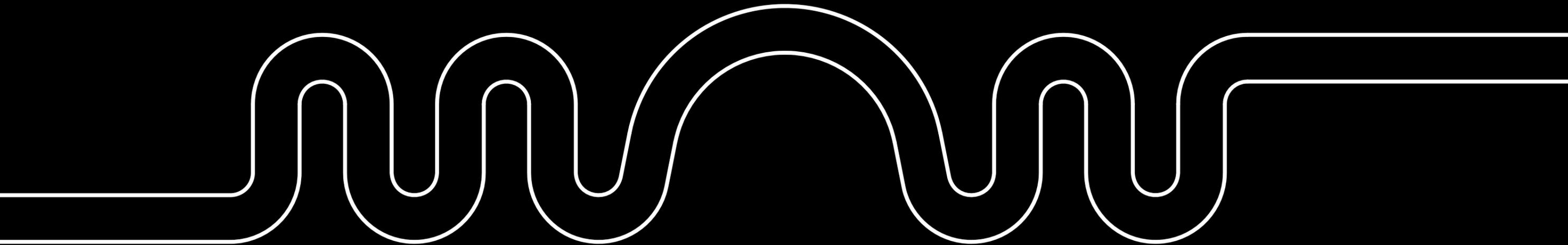


# REOPENING DEMOCRACY

IN SEARCH FOR THE NEW CONCEPT OF DUTCH PARLIAMENT BUILDING

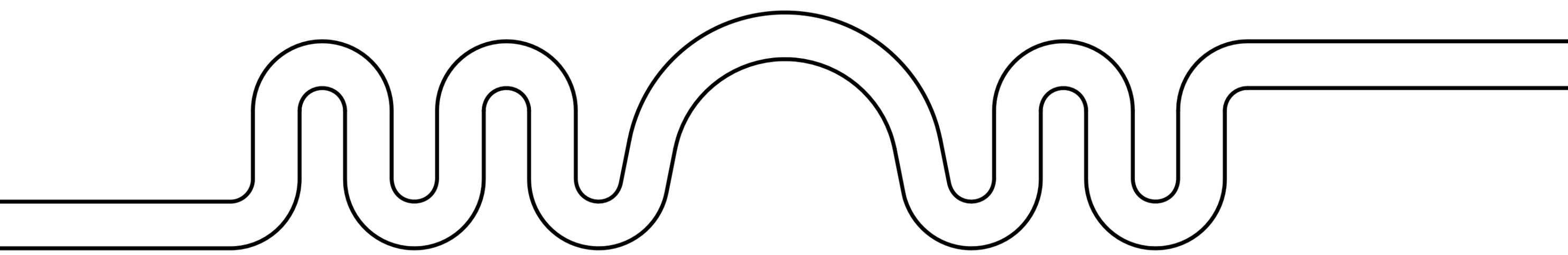


ALEXEY BOEV



# REOPENING DEMOCRACY

IN SEARCH FOR THE NEW CONCEPT OF DUTCH PARLIAMENT BUILDING



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**WE SHAPE OUR BUILDINGS; THEREAFTER THEY SHAPE US**  
**WINSTON CHURCHILL**

Winston Churchill inspecting bomb damage in the House of Commons debating chamber on May 11, 1941.



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15:30 Open Debate

Tweede Kamer



I'd been always interested in politics, the way it influences the history of mankind. Politics defines many aspects of people's lives, even when most of them are not directly involved in political processes and have no chance to do so. Main structure and functioning of the countries is shaped by political processes, and democracy became the way for non-politicians to influence their societies' lives. Born 2500 years ago in Athens, nowadays democracy lost its original openness to people and architecture of parliament building – buildings for the main instrument of democracy – highly represent that.

My project represents an idea of how the architecture, that would address openness and accessibility of democratic processes, could look like, while still fulfilling important needs of contemporary society, as security. The aim is to create alternative proposal for Dutch parliament building, that would promote democracy, REOPEN it to broader audience, reflecting contemporary society, both local and global.





## Birth of democracy

The word democracy derived from Greek demos (the people) and kratos (rule) and is literally translated as "the rule of people". Democracy in its origin was a political system, where every person has rights to participate directly in management of the polis (city) society. Here we speak about participation in public affairs of Athens, the first polis, where democracy was born. Participation in those activities was the main duty of Athenian citizen, yet here the definition of the citizenship at that time should be better explained: here we speak only about male adults born in purely Athenian family, where the father was Athenian citizen as well. Although it seems quite selective in the definition of permissible participants, at that time democracy as a system made a big step, offering direct involvement in political processes. There was no alternative system, that would introduce such openness to participation of broad public. Discussions that were previously held behind closed door by small group of privileged people, now were brought to the Agora for public assessment. Athenian society made a step from one-man dictatorship to the authority of citizens.

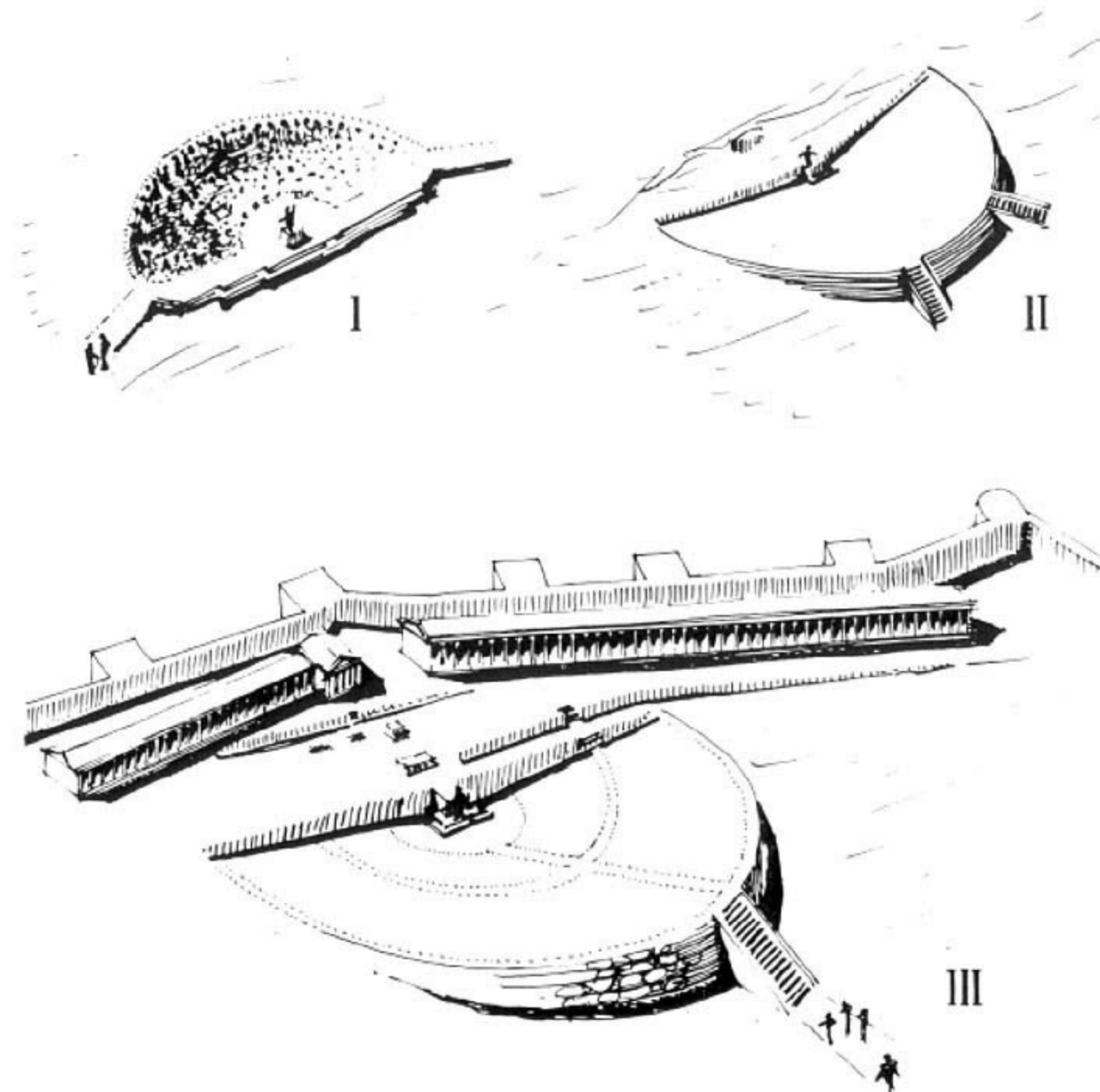


Pericles' Funeral Oration  
Philipp von Foltz - 1852

## Ekklesia and Pnyx

In about 400 B.C. each Athenian citizen had right to attend Ekklesia – citizens' assembly, that was taking place approximately every 10 days. Holding at least 6000 participants, during Ekklesia decisions were being made in debate, that would be converted to the law. Ekklesia was taking place at Pnyx, the hill to the west from Acropolis. Natural slope of the hill was forming the first political amphitheater, that was changed through the years by means of growing audience. Amphitheater as architectural form served the democratic aspiration of that time, when everyone in the audience could see and hear the speaker.

Ekklesia represented so called "direct democracy", which is only possible in smaller states. Further growth of states made direct democracy unmanageable, which resulted in toughening selection criteria and further on towards representative democracy.



Drawing by John Travlos.

Three phases of the Pnyx:

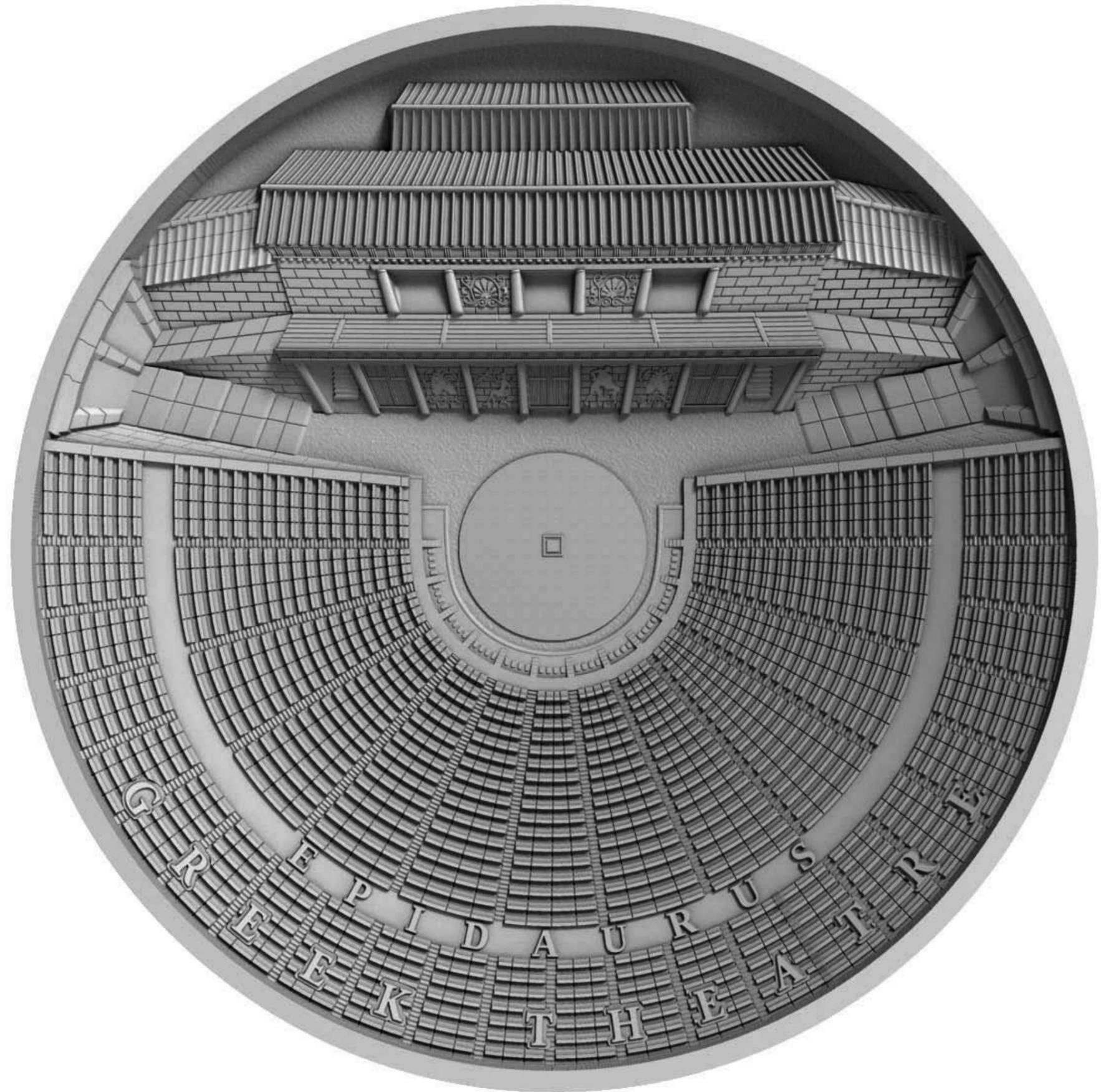
I - about 500 B.C. The Pnyx uses the natural slope of the hillside.

II - about 404 B.C. an embankment with a retaining wall created an auditorium with a slope contrary to that of the natural hillside.

III - 4th century B.C. the structure was enlarged but retained the same general configuration.

## Theatre as democratic space

In ancient history theatre also played a political role, in particular promoting involvement of the citizens in community decision making. Open theatre buildings in Greece and Rome with the scene in a center and sitting places sloping down to it in a form of half circle even today serve as an example and inspiration for public halls in entertainment and governmental buildings.



Collection coin showing Epidaurus theatre in Greece - 2016 History of theatre series

## Alþingi

Although democracy was born in Greece, the first ever parliament Alþingi (English – Althing) was established in Iceland. A thing – viking's outdoor assembly – existed in many parts of continental Northern Europe and became a basis of Althing, that by the time of its birth in 930 was the only example of a single legislature for whole country. The assembly was held for 2 weeks during summer time each year around the Low Rock, located about 45 km east from modern Reykjavik. Every free man could attend the assembly, and the most powerful leaders of the country were there to decide on justice and legislation.

After Iceland submitted the authority of Norwegian king in 13th century, Althing remained the main institution to decide on the law sharing power with the king. Here we see the system that can be named a predecessor of contemporary North European constitutional (parliamentary) monarchy, where nowadays the power of the monarch yields to the power of parliament. Therefore traces of the first ever parliament structure are to be seen in contemporary Dutch institution as well.



The law speaker of the Althing  
W. G. Collingwood - 19th Century

## **Parliament predecessors: conclusion**

What unites both examples of democratic institution predecessors, Ekklesia and Althing? First of all the intention to involve to the political processes as much citizens as possible, taking in account the size of the state. Secondly, both assemblies were organized outdoor to allow maximal openness of the process. Spectators would always be sited in the way they see and hear the speaker maximally equal.

Looking at later history of parliaments, we can see that because of many reasons, such need of holding assemblies more often regardless the weather and better security required for representatives, assemblies were moved from open spaces to enclosed buildings. Parliament buildings through the years were representing local political systems of the countries through their architecture, but ever since became closed institutions for broader public.

How to reopen the parliament building and therefore democratic processes to the citizens again, coming closer to the original understanding of democracy? My project focuses on Dutch House of Representatives of the Dutch parliament (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal – literally translated as ‘second chamber of the States General’) as the case study institution.







## Der Staten Generaal

Dutch parliament is bicameral, consisting of the Senate (Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal) and the House of Representatives (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal). 150 members of the House of Representatives (MP) are elected by direct votes by Dutch citizens once in 4 years, while 75 members of the Senate are chosen by indirect elections by the members of the twelve Provincial Councils. Therefore we can say that The House of Representatives is more “democratic” in the original understanding of the term, as it’s directly involved into daily political life of the country.

MP’s have certain rights that are written in the Constitution. For example, they can propose bills themselves, or to amend bills proposed by the Government. They have the right to ask questions of the members of the Cabinet and to call them to account. They can propose motions to give their opinion on the policies of the Government, to ask the Government to take action on a certain issue or not, or to express themselves more generally about certain matters or current developments. <sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.houseofrepresentatives.nl/house-representatives>



## Society involvement

Dutch citizens can make the parliament hear their voices via a number of ways:

- through the media;
- joining one of the political parties, who are the bridges between the society and the parliament
- demonstrations and campaigns – this method showed it's effectiveness through the history of the democratic development of The Netherlands
- through advisory boards, that are often contacted by the parliament prior decision making
- contacting MPs by joining their visits elsewhere around the country, writing an e-mail or a letter, calling or making an appointment
- citizen's initiative – for example, detailed proposal for environment improvement
- petition

Sitting in plenary hall of Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal

## The building

The House of Representatives is located in The Hague, in Binnenhof and its premises. Most of the spaces are located in the new building, specially built for The House of Representatives. The new building was finished only in 1991, although the question was raised few times starting in 1863. During 120 years from that a number of competitions were organized and abandoned, before the end of 1980, when Pi de Bruijn was announced as the architect for the new building.

