



Evers 2 Competition  
Document A - Vision

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# 1/ Site Constraints

Having visited the site, the constraints and challenges of the current setting are clear.

- (A) The current extension is unattractive and bulky and disrupts the repetitive nature of the main building's facade.
- (B) The public realm around the building is heavily compromised caused by the level changes along the building's elevations. This and the defensible planting borders makes the building feel detached from the public realm.
- (C) The decorative facade panels create a balcony zone around the building and also lead to an external escape stair. Both balcony and stairs are not safe to access.
- (D) The roof space is not optimised and the high crowning facade panels obstruct potential views over the city.
- (E) The deep plan of the building creates a large surface area deprived of natural daylight.
- (F) The urban context is both institutional and residential. The building is visible from far views of neighbouring streets. The redevelopment could become a beacon and make a positive contribution to the area.

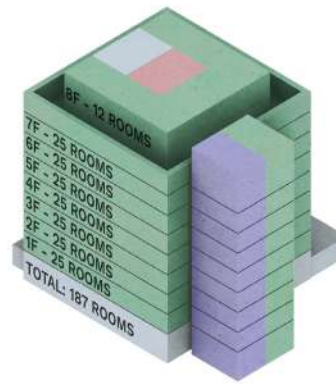


# 2/ Options Study

We started by looking at options to assess how the number of student bedrooms could be maximised whilst optimising amenity space. The options illustrated on the right explain how each meets the ambitions of the brief.

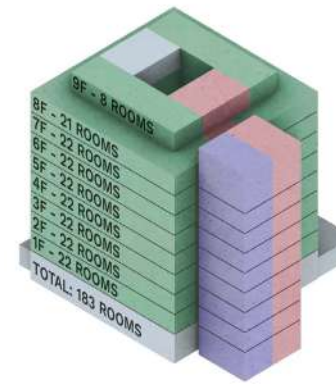
For comparative reasons, all options maximise the student bedroom number, providing only the minimum amenity space required by local regulations. Where the number of rooms exceeds the brief targets, consideration should be given to providing additional communal amenity space in the built volume instead. Options 3, 4 and 5 highlight how utilising the depth of the plan to accommodate the core improves the efficiency of the plan.

We believe that Option 5 has the best potential to create a dynamic student hub, whilst targeting the issues around the public realm, and have thus developed this option into a competition proposal. We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with the client and stakeholders to turn Evers 2 into a welcoming landmark that benefits the wider neighbourhood.



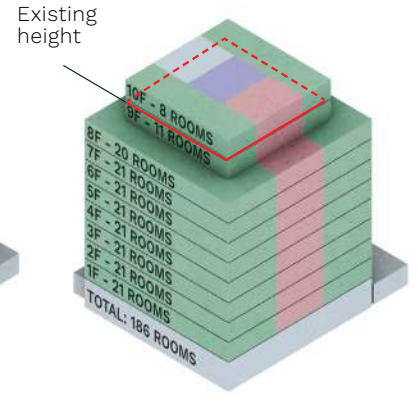
**Option 1**  
Refurbishment only

- Number of bedrooms
- Placemaking
- Maximising footprint for development
- Daylight to habitable rooms
- Planning risk
- Technical complexity



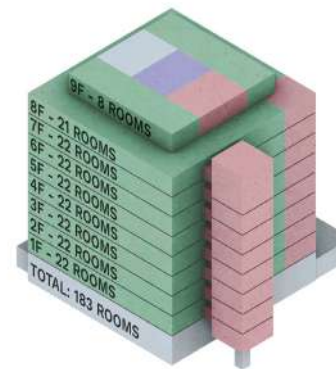
**Option 2**  
Addition of central lightwell

- Number of bedrooms
- Placemaking
- Maximising footprint for development
- Daylight to habitable rooms
- Planning risk
- Technical complexity



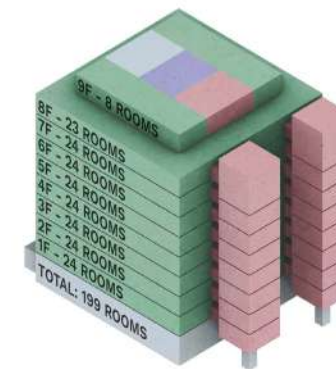
**Option 3**  
Removal of existing extension; adding height above existing

- Number of bedrooms
- Placemaking
- Maximising footprint for development
- Daylight to habitable rooms
- Planning risk
- Technical complexity



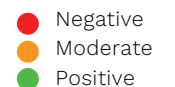
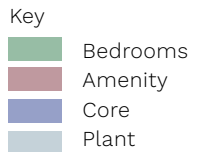
**Option 4**  
Replacement of existing extension with new; smaller footprint

- Number of bedrooms
- Placemaking
- Maximising footprint for development
- Daylight to habitable rooms
- Planning risk
- Technical complexity



**Option 5**  
Replacement of existing extension with new; adding 50% of facade area

- Number of bedrooms
- Placemaking
- Maximising footprint for development
- Daylight to habitable rooms
- Planning risk
- Technical complexity



### 3/ Design Strategy

The structure of the square building is formed of two central risers aligned within a deep 'spinal' beam zone. Typical beams at 3-meter centres span between the central spine and facade columns. The vertical circulation is currently located in the adjacent tower (refer to diagram 1).

