CITYFORWARD - ILÔT 130

REDEVELOPMENT OF OFFICES INTO A MIXED-USE PROGRAM

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Ilôt 130, The Maelbeek, The Leopold Quartier & Polak's Signature

A Palimpsest
A frequently used metaphor for interpreting and analysing Western European cities is that of the palimpsest. Originally a thick piece of parchment, a palimpsest was repeatedly reused to add new texts. By partially scraping away the previous layer before adding a new one, the valuable material could be used again and again. Over time, this process resulted in a complex and layered document, where traces of earlier layers remain visible through the newer ones. Although the most recent layer is the most prominent, older inscriptions and writings are often still legible.

This metaphor remains relevant today for the European Quarter of Brussels, also known as the Leopold Quarter, despite the significant transformations it has undergone in recent decades. Behind the dominant image of corporate and institutional architecture, characterized by a rather sterile International Style, lie various spatial, cultural, and architectural layers. The analysis and revelation of these underlying qualities form the starting point for our proposed redevelopment of the Ilôt 130 city block, which is intended to fit intelligently, contemporarily, and responsibly within the dynamic surrounding urban fabric.

Tilman-François Suys & the Valley of the Maelbeek
The first major planned interventions in the eastern part of Brussels originated in the urban plan of architect Tilman-François Suys (1783-1864), within the unique context of Brussels as the capital of the young Belgian state.
Although Suys' plan was based on a strict organization of the city in a grid pattern - as was common in the international planning culture

17the century - engraving of the eastern site of Brussels (KBR)

of the time - this orthogonal layout concealed a complex, hilly landscape, heavily influenced by the many valleys and waterways. The grid was rolled out eastward from the axes of the Warande Park and projected onto the Maelbeek Valley, with little regard for the pronounced height differences and landscape qualities.

Although the Maelbeek stream is now entirely hidden from view, in the early 19th century, it played a crucial role in the functioning of this area, historically. The wet and hilly terrain, typical of the Brussels region, had long been the primary organisational structure for the surroundings. Suys' plan sharply contrasted with the earlier landscape, which featured over fifty ponds and a highly organic network of paths, local roads, and agricultural plots. The introduction of Suys' orthogonal parcel structure cut through streams, creeks, slopes, and marshes, ignoring the natural systems.

Map of Brussels, 1912

1845 - Leopold district & Maelbeek valley (KBR)

With the covering of the Maelbeek and the creation of the 'Squares' in 1872, the visibility of the Maelbeek Valley faded further into the background, and its natural functioning was largely lost.

The transition of the European Quarter and the redevelopment of the block presents a unique opportunity to once again give the landscape a prominent and structuring role once again. Reducing paved surfaces, creating abundant green spaces, restoring the original valley topography, and reintroducing a sustainable water management system will not only make the dense district more liveable but also reconnect it with a part of its historical identity. This 'landscape first' approach thus forms a fundamental starting point for our proposed redevelopment.

From the Leopold District to the European Quarter
At the same time, Suys' plan created a new type of urbanity for Brussels. The previously rural suburb transformed rapidly into a thriving urban district that mainly attracted a new bourgeoisie. By the end of the 19th century, the former suburban area was dominated by streets lined with bourgeois houses in neo-styles. Noteworthy for Ilôt130 is the strong presence of buildings on the interior of the block. Due to relatively deep plots and many 'rear houses,' the remaining open space within the elongated block was already quite limited before the 20th century.

Intially the district featured a strong and urban mix of residential functions along the Rue Joseph II, numerous headquarters of prominent companies and organisations along the prestigious Rue de la Loi, and commercial activity on the Chaussée d'Etterbeek. From the mid-20th century the share of office space started to increase significantly. Combined with an ongoing urban flight, this led to the transformation of the district into a fully-fledged office area, with a building coverage of over 95% and a highly monofunctional character.

The original functional mix of living, working, and commerce forms a second important starting point for the redevelopment. The historical presence of small businesses, along with the reintegration of representative and commercial functions on the ground floor and the restoration of the balance between open space and buildings in the interior, should contribute to reintroducing a human scale and making the district 'habitable' again.

Luchtfoto 1935 (Bruciel)

A Brussels' take on Modernism
The last and most visible layer in the palimpsest of the European Quarter is that of corporate and institutional architecture, represented by the many headquarters and government offices that developed rapidly from the 1950s onwards. The prestigious architecture of individual bourgeois houses gave way to a sober and functional architectural style, driven by the investment logic of an emerging real estate sector. This dynamic brought about a scale increase that extended in all directions. The vertical articulation and the relatively fine-grained plot division were replaced by elongated office complexes, with building heights often more than doubling. The remaining open space within the city block was filled with office spaces and (semi-) subterrean parking garages.

Despite the involvement of leading architects and attention to materials and detailing, the relentless pursuit of optimisation has left its mark on the spatial quality. Elements such as the narrow passage between the Rue Joseph II and the Rue de la Loi, the extensive use of height differences to add extra floors, and the absence of lively, activated ground floors are clear examples of this. At the same time, the functional architecture, largely constructed from rational column-and-beam structures, offers significant potential for sustainable redevelopment adopting a circular design approach.

The redevelopment of the city block now presents opportunities to break open the block, with respect for the qualities of the Polak brothers' signature (architects of Loi 130) and guided by circular construction principles, and to introduce improved spatial quality where previous opportunities were underutilised. Without compromising the cultural-historical and material-technical qualities of the buildings, the redevelopment of the block presents an opportunity o widen passages, create new public spaces, and incorporate mixed-use programs.

This interpretation of the district identifies three themes for the design proposal for Ilôt 130: restoring the landscape, making the district habitable again, and respectfully building on the existing heritage. These themes form the foundation for a thoughtful and sustainable redevelopment strategy for the block and the district.

Loi 130, +- 1986

"Rue de La Loi - C'est celle qui pénètre le plus directement dans toutes les parties de la Ville, dès que l'impasse du Parc est percée, cette Rue est naturellement l'axe principal du Quartier Léopold"

PART 1

Tilman-François Suys & the Valley of the Maelbeek

1.1 Restoring the City Block

The redevelopment of the building block is conceived from 6 strategies, each aiming to reintegrate the buildings with their immediate surroundings.

1. Demolition Strategy
Starting with a carbon-conscious strategy, the proposal minimizes demolition and maximizes the re-use of existing buildings. This approach focuses on selective demolition at pre-identified locations to create new opportunities. Primarily, opening specific areas at the ground level of the current structures would establish visual and/or physical connections to the inner space. Additionally, portions of the existing parking levels in the inner area will be removed and repurposed as patio spaces. This transformation would increase natural light exposure in other parts of the parking levels, enabling the conversion of pre-existing volumes into leasable office spaces. Furthermore, this approach would expand the overall full-soil area on the project site.

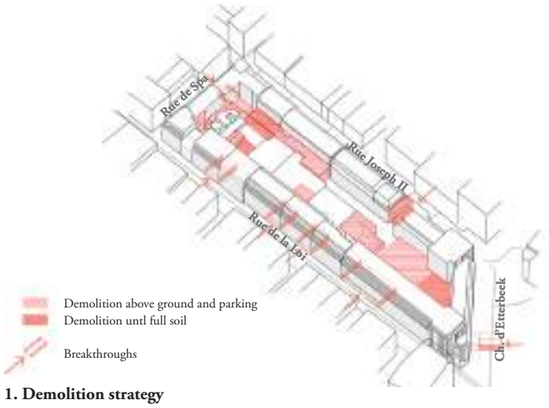
2. Restoring the Landscape
By applying this demolition strategy, the inner area is transformed into a continuous and fluid open landscape, echoing the natural levels of the Maelbeek valley. This new continuity between Rue de Spa and Chaussée d'Etterbeek both connects visually to the outsides of the block, while also restoring physical connections to the public streets they intersect. Introducing voids at the at the level of the surrounding public spaces offers those passing by a glimpse a glimpse in the green interior. These views help transforming the monotonous, continuous volume of the city block into a more fine-grained and human-scaled environment. These interventions are designed to increase the full-soil area by over 3.5 times.To further enhance biodiversity, the inner area buildings will be equipped with green roofs, serving both as outdoor spaces for the offices and as potential areas for urban farming.

3. Living together
Although the remodeled inner area will appear to outside observers as a continuous landscape, It's accessibility and usage is tailored to the programmatic needs of every user, including a clear threshold between public and private. The central passageway between Rue Joseph II and Rue de la Loi will function as a public corridor, leading to a public 'circus' space (green, see page 9). In contrast, the inner courtyard along Chaussée d'Etterbeek and the newly created patios on Rue de la Loi will be primarily reserved for office users (blue). The area behind the residential buildings on Rue Joseph II will serve as a longitudinal collective garden, accessible to residents (red). Despite these functional divisions, the visual and physical continuity between these outdoor spaces and the surrounding streets will is kept. Privacy settings will be harmoniously bridged through various techniques, including changes in elevation, vegetation barriers, and strategic fencing. Moreover these thresholds could change in time, throughout the day or week

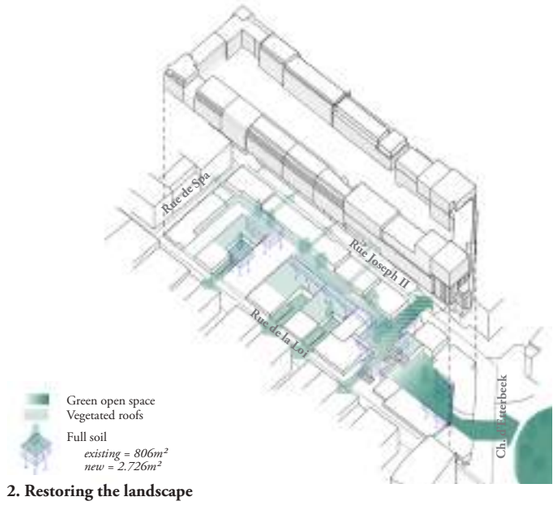
4. Activating the Ground Floors
Various new activities are strategically positioned at key points within the urban block. For instance, along the public passageway, functions catering to both office users and the residents of the Leopold neighborhood are in integrated along the public 'circus.' By adding a sports facility and a cinema to complement the existing auditorium, this area will serve as a neighborhood hub, active throughout the day and night. To further streamline foot traffic entering the passageway, smaller, everyday actvities will be placed at the key corners of the building block —such as a small grocery store at the entrance on Rue Joseph II and a coffee bar near the Metro entrance on Rue de la Loi. On top of that the once flourishing commercial frontage on Chaussée d'Etterbeek, will be restored, as already requested in the 1980's building permit for Loi 130. By integrating duplex commercial spaces, we open up the plinth of the building and reactivate the west oriented façade opposite to the Jardin de Maelbeek.

5. Volumetric Adaptations
The volumetric adaptations on the site will follow the project guidelines established at in the masterplan, focusing on strategies of optimization, compensation, and densification. To achieve optimization, the upper-level technical floors and parts of the existing parking levels will be repurposed into leasable space. In the residential buildings, terrace areas created on lower floors will be rebalanced by expanding volume on the upper levels, within the existing volume. Additionally, floor slabs removed from office buildings to create generous double-height voids will be compensated by adding extensions to the façade of the interior building block (see page 11).The densification strategy (external compensation) is based on an analysis of the urban context and existing structures. This analysis identified the Loi130 building as the most suitable site for significant transformation. This building serves as a transitional element between the strictly zoned buildings along Rue de la Loi (along the plan of Suys) and the more freely distributed high-rise buildings toward Schuman. As the building is already designed as a high-rise ('bâtiment élevé') with the necessary escape routes and vertical circulation (see page 10), it can be extended vertically without technical obstacles that would complicate or hinder further development."

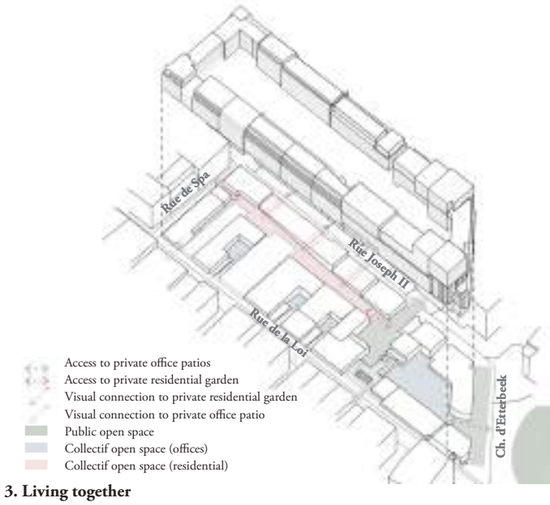
6. Mobility & parking
Currently, the site holds multiple parking lots, each with its own entrances and internal organization. Primarily all the accesses form the from Rue de la Loi will be removed, reducing conflicts with the sidewalks and bicycle lanes and improving overall traffic safety. The three remaining parking areas will be accessed via Rue Joseph II, while also retaining the existing entrance for the Belfius office on Rue de la Loi. One of the parking areas will have a dual purpose, serving both residential and office users. The remaining parking spaces and former ramps along the Rue de la Loi will be repurposed for bicycle storage.



