

Our existing built patrimonium has, next to its embedded CO2, often an undervalued civic potential. This is the potential to contribute qualitatively to its surroundings.

Architecture is never isolated; it redistributes spatial qualities and accommodates public life.

The quality of architecture lies in what it gives back to its surroundings. To design and to build is to define these terms of exchange.

A windowsill offers a place to sit. An arcade provides shelter. A threshold creates opportunities for encounters.

In return, the city responds through occupation, appropriation, stewardship, memory and social life.

We start from an as found post-1945 building in Gent or Brussels.

STEP **01. AS FOUND**

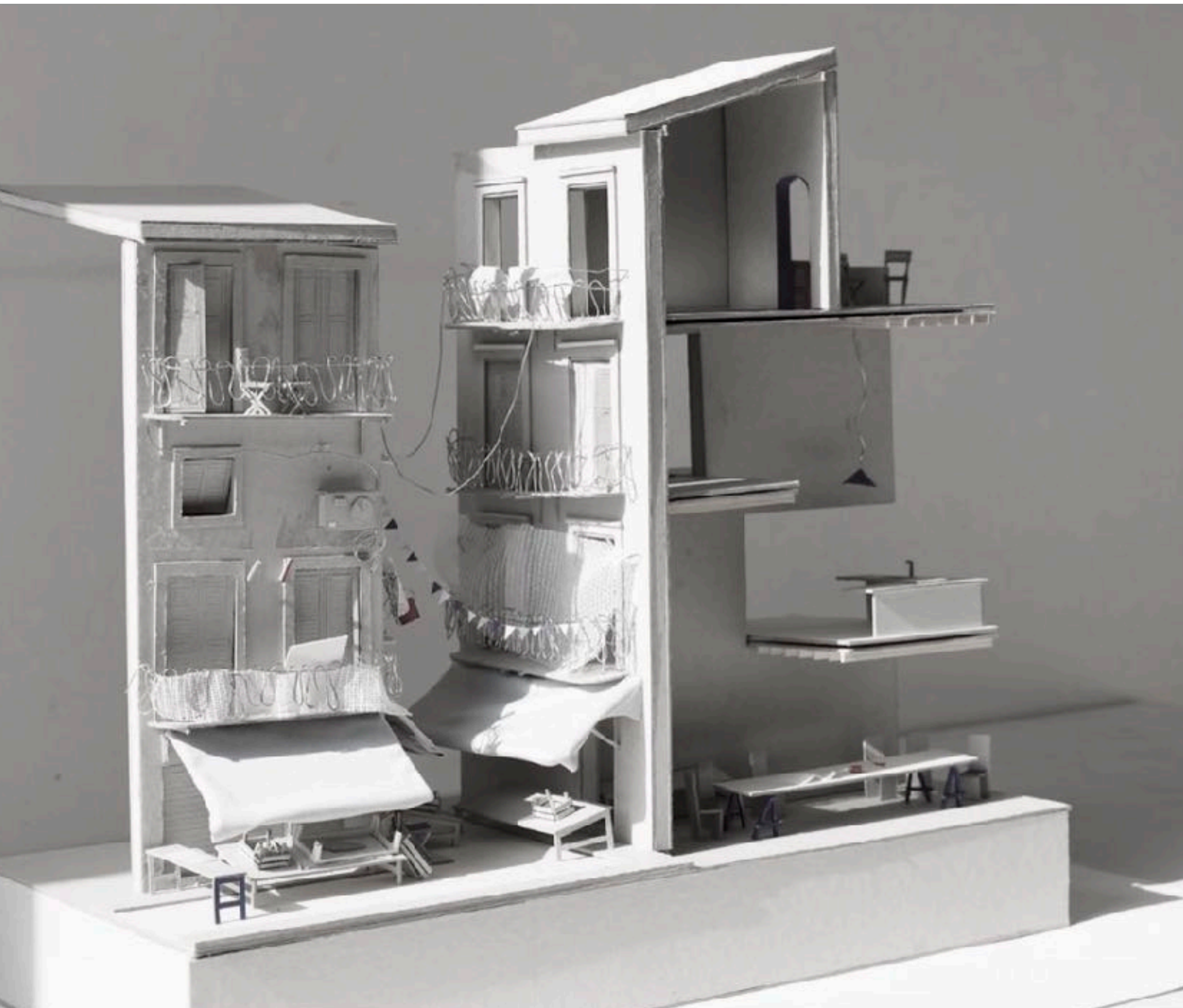
DOORS OF PERCEPTION: Can a detail save the world?