#### Demolitions (Diagram 2 & 3)

To free up facade area for bedrooms and amenity space for the enjoyment of natural daylight and air, we propose to bring the vertical circulation into the centre of the plan. Diagram 2 describes the demolitions required to achieve this. We intend to place new staircases and lifts in-between structural beams and existing central risers (1) so that those remain intact and only the concrete slab needs to be broken out. We consulted with a structural engineer who advised that the structural implications would not be complicated considering the thin slab of 130mm thick.

Demolishing the staircase tower (2) provides the opportunity for a new extension that is more street facing and welcoming and addresses the public realm in a positive way. The external escape stair is also proposed to be removed (3) as it does not comply with safety regulations and would no longer be required. New facade panels to match existing will be required to make good these areas of facade. The small risers along the facade (4) are expected to become redundant. This area will be freed up for bedroom furniture.

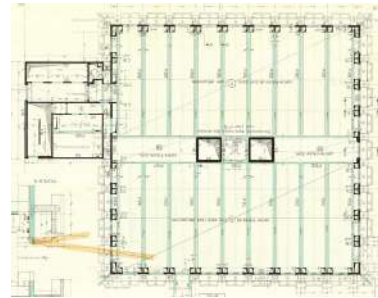
#### Proposed Typical Floor Plan (Diagram 4)

24 study bedrooms line the facade following the 3-meter structural grid. Two facade bays are kept open to allow light entering the circulation zone.

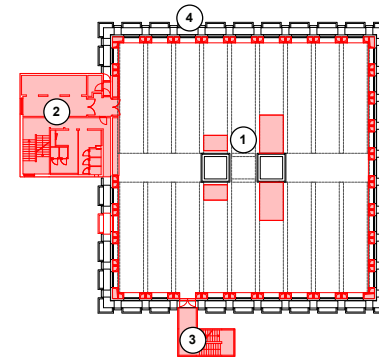
Two kitchen/diners of 36sqm each are required on every floor to meet local guidance. To protect daylight to all bedrooms whilst optimising the footprint of the new built, we designed the kitchens as two separate extensions. We believe this layout creates a legible plan and navigation through the building.

#### Key

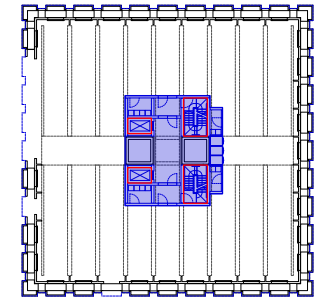
- Bedrooms
  - Kitchen/Diners
  - Core
- (A) Protected Staircase
  - (B) Lift
  - (C) Lift Lobby
  - (D) Existing Riser
  - (E) Laundry Room
  - (F) Store/Cleaner's cupboard
  - (G) Circulation with built-in bench



