

A detailed architectural rendering of the Schoenenkwartier interior. The space is characterized by its raw concrete and red brick walls. A prominent feature is a large, arched opening in the brickwork, which frames a view into a brightly lit upper level. This upper level has a glass railing with a perforated pattern and a white pillar. Below, on a lower level, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a white t-shirt and a black and white patterned skirt, stands with her back to the camera, looking at a display. The display area has a green wall and a wooden stool with a piece of fabric draped over it. The lighting is soft and even, highlighting the textures of the brick and concrete.

# SCHOENEN KWARTIER

CIVIC ARCHITECTS



# Schoenenkwartier

The past and future of a local craft

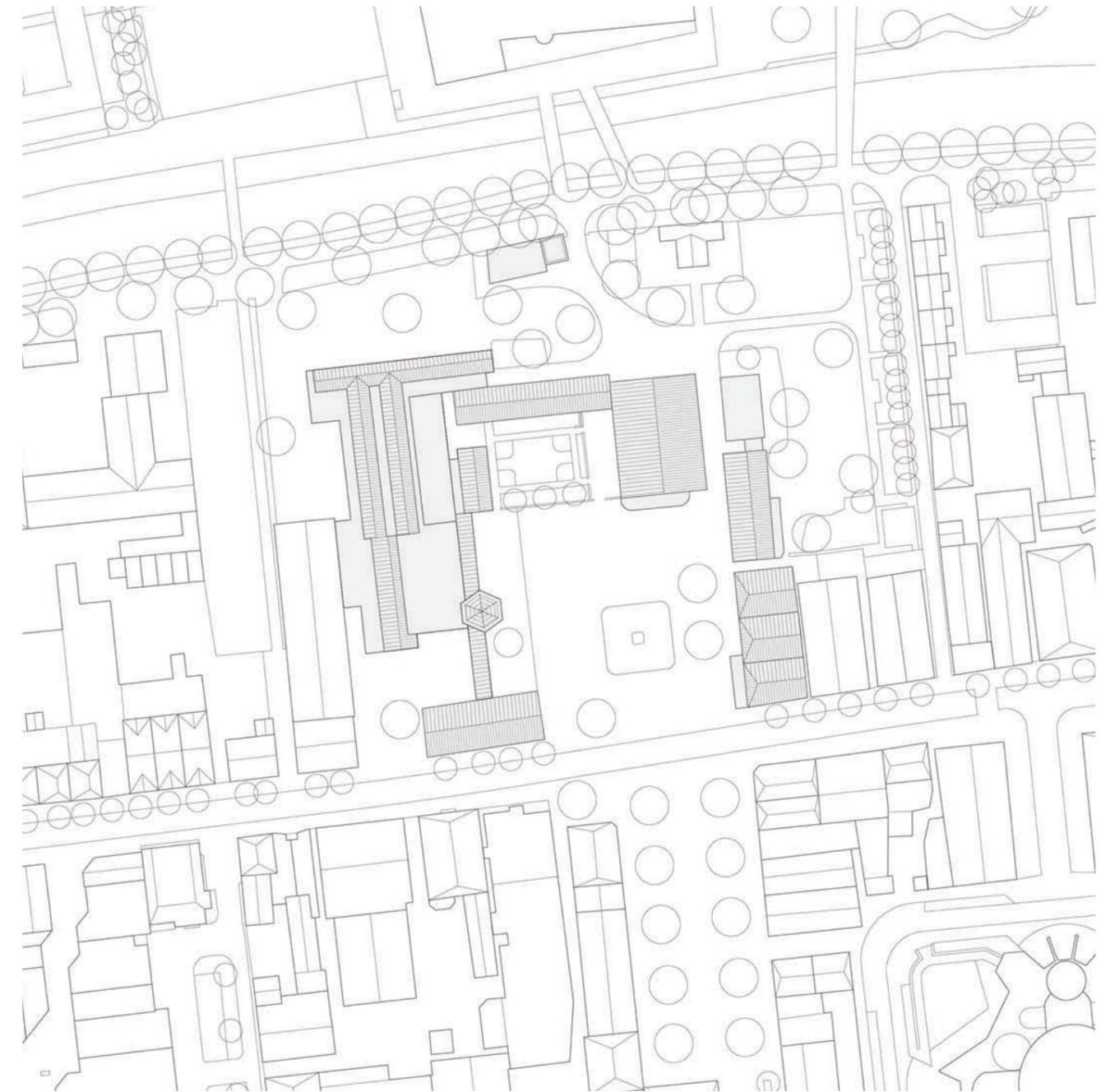


Waalwijk is a typical small European city that became big through the industrial development of a local craft, but at the same time is struggling with its future. Leather processing and shoe manufacture formed the culture, economy and pride of the region “de Langstraat” as an international player, but leather and shoe production have now disappeared. However, there are still areas of large and small shoe brands and the Shoe and Leather Museum, founded in 1954. The Shoe Museum has brought regional shoe craftsmanship back to where it started, the city is once again becoming an (inter)national destination for experts and innovators, and the cultural history of the local community is shown and enhanced. The collection is the endless source of inspiration in all this.

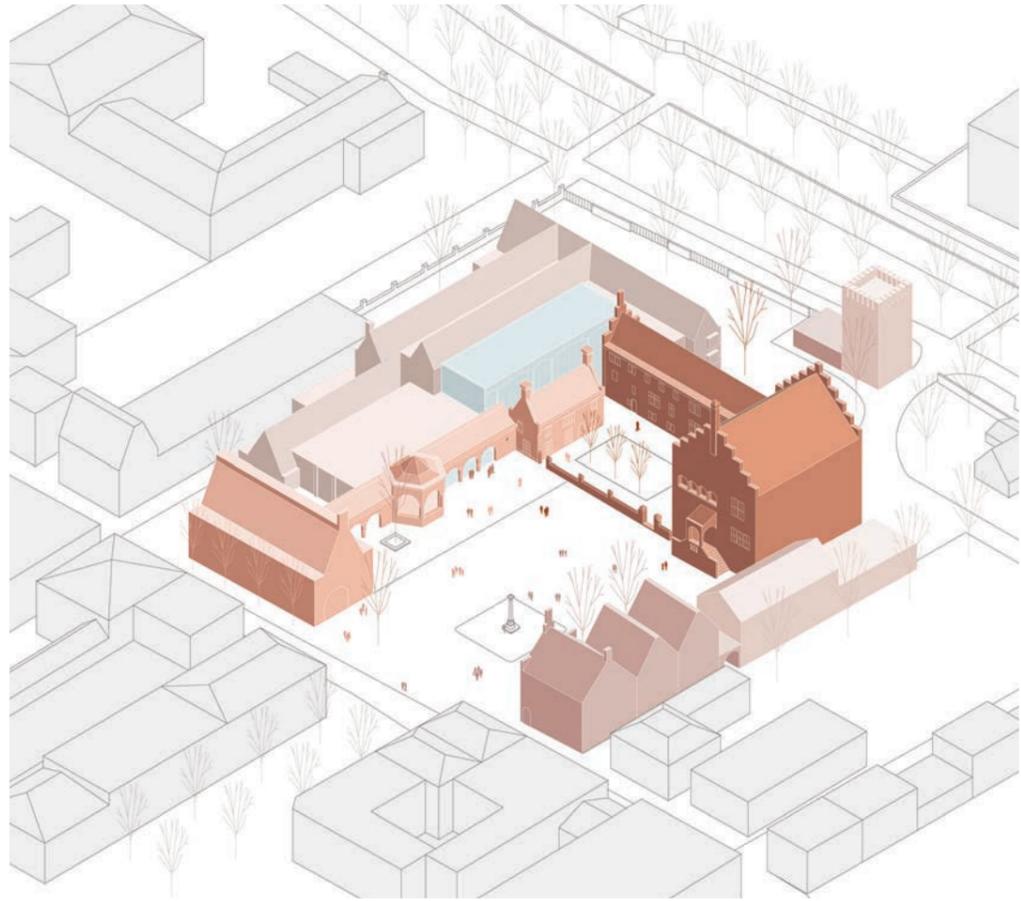
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## Revitalisation of the city centre



