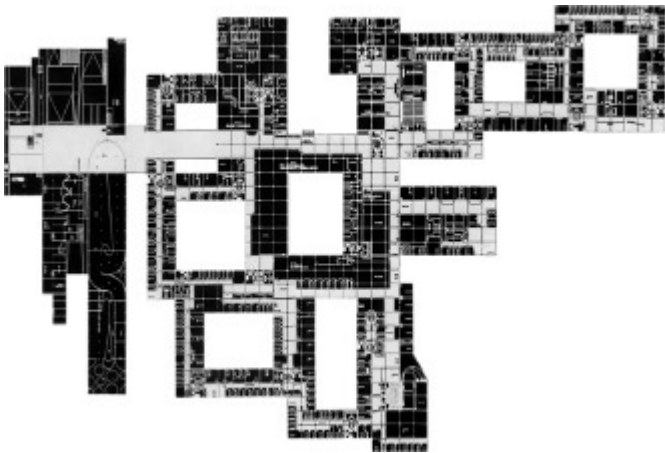


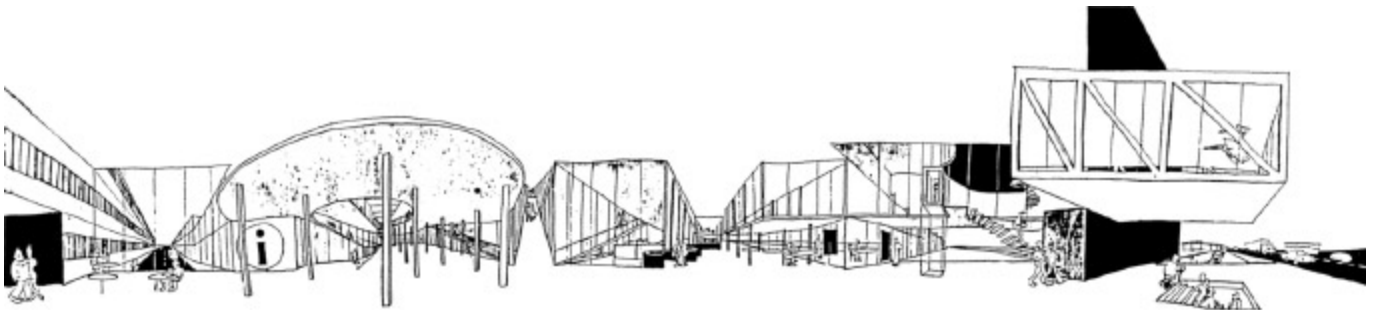
U97

International competition in 2 stages on the University of Copenhagen - Faculty of Humanities in the Ørestad, Copenhagen. 9 teams selected for the final stage. Proposal by Uid / Henrik Valeur, Fredrik Fritzson, Bjarke Ingels, Bent Johan Poulsen and Uwe Wuetherich, Barcelona in collaboration with landscape architect Camilla Hjerl, Copenhagen and consulting engineers Ole Vanggaard, Copenhagen and Buro Happold, London, 1997.

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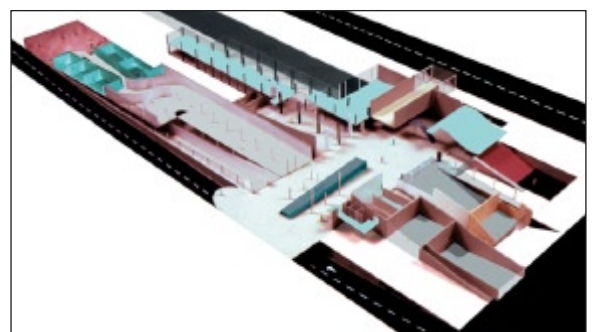


The first phase of the new university is a 25.000 m² structure, meant to initially function as an appendix to the already existing complex and later serve as an integrated part of the new. The organisational principle of this and subsequent phases is that of a transit area, a non-constructed linear space emerging as an opening in the existing labyrinthine structure and as a joining of the components of the new.

