

Alexander von Branca Gasteig Kulturzentrum, Löwenbräugelände am Gasteig

Signature: bra-113
Projektname: Kultur- und Kongresszentrum Gas-
teig, München
633 drawings; 4 photos

In the 70s Alexander von Branca worked for different projects in the same area. He participated to both the competitions for the cultural centre and later he designed the area behind it. In the Fig.1 is shown the area where the three projects are located.



Fig.1: aerial view of the site

Description of the area

The area of the projects is in the south west part of Munich. It is located in the right side of the Isar, near Rosenheimer Platz, in the district of Haidhausen and is characterized by an increase in the height of the ground, the name

indeed, comes from the old German gach-steig (steep climb). The area of the three projects is in front of the Ludwigsbrücke and it is defined by Rosenheimer Str., Stein Str. and Keller Str. Until the 70s, when it was demolished,

there was the famous Bürgerbräukeller, brewery in which, on 8th of November 1939, Georg Elser tried to attempt to Adolf Hitler's life. The bomb that was supposed to kill Hitler exploded 9 minutes too late.

Semesterarbeit von Lucrezia Rodriguez
im Rahmen des Seminars
'Architektur sammeln, dokumentieren und präsentieren -
Alexander von Branca im Archiv des Architekturmuseums'
im Sommersemester 2019

Gasteig cultural centre (1969-1977)

After the destruction of the brewery, the city of Munich held a competition for the construction of a cultural centre. This desire to build a cultural centre was part of the reconstruction work after the war. The Munich philharmonic was destroyed, while the library and the adult education centre had not been properly refurbished yet, so the administration decided to construct a new building that would bring together these three functions.

Competitions

In 1971/2, a competition was held, which was won by the Raue studio. Three years later the competition was renewed, and the same winners were confirmed. The construction of today's Gasteig (shown in Fig.2) had many problems: the costs increased significantly and at the time of the economic recession in the mid-1970s, changes to the project were necessary. The hotel with more than 1000 beds was eliminated and the number of parking spaces drastically reduced. Following these changes, construction began in 1976. von Banca participated in both competitions, in the archive of the Architekturmuseum it is possible to find two different projects: one identified with the

number 502010 (Fig.3) and one identified with the number 270918 (Fig.4). It is not possible to decide from the drawings which project is for the first and which is for the second one.



Fig.2: Photo of the Gasteig, Lucrezia Rodriguez, August 2019

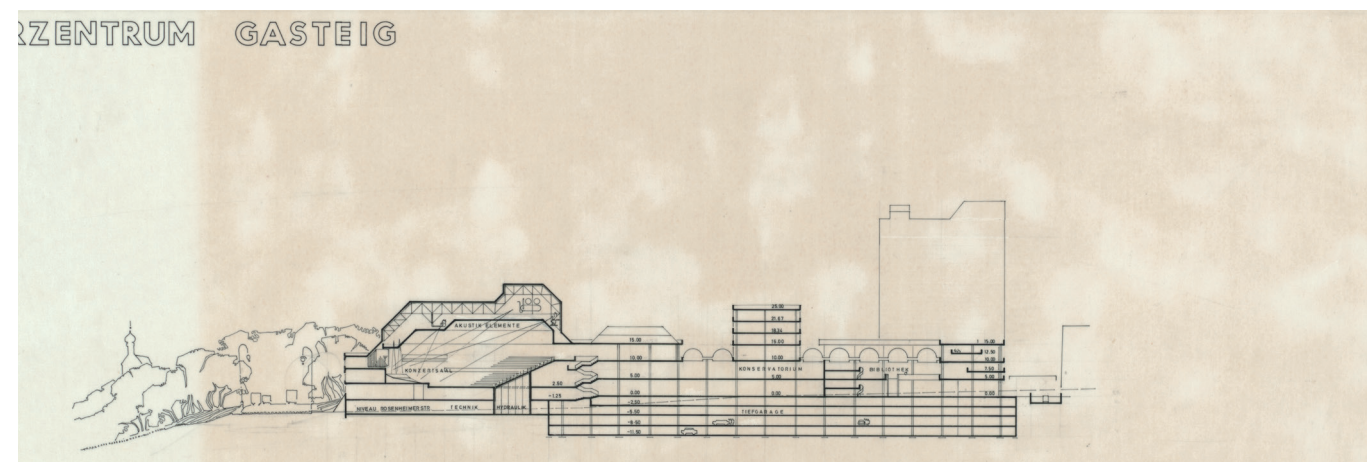


Fig.3: competition project 502010 (elevation)

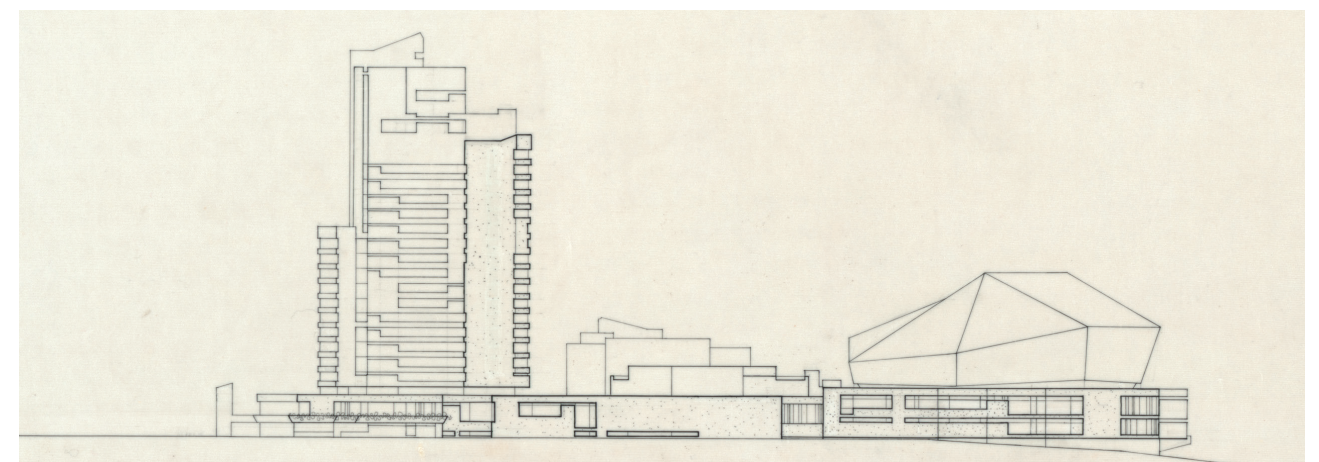


Fig.4: competition project 270918 (elevation)



Fig.5: project 270918 (siteplan)

Gasteig cultural centre project 270918

The project 270918 is probably the one that Branca made for the first competition. This is deduced for the following reasons: first of all, the number that identifies the competition comes first and it is reasonable to think that the projects were numbered sequentially; moreover, the building covers a larger area that reaches Rosenheimer Platz and the second competition asked for a smaller complex.

As it is possible to see from the site plan (Fig.5) the project has a really complex geometry both in plan and section (Fig.6), it's very different from the surrounding. The complex is composed by many different parts and some of them are joined together with a small one floor building. The shape of the parts seems to be independent from the edges of the block, it is almost impossible to find perpendicular lines and the buildings touch the border of the area only on few points.

The complex is divided in two parts: the first near the Isar hosts the recreational functions such as museum, concert hall, bar, restaurant; while the second one hosts some apartments, offices, shops and the national education house "volksbildundshaus". Looking at the site plan is also possible to understand how von Branca had imagined the accessibility of the block. There is an access for cars on Rosenheimer Str. that leads to the underground garage, on the same street there is also a station of the S-Bahn service, between Keller Str. and Steiner Str., instead, there is a parking for taxi, while the main pedestrian entry in the foyer, is on the river side.

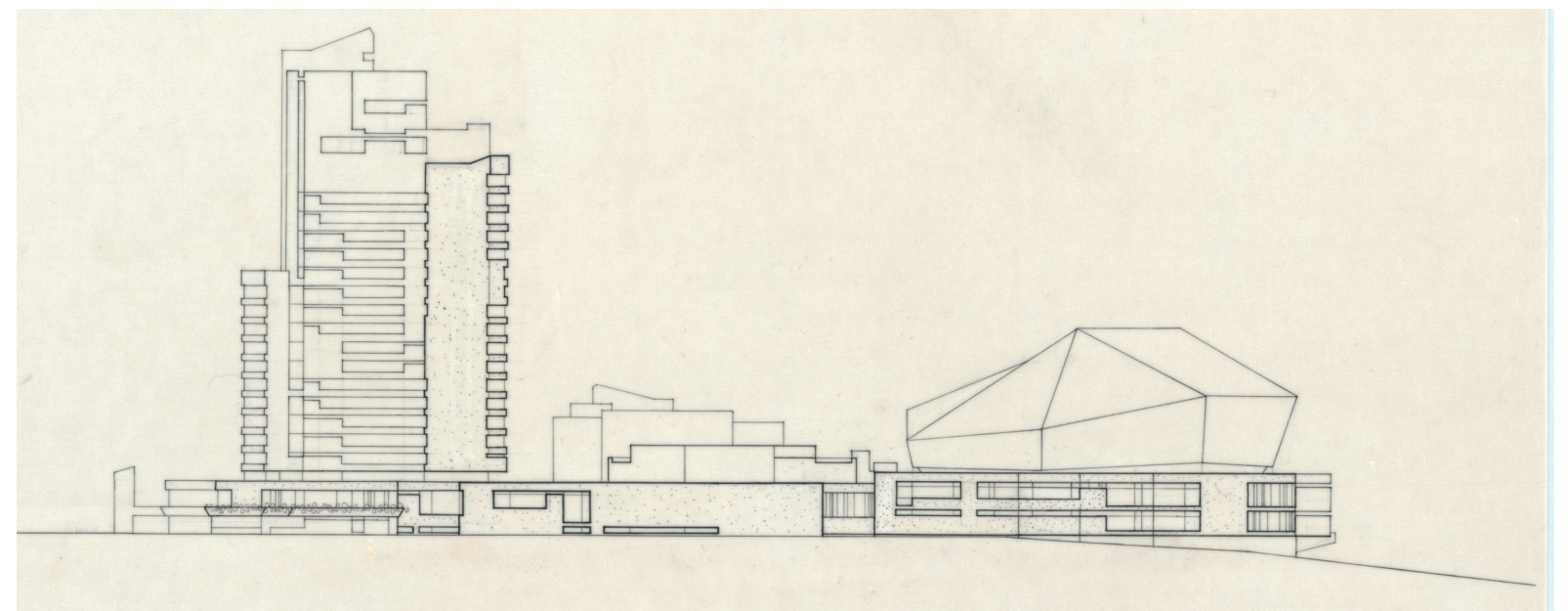


Fig.6: competition project 270918 (elevation)

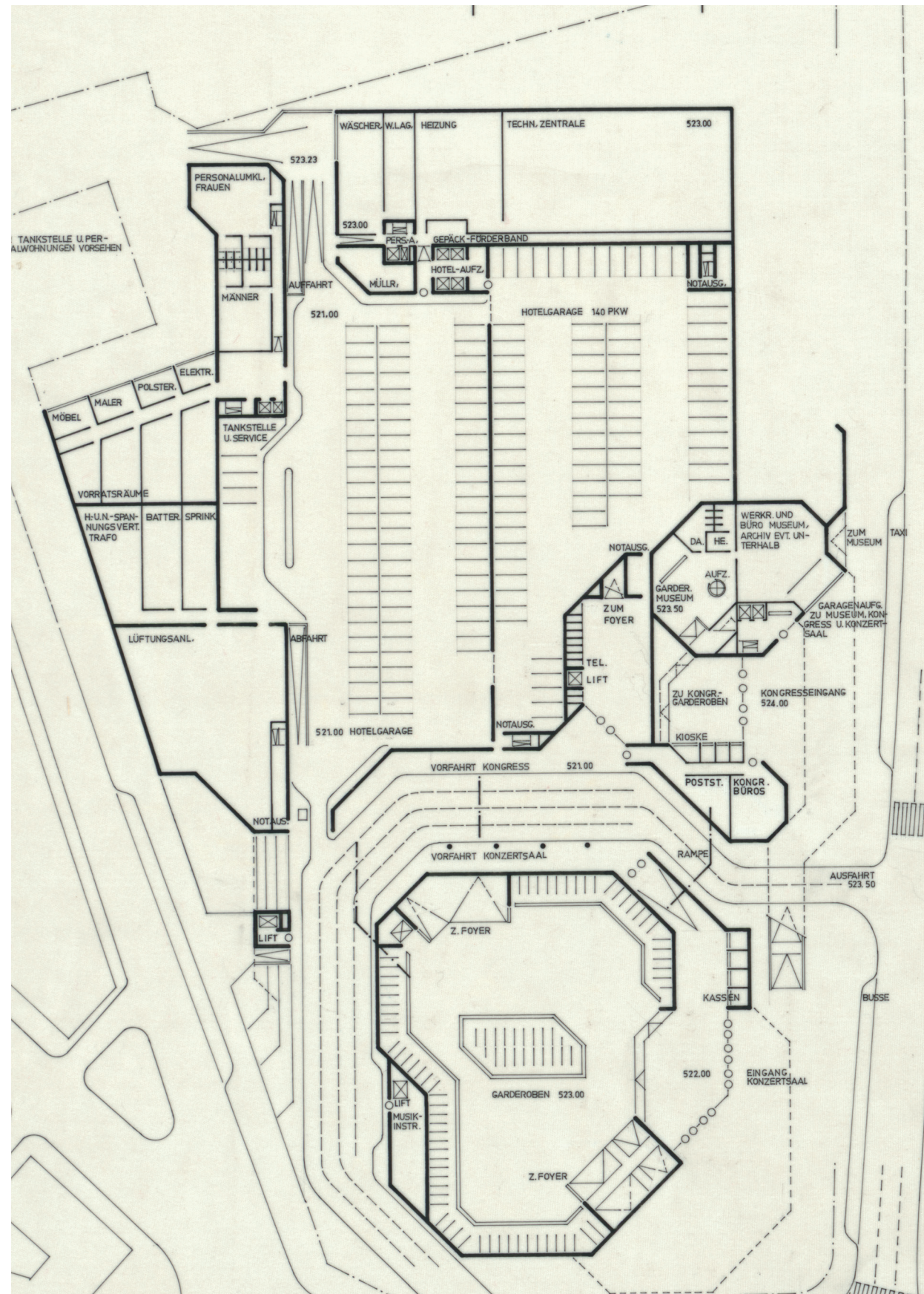


Fig.7: 3rd floor of the project 270918 (floorplan)