ASSEMBLEA - Faculty of Architecture KULeuven - Fall Semester 1, 2026, Gent



How is it Made?
What is Civic?
A Spatial Contract?

Marthe Vandenhautte, 2025



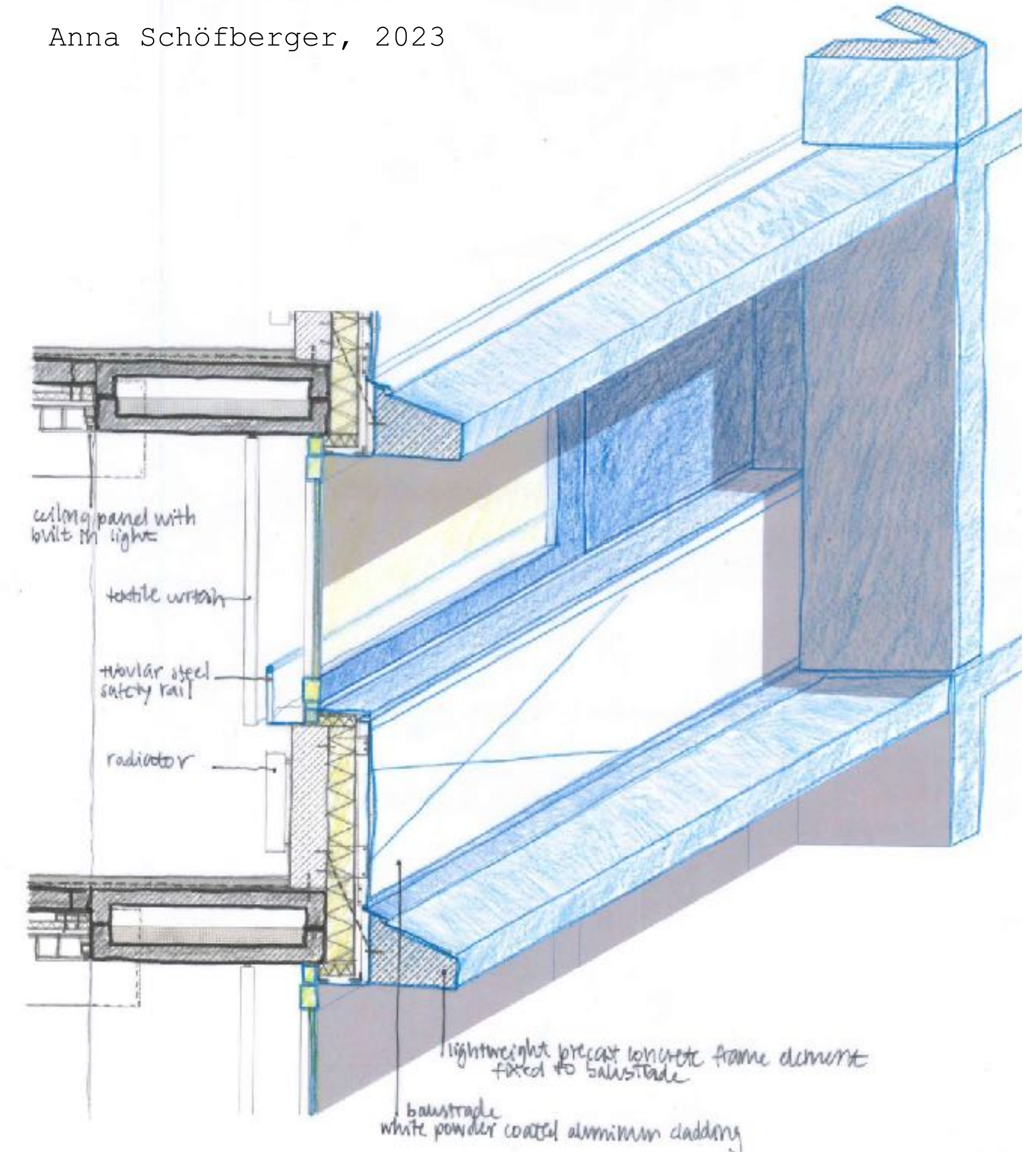
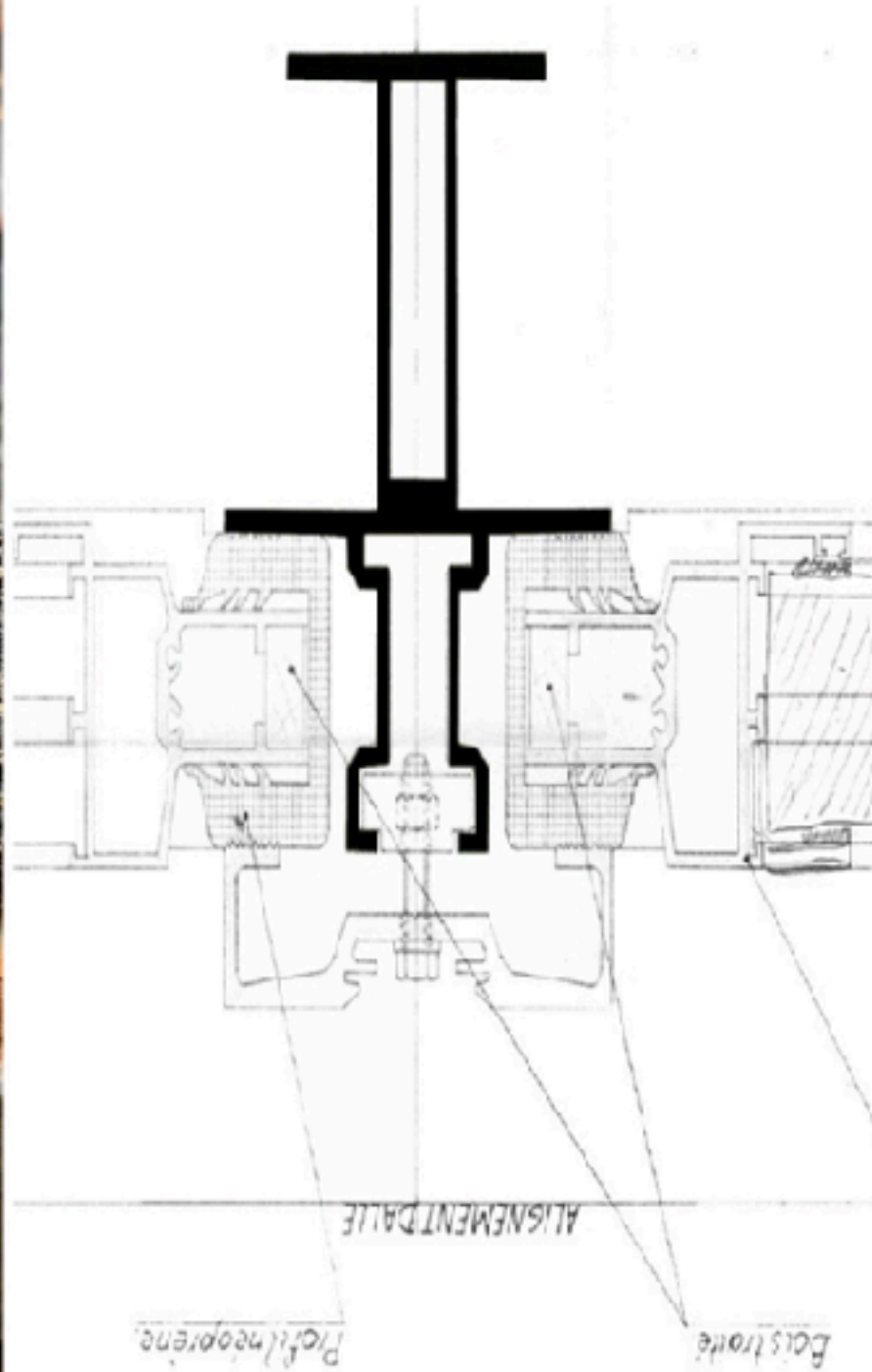
Alice Vanhulst, 2025



A SPATIAL CONTRACT: the set of exchanges through which architecture contributes to, and receives meaning from, the world around it. This operates across scales: from a well-designed windowsill that offers a place to sit and engage with the street, to a public space that connects urban districts and enhances social mobility.

