



A Learning Center Project: Challenges and insights

Erasmus Week - Meet our Staff, July 2, 2025
Christophe Dony ULiège Library



About me

- Subject librarian – acquisitions and collection development
 - Translation studies, interpreting, germanic languages and literatures
- Learning center project co-ordinator



Context matters (a lot)!

- No single definition what a learning center is
- Very much dependent on local constraints:
 - Size of collections
 - Available space
 - Budget...

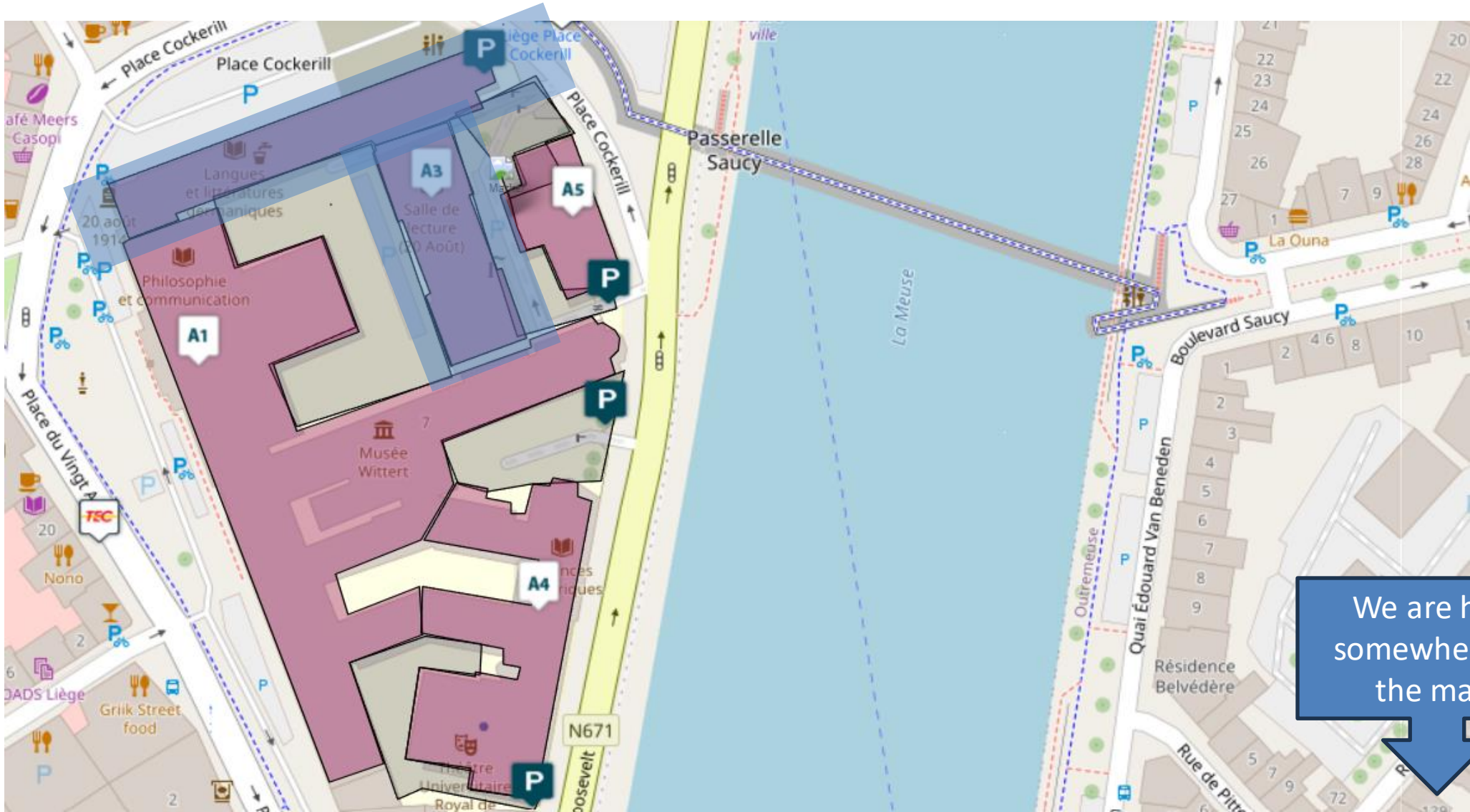
Our context



Existing local library branches
(incl. Heritage collections / main
reading room)

We are here
somewhere on
the map.

Our context



We are here
somewhere on
the map.



Our context

- Spatial and structural obsolescence of some of the current buildings



Our context



- No new buildings
 - Renovation of existing buildings (protected architectural heritage)
- No buffer space/zone during renovations
- Budgetary constraints (approx. 20M euros)
- Big objectives



Interior of heritage collections room; protected architectural heritage

Our context

- Approx. 14 km of existing collections (including heritage collections)

