

# GROSSLING - 1962.II

The question intrigues. The project must go beyond programmatic contingencies, sublimate them. How to create a new typology through the encounter between three hitherto autonomous programmes? How to create a contextualized emulation, on the scale of the ambitions that this unprecedented meeting calls for? This is not a public bath anymore. This isn't a library. No more than a café. It's a pretext, an opportunity, a social condenser. "1962.II" stages the iconic symbol of 1914 and the city in a new dialogue strengthening urban connections. It is an Exquisite Corpse concerning the symbiotic relationship between three programs through the identification of the Common Place: A Third Place. A public square. A Palestra of Possibles. Let's reinvent Grossling.

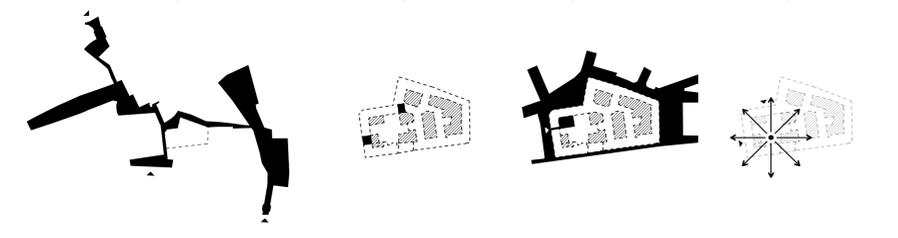
## 4 BIG IDEAS

### Connecting Medena

### Consolidating the urban fabric

### Giving a public palestra

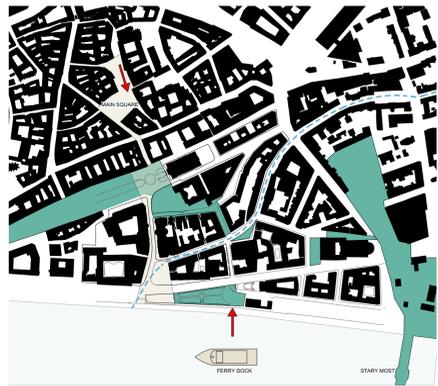
### Reactivating the landmark



## Existing Situation of Medena Square

Situated in the heart of a historical area rich in public, cultural and educational institutions, the complex is part of a wider network of functions, encompassing squares and urban patterns stretching from the banks of the Danube to Hlavni náměstí Square.

In this perspective, the requalification of Medena Square occupies a central position for the creation of green corridors conducive to soft mobility. Thanks to the new Křižácký green corridor, Medena square connects to a chain of green spaces (Pavlovský park, výhledový square, Panský náměstí and the green square (Hlavni náměstí) which will communicate in one piece, offering an alternative urban perspective on the Medena axis.



## The Medena square

The Medena square, in its current configuration, supports the pressure caused by the adjacent one-way streets. By structuring the edges of the square from Křižácká Street and connecting squares and urban patterns stretching from the banks of the Danube to Hlavni náměstí Square, the new axis of the public building and the new commercial development on the neighbour's ground floor is supported by the wider infrastructure.

The treatment of Křižácká street will be carried out on the same level as the pavement to create a unique space shared between the car and soft mobility. The car is thus encouraged to favour an alternative route. The parking area on both sides will be replaced by a wide planted pavement surrounding Medena from the revetment of the Danube. The new axes, responding to the opposite colonnades, significantly tighten the ambience. Therefore, the project actively supports the re-appropriation of the commercial ground floors under the colonnades by offering a pleasant space that, in the long term, will be activated on both sides. The project supports a reconstruction to the pedestrian network of the historical centre.

The square presents itself as an enlargement of this new development in the heart of the district. The space of the street is defined by the vegetation and integrates smoothly into the square. The two-way street is reduced to a minimum, defining the parking from the square and reintroducing its irregularity. The need for accessibility to the building, delivery, emergency, drop-off, encourages the project to support the creation of a covered path to avoid fragmentation of the public realm - a generally planned, accessible park. The development identifies the need to reinforce the status of the ground floor in front of the building to give Medena a public footprint at the scale of the district and the new program.

