Trace
Notes on adaptive reuse
N°2 On Modernity

The authors are members of the research group with the same name, TRACE. The research group is part of the Faculty of Architecture and Arts at Hasselt University (BE) and is closely connected to the teaching staff of the International Master on adaptive reuse. TRACE has a focus on the emerging discipline of adaptive reuse in architecture and heritage, developing a theoretical framework from a designerly approach. Studying the historical context of a building or site, they identify and select specific traces – defined as bridges between past and present – of tangible and/or intangible (re-)sources as anchors for the design process. Exploring the spatial potentialities and the poetics of the existing, they consider the transformation of buildings and sites from within.

Etymologically, “trace”, both in English and French, derives partly from the Latin trahere and its noun tractus (genitive tractūs), meaning: drawing, draught. The Old French tracier also refers to ‘looking for’, ‘following’ or ‘pursuing’, probably deriving from the vulgar Latin tractiare. In old English it could also refer to ‘following a course, making and outline of something’, or figuratively: ‘to ponder or investigate’.

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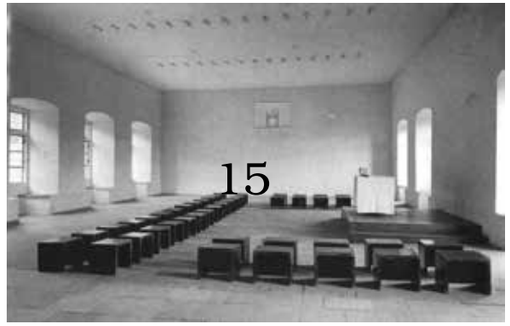
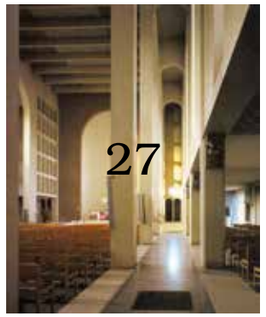
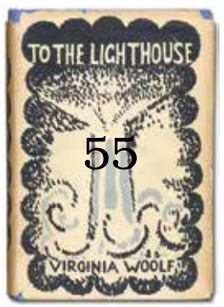
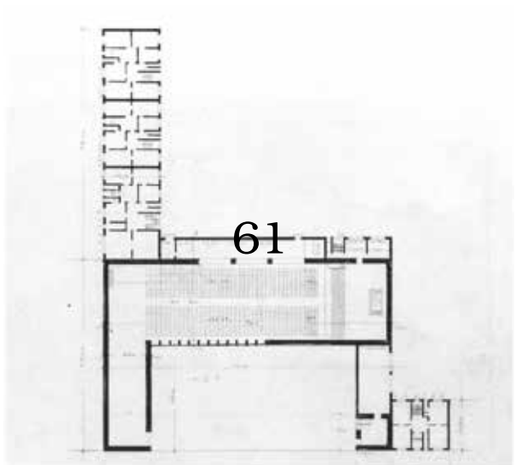








Preface

S. Devoldere . . . . . .

In 1989, Geert Bekaert, the most influential architecture critic of the Dutch-speaking regions, scripted and narrated a documentary film by Jef Cornelis with the title *Landscape of Churches*. The film gloriously showcases a continuous landscape of ceilings, arches and turrets, taking us from the Gothic Revival Beguinage of Sint-Amandsberg to the advent of modernity with the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Koekelberg, Brussels. Halfway through the film, while the camera is indulging in the splendour of the St. Bavo Cathedral in Ghent, Bekaert declares the act of building as a result of circumstances: 'Is it any wonder,' he asks, 'that buildings, that rise at one accidental spot or other, abolish this coincidence and make it into a holy place, a place people can no longer lose?' Hazard becomes firmness, thus creating a topos which 'survives the entire collections of its historic occasions, its iconographic meanings, its coincidences, bad moods, its contradictions, to be witness to the indestructibility, the absurdity, of human faith that, in the midst of unimaginable misery, quarrels, disaster, tyranny, continues to build.'[1]

Faith may have subsided, but the places it created are still not lost to us. They are located at the heart of our communities, stacking layers of meaning within our urban fabric. But despite their pivotal role throughout the centuries, the Flemish landscape of churches has become increasingly desolate over the years. Assisting local and church authorities in their quest for a new role for the many churches in disuse, the Flemish Government launched some five years ago a campaign for applied research by design. Several teams of architects and researchers investigated the current potential of churches, preserving them through new programming and design interventions, embedded in contemporary needs and ambitions. One of those teams was formed by the research group Trace of the Faculty of Architecture and Arts at Hasselt University. Together with Architecten Broekx-Schiepers, Architect Saidja Heynickx and UR architects, Trace studied and developed a possible future for eighteen church buildings[2] in an empathic research project that also fuelled our International Master programme in Adaptive Reuse. Imagined by professionals and students alike, the design exercises provided fresh insights into the use of these buildings, establishing new grounds for a local connectedness and meaning.

The design studio of the International Master focused primarily on churches that were built after WWII, as part of a modernist renewal of the landscape, both physically and mentally. As Nikolaas Vande Keere explains in his introductory essay, the reform of the 1960's Vatican II instigated a movement of incorporating modernity into the landscape of churches. New typologies emerged as promising architects were rethinking the traditional spaces of liturgy, shedding new light on the ideas and conventions that lay at their basis. Several contributions to this cahier explore the designs of architects like Roger Bastin, Jacques Dupuis, Jean Cosse and Rudolf Schwarz, discovering how they once again imagined that place that cannot be lost. Modernity generated new ways of defining, designing and using it, presenting us with a positive counterpoint to that bleak finale of the Cornelis movie, which starts with the utter negation of modernity in the Beguinage of Sint-Amandsberg, and ends with the cold megalomaniac embrace of it in the Basilica of Koekelberg, celebrating death instead of life.

This cahier deals with transition, continuity and restoration. It investigates how architectural design responds to a profound shift in a collective mindset, and how a recalibration of space can help respond to that shift. By providing continuity in how we live and what we do, but also by restoring a place that is shared by all: be it as part of a modernist awakening of the Catholic Church, be it in an attempt to reconnect a space to the community of its users, be it in the adaptation of places that define our collectiveness, such as churches, but also schools or social housing. Restoration is about dealing with circumstances. About adapting ourselves within a changing society. It is about the society we want to build for ourselves. Or as Bekaert puts it in the introduction to the film *Landscape of Churches*: 'Building is restoring, always, – in the 11th, as well as the 19th or the 20th century – a remembrance of that which has never existed.'[3]

1 Jef Cornelis and Geert Bekaert, "Landscape of Churches" (Brussels: Argos, 1989). The essayistic film is part of a series by Cornelis, commissioned and produced by the BRT, the then national Belgian Radio and Television Broadcasting Organisation. The spoken text by Bekaert is transcribed and translated in: Koen Brams and Dirk Pültau, *The Clandestine in the work of Jef Cornelis*, translation by Mari Shields (Maastricht: Jan van Eyck Akademie: 2009), 89-90.

2 The reports of tv TRACE can be consulted at https://sites.google.com/uhasselt.be/trace/research/research-by-design/herbestemming-kerken

3 Jef Cornelis and Geert Bekaert, "Landscape of Churches" (Brussels: Argos, 1989), (translation by the author).

The healing project of modernity

N. Vande Keere . . . . . .

[1] The ruin of Cologne with the cathedral still standing, 1945.

The question to be asked here and now is where does architecture stand at the present time, what state is it in? Furthermore, what sort of image of mankind does it reflect? These are questions not to be taken lightly, and the following issues arising from them will be thoroughly examined: firstly, does any activity capable of being called 'the art of building' actually exist at all today; and is there an architecture of our times? It is conceivable that there might be not just one but several forms of architecture, all with different aims, and each of them having its own way of constructing buildings. Secondly, is there such a thing as the present day, or rather does the present day actually exist as a kind of community of all human beings who are alive now. Finally, if such a community does exist, is it of any relevance to the field of architecture?

Rudolf Schwarz, Architecture of Our Times, 1958[1]

The second edition of this cahier is a reflection on *modernity*, taking as a starting-point the work of the students on the International Masters programme in Adaptive Reuse at Hasselt University during the academic year 2017–2018. In collaboration with students on the Master in Architecture course at the Bergische Universität of Wuppertal (DE) during the first semester of the academic year, they investigated ecclesiastical architecture built in the context of the Second Vatican Council or Vatican II (1962–1965). Framing the concept of modernity as a profound – social, cultural, political and economic – shift in the collective mind set of Western society in the 19th- and 20th-centuries,[2] we studied the history of the church in relation to modernity and the transformation of the meaning of modernity over time. While its original definition[3] suggests a continuous movement away from tradition, and emphasises constant change or 'progress' as the driving force, we identify WWII as the specific cause of this transformation, with its profound impact on ecclesiastical architecture and society as a whole.

Post-war modernity

In 1945, at the end of WWII, Cologne was one of many German cities reduced to ruins as the result of massive bombing by the Allied forces. Surrounded by the rubble of war, the cathedral, almost miraculously, remained intact. The city was barely populated and many of its former inhabitants no longer had a roof over their heads. *Stunde Null* or 'zero hour' expressed the catastrophic situation and at the same time the need for a new beginning. Architects including Rudolf Schwarz (1897–1961), Emil Steffann (1899–1968) and Hans Döllgast (1891–1974) took up the task of the reconstruction and modernisation of the country. As German citizens who had made the choice to remain in the service of their country during the war, they had been first-hand witnesses of many of the events that took place and would become leading architects in the effort to rebuild it.

By 1956, Cologne and other cities were already largely reconstructed. The speedy revival was remarkable, given the unprecedented degree of destruction.[4] The Marshall plan, an American initiative to support Western Europe's economic recovery, introduced in 1948, had already helped to efface many of the former differences with neighbouring countries, and created the new divisions of the Cold War. The recovery was quickly gaining pace and the European Economic Community, predecessor of the European Union, was being created. What may be called post-war modernity started in the Federal Republic of West Germany with the *Wirtschaftswunder* ('economic miracle'), successfully transforming the war industry into a civilian one.

In 1958, Rudolf Schwarz opened his matriculation address to students at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf with the words quoted above. Formulated as questions, the lecture started in a cautious tone but with a somewhat existential character, seeming to reflect the vulnerable post-war mood in a country still coming to terms with its recent history. In the same year, the city of Brussels hosted the world exposition, Expo 58. By that time, in Belgium and other countries, the sentiment of post-war reconstruction had already passed. The grim assessment of the war damage had given way to a more optimistic approach to reconstruction, not only in terms of building activity but also politically and economically. Confidence in the welfare state was restored and technological development was at the forefront of Expo 58, with pavilions including those of Le Corbusier and Iannis Xenakis for Philips and the Atomium. The Belgian architect, Roger Bastin

1 Adam Caruso and Helen Thomas (eds.), *Rudolf Schwarz and the Monumental Order of Things* (Zürich: gta Verlag, 2016), 36.

2 We consider here a broader context than the cultural one of *modernism*, prevalent in the fields of literature, philosophy, arts and architecture.

3 A possible origin of the term is to be found in 1864 in the text *The Painter of Modern Life* by poet Charles Baudelaire: 'By "modernity", I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable…' Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern life and other essays*, trans. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon Press, 1964), 13. Approaching modernity as an artistic or philosophic concept through the lens of fashion and painting, Baudelaire uses it in an abstract but suggestive way. His own eccentric and whimsical reputation added to it an artistic connotation to be appreciated only by a limited and like-minded audience. See Jeanne Willette, 'Charles Baudelaire, Author of Modernism', last modified August 20, 2010, https://arthistoryunstuffed.com/baudelaire-modernism/.

4 70% of pre-war housing stock in Cologne was lost after the war. Noud de Vreeze, *De Ziel van Duitse steden - het drama van verwoesting en wederopbouw* (Amersfoort: Boiten, 2018), 274. Several authors point at an undercurrent of continuity in German city development, despite the war (and the National Socialist regime), as one of the causes for the revival. For more on the German reconstruction after WWII, see Werner Durth and Niels Gutschow, *Träume in Trümmern - Planungen zum Wiederaufbau zerstörter Städte im Western Deutschlands* (Braunschweig/Wiesbaden: Vieweg, 1988).

5 The project seemed however not fully satisfactory to Bastin and Van Oost, who were not in charge of its execution or the exhibition lay-out. André Lanotte, Roger Bastin Architecte 1913–1986 (Sprimont: Mardaga, 2001), 93.

6 Caruso and Thomas (eds.), *Rudolf Schwarz and the Monumental Order of Things*, 111.

7 Caruso and Thomas (eds.), *Rudolf Schwarz and the Monumental Order of Things*, 7–8.

8 See Max Risselada and Dirk van den Heuvel, *TEAM 10. 1953–1981 In Search of a Utopia of the Present* (Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2005).

[2] The Atomium under construction, Brussels Expo 58.
© Dolf Kruger / Nederlands Fotomuseum

[3] *Postcard Civitas Dei*: church, electronic carillon and pavilions, the first presentation by the Vatican in a world exposition, 1958.

(1913–1986), having gained some experience in the design of ecclesiastical architecture, was commissioned together with Guy Van Oost (1930–2018) to design *Civitas Dei* or the 'City of God', the first time the Vatican had been represented in a world exposition. Like many others, the scheme is unequivocally modern and triumphant.[5]

Although the early post-war years can be perceived differently for Germany and Belgium, as the countries were on opposing sides during the war, nevertheless, influenced by geopolitics, they soon found themselves following the same course. The economic boom and the (re-) democratisation of the formerly warring countries, at least in the West, restored faith in public governance. More important here than the contextual comparison is the new meaning of modernity in comparison with its pre-war definition. The reality check of WWII made post-war modernity more tangible in everyday life and present in society, in contrast with its previous image as an ideological and abstract concept that was restricted to an urban, educated population. Stressing the painful character of the transition in Germany, Caruso and Thomas called it 'a period of traumatic modernity'.[6] The healing project of the first years after the war answers a desperate need for change:

> Separating the pre- and post-war periods of confidence, however, was a hiatus – a period of destruction that brought into question all the conditions that sustained belief in the rational and the objective, such as the value of technology and its expression, the politics and mobilisation of social classes, and the social and economic meaning of the city and its relationship to agricultural and non-industrialised regions. Between the end of the war and the moment when the effects of the economic miracle started to be felt, there was a period of about ten years in which the shocked and divided nation slowly started to reconstruct itself.[7]

A similar transformation can be seen in the evolution of modernist urbanism and architecture. The CIAM (International Congresses of Modern Architecture) meetings from 1928 onwards gave birth to the new generation of Team X between 1953 and 1959 – the emphasis shifting from a view of the city as a functionalist mechanism to a more dynamic and social perspective, with a growing interest in the vernacular. CIAM rejected the historical city and reflected on the modernist city, starting from an abstract *tabula rasa*. The (re-)invention of the modern city remained on the agenda of Team X, but now based on the all-too-real *tabula rasa* as the consequence of war. The remaining historical tissue of existing cities and the human scale of architecture become sources of inspiration rather than obstacles to change.[8]

Adaptive reuse of modern churches

Developed in the context of Vatican II, the design of ecclesiastical architecture was inspired by the process of reform of the 'liturgical movement', instigated by figures such as the theologian Romano Guardini (1885–1968) in the 1930s, well before the council took place.[9] In an effort to heal the wounds of

WWII, the Church authorities followed suit: Vatican II became the embodiment of modernity within the Catholic Church. Besides a theological reinterpretation, the reform defined the basis for a profound transformation of the liturgical space. A greater involvement of the faithful, and emphasis on the role of the community as a consequence of the democratisation of the liturgy, had a significant impact on the interior layout and typology of church buildings, both existing and new. Furthermore, renewed interest in the (layered) history of the liturgy and iconography led architects and artists to turn back to the early Christian tradition which inspired a fundamental change in the spatial concept of church buildings in the post-war era. This modernisation opened the way for architects and artists to apply a new formal language and created the freedom to approach spirituality on a more experimental and contemporary level.

In the first phase of the semester, students studied the spatial consequences of this reform. Various joint workshops and study visits to Belgium and the Rhineland in Germany were held by both universities during the first semester to investigate the post-war building campaign. The research focused on the historical perspective of modern churches and on how they were conceived in their context. The students of our faculty analysed examples in Belgium by architects including Roger Bastin, Jacques Dupuis (1914–1984), Marc Dessauvage (1931–1984), Jean Cosse (1931–2016) and visited churches in the Rhineland by Rudolf Schwarz and Gottfried Böhm (1920-). In addition, they made a study trip to Rome to gain a greater understanding of the history of ecclesiastical architecture and the origins of the Roman Catholic faith. By confronting different culture lines or 'translations' of Christian liturgy, the students gained insight into the complexity of the subject.

Inspired by these activities, a number of students also presented a short history and evolution of mosque architecture and found interesting parallels with early Christian churches.[10] One student developed these ideas later in a Masters project on the adaptive reuse of the abandoned Rajgan Mosque in Khanpur, Pakistan. The mosque was built in a region well known for its Buddhist sites from the Gandharan period and other religious heritage. The site has tourist potential and has been under-used since the 1970s as a consequence of the construction of a dam and an artificial lake which covers the older settlement in the valley in front of the dam. The proposal is to transform the building and forecourt into a retreat that could attract tourists, students and researchers from nearby educational institutes. The project provides a platform for social,

[4] The abandoned mosque of Rajgan in Khanpur, Pakistan

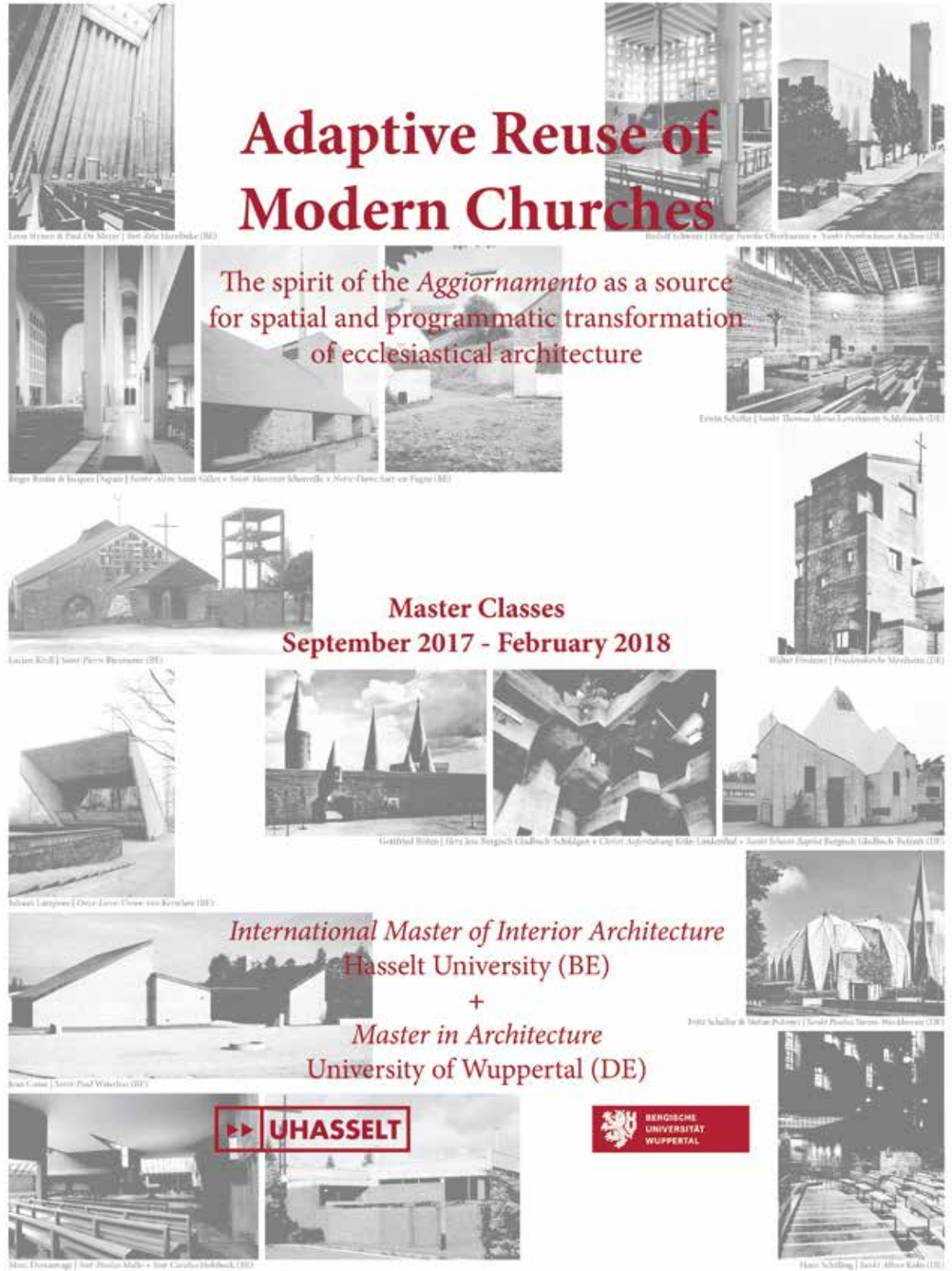
cultural and religious exchange. Despite the differences, it was interesting to note the shared concerns and sensitivity around religious architecture. The (arguably) more contentious relationship of modernisation with traditional values in Pakistan helped rather than hindered the mutual understanding.

In the second phase, students focused on a studio assignment to design a spatial and programmatic transformation, applying the building's intrinsic qualities and following the spirit of the *aggiornamento,* as Vatican II was also called.[11] Besides a stylistic retake on modernist traces, modernity after WWII also came to define the increased process of individualisation and secularisation in Western Europe. Ironically, with the *aggiornamento,* church attendance started to diminish and parish communities started to fall apart. In 1967, Geert Bekaert (1928–2016), Belgian architecture critic and Jesuit at the time, noted the increase of newly built churches after WWII, but at the same time questioned their future role and meaning in modern society.[12] The question asked by Rudolf Schwarz above in itself hints at the possible lack of 'community'. The decline in numbers of both priests and churchgoers has led to a reduced (or changed) use of churches for religious service and questions the complex spiritual and social role they can still play in society. Taking this into account, the studio assignment was to investigate the possibility for (adaptive) reuse. The students from Hasselt worked with the church of St. Alena in Brussels by Roger Bastin and Jacques Dupuis, while the German students studied two examples by Rudolf Schwarz: the Heilige Familie church in Oberhausen and St. Maria Himmelfahrt in Wesel.

[9] Frédéric Debuyst, *Le génie chrétien du lieu* (Paris: Les éditions du CERF, 1997).

[10] For more information on the project, see Syed Hamid Akbar and Koenraad Van Cleempoel, 'Mosque as "House of God" and as "House of Community". An inquiry into adaptive reuse of an abandoned mosque in Pakistan in A. Al Naim, M.,' in *Mosque Architecture Present Issues and Future Ideas,* eds. Hani M. Al Huneidi and Noor Hanita Abdul Majid (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Institute of Translation & Books, 2019), 383–400. (This was presented at the 2nd International conference on Mosque Architecture (ICMA 2019), 25-27 November, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.)
The above-mentioned students continue their studies at Hasselt University after the academic year 2017–2018 and are working on their PhD, with subjects based in Pakistan. Syed Hamid Akbar is working on the re-vitalization of British colonial heritage with protected status, focusing on the case of Karachi. Naveed Iqbal is studying industrial heritage and its adaptive re-use potential for urban regeneration, using international precedents as references.