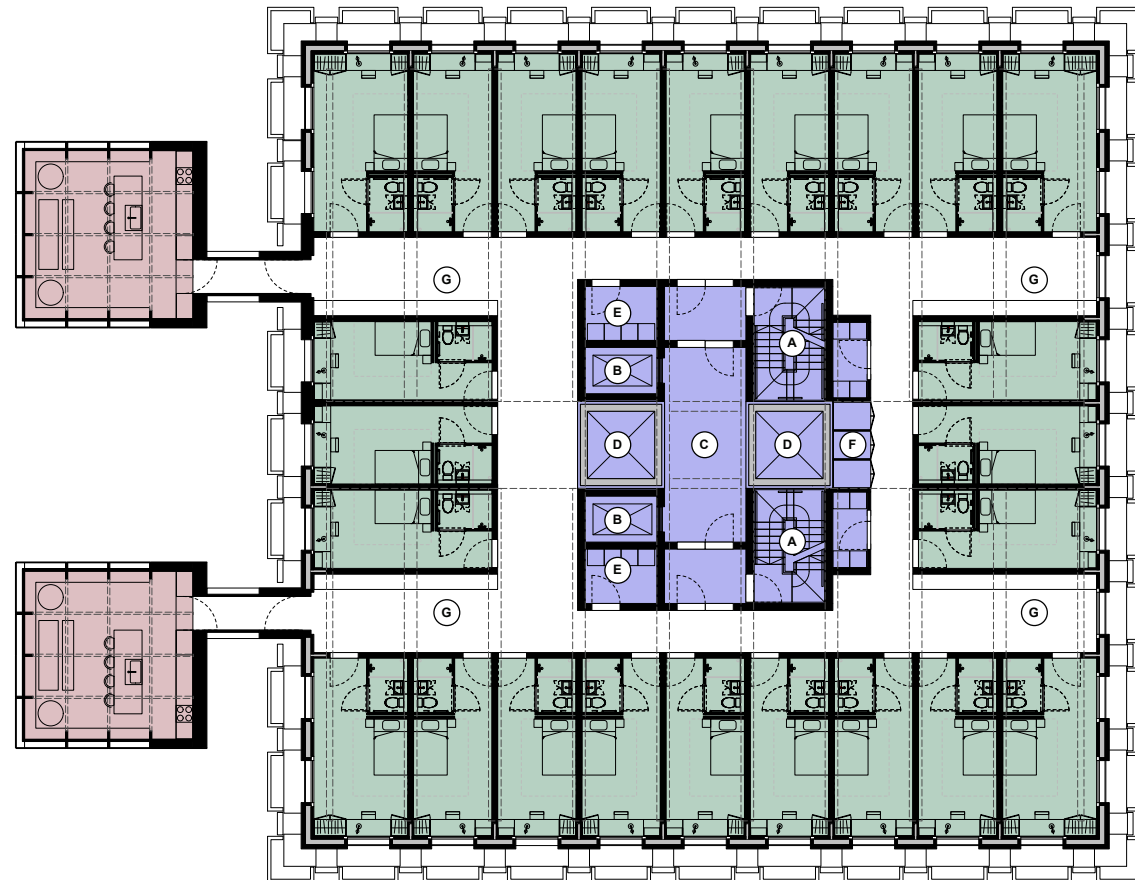
1 Structural plan dating 1969



2 Proposed demolitions in red



3 Outline of proposed vertical core



4 Proposed Typical Floor Layout

## 4/ Design Response



## 5/ Interior Quality (Bedrooms)

### Typical bedrooms

Each ensuite study bedroom has a floor area of 18 sqm as required by the brief, placed within the 3-meter structural grid of the existing building. This given setting out makes the rooms relatively narrow and long. The shower room (A) is located adjacent to the room entrance door. This allows the bedrooms to be divided into an 'entrance' zone (B) and a 'living' zone (C). The incoming services from the central risers will be brought in through a dropped ceiling in the 'entrance' zone, ensuring maximum floor to ceiling height within the 'living' zone by keeping it free of services.

The study desk is located in front of the central window and built-in storage frames the desk on either side (D). The bed size shown in the axo is 1.4 meter wide (E). The bed could be turned at right angles to create more space behind the desk. Integrated storage made of natural materials such as plywood or timber gives the rooms a warm, coherent feel and allows students to enjoy a calm and uncluttered environment. The typical bedrooms and bathrooms are stacked above one another, simplifying drainage runs (F).

### 8th floor bedrooms

The high facade panels at roof level allow for an additional floor to be added without compromising the perceived height of the existing building. On this floor only, we propose to modify the height of the recessed facade panels (G) to create openings for views out from bedrooms (refer to 8/ Existing Building for more detail on this). To align bedroom windows with facade openings, the grid of this lightweight added floor is staggered from the typical floor (H). Bathrooms remain to be stacked. This layout allows for larger wheelchair units in the four corners (I).

### Room numbers

Competition scheme:

Typical floor: 24 rooms (x7) = 168 rooms

8th floor: 23 rooms (x1) = 23 rooms

**Total: 191 rooms\***

\*includes 4 wheelchair compliant rooms on 8th floor

Alternative 1:

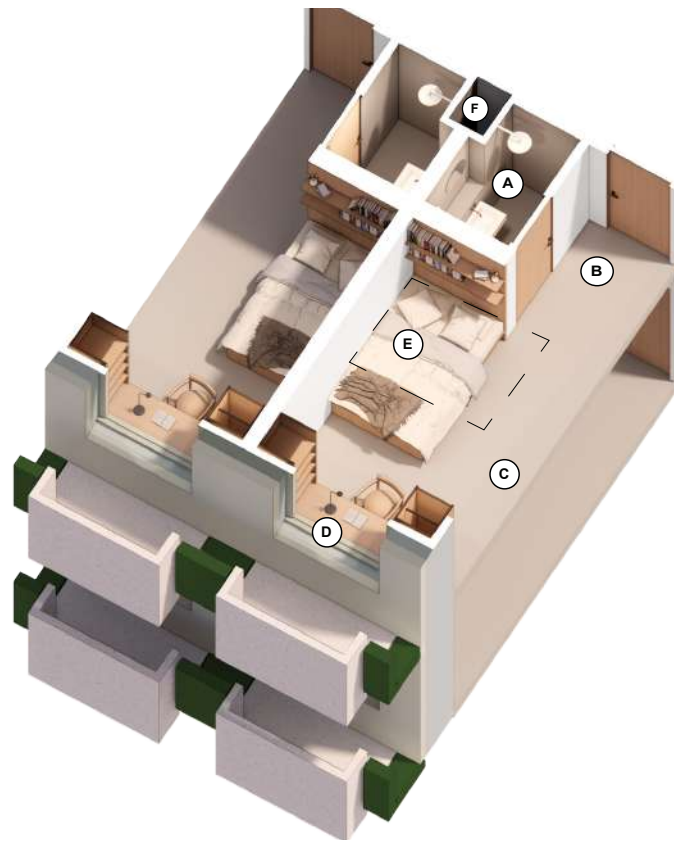
10 wheelchair compliant rooms

**Total: 185 rooms** (brief compliant)

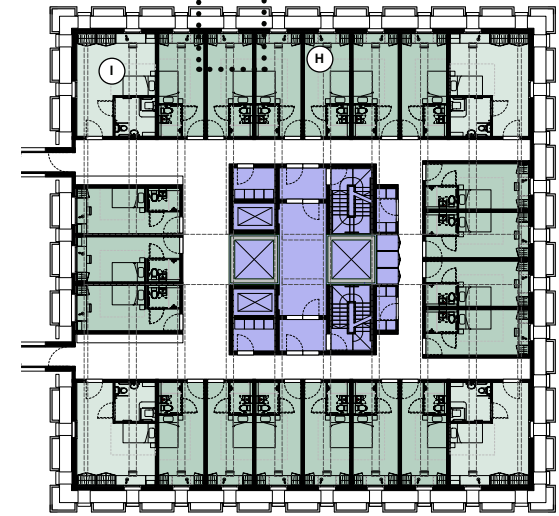
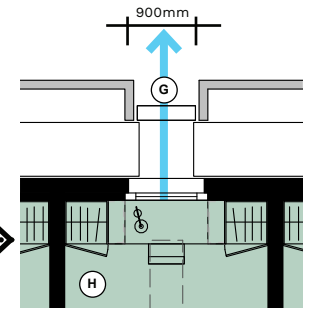
Alternative 2:

