



CONSERVATION AND DESIGN

MVRDV



Optimistic architecture

"We see ourselves as 'city doctors' who help local authorities all over the world when it comes to reanimating disused buildings, changing public spaces and reviving urban districts."

MVRDV



M / VR / DV

„We create happy and adventurous places.“ These are the words that Winy Maas, Jacob van Rijs and Nathalie de Vries use to summarise their work. In fact, the founders of the MVRDV firm of architects, which meanwhile has 336 employees, plan projects that usually radiate uncomplicated cheerfulness, designed with a sense of humour, free of the elitist severity that characterises rationalist buildings, for example. Instead, the team pursues the aim of creating architecture that is popular in the best sense of the word, architecture that will be understood and liked by as many people as possible. That certainly does not mean relying on tried and tested methods from the past. On the contrary, their work often proves to be daring, experimental or at least unconventional. Therefore Winy Maas also founded „The Why Factory“, an international think tank based at TU Delft, which works on visionary future scenarios for the development of our cities. Today, MVRDV's range extends from planning whole urban districts to designing shopping centres, skyscrapers and concert halls to family homes. The team has already handled 1,300 projects in 47 countries, and received 168 awards or nominations. This edition of Conservation and Design presents some of the firm's latest work. Mineral products by KEIM were used in many of the buildings.

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**Groan!
Sweat!
Brood!**

Werk 12, Munich

A compact new-build on a former industrial site at Munich's Ostbahnhof offers an unusual mixed-use concept for restaurants and bars, sport and leisure as well as offices. Although the neutral surfaces offer maximum flexibility, the building has its own unmistakable character, not only due to the expressions from German comics emblazoned in neon lettering on the façade.

Like many other firms, for many years Pfanni also used a production site near to the city centre, where the company manufactured its dumplings and potato products not far from Munich's Ostbahnhof well into the mid 1990s. After the factory had been closed down, the site was taken over by Kunstpark Ost, a diverse quarter with studios, alternative markets, clubs and discos. Today, the Pfanni heir is turning the area step by step into a lively urban district with a broad mixture of old and new buildings, culture and commerce, living and working. The original intention of the Pfanni heir was to re-erect the Netherlands Pavilion originally created by MVRDV for the Expo 2000 in Hanover and which had been vacant since then, on the site of the former plant 12 (hence the name "Werk 12"). However, moving the pavilion, with all the dismantling and reconstruction that this would involve, proved to be impractical. Instead, the architects were commissioned to design a new building based on the pavilion, with high ceilings, transparent architecture in a simple, rough design.



Art in architecture with a WOW effect: The storey-high neon lettering makes reference to Pfanni's historical illuminated advertising.



EDITION KEIM N° 3

That is exactly what has been done – with the addition of a glass façade and peripheral balconies. As in Hanover, the architects designed a compact cube of levels stacked on top of each other, connected by an elevator tower rather than an interior core, together with an external staircase curling around the building. With the staircase also providing structural stability, it was possible to design the building without load bearing walls on the inside. This allowed for highly flexible rooms that can be put to a wide range of different uses. The ground floor is currently where bars and restaurants welcome their guests; a club shares the top floor with the offices of Audi Business Innovations, with a gym and swimming pool on the storeys in between. If one of these tenants moves out, the rooms can be put to almost any other purpose, from a kindergarten to a supermarket. This would not entail any extensive modifications to the actual construction, so that the building can be expected to have a particularly long service life. The extra-high ceilings with 5.5 metres between each floor create even more flexibility and allow for mezzanines to be added if needed. The tenants have used this potential and created fascinating, open interior landscapes, partly over two storeys, offering a wide range of views. The unpretentious design with lots of bare concrete recalls the formerly rough, raw atmosphere that prevailed on the factory premises.