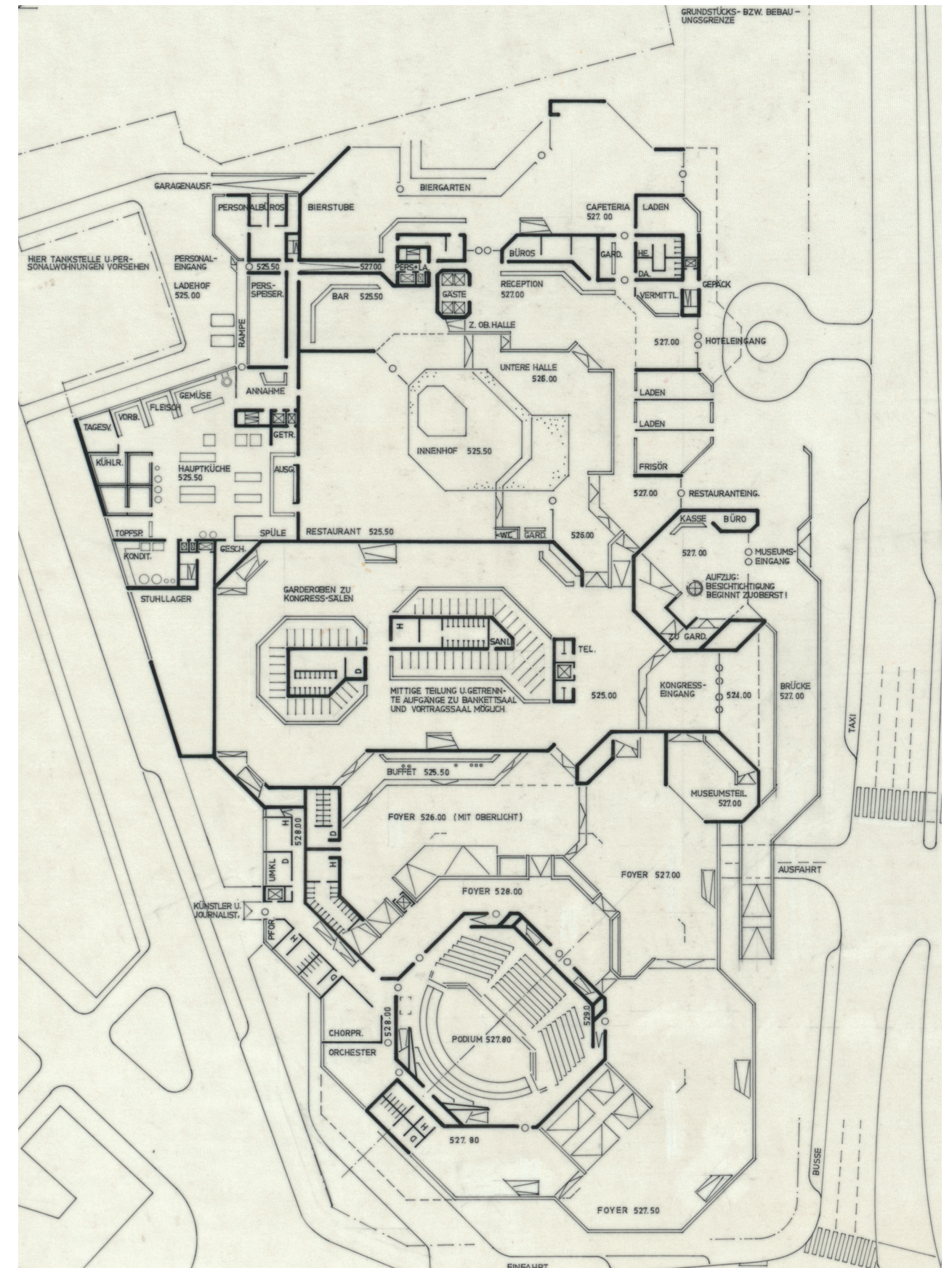


Fig.8: 4th floor of the project 270918 (floorplan)

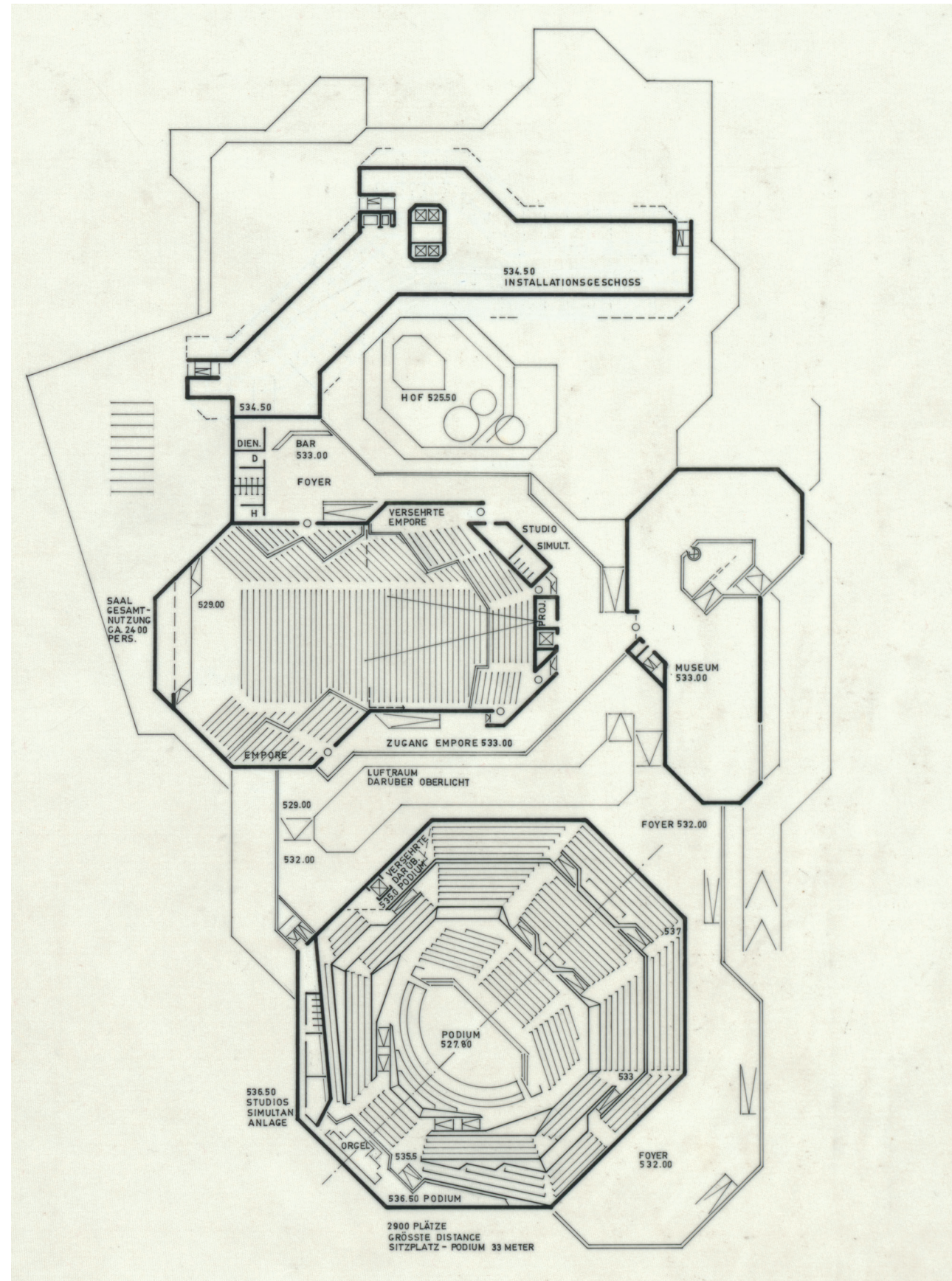


Fig.9: 5th floor of the project 270918 (floorplan)

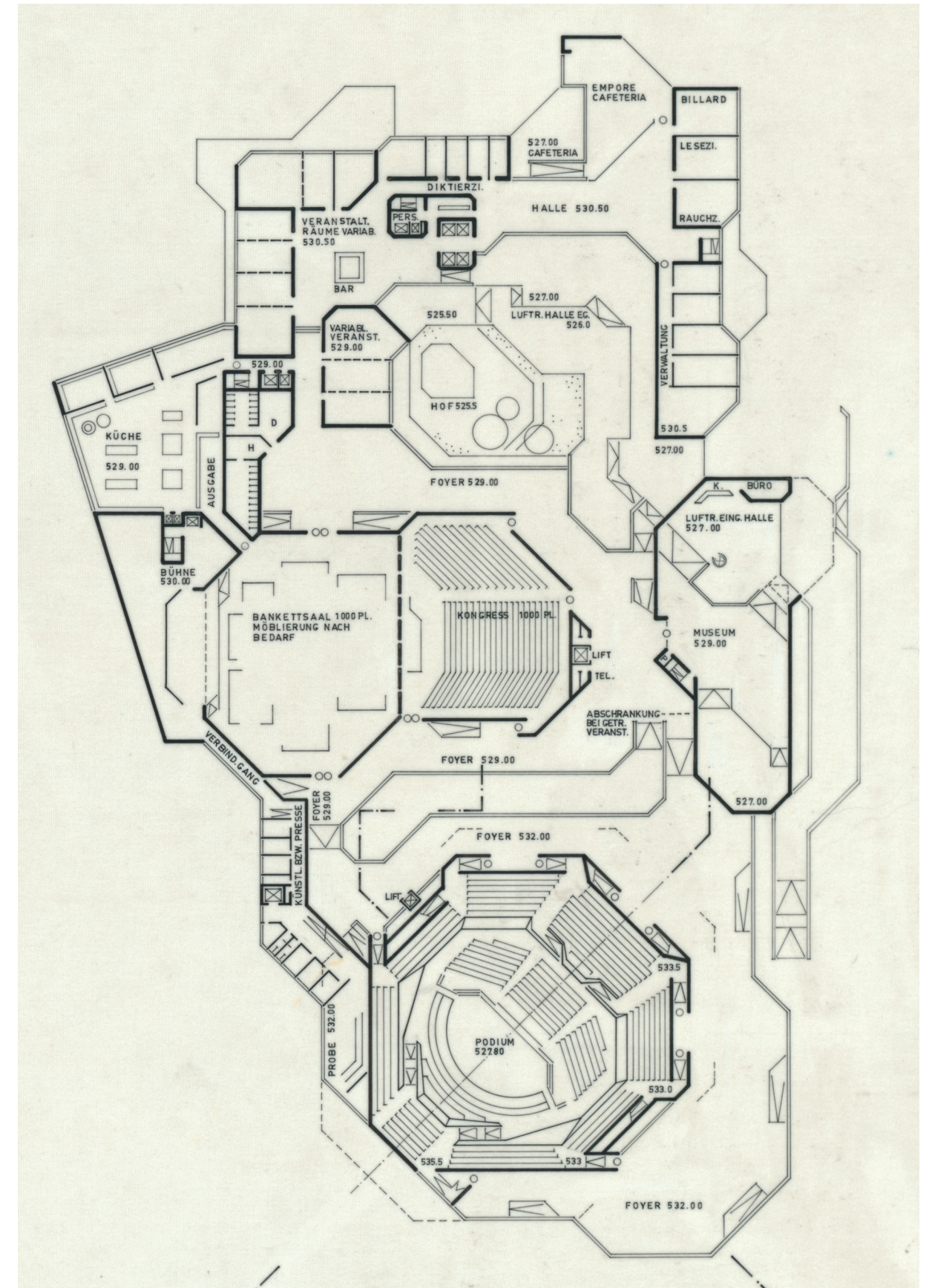


Fig.10: 6th floor of the project 270918 (floorplan)

von Branca designed more in detail (1:500) only the first part near the river. In fig.7 to 10 are shown the plans of the most significant floors of the building. Usually in the buildings that host public functions the plan of the ground floor is the one from which is possible to understand the general design, but this is not the case for the Gasteig project. Looking at the plan is also hard to understand at first glance which is the ground floor, this is due both to the complex geometry and to the change in height of the ground.

In fig.7 is shown the 3rd floor, as it is possible to see only the part nearest to the river is over ground and host the foyer, the entrance of the museum and the tickets booths. Looking at the other plans (fig.8-10) it is possible to see that, despite the complex geometry, the organization is clever, in the building there are a lot of slopes that connect the different functions that have a difference in height even of just one meter.

The main part of the building is certainly the concert hall that is shaped like an octagon, the plan changes at each level and it reaches the maximum dimension at the 5th floor. The seats are positioned parallel to the edges and the stage is almost in the central, probably for acoustic reasons.

An important part of the project is also the hotel, it is the highest building of the complex as it is possible to see from the site plan and from the section. It is a small skyscraper and it has 27 floors. In fig.11 are shown the plans of the most significant floors. The building is almost L-shaped, the distribution of the rooms is conventional with the four lifts in the central part that joins the two arms, two corridors bring from the lifts to the rooms distributed on both sides. There is as total of 114 rooms: 39 double rooms, 39 studio-rooms and 36 single rooms, apart from the special ones at the corners, all the rooms have a rectangular shape and they are mirrored in couples in order to have the bathrooms on the same side. At the 17th and 18th floors there are some areas dedicated to the wellness like the gym, the sauna and a swimming pool. The 19th floor hosts the restaurant while the 20th and the 21st floors, with a double height are dedicated to functional space like the lift system and the cooling system.

