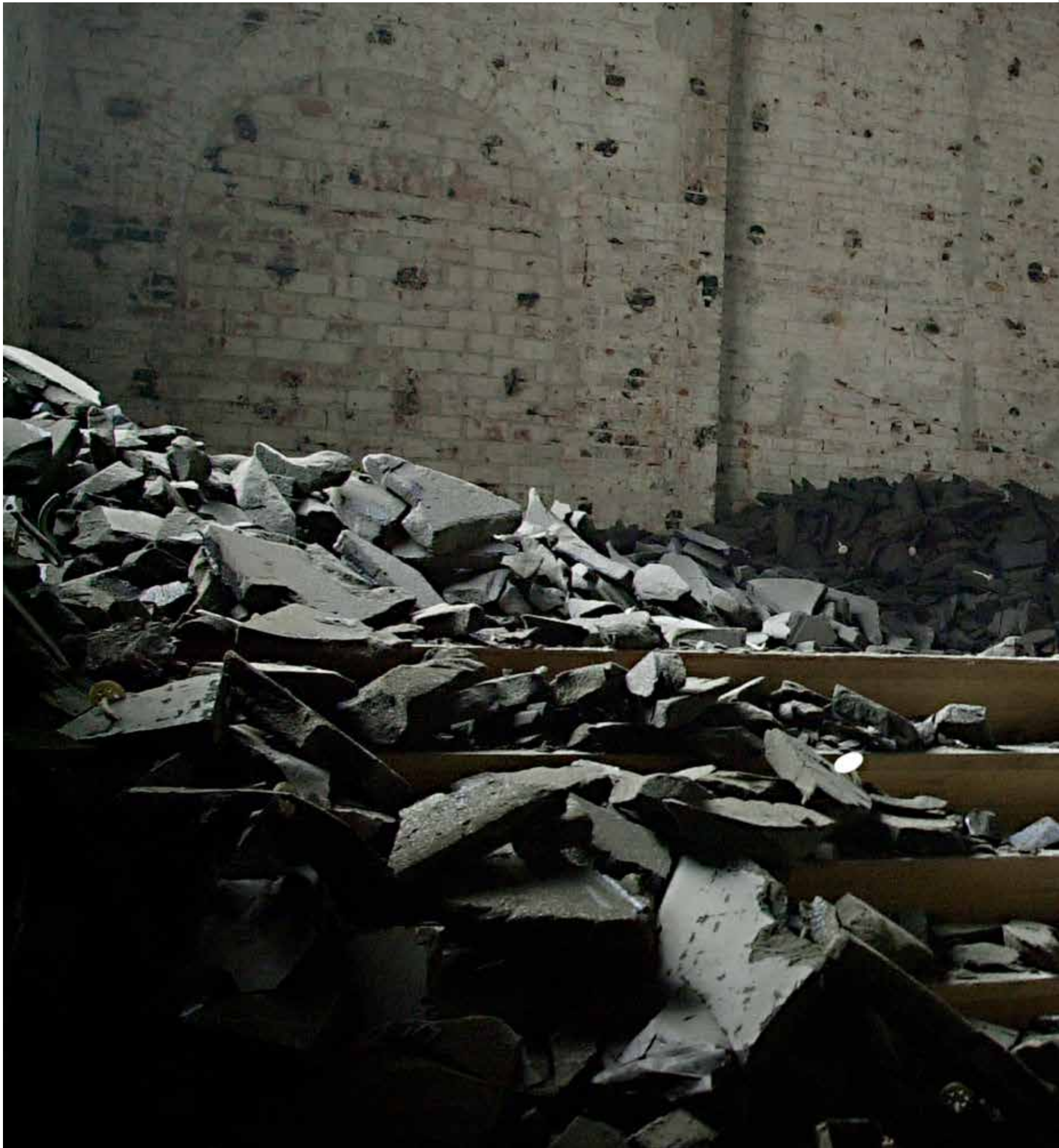
- Wilmotte presents the final design for the museum interior.

2012

- The renovation of the main building and the construction of the Asian Pavilion, designed by Cruz y Ortiz, is completed. Now work on the interior can begin. The Entrance Building and Teekenschool are also finished. After the construction equipment has been cleared from the site, the planting of the garden begins.
- Cruz y Ortiz develops a PD for the South Wing.

2013

- On 13 April, the public opening ceremony takes place for the renovated Rijksmuseum.
- On 22 June, the museum garden is opened.
- The renovation of the South Wing begins.

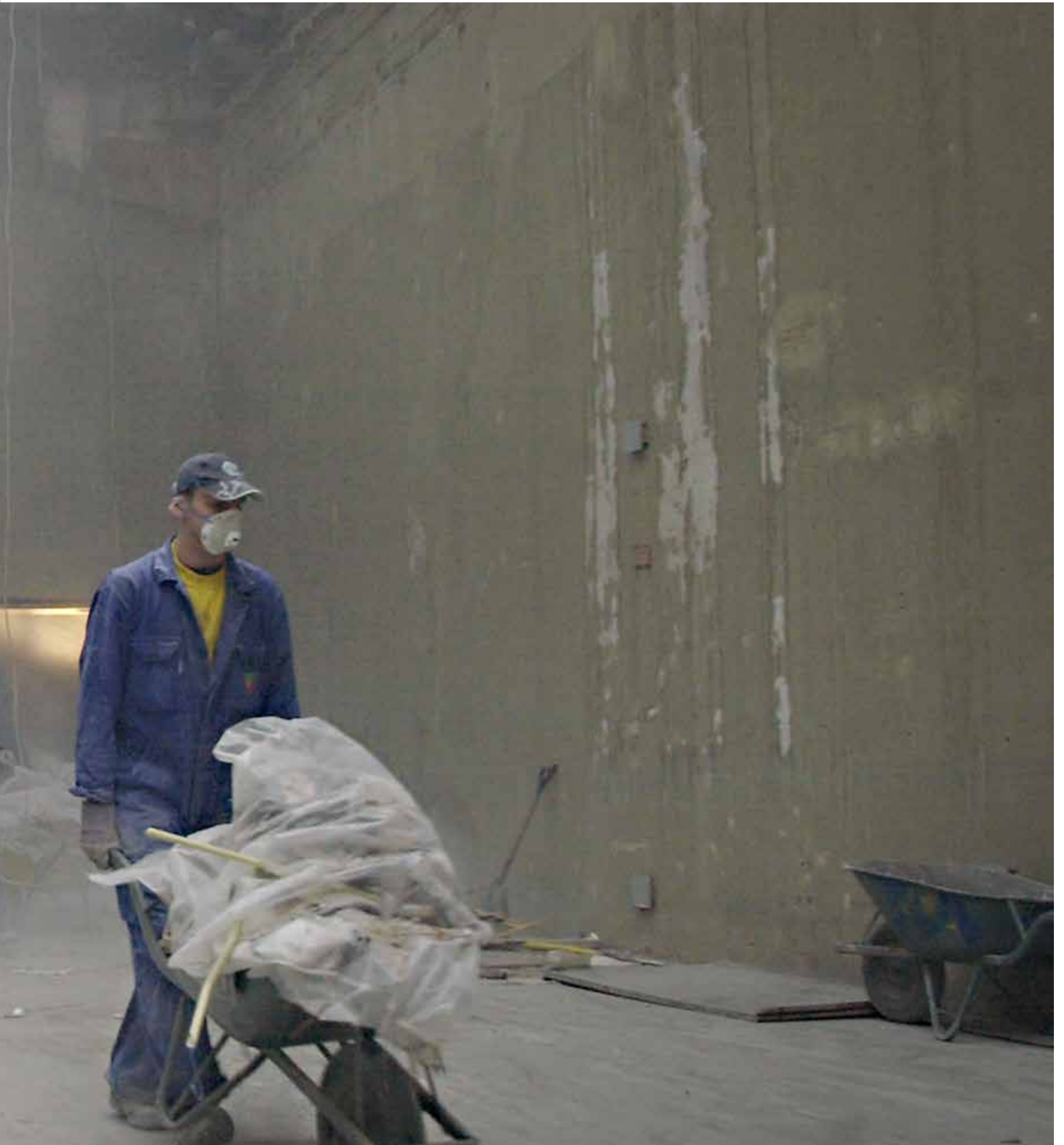






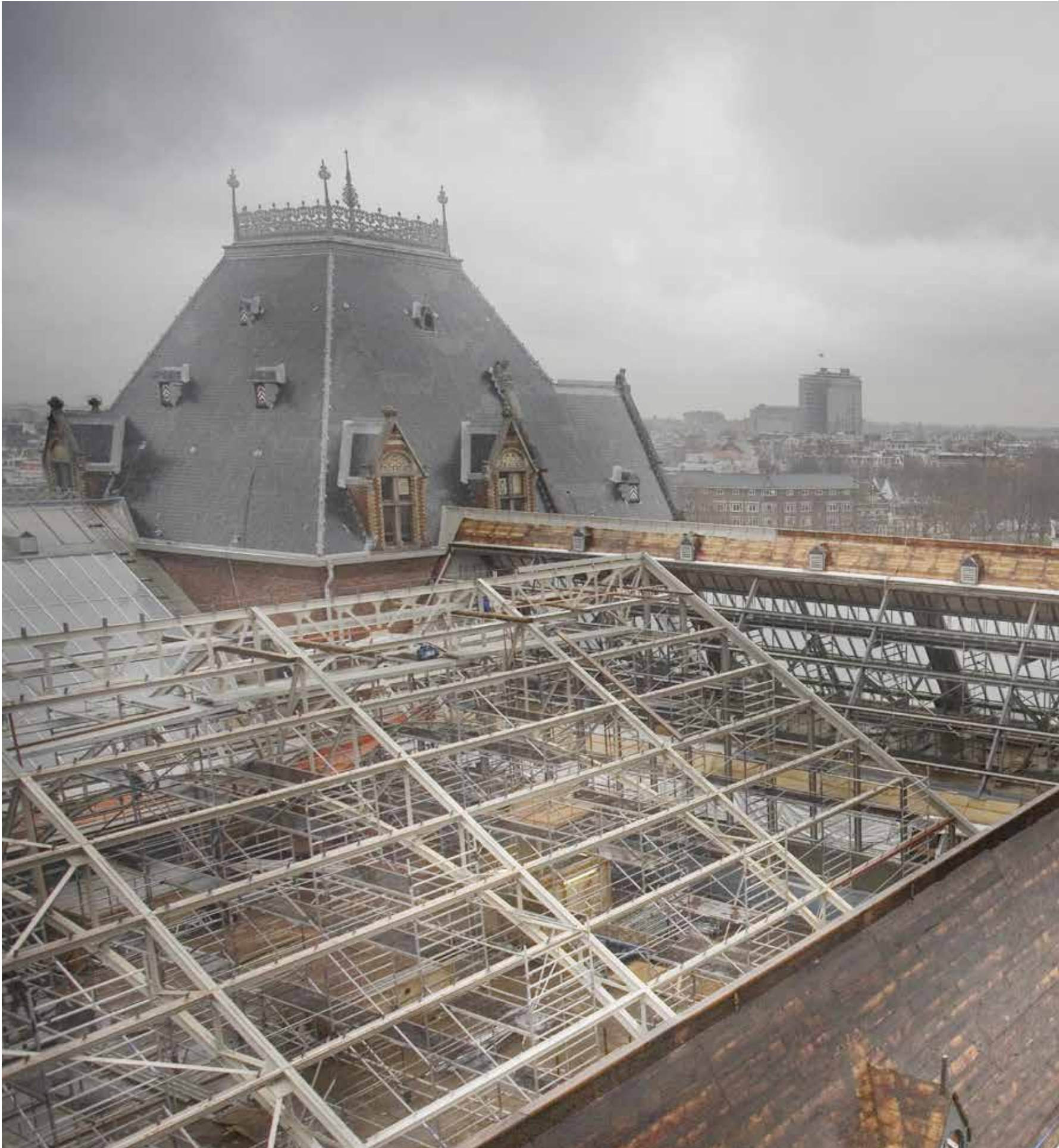


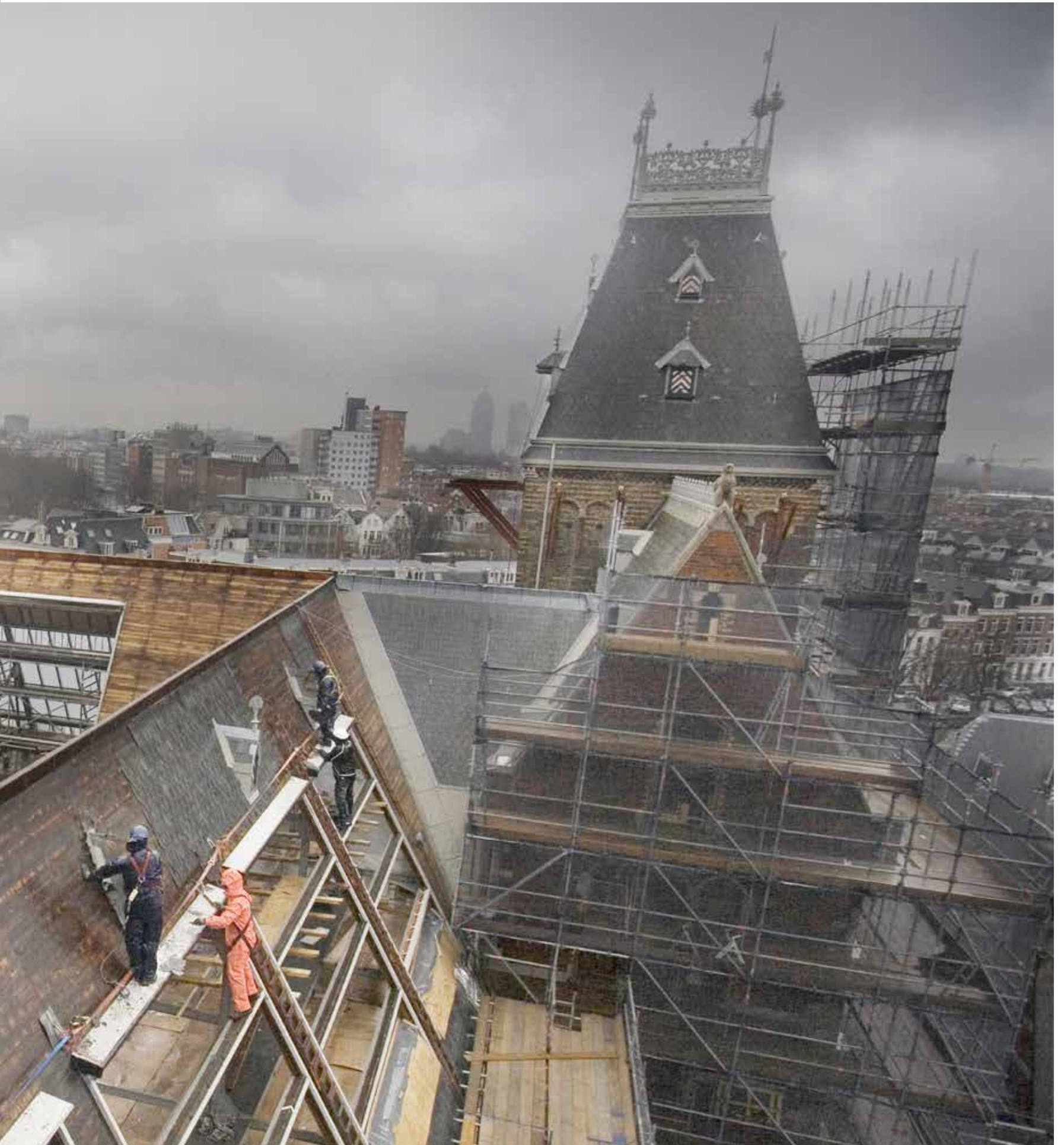




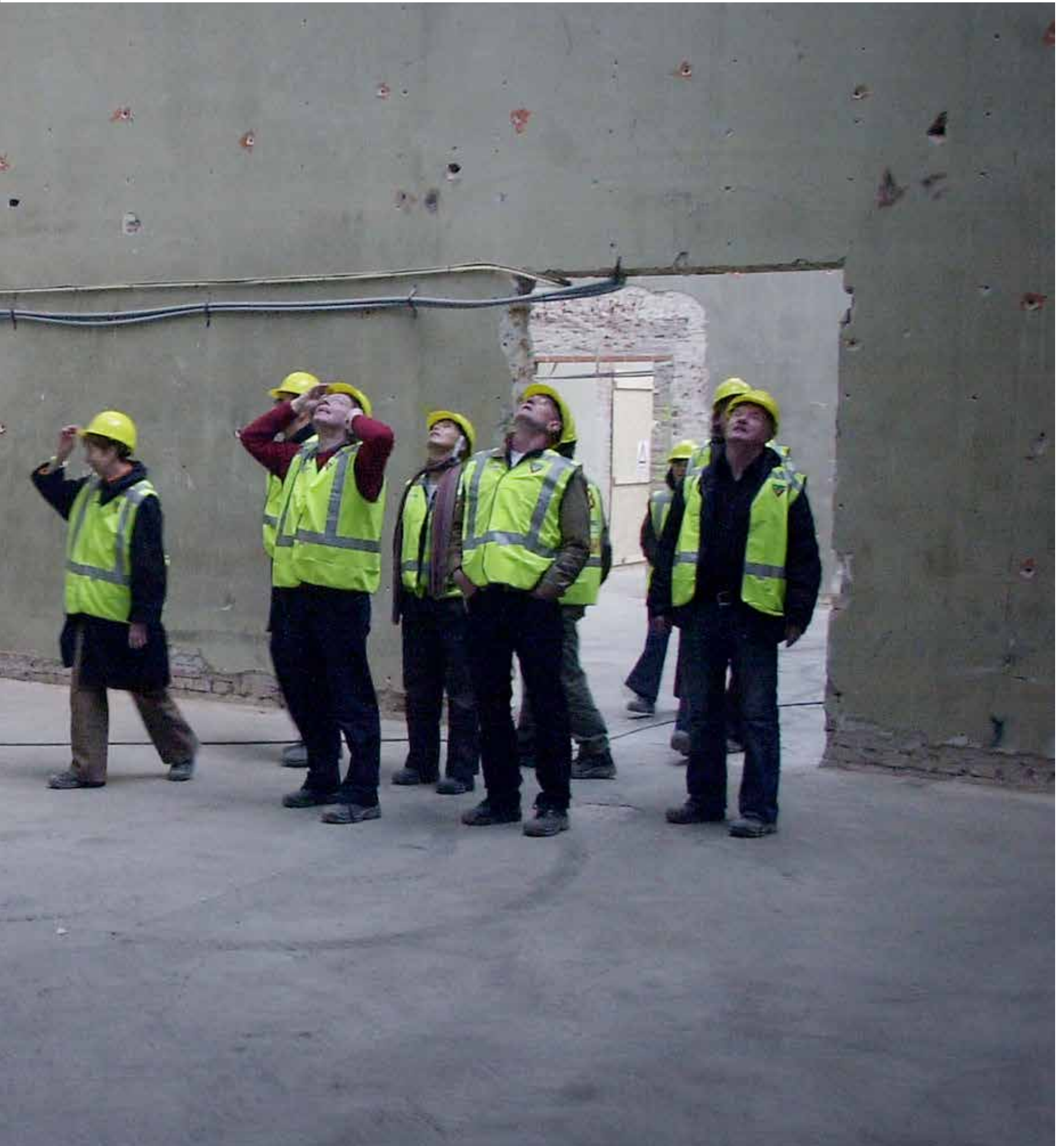


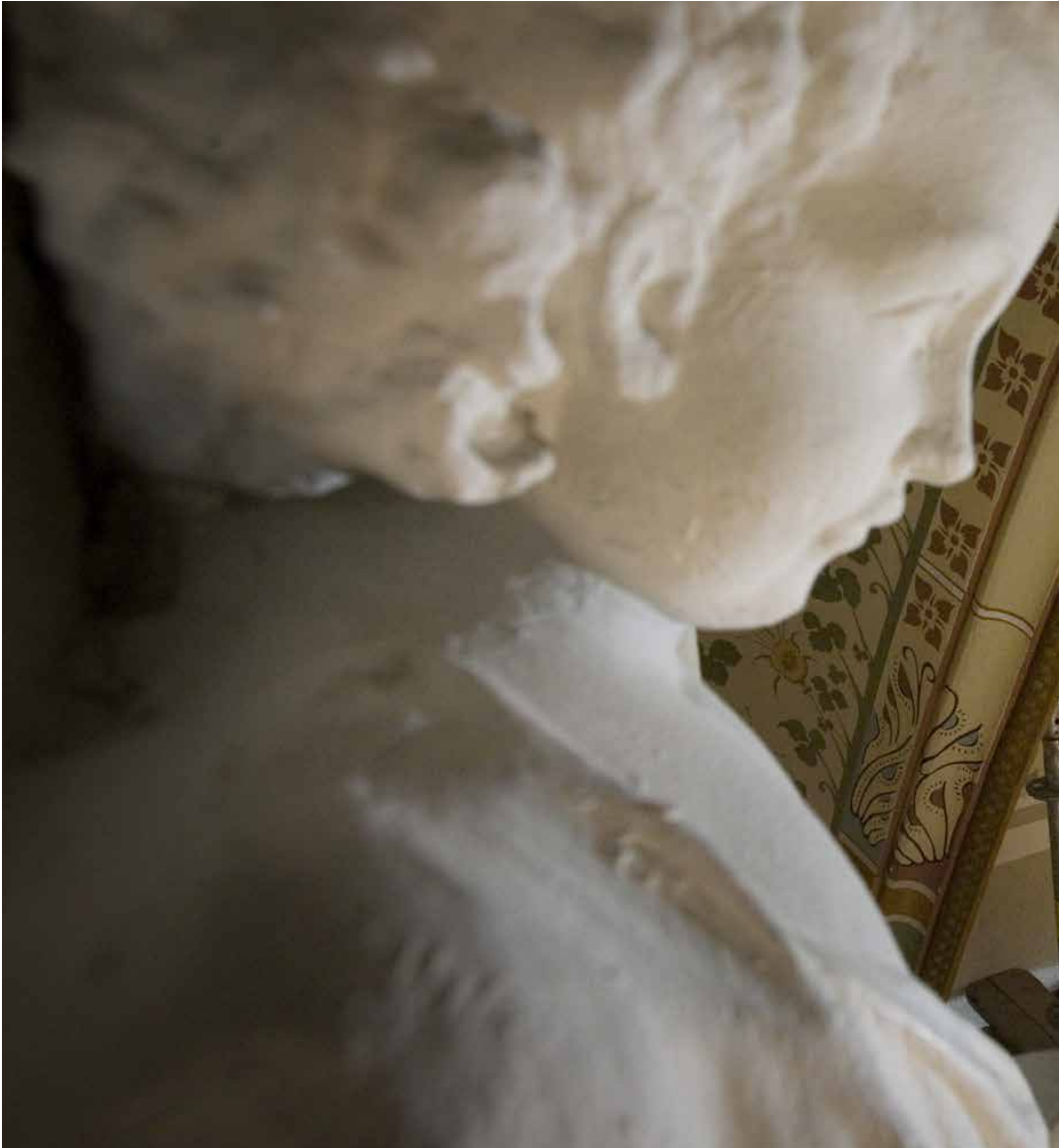


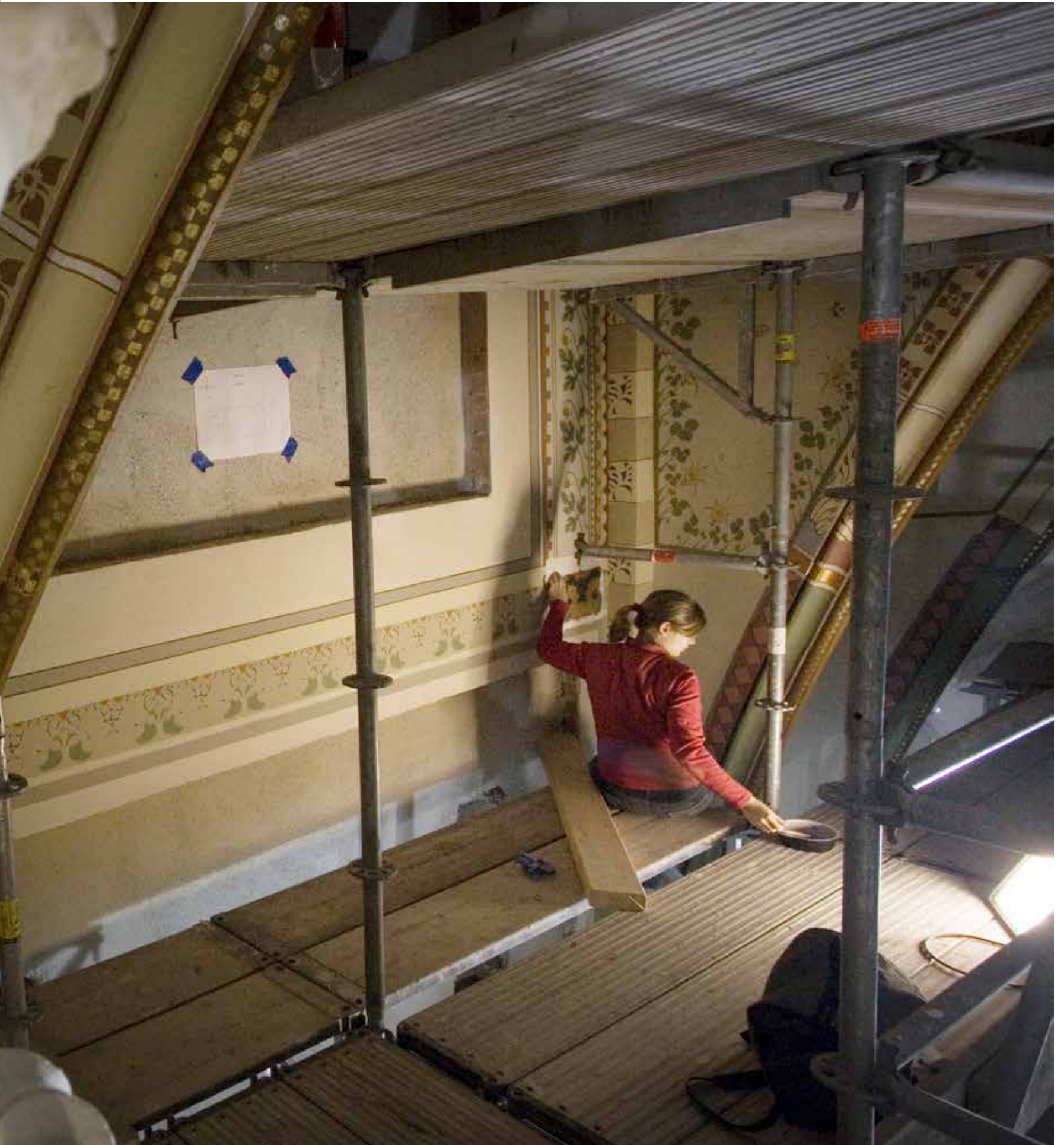




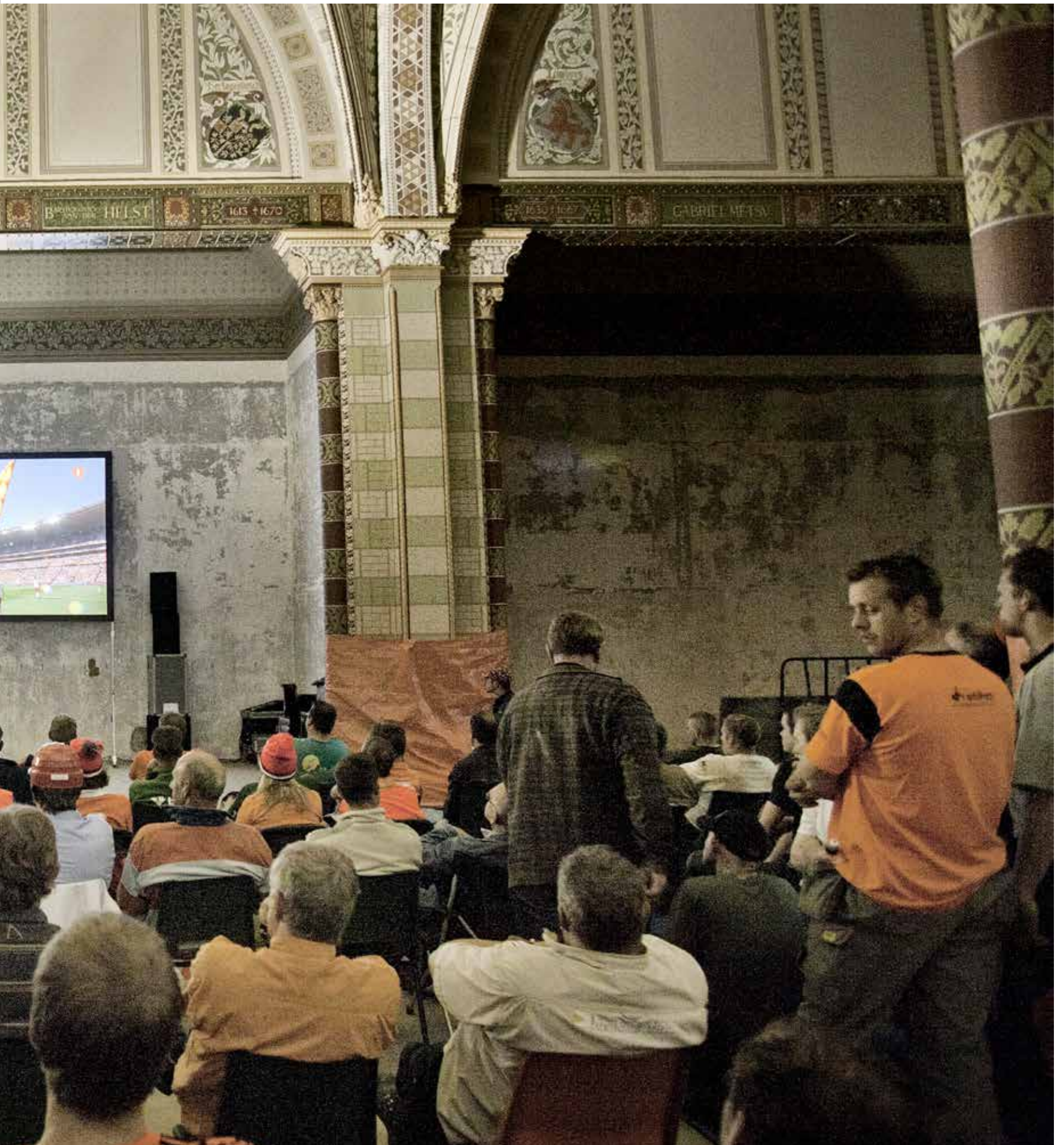


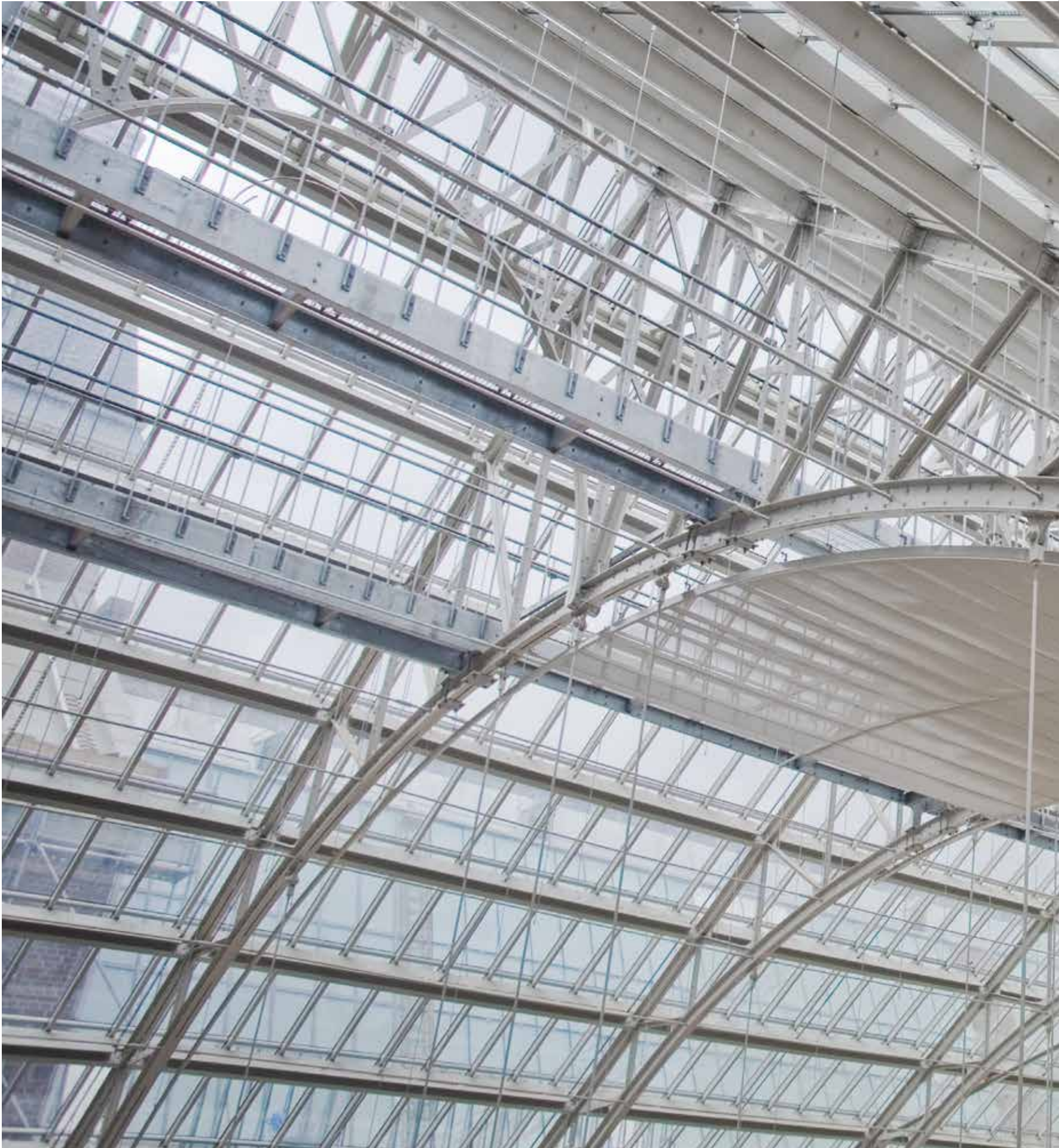
















The Rijksmuseum as delivered in 1885 was not the building dreamed of by its architect Pierre Cuypers.¹ The plan's genesis illustrates the emergence, in the second half of the nineteenth century, of international standards for important new types of public buildings, such as the museum, and shows how one individual architect struggled to adapt this type to his own ideas. The fact that Cuypers won the invited competition for the museum was due in large part to his extensive knowledge of recent developments in museum design. In preceding years he had also assimilated a theory about the public building and its place and significance in the city, which he was now keen to introduce into the townscape of a resurgent Amsterdam. From the outset he endeavoured to adapt the given type to his purpose, an undertaking in which he was only partially successful. The design was subject to continual compromises, so that the final outcome was a building that combined the 'state of the art' of museum architecture in the last quarter of the nineteenth century with Cuypers' Gothic rationalism. To that extent it was, for Cuypers too, a successful building, regarded as the pinnacle of his life's work. But at the same time, it was a building that did not necessarily reflect his vision of the ideal museum building for that particular site. Until his death he continued to regret that he had not been able to persuade the clients to go along with his preference for an expandable building that adjusted organically to the urban setting.

In the history of the reception of the Rijksmuseum, the style of the building, the choice of decoration, was a recurrent theme. This was an important aspect for Cuypers too, which entailed at times passionately debated nationalist and cultural historical connotations. But owing to this persistent and now fairly mechanically reiterated debate (see, for example, the press reactions to the recent renovation of the building) the underlying ideas regarding typological aspects of the building have received less attention than they deserve. Yet, in light of recent changes to the building, they are once again proving to be highly relevant. In nineteenth-century architectural thought, ornament was an important aspect of a building. Ornament turned a building into a work of art. But for Cuypers it was in the spatial siting of the building and its relationship with public space that the crux of the task lay. And once the overall shape of the building had been determined, it was not the stylistic forms but the functional aspects of the museum that were his greatest concern: the entrance and the circulation through the galleries, the way the light fell on the works of art, the arrangement and layout of the various collections – the Rijksmuseum was in fact a collection of collections, an assemblage of museums – and the issue of how to deal with the anticipated growth of the collections. It is these aspects that will be discussed in this chapter.

The 'Effect' of the Building on the Townscape

Even in his very first plans for a new national museum – the King Willem I Museum, a private initiative of a group of wealthy Amsterdam citizens to celebrate the establishment of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands under Willem I exactly 50 years earlier in 1813 – Cuypers tried to coax the jury into a broader discussion about the place and significance of the museum in the city. Instead of submitting one design,



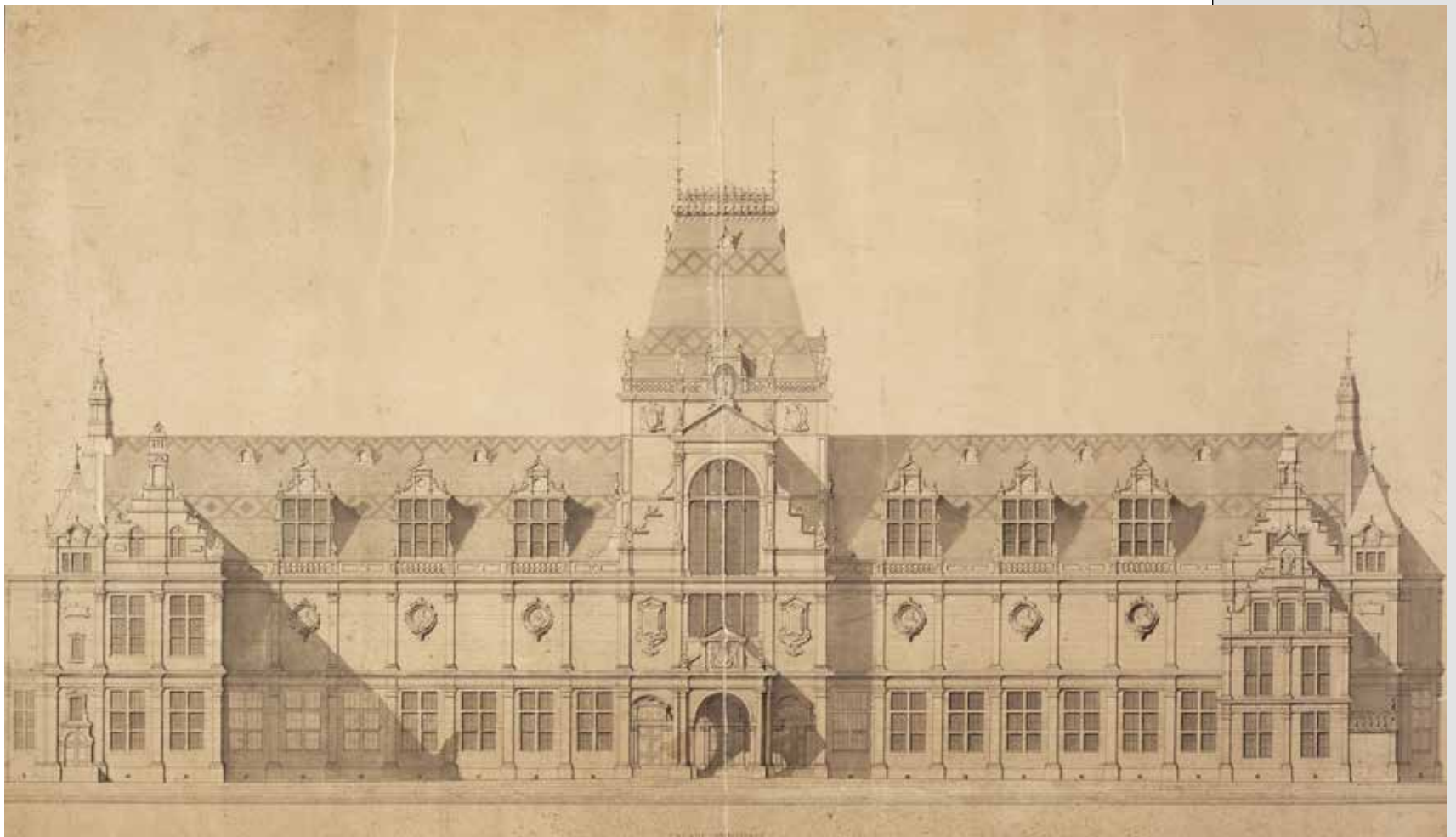
1.01

1.01 Competition design for the King Willem I Museum, Gothic version of Plan A, 1863.

1.02 Renaissance version of Plan B, 1863.

1.03 Floor plan for Plan B, 1863.

1.04 Site sketch of the museum, drawn by Cuypers in his 27 February 1864 letter to Alberdingk Thijm.

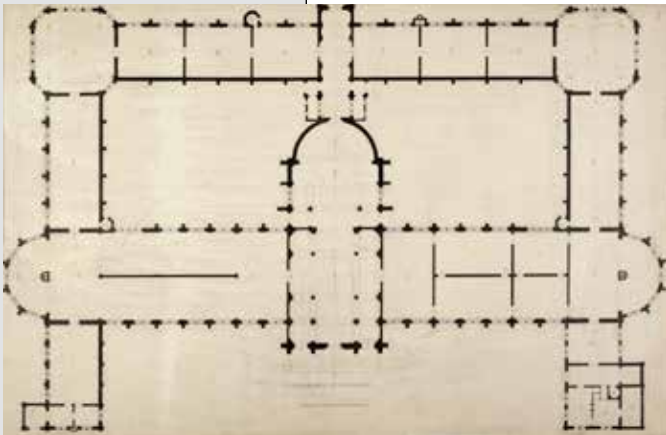


1.02

in the requested Dutch Renaissance style, he produced two typologically different solutions: one with a monumental street frontage and one with projecting corner pavilions and a forecourt as transition between street and building. For each variant he provided two differently designed façades: one with Gothic decoration, and one in Dutch Renaissance style (1.01-1.03).² The point Cuypers was trying to make with this rather complex entry was that in his view, not only should the building defer to the contents and the location in terms of the choice of material (in this case Dutch brick) and ornament, but its ground plan and composition should also conform to the urban context. Officially, the location had yet to be announced. But via his friend and brother-in-law, writer, poet and critic Joseph Alberdingk Thijm, who was also the jury secretary, he had learned that the site under consideration was the Leidsebosje, a former rampart along the axis of one of the recently opened-up radials of the Amsterdam canal zone. A sketch, appended to a letter to Thijm shows that he had immediately started to think about the relation between the building and the public space and to look at how he might adjust the urban setting to his own views and purposes (1.04).³

A detailed analysis of this plan is not relevant here. What is relevant is the fact that from his very first involvement with the museum, Cuypers searched for ways of optimizing the 'effect' of the building on the observer and of creating a striking *mise en scène* of the museum in the daily life of the city. Both notions derive directly from the theory and practice of the Gothic Revival movement. The 'effect' of the building on the townscape was a key theme in the work of A.W.N. Pugin, as can clearly be seen in his many church designs.⁴ The *mise en scène* was an important concept for E.E. Viollet-le-Duc, which he deployed in his crusade against the inability of his contemporaries to relate a building to the surrounding streets and squares.⁵ By this he was referring in particular to the – in his view – context-less and thus meaningless neoclassical architecture of the École des Beaux-Arts. A public building should express its functions logically and legibly in its composition – to quote Cuypers: 'The outward form should represent the inner function' – and simultaneously shape the urban space in a 'picturesque' fashion that was both pleasing and instructive for the citizens. Buildings should appeal, both literally and figuratively, to their users. However, this rational and simultaneously contextual approach to public buildings gave rise to new, often irregular ground plans and asymmetrical compositions that were incompatible with classical proportional systems and compositional schemes. Both designing 'from inside to outside' and the integration of irregular compositions into specific spatial settings called for a different design method. In his expanded church building practice Cuypers had accumulated plenty of experience with these types of tasks. And he had acquired the design tools for dealing with them. From Pugin and Viollet-le-Duc he had learned to design to a system (triangulation) and to handle 'ponderation' and 'multiplication', and he had become a deft practitioner of 'silhouetting'. He had become adept at composing with elements that differed in size and articulation based on human dimensions and at conjuring the functional elements of the building into a silhouette that was compelling from every perspective. His first major public commissions, for the Rijksmuseum and Amsterdam Centraal railway station, both in 1875, gave him the opportunity to introduce this Gothic rationalism into the Amsterdam townscape.

In the competition for the King Willem I Museum, Cuypers got no more than an honourable mention, the winner being a classicist design based on the ideal type of Leo von Klenze's Glyptothek in Munich. But this modest endorsement was important as a sign that his idea for a national brick architecture based on rational



1.03



1.04

principles was gaining traction. It was also, together with his influential network, the reason why he was invited to participate in the competition for the Rijksmuseum 12 years later. In this competition, a government initiative with budget to match, his entry once again engaged the jury in a discussion about the typological premises of the building.⁶

With the advent of the new client, the museum programme had undergone a significant change. The core was much the same: a ground floor with side lighting, an upper floor with skylights, and additional space for 'paintings to be added at later date'. New was the demand for a series of rooms arranged so 'as to afford the opportunity to organize the paintings systematically according to schools', and a large space for copying paintings.⁷ But in the King Willem I Museum there had been a central hall with a monument to the monarch and a series of historical paintings commemorating the establishment of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1813, and this aspect of the building now disappeared. Under the new client, what had started out as a royal pantheon became above all a public government institution for art and art education retaining the reference to the expression of national identity. This inevitably imposed new demands on the building. Victor de Stuers who, as the senior official at the Ministry of the Interior responsible for the museum, played a major role in this, was fully conversant with recent developments in the museum world. The South Kensington Museum in London (today's Victoria and Albert Museum) was an important source of inspiration for De Stuers and it was thanks to him that a Rijksnormaalschool voor Teekenonderwijzers (State Training College for Teachers of Drawing) and a Rijksschool voor Kunstnijverheid (State School for Applied Arts) were added to the programme and that Cuypers received support for his proposal to establish a library in the museum and to roof in the courtyards for his 'architecture museum', a research collection of plaster casts of building fragments.⁸ Under De Stuers, the Netherlands Museum for History and Art in The Hague was greatly expanded and transferred to the new Rijksmuseum. This consisted of a chronologically arranged series of period rooms containing a coherent display of specimens from almost nine centuries of Dutch arts and crafts.

Cuypers knew De Stuers; they were both members of the College van Rijksadviseurs voor de Monumenten van Geschiedenis en Kunst (Board of Government Advisers for Historical and Artistic Heritage) which also advised the government on new government buildings, and he showed him the first ground plan sketches for his entry. De Stuers provided detailed and knowledgeable commentary on both the programme and layout.⁹ This was a decidedly odd way to behave, especially for a government official, but typical of the decisiveness with which De Stuers propagated and applied his views on culture and cultural policy. From the very beginning he had let it be known that in his view Cuypers was the only architect in the Netherlands with sufficient gravitas and expertise to carry this commission through to a good conclusion. But on the crucial point of the typology of the museum building, Cuypers received no support from De Stuers. His attempts to introduce a building type appropriate to the ever-changing programme did not go down well with De Steurs.

The design with which Cuypers won the competition in 1875 was in line with the prevailing standard type: an orthogonal, two-storey building, with galleries arranged around two covered courtyards.¹⁰ Below galleries with side lighting, on the upper floor a combination of smaller, side-lit rooms and top-lit galleries. The attics had space for the two schools and the library was designed as an annex to the main building. This, together with the covered courtyards and a villa for the director, Cuypers had added on his own initiative.

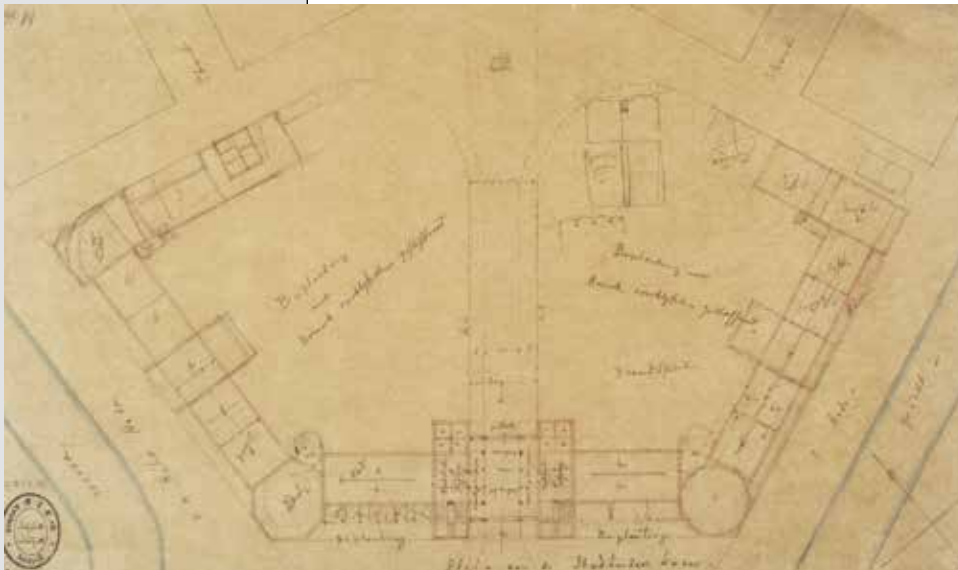
1.05 Design sketch for the five-wing plan, 1875.

1.06 Floor plan with circulation plan from 1875. Here the entrance area is underneath the gate.

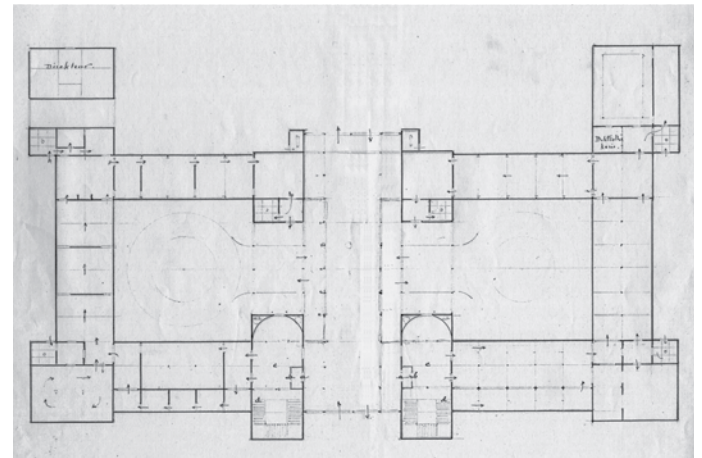
A complicating factor in the design was the City of Amsterdam's demand for a public access route through the museum, wide enough for modern traffic. The council hoped that this would increase the value of the land behind the museum – a still unreclaimed polder just beyond the recently demolished seventeenth-century fortifications of Amsterdam – and so allow it to recoup the cost of the land for the museum. Dutch architects, organized in the *Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst* (Society for the Advancement of Architecture) and the Amsterdam artists' association *Arti et Amicitiae*, declared their opposition to this mutilation of the building, which would make it impossible to create a central entrance with spacious lobby, something they considered essential in a building of such importance. Alberdingk Thijm, however, welcomed the passageway. He saw it as evidence of a re-emerging realization that the museum should be part of the living organism of the city. It would raise the museum to the status of 'an artery' and make it, in his words, 'a lifeline of our citizenry'.¹¹ The passageway was not without precedent. Proponents cited the example of the *Guichets* in the recent extensions to the Louvre in 1862-1869.¹² And the *Gemäldegalerie* in Dresden (1842-1855), G. Semper's extension to the Zwinger, which had a similar passageway. But the practical consequences for the operation of building were far-reaching – particularly for the entrance.

The Five-Wing Plan

Alongside the winning design, Cuypers had again submitted a variant, henceforth referred to here as the five-wing plan (1.05). In the 1870s, the standard type for museum buildings was under increasing pressure. National museums were evolving into broad institutions where the culture and history of the country were displayed in all their facets. Collections of art, crafts and history were brought together, sometimes in combination with scientific and technological presentations, or ethnographic and colonial collections. As a result the museum was becoming a collection of museums, a conglomerate of collections, each with its own particular requirements with respect to management, preservation and presentation. What's more, the collections were no longer static. Museums became more active in collecting and there was a more varied exhibition policy.



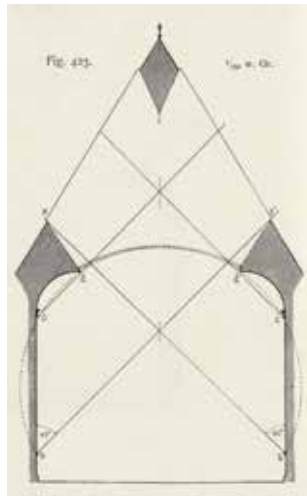
1.05



1.06

The result was that the displays were changed regularly and the museum gallery, instead of being a permanent habitat for a number of specific works of art, became a more neutral space for constantly changing exhibits. These programmatic changes led in turn to the development of new architectural concepts, of new building types. In addition to the classic museum as a 'closed system' – as described in the *Handbuch der Architektur* – there appeared buildings with a free, picturesque succession of stylistically and typologically different wings, each appropriate to the objects displayed within. In German this was called the *Angliederungssystem* (affiliation system), an approach perfectly in tune with Cuypers' Gothic rationalism.¹³ There were as yet no concrete examples of designs made in accordance with this 'system' in 1875. But Cuypers had observed how the South Kensington Museum, with its burgeoning collections and growing educational targets, was bursting at the seams and seen how successive architects struggled to keep some kind of grip on the rapidly expanding building complex. At the same time, there was a change in the meaning – and in parallel with this in the iconography – of the museum building. From the perspective of an ever-stronger 'l'art pour l'art' attitude, its connotation was less that of a work of art for works of art, a monument to art history, and more that of a neutral monumental exhibition building.¹⁴

Cuypers' five-wing plan reveals that he was well-acquainted with these developments and had immediately started to look for an appropriate building type. He wanted a museum that allowed for a structured, organic expansion. Beginning with three wings, it could be increased to five over time, and if necessary a sixth wing could be built through the middle of the courtyard. As far as the style and decorative programme were concerned, he appears, in view of the museum's still immature programme, to have kept two options open: he drew no façades, so the building could become either a more neutral exhibition building or a monumental representation of national culture. He did, however, add one aspect. In the explanatory memorandum, instead of describing the design in relation to the programme – which would have been logical – he justified it in relation to the spatial context. In this variant, the building could be erected 'in relation to the streets indicated on the site plan'.¹⁵ And that was the crux of the plan. Before starting on the competition design, Cuypers had requested the urban design plans for this area from the city engineer, J. Kalff, and noted that the museum site was set to become the connector between the old city and the expansion into the Buitenvelderse polder. The building itself would function as a gateway to the new suburb and Cuypers deliberately took this into account. In his plan, Kalff had straightened the Singelgracht (today: Stadhouderskade) at the museum site and designed regularly laid out canals beside and behind the museum, in an allusion to Amsterdam's historical urban structure. In a sketch for his five-wing plan, Cuypers carefully drew the outlines of the canals and the embankment and positioned the building very precisely vis-à-vis the surrounding public spaces. The space in front of the building was designated as a square, a revival of the forecourt theme from his first museum design. At the rear he increased the size of a six-way crossroads into a radial intersection with a monument in the centre. The entrances to the building were located in the passageway, thereby interweaving city and museum in the building's circulation system (1.06). The effect and the *mise en scène* of the museum were thus also ensured far into the future. It would develop in conjunction with the public space around it, would be able to grow along with the collection and through the choice of ornament and any additional decorative programmes, fulfil its task of educating the passer-by.



1.07

However, as Cuypers had reluctantly accepted, radical typological innovation and formal experiments were out of the question in the competition. The jury put his five-wing plan aside without comment, and he won the competition thanks to his effective and skilful interpretation of what had become the standard for museum buildings. For years to come he continued to sketch his expandable version, often on the drawings for the museum. And when in the 1910s the construction of the Drucker extension proved him right, he came up with a startling plan to 'wrap the Rijksmuseum' in a five-wing version.¹⁶

That ultimately he succeeded in adapting the standard type to his own ideas and linking it to the urban context according to his own insights, was due to the dexterity with which he – supported by De Stuers – took advantage of the constant expansion of the programme. This process can be followed in detail in the succession of ground plan designs and the explanatory memoranda.

Towards a Final Design

Basically, the ground plan consisted of a simple succession of galleries arranged around the courtyards, linked through the middle by the Gallery of Honour. Corridors were deliberately avoided because in Cuypers' view they distracted from the routing and wasted space. Staircases were attached to the outside of the building as separate towers so that they did not interrupt the routing and allowed the museum to be divided into sections if desired. For the schools in the attics, but also for the Van der Hoop collection, for example, autonomous entrances were required. These staircase towers presented Cuypers at the same time with a means of enlivening the composition of the building by working 'logically' from inside to outside.

Within the circuit of galleries the collections were arranged in relation to the light. There was a growing preference for top lighting on paintings (1.07). But because of the decision to have two floors, it was necessary to work with a mixture of side and top lighting in the galleries, through a combination of windows and skylights, and with light of varying quality: some of it entering directly from outside, some tempered by the roofed courtyards or filtered by the glass awnings in the top-lit galleries. Already in his first ground plan design, Cuypers had indicated in detail what light quality he deemed most appropriate to which part of the collection. As he continued to develop the lighting plan he was critically monitored by the College van Rijksadviseurs, the clients and later also by the members of two prominent artists' associations, *Arti et Amicitiae* and *Pulchri Studio*.¹⁷ In the end Cuypers even went so far as to build a test gallery in order to be sure that the dimensions of the galleries and the shape of the light openings in the roof satisfied standards for light on paintings (1.08). The lighting requirements thus influenced the dimensions of the building, both in plan and section. The fact that the top-lit galleries in the north wing on *Stadhouderskade* were nonetheless combined with smaller rooms with side lighting – theoretically less suitable for paintings – had to do with the appearance of the building. There was increasing criticism of blank wall planes in museum façades. Although they were a logical product of the programme, Cuypers, too, regarded the possibility of a partly blind façade for the national museum in such a prominent location as a problem. The location itself came to his aid. Thanks to the 'favourable disposition of the site to the north', the main façade could, as he put it, be 'enlivened' with windows.¹⁸ These windows also illustrate once again the considerable influence of the light on the design – not just in plan and section, but also in the composition of the façade. The height of the window sills was determined with reference to

1.08 Trial gallery for lighting, 1879.

1.09 Design sketch of the Rijksmuseum in its urban context, 1877.

1.10 View of the rear façade with library, director's villa, and the first extension (the Fragment Building), 1894.

1.11 pages 60-61:
The Museum Quarter, photographed facing south. The layout of Museumplein was also designed by Cuypers.

leading German research into the correct incidence of light on the *Bilderzone*, the strip of wall in the hall where the paintings were hung.¹⁹

But Cuypers' greatest challenges were the *mise en scène* of the building and finding a solution for the entrance. Right at the beginning of the project he had noted that, seen from the city, the building would 'sink' into the deep-lying polder. The passageway flanked by staircase towers automatically formed a gateway motif. But to be effective this gate needed to be at the same level as Stadhouderskade. The construction of the sewage system resulted in a slight raising of the ground, but this was not enough. Using the addition of the Netherlands Museum for History and Art, which included a collection of crypts, and exploiting the growing demand for plant rooms, especially for a heating system, he eventually managed to add a *souterrain* to the building. This brought it to level with the embankment and the Spiegelgracht bridge, which at his request had been kept as flat as possible to create an optimal perspective on the middle section of the museum seen from the canal zone. *En passant* he managed to persuade the city council to move a vegetable market, planned in front the museum, as it did not strike him as appropriate for the approach to the Rijksmuseum. And he made proposals for pocket-parks or, as a compromise between 'profitability and embellishment', villas with gardens on the former ramparts opposite the museum. Also he succeeded in blocking housing developments at the end of P.C. Hoofstraat, on the west side of the museum, which was instead laid out as a square. In this way he ensured the building of an appropriate setting on all sides, with clear views of the façades from the city and sufficient perspectives to enable it to be experienced as a three-dimensional composition (1.09-1.11). Carefully integrated into the façade compositions, the staircase towers with their different crowns made for a constantly changing silhouette as one walked around the building and a dynamic representation of the museum in the city. Now that he was unable to use the building's façades to shape the surrounding streets and squares, he did what he could to make the free-standing building part of the lively and picturesque streetscape of Amsterdam.

From the outset, Cuypers had kept several options in reserve for the entrance. The crux of the problem was, as already stated, that the passageway divided the building in two and made a central hall with staircase impossible. Cuypers nonetheless managed to make a virtue of necessity. His ideal was to enter via the archway, then through the arcades the to right or left into the courtyards and from there to the vestibules and the main staircases. This would generate a carefully stage-managed diverted *route architecturale*, a gradual progression from busy city life, via the formal forecourt, through the rather dark gateway towards the muted light of the passageway and via the spacious, top-lit courtyards – preferably to be decorated with educational history paintings – to the facework staircases and then on up to the iconographically charged Great Hall, introducing the arts. He kept open the option of making two doors directly beneath the gateway, should the courtyards not be made available as an entrance. De Stuers suggested another variant: making an entrance in one of the courtyards, with a grand staircase on the transverse axis leading to the first floor, to be modelled on the Renaissance staircase of the town hall in Leiden.

However, formally a response to the plans from King Willem III had to be awaited. Initially he reacted only to the composition and the façade. Referring to the high roofs and the rich Renaissance ornament of the middle section, he condescendingly compared the building to a Guild hall, thereby unerringly putting his finger on what was for him the sore spot. From a royal museum, founded to commemorate the restoration of the Orange dynasty, the building





had been transformed into a national museum. In style and iconography, it had changed from a royal building to a civic institution. In early 1877, however, he demanded that the museum should have doors opening onto the street, apparently something that he felt was essential for a building of this stature.²⁰

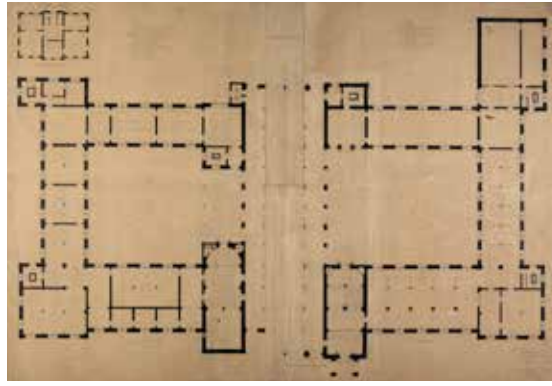
The issue of style was resolved by the responsible minister with a single stroke of the pen: Cuypers was to continue along the lines of his competition design (1.14, 1.15). But when it came to the entrance, even De Stuers felt obliged to defer to the king's comment. This put Cuypers in a difficult situation. In his proposal, the gateway motif with two staircase towers arose logically out of the circulation plan. With front doors on the street the staircases would have to move to the rear and the towers would no longer be the logical crowning of a vertical circulation point. Cuypers now had to choose and in the end he allowed the story he wanted to tell with the building to prevail over his rationalist principles: he clung to the gateway motif and the towers became empty spaces above the vestibules and landings.

The – for Cuypers – crucial issues of light and circulation, which is to say the relation between the light and the shape of the gallery, and between the enfilades of galleries and the exterior, have received virtually no attention in the history of the museum's reception. The professional world reacted favourably. Shortly after completion, the top-lit gallery featured as a model in the *Handbuch der Architektur*. With the ongoing research into lighting there was criticism, not only from visual artists, but also from a fellow-architect, A.W. Weissman, the designer of the Stedelijk Museum.²¹ And the lighting of the *Night Watch* was a case study in itself.

But with the introduction of artificial light this debate subsided and in the interwar years appreciation of the building in fact broke down into two parts: an exterior increasingly cherished as a monument, the *Bildseite* of the building as it were, and an interior that was seen primarily in terms of functionality. With changing views about exhibiting, the mixed displays in appropriately fitted out period rooms, and the chronologically arranged exhibitions gradually made way for a more art-for-art's-sake-inspired approach to hanging. The character of the galleries was neutralized, the decoration progressively erased and the structure of the museum routing adjusted – most dramatically by the filling in of the courtyards in the 1960s.

