THE

SHAM

MUSEUM

Exploring a potential return to architectural ornamentation

Masters Thesis in Architecture
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Gothenburg, Sweden. 2016

The Sham Museum

Masters Thesis in Architecture
Matter, Space, Structure Studio

Emily Hamilton

Autumn 2015

ABSTRACT

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Set in the picturesque suburb of Clifton in Bristol, England I am proposing a small scale art museum. This museum will be a vehicle in which to explore the theme of decoration, a potential return to architectural ornamentation.

This design proposal will seek to understand the local building context by analysing specific architectural elements, their function and their role in ornamentation. Categories are devised based on the function for different types of ornamentation, a set of design rules I will implement in 'Sham Museum.'

The museum will aim to bridge the gap between the familiarity of classical motifs to local residents and to challenge them with ideas of modern art. The art museum becomes an art piece, the visitors falling into a carefully concocted trap where they experience a morphing of a classical motif into modern art forms. Visitors first experience subtle variations of ornament gradually morphing into ornament that continues along a path to be structural and then spatial.

Examiner: Morten Lund
Supervisor: Kengo Skorick

SHAM CASTLE: a stone edifice, Bath, UK

SHAM

noun
1. a thing that is not what it is reported to be.
"our health system is a sham"

adjective
1. bogus; false.

This curious folly was designed in 1755 but meant to look medieval to match the nearby wealthy estate. The rear of 'Sham Castle' is without any ornamentation as it was only supposed to be viewed from the front.


Front view   Rear view

'Sham Museum' the name from 'Sham Castle' a stone edifice built to improve the view from a wealthy nearby estate. Whilst it was designed in 1755 but meant to look medieval to match the estate. The rear of 'Sham Castle' is without ornamentation as it was intended to only be viewed from the front from the castle. This reference perhaps gives you some ideas about the intentions of my project.
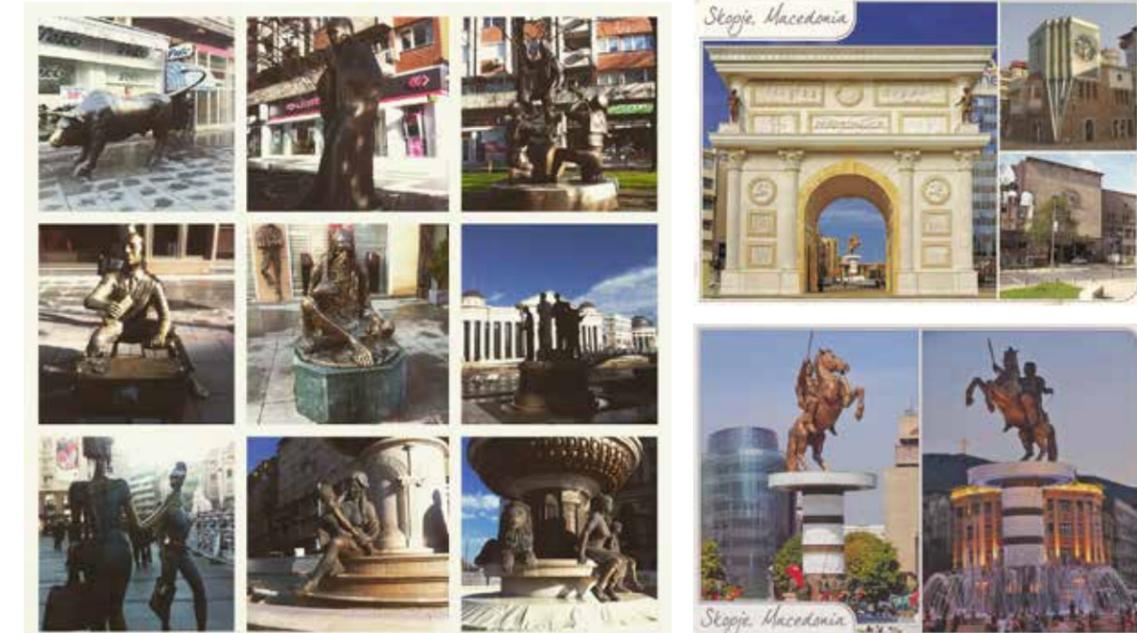
'SKOPJE 2014'

Photos of statues in Skopje   Postcards from Skopje

The other key point of departure was a trip to Skopje where I saw the results of an ambitious development program called 'Skopje 2014' where many Greek-revival buildings are springing up as a way to concrete a new Macedonian (FYROM) identity. This idea of fake architecture intrigued me. Buildings cannot help but make a statement even if the statement is you want to fit in.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I: SITE CONTEXT

INTRODUCING THE LOCAL CONDITIONS

SITE CONTEXT

INTRODUCING CLIFTON, BRISTOL

_____

A historic neighbourhood boasting Georgian and Regency architecture.

Typical views across Clifton
These photos showcase the typical architecture of the area.
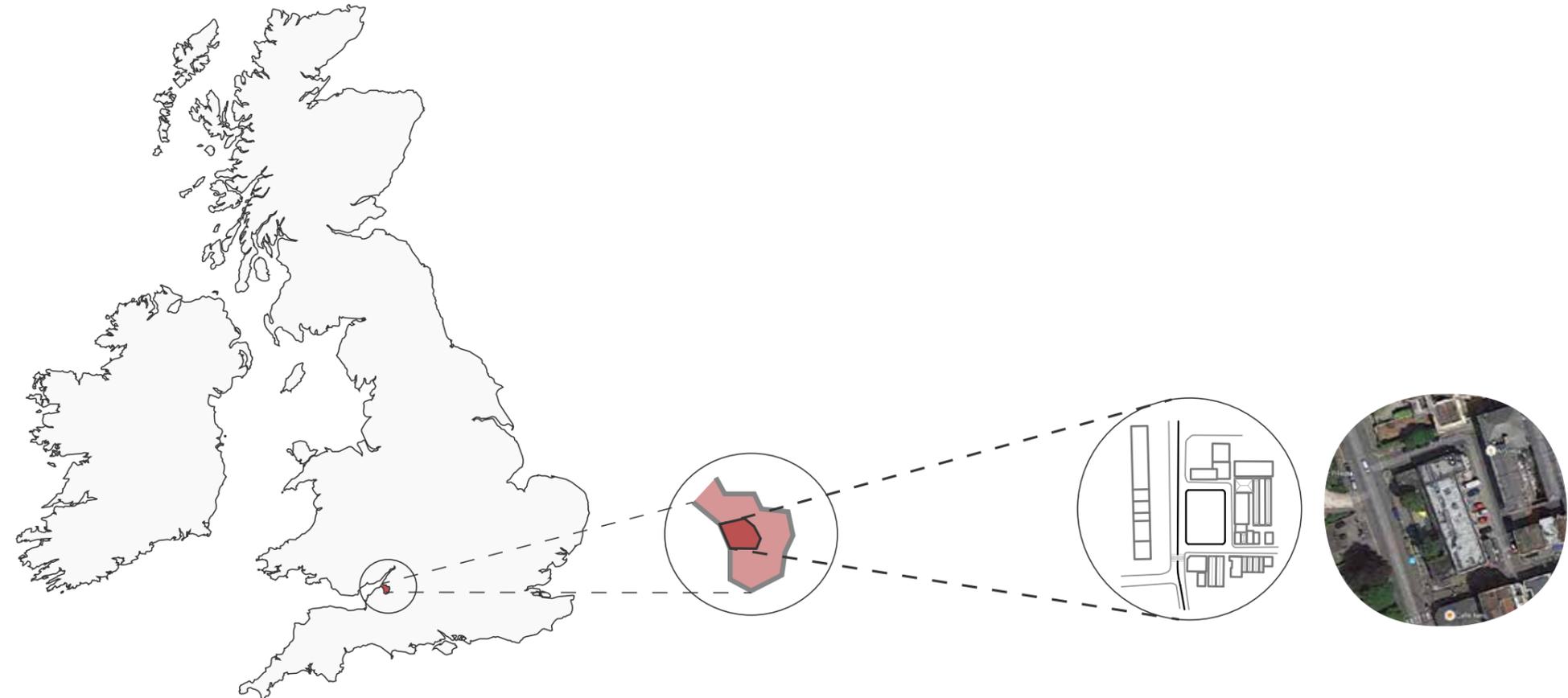
**Location of
Bristol in the UK**

**Location of
Clifton in Bristol**

**Location of
site in Clifton**

Aerial view of site

Bristol is a city in the South-West of the UK, near the border with Wales.
Clifton is a suburb within Bristol, known for Georgian and Regency architecture. The site itself is within
Clifton village, which is an area with plenty of shops and restaurants. The block is under renovation currently,
plans to develop it are on hold, as planning permission is sought.

SITE CONTEXT

Kings Parade, Clifton (Bristol)

A 1960's eyesore at the centre of historic Clifton.

Set in the picturesque suburb of Clifton, in Bristol, England, I was inspired by the conservative mind set of local residents and the local urban fabric.
Clifton is dominated by great examples of Georgian and regency architecture. Proposing a renovation of an ugly 1960's building was always going to be challenging, balancing a fine line between emulating the past and proposing new ideas in architecture.
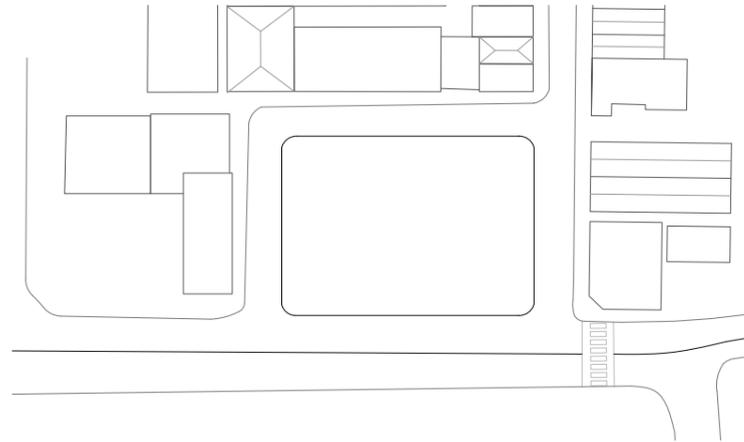
Front photo of the existing site.

Rear photo of the existing site

Site Development: The modern 'menace'

The site is currently under development, with plans to build develop the site into residences, office space and a shop. The proposal above (image created by Kingswood Architecture firm) was denied planning permission with the closing comment shown.

"Many proposed developments are a menace in which the Clifton character is thrown to the winds in favour of a modernistic form. This must not happen in Clifton. Architects and promoters will have to think of some way to keep Clifton Clifton"

SITE CONTEXT

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO MUSEUM DESIGN

Designing a museum in a historical setting poses various questions and challenges for the designer. Pictured are two possible approaches to museum design, it is designed to fit into the context or stand out? Albeit there are many strategies I designed I wanted my design for Sham Museum to be this, a building that is designed to fit into much older buildings will be slightly fake.

Below are some different viewpoints on this matter. My view is pictured last; rather than dismissing local residents as morons anxiously complaining 'things were better in the old days' I drew from this and addressing a more sensible approach to a modern interpretation of ornament.

Camouflaged amongst its surroundings Sainsburys Wing, National Gallery
Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates
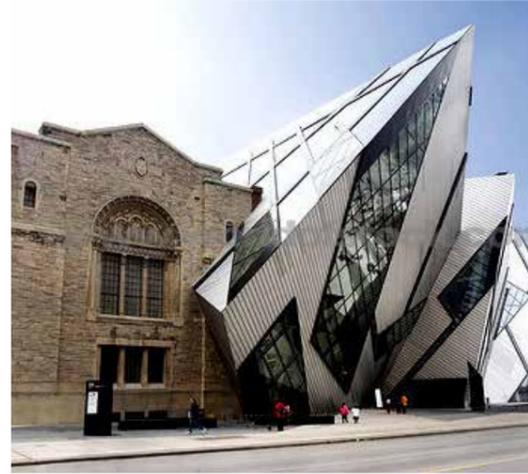
Bold expressive form
Royal Ontario Museum
Studio Libeskind

Everything was better 'back in the day'

How can I make my mark in architecture?

What will be the least offensive architecture to the general public?

How can I respond to all these local conditions?

THE PUBLIC

THE ARCHITECT

THE CITY COUNCIL

ME

Different approaches to development in Clifton.

Typical historic residential housing

A modern interpretation

Clifton: Historic meets modern / Ornament meets undecorated

Local photos showing a sudden change in architectural style. This change is often quite dramatic when half of the building has been destroyed (often in WWII as the area was bombed) and a modern replacement has been built.

*INVESTIGATING
ARCHITECTURAL
ELEMENTS*

THE DICTIONARY OF ORNAMENT

STRUCTURAL
_____

CORNICE

stone

DECORATIVE QUOIN

stone

KEYSTONE

stone

SPANDRELS

stone

BOSS

stone

Pictured here are photos of architectural details from surrounding buildings at the site. I separated them by the detail and the material used.

LIGHT
_____

BALCONIES
cast iron

By collecting these images of surrounding architectural details I started to investigate what effect each detail achieved.

For example, creating elaborate detail (in the balconies seen to the left) makes the heavy cast iron material appear lighter and the balcony becomes an ornate design feature.

