

**10 TALES ON TRANSFORMATION,
TOLD BY ACTUAL ARCHITECTURE
& LANDSCAPE PROJECTS**

*An Exhibition on
Architecture and Transitions*

PREFIGURATIONS

**THE
GREAT
TRANSFORMATION**

PREFIGURATIONS is initiated and produced by Architecture Workroom Brussels, innovation house for transformation, in the framework of The Great Transformation 2020–2030, an independent learning environment, incubator and public programme to accelerate place-based system change. The exhibition and the programme are set up in partnership with the New European Bauhaus Festival, the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam and Brussels2030, with the support of the Flemish and Brussels governments.

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10 TALES ON TRANSFORMATION, TOLD BY ACTUAL ARCHITECTURE & LANDSCAPE PROJECTS

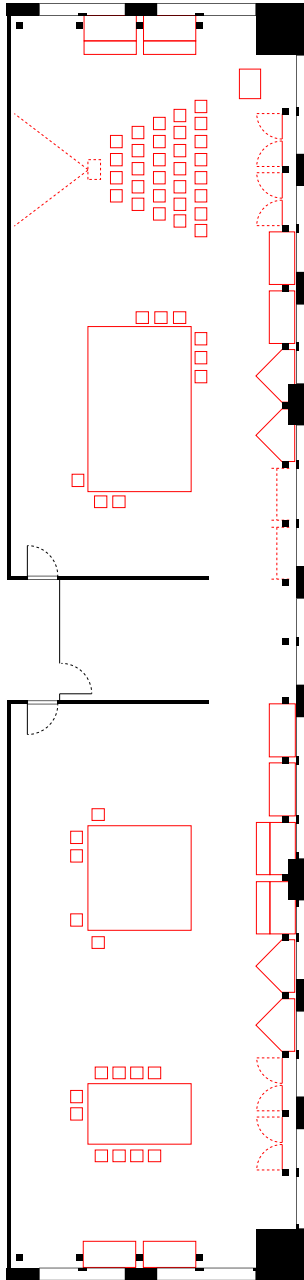
This guide accompanies an exhibition that invites you to explore another way of reading architecture. Under the motto ‘The Great Transformation’, economists, sociologists, transition experts, designers, marketers and policymakers have put together an agenda of ten types of projects by which to realize the goals we set for the coming decades. This exhibition surveys the extent to which architecture and landscape projects of today are already contributing to this agenda. The thirty-nine built or to-be-built projects in this exhibition are the pieces of the puzzle that take you on a pictorial voyage through potential future places. Together, the projects make up ten prefigurations, revealing glimpses of what our neighbourhoods, public spaces, societal infrastructures and landscapes could look like in five to ten years.

This new perspective not only shows you the quality of the spaces, materials and compositions of each individual project but also brings to light how architecture and landscapes make possible the necessary transition from fossil energy to renewable energy, to a sustainable food and mobility system, a circular economy, a caring living environment and an inclusive labour market. The composition of projects structures a workroom in which we discuss and propel design strategies and architectural typologies, societal coalitions and commissioning methods. Collectively, we develop a language for the practice of architecture and transition.

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STREETS**

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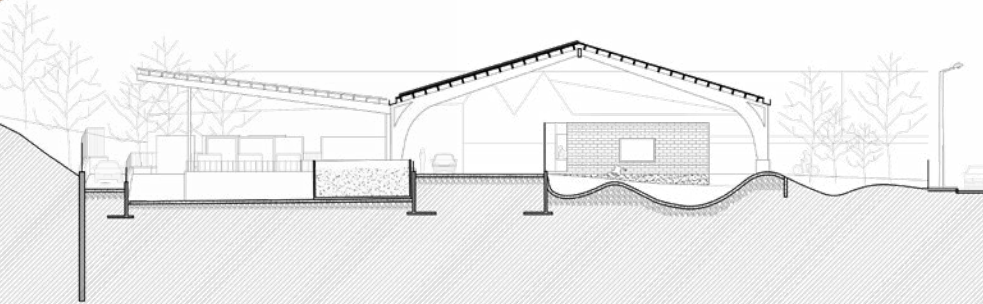
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**CIRCULAR
MATERIAL HUBS**

CIRCULAR MATERIAL HUBS

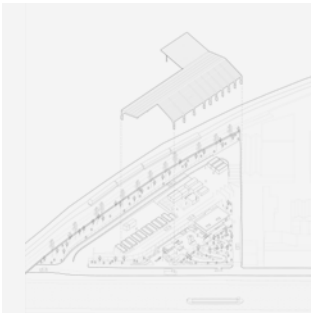
As a contractor, I am constantly working with building materials. A lot changed in recent years in the construction market. The reuse of materials has become more common thanks to regulations that allow recycled materials to be prescribed and approved in terms of safety and sustainability, not least because the CO₂ cost of new materials is now included in the price of the materials themselves. Today I am on the road early. With the van (electric, since recently!), I pick up a number of pieces at the recycling park ① for use on one of my construction sites.



In the past, we simply threw items such as tiles, bricks, sanitary facilities and carpentry into the construction waste container. Now we sort out what can still be recovered on site. And vice versa, today, whenever I need something, I first check whether I can find it in the recycling park, which serves as a real material bank. While waiting for the materials I selected to be loaded, I notice some teenagers sliding through the bowl on their skateboards. They use this place to hang out. The noise and smell of the recycling park don't bother them. It's nice to see how different urban functions can come together.

1 **RECYPARK, Anderlecht (Brussels)**

The recycling of waste and materials forms the background for new public spaces



2016–2023, Under construction | designed by 51n4e | commissioned by Net.Brussels

The transition to a circular economy requires places near the city where materials are collected and recycled. We know recycling parks as desolate places at the back of society. The design for one of the new recycling parks in Brussels by 51N4E seeks to reverse that image by adding a public function to the classic materials park, in this case a skate park and a green space. This juxtaposition of functions was based on a proposal by the architects themselves. In addition, they suggested reclaiming the canopy that covers this new public space from elsewhere. A horse-riding school in Liège that was to be demolished turned out to deliver the necessary structure, consisting of 26 m wide archways of glued laminated timber. These two modifications to the brief give the recycling park an urban character and smoothen the negative associations attached to the recycling of waste.



I hurry to my next stop where I have an appointment at a wood processing factory ②. For the construction of a multistorey passive apartment block – one of the first in the city – we are

working entirely in wood and here they can help me choose the right materials. Ah, the smell of wood and the light that cuts through the impressive hall, this is why I love my job.

② LAB15, Ghent

A new architectural language for manufacturing in the city



2018–2020, Completed | designed by GAFPA, Lab15 | commissioned by Lab15

To give the manufacturing industry a chance to stay in the city and form a high-quality urban environment, it is necessary to invest in high-quality industrial architecture. The Ghent-based architecture office GAFPA designed a workshop for Lab15, a wood construction company that manufactures prefabricated wood panels and bio-ecological insulation materials used in passive and low-energy houses. The architecture lifts the shed to a new industrial typology with a distinct identity. Instead of a typical metal frame, the workshop receives high, wooden sloping beams on a concrete column structure. The overdimensioning of the eleven sections allows for flexibility. Since all elements are made of prefabricated materials, they can be reused later. Between the production hall and the office building, a covered outdoor area is created that not only functions as a loading and unloading zone, but also as a place where employees can meet for lunch, a party or a drink after a long workday.

As it is impossible for me to transport all the materials in my van, they send me to the reception centre ③ to make arrangements to get the materials to the building site. The site is located along the canal, so most of the distance can be covered by water, right into the city. Thanks to the network of circular material hubs, the way of building has changed completely.



③ VAN HOOREBEKE TIMBER, Ghent

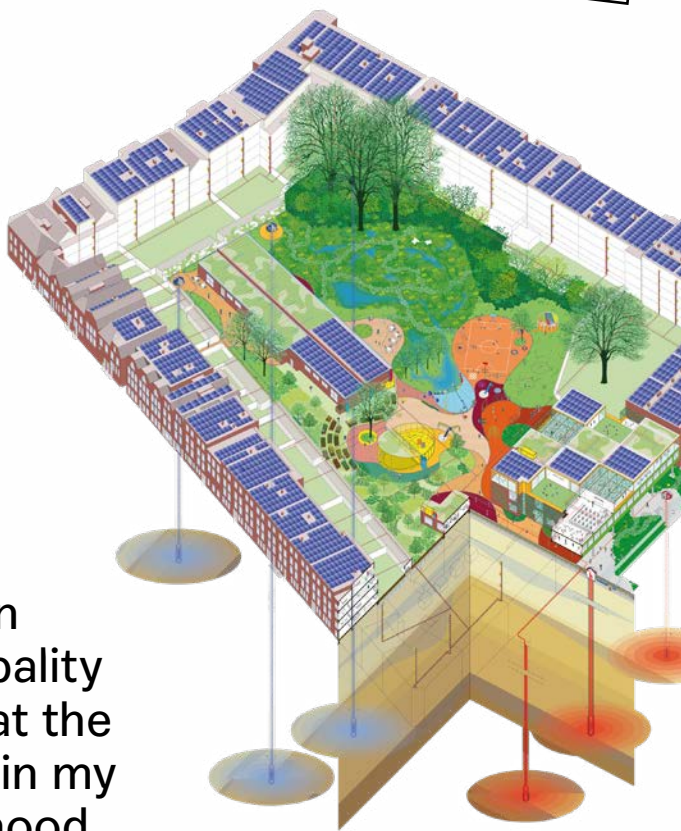
Logistical flows and activities determine the architecture of a reception building



2016–2018, Completed | designed by
TRANS architectuur stedenbouw,
UTIL Struktuurstudies, Studiebureau
Boydens | commissioned by
Van Hoorebeke Timber

If we organize our economy in a circular way, goods will no longer arrive packed in containers in large ports, but (recycled) materials will be processed and reshipped locally, preferably via inland waterways. The location of Van Hoorebeke Timber along the canal between Ghent and Terneuzen already anticipates this. In time, the site can supply the city over water with material from wood-producing countries. TRANS was asked to design the reception building for this company specializing in the import and processing of timber. The building's polygonal shape was dictated by the circulation routes at the production site. The supporting structure of wide wooden columns shapes the programme inside and outside. A covered outdoor area, with a wood fire used by waiting truckers, becomes a high-quality gathering place amid the logistic traffic, demonstrating that a productive site such as this one does not need to be distant or generic.

ENERGY DISTRICTS



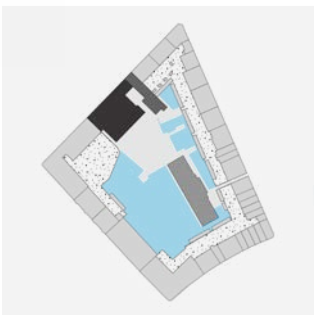
I was in shock when the municipality decided that the gas supply in my neighbourhood would be cut off in 2030. I did know that we cannot continue to depend on fossil fuels for heating our homes and I understand that we need to reduce CO₂ emissions to zero. But suddenly, such abstract goals came very close: my district was chosen as one of the first test sites, a European pioneer, because an urban

renewal programme is in the pipeline here anyway. That allows for various investments and dynamics to be combined. It was reassuring to hear that the government is ready to support me in switching to renewable energy. First, however, my apartment in an existing multistorey building must be renovated since the valuable heat will enter at a low temperature and will otherwise just be blown out of the house.

I receive all the information I need via the network of my children's school ^④. It is nice to see how the children are being taught about the energy system and the transition we are going through.