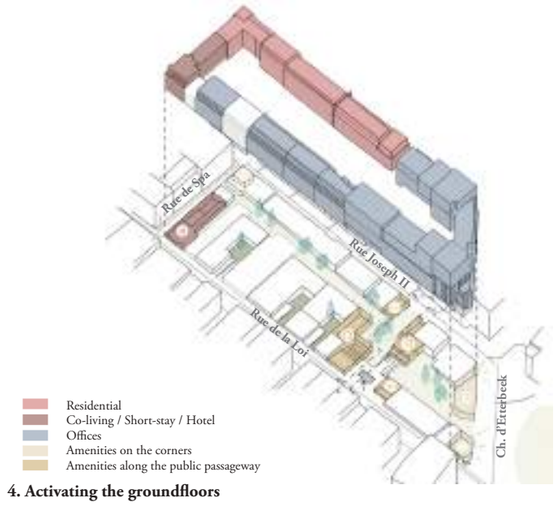
1. Demolition strategy



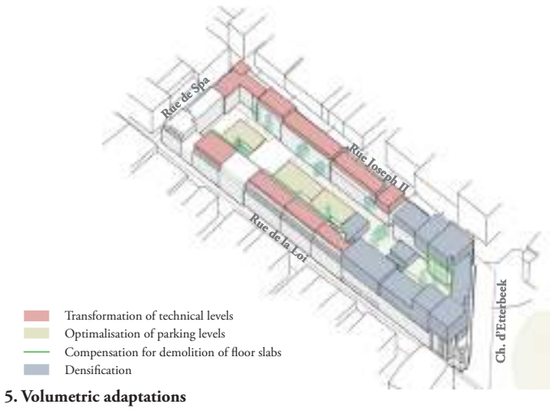
2. Restoring the landscape



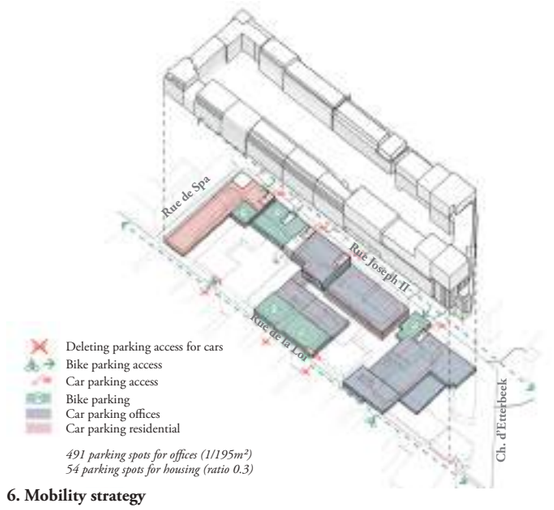
3. Living together



4. Activating the groundfloors



5. Volumetric adaptations



6. Mobility strategy

1.2 Recovering the Valley of the Maelbeek

The combination of six key design strategies at the building block scale introduces an entirely new logic to the interior of the plot. By carving out excess building mass from the centre of the block, reorganising parking, and upgrading the public passageways, we create space for a revitalised landscape. Obsolete structures have been removed, nearly tripling the area of full soil, allowing for the reintroduction of a continuous, soft-sloping natural environment.

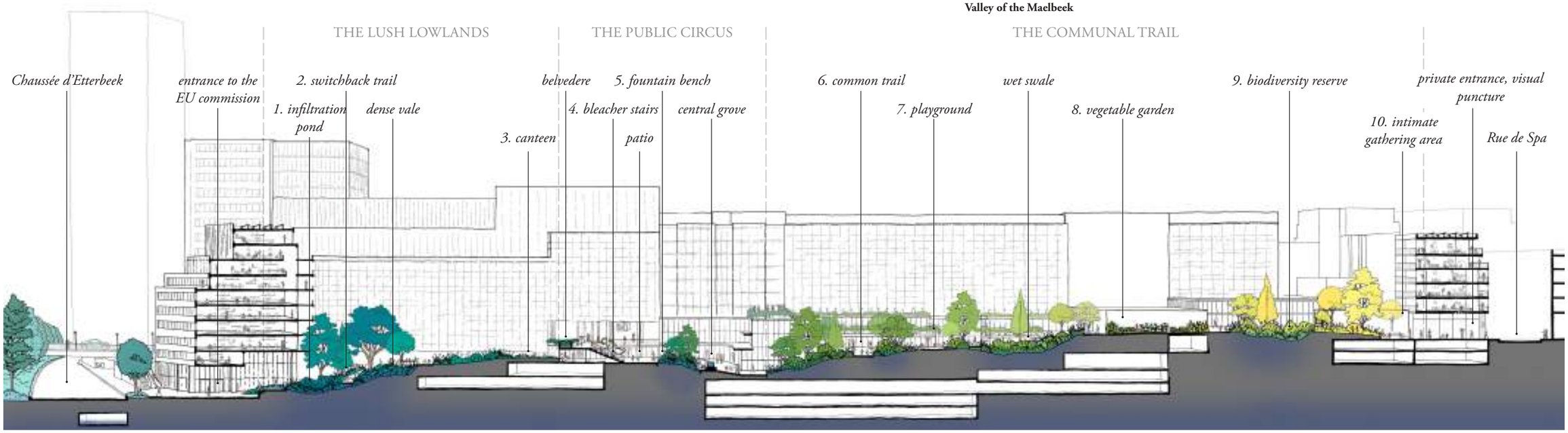
A rejuvenated natural valley now stretches across the courtyard, from the hillside down to the historic Maelbeek Riverbed. The seamless landscape unfolds, adapting and evolving as it interacts with the distinct character of each space.

Starting at the Chaussée de Etterbeek and the Maelbeek, the landscape gently ascends through a 'lush lowlands' zone, where infiltration ponds and shade-loving plants mitigate urban heat. Further uphill, the landscape merges with the 'central circus' (see page 9), accommodating a more urbanised area with higher traffic and activity. Water elements are playfully integrated here, evoking the memory of the valley while cooling the space through evaporation.

The landscape extends into the residential gardens along Rue Joseph II, conceived as a 'communal trail'. This elongated open space meanders between new housing units and low-rise office patios, varying in width (approximately 14m on average). It offers a blend of uses, from playgrounds and vegetable gardens to spaces that support biodiversity.

At every level, water features flow in various forms, creating a rich tapestry of natural environments. These not only enhance urban biodiversity but also contribute significantly to climate change mitigation efforts.

Valley of the Maelbeek



1.3 Landscape First!

With a strong emphasis on nature-based solutions, the approach to climate responsiveness and biodiversity is further refined throughout various elements of the landscape plan. Balancing climatic conditions, soil constraints, and the programmatic context of surrounding buildings, the open landscape is designed to be both visually cohesive and continuous, while also offering a complex and varied network of distinct spaces and activities. Different gradients of urban activities are therefore carefully intertwined with the development of the open green spaces, creating a diverse and dynamic urban landscape.

In more dynamic public areas, such as the central circus, larger trees are planted to provide shade, while maintaining open ground floors that accommodate urban life—be it for terraces, small events, or simple passers-by. A soft gradient between paved and unpaved areas enhances the natural atmosphere without compromising practical usability for day-to-day activities.

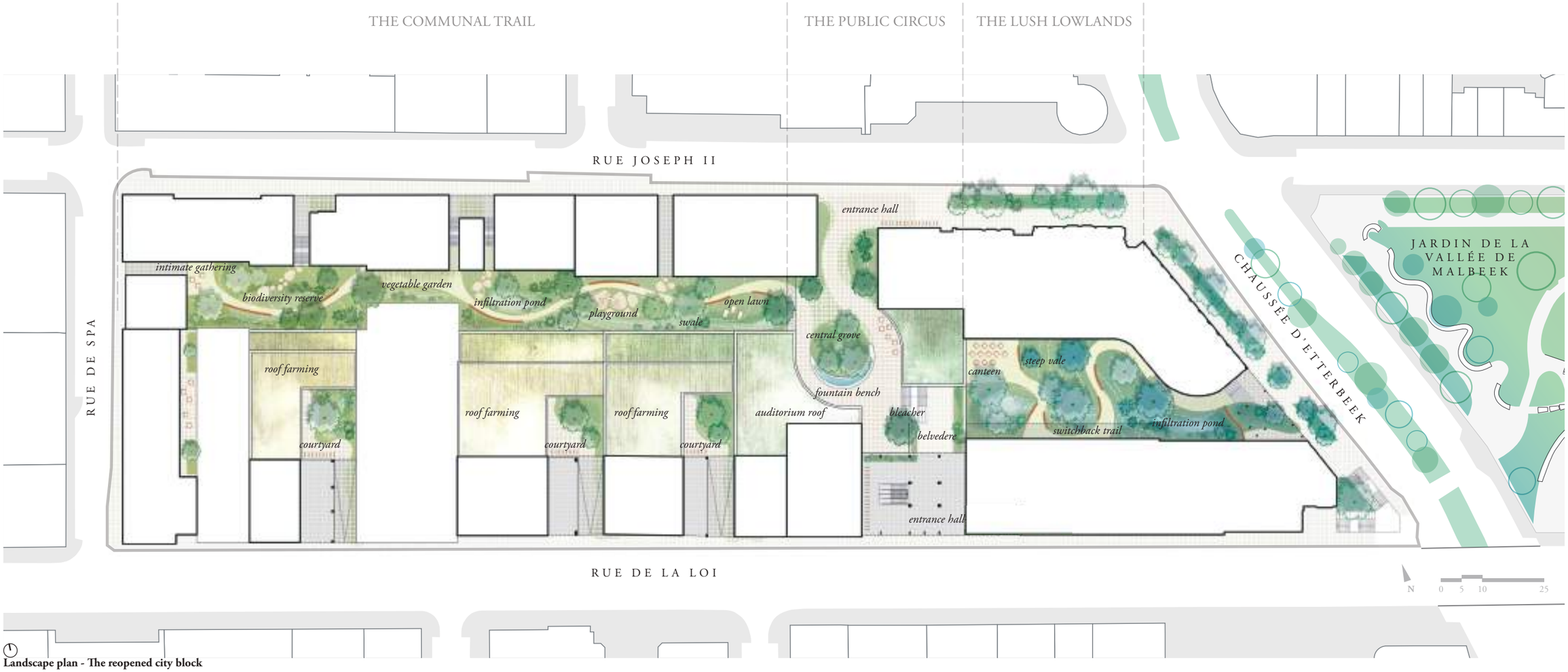
In quieter zones, such as the 'communal trail' along Rue Joseph II and parts of the 'lush lowlands' within the Loi130 courtyard, a diverse mix of tree sizes, multi-stemmed shrubs, and grasses is introduced. This natural planting scheme creates human-scale spaces for play, relaxation, and outdoor meetings, while also serving as a gentle transition between areas used by office workers and residents.

Additionally, smaller, low-activity areas are incorporated where human presence is minimal. These pockets serve as sanctuaries for biodiversity to thrive and maximise the cooling benefits of shade and evaporation.

In short, this 'Landscape First' approach draws inspiration from the complexity of the 19th-century layered landscape of the Maelbeek Valley. Much like the hilly patchwork of wetlands, open fields, and pathways of the past, the new landscape once again integrates spaces for urban activity and life with the need for passage and circulation, all within the framework of a performant natural system.

Existing situation

Reopened city block (+320% accessible open space)



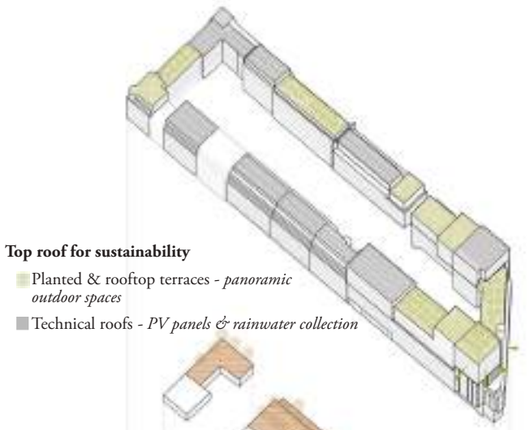
Landscape plan - The reopened city block

1.4 Re-nature: The Maelbeek Biotope

The strategy for the restoration of the Maelbeek Valley goes beyond mere landscape design. The restoration of natural processes and the integration of 'nature-based solutions' are deeply embedded in the design decisions for the transformation of the entire building block. The vision for greenery and landscape weaves through the entire block, with three different 'layers' of green spaces, depending on the climatic conditions (such as sunlight and rainwater), accessibility, and the surrounding functions.

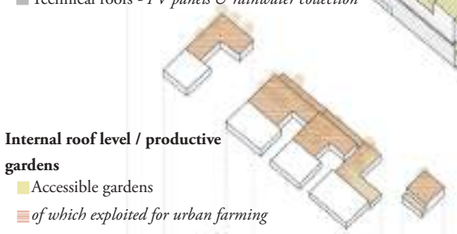
The first layer is the 'rejuvenated valley,' a lush, natural garden where a diverse mix of plants and trees is given space to fully develop, and where rainwater can directly infiltrate into the ground. The second layer is located on the patios. These rooftop gardens are connected to the communal spaces of the offices and serve as areas for relaxation, but can also be used for urban farming or gardening. The third layer consists of the office building roofs, which are used both for the generation of renewable energy (with PV panels) and for collective rooftop terraces, offering a beautiful view over the Leopold District, the Cinquantenaire, and the city center of Brussels.

