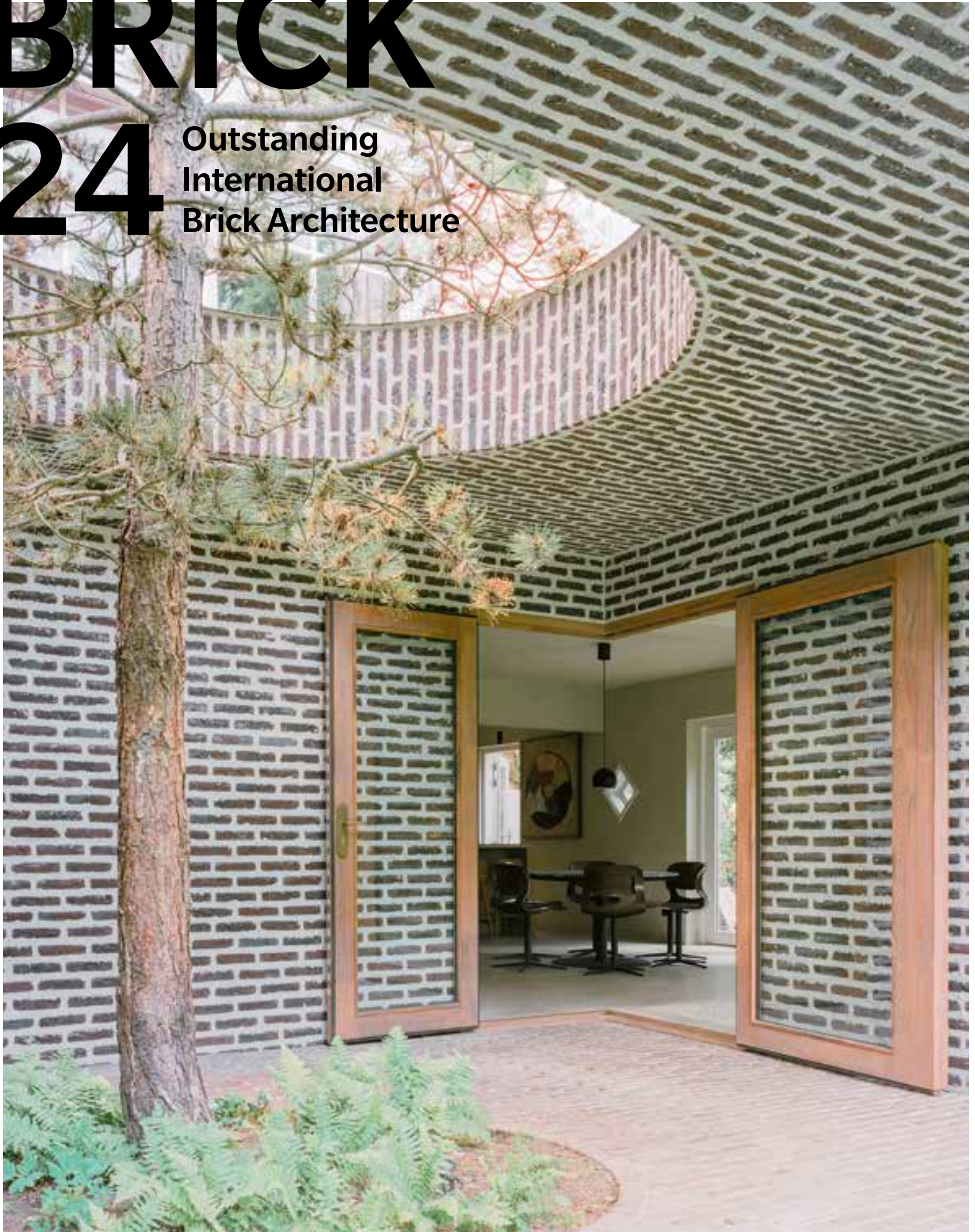


BRICK

24 Outstanding International Brick Architecture



PONT12 ARCHITECTES
Theater of Carouge



François Jolliet, Antoine Hahne, Guy Nicollier, Christiane von Roten, Cyril Michod, Frédéric Brigger

ARCHITECTS
PONT12 architectes
Chavannes-près-Renens
/ Switzerland

COMPLETION
2021

BRICK TYPE
Facing bricks

LOCATION
Carouge / Switzerland

PURPOSE
Culture

This light-colored sculptural theater building is located in the small municipality of Carouge on the western tip of Switzerland, just south of Geneva. It was designed after a winning entry by PONT 12 architects in an international architecture competition and the project was jointly funded by the local municipality, canton, and private investors. Creating a disparate island inside the town's dense historical fabric, the asymmetrical abstract masses of the theater form a backdrop for one side of the public square with a large chestnut tree in its center. The other reach of the L-shaped complex is occupied by a 600-square-meter-large multipurpose Salle des Fêtes from the seventies, with its glass walls and low-hipped roof providing a counterpoint to the abstract masses of the new theater.

