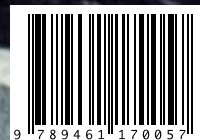


The architecture of the Belgian Modernist Juliaan Lampens (1926) goes beyond designs for conventional living and instead suggests a utopian avant-garde of living without barriers. He experimented with the use of raw concrete and created sculpture-like exteriors leading onto open vistas.

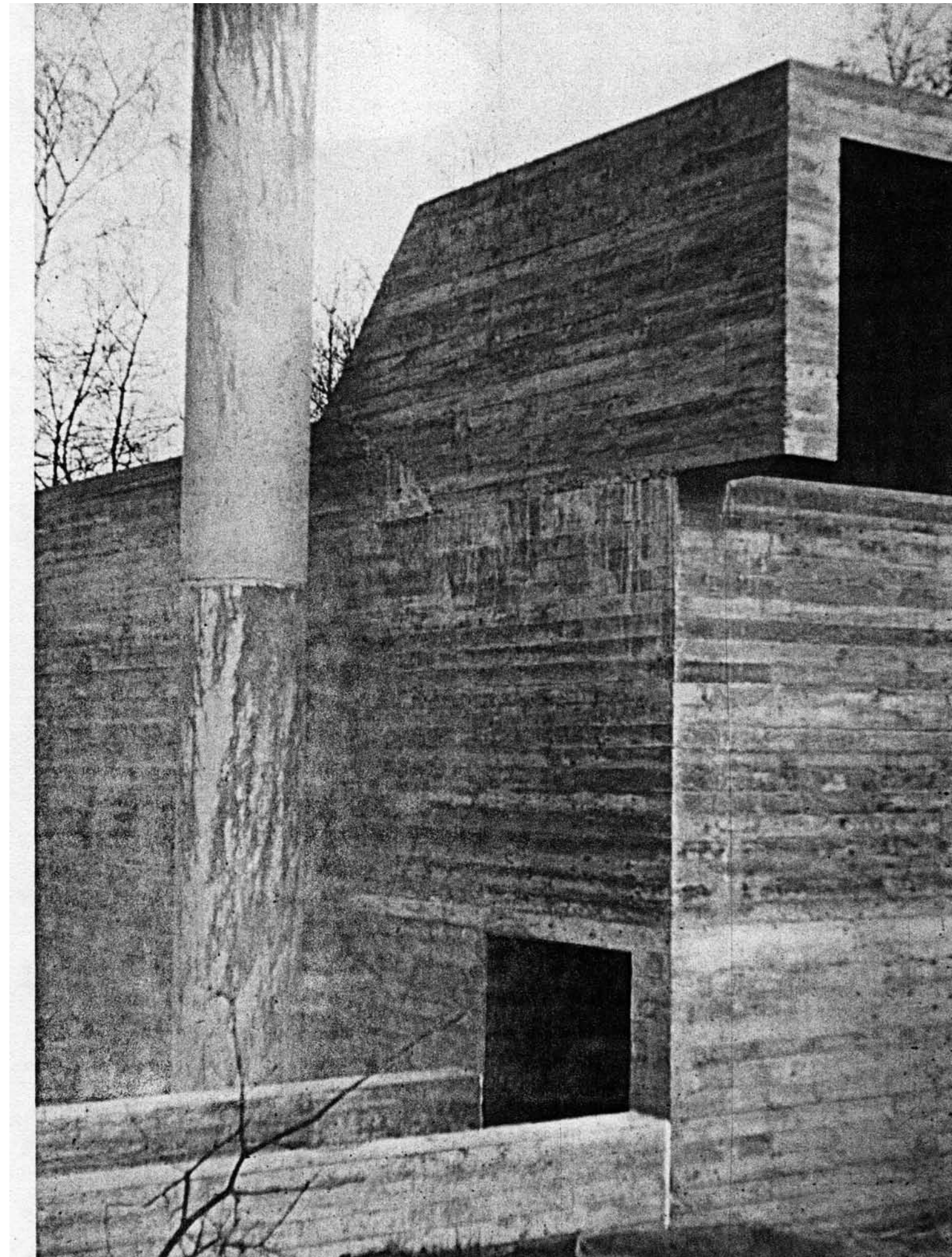
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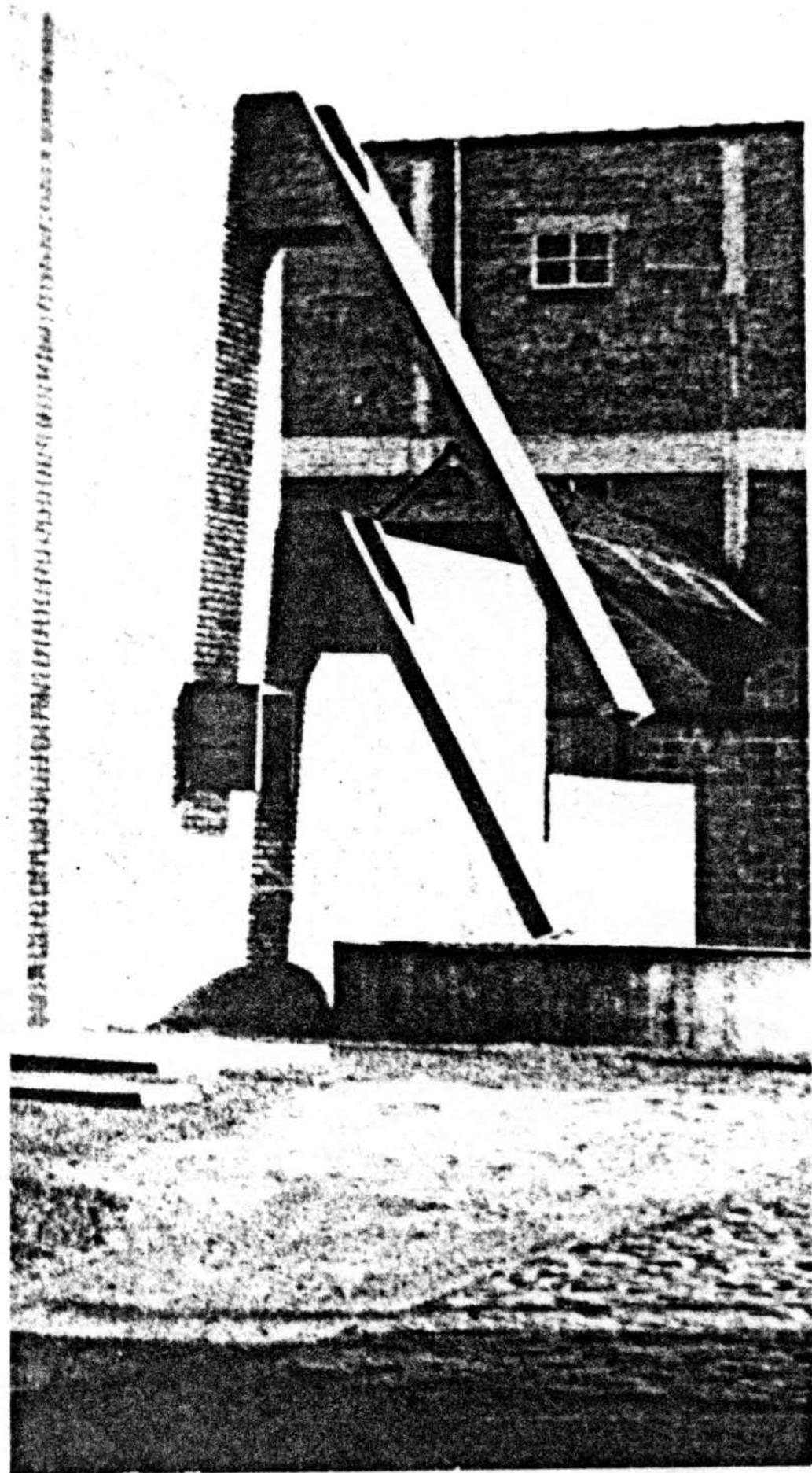


## JULIAAN LAMPENS



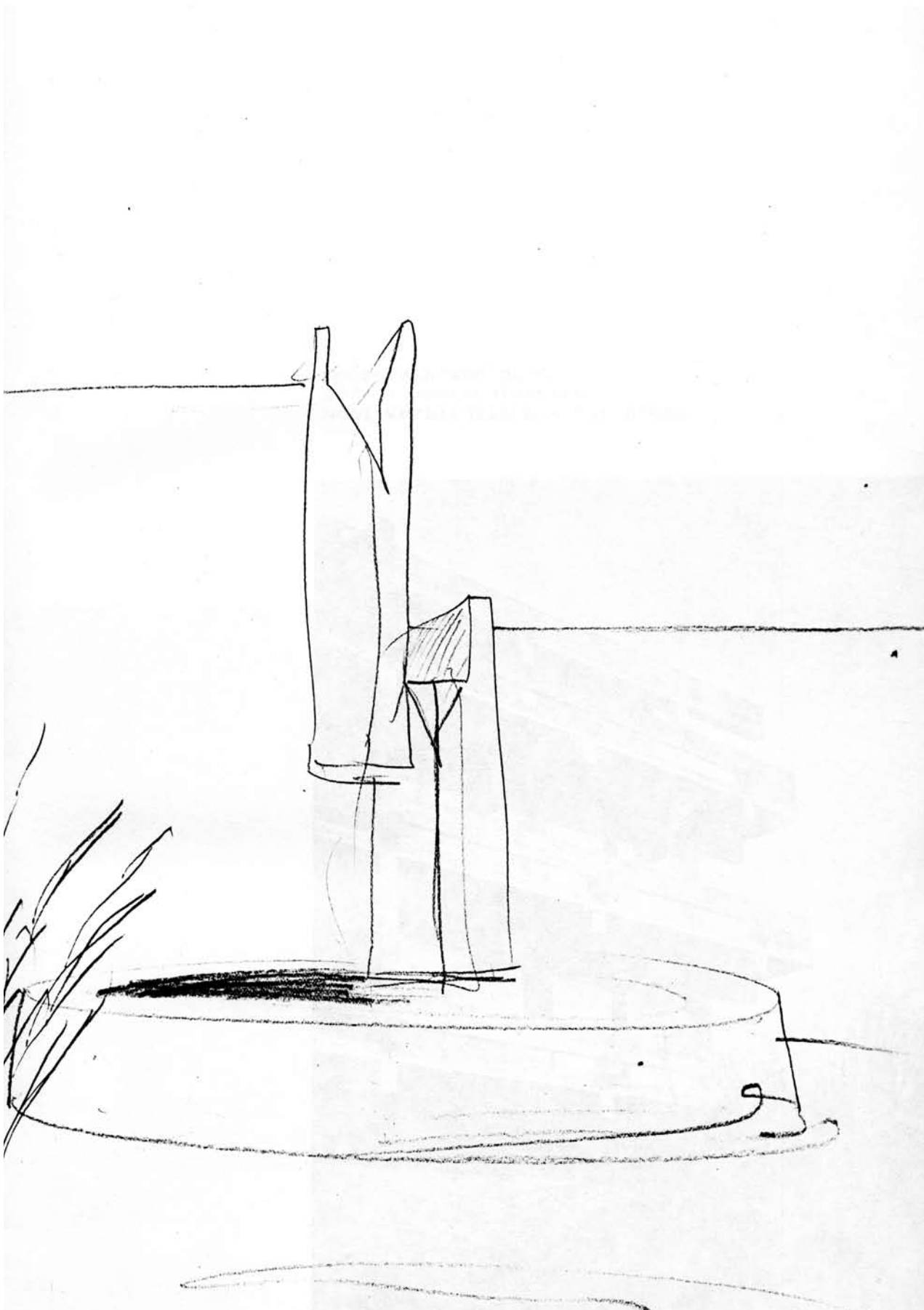


JULIAAN LAMPENS



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## INTRODUCTION

Angelique Campens

‘Each architect automatically creates a permanent exhibition. Each building is a sculpture.’ — Juliaan Lampens

The architecture of Juliaan Lampens (b. 1926) moves past conventional living towards the utopian avant-garde vision of living without barriers.

In 1950, Lampens started his own business in Belgium (in Eke, a village in the neighbourhood of Ghent) as a more or less conventional architect. After going to the 1958 World’s Fair in Brussels, he radically changed course and decided to build a home for himself in 1960. This construction proved to be a turning point in his career.

Indeed, Lampens was profoundly influenced by the fair. As he once stated: ‘Every healthy Belgian visited the world’s fair. It was due in part to the world expo of modern architectural styles that such work became accepted and established in Belgium. The masses saw the possibilities of technology and started to believe in modern architecture, and I felt that the climate was ready to build in a modern way in Belgium.’



Sverre Fehn, Norwegian Pavilion, Brussels, 1958

In general, there was a celebration of forms, materials and technology, but no uniform style that characterised the fair. Clearly, Lampens’ interests inclined him toward a number of architectural exhibits, including the Norwegian Pavilion, by Sverre Fehn, where the use of glass was central and showed an

interplay between transparency and reflection, a relationship between material and light, and a thinking through of how minimal use of material could create spatiality; the Japanese pavilion, its sobriety, and how the architect Kunio Maekawa brought nature into the building; and the Philips pavilion, with its thin concrete shell designed by Le Corbusier. His own house, built in 1960, has several striking similarities with the pavilion by Sverre Fehn. These can be seen in terms of transparency and openness, the perfect transition between inside and outside, the dialogue with nature, and even formally, in the back façade of Lampens’ house.

As Johanna Kint mentions in her book about Expo 58: ‘The architecture of the World Expo 58 cannot be separated from post-war modernism with its five forms of taboo: the ornament, honesty of materials, making constructions visible, the preference for geometric forms and, finally, functionalism.’<sup>1</sup>

Of course, the *Atomium* was also central to the impact of Expo 58. The goal of the construction was to restore confidence in nuclear power and to help people forget the horrors of nuclear destruction.

As such, the expo was seen as part of the power struggle between East and West, in particular between the United States and Russia. Howard Taubman describes this in the *New York Times*: ‘It will be the place where the cold war, fought with the weapons of art and drama, music and dance, architecture, books and films, will reach a climax.’<sup>2</sup>

Despite, or perhaps because of the anxiety over the atom bomb, the post-war period was characterized by a *Zeitgeist* of happy, mass consumerism. Modern architecture was embedded within the ‘total package’ of consumer desire for status symbols, including cars, fashion, and design. As Beatriz Colomina puts it in her book, *Domesticity at War*: ‘Post-war architecture was not simply the bright architecture that came after the darkness of the war. It was aggressively happy architecture that came out of the war, a war that anyway was as ongoing as the Cold War.’<sup>3</sup>

This strange co-existence of a global landscape of fear and a consumer culture based on individual stature is apparent in the era’s architecture through the formal exchange between transparency and closure.

1. Johanna Kint, *Expo 58 als belichaming van het humanistisch modernisme* (Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 2001), 230.

2. Howard Taubman, ‘Cold War on the Cultural Front,’ *New York Times Magazine* (April 13, 1958).



Part of the genius of some elements of the Brutalist movement was to understand the importance of closure as security, and openness as freedom and utopia, and then to combine these elements in architectural construction. The ideas of Paul Virilio and Claude Parent reflect this understanding, as well as those of Alison and Peter Smithson, such as 'The House of the Future', (1956) wherein the architects imagined the ideal family dwelling of the 1980s. Among other features, their design functioned as a bunker. This could also be seen inside the Philips Pavilion, where Le Corbusier had made a film which contained selected images whose effect was to present a commentary on modern life in the shadow of the cold war. This was shown together with the *Poème électronique*, a piece of electronic music written by composer Edgard Varèse. All these pieces exemplified at some level the post-war/Cold War obsession with an architecture of paranoia that still strived for utopia. This combination is most readily apparent in the use of the bunker motif in late 50s, 60s, and 70s domestic architecture. These homes conflated the formal features of the bunker prototype with the design styles of a consumer culture premised on rugged individualism. This was achieved, for instance, by being closed to the public street on one side, but completely open and transparent to nature on the other.



Command post in the Bay of Normandy

Though not directly associated with brutalism, the architecture of Juliaan Lampens stands as a significant variant of this style: materially in his use of raw concrete and formally in his allusions to bunker-typology. He experimented for some time with raw concrete in

order to form his style of bunker-like exteriors combined with open vistas and sculptural motifs. The transparent extreme can be seen in his Vandenhoute House and the tendency towards closure is strongly manifest in his Van Wassenhove House.

Lampens works almost exclusively with concrete, wood and glass. Formally, his homes are designed to showcase an interior and exterior harmony with their environment and nature. Borders, cardinal orientation and lines of sight are all central to the placement and construction of the home. Typically, Lampens' homes are closed to the public on one side (concrete walls shield the house from the street), but are otherwise completely open to nature, so that there is always a formal exchange between transparency and closure. He constantly tries to reach an absolute reconciliation of the antagonism between Le Corbusier's whimsy and Mies van der Rohe's control. He also has a deep admiration for Oscar Niemeyer, the bunkers along the Atlantic wall and Romanesque architecture. He got to know the work of Oscar Niemeyer through the first magazine he ever bought: *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* from 1947. This volume was a very important stimulant for his thinking and an inspirational source for him. It had a focus on Brazilian architecture and Lampens was especially impressed by the plans, sections and photographs of Pampulha by Niemeyer.



Overtaken bunker

Besides this, the bunkers on the Atlantic coast are for Lampens the most beautiful examples of brutalism: *'the integration with the sea and nature is just perfect'*.

In Romanesque architecture, he admires a number of elements, including: the simplicity;

the relationships between transparency and closure and those between spatiality and volume effect (that is, the way the interior space determines the exterior volume of the construction); and finally, the effect of light and dark which brings serenity and modesty.



Inside pages of *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui* magazine, no.13-14 (September 1947)

Lampens' idea of living is based on several features which work together to form a complete open plan without pillars or even walls, and the placement of every room is seemingly conjoined with each of the others (with kitchen, living room, bedrooms and bathroom all in one open space).

Besides this minimal number of fixed elements, the living structure can be freely organized under the roof. For example, sleeping units are composed of beds with adjoined cabinets. This creates a kind of 'sleeping niche', but since they are not fixed into the ground, they allow for a continual re-shaping and re-imaging of the space and its degrees of privacy.

He strives for an absolute openness, which encourages the family to live together in a space devoid of acoustic or perceptual privacy. In this way, Lampens lowers the barriers between parents and children.

Unlike the bourgeois insistence on individuality and patriarchy, this style foregrounds community and equality within the living space and living together as a family unit, which goes back to a more basic way of living. This is almost as it would have been in the traditional construction of a primitive house, which served first and foremost as shelter.

