



URBAN KNOWLEDGE HUB

SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT FOR THE FUTURE
STATE AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY HAMBURG



**WISSEN
BAUEN
2025**

Introduction

Participation, Innovation, Future



The spatial development project *Wissen Bauen 2025* started in August 2020 with the prospect of describing the State and University Library's (Stabi) future spatial development. The project design was inspired by the principles of Open Social Innovation, where public development is understood as an iterative and open dialog involving users, staff, experts and other stakeholders. To ensure a creative and diverse exchange of ideas, a deliberate mixture of stakeholders was fostered.

The first stage of the project focused on elaborating a preliminary idea for the future library by mapping out the needs and demands of different stakeholder groups. This was done via online workshops. The resulting qualitative findings were subsequently verified through two online surveys, consulting with a larger group of people. The preliminary idea served as a baseline for developing a new concept for the



future library during the second stage, focusing on the compilation of a spatial allocation plan and a functional scheme. Building on a first version of this concept, students from Hamburg, Dresden and Weimar developed architectural designs during the third stage of the project. The 15 best prototypes were later displayed at the library.

Due to the Covid Pandemic, all communication and collaboration had to be done online. This posed great challenges for the project team, since the stakeholders were harder to reach. On the other side, it opened up new possibilities for experimentation, introducing innovative and creative ways of engagement. Therefore, in hindsight the project profited from the emerging new trends in the university, science and societal sectors and was able to set its own mark towards the future.

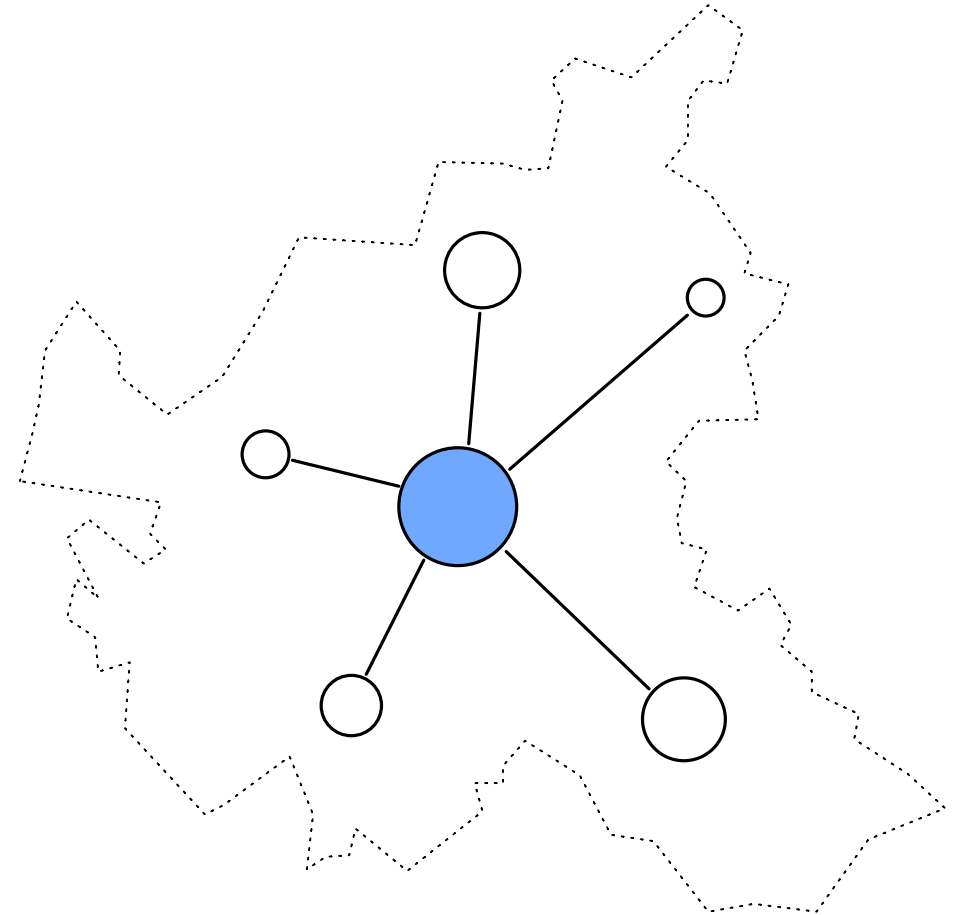
Urban Knowledge Hub

Networks, Science, Encounters

The final result of this project is a spatial concept, describing the future Stabi as an Urban Knowledge Hub. The Urban Knowledge Hub enhances the library's function, while taking the ongoing societal and cultural diversification as well as digitalization processes into account. It defines four spatial levels:

- On a macro level, it provides access to global information and knowledge networks, which are crucial to academia and knowledge based societies as a whole,
- on a meso level, it serves the city and its metropolitan region as a hub for networking and transfer of knowledge, open for academia and all citizens,
- on an institutional level, it supplies functional spaces for the library's future viability,
- and on an individual level, it constitutes a learning and working space for a variety of users as well as a venue for scientific, social and cultural engagement.

With this and the Stabi's urban and historical background in mind, several functional sequences were thought out and compiled into one master plan.



The Master Plan

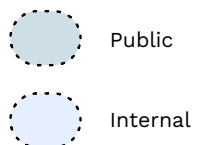
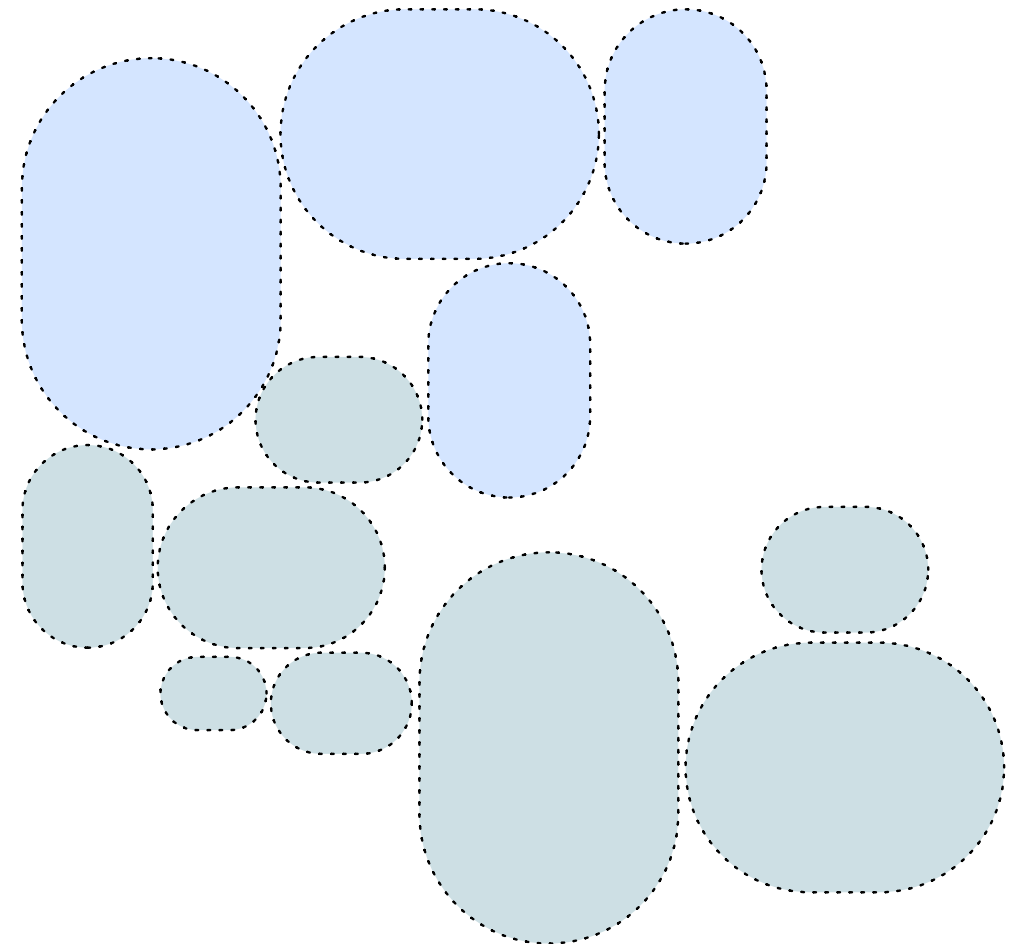
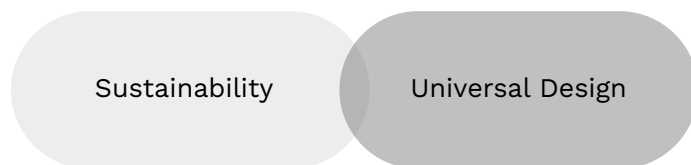
Sustainability, Accessibility, Flexibility

The concept proposes a division of the future library into four internal and eight public areas, including joint and transition zones.

