

SUPREME COURT OF ALBANIA AND SCHOOL OF MAGISTRATES



NFA architects - Bevk Perović arhitekti - Atelier 4



Introduction

The Supreme Court of Justice is one of the highest institutions for any democratic Nation in the world. Redefining its organisation together with the educational ambition of a School of Magistrates is an opportunity to express those inherent values, through Architecture, with an inscription in the historical perspective.

We find it very appealing that Albania opens such a programme and project to an international architectural contest, and strived to make such energy the essence of our design proposal today.

We believe that this kind of initiative is a display of the most progressive and lively forms of true European culture, being social and geographical before institutional.

It underlines that Albania, as a relatively young democracy, has the possibility to recapture the pioneer values of the initial societal European project, more so than the controlled, somewhat introvert and (seemingly) 'established' democracies.

As a European team, we have the conviction that such openness is in the hands of the new and future member states. Furthermore, we believe this project can be one of the rare tangible expressions of such a challenge, served by good architecture. Architecture is the instrument that can express the democratic, non-ostentatious nature of a state institution that devotes itself to its citizens, daily.

The two institutions seem to us as parts of one growing ecosystem, which occurs as an important pivot of institutional evolution in Albania, towards its European integration.

With this in mind, our design for the Supreme Court and School of Magistrates articulates 8 priorities:

1. Expressing an Albanian European identity, as inclusive, evolutive, contemporary, future-oriented culture.
2. Allowing efficiency in operations, in short term (successful transition) and long term (adaptive building),
3. Transforming issues of access, circulations and security into architectural qualities, for a stronger, specific institutional identity.
4. Fostering high awareness of its Public role, dedicated to citizen's rights,
5. Preserving the relation to history (in the making) and heritage,
6. Helping further develop high academic education standards, and their relation with the highest Judicial authority.
7. Integrating the complex in its natural context, increasing the value of the park both as a natural and civic value for all.
8. Leading by example on the ground of today's environmental challenges.

In establishing the strategic axis of our proposal, we delved deep into the understanding of the existing – both physical (landscape, existing structures, local character) and conceptual aspects of the challenge, dissecting the institution's programs and uncovering potentials and synergies between them.

As architects, the centre of our concerns is the very public dimension.

Also, through our proposal today, we strive to resolve programmatic issues - such as security, accessibility, as well as iconographic issues - presence, symbolism, materiality and expression; in a singular line of thought, for an architectural synthesis of high public and democratic value.



A symbolic location, between Heritage and Future.

The choice of the Valle building as new location for the Supreme Court of Albania is a decision that makes sense on many levels.

After analysis, it seems evident to consider this choice was not only one of a building, but -first of all- one of a location and a context. Indeed, the monumental site of the “Convitto Femile” dominates Tirana from a natural setting, while remaining part of the city. Its environment provides the necessary distance from the urban daily implications, while remaining totally connected and accessible, ideals factors for an institution of such public importance as the Supreme Court.

Because of its relation to the park and the topography in Tirana, the heritage is not only made of the Italian architecture. The monument is the entire site!

As with any Palazzo, the timeless landmark is the product of the building and it’s surroundings, as a whole, regardless of their functions.

We have approached the project with a broader historical and symbolic ambition, considering the site as a heritage where each element will play its best role for the future.

The New Supreme Court + School of Magistrates complex.

Is it possible to achieve a coherent Unity with a courthouse and a school, two autonomous institutions?

How can they both work efficiently, while achieving together the best resolution of antagonisms such as openness and security, academia and practice, heritage and future?

And how can such an intelligent resolution be developed in continuity with the park?

Our postulate is to create a united venue, as one destination of Justice, where each institution meets the uncompromised resolution of its fundamental needs, with maximal common synergies.



The Best for Both

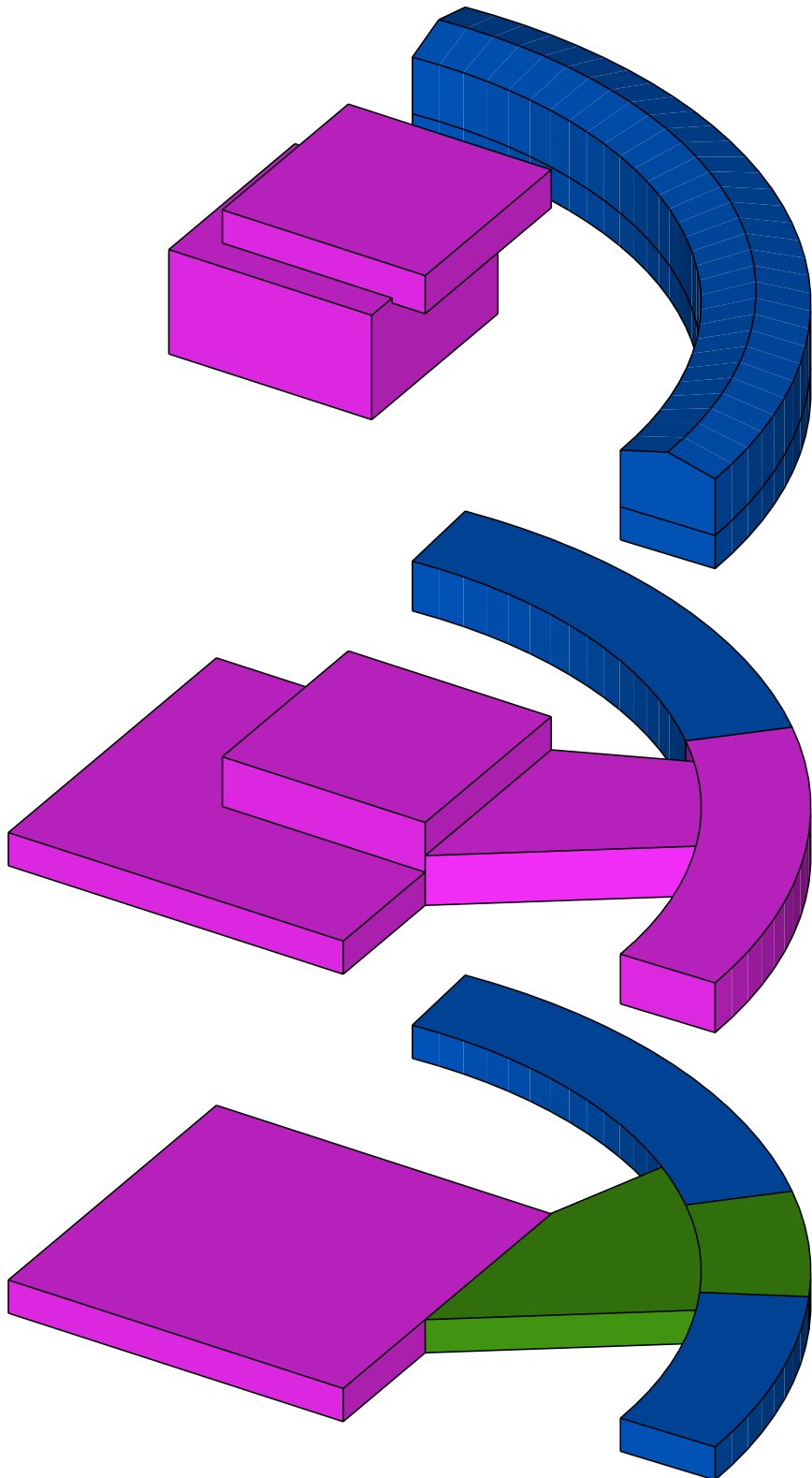
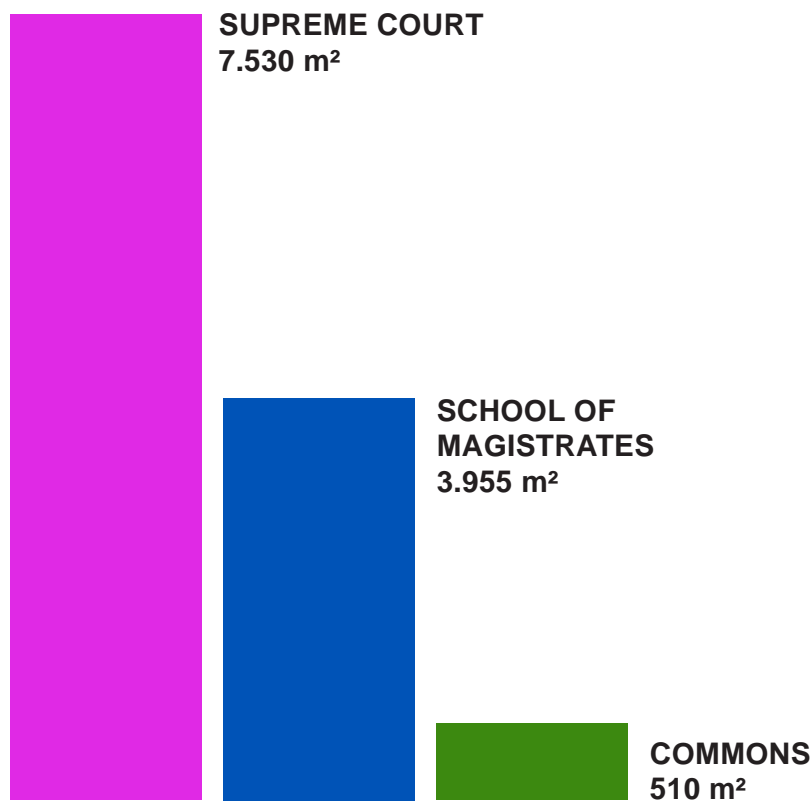
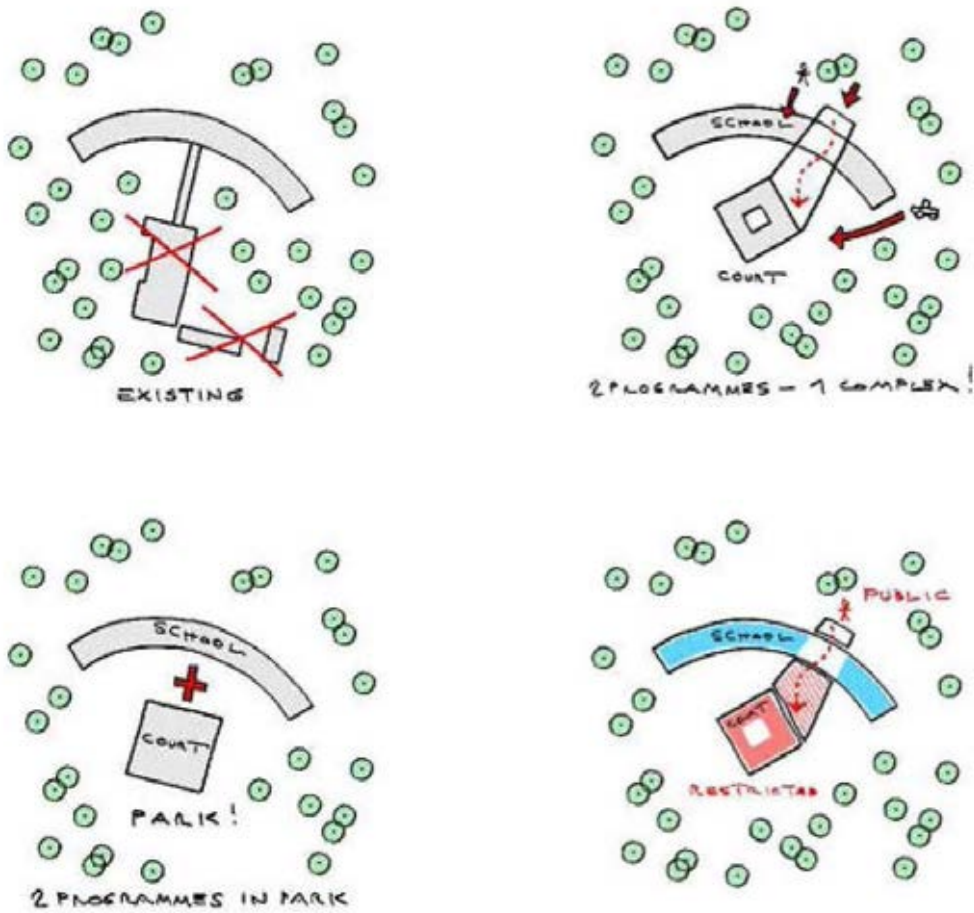
After researching numerous organisational diagrams, our postulate can be summarized as such:

Instead of forcing the judicial bodies in a traditional architecture of classrooms, with the courts relegated as “annexes” through a chaos of compromised circulations, we propose to maintain the national monument as an educational institution, and as the gate of an even higher institution, the New Supreme Court of Albania, a new symbol of Justice.