The stone balconies below use perforations to use less material and also create design opportunities for ornamentation.
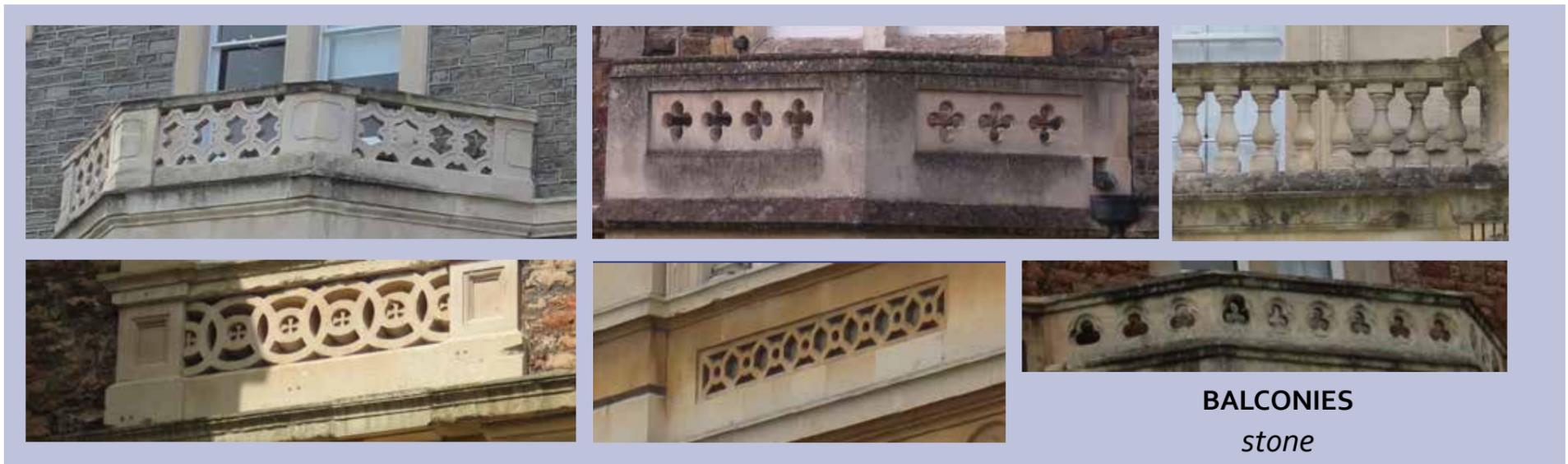
BALCONIES
stone

THE DICTIONARY OF ORNAMENT

3.

JUNCTION MEETING POINTS

_____

CORBELS

stone

BRACKETS

cast iron

BARGEBOARDS
wood

CORNICE (edges)
PEDIMENT (triangle part)
ENTABLATURE (whole structure)

stone

Pictured here are photos of architectural details from surrounding buildings at the site. I separated them by the detail and the material used.

The Dictionary of Ornament: in detail

FAMILY	NAME	DETAIL	FUNCTION / STRUCTURE	TYPE OF DECORATION	EFFECT	CATEGORY
ELEMENT AEDICULE	SPRANDEL — Triangular section on each side of an arch.				'Blank' area of opportunity for ornament. Animates flat surface.	
	IMPOST — Block on top of column where arch begins.				Arch is 'growing' from column (as emphasized by foliage.) Emphasizes structure.	
	VOUSSOIR — Bricks used to construct an arch.				Frames the arch and emphasizes the structure.	
	FANLIGHT — Semi-circular light above a door.				Breaks up the rectinlinear door by adding a curved shape above.	
	KEYSTONE — Central stone of arch. Originally crucial wedge in construction but often ornamental.				Visually unites arch. Leads your eye to a key moment of opportunity for decoration	
	ARCHIVOLT — Moulding around an arch which may be plain or decorated.				'Blank' area of opportunity for symbolic decoration due to the key position.	
ELEMENT ROOF	PROJECTING CORNICE — Horizontal decorative moulding which functions to drain away rainwater.				Gives the building an imposing presence without the visual reassurance of the roof showing.	
	BARGEBOARDS — Board fastened to projecting gables of a roof.				Articulates the joint at the end of the gable. Light finish to heavy, solid roof.	
	PARAPET — Provides a fortification effect. Hides the roof and guttering.				Fortifcation. Emphasizes structure.	
	BOSS — Carved, ornamental form, covers the join or intersection between the various ribs of vaulting.				Conceals the actual vault joint and also highlights the join with the ornamental foliage.	

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ELEMENT PROJECTIONS	BOSS — Carved, ornamental form, covers the join or intersection between the various ribs of vaulting.				Conceals the actual vault joint and also highlights the join with the ornamental foliage.	
	CAST IRON BALCONY — Often used a material to build balconies with in this area, cheap (at the time) and could be very decorative.				The cast iron-work the balcony is made from makes the heavy imposing structure seem light and dainty.	
	ORNAMENTAL BRACKETS — Brackets hold up any projecting element.				Brackets can be used either as a structural feature with or without ornament, or purely decoratively.	
	CONSOLE — Ornamental bracket with unique S shape.				Grand articulation of structure.	
MASONRY	BANDED COLUMN — A column with drums alternating in some way.				Adds interest and variety to openings.	
	RUSTICATION — Chamfered blocks.				Shadowed effect - emphasizes the structure. Textural device. Often used only on ground floors as the heaviness denotes security.	
	QUOINS — Emphasized masonry blocks at adjoining walls.				Visual reassurance that the building is solid and stable. Frames the building.	
MOULDING	CHEVRON — Geometric pattern.				A motif to animate surfaces. Easy and cheap to create as pattern is simple and repeating.	
	STRING COURSE — Horizontal band of moulding. Visually divides structure.				Used to indicate floor levels. Visual reassurance	
	LINENFOLDING — Decorative paneling on doors. Developed by woodcarvers, many think the pattern is supposed to resemble linen cloth but it more likely arose as an imitation of wall paintings depicting verses on scrolls.				The paneling catches light, producing attractive shadows and a 3D effect.	

THE DICTIONARY OF ORNAMENT

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After collecting knowledge of local building details, I had research to create a dictionary of ornament as seen on the left.

I asked myself how ornament is used?

For example, the keystone – last voussoir or block to be set in the centre of an arch was originally used for construction purposes as it held the arch in place.

Development in technology meant it is no longer needed in the construction of an arch yet it became symbolic, it focuses the arch.

By analysing local ornament I dispelled the superficial side and explored the function of each detail.

INVESTIGATING ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

DOORS

_____

Four different local doorways
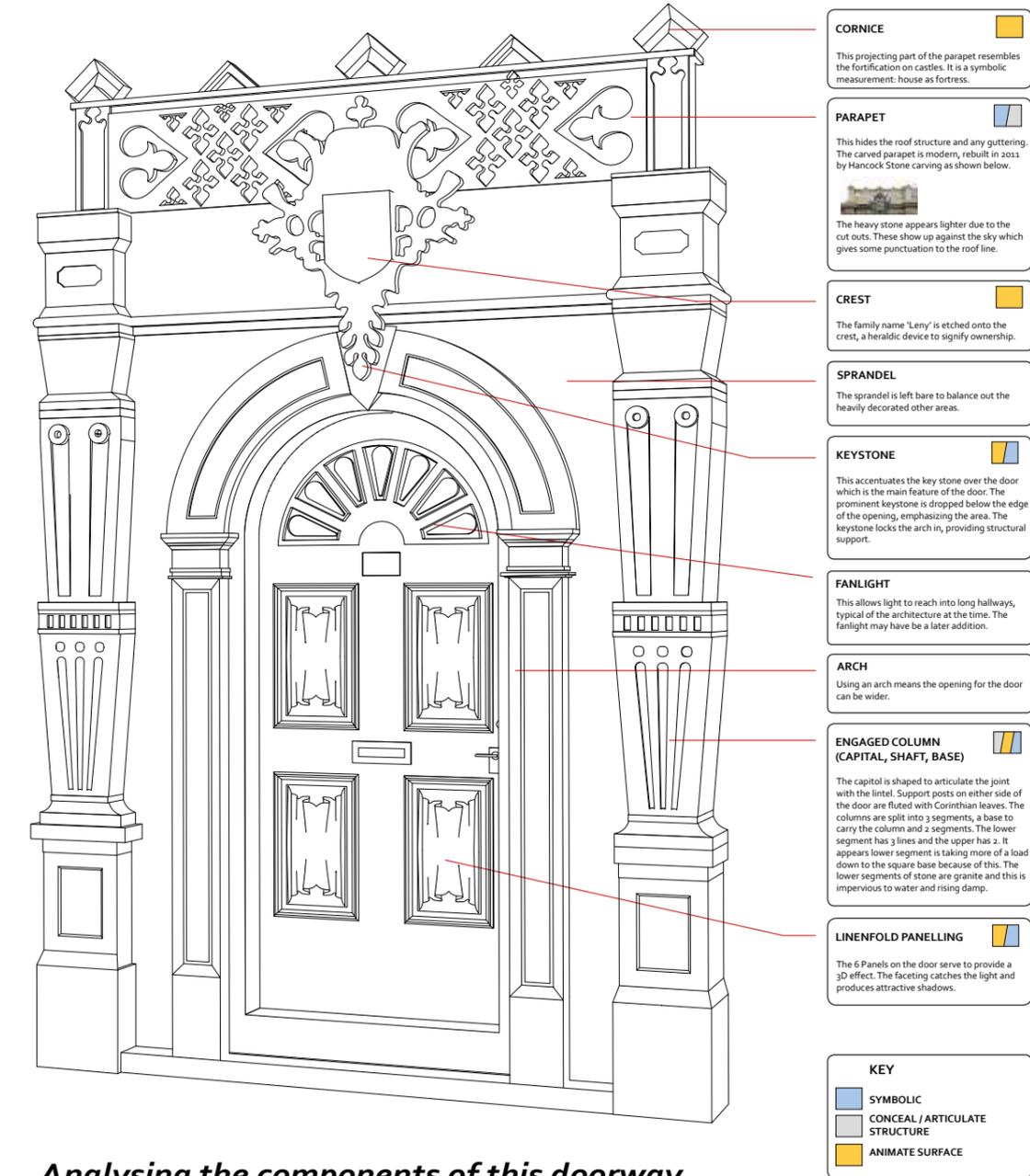
Analysing the components of this doorway

CORNICE
This projecting part of the parapet resembles the fortification on castles. It is a symbolic measurement: house as fortress.

PARAPET
This hides the roof structure and any guttering. The carved parapet is modern, rebuilt in 2011 by Hancock Stone carving as shown below.

The heavy stone appears lighter due to the cut outs. These show up against the sky which gives some punctuation to the roof line.

CREST
The family name 'Leny' is etched onto the crest, a heraldic device to signify ownership.

SPRANDEL
The sprandel is left bare to balance out the heavily decorated other areas.

KEYSTONE
This accentuates the key stone over the door which is the main feature of the door. The prominent keystone is dropped below the edge of the opening, emphasizing the area. The keystone locks the arch in, providing structural support.

FANLIGHT
This allows light to reach into long hallways, typical of the architecture at the time. The fanlight may have be a later addition.

ARCH
Using an arch means the opening for the door can be wider.

ENGAGED COLUMN (CAPITAL, SHAFT, BASE)
The capitol is shaped to articulate the joint with the lintel. Support posts on either side of the door are fluted with Corinthian leaves. The columns are split into 3 segments, a base to carry the column and 2 segments. The lower segment has 3 lines and the upper has 2. It appears lower segment is taking more of a load down to the square base because of this. The lower segments of stone are granite and this is impervious to water and rising damp.

LINENFOLD PANELLING
The 6 Panels on the door serve to provide a 3D effect. The faceting catches the light and produces attractive shadows.

KEY
SYMBOLIC	
CONCEAL / ARTICULATE STRUCTURE	
ANIMATE SURFACE	

PARAPET

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INVESTIGATING ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

KEY

SYMBOLIC

CONCEAL / ARTICULATE STRUCTURE

ANIMATE SURFACE

I devised a set of categories as rules for why ornamentation is used.

SYMBOLIC (light blue)
Ornament can be used symbolically, to signify a concept. For example, a keystone can used to display a family name, to signify ownership and entrance to a property.

CONCEAL / ARTICULATE STRUCTURE (grey)
Ornament can conceal and at the same time, highlight structure, this would be ornament hiding plain joints with some elaborate foliage for example.

ANIMATE SURFACE (yellow)
Flat surfaces can be animated by creating visual complexity rather than just a flat plain surface.

These categories often overlap and of course are open to interpretation, however this is my interpretation. For example a selection of foliage at the impost (end) of a column as begins springing (where it goes into an arch) conceals this joint, yet highlights it with something else. Then it is also symbolic, the arch looks like it is sprouting from the column.