④ **DAKPARKSCHOOL, Bospolder-Tussendijken (Rotterdam)**

A school as a catalyst to engage the surrounding streets in the energy transition



2020–2021, Research | designed by
OOZE architects & urbanists |
commissioned by IABR International
Architecture Biennial Rotterdam

The Bospolder-Tussendijken district in Rotterdam is one of the five poorest areas in the Netherlands. However, it has a lively social fabric. Many strong family and informal networks offer people a safety net when they are in difficulty. The announcement of a private heat network in the district prompted the development of an alternative approach that would enable local residents to become co-owners, a Local Energy Action Plan (LEAP). One of the pilot projects in this plan is the redevelopment of the 'Dakparkschool', which could become exemplary for other (public) buildings in the district. The renovation of the school building, installation of solar panels and depaving of the playground are the entry point to future-oriented classes for the pupils and the mobilization of their parents and neighbours in the energy transition. OOZE developed this spatial, financial and organizational design strategy as part of the International Architecture Biennial of Rotterdam Atelier between 2018 and 2021.

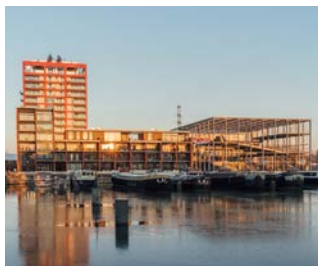
As a parent, this allows you to learn indirectly as well! A cooperative ⑤ is going to be set up to supply heat to the entire neighbourhood and I have decided to become a shareholder of the heat network.

As a result, neighbours are growing closer; we help each other out and we discuss how the public



⑤ DE NIEUWE DOKKEN, Ghent

A district's residents share ownership of their energy infrastructure



2018–2025, Under construction |
designed by Schipperskaai,
Stéphane Beel Architects, BLAF
architecten, DENC!-studio, ONIX,
RONT, PAUWELS, ELD, ANTEA,
DuCoop, sogent | commissioned by
Schipperskaai Development NV

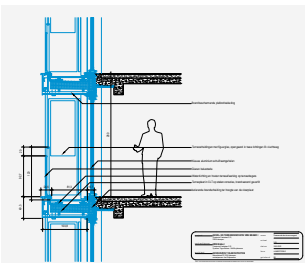
De Nieuwe Dokken (The New Docks) is a large-scale residential neighbourhood on the east side of the Handelsdok, mainly for the upper middle class, but with 20 per cent social housing and another 20 per cent low-priced apartments. The Nieuwe Dokken district reveals an interesting energy model. A cooperative operates a heat and water network with closed circuits for heat, water and waste. By buying a dwelling there, inhabitants automatically become shareholders in the local energy infrastructure. This allows them to share in the profits of the investment in the form of low energy prices. The 400 flats are provided by the cooperative heat network, which is powered by residual heat from a nearby factory (2/3) and locally recovered sewage heat (1/3). In addition, solar panels are installed on as many buildings as possible. Thanks to a district battery, these permanently supply the heat pumps and car-charging stations. For household electricity, residents choose their own supplier, but group purchases are made possible at advantageous rates.

space can also benefit when the new underground energy infrastructure is implemented. A renovation coach ⑥ visited me to draw up a spatial and financial plan for the total renovation of my apartment building with my co-owners. The entire façade will be renewed and at the same time they will add an extra terrace. The investment is not cheap, but the loan conditions make it feasible.



⑥ BRABO I, Linkeroever (Antwerp)

An architecture office becomes mediator to enrol residents in a renovation strategy



2018–ongoing, Execution design |
designed by Gevelinzicht, Tecon,
FVWW, Bollinger-Grohmann |
commissioned by VME Brabo I

Our entire existing building stock will have to be renovated if we want to become fossil fuel-free. The existing structure of the association of co-owners of an apartment building makes it possible to take such decisions collectively, but that does not mean that enrolling every single owner is easy. In the Brabo I apartment building on Antwerp's Linkeroever, 150 private owners joined forces with the support of the city on an extensive renovation strategy. A task force including architecture office Gevelinzicht and technical expert Tecon was appointed to assist residents during information evenings, to identify the deficiencies in the building, to propose technical and financial scenarios, and to draw up a balanced multi-year plan. The financial aspect in particular proved to be an obstacle. The renovation of the façade and terraces amounts to 4 million euros, which the owners have to pay out of their own pockets. Eighty-eight percent of the owners voted in favour. Those who did not, had to contribute or sell their flat. The result is a total renovation with concrete benefits for users in terms of quality and comfort: the terraces were enlarged, for example, and the entire building has a completely new look.

At the same time, I choose to make a number of adjustments to my flat that I have long been waiting for. My architect suggests a different approach for the office and children's playrooms: by no longer heating them, I reduce extra costs and create a natural indoor-outdoor climate. ⑦ After the renovation of the flats, the individual houses will be renovated street by street and connected to the heat from collective boreholes. The neighbourhood approach to energy makes it possible to accelerate and combine investments.



⑦ **VERBIEST, Sint-Jans-Molenbeek/Molenbeek-Saint-Jean (Brussels)**

A renovation that thoroughly questions habits



2017–2020, Completed | designed by AgwA, JZH&Partners | self-commissioned

The Verbiest single-family dwelling and artist studio in the Brussels municipality of Molenbeek is an example of how an alternative design of living spaces can guide a different use and behaviour of the residents, resulting in lower energy consumption. Instead of wrapping the former warehouse in polyurethane, the architect – who also owns and occupies the house – opted for a low-tech approach, which after careful calculations also has the greatest impact. Only the essential parts of the living space are heated: the kitchen, bathroom, a small living area and the bedrooms. In-between, spaces arise that evolve with the seasons: an office, an extra lounge area, a winter garden. The massive structure of the original industrial building retains heat in the autumn and is pleasantly cool in the spring. Or how the willingness to break fixed habits can lead to win-win situations in terms of energy and quality.

CARING NEIGHBOURHOODS



On Sunday morning,
I visit my grandmother
in the care home where
she lives, close to here.
I'm glad she didn't end up
somewhere isolated, but rather in one
of the homes embedded in the neigh-
bourhood. This means she can still live
reasonably independently, and she
clearly still enjoys her
daily routine.



I ring the doorbell of the converted doctor's residence ⑧ where she lives with nine others. One of her housemates opens the door, and even though I come here every week, she doesn't recognize me. Before I can say anything, I hear my grandmother call out, 'Let her in, it's my little girl!' I walk into the kitchen and find her cooking. After lunch, we go for a walk along the grounds.



⑧

HUIS PERREKES, Oosterlo (Geel)

A care home embedded in an everyday environment



2018, Completed | designed by NU
architectuuratelier | commissioned
by Huis Perrekkes vzw

The Huis Perrekkes building complex has been redeveloped to give the caring facility a 'human' connotation instead of following medical prescriptions. As a result, an ordinary house stands in an ordinary street in an ordinary Belgian village, inhabited by people with different stages of dementia. NU architectuuratelier designed the doctor's villa, its extension, the garden pavilion and the central garden as four clear elements that enable residents to orient themselves independently. In the villa's open kitchen, residents and their visitors prepare food that can be shared at the custom-designed tables. A covered outdoor area adjoins the kitchen. A homely, recognizable atmosphere reigns in the original doctor's house, where the flats are located. The new pavilion in the garden offers space for the residents, but also for occasional childcare and village activities. As the world of the residents shrinks, the public domain expands.

We pass a historic villa ⑨ where one of her friends sits under a pergola drinking a cup of tea. Because the buildings look so different, my grandmother can still find her way around here. At the same time, the buildings all have a very recognizable, homely atmosphere, which makes people feel at ease here.



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ZORGBUURT DE KORENBLOEM, Kortrijk

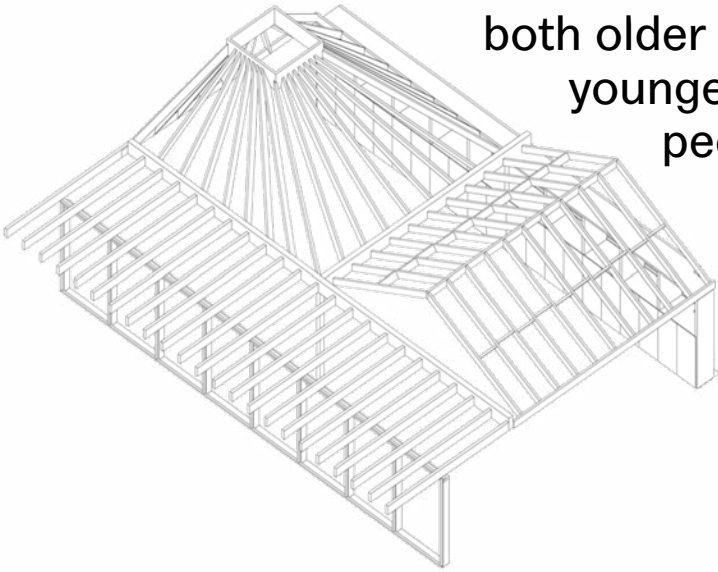
Old and new, private and public are intertwined in a neighbourhood care campus



2013–2021, Completed | designed by Sergison Bates Architects, Studio Jan Vermeulen, Tom Thys Architecten, Buro Groen | commissioned by De Korenbloem VZW

De Korenbloem is a care campus east of Kortrijk city centre. It is one of the 'Invisible Care' pilot projects of the Flemish Government Architect. It was set up after extensive research into how care can be better embedded in our society. The project wants to break down the existing barriers between care and society by opening up two renovated historic villas on the care campus to neighbourhood activities and associations. The masterplan and design by Sergison Bates, Studio Jan Vermeulen and Tom Thys Architecten consists of two parts connected by a large garden. Two historic buildings – an art deco villa and a neoclassical country house at the far ends of the campus – house the day care centres and neighbourhood services. Two new buildings with the units for the permanent users each adopt spatial elements from the respective villas and make the connection between the street and the inner area. Eight to ten residents each share a flat unit: it is an intermediate level between their own room and the entire complex. Balconies, pergolas, canopies and garden rooms make reference to the original buildings and create a mediating scale between the privacy of the residential building and its surroundings.

In the service centre ⑩ a bit further on, we take a break at a table. There is always life here: people choose a book from the library and settle down with something to drink. This place is a crossroads where both older and younger people meet.



⑩ **GODSHUIS, Puurs-Sint-Amands**

A service centre as a meeting point between care home and village



2021–ongoing, Execution design | designed by OFFICEU architects, atelier horizon | commissioned by OCMW Puurs-Sint-Amands

The former almshouse of Sint-Amands was a charitable institution where the poor, the sick and the elderly were cared for along with orphans. Building on this existing identity, the municipality and the public centre for social welfare of Puurs-Sint-Amands want to accommodate a central reception, municipal services, a library and a local service centre here. The almshouse will be restored to its former glory and a new volume will be added in the middle, designed by OFFICEU and atelier horizon. By creating a series of openings in the walls, the small rooms in the historical building will be opened up to form larger interconnected community spaces. Two inner gardens nestle in the corners of the different buildings. The redevelopment of the almshouse allows for a connection to be made with the adjoining residential care centre. As a result, the service centre becomes the place where the elderly from the care centre and the villagers can meet spontaneously.

On the way back, we cross the wide garden ⑪ of the estate, which is surrounded by the old monastery wall. This is where teenagers lie in the grass and families come for a picnic. It is a shared space which serves as a village square for the neighbourhood. We hug before she goes back inside to start dinner. It's reassuring to know that she is being well cared for and at the same time that she is still part of society and is growing old with dignity.



