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Architects

Editorial Critique:
Toyo Ito

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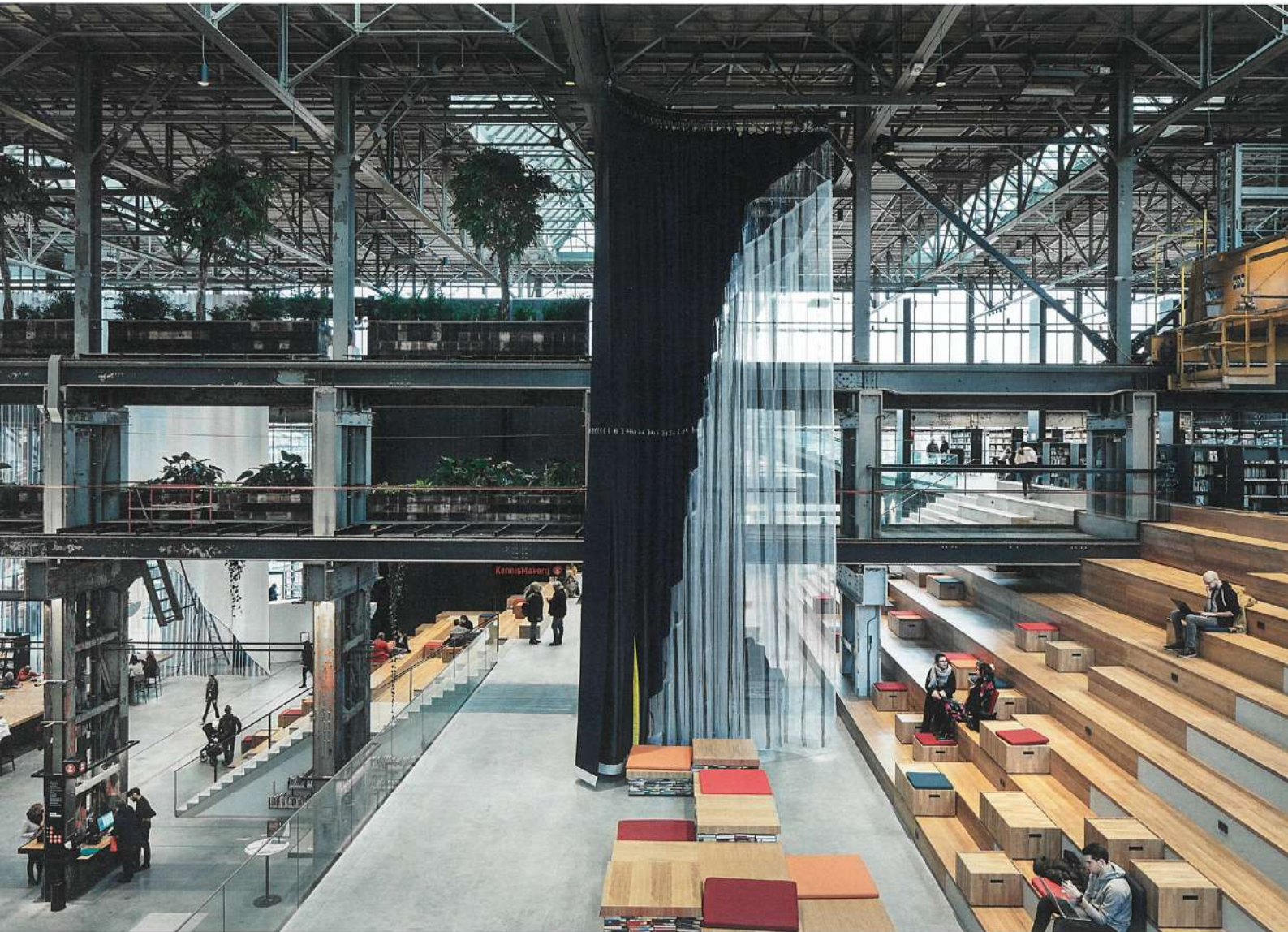
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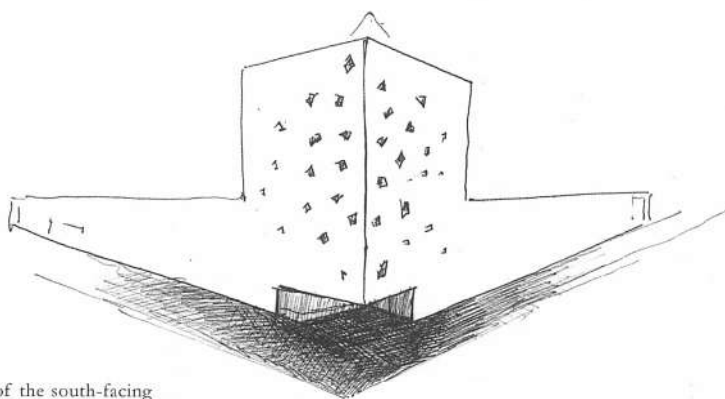