MULTI, 2018

Anna Schöfberger, 2023



HOW IS IT DESIGNED? HOW IS IT MADE? In an era of climate crisis, material scarcity and accelerating social change, architecture can no longer rely on expansion alone. **The greatest design resource is likely to be the building stock that already exists.** How can overlooked post-1945 buildings be reimagined as civic assets? How can small interventions produce meaningful change? And how can architecture give more back to its surroundings than it takes?



How reuse, transformation and careful acts of design can unlock new forms of exchange between architecture, the city and its inhabitants.

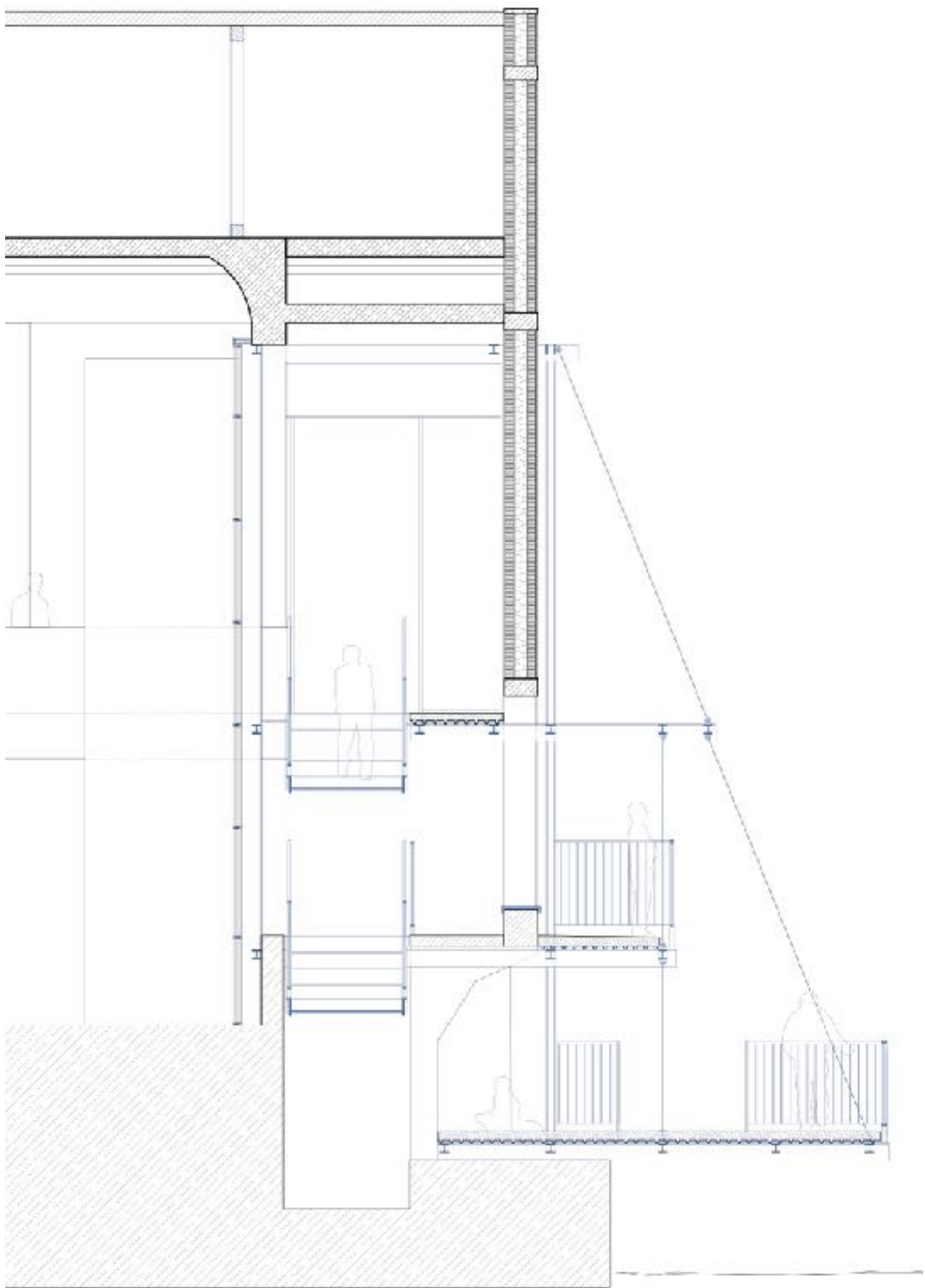
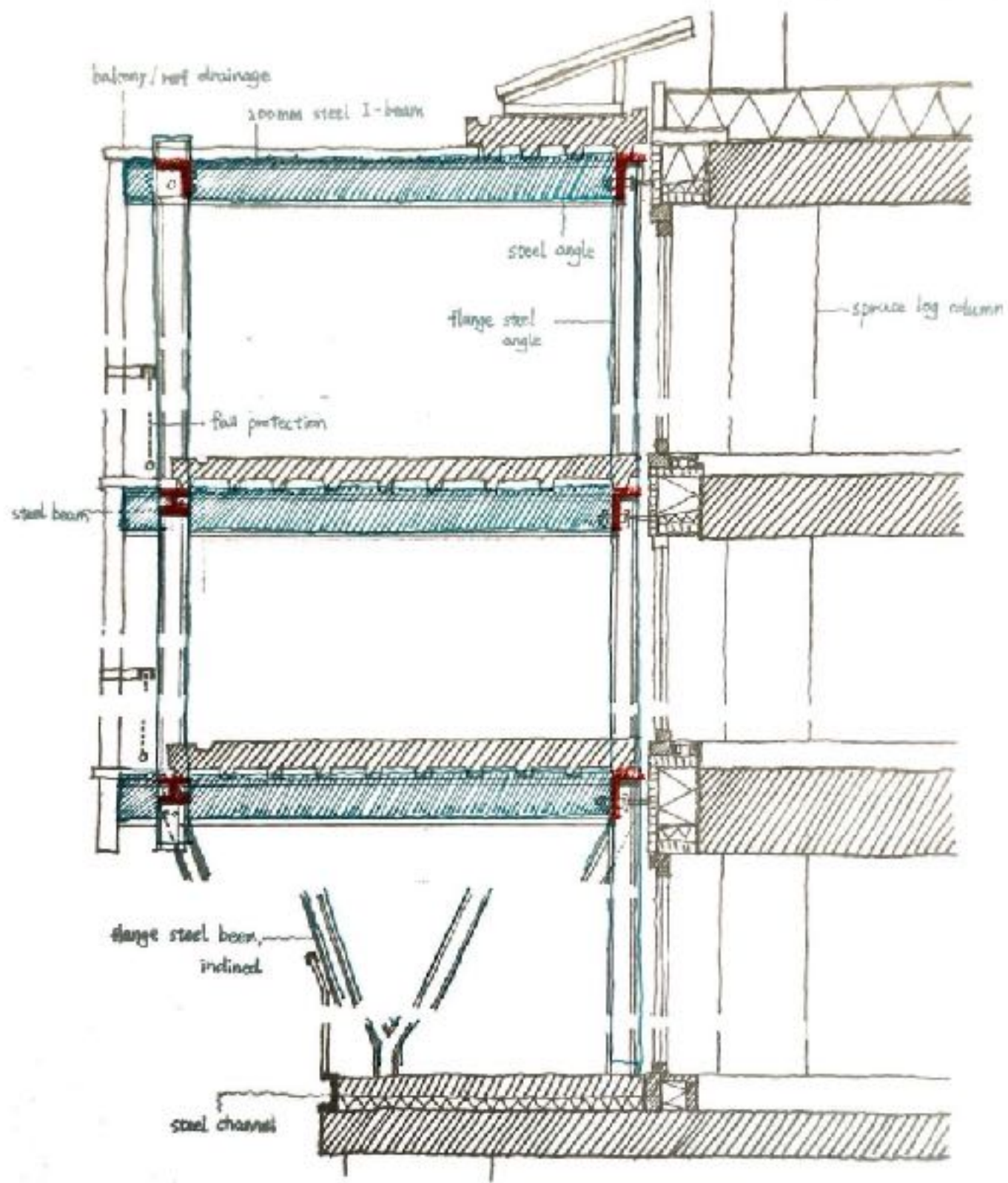
STEP 02. THE ALTERNATIVES

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The detail becomes both an instrument of inquiry and a catalyst for broader spatial and social transformation.