Lampens' domestic architecture has proven hugely successful, as the spaces are often still inhabited by their original owners. Different owners and children who have grown

up in his buildings have stated how Lampens' architecture has the unique sense of space where you live together at once as a family community and with nature.

Lampens also designs the basic furniture such as dining tables, kitchen units,

sofas, cabinets, and the furniture for sleeping for each of his homes. By doing so, he creates a unity between the architecture and the furniture. Both are characterized by their elemental/rudimentary forms. In addition to his architecture, he also painted thousands of coasters with animals, landscapes and above all, female figures.

Lampens existed outside of today's network culture, never placing himself in the spotlight. He didn't travel much, usually worked with just two assistants and had very little contact with colleagues. His interaction with modern architecture was largely based on information from international magazines such as *Bauen + Wohnen*, *Deutscher Bau-meister*, *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, and later, also from *domus*. National recognition came late in Lampens' career. The first and only monograph was published in 1991 for the occasion of an exhibition in Antwerp in the international arts campus deSingel (now out of print). The book has an introduction and otherwise mainly consists of illustrations which shed light on seventeen realised and unrealised projects. In 1995, he won the Great Architecture Prize (Grote Architectuurprijs) for Belgium. Like many other Belgian architects from his generation that also had an interesting oeuvre, Lampens received almost no international publicity. The aim of this publication is to give this small, but highly unusual oeuvre the recognition and the place that it deserves



within Modernism. The different contributions should make visible the diverse aspects to be found in the work of the architect.

From the interview between Hans Ulrich Obrist and Juliaan Lampens, we are given an overview of — and an insight into — Lampens' working method. Sara Noel Costa De Araujo contributes a second layer to the book by using notes and architectural drawings throughout which comment on the pictures, plans and drawings. The notes zoom in on the details in Lampens' architecture. In his essay, Francis Strauven positions Lampens' architecture in the broader social, cultural and political landscape of Belgian architecture at that time. He further explains the educational environment of architecture studies during Lampens' student years. He also goes on to describe Lampens most eminent projects in some depth. Jan Kempenaers contributed two colour islands of photographs that confront us with the interface of nature, environment and the architectural interior and exteriors, while at the same time allowing the monumentality of the architecture to be present. Through these photographs, the brutal forms of Juliaan Lampens protrude and the viewer can view the houses as they function today, some forty years after their construction.

Joseph Grima, in his essay, describes the house of Vandenhoute-Kiebooms (1967), where the most pronounced enactment of Lampens' ideas was manifested. In addition to a library and a chapel, Lampens has built about thirty-five residential houses in his unique style. The period between 1960 and 1975 was when his ideas arrived at their apogee. It was during this time that Lampens realised the house Vandenhoute-Kiebooms (1967), in addition to other important projects, such as his own house (1960), Our Blessed Lady of Kerselare Pilgrimage Chapel (1966), and the Van Wassenhove house (1974). Wouter Vandenhoute spent his childhood and adolescent years in this house, where Juliaan Lampens carried out his most radical open plan. In an interview, Vandenhoute reflects on the architectural space where he grew up.

At the end of the publication, a chronology lists the realised and unrealised projects recognised and selected by Juliaan Lampens.

They include two examples from before his turning point in 1960. Since Lampens did not have so many clients for whom he could build in the way he wanted, he was forced to occasionally build houses in a traditional style in order to earn a living. Given that these post-1960 constructions had nothing to do with what he then stood for, we have decided to exclude them.

In between the individual chapters, one will find plans, drawings and photographs. These all refer to the projects listed in the chronology.

## Acknowledgments

I am especially grateful to Juliaan Lampens, who inspired me and gave me all the information that I needed. He helped me to select sketches and photographs and to understand his drawings.

I would like to thank the Juliaan Lampens Foundation, particularly Luc De Vos and Dieter Lampens, who helped me to find material in the archive.

I am very grateful to friends, colleagues and advisers for the many discussions we had about the work of Juliaan Lampens. I would especially like to thank the following people: Avi Alpert, Sara Noel Costa De Araujo, Francis Strauven, Jan Kempenaers, Chantal De Smet and Wouter Davidts. I would also like to thank Laurence Campens, Martin Campens, Ron Clark, Jan De Cock, Koen Dekeyser, Thomas Desmet, Greta De Smyter, Daan Dufait, Joseph Grima, Johan Grimonprez, Lieve Kiebooms, Diane Lampens-Vanhove, Mieke Mels, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Chantal Pattyn, Rolf Quaghebeur, Valério Sartori, Patrick Saelens, Dirk Snauwaert, Paul Sosson, Jo Van Den Berghe, Gerard Vandenhoute, Katrien Vandermarliere, Frank Velghe and many others.





## INTERVIEW WITH JULIAAN LAMPENS

Hans Ulrich Obrist

Hans Ulrich Obrist — I know that you were first *en route* to becoming a painter. Did you have an epiphany, a breakthrough moment that brought you to architecture?

Juliaan Lampens — That is a story that I have already told countless times, but I will gladly do so again. My father was advised by the head teacher to send me to drawing school. According to my teacher, I had a talent for drawing. My father, who was a carpenter, wanted me to follow a technical and architectural drafting course at the architecture school. Although painting was my great love and passion, I immediately felt at home in architecture, likely because it is at the intersection of two elements: the artistic or spiritual, and the constructive or constructing — the practical realisation of something that remains. Each architect automatically creates a permanent exhibition. Each building is a sculpture.

HUO — Each of your buildings indeed possesses that unmistakable sculptural quality and, at the same time, you're a painter-illustrator. Throughout your life, you have always doodled and sketched. Nowadays everybody works with the computer. Was drawing a daily practice within your architecture?

JL — Every brief goes through an organic process of becoming: from embryo to realisation. Freehand drawing and sketching is always an essential component. I also always draw details of the structure. And true to scale. I had seen that in my father's carpentry practice, so I could immediately determine whether the proportions were good. And it makes it easy for the apprentices and craftsmen to further develop the components. Drawing freehand is very important; those drawings were and are an oxygen supply for my architecture. They provide inspiration.

HUO — With you, there are different kinds of drawings. On one hand, there are the technical details that you just mentioned, and on the other, the freehand architectural

sketches of realised and unrealised buildings. But there are the non-architectural drawings as well, the completely freeform drawings, so to speak. How do these three types relate to each other?

JL — For me, there is no difference. Even if I make a sketch of a woman, it's about structure. It's like architecture. You cannot separate the outside from the inside. Architecture is like a shell, like a skin in which you live. In this way, my completely freeform drawings are also related to architecture. And as I already said, those are inexhaustible sources of inspiration.

HUO — You also have lots of sketches of unrealised buildings. I'd like to know what your ideal is, or your dream, your utopia. Built or not built, sketched or not sketched.

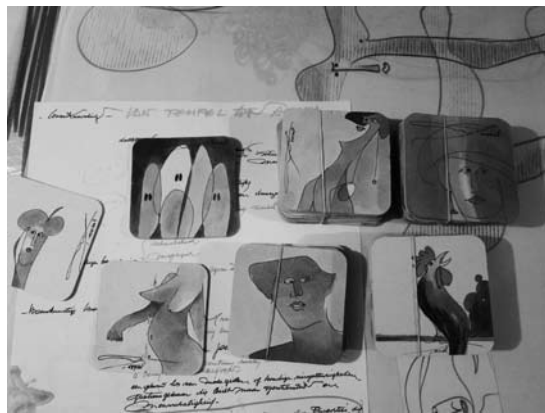
JL — That's very simple: a church or a monastery. And it's because such buildings, which are practically never realised anymore, focus more on the sacred or the spiritual, than the constructive. Such a structure is somehow liberated from all kinds of everyday concerns. In a church, you are there for just a moment and then away again. In a house, it's quite different. You are there nearly 24 hours a day and sometimes your whole life long. A church is therefore 'easier'. There, you deal only with a certain part of 'being human'. A house is a much more complex matter. But what's involved in every design is the environment, the landscape. Each building is determined by the surrounding landscape, the town or city. That's something that you can never lose sight of. Apart from this, I also made a huge number of embryonic sketches without any concrete motive or brief. Because most briefs are counterproductive, nearly executed. The client wants *this* and then *this* and then *this* ... So that is where the sketches come in. For myself, of course, but also for the client, so I can let him see what I mean and what I want to achieve. Not everyone can read plans.

HUO — Reverting back once again to your non-architectural drawings, like the sketches of figures and the portraits.

JL — It is not by chance that my favourites are the sketches of women. The curves, structures and undulations of a woman's body



are, like architecture, a matter of fascination. Much more interesting than a man's body. I'll show you a few examples... Many of these drawings have also been exhibited.



Drawings on coasters by Juliaan Lampens

HUO — You made designs for a 'Peasant War Museum'<sup>1</sup> [p. 120] that hasn't been realised. Can you say a bit about that?

JL — The museum was supposed to tell the story of farmers through the ages. It wasn't built, because the mayor kept adding on functions. There were also supposed to be lectures and symposia given there, and in the end it all became too expensive, but it was a very intriguing and interesting project.

HUO — First, there were the more conventional dwellings. Then your freehand architectural sketches. After 1958 and the Brussels World Expo, your house designs became more radical, more purified. One would therefore see the World Expo as a crucial component within your career. You made a radical turnaround with the building of your own home in 1960.

JL — The World Expo was, of course, a great event. I had already designed radical buildings before that, but those remained on paper. They were not sold. Clients were very reluctant. There was no trust. No one dared to build like that, because, to date, the vast majority of people build not for themselves, but for their family, their friends, the neighbourhood... They build for the outward show and too much for the sake of appearance. But so far as open-mindedness is concerned, Expo '58 finally brought some improvement, improvement that was also visible, perhaps

especially visible within the field of modern architecture. My own house (1960) was the ultimate business card. In this way, I was able to show candidate clients what is at stake in architecture. As I have said, I was already interested in modern architecture before the Expo. I read international magazines and followed developments closely. The only problem was that no-one in Flanders wanted to build in that style. So I designed and realised a house for one client who specifically said that he wanted his house to be built of brick — and preferably not of concrete. I then went ahead and made the project entirely in concrete. The client only saw it when it was built and in the end, he was ultimately very pleased. It is a matter of confidence. And if that confidence is there, a lot becomes possible.

HUO — Who were your favourite radical architects at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s?

JL — Obviously, that was a time of antagonism between Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier. Two extreme opposites. For me, Le Corbusier is the sculptor and Mies van der Rohe the structuralist. For those who wanted a residence back then, this antagonism was naturally an irrelevance. The majority of people go for a nice façade onto which they can add features, preferably a stately front door. The back of the house doesn't count. Here in my own home, it is just the opposite. There is, as it were, a blockade at the street side and the back door is one of the key elements, with great openness, much light, and a transition to the green outdoors.

HUO — Based on this inversion and the open-plan living style of your own home, which you further extended in your later designs, how do you feel about the idea of 'living in a community', or communal living?

JL — The relationship with the client always runs more or less the same. You learn to know each other. People want a modern house. Many things are discussed, but the thing that is never mentioned is the issue of privacy. When I finally mention it, it's like a bomb has been dropped. An open-plan living space? *Well okay, but...* Nevertheless, open-plan living and privacy are a matter of planning.

Living together is something rational. If a couple decides to live together, that's a rational decision. Agreements are made. So it is with an open-plan house. The residents make clear arrangements as to whom, what and when. In that way, father, mother and children can each lead their own lives and can do so together under one (suspended) roof. During this kind of conversation about privacy, I like to proffer the expression: 'So many things have already been seen through the keyhole, so why then do you need a keyhole...?'

HUO — How would you describe this kind of open-plan living? Does it have to do with self-organisation?

JL — It has to do with the spirit. I know that an open-plan house doesn't only have advantages, but once you've lived in such a house, you will want nothing else. That's also the case with the Vandenhoute house, for example.

HUO — Tell me how you pushed ever harder for openness. In the Vandenhoute house, even the toilet, bathroom and kitchen are not separated.

JL — I didn't know Vandenhoute initially. He had seen how my own house was built and rang the doorbell here one Christmas Eve, asking if he could view it. After a short conversation, I sounded him out to see if he could handle my going further and more radically with his house than I had done with my own. He immediately agreed. His children are now grown up and I've built in the same way for them. I also designed for Wouter (Vandenhoute, head of Woestijnvis, television production and publishing house), but we didn't get planning permission. Living like this offers so much more than the conventional way of living. I don't care about luxury, but I do like wealth. The kind of architecture that I advocate does not need extras. Rough is enough. Perfectly unadorned.

HUO — You have never been a member of a movement. Yet one might say that you belong to Brutalism. You are also concerned with the emphasis of the human aspect within architecture. What do you think about that and why is concrete so important?

JL — That is about fairness. Honesty in the use of materials. Allowing the material to be itself. By itself. The use for which it was intended. So you should not make arches in concrete. It is perfectly possible to create a safe atmosphere without unnecessary adornments. Everything must also be in proportion, such that all 'meetings' of the horizontal and the vertical, in different materials, are in harmony. It's the proportions that count, the measure of the spirit. It's like in poetry: with the same words one person can make a masterpiece, while another merely tinkers.

HUO — What is your advice for a young architect today?

JL — That he must learn the trade. That is to say that he must truly occupy himself with building. There is too much attention paid to philosophy in contemporary schools of architecture. You can be of an artistic nature, but if you don't know the profession, you would do better to focus on critique, or ideology. To students, I say: for the first ten years, you're an architectural student, and after that you stay a student architect for the rest of your life.

HUO — I am very impressed with your efficiently designed chair [pp. 122-124, 136]. In conclusion, can you say something about Juliaan Lampens, the designer?

JL — A chair is very difficult to make. It must be beautiful, easy to handle and discreet. But first and foremost it must be good. I've designed a lot of things, such as cabinets and tables... and all because I do not like luxury. It must be simple. This chair I designed around 1970. There are also some of these in the Van Wassenhove house of 1974. They're not designed for sitting at the dinner table for hours, because they have no armrests. But because of that, they are also so discreet, so controlled. They are a good size.

HUO — Lovely. Thanks for the interview.

1. 1979, Nationaal Boerenkrijg Museum, Overmere-Donk (Berlare)

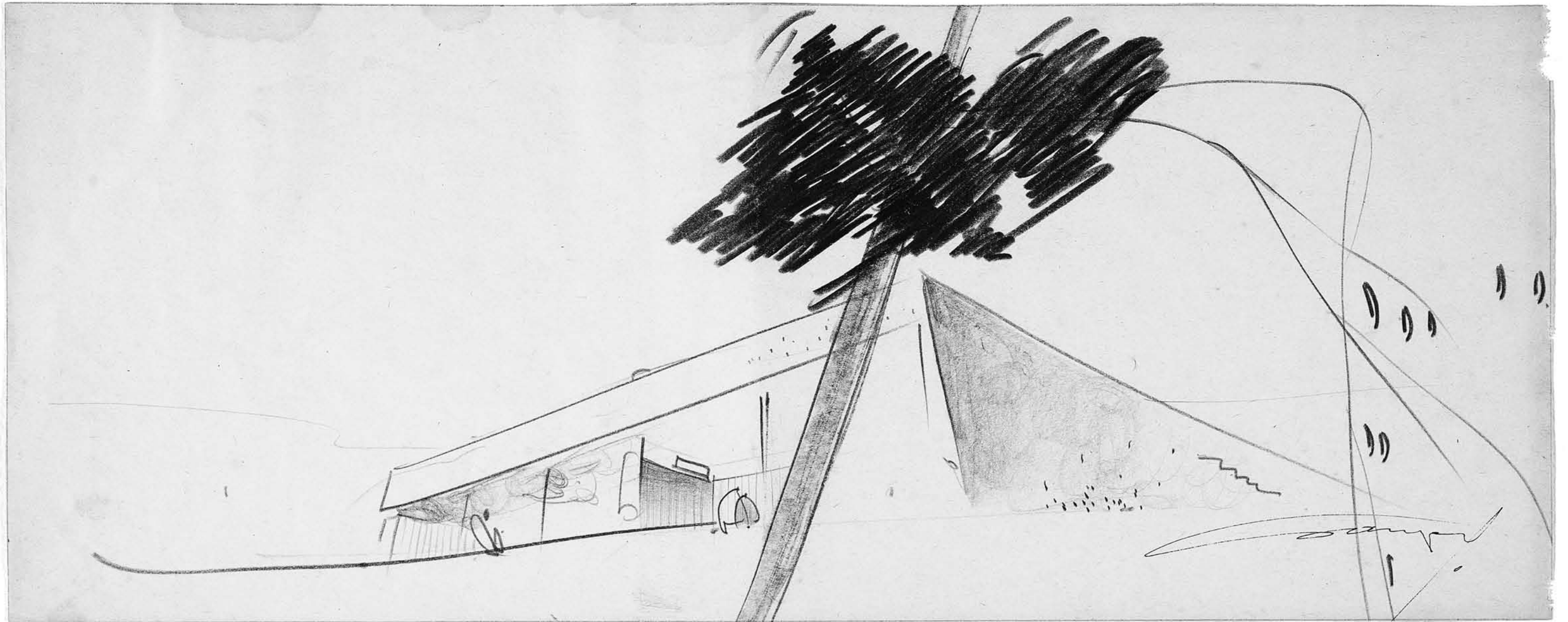


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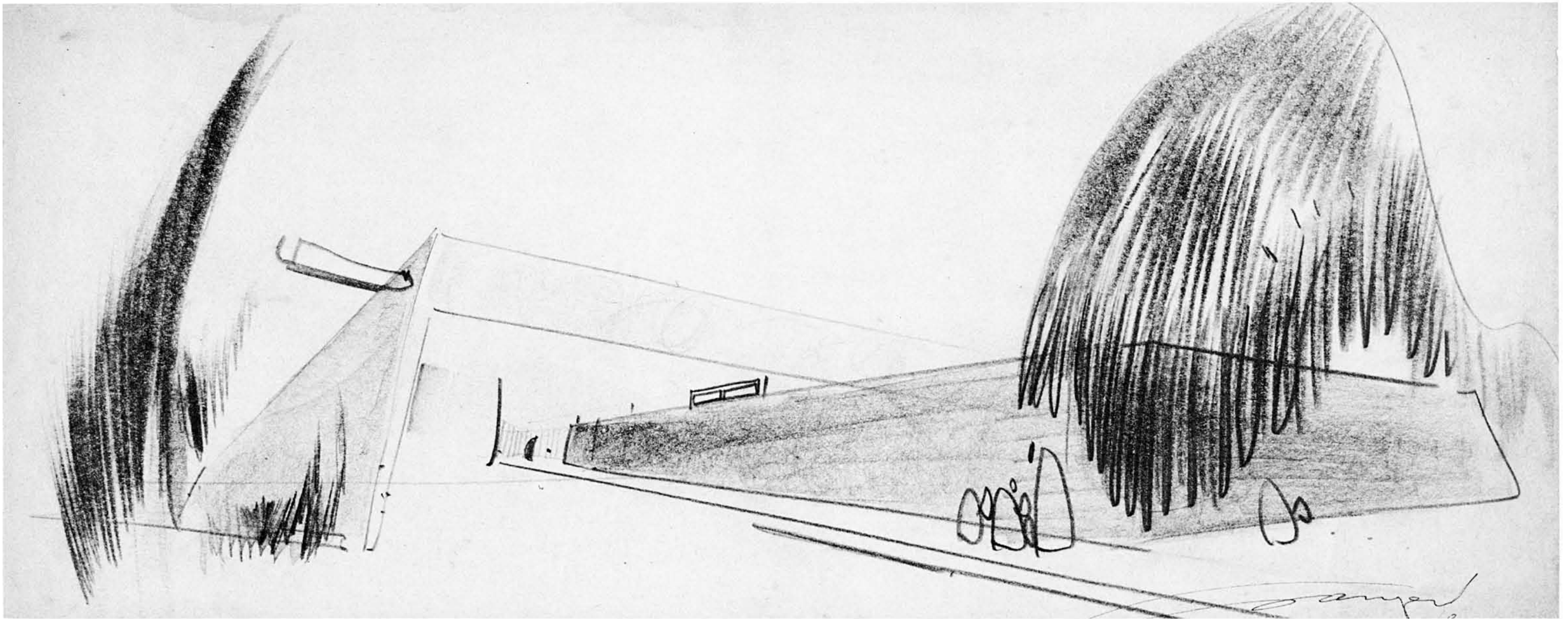
Juliaan Lampens developed his designs based on an approach similar to that of his architect contemporaries, discussing the function of his buildings while prioritising the structural and material considerations. But he refined the integration of the materials he used to such perfection that they fully developed into a structure, and thereby into a true expression of space and architecture.