The Shoe Museum is located in the heart of the historic city centre, on the Raadhuisplein, where the town hall and city hall were housed in the last century.







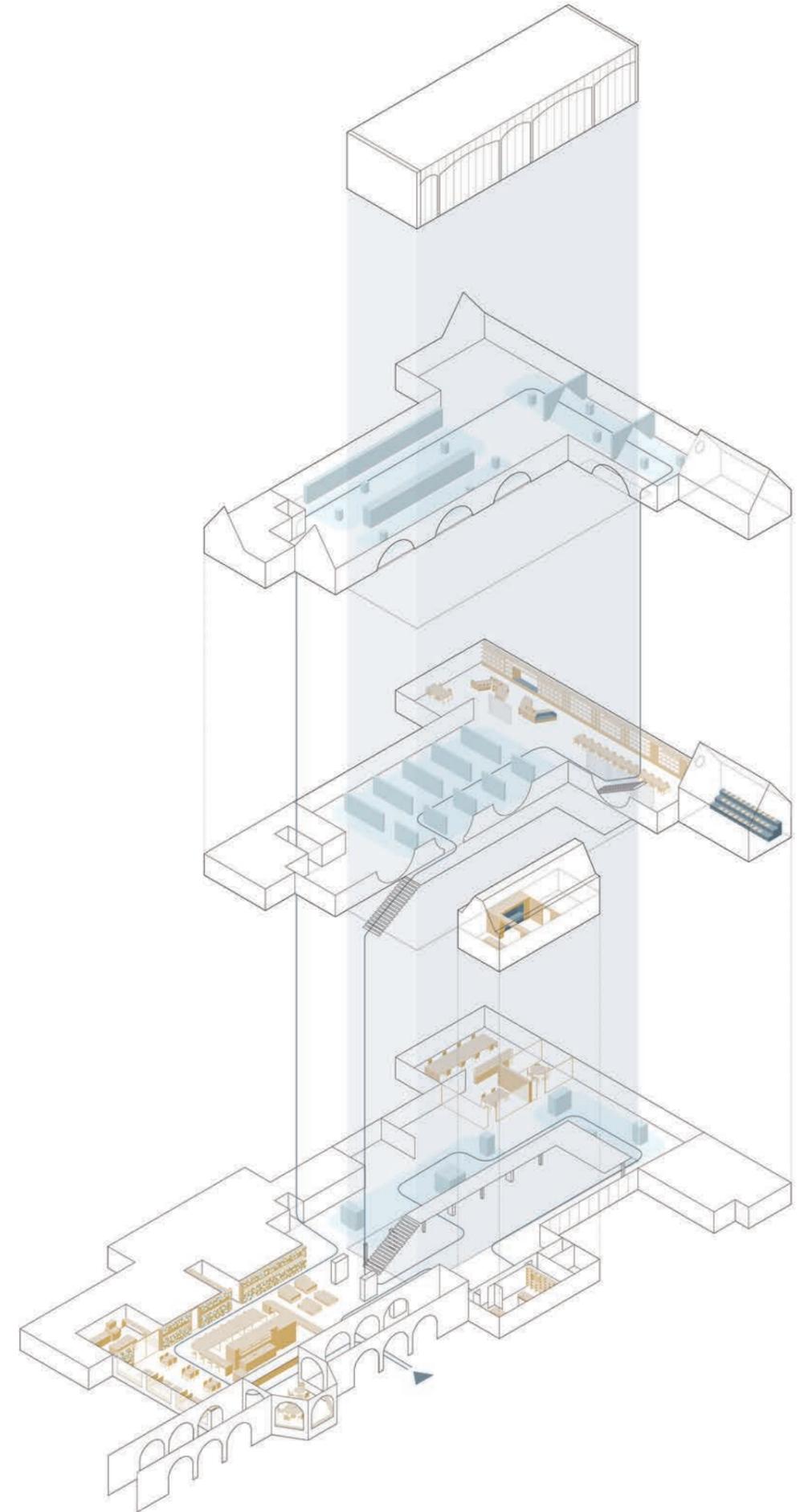
The general functions of the museum, such as the work café with the open work labs, are directly visible from the square and are also open to the public, even for people not visiting the exhibitions.

In addition to being a museum and innovation centre, the Shoe Museum is a welcoming place for the community. The hospitable public atmosphere is also noticeable when you enter the building through the historic arcades with generous pivoting and sliding doors: The entrance area is completely open and in the centre of the building runs an inner pavement with a cobble pattern, reminiscent of a covered city square.



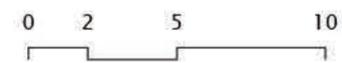
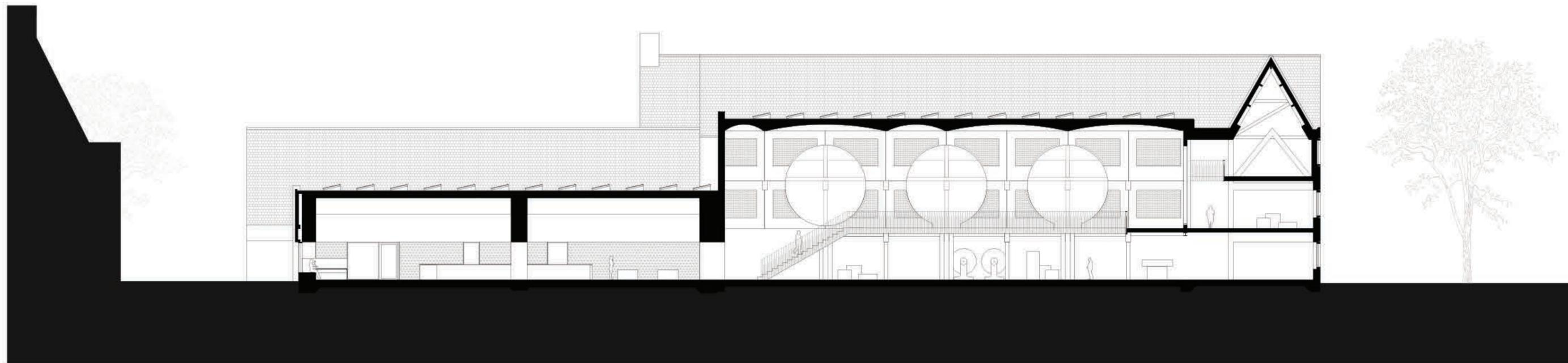


## Keeping the museum with the times



The building has a different layout and atmosphere compared to traditional museums. The shoe collection is large, extensive and special, but the intended target groups (from international fashion experts to families from the neighbourhood) all have different expectations, needs and attention spans. That's why the building has been designed in such a way that everyone can determine their own way and pace.