⑪

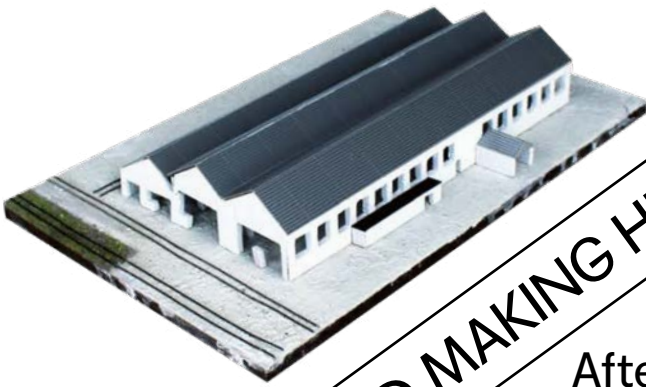
ZONNELIED, Eizeringen (Dilbeek)

The care home's garden meadow becomes a new village square



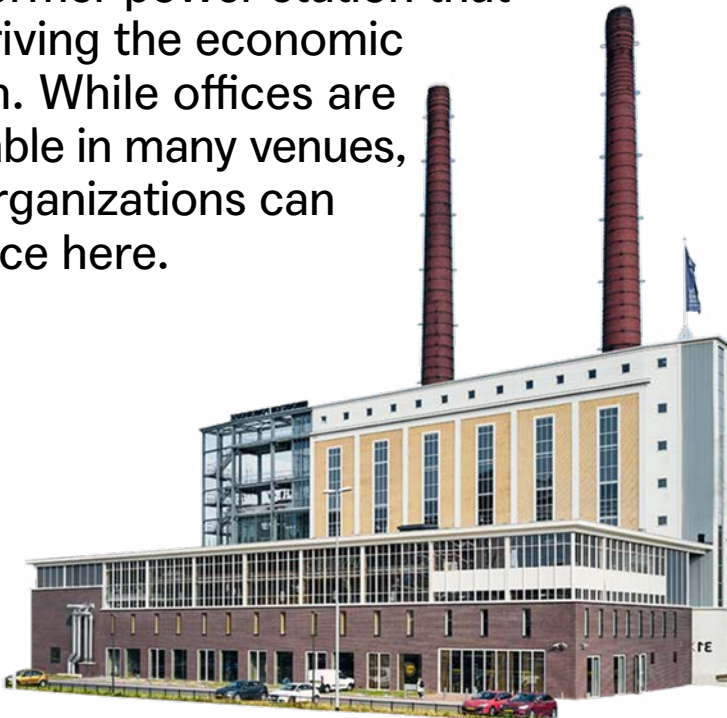
2014–2021, Completed | designed by MADAM architectuur, ZAmponse architecten | commissioned by VZW zonnelied

Located in the heart of the south-western agricultural landscape around Brussels, Lennik is home to the Eizeringen campus, which houses a school in the old monastery building, an after-school care centre and a day-care centre. Recently, a residential home for eighteen people with severe mental disorders and two residential groups for people with mental and mild physical disorders were added by ZAmponse and MADAM architectuur. The design consists of two folded beams on top of each other and gives structure to the ensemble of buildings on the campus. The beam on the ground floor bends sideways to facilitate the connecting road that runs across the grounds, while on the first floor it leans on the existing day-care centre. The building plays with different relations to the old monastery wall that embraces the entire campus and acts as the binding element of the site. The garden and the rough pasture are opened up to the neighbourhood and function as a sheltered village square.

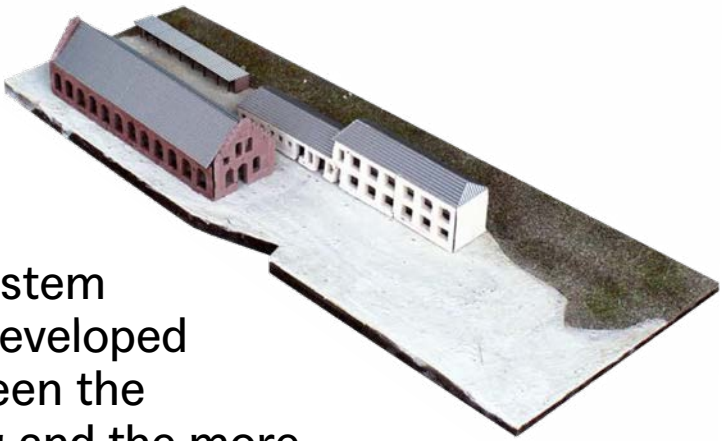


LEARNING AND MAKING HUBS

After struggling for years on the labour market, I decided to make a radical career change. With my start-up that designs biodegradable textiles, I recently began renting a workshop space in an innovation house ⁽¹²⁾ set in a former power station that is now driving the economic transition. While offices are unaffordable in many venues, starter organizations can find a place here.



The ecosystem that developed between the young and the more experienced – all passionate people – has allowed us to grow our ideas and business model. At the coffee machine, I meet interesting people from other sectors who point out risks and opportunities I hadn't thought of.



12 INNOVATION POWERHOUSE, Eindhoven

Exchange between companies and organizations in a creative hub



2015–2018, Completed | designed by Atelier van Berlo, Eugelink Architectuur, De Bever Architecten | commissioned by GEVA Vastgoed

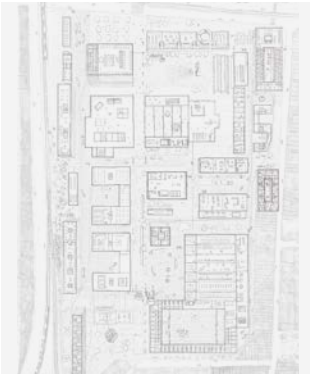
Innovation Powerhouse is a former Philips power plant that had not been in use for several years and was listed for demolition by the city of Eindhoven. Design-driven innovation agency Atelier van Berlo was in search of a new headquarters and initiated the transformation of the building. For four years they lobbied for the preservation and transformation of the plant and worked closely with the developer for the actual realization. Today it is the work environment of a dozen technological organizations, offering them the opportunity to meet, inspire and stimulate innovation. The design is centred around a communal street-like passage that extends from one end of the building to the other. All of the offices are arranged along this central passage and their glazed walls help to enhance the feeling of connection. Providing spaces for local residents too, the result is a hybrid space that has become one of the central cores of neighbourhood life. Innovation Powerhouse worked as a catalyst for the redevelopment of the whole of Strijp-T, an innovation district in the heart of Eindhoven's brainport.



The workshop is part of a real productive neighbourhood ¹³ where various makers, creatives and companies coexist. The site used to be a train repair yard and the old sheds have been completely refurbished so that both the historical and new manufacturing cultures can merge. There are several places whose function has not yet been defined, so that people who come up with new spatial needs can make flexible use of them.

13 MAKERSWIJK ARSENAAL, Gentbrugge

A former repair yard becomes a new productive neighbourhood



2020–2021, Research | designed by TRANS architectuur stedenbouw, RE-ST, Idea Consult, Cluster Landscape | commissioned by City of Ghent

The 12 ha Arsenal site in Gentbrugge had been a repair yard owned by the railway company NMBS-SNCB since 1926. The workshop stood empty for years before the city of Ghent commissioned a concept study to revalue the site as an urban node. The proposal put forward by TRANS, RE-ST, Idea Consult and Cluster presents the site as a makers' district, an ecosystem for businesses and neighbourhoods. The existing sheds and their heritage value are put centre stage. Flexible forms of management are considered, and the business model is calculated in function of the viability of the concept. An important aspect is the attention paid to 'white space', in which temporary programmes can be accommodated. Various cultural and civic organizations are eager to be part of this story. They will be given a place in the temporary occupation between 2022 and 2025, which will be managed by Re-Vive. The temporary and future users are now awaiting the final master plan to be drawn up by the private developer who bought the site at auction.

For one of our projects, I make intense use of the fablab ⁽¹⁴⁾ on site. A regular explains to me how the various machines work. You can also take courses there, but I like to learn in a more informal way. What's nice is that professionals use the tools here, but there are also students and hobbyists from the neighbourhood.



14 **TIMELAB, Ghent**

A flexible workplace for an urban micro-ecosystem



2017–2021, Completed | designed by a2o | commissioned by Timelab

Timelab in Ghent is a micro-ecosystem of learning and making activities embedded in a residential neighbourhood. Composed of a co-working space, prototyping lab, auditorium, bar and communal garden as well as several studios, a new system of local production and consumption is being tested. In their design, the architects restored the outdated supporting structure of the former factory building. In doing so, they used what they themselves describe as 'architectural acupuncture'. At the front, they cut away part of the building to break the introverted character of the factory and give the whole a more accessible and inviting appearance. In the inner area, they cleared the garden and perforated the façade in strategic places. The almost surgical interventions remain radically visible as scars.

When a delivery deadline comes closer, some of them give us a hand finishing the orders. The resulting ecosystem has an impact as a learning and testing environment for the companies on the site itself, but we also feel part of the surrounding neighbourhood. New circular approaches around water, food and materials are tested with the local residents.



Our company gets guidance from one of the experts of the site's cooperative impact hub ⁽¹⁵⁾. Here, both profit and non-profit initiatives that make our economy more circular are supported. Because this place was co-financed by the city and a citizens' fund, there really is a community dynamic here. These learning and making hubs ensure that people have access to and are guided towards the skills of future jobs. As a result, unemployment in the region has dropped noticeably in recent years.

(15) IMPACT FACTORY, Mechelen

A circular hub, co-funded by citizens



2021–ongoing, Pre-design | designed by WIT architecten (team 1), Enofstudio, Petillon Ceuppens (team 2), Kras, Mosard, Provoost (team 3), Oest, Bob McMaster (team 4) | commissioned by Stadsmakersfonds

The Impact Factory in the centre of Mechelen is a breeding ground for circular initiatives and entrepreneurship. The buildings already house a shared library for home and garden tools, laptops and seeds, an organization that grows mushrooms on coffee grounds, a circular fashion studio, and the fashion department of Ursulinen Mechelen. The upcoming renovation enlarges the ambition for this space up to between 150 and 200 workplaces in training, co-working, production and laboratory areas. The entrepreneurs will receive on-site support from innovation agency Switchrs. The ambition is to give the city's residents the opportunity to co-invest in this local, sustainable project as cooperative members. The Stadsmakersfonds (a citizen cooperative fund) and the city administration, joint owners of the site, opened a call for the renovation project, with a requirement for the new building to be circular in its materials and methods of construction. Out of four designs, the proposal by WIT architects was eventually chosen.

COMMUNITY ENGINES



The city is buzzing when I leave the municipality's administrative centre and start my round through the district. The people I meet on the street greet me. They know me as a community worker from different projects that we have set up together in the neighbourhood. With the city, we support both formal and informal organizations and places that promote local solidarity and inclusiveness, places of connection. We have observed that it is equally important to invest in social and physical infrastructure.

In the context of the city's arts festival (16), I invited artists to accompany a group of young people with no place of their own. It is inspiring to see how this trajectory allows them to move from their first wild ideas to appropriation of an abandoned site. A few teenagers are putting together a kitchen under the guidance of a construction coach. By doing it themselves, their self-confidence and sense of ownership have grown visibly!



(16) **HOUSE OF TIME, Bruges**

The historic city centre makes room for colouring outside the lines



2017–ongoing | designed by raumlaborberlin, Brugge(n) voor jongeren | commissioned by Triënnale Brugge

Bruges has always been a city of art and world heritage. Its well-known historical past draws millions of tourists every year, putting enormous pressure on its liveability. The city wants to shake off its theme-park image and give back space not only to visitors but also to residents. The temporary initiative 'House of Time' has shown that there is a pressing need for a shared space for creation, exchange and meeting in the centre of Bruges. In the context of the 2018 Brugge Triennale, a former industrial and dockland site was transformed in collaboration with the local community, young people, social workers, artists and residents. The theme 'Liquid City' explored the concept of the city's flexibility and resilience in a liquid society. Berlin-based architectural collective Raumlabor initiated a process of co-creation to build a place that empowers users to collectively shape their city. The site now has an indoor and outdoor studio, a yurt, a kitchen in a bunker and a container that serves as a multipurpose bar. What was initially a temporary redevelopment project later became permanent due to its high local value as a cultural community facility.