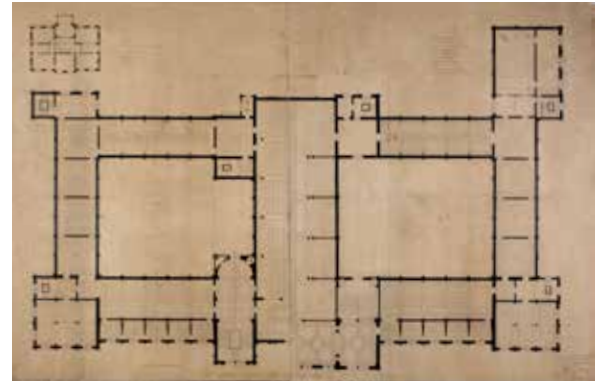
A comprehensive analysis of the detailing and decoration of the interior is not appropriate here. But even a superficial examination reveals that in the interior, too, Cuypers elaborated and decorated the museum as a collection of museums. The ground floor was occupied by the Netherlands Museum for History and Art, a series of galleries constructed, materialized and decorated to match the characteristics of the architecture of the period in question. On the main floor there was the iconographically charged ensemble of Great Hall, Gallery of Honour and Night Watch Gallery, and around these the more neutrally designed top-lit galleries, some fitted out for a special collection, such as the Van der Hoop Collection. From the outset there was criticism of the wealth of decoration and the combination of original pieces and contemporary history paintings. This came mostly from a younger generation of painters, who distanced themselves from the predominantly historicist view on art of the final quarter of the nineteenth century. Appreciation for the building's organization as a lesson in art and cultural history was of short duration and it gradually changed into a more neutral container for the national art collections. In the process people lost sight of the fact that in the interior, too, there was a link between construction, spatial structure and decoration. The decoration was no mere ornamental addition, but a means of articulating the choice of

1.12 Competition design for the Rijksmuseum, 1875. Ground level, with the modified entrance area along the Stadhouderskade pasted to it.



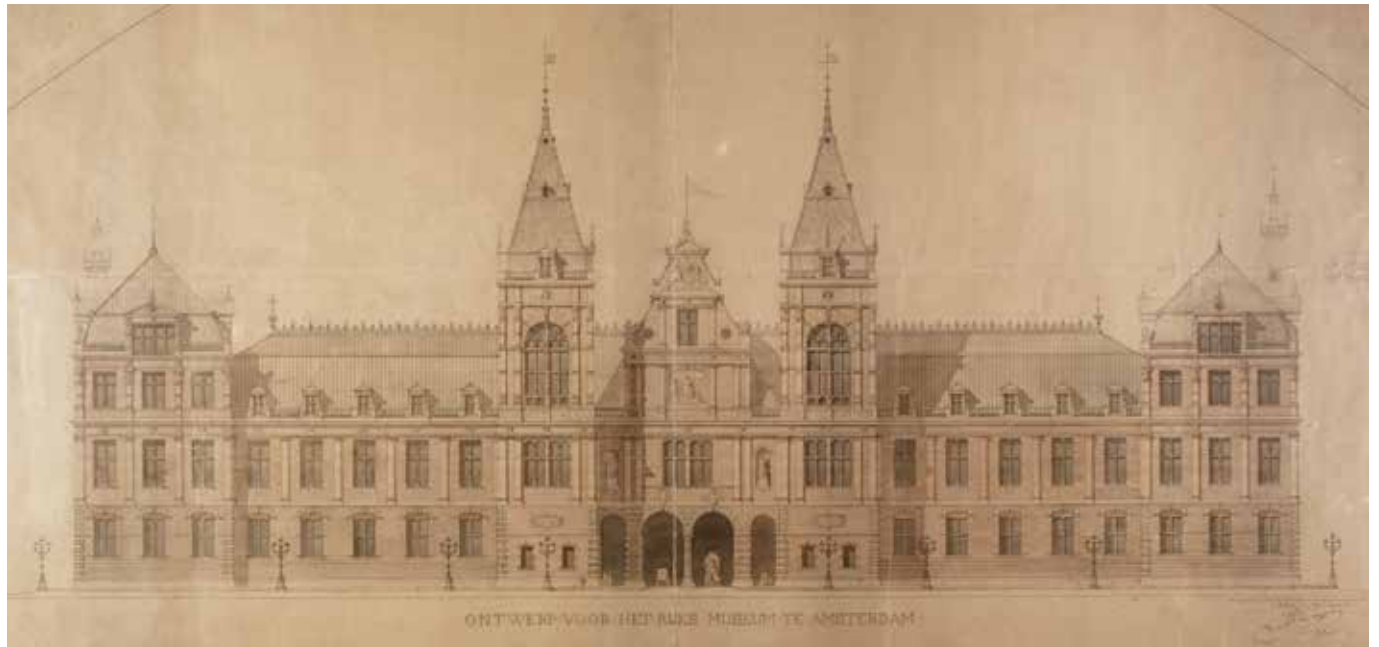
1.12

1.13 The main floor, with the modified access structure pasted to it, 1875.



1.13

1.14 Competition design for the front façade of the Rijksmuseum, 1875.



1.14

1.15 Modified façade design, 1877.



1.15



1.16

1.16 Main entrance
at the northeast.

1.17 Gallery of Honour,
situation prior to 1917.



1.17



1.18

1.18 Vestibule of the original entranceway on the west, situation prior to 1917.



materials, the construction and the spatial structure, and of underlining their importance in the whole. A typical example was the differentiated treatment of the decoration in the approach to the Great Hall (1.16, 1.18, 1.19). The main impression upon entering the hall through the front doors was of facing brickwork. Materiality and construction were dominant. In the upper part of the Great Hall, the spatial and structural articulation was supported by decoration, but history paintings and allegorical depictions predominated. Thus, as the visitor advanced towards the art, the physical qualities of the building made way for more ideal aspects.

With the gradual whitewashing of the interior in the interwar period and especially in the 1950s and 1960s, the spatial and structural features of the various parts of the museum disappeared.²² The museum as an educational collection of collections became – on the inside – a neutral container for works of art. The recent renovation/restoration of the building afforded the opportunity to reinstate important aspects of Cuypers' design. The restoration work by Van Hoogevest Architecten, the modifications by Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos and the interior by Wilmotte & Associés represent big steps in that direction.

Thus far, there has been no comprehensive reappraisal of Cuypers' building – of the museum concept, spatial forms, structural aspects and decoration, regarded as an integrated whole. Still, the new entryway through the central passageway and the courtyards is the embodiment of Cuypers' ideal entrance route, after almost 150 years. The placement of the main stairwells, which are the wrong way round with respect to the flow of visitor traffic, can be seen as a lasting tribute to the inevitable compromise between the architectural ideal and the stubborn reality of technical, practical and administrative requirements.

1.19 Great Hall,
situation prior to 1917.



1.19



A.01

A.01 The east façade of the Atelier Building, designed by Cruz y Ortiz.

After the completion of the Rijksmuseum in 1885, the complex consisted of the main building, the director's villa, and the surrounding museum garden. The north façade, on the Singelgracht side of the main building, was perfectly symmetrical. The south façade, facing Museumplein, was more or less symmetrical too, but the library and the director's villa were presented as independent structural units. Here, symmetry made way for cohesion between unequal parts (*pondération*). Against the background of the main building with its gateway role, these smaller volumes were intended to harmonize with the planned luxury housing in the surrounding area. It was a picturesque setting that had no trouble accommodating the earliest additions to the museum complex: the Oefenschool (Training School, 1891, later known as the Teekenschool, or Drawing School), the Fragment Building (containing fragments of historic structures, 1898), the Night Watch extension (1906, later the Vermeer extension), and the Drucker extension, designed by Cuypers' son Joseph between 1909 and 1916.

Later, this ensemble of buildings was disrupted by the addition of bicycle sheds and a car park. In 1995, the Rijksgebouwendienst (Government Buildings Agency) acquired the former Security Institute on the other side of Hobbemastraat, now called the Atelier Building. Since 2000, there has been an underground connection between this building and the museum by way of an underground storage tunnel designed by Hans Ruijsenaars. This structure under Museumstraat and Hobbemastraat houses two levels of storage areas, as well as parking places for 25 tourist buses.

The only way to achieve the goal of making the new Rijksmuseum accessible to the largest possible number of visitors was by moving all public services not meant for presentation to the old extensions and other surrounding buildings. Additional storage facilities have been set up outside Amsterdam, for instance in the former Eurokluizen in Lelystad. The Mannheimer Villa next to the Security Institute, on the corner of Museumplein and Hobbemastraat, began its life as an office for the directors and administrative staff in 2003. Across the street, what was formerly the director's villa has been converted into offices for the curators. The Teekenschool has become an educational centre. The preliminary design for the Teekenschool by Cruz y Ortiz (2002) had to be altered considerably after it drew fire from the Commissie voor Welstand en Monumenten in Amsterdam (Design Review Board) and the national and municipal agencies responsible for the preservation of historic buildings. Building archaeological research was done and water basins from the historic Defence Line of Amsterdam were found buried underneath it. These basins have now been preserved. Inside the building, the original layout was reinstated and the striking, chapel-like extension was restored into an area for study and visitor activities. The building also accommodates parts of the National Print Room and the Royal Antiquarian Society.

The renovation and expansion of the Security Building, turning it into the Atelier Building, was not initially part of the commission for the main architectural. Later, however, the project was entrusted to Cruz y Ortiz. This was the first part of the complex to be completed (in 2007). The Rijksmuseum is only one of the three lessees; in this building, it works together with the University of Amsterdam and the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands on research, restoration, and conservation of art objects. The new addition was constructed behind the front section of the historic Security Institute (originally the Security Museum), designed in 1911 by Eduard Cuypers, a nephew of Pierre Cuypers. The large rear section, later renovated several times, was demolished to make room for the ultra-modern Atelier Building. To create a smooth transition between this large new building and the planned luxury

housing development, the designer made the middle section lower than the rest of it, creating a horseshoe-like shape. Because the saw tooth roof and ridged façades are oriented towards the north, no direct sunlight will enter the conservation studios.

Two new buildings complete the new Rijksmuseum: the Asian Pavilion and the Entrance Building, which took the place of the former bicycle sheds and car park. These two structures, clad in Portuguese limestone and lined with large windows, were both designed by Cruz y Ortiz. The Asian Pavilion is discreetly located between the main building and the South Wing, partly underground. The pool surrounding it echoes an earlier garden design by landscape architect Jan Boon. After the invited competition, the design for the pavilion was fleshed out in greater detail, but barely altered. The planned building was made somewhat smaller and thus better suited to its site. Cruz y Ortiz also designed the interior, including the display cases.

The Entrance Building was designed in 2002 as a Study Centre that would tower above the eaves line of the main building. The plan was for the Entrance Building to contain offices, a study centre and physical plant facilities, with a flue at the top for gas from the underground energy centre. Because the Ministry of Culture, Welstand and the national and municipal agencies responsible for the preservation of historic buildings had their doubts about this tall, eye-catching addition to the complex, the building was reduced to the same proportions as the other annexes in the final design drawn up in 2006. Situated next to the Teekenschool, it serves as a staff entrance to the complex and provides access to storage areas and reading rooms. There are underground passageways between the Entrance Building and the museum's invisible extensions: the underworld of the energy centre, the Energy Ring and the storage areas.

The refurbishment of the South Wing (the Drucker extension and Fragment Building) forms the last step on the road to the new Rijksmuseum. During the renovation of the main building, this extension served as a temporary museum with highlights from the collection. Consequently, renovation could not begin there until the museum complex reopened. The building will host temporary exhibitions and a second café-restaurant with outdoor seating.



A.02

A.02-05 The exterior and interior of the Asian Pavilion, designed by Cruz y Ortiz.



A.03



A.04

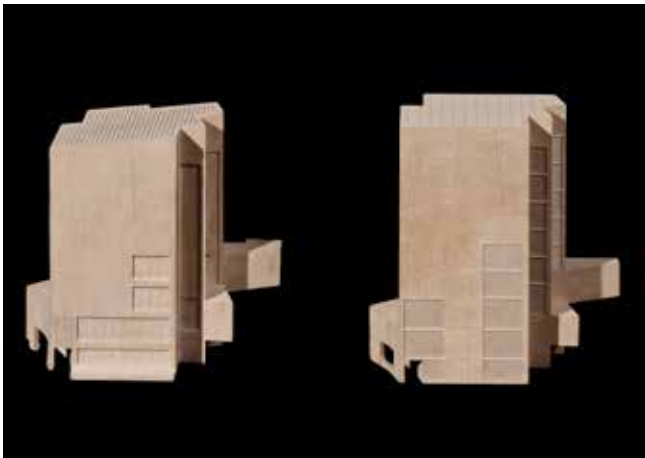


A.05



A.06

A.06-10 Various design studies for the Study Centre, later known as the Entrance Building.



A.07



A.08



A.09



A.10



A.11 Rear (north side) of the Entrance Building, as built.

A.11



A.12 Front (south side) of the Entrance Building, as built.

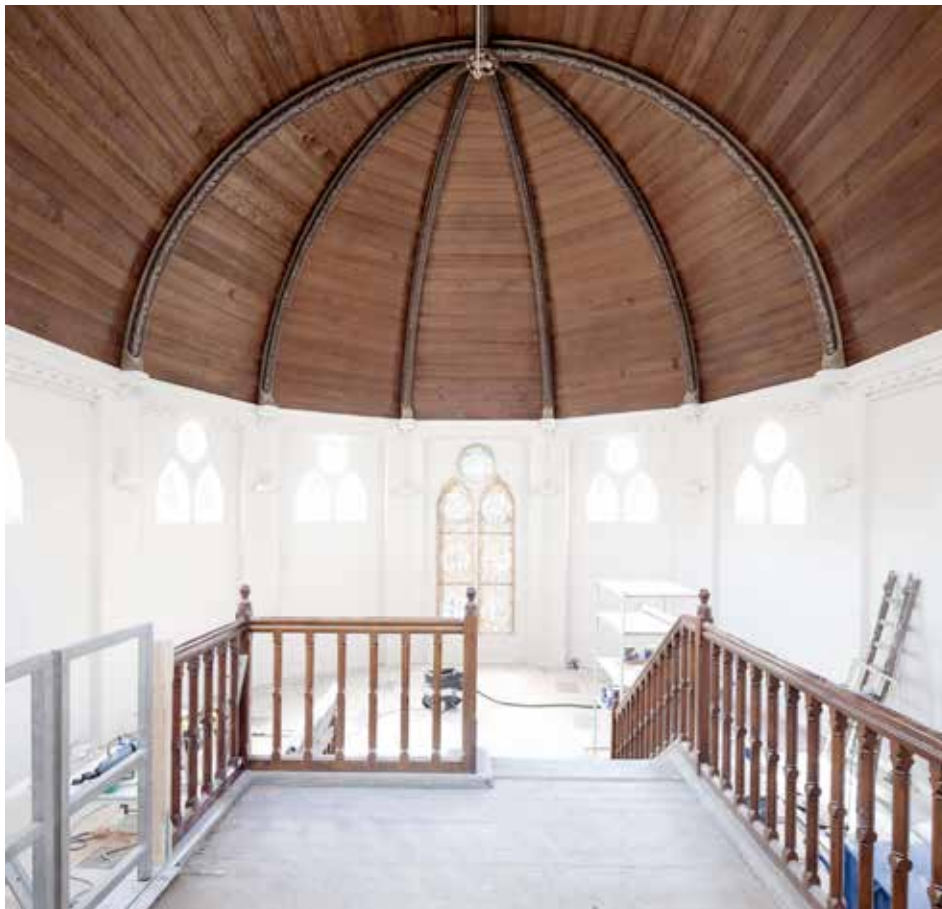
A.12





A.14 The Teekenschool,
north side.

A.14



A.15 Interior of the restored
Teekenschool.

A.15



A.16



A.17



A.18

A.16 Model of the Atelier Building.

A.17 Interior of the Atelier Building.

A.18 Aerial photograph of the Atelier Building from the north.



A.19-20 East façade of the Atelier Building.

A.19



A.21 Studio space in the Atelier Building.

A.20



A.21



'A New Building inside the Walls of the Old One'

Some 50 years ago, after the renovation of the Rijksmuseum had been completed, managing director Arthur van Schendel triumphantly commented:

In the summer of 1962, the Rijksmuseum became the focus of attention when it opened its complex of 30 new galleries and an auditorium with almost 400 seats, a new building inside the walls of the old. This was not the end of the process, but it was a high point in a long series of activities undertaken since the liberation of the Netherlands to create a fitting, modern accommodation that does justice to the country's world-famous art collection.¹

Later, architecture critic Max van Rooy called this renovation 'an assault of the most violent nature' on the building.² The new intervention by Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos has wiped away almost every trace of these post-war-era modifications. In the years separating Pierre Cuypers from Cruz y Ortiz, the Rijksmuseum underwent alterations inspired by various motives and concepts. There were a few recurring themes: the central passageway, the grandeur of the building's backbone (the Great Hall, Gallery of Honour and Night Watch Gallery), the confusing walking routes, the continual shortage of space, and the question of what to do with Cuypers' decorations. These were also the major themes in Hans Ruijsenaars's master plan (from 1996), which formed the backdrop to the recent renovation.

Lack of Space and Changing Perspectives

The exterior of the Rijksmuseum has remained almost unchanged since it was first built. The main reason for changes inside the building has been a lack of space. Cuypers' original conception of the Rijksmuseum was as a gathering place for art objects. He did not include any storage space in his design for the building; the entire art collection was on display. Unsurprisingly, the first storage space was set up just one year after the opening ceremony in 1885, in one of the larger exhibition rooms on the ground floor.³ Other responses to the shortage of space included the installation of false ceilings (which began as early as 1898) and the use of partitions to increase hanging space in the galleries.⁴ The museum collection was growing all the time, and the directors had to keep raising the bar for inclusion. Consequently, more and more space was used for storage, at the cost of exhibition space and facilities for staff and the public. In the 1920s, concrete floors were poured in the two courtyards, so that storage basements could be dug underneath them. From 1967 to 1974, several towers were also used for storage (2.01, 2.04).

The changes to the building were made by Cuypers himself in the early years, but over time his health declined and his son Joseph (or Jos) Cuypers took over his responsibilities.⁵ In 1893, Jos Cuypers became the official deputy Rijksmuseum architect. So much construction and restoration took place that it kept the museum's 'Building Office' continually occupied. Jos Cuypers' own architecture firm also received assignments for the Rijksmuseum, such as the enlargement of the Rijksnormaalschool voor Teekenonderwijzers (State Training College for Teachers of Drawing, now known as the Teekenschool, or Drawing School) in 1923-1924.



2.01



2.02



2.03

2.01 Plaster models in the west courtyard, 1923.

2.02 The Gallery of Honour viewed from the Night Watch Gallery during the 1925 renovation.

2.03 Exterior of the Night Watch extension, later called the Vermeer extension, 1936.

2.04 The east courtyard, 1929.

2.05 Renovation of west gallery 272 in 1926.

In 1922, a year after the death of Pierre Cuypers, the appointment of Frederik Schmidt-Degener led to a complete reorganization of the permanent exhibition and the museum building. After an experiment with displaying fifteenth- and sixteenth-century paintings in the five east galleries of the main building, the other galleries were redecorated between 1924 and 1927, and as a result many objects were sent to storage once again (2.05). In 1924, the walls were painted a hue that Schmidt-Degener believed was better suited to the nature of the works on display. The floors were covered with linoleum, the galleries were lined with jute, and the polychrome decorative scheme was toned down. That same year, overhead lights were installed in the Night Watch Gallery and the Carolingian Chapel.⁶

Particularly radical changes were made to the main central axis of the museum building – the Great Hall, Gallery of Honour and Night Watch Gallery. Cuypers had built an extension on the south side of this axis because of problems with lighting the *Night Watch* (2.02, 2.03). But this Night Watch extension was off the main route through the museum and on a different level from the rest of the building, and so the painting was returned to its original gallery in 1926. This time it was exhibited on the west wall. In 1925, in preparation for its return, the Night Watch Gallery had been panelled and painted, the curtains had been removed, and the decorative paintings on the walls and ceilings had been covered with whitewash. The floor of the Gallery of Honour had been raised so that it was at the same level as the side galleries. The floors were carpeted and the vaulting was overpainted. Display cases of Delftware covered the length of the Gallery of Honour. In 1958, the floor of the Gallery of Honour would be lowered again, reinstating the difference in elevation between the main gallery and the side galleries. The visual unity of the Gallery of Honour and Night Watch Gallery was not restored until 1983, when the *Night Watch* was returned to its former place.



2.04



2.05

Eschauzier and Röell

The second period of thorough renovation at the Rijksmuseum was the work of a smoothly functioning duo: the museum director and the architect. Frits Eschauzier, the architect in question, was a friend of Willem Sandberg, who worked at the Stedelijk Museum. Sandberg had put Eschauzier in touch with David Röell before the Second World War. When Röell was appointed director of the Rijksmuseum, he asked Eschauzier to make whatever plans he saw fit for the redesign of the building's interior. By 1948, the galleries had already been 'stripped of the very unsightly multicoloured friezes and black panelling and repainted in colours befitting the works of art'.⁷ In 1949 new display cases, pedestals and parquet floors were installed. New levels were added in the courtyards for extra exhibition space. A year later, in 1950, the decorations in the Night Watch Gallery were toned down, and in 1951 Eschauzier redecorated the Gallery of Honour and the eight adjoining side galleries. Röell had the walls of the Rijksmuseum whitewashed, like those in the Stedelijk, for an aesthetic display of a selection of highlights. He aspired to improve public taste and made a sharp distinction between painting, sculpture and applied arts.

The first 60 galleries redecorated by Eschauzier met with public enthusiasm. Eschauzier collaborated with architect Bart van Kasteel on this project. The bright light in the new, white-stuccoed galleries, which provided a clearer view of the art objects, was felt to be 'supernatural', a kind of revelation. At last, the Rijksmuseum's interior met the standards for museums of the day. In the interior, Eschauzier used low, arched passages at angles to one another: 'Here, a sculpture along the axis of a passage tempts the visitor to continue to the next gallery; elsewhere, a partition hides the entrance to tempt curiosity' (2.06).⁸ Eschauzier installed a muslin canopy to filter the light, softening contrasts; in combination with the lowered ceilings, this lent greater intimacy to the spaces.⁹ He manipulated light that entered from above and to the sides 'to the extent that by using various shades of white, he could adapt the reflectivity of the walls to the type of object'.¹⁰ In 1957 the high ceilings were lowered and pre-walls were installed, along with parquet and marble floors and block-shaped, freestanding display cases. Windows and doors were closed off wherever possible. Not all the responses to Eschauzier's measures were favourable. One of the great architects of the Modern Movement, J.J.P. Oud, made his displeasure known in a letter to the National Commission for Conservation. He offered an admonition: 'Removing ornament with the intention of possibly restoring it later strikes me as *such* a peculiar procedure, when applied to a recognized piece of "great" architecture, that I shall say no more about it!'

Oud argued that Eschauzier's approach was detrimental to Cuypers' 'masterpiece', and he argued against imposing changing fashions in exhibition design on buildings that 'cannot endure' such measures. Oud contended that the integrity of Cuypers' building deserved the same respect as that of a historic work of art. He wrote that he had always very much enjoyed his visits to the museum until Schmidt-Degener had begun his alterations.¹¹

When Eschauzier died unexpectedly, former Chief Government Architect Gijsbert Friedhoff briefly managed the Rijksmuseum. During his tenure, the Great Hall, the Gallery of Honour, the Night Watch Gallery and the other galleries in the east wing were redecorated once again.¹²

2.06 Frits Eschauzier's interior decoration of the galleries, 1952.

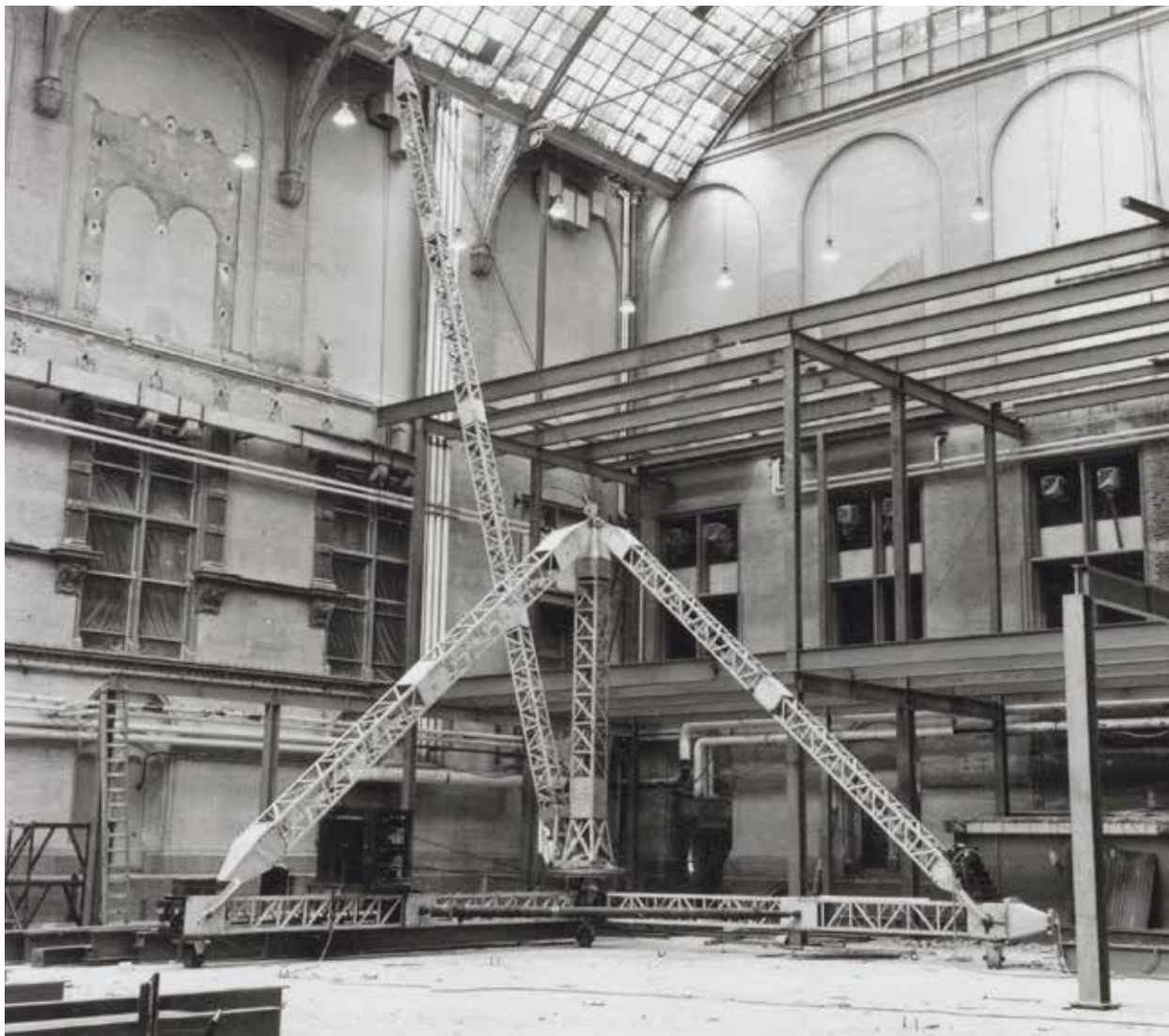
2.07 Trial arrangement in the west courtyard for the Meissen porcelain exhibition, 1957.



2.06



2.07



2.08

2.08 Construction of steel frame in the west courtyard, 1960.

2.09 The arcades in the central passageway, closed off with marble panels, with display cases.

2.10 Design for an entrance area in the central passageway by Dick Elfers and Thijs Wijnalda, version A, 1967.



2.09

Filling in the Courtyards

Just prior to his death in 1956, Eschauzier had made proposals for alterations in the west courtyard. In 1957, Röell had persuaded the Dutch authorities to allocate funds for this renovation. To achieve this he had set up a provisional display in the courtyards, with partitions on which art objects were exhibited (2.07).

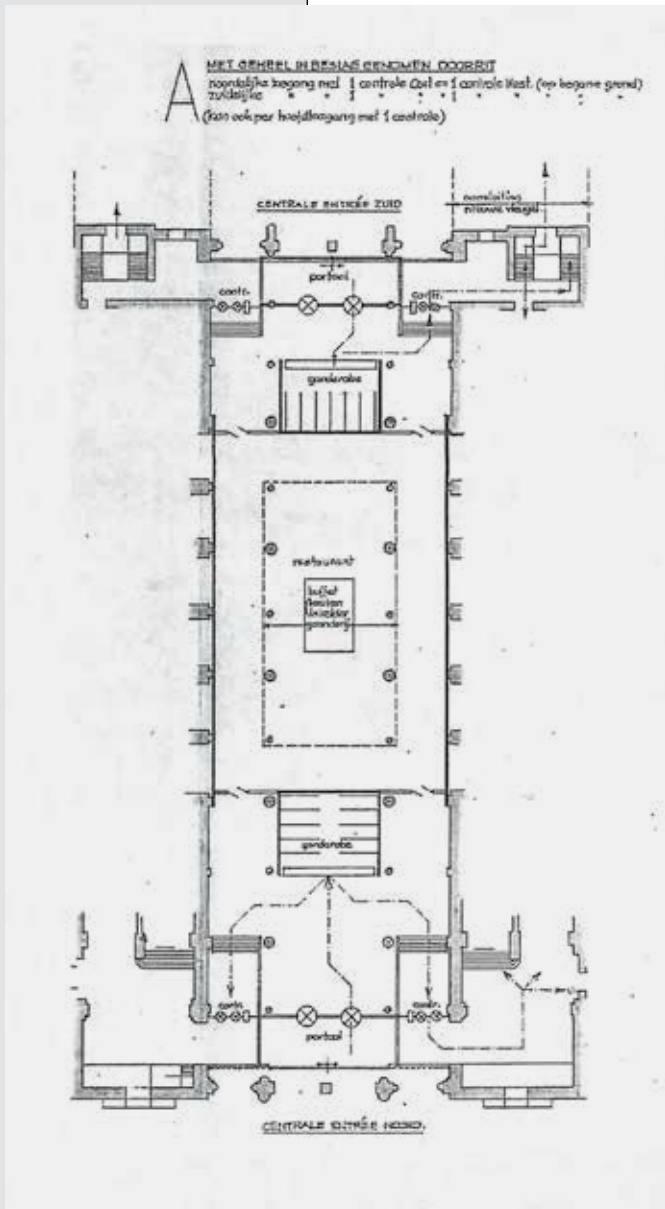
Eschauzier's successors moved forward with this project. Visual artist Dick Elffers began working for the Rijksmuseum in 1956, a relationship that would continue for 25 years. His work for the museum included both graphic and exhibition design; his first project was to devise a new letterhead and posters. Later, he started up an agency with architect Thijs Wijnalda, which handled the design of temporary Rijksmuseum exhibitions, as well as a few major renovations, such as the filling-in of the two courtyards. In 1962, the Sculpture and Applied Arts Departments opened in the 30 new galleries in the west courtyard; for this purpose, Elffers and Wijnalda had designed two new levels. With acoustical assistance from the National Theatre Building Committee, they also designed an auditorium, the Roëllzaal, with 384 seats. The infill in the west courtyard was a steel structure with concrete floors (2.08). The new passages had an aluminium finish. Marble was used in transition areas between old and new sections.

To speed up the renovation process, the Rijksmuseum was placed under the authority of the Rijksgebouwendienst's (Government Buildings Agency; Rgd) department for new building projects, starting in 1964.¹³ This gave an additional impetus to the renovation of the east courtyard. The old walls and floors were demolished, and concrete walls were erected with a slip forming construction technique that was innovative for its time. The floors were made of pre-stressed concrete beams. This technique made it possible to create large spaces without intermediate columns, spaces that could be divided and used in various ways. In 1969, the east courtyard was completed and the Dutch History Department moved there. The artfully worked iron trusses designed by Cuypers to span the courtyards were now entirely concealed from view. The transition between the courtyards and the building was invisible; the original outer walls of the courtyards were hidden behind new walls. The arcades on either side of the central passageway had been closed, a measure that blocked all visual contact between the passageway and the courtyards (2.09).

Cuypers himself had been unhappy with how the passageway cut through the ground floor of the Rijksmuseum. He called it an 'obstacle to the interconnectedness of the building'.¹⁴ In later years, many directors dreamed of closing the passageway. One minor victory in this respect had been won before the Second World War, in 1931, when the passageway had been declared off-limits to automobiles, buses and lorries. In 1967 Elffers and Wijnalda designed three variations on an entrance hall in the passageway. In one version the entire passageway area was incorporated into the museum and therefore became unavailable to cyclists and pedestrians (2.10).¹⁵ None of these proposals was carried out.

Wim Quist: 'A Calvinist in the Catholic Church'

In 1969 the museum submitted an expansion plan to the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work describing its departments' urgent need for space. Five years later, a working group was formed to identify the challenges facing the museum, such as improving accessibility, housing the National Print Room and restaurants, expanding its office and storage space, improving the paintings department, creating separate exhibition spaces, improving the Asian Art Department, and adding a canteen and staff areas. In 1975 the art connoisseur F.J. Duparc wrote:



The many interruptions in the reorganization project have made heavy demands on the patience and perseverance of the management and the many other staff members at the Rijksmuseum, and they have undeniably cost the Dutch treasury tremendous amounts, which could have been saved if the work had been performed at a regular pace and without interruption.¹⁶

In 1976, the safety glass in the display case in gallery 170 spontaneously shattered, destroying some of the glassware on show. This prompted the management to proceed with the major renovation. In 1980, Chief Government Architect Wim Quist (a member of the above-mentioned working group) was asked to design the renovation. Quist initiated the first steps towards the restoration of the spatial quality of the building.

During his 15 years as Rijksmuseum architect, Quist made many structural changes, regarding climate control, for instance, or security measures against fire and theft. Quist's moves to restore the clear spatial organization of the building mark the beginning of the rehabilitation of Cuypers' original architecture. Nevertheless, Quist did give priority to user needs and the aesthetic standards of his day over the reinstatement of the historical situation. In some places where they did not distract from the art on display, such as on the steel architraves of the side galleries and the Gallery of Honour, Cuypers' decorations were left in place and restored, or returned to their place in a modified form.¹⁷

Between 1981 and 1990, Quist removed 'the elements that concealed parts of Cuypers' architecture from view and, here and there, restored the old spatial and architectural accents – without, it should be said, adding any imitations'. In reorganizing the museum's most prestigious galleries, Quist made the vaulting visible again. In the Gallery of Honour and the Night Watch Gallery, a few of Cuypers' decorations were restored, or else adapted and toned down (2.11, 2.12). In other areas, plasterwork was partly or wholly removed from the vaulting, revealing the masonry. Museum director Henk van Os described Quist as 'a Calvinist in the Catholic Church'. The walls of the painting galleries in the wings around the east courtyard were decorated with pastel linings. Quist used stainless steel for the door frames and the bases of the columns. His glass doors with asymmetrically placed hinges created contrast.

From 1992 to 1995, Quist also renovated the South Wing. This wing had several sections: the Fragment Building from 1898, the first Drucker extension, completed in 1909, with an eighteenth-century Rotterdam staircase added in 1922, and the second Drucker extension, completed in 1916. Quist forged spatial connections between a number of galleries with varying dimensions and lighting: 'The chamfers already present in the galleries inspired the design of the passages, which created an intriguing interplay of diagonal sight lines straight through the galleries in various directions, offering a new perspective on the unity of the collection.'¹⁸ The streamlined surfaces of Quist's architecture entered into dialogue with the historical building (2.13-2.15). Particularly successful examples included the new stairwell, as well as the juxtaposition of the new draught lobby and a historical building fragment. The relationship between inside and outside was also held up for examination, for example in the spot where a tall glass wall afforded a view of landscape architect Jan Boon's pool and the main building.

Hans Ruijsenaars's Master Plan: Towards the Clear Layout of the Original Complex

In 1995, Hans Ruijsenaars succeeded Quist as Rijksmuseum architect. Two years earlier, he had converted Amsterdam's former main post office on Nieuwezijds



2.12 The Night Watch Gallery,
c. 1984.

2.13-15 Interior of the South
Wing renovated by Wim Quist
(1992-1995).





2.13



2.14



2.15

Voorburgwal into the shopping centre Magna Plaza, demonstrating that he could adapt a historic building to a new purpose. In his analysis of the Rijksmuseum, Ruijssenaars laid a firm foundation for a thorough, comprehensive approach to the building. Two major problems that he identified were the central passageway, which had once offered a view of the heart of the museum but had degenerated into a dark tunnel, and the lack of opportunities for 'not looking, relaxing, the silence between the notes'.¹⁹ Ruijssenaars concluded that there was no longer any point in half measures. He proposed a comprehensive plan with a total solution: integrating the museum's different collections into a 'mixed exhibition'. His findings and proposals were summarized in his master plan for the museum, first presented in 1996 and later published in book form.

At the core of Ruijssenaars' plan was the restoration of the building's basic structure and the reinstatement of its 'monumental spaces'. Ruijssenaars believed that the passageway should become the museum's lobby, its 'antechamber'. He recommended that daylight be readmitted to the courtyards and that they be used for public services (2.16). This would involve partly reopening them. Ruijssenaars' plan required the elimination of all bicycle and pedestrian traffic in the passageway. The entire area was to be incorporated into the museum proper, and entrance doors were to be installed in the archways. The ground and main floors could then be used entirely for exhibition purposes, as Cuypers had originally intended.

2.16 Sketch from *Masterplan Ruijssenaars Rijksmuseum: Vooruit naar Cuypers* (Onwards to Cuypers), with the courtyards partly reopened, 1996.

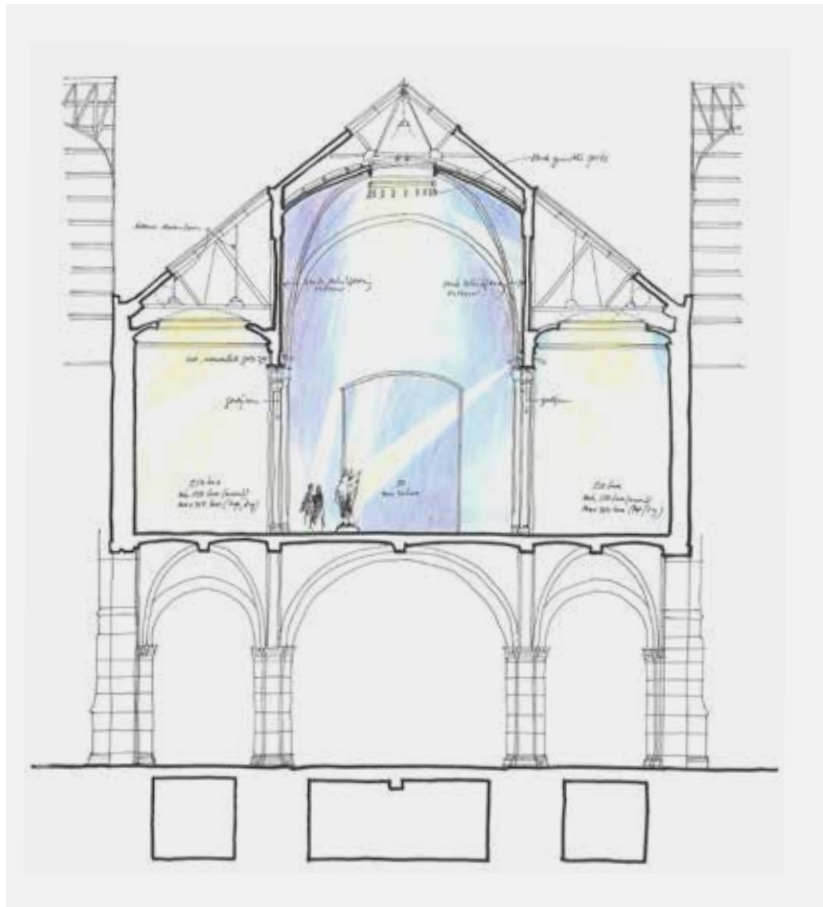
2.17 Cross-Section of the Gallery of Honour, Hans Ruijssenaars, 1997.



In his master plan, Ruijssenaars devoted a great deal of attention to 'orientation towards the outside world and the courtyards in corner galleries and stairwells where the direction of the routing changes'. In the Gallery of Honour, he suggested reinstating the original contrast between the dim lighting in the central area (the 'nave') and the more well lit side galleries (the 'aisles') (2.17).

Ruijssenaars had the opportunity to turn some of his ideas into reality. In the northwest part of the souterrain, the structure of the original vaulting became visible again in 1998-1999 when the building infrastructure was moved beneath a raised floor. The construction of the tunnel building (1997-2000) greatly alleviated the need for storage space in the complex. According to architecture critic Max van Rooy, Ruijssenaars did not 'cram' his plan with 'grandiose novelties' but 'largely' proposed 'old ideas that he merged into a practical whole. The message was simple: back to the roots.'²⁰ Strikingly, Ruijssenaars utterly ignored the work of his predecessors in his master plan. He was convinced that the only way to restore the clear spatial organization of the original complex was by adhering to the principle 'Onwards to Cuypers'.

Using Ruijssenaars' master plan and the accompanying budget as a basis, the Rijksmuseum applied for government financing for a major renovation. Ronald de Leeuw had replaced Henk van Os as director in December 1996. The working relationship between De Leeuw and Ruijssenaars was strained and would come to an end in October 1999. The new director announced his preference for 'a more



2.17

flamboyant, visionary approach to the museum'. The master plan officially disappeared along with Ruijsenaars, its maker, but preparations for renovation continued. The master plan laid the groundwork for the Rijksmuseum policy document published in 1998 and the Rgd's strategic plan (2000).²¹

Policy Document and Strategic Plan

In *The Rijksmuseum in the 21st Century*, a policy document laying out a master plan for long-term development, the Rijksmuseum set out its wishes for exhibitions, public services, and the historic complex. This document comes out clearly in favour of an integrated permanent exhibition in which the previously separate collections – painting, sculpture, Dutch history and applied arts – are shown together in a chronological arrangement. The Rijksmuseum also wanted opportunities for a more in-depth approach, 'spark spots' linked to the main route where the same subject matter could be addressed in greater detail. A need was observed for a larger reception area that would be directly linked to public services, such as the museum shop, restaurant, cloakroom, screening rooms and lecture halls, and that would offer direct access to the exhibition areas. The absence of a large central space from which visitors could orient themselves and find their way to the collections or public services was seen as a major shortcoming: 'It is proposed that the filled-in courtyards therefore be reopened, so that [the Rijksmuseum] once again becomes a building organized around two courtyards and selectively brings Cuypers' decorative scheme back into view.'²² One result of the reopening of the courtyards was to readmit daylight into the central passageway, providing an impetus for better use of what had been a very dark space.

Of course, the partial or complete removal of the additional levels in the courtyards reduced the available surface area. The museum directors decided to solve this problem 'by situating all the "excess" storage spaces, offices, studios and the like elsewhere, outside the building. This amounted to "giving back" Cuypers' Rijksmuseum to the public, as it were.'²³ The millennium gift from the national government under Prime Minister Wim Kok in 1999 was a first financial step towards the realization of the planned refurbishment. The decision had been made 'to renovate the 115-year-old building in a manner respectful of its architectural and historic value and in keeping with the museum's international renown'.²⁴

The Rgd took responsibility for developing terms of reference for the renovation project, based on the Rijksmuseum policy document. These terms were set out in the *structuurplan 2000*. Before then, the agency ordered a study of seven scenarios for the courtyards, varying from leaving them much the same to clearing them out entirely. Three of these scenarios were then selected, and the most expensive one (clearing out the courtyards entirely) was adopted as a point of departure. The strategic plan was intended as a framework for the museum's new architects, to be selected in 2001. Interestingly, it was not yet clear at that point what prior conditions would have to be met in the domain of urban planning. Furthermore, the planned building archaeological research of the museum building's historic value had not yet been carried out. The strategic plan included this noteworthy remark: 'In any future restoration, it will be important to retain valuable additions and eliminate disruptive alterations.'²⁵

Intellectual Debate and Essays

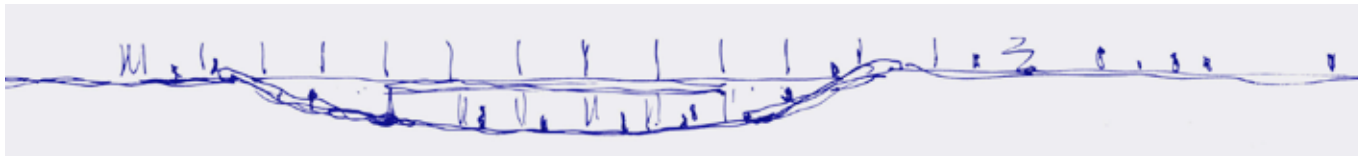
Before the invited competition for the renovation of the Rijksmuseum took place in 2000, State Secretary for Culture Rick van der Ploeg initiated an intellectual debate about the new Rijksmuseum. The idea was to build support for the project and

provide inspiration for the designers.²⁶ This led to a variety of cultural and social reflections on the purpose of the Rijksmuseum in relation to the building. Filmmakers, journalists and scholars described their personal connections to or visions for the Rijksmuseum and its collection. For instance, Professor Marita Mathijssen described the museum from the perspective of a painting. Wies van Leeuwen, former president of the Cuypers Society, called the Rijksmuseum 'one of the highlights' of the museum collection. The most outspoken opinion was voiced by architecture historian Auke van der Woud:

It was only after Cuypers's death in 1921 that the museum management gained the legal power to alter the interior of the Rijksmuseum as they wished. All the attempts made since then have added up to a situation sometimes described as a crazy quilt, which has led some people to long for the restoration of 'Cuypers' clarity'. But there can be little doubt that if this came to pass, we would run up against the same problems all over again. Cuypers' 'clarity' offers no conceptual unity with regard to the essential issues; the building is a gorilla in an expensive tutu. This is not a case of ambiguity at the interface between illusion and reality, but of brutal confrontation between one reality and another. This hybrid is composed of oppositions, of conflicts that remained visible in the design, that were built into its fabric and have thus been creating problems for more than a hundred years.²⁷

The essays were meant to provide inspiration for the architects, but in retrospect it is difficult to say how much influence they may or may not have had on the principles and choices in the designs.

Competition design by
Cruzy Ortiz



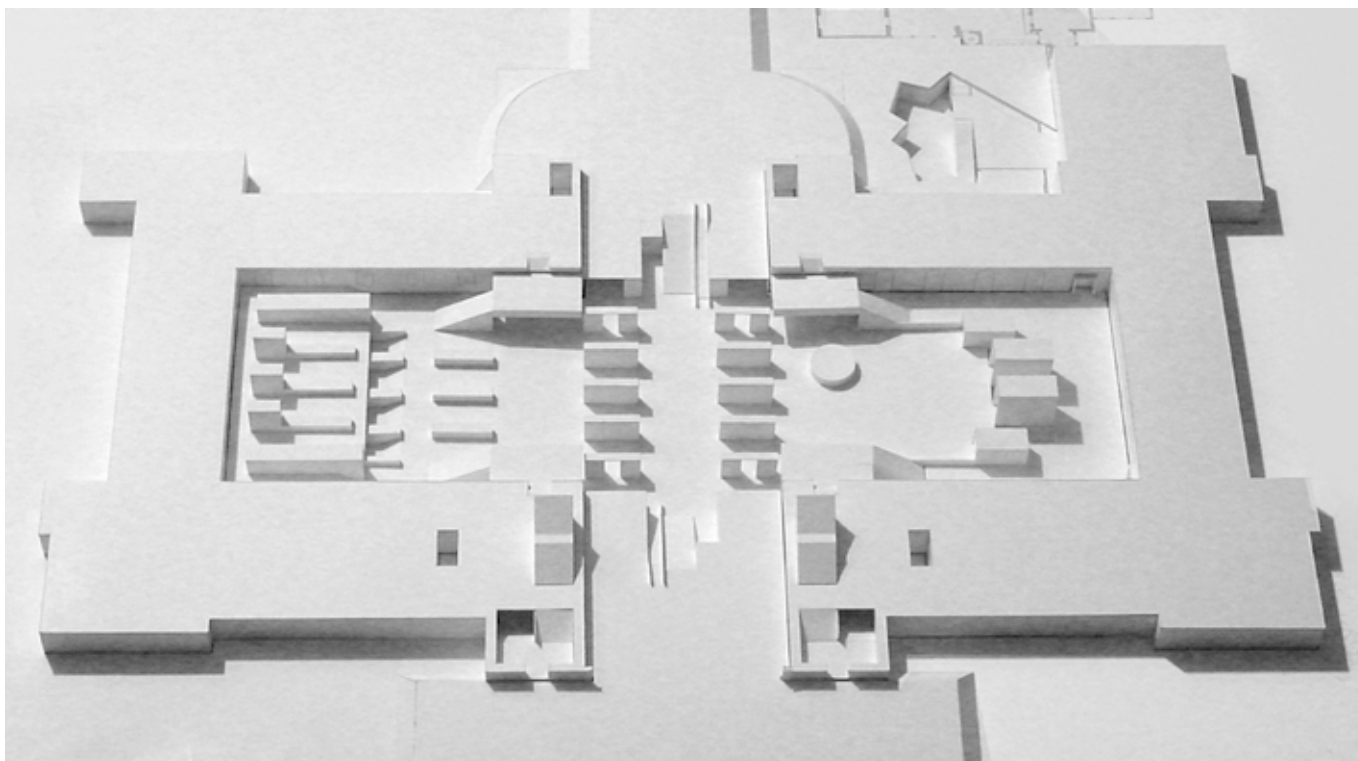
B.01

B.01 Detail from sectional sketch of the central passage-way, with the connection between the lowered courtyards beneath it.



B.02

B.02 The east courtyard is envisaged as a semi-public space.



B.03

B.03 Model of the interconnected, lowered courtyards and entrance area.

Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos

In the proposal by Cruz y Ortiz, the main entrance is located in the middle of the building. This is accomplished by clearing out the courtyards, excavating them and connecting them. From the heart of the passageway through the main building, ramps lead visitors into the new atrium, which contains all the visitor services that do not fit into the old building. On the Stadhouderskade side, Cruz y Ortiz suspends an 18-m-long glass awning from the exterior wall to guide visitors to the entrance. A sub-basement under the atrium holds the auditorium and other facilities. The design does not involve any other spectacular additions, other than a modest Asian Pavilion half-hidden between the main building and the South Wing.

Paul Chemetov

Like the Cruz y Ortiz design, Paul Chemetov's involves clearing out the courtyards and creating an underground connection between them. The entrance is in the passageway through the main building, near the western courtyard. Chemetov also adds a vertical element: a glass extension, or 'active wall', next to the west wing, with stairways, lifts and a shortcut to the South Wing. Chemetov separates the floor of the entrance hall from the existing courtyard walls, thus admitting light to the new basement level beneath the courtyards. Finally, he tries to integrate the Rijksmuseum more firmly into its surroundings with a garden that extends as far as Museumplein. The judges greatly admired the clarity of the idea, but there were numerous objections to opening the blind recesses in the courtyards. The proposed underground level also proved technically unfeasible.

Dam & Partners Architecten

The design by the father-and-son firm of Dam & Partners endeavors to strengthen the connection between the museum and the city, in part by creating a large square that bridges the differences in elevation between the Stadhouderskade side of the building, the surrounding gardens and the passageway through the museum. Above the north entrance, the architects propose an immense glass roof. For the towers on either side of the Museumplein end of the passageway they also envisage glass roofs that can be illuminated at night. The entrance leads from the passage to the lowered courtyards, which are connected to each other underground. The design allows museum visitors to move freely between different sections of the museum on aerial walkways and escalators in the courtyards. The 'boisterous' character of the courtyards reminded the assessment committee of a railway station concourse.

Henket Architecten

In the Henket Architecten plan, the city side of the Rijksmuseum is still clearly the front of the building. Stairways lead to a lowered atrium 3 m under street level with two glass roofs. A new passageway leads from the atrium under the main building to the courtyards, which remain open to the public. There is a large café in one courtyard and an egg-shaped structure for the Asian art collection. This solution leaves the passageway intact; the open recesses give cyclists a view of the courtyards. There is also a striking proposal to reinvent the Gallery of Honour, with curtains in a modern style for the side galleries. The judging committee admired the architects' analytical skills and their respect for Cuypers but had misgivings about the entrance and the proposals for the museum galleries.

Erik Knippers, Bureau Wouda

Like Hubert-Jan Henket, Erik Knippers proposed a new underground entrance in front of the museum. He re-imagined the passageway through the building as a steel bridge extending all the way to Museumplein. In his design, visitors pass under the bridge on their way to the museum entrance in the east courtyard. Steel walkways and stairways in the courtyards give access to the different floors, and there are also aerial walkways in the exhibition galleries. The judging committee was especially critical of the 'hidden entrance' in this proposal, and the many additions to the courtyards and galleries failed to impress them.

Heinz Tesar

One striking feature of Heinz Tesar's design is the elimination of both the South Wing and the glass roofs over the cleared courtyards. This allows him to restore the garden on the Museumplein side and decorate it with historical building fragments relocated from the South Wing. Tesar places the museum entrance in the middle of the passageway through the building. In the courtyards on either side of the passageway, there is a planned extension for stairways and lifts, which also serves to admit daylight deep into the building. To tidy up the area around the museum, the design includes a massive underground structure containing museum galleries and storage areas. The judges were critical of this 'underground domain', because of both routing issues and the technical challenges of constructing it. They were also concerned about exposing the walls of the courtyards to the outdoor climate.

Francesco Venezia

Francesco Venezia's design was, by any measure, the most radical proposal submitted to the competition. It involves a new 'Grand Palais' for Dutch history and art on Museumplein, alongside the existing complex. This creates optimal conditions for restoring the old building. In this proposal, the passageway through the museum remains in place, and the Asian art remains on display in the South Wing. The new trapezoidal building is located above water features on Museumplein, which the architect regarded as a 'wasteland'. The heart of this labyrinthine building is to hold the new 'treasure house' of Dutch art. The judging committee decided that Venezia's proposal fell outside the terms of reference and was therefore *hors concours*.



B.04

B.04 Longitudinal section with the 'active wall' in the west courtyard.



B.05



B.06

B.05 The tunnel connecting the two lowered courtyards.

B.06 Aerial view of the east courtyard with opened recesses.

Competition design by
Dam & Partners Architecten



B.07 Cross-sections with
the proposed underground
extensions.

B.07



B.08



B.09

B.08-09 Impressions of the
museum entrance areas on
the north and south sides.

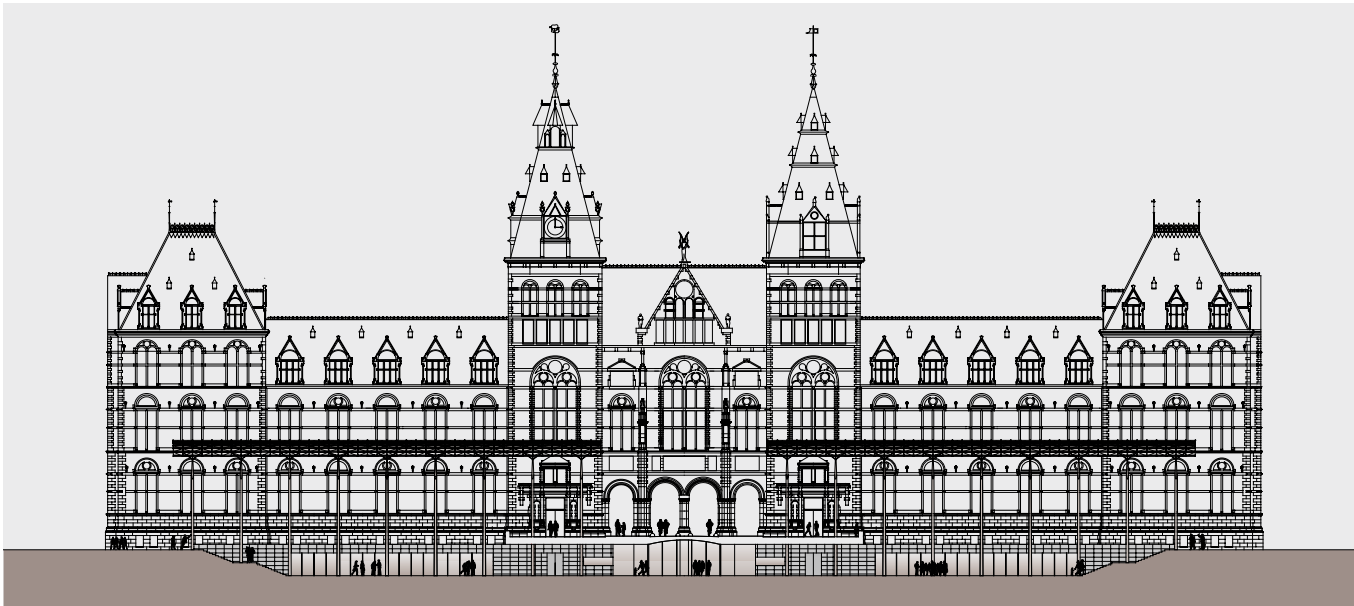


B.10



B.11

B.10-11 Designs for the
courtyards with escalators
and aerial walkways.



B.12

B.12 Front elevation with the lowered atrium and glass roof on the Stadhouderskade side.

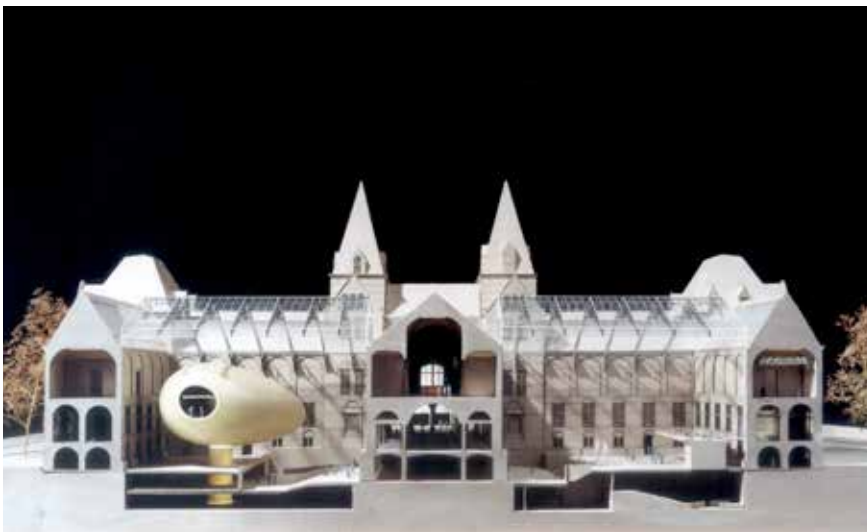


B.13



B.14

B.13-14 Impressions of the lowered atrium with the glass roof on the Stadhouderskade side.



B.15

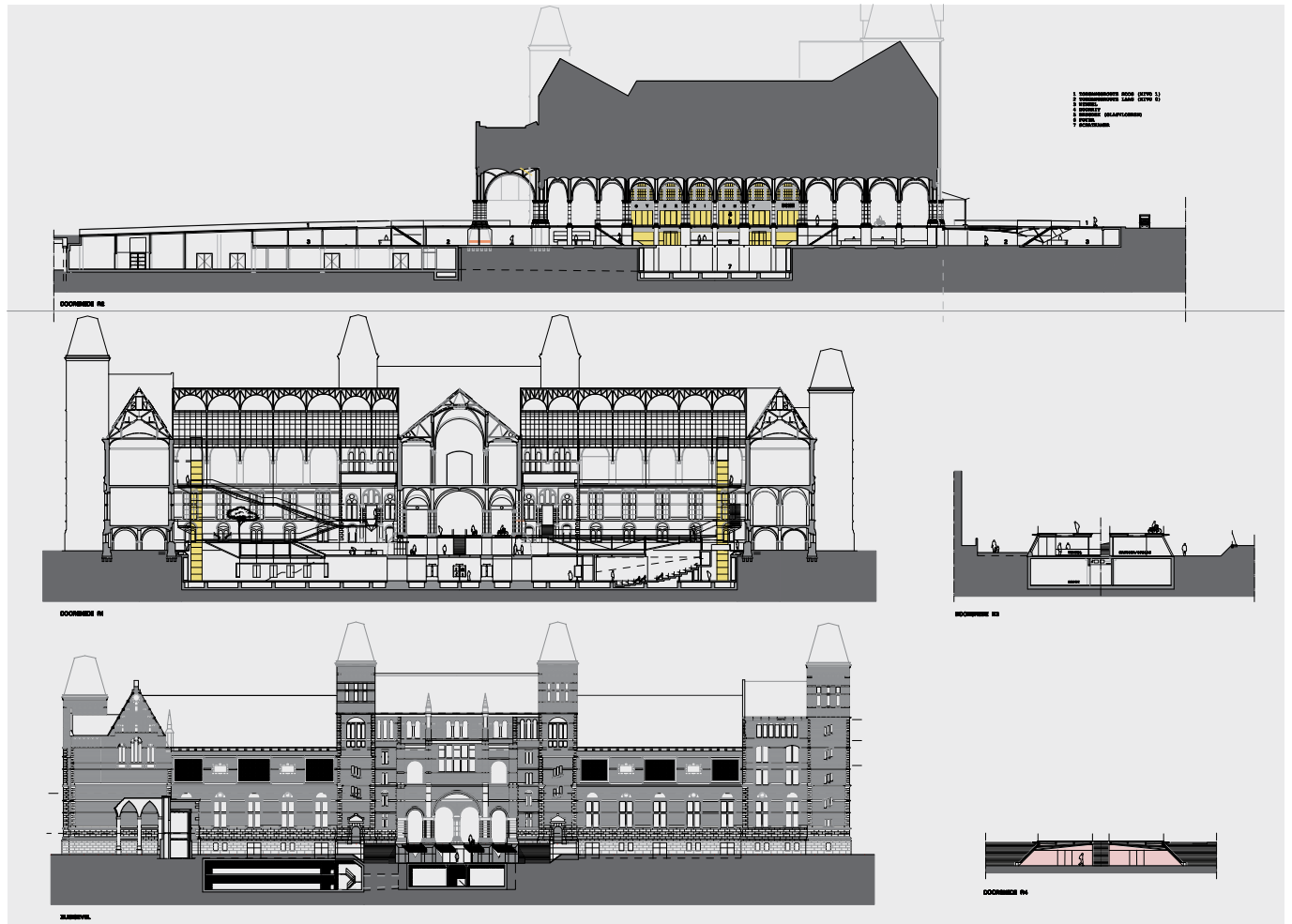


B.16

B.15 Cross-section of the museum building, with an egg-shaped exhibition area in the west courtyard.

B.16 Impression of the redesigned Gallery of Honour.

Competition design by
Erik Knippers, Bureau Wouda



B.17 Cross-sections including the steel bridge between Stadhouderskade and Museumplein.

B.17



B.18 The underground entrance on the north side of the museum.

B.19 The tunnel below the central passageway.

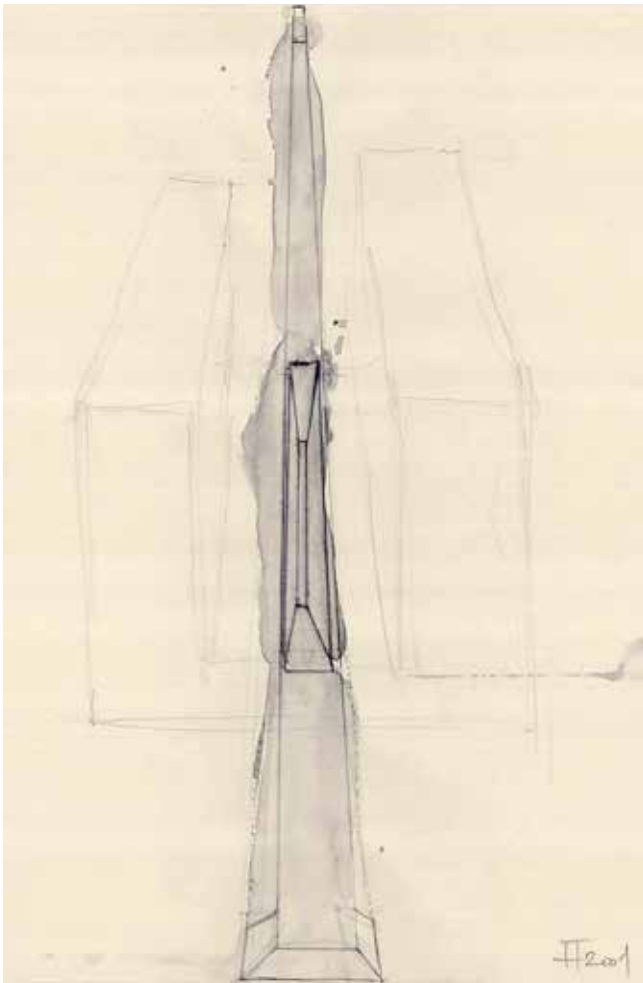
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B.19



B.20

B.20 Model of the west
courtyard.

