flores & prats . ouest

technicum 4 | new school of architecture . ghent



Second Prize in public competition

Planning, Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies of Universiteit Gent.

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The competition The Technicum 4 building at Universiteit Gent was conceived almost one century ago as a laboratory linked to the Engineering Department. With the time the building remained under-used, and the university

Competition for the adaptive reuse of the Technicum 4 in Ghent as a new School of Architecture and Urban

started to consider adapting it as its new School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies. The building is an example of 1930es architecture, with wonderful con-

structive, spatial and lighting qualities: structure, stairs, finishing materials... The brief of the competition required that the proposals were both innovative and exemplary in combining the valorisation of this modern heritage with a comprehensive approach to sustainability: depaving, maximum reuse, attention to circular construction, energetic renovation of the building skin and technical equipment with a view to energy neutrality. The renovated building had also to reinforce the functioning and experience of the campus along the River Scheldt, through the organization of access points for staff, students and visitors, on foot and by bicycle. The architecture study programme requested a varied studio landscape, with a mix of workshop, consultation and presentation spaces, as well as technical workshop spaces for its roughly 600 students. An introverted Building When visiting the Technicum 4 for the competition, we found a building with unique spatial, historic and material qualities but lacking any connection with the physical and social environment that surrounds it. The city and the campus have evolved greatly around it in the past decades, with a very vivid neighbours and

student's life, but the building remained without any contact with it. When walking around it, one find fa-

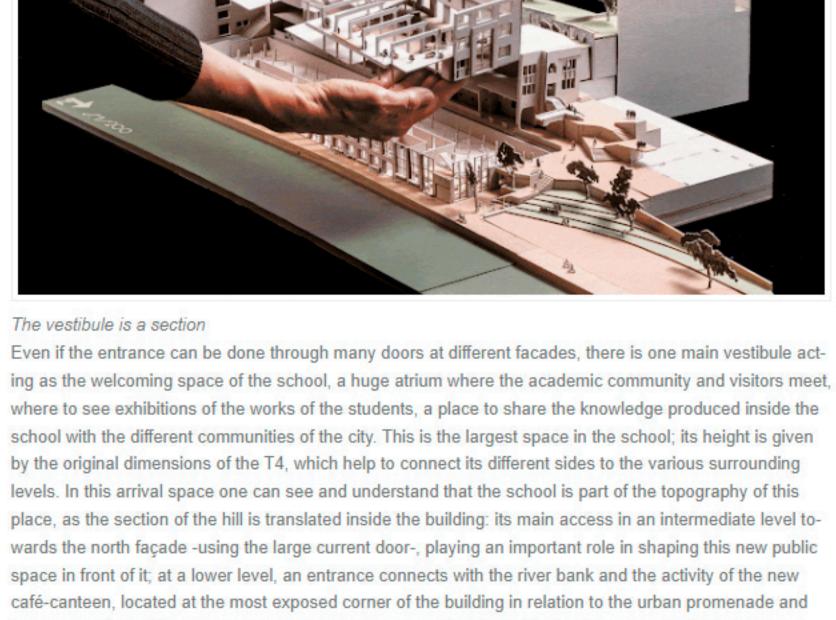
cades that do not express any relationship with its immediate environment, doors act as secondary or rear

doors articulating in a forced and unnatural way with the exterior reality; no matter how large they are in

size, they are not expecting you. At the same time, the building sits in a beautiful green hill that connects the upper part of the city with the river Scheldt but does not acknowledge this landscape in any way. With two different topographic levels touching its long sides, the T4 does not create any internal connection among them, the building is not designed to relate to the topography. It is a very particular situation, the T4 is a very hermetic and introverted building, given from the fact that it was conceived as a laboratory, an annex for the Campus. A new school to celebrate this place Our proposal aims to reverse this situation by opening the building to its surroundings providing the new accesses of the students in and out of the building. These connections use the current topography in which the building sits and links the different interior levels of the new school to the landscape around it. Like this, entering the school could be done through different levels at its various facades, connecting with different parts of the school programme. This generates a very rich net of circulations and crossings, making the building part of the landscape and the movements of the city around it. The interior topography is coordi-

the abandoned tower, and the river. This coordination has defined the identity of the different levels of the future school. Both outside and inside, the project seeks to restore the topography of this hillside and adapt the T4 Building internally to be able to respond to it, generating those intermediate spaces that will offer students casual meeting spaces during their study years.