Bedrooms in roof space in lieu of amenity (refer to 7/ Roof)

**Total: 199 rooms**



1 Axo of typical bedrooms



2 Eighth floor plan



3 View of bedroom window and integrated desk



4 View bedroom and shower room

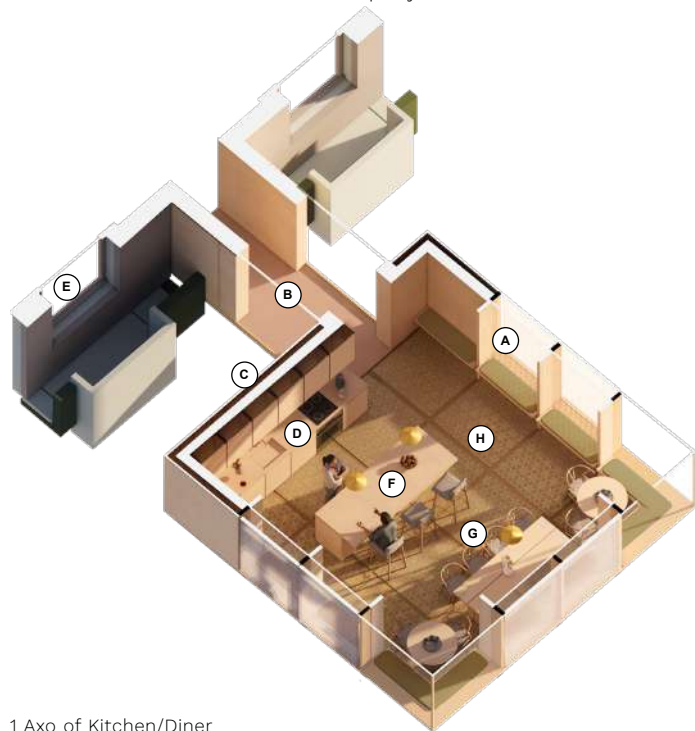
## 6/ Interior Quality (Kitchen/Diners)

### *Communal Kitchen/Diners*

The Kitchen/Diners are located within the two new built towers, replacing the existing extension on rue Evers. The square rooms stack as a series of timber frames, the timber exposed to create a warm interior. The spaces have a coffered ceiling and integrated benches along the perimeter (A). The timber will need to be sized to meet fire regulations of 'batiments élevés'.

Kitchen/Diners are accessed via a glazed link (B). The walls directly opposite the existing building are solid (C) and incorporate the kitchen units (D). Bedroom windows facing onto the kitchen pods (E) could be non-transparent as these are bedrooms with more than one window. A kitchen island (F) separates the cooking from the seating area (G), the latter situated within the bright part of the room. Low and high level openings within the space are envisaged to create cross ventilation. The colours of the tiled floor (H) are reminiscent of the proposed colours of the external facade panels.

Sociable views are created from the Kitchen/Diners up and down Rue Evers and between Kitchen/Diners. Bringing a public use to the street frontage animates the street as pedestrians looking up can see students in convivial company.



1 Axo of Kitchen/Diner

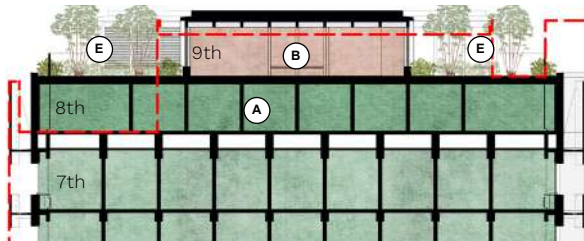


2 View of Kitchen/Diner with second tower in the background

## 7/ Roof

The red line on the below diagram indicates the existing building outline. Based on the drawings available, the current plant room extends ~4.1 meters above the height of the external facade.

The proposed section shows the new-built 8th floor of study bedrooms (**A**) in line with the existing facade panel height. To maximise development, a 9th floor of smaller footprint (**B**) could be added within the approximate height of the existing plant room volume. This could accommodate additional eight bedrooms as shown in diagram 5. As the target number of bedrooms is met without this floor, we propose this level as student amenity with a common room (**C**) and a gym (**D**), with access to a shared roof garden (**E**). We believe this would add value to the project and make it an attractive place to live. An area for heatpumps is also included on this floor (**F**).