[11] Pope John XXIII, instigating Vatican II, coined the term *aggiornamento* – the Catholic term for modernity that can



[5] Poster of joint masterclasses, studying the post-war building campaign of churches in Belgium and Rhineland (DE).

Contributions

The contributions to this cahier reflect on modernity in different ways. Most are directly or indirectly linked to the collaborative research mentioned and reflect the students' work during the academic year. Others broaden the subject beyond church architecture. While most articles take a historical view as a starting point, they also question the concept of modernity in a contemporary way. *What remains, or is still relevant, of the urge to adapt to the present ('new') timeframe? What might its meaning be today?*[13] The continuous but unavoidable struggle with modernity therefore forms the underlying theme of this cahier. The articles approach the theme critically but empathically. They try to portray modernity with an alternative tone, coming to terms with the past while reaching towards the future, perhaps with some hesitation, seeing modernity as a mediating concept for the transformation in time.

The first two essays are reflections on the design studio during the first semester. Prior to the design assignment, students investigated different church designs, the architects and their sources. In *'Contemplative freshness'*, Koenraad Van Cleempoel studies the symbiotic relationship between theologians and architects. In the first part he focuses on the exemplary roles of Romano Guardini and Rudolf Schwarz as instigators of liturgical reform during meetings of the Catholic youth movement Quickborn in Rothenfels castle, preceding Vatican II and WWII. Using Dom Frédéric Debuyst (1922–2017) as a guide, Van Cleempoel continues to examine the emergence of concepts such as the 'house-church', and the lesser known 'house-monastery', after Vatican II. Together with architect Jean Cosse, Debuyst entirely rethinks the liturgical space and the experience of the faithful by introducing aspects of domesticity in a liturgy that was perceived as static and out of touch with today's faithful.

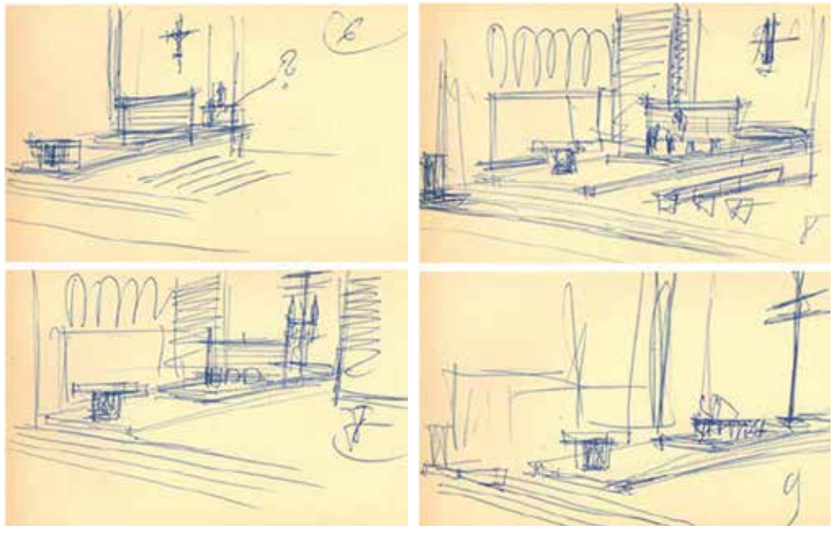
Bie Plevoets, Linde Van Den Bosch and I present the key moments in the history of the church of St. Alena in Brussels by Roger Bastin and Jacques Dupuis[14] and the outcome of the Hasselt University design studio project regarding the reuse of the surrounding spaces and the larger site of the church. The original project was formative in the careers of Bastin and Dupuis, since its construction spanned the years from 1940 to 1972, thus living through both WWII and Vatican II, during which period the design evolved from a decorated and more classic stylistic approach (building on the executed foundations of an earlier eclectic design) to more minimal versions, and finally became the modernist church at odds with the 19th-century bourgeois environment of St. Gillis in Brussels. The brief for the studio assignment was to (re-)integrate the church, and the migrant community that uses it, into the now hipster neighbourhood.

In *Re-reading the 'Corridor-School' of J.W.Hanrath*, Tijl Beelen and Saidja Heynickx elaborate on Beelen's Masters' project on the adaptive reuse of a 1920s primary school in Eindhoven (NL). Rather than simply redefining the programme, the concept develops a versatile strategy for multiple reuse (living, studying or working) based on the proto-modern DNA of the building. More specifically, the tectonic quality and recurring typological feature of the *corridor* in school buildings since the late 19th century can be recognised as a modern feature with inherent potential for transformation.

In *Reviving the modernist utopia,* Marie Moors compares the recent and successful architectural adaptation of three post-war modernist housing complexes. Rather than tackling modernist ideology, the differing approaches of the refurbishment architects are more pragmatic with a positive attitude towards the existing buildings. The contemporary needs for more densified living spaces and energy and cost saving construction are of renewed concern and create another perspective on the maligned ideology of modernist housing. Significantly, these projects show the potential for further work on modernist principles in a conceptual and spatial manner. The underlying shift in meaning may be connected with the generational change of its inhabitants: a housing scheme originally intended for working class families now accommodates middle-class first-time buyers,[15] a dynamic target group likely to be more sympathetic to the original cause of modernism and its retro looks today.

Kris Pint examines, in *Modernism: glass, steel, concrete … and books,* the cultural and inspirational contradiction between modernist architecture and literature and, specifically, how both deal with (the rupture with) the past. The emergence of Freudian psychoanalysis and interest in the human psyche at the end of the 19th century redefined art and literature, while architecture stressed technological renewal and the reinvention of the city. The author describes the domestic environment or 'home' as the place *par excellence* for this confrontation. Within the '*machine à habiter*' (Le Corbusier), the rational subject of architecture finds itself at odds with the inner insecurities and unconscious tendencies of its character, as explored in literature.[16] Like Virginia Woolf, however, one could just accept this contradiction and consider it part of modern life. Humorously juxtaposing the heroes of each discipline, the author shows us the refreshing quality of being a modernist.

Finally, and to come full circle, in *Beyond the modern – Some observations on the work of Rudolf Schwarz*, Christoph Grafe (re-)addresses the oeuvre of the architect and the arguably isolated position it takes in the history of modern architecture. Schwarz was, nevertheless, admired by iconic figures including Mies van der Rohe, and has gained more attention as one of 'the other moderns' since the 1990s. Rather than idiosyncratic, his work could be described as the continuous search for a careful balance between past and present, a critical and personal approach to modernist ideas. In examining some of his writings and studying four church projects, we learn more about the conscientious designer and theorist. Schwarz's work is modern in the true sense because it is trying to be, to use the words of Romano Guardini, 'on the verge of a more essential reality'.



[6] Altar of St. Alena, sketches by Bastin, proposing adjustments in line with Vatican II liturgical reform, 1966.

be translated as *adaptation to today* or *bringing up-to-date*. The current pope, Francis, is recommending Vatican II as a source of inspiration for answers to many of today's questions in the Catholic church, see for example: John L. Allen Jr., 'Pope urges theologians to be "faithful, anchored" to Vatican II', last modified December 29, 2019, https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2017/12/pope-urges-theologians-faithful-anchored-vatican-ii/.

12 For example: '… the church building doesn't belong anymore to the image of the modern city…' or '… is there in the existence of the consequently contemporary, secularised man still place for such an explicit religious practice?' Geert Bekaert, *In een of ander huis: kerkbouw op een keerpunt*, trans. by author (Tielt/Den Haag: Lannoo, 1967), 13–14, 26.

13 According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term *modern* is etymologically derived from the late Latin *modernus*, in its turn from the Latin *modo*, meaning 'just now'.

14 The contribution of Jacques Dupuis to the design of St-Alena was growing in significance during the course of the project. Especially interesting here and in other projects of Dupuis is the quality and meaning of decorative and Christian iconographic elements, (not further investigated in the context of this cahier).

15 A similar argument is made by Kenneth Frampton in a comparison between the proposal of the Smithsons for the Golden Lane Housing Competition in London (1952) and the Diagoon Experimental Housing by Herman Hertzberger in Delft (1967–1972). Risselada and van den Heuvel, *TEAM 10*, 290.

16 This struggle was mirrored in reality: see for instance the abandonment of Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye For an extensive description on this, see Fred Scott, *On Altering Architecture* (London/New York: Routledge, 2008), 20–42.

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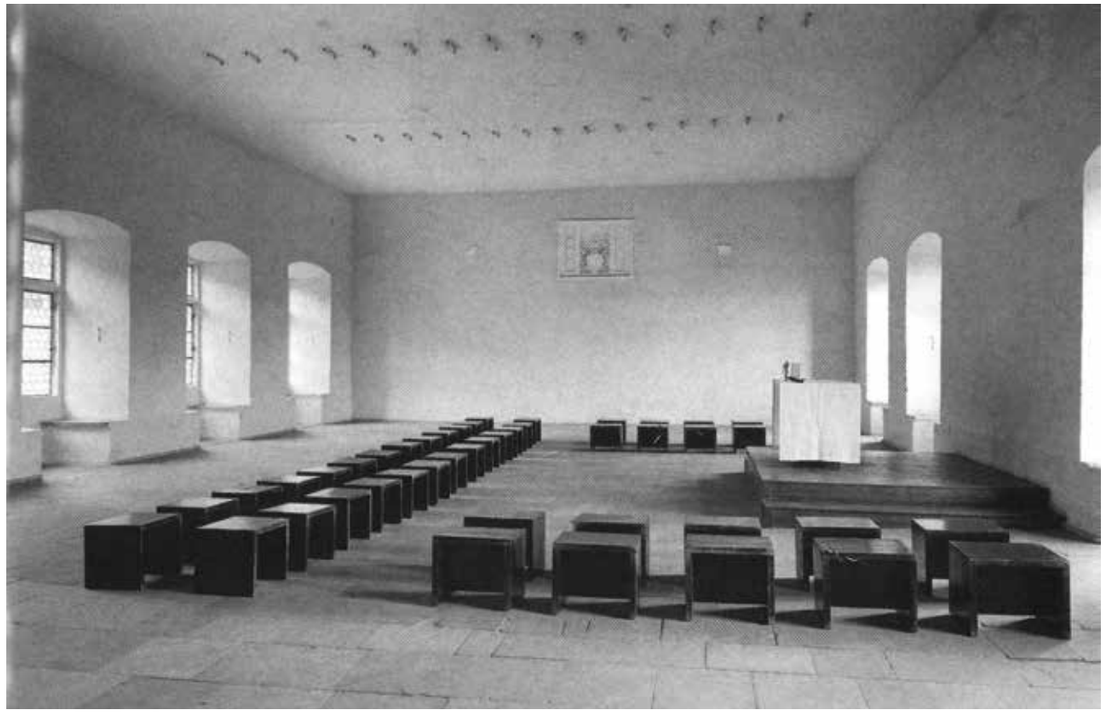
[List of figures]

‘Contemplative freshness’ : On the emerging typology of a house-monastery after Vatican II

K. Van Cleempoel. . . . . .



[1] The Knight’s Hall in Rothenfels measures 19.2m by 11.45m, with white walls of great thickness visible through the recessed window frame, and with dark brown slabs on the floor. Arranged by Rudolf Schwarz, Heinrich Kahlefeld and Romano Guardini, around 1930 heralding the Liturgical Movement

Vatican II and the house-church

In 1959, Pope John XXIII expressed his intention of opening a council reaffirming the church's 'self-understanding by reinterpreting the Catholic tradition in the light of contemporary challenges.'[1] A central idea was greater lay participation in the liturgy. This emphasis on active participation led to a renewed rationale of form and floor plans. For centuries, the Latin cross had formed the basis of a standardised layout. Contemporary layouts emerged, with the congregation encircling the focal point of the altar, aiming to enable genuine participation in the sacred sacrifice. The theology of the German Romano Guardini (1885-1965) pioneered this 'liturgical reform'. In his book *Liturgische Bildung* of 1923, he argued in favour of a liturgy based on a new agreement between clergy and congregations, incorporating the architecture of the church or the interior of the assembly room.[2] In 1924, as nationalism started to cloud Germany, Guardini organised prayer meetings and workshops with the Catholic youth movement, Quickborn, in the castle of Rothenfels in Bavaria. The Knight's Hall, in particular, was the centre of their meetings and prayer sessions. Guardini's circle also included the Jesuit Przywara and the young architect Rudolf Schwarz. The impact of these meetings, both spatially and spiritually, cannot be overrated and they are often referred to as pivotal events in pre-Vatican II church architecture. The open space of the Hall measures 19.2m by 11.45m, with white walls of great thickness visible through the recessed window frame, and with dark brown slabs on the floor [figure 1].

Schwarz describes his experience of the gatherings in his diary: 'The only furniture consisted of several hundred little wooden stools painted in black, of cubic form. That was all. The architecture, kept in a pure state of containment, was uniformly painted in white. All the rest, the living space, was the assembly itself who would give form in the way they choose [by re-arranging the seats]. This meant that we took the possibility seriously of the community creating spatial forms by itself.' Regarding the impact of these gatherings, Schwarz continues,

> We were simply trying to do what we felt was right for ourselves. But a very large number of people frequented this place. They took with them the memory of so intense a celebration, and of course hoped to find it one day at home ... The Rothenfels room found in this way descendants that cannot be counted.[3]

The dynamic and un-hierarchical organisation of this room was both modern and ancient at the same time. Guardini had a deep interest in the liturgy and architecture of early Christian communities. He reflects on this in a travel log after visiting Rome's oldest churches in the late 1920s: Santa Maria Maggiore, Santa Clemente, Santa Sabina and San Giorgio in Velabro. He praises the simplicity and nobility of these spaces in contrast to the splendour and monumentality of contemporary architecture. In his words.

> As everything is alive in these old churches ... Simplicity of Christian existence where the nobility of ancient forms still sounds: intimate, quiet, full of humanity. Holiness is here so close ... it's so distant in most of the glittering churches we see everywhere.[4]

The structure of this reasoning is essential for what follows in the essay: firstly, archaeological inspiration from the spatial organisation and rituals of early Christian communities in order, secondly, to oppose and challenge existing church and monastery typologies. This resulted in a new church typology later known as the 'house-church'. The conceptual cradle was, again, Rothenfels and Guardini's theological legitimisation. It comes as no surprise that he provided a very early description of the spatial and theological essence of a house-church, as early as 1937:[5]

> Is it really possible for us today to set up buildings which when built, impose on the houses which surround them a type of relationship which, no longer in fact exists? Would it not be better to bring our places of celebration back into the category of private buildings, and, full of a new strength, go from there towards the world? Should our preaching always claim for itself the 'privileges' of the faith? Why could we not present ourselves as ordinary people and speak in all[6] of that man who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and yet remains living among us? A Word which presents itself without many trappings possesses a force all its own? Ought not the construction of a church, from now, be considered in the light of this real situation and draw from it a new and authentic spontaneity? We could very well imagine the church as a house among others. A house which contained at the same time living quarters and a space for the liturgical celebration. This would be a frank and honest point of departure for the transmitting of the Christian message.

1 Ormond Rusch, *Still Interpreting Vatican II: Some Hermeneutical Principles* (USA: Paulist Press, 2004), 4.

2 The encyclic Mediator Dei of 1947 and Instructio de Arte Sacra of 1952 elaborate on the specific relationship between fine arts and the liturgy. It is clear, however, that the main issue concerns architecture and its attempts to find a new language in harmony with the *aggiornamento* (see Frédéric Debuyst, 'Le problème actuel de l'art sacré', *Art d'Église*, no. 105, (1958): 113.)

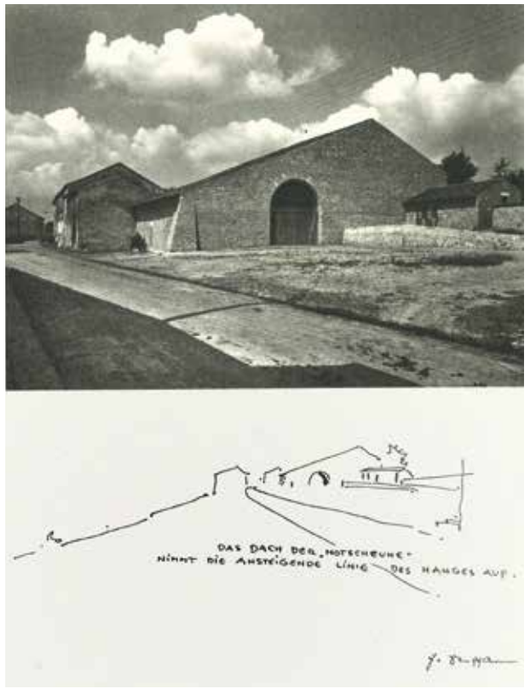
3 Both quotations from Frédéric Debuyst, *Le génie chrétien du lieu* (Paris: Les éditions du CERF, 1997), 58–59 (translation by the author).

4 Romano Guardini, *In Spiegel und Gleichnis, Bilder und Gedanken* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1932), 255–258.

5 In 'Schildgenossen', a Catholic periodical theology and culture that he published from Rothenfels with, among others, architect Rudolf Schwarz as co-editor. Its publication was stopped by the Nazis in 1939.

6 This concept of 'simplicity' is rather interesting and will be linked to 'nobility' in the proceedings of Vatican II. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963) section 34, states that 'in encouraging and favoring truly sacred

An abundance of archaeological remains and Roman churches in combination with an emerging theology rapidly prompted new church design in Germany, and Schwarz took the lead. Another interesting figure was Emil Steffann (1899–1968), whose approach also captures this synthesis between Christian antiquity and contemporary church design. Born into a Huguenot family, he converted to Catholicism in 1926 after a long stay in Rome and Assisi. The *genius loci* of Assisi, and the figure of Francis in particular, had a profound impact on his personal and architectural development – as had Guardini and Schwarz of course. Two projects suffice to illustrate this. The first was part of a project to build churches for the Catholic diaspora in Protestant countries: the now destroyed barn-church of 1943 in Boust, Lorraine [figure 2].



[2] Emil Steffann's now destroyed barn-church of 1943 in Boust, Lorraine. Its vernacular and robust appearance blend seamlessly with its context.

Its vernacular and robust appearance was embedded in its context with a wonderful abstract surface of natural stone.[7] The front door of the church resembled the arched gate of a typical barn, but the elegant composition of the façade clearly distinguishes it as a modern design. The articulated left corner, with a thickened base that slopes upwards, is a detail he saw in the early medieval lower church in Assisi which would become part of his vocabulary, seen also, for example, in his well-known Sint-Laurentius Church of 1955 in Munich, both on the outside wall and on the interior arched wall separating the central nave from the side aisles.

Belgium followed suit only after WWII. The Benedictine monks of the centuries-old St Andrew's Abbey in Zevenkerken, near Bruges, published one of the most influential periodicals on contemporary religious art and architecture. The *Revue d'Art et d'Église* provided erudite descriptions and sharp reflections on applied art and architecture in the spirit of Vatican II. From the mid-1950s onwards, Frédéric Debuyst (1929–2017) became a regular author – and eventually also chief editor – and his refined, yet critical, pen would bring a new forum for Belgian art and architecture of a religious nature. He reported in 1960 on the interesting 'Pro Arte Christiana' Architecture Competition of 1958; the first time Belgium had organised a competition on modern religious architecture of international significance. The jury unanimously selected a project by the young architect Marc Dessauvage (1931–1984)[8] for a house-church. It presented a new architectural interpretation of a 'theology of the community' with the church playing the role of a 'house for that community', building on a concept of Christian Antiquity: *Domus Ecclesiae*.[9] Dessauvage subsequently received commissions for dozens of churches, with variations on the original competition-winning plan, always starting from the central position of the altar and a closer involvement of all participants during the liturgy. His sublime handling of light, and the relationship with the surrounding gardens, gave his œuvre a distinct signature. He applied the same softened modernist grammar to monasteries and private housing projects.[10]

Frédéric Debuyst would continue to report with authority on new architecture and fine arts in relation to theological developments. In a series of three essays in 1966–67, *New Churches after the Council*, for example, he states, '... The examples of new churches ... go beyond the immediate perspective of pure liturgical functionalism in an attempt to express the real spirit of Vatican II: its willingness for dialogue, its simplicity, its inwardness. They obey this spirit sometimes by their 'hospitality', sometimes by an effort to shed the accidental and to return to the essential. For us at least, the spirit of the Council, above and before all else, is one of humility. In the realm of church architecture this can be summed up in one phrase: 'the serving of the assembly community *in the simplest possible form*.'[11]

art, they [church designers] should seek for noble beauty rather than sumptuous display.' *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (1969), section 279, also affirms that 'church decor should aim at noble simplicity rather than ostentatious magnificence.' The term 'noble simplicity' arose originally in the mid-eighteenth century and was used to describe the characteristics of beauty in ancient Greek works of art. See, for example, the work of art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (Stuttgart, 1755).

7 Gisberth Hülsmann and Jean Kail, 'Die "Notscheune" von Emil Steffann', *Kunst und Kirche*, no. 3 (1987): 194–198 (cited in Debuyst, *Le génie chrétien du lieu*, 19).

8 The composition of the international jury was Hermann Bauer, Rudolf Schwarz, Xavier Arsène-Henri and Michel Marot. For a discussion of the competition, see T.R. Frère Urbain, 'Pro Arte Christiana Concours d'architecture. Trois projets primés', *Art d'Égli*se ,no. 111(1960), 315-325. See also Anne-Françoise Morel and Stephanie Van de Voorde, 'Rethinking the Twentieth-Century Catholic Church in Belgium: The Inter-Relationship between Liturgy

He also criticises 'the Fathers of the Council' who did not, in his opinion, go far enough, and only:

> readjusted the poles of the celebration. While creating a new theology of the assembly they kept the image of the church building familiar to them – an image which comes from the beginning of the Middle Ages. The theology of the assembly was however too rich to be exhausted by such minor changes. By its inherent dynamism it tended to a return to the *domus ecclesiae*, that is to say to a type of church which could be completely at the disposition, the 'service' of the assembly. The result are new points which the early stages of the liturgical movement never taught us to consider: the primacy of interiority over exteriority, of the world of persons over that of things, of the values of hospitality over those of representation.[12]

Debuyst would continue to develop this discourse on new meanings in new interiors, but with Christian Antiquity as a source for inspiration. In addition to citing early churches, such as San Clemente, he elaborates on the archaeological site of the earliest Christian house-church in Doura-Europos [Figure 3] in the desert of present-day Syria.[13]

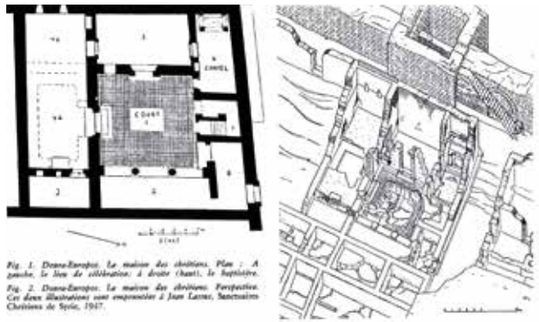


Fig. 1. Doura-Europos. La maison des chrétiens. Plan : A gauche, le lieu de célébration; à droite (haut), le baptistère.
Fig. 2. Doura-Europos. La maison des chrétiens. Perspective. Ces deux illustrations sont empruntées à Jean Lassus, Sanctuaires Chrétiens de Syrie, 1947.