To liven up the façades, the architects wanted to use lettering as an ornament. The winners of the corresponding art competition, Christian Engelmann and Beate Engl from Munich, had the idea of using common expressions taken from the German version of Donald Duck comics as storey-high neon lettering fitted to the balconies. The gym façade is now punctuated by a groaning “PUH” (“WHEW”) and “HMPF” (“HMPH”) while an ecstatic “WOW” and “AAHHH” indicates what goes on behind the windows of the Audi think tank. This art concept pays tribute to the former neon signage of the Pfanni factory and to the graffiti culture that is still visible in the neighbourhood today as a remnant of the Kunstpark Ost era.

Architecture: MVRDV, Principle-in-charge: Jacob van Rijs, Project management: Fokke Moerel ■ Co-architects: N-V-O Nuyken von Oefele Architekten ■ Client: OTEC GmbH & Co. KG ■ Location: Munich ■ Completion: 2019



The unpretentious design with lots of bare concrete recalls the fact that this used to be a factory site.



Black Box in Gold



The Imprint, Seoul

Large façades without any windows are frequently inevitable for museums, cinemas or department stores, but they are a real challenge for architects.

The solution found for an entertainment complex in Seoul consisted of a refined relief – and a golden spot.





The Black Box is a “decorated shed” and reflects characteristic shapes of the neighbouring buildings.

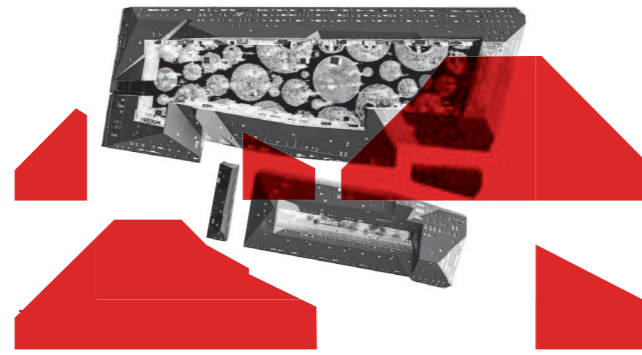
“Paradise City” is an entertainment and leisure complex not far from Incheon, South Korea’s largest airport. In 2018, the complex was extended with the addition of two illustrious new-builds. Named “The Imprint”, these two new structures are home to a night club covering around 6,200 square metres and an indoor theme park covering 3,600 square metres. MVRDV planned the buildings as a Black Box in each case, as the respective uses require no daylight. The difficulty was to design corresponding façades that managed without windows while still acting as an echo of the surroundings.

The solution uses the famous principle of the “decorated shed”. The outer shell is not developed from the inside out but forms a totally independent layer on front of the building structure. The curtain wall façade of both entertainment buildings is constructed of glass-fibre reinforced concrete panels that reflect the characteristic shapes of the neighbouring buildings, depicting their windows, doors, arches and stone blocks as a relief pattern – not 1:1, but blind, non-functional and artistically alienated. The relief pattern was inverted so that the pointing between the stone blocks protrudes from the surface. Most of the 3,869 different concrete modules are simply monochrome in white to emphasise the shapes and ornaments. The architects dispensed with conventional entrances. Instead, the façade relief is raised off the ground in places like a theatre curtain, held by unknown forces.

In a particularly impressive feature, a complete corner of the building including the eaves bends upwards. Colour-changing light effects visible at the point where the façade lifts off from the plaza entice visitors to come inside. The entrance to the night club is given special emphasis: here the relief is given a coat of golden paint. The golden hue covers part of the main façade and continues over the corner to the narrow side, up to part of the roof and down to cover the ground in front of the building. The idea behind it all is only apparent with a bird’s eye view from above when the surfaces blend into one: when passengers from all over the world come in to land at the nearby airport, their attention will be caught by the combined effect of the golden sections that form a large, glowing circular surface. Special lighting reinforces the effect at night: the golden spot shines brightly and creates the amazing impression as if the building is illuminated by a giant spotlight.