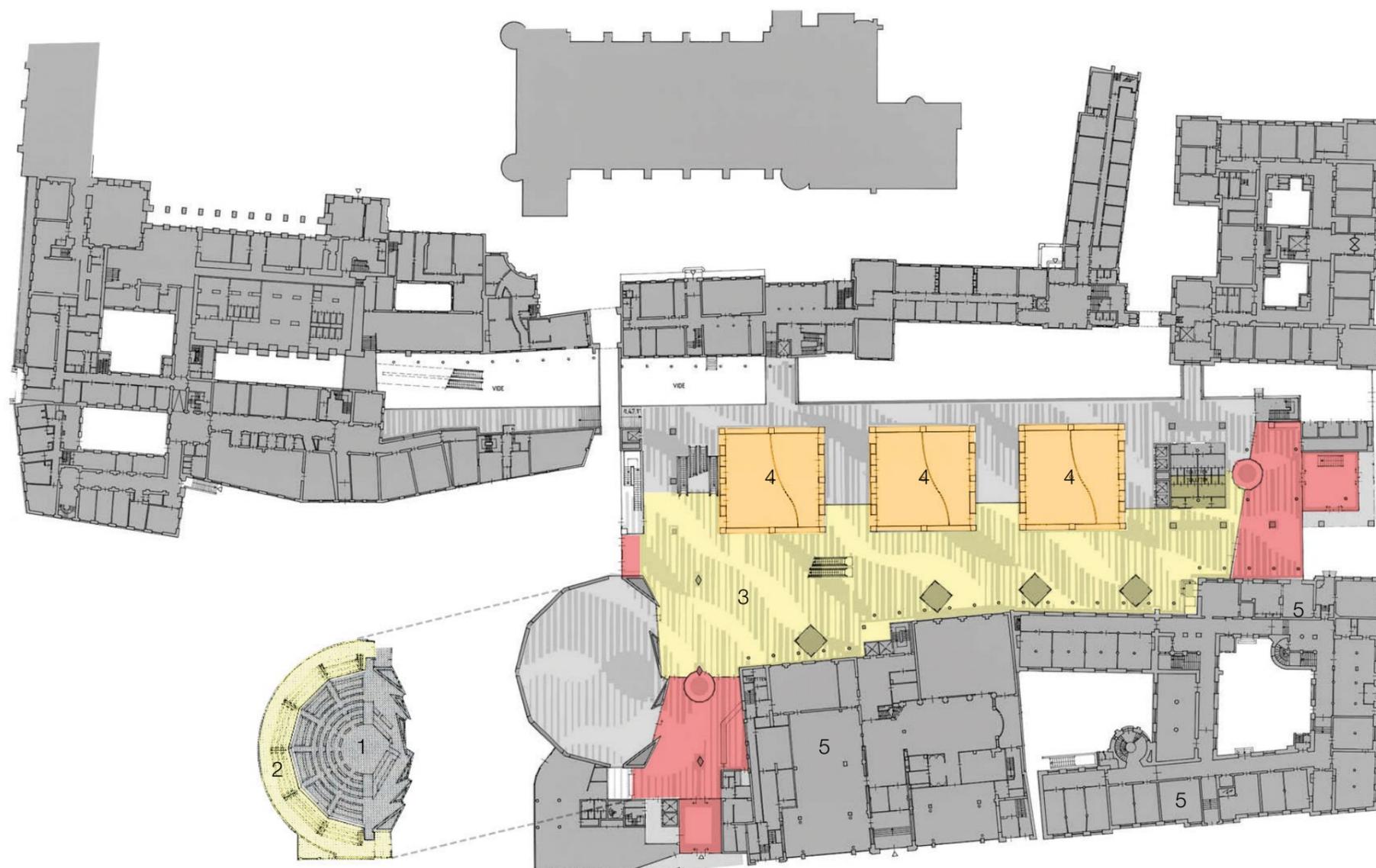


New building of the House of Representatives in The Hague

## Floor plan of Tweede Kamer

- security check
- secure public
- secure semi-public
- secure private

1. Plenary hall
2. Public balcony
3. Passageway
4. Conference and meeting rooms
5. MP offices

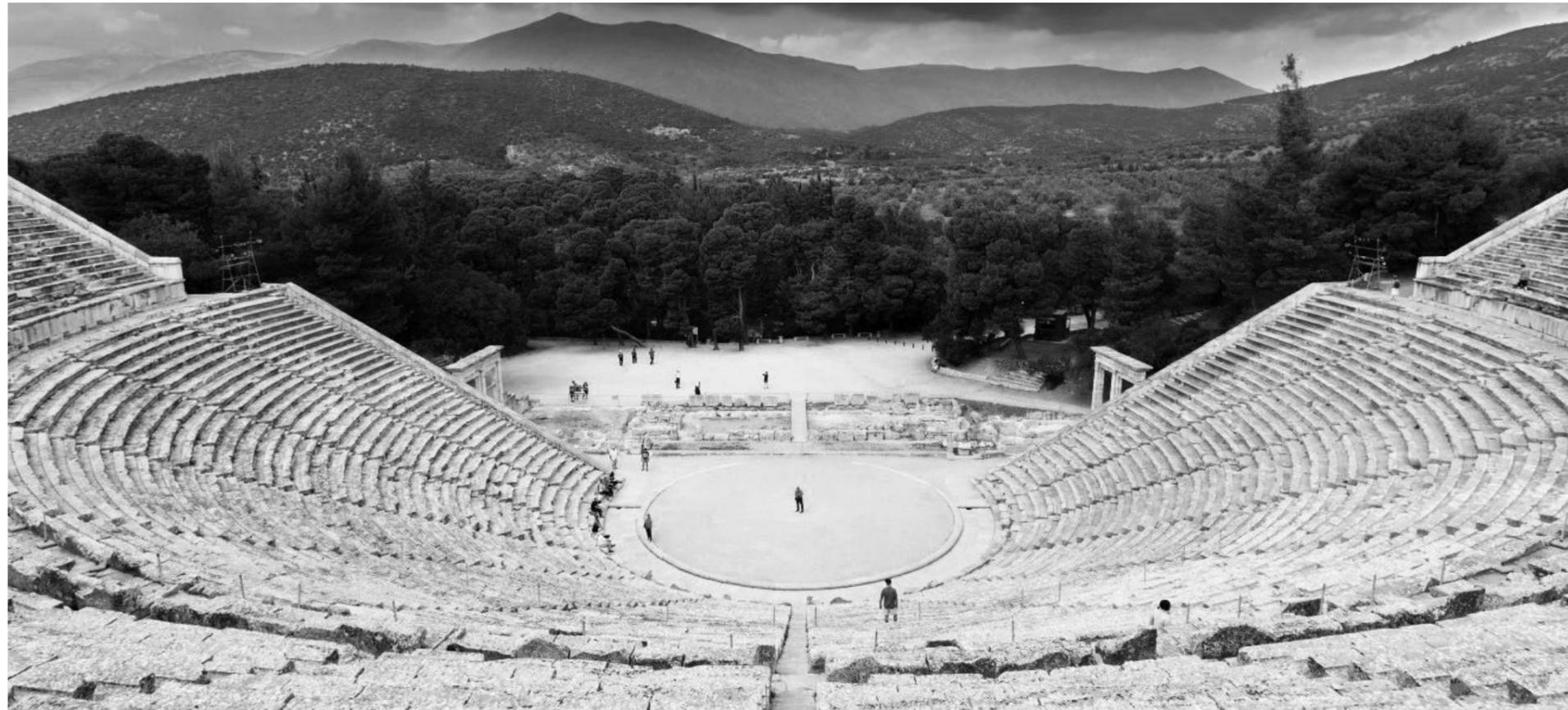


## Passage

One of the major design tasks was to examine how much volume it's possible to add to the existing Binnenhof in order to provide MPs, whose number increased from 55 in 19th Century to 150 in 1970s, with office and meeting spaces. At the same time design should address concept of 'open government', bringing better connection of the building with surrounding environment. The final design of Pi de Bruin definitely satisfied in both perspectives, but the idea of building's openness to the public stayed only visual, as there was a great need for secure spaces against rising terrorism and aggression. The main axe in the design is 24 m high and 100 m long hallway, connecting old and new buildings. It supposed to be a public passageway, accessible for everyone, but because of security reasons, it was closed off and remained open to the surrounding streets only visually with its full high glazing.



Hallway of the House of Representatives



## Plenary hall

Among the hallway, new design consists of 3 blocks of meeting spaces, the plenary hall and 9-storey corner building for various activities.

Plenary hall among them all is interested its shape distinction. During the preliminary design investigations, many different parliament halls from diverse countries were compared, and in the eyes of The House of Representatives Greek-Roman amphitheater model suited the image of Dutch parliamentary democracy and its consultative character the best. In the final design speakers podium is surrounded by semi-circle of MP seats. At the back there are places for the guests, diplomats, officials and staff. Above them there is a gallery with 60 seats for the press and 230 seats for the public.



Hallway of the House of Representatives

## Programme starting points

Looking back at the brief of the 1978 competition and the final design by Pi de Bruin, I defined the questions, that I'd like to address in my project.

1. In the original brief for the competition it was required to have separate offices for each MP, his/her staff and party members, as well as more meeting rooms, both for internal and external (press, public) communication. This was basically the main reason to start with new building design, taking in account MP's number growth and increase of the interest from media and public. Unfortunately, although the maximal possibilities for expansion were introduced in the new design, site restrictions lead to the program shrinking by 16%. In my design I'd like to introduce the building, that would fit the full sized program.

2. Taking in account current site restrictions and there consequence to the design (shrinking program; insecurity of the environment, that doesn't allow the building to open up towards it) I'd like to rise the question of relocating The House of Representatives to the place, where both original program size and open democracy concept can be fully explored.

3. Architectural language, promoting openness of Dutch democratic system. The design of Pi de Bruin already introduced such elements, symbolizing openness of parliamentary democracy, such as the street-like public hall, that was unfortunately, closed from the environment after completion; amphitheater shaped plenary hall serves the idea of open discussion as well. I'd like to explore the theme of democracy openness through architectural language further in my design.

Symbolic image of contemporary parliament building consisting of 3 components:

- outer shell
- debate arena
- security









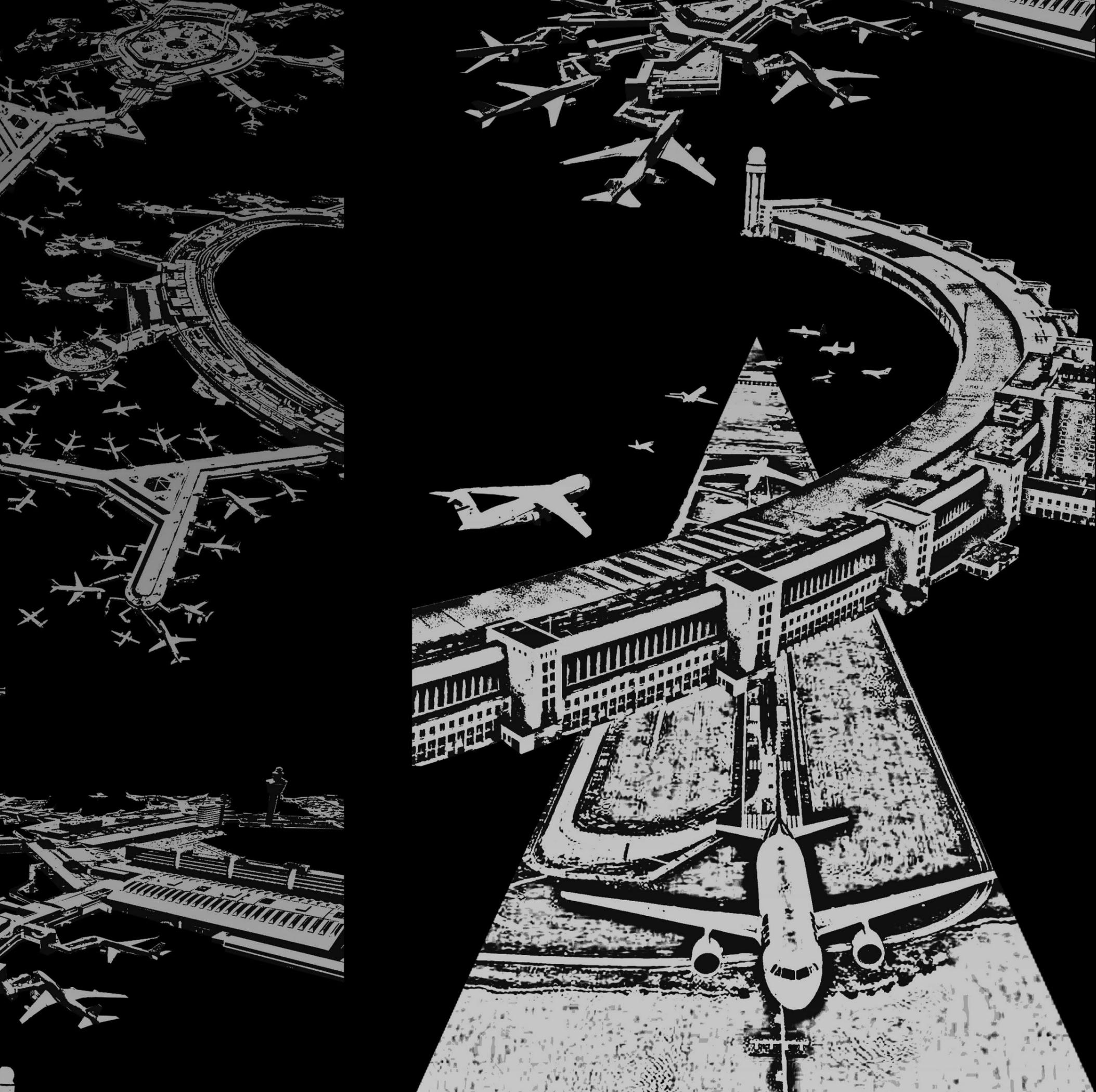
## Airport in globalized world

Globalization is not only the form of the influence of the world to the identity of the countries, but also bigger amount of possibilities to explore the world, available to the bigger part of the people on Earth. Among the internet, that plays the main role in this process, better, faster and affordable transport connections play great role in physical global movement. Aircrafts stand out from different types of transportation, as so far is the fastest way to reach even the most distant parts of the planet.



Airports on the world map





## Types of airports

Since aircraft connections become affordable to more and more people, due to creation of alliances and emergence of low-costers, airport structure has changed. Today we can roughly see 3 types of airports:

- the local ones, with mostly non-transfer of short-transfer flights. Here the fast movement through the terminal plays crucial role;
- continental ones, with intermediate transfer time. There the terminal becomes a tax-free shopping mall
- global or intercontinental ones, where the transfer time takes more than half a day and sometimes few days. Here airport gets more a city-like structure with diverse lounge and business functions. It becomes a meeting point for people from all over the world, rather than just a transfer hub.

Collage of different airports



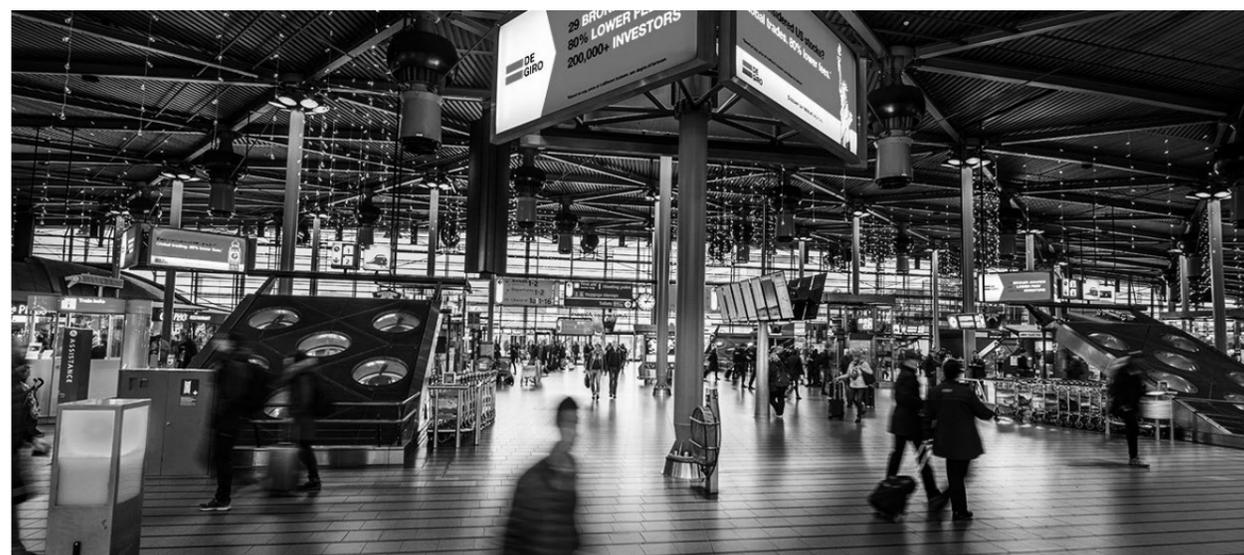
## Schiphol - AirportCity

“The only thing that is permanent at Schiphol is change” Hubert-Jan Henket, supervisor of architecture and urban design of Schiphol 1996-2008

Schiphol structure can be described as city-like. As Hubert-Jan Henket, supervisor of architecture and urban design of Schiphol 1996-2008, remembered in his interview to Jan Willem de Wijn that, shortly after he was appointed to the position, Schiphol had changed its market positioning and development strategy as AirportCity, as a result of the competition between larger European Airports for transfer travelers.

As a result of the orientation towards international and intercontinental travelers and emergence of transfer times of the whole day or even few, through the years the airport grew up into the large complex on both land and air side, including such city functions, as shopping, museum, library, casino, offices of international companies and conference center, hotel, and even a golf course. In 2008 further development principles were formulated that were focusing on anchoring in the society. These principles included “making a connection with travelers from different classes and cultures, retaining distinguishing features such as simple & spectacular and global & local, the airport and travelers being collectively pro-active”. These principles say about democratic direction of the development and play as an extra point towards choosing Schiphol as the location for new parliament building.

322 DIRECT WORLDWIDE  
DESTINATIONS



63,5 MILLION PASSENGERS  
A YEAR



AMONG THE SOCIAL ORIENTATION OF THE SCHIPHOL DEVELOPMENT, ONE OF THE MAJOR CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING THE AIRPORT AS THE LOCATION FOR NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING IS THE HIGH LEVEL OF SECURITY IN THE BUILDING.

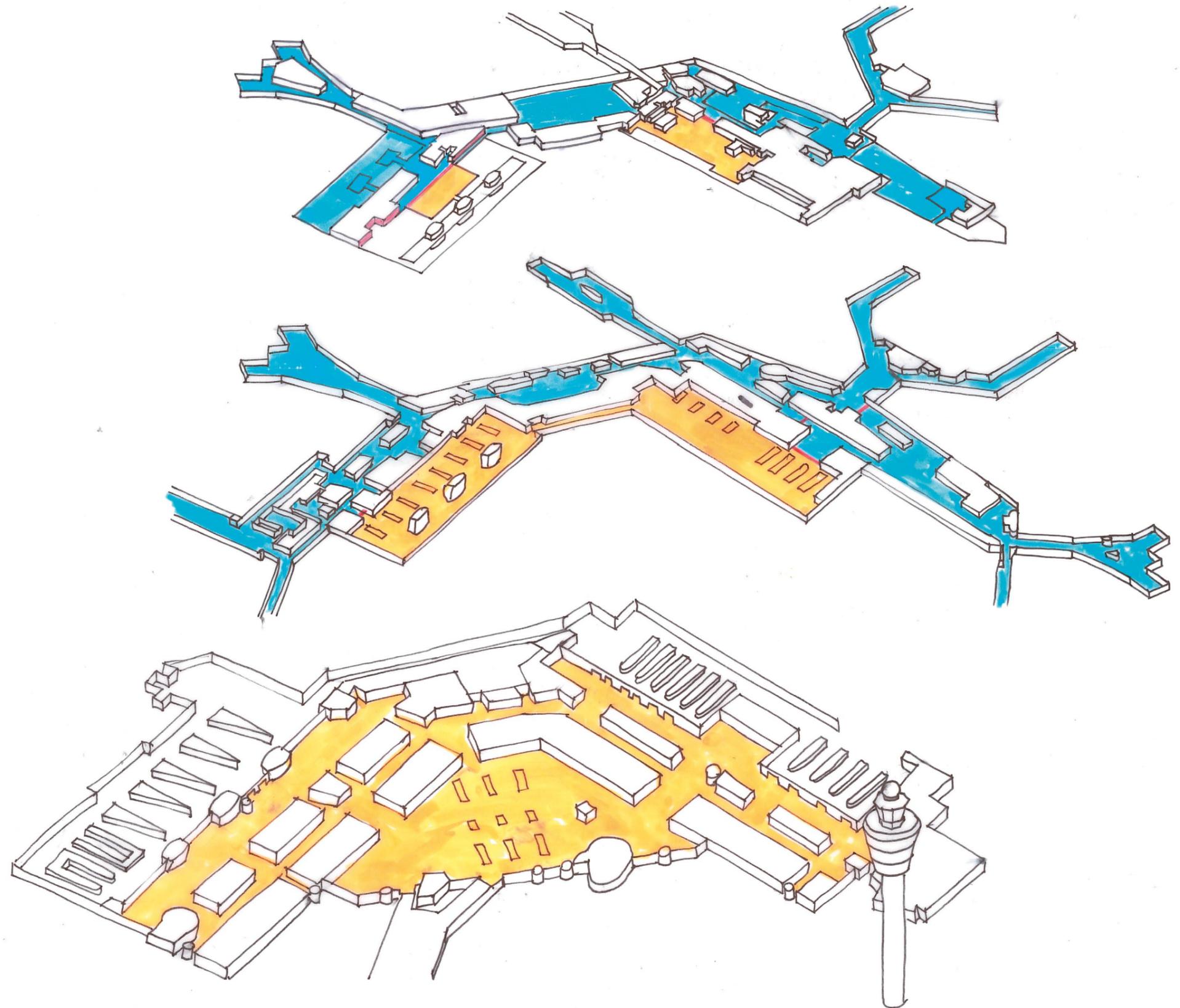


BEFORE GETTING TO THE PLAIN, EVERY PERSON HAS TO GO THROUGH THOROUGH SECURITY CHECK, WHICH IS EVEN MORE STRICT THAN THE ONE, PEOPLE GO THROUGH, WHEN ENTERING PARLIAMENT BUILDING.