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JOINT SCHOOL OF DESIGN
AND INNOVATION CENTRE
XI'AN JIAOTONG UNIVERSITY &
MILAN'S POLYTECHNIC
COLLABORATION
AND DIALOGUE
AMONG PEOPLES
XI'AN, SHAANXI, CHINA



Sketch of the south-facing exterior view

Remo Dorigati
Pierluigi Salvadeo



Remo Dorigati, lecturer at Milan's Polytechnic, specializes in the design and construction of both public and private projects.



Pierluigi Salvadeo, PhD, is an Associate Professor at Milan's Polytechnic and a founder partner of the architecture practice Guidarini&Salvadeo.



A complex process of research and collaboration between Milan's Polytechnic and the Jiaotong University of Xi'an was behind the recently built Joint School of Design and Innovation Centre. Occupying a dedicated plot in what is known as the XJTU New Campus in the Xi'an New District, the school is part of a location a considerable distance from the city center, not far from Xi'an's international airport, Xianyang, considered the largest airport in northwest China and the second largest in the whole of northern China. With this location, the Design and Innovation Centre, like the rest of the university, seems to be showing it belongs to a wider political, cultural and human community. In fact, the links between China and Italy go back a very long way. Xi'an was the city from where the caravans started out on the Silk Road, whose various ramifications led ultimately to the Mediterranean and the final destination, Rome.

As we know, it was not only goods that traveled the Silk Road. Ideas, religions, philosophy, culture, technology and knowledge in general took the same route. The Joint School of Design and Innovation Centre is by its very nature a place of ideas, open to different cultures and all possible innovation, a place where research, start-ups, experimental laboratories and innovative postgraduate teaching come together. The idea of inclusivity the center embodies springs from the way contemporary societies have been transformed by globalization, which has led to the opening up and mobility of our social systems, and in turn to acceptance of what is new and diverse. All this is expressed in the clear simple design of the two main volumes making up the center: a single-story volume and a corner tower. The long low building hosts a series of work environments called "laboratories" arranged in a fluid space called the "trading zone", a tribute to the philosopher of science, Peter Galison, and his ideas on planning and the processes that led to the formation of cities.

The trading zone is the physical place where different sciences and disciplines dialogue. Its simple design facilitates communication among people, incentivizing exchange and the acquisition and passing on of information. This is where different groups get to understand one another, where diverse disciplines can mutually integrate, fertilizing each other, and proposals and ideas appraised

and compared. All this takes place in environments bathed in natural light streaming in from a succession of open patios running alongside the laboratories. Designed as small internal gardens, the patios create a sort of natural geography on the secluded side of the single-story center. At night, the chiaroscuro effect produced by artificial illumination behind the glazed openings highlights the depth of the building. Despite its different typology, the tower is designed along the same concept: an irregular open central space cuts diagonally into all floors with a series of staggered staircases, a "communication infrastructure" coursing up the whole building and linking all floors.