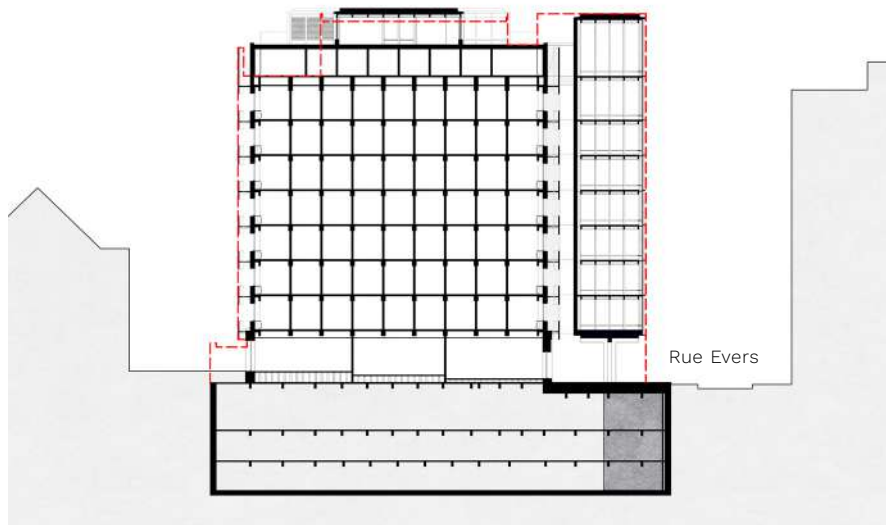
1 Section crop of 8th and 9th floor



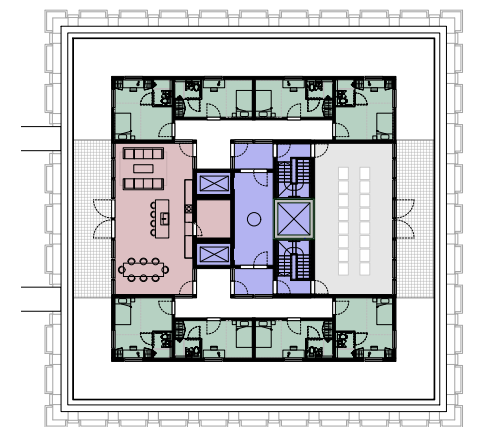
2 View of the 9th floor amenity space and roof garden beyond



3 Proposed 9th floor plan



4 Proposed section showing existing outlined in red



5 Alternative 9th floor layout showing bedrooms

## 8/ Existing Building

### External envelope

The fabric of the existing building should be upgraded to improve energy performance and limit cold bridging of the existing structure. This can be achieved by adding an insulation layer to the outside of the facade (A). Without removing the facade panels, the detailing of the insulation around the panel fixing points (B) needs to be carefully considered to avoid coldbridges. An approach would be to internally insulate the wall/beam junctions (C). The design and impact should be checked in a thermal model. The zone of internal insulation around the beam is concealed by the new built-in joinery.

Our structural engineer advised that facade panel fixings are thoroughly checked for structural integrity as there is a risk with buildings of that era and that reinforcement may be required.

### Treatment of facade panels

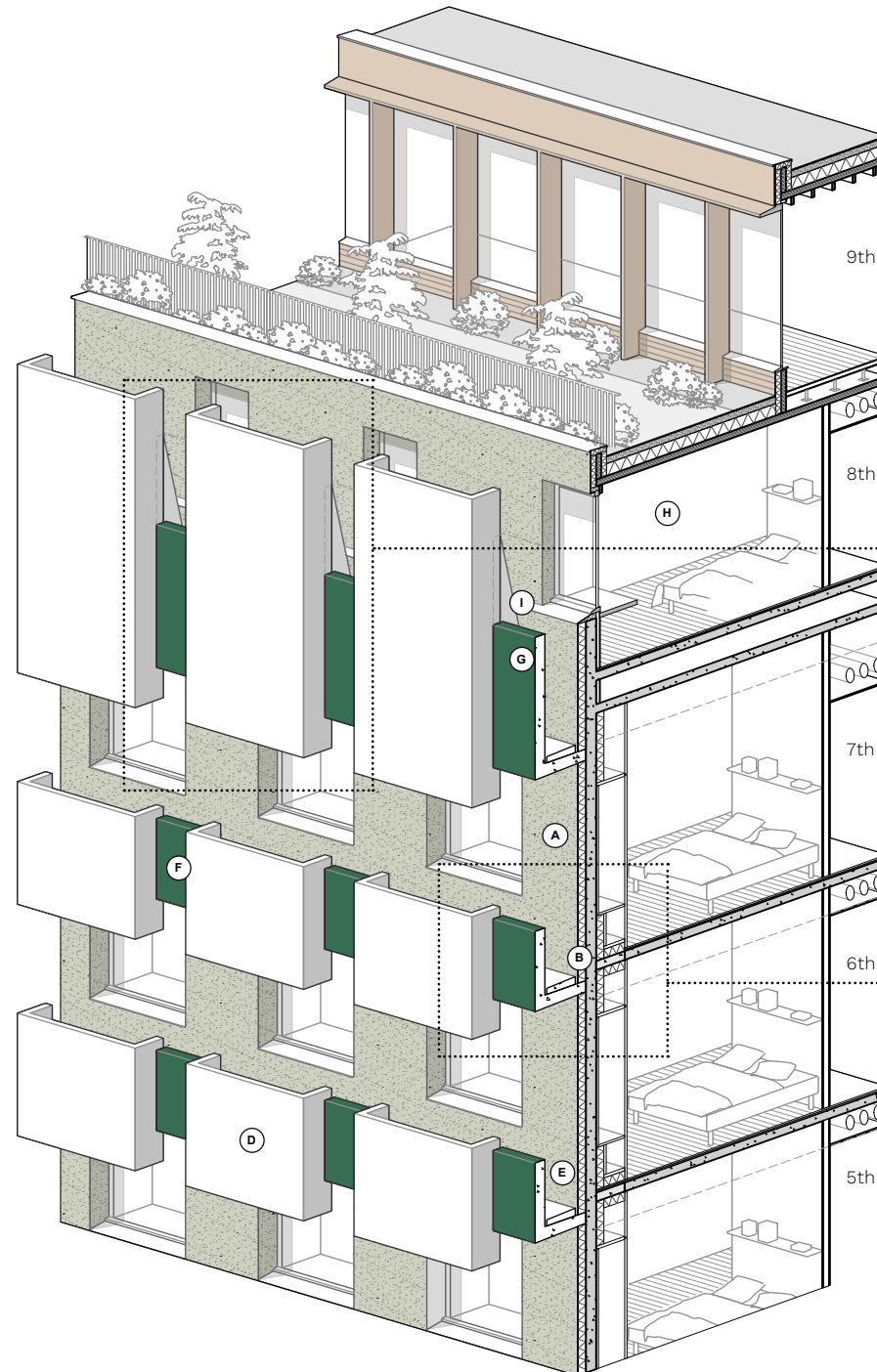
1) The facade panels give the building its unique iconic appearance (D). They create a narrow balcony zone (~650mm once the walls are insulated) around the building (E), currently not safe to access due to the low height of the panels. We considered making the balconies accessible for students however due to the width constraints, we concluded that this was not viable. Window openings should be restricted to avoid students accessing the balconies.