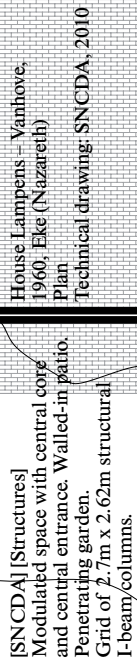
The eight most salient characteristics of Lampens’ architecture are presented in an equal number of chapters, each illustrated by a selection of specific, original images and drawings. Occasionally, where necessary, the plans, elevations, sections and details have been redrawn on the basis of original material, photographs or visits to the houses. Photographs of models produced for an earlier exhibition on Juliaan Lampens, serve the same function. This results in a cross-reading throughout the book. The compilation can be traced back using the following table of contents.

Functional Shelter	pp. 68, 70, 126, 127
Integrated Landscapes	pp. 23, 61, 70, 133
Clear Shapes	pp. 63, 69, 71, 80, 84, 132, 135
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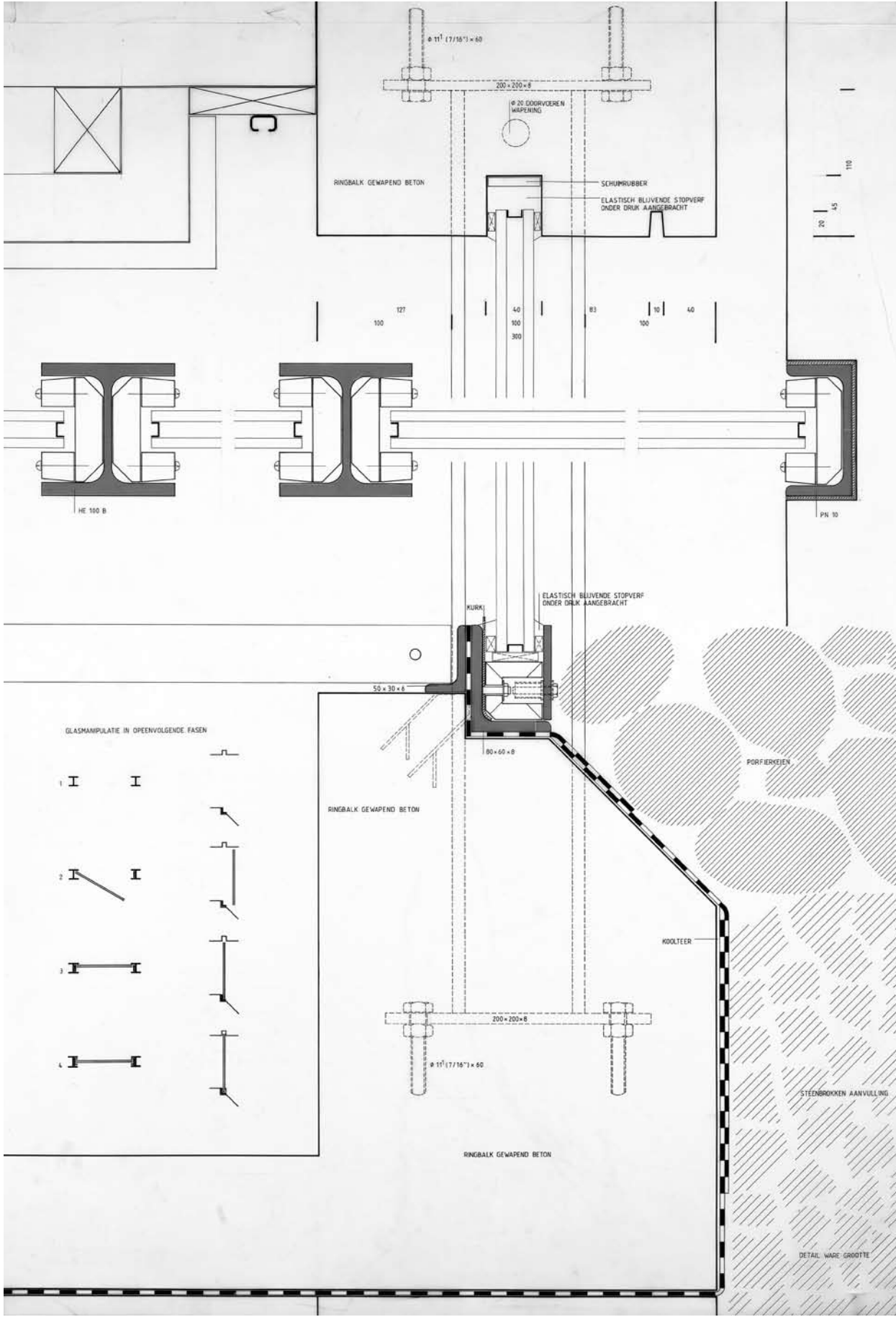










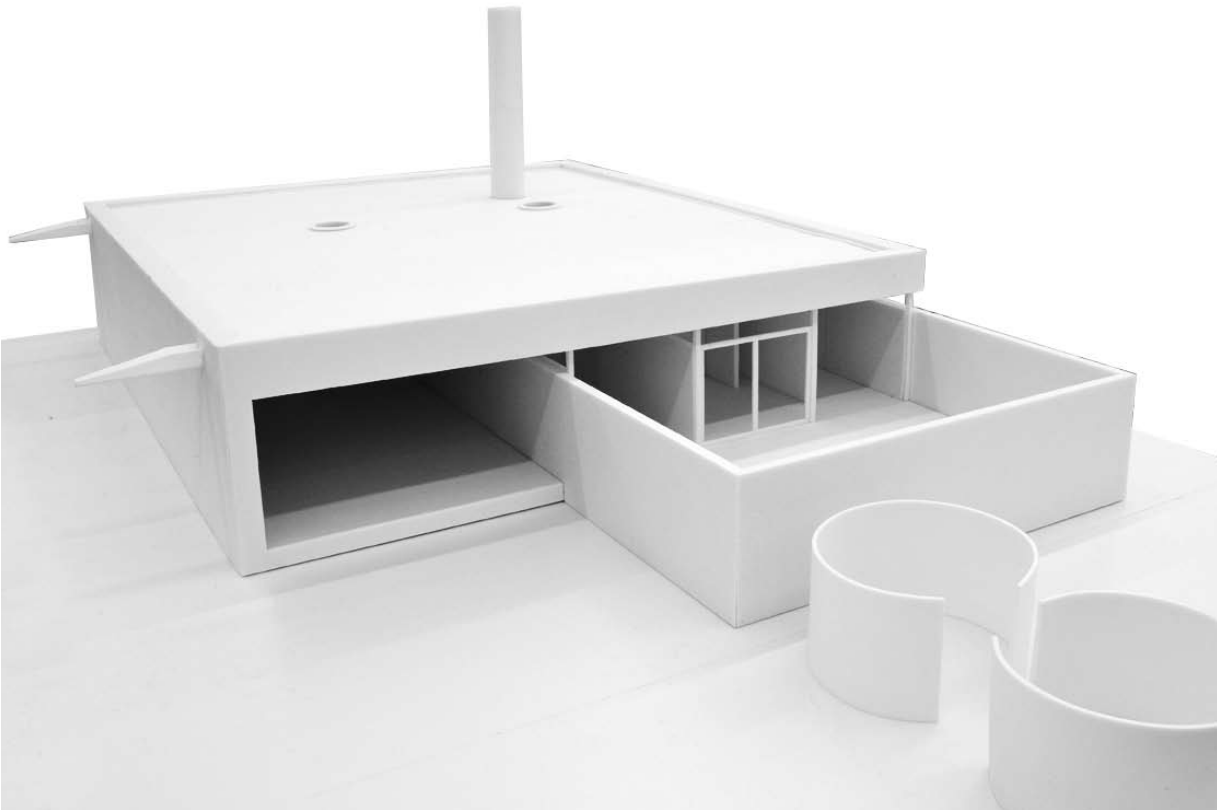


[SNCD] [Details]  
Transformation of ordinary I-beams into subtle modular expressions of proportion and detail. The flanges of the steel columns become structural and expressive.  
Source: Juliaan Lampens Foundation

[SNCD] [Integrated Landscapes]  
House concealed within nature. The openness of the plan is balanced by a surrounding wall that overlaps below the roof to create a patio for the bedrooms. The patio functions as an inversion of the cavity in the entrance door area.  
House Lampens – Vanhove, 1960, Eke (Nazareth)  
Bedroom Patio  
B/W photograph  
Source: Juliaan Lampens Foundation



[SNCD] [Composition]  
House Lampens – Vanhove initiates Lampens' interpretation of the rule of walls as an element of delimitation. Walls are a hybrid elements composed of structural of I-beams (2,6m high) and separative wall portions of a height of 2,07m, which both follow rigorously a grid. A strip of glass along the top closes the house from the outside.  
House Lampens – Vanhove, 1960, Eke (Nazareth)  
North façade  
Foam Model 1/20: SNCD, 2009



