

Spit out and honoured

J.J.P. Oud's Shell building design and rejection



Autor:	L.M.A. Ubbens
Course:	Architectural History thesis
Tutor:	Mr. P.I. Panigyrakis
Date:	15 April 2021

Content

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Oud's career before the Shell building.....	4
3. The competition	6
3.1. The commission.....	6
3.2. Building program	6
3.3. Competition.....	8
3.4. Oud's design	8
3.5. Winner of the competition.....	12
4. Towards a final design.....	14
4.1. Revision of Oud's initial design.....	14
4.2. Bombed twice.....	15
5. The Shell building and its publication.....	17
5.1. Remarks of Douglas Haskell	17
5.2. Remarks of Johnson	19
5.3. Positive remarks	20
6. Conclusion	21
Bibliography.....	22
Appendix A	25
Appendix B	34

1. Introduction

Jacobus Johannes Pieter Oud was a Dutch architect who lived from 1890 till 1963. In 1917 he and six other well-known architects, started a magazine 'De Stijl', a manifest for Dutch Modernism in art and architecture. Five years later, in 1922, Oud withdrew himself from De Stijl, but he continued to design according to the manifest of 'De Stijl'. Examples are 'Het Witte Dorp' (1923) and 'Café de Unie' (1924). With the residential district 'De Kiefhoek' (1928), he gained national and international fame.

Oud always struggled with the style of Modernism. After a period of strictly designing modern buildings in the 1920s, he experimented with forms that did not relate to the Modern architectural bases. Before and during WWII II, from 1938 until 1942, he built the head office of Shell in The Hague. The building was completed in 1946. His design of this building was poorly received. Most of the Modern architectural critics had no sympathy for this 'old fashioned' way of designing. As a result, Oud's name was removed from all the magazines and his articles were refused in other countries.

This thesis will investigate why the Shell building of J.J.P. Oud was generally rejected by critics. Through thorough investigation in literature and notes of Oud, regarding the design of the Shell building, the explanation of the frame of mind behind the design will be analysed. In addition to the first hand sources, also secondary resources, such as books and articles, will be explored. These secondary resources will give an explanation of the rejection of the critics towards the design of the Shell building.

Hypothesis

People have different perceptions due to different backgrounds, experiences, taste, preferences and so on. In this case Oud and the other Modernists had different perceptions of modern architecture. However, the hypothesis of this research states that, even though people have different perceptions of modern architecture, the critics were wrong to identify the work of Oud as 'poor' architecture.

In chapter 2 of this paper the early years of Oud's career are described, followed by the Shell commission and competition in chapter 3. Chapter 4 looks in detail at the design for the building and the implementation by Oud. The receipt of the building and the criticism of fellow architects on the Shell building is elaborated upon in chapter 5. In conclusion, the answer to the hypothetical question will be addressed in chapter 6.

2. Oud's career before the Shell building

Architects are constantly looking for ways to discover new marketable formulas. When the formula is found, they tempt to mine it as long as requested. This attitude is shared by many artists, like painters, composers and writers.¹ However, for some ambitious artists exploring on new ideas can lead to wondering off in radically different directions and cause their downfall. There is no better example of a major talent stigmatised by one resounding 'fiasco', namely The Shell building, than Oud.²

When Oud was 23 years old he lived in Leiden, where he met artist Theo van Doesburg. In 1917, together with Van Doesburg, Piet Mondriaan and Bart van der Leek (both painters), he started the magazine 'De Stijl'. Writing this magazine was an opportunity for them to experiment with new designs and discuss future developments within architecture and art. De Stijl opposed not only the Amsterdam views on architecture, but also wanted to lay down the foundations for a new architectural style that took abstract art, Cubism, as its starting point. The influences of Oud and 'De Stijl' paved a way in The Netherlands for a movement called 'De Nieuwe Zakelijkheid' (*New Objectivity*). Architects Le Corbusier represented these views in France and Walter Gropius in Germany.³ When Oud was 28 years old he was introduced by the famous architect Hendrik Berlage to the municipality of Rotterdam and appointed as town architect of Rotterdam. The simplicity of Berlage's work attracted Oud.⁴ In the time he was town architect, he had the opportunity to practice the 'simplicity' himself.

Oud quickly realised that Cubism, purely as a starting point, would ultimately result in 'dead end street' problems. In 1922 Oud relinquished 'De Stijl'. According to Oud, great architecture had to arise from life itself, without being bound by fixed dogmas of form.⁵ Oud's belief was: *"The search for the essential requires as an addition the quality of melody. Pure abstraction is like religion without the quality of humanity. This quality is expressed in the day-to-day demands of our existence. The course and rhythm of this existence require in architecture the essential melody."*⁶ Pure abstraction, something the Modernist wanted to achieve, is thus an empty shell without a living spirit, according to Oud. In his view, architecture needs to be in balance to create the essential melody.

In the 1920s, Oud's designs were seen as examples of 'Het Nieuwe Bouwen' (*the New way of Building*). Philip Johnson, a friend and admirer of Oud, called Oud, the *"great white hope of the modern movement."*⁷ Oud went head-to-head with the ideologies of the 1920s. From 1920 till 1925 Oud had an abundance of assignments, particularly in the housing sector. 'Kiefhoek', a public housing project at the Hoek van Holland (1928), and the 'Weissenhof' in Stuttgart (1927), put Oud on the international map of avant-garde architects in the 1920s. Russell Hitchcock, an architectural critic at the time, called Kiefhoek *"the greatest monument of modern architecture."*⁸ The Weissenhof also played an important role in the international character of Het Nieuwe Bouwen. An important aspect of this permanent exhibition of social housing is that it was the first time that pioneers of Het Nieuwe Bouwen presented their manifestation together. Commissioned by the municipality of Stuttgart, 60 houses were built by architects from various countries. This exhibition made Oud a hero of the architectural avant-garde. In the 20s Oud was, together with Mies van de Rohe, Gropius and Le Corbusier, one of the greatest

¹ Martin Filler, "Fame: A fickle mistress," *Architectural Record*, December 16, 2019, <https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/6177-fame-a-fickle-mistress>

² Ibid.

³ Baharak Tabibi, "Exhibitions as the medium of architectural reproduction "modern architecture: international Exhibition," April, 2005, 22. <https://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12606077/index.pdf>

⁴ Eric Ambrose, "Finding Oud, a tribute to a humanist," *The Builder*, April 10, 1964, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q210-16-3a.

⁵ Van een medewerker voor architectuur, "Vurig verdediger van Moderne Bouwkunst," *Het parool*, Februari 8, 1950, 3.

⁶ Eric Ambrose, "Finding Oud, a tribute to a humanist," *The Builder*, April 10, 1964, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q210-16-3a.

⁷ Martin Filler, "Fame: A fickle mistress," *Architectural Record*, December 16, 2019, <https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/6177-fame-a-fickle-mistress>

⁸ Eric Ambrose, "Finding Oud, a tribute to a humanist," *The Builder*, April 10, 1964, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q210-16-1.

architects of Het Nieuwe Bouwen. This was a period of great success for Oud. As a result, he was asked to write articles for famous architectural magazines. And In 1926 Oud's book 'Hollandische Architectuur' got published. His work was even exhibited at an exhibition of the international Style of 1932 in New York along with famous architects like Van de Rohe, Le Corbusier and Wright.⁹ After a period of great success, national and international, Oud suffered a severe depression in 1930. Due to this depression, Oud was forced to turn down a lecture series at Princeton. Instead of Oud, Frank Lloyd Wright had the honour to give the lectures.¹⁰ Although Oud's name was famous, the governmental sponsorship of the workers' dwellings stopped, because of his depression. This left him unemployed for a certain period of time.

His big chance to a comeback arrived in 1937, when he and three others, were asked to join the competition to design a new Shell office building in The Hague.

⁹ Baharak Tabibi, "Exhibitions as the medium of architectural reproduction "modern architecture: international Exhibition," April, 2005, 22. <https://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12606077/index.pdf>

¹⁰ Boris Jardine, Modern Architecture: "being the Kahn Lectures for 1930 (review)", *The MIT Press*, June, 2009. <https://muse-jhu-edu.tudelft.idm.oclc.org/article/265341/pdf>

3. The competition

3.1. The commission

In 1937 additional office space was needed within the Bataafsche Imports Maatschappij (BIM) in The Hague, the sales branch of Royal Dutch Shell. BIM personnel worked in an office building next to the office building of the parent company BPM (Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij), the Royal Dutch Corporation for the exploitation of oil wells in the Dutch East Indies.¹¹ For both BIM and BPM there was a shortage of space, therefore their boards of directors decided to have a new building for BIM constructed, allowing BPM to stay in the old BIM building. In December 1937 an agreement between the BIM board of directors, the municipality of The Hague and the property owner was signed.¹² It concerned a construction site at the southeast corner of the Oostduin-Arendsdorp Estate, located in the north of The Hague. The house of Countess M.A.O.C. van Bylandt, to whom the estate belonged, was located at the developed part of the estate. She wished the preserve and remain living on the yet developed part of the estate.¹³ She sold 6,000 sq. m.² for 186,000 guilders to BIM.¹⁴ Countess Van Bylandt donated the largest park section of her property to the municipality and sold the other five parcels as construction sites.¹⁵

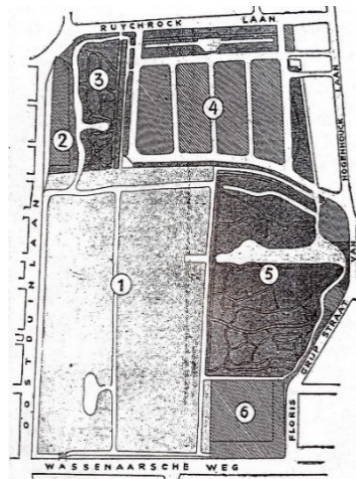


Figure 1. Map of the Oostduin-Arendsdorp estate in The Hague. BIM could use lot 6 for its new office building. A large part of the estate remained in its original state (1) two sections were to become areas of public parkland (3 and 5), and three sections were indicated as building sites.

3.2. Building program

After the approval of the municipality, the assessment of BIM was to establish a building program. This project required a large investment. A thorough study of the situation was needed for the process of decision making and commissioning architects. A committee, known as 'Management's control of the General Course of affairs', set up a new, adaptive report for future operations. Throughout this report, BIM's technical department formulated a provisional building program of which the first draft was adopted on 7 December 1937.¹⁶ The building was not allowed to cost more than one million Dutch

¹¹ Rob van 't Wel, "Een koninklijk gebouw," april 19, 2019. <https://www.shell.nl/media/venster/eerder-verschenen/a-royal-building.html>

¹² Ed Taverne & Dolf Broekhuizen, *Het Shell-gebouw van J.J.P. Oud. Ontwerp en receptie/J.J.P. Oud's Shell Building. Design and Reception*, Rotterdam 1995.

¹³ Rijkdienst voor monumentenzorg, "Monumenten inventarisatie project- Den Haag, Wijkbeschrijving en gebieden met bijzondere waarden," Oktober, 1990, 73. <https://020apps.nl/mip/beschrijvingen/s-Gravenhage.pdf>

¹⁴ Rob van 't Wel, "Een koninklijk gebouw," April 19, 2019. <https://www.shell.nl/media/venster/eerder-verschenen/a-royal-building.html>

¹⁵ Ed Taverne & Dolf Broekhuizen, *Het Shell-gebouw van J.J.P. Oud. Ontwerp en receptie/J.J.P. Oud's Shell Building. Design and Reception*, Rotterdam 1995.

¹⁶Ibid.