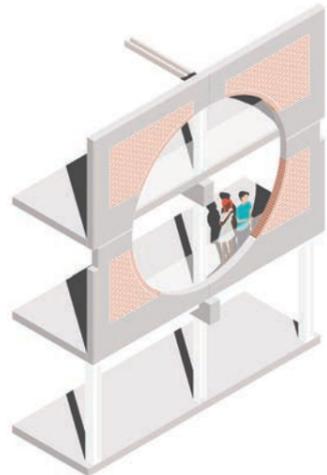
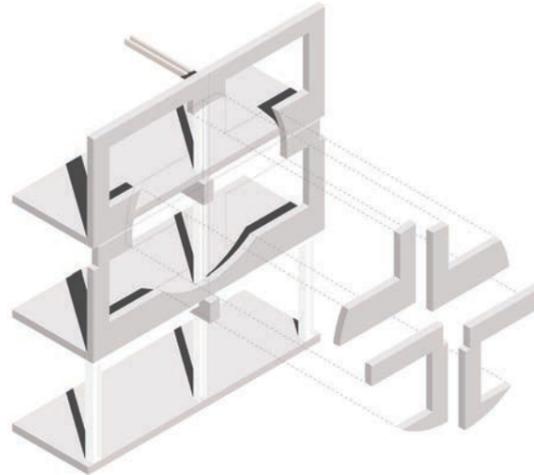
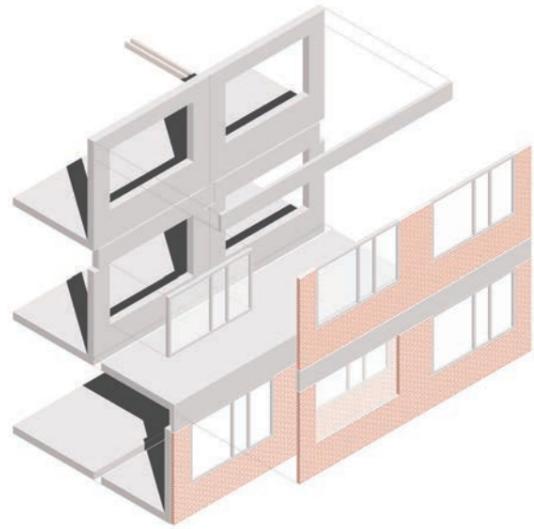




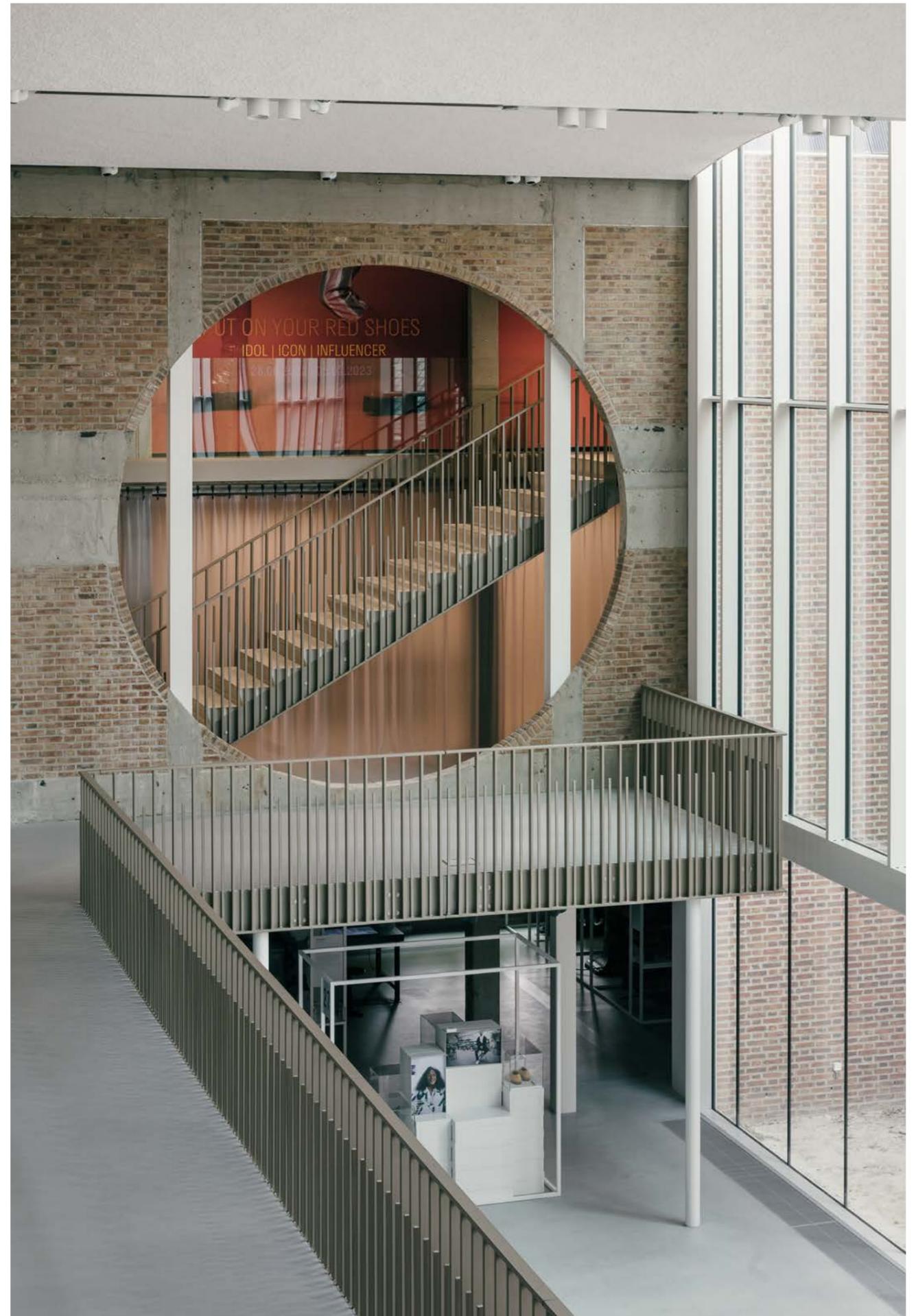
The completely open ground floor brings together all the functions, from café to exhibitions, and the centrally added garden gives flexibility and choice for the public routing. The spectacular new large round openings, cut out of the stripped-down old façade of the 80s office wing, allow you to catch a glimpse of the exhibitions from here.