For the public areas, a new spatial typology is formulated, which divides the Urban Knowledge Hub into different functional facets. This new approach is inspired by findings in neuroscientific research as well as spatial studies. The variety of spaces opens up new possibilities of working, studying, communicating and interaction, while always placing the constitution, appropriation and dissemination of knowledge and competences at its core.

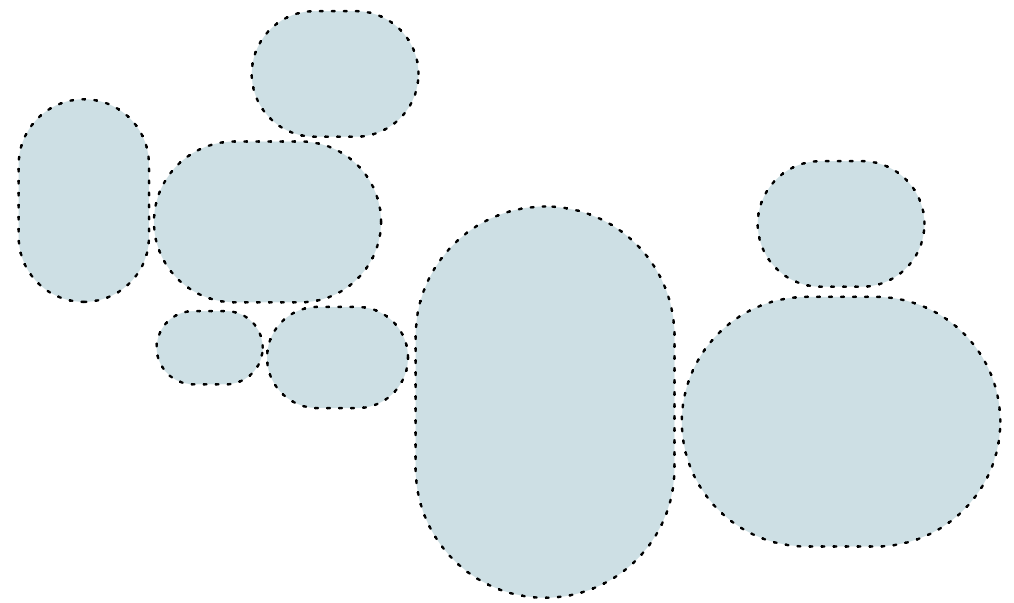
The internal areas are integrating the notion that the future workplace culture in libraries will fundamentally change as a result of ongoing digitalization processes. The job environment will adapt to new ways of work and collaboration. Storage and logistic systems are incorporating current understandings of conservatory standards and are simultaneously set out to be efficient and cost-effective. Smooth in-house operations are assured through the implementation of a new center for digitalization as well as up to date workshop areas.

Guiding principles for the development of the Urban Knowledge Hub are a comprehensive understanding of sustainability as well as criteria of openness. Ecological, economic, social and cultural sustainability will be as much of a standard as the principles of Universal Design.



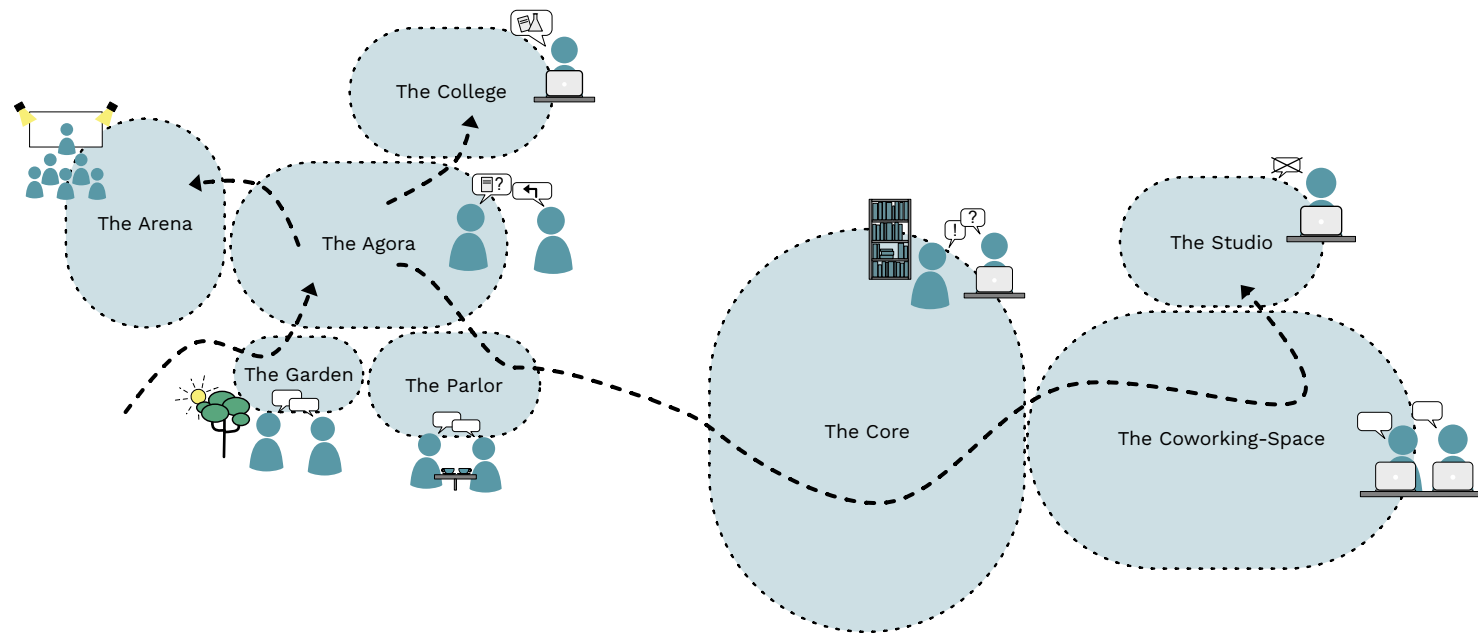


PUBLIC AREAS



Spatial Typology

Functionality, Diversity, Appropriation



The structuring of the public areas is shaped by a holistic approach deriving from the project's participatory process. Instead of mono-functional spaces (book stacks, reading rooms, administration offices) or multifunctional areas, such as study spaces surrounded by bookshelves, the aim is to create a multi-faceted spatial sequence, which is shaped by the users' perception and appropriation. By refraining from allocating fixed functions to each space, this typology also supports the idea of sustainability, implementing flexible spaces, which can easily be adapted to the ever-changing user needs in the digital age.

The spatial typology starts off in the **Garden**. A mixture of garden, community and gastronomic spaces embeds the library within its urban surroundings. The central access point is the **Agora**, serving visitors with orientation and information, while also offering central

meeting points. One way leads them towards the **Parlor** - a place for recreation and social interaction. Diving deeper into work and study processes, users will then arrive at the **Core** of the library, where they will find information and support. A variety of spaces for collaboration will unfold in the **Coworking-Space**, whereas the **Studio** will offer quiet spaces for focused work and high levels of concentration. While moving through the library, visitors will be guided from spaces of orientation and the collection of information towards clearly dedicated, concentrated work environments. Furthermore, the concept entails the **Arena**, a separate area for events and the **College**, a space for research and its cooperation.

Subsequently, the spatial typology as well as central characteristics of the different areas will be presented.