This approach is also reflected in the technical design of the buildings. By maximizing the reuse of rainwater and allowing excess water to infiltrate, the ecological footprint of the project is reduced. The various gardens not only increase local biodiversity but also contribute to CO2 storage and the production of fresh air. Additionally, the positive effects of green spaces on the living environment have now been widely demonstrated. Finally, this project also strives for the maximum reuse of existing materials (such as structures and facade panels). Where reuse is not possible, recycled materials are used, for example in the form of seating elements or gravel. Remaining materials are produced as much as possible from biobased sources and implemented in a dismantlable way. In this way, the transformation of Ilôt130 can have a positive impact on the broader living environment.



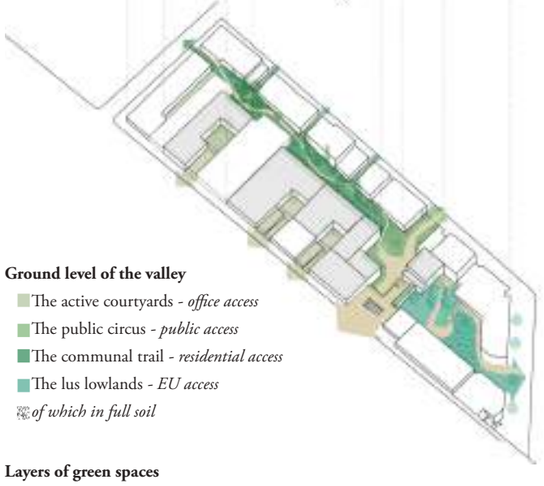
Top roof for sustainability

- Planted & rooftop terraces - *panoramic outdoor spaces*
- Technical roofs - *PV panels & rainwater collection*



Internal roof level / productive gardens

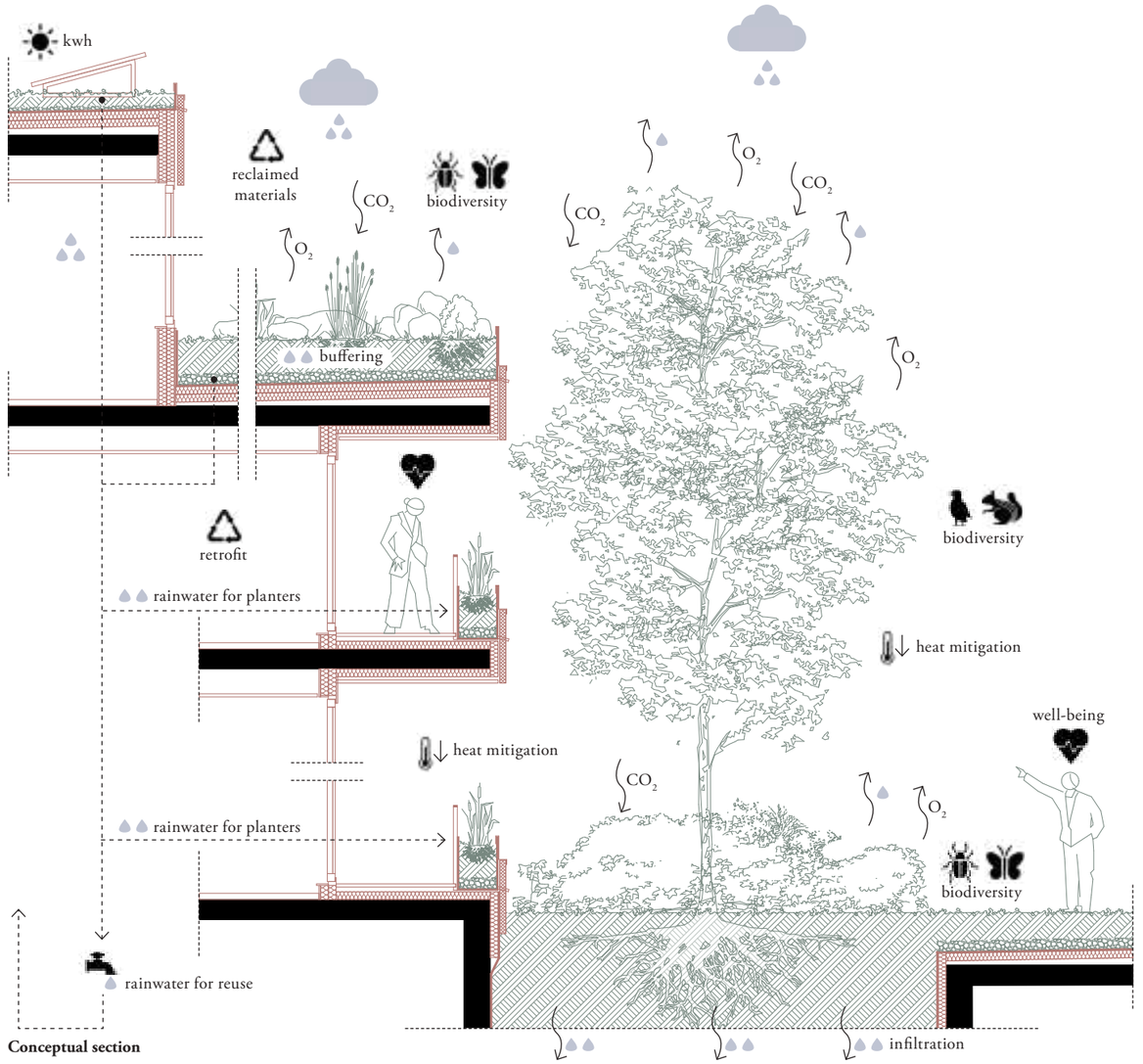
- Accessible gardens
- *of which exploited for urban farming*



Ground level of the valley

- The active courtyards - *office access*
- The public circus - *public access*
- The communal trail - *residential access*
- The Ius lowlands - *EU access*
- *of which in full soil*

Layers of green spaces



Conceptual section

Planted roofs

Urban farming

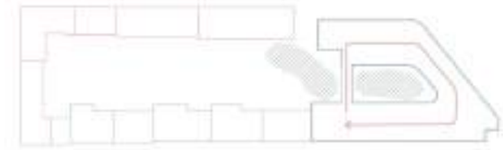
Stepped planters

Ground level

1.5 A Permeable City Block

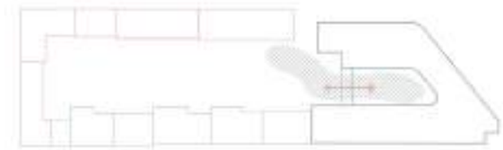
The redevelopment of Ilôt130 presents a unique opportunity to transform not only the buildings but also the functionality of the entire block and the surrounding neighbourhood. A key aspect of this redevelopment is the upgrading of the existing passage into a full-fledged public space between Rue de la Loi and Rue Joseph II. This existing passage will be significantly expanded and thoroughly renewed, turning a former backside into a new front. On the Joseph II Street side, the block will be completely opened up, highlighting the public nature of the passage. On the Rue de la Loi side, the existing building by the Polak brothers will be opened over two floors and over a length of more than 40 metres. The passage will remain purposefully connected to the Metro station, both at the level of the passage as along the Rue de la Loi. Together with the new sightlines and the connection to the new valley garden, this will create a vibrant public space with new façades and dynamic functions such as a cinema and sports facility (see page 9).
A second opportunity lies in the diversification of the programme. As outlined in the masterplan, primarily office functions will be developed along Rue de la Loi, while the existing office buildings on Rue Joseph II will be converted into residential areas. Along Chaussée de Etterbeek and at the corners of the block, commercial functions will be introduced. In this way, the Chaussée reconnects with its past and the original intentions of the Suys plan and Loi130 development. On the corner of Rue de Spa and Rue de la Loi, a transition zone between residential and office spaces will emerge, where temporary accommodation, such as short-stay typologies or hotels, will be among the possibilities (see page 15). Finally, the scale of the transformation also offers opportunities to prepare the buildings for rapid social and economic changes through intelligent interventions. By thoughtfully adjusting circulation cores and using strategically placed voids to bridge height differences between various floor levels, the buildings can be used flexibly, either independently (multi-tenant) or by a single large organisation (single-tenant) (see page 11).

Additionally, the plan provides opportunities to integrate complex requirements around security and access control. A private connection at the passage level, for instance, can enable the entire building at Loi 130 to function as one cohesive office building, with a limited number of entrances and efficient internal circulation. Simultaneously, this passage can also be removed, allowing the inner gardens to connect seamlessly with the central passage if the specific programme demands it.



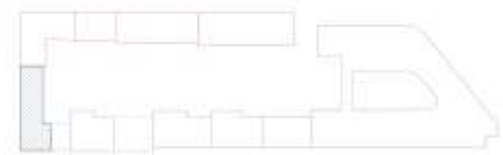
Courtyard office space with private passage

Multi-tenant approach (see page 11)



Continuous valley garden

Single-tenant approach (see page 11)



Transition zone with hotel or short stay between residential and office spaces

1. Circus space / 2. Entrance Rue de la Loi & Metro / 3. Entrance Ch. de Etterbeek / 4. Entrance Rue Joseph II / 5. Residential garden / 6. Valley courtyard / 7. Office patio / 8. Cinema Polak & cultural space / 9. Sports facility

Typical upper floorplan 1/1000

1.6 Embracing Street Life

Although Suys' original plan envisioned three separate building blocks for the Ilôt130 site, the final design was executed as a single, elongated structure spanning approximately 300 meters. This design choice ultimately closed off the visual connections between the perpendicular streets and Rue de la Loi. To counterbalance the length of the facade and break up the uniformity of the streetscape, one of the key interventions in the redevelopment involves introducing active, human-scaled ground floors and creating connections to green spaces. By opening the ground floors to the block's interior, the greenery of the inner area is extended into the surrounding streets, enhancing the urban environment. The inclusion of entrances for housing and offices, along with various activities, will further animate the ground floor, giving the facade a more dynamic and inviting character.

1. Entrance to the Office Patios – The existing parking ramps of the buildings along Rue de la Loi will be repurposed to provide open-air access to the newly created patio spaces. Flanking these ramps, the glazed entrance lobbies of the office buildings will offer expansive sightlines into the inner courtyard area.

2. Rue de Trèves – In the Loi 78 building, the existing auditorium will be retained as a shared facility for both office workers and residents of the Leopold district. The open entrance to the Metro station, combined with the glazed office lobbies and access to a newly created patio, will create a visual connection to the green inner courtyard, making it visible from Rue de Trèves.

3. Metro Maelbeek – At the entrance to the Maelbeek Metro station, both the ground floor and first floor will be completely opened to form a public passageway. On either side of the Metro entrance, amenities such as a coffee shop and the existing auditorium will further expand the view into the inner area. The public nature of the entrance will be emphasized by the integration of art on the soffit of the passage.

4. Chaussée d'Etterbeek – At Chaussée d'Etterbeek, the street connection will be restored by demolishing sections of the existing parking structure and introducing a landscaped connection between the public space and the interior courtyard. Adjacent to this ground-floor opening, double-height spaces, such as office entrances and duplex amenities, will bring more activity and life to the ground level.

5. & 6. Entrée Rue Joseph II – The entrance to the residential units will be made prominent by opening up the ground floor, creating a direct physical connection to the collective garden. Spacious entrance halls will provide direct access to bike storage and house mailboxes. In addition, some duplex apartments will have street-level front doors, further activating the ground floor and enhancing street-level interaction.


1.


2.


3.

Rue de la Loi


4.


5.

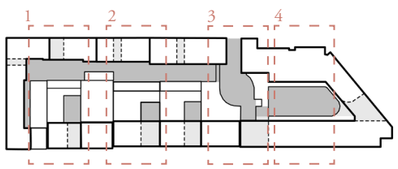

6.

Rue Joseph II

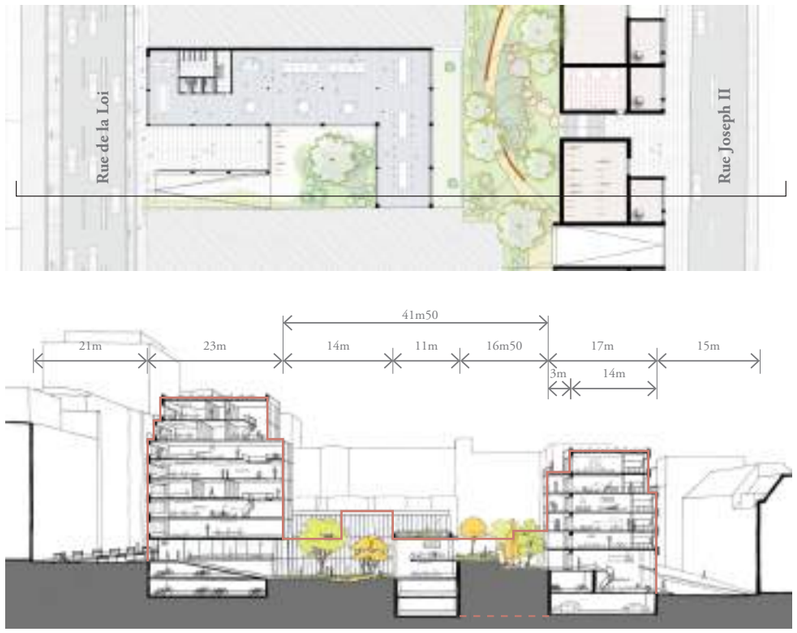
1.7 Reconnecting to the Topography of the Valley

The proximity to the Maelbeek creates a complex topography, characteristic of the many small valleys found across the Brussels territory. Over the past few decades, construction has steadily filled in this unique landscape, hiding the complexity of the landscape and overlooking the opportunities it presents. By thoughtfully "carving out" again the excess built mass, the balance between constructed and open spaces can be restored. What was once underground, utilitarian space is transformed into outdoor patios, green terraces, high-quality office spaces, and duplex dwellings.

