

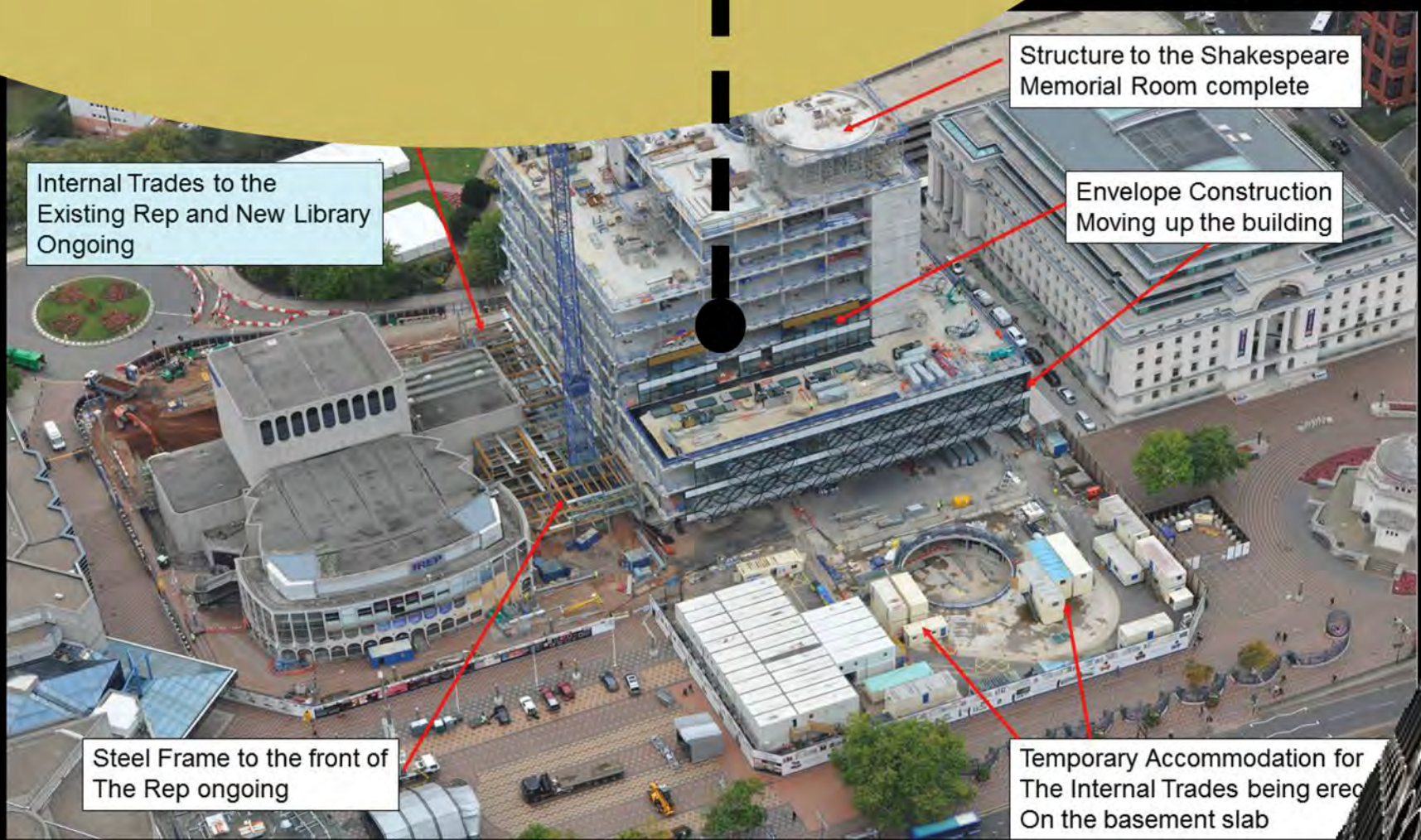
The busiest pedestrian route in the city, what Mecanoo calls the red line, leads pedestrians right into Centenary Square. The cantilever of the library is not only a large canopy that provides shelter at the common entrance of the Library of Birmingham and the REP, but additionally forms a grand city balcony with views of the events and happenings on the square.

Centenary Square, the largest public square in the heart of Birmingham, currently lacks cohesion or a clear identity or atmosphere. Mecanoo's design transforms the square into one with three distinct realms: monumental, cultural and entertainment. These palazzos form an urban narrative of important periods in the history of the city; The Repertory Theatre (REP), a 1960s concrete building, the Library of Birmingham, designed in 2009 and Baskerville House, a listed sandstone building designed in 1936.

LIBRARY of BIRMINGHAM

EXTERIOR

There is a way of building now that is all about packages and wrapping, which, though it sounds nice – sort of Christmassy – does not always result in the most beautiful gifts to the fabric of British cities. It's the practice of dividing up each element of a building, such as its structure, finishes, pipes, lighting and roofing, into separate units (the "packages"), each one of which is the province of specialized companies and experts. They are collected together to make a building, which is then given a decorative exterior, the wrapping.