3.3. Competition

After the thorough investigation and establishment on the site and the building program, BIM organized an invitational competition. On 5 January 1938, four architects were selected to compete: Oud, A.J. Kropholler, D. Roosenburg, and G. Friedhoff. A letter was sent to all four architects to inform that they were invited to make a design for the BIM building in The Hague. The letter stated that by participation each architect would receive 3,000 guilders regardless of winning the competition.²⁶ Throughout the letter they were informed also that there would not be a jury, but that the board of directors would choose the winning design.²⁷

The board of directors of BIM had different ideas about the character of the office building. Their ideas on the character of the new BIM Building were based in comparison with, among others, the BPM Building and KLM building (figure 3).²⁸ In an early stage, during a meeting in January 1938, the comparison with the BPM building had been seen as a negative reference. The character of the BPM building was seen as undesirable, due to the façade which was decorated with many allegorical and floral ornaments in stone.²⁹ The building committee wanted something simple, functional and representative.³⁰



Figure 4. Left KLM building, right BPM building.

Only two meetings were held to discuss the building program with the four invited architects. The first meeting was held on 10 January 1938 where the architects could ask any questions regarding the program for the new building. The first remark from one of the architects, Roosenburg, was about the right of ownership and use of the architects potential designs. De Bruin, the technical adviser, explained that a detail from an unselected design could be adopted during implementation of the selected design. However, a clear architectural idea would not be copied from a design of one of the other architects. *“The four architects had to trust the board of directors”*, said De Bruin.³¹ Oud expressed his confidence in the board of directors. Oud raised the question whether the architects were able to re-use their design ideas for other occasions. There was no objection to this. The architects considered the original deadline date of 7th March 1938 too early, so the date was moved to 1 April 1938.³²

3.4. Oud’s design

The designs were due on 1 of April 1938. Therefore Oud and the other architects had three months to work on a design for the competition. Next to drawings, Oud explained his design by writing eight pages

²⁶Letter from BIM to Oud: new office building, 5 Januari 1938, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q86-1-1.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ed Taverne & Dolf Broekhuizen, *Het Shell-gebouw van J.J.P. Oud. Ontwerp en receptie/J.J.P. Oud’s Shell Building. Design and Reception*, Rotterdam 1995.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Records of meeting., 10-01-1938., collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q86-7-1.

³¹Ibid.

³²Records of meeting., 10-01-1938., collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q86-7-3.

of notes. Hereinafter, the different parts of Oud's design are elaborated upon. The outside and inside of the building will be described after which the outside area and environment around the building will follow. The full explanation of Oud's design is included in the Appendix A.

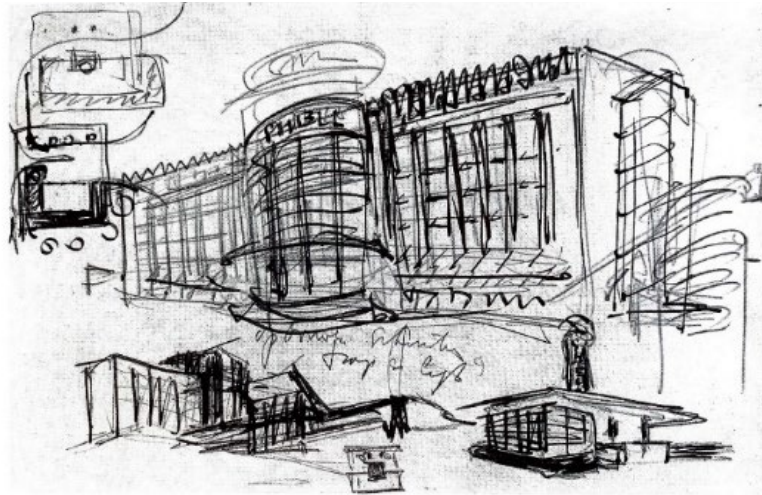


Figure 5. Oud, one of the first design sketches of the main façade and the service station, 1938, The Hague. The sketches indicates the basic design of the building: high-rise construction (biggest sketch), a low pavilion (left bottom) and a service station (right bottom)

The outside of the building

As regards its design, Oud followed the BIM building program closely. For example, he had situated the office building along the Wassenaarseweg where the façade of the building would be in line with the building line of the Wassenaarseweg, as the board had requested. The building consisted of a high-rise construction on the Wassenaarseweg and a low-rise pavilion at the back. The high-rise building was supposed to propose a repetitive, orthogonal structure with a central corridor, where on both sides offices would be located. All offices had one wall with an outside view, so the offices were easy to access with natural light and air.³³ This also gave the design of the building symmetric and rhythm on the façade. The content of the building, together with the service station that Oud initially designed (more about this later on), was about 55.000 cb. m.³⁴

The main stairwell and the stairwells at the end of the hall were visible on the outside of the building. This way, visitors had immediate insight into the general organization of the building.³⁵ One stairwell is located in the middle of the building, accessible from the main entrance and the other two were drawn on both sides of the office building.

The building had many entrances, which was well thought through by Oud. This is most apparent in his plans for the garage entrances. It would be possible to drive a circle around the main building. Via a ramp at the back of the main building the entrances of the garages were located. The exit lanes are very wide, so two cars, driving in different directions, would fit next to each other. In order to minimize disruption from freight cars, delivery's, etc. their entrances, were located at the back of the building, and accessible via the Floris Grijpstraat. The entrance for the employees was also on the Floris Grijpstraat.³⁶

³³ Ed Taverne & Dolf Broekhuizen, *Het Shell-gebouw van J.J.P. Oud. Ontwerp en receptie/J.J.P. Oud's Shell Building. Design and Reception*, Rotterdam 1995.

³⁴ Letter from J.J.P Oud to BIM: explaining the design, x x 1938, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q88-39a.

³⁵ Letter from Oud to BIM explaining the design, x x 1938, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q88-39b.

³⁶ Letter from J.J.P Oud to BIM: explaining the design, x x 1938, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q88-39a.

As stated in the building program the architects were instructed to incorporate the advertisement of the building and the company Shell. Oud's idea was to carve the word 'Shell' on the main façade in big letters (figure 4) and add ornaments on the building (figure 10), which seem to refer to the logo of Shell, being a seashell.

The inside of the building

In the pavilion he situated the recreation room, which could be used as cafeteria, theater or cinema. The main staircase was drawn up to the 5th floor, since the building program prescribed that the archives floor which was located on top floor (the 6th floor) did not have to be accessible via the main stairwell.³⁷ In the basement, located under the recreation room, the bicycles parking places, the warehouse for the kitchen and the wardrobes for the evening performance are situated. From here, two wide staircases lead to a large hall, ending in front of the recreation room on the ground floor. The main staircase has two accesses, one on the front and one on the back. Oud created these two accesses in order to reduce the flow of people during peak hours. Oud chose to exclude an elevator at the main staircases, because of several reasons he said, but the option was still open.

The hallways were 2 meters wide, therefore Oud incorporated enough space for a waiting area, if needed. This gave an impression of wideness.³⁸

The structure in the middle of the building was intended as a connecting element. Oud also suggested to consider a roof garden on top of the building. His plan was to build a pavilion on the roof where visitors and employees could meet.³⁹

Oud wrote that some details had yet to be determined, for example the location of the garages in comparison to the main building and the location of shafts. In this stage of the process, Oud drew these details all schematically.⁴⁰

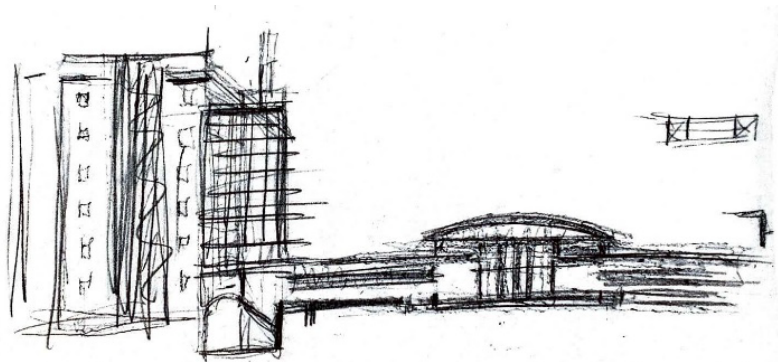


Figure 6. Oud, Sketch of the east façade, 1938, The Hague

Service station

The Shell service station was located at the corner of the Wassenaarseweg and Floris Grijpstraat. On one side there was the existing ditch along the Wassenaarseweg. On the other side Oud projected a ditch along the Floris Grijpstraat as a terrain barrier. Oud considered this location "romantic" because of the water on two sides.⁴¹ The Shell service station was accessible from both streets. An ornament was planned above the windows, entailing inscriptions that would be visible to the eye. As well as on the main building, the word Shell was written on the chimney of the service station.⁴²

³⁷ Letter from Oud to BIM: explaining the design, x x 1938, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q88-39a.

³⁸ Letter from Oud to BIM explaining the design, x x 1938, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q88-39d.

³⁹ Letter from Oud to BIM explaining the design, x x 1938, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q88-39e.

⁴⁰ Letter from Oud to BIM explaining the design, x x 1938, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q88-39c.

⁴¹ Letter from Oud to BIM explaining the design, x x 1938, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q88-39f.

⁴² Ibid.

Garden

Since a garden required a lot of maintenance, Oud wrote that a garden could be designed simply with as little maintenance as possible later on. The horizontal garden would be complementary to the verticality of the building. Oud intended, if there was enough budget, to construct a pond opposite to the entrance of the recreation complex. The reflection of the building in the pond would increase the effect of the experience of the complementary relation between the horizontal garden and the vertical building façade.⁴³ The complementary way in shape was based on a contrast in use: working in the building and relaxing in the garden.⁴⁴ Oud thought it would be nice to put a statue in front of the pond. He suggested a statue of Sir Henry Deterding (director of Royal Shell till 1937).⁴⁵ For the time being, Oud designed an avenue of trees had been planned to provide shade at the area of the possible extension of the building.⁴⁶

Extension

Oud's idea was to implement the extension in two stages. First, the wing located behind the main building could be pulled up. It was the wing area above the hall way, dwellings, kitchen, dressing room, theater. On the first floor a hall with rooms of 6 meters depth would arise. This extension eliminated the arch above the recreation room.⁴⁷ For the second extension a building would be created more or less the same as the main building on the back side of the main building. This building had its own entrances for everything. Oud even thought about, for example, the underground garages and gas cell areas for this building, all from the same entrance. This allowed visitors and other traffic to be separated from the Wassenaarseweg and Floris Grijpstraat. Oud's extension idea was designed so that the most important spaces, like the director's office, recreation room, lockers, etc., would still be centrally located in the building. The recreation room could be extended at the circle shaped part. It was preferable that this part would be kept lower so it had a good light incidence.⁴⁸

Architecture

The Shell building was something different in the oeuvre of Oud. After mostly working on labourer-dwellings, he had to define the different needs, use and purpose of the building in order to know what to design for Shell: *"In the beginning I was working on Laborer-dwellings and my aim was to find a good and agreeable form for them; a form- so to say- as exact and as clear as the form of a good car, a good steamer...in other words, I was searching for a good "common" form. The world however, does not exist only out of cars, steamers...there are grades in our existence and therefore in our architecture... Analogous with this, domestic building in our society has another function from that of an office building, a town-hall or a church."*⁴⁹ With a general definition of Architecture in mind: *"Architecture is the search for clear shapes for clearly defined needs. Proportion, rhythm and the imprint of the designer are indispensable."*⁵⁰

Oud wanted thus the architecture to be simple. Concrete construction lined with brick, possibly with wickerwork, with a base of natural stone. Oud chose copper for the curved roofs, because after oxidizing it would have a green color. Next to the main entrances Oud wanted sculptures and some reliefs. The

⁴³ Ed Taverne & Dolf Broekhuizen, *Het Shell-gebouw van J.J.P. Oud. Ontwerp en receptie/J.J.P. Oud's Shell Building. Design and Reception*, Rotterdam 1995.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Letter from Oud to BIM explaining the design, x x 1938, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q88-39g.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Letter from Oud to BIM explaining the design, x x 1938, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q88-39i.