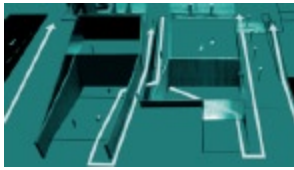
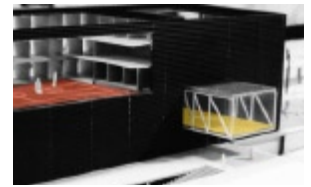


The individually designed components are assembled by a monolithic concrete structure, which is optimised ad hoc by secondary structural systems, adjusted to local conditions. The components exhibit their contents at the interfaces with the transit area. The transit area is a distributor of flows with floor heated info check points and chill-out facilities. It is covered by a synthetic sky and it is open to the public 24 hours /day.

In the transit area the perspective dissolves into the banal and the exceptional events of everyday university life, before it finally accelerates out through the ballet studio tunnel at the end of the black box.

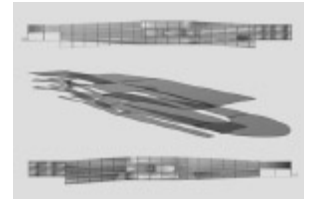


The Black Box is the outpost of the new university providing direct access to the new underground metro station. It contains facilities for the art history and theatre science units, including a gallery, a theatre, a ballet studio and a basketball court.



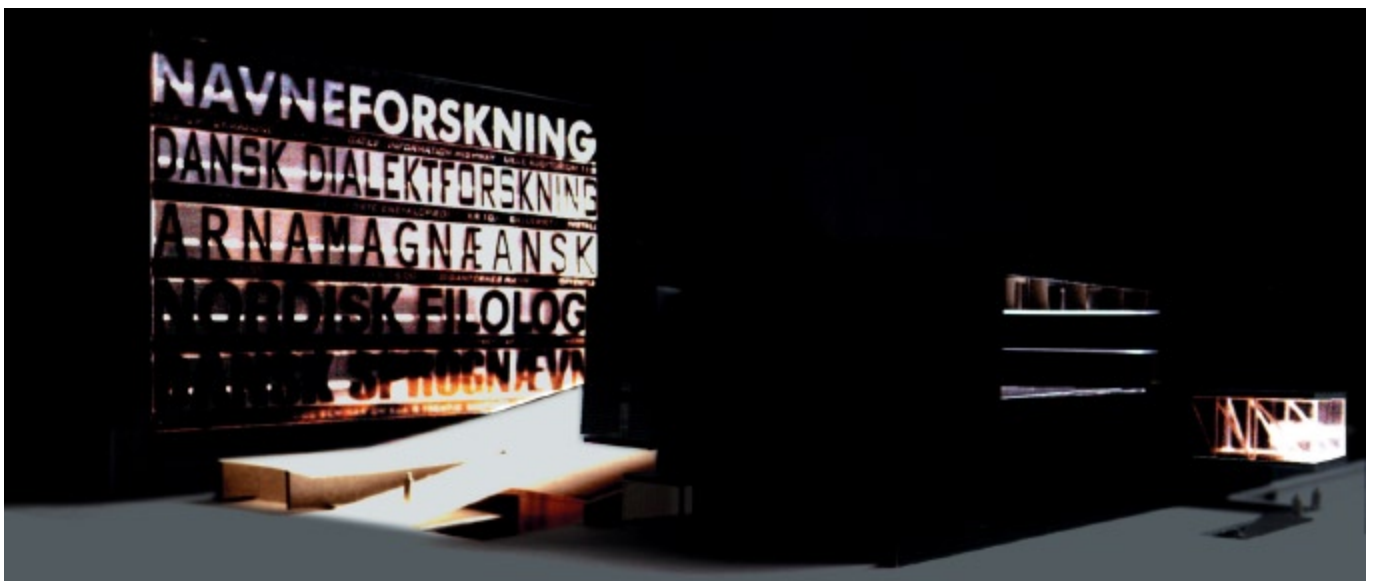
The Bunker contains two lecture rooms. Via their transparent back walls, respectively facing the interior transit area and the exterior, bypassers can get a “taste” of the lectures inside. The accessible roof provides an alternate route into the Ørestad North.

