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**2nd International Docomomo Workshop**

## **The Challenge of Change**

*Dealing with the Legacy of the Modern Movement*

**Coolsingel Strip Rotterdam**



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Dealing with the Legacy of the Modern Movement

**Coolsingel Strip Rotterdam**

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# Foreword

*DOCOMOMO is an international organisation dedicated to the DOcumentation and COnservation of buildings and urban and rural ensembles from the MOdern MOvement. Its mission is to promote knowledge and appreciation of Modern architecture and urban planning and to find ways of preserving its legacy and its ideals. Founded in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, in 1988, Docomomo currently has a workgroup in over fifty countries. Docomomo marked its twentieth anniversary by choosing the Netherlands as the venue for its tenth international congress, entitled 'The Challenge of Change - dealing with the legacy of the Modern Movement'. At the same time, it organised its second international student workshop. The first took place two years previously in Istanbul.*

The 2nd Docomomo International Student Workshop made a sizeable contribution to the general programme of the 10th Docomomo Congress in Rotterdam in September 2008. The theme and area of study were chosen on the basis of two complementary issues: recognition of the specificity and current urban development of Rotterdam (the city hosting the conference) on the one hand; and the need to tackle the urgent problems raised by the highly controversial re-design of Rotterdam city centre and the proposed demolition of the Lijnbaan shopping area on the other.

As Chair of Docomomo International I am delighted to acknowledge the success of the initiative in terms of the number of represented institutions (sixteen universities worldwide, housing programmes in architecture, urban planning and preservation) and wish to pay tribute to the students and tutors who delivered high-quality results at the end of a week of very intense work.

The theme of the workshop Strategies for the Coolsingel Strip gives serious pause for thought. Coolsingel, the backbone of 21st-century Rotterdam and dramatically reshaped by the trend towards newborn Manhattanism, is the repository of the Rotterdam collective memory. The handful of public buildings that survived the Luftwaffe bombing raids on May 14 1940 inspired the construction of a modern boulevard, flanked by some remarkable edifices that reconfigured the vision of urban space.

The Lijnbaan shopping centre lies between Coolsingel and Mauritsweg. When inaugurated in 1953, Lijnbaan was the first major example of the new strategy for urban design and social organisation that emerged from the post-war CIAM congresses. The uniqueness of Lijnbaan is witnessed by its history. An exemplary achievement of the new ur-

ban planning formula, Lijnbaan was designed at the end of the 1940s by Van den Broek and Bakema and presented by Bakema at the Doorn Conference in January 1954 in the run-up to CIAM X. The recently completed Lijnbaan combined pedestrian shopping streets with residential slabs into a coherent array of social and visual relationships. The ‘Scale of Association’ that would later become the key concept of Team 10 was anticipated in the Lijnbaan project. It implemented the statement on habitat, the central topic of discussion, with a rich variety of ‘vital human associations’.

When it was built, Lijnbaan encouraged different uses of the city and was seminal in the development of a new sense of identity in terms of citizenship. It came into being after some ground-breaking statements on town centres from ‘the masters’; namely, Le Corbusier’s Plan for the Centre of St. Dié (1945) and Wiener and Serts’ Plan for the Centre of Cidade dos Motores near Rio de Janeiro (1947). Lijnbaan was seen as possessing qualities that implied far more than just the technical renewal of the functions of a central area in a dynamic and contemporary city.

As the area of study for the workshop, Lijnbaan tested the students’ ability to rethink Rotterdam’s Modernist heritage as an asset and challenged them to put forward proposals on various scales and under diverse economic constraints. Students and tutors worked hard to come up with solutions. What particularly impressed me as a member of the jury was that they rose to the challenge of measuring their plans on a human scale and tried to avoid formal gestures that favour designing within the interstices and remodelling spaces via changes that generate more sensible and body-related urban tissues. This new vision, which sees heritage as a living force and a priority for human beings living in a multilayered, built-up environment, lies at the heart of this report. Whatever future awaits Coolsingel, some of the ideas presented in the following pages have already proven vital; my hope is that they will prove fruitful as well.

*Maristella Casciato, Chair, Docomomo International*

# Contents

Introduction	07
The role of the Coolsingel Strip in the historical development of Rotterdam	09
The Assignment	13
Proposals for the Coolsingel Strip	
Urban Vision	17
Group 1: HILTON (A)	21
Group 2: LUXOR (B)	27
Group 3: HOLBEIN HOUSE (C), SPAARBANK (D)	33
Group 4: LUCIA SCHOOL (E)	39
Group 5: BIJENKORF (F)	43
Group 6: ABN-AMRO BANK (G), JONGERHANS (H)	53
Jury report	57
List of participants	59



Participants at Van Nelle factory - Photograph: Sjon van Veen



# Introduction

Master's students and PhD students of architecture, urbanism and historic preservation from fifteen countries worldwide participated in a workshop on the theme of the 10th International DOCOMOMO Congress: The Challenge of Change - dealing with the legacy of the Modern Movement. The aim of the workshop was to develop revitalisation strategies for the Coolsingel Strip in Rotterdam and, at the same time, to preserve the local landmarks of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, which symbolise and embody the Modern post-war reconstruction of the devastated inner city. This characteristic western site of a prominent city boulevard, stretching from north to south between Hofplein and Beursplein, is currently faced with the prospect of radical redevelopment by commercial real estate companies. Hopefully, the workshop would provide the City of Rotterdam with suggestions for an overall multi-disciplinary approach to the redevelopment of the Coolsingel Strip on different scales.

The workshop began on Saturday 13 September with six groups of eight students and a team of tutors and external coaches. On Wednesday evening of the following week Herman Hertzberger opened the congress in the recently reopened Faculty of Architecture at Delft University of Technology. Both the congress and the workshop ended on Friday 19 September with a day of presentations and conclusions. The jury awarded prizes for the most inspiring proposal. The congress and the workshop were both held in the Van Nelle Factory in Rotterdam. After the workshop the Delft students continued the work in the Master 1 studio of @MIT from September till December 2008. This report discusses the problems raised by the assignment, the working methods, the results, and the jury's assessment.



# The role of the Coolsingel Strip in the historical development of Rotterdam



Rotterdam 1340

The present-day City of Rotterdam arose around a dam that was built in the Rotte in 1250 AD to prevent the waters of the Maas from flooding the hinterland. It began with the construction of houses on what is now Hoogstraat. Earlier, from around 800 AD, settlements at the same place had been repeatedly washed away. After 1340 a canal was laid between the Maas and Overschie, which connected Rotterdam with Delft and the rest of Holland. Before long, Rotterdam was no longer just a fishing hub but a harbour for shipping into the bargain. However, despite the potential for further development as a maritime centre, Rotterdam remained first and foremost a fishing hub until the end of the 16th century.

The city evolved in two directions. It spread inland, north of Hoogstraat, and was bordered by Coolsingel in the north-west and Goudsesingel in the north-east.



Rotterdam 1652

Fortifications were later built along these two waterways. To the south of the dam lay the first harbour - now the Oude Haven. In the century that followed, the area south of Hoogstraat was reclaimed, making space for more harbours and harbour industry. From 1550, Rotterdam grew as a commercial port. The steady growth in population led to ever-increasing densification; for a long time Coolsingel continued to mark the north-west boundary.

Around 1850, thoughts turned to expansion. More and more country houses had sprung up outside the city over the years and businesses had settled there as well. In 1840 city architect W.N. Rose had already drawn up plans for the Coolsingel Hospital on the west bank of Coolsingel. In 1858, Rose came up with the first plan to expand Rotterdam towards Delfshaven in the west and on the south bank of the Maas. Rotterdam burgeoned

as a result of the shipping and port activities. Harbours were laid, garden cities and suburbs were built and adjacent villages were annexed. By 1940 Rotterdam was twenty times its size in 1860.

New urban visions emerged at the start of the 20th century. The area to the north east of Coolsingel was demolished and plans were drawn up to transform Coolsingel itself into a city boulevard flanked by important public buildings such as the Town Hall (architect: H. Evers, 1914), the Post Office (architect: G.C. Bremer, 1915) and the Stock and Commodity Exchange (architect: J.F. Staal, 1940).

On 14 May 1940, the German Luftwaffe bombed Rotterdam, wiping out large swathes of the city triangle. Almost immediately after the attack, W.G. Witteveen started working on a reconstruction plan in which many of the buildings that had survived the bombing were to be demolished in a bid to solve the traffic problems in the old city and create space for a brand new city cen-

tre. In 1946 Witteveen's plan was revised by Van Traa, who envisaged an updated city centre in the form of a commercial hub with shops and offices and less than half the original number of dwellings. As a result, the city centre was moved from the east of Coolsingel to the west.

To this very day, Van Traa's plan more or less dictates the face of Rotterdam. Of all the European cities that were reconstructed after the war, Rotterdam was the one most influenced by the ideals of the Modern Movement. The amenities in the inner city were divided into sites, with one public service site around Coolsingel and an office site around Blaak, and a shopping site around Lijnbaan (architects: Van der Broek & Bakema 1953). Lower density made the city centre more panoramic. The relationship with the port was maintained by extending Coolsingel along the inner harbours to the river. By and large, the Rotterdam cityscape was characterised by reconstruction architecture interspersed



Rotterdam 1865



Rotterdam 1945



Rotterdam 1946

with a few pre-war buildings, notably the old Luxor and Hotel Central on Kruiskade, and Hotel Atlanta, the Post Office, the Town Hall and the Stock Exchange on Coolsingel.

The design for the strip between Coolsingel and Lijnbaan also fitted into the vision of the Modern Movement. Shops were situated around Lijnbaan with service alleys at the rear and high-rise buildings behind. On the side of Coolsingel high office blocks were built with shops at ground level, again backed by service alleys. Intersections and squares, like the intersection from Korte Lijnbaan to Stadhuisplein, were added to Lijnbaan as points of orientation. The connections with the city were formed by Kruiskade, Aert van Nesstraat, Meent, Van Oldenbarneveltstraat, Hoogstraat and Binnenweg, which ran from east to west. Office blocks were lowered and facades were set back from the building line to vary the scale of Coolsingel between the squares and intersections. Nowadays, low density and



Plan by Van Traa

segregated amenities are debilitating rather than enhancing efficiency in the city centre. Coolsingel, which has become a busy traffic artery, is perceived as a formidable impediment to the flow between the old and new city centre.

It has become apparent in recent years that the centre of Rotterdam is losing out on competitiveness precisely because of the low density, the one-sided housing and the separation of amenities. Obviously, intervention is a sensitive issue, given the historical and cultural value of the area, but steps still need to be taken to address the need for higher density, broader uses, and more differentiation in shops and housing.

The Coolsingel Strip lies in the western site. It is characterised by buildings varying in height from four to twenty storeys and situated along one of the busy traffic arteries that cross the heart of Rotterdam. These buildings, almost without exception, date from the



post-war reconstruction period. Some have been accorded protected monument status by the government (the Bijenkorf department store with the former cinema and sculpture; the Lucia School and parking garage; the former Dutch Trade Company, the former Rotterdamse Bank and the former Twentse Bank) or by the municipality (Hotel Atlanta). The adjacent ensemble of Lijnbaan - a prominent pedestrian shopping centre with low-rise shops and two residential areas consisting of apartments built around green courtyards - is provisionally protected and under threat, but it is not a part of the Coolingsel Strip.

Sources:

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D'Laine Camp, M. Provoost (red), *Stadstimmeren: 650 jaar Rotterdam stad*, Rotterdam 1990.

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J. van Herwaarden, M. van der Heijden, C. van Horzen, P. van de Laar, A. van der Schoor, *Vijftien fragmenten uit de geschiedenis van Rotterdam*, Rotterdam 1997.

Urban Fabric, Steenhuis stedenbouw/landschap, De Lijnbaan, *cultuur-historisch kader voor transformatie*, 2007.



Rotterdam - maps.google.com

# The assignment

The students spent a week working on the area framed by Lijnbaan, Weena, Coolsingel and Blaak. This area was split into six sites and was analysed on different levels and scales. The results formed a programme and a list of requirements which then became the basis for a master plan for the Coolsingel Strip. Each group had to produce a design for one of the six sites within the lines of the master plan.

An excursion was organised to the Coolsingel Strip. A series of lectures was held at the NAI and the Architecture Faculty at TU Delft, and one lecture followed by a debate was held at the Van Nelle Factory. The students also had access to the lectures at the congress.

A total of 48 students took part in the Docomomo workshop, twelve of whom came from TU Delft @MIT. The students were split into six groups of eight. Each group was assigned a site for which it had to produce a design. The master plan was drafted by representatives from the six groups and the details were worked out later by two students. The workshop was held in the Van Nelle Factory. There was a large space on the second floor with two glass cabins where the groups could work on the assignment. Drawings of the locations and the buildings were on hand.