2) To reinforce the playfulness and 3-dimensionality of the warp and weft quality of the facade, we propose to paint the recessed panels (F) a dark colour. The primary concrete panels remain unpainted.

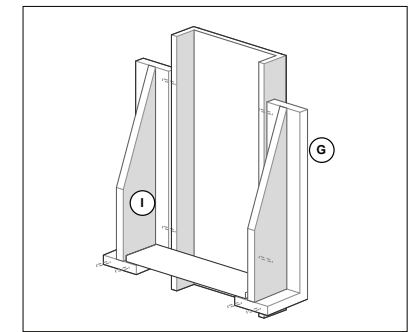
3) To get daylight into the new 8th floor bedrooms (H), we propose to cut down or replace the uppermost recessed facade panels (G). The panels are 900mm wide, providing ample daylight. We believe that the enhanced stepping in the panelling emphasises the layering of the facade without compromising the overall appearance of the building. To achieve this, the primary panels will need a new support structure (I), indicated in principle in diagram 3.

### Fire & Acoustics

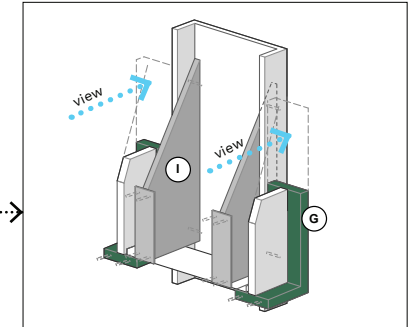
The aim is to keep floor to ceiling heights in bedrooms as high as possible whilst meeting fire and acoustic separation requirements. We have consulted with fire engineer Jean-Philippe Veriter from Seco who advised that the existing concrete structure requires fire treatment to comply with the required standards.



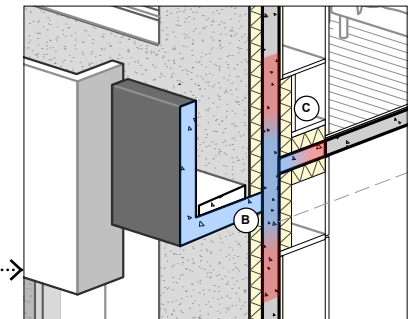
1 Drawing describing proposed works to existing building facade



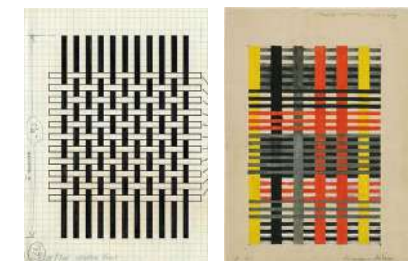
2 Existing facade panel detail of top floor