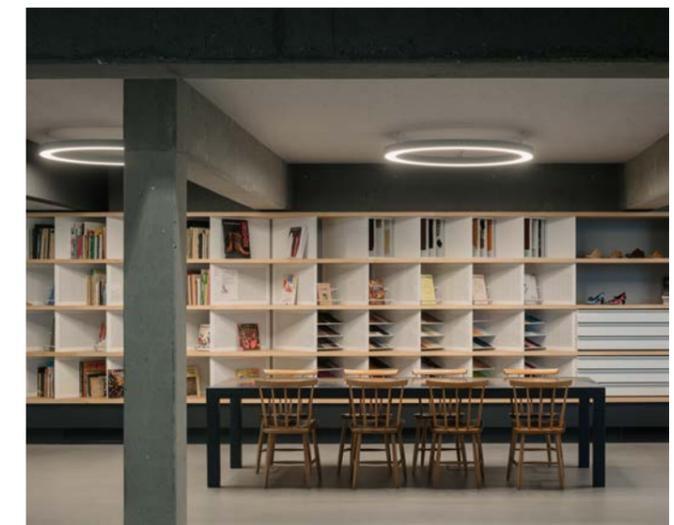
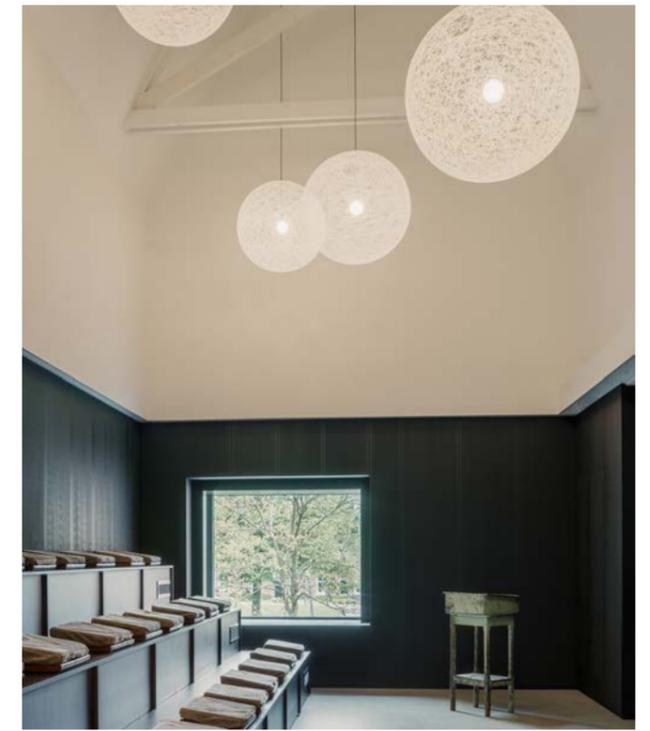
The open layout of the museum means that there are many views right across the museum. You can look forward, back and inside the exhibition rooms, as well as in the knowledge centre and the “make-labs” which have been placed logically along these routes. This connects the collections and the people in a relaxed way. It makes the Shoe Museum a lively place for cross-pollination and inspiration. Sometimes, you can also look outside at one of the gardens or the historic buildings, to process your impressions or simply enjoy the beautiful place.



Cleverly placed staircases and routes make it possible to take shortcuts and only visit the highlights and study one exhibition in detail if you wish, but you can also visit the museum in the classical way and follow the entire beautifully thought-out route.







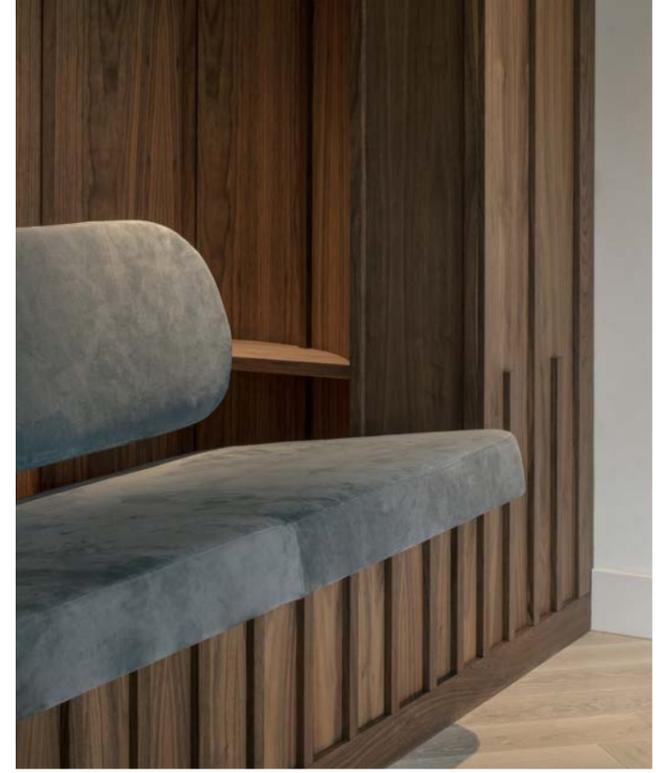
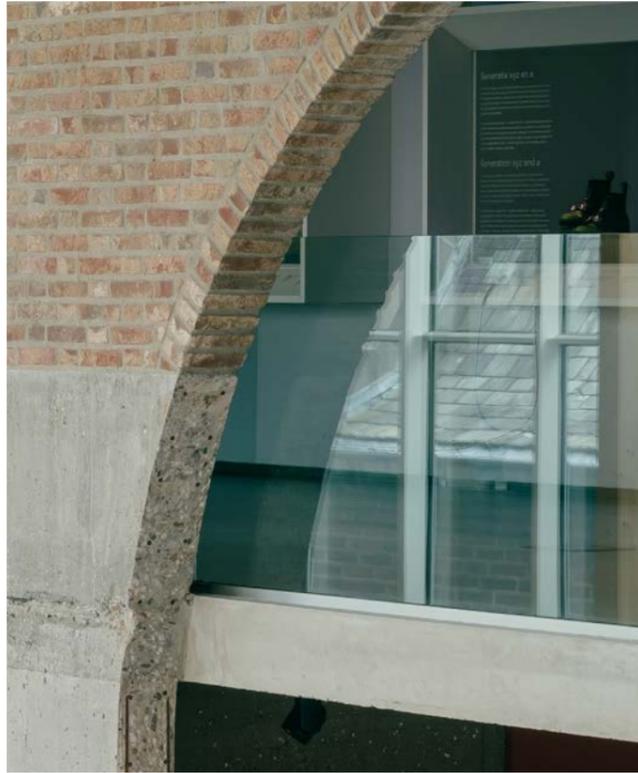
The building is a combination of a museum and an innovation centre, interwoven into one living entity. A research library is located between the exhibition rooms, there are several innovation and design labs for education and artists in residence, and various possibilities for conferences and company presentations.