⁴⁹ Letter from Oud to Haskell, 17 October 1945, Collection of het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q105-21-1.

⁵⁰ Eric Ambrose, "Finding Oud, a tribute to a humanist," *The Builder*, April 10, 1964, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q210-16-3a.

subjects of the reliefs Oud had in mind were of the great history of Shell. On the front façade of the building the history was to be told, which was crowned above the Shell logo.⁵¹

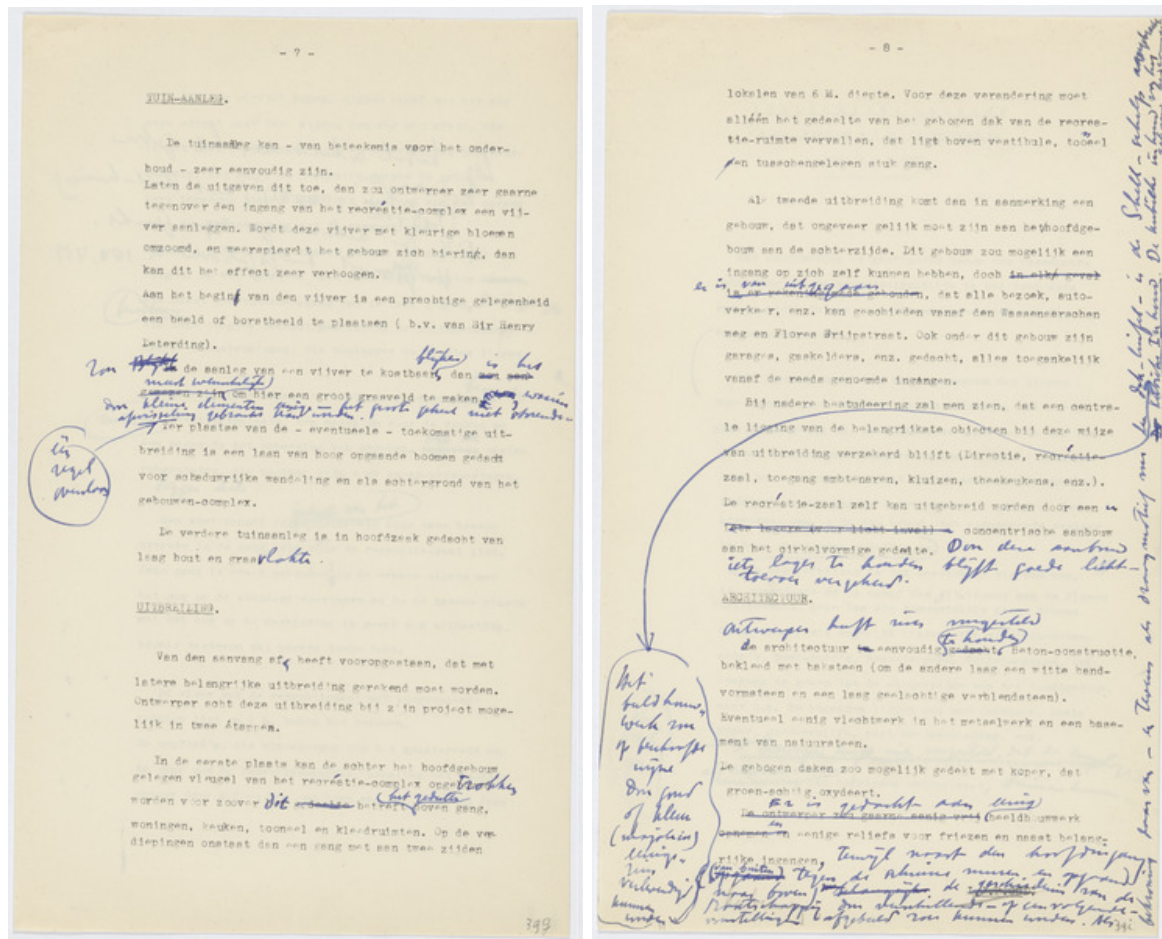


Figure 7. Oud's explanation, two out of eight pages, 1938

3.5. Winner of the competition

Not all of the designs of the four architects were preserved to this day. Only the design of Oud and Friedhoff were saved. Regarding the design of Friedhoff the directors were opposed to three choices he made.⁵² Firstly, Friedhoff put the main building perpendicular to Wassenaarseweg. The building was turned away from the city.⁵³ Secondly, the design contained closed courtyards. Which contradicted with the building program: "the tallest building possible, standing on the smallest possible base."⁵⁴ Furthermore the board instructed to have the area to be as open as possible so that there would be space for extension later on, which Friedhoff did not incorporate in his design. Lastly, the overall design did not match the building program. In comparison with the other architects Oud's design was most in line with the building program and the board of directors preferred the overall look of the building.⁵⁵ Oud's design was compared with the KLM Building of Dirk Roosenburg. The board had drawn up a report of this comparison on 21 April 1938. After the report, Oud received a letter in which he was told that

⁵¹Letter from Oud to BIM explaining the design, x x 1938, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q88-39i.

⁵²Ed Taverne & Dolf Broekhuizen, Het Shell-gebouw van J.J.P. Oud. Ontwerp en receptie/J.J.P. Oud's Shell Building. Design and Reception, Rotterdam 1995.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid.

his design was chosen by the board. Therefore, Oud earned the commission to build the building.⁵⁶ It is worthy to note that Roosenburg, one of his competitors for designing the Shell building, Roosenburg, sent a postcard to Oud in which he congratulated Oud with his assignment (figure 8).



Figure 8. Letter from architect Roosenburg to congratulate Oud with the commission, 1938, The Hague

⁵⁶Letter from BIM to Oud, 22 April 1938, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q86-30

4. Towards a final design

Oud designed the entire Shell area at the estate. The goal of the design was, among others, to be future proof in case of growth. The inside, the building itself, would have to be connected with the surroundings and be part of the city.

4.1. Revision of Oud's initial design

The letter from the board of Shell, in which was announced that Oud had won the competition, Oud was requested to come to a new office in Scheveningen to discuss his design.⁵⁷ The meeting took place on Monday 23 April 1938. Two important changes were put on the table. Firstly, the location of the service station was considered a problem. The board wanted the service station located towards the Wassenaarseweg. Oud was pleased by the idea: while filling up their tank, people would enjoy the views on the garden and the water.⁵⁸ Secondly, as prescribed in the building program, Oud designed the carparking underneath the offices and the bicycle shed under the recreation room, but in this meeting one of the board members, Mr. Brands wanted the opposite; cars under the recreation room and the bikes under the offices. Oud agreed to alter those spaces. Later on, the local authority told Oud that the service station had to conform the building line of existing buildings on the Wassenaarseweg. A view months later, on 22 June of 1938, the application was made to obtain a building permit for the site office.⁵⁹

In June 1938, some budget cuts were needed, due to the wish from the board to cut back on building cost. The board asked the committee, Management's control of the General Course of affairs, if it was possible to reduce the size of the building and accommodate 300 employees instead of the 600 employees.⁶⁰ A new design was made by Oud. The significant difference with the original design of Oud was that the extra space and the lower basement were left out of this design. The boiler room was relocated from the lower basement to the basement under the recreation room.⁶¹ The new design saved 90,000 guilders in total, which meant that the total amount of building costs would be 1,160,000 guilders.⁶² Oud worked hard on a final design in the last part of the year 1938.

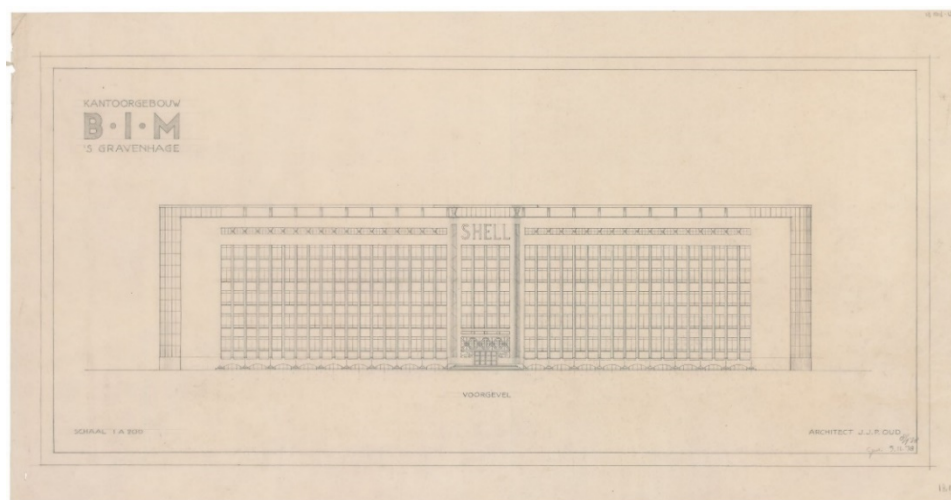


Figure 9. Oud, Front façade Bataafsche Import Maatschappij (not yet definitive design), 5 November 1938, The Hague

⁵⁷ Letter from BIM to Oud, 22 April 1938, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q86-30

⁵⁸ Ed Taverne & Dolf Broekhuizen, *Het Shell-gebouw van J.J.P. Oud. Ontwerp en receptie/J.J.P. Oud's Shell Building. Design and Reception*, Rotterdam 1995.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

In the beginning of 1939 once again the decision was made to cut back on expenses. The entire project now was reduced to a single office building, which would not be suitable for extensions.⁶³ The corridor connecting the building with the recreation room was eliminated. The recreation room was now placed directly alongside the building. The garage and the concierge's apartment were also left out of the design, only one apartment remained. The need for further extension had now been reconsidered, due to economic measures.⁶⁴

The board of directors tried to save money on materials of the budget. For Oud on the other hand materials were very important to determine exterior fields of colour. Oud had to choose his materials as precisely as possible. He wanted durable materials and coordinated the various materials that had to be chosen precisely. Luckily, he got support from E.J. Muller, director of BIM. In June of 1939, Oud made a thorough investigation of brick. For him the aim was to capture vitality in a single brick. Therefore he abandoned his earlier plan of 1938. Instead he used handmade bricks and yellowish facing bricks in alternate rows.⁶⁵ Phase one of the building was completed in accordance with the modified design in 1941. The last phase, landscaping and construction of the service station was done after the building was occupied.⁶⁶

