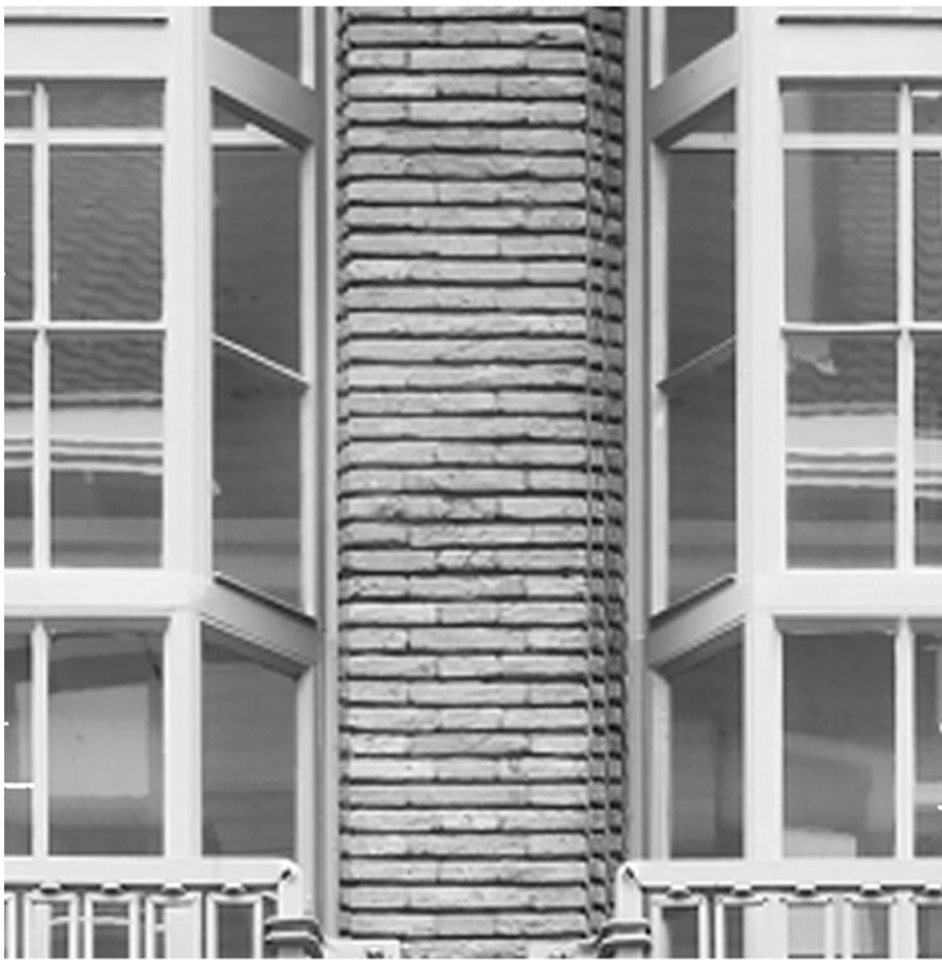


Touch & Feel

Materiality and a Changing Society

Jaap van den Elshout
Thomas Geraedts
Max Henneman
Pieter van der Weele



PRELIMINARY VERSION
including the work of
Pieter van der Weele

Touch & Feel

MATERIALITY AND CHANGING SOCIETY

Heritage & Architecture Studio 2020-2021

Vacant Heritage - Department Stores V&D's

With contributions by Jaap van den Elshout, Thomas Geraedts,
Max Henneman & Pieter van der Weele

Edited by Wido Quist

HA_{LAB}

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Front Cover: The former V&D building in Leiden standing next to the historic "Waag" building. Picture captured and edited by the author.



**PRELIMINARY VERSION
including the work of
Pieter van der Weele**

HA_{LAB}

Introduction - Wido Quist

In September 2020 a studio on Vacant Heritage started within the MSc - graduation laboratory Heritage and Architecture. The vacancy issue was derived from the 62 obsolete department stores, equivalent with 400.000 m² gross floor space, that were left in Dutch city centres after the bankruptcy of Vroom & Dreesmann (established in 1887) by the end of 2015 (Roggeveen 2016). The initial attempt to continue using some of the buildings as department store by the Canadian company Hudson's Bay failed in 2019. What happens to the traditional twentieth century commercial areas in major Dutch cities when everyone is shopping online? The Covid-19 pandemic illustrates that this question is relevant in many ways. In the historic city centres of Haarlem, Leiden, Dordrecht and Alkmaar for example, many buildings are vacant because traditional retailing is almost impossible. For over a century, the use of the city centre was dictated by commercial activities yet nowadays shopping streets are empty. Shops and department stores are closed, leaving a desolate image. The rather large former V&D buildings with a clear corporate identity are in urgent need of transformation to secure liveability. The research done in this studio contributes to the broader question of Vacant Heritage: can attributes, of commercial buildings becoming obsolete, be identified to assess their significance and how can this feed into concepts for revitalisation?

Research theme

The research presented in this book contributes to the wider theme of Materiality in Twentieth Century Heritage. This theme is relevant from an architectural historical perspective, but even more from an analytical perspective on the essential qualities to be identified and preserved and the design of strategies for adaptive reuse. What is the effect of certain materials and certain construction technologies on the architectural expression, its consequent perception by people and the consequences for the (im)possibilities of adaptive reuse? What distinguishes the architecture of a bank building from an ordinary workman's home? Can the hand of an architect be recognized in the selection of materials or can it only be explained by using stylistic terminology? What was/is the influence of corporate architecture on the spending of people in department stores? Those questions and many others are derived from the twofold hypothesis underlying this research theme:

1. Heritage values relate more to the scale of materials and construction details than recognized (yet) and subsequently this notion is lacking in many reports, descriptions, value assessments and other publications;
2. People are more susceptible to material aspects in architecture than they are able to clearly express.

This book focusses on the Touch and Feel of facades of vacant former V&D department stores. The primary focus is on facades, as these materialize the traditional border between public and private where architects and building owners constantly face the dilemma of either inviting or obstructing people.

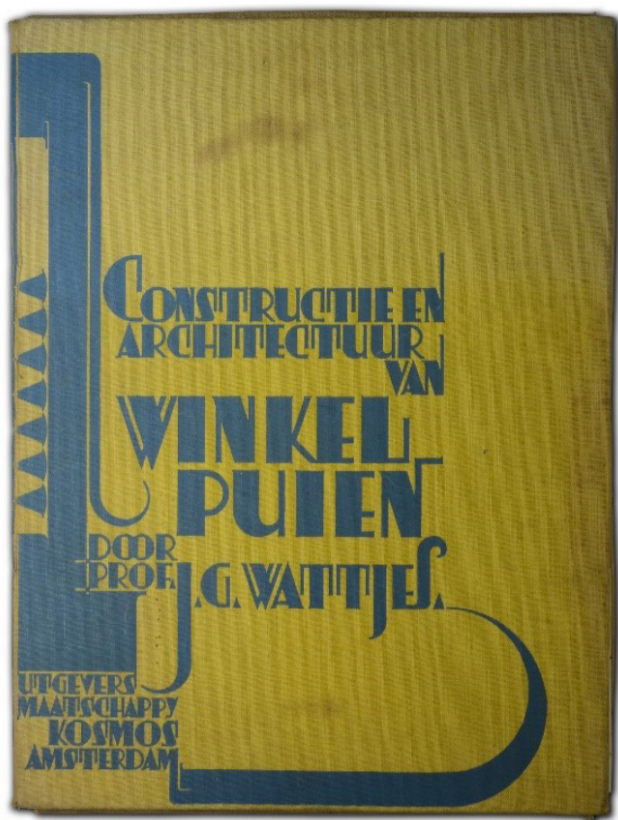


Figure 1: Cover of the folder of *Constructie en Architectuur van Winkelpuien*, designed in the so-called *Wijdeveld*-style by Anton Kurvers (collection W.J. Quist)

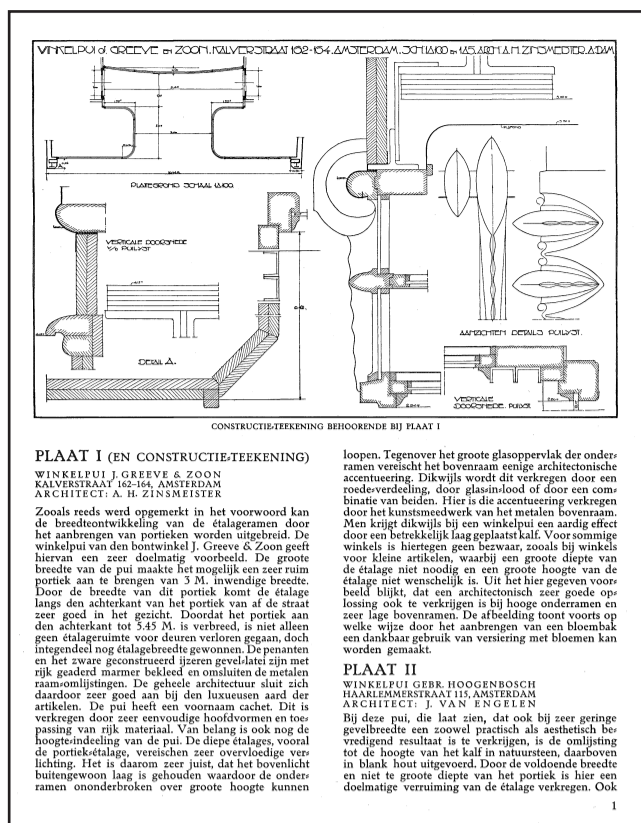


Figure 2: Sample page (text and drawings) from *Constructie en Architectuur van Winkelpuien*.