Each group was steered and supervised by a tutor. External experts came along for one afternoon to advise the individual groups on criteria-setting and urban, architectural and structural design. These afternoons were selected to fit in with the scale at which the students were working. The experts were approached on the basis of their experience of the respective scale and their knowledge of the area and the buildings.

Each group was an international mix of students from the different universities; two students from @MIT were allocated to three of the groups. The groups were also multidisciplinary, so each one had at least one student with a background in urban planning, architecture or structural engineering. The different backgrounds made for somewhat laborious communication at first, but things steadily improved as the week progressed and the students soon learned to work together. Their enthusiasm had a motivating effect. They started in the early morning and often worked till as late as 11 pm. Much of the time was spent on sketches, collages and computer drawings, but there was also a fair amount of discussion and presentation.

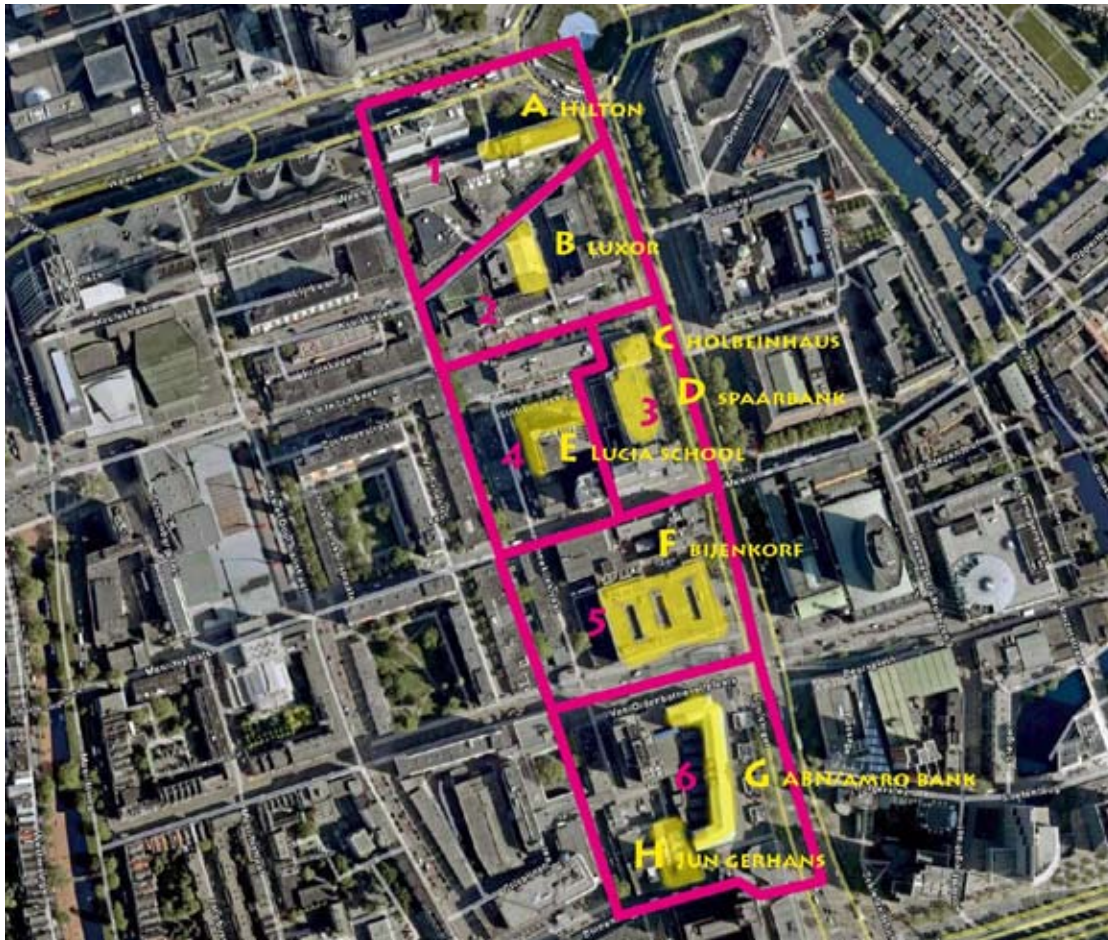
The groups were asked to develop a 3D design proposal for (part of) the Coolsingel Strip with 'Challenge of Change' as the theme. The proposal also had to take account of preservation issues and reflect a vision (history/orientation/function/coherence) that was specially compiled for the Coolsingel Strip during the workshop. A substantial part of the assignment involved justifying choices for existing buildings. Would they be preserved? If not, then why not? Could they be reused? And if so, how?

The proposals had to be accompanied by detailed drawings showing the spatial consequence(s) of the interaction between private and public areas as well as a summary of the concepts, the strategies and the decisive steps in the design process. Details of materials, textures, finishings, green public space, water, uses, etc. were desirable but not mandatory. The sub-themes in these experiments in international collaboration

were: understanding the sense of place, permeability, the human scale, the contrast between slow and fast movement, and valorisation of the architecture of the recent past.

Each group presented a plan, with the exception of the group that was assigned the Bijenkorf site. The opinions

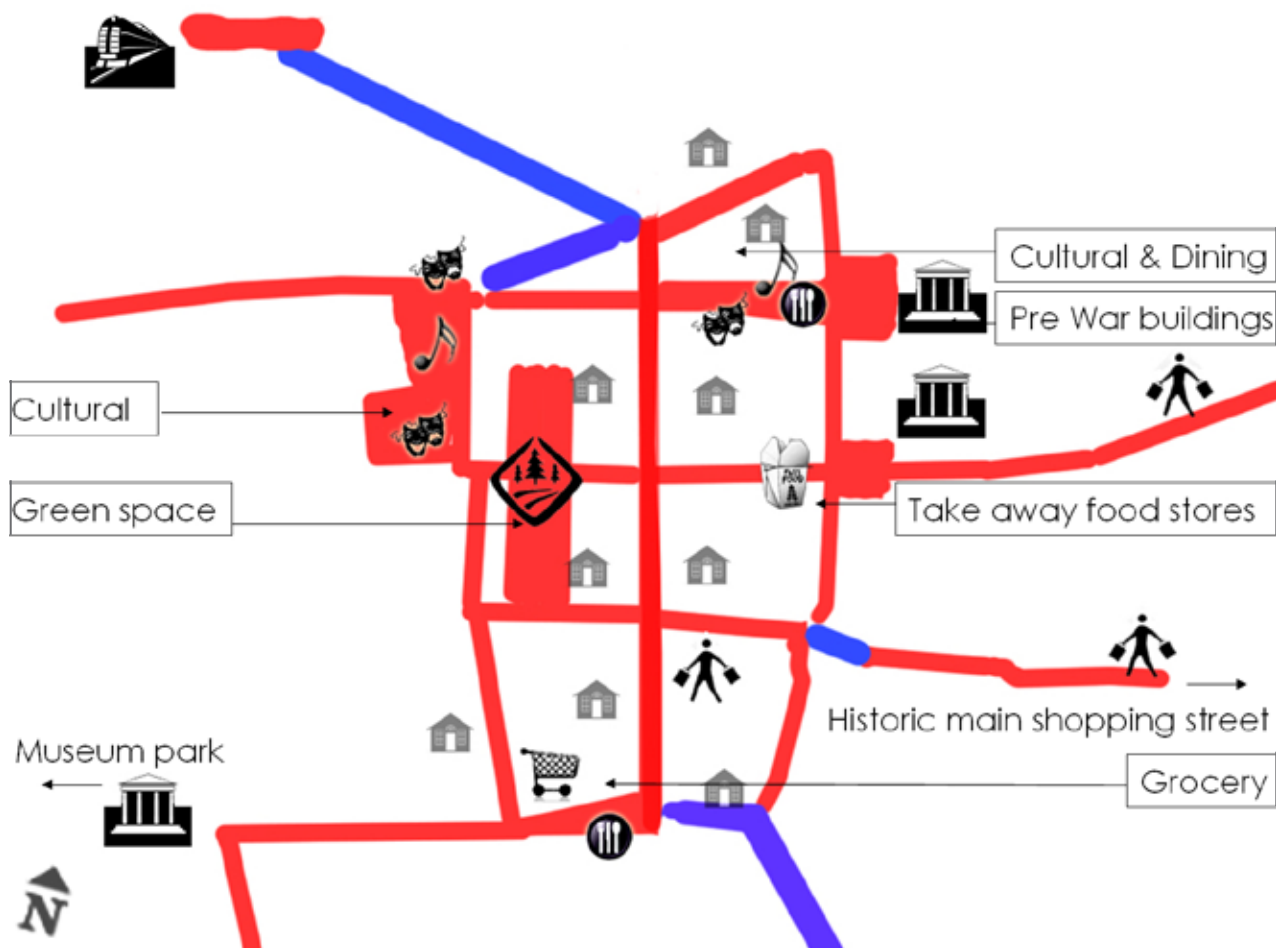
were so divergent in this group (site 5) that it split into three sub-groups. On the next pages the proposals are presented from north to south along with the jury's comments and assessment. The urban vision is presented first. The proposals for the six sites varied widely but were all in keeping with the urban vision.



Location with Assignments







## URBAN VISION

### A PUMPING HEART

We envision the revitalised Coolsingel as more than just a main street, but Lijnbaan stays the true heart of Rotterdam. In Modernist terms, it resembles a pulsating heart within a vascular system of streets, programmes and architecture that continuously pumps life in and out. The red veins represent the busy working streets and the blue veins represent the weak connections in the existing urban plan.

We feel that a plan which combines design and functional programming will physically guide pedestrians to the centre of the city and then towards other parts of Rotterdam, thus creating an interconnected and stronger urban fabric.

#### *Private and Public Functions*

To infuse energy into the area, we chose a programme that will combine public and private functions and thus maintain constant activity and eliminate or minimise dead sites. The programme will be mixed not only in the sites but also in the buildings, thereby generating activity in a horizontal and vertical direction. There will also be a mix of residential and commercial functions to generate an extra layer of activity throughout the day and the week.

Housing is proposed as well as the incorporation of green space, which will draw pedestrians through the area from Coolsingel to Lijnbaan and provide yet another layer of activity.

#### *Infrastructure*

The site is bounded by major traffic arteries on the north and south and minor roads on the east and west. The encircled intersections on Coolsingel mark the 'speed bumps' in the existing design - the pauses in the

heartbeat - which force a slowdown in traffic and give people time to notice the architecture. This results in a predominantly pedestrian site with service roads for the residents and businesses.

#### *Future of Coolsingel*

We envision Coolsingel as a vibrant area, where people live, work and enjoy cultural activities. Architecture is used to reinforce a Modernist ideal of the city in which pedestrians are accommodated without undermining the importance of traffic. If the four directions are reinforced, Coolsingel - the heart of Rotterdam - will become a recognised and integral part of the city centre.

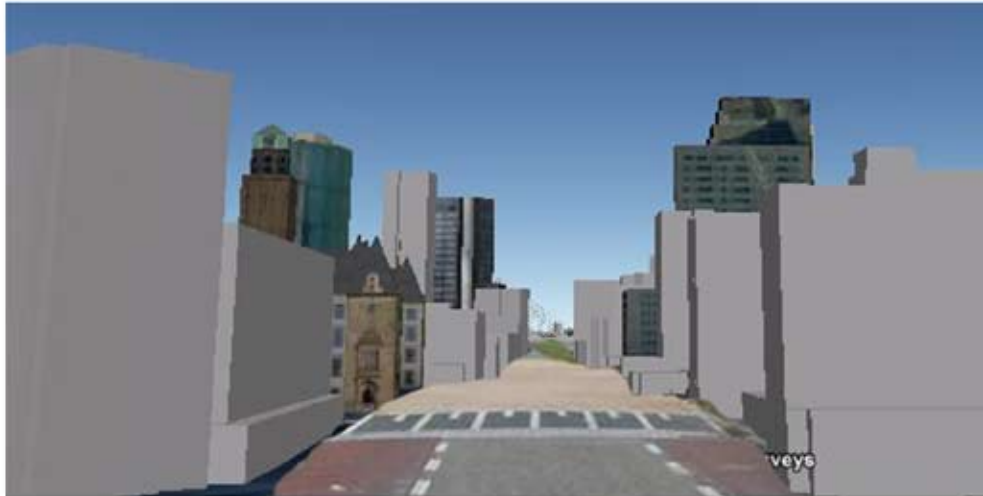
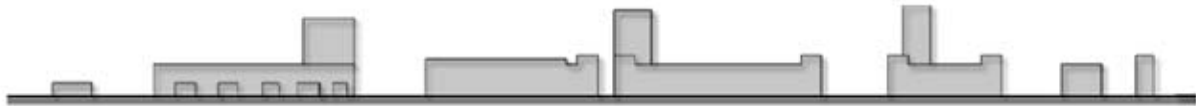
#### *Vision*

Our toughest challenge stems from the lack of orientation and connection between adjacent sites in Rotterdam; for example, there is no direct route from Central Station to Lijnbaan. Our proposal includes an architectural intervention which would guide pedestrians through the city, connect sites and provide orientation points for visitors. One suggestion, inspired by examples in Beijing and New York, is to create bridges that link selected buildings and to elevate pavements so that pedestrians are lifted off the ground, thereby echoing Modernist principles, which use pilotis to elevate pathways and are programmed to include green space in the form of an elevated park. This would create a democratic programme in which sites are linked in a visible and sustainable design.