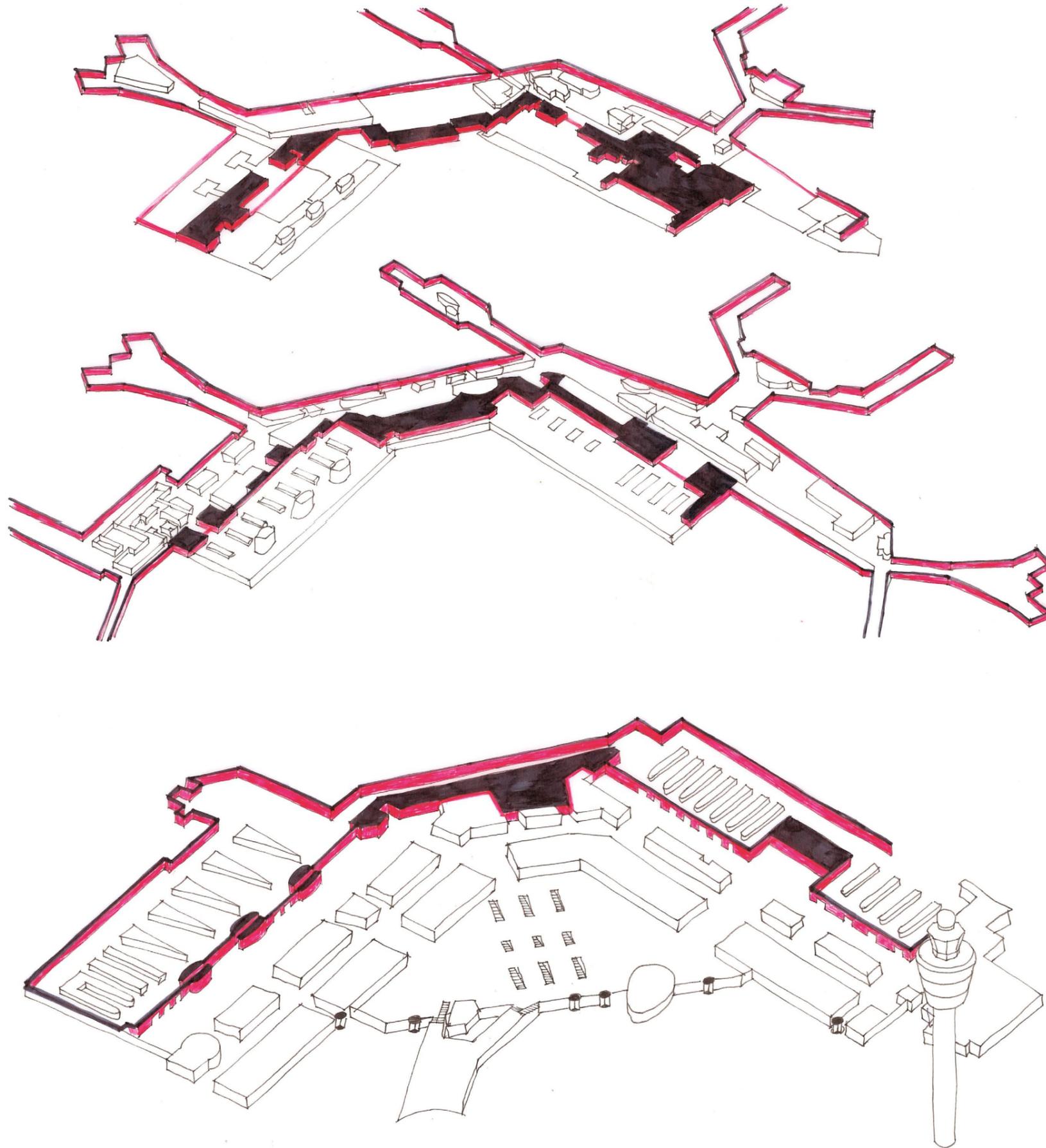
## Land and air sides

Two main public zones of the airport are land and air sides. Land side (yellow) is accessible to any citizen or visitor of The Netherlands. Air side (blue) is accessible only to those, who has an airplane ticket, or landed in Schiphol, or working there, in any case these are the people, who passed through thorough security check. In that perspective air zone becomes a potential direction for new parliament building to open towards. At the same there should be an access from the land side organized for workers and visitors of the parliament.



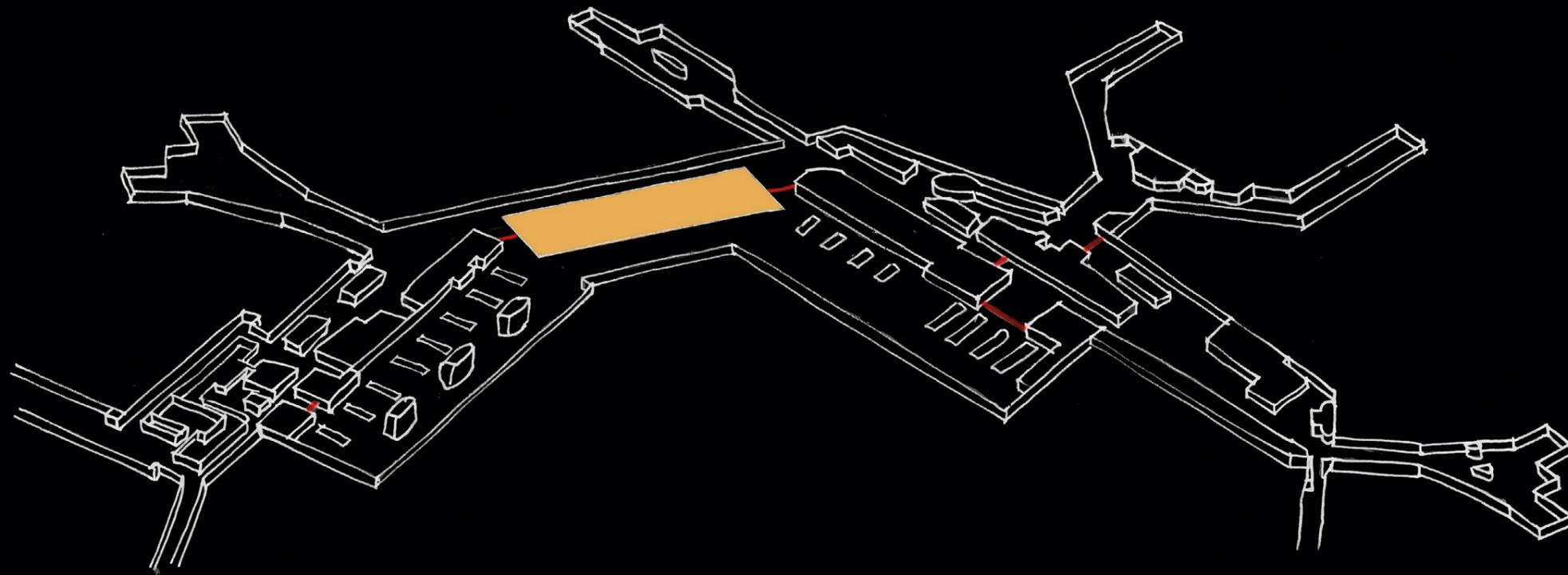
## Border

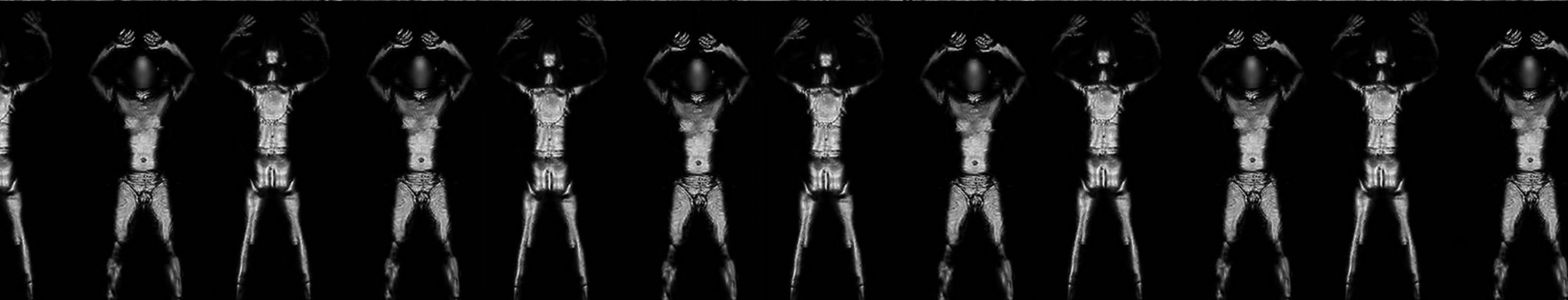
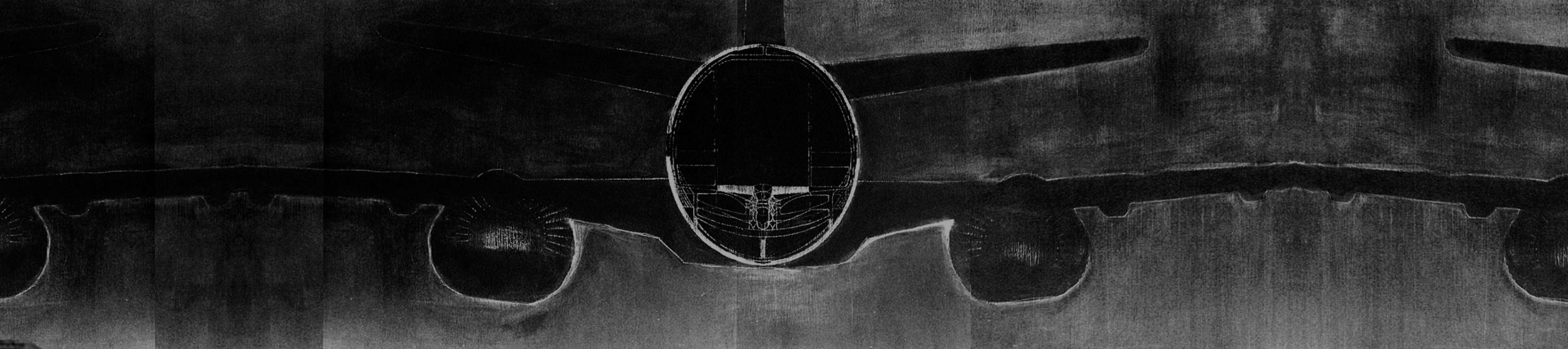
To be able to open up new parliament building towards air side and to have an access from the land side, it should be located in between these zones. The space between them at the moment is taken by different technical and administrative spaces. Customs and security check corridors cross through technical space border.



## Location of the new parliament building at Schiphol

The location for the new parliament building is located on the border between land and air side, between piers E and F.









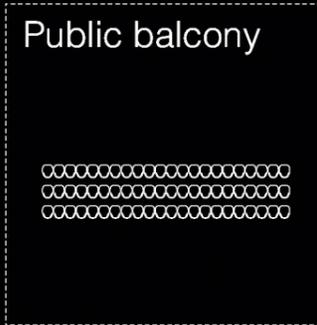
## Building programme

Conditionally all the spaces in the parliament can be divided in 3 groups:

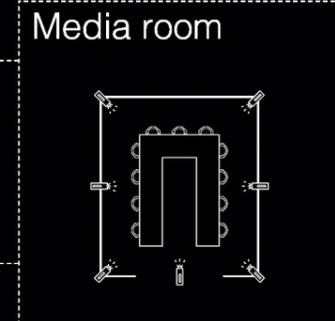
1. Accessible from the land side: includes “non-secure” public balcony, that allows to see the work of the parliament through huge window without going through security check. Works as promotion of Dutch democracy for broader public.
2. The body of the building - “the border” - that includes semi-public secure and private secure spaces. Semi-public secure spaces are located on the ground level and consist from meeting and conference rooms that are accessible for parliamentary and committee members, but also citizens only on appointment. Private secure spaces include MP offices and meeting rooms, Senate spaces, the parliamentary library and the archive. These spaces are accessible for parliamentary members and official visitors on appointment.
3. Secure “public” spaces - accessible from the air side (the word public in quotes means that not all the people can be present on the air side, but only the ones who passed customs or arrived to Schiphol by plane). Those spaces include open meeting steps, where people can meet together or with the parliamentary member to have a discussion in an informal, open way; public passageway that gives an access to public library and public raws of plenary hall. Although public and private / semi-public routes don't intersect, public passageway allows maximal interaction between public and parliamentary members both visual and physical.

LAND ZONE

"NON SECURE"  
PUBLIC

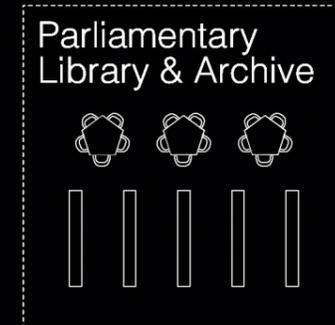
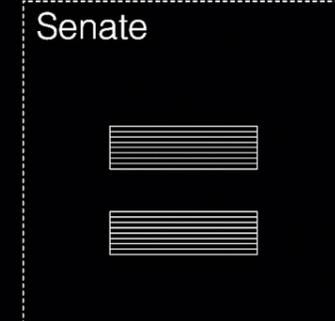


SECURE  
PRIVATE



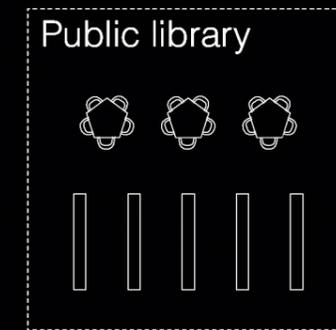
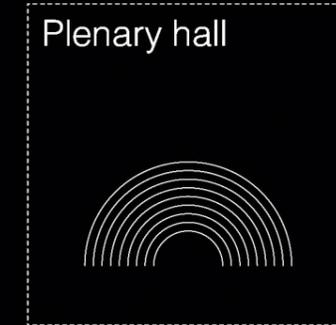
BORDER

SECURE  
SEMI-PUBLIC



AIR ZONE

SECURE  
"PUBLIC"



## Wall as a political separator

Wall as a structure may have different functions and meanings. It creates a shelter, defines space, protects from the environment. In politics it's mostly used to create borders between the environment and political space or to separate different groups of people from each other. In any case, it's used as an instrument, to divide people based .



Berlin wall historic picture: young woman from Western Berlin is speaking to her mother on the Eastern side.



## Wall as space definer

But architecturally wall plays an important role in space definition. Rather than just separating spaces it's goal is to define and shape spaces, creating certain atmosphere. I'd like to look at the building as the wall, that creates space for political discussion, rather than just hides political processes, making them accessible only to privileged people.

Inside Out  
Richard Serra - 2013

Schiphol border evolution



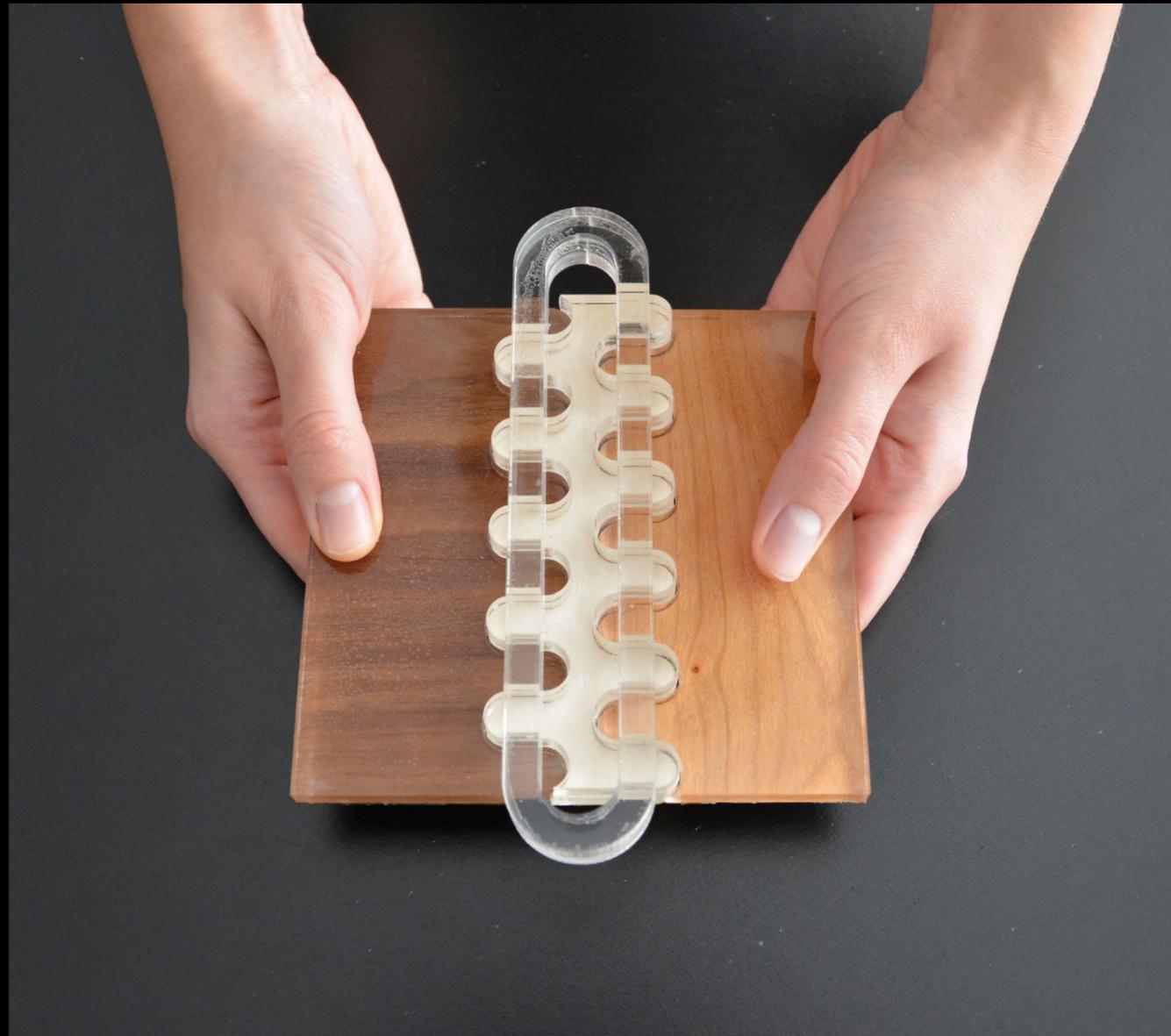
STRICT BORDER BETWEEN LAND AND AIR ZONES



BORDER, CRE



ATING SPACE



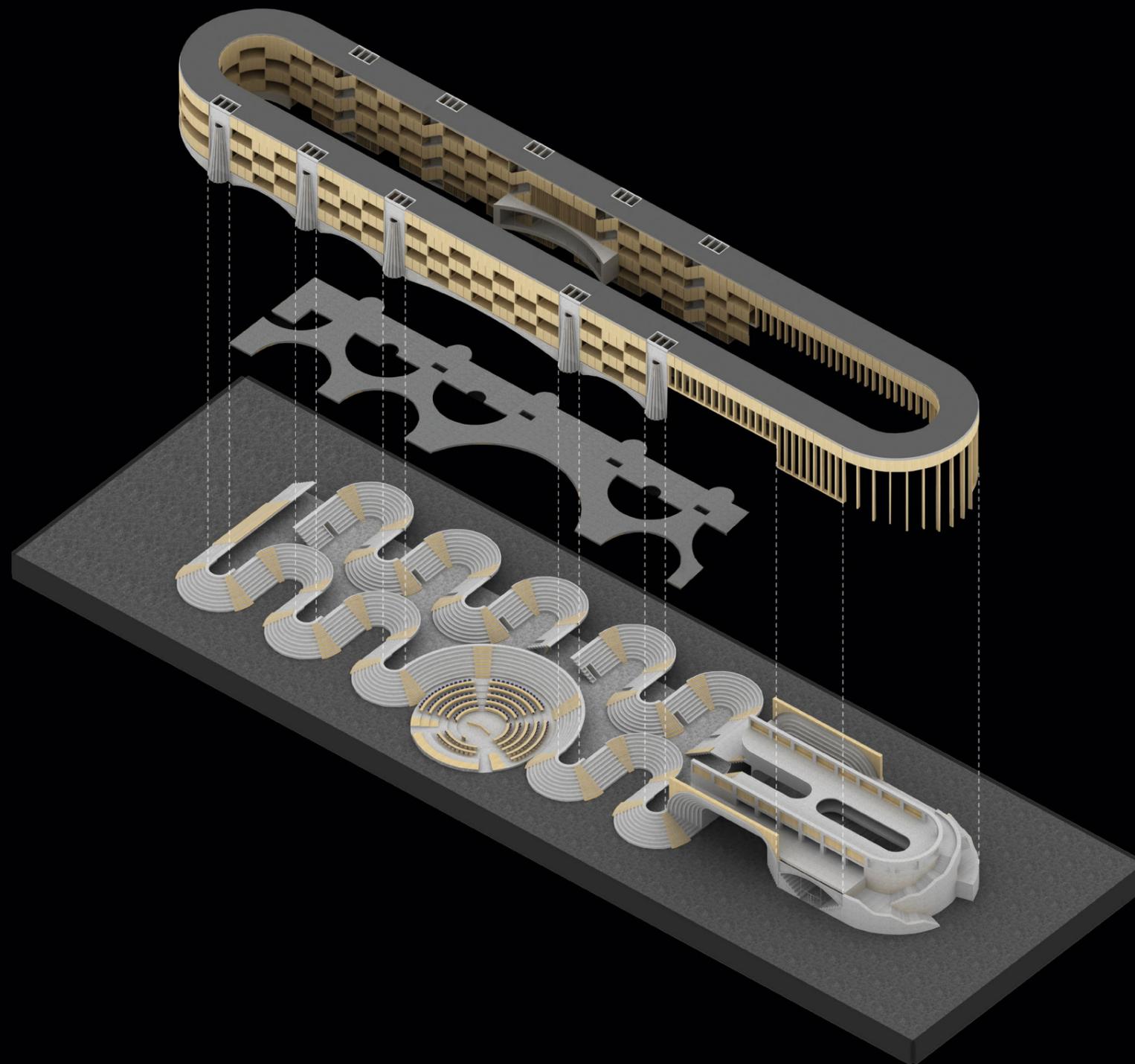
PARLIAMENT BUILDING ON THE BORDER BETWEEN  
LAND AND AIR SIDES

## Spacial concept

The base serves as the border, but at the same time creates spaces allowing people from the air side to access public zones of the building and to see some parliament activities from the land side.