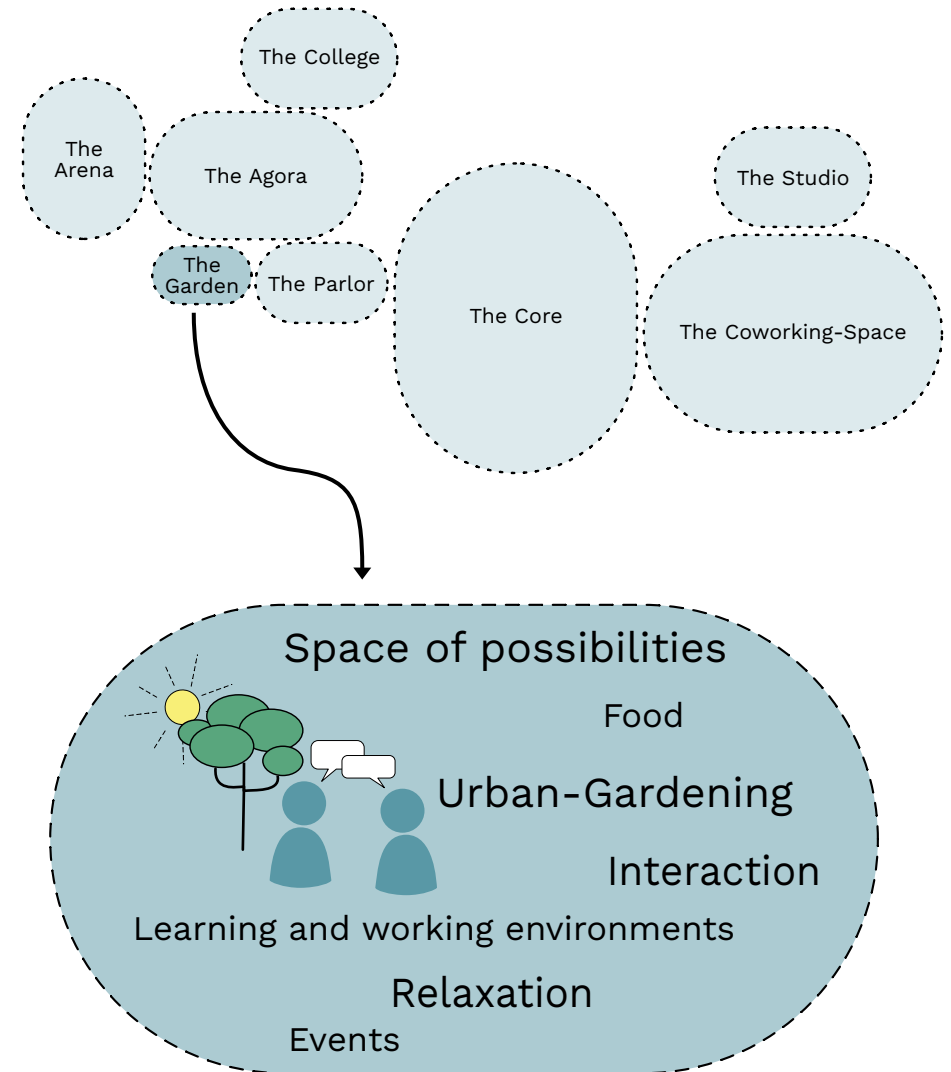
The Garden

Context, Nature, Recreation

Guiding principles of the Garden are communal activities and relaxation. The Garden creates transitions between people and nature, as well as inside and outside areas. Multiple green spaces serve the purpose of stimulation, sparking interest and drawing individuals inside. On the other hand, the Garden is a space for recreation and relaxation, disrupting long periods of focused studying. Here, mental learning processes can be accompanied by physical activities.

Complementing the building complex, the Garden also serves the purpose of a visiting card, sparking pedestrians' interest. Next to culinary offerings, which stretch into the Agora and the Parlor, the Garden also comprises informal working as well as recreational spaces, which are surrounding the gastronomy. The supply of power outlets and a stable internet connection are assured. There is also an outside venue for events, including a covered small open-air stage and flexible seating zones.

Next to this centralized outside area for recreation and communication, a whole network of green spaces will be installed, covering the library vertically as well as horizontally and reaching into the buildings' interior. Depending on the architectural structure, additional terraces and courtyards will be implemented in order to provide the whole library with fresh air supplies and access to outside areas. These green patches will simultaneously serve the purpose of a sustainable insulation and air conditioning, improving the library's microclimate and unsealing urban concrete surfaces. Overall, the Garden poses a metaphor for an interconnected network of outside and green spaces, covering the building as a whole.



The Agora

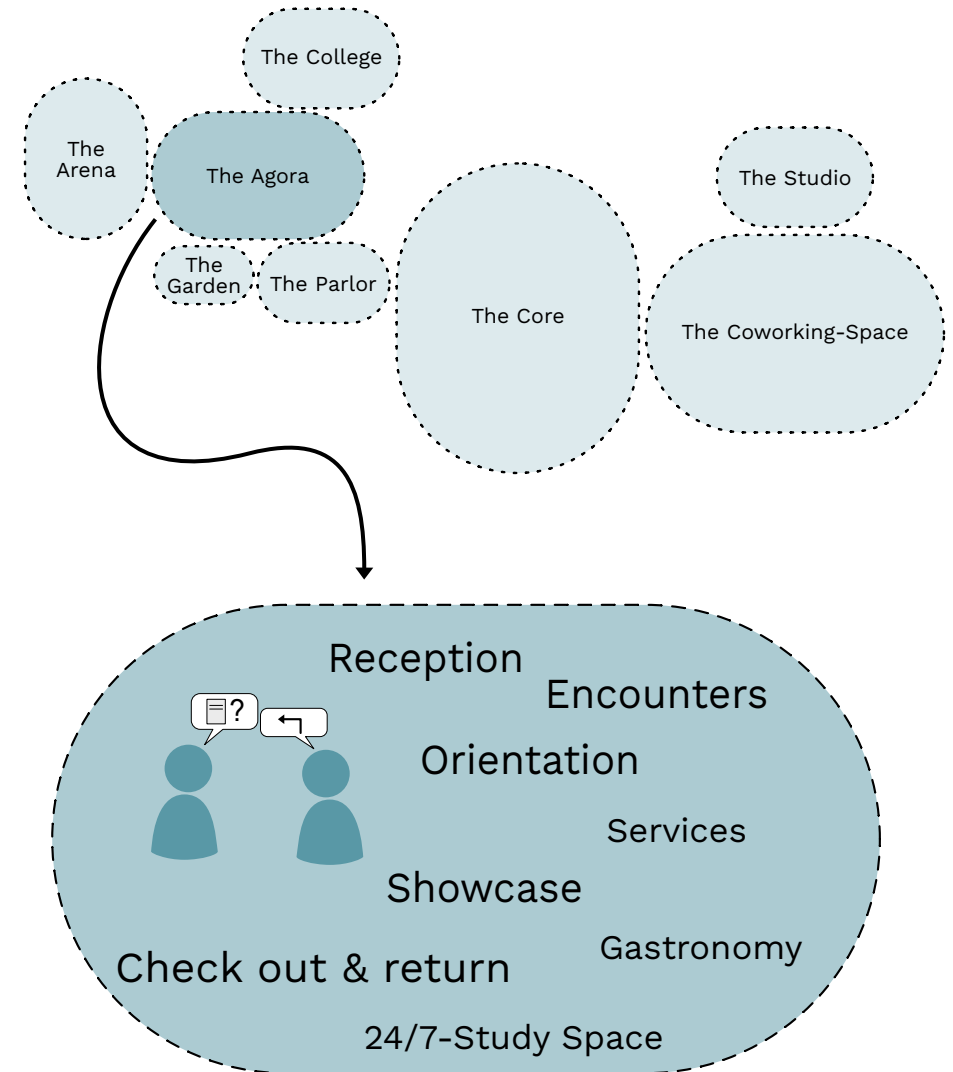
Arrival, Orientation, Encounters

In order to further embed the Urban Knowledge Hub in its urban and societal fabric, a variety of entrances as well as an open architecture will be implemented. This will ensure the access to the library from multiple sides. A direct connection to the future metro station would be another possible way of enhancing the library's connectivity.

Next to the multiple side access points, a prominent main entrance will be installed, which will lead to the main lobby in the Agora. This entrance hall will serve the purpose of providing people with information and meeting spaces.

The guiding principle of the Agora is creating a passage between outside and inside spaces. It provides a place for arrival, orientation and interaction. At the same time, the Agora includes a showcase, displaying the library's services and collections, hereby communicating its essence to its users. This place facilitates meetings and interaction between people, the display of goods and services as well as the fast provision of information and publications to go. It also includes a 24/7 study space. Generally though, learning processes in the Agora are informal and preparatory.

To foster spontaneous interactions, the Agora also provides different venues for events and exhibitions. This range of spaces and functions is accompanied by a pleasant and inspiring atmosphere, making its users feel welcome and creating an interest in exploring the library further.