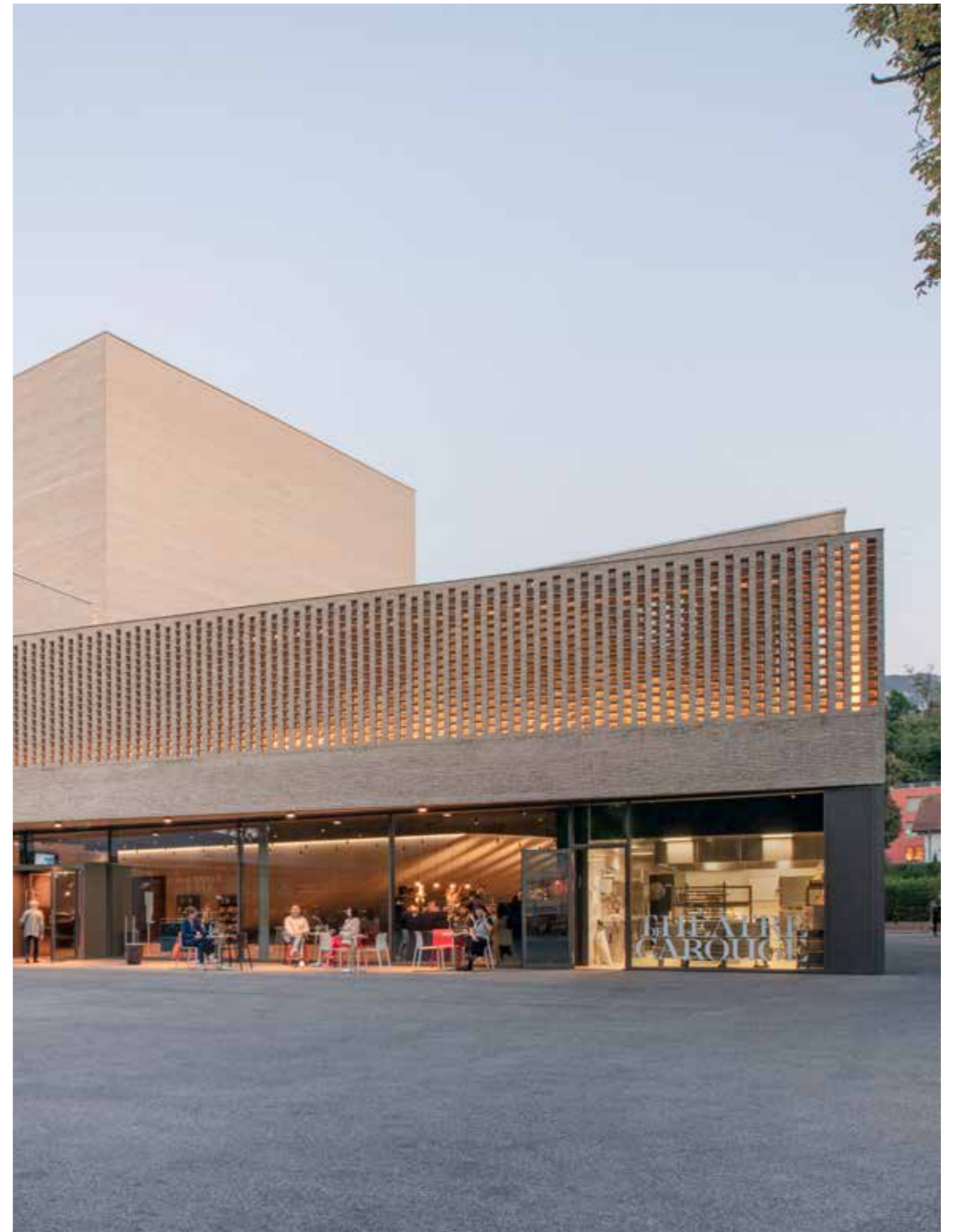
The new structure is occupied by two performance halls, the larger one seating 460 viewers and a smaller one 135, a rehearsal hall that can also be rearranged as a performance space, and office spaces. All entrances to the public rooms are on the ground floor, making it easy to find one's way inside the building. Upon entering the foyer, the viewer is confronted by an oblique concrete volume of the main auditorium seating area, that with its sharp angle becomes a dominant feature inside the