[3] The earliest Christian house-church in Doura-Europos in the desert of present-day Syria. The building consists of a house adjoining a separate hall-like room, which acts as a meeting room for the church. The iconography of the surviving frescoes show the earliest depictions of Jesus Christ and date back to 235 AD.

When it was conquered and abandoned in 256-57 AD, the border village remained intact and became an exceptional archaeological site including large fresco cycles. The typology is that of a house with a humble hall-like room as a meeting room for the church. Based on this historical argument, like Guardini – but exactly 30 years later – Debuyst also arrives at a description for the house church in 1967:

> What is true for a house should also be true for a church. The meeting with God includes a meeting with men. Liturgy and mission complete one another. The church should take us where it finds us and cause us to voyage in its intimacy and transparency, to the end of the road, should offer us the image of the peace of God.[14]

Incunables and a third force

In his many descriptions of contemporary churches in *Art d'Église,* Debuyst created a unique panorama in which he starts to develop a selective reading, coming to what he calls '*incunables*', from the Latin '*incunabula*', referring to 'cradle' and to be understood in this context as 'the earliest stages or first traces in the development of anything'.[15] He identifies three references: (1) the above-mentioned Rothenfels castle including the theology of Guardini and the architecture of Schwarz; (2) The Sint-Laurentius church in Munich by Emil Stefann, and (3) The university chapel of Otaniemi at the Aalto campus in Finland by architects Heikki and Kaija Siren.

Debuyst's descriptions of these sites would form the design parameters for his own house-monastery conceived together with architect Jean Cosse. When referring to the chapel at the Otaniemi campus, for example, Debuyst praises its simplicity, poetry and transparency: '… this *contemplative freshness* ought to mark our atmosphere: it must be admitted that we but rarely arrive at it.'[16] Debuyst is not only attracted to the exceptional work of Emil Steffann by its domestic qualities as a 'house' for the Christian community, but more profoundly his rediscovery of a type of construction adopted by Christian antiquity. Its appearance was simple, calm and rather heavy, as if it carried centuries of patina in itself: '… before the council, after the council: these expressions have no meaning in this case, save to vindicate him.'[17]

Towards the end of the 1960s, Debuyst comes to a synthesis in his reflections on Vatican II churches and introduces the concept of a third force. In his reasoning, the first force is the monumentality of Le Corbusier's (1887-1965) Ronchamps and the second the analytical phase of Mies van de Rohe (1886-1969) and Rudolph Schwarz, whom he calls 'theological creatures.'[18] He praises their sublime handling of spatial control, materialisation and proportion, but equally addresses the neglect of human

and Architecture', *Architectural History* 55 (2012), 269–297.

9 Church buildings are often defined as both a house for God (Domus Dei) as well as a house for the Community (Domus Ecclesiae). A splendid reading on these layered meanings is B. Daelemans in *Spiritus Loci. A Theological Method for Contemporary Church Architecture. Series: Studies in Religion and the Arts*, Volume 9, Brill, 2015.

10 Luc Verpoest en Geert Bekaert, *Marc Dessauvage 1931/1984*, Wommelgem: Den Gulden Engel, 1987.

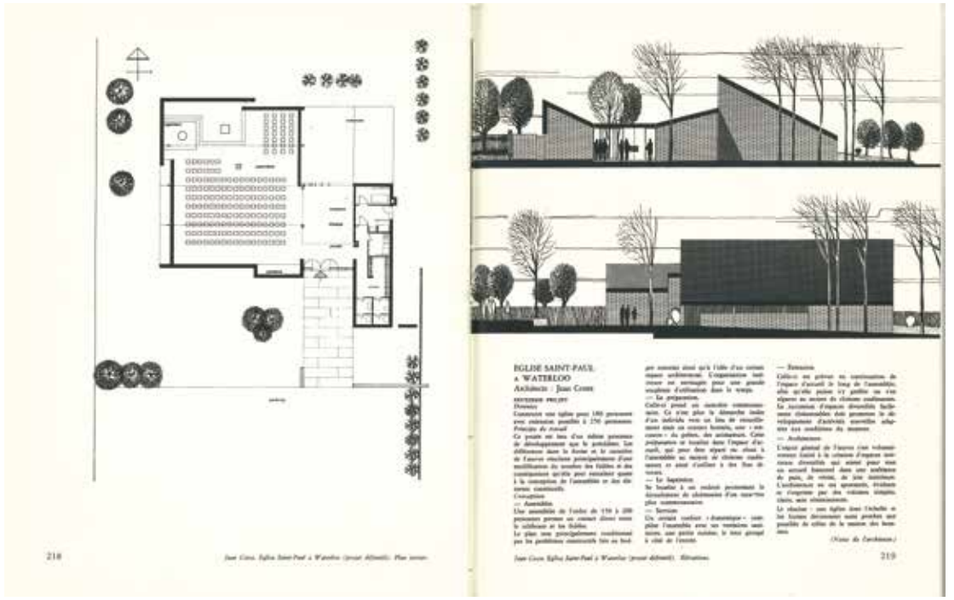
11 Debuyst, 'Eglises Nouvelles après le Concile – II", *Art d'Église*, no. 135 (1966).

12 Debuyst, 'Eglises Nouvelles après le Concile – I', *Art d'Église*, no. 134 (1966).

13 Carl Hermann Kraeling, *The Christian Building*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967.; Floyd V. Filson, (June 1939). 'The Significance of the Early House Churches', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 58, no. 2 (June 1939): 105–112.; Michael Peppard, *The World's Oldest Church*, (Yale Scholarship Online: 2016), DOI:10.12987/yale/9780300213997.003.0002.

14 Debuyst, 'A la recerche d'une "troisième force"', *Art d'Église*, no 140 (1967), p. C (English translation).

15 Oxford English Dictionary, 1933, I:188.



[4] The house-church of Saint-Paul designed by Jean Cosse, Waterloo, 1968

occupation and experience in modernism (similar to Team X). Debuyst introduces the concept of a third force, found more frequently in domestic architecture than in public buildings, and renders to unite functional seriousness with creative liberty, rigor and construction with a kind of 'inner poetry very sober in expression.' As always, Debuyst links these 'noble' spatial manifestations to a renewed spiritual basis:

> every time this type of architecture has been wedded to an ecclesial theology marked by simplicity, openness and closeness to essentials, we have seen worthwhile churches produced'.[19]

In 1969, the cover of *Art d'Église* shows an elegant black and white picture of a house-church of humble appearance with steep roofs: the church of Saint-Paul designed by Jean Cosse in Waterloo [Figure 4].

Debuyst is full of superlatives as he finally seems to have found the manifestation of all his previous reflections, critiques and suggestions in the work of the Belgian architect. It features three times in the journal: twice to describe the plan and the project (nos. 144 & 146) and again in 1970 (no. 153) in a visual essay to portray the church alive during celebration, in its 'ecclesiastic' reality:

> By its atmosphere it remains very close to a domestic celebration, to the 'intimate feast'. It possesses all the characteristics of this: intensity of word and attention, interiority, spontaneity. The assembly whether sitting or standing, freely extends itself into the reception area and tends to form a circle … the most astonishing pictures presented to us by St-Paul, to us semi-Nordics, is perhaps this departure which does not seem to end, where groups form and reform, and where perhaps three quarters of an hour may pass before all have dispersed.

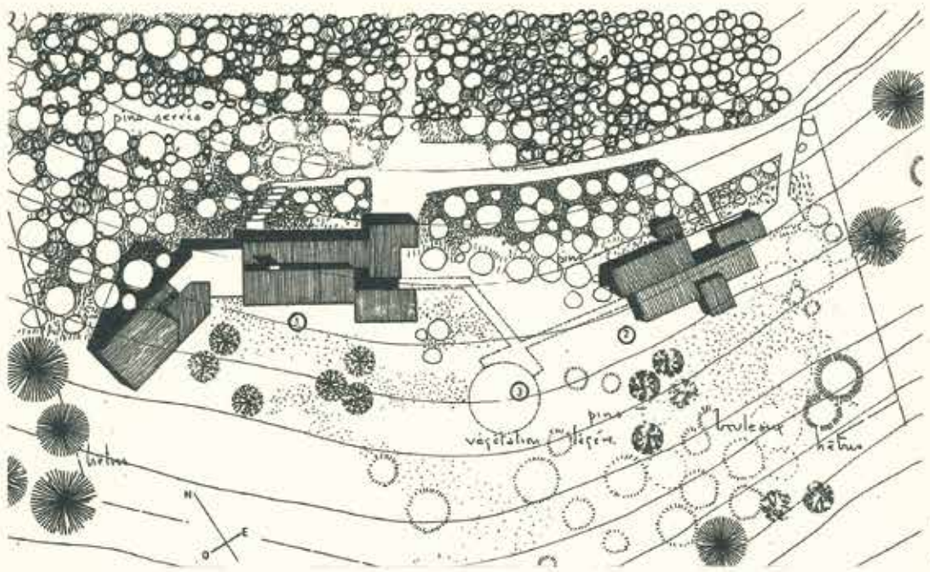
The architect stresses the importance of the entry hall as a subtle buffer zone meant for people to meet and find shelter and comfort. Its spatial design is anchored on the concept of hospitality: 'we find this theme in the architecture' Cosse says, 'and with particular emphasis on the profound human character of the space: the very refined economy of the light; the balance between the clarity of the volumes and a certain organic complexity; the scale of the lateral walls which relates to the size of men …. It is rare to

16 Debuyst, 'Le lieu de la prière monastique', *Art d'Église*, no 154 (1971), 129: Cette fraîcheur contemplative devrait caractériser notre propre climat: il faut reconnaître que nous n'y arrivons que très rarement.

17 Ibidem

18 As in note 14, refering to Rudolph Schwarz's book *Vom Bau der Kirche* (1947)

19 See footnote 14



Site.

Dans un bois de pins et de bouleaux en pente vers le sud, un sol sablonneux en sous-bois tapissé d'aiguilles de pins, avec des clairières envahies de bruyères et de mousses.

Une harmonie d'ocre et de brun virant au carmin — le vert localisé au faîte des pins n'étant perçu que dans un deuxième temps.

Un graphisme de strilles verticales serrées, contrastant avec des temps de repos au droit des clairières.

Intentions architecturales.

Fournir un bon outil, économique à la construction et à l'entretien, qui apporte une aide à ses habitants dans l'accomplissement de leur tâche. Etre juste dans les moyens et dans l'expression; atteindre une qualité qui invite à un dépassement, tout en restant familier, proche de l'homme, à sa mesure.

A l'extérieur, conserver la primauté du site, être là naturellement, comme si les murs avaient poussé entre les arbres; être là sans heurts, avec évidence, et pourtant créer un lien spécifique.

Matériaux et techniques.

Les techniques sont là pour servir un parti, un budget, concrétiser des espaces. L'ensemble des facteurs pris en considération a amené le choix de maçonneries portantes en blocs de béton léger laissés apparents à l'intérieur et en briques « ton cuir » s'harmonisant particulièrement bien avec le site pour les parements extérieurs. Les charpentes partout visibles de l'intérieur permettent l'utilisation totale du volume des toitures. Fermes de bois pour la maison universitaire, en acier pour la maison principale (les entraits portent les dalles des duplex).

Couvertures en ardoises éternit, planchers en béton brut de décoffrage, laissés apparents en plafonds.

Les matériaux intérieurs harmonisent les nuances sable et ocre au blanc et au noir.

Organisation des plans.

La maison principale comporte deux zones bien distinctes réunies par l'oratoire et le lieu de méditation.

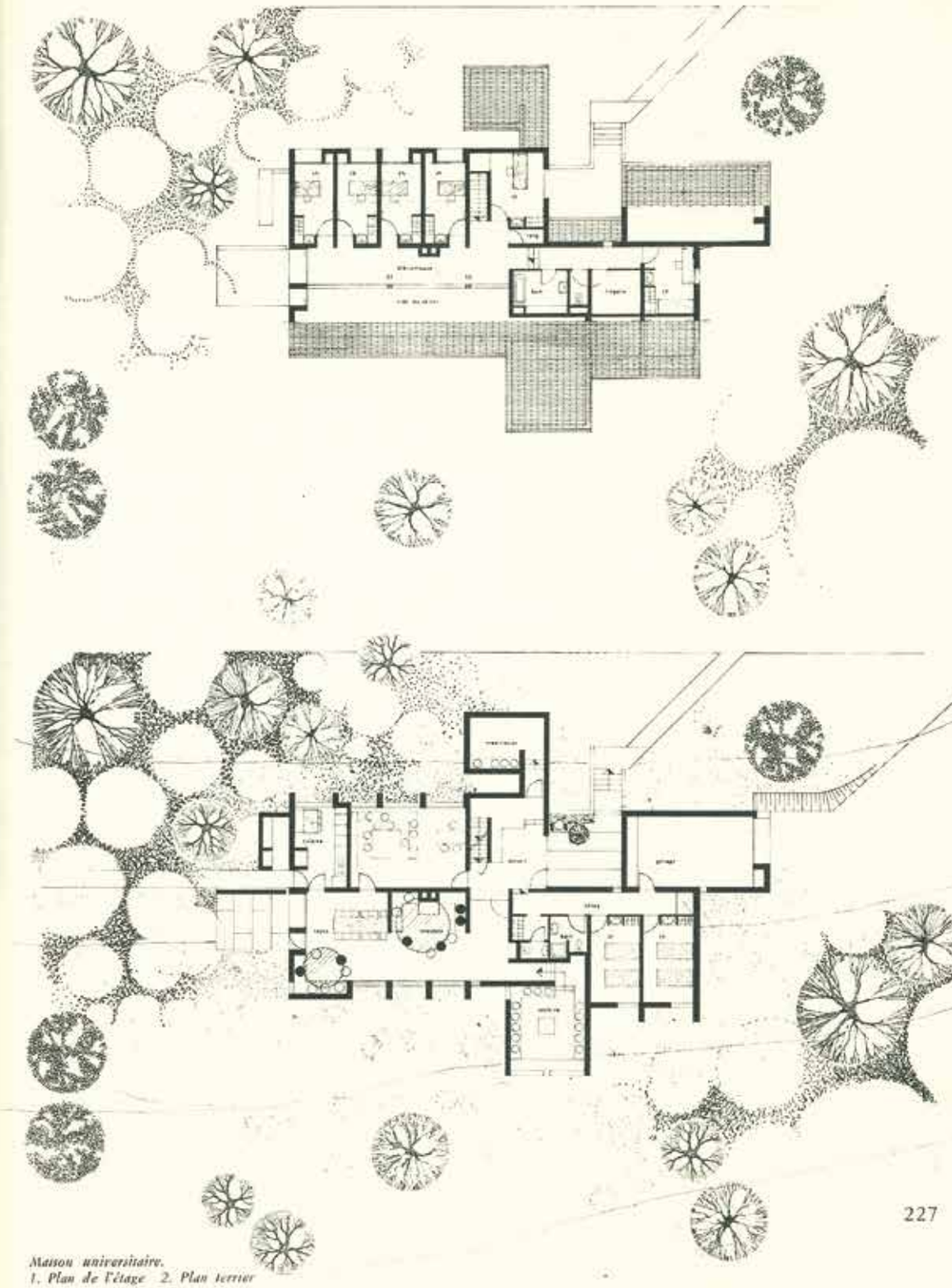
D'une part une zone de calme et de silence, comportant seize cellules sur quatre niveaux, et, d'autre part, organisés sur trois niveaux, les espaces de vie et de rencontre, les bureaux, et en position terminale, le quartier des hôtes. Cette situation des hôtes leur permet une participation à la vie communautaire tout en ménageant un isolement possible quand il est souhaité.

Les locaux de vie sont traités comme un enchaînement organique d'espaces diversifiés, qui favorisent la formation de groupes ayant chacun leur territoire tout en conservant la sensation d'appartenir et de participer à une totalité. Ils permettent dans certaines occasions exceptionnelles la réunion d'un groupe de 80 à 100 personnes. La maison universitaire applique dans leur intégralité les principes développés pour les espaces de vie de la maison principale.

C'est un foyer sur lequel se greffent directement toutes les fonctions. Seules les chambres d'hôtes sont distribuées séparément.

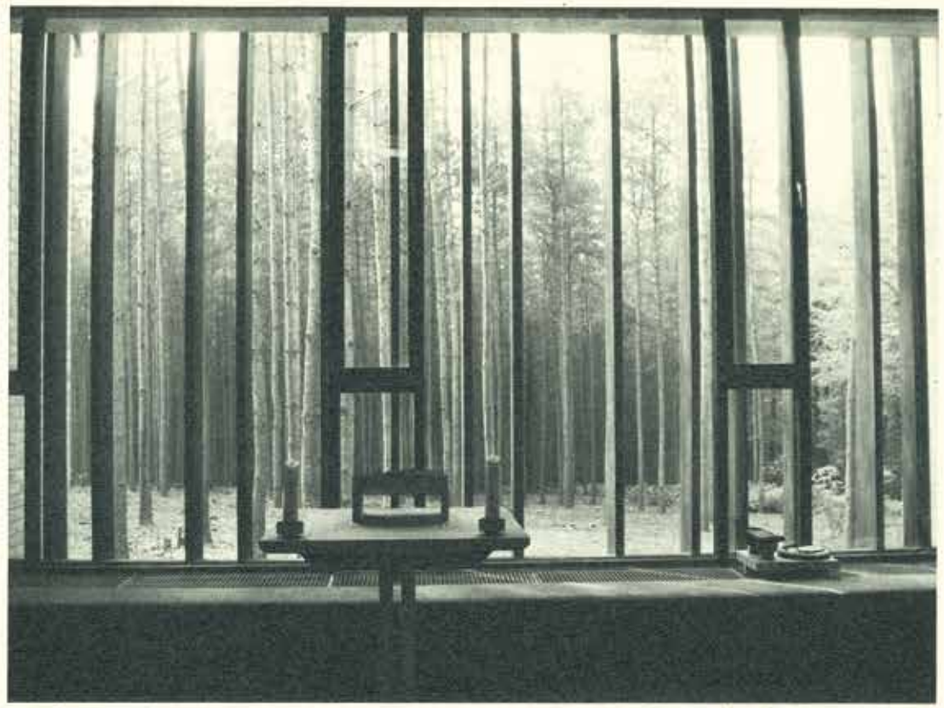
Jean COSSE.

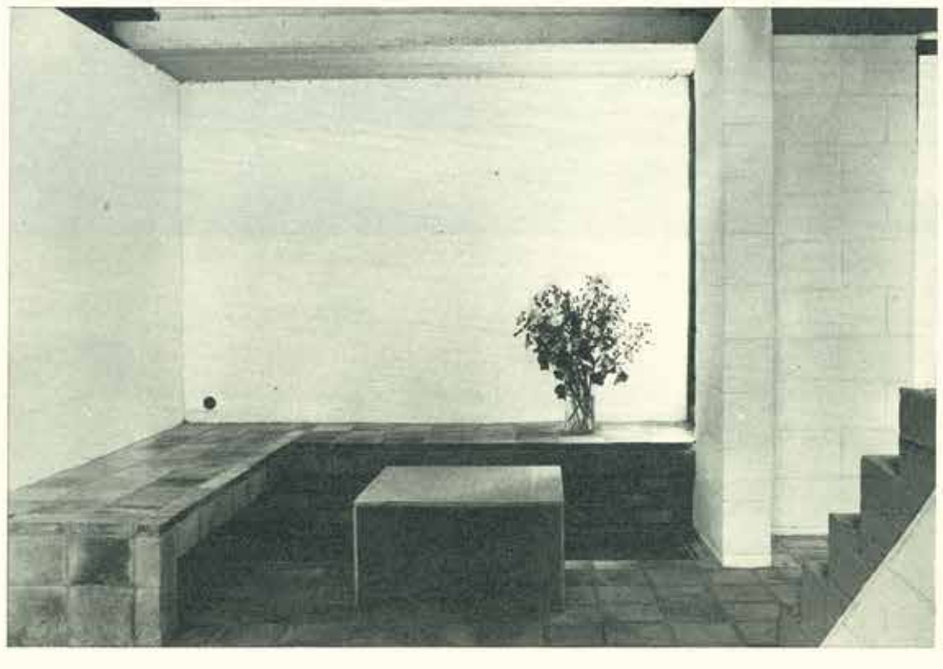
Plan d'implantation du monastère, montrant : 1. la maison principale 2. la maison universitaire 3. la future chapelle centrale



Maison universitaire.
1. Plan de l'étage 2. Plan terrier

[5] The house-monastery of St-André de Clerlande designed by Jean Cosse in 1971 in the woods of Ottignies: 'As the typology of churches was filtered through Vatican II, so should monasteries also explore new forms of expression.' (F. Debuyst) (1) situation plan following the slope of the terrain, (2) university guest house, ground floor and (3) first floor.





Maison principale. Ci-dessus : *Un aspect de la façade nord-est.*
Page de droite : *1. La chapelle de célébration, vers les bois.*
2. Un coin du living (Photos Jean Cosse).

[6] Jean Cosse, the house-monastery of St-André de Clerlande (1971), (1) exterior view with pine trees in front of the north-east façade, (2) interior of the chapel with vertical window frames, and (3) a corner in the living room.

[7] Jean Cosse, the house-monastery of St-André de Clerlande (1971), the guest house: (1) exterior view of the east façade, (2) section drawing and (3) interior view with the duplex structure.

find today a church which translates so fully a concept both theologically and architecturally with a concern for detail full of poetry and true humanity.'[20]

Finally, Debuyst found in Cosse a like-minded spirit using a vocabulary – both spatially and architecturally – that created a new synthesis for his third force. The intellectual and spiritual friendship between the men would herald the design of a new monastery, fully embedded within the concept of the house church, a typology derived from the respective disciplines of each man: theology and architecture.

The house-monastery of St-André de Clerlande

The French-speaking Benedictine monks of the St André Abbey in Zevenkerken had the ambition to found a new monastery in the vicinities of the new university, 'Louvain-la-Neuve', as a result of a fracture caused by language issues at the 'old' Catholic University of Leuven. Having acquired a plot of land in a pine forest in Ottignies, Frédéric Debuyst was obviously concerned to find the appropriate architectural expression. The reservoir which he developed in *Art d'Église* was like a mirror that he used as frame of reference.

Jean Cosse's work in Waterloo was to become the point of departure and we see his first sketches appearing in January 1971 to illustrate an essay by Debuyst, *Some reflections on the 'place' of monastic prayer*.[21] There is a need to reform, he explains, 'the predominantly intellectual, impersonal and objectified frame that was handed over from previous centuries. As the typology of churches was filtered through Vatican II, so should monasteries also explore new forms of expression. These 'reflections' of Debuyst are nothing less than a design brief:

[20] *Jean Cosse, architecte: Des maisons pour vivre*, (Brussels: Editions Art, vie esprit, 1975), 100-101 (translation by the author).