The Parlor

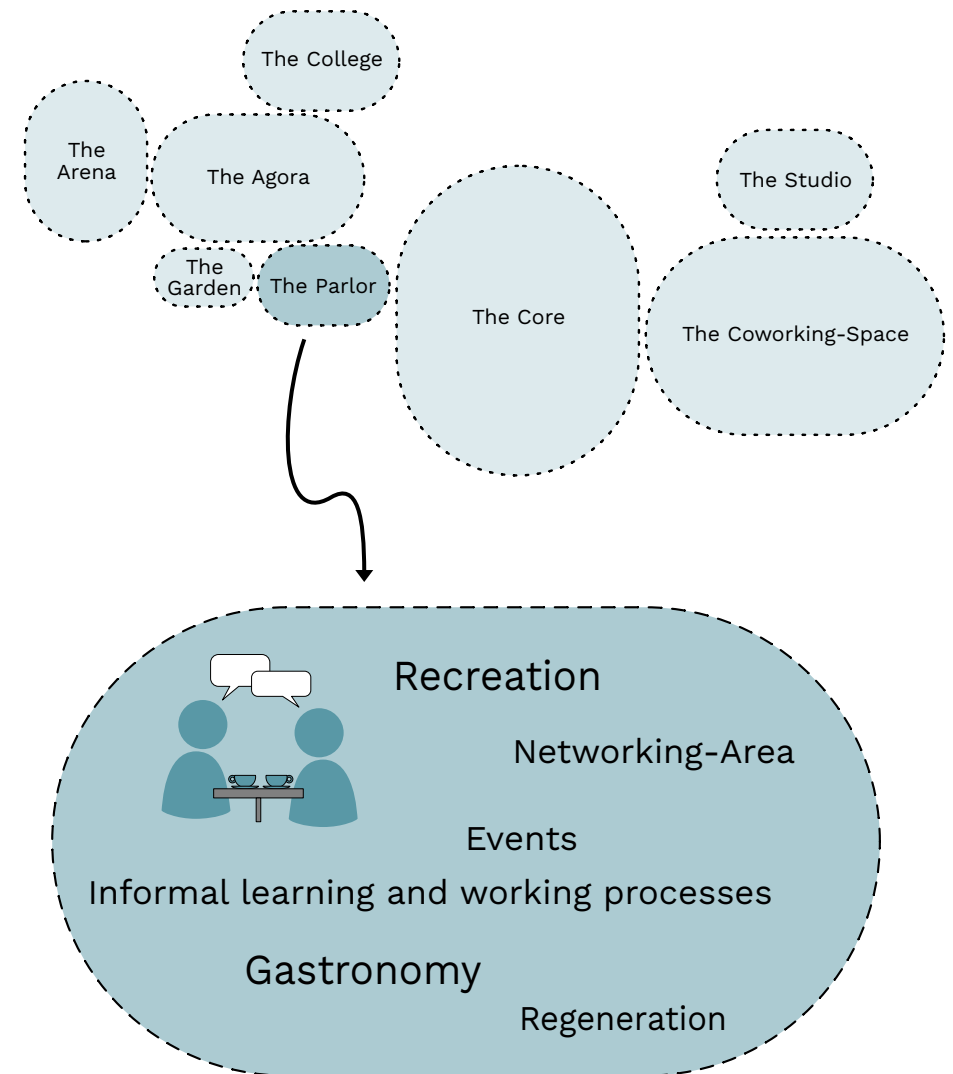
Recreation, Alternation, Exchange

Guiding principles of the Parlor are exchange and alternation. People here are looking for deceleration, feeling at ease, and interacting with others spontaneously or purposefully. They create new ideas, form networks and tune into focused working phases. At the same time, there is also room for breaks and rest, for recreation and gastronomy. Learning processes here are social and spontaneous.

The café is the anchor of the spaces for relaxation and interaction found in the Parlor. It also forms an intersection between the Garden, the Agora and the Parlor. Next to some outside seating areas, the café includes a variety of inside seating. Central communication spaces, namely the Stabi-Lounge and the Stabi-Club, are situated right next to the café. The Stabi-Club serves the purpose of a Networking-Area for meetings, brainstorming sessions or strategic reunions. It can also be used for smaller and informal events. The Stabi-Lounge on the other side serves as a relaxation zone to unwind, read or work alone or with others.

The Parlor also entails central break rooms, as spaces for retreat and recuperation. For example, a space for rest and a space for silence, where users can escape the noise and focus their attention on what is going on internally. Another space for regeneration is the play and movement hall.

With the help of the Parlor, a counterpart to long and focused working phases is created. These informal sites are supposed to cater to the users' varying daily needs and are supporting the holistic approach towards learning spaces within a library.



The Core

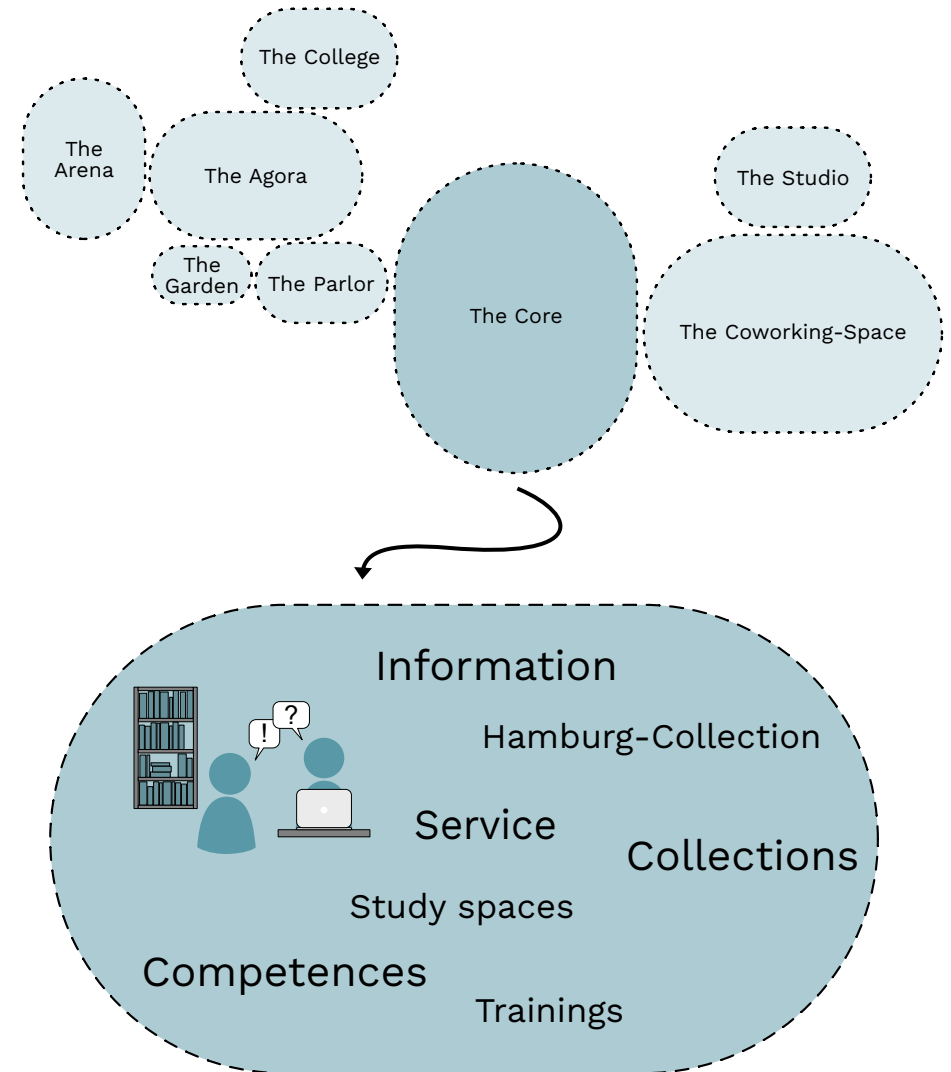
Information, Enquiry, Media

The guiding principle of the Core is that of information procurement. People can find help in identifying research questions as well as support in retrieving the information they need. Next to personal counseling, one can also find digital research options. In addition, some of the most popular as well as introductory books are displayed and freely available. Additionally, parts of the Hamburg Collection as well as the multimedia Hamburg Lab are located here.

Learning processes in the Core are revolving around acquiring knowledge as well as different types of competences. Namely, expanding one's expertise on information procurement, scientific research and managing digital data and resources. The central point of contact in the Core will be the second permanently installed service desk of the Urban Knowledge Hub, where users can consult library staff for help in finding information and advice on collections and services. The library's main spot for copying and scanning will be located right next to the service desk. Additionally, the Core provides a range of different study and work spaces.

To ensure that visitors can use all books freely in this and the following parts of the library without having to officially borrow them, a book control system will functionally separate the Core from the Parlor.

Overall, the Core with its services provides an entry point into the multiple facets of scientific research. Its atmosphere represents that of a classical library.