They have been so stimulated by the making process that they now also make furniture for the converted church (17) further down the road. The neighbourhood gathering is about to take place there. I have a chat with an elderly couple who still come here for morning mass. It took them a while to get used to the idea that this place would now also become a multipurpose hall and a library. But as they meet




17 **SINT CORNELIUS KERK, Aalbeke (Kortrijk)**

Repurposing symbolic heritage to host a society in transition



2018–ongoing, Under construction | designed by urbain architectencollectief, Sileghem & Partners, Tech3, De Fonseca, Feys BV | commissioned by City of Kortrijk

Churches have always been prominent community centres in our cities and villages. Today, they still represent key centralities in the life of religious communities, but they also offer the opportunity to accommodate the needs of a changing society. In the Church of St Cornelius in Kortrijk, new value is given to this symbolic place as part of a new public area in Aalbeke (Kortrijk). The project was commissioned by the city of Kortrijk after a participatory process involving the Church Council, the Church Office, the public centre for social welfare, associations, city services and residents. The master plan, designed by Urbain, foresees the redevelopment of the church, in connection with the multipurpose meeting centre of the building housing the public centre for social welfare. The design combines a smaller liturgical space for eighty people with a music school and library, allowing the space to acquire new value for all generations. What was once the setting for baptisms, weddings and funerals takes on a new meaning in the community and will be associated with new memories. St Cornelius once more becomes the face of Aalbeke, not only in a religious context but as the mascot of the village.



their grandchildren walking out of the library, they realize that this intervention not only saved the listed building from deterioration: it really renewed the significance of this site for the community. After the assembly, I eat my sandwich in the neighbourhood park ⁽¹⁸⁾ in the adjacent district.



18 DE STANDAERTSITE, Ledeberg (Ghent)

The inner area of a block becomes community space at the initiative of the neighbourhood



2015–2021, Completed | designed by AE, Carton123, murmuur | commissioned by sogent, City of Ghent

In late 2013 the city of Ghent bought the grounds of the former Standaert DIY shop in the centre of Ledeberg. The residents' initiative 'Ledeberg Doet het Zelf' set the ball rolling by organizing a referendum on the future of the Standaert site. At that point, a participatory process of temporary use with local citizens and organizations was set up to test possible uses for the site. This process led to the definition of a master plan and sharp design questions. The answer put forward by the design coalition of AE architecten, Carton123 and murmuur involved transforming the former sawmill across the site into a central pavilion with a passageway connecting the outdoor spaces on either side. The uses of the inner space were defined by the citizens and local community: on the ground floor a bike repair shop and an inn, on the first floor a space for neighbourhood associations. The benches on the outer wall make it clear that there is no need to consume to be welcome here.

Some committed local residents who run a bar there have asked whether a canopy can be built in the garden so that the area can also be used in poor weather. This inner block used to be completely built up, but now it is green and provides a much-needed place for people who don't have a garden and are longing for



social contact. Before I finish my shift, I drop in on the temporary hall ①9 set up next to the station. A new, affordable residential area is going to be built along the tracks. Because the organizations are already able to work with the neighbourhood, we will soon know exactly what the needs are for the new community centre that will be built in the heart of this new district in a few years' time.



①9

MOLENWEST SQUARE, Molenbeek-Saint-Jean (Brussels)

A temporary hangar gives a boost to local dynamics

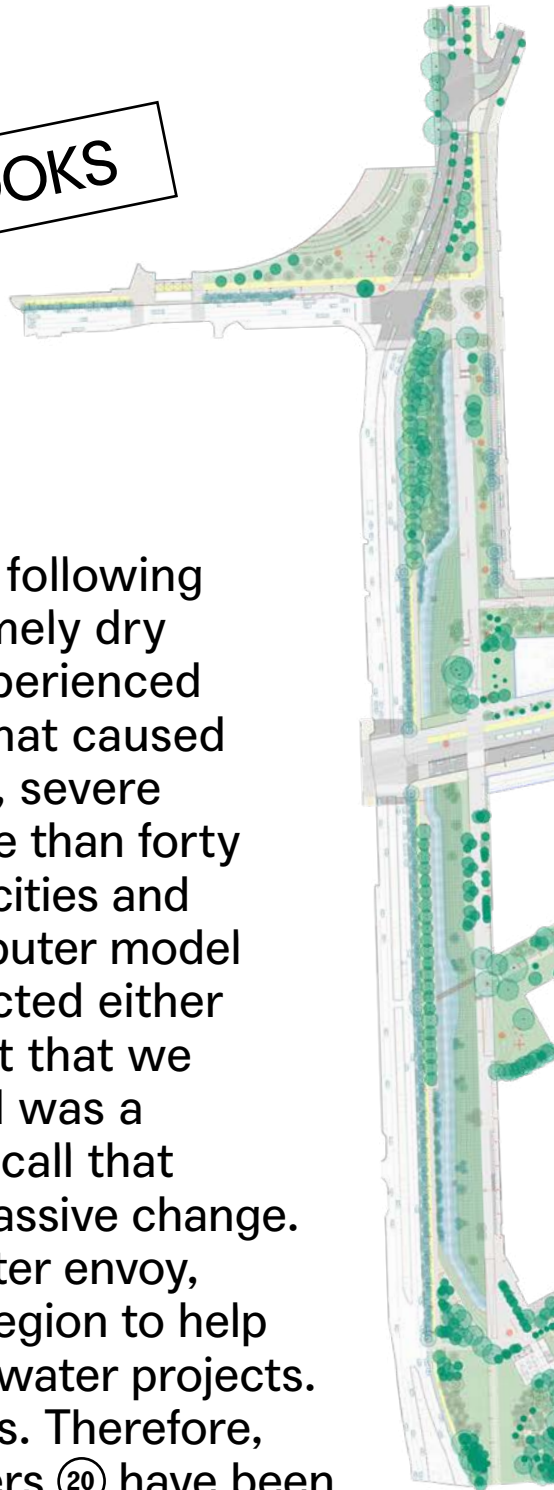


2020, Completed | designed by 1010au, Topia Landscape, JZH engineering | commissioned by SAU-MSI.brussels

Over the coming decade, a new mixed urban neighbourhood will be developed on a brownfield-site along the railway line next to the Brussels West station, with housing, economic activities, public services and a park. To programme the time between now and then, the Brussels Region is collaborating with local associations to create an offer of activities for young children and teenagers. The temporary appropriation accommodates a number of existing organizations working with local youngsters that do not have their own space. The temporary use of the square enables organizations to build up a more stable operation and a longer-term dynamic with disadvantaged local groups, usually unheard in this part of the city. Molenwest is a portable, partly recycled and dismantlable infrastructure designed by 1010au. The project is deliberately left 'unfinished' to let local organizations and inhabitants appropriate and self-construct of the spaces they need.

BUFFER BROOKS

Some years ago, following a series of extremely dry summers, we experienced a 'water bomb' that caused massive flooding, severe damage and more than forty casualties in our cities and villages. No computer model could have predicted either extreme. The fact that we were unprepared was a serious wake-up call that brought about massive change. As the official water envoy, I now travel the region to help set up ambitious water projects. Every drop counts. Therefore, encapsulated rivers (20) have been



opened up at various locations in cities. The water stream once treated as another sewage pipeline now comes to the surface, gets oxygen and feeds animal and plant life. I talk to many people in the streets and they realize now that it is important not to drain rainwater too quickly, but to keep it in the city. This symbolic breakthrough in our urban centres is crucial.



20

MAX-SUR-SENNE, Brussels

When water comes to the surface and biodiversity revives



2020–2026, Building permit | designed by OLM paysagistes & urbanistes, Studie Bureau Jouret, HBAAT, Ouest, Dédale, AGT, IMDC, Vectris, Util, Zeugma, Rya, Eveka, UpCie | commissioned by Brussels Environment, Brussels Mobility, City of Brussels

In order to meet the EU water quality and biodiversity objectives, the river Zenne/Senne will soon be reopened and naturalized at the level of Maximilian Park in the Northern Quarter, after being covered over in the 1860s. By opening up the tunnelled river, its interaction with the air will lead to an increase in biodiversity and its visibility in turn will raise user awareness. We see this happening in various cities, but what is specific about this project is its location in a complex neighbourhood that is very heterogeneous both socially and spatially. Cooperation with local residents and associations active in the neighbourhood is therefore crucial for the success of the total renovation of the park. The concrete channelling tube of the river is preserved in the design of the Belgo-French design team and draws a straight line through the park on which a broad footpath is laid from the children's farm to the Vergote Dock. The Zenne/Senne itself sometimes leaves the tube, sometimes flows along it, following a natural course.



But the space to allow a river to flow naturally in the urban context is of course limited. Another wave of change is happening on the outskirts of the city. During the participative process with citizens and businesses, we use a small observatory ⁽²¹⁾ with a view of the landscape as a base for discussion.



21

OBSERVATORY, Harelbeke

An observatory to better see the natural environment



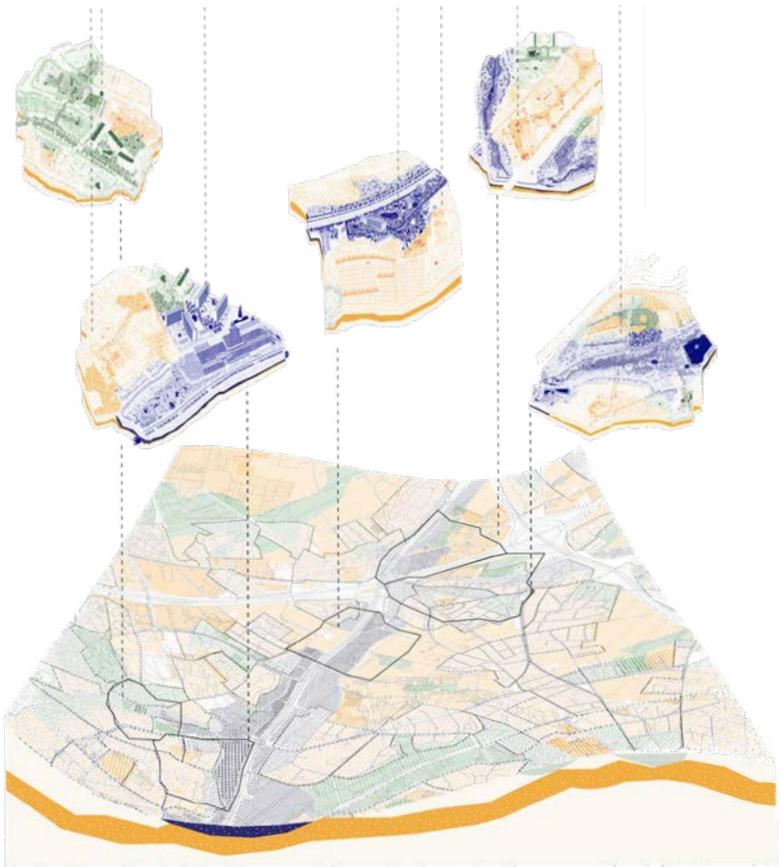
Completed | designed by Kevin Trappeniers, Maarten Devrieze, Vincent Malstaf, Hans A.R. Van Wambeke | commissioned by Intercommunale Leiedal

Very often, large infrastructural investments are made in waterways, ignoring how we prepare our ecosystems for drought, flooding and nature conservation. In Harelbeke, the river Leie/Lys is undergoing major work to improve its navigability and connect it to the inland waterway network. To discuss the possible links between this intervention and the buffering of water and increasing biodiversity, artist Kevin Trappeniers built a temporary installation as an observatory for the changing landscape. The project focuses on raising people's awareness of a much larger natural ecosystem. The design's dome shape is evocative of a planetarium, an exhibition, a botanical garden and a greenhouse. Water trickles in through the fabric of the shelter and is collected in a basin, symbolizing the new relation we will have to enter into with nature.

I argue that the territorial development in this suburb completely undermines the natural water system of the valley. For years, we have made sure rainwater is evacuated as quickly as possible from our land via the rivers to the sea. During the recurring periods of drought, farmers pump up groundwater until it is depleted and harvests fail.



During peak rainfall, the diked river banks quickly burst because we left so little space for the water. The inconvenient truth is that we must change gear completely: when we fail to give water the space it needs, it causes severe damages. To do so, we proactively worked with various municipalities, farmers, businesses, developers and residents to build up and invest in an arsenal of local projects.



Together, they reactivate the natural sponge effect of our soil and tackle drought and flooding in one go.