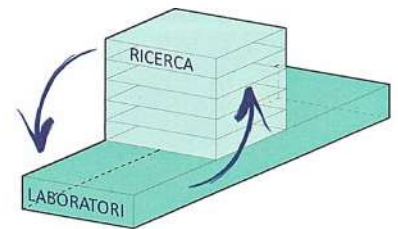
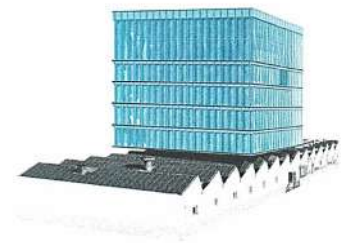
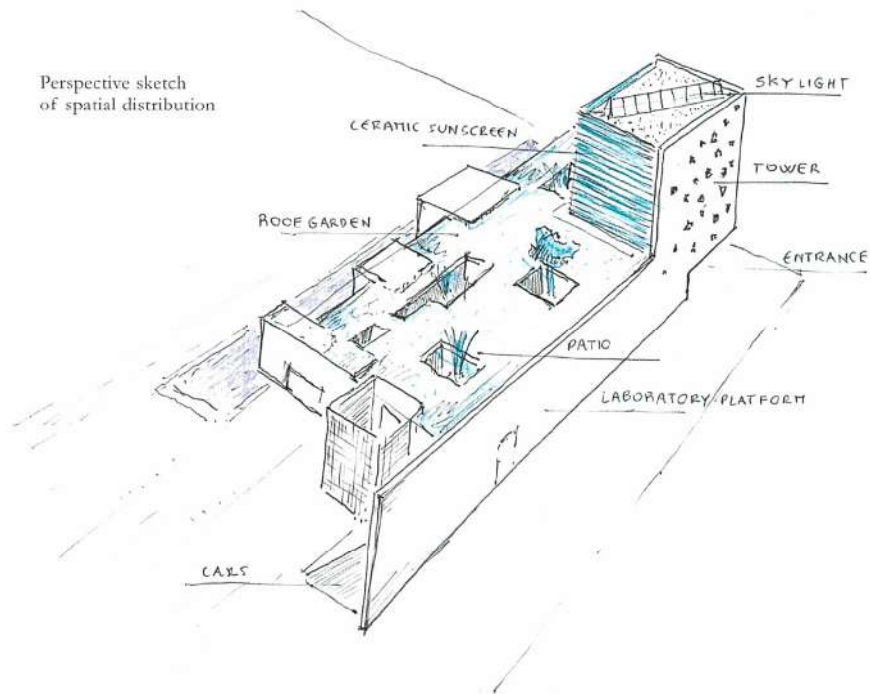
The easy communicative flow of spaces and human interaction achieved in the building is here repeated on the vertical. Light pours into the tower thanks to two devices working in synergy: the glazed curtain walls shielded by a brise soleil made up of different length ceramic elements whose green color recalls ancient Chinese jade vases, and a large diagonal roof skylight whose rhomboid section reflects the natural daylight projecting it down into the lowest levels of the building.

At ground level, a large deep recess at the only tower corner giving on to the street signals the entrance to the whole building. In the multi-height atrium, slender white columns stand like discreet hosts welcoming guests inside. From here, visitors gain access to the below-grade conference hall. In keeping with its hollowed out underground location, this environment is entirely black, from flooring to side paneling, and illuminated by a series of small recessed circular lights on the walls that resemble stars twinkling in the sky. On the outside, the complex presents as a single mass. The huge tower is punctuated by small irregular openings, two long solid walls extending on either side. The secluded side of the low building looking out onto a reflective pool is divided into a series of smaller glazed volumes occupied by a cafeteria, restaurant, gym and smaller relaxation areas, each giving onto an outer "peninsula" area. The self-cleaning anti-pollutant photocatalytic plaster façade cladding by the Italian producer Italcementi was a carefully considered choice. A special chemical process causes the plaster to react with the pollutant particles on the surface, turning them into salts, which are washed away from the wall when it rains.