The Coworking-Space

Collaboration, Experiment, Creativity

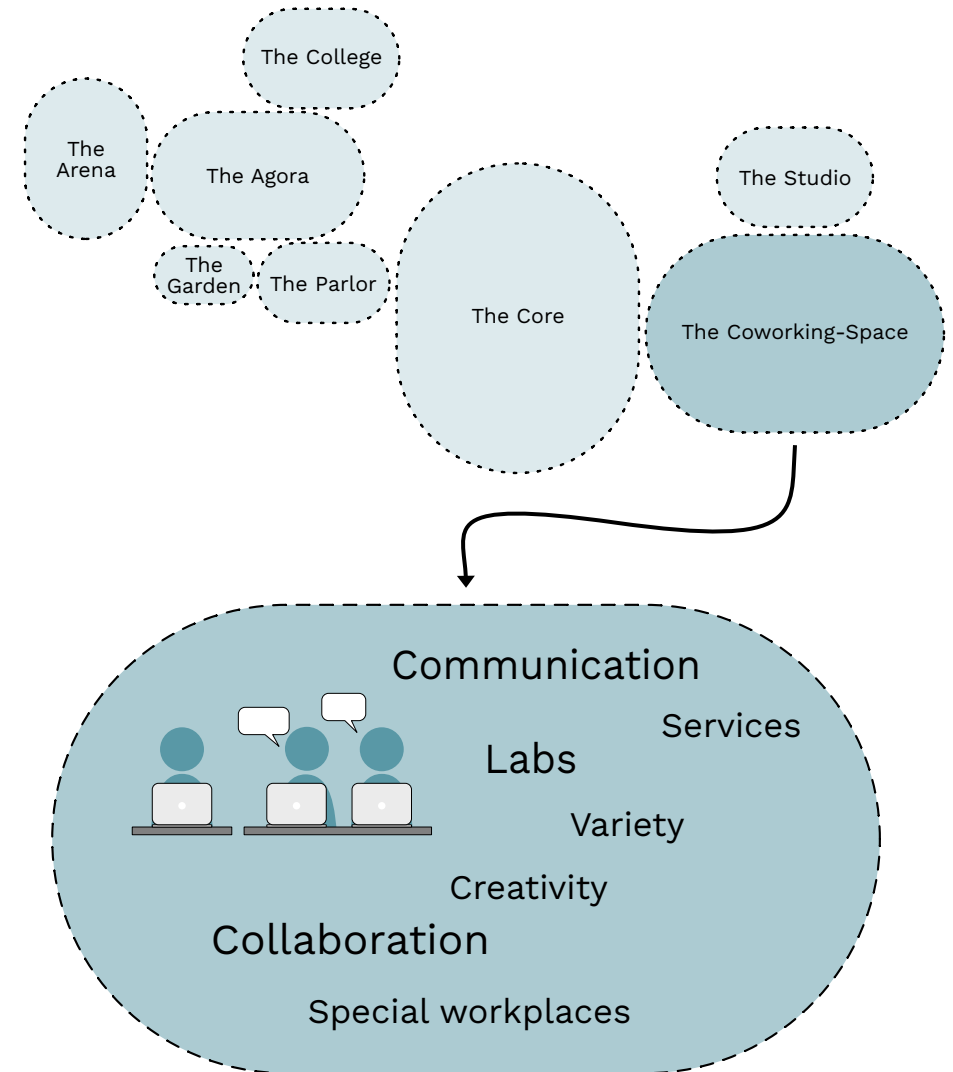
The guiding principle of the Coworking-Space is collaboration, revolving around the shared appropriation of space and knowledge. There are multiple study spaces for teamwork, as well as more experimental and hands-on workshop areas. The sharing of knowledge and fostering of collaboration processes result in a creative atmosphere, rooted in the interaction between people. Learning processes are therefore collaborative and situated.

The types of places to study and work range from open spaces, to separate group areas, as well as special workplaces and labs. Since users can adapt the open and flexible study areas according to their needs by adjusting the provided furniture, they naturally subdivide these spaces into different zones. This automatically creates a diversification of workplaces and assures beneficial acoustics and atmospheres.

Within the Urban Knowledge Hub, its users will not only find traditional arrangements for studying, but also spaces for practical projects and hands-on research. A range of creative spaces, combining laboratories and workshops, are integrated within the Lab Areas.

Additionally, there will be a service station placed prominently in the Coworking Space, including possibilities for scanning, taking quick phone calls, locking away personal belongings or filling up one's water bottle.

Overall, the Coworking Space with its variety of spaces and services attempts to cater to the users' different needs. Collaborative and creative energy are marking the atmosphere of the Coworking Space.



The Studio

Concentration, Focus, Quiet

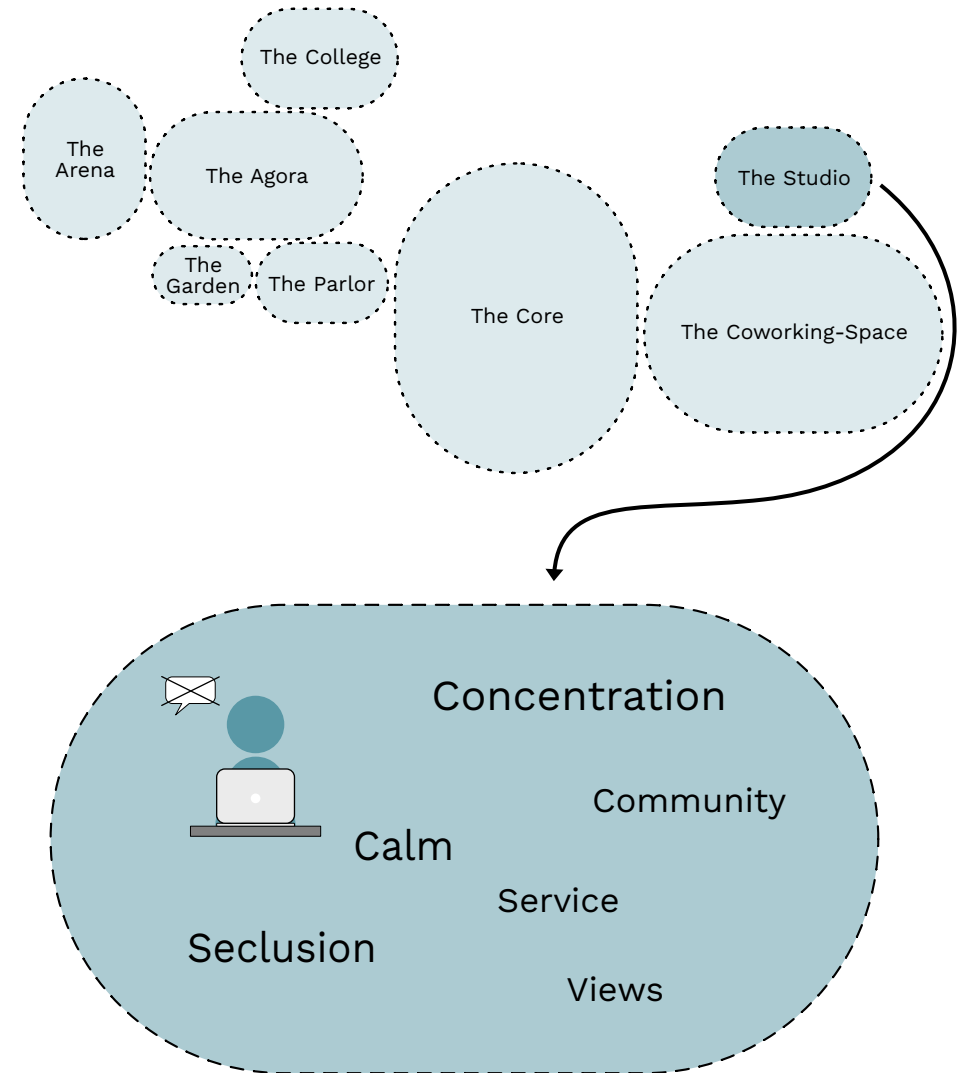
Guiding principles of the Studio are immersion and concentration. The lack of movement enables an atmosphere of total silence and seclusion. Users are provided with individual workstations and places of retreat, overlooking outside and green spaces. Acoustics and atmospheres are calm and soft, in order to promote long, focused working periods, fostering new ideas and knowledge.

There is an unspoken understanding amongst the users to avoid disrupting one another, creating a feeling of community. Learning processes are focused on the constitution and consolidation of knowledge.

Within the Studio, people will exclusively find individual workstations, meant for working in silence. They can be placed in open space, semi-private and shielded by panels, or located in separate cabins. Additionally, the Studio comprises a zone with long-term individual workstations, which can be booked over longer periods of time in order to work on final projects, papers or dissertations. To balance these intensive workflows, the Studio also includes a separate silent break room, overlooking outside and green spaces. Users can admire the view and get inspired.

Another shielded service station provides visitors with long-term lockers, storage areas for lockable book trolleys, scanners, water dispensers and a separate space for receiving phone calls.

The Studio aims at creating a calm atmosphere, which will foster and support long studying and working flows.