Tutor: Wouter Willers

Students: Linda van Leeuwen, Anneloes van der Meer





## Comments by the Jury

### *Problem analysis*

The metaphor is well chosen, though not very original. The problem is defined mainly in terms of connectivity. Not Coolsingel but Lijnbaan is seen as the main axis.

### *Interpretation & strategy*

The need for better connections is interpreted mainly in terms of passenger flows and modes of transport. Strategies are based on references to metropolises which are much larger than Rotterdam (New York, Beijing). No specific strategy for 'integrated preservation'.

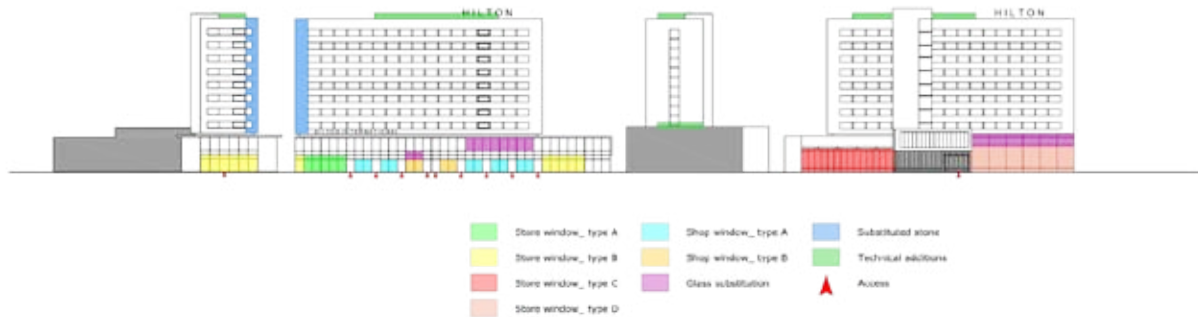
### *Proposal*

Insert a new system of pedestrian bridges as 'elevated parks', partly in combination with new buildings.

### *Design concept & presentation*

The concept focuses primarily on the new bridges and does very little to integrate the existing urban fabric. There is no overall view. The addition of new buildings is sketchy and lacks functional and visual coherence.





*Hilton Hotel (current situation)*



*Hilton Hotel (newly built)*



## RE-PULSATION

### PROPOSAL FOR NEW URBAN HEARTBEAT OF THE VERY ENDING OF THE LIJNBAAN

#### GROUP 1: HILTON (A)

The area between Weena and the Coolsingel Strip is an independent site at the end of Lijnbaan. It is triangular in shape, demarcated by a narrow street, a legacy of the old city, which leads to a wider green public space. There are four buildings on the site: the Thalia, dating from the 1950s, is the oldest, followed by the Hilton Hotel, built between 1960 and 1964, and more recently, the Fortis building on Weena and a parking garage, which fills the open space. The site is located at the intersection between the shopping, housing and entertainment areas along Lijnbaan and the office area on the main streets. The Hilton Hotel has retained its function and much of its original fabric over the years; the Thalia, a former cinema, is now a café and night-club.

The Fortis building contains offices. The parking garage, next to the Hilton, Fortis and Thalia buildings, though necessary, is in an inauspicious location as it creates back alleys. Whereas the rest of the Lijnbaan area buzzes with pedestrian activity, the area around the Hilton Hotel is unprepossessing and often empty. It has no visuals or reference points, is unattractively filled, and lacks a strong urban identity, despite the clear shape of the plan.

On an urban scale, the challenge of change revolves around turning the entire area into an activating point for the overall master plan. On an architectural scale, it revolves around the strategic role of the main iconic building on the site, the Hilton Hotel, and conservation guidelines. The site derives its character from the Hilton Hotel: the building has strong urban and architectural meaning and is an important legacy of the Modern movement. Even so, a proposal has been put forward to replace the hotel with a more up-to-date building that

maintains the same programme, shaped on the outdated needs of the international travellers of the 1960s.

We propose a shift in point of view, which leads to a differently defined problem based on a comparison between the assets of the area and the needs of the users. The ensuing programme provides a mix of functions reflecting the concept of the 'longer stay'. The existing hotel will be reshaped accordingly and integrated with a new volume on the site of the current parking area, which will add more facilities and provide new accommodation for business purposes. The main public space will be constructed in a way that defines a new end for Lijnbaan and will be connected with the pedestrian path. This will add reference points, enlarge open space and define access. The parking area will be underground and connected to the public services.

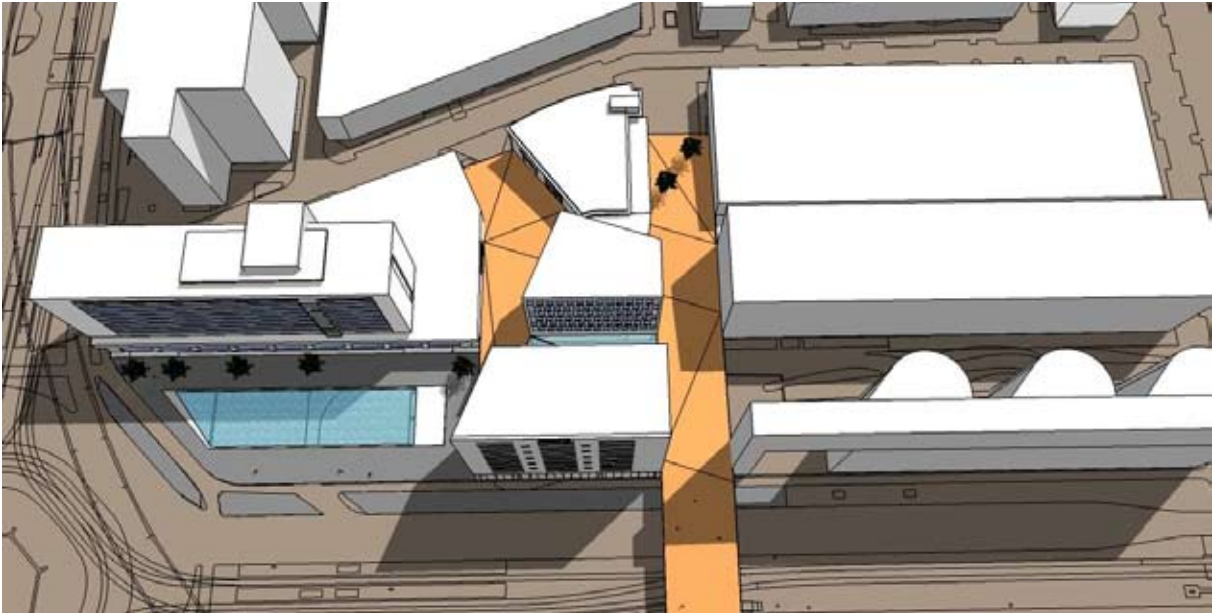
The conservation programme for the Hilton Hotel implies a shift in mindset. As an alternative to replacement, we suggest an approach based on an ongoing dialogue between the users and the architecture. This will lead to a comprehensive programme of continuous care and change management for the building. Precise guidelines for the players will define the limits of the changes.

Tutor: *Hielkje Zijlstra*

Students: *Johanna Beuscher, Maria Paola Borgarino, Jaime Marcondes Cupertino, Senem Hatice Doyduk, Daniel Knijnenburg, Kristina Marie Nugent, Bianca Sartori Riotto, Kobe Stroobants*

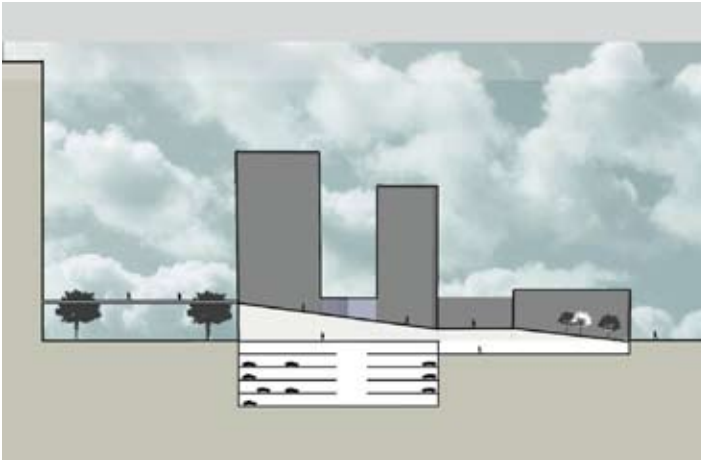


*Perspective: view from Lijnbaan*

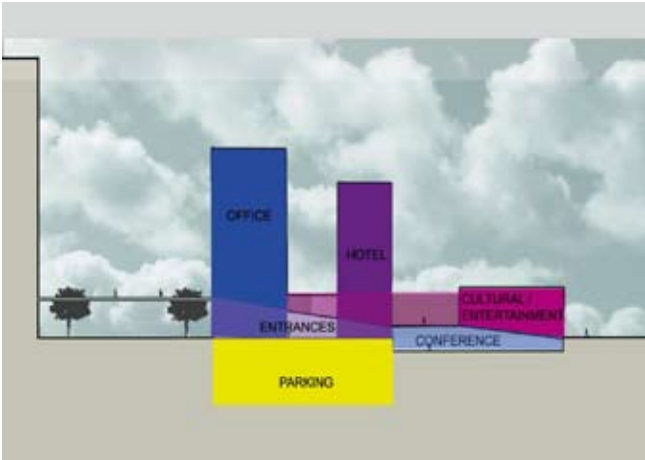


*Perspective: view from above*

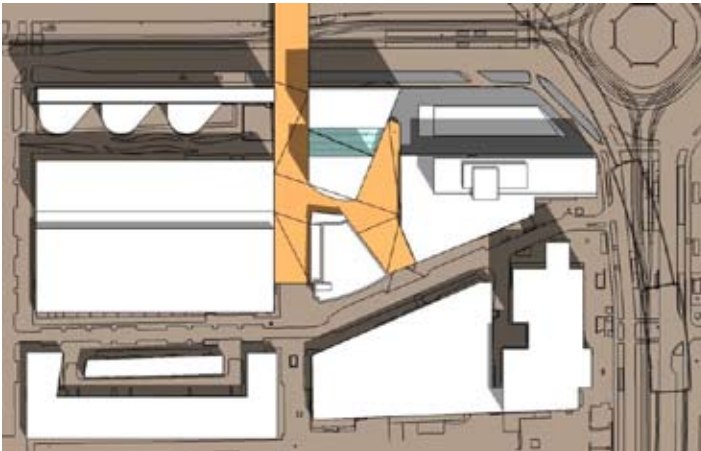




Section public space



New arrangement of functions



New functional programme



New functional programme

## Comments by the Jury

### *Problem analysis*

Focus on functional and visual improvement of the public area/ground level during the day and at night; solutions for parking and accessibility; upgrade/extend hotel facilities while conserving facades.

### *Interpretation & strategy*

Focus on creating new/replacement functions around the main body of the 1960s hotel; partial use of historical drawings, but no specific attention to Hugh Maaskant (architect of the Hilton) or the relationship with Hofplein.

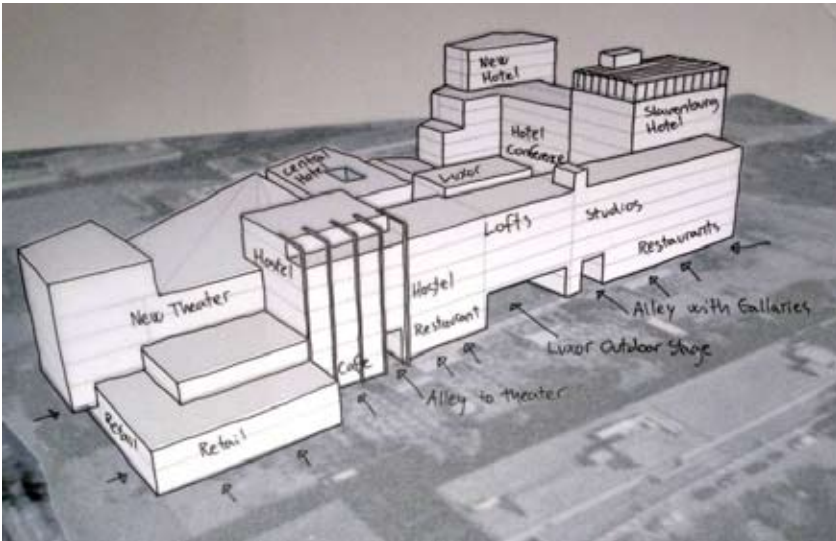
### *Proposal*

Create an elevated plaza over a new underground parking lot as a public slope in the sun and add new hotel amenities (conference hall, culture/entertainment, gym, offices) in separate buildings of different shapes and sizes that are connected by the slope or underground passageways.