The idea of inclusivity the center embodies springs from the way contemporary societies have been transformed by globalization, which has led to the opening up and mobility of our social systems, and in turn to acceptance of what is new and diverse

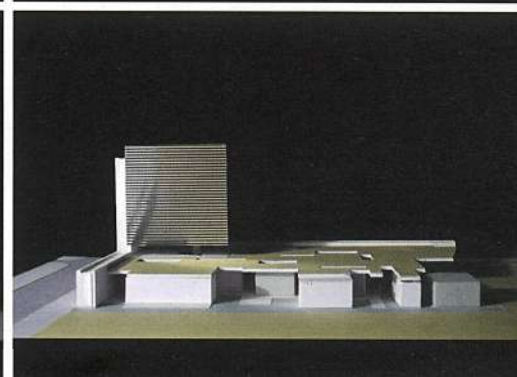
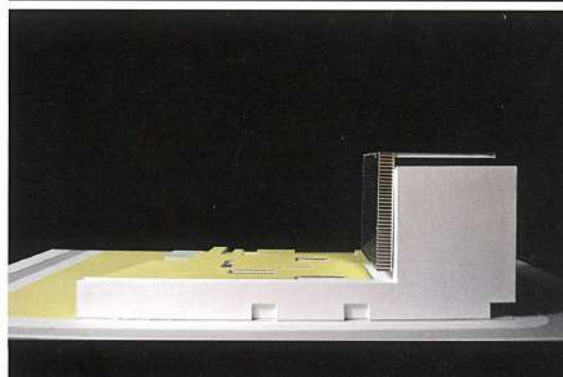
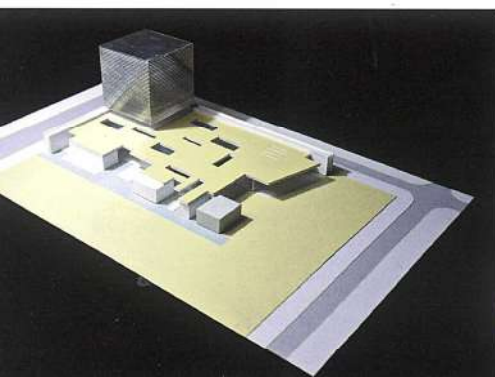
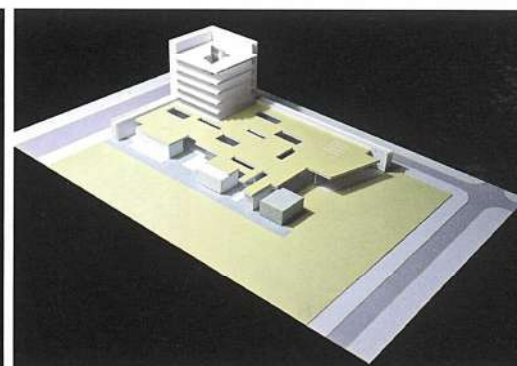
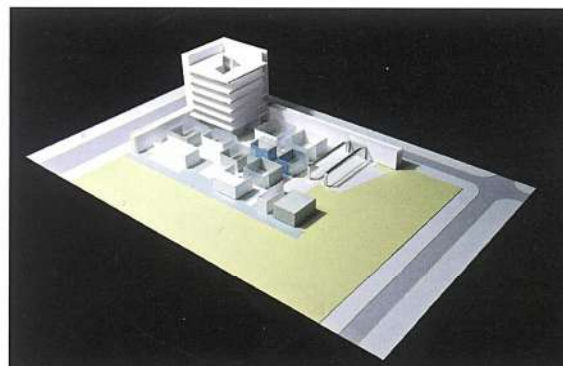