The Arena

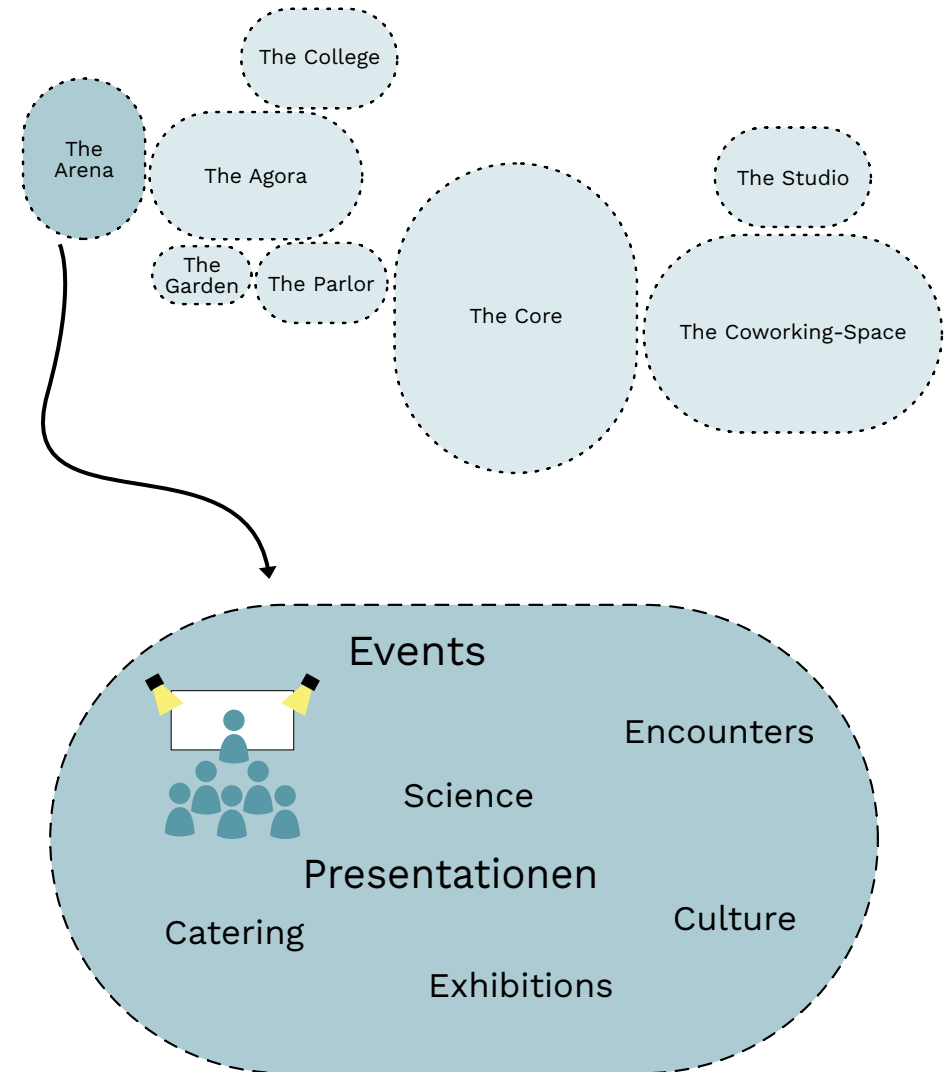
Inspiration, Presentation, Meetings

Guiding principles of the Arena are inspiration and further education. The focus lies on performances and communication. Visitors share a collective interest in the upcoming events. Therefore, the Arena serves the purpose of a showcase into society and science. Learning processes here are informal as well as entertaining and expand horizons with their educational and inspiring character.

Access to the Arena will be granted from the Agora and via an additional side entrance. That way, the Arena is open to the public for conferences or other events outside the library's opening hours, thus making it possible to separate the flow of visitors from the rest of the library.

The side entrance leads visitors into the Arena's lobby, where they can find a waiting zone, a cloakroom as well as an area for catering. The permanent exhibition "Erinnerungsort SUB" will illustrate the library's turbulent history and give some deeper insights into its eponym Carl von Ossietzky. Due to his importance, the central convention hall will also be named after this famous publicist and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. It comprises an auditorium including a reception area, flexible seating options and a modular stage. Additional venues can be used as complementary break out rooms or for separate smaller events.

Next to these centralized event halls, there will be supplementary spaces for exhibitions and trainings throughout the whole building. A digital booking system will make these rooms apparent and available to both staff and users.



The College

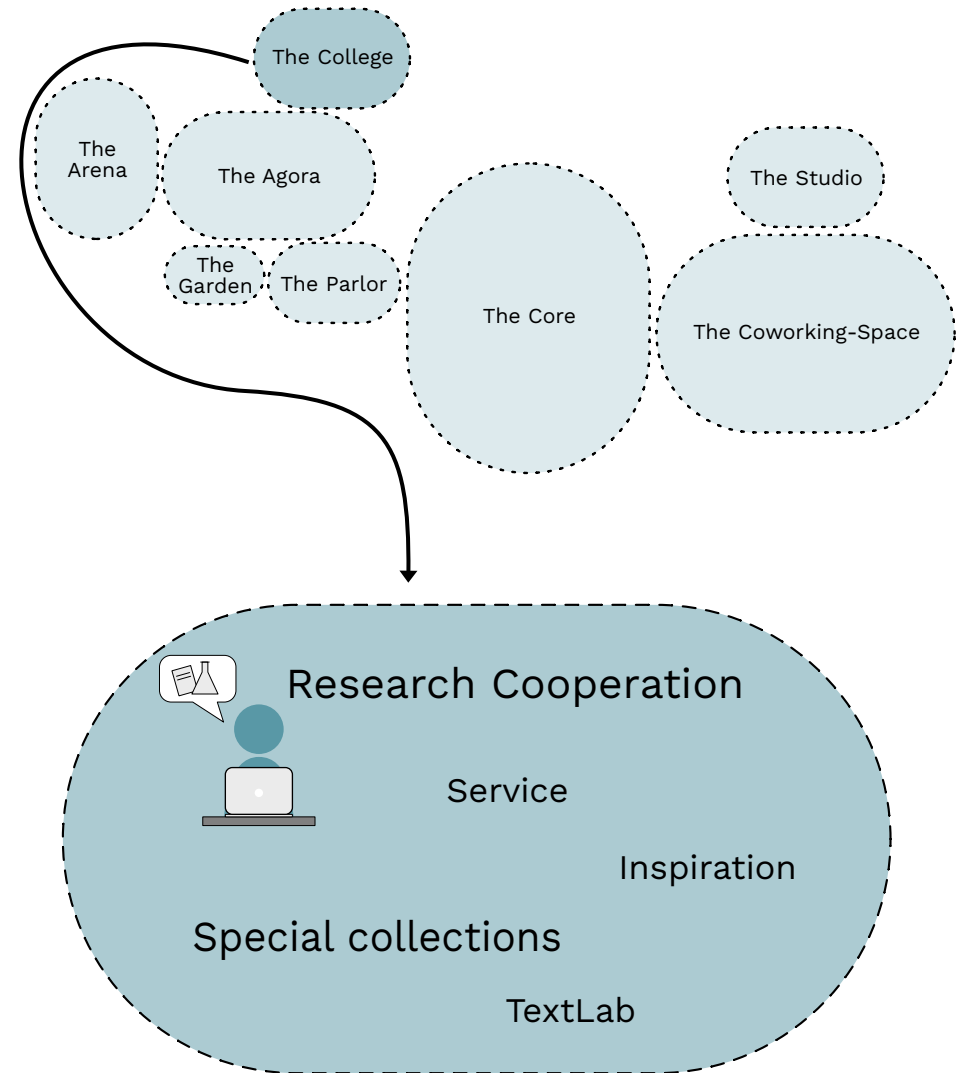
Research, Science, Specialization

The guiding principle of the College is intensified research. Its atmosphere is calm and communicative due to the large range of different types of study spaces. The handling of and interaction with people and artifacts is marked by caution and respect. Additionally, the College includes supporting services as well as spaces for interaction and inspiration.

Just like the Arena, the College can be accessed from the Agora and via an additional side entry, also leading into a separate entrance hall. Here visitors will find a small lounge area as a space for engagement and relaxation, meanwhile the so-called Crystalline Vault will give them deeper insights into alternating highlights of the library's collections.

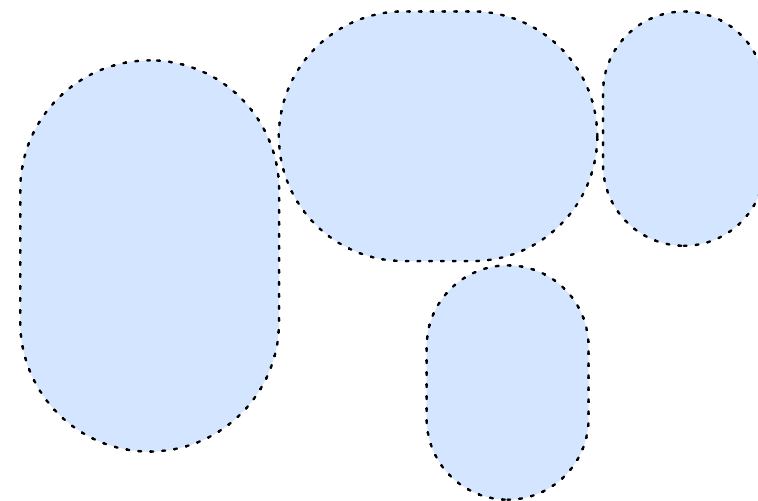
From this lobby, users will be led to the research reading room, a separate space for research cooperation and the semi-public areas of the department for special collections. The research reading room includes a service isle, reference collections and a variety of study spaces, aiming at facilitating the supervised access to the library's special collections. The area for research cooperation is subdivided into different spaces for events, trainings, long-term projects and offices for temporary researchers. Additionally, there will be an innovative structural intersection between the library and the University of Hamburg's Center for the Study of Manuscript Culture's activities. This will create a unique alliance in the German research landscape between the competences in science and the library.

Overall, the College emphasizes the access to the library's special collections as well as hybrid and cooperative means of collaboration with these materials.