Internal Trades to the Existing Rep and New Library Ongoing

Structure to the Shakespeare Memorial Room complete

Envelope Construction Moving up the building

Steel Frame to the front of The Rep ongoing

Temporary Accommodation for The Internal Trades being erected on the basement slab



ENTRANCE

Most enter from the underground transit drop-off. As one ascends through the building, you begin to notice a constant circular growth. With each level that you rise, more is visible. Although three rectangular blocks are the exterior formation, your ascension, descent and circulation are all circular motions.





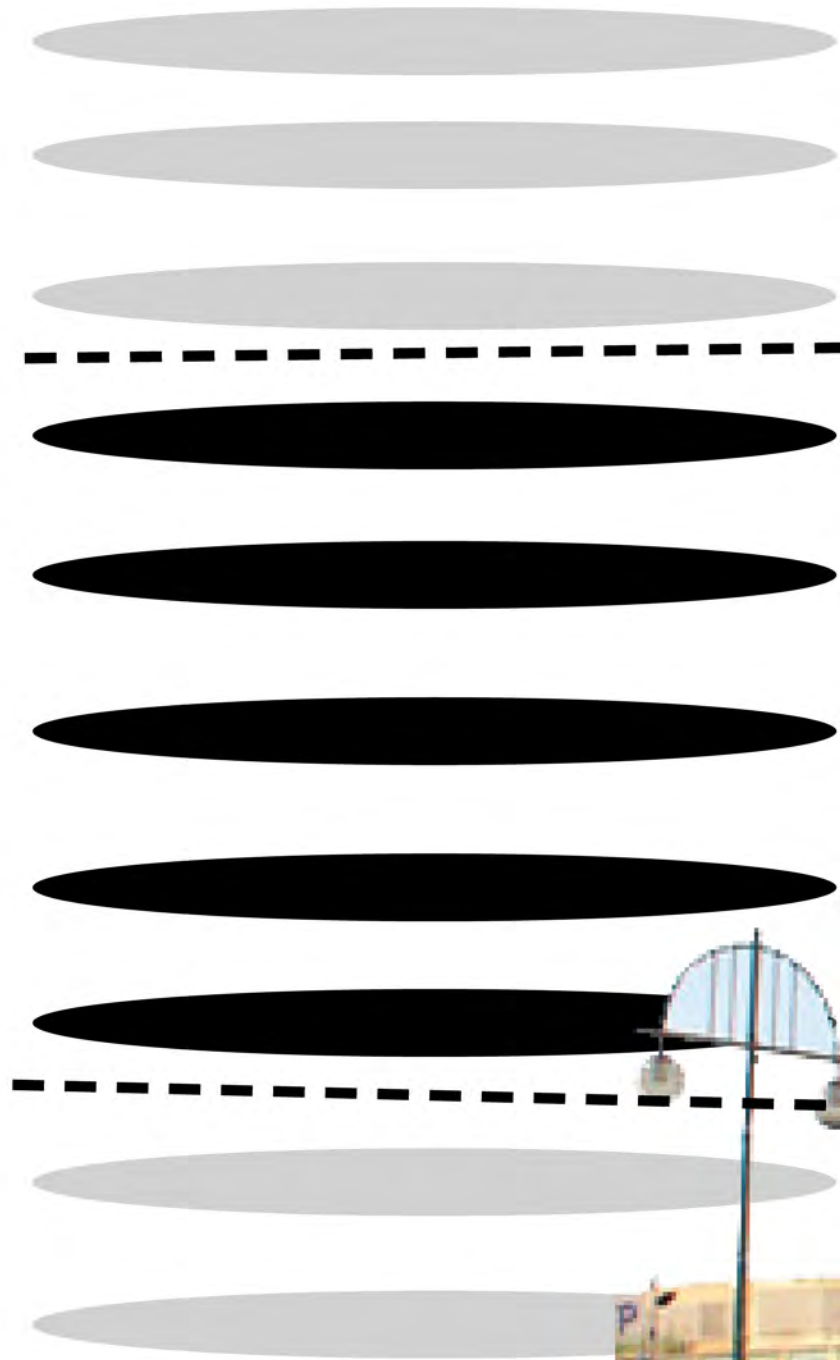
INTERIOR

Birmingham's interior is a series of circles placed in a rectangle, to make repetitive routes of travel, both in and around its structure. Its stronghold is its ability to make the transition seem so gentle when in actuality, from this construction photo, their construction process was very difficult.



CIRCULATION

Circulation is the densest in the middle levels where the actual library is located. Not only does traffic pick up in this areas, but the most leasire and dwelling happens here as well.