In the body of the base semi-public meeting spaces are located.

Above the base deputy office boxes are stacked in 2 rows, shaping the public passage. On the air side office blocks are held by supporting arches that open up parliament space. In between office blocks, connection towers are located.











Twe

ede Kamer DER STATEN-GENERAAL

Vertrek  
Departures



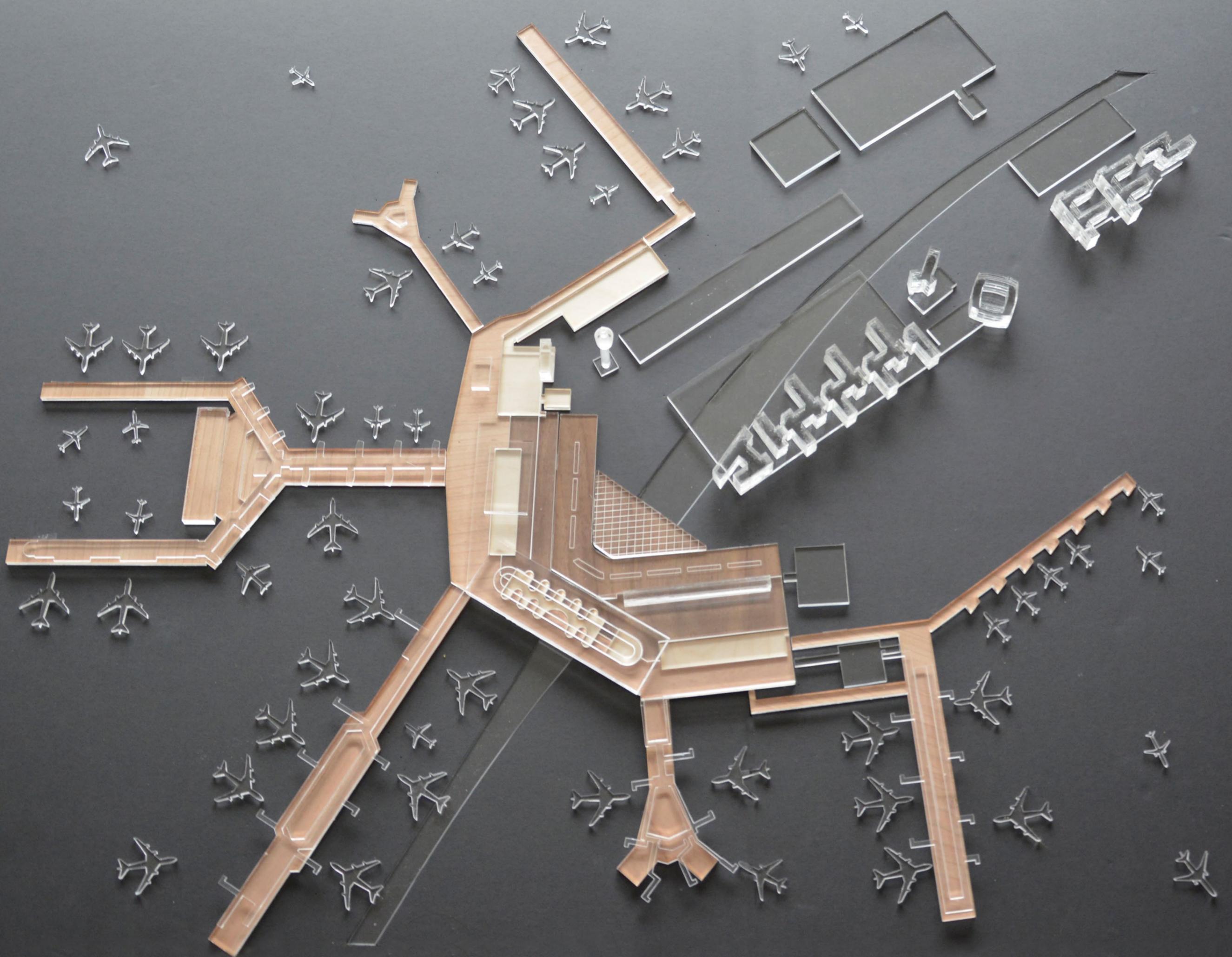
## Parliament in Schiphol

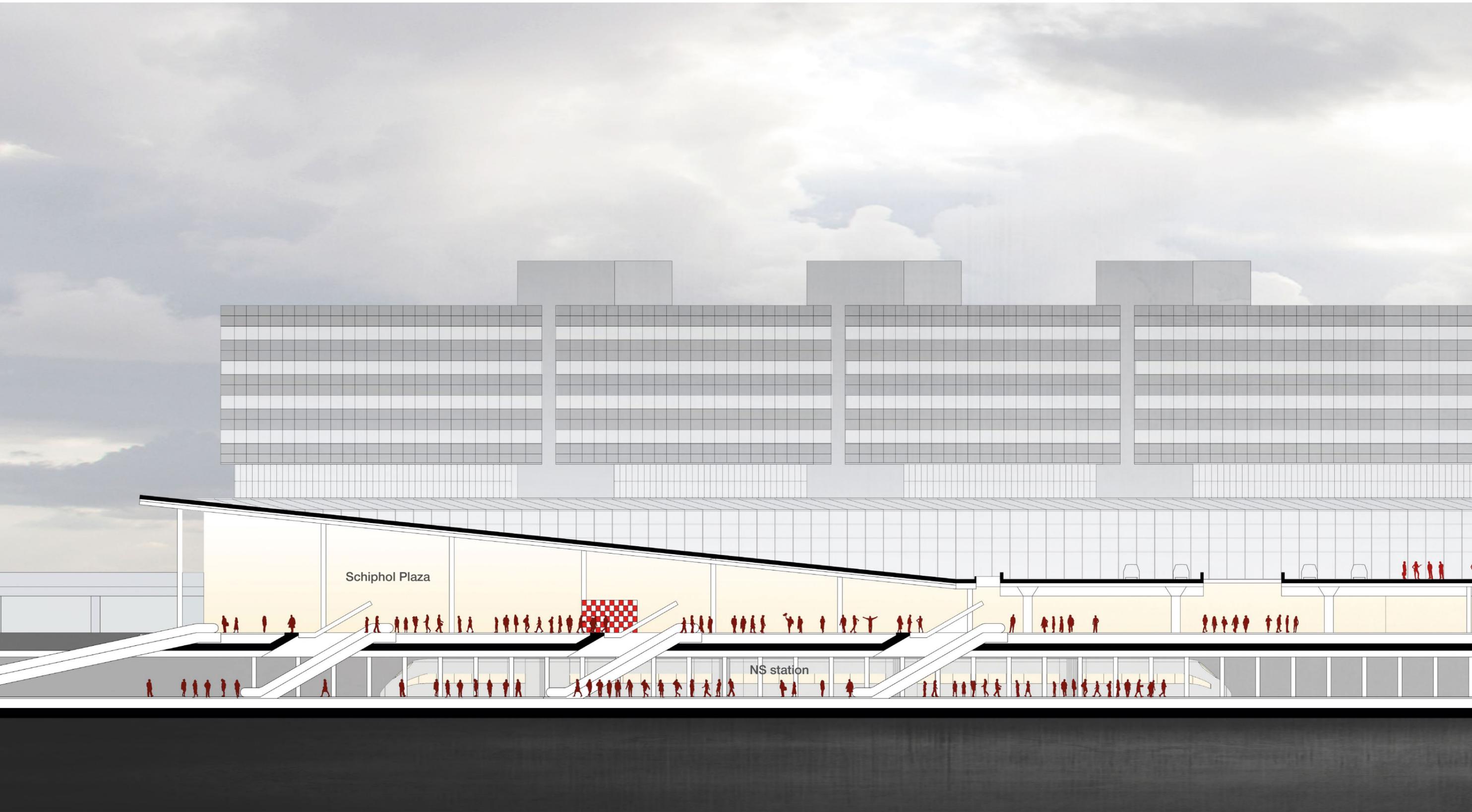
New parliament building, located on the border between land and air side, links local and global worlds. Well connected to both Netherlands by railways and the rest of the world by plain, this location creates a great opportunity for interactions and promotion of Dutch democratic system. New parliament building becomes an icon, demonstrating openness of the local democratic processes to every citizen or visitor of the country.





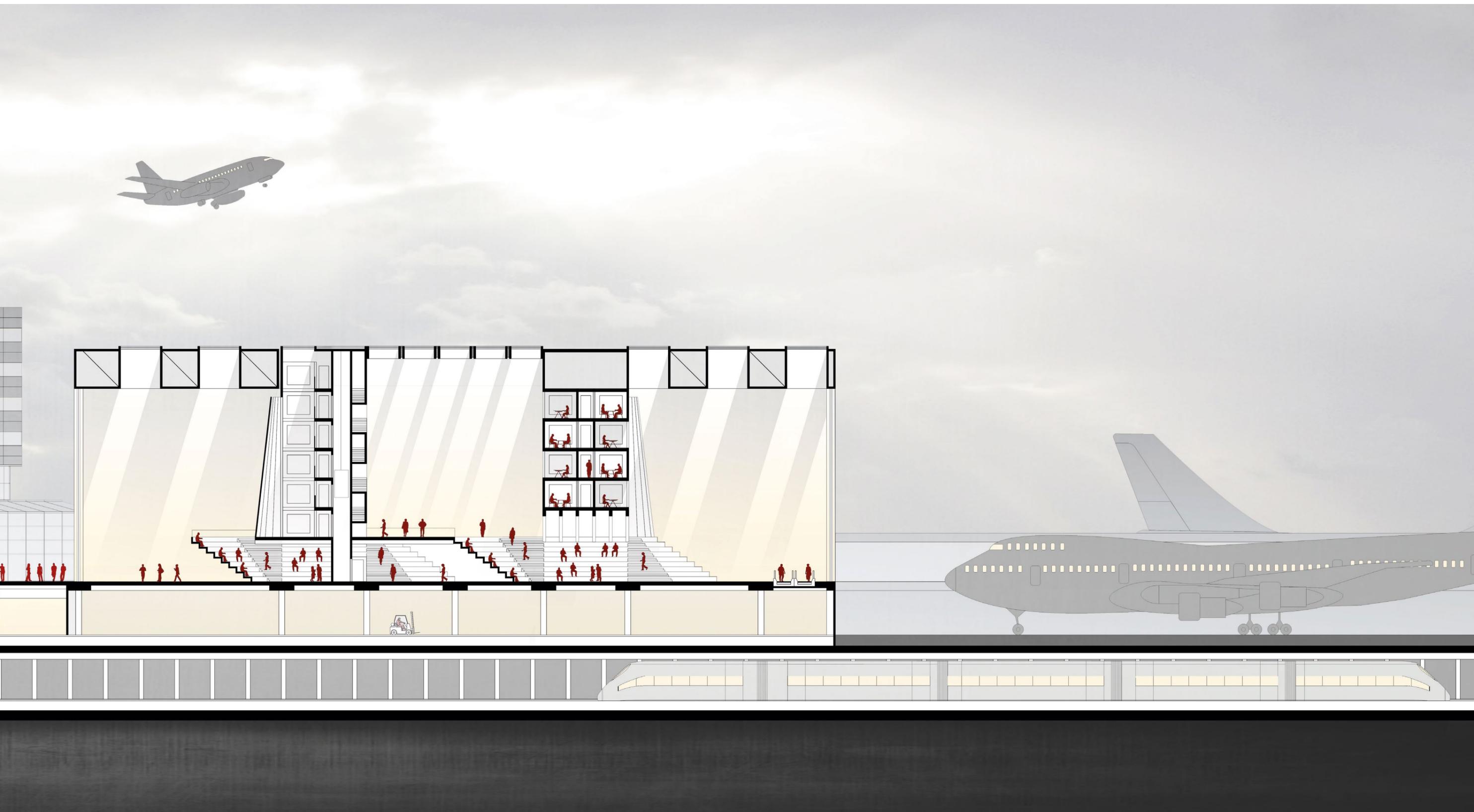






Schiphol Plaza

NS station





# Schiphol Airport



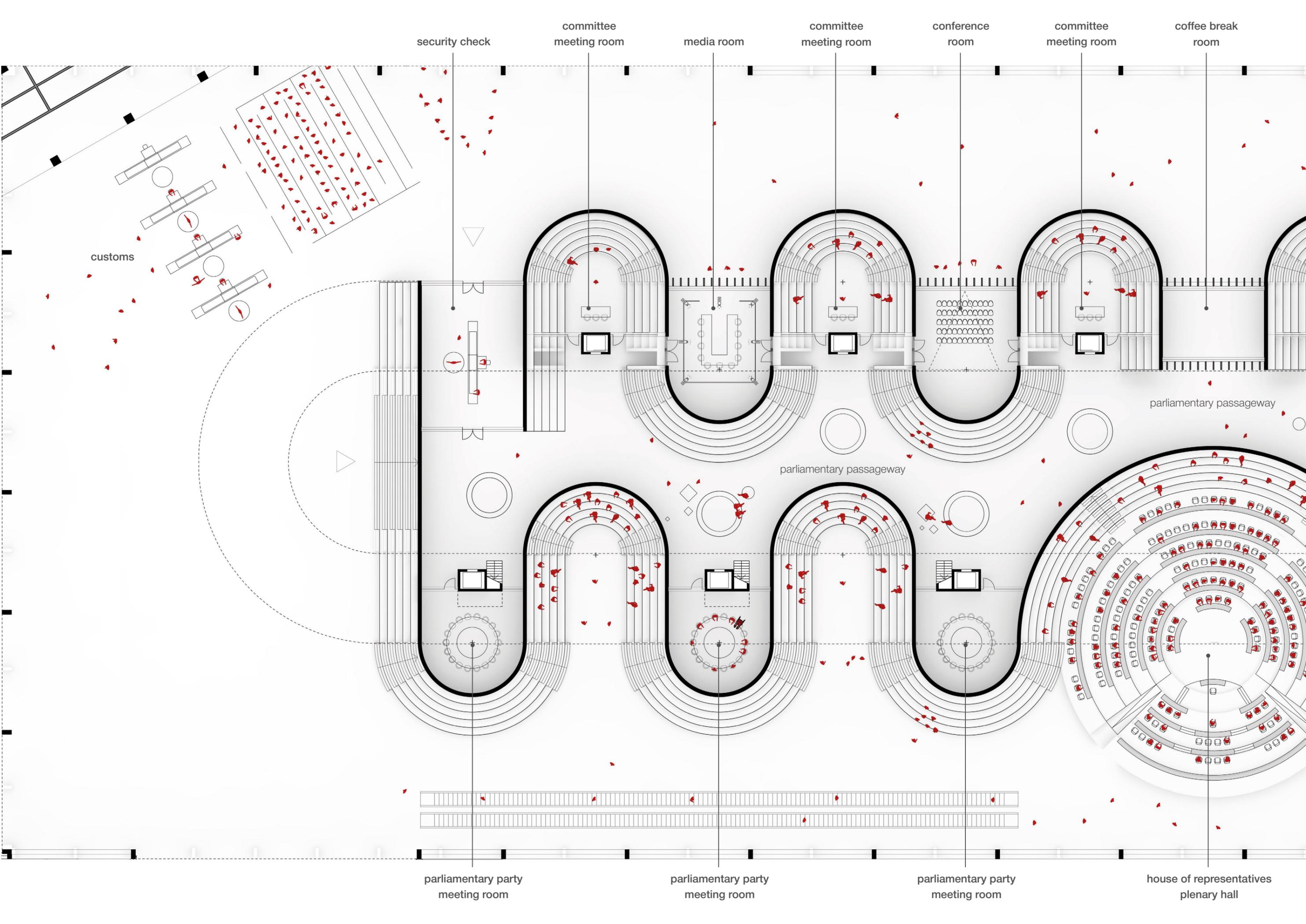






## Air side

Public zone of the parliament opens up towards air side lounge boulevard, creating spaces for people to meet each other and parliamentary members for open discussions. It also gives an access to the parliament passageway, where broader public can learn about Dutch democracy. As transfer passengers, especially intercontinental ones, have to spend long hours and sometimes even a couple of days on the air side of the airport, they will get a chance to learn about Dutch democratic system.