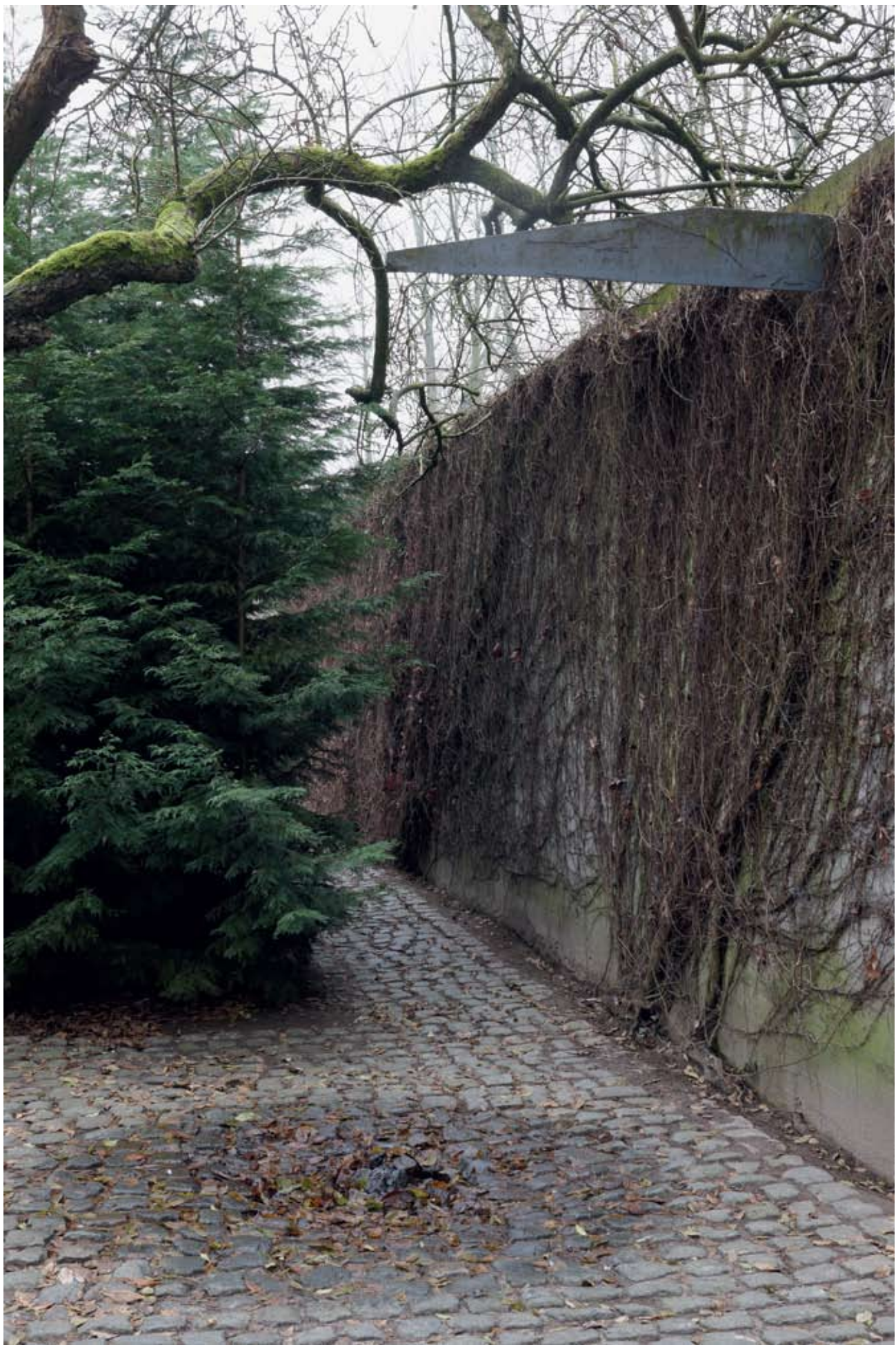
























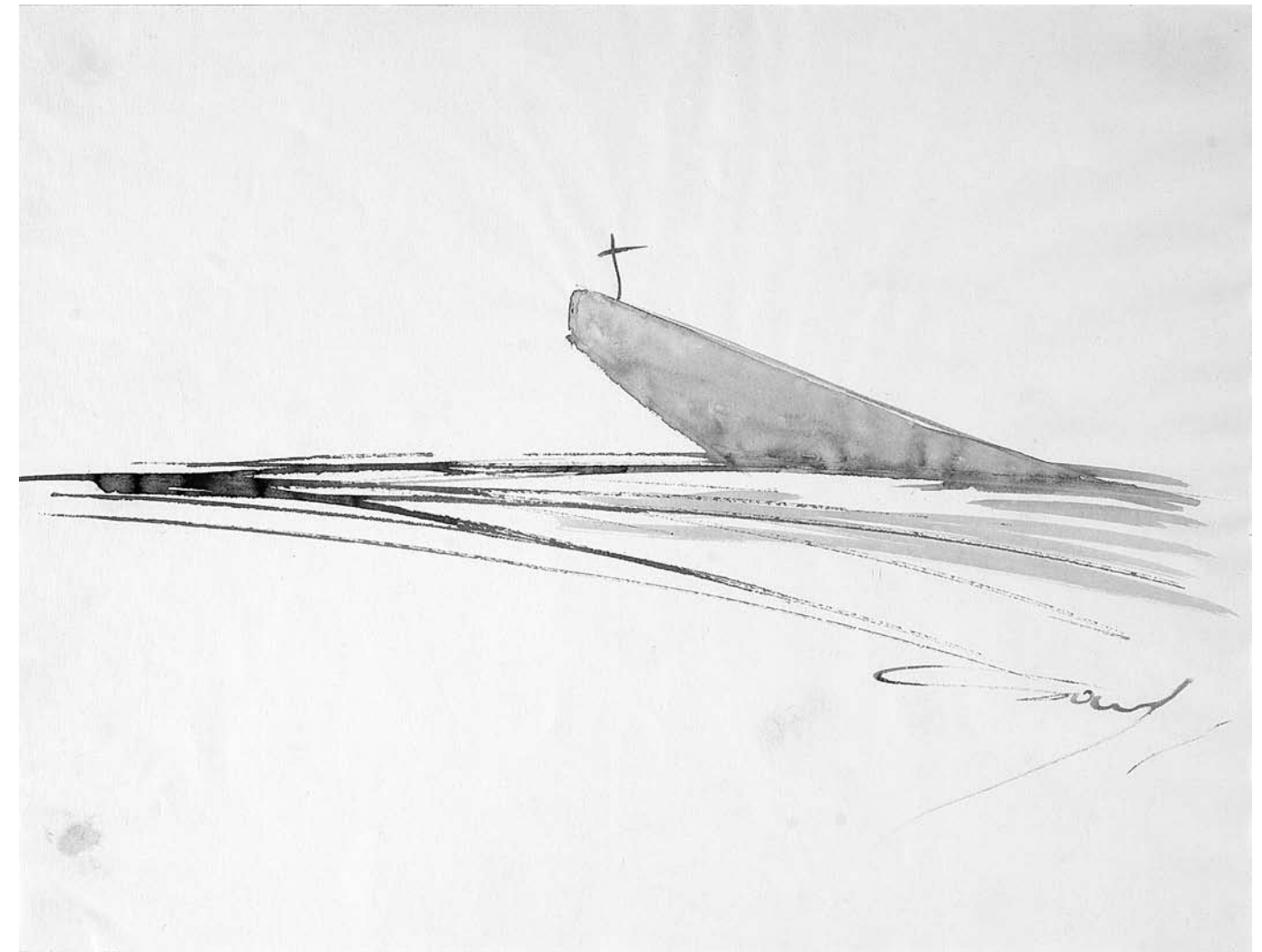








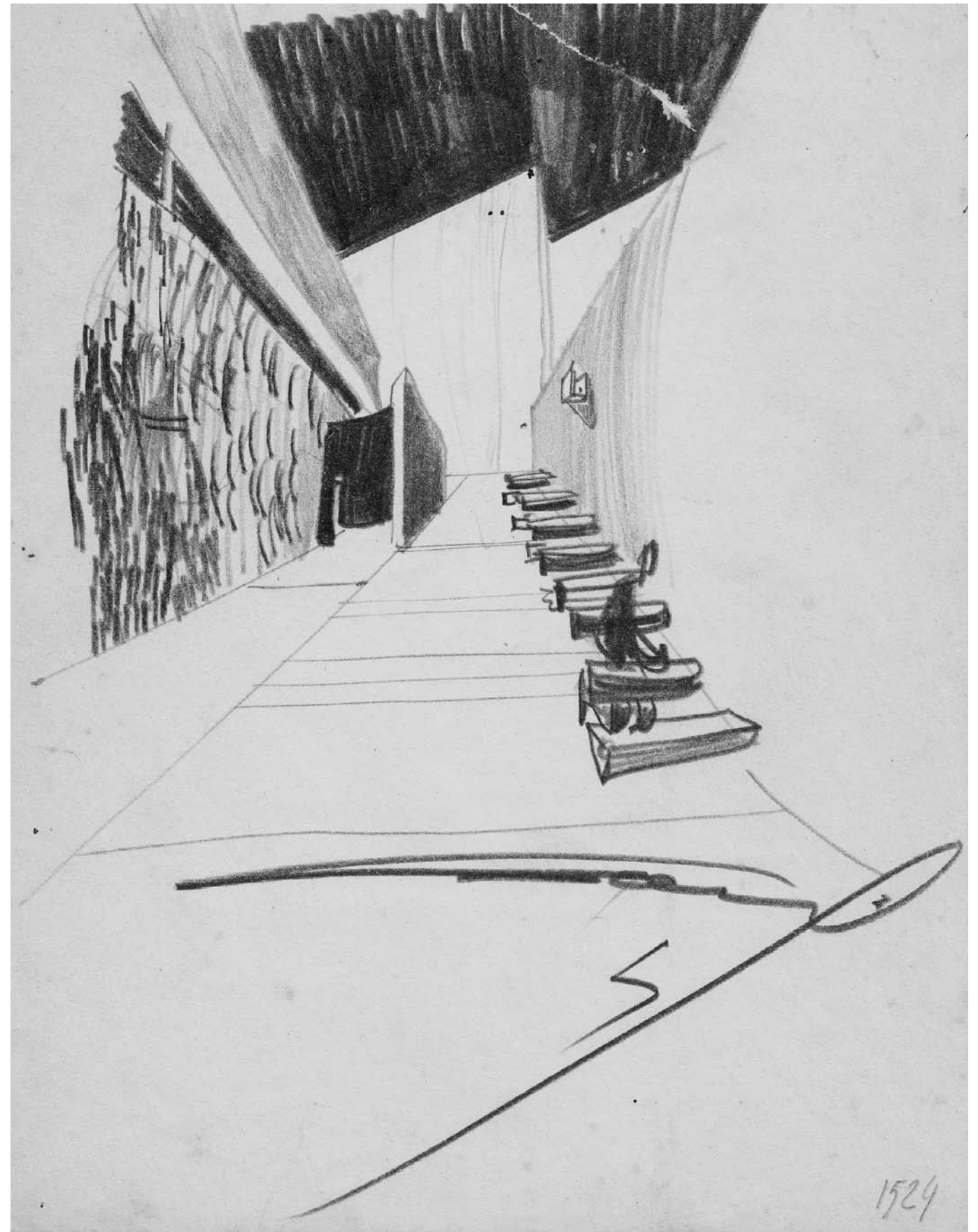
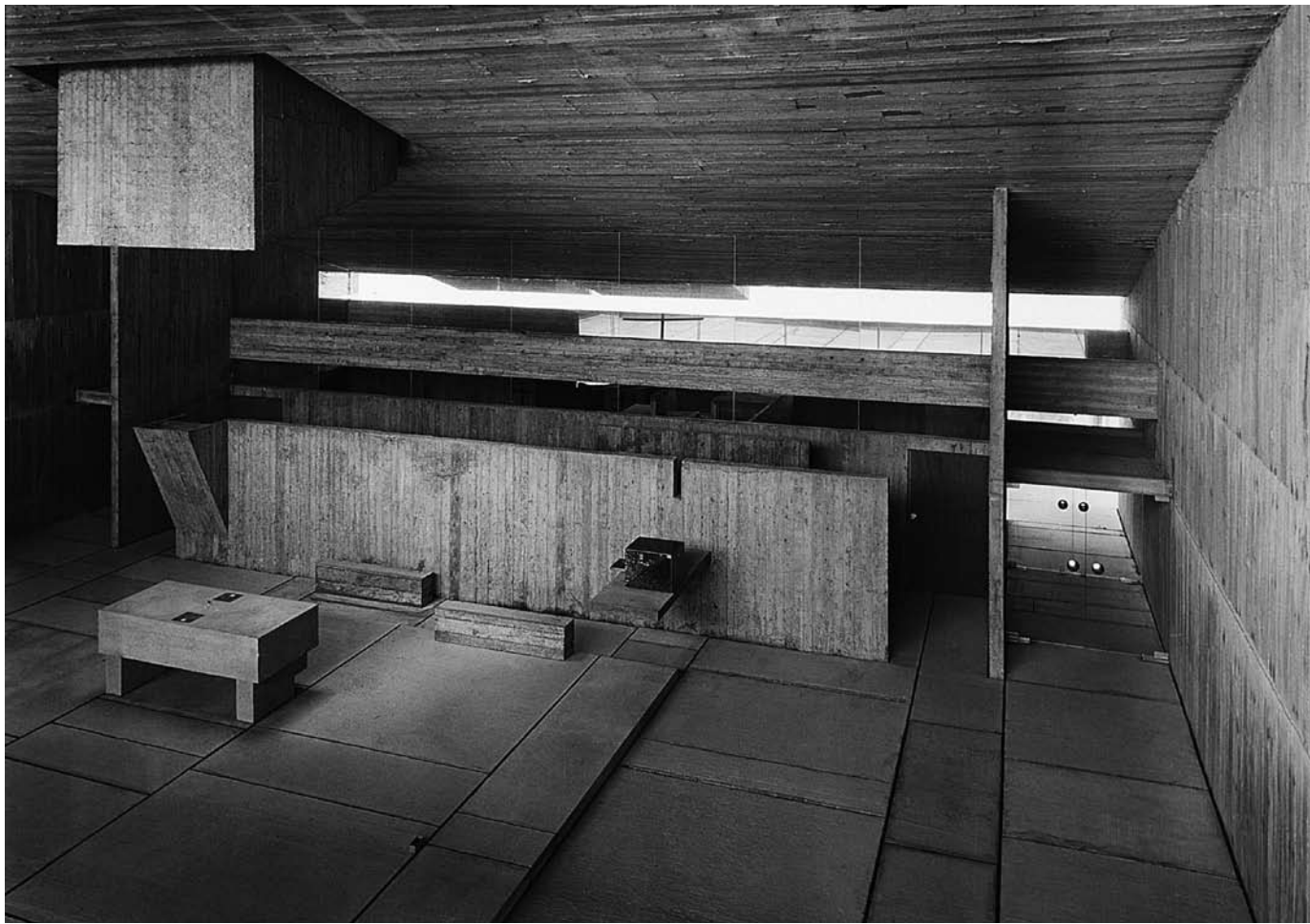




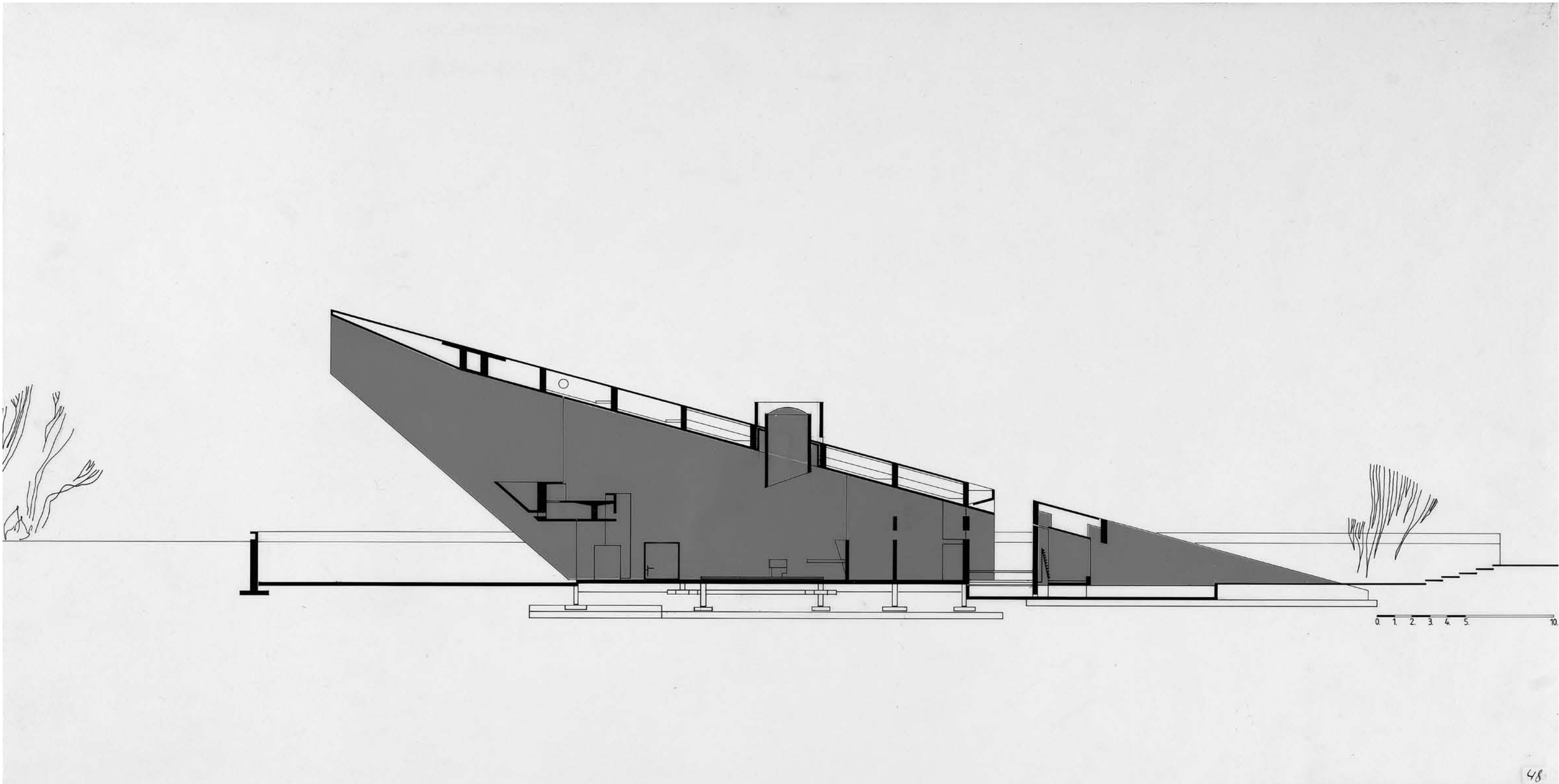
















# JULIAAN LAMPENS AN AUTHENTIC MODERNISM PRODUCED ON FLEMISH SOIL

Francis Strauven

Between 1960 and 1990, in the vicinity of Oudenaarde, Juliaan Lampens built some unusual, idiosyncratic houses. Although externally inconspicuous, averse to any formal ostentation, they belong to the most original specimens of modern architecture in Belgium. They are simple buildings that lurk within the greenery and came into being in silence, without receiving a single remark in any architectural magazine.<sup>1</sup> They turn their back on the public space, to entirely attune themselves instead to their natural surroundings. Stylistically speaking, they fall into the category of the international style termed *Brutalism*, an architectural movement initiated by Le Corbusier shortly after the Second World War and characterised by the use of rough, unfinished construction materials. Apart from this aesthetic, their originality lies mainly in their internal spaciousness and non-conformist open living concept. Lampens initiated this living concept in the house he built for himself and his family in Eke in 1959-60 [pp. 16-31]. With ten years of practice already behind him, it was, curiously enough, the first house in which he implemented a modern design. Until then, in order to earn a living, he had built traditional houses in a simple rustic idiom. He was far from alone in this. It is perhaps hard for today's younger generations to imagine, but in the first decade after the end of the Second World War, despite the economic growth and the energetic reconstruction, there was hardly any interest in modern architecture here in Belgium. While modernism was blossoming in the neighbouring countries, particularly in the Netherlands, it remained a marginal phenomenon in Belgium. This was particularly the case in East Flanders. Taking everything into account, the house that Lampens completed in 1960 is one of the first modern houses to be built there after 1945.

## Building in Belgium after World War Two

To understand this situation and thereby explain the significance of Lampens' work, one needs to have an idea of the social climate prevailing in Belgium during the first decade following the war. It was in many respects a time of confusion, a time dominated by a reactionary mentality which allowed almost no place whatsoever for renewal. The war had created a deep chasm in social and cultural life, and the older generation made it their first priority to fill this void. They wanted the wartime destruction to be reversed as quickly as possible and for the situation prior to 1940 to be reinstated. They sought to promptly forget the past by seeking comfort in old and trusted values. In predominantly Catholic Flanders, this meant a resolute reconfirmation of traditional Christian values. In the domain of architecture and town planning, this implied choices as unexpected as they were serious. Established in 1945, the Christian People's Party (CVP) wanted to implement Christian values by way of political policy and they had a distinct vision regarding residential construction. In the programme in which they laid out their profile, they presented, amongst other things, their goal to deproletarianise the working population; that is to say, to guard it from collectivism. As a conspicuous instrument in pursuit of this, they encouraged the proliferation of private residential ownership. To prevent families from being accommodated in collective residential complexes, which it deemed morally obnoxious, the CVP determinedly drove the population to spatially deconcentrate themselves, to spread out into individual houses disseminated throughout the

1. A selection of his work was first published in 1987 by the magazine *Stichting Architectuurmuseum*

(1987, nr. 4, pp. 2-13). Five years later deSingel in Antwerp dedicated an exhibition to his oeuvre and on

that occasion published a catalogue with an introduction by Paul Vermeulen.



countryside.<sup>2</sup> When this party came into power in 1948, it promptly adopted a law that promoted the building of private residences by means of sturdy construction premiums. All those with a strong desire to build, including the least well-off, were encouraged to construct their own house, on whichever plot they wanted, so long as it was reachable from a public road. In this way, Belgian citizens were given the maximum say in the building of their own houses, but instead of seizing this opportunity to develop new and original types of housing, they exhibited a preference for traditional dwellings. In particular, the less endowed who aspired to a higher level of prosperity wanted to express their social ascent in built form and in order to do so, they looked back to the earlier examples set by the higher classes. The individual residence quickly disclosed itself as a status symbol, indeed as the most prominent of status symbols. Rather than being a way in which to integrate with the community structure, housing became a means to stand out from it. Each individual builder went into semantic rivalry with his neighbour. Like the working classes, the middle classes too grasped at the models that would gain them a few more steps on the ladder of the social hierarchy, with the aim of formally anticipating their ascent to this level, regardless of the extent to which it may have resembled caricature. Initially, at least, modern architecture scarcely featured in this competition. Indeed, the private building initiative was completely at odds with this sober style that was originally intended to represent an egalitarian society.

#### Education at Sint-Lucas Ghent 1940-1950

Juliaan Lampens was born in 1926 and came from an artisanal milieu. From his father, a carpenter, he inherited a keen sense of fine craftsmanship. From childhood, he demonstrated an exceptional talent for drawing and dreamed of becoming a painter. At the end of 1940, on the advice of the village schoolmaster, his father allowed him to enroll at Sint-Lucas Ghent, though not in the painting department, but rather the architectural drawing course, a direction that offered better prospects with regard to making a secure living. After a number of years this high school education gave way to a higher education in architecture.

Architectural education at Sint-Lucas Ghent was decidedly traditional. It remained anchored in the Neo-Gothic. The lesson in Freehand Drawing was considered fundamental and was entirely aimed at familiarising the students with the Gothic and other traditional forms. The students were obliged to make daily sketches of old façades in Ghent, in their totality as well as in detail, in order to get a feel for Gothic lines and proportions. In keeping with this, the design exercises in the first years of study obviously had to be conceived in the Gothic style. In the final years, a careful experimentation with moderately modern forms was permitted. Lampens had a difficult time with mathematics, but found Freehand Drawing more to his taste and this was something at which he soon shone. Far from being a burden to him, he found the obligation to make daily sketches a pleasure. Over the course of his ten year study, he explored the entire city centre of Ghent in his sketching and gained a vast visual knowledge of its architecture. With regard to contemporary development, however, the information he absorbed remained extremely limited and one-sided. It was wartime and Belgium had capitulated; the city was occupied and the local *Kommandatur* had taken up residence in a wing of the Sint-Lucas institute.<sup>3</sup> The occupation made its mark on education and determined, among other things, that no more French or English publications were to be found in the school. The library was provided all the more abundantly with books on recent German architecture and magazines like *Moderne Bauformen*, which propagated both monumentality à la Speer and the German *Heimat* style. The international publications only found

2. Christelijke Volkspartij (CVP), *België moet weder opgebouwd worden. Wie zal de bouwmeester*

*zijn? (Belgium must be rebuilt. Who will the master builder be?)*, Brussels, 1945.