Contrasting with the material lines of the former Grossling building, the geometry of the square supports an organic landscape intervention. The existing trees are maintained. The new ones create dense areas and openings that foster different types of appropriation. On the ground, five water bodies, referring to the major alluvium of the Danube crossing Slovakia, restore the collective memory on the course of the Medena street, a pilgrimage of the river towards a piece of the Danube. A place for recreation, refreshment, meetings, gatherings, this event near the main entrance announces the new status of the building. We believe in spontaneous appropriation of this strong urban statement.



Park Draha - Eschenlauer / Michael Degenhart; Brno Opera House - Grove of trees / Dieckhoff/UrbanHinterfaller; Brno Opera House - Waterway / Dieckhoff/UrbanHinterfaller

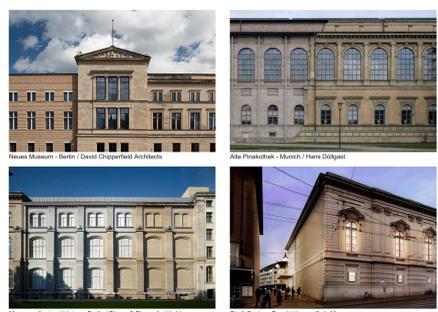
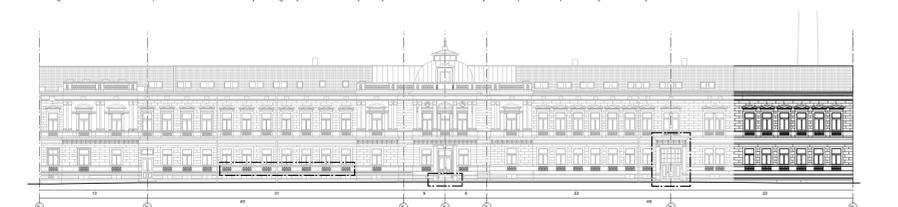
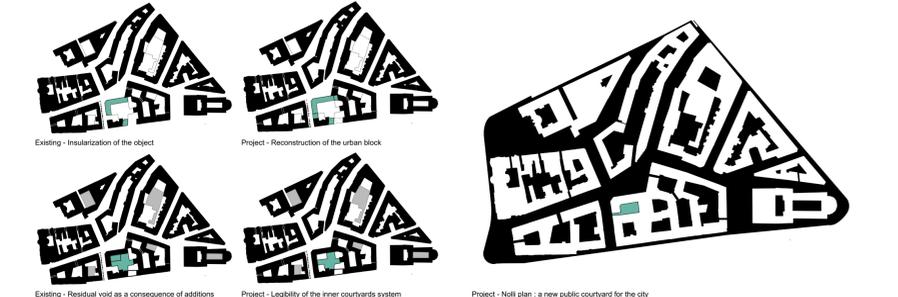
## Strengthening the urban fabric

The successive mutations of the urban block have actively participated in insulating a main body of 1914 which was connected to its neighbour, generating residual voids that today contaminate the morphology of the fabric. By creating connections to the adjoining buildings, the project affirms its belonging to the block, and the block's belonging to the urban structure. The sequence leading to the Medena square, emphasizing the importance of the public void, is reinforced and the inner courtyards equalized.

The building acquires a new presence on the public domain: 6m of facades develop symmetrically on either side of the historic entrance, on Medena and Křižácká streets. The architectural attitude of the facades is in continuity with the existing and in line extensions. It interacts with it to give a homogeneous urban identity.

By the creation of an artificial level in balconies on the public domain, the typology of the existing main body expresses a clear distance between the status of the ground floor. This assumed intervention is pushed to the extreme in the symbolic treatment of the historical facade. The interior facades contrast. The former bulk tower identifies an inside and outside. The project radically separates above this massive attitude of the historical building, which supports the desire for an immersive experience. Closing its limits confirms what the building was to a box of possibilities.

By entering these qualities, the project clarifies the nature of the public and private spaces and offers a new experience in the city. It inserts the new venue in Bratislava's extended network of alleyways and secondary courtyards.