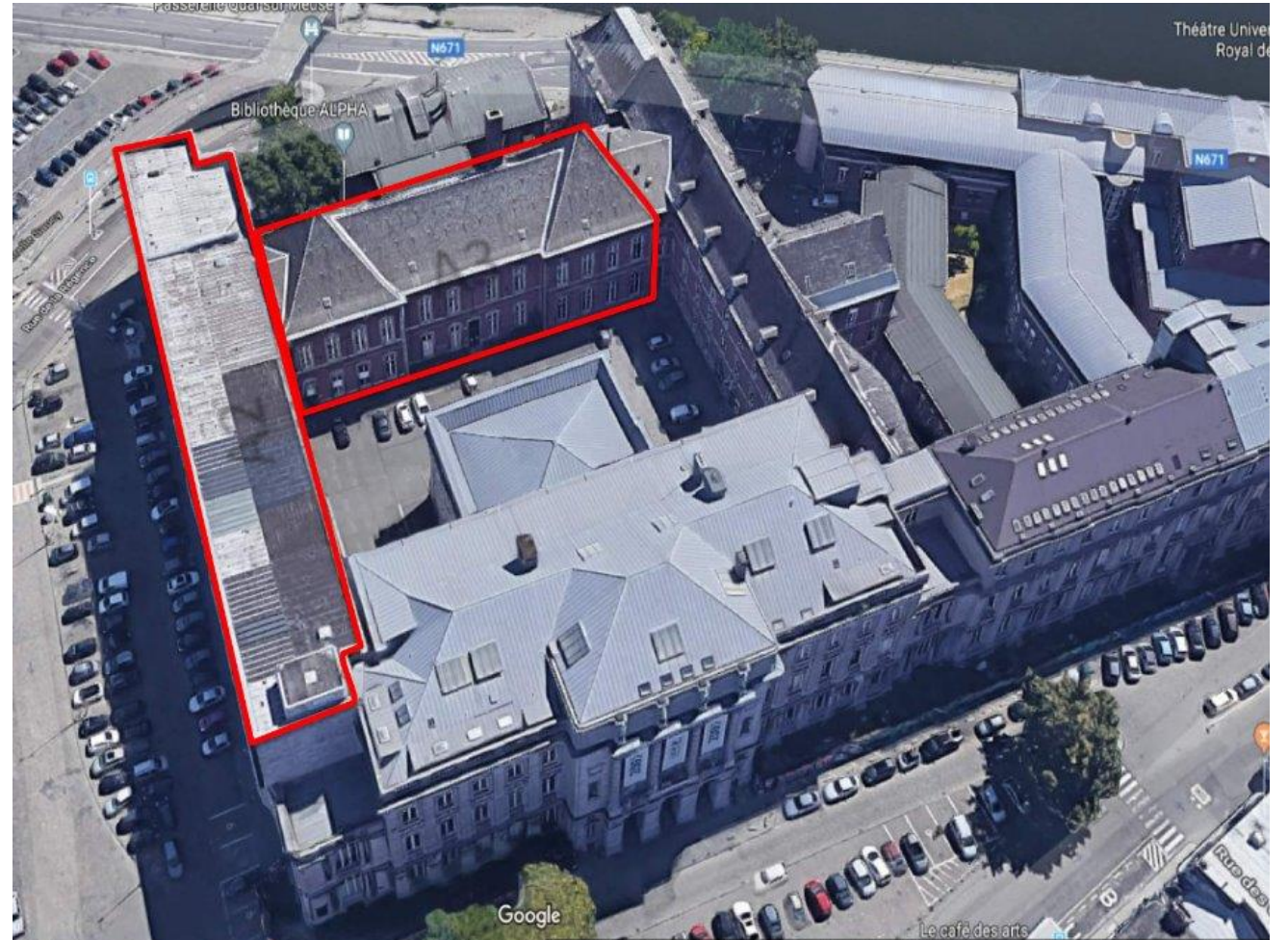
- +/- 450.000 items



Interior of heritage collections room; protected architectural heritage

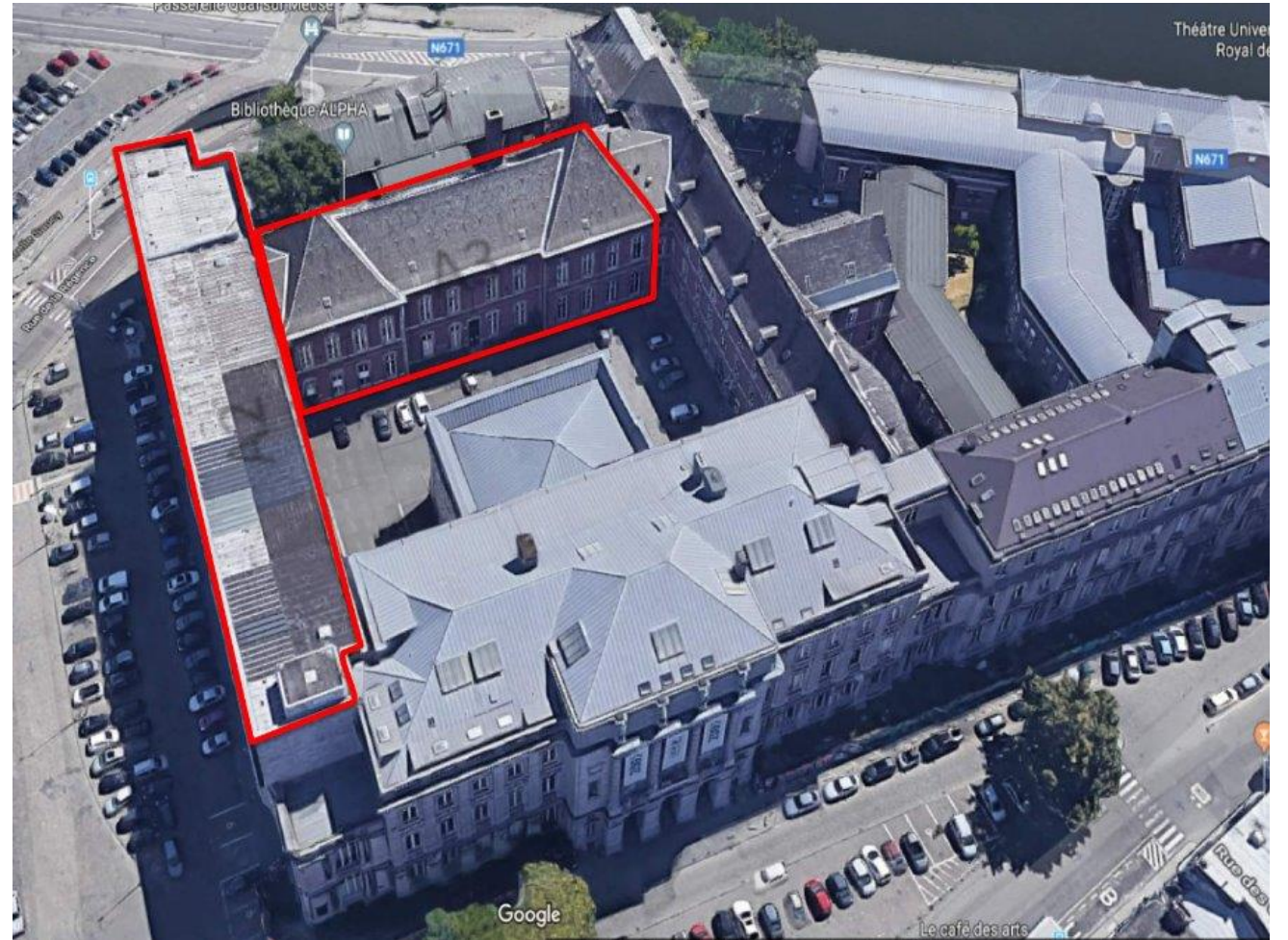
Our main objectives

- Unify all downtown campus library sites into two adjacent buildings (~6000 m²)
- Extend opening hours and autonomous access zones
- Offer a wider range of services for students, teachers, and researchers
- Address spatial and structural obsolescence of the current buildings
- Foster community, collaboration, and innovation with a diversity of working spaces and furniture
- Focus on sustainability (buildings, but also furniture and services)