Architecture: MVRDV, Principle-in-charge: Winy Maas, Project management: Wenchian Shi ■ Co-architects: Gansam Architects & Partners ■ Client: Paradise Segasammy Co., Ltd. ■ Location: Seoul, South Korea ■ Completion: 2018





A modern old town

Ilot Queyries, Bordeaux

What can urban living look like in the 21st century?
A new quarter at the heart of Bordeaux translates the
qualities of the historic city centre into the present day.



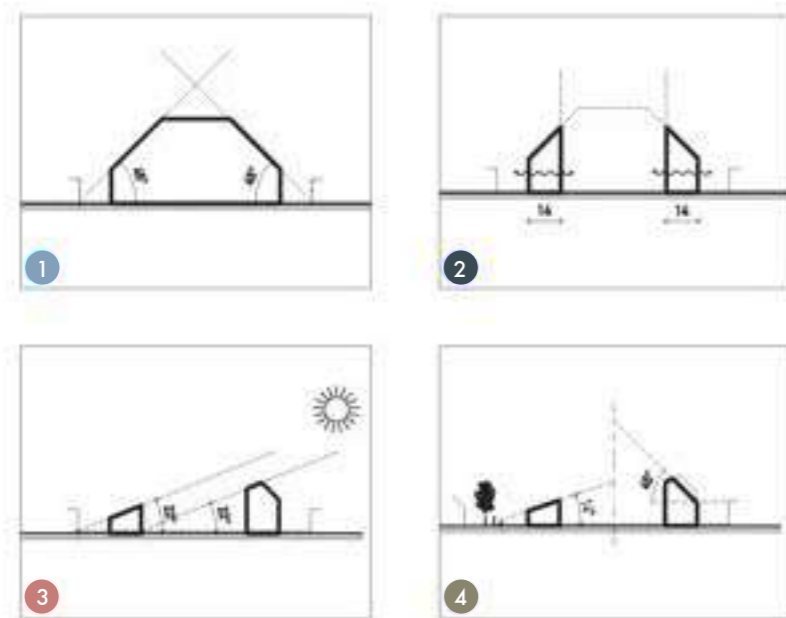


White ceramic panels cover the walls and roofs facing the road, while the façade to the inner courtyard is covered with ruby-coloured stucco.

People now live where trains used to shunt. A disused railway site with tracks, sheds and warehouses is giving way to the new Bastide-Niel quarter, based on plans by MVRDV. Located on the banks of the river Garonne directly opposite Bordeaux's UNESCO World Heritage city centre, the new quarter intends to combine typical strengths of old town centres - vibrant mixed usage in intimate narrow streets and a surprise around every corner - with the achievements of the modern age: light, air and sun. The architects have now completed a first residential quarter called Ilot Queyries as a pilot project.

The buildings fill the site to its boundaries, creating a protected inner courtyard on the one hand and clearly defined streets and alleys on the other, with commercial premises enlivening the ground floor here and there. The courtyard provides residents with a park-like green space featuring luxuriant vegetation one storey above ground level, hiding the cars parked in the garage below. The relatively high share of social housing, accounting for 165 of the 308 homes, meant that the construction costs had to be kept to a limit. This is why the cars are not parked in an expensive underground car park, but at lower cost on ground level. Streets and alleys remain a traffic-free pedestrian zone.

The principle of sloping roofs was also adapted from the old town, but modified accordingly. In terms of eaves height, the buildings respond to the existing structures in the vicinity, sometimes with just one storey, growing to four at other points, or rising as high as nine storeys on the river bank. The roof slopes vary and are always designed to avoid excessive shading of the ground-floor homes in the building opposite, with a minimum of two hours of sunlight in winter.