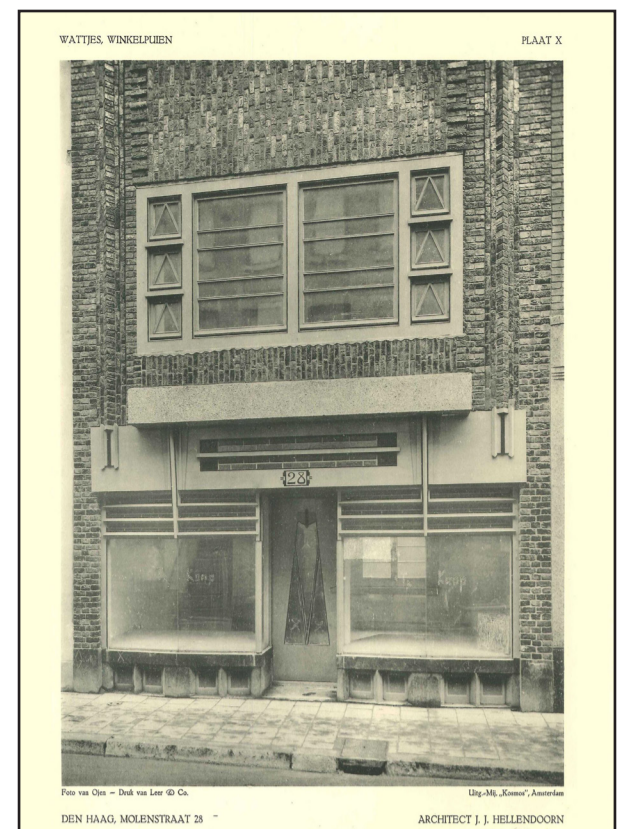


Figure 3: Sample pages (photographs) from *Constructie en Architectuur van Winkelpuien*. (Left: Shop Window of the store in Molenstraat 28, The Hague; Right: Shop Window of the store in Hoogstraat 20, The Hague)

Inspiration

This research on the touch and feel of facades is inspired by the work of prof. J.G. Wattjes (1879-1944). In 1918 Wattjes was appointed professor at the Faculty of Civil Engineering at TU Delft (back then Technische Hoogeschool Delft) and he is known for his many publications on 1920's and 1930's architecture and construction handbooks (see Loggers 2005 and Oldewarris 2016). Many architecture students, architects, craftsmen, architectural historians and heritage officers are familiar with the handbooks he published in the 1920's and 1930's. Almost every aspect of the construction of building was covered in *Constructie van Gebouwen* making them ideal for contemporary use in education and for nowadays understanding of the architecture of the first half of the twentieth century. The first edition of the book series comprised of 4 volumes and a total number of over 20 pages, including 40 figures. The second edition even comprises 10 volumes with a total of 24 pages and 48 figures. It is not only the completeness that appeals to many, it is also the precision and practical usability: it makes use of to-the-point descriptions supported by many photographs, and neatly made drawings on different scales. In 1926, Wattjes published a book on shop facades, *Constructie en Architectuur van winkelpuien*. In this publication, Wattjes describes and critically analyses a series of recently constructed Dutch shop windows. It presents construction details and photographs to offer the reader maximum insight in the projects presented. Wrapped in a typical Amsterdam School style folder, designed by Anton Kurvers (1889-1940) with a functional layout and high quality printed on separated pages, this publication is easy accessible in bringing stylistic properties, material aspects as well as construction details together. Because of Wattjes' strong believe in technology being an inseparable part of architecture, his clear way of publishing on this topic and the direct reference to shop facades in one of his publications, this study – partially having comparable goals - can be seen as a kind of homage.

Structure

This publication elaborates on different ways to collect, document, analyse and evaluate the material aspects of facades of former V&D department stores. The research presented is the combined effort of four students during the first half of their graduation in the academic year 2020-2021. The students have all looked at the topic 'Touch and Feel' from their own perspective based on their personal problem statement and resulting research question. This publication presents a selection of their work.

The different perspectives the students have been working on are reflected in their research questions that guided them through their graduation:

Jaap van den Elshout

“How does the architecture of the former Vroom & Dreesmann department store engage in the relation between the public, semi-public and private space and the people moving within and between these spaces and how can this be applied in the new design?”

Thomas Geraedts

“To what extent can architectural attributes of post-WWII vacant department stores acquire patina from intended and unintended weathering which enhances the original design intent of the architect and thereby, delivers facade values?”

Max Henneman

“What visible elements in the facade of the former V&D building affects the collective memory and create a non-intended commemorative value, that could influence the re-design, by surveying the residents of Haarlem?”

Pieter van der Weele

“What lead the architect to insert distinct elements in the facades that required a certain amount of precision and craftsmanship? Is the precision in the façade design and craftsmanship in these buildings related to the urban context and surrounding architecture?”

The studies cover five different former V&D buildings:

- Vroom & Dreesmann Haarlem, Jan Kuijt (1931), Grote Houtstraat 70
- Vroom & Dreesmann Enschede, Jan Kuijt (1939), Korte Hengelosestraat 1
- Vroom & Dreesmann Leiden, Leo van der Laan and Jan van der Laan (1936), Aalmarkt 22
- Vroom & Dreesmann Maastricht, Jan Kuijt (19)32, Grote Staat 5-15 / Vijfharingenstraat
- Vroom & Dreesmann Sittard, Jan Peutz (1966), Markt 1

References

- Loggers, T., Wattjes en de Nieuwe Bouwkunst. Prof.ir. J.G. Wattjes (1879-1944) publicist en architect, Walburg Pers 2005, 126 pp.
- Oldewarris, J.A, Liefde voor de Hollandse bouwkunst : architectuur en toegepaste kunst bij Uitgeversmaatschappij Kosmos 1923-1960, dissertation Leiden University 2016. <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/43443> Accessed November 21, 2020.
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- Wattjes, J.G., Constructie en architectuur van winkelpuien. Uitgeversmaatschappij “Kosmos”, Amsterdam, 1926, Losbladig in map, VIII + 24 + XLVIII platen. Wattjes, J.G., Constructie en architectuur van winkelpuien. Uitgeversmaatschappij “Kosmos”, Amsterdam, 1926, Losbladig in map, VIII + 24 + XLVIII platen.



Vroom & Dreesmann Enschede
Pieter van der Weele



Picture 1. Front facades of the V&D stores in Enschede (above) and Leiden (under)

Picture [I]

Vroom en Dreesmann, Aalmarkt 22, Leiden
Leo & Jan van der Laan

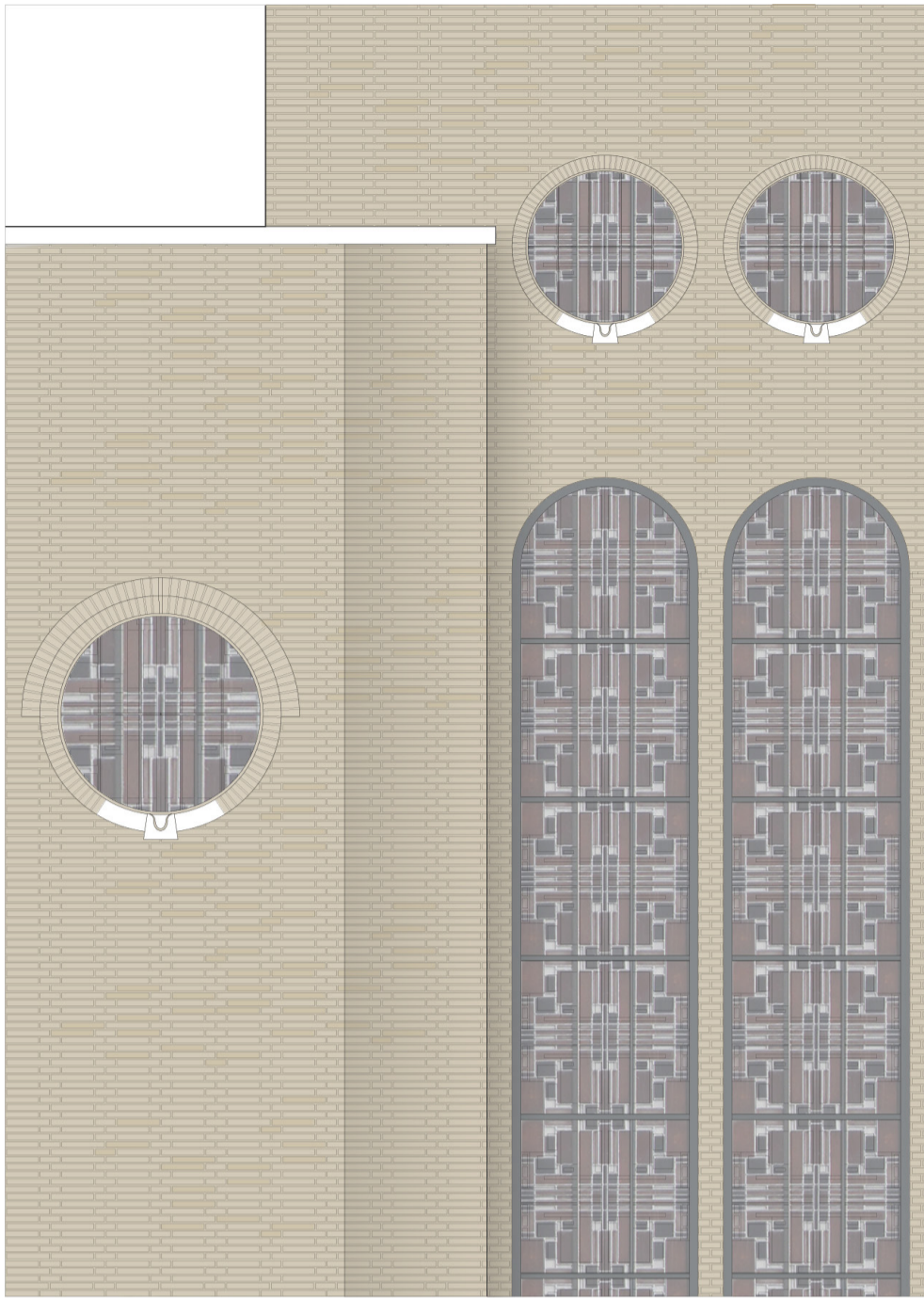
Vroom en Dreesmann, Korte Hengelosestraat 1,
Enschede
Jan Kuijt

“Serious architectonic knowledge of the façade, the surface that intermediates between the interior and the city, can be developed very effectively by a study of old buildings. This is an excellent way of learning about such things as proportions, window openings, the effect of depth, detailing, façade coping, the silhouette of a building, the possible methods of supporting it and so on. There is a real need for this kind of knowledge.” In this sentence, from the book “The Art of Blending” Dutch architect Jo Coenen underlines the importance of studying historical facades in our urban landscapes. This statement is part of the main case he makes in the book, namely that architects today should try to design in a certain way in order for their buildings not to “violently collide” with their surroundings but rather to “work together” with them. The neglect of the existing architecture in new construction has led to a “disjointed public space without direction”. One of the key steps to achieve a desirable outcome is the careful study of facades.