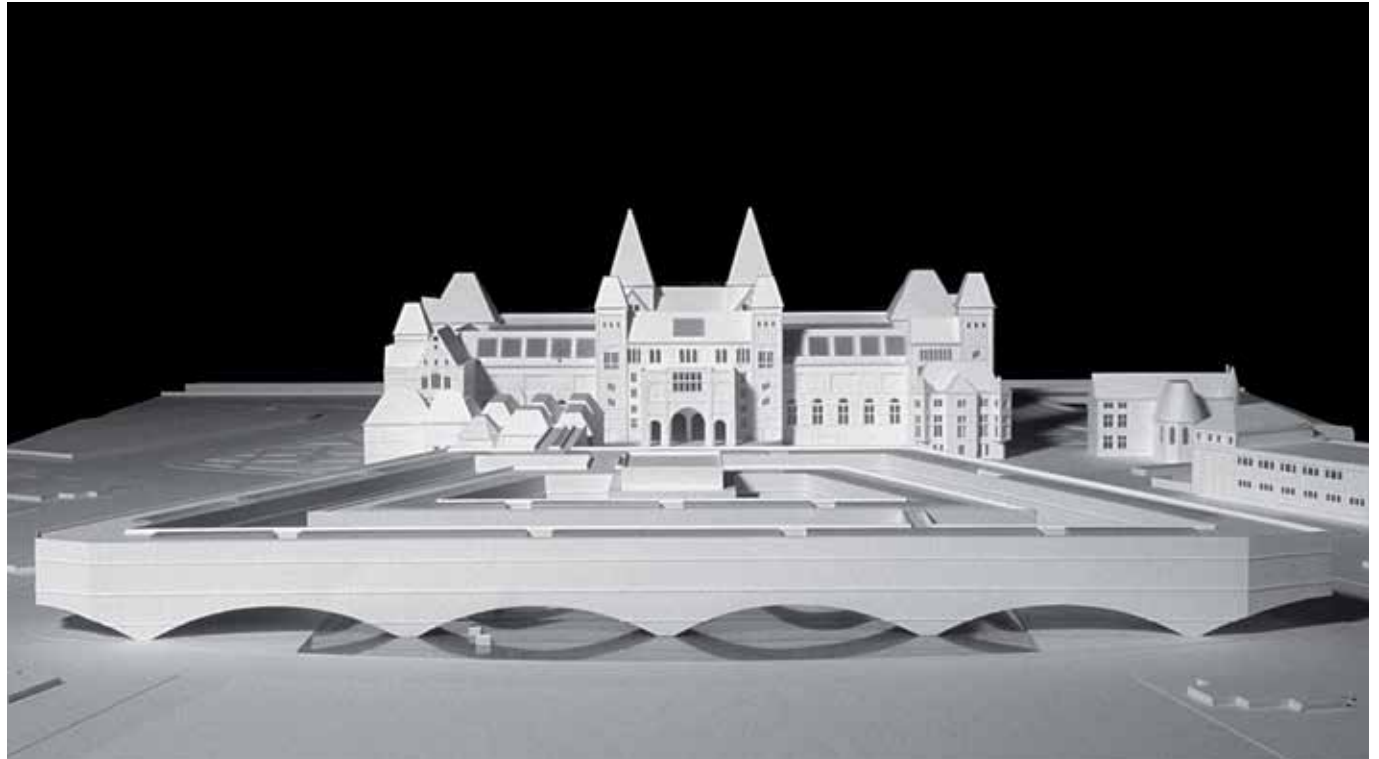
B.21



B.22

B.21-22 Entrance in the
middle of the central
passageway, with vertical
structural elements in the two
courtyards on either side.

Competition design by
Francesco Venezia



B.23

B.23-25 Variations
on the concept of adding
a new wing to the museum
in Museumplein.



B.24



B.25



The selection of architects for the new Rijksmuseum took place in 2000. The intention was to split the task in three and to select three architects: a chief architect, a restoration architect and an architect for the Atelier Building on Hobbemastraat. For government commissions of this magnitude a European tender procedure is mandatory. Around the turn of the century, the Rijksgebouwendienst (Government Buildings Agency; Rgd) was handling some 20 such procedures a year, in all of which the Chief Government Architect played a key role. To avoid having to make repeated expensive and time-consuming public announcements, the Rgd made do with an annual call for architects to submit their documentation. For each project a preliminary selection was made from this documentation database, and then an invited competition was held in order to arrive at a final choice. This procedure was also followed for the Rijksmuseum. In March 2000 Chief Government Architect Wytze Patijn, in consultation with the Rgd, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Rijksmuseum, came up with a list of 17 potential chief architects, including five foreign firms.¹ The long list for the restoration architect contained just five names, all of whom were eventually approached.²

In the summer of 2000 it became clear that the next Chief Government Architect would be Jo Coenen. Although he was not due to take up his position until 30 November, he was involved in the choice of architects before then, seeing that he would be heading the assessment committee. The shortlist that emerged in the autumn of that year was based on Patijn's preparatory work, supplemented by Coenen's suggestions. Coenen argued in favour of architects with empathy for the historical context. In this regard, the exchange of faxes between the Chief Government Architect's office and Coenen concerning the list of candidates for the Atelier Building makes for interesting reading. Coenen felt that the only architects being considered were what he called 'conflict architects' and he wanted a completely different list.³ The tender for the Atelier Building was accordingly postponed, with the commission later being awarded privately to the chief architect.⁴ Coenen's use of the term 'conflict architects' made it quite clear what type of approach he had in mind: no contrast between old and new, rather a fusion.⁵ This called for architects capable of empathizing with the Dutch monument, in effect assimilating it and then transforming and recasting it in such a way that it acquired new élan, both in terms of its design and in its technical elaboration.

The candidates who were sounded out for the position of chief architect in September were drawn from Patijn's list: Hubert-Jan Henket, Erik Knippers, the Spaniard Rafael Moneo, the Frenchman Paul Chemetov and the Swiss Peter Zumthor. After consulting with museum director Ronald de Leeuw, Moneo's name was removed. Zumthor disappeared from the list because he failed to respond, whereupon Patijn added Cees Dam's name. At Coenen's prompting the list was augmented with four more names: the Italian Francesco Venezia, Austrian Heinz Tesar, the Spaniards Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos and Rem Koolhaas. De Leeuw vetoed Koolhaas, no doubt fearing a radical design.⁶ Thus there remained seven architects. They were experienced architects, all but one middle-aged men. The exception was Erik Knippers, just 37 years-old at the time. Early in Patijn's term as Chief

Government Architect, Knippers had won an invited competition for the extension of the Parliament building on the historically charged 'Plein' in The Hague. Hubert-Jan Henket (b. 1940) could hardly be omitted, if only because of his extension of the Teylers Museum in Haarlem. Cees Dam (b. 1932) had not built any museums, but Patijn had dealt with him in relation to the archives building in Middelburg. Dam brought his son Diederik (b. 1966) on board. Paul Chemetov (b. 1928) had made a name for himself with the Grande Galerie de l'Évolution du Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle in Paris. The architects added to list at Coenen's behest had an affinity for building in a historical context. Francesco Venezia (b. 1944) had built the Gibellina Vecchia museum in Sicily, around the ruins of the Palazzo di Lorenzo. Heinz Tesar (b. 1939) had designed the Haus am Zwinger in Dresden and been involved in the renovation of the Museumsinsel in Berlin. Antonio Cruz (b. 1948) and Antonio Ortiz (b. 1947) were from Seville, where they had built extensively in the historical centre. They had also designed the Maritime Museum in Cadiz.

Invited Competition

On 28 November, Coenen, by now Chief Government Architect, sent the seven firms the brief for the invited design competition.⁷ The task was to come up with a future vision for the Rijksmuseum. Four guiding principles were provided: 1) restoration of the spatial structure of the museum in line with Cuypers' concept but with a contemporary ambience; 2) amelioration of the museum's accessibility and circulation structure; 3) restoration of the original interior finish in so far as compatible with the museum's public functions; 4) development of a proposal for the garden and the museum's relationship with its surroundings. These guiding principles were quite prescriptive, in particular with regard to the decision to restore Cuypers' structure and to reinstate some of the interior finish. The precise intention of this last point was not entirely clear, however. In Cuypers' interior, the internal finish, decorations, paintings and building fragments coalesced in a *Gesamtkunstwerk* in which the distinction between building and collection ceased to exist. It was left to the architects to interpret the mottos 'Back to Cuypers' and 'Continue with Cuypers'. The practical challenge for the architects was to solve the problem of the entrance and circulation. Obviously, the intervention would need to cater to the wide-ranging requirements of the mass public, contemporary presentation techniques, climate control and security. The competition phase, however, was primarily about finding the most suitable architect. The architects were asked to produce a sketch model of the entrance zone and design proposals for four spaces in the museum.⁸

In March 2001, four months after the distribution of the brief, the architects presented their visions for the Rijksmuseum. Seated opposite them was the assessment committee, consisting of Jo Coenen, Ronald de Leeuw, former Amsterdam mayor Schelto Patijn, the director of the Rijksdienst voor de Monumentenzorg (Government Agency for the Preservation of Historic Buildings; RDMZ) Fons Asselbergs, representing the State Secretary for Culture and, as independent member, writer and journalist Max van Rooy.⁹ The committee's task was to come to a decision based on eight evaluation criteria: respect for Cuypers, the museum's operating conditions, the urban context, financial constraints, architectural quality, originality, finish and proposed use of materials and energy consumption. A technical committee advised the evaluation committee on the implementational aspects of the various plans.¹⁰ The commission was to be awarded to the architect who, in tendering jargon, submitted the 'most economically advantageous offer',

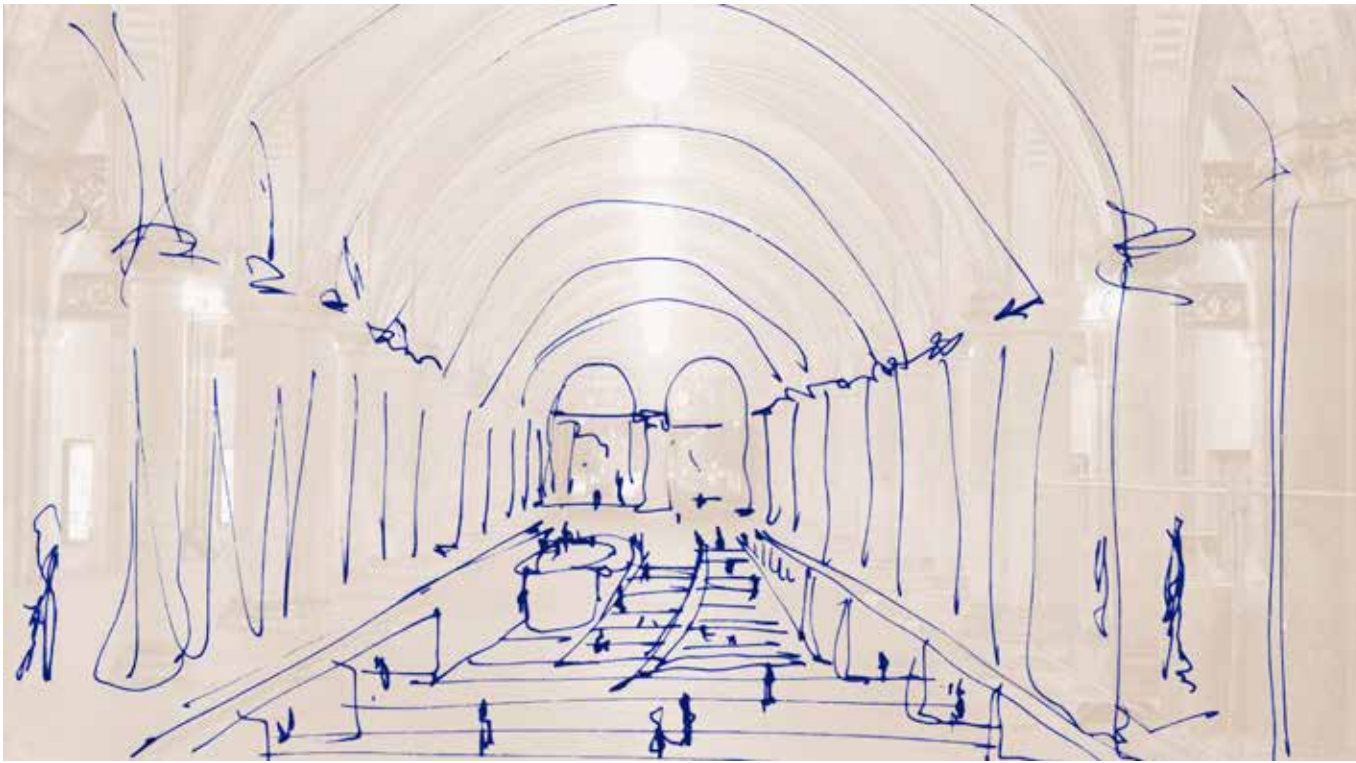
although architectural quality was to be the decisive factor. That rider gave the committee the leeway to put aside the score sheets with part-scores and allow the architect's heart to speak.

During the discussions that followed a marathon of seven concept presentations, question-and-answer sessions and 'interludes', the three Dutch entries fell by the wayside. The reason given was that although the 'Continue with Cuypers' notion was evident in their treatment of the existing fabric, they fell short when it came to the request to look at the current functioning of museum from the viewpoint of Cuypers while exercising 'maximum care, restraint and calmness'. The Dutch architects' additions were too free and contrastive. The committee was of the unanimous opinion that 'the extent of their interventions inside and outside the contours of the building . . . were perceived to be too drastic and/or inappropriate'.¹¹ A week later, at the start of the next round of deliberations, Tesar's proposal foundered for the same reason. When Venezia was subsequently disqualified because his proposal for a Grand Palais on Museumplein exceeded the brief, only two plans remained. Doubts arose over Chemetov's plan because of his notion of opening up the blind recesses on the main floor and putting a huge media screen in the courtyard. The idea for a continuous basement underneath the courtyards also looked to be technically unfeasible.¹² Which left just Cruz y Ortiz. This did not mean that it was a negative choice. The evaluation committee spoke in superlatives about the resolution of the entrance, the design for the courtyards and the 'refined and restrained subtlety of their intervention and the extremely appealing proposal for a superb pavilion'.¹³

Cruz y Ortiz's Vision

According to Cruz y Ortiz, the original ambition to build the Rijksmuseum as a gateway to the urban expansion areas had meant that the museum function was from the very outset subordinate to the urban design gesture.¹⁴ The arched passageway divides the building in two, resulting in double entrances and main staircases. The architects saw it as a challenge to eliminate that divide while retaining the passageway. Cuypers' building would finally acquire a satisfactory layout with the aid of techniques that had not existed a century earlier. In essence, Cruz y Ortiz's plan consisted of two interventions: the lowering of the central passageway and the clearing, lowering and below-grade connection of the two courtyards to create one big entrance hall (3.01, 3.02, 3.05, 3.06). This sunken plaza had space for ticket sales, information desks, the museum shop and café-restaurant. The lowered passageway provided access to the entrance hall from either Stadhouderskade or Museumplein, thereby removing the distinction between the front and rear of the museum. The passageway would become the central entrance while continuing to function as a pedestrian/cycle route. However, the architects doubted whether the bicycle traffic in the passageway (as laid down in the guiding principles) was appropriate on busy days. They consequently suggested an alternative cycle path through the garden, which could even become a permanent solution for bicycle traffic. They did not think it was necessary to entirely close off the passageway for bicycle traffic.

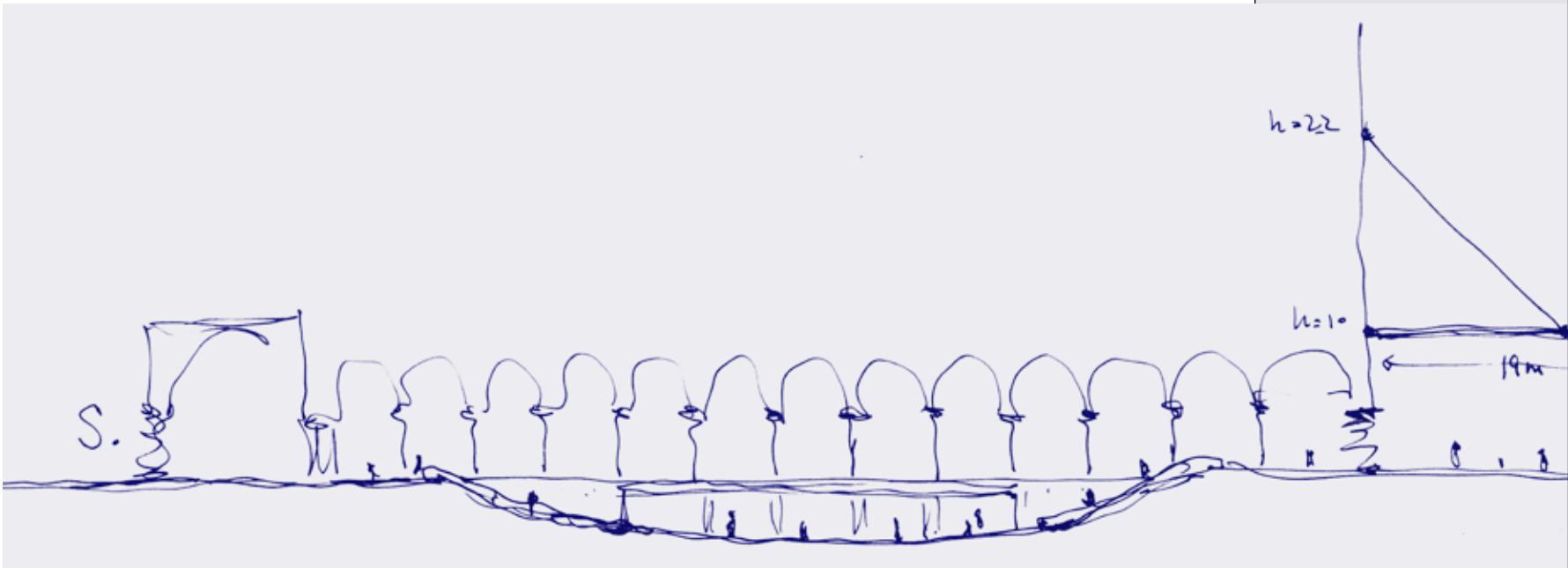
The main route through the museum was a continuous, chronological presentation from the entrance in the west courtyard, past the Middle Ages at the bottom of the west wing, ascending to the Golden Age on the main floor and then descending via the east wing to the twentieth century and finally ending up at the restaurant and shop in the east courtyard. Stairwells and lifts could be used to cut off parts of the route or to facilitate a quick tour of the Gallery of Honour and the



3.01

3.01 Sketch of the lowered entrance area in the central passageway, Cruz y Ortiz 2001.

3.02 Longitudinal sketch of the central passageway with the connection between the lowered courtyards beneath it. A glass awning has been added on the city side.



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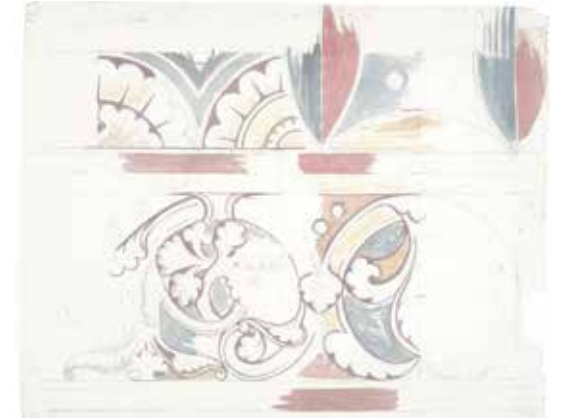
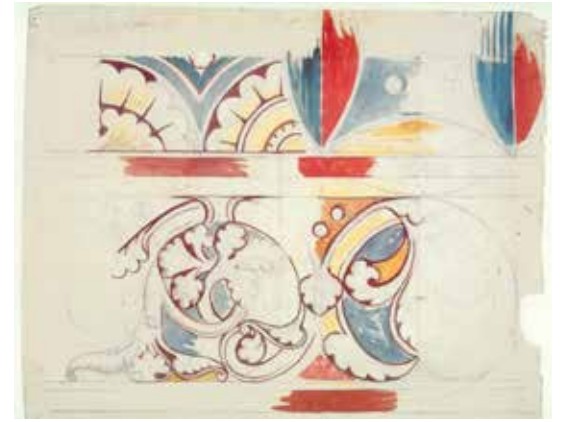
3.03 Impression of the glass awning attached to the front façade.

3.04 Proposal for toning down the bright colours in the interior.

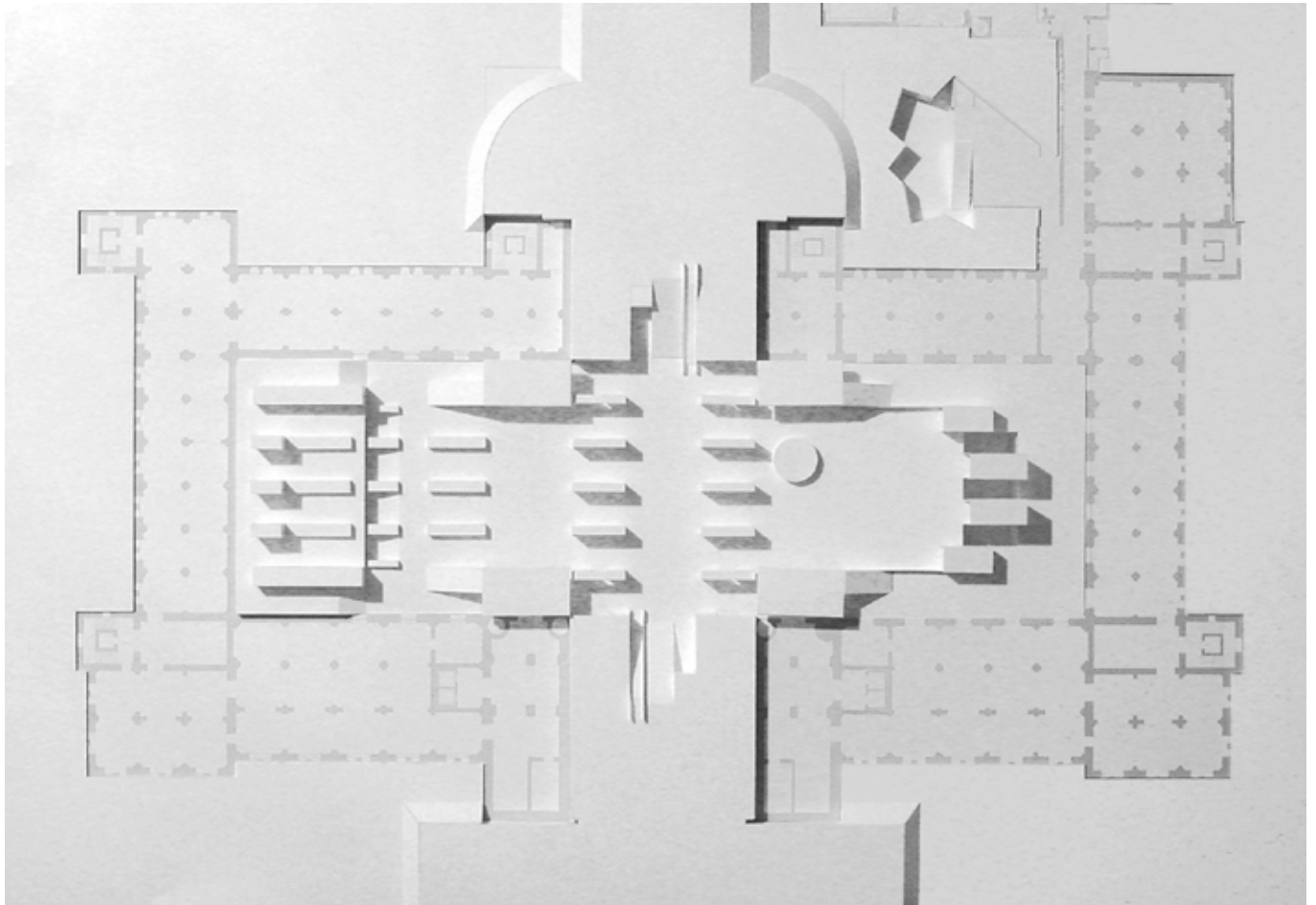
3.05 Model of the lowered courtyards and the entrance in the central passageway.



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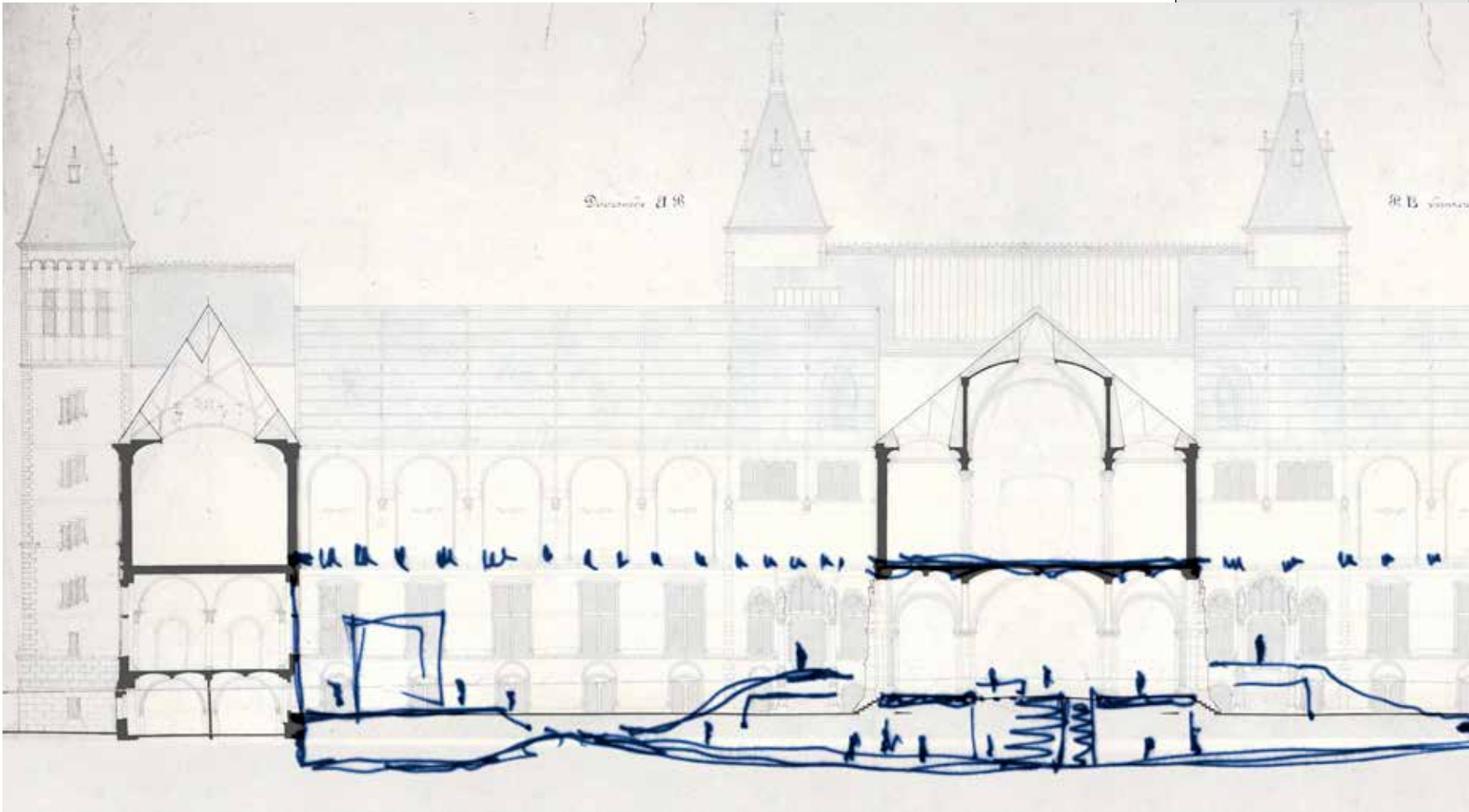


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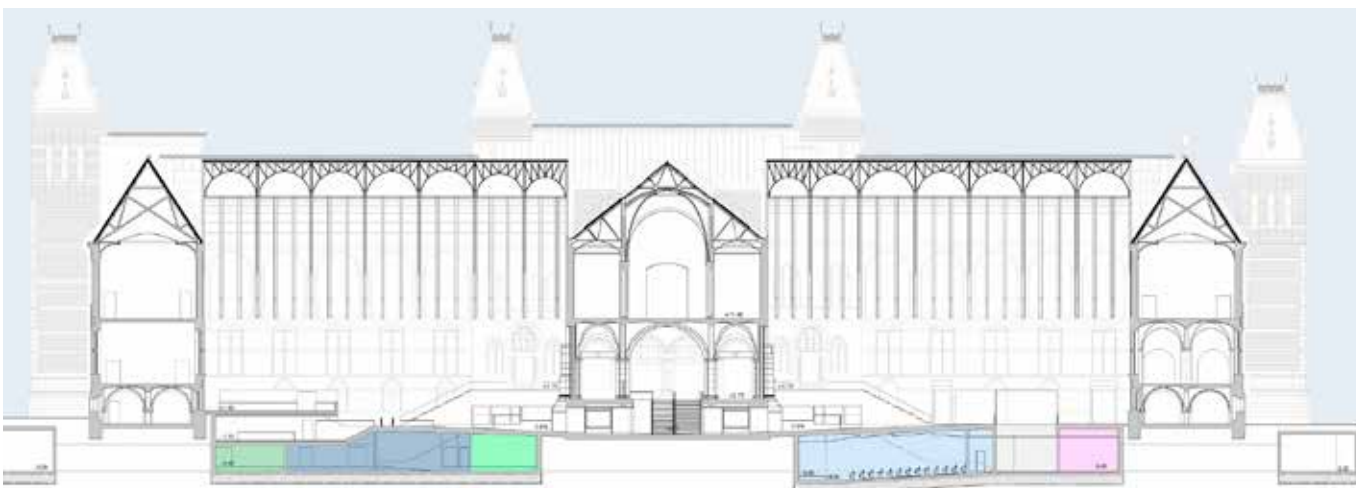


3.06 Sketch of the walking routes between the entrance, the courtyards and the museum galleries.

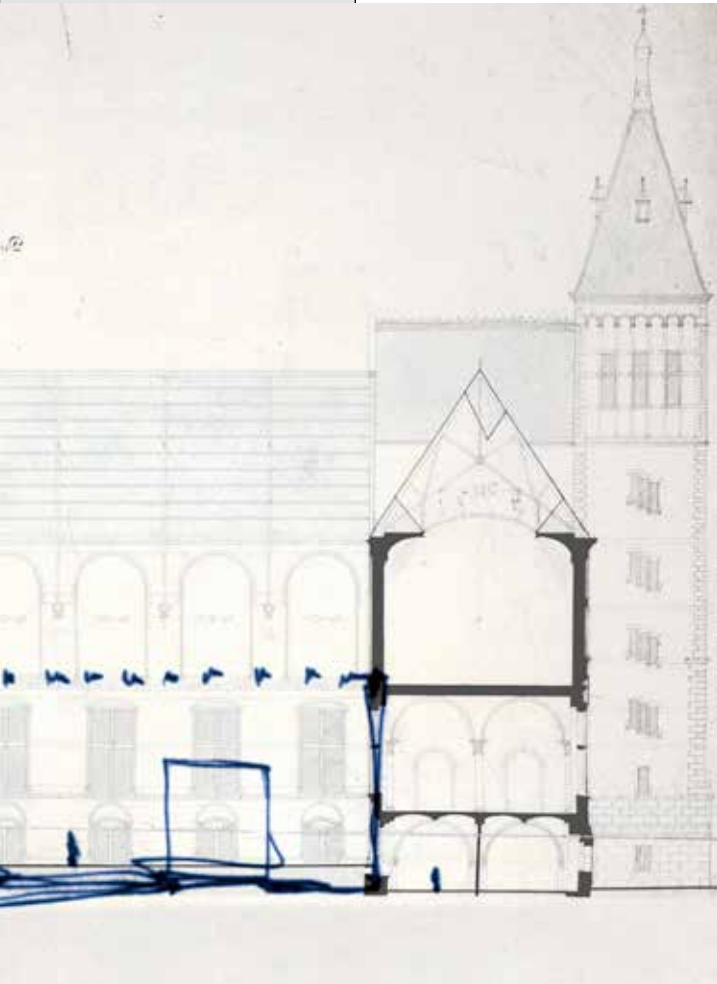
3.07 Auditorium and service areas beneath the lowered courtyards.



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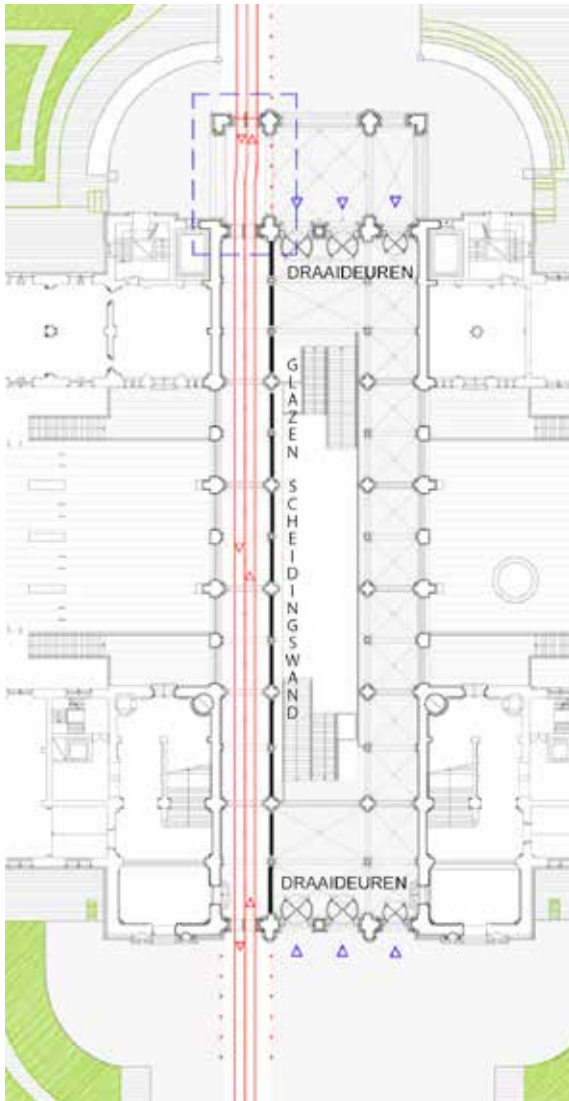


Night Watch Gallery. The decision to use the main building almost entirely as exhibition space meant that the offices, storerooms and supporting functions would have to move to neighbouring buildings or disappear from Amsterdam altogether. Three additions completed the ensemble: an awning on Stadhouderskade, the Asian Pavilion between the main building and the South Wing, and a basement below the courtyards containing an auditorium, educational spaces and service areas (3.03, 3.07, 3.17-3.21). There was no plan for the garden. The architects wanted to restore Cuypers' decorations in some places, but in muted colours so that they would not compete with the collection. For the sake of the acoustics they suggested carpet woven with the pattern of Cuypers' mosaic floors. For the courtyards they designed huge crystal chandeliers to filter the daylight and to give the entrance hall a ceiling and a sense of coherence (3.29-3.32). The assessment committee spoke (unanimously) of a lucid concept that resolved the logistical problems of the Rijksmuseum and delivered a fine entrance. The Asian Pavilion was regarded as a stroke of genius. The only ideas rejected by the committee were those for carpet in the galleries and an awning on Stadhouderskade.¹⁵ Since the committee did not consider these elements essential to the design, it assumed that good alternatives could be found at a later date. It is unclear why the idea of hanging a huge awning on the main facade did not attract the same judgement as many other interventions, namely that 'inside and outside the contours of the building . . . [they] were perceived to be too drastic and/or inappropriate'. Of the plans regarding Cuypers' interior, all that remained was the suggestion to tone down the bright colours and for the rest to make the galleries as light as possible (3.04).

Preliminary Design

Cruz y Ortiz was not unknown in the Netherlands. The firm had previously built housing schemes on Java Island in Amsterdam (1994-1996) and on the Céramique site in Maastricht (1999-2001). The firm's nomination as chief architect of the Rijksmuseum on 4 April 2001 brought the architects into contact with what was for them an as yet largely unknown side of Dutch culture, namely social decision-making. This required a period of 'familiarization' with the Dutch reality of multiple clients, numerous committees, the institutions and other interested parties – each with a seat at the table and their own views on the project.¹⁶ Years later Antonio Ortiz commented ruefully: 'I think you call that "Polder-model".'¹⁷ A week after their nomination Cruz y Ortiz joined in the selection of the restoration architect. This commission went to Van Hoogevest Architecten. Although it was already laid down that this firm would be answerable to the chief architect, what shape that collaboration would take and what tasks and responsibilities it would entail was at that moment still unclear. In February 2002, Cruz y Ortiz completed an integration study that had looked at how all the various wishes for the new Rijksmuseum could be incorporated into the design plan. One of the conclusions was that the Study Centre did not belong in the former library and should be housed elsewhere on the site. In May that year there followed the choice of consultants for structural design (Arcadis), building physics (Arup Madrid and DGMR) and building services (Arup Madrid and Van Heugten).¹⁸ Their contribution to the design was to be considerable, given the huge challenges with respect to underground construction and building services.

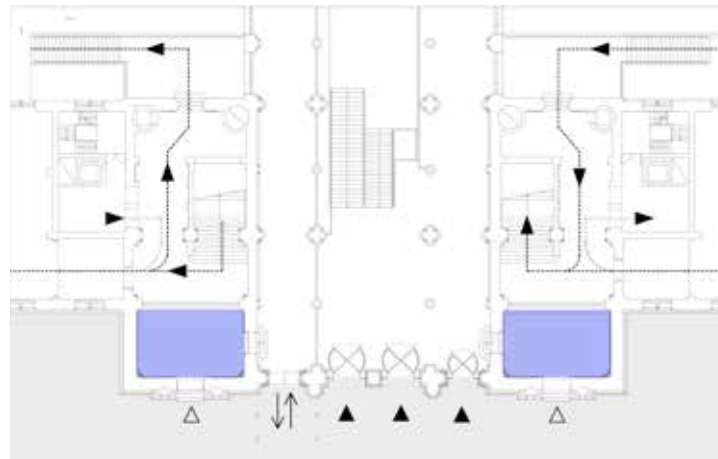
From November 2001 to December 2002, Cruz y Ortiz worked on the Preliminary Design (PD). Such a design establishes the broad outlines of a construction plan, which are then worked out in detail in the Final Design (FD). In the PD the plan for



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3.08-10 Entrance area designs by Cruz y Ortiz from the PD, 2002.

3.11 The PD features a continuous glass wall separating the bicycle path and entrance area.

3.12 Modified version of the entrance design, 2005. Here there is no longer a sunken entrance in the central passageway; instead, revolving doors provide entrance to the museum. This is the version that was ultimately used.

3.13-14 Visualization by Cruz y Ortiz, used by Wim Pijbes and Liesbeth van der Pol from 2008 onwards in an attempt to win sufficient support for the original entrance area concept.



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the Rijksmuseum was spelled out, for example with respect to layout and square metres, building services, constructional approach, heritage restoration and architecture.¹⁹ The original concept remained essentially intact: a central entrance in the passageway with stairs to the sunken entrance hall (3.05). There was a new solution involving cables and ducting in an underground services tunnel around the main building, from where the entire building could be serviced via vertical shafts. One striking addition was the Study Centre, a tower over 30 m high next to the main building, between the director's villa and the Teekenschool (Drawing School, now National Print Room) (3.23-3.28). This tower was intended to become an important node, with access to the engine rooms and the energy centre in the basement, the staff entrance on the ground floor and on the floors above reading rooms and a library tower. The building was conceived in concrete, with large windows and a cladding of Swiss limestone. This was later changed to a Portuguese limestone whose bluish cast complements the Belgian Blue limestone of the historic building.

In the elaboration of the passageway, the cycle path remained in the open air, but the entrance zone and the footpath were incorporated into the building. The result was that behind both façades a revolving door was placed in three of the four archways and, along the entire length of the passageway, the cycle path was screened by a glass wall (3.08-3.11). To make it possible to access the various routes from the entrance hall through the museum galleries, and to solve the problem of emergency exits, lifts and stairs were added. This resulted in two galleries on the main floor being reduced by one bay.²⁰ The chronological arrangement, which pursued a serpentine course through the building, would present an interrelated display of art, applied art and history. The two attic spaces on the north side were reserved for study collections, with thematic displays of ceramics, textiles, ship models and arms. Autonomous sections of the collection were housed in separate buildings, such as the so-called Asian Pavilion and the former Teekenschool. The South Wing was designated for temporary exhibitions, printing and photography. The former library became a reading room and café and was incorporated into the museum route.

Cruz y Ortiz's PD contained one rigorous modification with respect to the museum interior: raised parquet floors concealing pipes and air ducts and double walls for acoustics and climate control. This would change the appearance of the galleries and the detailing of doors, windows, columns and stairs would need to be adapted accordingly.²¹ The museum also wanted to block a lot of windows in order to gain additional exhibition space and to protect the collection from too much daylight. Where possible the architects tried to retain daylight in the museum to provide orientation towards the courtyards and the city. The external space around the museum was dealt with in summary fashion in the PD. Cruz y Ortiz projected the new buildings of the Asian Pavilion and the Study Centre on the site of the bicycle sheds and car park. Since Cuypers' time various extensions had been built on Museumplein and together they formed a picturesque silhouette. The new volumes fitted into this picture. The firm was keen to tidy up and redesign the gardens, but first wanted to know for certain whether or not a cycle path would be routed here as an alternative to the passageway. Only then, too, would the possibilities for the forecourt on Stadshouderskade become clear.

Remarkably, both Cruz y Ortiz and Van Hoogevest drew up their own restoration criteria during the PD phase. Cruz y Ortiz voiced their preference for preservation of the architectural configuration (volumes and spaces), the typology and the heritage value, at least so long as it did not impede the functional organization. In concrete terms this amounted to the restoration of the spatial layout and the

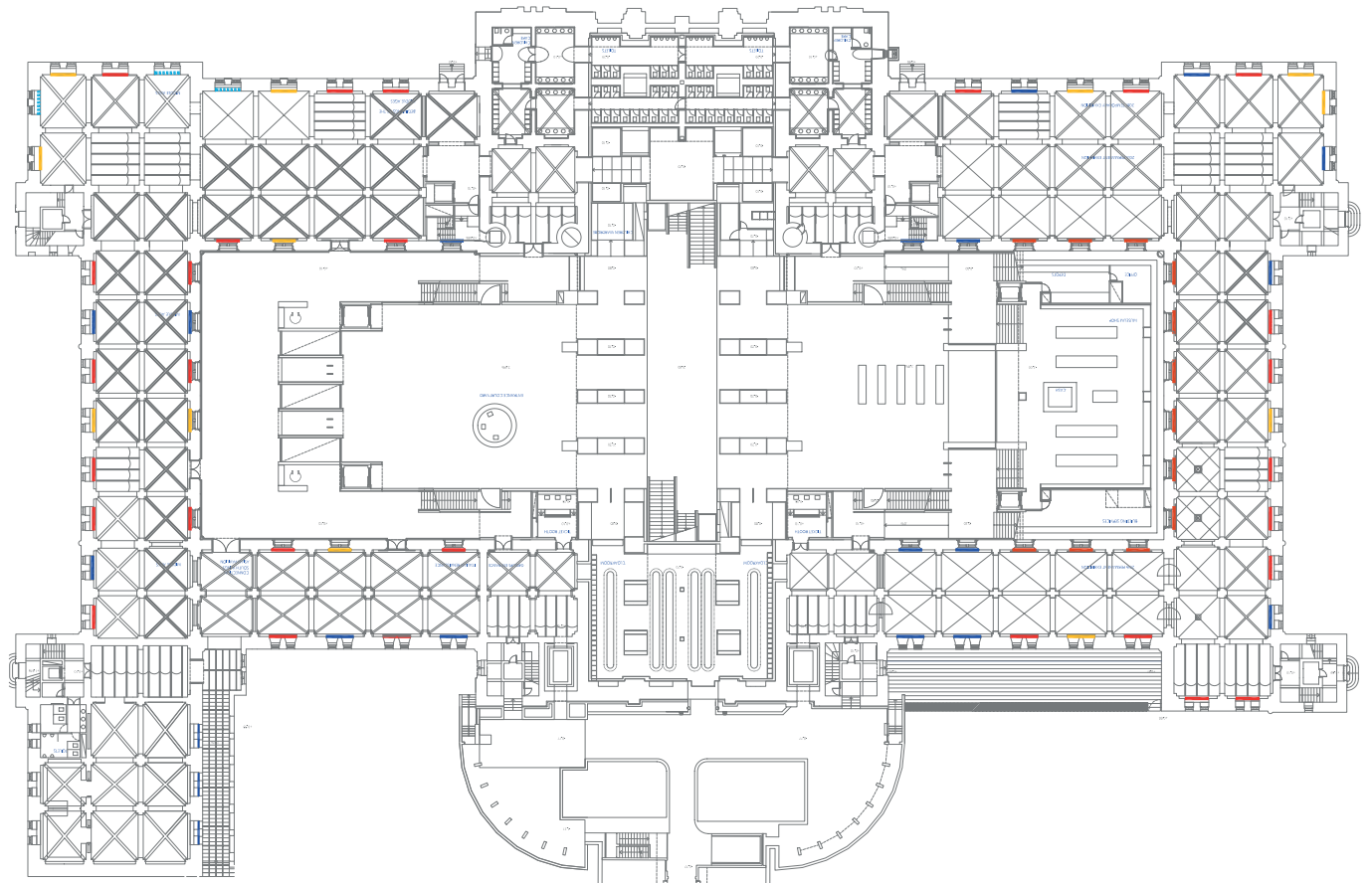
3.15 Model of the Cruz y Ortiz competition design (2004), with the Asian Pavilion and the Study Centre added to the ensemble.

3.16 Plan for window openings, Cruz y Ortiz 2004.

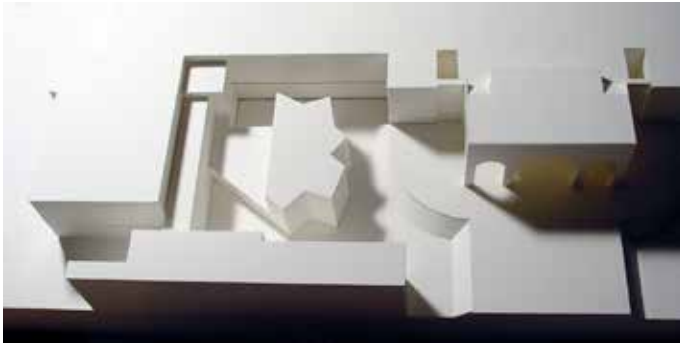
- closed window
— always
- closed window
— not reversible
- closed window
— not easily reversible
- closed window
— easily reversible
- open window
- translucent window level



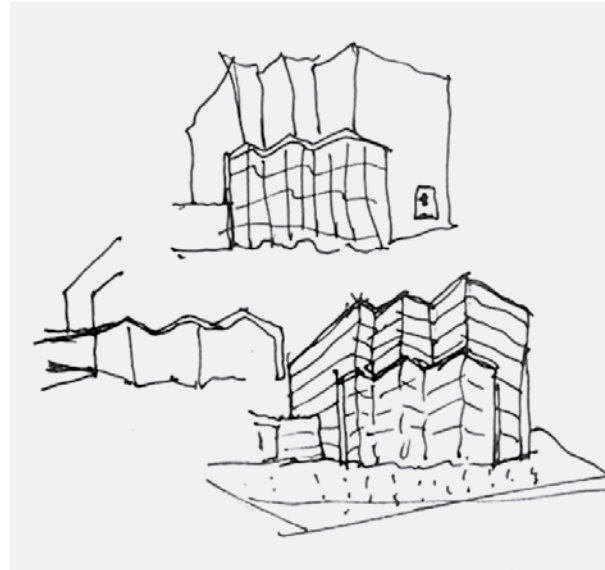
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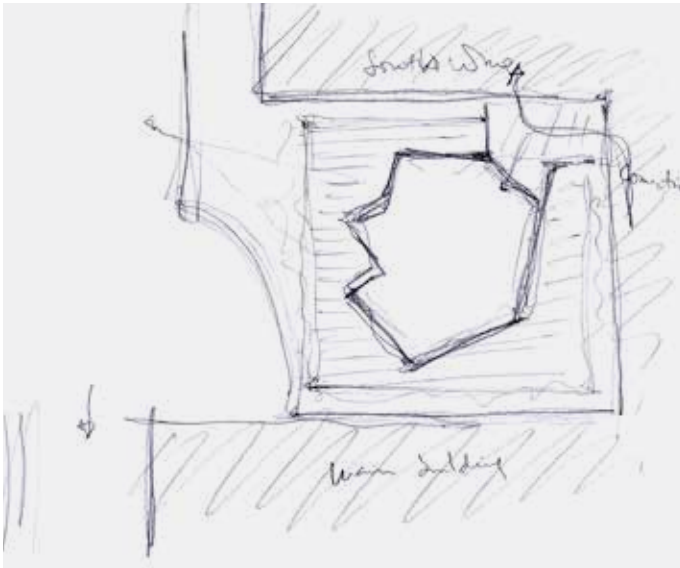
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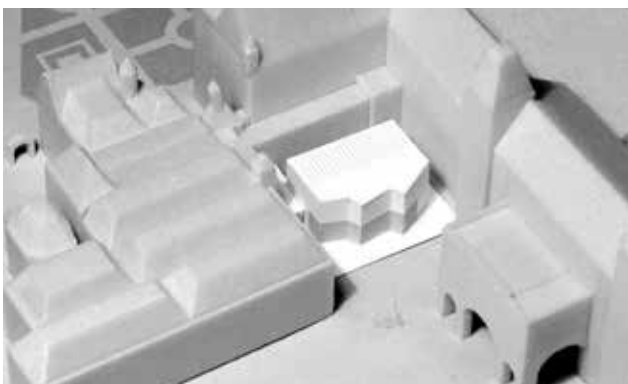
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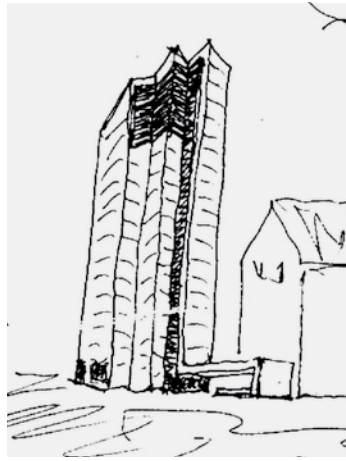


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3.17-21 Stages in the design of the Asian Pavilion, 2001-2004.

3.22 The completed Asian Pavilion.

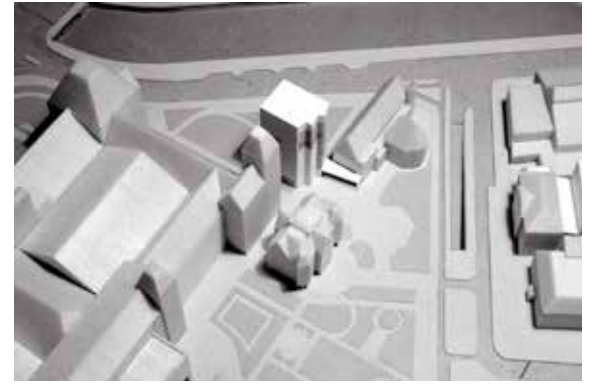
3.23-28 Design and integration studies for the Entrance Building, previously called the Study Centre, with successively smaller building volumes, 2002-2013.



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reinstatement of Cuypers' decorations in the entrance hall, the main stairwells, the library and the Aduard Chapel. In the architects' own words:

Regarding the first floor, the Front Hall should be the main space to be restored, so we are not thinking in restoring the 'Gallery of honour and Nachtwacht-zaal as well decorated in the same atmosphere' and we have some doubts regarding the 'Partly reconstruction of paintings in the upper zone of the rooms', so far those proposals might disturb the explained vision for restoration and the Rijksmuseum exposition layout.²²

That Cruz y Ortiz's restoration criteria were based on their architectural outlook, is clear from the explanatory text:

In the other spaces inside the building we should not find 'reminders of colours', considered as archaeological remains. We think that the conservation criteria of the colours in the basement and intermediate floor must follow the museum's criteria and the exhibition's point of view. We insist upon the idea that the original colour grade would be excessive. No 'patch' interventions will be done in any case (it means, no singular spots on the walls will be kept or restored).²³

With this firm pronouncement on the treatment of the historical substance of the museum, the architects underscored the way they intended to approach the national monument: in an architectural rather than an archaeological or building-historical manner. In the basic design they approached the existing monument with maximum sensitivity and succeeded in reconstructing Cuypers' spatial layout and adapting it to the requirements of large crowds of visitors and a controlled climate. At the same time, within this overall design they took the liberty of creating an almost modernist, dazzling light interior – as the ideal decor for the works of art. The history of the building was to be allowed to resonate in a highly measured way, as long as this did not disturb the tranquillity and serenity of the museum galleries.

Reaction to the Preliminary Design

The PD was submitted for comment to parties directly involved in the new Rijksmuseum and to external advisory bodies such as the Commissie voor Welstand en Monumenten in Amsterdam (Design Review Board) and RDMZ. Reactions were generally positive with regards to the solution for the entrance and the courtyards, but there was also a sense of unease about the treatment of the conservation aspects and the interior. Broadly speaking, the commentary focused on the Study Centre, the glass walls in the passageway and the restoration plan. Welstand and RDMZ queried the utility, necessity and appearance of the Study Centre, given the visual impact of this volume on the ensemble.²⁴ The passageway attracted criticism for the combination of the entrance zone with a cycle path, and the consequences it entailed. Asselbergs, for example, thought it a poor idea to block three of the four archways with turnstiles because it disrupted the symmetrical façade arrangement.²⁵ Coenen objected to the long glass wall in the passageway.²⁶ Both men wanted to move the cycle path and integrate the passageway completely with the museum – as previously conceived by Hans Ruijsenaars in his urban 'foyer' idea. Welstand's opinion was diametrically opposed to this: 'The envisaged changes in the passageway are in its view a travesty of the propagated public character, which is all but lost.'²⁷

The comments about the restoration plan focused on the lack of building archaeological research and of any substantiated statement regarding the essence of the historic building. The restoration plan was in fact a derivative of the museum

3.29-32 Designs for the chandeliers over the courtyards. The original design for two special models, both in crystal.

3.33-34 More detailed version of the chandelier design.

3.35 One of the two final identical chandeliers.



3.29



3.30



3.31



3.32



3.33



3.34



3.35

concept, climate control and space requirements. Asselbergs, for example, felt that too little thought had been given to the reinstatement of the original decor: 'That the "Continue with Cuypers" motto should now be interpreted chiefly as the restoration of the structure, plus decorations in one or two rooms, is an unacceptable principle as far as I'm concerned.'²⁸ Asselbergs thought that the decorations were part of the original architecture and that the restoration plan should also take account of the significance of the Rijksmuseum as a monument of national identity. These aspects were not mentioned at all in the PD. De Leeuw stressed that the museum wanted maximum flexibility in the galleries, but was also keen to pass the original building on to future generations.²⁹ He therefore suggested restoring Cuypers' interior in the non-museum spaces, such as the Great Hall, staircases, corner towers and courtyards. He also wanted to restore the Aduard Chapel as part of the display devoted to the nineteenth century. He went even further and argued for the restoration of the high point of Cuypers' interior – the sequence Great Hall, Gallery of Honour and Night Watch Gallery – as an art object in itself.³⁰ Antonio Cruz's initial reaction to this 'Cuypers cathedral' was not necessarily negative, but he wasn't overly enthusiastic, either.³¹ Coenen wanted to suspend judgement on this idea and deal with it in relation to a concept for the entire interior, which was as yet insufficiently spelled out.³² Programme director Bart van der Pot had different concerns about the restoration plan. He had flagged a cost overrun and wanted no uncertainty regarding similar discoveries in later stages. His preference was for a decision to restore one or two sections of the building to be taken now and to leave it at that.³³ This served to introduce cost as a restoration criterion, which strengthened Cruz y Ortiz's approach. The architects objected to the incidental display of historical fragments and were only prepared to give Cuypers' interior pride of place where this did not compromise the museum display. In fact, there were already signs here of the compromise arrived at later, whereby, in addition to the non-museum parts of the building, the Night Watch Gallery and the top of the Gallery of Honour were restored or reconstructed, and building traces and other decorations elsewhere in the building largely disappeared.

The Final Design

The first part of the FD was completed in October 2004, preceded two months earlier by 'Intervention and restoration criteria'.³⁴ The FD combined the views of the chief architect and the restoration architect, with those of Cruz y Ortiz prevailing.³⁵ According to Antonio Ortiz, the proposal could be encapsulated in five principles: renovate (not restore), the museum is never finished, new designs for new functions, balance between architecture and exhibition, and an integrated design instead of a patchwork.³⁶ These principles gave the necessary scope to renovate the museum in detail while giving it a sense of coherence. Typical of the architectural approach was the decision, regardless of the magnitude of the change, not to cling obstinately to reinstating the old form. The architects strove for new architectural quality, based on their interpretation of the building.

Compared with the PD, some minor changes had been introduced. The height of the Study Centre was slightly reduced for the sake of the silhouette of the ensemble. The chandeliers in the courtyards changed from crystal to aluminium with perforated MDF with sound absorbent material, 'a moderately spectacular touch' (3.29-3.35).³⁷ The café in the library disappeared. The architects proposed keeping more windows open than the museum had requested (3.16).³⁸ In the galleries they wanted to conjure a contemporary experience of the historical space through the use of light and colour. The most striking aspect of the FD was what

3.36 pages 120-121: The Rijksmuseum complex viewed from the south during the final stage of construction.

was missing: the elaboration of the passageway. Since the city council had vetoed the plan, the architects could only wait for new guidelines from the council.³⁹

In the FD the intervention in the main building was described as the reinstatement of the 'original architecture', interpreted as 'the original space and the original connections between different spaces'.⁴⁰ The proposal to strip the museum of building traces and fragments was underpinned with historical arguments. The remnants of the 'Nederlandsch Historisch Museum' (Netherlands Historical Museum) in particular were dismissed as historically and artistically inaccurate. For example, Cuypers had set up columns in the museum as an example of church architecture. The FD explained in meticulous detail that they had no structural meaning, did not fit in the structural grid and were absent from the foundation drawings.⁴¹ Once unmasked as kitsch, the conclusion was that they did not belong to the architecture and should be removed.

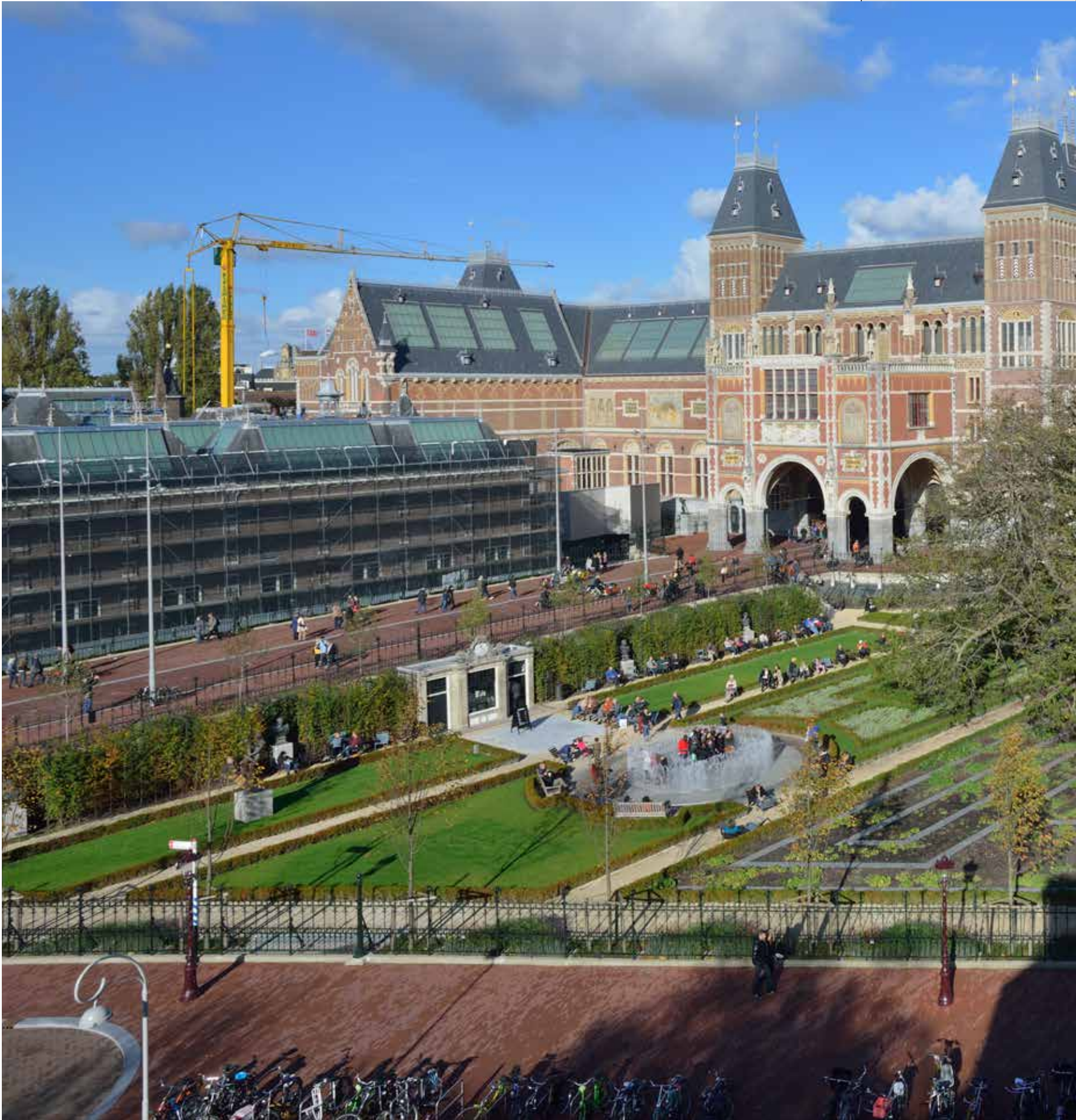
However, in general, we call into question the value of replicas of architectural elements that exist elsewhere. The fact that time has gone by since these replicas in the museum were built does not necessarily mean that they have any additional monumental value than that of being mere replicas.⁴²

Only the Aduard Chapel in a corner tower of the ground floor would be retained, as a relic of an outmoded museum concept. The Great Hall and the Night Watch Gallery would be restored as an art object. For the sake of continuity between the two rooms, it was proposed that the paintings on the frieze, the capitals and the pilasters in the intervening Gallery of Honour be reconstructed.

From Final Design to Construction Plan

At around the same time that the first phase of the FD appeared in October 2004, Mels Crouwel was installed as the new Chief Government Architect. His reaction to the FD was positive and included the recommendation to stick with the architectural concept for the passageway.⁴³ Crouwel only wanted to be involved in a few implementation aspects, such as the climate separation in the passageway, the insulation of the external façades and the design of new windows. The intervention design was as good as complete, with the exception of the passageway. When the Oud-Zuid district council passed the Ruimtelijk Afwegingskader Rijksmuseum (Rijksmuseum Spatial Evaluation Framework) in 2005, the city's wishes with regard to the passageway were established: retention of the cycle route and permanent public accessibility.⁴⁴ The design had already been modified accordingly.⁴⁵ The passageway remained intact and accessible across its entire width. The climate separation shifted to the wall between the passageway and the courtyards, where the museum entrances with revolving doors, stairs and lifts would be located to either side of the passageway. Instead of entering via the passageway, visitors would descend to the entrance area in the courtyards (3.12).

The elaboration of the entrance zone cleared the way for the finalizing of the building application, which was duly completed in March 2006.⁴⁶ The most important modification from this final design phase was the reduction of the towering Study Centre to a subordinate volume next to the Teekenschool (3.28).⁴⁷ After earlier critical remarks about the tower's impact on the ensemble and under pressure from The Hague, the project office was evidently not willing to take the risk that this new building might further delay the construction work. The reading rooms, the offices and the flue gas exhaust moved to another part of the museum complex.⁴⁸ The new section henceforth designated the Entrance Building, contained only entrances for the staff, deliveries, the energy centre, the multidisciplinary educational centre, (underground) storerooms, reading rooms and the National Print Room.