The parking ramps of the existing office buildings on Rue de la Loi will be repurposed to provide access to newly designed patios. Surrounding these patios, the current parking levels will be converted into leasable office spaces, including meeting rooms and breakout areas. The setback of these volumes, combined with the difference in elevation, will introduce a sense of intimacy toward the collective garden within the residential development.
In the residential buildings, double-height entrance halls will connect directly to the collective gardens and provide access to bicycle parking. Elsewhere, duplex apartments will feature private front doors on Rue Joseph II and individual outdoor spaces, each linked to the collective garden.
At the Metro Maelbeek entrance, the lower level grants access to a public passageway that connects Rue de la Loi with Rue Joseph II. Along this passageway, an indoor walkway is created exclusively for the tenants of the Lot 130 office building, forming a continuous circulation route around the inner courtyard. Above this walkway, and directly connected to Rue de la Loi, a belvedere offers access to the upper level of the sports facilities. A large public staircase provides a connection between this upper level and the lower public passageway.
The section through the inner courtyard of Lot 130 illustrates the change in elevation from the public passageway down to Chaussée d'Etterbeek. The roofs of the parking levels will be repurposed as outdoor spaces for offices and terraces for the cafeteria. Entrance lobbies will connect the adjacent streets with these outdoor areas, activating the ground floor. Existing buildings in the inner area will be enhanced with terraces or winter gardens, creating double-height voids within the office spaces.



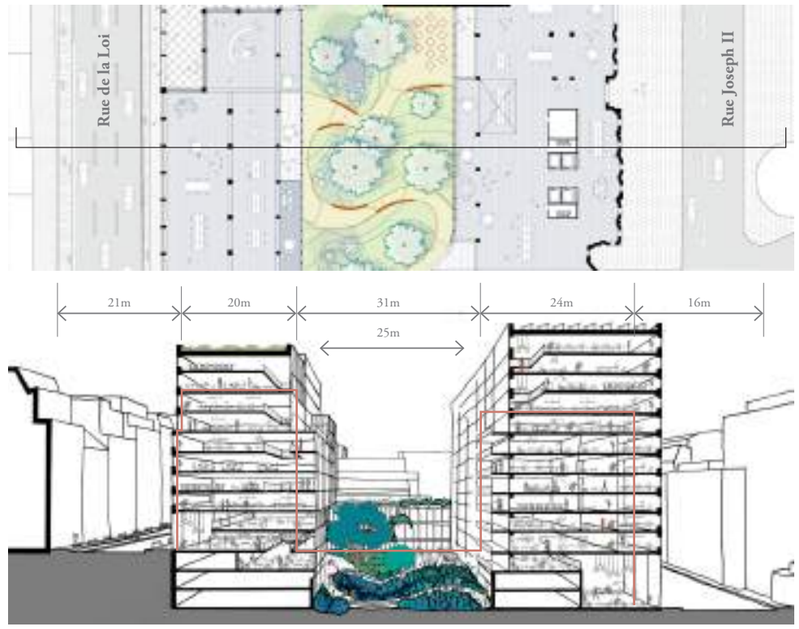
Indication of zooms



Zoom 1

Zoom 2

Zoom 3



Zoom 4

1.8 The 'Circus'

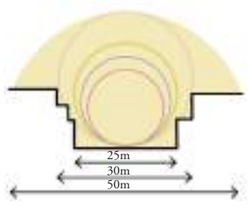
In the middle of the building block, the existing public passageway is transformed into a new central public plaza. Located to the heart of the development – centred on the already established public route to Maelbeek Metro Station – the 'circus' plaza acts as a key urban space within the city block, at the confluence of numerous routes. The word 'circus' originates from the Latin word circus, which means ring, oval or circle. The circular space and its cascading terraces make reference to both the ancient amphitheatres with their multiple views towards a key central point as well as to the eponymous typology in 18th and 19th century British urbanism in which circular spaces were used to integrate the increasing intensities of flows in the growing cities with the calmness & simplicity of the circular form.

We envisage this key central space being used in a similar way, not only helping to guide pedestrians through the public realm to the streets beyond, but also acting as a community space where the 'theatre of life' takes place: a space to participate in events; to 'rendez-vous'; to dwell; to spend time with loved ones. The circus space is deliberately tiered to create a series of accessible terraces and multi-level green spaces, overlooking the central space where the theatre occurs. These terraced volumes to all sides of the central plaza, extend the space vertically, adding spatial generosity, whilst leading the eye to multiple routes beyond, each 'spinning' from the central 'pin wheel' at the centre of the circus. Simultaneously the contrasting form, the human scale of the space and the cascading terraces introduce an unexpected and surprising experience within the dense European District.

The circus therefore combines the qualities of a space of passage with those of a destination. Different amenity spaces will be accessible from this public space, such as the lower level of the sports/activity centre and a newly created cultural foyer, which will give access to an arthouse cinema and the existing (rejuvenated) auditorium. Covered galleries extend the space and will provide shade and give shelter when entering these public amenities. The circus will also give direct access to the entrance of the Metro Maelbeek, creating a 'parvis' to the Rue de la Loi. The connection to Rue de la Loi is made by a generous urban stair with integrated 'elephant' seating to showcase outdoor projections onto adjacent facades/temporary external screens. The upper level of the sports/activity centre will also be accessible from the Rue de la Loi level. Beneath this connection, an interior private circulation spine and gallery - enjoying spectacular views to the verdant private garden (only accessible for the tenant of the Loi 130 building) - completes the circulation around the inner courtyard.

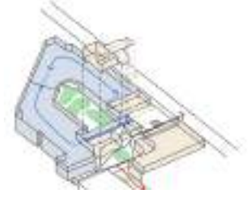
Axonometric of the circus

Amenities Offices Residential



1. Place de Londres - 2.200m²
2. Circus - 2.280m²
3. Place du Samedi - 2.800m²
4. Place des Halles Saint Géry - 3.500m²

Scale research



Flows

“Door deze transformatie versterken we de positie van onze hoofdstad als het hart van Europa. Tegelijk spelen we ook in op de sterke vraag naar diversificatie en bijkomende woningen in de Europese wijk,”

PART 2

From the Leopold District to the European Quarter: Working

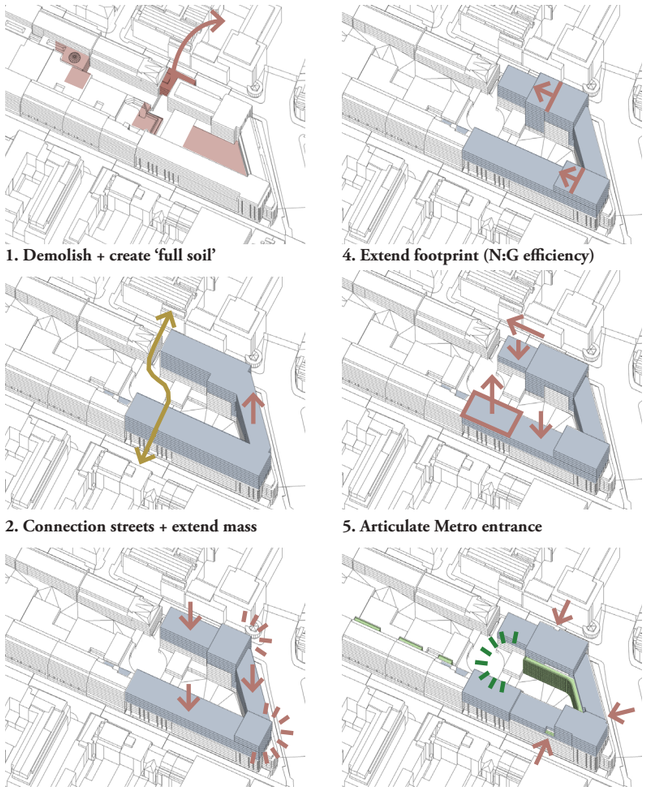
2.1 Densifying Loi 130

The densification of the existing Loi 130 plot is proposed to the areas as outlined within the diargams illustrated opposite. The overarching approach is to densify the form in the areas of the building where the urban form can most comfortably handle additional height and mass, in townscape terms, i.e. from the 'outside-in'. Namely, the two already existing mini 'tower' forms that form the urban corners to the end of the block. In doing so, the new mass allows for a highly efficient extension of the building, using the 'high-rise' (two stair) core design already in existence here, whilst simultaneously building on to Polak's initially design logic. In doing so the overall net-to-gross of these elements is greatly improved from the existing, inefficient, situation.

The densification has also been proposed from the 'inside-out', with the massing proposed to allow continuous circulation internally (not possible in full, currently), whilst seeking to optimise opportunities for abundant internal and external amenity, with a focus on maximum flexibility, wellbeing and modern working.

note: a rendering including the volume of the 'Realex development is included in the annexe

- **A** Existing context (as built)
- **B** Permitted context (but not yet built)
- **C** Proposed densification to Ilôt 130 (office)



1. Demolish + create 'full soil'

2. Connection streets + extend mass

3. Accentuate 'towers' to corners

4. Extend footprint (N:G efficiency)

5. Articulate Metro entrance

6. Add setbacks and amenity

Tower holds the urban corner and optimises presence and views to the EU Quarter

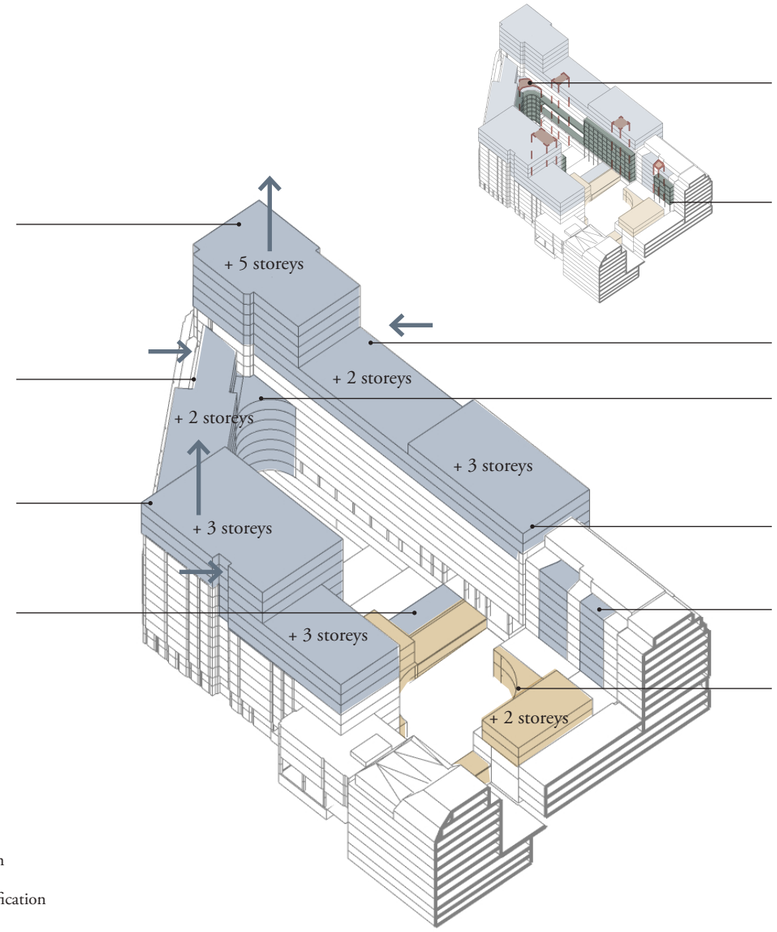
Setback to massing helps articulate tower

Tower holds the urban corner and optimises presence and views to the EU Quarter

New gallery at level -1 provides link between North and South of Ilôt 130 plot and creates a continuous circulation loop

Office Densification

Community Densification



Double height voids created to provide spatial generosity within otherwise low floor to ceiling height zones

Enhanced floorplates to courtyard provide additional internal and external amenity, with a focus on wellness