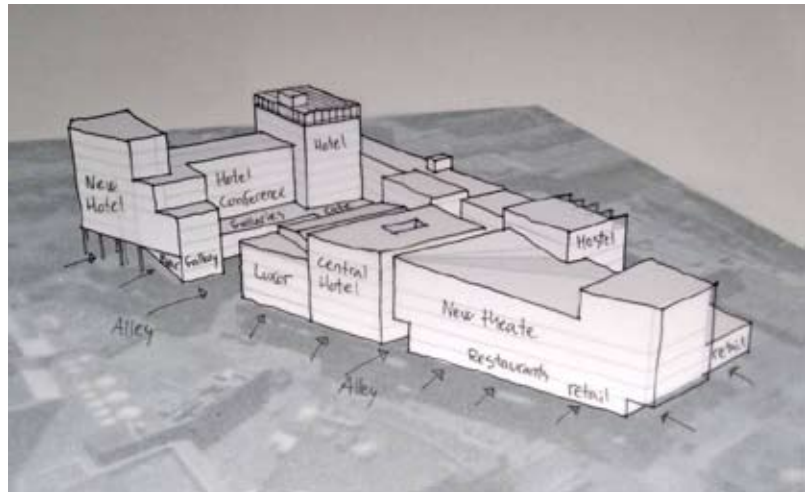
### *Design concept & presentation*

Attractive concept, uses the beating heart metaphor and addresses some key problems by creating new amenities which are in character with the original Hilton Hotel. The new underground parking garage, the efforts to improve the quality of the public space and the addition of a balanced programme are positive innovations. The connections between the new parking garage and the hotel, and between the hotel and Hofplein need further elaboration.





Perspective: programme proposal



Perspective: programme proposal



Collage: proposal for intervention



## CHANGING CONNECTIONS

### REDEVELOPMENT OF THE COOLSELINGEL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

#### GROUP 2: LUXOR (B)

Site 2 is the second most northerly block in the Coolsingel commercial district. It is unique for both its history and its architecture, as illustrated by its design and functions. Kruiskade, which borders the site to the north, is the only diagonal 'east-west' axis in the commercial district. The site is bordered to the east by Coolsingel, to the west by Lijnbaan and to the south by Stadhuisplein. The buildings are an amalgamation of styles and sizes from previous decades. Three are designated monuments: the Luxor Theater, the Grand Central Hotel, and the Slavensburg Bank. The Luxor Theater and the Grand Central Hotel stem from the pre-war period, whereas the Slavensburg Bank stems from the post-war redevelopment and represents Modern Rotterdam. These monuments are interspersed with retail and commercial areas, restaurants and entertainment venues. Though the site appears to serve many different purposes and though it hosts a variety of day and night-time activity, it lacks vitality and connectedness, both in itself and of itself.

The revitalisation of site 2, with the Luxor Theater in the centre, brings a change in usage. Building on the importance of the Luxor Theater, the urban vision for site 2 is a cultural, dynamic district with functional, yet flexible spaces devoted to the arts. The first floor will accommodate galleries, studios, stores and restaurants. A new theatre on the northwest corner will replace an old discotheque. A hotel in the space of the Slavensburg Bank and mixed housing in the vacant office space along Stadhuisplein will bring people into the area and provide customers for the new venues, shops, and cafés. The second weakness, connectedness, will be solved by an interplay of solid and void, public and private spaces. At present, each building stands alone, structural

and functional islands attempting to be neighbours. Functional cohesion will promote structural cohesion. The Luxor Theater will retain its original theatre space but will also be expanded southwards, adding flexible space that will connect and interact with the pedestrian Stadhuisplein. The Luxor Theater will be linked to the new theatre by the Grand Central Hotel, which will provide accommodation for visiting artists and performers. The dark service alleys will be widened and lit to provide pedestrian access and public space between the buildings and between Kruiskade and Stadhuisplein.

The connections between buildings and alleys, public courtyards and private housing, theatres, hotels, stores and restaurants will create the twenty-four-hour vitality that site 2 currently lacks. The range of functions will attract people from a wide demographic spectrum who will not only energise the area but patronise the Coolsingel district as a whole. Change is inevitable and often necessary. The proposal for site 2, however, shows how change can occur inside and out, functionally and structurally, privately and publicly, without compromising historical integrity.

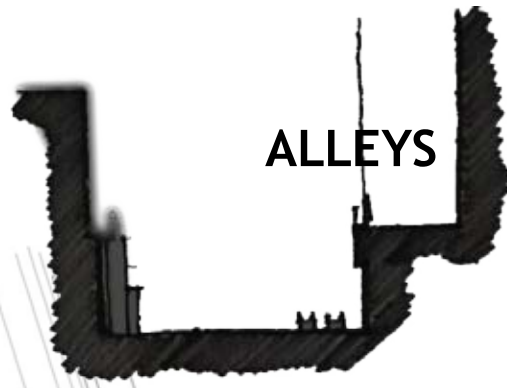
Tutor: *Theo Prudon*

Students: *Koen Berghmans, Linda van Leeuwen,  
Anneloes van der Meer, Jonas Flyckt  
Nielsen, Shawn Patrick Tubb, Caroline  
Stephenson, Luz María Vergara*



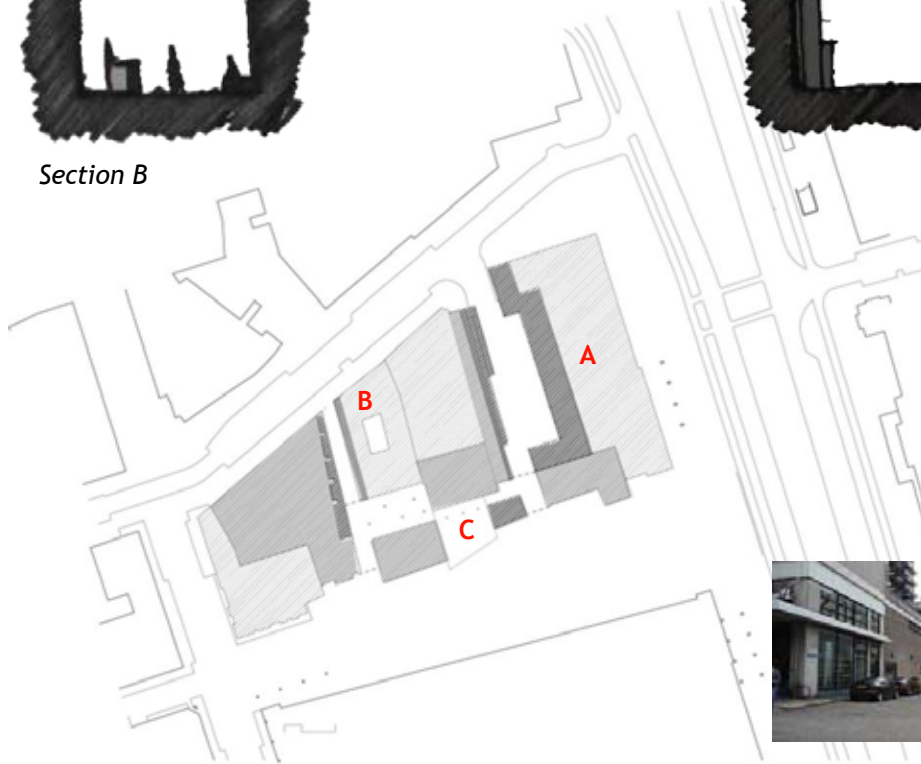


Section B

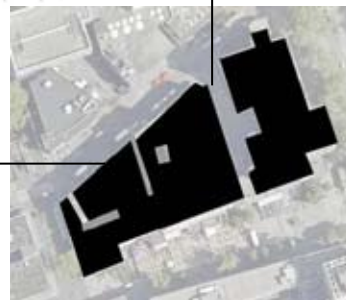


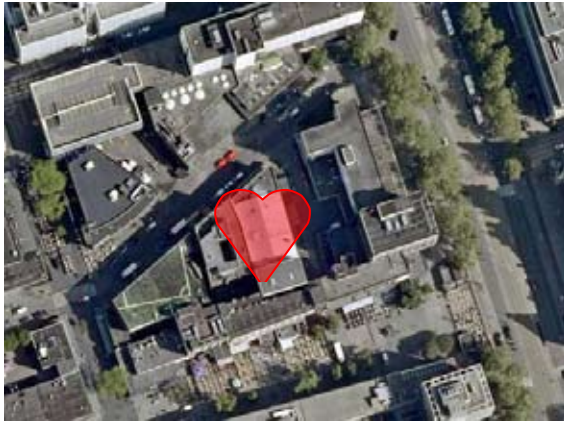
ALLEYS

Section A

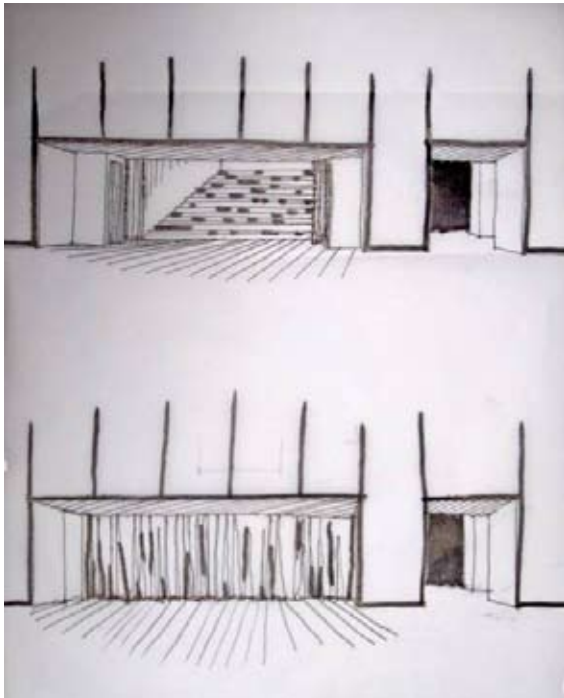


Section C

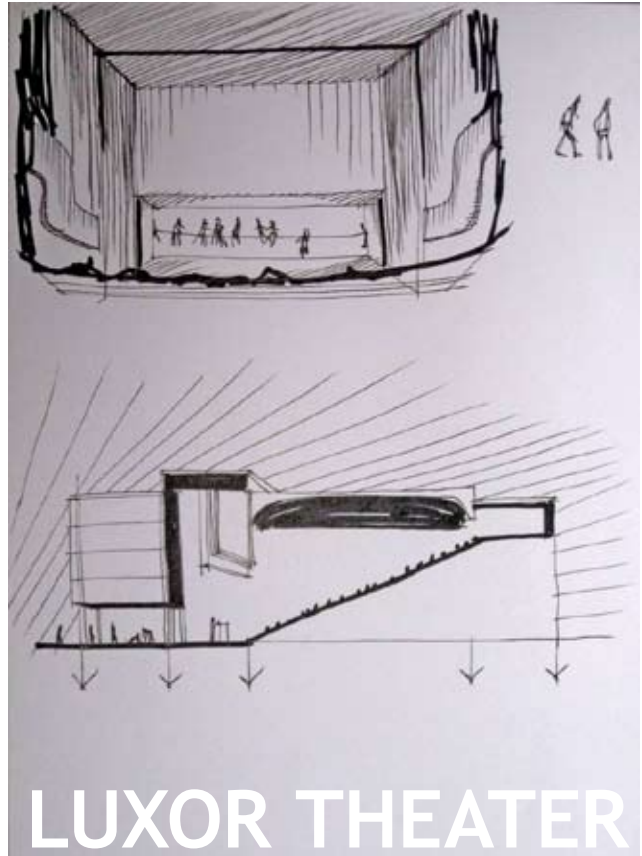




*Aerial photograph from the location*



*Multiple use of functions*



*Section*

# ***CULTURAL BLOCK***

## Comments by the jury

### *Problem analysis*

An intelligent analysis with a broad spectrum. Multiple focus on functionality, historical layers, importance of corners, use of public space, floors, routing, (absent/present) architectural qualities.

### *Interpretation & strategy*

Focus on two major problems: put people back on the street and mark new entrances; hardly any attention to conservation issues. The main idea is to create new connections between the street life and the buildings and the other sites in the strip, supported by a new, mixed programme for retail, cultural recreation, accommodation etc.

### *Proposal*

A radical transformation which entails replacing most of the buildings and creating new entrances and alleys; the Slavenburg building will be converted into a hotel. The existing alleys will be widened. The new programme creates higher density; the volumes are individually articulated in different sizes and heights; architectural details are not specified. The implications for motorised traffic, parking etc. are more or less ignored.