Perspective sketch of spatial distribution

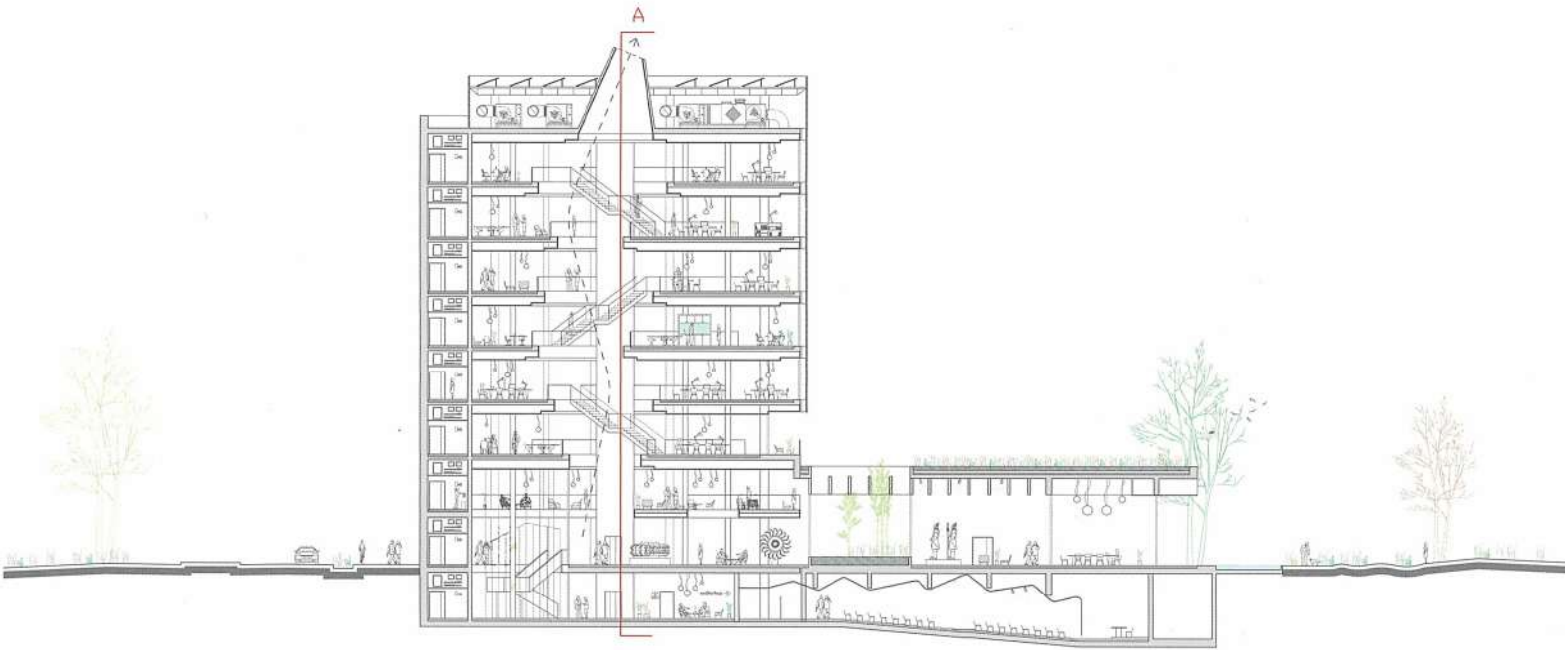


Concept sketch of how research and laboratory spaces interconnect

Views of the study model showing the various project components







XX Section - Scale 1:500



Ground floor plan - Scale 1:500

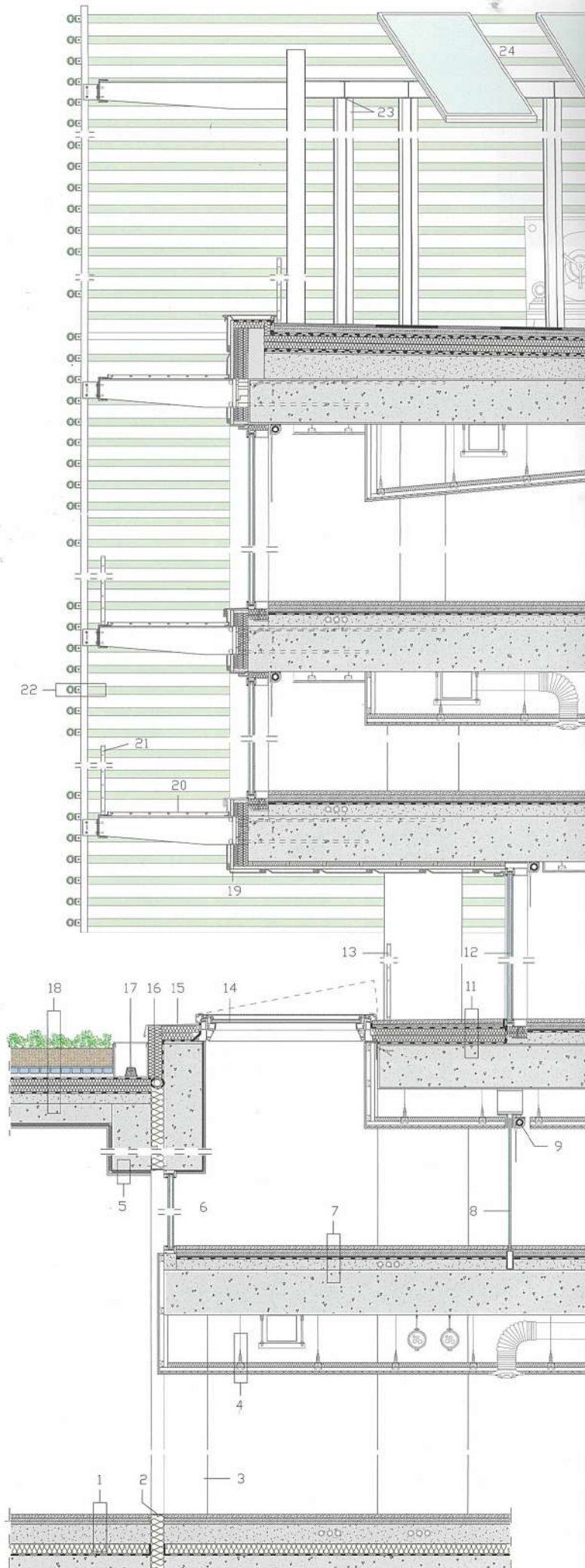
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|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1- Main entrance | 6- Canteen | 11- Overhead crane entrance |
| 2- Hall/exhibition space | 7- Fitness room | 12- Overhead crane |
| 3- Entrance | 8- Break room | 13- Parking entrance |
| 4- Trading zone | 9- Garden | 14- Laboratory |
| 5- Patio | 10- Open air storage | |