Challenges and insights

- Space and circulation
- Collections
- Services and staff

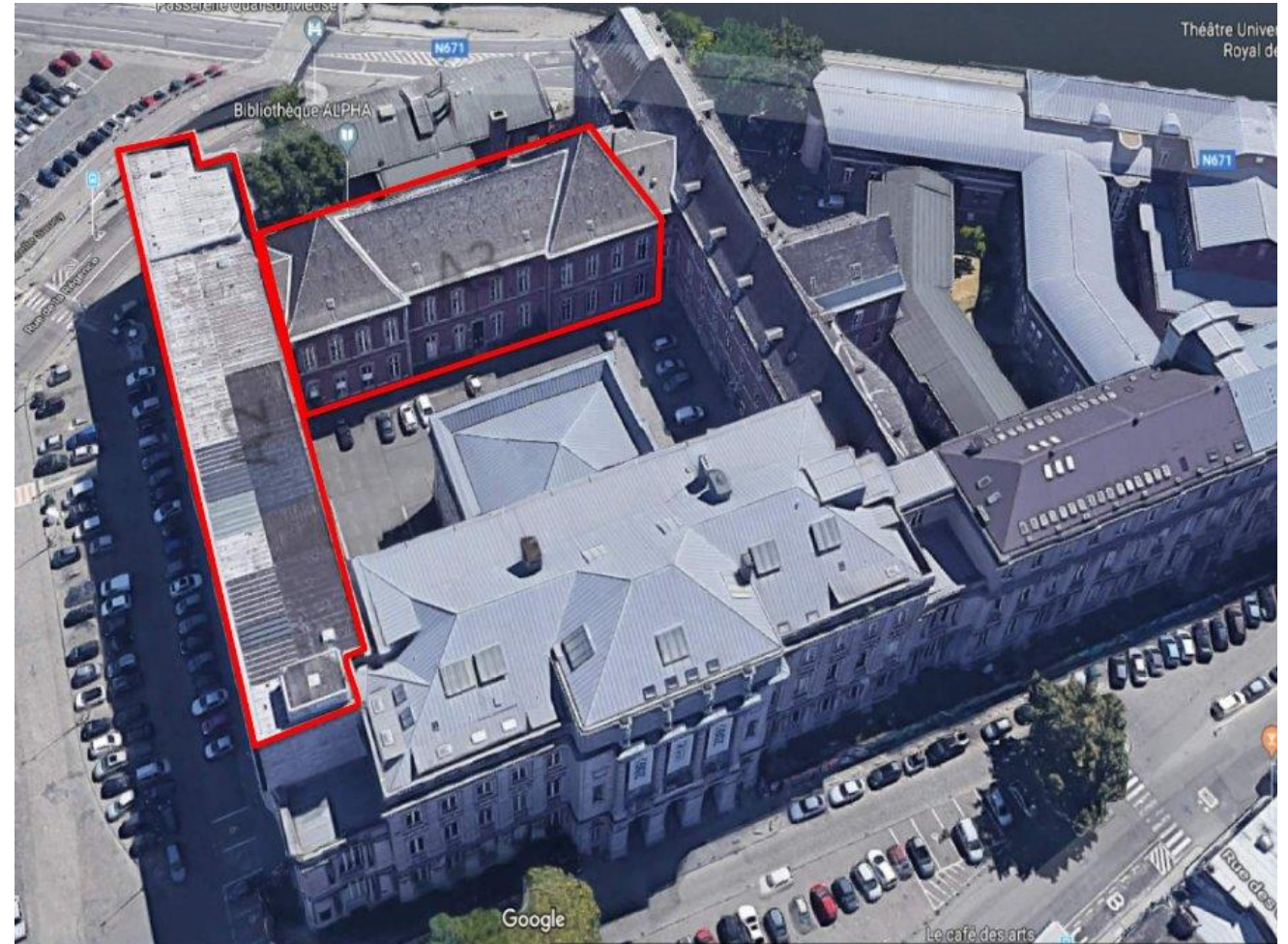


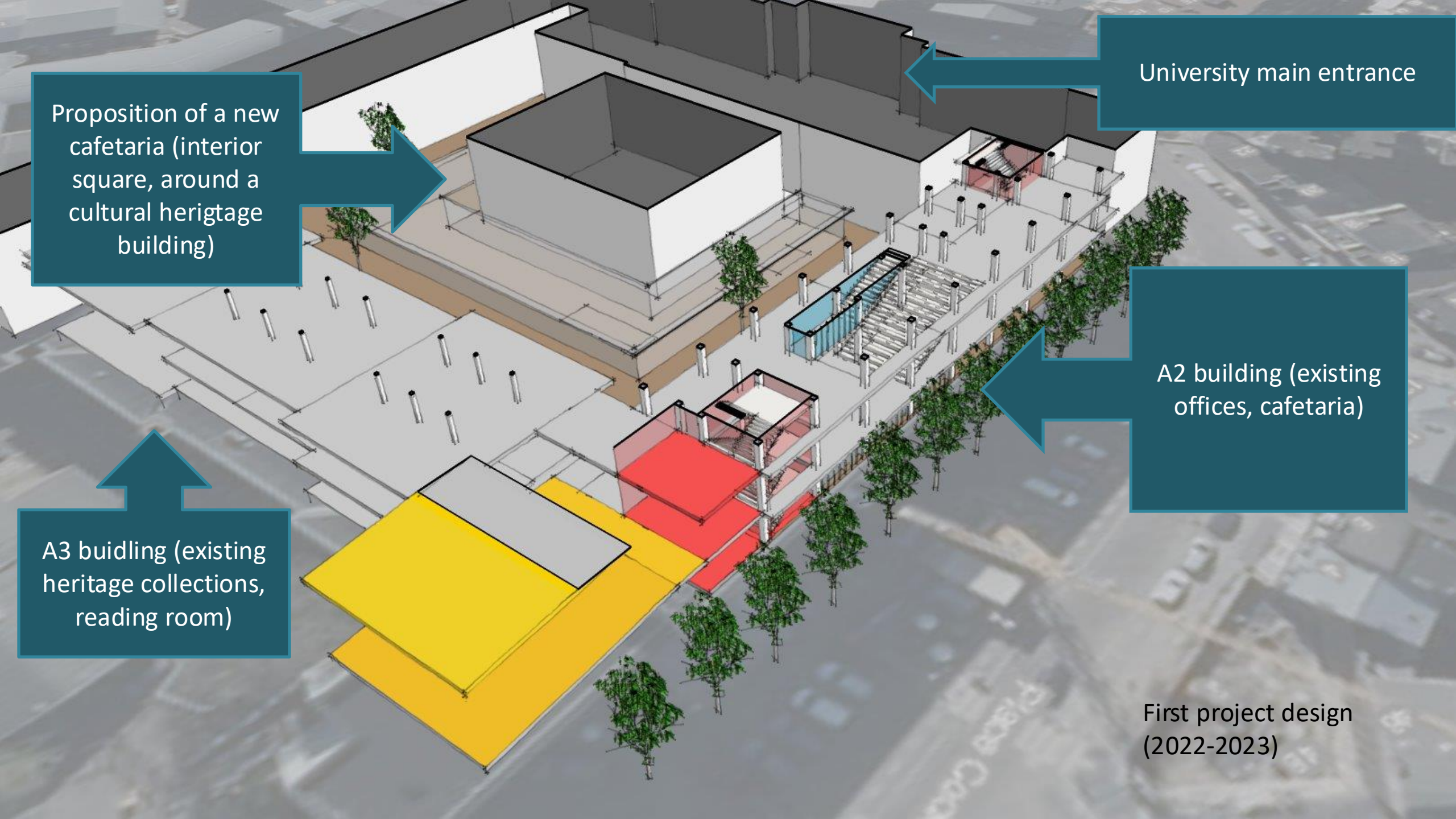


Challenges and insights

Space and circulation

- Two adjacent buildings with different floor levels
- Existing cafeteria in A2 building (no buffer zone)
- Existing lecture halls in A2 building
- Existing classrooms and offices in A2 building
- Parts of the A3 building are considered architectural heritage
- Integration of heritage collections room