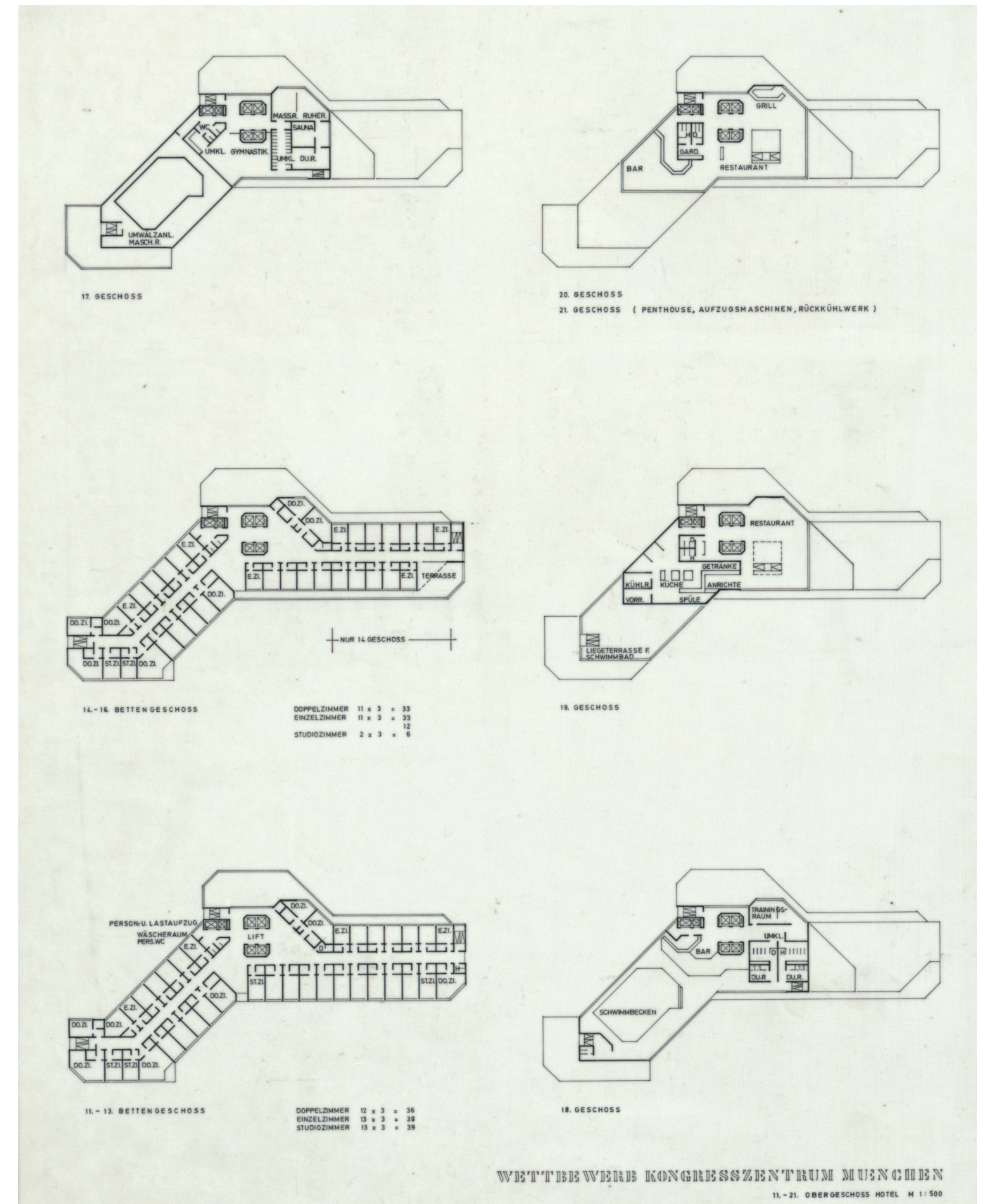


Fig.11: hotel 11 to 21 floors (floorplan)

Gasteig cultural centre project 502010

The project 502010 is probably, the one that von Branca designed for the second competition. Looking at the site plans (fig. 12-13) it is possible to understand that the design is in general more geometrical and simpler. The function that the buildings host are almost the same (concert hall, library, school for adults, shops and conservatory) but there is no museum. For each function is reserved an independent building, in this case they are not joined together but connected by external paths. These paths are recognisable in the site plan by a hatch that probably shows a different pavement. On the path is also possible to see dotted lines that individuate the principal connection with the surroundings and the entrances. From the attention that von Branca put in the drawings of connection space it is also possible to understand that he decided to realize the connection outside in order to have a new public space where it would also be possible to socialize. In fig. 12 is possible to see also a biergarten in the middle of the area.

The two main axes, that are perpendicular, are covered and they create a passage that the architect sketched in fig.14-15



Fig.12: project 502010 (siteplan)

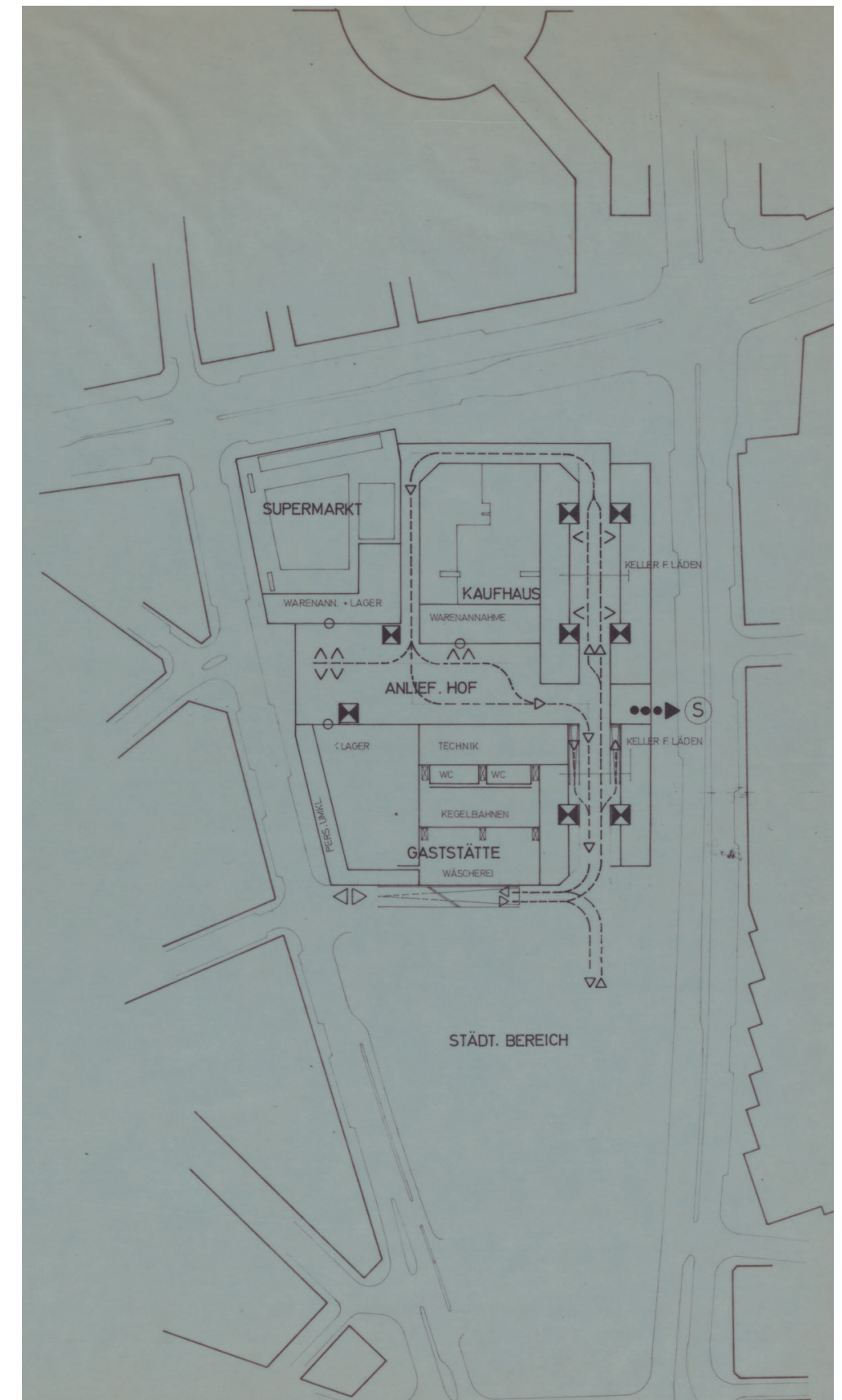


Fig.13: plan of the -1st floor of the project 502010

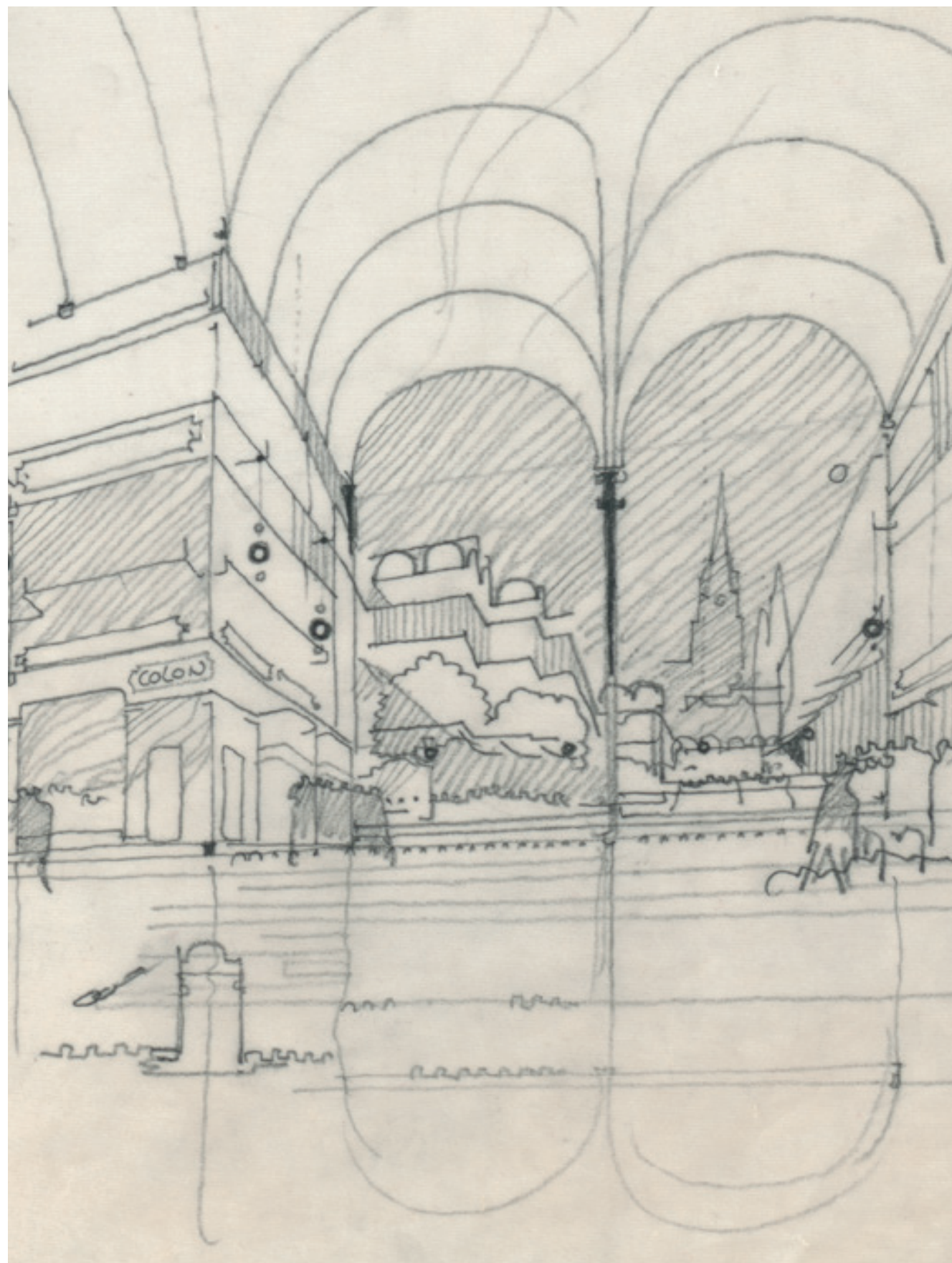


Fig.14: project 502010 (prospective sketch)

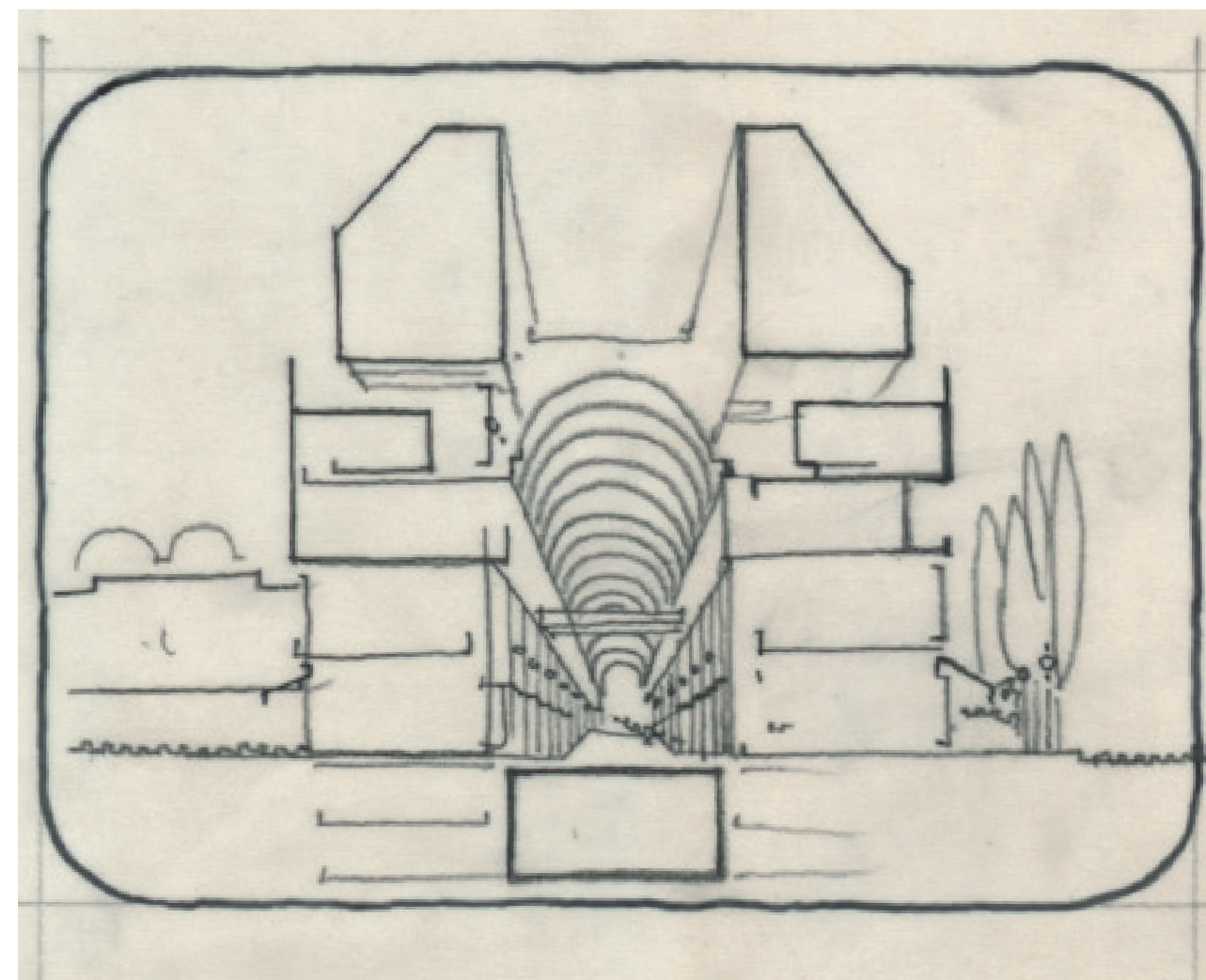


Fig.15: project 502010 (prospective sketch)

the sketches is possible to see that in this project von Branca tried to integrate the complex with the architecture of the surroundings: the dimension of the buildings is similar to the near blocks and in the sketches he drew the neighbouring buildings visible from the entrances.