The Loop is composed of two 4% sloping circuits circulating around two internal voids of natural ventilation. They contain 5 different libraries and several classrooms. At the extreme end are two stacked spaces with smaller group rooms in translucent plastic wrapped around the tiny columns of a building site construction.



The Slab is a high-rise structure containing a giant staircase, an anti-thesis to the low frictional forms of communication, permitting the offices of the various departments of the Nordic unit to be randomly spread out over the vertical surface. Common facilities are placed on the huge stairs and from the transit area you can look up into the social interior of this otherwise secluded area.

To the outside the first phase of the new university displays huge billboards, illuminated signs and projections on the facade of the Slab and basketball players and ballet dancers in the Black Box.



Underneath the new structure is a road into the new city of Ørestad also providing access to an underground parking lot. On the ground floor, in front of the new structure, is a side track for bicycle and short-term parking.

The Faculty of Humanities is part of the Copenhagen University. It has 13 units, subdivided into 25 departments, offering 50 different subjects for 15,000 daily users. This giant mechanism is controlled by an extensive bureaucracy. The users are distributed into hundreds of identical cells in a labyrinthine complex, counteractive to internal communication, outside influence and any assessment of local performances. In this environment informations accumulate within restricted circles, which mainly seem to exist for the sake of their own existence.

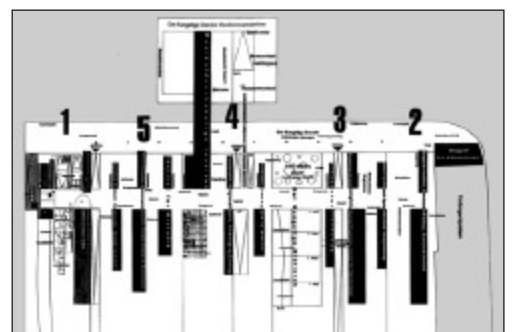
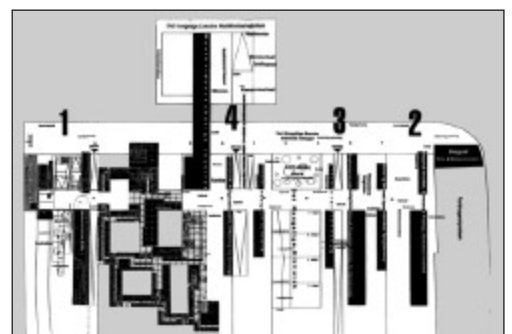
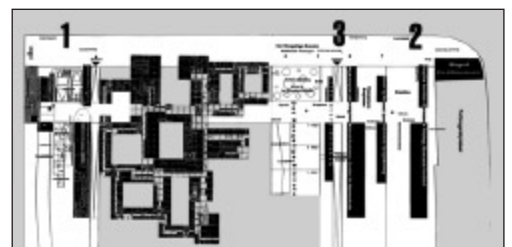
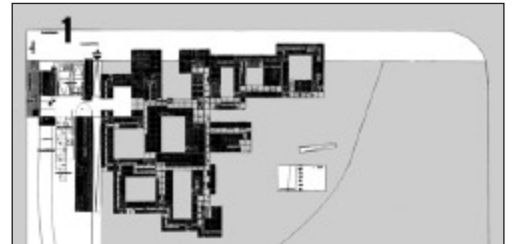
In the shock waves of the 68' student revolt and in order to accommodate the equally shocking growth of babyboomer students the new faculty installation was constructed in haste and panic, on a deserted field on the outskirts of the city.