## Architecture for everyone

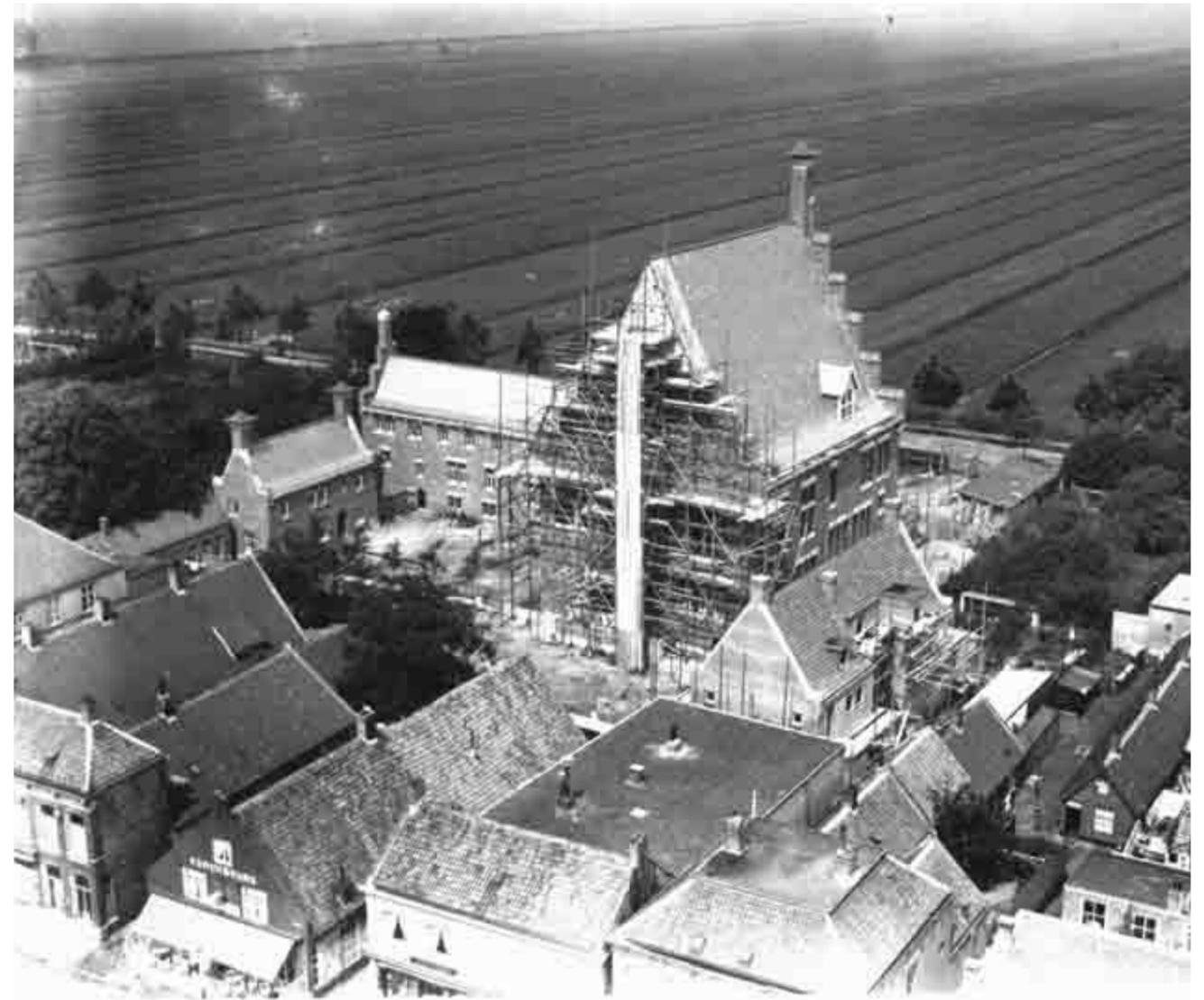
The tone in the complex is set by familiar materials such as brick, steel, concrete and wood. This is a deliberate choice: the materials reinforce the atmosphere of the collection and of the historical building and form one collective artwork. At the same time, it appears that some visitors may feel uncomfortable or unwelcome in abstract museum spaces because they don't visit them that often, while the museum wants to be open to the widest possible audience.





The choice of real materials and the geometric shapes used transcend the target group in the sense that they appeal to universal experiences of the human senses; from sight to hearing, from touch to smell. The materials are also chosen with sustainability in mind. On the one hand, this means that they must be able to withstand rough handling and age well, and on the other hand, that they must be sustainably sourced and reused wherever possible.

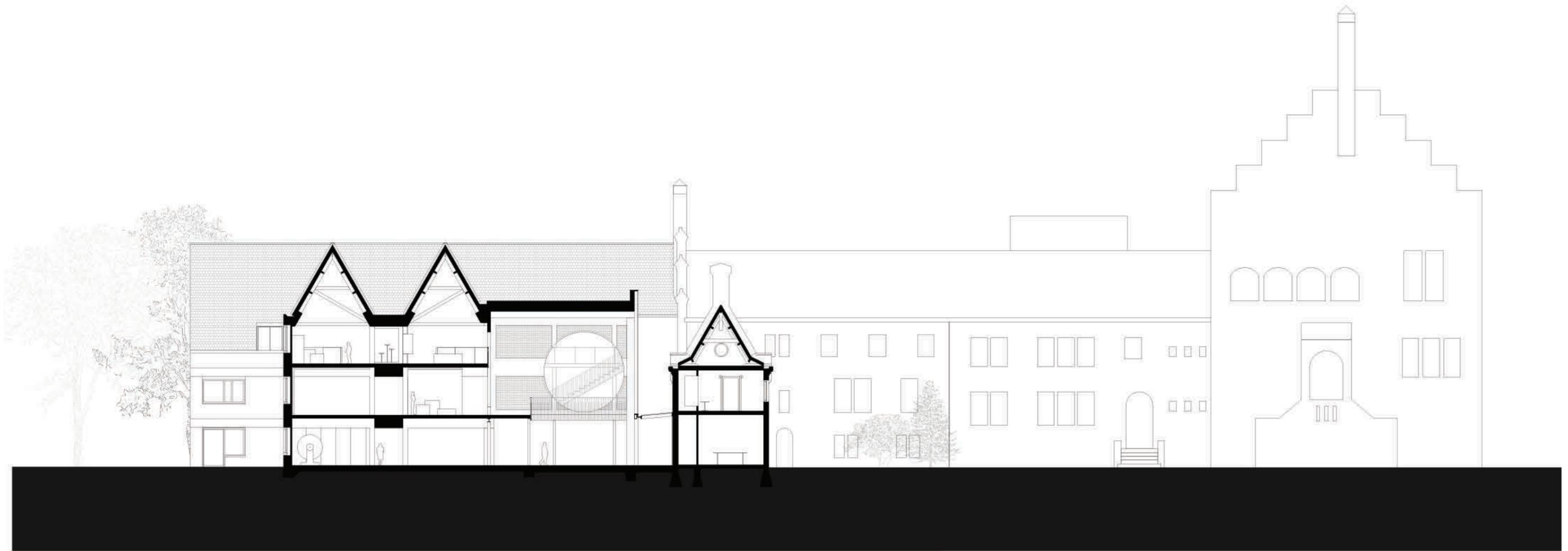
## Adding to the life story of the building



The "Raadhuis ensemble" is one of the most important building complexes by architect Alexander Kropholler from the 1930s, which was realised in phases and extended once in the 1980s. The buildings have been partly modified, partly renovated and expanded with a new building section.