[21] Debuyst, 'le lieu de la prière monastique', *Art d'Église*, n°154 (1971), 129-135

[22] It continues to explain also the specifics of the church, the living spaces for the monks and the guest rooms. (Ibidem, p. A.)

[23] Issue 157 (1971) of *Art d'Église* is solely dedicated to the completed monastery, starting with an essay by Jean Cosse explaining his intentions and reflections on the plan, materials etc. (there are only two essay: Jean Cosse, "Le monastère Saint-André à Ottignies" and Frédéric Debuyst, "Petite dialectique du "monastère-maison")

[24] Ibidem.

> ... the choir would be rearranged with simpler furnishing, more related to human scale, its level reduced to that of the nave, if possible around an altar placed as centrally as possible ... arranging the whole church along the axis of its breath rather than its length ... for the daily rhythm of prayer, it will be necessary at all events to find another space adapted to the real scale of the community, and the few guests who may wish to associate themselves with it ... A domestic rather than a public liturgy will find in such a location its true environment ... personal and meditative prayer will perhaps demand a third space, situated in the quietest part of the monastery, and, if possible, in direct contact with nature.
> ...
> For its regular Office the community will have in the centre of the monastery an oratory about twenty feet by twenty feet, a large room with white walls, insulated against noise, having a small altar in the middle and a single long seat running around the walls. At one time it will be able to contain fifteen to twenty monks and as many guests. A large bay window will open onto the woods but without destroying its intimacy.'[22]

The general concept and discourse of this program was a perfect fit for Jean Cosse, who was particularly happy with the physical conditions of the site where he could develop his theory between architecture and the landscape.

The volumes could inscribe themselves on the land and follow exactly the slope of the terrain. The site is characterised by pine trees, which is rare in Brabant. The soil is therefore sandy and Cosse tried to echo this in his architectural language and materials. In his own words, 'The consideration of the ensemble of factors led to the choice of carrying walls in light cement blocks left visible in the interior and with an outer facing of bricks of 'leather colour' which harmonize particularly with the site.'[23]

The title of Debuyst's essay explaining 'his' monastery is an obvious synthesis of all his previous writings on churches: *A short dialectic of the 'House Monastery'*.[24] It elaborates on all his earlier themes, such as hospitality, human values, the inner climate of the house, its relationship with the surrounding nature and the emergence of poetic qualities (as he quotes from Bachelard). The omnipresence of nature is referred to as an 'ecological experience' with a hundred different openings blurring the boundaries between interior and exterior. He paints a most wonderful and accurate picture of 'an island of interiority in the midst of the woods'.

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[2] Top image: Wiedermann. "Emil Steffann. Grange-église près de Thionville." *Art d'Église*, no. 140 (1967): 65. Bottom image: Steffan, Emil. "Le toit de la grange-chapelle reprend et prolonge la ligne ascendante de la colline." In Debuyst, Frédéric. *Le génie chrétien du lieu.* Paris: Les éditions du CERF, 1997: 20.

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[7] Cosse, Jean. "St. André de Clerlande. Maison principale. Façade nord-est, chapelle de célébration, coin de living." *Art d'Église*, no. 157 (1971): 248-249.

All figures: courtesy of Art d'Eglise (reproduced with permission of Monastery of St. André de Clerlande)

The church of St. Alena in Brussels
Vatican II as a source for adaptive reuse[1]

B. Plevoets, L.Van Den Bosch, N. Vande Keere . . . . . .

[1] St. Alena, interior view towards nave and side chapel; photograph by Christine Bastin

The principles laid down in Vatican II formed the basis for the reform of the liturgical space in existing churches and initiated the freedom for new architectural design in modern churches. Beyond that, we would like to argue the contemporary potential of these principles as an inspiration for the adaptive reuse of church architecture. Studying and applying them as a starting point for spatial interventions, the students worked on the case study of the church of St. Alena in St. Gillis in the south of Brussels during the design studio in the first semester.[2] The church was built over the period 1940–1972, its plans being adapted several times during and between construction phases. 'Modernisation' came about gradually due to various factors: besides the shift in ideas about the liturgy and church architecture, the project was interrupted due to lack of funds, the impact of WWII, and the changing process of collaboration between the architects. The result is a church which is traditional in its basic plan, but modern in its appearance and structure.

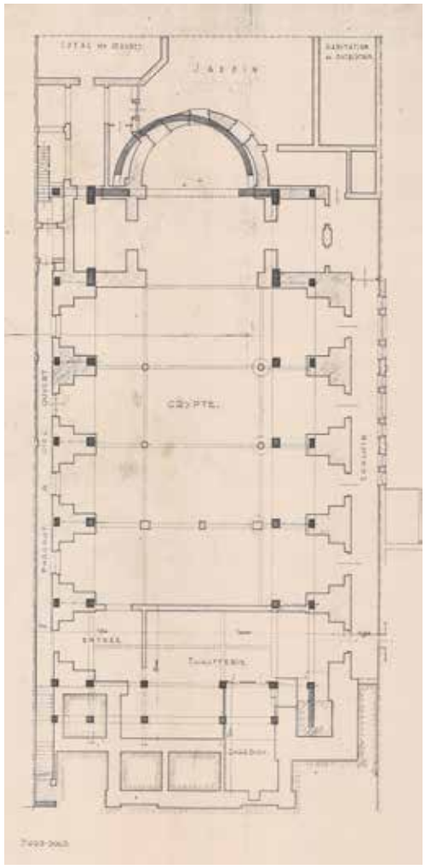
At the start of the assignment, St. Alena had not functioned as a traditional parish church for local inhabitants for some time. Until recently it was used by the (older) Italian migrant population in St. Gillis and, since September 2017, by the Brazilian community of the Brussels region for weekly mass and social gatherings afterwards. The church itself is relatively well preserved, although some restoration work appears necessary in the near future. The plot, which is owned by the church, also includes a large garden to the west, a presbytery to the east and adjacent buildings to the back of the church, a large part of which were formerly used by the Scouts Association. The basement is currently used as a community space but is a poor quality space, with limited daylight and complicated access. The presbytery and adjacent buildings, together with the foundations and basement – part of an older design – are in worse condition. Although there are no plans for the adaptive reuse or additional shared use of the church, the Brazilian community has expressed interest in upgrading some of the spaces surrounding the church and using them more extensively. The available space, however, exceeds the requirements of the community, and the community, at the same time, lacks the funds to invest in a larger plan without the involvement of other parties.

History of the church

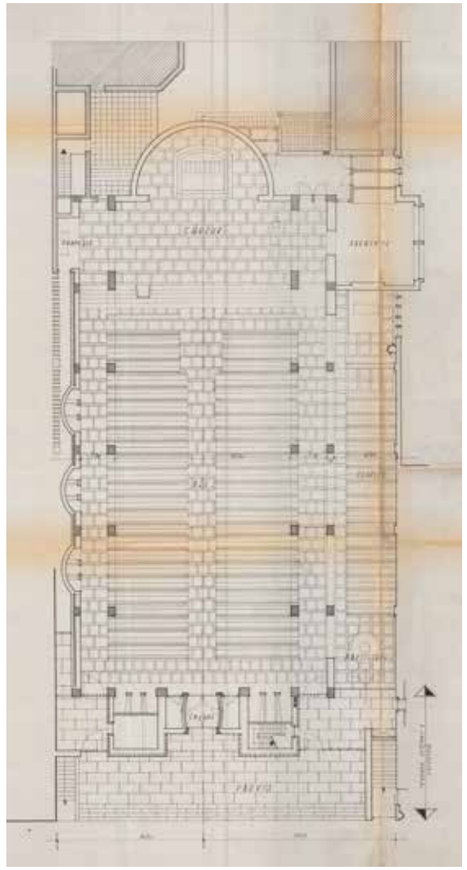
The first plans for St. Alena date back to 1913. The church was designed in an eclectic style by the architect Louis Pepermans, as the parish church for the neighbourhood of St. Gillis. Of these original designs, only the basement and adjacent buildings were built. The project was revived in the 1930s with a design competition won by the young architect, Roger Bastin (1913–1986). For the interior of the church, the side chapel and the façade, he collaborated with Jacques Dupuis (1914–1984). The construction started in 1940 but suffered delays due to WWII and a lack of funding. The main body of the church was finished in 1951, while the street façade was only finally completed in 1972. In the course of this process, several adaptations completely transformed the design.

The numerous plans and sketches found in the basement of the presbytery reveal how the project became increasingly modern as it developed over time. Probably, at least in part, for economic reasons, the competition design proposal was conceived as a lightweight construction, consisting of a framework in reinforced concrete, enclosed by a double brick wall. The massive foundations of the basement simultaneously supported the outer walls and the row of inner columns, creating an ambulatory on both sides of the nave. The architects also proposed to incorporate within the body of the church the passage that corresponds with the basement entrance, which was previously planned to lie between the church and the presbytery. The space thus created in this area would fit a lateral chapel, the height of which would not surpass the base of the windows in the nave. To give this chapel the correct proportions, the concrete columns supporting the main volume were shifted inwards and required additional support besides the existing foundations. The axis of the nave was thus slightly shifted, as can be observed at the rear of the church where the curve of the new apse does not completely correspond with the curve of Pepermans's foundations. To balance the proportions of the nave, the façade and organ loft were shifted inwards, resulting in a larger forecourt between the church and the street, with a low *narthex* and *baptisterium* in front. In later drawings, the nave became higher and the façade more vertical. Initially the lower *narthex* was retained, but in later designs it was replaced by a smaller version integrated in the body of the church with the *baptisterium* as an additional lower element. The final design became a radically simplified version of the different elements mentioned.

Beside the modernisation of the architectural design, the positions of the altar and ambo were adapted to meet the requirements of the liturgical reforms. The interior architecture has a modern finish with geometrical decoration, including motifs fashionable in the context of Vatican II. The iconography, particularly the sculpted capitals in the side chapel representing figures of the apocalypse, are influenced by the trauma of WWII. The evolution of the church's architecture and interior reflects the transition from pre- to post-Vatican II and was formative in the future careers of Bastin and Dupuis.[3] There is no doubt that the interaction between the two young architects elevated the quality of the design: the deliberate sobriety of the project perhaps relying on the more rational Bastin, while the richness of some architectural elements and ornaments carry the spirit of Dupuis.[4] Although the building is a fine example of modern church architecture, including high-quality craftsmanship and stained-glass windows, and reliefs and sculptures commissioned from local artists, and forms part of the official inventory of built heritage in Brussels, it is not officially protected as a monument.[5]



[2] Floorplan of basement 1940, columns and apse of the church are shifted in comparison with the foundations



[3] Floorplan of church floor 1955, a narrow lateral chapel breaks the symmetry of the church on the east side

Design Studio

As a preparation for the design assignment for the church of St. Alena, the students analysed in groups a selection of outstanding examples of modern Belgian churches, to gain insight into the characteristics of modern ecclesiastical architecture, and how it has been influenced by liturgical reform in the context of Vatican II and by the social context of the post-war period in more general terms.[6] Additionally, students took part in preliminary historical research on St. Alena, largely based on the parish archives which were made available to the students in the context of this assignment.

[1] This paper is partly derived from a conference contribution: Nikolaas Vande Keere and Bie Plevoets, 'Heritage without heirs? Reconnecting church and community through adaptive reuse,' in *Proceedings of the Interpret Europe Conference 2018*, ed. Marie Banks (Kőszeg: Kőme, 2018), 195–207. The contribution addresses the topics of migration and secularisation in the context of adaptive reuse of church architecture by comparing the case of St. Alena and the studio results to parallel design research carried out for various parishes in Flanders and organised by the Team Flemish Government Architect between 2016 and 2019. The design research was carried out by the team TRACE (Architecten Broekx-Schiepers, Architect Saidja Heynickx, UR architects and Hasselt University), which is closely linked to the research group with the same name and to some of the authors responsible for this cahier. See also Marijn van de Weijer and Nikolaas Vande Keere, 'The Case of the St. Alêne Church in Brussels,' in *RMB Conference Week 2018 Coimbra // April 6th and 7th*, ed. Michel Melenhorst, Gonçalo Canto Moniz and Paulo Providencia (Coimbra: RMB Erasmus Project, 2019), 73–81 (publication pending).

[2] The design studio was part of a joint master class that took place in the autumn of 2017 as a collaboration between two schools: the International Masters in Interiors on Adaptive Reuse of Hasselt University, Belgium, and the Masters in Architecture of the University of Wuppertal, Germany. The students from Wuppertal worked on the adaptive reuse of two cases in Germany – the Heilige Familie church in Oberhausen and St. Maria Himmelfahrt in Wesel, both designed by Rudolf Schwarz (1905–1994), while the students from Hasselt worked on the St. Alena church. During two short intensive workshops organised in both faculties, the students exchanged insights and ideas on how to approach modern churches.

[3] The architectural project of St. Alena was heavily criticised by architectural critic Geert Bekaert, who categorised the project alongside the majority of Belgian post-war projects as 'an extension and, in some cases, a copy of the architecture of totalitarian regimes' (Geert Bekaert and Francis Strauven, *Construction en Belgique 1945–1970* (Brussels: Confédération Nationale de la Construction: 1971, 50). Although a comparison with the architectural language of the fascist Palazzo della Civiltà

ca. 1950 view of unfinished church (R. Bastin) and presbytery (L. Pepermans)

1924
construction of adjacent apartments
(10 storeys, by Camille Damman)

1918
adjacent villas demolished

1948
wall cladding of nave and apse
placement of decorative capitals

1947
large windows in deambulatory are
replaced by small circular windows

1945
fruition decoration
of nave ceiling

1943
placement main altar
and side chapel altar

1942
first Mass
27.09.'42

1952
completion of
"Via Crucis"

1966
draft designs for replacement of main altar

1968
restoration of organs
benediction altar cross

1985
partition side chapel
installation of individual heating systems

1910 | WW I | 1920 | 1930 | 1940 | WW II | 1950 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000

clergymen: A. de Maheu | J. Buisseret | J. Balthazard | Kervyn de Meerendré

architects: L. Pepermans | G. Maréchal | R. Bastin - J. Dupuis

shift of users: from parish church to Italian migrant community

1912
design of church,
presbytery, annexes

1913
building application and construction
of crypt, presbytery, annexes

1931
preliminary
design church

1913
final facade
design

1937
design competition:
- arch. G. Moreau
- arch. G. Pepermans
- arch. R. Bastin

1939
building application church

1940
start construction works

1941
benediction of the first stone
29.06.'41

1942
first Mass in unfinished church
27.09.'42

1944
final facade design

1955
presentation of current
facade design

1972
modifications to facade, in collaboration with J. Dupuis

1974
completion of modifications to forecourt and side facades
placement of abstract sculpture by P. Denis

1978 - 1983
several large-scale roof repairs

1953 interior close to completion (pre-Vaticanum II)

one of the capitals in between side chapel and ship (H. van Altadu)

confessional (J. Dupuis) and Via Crucis (G. Boulmant, Z. Buzine)

side chapel (several artists, under supervision of J. Dupuis)

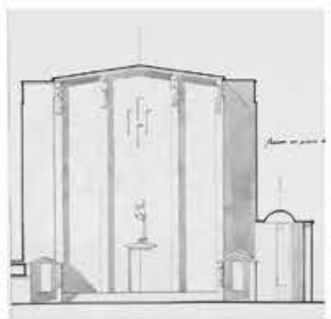
1968 new altar (R. Bastin) post-Vaticanum II

1912-1913 (L. Pepermans)

1937 preliminary sketch (R. Bastin)

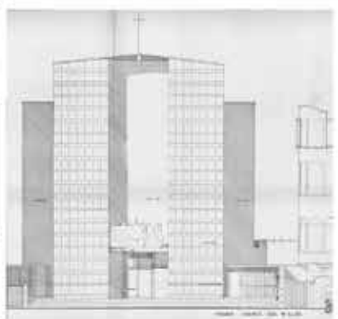
1938 competition design (R. Bastin, drawn by J. Dupuis)

1938 facade design (R. Bastin)



1940 adjusted facade design (R. Bastin)

1944 model of facade study



1955 final facade design (R. Bastin)

1973 model of final interventions

[4] Timeline showing the evolution of the interior design and arrangement together with some iconographic elements in the upper part, with the evolution of the body of the church, and the various designs proposed for the façade in the lower part.

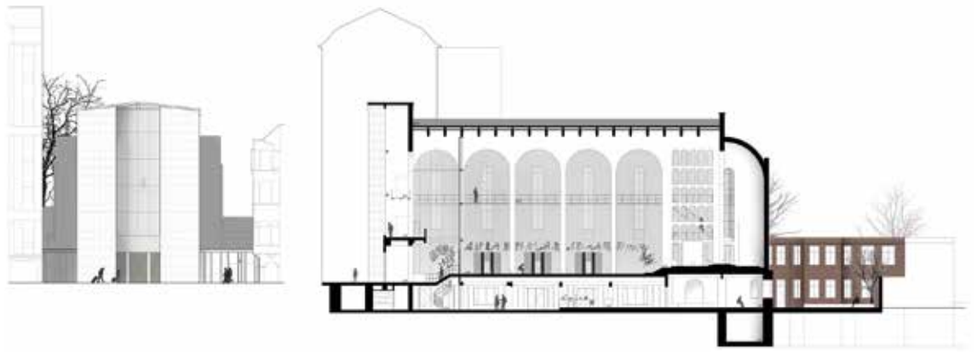
The assignment for the church acknowledged the recent change in use (and re-activation) of the building. The focus of the design studio was therefore on possible additional functions for the surrounding spaces to enable a spatial upgrade and to link the church and its new community to the wider environment and the local inhabitants of St. Gillis. This would include transforming the programme of church activities with the introduction of social or cultural activities, rather than strictly commercial or private functions. Spatial requirements, such as the need for a better connection between the street, inner gardens and the church space itself, were included. At the same time, the students were encouraged to work with the material and non-material memory of the building (process) as sources for inspiration. The project has the potential to embed the building and its activities in the surrounding area and, at the same time, to become a new home for the migrant community. In what follows we elaborate on the concept and design proposals of two students.

'A quand Taizé à St. Gilles?'

Tijl Beelen's project was inspired by a particular postcard found on site. The card was sent in 1967 from a youth retreat in Taizé by some Catholic Sisters to the parish priest of St. Alena. It describes the particular atmosphere they had experienced during their pilgrimage and is clearly coloured by the exciting and genuine spirit of reform felt at the time. Eagerly looking forward to bringing the message home, they conclude with the above sentence, translated as 'When will Taizé be at St. Gillis?' This inspired Beelen to propose the transformation of the church and adjacent buildings into a youth hostel and retreat centre for pilgrims, an idea strengthened by the location of the church on one of the extended pilgrim routes to Santiago De Compostela. This plan could also easily co-exist with the current use by the Brazilian community.

The most significant architectural intervention was his proposal for the transformation of the façade and entrance to the building. Currently, the entrance gives access at church level, which is several steps higher than street level, while the basement is only accessible through a side entrance. Together with the closed character of the front façade, the differences in level create a barrier between the street and the interior. Therefore, the design proposes an in-between space, inside the church but at street level and visible from the outside, by making a part of the front façade transparent, creating an entrance portal with the more inviting character of a preparatory or transitional space, allowing for assembly and silence before entering the sacred space of the church. Beelen referred to the courtyard of the *Basilica di San Clemente* in Rome, and adapted the concept to the St. Alena church. A new *narthex* was created by extending the level of the street to the first two bays of the interior. New stairs and an elevator in this space provide equal access to the levels of the church and of the basement, which houses a reception area and the multifunctional and communal space of the youth hostel. On the same level, below the sanctuary, he added a chapel or silent space, open and extendable towards the shared facilities.

[5] Taizé Postcard, 1967



[6] Tijl Beelen, design for the new front façade and longitudinal section

[7] Emilie Raquet, a model of the new building and the *corridor de silence*; photograph by Liesbeth Driessen

[8] Sainte Marie de la Tourette – Le Corbusier, façade detail, 1960; photograph by Fernando Schapochnik

Italiana (Rome, 1937) seems to support this critique, the argument was refuted by Maurizio Cohen and Jan Thomaes, identifying German architects Dominikus Böhm, Emil Steffan and Rudolf Schwarz and Scandinavian architects Asplund and Aalto as mayor sources of inspiration for both Bastin and Dupuis. Aside from this, contemporary critics point out that architectural realisations of the post-war era are not necessarily inscribed within political views, but rather within expressive investigations refuting the more uncompromising precepts of modernism. (Maurizio Cohen and Jan Thomaes, *Jacques Dupuis l'architecte* (Bruxelles: La Lettre volée, 2000) 124.) One of the German projects most likely to have inspired the architects is the St. Fronleichnamskirche by Rudolf Schwarz (in terms of contrasting materials, black marble versus white stucco and the low ceiling height of the side chapel). This project is described more in detail in the last contribution in this cahier, *Beyond the Modern* by Christoph Grafe.

[4] In his eulogy on Bastin, Lanotte describes Bastin as an intuitive perfectionist, experimenting with volumes and masses, whereas Dupuis expresses his artistry through materiality, ornaments and a playful line. 'Two men combining their contrasts to disclose the subtleties of light, of solid surfaces and of perforated surfaces, where body and spirit could be released.' (*deux hommes conjuguant leurs contrastes pour mettre au jour dans les subtilités de la lumière, les surfaces pleines et les surfaces trouées, où se dilateront corps et esprit.)* André Lanotte, 'Notice sur Roger Bastin,' in *Annuaire de l'Académie Royale de Belgique 1933* (Brussels: Maurice Lamertin, 1933), 179–180.

[5] Jacques Buisseret, *La construction de l'Église* (unpublished, archive of St. Alena Parish, est. 1952–1957); Lanotte 'Notice sur Roger Bastin'; 'Église Sainte-Alène. Avenue des Villas 49-51-53,' MRBC, last modified: 2004, http://www.irismonument.be/fr.Saint-Gilles.Avenue_des_Villas.49.html.