The new water districts and villages ⁽²²⁾ from the source of the river to its mouth are gradually giving space back to the water. With these buffer brooks we are building a resilient and climate-proof living environment.



(22)

WOLUWE WATERLAND, Kraainem, Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe

Water and urbanization meet in new water districts



2021–2022, Research | designed by Fallow, 1010au | commissioned by Perspective Brussels, Departement Omgeving

In many of our urban cores and fringes, development has neglected nature and water systems. This is also the case in the twentieth-century eastern periphery of Brussels, where the Woluwe valley is tucked away underneath the territorial expansion of the city. We cannot continue like this. In order to cope with peak rains, to combat drought and heat island effects, and to let biodiversity flourish, we must construct another relation to the water system. Woluwe Waterland takes water challenges as the entry point for tomorrow's plans and building projects in the city's eastern periphery. Fallow and 1010au developed this research through fieldwork, mapping and extensive interviews with residents, stakeholders and actors. It proposes a series of typologies of water neighbourhoods. These include a swamp district (downstream), a seasonal district (on the flanks) and an infiltration district (upstream), and integrated projects that simultaneously attempt to restore the water balance and answer the current transformation challenges in the area.

FLOW COLLECTORS

It is almost five o'clock, time to go home. I've always commuted from my home in a village to my job in the city centre. I can no longer imagine losing two precious hours per day in traffic jams, as I used to. What a waste of time! Fortunately, the situation gradually improved in recent years. First came the construction of several Park + Rides ⁽²³⁾ along the urban ring road. When I used to still take the car, I would park it there and switch to a tram that brought me to the office district.



Instead of spending time in traffic and paying outrageously for parking, I could park here for free. But since being interviewed about my mobility needs and desires at the weekly local market, I have actively participated in a new approach to mobility in my own village. In my street, the space once taken up by parking spaces has now made room for wide cycle paths, greenery and urban terraces. My neighbour has her own local taxi company that drives the elderly,

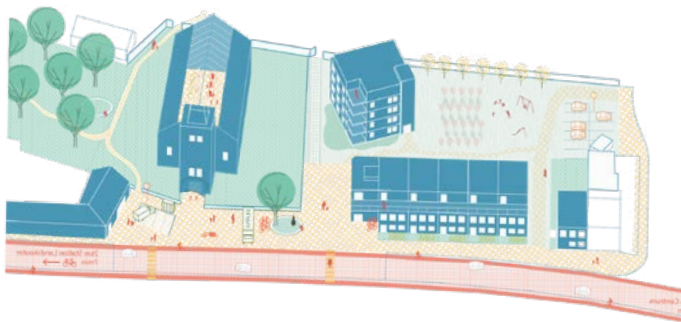
23 **PARK & RIDE, Linkeroever (Antwerp)**

Recognizable wooden interchanges along the city's ring road



Antwerp, like many other cities, is committed to a modal shift: enticing more people to take modes of transport other than the car. This is all the more important in the context of the covering of the Antwerp ring road: for safety reasons, traffic jams in tunnels must be avoided. Therefore, the city is building strategic transfer points along the ring road where users can exchange their car for a tram, bus or (electric) city bike. The new parking buildings on the edge of the city will all have the same look and feel. The design by HUB architects introduces high wooden beams that are visible from a distance thanks to the absence of a façade. Central patios bring light deep into the building and serve to orientate the various traffic streams. The first three P+Rs were realized between 2018 and 2022 at Luchtbal, Merksem and Linkeroever.

2015–2022, Completed | designed
by HUB, Sweco | commissioned by
Lantis



and one of my friends invested in shared cars ⁽²⁴⁾. So I started taking one to work, sometimes with people I meet through the sharing app who are going in the same direction. Because cars are now shared rather than standing still, there is an abundance of options. I am still free to go wherever I want, but the cost of my mobility has roughly been cut in half. Especially since I finally decided to sell my own car.

(24) ANDERS MOBIEL, Merelbeke

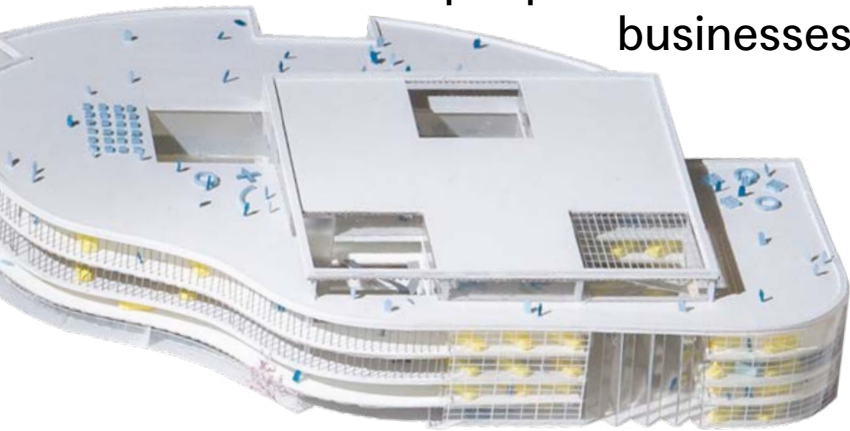
Understanding and changing mobility demand within micro-centralities



2019–2020, Research | designed by 1010au, Verena Balz, TML, Meneer de Leeuw | commissioned by Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen, Atelier Oost-Vlaams Kerngebied

The goal of the modal shift is not less mobility, but more, and of a far more diverse nature too. According to the design research carried out by 1010au in Merelbeke, on the periphery of Ghent, this will not happen as a result (only) of new technologies, investments in infrastructure, mobility plans or taxes. Instead, they look at the reasons behind people's movements. The aim is to change the demand, not just the supply. They analyse initiatives that citizens have already launched in order to scale them up and spread them further. The designers propose two types of mobility hubs to broaden the range of sustainable transport modes: a local type that focuses on short-distance transport needs and a transfer type, with a good connection to the regional mobility networks. Anders Mobiel is part of the design research in Merelbeke within the IABR–Atelier Oost-Vlaams Kerngebied in 2017–18.

Today, we drive home and pass by an impressive building that used to be a car garage and showroom (25). But now that cars are being sold in noticeably fewer numbers, large parts of the building have been given a new lease of life as an innovation hub for creative people and local businesses.



25

D'IETEREN IMMO MOBILIS, Anderlecht (Brussels)

A garage with a flexible structure survives beyond its current programme



2018–2023, Under construction |
designed by XDGA Xaveer De Geyter
Architects, Util Struktuurstudies,
Studiebureau Boydens, Daidalos
Peutz, Securisan, Pam & Jenny |
commissioned by D'Ieteren Immo

The growing ambition of private companies to be part of a future-oriented mobility strategy is striking. For example, D'Ieteren, a Belgian importer and distributor of cars, is positioning itself as a broad mobility company that 'designs the mobility of tomorrow'. With the acquisition of GoodBikes in Brussels and iBike in Antwerp, it is well on its way to becoming a national chain for the sale and maintenance of (electric) bicycles. In addition to scaling up a range of new forms of mobility, the company's real-estate division is committed to building structures that will survive the mobility transition. For one of its car showrooms in Anderlecht (Brussels), D'Ieteren engaged Xaveer De Geyter Architects (XDGA). The potential of excess is at the heart of the design. The amorphous form follows the plot boundary and unfolds around a regular, rational grid with five large patios. With its spans of 16.2 by 16.2 m, a storey height of 7 m and a load-bearing capacity of 16kN/m², the primary structure has a life expectancy of a hundred years, probably far beyond its current use as a garage.

We drive into the village, park in one of the local community hubs (26) and plug the car in a charging station for its next users. I pop into the small supermarket here and pick up a postal package. After a chat with my old friend Adil, who works in the bicycle repair shop, I take the electric bike home. Besides being financially and functionally efficient, this network of flow collectors has boosted the village's social dynamics and sense of entrepreneurship.

26

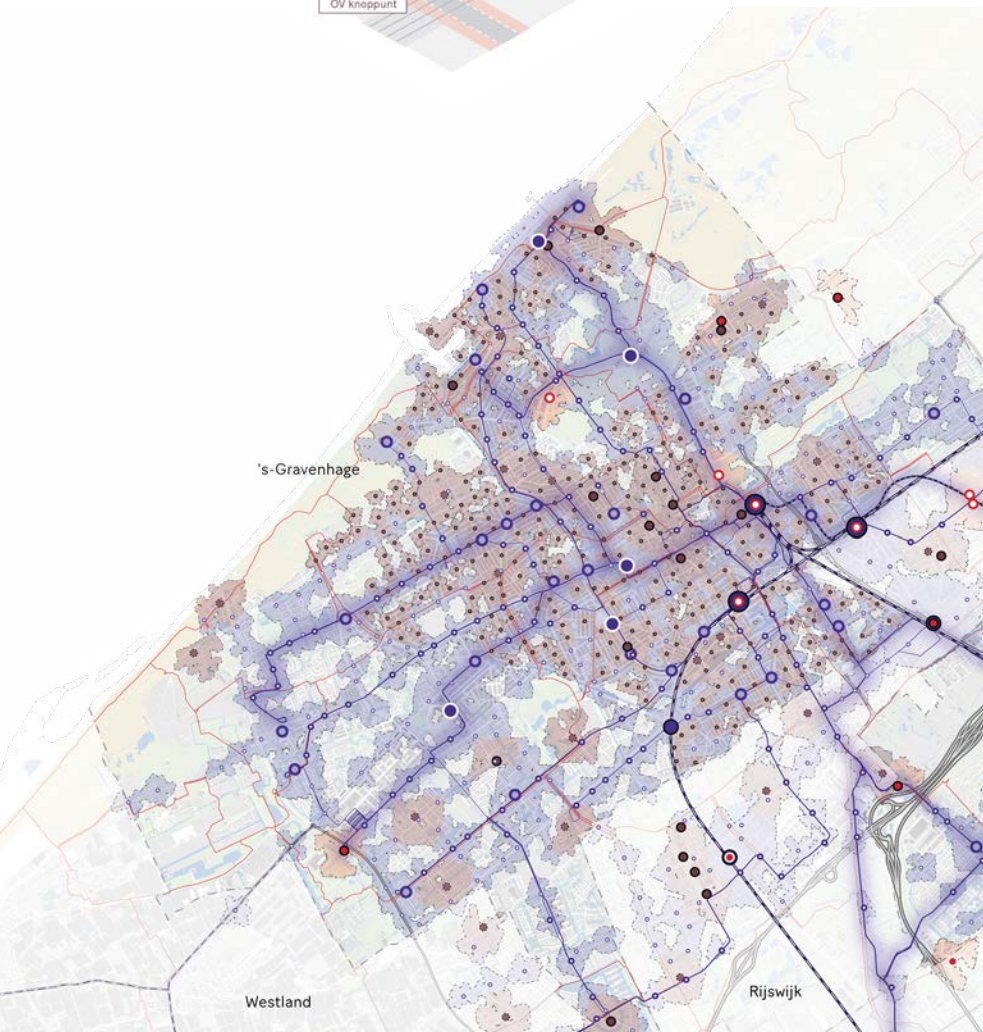
HUB HOLLAND

Community hubs link mobility to community functions in smaller centres



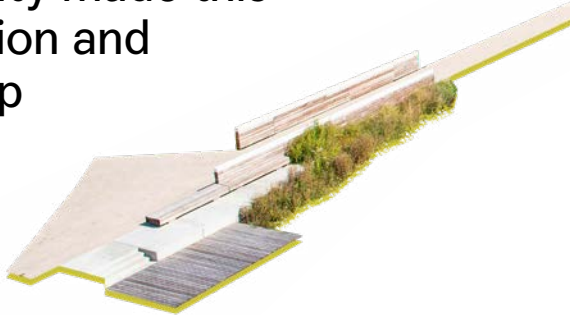
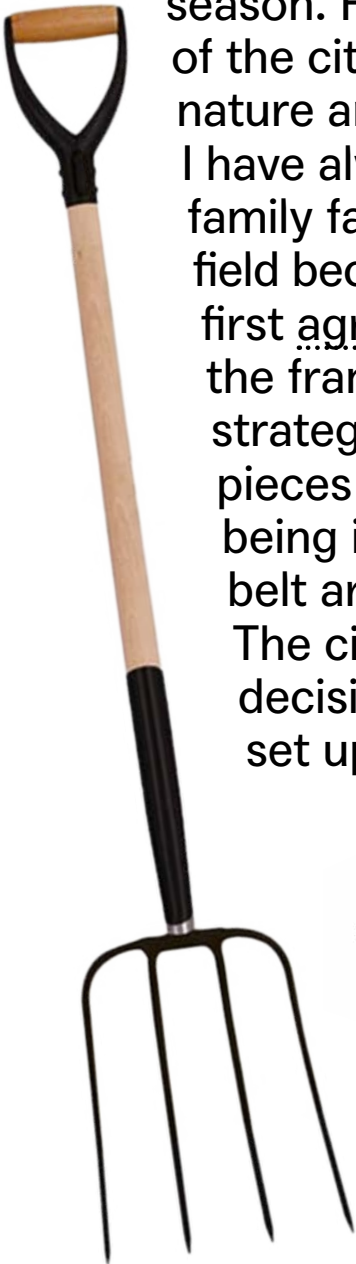
2020–2021, Research | designed by PosadMaxwan, SUM-One, APPM, Vereniging Deltrametropool | commissioned by Municipalities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht and Eindhoven