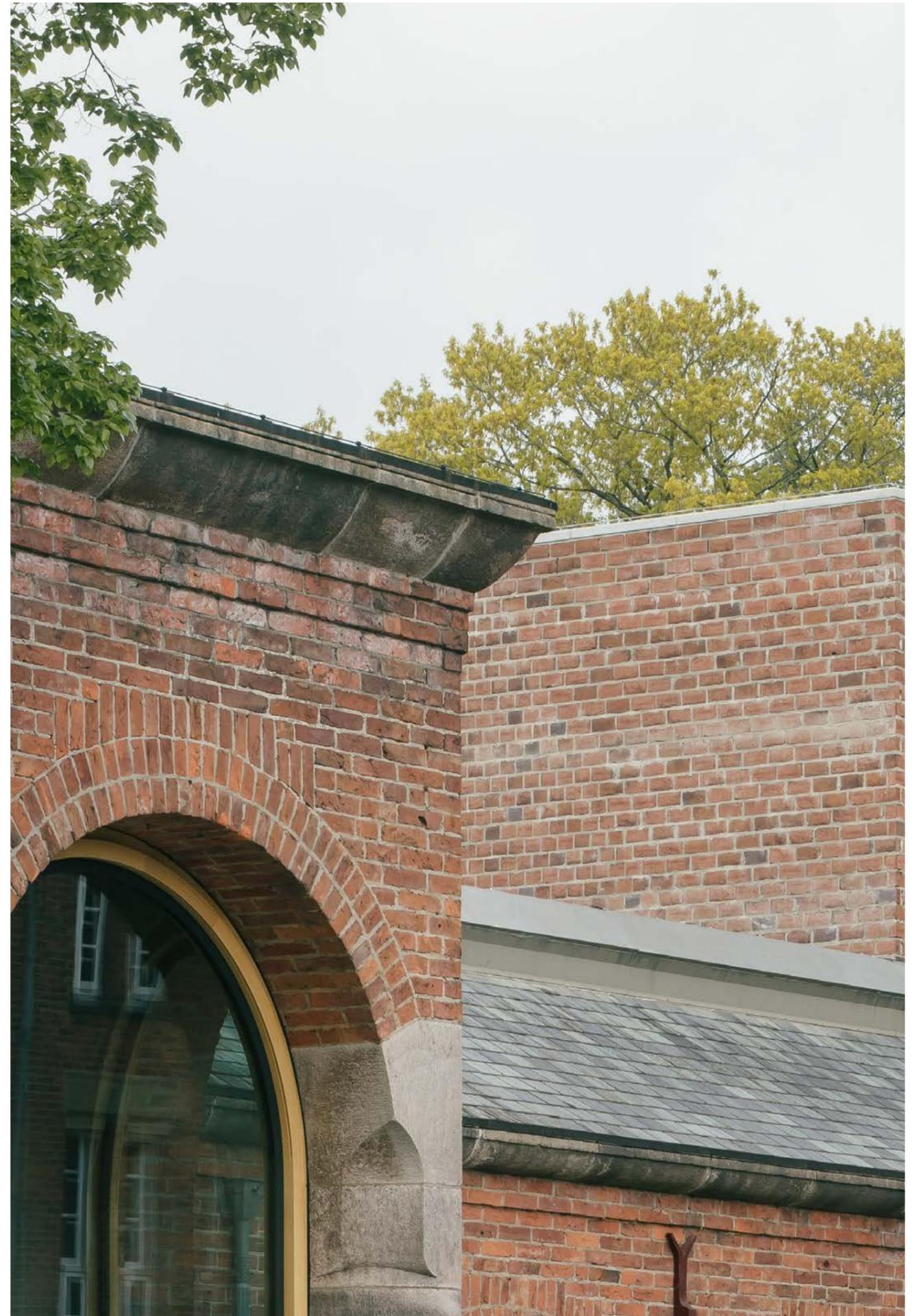
The recognisable Kropholler principles and details were restored during the renovation, and they also inspired the new design. In this way, we apply the principle of individuality and solidity, just as the original architect did: wood is wood; stone is stone. The original layout of the open arcades and the kiosk on the square has been reinforced with new arched window frames, made from thick oak, in the “Kropholler” tradition.



The new garden has a brick façade, just high enough to make the new museum visible from the town hall square, but low enough not to draw all the attention to itself.



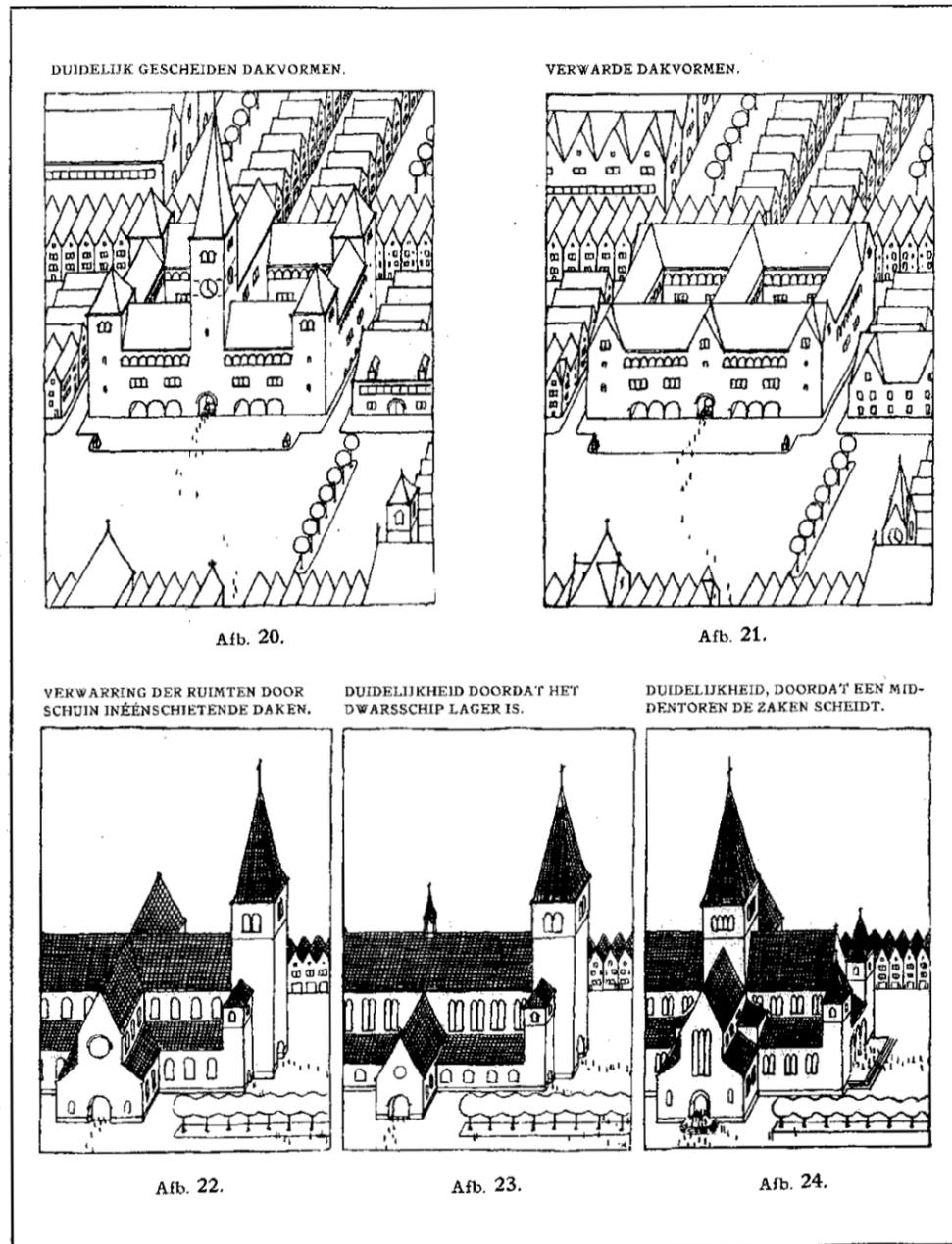
As with the historic buildings, large-format bricks with wide joints have been used here, whose diagonal, staggered masonry subtly refers to the roof shapes of the other building sections.