3 Proposed changes to facade panel detail of top floor



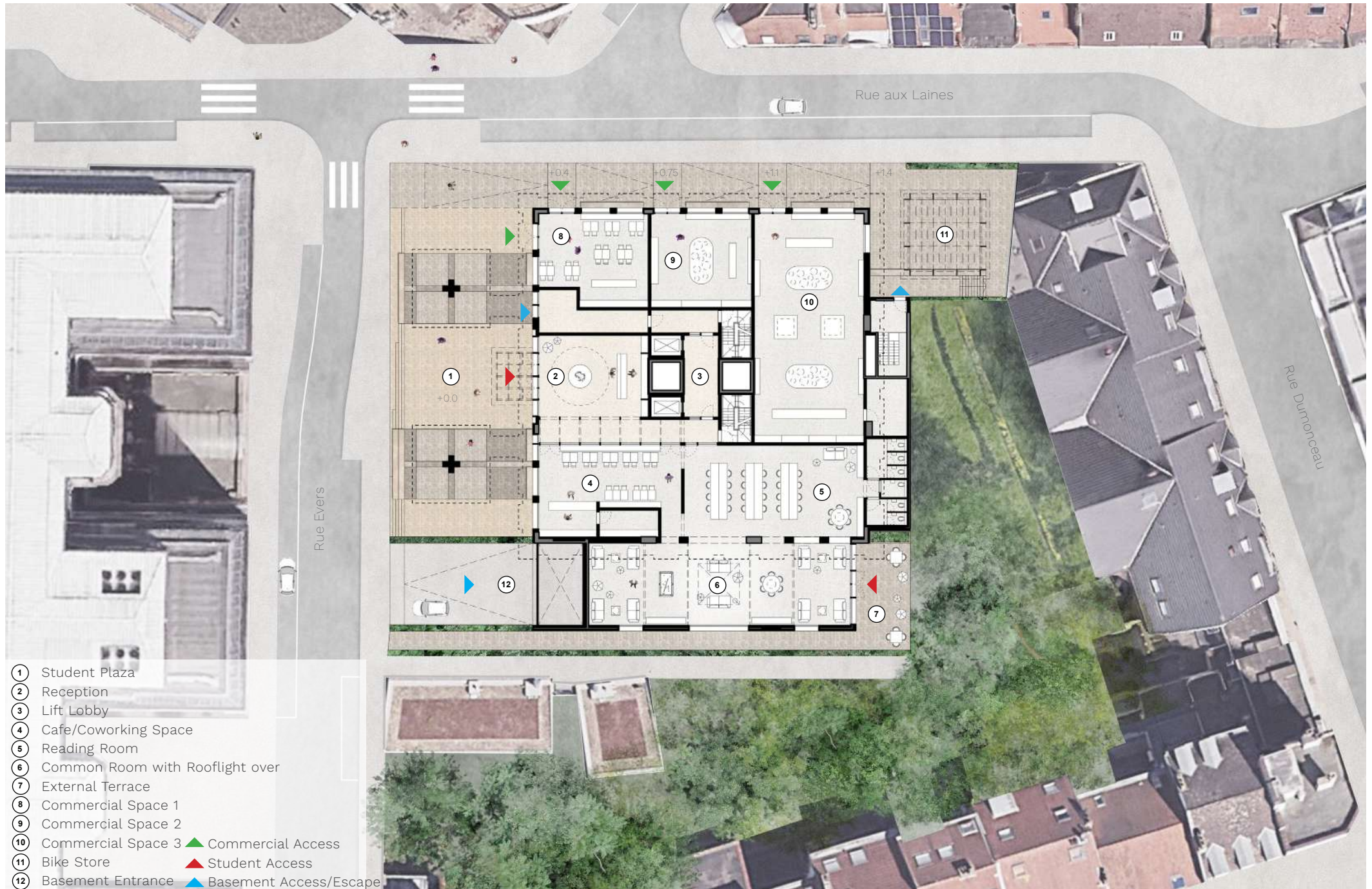
4 Indicative detail of insulation around panel fixings (not cut through beam)



5 Drawings by Anni Albers



# 9/ Site Plan



- ① Student Plaza
  - ② Reception
  - ③ Lift Lobby
  - ④ Cafe/Coworking Space
  - ⑤ Reading Room
  - ⑥ Common Room with Rooflight over
  - ⑦ External Terrace
  - ⑧ Commercial Space 1
  - ⑨ Commercial Space 2
  - ⑩ Commercial Space 3
  - ⑪ Bike Store
  - ⑫ Basement Entrance
- ▲ Commercial Access  
▲ Student Access  
▲ Basement Access/Escape

## 10/ Ground Floor Access & Public Realm

### Rue Evers

The Student Plaza on Rue Evers creates the focal point for the new public realm with a sheltered student entrance at its centre, framed by the two new towers.

The new square mitigates the level changes along Rue Evers with a series of steps and seats (A), thus creating an edge to the sloping pavement. Level access to the square is provided from the north. The square offers views into the ground floor student common rooms (B). Pedestrian entry to the car park is via a separate entrance from the square (C).