### *Design concept & presentation*

The design concept is based on creating new urban connections for culturally inclined pedestrians by building interconnected articulated volumes for new functions typical of a city centre (and already in existence elsewhere in the strip). The proposal is accompanied by photos of the present 'problem spots', sections, plans, and sketches for the new buildings. Attention concentrates entirely on the site in question; the visual and functional connections with adjacent sites need further elaboration. Scant attention to historical data and conservation issues.







## New Urban “Slow Down” in Coolsingel

Creating human scale sustain-  
able public space which al-  
lows people to STAY.

// eat // read // think // meet  
// work // talk // dream...

## Urban Stop



## SLOW DOWN

### THE URBAN STOP OF COOLSELINGEL STRIP

#### GROUP 3: HOLBEIN HOUSE (C), SPAARBANK (D)

The site lies between Lijnbaan and Coolselingel, opposite the Town Hall and the Post Office. In the current situation, surrounded by intense uses, the exterior and the interior character of the site seem to be at odds with each other. This is why we thought of inserting a pause in the urban system. Our main goal is to create a public space which opens up a host of options and activities for today's urban dweller. In our plan, we maintain the connection to Stadhuisplein, as proposed in the urban analysis and simultaneously develop a programme to attract people. In essence, we turn things inside out. Accordingly:

- We introduce a new approach by integrating the programme in the site.
- We create transparency by means of a multilayered space, starting from Coolselingel and penetrating to the inside of the site.
- We create sections in the building mass, controlling the sunlight and enhancing the character of the public space, making art out of architecture, redolent of the ideals of the Modern Movement.
- We create multi-layered circulation, using all possible public space, with an urban fabric that guides people to the inside of the complex.

Our programme comprises an art school, facilities (such as shops, offices and a bank) and a cluster of cultural activities in the form of art studios etc. A residential ensemble is added on the upper part of the building next to the Lucia School. In this building we develop semi-open public space at ground level, which connects

the different layers of the programme, finally constructing what we call an 'urban jungle', as a metaphor for and a synthesis of urban textures.

#### Problems:

- Lost interior space
- Vacant space
- Disconnected facades
- Urban disruptions

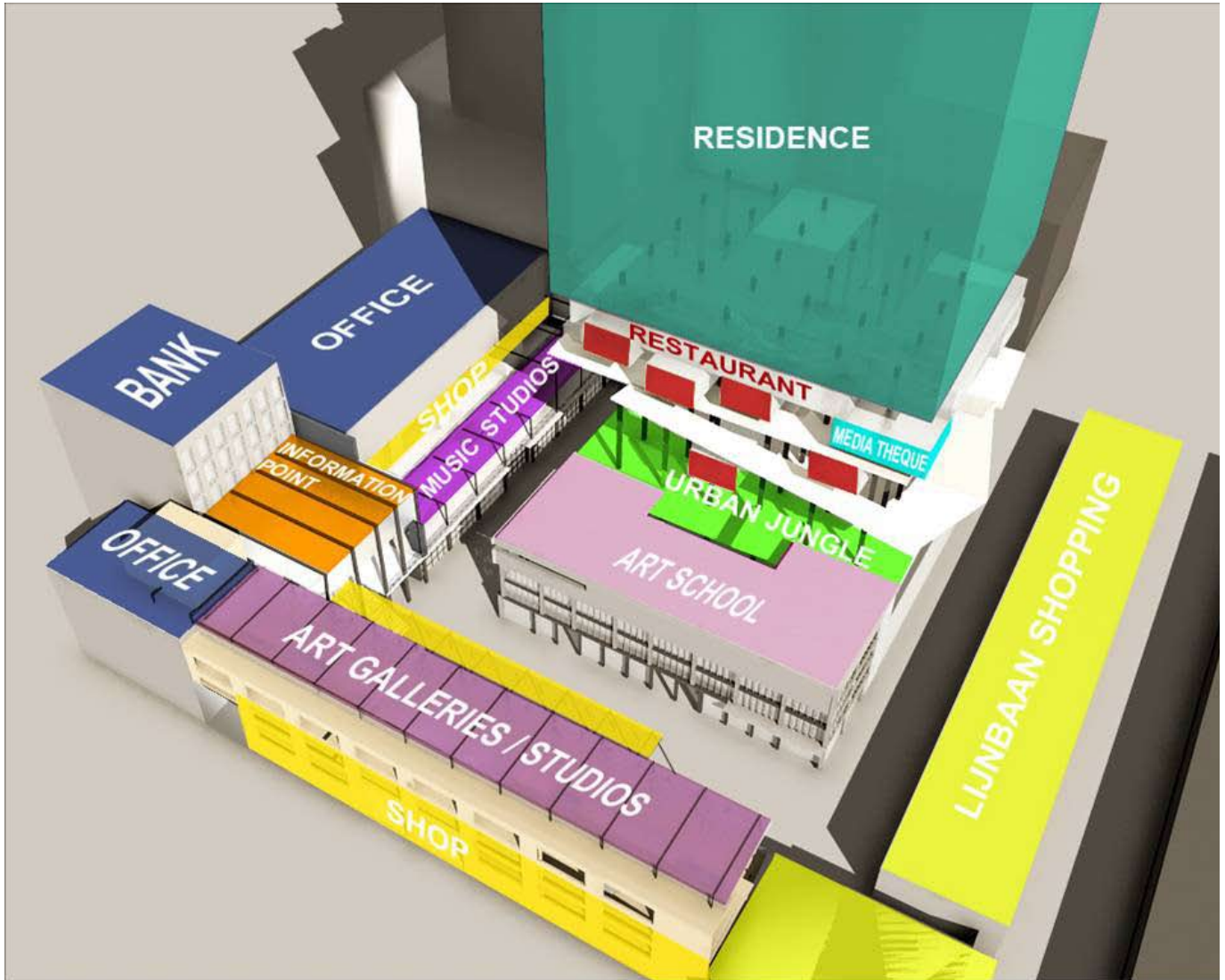
#### Main Goals:

- To create human-scale sustainable public space which allows people to STAY - eat, read, think, meet, work, talk, dream...
- To introduce NEW PROGRAMMES for EXISTING BUILDINGS - using space which is currently unused.
- To redeploy the LOST SPACE of rear facades as semi-internal arcades connected to Stadhuisplein, drawing more people into the area by showing the skeleton of the inner structure of the complex.

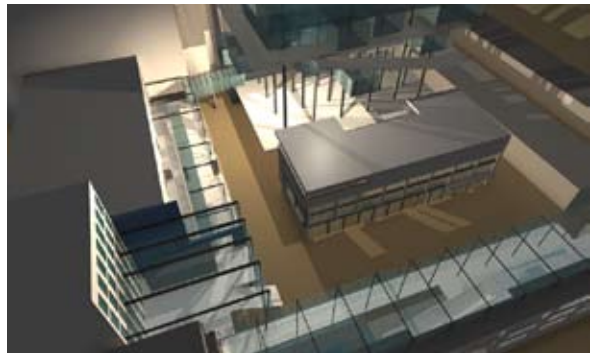
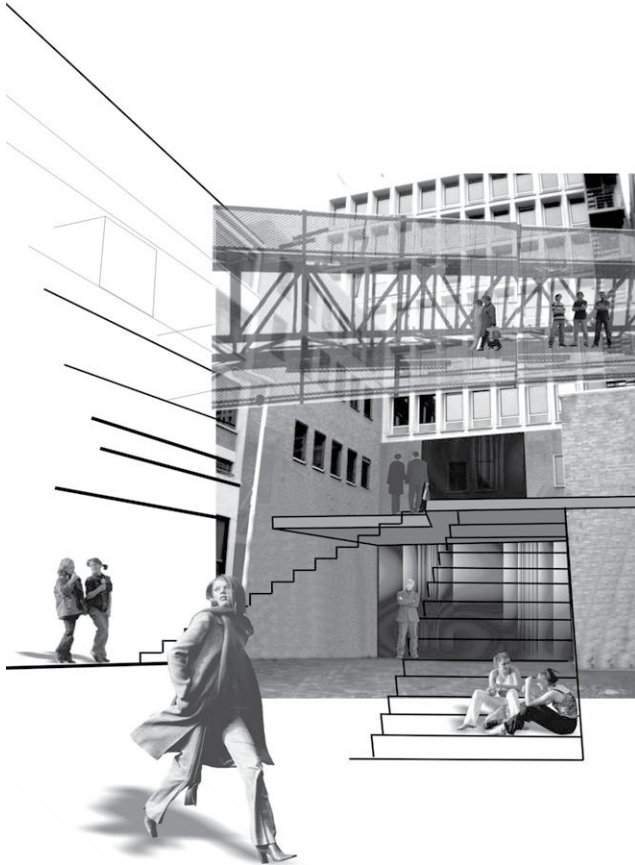
Tutor: *Wouter Willers*

Students: *Neeraj Bhagat, Deirdre Gould, Leon van Ooijen, Jonas Rahim Pedersen, María Carrascal Pérez, Aliko-Myrto Perysinaki, Shira Sprecher, Xiao Zhang*





/// Program Diagram



## Comments by the jury

### *Problem analysis*

The multi-disciplinary site analysis is original and critical, especially in respect of the current tendency towards 'hyperintensification' through the addition of high tower blocks. Vacant space, noise, disconnected facades, friction between scales are the problems that require a solution.

### *Interpretation & strategy*

The interpretation presents a refreshing vision of this part of the urban centre. It is an inventive counter-reaction to the practice of adding high-rise buildings to provide more of the same functions. The strategy is to bring about an 'urban slow down' by creating a new square and by the partial re-programming of the buildings around the newly detached art school. The interpretation revives essential elements of the Modern Movement such as transparency and openness to the sun, as well as egalitarianism and cultural development.

### *Proposal*

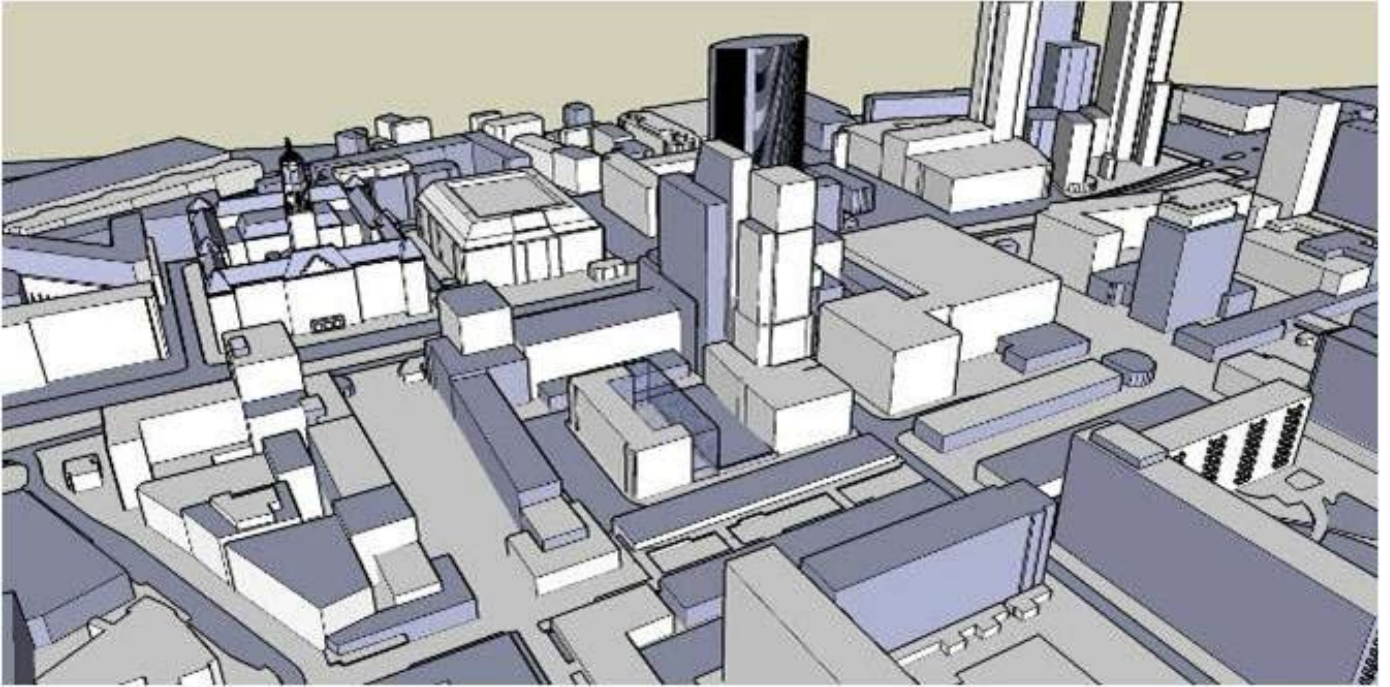
Surgical intervention in the site via the partial removal of buildings to create new urban space and a programme with a mixture of functions for both day and night - residential and commercial, art galleries and studios - spread between new and existing buildings. The art school occupies a central position and a second layer will be added on top. An 'urban jungle' and semi-public functions, such as a restaurant and a multimedia centre, are projected at the residential tower.