Considering the whole site as symbolic heritage, considering the complex as one unity, we therefore suggest to install the School of Magistrates in the historical educational building, and Supreme Court in a specific structure, a focal point, a new instrument of Justice.

Also, from the analyses made from our structural engineers, it appears as evidence that structural interventions on the historical building have to be avoided as much as possible.
On structural and mechanical engineering point of view, the Supreme Court is not feasible in the historical building. Also, the Supreme Court of Albania should be hosted in a flexible structure that accompanies the changes implied by the Albanian reforms of Justice.

In this report, we will guide you through the multiple elements that indicate why this choice can be an evidence, for a better functioning of the two institutions in the complex, and a clearer, stronger, evolutive identity for the whole.





Entrance Sequence
A dialogue of two Geometries

The Valle building, as universal Albanian Monument, remains the public facade of the complex, its anchor, the symbolic gate to both the Supreme Court and the School of magistrates. Built seventy years ago as an educational building, the monument is preserved in that role and typology, allowing for it's architectural features to be untouched, furthermore making it a piece of living patrimony for the next generations. The key features of the building, it's gallery, it's ample staircase and it's corridors can be restored in original condition, without being altered by the needs of security measures. The absence of contrasts in levels of access along its vertical and horizontal circulations offers to keep the monument intact.

Two arcades on the left are dedicated to a large bay: the new Supreme Court entrance and foyer, from which one perceives the second element of the complex: the Supreme Court.

The simple scheme of “public-monument-as-school” versus “compact-new-judicial-instrument” allows for a richer and clearer access sequence. The historical building acts as a ‘Face’ of the entire venue, an image projected to the city, a beacon for the new instrument: the court that operates like an efficient mechanism, a machine inserted into the park...

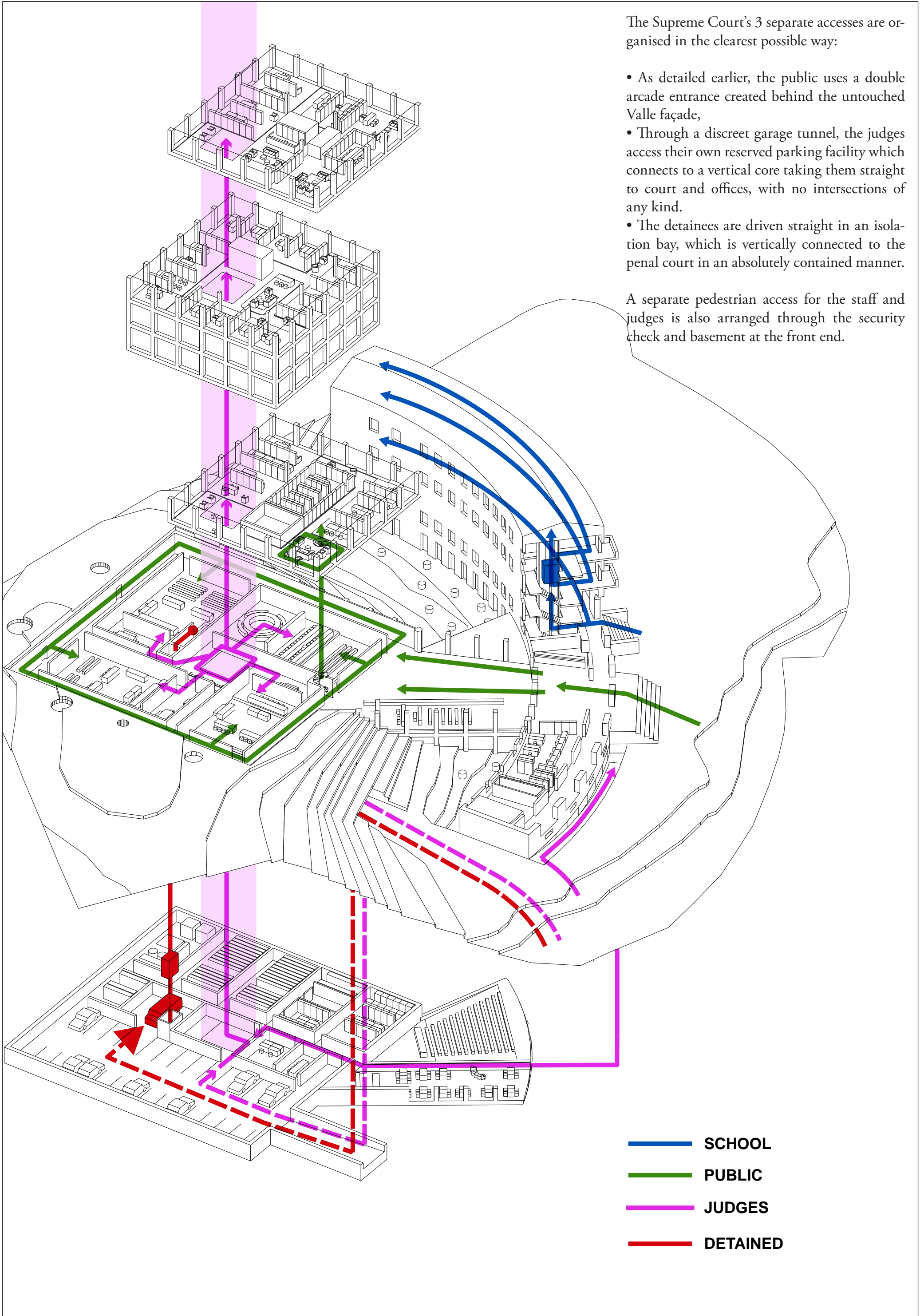
Thanks to such program distribution, the Supreme Court compound appears as a modern institution dedicated to its mission as judicial apparatus, while it lets the monument play the representational role of the complex.

Accesses / Circulations

Most importantly, this critical interpretation of the program allows for an outstanding clarification of accesses and statuses. It produces, in our views, the best scheme for a non-compromised triple access and circulation, first of priorities of the Supreme Court. In return, such access scheme allows for more “publicness” of the whole, by the removal of conflicting intersections.

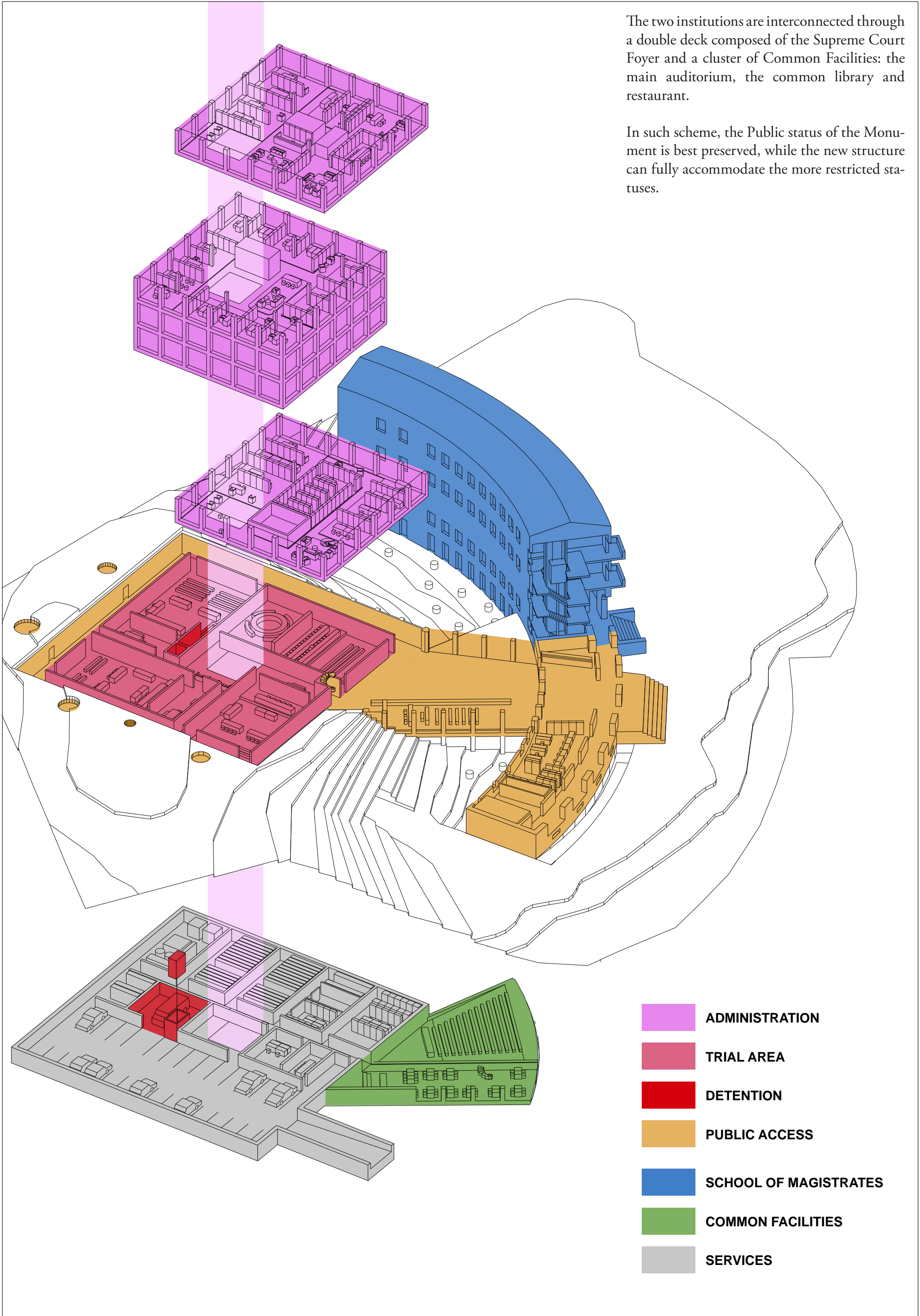
Practically, the school and public access is organised through the façade of the historical building. The school of magistrates keeps the natural entrance around which this educational building is naturally organized.