nated with the various levels that surround the building: the neighbouring schools, the old medieval path,



leisure condition of the quay; and at a higher level and coinciding with the Hidraulica building's terrace, a

third entrance is proposed as an open-air gallery space, with plants and places to stay, a "loggia" for the students to rest, interact and watch the activities of the square through these big windows. The topography of the roofs A new roof landscape is proposed to change the interior volume, light conditions and spatial qualities of the existing warehouse. One of the main features of the T4, the series of skylights that give an homogeneous light to the former working spaces can be get more advantage of by making the light stay there, in-between outside and inside, being more useful before it gets down to the floor. As the working and study places are not a homogeneous space anymore, the light rhythm can also be modified and adapt to this varied condition of the interiors that we want for the school. Following its own geometry, some of the skylights can be enlarged converting them into real study rooms, suspended in the roof level and surrounded by natural light. Now the roof will not just be a homogeneous series of skylights to provide constant illumination but will also allow working inside its section while looking the city outside above the roof and at the same time see the study and working spaces below. This new roof topography helps us also to absorb and incorporate to the school the enormous volume of the old test tower, connecting its inner levels to the new studios and workshops.

A new school open to the city

of the civic and natural condition of the place where it sits.

The topography of the studios

related to the high skylights and the tower, producing cross relationships in length and height with the other studios of the school and providing a unity and at the same time a variation that does not exist today. With this proposal, the years of study will be spent in a large building with different environments: quieter spaces with less lighting, spaces for group work, spaces to be alone, presentation areas, places that invite you to sit and talk for a while, places to exhibit, to walk and easily find out what is going on inside the school. Workshops and Laboratories The manufacturing work is being moved to the actual basement, emptying part of the 1st floor to give light and height to this space. The new generous heights help to connect the spaces of fabrications with the school and with the urban promenade along the river dock, offering to the neighbours a glimpse into the school activities. These new connections give a new character to the basement levels of the current building, which are now actively linked to the school, the campus and the city. Natural light enters into these spaces through the large openings overlooking the river and also from the large warehouse of the studios above.

We propose a school of architecture as a public building, an institution of learning, studying and teaching,

welcoming students, visitors and passersby from all directions, to share the knowledge produced in it. The

project works in intensifying the relationship between the inner world of the school with the outer reality of

paths and buildings that surround it, creating a varied series of intermediate spaces to articulate this transi-

change when getting in and out of the school. At the same time, paths, stairs and slopes are softly modified

and adjusted to connect the new school with the several features of the campus and the neighbourhood.

The proposed school works as a pavilion in the hill, naturally reached from the neighbouring schools, the

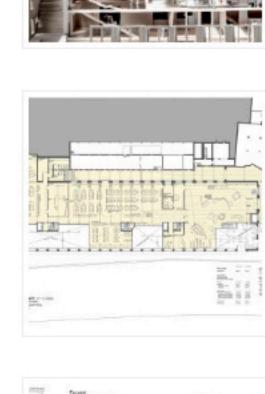
old medieval path, the abandoned tower and the River bank. A place to celebrate learning as an extension

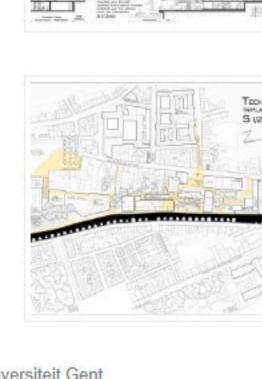
tion, small patios, courts, thicknesses, passages, to provide students places to casually meet and ex-