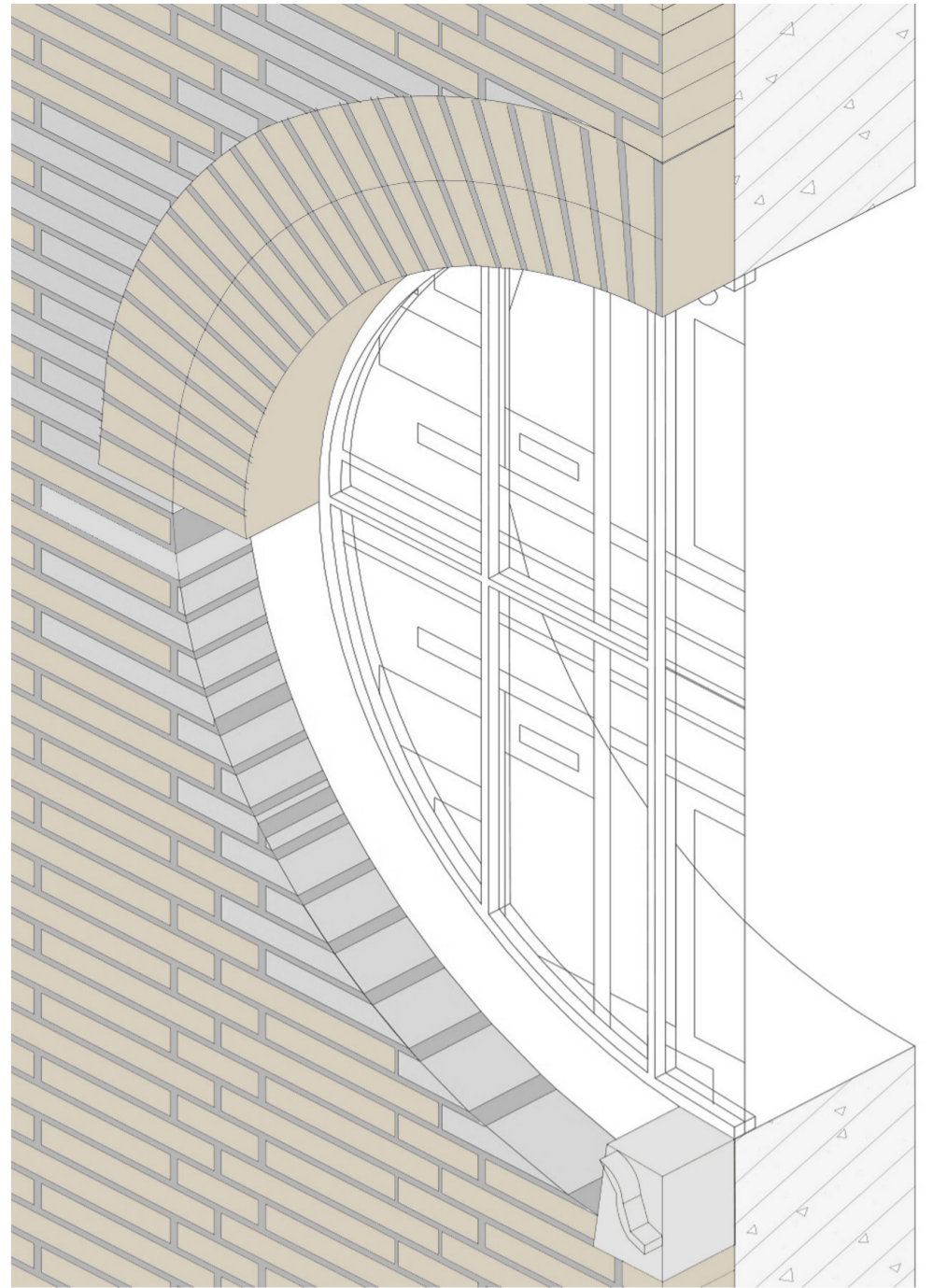
One can easily notice that the building in Leiden has a more traditional appearance in contrast to that in Enschede which is simple and modernist. One similarity between these buildings is the use of brick in both facades. Another similarity is that in both these buildings one can find interesting technical details, which require a fair amount of

precision in both the design and construction phase. In the former V&D building in Enschede, facade details that visually represent craftsmanship are the round openings as well as the stained glass windows. In Leiden, the main detail that required a descent amount of craftsmanship were the stone pieces that created horizontal lines alternating with the brickwork. These facade details required not only craftsmanship, capable constructors but also capital. It is valuable to study the reason they were implemented by the architect.

The research questions and problematizations drawn from this were inspired by an argument made by well known Dutch architects associated with heritage. Among those are Wessel de Jonge, Jo Coenen and Job Roos who expressed their concerns in books such as “The Art of Blending”, “Discovering the Assignment” and “Designing from Heritage”. The main argument these architects hold is associated with the need for seeking information that goes beyond the tangible, and search for information (the stories) behind the use of certain construction materials. The facade’s construction details and materials when studied thoroughly can prove to be a valuable source of information about the architect’s design approach, his stances and views on aesthetics his influences/role models etc.



Picture 2. Curved openings on the central part of the facade



Picture 3. Axonometric section of a round opening.

Picture [II]

Analysis of the front facade

Vroom en Dreesmann, Korte Hengelosestraat 1,
Enschede
Jan Kuijt

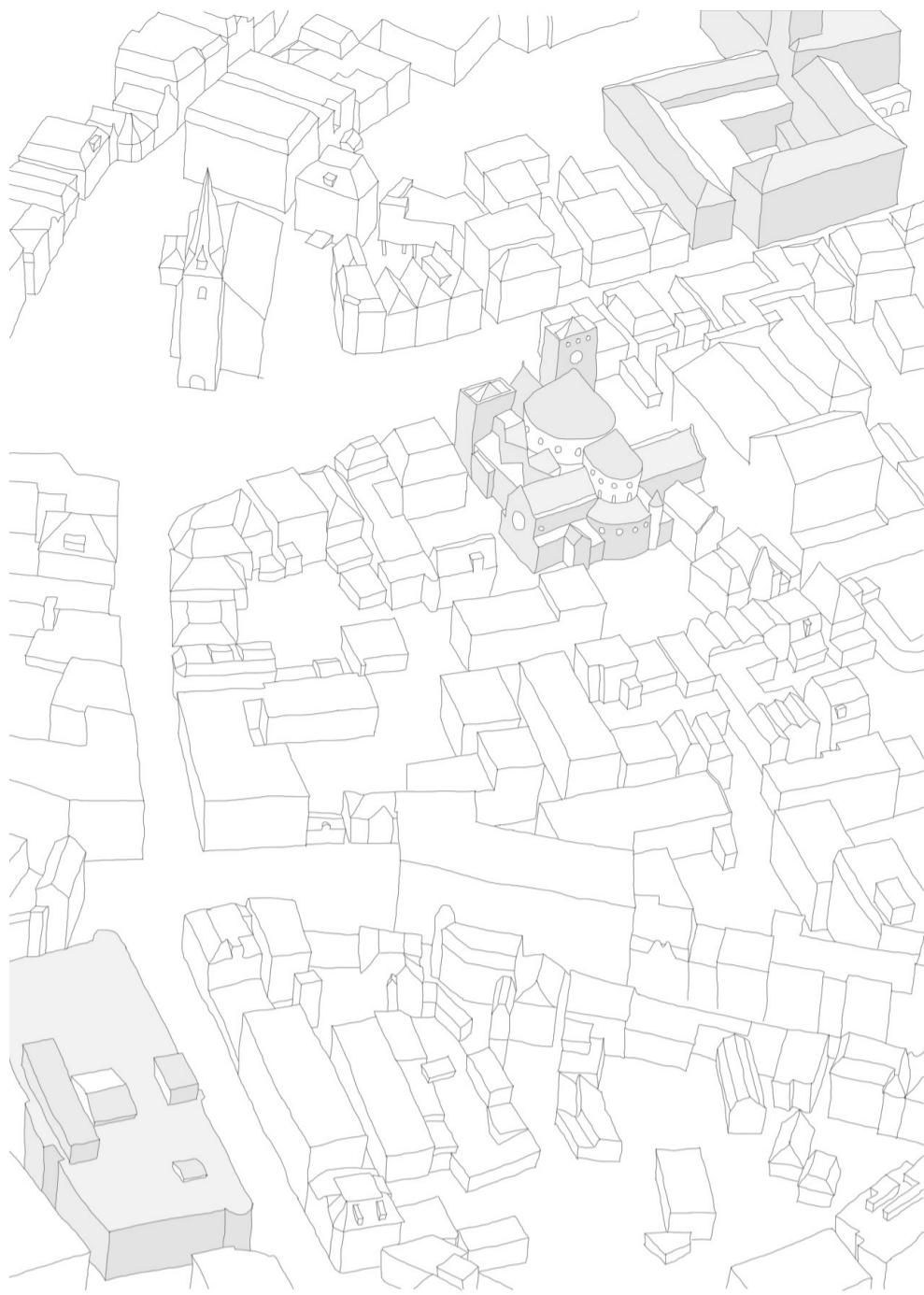
The V&D building in Enschede was completed in 1939 and was designed by Jan Kuijt (1884 - 1944). The building has 4 floors and reaches a maximum height of 15,9 meters, while the maximum dimensions of its floorplan are 77,8 x 31,5m. The building's skin is mainly made out of brick and the openings are often sealed with stained glass. The front facade of the building can easily be divided into three distinct segments, one central and two peripheral parts. Each of the three parts is different and has some specific elements. One characteristic of the peripheral parts is that the windows are aligned in horizontal lines. In an exact opposite logic, the architect created long and narrow vertical windows in the central part of the front facade. In contrast to the peripheral parts of the facade, none of the windows found in the central part is angular as even the narrow vertical windows end with a curve. The brickwork has a distinct yellow-brown colour and is assembled in a monk-bond-system. In this system one header is placed between two stretchers on each side

Picture [III]