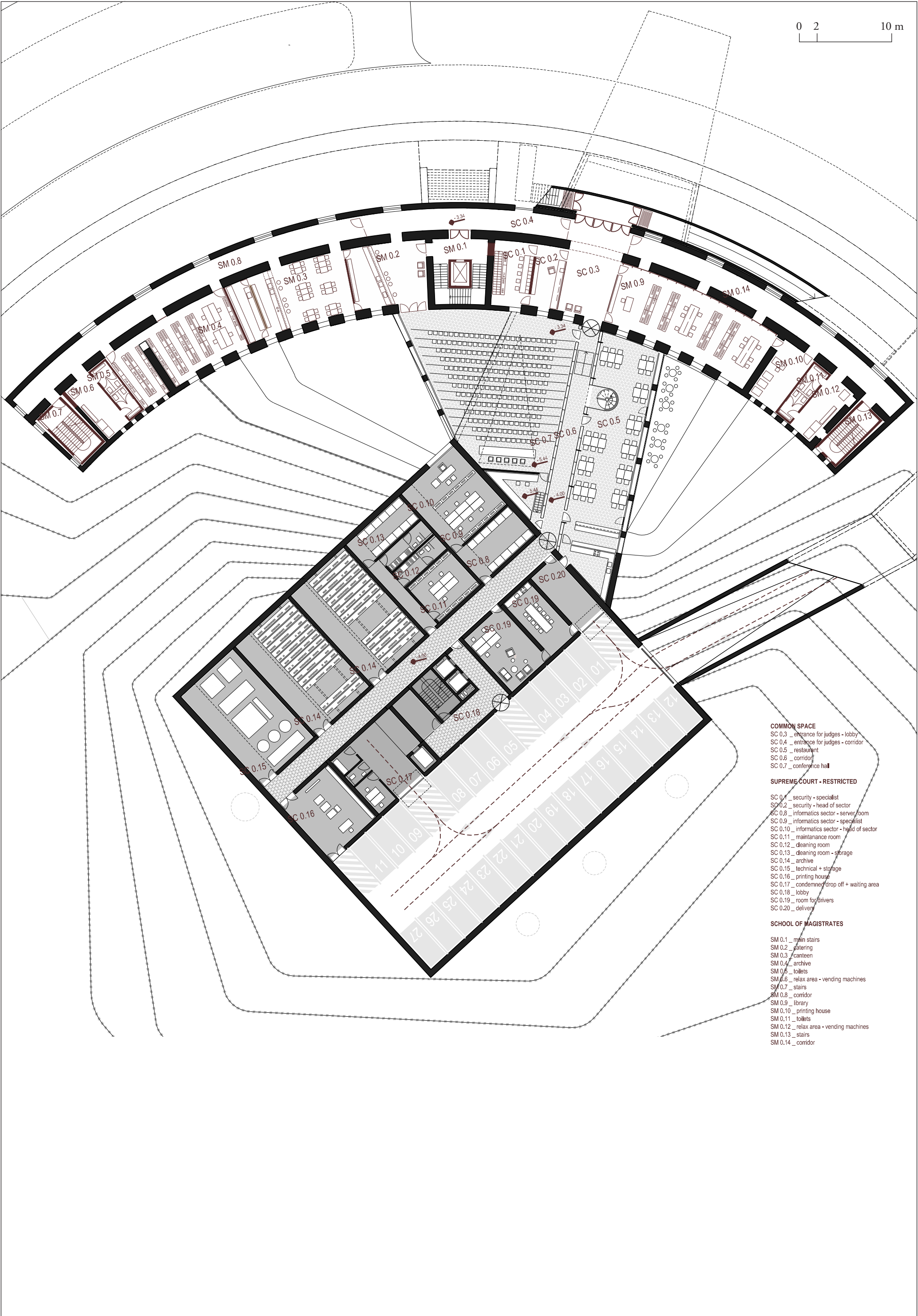


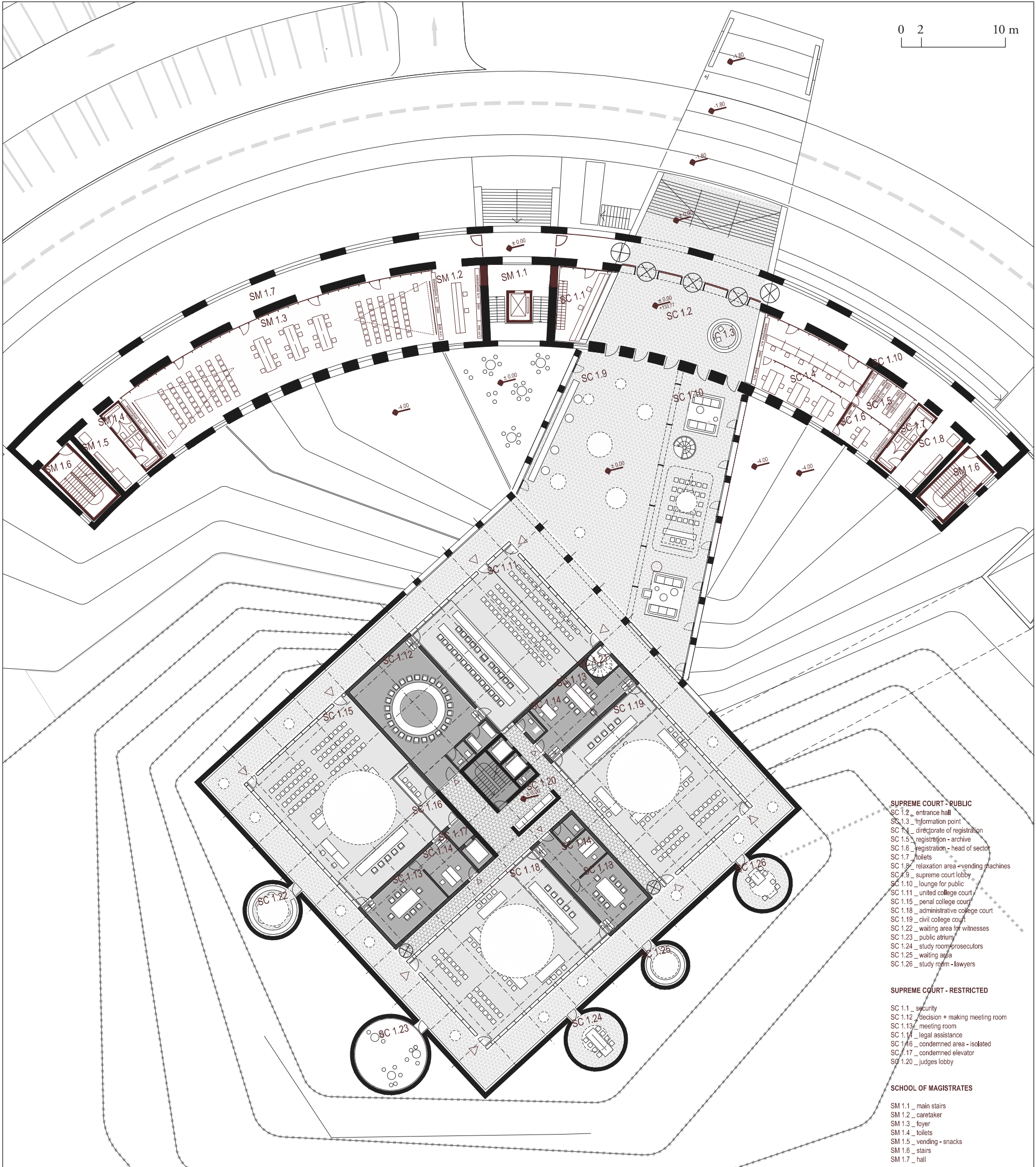


The two institutions are interconnected through a double deck composed of the Supreme Court Foyer and a cluster of Common Facilities: the main auditorium, the common library and restaurant.

In such scheme, the Public status of the Monument is best preserved, while the new structure can fully accommodate the more restricted statuses.







Program repartition

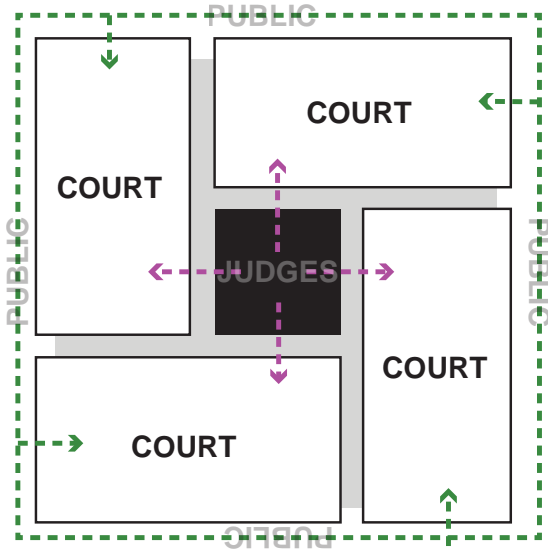
Continuous Ground Floor

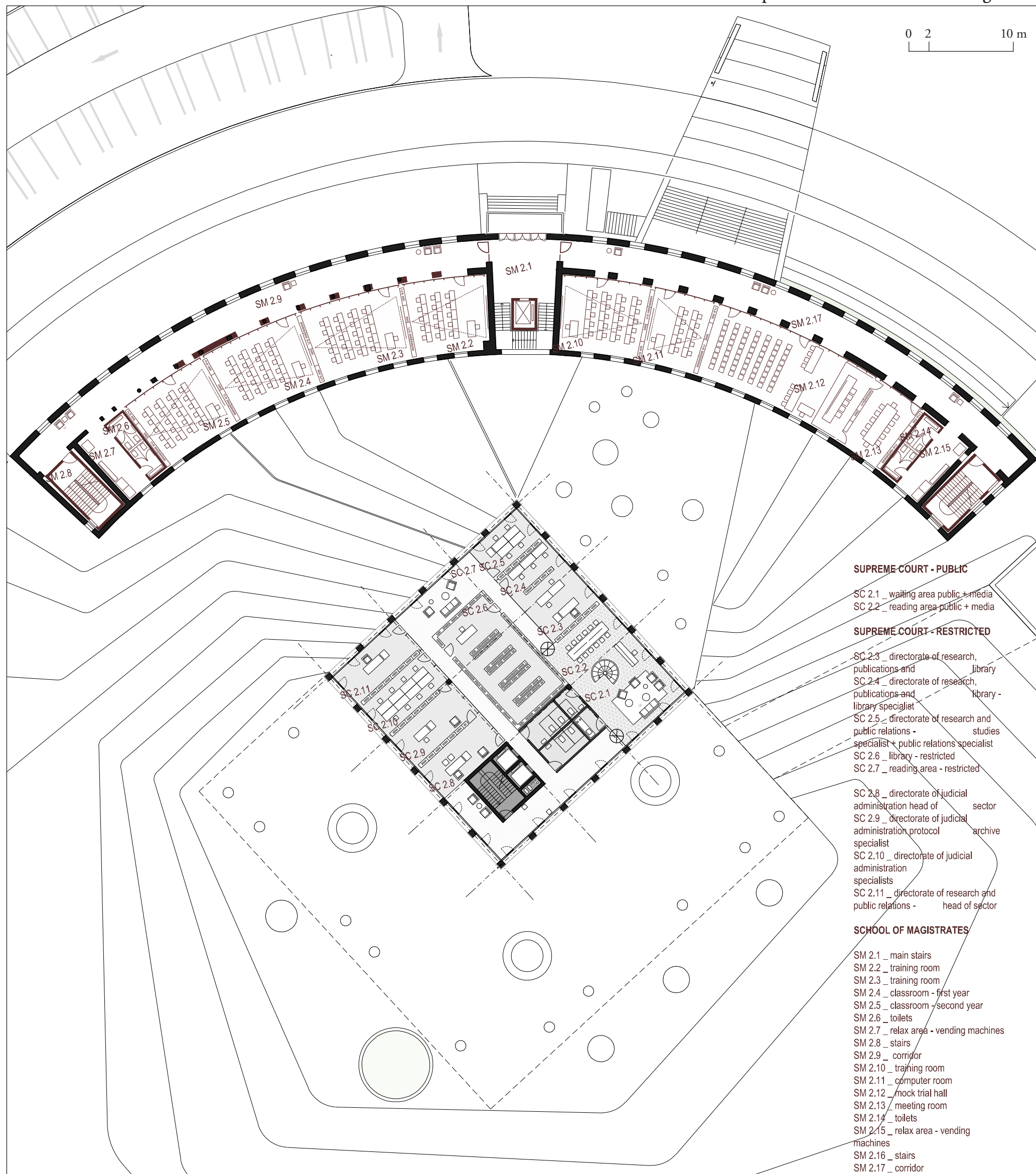
The first achievement aimed by our design is to create the greater possible “public” continuum, from the Valle building “magisterial” ground floor.

In this way, the citizens and visitors can experience a full on grade spatial sequence, from the monumental entrance to the courtrooms.

The ground floor contains the most public elements of both institutions: The Lobby, Press Room, Registration and Courtrooms for the Supreme Court – the Foyer, Academic Auditorium and staircase for the School of Magistrates.

The two institutions are interconnected through a double deck composed of the Supreme Court Foyer and a cluster of Common Facilities: the main auditorium, the common library and restaurant.