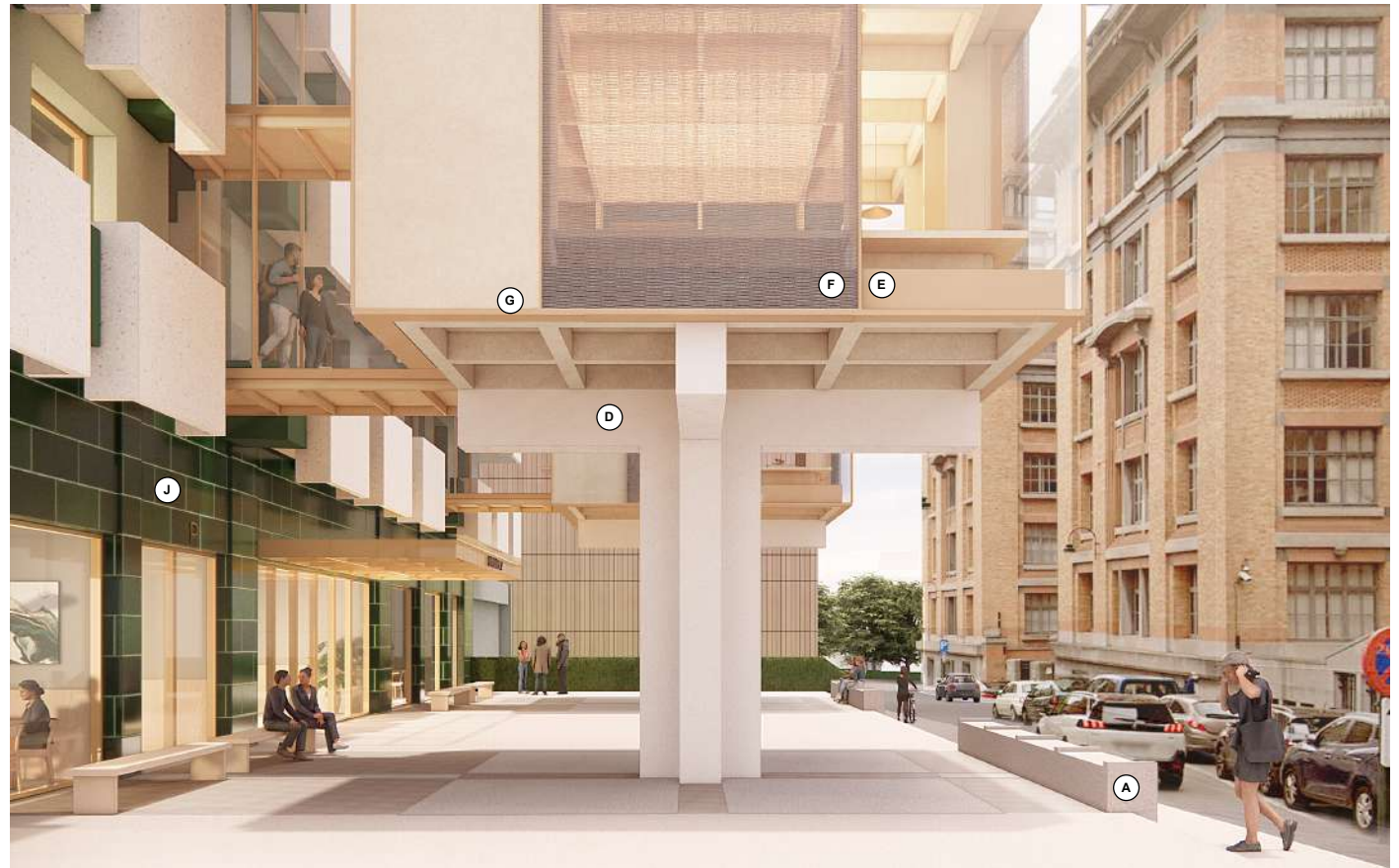
The towers are open at ground floor level, supported by a sculptural concrete column (D), providing shelter and maximising space for students to mingle. The glazing of the towers has pale gold metal framing (E). A delicate metal mesh to the central panels (F) protects kitchens from overheating while providing views out. The solid parts of the towers are conceived as lightweight boarding (G).

### Rue aux Laines

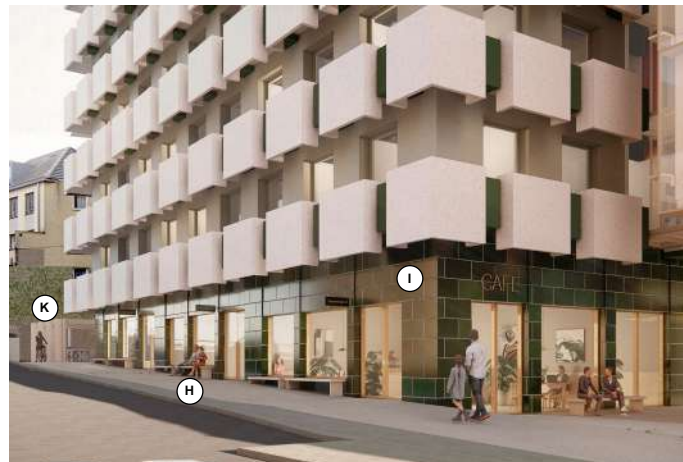
A series of shops is proposed along rue aux Laines. To make the shop fronts feel part of the public realm with easy access and visibility, we have aligned the level of the shop entrances with the level of the sloping street (H). From walking through Brussels, this seems to be a common feature. The shop front openings towards the north east will be stepped to create the additional height required whereas the existing ceiling height can incorporate the higher floor level. A cafe would work well in the north west corner unit (I) as it has a dual frontage, is part of the new square and benefits from close proximity to Saint-Pierre hospital.

For durability and to enhance the street level appearance, the existing ground floor facade is clad with a dark reflective tile (J), matching in colour with the recessed panels above.

Bike storage is located in the north eastern corner of the site (K). This location feels appropriate considering its aspect and remoteness from the main frontages. The pocket also maintains fire escape access from the underground car park.



1 View of the Student Plaza from north

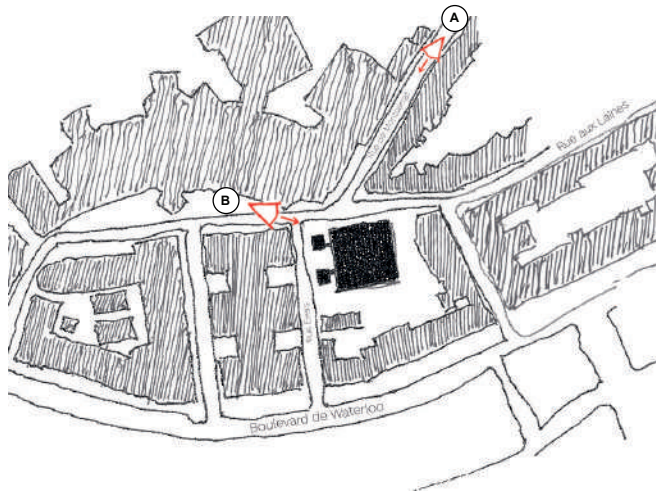


3 Shop fronts along Rue aux Laines



4 Student Plaza showing new towers framing the student entrance

## 11/ Urban Context



1 Site plan indicating view points



2 View A. Sketch view of northern kitchen tower from Rue de Montserrat



3 View B. Image of proposal from Rue aux Laines