The places where we will soon be switching between different mobility modes have the potential to become real neighbourhood hubs. With its research into 'community hubs', Posad Maxwan argues that accessibility and liveability go hand in hand. Logical links with the programme of a community hub are, for example, a bicycle workshop, a neighbourhood centre, restaurant or flexi workplace. For this study, GIS maps were used to calculate the spatial requirements and gains. Working intensively with the relevant officials, several pragmatic research questions were answered. For instance, where do the opportunities for hubs lie? What is the spatial impact on a neighbourhood? How does a network of hubs grow? And what do hubs look like? The research helps cities and municipalities to plan the development of a network of smaller and larger hubs of this kind.



FOOD LAND

It's a fresh summer morning and I'm about to head to my field for the first harvest day of the season. Here, on the fringes of the city, you can hear both nature and urban life stirring. I have always lived on the family farm, but recently my field became part of one of the first agricultural parks ⁽²⁷⁾ in the framework of a new food strategy, where ever larger pieces of fertile land are being inscribed in a green belt around the city. The city made this decision and set up



coalitions with various professional and urban farmers like me to produce more food locally. I move along winding paths between the fields where I grow very different crops and where my neighbour's sheep graze under the trees. The diversity of cultures and their rotation makes them less vulnerable to pests and diseases and reduces the risk of crop failure. Sheep manure is used to enrich the soil. This allows cultivation to take place in a more ecological way, creating a stronger natural ecosystem.



27 **TUINEN VAN STENE, Ostend**

A new park typology with the potential to activate an urban food strategy



2016–2019, Completed | designed by Tractebel, ADR architectes, Georges Descombes | commissioned by City of Oostende

The 'Gardens of Stene' is a 35 ha area situated along the green belt around Ostend. This twenty-first-century city park is the first agricultural park in Flanders and unites food production, water management and tourist recreation. The master plan by Tractebel and Georges Descombes/ADR, based on a concept study with Maat-ontwerpers, divides the Gardens into four zones that connect spatially and programmatically to their fragmented surroundings. With this food laboratory the city of Ostend cannot (yet) feed its inhabitants, but the agricultural park marks a turning point at which professional and urban food producers will have a place together. The Gardens of Stene are one of the five 'Productive Landscape' Pilot Projects of the Flemish Government Architect and the Institute for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Research. Official development began in late 2017. The park has been accessible since 2018, initially through small-scale interventions.



I arrive at the farm next to the test fields (28). In the courtyard, a birthday party is under way for one of the local children. People who do not have a large garden themselves like to make use of the space here.

28

CECI N'EST PAS UNE FERME, Berchem-Sainte-Agathe (Brussels)

Repurposing agricultural heritage for an education centre on food and nature

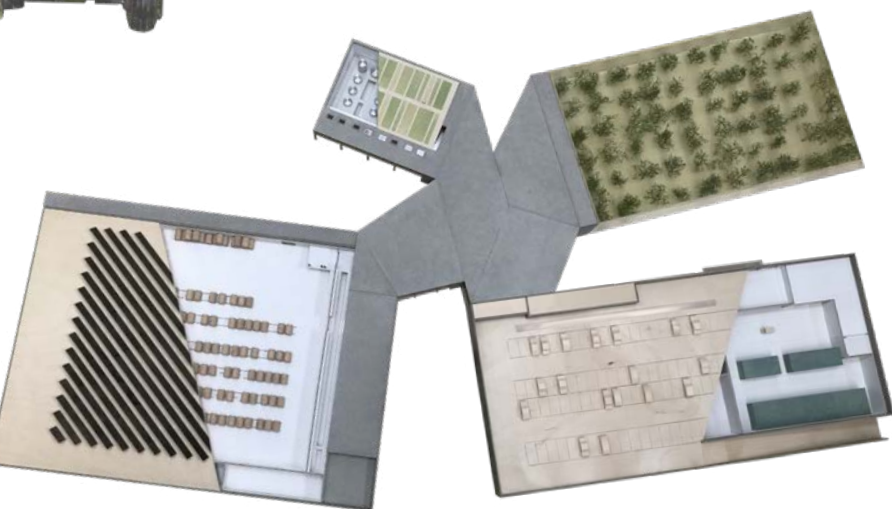


2020–2023, Building permit |
designed by atelier horizon, OFFICEU
| commissioned by Bruxelles
Environnement

'This is not a farm' is an agricultural and social project on the Zavelenberg site in Sint-Agatha-Berchem/Berchem-Sainte-Agathe. Its twenty-six hectares constitute one of the last agricultural remnants within the Brussels ring road in an area that has become densely urbanized. It is at once a listed site (1989), a nature reserve (1992) and a zone of high biological value in the Regional Land Use Plan. One of the major challenges of the project is to reinforce the agricultural dynamics of the site while protecting the natural heritage. Since a choice often has to be made between one or the other, this requires a whole new approach to agriculture. Urbanism office atelier horizon and architecture office OFFICEU worked with farmer Tijs Boelens on the farm and the surroundings. The architecture reinterprets the traditional shape of the square farm but combines a sheepfold, a hay barn and storage space with spaces open to social and cultural activities. This centre for agroecology is part of the Good Food strategy of Bruxelles Environnement.



In the orchard, I collect the harvest and bring it to the brewery 29 next door. They use the local cherry variant that I and other local farmers produce, an idea we came up with to reintroduce a forgotten but highly resilient variety.



29

DRIE FONTEINEN, Lot (Beersel)

A brewery becomes a test bed for the reintroduction of a forgotten crop



2017–ongoing, Execution design | designed by Robbrecht en Daem architecten, Erik De Waele landschap, Boydens Engineering, Util Struktuurstudies, PLOT | commissioned by IMMO Fonteinen bvba, 3 Fonteinen NV

At the second brewery of '3 Fonteinen', Lambic will be brewed, bottled, matured and sold, right beside its new cherry orchard. As a private company, 3 Fonteinen aims to reintroduce a local crop of a forgotten variety, the 'Schaakbeekse kriek'. Only four per cent of the raw materials for Belgian breweries come from Belgium itself, while the grains and hops produced locally are used for animal feed. 3 Fonteinen invests in buying grain locally and plans to add 3,000 more wild cherry trees elsewhere in the Pajottenland. Positioning the first generation of trees as a central part of the architecture is a symbolic gesture. Brewery 3 Fonteinen appointed Robbrecht en Daem architecten for the creation of their visitor centre. The building was designed according to four branches: for the barrel cellar, bottling plant, market hall and orchard. Work began in October 2020 and the new construction is set to be fully operational by 2023.

I decide to take a short break and head to the mobile meeting caravan (30) set up next to the field to have lunch with the seasonal workers. They are here to support me during peak harvest time, luckily so. It's nice to see how they are really becoming part of village life. When the members of the cooperative who are taking part in today's



30

HOUSE FOR SEASONAL NEIGHBOURS, Borgloon

Making space for encounter in the temporary reality of seasonal workers



2021–2022, Completed | designed by Ciel Grommen, Maximiliaan Royakkers, radio shows by Mona Thijs (Seasonal Neighbours collective) | self-commissioned

The mobile 'House for Seasonal Neighbours' originated in Borgloon, a small town in the heart of the Belgian fruit region with the highest concentration of seasonal workers (one fifth of the population or about 2,000 people). These workers come from Eastern and Southern Europe during the picking season. The intervention addresses the need for informal meeting places, as most workers have very little chance of escaping the context of their temporary residence on the farm, except to go shopping. The mobile was designed and built by artist-architects Maximiliaan Royakkers and Ciel Grommen. Two regional archetypes – the row house and the container house – were rescaled, skewed and overlapped to form a familiar but surprising hybrid. The mobile was first set up next to a discount supermarket in the summer of 2018 for sixty-five days, the maximum period ascribed by Belgian law for seasonal workers in agriculture. In the summer of 2021, Mona Thijs used the House for Seasonal Neighbours as a mobile studio for a radio show series 'Playlist van de pluk'. It is an investigation into the poetry of multilingualism (or the absence of a common language) and a search for music that is meaningful to seasonal workers during the picking process.



introductory training arrive at the education centre (31), I patiently demonstrate the right techniques to harvest the seasonal produce. They will start self-picking from next week so they need to know the basics. This food land hosts a diversity of crops and this is where professional, temporary and recreational users come together.

31

PADDENBROEK, Gooik

Repurposing agricultural heritage for an education centre on food and nature



2018–2021, Completed | designed by
jo taillieu architecten | commissioned
by Municipality of Gooik

The Paddenbroek rural centre offers space for the education and training of diverse target groups (adults, children, new and traditional farmers). At the same time it is a recreational and tourist destination, a gateway to the rural landscape of the Pajottenland. Through education and recreation, people are drawn into the world of food production and nature conservation. Jo Taillieu proposed to the municipality of Gooik to partially dismantle the old fruit farmhouse and construct a volume of glass and steel all around it, protecting it from wind and weather. An enlarged greenhouse – a recognizable shape in our food production landscapes – has been placed over the original farmhouse like a bell jar, almost giving it the status of a ruin. The greenhouse itself serves as an unheated ‘in-between’ space around the offices, a café and a small bakery building. Each façade offers a different, unique view on the surroundings.

AFFORDABLE DWELLINGS

As coordinator of the housing policy in the

municipal administration, the city council gave me the task to urgently develop strategies for the realization of more affordable housing. The gap between what is for sale on the housing market and the financial capacity of people with lower incomes – though at key positions in hospitals, schools or supermarkets – is widening rapidly. Key workers are now searching for homes between twenty and forty kilometres from their jobs in the city. To avoid a complete housing crisis, swift action was required: we realized that a city that is not accessible simply comes to a standstill! Luckily we had local inspiration to build upon. I remember a few years ago when we went on a site visit to a



co-housing complex ③② where residents had taken matters into their own hands and, without a developer, had built more than twenty affordable flats of varying sizes with shared gardens and kitchen. There we learned what such a form of living together could look like, what functions and rooms can be shared and what materials and design allow for affordability and sustainability. Based on experimental projects like these, we realized that it's not only a question of selecting a good architect.

③② **BRUTOPIA, Vorst/Forest**

A coalition of residents takes matters into their own hands for their affordable house



2008–2013, Completed | designed by **stekke + fraas** | commissioned by **brutopia asbl**

Brutopia in the Brussels municipality of Vorst/Forest is a residential housing block developed by a group of twenty-nine families wanting an affordable sustainable dwelling in Brussels. By acquiring the land together, developing it without a developer company and finishing it as much as possible by themselves, the cost of the project stayed below market price. The Brutopia non-profit association signed the purchase. After the building permit and the basic deed, each resident bought his or her own share. The private units were designed by **stekke + fraas** to suit each family's living requirements (between 71 m² and 165 m²) with an important difference in the price weighting of the units, thus creating great diversity in the group. The private residences are connected via an outdoor corridor and the families share a common garden. The ground floor is reserved for the offices of several architectural firms, the public centre for social welfare, and a multipurpose room with a neighbourhood kitchen operated by the local service centre. During office hours, the latter can use the garden and residents can use the kitchen.