It is an anonymous complex of module systems of standard pre-fab elements, effectively suppressing all differences and literally letting all energy ooze out of the endless and monotonous corridors.

The late modernist idea that uniform spaces guarantee flexibility has proven wrong, not only because the building systems have become obsolete, but simply because nobody wants to use them. Like Christiania, a contemporary but contrary fall-out of flower power less than a kilometre away, the facility for the Faculty of Humanities has been considered fit for demolition ever since it came into existence.

The new university is a 135.000 m2 complex to be realised in 5 phases, by different architects, with an additional 50.000 m2 for possible future extensions.

In a simultaneous process of construction and demolition, the new complex is to gradually superimpose itself upon the old. Throughout this process both complexes are to be fully operational as a single entity.



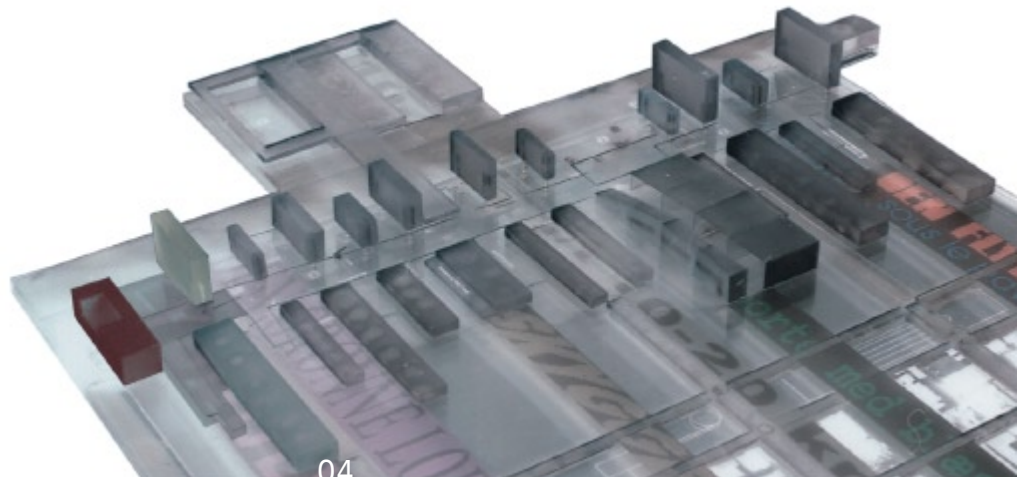
Not only is the programme huge, it is also likely to undergo continual modification. Instead of determining the physical design of these programmes, the voids they produces are concentrated in a singular continuum, a transit area.