Also in this case he designed deeper (1:500) only the area near the river that hosts the function offered from the administration to the citizen. In Fig.16-17 are shown the ground and the 1st floors. As said before in this project the geometry is more simple this is confirmed from a clear groundfloor, the plan goes from 0.00 to -1.20m. but this is due only to the change in height of the ground. Thanks to the geometry more simple the architect designed also a more simple structural system that is composed by a grid of pillars probably in concrete since that they are drawn circular and filled in black.

The main part of the building is again the concert hall visible also from the sketch in fig.18. The shape, the position and the dimension are almost the same of the first project. The octagonal shape is often used from the architect for all

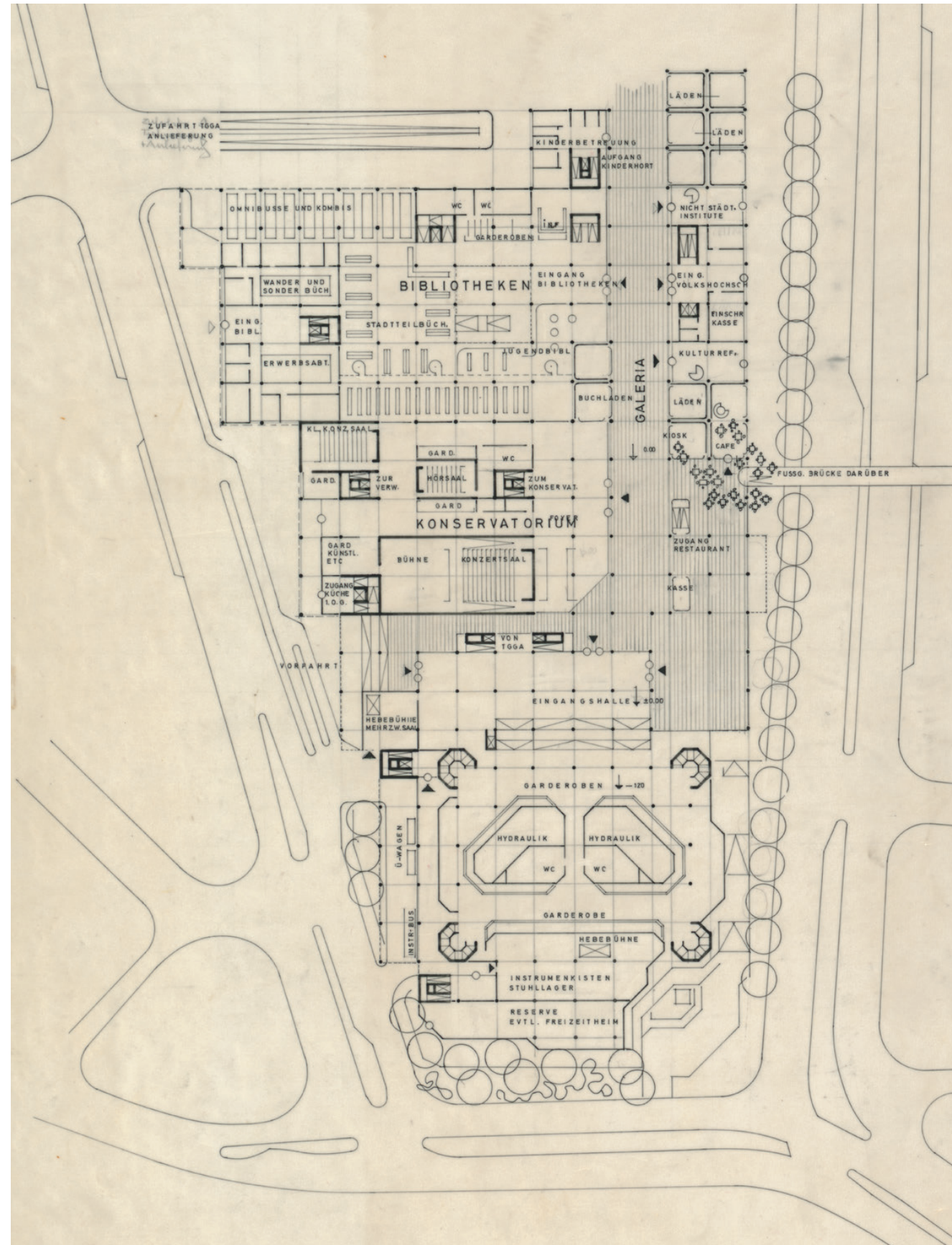


Fig.16: project 502010 (ground floor plan)

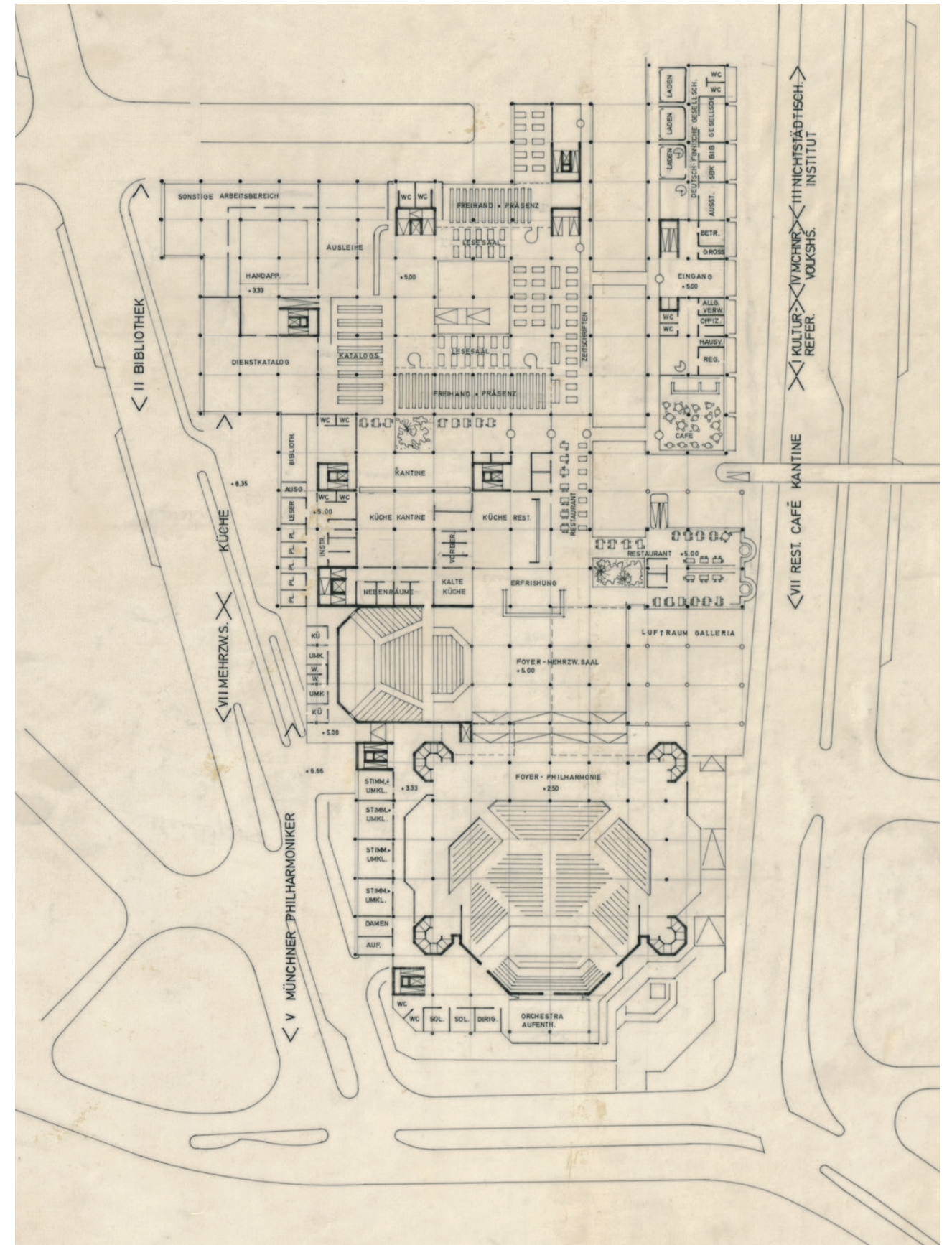


Fig.17: project 502010 (first floor plan)

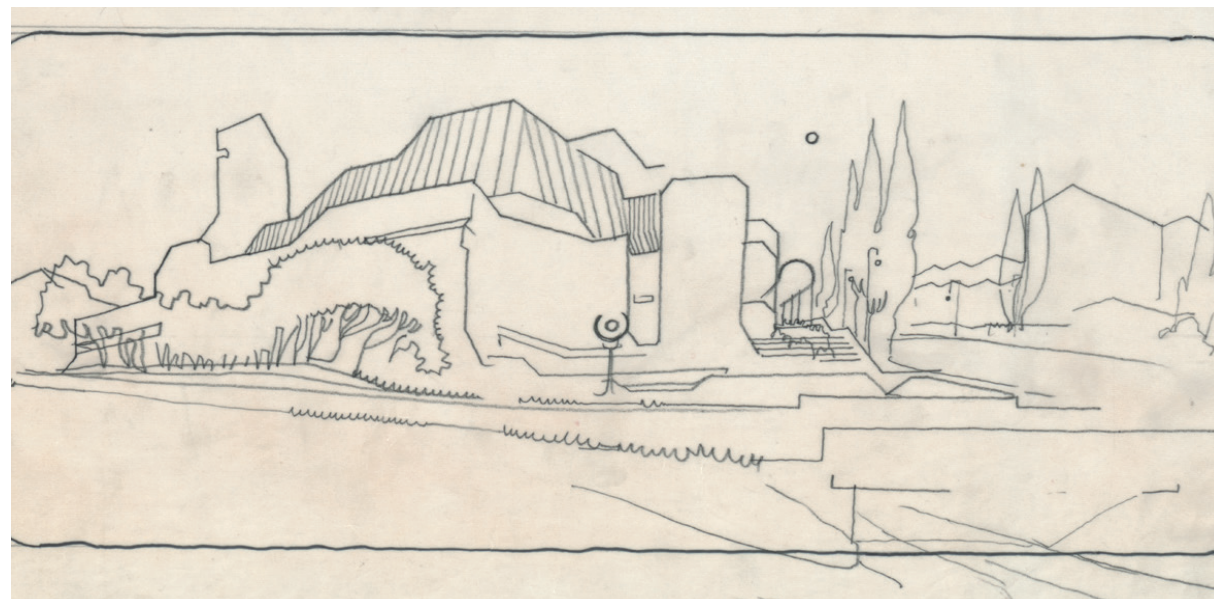


Fig.18: project 502010 (prospective sketch)

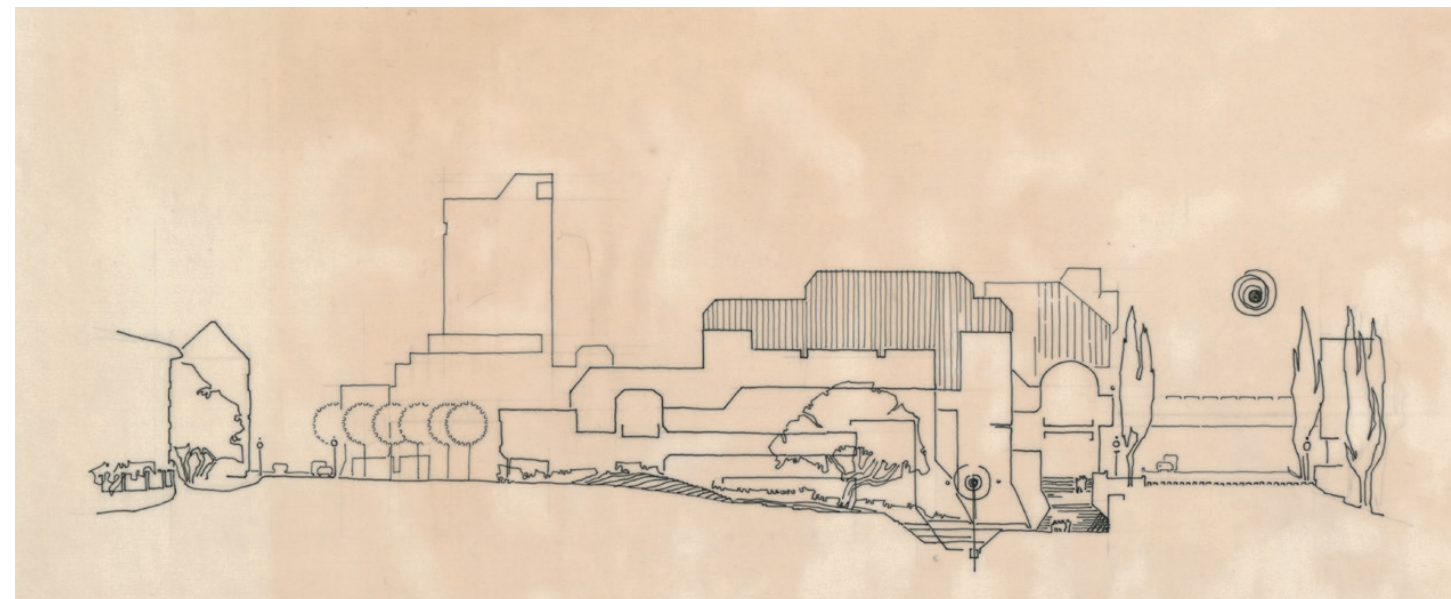


Fig.19: project 502010 (elevation)