Setback to massing helps articulate tower

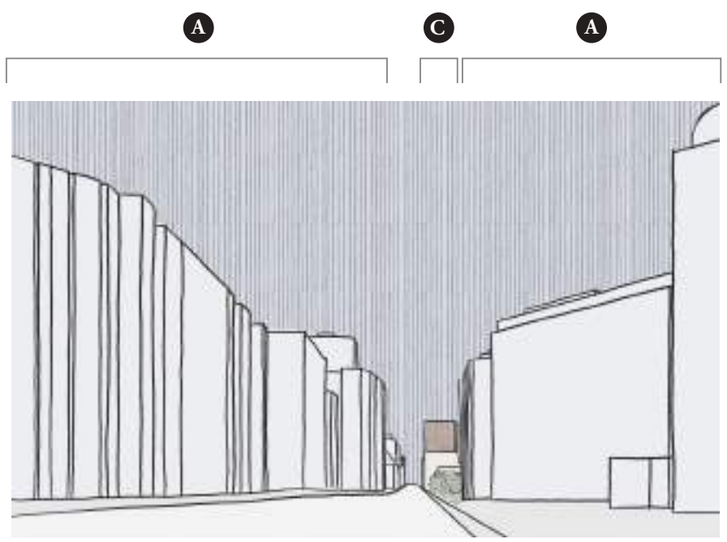
Curved infill 'softens' courtyard and creates opportunity for large lightwells, plus internal and external amenity

Lower massing steps provide articulation to Rue de la Loi buildings

Infills rationalise floors and allow for internal and external amenity

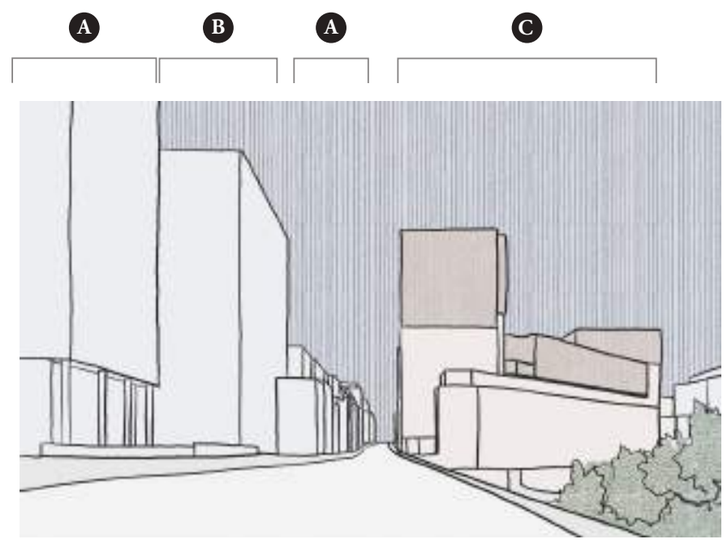
Curves to new public space help 'guide' urban flow and provide element of 'surprise' and 'relief' to the otherwise orthogonal buildings, adjacent

Cut-away axonometric diagrams highlighting key massing moves in tems of the community and office use densification



Long distance townscape view from Rue de la Loi
The proposed height blends in with existing high rise buildings along the eastern part of the Rue de la Loi

Mid distance townscape view from Rue de la Loi
The indenting alignment of the building is accentuating the intersection of both streets



Near distance townscape view from Rue de la Loi
The building becomes a pivotal point between the planned Realex development and the western part of the Rue de la Loi

2.2 Creating a Contemporary Workplace

The design proposal concentrates the office use areas of the brief to the Rue de la Loi, *Chaussée d'Etterbeek*, and the eastern side of the Rue Joseph II - as per the masterplan principles set out in the design brief. The design seeks to completely re-cast the existing out-of-date office layout and functionality to provide a highly flexible framework for a highly contemporary, office of the future - to enable the workplace to act simultaneously as a place for culture, for creativity, and for social and serendipitous ideas exchange.

Entrance areas (of which there are four designed for) are all now proposed as double height, open and welcoming - yet highly secure - spaces activating the surrounding public realm. They are all located to key urban corners, on activated public routes. The typical upper floors are proposed to be opened up in key locations across the plan to providing double height zones throughout, opening up views and creating spatial generosity within what are otherwise low (existing) floor-to-ceiling heights at 3.3m. All new densified floors above are proposed at a more generous 3.6m floor-to-floor.

All internal workspaces are designed to have direct access to external amenity - with optmised views to nature - afforded through the addition of new terraces throughout, overlooking the serene valley landscape.

Well in line with the ambitions of the European Green Deal, the Brussels Region's sustainbility strategy and Cityforward's mission statement, the design seeks to meet the highest possible targets in terms of sustainability credentials, including BREEAM Outstanding, WELL Platinum whilst targeting net zero operational carbon. Energy performance will be optimised through committing to the NABERS and Design for Performance process. Basic design attitudes in terms overheating, daylight performance,... have already been implemented in the design strategies. throughout the followin design stages, the ambitious targets will be aligned with the project sustainability brief, and cost plan allowances.

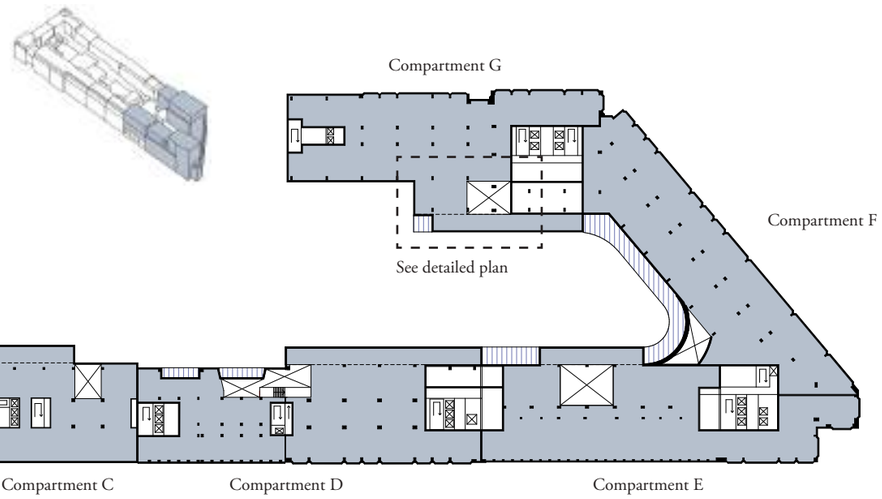
Summary note: compartments refer to required fire compartments in accordance with Belgian statutory fire regulations, where escape exits are provided to each end of the compartment, and where the compartment is no greater than 2,500m2 - including the linking of compartments over two floors through double height voids.

Ground Floor Plan (NTS), highlighting entrances

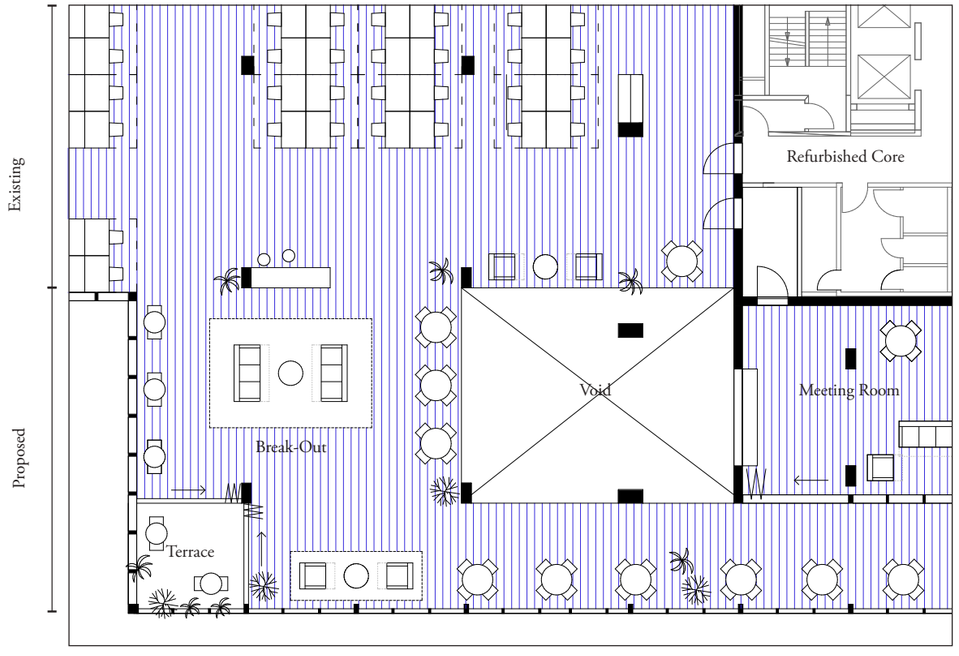
Net Internal Area (Typical Floor)

Tenant 1 5,890 m2

Note: all compartments accessible to one another internally (except compartment A) through new linking stairs bridging circa 1.5m high level difference within compartment D



Office Use Floor Plan (not to scale) illustrating single tenant floorplate layout

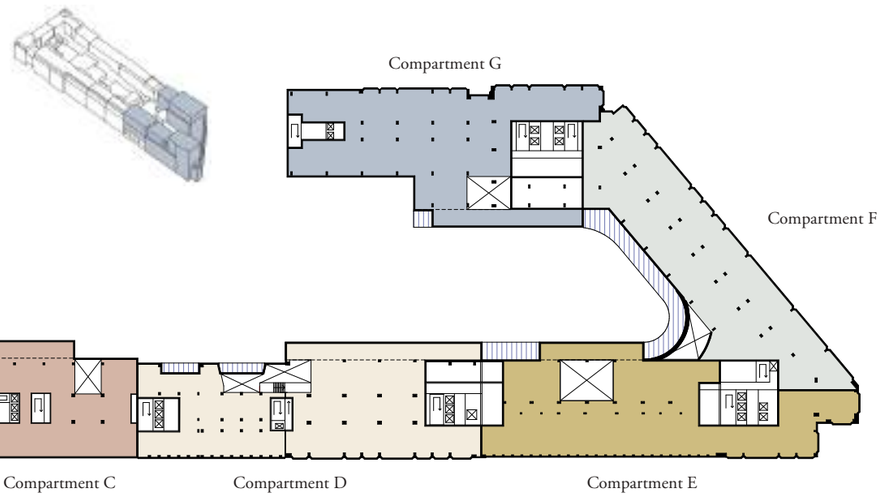


Detailed Plan (not to scale) illustrating suggested layout and zoning

Net Internal Area (Typical Floor)

Tenant 1	1,034 m2
Tenant 2	1,074 m2
Tenant 3	1,052 m2
Tenant 4	1,110 m2
Tenant 5	574 m2
Tenant 6	645 m2
Tenant 7	401 m2

Note: tenant splts show examples with the greatest and fewest number of splits possible to demonstrate inherent flexibililty designed for, but other configurations between these two extremes are also possible.



Office Use Floor Plan (not to scale) illustrating multi-tenant floorplate layout, demonstating flexibility for multiple tenant occupancy

2.3 'Office Plus' Design Approach

The approach to the design of contemporary worksplaces is defined by an in-house developed approach, coined ' Office Plus'. This approach stems from our experience in designing various office environments and is defined by six core tenets, as described below:

1. **Make Programmatic Connections:** Forge better connections between the workplace and wider communities, creating links through varied programmes that blur boundaries between public and private / inside and out. *

2. **Value Material:** Prioritise ambitious sustainability goals placing the highest value on existing building stock, and refocus on the value of materials and the importance of circular design principles.

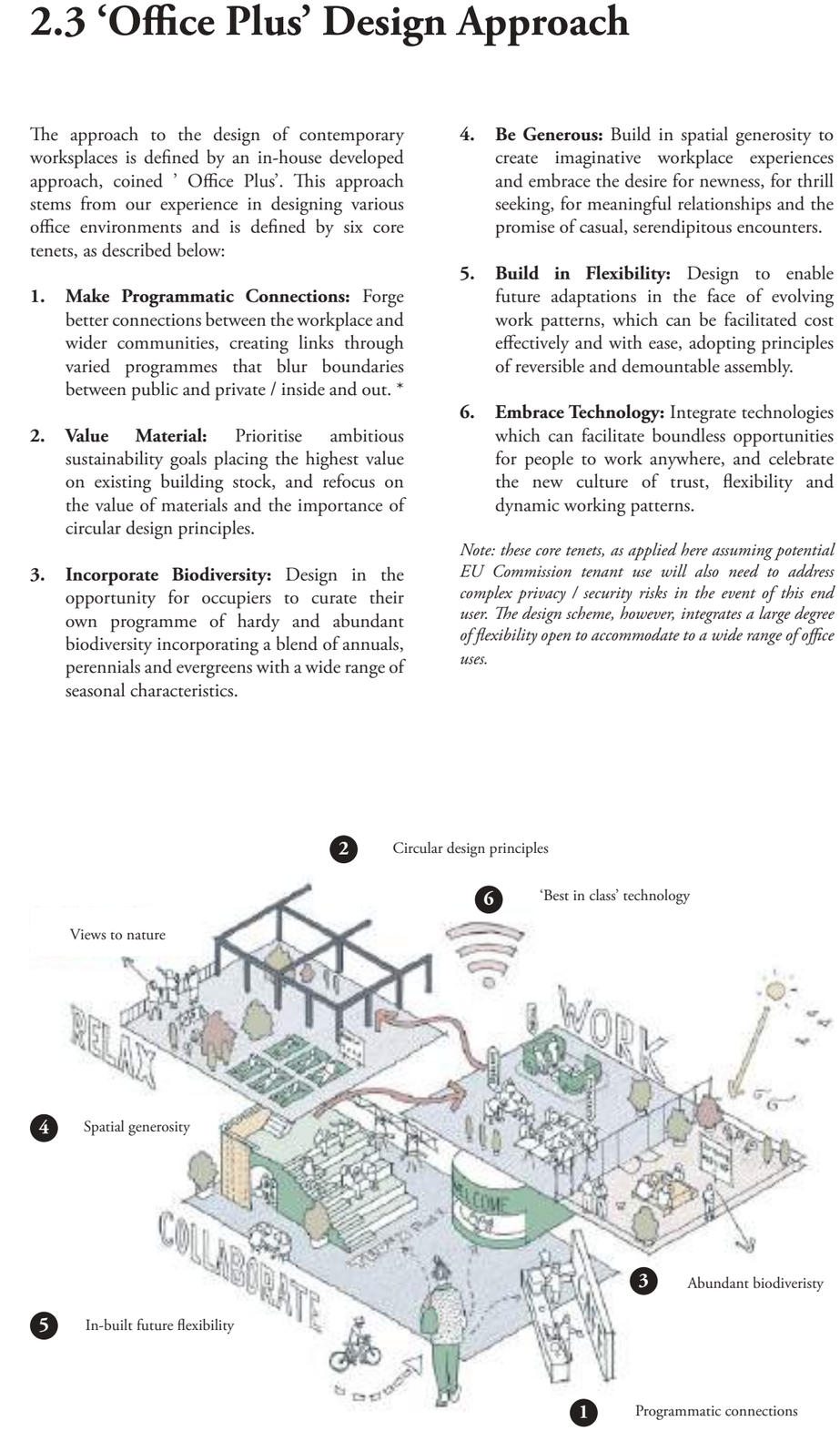
3. **Incorporate Biodiversity:** Design in the opportunity for occupiers to curate their own programme of hardy and abundant biodiversity incorporating a blend of annuals, perennials and evergreens with a wide range of seasonal characteristics.

