

The School Building “The Ship” has been distinguished with the 2013 Brinkgreve Award

The School building “The Ship” in Amsterdam, rehabilitated by Wessel de Jonge - Architecten BNA BV, won the annual Brinkgreve Award for the best adaptive re-use & restoration project in Amsterdam of 2013.

The distinctive former First Technical School along one of Amsterdam’s main avenues has recently been fully restored and transformed into an up-to-date school building for the Cygnus Grammar School. The remarkable modernist’ structure, better known as “The Ship”, has been adapted to current insights on education as well as to contemporary health requirements according to recent governmental guidelines to improve the ventilation of school buildings. The government program as well involves funding incentives and, as a result, many school buildings in Holland are now upgraded in terms of climate control and sustainability.

The building was designed in 1952-1956 by the architect JB Ingwersen and strongly

inspired by the *Unité d’Habitation* of Le Corbusier. Partly because of the expressive structure of exposed concrete it has been designated as a national landmark in 2009. The concrete, which had been partly painted in the 1990s, was fully cleaned and carefully repaired, restoring the original texture and various natural colours of the material surfaces. Great care was given to restore the many art works that are integrated in the concrete as bas-reliefs, as well as the original colour scheme of the interior.

Bespoke insulation glazing is placed directly into the concrete rebates of the fixed façade elements. The distinctive ‘brise soleil’, the screen façade of prefabricated, mechanically compacted concrete elements, was inspired by Mediterranean examples but appeared in our climate as an inadequate shading device. The timber sliding windows have been replaced with an improved sound insulation but natural ventilation by simply opening them was no longer possible due to

the traffic noise. Given the limited budgets for educational facilities, a climate control system had to be developed without using mechanical cooling. As far as possible, the physical features of the building have been used to enhance the indoor climate, for instance by making good use of the heat-absorbing capacity of the concrete structure. Fresh air is blown into the class rooms. To avoid an excessive amount of ventilation ducts in the building, the corridors and stair cases are used as abduction ‘channels’. The Cygnus Grammar School is now accommodated in a relatively sustainable building, while CO₂ emissions are a greatly reduced.

Last December 17, the project by Wessel de Jonge architects was awarded the “Brinkgreve Bowl” as the best restoration and adaptive re-use project in Amsterdam of 2013. ■

Revised translation by Wessel de Jonge, from: <http://www.wesseldejonge.nl/cygnus.php>



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