Neues Museum - Berlin / David Chipperfield Architects; Alja Pivakova - Munich / Hans Döllgast; Museum of natural history - Berlin / Dierker & Diener Architekten; Stadt Casino - Basel / Herzog & de Meuron

## Open loop system

The city of Bratislava is suffering from an overheating of the underground water. Two factors explain this:

- the presence of a dense and poorly insulated historic centre which transmits its heat to the ground
- shallow groundwater (6 metres below the surface)

This overheating has many negative effects, both environmental and practical.

The project, located in the epicenter of the overheated area, proposes the installation of an open loop system, which would pump out the underground water, extracting the excessive heat via a heat exchanger and release cooler water to help restore the normal temperature of the underground water. This extracted heat can then be used to heat the building as well as the water of the different pools.

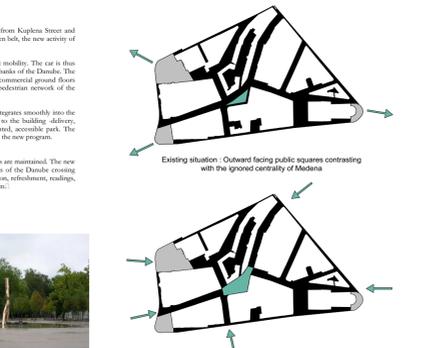
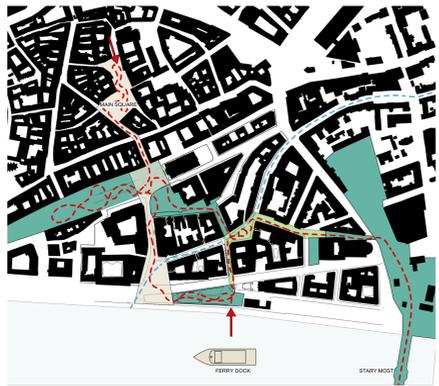
The quality of the water is not affected in any way as it remains in a closed circuit and never comes into contact with the water used in the Grossling complex.

The Grossling complex is a project focused on the city, the public good and the water. The building's energy strategy works in this direction. It contributes to exploring the quality of an increasingly important public good: water.



## Connecting Medena Square to the existing network

The desire for continuity and fluidity of the green space creates a potential reconnection to the city scale embedding the Starý most and therefore Petržalka.



Existing situation - Outward facing public squares contrasting with the ignored centrality of Medena; Project - Enlarging Medena Square to stimulate its perception as the central place of the district

## A new identity

The new public expression of the building re-qualifies the status of the historic porch, now at the core of the new facade on Křižácká street. The project takes advantage of this unique access to direct connect with the level of the public realm to offer a public space inside the place, accessible to all by entering the existing structure adjacent to the former external porch. The whole intervention requires new possibilities. The new porches open up the blind ground floors, providing light, views, and a fluid spatial connection. It offers new perspectives from the public realm through the building, connecting visually public spaces together.

## A Stage for Bratislava

The space left empty creates two clear spaces that the project emphasizes the welcome room and the Palestra of Possibles. The first one, visually connected to the street, is an invitation to discover. It gives the opportunity to curate this first act in an announcement of the main space. Public passing by is welcome. The urban sequence allows a total facility for the program. What is more is an independent event, the rest of the program can keep running 100%. According to the needs, the space can also be closed from the street, or controlled by the shared entrance deck of the evening time.

The proposal avoids the pitfall of overloading by considering the new program as a theme of life, conducive to new forms of social interaction. The project takes a social condenser rather than a simple programmatic collaboration. The materialization of the boundaries shows the freedom when it needs to, and suggest the life of the organism when (intensity) of the body is required: curtains, translucent glass. Space creation and suggestion of continuation, programs are forever an opportunity to new types of exchange.

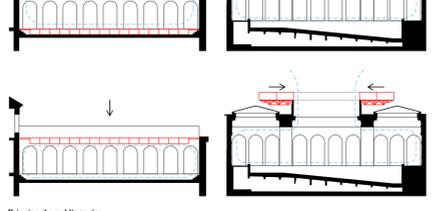
## A palestra, a third place, a public square.