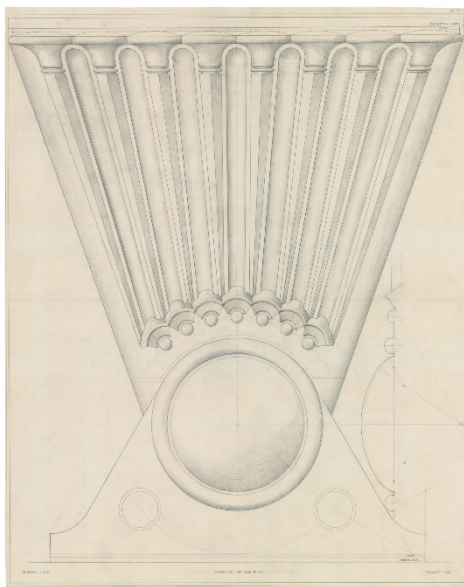


Figure 10. Roof shell
Oud design drawing view, 1941



The roof shell high in the central section of the main facade, 1943

4.2. Bombed twice

At the end of the World War II the Shell building was used by the Germans as a telephone post. Therefore it was an important target for the allied forces and the British air force (RAF) bombed the building.⁶⁷ In April 1945 Oud received a letter, from the board of Shell, to inform him what happened and that the building was bombed twice: on 18 March and 30 March of 1945.⁶⁸ The Shell building was partially destroyed. By letter Oud responded: *"I do not need to tell you that the whole thing is a sad case for me. I have worked with heart and soul on the building for four years and the satisfaction of the B.I.M.,*

⁶³ Ed Taverne & Dolf Broekhuizen, *Het Shell-gebouw van J.J.P. Oud. Ontwerp en receptie/J.J.P. Oud's Shell Building. Design and Reception*, Rotterdam 1995.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Letter from Oud to Mr. Bird, November 8, 1945, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q100-38-1

⁶⁸ Letter from BIM to Oud, 26 April 1945, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q98-10; Letter from Royal institute of British Architects to Oud, 27 October 1945, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q99-63

of the public (in general) and of myself gave me a satisfaction, which I think I had somewhat earned.”⁶⁹ In this letter one could read the building was of great importance to Oud: “I hope that the damage can be repaired, as the building is very close to my heart.”⁷⁰ Oud was appointed by the Shell board as restoration architect. He had one request, not to work with De Bruijn again: “On that basis, I have resolved not to accept any more work, in which De Bruijn has a position....”⁷¹ During the first construction in 1938 De Bruijn liked to take the lead⁷², but Oud said: “The management of a building should be in one hand and that is in the hand of the architect.” Restoration was completed in 1946, without De Bruijn.⁷³

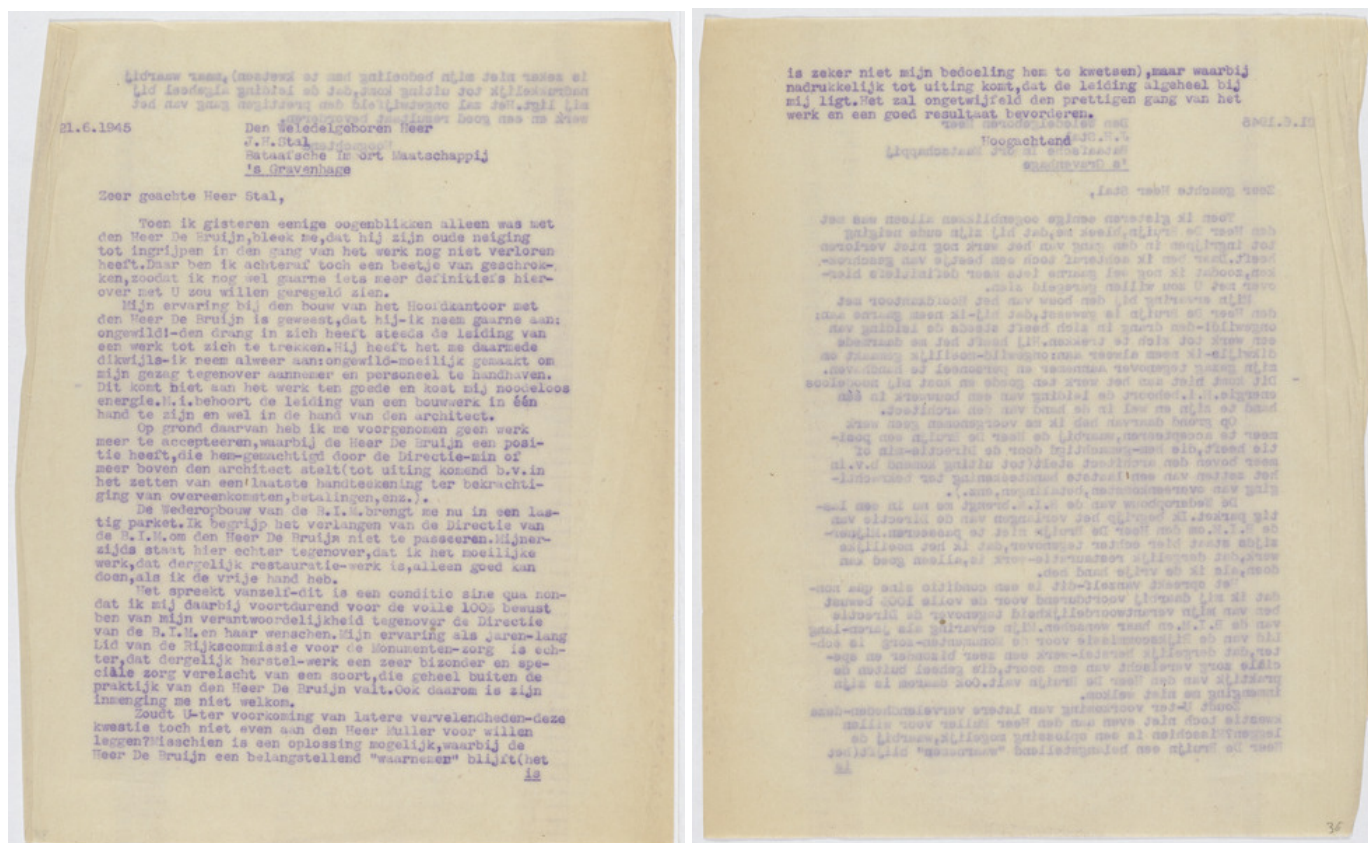


Figure 11. Letter from Oud to J.H. Stal about not wanted to work with de Bruijn, 21 June 1945.

⁶⁹ Letter from Oud to J.H. Stal, 3 May 1945, Collection of het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q98-10

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Letter from Oud to J.H. Stal, 21 June 1945, Collection of het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q98-36a

⁷² Letter from Oud to de Bruijn, 3 november 1938, Collection of het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q88-1

⁷³ Letter from Oud to J.H. Stal, 21 June 1945, Collection of het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q98-36a

5. The Shell building and its publication

The Shell building contradicted with Oud's early work. Lines, volumes and sleek surfaces were Oud's pre-war hallmarks. For the Shell building Oud used classical principles of architectonic composition like symmetry, proportion and ornaments. Hence, the Shell building was not appreciated by the Modernist of the day. Critics said that Oud had reverted to the historical styles he renounced in his book *'Hollandische Architectuur'* (1926) and that he broke with the development of Dutch architecture in the 1930s.⁷⁴ This resulted in history's disregard of the Shell building and Oud's later work.

5.1. Remarks of Douglas Haskell

Douglas Haskell, associate editor of the American magazine *Architectural Record*, and Oud had contact about publishing the Shell building in 1946. Oud stated in a letter to Haskell that *"The Shell building was not yet published (under the German occupation, I did not like to do it)"*.⁷⁵ Therefore, Haskell had the honors to be the first to publish an article about the Shell building. The payment Oud received was 150 dollar of goods, due to WWII money was of little value to Oud.⁷⁶ On 30 October 1945 Oud received a letter from Haskell asking Oud to write about two projects for his magazine. Firstly, a project on the trend of architectural thinking in The Netherlands and the rest of Europe, with a dozen illustrations. Secondly, a project about the Shell building.⁷⁷ Oud answered he could not give an outline on the trend of architecture project. The Netherlands and Europe worked hard on reconstruction after WWII *"There are such a lot of questions of daily life awaiting now first there solution that the development of the reconstruction came a bit in the background."*⁷⁸

In 1946 the Shell building was published in the *Architectural Record* by Haskell. Haskell was a promotor of modern architecture, but with a critical note. The article about the Shell building was titled *"Mr. Oud embroiders a theme."*⁷⁹ In a letter from Haskell to Oud he wrote *"This was rather a surprising building to the editors and it would have been unnatural for us to present it without, so to speak, a question mark."*⁸⁰ In the article the question *"what does it mean in the design cycle"* arose.⁸¹ Haskell was not only talking about Oud, but in a broader context: *"The question raised goes beyond Mr. Oud or any other individual. The question relates to those irrationalities of human nature, those elements of sheer play, those demands for symbol and story, that once found their frank outlet in 'decoration'. Is every designer quite sure that all his 'functional' devices are quite so inevitably a response to rational need? And if, on quiet examination, some of them are not, how might natural human irrationality be better acknowledged - so as to lead not to 'compromise' but to a deeper appreciation?"*⁸² A few months later Oud defended his design in a letter to Haskell saying: *"I have always tried to keep myself far away from all 'rules'. Seeing something 'new' the world is immediately willing to give it a label and to place it in a partition."*⁸³ Oud was stubborn when it comes to architecture: *"...I attempted to go my own way in architecture"*⁸⁴ He was distancing from 'functionalism', as it gave chaos to the importance of aestheticists. Oud also thought different buildings had different functions, thus different architectural appearances. *"I discovered that the form of a laborer-dwelling or a factory cannot be the end of all architectural wisdom. It is an error to imply that this is true and that we have already reached 'new architecture' by this means."*

⁷⁴ Taverne, "Het esthetisch fundament van het Shell-gebouw (1938-42) van Oud," *Dutch connections*, 2020, p.325

⁷⁵ Letter from Oud to Haskell, 17 October 1945, Collection of het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q99-59

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Letter from Haskell to Oud, 17 October 1945, Collection of het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q99-46-1

⁷⁸ Letter from Oud to Haskell, 17 November 1945, Collection of het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q100-1

⁷⁹ Phoebus Panigyrakis, "Douglas Putnam Haskell: Raising a critical voice." *Architectural Record 1942-1967*, 2020, p.106.

⁸⁰ Letter from Haskell to Oud, 17 October 1945, Collection of het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q104-7

⁸¹ Phoebus Panigyrakis, "Douglas Putnam Haskell: Raising a critical voice." *Architectural Record 1942-1967*, 2020, p. 106.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Letter from Oud to Haskell, 17 October 1945, Collection of het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q105-21-1

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Also function was for Oud still of great importance, as he wrote to Haskell: 'Do you know that the 'Shell building' up to now already has been used for 5 years- sometimes by 600, sometimes by 1,000 employees and that I never heard one complaint about the practical functioning of the building? What do you think could 'functionalism' do more in this respect?'⁸⁵ While Haskell wanted further discussion of the matter, he was cut back by Emerson Goble, editor-in-chief of the Architectural Record in 1967, who did not want another article on Oud.⁸⁶