3.37 The west courtyard in use.

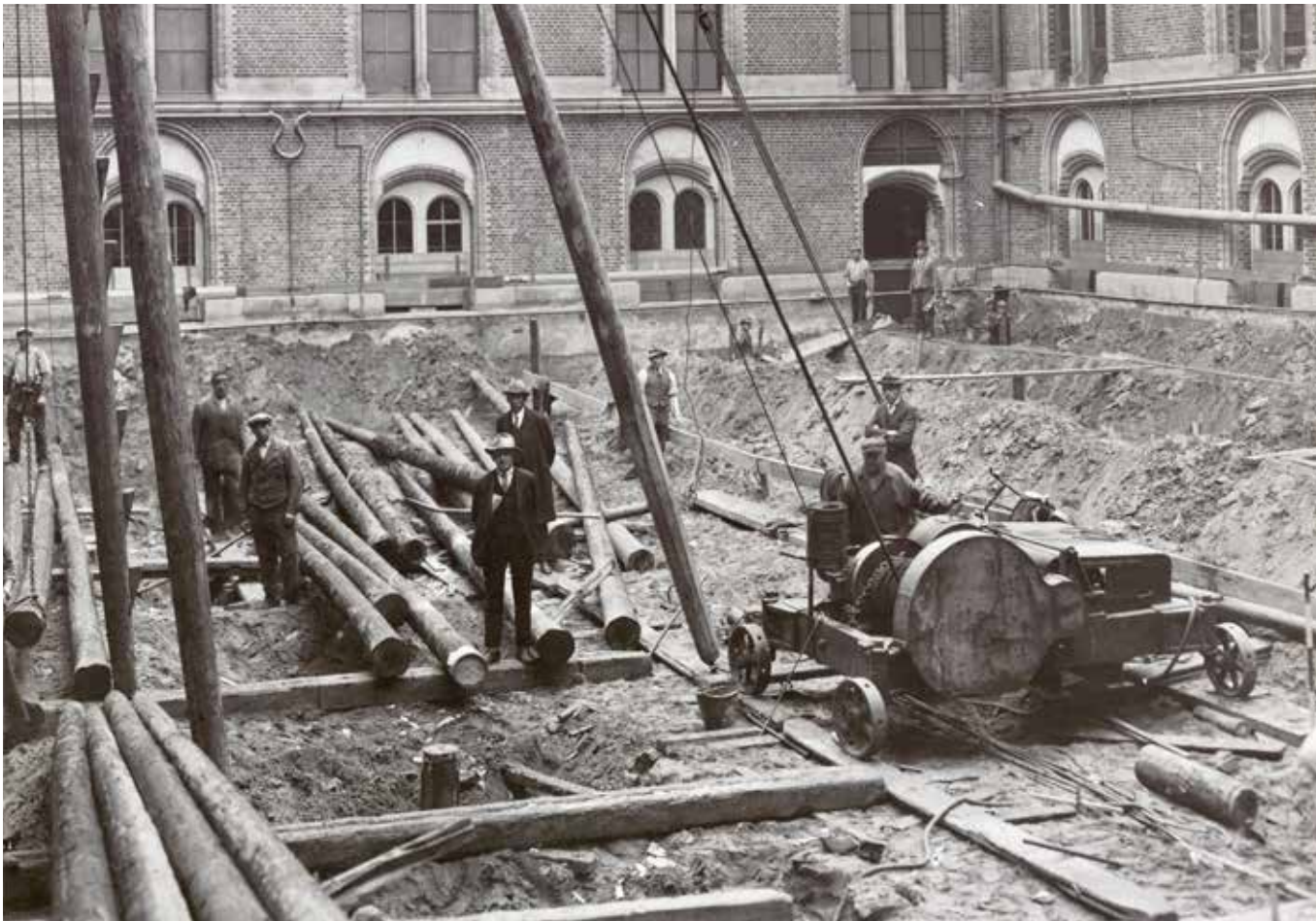


At the end of 2007, with the structure of the courtyard basements already in place, all the necessary permits for the intervention were granted. Yet even after this some changes took place, partly owing to the influence of the interior architect, Jean-Michel Wilmotte (chosen in 2004) and the arrival of a new museum director, Wim Pijbes, in 2008.

For example, more windows in the main building were blocked up, the Aduard Chapel disappeared behind false walls, Cuypers' three 'pastiche' columns survived the intervention, the colour grey made its appearance in the museum galleries and the chronological presentation according to the 'serpentine model' made way for an 'elective model' in which the display was tailored to the spatial characteristics of the floor concerned. But the attempt by Pijbes and the next Chief Government Architect, Liesbeth van der Pol, to return to the original idea for the entrance zone in the passageway came to naught (3.13, 3.14).⁴⁹ The construction process was so far advanced meanwhile that there was neither time nor money for new modifications.

The evolution of the design for the new Rijksmuseum reveals very clearly how the Spanish architects introduced a distinction in Cuypers' legacy, based on an architectural and aesthetic interpretation of the historic building. The structural shell and the exterior were interpreted as heritage architecture. Important decorations, such as those in the Aduard Chapel, the library, the Great Hall and the Night Watch Gallery were designated 'art' and restored or reconstructed. In this way, to quote Antonio Cruz, 85 per cent of Cuypers was restored.⁵⁰

The remaining building traces, such as building fragments and paintings, were labelled imitation and thus by implication deemed unfit for a top contemporary museum. In 2004, Antonio Cruz wrote despondently to the Programme Board that a historical analysis drawn up by Van Hoogetest on the basis of building archaeological research conducted by the Rgd was imbued with a nostalgic sensibility that approbation should be reserved for the situation in 1885. A high heritage value was accorded to every individual element from that period: 'This report is potentially dangerous because it could be deployed at any moment against our design.'⁵¹ It was by splitting Cuypers' legacy into art and kitsch, that Cruz y Ortiz created space for its architecture. With light walls, wooden floors, newly designed windows and doors, the firm tried to bring tranquillity and coherence into the museum after over a century of cacophony and clutter. In the design, Cruz y Ortiz resolved the logistics of millions of visitors and the complicated building services technology by means of the grand gesture of the atrium and the building services tunnel. In the implementation, old and new were continuously being interwoven in every detail. The replacement of the windows, for example, was seized on to reinstate Cuypers' dimensions and profiles and en passant to integrate the brass grilles of the climate control system. Putting the building services in the floors and walls made it possible to remove the false ceilings and reveal the vaulting once more. In the end it did not prove necessary to raise the floors, except in the basements. The false walls required for air conditioning and acoustics were individually detailed to ensure an optimal match with the mouldings and coves. Cruz y Ortiz' ambition to make a serene gesture and bring light into the interior was constantly under pressure throughout the protracted process and the endless consultations with interested parties. Gradually, the design adjusted to Dutch reality. The passageway did not become a foyer or a ramp to the entrance forecourt, but a meeting of city and museum. In many places the design lost colour and texture. Meanwhile, the ensemble – of city and building, shell and collection, and of Cuypers and Cruz y Ortiz – grew.



C.01

C.01 Driving piles in the courtyard, 1929.



C.02

C.02 Pouring concrete underwater in the east courtyard with assistance from divers, November 2006.

The new main entrance and the conversion of the courtyards into an underground atrium are essential features of the design for the new Rijksmuseum. During construction, they presented a formidable civil engineering challenge. The courtyards had to be excavated and connected underground without damage to the building and its foundations. Furthermore, the excavation had to be very deep, because an additional underground level was to be created beneath the new atrium for services such as the auditorium, the kitchen of the grand café and the toilets. The museum also had to be adapted to present-day climate control and security standards, which presented another difficulty for the builders. The many bulky technical systems, cables, pipes, conduits and ducts had to be hidden from visitors wherever possible. The plan even involved clearing out the physical plant areas in the souterrain to make them available for public purposes. Again, the solution was mainly to work underground, encircling the main building with a tunnel for technical services, known as the Energy Ring. From outside the museum, it now seems as though the renovation has changed very little. In reality, an immense underground complex now underlies, intersects and surrounds the main building. This has freed up almost the entire historic complex for the display of the collection.

The courtyards were excavated to a depth of 7 m below Amsterdam Ordnance Datum (NAP) and more than 8 m below the street level of the central passageway. The building was found to have settled 10 to 15 cm since its opening in 1885. The historic structure is in almost constant motion, partly owing to differences between summer and winter temperatures. Because the subsurface is not uniform, there were and are different degrees of settlement. Nonetheless, the old foundations had held up very well through their many decades of use. The Norway spruce piles under the main buildings (approximately 8,000 in number) were almost completely intact, and hardly any significant cracking was found in the building's walls. The original load-bearing construction of the museum had been oversized, and this had had its benefits.

To avoid major problems with the existing foundation, the construction of the new underground levels had to be approached carefully. If the excavation in the courtyards had begun without any special precautions, then drainage would have been necessary in the foundation pit. But this would have placed the wood foundation piles at risk of drying out, a situation that could lead to significant settlement. The alternative was wet excavation. First, sheetpile walls were driven deep into the ground next to the existing foundations and the wooden foundation piles. The method used did not cause vibrations. Then 468 new foundation piles were driven for the new floors and walls of the atrium. To avoid damage to the museum, concrete screw injection piles were used. This procedure involves drilling a hole in the ground, installing a steel pile, and encasing it in injected grout, a mixture of cement and water that blends with the soil. Only after the completion of the foundations were the underground areas excavated. During excavation, the pit was filled with water. This maintained a constant water table and prevented groundwater pressure from breaking open the bottom of the pit. A layer of underwater concrete was poured as a work floor at 7 m below NAP. When it hardened, it created a watertight basin consisting of the work floor and the steel sheetpile walls. Divers checked whether all the connections and joints really were watertight and removed deposits of sludge. The basin was then drained; the piles prevent it from floating upwards. The underground levels are attached to the main building by a flexible structure that allows the two to move independently without cracking or doing damage to the foundations. A layer of sand was poured into the dry foundation pit before the structural floors and walls were built.

One particularly impressive stage of the underground construction work was the construction of a passage between the excavated courtyards underneath the Rijksmuseum's central passageway. The old brick and concrete foundation had to be replaced by a much narrower one so that construction workers could pass directly from one underground courtyard to the other. The passageway remained in place during this stage, and all possible measures were taken to prevent damage such as cracking and settlement. First, foundation piles were driven around the existing foundations. These supported the passageway during construction. Then horizontal holes were drilled under the columns and walls of the passageway. These holes were filled with steel sections encased in a concrete mixture. Horizontal steel needle beams were inserted between the steel sections and the foundation piles. These beams were fitted with cross beams and jacks that could be adjusted with great precision. While the passageway was supported by this corset of steel sections, the old foundations were demolished and replaced by new ones.

The Energy Ring was constructed by the same method as the basements beneath the courtyards. This tunnel, 3.5 m high on the inside, encircles the building and passes under the courtyards between two sheetpile walls. The innermost ring of sheetpile walls turns the main building into a kind of polder, shielded from the high water table around it. This requires constant regulation by means of water pumps. A subsurface irrigation system in the museum garden allows water to be pumped in from the canal in times of drought. This prevents the wooden foundations from drying out. The reverse is also possible: the water table in the miniature polder can be lowered when surrounding water levels are high by pumping filtered water back into the canal.

Unlike in Cuypers' day, the feasibility of the underground structures and new foundations was painstakingly calculated before they were built. The main load-bearing construction is no longer extremely oversized; the boggy Amsterdam soil can be expected to conform, for the time being, to the logic of the design. The mini-polder combines a variety of advanced construction and foundation techniques. This will make future changes and additions a greater challenge than ever.



C.03

C.03 Pressing the sheet piling prior to excavation of the east courtyard, June 2006.



C.04

C.04 The underwater excavation of the east courtyard. A temporary work platform was constructed on a temporary foundation for this purpose, September 2006.



C.05 Pouring concrete underwater in the east courtyard; divers checking connections and joints, November 2006.

C.05



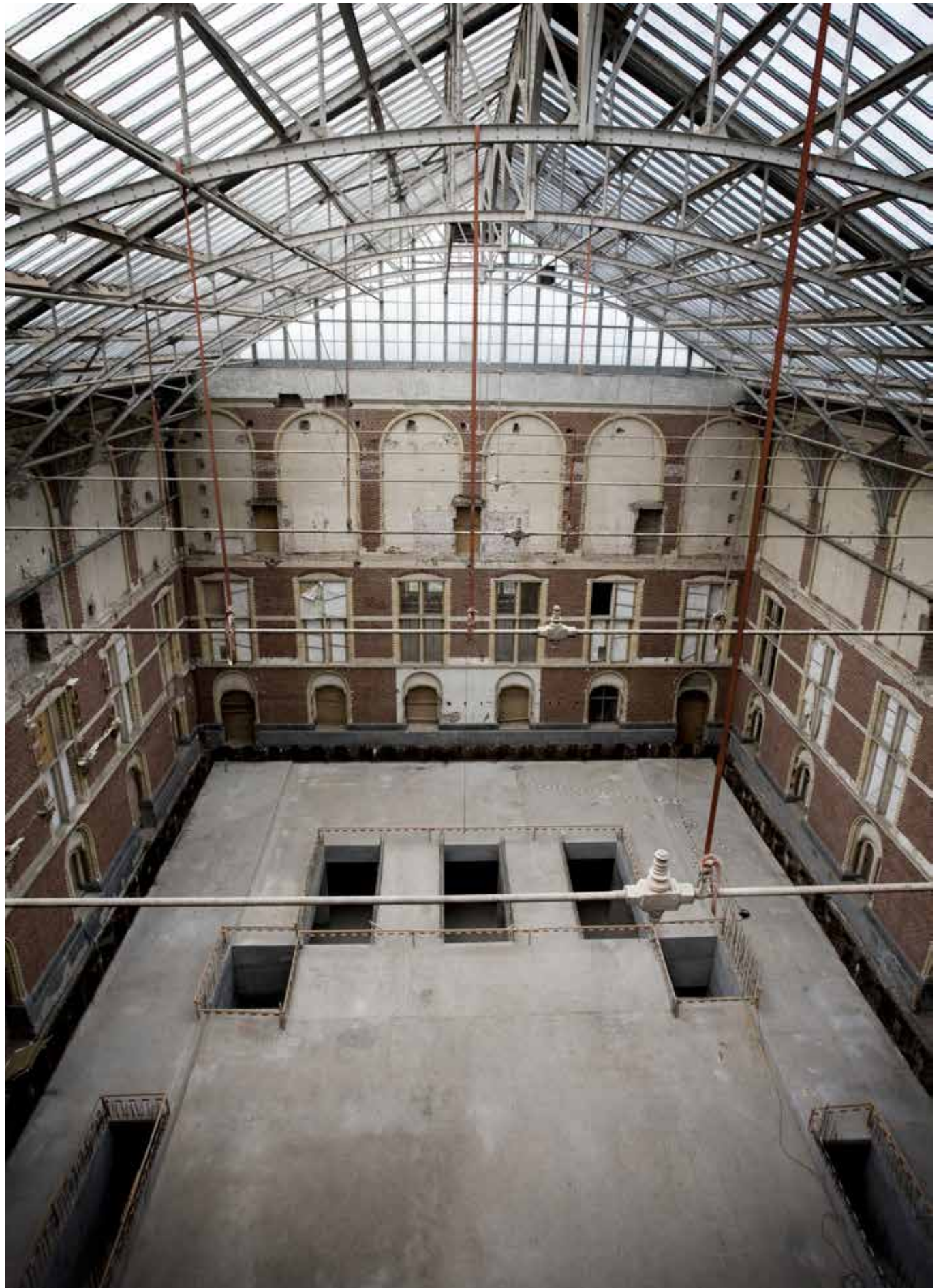
C.06 Pouring a layer of sand onto the hardened underwater concrete at the lowest point after draining the east courtyard, December 2006.

C.06



C.07

C.07 Pouring the new concrete sub-floor over the sand layer in the west courtyard, view from above, February 2007.



C.08 View of the west courtyard from above; the new cellar has been completed. The sheetpiling is still clearly visible, 2008.



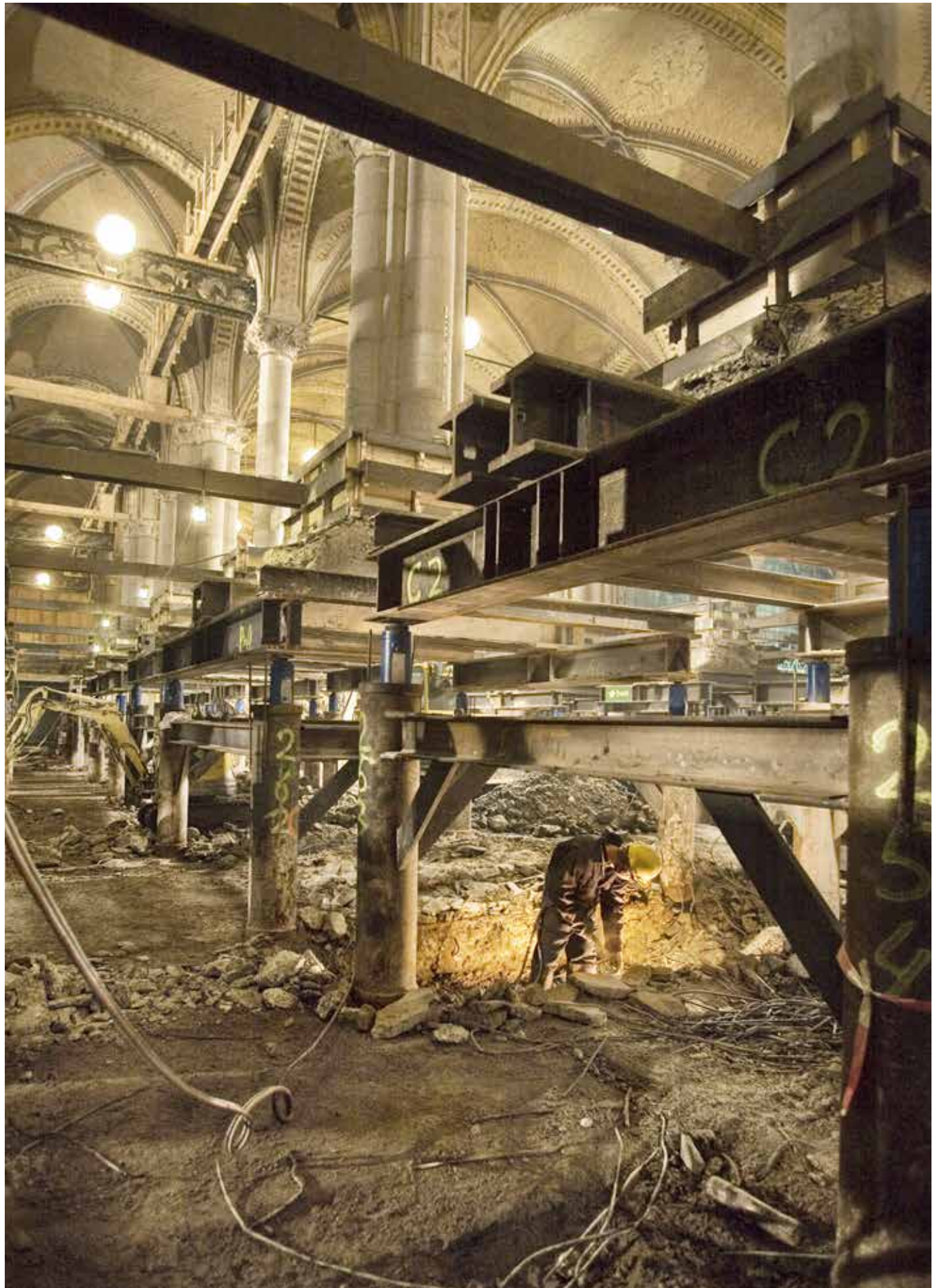
C.09

C.09 Demolishing the floor in the central passageway through the Rijksmuseum. The steel sections encased in concrete in the current foundation are clearly visible, held in place by jacks while the foundation is demolished, September 2009



C.10

C.10 The foundation of the central passageway is demolished, leaving the Gallery of Honour 'suspended' on top of the temporary foundation and jacks, February 2010.



C.11 The foundation of the central passageway is demolished; the blue jacks are clearly visible, February 2010.



C.12

C.12 The deepest point under the courtyards is reached.



C.13-14 Concrete structure under the east courtyard.

C.13



C.14





C.16 Work on the energy centre on the east side of the Rijksmuseum, under the future Entrance Building, March 2010.

C.16



C.17 Work on the energy centre under the future Entrance Building; the ducts in the sheetpile wall are clearly visible, March 2010.

C.17



When large government-owned monuments are renovated it is customary in the Netherlands to appoint a restoration architect alongside the principal architect. Consequently, for the Rijksmuseum a separate selection was held among five architectural restoration firms. For this complex assignment, it proved difficult to formulate the brief and the responsibilities. Also, the addition of a theme – ‘Continue with Cuypers’ – gave rise to a great variety of interpretations concerning the building and the restoration.

On 12 April 2001 the views on the restoration were presented in The Hague by five firms: Architectenbureau J. van Stigt, Verlaan en Bouwstra architecten, Braaksma & Roos Architectenbureau partnered by Rappange & Partners Architecten, and Van Hoogevest Architecten. The assessment committee, chaired by Jo Coenen, was the same as that for the selection of the principal architect, and was backed by a special restoration advice committee led by professor Frits van Voorden from Delft University of Technology. Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos was also represented on the committee, since the role of the restoration architect would be a supportive one to the principal architects holding ultimate responsibility for the project. Both architecture firms would have to work closely together, so a good working relationship was a necessity. Coenen had also discussed this with the restoration architects and with Cruz y Ortiz;¹ accordingly, Cruz y Ortiz’s input was very important. The preference, though not unanimous, was for Van Hoogevest. All the firms met the considerable demands of the complex assignment, but Van Hoogevest was considered to be the most suitable ‘as regards professional know-how, experience and collaboration with the principal architect’.²

Vision Statement

The restoration architects received a letter inviting them to present a scenario for the Rijksmuseum as a monument, as part of the *structuurplan 2000*, and with the same general premises as those put before the principal architects.³ The main emphasis was on the rehabilitation of the architectural quality of the Cuypers concept (the resolution of the ‘traffic interchange’), and the approach to questions relating to structural design, building performance and services engineering. At this stage the restoration architects were not yet asked for plans, just initial ideas. Unlike the invited competition for the principal architects – and remarkably in view of the process that followed – for this assignment building archaeological research was to receive particular attention. It would be conducted prior to, but also during, renovation.⁴ The restoration architects were required to indicate how they thought such research could be integrated in the design. They were also asked to consider how an extensive decorative programme might be executed for the interior (in technical, logistical and financial terms).

From the start, Van Hoogevest’s ideas on how to approach the task differed from those of Cruz y Ortiz. In his vision statement, monument-specific, building archaeological, technological and usage aspects took a prominent place: structural solutions for technical shortcomings bearing in mind the significance of the monument, and suitability for the principal and the user.⁵ The firm was of the opinion that



research into the building's structural history was absolutely essential in determining the monumental value. The results could affect the restoration plan, which would therefore have to be fairly flexible. After all, historical remains that might be revealed during the process could precipitate fresh interpretations and so mean adjustments to the design. According to Van Hoogevest, rehabilitation of the features of Cuypers' original design concept had implications for the spatiality as well as the decoration. Ultimately, they were part of his overall architectural concept, in which walls, vaults, floors and windows formed a comprehensive whole according to a specific iconographic programme and sophisticated colour palette. If the filled-in courtyards were cleared, blocked windows were opened up and the original museum galleries were reconstructed (for example, by removing false ceilings), the daylight museum could regain its original structure and character. In addition, painted-over decorations might conceivably be rehabilitated selectively, for example in public areas, where there would not be a conflict with the presentation of the collection. The library and Aduard Chapel could serve as examples.

The vision statement also presented by way of example the results of an initial study by Van Hoogevest into the original decoration in the Great Hall. An artisanal approach to possible reconstruction of the wall paintings was proposed. In that respect, Van Hoogevest urged researching the colours and technique used for the original layers of paint, to tie in with or supplement building archaeological research. Similarly, information on the quantity, quality and location of the residues might be a reason for alterations to the restoration approach. So it would be preferable for both studies to start at an early stage. With respect to the technical installations for climate control, electrical engineering and security, fire prevention and the like, Van Hoogevest proposed 'weaving' all the services and ducting (when possible out of sight) into the existing architecture. In Cuypers' building, space had been allowed for ducts for ventilation and heating in the section of the walls, or else housed in shafts. Equipment for hot air heating was located in the souterrain. The Climate control system (installed at a later date) was also concealed in the building fabric. The restoration architect suggested using existing systems and ducting for the new services as far as possible. Here again, building archaeological research might supply more important information. The firm felt it would be wise to add a preliminary stage to the project. That would address not only research into building archaeological research, colour analysis and demolition work, but also research into the structural design of the building's foundations, the wood pile foundations, as well as the condition of the walls once the courtyards had been cleared.

'Continue with Cuypers' or 'Back to Cuypers'

Clearly Van Hoogevest explored the interpretation of Cuypers' legacy quite extensively for his scenario presentation. Amazingly, the theme 'Continue with Cuypers' was not even mentioned to the restoration architects in the letter inviting their proposals. Yet, according to Gijsbert van Hoogevest (b. 1951), those points of reference had been made 'perfectly clear' in the two briefings with all the architects.⁶ However, the invitation to the principal architects did specifically ask for their views on 'Back to Cuypers', which had in fact to be interpreted as being 'Continue with Cuypers'.⁷ In the presentation of their scenario, Cruz y Ortiz actually proposed reproducing Cuypers' colours in 'diluted' and toned down form.⁸ In their view the exuberant, bright colours had always been a drawback for the use of the building as a museum. So 'Continue with Cuypers' was interpreted very differently by the two firms.

In order to envisage the views and concepts concerning the restoration of the Rijksmuseum as a listed historic building and museum, Coenen instituted a round-table conference in the Rijksmuseum on 6 March 2002.⁹ In sessions with 'makers, guardians and consumers' of culture, ideas on 'Continue with Cuypers' and, in particular, 'Back to Cuypers', were considered, with the discussion concentrating on whether or not to reinstate the interior decorations.¹⁰ The director of the Rijksmuseum and the tenant of the building, Ronald de Leeuw, had a strong opinion on the subject. In changing ideas on the content and character of the presentation, De Leeuw felt Cuypers' *Gesamtkunstwerk* approach (in which every gallery, with its decorations, was directly connected with the objects) was inappropriate. But also, the building itself should appear to best advantage, in a museological sense as well. He proposed creating resting places along the circuit through the museum, where visitors could catch their breath after all the impressions, and where the building could speak for itself. The examples he gave were the Great Hall and the imposing staircases. At the same time, De Leeuw was a great proponent of Cuypers' original decorations combined with colourful walls.¹¹

4.02 Design drawing by Cuypers for the south wall of the west courtyard.

4.03 Rediscovered fragment of architectural sculpture.

4.04 Palms in the central passageway, decorated for an exhibition in 1926.



Fons Asselbergs, director of Rijksdienst voor de Monumentenzorg (Government Agency for the Preservation of Historic Buildings; RDMZ) also believed that 'Back to Cuypers' would not take the demands of present-day museum use into account. 'Continue with Cuypers' was, therefore, a better premise. However, in order to proceed with Cuypers, 'Back to Cuypers' would be necessary: research into what was still there, what could be rehabilitated, what could be restored and where reconstruction was necessary or feasible. Asselbergs volunteered five premises for a practicable development process. He was of the opinion that the decorative and figurative wall paintings, if present and wherever possible, ought to be exposed: reinstating Cuypers to the very maximum in non-exhibition spaces. Cuypers' decoration plan could – for instance in sequences of galleries – provide opportunities for the integral presentation favoured by the museum, possibly with curtains, terrazzo flooring and palm trees (4.04). Asselbergs did not favour toning down the colours, but rather partially revealing Cuypers' true intensity. To some extent the new integral presentation did coincide with the Cuypers concept, for example in the galleries containing fragments of architecture and sculpture. To conclude, in Asselbergs' opinion 'Continue with Cuypers' implied that Cruz y Ortiz would follow on from Cuypers, and that the layers of interventions by Eschauzier, Elffers and Quist would have to be removed.¹²



4.03



4.04

Preliminary Design for Restoration Plan

In the course of 2002 Cruz y Ortiz and Van Hoogevest developed their ideas in preliminary plans for reconfiguration and restoration. The two firms differed with respect to the restoration premises, so Van Hoogevest presented a separate Preliminary Design (PD). Cruz y Ortiz's design comprised the firm's own restoration criteria. Both PDs appeared in December.¹³ In the restoration context, four areas were worked out in Van Hoogevest's PD. They were to form the body of that firm's planning process and activities. First and foremost, for Van Hoogevest the rehabilitation of Cuypers' spatial structure meant restoring the historic structure. That was largely bound up with the construction and the services. In fact, these three components were in line with the principal features of Cruz y Ortiz's plans, but in this case from the point of view of consequences for the historic building. The fourth area was the restoration of Cuypers' decorations (4.02, 4.03).¹⁴

The first step in rehabilitating Cuypers' concept, also termed Cuypers' 'pretzel' in the *structuurplan 2000*,¹⁵ was to clear the filled-in courtyards. Then the historic shell had to be restored (4.05-4.07). Clearly, the extent to which that repair would entail rehabilitation or reconstruction of the internal walls and their details depended on the extent to which infills had compromised the building over the years. Van Hoogevest suggested returning as much as possible to the original situation: reconstructing windows, passages, iron roofing structure and also, where possible, restoring (preserving) sculpted and painted decorations. The quantity of what remained would only emerge when everything was dismantled and building archaeological research and historical colour analysis were completed. For example, the initial investigation on site had already exposed remains of sculptures and wall paintings on the window reveals.

So the rehabilitation of the Cuypers concept also meant restoring the original layout with the original floor areas and heights of the galleries, as well as opening up the windows to allow daylight to enter. The reappointment of the museum, Cruz y Ortiz's infills, the lowering of the courtyards and the passageway, the tunnel ring for the services, and the constructions for the new-build would have far-reaching consequences for the foundations. Sound plans would have to be drawn up with

The decorated trusses of the restored roof structure above the courtyards.

4.05 Detail of Cuypers's design.

4.06 Elements preserved behind an added wall.

4.07 The restored roof structure, now fully visible again.

Arcadis and Arup engineering consultants (and partners) to prevent damage to the historic building. Arup had, for instance, already developed a building services package, for climate control, electrical engineering, lifts and other services, which could probably be installed out of sight in the building's shell. Therefore, it was important to repeatedly consider how technology and meticulous restoration could be combined.¹⁶

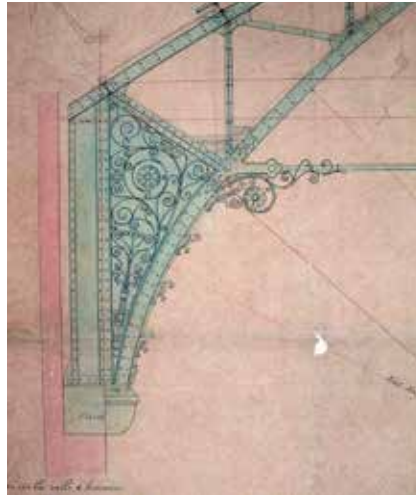
Regarding the restoration of Cuypers' decorations, Van Hoogevest focused on the experience of the building as a whole. It had changed considerably as the years went by, as decorations were painted over in 'whitewashing campaigns'; coats of paint had even been chipped away. The anticipated make-over made extensive research possible. The Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (Foundation Restoration Studio Limburg; SRAL), headed by Anne van Grevenstein, had been commissioned by the Rijksgebouwendienst (Government Buildings Agency; Rgd) to start explorative research into the wall paintings in several galleries. Van Hoogevest was able to refer to the preliminary results.¹⁷ The SRAL's investigations had revealed that there were still many paintings beneath the coats of white paint. Material in the archival records demonstrated the scope and coherence in which the decorations had once been applied. And not only were there wall paintings. Terrazzo flooring, sculptures and architectural mouldings that had been part of Cuypers' *Gesamtkunstwerk* were of importance in this respect. Once the false ceilings and the partitions had been pulled down in the large picture galleries on the first floor, remains of coves, cornices, figurative heads and wall paintings emerged. All these research results bolstered the firm in its earlier position in the vision statement. Van Hoogevest no longer restricted his call for restoration and reconstruction to the public spaces only. Detailing would depend to a large extent on subsequent studies and the appearance of the building after it had been stripped, but he now recommended preserving at all events the fragments retained on the ground and main floors, though not wishing to generate a 'piecemeal plan that would have an adverse effect on the harmony of the interior architecture' (4.08-4.10, 4.12-4.14).¹⁸

Whereas Van Hoogevest saw more and more opportunities for returning Cuypers' decorations to the museum's interior – partly thanks to the research carried out there – Cruz y Ortiz continued to be very restrictive, adhering to a new aesthetic concept. In their PD, Cruz y Ortiz urged the use of neutral backcloths for the exhibition galleries. Moreover, the coloured masonry of the vaulted spaces should, in their view, have uniform cladding. Only the Great Hall, the stairwells, the Aduard Chapel and the library would be eligible for restoration. As we have seen, the principal architects proposed toning down Cuypers' bright colours somewhat. In their view, no painted fragments should be kept or restored as 'archaeological remains'.¹⁹

Reactions to the Preliminary Designs

The differing scenarios concerning the restoration of the interior unleashed many reactions and questions in the spring of 2003 in heritage conservation circles. People at the RDMZ, the Bureau Monumenten & Archeologie Amsterdam (Office of Monuments & Archaeology Amsterdam; BMA), the Amsterdamse Raad voor de Monumentenzorg (Amsterdam Advisory Council for Historic Conservation) and Cuypers Society urgently advised the Programme Board to develop one scenario for addressing these issues before commissioning the architects for a Final Design (FD).²⁰

The organizations were unanimous in their call for more research, concerning building archaeology and colours – as in fact proposed in Van Hoogevest's PD. Asselbergs took the lead and challenged the principals to indeed develop the



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declared 'Continue with Cuypers' theme 'with conviction', and for the entire building.²¹ They also emphatically demanded the restoration of the facing brickwork, treatment of the areas where building and collections interfaced (for example in the gallery for ecclesiastical architecture) and the ideas for picture galleries on the upper floor with the cove paintings and mouldings. RDMZ and BMA even suggested making the research a condition for (assessment of the plans for) the planning permission procedure.²²

Cruz y Ortiz was of the opinion that its scenario for the restoration would already reinstate Cuypers by '85 per cent' on account of the rehabilitation of the original structure, restoration of the shell and part of the decorations. De Leeuw again had an important say. He had been convinced by what Van Grevenstein had meanwhile revealed in her research. Accordingly, he was in favour of achieving better cohesion between the Great Hall, Gallery of Honour and the Night Watch Gallery (4.11, 4.15-4.17). Even he could visualize keeping the vaults inside the museum exposed.²³ Coincidentally with the substantive arguments, the Programme Board also had concerns about the estimated costs of the restoration work. In addition, the desire was expressed to have clear ideas on the monumental value and to be free of 'open-ended issues'.²⁴ The outcome was what might be termed a pragmatic

Images of the museum interior in 2005, after the building was dismantled and prior to renovation.

4.08 Gallery of paintings on the main floor.

4.09 The Gallery of Honour.

4.10 Vaulting on the ground floor.





4.09



4.10

4.11 The SRAL restoration studio at work in the library.

4.12-14 Sculpture and polychrome fragments that came to light after the building was dismantled and the walls and vaulting were cleaned.



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solution for an 'optimal compromise': the deployment of building archaeological research, a more comprehensive commission for the SRAL, and a joint formulation by Cruz y Ortiz and Van Hoogevest of 'intervention and restoration criteria'.

Building Archaeological Research

Immediately after the PDs were presented in January 2003, Rob Apell of the Chief Government Architect's office chaired a meeting about the cultural history (including structural history) research. Apell stated beforehand that:

although a top-ranking monument is involved, no overall building archaeological research is available, nor has incorporation of research in the design and building process been taken into account. The programme team and board would prefer not to have building archaeological research carried out, and the Rgd's projects management feels the same. Nor is there any real support from the principal architects in this respect. Recent external pressure . . . has meant that the Programme Board of the project is gradually changing its mind somewhat.²⁵

Bearing these premises in mind, a list was compiled of the available research data, also identifying what limitations and objectives could be formulated and applied to reach a clear, rational proposal, without 'open ends'. Two memos were drawn up, by Van Hoogevest and the Rgd. In one, Van Hoogevest formulated a number of considerations for study based on his restoration and layout plan. The Rgd's memo drew attention to the exemplary function of this 'Grand Projet' of the government's and sound reporting of the research, urging that the *Guidelines for Structural History Research*, edited by the Rgd, be observed. Moreover, the Rgd considered a 'solid data base' (which that Agency would finance separately) containing existing and new data to be of *essential* importance.²⁶

Although, remarkably enough, there was no viable building archaeological report, an impression could be obtained from earlier preparatory, exploratory work of the vast extent and complexity of the research – relating both to archival research and structural history assessment.²⁷ However, those involved believed that architects, heritage conservation people and clients would only obtain sufficient information on their designs, plan assessment and decision-making if the appropriate work were tackled thoroughly, monitored and supported by experts, and facilitated by the Rgd database. Accordingly, these considerations were the basis for a proposed estimate for two-stage structural history research.²⁸ The proposal met with queries from the Programme Board as to exactly what research was required, in terms of content and cost.²⁹ Coenen once more noted in writing the motivation for the research, with respect to content and to the 'Grand Projets' memo.³⁰ In the end, pressured by both the municipal and national agencies responsible for conservation of historic buildings, research was started by the Rgd itself.³¹ In the summer of 2003 Rgd researchers already began making material available.³² They used it to fill the database, information for which was available via the website www.waardestelling.nl.³³ Via the four-tier website, 'sources of data used to realize building archaeological reports and assessments' were registered and opened up. Registration was fast: in March 2004 the system already contained some 16,000 pages.³⁴

'In fact that building archaeological research was impossible to work with', according to Gijsbert van Hoogevest.³⁵ The website (in Dutch) was not very comprehensible, certainly not for the Spanish architects, nor was it organized. The design team became increasingly dissatisfied, because the research only collected



and documented data, but did not answer urgent questions about important places in the building (described as hotspots). Van Hoogevest was obliged to provide answers themselves (from the database) to questions on Cruz y Ortiz's hotspot list concerning the building's structural history. Once more, confusion, misunderstandings and incorrect interpretations resulted – not improving the atmosphere between the two architecture firms.³⁶ Accordingly, the high ambitions of the building archaeological research evaporated under pressure from the advancing development process. The website was still used, for instance for BMA's assessment of the plans, but a concluding report did not materialize.³⁷ Research into the painted decorations was another matter; the approach there was more pragmatic and provided visualizations and concomitantly, results.

Historical Colour Analysis

At the start of 2002, the SRAL had already carried out initial research into the building's decorations and colours. Since its opening, the museum's layout had been altered frequently and the original finishes in the interior adapted regularly to changing ideas on museology. Consequently, many of the original decorations had disappeared – painted over or even completely removed. The SRAL's activities were aimed at determining whether there were still any original decorations left, and what condition they were in.³⁸ Their studies combined stratigraphical and topographical research (to expose paint layers in their spatial context) with the study of archival material including drawings, sketches and photographs. Wall paintings that were still present at many different places in the museum were examined, for comparison with areas where only stratigraphical research (scraping off the layers of paint) could reveal the original, often vulnerable decorations. For instance, the wall paintings in the library, Aduard Chapel, and remains of paintings behind the organs in the Great Hall and the upper part of the Night Watch Gallery supplied important information on the original surface, colour saturation and detailing of the paintwork in all of the museum spaces. The SRAL ascertained that much of the original paintwork must still exist. In the concluding report they noted: 'In spite of the wealth of motifs, the degree of stylistic unity in the various decorative paintings found at various locations in the Rijksmuseum is remarkable' (4.12-4.14).³⁹

The authentic surface mostly comprised a matte distemper, alternating sometimes with bronze paint or gold leaf, and sections in oil paint (4.15, 4.16). Where still present, these authentic layers proved to have become darker and duller over time. However, the majority of the wall paintings in the museum were no longer visible and had disappeared under new layers of paint. In addition, the first layer of white lead painting had penetrated the underlying plaster so much that the bottom layer could not be revealed without causing damage. The layer of lead white had combined totally with the layer of plaster, and if the former were scratched off the top part of the plaster would come off as well. So the SRAL proposed reconstructing the decorations only where there were repetitive patterns, but not in the freely painted sections (4.17). However, more research was needed into the original templates, the historical context and, especially, into primary sources (wall paintings and painted canvases) if the possible reconstruction was to be conducted properly. For example, for the Great Hall and the Gallery of Honour, it was important to learn more about the quality and potential of the work done by Georg Sturm. His paintings had been installed in the first decade of the twentieth century, but had meanwhile been removed and stored away.

In the discussion about the interpretation of the 'Continue with Cuypers' theme in the interior, the SRAL's exploratory research produced interesting, but also fairly

4.15-16 Details of the colour research by the SRAL restoration studio.

4.17 The application of reconstructions using templates.

concrete information. The SRAL proposed continuing research into the paint, colours and pigments, as well as the historical context for the sake of restoration (where possible) and reconstruction. They also suggested – in consultation with Van Hoogevest – making test reconstructions. Those might well prove very useful for decision-making.⁴⁰

In the spring of 2003 the SRAL was able to carry out an initial test reconstruction, in a corner of the Great Hall (4.19). One of Sturm's canvases was returned to its original place and the painting work was reconstructed around it (4.18). That brought to light the purpose of the decorations: thanks to the effect of the paintings on the cornice, painting and sculpture work and architectural elements seemed to blend seamlessly together. This approach – rather than remaining seated at the conference table – was a far better way for all concerned, including the Spanish architects, to get an impression of (and later be convinced by) Cuypers' decorative interior, the historical context and the aesthetic result.⁴¹ And in that year the SRAL was actually commissioned to carry out analyses in the Gallery of Honour, a side gallery and in the Night Watch Gallery. Their successive preliminary investigations



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4.18 A Georg Sturm painting restored to its place above the Gallery of Honour.

4.19 Trial reconstruction in a corner of the Great Hall, 2003.



and tests were to result in the commission to carry out restorations and reconstructions between 2005 and 2013 in parts of the museum about which a compromise could be reached in the 'intervention and restoration criteria'.⁴²

Intervention and Restoration Criteria

While the staff and students of the SRAL were up on the scaffolding continuing their preliminary research, consultations were taking place between the two architecture firms and the Programme Board about a joint scenario for the building's restoration, within the available budget. Rehabilitation of the spatial structure, the clearing of the courtyards, the opening of the museum galleries, restoration of the historical shell and the installation of new services in that shell were not on the agenda, but were premises for the Final Design (FD). Communication on the reinstatement of the decorative elements was more problematical. Were decorations that were eligible for reinstatement part of a new museum (concept) or were they part of the historic monument? Should they be incorporated in Cruz y Ortiz's design or were wall paintings, traces of construction and building fragments actually important expressions of the 'Continuing with or Back to Cuypers' theme?

In March and April 2003 each of the two architects drew up an annex to their own restoration criteria, but their views still differed.⁴³ It was not until June 2003 that they arrived at an initial, jointly formulated idea of the restoration, which was



to be communicated via the principal architect. According to these 'intervention and restoration criteria' (an annex to the PD) agreement had been reached on the reconstruction of the decorations in the stairwells and the Great Hall, and on preservative restoration of the Aduard Chapel and the library.⁴⁴ The approach to be taken for the Gallery of Honour and the Night Watch Gallery was not yet definite, but a 'kind of transitional restoration' was being considered, perpetuating the coherent sequence Great Hall-Gallery of Honour-Night Watch Gallery. In the courtyards the authentic roofing and elevation would be meticulously and circum-spectly restored. However, traces of construction and fragments of sculpture or mouldings were not included. Walls would only be restored in the elevation plane; Cruz y Ortiz was to design infrastructure for the new museological use (passages, doors and glass walls to the arcades, for example). Several other decisions were postponed until more was known about the research results, the situation after the areas had been stripped, the Rijksmuseum's views on routing and presentation. Consequently, more precise treatment of the Gallery of Honour, the Night Watch Gallery, the vaulted areas in the souterrain (including the remaining architectural elements) and the museum galleries on the ground and main floors would only be specified in the FD.

In the first part of the FD, dating from October 2004, there was greater consensus on the Gallery of Honour and the Night Watch Gallery, thanks to the SRAL's research and trials: the reconstruction programme could be extended to the entire central axis.⁴⁵ The Night Watch Gallery was to be restored and in the Gallery of Honour Cuypers' decorations would be reinstated on the frieze, capitals and pilasters (4.21). There, the decorations were part of the architecture and represented Cuypers' ideas on space and decoration, according to the FD. When completed, the central axis, and the Great Hall in particular, would ultimately be the most pronounced expression of this Cuypers concept. This social or rest area does not contain a collection of its own, but is itself part of the collection, as it were. It represents an important component of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* in which walls, vaulted ceilings, windows and terrazzo flooring are part of an iconographic programme. Important points of reference for the reconstruction of the entire axis were the 70 authentic paintings by Sturm – which could be restored – and the original wall paintings and (sculpted) caryatids in the Night Watch Gallery.⁴⁶

The decorative painting and sculpture work, and the building fragments elsewhere in the building should, the FD stated, be considered part of a historical museological concept. Those decorations and fragments were not to be rehabilitated or reinstated, and should even be removed (possibly placed elsewhere), to bring the spaces and their colour schemes in line with the wishes of the Rijksmuseum. For the picture galleries on the first floor it meant that the authentic decorations that had been exposed could not be retained. The wainscoting would be concealed behind false walls, but the cornices under the cove would be visible or even completed. The authentic wall paintings that would be exposed after the building's shell had been restored at the lower levels – for instance, in the Gothic Gallery – would eventually all be hidden from view, to the regret of the restoration architect, the restorers and agencies for the conservation of historic buildings (4.22, 4.23). Only three columns would remain in the east souterrain.

The FD contained no comments on the finishes of the galleries in the souterrain nor on the ground floor. Treatment of the facing brickwork was the problem. At that stage there were still doubts whether the best option was a neutral character for these galleries. On the other hand, the colours of the brickwork should not distract from the displayed works of art. Therefore, the FD pointed out that brickwork,

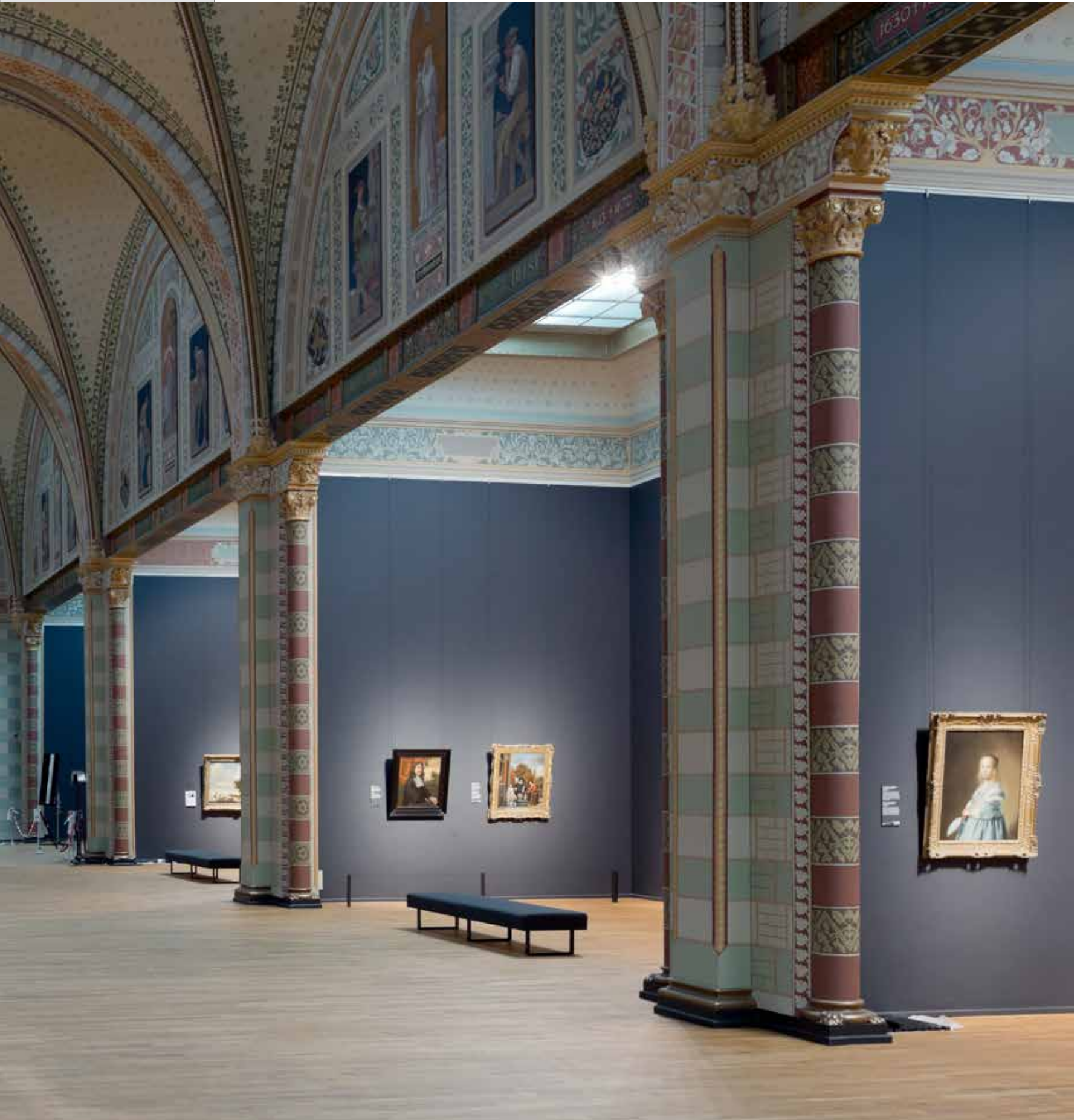
4.20 The west stairwell with reconstructed decorations.

4.21 pages 154-155:
The Gallery of Honour after renovation; most of Cuypers's decorations have been reconstructed.



4.20





4.22-23 Masonry patterns and decorative painting in the ecclesiastical architecture section, visible now that the façades have been cleaned.

4.24 The Aduard Chapel in 2005.



4.22



4.23

which would be restored only in vaults, columns and pilasters, could best be painted in a colour in keeping with the museological context. For the vaults on the ground floor a 'white or very pale colour' was suggested. These premises were also retained in stage two of the FD which was published after the building's shell had been stripped.⁴⁷ Ultimately, the finishes of the galleries would be determined in consultation with the Rijksmuseum and the interior architect (who was actually appointed in 2004).

The Paradox of the Theme

The FD confirmed that Cruz y Ortiz's approach would be pursued, also as regards restoration criteria. The motto was 'Continue with Cuypers', in accordance with a new aesthetic and museological concept, and without 'archaeological remains'. Van Hoogevest achieved consensus for the building's central axis. There, Cuypers returned in all his glory, and the decorations could also tie in with the Rijksmuseum's wishes. So consensus and compromise also expose the paradox of the theme. Authentic wall paintings and fragments, seemingly discovered by chance, once more disappear. And, by contrast, lost decorations have been reconstructed. The interpretation of Cuypers – backwards or forwards – had not been clearly defined beforehand and proved, afterwards, to be caught, as it were, between a rock and a hard place (4.24).





D.01



D.02

D.01 The north wall of the west courtyard after removal of the added floors.

D.02 The same wall during restoration.



D.03

D.03 Pillar on the ground floor; the polychrome decoration has been partly preserved and partly painted over, 2005.

The long history of the Rijksmuseum and its many refurbishments and restorations gave the historic complex a many-layered quality even before the recent renovation. Prior to the renovation project, no definite decisions had been made about which parts of the complex would be preserved and what role they would play in the new Rijksmuseum. The theme of 'Back to Cuypers' or 'Continue with Cuypers' was interpreted in diverse ways by the different architects involved. A balance had to be struck between the historical significance of the building and its practical role as a museum.

While the building was being dismantled, new issues kept coming to light that had never before been studied by experts or researched thoroughly in the archives. These included building fragments, vestiges and painted decorations in many different parts of the museum. Outside a few areas where Cuypers' decorations were restored or reconstructed – such as the library, the Aduard Chapel, the stairwell and the central axis extending from the Great Hall to the Night Watch Gallery – most of the exposed fragments were removed, or else painted or plastered over. Only a handful of elements in a few places were left in place or restored.

In the west courtyard, for instance, where originals and copies of funerary monuments, sculpture and parts of buildings were on display in Cuypers' day, fragments of the south façade were exposed when the intermediate floors were demolished. These were replicas of façade segments from the historic city hall in The Hague. Because remnants like these in the courtyard façades did not fit into the aesthetic concept that Cruz y Ortiz had developed, they were removed. The decorative painted borders in the recesses surrounding various windows around the courtyards were left in place after being uncovered, but were concealed from view.

In other parts of the atrium, rediscovered fragments were left in place or returned to their original place. For instance, there were originally portals on the north and south sides of the courtyards leading to the exhibition galleries. The south portals were flanked by columns that supported a total of four statues of seated or standing sentries. Two of these sentries have been partly preserved; the other two have been lost. The architectural design for the new atrium did not involve returning these statues to their original places. But after the building was completed in the summer of 2012, the Rijksmuseum asked Replique, a reproduction and reconstruction studio, to reconstruct the four sentries on the basis of the two remaining statues. The earliest sculptures from Cuypers' studio were made from multiple blocks of sandstone to limit costs and then finished with stucco and paint. The two surviving statues were modelled by hand at Replique. These models were then used to make moulds with digital technology. Shortly before the museum reopened, the four acrylic sentries were mounted on flat surfaces on the façades. These modern replicas of architectural sculpture from the original building have thus become part of the collection.

Soon after the construction of the Rijksmuseum began in 1876, it was decided that the courtyards would be used as exhibition areas and therefore covered with glass roofs. The ironwork of these roofs interrupts the sandstone cornices of the façades. During restoration, the cornices were not restored but completed, so that they can serve as reminders of the building's history.

When the original museum building was erected, tile panels (tableaux) designed by Georg Sturm were placed in the west, south and east façades at the main floor level. These depict key moments in Dutch art history. The three panels in the middle of the south façade, over the passageway, soon disappeared behind the Vermeer extension. This extension was initially connected to the main building in the spot where the rightmost panel had been, the other two were hidden from sight behind a wall. During the recent

renovation, it was hoped that fragments of these panels would come to light when the building was dismantled. When the false walls in the Vermeer extension were removed, the panels were found to be in much better condition than expected. A few fragments of the rightmost panel were found, and the other two had been preserved in their entirety. The Rijksmuseum chose not to integrate these panels into the building interior, however, because they would have dominated the space and hence made it unsuitable for exhibition purposes. One option considered was to remove the panels from the façade and exhibit them in the garden. But this proposal was unacceptable to the national and municipal agencies responsible for the preservation of historic buildings, which regarded the panels as an integral part of the main building. Furthermore, there was a risk that removing the tiles would damage them. The panels were ultimately left in place and hidden from view with a false wall.

A similar discussion was prompted by three columns in the east section of the souterrain, which had originally been part of the collection of architectural elements used by Cuypers to illustrate the history of Dutch architecture. Because the columns said so much about Cuypers' intentions for the Rijksmuseum, Bureau Monumenten & Archeologie Amsterdam (Office of Monuments & Archaeology Amsterdam) opposed their removal. The columns can now be found in the Special Collections area.

When the historic fabric of the building was dismantled and restored on the southeast side of the museum's ground floor, authentic decorative and figurative paintings were discovered in a number of galleries in which ecclesiastical architecture had been exhibited. Some were in good condition. Although Cruz y Ortiz and Van Hoogevest wished to consolidate some of them (the best examples) or have them restored by the Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (Foundation Restoration Studio Limburg), the Rijksmuseum and Wilmotte decided to leave these fragments hidden from view as well.



D.04

D.04 Two sculpted heads under the cornice in one of the painting galleries on the main floor.



D.05

D.05 Decorative painted borders in the recess surrounding a courtyard window.



D.06

D.06 Fragments of the original painting and masonry vaulting in the ecclesiastical architecture department.



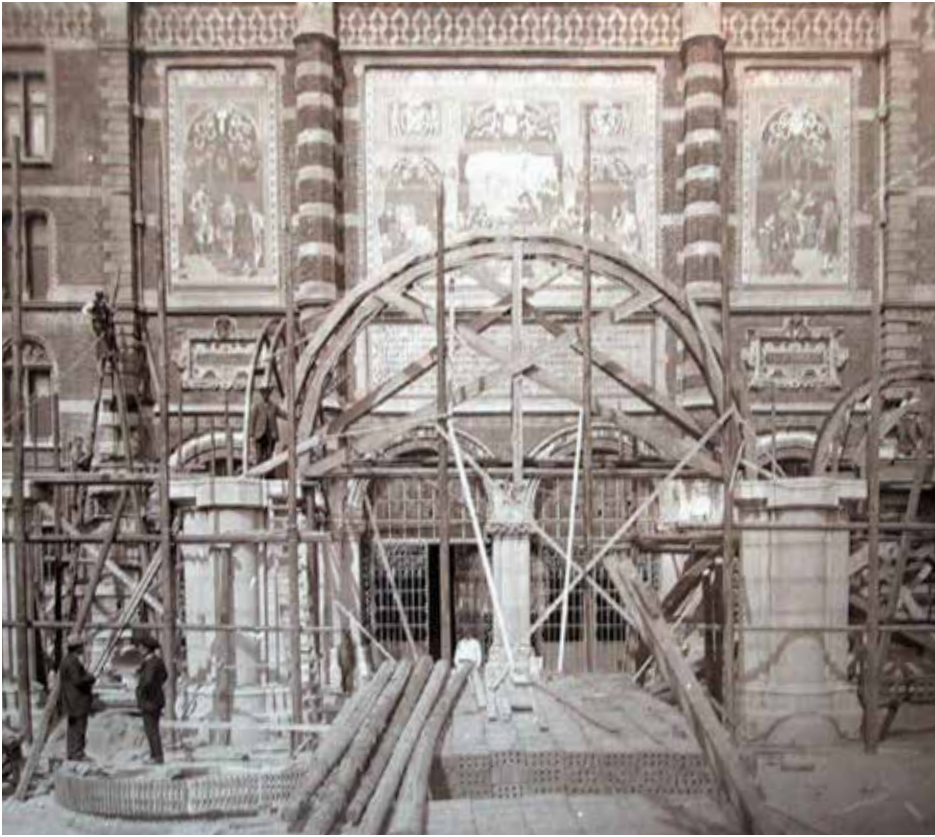
D.07 The east courtyard
in use as a weapon gallery,
c. 1914.

D.07



D.08 The west courtyard
in use as an exhibition space
for architectural fragments,
some of which have been
incorporated into the walls.

D.08



D.09

D.09 Construction of the Vermeer extension behind the Night Watch Gallery.



D.10

D.10 Tile panel based on a design by Georg Sturm on what was formerly an outer façade, rediscovered during renovation of the Vermeer extension.



D.11 Design for the interior of the Vermeer extension.

D.11



D.12 The museum's south façade with the Vermeer extension, 2013.

D.12



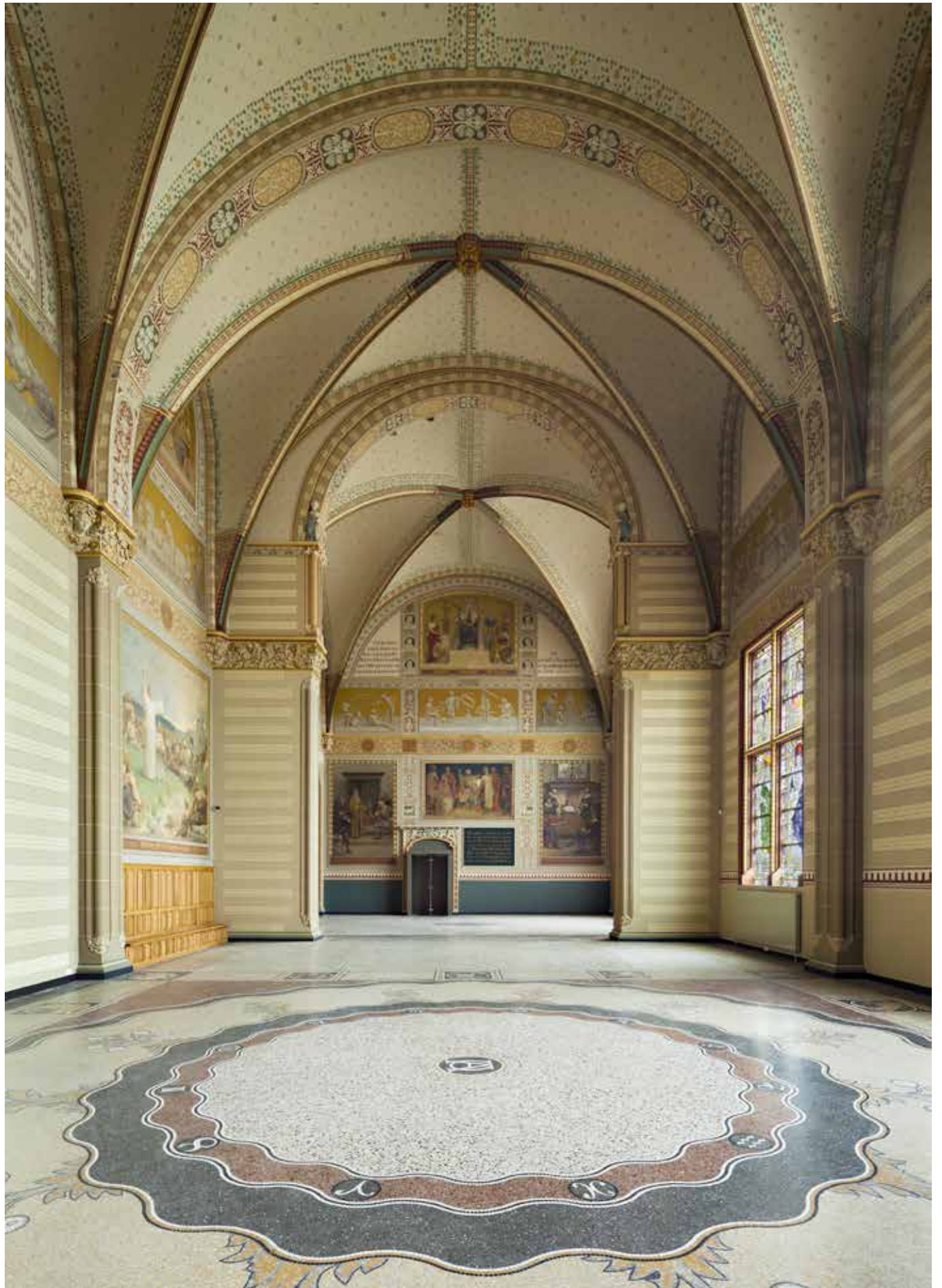
D.13

D.13 The original decoration of the Great Hall.

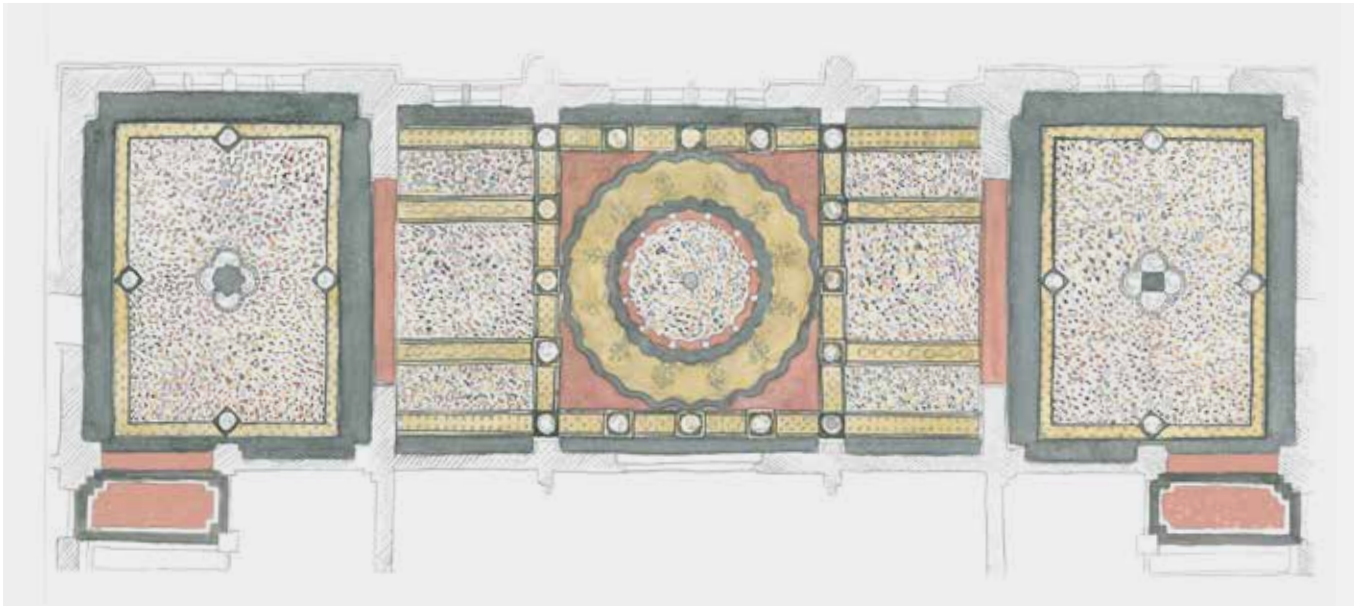


D.14

D.14 The situation in 1959.