CONCEPT

The building structures were designed according to the following principles:

- 1 Daylight
- 2 Natural ventilation
- 3 Sunlight at a minimum of 2h per day in winter
- 4 Respect for neighbours

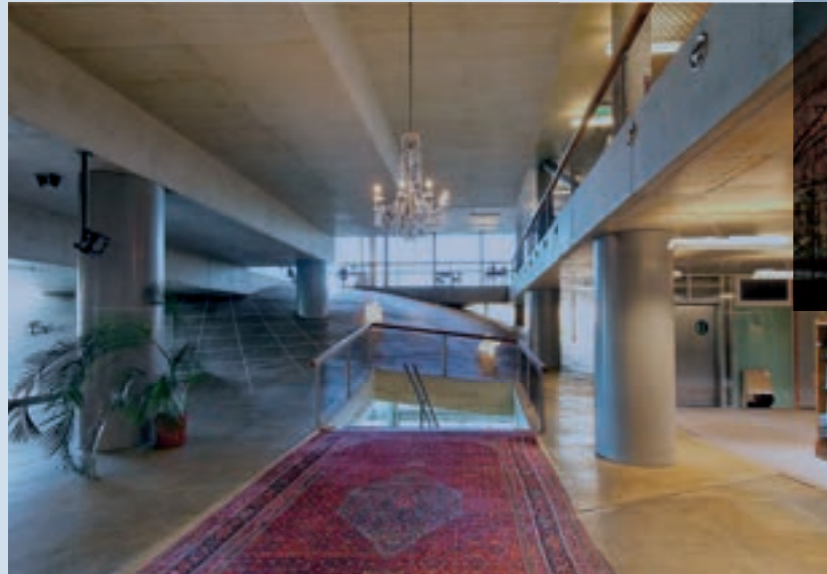
The quarter combines typical old town centres qualities with the achievements of the modern age: light, air and sun.



White ceramic panels cover the walls and roofs facing the road, while the façade to the inner courtyard is covered with ruby-coloured stucco.

The block in the south therefore remains lower than in the north. The various roof slopes generate a variety of different interior spaces so that scarcely any of the homes are the same. Instead of the monotony often exuded by mass housing, here the living space has a unique feel. The outside spaces also create varied impressions. The façade to the private courtyard is coated with ruby-coloured stucco, while the street-facing walls and roofs are covered with white ceramic panels that give the building a crystalline appearance. To prevent any heat-island effect in the summer despite the city-centre location, multi-storey openings penetrate the building complex at several points so that the wind wafts through the inner courtyard. The highest point of the jagged roofs crowns the whole complex with a glass structure that houses a restaurant which offers its guests magnificent views across the river to the historic centre of Bordeaux.

Architecture: MVRDV, Principle-in-charge: Winy Maas, Project management: Bertrand Schippan, Jeroen Zuidgeest ■ Client: Kaufman & Broad, ADIM ■ Co-Architects: Flint ■ Location: Bordeaux, France ■ Completion: 2021



Villa VPRO, Hilversum, 1997
A three-dimensional open office landscape creates flowing transitions from one floor to the next, providing the client, a broadcasting company, with a low-hierarchy environment for creative working.

MVRDV Greatest Hits



Tianjin Binhai Library, Tianjin, 2017
A spherical auditorium forms the focal point of the central foyer and reading hall. Instead of walls, terraced bookshelves form a gently curving landscape that invites people to walk around, take a seat and have a read.



Netherlands Pavilion at the Expo, Hanover, 2000
Holland is known for its typical man-made landscapes wrested from the sea. The pavilion is a humorous take on this cliché and simply stacks landscapes on top of each other for the purposes of the exhibition.