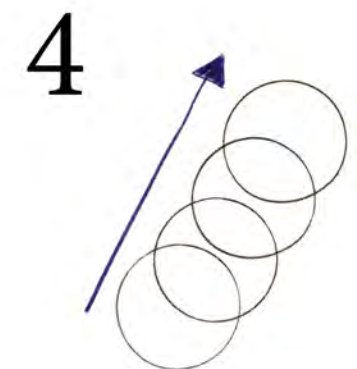
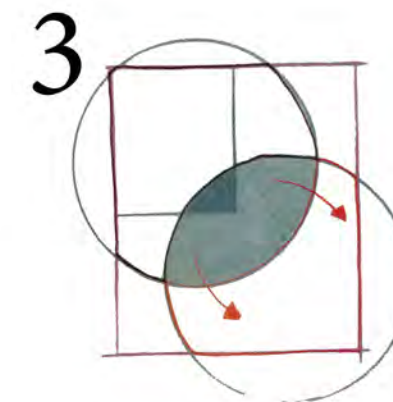
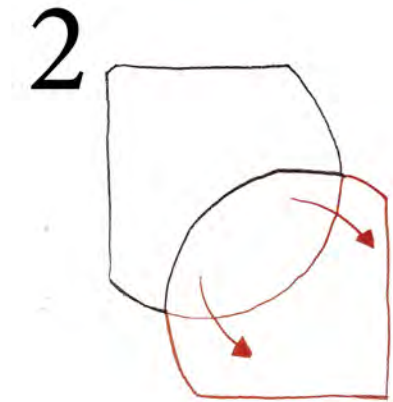
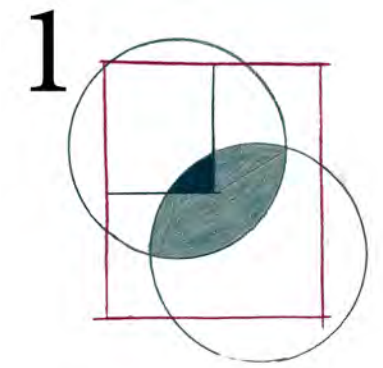
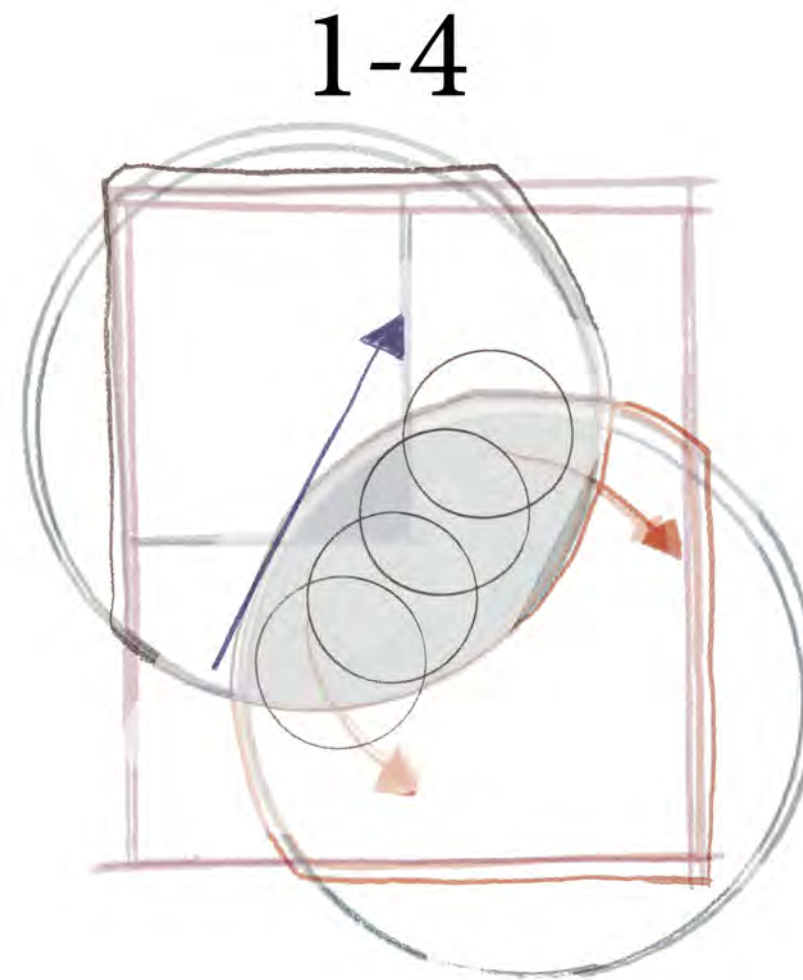


DIAGRAMS

When diagramming I found it most important to not only note how you roam about the library but also how the figures that make up the building overlap (which probably told the architects and engineers what was the best way to circulate through the place!)



1. shows the stacking of the rectangles along with the two circles that represent the courtyard and transit hub beneath ground. 2. shows that you move from the circles, to the squares, back to the circles, and 3. shows the circles overlapping within the parameters of the rectangle. 4. is the circular ascension inside the rectangle.





LIGHTING

The ability of Birmingham's interior and exterior light to maintain a balance is something not many structures can do. Not only does the structure of the interior lighting mimic the shape of the exterior aesthetics, but also the interior light remains minimal, as the penetration of the exterior light through the circular aesthetics becomes the main source of brightness.