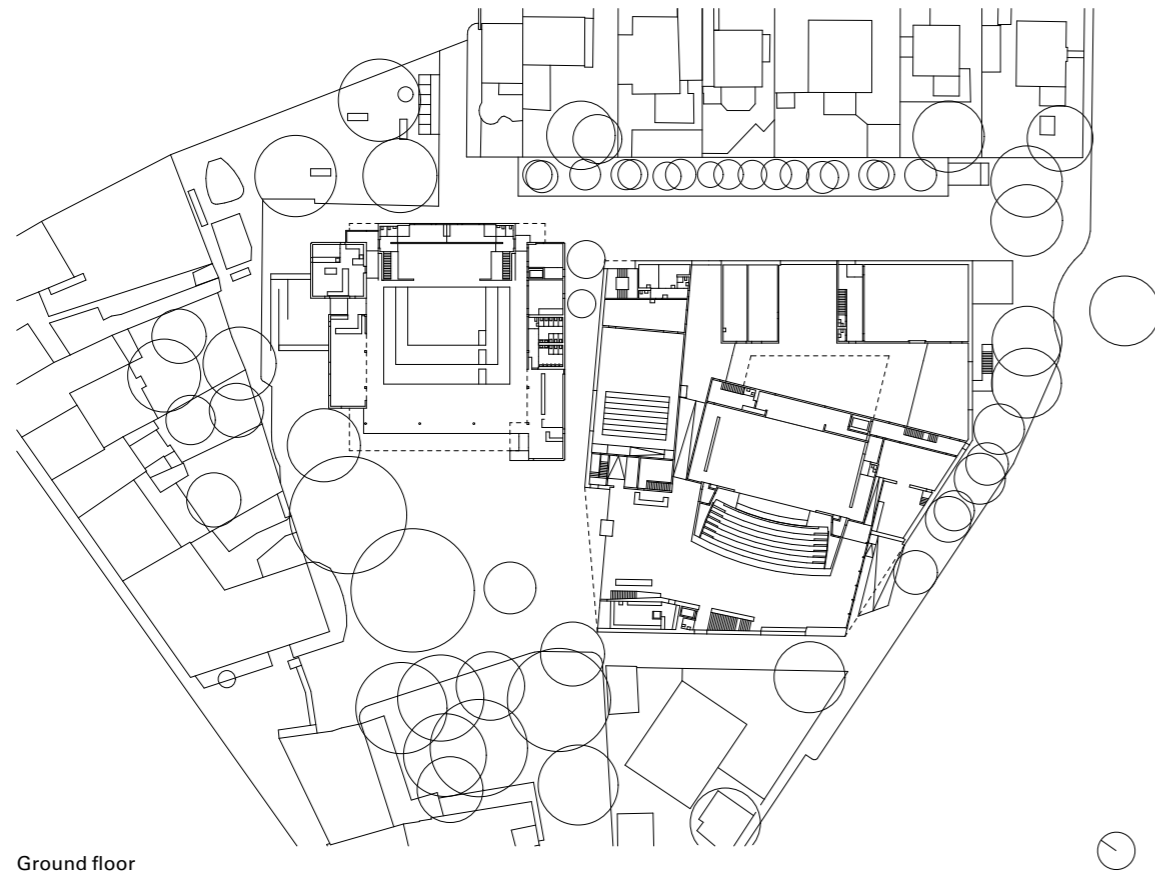
sober, right-angled environment. Reminiscent of the early 20th Century avant-garde public structures that experimented with new ways to bring people together, this motif is combined here with elements from more recent, forward-looking architecture: the lattice brickwork masking off office spaces on the upper floor, or the taut wrapping of the outer walls. Their uniform surface is further underlined by the use of narrow, long bricks, light seams, and frameless windows that are brought together to one uninterrupted face of the building. It represents the ways in which we could imagine public structures in the 21st century: conscious of the sustainable use of materials, blending into the existing historical urban fabric, and bearing in mind the community of its users.

**An immanent façade
for the theater, the art
of presence**

The Théâtre de Carouge has a long history. It was established in 1957 and moved to its current location in 1972, occupying then a smaller parish hall structure not unlike the adjacent Salle de Fêtes. After the winner of the new theater design competition was selected in 2012, the construction process was

halted for a referendum questioning the need for the new theater building. After 66 percent of the town's inhabitants voted in its favor, work started in February 2018. This scale of approval demonstrates the relevance of the theater and its program for the local community, as well as their trust in its chosen models of development. [ak]





Different shades of gray: a dynamically staged passageway between the existing structure and the new building