The School of Magistrates

The original circulation scheme of the Valle building is made-to-measure for educational purposes. Therefore, the academic institution sees its needs best served and represented by the traditional staircase, hallways and corridor scheme. The program of the School of Magistrates falls in place naturally in the walls of the heritage architecture.

The Auditorium takes advantage of the noble ground floor 6m ceiling height, creating a high standard of academic representation.

The Supreme Court

The Supreme court is the focal point of the complex, where it is organised a rational - yet aesthetical - machine of Justice, an informal expression of democracy.

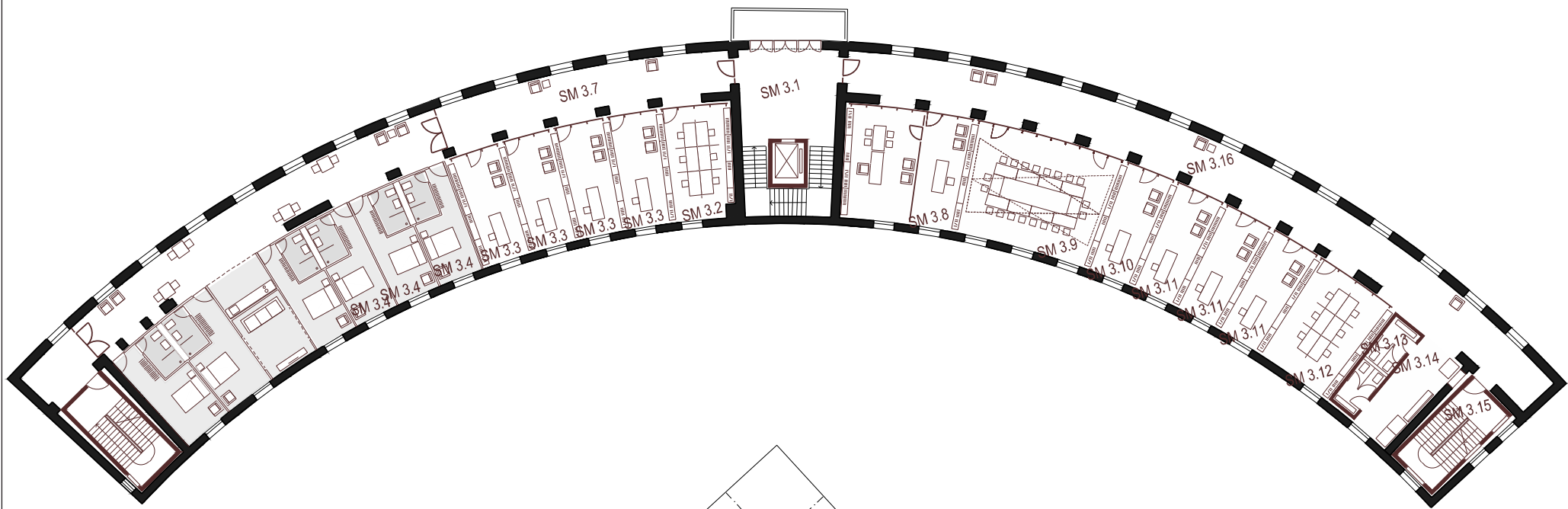
It is a straightforward efficient superposition of operating bodies, vertically positioned in the shortest possible relative distance, through the means of a vertical circulation core.

An underground level contains parkings, archive, maintenance, data center and services.

The court Rooms are organised in abstracted

ideal layout: the hierarchy of circulations is clarified to an extreme interface: while the public accesses the courtrooms from a peripheral gallery of zenithal light, the judges have a central core lobby interconnecting all the Courts and meeting rooms with no walking distance.

Directly above courtrooms is the Research, Publication and Library directorate. This space is the focal point of the complex: on grade with the garden, embraced by the Valle building perspective, it is a high architectural moment in the experience of the whole.



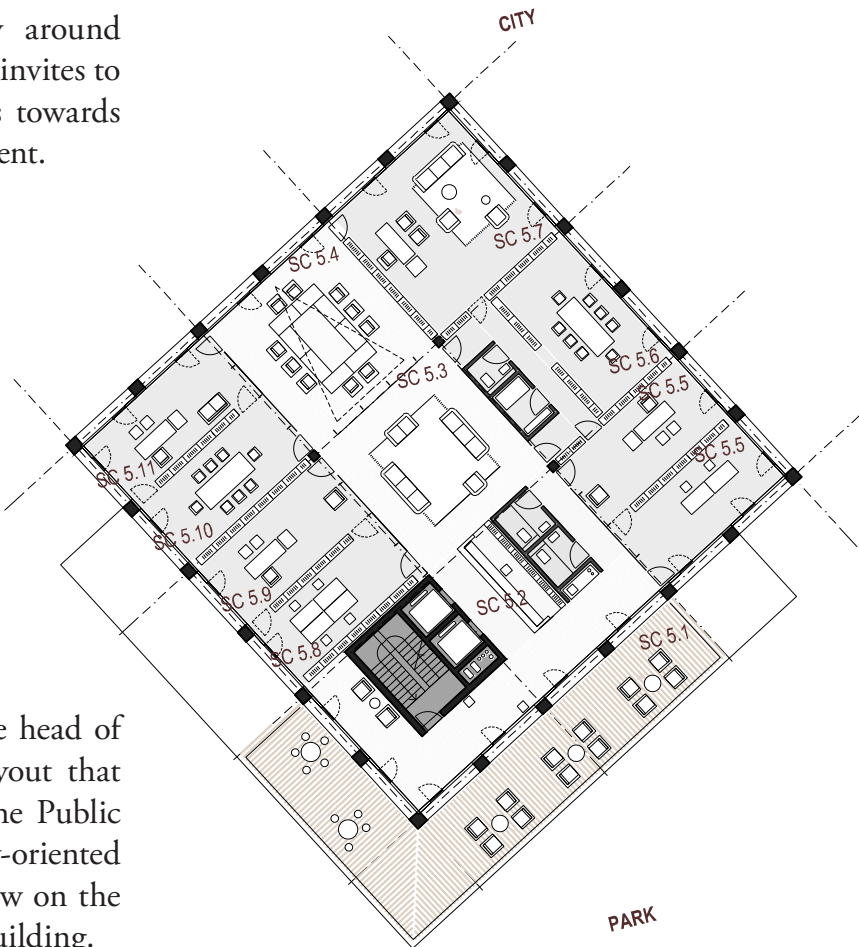
SUPREME COURT - RESTRICTED

- SC 3.1 _ waiting area - lounge
- SC 3.2 _ judges library
- SC 3.3 _ legal assistance - judge's assista
- SC 3.4 _ judicial bodies - judge's office

SCHOOL OF MAGISTRATES

- SM 3.1 _ main stairs
- SM 3.2 _ lecturer office
- SM 3.3 _ lecturer office
- SM 3.4 _ rooms for visitors
- SM 3.5 _ stairs
- SM 3.6 _ common space
- SM 3.7 _ corridor
- SM 3.8 _ director + secretary
- SM 3.9 _ meeting room
- SM 3.10 _ chancellor office
- SM 3.11 _ directors office
- SM 3.12 _ specialist office
- SM 3.13 _ toilets
- SM 3.14 _ relax area - vending machines
- SM 3.15 _ stairs
- SM 3.16 _ corridor

Above are the office floors of the judicial bod-ies. They benefit from a radial plan organisa-tion, away from old traditional corridors. This in itself can be a vector of change and moderni-sation: while respecting the conditions of con-fidentiality, the space itself also suggests a more democratic organisation. The lobby around which the judicial offices are gathered invites to collegiality and informal interactions towards the institution's permanent improvement.

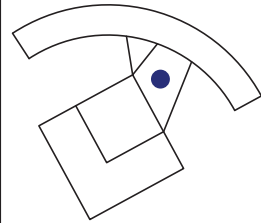
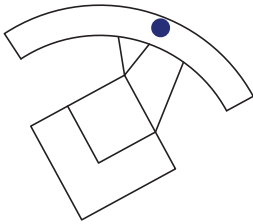
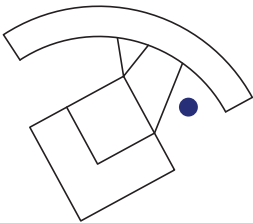