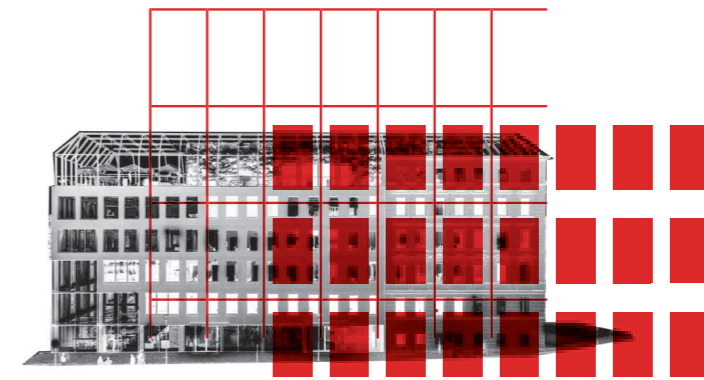


WoZoCo, Amsterdam, 1997
The house for elderly residents has whole units cantilevered from the north façade. As a result, there is less shading of the neighbouring buildings while optimum use is made of the available land without sealing the ground.

Silodam, Amsterdam, 2003
A mixture of different apartment types characterises the interior of the highly compact building and is reflected by the façade. The building shell resembles stacked containers and is reminiscent of the location in the harbour.



Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 2021
The art depot makes the whole collection of the Boijmans Van Beuningen collection accessible to the public. The glass façade reflects the neighbouring museum, while a public rooftop garden replaces the section of the museum park that was taken up by the building.



Re- juvenation project

Concordia Design, Wrocław

At the heart of the city, a start-up centre breathes new life into an old 19th century building. The substantially extended building not only offers office space for start-ups, but also has a café and a rooftop terrace to attract the general public.



The only building on Stodowal Island to survive World War 2.

Water is the dominating element in the centre of Wrocław, with the river Oder flowing around several islands whose green spaces make the city centre particularly attractive. Stodowa Island and its park have also become a popular meeting place, particularly for young people, as demonstrated among others by all the graffiti on the embankment. The only building to survive World War 2 has now been renovated and modified so that it can be used in a way that takes account of the island's character.

The company Concordia Design now offers co-working spaces in the house for creatives and young start-ups. To keep the building lively even outside office hours, MVRDV has integrated a café with direct access to the park, as well as a roof-top terrace as a party location, creating a mixture of rooms for work and leisure.

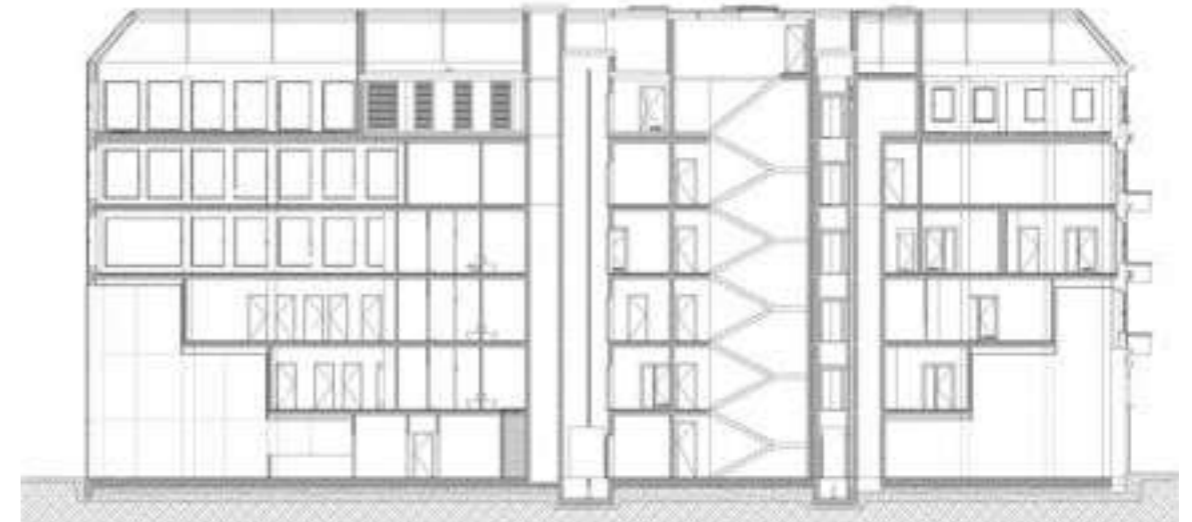
To do so, the solid old building from the 19th century with its regular window grid was simply extended by a few axes without any fuss. Although the windows in the extension match the pattern in the existing building, they become a little bigger with every axis. This makes the punctuated façade increasingly light and transparent until it becomes an almost totally glazed façade at the other end of the building.