D.15 The Great Hall after reconstruction, 2013.



D.16



D.17



D.18



D.19

D.16-19 Designs and detail drawings for the reconstruction of the terrazzo floor in the Great Hall.



D.20



D.21



D.22

D.20-22 Italian terrazzo workers lay the floor in the Great Hall.



D.23

D.23 Detail of the reconstructed terrazzo floor.



D.24



D.25



D.26

D.24 Historical photograph of one of the four sculptures of sentries.

D.25 One of the two remaining original sculptures.

D.26-27 Making the acrylic replicas at the Replique studio.



D.27



D.28

D.28 Sentry sculpture by Replique attached to the south wall of the west courtyard.



D.29

D.29-31 Fragments of original paintwork and masonry vaulting in the ecclesiastical architecture department.



D.30



D.31



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In the Gallery of Honour of the Rijksmuseum there is a painting of a Dutch church interior by seventeenth-century artist Pieter Jansz. Saenredam (5.01). The Late Gothic church of Assendelft is extremely austere in its interior design; the walls are plastered white from top to bottom. After the Reformation, in Protestant churches almost all the painted decoration dating from Catholic times was concealed behind a layer of plaster.

Saenredam, after a long period of relative obscurity, blossomed in the twentieth century into one of the best-known painters of the Golden Age – due to the fact that his work greatly appealed to modernist tastes. And such tastes affected the interior appearance of the Rijksmuseum. Many of the original, brightly coloured wall paintings by Pierre Cuypers and Austrian painter Georg Sturm had been toned down, concealed or even removed in the 1920s. Not only on account of their Catholic and nineteenth-century nationalistic connotations, but primarily because it was felt they distracted too much from the displayed works of art.¹ After the Second World War, the new norm was to exhibit art in entirely white spaces, the neutral white cube. Most of the galleries in the Rijksmuseum then acquired an entirely white effect.² In the last 20 years people have started to realize that this approach is far from ideal, since most works of art are shown to best advantage against a coloured background.³ Similarly, the Rijksmuseum decided to exhibit its collection to the public in a different manner.

During the museum's recent renovation, the Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (Foundation Restoration Studio Limburg) reconstructed most of the painted decorations, for instance in the Gallery of Honour, though the walls in the side galleries have not been returned to their original colours.⁴ That might have offered too much competition with the paintings (5.03). French interior architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte (b. 1968) and the Rijksmuseum opted for a shade of dark grey derived from Cuypers' colour scheme. According to the Rijksmuseum's director, Wim Pijbes, the darker walls 'with the monochrome colour and lack of ornaments' form 'a complementary contrast' to Cuypers' decorations.⁵ The contrast is indeed striking, and not only visually. For the walls in the side galleries, the multi-interpretable motto 'Continue with Cuypers' may have been applied, but in the upper part of the side galleries and in the central aisle of the Gallery of Honour, it is more a matter of 'Back to Cuypers'.⁶ That solution demonstrates that museological interests sometimes conflict with those of architects (addressing restoration) or heritage conservation. This chapter deals with, in greater depth, the question to what extent the Rijksmuseum's new presentation of the collection now interfaces with Cuypers' building, and if the situation was different in the past.

History of the Building and Collection

When Cuypers embarked on the building of the museum in 1876, it was not yet certain which collections would ultimately be on display. Clearly the paintings and prints from the Trippenhuis (which had previously housed the Rijksmuseum collection) would move to the new premises. They included a number of major paintings belonging to the City of Amsterdam like the *Night Watch*. Two years

5.01 Pieter Jansz. Saenredam,
*Interior of the Church of
St. Odulphus in Assendelft,*
1649.

5.02 The Gallery of Honour,
c. 1959.

5.03 Drawing by Cuypers
in pencil and watercolour
on paper, showing wall
decorations for the alcoves
along the Gallery of Honour.

5.04 Main-floor gallery of
paintings, with skylights.



5.01



5.02

before the new museum was opened in 1885, it was formally determined that the Netherlands Museum for History and Art would also be housed there, as well as Museum Van der Hoop, a collection of high-quality paintings belonging to the City of Amsterdam, the National Collection of Art Works by Modern Masters and the National Collection of Plaster Casts and Sculpture.⁷

The most important requirement the new building had to meet was to accommodate a great many picture galleries with closed walls and skylights on the main floor (5.04). Objects from other collections could be exhibited on the ground floor. The rooms on that floor had windows but were also illuminated artificially – until 1904 by oil lamps, after that by electricity.⁸ Soon after building work had begun, it was decided to cover the two courtyards with glass roofs so they could serve as exhibition spaces. The various collections were growing apace, thanks to acquisitions, gifts and loans, meaning that by 1900 the largest building in the Netherlands was already at risk of being too small. Paintings were hung with frames touching, good works and bad hung side by side, the reason being that successive museum directors and a highly influential official in The Hague, Victor de Stuers, were very much in favour of showing the range and diversity of Dutch art. In addition, storage space had not been designed, since the documentary value of the object was highly prized.⁹ Unlike major national museums abroad, such as the National Gallery in London, Musée du Louvre in Paris or Kaiser-Friedrich Museum in Berlin that had a wide collection of international art on show, the Rijksmuseum focused almost exclusively on national art and history.



5.03



5.04



5.05

5.05-06 The Gallery of Honour and an alcove during the Schmidt-Degener period.

5.07 The Gallery of Honour after the renovation under Wim Quist, c. 1984.

5.08 The Night Watch Gallery in the 1960s.



5.07



5.06

At the start of the twentieth century, criticism of the way collections were presented increased. The museum resembled a warehouse. Consequently, it was necessary to make a strict selection from the profusion of objects, with quality the foremost criterion. The same applied at that time in several museums abroad: for instance, in Berlin, Hamburg and Boston, gallery walls became less crowded and true masterpieces were given considerably more space. In the Netherlands the exact qualities to be met by the Rijksmuseum's items for display were reviewed. A growing group of critics felt artistic and aesthetic value was of far greater importance than documentary or historical merits. In their view, the combination of art and history in one museum was doomed to fail.¹⁰

A further point of criticism related to the overabundant ornamentation of the interior which was thought to distract considerably the visitor's attention from the art works themselves. Cuypers had been greatly opposed to the idea that 'everything [be] covered in a shade of grey' and succeeded until his death in 1921 in preventing that.¹¹

All the criticism ultimately resulted in a radical change of direction for the museum under the directorship of Frederik Schmidt-Degener. Although this new, ambitious director was not an admirer of Cuypers' building, he extolled the dimensions of the galleries and the way they flowed together. During his directorship (1922-1941) he stripped the museum of its nineteenth-century character. For example, as soon as he could he had many of the decorations removed or concealed.¹²

In his first annual report Schmidt-Degener wrote that he wanted 'however difficult it might be, to create something with the building and the collection that resembles a comprehensive whole'.¹³ The number of works on display was drastically reduced and subsequently the visitor was guided in an obligatory tour through the museum galleries. The route on the main floor was more or less chronological. Paintings dominated there, though there were galleries containing sculpture and the applied arts. Some galleries displayed mixed exhibits. For instance, the Gallery of Honour contained seventeenth-century furniture, as well as paintings and Delftware (5.05, 5.06). Schmidt-Degener sought to exhibit aesthetically appropriate groups of items that were specifically related to one another and arranged as symmetrically as possible. The lower floor to the west featured the applied arts and sculpture; that on the east side housed the Netherlands Museum for History and Art. There, Schmidt-Degener separated historical objects from art works and sought, using authentic pieces, to provide a chronological overview of Dutch history. His chief aim was to create an ambience to 'revive the past'.¹⁴

After the Second World War the total number of objects owned by the Rijksmuseum grew very rapidly. In 1952, when the Asian art collection was moved from Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum to the bottom floor of the Drucker extension, an entirely new field of interest came about.¹⁵ The arrangement of the collection in the main building also changed regularly. In the Gallery of Honour, Schmidt-Degener's mixed presentation was, for instance, to make way for the relatively small collection of non-Dutch paintings (5.02).

The rapid growth of the collection and the desire to accommodate new public amenities heightened the necessity to increase the floor area. To that end, the museum courtyards were filled with exhibition rooms in the 1960s. The original, transparent structure of Cuypers' building vanished. Architects like Frits Eschauzier, Dick Elffers, Thijs Wijnalda, Gijsbrecht Friedhoff and Wim Quist adapted sections of the interior in keeping with high standards and the latest museological ideas



(5.07, 5.08). And yet the consistency in arrangement was lost owing to the numerous small-scale alterations at various stages.¹⁶

Towards a New Museological Presentation

In 1998 then Rijksmuseum director Ronald de Leeuw outlined his vision of the museum's future. An improved balance between building and collection was an essential part of his plans. Not only should the building be renovated, but the museological presentation also had to be modernized to reinforce clarity and orderliness of the structure. The Rijksmuseum actually comprised five sub-museums, each telling its own story (the Departments of Paintings, History, Sculpture and Applied Arts and Asian Art and the National Print Room), but if a large part of the collections were henceforth to be displayed to the public 'in a mixed or integrated presentation', De Leeuw believed more justice would be done to

... the specific character that is intrinsic to the Rijksmuseum as the National Museum and with which it differs quite strikingly from other 'national museums'. Most European national museums are not accustomed to the combination of the country's history and visual and applied arts, and certainly not when executed comprehensively.¹⁷

The added value of a combined presentation is that objects can be shown in fitting coherence, thus forming a mutual context: 'Not only is the art lover provided with the historical and social background of a certain period, but art objects can themselves tell part of the historical story.'

De Leeuw wanted to give the visitor an understanding of Dutch art and history, in chronological order, and in an international context from the Middle Ages until 1900. It was not his intention to display a wide array of objects in close proximity in all the galleries. He sought to create a varied route, with picture galleries followed sometimes by galleries with sculpture or the applied arts, or else a historically thematic arrangement:

The main aim is to achieve greater diversity and enhancement of the visual programme. By varying different types of items (paintings, sculpture, furniture, glass and silver, weapons, model ships, etcetera) there is always something to excite the eye and avoid eyestrain, the benefit for the visitor being a heightened historical and aesthetic impression: a sense of time and a feeling for beauty.¹⁸

The date to end the chronological journey was taken as 1900, because the twentieth-century visual arts were a field which the Rijksmuseum addressed only perfunctorily and primarily left to other Amsterdam museums.¹⁹ De Leeuw did intend to organize temporary exhibitions on twentieth-century historical themes. In the end, it was nevertheless decided to give twentieth-century visual arts and history a permanent place on the route. To that end the collection had to be extended considerably, with new acquisitions or important loans. Alongside the principal – chronological – route, the new approach also covered a series of studies or Special Collections, providing more substance to the content of the main route for 'the interested visitor' and the arrangement of which could be based on medium, theme or artist.²⁰

The Choice of an Interior Architect

When around 2003 plans for the ambitious renovation and restoration of the building and the new approach to the collection's presentation were acquiring more concrete form, it was proposed to add a separate interior architect to the

team.²¹ The principal architects – Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos – would be responsible for designing the public spaces and the new Asian Pavilion, while the layout of the exhibition galleries along the main route and the Special Collections would be addressed by the interior architect.²² One of the main requirements was that the museological arrangement would be reversible, because, as De Leeuw noted, it had

... a shorter cycle than 'architecture'. The way a museum is appointed is highly susceptible to the 'spirit of the times', each generation will style it in accordance with its own professional criteria, in keeping with the artistic and substantive mission and views on presentation of a specific period. The basic assumption is that the Rijksmuseum's 'hardware', in a blend of old and new from Cuypers to Cruz y Ortiz, will reach long-term equilibrium, whereas the 'software' – the internal layout – will fluctuate more often and have a shorter span. That is why the Rijksmuseum is in favour of an arrangement that unfolds in a dialogue with the Cuypers/Cruz y Ortiz building. So the museological layout interacts with the architecture, but does not merge indissolubly with it.²³

The interior design was intended to have a calming effect, with a minimum of contrast and variation, while using materials that harmonized with Cuypers' architecture. Thematically related objects could best be presented as ensembles. Lighting in the galleries was to be subdued and warm, also in the evening, and be combined with bright illumination of the objects. Obviously it was extremely important to allow for the fact that fragile objects had to be protected from harmful (day)light.²⁴

On account of its important role in the interior design process, the Rijksmuseum was well represented on the committee to select an interior architect, but Cruz y Ortiz also took part.²⁵ On 26 April 2004 seven architecture firms presented their plans: Jen Alkema architect & associates (Amsterdam), David Chipperfield Architects (London), Antonio Citterio and Partners (Milan), Christian Kieckens Architects (Brussels), Architetto Michele De Lucchi (Milan), Merckx + Giod (Amsterdam) and Wilmotte & Associés S.A. (Paris).²⁶ They had been commissioned to draw up an interior plan for two spaces and arrange a number of paintings and objects in them. The proposal should elucidate ideas on the lighting plan and the display cases, and suggest text signs to accompany the art works. The first space comprised the souterrain, a semi-dark area with brick vaults intended for objects from the early Middle Ages. The second area covered several main galleries on the main floor – and their interior design. A variety of objects and paintings from the seventeenth century would be located there. These spaces are chiefly defined by their immense height and the skylights.²⁷

The selection committee deemed Wilmotte's plans to be the best. Their design stood out on account of the varying furniture elements based on a modular system. Cuypers' architecture, in the souterrain as well as in the large exhibition galleries, was largely untouched. The display cases were the main feature in the proposal. In the selection committee's opinion, if several elements of the display cases were varied – for instance, closed surfaces and glazed surfaces, lighting, colour and material – they would adapt 'to the different dimensions and "narratives" of the objects'. The cases were of 'a refinement reminiscent of Viollet-le-Duc and Art Deco designers like Pierre Chareau'. The ambience of both designed spaces was felt to be extremely appropriate, as regards layout, lighting, material and colour. The necessary interventions in the galleries for the seventeenth century were based on 'the palatial character, architectural idiom of the space. So, despite

the introduction of new walls, the axial arrangement of the large exhibition space is retained and, in addition, its height is emphasized by the proposed uniform grey-blue colour.²⁸ Wilmotte had already earned an excellent reputation with projects like his design of the first floor of the Richelieu wing and the ethnographic department of the Louvre in Paris.²⁹

The Result

In 1998 in its plans for the future, the management of the Rijksmuseum had indicated it did not want to make the museum any bigger than it already was.³⁰ Since the number of square metres intended for the presentation would not increase, items for display would be subject to strict selection. Only a fraction of the total holdings is now on show: over 8,000 out of approximately 1 million objects.³¹

In the 1920s, Schmidt-Degener, at that time the museum's director, had, as we have seen, also greatly restricted the number of items on show and had made a selection based on aesthetic and artistic quality. He had set out a chronological route on the main floor, with a mixture of paintings, sculpture and the applied arts in some of the galleries, including the Gallery of Honour. The main route that has

5.09 The mixed display of historical artefacts and art objects in a main-floor gallery.



5.10 Floor plan,
Cruzy Ortiz, 2007

Souterrain

- Middle Ages
- Italian Renaissance
- 1900-2000
- Asian art
- activities

Ground floor

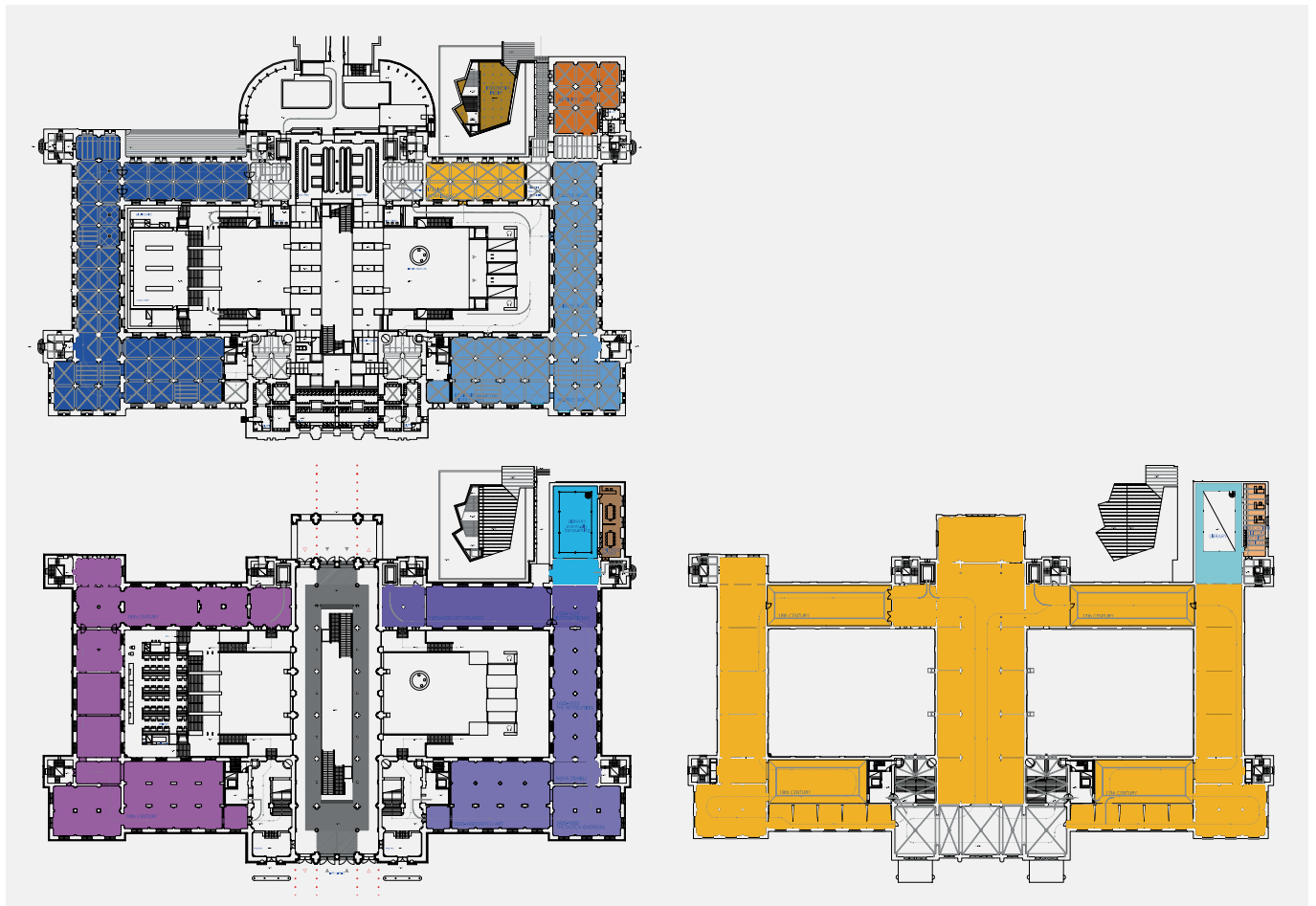
- 1550-1600
- 1600-1650
- 1800-1900
- library
- service areas

Main floor

- 1600-1700
and 1700-1800
- library
- education

now been instituted features more comprehensive deployment of the integration pioneered by Schmidt-Degener. Moreover, the new approach is a considerable step further, in that historical objects are mixed with art objects, enabling visitors to follow developments in and connections between Dutch history and art over the centuries (5.12).

When De Leeuw was the director, a plan was conceived to enable the visitor to take a chronological journey through the building: the Middle Ages in the west souterrain, the western part of the ground floor with the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century, the main floor with the second half of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century, and the attic for the Special Collections. The visitor then went back downstairs to the eastern part of the ground floor for the nineteenth century, finishing in the east souterrain with the twentieth (5.10).³² Pijbes changed this: the souterrains were intended for the Special Collections, the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the ground floor for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the main floor for the seventeenth century and the attic for the twentieth century. The fact that the visitor is not forced to follow a particular route means, according to Wilmotte 'that it [the museum] works like a kaleidoscope: you don't always know where you are, but it doesn't matter. People follow their own route, it isn't predetermined by the museum.'³³



In 2007 Wilmotte and the Rijksmuseum presented the Preliminary Design (PD) for the interior, explaining that gallery walls have a different colour for each century to create a distinctly different atmosphere. For example, for the Middle Ages the original colours of Cuypers' vaults are visible, for the seventeenth century there is a blue shade, the eighteenth century has yellow and the twentieth century has a white shade – these colours are based on Cuypers' palette (5.11-5.15).³⁴

Chief Government Architect Mels Crouwel commended the plans, but pointed out that the interior design might eclipse Cuypers' architecture, as evidenced in

... Wilmotte's proposal to give the vaulted ceilings in many galleries the same colours as the walls. Personally I think this – reversible – design is a good thing based on the depicted examples, with galleries filled with specific collection arrangements. But I can imagine that there could or should be a different solution in other spaces/departments.³⁵

In the end Wilmotte decided, in consultation with the Rijksmuseum and Cruz y Ortiz, to give both the walls and the vaulted ceilings in the galleries different colours.³⁶ He developed six new shades of grey (including dark grey, blue-grey, medium grey and pale grey). Although the presentations of the various centuries can still be distinguished one from the other with the subtle differences in colour, there is considerably greater unity in the museum than found in the PD.³⁷

Rijksmuseum staff, including curators, specialists in the art or history of a particular period, worked for many years on layout plans for the galleries (5.16, 5.17). The eventual presentation came about in consultation with Wilmotte, who attached great importance to symmetry. The French interior architect designed the display cases in metal and non-reflective glass which on the whole are quite unobtrusive. The visitor can focus fully on the exhibits. He also designed other appointments, such as additional display partitions, furniture and the chandelier units for the LED lighting developed by Philips. The lighting can be tuned to the required degree of brightness, is not only sustainable and economical, but also attractive and varied. In addition, it enables differing conservation requirements for differing objects to be taken into account.

Building or Collection?

At a few specific locations in the museum it is apparent that the balance between building and collection (presentation) is not always without problems.

Starting with the foremost galleries in the museum: the Night Watch Gallery and the Gallery of Honour. Cuypers had designed a separate gallery for Rembrandt's *Night Watch*, a central hall in the museum at the end of the Gallery of Honour. The group portrait of the Amsterdam militia was presented as the prime example of Dutch culture. It hung in the centre of the back wall, allowing visitors to catch a glimpse of it as soon as they entered the Gallery of Honour. In 1893 French poet Paul Verlaine aptly compared the central aisle in the Rijksmuseum to the nave of a cathedral and the *Night Watch* to an altarpiece.³⁸

In the current layout, the Gallery of Honour and the Night Watch Gallery are devoted to the best of seventeenth-century Dutch painting. A mixed or integrated arrangement was deliberately avoided. It would probably have caused problems, considering the large number of visitors in those areas. Quite a few paintings in the Gallery of Honour are too small for the large spaces where they have been hung, but practical considerations would seem to have led to this solution.

Soon after the Rijksmuseum opened in 1885 there were complaints about the poor illumination of the *Night Watch*. In 1904 it was decided to build a gallery

PD for the museum interior as presented by Wilmotte and the Rijksmuseum in 2007. Each time period is appointed a different colour.

5.11 Seventeenth century; the Netherlands overseas

5.12 Eighteenth century

5.13 Twentieth century

5.14 Middle Ages

5.15 Seventeenth century



5.11



5.12



5.13



5.14



5.15

behind the Night Watch Gallery where the painting could be displayed better. During the recent renovation some of the large lava tableaux which had originally adorned the exterior of the main building were found in that space known as the Night Watch or Vermeer extension.³⁹ The tableaux are no longer on show, to give the gallery a restful look and avoid distracting the visitor from the sculpture displayed in that room. The Cuypers Society was highly critical about this solution, which is in fact reversible.⁴⁰

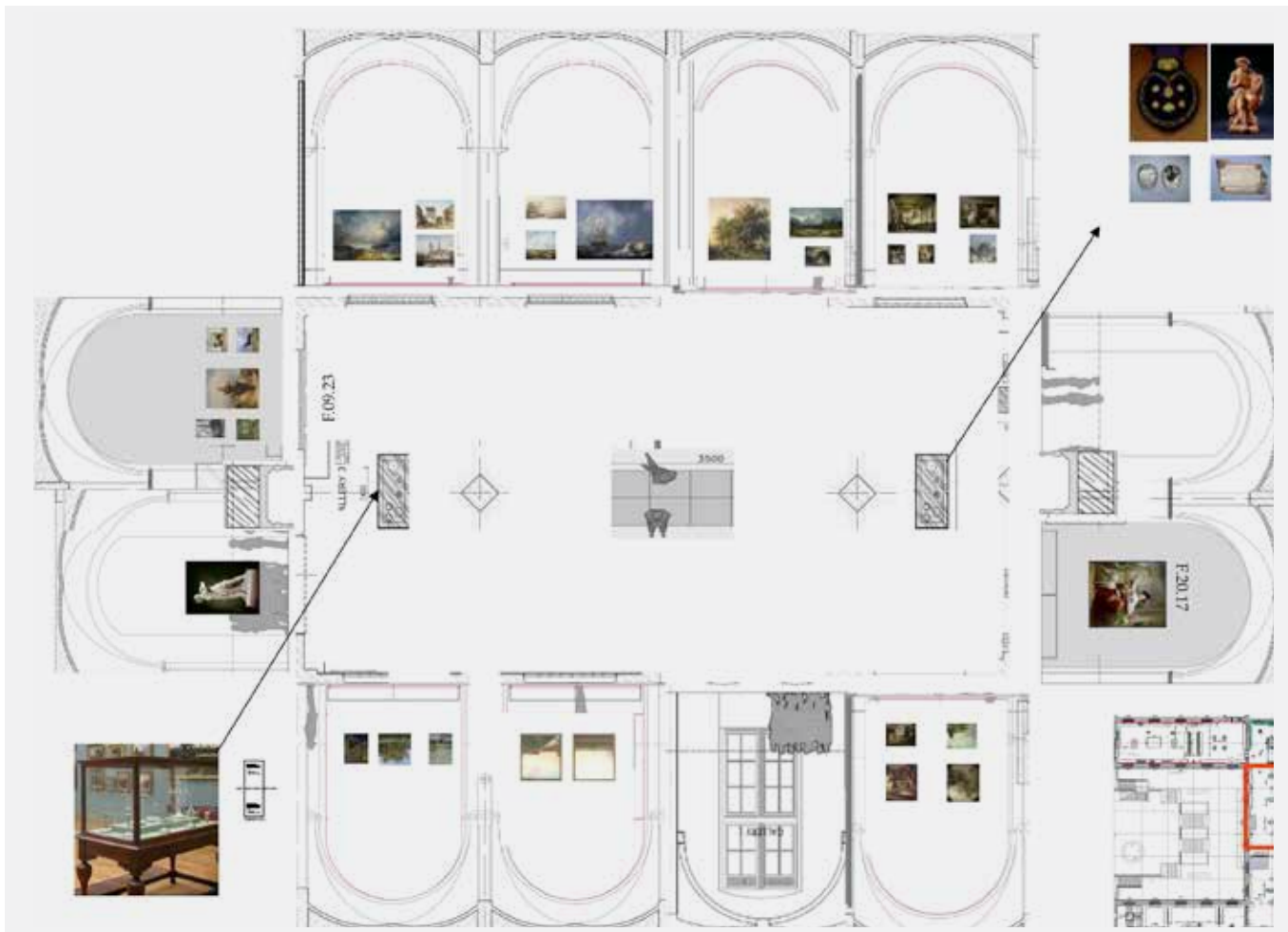
Some of the other original elements from the interior have been concealed (occasionally even after having been restored), including the vaults in the west souterrain. These areas originally had a wide variety of uses, were not intended for public use and belonged to the least important parts of the museum. However, they have now been transformed into galleries for the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The decision to plaster and paint the vaults in those areas did come in for criticism, since the PD had declared that such work would not take place.

The Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, the Bureau Monumenten & Archeologie Amsterdam (Office of Monuments & Archaeology Amsterdam), the Commissie voor Welstand en Monumenten in Amsterdam (Design Review Board)

5.16 PD for the layout of the Romantic gallery, made by curator Jenny Reynaerts and Wilmotte, 2011.

5.17 Proposal by Jenny Reynaerts for the presentation of the nineteenth-century collection against the background of Cuypers's decorations, 2005.

5.18 pages 184-185: Medieval sculpture against the backdrop of uniformly grey walls in the souterrain.



and the Cuypers Society protested – in vain.⁴¹ The Rijksmuseum wanted to exhibit its objects against the most restful and neutral background possible and pursued the greatest possible unity in the museological presentation. Director Wim Pijbes emphasized that his solution tied in with the symmetry of the building that Cuypers had wanted.

A striking solution has been found – a ‘box-in-a-box’ structure – in the Aduard Chapel, a room on the ground floor where Cuypers’ original architecture and ornamentation have survived exceptionally well, as is the case in the library. Cruz y Ortiz wanted to restore this space as a relic from an outdated museum concept. In Wilmotte’s design for the interior, the chapel was largely concealed behind false walls.⁴² This room, a scaled-down version of the Romano-Gothic infirmary built in 1297 in the Cistercian monastery in Aduard in the province of Groningen, was originally part of the Netherlands Museum for History and Art, housed on the ground floor and in part of the east souterrain.⁴³

One thing Cuypers and De Stuers wanted in this museum was to create a chronological impression of Dutch ecclesiastical and secular architecture and applied art. De Stuers wrote that his ideal was that ‘the galleries be arranged in







5.19 The eighteenth-century collection on the ground floor, with the entrance to the Aduard Chapel in the background.

5.20 One of the three columns in the east souterrain after renovation.



accordance with the spirit of the time of the objects that will be placed there'.⁴⁴ A succession of period rooms displayed original building fragments and objects, as well as a great many reconstructions, reproductions and casts. That was consistent with the educational function attributed to museums in those days. The architecture of the sequence of rooms comprised elements from various buildings and was intended to reflect the architecture of a particular period.

Schmidt-Degener, who was the museum's director at a later stage, had the architecture and appointments of these galleries largely concealed or removed.⁴⁵ During the recent renovation and restoration it was initially decided to expose once more the remaining vaulted ceilings and restore some of the original wall paintings.⁴⁶

In 1998 Ronald de Leeuw expressed the desire for better cohesion in future between the building's architecture and the collection in some of the Rijksmuseum's galleries, for instance the former period rooms from the Netherlands Museum for History and Art.⁴⁷ Among the plans for the museological presentation of nineteenth-century objects, there are several designs for galleries with historicist objects that are compatible with Cuypers' architecture. However, primarily for pragmatic reasons, the museum located the eighteenth-century collection in the east part of the ground floor, meaning that architecture and collection do not interrelate.⁴⁸ All the walls and vaults – except in the Aduard Chapel – were covered in a reversible layer of grey paint (5.19).⁴⁹ Once more, the museum's wishes were complied with: to achieve maximum unity in museological presentation and to display the objects against the most restful and neutral background possible.

A final example of the friction between building and collection relates to the three columns in the east souterrain, which were inspired by Romanesque crypts in Netherlands, as found in the church of Saint Peter in Utrecht, in Rolduc abbey near Kerkade and Lebuinus church in Deventer (5.20). Unlike with other examples of Cuypers' work, it was decided here to show these architectural elements and their original, painted decorations to the public. They form a striking contrast with the Special Collections in the dark-coloured spaces, highlighting the original purpose of the spaces as Romanesque period rooms of the Netherlands Museum for History and Art.⁵⁰

These examples demonstrate that a conflict of interests between building and collection could be solved in many different ways. Sometimes great store was set on an optimum museological presentation, at other times the requirements of the restoration architect or heritage conservation prevailed. It is of great importance that interventions be reversible, to enable a following generation to make its own choices.





E.01

E.01 The alcoves in the Gallery of Honour during the Quist period, c. 1984.



E.02

E.02 The alcoves in the Gallery of Honour after the recent reconstruction.

In 2002, the Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (Foundation Restoration Studio Limburg; SRAL) began exploratory research on the colours in the interior of the Rijksmuseum. The theme of 'Continue with Cuypers' or 'Back to Cuypers' inspired a variety of perspectives on handling historical decorations (and remnants thereof) and on restoring decorative wall finishes. Over the years, most of the original wall paintings from the Cuypers period had been painted over or removed completely. The SRAL was asked to determine whether original decorations were still present (underneath later paint layers) and then to assess their condition. It was also invited to investigate the colours used and their saturation.

Stratigraphic research was carried out in various parts of the museum. This involves the mechanical removal of layers of overpaint with scalpels and provides insight into types of paint, binders, the use of matte or glossy surfaces, and the condition of the original paint layers. The SRAL observed that the original paint layers were very fragile; when scratched, they developed lacunae. These original layers consisted largely of matte distemper. In some cases, oil had been added to the glue to make the paint more wipe-resistant. The first overpainting of the original layer often turned out to contain white lead and have very strong binding. This made it difficult to uncover the decoration below, and as a result the top layer of the original painting was usually lost in the process.

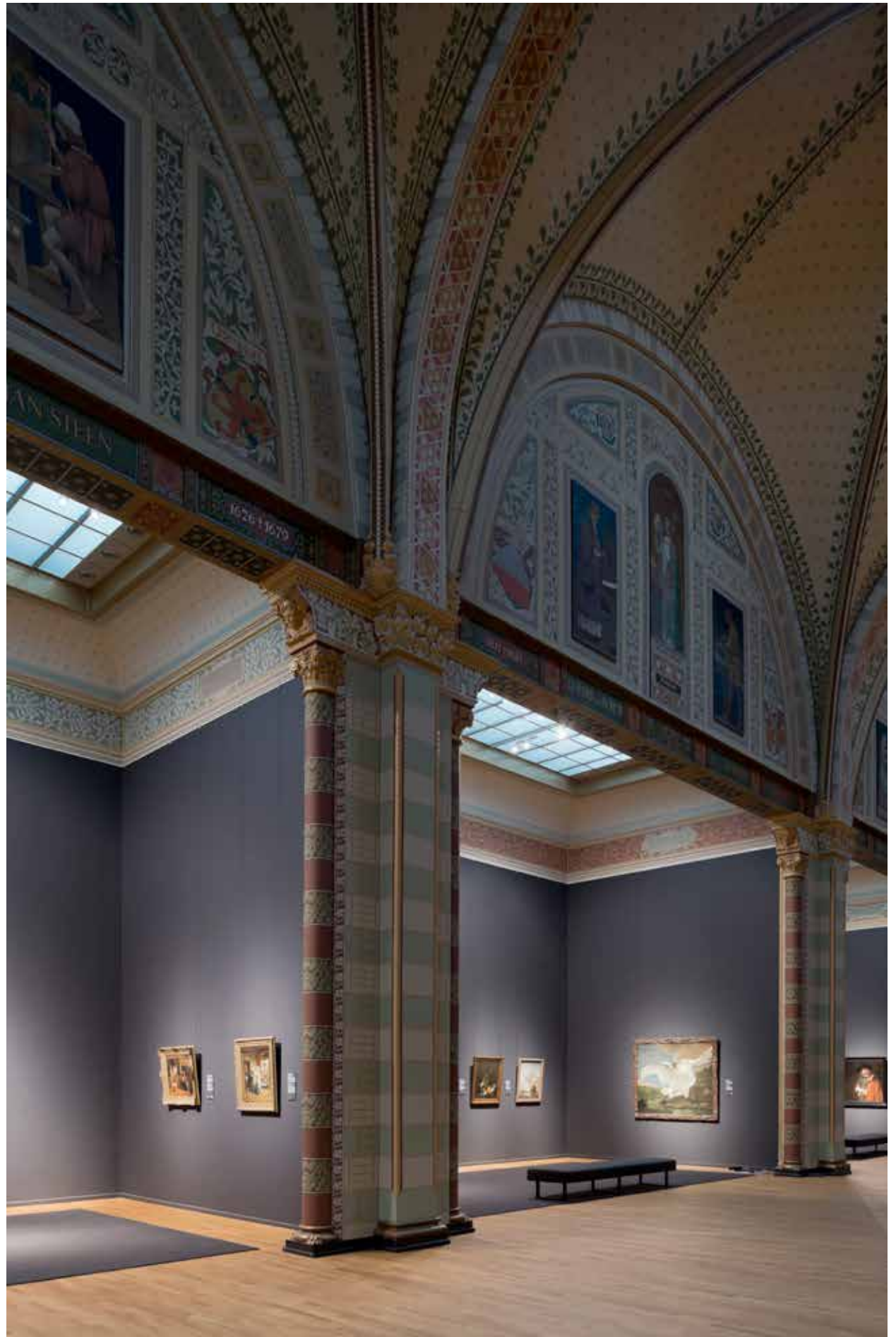
The uncovered sections of the original paintings were compared to spots where the original layer had never been painted over, for example in decorations from the Aduard Chapel, the library, and behind the organs in the Great Hall. The exposed colours were more vivid than the decorations that had never been painted over, because the latter had undergone natural aging. Alongside this stratigraphic research, the SRAL also carefully studied photographs, drawings, sketches and other archival materials. As a result of the discussions about how to approach the interior decoration, the SRAL was ultimately asked to conserve or restore the decorative paintings in some areas of the interior and to reconstruct them in other areas. This work began in 2005.

The reconstruction was based on the SRAL's colour research. Cuypers' working drawings guided the choice of colours in some parts of the building. In the absence of such drawings, various colour combinations were discussed with a focus group. To reproduce the colours accurately, the SRAL examined traces of the original paint that had been exposed when overpaint layers were removed. Analysis of the pigments in these samples served as the basis for remixing the colours. The aim of the SRAL was to mix colours that gave the impression of natural aging and patina, rather than imitating the colours as they had appeared in Cuypers' day. The final result was a palette of 55 'new Cuypers colours', which Sikkens mixed, using the paint samples as a guide and keeping a record of the recipe.

The colours and paints used in the reconstructions by the SRAL were applied to the existing paint layers, so that the older layers could be preserved underneath. The most recent existing layer consisted of modern Sikkens emulsion paint. The same type of paint was used for the reconstruction.

Wilmotte took Cuypers's colour palette as a basis for its own palette for the colours of the exhibition galleries, consisting of six shades of grey: light grey (twentieth century), middle grey (areas for drawings and prints), medium grey (Middle Ages and Renaissance), middle marble (nineteenth century), moss grey (eighteenth century) and black grey (seventeenth century and Special Collections).





E.04 Cuyper's polychrome decorations and Wilmotte's uniform grey surfaces meet in the Gallery of Honour, 2013.



E.05 The 55 'new Cuypers colours' developed by the SRAL restoration studio and Sikkens. As the work on the museum progressed, the palette expanded: 501 - 510, based on colour studies in the library. 601 - 623, based on colour studies in the main stairwells. 701 - 722, based on colour studies in the Gallery of Honour.



E.06



E.07

E.06-07 SRAL employees working on the reconstruction of the paintings in the Gallery of Honour.



E.08



E.09



E.10

E.08-10 Design drawings, fragments and experimental reconstructions were used in the colour research.



E.11 Pen drawing of the Great Hall, coloured in with watercolour, made by Van Hoogevest Architecten for their presentation in 2001.



E.12



E.13

E.12-13 Returning the restored Georg Sturm paintings to their original places in the Great Hall.



E.14



E.15

E.14-15 The colourful Great Hall is the most vivid manifestation of Cuyper's *Gesamtkunstwerk*.



E.17 A SRAL employee applies the new colours in the Gallery of Honour.

E.17



E.18 The reconstruction is not limited to the uppermost zone in the Gallery of Honour. The pilasters flanking Wilmotte's grey walls have been reconstructed in the new Cuyper colours.

E.18



light grey (twentieth century)



moss grey (eighteenth century)



middle grey (areas for drawings and prints)



middle marble (nineteenth century)



medium grey (Middle Ages and Renaissance)



black grey (seventeenth century and Special Collections)

E.19

E.19 Wilmotte's six shades of grey.



E.20

E.20 Impression of the Wilmotte colours in the Special Collections gallery.



E.21 Impression of the Wilmotte colours in the nineteenth-century galleries.

E.21



E.22 Impression of the Wilmotte colours as the background to the eighteenth-century collection.

E.22



E.23



E.24

E.23-24 The colour 'black grey' is used in the Special Collections galleries in the souterrain.



E.25 The nineteenth-century galleries on the ground floor are painted in the colour 'middle marble'.

E.25



E.26 In the Gallery of Honour, the black grey from the Wilmotte palette is combined with the original Cuypers colour palette.

E.26



Built on the edge of Amsterdam's seventeenth-century canal ring, the Rijksmuseum has always formed the transition between the historical centre and the urban extensions that began in the late nineteenth century. For obvious reasons, the museum was designed to face the existing city, but the municipal authorities ordered the construction of a stately passageway through the building to the planned urban extensions. When the Concertgebouw (Concert Hall) was erected some distance away from the museum, this defined an open space between the two buildings, which later became known as Museumplein (Museum Square).

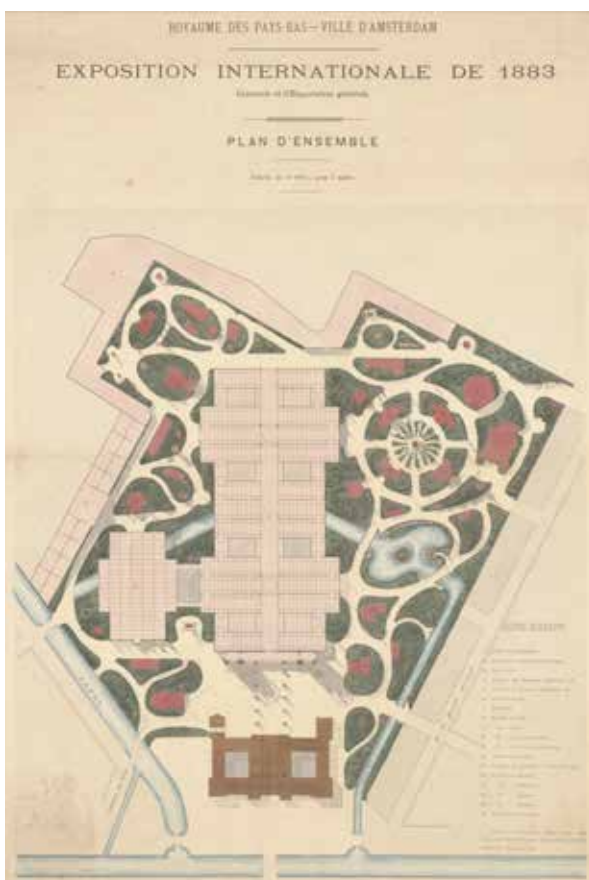
This chapter focuses primarily on that square, but also discusses the gardens around the museum. They were intended as part of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, in combination with the building, and designed to modulate the transition to the public space around them. The gardens are mostly on the Museumplein side of the building, although successive expansions have eaten away at them. The gardens on this side have posed problems, but the greatest difficulties have been with the layout of the square itself. Over the years this problem seems to have developed into a national urban planning trauma, a trauma which may now finally have been laid to rest. We must hope that the latest measures will prove to be a happy ending for this 'symbol . . . of confusion and malaise in Dutch urban planning', as Ed Taverne, historian of architecture and city planning, described Museumplein in 1990: 'The victim of a series of disparate and conflicting visions unleashed on it without the slightest historical awareness.'¹

He was not alone in this opinion. Both earlier and later authors have seen Museumplein as a 'gaping, ragged mouth wailing for help' (in the 1940s).² It acquired the sobriquet the 'Square of Plans', as well as the 'Square of Missed Opportunities' (in the 1990s).³ In 2000, a year after the opening ceremony for Sven-Ingvar Andersson's 'definitive' plan, journalists raised a ruckus about Museumplein's material disrepair (broken street furnishings and lighting) and the failed lawn, which became an impassable pool of mud each time it rained.⁴ Will it *end* the never ending litany? Will the recently approved revamp of the square be embraced as a new outrage and breathe new life into the long tradition of aggrieved protest? And will the Rijksmuseum finally be embedded in the urban context that it deserves, the setting it has awaited for over a century?

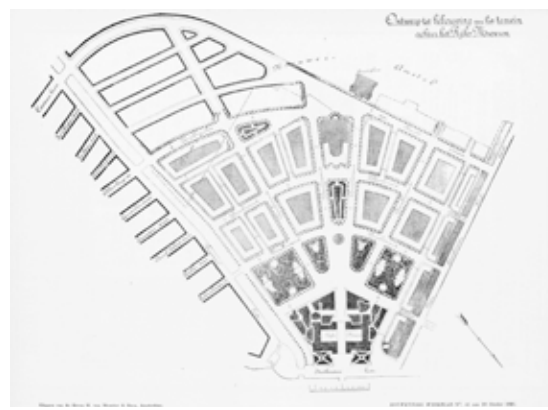
Luxury Development, Park or City Square?

The origins of what is now called Museumplein go back to an extension plan presented by J.G. van Niftrik in 1866, almost 200 years after Amsterdam's previous period of major expansion. Three years earlier, an architecture competition had been held for a new Rijksmuseum (6.01). Even though no feasible plan had emerged, Van Niftrik decided to reserve a fitting location for the new building: a large, round plaza near Vondelpark, serving as a bridge between that green oasis and the densely built-up city centre. Although Van Niftrik's extension plan proved much too expensive and was scrapped in 1868, the Rijksmuseum was ultimately shifted only a few dozen metres further east. As Van Niftrik had anticipated, it became part of the ring surrounding the seventeenth-century city. The idea of a large open space





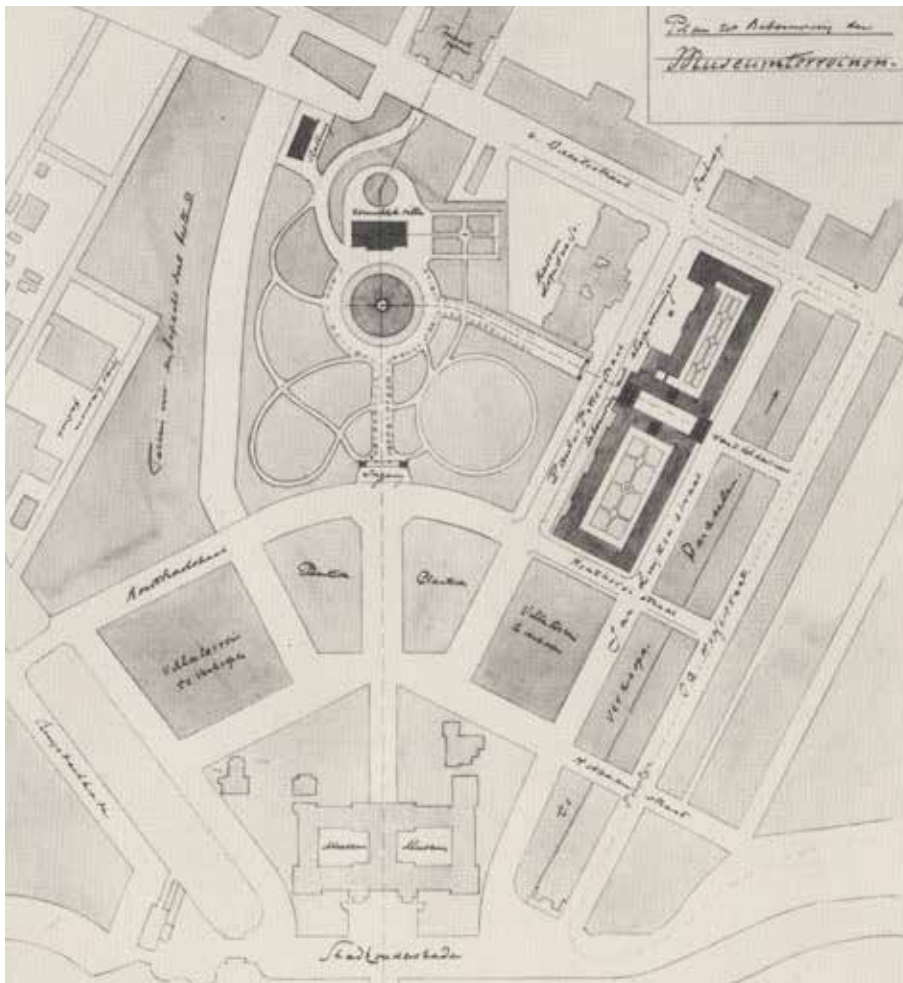
6.05



6.06



6.07



6.08



6.09

6.05 Map of the International Colonial and Export Trade Exhibition on the Museum Grounds, 1883.

6.06 E.H. Gugel, development plan for the site behind the Rijksmuseum, 1891.

6.07 Alternative plan by Cuypers and Jacob Ankersmit, 1891.

6.08 H.P. Berlage, development plan for the museum grounds, 1895-1896.

6.09 H.W. Beyerinck, the site of the later Museumplein, looking out from an upper room at Ruysdaelkade 39 over the ice rink and racetrack towards the recently completed Concertgebouw, 1887.

next to the new building was also put into practice; here lie the roots of today's Museumplein. Ten years after the first competition, Cuypers won the second one, and that same year, 1876, saw the driving of the first pile (6.02).

To accommodate another surviving scrap of Van Niftrik's plan, Cuypers had to replace the monumental entrance he had envisaged with a large passage through the building. This was deemed necessary to create a direct route from the city centre to the planned southern districts, by way of Spiegelstraat, a new bridge, and the passage through the museum. It was a thorn in the side of the architect and the museum directors, but the city insisted. When the Rijksmuseum opened its doors on 13 July 1885, there it was: a 40-m-wide arterial road straight through the building. The eventual purpose of this road was to provide access to the planned districts in the south of the city and possibly connect to through roads to Utrecht and The Hague (6.03). But for the time being, the landscape behind the museum was untouched, apart from widely scattered workshops and factories barred from the city centre, such as the Koninklijke Fabriek van Waskaarsen (Royal Wax Candle Factory). The area was rarely used as a park or public garden, although in 1883 it accommodated the Colonial Exhibition (6.05). Jaap Eden wrote ice skating history in 1893 by winning the sport's first world championship in this area, on a rink that would remain there for quite some time.

For many years, it remained an open question whether Van Niftrik's ideal of a large green space would stand the test of time. J. Kalff, Van Niftrik's successor, was eager to take advantage of the private building sector (6.04). His plan did nothing with the site on the far side of the Rijksmuseum (from the perspective of the city centre). The first step towards the square as we know it today was the construction of the Concertgebouw. The opening of the museum fuelled the idea that Amsterdam was ready for its own concert hall, and an architecture competition was announced that same year; the winner was A.L. van Gendt. The organizers of this initiative chose a location directly linked to the new museum. The Concertgebouw was to have a main entrance facing the Rijksmuseum and another entrance on the side where they planned a luxury housing development. From that moment on, the two buildings defined the space we now call Museumplein. What was to be done with it?

The first question to excite public debate was whether it was necessary or desirable to leave this large expanse of land undeveloped. E.H. Gugel, a professor of Architecture at Delft University of Technology, drew up a plan (6.06) in 1891 at the behest of the Amsterdam city authorities which called for most of the area to be built up. This prompted Cuypers (6.07), who was on the city council at the time, and Jacob Ankersmit Jr, another council member, to put forward an alternative plan that left most of the area untouched.

The *Bouwkundig Weekblad* (Architectural Weekly) protested what it saw as the ill-fated union of a luxury residential development and a venue for public events. The result, it was argued, would be a 'highly unsavoury neighbourhood';⁵ If things went on in this way, the magazine continued, the city would never escape its impasse, which resulted from poor urban planning and the fact that most new arrivals came from the lower classes. This yielded new buildings that were 'with a few exceptions, monotonous and ugly'.⁶ Public buildings, a time-tested method for enhancing the character of a district, therefore tended to be built in the old city rather than the new districts. The magazine was no more enthusiastic about the alternatives to leaving an open space between Concertgebouw and Rijksmuseum (6.08). If villas were spread loosely over the site, the result would never be a suitably dignified, impressive cityscape. But even the much more appealing strategy of

building rows of villas like those in Berlin's Tiergarten district was unlikely to lead to a satisfactory outcome. Furthermore, potential buyers would have formidable alternatives: homes in breathtaking landscapes less than a half-hour away by train. This stalemate between the two visions for the area lasted more than ten years (6.09).

In the meantime, a third temple of culture was erected there: the Stedelijk Museum opened in 1895. Conceived as a home for contemporary art, it also held Rembrandt's *Night Watch* from 1898 to 1906, because at the Rijksmuseum the painting could not be exhibited under adequate lighting conditions. The Stedelijk faced not the green but Paulus Potterstraat. In 1902, Cuypers' alternative plan was adopted after all, and from that time onward it was clear that the area behind the Rijksmuseum would not be filled in with buildings. This marked the true beginning of the struggle over the square that was never meant to be a square, the public garden caught in a tug-of-war between competing visions. Was it a park, or a sports field, or a site for public events? Was it a major thoroughfare, or a secondary route? The only assumption that was generally accepted without reservation all those years was that it was a prime location for a cluster of major cultural attractions.

Cultural Hub, Traffic Machine, or Both?

If Cuypers had hoped that by carrying out his original plan he could root the museum more firmly in the city and give it the grandeur he sought, he must have been disappointed. The large, green space he had incorporated into his plan, which included the sports field with the skating rink (6.10, 6.11), became less and less of a forecourt for the Rijksmuseum and more and more of a leftover area in back of the building. The gardens he had designed with Victor de Stuers did little to change this situation. Their landscape design called for a number of 'period rooms' in the 'old Dutch Style', an idiom that the designers had distilled from the various garden styles found in the Netherlands, which offered enough variety to give each of the 'outdoor galleries', as the gardens were called, its own personality. These outdoor galleries formed the scenery within which fragments of historic architecture were exhibited.

When the museum was expanded on the Museumplein side, that side became more clearly defined as the rear. The first Drucker extension was built in 1909 and the second in 1916. These did not help to transform the Museumplein side into a grand entrance; if anything, they made it seem even more like the back of the building, thus defining the square as a second-class area. The Stedelijk, too, turned its back on Museumplein, and the Concertgebouw was too far away and too small to have a decisive influence on the character of the square. A symmetrical arrangement along an axis extending from the passage through the Rijksmuseum, accentuated by stands of trees on either side, gave the space a clear shape but failed to integrate the square with its surroundings.

The first opportunity to rescue Museumplein arose in 1928, with an architecture competition for an opera house there, the Wagneropera. Naturally, the entrants made various proposals for redesigning the square. The winner was J.F. Staal, whose design incorporated the Wagneropera – the fourth cultural monument of national significance on and around the square – into an urban plan that reduced Museumplein to manageable proportions (6.12).⁷ The planned opera house, a large complex that included restaurants and cafés, would have blocked the old line of sight to the Concertgebouw and emphasized the axis extending from the passage through the Rijksmuseum. The plan unleashed a flood of counterproposals that

6.10 Rijksmuseum viewed from Paulus Potterstraat, 1897.

6.11 Rijksmuseum viewed from the skating club grounds, 1906.



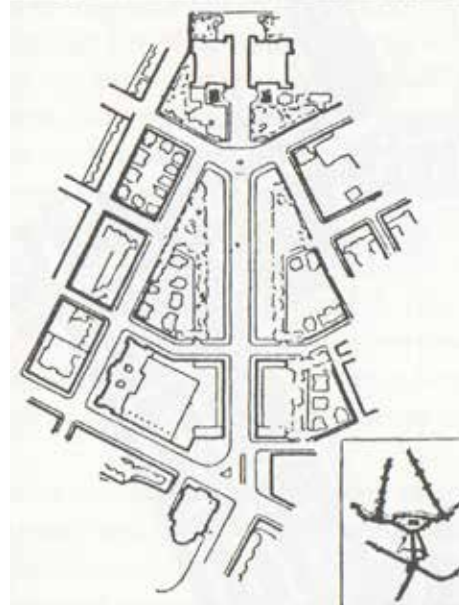
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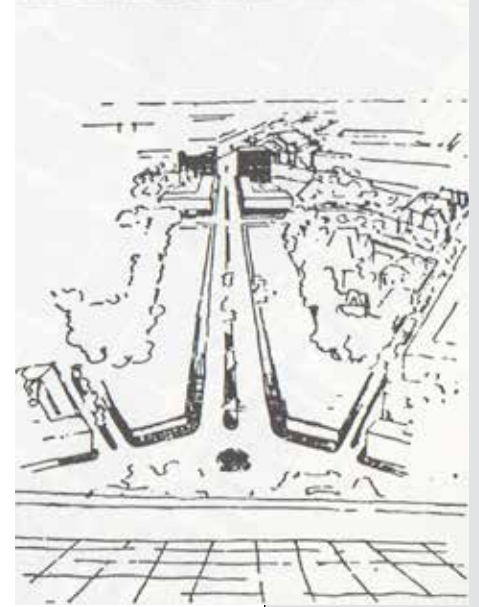
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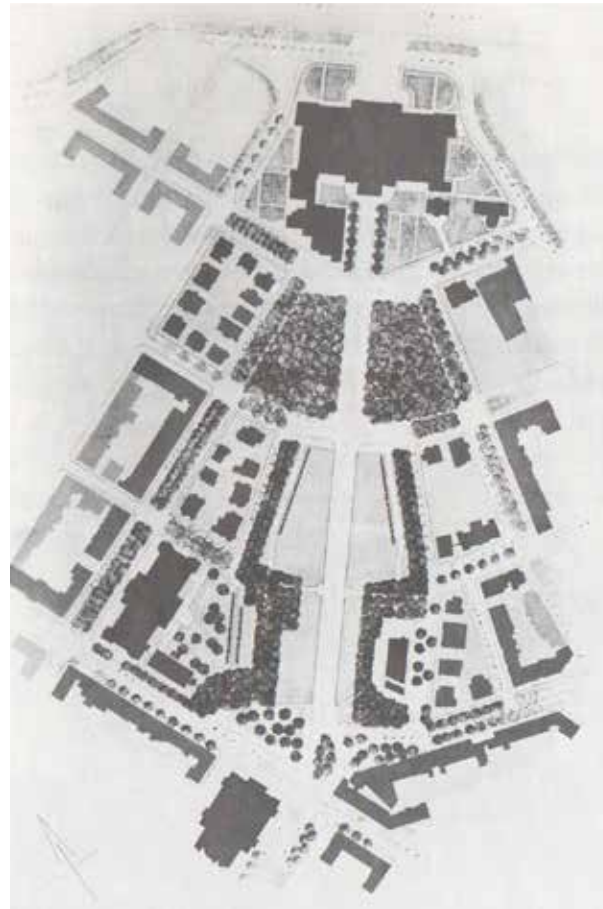
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6.12 J.F. Staal, development plan for the museum grounds, 1925-1928.

6.13-14 J.M. de Casseres, C. van Eesteren, C. Karsten and B. Merkelbach, development plans for the museum grounds, 1928-1929.

6.15-16 Development plan by the Department for City Planning, based on a design by Van Eesteren, 1951. Current situation (6.15). Provisional development plan for Museumplein (6.16).

continued for weeks. C. van Eesteren, the head of the Department for City Planning, who was responsible for designing Amsterdam's *Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan* (General Extension Plan; AUP) collaborated with J.M. de Casseres (6.13, 6.14), C. Karsten and B. Merkelbach on an alternative design for the square that integrated it into the traffic plan for the city as a whole. But this design, like Staal's, was shelved and forgotten.⁸ For the next few decades, almost no changes were made to the square at all, aside from the damage done by the German occupiers in the process of building five bunkers there.

What Van Eesteren had failed to do to 1928, he accomplished in 1952: a new plan for Museumplein was set in motion, one that harked back to his 24-year-old counterproposal (6.15, 6.16). The objective was to transform Museumplein from a 'muddy, sloppy playing field with bunkers' into 'our country's foremost cultural centre'.⁹ The presentation of this old proposal in new garb inspired a number of competing designs. A. Komter came up with an alternative plan in which the road did not run straight through the square but along the east side, and Staal's widow, Margaret Staal-Kropholler, put forward a version of her late husband's original plan, adapted so that it too allowed for a through route on the east side.¹⁰

Van Eesteren presented his proposal in two parts: a 'provisional construction plan' and a 'future construction plan'. The first came before the second but addressed only the most urgent issue: providing access to the city centre for motor traffic. This provisional plan routed a wide flow of traffic over the middle of Museumplein towards the Rijksmuseum. For a long time, this route would remain the shortest motorway in the Netherlands. The onrushing cars had to veer off to the left or right as they neared the passage through the museum, which had been closed to motor traffic since 1931. On the other side of the museum, the axis of this route joined with De Lairessestraat, which led to the motorway to The Hague. Van Eesteren left the option open of building a terminal underneath this axis for the railway line to Schiphol Airport. For the time being, there was a bus connection, and KLM opened a bus station on the square. Van Eesteren's future construction plan, like Staal's plan, involved making the square much smaller, in this case by filling it with two mammoth cultural institutions. The provisional construction plan was carried out, and for the next 40 years motor traffic dominated the central part of Museumplein. The plan for the future was cast aside.

In the late 1970s, Dutch Railways (NS) set off fresh controversy with a plan to extend the Schiphol line, which came from Leiden by way of the airport, to an underground terminal next to the Rijksmuseum. Even though serious damage above ground could be averted with a tunnel underneath the Boerenwetering canal, the plan was seen as an example of what the Dutch called *cityvorming*: aggressive, overreaching urban renewal. It called for fewer homes and more space for offices, banks, hotels, restaurants, and cafés. The press coined the term 'Manhattan effect': 'If this NS fantasy becomes a reality, then there is reason to fear that Museumplein and its surroundings will literally be handed over to the highest bidder.'¹¹ A massive office block that had recently been erected in Banstraat, behind the Concertgebouw, became the symbol of this nightmare scenario.¹² Critics saw the proposal as a misguided response to the emergence of a suburban way of life 'characterized by a maximum need for movement'.¹³ As they saw it, the terminal would only encourage continued flight out of the city, which had lost 100,000 inhabitants in barely ten years. The ultimate decision was to build a railway ring around the city, as proposed decades earlier in the AUP, and to extend the Schiphol line to Amsterdam Central Station along the west side of the ring.

6.17 Museumplein with the Rijksmuseum, viewed from De Lairesestraat, 1951.

6.18 Aerial photograph of Museumplein, 1971.



Although the objective was still to fill Museumplein with cultural landmarks, not much progress was made in that direction for some time. In 1954 the Stedelijk had opened a small extension, which again lacked an entrance facing the square. The first major addition was the Van Gogh Museum, built in 1973; four luxury houses had to be demolished to make room for it. Starting in 1986, Villa Troostwijk housed the short-lived Museum Overholland for a few years, until it closed in the 1990s. A year later, the new extension of the Concertgebouw, designed by Pi de Bruijn, opened its doors. From then on, the building's main entrance no longer faced the Rijksmuseum, but was oriented towards an area on the side that had been renamed Concertgebouwplein. Museumplein thus remained a leftover space between the backs of buildings, with the country's shortest motorway still running through its heart. The passage through the Rijksmuseum was still exclusively for pedestrians and cyclists. In 1986, a proposal for a tram line through the passage ran afoul of protests by neighbourhood residents.