3. Information by Lampens reported to the author.

their way into the school after the war and this gradually opened up other, more modern perspectives. Nonetheless, prior to 1950, education at Sint-Lucas remained decidedly sceptical and reserved with respect to Modernism. This is made clear in the illustrated magazine *Schets* (sketch) that was published in Sint-Lucas Ghent between 1947 and 1958. During its first years, the editors vehemently turn their backs on all that is modern. They denounce the confusion in modern thought that they have come to notice, and do not neglect to affirm that it is they themselves, by virtue of their religious conviction, that have the only legitimate basis for the development of a sound contemporary culture. Engineer Brother Urbain, ideologue and director of the Institute of Higher Education from 1948, took a particularly ambivalent attitude from the start. On the one hand, he was determined that contemporary architecture ought to develop on the basis of the everlasting values of the Christian culture. On the other, he was conscious that renewal was both unavoidable and



Cover of *Schets*, Vol. 2, no. 4 (1948-1949)

desirable. History teaches that each era develops its own style. However, the new had to be developed in continuity with the existing; it had to be understood as a new contribution within the Christian tradition. Brother Urbain was aware, however, of living in a wretched and confusing time, in a society that was torn by collectivism and individualism, by 'materialism, self-interest, snobism and ambitiousness'. Within this chaos, true renewal would be tedious to initiate. 'We are split, we are socially sick. We seek, we wander ... and we are likely to remain in the idiot box for a long time yet, precisely because the seekers, with all their misconceptions, hardly capture anything of the new architectural truth.'<sup>4</sup> He was of the attitude that most buildings purporting to be modern were in fact an expression of the prevailing chaos. It was the work of 'pseudo-moderns or epigones, abominably beneath their task of being the creators of beautiful forms, idiots in the application of appropriate and delicately wrought details, thoughtless in the use of as yet untested materials.' Rather than a return to tradition, 'to a certain formalism, in which a "beautiful" façade, which was not at all an expression of what was astir behind, nevertheless appeared stately, quiet and serene; above all, respectable, dignified, not too flamboyant. Rather a safe façade that testifies to the culture of the inhabitant, than an eccentric and barbarian pseudo-modern creation. Rather classic harmony than jazz-architecture.'<sup>5</sup> In other contributions, he protested against the production of collectivist living units that sever the masses from the hierarchical coherence of the old city centres, and against a materialistic building trend from which the language of form is based purely on the characteristics of the applied materials, a language which declares disapproval for all old forms, 'likely disapproving of the concrete

4. *Schets*, 1948-49, nr. 4, p. 61.

5. *Schets*, 1947-48, nr. 1, p. 3.



ideas contained therein'.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, over the course of time, Brother Urbain established a lively interest in contemporary developments. He kept up-to-date with news in the magazines and made a number of study trips to Switzerland and Italy, France and the Netherlands.

He corresponded with Auguste Perret, whose work he admired, and made contact with Dom van der Laan and his Bossche School. As a result, there was a gradual swing in his appreciation of modernism and he delved deeper into the work of the leading figures. Lampens remembers how Brother Urbain unexpectedly turned up in the studio one day with a comprehensive exposé on the work of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe. His knowledge and critical comparison of the two very different figures came as a complete surprise and was of lasting significance for Lampens. It was a theme that was also internationally relevant at that time. Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe had earned recognition as the most important protagonists of modern architecture, which gave rise to a debate about their opposing approaches. Which direction should modern architecture follow: the emotionally appealing plasticity of the one, or the immaterially inclined rationality of the other? Many thought that a choice needed to be made between the two approaches, while others found that a synthesis should be sought. Lampens would choose, at a later stage, the latter option, but nothing of this could yet be gleaned from his design studies.

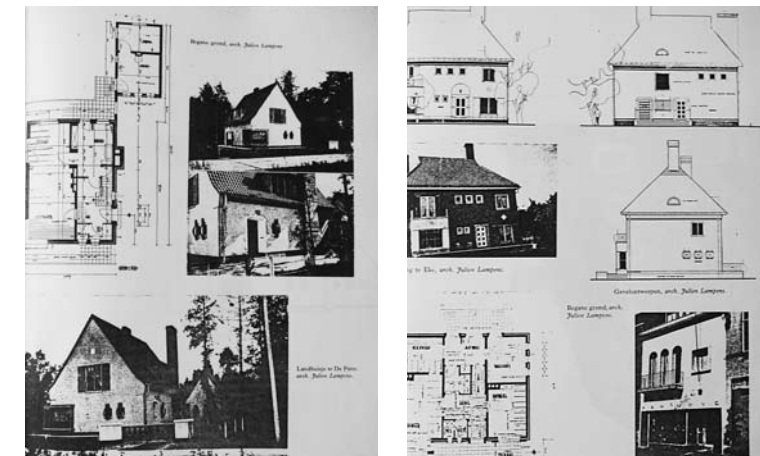
In the later years of their studies, the students were free to work out their projects in a chosen style, either the Neo-Gothic in which they had been trained through the earlier years, or in a more or less modern idiom. Lampens freed himself of the dilemma by making two designs each time, a traditional and a modern. Today he admits that in both cases it was about a non-committal eclectic game with forms that with the necessary graphic impetus were worked up and presented. He was especially proficient at this and was counted amongst the best designers. He graduated with honours in 1950.

#### Own practice since 1950

Juliaan Lampens established himself in Eke and promptly received a number of commissions for the building of individual houses. Four of these, completed in 1952, were included in an exhibition of former Sint-Lucas students that took place in May of that year in the Museum of Decorative Arts in Ghent. There were three modest country houses, implemented in a sober regional style, and a more classic looking shop premises. Brother Urbain published these in *Schets* with a eulogistic commentary: 'It is for the most part the revising of a known theme in a free rhythm. Let it be a part of our heritage. The resulting treatment is not robbery, but safety and wisdom. What one does is something; how one does it is something else again! The drawings demonstrate how much care the designer gave to the game of proportion, to the pondering of volumes, to the *square* and to the *void*, to detail and to colour.'<sup>7</sup> It was a style that suited the taste of the local population, and everything indicated that in this sense, the rest of Lampens' career would thoroughly flourish. He received numerous contracts for country houses, including some large doctors' residences. In some cases, he attempted to steer toward a modern project but these initiatives were entertained with sheer stupefaction and incomprehension. Modern architecture was still a totally unknown entity at that point of time in Flanders. It was experienced as a completely strange phenomenon, both by the confirmed middle-class and the nouveau riche. Contrarily, the young architect quickly found himself confronted with the craving for status, the snobbism and the ambitiousness that Brother Urbain had warned about. Above all, the clients of modest origins who were

6. *Schets*, 1951-52, nr. 1, p. 15.  
7. *Schets*, 1951-52, nr. 6, p. 175.

successfully climbing the ladder nourished the ambition to express this in the size and superior appearance of their houses. The one wanted a temple portico with a pediment, the other a tower. Lampens nevertheless succeeded in harnessing their craving within the restrictions of a sober arts and crafts idiom.



Inside pages of *Schets*, Vol. 5, no. 6 (1951-52)

Fundamentally, however, he experienced this practice as incorrect, as a form of retrograde decoration that completely disregarded the new sense of life addressed in contemporary art and international publications. He wanted to participate in this new feeling, to divest himself of all superfluity, to concentrate on the substantial, the elementary. It was for that reason, that in-between the regional designs, he put down on paper a number of ideal projects for himself, or for imaginary clients, projects in which everything that palled him in his practice was eliminated, little by little: the showy forms demanding attention, the classic or rustic ornamentation that was intended to proclaim the social status of the owner; in short, all retrograde or modern trappings, and *last but not least*, the stereotypical citizen's way of living, with the house as a collection of distinct rooms, large and small, separated from each other by equally distinct corridors, halls and thresholds. He dreamt of communal living brought back to its essence, a way of living that, instead of nourishing itself in an ornamentality derived from nature, would be closely drawn into true nature.

In the first place, he wanted to build such a house for himself, and to that end found a suitable plot of land on the edge of the village: the somewhat neglected clay extraction area from a dismantled stone bakery. He repeatedly postponed the project, however, for fear of provoking his surroundings with a radically modern house. His father, in particular, was of the opinion that he would throw away the reputation that he had already built up and thereby alienate potential clients. At the end of 1958, after the conclusion of Expo 58, Lampens finally decided to draw up and execute the construction of his house. He had the impression that the heavily attended World Expo had brought about a swing in public taste. It was not that his project related to any of the Expo pavilions. It would be just the opposite of the exuberant formality that had dominated the international exhibition.

#### Lampens' own house, Eke, 1959-60 [pp. 16-31]

Lampens' house is an exceedingly sober, horizontally built entity that rather timidly withdraws between the areas of greenery in its elongated garden, the previous stone bakery that has grown into a farmyard-like park. A cobblestone path leads from the street directly to the carport where the visitor is welcomed by a colourful



company of chicken and geese, turkeys and peacocks. The house itself, however closed and introverted, also welcomes the visitor with an affectionate gesture. The massive concrete roof deck that covers the entire volume of the house extends over an open stretch of five metres, only to then, as it were, fold downwards to become a concrete wall. Roof and wall evoke the image of an enormous hand protecting the carport and the entrances to the office and house. The carport passes between two plain walls and leads firstly to the architect's office, a fully transparent space in which a portion of the green area at the back is seen. The internal brick wall at the right-hand side is not fully closed off, being only 2.1 metres high with a strip of glass across the top. The roof therefore does not rest on this wall, but appears to float over the living room. It is carried by steel H-profiles worked into the wall. The floor plan indicates that apart from the concrete wall of the carport, the house has no load-bearing walls. The roof slab is carried by twenty-six steel H-profiles that are positioned at the crosspoints of a regular grid, a grid based on a 2.6 x 2.6 metre module. The actual house is comprised of eighteen modules, that is to say, a space of 8 x 16.2 metres, with a fixed core (of two modules) in the middle that contains the sanitary facilities, cellar stairs and kitchen. The height of this core is fixed at 2.07 metres, the same as that of the surrounding walls, so that nearly one hundred and thirty square metres of living room is experienced as one large whole. There are no bedrooms in the traditional sense. The beds are lodged in large cupboards or 'sleep hutches' that can be clustered at whim in the northern zone. This zone looks out onto a patio (of six modules) that is enclosed by the brick wall running through to the outside and is experienced as a part of the living room. The southern living zone looks out onto the garden, or, more precisely, onto a large pool, a former clay reservoir, which retains the memory of the area's industrial past. The house has no windows in the traditional sense, but is conceived as a space that unfurls between solid walls and flows into the outside through glass surfaces. The double glazing is contained within the H-profiles, the floor and the ceiling, in an ingeniously artisanal way.

Certain ingredients of Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier were synthesised in the design of the house: from the former come the clearly modulated space with a vast central core, the spacious transparency, and the walled-in patio that forms an integral part of the living space; from the latter come the somewhat brutalistic use of brick and concrete, the roof that refers to a gesture of the human hand, the spout that spews forth the rainwater, and the elementary cylindrical shapes at the entrance. A personal touch is to be found in the warm wooden planks that clad the inside of the external walls, a cladding that merges into the architect-designed furnishings: the 'sleep hutches', the bookshelves, the robust dining table, and the simple stools. For Lampens, the building of this house was a milestone, a built statement with which he postulated the concrete principles upon which he would continue to build.

House Vandenhoute–Kiebooms, Huise, 1964, 1966-67 [pp. 60-74, 89-101]

When Gerard Vandenhoute, on the lookout for a suitable architect to design his house, came to visit Lampens for the purpose of getting acquainted, he was so impressed by him and his house that he decided then and there to entrust him with the task. When Lampens then asked his new client if he 'could go a step further' in the design of his house, he promptly went for it. Consequently, Lampens thought beyond the open concept that he had initiated in his own house and developed his most radical plan. The plot of ground was a quiet spot along a country road within view of a vast cornfield. The architect arranged the house into a square of 14 x 14 metres and set it on a platform that he laid at a metre and a half below the level

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of the road, and made accessible via a winding path. It was a markedly horizontal building, that with its solid concrete northern wall turns away from the road, and with its three fully glazed sides, opens itself up to the landscape. The massive north wall, together with the roof plane, perform a protective gesture, just as they do in Lampens' own house. On the south side, the roof rests on only two slender steel angle profiles that serve as pillars — a constructive tour de force by means of which all internal supports could be avoided and the space, more so than in Eke, could be experienced as a single whole. In essence, the house consists of an open area sheltered with an enormous roof, a concrete deck that 'hangs' 2.6 metres above floor level. Beneath this protective covering, only three functions were installed in permanent form, executed in concrete: two cylinders at human-height that arise from the floor and contain the toilet and the bath, respectively, and the kitchen, which is covered at the top by a concrete baffle that stretches from the ceiling to just below eye-level [pp. 69, 71]. These three concrete volumes are the only fixed components, betwixt which family life can freely unfold and organise itself. The family members can decide amongst themselves as to the position of the 'sleep hutches', the seating areas and the workstations. Hidden under the concrete roof, the house is an open interior in the middle of the landscape. It is a 'nestling place' for a family, a small community in which the members live in utmost commonality with each other. None of the activities or 'functions' is acoustically divided from the others. Adults and children are placed together in a primary, almost pre-cultural living situation to share with one another the basic things of life, averse to all civil conventions, and on the basis thereof to develop a communal life free of complexity, and to do so in permanent complicity with the natural surroundings, the rhythm of the seasons and the changing appearance of the landscape. The quality of the interior flows for the most part from the consistent and refined detailing of the building elements. The glazed walls have been implemented as simply as possible. There are also no windows here, instead the glass has been worked into the floor and ceiling using concealed profiles. The vertical stiles in the glass walls are not load-bearing. They hold the glass panels together and offer wind resistance. The concrete baffle that functions as an enormous extract for the kitchen resembles a box that has been swung down from the roof to leave behind a large opening that allows daylight inside. The dining table that 'floats' out directly under the baffle, forms a lovely expressive whole with the countertop [pp. 71-73].

Despite the unconventional and daring concept, the house was fully accepted, indeed highly appreciated by its inhabitants. Gerard Vandenhoute, Germanist and high school teacher, expressed his appreciation for his house — and Lampens' architecture in general — by stating it repeatedly.<sup>8</sup> According to Vandenhoute, a house from Lampens, in the words of the prophet Gibran, is like 'the larger body' of the family. It is a place where the inhabitant, free of all trappings and status symbols, rediscovers 'life in its liveability'. Lampens' architecture is a remedy against the ever-present clutches of consumption, commercialisation and 'societalisation'. It opens space for spiritualisation.

Our Blessed Lady of Kerselare Pilgrimage Chapel, Edelare [pp. 33-47]  
Competition design 1961, new design and execution 1964-66

The Gothic chapel of Our Blessed Lady of Kerselare has stood on Edelare hill, to the south of Oudenaarde, since 1460. It was extended in 1570 by order of the Baron of Pamele, who was attacked by a crocodile during the pilgrimage to Egypt and, on the appeal of the Holy Virgin of Kerselare, escaped death. The crocodile

8. 'Juliaan Lampens, van embryo tot architecturale verwezenlijking' (JL, From embryo to architectural accomplishment), introduction to the Lampens exhibition, Witte Zaal,

Sint-Lucas Ghent, April 1977; 'De architectuur van Juliaan Lampens' at *Stichting Architectuurmuseum*, 1987, nr. 4, pp. 2-13; 'In ruimtelijkheid' (In spaciousness), 'Niet

ingesloten' (Not enclosed) in *Juliaan Lampens 1950-1991*, catalogue deSingel, Antwerp 1991, pp. 31-33. This last testimony was co-signed by his wife and children.



was embalmed and mounted in the chapel like a votive statue. Later, in 1850, it was replaced by a wooden replica carved by the sculptor Van Biesbroeck. When the chapel was thoroughly destroyed by fire in 1961, the church board decided not to reconstruct it, but instead to build a new one. They organised a design competition, which was won by Lampens and his ex-teacher Rutger Langaskens. In order to appeal to the taste of the church board, they had sent in a traditional-looking design, embellished with a number of towers. Once the competition had been won, Lampens shoved this plan to the side and developed a new design, which he set about implementing unbeknownst to the church board. He made a number of fake drawings of the esteemed traditional design that he presented to the heads of the church board, but simultaneously worked out his new project about which he held consultations with the pastor. 'After the casting of the first layer of concrete, up to the first construction joint at a height of 1.2 metres, many people thought that silos were being built there.' Unlike its Gothic predecessor, the new chapel is not visible from the public road; it was implanted somewhat further along, hidden in a rift. But there it rises with a striking expressive power. It has a somewhat rugged appearance that opens suggestively to the approaching visitor. The unusual shape and the spindly crucifix erected on top of it suggest that it is a chapel, but a chapel that is in no way reminiscent of the old type. Completely executed in rough concrete, with deliberate irregularities in the shuttering joints, it is at odds with the atmosphere of popular devotion that characterises the traditional pilgrimage. It is without frills, outside and inside. Its interior remains completely devoid of votive offerings and other devotional objects that tend to proliferate in these places. The ecclesiastical is limited to the essentials: an altar, a tabernacle, a pedestal with a statue of Mary, and at the back in the large glazed wall, a few fire-glass windows.

The spatial concept is atypical. The visitor, welcomed by way of the large gaping mouth in the front, cannot enter there, but is led along the side of the tapered building, descending toward the rear, where he gains access to the interior via a cove with a water feature. He enters the church space along a passage beside the altar. There he is immediately confronted with the dynamic expanding space that rises up toward the outside, through a ten metre high glass wall. Just inside, he is, as it were, pushed or sucked back out. But once he recovers from the surprise, if he then turns around, he discovers an entirely different place, a profoundly private and quiet place: the concrete altar, the tabernacle and two concrete benches silhouetted against the backdrop of a rough concrete wall. The centre of worship is in the lowest swathe of space, a place where the southeast sun of the large glass wall does not directly penetrate. Light slips in, in doses, along the lateral approaches and through a horizontal slot above the said wall. The ambiguity of front and rear, the tension between inside and outside, the slipping from open to closed, from high to low, the change in situation from dynamic to peaceful, give this room a special, unusual character, so unusual that it cannot be positioned within the typology of modern church building. In the diverse panorama of churches that arose in the 20th century, no precedent for Kerselare chapel can be found. The architect's inspiration was as unusual as it was original. As I have said, he rejected the trappings of traditional pilgrimage folklore, but that did not prevent him from basing his building as a whole on the crucial element of local folklore. Kerselare would not be Kerselare without a crocodile. The chapel was conceived as a whole in the image of an enormous reptile with gaping jaws emerging from the ground — or from the said water feature.<sup>9</sup> However, this is a good-natured animal that extends its upper jaw to the migrating visitors, to welcome and shelter them. Without ever explicitly drawing attention to it, Lampens, with his architecture, breathed new life into the old mediæval legend. The pilgrims are not only faced with a stylised image of a crocodile,

9. A fact confirmed by the architect during an interview with the author.

they are also taken inside the reptile, in which, like Jonah in the belly of the whale, they may come to repent.

House Van Wassenhove, Sint-Martens-Latem, 1970-74 [pp. 104-119, 126-141]

This expressive building contains another version of Lampens' open living concept. The client was a high school teacher and a bachelor. The plan is compact, contained in a U-shaped concrete shell. The plot offered no landscape view and the building was subject to construction regulations that required an inclined roof. The architect therefore decided to conceive the house itself as a landscape, an undulating interior space covered over with an undulating roof. The roof comprises three horizontal surfaces that are joined together with oblique strips and articulate the interior in three zones: a half level that contains his work and sleep zone along with sanitary facilities; the ground floor level that accommodates the actual living space along with the kitchen and integrated dining table; and lastly, the covered terrace.