TOWARDS A NEW SPATIAL CONTRACT



STEP 03. THE MEANS

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A new spatial contract: details as catalyst for urban transformation

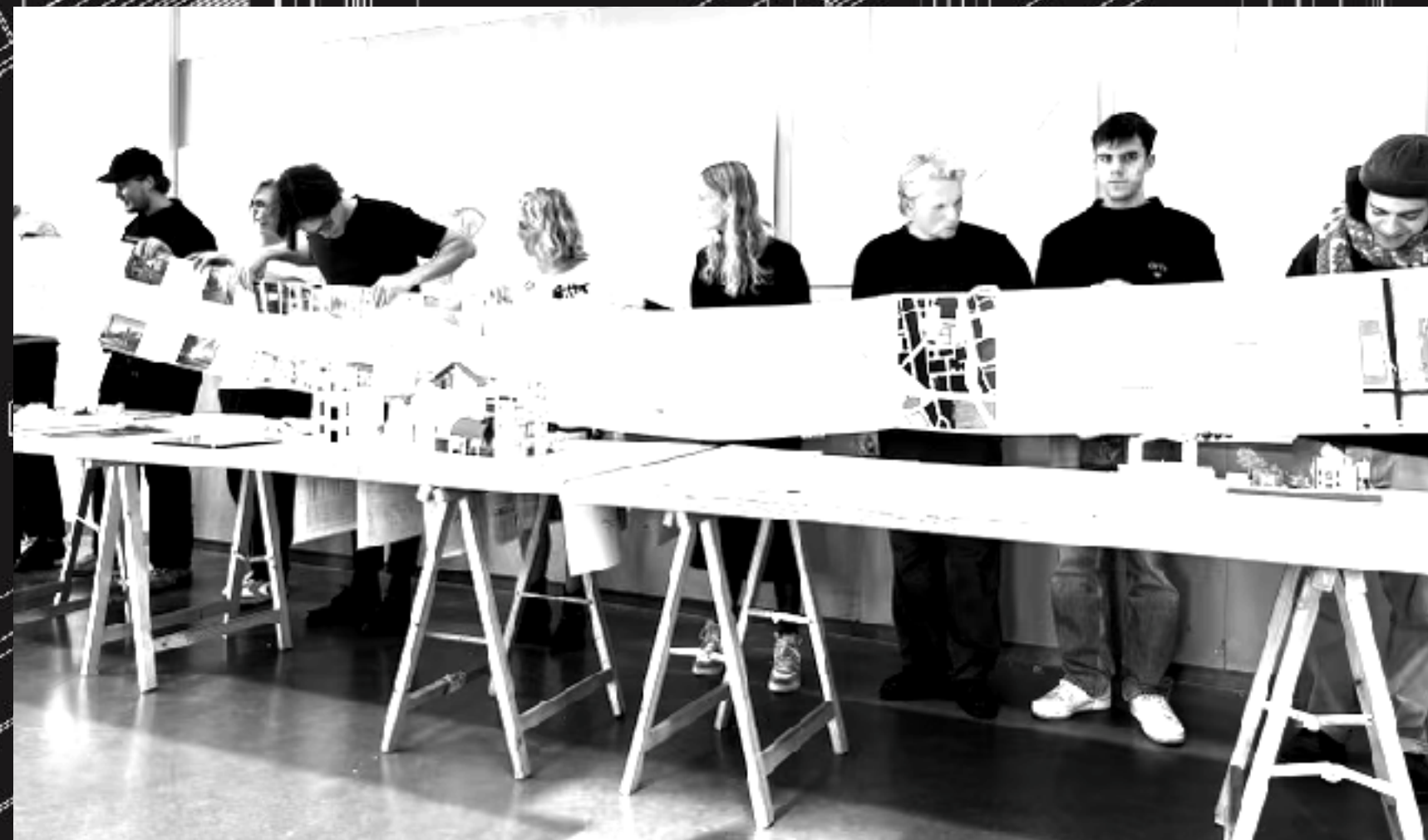


formulate ambitions, develop alternative design positions and transform the building's spatial contract through a carefully designed detail or fragment that acts as a catalyst for broader civic architecture.

DOORS OF PERCEPTION:

can a detail save the world?

ku leuven, gent
craftsmanship, semester 1
tutor: tomas ooms
student: maurus hitz



**Final outcome: an
A3 Leporello with
integrated models**



**See the blog for
the full project**

Maurus Hitz, 2023



GENT / EN

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