Dutch Landscape

In 1988, *NRC Handelsblad* organized a competition that was the first in a series of attempts to solve the Museumplein problem once and for all. Although none of the 200 entries were usable – in John Körmeling's plan, for instance, the country's shortest motorway also became its widest – the initiative succeeded in bringing the issue to the forefront of public attention. In 1989 the Stichting Museumplein (Museum Square Foundation) took the lead, asking Ed Taverne to analyse the



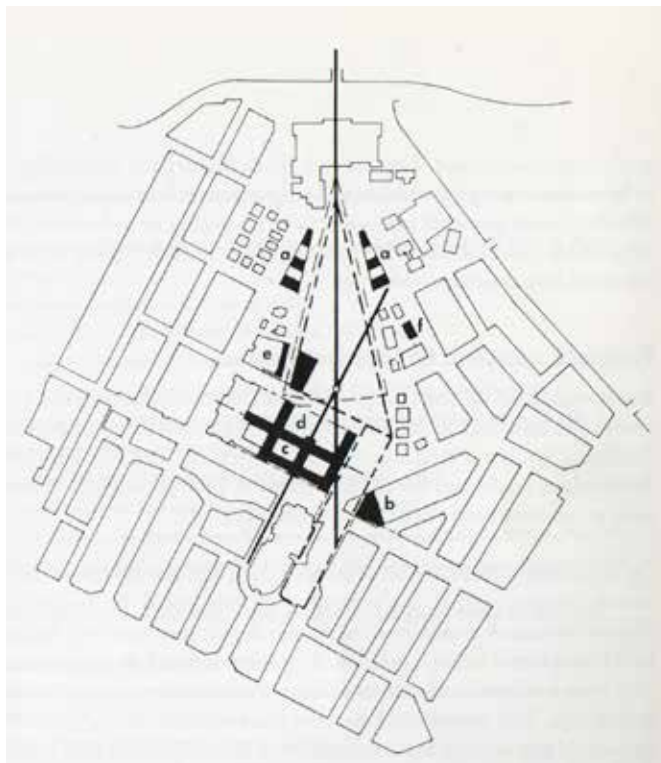
problem and Carel Weeber to come up with a design (6.19). Taverne concluded that Museumplein had originally issued from a combination of the general nineteenth-century pursuit of urban modernism (Vienna had been one source of inspiration for the Van Niftrik plan) and an approach typical of Amsterdam, namely the reflection of the old city across the canal ring. He went on to advocate a 'visual confrontation with the new conditions of the metropolis', making reference to Paul Virilio.¹⁴ The danger, he warned, was 'losing one's way in dated neo-sixties-style fantasies of the biggest living room in the Netherlands, which inevitably lead to jumble-sale-style fairgrounds'.¹⁵ Carel Weeber took this advice to heart, but his development plan excited very little enthusiasm.

The city authorities ordered several studies of the problem in 1990 and followed up in 1992 with a policy document laying out basic principles. Museumplein had to remain suitable as a site for major events. The lines of sight had to remain open, and any new facilities there would have to be placed along the edges. The district council established an advisory council for city planning consisting of Rein Geurtsen (city planning expert), Alle Hosper (landscape architect) en Maarten Kloos (director of Arcam, Amsterdam Centre for Architecture).

These advisers put forward the Danish landscape architect Sven-Ingvar Andersson to redesign the square (6.20). From 1993 to 1996, Andersson, together with Stefan Gall, worked on a plan intended to give the square a degree of autonomy from the buildings around it by means of a 'light line' between two fountains. The square had to accommodate a major expansion of the Van Gogh Museum and the construction of a half-underground car park on the southwest side. This made it necessary to raise the level of the square on that side. Andersson made a virtue out of this necessity by trying to evoke a sense of the archetypal Dutch horizon (and to allude to a Rembrandt etching). Van Eesteren's motorway was eliminated. The entrance to the car park took the form of a 'dog-ear', a sloped corner of the lawn that was especially large because the private investor would only agree to the plan if the

6.19 Carel Weeber, design for Museumplein, 1989.
a: luxury houses, b: hotel, c: extension of Stedelijk Museum, d: luxury apartments, e: extension of Van Gogh Museum, f: residential complex

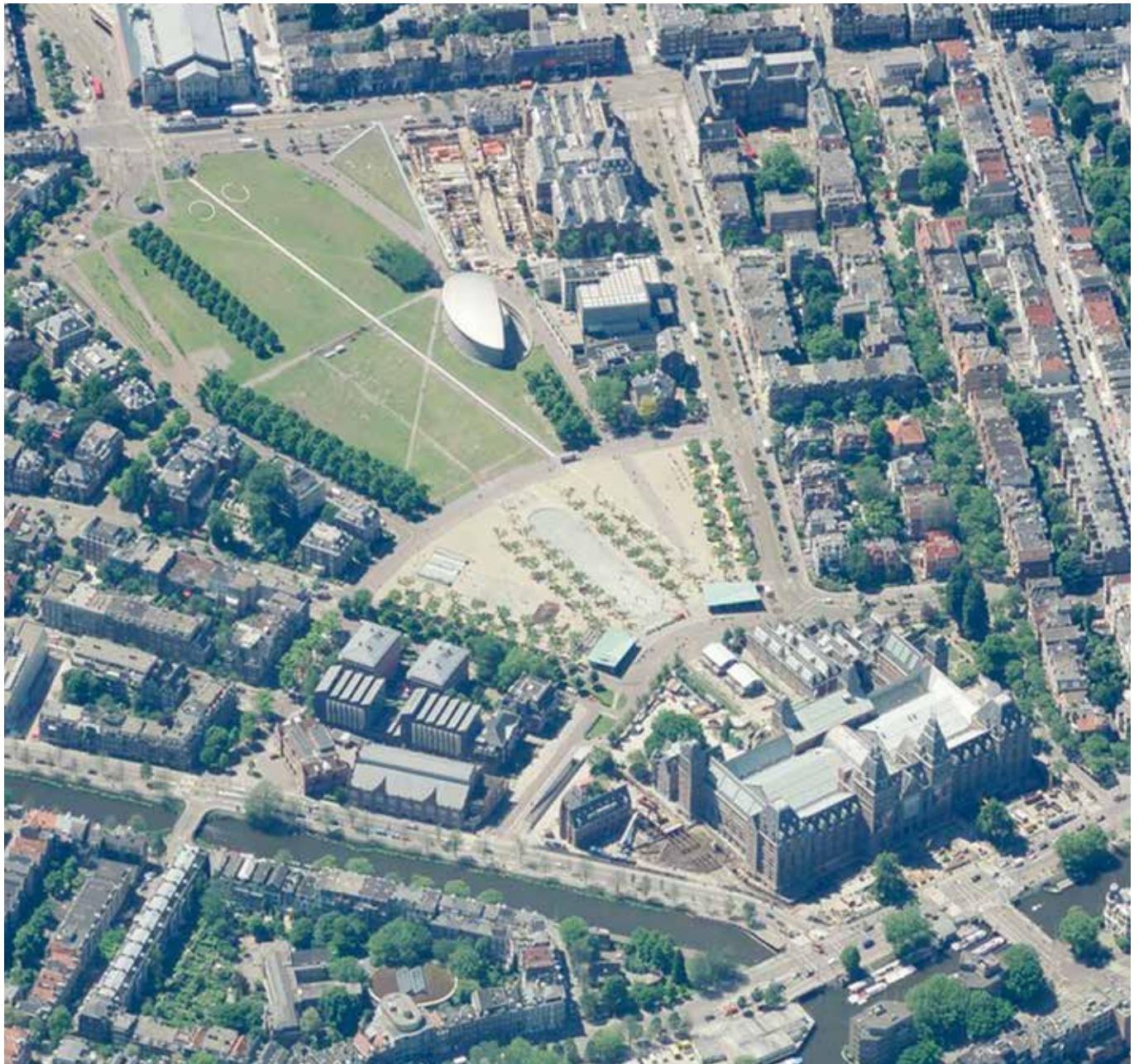
6.20 Aerial photograph of Museumplein as designed by Sven-Ingvar Andersson and Stefan Gall.



6.19

entrance also gave access to an underground supermarket.¹⁶ On 19 August 1999, Freek de Jonge opened the renovated Museumplein with a brief stand-up comedy act.

Meanwhile, the renovation of the Rijksmuseum had begun. Hans Ruijsenaars proposed an underground storage area on the side facing the square. He also wanted to close the passage to through traffic and turn it into the grand entrance that Cuypers had envisaged. The studio of Cruz y Ortiz, later chosen as the lead architects for the renovation, presented a similar concept, projecting the main entrance into the heart of the passageway. This left room for an adjacent bicycle path. Another aspect of the assignment was developing a concept for the gardens. Besides reorganizing and tidying up the gardens themselves, this also involved forging a connection between the Rijksmuseum and Andersson's new plan. As the lead architects, Cruz y Ortiz had final responsibility for the design of the gardens, but they were assisted by a garden and landscape architect. In 2004 the Utrecht firm of Copijn Tuin- en Landschapsarchitecten was chosen for this role. Although their





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6.21-22 Artist's impressions of the museum garden, designed by Copijn Tuinen Landschapsarchitecten, 2011.

6.23-24 Impressions of the completed museum garden, 2013.

design met the functional terms of reference – it preserved the open-air museum atmosphere, distinguished between different sections of the garden, called for low-maintenance native plants, and required no more than two gardeners – it was also very conservative and so architectural in character that the contrast with the building was anything but pronounced (6.21, 6.22).

While the discussions of the garden took place in relative calm, the passageway became a hotly debated issue. In Andersson's Preliminary Design from 2002, the passageway remained open to foot and cycle traffic. The same was true of the Cruz y Ortiz plan, at least on the face of it. But by placing the entrance in the middle of the passageway, they raised questions of traffic safety.¹⁷ For this reason the Rijksgebouwendienst (Government Buildings Agency) and the Rijksmuseum all wanted to eliminate the bicycle path through the passage. There was a public outcry, and the district council came out in support of leaving the passage open to cycle traffic. The councillors based their opinion on the recommendations of the Amsterdam advisory council for city planning, which had argued that 'the connection . . . [is] present on many people's "mental map" and . . . widely appreciated'.¹⁸ In the years that followed, the district council remained insistent that the passageway had to remain open; on 29 January 2004, it unanimously adopted a motion urging that this be guaranteed for the future.¹⁹

The passageway once again became the subject of a study. Urban planning expert Maurits de Hoog (of the Amsterdam planning department) concluded that by the standards set out in the Recommendations for City Traffic Facilities, the passage clearly offered too little space to accommodate everyone's wishes. The directors of the museum renovation project suggested that the objective of turning Museumplein into 'a leading cultural attraction on a European scale', with 4 to 6 million visitors a year, was at odds with the wish to leave the passageway open.²⁰ Nevertheless, the museum decided to accept the position that through traffic should remain possible.²¹ The Amsterdam Cyclists' Union, a 'Committee to Save the Passage', and the district council continued their efforts to keep the passageway open, but their opponents also made their voices heard. Architects Tjeerd Dijkstra, Ben Loerakker, Fred Rocco, Jaap van Rijs and Noud de Vreeze sent a joint press release to Chief Government Architect Mels Crouwel in May 2005.

The Policy Document on Basic Principles released in 2005 put an end to the debate: the passageway was to stay open, the side lanes would be for pedestrians only, and the central lane would remain open to cyclists. It seemed that Ruijsenaar's grand entrance in the centre of the building would never be more than a dream. 'Well, this is how things go in the Netherlands; this is what comes of public participation,' Crouwel opined.²² Yet the sorely missed central entrance hall did ultimately take shape – not in the centre of the passage, but on either side, in the indoor courtyards. This solution appears to have combined the best of both worlds, shifting the attention back to Museumplein.

The Final Act?

In 2010, Copijn Tuin- en Landschapsarchitecten was invited to submit the Final Design for the gardens. From this point on, Cruz y Ortiz were no longer involved. The background to this change of plans was the arrival of a new museum director, Wim Pijbes, in 2008. Pijbes felt that the Cruz y Ortiz plan was not ambitious enough. If the garden was to become the museum's calling card, then the design would have to give it a distinct identity. Ideally, it would have to attract visitors throughout the year and offer enough flexibility for a varied programme of activities.

Cuypers' garden sketch from 1901 was still taken as a point of departure, as it had been for the original plan, but was now freely interpreted.²³ The 'period rooms' were adapted to serve as settings for changing architectural elements, such as Amsterdam playground equipment designed in the 1950s by architect Aldo van Eyck. The garden and building came to form a *Gesamtkunstwerk* that incorporated the additions and alterations of recent decades and placed more emphasis than earlier designs on the interplay with the reinvented museum. Moving the service entrance to one side of the garden and eliminating the bicycle shed allowed the designers greater creative freedom. A space was created on the east side of the passage that has become a play area for children. It includes a fountain with jets of water that shoot high into the air in an ever-changing pattern. In the tradition of Dutch gardens, vegetables are grown; this forms a conceptual link to the vegetables in the paintings inside the museum. The plan is to use these vegetables in food in the long run. 'Experience' is a key concept, and plants were selected to create an extended blooming season: there are flowers from early spring to late autumn. Compared to the Cruz y Ortiz plan, the garden looks lush, free-spirited, and unrestrained.

The garden acts as a transition to the square, which is being redesigned again now that the museum has reopened. Just one year after completion, Andersson's design for the square proved to have been undermined by spending cuts at the implementation stage and a laughable maintenance budget. In 2007, the sum of 10 million euros was committed to Museumplein. The following year, four scenarios were developed, ranging from inaction to the transformation of the green lung into a traditional city square. The guiding concept of the *square as field*, intended to respect the basic principles of Andersson's plan but depart radically from many of the details, was adopted in June 2007 and confirmed that December in the Museum Quarter Vision. This new concept involves moving the entrance to the car park, restoring sight lines, and establishing a lorry-free zone. The aim is to create a harmonious, integrated whole on a par with Berlin's Museumsinsel and Vienna's Museumsquartier.²⁴

City planner Ton Schaap and landscape architect Michael van Gessel drew up the final version of the design. Sweeping away Andersson's street furniture, they laid out spacious paths and 16-m-wide avenues around the grassy field, and set off the grass with stone borders seven times as broad as ordinary curbs. Their new square is more robust; the walking routes mesh with the pattern of the surrounding streets.²⁵ The plan looks ahead to the new situation, in which both the Stedelijk Museum and the Van Gogh Museum will have their entrances on the Museumplein side. Instead of a green sea between backs of buildings, the square will be a large, green field like a shared forecourt. The 'dog-ear' will make way for a large pond, which will reflect light onto the overhang of the extension of the Stedelijk Museum. This solution was inspired by an Andersson-designed pond next to the Karlskirche in Vienna. Let us hope that the Schaap and Van Gessel design will close the book on more than a century of struggle over the cultural heart of the Netherlands.

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6.25 The garden to the south side of the Rijksmuseum.

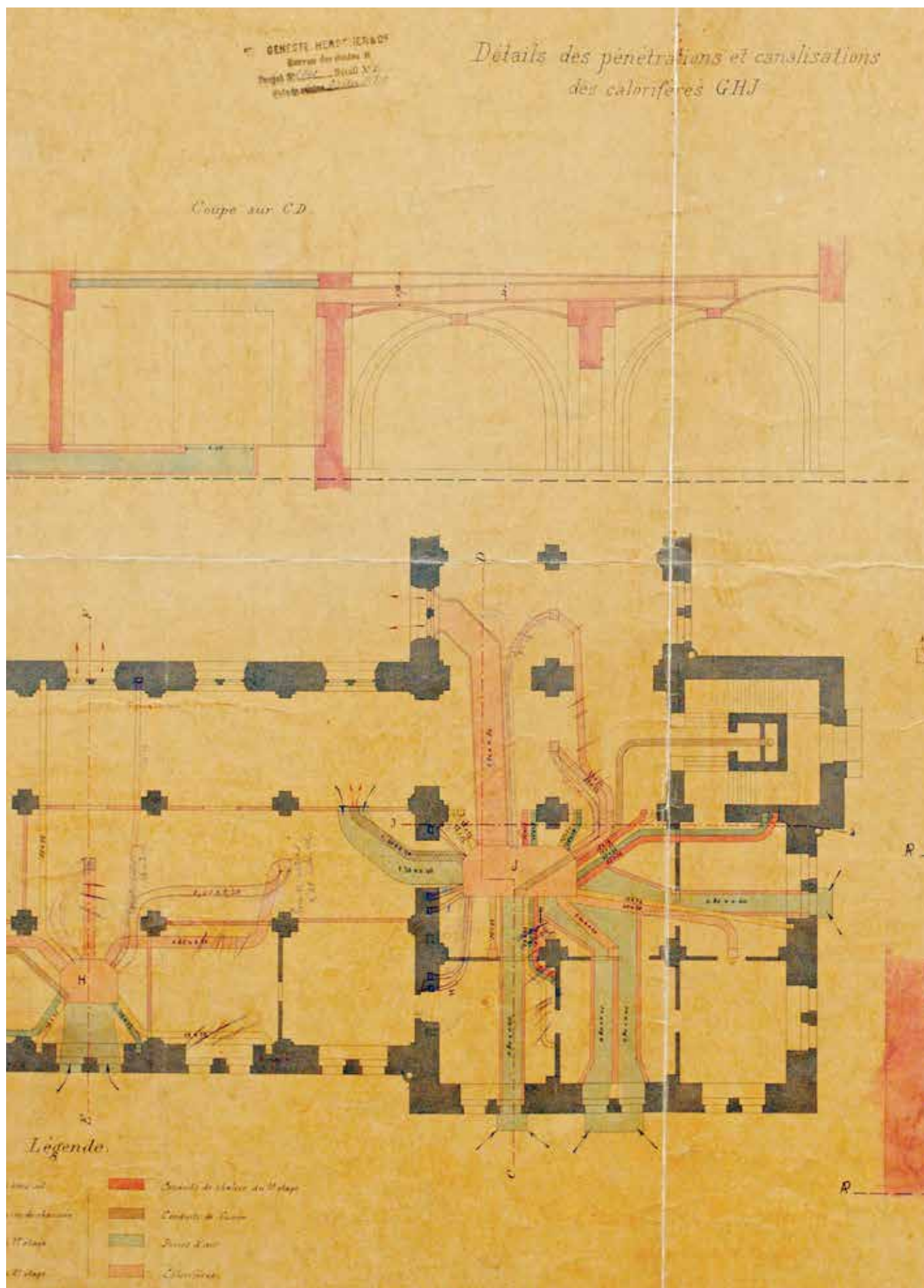
6.26 Playground equipment by Aldo van Eyck in front of the Entrance Building in the museum garden, 2013.



6.25



6.26



F.01 Detail of a design drawing for the museum's heating and ventilation system, 1879.

To protect its collection and guarantee the comfort of its many visitors, the Rijksmuseum requires an excellent climate control system. In its early years, the museum had coal-fired heaters in the souterrain. The heated air rose through the thick walls of the building into the exhibition galleries, in a process concealed from visitors. The courtyards were also integrated into this initial air circulation system. Yet it proved incapable of heating all areas of the museum to a uniform temperature, and fresh air was in short supply. During major renovations after the Second World War, the technical systems on the underground level were modernized several times. Coal was replaced by heating oil and later by natural gas. At the same time, the museum extensions, which had taken the place of the courtyards, required a new air circulation system. This time, the air shafts were hidden away behind dividing walls and in the spaces above the false ceilings. When these partitions and false ceilings were removed during the most recent renovation, the systems behind them were revealed.

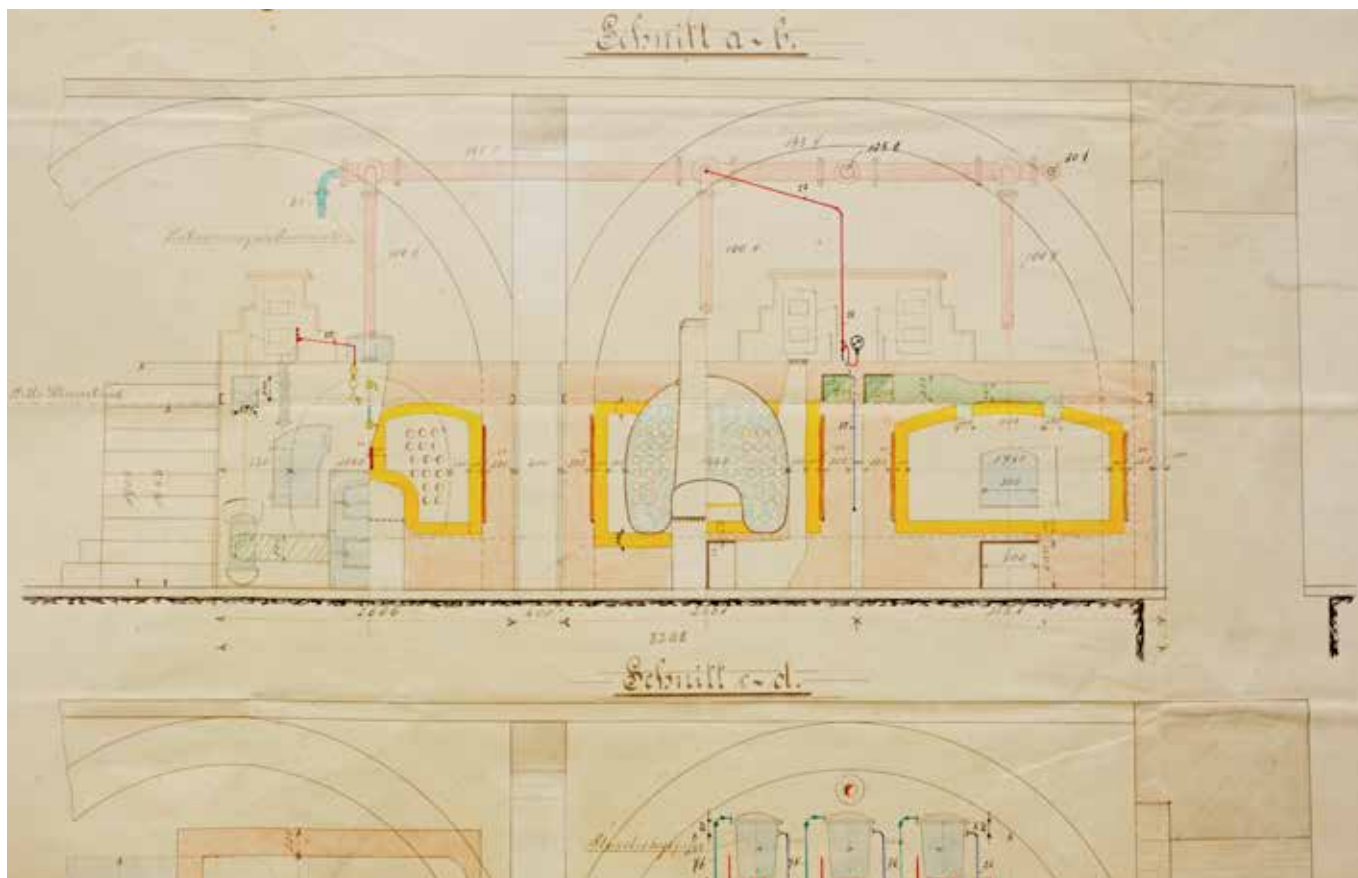
As part of the plan for the new Rijksmuseum, the climate control system was redesigned. In many respects, the new design harks back to the original concept, in which technical systems were kept out of sight and air ducts were integrated into the walls. This approach was felt to be both historically and aesthetically appropriate. Incorporating the new system into the historic fabric of the building proved to be a complex challenge, and Cruz y Ortiz and Van Hoogevest worked together with consulting building services engineers from Arup and partners. They decided to install two separate air circulation circuits. The air-conditioning units for the souterrain and ground floor were placed in an Energy Ring largely encircling (and partly underneath) the existing building. The centre of this Energy Ring is no longer in the main building but deep below the new Entrance Building; this leaves more space in the souterrain for exhibitions.

The air from the Energy Ring is delivered into the building through steel pipes that pass between the wooden foundation piles. Beneath the raised floor, the air is distributed among the floor grilles in the souterrain and the ducts in the walls, which deliver it to the ground floor. Because the original shafts were not large enough, new, larger air ducts were carved into the walls. The air inlet grids on the ground floor are underneath the windows. On both floors, air passes out of the exhibition galleries into the courtyards through openings in the windows. From there, most of it returns to the underground air treatment units, which heat or cool it as required and circulate it back into the building. The need for fresh air from outdoors is determined on the basis of visitor numbers. When necessary, a few panels in the glass roofs open automatically, admitting fresh air from outside directly into the courtyards.

The air treatment units for the museum galleries on the main floor have been installed in the ridge of the roof. Through openings in the roof slope, fresh air is drawn into the building. Various systems have been built in the ceilings of the galleries below to conduct air in and out, thus regulating the temperature and humidity.

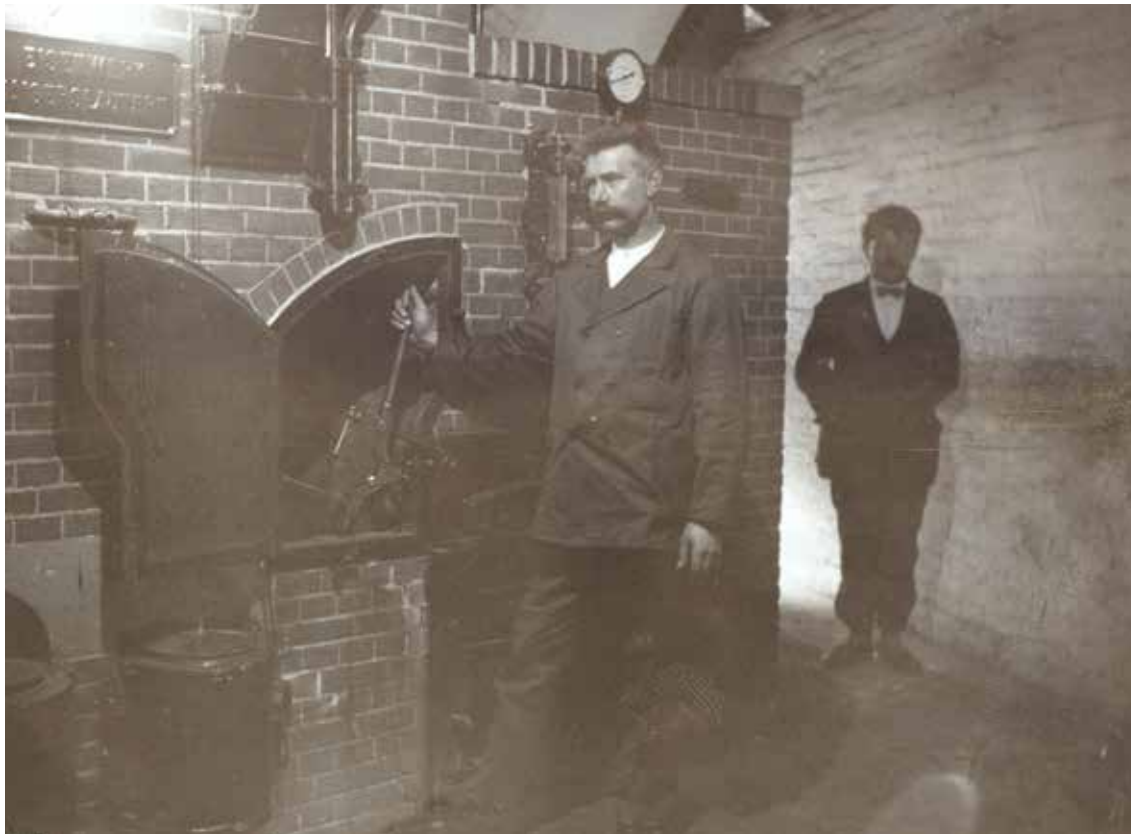
Another important aspect of climate control is insulation. Insulation requirements played a central role in the development of the modern glass used in the museum's new windows, and the options for wall insulation were the subject of thorough research. The aim was to find the best option for conservation of works of art without damaging the building. After long and sometimes heated discussions, the final decision was to cover the interior sides of the outer walls with Calsitherm, a material developed at Dresden University of Technology. Parts of the window recesses were also covered with Calsitherm. This chalky material helps maintain a constant humidity in the exhibition galleries, and despite being

porous, it insulates effectively. This is an important characteristic, because non-porous insulation material would have caused damage to features of the historic building such as the tile panels on the outer walls.

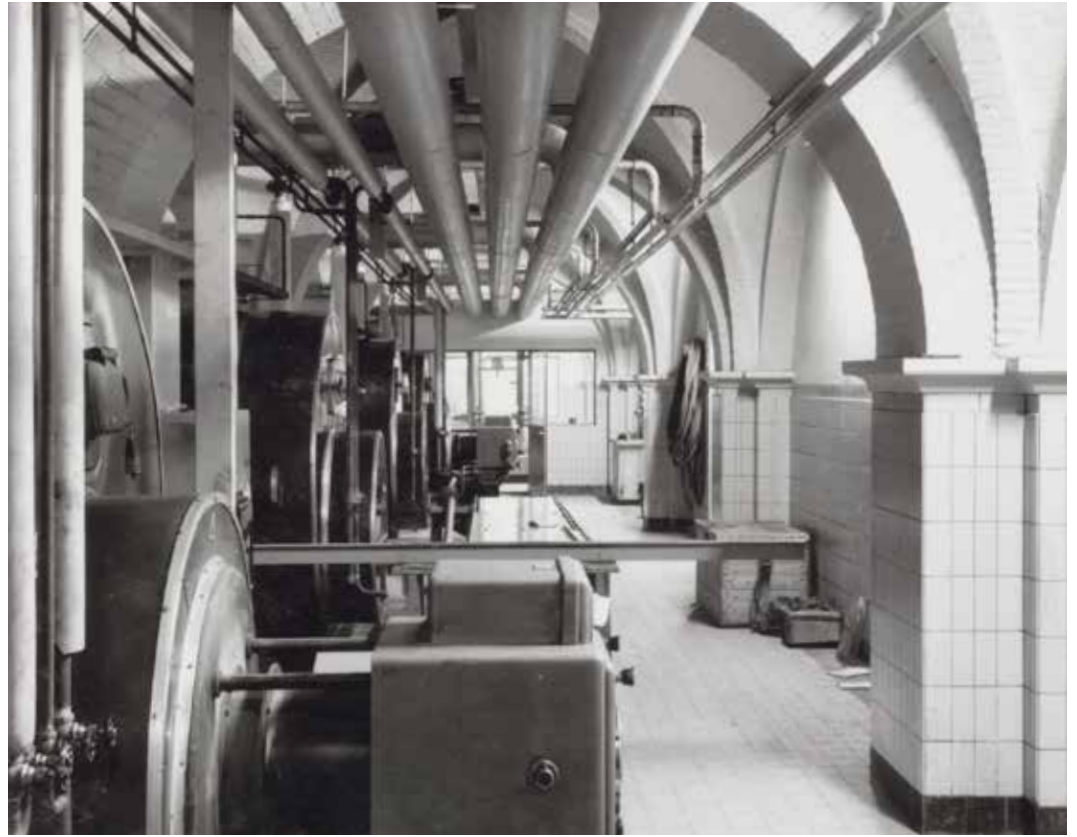


F.02

F.02-03 The original coal-fired boilers in the souterrain of the museum, c. 1900.



F.03



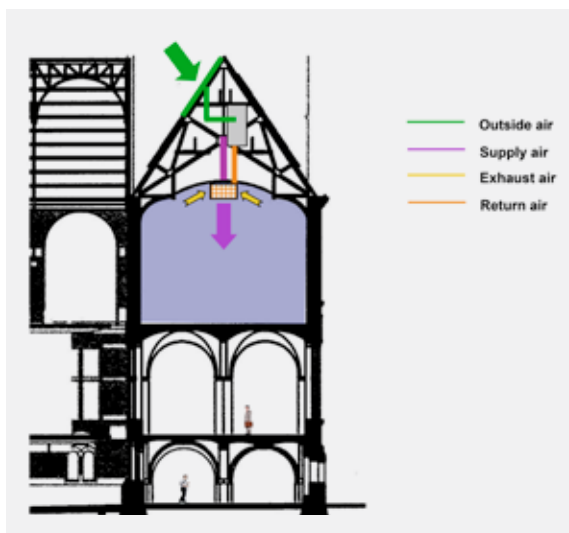
F.04 The boiler house in 1961.

F.04



F.05 Before the museum courtyards were filled in, in the 1960s, ventilation shafts were installed along the walls, since they would no longer be visible anyway.

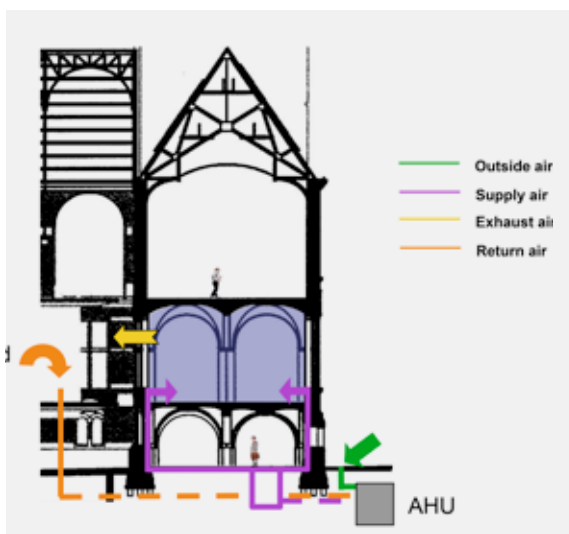
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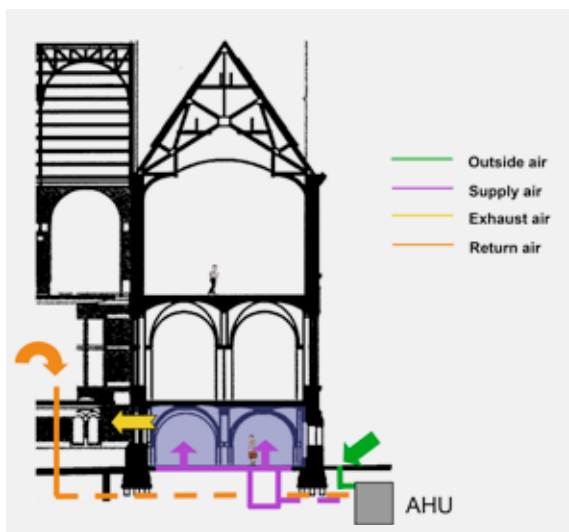
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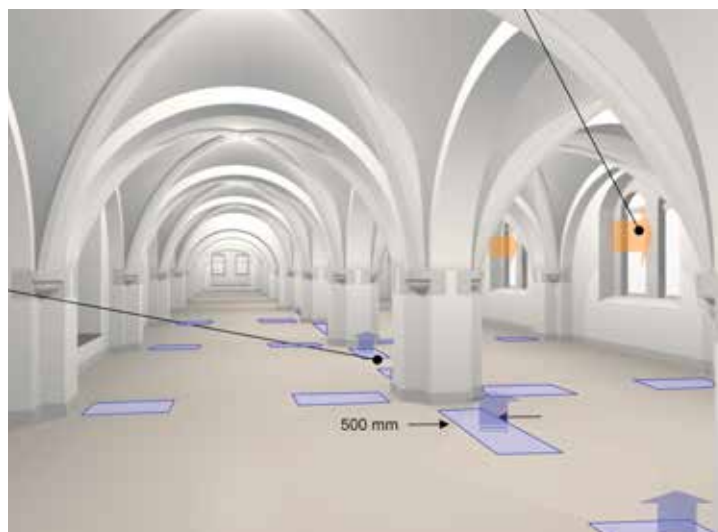
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F.11

The new climate control system designed and incorporated into the building design by Cruz y Ortiz and Van Hoogevest Architecten in collaboration with the building services engineers at Arup and partners.

F.06-07: The air circulation system on the main floor, where the air treatment unit has been installed in the ridge of the roof.

F.08-11: The air treatment units for the exhibition areas on the ground floor and in the souterrain are in the Energy Ring, and the air returns there by way of the courtyards.



F.12-13 For the new climate control system, larger air ducts were cut into the walls.

F.12



F.14 Installation of wells/catch pits under the souterrain floors.

F.13



F.14



F.15

F.15 Installation of the climate control system on and under the roof.

F.16-17 Work on climate control systems in the rooftops.



F.16



F.17



F.18 Fire and ventilation hatches in the new glass roof over one of the courtyards.

F.18



F.19



F.20

F.19 Construction of conduits between the western section of the Energy Ring and the souterrains of the main building, 2009.

F.20 Duct running beneath the west courtyard.



F.21

F.21 The construction of the energy centre beneath the Entrance Building, 2011.



F.22 The northern section of the Energy Ring, 2011.



Putting aside the question of whether the new, integrated chronological approach to presenting Dutch history could be improved upon – the art and history buffs can debate that one – the Rijksmuseum has made great strides as a logistical system. This is an crucial step for a modern-day museum, because over the past century, the emphasis has shifted from the museum as a place to store objects to the museum as a machine for visitors. The building has become more easily accessible, and routing is better managed. The new twentieth-century section, split in two and almost hidden away, is the exception that shows just how clear the general organization of the museum has become.

The new museum may not yet be ideal, but it is better equipped to handle large numbers of visitors. Anyone who recalls the queues that used to form next to the two small, dark entrances at either side of the central passage, or the throngs of visitors at the bottom of the stairs to the main entrances, will recognize how much the building has improved in this respect. The new atrium, a light, spacious area in the heart of the building, makes a world of difference.

Furthermore, the restoration of the original architecture and decorations has greatly enhanced the building's atmosphere. A visit to the Rijksmuseum is now not only a visual treat because of the art works and objects on display, but also a rich architectural experience. This too is a great asset in today's museum sector.

Besides all the practical reasons for the renovation – it was high time to fix up and tidy up the building – there was another motive for transforming the Rijksmuseum, a motive sometimes expressed in veiled terms: almost all the major museums in other countries had already been transformed. The old Rijksmuseum could 'not fulfil museum visitors' wish for modern facilities', the Rijksgebouwendienst (Government Buildings Agency) and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science wrote in a document dated 4 April 2013.¹

Ultimately, the primary justification for museum renovations and expansions is not the growing collection but the objective of attracting and managing growing numbers of visitors. The architecture of a renovated (or restored) museum, which is often worth a visit in its own right, serves this objective in two distinct ways: the renovation increases the museum's capacity for visitors, and more visitors come to see the renovated museum.

Two Stages

The Rijksmuseum, like so many other museums, used to be a conglomeration of additions and changes. Over time, more and more areas of the building had been adapted to shifting needs, new thinking about museums and growing numbers of visitors. The recent transformation swept away almost all the earlier ones, showing a remarkable similarity to the alterations in the Stedelijk Museum just across the square. It is not only that in both cases the entrance was moved, altering the primary orientation of the building, but above all that both museums seized upon the renovation as an opportunity to erase an organic building history and replace it with just two stages: the original building (or, more accurately, an interpretation thereof) and the twenty-first-century intervention.

In the case of the Stedelijk Museum, it is not easy even to say exactly what the original building was. Benthem Crouwel Architects did away with almost all the additions and alterations made by Frits Eschauzier and Bart van Kasteel between 1937 and 1985, including the New Wing, but the firm did not restore the nineteenth-century building to its former glory, as the Spanish architectural office Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos attempted to do in the case of the Rijksmuseum, in collaboration with Dutch restoration architects Van Hoogevest Architecten and French interior architects Wilmotte & Associés. In the Rijksmuseum, nearly all traces of earlier renovators were removed, such as the above-mentioned Eschauzier, whose work had included the sumptuous National Print Room and the Asian department, as well as Wim Quist, who had designed the Gallery of Honour in the 1980s and refurbished the South Wing in the 1990s. Since that refurbishment, the interior design of the South Wing had been changed once again to make it suitable for a temporary exhibition of museum highlights during the long renovation period. And since the reopening of the main building, the wing has been undergoing yet another transformation, into a temporary exhibition area and restaurant.

Yet despite the many similarities between the transformation of the Rijks and that of the Stedelijk, there is an important difference. While the Rijksmuseum has highlighted the original design by Cuypers, as well as his decorations along the main axis, in the most authentic manner possible, the Stedelijk Museum, alluding to Sandberg's 'white museum', has disguised and effaced nearly all the decorations and material features of A.W. Weissman's nineteenth-century building. Moreover, the changes to the Rijksmuseum call less attention to themselves than those to the Stedelijk. While the upper level of the Stedelijk extension echoes the size and appearance of the museum galleries in the old building, it is impossible to overlook the differences between old and new in every other aspect of the building. The alterations to the Rijksmuseum are not nearly so pronounced. In the Stedelijk Museum, there is a dramatic difference between Weissman's brick building and the white 'bathtub', as even Mels Crouwel calls his addition. In the Rijksmuseum, the contrast between old and new is much more subtle. Tellingly, one of the few additions visible from the outside is the unassuming Asian Pavilion.

Scale

In international terms, the Rijksmuseum ranks not far below the world's top museums. But with a projected 2 million visitors a year, it is no match (in popularity or reputation) for the cultural Champions League. The Louvre in Paris (with 10 million visitors a year), the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the British Museum in London (with 6 million apiece), and the Vatican Museums in Rome (with more than 5 million) have a huge and probably insurmountable lead.

Yet the Rijksmuseum has a jump on many other renowned European museums with impressive collections, such as the Neues Museum in Berlin, where David Chipperfield's office has raised a new building out of the rubble (with 700,000 visitors a year), just as Hans Döllgast did earlier with the ruined Alte Pinakothek in Munich, another museum with a unique collection (and a modest 300,000 visitors a year).

What is true of the Rijksmuseum also applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Stedelijk Museum, which does not draw the same crowds as the Tate Modern in London (5 million a year), the Centre Pompidou in Paris (almost 4 million) or the MoMA in New York (2.5 million). Of course the great museums boast legendary collections, mount fantastic exhibitions, and have larger budgets, but that does not entirely account for the differences in visitor numbers.

A Relative View

At a museum such as the Louvre, there is much more to see in absolute terms than at the Rijksmuseum, but an equal amount in relative terms. With around 35,000 objects, the Louvre has almost five times as much on display as the Rijksmuseum. But if one divides the number of art works by the annual visitor figures (which are about five times as high for the Louvre as they are for the Rijksmuseum), there are 0.004 works per visitor in both cases. Since the two museums both have limited numbers of must-see masterpieces on the level of the *Mona Lisa* and *Night Watch*, the crowds are more tightly packed in some parts of the Louvre than in the Rijksmuseum.

The Rijksmuseum has around 5,000 visitors a day, while the Louvre – which is only open six days a week – has more than 30,000. This makes the Rijksmuseum a more pleasant place to visit. But even there, you almost inevitably encounter the masterpieces while others are peering over your shoulders or standing in your way to obtain a better view. The only time the average visitor to a popular museum sees an empty gallery is in a photograph taken outside opening hours. During an ordinary museum visit, other people are in the same area (often in great hordes), looking around, strolling around, and not only blocking the view of the art works but also making it almost impossible to gain a sense of the entire space. All the aesthetic ideas expressed through the space as a whole by the architect, the curator, and the maker of the exhibition are thus drowned out by the everyday reality of visitor traffic. Nevertheless, the renovation of the Rijksmuseum followed the international convention of regarding museum galleries and even the entire museum as a spatially, visually, and conceptually cohesive whole.

Logistics

Large numbers of visitors necessitate crowd management and have therefore turned many museums into airport-like environments, rather than quiet places for the contemplation of art. Many museum architects earned their stripes on complex projects such as airports and railway stations, which require similar measures to deal with peak congestion times. This is familiar territory for Cruz y Ortiz; the firm renovated Basel's main railway station in collaboration with Giraudi Wettstein between 1996 and 2003. Ieoh Ming Pei, designer of the pyramids at the Louvre, also had prior experience with transport architecture. In the 1960s, his design work had included Terminal 6 (now demolished) at JFK Airport, which was in use from 1970 to 2008. Norman Foster's firm has built and renovated many museums, such as the British Museum (1994-2000) and Munich's Lenbachhaus (2002-2013), and designed many airports, such as Stansted in London (1981-1991), Chek Lap Kok in Hong Kong (1992-1996) and Queen Alia in Amman (2005-2012).

Another thing airports and museums have in common is that they must cope with growing numbers of users as time goes on. Despite stark contrasts in their purpose and symbolic significance, both types of buildings are to a large extent logistical challenges. And in both cases, security is a high priority. The luggage handling system at airports is analogous to the museum cloakroom – either one can easily become a bottleneck. Likewise, airport food courts and tax-free shops find their counterparts in the museum shop and restaurant. And just as shops are a major source of revenue for many airports, sometimes proving more profitable than the flights that form their *raison d'être*, the shop and food services are crucial to the museum economy.

The number of passengers at an airport is influenced only slightly by the architecture or the shops; almost no one chooses an airport for its design or facilities.





The essential factors are its geographic location, relative both to other airports and to one or more major cities, the number of destinations served directly, and the frequency of the flights.

Something similar is true of museums. Just as there is more airline traffic to and from London and Paris, there is also more museum traffic there. For one thing, these are true metropolises, with larger pools of both local visitors and tourists. For another, many of the most popular museums in London and Paris do not charge admission, while in the Netherlands only annual museum card holders can enter for free. There is no direct relationship between a city's size and the number of museum visitors, but conversely, the largest museums with the most visitors do tend to be located in major cities.

If this thesis is tenable, then a museum such as the Rijksmuseum will never become one of the world leaders. This is not because there are too few top-quality art works for sale at affordable prices to raise the museum's magnificent collection to a still higher level, but simply because of Amsterdam's size. Since there is no chance of Amsterdam becoming a much larger city or attracting many more tourists, there is an upper limit to the number of visitors.

Furthermore, the museum is performing exceptionally well in relative terms, and its transformation is sure to consolidate its position in the second tier. In cities substantially larger than Amsterdam (which has 800,000-plus residents), with considerably more overnight stays by tourists than Amsterdam's 10 million in 2012, comparable museums certainly do not always do better. The Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (2 million residents, 12 million overnight stays) draws 'only' 1 million visitors a year, and the Prado in Madrid, a much larger city with many more tourists (3.2 million residents, twice that number in the region, and 16 million overnight stays by tourists in 2012) has visitor numbers close to the Rijksmuseum's.

The Spanish Approach

Like the Rijksmuseum, the Prado in Madrid has been renovated and expanded just recently, between 2003 and 2007. The architect responsible, Rafael Moneo, adopted a working method much like that of Antonio Cruz and Antonio Ortiz, who have a strong affinity with Moneo's work and his approach (having worked for him from 1968 to 1971). According to then *Guardian* critic Jonathan Glancey, Moneo freed up the entire museum for art by housing the 'seemingly essential gallery add-ons (cafe, bookshop, auditorium)' in the new addition.² The placement of the Rijksmuseum 'add-ons' in the atrium represents the same strategy. Glancey also wrote that Moneo 'has avoided the temptation to design an "iconic" (in other words, showy) gallery that might have rivalled Frank Gehry's phantasmagorical Bilbao Guggenheim'. This statement also applies, without reservation, to the work of Cruz y Ortiz at the Rijksmuseum. The firm's alterations are, in the last analysis, fairly unobtrusive – even more so thanks to Wilmotte, who proposed the use of grey in the museum as an alternative to the white that Cruz y Ortiz originally had in mind.

Without denying the direct relationships and parallels between Moneo's approach and ideas and those of Cruz y Ortiz, one can also observe that there is something Spanish about their attitude. Many Spanish architects have made similar choices in working with historic museum buildings. For example, the same qualities can be found in the work of Nieto Sobejano, prolific builders of museums and museum extensions in Spain and elsewhere, including the Museo Nacional de Escultura in Valladolid (2001-2007) and the Universalmuseum Joanneum in Graz (2006-2012). Another case in point is the transformation of the Fundació

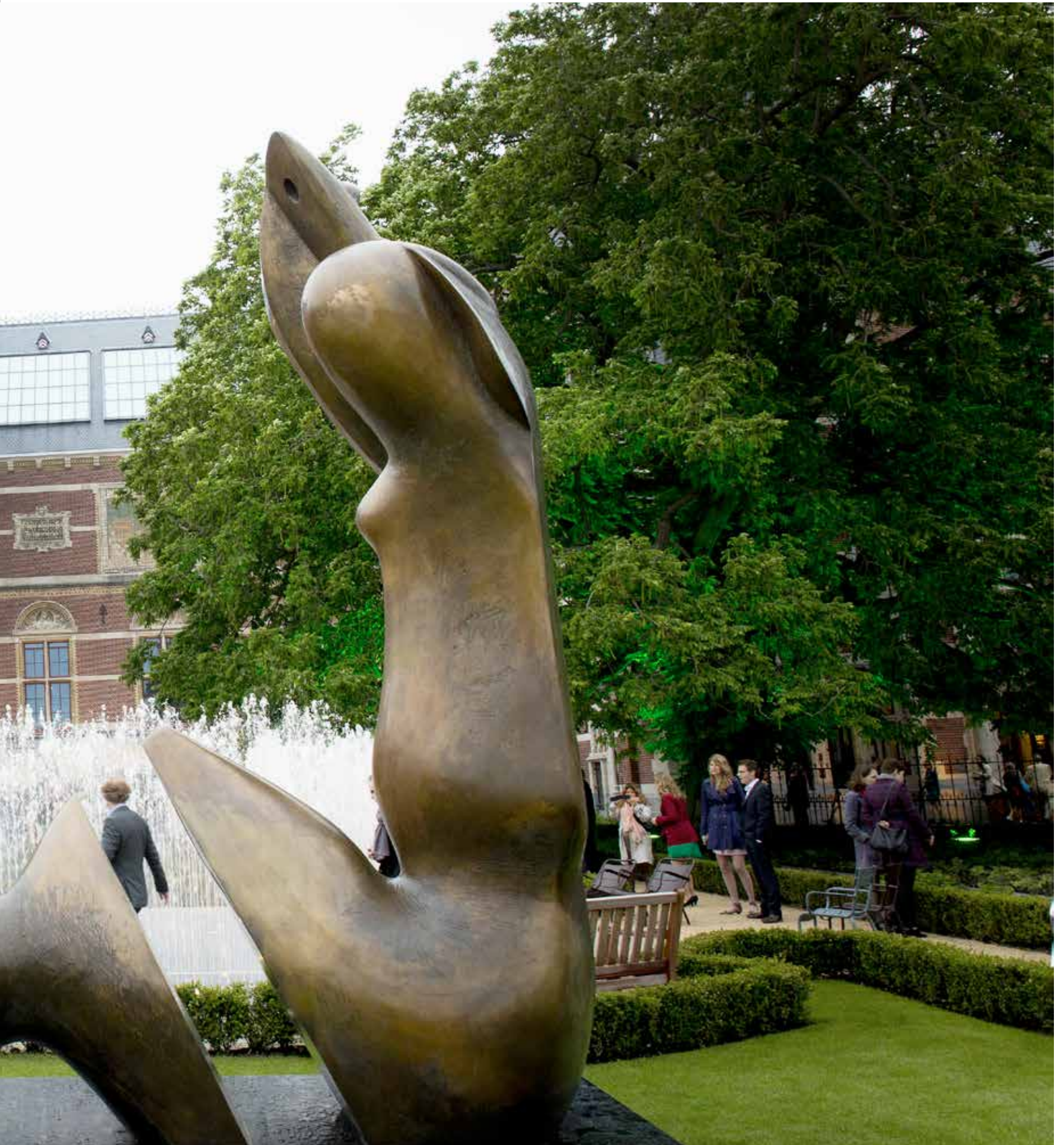
Antoni Tàpies in Barcelona (2007-2010), designed by Ábalos+Sentkiewicz. Their work was modest in scope and restrained in character.

This approach can be observed with some frequency in Southern Europe, where since the time of Carlo Scarpa historical and contemporary architecture have come to a tentative understanding. Combining old and new in this way is less customary in Northern Europe. That has begun to change in recent years, but even so, this approach is not typically Dutch – and certainly not in the case of museum architecture. Consider, for example, the Stedelijk Museum or the recent museum projects by Bierman Henket architecten, in which the contrast between old and new is always eye-catching and emphatic.

By comparison, the recent alterations to the Rijksmuseum – the national symbol of Dutch art and history – are fairly un-Dutch in character, and therefore fit perfectly into the tradition of the building. Cuypers' original creation was also seen as un-Dutch in the beginning, at least by critics who resented his Catholic background and beliefs. They complained that his architecture did not adequately reflect the Protestant culture that had so profoundly shaped the Netherlands. Not many other national museums have provoked that variety of architectural debate. Most national museums designed as such in the nineteenth century are in one of the revival styles that were considered most appropriate for museums – neoclassical or neo-Renaissance – rather than in a specific national style. The iconography of their decorations often expresses national themes, but the museum buildings themselves have a generic quality. The Rijksmuseum is an exception. Yet since the nineteenth century, even the Dutch have forgotten that the architecture of the Rijksmuseum is or could be an expression of national identity. Nowadays, the symbolic meaning of the Rijksmuseum is unmistakably vested in the institution, the collection, and the programme of activities, and no longer in the building's architecture.

Those who accept the nineteenth-century conventional wisdom that the Rijksmuseum is not a typically Dutch building can agree that the work of Cruz y Ortiz is the perfect embodiment of the project's motto: 'Continue with Cuypers'. Against this background, the words of Erick van Egeraat, who has described the project as 'such a good renovation that it could never have been carried out by a Dutch architect', confirm that the character of this transformation is atypical of the Netherlands.³



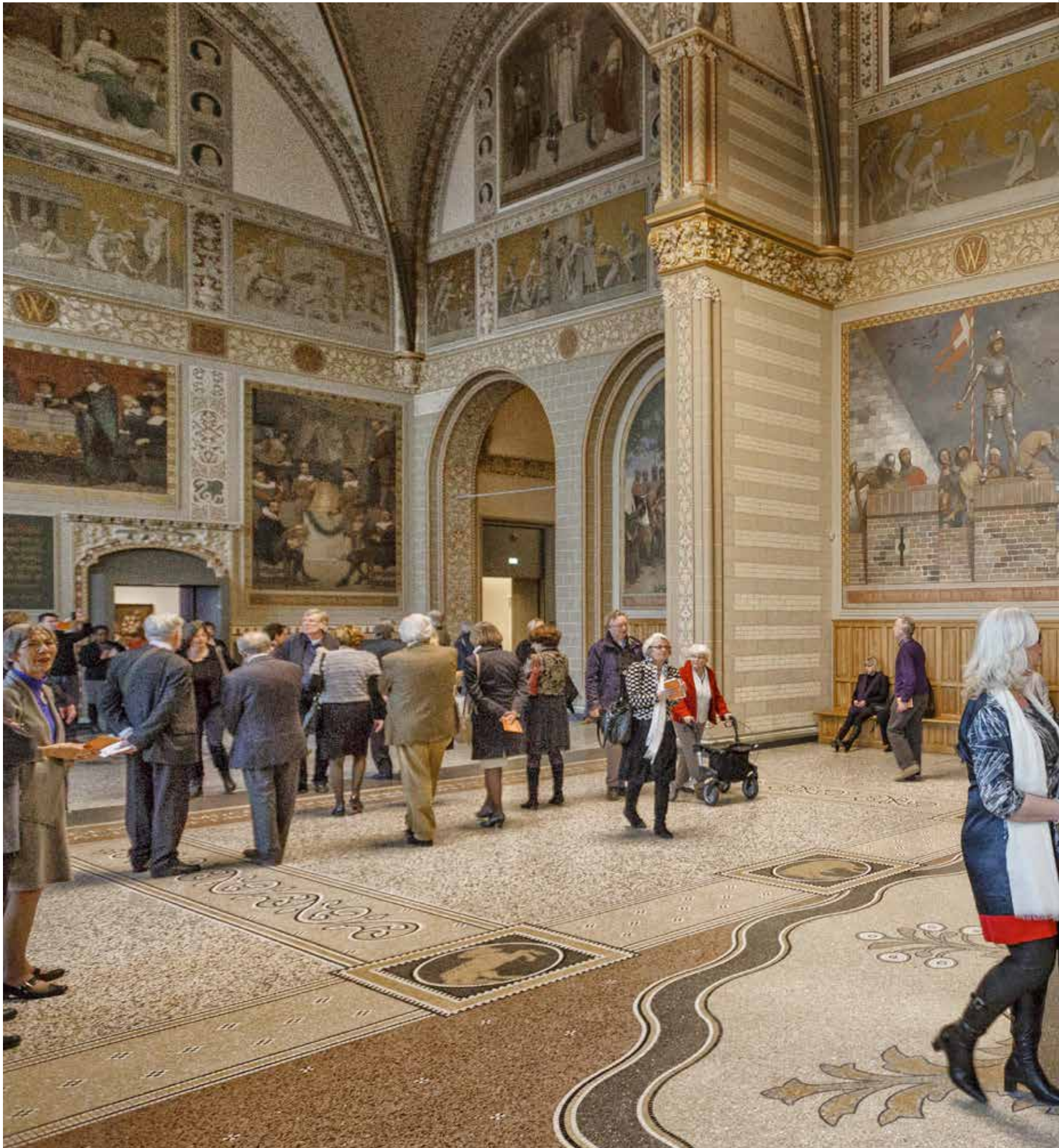


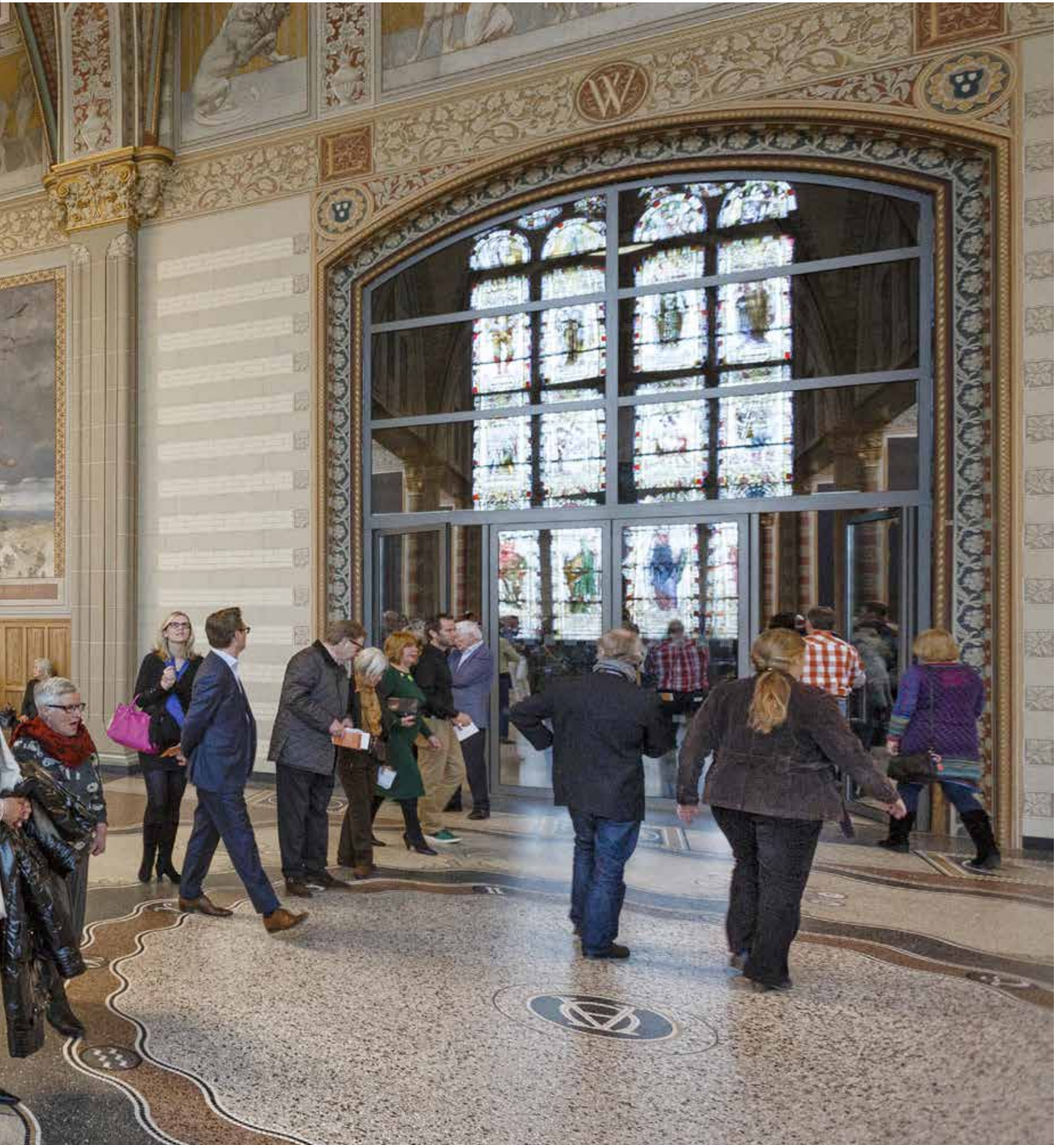


















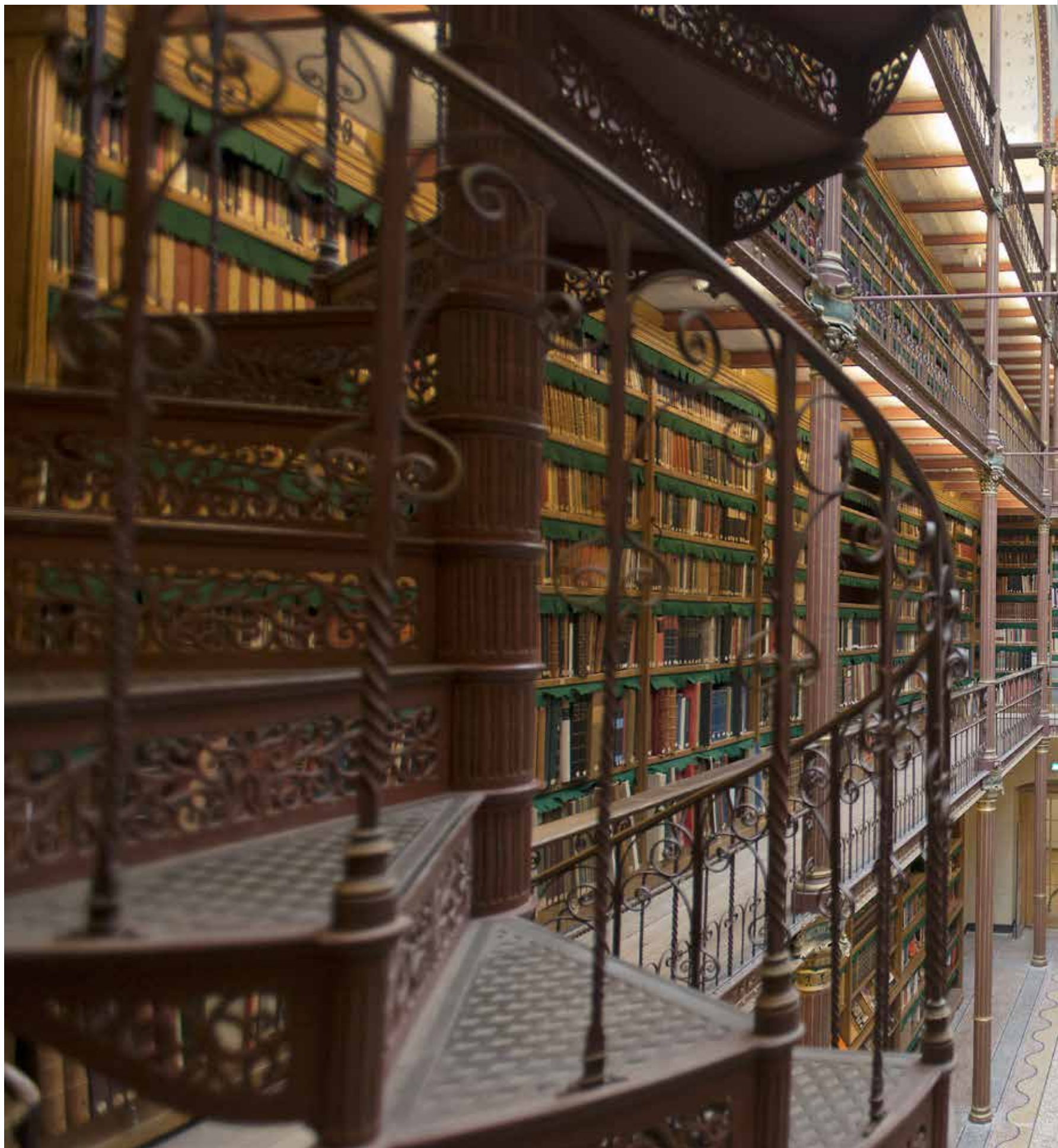
















The renovation of the Rijksmuseum was about more than adapting an outmoded museum to the demands of the time. On 19 September 2000, State Secretary for Culture Rick van der Ploeg wrote to the Chairman of the House of Parliament and the director of the Rijksmuseum that the government had decided on a total makeover of the museum. This meant that the main building would have to be completely emptied for the first time since it opened. This in turn provided an opportunity to clear out the museum, which over time had become a veritable maze, and to give the monument its old grandeur together with a fresh new look. The Kok government's millennium gift provided the financial boost that made this prestigious national project possible.