SPANDREL

Triangular section on each side of an arch.
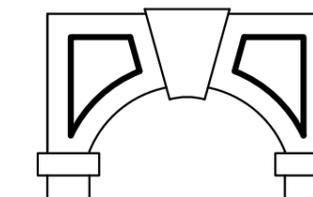
'Blank' area of opportunity for ornament. Animates flat surface.
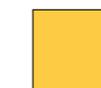
MY INTERPRETATION OF ORNAMENT

USING LOCAL CONTEXT AS A BASIS FOR ORNAMENT STUDIES

INITIAL ORNAMENT RESEARCH:
Local context photos, references, initial sketches

Details I used as reference and inspiration
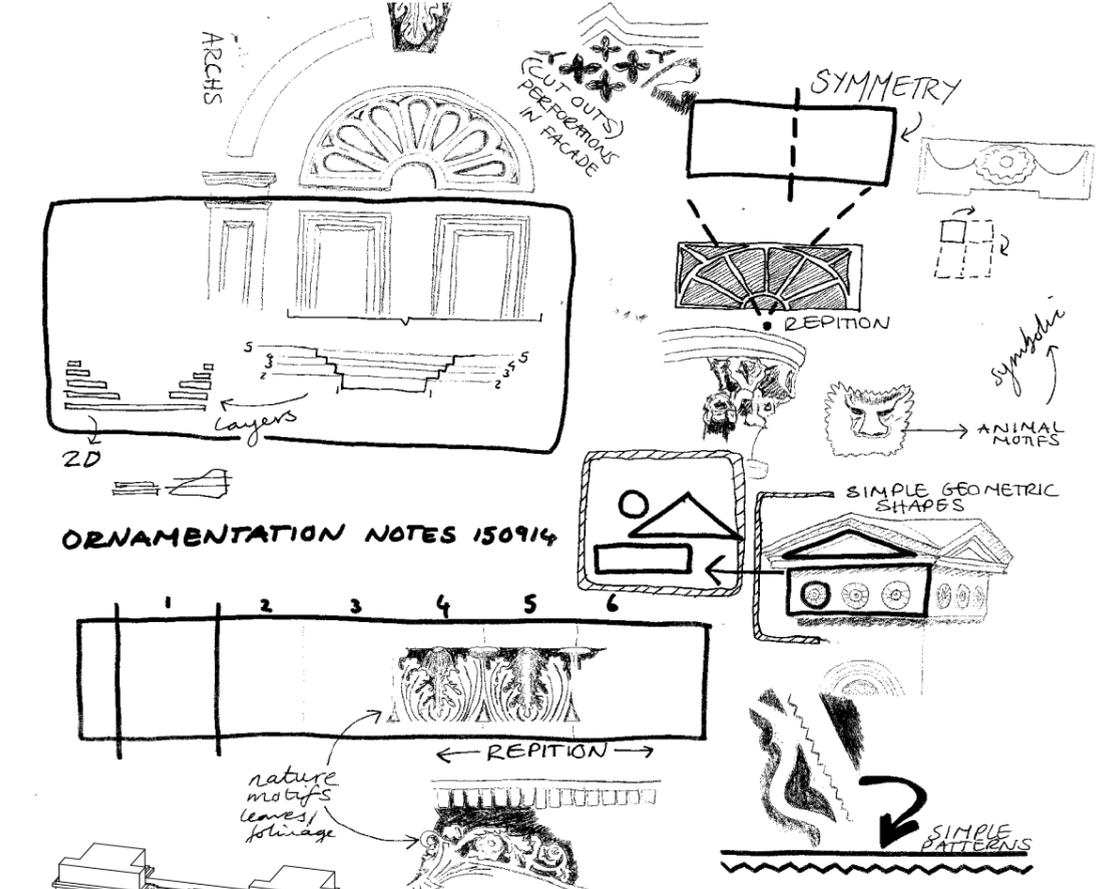
My sketches from local photos and reference details

# INTREPRETATING ORNAMENT

Architectural detail from a local building
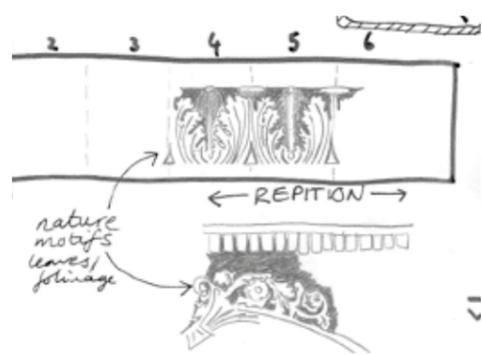
A sketch analysing this detail
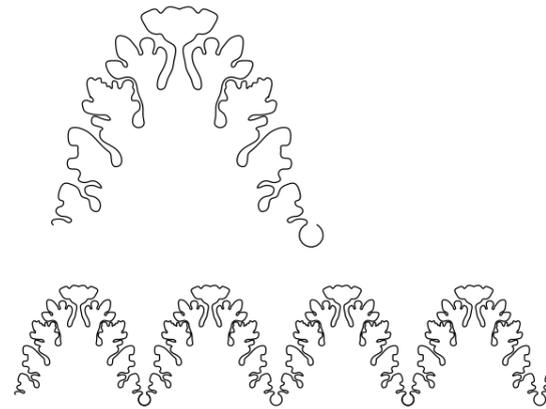
Replicating the detail
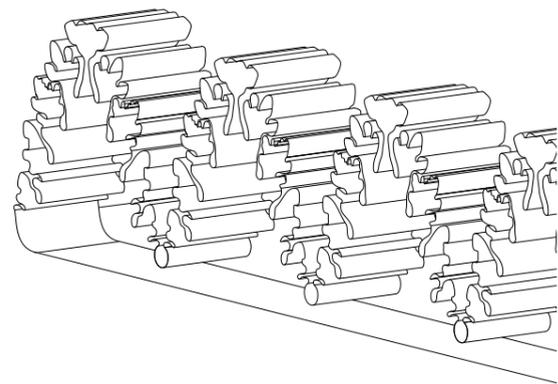

Extruding the curves
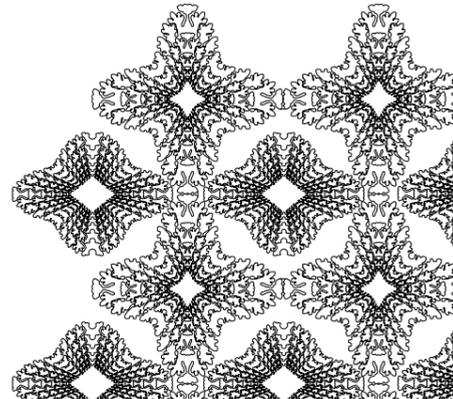
Arraying into a flat pattern

The vast complexity of the different layers of history and meaning in the ornament opened up many design possibilities.

In experiment 1 and 2, I looked at the idea of pattern on 2D surfaces, creating some sort of screen with perforations.

This was not what I had in mind as I wanted a more 3D experimental approach, I wanted to represent ornamentation in the 21st century not a replica of the past.

INTREPRETATING ORNAMENT
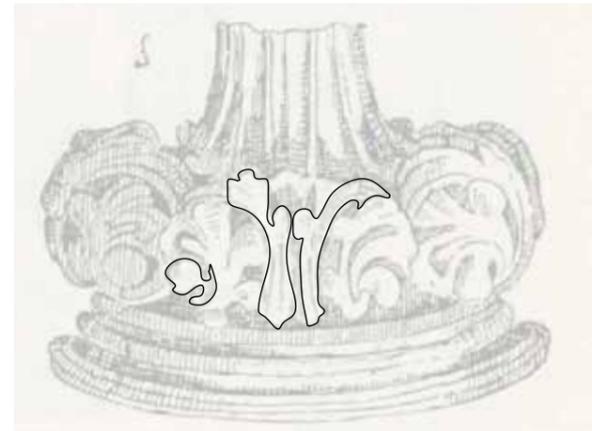
Sketching over reference images for shapes
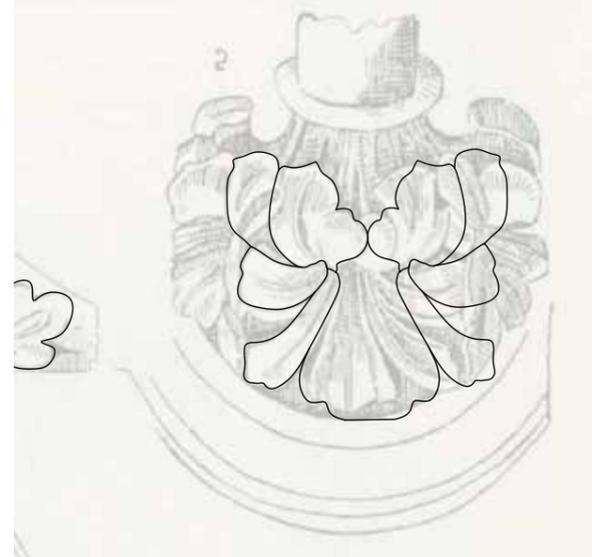
Arranging these shapes to create a pattern

Expanding this pattern - this could be a screen

DELVING INTO ORNAMENT
FORM - FINDING

EXPLORING A 3D MODERN ORNAMENTATION
————————

Above: An image I used as inspiration for the clay experiments.

Right: Photo's of 4 different clay models I created resembling foliage.

"partial human figures can be combined with other elements, such as animal parts, to create bizarre and p grost grotesque figures. These grotesques were meant to amuse onlookers with their sheer preposterousness."
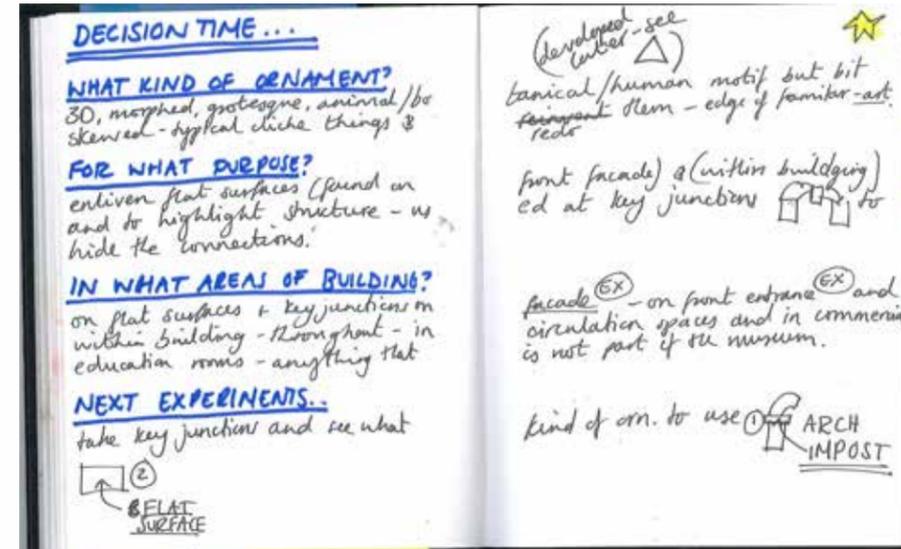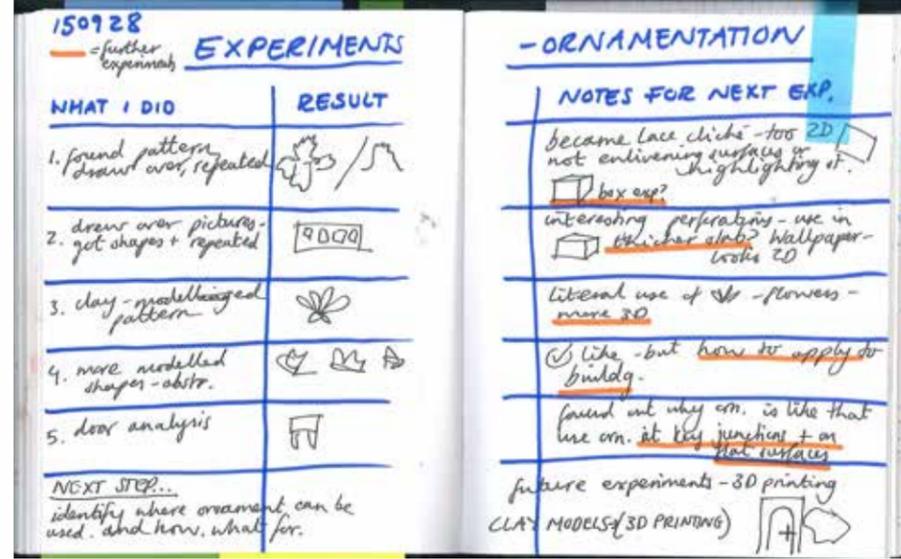
Cataloguing my ornament experiments and the next design steps.

Craving a more 3D approach, throughout the project I have been constantly referring to the artist David Altmejd who often uses motifs of familiarity in his work, in his case, the human figure and distorting it into forms which still hold this essence of the original motif but take on weird and disturbing characteristics.

Altmejd creates highly detailed sculptures that often blur the distinction between interior and exterior, surface and structure, figurative representation and abstraction.

The proximity to what is seen typically as a historic museum allows viewers to relate to the building, but creates enough of a difference to create a weird tension.

Sketches of my ornamentation studies continued.

I decided I wanted ornamentation to be used in different types.

In type 1, the ornament serves to highlight the structure by adorning key junctions.
Example 1: Using ornament where a column meets the springing of an arch as pictured.
Example 2: Covering up a window frame, this highlights the window and create an ivy effect.
Example 3: Hiding the joint from the floor to wall by embellishing skirting boards with 3D foliage that looks like it is growing.