- Desire to have one centralized entrance for visitors in the Learning Center (but necessity for easy circulation with the rest of the campus)





Proposition of a new cafeteria (interior square, around a cultural heritage building)

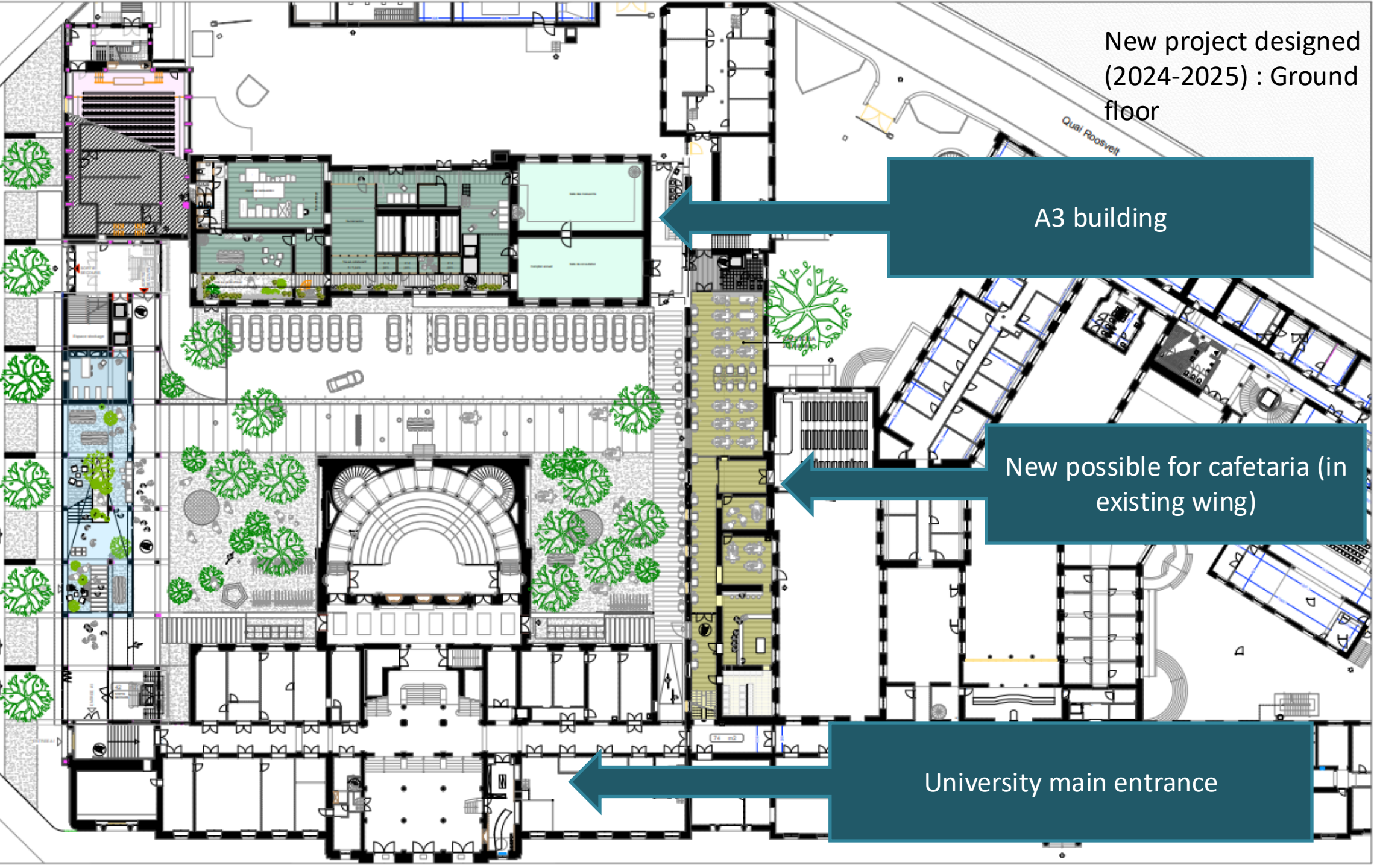
University main entrance

A2 building (existing offices, cafeteria)

A3 building (existing heritage collections, reading room)

First project design (2022-2023)

- LC-BIBLI
96 places
- LC-GES
- COURS
- BUREAU
- CAFETERIA



New project designed
(2024-2025) : Ground
floor

A3 building

New possible for cafeteria (in
existing wing)