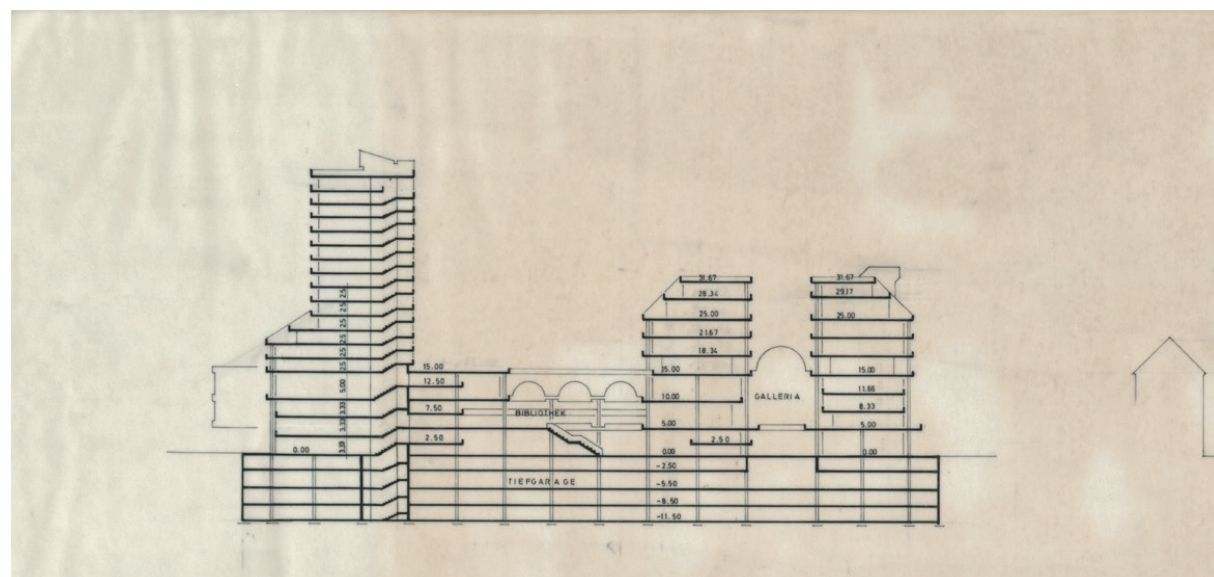


Fig.20: project 502010 (section)

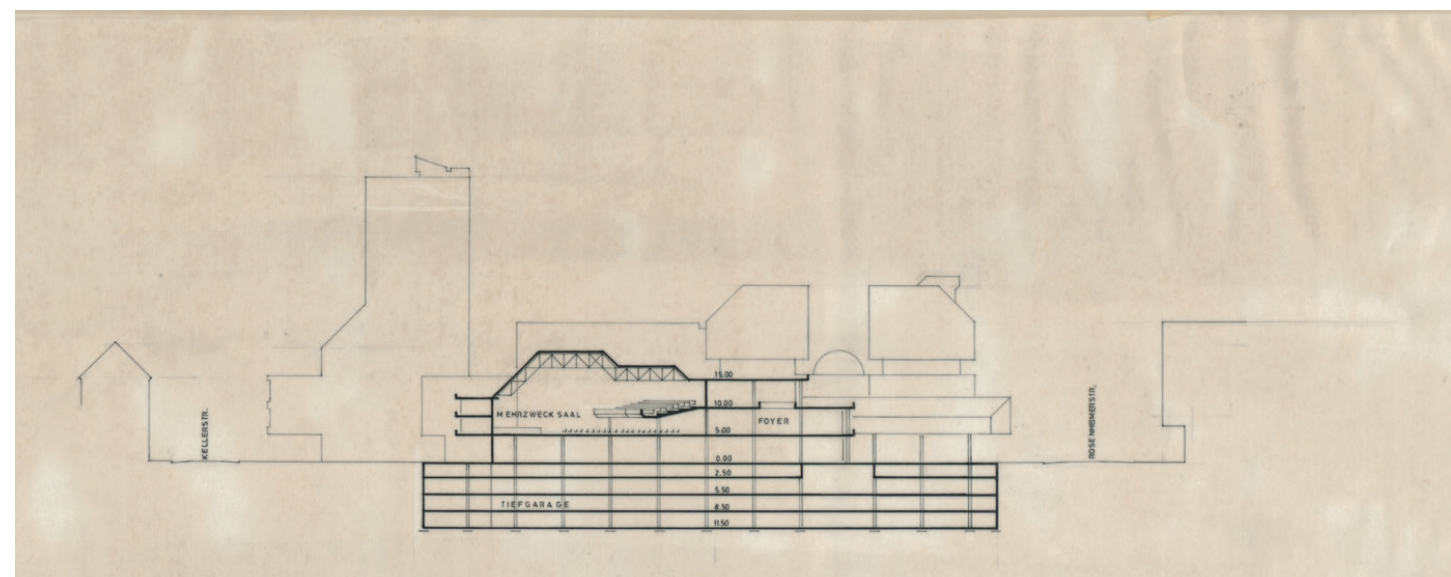


Fig.21: project 502010 (section)

the buildings that have the need of a good acoustic, he used the same disposition also in a church. The entrance to the concert hall is at the same level of the side walk but in this case not in the street on the side of the river but from the connection space of the complex. From this point it is possible to reach through a slope a room that is 1,20m under the level of the street in which there are the bathroom, the wardrobe, the lifts and four stairs. These are positioned at the corner of the space and they are too octagonal-shaped. From the vertical connections it is possible to reach the foyer, at the first floor (Fig.17), and then the concert hall. Around the space for the concert, divided by thick wall there are some functional space for the visitor and the musicians. In the building there is also another concert hall, it is smaller and it's dedicated to the music school. As it is possible to see from the section in Fig. 21 the main concert hall is the only part of the building that has a particular structure: from the drawings it seems a truss beam, it has a considerable section probably in order to keep free from pillar the space of the seats. In the elevation it is also the only roof with an arched shape. From the elevation it is also possible to notice that the complex from the side of the street is regular and designed in a repetitive

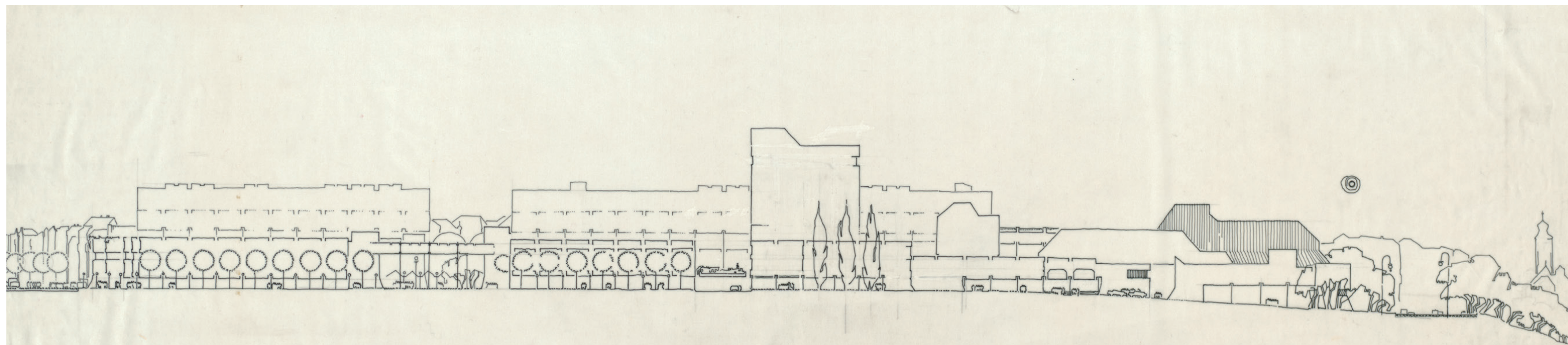


Fig.22: elevation of the project 502010

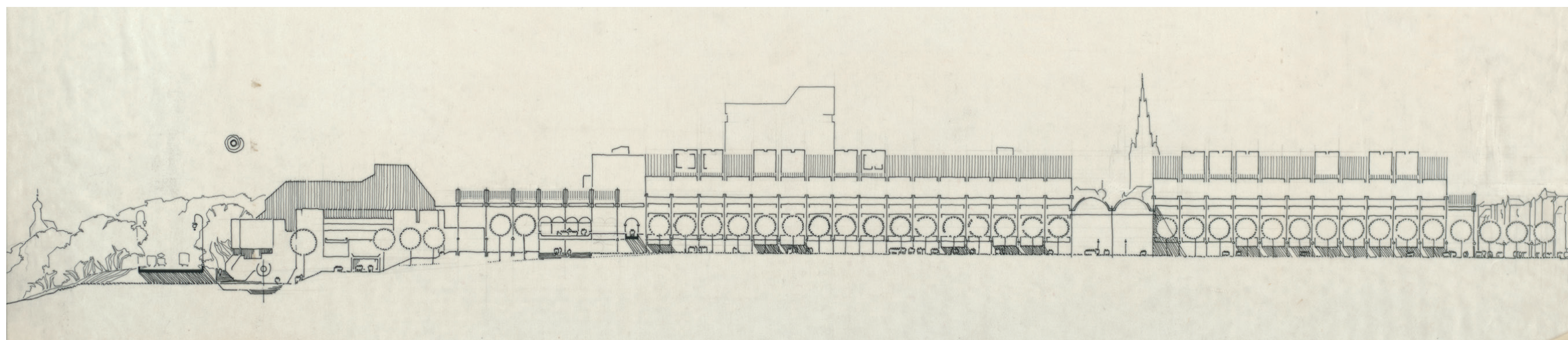


Fig.23: elevation of the project 502010

way, despite the organization visible from the siteplan it looks like two buildings connected by the passage. In the elevation it is also showed the slope made from the ground and how the complex is adapted to this.

The projects compared



Fig.24:picture of today's Gasteig, Lucrezia Rodriguez 08/19

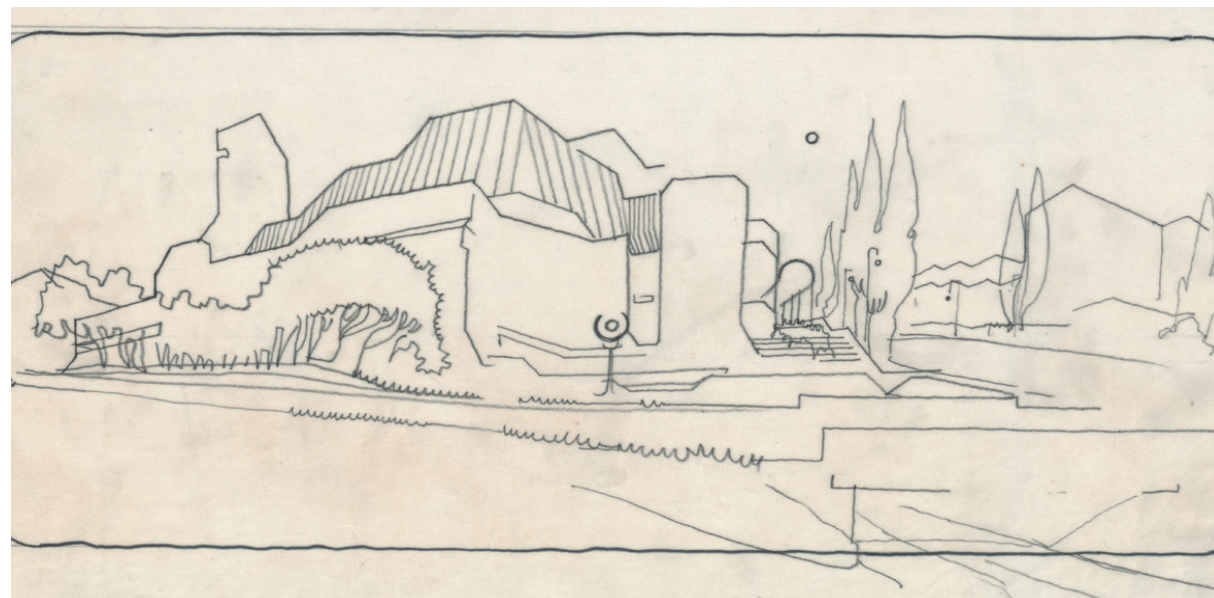


Fig.25: project 502010



Fig.26: model of the project 270918

Löwenbräugelände am Gasteig

One year after the beginning of the construction works of the cultural centre, in 1977, von Branca realized a feasibility study in the area behind the cultural centre. He worked for a private construction company called Monachia-Immobilie GmbH et Co. From the titlehead of the drawings it is possible to see that he worked in collaboration with Wolfgang Nesselberger. In fig.27 it's shown the site plan of the area, it was drawn on the 5th of May 1977, in the plan there is also the final design of the cultural centre.