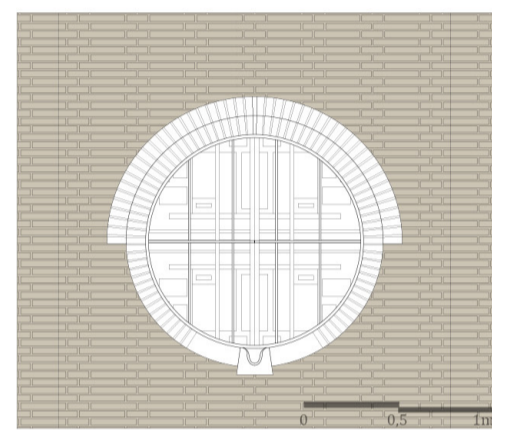
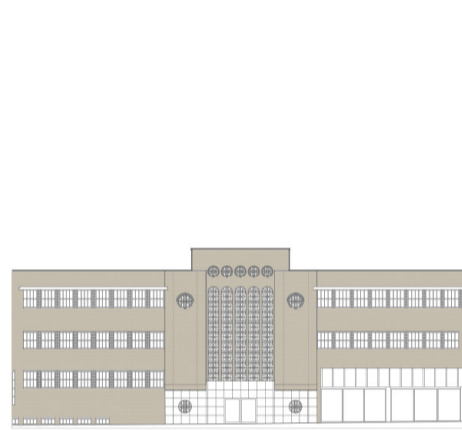
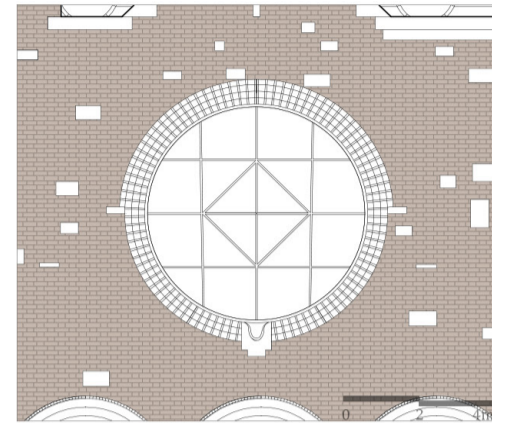
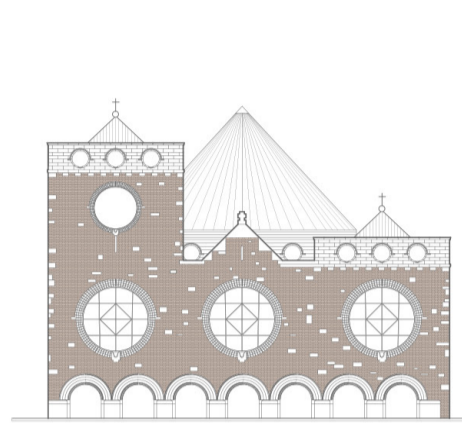
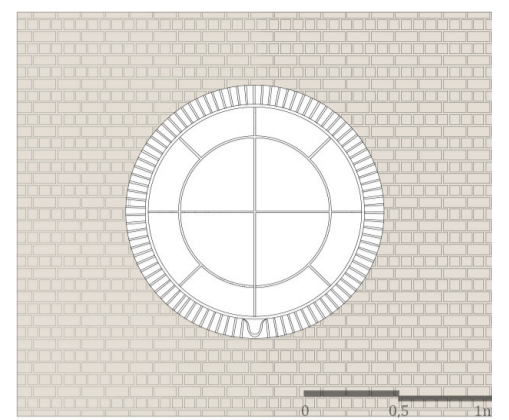
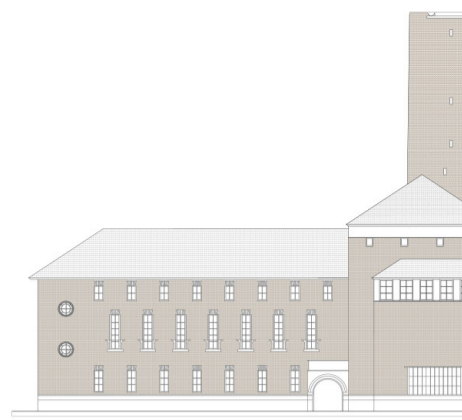
The Craftsmanship of the Round Openings

Vroom en Dreesmann, Korte Hengelosestraat 1,
Enschede
Jan Kuijt

The circular windows require a variety of materials, precision and craftsmanship in order to be constructed. In their lower parts, the circular brick row is replaced by three stone pieces, the central of which is a scupper with a distinct trapezoid shape. These stone pieces were customly designed and produced for these specific openings. As one can observe in the section, a thick layer of reinforced concrete is behind the brickwork, which as the load-bearing element. The brickwork was not part of the structure, but was rather chosen for aesthetic purposes to cover the concrete. In contrast to rectangular openings, round openings require precise work in brick facades. This is because the bricks surrounding the opening have to be cut with curved slices in order to fit the round shape of the opening. Although the overall design of the facade is simple and sober, it is obvious that the architect envisioned the round openings to be very important in the facade composition. This observation instigated a research concerning their origin.



Picture 4. Locations of the V&D, the St. Jacobus church and the townhall.



Picture 5. The Round openings in the V&D, the St. Jacobus church and the townhall.

Picture [IV]

The Urban Context

Vroom en Dreesmann, Korte Hengelosestraat 1,
Enschede
Jan Kuijt

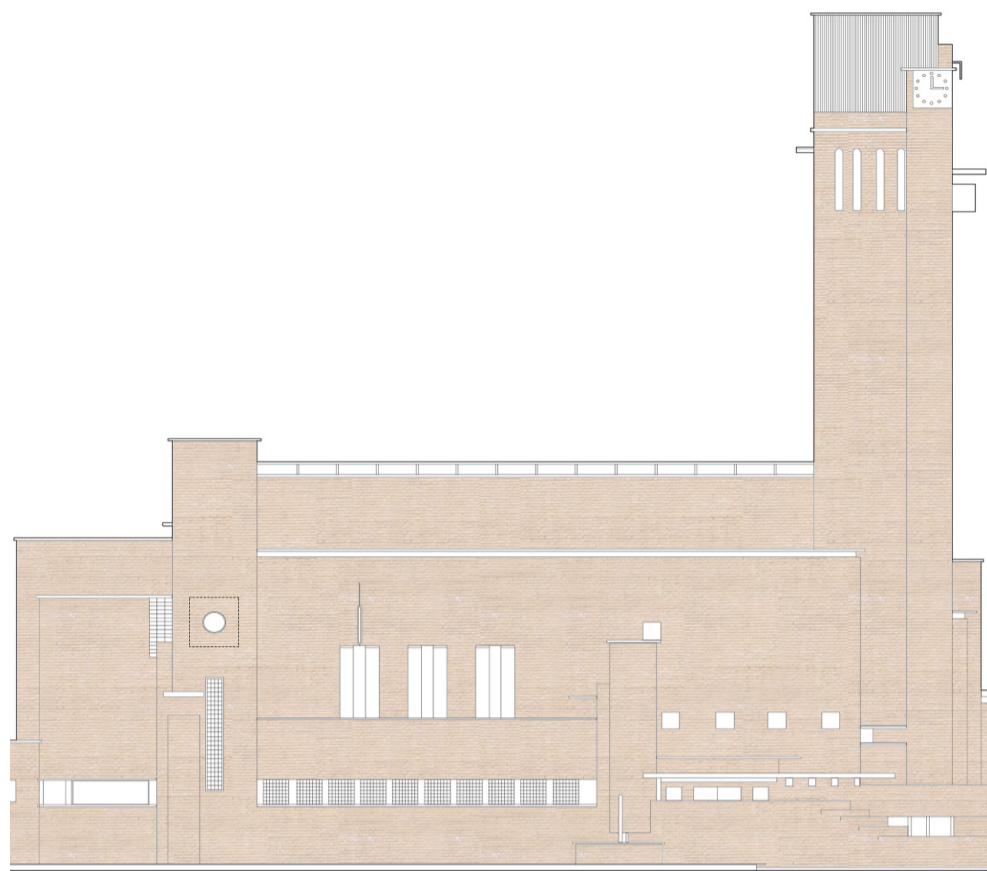
Many large new buildings were being constructed in the 1930's in Enschede. There was much available space after a large part of the center burnt down by a big fire. The highlighted buildings are (from left to right) the former V&D, the St. Jacobus Church (by H.W. Valk and J.H. Sluijmer - 1933) and the Town Hall (by G. Friedhoff - 1933). An interesting urban feature of the city is that many of the buildings at the corners of the building blocks have a rounded edge. The same applies to the V&D building. The round corners allowed coaches to move more smoothly through the city which was completely rebuilt after the fire. The V&D store was constructed in a time when coaches were largely ceased being used hinting that Kuijt did not use this urban typology for a practical purpose.

Picture [V]

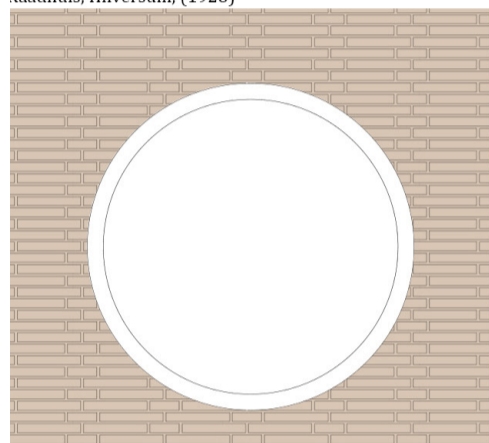
The Round Opening in the Surroundings
Vroom en Dreesmann, Korte Hengelosestraat 1,
Enschede

Jan Kuijt

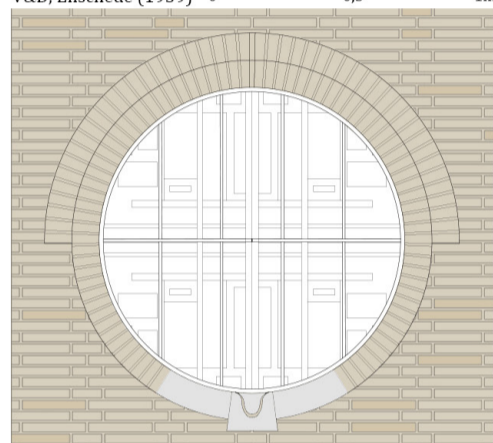
When examining the facades of the St. Jacobus Church, the former V&D building and the Townhall of Enschede, there is an interesting similarity between them, namely the existence of circular windows. In all cases, the round openings are enriched with scuppers at their lowest parts. These scuppers have identical shapes. The fact that Kuijt designed his building to have round edges, something that could possibly be due to his desire to integrate a feature of the surrounding urban landscape into his building could strengthen the hypothesis that the circular openings were also inspired by the surrounding architecture. It has to be underlined that these buildings were completed just six years before the V&D store was. However, these are just indications without proof.