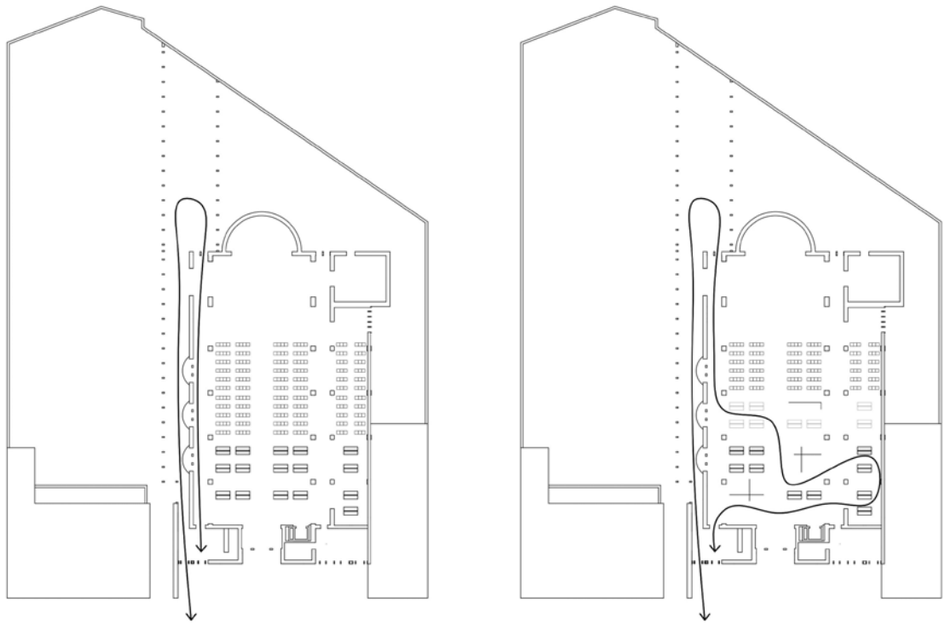
[6] See also the previous article in this cahier, *Contemplative Freshness* by Koenraad Van Cleempoel.

Modernist Gesamtkunstwerk

Emilie Raquet started her project with a thorough analysis of the architectural qualities of St. Alena through careful observation of its use and comparison of the church with other modernist (religious) buildings. In her presentation, she described the experience of moving through or accessing the different parts of the building, referring to the so-called *corridor de silence* which used to be the main entrance to the basement, functioning as the liturgical space before the modern part of St. Alena was built. Inspired by the typical and tactile contrast of modern materials, such as rough concrete against elements of figured glass and precious metals, she investigated the material oeuvre of the architects and their contemporaries and went back to one of the canonical sources of inspiration at the time, the convent of Sainte Marie de la Tourette by Le Corbusier. To define the additional programme of activities, she built further on the contemporary characteristics of St. Gillis as a creative and cultural hub in Brussels and proposed the inclusion of an art centre with a gallery, atelier space and accommodation for artists in residence.

Racquet removed the adjacent buildings behind the church and added a new low building stretching from front to back. The design of this new building is inspired by monastic architecture in that a new *corridor de silence* connects all the different spaces like a cloister. Besides its role as a direct route from the street to the new apartments for artists at the back, it also serves as an exhibition space. Its structure of concrete ribs filled in with different types of glass, as in la Tourette, allows for a direct and continuous relationship with the garden and captures the evening sun.

Racquet made limited changes to the interior of the church but proposed a dual use of the church without creating a fixed or physical separation between the different functions. The religious purpose of the church is focused in the choir and the large part of the nave, while the rear could be used as a flexible and informal art gallery. The basement has been designed for use as artists' studios, with shared kitchen and dining facilities below the choir.



[9] Emilie Raquet, routing of the exhibition space versus the church space

Conclusion

Studying St. Alena church revealed a layered history that offered potential for a transformation in style and (religious) meaning of the building, giving its modernist properties a tangible context in time. The two student projects described seized on these properties and considered them in the context of adaptive reuse. By thoroughly studying the material and non-material history of the building and site, they identify and select specific traces – defined as bridges between past and present – as anchors for the design process. The first project had the re-sourcing of Vatican II at its heart by re-introducing the concept of the *narthex*. The design improved the connection of the different functions with the street, to allow pilgrims to enter and live in the buildings and gardens, without restricting their function to Christian worship. The second project built further on the modernistic architectural properties of the final church design and deliberately sought out additional sources from the monastic architecture of the same era.

The reuse proposals for St. Alena thus assimilate historical (re-)sources as the starting point for their adaptive reuse. The selected traces for both cases are the result of a personal and empathic reading of the site and its cultural context. The designs apply these sources to a much-needed transformation in a considerate and balanced manner and emphasise continuity where at first perhaps radical change seemed inevitable. The goal is to reach a gentle transformation from within, able to affirm and secure a place in the future, while at the same time maintaining a link with history. This goal incorporates the hope that new communities will adopt the church building, and the new opportunities for use it offers, in such a way that it plays, once again, a crucial role in society, and lends these communities the identity they deserve.

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[1] Bastin, Christine. "St. Alena, interior view towards nave and side chapel." Date unknown. Reproduced with permission from the heirs of Roger Bastin.

[2] Bastin, Roger and Jacques Dupuis. cut-out of "Eglise Ste. Alène, dessin n° 1. Partie du dossier du Conseil de Fabrique, vu et approuvé 24-4-1940." 1940. St. Alène parish archives (reproduced with permission from the parish and from the heirs of Roger Bastin).

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[7] Schapochnik, Fernando. "Sainte-Marie de la Tourette - Facade detail." date unknown. Project by Le Corbusier, 1960.

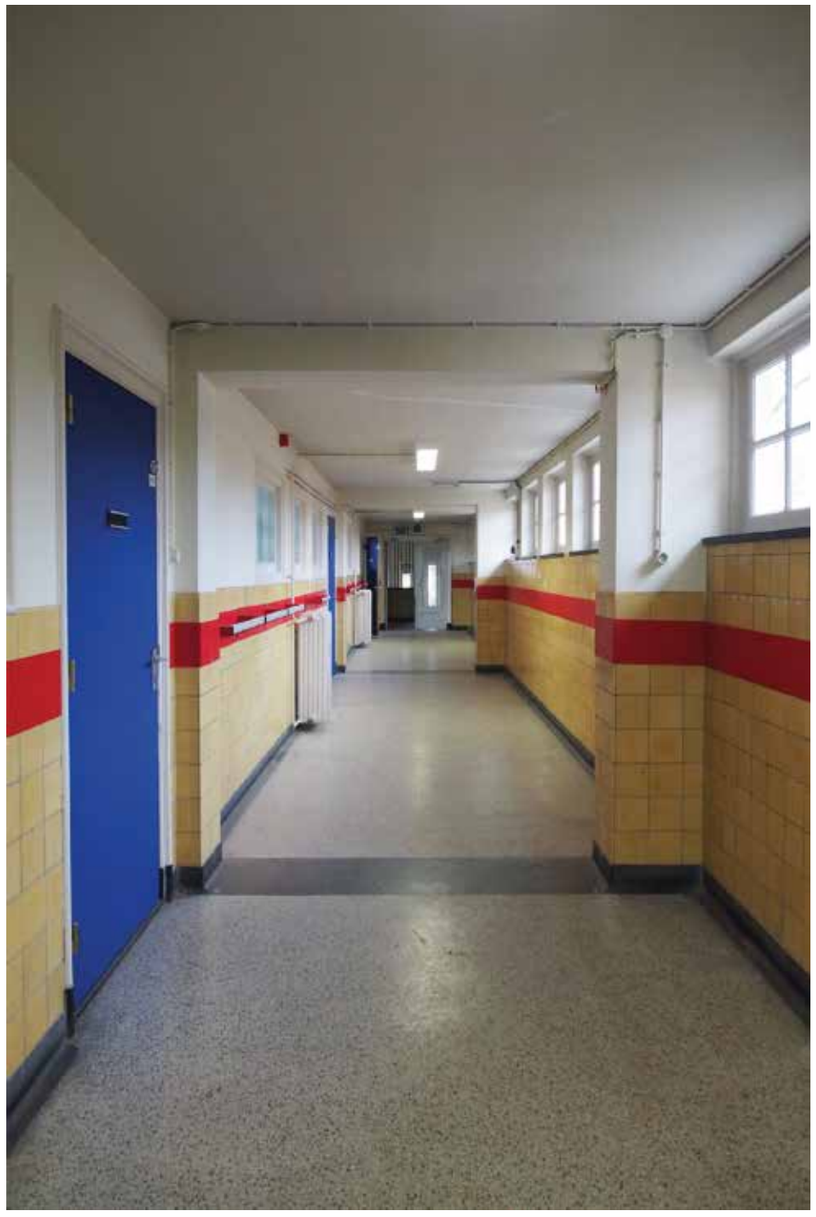
[8] Driessen, Liesbeth. "model of St. Alena with new volume." 2017. Project by Emilie Raquet.

[9] Raquet, Emilie. "St. Alena: floor plan with routing of exhibition vs. church space." 2017.

Re-reading the 'Corridor-School' of J. W. Hanrath

Addressing the interior DNA of a typology

T. Beelen, S. Heynickx . . . . . .



[1] Corridor in the C.N.S. school Galileistraat, Eindhoven

Reading a site or a building in the context of adaptive reuse almost always starts with gaining an understanding of the urban context. The reading of the layers of history is an important base for first conclusions and the introduction of possible interventions. The building, always testimony to a specific period, is categorised in that moment in a value system. Often, the question arises: do we keep it, and additionally: can we transform it to a new programme?

The qualities of the interior-DNA can then be a source of inspiration. Combining the meaning of the larger scale (urban development, other cases) with the analysis and the contours of typological qualities, as well as the specific intentions of the architect, can initiate a thinking process from the inside. This reuse strategy, starting from the spatial qualities in the typology of the architecture, is broader than a-priori programmatic choices such as loft housing in former industrial and school buildings.[1]

Our case study is a school by architect Johan Wilhelm Hanrath (1867–1932) in Eindhoven (NL). Hanrath played an important role in the history of Eindhoven and Philips,[2] designing various mansions, housing projects and schools in the years of the city's explosive growth in the interwar period. The school in Galileistraat, built in 1922, was the focus of Tijl Beelen's graduation project.[3] The original project is organised around the typology of the corridor. The specific use of the corridor and its potential forms the backbone of the redesign proposal.

[2] Production of lightbulbs, ca. 1915
(Philips Company Archives) This image of the first lightbulb factory in Europe illustrates the rapid development of modernisation in the city of Eindhoven. Notice the changing role of the woman, working in a factory now.

An (*almost)* modern architect in the new landscape of Eindhoven

C.N.S. Galileistraat (figure 1) is the name of a former school, located on Galileistraat in Eindhoven, The Netherlands. It was designed by Hanrath, in collaboration with his partner P.H.N. Briët (1894–1978) and completed in 1932. The school was part of a large social housing district, designed and commissioned by the Philips Company. Its location is characterised by the presence of many historical layers that provide the building with a unique context. Furthermore, this school building is one of five schools designed by the same architects in the same time period, probably derived from a standard typology.

According to a report by Crimson in 2016, Hanrath's traditional, sometimes historicising style was not considered particularly striking or innovative during his lifetime, especially when compared to his contemporaries, H.P. Berlage (1856–1934), K.P.C. de Bazel (1869–1923) and W.M. Dudok (1884–1974). These were attracted to new kind of 'rational architecture' embedded in international developments. Nevertheless, Hanrath's work received recognition in later times, as many of his buildings became listed as National or Municipal Monuments.

Developing an individual style

Hanrath slowly started to develop his own architectural style, inspired by the farmhouses scattered around the landscape surrounding Hilversum. Another influence was the English mansion style. His designs were characterised by the use of natural materials, striving to create a sense of calm and not disrupting the surroundings. The façades are often unplastered brickwork under a high tiled roof with a large overhang and a strong emphasis on the horizontal line.

In general, his work can be characterised as traditional, with the occasional side step into a more modern and expressionistic architecture for non-residential designs. Hanrath carefully studied various architectural styles and applied elements of these in his own designs. He aspired to peace and order, as seen in his symmetrical plans, elevations and shapes. Interruptions to that symmetry were often a very conscious choice to strengthen the design.

Hanrath does not seem ever to have prioritised developing a personal architectural style. According to Van Aalst,[5] his work can be divided into two types of architecture. On the one hand, his Revival architecture used historical motifs and the villa 'Groenendaal' is a primary example of this. Hanrath always underlined in this project the importance of the use of craftsmanship, and unity between interior and exterior, in compliance with the values of the Arts and Crafts movement.[6]

On the other hand, a more traditional, and to some extent vernacular, architecture characterised the beginning of his career. Van der Zweth[7] states that Hanrath took his inspirations from both the English tradition of house building and the Dutch farm building, and that he always aimed to contextualise his buildings with their surroundings. He was never regarded as an architectural innovator.

Towards the end of his life, his designs start to show affinity with modernistic elements and especially the typology in plan. After the tragic death of his son, however, Hanrath was unable to continue working and his designs were completed by Briët, who introduced this more fashionable design style.[8]

Typology of Hanrath's schools

The original design of the school on *Galileistraat* is a typical example of a 'corridor school'. The layout is characterised by the position of the classrooms, unilaterally connected by a corridor or hallway, with different floors linked via the main staircase.

An educational law of 1985, stating that kindergartens and primary schools should merge, increased pressure on many school buildings as they were now supposed to accommodate more children. Many corridor schools, and also schools from the post-war period, were simply too small, and could no longer meet contemporary educational requirements. The lack of space was often solved by the use of temporary, prefabricated, classrooms, or when the location allowed it, by expanding the school with new buildings.[9]

General description of the building

Crimson describes the former C.N.S. School as having a principal brick structure, housing four classrooms on the ground floor and three on the first floor, with a gently sloping roof and relatively large roof overhangs, covered with dark roof tiles. The school is situated on the edge of a square, is freestanding and has a fenced playground. The long façade on the *Galileistraat* is orientated towards the east and has large composed windows (one per classroom) on the ground floor and on the first floor [figure 3].

Original setup

The school's main entrance is on *Galileistraat* and leads to the central hall where the stairs are located. The headmaster's room was strategically positioned to the left of the entrance, with a small window looking onto the central hall. There is also a door, opposite the entrance, to the playground, and a door to the long corridor that connects the four classrooms on the ground floor.

The first floor, with the staffroom directly above the entrance, features another long hallway, leading to three classrooms. A small protrusion (towards the playground) at the end of this corridor houses the toilets, located directly above the toilets on the ground floor. The first floor also grants access to attics, only used for storage. Finally, below the entrance hall is the basement, used as a coal shed and to house the heating system.

1 This vision is explained in Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living* (New York: Rutgers University Press, 2014). Zukin wrote a pioneering book about the concept of lofts in 1983. In *Loft Living* she describes sharply the phases in the process of gentrification and the role of the industrial open space in the changing patterns of lifestyle. Zukin demonstrates that, initially, the reuse of industrial heritage was not a question of design or good taste but an almost spontaneous discovery and recuperation of found qualities (high ceilings, open plan spaces).

2 The relationship between the company Philips, founded by Gerard (son) and Frederik (father) Philips, and Eindhoven is a striking example of the innovational impact of the second industrial revolution in the 19th century. The company started in Eindhoven in 1891 with the production of carbon-filament lamps and other electro-technical products, the high-tech products of that moment. Eindhoven, until then a combination of small villages, becomes an industrial city with a more than symbolic connection with Philips and the modern area of electricity and artificial light. (See 'More than a century of innovation and entrepreneurship', Philips, accessed May 5, 2019, https://www.philips.com/a-w/about/company/our-heritage.html)

3 This article is largely based on research by Tijl Beelen, *C.N.S. Galileistraat, searching permanent optimization for temporary adaptive re-use initiatives* (unpublished masters thesis, Hasselt University, 2018). This thesis is the result of research conducted in the courses *Masters Thesis* and *Masters Project* at the International Masters on Adaptive Reuse at Hasselt University.

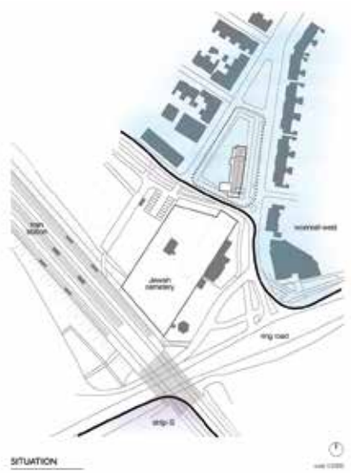
4 Crimson Architectural Historians, *Bouwen cultuurhistorisch onderzoek voormalige Christelijk Nationale School aan de Galileistraat, Eindhoven*, last modified April, 2016, https://www.crimsonweb.org/IMG/pdf/eindhoven-cns_school-screen.pdf

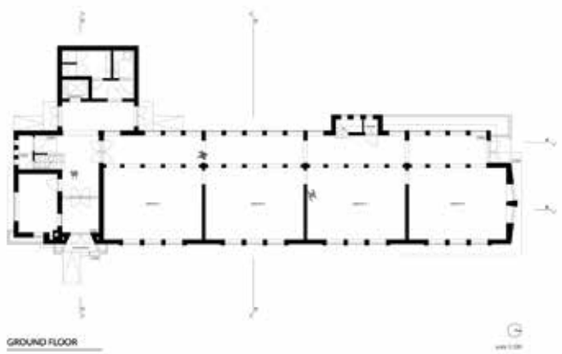
5 M. Van Aalst , 'Wij hebben met Hanrath een huis gebouwd: Hanrath's gebouwen in Hilversum,' *Hilversums Historisch Tijdschrift Eigen Perk* 26, no 3 (2006): 101–116, Accessed April 1, 2018. http://zoeken.gooienvechthistorisch.nl/HttpHandler/file.pdf?file=214266350.

6 Ibid

7 Stefanie Van der Zweth, *J.W. Hanrath (1867–1932)* (unpublished masters thesis, University of Ghent, 2010), https://lib.ugent.be/fulltxt/RUG01/001/457/605/RUG01-001457605_2011_0001_AC.pdf.

8 Crimson Architectural Historians, *Bouwen cultuurhistorisch onderzoek voormalige Christelijk Nationale School aan de Galileistraat, Eindhoven.*





C.N.S. GALILEISTRAAT, EINDHOVEN
designing with DNA

[2] Plans of the school and photograph of the building in 1936

Functionality as a feature of 'modernism'

Etymologically, 'corridor' comes from *courier*, a person who can run very fast to bring a message. The first meaning in an architectural context is of a military nature, referring to spaces in fortifications that enabled rapid communication. The corridor was often a secret gateway, not mentioned on plans. Later on, however, it clearly became an architectural element and a status symbol: 'emphasizing the importance of an owner who wanted to make the impression of needing to be kept abreast of world events by fleet-footed messengers.'[10]

The Dutch corridor schools became popular from the late 19th century onwards and were characterised by a corridor on one side of the classrooms. Fouquet[11] made a clear analysis of this specific typology, in which he articulates three important spatial components. Firstly, classrooms, the basic building blocks of a school, are in terms of area (square meters) the largest part of the school building, and their design is directly related to government laws over the years. The second spatial element relates to the administrative functions: storage spaces, a cloakroom, the staffroom, toilets, etc. These functions are located close to the main entrance of the school, except for the toilets, which were positioned along the corridor. The third element is the internal circulation routes. Schools are characterised by the constant movements of children, usually at more or less the same time: at the beginning and end of the day, but also between classes. The dimensions of corridors and staircases must be attuned to these movements. The width of the corridor, for example, depends on the flow of students and any secondary activities that may take place. The circulation layout must be designed in such a way that it is possible to go from point A to point B in the most efficient way, without many detours or having to move through other classrooms.[12]

Evolution of the corridor school

Fouquet states that these three spatial components have been combined and arranged in different ways over the years, and explains that the various combinations applied during the second half of the twentieth century resulted in the three most common school types: the corridor school, the hall school and the pavilion school.[13] The hall school and the pavilion school derived from the corridor school, reflecting changing views on education.

From the 1950s onwards, it was felt that children needed more than just space to sit in order to develop.[14] Extra spaces for varied group activities, such as film and theatre, were incorporated into school buildings, which were now often grouped in several wings positioned around a central hall, which was used not only as a circulation space but also for communal activities. The corridor school thus developed into the hall school. The central hall also included staircases to the different wings, which had a layout based on that of the corridor school.

The evolution of these different school types indicates that the corridor was, in architectural terms, the most important spatial element of the typology. It is the place where students meet each other when they have to change classrooms and where activities such as self-study can take place. The corridor is a place that organises the school system in a clever way.

Dutch architect Herman Hertzberger (1932-) stated that school corridors and staircases were designed with relatively large dimensions specifically for this purpose. They would partly inspire his famous structuralist office interiors, based on democratic principles which break down hierarchies and generate conditions for people to meet. The seemingly over-dimensioned corridors of the school described here provided the inspiration for his value-based architecture.

In connection with wardrobes, the expected rush at those and the image of a mass of hyper-active children who have not been not allowed to move for too long and whose frustrated energy, once released, would have to discharge explosively in an indiscriminate dynamic of pulling and pushing, all in a peak of simultaneously emptying classes, justifies these generous dimensions.[15]

The wall as an interface

The school building underwent multiple changes over the years, some due to fire safety regulations and others because of a lack of space. Crimson's report of 2016 discusses all those changes in detail.[16] Several additions with toilet units were made over the years and unfortunately ruined the architectural qualities of this corridor school. The design proposal by student Tijl Beelen for his master's project starts with the elimination of these additions.

9 Crimson Architectural Historians, *Bouw- en cultuurhistorisch onderzoek voormalige Christelijk Nationale School aan de Galileistraat, Eindhoven, 46.*

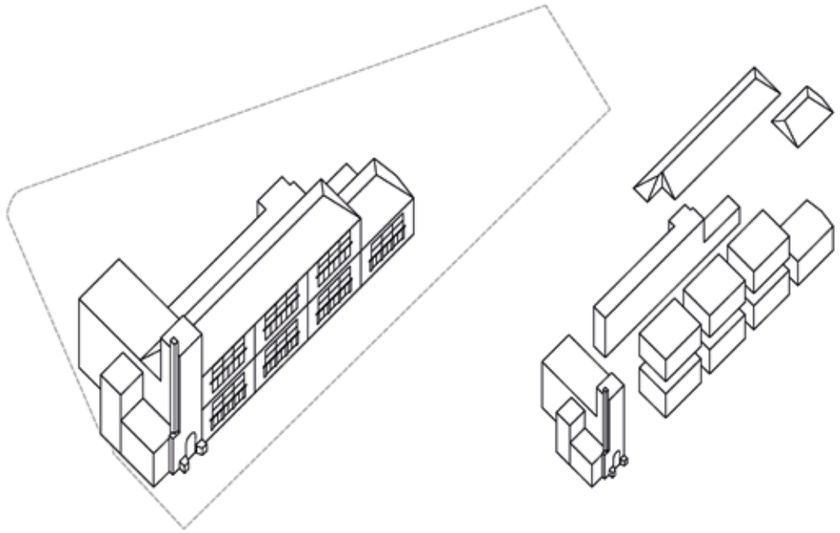
10 Mark Jarzombek, 'Corridor Spaces', *Critical Inquiry* 36, no. 4 (June 2010): 735.

11 Maarten Fouquet, *Van Schoolgebouw naar Studiehuis; Onderzoek naar de Ruimtelijke Vertaling van een Nieuw Pedagogisch-Didactisch Idee* (Unpublished masters thesis, University of Ghent, 2005), https://lib.ugent.be/fulltxt/RUG01/000/895/767/RUG01-000895767_2010_0001_AC.pdf.

12 This could be due to the book *Scholenbouw* by Hoogewoud, Spoelstra & Van der Werf (DATE), which contained a number of specific guidelines for architects, for example avoiding central corridors in schools because not all classrooms can enjoy optimal sunlight.
Guido Hoogewoud, Yteke Spoelstra and Jouke Van der Werf, *Schoolvoorbeelden: Inventarisatie en selectie van schoolgebouwen buiten de Singelgracht in Amsterdam 1850–1965* (Bureau Monumenten en Archeologie Amsterdam, 2004), http://ytekespoelstra.nl/schoolvoorbeelden.