security check

committee meeting room

media room

committee meeting room

conference room

committee meeting room

coffee break room

customs

parliamentary passageway

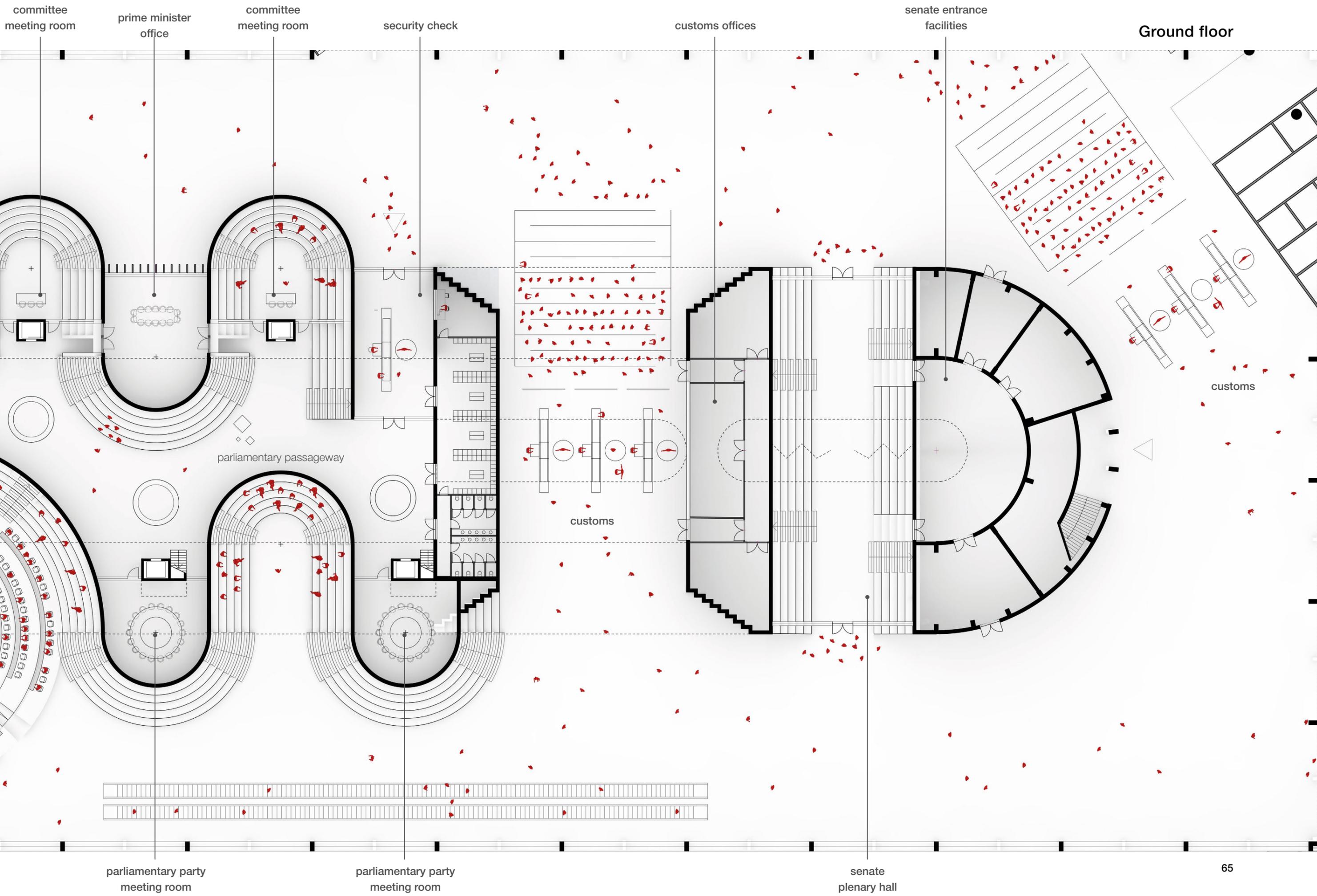
parliamentary passageway

parliamentary party meeting room

parliamentary party meeting room

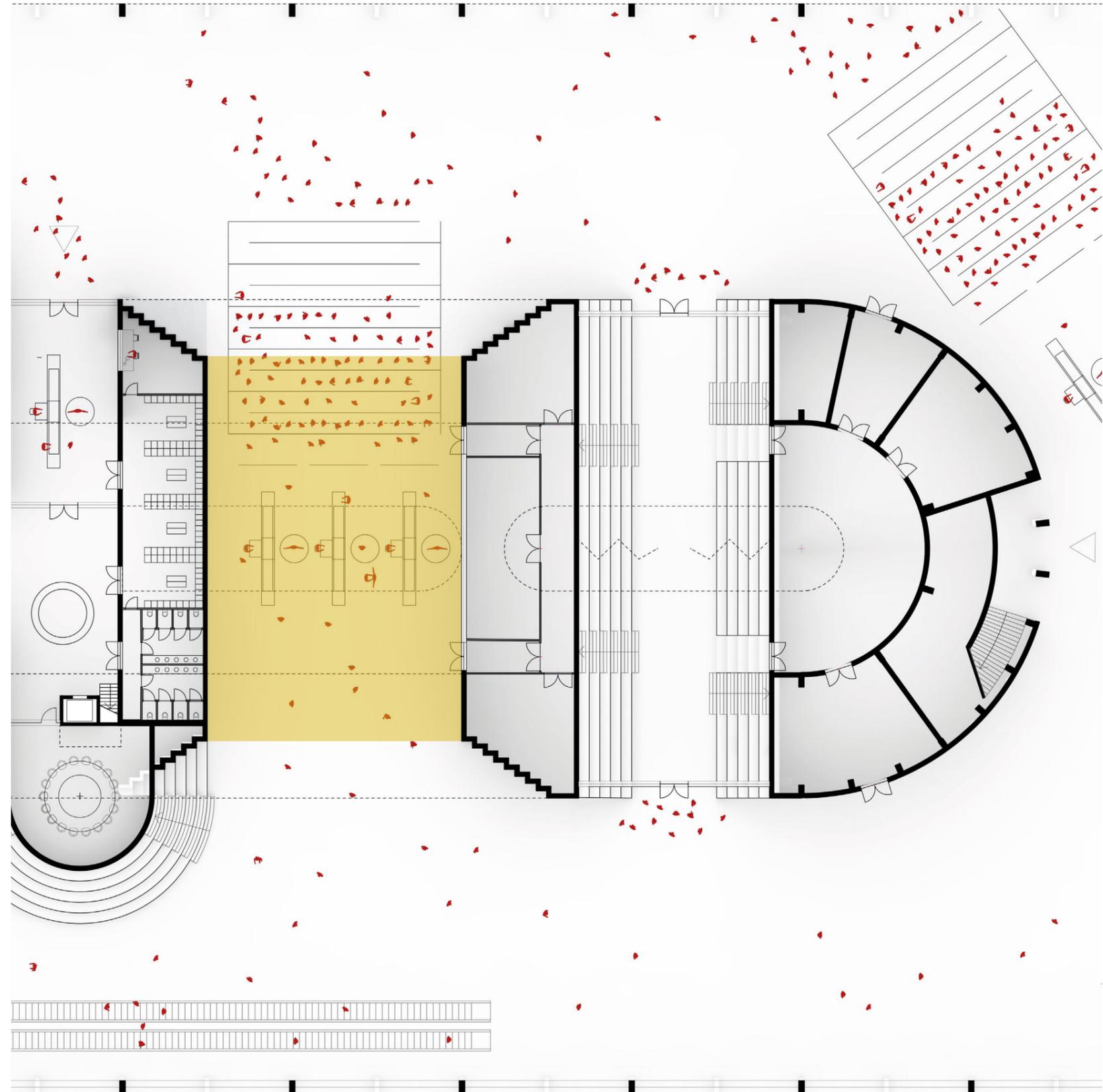
parliamentary party meeting room

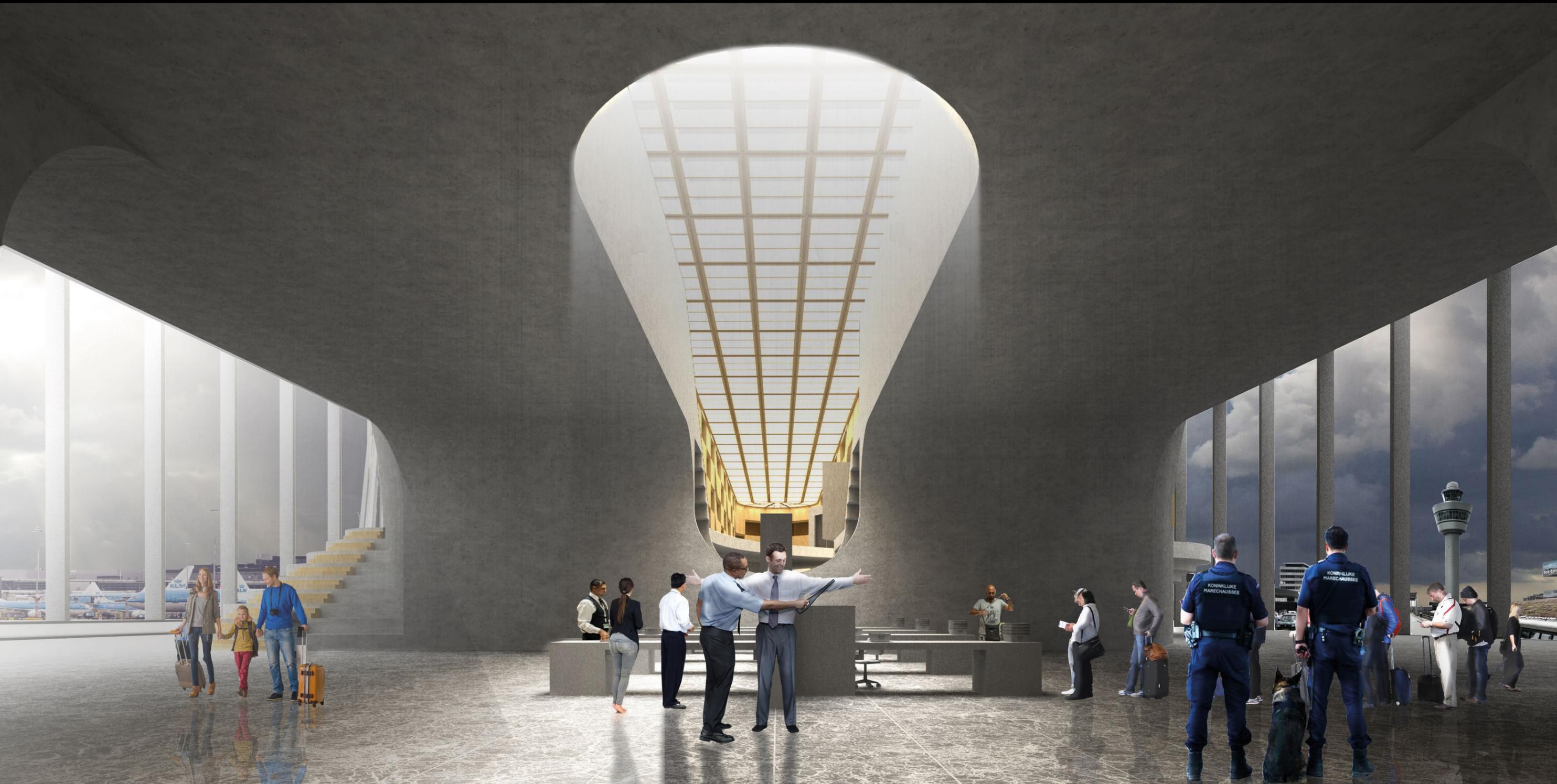
house of representatives plenary hall



## Security check zone

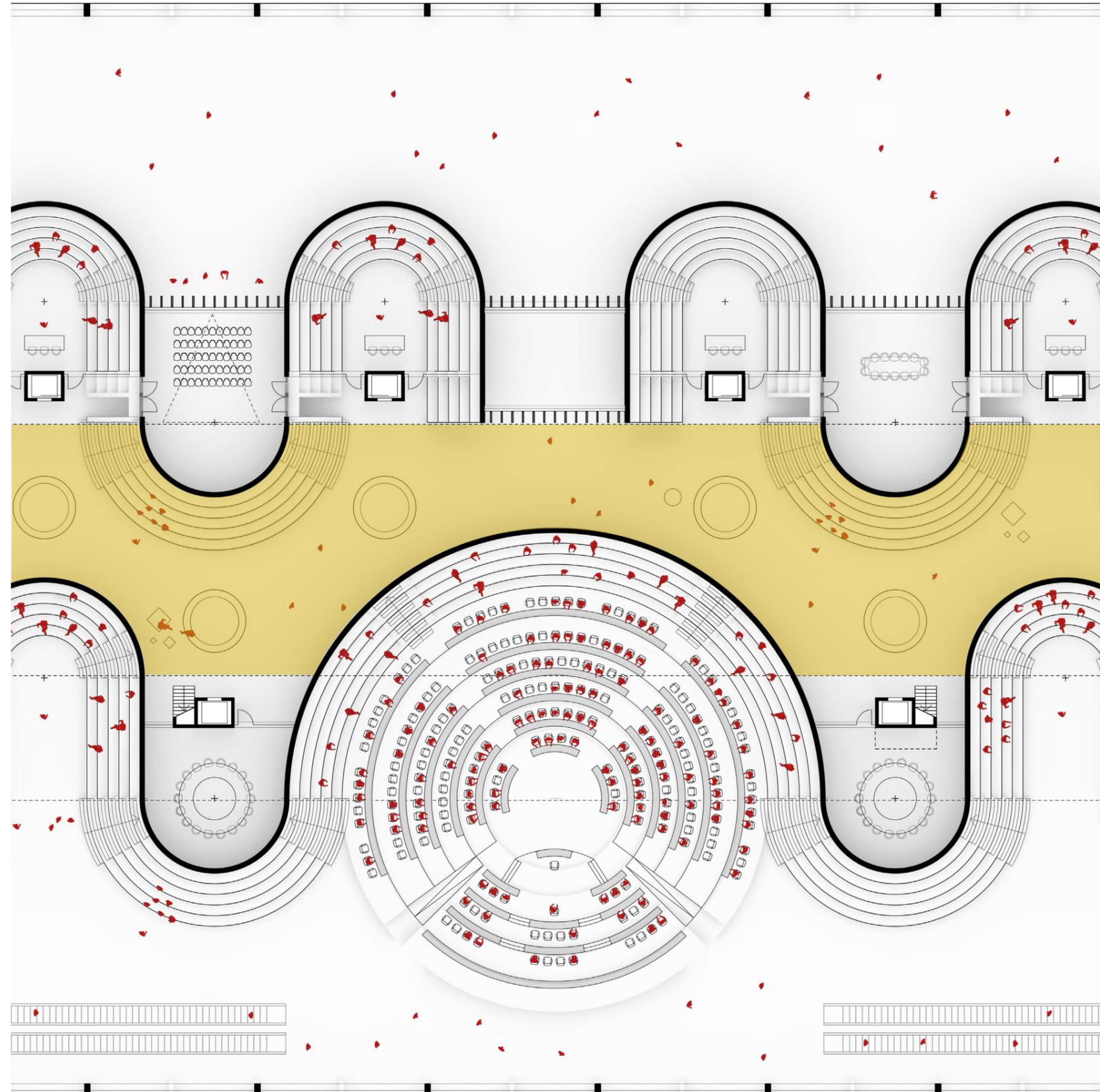
Security check zone of the customs breaks up the ground floor of the parliament volume and becomes a transition zone from land to air side. It's located under library and archive spaces of the parliament and has a visual connection with those spaces through the void above.





## Parliamentary passageway

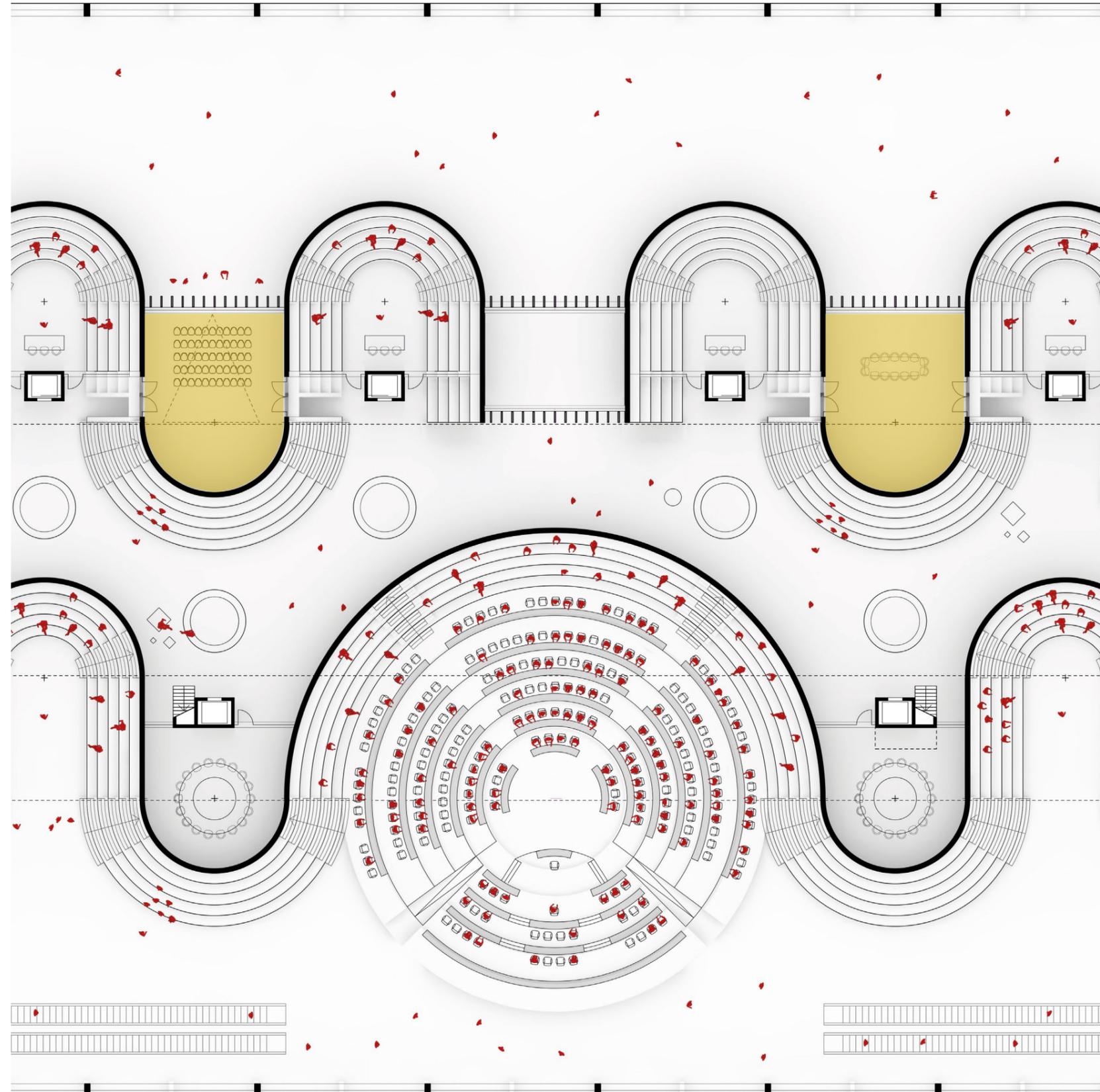
Ground floor within the architectural volume is a semi-public zone with the limited access. All these spaces are connected by wave shaped passageway that gives a room for waiting and interaction zones. Passageway is connected to private MP offices by connection cores with staircases and elevators.