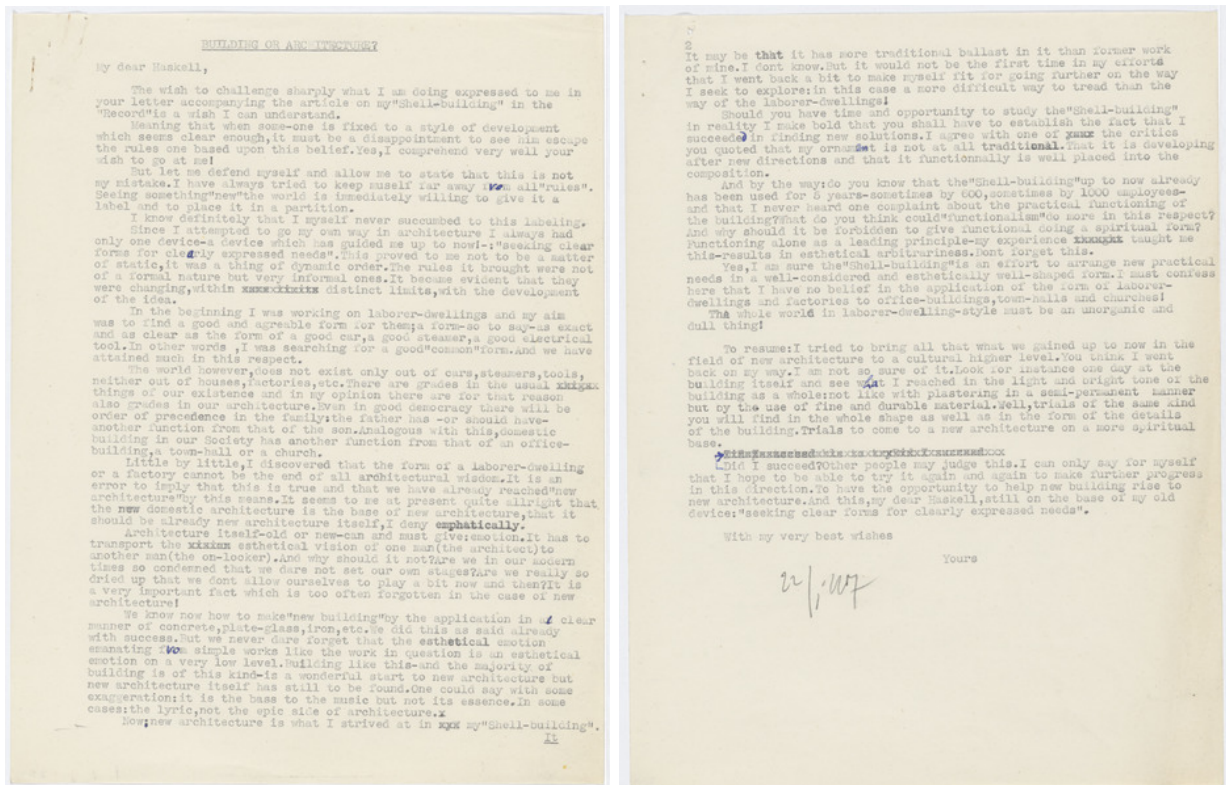


Figure 12. Letter written by Oud to Haskell, 1947

⁸⁵ Letter from Oud to Haskell, 17 October 1945, Collection of het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q105-21-2

⁸⁶ Phoebus Panigyrakis, "Douglas Putnam Haskell: Raising a critical voice." *Architectural Record* 1942-1967, 2020, p.106.

5.2. Remarks of Johnson

Philip Johnson, a good friend of Oud, and one of the most influential architecture critics of his time did not understand the Shell building: *"I do not know what to say."*⁸⁷ He wrote more in a letter to Oud: *"The building looks like a return to Dutch tradition rather than the next step in international architecture."*⁸⁸ Further down in the letter, Johnson added that he himself was maybe to traditional: *"I am still in that tradition, and I do not understand the Shell bldg."*⁸⁹ Oud replied on 18 December 1945: *"We always have to explore new terrains. I myself am sure that I did a bit of this in the Shell-building again and I hope that you will find after studying it that I am right. If it is 'conventional' to use anew the rules that as long as this world rolls had reigned good architecture than I am glad that I am 'conventionally'."*⁹⁰ The letters from Johnson and Oud were very honest. In a later letter from Johnson he wrote: *"...I was again disappointed by the wealth of (to me) irrelevant details and the general axial formality of the scheme. I'm afraid I am getting old-fashioned—just stuck in the twenties."*⁹¹ Nevertheless, Johnson did not understand the decoration of the Shell Building. Despite the misunderstanding towards the Shell building, Johnson said years later in 1996 to a journalist that Oud was his favourite architect: *"...of all architects he was the most intellectual and interesting. Rietveld was probably a better architect, but Oud was intellectually the most gifted of the whole group from those years. Oud was at odds with the ideologies of the 1920s. He was an extraordinarily clever man."*⁹² For Johnson personally the Shell building did not affect the reputation of Oud. Neither did he see that the Shell building was a logical consequence of exploring modern architecture as Oud himself considered it was.

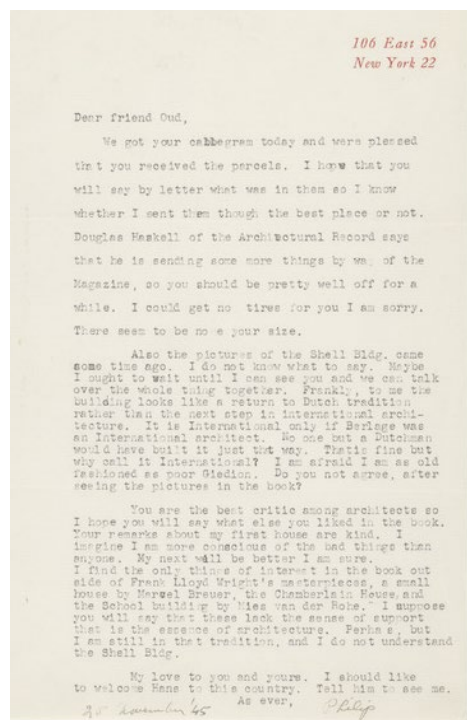


Figure 13. Letter from Johnson to Oud on November 25th 1945

⁸⁷ Letter from Johnson to Oud, 25 November 1945, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q100-1

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Letter from Oud to Philip Johnson, 18 December 1945, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ-B100-2a/2b

⁹¹ Letter from Philip Johnson to Oud, 18 December 1945, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ-Q104-9

⁹² Arnoud Hekkens, "Philip Johnson: verandering als constante," *Trouw*, June 26, 1996. <https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/philip-johnson-verandering-als-constante~b29879c9/>

5.3. Positive remarks

In the Netherlands the Shell building received less criticism. In 1964, short after Oud's death, *The Builder*, an British architectural magazine, published an article about the life of Oud. In this article the writer, Eric Ambrose, speaks highly of Oud and the Shell Building: *"Although I first saw the building nearly 15 years ago, I still find it immensely satisfying; the 'clear shapes' meeting the 'clearly defined needs' of those working within the building with complete success."*⁹³ Oud never stopped searching for new architecture. Oud himself wrote *"We have to explore always new terrains"*.⁹⁴ And that's what he did, according to a Dutch critic, Karel Wiekart: *"But look at his ground floor-with all its ornament and decoration it is a functional requirement of modern architecture."*⁹⁵ For some critics Oud did not turn his back to Modern architecture, on the contrary. Ambrose thinks Oud was exploring in the right direction: *"If the scale has been forced by the massive ornament over the entrance door and the building has indeed some pretensions to monumentality, it is a reasoned plea for a quality which is fast disappearing in an age when few know precisely where they are going."*⁹⁶ Oud's way to new architecture was by exploring. New architecture is a living thing that changes over time. It was for him some kind of language from the architect to the 'on-looker': *"Architecture itself -old or new- can and must give: emotion. It has to transport the esthetical vision of one man (the architect) to another man (the on-looker). And why should we not? Are we in our modern times so condemned that we dare not set our own stages? Are we really so dried up that we don't allow ourselves to play a bit now and then? It is a very important fact which is too often forgotten in the case of new architecture!"*⁹⁷

Oud's perception on new architecture may not have been rewarded as highly as it should have been in his times, however, it never stopped him from believing in his own vision on architecture.

The Shell building marks the beginning of his later work. Although Oud no longer featured such ornamentation as in the Shell building, his work after this design was less severe and more expressive. His efforts in architecture were honoured in 1955, when Oud received an honorary doctorate from Delft University of Technology for his wilfulness.⁹⁸ The speech that was held by J.F. Berghoef during the award ceremony of 26 September 1955, is included in the Appendix A.



Figure 14. A picture of the Shell building was used for a stamp, 1955

⁹³ Eric Ambrose, "Finding Oud, a tribute to a humanist," *The Builder*, April 10, 1964, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q210-16-3a

⁹⁴ Letter from Oud to Philip Johnson, 18 December 1945, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ-B100-2b

⁹⁵ Eric Ambrose, "Finding Oud, a tribute to a humanist," *The Builder*, April 10, 1964, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q210-16-3a

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Letter from Oud to Haskell, 17 October 1945, Collection of het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q105-21-1

⁹⁸ J.F. Berghoef speech, 26 September, 1955, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q145-75-1,2,3,4,5,6; Letter from Burgers to Oud, 27 May, 1955, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q145-77

6. Conclusion

In the 1920s, great architects were discovering what great modern architecture meant. Among them Oud also searched for an answer. Functionalism and simplicity were of great importance for Oud, but more importantly, Oud did not want to attach himself to any kind of dogma or rule. Oud considered that the buildings he designed were more than a machine that could be used. Oud designed buildings not only for the comfort of human beings: *“Architecture is the search for clear shapes for clearly defined needs. Proportion, rhythm and the imprint of the designer are indispensable.”* And this is exactly what he did with the Shell building: he took the opportunity to help new construction rise to new architecture.

Oud was proud of his design for the Shell building. He worked with heart and soul on the building during the rough years of WWII. The BIM and the public were satisfied with the building. The users of the building, the 1,000 employees, never complained. This is functionalism at its fullest. Despite all of this, Oud still had to defend his design to the wounding attacks. The building was too decorated and for some even a setback in architecture rather than exploring on future development. But for Oud the opposite was true. The texts he wrote defending his design showed that Oud did not betray or break with his former work or with Modern architecture, it was not a step back. One could say it was, on the contrary, a step forward. His design was a logic consequence of exploring new ideas. He incorporated functionalism with ornaments and even made the ornaments functional as well as they were used as a kind of advertisement and to show the history and importance of Shell, like the shell shaped ornaments (figure 10). Till today the building is known as Shell building, although different companies occupied the building over time.

The aim of Oud with all his designs was to make clean architecture for the needs of people. Oud was used to designing dwellings for labor workers, so an office building was new for him. His view was that each type of building differs from other types of building. His designs consisted of lines, volumes and sleek surfaces, but for the office building Oud used classical principles of architectonic composition, like symmetry, proportion and ornaments. The logic of Oud is interesting. An office building could be a landmark for the city, where a single house is not. It seems logical than to make the Shell building remarkable, with ornaments, still in line with his vision of searching for clear shapes, proportion and rhythm.

The hypotheses in the beginning of this thesis could be assumed:

People have different perceptions due to different backgrounds, experiences, taste, preferences and so on. In this case Oud and the other Modernists had different perceptions of modern architecture. However, the hypothesis of this research states that, even though people have different perceptions of modern architecture, the critics were wrong to identify the work of Oud as ‘poor’ architecture.

In the time of Oud, each Modernist was searching for his/her own definition of Modern architecture. For Oud his journey did not end or start with the Shell building, but was one of his expressions of what he considered the right path to the definition of new architecture. With the Shell building Oud took the opportunity to help new building rise to new architecture. In my opinion he has succeeded, bearing in mind: *“Seeking clear forms for clearly expressed needs.”*⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Letter from Oud to Haskell, 17 October 1945, Collection of het Nieuwe Instituut, OUDJ_Q105-21-2

Bibliography

Books

Oud, Jacobus Johannes Pieter. "Nieuwe bouwkunst in Holland en Europa." April, 1935.

Taverne, Ed, and Broekhuizen, Dolf. *Het Shell-gebouw van J.J.P. Oud. Ontwerp en receptie/J.J.P. Oud's Shell Building. Design and Reception*. Rotterdam: NAI Uitgevers/Publishers, 1995.