13 Maarten Fouquet, *Van Schoolgebouw naar Studiehuis*, 27

14 Maarten Fouquet, *Van Schoolgebouw naar Studiehuis*, 31



[4] On the right, the building reduced to its original building blocks, illustratin, the basic concept of the corridor with the classrooms.

Isometric drawings and models, a method for a new corridic future

The design concept for the school [figure 4] by Tijl Beelen demonstrates that the process of shifting functions, from office to housing and vice versa is perfectly possible in this building. By re-using the typological element of the corridor as a connector, the former classrooms become new spaces on two levels. The classrooms are containers with new connections. Connections between the rooms are possible and the matrix of isometric analysis shows that the potential variety in typology of housing or offices is enormous. Several types of housing can be combined into new spatial configurations. The wall between corridor and room acts as an interface where furniture punctuates existing openings. Possible scenarios [figures 5 and 6] include student housing with shared facilities, a new school using the Montessori educational system, use by small companies that can grow through time, or even a student atelier combined with a private atelier.

The layout, with the corridor as the backbone, is an incentive for development. You do not simply rent or buy a place, but you buy into the potential and changing possibilities of a variety of places such as in figure 6. The original materials, such as tiles, are preserved, while the strict corridor system becomes instead playful. Jarzombek also concluded that the corridor always updates itself through history. He calls it a '*corridic* future'. The idea of the corridor, however, in fact brings the building completely into the modern age.

Beelen's design strategy starts with an architectural re-reading of the corridor as a rich typological feature, once intended for hectic schoolchildren. In his master's project, he re-programmes it as a place for living, studying or working. It expresses the generous character of the corridor, freed from its merely functional character. Taking the school as subject for an adaptive reuse process, the building's history did not obscure his vision for the future; instead, he looked to the internal richness and logic of the original typology of the building for inspiration for a new type of use.

[15] Herman Hertzberger, *Ruimte en Leren* (Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 2018), 45.
[16] Crimson Architectural Historians, *Bouw- en cultuurhistorisch onderzoek voormalige Christelijk Nationale School aan de Galileïstraat, Eindhoven*, 63–77.

[5-6] Possible scenarios for housing (green) or art ateliers (red)

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[List of figures]

Reviving the modernist utopia[1]

M. Moors . . . . . .

[1] Top view image of Park Hill, 1960

In the aftermath of WWII, many cities in Europe suffered from considerable housing shortages, leading to new housing developments, many of which were high-rise housing estates, built following the principles of the Modern Movement and CIAM (*Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne*). The ideology is based on the concept of the 'Functional City', implemented through ideas such as function-based city zones, with minimum dwellings together with collective infrastructures; low-rise and high-rise buildings in extensive green areas; the ideal of 'air, light and nature' combined with high-density living and standardisation; open ground-floor plans and pedestrian areas separated from traffic routes. In the context of an urgent need for housing, the strong, uncompromising approach was accepted without hesitation. Politicians and planners built according to architectural notions, in which high-rise served as a potent symbol of a 'new architecture for new people' in a modern post-war age of multi-family living, communal facilities and social equality.[2]

Despite the lofty ambitions of the Modern Movement, many of these projects have undergone a critical shift in meaning, and are today associated with problematic living conditions, deprived areas, isolated locations, a low-income population, social isolation, pollution, crime etc.[3] As a consequence, questions emerge about how to solve these problems, in many cases resulting in demolition, even of the most iconic projects, such as the Pruitt-Igoe in St, Louis, USA, or the Smithsons' Robin Hood Gardens in London.

Despite the negative connotations of this architectural typology, some interesting refurbishment projects have been executed over the past decades, in which the pre-existing was not eliminated. This article illustrates three refurbishment projects in which the architects succeeded in adapting the original ideologies and aspirations of a different generation to those of today: Park Hill Estate in Sheffield, Kleiburg in Amsterdam, and Tour Bois-le-Prêtre in Paris. These projects will be analysed based on their origins and evolution, transformation, and re-interpretation of modernist ideas.

Park Hill Estate, Sheffield by Urban Splash

Origin and evolution

Park Hill Estate in Sheffield (United Kingdom) was built between 1957 and 1961 according to a design by Jack Lynn (1926–2013) and Ivor Smith (1925–2018), under the supervision of Sheffield Council's City Architect, John Lewis Womersley (1910–1990). Inspired by Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation at Marseille and the Smithsons' brutalist unbuilt schemes, the plans for Park Hill were straightforward and revolutionary at the time. Referencing the original back-to-back housing scheme that it replaced, the decks were named after the former streets.[4]

Four slab blocks are oriented in such a way as to take best advantage of the topography and light and to avoid unimaginative repetition. Additionally, the decks change from one side of the building to the other. The housing blocks were designed on a steeply sloping site and their height ranged from four to thirteen floors, because the architects wanted to maintain a constant roof level, inspired by the scheme for Algiers by Le Corbusier.[5]

The innovative aspect of the four 'street decks' and the interconnection between the four major blocks was a key feature of the architects' concept, bringing the project its nickname of 'streets in the sky'.[6]

Transformation

The city had planned to demolish Park Hill but, in 1998, it was granted Grade II* listed building status, designating it as a 'particularly important building of more than special interest'[7] and making it the largest listed building in Europe. Property developer Urban Splash (architects Hawkins\Brown and Studio Egret West, and landscape architects Grant Associates) were awarded the contract to carry out the renovation. As a developer with a reputation for ambitious design-led conversions, they were convinced that a courageous programme was needed to reverse degradation and change Park Hill's negative image. The transformation of Park Hill is spread over three phases. The first phase is completed and includes dwellings, workspaces, a café and a nursery. The second phase of residential and additional commercial spaces will be finished by the end of 2019, and the full project will be completed by June 2021. The development was one of six projects short-listed for the 2013 RIBA Stirling Prize.

By leaving the main organising elements intact, and rearranging everything else within the completely stripped concrete frame, space could be reassigned in new combinations, creating new typologies for luxury apartments, business units and social housing. The City Council intends that approximately one-third of refurbished units will remain as social housing, with priority given to former residents. In an investment in mixed community development, the remaining two-thirds are for private sale, and the communal services will be commercial.

1 This article is written in the context of a PhD research study entitled: 'Re-reading modernist housing estates: an inquiry into the value of threatened heritage sites and the possibilities of adaptive re-use as a method for re-evaluation', which aims to address the challenges of modernist post-war housing in Flanders.

2 Gerben Helleman and Frank Wassenberg, 'The renewal of what was tomorrow's idealistic city', *Cities 21*, no. 1 (2004): 3–17. doi:10.1016/j.cities.2003.10.011.

3 ibid.

4 Ivor Smith, lecture given on April 15, 2008, as part of the Centenary celebrations of the School of Architecture at the University of Sheffield, accessed on March 31, 2019, https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/us-website-content/Downloads/park-hill/080424_Ivor_lecture.pdf.

5 ibid.

6 Park Hill, Historic England, accessed March 12, 2019, https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1246881.

7 Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990, Legislation UK, accessed July 1, 2019 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/contents.

8 See Peter Blundell Jones, 'A second chance for Sheffield's streets in the sky', *Architectural Review*, last modified September 27, 2011. https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/reviews/a-second-chance-for-sheffields-streets-in-the-sky/8620160.article.; Steve Parnell, 'Streets in the sky', *The Architectural Review* (2013): 46–49.

9 Jones, 'A second chance for Sheffield's streets in the sky', and Smith, lecture given on April 15, 2008.

[2] Exterior view of renovated Park Hill.
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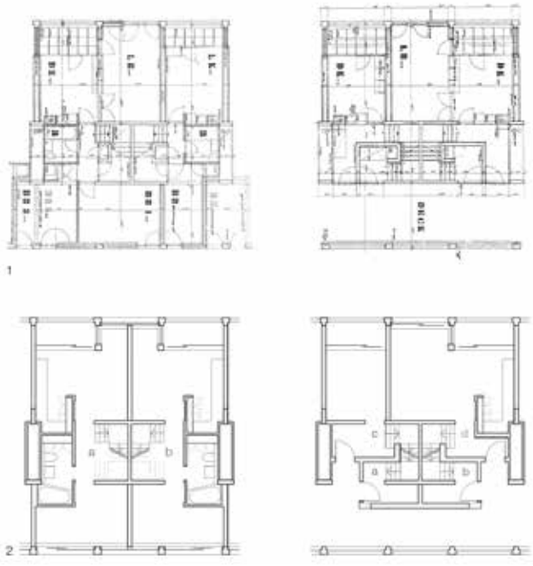


[3] Plans before and after intervention of dwelling-types A and B, in which the enlargement of the entrance hall and the opening up of the living areas can be seen

New glazed lifts are to be introduced as vertical circulation and the galleries have become smaller in order to gain more living space for the apartments. As a reminder of the buildings' brutalist origins, some walls and beams are left stripped bare; the scars of the previous services play an important role in the more luxurious character of the buildings' second life, combined with high-quality finishes and minimalist detailing of the built-in furniture.[8]

Urban Splash glazed the bottom three floors to designate them as shops, cafés and commercial units. Furthermore, the architects cut off a four-storey gateway at the north-west corner of the building and added a broad paved walkway to welcome people and to attract customers. The surrounding landscape has been redeveloped by Grant Associates with large trees (which were missing in the original plan according to architect Ivor Smith), new plants and an amphitheatre formed in the slope of the hill. These interventions aim to enliven the residents' experience of the site.[9]

Translation of modernist ideas

Park Hill was never supposed to be frozen in time; it was constructed as a sophisticated machine for living, with indoor plumbing, mains electricity and communal central heating. The original intentions of Jack Lynn and Ivor Smith are today addressed in different ways. In the first phase of the refurbishment, the 'streets in the sky' were retained, as well as the buildings' structural grid, the appreciation of 'air, light and nature' and shared collective functions. In the 1950s, the Smithsons were promoting

[4] Top view image of Bijlmermeer, 1975

their 'doorstep-philosophy'[10] as the definition of community. This philosophy has, however, become a romantic anachronism, as social media has replaced front-door gossip and we no longer share facilities, such as washing machines in a communal laundry room.[11] For these reasons, and as a counter-reaction to the concept of the modernist minimum dwelling, the architects narrowed down the galleries, in order to gain surface area within the apartments. Furthermore, Urban Splash redesigned the general image of the building and the extensive surrounding green areas.

Kleiburg, Amsterdam by NL Architects and XVW Architectuur

Origin and evolution

The high-rise blocks of Kleiburg, situated in Bijlmermeer, a neighbourhood in the south-east of Amsterdam, were originally planned by architect Siegfried Nassuth (1922–2005). Between 1968 and 1975, 13,000 dwellings were built in 31 large blocks, ten floors high, 200m to 300m long, each containing 300 to 500 residences. The balcony accessed apartments were laid out in a honeycomb pattern, as previously built in Park Hill, Sheffield, and Toulouse-le-Mirail near Paris. The site was intended to house approximately 100,000 residents. The application of CIAM's ideas on modern living was clearly present: separation of living, working and recreation areas, broad green landscapes between the apartment blocks, separation of traffic flows by raised main roads above ground level, etc.[12]

Notwithstanding these promising ideas, the site was never finished according to Nassuth's original intentions: shops, sports facilities and recreational accommodation have not been realised. The shortage of further investable money, the unfinished character of the district, and the unforeseen diversification of the inhabitants, together with a lack of 'eyes on the street' due to the raised roads, leading to vandalism and a lack of safety, were the main reasons for the negative image of Bijlmermeer and led to a request for demolition. In the 1990s an urban renewal programme took place, in which the district was redesigned spatially, socially and in its management. During the refurbishment, half the buildings were demolished and replaced with smaller scale constructions. The intention was to introduce variety into the housing market, with more

[10] Alison and Peter Smithson's doorstep philosophy was concerned with the immediate outside of a building and its inside-outside relationship. Alison and Peter Smithson, 'The Built World: Urban re-identification,' *Architectural Design*, no. 6 (June 1955): 187; Cornelia Tapparelli, 'Alison & Peter Smithson Lucas Headquarters 1973–74 (unbuilt)', last modified on June 7, 2017, https://www.transfer-arch.com/materiality/alison-peter-smithson/

[11] Jones, 'A second chance for Sheffield's streets in the sky'; Parnell, 'Streets in the sky'.

[12] Helleman and Wassenberg, 'The renewal of what was tomorrow's idealistic city'.

[13] Architectuur Centrum Amsterdam/ BU, 'Kleiburg', Accessed March 8, 2019, https://www.arcam.nl/en/kleiburg/

[14] Ibid

[15] Anneke Bokern, "Kehrtwende für einen alten Riesen: de Flat Kleiburg", *DETAIL*, no. 9 (September 2017): 6.

owner-occupied dwellings, and into the building development by creating vibrancy, an urban character and greater public security. This security was provided by commercial space in the blocks, new urban centres and by reorganising the public spaces.[13]

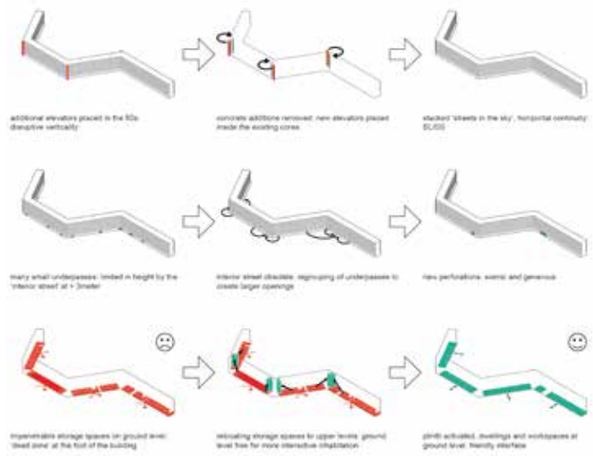
Transformation

Only one building slab, located in the south-east of Bijlmermeer, survived in its original layout and was therefore declared the 'Bijlmer Museum' by the residents themselves. The other blocks which survived demolition were extensive renovated. The 400m-long block Kleiburg, designed by Fop Ottenhof (1906-1968) in 1971, was part of the Bijlmer Museum Foundation and therefore considered 'an important element in the city landscape and a symbol of the social ideals on which it was premised'.[14] This 'recognition' saved it from demolition, when the Rochdale building society[15] (Bokern, 2017) sold the block of flats for the symbolic sum of one Euro to a third party 'Consortium DeFlat', composed of four real estate companies.

The Do It Yourself (DIY) concept seemed the best approach for this project. After a superficial refurbishment, the apartments were sold individually or in groups at competitive prices. In return, the new owners had the responsibility of refurbishing their own unit within a limited amount of time and occupying it for a certain number of years afterwards. The aim was to gentrify the property without losing sight of its original occupants, but nevertheless the site lost its function as social housing. All apartments were sold or rented out within two years. NL Architects and XVW architectuur drew up the plans, saying: 'Our starting point was the fact that the building was actually very attractive and simply needed upgrading.' Their strategy was based on the optimisation of the load-bearing structures in combination with the flexibilisation of the non-bearing constructions. In order to better connect indoor and outdoor, the architects converted the ground-floor storage into living spaces and enlarged the walkways beneath the building, resulting in bright routes and visual axes to the park. In 2017, the project won the Mies van der Rohe award.

Translation of the modernist ideas

The attitude of the deFlat Consortium towards the original modernist concept is ambiguous. On one hand are the redevelopment of the extensive green areas, the creation of scenic relationships by double height connections between both sides of the building, and the diversification of the housing units. On the other hand, the tramline on the massive bridge construction (separating traffic routes) is still present and the exterior of the building was returned to its original simple appearance, apparently now considered sophisticated. Additionally, the DIY-principle can be interpreted as a translation of the modernist principles of Maison Dom-Ino or Plan Obus by Le Corbusier, in which the independent concrete carcass gives the freedom to design the interior.



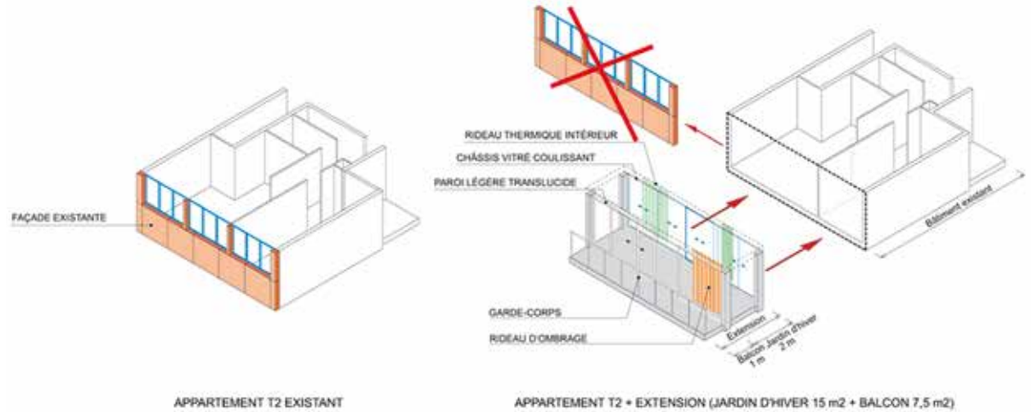
[5] Schemes of adaptation by XVW architectuur and NL Architects

[6] Exterior view of Kleiburg, after renewal, 2016

[7] Original building by Lopez, 1959

[8] Building adapted in 1980s

[9] Final result, after intervention by Lacaton & Vassal and Druot, 2013



[10] Scheme of new intervention

[11] Interior/exterior view of apartments after renewal, 2013

Tour Bois-le-Prêtre, Paris, by Lacaton & Vassal and Druot

Origin and evolution

French architect Raymond Lopez (1904-1966) designed the 'Alcatraz' tower block in the northern outskirts of Paris in the 1960s. The prefabricated concrete tower contained 96 flats between the first and the sixteenth floors. In the 1980s, the building had already undergone an ill-considered update in the context of a campaign for upgrading and renovating by OPAC (*Offices publics d'aménagement et de construction*). However, after decades of neglect, the building needed a significant overhaul in order to bring the housing block up to contemporary standards. A design competition was launched, and won by Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal (Lacaton & Vassal), together with French architect Frédéric Druot.

Transformation

The winning project works from the inside out and proposes to enlarge the flats (the original overall surface area of 8,900 m² is expanded to 12,460 m²) by creating new floorplates on the outside of the tower, which enables larger rooms and the creation of new winter gardens, continuous balconies and improvements in comfort, views, light and insulation. The tower was given a new skin by constructing a shell to envelop the building. The new façade of corrugated aluminium, interspersed with enlarged windows and glazed balconies, generates a decrease in energy consumption of over 50% and brings a new, positive image of the building. The floor of the entrance hall was reconstructed to bring it on the same level with the exterior, and the space was opened up to the new garden created at the back of the building. Transparent rooms for communal activities were added.[16]

The residents retained their flats or were able to move to another flat in the same building during the construction process. Remarkably, the intervention project was completed at half the cost of demolition and new construction. This is an exemplary lesson in connecting ingenious thinking and inventiveness to transform unloved parts of our cities. In addition, and Tour Bois-le-Prêtre won the architecture category of the Designs of the Year Awards 2013.[17]

Translation of modernist ideas

Lacaton and Vassal advocate in the book *plus* that a good flat is a luxurious flat with generous space, light and comfort, while also simple and economical; and they take the generous Hollywood Hills home (Case Study House 22, 1960) in Los Angeles by American Architect Pierre Koenig (1925–2004) as a starting point. These Case Study Houses (36 in total) were part of an architectural experiment extolling the qualities of modernist theory and industrial materials, photographed by Shulman (1910–2009) who highlighted in his pictures the 'graceful simplicity and humanity' of the angular forms. As a point of comparison to this modernistic propaganda, Lacaton and Vassal put forward the qualities of the big apartment-blocks, and specifically the benefits of the landscape, the unobstructed views they offer, the absence of noise and the communal profit of shared service facilities. Lacaton and Vassal's reference to these luxury houses of the 1960s is unexpected, because they do not refer to the modernist CIAM cities or the villas of Le Corbusier from the 1930s.

The transformation of the small housing accommodations in the 'Alcatraz' tower may not have been carried out according to the CIAM principles (as was the case in the other two projects), but it is undeniably based on general modernist ideology. We could argue that this more conceptual approach for renewal was based on the key modernist principle 'form follows function'. The architects emphasise that projects are successful when aesthetics come from decisions to improve living conditions and quality of life; they analysed the pre-existing from the inside looking out, and not from the outside looking in. Hence, in this case, 'function' stands for the existing 'user' (the inhabitant). In first instance, Tour-Bois-le-Pretrê implies a modernist 'freedom', even if it is an imaginary freedom, by enlarging the apartments with new balconies, maximising daylight, and opening up the building to its environment: 'air, light and nature'. Additionally, it shows an understanding of the influence of previous interventions or informal, spontaneously arising collective spaces, resulting in opening up the ground-floor level for communal activities.

[16] Michael Kimmelman, 'At Edge of Paris, a Housing Project Becomes a Beacon', *The New York Times*, last modified March 27, 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/28/arts/design/renovated-tour-bois-le-pretre-brightens-paris-skyline.html; Amy Frearson, 'Tour Bois-le-Prêtre by Fréderic Druot, Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal', *Dezeen*, last modified April 16, 2013, https://www.dezeen.com/2013/04/16/tour-bois-le-pretre-by-frederic-druot-anne-lacaton-and-jean-philippe-vassal/#disqus_thread; Frédéric Druot, Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal, *plus* (Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 2007).

[17] See Frearson, 'Tour Bois-le-Prêtre by Fréderic Druot, Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal'. Recently, a similar project, Grand Parc Bordeaux, a transformation of 530 dwellings, won the EUmiesaward 2019. 'Transformation of 530 dwellings - Grand Parc Bordeaux', Fundació Mies van der Rohe, accessed July 1, 2019, https://www.miesarch.com/work/3889

Conclusion

Comparison between projects

Although the answer to good refurbishment projects lies in individual solutions for specific locations and situations, Park Hill, Kleiburg and Tour-Bois-le-Prêtre have comparable approaches. Similarities between how the projects approach their modernist heritage can be found in a variety of aspects: altering the exterior of the building to change the negative image; improving the accessibility by installing elevators or new pathways; investing in the quality of the dwelling (daylight and view) by giving the opportunity to individualise the residences (DIY) or by enlarging the apartments; bringing back 'the eyes on the street' (the sense of safety) and social cohesion by enlarging windows or by generating new commercial functions.

When we compare the renovations of Park Hill and Kleiburg on a more comprehensive level, some interesting differences regarding the aesthetics of the buildings become apparent. The refurbishment architects of Park Hill invested more in the 'trendy', fashionable look of the building, clearly recognisable in the replacement of the brick infill with brightly coloured aluminium panels and by the neon memorialisation of the estate's most famous graffito, 'I love you will u marry me', sprayed on a high bridge.[18]

I question the sustainability of Park Hill's adaptations and how these patch-ups can have a real influence on the negative image of the building or improve the quality of living there. In my opinion, the original brick is worth preserving, with its ability to weather and age.