This means that the addition is not an idiosyncratic fashion icon, but a logical new chapter in the overall story of the historically layered building ensemble, which with this approach still has a long future ahead of it.



# Free handling of compelling legacy



Afb. 20.

Afb. 21.

VERWARRING DER RUIMTEN DOOR SCHUIN INÉÉNSCHIETENDE DAKEN.

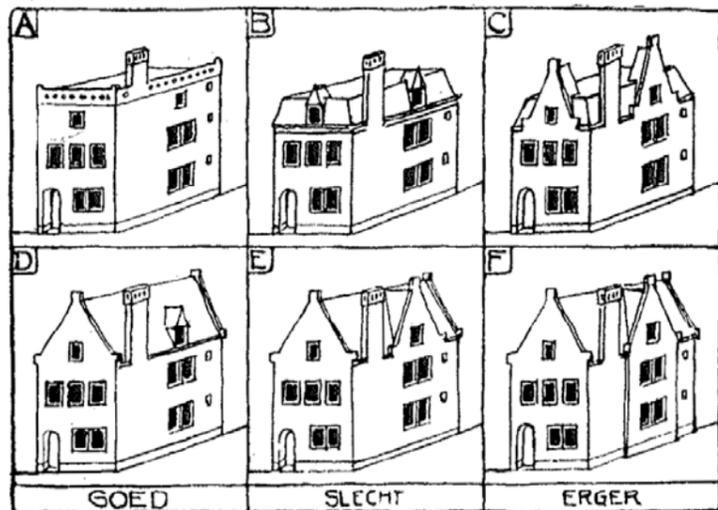
DUIDELIJKHEID DOORDAT HET DWARSSCHIP LAGER IS.

DUIDELIJKHEID, DOORDAT EEN MID-DENTOREN DE ZAKEN SCHEIDT.

Afb. 22.

Afb. 23.

Afb. 24.



Kropholler's architectural ideas were also somewhat rigid and constraining, which is not in keeping with the role that the museum wishes to fulfil in society today. That's why a conscious decision was made to continue working with the original materials and techniques, but to design in a more liberal way.

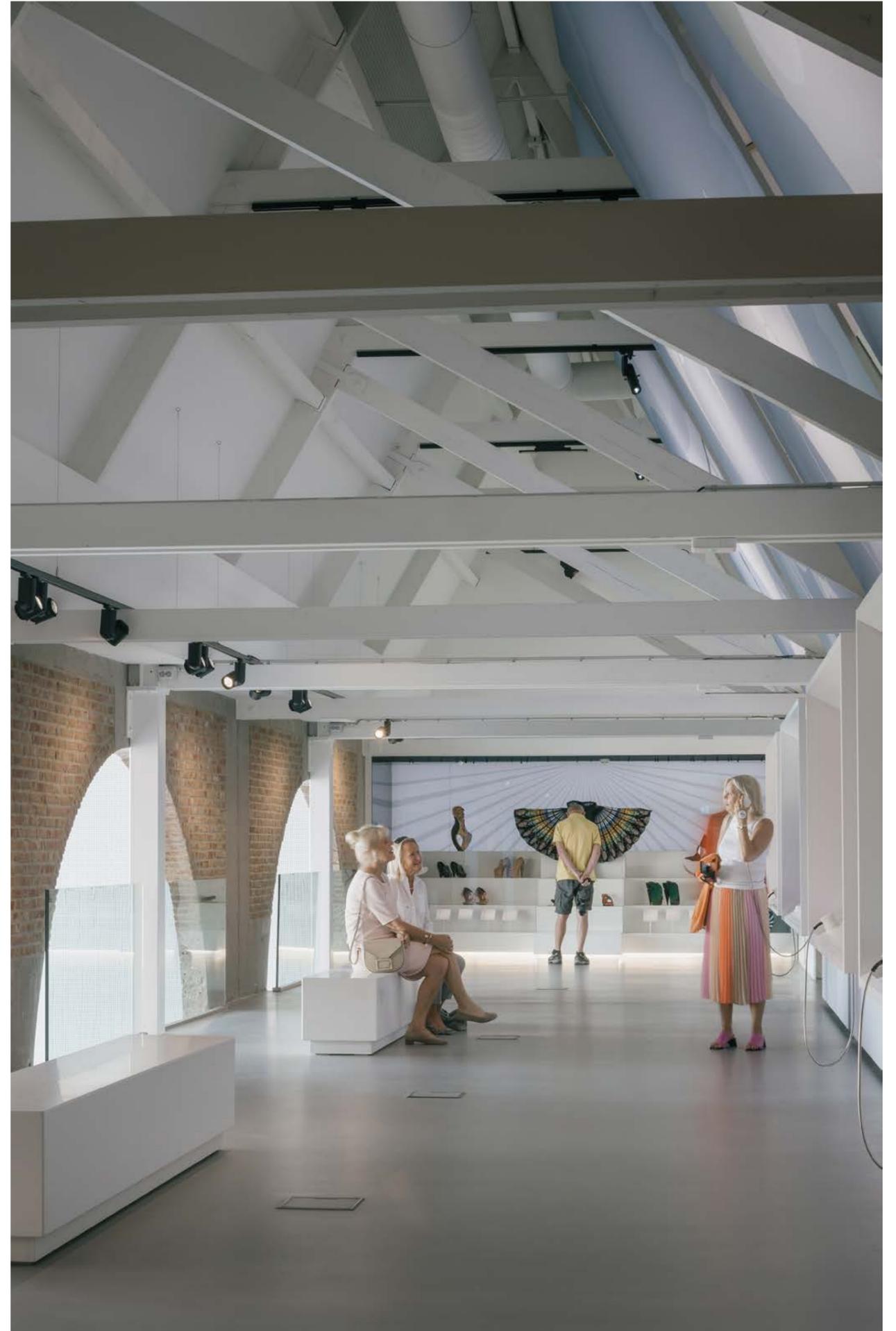
The new sawn openings in the central hall fit well with the arched arcades of the old town hall, but are actually bricked in a complete circle, which would be a "sin" according to Kropholler's theory. The vaulted ceiling doesn't have one continuously repeating size but is staggered several times. These and other subtly subversive design details bring Kropholler's rigid architectural ideas to the present day, but ultimately the old and new beliefs form one unit.