University main entrance

Challenges and insights

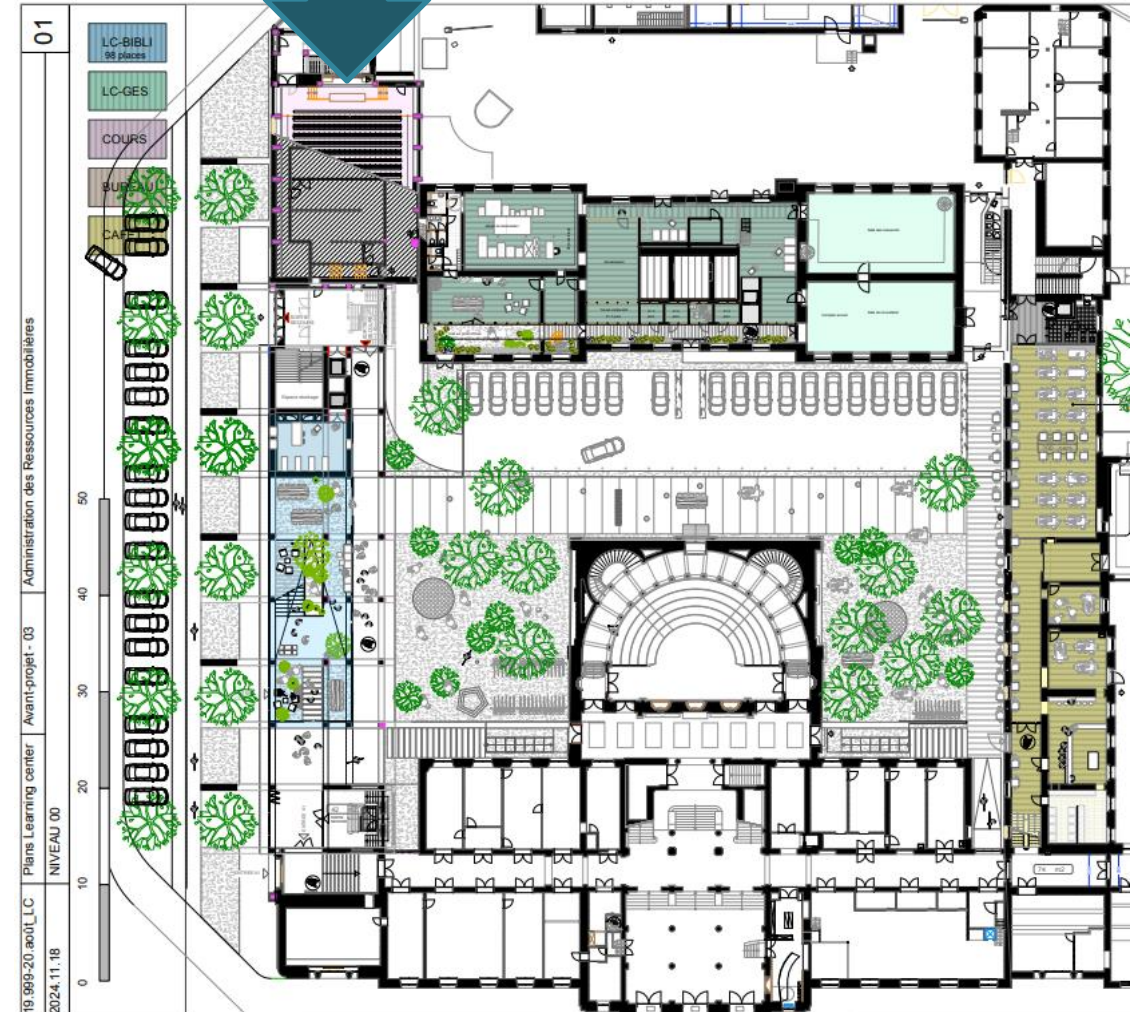
Space and circulation

New project design offers :

- o Better Centralized entrance with clear visitor flow
- o Separate circulation for lecture halls (Kurth & Wilmotte)
- o Renovated vertical circulation: elevators, stairs, historic preservation
- o Backend areas for digitization, conservation, and logistics (acquisitions, collection development. etc.)



Lecture halls (A2 building)



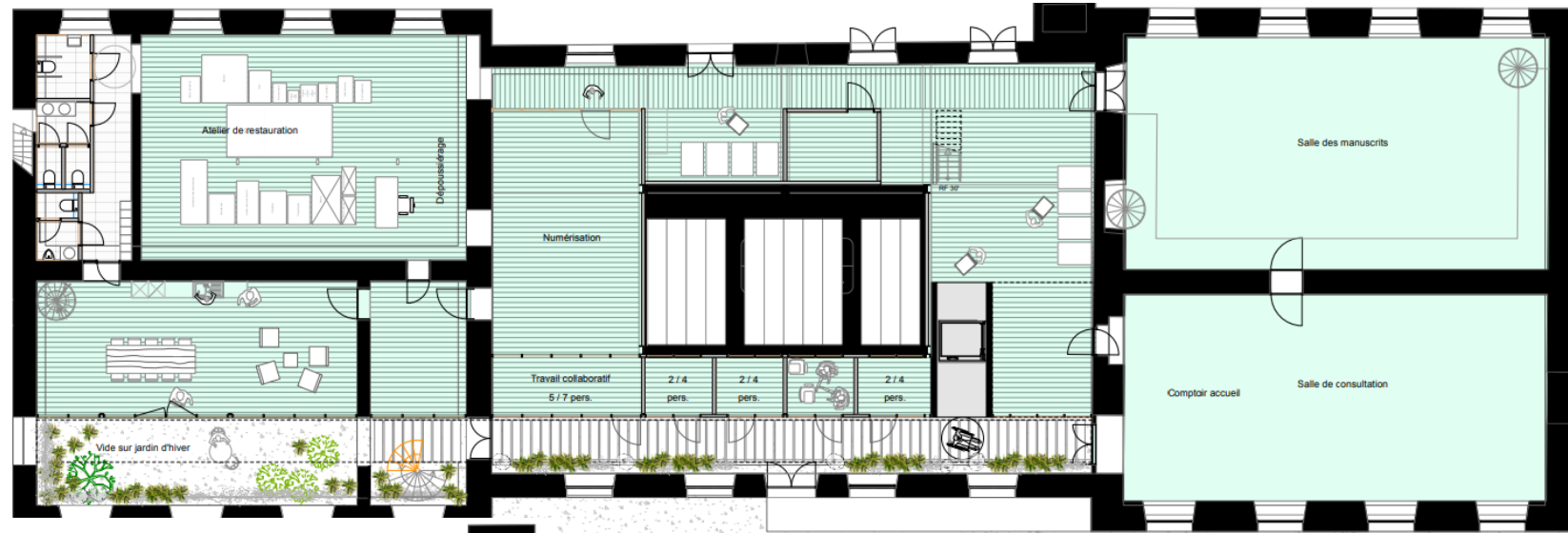


Challenges and insights

Space and circulation

Zoom on staff and backend spaces (A3)

