

PASSAGENWERK
transformation of a Dominican Monastery

Period: **2012 : invited competition**
Place: **Dominican Monastery,
Antwerp, Belgium**
With: **RE-ST architects
Grontmij**
Photographer: **Stefano Graziani**
Competition promoter: **Province of Antwerp
Department of Logistics –
Services for Infrastructure
community centre, cultural
centre, apartments**
Program: **5800 sqm**
Surface:

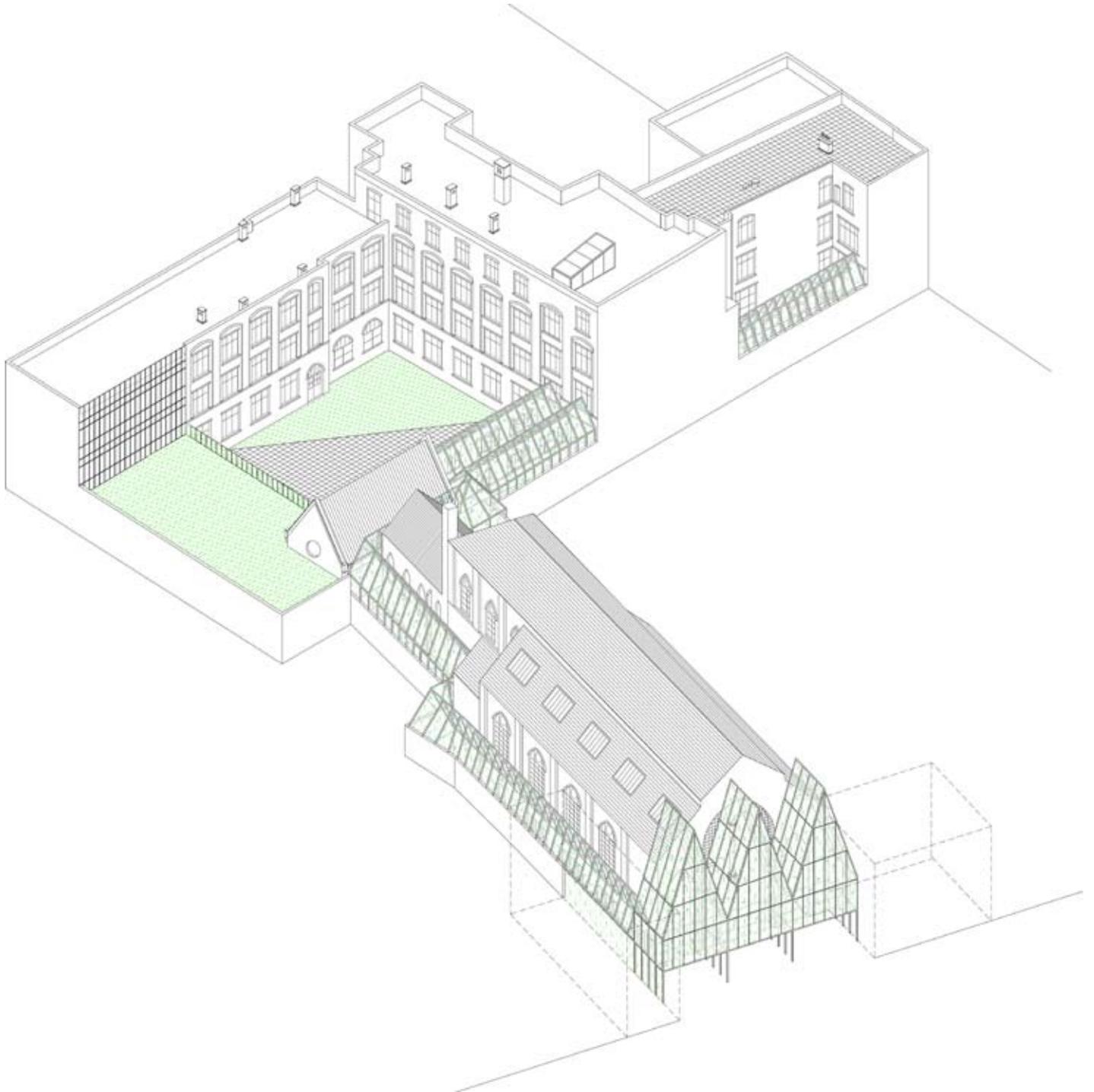
The Dominican Monastery was a closed system: it engaged the world by taking a distance.

We are now asked to turn the – by definition *isolated* – monastery into an accessible, multifunctional meeting place aimed at innovation and production of knowledge. The walled, closed architecture of the complex needs to become transparent, open.

We propose to open the Dominican Monastery to the city by literally showing its interior to the outside: a new urban *passage* connects the different parts of the complex, linking the entrance on the Ploegstraat to the entrance on the Provinciestraat and creating a public street servicing all the functions of the community centre. The inside of the plot is politely revealed and made *public* by the appearance of the passage.

The passage is built in a very classical fashion, with light structure and glazed roof. The passage snakes through the plot generating a sequence of greenhouses and gardens that follow the existing layout of the monastery and are populated by a multitude of plants, flowers and fruit, creating a pleasant and unexpectedly exotic environment with sunlight filtering from the roof.

The two new entrances disclose the newly accessible interior of the monastery. Along the Provinciestraat, the façade of the old church is removed and substituted with a new porch. The porch is the prosecution of the passage. It introduces/ concludes the sequence of the greenhouses wrapping the church in an envelope of glass and vegetation. The porch allows the inside of the church to appear on the street and invades the space with abundance of light. The porch is a light structure, hosting a variety of plants growing from hanging pots. From the outside, the neo-gothic interior of the church appears through a new light screen populated by a multitude of plants.



axonometry



photo by Stefano Graziani



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