It is interesting to notice that the functions (hotel, offices, apartments, shops) that the construction company asked for are the same that were originally present also in the project of the cultural centre. They had not been realized because of a decision of the administration of the city. After the investment for the Olympic games they were deemed too expensive.

Two years later, in 1979, von Branca and his collaborator worked again on the project and they made again a masterplan of the block and probably also a proper design



Fig.27: feasibility study , (site plan) 5.May 1977

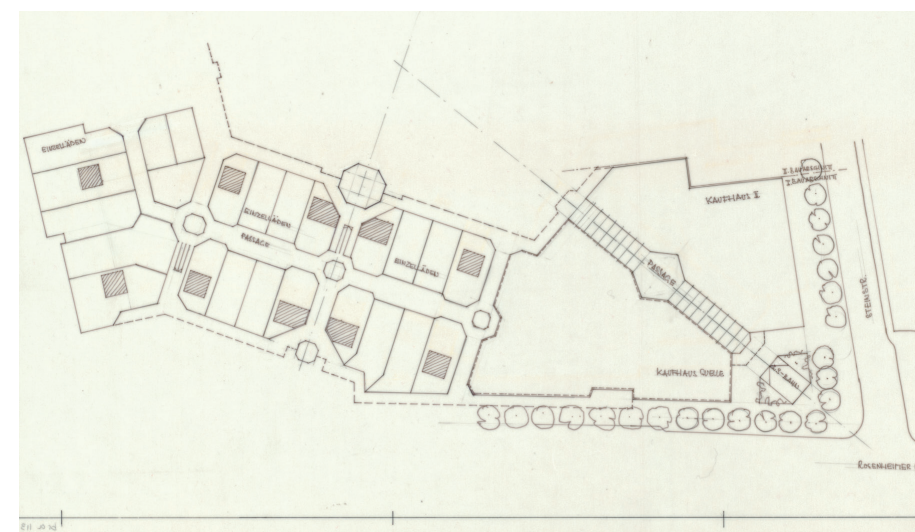
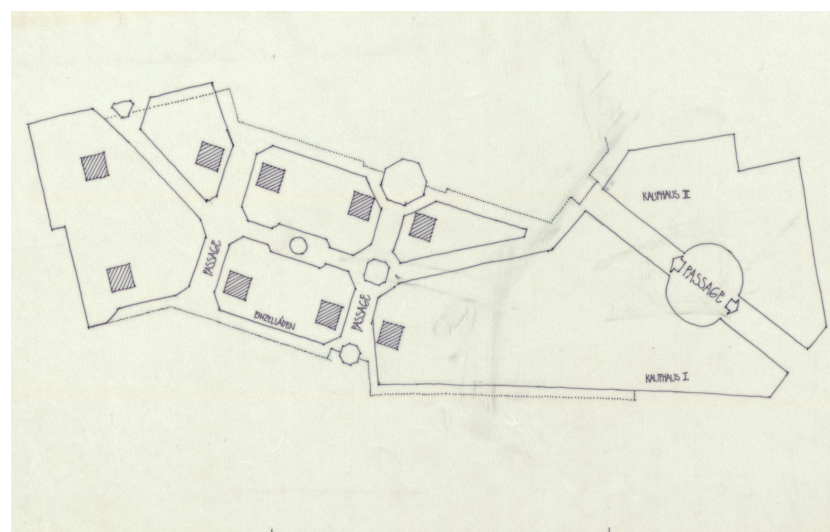
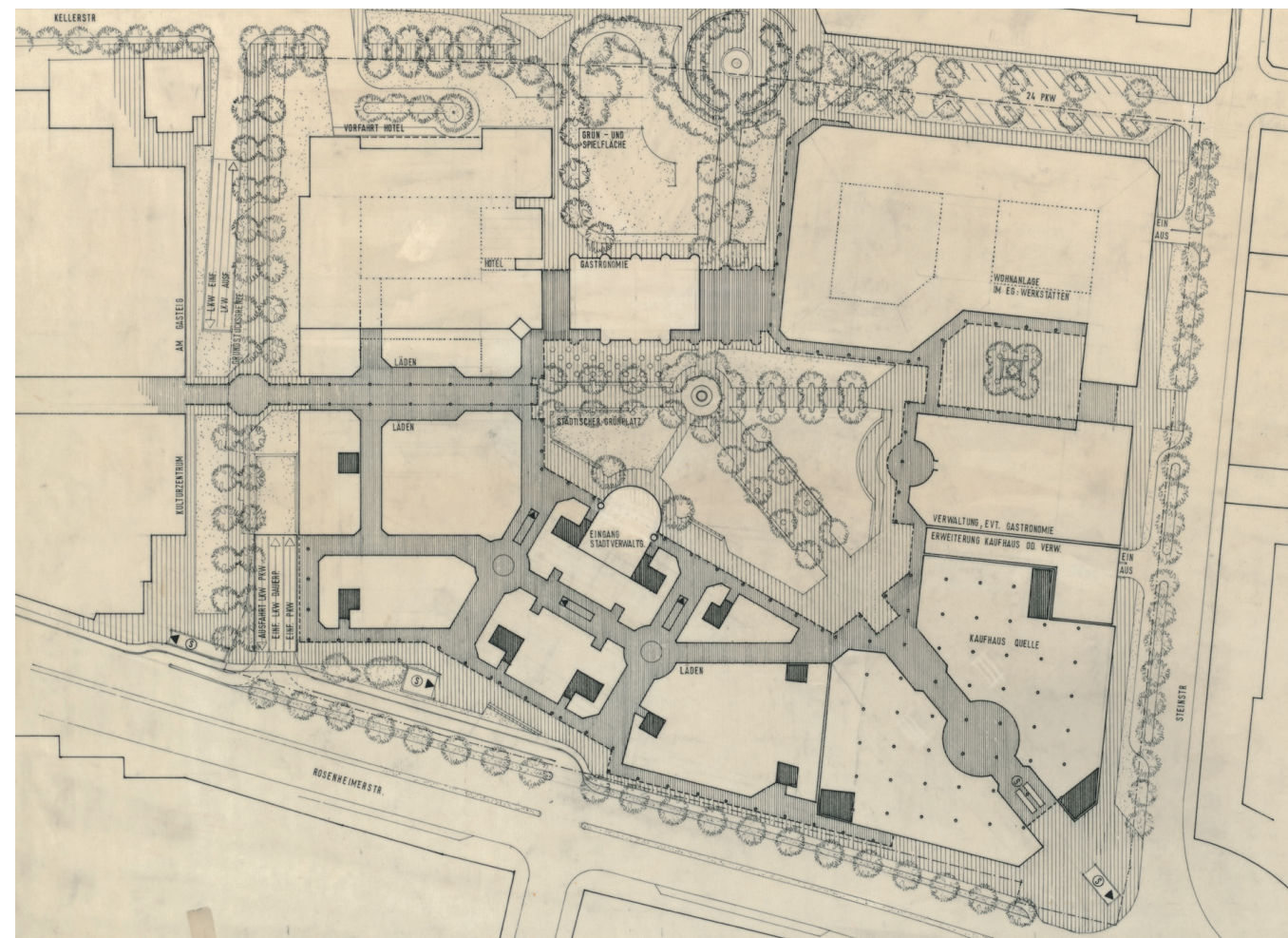
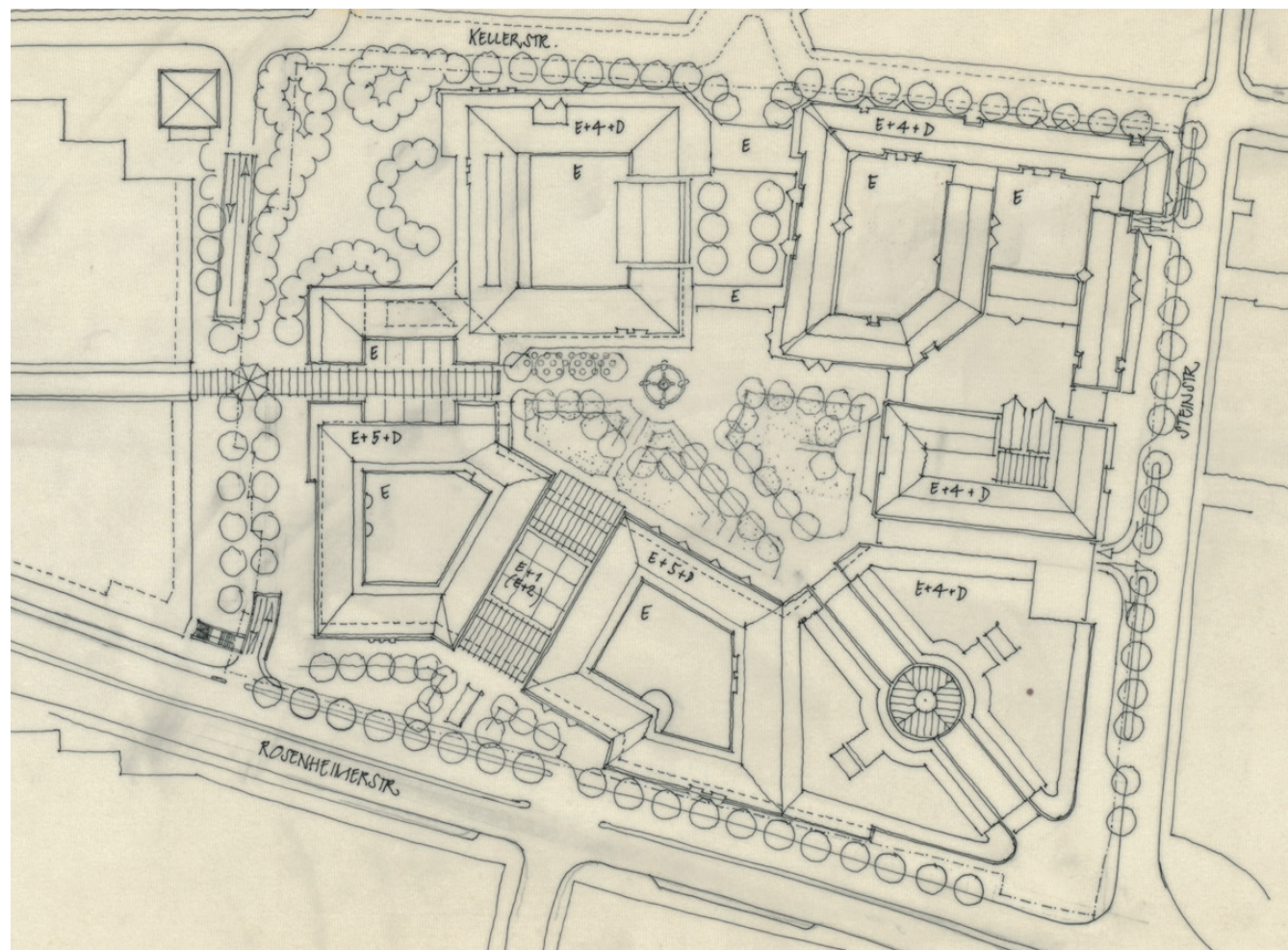




Fig.33: street view (perspective)



Fig.34: Passage (perspective)

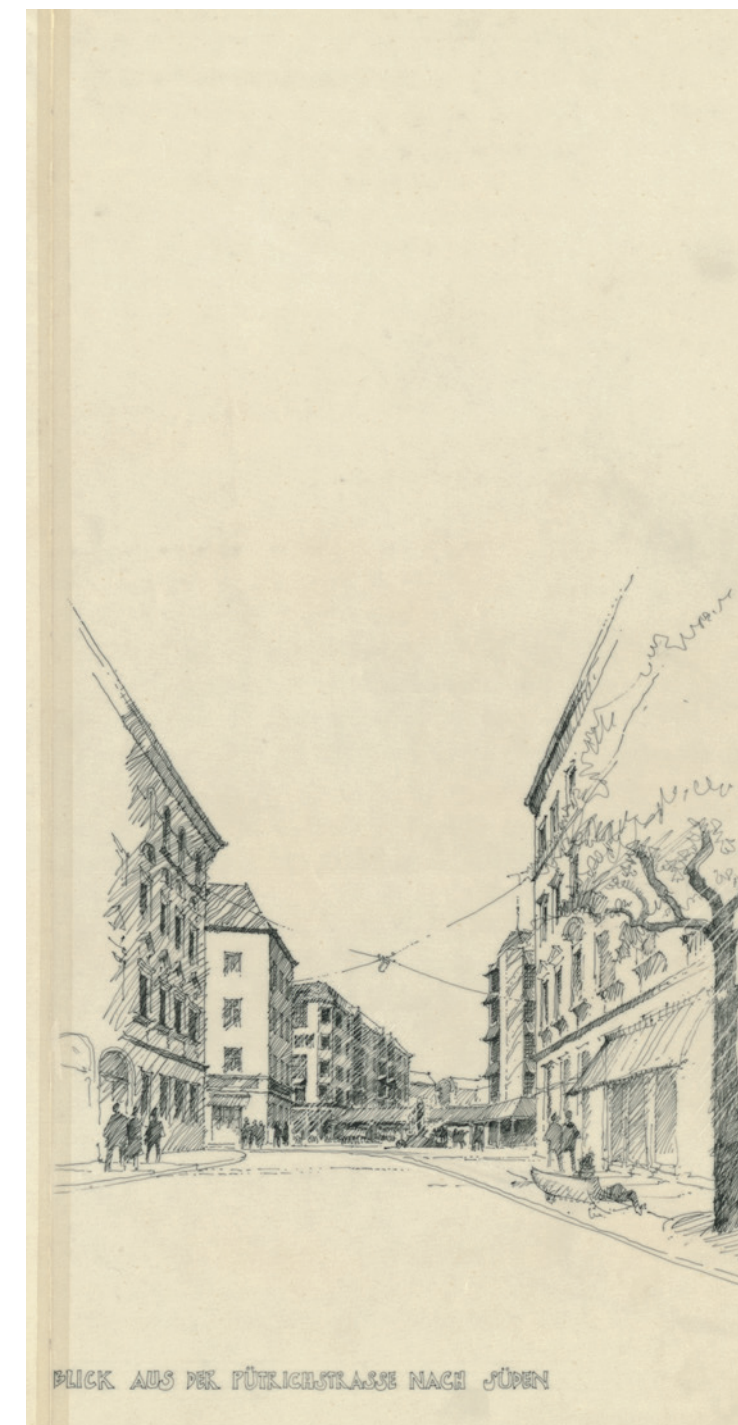


Fig.35: street view (perspective)

of a part of it, or even all of it, since that they worked on the project until 1981. In the spring of 1979 they realized the masterplan, for which they did a lot of variations. In fig.28 and 29 are shown two of the most differing. The changes in the several proposals were due both to economic reasons (in most of the drawings there are calculations for the comparison of the built/unbuilt areas etc.) and architectonical ones. The two more recurring differences in fact are related to the relationship with the surrounding and the space between the cultural centre and Stein Str. (that in some variations is just a garden, in others it hosts a building) and the side on Rosenheimer Str, especially the passage. All the proposals are similar in the general distribution that closely resembles that of the rest of the area: the functions are divided in different courtyard buildings similar in height and dimension to the others. The architects studied thoroughly the neighbouring area, in fig33 and 35 two perspective