In 2000 the museum was designated an exemplary project in the government's architecture memorandum, *Ontwerpen aan Nederland* (Designing the Netherlands). It was one of nine 'Major Projects' designed to showcase and propagate architectural policy ambitions aimed at raising 'the cultural dimension and overall design quality'.¹ The list of Major Projects was quite a mixed bag, in which the Rijksmuseum stood side by side with the route design of state highways, the construction of the Zuiderzee train line, the reconstruction of agrarian landscapes on sandy ground and encouragement of owner-built housing. The memorandum argued that design quality could be improved by bringing designers into the process at an early stage and through their sketches help to clarify both the task and the solution strategy. The idea was that the parties involved, with their often conflicting interests and positions, could be brought together behind an integrated vision of the future. In other words, the designer was being presented as mediator and coalition builder, with the design functioning as the basis for the formulation of fundamental principles. It was thought that inspiring and appealing designs might benefit and speed up the planning and construction process. With its Major Projects, the government as client was also keen to set a good example for 'Dutch builders and designers' in the pursuit 'of optimal design quality and exemplary collaboration between interested parties'. Given the project's intrinsic challenge and huge prestige, the Rijksmuseum fit perfectly with the ambition to promote the design of the Netherlands. The design task extended over several domains, from city to detail, so that to arrive at an integrated solution it was necessary to work across the spatial levels of scale and participating disciplines. The desire to promote design quality by way of good commissioning practice was equally challenging, given that there were three commissioners: Stichting Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (Foundation Rijksmuseum Amsterdam), the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Rijksgebouwendienst (Government Buildings Agency; Rgd) – at the time part of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment.

The Rijksmuseum project brought the worlds of heritage preservation and modern architecture together and perhaps they could learn from one another:

How can the important cultural-historical values be rediscovered and preserved and how can the building be simultaneously turned into a contemporary museum? . . . The modernizing aspect may lie in the way back:

the desire to reintroduce Cuypers and his decoration into the building and to reverse most of the later changes (based on building archaeological research).²

Commissioning

This book focuses on the design history of the Rijksmuseum, a tale of concepts, designs, debate, plan evaluation and decisions throughout the design process and preparations for the implementation. For the production of this book we spoke with dozens of the hundreds of people involved in the new Rijksmuseum – a sizeable, but arbitrary sampling. In almost every interview the complex and often difficult course of events came up. Oeke Hoogendijk's famous documentary series is eloquent on this point.³ Yet, every interview we conducted ended in satisfaction with the result. Wytze Patijn summed it up with a comment often heard in the construction industry: 'A wretched process with a good outcome.'⁴ That is striking. Does this almost euphoric reaction to the end result stem from relief that the project actually reached a conclusion? Have the successful reopening, the positive media coverage and the gratifying visitor numbers led to a closing of the ranks and allowed all those involved to feel like co-authors of this success? Or is the new Rijksmuseum a fine example of the 'Polder model', where each party can ultimately take pride in what it has managed to pull out of the fire for itself? There are many examples of positive Small Projects in the Rijksmuseum. For example, Cuypers' decorations were reinstated, the cycle path was saved, the garden was modernized, the collection acquired a contemporary setting and architecture and restoration achieved a high-quality finish.

The project started out with high ambitions:

By participating in concrete processes, the national government will also attempt to improve the organization of the construction and design processes. The question of who does what (in other words, the issue of decision-making) is perhaps the most important. It must become clear who the 'problem owner' is; generally this will be the commissioner.⁵

In the stubborn reality of the project it was not easy to live up to these ambitions. This was chiefly due to the complexity of the task, but also to the fact that there were three commissioners of equal standing and sometimes contradictory interests. In 2006 there was a change in the management of the Rijksmuseum project. The Rgd took on the role of commissioner for the renovation and in turn worked for the Rijksmuseum and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.⁶

The search for a division of roles between the state and the increasingly independently operating government departments and state museums was very topical around the turn of the millennium. For the Rgd this meant assuming the role of a commercial landlord who rented state-owned property to the government. The Rijksmuseum for its part felt that it was just as much the 'owner' of the museum building, which was after all intimately interrelated with the collection. From the museum's perspective, the Rgd was dominating the renovation. The museum directors were determined to set their stamp on the renovation as well. For example, during the design process in 2004, the Rijksmuseum decided, virtually of its own accord, to engage an interior architect whose design undermined the integrated plan of the chief architect. The light-coloured museum galleries conceived by Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos made way for the colour scheme of Wilmotte & Associés. The Spanish architects were understandably upset, but this did little to change the situation. To avoid having constantly to disrupt and hold up the construction

process, once the shell was completed the Rgd introduced a period during which the Rijksmuseum could carry out various minor and major adjustments along with the rest of the fitting out. Prompted by a desire to keep the construction process manageable, this resulted in changes to work that had in some instances just been completed. Not only were parts of Cruz y Ortiz's design modified, but even certain hard-fought restoration decisions were overturned. The Aduard Chapel disappeared behind a 'box-in-a-box construction' and carefully restored vaulting and exposed construction traces in the basement were whitewashed. As consolation for the heritage authorities, all these changes are reversible, but the compromise about how to deal with Cuypers' legacy in the interior, in which the Rijksmuseum, too, had long taken part, gradually disappeared.

In 2002, at the time of the Preliminary Design (PD), it was assumed that the renovation would take three years, with the museum reopening in 2008. Instead the museum was closed for almost ten years, reopening in 2013. The causes for the delay include an underestimation of the complexity of the intervention (such as the extensive and complicated below-grade works), interests and organization, the issue of the entrance in the passageway and the failed tendering of the main building. The design pushed the boundaries of what was possible, both in the physical foundations and in the many preconditions. With a certain optimism people no doubt thought that the original planning should be attainable, but every setback immediately resulted in delay.

One consequence of the long lead time was that the creation of the new Rijksmuseum exceeded the average shelf life of the administrators and directors. During the life of the project the country was run by a succession of seven governments.⁷ Including the preparatory phase (Ruijsenaars' 1996 plan), the Rijksmuseum had three directors who devoted themselves to the renovation: Henk van Os, Ronald de Leeuw and Wim Pijbes.⁸ Five Chief Government Architects and three programme directors were involved in the actual renovation of the Rijksmuseum.⁹ Which all goes to show how difficult it was to sustain the ambitions of the design and the collaboration of all the parties involved.

Apart from time, money and collaboration, the quality of the design process can also be expressed in terms of support for the decision-making. In 2000, State Secretary Van der Ploeg emphasized the importance of the public debate about the significance and purpose of the Rijksmuseum:

The new Rijksmuseum will set many tongues wagging. About the role of history, about the role of the cyclist in the passageway, about the integrity of the monument. I expect the Rijksmuseum to play an active role in this social debate.¹⁰

Accordingly, a round table discussion was organized and a number of writers and filmmakers were invited to write an essay giving their personal view of the Rijksmuseum.¹¹ In addition, an international reconnaissance of European museums was organized (chiefly among decision-makers and politicians). A social debate certainly took place, but not exactly as envisaged. To what extent the essays influenced the design is impossible to say, except that there is no reference to them in the design explanations.

Design Quality

As already mentioned, a central theme of the Major Projects of 2000 was the ambition to improve design quality and to deploy the design early on in the planning process in order, among other things, to help to define the task more

precisely. This meant that during the selection of the architects in 2001, the chief architect and restoration architect were given a lot of freedom in the formulation of a concept. The implicit expectation was that all parties would rally behind the winning design and that the basic principles would emerge in part from the design instead of vice versa. This approach, which had proved successful for infrastructural works like the southern high-speed train line, turned out not to work so well in the case of the Rijksmuseum. There were several reasons for this. To begin with, the division of roles between the chief architect and restoration architect had not been clearly defined beforehand and their ideas about the building and the restoration diverged. A second point was the handling of the basic principles and the evaluation framework for the heritage permit, which could not be inferred from the design concept. The same applied to the urban design preconditions. Finally, the chief architect was chosen mainly for his plan for the entrance, but at the time it was not at all clear what should happen with crucial tasks such as the historical interior, the gardens, the connection with the city or the technical implementation. This was not the fault of the architects since they had been asked to present a concept and an attractive perspective, not a fully worked out design. But the integrated concept design was lacking at the moment when the chief architect was given responsibility not only for the architectural design but also for the restoration plan, the garden layout and the museum interior.

Chief Architect versus Restoration Architect

The collaboration between the chief architect and the restoration architect was in the case of the Rijksmuseum an arranged marriage. This formula had been used before by the Rgd and dated from the time when new construction and restoration were separate activities and architects specialized in one or the other métier. In recent decades, however, the domain of restoration has increasingly been subsumed in architecture and vice versa. Interventions in heritage buildings are less and less about creating a contrast between old and new than about achieving a symbiosis. The restoration plan and the architectural plan coincide; at most, specific know-how relating to the restoration process and technology is obtained from restoration specialists who are part of the team of architects.

In the case of the Rijksmuseum, especially in light of the choice of a foreign chief architect, experience from Dutch construction and restoration practice was essential in order to be able to tackle the task and the implementation. For the Spanish architects, however, this was a completely new way of doing things. There was a split commission with a division of tasks and responsibilities but the demarcation had not been worked out in detail and in addition there was an overlap in the task as presented to the chief architect and restoration architect at the time of the invited competition. Communication was difficult. Up to and including the PD, Cruz y Ortiz and Van Hoogevest Architecten worked alongside one another, each with their own restoration plan. There were no major differences as far as the exterior was concerned, but their ideas regarding the interior and how to deal with the decorative schemes inside Cuypers' building differed widely. In this respect the chief architect's restoration ideas did not correspond to those of the restoration architect and the heritage authorities. In this instance, however, delays in the process had a favourable effect. Extra time allowed for extra research, such as the historical colour research carried out by Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (Foundation Restoration Studio Limburg; SRAL). Thanks to SRAL's work, which was conducted as an educational project involving a variety of students, Cuypers' colours were brought to light once more and compromises could be found for

the approach to the interior. It also served to highlight the interior characteristics of Cuypers' building. Another positive consequence of the delay was that a productive division of work between the chief architect and the restoration architect eventually emerged, which allowed the façades and the courtyards in particular to be preserved and restored with great precision.

Heritage Authorities

In the architecture memorandum of 2000 and in the invitation to the restoration architects it was stated that archaeological building research would be carried out in the preliminary phase and that further consultation was necessary with the City of Amsterdam. Neither of these things had taken place, however, when the architect selection took place in 2001. At this early stage, therefore, it was unclear what the new Rijksmuseum could expect in the sphere of heritage preservation and urban design. Archaeological building research works towards an evaluation in which the heritage values are spelled out and this provides a basis for design decisions and for developing an assessment framework for the granting of a heritage permit. Generally speaking, insight into the historical building and its unique qualities develops in part during the course of the work, when the building has been dismantled and revealed its secrets. This means that a design and restoration plan needs to be flexible enough to allow it to be refined and modified along the way. Both Chief Government Architect Coenen and Cruz y Ortiz indicated repeatedly that they did not think such building archaeological research was necessary. In their view Cuypers had already been sufficiently researched.

The design was completed before any verdict had been given on the building's specific heritage qualities. Cruz y Ortiz proposed a restoration of the spatial organization of the building, but in a modernist manner whereby the historical interiors – from the museum galleries up to and including the courtyards – would make way for light interiors. This way of thinking was out of step with common heritage practice in the Netherlands, which is to cherish the history of a heritage building, by retaining historical fragments and traces, for example, and where possible making them visible. The project organization established a Heritage Forum made up of architects and heritage experts, tasked with advising on how to deal with elements that emerged in the course of the dismantling and renovation work. Not that there was much room to manoeuvre any more. In the principles drawn up for the renovation it had already been established that historical layers added post-Cuypers (up to 2000) would be removed altogether. For the restoration a compromise was reached whereby Cuypers' decorations would be retained and above all reconstructed in a number of spaces and that all other building traces and fragments would be covered up or removed. At the insistence of the heritage authorities and private organizations, the archaeological building research was eventually carried out at a late stage, in accordance with an experimental approach of the Rgd. Although there was no longer any chance of basing the design on the results of the investigation, this did give the review bodies a frame of reference with which to assess the design. The research was primarily encyclopaedic and descriptive. The results provided useful information for the implementation at the level of the detail. The crucial design decisions had already been made, however, before the research began. The heritage authority's task was consequently limited to reviewing and researching. There was no possibility of playing a strategic role in the process as advocated in the *Nota Belvedere* (Belvedere Memorandum) and later in the 'Beleidsbrief Modernisering Monumentenzorg' (Heritage protection policy paper on modernization, 2009).¹²

Urban Design

Prior to the architect selection, the city council's position was that the passageway should be turned into a public space as an extension of Museumplein and the entrance to the museum.¹³ By choosing Cruz y Ortiz's design, the selection committee was taking a bit of a risk, because placing the entrance in the passageway implied that the public space beneath the building had been more or less annexed by the museum. But this public space – complete with barrel organ and street musicians – did have significance in the collective memory of the city.¹⁴ In the elaboration of the PD, it was suggested that the passageway be closed off with glass revolving doors and glass walls. Only the cycle path along the side would remain open and publicly accessible. This decision was motivated by the need to introduce a climate separation between inside and outside, but it was certainly not the intention to execute the ramps to the entrance zone as glass 'bus shelters'. There was little choice other than to incorporate the passageway into the interior. However, the retention of the cycle path resulted in an unsightly long glass wall, which is why Chief Government Architect Coenen and others argued in favour of removing the cycle path and installing glass doors in all the gateways. This idea had previously been put forward by Wim Quist, and Hans Ruijsenaars had also incorporated the passage into his 1996 master plan in the form of an urban foyer (and event venue). The conflict over the passageway ultimately led not only to the retention of the cycle route beneath the museum, but more especially to the retention of the passageway as public space in the city. Despite years of irritation with the museum's abysmal entrances, the design was unable to change the urban design significance of the gateway and the passageway. The solution was found in locating the entrance at the side of the passageway and incorporating the climate separation – quite logically – into the windows between the courtyards and the passageway. Cuypers would have endorsed this solution.

Interior

Whereas the dispute about the passageway was widely covered in de media, the interior design led to a discussion that was primarily conducted internally, among designers, commissioners and plan evaluators. From the heritage authority's perspective, this discussion was about the decorations, building traces and building elements, like the brickwork vaulting ('Back to Cuypers'). For the museum the dilemma was a presentation of the twenty-first century ('Continue with Cuypers'), with Cruz y Ortiz's ideas in the main building being exchanged for Wilmotte's vision. Museum director De Leeuw sought where possible for harmony between building and collection, for example by presenting nineteenth-century art on the eastern part of the ground floor where Cuypers' original painted decoration could also have been displayed. He eventually relinquished this idea out of practical considerations: by keeping the interior and the display separate, the museum would be able to use the space more flexibly. Under his successor Pijbes the guiding principle of a chronological (serpentine model) presentation was abandoned and replaced by an elective model because it was considered unlikely that visitors would look at the entire collection in chronological order.

The realized interior does not provide the total concept of the earliest plans, but a collage of signatures: Cuypers, Cruz y Ortiz and Wilmotte. But thanks to the design by Cruz y Ortiz it has become 'unity in diversity'. The museum did not get the serenity desired by the Spanish architects, but it gained space for a dynamic presentation, reinforced by the ubiquitous visitors who have a substantial influence on the contemplation of art nowadays. It is to be expected that the lifecycle of

pages 266-267: Aerial photograph of the reopened Rijksmuseum complex, with the South Wing still covered by scaffolding.

these interiors will differ. Although it has been established that old art is best seen against a darker background, Wilmotte's shades of grey will undoubtedly be painted over by a future museum director. Cuypers' cathedral will probably survive. It represents the cultural-historical legacy of the nineteenth century as well as of the period around 2000, the time when there was a passionate debate about national identity.¹⁵ How the logistical interventions will fare is difficult to estimate. Owing to the relocation of the entrance, the original routing has lost some of its clarity; in particular, the space below the passageway and the routing from the entrance gateways to the museum galleries is no longer entirely logical. In theory it would be possible to implement Cruz y Ortiz's original entrance at a later stage. The problem will be to realize an effective climate separation between inside and outside if the passageway remains open.

Back to the result. The Rijksmuseum experience shows that the leap in the dark of an appealing design has finally delivered a good result, but in its realization it ran up against the exalted heritage qualities of the museum and the many interests involved. In the absence of fully crystallized urban design and cultural history principles a design evolved that later came under considerable pressure precisely on those points. Essential elements of Cruz y Ortiz's design, such as the central entrance and large parts of the museum interior, were not realized. The Major Project eventually materialized in the form of several Small Projects, all with interesting results, such as the reconstruction of Cuypers, the new entrance hall, the gardens, the interiors by Wilmotte and the circumspect restoration of the exterior. This gave rise to a building with the variation and diversity of a city, while also strengthening the national and international iconographic value of the museum. The preliminary design process was long and complex. But the sting was in the head: after the reorganization of the process structure in 2006, the design was relatively quickly completed. The unsuccessful tendering was the catalyst for a new beginning and from 2008 onwards the project was completed without delays, cost overruns or accidents. It shows that the real challenge of this Major Project laid not only in the museum techniques or the underground engineering works, but also in the collaboration of all concerned. If there is a lesson to be learned from the new Rijksmuseum, it is that there is a challenge for the future in the social, economic and cultural dimension of designing.



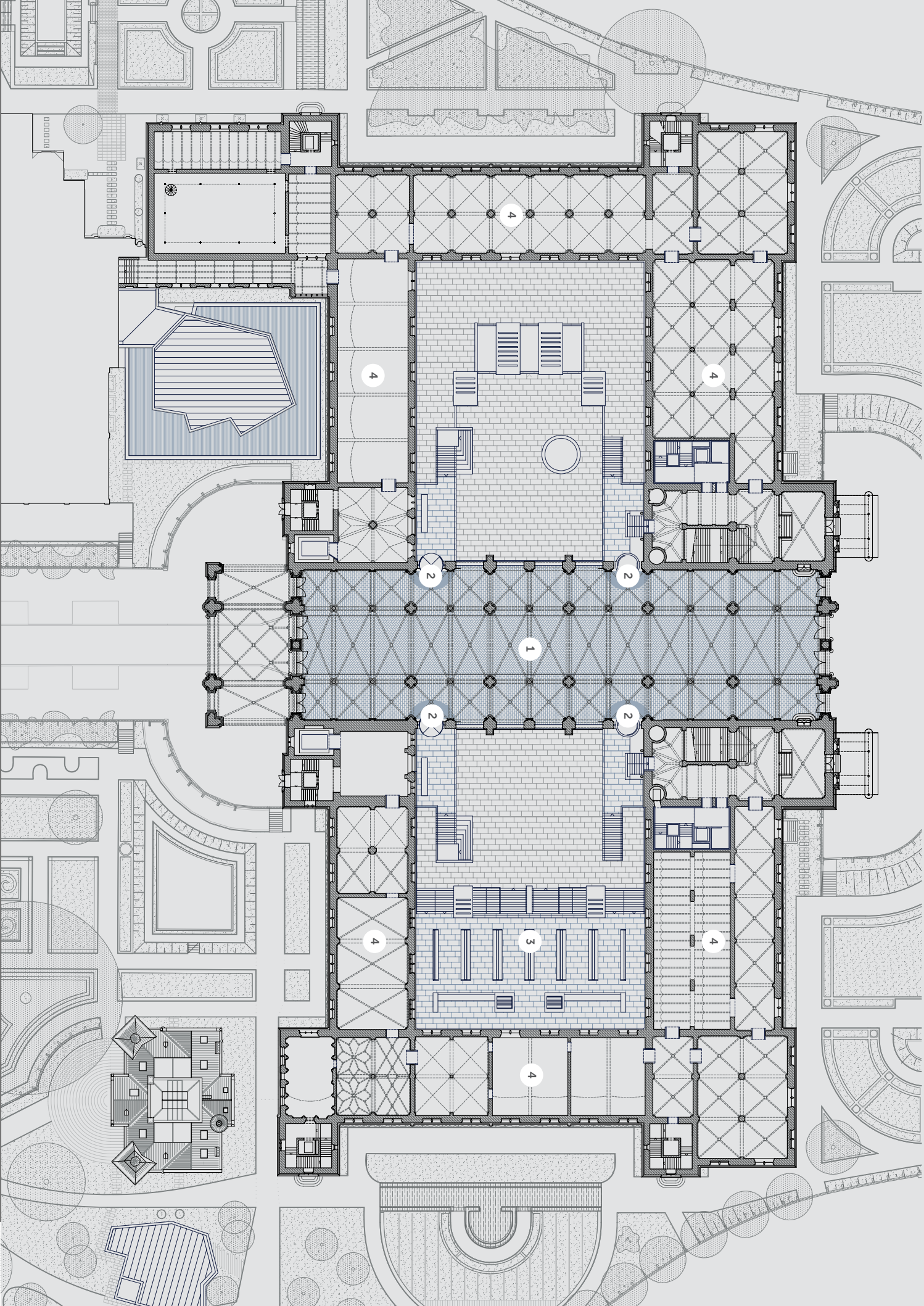


Main Building

Southern

- 1 Information desks
- 2 Ticket sales desk
- 3 Cloakroom
- 4 Access to exhibition galleries
- 5 Museum shop
- 6 Toilets
- 7 Exhibition galleries
- 8 Entrance Building
- 9 Asian Pavilion
- 10 South Wing





Ground Floor

- 1 Passageway
- 2 Museum entrance
- 3 Café
- 4 Exhibition galleries

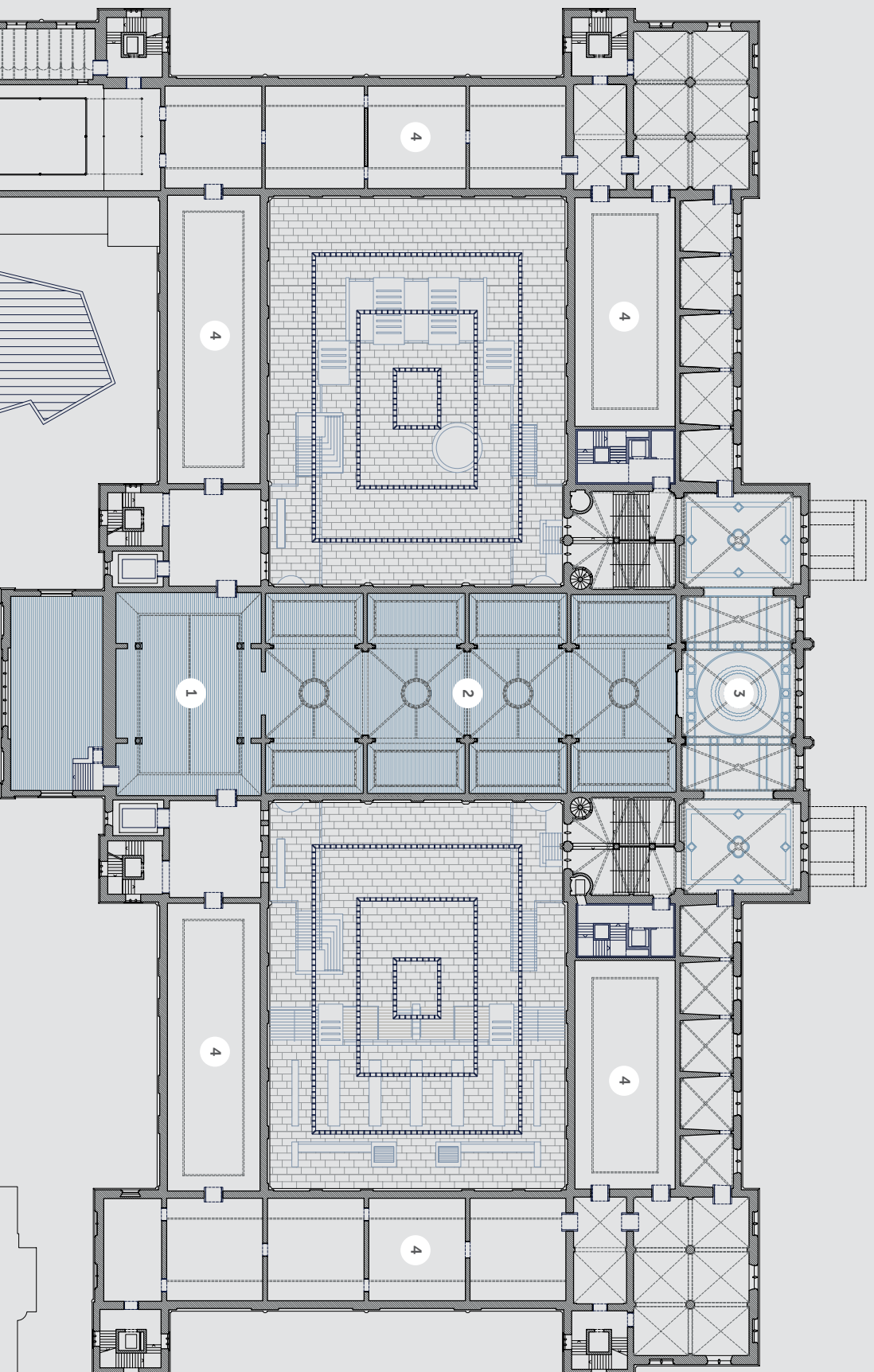
Floor Plans and Sections

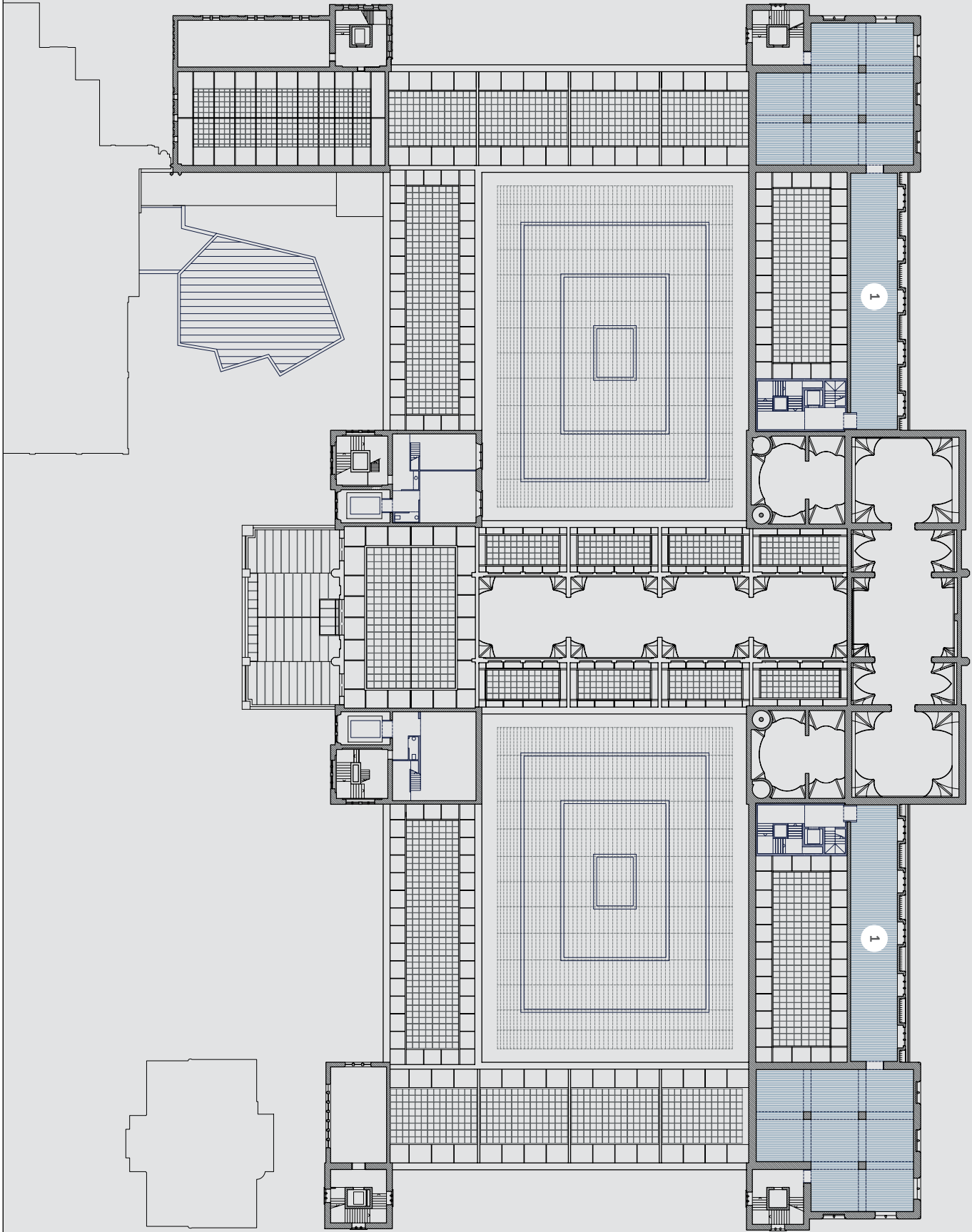
Cruz y Ortiz

Main Building

Main Floor

- 1 Night Watch Gallery
- 2 Gallery of Honour
- 3 Great Hall
- 4 Exhibition galleries





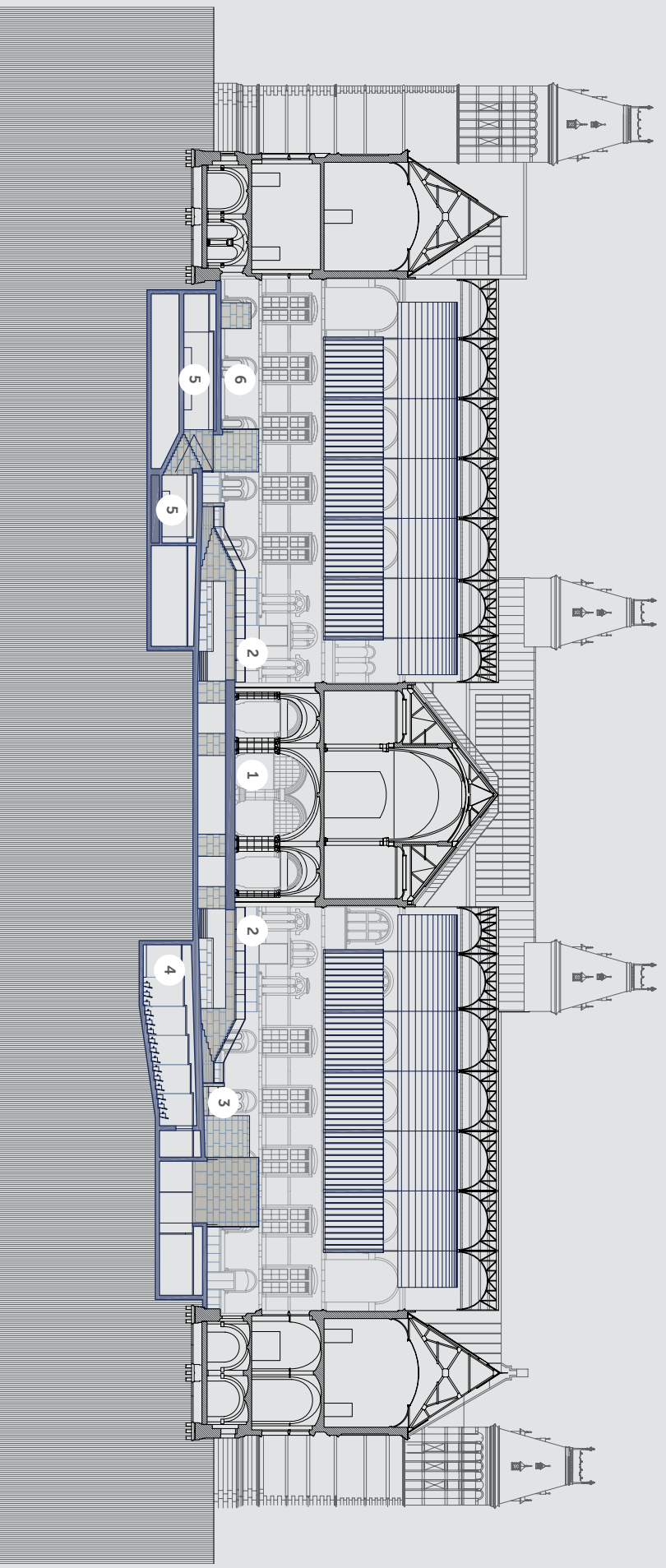
Attic

1 Exhibition galleries

Main Building

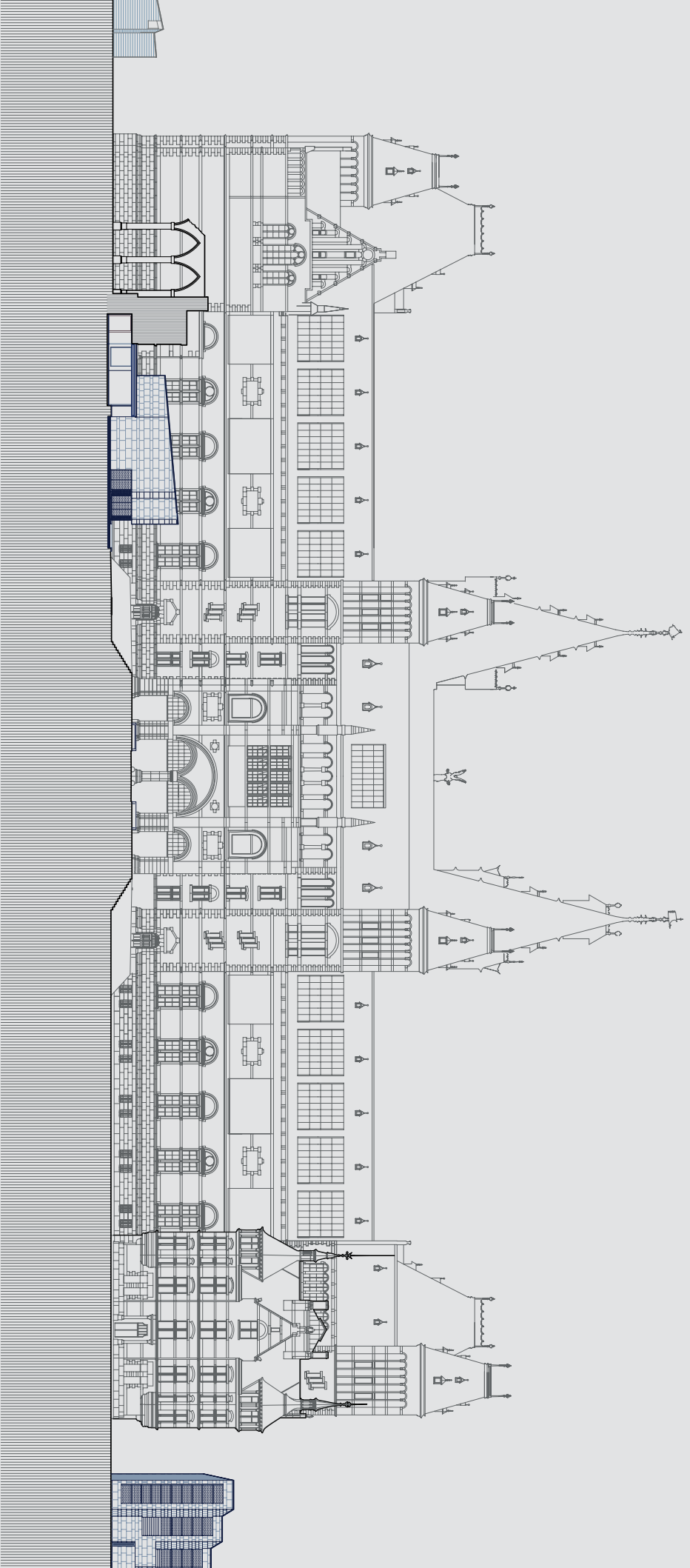
East-West Section

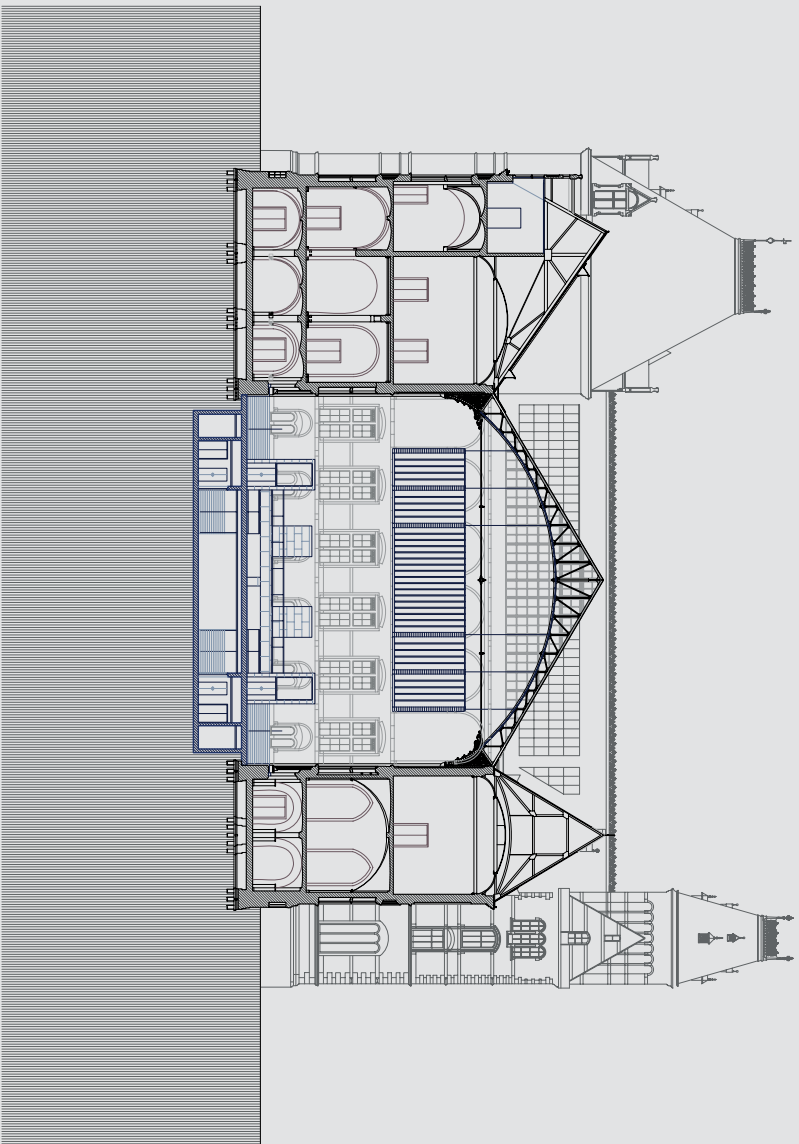
- 1 Passageway
- 2 Museum entrance
- 3 Access to exhibition galleries
- 4 Auditorium
- 5 Museum shop
- 6 Café

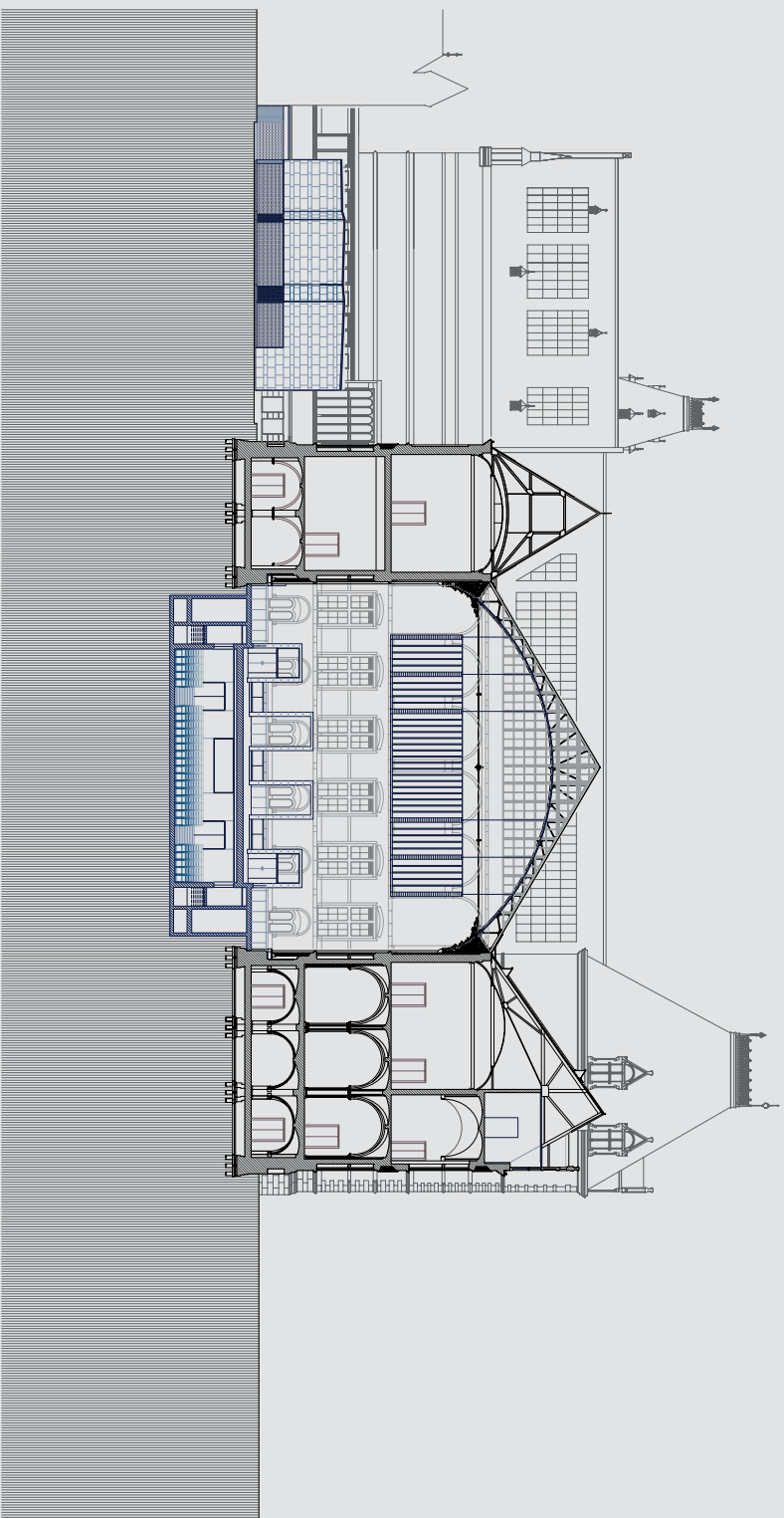




South Façade



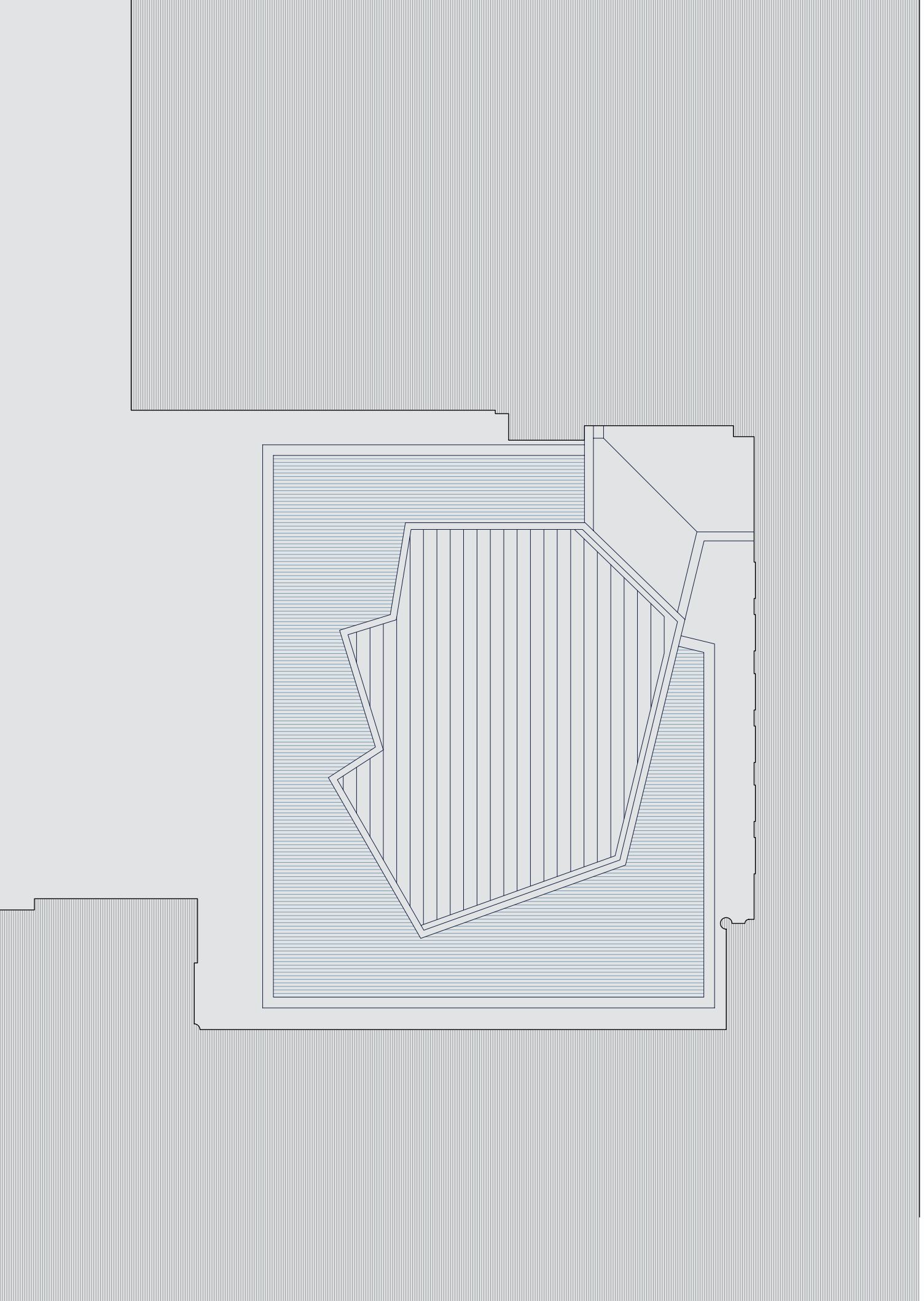




West-East Section

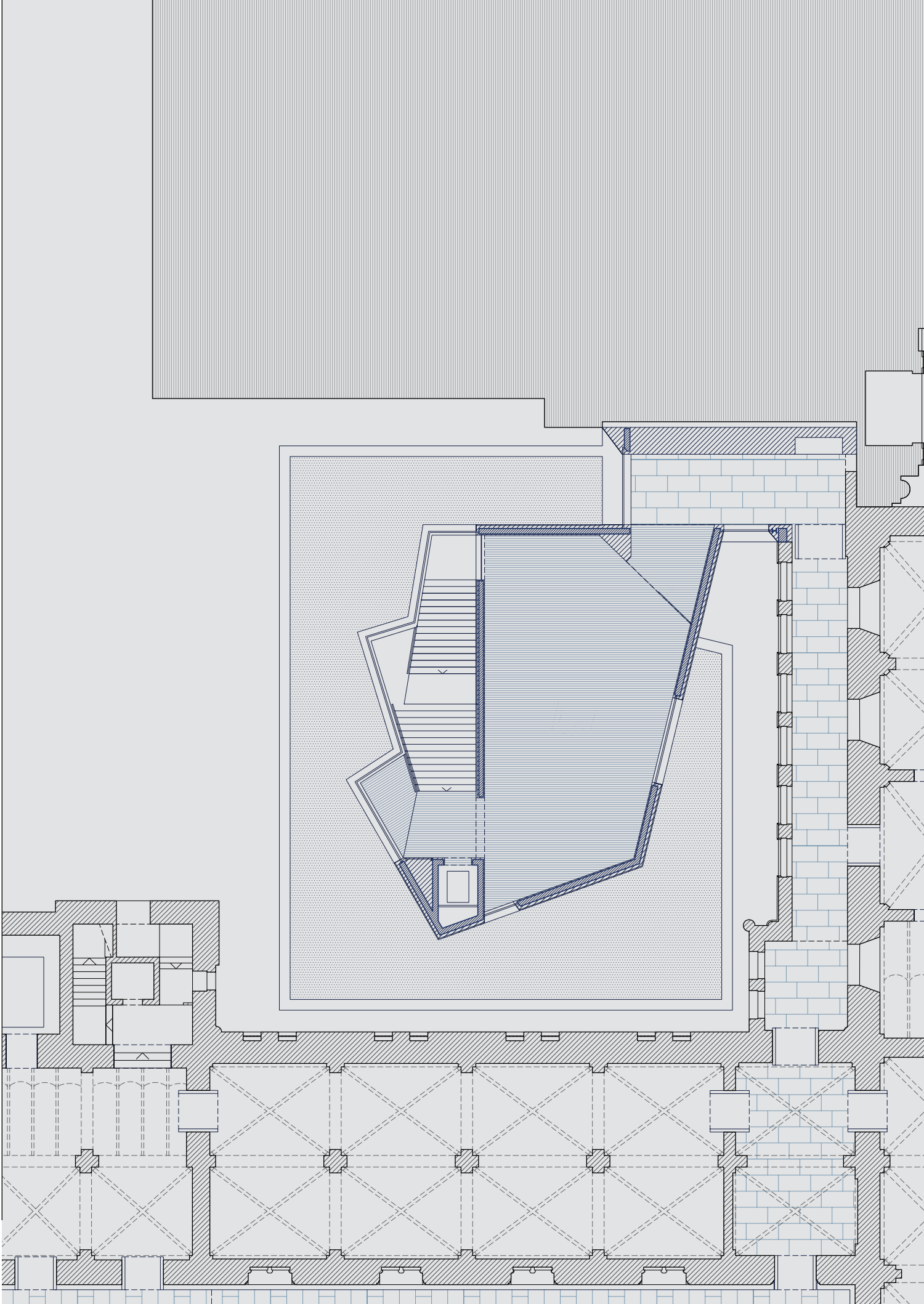
Asian Pavilion

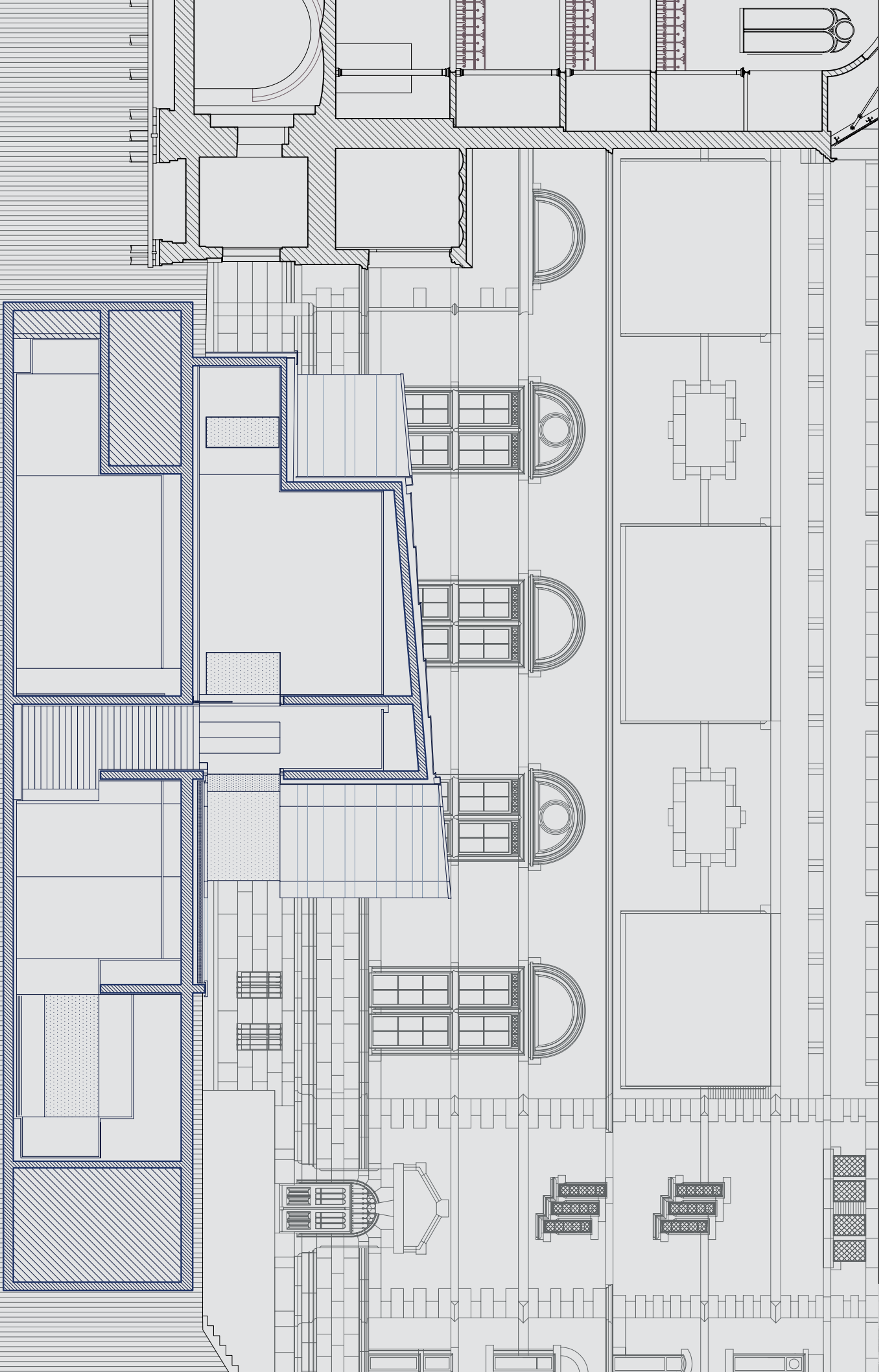
Cross-Section





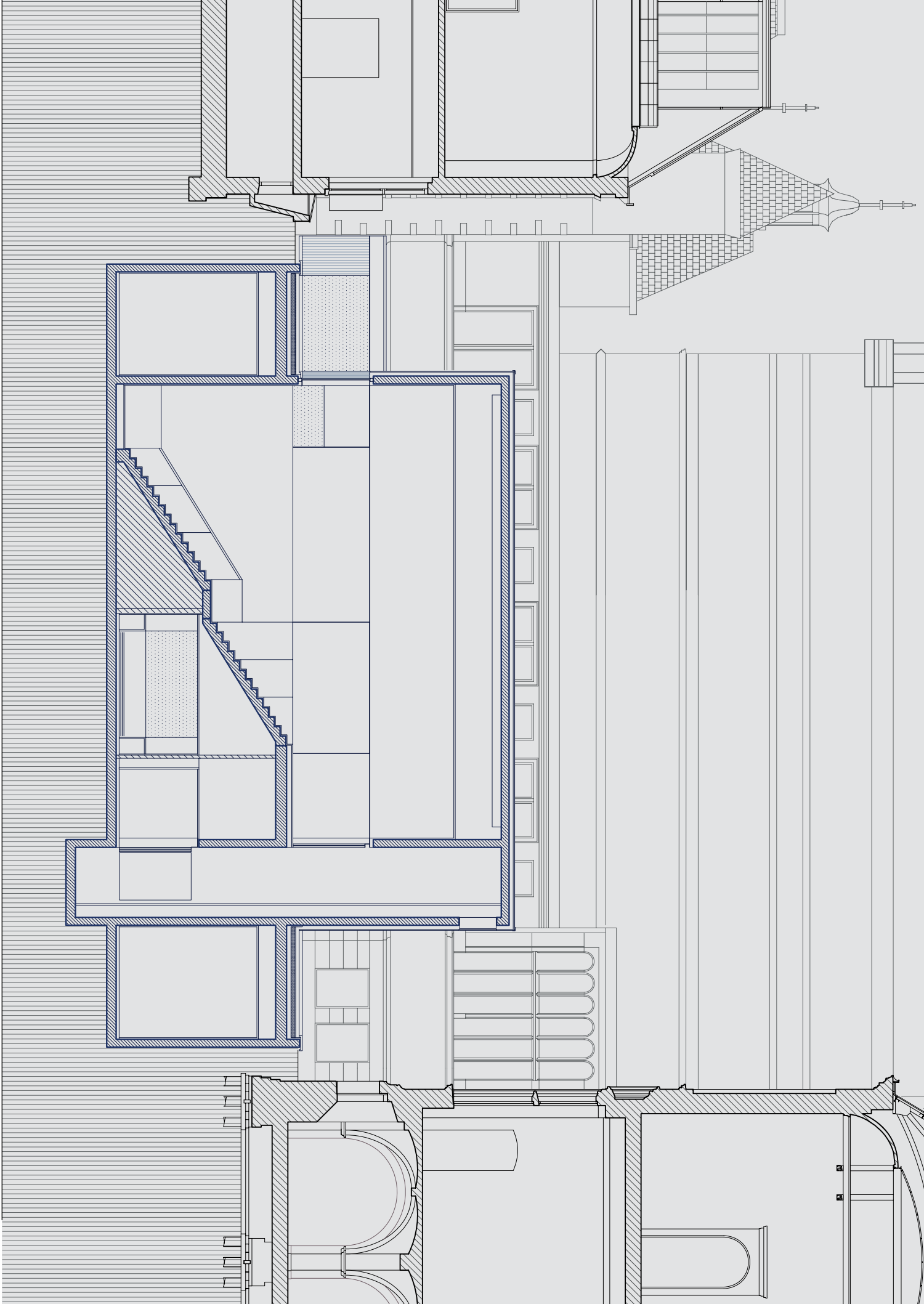
Southern





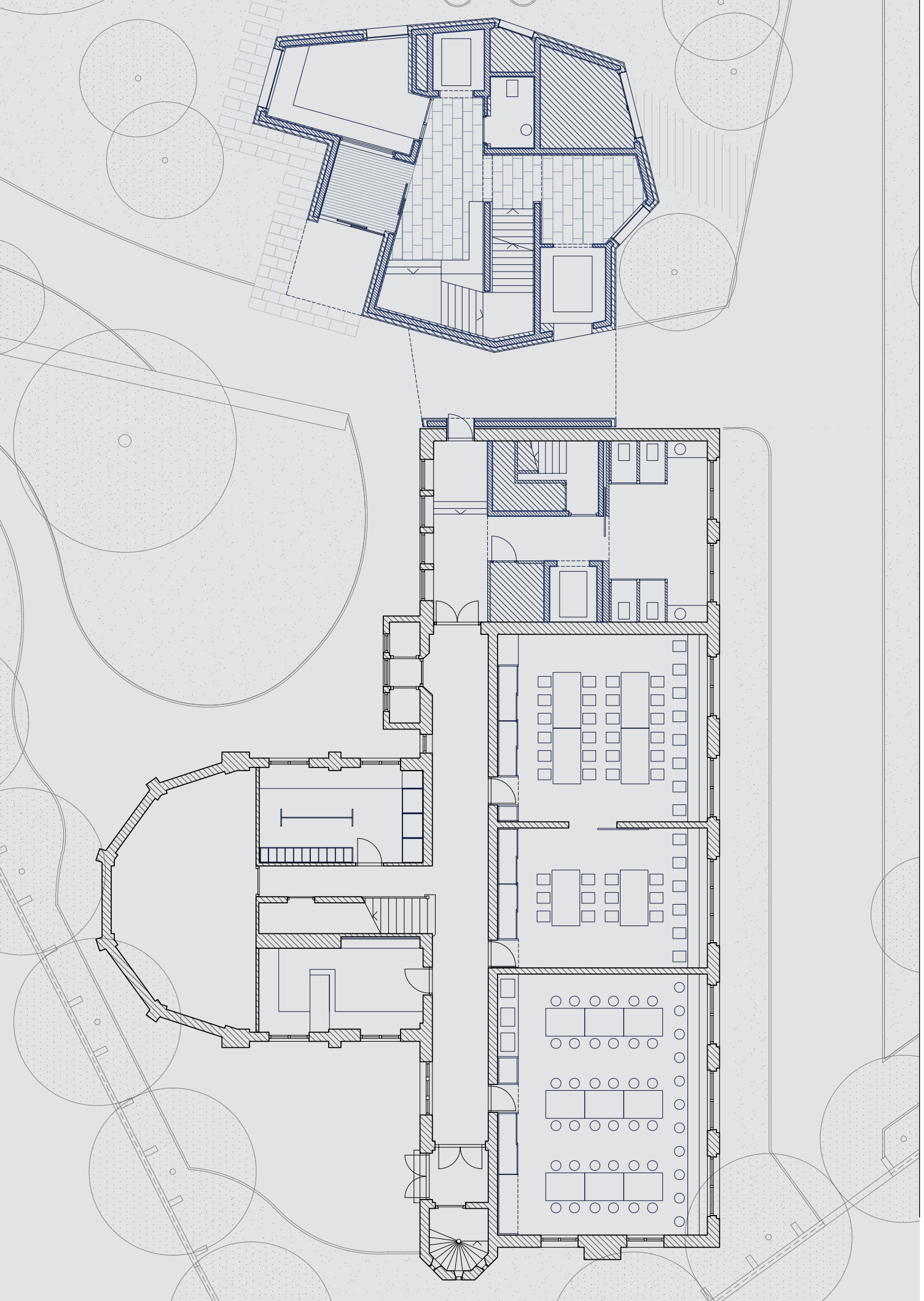
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Longitudinal Section



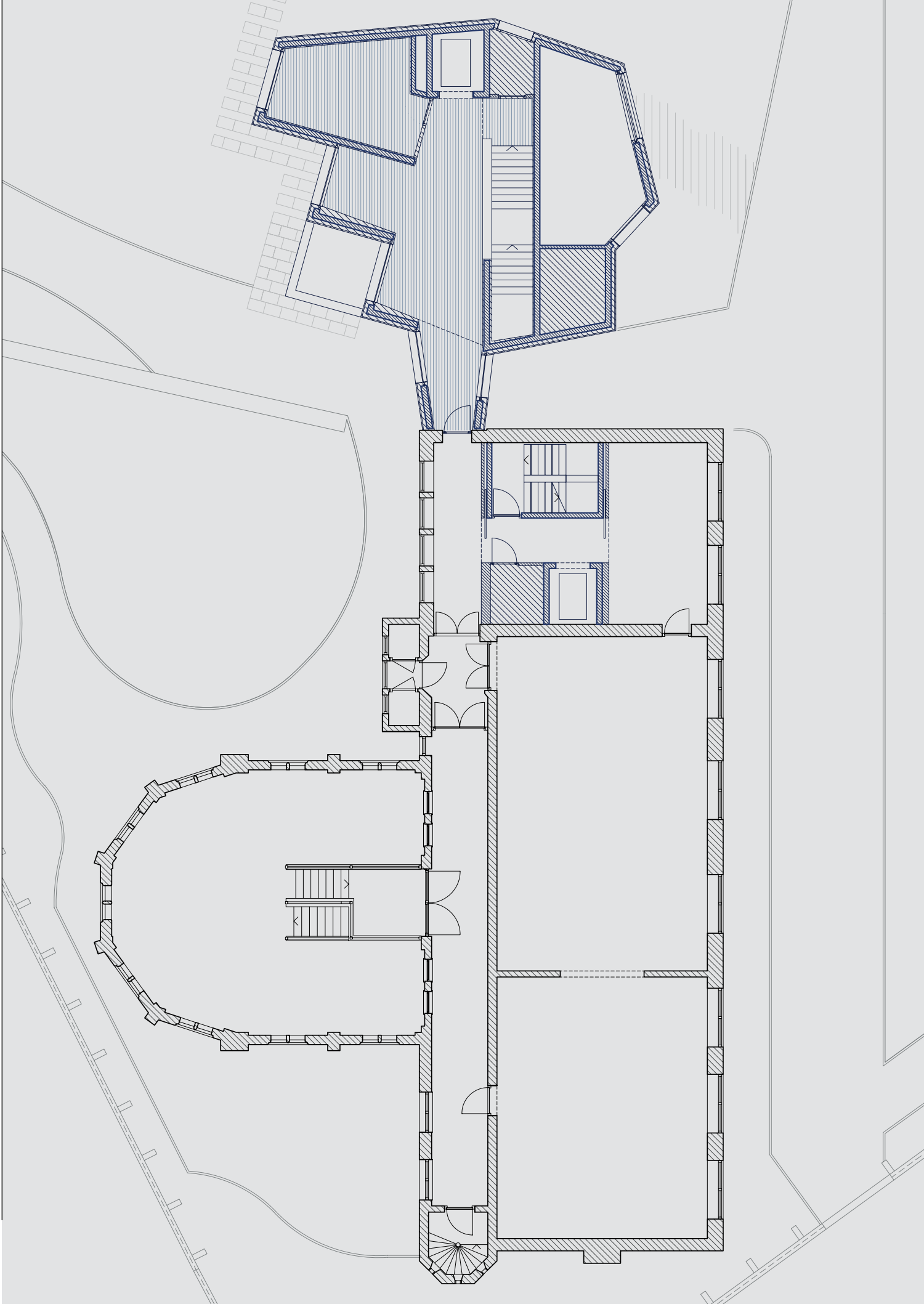
Entrance Building and Teekenschool (Drawing School)