Van Bergeijk, Herman. *Het zwaarte van de materie. Het architectonisch werk van A.J. Kropholler (1881-1973)*. Rotterdam: Nai010 Uitgevers, 2020

Articles and papers

Filler, Martin. "Fame: A fickle mistress." *Architectural Record*, December 16, 2019, <https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/6177-fame-a-fickle-mistress>

Hekkens, Arnoud. "Philip johnson: verandering als constante," *Trouw*, June 26, 1996. <https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/philip-johnson-verandering-als-constante~b29879c9/>

Jardine, Boris. Modern Architecture: "being the Kahn Lectures for 1930 (review)", *The MIT Press*, June, 2009. <https://muse-jhu-edu.tudelft.idm.oclc.org/article/265341/pdf>

Panigyrakis, Phoebus Ilias. "Douglas Putnam Haskell: Raising a critical voice." *Architectural Record 1942-1967. A+BE| Architecture and the Built Environment* 11 (2020): p.102-114. <https://books.bk.tudelft.nl/press/catalog/view/763/875/833-2>

Rijkdienst voor monumentenzorg. "Monumenten inventarisatie project- Den Haag, Wijkbeschrijving en gebieden met bijzondere waarden." Oktober, 1990, 73. <https://020apps.nl/mip/beschrijvingen/'s-Gravenhage.pdf>

Tabibi, Baharak. "Exhibitions as the medium of architectural reproduction modern architecture: international Exhibition," Middle east technical university, April, 2005, 22. <https://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12606077/index.pdf>

Taverne, Ed. "Het esthetisch fundament van het Shell-gebouw (1938-42) van J.J.P.Oud," *Dutch connections* Essays on international relationships in architectural history in honour of Herman van Bergeijk (2020), p.325. <https://books.bk.tudelft.nl/press/catalog/view/780/891/858-1>

Van een medewerker voor architectuur. "Vurig verdediger van Moderne Bouwkunst," *Het parool*, Februari 8, 1950, 3.

Archives

Collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut

OU DJ_Q86-1-1.	Letter from BIM to Oud: new office building, 5 Januari 1938.
OU DJ_Q86-7-1.	Records of meeting., 10-01-1938.
OU DJ_Q86-7-3	Records of meeting., 10-01-1938.
OU DJ_Q86-30	Letter from BIM to Oud, 22 April 1938.
OU DJ_Q88-1	Letter from J.J.P Oud to de Bruijn, 3 november 1938.
OU DJ_Q88-37-1.	Exposé speech. Programma van Eisen.
OU DJ_Q88-39a	Letter from Oud to BIM: explaining the design, x x 1938.
OU DJ_Q88-39b	Letter from Oud to BIM: explaining the design, x x 1938.
OU DJ_Q88-39c	Letter from Oud to BIM explaining the design, x x 1938.
OU DJ_Q88-39d	Letter from Oud to BIM explaining the design, x x 1938.
OU DJ_Q88-39e	Letter from Oud to BIM explaining the design, x x 1938.
OU DJ_Q88-39f	Letter from Oud to BIM explaining the design, x x 1938.

OUdj_Q88-39g	Letter from Oud to BIM explaining the design, x x 1938.
OUdj_Q88-39h	Letter from Oud to BIM explaining the design, x x 1938.
OUdj_Q88-39i	Letter from Oud to BIM explaining the design, x x 1938.
OUdj_Q98-10	Letter from Oud to J.H.Stal, 3 May 1945.
OUdj_Q98-36a	Letter from Oud to J.H.Stal, 21 June 1945.
OUdj_Q99-46-1	Letter from Haskell to J.J.P Oud, 17 October 1945.
OUdj_Q99-59	Letter from Oud to Haskell, 17 October 1945.
OUdj_Q99-63	Letter from Royal institute of British Architects to Oud, 27 October 1945.
OUdj_Q100-1	Letter from Oud to Haskell, 17 November 1945.
OUdj-B100-2a	Letter from Oud to Philip Johnson, 18 December 1945.
OUdj-B100-2b	Letter from Oud to Philip Johnson, 18 December 1945.
OUdj_Q100-38-1	Letter from Oud to Mr. Bird, November 8, 1945.
OUdj_Q104-7	Letter from Haskell to Oud, 17 October 1945.
OUdj-Q104-9	Letter from Philip Johnson to J.J.P Oud, 18 December 1945.
OUdj_Q105-21-1	Letter from Oud to Haskell, 17 October 1945.
OUdj_Q105-21-2	Letter from Oud to Haskell, 17 October 1945.
OUdj_Q145-75-1	J.F. Berghoef speech, 26 September, 1955.
OUdj_Q145-75-2	J.F. Berghoef speech, 26 September, 1955.
OUdj_Q145-75-3	J.F. Berghoef speech, 26 September, 1955.
OUdj_Q145-75-4	J.F. Berghoef speech, 26 September, 1955.
OUdj_Q145-75-5	J.F. Berghoef speech, 26 September, 1955.
OUdj_Q145-75-6	J.F. Berghoef speech, 26 September, 1955.
OUdj_Q145-77	Letter from Burgers to Oud, 27 may, 1955.
OUdj_Q210-16-1	Ambrose, Eric. "Finding Oud, a tribute to a humanist," <i>The Builder</i> , April 10, 1964.
OUdj_Q210-16-3a	Ambrose, Eric. "Finding Oud, a tribute to a humanist," <i>The Builder</i> , April 10, 1964.
OUdj_Q210-16-3b	Ambrose, Eric. "Finding Oud, a tribute to a humanist," <i>The Builder</i> , April 10, 1964.

Websites

Van 't Wel, Rob. "Een koninklijk gebouw," april 19, 2019. <https://www.shell.nl/media/venster/eerder-verschenen/a-royal-building.html>

Figures

Figure 1: Ed Taverne & Dolf Broekhuizen, Het Shell-gebouw van J.J.P. Oud. Ontwerp en receptie/J.J.P. Oud's Shell Building. Design and Reception, Rotterdam 1995.

Figure 2: Google, Pinterest, Shell service station in Scheveningen around 1938

Figure 3: Newspaper article, 19 January 1938, The apeldoornsche courant

Figure 4: KLM building: Haags gemeentearchief /Dienst Stedelijke Ontwikkeling, 1949, omroepwest.nl/nieuws/3899448/KLM-honderd-jaar-een-koninklijk-Haags-bedrijf
BPM building: Google, Pinterest.
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b8/Aanzicht_B.P.M._Gebouw_-_s-Gravenhage_-_20088380_-_RCE.jpg

Figure 5: One of the first design sketch of Oud , xx 1938, Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUdj_BM1

Figure 6: Ed Taverne & Dolf Broekhuizen, Het Shell-gebouw van J.J.P. Oud. Ontwerp en receptie/J.J.P. Oud's Shell Building. Design and Reception, Rotterdam 1995.

Figure 7: Letter from Oud to BIM explaining the design, xx 1938, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUdj_Q88-39i-j

Figure 8: Letter from architect Rosenberg to congratulate Oud with the commission. xx 1938, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUdj_Q86-32a/b

Figure 10: Figure 9, Roof shell

Left: Oud design drawing view, x March 1938, Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUdj_bm491_3000px

Right: The roof shell high in the central section of the main facade, 1943, Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUdj_kh100_3000px

Figure 11: Letter from Oud to J.H.Stal, 21 June 1945, Collection of het Nieuwe Instituut, OUdj_Q98-36a

Figure 12: Letter from Oud to Haskell, 17 October 1945, Collection of het Nieuwe Instituut, OUdj_Q105-21-2

Figure 13: Letter from Johnson to Oud, 25 November 1945, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUdj_Q100-1

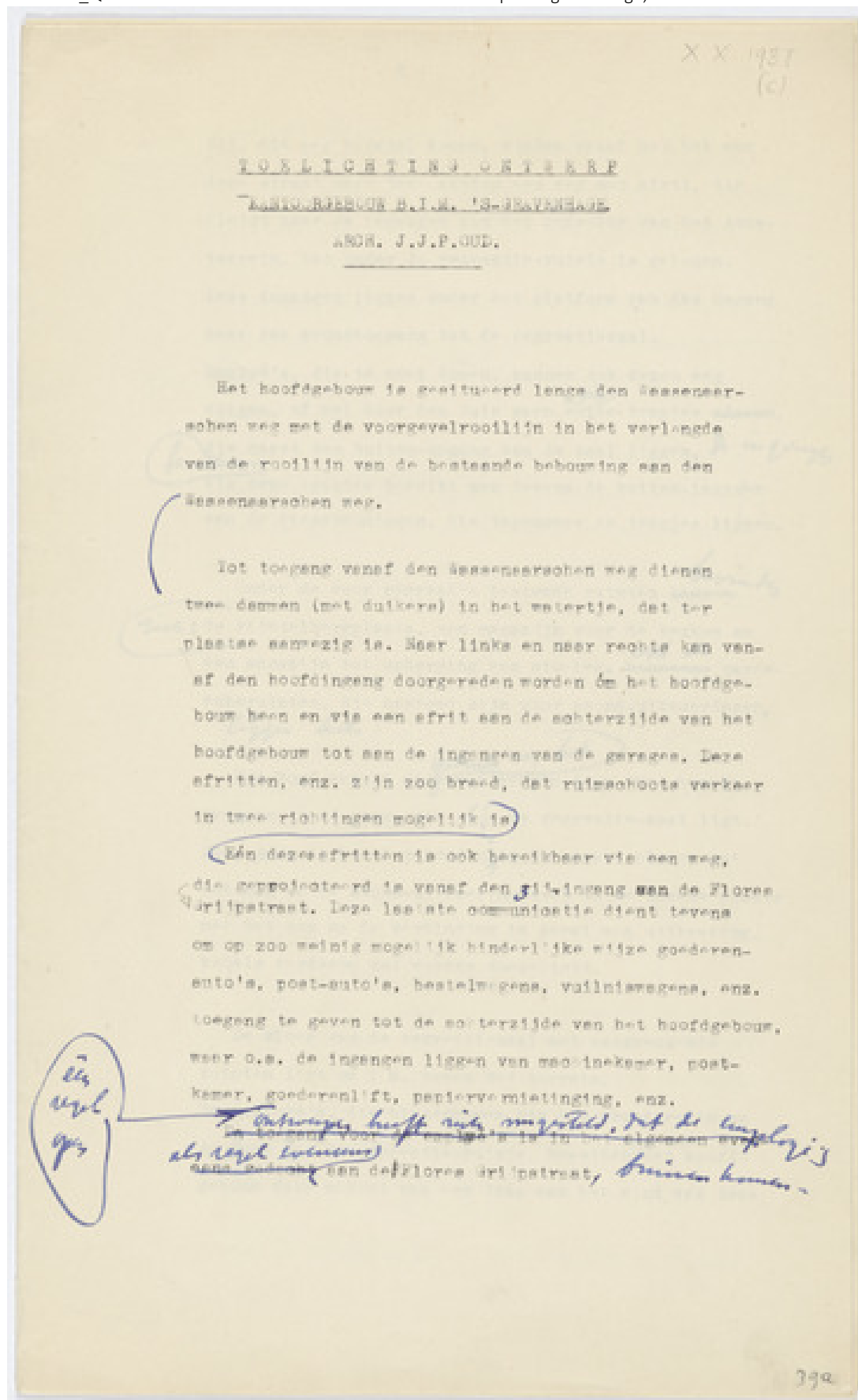
Figure 14: Letter from Shell Nederland to Oud, 24 Januari 1955, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUdj_Q144-67; Letter V.A.R.A Hilversum, 15 June 1955, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut, OUdj_Q144-4-2

Figure found on: zomerzegels 1944, <https://www.postwaarden.nl/toeslag/zomer1955.pdf>;

Appendix A

1. OUDJ_Q88-39a

Letter from J.J.P. Oud to BIM: explaining the design, x x 1938.