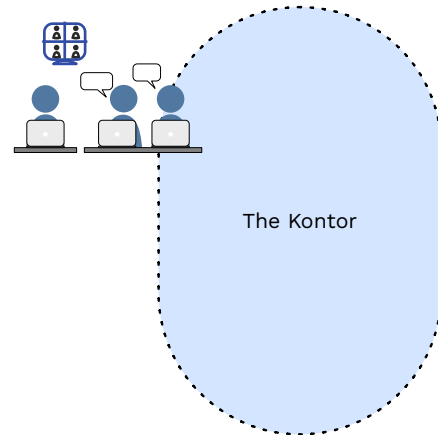
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INTERNAL AREAS

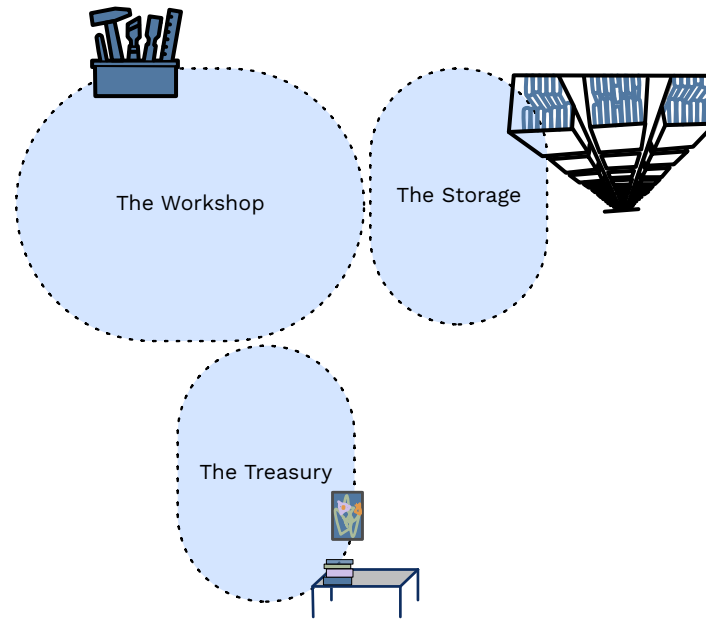


New Work

Change, Diversification, Collaboration



The outlined changes within the work environment of academic libraries will equally affect its staff in the future, since internal processes will also become increasingly digitalized and working structures will be marked by the need to collaborate and to network. As a learning organization, interfaces between the library's users and its staff are already more versatile, refraining from classic divisions between front and back offices. Since new modes of teamwork will prioritize iterative processes and projects over routine activities, new spatial needs will arise. This demand will not be met by traditional corridors connecting individual or group offices. Additionally, further spatial requirements for projects, meetings and workshops will have to be implemented in a cost-efficient manner.



In order to foster these emerging working modes while maintaining some degree of flexibility, future office spaces will be organized as team areas. Preliminary calculations of the spatial requirements were based upon ongoing projects within Hamburg's state administration, revolving around the topic of New Work. They include recommendations for desk sharing quotas as well as dimensions of conference rooms. This course of action is a future-proof approach, considering the ongoing transition phase towards new modes of working, while simultaneously taking needs-oriented office space estimations into account.

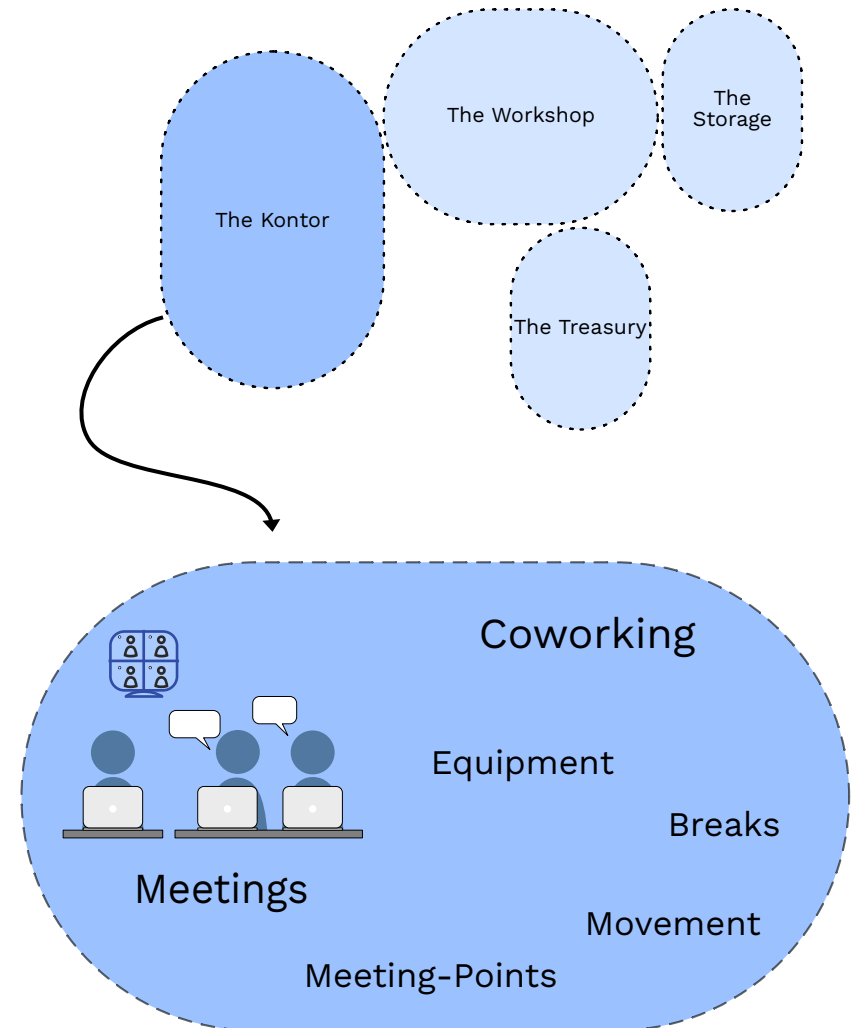
Detailed requirements will now be presented within the subsections the **Kontor**, the **Storage**, the **Treasury** and the **Workshop**.

The Kontor

Management, Administration, Departments

The Kontor is the library's central administration area. Office spaces and meeting rooms for management and administration, acquisition and cataloguing, library management system and IT, service management and library system as well as staff council will be located here. Additionally, the central conference area for large meetings and committee assemblies can be found in the Kontor. In-house spaces for activities, breaks and social gatherings as well as a chill-out-area will be located here.

An important distinction is made between the semi-public areas, accessible for the users during the day such as the management offices, the service department as well as the administration, and the internal non-accessible areas. The layout will be further developed during the comprehensive planning process. At the moment a focus is set on the implementation of combi-offices, workshop and project spaces as well as areas for coworking, complemented by spaces for storage and logistics. Additionally, kitchenettes will be implemented as local meeting points and spaces for short and informal consultations.

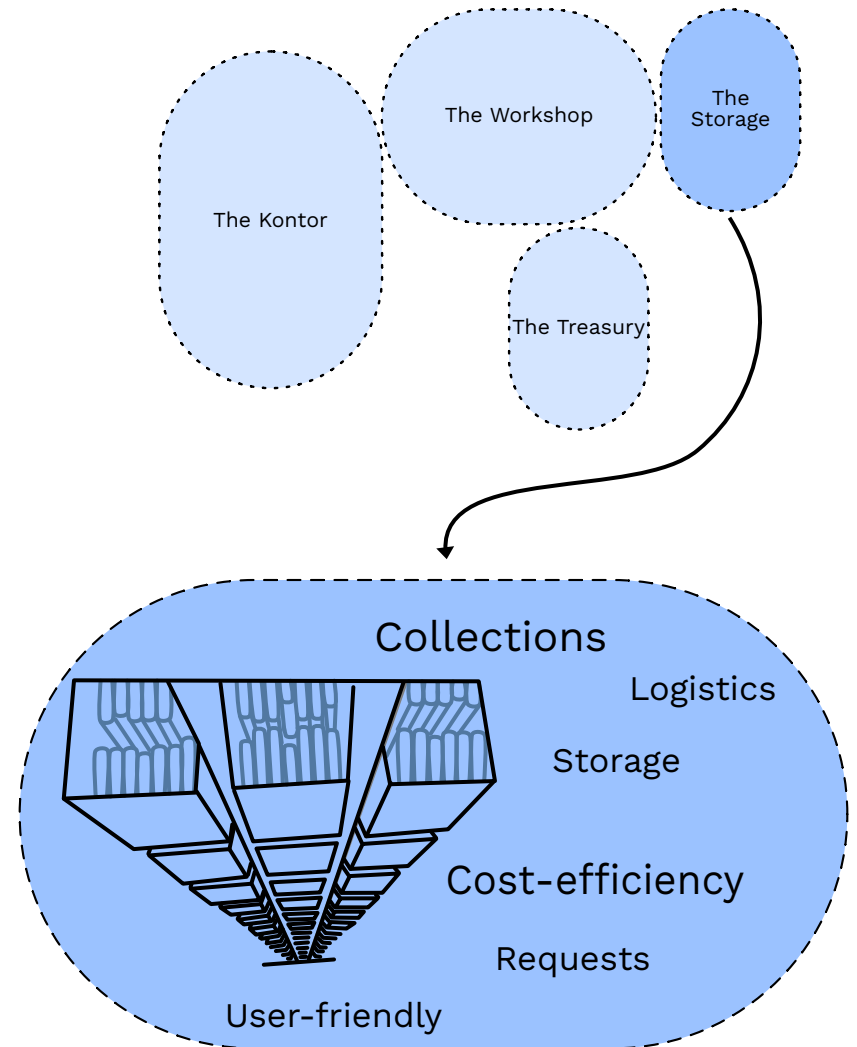


The Storage

Collections, Automation, Efficiency

The Storage stocks large parts of the collections shelved on-site. Therefore, its main element will be an Automated Storage and Retrieval System (ASRS) to ensure the safe, cost-efficient and user-friendly storage of the collections. An ASRS is a high rack warehouse, adapted to library specific needs. Here, books are stored in containers, which can hold, depending on the systems' design, up to 100 volumes (in Europe common containers are estimated to hold around 30 volumes). These containers are stored individually or in pairs within the rack. After receiving a user's request for a specific book via the library's online-catalogue, the system's operator device will pull the corresponding container out of the rack and place it on the conveyor. The box will then reach the central order picking desk (commissioning), where the staff will take out the book and either hand it directly to the user or forward it to the holdshelf. The container will be inserted back into the rack.