A few functional areas received their own, distinctive form. The bed is placed in a wooden cylinder that stands on the half level like a giant piece of furniture, and slightly bulges out into the living space [p. 132]. The desk is contained in a square concrete box, also situated on the half level, that completely 'slides into' the living space to partially obscure the view to the kitchen, which is positioned against the north wall. Out of the office floor, which overlooks the interior like a balcony, grows the dining table that seems to float freely in the space [pp. 132-133]. Here too, everything is acoustically open. The functional elements form an expressive whole that adds to the quality of the space which itself is experienced as a continuous dynamic whole, from the covered terrace to the strip of light at the half level. Apart from the floor, the sleep cylinder and the inbuilt cupboards, the whole house, inside and outside, was executed in roughcast concrete.





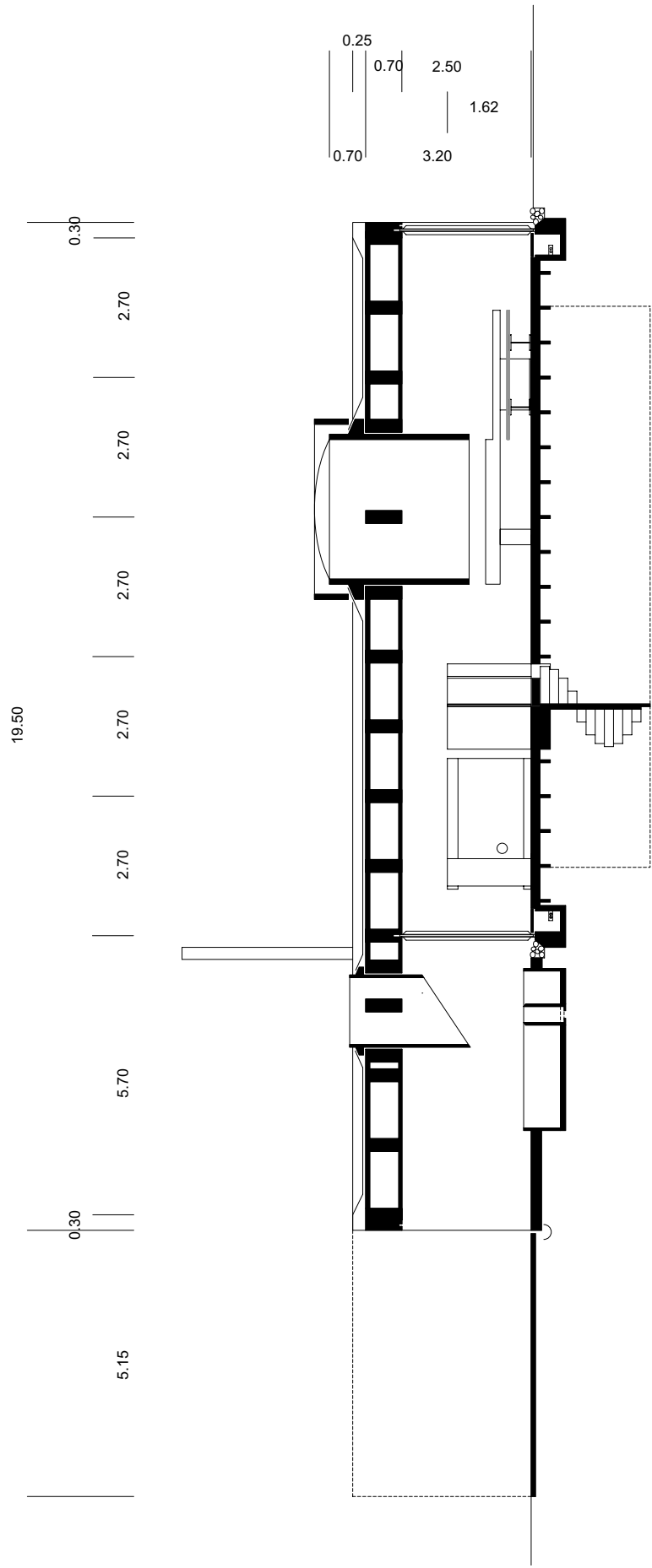
## HOUSE VANDENHAUTE–KIEBOOMS

Joseph Grima

It is often said — and rarely challenged — that the successful architect is equal parts skilled designer and savvy media strategist, preferably erring in favour of the latter. The history of architecture is littered with the corpses of unknown renegades and unsung revolutionaries, the majority of whom are condemned to eternal anonymity, while a lucky few of these rebels achieve posthumous glory à la Erno Goldfinger — and it is difficult to know whether that great and unrelentingly serious master of European modernism would feel insulted or vindicated by the news that his personal residence is today considered a tourist attraction (when he died in 1987, Goldfinger had been all but ostracised from society following the controversies surrounding Trellick Tower, nicknamed the ‘Tower of Terror’). Architecture is a profession that needs and feeds egos, and inventiveness often goes hand in hand with an unquenchable thirst for recognition and approval. Yet there are occasional exceptions, and the fact that there are so few only makes them all the more interesting. One of these deviants is Juliaan Lampens, a Belgian architect born in 1926. With the exception of an exhibition at Antwerp’s deSingel Museum in 1991, Lampens’ work has never been the object of very much critical recognition, particularly outside of Belgium. The only monograph concerning his work, to this day, is a rare catalogue for the 1991 exhibition, and most amazingly of all, it would seem that many of his most interesting works have not been published outside Belgium. Yet in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s of the last century, he was the author of a couple of the most singular and innovative modernist dwellings that Europe had, or indeed *has* ever seen. The bulk of Lampens’ work is, by his own admission, relatively humdrum: gabled suburban residences, unremarkable residential conversions, public architecture of the more mundane variety. ‘Like everyone else, I needed to pay the bills’, he said in a recent interview. ‘You can’t push the envelope on every project. It requires very particular circumstances’. On the rare

occasions when Lampens was approached by clients whose ambitions surpassed the need to merely place a (pitched) roof above their heads, he was quick to question even the most fundamental and indisputable dogmas of residential architecture. One such case is House Vandenhaute-Kiebooms, built in 1967. It is a low-slung, single storey flat roof dwelling, commissioned by a couple who had inherited a sliver of land in a prevalently rural area, sandwiched between a cornfield and a small country lane. Entirely cast in reinforced concrete, in true Brutalist tradition, the house consists of a single open space. The desire to span the entire breadth of the space without pillars explains the remarkable depth of the roof slab. The exceptional feature of House Vandenhaute-Kiebooms, however, is the total absence of walls. As with a small number of his other houses, Lampens’ ambition was to create a pillarless open plan dwelling in which not even functions such as the shower and bathroom would be allowed to interrupt the building’s spatial continuity. To achieve this, the WC, shower and other ‘private’ areas are placed inside concrete cylinders, each of which is cut off at eye level, creating an archipelago of semi-enclosed cubicles within a larger open space. For the kitchen, this ‘island’ configuration is inverted: here, the work-space is separated from the rest of the house by a curtain-like wall hanging from the ceiling, cut off at waist height. In a further gesture of spatial integration, the work surface protrudes beyond the kitchen into the living area to become the dining table. Bedrooms, too, are little more than pieces of furniture within the open space of the house. Despite the similarities between his work and the production of other 20th century Modernists (particularly those associated with New Brutalism), one could describe Lampens as their antithesis. He never belonged to a movement, never built abroad, and traveled little. He did not fraternise with the stars of the international firmament, with one exception: his work was once exhibited in Brazil with Oscar Niemeyer. Their stories could not be more different, but to this day the two share an ongoing friendship.





[SNCDA] [Structures]  
The house is composed of two concrete plates – the floor of the house and the roof, supported by a concrete wall and steel columns. Open plan. A composition of low-slung geometrical objects and suspended objects, arranged as subtly juxtaposed figures, delineate interior territories.

A stairway leads to the basement level. A massive concrete spout in the carport, a kitchen extractor hood in the living room. Sculptural window beams.

House Vandenhautte – Kiebooms, 1967, Huise (Zingem)  
East West Section  
Technical drawing: SNCDA, 2010

[SNCDA] [Integrated Landscapes]  
A continuous wall reinforces the integration of external and internal landscapes. Front and rear gardens merge into one.

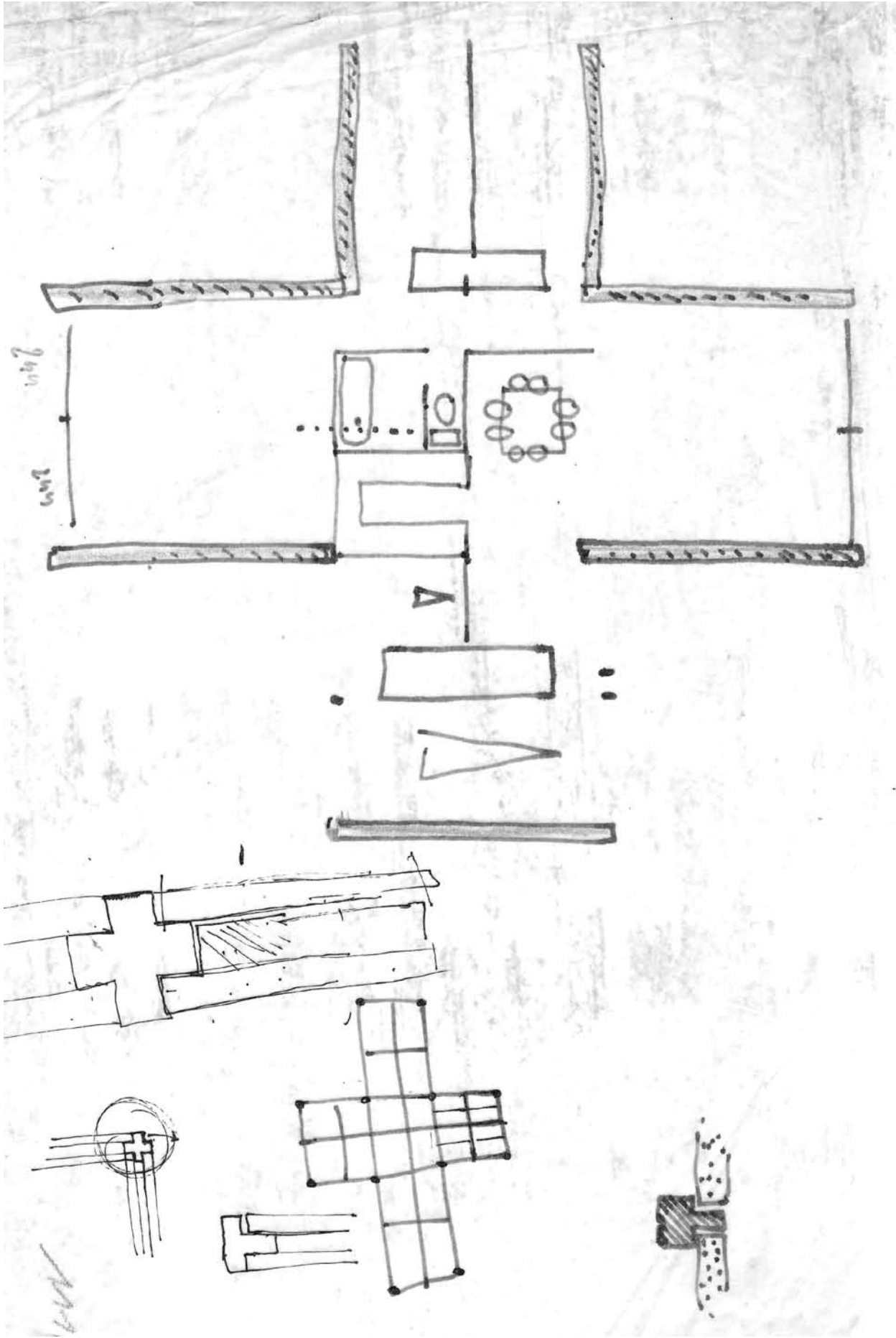
House Vandenhautte – Kiebooms, 1967, Huise (Zingem)  
Main entrance, Northwest façade  
Colour photograph  
Source: Juliaan Lampens Foundation











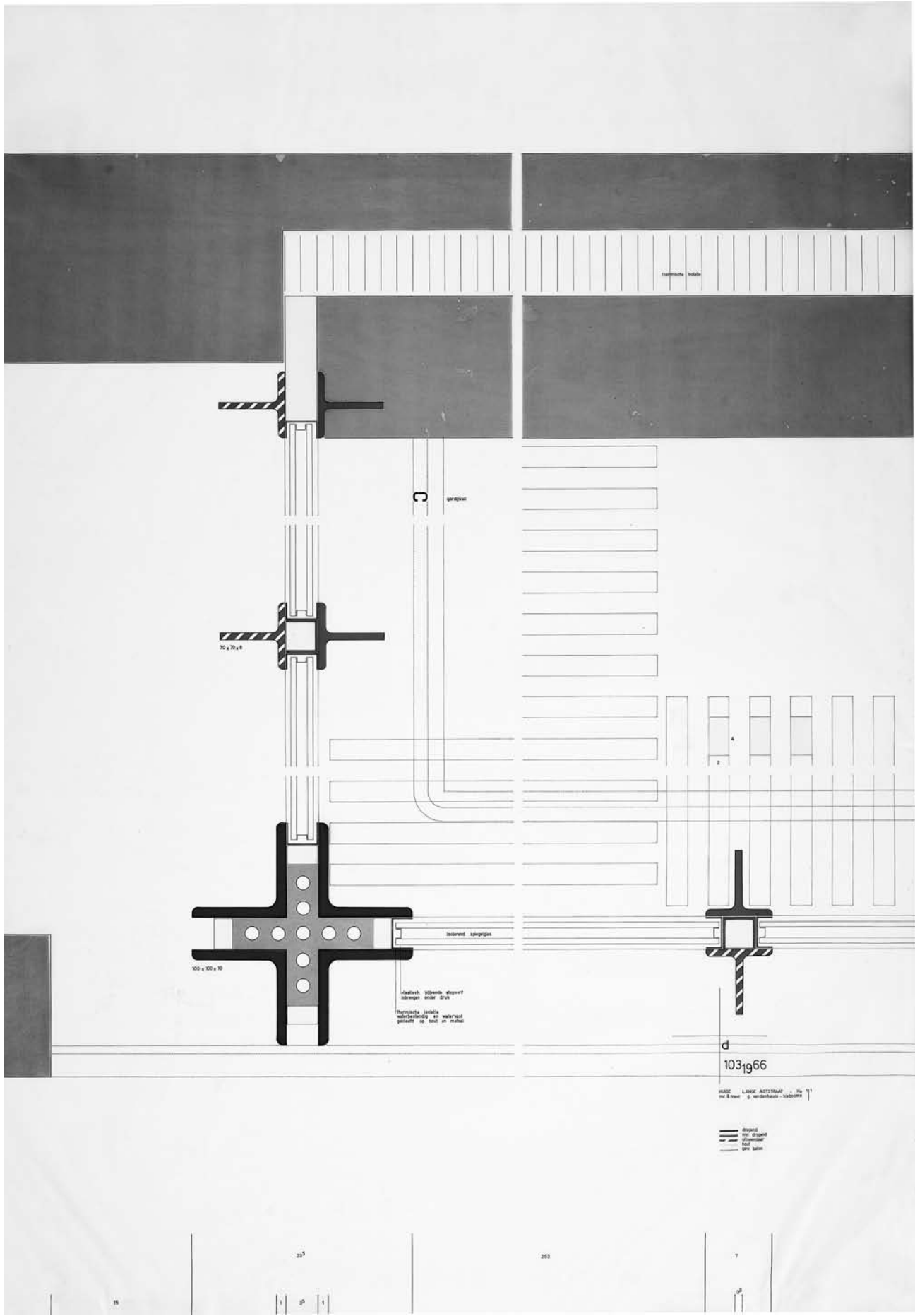
[SN-CDA] [Structures]  
Corner column detail transforms into the structural plan of a house.  
Function changes with size.

Pen sketch on tracing paper  
Source: Julian Lampens Foundation

[SN-CDA] [Details]  
Transformation of common L-beams into an explicit cruciform corner column.

House Vandenhaute – Kiebooms, 1967, Huise (Zingem)  
Horizontal detail of wall and glass façade connections.

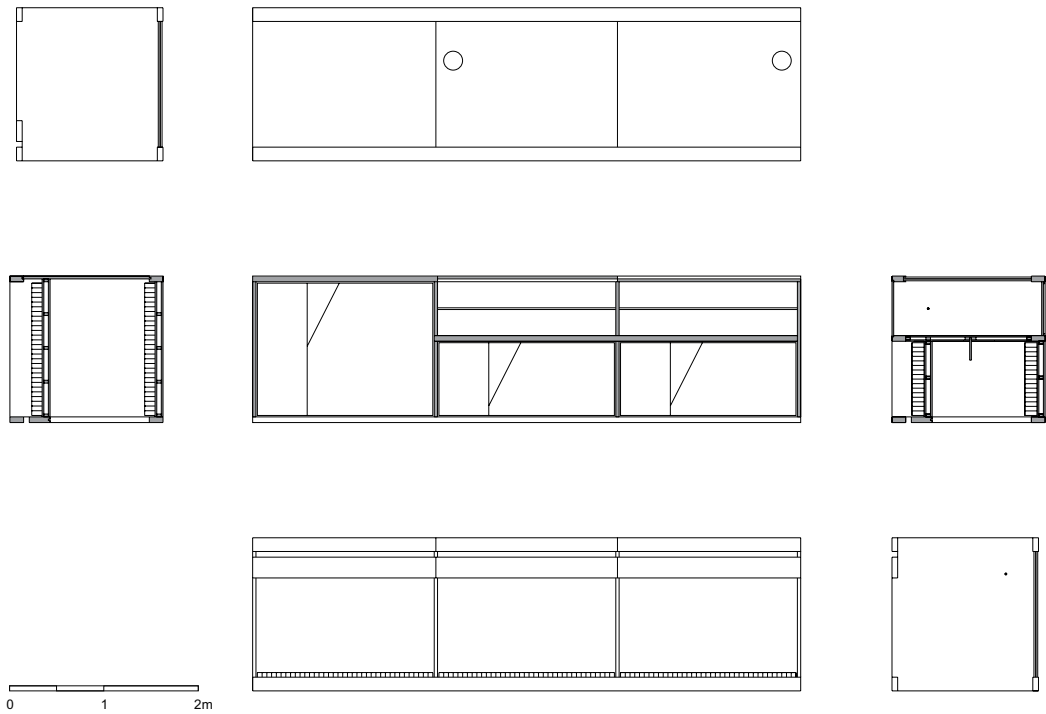
Ink drawing on tracing paper  
Source: Julian Lampens Foundation











0 1 2m

[SNCD] [Functional Shelter]  
Concrete roof (198.81m<sup>2</sup>) that functions as a shelter for the areas defined by furniture. A difference in height between the bedroom furniture (162cm), bathroom (162cm) and ceiling (250 cm) maximises the penetration of natural light. On the right, steel columns and glass panels separate the interior space and carport.