Raadhuis, Hilversum, (1928)



V&D, Enschede (1939)

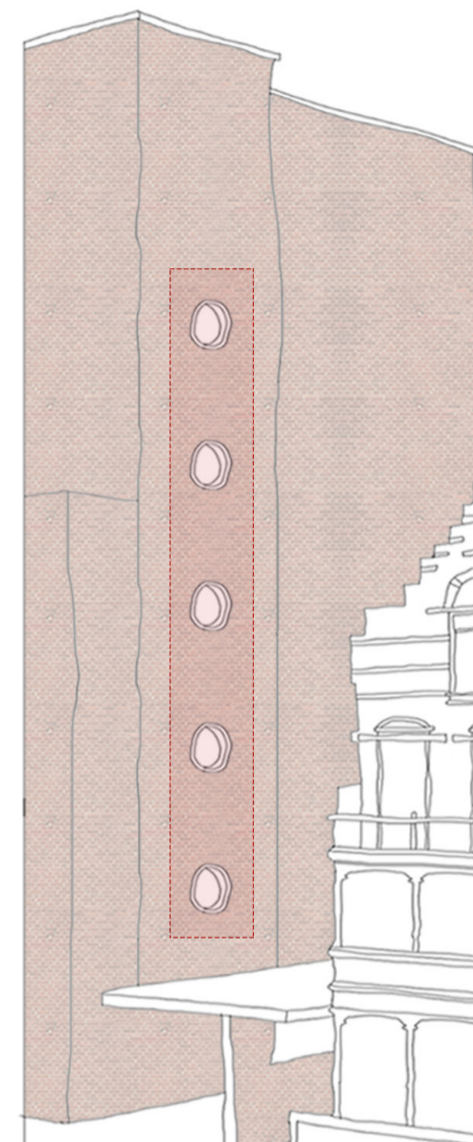


Picture 6. The round openings in the townhall of Hilversum and the V&D in Enschede.

V&D, Utrecht (1940)



De Bijenkorf, Rotterdam (1930)



Picture 7. The round openings in Dudok's Bijenkorf in Rotterdam and Kuijt's V&D in Utrecht

Picture [VI]

The Townhall of Hilversum
Townhall, Dudokpark 1, Hilversum
Willem Dudok

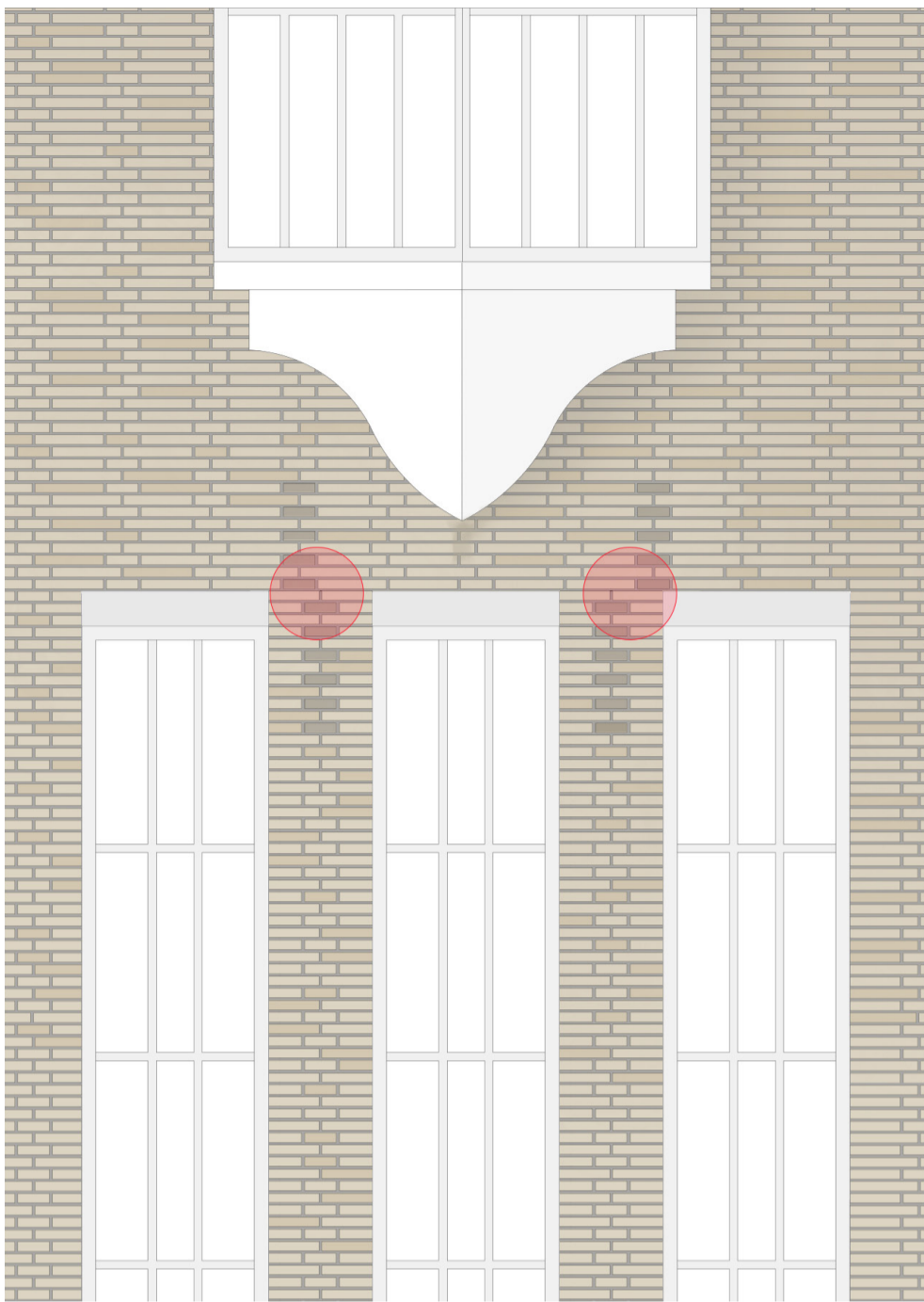
The construction of the V&D department store in Enschede was widely covered by the press. An article dating from 1939 in the newspaper "De Standaard" titled "A new building in Enschede" named the bond system of the brickwork as a "Hilversumsch" bond, referring to the town of Hilversum. The Townhall of Hilversum was designed by Dutch architect Willem Dudok (1884-1974) and was one of the most famous Dutch buildings of the decade as documented by H. van Bergeijk in the article "Foreign visit to Hilversum". The fact that a newspaper aiming at the general public called the bonding system "Hilversumsch" testifies that the building had indeed reached a significant level of fame in the 1930's. A hypothesis was made that the bonding system Jan Kuijt used in the V&D store was inspired by the townhall. Except from the bond system, the circular openings can also be found in the townhall.

Picture [VII]

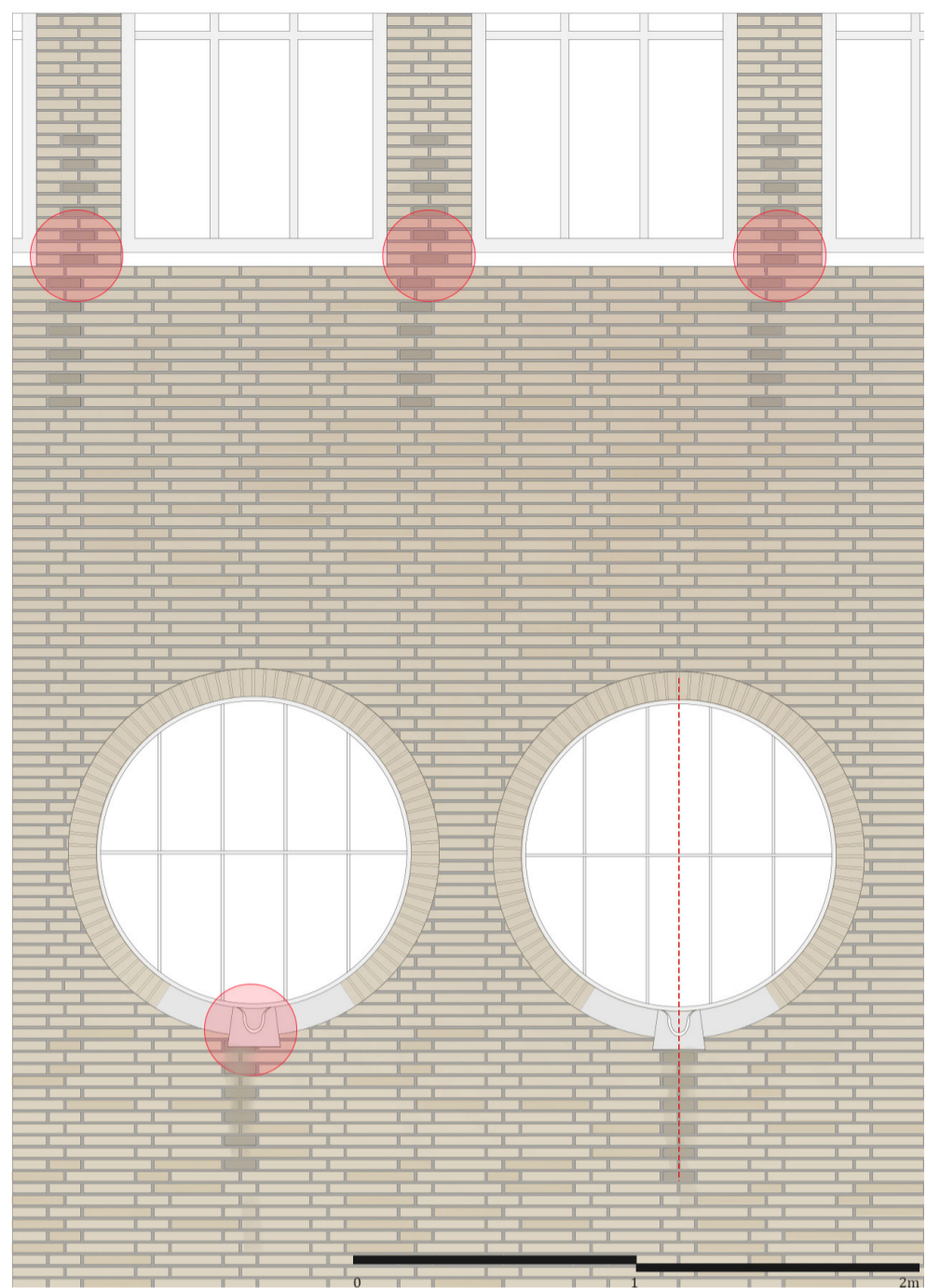
Similarities between Kuijt and Dudok
The V&D in Utrecht by Kuijt and the Bijenkorf in Rotterdam by Dudok

The hypothesis that Kuijt referred to Dudok's architecture is not merely an assumption, but has been documented by Van Beekum, who writes in "Architect Jan Kuijt Wzn. Bouwen voor Vroom en Dreesmann" that the Bijenkorf building in Rotterdam (1930) - designed by Dudok - "stood as a rolemodel" for the facade of the Rokin V&D store in Amsterdam.