The café is located at this point. A three-storey glass front opens onto the park, while also giving a view of the interior with a large mural by the Polish artist Alicja Biata. The principal theme of the mural is deceleration and contact with nature. At the same time, the colourful artwork with its comic-like mythical creatures makes reference to the graffiti that can be seen on the island, and that also covered the back of the building before it was renovated. The height of the café offers a special spatial experience, with a stepped transition from three storeys to just one. The same stepped concept can also be found at the other end, behind the façade of the gutted old building. Here the bricks are visible on the inside, at least where the walls are not lined with wooden slats to improve the acoustics in the hall-like space that is used for events. Hanging from the ceiling, there is a modern abstract version of a chandelier, paying tribute to the historic origins of the building.



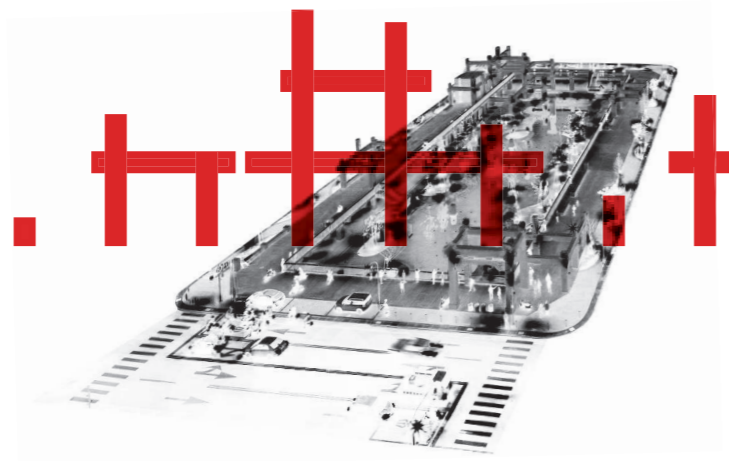
Clear view of the large mural by the Polish artist Alicja Biata.



Longitudinal section through the historical building and the extension

The top floor features an open-air terrace, protected from the wind by glass on all sides, providing its guests with splendid views across the river. The structure in the middle of the top floor with the lush vegetation on its walls looks as if part of the park had been simply transported up to the fifth floor. This gives the city recompense for what the building extension took away, to the benefit not only of those using the offices: instead, everyone can now profit from the building in this special location.

Architecture: MVRDV, Principle-in-charge: Nathalie de Vries, Project management: Fokke Moerel ■ Client: Concordia Design ■ Location: Breslau, Poland ■ Completion: 2020



Padding in Ruins



Tainan Spring

The structural remains of a shopping centre have been transformed into a lively public space with a pool and abundant vegetation. This shows what can be done in city centres with commercial buildings that have become superfluous in the age of online shopping.



Tainan is the sixth largest city of Taiwan with a population of 1.9 million people. For many years it was also the main port in the country. In 1983, part of the old harbour near the city centre was filled in order to build a large shopping centre. Like so many other buildings of its kind, there then came a time when it was no longer fit for purpose. In the end it was just an empty building that spread a feeling of desolation that definitely did not go with the image of an intact, lively city centre.

And so it was demolished and meticulously recycled – but not completely: the architects have transformed the underground parking level into a sunken public plaza. Part of the building remnants now act as a peripheral shady arcade. In the middle, an organically shaped pool tempts people to put their feet in the water. Young families in particular like to come and let their children have a paddle. Furthermore, in hot weather, sprayers create clouds of mist to help visitors to keep cool.