### *Design concept & presentation*

The first step is a conceptual presentation of the 'Urban Stop' with a clear message about the intentions and, therefore, with no architectural or urban reference. The next steps are architecturally elaborated with a colourful projection of the new functional programme and visual references to the reuses or the added buildings. A sunlight diagram was also provided. The 'urban jungle' is an intriguing part of the concept, but more attention needs to be paid to form and function. The central position of the art school and the new functional and urban connections with the other buildings are well thought out responses to the results of the site analysis. The introduction of 'sustainability' and the return to the human scale are also well integrated.











## PERMEABILITY

### DESIRABLE CONNECTION

#### GROUP 4: LUCIA SCHOOL (E)

The key to the success of the public areas in the Cool-singel Strip lies in their ability to interconnect, attract and involve visitors. Our overall vision is to connect our isolated site with the dynamic areas of the City of Rotterdam. The site consists of half a block around the Lucia School, which was built in 1955 and is currently used as an art school. The area can be accessed by foot from Lijnbaan, but is used mostly for parking and making deliveries. Basically, it is a back alley with a school in the centre, which backs up against a large office tower. The only landscaping feature in the vicinity is a small row of trees.

Our vision for the site is geared to five main goals: to attract residents and visitors, to keep art and creativity in the neighbourhood, to connect the site with the city and its surroundings, to create green public space, and to conserve a notable example of Modern architecture. This vision not only fits in with the master plan for the overall area but also rises to the challenges presented by this particular, isolated site.

The Lucia School itself is an impressive example of post-war Modern architecture. We propose that it be rehabilitated without altering any of its original characteristics. The programme for the school will remain the same, as we intend to bring more creativity and culture into the area. The ground floor is a garage space, which will be retained, but kept open for local festivals, markets and suchlike. A glass atrium will be constructed on the rear facade to create space for performances and exhibitions. To strengthen the connection with the existing street grid, we propose opening up the ground floor of the building directly opposite the school. We will create a pedestrian zone through an existing street wall in order to open a new route of circulation and to

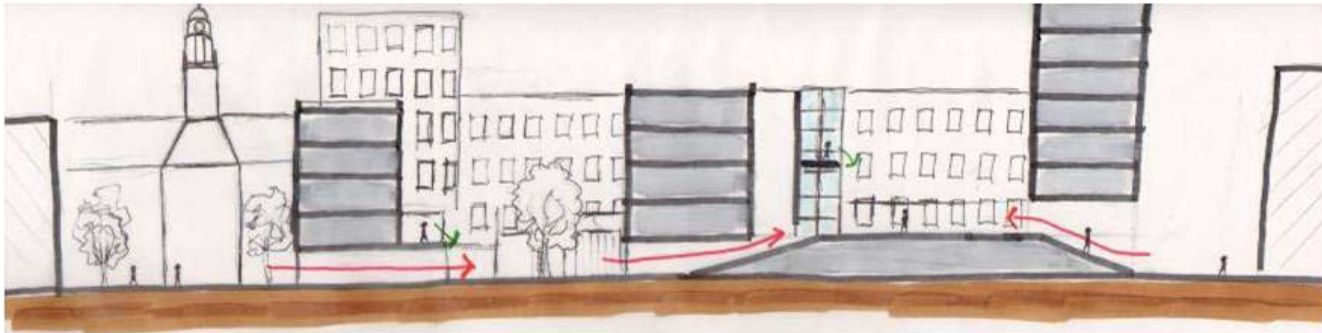
make the existing school plaza a more welcoming place.

The site is dwarfed by two massive office towers behind the school. We propose demolishing one and converting the other into apartments. The taller tower has a small footprint and will be heightened to incorporate more apartments. The lower tower will be replaced with a smaller block of offices that match the school in size, mass and materials. A courtyard will be laid between the school and the new building, providing semi-public space for art students, apartment dwellers and the occasional pedestrian.

This site is a back alley with a noteworthy building in the centre. As a group, our challenge was to raise the status of the Modernist building and to bring light, activity and attention to the area at the same time. This site must evolve if the city centre is to remain vibrant, but its status as a symbol of Modernism must be maintained if it is to remain connected with the spirit of Rotterdam.

Tutor: *Ola Wedebrunn*

Students: *Lacey Bubnash, Joaquín Ortiz de Villajos  
Carrera, Cristina Ciovati, Sebastiaan  
Geerdink, Maria Henriques, Melina Mezari,  
Camila Soares de Oliveira, Rita Peirumaax*



Section



Introducing new public space

## Comments by the jury

### *Problem analysis*

The site is considered a 'dead' or a 'back street' area with too many cars and too few people: no light, no (city) life. The Lucia School is a protected monument that needs to showcase its Corbusian qualities.

### *Interpretation & strategy*

The focus is twofold: on creating more connections with the immediate urban environment (to diminish the present deadly isolation) and on restoring the status of the Lucia School as an example of post-war Modern architecture. The strategy is to enhance the permeability of the block by making new E-W connections and new pedestrian alleys, partly through the buildings, and by demolishing the 'Big Brother' tower block.

A new tower could be erected elsewhere for commercial and residential purposes. Also, more public green space needs to be added to the area.

### *Proposal*

The central idea is to radically transform the site by creating a new slope and new mid-rise blocks (for which existing buildings need to be removed) with alleys at ground level.

### *Design concept & presentation*

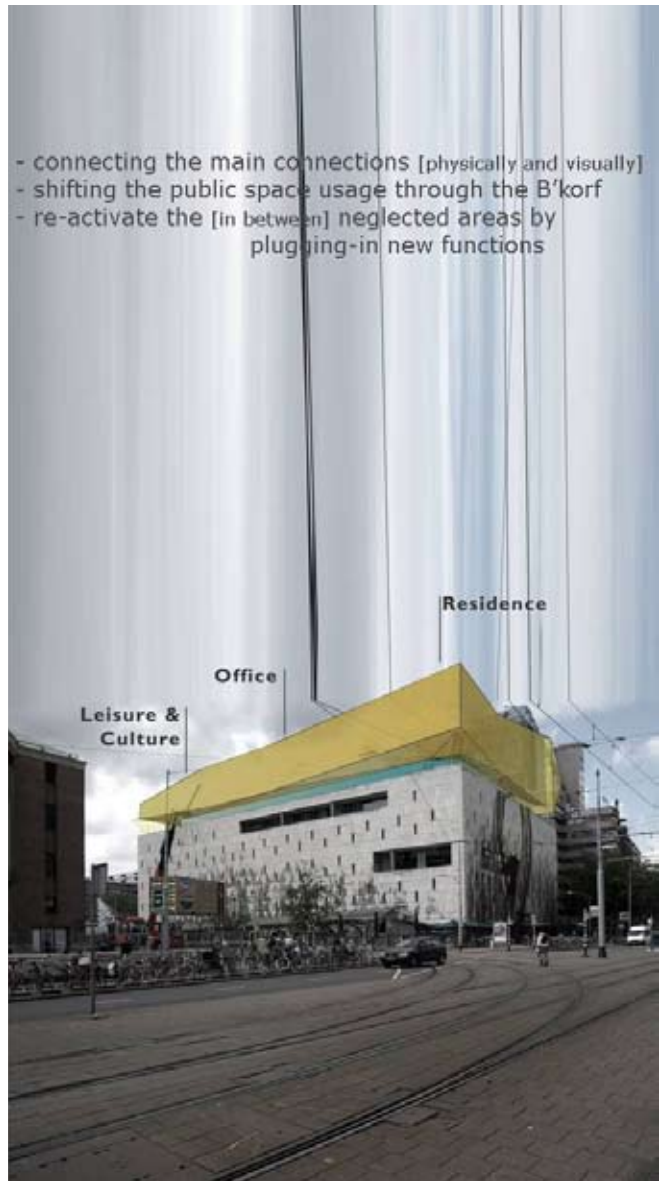
The design testifies to a keen interest in the visual relationships with the adjacent buildings in the area, including the 'historical' town hall, and the effects of the new volumes, but the architectural detailing needs more elaboration; the proposed elevation is illogical. It is unclear how the addition of more green space will be realised in this project.



**RETAIN**



**VACUUM BOX**



**UPGRADING**

- connecting the main connections [physically and visually]
- shifting the public space usage through the B'korf
- re-activate the [in between] neglected areas by plugging-in new functions



## ‘BOX’ING

### BIJENKORF: THE BOUNDARIES OF PRESERVATION

#### GROUP 5: BIJENKORF (F)

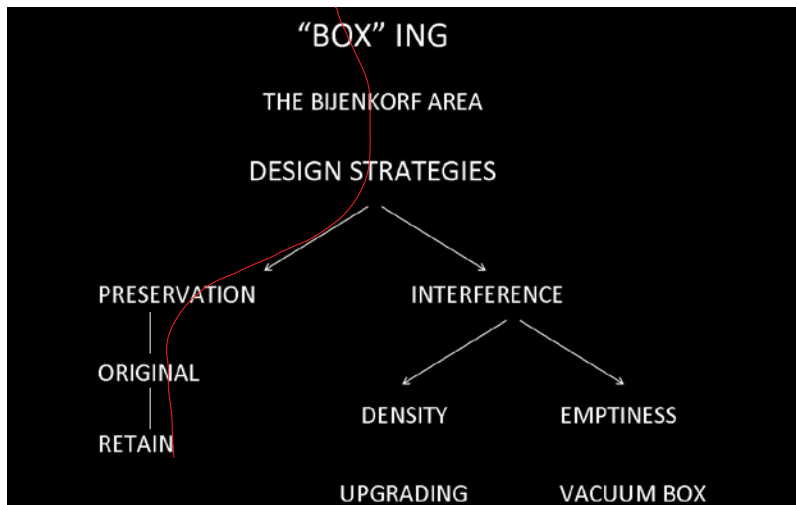
Our group explored the boundaries of the historical space created by a post-war department store, Marcel Breuer’s Bijenkorf, dating from 1957, at the northwest corner of Coolsingel and Oldenbardenveltplaats. Though the Bijenkorf was not the only listed monument on the site, we all agreed that it was by far the most important monument in the area and a major focal point of Coolsingel, so much so that we paid minimal attention to the treatment of other historical elements in the cityscape. We foresee no major design interventions in the Atlanta Hotel or the Lijnbaan shopping district: the buildings function well in their present state and their integrity and historical role in the streetscape would be seriously compromised by major alterations or rooftop additions, especially in the low-scale street of Lijnbaan. At the same time, we agreed that the parking garage on the northwest corner of the site, between the Atlanta Hotel and Lijnbaan, is the best soft

spot for a major high-density residential tower.

The Bijenkorf proved too burdensome an object for the group to reach a consensus on its historical value, or even on the elements of the building, material and functional, that made it significant. Thus, instead of a single vision, we decided to present three options that vary in the degree of attention to the history and integrity of the Bijenkorf. In our response to the challenge of change, the Bijenkorf ‘Box’ is either conserved or added to or hollowed out, though each scheme argues that the essential identity of the Bijenkorf as a monument is in some way preserved.