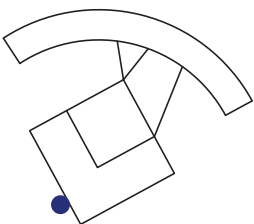
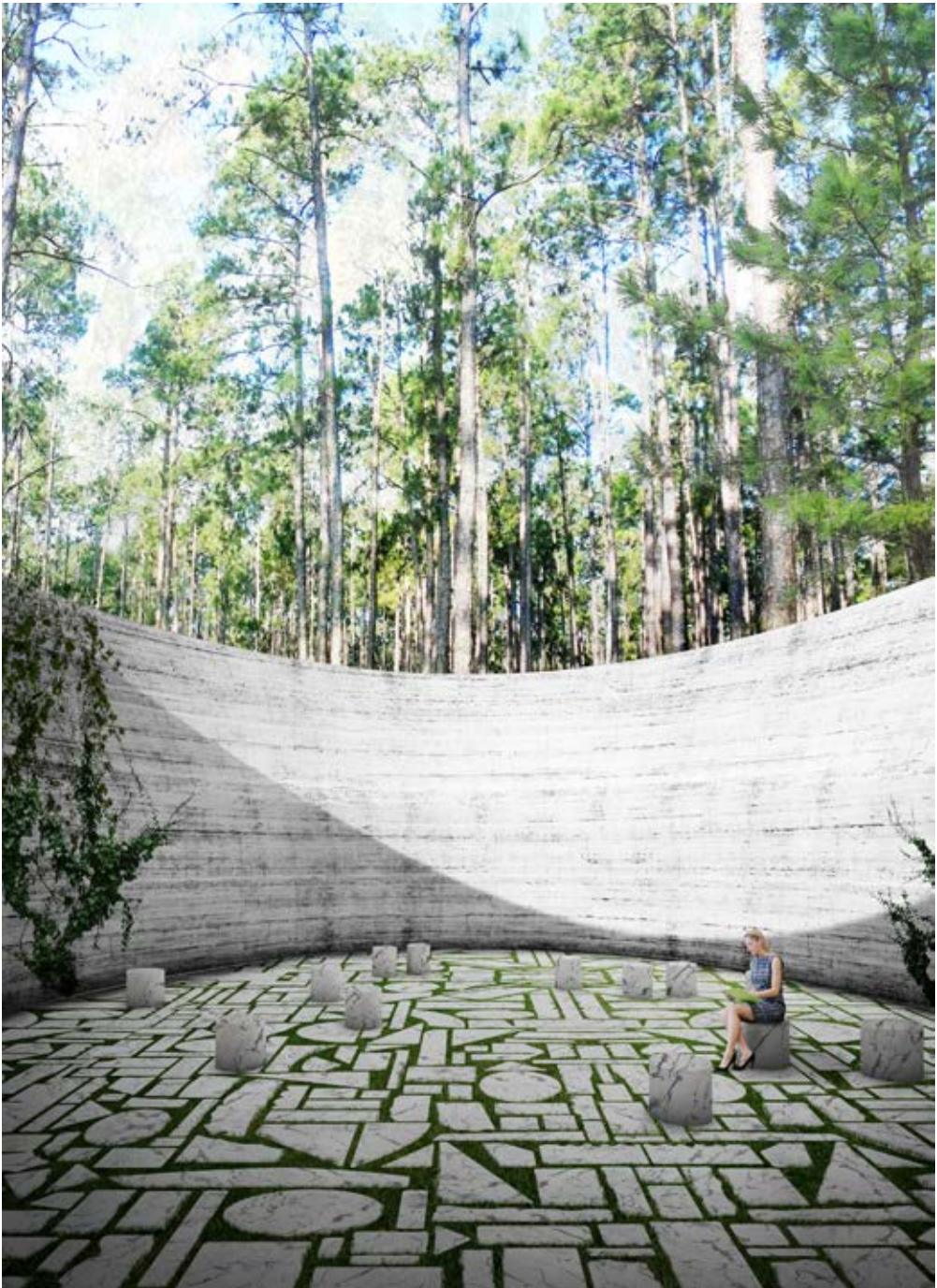
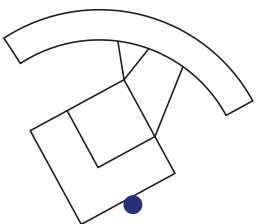
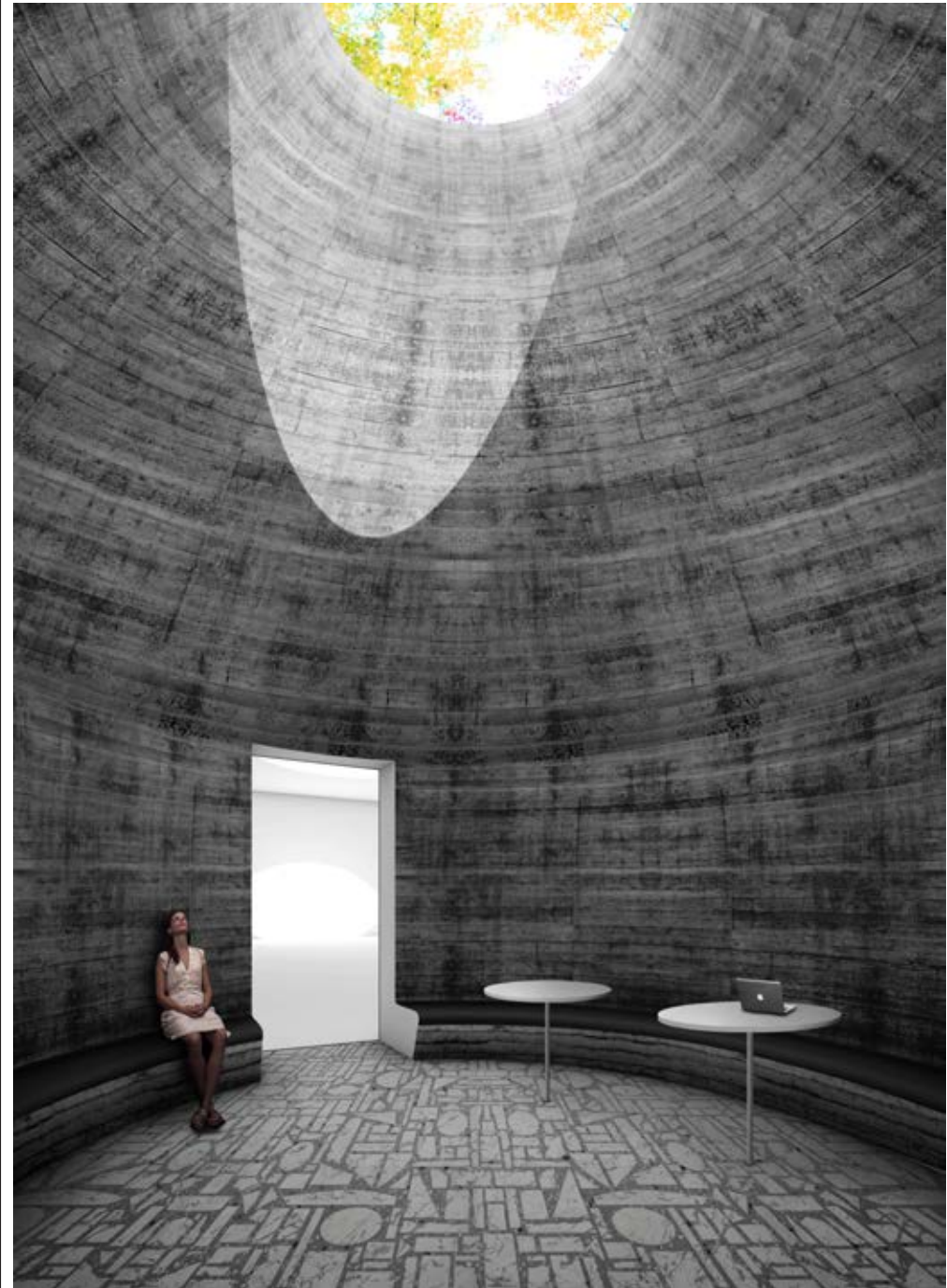
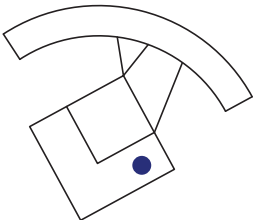
SUPREME COURT - RESTRICTED

- SC 5.1 _ terrace
- SC 5.2 _ secretary
- SC 5.3 _ waiting area - lounge
- SC 5.4 _ meeting room
- SC 5.5 _ head of supreme court cabinet
- SC 5.6 _ head of supreme court meeting rc
- SC 5.7 _ head of supreme court
- SC 5.8 _ finance sector - financial specialis
- SC 5.9 _ finance sector - head of sector
- SC 5.10 _ chancellor - meeting room
- SC 5.11 _ chancellor

Finally, above the judicial bodies, the head of Supreme Court is organised in a layout that recalls the same organisation than the Public Relation Directorate, democratically-oriented around welcoming lobbies, with a view on the city, just above the roof of the Valle building.









Landscape

The whole complex is developed in a way to preserve the park to its maximum, with the smallest possible mineralised footprint.

The program is compressed around vertical efficiency, instead of using more park footprint.

Part of the building (the courtrooms) dissimulates by being covered with the landscape through the means of a vegetated roof. The compactness of the building is one of its key qualities, in terms of circulation efficiency, site preservation, and energy efficiency.



We have worked with Michel Desvigne on solutions for the periphery of the site, and the landscape connection to the rest of the park.

We foresee a discreet but efficient protection of the site, blocking escapes or accesses, yet without any visible fence.

Inspired by typologies such as Vauban, a principle of French moat has been studied and anticipated.

Structure

The structural concept is based on achieving the most optimal solution for both the existing and the new building.

The existing Valle building will only be cleaned from all additions and changes that happened over time. The original structure will be fully preserved.

New programs will then be inserted, like a layer of ‘furnishings’ into the clean structure of the building.

Additional stability will be achieved through insertion of concrete staircase cores at both ends of the building, as well as the elevator core in the existing main staircase of the Valle building.

The new building is conceived in simple, straightforward and rational structure.

Executed in concrete, cast on site – it provides both the ‘skeleton’ and the façade of the new court complex - rough and durable, formal and efficient simultaneously.

Structural grids are based on a 4,00m module, and multiplied to fit with the program: 8,00m for services and parking, 16,00m for large programs.

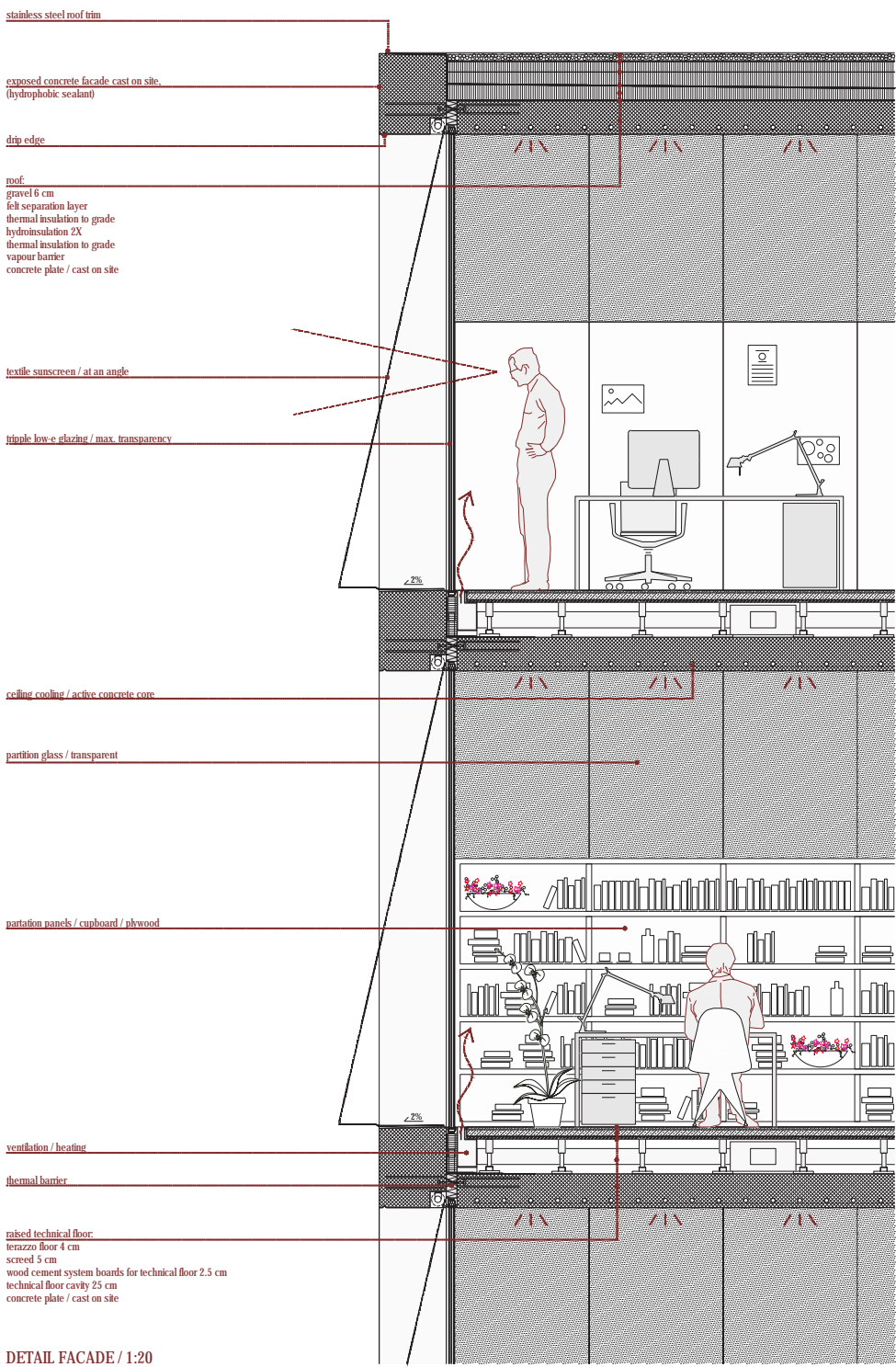
The public lobby/foyer spaces, connecting the existing and the new building is executed as a series of grids and a single large Vierendeel beam, spanning the congress hall on the lower ground floor.

Energy and sustainability concept

The new complex will, to a maximum possible degree, strive towards applying the most efficient, yet most discrete mechanical systems.

High quality insulation materials, low-e triple glazing for glazed surfaces, as well as computer and manually operated textile screen system, will all contribute to the overall reduction of energy needs of the building.

Ideally, the buildings and surrounding greenery are to be organized and designed to utilize maximum passive heating, by envelope characteristics and orientation and, at the same time, require minimum artificial energy for heating and cooling.



Building will be designed to utilize free cooling thermal mass activation by means of natural cooling.

Ventilation of courtroom spaces, as well as offices, will be organized in elevated floor cavities, partially cooled (or heated) via heat pump system. Natural ventilation will be used to a maximum degree in all non- public areas and offices.

The decision on the selection of the most appropriate energy source, will be based on the Life Cycle Cost simulations of the energy consumption including all running costs, maintenance cost as well as forecast of energy costs increase for the agreed period of time. The LCC analysis will offer a number of alternative possible packages and scenarios.

The greenery and trees around the buildings will be selected and positioned in such a manner to offer highest level of heat island elimination to all public areas. Trees will be selected and located to create full summer shade for all areas on the first two floors of the building. The selected trees will have dense canopies for maximum summer protection. These trees will lose leaves early in October to allow buildings passive heating. Particular design and pattern of trees, that use available summer winds, will be made to activate natural adiabatic cooling process and create outdoor environment cooler 3 to 4 degrees than the surrounding park. The project will be designed with intent to meet the German Sustainable Building Certificate on a Gold level.