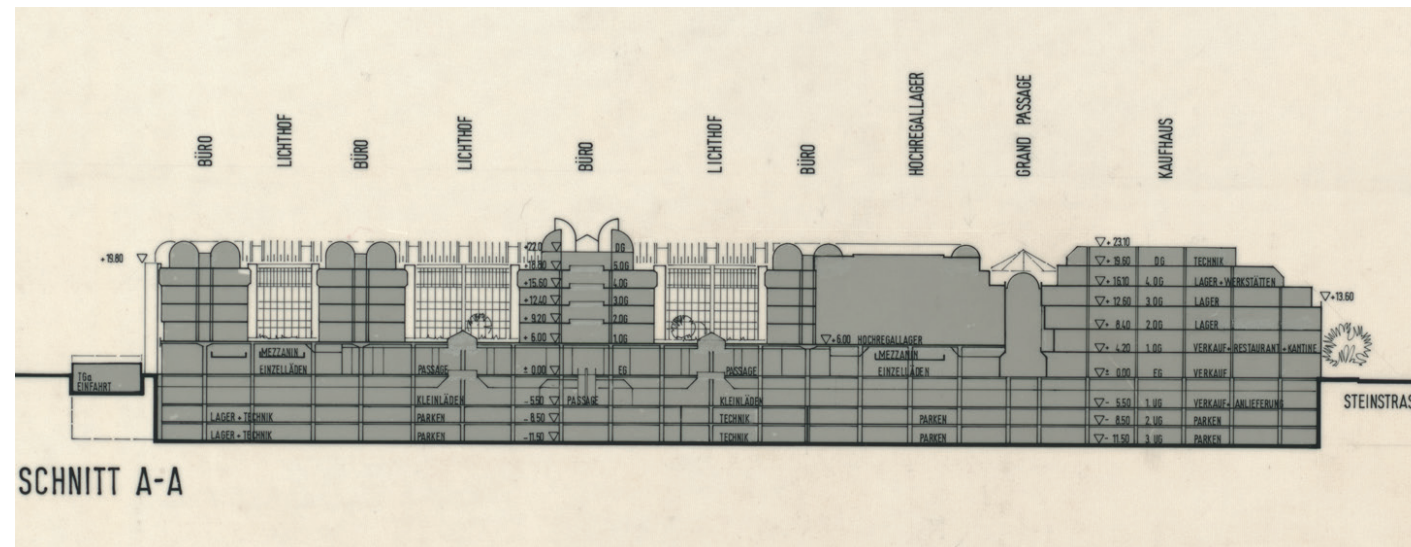


Fig.36: section of the block 31. August 1979

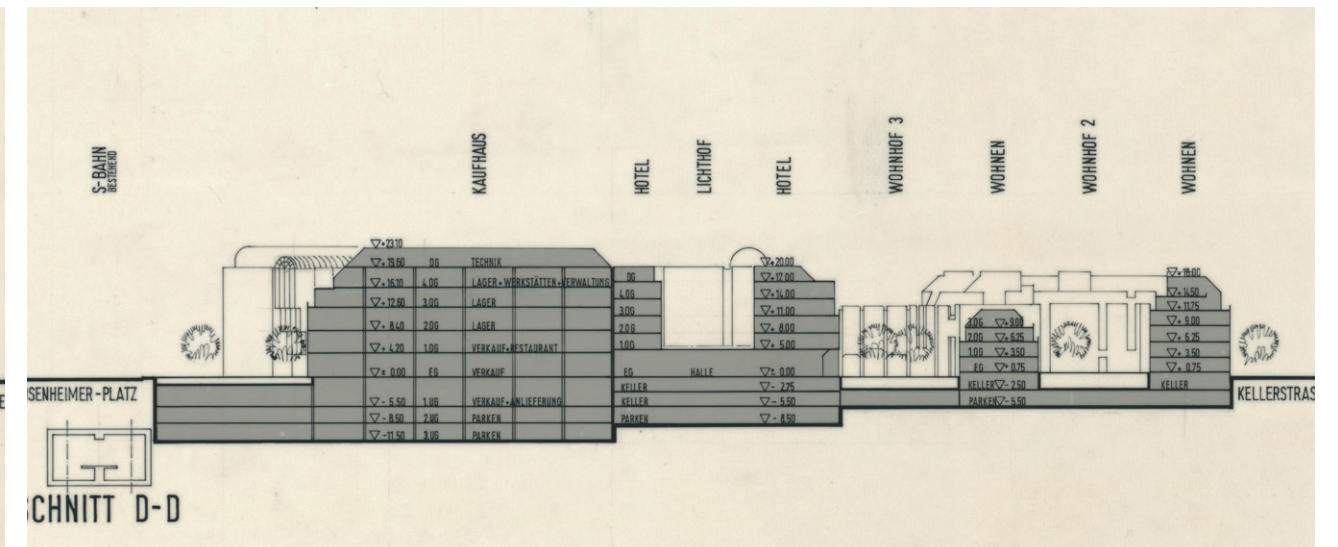


Fig.37: section of the block 31. August 1979

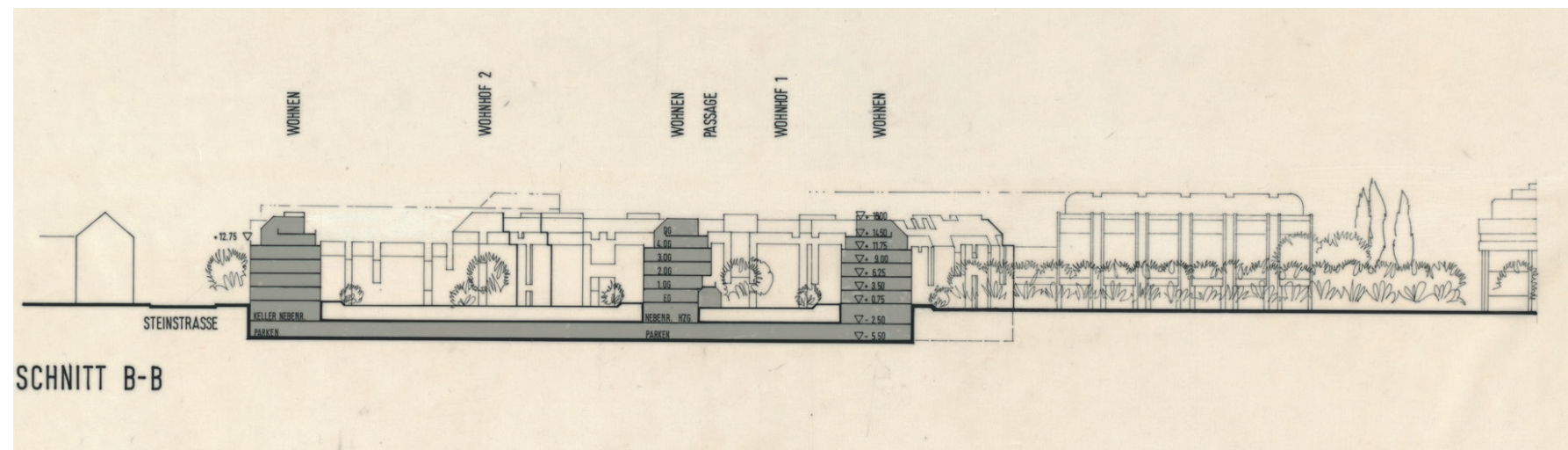


Fig.38: section of the block 31. August 1979

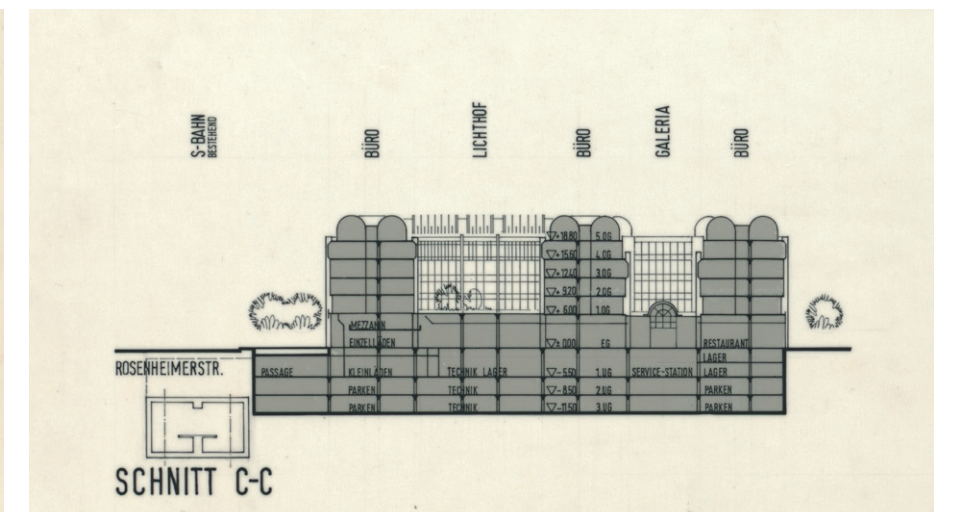


Fig.39: section of the block 31. August 1979

sketches realized during the design process.

It is not easy to understand from the drawings if and which project was chosen as the final one but in the summer of the same year the two architects started to work on the design of the building on the side of Rosenheimer Str. Similarly in this case they did many variations (eleven), and they changed often the passage that leads to the main courtyard that, as is shown in fig.34, they had imagined it as a lively space. The sections shown in fig. 36-40 are made in August of 1979 and they are probably almost the final option for the entire block.

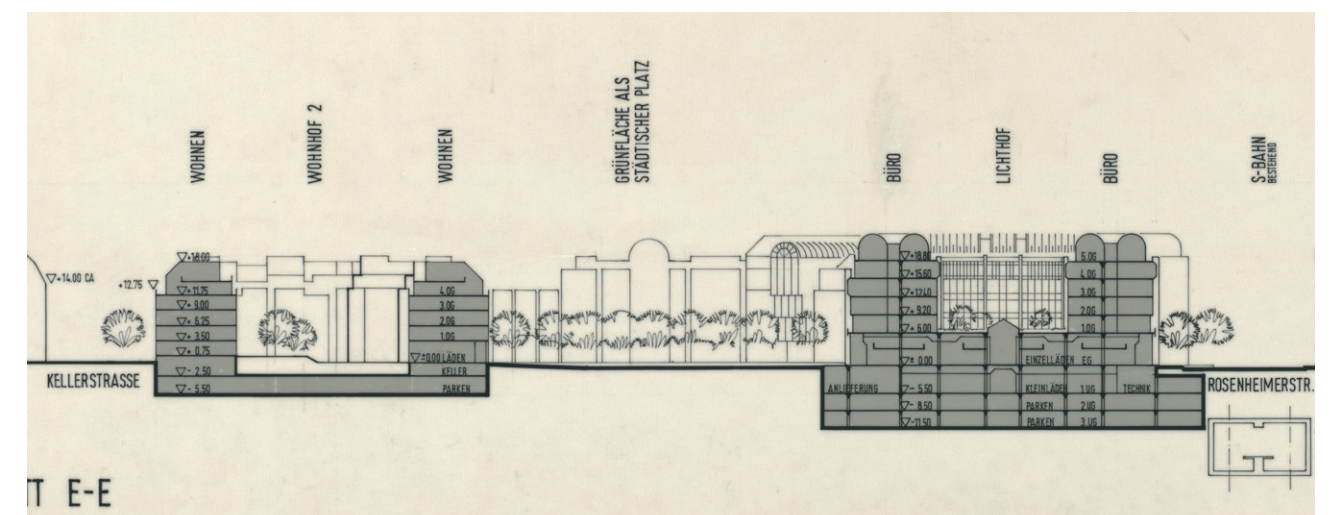


Fig.40: section of the block 31. August 1979



Fig.41: aerial view of thw block

Comparison with today's block

Part of the research was also to understand what was built and what was not. Comparing the project with the current aerial view it is plausible that it was realized, certainly in part, perhaps all of it: the functions, in fact, are the same as well as the setting and the general division of the lot. Since there is no final plan, it is not easy to understand what was actually designed by von Branca and what was perhaps designed by others on the basis of the masterplan made by him and his colleague. In the following pages is proposed a comparison between the elevations dated 1979 and those actually visible today, it was chosen to continue the comparison on the basis of the elevations because in addition to being the most complete, some of them are made to a scale that suggests a project aimed at construction. It is also possible that the block was originally built according to von Branca's project and then underwent changes, this is probably the case of the building that according to the project was to house the passage. Despite having almost the same layout from the elevation looks like a building built in the last ten years.