A3 LEVEL 0




A3 LEVEL 1 (1st connection with A2 and main entrance)



Challenges and insights

Space and circulation / Focus of studying and working spaces

- 800+ seats of all types (quiet, collaborative, relaxed, etc.)
- Auditorium space for small library-related events (≈50 seats)
- Study rooms :
 - 12 rooms for 2-4 people
 - 6 rooms for 5-7 people
 - 2 rooms for 8-12 people
 - 1 room for 20-25 people (hybrid setup)

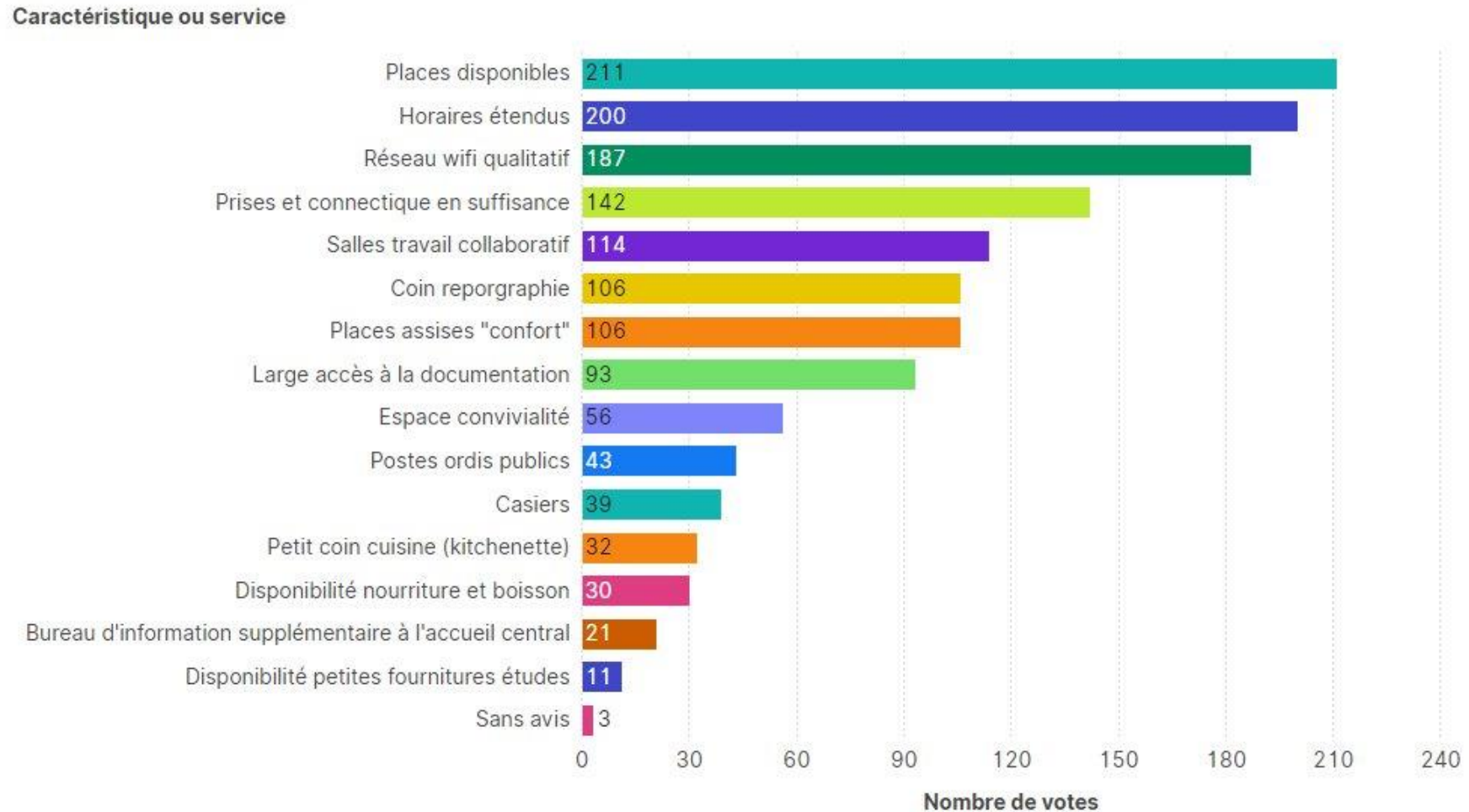


Results based on university-wide survey on types of studying and working spaces



Challenges and insights

Space and circulation / Focus of studying and working spaces



•Survey results for most desired services or equipment



Challenges and insights

Space and circulation / Focus of studying and working spaces



Gradins



Espace détente



Espace individuel



Espace de groupe ouvert



Espace de groupe fermé



Espace de groupe semi-ouvert (alcôve)



Espace agora



Cafétéria

•Types of studying/working spaces illustrated in the survey to determine for user preferences.



Challenges and insights

Space and circulation / Focus of studying and working spaces



Gradins



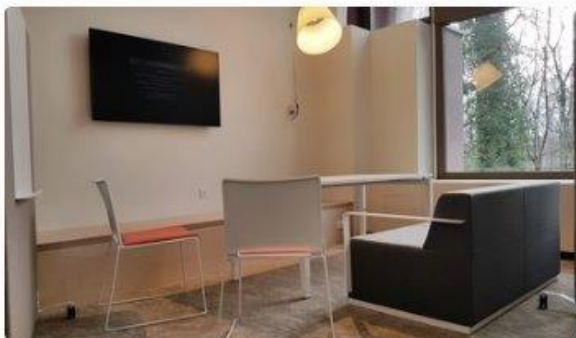
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Espace agora



Cafétéria

• Preferred types of space for studying activities.