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VRT Headquarters, Brussels



National and University Library NUK 2, Ljubljana



Elbasan Law Court, Elbanasan



European Union Headquarters, Brussels



Faculty of Mathematics, Ljubljana



Ambasador 3, Tirana



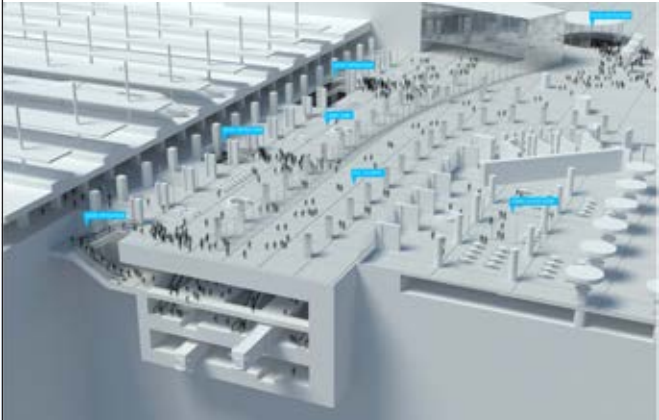
Liege Design Center



Islamic Religious-Cultural Centre Ljubljana



Top Channel Headquarters, Kashar



Midi International Station masterplan, Brussels



Complex Situla



Regional Hospital of Fier



Housing in Porte de la Chapelle, Paris



University Building BGG, Zagreb, Croatia



"Loro Borici" Stadium, Shkoder

NFA architects
Brussels, Belgium

Nicolas Firket.....architect-urbanist
Riccardo Villaarchitect
Elise Françoisarchitect

Michel Desvigne Paysage
Michel Desvignelandscape architect

Bevk Perović Arhitekti
Ljubljana, Slovenia

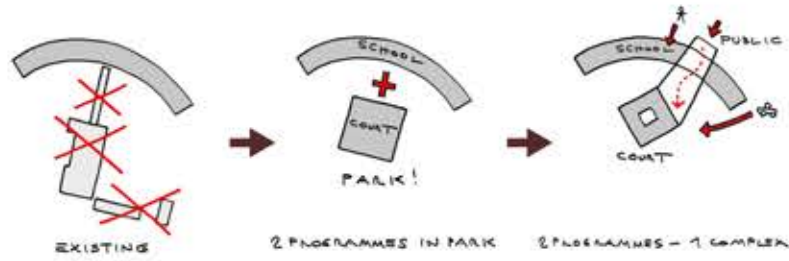
Matija Bevk u.d.i.a. team leader
Vasa J. Perović, MABIA team leader
Juan Miguel Herrero, arquitectoarchitect
Luka Nedzbala, B. Arch.architect
Urban Petranovič, u.d.i.a.....architect
Vid Tancer, internintern
Mitja Usenik , internintern
Irene Salord, arquitectoarchitect
Blaž Goričan, u.d.i.a.....architect

Atelier 4
Tirana, Albania

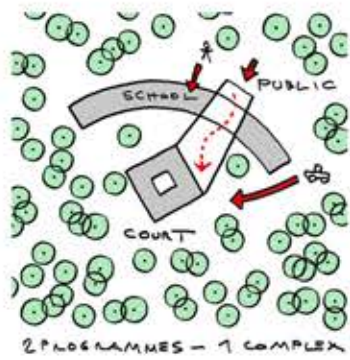
Andi Eftimi..... team leader
Alban Eftimi restoration expert
Altin Premtiproject coordinator
Olsi Eftimilandscape architect
Olisa Fotoarchitect



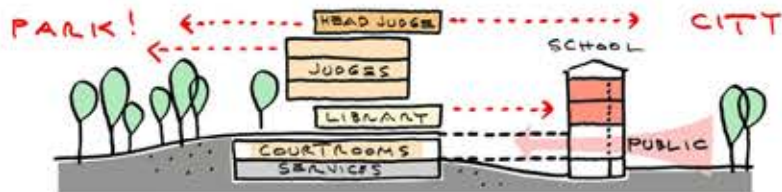
AERIAL VIEW - COURTHOUSE SUBMERGED IN THE PARK



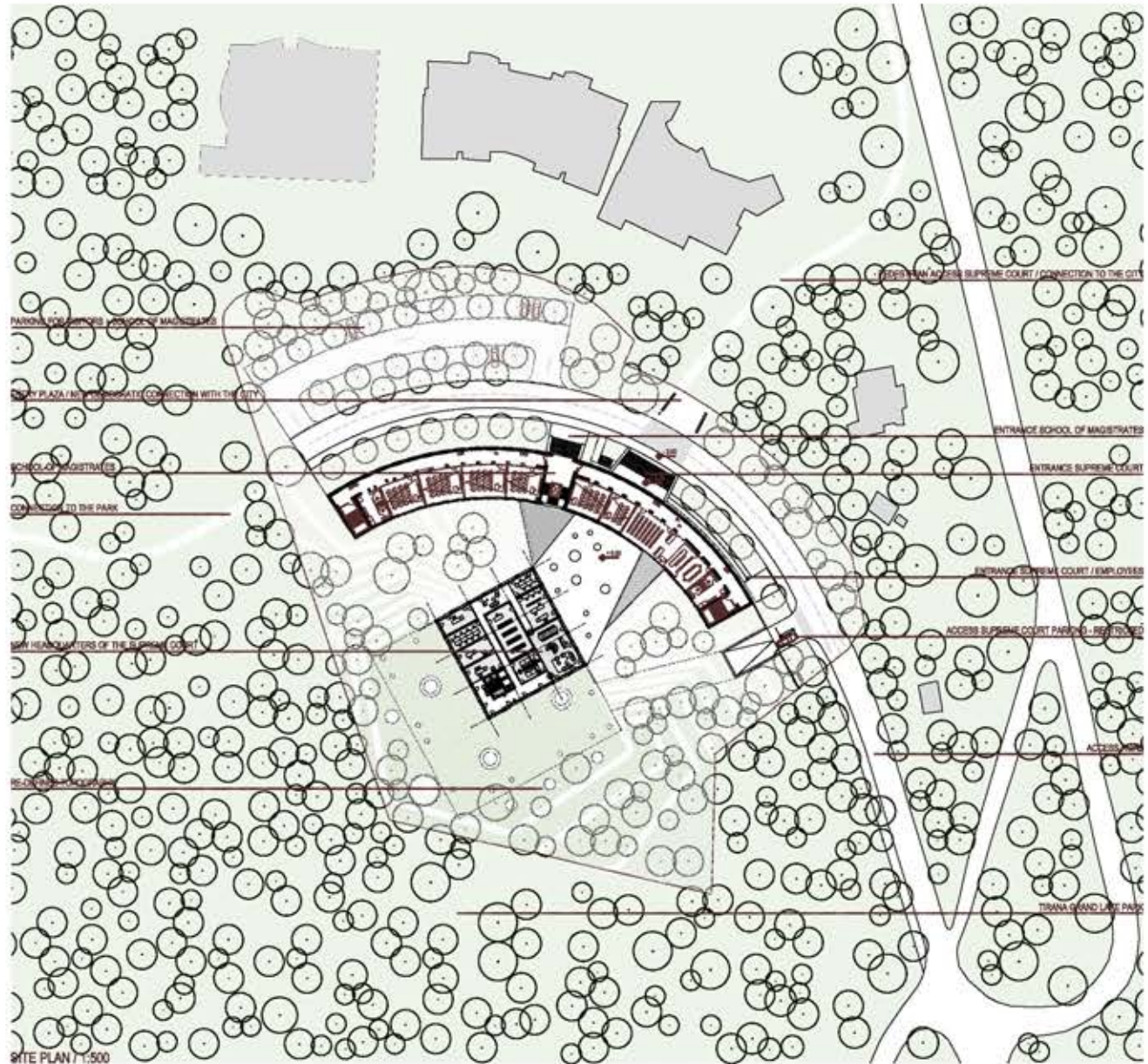
REDISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAMME - INVERSION OF 'EXPECTED'!



NEW COMPLEX - 'SUBMERGED' IN THE PARK!



PROGRAMMATIC SCHEME + VIEWS!



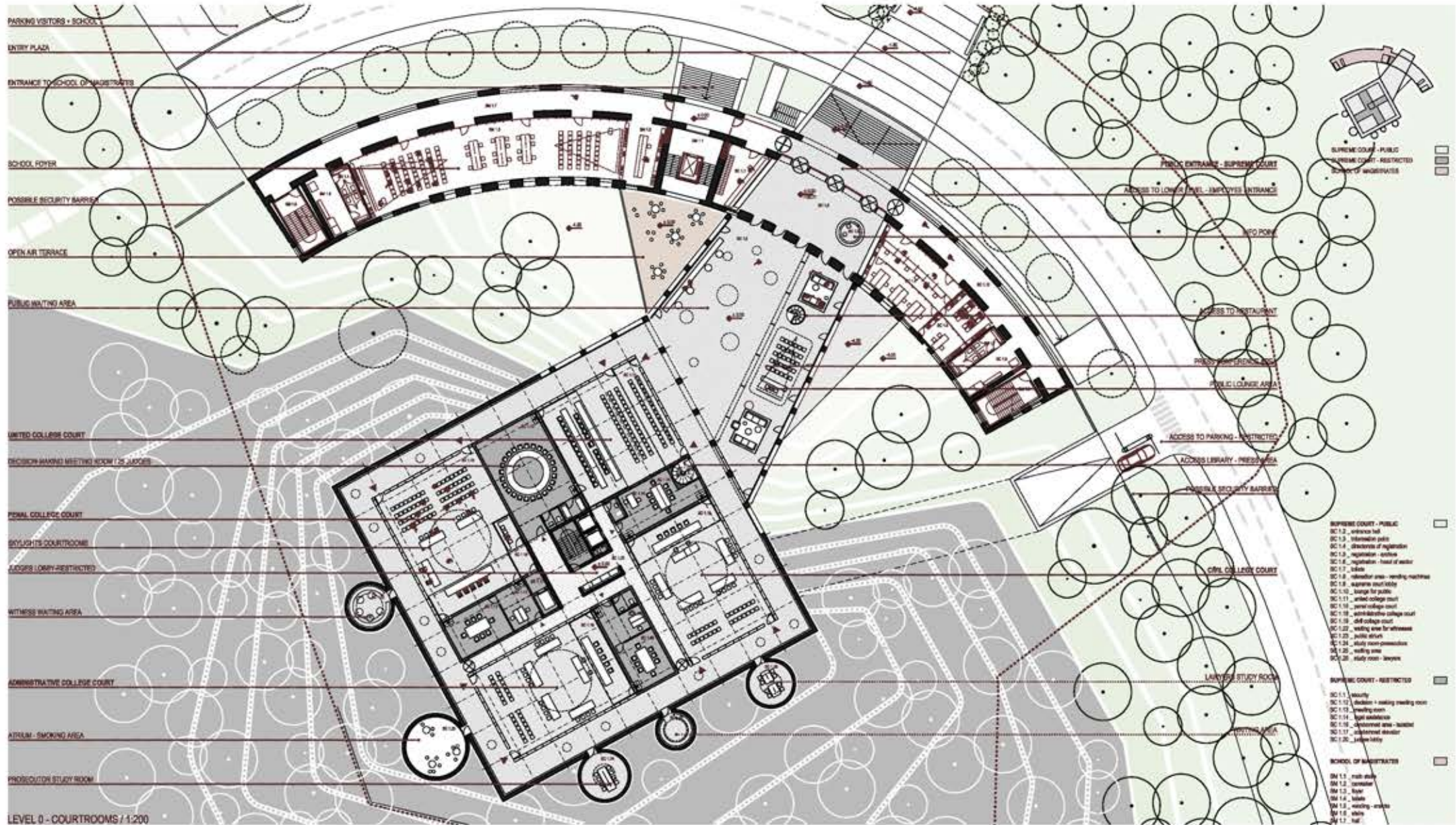
BY INVERTING THE PROGRAMMATIC SCHEME, THE SUPREME COURT BECOMES IMMERSED IN THE LARGE PARK. THE EXISTING VALLE BUILDING IS 'LIBERATED', AND PRESERVED.