4. **Be Generous:** Build in spatial generosity to create imaginative workplace experiences and embrace the desire for newness, for thrill seeking, for meaningful relationships and the promise of casual, serendipitous encounters.

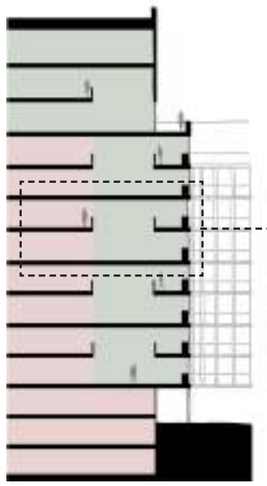
5. **Build in Flexibility:** Design to enable future adaptations in the face of evolving work patterns, which can be facilitated cost effectively and with ease, adopting principles of reversible and demountable assembly.

6. **Embrace Technology:** Integrate technologies which can facilitate boundless opportunities for people to work anywhere, and celebrate the new culture of trust, flexibility and dynamic working patterns.

Note: these core tenets, as applied here assuming potential EU Commission tenant use will also need to address complex privacy / security risks in the event of this end user. The design scheme, however, integrates a large degree of flexibility open to accommodate to a wide range of office uses.

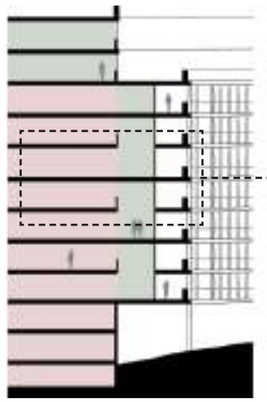


'Office Plus' key principles diagram



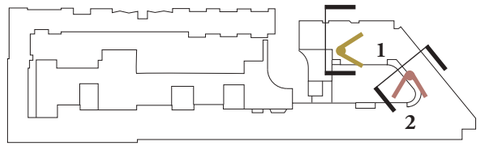
Typical section: void locations

3 Sheldon Square internal amenity, M+C



Typical section: void locations

3 Sheldon Square external amenity, M+C



Key Plan

Internal amenity areas within double height void areas (pink: existing / green: new)

External amenity areas to the courtyard, with views to the restored landscape (pink: existing / green: new)

"The high ambitions of Cityforward aligned with an inclusive design process foster a continuous pursuit of quality and innovation, and allow the development of Ilôt 130 to emerge as a turning point for the European Quarter"

PART 3

From the Leopold District to the European Quarter: Living

3.1 Inhabiting the Leopold Quarter

As mentioned before, sustainability considerations steer the overall project toward maximum preservation of buildings and structures to avoid carbon intensive new construction. To achieve the proposed transition from monofunctional building block to layered multifunctional complex, the northwest quadrant of offices will be transformed into urban residential units. This assignment has specific challenges. The configuration of risers and columns is different for office buildings than for residential buildings. With a building depth between 16.5 and 20 meters, the dimensions differ greatly from the average 13-meter building depth that is standard for residential buildings. Because individual office buildings differ from one another, each building requires its own solution. The approach summarizes as follows;

- existing vertical risers are retained, possibly with modifications;
- the infill adapts to the rhythm of the existing load-bearing lines and the grid of the columns;
- necessary additions or modifications to the buildings do not impact the underlying parking floors;
- terraces are formed from the existing slabs; no new structures for outdoor spaces are added;
- interior space lost through the creation of terraces and exterior circulation is compensated by the additional conversion of parking space or technical (attic) space into living space, or exceptionally by adding floors, and this within the own sub-parcel;
- attention will be paid that the buildings do not exceed the fire classification “medium-rise”;

Because each building is different, the end result will also be different each time. There is a strength in this variation.

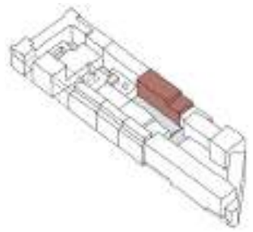
Whereas the appearance of office buildings is determined by modularity and flexibility, the identity of residential buildings is determined by individuality, recognizability and the desire to differentiate from the rest. A rich pallet of apartments, typologies, plan forms and configurations ensures that a diverse target audience can feel at home. Although the residential buildings each have their own caracter and accents, they share some basic core characteristics;

- the address of each residential block features a double-height, generous thoroughfare from street to garden;
- circulation areas are open or have contact with the outside through windows or vistas (cfr. Brussels Good Living);
- all large apartments (2+ bedrooms) and most small apartments (1 bedroom, studio) are transversal, with livingspaces both on the garden and the street side (cfr. Brussels Good Living);
- each apartment has its private outdoor space;
- deep terraces on the garden side occupy the entire width of the apartment, also acting as passive sun protection on the south;
- duplex apartments bridge the height difference between street and garden and bring living to street level;
- - duplex apartments on the upper floors ensure at critical points that the complex remains a “low-rise”;
- communal spaces are added to enhance livability and strengthen the sense of community;



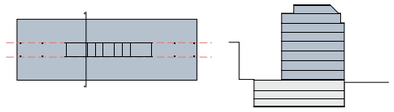
reference of the terraces on the park side: a2o - Ursulinnen

3.2 Rue Joseph II nr. 99



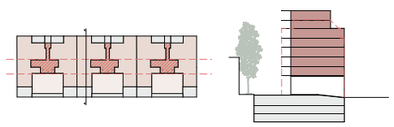
The former office building has a deep plan with an elongated central core and columns in line with the load-bearing walls. Cutting up the existing core creates three stairwells around each of which three apartments are connected. The hall has a passage to the street on each floor. This brings daylight inside, and at the same time provides the necessary evacuation routes. By placing alternating terraces on both facades, the building depth of 20 meters is reduced to a more manageable 15 meters for residential buildings. The staggered façade line gives dynamism and scale to the street side. The rhythm of residential units is made legible. The architecture distinguishes itself from the larger-scale and more monotonous office designs in the neighborhood. Living spaces extend to the street façade. Balconies occupied by furniture and terrace plants are a new feature for the Joseph II street, signaling a new chapter.

current office building

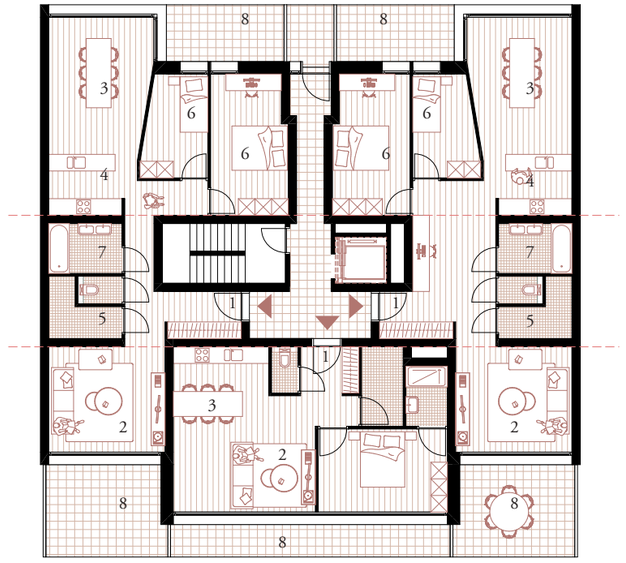


plan section

proposed transformation



plan section



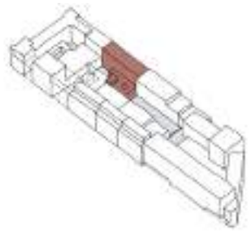
proposed typology

1. entrance / 2. living room / 3. dining room / 4. kitchen / 5. storage / 6. bedroom / 7. bathroom / 8. terrace

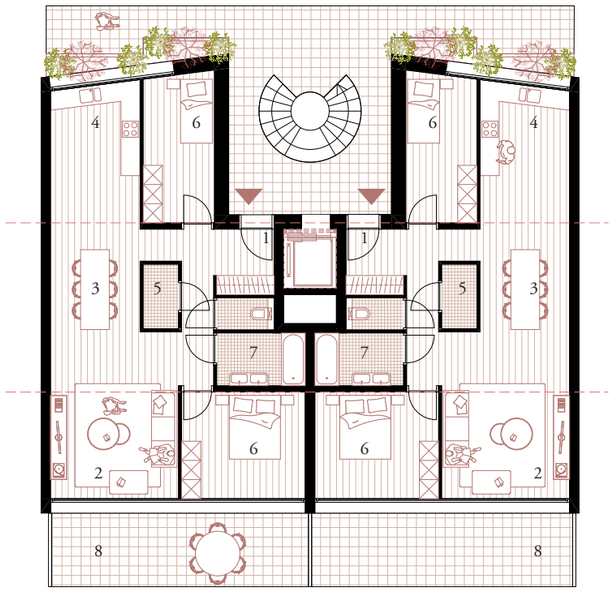



architecture reference: a2o - Trichterhof

3.3 Rue Joseph II nr. 77



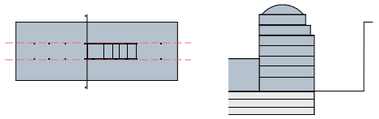
The existing floor slab has a distinctive assymetric core in line with the central columns. The apartments follow the bearing lines and allow enough of the cores to be preserved to ensure lateral stability. Circulation is organised via a striking central spiral staircase that opens onto exterior galleries. The gallery typology that was popular in the 60s and 70s is making its return today as its quality is appreciated again. The gallery ensures that all apartments, even the smallest ones, can enjoy a two-sided orientation, without the need for a forest of staircases. The gallery brings life and movement to the Joseph II street. In addition, the gallery is a way to efficiently repurpose the deep office floor to residential by reducing the depth of the interior space. The privacy of the residents along the gallery is managed through voids and planters, as well as by limiting the number of apartments to be accessed.



proposed typology

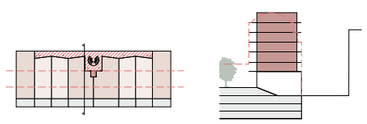
1. entrance / 2. living room / 3. dining room / 4. kitchen /
5. storage / 6. bedroom / 7. bathroom / 8. terrace

current office building



plan section

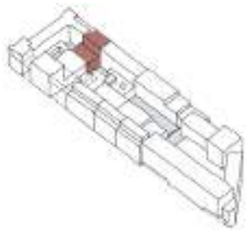
proposed transformation



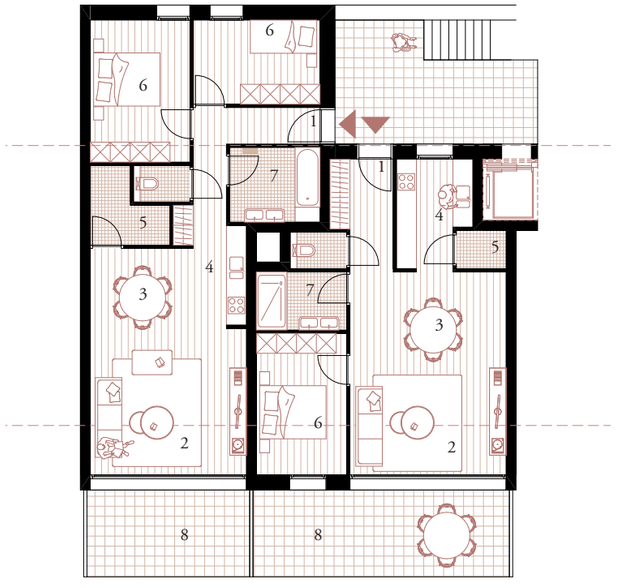
plan section

architecture reference: Morris+Company - Canada Water K1

3.4 Rue Joseph II nrs. 73-75



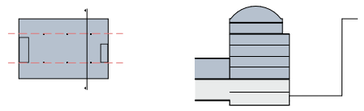
The number 73-75 building has the most erratic structure with uneven cores and columns. Rethinking the circulation is necessary to achieve an efficient plan. However, this redesign preserves the support structures as much as possible. A spacious landing allows for efficient access to four apartments with only one staircase and elevator. The staircase is used in the facade as an architectural element, and invites to be used. The landing is a meeting place for the residents. It can be conceived as an outdoor space or as an intermediate climate or winter garden.