When the comparison is made with the 'trendy' refurbishment of the Bijlmer-blocks in the 1990s, the dated appearance of these blocks today is real. The DeFlat consortium wanted to make Kleiburg an external representation of its original modernist expression. Removing the 1990s features in Kleiburg is similar to the intervention of Lacaton and Vassal in Paris; however, they went one step further in removing all the previous alterations of the 1980s. I conclude that all three projects see the modernist ideology as an auxiliary upon which to build further. Lacaton and Vassal definitely acknowledged the original modernist appearance of the 'Alcatraz' tower more than the 1980s version, and this also applies to the architects of the Kleiburg refurbishment.

For Kleiburg and Park Hill, the interaction between residents and nature has increased in comparison with previously, not only by enlarging the windows but also by making the environment more inviting. The green areas have been redeveloped to improve the quality of the public spaces, such as the creation of the amphitheatre in Park Hill, or the axes and new walkways in Kleiburg. In Park Hill, new commercial functions and companies were brought in on the first and second glazed floors.

Both buildings were stripped to the concrete carcass of their load-bearing structures, and were adapted for a variety of different unit typologies, which generated a diversification of inhabitants. Park Hill managed to preserve a part of the building block dedicated to social housing, whereas Kleiburg lost its function as social housing. It is important to mention gentrification within this story. The flats of Bijlmermeer were initially aimed at middle-class families, and drawing them in was less difficult than keeping them there. Following Surinam's independence in 1975, many of its citizens migrated to the Netherlands, and the government placed a significant number of them in the affordable social housing of Bijlmermeer. For this reason, the renovation of Kleiburg was aimed at low-budget target groups, who were enthusiastic about the DIY-concept. Nevertheless, today the flats are sold at huge profit[19] and, contradictorily, little by little the neighbourhood will lose its affordable housing and return to the initial aim of modernist visions. Because Kleiburg was the final piece of the whole site, gentrification has already surfaced, whereas the Park Hill site is at the start of its redevelopment, and therefore we cannot yet estimate the consequences of its refurbishment. In none of the three projects was there a radical break with modernist visions; instead, they were the foundation for the new design visions. For each of them, the existing principles were the starting point of the refurbishment, without deifying the ideology.

> 'I believe that the modern utopia begins today, in point of fact. It begins with the idea of recycling spaces, which allows of strategies of union, hybridisation and conversion; strategies that generate complexities one was unable to arrive at by obliterating the pre-existing'
>
> Frédéric Druot, Anne Lacaton, Jean-Philippe Vassal, plus, 2007[20]

[18] Rowan Moore, 'Park Hill estate, Sheffield – review', *The Guardian*, last modified August 21, 2011, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2011/aug/21/park-hill-sheffield-renovation

[19] Based on explanation of guide Peggy Totté, visit to Amsterdam with *Architectuurwijzer*, March 2019.

[20] Druot et al., *plus*, 75.

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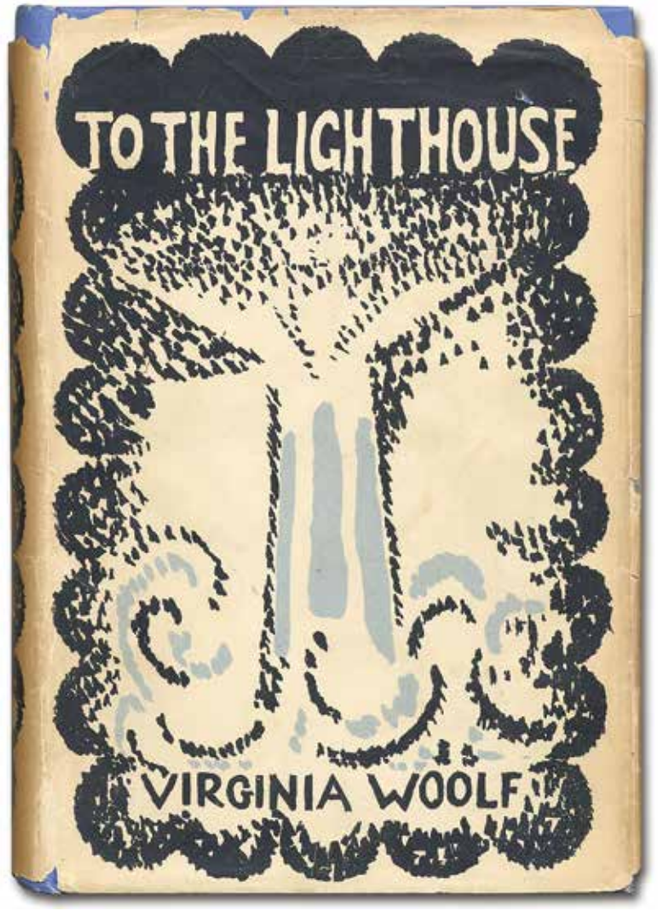
Modernism:
glass, steel, concrete … and books
K. Pint . . . . . .



At first, modernist heritage seems an oxymoron, as modernism is usually associated with the fantasy of the *tabula rasa,* the most striking example of which was perhaps Le Corbusier's plan for the 'radiant city', which included the complete destruction of entire historical districts of Paris. An architect, according to Le Corbusier in his well-known work *Towards an architecture* (1923), should look at modern, functionalist engineering as a liberation 'from cursed enslavement to the past'.[1] The best way to honour a modernist building would thus be, quite simply, to destroy it and replace it with something more fitted to the present time.

Fortunately, the modernist relationship to past forms and traditions is far more complex than radical provocations such as Le Corbusier's would suggest, as becomes clear when we look at one of the most famous mottos summarising modernism's revolutionary project: 'to make it new'. This phrase actually referred to an ancient inscription on the bathtub of a Chinese emperor,[2] which was not about destruction, but rejuvenation: the old forms are not demolished, but revitalised. Le Corbusier himself was strongly influenced by previous architecture – the famous *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseille was inspired not only by the contemporary design of ocean liners, but also by the Greek monasteries on Mount Athos.[3]

This bold reinterpretation of the past, in order to envisage a new, different future for human dwelling, makes modernism an interesting frame of reference for the theory of adaptive reuse, not only because modernist buildings are now getting old, and increasingly need adapting to new demands, but also because the modernist cultural programme as a whole can be a source of inspiration. The seemingly paradoxical modernist attitude of using the past to make things 'new', can help adaptive reuse to go beyond the conservative demands of mere restoration. It combines a desire for radical rupture and liberation with a respect for the creative powers of past forms and of past ideas, to which we can now add modernism itself.

This study argues that, if designers, interior architects and architects seek inspiration in the modernist heritage, they should not only consider modernist architecture, but also modernist literature. Leafing through architectural handbooks and anthologies of modernist architecture, it is always striking to see how the canonical buildings of European modernism seem at odds with the books that form the canon of modernist European literature. How do we reconcile the pure, functionalist design philosophy of the architectural and design programme that Walter Gropius installed at the Bauhaus in 1919, with the baroque chaos of modern experience presented by James Joyce in *Ulysses* in 1922? How do we understand that between the completion of Gerrit Rietveld's *Schröder House* (1923–24) and Adolf Loos' *Villa Müller* (1928–30), both radical, self-assured celebrations of the art of dwelling, Max Brod posthumously published Kafka's *The Trial* (1925) and *The Castle* (1926) – books that obviously offer a far more problematic and desperate account of what it means to dwell? How do we relate Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* (1924), describing the doubts, desires, philosophies and experiences of eccentric characters in a sanatorium in Davos, to the Paimio Sanatorium designed by Alvar Aalto (1929–1933), with its focus on health and efficiency? And how do we link Le Corbusier's utopia of collective housing with the nihilistic despair and existential loneliness of Frits van Egters, the protagonist of Gerard Reve's *The Evenings* (1947), published in the same year as the construction of the Unité d'Habitation started? Modernist novels seem to be inhabited by a different breed of human beings than those who are supposed to inhabit modernist architecture.

This discrepancy may be caused by the fact that functionalist modernism was simply not very interested in the kind of complex domestic life into which modernist literature delved. Modernist architecture followed a rationalist design philosophy, and the home, in Le Corbusier's famous phrasing, is just 'a machine for living in'.[4] It should provide shelter, with plenty of air and light, and be place to relax and work, but only as a temporary retreat from the outside world, where things actually have to get done. Modernist architecture has little time for unproductive neurotic ruminations. As Reed argues in his introduction to *Not at Home. The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture* (1996), the modernist avant-garde 'imagined itself away from home'[5] (Reed 1996:7), and saw 'domestic figures as the opposite of the heroic'.[6] In her *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life* (2005), however, Victoria Rosner argues that modernist literature made exactly the opposite move, such as in the work of Virginia Woolf: 'If modernism and the domestic have often seemed like antithetical categories, Woolf weaves them together as she locates modernism's origins squarely in the space of modern life'.[7] For many modernist writers like Woolf, the human psyche was the most important source of an heroic exploration of the unknown (or unrevealed) territories of human experience. In *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy* (2007), Peter Gay looks for a common denominator for all forms of modernism, and finds it in the modernist belief that 'the untried is markedly superior to the familiar, the rare to the ordinary, the experimental to the routine'.[8] Modernist literature wanted to demonstrate how the most familiar, ordinary space of daily domestic life could be the source of the most experimental and rare explorations. It is this interior life that modernist writers wanted to explore in all its aspects, nuances, sensations, obsessions and perversities, creating an image of a human being that goes far beyond the limited, one-sided scope of the modernist ideal of the engineer-entrepreneur in Le Corbusier's *Vers une architecture*.

A key figure in this exploration of the unknown territory of the psyche was no doubt the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud. Although himself deeply immersed in the aesthetics of the nineteenth century, his work would nonetheless have a major impact on modernist writers and artists. It is no coincide that his work was translated into English by James and Alix Strachey, who were both associated with the Bloomsbury group, to which Virginia Woolf famously belonged.

Freud's famous dictum, in *A Difficulty in the Path of Psychoanalysis* (1917), that the ego is not master in its own house, was widely shared by writers and poets who presented their characters often in a stream of consciousness, in which strange associations, sensations, thoughts, banal and sublime experiences all intermingle, shattering any illusion of consistency and control., similar to the speaking cure of psychoanalysis, where the patient is asked to speak freely about whatever comes up in his or her mind. Writers including Virginia Woolf and Marcel Proust present their characters with a flux of impressions, mixing the interior with the exterior, the past with the present, and revealing how complex and paradoxical consciousness actually is. They wanted to find an expression for the kind of affective states that go beyond what was deemed to be 'normal', including the darker effects of alienation and abjection, as seen in the work of Kafka, but also effects of joy, desire and lust. These explorations often challenged a heteronormative framework, and the limited point of view of a masculine, heterosexual subject, as seen, for example, in D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) or in Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood* (1936), or in Molly's famous monologue at the end of *Ulysses*, musing about her sexual desires and experiences.

Surrealism would take this experimental exploration of the mind a step further, in the celebration of irrationality as the primal source of inspiration. Or, as André Breton puts it in his Surrealist manifesto, 'Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of the dream, in the disinterested play of thought. It tends to ruin once and for all other psychic mechanisms and to substitute itself for them in solving all the principal problems of life.'[9] The unconsciousness was regarded as a creative force, not as the mere repression of unwanted ideas or effects: the irrationality of dreams and whims should be celebrated in its own right. Surrealism's resistance against functionalism and technocratic efficiency in modern urban life would inspire the Situationist movement after WWII, with its notion of psychogeography as an alternative, more playful, way to inhabit and to explore modern city life, and to avoid the pitfalls of capitalist consumerism.

Another, perhaps unexpected, territory of human experience explored by a number of modernist writers was that of spirituality. This may sound surprising, as modernity is associated with a radical atheistic worldview, summarised in the cry of the madman in Nietzsche's *The Gay Science* (1882), 'God is dead'. As Nietzsche predicted, however, the image of God would nonetheless linger on in the twentieth century, not only in the collective secular religions of totalitarian communism and fascism, but also in different forms of more individual spirituality. There was of course Nietzsche's own interest in Greek mythology, especially in Dionysus, the Greek god of ecstasy, but even older forms of religion gained a new appeal. *The Golden Bough* (1890), James G. Frazer's anthropological study of ancient, sacrificial fertility cults of dying, and rising gods and their afterlife, would greatly influence modern literature, as seen in one of the most famous modernist poems, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922). The many mythological references in this poem are juxtaposed with the experience of modern fragmented, meaningless existence and a sense of personal and collective collapse. The kind of magical associative thinking discussed by Frazer in *The Golden Bough* also had remarkable similarities with the poetics of surrealism. It is thus not surprising that occultism and esotericism played a great part in the work of André Breton.[10]

More established forms of religions were also explored in modernist literature: the Jewish mystical tradition is secularised, but at the same time survives, in the works of Franz Kafka and Walter Benjamin, just as Christian mysticism found a strange, erotic afterlife in the 'atheology' of Georges Bataille. T.S. Eliot converted to Anglicanism in 1927 and, in Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* (1940), the interior monologue of the flawed and pitiful 'whisky-priest' reveals how a tragic, modernist form of Catholicism could still exist in the twentieth century.

It would be interesting to attempt to bring together the architectural and the literary imagination of

1 Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2007), 158.
2 Sun, quoted in: Nadia Sels and Kris Pint, '"Energies of History" in Modernism: the case of Casa Malaparte,' *Interiors 6*, no. 2 (2015): 122–137.
3 Zacknik, quoted in: Kris Pint, 'If these walls could walk. Architecture as a deformative scenography of the past,' In *Performing Memory in Art and Popular Culture*, eds. Liedeke Plate and Anneke Smelik (Oxford/New York: Routledge, 2013), 123–134
4 Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture*, 158.
5 Christopher Reed, *Not at Home. The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 7.
6 Ibid, 15.
7 Victoria Rosner, *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 4.
8 Peter Gay, *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy.* (New York/London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008), 2.
9 André Breton, 'From the First Manifesto of Surrealism,' In *Art in theory, 1900-2000: an anthology of changing ideas*, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Malden/Oxford/Carlton: Blackwell, 2003), 452.
10 See Tessel M. Bauduin, *Surrealism and the occult: occultism and Western esotericism in the work and movement of André Breton* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014).

modernism. How would the characters of famous modernist novels, such as Kafka's Josef K. or Woolf's Mrs. Ramsay, interact with specific modernist buildings, and what would these virtual interactions reveal about the effects, sensations and thoughts this architecture either evokes or ignores? What would be the effect if T.S. Eliot's *Ash Wednesday* (1930) were to be read aloud in the setting of a modernist church by Rudolph Schwarz? What would it look like if the bedroom, in which Gregor Samsa wakes one day to find himself turned into a bug, in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1915), were designed by Mies van der Rohe? In what kind of hallway designed by Loos could we imagine Sartre's voyeur in *Being and Nothingness* (1943), looking through a keyhole, totally forgetting about himself, until suddenly a noise startles him and he feels caught, ashamed, in an example of how the modern subject is always at the mercy of the gaze of the other? If we could look at the public offices and the shopping malls of modernism in the same way as Walter Benjamin experienced the outmoded Parisian Arcades of the nineteenth century, could their anachronistic typology generate the same messianic, erotic, revolutionary desire? Such virtual juxtapositions between architecture and literature could help us identify where our relationship with the built environment still causes friction, where human experience is neglected or taken for granted, or where there is room for experiment.

In *Encounters* (2005), Juhani Pallasmaa states that '[a]t the turn of the millennium, the great challenge for architects is the re-sensualization, re-mythologization, and re-poetization of the human domicile'.[11] One of these poetic, sensual myths is modernism itself. The modernist project is still helpful in the exploration of other ways of feeling, thinking, sensing, and eventually, dwelling. The combative boldness of modernism's *cri de cœur*, 'make it new', is refreshing in an era of ecological, political and psychological crisis, with its cheap cynicism and comfortable fatalism. It demands an engagement with reality that, even in Kafka's most grim evocations, still has much more vitality than scepticism or dreaming of a better past that never in fact existed. The modernist project offers a stubborn resistance to any form of reductive technocratic functionalism, showing that human experience is much more complex than we think. It demonstrates that, alongside the ecology of our planet, there also exists something akin to an ecology of the mind, which is an equally complex, yet at the same time fragile, beautiful and cruel system.

The modernist heritage, in glass, steel and concrete, but also in books, is a constant reminder that our exploration of the question of what human life actually is, is still far from over. It is an invitation to be guided by the same kind of 'principled self-scrutiny' that, according to Peter Gay, drove the modernist movement,[12] and where affectivity, irrationality, sexuality and spirituality all demand their rightful place in how we define ourselves and take care of ourselves, a definition which includes the way we build, or re-build, our environment.

[11] Juhani Pallasmaa, *Encounters. Architectural essays* (Helsinki: Rakennustieto Publishing, 2005), 70.
[12] Peter Gay, *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy*. (New York/London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008), 4.

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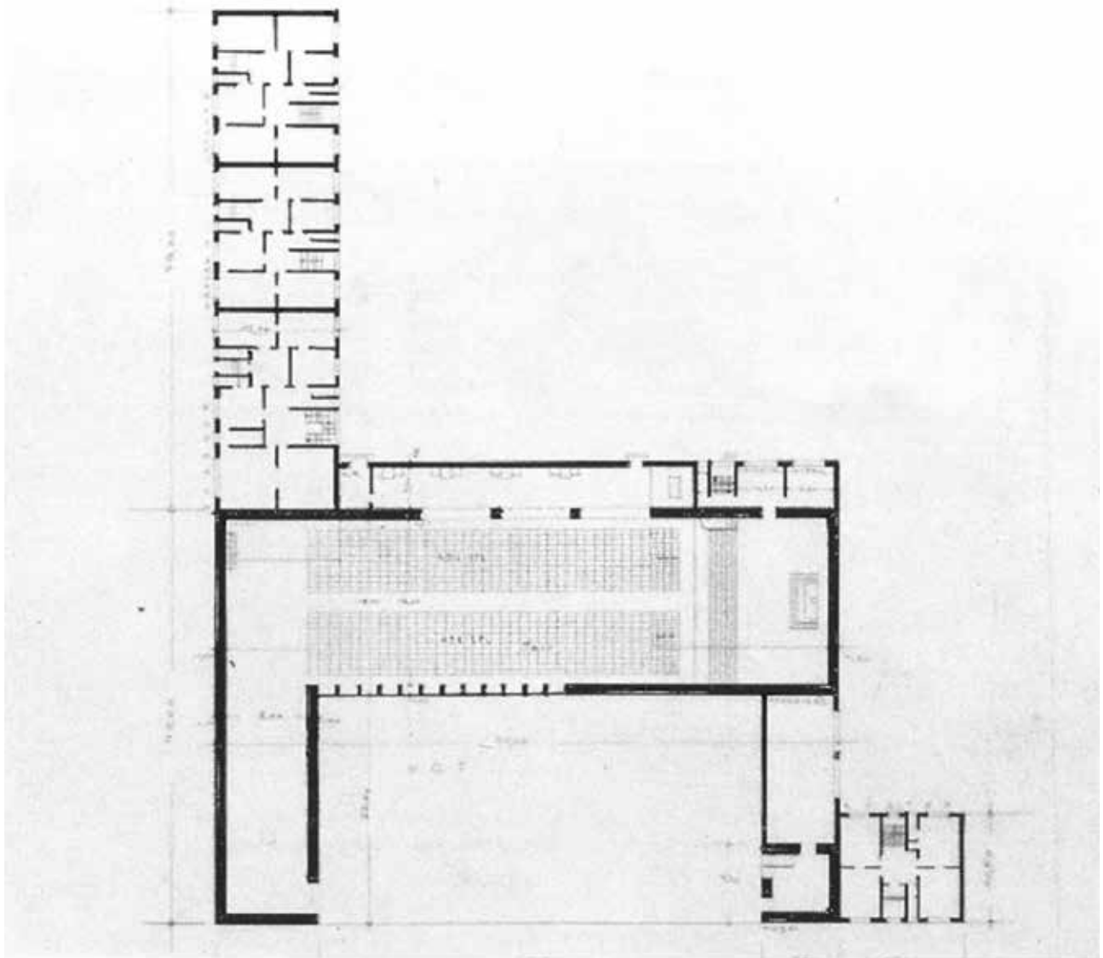
Beyond the modern
Some observations on the work of Rudolf Schwarz

C. Grafe . . . . . .



[1] Floor plan of St. Fronleichnamskirche (Aachen) by Rudolf Schwarz.

Rudolf Schwarz is an enigmatic figure in the history of twentieth-century architecture. For much of the post-1945 period, interest in his published and built work was confined to the Rhineland and Cologne, where Schwarz played a major, if complicated, role in the reconstruction of the city after WWII. It was only in the 1990s that Schwarz received increased international attention as an architect of buildings of emotional intensity and as a writer whose books offered a more nuanced view on the effects of modernity on architecture than those of most of his contemporaries. Schwarz, in other words, became absorbed into the emerging canon of 'the other moderns'.

Schwarz was never attached to any of the institutions of the 'avant-garde', and this probably accounts for his relative obscurity outside Germany for many years, an obscurity which contrasts sharply with his enormous productivity, which resulted in an awe-inspiring oeuvre both as an architect and as a writer. He perhaps also owes his unique position to the fact that, during his career, he primarily presented himself as designing buildings for the Catholic church, an institution which had famously been struggling with essential modern values since the Enlightenment. From 1926 until the time of his death, Schwarz designed some seventy Catholic churches, but his contribution to a broader understanding of the *techné* of architecture also deserves attention.[1] He was a modern architect who, inspired partly by his Catholic background, and partly by a more broadly motivated critical attitude towards the levelling and alienating tendencies in mass industrial society, reached conclusions which, in the early twenty-first century, are highly topical in the examination of the relationships between physical form in architecture, architectural meaning and perception of space.

Peregrinations and formations

Rudolf Schwarz was born in Strasbourg, a city which had been absorbed into the German Kaiserreich in 1871 and returned to France after WWI. During the war, Schwarz went to Berlin to study architecture but, after completing his studies, found himself unemployed. He spent six months at the castle of Rothenfels on the Main, a mediaeval castle owned by *Quickborn*, a Catholic youth movement led by the theologian and philosopher Romano Guardini. whose writings also exerted a great influence on Mies van der Rohe.[2] Around the *Schildgenossen*, the Quickborn journal, a close community was forming in the 1920s which was reminiscent of an academy. Here, theologians, writers and artists met regularly to exchange ideas about social and religious reforms. After his first stay at Rothenfels, Schwarz remained one of the editors of the journal, to which he also contributed articles. As an architect, he held a special position in this circle of Catholic intellectuals from the beginning. Guardini was himself very interested in the possibilities of technological progress, and regarded Schwarz as an important discussion partner who, although aware of the problems of modern technology and the trend of alienation in industrial society, was not set against them in advance. The relationship with Guardini and the discussions at Rothenfels left an indelible mark on Schwarz.