SUPREME COURT ACCESS ROUTE



PUBLIC CONCOURSE / LOBBY COURTHOUSE



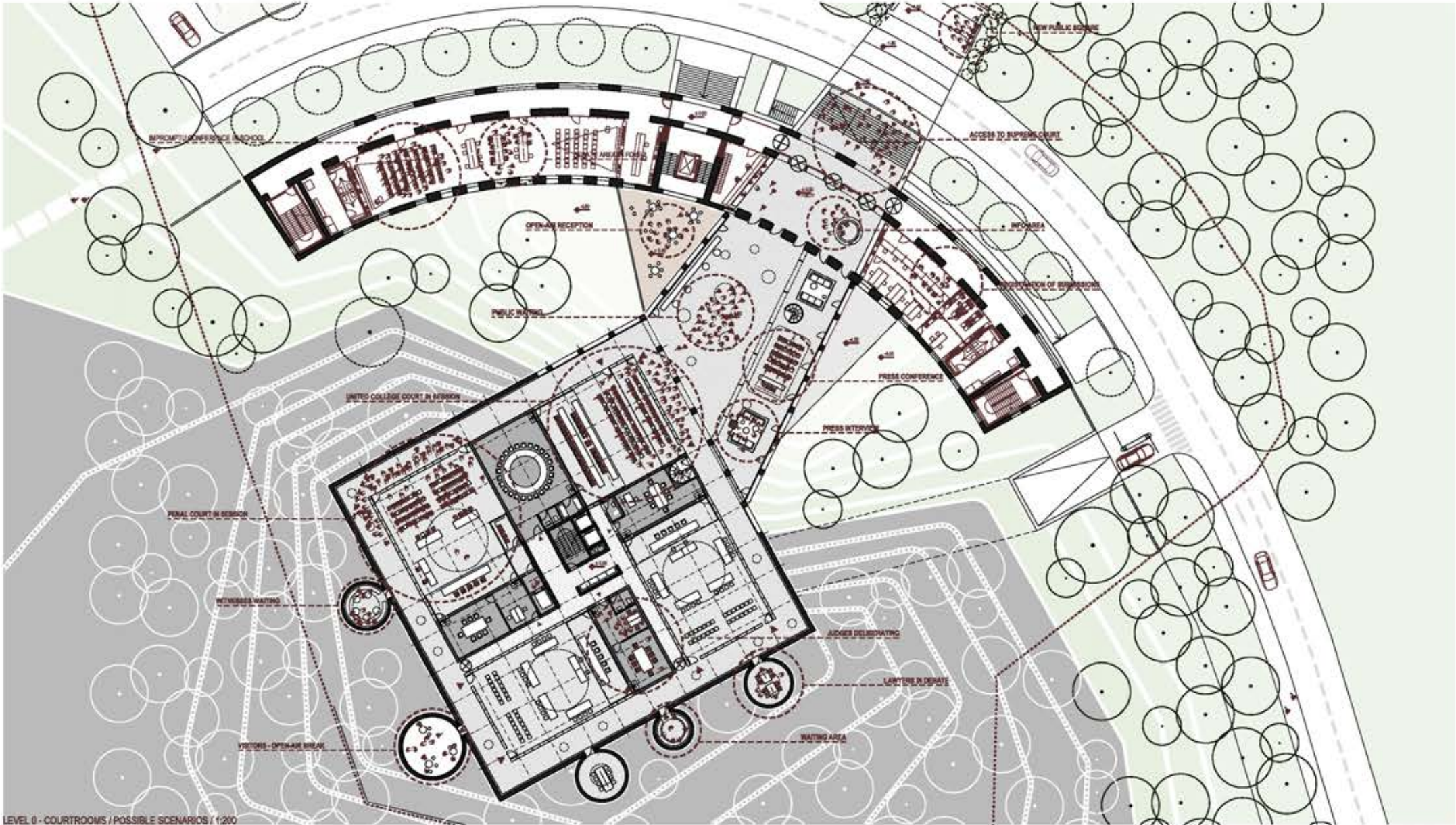
THE NEW COURTHOUSE CONNECTS TO THE PUBLIC SPHERE AND TO THE CITY THROUGH A 'CUT' IN THE EXISTING BUILDING - OLD AND NEW CAN EXIST SEPARATELY, YET TOGETHER.



SUPREME COURT ENTRANCE



COURTROOM - ADMINISTRATIVE COLLEGE COURT



LEVEL 0 - COURTRUOMS / POSSIBLE SCENARIOS / 1:200

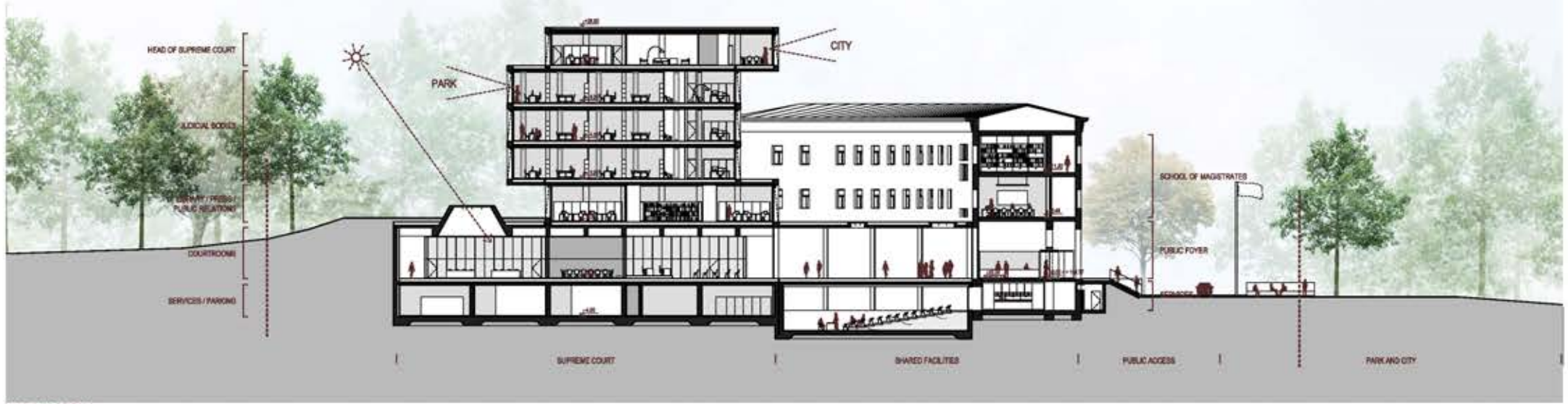
NUMEROUS POSSIBLE SCENARIOS CAN TAKE PLACE ON THE PUBLIC CONCOURSE OF THE NEW COMPLEX, VERY 'PUBLIC' AND VERY 'PRIVATE' EVENTS HAPPENING ON THE SAME PLANE.