Sketches of my ornamentation studies continued.

In type 2, the ornament serves to enliven flat surfaces.
Example 1: Decorating a spandrel to create more variety on the flat surface.
Example 2: Decorating string-courses to visually divide the structure.
Example 3: Decorated plain walls
Example 4: Panelling of a door to be decorated to create more variety on a flat surface.
Example 5: (left) ornament being used as a shading device to allow light into a space.
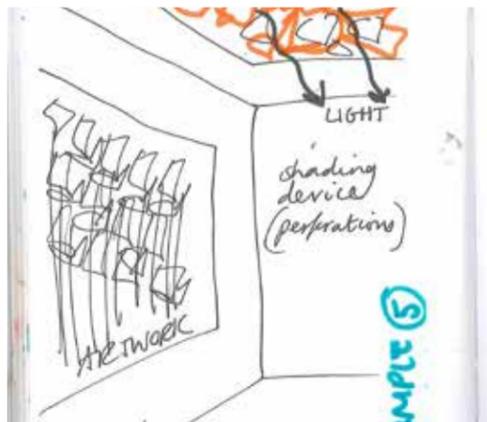
INVESTIGATING
ARCHITECTURAL
ELEMENTS

THE FRONT FACADE

_____

**The Sham Museum's neighbours**

The front façade of the Sham Museum is based on the surrounding buildings with only a small hint things are a little strange (one window is upside down.) Depicting a traditional front, I used techniques employed by surrounding façades. Textural devices such as rustication, emphasizing the ground floor blocks, detonating a sense of stability and security. After stating this allegiance to historic Georgian and Regency buildings, artwork within the museum should complement these old elaborate details.

Site development

The site is currently under development, with plans to build develop the site into residences, office space and a shop. The proposal above (image created by Kingswood Architecture firm) was denied planning permission with the closing comment shown.

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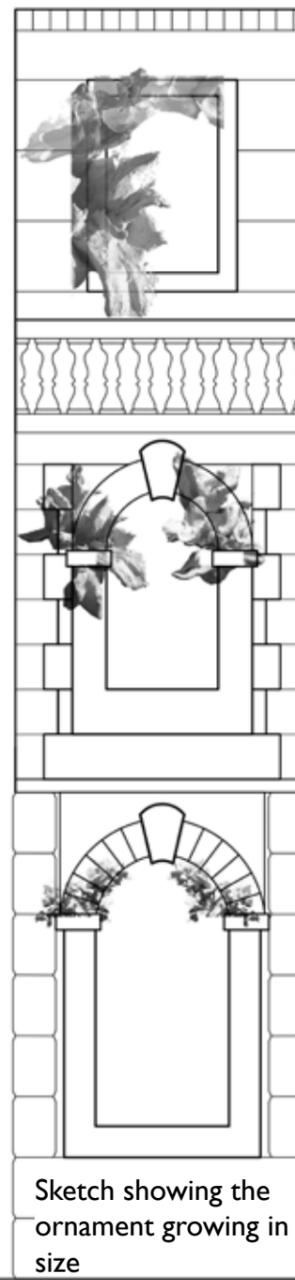
Sketch showing the ornament growing in size

THE FRONT FACADE
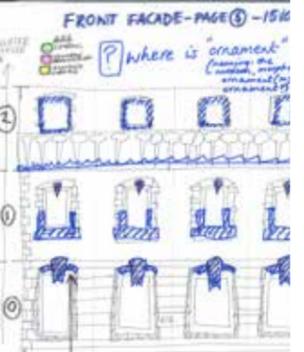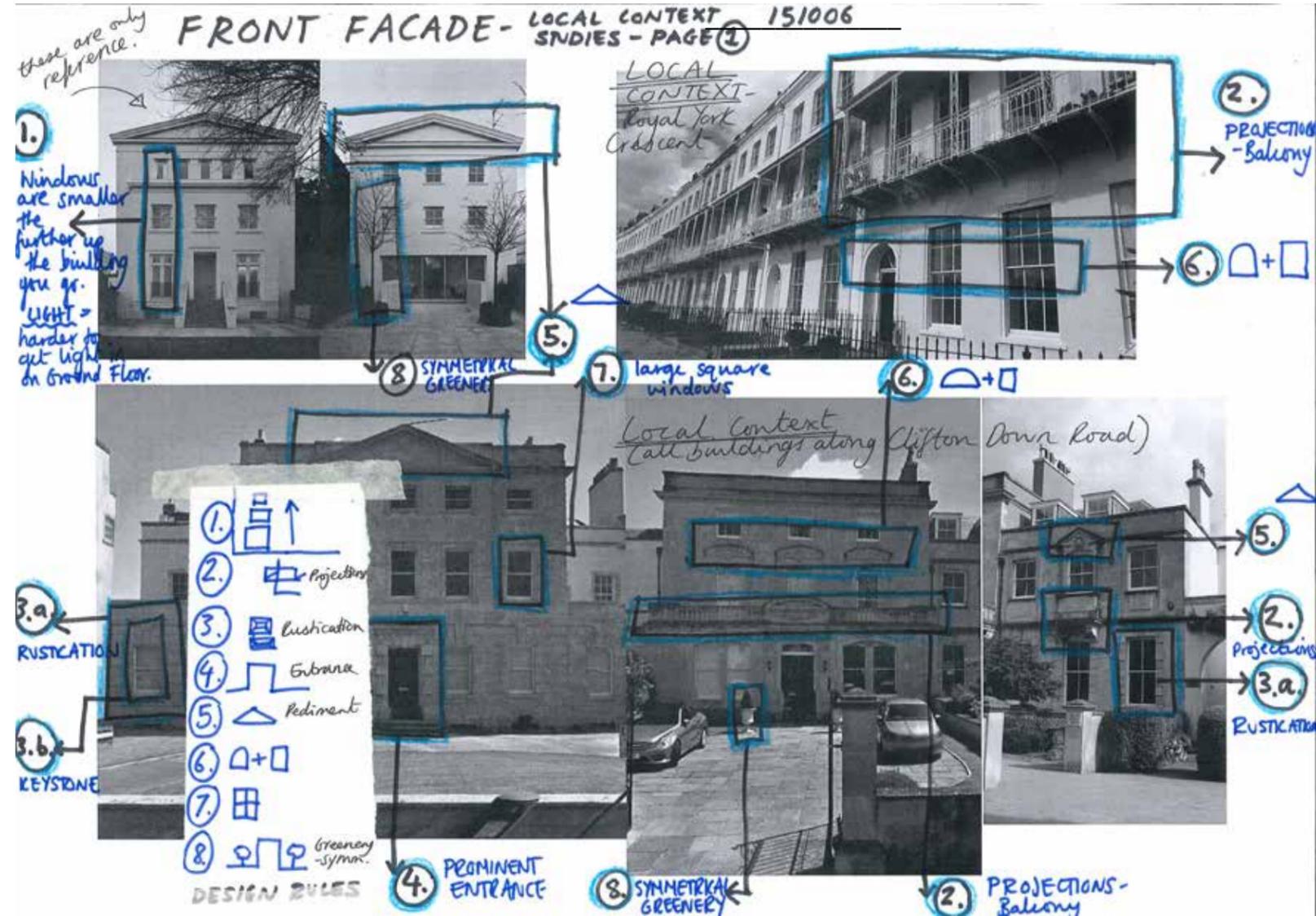
Here I collected various sketches of surrounding buildings and analysed their façades.

What attributes did they have in common?

1. Window sizes are larger closer to the ground due to light.
2. Balcony project out.
3. Rustication is used (chamfering of bocks to emphasize them.)
4. The entrance is in the middle of the front facade.
5. Pediments are used.
6. Regular semi-circle and rectangle shapes are used.
7. Architectural elements are evenly spaced and the same size.
8. Symmetrical
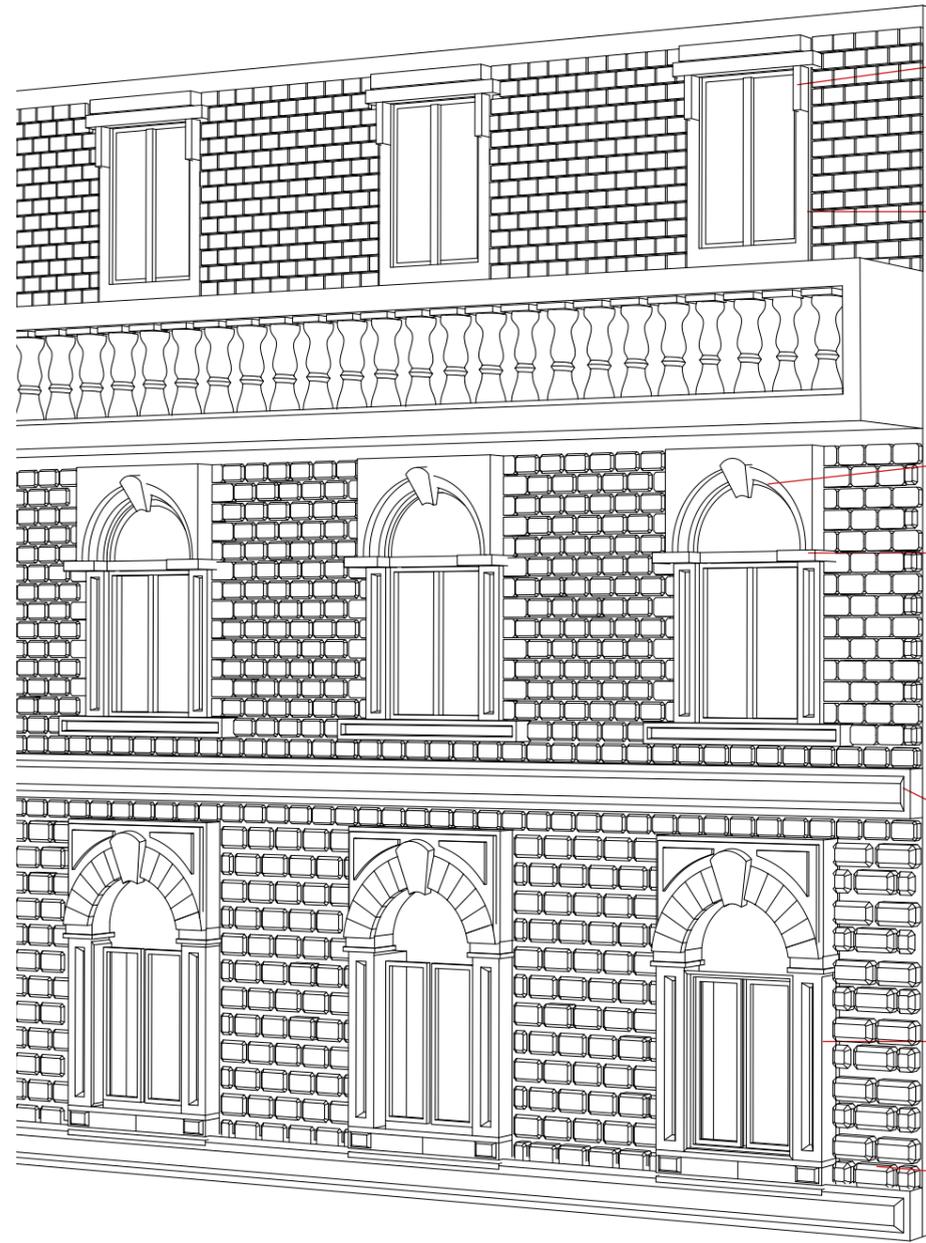
JAMB LINTEL SUPPORT MOULDING

This support is holding up the lintel of the window frame. Unlike this one pictured on a neighbouring building which is purely ornamental.

ORDER OF ORNAMENT

The size and level of ornament and complexity decrease the further up the facade you go. This is so visitors can appreciate a more complex ground floor from their height. Windows don't need to be as large as more sunlight can penetrate into the higher up windows. This gradual phasing out of complexity creates a balanced facade.

RELIEVING ARCH

An additional plain arch placed above an arch to provide extra support and thus simple ornament.

WINDOW TAX

These windows are actually boarded up. Light is only needed from above in the corresponding space for the art work. The idea of allowing windows to symmetrically adorn a facade yet essentially remain fake came from a old law which stated properties were taxed depending on the amount of windows they had. Many windows were boarded up ready to be glazed again at a later date.

A modern extension to the end of a block of flats. Window frames sit covered up to keep the symmetry and order of the windows.

STRINGCOURSE

To visually divide the building to show viewers the different interior sections.

CLASSICAL FRONT

Each bay has been designed in accordance with the local building façades. These are purely sham devices, the construction is actually secured to a steel frame.

RUSTICATION

Chamfered bricks emphasizes the ground floor making it seem more stable and secure.

KEY

■	SYMBOLIC
■	CONCEAL / ARTICULATE STRUCTURE
■	ANIMATE SURFACE
■	SHAM DEVICE

an additional category!

Facade Analysis: Paying homage to the surroundings

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An additional plain arch placed above an arch to provide extra support and thus simple ornament.

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A modern extension to the end of a block of flats. Window frames sit covered up to keep the symmetry and order of the windows.

STRINGCOURSE

To visually divide the building to show viewers the different interior sections.

Facade Analysis: in detail

A modern interpretation of ornament

How can I coax visitors into engaging in modern art/architecture?