## Testing grounds for circular techniques and methods

With its various design and manufacturing labs, the Shoe Museum offers space for designers, educational institutions and the business community to experiment with new circular techniques. Experiments have also been carried out with different techniques and materials in architecture and interior design.

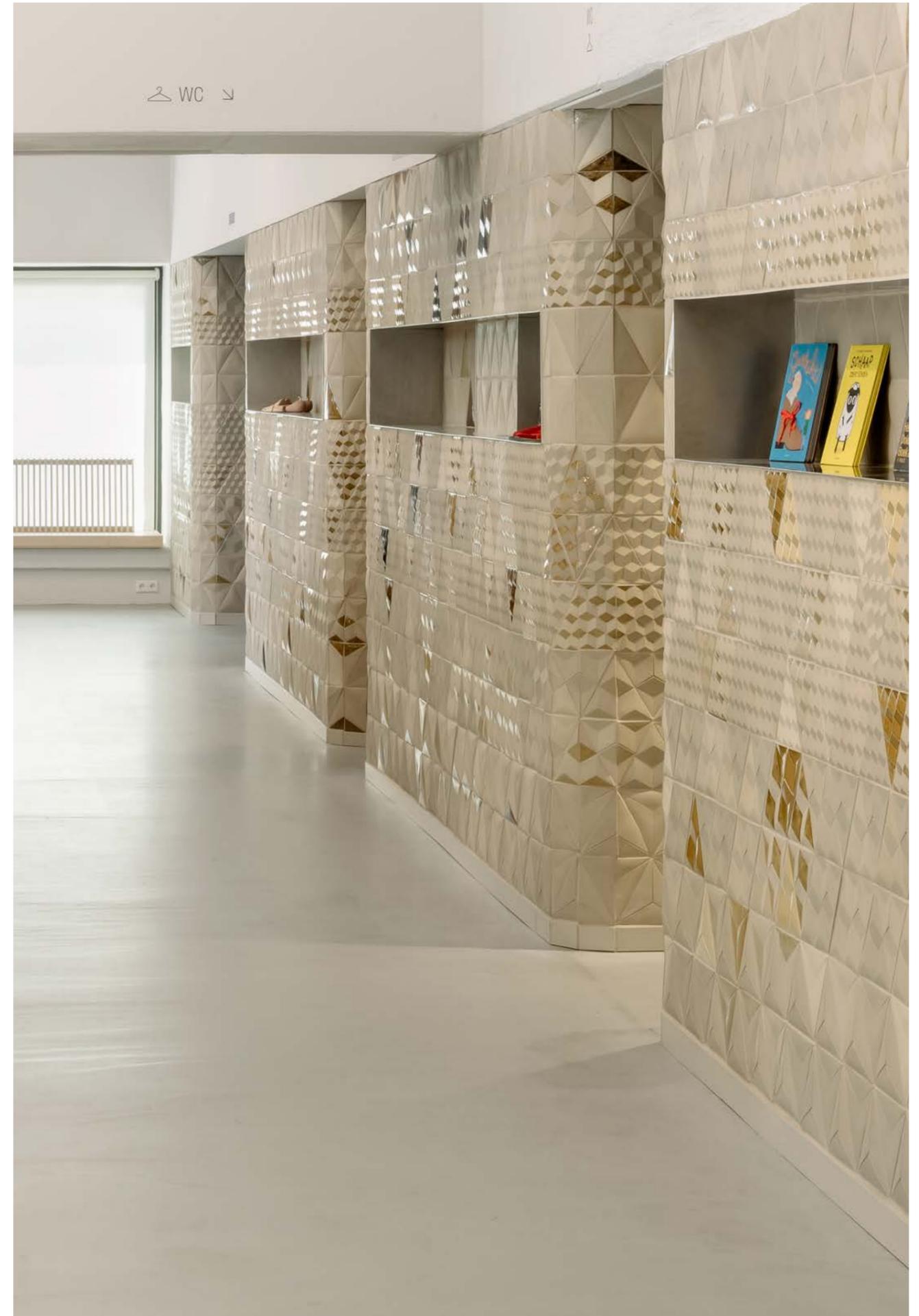
By turning an oppressive 80s office building with low ceilings into museum spaces, and by sawing out parts of it in a special way and preserving as much as possible.





The central multifunctional desk in the entrance area is made of "lime hemp" with ceilings made of synthetic felt from recycled PET bottles.

The undisputed eye-catcher in the entrance area is the experimental ceramic tile wall, developed in cooperation with the agency La-Di-Da. The wall combines ceramic craftsmanship with innovation and sustainability through the unusual shape of the 3D printed moulds and the use of waste from other glazing processes.



## Social cohesion and regional craft



To develop the interior design, collaborations have been set up with education, the business community and creative regional crafts. It shows that the link between social cohesion and architectural products can be realised in public buildings. It is therefore as one in cultural cohesion, social cohesion and regional identity.



In cooperation with ceramics studio Cor Unum, the prototype for the tile wall was developed and implemented as a small-scale traditional production, partly realised by people with a distance to the labour market. Students from the Sint-Lucas vocational school designed the leather cushions for the auditorium, and local businesses provided the furnishings for the office environment.

# Project information

## - Project details

Commissioning client  
Total project area  
Programme

Municipality of Waalwijk  
3.423 m2  
Exhibition spaces, research library, auditorium,  
museumcafé, museumshop, workshopspace, offices,  
depot, educational laboratories

## - Design team

Architect  
Exhibition design  
Interior design  
Ceramic wall design  
Brand design & wayfinding  
Lighting design  
Landscaping

Civic Architects  
Tinker Imagineers  
Civic Architects  
La-Di-Da  
The Invisible Party  
SiSi Lighting Design  
Bureau BOL

## - Consultants and execution

Design & Construction management  
Structural Engineering  
Mechanical and electrical engineering, fire safety  
Execution management  
Lead contractor  
Installations contractor  
Restaurant consultancy  
Retail consultancy  
Contractor interior  
Contractor exhibition  
Production ceramics

BBN  
Archimedes Bouwadvies  
Nelissen ingenieursbureau  
BTB  
WAM en van Duren  
VanDijnsen  
Vijverborgh  
Devopia  
Planemos  
Kloosterboer  
Cor Unum Ceramics

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# Civic Architects

Civic is an office for public architecture. We design libraries, bridges, cultural buildings, public fora, squares, educational buildings, housing, sculptures and stations.

We start each project by exploring the societal relevance and public agenda.

Civic hopes to design generous, powerful and atmospherically architecture that stands the test of time.



**Passage**  
2016



**Pavilion**  
2017



**Museum**  
2022



**Theatre**  
2023



**Faculty**  
2022



**Literature salon**  
2016



**Tower**  
2023



**Library**  
2018



**Bioreactor**  
2015



**Lecture Hall**  
2019



**Mosque**  
2015



**Station**  
2017



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