Bushes and trees have been planted to improve the micro-climate in the densely built-up city centre. They are still relatively small, but in time they will overgrow the plaza. Generally speaking, Tainan is a very grey city with little road-side vegetation, so that the former shopping centre is gradually evolving into a green oasis. The concrete skeleton of the building was artfully dismantled to leave behind a number of follies that can in due course be converted into shops, kiosks and other amenities. They are lit up effectively at night.

Instead of just flattening everything in one fell swoop and replacing it with something completely new, the project pays double tribute to local history: the lowered pool can be seen as a kind of homage to the harbour basin that used to be here. And the orchestrated building remnants recall the demolished mall where Tainan's urban society came to shop for decades, now rising up out of the ruins like a modern version of the Forum Romanum. Or, to use the words of MVRDV founder Winy Maas: "In Tainan Spring, people can bathe in the overgrown remains of a shopping mall. Children swim in the ruins of the past."

Architecture: MVRDV, Principle-in-charge: Winy Maas ■ Project management: Wenchian Shi, Jeroen Zuitgeest ■ Client: Tainan City Government ■ Location: Tainan, Taiwan ■ Completion: 2020



Clouds of mist help visitors to keep cool and create a poetic atmosphere.



Successful transformation: ruins of the past become a vibrant public space.

Jacob van Rijs



Jacob van Rijs is the 'VR' in MVRDV. The founding-partner of the firm lives and works in the Netherlands, in other words below sea-level, and therefore has a vested interest in minimising the climate impact of his projects. We spoke to him about the growing significance of sustainable construction.

Since when have ecological issues played a major role in MVRDV's work?

There are naturally many aspects involved here. Actually, it's something we have always paid attention to, but more along the lines of building something special that will hopefully have a long service life. Right from the start we often worked with green roofs, even if this was more a case of making attractive use of the surfaces or letting a building blend visually with the landscape. Nevertheless, they still make a contribution to sustainability.

Which would you say was the first project with a specific focus on sustainability?

Perhaps it all began with the Expo Pavilion in Hanover.

Seriously? It was vacant for 20 years because a solution to reuse it couldn't be found.

Yes, but why did it survive these 20 years? Because it is something special and people liked it. That's why no-one had the heart to tear it down – and the grey energy it contained was not destroyed. The aesthetic or design component of sustainability is often underestimated. But first and foremost, we planned it to be a highly efficient, compact building. It consumed little of the landscape and left most of the plot free of buildings. Perhaps this aspect was less obvious back then, but now the open space allows for considerable redensification. We are currently converting the pavilion into co-working space, while the rest of the plot is being used for constructing an office building and 370 student apartments, without consuming any more open countryside.