West Elevation

Depicting a traditional front, I used techniques employed by surrounding façades. Textural devices such as rustication, emphasizing the ground floor blocks, detonating a sense of stability and security.

Ornament starts to creep in, the closer you get to the building. There is a slight hint something might not be quite right.

DESIGNING THE ARCH
MAIN NAVE OF BUILDING

COMBINING ORNAMENTATION AND SPATIAL STUDIES

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EXPLOITING A CLASSICAL MOTIF: THE ARCH

IDEA ①

the 3 clay pieces used to make up the arch

joined together

arch is starting...

arch is growing...

full arch
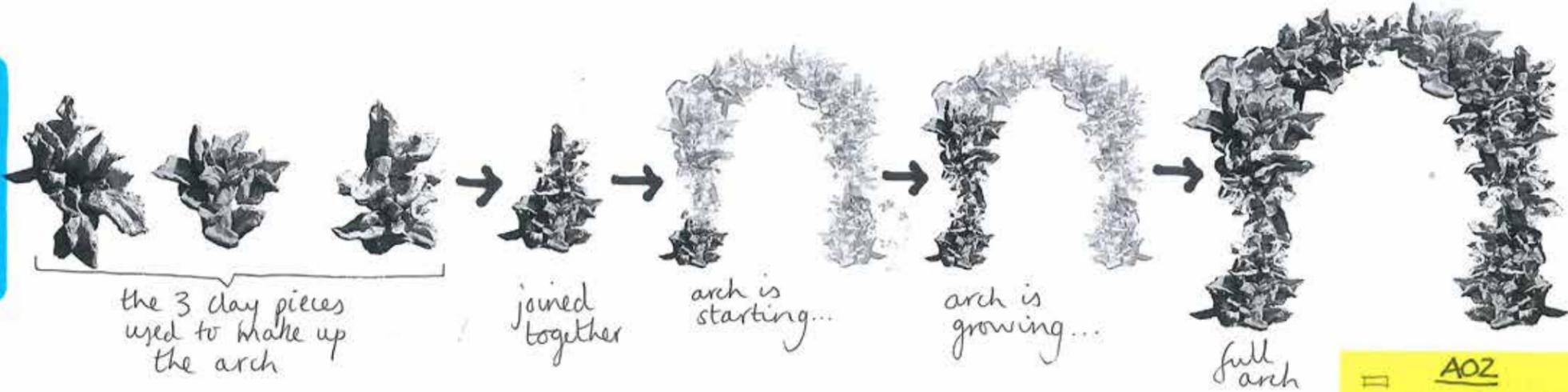
AO2

like lots of bits of clay stuck together (which it basically is) + ivy hedge!

IDEA ②

local context arch on door

seperated into individual elements

ornamentation emerging through each part is growing from the next.
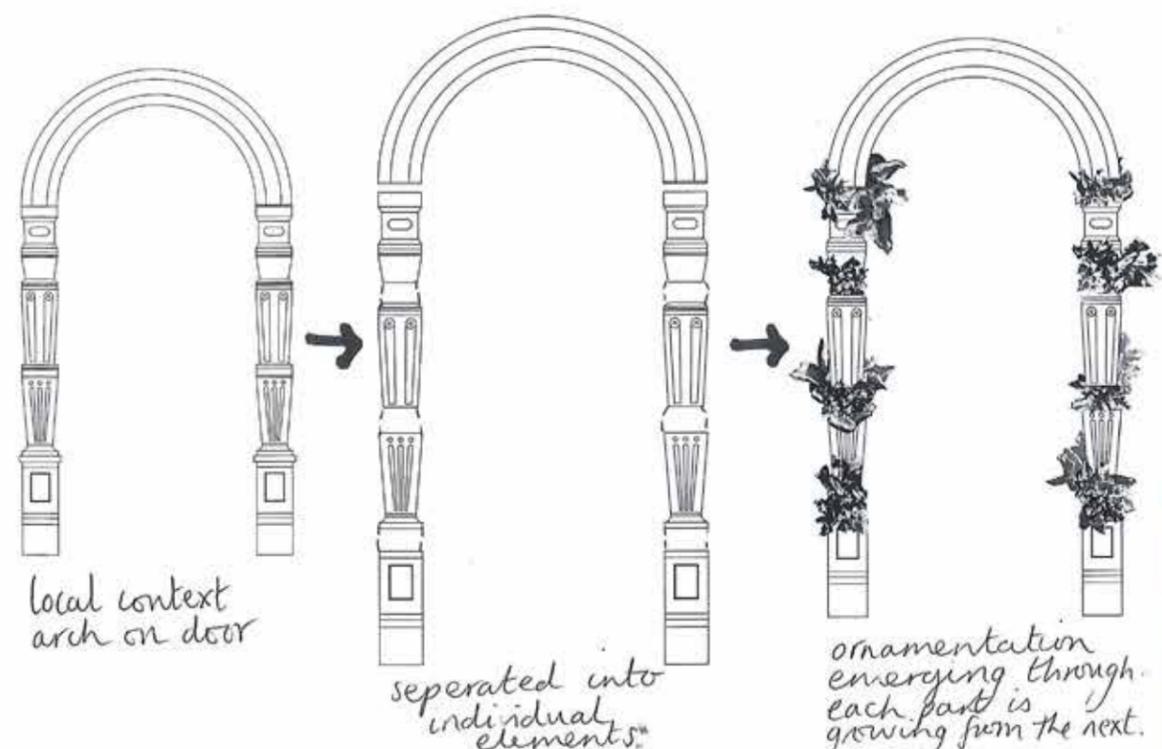
AO2

like bats + between junction parts & element is growing out of

AO2 = POSITIVE/+ CONCL- = NEGATIVE VISIONS

IDEA 1

+ organic feel of column

IN CONTEXT...

LIGHT
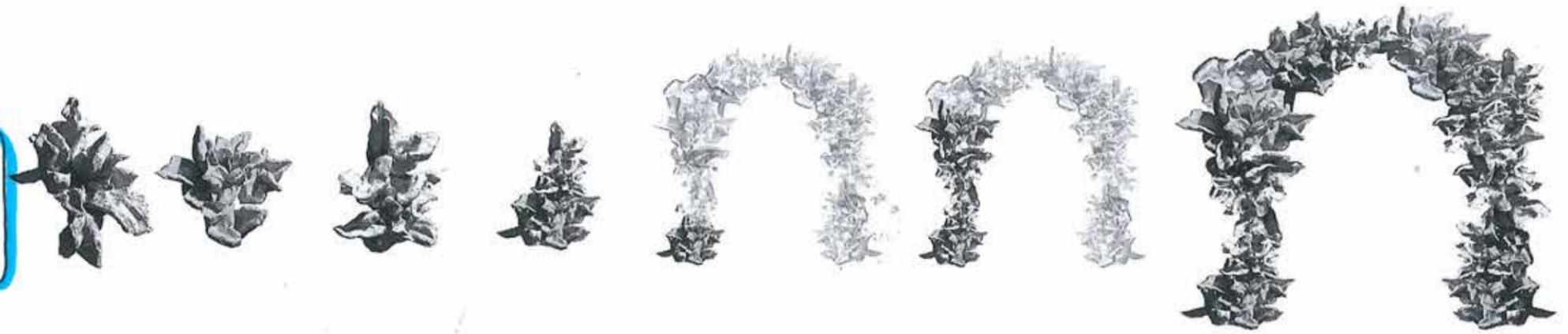
dappled light (like in ivy tunnel)
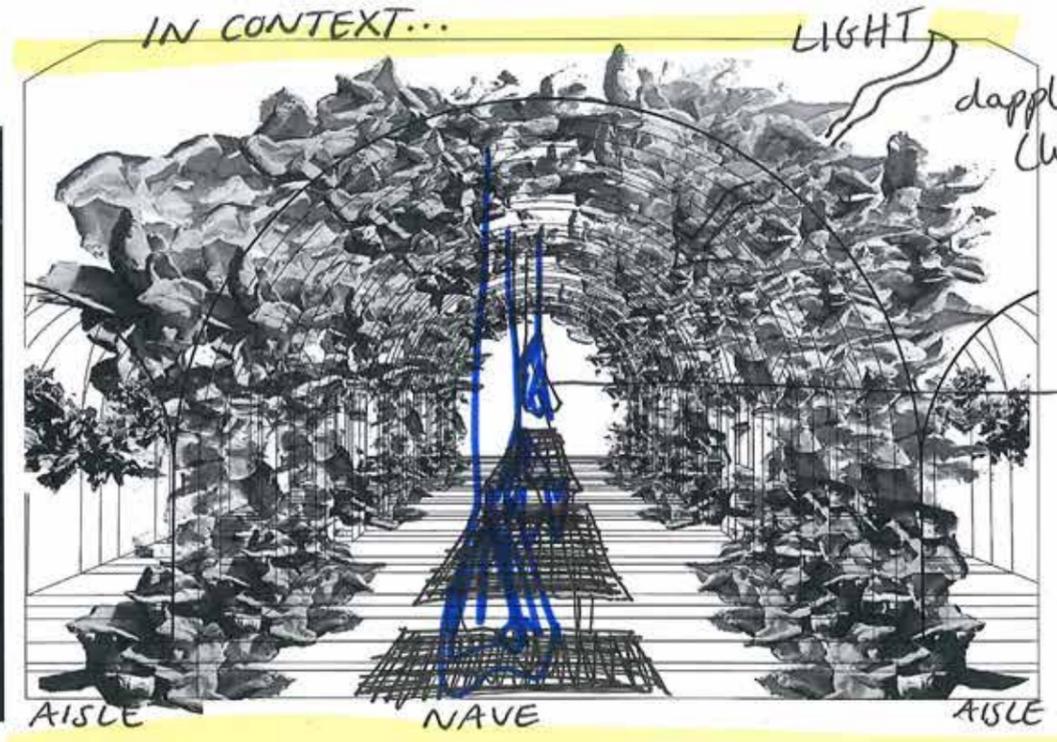
(possible layout) → ARTWORK - hanging sculptures

IVY TUNNEL

AISLE   NAVE   AISLE

FORMFINDING

IDEA ③
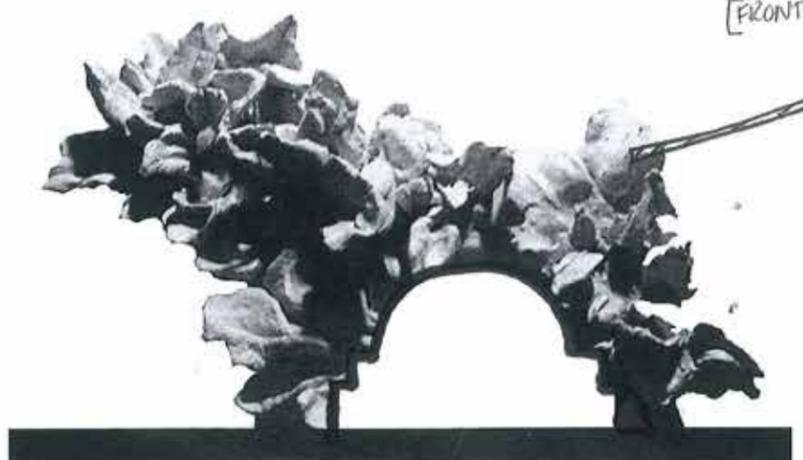
ARCH IS CREATED BY HOLLOWING OUT THE ORNAMENT.

WALL [FRONT FACADE]

→ OUTLINE OF BUILDING - MAIN FORM

VIEW

MAIN HALL "NAVE"
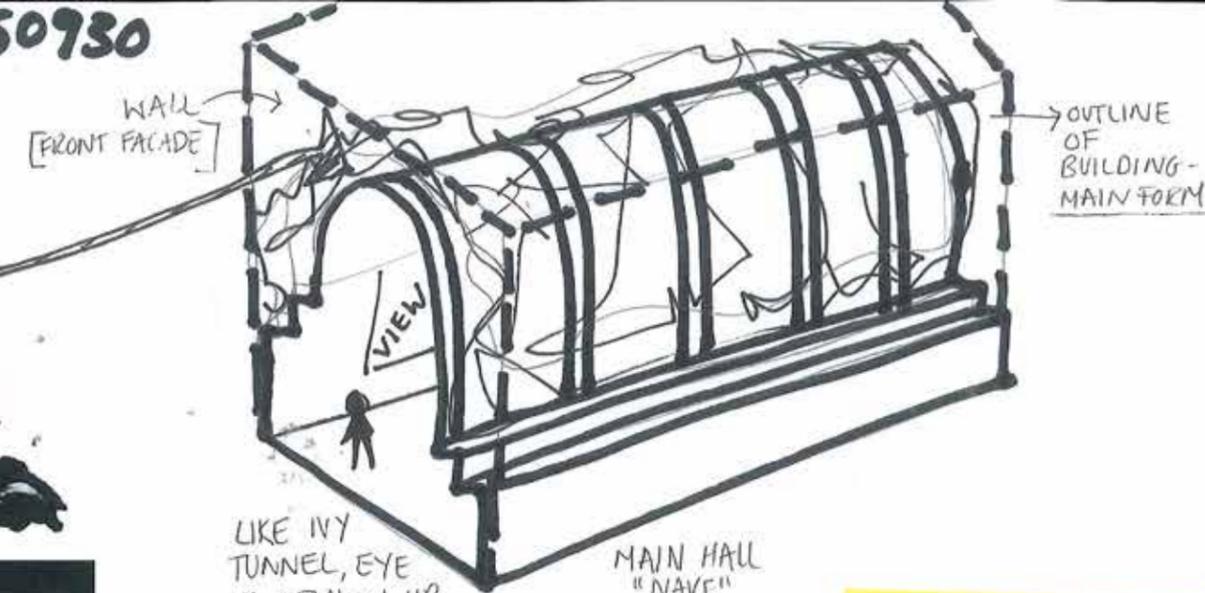
LIKE IVY TUNNEL, EYE IS DRAWN UP. LOOKING AT ORNAMENT FROM BELOW.