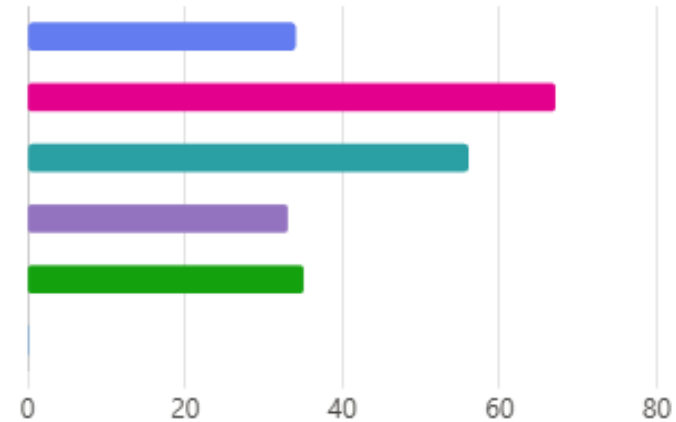


Challenges and insights

Space and circulation / Focus of studying and working spaces

12. Votre espace de travail collaboratif idéal consisterait en :

● Des petites salles fermées et insonorisées de 2 personnes (type cabine)	34
● Des salles de travail fermées de 2-4 personnes	67
● Des salles de travail fermées de 4-8 personnes	56
● Des salles de travail fermées de 8-12 personnes	33
● Espace semi-fermé	35
● Sans avis	0



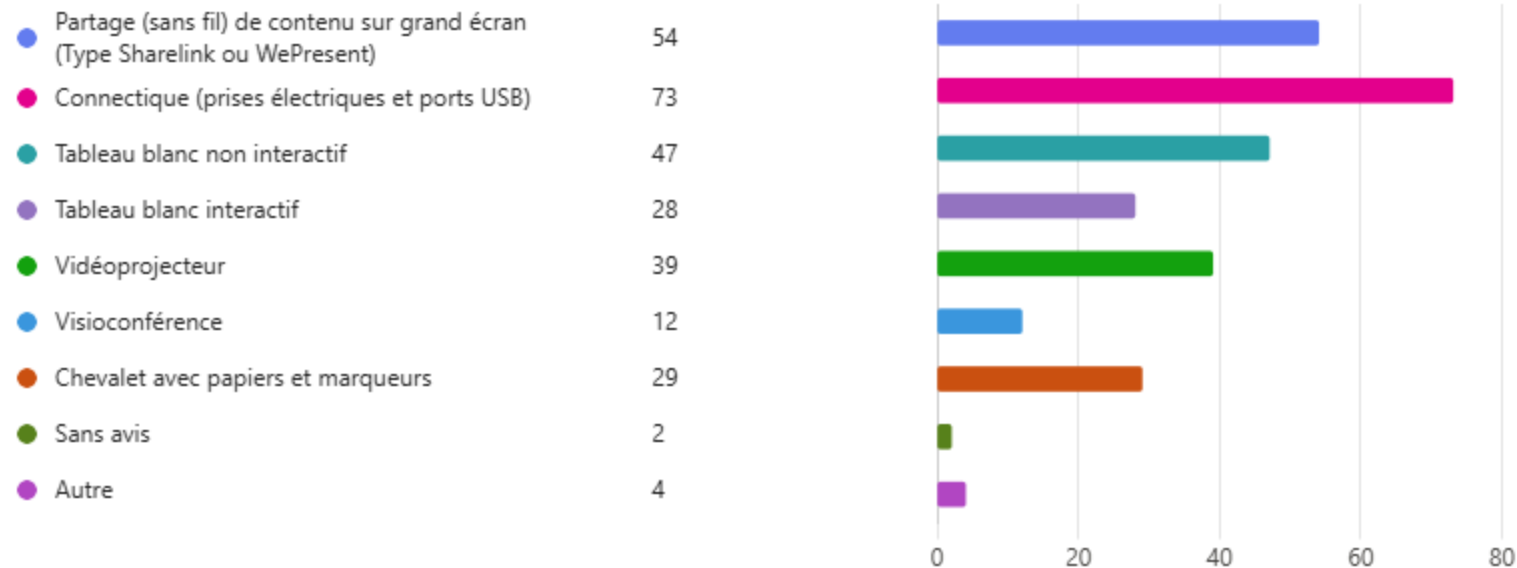
- Preferred capacity for (semi-)closed working group spaces



Challenges and insights

Space and circulation / Focus of studying and working spaces

14. Pour les espaces de travail collaboratif, quels sont les équipements qui vous paraissent les plus importants ?



- Preferred equipment for closed working group spaces



Challenges and insights

Collections

- Approx. 14 km of collection (including heritage collections)
 - In the new LC > room for a maximum capacity of 12 km (structural constraints of building in terms of possible weight charges)
- Collections come from 5 main thematic library branches
 - with their own shelving and classification system (no unified classification system)
- Only 2 of these branches are equipped with RFID