The Bijenkorf building had a characteristic vertical row of round openings, something that was also perceived in Kuijt's V&D store on the Lange Viestraat in Utrecht (1940, now demolished) for example. The striking resemblance of the circular openings in Dudok's and Kuijt's buildings together with the information presented before strengthens the hypothesis that the circular openings in the V&D store in Enschede were inspired by the architecture of Willem Dudok.



Picture 8. Fragment of the left wing of the front facade.



Picture 9. Fragment of the left wing of the front facade.

Picture [VIII]

Imperfections in the Brickwork

Vroom en Dreesmann, Korte Hengelosestraat 1,
Enschede
Jan Kuijt

So far, the focus of the research has been about the elements in the facades that showed a certain level of detail and craftsmanship. As already extensively mentioned Jan Kuijt used the monk (or Hilversumsch) bond for the brickwork. The header bricks in the monk bond are placed in such a way that they show a “vertical line” pattern in the façade. The positioning of most openings was not calculated or aligned with respect to these vertical lines of the headers. In order to avoid a disrupting aesthetic effect which could possibly be interpreted as a lack of meticulous design, the architect chose to slightly shift the brickwork so that the headers would still fall centrally between the openings.

Although it might have been a disturbing effect to not re-center the brickwork between the openings, the shift in the brickworks (underlined in the facade fragment) is still perceivable mainly due to the vertical lines created by the monk-bond system.

Picture [IX]

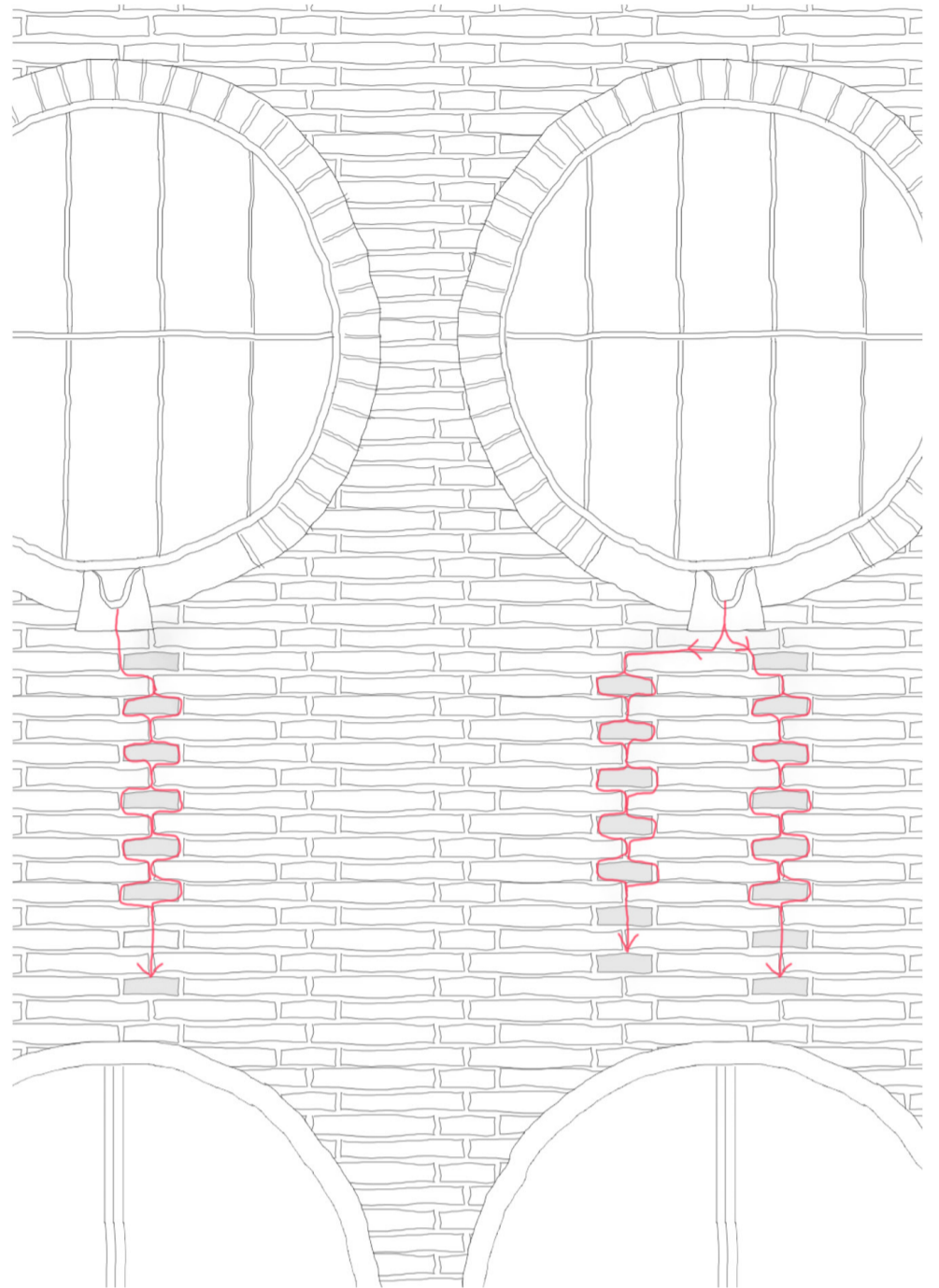
Alignment and Non-Alignment

Vroom en Dreesmann, Korte Hengelosestraat 1,
Enschede
Jan Kuijt

The brickwork was only aligned to a few openings in the front facade. Two of these openings were located in the western peripheral part of the front facade and the other two in the central part. A common feature of these openings is that these all share the same shape. This is another indication that Kuijt regarded the circular openings as being more important elements of the facade than the other openings. It is interesting that in contrast to Enschede, in the V&D buildings in Utrecht and Amsterdam (also designed by Kuijt) all the openings are aligned with the brickwork. Was it a case of Kuijt not having enough time for his design in Enschede to bring the design to the perfection of Amsterdam and Utrecht, or did he not consider this particular case (which means the town as well) as important as others? In either case it is interesting that he continued a tradition of the craftsmanship of constructing curved openings in brick walls which can be traced back to the tradition of the “Amsterdamse School” and the architecture of H. P. Berlage.



Picture 10. Photograph of the central part of the front facade.



Picture 11. The movement of the rainwater through the joints.

Picture [X]
Brick Displacement and Weathering
 Vroom en Dreesmann, Korte Hengelosestraat 1,
 Enschede
 Jan Kuijt

The non-alignment of the windows with the brickwork is something that Kuijt apparently tried to hide with the displacement of the bricks between the openings. The weathering of the facade over time has made the non-alignment of the openings and the brickwork gradually more visible.

Picture [XI]
The Trace of Moisture
 Vroom en Dreesmann, Korte Hengelosestraat 1,
 Enschede
 Jan Kuijt

The dirt and moisture result in a dark soiling of the facade following the layering and position of the bricks, highlighting the vertical lines created by the monk bond system. As the rainwater follows the head joints between the bricks, the trace it leaves behind remains in one or more vertical lines not centered under the scupper, creating an aesthetically disrupting effect.



Vroom & Dreesmann Leiden
Pieter van der Weele



Picture 1. Fragment of the lower right part of the front facade.

Picture [XII]

Imperfections in the Brickwork

Vroom en Dreesmann, Aalmarkt 22, Leiden

Leo & Jan van der Laan

German writer Alfred Wiener (1885-1964) stated that “Everything that the department store has and is must contribute to attracting the public (...) The fact that the visitors can stroll freely through the department store’s beautiful spaces draws many people into the department store who had no intention at all of buying anything”. It is clear from this text that the “beautiful spaces” had an important part in the function of the store. Not only did the new megastores attract visitors through “beauty” but also by their size, which would impress people and compel them to enter, just like the cathedrals did in medieval Europe. A substantial portion of the first large publicly accessible buildings in The Netherlands like the Tuschinski Theatre in Amsterdam were designed with the underlying principle of “standing out” from the surrounding urban environment, either through size but also through ornamentation. From the 1920’s onwards, the approach of many architects aimed in the exact opposite direction, namely to design the building with the goal of fitting in with the surrounding architecture. One of the first large public buildings in the Netherlands that followed this design principle was the “Telegraaf” building, completed in 1930. This building used bricks with a colour that matched many of the surrounding buildings of that neighbourhood. A design “technique” used by architects to achieve urban integration was to relocate the exterior wall of the top

floor of the building a few meters back. In this way, the masses of these new buildings would seem smaller, and thus closer in scale to the surrounding historic buildings. Both of these design “techniques”, namely the displacement of the upper floor’s exterior wall and the use of materials seen in surrounding buildings, were implemented in the design of the V&D department store in Leiden. The building was completed in the year 1936 and designed by Leo (1864-1942) and Jan (1896-1966) van der Laan. The building has 6 elevations and reaches a maximum height of 26,8m. Its maximum dimensions are 77,8m x 45,6m. The building skin consists mostly of brick, a material widely used by the Van der Laans in their buildings, but also of sandstone, specifically on the part of the façade covering the first floor. Not only the use of sandstone is interesting but so is the way it interacts with the brickwork. In the part of the façade covering the first floor, the stone panels and brickworks are positioned in layers, and placed one on top of another. On many occasions the size or positioning of the stone panels of the facade does not seem trivial. Instead, it has been noticed that in some parts of the facade, the proportions between the stone pieces or between the brickwork and the stone were approximate to the golden ratio.