The most important linkage will be between the Storage and the Agora, where visitors will be able to pick up their requested books.

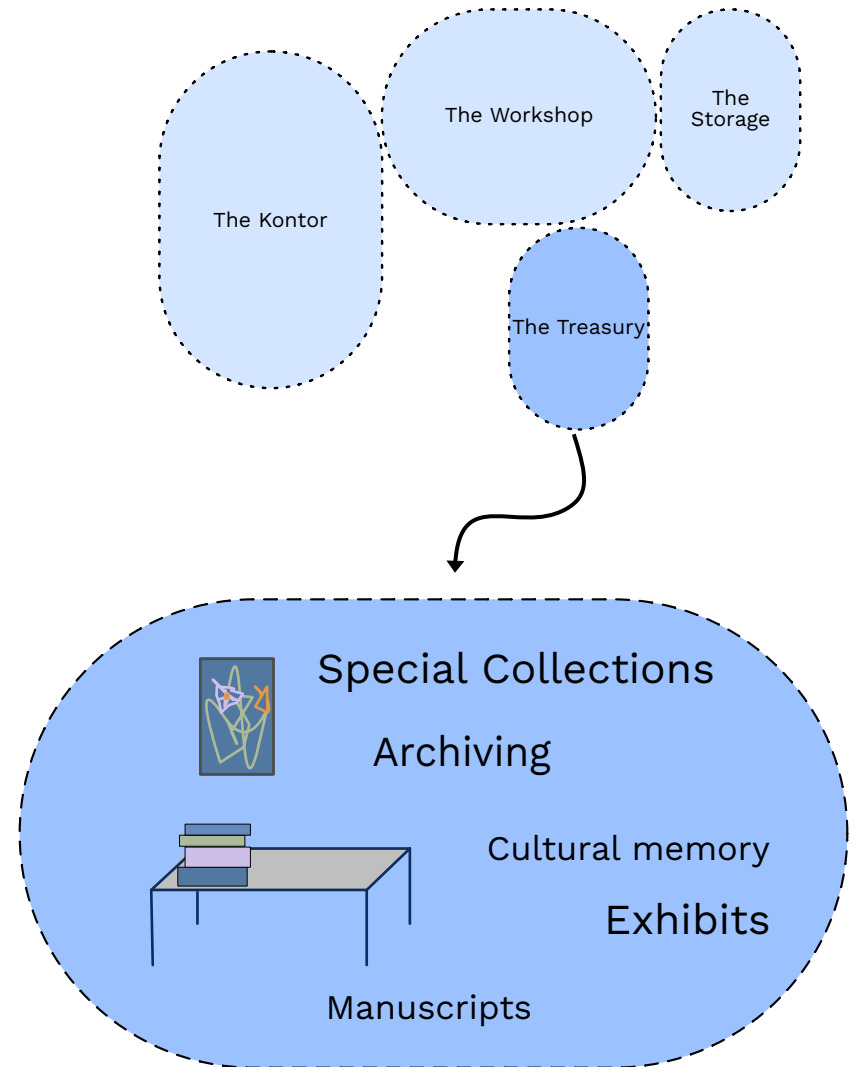


The Treasury

Heritage, Conservation, Protection

The Treasury holds all special collections. This includes the most valuable and ancient books and documents such as manuscripts, early prints, estate collections and rare book collections. Additional peripheral areas for special works, unpacking and sifting as well as sorting and logistics are included in the Treasury. Due to varying climate, equipment and security measures, an array of spaces is differentiated. Archive materials pose the need for wider shelves and bigger working stations to un- and repack archival collections. Paintings (stored vertically) and realia (stored horizontally) share the same space. Special security measures will be taken for the rare book collections and the vault. Large formats and flat materials will need to be stored in specially equipped stacks, with extra wide shelves in order to allow horizontal storage, cabinets for maps and plans as well as bigger storage and working areas. All facilities will include an extra workstation for research tasks. The Treasury also includes office areas as well as a staff lounge and changing rooms.

Due to functional and safety necessities, a direct spatial connection to the department for special collections is indispensable. The Treasury should also be close to the library specific workshops.



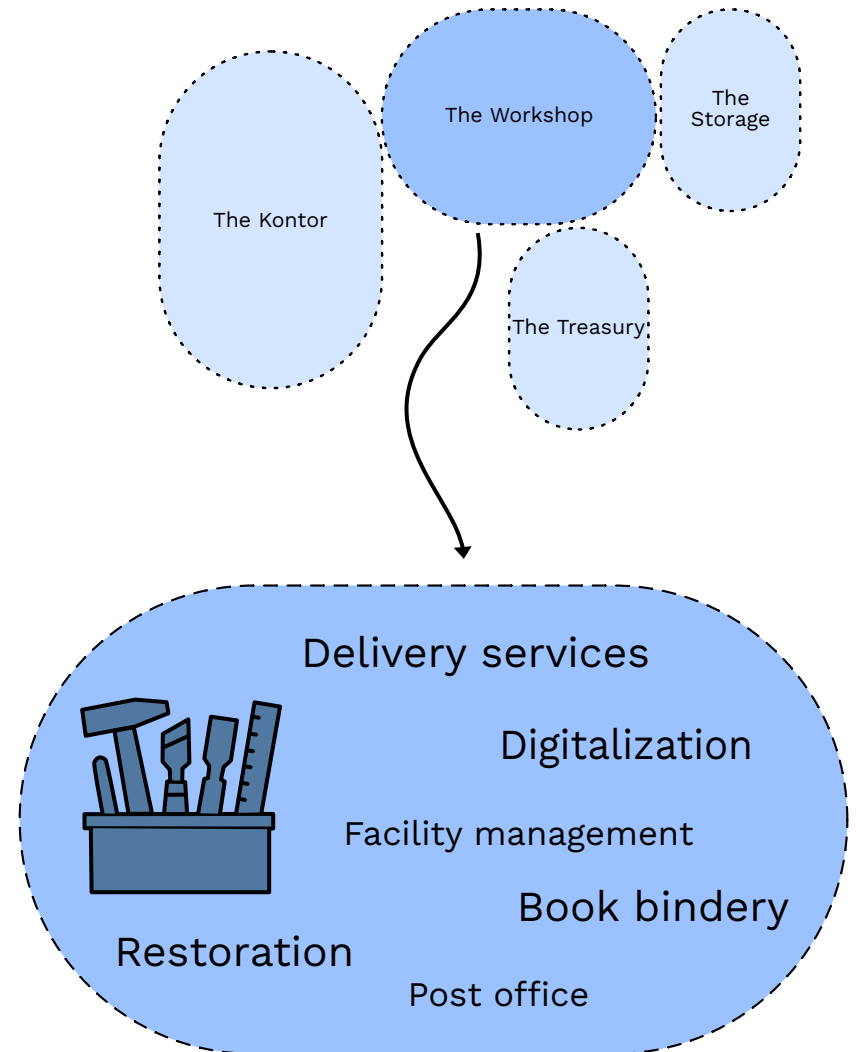
The Workshop

Digitalization, Crafts, Maintenance

The Workshop comprises the library specific workshops on the one hand side, including the accompanying work and office spaces, and storage, office as well as work areas of the facility management and mailroom. Spatial assessments have been made according to the status quo and the necessary degree of expansion. Most important are the interconnections between the workshop areas and the respective storage, office and delivery zones.

The library specific workshops include the book bindery, the restoration workshop, the center for digitalization and the Elbewerkstätten (external services for mass digitalization). These areas need to be spatially connected.

The facility management and building services including office, workshop and storage areas are also integrated in the Workshop. Additionally, a shared break room, a kitchenette and changing rooms are located here. For the external cleaning and security staff, separate facilities will be installed. The general staff entrance will be located in this part of the building as well.



For more information on the project
see

stabi.hamburg/wissenbauen2025

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