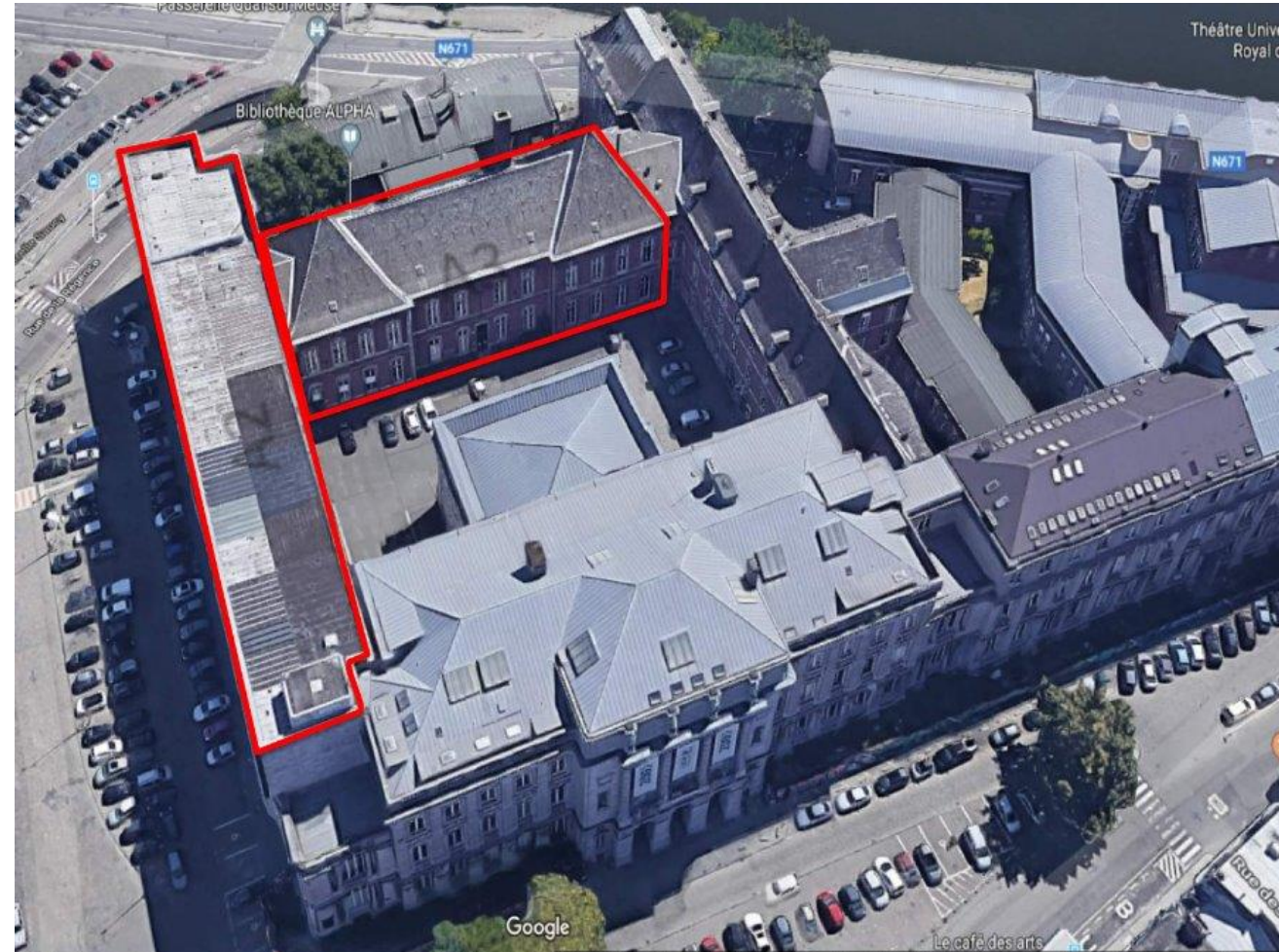


Challenges and insights

Collections

Max. Capacity of 12 km for collections

- Approx. 9 km in compact shelving (dense storage but accessible to the public) in A3
- Approx. 3km (recent collections and most used items) in A2
 - Less compact shelving
 - Division into 8 zones
 - 7 thematic zones (e.g., Language sciences, Philosophy, Antiquity, Arts) to help students and teachers to better navigate these collections
 - 1 generalist zone (e.g., national biographies, religious texts)
 - Integration of these zones with seating and working spaces



Challenges and insights

Collections



- Deduplication processes thanks to duplicate reports in ALMA
 - Reports for deduplication between local library branches
 - Approx. 10,000 duplicates
 - Reports for deduplication with distant reserve
 - Approx. 22,000 duplicates
- Various filtering possibilities :
 - publication year
 - permanent call number
 - location
 - Number of libraries owning a copy
- Revision of journals conservation policies
 - transfer or elimination of approx 1 km of collections

* Library

Agro-Bio Tech

Architecture

Direction générale et services communs

Environnement

Géosciences

Langues et litt. germaniques

Langues et litt. romanes

Léon Graulich

Médecine vétérinaire

Philosophie et communication

Polytech

Santé - CHU

Sciences

Sciences de l'Antiquité

Sciences historiques

Site central 20-Août

Publication Date (optionnal)
Entre --Sélectionner (▼) - --Sélectionner (▼)

Location Code (optionnal)
 --Sélectionner (▼)

Permanent Call Number (optionnal)
commence par

Number of libraries which own the book (optionnal)
>=

Appliquer

Liste des livres présents dans au moins une autre bibliothèque

Number of Titles
2 856

Title	Author	Library Name	Location Name	MMS Id	ISBN	Permanent Call Number	Barcode
"Auf die Plätze, klar, partez!" : jouer des histoires, apprendre des langues /		Langues et litt. germaniques	Armoires médias - SHORT LOAN	9919391689602321		CD.346	1601783
			Libre accès - EXTENDED	9919391689602321		Did.738/AUF	1601782
		Services ULiège	Service de didactique des langues germaniques - SERV_1M	9919391689602321		Unknown	1601780
			Service de didactique des langues germaniques	9919391689602321		Unknown	1601781



Challenges and insights

Collections



- RFID or NOT?
- Most modern library equipments are based on RFID technology
 - Self checkout
 - Security and anti-theft gates
 - Automatic sorting
- But RFID is far from sustainable
- Most modern library equipment can be operated on barcode item identification but :
 - with extra patron activity/involvement (self scan > no bulk reading)
 - with limited possibilities in terms of operators (for across-the-board equipment consistency)
 - with few possibilities for anti-theft tags

RFID vs Barcode – Environmental, Cost & Efficiency Comparison

Criterion	RFID	Barcode
Materials	Electronic chip + antenna (metals, plastics)	Paper or plastic with ink
Manufacturing energy	High (microelectronics, metal processing)	Very low (basic printing)
Carbon footprint	Medium to high	Very low
Recyclability	Low – hard-to-separate composite materials	Good, especially paper-based labels
Waste generation	Produces electronic waste (e-waste), poorly recovered	Simple, non-toxic waste (mostly recyclable)
Lifespan	Long – reusable in some applications (e.g., logistics, libraries)	One-time use only
Indirect impact	Mining for metals, chemical pollution from chip production	Minimal environmental impact
 Unit cost	Higher – a few cents to several euros per tag	Very low – fractions of a cent
 Functional efficiency	Very high – no line-of-sight needed, bulk reading, longer range	Limited – requires direct line-of-sight, one-by-one

Challenges and insights

Staff and services

To be continued... current focus on space, design, and collections BUT

- Complex **relocation and phasing** of services during renovation
- Necessity for efficient communications to users
 - About changes in project phasing
 - Temporary locations
 - Alteration or pausing of particular services
- Probable necessity of tasks reorganization along different lines :
 - Facility, infrastructure and equipment
 - Collection development and acquisition
 - Cultural events and valorization

Dedicated website with basic and key project info at this stage



Objectifs et valeurs

Découvrez les objectifs de cette nouvelle structure et comment elle entend mieux répondre aux besoins des usagers. →



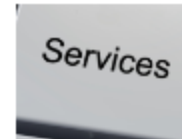
Collections

Comment le Learning Center accueillera-t-il plus de 200 000 documents ? Quels espaces seront consacrés aux collections ? →



Espaces

Le Learning Center proposera des espaces adaptés pour travailler, collaborer, suivre des cours en ligne et organiser des événements académiques. →



Services

De nouveaux services seront proposés : horaires élargis, accueil centralisé, formations personnalisées et espaces adaptés pour vos recherches et événements. →



Calendrier des travaux

Le calendrier théorique des travaux prévoit un début du chantier pour 2026-2027 pour une ouverture des portes fin 2032. →



FAQ

Nous avons rassemblé dans cette FAQ les réponses à vos questions sur le projet. →





Thanks for you attention!

- Any questions?