Tutor: *Astrid Aarsen*

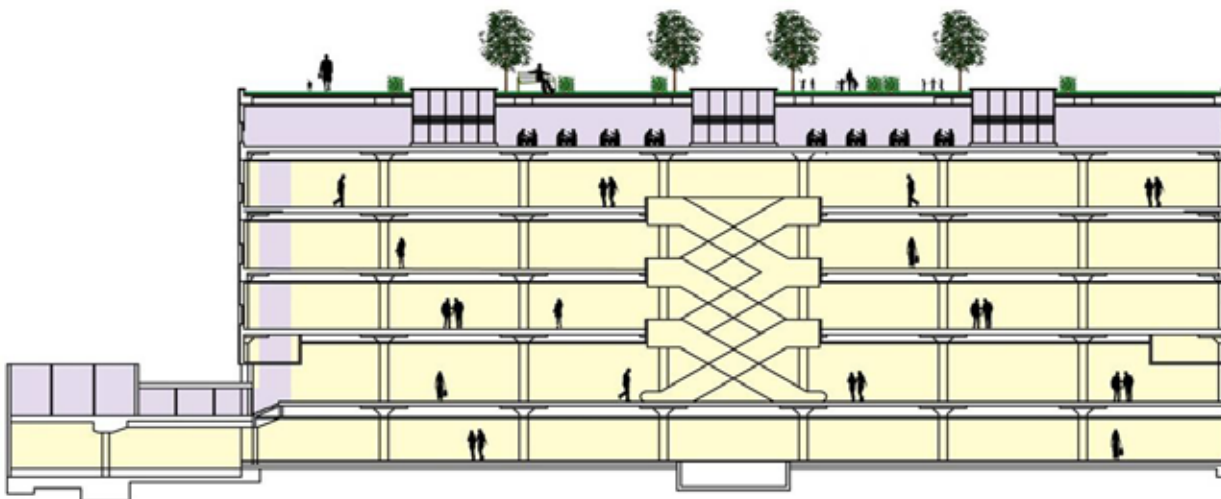
Students: *Patrick Ciccone, Tzafrir Fainholtz, Burak Haznedar, Karin Kunst, Zeren Önsel, Adam Stafiniak, Mikael Vlasopoulos, Kim Eun Yong*







*Perspective: proposed plan*



*Section of the bijenkorf*





## RESTORATION OF THE BIJENKORF

### SCHEME 1: PRESERVATION

We propose preserving the exterior envelope and the public interior space of the Bijenkorf and clearing the ground-level landscape to re-emphasise the presence of the building in the cityscape. We believe that monuments should not be bases for new construction and that the high-density urban plan for Rotterdam threatens to overpower the city centre by placing ever-larger buildings in a vast sea of public space. We propose minimal physical interventions in the existing envelope of

the Bijenkorf and seek to renew its night-time presence in the city. We suggest that the Bijenkorf's original showroom pavilion be restored and converted into a restaurant, and that the Bijenkorf be activated at night by converting some of the fourth-floor office space into restaurants or bars. In sum, we aim to recast the future identity of the Bijenkorf in the form of its historical appearance.



*Perspective: view from above*



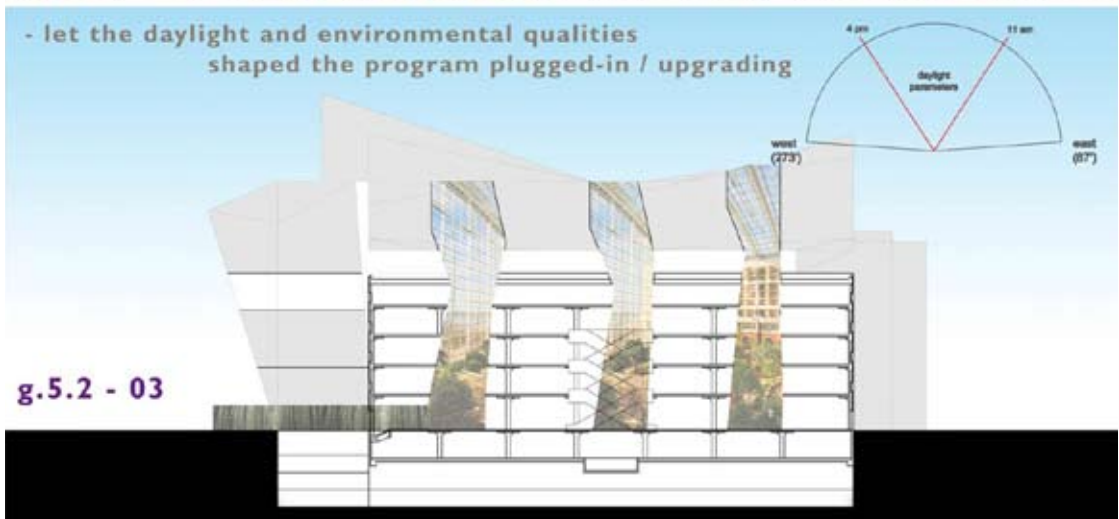


## PLUG-IN BIJENKORF

### SCHEME 2: ADDITION

We propose a plug-in structure for atop the Bijenkorf. The historical significance of the Breuer building is found only in its east and south elevations, but its other faces - the roof and the west face of the building - are less integral to the composition and the urban role of the new programme, and thus can be sacrificed to reactivate the space around the Bijenkorf. We propose an L-shaped addition at the side and top of the building

and a programme of residential, office, leisure, and cultural uses within it, while improving the quality of the external public space. The new exterior mass, by creating a gap between the old and the new building, will preserve the roofline of the Bijenkorf and simultaneously accentuate and magnify the importance of the building. Continuous activity will rejuvenate the dead space in the street at night.







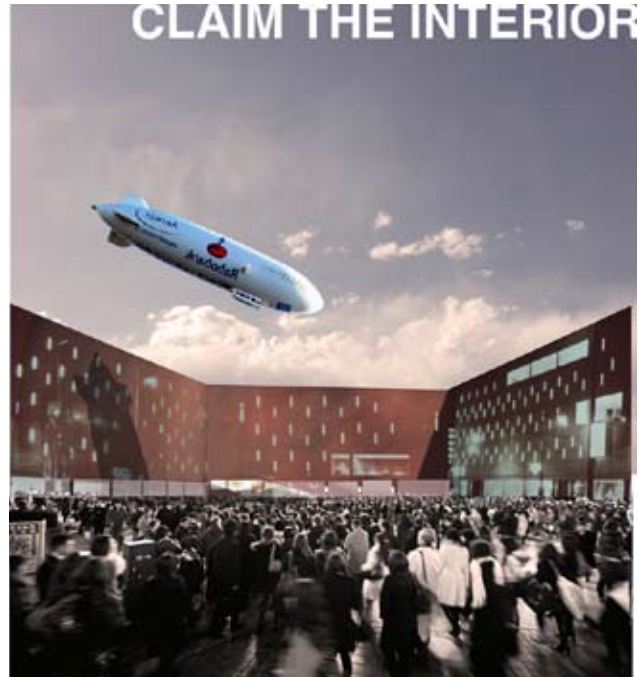
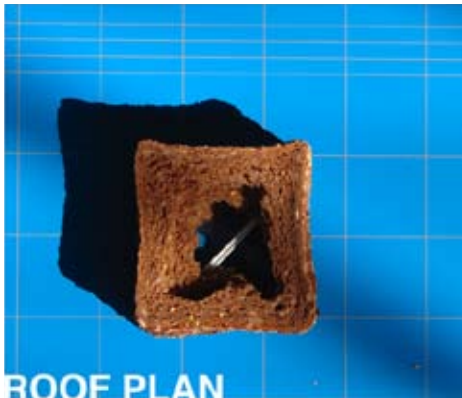


## HOLLOWING OUT THE BIJENKORF

### SCHEME 3: SUBTRACTION

We propose the surgical removal of the majority of the floor slabs in the Bijenkorf, thus reducing the building to an outer shell and an inner courtyard. The solution is to radically deprogramme any urban role for the building as a functional space in favour of the creation of an empty monument. This plan is the reductio ad absurdum of the conservation concept of the ‘facadecto-

my’, as no new function will be introduced into the empty space. The empty space will expose the architecture, figuratively and literally, and symbolically leave an acknowledged monument as an empty monument to itself. The problem of a Modern monument is presented to the City of Rotterdam through the contradiction of exterior integrity and interior absence.



## Comments by the jury

### *Problem analysis*

The architectural integrity of de Bijenkorf is more or less intact but the presence of the Bijenkorf in the streetscape needs improvement; views are blocked due to a lack of urban planning. Unattractive kiosks etc. undermine the architectural value of Breuer's creation. High tower blocks are projected nearby, which will also have a visual impact on the relatively low box.

### *Interpretation & strategy*

Two different design strategies were developed: one focusing on the comprehensive conservation of Breuer's Box and another focusing on intervention, worked out in two opposing variants. These variants concentrated either on higher density or on new inner emptiness. This clever conceptual play with 'box' and 'boxing' did not address the essential challenge of change in the context of 'conservation through development'.

### *Proposals*

The conservation-alone proposal aims to restore the original architecture; it contained only studies of surfaces and historical details. The 'addition' variant aims to plug in new functions by creating new public space for 24-hour usage inside the Bijenkorf and in the surrounding neglected areas. The 'subtraction' variant 'claims the interior' as an open-air square for public use surrounded by the original walls with some facilities.

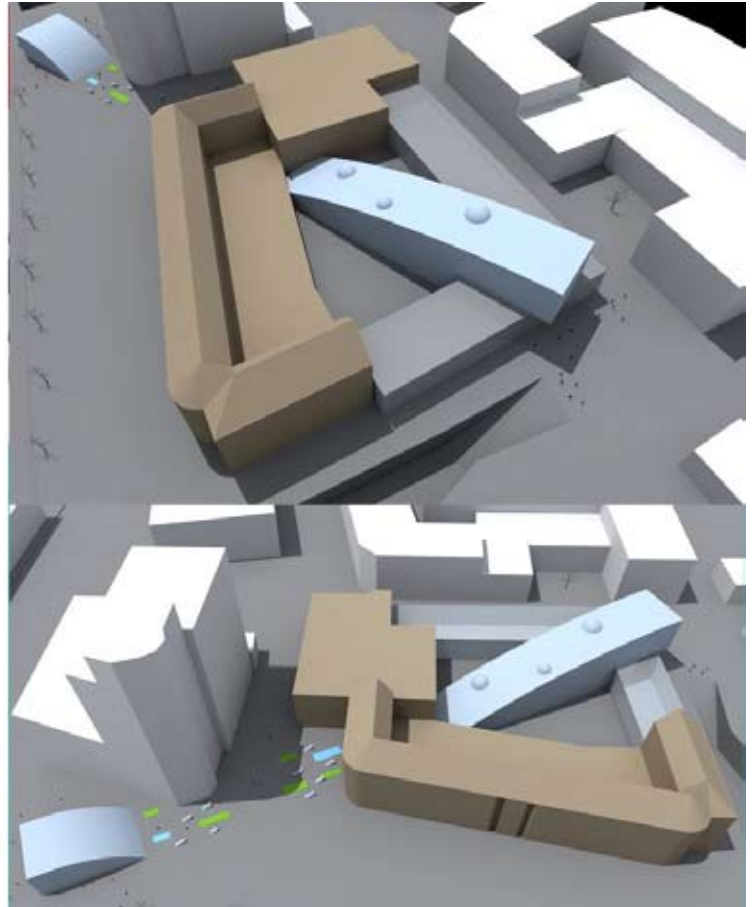
### *Design concept & presentation*

The preservation scheme is oriented mainly to the exterior, but also proposes a semi-public garden on the roof. The use and details of the interior are not further elaborated. The addition scheme proposes piercing the building vertically in three sections to let the daylight in and to add a huge sculptural mass on the rooftop for residence, office, leisure and culture. The subtraction scheme will be combined with neighbouring high-rise blocks. There are no definitive solutions, but the intention is to create a new public square.

All three schemes give insight into the major steps of the design process; the use of a 'slice of bread' metaphor for this purpose is original. Also, attention is paid to the lighting design at night. But the box will no longer have a garden on the roof.







up between under



## STITCHING THE CITY TOGETHER

*UP / BETWEEN / UNDER*

GROUP 6: ABN-AMRO BANK (G), JUNGERHANS (H)

The site bordered by Coolsingel, Lijnbaan, Van Oldenbarneveldtplaats, and Binnenwegplein is characterised by intense pedestrian use, fragmented urban space, mismatching architectural adjacencies, and no real sense of identity. Yet it has huge potential. It is located at the end of Lijnbaan, with connection possibilities to the river and the cultural centre of Witte de Withstraat.

There are important monuments on this site, but at present their power is lost amid the disorder. The pedestrian use is good for the functions in the area, but it must be allowed to follow its organic path with minimal disturbance from architectural elements. Finally, there is an opportunity to create a focal point at the termination of Lijnbaan. This would give a sense of identity to an otherwise amorphous area.

We picture the city as a living machine and favour a surgical approach: leaving the parts that work, removing the parts that do not, then stitching the pieces together. The site must change if it is to be protected, but change does not necessarily mean compromise. We can reaffirm the ideals of the designers of Lijnbaan and, at the same time, create a space that works in the contemporary city. Their driving motive was to create order from disorder. Our key goal was therefore to create a new order through simplification and connection. Using this careful and simple methodology, we will clear the clutter that has accumulated in the public space, circulation areas and around the monuments, allowing them to work as they were originally designed, re-establishing their original character and intention and projecting a much clearer understanding of the city.