To offer a critical mass of affordable housing requires a systemic approach: it's a question of rethinking location, regulation, business model and design in an integrated manner. Over the past five years, we have been testing this in several ways to make room for affordable housing. Pushed forward by a renewed national Affordable Housing Act, we redesigned our subsidy model so that it now focuses on lower-income families instead of serving everyone in the same way. But we also became more

33

TIVOLI, Brussels

By separating the land ownership from that of the building, living remains affordable

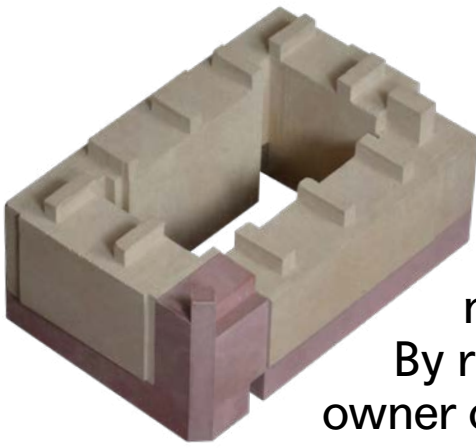


2020–ongoing, Building permit
| designed by V+, HBAAT |
commissioned by CLTB (Community
Land Trust Brussels)

In the Community Land Trust model, land is considered as communal property. Residents buy the house, not the land. The land remains the property of a trust, which is managed jointly by the residents, the neighbourhood and the public authorities. In this way, the houses remain affordable from generation to generation. On average, they cost 40 per cent less than those on the private market. In the sustainable district of Tivoli next to Tour & Taxis, the CLTB Foundation has exceptionally accepted to work on the basis of a long lease: Citydev, the Brussels development company, remains the owner. On a corner plot, 22 housing units with 1 to 4 rooms alternately will be built, in line with the CLTB's ambition of affordability and cohabitation as well as the sustainable characteristics of the neighbourhood. The plot is narrow and strict requirements are attached to the subdivision permit. The design by V+ and HBAAT provides for three building volumes along the street, with a recess between two buildings where there is room for a little square that opens out onto the street. Not only the residents of the buildings themselves but also local residents can use this new public space. Special attention has been paid to the communal areas, their spatial qualities and the meeting and exchange opportunities they promote.

entrepreneurial ourselves. We are testing the Community Land Trust model (33), for example, where the municipality becomes stakeholder in a trust that keeps the property of the land while ownership of the homes built on it are sold individually to people with lower incomes. As the owner of the land, the trust can impose specific conditions when selling homes, ensuring these homes remain affordable in the long term.





We now systematically acquire listed heritage ³⁴ to test new renting models as well.

By remaining the owner of the property, we can control rent pricing and preserve our patrimony at the same time. Thirdly, we looked at the potential for densification on land that we already own in the fringes of the city. The first affordable homes are being built as we speak in the middle of a



34 DE FIERENSHOVEN, Antwerp

By reallocating public heritage, the city keeps rents in check



2016–2022, Under construction
| designed by Happel Cornelisse
Verhoeven Architecten, Molenaar &
Co Architecten | commissioned by
AG Vespa

The realization of good, affordable rental housing for first-time tenants, tenants moving upward from the social rental market and single-parent families is one of the most pressing issues on the housing market. As a landowner, the city can play a role by controlling rents, as Antwerp does in the Fierens blocks. The former social housing complex dating from 1939, a listed modernist building, no longer met the conditions for social housing but was not being sold due to the high cost of preserving the heritage. As a public developer, AG Vespa appointed the design office HCVA to renovate the building. A new corner building – with its own identity but one that fits in well with the two adjacent wings in terms of proportions, colour and detailing – allows new units to be composed in a mix of studios with collective areas and flats with 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom(s).

mid-twentieth-century garden city ③⑤: that abundance of space that is typical of these places now provides us with opportunities for quality densification. By working closely with developers and citizens here, the risks for all parties are reduced and they no longer have to be included in the cost price.



③⑤ **HOMBORCHVELD , Ukkel/Uccle (Brussels)**

A garden suburb in the periphery becomes a mixed, dense fabric

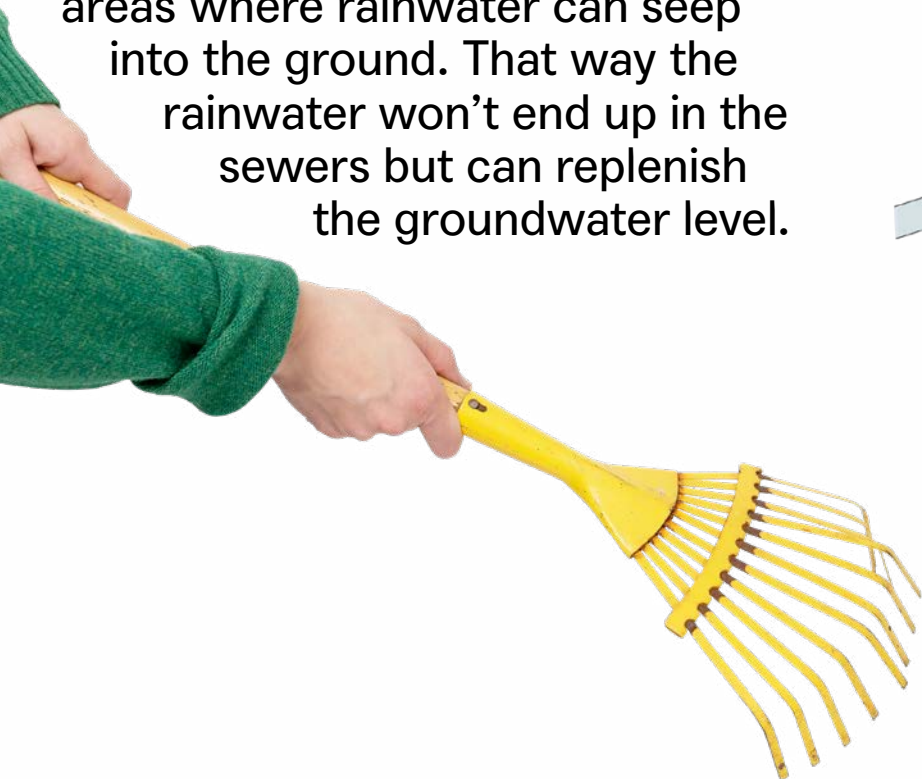


2018–2026, Execution design
| designed by 51N4E, Coloco,
BAS, Istema, De Fonseca, IVW |
commissioned by SLRB, BinHôme

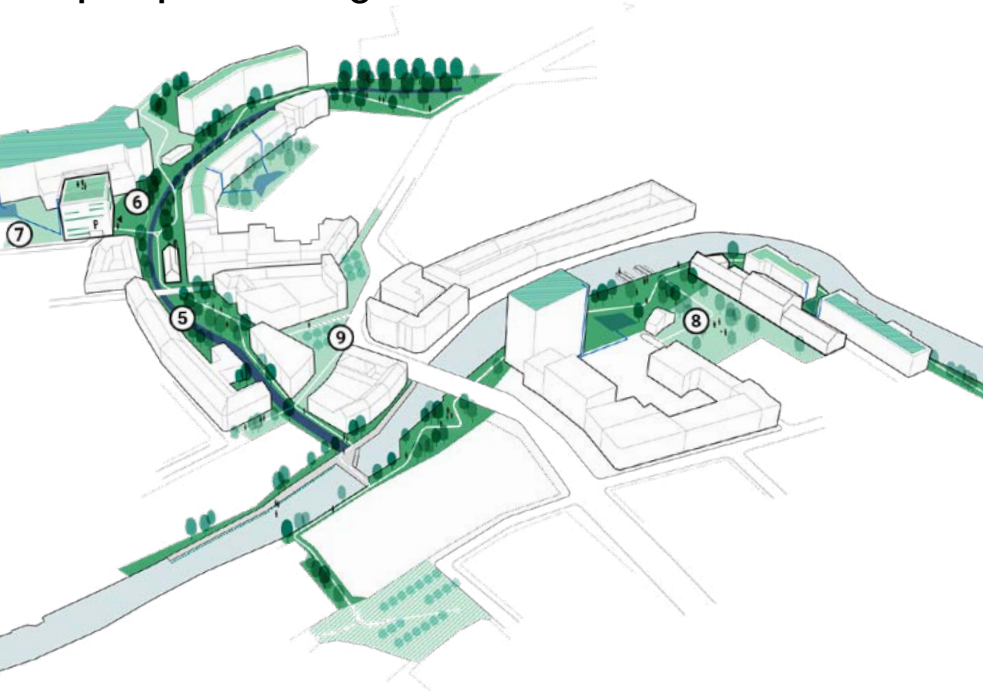
Opportunities for affordable densification are available not only in the heart of the city. The historical garden city of Homborchveld shows how the underused low-density residential landscape in the twentieth-century periphery of our cities and villages offers opportunities for residential densification strategies. This is the fourth expansion that Fernand Bodson's garden city will undergo already. A total of ninety social and middle-class housing units will be added by social housing company SLRB-BGHM and BINHOME on public land belonging to the municipality of Ukkel/Uccle. By rethinking the model of the garden city, the project designed by 51N4E and Coloco landscape designers presents the shared landscape as added value for local communities. It facilitates the integration of the new inhabitants among those already present while reinforcing the sense of belonging.

CLIMATE STREETS

What a scorching hot summer day. Together with my colleagues, I ride a cargo bike through the city to maintain the streets and parks. In recent years, these were completely redone to cope with periods of extreme drought and rainfall. Every job we do involves removing as much pavement as possible to make way for permeable areas where rainwater can seep into the ground. That way the rainwater won't end up in the sewers but can replenish the groundwater level.



Along the main routes ③⑥, following watercourses and wide cycle paths, climate-resistant plants and trees provide coolness and shelter for the people fleeing the heat of their homes.



③⑥

GROENKLIMAATASSEN, Ghent

Green routes reconnecting the city and landscape



2019–2020, Research | designed by plusoffice architects, DELVA Landscape Architecture / Urbanism | commissioned by City of Ghent

The city of Ghent wants to reconnect its centre with the landscape by means of green climate routes. This should reduce heat islands and fine dust, promote more sustainable water use, and increase quality of life and biodiversity. Plusoffice therefore developed a network of routes that draws the benefits of the landscape (cooling, biodiversity and greenery) back into the heart of the city. At the same time, these routes ensure that city dwellers can walk or cycle directly from Ghent to the surrounding landscape via generous green-blue courses. The routes are grafted onto important waterways or other landscape structures, connecting places where the benefits of nature and landscape can be experienced locally. This creates synergies between landscape challenges and planning objectives for the city. For example, taller, more compact and sustainable buildings can be linked to the development of more green space of greater quality.