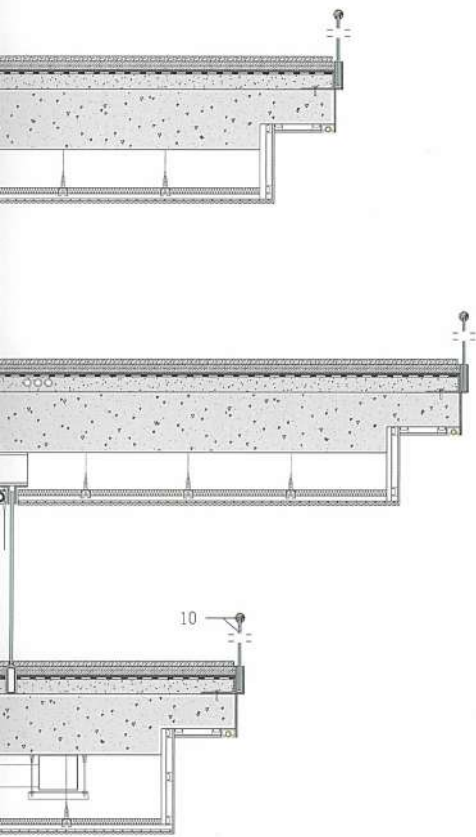
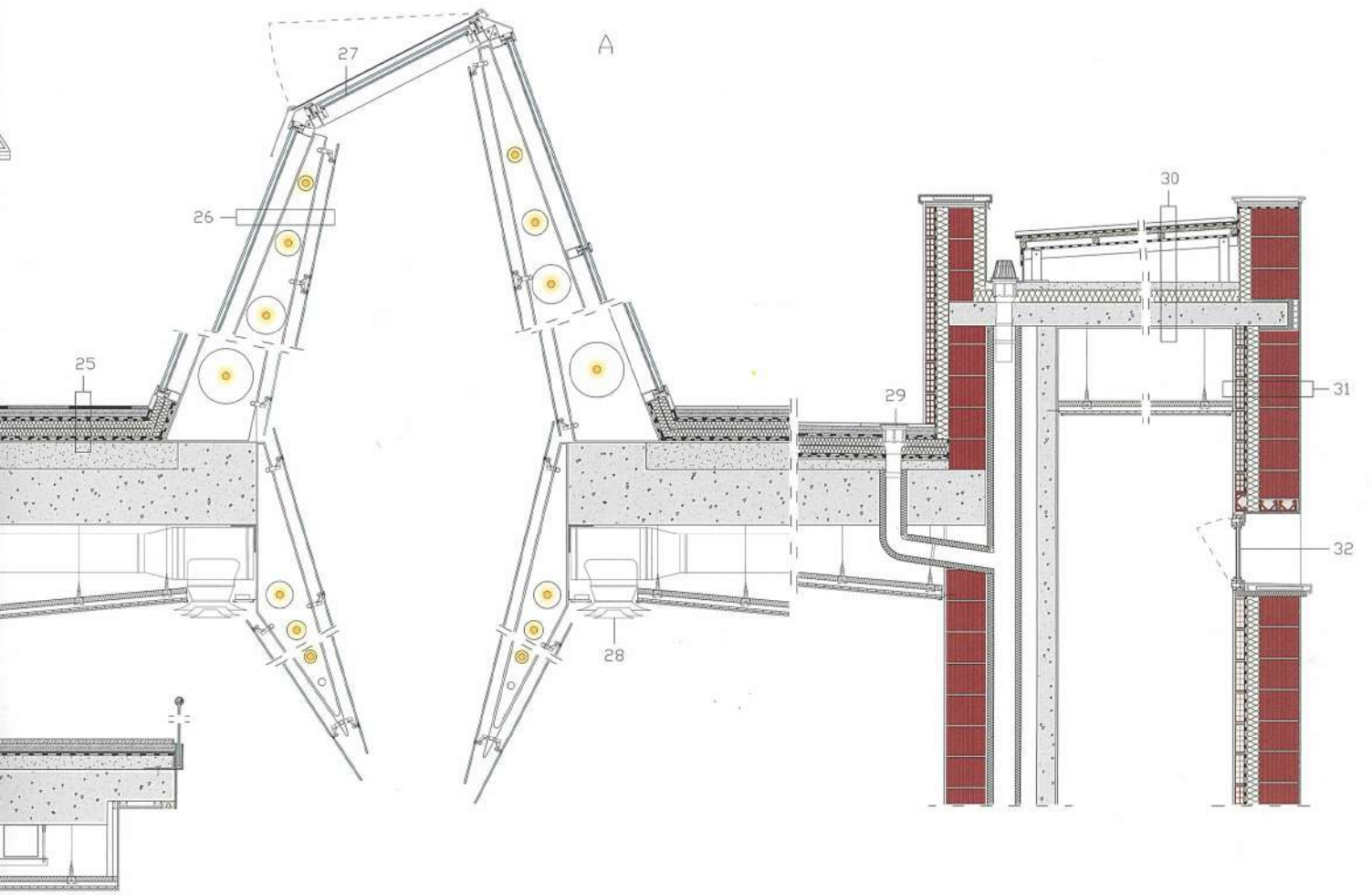