## Land side - view towards the conference room

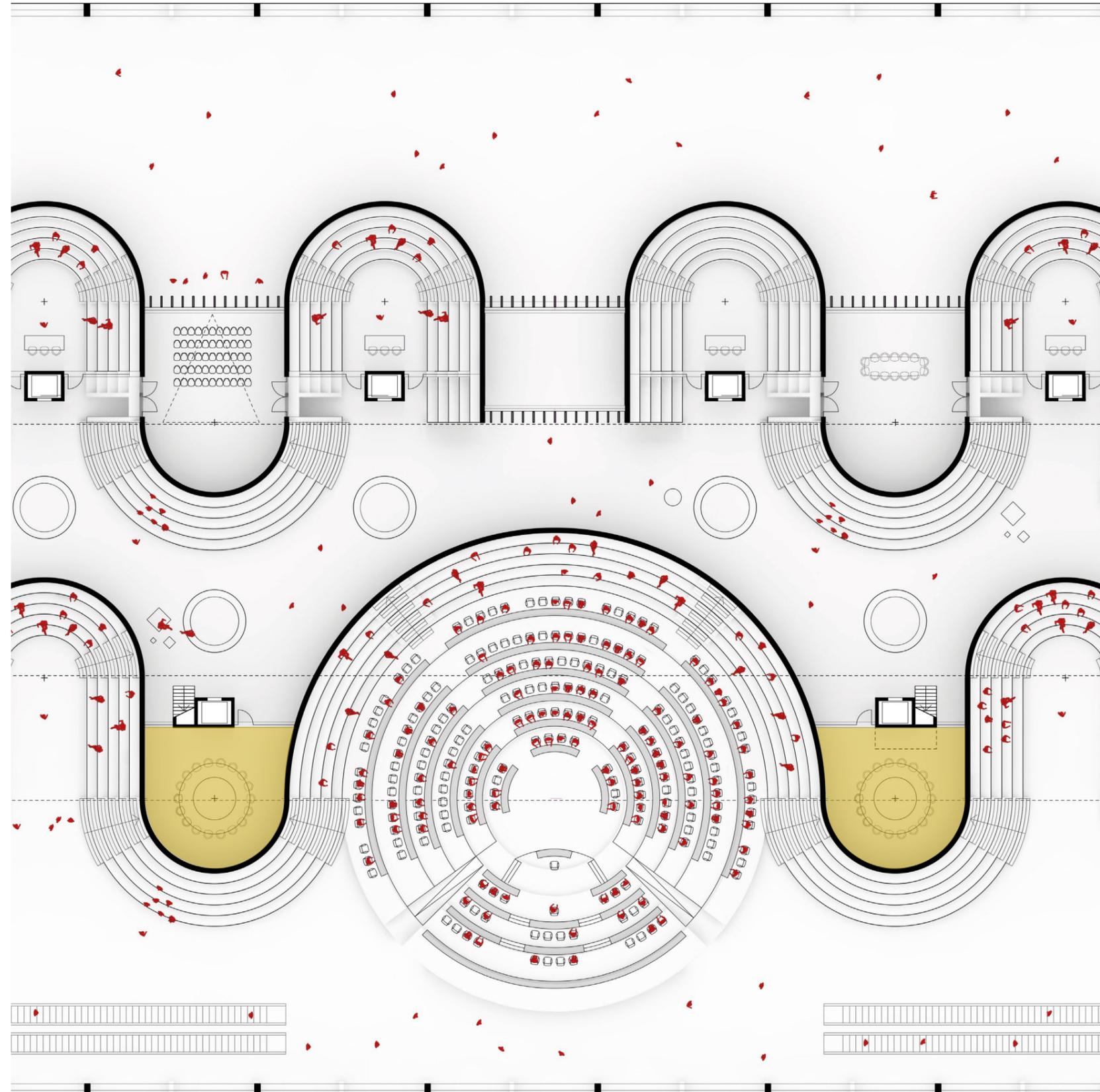
These meeting and conference rooms are located with an access for parliamentary members and visitors on appointment. They open up towards the land side, where airport visitors can see, what's happening inside, through the glass wall.





## Parliamentary party meeting room

Parliamentary party meeting spaces are places in the way, that they have natural light coming from above through the glass cones on the air side facade. Rooms open up towards the ground floor semi-public passage allowing more interaction.