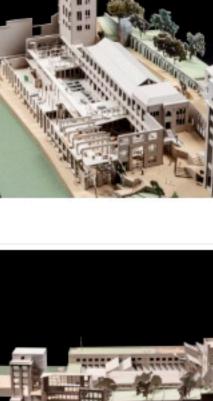
The studios for the lower grades of the school will mainly occupy the actual central warehouse and the first

floor of the offices building. Instead, for master and PhD programs, the studios are located in higher levels,











New School of Architecture for Universiteit Gent Second Prize in open competition

Situation: Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 41, 9000 Gent, Belgium

Planning, Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies of Universiteit Gent. Architecture: Flores & Prats + Ouest Architecture Collaborators: Guillem Bosch, Ingrid Bru, Ana García, Antoine Trémège, Júlia Sorribes, Daria Baldovino,

Budget: 11,9M euros

Client: Universiteit Gent

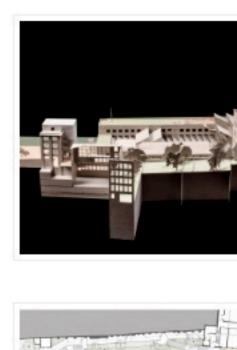
Competition: 2022

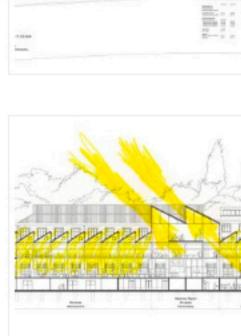
Area: 8.835 m2

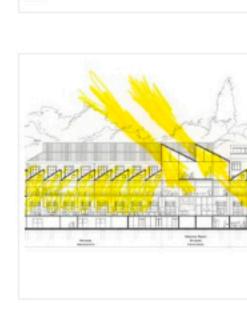
Vittoria Guglielmi, Floortje Van Sandick, Irini Syka, Coline Miossec, Gustavo Hernández, Nina Andreatta, Giovanna De Caneva.

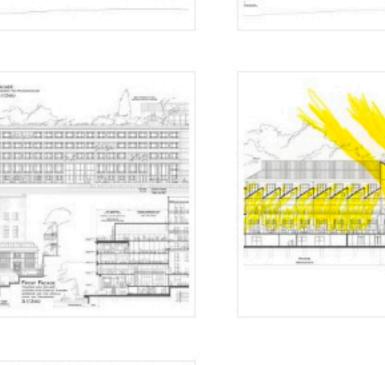
Landscape: Elise Candry Structure: Util Acoustics: Daidalos Peutz Techniques: Ingenium Photographs as-found state: Stijn Bollaert

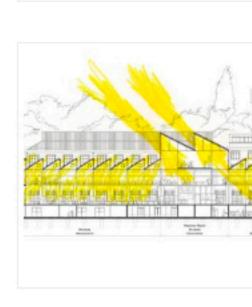
Photographs models: Adrià Goula Renders: Play-Time Tags: Flores Prats, Ouest Category: architecture

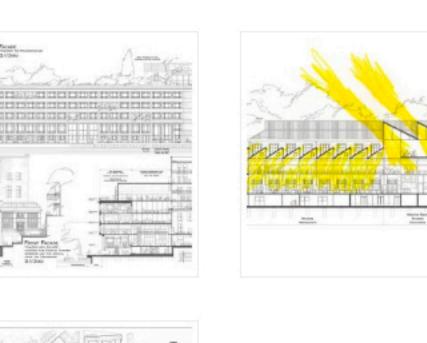


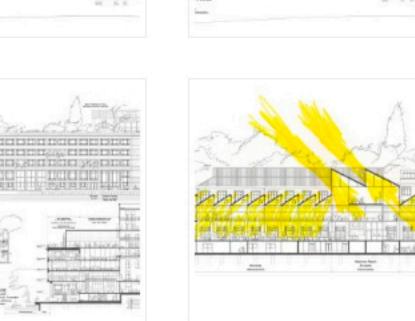






















Program: Adaptive reuse of the Technicum 4 building in Ghent as a new School of Architecture and Urban