WOOOO

IDEA ④

BIT OVER THE TOP → ornament

→ building

ARCH TYPES

draws your eye up

AO2
further experiments/ design needed to see how this would actually work
✚ like negative space idea.

AO2
how will this fill space and **WHY**?
✚ like arch shape

FORMFINDING

IDEA 5

+ →

JUNCTION MEETING POINT

→ ARCH
→ ORNAMENT (ARCH IS NATURAL)
→ IMPOST (where springing occurs)
→ COLUMN

growing from column
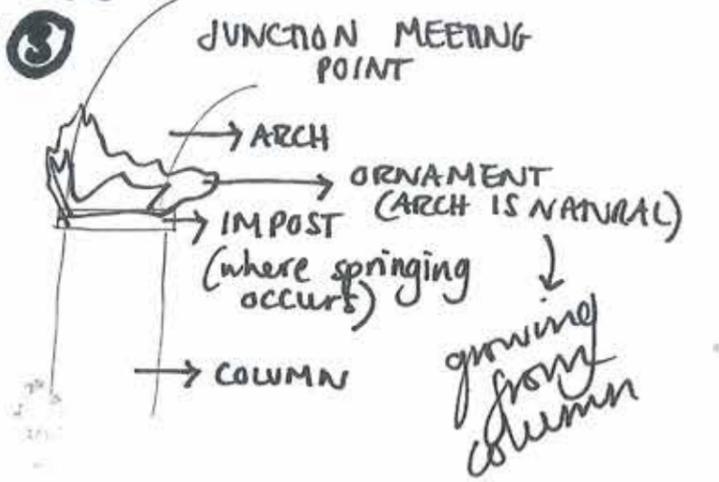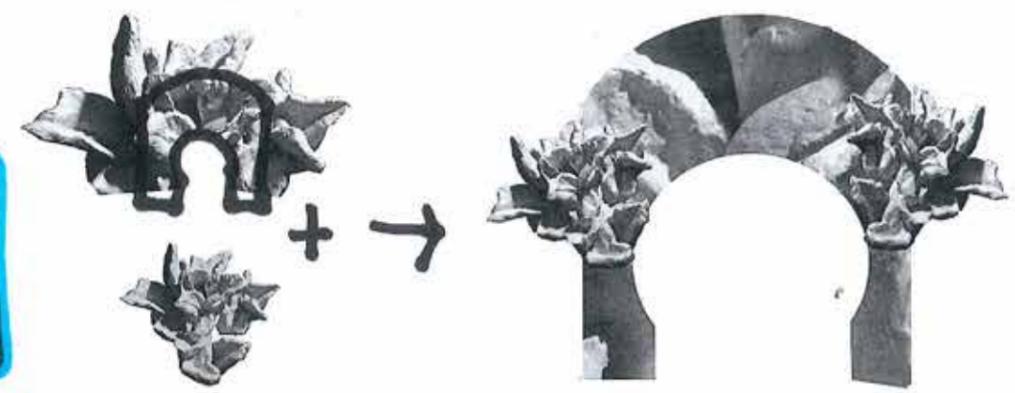
AO2
how is [shape] made?
✚ like naivity of image + floral bunches

IDEA 6

I LIKE THE SIMPLICITY + TRADITIONAL-'NESS' OF BRICK. [OLD + NEW]

INSERTING ORNAMENT

AO2
maybe ornamentation should play a bigger part in arch design than just inserted
✚ like the simplicity of the idea. Familiar (but...)

AO2 = POSITIVE/ + CONCLUSIONS NEGATIVE + VISIONS

AO2 = POSITIVE/ + CONCL NEGATIVE + VISIONS

IN CONTEXT OF SPACE

STEP 1

8.3M

15.7M   41.3M
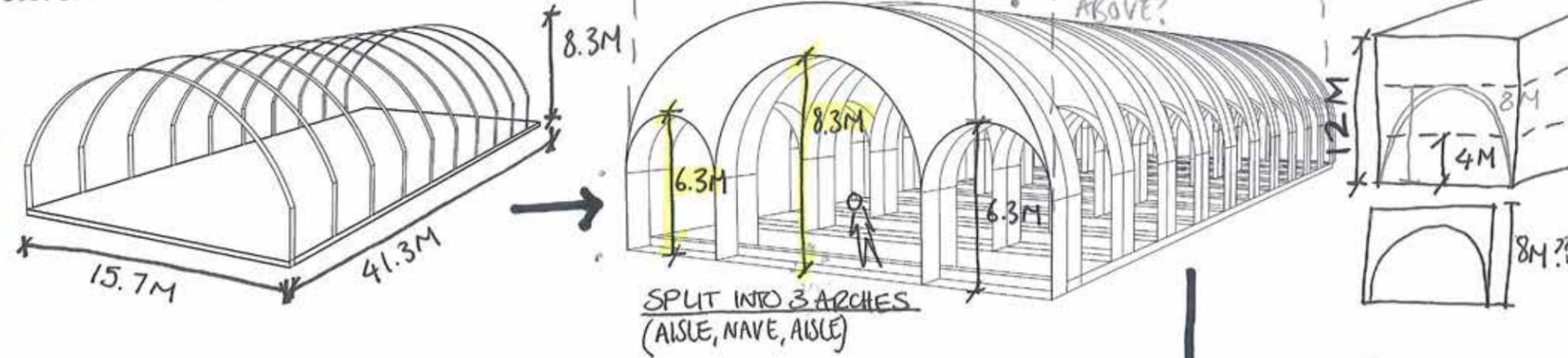
SPLIT INTO 3 ARCHES
(AISLE, NAVE, AISLE)

6.3M   8.3M   6.3M

WHAT HAPPENS ABOVE?

Building is 3 storeys (4M each)

12M   8M   4M   8M??

STEP 2

8.3M

AISLE   NAVE   AISLE

VIEW FROM ENTRANCE

CONTRAST

SIMPLE, BOLD GEOMETRIC SHAPES
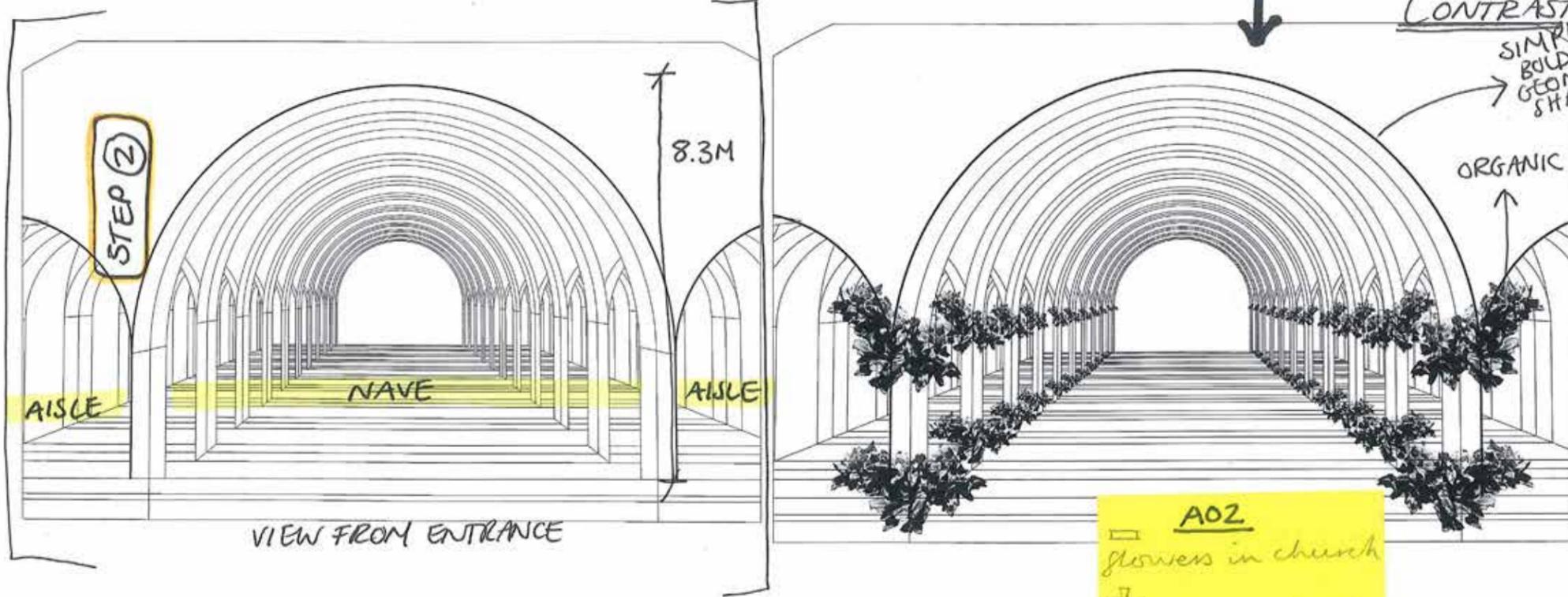
ORGANIC

A02
+ flowers in church
+ like the contrast between simple, bold + organic geometries

IN CONTEXT OF SPACE

thinking about the columns - how can [ ] be made more interesting

ARCH: from local context (door analysis)

STEP 3

CONTRAST

ORGANIC

GEOMETRIC FORM

A02
Victorian garden party
+ I like the contrast and the form of the columns.

How can I combine these different expressions?

ARCH PROGRESSION

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORNAMENT AND STRUCTURE

1. **TRADITIONAL** (grey)

2. **'OIL AND WATER'** (orange)
   Structure and ornament are separated

3. **HYBRID** (yellow)
   Ornament becomes spatial

CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAM

TRADITIONAL · 'OIL + WATER' · 'HYBRID'

Structure & Ornament are somewhat intertwined

Structure & Ornament is separated

Structure & ornament merge
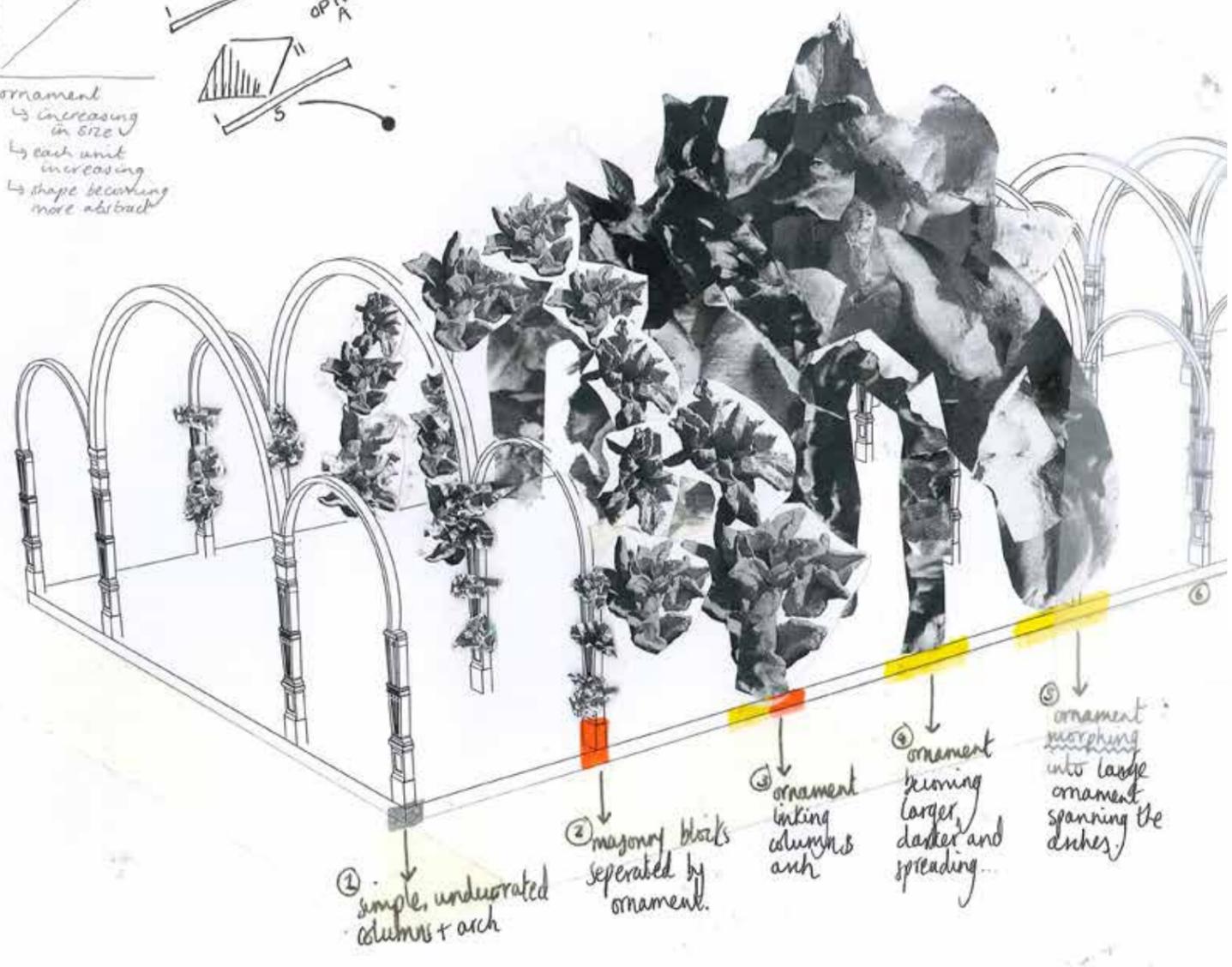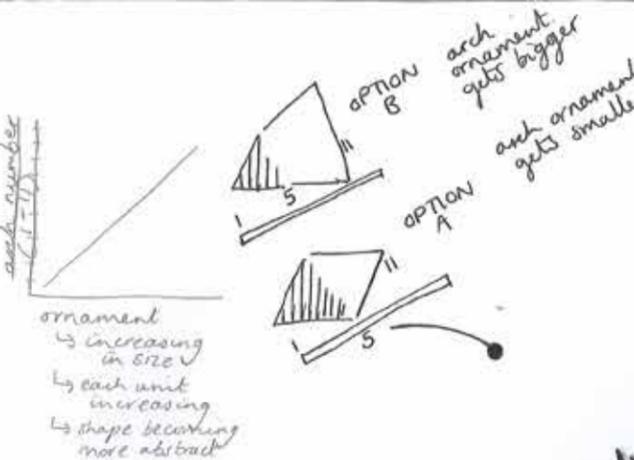
ARCH EXPERIMENT - FOR USE IN MAIN EXHIBITION HALL (NAVE) 151005 PAGE ②