The central square celebrates the diversity of the program in one clear geometry, continuing the inner ground floor levels of the structure without thresholds. It facilitates the gathering moment deeply anchored in the core of the three functions. At the same time public place for the café, third place, & library for the library and palestra for the thermal baths, this strong physical anchoring with a social resonance allows a total facility for the program. A place for informal meetings, connectivity and culture open to the public. The urban district offers maximum flexibility to the users: the square can function as a semi-public space, as a space reserved for the café, the library or the thermal baths, or for the combination of all. The ground floor is suggested to stimulate all kinds of appropriation of the gathering figure: lectures, public debates, cinematographic projections, artistic exhibitions, workshops, table of conversations, lectures, book fairs or events in connection with the thermal baths.

The café is pushed between two public spaces with different status: the Medena square, commercial and representative equivalent, announcing the building at the forefront of a church, and the Palestra of Possibles on the ground floor, supporting the activities of the city program. The library takes advantage of the great length of the 19th building and covers the new Křižácká green hub. By positioning these two programs on the main wings, the representative facade faces visitors to the building in constant activity and maintains the public space of Bratislava. The two inner edges defining the periphery put in relation the thermal function with the rest of the programme in a new suggestive dialogue.

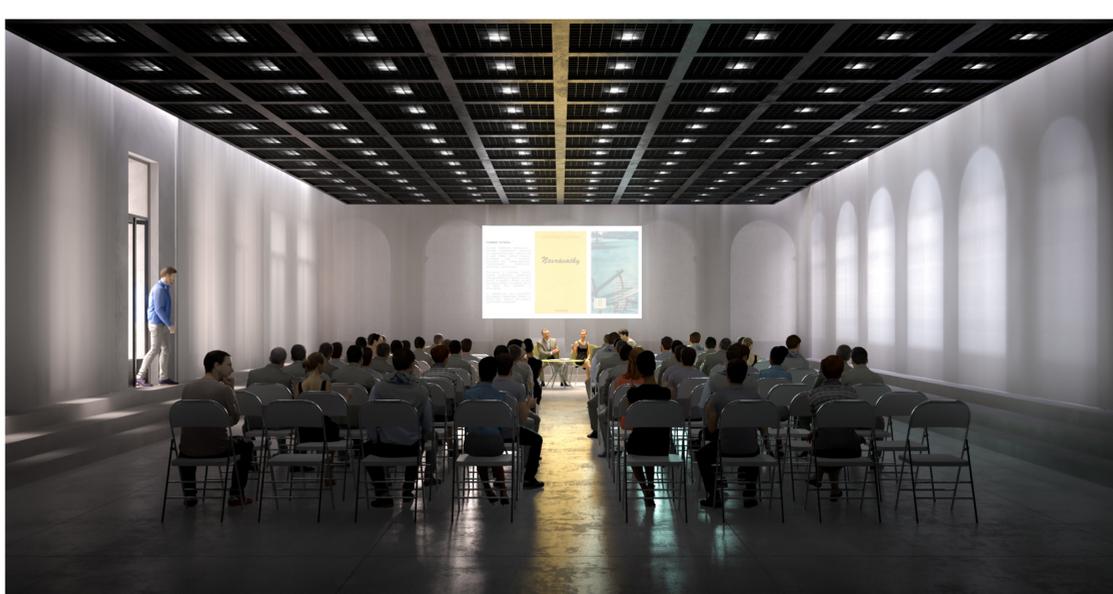
## Transforming the space

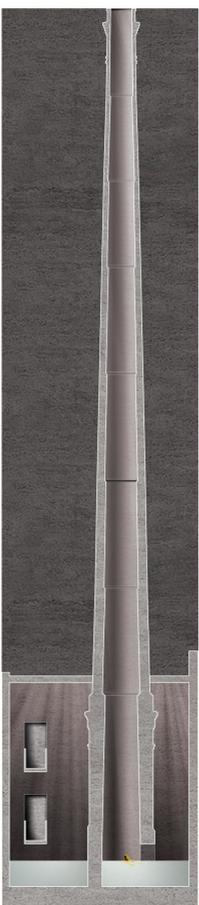
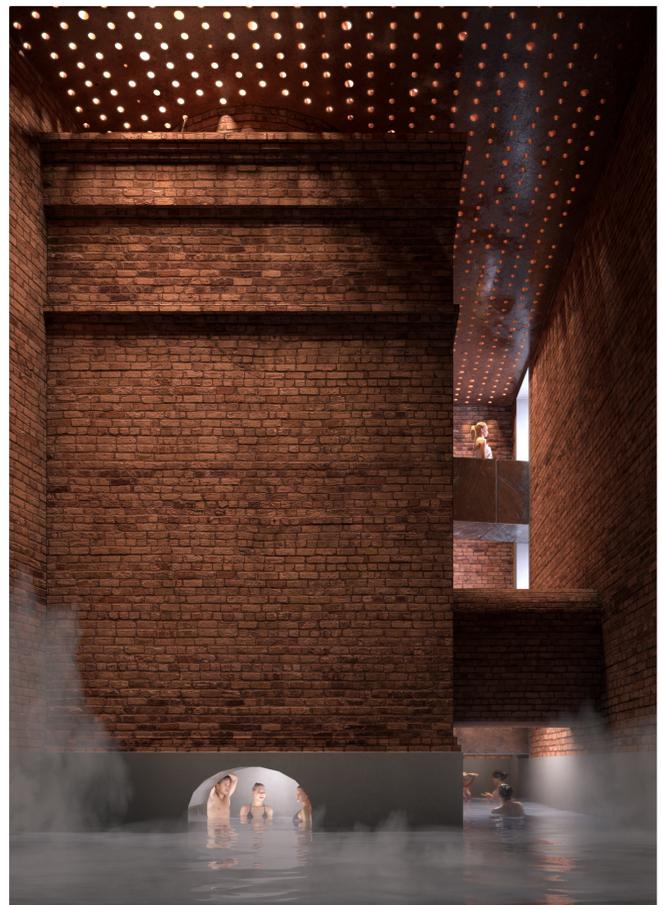
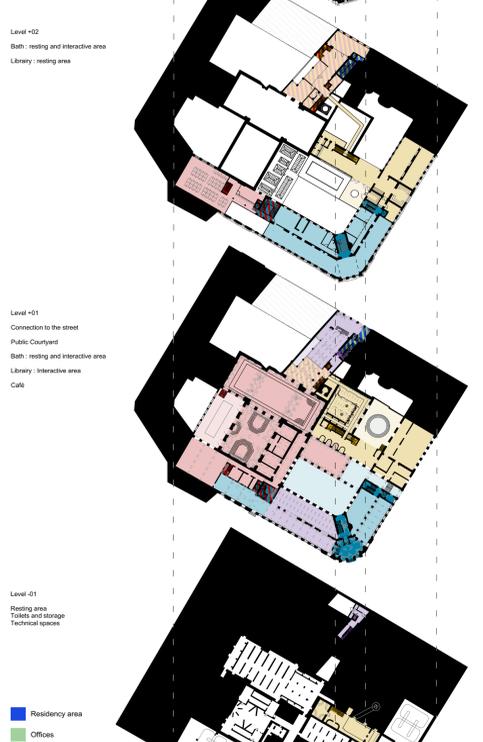
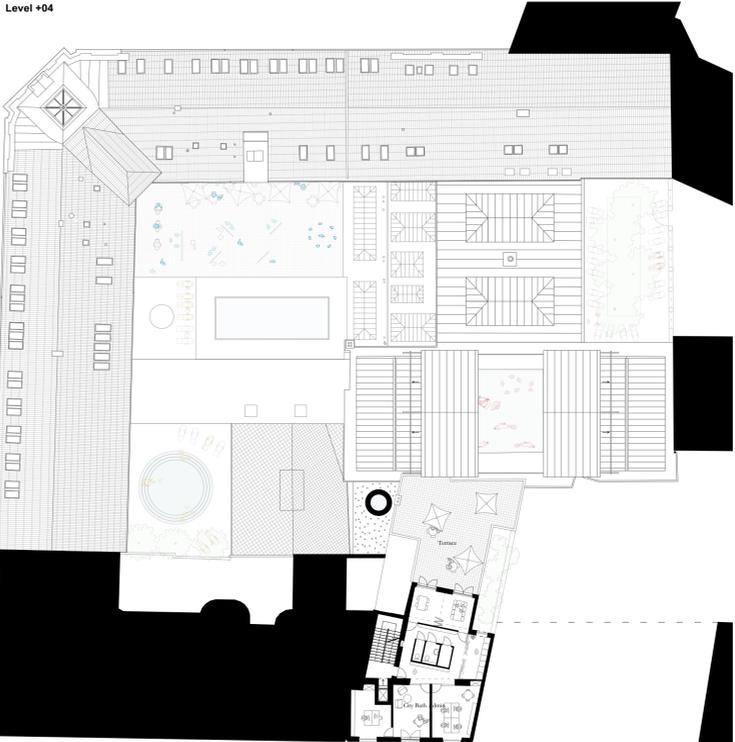
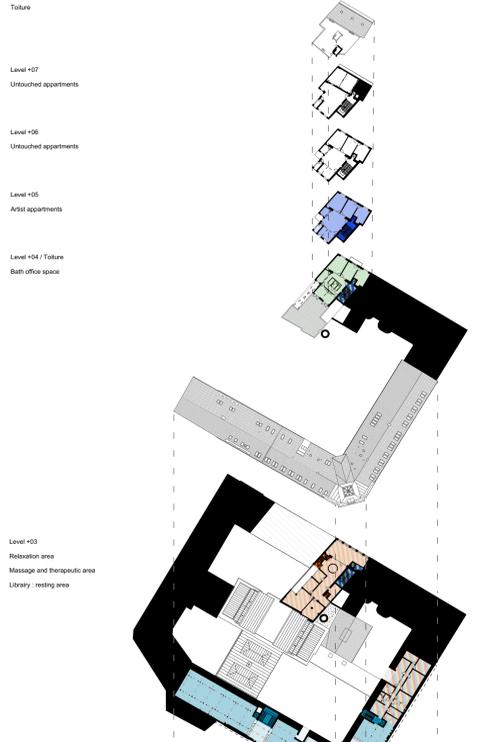
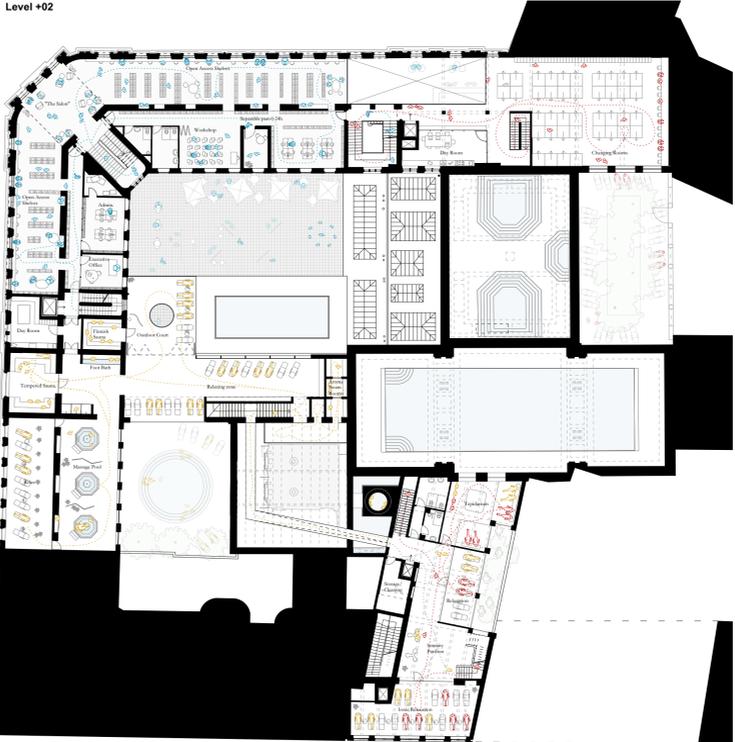
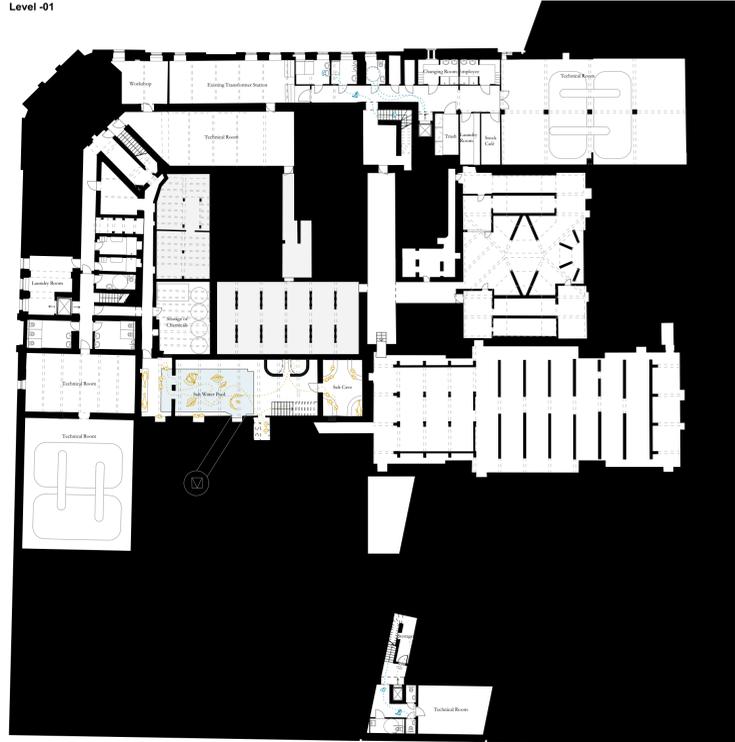
The mobile structure of the swimming pool, offers a surprising space, a flexible and evolutionary tool. The new square enters in resonance by interrupting the existing machine. The floor of the square is made up of a mobile waffle structure which, according to the needs, rises to reveal a covered multi-purpose "floor" of 21m x 11m with no columns. The reversibility of the space offers a flexibility of appropriation for the programmes and the city.