During this period, Schwarz seems already to have been preoccupied with the timeless aspect of building. Architecture, according to Schwarz, follows naturally from divine creation and is part of it. Although its forms are typical of the human contribution, they are also related to the forms produced by nature.

> I recognised that forms have an eternal significance; the sphere was the form of all things that want to be alone in themselves: the single-celled organisms, the droplets, the stars ... The restless things, however, are fleeing in narrow, rigid forms, in branches, in streams and ways ...[3]

In Schwarz's case, however, this notion of the origin of architectural forms did not lead to the organic idiom which was widely followed in Germany in the early 1920s. According to Schwarz, the harmony typical of natural forms cannot be imitated, and therefore a new order has to be created, the key to which is the *Gestalt* of the building. In designing buildings for religious gatherings, Schwarz saw a domain in which architecture was able to return to its own source, 'to become entirely itself'.[4] How this was to be translated into real buildings was still an insurmountable problem to the young architect: he was too much preoccupied with images of utopian rooms. In *Kirchenbau*, for instance, Schwarz referred to an early design for a glass church with vaults onto which films could be projected, so as to underpin the effect of the liturgical ritual.

Schwarz completed his best-known building of the interwar years in Aachen, near the Belgian border, the St. Fronleichnamskirche. It was in this first larger church commission that Schwarz put into practice his ideas about space and its effect on human perception. This is most notable in the interior: from the door to the aisle, the visitor enters the twilight of the entrance hall, which is separated from the aisle by a large glass panel. Rough white plaster emphasises the contrast between the nave,

1 See Alexander Henning Smolian, 'Serie oder Persönlichkeit – zum Technikverständnis von Rudolf Schwarz.' *Wolkenkuckucksheim*, 19, no. 33 (2014): 193.

2 Guardini was professor of *Religionsphilosophie* (philosophy of religion) and *katholische Weltanschauung* (Catholic ideology) in Berlin. He exerted a great influence not only on Schwarz but also on the thinking of Mies van der Rohe, who refers to Guardini in his personal testimonies. In 1939 Guardini was forced to leave the university. Hanna Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz, *Romano Guardini: Konturen des Lebens und Spuren des Denkens* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 2005).

3 Rudolf Schwarz, *Kirchenbau. Welt vor der Schwelle* (Heidelberg: Kerle, 1960), 9. (trans. by author)

4 ibid.

5 When the church was adjusted to meet the requirements of Vatican II, a second, centrally positioned altar was added, which slightly impairs the view of the original altar.

6 Mies van der Rohe called the text 'a breaking point in my development'. The relationship between Schwarz and Mies van der Rohe was one of mutual respect. Even after Mies's emigration to the United States, the bond between the two architects remained intact. Mies wrote the preface to the American translation of Schwarz's book *Vom Bau der Kirche* (The Church Incarnate) and later, two years after Schwarz's death in 1961, he wrote an obituary on the 'thinking architect'.

7 Smolian, 'Serie oder Persönlichkeit', 195.

[2] Interior view of nave and side chapel of St. Fronleichnamskirche, Aachen.

19 metres high, and the low aisle which is a mere 3.5 metres high. The windowless aisle faces the nave like a large, low niche opening towards the taller, lighter space.

As the square windows are set very close to the ceiling, light pours into the nave from an almost invisible source filling the space with an indefinable haze, and inducing a slight dizziness. Towards the altar, the intensity of the light increases. Here the square windows form two vertical series meeting the horizontal band at the ceiling. The dark marble floor folds in a shallow flight of stairs across the whole width of the nave running towards the altar.[5] The marble block of the altar itself seems to grow from a geometrical landscape, providing a slight elevation towards the focal point: the thirty centimetre high crucifix standing on a humble wooden box at the centre of the altar. Otherwise, the church is devoid of any images. It is in the dimensions, the proportions and the qualities of the walls that the meaning of the space is communicated: the earthly, nearly black marble with its fine pattern of white veins, the rough plastered walls, and the ceiling which, separated by a thin recess from the bearing walls, seems to float. The natural, irregular pattern of the veins in the floor contrasts with the rigid pattern in which long columns of light fittings hang from the ceiling like a serial sculpture. Only once is the fundamental rule of treating the surfaces varied. At the points where a constructive element is necessary to support the lateral wall of the nave, while the design does not tolerate any columns between the nave and the aisle, Schwarz found a pretext for an architectural detail of great beauty: a wall that can also be a column - and vice versa - and that distinguishes itself from the wall surface above by the black of its marble covering forms the backdrop for the cantilevered cubic pulpit.

Schwarz the theorist

In the essay *Wegweisung der Technik*, one of Schwarz's best-known texts and the one that had a particular impact on Mies van der Rohe,[6] he formulated an attitude towards the possibilities of technical inventions and innovations, which differed sharply from the uncritical faith common among the modern architects of his time. Schwarz did not reject technology but embraced new possibilities with enthusiasm, his broad interests extending from studies of the mediaeval mystics such as Master Eckhard and Bonaventura, to Husserl's Phenomenology and *Gestalt* Theory.[7]

Schwarz felt that the developments resulting from technological innovations needed some control, and linked them to a historically rooted and philosophically motivated significance. He offered an analysis of the trend of alienation emanating from modern science and modern production methods: scientific knowledge was too exclusively focused on the control of the material world, and the *value* of progress had not essentially been subjected to examination. Scientific knowledge ought to be accompanied by 'older' – or possibly timeless – forms of human knowledge, not only those including cultural or religious knowledge, but also those acquired intuitively, through the senses. Science, technology and industrial progress were, according to Schwarz, perverted, and had deteriorated into systems of oppression. Only in the full awareness of the new technical possibilities could the architect look for an 'underlying' order to give meaning to individual and collective activities.

Schwarz's ideas were strongly influenced by the thinking and terminology of Romano Guardini who, in his 1926 *Briefe vom Comer See*, had painted a picture of a modern society entirely in the grip of an abstract and chaotic field of influence devoid of any central meaning. Neither Schwarz nor Guardini, however, sought a solution by restoring old values or forms. Guardini stated in this context,

> Whatever is not entirely authentic, in itself and in our souls, is doomed to fail. That is how it is. Perhaps we are simply on the verge of a more essential reality.[8]

In *Vom Bau der Kirche*, published in 1938 (during the years of Nazi *Gleichschaltung*, i.e. the enforced co-ordination of the media), Schwarz pursued the question of what this essence of architecture could be. The argument is consistent with that he had set out in *Wegweisung der Technik*. If the form of a building is not given by tradition or a functional scheme, it is the architect's prime task to look for its essential meaning. Schwarz identifies the church as the architectural task in its ultimate essence. In a church, the technique of construction meets a primal form of a human collective, and the problems of architecture arise in their purest form.

> The art of building, as we meant it, is not merely a walled shelter, but everything together: building and people, body and soul, the human beings and Christ, a whole spiritual universe - a universe, indeed which must ever be brought into reality anew.

It is a '… primal deed of building, the process in which church becomes living form.' Although Schwarz sees an inspiring translation of this fact in the medieval churches and cathedrals, he feels that the technical principles have now changed so much that there is no way back:

> For us the wall is no longer heavy masonry but rather a taut membrane, we know the great tensile strength of steel and with it we have conquered the vault. For us the building materials are something different from what they were to the old masters. We know their inner structure, the positions of their atoms, the course of their inner tensions. And we build in the knowledge of all this - it is irrevocable. The old, heavy forms would turn into theatrical trappings in our hands and the people would see that they were an empty wrapping.[10]

In Schwarz's work, architectural forms are determined by geometrical rules. However, these rules are explicitly not defined in purely mathematical terms.[11] Geometric form is corrected by observation and perception of space. The visual and auditory perspectives, and the physical perception of the qualities of materials, emerge as factors that have to be considered in the actual spatial form. Gravity and the perceived density of the volume are also factors in the perception and the process of realising a design. A space, according to Schwarz, is experienced through the whole body, the senses and the intellect. 'Indeed it is with the body that we experience building, with the outstretched arms and the pacing feet, with the roving glance and with the ear, and above else in breathing. Space is dancingly experienced.'[12] 'The farthest fingertip softly touches a thing, the gentlest power of communication flows out to it and slowly, softly it reveals itself.'[13] The building is part of the same material world as the human body, it is a 'second' body. Originated through human movement, it is both solidified energy and a skin coming into contact with the 'dancing body'. Here, Schwarz formulates a definition of architecture which proves to be extremely topical against the background of a revived interest in the material presence of buildings. Among his contemporaries, however, he was rather alone in his explicit and poetically phrased stance on the materiality of architecture.

World War II and Post War Reconstruction

After the war Schwarz worked as *Generalplaner*, supervising the reconstruction of Cologne, a heavily destroyed city.[14] In addition to these activities, he designed dozens of churches. The majority of the designs were realised and, although the concepts of space are based on his pre-war studies, and primarily on the types developed in *Vom Bau der Kirche*, their execution shows a great variety in material and idiom.

In these post-war churches, Schwarz seeks to mediate between the language of modern architecture and more traditional forms. The result is never a compromise, but addresses the essence of the human spatial experience, which is simultaneously timeless and embedded in its time. The Church of St. Maria Himmelfahrt in Wesel (Lower Rhine), for example, replaces a neo-Gothic predecessor destroyed during WWII. Schwarz refers to the remaining components of the old church in his plans and wants to create what he describes as an 'interesting and also liturgically non-meaningless group'. These components, the entrance portal from the 19th century and the substantially older crypt with its aristocratic tombs, are integrated into the new building dating from 1950, which stands on the foundations of the crypt. In the ground plan, the church describes an oblong rectangle that ends in the east in a bow. The flat ceiling, stretched under the simple saddle roof, emphasises the archetypal form, and the light grey plastered walls further support this effect. The inclusion of the longitudinal space and the use of brick in the facades establish clear historical references. The elements that survived the destruction are not a set of isolated pieces that appear as a collage in the new building, but rather connect with it to form a new whole, in which the different time layers can be experienced.

A completely different approach can be found in the church of the Heilige Familie in the city of Oberhausen. Its history is closely linked to the development of the industrial city in the late 19th and 20th centuries and the various migratory waves that characterise urban societies in the north-western Ruhr. Its construction is the result of a long campaign of the inhabitants of the so-called Slaughterhouse district, who originated largely from Catholic areas in today's Poland. The church was to be their own social place in their new environment. After over four decades, their desire for their own church was realised in the years 1955–58 with the new building, following designs by Rudolf Schwarz and Josef Bernard.

The flat-covered hall church follows a square floor plan. In the middle, there is a simple table, positioned under the canopy, which is designed here as an awning. Within this spatial conception, Schwarz formulates a preconception of the ideas that would be established in the course of Vatican II from the

8 Guardini's philosopy is expounded clearly and succinctly in the chapter on Mies van der Rohe in: Francesco Dal Co, *Figures of Architecture and Thought, German Architecture Culture 1880–1920* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990) 262–286.

9 Rudolf Schwarz, *The Church Incarnate*, trans. Cynthia Harris (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1958), 213. First edition: *Vom Bau der Kirche* (Würzbürg: Werkbund-Verlag Würzbürg - Abt. Die Burg, 1938), 141.

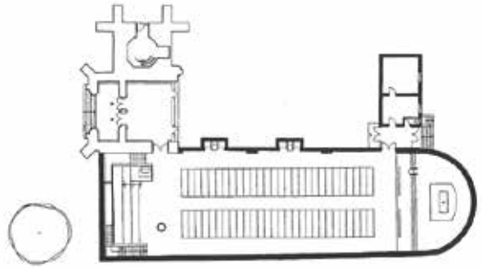
10 Schwarz, *Vom Bau der Kirche*, 4-5.

11 Wolfgang Meisenheimer, *Der Raum in der Architektur, Strukturen, Gestalten, Begriffe (Space in Architecture, Structures, Forms, Concepts)* (undated doctoral research, Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule, Aachen), 150–153.

12 Schwarz, *Vom Bau der Kirche*, 17.

13 ibid., 11.

14 Schwarz's major legacy is the campaign for rebuilding the Romanesque churches of Cologne.

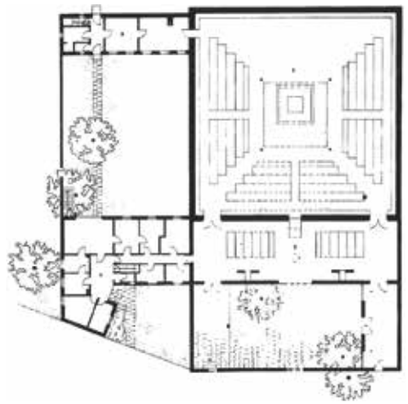


[3] Floor plan of St. Maria Himmelfahrt (Wesel) by Rudolf Schwarz.

[4] Interior view of nave of St. Maria Himmelfahrt (Wesel).

mid-1960s for the construction of churches. The radical nature of the spatial conception also finds its equivalent in the highly effective, but extremely simple, materialisation of a brick base and panels of concrete blocks with glazed openings above. This large and luminous church area is reached via a lower vestibule, which was conceived as a secondary church for weekday celebrations and which, in turn, looks out onto the small atrium through which the church is connected to the city. The current use of the church as a 'Tafelkirche' reflects both the history of its genesis from a community of migrants and the social changes in this former industrial region. After the parish ceased to exist, it was not deconsecrated, but has become an alternative social meeting place for members of the community who use the food bank and its café.

A particularly poignant building from the oeuvre of Rudolf Schwarz in the post-war period can be found in the small town of Düren, halfway between Aachen and Cologne. Today, Düren lies at the edge of a landscape devastated by the long-term extraction of brown coal. The town was heavily bombed during the war. The St. Annakirche, which Schwarz co-designed with his wife, Maria Schwarz, and which was built in the early 1950s, stands like a strange earthly stone cube in the town centre. From the rubble of an older church, destroyed during the war, Schwarz built a tall construction. By slightly rotating the angle of the construction in relation to the main axes of the city, the building withdraws from its surroundings while, at the same time, controlling them completely. The church has a high main nave which winds round the low aisle in the shape of an L,

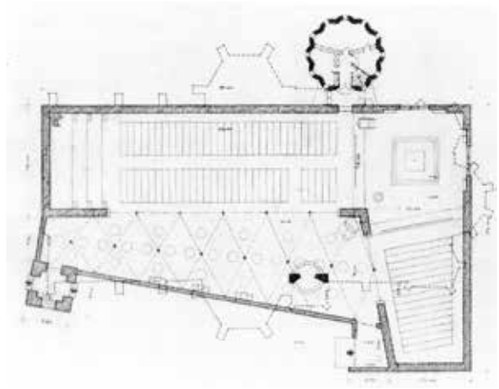


[5] Floorplan of Heilige Familie (Oberhausen) by Rudolf Schwarz.

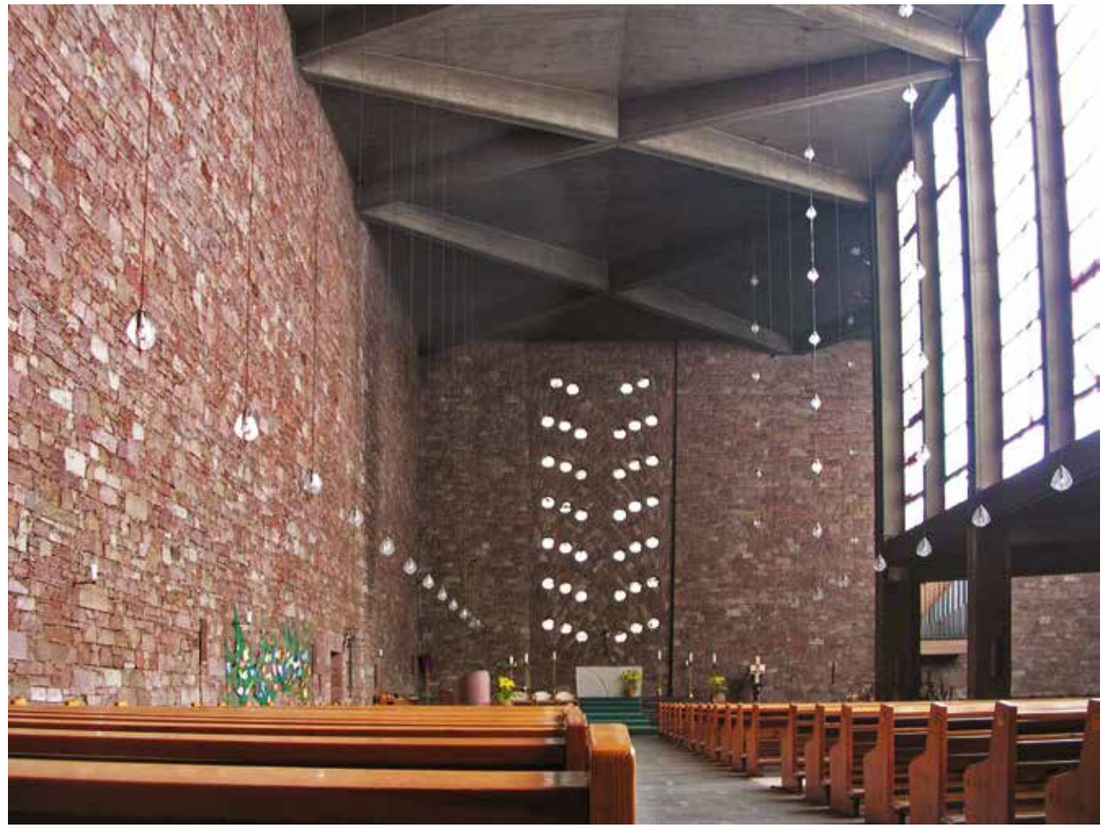
[6] Interior view of Heilige Familie (Oberhausen). photo: thomasmayerarchive.com

[15] Perhaps Schwarz took the opportunity to travel to Italy, when German citizens regained the right to travel abroad in the 1950s. Much of his post-war work is reminiscent of the use of materials which, by their refined appearance and rich contrasts, are typical of the other side of the Alps. The St. Annakirche, for instance, seems curiously related to Michelucci's Stazione Santa Maria Novella (Florence).

[16] Romano Guardini, preface to the catalogue of an exhibition of German liturgical art in Rome, 1956 (undated), unpaginated.



[7] Floor plan of St. Annakirche (Düren) by Rudolf Schwarz.



[8] Interior view of nave and side chapel of St. Annakirche (Aachen).

a layout roughly comparable with that applied in Aachen, although the proportion between the two spaces is virtually reversed. The aisle is filled with soft, filtered light which pours in through domes made of small, round glass stones, forming a row of patches on the floor. It seems subordinate to the nave while, at the same time, it is the secret centre of the church. In the main nave, a mass of light floods in through high windows at the inside of the L, emphasising the rough surface of the outer wall. As in the Fronleichnamskirche, the enclosing surfaces are literally flat, with no added layer of meaning. The richly graduated red-brown of the natural stone, and the concrete visible in the ceiling, bestow a completely different atmosphere on this church, however, which can hardly be captured in a black-and-white photograph.[15]

Both churches possess a great atmospheric density, attributable to an economy of means which, in its craving for the essential, rejects any redundant gesture. Their apparent asceticism and poverty produce a spatial experience of great intensity. Schwarz's architecture is physically present: in its simplicity it becomes primary and highly tangible, in a way that you do not need to touch in order to know how it *feels*; and, thus, what it *means*.

Perhaps Romano Guardini was referring to this experience, when he wrote about the design of the church at Aachen, 'As far as the imagelessness of the sacral space is concerned: its emptiness is an image in itself. Rephrasing it without a paradox; formed in the right way, the emptiness of space and surface is not simply a negation of the pictorial character, but its opposite.'[16]

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Colofon

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UHASSELT
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Site.
Dans un bois de pins et de bouleaux en pente vers le sud, un sol sablonneux en sous-bois tapissé d'aiguilles de pins, avec des clairières envahies de bruyères et de mousse.
Une harmonie d'ocre et de brun virant au carmin — le vert localisé au faîte des pins n'étant perçu que dans un deuxième temps.
Un graphisme de stries verticales serrées, contrastant avec des temps de repos au droit des clairières.

Intentions architecturales.
Fournir un bon outil, économique à la construction et à l'entretien, qui apporte une aide à ses habitants dans l'accomplissement de leur tâche. Etre juste dans les moyens et dans l'expression; atteindre une qualité qui invite à un dépassement, tout en restant familier, proche de l'homme, à sa mesure.
A l'extérieur, conserver la sérénité du site, être là naturellement, comme si les murs avaient poussé entre les arbres; être là sans heurts, avec évidence, et pourtant créer un lieu spécifique.

Matériaux et techniques.
Les techniques sont là pour servir un parti, un budget, concrétiser des espaces. L'ensemble des facteurs pris en considération a amené le choix de maçonnerie portantes en blocs de béton léger laissés apparents à l'intérieur et en briques « fen cuit » s'harmonisant particulièrement bien avec le site pour les parements extérieurs. Les charpentes portant visibles de l'intérieur permettent l'utilisation totale du volume des toitures. Fermes de bois pour la maison universitaire, en acier pour la maison principale (les entraits portent les dalles des duplex).
Couvertures en ardoises eternit, planchers en béton brut de décoffrage, laissés apparents en plafonds.
Les matériaux intérieurs harmonisent les teintes sable et ocre au blanc et au noir.

Organisation des plans.
La maison principale comporte deux zones bien distinctes réunies par l'oratoire et le lieu de méditation.
D'une part une zone de calme et de silence, comportant seize cellules sur quatre niveaux, et, d'autre part, organisés sur trois niveaux, les espaces de vie et de rencontre, les bureaux, et en position terminale, le quartier des hôtes. Cette situation des hôtes leur permet une participation à la vie communautaire tout en ménageant un isolement possible quand il est souhaité.
Les locaux de vie sont traités comme un enchaînement organique d'espaces diversifiés, qui favorisent la formation de groupes ayant chacun leur territoire tout en conservant la sensation d'appartenir et de participer à une totalité. Ils permettent dans certaines occasions exceptionnelles la réunion d'un groupe de 80 à 100 personnes.
La maison universitaire applique dans leur intégralité les principes développés pour les espaces de vie de la maison principale.
C'est le foyer sur lequel se greffent directement toutes les fonctions. Seules les chambres d'hôtes sont distribuées séparément.

Jean COSSE.

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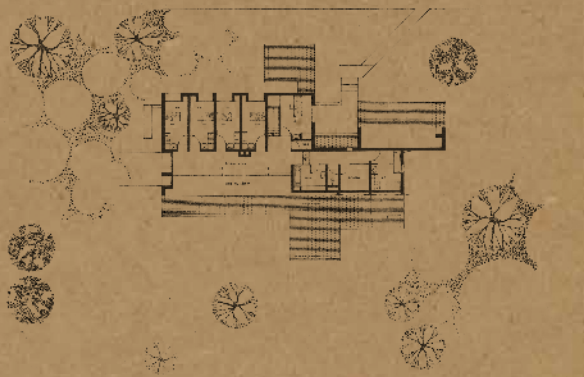
Plan d'implantation des nouvelles constructions : 1. la maison universitaire 2. la maison principale 3. la future chapelle oecuménique



Maison universitaire
1. Plan de l'étage 2. Plan terrain

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