local context arch on door

separated into individual elements

ornamentation emerging through each hoop is growing from the next
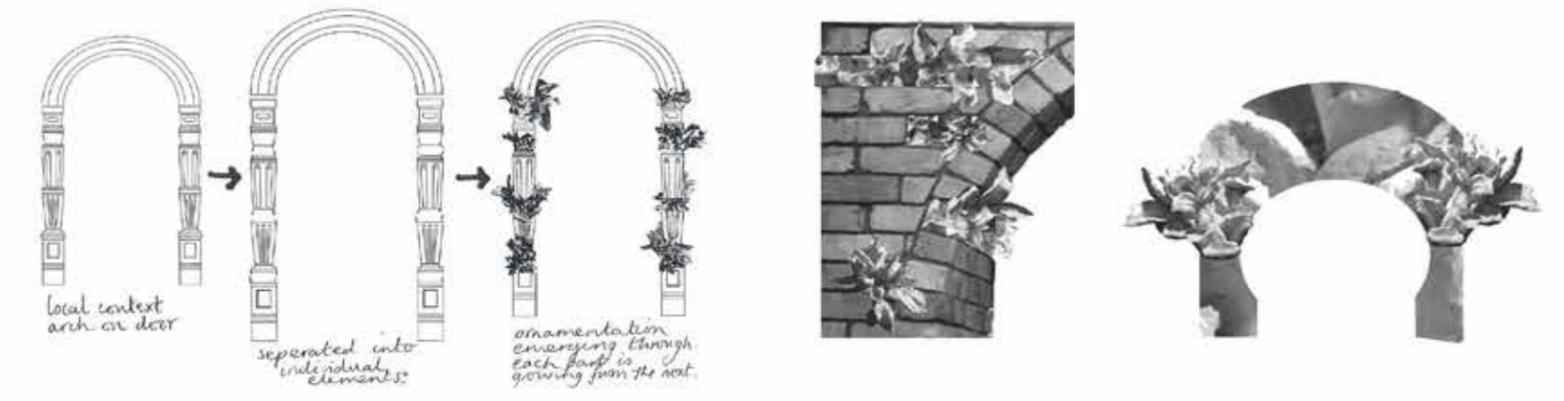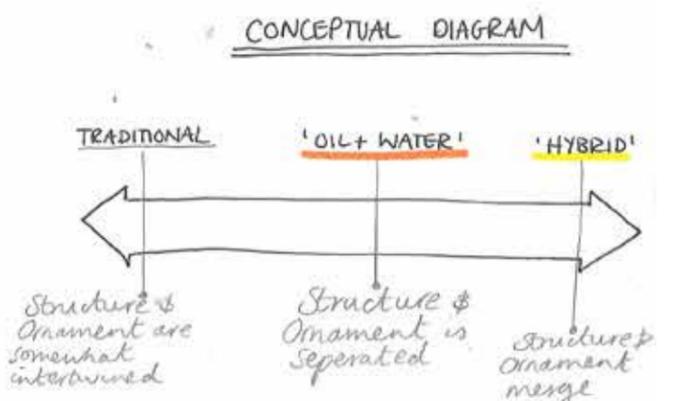
ORNAMENT: ONLY FOR ADORNING...
*ornament decorates structural junctions*
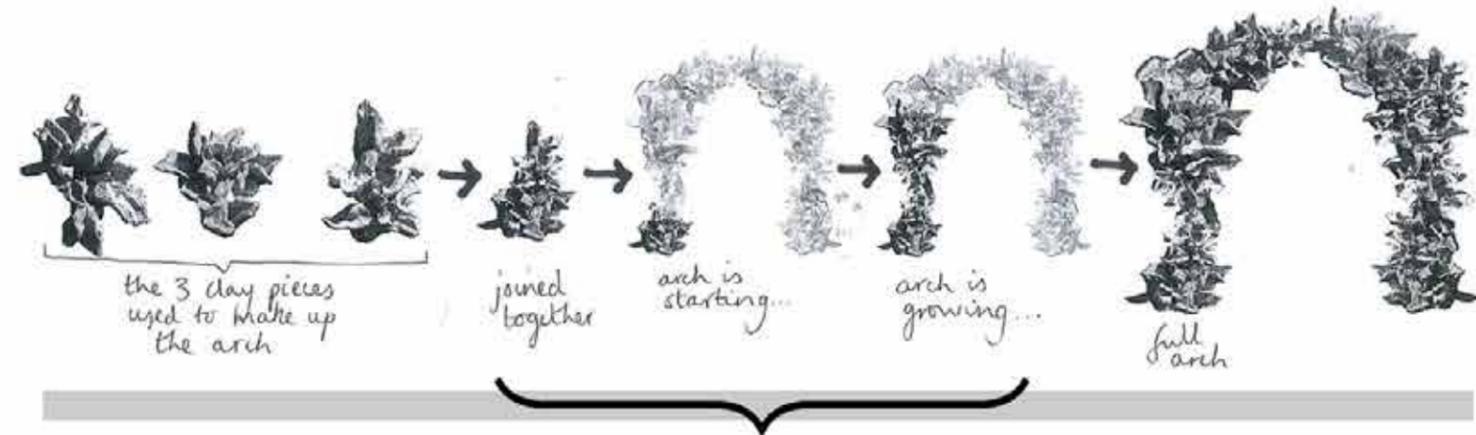
ORNAMENT: TAKING OVER!
ornament becomes the structure
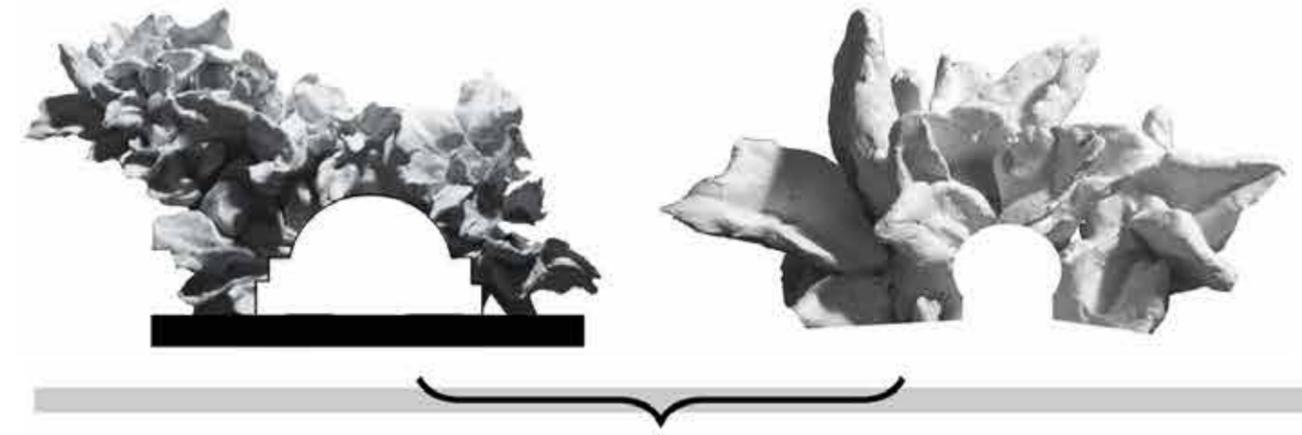

ORNAMENT: FINALLY EXPRESSIVE!
ornament has been promoted from structural slave

the 3 clay pieces used to make up the arch

joined together

arch is starting...

arch is growing...

full arch

ORNAMENT CONSTRUCTION:
Spray applied concrete onto mesh

The progression of these arches to form part of the central exhibition hall

ARCH 7:
Ornament morphing out of control

ARCH 6:
Ornament spreading out

ARCH 5:
Ornament morphing into the actual arch

ARCH 4:
Ornament taking over

ARCH 3:
Ornament emerging, arch

ARCH 2:
Ornament creeping out

ARCH 1:
Classic arch ready to be exploited

ARTWORK:
Can be displayed on the floor in the central nave against the arches or in the exhibition spaces against a blank canvas.
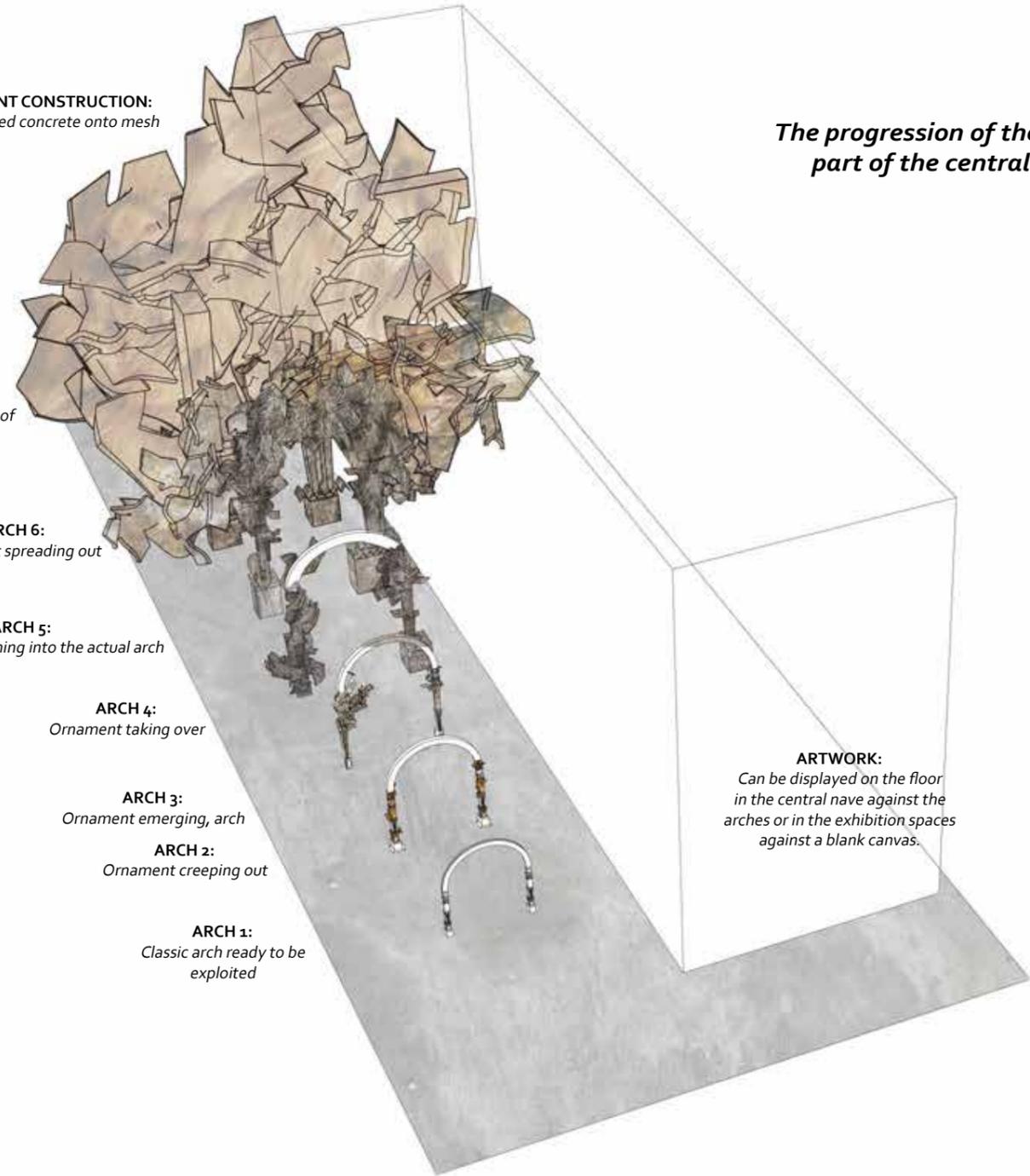
Section view through the exhibition space
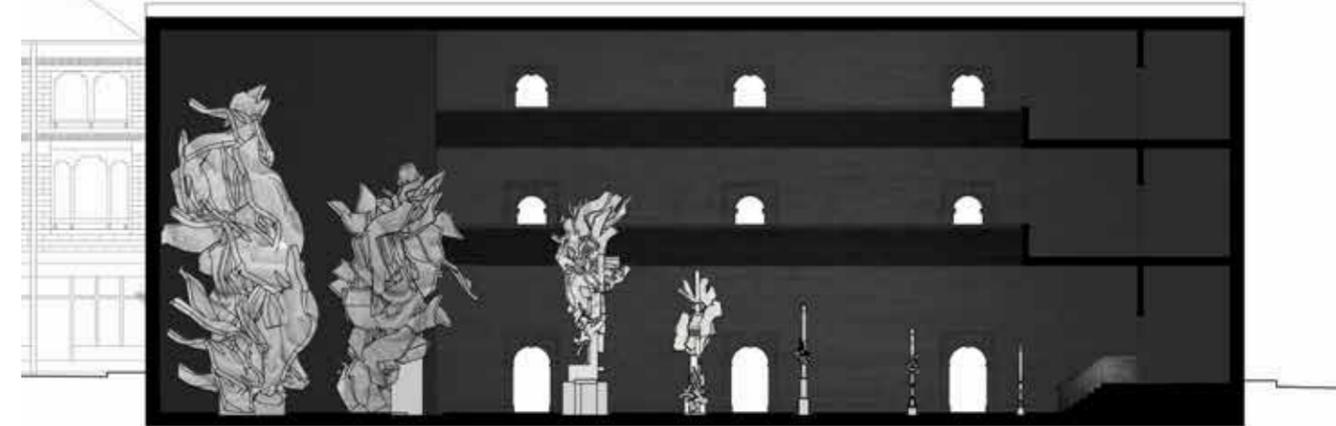
The arches within their natural habitat (The Sham Museum)