proposed typology

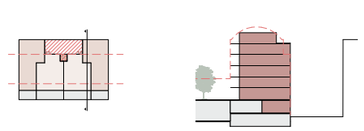
1. entrance / 2. living room / 3. dining room / 4. kitchen /
5. storage / 6. bedroom / 7. bathroom / 8. terrace

current office building



plan section

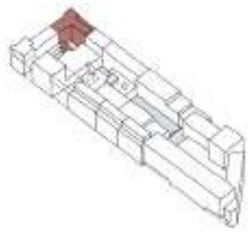
proposed transformation



plan section

architecture reference: a2o - Dorpsdreef

3.5 Rue Joseph II x Rue de Spa

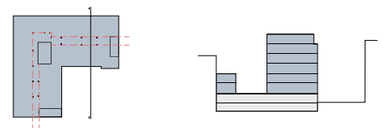


The three existing riser cores, one central and one at each end, provide a flexible base to build on. Two riser cores are connected to create compact east- and south-facing apartments along a corridor in the middle. As a result, the east-facing apartments have a two escape routes. Elongated terraces along the entire length of the facade characterize the appearance of the residential building. The plan is very flexible and allows many residential combinations. It is pre-eminently a building where larger, family-oriented housing is possible.

proposed typology

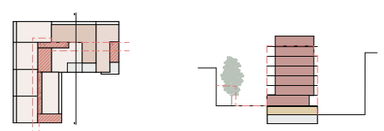
1. entrance / 2. living room / 3. dining room / 4. kitchen /
5. storage / 6. bedroom / 7. bathroom / 8. terrace

current office building



plan section

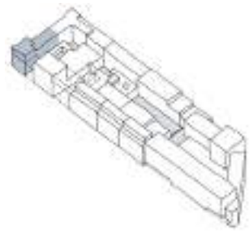
proposed transformation



plan section

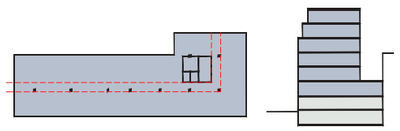
architecture reference: VELD - Citydox

3.6 'Hotel de Spa'



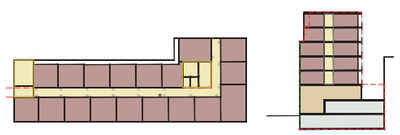
The foregoing transformations meet the requested development area for housing. The remaining office building on Spa street can, as the master plan suggests, remain in use as workspace. Still, we think a more interesting whole can be created by introducing alterantive forms of accommodation here. A hotel, aimed at business visitors, could come into its own at this spot. An audience can also be found for forms of long-stay or aparthotel. Here, simple rental apartments are complemented by the facilities and services of a hotel. This is popular with expats staying for short periods on a project basis, for example. Moreover, a co-housing concept, where compact residential units are complemented by a rich array of complementary shared functions, would be among the possibilities that deserve further investigation.

current office building

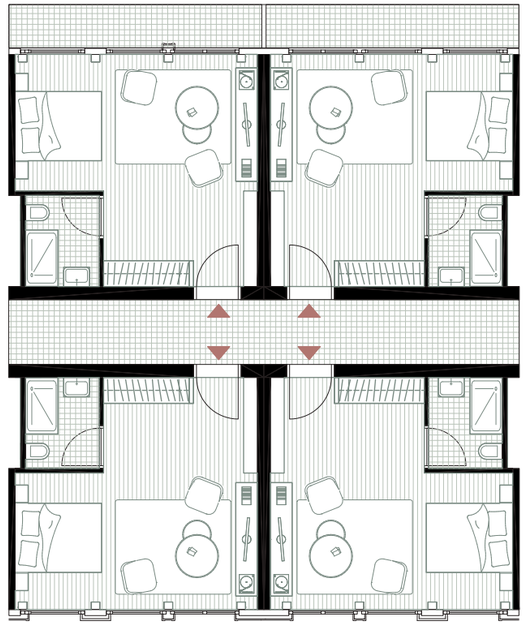


plan section

proposed transformation



plan section



proposed typology - hotel

proposed typology - co-housing

Le renouveau du Quartier Européen, c'est l'espoir d'une ville plus accessible, plus verte, plus humaine : un modèle pour les futures métropoles européennes.

PART 4
A Brussels' take on Modernism

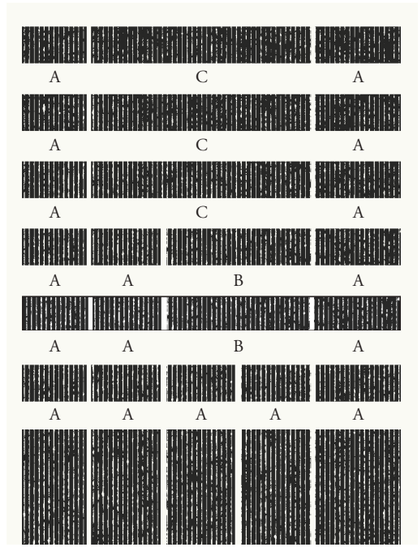
4.1 Polak's Signature

Jean (1914-1988) and André (1920-2012) Polak were appointed by the European Commission (EC) in the late 1970s as architect for a new large-scale office complex at 130 Rue de la Loi. The two brothers come from an architectural dynasty spanning four generations of Polaks, and were prolific in designing numerous similar large-scale commercial buildings across Brussels (including many across the city's European Quarter), Belgium and further afield in the second half of the 20th century.

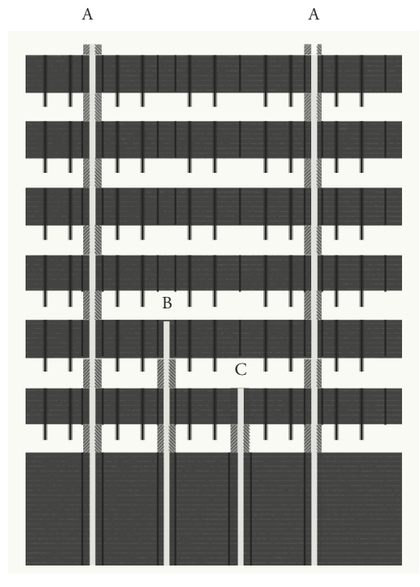
The design of the plot is typical of the Polak's oeuvre, and is constructed principally of natural stone, concrete and bronze-coloured aluminium windows (with external motorised blinds). As the capital of Europe, Brussles is home to several European institutions, of which the 120 Rue de la Loi building is one of many completed during this period. The scale of the project reflects the growth and pressence of the European Commission in Brussels in the 1980s, with this building comprising 33,000m2. The development had to accommodate significant changes of level, with the topography of the urban landscape changing by 2-3 storeys from one side (Rue Joseph II) to the other (Rue de la Loi), at the low point of this former valley landscape. Furthermore, the development also incorporates the Maelbeek Metro Station, with access from the two main streets.

The plan follows a rational and functional approach, typical of commercial buildings of this period. However, the elevational character is much more distinct, and different in character to the earlier (circa 1960s) original UPB building adjacent. Further analysis of this distinct facade character is described opposite, below right.

Existing photos, showing architectural character

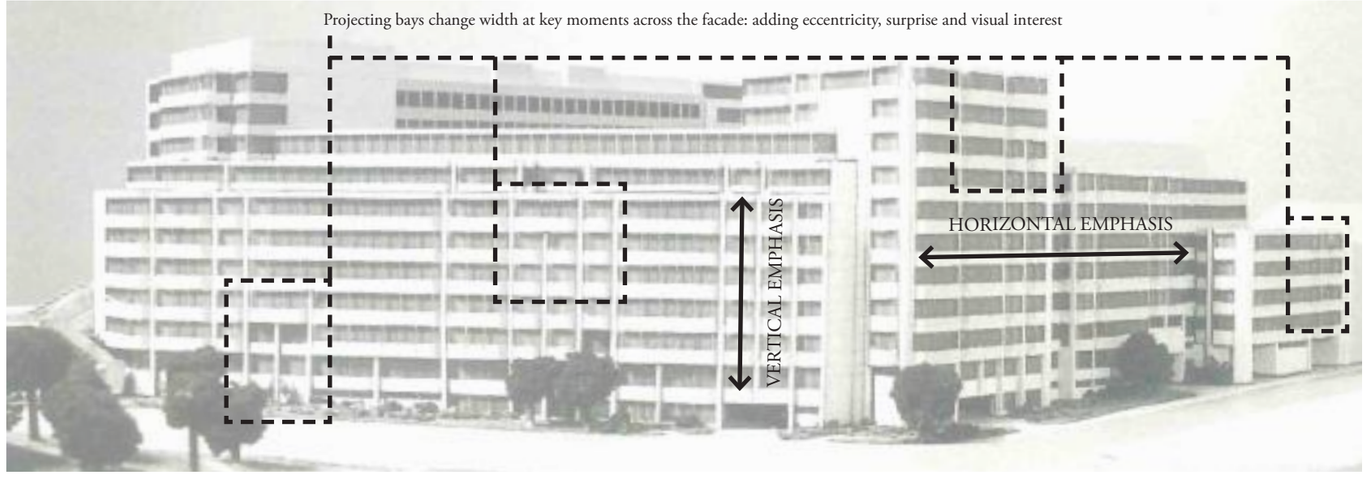


Typical bay, illustating horizontals and verticals



Typical bay, illustating eccentric bay rhythms

Photograph showing the Ilôt 130 plot today, as seen from the southern side of the Rue de la Loi



Architectural design model, showing elevation to Chaussée d'Etterbeek (left) and Rue Joseph II (right) - date unknown, circa late 1970s

Horizontal vs Verical Emphasis
The existing 120 Rue de la Loi building features a prominent horizontal emphasis, with ribbon windows throughout. However, these windows are 'interrupted' by a series of vertical piers throughout, lending the building a very different impression when viewed from afar (more horizontal) to when viewed from close (more vertical). The elevations are, in fact, a 'complex weave' of horizontals and verticals, giving the building a distinct character, typical of Polak's oeuvre.

Elevational Character
The distinctive elevational character is acheived through the application of an overarching rational approach, which is then adapted - in places - to 'break the rule. For example, the stone piers appear seemingly random, but actually follow an organised grid, with the vertical emphasis just expressed in the elevation (whilst the column grid continues in plan). This gives the building its distinctive character, and allows for the 'element of surpirse' throughout.

Elevational Detail
On further inspection of the detail, further eccentricities become evident. A series of 45 degree facade 'cuts' and angled projecting bays are used across the facades. These bays are eccentrically applied in different widths in key locations, adding interest. As noted on the following page, we have referenced these 3/4 length cuts and bays in the in our proposed architectural interventions, using contemporary bays and stone fins of 3/4 lengths, so new and old are 'in dialogue'.

4.2 Building on Ilôt 130

In developing an appropriate language for the Ilôt 130 interventions, we have sought to find an architectural language that is at once fresh and contemporary, whilst simultaneously respectful of the Polak borthers original architecture. The new form and mass seeks to sympathetically respect the original architecture's proportions and rhythms - adding height where most appropriate - and proposing a language of architectural stone fins and elegant window proportions to create a lightweight, filigree expression, inherent to the existing architecture. These fins provide solar shading, add facade depth, and create shadow play.

Elevation concept testing 'continued' bays

Elevation concept testing simple lightweight 'box'

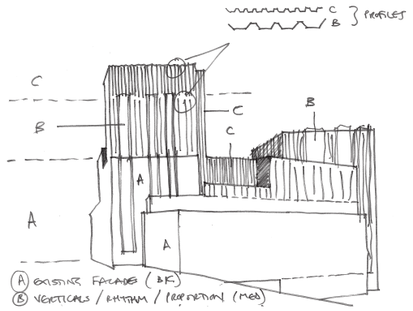
Elevation concept testing simple 'box' with insets

Elevation concept testing asymmetric expression

Elevation concept testing jumbo bays and setback

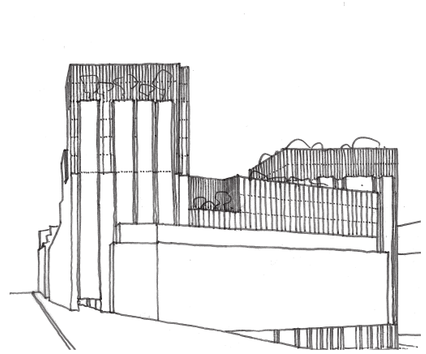
Elevation concept testing eccentric bays (selected)

The sketch below shows the concept to the Chaussée d'Etterbeek facade: seeking to find a calm, elegant language to sit comfortably above the robust stone base. This existing features a 'complex weave' of horizontals and verticals, with which our interventions seek to carefully integrate.