Ground Floor



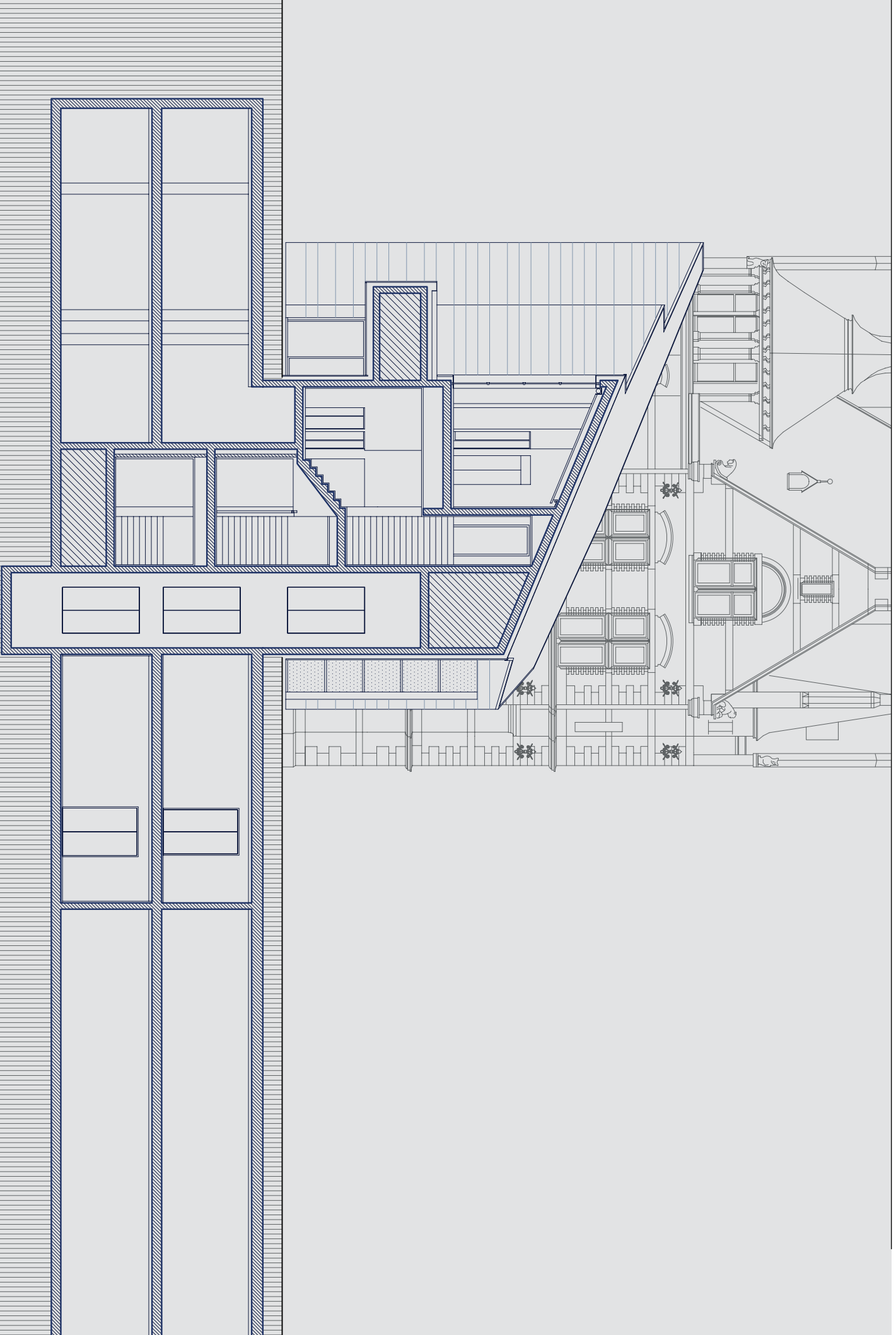
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Main Floor



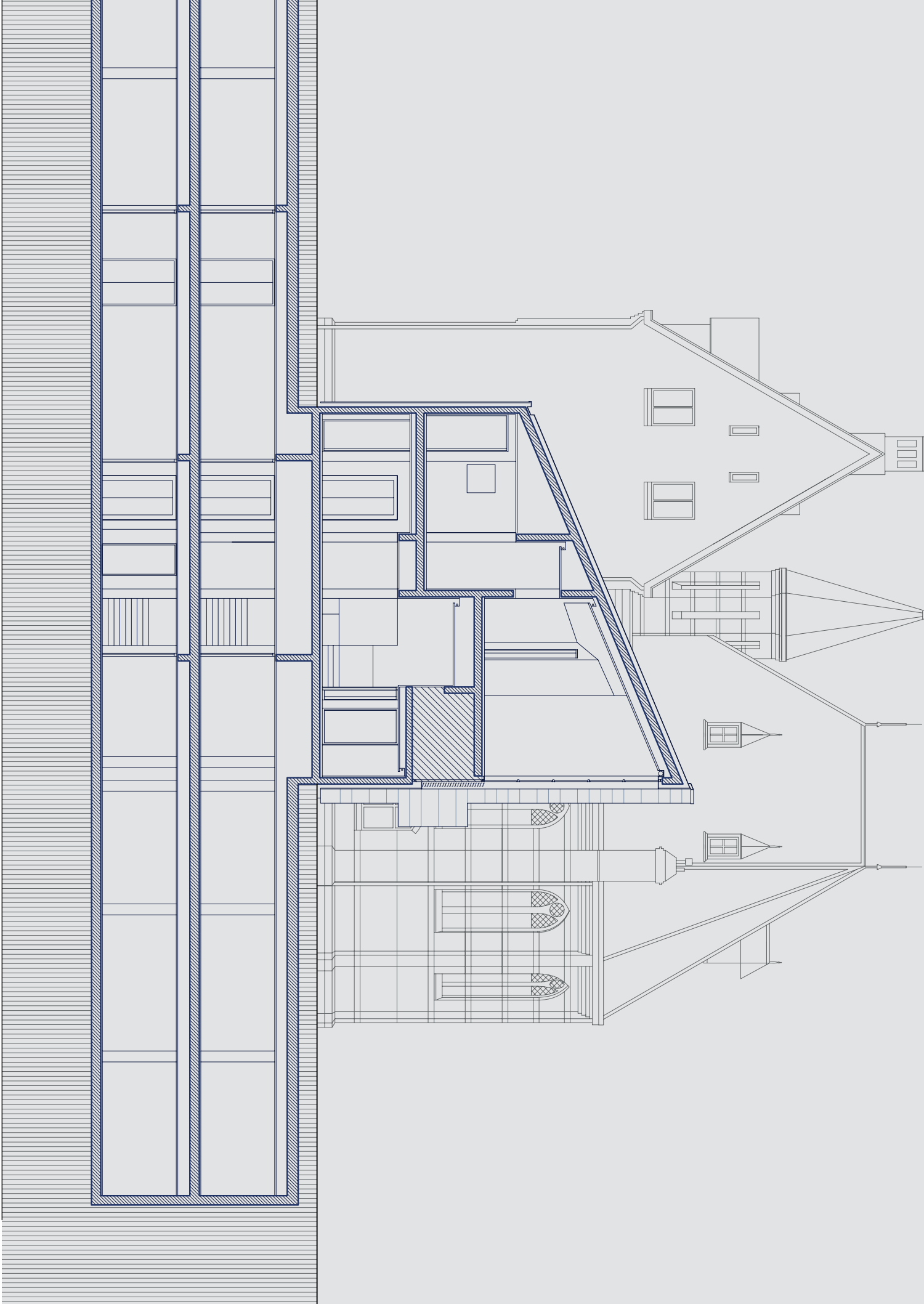
Entrance Building and
Teekenschool (Drawing School)

Cross-Section



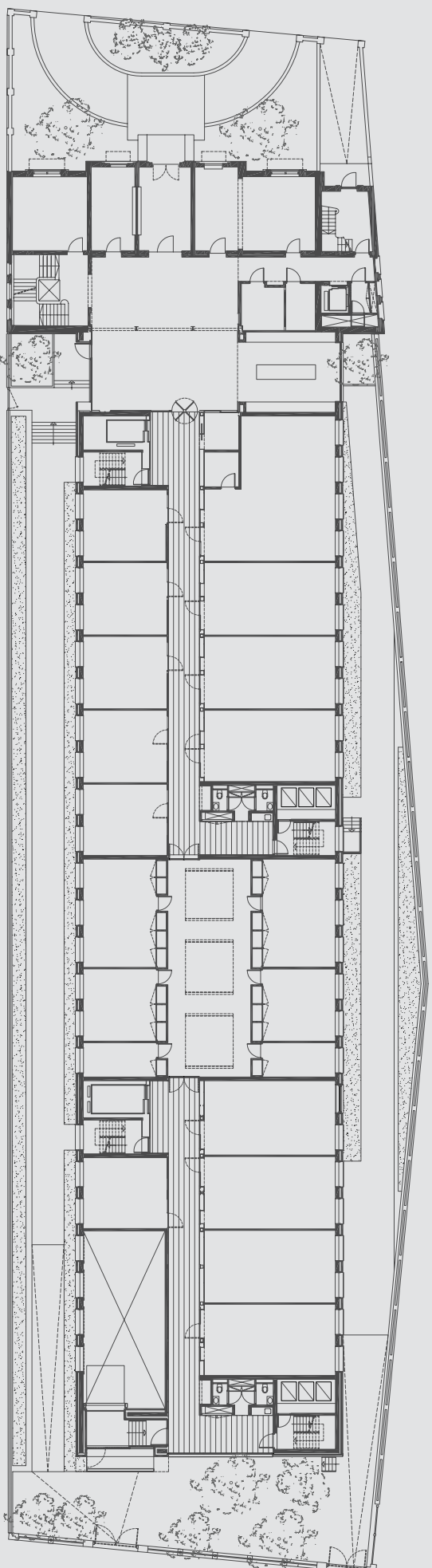


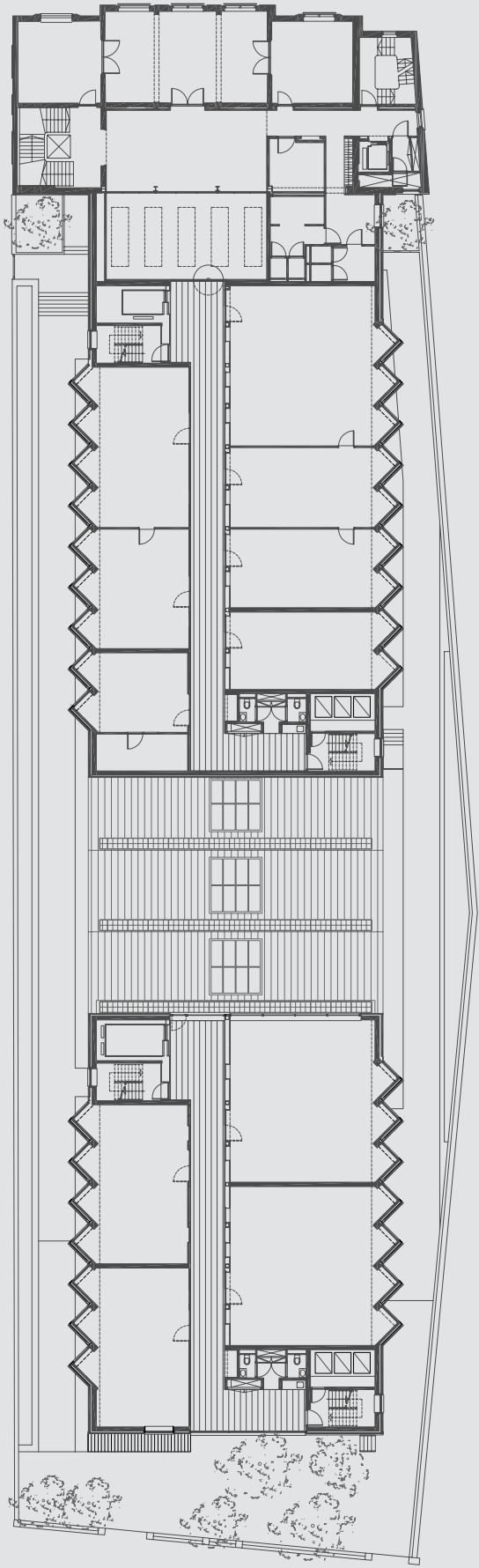
Longitudinal Section



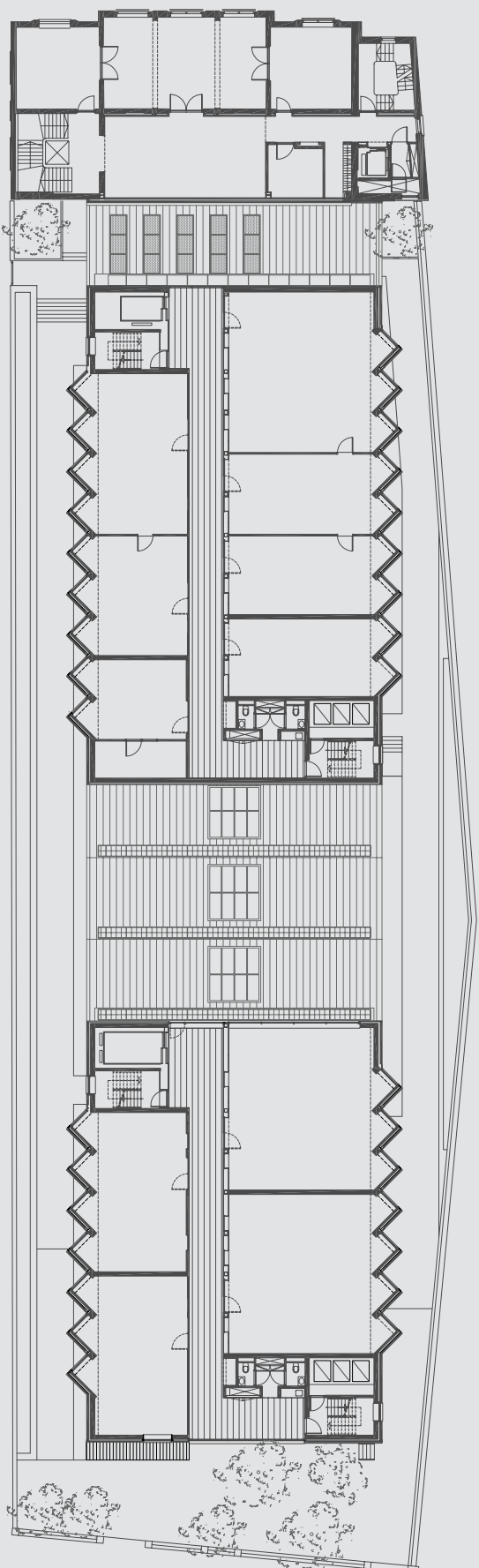
Atelier Building

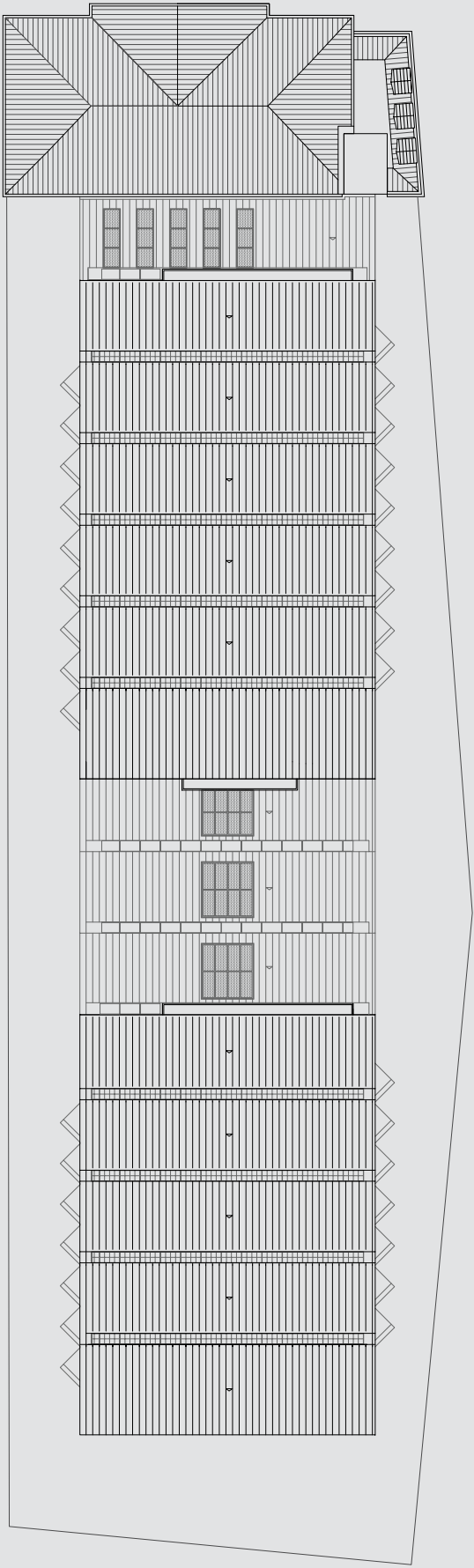
Ground Floor



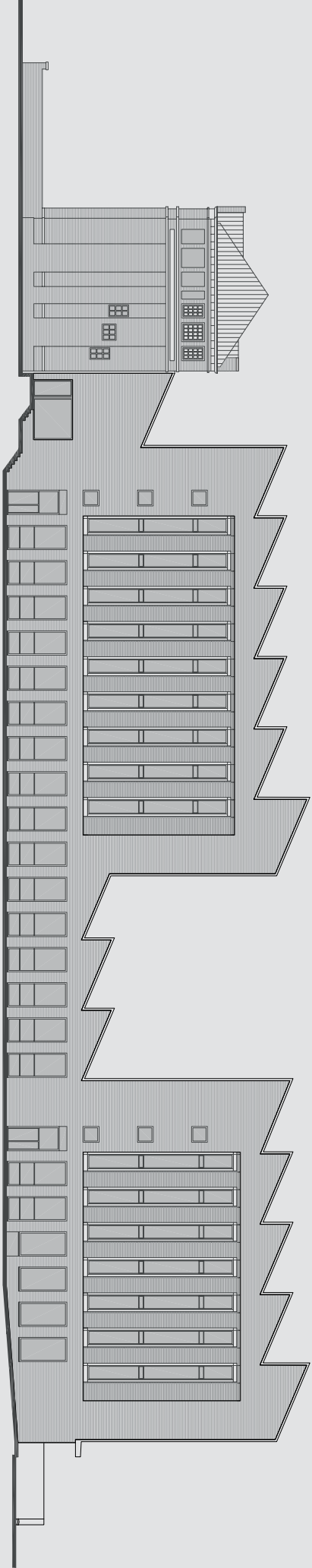


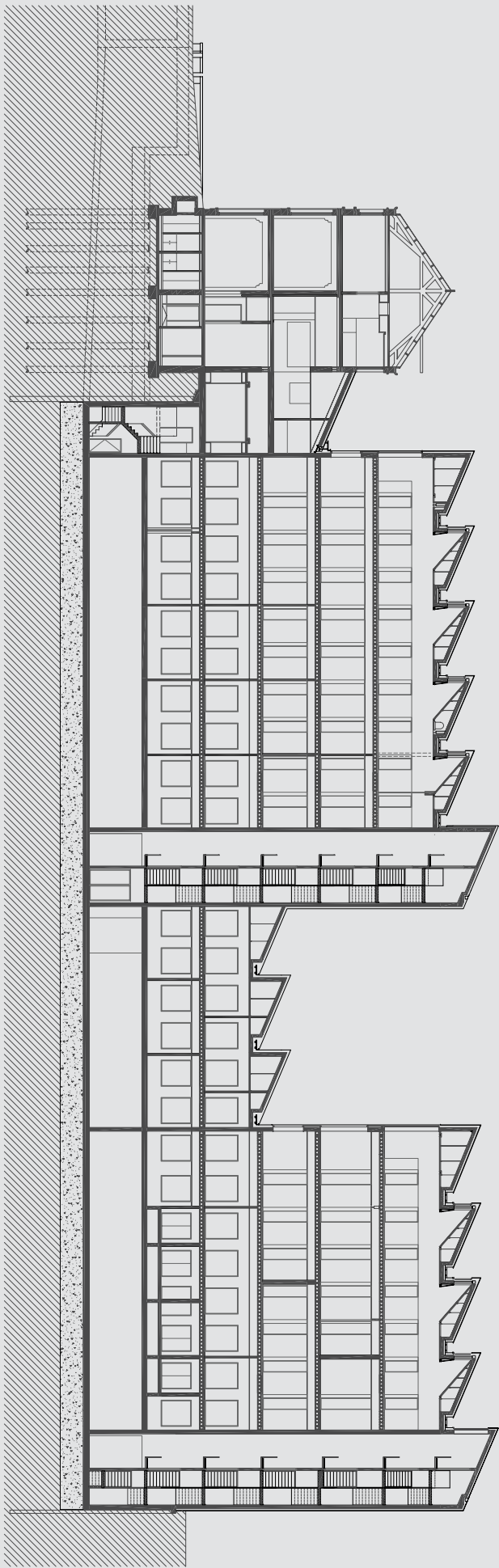
First Floor





Third Floor





Longitudinal Section

Foreword

- 1 Meurs and Van Thoor 2010

Introduction

- 1 Letter from State Secretary for Culture, F. van der Ploeg, to parliament, dated 19 September 2000.
- 2 Quoted in 'Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum', memo Directie Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, September 2000.
- 3 *Ontwerpen aan Nederland. Architectuurbeleid 2001-2004*, (Designing the Netherlands. Architectural Policy 2001-2004) a memorandum published jointly by the then ministries of OC&W, VROM, V&W and LNV, The Hague 2000, p. 15.
- 4 Published in 2000, see Spijkerman 2000.

1 Design and Context

- 1 This article is an edited summary of the author's PhD research: Oxenaar 2009, in particular chapters 7, 8 and 11.
- 2 Drawings in Cuypers Archive (The New Institute, formerly NAI). Explanatory memorandum in the King Willem I Museum Archive (Stadsarchief Amsterdam).
- 3 Sketch in a letter from Cuypers to Alberdingk Thijm dated 27 February 1864. Thijm Archive (KDC), Nijmegen.
- 4 Pugin 1841 (1969), pp. 62-63.
- 5 Viollet-le-Duc 1863-1872, pp. 254-256.
- 6 On this competition see Veenland Heineman 1985, pp. 151-194.
- 7 Copy of the programme, part of a letter from the Minister of the Interior to Cuypers, dated 20 May 1875, Cuypers Archive, d1001 (The New Institute, formerly NAI).
- 8 For De Stuers' views on art education and the importance of drawing classes, see 'Iteretur decoctum' 1874, pp. 314-352, especially p. 336.
- 9 P.J.H. Cuypers, 'Concept Memorie van Toelichting bij het prijsvraagontwerp van 1875', n.p., n.d. (before 2 December 1875), Cuypers Archive, d1001 (The New Institute, formerly NAI).
- 10 On the typology of the museum building see, among many others: Wagner 1906; Plagemann 1967; Pevsner 1997; Bergvelt, Meijers and Reinders 2005.
- 11 J.A. Alberdingk Thijm, 'Ingezonden stuk' (letter to the editor), *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 30 December 1876.
- 12 Letter from the Minister of the Interior to Cuypers, dated 20 May 1875, Cuypers Archive, dossier 00903 (The New Institute, formerly NAI).
- 13 Wagner 1906, pp. 272-277.

- 14 Plagemann 1967, p. 196 ff.
- 15 Cuypers, Explanatory memorandum for 1875 competition design, Cuypers Archive, d1001 (The New Institute, formerly NAI).
- 16 Sketch in a letter from Cuypers to a fellow architect. Letter depicted in *Het Parool*, 22 September 1995. Present whereabouts unknown. Information kindly provided by Guido Hoogewoud.
- 17 On the test gallery, see the correspondence between Cuypers and the Minister of the Interior, dated 5 July 1879 and 31 October 1879. Cuypers Archive, d1001 (The New Institute, formerly NAI).
- 18 Explanatory memorandum for 1875 competition design, Cuypers Archive (The New Institute, formerly NAI).
- 19 Magnus 1864; Magnus 1866. For a comparison with the research by A. Tiede, see Wagner 1906, p. 289 ff.
- 20 See: Minister of the Interior to Cuypers, dated 17 October 1876; *Memorie van toelichting bij het gewijzigde ontwerp voor de Museum gebouwen te Amsterdam*, dated 18 April/ 31 May 1877, Cuypers Archive, d1001 (The New Institute, formerly NAI).
- 21 Weissman 1886.
- 22 This process is clearly shown in: Braat 1985.

2 Transformations of the Rijksmuseum

- 1 Van Schendel 1963, p. 1710.
- 2 M. van Rooy, 'Rijksmuseum volgens Ruijssenaars', in Spijkerman 2000, p. 28.
- 3 J.A. van der Hoeve and J. Kamphuis, *Het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam. Inventarisatie van de gebruiksgeschiedenis ten behoeve van het ontsluiten van diverse foto- en tekeningencollecties betreffende het Rijksmuseum*, Amsterdam/The Hague, 29 March 1996, p. 6.
- 4 'Prentenkabinet voorzien van een verlaagd plafond' from the 1898 annual report, quoted in *Het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam. Inventarisatie van de gebruiksgeschiedenis ten behoeve van het ontsluiten van diverse foto- en tekeningencollecties betreffende het Rijksmuseum*, p. 22.
- 5 See also Van der Ham 2000, p. 248.
- 6 Annual report for 1924. quoted in *Het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam. Inventarisatie van de gebruiksgeschiedenis ten behoeve van het ontsluiten van diverse foto- en tekeningencollecties betreffende het Rijksmuseum*, p. 24.
- 7 *Het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam. Inventarisatie van de gebruiksgeschiedenis ten behoeve van het ontsluiten van diverse foto- en tekeningencollecties betreffende het Rijksmuseum*, p. 11.
- 8 Van der Werf 1999, pp. 100-101.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 101.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 Van der Werf 2003, p. 204.
- 12 Röell 1955, p. 25.
- 13 This department was in fact a continuation of Cuypers' public agency for building and architecture.
- 14 Letter from P.J.H. Cuypers to V. de Stuers, no date (private archive, De Stuers, Vorden), quoted in Van der Ham 2000, p. 145.
- 15 For an illustration, see 'De variant A "Met geheel in beslag genomen doorrit", 31 januari 1967', in Van der Ham 2000, p. 340 (upper left).
- 16 Duparc 1975, p. 261.
- 17 *Het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam. Inventarisatie van de gebruiksgeschiedenis ten behoeve van het ontsluiten van diverse foto- en tekeningencollecties betreffende het Rijksmuseum*, p. 38.
- 18 Van der Woud 1999, p. 92.
- 19 H. Ruijssenaars, 'Schetsen', in Spijkerman 2000, p. 10.
- 20 M. van Rooy, 'Rijksmuseum volgens Ruijssenaars', in Spijkerman 2000, p. 50.
- 21 R. de Leeuw, *Het Rijksmuseum in de 21ste eeuw. Beleidvisie Masterplan Rijksmuseum Amsterdam*, Amsterdam 1998; *Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum, structuurplan 2000*, Government Buildings Agency (RGD), Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM), November 2000.
- 22 Quoted in *Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum, structuurplan 2000*, p. 4.
- 23 Management of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, 'Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum', September 2000, p. 8 (VHA).
- 24 F. van der Ploeg and J.W. Remkes in a letter to the chair of the lower house of Dutch parliament dated 19 September 2000 (RGDRBM, 9105).
- 25 *Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum. Structuurplan 2000*, p. 22.
- 26 Memorandum from P. van Exel to the Chief Government Architect (Rijksbouwmeester) dated 29 October 1999 (RGDRBM, 9105).
- 27 M. Mathijssen, 'Monoloog van een zelfportret', A.J.C. van Leeuwen, 'Van romantische illusie tot museum met toekomst' and A. van der Woud, 'Alles stroomt', in *The New Rijksmuseum. A Volume of Essays*, RGD-OC&W-Rijksmuseum March 2001, 5-6 (RGDRBM, 9090).

3 Continue with Cuypers

1 They were American Steven Holl (architect of the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki), Belgians Robbrecht & Daem (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam), Frenchman Paul Chemetov (Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris), Spaniard Rafael Moneo (Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Prado extension, Madrid) and Italian Giorgio Grassi (Roman theatre, Sagunto; Neues Museum, Berlin, first prize, first competition). Dutch firms on this list included MVRDV, Jo Coenen, Henket, Van Velzen, Benthem Crouwel and Cees Dam. Report of New Rijksmuseum discussions, dated 13 March 2000 (RGDRBM, 9109).

2 Van Hoogevest Architecten, Rappange & Partners Architecten, Braakma & Roos Architectenbureau, Verlaan en Bouwstra architecten, Architectenbureau J. van Stigt.

3 Coenen suggested father and son Baines (Brussels), Pieter Tauber (Alkmaar), Gunnar Daan, Hannie van Eyck and her daughter Tess Wickham-Van Eyck, Kasper Klever (Aachen) and Juan Navarro Baldeweg (Madrid). Memo from R. Apell (RBM) to members of Projectgroep Rijksmuseum, dated 27 November 2000 (RGDRBM, 9109). Apell informed Coenen that the Rgd (Rik Vos) was not happy with the proposal because these architects were not in the documentation database. He therefore advised Coenen to follow Wytze Patijn's list, augmented with two or three new names: 'The advantage of this is that the difference between the "conflict architects" and the slightly more conservative architects of your choice will be clearer during the presentation, so that a well-grounded choice can be made.' Fax from R. Apell to J. Coenen, dated 5 December 2000 (RGDRBM, 9109).

4 Cruz y Ortiz received this commission on 5 November 2001. Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos, *The New Rijksmuseum. Atelier Building, Final Design*, May 2003, (RGDPRO, 116136).

5 Coenen used this term in his lecture in Delft. See Coenen 2006.

6 'Rijksmuseum Architects' address list (n.d.). Beside Moneo: 'In consultation with R. de Leeuw, removed from the shortlist. 25 Sept. 2000.' Beside Koolhaas: 'proposed by Coenen, unacceptable for R. de Leeuw' (RGDRBM, 9107).

7 Letter from J. Coenen to all architects (also on behalf of the Rijksmuseum board and the Department of Education, Culture and Science), dated 28 November 2000, containing the brief, guiding principles, evaluation criteria,

background documents and timetable (RGDRBM, 9109).

8 Requested design proposals: integration of passageway and courtyards as entrance zone; link between main building and South Wing; auditorium and educational spaces; a 'typical' museum gallery with a few architectural details.

9 At the request of Ronald de Leeuw, Max van Rooy was added as an independent member. Report of HNR discussions, dated 15 February 2000 (RGDRBL, 9106). Van Rooy had previously written an essay entitled 'Rijksmuseum à la Ruijsseenaars', in: Spijkerman 2000, pp. 27-32, 50-56.

10 The technical committee was chaired by Peter van Hulden of the Rgd's Design and Technology Department.

11 Evaluation committee's report, 4 April 2001, p. 13 (RGDRBM, 9107).

12 'The basement he proposes underneath the courtyards is difficult if not impossible to implement. If however the walls were to be placed some distance from the existing facades, which is technically feasible, this would fundamentally compromise the concept.' Evaluation committee's report, 4 April 2001, p. 10 (RGDRBM, 9107).

13 Evaluation committee's report, 4 April 2001, p. 10 (RGDRBM, 9107).

14 Explanation by Antonio Cruz and Antonio Ortiz, in: *Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum* (reader), May 2001. Library of Atelier Rijksbouwmeester.

15 Assessment committee's report, 4 April 2001, p. 6 (RGDRBM, 9107).

16 For example, the architects had to deal with various construction-related departments of the City of Amsterdam and of the Oud-Zuid District Council, the Amsterdam Fire Brigade (Fire Safety Department), RDMZ, Rgd, the Amsterdam Cyclists Association and the Cuypers Society.

17 Capita Selecta lecture, Faculty of Architecture, Delft University of Technology, 27 March 2008.

18 This decision was taken in consultation with Cruz y Ortiz and Van Hoogevest.

19 Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos, *The New Rijksmuseum. Preliminary Design Report*, December 2002 (RGDRBM, 9079).

20 Former Portrait Gallery and Van der Hoop Gallery. Cuypers' stairwells do not satisfy contemporary emergency exit standards.

21 The PD envisaged air conditioning via the floor in the souterrain and ground floor (*Preliminary Design Report*, December 2002,

p. 48). In the FD the proposal was to handle the air conditioning of the ground floor via the outer walls and of the main floor via the ceilings (*Final Design Report*, October 2004, pp. 42-43).

22 *The New Rijksmuseum. Preliminary Design Report*, December 2002, p. 49.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 47.

24 CWM draft report, committee II meeting, 9 April 2003; letter from A.L.L.M. Asselbergs to R.J.M. van Hengstum (OCenW, DCE), dated 13 January 2003; letter from J.C.M. van Niekerk (BMA) to The New Rijksmuseum Programme Board, dated 18 March 2003.

25 Letter from A.L.L.M. Asselbergs to R.J.M. van Hengstum, dated 13 January 2003.

26 Letter from J. Coenen to The New Rijksmuseum Programme Board, dated 17 February 2003.

27 CWM draft report, committee II meeting, dated 9 April 2003.

28 Letter from A.L.L.M. Asselbergs to R.J.M. van Hengstum, dated 13 January 2003.

29 Report of the Architecture Committee, dated 14 January 2003 (RGDRBM, 9119). This committee was set up by the Steering Group in late 2001 to advise it about architecture, and consisted of architects, the Chief Government Architect, the museum director and the Programme Director.

30 Report of the Architecture Committee, dated 14 January and 4 February 2003 (RGDRBM, 9119).

31 Report of the Architecture Committee, dated 14 January 2003 (RGDRBM, 9119).

32 Report of the Architecture Committee, dated 4 February 2003 (RGDRBM, 9119).

33 Email from B. van der Pot to J. Coenen re steering group meeting on 23 January 2003 (RGDRBM, Rijksmuseum dossier).

34 Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos, *The New Rijksmuseum. Intervention and Restoration Criteria*, August 2004 (RGDRBM, 9002); *The New Rijksmuseum. Final Design Phase 1*, October 2004 (RGDRBM, 9022). In view of the size of the project, the FD was divided in two. Part 1 focused broadly on everything about which statements could be made prior to the exposure of the shell. Part 2 would deal with what only became clear after that, as well as with the finishing. *The New Rijksmuseum. Final Design Phase 1*, October 2004, pp. 4-6.

35 The difficult collaboration between the chief architect and the restoration architect led in September 2004 to an intervention by the Steering Group: henceforth there would no

longer be two architecture firms; instead the work would be carried out by a team of architects under the leadership and responsibility of Cruz y Ortiz. Cruz y Ortiz was also made responsible for cost consultations, external contacts (Heritage authorities, Design Review Board, city council) and publicity. The two firms were to decide between themselves what Van Hoogevest's specific contribution to this team would be. Letter from J.J.M. Veraart (chairman Steering Group) to Cruz y Ortiz Amsterdam and Van Hoogevest, dated 14 September 2004 (HNR, 8.2.1, Cruz y Ortiz correspondence).

36 Explanation by Antonio Ortiz, Report of Architecture Committee, dated 1 September 2004 (RGDRBM, 9116).

37 *The New Rijksmuseum. Final Design Phase 1*, October 2004, p. 20.

38 'We have been asked to close up on the interior an important amount of the windows that presently light the galleries. . . . However, we believe this decision should be reviewed at this point in time so as to reach a more adequate solution in accordance with the building itself and for the sake of the visitor's better orientation.' *The New Rijksmuseum. Final Design Phase 1*, October 2004, p. 22.

39 On 16 June 2004 the architects received an order from Programmadirectie Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum (New Rijksmuseum Programme Management) to stop work on the design of the entrance zone. *The New Rijksmuseum. Final Design Phase 1*, October 2004, p. 61.

40 *The New Rijksmuseum. Final Design Phase 1*, October 2004, p. 23.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

42 *Ibid.*

43 Letter from W.M. Crouwel to Programmadirectie Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum, dated 17 November 2004.

44 *Ruimtelijk Afwegingskader Rijksmuseum* (RAK), established by Amsterdam Oud-Zuid district council, 22 June 2006.

45 Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos, *The New Rijksmuseum. New Entrances*, May 2005 (RGDRBM, 9028).

46 Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos, *The New Rijksmuseum. Intervention and Restoration Criteria*, February 2006 (RGDRBM, 9029); *The New Rijksmuseum. Final Design*, March 2006 (RGDRBM, 9030).

47 'A new little building will be built between the Villa and the Drawing School in the area occupied by the garage. . . .'. Cruz y Ortiz

arquitectos, *The New Rijksmuseum. Intervention and Restoration Criteria*, February 2006, 4 (RGDRBM, 9029).

48 Amsterdam City Council, Oud-Zuid District Council, *Ruimtelijke onderbouwing vernieuwbouw Rijksmuseum*, dated 13 February 2007.

49 Launched with an email from W. Pijbes to L. van der Pol, dated 9 December 2008 (RGDRBM, unnumbered).

50 Report of the Architecture Committee, dated 22 February 2004 (RGDRBM, 9119).

51 Letter from A. Cruz to B. van der Pot, Rijksmuseum project manager, dated 4 August 2004. For the thrust of this report see the article by Marie-Thérèse van Thoor, note 36.

4 Back to Cuypers

1 Conversation with Jo Coenen, 1 July 2013.

2 'Rapport van de beoordelingscommissie voor de selectie van een restauratiearchitect voor Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam', dated 22 May 2001 (VHA). The viewpoint of one of the assessment committee members differed from the majority. As a result the decision was delayed by two weeks. Press release: 'Keuze restauratie-architect Rijksmuseum uitgesteld', dated 25 April 2001 (VHA).

3 Letter from W. Patijn to Van Hoogevest Architecten, dated 25 October 2000; letter J. Coenen to all restoration architects, dated 28 November 2000 (VHA).

4 Letter from J. Coenen to all principal architects, dated 29 November 2000 (VHA).

5 Van Hoogevest Architecten, *Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum. Restauratievisie*, Amersfoort, April 2001. This does not mean, however, that Cruz y Ortiz did not focus on building technology, tectonics and the way the buildings would be used.

6 Conversation with Gijsbert van Hoogevest, 24 May 2013. On 12 December 2000 and 16 January 2001 briefings were held in the Rijksmuseum for all architects and representatives of the Rgd, the Rijksmuseum and the assessment committees. See: *Architect Briefing The New Rijksmuseum*, 12 December 2000 and *Second Architect Briefing The New Rijksmuseum*, 16 January 2001, Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, Rgd (VHA).

7 Letter from J. Coenen to all principal architects, dated 29 November 2000 (VHA).

8 'Het architectenbureau Cruz y Ortiz uit Spanje (Sevilla) is gekozen voor de renovatie van het Rijksmuseum Amsterdam', press release dated 4 April 2001 (VHA). Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos, *The New Rijksmuseum. Preliminary Design Report*, December 2002 (RGDRBM, 9079). The reason for this was that Cruz y Ortiz wanted to adapt the colours to the natural aging process.

9 Letter from J. Coenen to various participants *Round Table. Restauratievisie Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum*, dated 15 February 2002 (RGDZ, 20110376).

10 Programme, summaries, presentations, etcetera of *Round Table. Restauratievisie Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum*, Amsterdam, 6 March 2002 (VHA). During the discussions, extremely varied questions were submitted, such as: 'Is Cuypers connected inextricably with the Rijksmuseum?' 'Is Cuypers still suitable for present-day museum visitors?' 'What does the Cuypers-concept mean?'

11 R. de Leeuw, 'The New Rijksmuseum. From a visitors' perspective', contribution *Round Table. Restauratievisie Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum*, Amsterdam, 6 March 2002.

12 F. Asselbergs, 'Inleiding t.b.v. het ronde tafelgesprek over het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum', Amsterdam, 6 March 2002 (VHA).

13 Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos, *The New Rijksmuseum. Preliminary Design Report*, December 2002 (RGDRBM, 9079); Van Hoogevest Architecten, *Voorlopig Ontwerp Restauratieplan*, December 2002 (VHA).

14 *Voorlopig Ontwerp Restauratieplan*, December 2002.

15 *Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum, structuurplan 2000*, Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, Rgd, p. 3.

16 In the final execution, the technical aspects were the work of both Van Hoogevest (restoration) and Cruz y Ortiz (renovation).

17 Van Hoogevest had carried out extensive archival research himself in the Cuypers archive at the Netherlands Architecture Institute in Rotterdam.

18 *Voorlopig Ontwerp Restauratieplan*, December 2002, p. 23.

19 *The New Rijksmuseum. Preliminary Design Report*, December 2002.

20 Letters to Programme Board Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum from Amsterdam Advisory Council for Historic Conservation dated 3 April 2003, BMA dated 18 March 2003, RDMZ, dated 7 April 2003, Cuypers Society dated 16 May 2003 (VHA).

- 21 Letter from A.L.L.M. Asselbergs to R.J.M. van Hengstum, DCE Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, dated 13 January 2003 (RGDRBM, 9120).
- 22 In spring 2003 a Monumentenoverleg was initiated with representatives of Van Hoogevest Architecten, RDMZ, BMA and the Rgd. It had been set up as a form of preliminary talks to explore the planning process and aid the planning permission procedure. Conversation with Coert Krabbe (BMA), 26 April 2013; report Monumentenoverleg, dated 4 March 2003, p. 1.
- 23 Report Architectuurcommissie, dated 4 January 2003 en 4 February 2003 (RGDRBM, 9119).
- 24 E-mail from B. van der Pot to J. Coenen, dated 24 January 2003 (RGDRBM, dossier Rijksmuseum).
- 25 Report meeting building archaeological research Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Rijksgebouwendienst Government Architect's studio, dated 20 January 2003. Present at the meeting: employees of Van Hoogevest, the Rgd and private archaeological research companies.
- 26 C. de Boer-van Hoogevest, 'Notitie ten behoeve van het bouwhistorisch onderzoek Rijksmuseum Amsterdam', dated 17 January 2003; J. Kamphuis and C. van der Peet, 'Memo Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum', dated 16 January 2003 (VHA). See also: *Richtlijnen Bouwhistorisch Onderzoek. Lezen en analyseren van cultuurhistorisch erfgoed*, Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, Architectural History Foundation Netherlands, Association of Netherlands Municipalities, Chief Government Architect's Studio, Rgd, The Hague April 2009.
- 27 See in this context: W. Friso (ed.), J. van der Hoeve and C. van der Peet, 'Toelichting op het Archiefonderzoek ten behoeve van het Bouwhistorisch Onderzoek van het Rijksmuseum', dated 23 August and 7 October 1999; V.O.F. Van der Hoeve and Kamphuis, *Ontstaans- en gebruiksgeschiedenis van het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam*, Rgd, Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, Architectural History Foundation Netherlands, Association of Netherlands Municipalities, Chief Government Architect's Studio, The Hague 2000; C. van der Peet, 'Overzicht bestaand materiaal e.d. op bouwhistorisch/documentair gebied Rijksmuseum Amsterdam', dated 1 October 2001 (VHA).
- 28 A.A. van Daatselaar, 'Notitie van Van Hoogevest Architecten d.d. 4 februari 2003 om te komen tot een opdracht voor het Bouwhistorisch Onderzoek' (VHA). Although the building archaeological research had been defined in the brief to the architects, and the cost presumably already estimated, a cost proposal was again made here.
- 29 Memo B. van der Pot to Van Hoogevest Architecten and Cruz y Ortiz, dated 19 March 2003 (HNR, 8.10).
- 30 J. Coenen, 'Bouwhistorisch onderzoek bij Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam. Motivatie', dated 12 March 2003 (RGDRBM, 9119). It is possible that the date relating to this text is incorrect, since the text refers to '18 March last'.
- 31 BMA in particular continued in the Monumentenoverleg to press for building archaeological research to facilitate assessment of the plans, reminding the Programme Board of its responsibilities in that respect. Conversation with Coert Krabbe, 26 April 2013; report monuments forum, dated 4 March 2003 (VHA).
- 32 Report Design team Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum, dated 1 July 2003 (HNR, 4.2.2).
- 33 See: L. Hendriks, 'Ondersteuning van historisch onderzoek. Efficiënt realiseren van cultuurhistorische waardestellingen voor Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum', Rijksgebouwendienst Strategie & Onderzoek, The Hague 11 February 2003. In this memo reference is made to the memo 'Innovatief (bouw)historisch onderzoek, d.d. 13 november 2002'.
- 34 Report Klankbordgroep bouwhistorisch onderzoek, dated 9 March 2004 (VHA).
- 35 Conversation with Gijsbert van Hoogevest, 24 May 2013.
- 36 Cruz y Ortiz did not understand the significance of Van Hoogevest's documents, believing that the latter greatly overestimated the value of the monument itself. A variety of correspondence on building archaeological research, reports on meetings of the Architectural History Team and Van Hoogevest Architecten, reports Feedback group building archaeological research, 2004 (VHA). A letter from C. van der Peet (Team Bouwhistorisch Onderzoek Rijksmuseum Amsterdam/ Methodologie Bouwhistorisch Onderzoek) to Van Hoogevest Architecten, dated 15 July 2004 is significant. In this letter he asserts that the answers on Cruz y Ortiz's hotspot list do not feature in the method used by the Rgd. In his view, they should not form a precedent. In September 2004 no new arrangements on communications were planned in view of the problems between the two firms. See text Paul Meurs, note 35.
- 37 Conversation with Coert Krabbe, 26 April 2013. The website does include valuations, but they are not available to the public, only to stakeholders.
- 38 C. Junge-Dijkman, N. van der Woude and R. Hoppenbrouwers, 'Reconstructie van de "kleuren van Cuypers": restauratie van het 19de-eeuwse interieurbeeld. Informatie voor de werkzaamheden van de Stichting Restauratieatelier Limburg voor het Rijksmuseum Amsterdam', SRAL, Amsterdam/ Maastricht 2013.
- 39 Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg, *Een kleurverkenning in het interieur van het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam: zoeken naar Cuypers, van fragment tot ensemble*, conducted at the request of project bureau 'Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum', June 2002.
- 40 The research also had an educative purpose: besides SRAL students, the activities also involved students from the University of Amsterdam and pupils studying painting at SintLucas in Boxtel.
- 41 Conversation with Anne van Grevenstein, 2 July 2013; P. Spijkerman, 'Cuypers' decoraties in oude luister hersteld', in: De Jong and Spijkerman 2013, p. 63.
- 42 'Reconstructie van de "kleuren van Cuypers": restauratie van het 19de-eeuwse interieurbeeld. Informatie over de werkzaamheden van de Stichting Restauratieatelier Limburg voor het Rijksmuseum Amsterdam', 2013.
- 43 Various letters and documents relating to annexes to PDs, March-June 2003 (VHA).
- 44 A. Cruz and G. van Hoogevest, 'Intervention and restoration criteria', *Preliminary Design Annex*, June 2003 (VHA).
- 45 Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos, *The New Rijksmuseum. Final Design Phase 1*, October 2004 (RGDRBM, 9022).
- 46 See, among others: Becker 1985; De Boer-Van Hoogevest 2013; De Jong and Spijkerman 2013; C. Junge and J. Bohan, *De decoraties van de Rembrandtzaal Rijksmuseum Amsterdam*, Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg, Maastricht January-April 2004.
- 47 Cruz y Ortiz arquitectos, *The New Rijksmuseum. Intervention and Restoration Criteria*, February 2006 (RGDRBM, 9029). In the FD a number of building performance aspects of insulation and acoustics (concerning walls, windows and doors) were not yet fully worked out.

5 Towards a New Museological Presentation

- 1 For Sturm's wall paintings see Reynaerts 2012; Delvigne and Heij 2013; De Jong and Spijkerman 2013.
- 2 Noordegraaf 2004, p. 161. Also Van der Ham 2000, p. 327.
- 3 Huisman 2013, p. 52.
- 4 According to Anne van Grevenstein the original colour scheme of the side galleries could not be established, as no residue of the original paint was found (verbal communication to Marie-Thérèse van Thoor).
- 5 Pijbes in De Jong and Spijkerman 2013, p. 7.
- 6 De Jong and Spijkerman 2013, pp. 23-24 and 67: during the reconstruction of the decorations, when selecting the colours the natural ageing of the paint was borne in mind.
- 7 Van der Ham 2000, p. 152 and 168. Also Bergvelt 1998.
- 8 Van der Ham 2000, p. 145.
- 9 Ibid., p. 182.
- 10 Krul 1995; Bos 1997; Van der Ham 2000, pp. 225-231.
- 11 Van der Ham 2000, p. 182, 204 and 213.
- 12 Ibid., p. 248 and 252. For Schmidt-Degener see in particular Luijten 1985, pp. 351-413.
- 13 Van der Ham 2000, p. 236.
- 14 Krul 1995; Bos 1997; Van der Ham 2000, p. 253.
- 15 Van der Ham 2000, p. 298-299.
- 16 R. de Leeuw, *Het Rijksmuseum in de 21ste eeuw. Beleidsvisie Masterplan Rijksmuseum Amsterdam*, Amsterdam 1998, p. 5.
- 17 Ibid., p. 17.
- 18 HNR, 02 (stage documents/project plans): www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/over_het_rijksmuseum/beleidsvisie.htm (consulted on 24 July 2001), p. 2.
- 19 *Het Rijksmuseum in de 21ste eeuw. Beleidsvisie Masterplan Rijksmuseum Amsterdam*, pp. 25-26.
- 20 Ibid., p. 21.
- 21 Letter J. Coenen to B. van der Pot, dated 17 July 2003 (HNR, 7.1).
- 22 Letter R. de Leeuw to B. van der Pot, dated 31 July 2003 (HNR, 7.1).
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Letter from J. Coenen to all candidate interior architects, dated February 2004 (RGDRBM, 9045; project dossier ARBM 2004, interior architect selection). See also the draft letter from J.R. de Lorm and I. Santhagens, 15 October 2003 (HNR, 7.1).
- 25 The selection committee was made up of: Ronald de Leeuw (Director of the Rijksmuseum),

- Peter Sigmond (director Rijksmuseum collections), Jan-Rudolph de Lorm (head of exhibitions Rijksmuseum), Antonio Cruz (Cruz y Ortiz), Wim Crouwel (designer, former director Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen) and Jo Coenen (Chief Government Architect).
- 26 Letter from J.R. de Lorm to B. van der Pot, dated 24 October 2003 (draft list of interior designers); letter from J. Coenen to B. van der Pot, R. de Leeuw and Cruz y Ortiz, dated 5 January 2004 (HNR, 7.1). See also RGDRBM, 9096, 9098, 9099, 9102 (interior architect selection).
- 27 Selection committee's assessment report on the interior architect 'Ruimte voor kunst', dated July 2004, p. 1 (HNR, 7.1).
- 28 Ibid., p. 5.
- 29 The Département des objets d'arts, opened in 1993, and the Département des Arts Premiers, Pavillon des Sessions, opened in 2000.
- 30 *Het Rijksmuseum in de 21ste eeuw. Beleidsvisie Masterplan Rijksmuseum Amsterdam*, p. 13. Also Huisman 2013, p. 63.
- 31 Huisman 2013, p. 58. See also www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/verbouwingen/over-de-verbouwing (consulted on 12 June 2013).
- 32 Design Cruz y Ortiz, 'The New Rijksmuseum', January 2004 (digital document in the Chief Government Architect's archive).
- 33 I. Start, 'Interieur', *Elsevier*, special edition 'Het Rijks', 2013, p. 88.
- 34 The PD was presented on 23 March 2007d. See the PowerPoint presentation by Wilmotte & Ass. and the Rijksmuseum, May 2007 (RGDRBM, unnumbered). Also de *Nieuwsbrief van het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum* 5 (March 2007) 17.
- 35 Letter from M. Crouwel to E. Schoenmaeckers (PHNR), dated 12 September 2007 (HNR, 8.2.3, interior architect Wilmotte & Ass.).
- 36 Minutes Monuments consultations, dated 15 June 2010, 16 November 2010, 11 January 2011, 22 February 2011, 29 November 2011; tour 25 January 2011 (RGDRBM, unnumbered).
- 37 *Definitief Ontwerp* by Wilmotte and the Rijksmuseum, dated 13 October 2010 (digital document from the Rgd – Government Buildings Agency).
- 38 Van der Ham 2000, pp. 179-180. Also Van Os 1996; J.A. van de Hoeve and J. Kamphuis, *Het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam. Inventarisatie van de gebruiksgeschiedenis*, Amsterdam/The Hague 1996, pp. 75-76.
- 39 Delvigne and Heij 2013, p. 31. For information on the Night Watch Gallery,

- also Boomgaard 1985; *Het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam. Inventarisatie van de gebruiksgeschiedenis*, pp. 70 and 77-79; www.waardestelling.nl (consulted on 21 May 2013).
- 40 Letter from Stichting het Cuypersgenootschap (Cuypers Society) to the executive committee of Stadsdeel Zuid (municipal district south), dated 4 June 2011. The arduous nature of this decision process was evident from a conversation with Coert Krabbe, BMA, dated 26 April 2013.
- 41 Minutes Monuments consultations, dated 15 June 2010, 16 November 2010, 22 February 2011, 29 November 2011; tour 25 January 2011 (RGDRBM, unnumbered); letter from Stichting het Cuypersgenootschap to the executive committee of Stadsdeel Zuid, dated 4 June 2011.
- 42 Minutes Monuments consultations, dated 22 February 2011 (RGDRBM, unnumbered).
- 43 Van Os 1996, p. 311; Van Leeuwen 2007, p. 262; Biemond 2009, pp. 49-66, in particular 58. See also *Het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam. Inventarisatie van de gebruiksgeschiedenis* 1996, pp. 133-134; www.waardestelling.nl (consulted on 21 May 2013).
- 44 Van Hellenberg Hubar 1997, p. 90; Van der Ham 2000, p. 184; Van Leeuwen 2007, pp. 260-263.
- 45 Van der Ham 2000, pp. 149 and 252.
- 46 Cf. Cruz y Ortiz *intervention and restoration criteria*, dated February 2006, part 2, p. 6; *Appendix to the restoration criteria decoration*, dated January 2006, pp. 17-24 (digital document in the archive of VHA); www.waardestelling.nl:bel-etage,kerkelijkebouwkunst (consulted on 21 May 2013).
- 47 De Leeuw 1998, p. 31.
- 48 Verbal communication with Jenny Reynaerts, senior conservator eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Rijksmuseum, 18 June 2013: the Beuning room, an eighteenth-century period room, could only fit in the east and not in the west half of the ground floor. Some of the museum staff experienced the combination of Cuypers' architecture and the nineteenth-century collection as too restrictive.
- 49 Memo from Van Hoogevest Architecten, dated 31 August 2010: assessment test surface reversible paint system; report VanderVeenconsult, dated 30 August 2010 (RGDRBM, unnumbered).
- 50 *Het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam. Inventarisatie van de gebruiksgeschiedenis*, pp. 138 and 141; www.waardestelling.nl.

(consulted on 21 May 2013). See also the letter from Stichting het Cuypersgenootschap to the executive committee Stadsdeel Zuid, dated 4 June 2011; Huisman 2013, pp. 42 and 63.

6 The Rijksmuseum and the City

- 1 Taverne and Kleyn 1990, p. 128.
- 2 *Het Vrije Volk*, quoted in W. Ellenbroek, 'Plein der vergeelde plannen', *De Volkskrant*, 25 August 1995.
- 3 X. Schutte, 'Plein der plannen', *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 26 March 1997.
- 4 M. Krielaars, 'Uitgestelde allure', *NRC Handelsblad*, 31 March 2000.
- 5 Muysken and Rieber 1891, p. 278.
- 6 Muysken and Rieber 1891, p. 277.
- 7 Van Stralen and Lootsma 1993.
- 8 J. van der Werf, *Plein, park of veld? Cultuurhistorische Verkenning Museumplein en omgeving*, Amsterdam [2008], p. 51.
- 9 Staal 1951, p. 305; 'Plannen voor aanleg van het Museumplein te Amsterdam', *Bouwkundig Weekblad*, 70 (1952) 35/36, 2 September 1952, p. 269.
- 10 'Het Museumplein te Amsterdam', *Forum* 7 (1952) 11, p. 365
- 11 'Zware druk op het Museumplein', *Wonen-TA/BK*, 13 July 1976, p. 20.
- 12 Hol 1977, p.12.
- 13 Verdenius 1977, p. 5.
- 14 Taverne and Kleyn 1990, p. 135.
- 15 Taverne and Kleyn 1990, p. 134.
- 16 B. Hulsman, 'Van snelweg naar nergens tot grootsheid met liflafjes', *NRC Handelsblad*, 19 August 1999.
- 17 Letter from S. Patijn to R. Apell, Government Buildings Agency, 3 April 2001.
- 18 Letter from Amsterdam's Urban Development Advisory Council to the Oud-Zuid District Authorities and Central Municipal Authorities, 2 May 2001 (RGDRBM, 9114, general correspondence regarding the passageway through the museum).
- 19 Fax, District Council to the Rijksmuseum, 29 January 2004.
- 20 Memo, M. de Hoog, Director of Spatial Planning, to the District Council, 25 November 2004; letter, directors of the New Rijksmuseum Programme to P. Pol, sector head for Spatial and Economic Development, 10 December 2004.
- 21 Memo, Rijksmuseum, 14 December 2004.
- 22 "'Geen goede argumenten.'" Plan ingang Rijksmuseum van tafel', *NRC Handelsblad*, 12 May 2005.

- 23 Interview with Sander Rombout, Copijn, 11 July 2013.
- 24 S. Smalenburg, 'Museumplein naar voorbeeld Museumsinsel Berlijn', *NRC Handelsblad*, 31 July 2009.
- 25 E. Dijksterhuis, 'Rijksmuseum aan de kop van een strakke groene vlakte', *Smaak. Blad voor de Rijkshuisvesting, special Rijksmuseum Amsterdam*, April 2013, p. 36.

7 A Machine for Large Numbers of Visitors

- 1 *Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum. Achtergrond bij het project: Restauratie, renovatie en nieuwbouw van het Rijksmuseum*, April 2013 (www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/downloads/52e3df0e-f0af-4e59-86a4-07af6072b718/Project-Nieuwe-Rijksmuseum_.pdf).
- 2 J. Glancey, 'In the pink', *The Guardian*, 30 April 2007 (www.theguardian.com/artand-design/2007/apr/30/architecture).
- 3 E. van Egeraat, 'Van Egeraat: "Nederlander had Rijks niet kunnen ontwerpen"', *Architectenweb*, 24 April 2013 (www.architectenweb.nl/aweb/redactie/redactie_detail.asp?iNID=31295).

Conclusion

- 1 *Ontwerpen aan Nederland. Architectuurbeleid 2001-2004*, (Designing the Netherlands), a joint memorandum of the Ministries of OC&W, VROM, V&W and LNV, The Hague 2000, pp. 22-29, 34-44, 50-68 and 91-94.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 56.
- 3 Oeke Hoogendijk, documentary series *Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum*, NTR (*Het Uur van de Wolf*), four parts, 2013.
- 4 Wytze Patijn during a debate at Delft University of Technology, 1 May 2013.
- 5 *Ontwerpen aan Nederland*, p. 42.
- 6 This development is described in: J. Alberts, 'Hoogmoed en gekibbel', *NRC Handelsblad*, 6 July 2007. For the project the Ministry of OC&W and the Rijksmuseum became the commissioners and the Rgd the contractor, which gave the latter the role of commissioner for the construction and design process.
- 7 The successive State Secretaries for Culture were Rick van der Ploeg 1998-2002, Cees van Leeuwen 2002-2003, Medy van der Laan 2003-2006, Maria van der Hoeven 2006-2007, Ronald Plasterk (briefly replaced by André Rouvoet) 2007-2010, Halbe Zijlstra 2010-2012 and Jet Bussemaker 2012-2013.
- 8 Henk van Os 1989-1996, Ronald de Leeuw 1996-2008 and Wim Pijbes from 2008.

- 9 Chief Government Architects: Wytze Patijn 1995-2000, Jo Coenen 2000-2004, Mels Crouwel 2004-2008, Liesbeth van der Pol 2008-2011, Frits van Dongen from 2011. Programme directors of The New Rijksmuseum: Bart van der Pot (2002-2007), Etienne Schoenmaeckers (2007-2008) and Peter Derks (2008-2012). On the advisory side in Monumentenzorg and the ministries there was continuity throughout the entire process.
- 10 Letter from F. van der Ploeg, State Secretary of Culture, to R. de Leeuw, managing director of the Rijksmuseum, dated 19 September 2000.
- 11 *The New Rijksmuseum. A Volume of Essays*, The Hague 2001.
- 12 *Nota Belvedere. Beleidsnota over de relatie cultuurhistorie en ruimtelijke ordening*, The Hague 1999 (Ministries of OC&W, LNV, VROM, V&W); 'Beleidsbrief Modernisering Monumentenzorg', 2009 (Ministry of OC&W).
- 13 *Ontwerpen aan Nederland*.
- 14 As described by Adriaan Geuze, September 2013.
- 15 This debate was initiated by, among others, Aad Nuis, State Secretary for Culture in the first Kok government (1994-1998), with the memorandum *Pantser of ruggegraat, Uitgangspunten voor cultuurbeleid* (Armour or Backbone, Principles for Cultural Policy, 1995). Nuis wanted to use cultural policy to strengthen the sense of national identity and with it the sense of cohesion and solidarity in the multicultural society.

- A**
- F. Asselbergs, "Het morgenrood eener Wedergeboorte". P.J.H. Cuypers, architect (1827-1921)', *De Negentiende eeuw* 4 (1980), pp. 158-170
- B**
- J.T.M. Bank, 'Exempla virtutis. Een negentiende-eeuwse interpretatie van vaderlandse geschiedenis en kunst in het Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam', *Leidschrift* 8 (1992) 2, pp. 43-59
- J. Becker, "Ons Rijksmuseum wordt een tempel". Zur Ikonographie des Amsterdamer Rijksmuseums', in: E. de Jong, G.Th.M. Lemmens and P.J.J. van Thiel (eds.), *Het Rijksmuseum. Opstellen over de geschiedenis van een nationale instelling* (Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek 1984; 35), Weesp 1985, pp. 227-326
- E.S. Bergvelt, *Pantheon der Gouden Eeuw. Van Nationale Konst-Gallerij tot Rijksmuseum van Schilderijen (1798-1896)*, Zwolle 1998
- E. Bergvelt, D. Meijers and M. Reinders, *Kabinetten, Galerijen en Musea. Het verzamelen en presenteren van naturalia en kunst van 1500 tot heden*, Heerlen 2005
- J. Boomgaard, "Hangt mij op sterk licht." Rembrandts licht en plaatsing van de Nachtwacht in het Rijksmuseum', in: E. de Jong, G.Th.M. Lemmens and P.J.J. van Thiel (eds.), *Het Rijksmuseum. Opstellen over de geschiedenis van een nationale instelling* (Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek 1984; 35), Weesp 1985, pp. 327-345
- J. Bos, "De geschiedenis is vastgelegd in boeken, niet in musea". Van planvorming tot realisatie. Het Nederlands Museum voor Geschiedenis in het Rijksmuseum, 1922-1939', *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 45 (1997), pp. 262-309
- J. Braat et al. (ed.), *Honderd jaar Rijksmuseum: 1885-1985*, Weesp 1985
- C**
- J. Coenen, *De kunst van de versmelting/ The Art of Blending*, Delft 2006
- R. Delvigne and J.J. Heij, 'Rehabilitation for Georg Sturm', *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 61 (2013), pp. 24-59
- D**
- C. de Boer-van Hoogevest, 'Reconstruction of the Cuypers Floor in the Entrance Hall', *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 61 (2013), pp. 60-77
- C.W. de Jong and P. Spijkerman, *Het nieuwe Rijksmuseum. Pierre Cuypers en Georg Sturm in ere hersteld*, Amsterdam 2013
- F.J. Duparc, *Een eeuw strijd voor Nederlands cultureel erfgoed*, The Hague 1975
- H**
- P. Hol, 'Cityvorming nóg in papieren stadium, maar Museumplein en omgeving staan op springen', *Wonen-TA/BK*, 19 October 1977, pp. 12-16
- J. Huisman, *Het nieuwe Rijksmuseum. Cruz y Ortiz Architects*, Rotterdam 2013
- I**
- 'Iteretud decoctum', *De Gids* (1874) IV, pp. 314-352
- K**
- W.A. Keuzenkamp, 'De plannen voor het Rijksmuseum', *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 8 (1960), pp. 117-134
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Abbreviations

FD
Final Design

LNV
Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

OC&W
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

PD
Preliminary Design

RDMZ
Rijksdienst voor de Monumentenzorg
(Government Agency for the Preservation
of Historic Buildings)

Rgd
Rijksgebouwendienst (Government Buildings
Agency)

SRAL
Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg
(Foundation Restoration Studio Limburg; SRAL)

VROM
Ministry of Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning
and the Environment

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Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, Nijmegen
Nederlands Architecture Institute (NAI),
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Credits

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