EXHIBITION STRATEGY

## MAIN NAVE OF BUILDING

CENTRAL NAVE AND EXHIBITION SPACES

———————
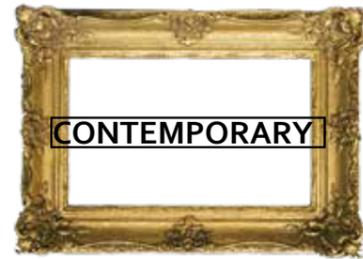
CONTEMPORARY

CONTEMPORARY / CLASSIC
ART / ARCHITECTURE
*Modern artwork complimenting
historic architectural elements*

CONTRASTS

white	**BLACK**
feminine	**MASCULINE**
detailed	**MINIMAL**
textured	**SMOOTH**
exterior	**INTERI-**
OR	
historic	**MODERN**

Modern artwork set against classical architectural elements
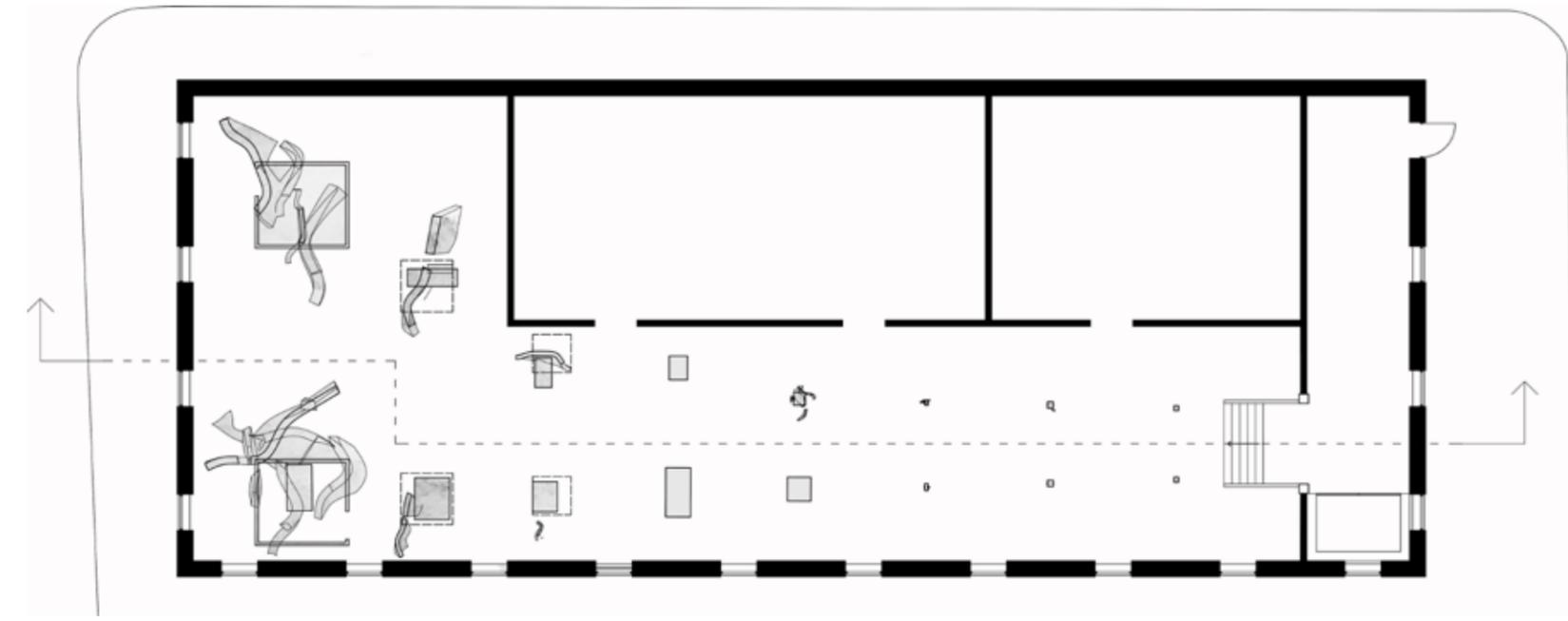
Ground Floor Plan
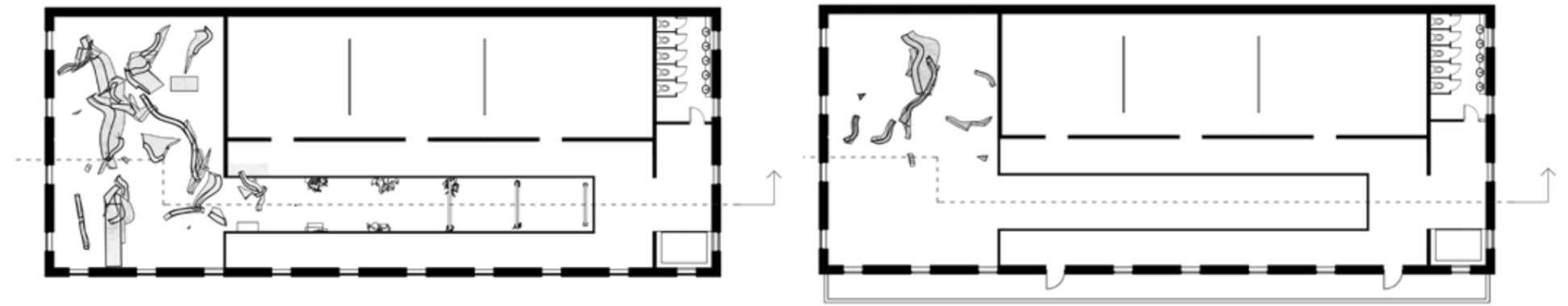
First Floor Plan

Second Floor Plan

STRATEGY

I choose to create a large central hall which could house a variety of different sizes of art. This central hall becomes the main nave of the museum, similar to other surrounding building, a format many people know and are familiar with. The use of this central nave allowed me to be flexible with the different types of artwork displayed. There are spaces where the architecture serves as an iconic backdrop to art work and spaces where the art work enjoys a blank canvas.

The central exhibition hall: artwork set against the progression of arches
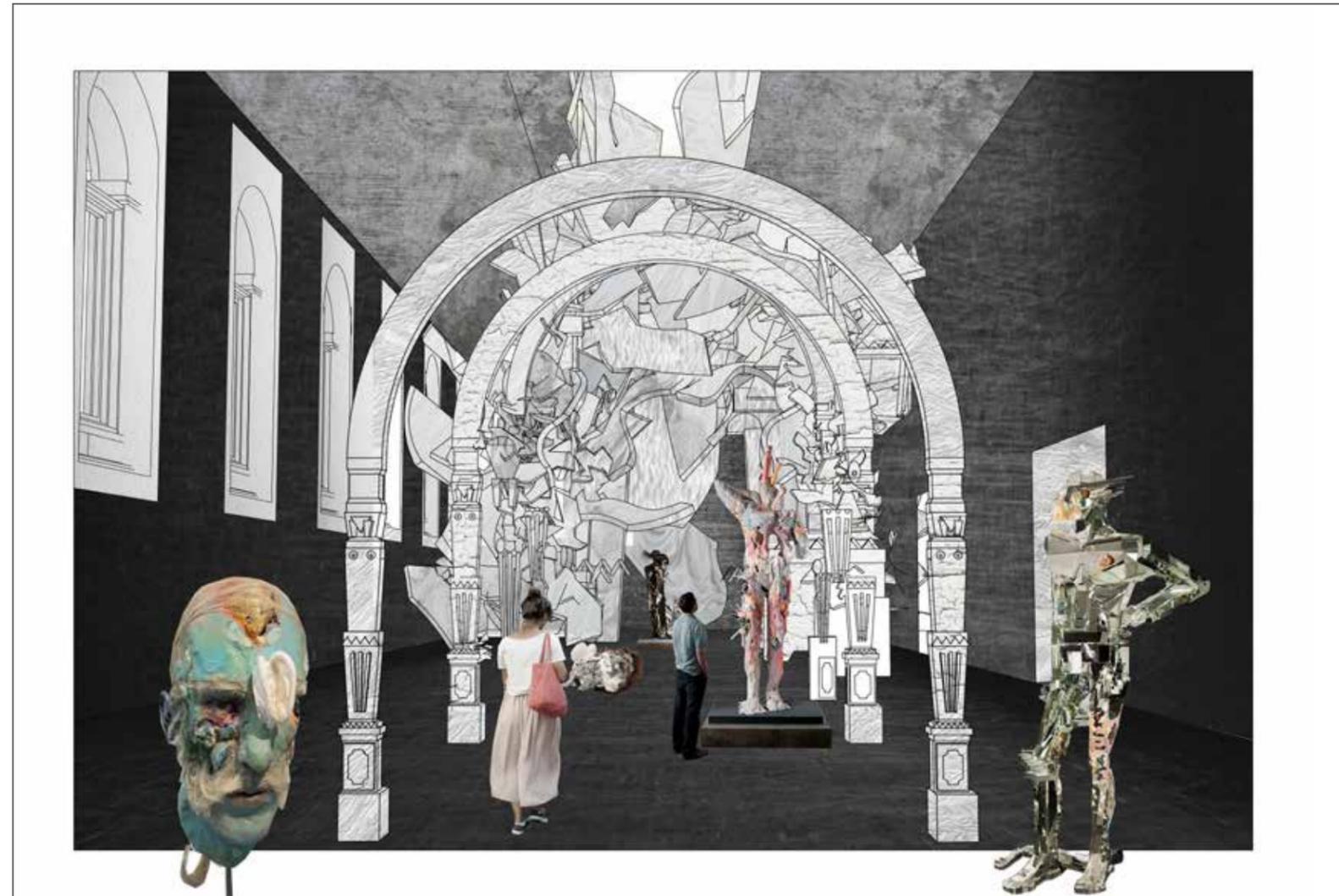
ARTWORK:
The central hall needed to be large enough to house a large variety of art. This space is for free standing sculptures.

LIGHT STRATEGY:
Ground floor windows can have screens placed over them if light needs to be controlled and only allowed in from the roof-light above.

INITIAL ARCH:
At the entrance to this central space, the free standing arches start off in their classical form but the visitor can see ahead to the morphed progression catching their intrigue

MULTI-FUNCTIONAL:
This space can be transformed into part of the artwork, for example by using light projections or paint.

LIGHT STRATEGY:
In these exhibition spaces, light is carefully controlled with artificial lights also allowing space for completely dark room ideal for video installations.

ARTWORK:
This space needs to be as flexible as possible to allow different types of art to be exhibited. The blank container quality of these rooms allow the art and not the architecture to stand out.