Detail A: Construction system
Vertical section - Scale 1:40

- 1- 1 1/8" (30 mm) concrete flooring with marble, brick and stone chips, 2" (50 mm) screed with anti-crack mesh and fast-set mortar, 5 7/8" (150 mm) self-leveling lightweight concrete screed embedding services, 3 1/8" (80 mm) rigid insulation, vapor barrier with fiberglass matting reinforcing, pre-cast double-tee reinforced concrete slab
- 2- Neoprene waterproof structural joint
- 3- Exposed reinforced concrete column
- 4- Radiant ceiling for heating and cooling comprising modular drywall panels with integrated pipes, suspended from slab by metal droppers
- 5- Plaster layer, 1" (25 mm) wood fiber rigid insulation, reinforced concrete edge beam
- 6- High-efficiency aluminum heat and sound insulating window with 1/2 - 3/4 - 1/2" (12/20/12 mm) glazing unit
- 7- 1 1/8" (30 mm) concrete flooring with marble, brick and stone chips, 2" (50 mm) screed with anti-crack mesh and fast-set mortar, 1/2" (13 mm) modular acoustic and heat insulation panels, vapor barrier, 4" (100 mm) self-leveling lightweight concrete screed embedding services, 13 3/4" (350 mm) reinforced concrete slab
- 8- 3/8 + 3/8" (10+10 mm) laminated glass partition fixed to slab by 7 7/8 x 3/8" (200x10 mm) bent flat steel and fixed to base by steel box profile
- 9- Sound-absorbing fabric roller blind
- 10- Structural safety glass railing with wood handrail
- 11- 1 1/8" (30 mm) concrete flooring with marble, brick and stone chips, 2" (50 mm) screed with anti-crack mesh and fast-set mortar, waterproofing membrane, UV-resistant PVC and fiberglass waterproofing membrane, double 2" (50 mm) rigid insulation, vapor barrier, reinforced concrete slab
- 12- Aluminum window with 1/2 - 3/4 - 1/4 + 1/4" (12/20/6+6 mm) glazing unit with self-cleaning insulating glass, 4 1/8 x 2 3/8" (105x60 mm) aluminum box profile façade mullion
- 13- Railing comprising flat metal bars and steel tie rods
- 14- Motorized aluminum skylight with 1/4 - 3/4 - 1/4" (6/20/6 mm) glazing unit, aluminum profile trim
- 15- Waterproofing galvanized steel flashing
- 16- Waterproofing neoprene joint
- 17- Drainage system with

- inspection chamber
- 18- Roof garden comprising 3/4" (20 mm) granular substrate, filter layer, water attenuation layer over drainage layer, root-repellent waterproofing membrane, double 2" (50+50 mm) rigid insulation, vapor barrier, lightweight concrete screed forming slope, 5 7/8" (150 mm) reinforced concrete slab, 1" (25 mm) wood fiber rigid insulation, plaster finish
- 19- Seamed zinc sheeting finish
- 20- Walkway comprising steel grill on projecting tapered steel T-brackets anchored to structural concrete beam
- 21- Railing anchored to bracket by UPN 180 beam
- 22- Sunshading comprising Ø 2 3/8" (60 mm) ceramic tubes with glazed finish, L-profile anchor, aluminum box profile mullion
- 23- Structure of IPW 140 beams supporting photovoltaic panels
- 24- Photovoltaic panel
- 25- Roof comprising freeze-resistant non-slip porcelain stone tiles, 2" (50 mm) screed with anti-crack mesh and fast-set mortar, waterproofing membrane, UV-resistant PVC and fiberglass waterproofing membrane, double 2" (50 mm) rigid insulation, vapor barrier, fiberglass-reinforced elastomeric membrane, cold-applied bitumen primer, lightweight concrete screed forming slope, 13 3/4" (350 mm) reinforced concrete slab
- 26- Diamond-shaped skylight shaft wall with 1/2 - 3/4 - 1/4 + 1/4" (12/20/6+6 mm) aluminum glazing units, tapered steel cellular beam with integrated LED tubes, frosted glass on steel point fasteners
- 27- Motorized skylight with 1/2 - 3/4 - 1/4 + 1/4" (12/20/6+6 mm) aluminum glazing unit and aluminum profile trim
- 28- Ventilation and air conditioning system
- 29- Rainwater gutter with leaf guard
- 30- Roof comprising 2 5/8 x 15 3/4" (67x400 cm) zinc panels, 1" (25 mm) plywood panel, 1 5/8 x 1 5/8" (40x40 mm) wood beams, waterproofing membrane, structure of metal pipe profiles, metal point supports, lightweight concrete screed forming slope, 3 1/8" (80 mm) rigid insulation, 5 1/2" (140 mm) reinforced concrete slab, interior plaster finish
- 31- Photocatalytic plaster exterior finish, structure of 9 7/8" (250 mm) perforated bricks, 3 1/8" (80 mm) rigid insulation, fiberglass-reinforced vapor barrier
- 32- Aluminum transom window with 3/8 - 1/2 - 3/16" (10/12/5 mm) glazing unit







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