Picture 2. Fragment of the V&D store's facade and the Waag

Picture [XIII]

The Waag Building

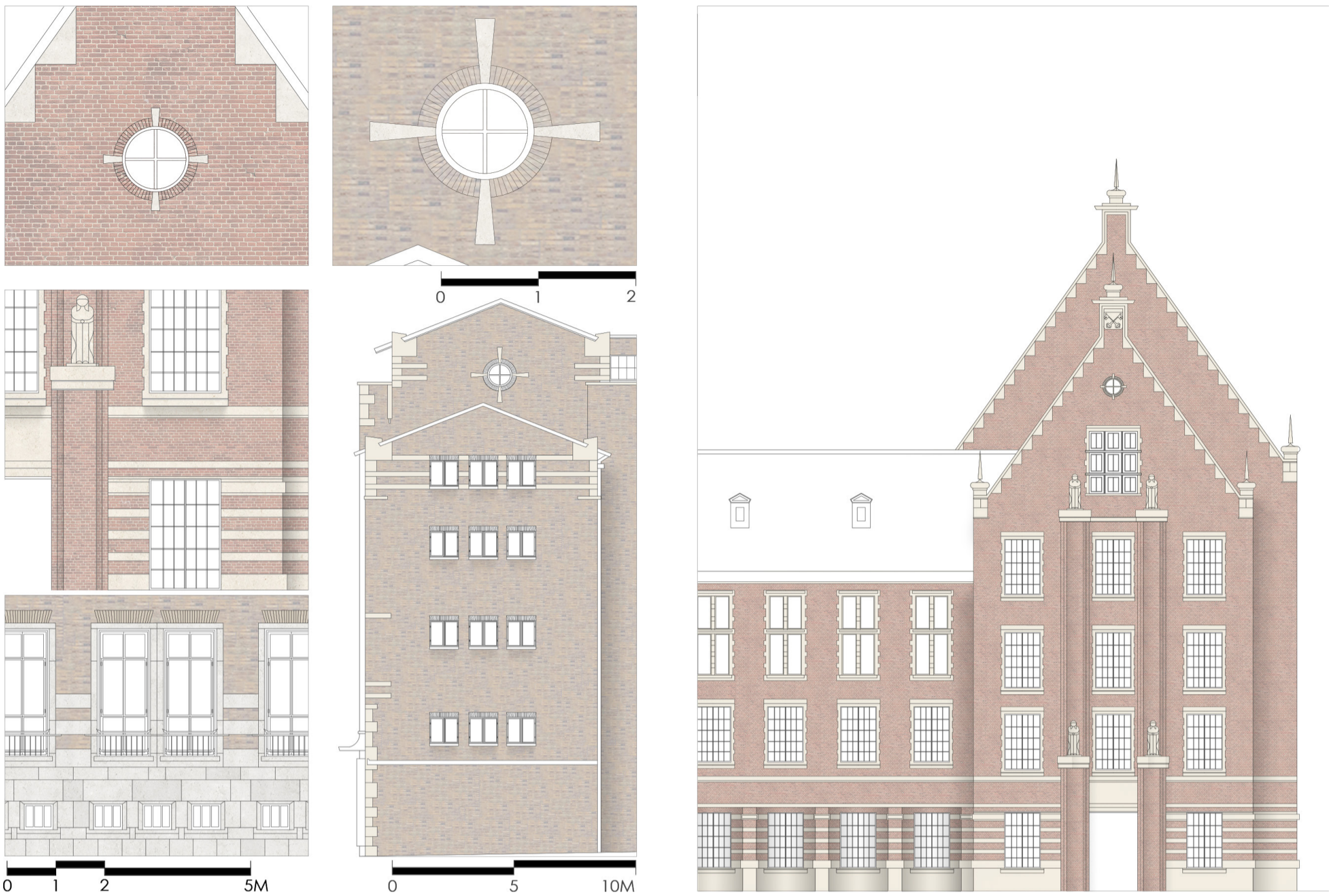
Vroom en Dreesmann, Aalmarkt 22, Leiden

Leo & Jan van der Laan

The iconic Waag building of Leiden was constructed in the mid-17th century in classical style, and is largely covered with sandstone. According to M. Groot in the article “Een oud kleed past geen nieuwen mensch, elk jaartij heeft een eigen wensch” the use of sandstone in the V&D store is closely associated with the Waag. The architects, wishing to create a “smooth transition” from the large department store to the Waag building, made the façade shorter to the right. The lower parts of the façade of the V&D are covered with sandstone blocks, also a feature for which the Waag building stood as a “role model”. It is certain that the Waag building had caught the interest of architect Leo van der Laan, as among the drawings that were obtained from the national archives, sketches of the Waag building were found. One main difference between the stone cladding of the V&D and the Waag building is that the joints between the stones are much wider in the latter. Another difference is the fact that the stone pieces in the Waag have a significant thickness and were stacked on top of each other, while the stone pieces in the V&D are much thinner and were attached

to the building's structure. The architects may have chosen to make only these specific joints wider, as the entrance lies precisely next to the Waag. This could also be seen as a way the architects aimed to create a “smooth transition” to the Waag building by referring to it as a “role model”.

It is possible that one reason the architects used the lower stone cladding was to make the building mass look smaller. Together with the displacement of the upper floor wall, the façade is fragmented into three smaller distinct parts, and gives a more elegant impression than it would have if it were designed as a solid brick wall. An interesting fact is that there seems to be an attempt in “blending” the building into its surroundings only through the front facade. When the building was constructed in 1936, a facade also overlooked the Breestraat. Just as in the Aalmarkt, there are many monumental historic buildings on the Breestraat, including the famous “Vergulde Turk”. The facade of the department store on the Breestraat does not seem to have any connections with the surrounding context, either in form or materiality.



Picture 3. Fragments of the side facades of the V&D and the townhall.

Picture [XIV]