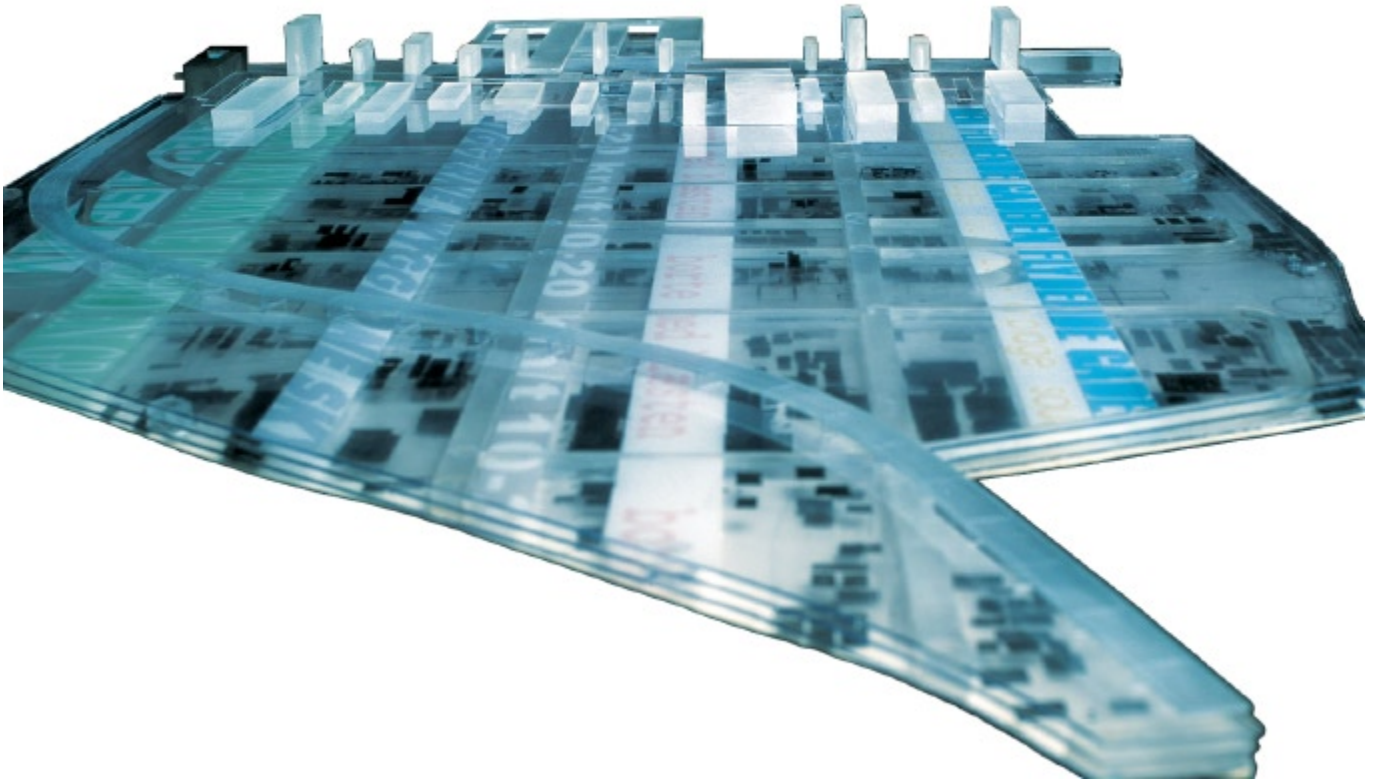


For inter-communication between the units, not knowing their exact content or form, the units are to be linked by the transit area, as a sequence of open volumes to be shaped and filled out according to the changing demands and tastes. Each unit is assigned a zone in the transit area, in which it can display and market individual products, in competition with the other units.

The transit area ensures minimum distances measured in time and maximum exposure of offers. As a system of communication it is both hyper efficient in terms of localising specific information, in provoking explorations into new informational territories and in providing opportunities for crashing into unexpected informations.

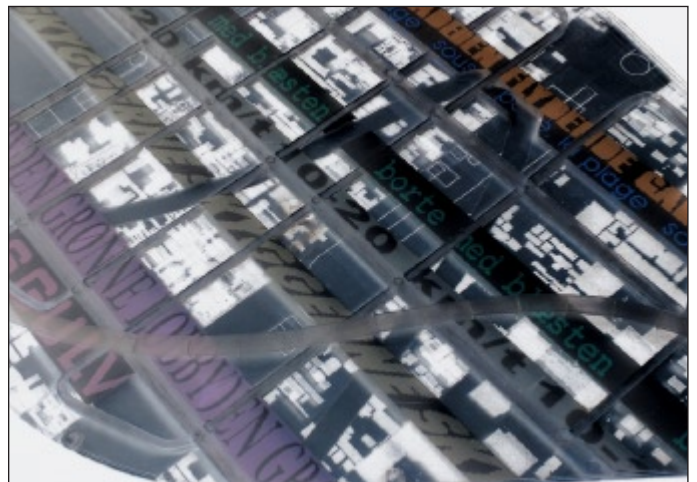
With a multitude of openings under, over and through it, the new university becomes a giant corridor, possibly fulfilling the dream of every airport passenger: to take the gate to where ever you feel like it!