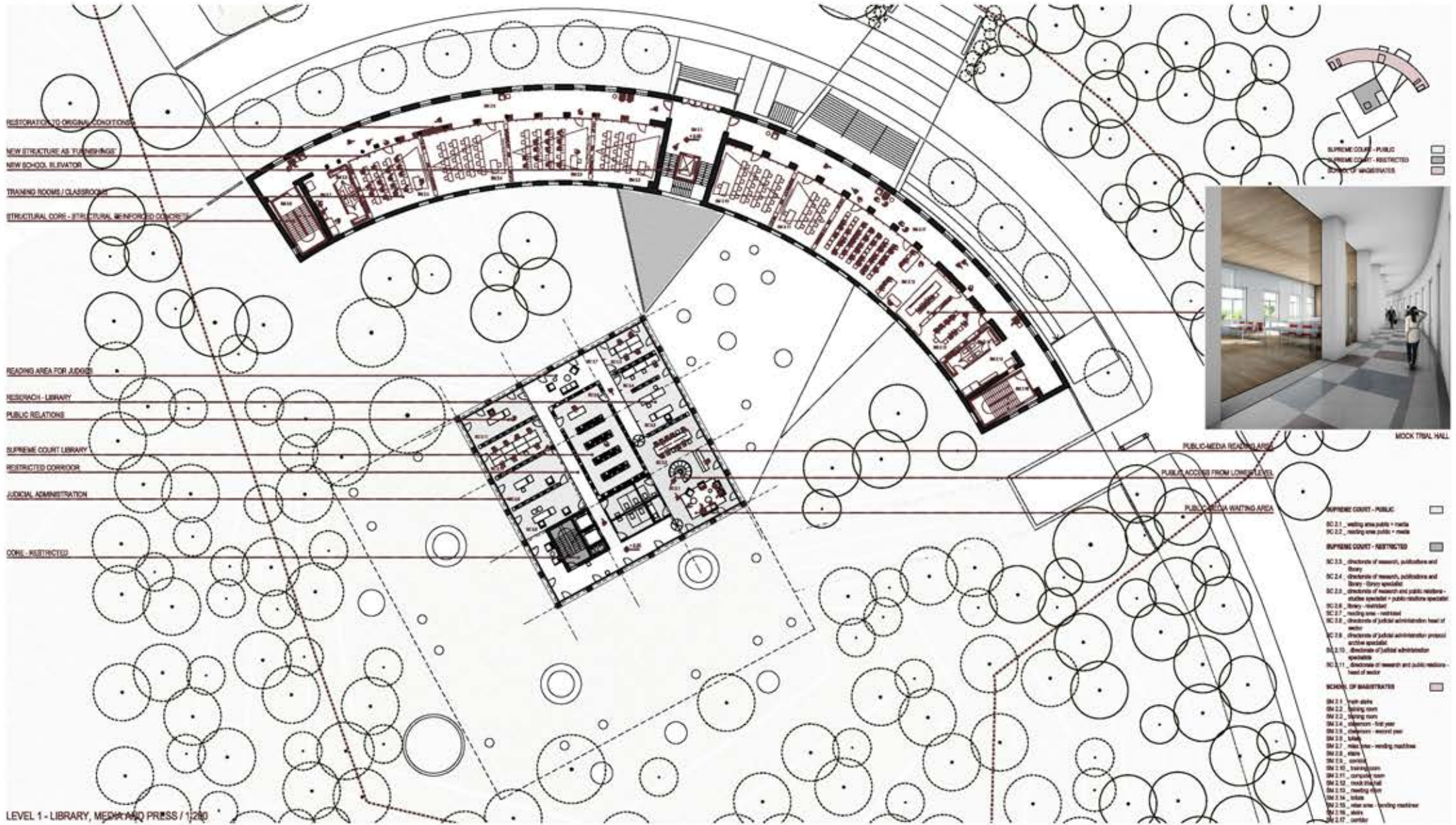
WITNESS WAITING AREA



COURT LEVEL PATIO



SECTION B / 1:200

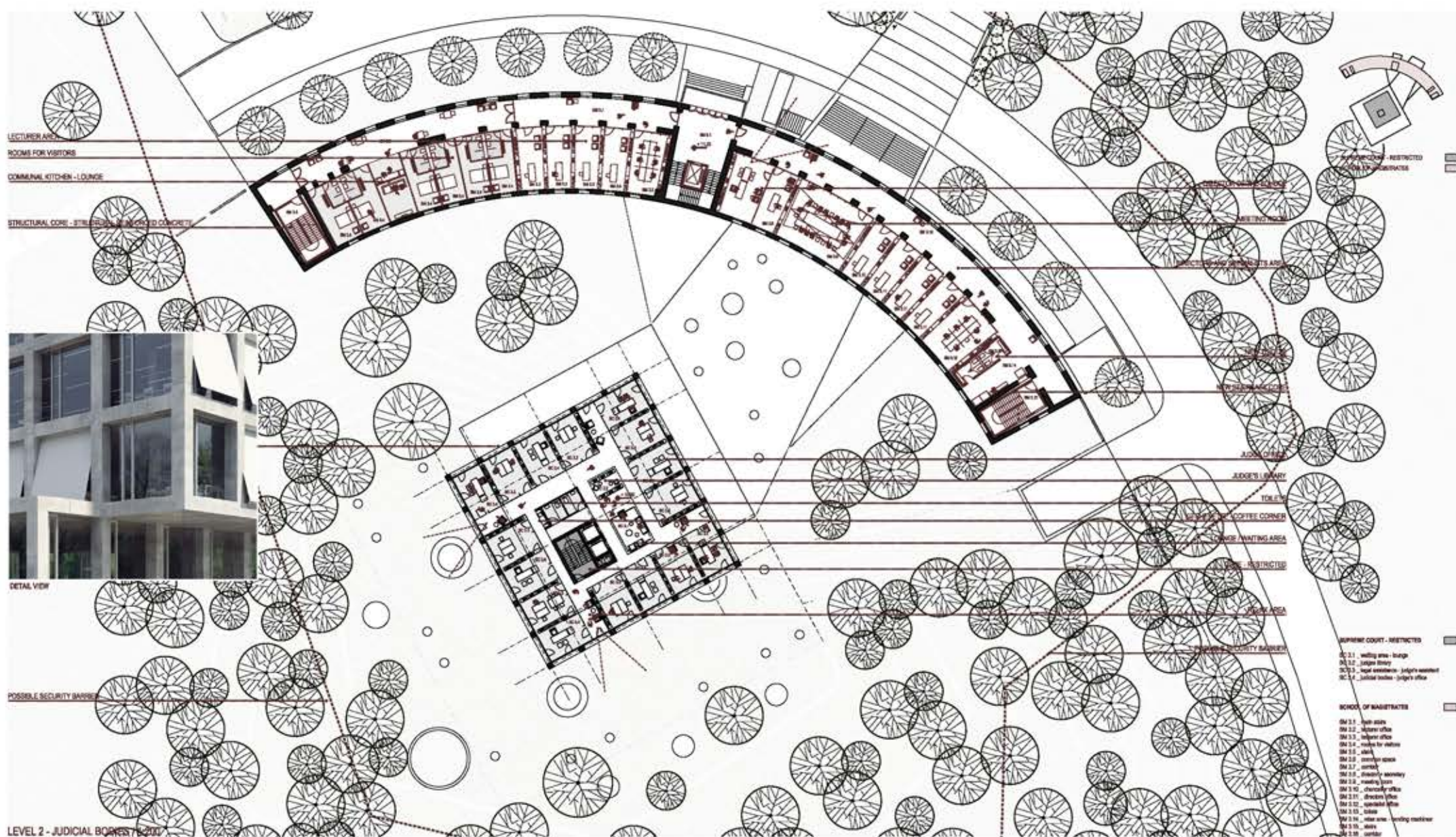


LEVEL 1 - LIBRARY, MEDIA AND PRESS / 1:200

LEVEL ABOVE THE COURTROOMS, CONTAINING PRESS AREA, SHARED LIBRARY AND MEDIA ZONE, OPENS FULLY TOWARDS THE PARK, IT IS 'SUBMERGED' INTO THE SURROUNDING GREENERY.



VIEW FROM THE PARK



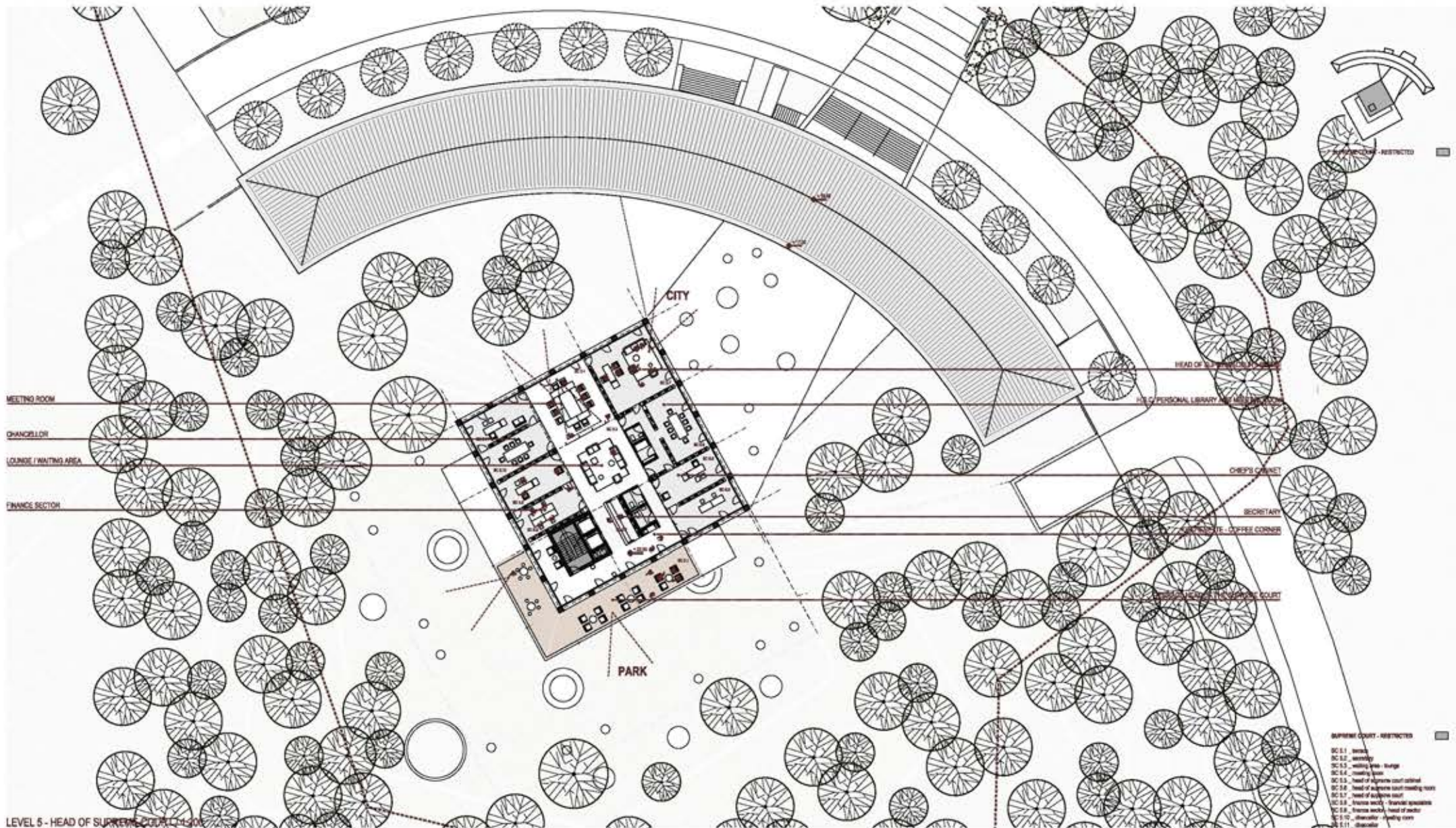
THE UPPER VOLUME, 'COLONIZED' WITH JUDGES' AND ASSISTANTS' OFFICES, SHIFTS TOWARDS THE PARK, ALLOWING FOR MAXIMUM OPENNESS OF JUDGES OFFICES TOWARDS THE VIEWS.



JUDGES FLOOR - RECEPTION



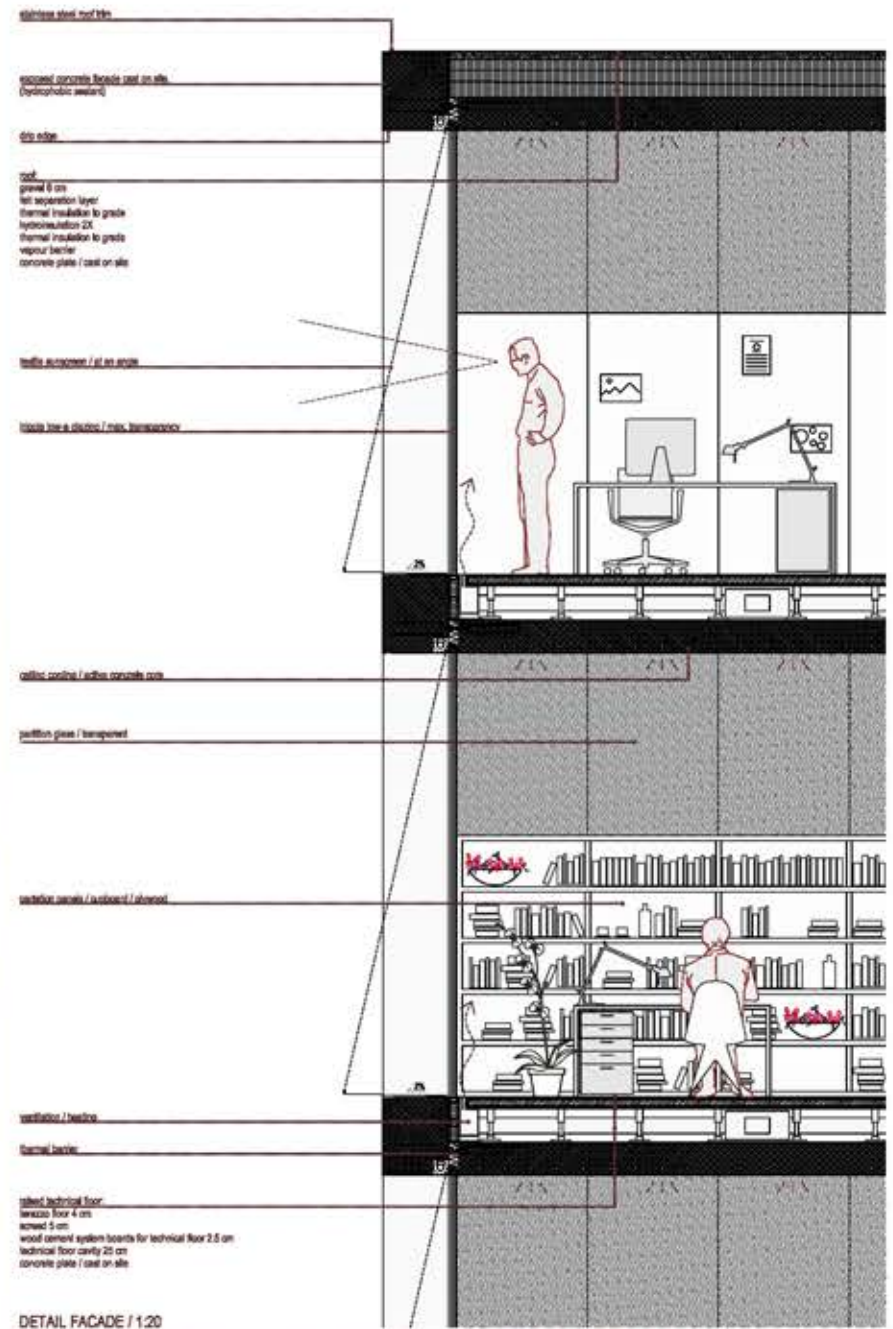
SOUTH-WEST FACADE / 1:200



TOP FLOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE 'TILTS' BACK TOWARDS THE SCHOOL BUILDING, PROVIDING OFFICES FOR THE HEAD JUDGE AND HIS TEAM, FLOATING ABOVE THE PARK AND OPENING TOWARDS THE VIEWS OF THE CITY.



OFFICE - HEAD OF THE SUPREME COURT



BRUTAL SIMPLICITY OF EXPRESSION IS MATCHED BY THE SOPHISTICATION OF THE FORMAL CONCEPT - RATIONAL AND 'OBVIOUS' MATERIALITY COULD LEAD TO A POTENTIALLY SUBLIME BUILT STRUCTURE.



VIEW FROM THE PARK