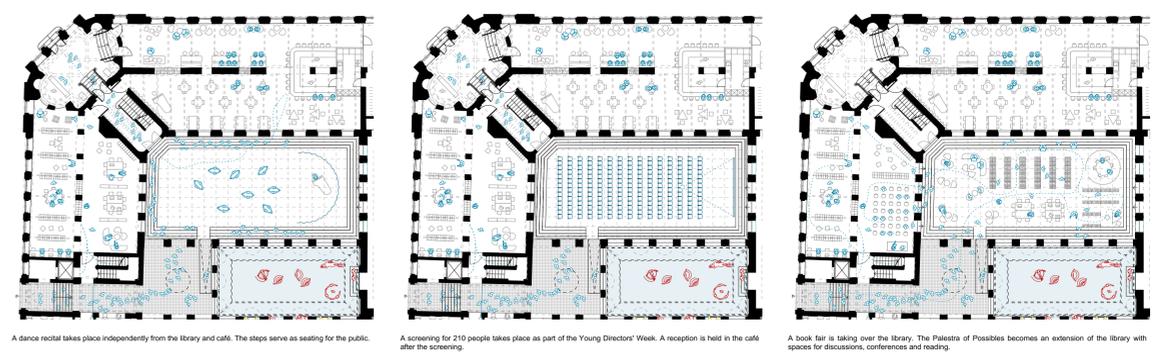
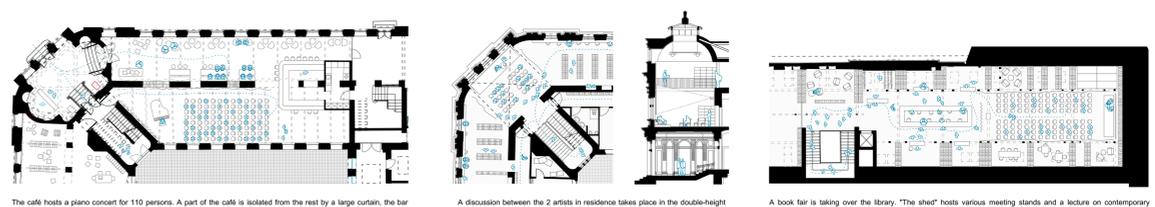
## Bringing the public to life

As it rises, the square benefits the +1 level of the library and identifies a new Plaza Nobile. This desire to raise the public status of the space stimulates the life of the building. The project identifies a series of multi-purpose spaces that are autonomous events. These functional spaces are always accessible to all and allow the public to discover the building in a different way, through new routes.