- 2 -

Zij, die per rijtuig komen, vinden vanaf het hek een
deze straat naar twee zijden een weg met afrit, die
leidt naar de ingangen van het gedeelte van het sous-
terrein, dat onder de recreatie-ruimte is gelegen.
Deze ingangen liggen onder het platform van den opgang
naar den avondtoegang tot de recreatiezeel.

Employé's, die te voet komen, kunnen ook dezen weg
volgen, of wel door den tuin gaan en ^{na} de trapjes ~~afgaan~~.

fruits die naast den buiten-opgang van de zeel liggen, *de in Vrij*
via deze trapjes bereikt men tevens de buiten-ingangen
van de dienstwoningen, die tegenover de trapjes liggen.

Onder de voor recreatie bestemde ruimten ^{bevinde} ~~zijn~~

zie de rijtuigbergplaats, een magazijn voor de keukens en
een magazijn tot opberging van stoelen, ^{ook de} ~~bestemde~~ garde-
roberuimten, die bestaan zijn voor avond-uitvoeringen,
liggen hier.

gebouwen van het
Men komt vanuit dit ~~sous~~terrein door twee breede
trappen in de gang, die vóór de recreatie-zeel ligt.
Deze gang is breed gebouwd; in de eerste plaats met
het oog op de avond-uitvoeringen en in de tweede plaats
met het oog op de verbinding in geval van uithreiding,
zoodra verderop zal worden toegelicht.

De vloer van de recreatie-zeel met aangrenzende
ruimten ligt op 1 M. boven het terrein.

De employé's, die binnenkomen via het sous-terrein en
de gang van de recreatie-ruimte, bereiken het hoofd-
gebouw door middel van een trap aan het eind van deze

- 3 -

gang. Ze komen aldus in het trappenhuis en vinden
recht vóór zich een trap-arm naar het bordes van de
hoofdtrep. Ier plaatse heeft de hoofdtrep naar het
bordes dus twee opzichten: één naar achteren en één
naar voren. Dit komt eigenlijk voor op de parterre-
verdieping en heeft de bedoeling om op extra-uren ~~tijd~~
af ~~aan~~ stroom van employé's ~~langs~~ *langs* den hoofdingang te
~~laten~~ *lijzen*.

Ontwerper stelt zich voor, dat de groepen employé's
zich *naar de traphuizen* ~~op~~ verdiepingsgewijze afscheiden of reeds
dadelijk op de eerste verdieping gebruik gaan maken
van de dienattrappen en paternoster-liften, die - even-
als toiletten en garderobes - op elke verdieping aan
de einden van het hoofdgebouw liggen.

Van de aanvankelijke bedoeling om tusschen recrea-
tiefaciliteit en hoofdgebouw in het trappenhuis nog paternoster-liften voor de employé's in te schakelen is
om verscheidene redenen afgezien, doch de mogelijkheid
daartoe is aanwezig.

Ien opzichte van het hoofdgebouw valt verder nog
op te merken, dat de zuilen in de gangen vermoedelijk
andere geplaatst zullen moeten worden.

Iere kwestie, zoowel als het vraagstuk van de gas-
sluizen, leidingen-tunnel, enz. hangen zoo nauw samen
met de uitwerking in details, dat ze eerst nauwkeurig
bepaald kunnen worden als de uitvoering vaststaat.

Ontwerper heeft zich hierbij dus ~~alreeds~~ tot sche-
matische aanduiding bepaald.

Bij de plaatsing van de goederen-lift is er mede

- 4 -

gerekend, dat het wenschelijk zal zijn de emmers met vuil gemakkelijk naar beneden te kunnen transporteer-
ren. De bergplaats voor deze emmers is daartoe in het
onderste sousterrein aangebracht, waar ze onmiddellijk
door vuilniswegens te bereiken is.

Wegens voor andere auto's is ook voor deze soort
wegens direct doorgaend~~e~~ verkeer om het hoofdgebouw
mogelijk.

De woningen van den machinist en die van den chef
van den huishoudelijken dienst hebben een binnen- en
een buiteningang. Ook nog een verbinding naar het
susterrein onder de recreatie-ruimte.

Deze laatste verbinding dient om hulp te kunnen ver-
leenen bij de regeling van de avond-uitvoeringen en
eventueel voor toezicht op de rijsielbergplaats.

Onder de hoofdtrep is aan de ééne zijde een trap,
die den machinist gelegenheid geeft op eenvoudige wijze
de machinekamer te bereiken, en aan de andere zijde
een telefoongel voor het publiek.

Als breedte van de gangen is 2 M. aangenomen (hart
zuil - hart zuil). De nuttige breedte tusschen de
zuilen wordt dan 1.50 à 1.60 M.

Met het oog daarop - en tevens om wachtruimte met
banken te creëren - zijn de gangen naar den hoofd-
ingang toe, breeder gemaakt. Bovendien komt er op deze
wijze meer bewegingsruimte voor publiek, werkers,
enz., terwijl door de ligging van de kluizen in de
hoeken geen opstopping ter plaatse kan ontstaan.
Het corridor-achtig karakter van de gang verdwijnt
hierdoor tevens.

33d

- 5 -

Een opbouw in het midden op het dak is bedoeld als verbindend element voor de anders rommelig aandoende opbouwen van liften, enz. Misschien ligt hierin tevens aanleiding om de menscheelikhed van een daktuin te overwegen.

In elk geval is in dit plan reeds gesproken van paviljoentjes op het dak (voor de windmolen). Voor deze thea. presentatie kan worden.

Het de recreatie-zaal betreft, valt nog op te wijzen, dat ontwerper zich heeft voorgesteld, dat het tooneel in de recreatie-zaal als regel aan het oog onttrokken zal zijn door een gordijn tusschen de beide zuilen.

Regel open

Bij uitvoeringen wordt de toegang tot de recreatie-zaal, die aan den tuin gelogen is, gebruikt. Voetgangers, gaan via den borden-opgang naar de zaal, wielrijders via het equesterrein. *De vervoerders* beide groepen in het equesterrein. *afgevoerd worden*

En kan gefilmd worden vanuit een cabine, die gedacht is in het plafond (rond gedeelte).

Met het oog op het hier bedoelde gebruik van de recreatie-zaal is een deel *gevoel* *van het gebouw* *aan het aspect* *gegeven.* *Dit brengt tot het dit deel niet te dubbel*

Regel open

Reclame-technisch is mogelijk nog van belang, dat het midden van het hoofdgebouw met de Shell-lichtreclame juist tegenover de Dreefholzetraat gelegen is.