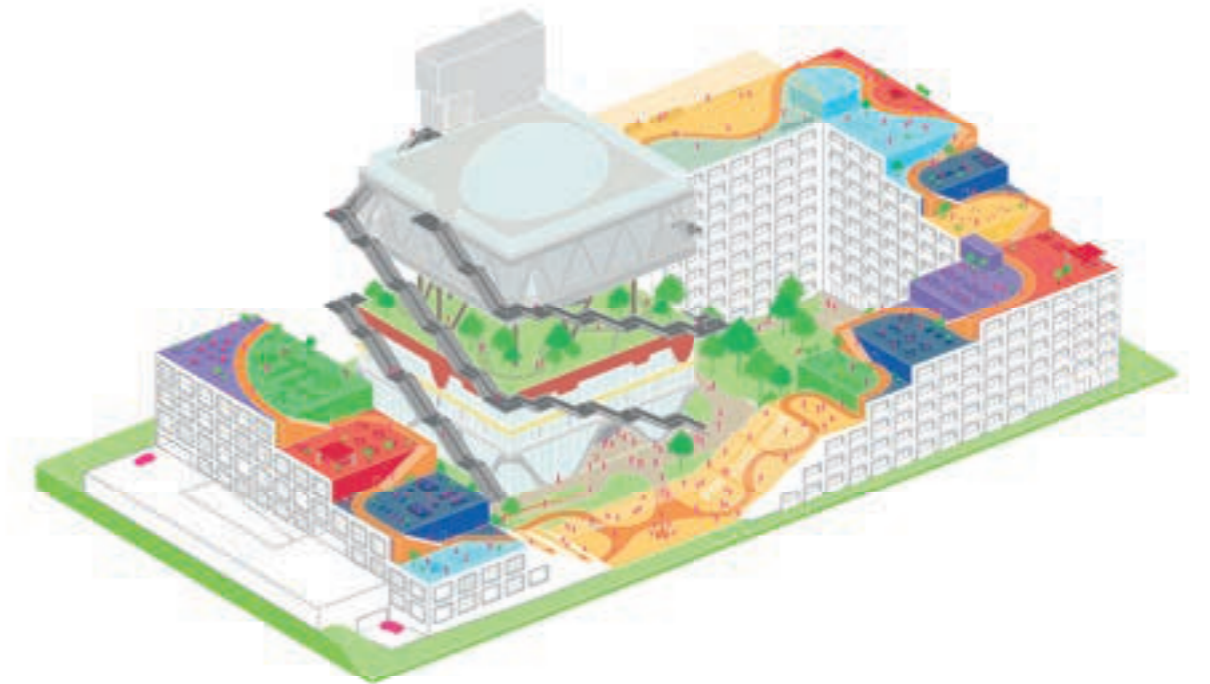
How do you work today to draw up sustainability concepts for your projects?

We are meanwhile organised into 8 teams consisting of 20 to 25 people. Each team has its own LEED or BREEAM assessor with special know-how in this field. These in-house experts then help to reduce the carbon footprint of a building, for example. Of course we don't strive to obtain an official certificate for every project, that depends entirely on the client, but we do try to reduce the environmental impact.

Which of your buildings has achieved the most in this respect?

That's hard to say. Perhaps we should take a look in 50 years to see which of our buildings are still standing and still in use. After

all, what's the point of a zero-energy house if it is demolished again after a relatively short time? The technical aspects are important of course. For a long time the main concern was how much energy buildings consume when in use. That is meanwhile pretty well under control. The main issue now is the carbon footprint of the materials used in the building process. However, at some point, the laws and regulations that are getting stricter all the time will ensure that most projects will be on a comparable level in this respect too. Durability will become more important. For a building to have a long service life, people must love it and appreciate it so that they treat it well. It's also a case of how easily a building can be adapted and converted. I expect discussions to focus more on this in future.



Planned reuse and extension of the Netherlands Pavilion on the Expo grounds, Hanover, 2020

Latest Projects

Ongoing or recently completed



The Pyramid Tirana

The gigantic National Museum is being transformed into a youth centre – with cafés as well as education and leisure facilities. New room boxes, trees and glazed building sections break up the monumental design, while at the same time people can climb up the building at the heart of the city as if it were a mountain.



Radio Hotel & Tower New York

The sheer volume of the room programme with hotel, retail and office space gives a nod to the neighbourhood in a design that seems to stack the typical structures of the surroundings on top of each other. They differ in terms of window pattern and colour schemes that are based on the shop fronts in the neighbourhood.



Nieuw Bergen Eindhoven

The hyper-modern housing project explores the possibilities of urban densification. Crystal-shaped building structures give a view of the sky even on the ground floor and reinterpret the historic sloping roofs of the surroundings. Urban gardening brings nature into the city.



Valley Amsterdam

A public footpath zig-zags up the five-storey plinth for retail, offices and culture. Three large apartment blocks rise above this level, crowned by a bar that offers views of the city. The intensive vegetation of terraces and roofs is designed to create a green picture all year round.

More Projects: www.mvrdv.com

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KEIM. COLOURS FOR EVER. 

"Good planning should be courageous. It is easy to make people happy by giving them what they expect. But it is much better to show them how an unexpected approach can make their lives better in some respects."

MVRDV