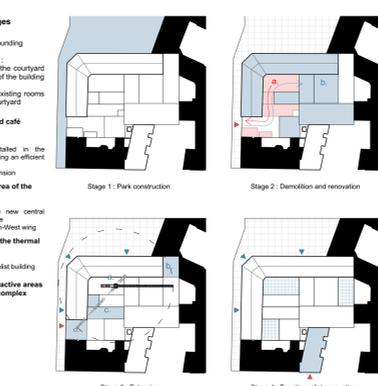
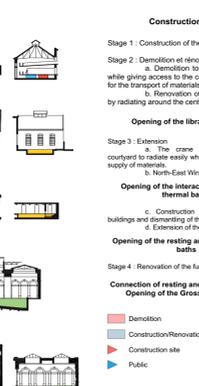
LET'S IMAGINE...



**Spatial organization**  
The compositional structure of the historical building identifies three entrances, each identifying three main vertical circulations. The project favours a legibility that allows the user to easily appropriate the new space. Each entrance distributes two functions. The public baths are accessible from the Medina square, the recreational area can benefit from an independent access from the Ruppina street, which also serves the library. The cafe is positioned at the confluence of the two programs as a life space.

**The library**  
Symbol of emulation of the collective memory, the library takes advantage of the three levels of the original building and is accessible through the three main cores. The organization of the plan uses the structural wall and preserves it as much as possible. It configures the organization of the program by identifying on the one hand the spaces facing the public realm, dedicated to the 60,000 books for active consultation, and on the other hand the social spaces, facing the patio. The niches in the wall allow for informal forms of appropriation.

**The public baths**  
The project offers a unique experience to the user by allowing a spatial journey through the history of the building. The baths are developed on the three public interfaces and the whole building. The experience is varied and each part of the program responds to the atmospheres and capacities of the existing buildings to support it. The new assignments take into account the structural specificities of the building.



**Trust in what is there**

Each layer of Grossi's history has brought new solutions that have enriched the spatial qualities of the building. Rather than a literal return to the state of 1914, the project proposes to take advantage of the most relevant solutions offered by each era: the 1914 pools, the 1930 roof... The demolished spaces are those of lesser historical quality, whose demolition allows a unitary reading of the project. The major spaces are preserved and enriched, trusting the existing spatialities.

The extensions follow the continuity of the building, as it has been the case with the past extensions of 1914 and 1930. This is no nostalgia to the past, but rather to ensure the coherence and urban strength of such a building.

Several contemporary projects follow this path: acknowledging the importance of urban and historical continuity before an intervention by contrast. However, this does not mean that the new facades are a pastiche of the old facades, a simple copy. The new facades mark their belonging to another time for a careful eye, thanks to a subtle difference in materiality and/or a simplification of the geometry.

The distribution of spaces is rationally positioned, taking advantage of the load-bearing capacities of the existing spaces, in order to limit structural additions. Because of its low load-bearing capacity, the functionalist houses light activities, the library is spread out in the main wings...

The structural philosophy of the project goes in the same direction; to help back of the existing structures even when they are weakened. When existing structures are heavily damaged, as in the case of pools, we wish to keep what is existing and either reinforce them or use them as a base to pour a new structure on top. The landscape of the foundation walls appears to be in good condition and could be cleaned and reinforced locally. The structural reading of the project would still be possible: an addition of error rather than a substitution of one by the other.

**1962.II**

It's not about dependency. It's about symbiosis. Programs do not constrain each other. They serve each other by contributing to each for what they are. Like the Equilibrating Corpses dear to the surrealists or the cubism, the frictions born of the encounter between strong identities become the support of the imagination. An imaginary that is left free to the curiosity of each one sacralized through reversible places.

Realized on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1962, the painting "Portrait of a woman" by Picasso, expresses the encounter between 3 autonomous abstract bodies, which once assembled produce a narrative full of new potentials.