Today I am helping a group of residents to rebuild an underused square (37) on one of these routes. They are already busy removing the bricks when I arrive with the new plants. One of them suggests using the bricks to build



(37)

WATERRIJK WATERSCHEI, Waterschei (Genk)

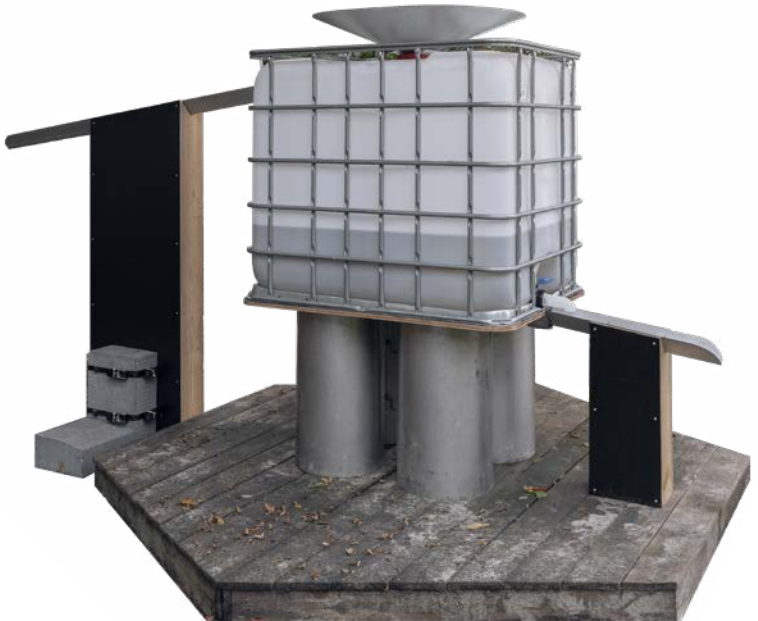
Buffering water in gardens, streets and squares relieves the burden on sewer systems



2021–2023 | designed by Waterland, Breekijzer, Universiteit Hasselt, Constructlab | commissioned by City of Genk

The Stiemerbeek brook in the region of Genk suffers from many overflows, causing issues of water quality. To solve this problem, water must be extracted maximally from the sewer system and retained on site. In the Waterschei district itself, this urgency is less tangible. That is why the Waterrijk Waterschei project focuses on the added value that this can nevertheless generate (individually and collectively). A first achievement is the desealing of a formerly unused basketball court. The removed concrete clinkers were used to build a vegetable garden, picking garden, flower meadow, pergola and water collection basin as well as a place to sit at a long, shared table. Besides mobilizing projects in the public space, Waterrijk Waterschei will also help private citizens to better protect their gardens against too little or too much water by installing a water tank, desealing, creating water gutters or developing a planting strategy. The approach of Waterland, Breekijzer vzw, UHasselt and Constructlab links a systemic challenge to the concerns and wishes of the locals.

a bench
and a
table. It's
a good idea.
'You're already
implementing
the circular
materials strategy approved
by city hall last week!', I tell the group
to motivate them. When the shovelling
and reconstructing is done, I explain
how people can also start depaving
or implementing water management
measures in their own garden; the city
just launched a programme for the
group purchase of water barrels.

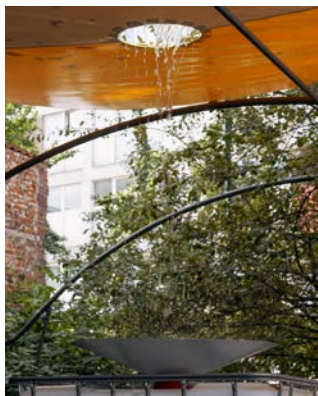


Earlier this morning, I brought a large canvas and rain barrel from the city's maintenance service depot to the new community vegetable garden (38). The canvas will collect rainwater and guide it through the central opening to the large rain barrel. I test the tap and check the pumpkins, leeks and cabbages planted here yesterday. Suddenly, I feel the first drops of rain. The thunderstorm that had been forecast is here! The drops fall faster and faster as I hastily put away the equipment and rush out of the garden. I follow the water flowing through a natural gutter to the square around

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EAU DE COUTURE, Brussels

Water as a lever to build a cohesive community



2021, Completed | designed by
LATITUDE Platform, collectif dallas,
Habitat & Rénovation, Loop Studio |
commissioned by City of Brussels

Deep in the Marollen/Marolles neighbourhood in Brussels, next to the Briggittines Chapel and at the foot of a social housing block, lies the Arakova garden. Anchored along the Brussels North-South train connection, this complex environment is in urgent need of quality public space and a positive social dynamic. For several years now, a productive urban garden has been developed here, with chickens roaming and vegetables growing. In 2021, working together with residents and local organizations, Collectif Dallas and Latitude Platform designed a large, suspended canvas to serve as a shelter and to recover water to be used in the garden. The collected water flows through a hole in the canvas into a 1,000 l rainwater barrel made of residual materials from the Brussels city depot. The temporary occupation will soon move to a new location in Laeken.

the corner and find shelter beneath a canopy. The pavilion is part of a recently redesigned park ⁽³⁹⁾ where a system to collect water harvests rainwater at different levels, slowing it down so that it doesn't run away at once. Without a network of climate streets, the district would already have been flooded during this kind of rainfall!



39

PLACE MARIE JANSON, Sint-Gillis/Saint-Gilles (Brussels)

Square becomes park in a water-retention strategy between high and low



2021–2022, Under construction |
designed by vvv, studio paola viganò |
commissioned by Municipality of
Saint-Gilles

Place Marie Jansonplein is the final piece in a series of open and public spaces on the hillside of the Brussels municipality of Sint-Gillis/Saint-Gilles where water is gradually collected in higher areas of the municipality to prevent flooding of the lower areas. The square hosts a weekly market and is home to a basketball court. Other than that, today it mainly functions as a place to pass through. The square is an extension of the well-known Sint-Gillis Voorplein/Parvis de Saint-Gilles but will be given a completely different character: it will be largely depaved and additional trees will be planted that can live for up to a century. The run-off water will have time to infiltrate via vegetated terraces. The existing paving stones will be largely collected, sorted and treated to be re-laid on site. What is striking about Studio Paula Viganò's design is that two of the adjoining streets, which currently have a hundred parking spaces, will become pedestrian zones with limited traffic. This proposal was made after a temporary activation of the square by Toestand vzw and a series of workshops with residents and shopkeepers.



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PORTRAITS

© Mieke Debruyne, 2020

Mieke Debruyne is a journalist who takes an anthropological approach to her subjects. She works for the TV production company Woestijnvis. 'The Great Transformation' asked her to make a series of portraits in which the transitions are portrayed at eye level. We get to know Bernadette, a local resident who helped build a collective garden in the Rabot neighbourhood of Ghent. We meet Ronny, a 'CSA' farmer who explains how the Community Supported Agriculture model secures his income from the start of the harvest season. We visit Kurt, a cattle farmer who works with local nature organizations and fruit growers. Yannick is at the head of an organization that processes unsold food in Brussels. Els is a citizen who was able to install solar panels on her roof thanks to an inclusive urban programme. Koen is an economist who advocates a rolling fund to make homes energy-efficient. We also learn from Koen, a commons practitioner who puts common ownership into practice. And Sophie, an activist who wants to reach zero traffic deaths and is rethinking the public space to achieve this. Simon is an electrician who looks at the energy challenge from a practical angle. Lieven takes us into the world of urban maintenance as a worker of the urban green space department. More portraits will follow. In contrast to the narratives that structure this exhibition, the stories in the videos are situated in the here and now. This is where we are. These are the people that will have to get it done.



THIS SELECTION OF PROJECTS IS BASED ON AN OPEN CALL

Curatorial statement
24 March 2022

ARCHITECTURE AND TRANSITIONS: A MARRIAGE DOOMED TO FAIL OR A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN?

Architecture in the Eurodelta is flourishing. Partly thanks to institutional frameworks such as selection procedures by chief government architects or city architects, the quality of design plays a key role in the construction process. It is bearing fruit. Belgian and Dutch architects, innovative practices and commissioning parties are praised at home and abroad. Architecture elevates the quality of the places where we live, work, relax or travel through to an unprecedented level and (consciously and unconsciously) influences users and their behaviour. Furthermore, well-considered choices in the design and construction process have an impact on the material, energy and financial chains that should not be underestimated. The innovative - and poetic - way in which our architectural sector deals with these aspects is highly regarded worldwide.

At the same time, our approach to building is up for debate. The rate at which we are constructing, taking up more space, hardening surfaces and consuming materials and energy really is alarming. The building industry must reinvent itself. A change is needed that will require a large-scale transformation of our buildings, streets and districts. This observation has a rather destabilising effect on the practice of architecture today. Reconciling architecture with the major social challenges does not appear self evident. Does the social agenda deviate too much from architecture's core task? Shouldn't we stick to what we know?

It is true that the frameworks for intrinsically sustainable architecture have not (yet) been finalised. Today, designers must increasingly take into account circular materials, new energy sources and installations, water reuse, collectivity and affordability. All too often, these tasks are added to the margins of a project instead of constituting the core of the design challenge. They remain relatively vague principles to which the only answer is

to layer established concepts (with buzz words such as 'circular' or 'adaptive'). At the same time, architecture is confined to a rigid straitjacket of compulsory regulations with which building projects must comply in a generic way, but which often stand in the way of innovation (consider, for example, the strict but not always logical EPB regulations).

Good architecture within these shifting contours has not become any easier. It is precisely this phase of instability that is characteristic of a paradigm shift that has only just begun. Does that mean architecture and transitions are genuinely irreconcilable? Or should we dare go a step further?

THE SUBSEQUENT PHASE IN THE PARADIGM SHIFT: ARCHITECTURE AS A PREFIGURATION OF THE FUTURE

If you look closely, you can already discern the seeds of future-oriented architecture. The Circular Building Materials Hub in Brussels proudly graces the cover of the Flanders Architectural Review 2020, in which it is praised for its inspiring combination of form, scale, spatial layout and use of materials. No less important is the catalytic effect that this building has in the transition to a circular economy. Isn't it a real breakthrough that the Port of Brussels - which until recently was not known as a leading commissioning party - nevertheless chose to turn its storage, sorting and recycling centre into an architectural moment? It is precisely with this gesture that the Port positions itself and its productive activity as an actor entitled to a place in the city and that wants to contribute to a well-functioning urban ecosystem.

There are other examples too: learning centres for new forms of food production, empty churches that are repurposed as a district engine or manufacturing learning hubs for the local production of materials, clothing or furniture. They are all places where the seeds for fundamental social and spatial changes have already been sown.

A new generation of projects is in the making. Architects and landscape designers are proving that they are capable of making very abstract transition challenges fit in our everyday living environment. They take concrete shape in our homes, streets, public spaces or landscapes. The projects question the established order. They offer a preview or 'prefiguration' of what could and should be happening in many more places.

WRITING THE STORY OF A
SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE
ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE
TOGETHER

While the task of underpinning this new role of architecture with routines and guidelines falls partly to the building practice itself, it is equally up to the innovative practices that redefine the (written or unwritten) rules of the building process from a different perspective, the commissioning parties that take on a pioneering role, the social actors and coalitions that work on a transition practice and the architectural critics and cultural organisations that observe and challenge the discourse. The mission of The Great Transformation is to bring all these perspectives together. A group of designers, consultants, economists, sociologists, administrative specialists, cultural actors, transition experts and policy makers has drawn up an agenda comprising ten 'Future Places'. These are ground-breaking projects of which we will need many more in the next decade to achieve our ambitious goals. Future Places explore the frameworks, the language, the coalitions, the commissioning and design strategies that help put the much-needed paradigm shift on a firm footing.

The exhibition will also be a research space. We will share knowledge and expertise by means of a rich and varied programme of lectures, debates and workshops. Through guided walks, we will link the grand principles to real buildings, streets and districts. In this cultural environment, we will collectively compose a new narrative for architectural practice, situated within a broader practice of change.

Architecture Workroom Brussels is a cultural innovation house for the transformation of the social and physical living environment. The organisation's mission is to enable the transition to a solidarity-based, sustainable and circular urban landscape by means of design and architecture. It supports the development of new projects, coalitions and practices that provide solutions to tomorrow's important societal challenges, related to themes such as food, water, energy, mobility, housing and community.

www.architectureworkroom.eu

The Great Transformation is an independent learning environment, incubator and public programme. Entrepreneurial citizens, governments, businesses, impact investors, scientists and organisations work on actual breakthroughs and achievements. Using design and the power of the imagination, we are forming coalitions and formulate strategic projects that can be developed between now and 2030.

www.thegreattransformation.eu



More information on
thegreattransformation.eu