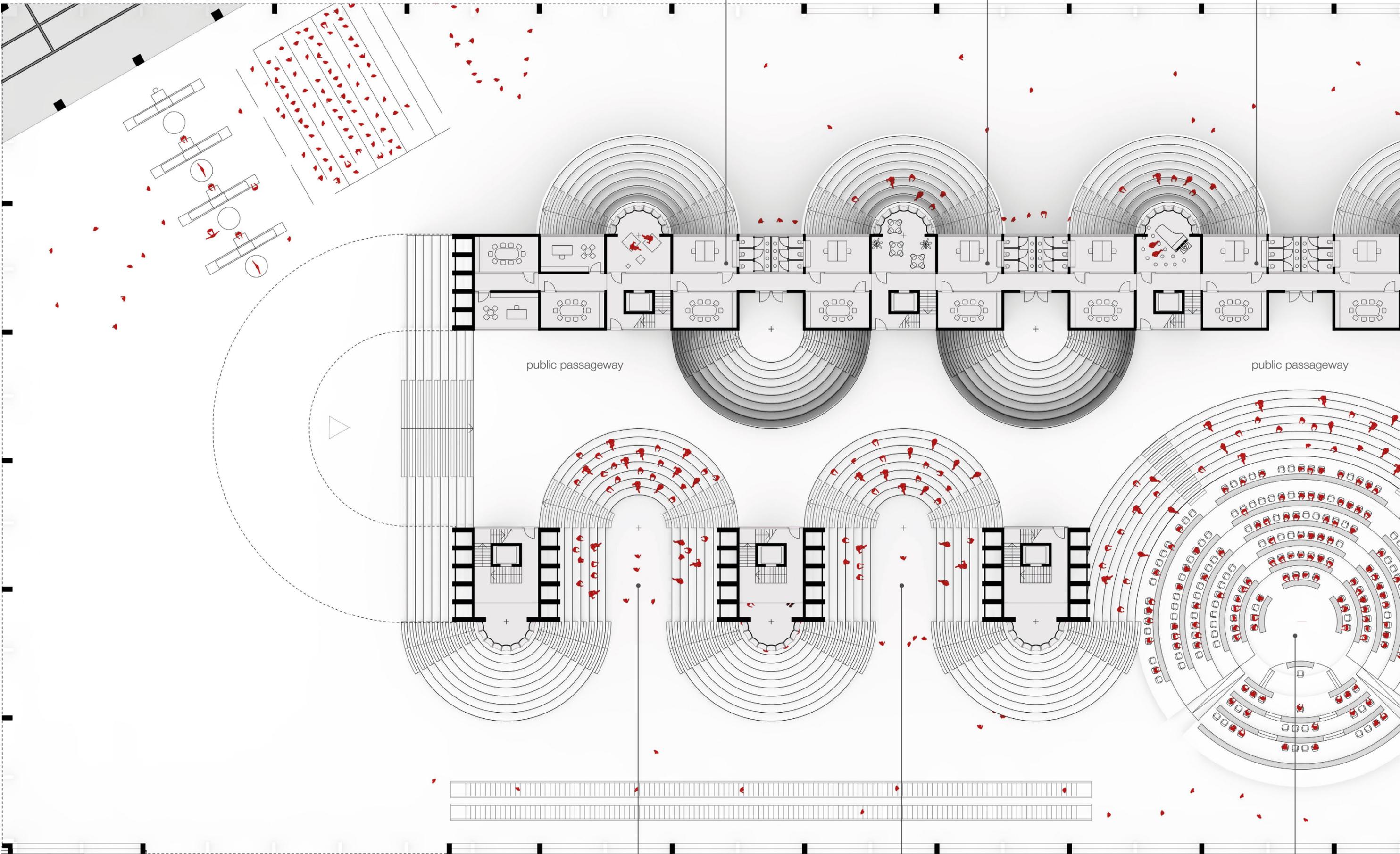
Parliamentary party meeting room



MP office spaces

MP office spaces

MP office spaces



public passageway

public passageway

open public meeting room

open public meeting room

house of representatives plenary hall

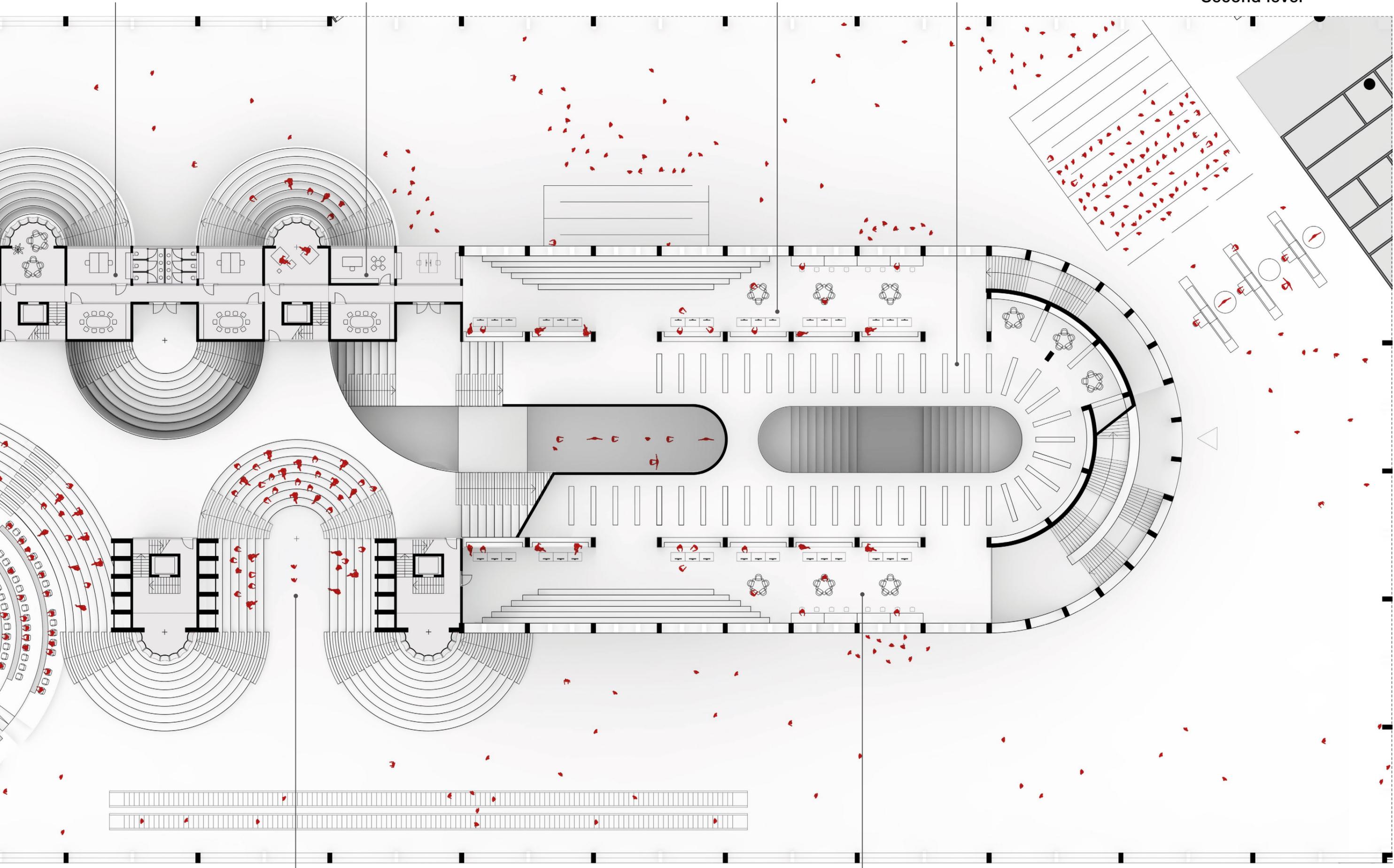
MP office spaces

MP office spaces

parliamentary  
library

archive

Second level

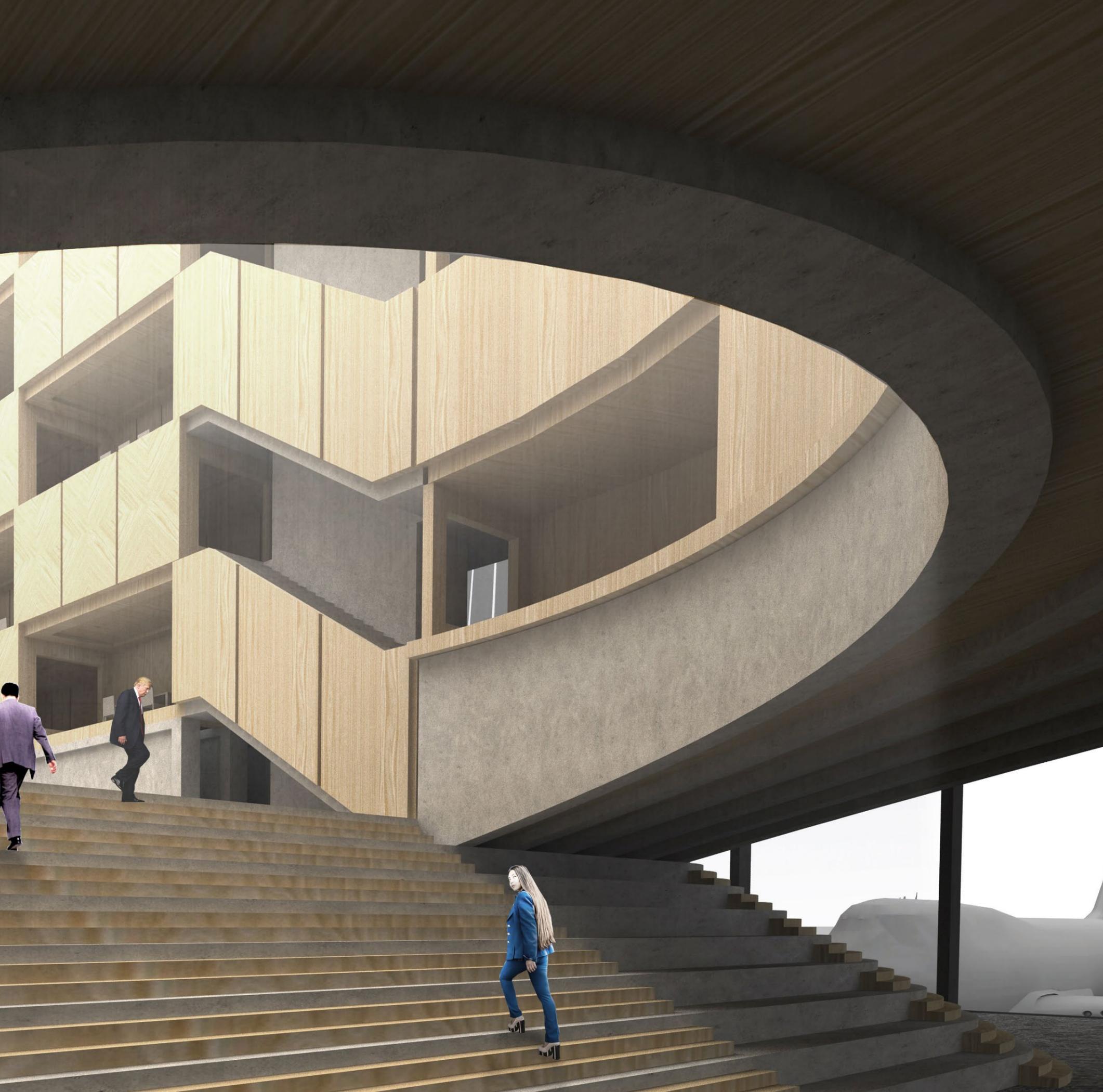


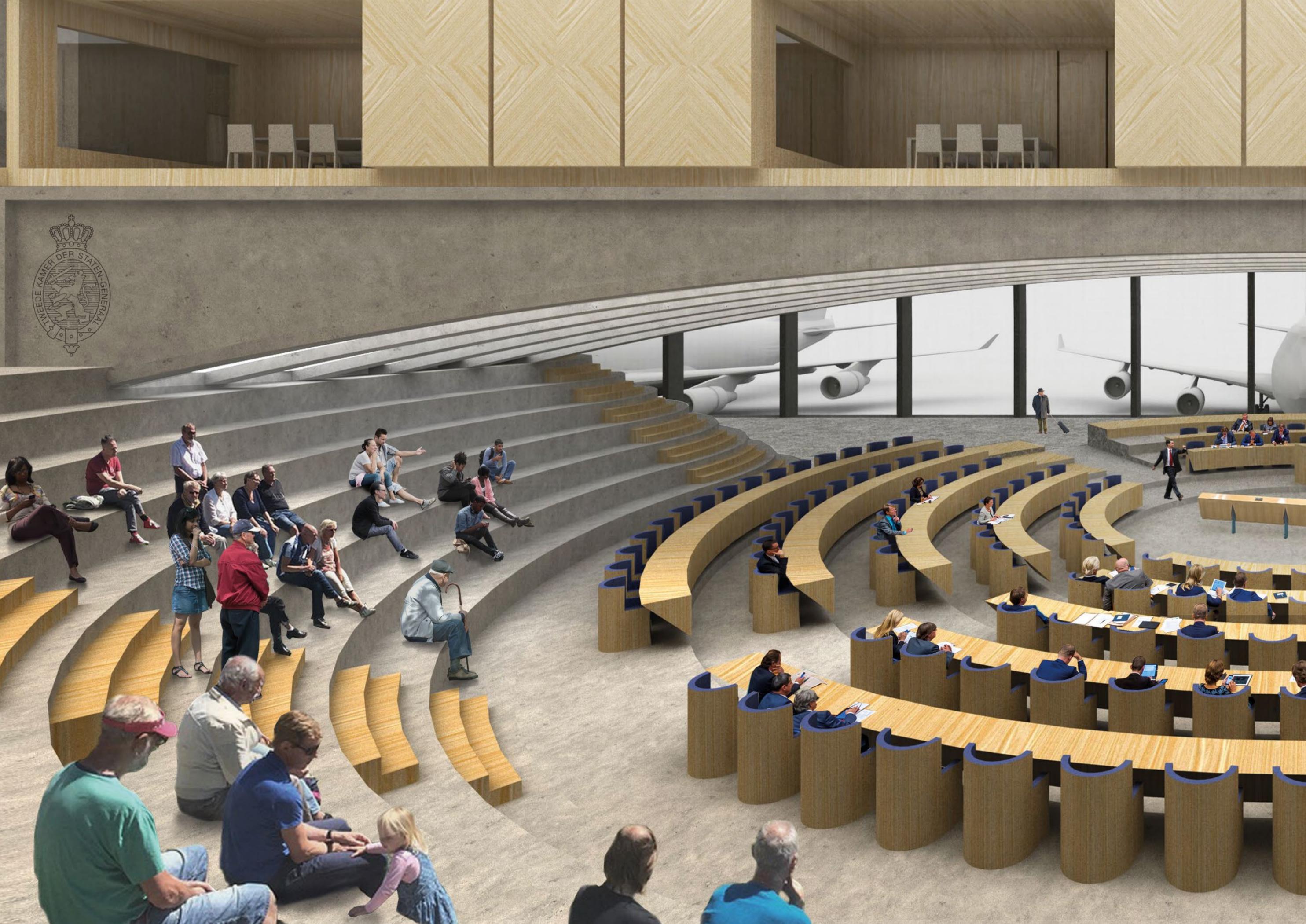
open public  
meeting room

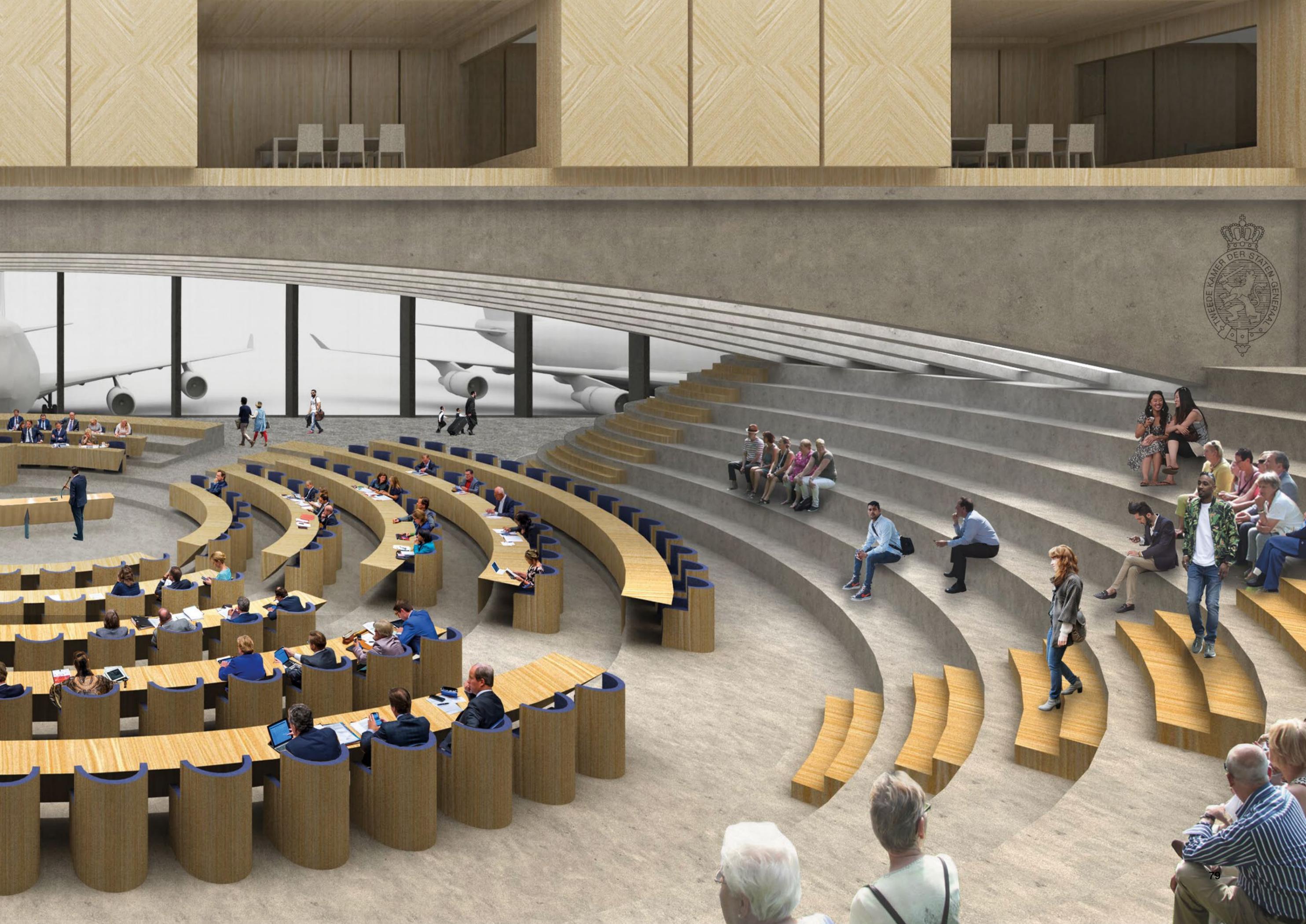
parliamentary  
library



Entrance to the public passageway

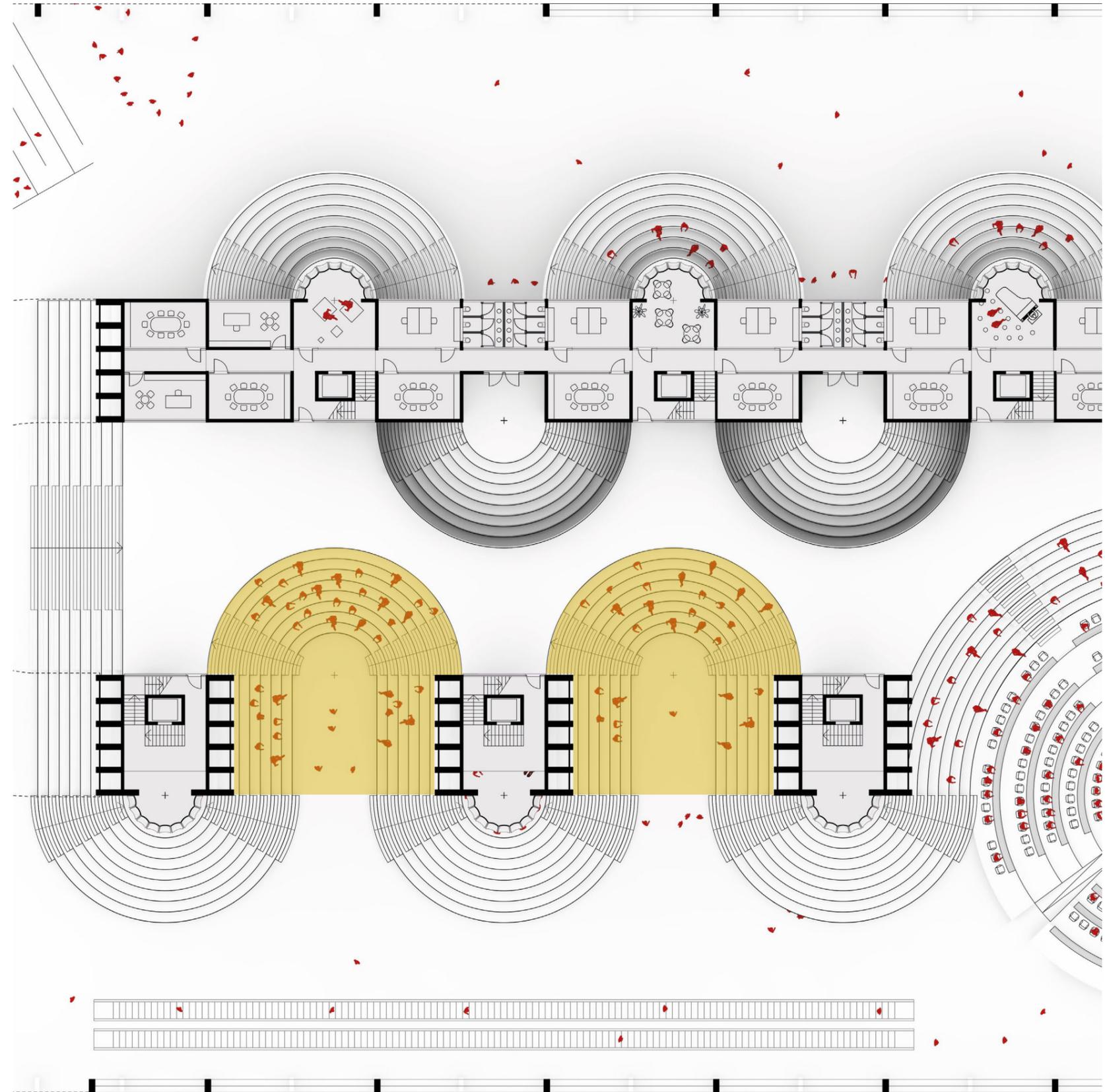






## Public meeting spaces

Curved parliament base create open, amphitheater like meeting spaces for the public. There people can meet for discussions with MPs. Held by concrete arches, wood finished office blocks are located above those spaces.