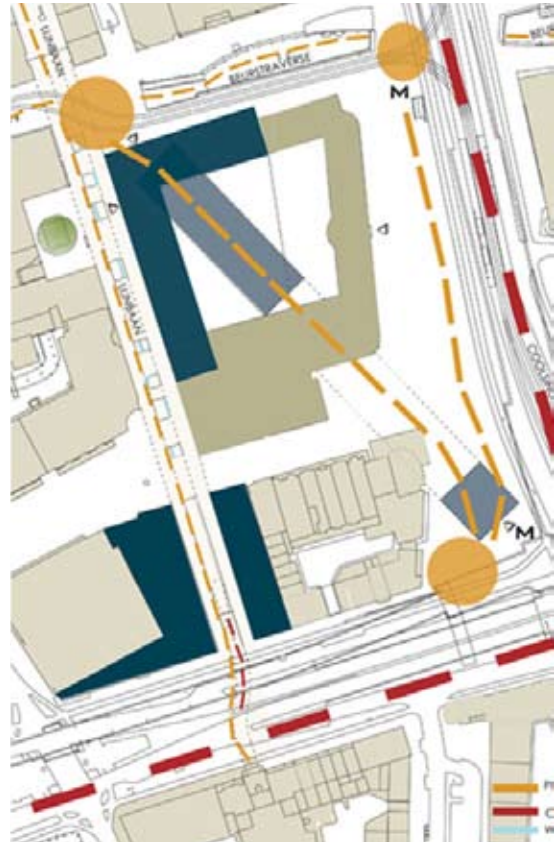
From an urban planning perspective, our move to continue Lijnbaan axially across Westblaak towards the

Cinerama Theater will connect Lijnbaan with the cultural centre of Witte de Withstraat. Our major intervention is to follow an organic circulation path that has been cut off by a block of buildings. In doing so we will connect the Rotterdam Metro station (at the corner of Coolsingel and Westblaak) and the end of Lijnbaan with a structure that plunges diagonally under the ABN-AMRO building to emerge on the other side with a distinctive curve overlooking Lijnbaan. This structure will connect under the site to what we envision as a constantly expanding underground city. As such, it flies in the face of the present trend towards vertical density - which has garnered criticism as destructive to the city. Finally, the emerging pavilion on the southwest corner will establish a visual connection with the River Maas. By applying this strategy we effectively stitch together what has become a fragmented city.

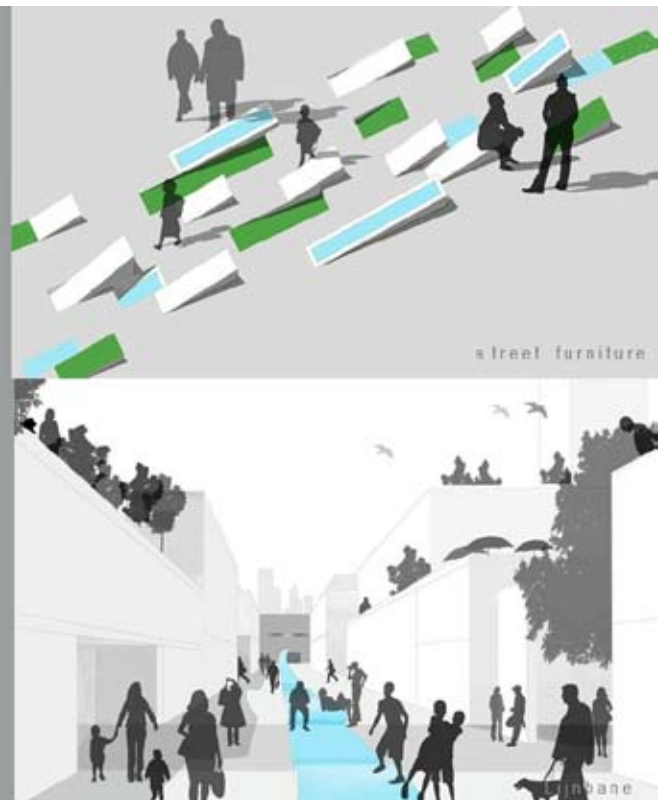
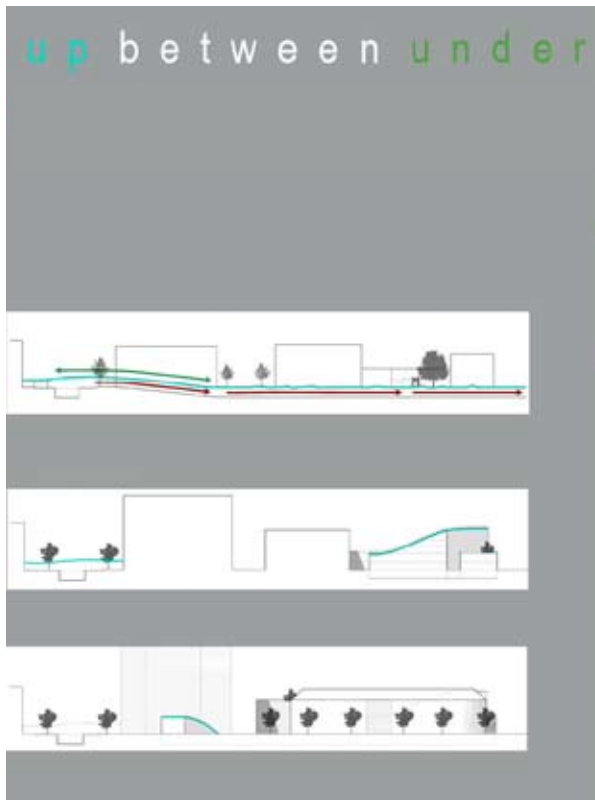
The challenge here is to accommodate contemporary uses in an urban area with a complex mix of conditions. We believe that the original character and ideology of the historical site must not be compromised and that change should be introduced in ways that reinvigorate without complete transformation.

Tutor: *Ruth Verde Zein*

Students: *Matthew Coody, Joris Hogeweg, Marie Eve Issa, Marta Jaszcz, Esra Manci, Maris Suits, Samuel Uriarte*



u p b e t w e e n u n d e r



## Comments by the jury

### *Problem analysis*

Two major problems are addressed: the dysfunctional nature of the urban space and the lack of connections between individual elements of the city fabric; the conservation of the post-war monuments is also a challenge.

### *Interpretation & strategy*

The basic idea is not to touch the monuments (ABN-AMRO bank, De Klerk/ Donner, Jungerhans/Blokker) but to create a new diagonal connection with new functions that will attract people and establish new connections on, between and under the present site.

### *Proposal*

The 'do-not-touch' idea implied, intentionally or otherwise, a 'do-not-think' approach to conservation issues. The main focus is on the creation of new street furniture and new volumes. No effort is made to harmonise these with the existing buildings; instead, an architectural contrast is sought. Also, the creation of green roofs was considered along Lijnbaan.

### *Design concept & presentation*

The design concept is approached only in terms of new architecture. The proposal for this complex site makes no attempt to integrate the architectural qualities of existing buildings with the new additions. Besides sections and 'reference images', the proposal was accompanied by a model.



# Jury report

## Jury

<i>Chair</i>	Job Roos	@MIT, TU Delft
<i>Secretary</i>	Marieke Kuipers	(report)
	Peter de Bois	@MIT, TU Delft
	Ruud Brouwers	TU Delft
	Maristella Casciato	DOCOMOMO
	Astrid Sanson	dS+V Rotterdam

- Concentration of Use/s
- Preservation (idea, approach, details)
- Added Value (re-investment)
- Spirituality (poetry)
- Message on a 'higher level'

## Jury's comments

The jury was impressed by all the group efforts to devise a comprehensive solution for a challenging assignment. The analysis of the site problems did not present too many problems, not least because lessons could be drawn from the introductory lectures; but the interpretation of the consequences proved tricky, especially in relation to preservation. Conservation was often seen in contrast with new design, and not as a continuation or integrated form of existing architecture. Most of the proposals attempted to create new connections in the urban environment for pedestrians and activities during the day and night. Some design strategies and proposals were original and refreshing, and merit further investigation. However, only one group really rose to the challenge of developing strategies for 'conservation through development'.

The evaluation criteria for the entries, listed in random order, were as follows:

- Challenging
- Communication
- Analysis, Strategies and Result (complexity of the task)
- Meaning of the Urban Context (connectivity)

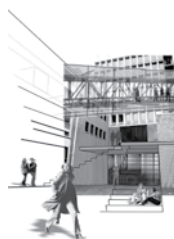
## Entries

The groups worked assiduously under the supervision of Wouter Willers, Astrid Aarsen, Theo Prudon, Ola Wedebrunn, Hielkje Zijlstra and Ruth Verde Zein. All of them compiled a presentation that provided insight into their analytical process and the main steps in drafting the design. One group took on the challenge of producing an overall view for the redevelopment of the Coolingsel Strip in relation to changes in the wider urban environment. The others concentrated on the redevelopment of one of the sites on the west area of Coolingsel between Hofplein and Beursplein.

The jury was well aware that a general analysis of the urban and architectural design problems in Rotterdam's city centre and the 'translation' into a design and conservation strategy represented a daunting task, made even more daunting by the fact that it had to be completed within a week. It greatly appreciated the efforts by all the groups to present a comprehensive and creative proposal. However, some groups were more successful than others in addressing the combination of new design concepts and conservation issues.

### Final conclusions

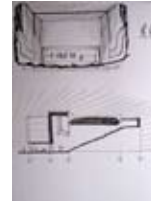
The jury agreed unanimously on the winning proposal: **SLOW DOWN** (group 3). This choice was based on the group's appraisal of the critical conceptual analysis of the current urban problems and its audacious response: it did not intensify density but created new urban space to slow down the high-rise while making intelligent reuse of existing buildings. Scale, programme and place were excellently matched and the preservation of the buildings and the urban context formed an essential part of the concept.



Second place goes to **'BOX'ING** (group 5), because of its intelligent treatment of three different design/conservation strategies; the final results were original and visionary but were not elaborated in detail. In fact, the design of new elements started too soon with no link to the conservation analysis.



Third place goes to two proposals: **CHANGING CONNECTIONS** (group 2) for its multi-faceted site analysis and **RE-PULSATION** (group 1) for the critical and relatively modest upgrading programming for the site and the hotel facilities.



All in all, the jury concluded that student workshops significantly enrich the debate on the future of the Modern heritage. However, the essence of conservation - namely, the confrontation between change and continuity - is still proving difficult to master. The City of Rotterdam can, at any rate, benefit from the various strategies and critical concepts that underlie the design proposals.

The idea to temper the density in this part of the city centre by adding almost limitless new tower blocks is an important outcome, as is the proposal to mix functions in such a way that pedestrians will enjoy taking part in city life during the day and at night. The results therefore deserve to be publicised beyond the Docomomo conference room and this report.

# List of Participants

Institution	Students
<b>Columbia University</b> Historic Preservation Program New York, USA	Deirdre Gould Patrick Ciccone Matthew Coody Kristina Marie Nugent Caroline Stephenson Lacey Bubnash
<b>Edinburgh College of Art</b> Scottish Centre for Conservation Edinburgh, Scotland	Neeraj Bhagat Maria Henriques
<b>Estonian Academy of Art</b> Tallinn, Estonia	Maris Suits Rita Peirumaa
<b>Israel Institute of Technology (Technion-IIT)</b> Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning Technion City, Israel	Shira Sprecher Tzafrir Fainholtz
<b>Istanbul Technical University</b> Faculty of Architecture Istanbul, Turkey	Zeren Önsel Esra Manci
<b>Mackenzie University</b> Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Post-Graduate Program on Architecture and Urbanism São Paulo, Brazil	Jaime Marcondes Cupertino Camila Oliveira
<b>National Technical University of Athens</b> School of Architecture, Architectural Design, Space and Culture Athens, Greece	Mikael Vlasopoulos Alikí-Myrto Perysinaki
<b>Politecnico di Milano</b> Building Environment Science & Technology Department Milan, Italy	Maria Paola Borgarino Cristina Ciovati

**Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile**  
Facultad de Arquitectura, Diseño y Estudios Urbanos  
Santiago, Chile

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The 2nd International Docomomo Workshop made a sizeable contribution to the general programme of the 10th International Docomomo Conference in Rotterdam in September 2008. The theme and area of study were chosen on the basis of two complementary issues: recognition of the specificity and current urban development of Rotterdam (the city hosting the conference) on the one hand; and the need to tackle the urgent problems raised by the highly controversial re-design of Rotterdam city centre and the proposed demolition of the Lijnbaan shopping area on the other.

The theme of the workshop Strategies for the Coolsingel Strip gives serious pause for thought. Coolsingel, the backbone of 21st-century Rotterdam and dramatically reshaped by the trend towards newborn Manhattanism, is the repository of the Rotterdam collective memory. The handful of public buildings that survived the Luftwaffe bombing raids on May 14 1940 inspired the construction of a modern boulevard, flanked by some remarkable edifices that reconfigured the vision of urban space.

As the area of study for the workshop, Lijnbaan tested the students' ability to rethink Rotterdam's Modernist heritage as an asset and challenged them to put forward proposals on various scales and under diverse economic constraints. Students and tutors worked hard to come up with solutions. They rose to the challenge of measuring their plans on a human scale and tried to avoid formal gestures that favour designing within the interstices and remodelling spaces via changes that generate more sensible and body-related urban tissues. This new vision, which sees heritage as a living force and a priority for human beings living in a multilayered, built-up environment, lies at the heart of this report. Whatever future awaits Coolsingel, some of the ideas presented in this have already proven vital; let us hope that they will prove fruitful as well.



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