House Vandenhaute-Kiebooms,  
1967, Huise (Zingem)  
Picture taken at 1.70m  
Colour photograph  
Source: Julian Lampens Foundation

[SNCD] [Functional Objects]  
Bedroom furniture composed of double and single sleeping modules. Layout of beds and cupboards interchangeable over time. One or two or more possible night-zones in the house. Modular concept.

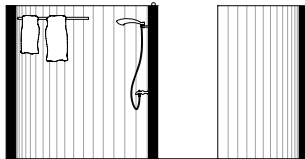
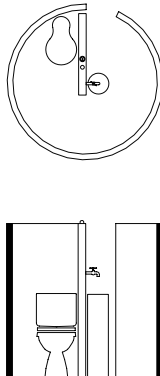
Beds and cupboards  
Plan, section, elevation  
Technical drawing.: SNCD, 2010

[SNCD] [Clear Shapes]  
In situ cast concrete bathroom cylinder. Precast toilet cylinder. No acoustic or olfactory privacy. Light switch and bulb on top of the separation wall.  
Standard bathroom fittings

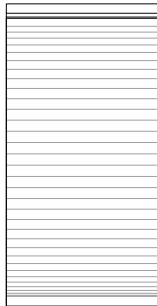
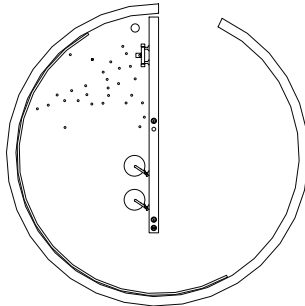
House Vandenhaute – Kiebooms  
1967, Huise (Zingem)  
Plan, section, elevation  
Technical drawing: SNCD, 2010

[SNCD] [Pure Materials]  
On the right, wooden bed furniture. On the left, concrete cylinders for toilet and bathroom. In the back, the living room and kitchen. Polished concrete floor with a grid of expansion joints.

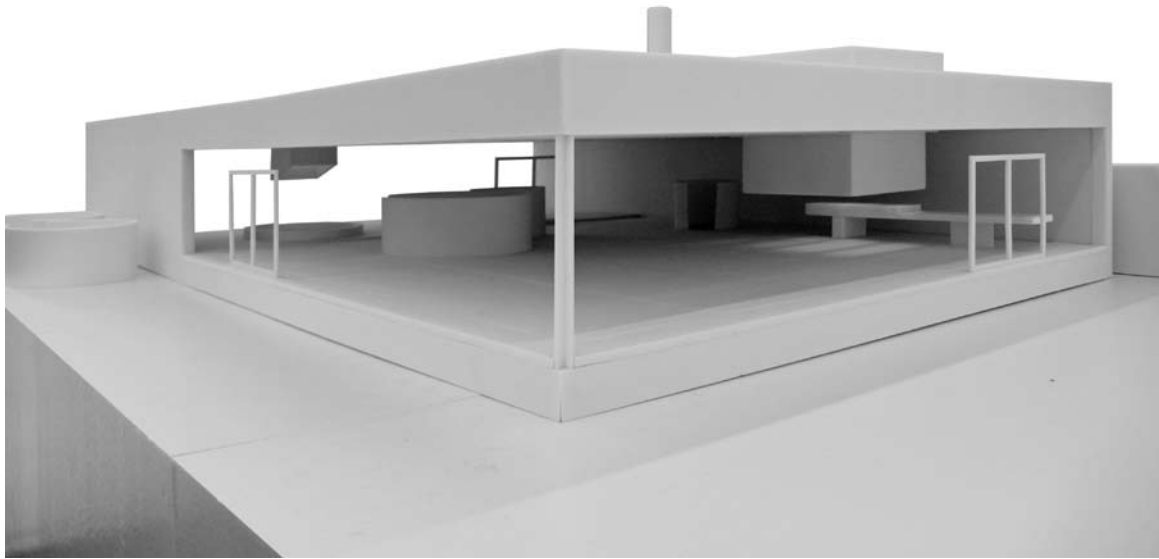
House Vandenhaute-Kiebooms,  
1967, Huise (Zingem)  
Colour photograph  
Source: Julian Lampens Foundation



0 1 2m



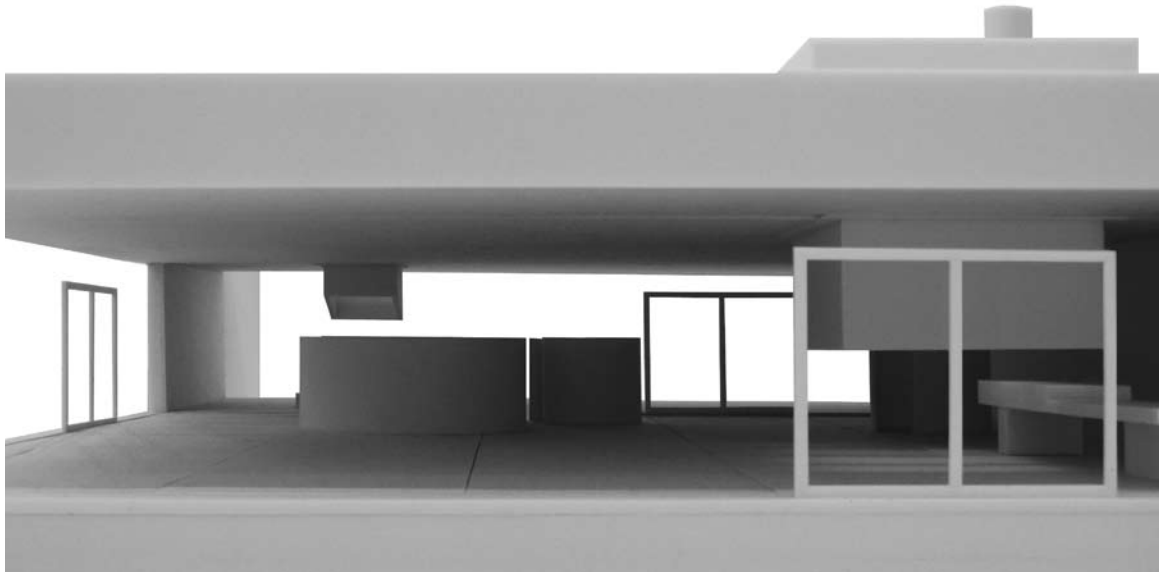




[SNCDA] [Integrated Landscapes]  
The interplay of low objects inside and outside the house configures various zones of the garden and house and creates an effective continuity between exterior and interior. Boundaries between inside and outside disappear. Geometrical shapes

define the layout of the house and its surroundings. The interior is perfectly transparent within as well as in its aspect toward the outside terrain; rooms, walls, doors, loose furniture... all have been transformed; a puritanical vision of living.

House Vandenhaute-Kiebooms,  
1967, Huise (Zingem)  
Northeast view  
Foam Model 1/20. SNCDA, 2009



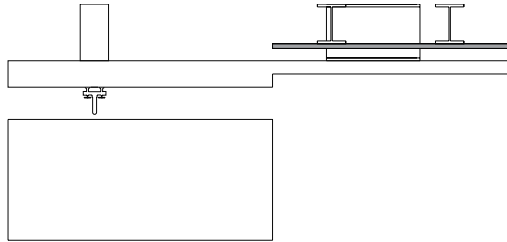
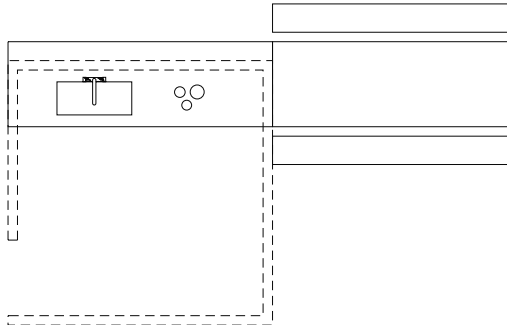
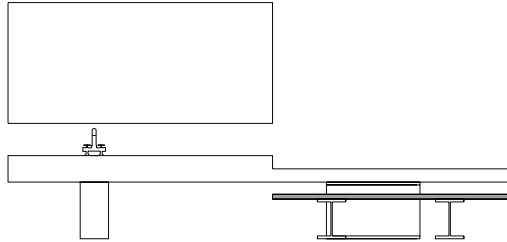
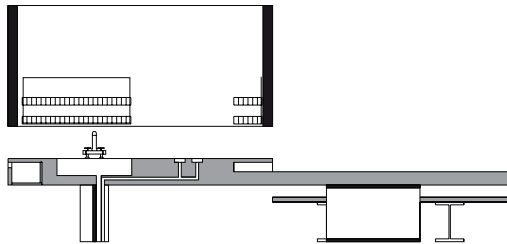
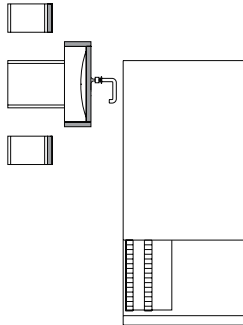
[SNCDA] [Functional Shelter]  
Spatial partition achieved by way of freestanding objects. The ceiling plane extends the perspective toward the exterior, in order to suggest an infinitely receding space. The ground floor level is open in all directions, with the exception of the street view (to the right in the picture), the garden shed, and

the cylindrical rubbish bins (to the left in the picture), where a concrete wall obstructs the view.

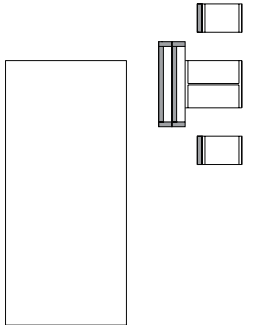
House Vandenhaute-Kiebooms,  
1967, Huise (Zingem)  
North view  
Foam Model 1/20. SNCDA, 2009

[SNCDA] [Clear Shapes]  
Prisms  
Concrete light shaft and ventilation shaft delineate kitchen space and function as cupboard.

House Vandenhaute – Kiebooms,  
1967, Huise (Zingem)  
Plan, section, elevation  
Technical drawing: SNCDA, 2010



0 1 2m











## INTERVIEW WITH WOUTER VANDENHAUTE

Angelique Campens

‘In der Beschränkung zeigt sich  
erst der Meister’  
(‘None proves a master but  
by limitation’)

Wouter Vandenhoute (b. 1962), former Belgian sports journalist, programme maker and managing director of the production company Woestijnvis, spent his childhood and adolescence in the house where Juliaan Lampens executed his most radical open plan. This discussion explores how Wouter Vandenhoute looks back now, a few decades later, on growing-up within the context of this architecture. How was someone with a brother and two sisters raised in a house in which the kitchen, living room, bedroom and bathroom form one single large open space? A house without columns, where walls have been omitted and where there are visible connections between different areas.

Angelique Campens — Were you aware as a child that you did not live in a house like that of most other kids, or did you take the way you were living in a rather atypical home as something normal?

Wouter Vandenhoute — As a child, you’re much less concerned with architecture, spaciousness, aesthetics and a sense of proportion. We hardly ever went to play at other kids’ houses either. When we played with others, it was always outside. I remember well that it was fantastic to play inside our house. For example, I spent hours and hours at home playing football, which other children could not possibly do. We just found those kinds of things natural.

AC — Do you think this open way of living has had a certain influence on how you and your siblings deal with others?

WV — I honestly do not think that a house can determine someone’s personality. We four, that is to say, my brother, my sisters and me all have very different characters and I think that living in an open plan house is easier

for those who are naturally more sociable. Since I’m an open and sociable person, I’ve perhaps experienced more advantages than disadvantages. But there are definitely downsides to open plan living, things that we discovered especially during our teenage years. If my parents received visitors in the evening, for example, I was often annoyed by the noise. Not that it was so very noisy, but I slept in a sleeping-container that was open at the top and so was susceptible to light and noise. As a child, I rarely experienced the open plan space as a disadvantage, but of course, that’s not necessarily the case. If one of us was ill, for example, then the whole house was ill. These are things to be reckoned with. In our house, we opted to close off the rooms. I would still be able to live in my parents’ house now, but preferably as a single person, or as a couple without children.

AC — A way of living that doesn’t place restrictions on your freedom, on your privacy, especially if you live there with children?

WV — Personally, I never experienced it as a limitation to freedom. That was also another generation, another spirit. It was the sixties, small is beautiful. At home, important feelings weren’t spoken about. We received a good education, had everything we wanted, but when we were eighteen, we had to find digs and stand on our own two feet. I’ve never experienced that as a disadvantage. I’ve actually never felt the need to have a conversation with my parents about how they managed in the house as a couple with young children growing up. On my eighteenth birthday, I went to study Sport in Leuven and after my studies, I suddenly noticed the difference with other houses. Now, every time I come back, I find it a great house, a place where you can quietly grow old. My father is now seventy-six and my mother is seventy-two, and there are no stairs, for example. Everything is on one level, without rooms. The house therefore has a tremendous sense of space, where you live together with nature. What I also find clever is that it makes no difference whether you are two years old or twenty. The house is never too big or too small because everything merges together. Concerning comfort, it’s very simple, but all you need is there. Proportionally, there is much attention paid to comfort these days.



How we live in the Western world is really not the norm.

AC — To what extent were your parents involved in the design and construction of the house?

WV — I think it mostly boiled down to the trusting relationship between Juliaan and my father; my parents felt comfortable with Juliaan as an architect. I naturally base this on how I see the underlying relationship between my parents and Juliaan today. How it was in the sixties exactly, I cannot really know. I was too young.

AC — In Juliaan Lampens own house, there's also an open plan, but only in your parents' place is that plan carried out to such an extreme. Juliaan told me he received that freedom from your father and felt that he could go further.

WV — Juliaan and my father quickly became friends and still are to this day. My father had first bought a piece of land in Sint-Amandsberg and wanted to build a house with an architect he had gone to school with. Then my father came across Lampens' house and got to know Juliaan. Eventually they then went together to have a look at the piece of land in Sint-Amandsberg and Juliaan advised my father to build there. My father was in his mid-thirties and Juliaan in his mid-forties, and it must have immediately clicked between them. I think that's very clear. With all I do in life, for example, a lot is also based on trust, and chance encounters with people often lead to a collaboration.

AC — That's true, but for an architect, and especially in Flanders, it is not usual to receive that kind of freedom from your client, is it?

WV — I work with creative people as well, and it is just those people you really should give space to. I assume, moreover, that a good architect takes into account the wishes of his client. Juliaan has certainly not forced his vision onto my parents. As an architect, you are really dependent on your client. An artist is much less dependent on society. As an artist, you are free. You do what you want and your work is acknowledged, or not.

As an architect, you are dependent on a client and on his or her means. I am convinced that if Juliaan — in a certain phase of his professional life — had met a few people with the same vision as that of my father and with more resources, it would have helped him to advance in a number of areas. Then he could have developed faster, realised larger projects. Ultimately, we live in a very small society, especially in Flanders; everyone knows one another, and contrary to what is often assumed, that is not always so negative. Usually a link is immediately made with corruption, or nepotism, while it is often simply about trust. You always need someone who believes in your project.

AC — Is that not also perhaps due to the fact that Juliaan is not so communicative? If you compare him to other architects at that time, who all traveled from here, there and everywhere to make contacts. Juliaan was a lot less interested in that kind of thing.

WV — Maybe so, but even though Juliaan Lampens doesn't have such a big body of work, he is now internationally recognized and considered one of the leading Belgian architects. But however you look at it, as an architect, you want above all else to realise houses and projects, and in relation to his talent, he has, in my opinion, received insufficient resources to do this. But as they say, 'In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister'. And you see that in my parents' house. That fits perfectly with his restrained minimalism.

AC — I find the period between 1960 and 1975 the most exciting. After the chapel, Vanwassenhove, and the library, he never achieved anything else so fantastic. It seems as if he only applied nuance, or that more compromise crept into his work. Indeed, perhaps he was not given the opportunity to be able to work to such an extreme?

WV — Things are indeed dependent on the client. I very much regret that our project with Juliaan in Heverlee could not continue. I'm really happy with our apartment at the seaside that we worked on with Juliaan in the mid-1990s, because I'm convinced that in fifty years it will still be exemplary. There too, Juliaan was given carte blanche. He advised

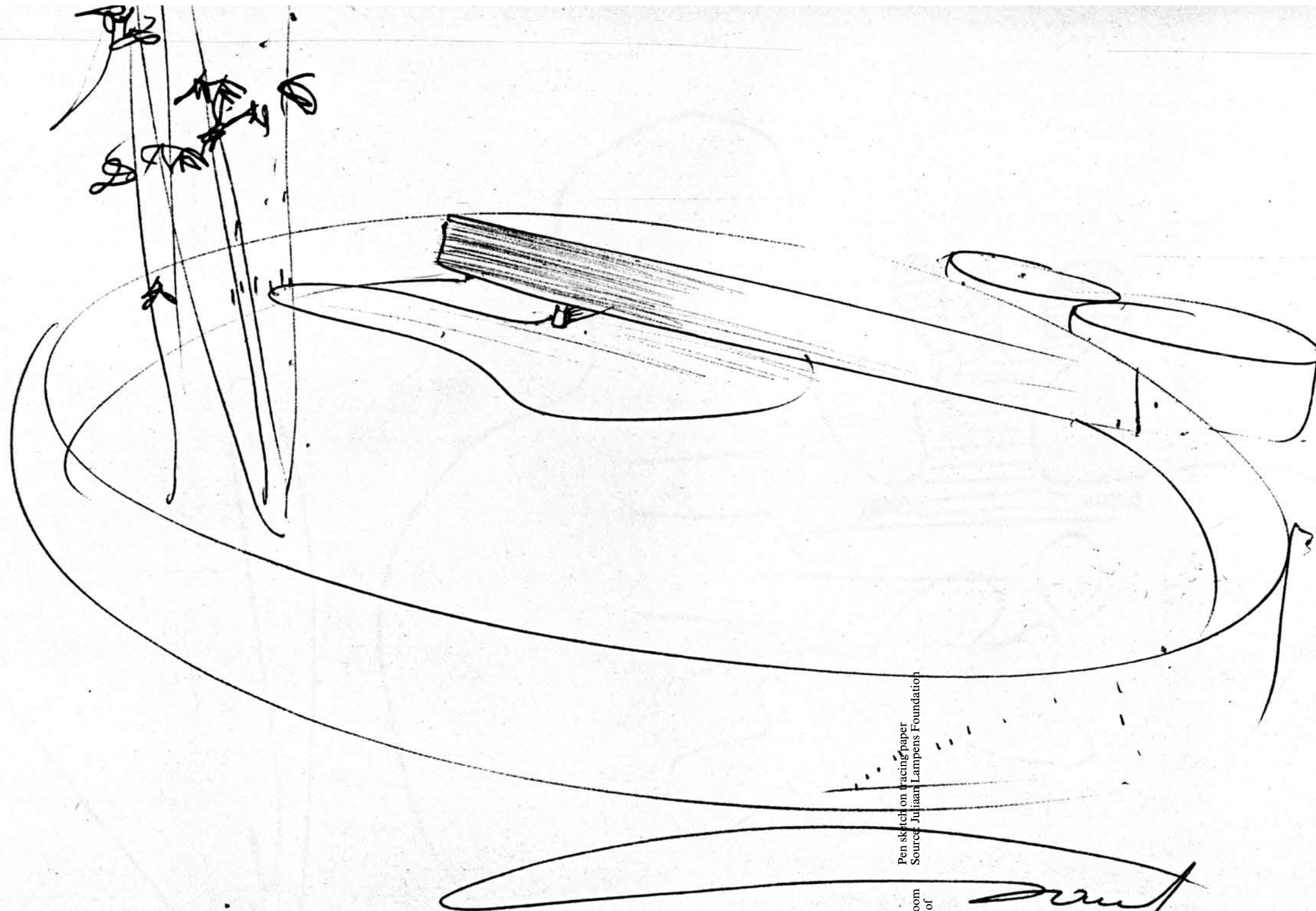
us on which apartment we should buy, the resources, choice of materials, and so on.