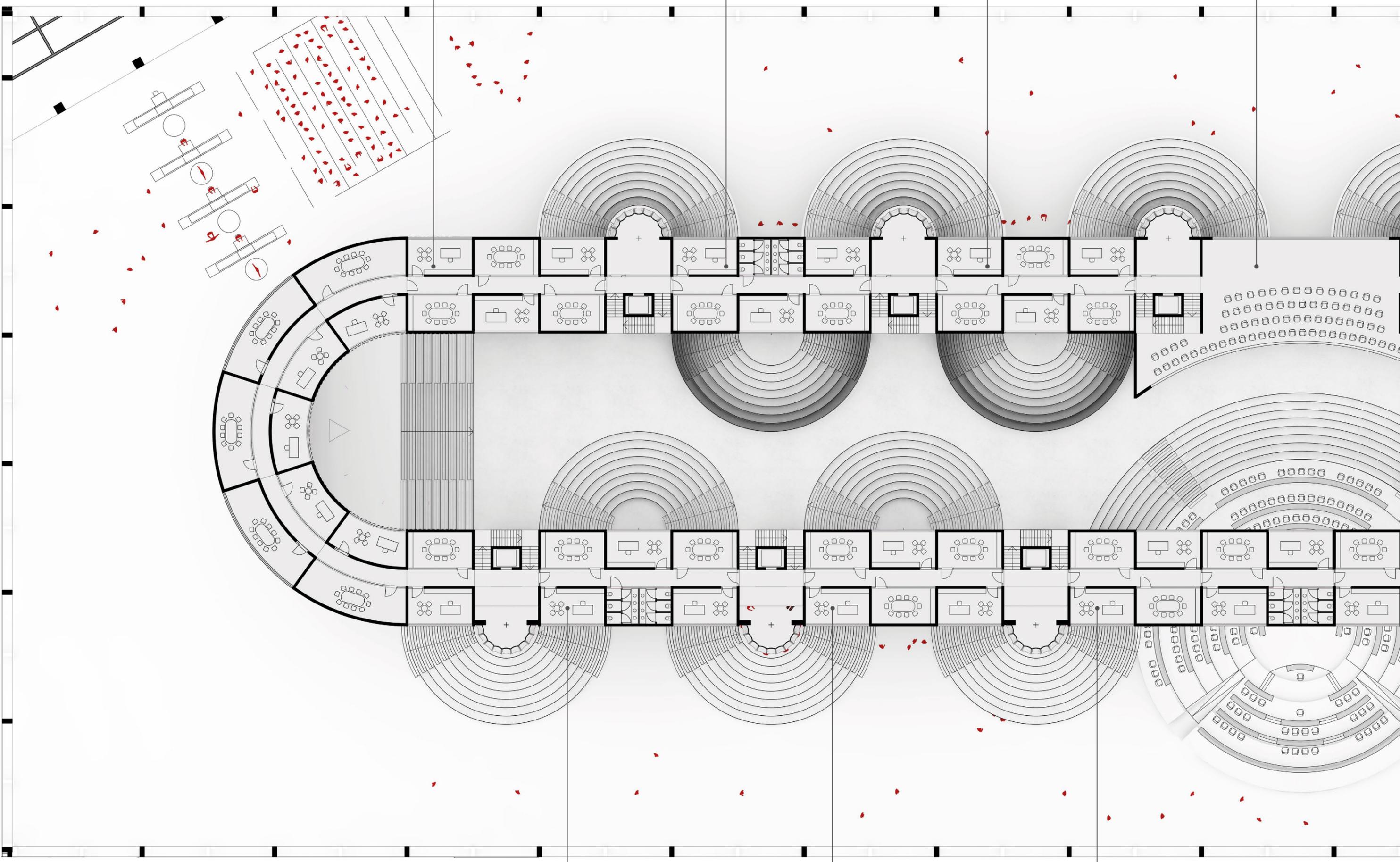


MP office spaces

MP office spaces

MP office spaces

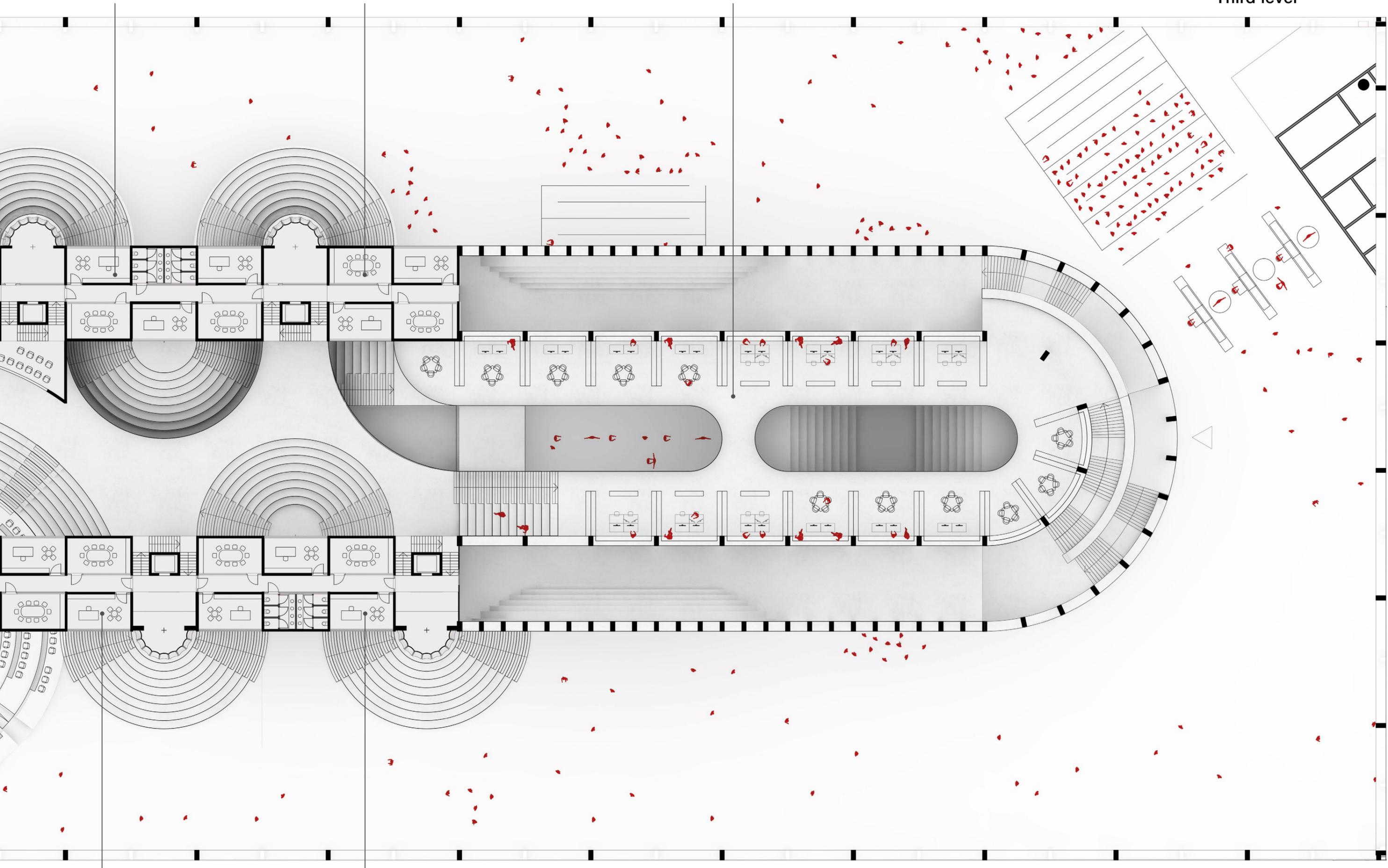
public balcony



MP office spaces

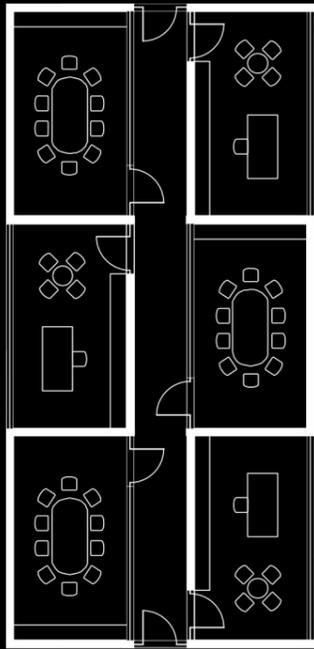
public library

Third level



MP office spaces

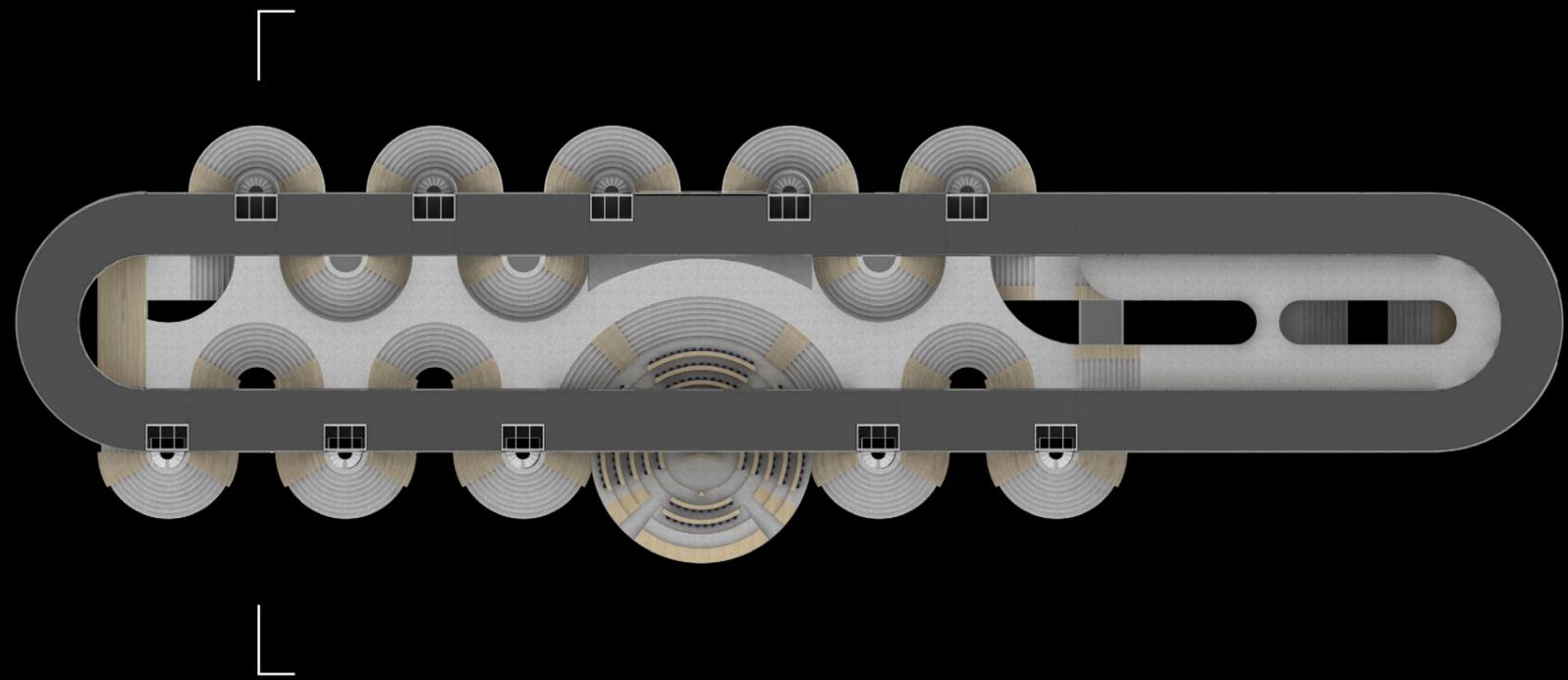
MP office spaces

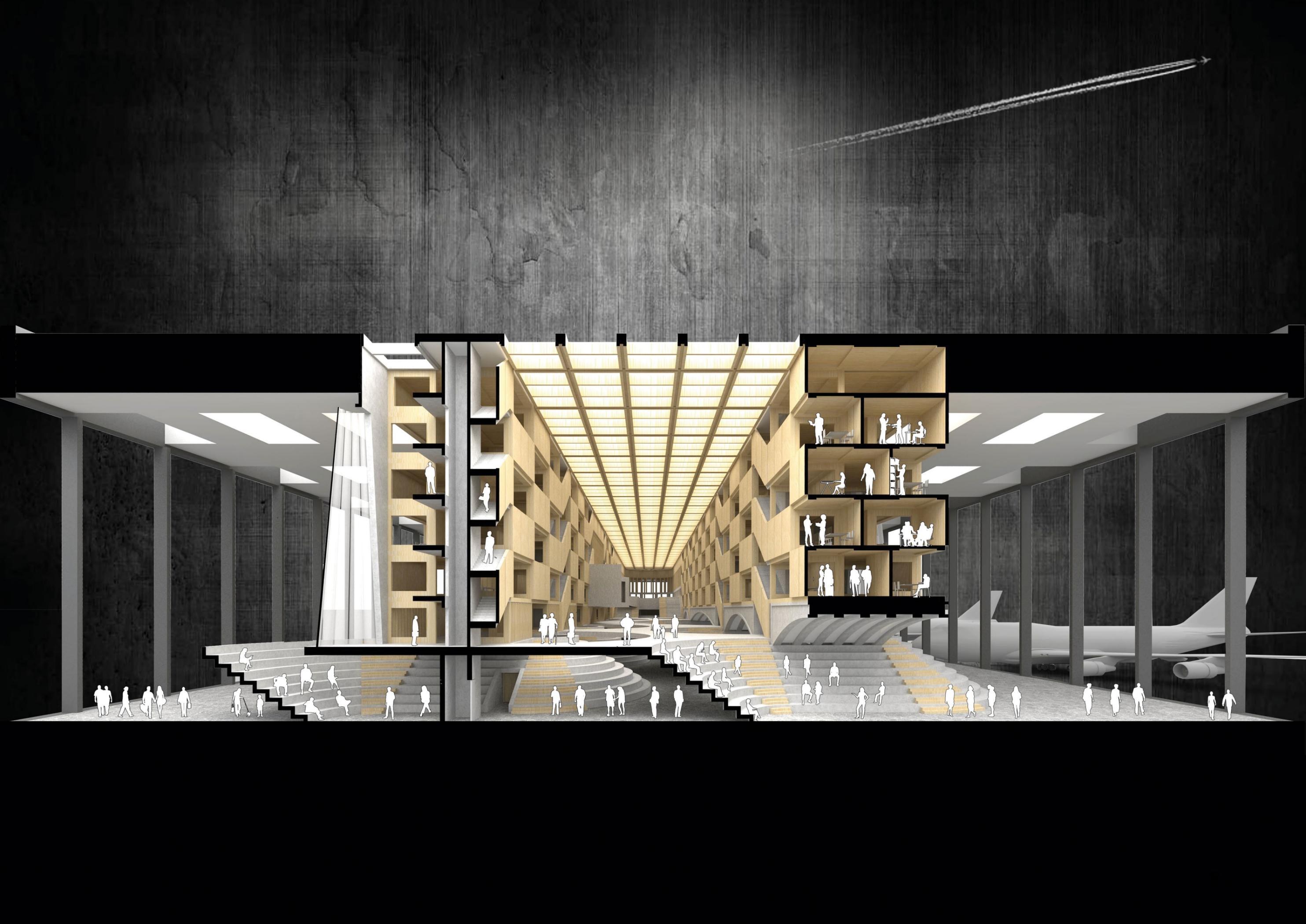


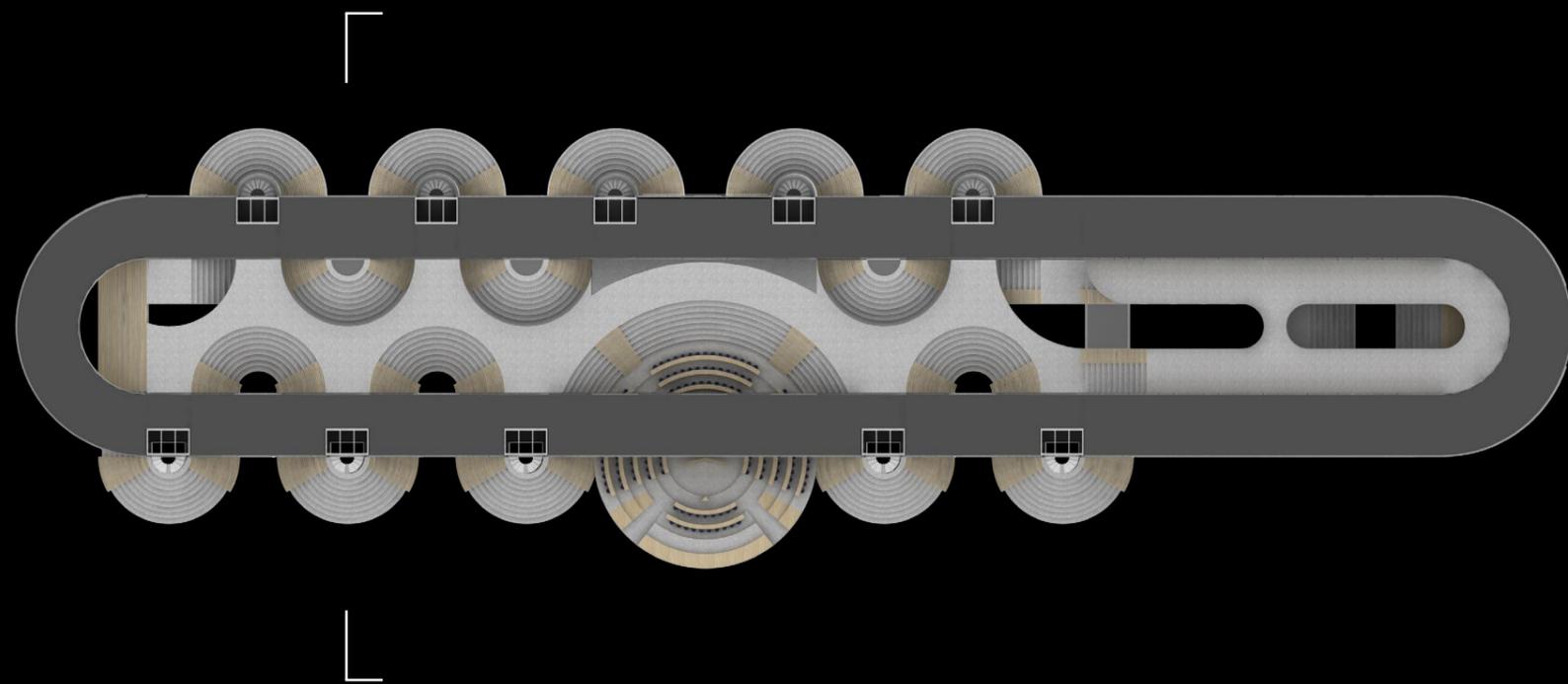


## MP office with the view to the public passageway

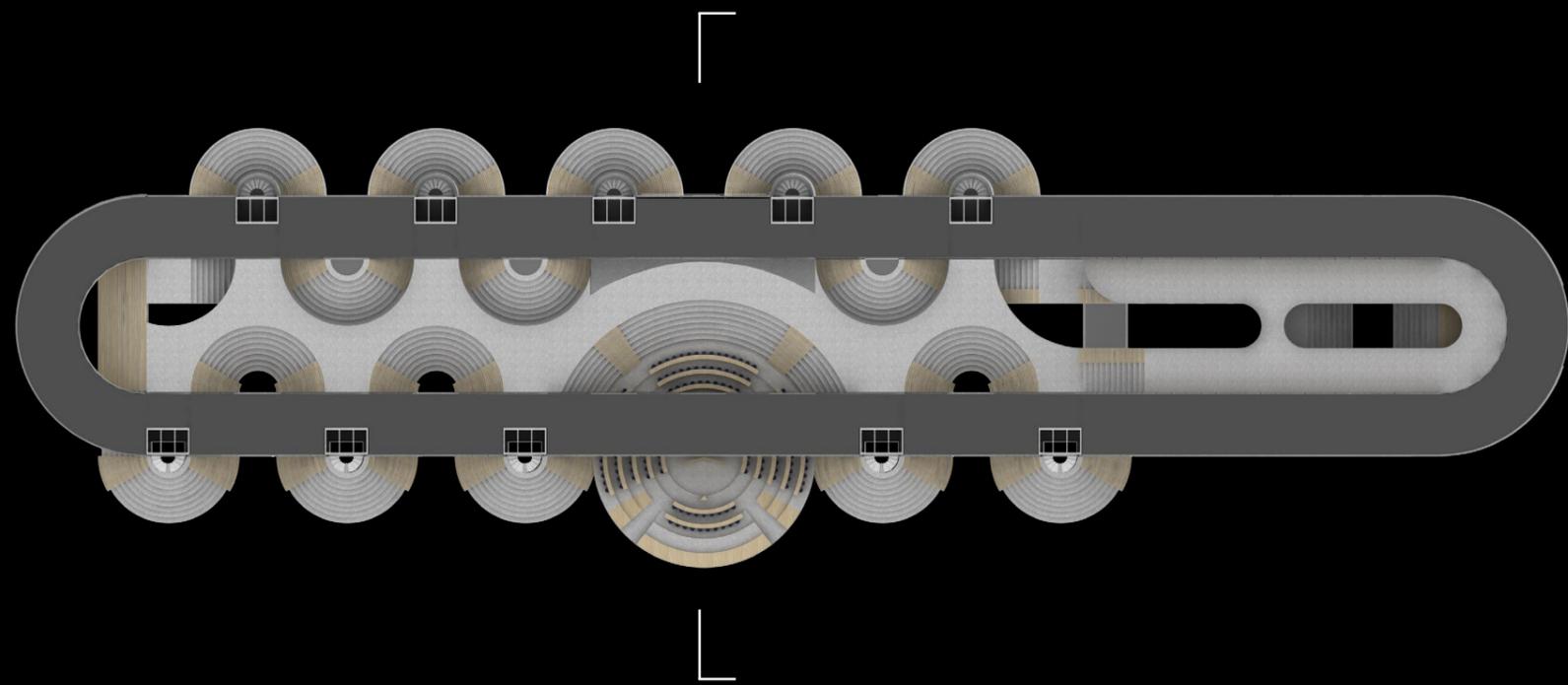
MP offices include actual office of certain MP, his/her secretary and small meeting room. Half of the offices have the view towards public hallway, another half towards land or air side of the airport.



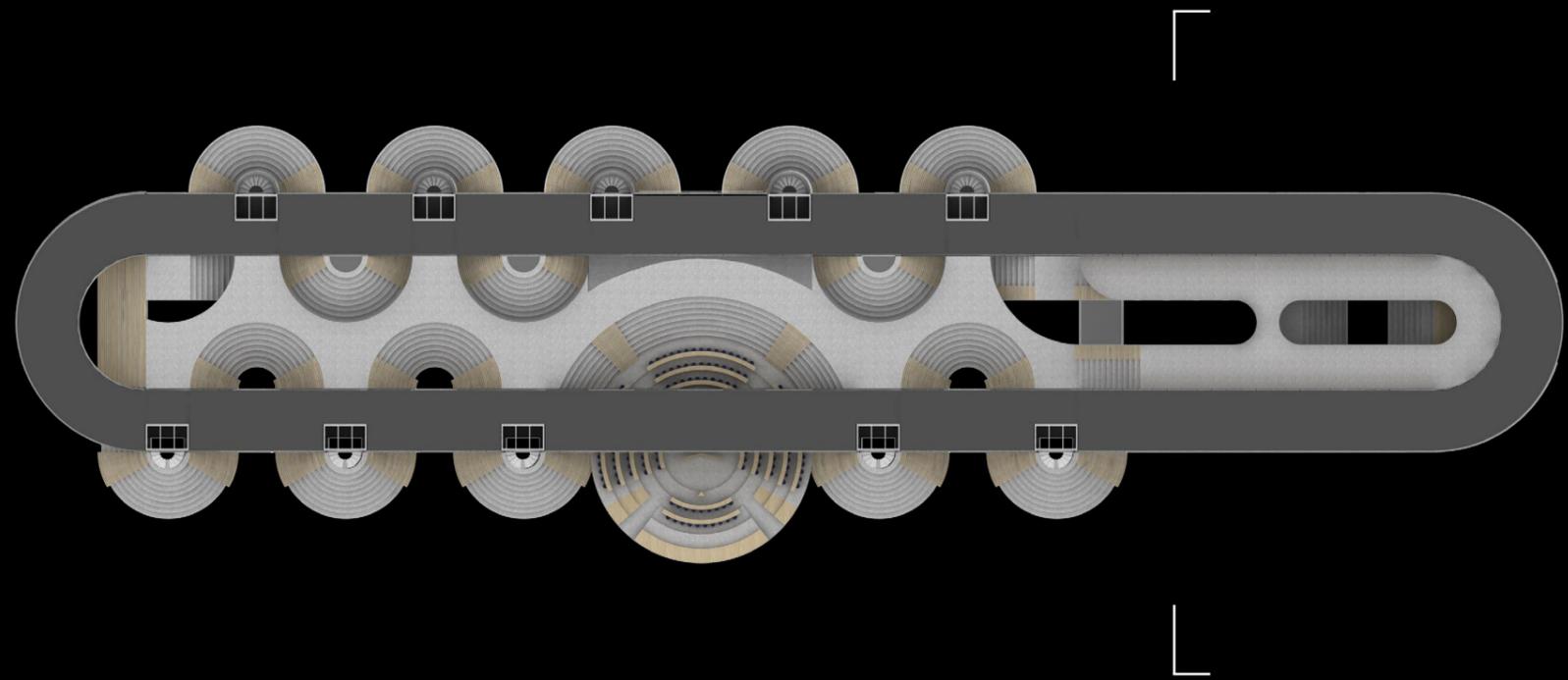




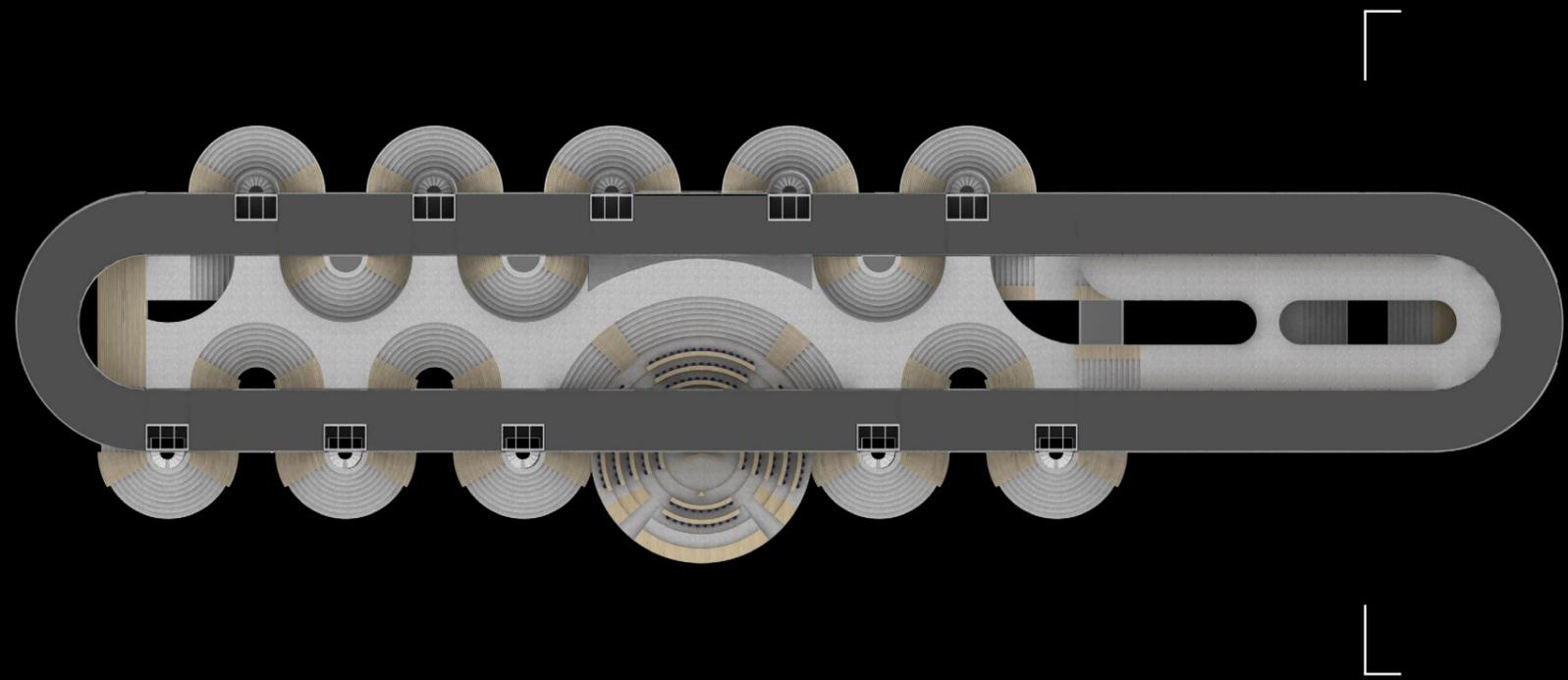








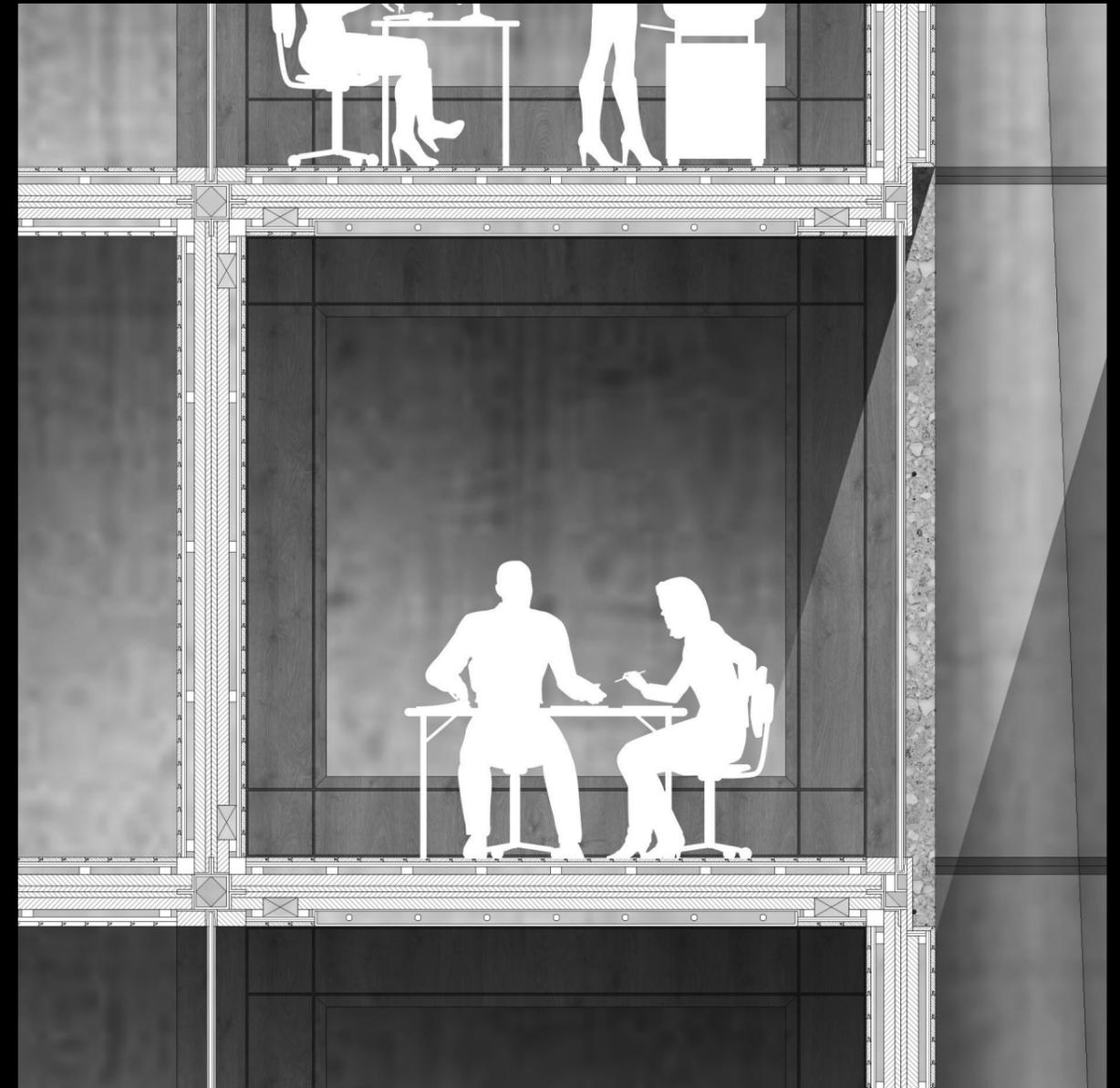








Detail of the stairs of public meeting space



Detail of the office block



15:30 Open Debate

Tweede Kamer



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- <https://www.schiphol.nl/en/>

## Gratitude to

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