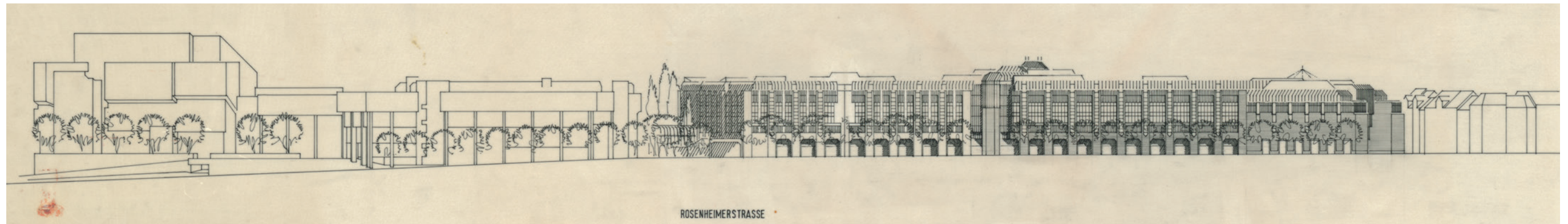


Fig.42: Block on Rosenheimer Str. (elevation)



Fig.43: photo of the block on Rosenheimer Str., Lucrezia Rodriguez, August 2019



Fig.44: photo of the block on Rosenheimer Str., Lucrezia Rodriguez
August 2019



Fig.45: photo of the block on Rosenheimer Str., Lucrezia Rodriguez
August 2019



Fig.46: photo of the new building on Rosenheimer Str., Lucrezia Rodriguez
August 2019

The most studied building is the one on Rosenheimer Str. In design drawings as in reality, the covering material is brick. In both of them, there is a marked vertical articulation that divides the building into modules. One difference lies in the openings: in the project there are mainly large windows while today there are significant windows alternating with windows of normal size. Even the portals have a slightly different shape. Despite the whole project seems to be realized and these differences are probably due to the fact that we do not know the final version.

The biggest difference is in the white building at the corner, which has probably undergone some changes. Today it houses the offices of Deloitte, it is certainly a later construction both for the materials and for how it attaches to the brick building. The passage looks totally different, it is also divided into two parts and has a lower height.



Fig.47: photo of the new building on Rosenheimer Str., Lucrezia Rodriguez
August 2019



Fig.48: photo of the new building on Rosenheimer Str., Lucrezia Rodriguez
August 2019



Fig.49: photo of the new building on Rosenheimer Str., Lucrezia Rodriguez
August 2019



Fig.50: photo of the new building on Rosenheimer Str., passage, Lucrezia Rodriguez August 2019



Fig.51: photo of the new building on Rosenheimer Str., passage, Lucrezia Rodriguez August 2019



Fig.52: Passage (perspective)

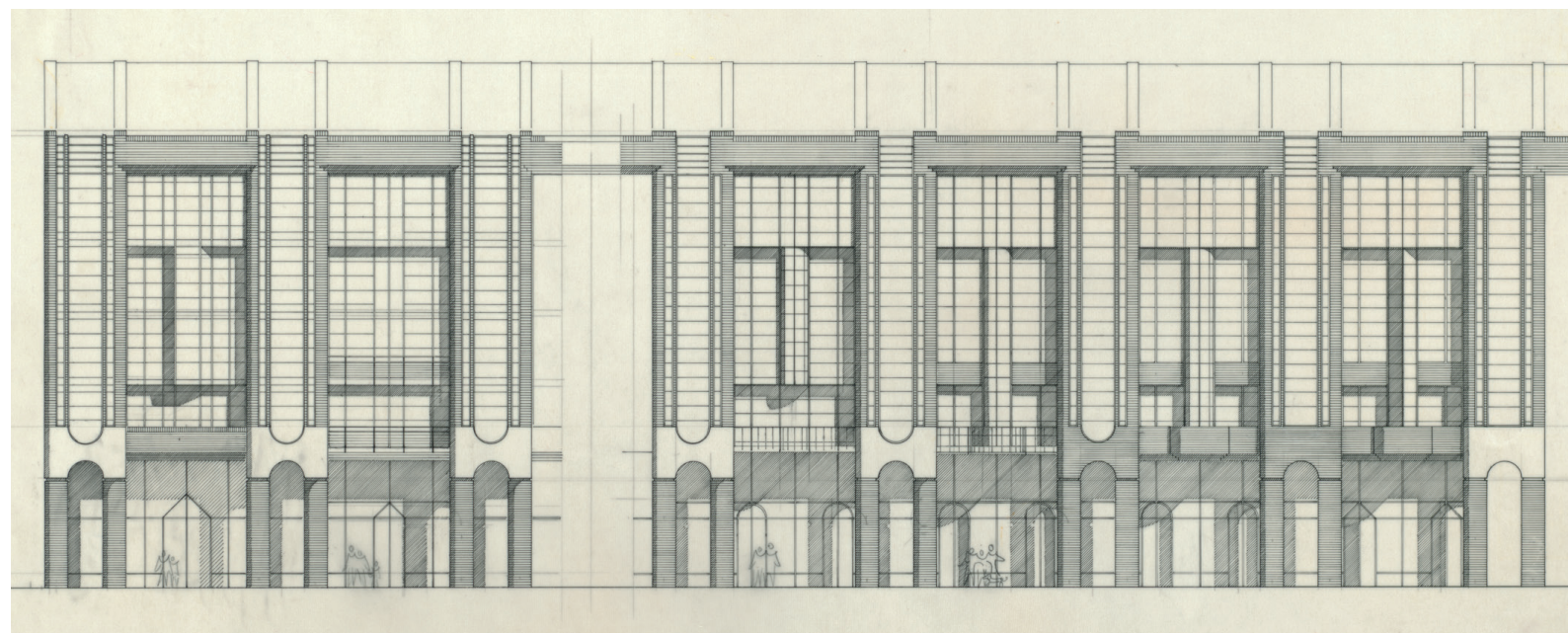


Fig.53:elevation of the side in front of the cultural center, 10 July 1979



Fig.54: photo of the side in front of the cultural center, Lucrezia Rodriguez August 2019



Fig.55: photo of the side in front of the cultural center, Lucrezia Rodriguez August 2019

On the side facing the cultural centre the situation is very similar to the one on Rosenheimer Str. The shape of the roof is almost the same there are slight differences in the type of openings.



Fig.56: photo of the side in front of the cultural center, Lucrezia Rodriguez August 2019



Fig.57: photo of the side in front of the cultural center, Lucrezia Rodriguez August 2019

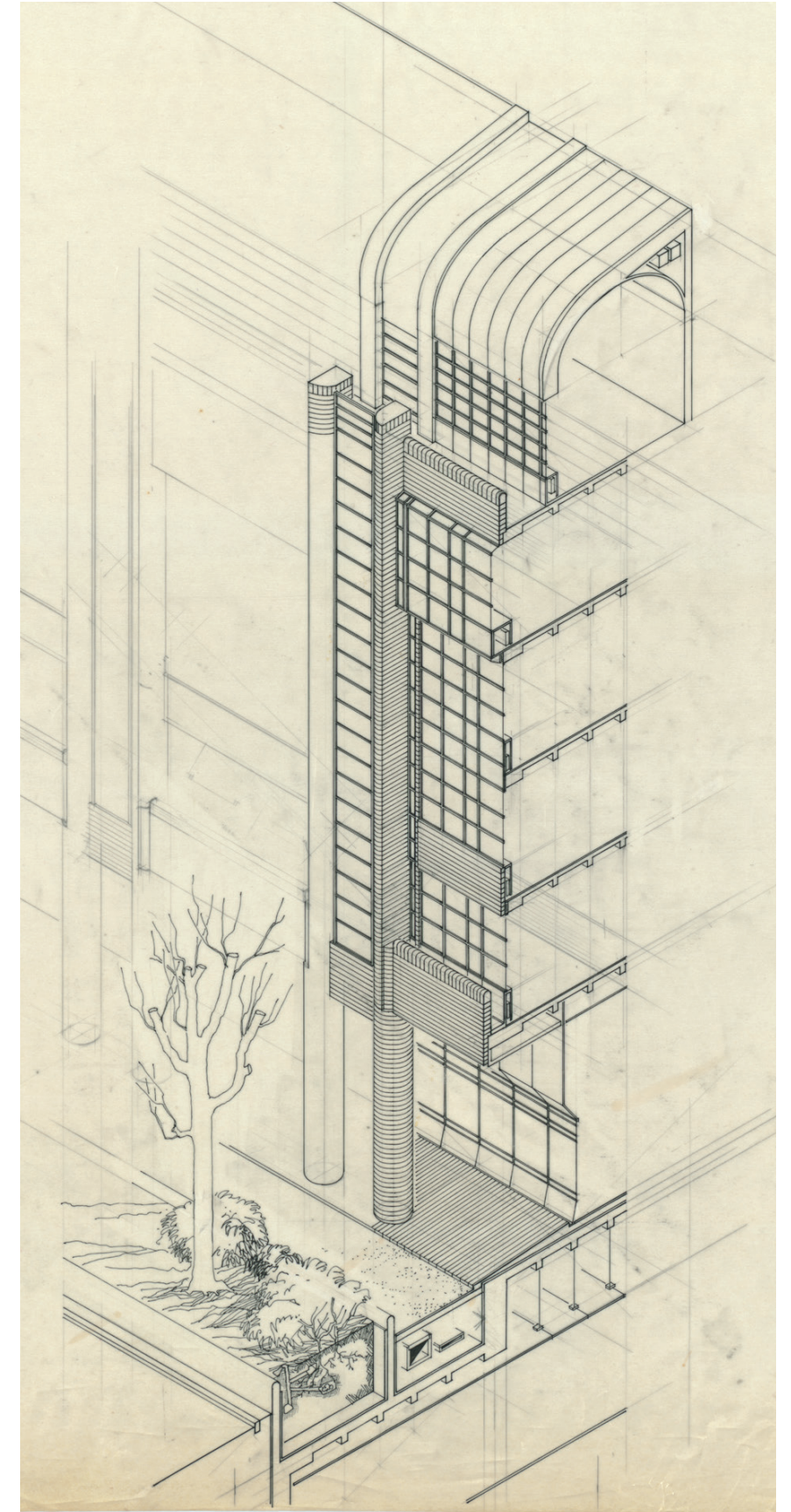


Fig.58:axonometry of the facade 3 July 1979

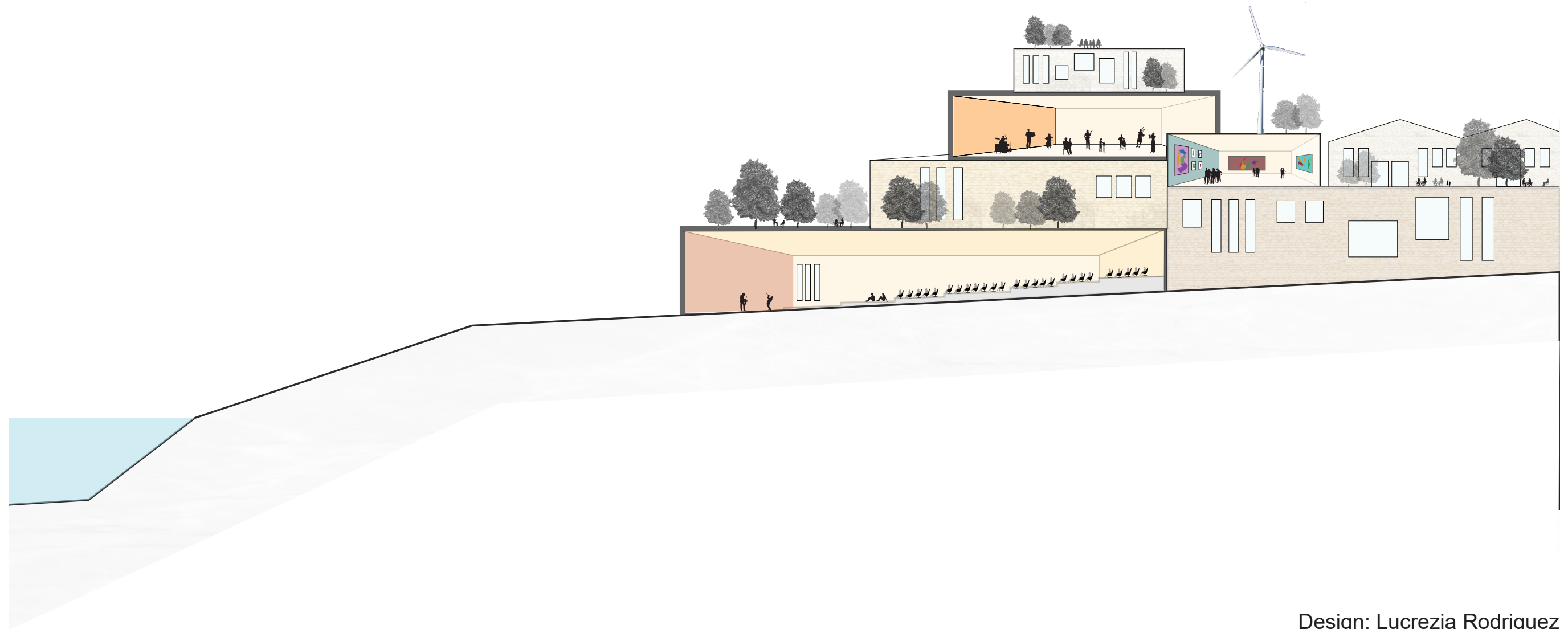


Fig.59: photo of one of the residential buildings, Lucrezia Rodriguez August 2019



Fig.60: photo of one of the courtyard, Lucrezia Rodriguez August 2019

The residential buildings are the part for which it is more difficult to determine whether the project was carried out or not, in fact, the plans and detailed elevations are missing. From the style and the presence of more than one court it is plausible to think that they were built in the 70s. Although among the list of the major works of von Branca there is no trace of this work so, maybe, for this part he just designed the masterplan.



Design: Lucrezia Rodriguez

Personal sketch

For my sketch I thought to remember the brewery that once stood on the area through the use of bricks and chestnut trees typical for the areas in front of this type of factories. To dampen the forms that vaguely resemble an industrial building, the openings are placed in a disorderly manner.

To remember the fortress that occupied the area I thought of a building that would resemble a hill. This is done with a series of very simple volumes superimposed in order to obtain a total division of functions that can also ensure good acoustics. The concert hall uses the natural difference in height of the ground for a layout of the seats that facilitates the view of the spectators.

On top of the building there is a wind turbine, this is not really part of the design but it is a symbol of one of the things that an educational center for adults built today should do: to educate about respect for the environment.