The V&D and the Townhall of Leiden

Vroom en Dreesmann, Aalmarkt 22, Leiden

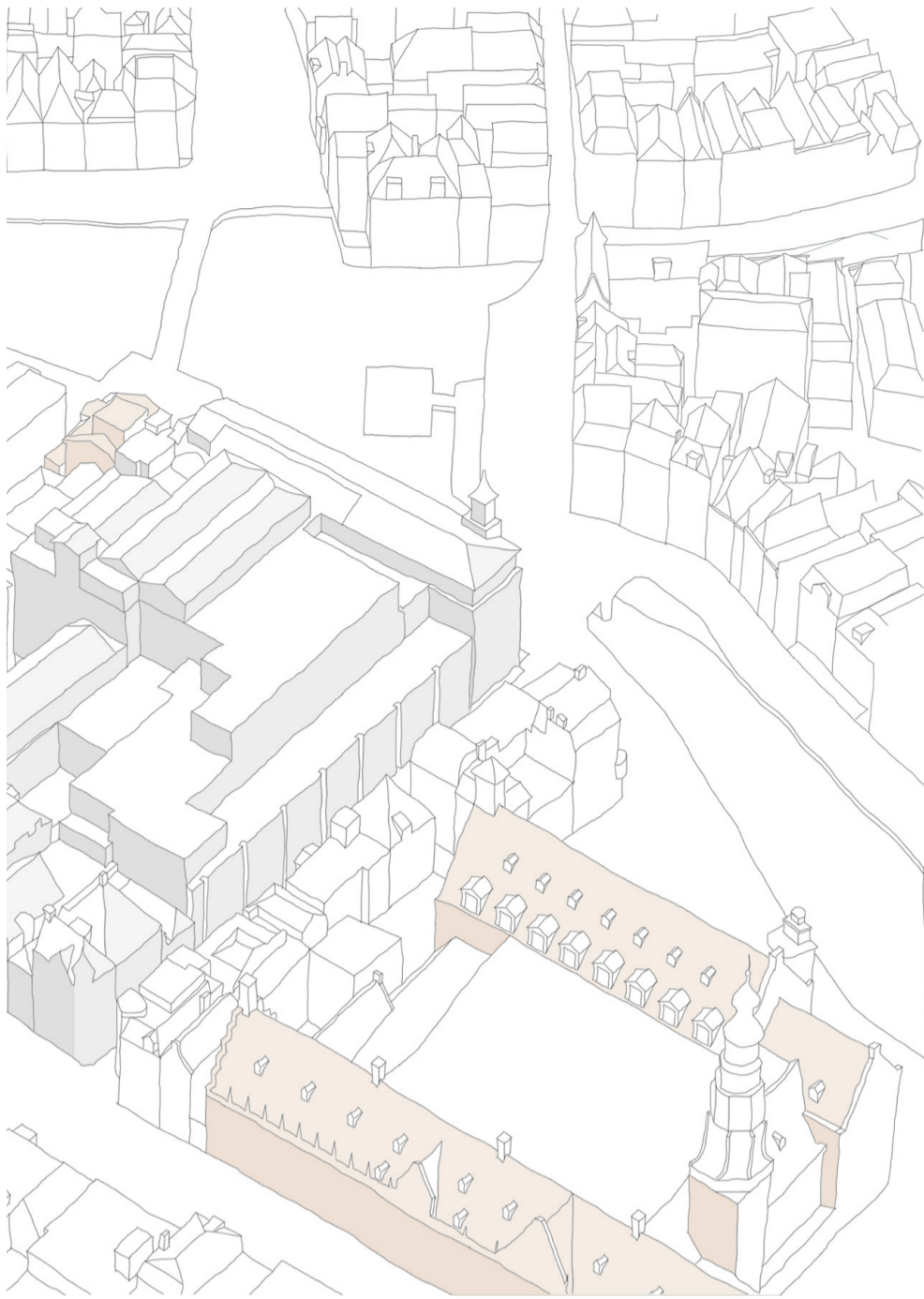
Leo & Jan van der Laan

Townhall, Stadhuisplein 1, Leiden

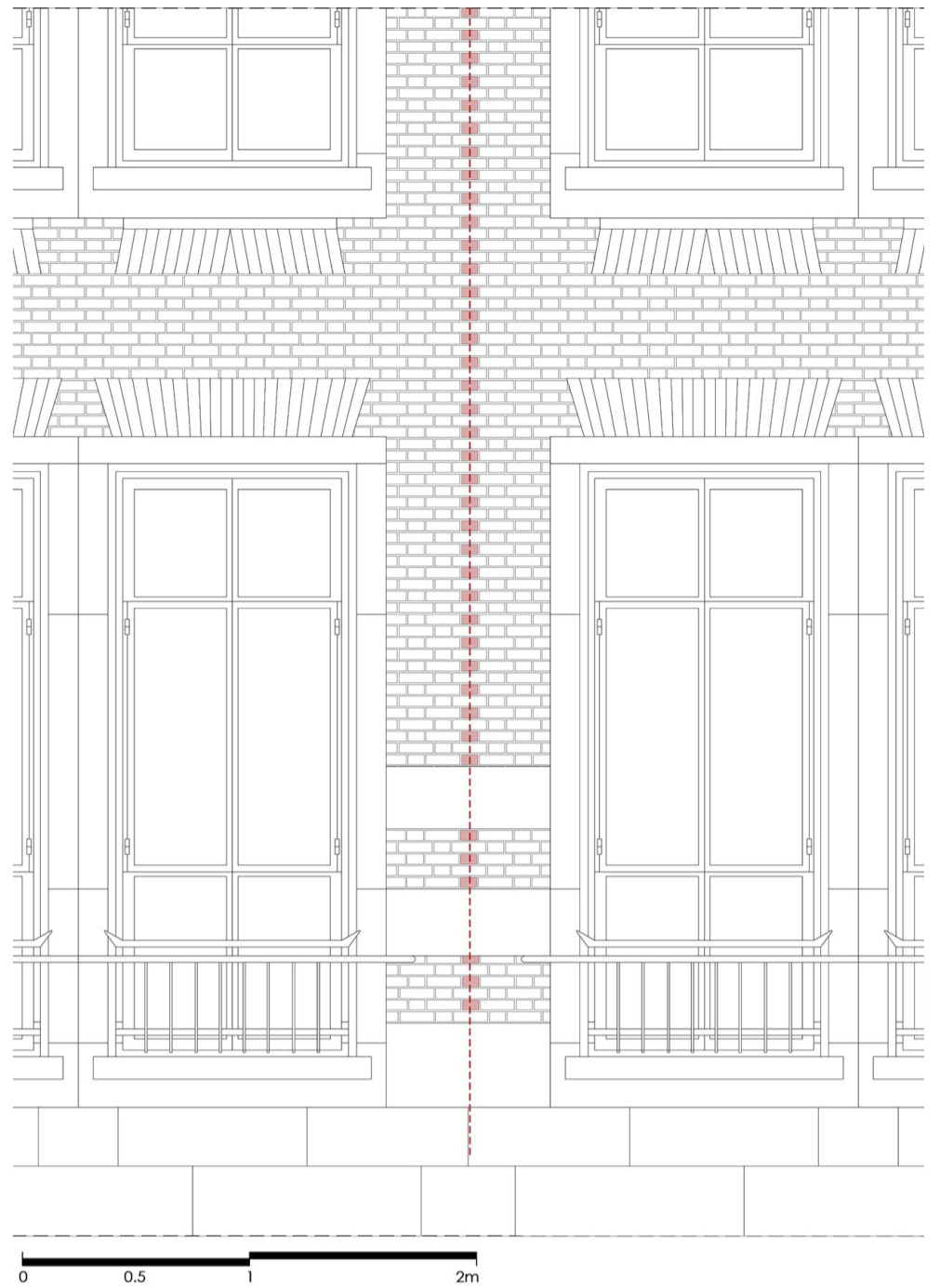
Cornelis Blaauw

Next to the proportions between the stone pieces, one can observe that the sandstone elements are organized in alternating layers. The parts of the façade between these layers is clad with brick masonry. This “typically Dutch” layering of alternating sandstone panels and brick, can be found in the old and new parts of the townhall of Leiden, situated within 50 meters from the V&D. In the year 1929 the building caught fire, and a significant part of it was destroyed. The new part in particular was designed by architect Cornelis Blaauw in the year 1932. It could be argued that the architects of the V&D were inspired by this building, even though the “enrichment of brickwork with horizontal bands is a characteristic of many of Van der Laan’s earlier works”. The assumption of a design connection between the V&D and the townhall can be strengthened by a common architectural feature. In

the façade of the V&D facing the Waag building, a circular opening is to be found which is surrounded by four oblong stone pieces. Almost the same opening is to be found in the western facade of the V&D store. It is significant to point out that it is not only the fact that there are common elements in the facades of the V&D store and the townhall that leads to the claim of a possible influence on Van der Laan. The most important fact is that these elements can be found in similar positions on the facades of these buildings. The layering of the stone with the brickwork is most prevalent in the lower parts of the townhall as well as the department store. Similarly, it is hardly a coincidence that the identical circular openings are both placed on similar spots below the sloped roofs.



Picture 4. Birds Eye view drawing of the surrounding area of the V&D and facade fragment.



Picture [XV]

The Reason for Urban Integration
 Vroom en Dreesmann, Aalmarkt 22, Leiden
 Leo & Jan van der Laan

Conclusion

When a building is designed within a historic context full of monumental buildings constructed with great craftsmanship, it has to reach certain expectations and standards. These standards are not only linked to the view of the building as an architectural object but as a store was well. It could be argued that the reason the department store in Leiden uses the architectural language of monumental buildings was not done purely out of respect of the heritage, but rather to suit the likings and taste of the bourgeois class of Leiden. In contrast to the V&D in Leiden, where the brickwork is aligned with the openings in the facade, the V&D in Enschede which shows more imperfections on the detail scale is not situated in a neighbourhood of comparable historic or architectural value. Thus, it can be hypothesized that also in Enschede the level of detailing (meaning the lack of detailing) is dependent on the urban context.

When the old stories are preserved and connected with new ones, heritage buildings can serve as a “memory palace” in which historical value and cultural significance are materialized. From the research carried out to this point, either through re-drawing facades, or through

examining written sources, it became clear that the buildings in Enschede and Leiden carry memories and stories which are indeed “materialized” in their facades. The examination of the materials themselves along with the way they are assembled can lead to interesting assumptions and hypotheses regarding the way the architects thought about the surrounding architecture, their level of consciousness of the urban context, and their influences. Many times when designing in a heritage building, architects have a tendency to refer to the original design in their interventions. In order to achieve reference without imitation, one should not recycle the exact material assembly, form or details of a building, but rather recycle the principles sources and ideas behind these. In this way, a new balanced outcome can be created while at the same time the new and old parts are clearly distinguishable. The research procedure conducted could be mainly of use for more recent heritage buildings of the 20th century, as a large part of these was indeed designed with references to the urban context.

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Conclusions

One of the major aspects of façade design where an architect can make a difference is through the design of its openings. Looking at the cover page of this book, representing several former V&D-buildings, it is clear how the character of every façade is influenced by its openings, varying in scale, form, colour and materiality.

Although different research questions were formulated to study the materiality of facades, actually all the studies ended up looking carefully at windows. Apparently openings play a key role in looking for strengths of the existing and opportunities for the future of vacant department stores. Regarding the former function of the buildings it will undoubtedly be true that the aesthetics of the façades as well as the impression these left on the public were explicitly addressed by the architects.

Through the analysis of the openings in the V&D stores in Leiden and Enschede it was possible to suggest some theories regarding the inspiration of the architects for the design and implementation of craftsmanship and detailing. Furthermore, it was concluded that the amount of detailing and precision, depended in both buildings on the urban context. More specifically, it was concluded that Leo Van der Laan, who designed the V&D in Leiden, was strained to design with precision due to Leiden's historic architectural context, while Jan Kuijt's more "reckless" composition was a result of the lack of monumental or historical buildings in the surroundings. The research conducted on the V&D in Haarlem did not focus on the architects' thoughts, but rather on the thoughts of the general public. A survey among residents of Haarlem showed that the V&D building was the most recognizable among other monumental buildings in the city, something that could be related to the fact that it was for a longer period accessible to and used by a diverse crowd. As proven by the survey, this "non-intended commemorative value" of the V&D's façade was ascribed to its composition which is principally co-shaped by the characteristic windows.

The research on the V&D in Maastricht focused on the building's interaction with the public. The research aimed at discovering how the building engages in shaping the relations between public, semi-public and private space. It was concluded that the transition between these domains, heavily relied on three aspects: the entrances to the building, the product display opportunities and the overall architecture of the façade. The main entrance for instance has gone through varying phases in time, starting as an easily accessible, low threshold, sheltered browsing space, later modified to a more straightforward sheltered browsing space, to eventually becoming a harsh border between the public and private space. This analysis not only revealed those layers of time, but also stated their possible value in formulating starting points for intervention.

In the case of the V&D in Sittard, the research concentrated on the weathering of the façade. A detailed modelling procedure of the building together with a technical analysis, showed that the architect applied three different detailing principles for the façade openings, subsequently leading to a characteristic mixture of intended and unintended weathering on the façade. These weathering phenomena were used to evaluate the architectural attributes of the façade leading to starting points for intervention.

Methods

The studies presented in this book all used different methods to study the role and importance of materiality in vacant department stores in order to create input to formulate starting points for adaptive reuse.

In view of enlarging the public participation in heritage conservation the professional community has i.e. to find ways to interact with the general public and to involve people actively. Questionnaires and interviews need to be further developed to get a response that is useful to designers and developers. Other examples showed that the mix of historical, spatial and material oriented research could lead to interesting (new) views on the possible reasons behind historic designs, just as the focus on damages and weathering not only influences the technical state of a (heritage) building but also the public perception, resulting in a public opinion.

All students developed methods that deserve to be further developed in order to be widely used next to the 'traditional' architectural and technical analysis from the point of view of the architect and the 'traditional' building archaeological research most often executed by a historian.