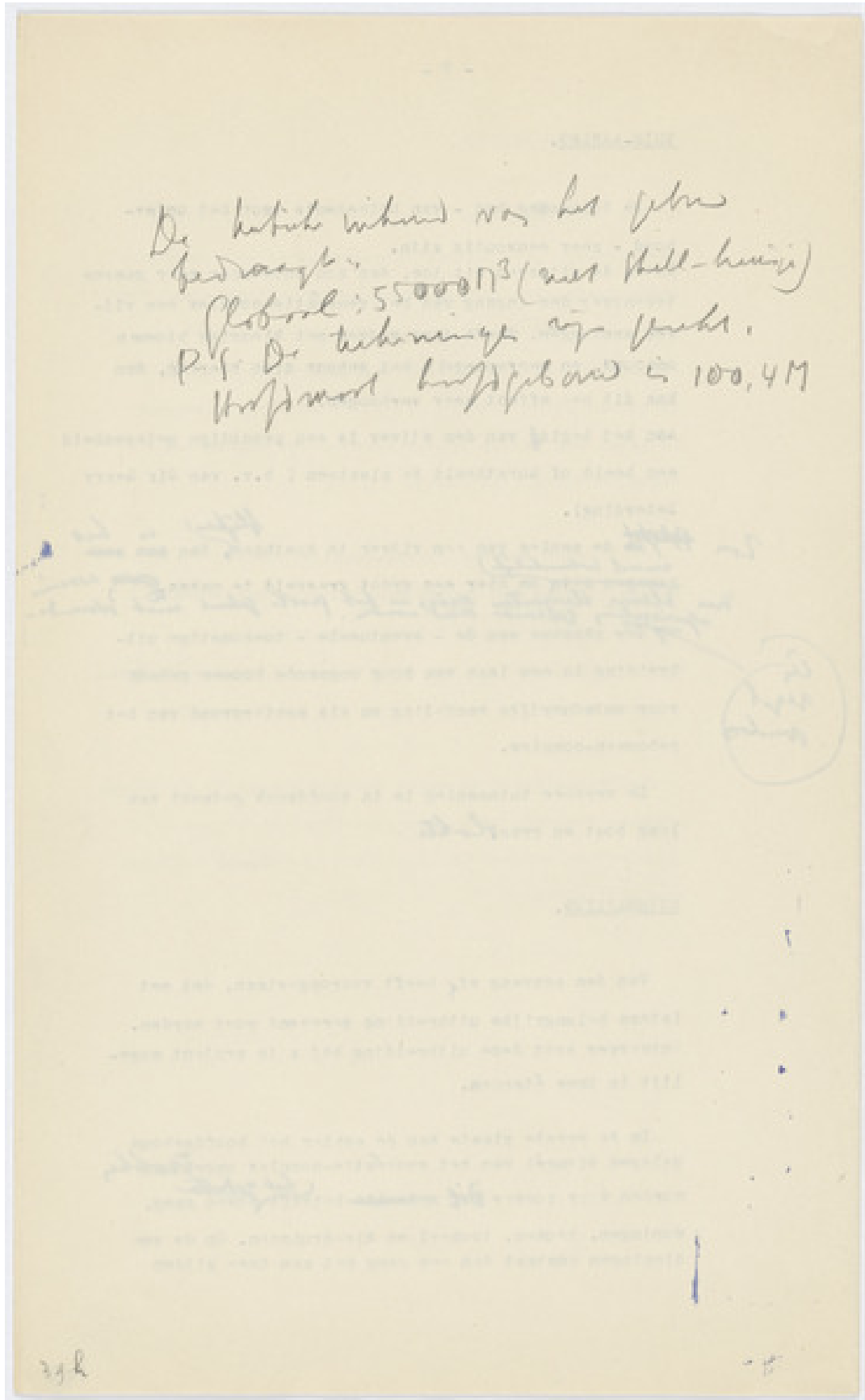
- 6 -

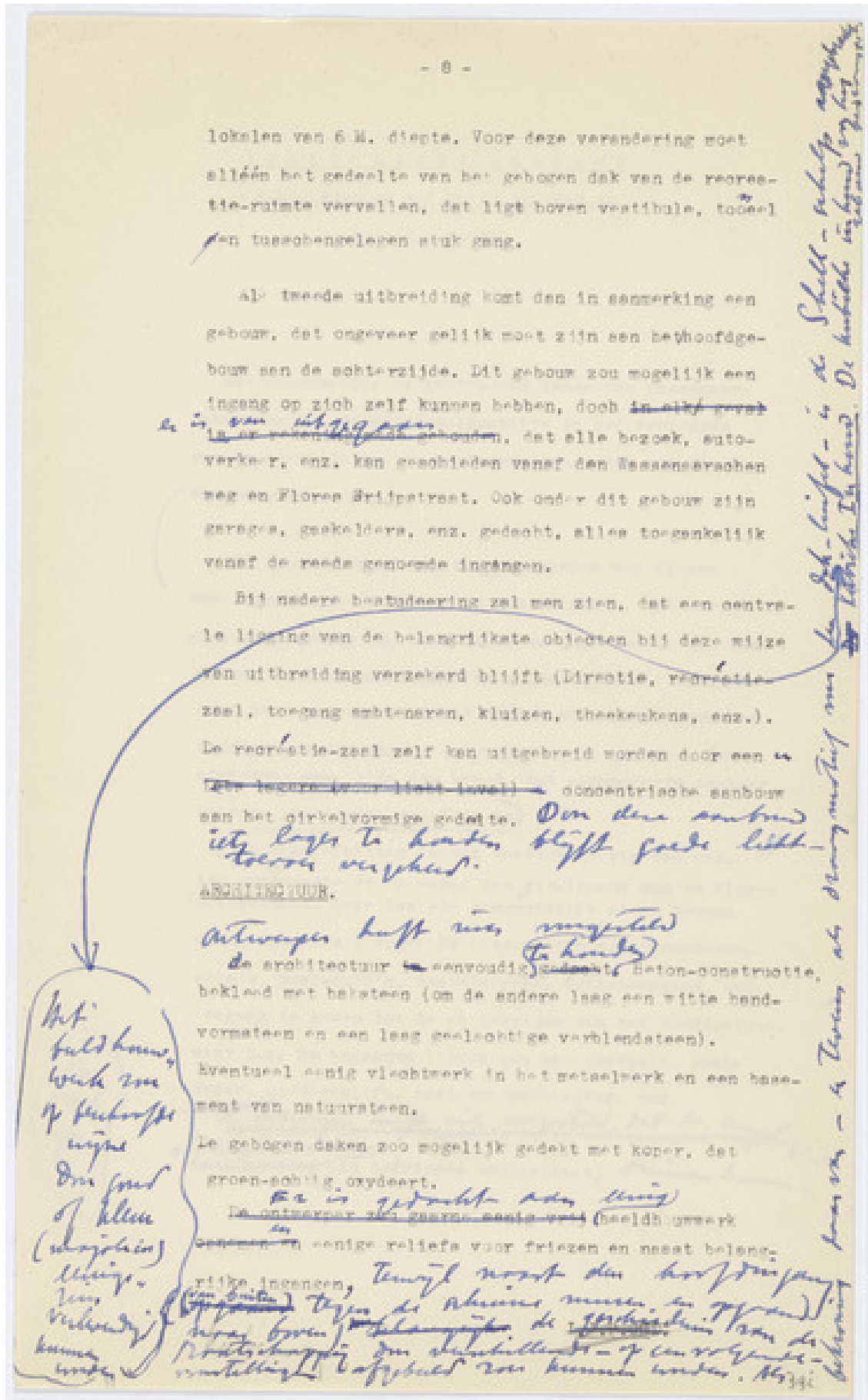
SHELL-SERVICE STATION.

Het "Shell-service station" is ontworpen op den terreinhoek, gelegen aan IJssenaarschen weg en Flores Grifpatrust. Het ligt eenigszins romantisch - met twee zijden aan het water; met de ééne zijde aan het bestaande watertje langs den IJssenaarschen weg, met de andere zijde aan het watertje, dat geprojecteerd is langs den Flores Grifpatrust en dat meêten tot terrein-afschieding dient.

De toegang tot het "Shell-service station" heeft plaats via één der doorden aan den IJssenaarschen weg en via één der aan de Flores Grifpatrust. De stoppen bij het Shell-station kan naar beide zijden steeds doorgereden worden.

Het fries boven de ramen van het gebouwtje is teruggebouwd gedacht. In de daardoor ontstane ruimte zijn opschriften gedacht in néon-licht van ~~kleine~~ letters, die *in het* staan.





Appendix B

OUJ_Q145-75-1

J.F. Berghoed speech, 26 May, 1955, collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut

Majesteit,

Excellenties,

Dames en Heren.

Het is mij een voorrecht U, zij het in het kort, de motieven te mogen uiteenzetten, die de Senaat deden besluiten om op voordracht van de Afdeling der Bouwkunde aan

JACOBUS JOHANNES PIETER OUD

het doctoraat in de Technische Wetenschap honoris causa te verlenen.

Toen in het tweede decennium van deze eeuw Oud op zeer jeugdige leeftijd zijn loopbaan als architect begon, was de Amsterdamse Koopmansbeurs ongeveer tien jaren in gebruik. In korte tijd had Berlage zich ontworsteld aan het eclecticisme van de 19e eeuw en tegenover het overdadige en loze gespeel met historische vormen stelde hij een eenvoudige, kloeke vormgeving, waarin doel, bouwstof en constructie in harmonische samenhang en toch elk voor zich duidelijk te herkennen, optreden. Daarmee was Berlage de weg naar zuivering en vernieuwing van de architectuur opgegaan, maar die weg was allerminst gebaand: zeker, hij kreeg medestanders, doch de ruige kracht van zijn werken schrikte velen af en overgeleverde vormen bleven in gebruik.

Oud was in die dagen een groot verdediger van Berlage: het blijkt uit zijn vroegste ontwerpen zowel

als uit zijn eerste geschriften, waarin hij het opnam voor het rationele bouwen van de Meester en waarin hij de stijlnabootsing hekeld. Dochál spoedig en gaandeweg bewuster, heeft Oud gezocht naar een vormgeving, die de geestelijke, sociale en aesthetische tendenzen van de tijd duidelijk tot uitdrukking zou brengen en in een reeks van overtuigende werken heeft hij de resultaten van zijn streven neergelegd.

Al bouwend en in zijn geschriften getuigend van wat hem bewoog, is Oud beurtelings initiatiefnemer en pionier geworden van nieuwe stromingen in de bouwkunst, met name van de Stijlgroep-architectuur sedert 1917 en van het zogenaamde Nieuwe bouwen tussen de jaren 1920 en '30. Toen de cubistische architectuur van de eerste groep dreigde te ontaarden in een decoratief spel, ging Oud de zakelijke en functionele grondslagen van het bouwen vooropstellen: hij zocht en is blijven streven naar een architectuur, die minder een middel tot individuele expressie dan wel van algemene strekking en geldigheid zou zijn.

Met een verwonderlijke geestelijke onafhankelijkheid heeft Oud zich weten vrij te houden van langdurige inlijving bij een bepaalde stroming, zodat hij telkens op nieuwe wegen kon verdergaan. Aldus heeft hij baanbrekend werk verricht en veel van zijn werken zijn voorbeeldig en richtinggevend geweest en verscheidene zijn het nog.

Tal van Oud's projecten en uitgevoerde werken hebben bij hun verschijnen architecten in binnen- en buitenland tot bezinning op de essentiële waarden van de architectuur gebracht en indien bij tijd en wijle weerstanden gewekt zijn en kritiek geuit werd, zo zij toch erkend dat zijn werk geen waarachtig architect onberoerd gelaten heeft en dat het voor velen een stimulerende kracht bezat.

Persoonlijk wil ik hier dankbaar erkennen dat een van Oud's bescheiden, vroegste werken 35 jaar geleden in mij de neiging tot de bouwkunst gewekt en mijn keus voor dit vak bepaald heeft.

Oud's gebouwen geven blijk van zijn zeer bekwaam vakmanschap; zij werden met grote toewijding verzorgd en zij bezitten de noblesse van al wat uit een volmaakt integere kunstenaarsziel gesproken is. Uit zijn werk spreekt de vasthoudendheid van de overtuigde, die moet getuigen en die zich wil rechtvaardigen.

Ongetwijfeld zijn zijn werken koel, bij het nuchtere af. Maar zoals Vermeer de figuren, de stoffen, de kleuren en de lichtglansen in zijn Delftse kamer met een koele hartstocht registreerde, zoals Saenredam in ongebroken gespannen aandacht de gebouwen, waarvoor hij zich zette, noteerde, zo geeft Oud met indringende scherpte de maatschappelijke werkelijkheid van de 20ste eeuw in zijn bouwwerken gestalte: in zijn volkswoningen de feitelijkheid van de geordende, in redelijke

welstand levende massa, in zijn kantoorgebouwen de zelfbewustheid van het economisch machtige concern. En achter de uiterlijke onaandoenlijkheid speurt men in beide de spanningen van de tijd.

In zijn werk is Oud een realist, die de werkelijkheid met ongemene helderheid doorziet en die geen enkele concessie doet om haar te verfraaien, noch om haar te verzachten.

Oud's werk is architectonisch bezien van een ongemene zuiverheid; het wezen ligt geheel verankerd in maten en verhoudingen. Daarin is het aan de abstracte bouwkunst der Grieken verwant en het bezit de helderheid van de klassieke humanistische architectuur; in zijn beste werken reikt Oud aan een probleemloze lichtvoetigheid - ik weet dat die sfeer hem het liefst is.

Naaft zijn architectonische werken heeft Oud een welhaast onoverzienbare reeks publicaties het licht doen zien, niet alleen voor de vakgenoten, maar ook dikwijls voor het grote publiek geschreven; met het laatste vooral heeft hij een belangrijke bijdrage geleverd tot beter begrip inzake de architectuur.

In deze pennevruchten heeft hij zich vaak als een bijz onder strijdbaar man doen kennen. Zijn geschriften zijn gericht, zowel op verheldering van inzicht in architectonische problemen als op het hooghouden van de artistieke integriteit,

Zij vestigen de aandacht op waardevolle uitingen op het gebied der architectuur en bestrijden voordelen en misstanden in de wereld van de bouwkunst en de stedenbouw.

Altijd met recht?

Als vertegenwoordiger van een Afdeling, welker leden individueel of collectief het wel eens moesten ontgelden, mag ik mijn twijfel dienaangaande wel uitspreken, al kan ik de controverse begrijpen en dus vergeven. Er is verschil van uitgangspunt bij hem, die voor alles nieuwe wegen zoekt en hen, die het overgeleverde wegen en het waardevolle behoeden en verder reiken. Er is wezensverschil tussen hem, die in volle aanvaarding kind van zijn tijd wil zijn en hen, die zich mede verantwoordelijk voelen voor hun tijd. En ten slotte is er verschil in einddoel bij hem, die de realiteit gretig aanvaardt en uitbeeldt en hen, die in de gestalte een reflectie zoeken van een hogere werkelijkheid. Toch zijn beiden exponenten van eenzelfde zijn en het tijdsbeeld zou scheefgetrokken worden als men een van beiden zou elimineren. Het gaat om de zuiverheid der intenties en om de zuiverheid van zijn intenties en de klare uitdrukking ervan in zijn werk eren wij Oud.

Vele van Oud's publicaties zijn buiten onze grenzen verschenen; zij hebben, evenals zijn architectonische werken, de Nederlandse

bouwkunst in het buitenland bekend gemaakt en doen respecteren. Bouwend en Schrijvend heeft Oud een ongemene bijdrage geleverd tot de ontwikkeling van de internationale architectuur.

Zeer geachte heer Oud,

Op grond van het door mij aangevoerde, in het kort wegens Uw uitnemende verdiensten, als bouwmeester en als publicist, voor de ontwikkeling van de architectuur in deze eeuw, verklaar ik namens de Senaat van de Technische Hogeschool, ingevolge zijn besluit van 26 Mei 1955, krachtens de bevoegdheid hem door de Wet verleend, U

JACOBUS JOHANNES PIETER OUD

te zijn doctor in de Technische Wetenschap, honoris causa, met alle rechten, die door Wet en gewoonte aan dit doctoraat zijn verbonden.

Ten bewijze hiervan overhandig ik U hierbij het diploma, dat U het recht geeft de titel van Doctor in de Technische Wetenschap te voeren.