Concept sketch: testing proportions (Etterbeek)

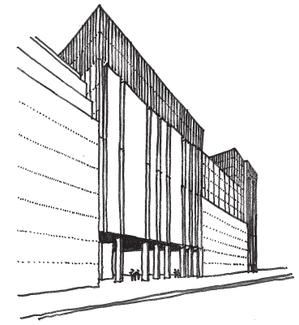
The sketch below shows the concept to the Chaussée d'Etterbeek facade: acting as a symbol of regeneration on this key city axis. A simlpe language is proposed, accentuating the expression and verticality of the towers either side of an elegant link building, uniting the forms.



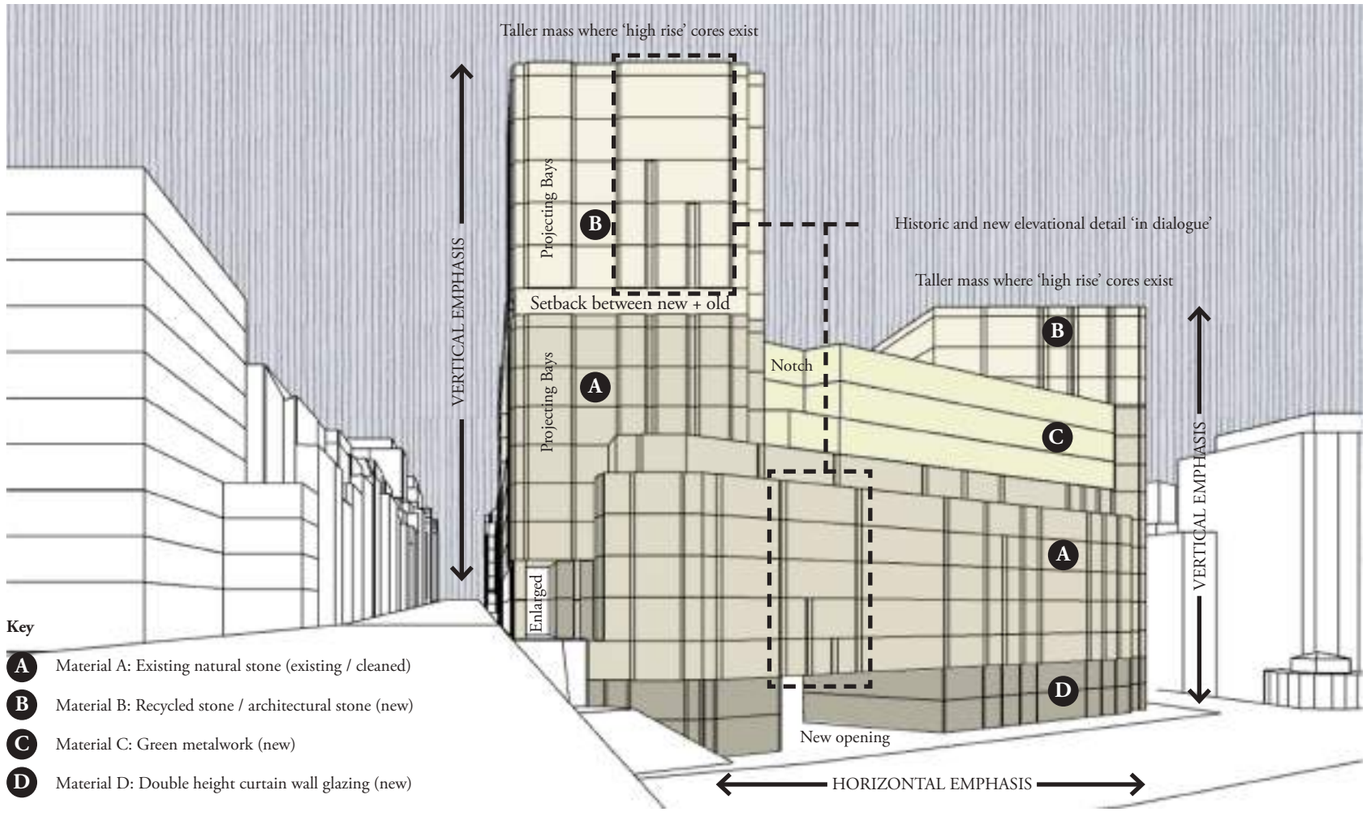
Concept sketch: verticality and bays (Etterbeek)

The sketch below shows the concept to the Rue de la Loi facade: highlighting the grand opening proposed to the Maelbeek Metro entrance. A calm, simple, rhythmic language is proposed, referencing the projecting bays and elegant proportions from Polak's architectural language below.

note: a rendering including the volume of the 'Realex development is included in the annexe



Concept sketch: testing verticality and bays (Loi)



Chaussée d'Etterbeek facade analysis diagram: highlighting horizontal and vertical emphases and how our interventions seek to accentuate and intergate

4.3 Introducing a Contemporary Dwelling Culture

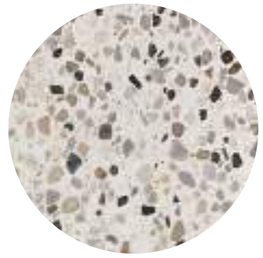
To make space for housing, the existing corporate office design must be transformed into appropriate residential architecture. Good design can help improve the quality of life by providing comfortable living spaces that meet the needs of their inhabitants while also inspiring creativity and productivity. Additionally, well-designed buildings can add value to a neighbourhood by helping attract new businesses and residents. Finally, good design can also reduce environmental impacts by reducing energy consumption, through the efficient re-use of materials, and by improved insulation techniques. We create appropriate residential architecture at street scale by focusing on;

- diversity: changing colours, shapes, dimensions, articulation, façade composition, etc;
- an expressive volume: Openings, setbacks and vistas not only make the volume interesting, they also give the architecture a recognisable human scale;
- a habitable façade: Terraces, walkways and stairs turn the façade into a tableau for everyday life. People move about, come home, meet and relax. There are chairs, tables, bicycles, plants, bbqs and children's toys;
- eyes on the street: Living spaces give a direct view of the street. The flickering light from TV sets signals living and promotes the habitability of the whole street through informal social control;

The liveability of a neighbourhood is largely determined by what happens on the ground floor and first floor along the street. Architecture, and in particular a vibrant plinth, can be a lever to promote social cohesion. We use four main ingredients for a vibrant plinth:

- vistas: Views from street to garden mark the entrances to the houses. Although they are closed at night, they remain transparent. After dark, the gateways and garden are illuminated.
- the town house: Town houses have their own address on the street via architecturally accentuated portals. Their double-height living spaces are slightly above ground level to ensure privacy.
- the fascilities: Attached functions further liven the street. At key locations we create spaces for commercial functions, at others spaces for shared living functions such as a bike repair point, relaxation space and co-working place.
- removal of driveways: After thorough analysis of the parking layers, several driveways for cars are removed.

reclaimed natural stone



reclaimed aggregates

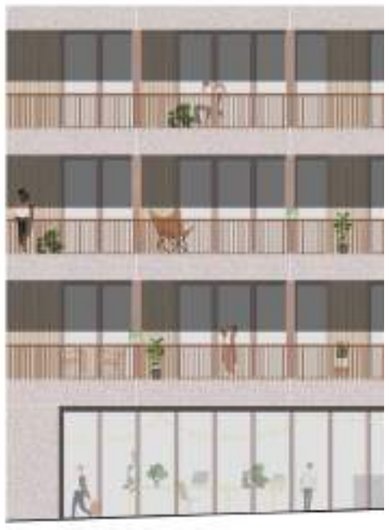
biobased additions

▲ **The Vista**

■ **The Town House**

▲ **The Vista**

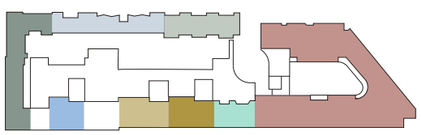
■ **The Town House**

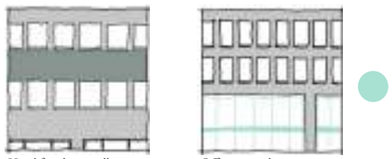


● **The Collective Living Room**

4.4 Carbon-led Material Selection

Our approach to material selection has directly shaped by a circular design approach in pursuit of a net zero future. The design thinking for our new interventions starts with a fabric first approach - optimising the re-use of the existing structure - and where replacing facades, and/or extending with new interventions, selecting materials that have the potential for re-use from across the existing plot (e.g. stone panels).
And/or using recycled content from these materials (e.g. crushed aggregate re-used in architectural stone). In this way, we can thereby greatly reduce embodied carbon across the project. We have outlined our general approach to material selection into four key areas of elevation design principles (right), alongside a plot-by-plot approach (below). In each of this theme, the meticulous addition of soft colors, seeks to complement the existing materials whilst introducing diversity and legibility.




Hotel facade partially re-clad, using recycled ston

Office opened up using new curtain walling


Office facade partially re-clad using recycled stone

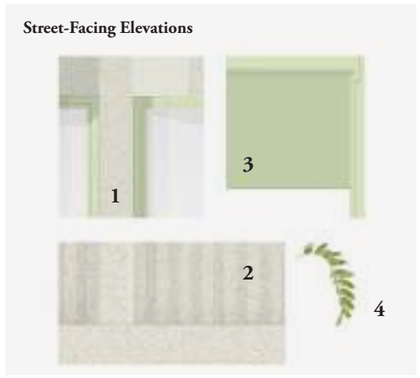

Office facade extended using recycled stone


Office facade partially re-clad with recycled cladding


Residential facade re-clad using recycled brick


Part of office facade re-clad using recycled stone


Residential facade re-clad using recycled brick

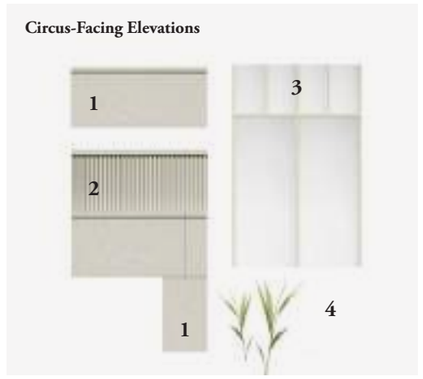


Proposed Material Pallette: Workplace Use

1 Recycled stone / architectural stone fin
2 Ribbed architectural stone spandrel
3 PPC metal window frame / external blinds
4 Abundant biodiverse planting (to planters)

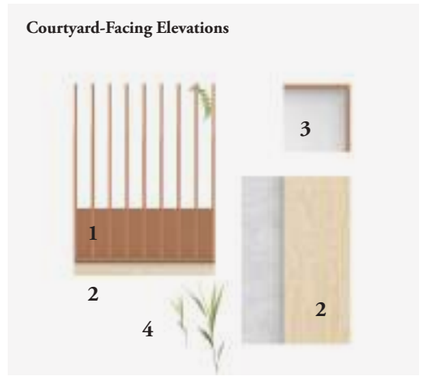
Proposed Material Pallette: Workplace Use

1 PPC metal window frame / blinds (green)
2 Ribbed architectural stone spandrel
3 PPC metal window frame / external blinds
4 Abundant biodiverse planting (to planters)



Proposed Material Pallette: Community Use

1 Recycled stone / architectural stone
2 Ribbed architectural stone box planter
3 PPC curtain walling with deep mullions
4 Abundant biodiverse planting (to planters)



Proposed Material Pallette: Housing Use

Key

1 PPC metal balustrade / upstand (terracotta)
2 Timber soffit lining / external wall cladding
3 PPC metal window frame / external blinds
4 Abundant biodiverse planting (to planters)

4.5 Ilôt 130

The three themes in the design proposal—ranging from the Maelbeek valley and the Suys plan, to the transformation of the Leopold District into a European Quarter, and the distinctive architecture from the second half of the last century—together form a rich source of inspiration for the design.

Combined with an ambitious and contemporary vision for the future of Brussels, the European Quarter, and the imminent sustainability transition in the construction sector, this design proposal outlines a clear future perspective for the area. Rather than a tabula rasa, it represents an approach where new solutions flow almost naturally from a thorough investigation into the qualities that are already inherently present today. By carefully and thoughtfully identifying these qualities—such as the Maelbeek valley, the architecture of the Polak brothers, the dynamics of the Metro station, the presence of the auditorium, and the valuable materials—and subsequently testing them against innovative spatial concepts around living and working, the redevelopment of Ilôt 130 becomes a logical next step in the city's evolution, adding a new layer to the location's palimpsest.

At the same time, the intensive collaboration and cross-pollination between all the partners involved in the design process foster a continuous pursuit of quality and innovation, allowing the development of Ilôt 130 to emerge as a turning point and a break in the trend for the European Quarter, and an international example of contemporary urban renewal.

Key Figures

113.5540	m^2 usable space
14.547	m^2 of technical space or parking turned into usable space (+16%)
9.378	m^2 addtional floor space (external compensation, +11%)
84.913	m^2 office space
186	housing units of mixed typologies
4.228	m^2 activities of which a neighbourhood sports centre & cultural space
320%	increase of publicly accessible open space
1.920	m^2 increase in full soil (x2,9)
491	parking spots (reduction of >36%)

20 september 2024

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