Apart from the existing university complex Ørestad North is a flat vacant lot of 395.000 m² landfill with low green vegetation, that is to be developed into a total floor area of 461.500 m² with a mixed programme over the next 20 - 30 years. The boundless flatness of the site is a common characteristic of the Danish landscape. It lets your longings travel unhindered.

The Ørestad project is a new development zone in Copenhagen tied up with the investment in the bridge connection to Malmø. The Ørestad North is a speculative project, based on the possible development of self-perpetuating processes, the potential value of surplus information generated by the university and the artificial proximity to the city centre and the airport, created by the new metro line.



It is envisioned as an information based R&D zone; an innovative environment destined not by its physical form, but rather by the patterns of spin-off and feedback it is capable of producing. Patterns born out of the formless, as some biologist might say, not out of nowhere !



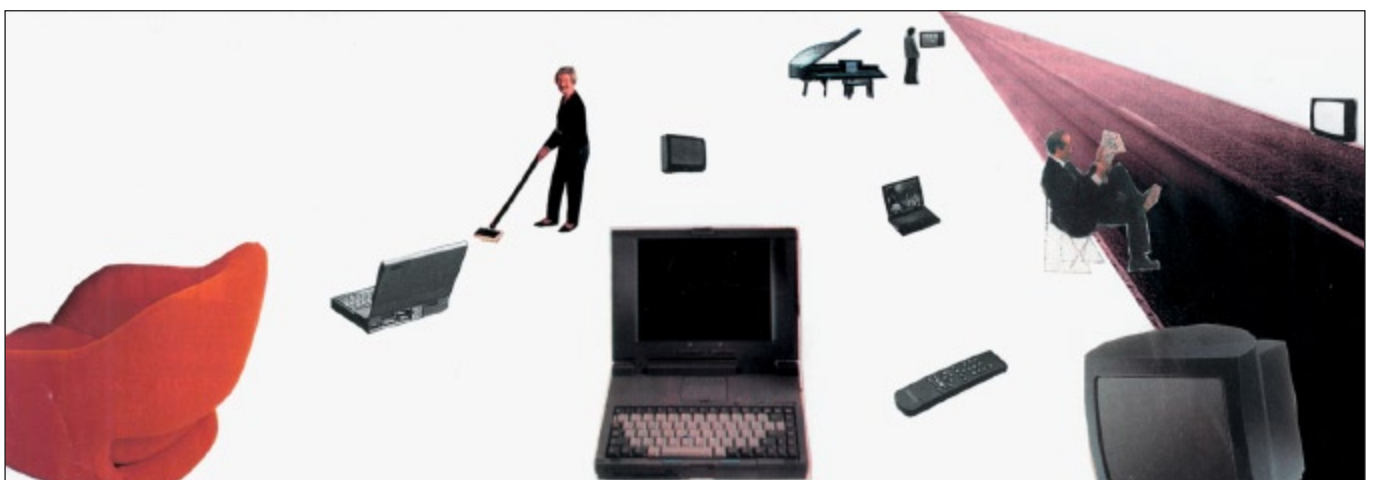
The scheme consists of bands of programme adapted to the quantitative demands of the brief weaved with infrastructural networks and strips of thematically coded open areas intended to provoke the imagination of future developers.

The bands contain education and research facilities, students housing, leisure activities, high-tech enterprises and various service institutions.

The strips represent the freedom of Ørestad North. They secure concrete openings in the new urban landscape and even though they represent “the other side” of urbanity, they are not related to nature, but to imagination.



As bands and strips are gradually realised they reveal a simple system of orientation, making Ørestad North transparent. The use of the modernist scheme of functional zoning ensures a high degree of efficiency, and in a lattice layout it also renders probable an interzonal dynamic, essential for the survival of this kind of light yet complex environments.



Not knowing the demands of the future and unable to control the development anyway, it seems less sensible to design and decide than to find out how not to trap future possibilities in our limited perspectives.