AC — Has the house in Huise had an influence on the development of your aesthetic sense, do you think?

WV — I find that a very difficult question. Aesthetic sense, like everything, is the sum of genetic and environmental factors. That I am the child of my parents will undoubtedly have influenced me, but to what extent? I can enjoy beautiful architecture, art, clothing, etc... I can enjoy all that is beautiful, but I'm not constantly occupied by it. I do notice that every time I go home to my parents' place, the house takes me back, and similarly, every time I'm at sea, I am also fully able to enjoy it. But what does this mean? I like to cycle a lot and also enjoy the aesthetics of a bicycle. Riding on a good and beautiful bike, and then cleaning it up after a long ride, for me that brings the same kind of enjoyment.

AC — In that kind of architecture, is it pretty much about the sanctification of the space?

WV — That is something that I experience less. For me, it's just our house: the house where my parents live and where I feel good. I find it a much more normal house than many other houses. Occasionally, I may come across a house in which I think I could live, but much more often I come into homes in which I think I could never live. My parents' house is, in my opinion, much more the norm than any other house. It makes me think of what we do at Woestijnvis. The way we run Woestijnvis may not be the normal way, but we find what we do very normal. Moreover, we even find it to be how things should be.

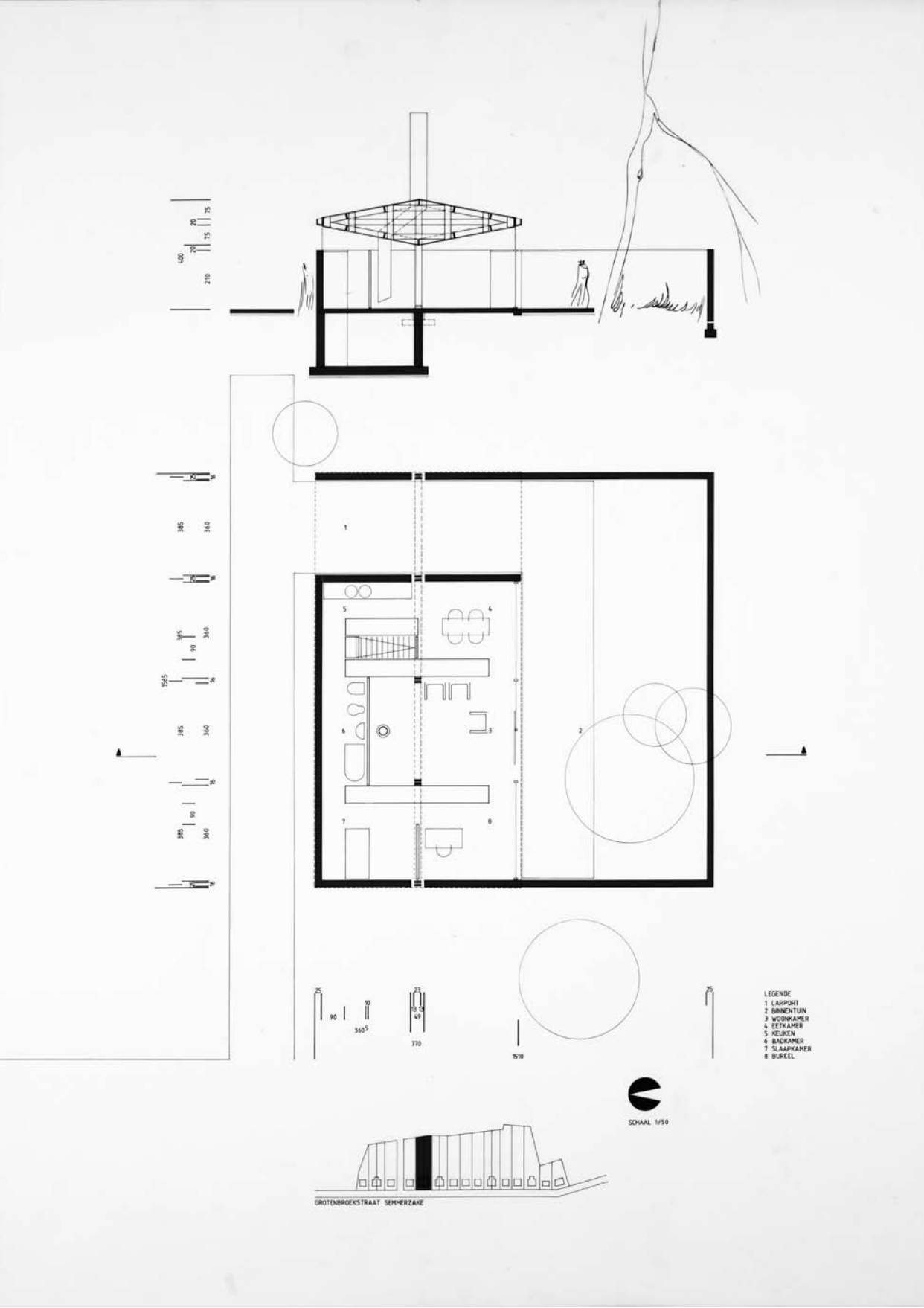


Pen sketch on tracing paper  
Source: Julian Lampens Foundation

[SN/CDA] [Functional Objects]  
Function changes with size. Bedroom  
cylinder transforms into the plan of  
a house.

21.5/10.



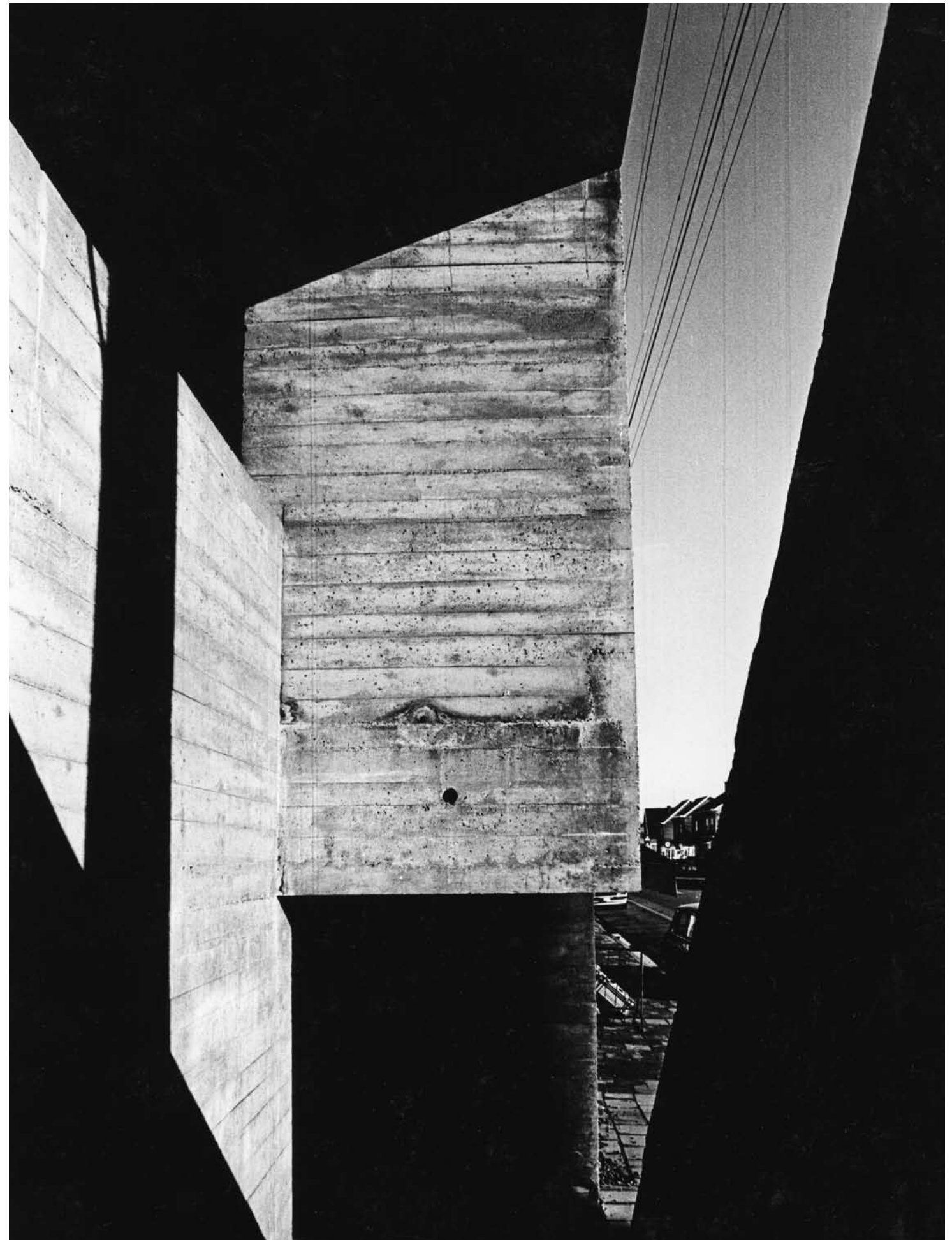


HOUSE DIANE LAMPENS 1968

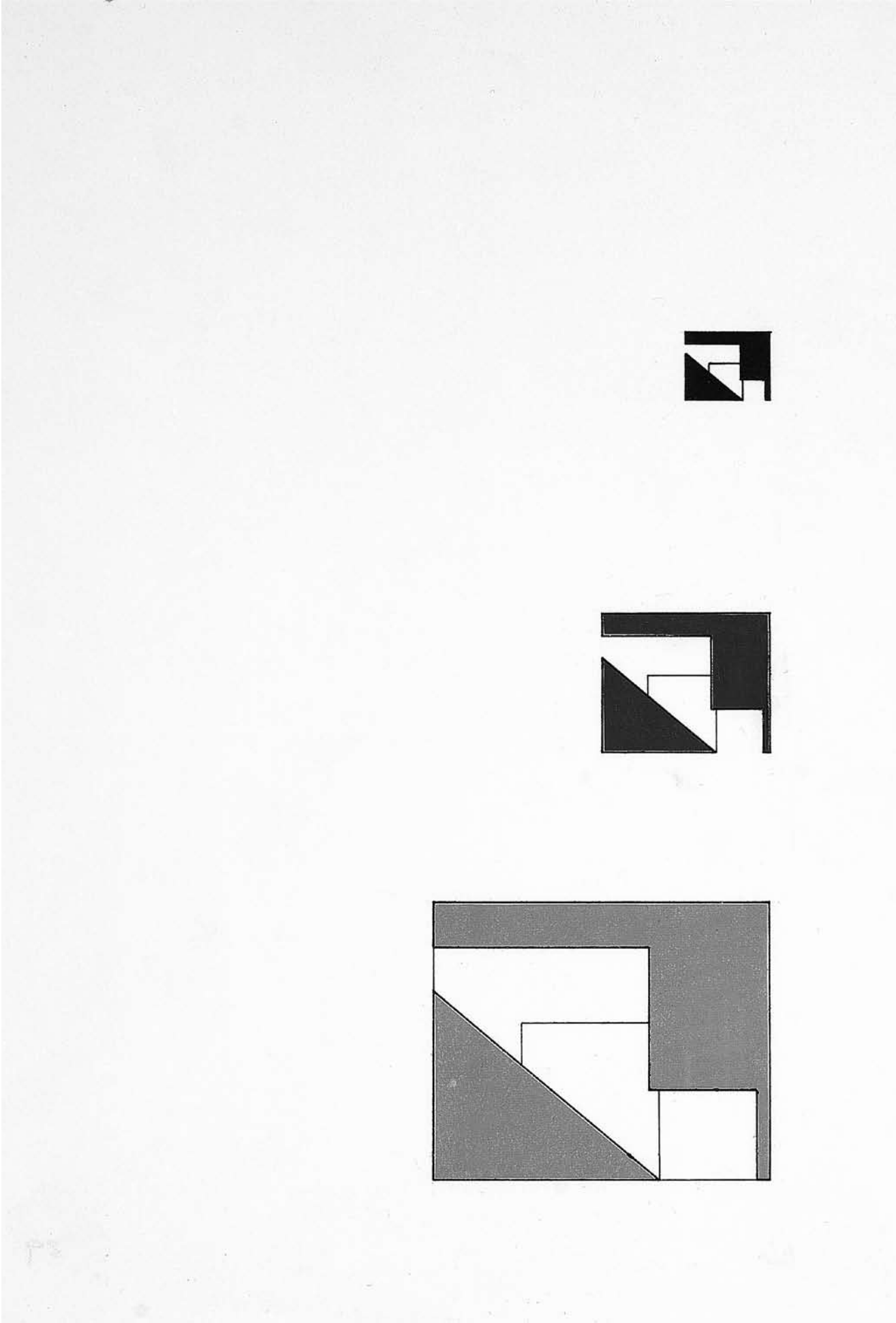
[SN]CDA] [Clear Shapes]  
A horizontally extruded rhomb  
becomes a roof. A vertically extruded  
rectangle defines the internal perim-  
eter of the house.



APARTMENTS OOSTDUINKERKE 1969

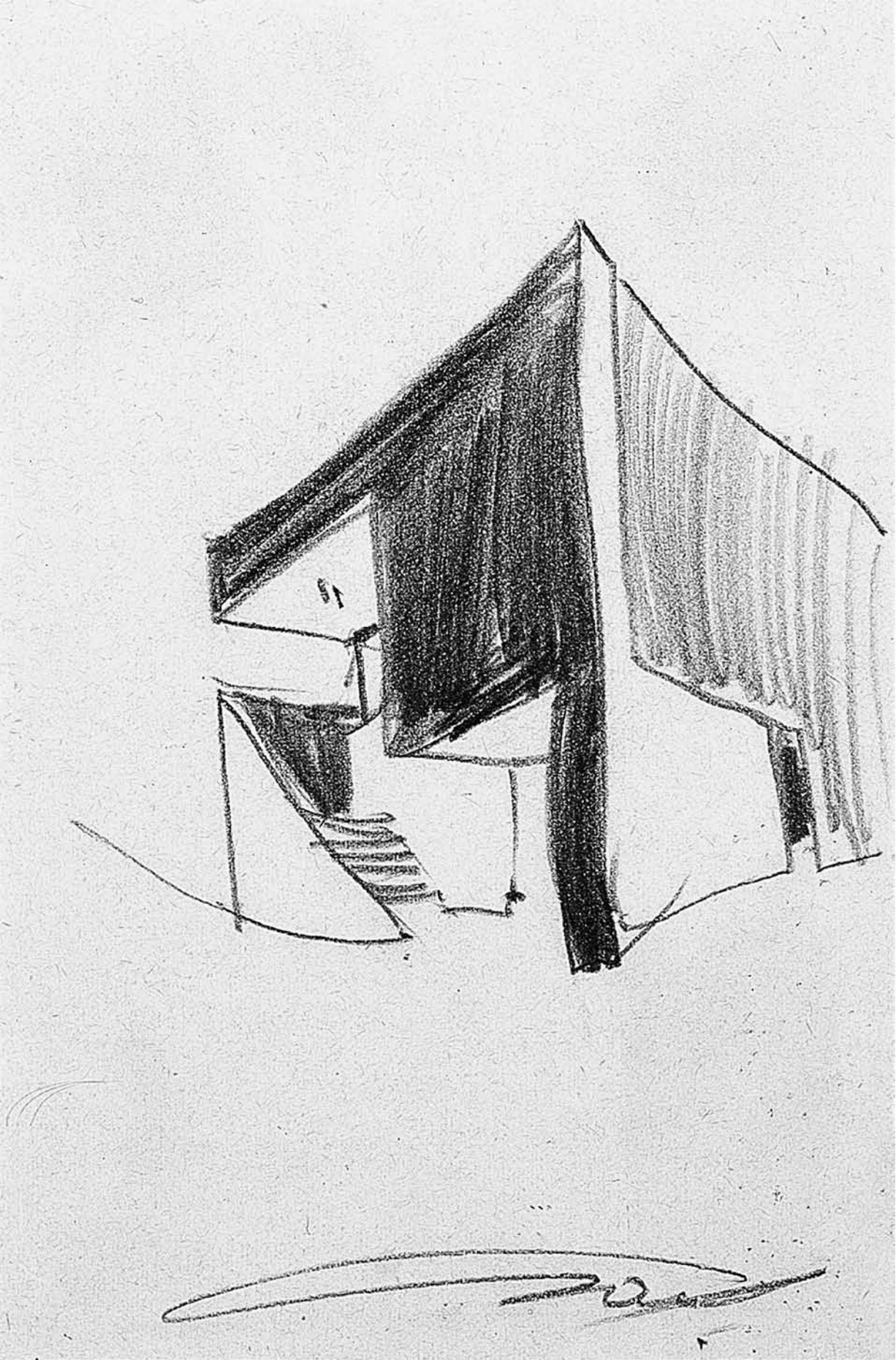






[SN CDA] [Clear Shapes]  
Prisms  
Library: Main façade.

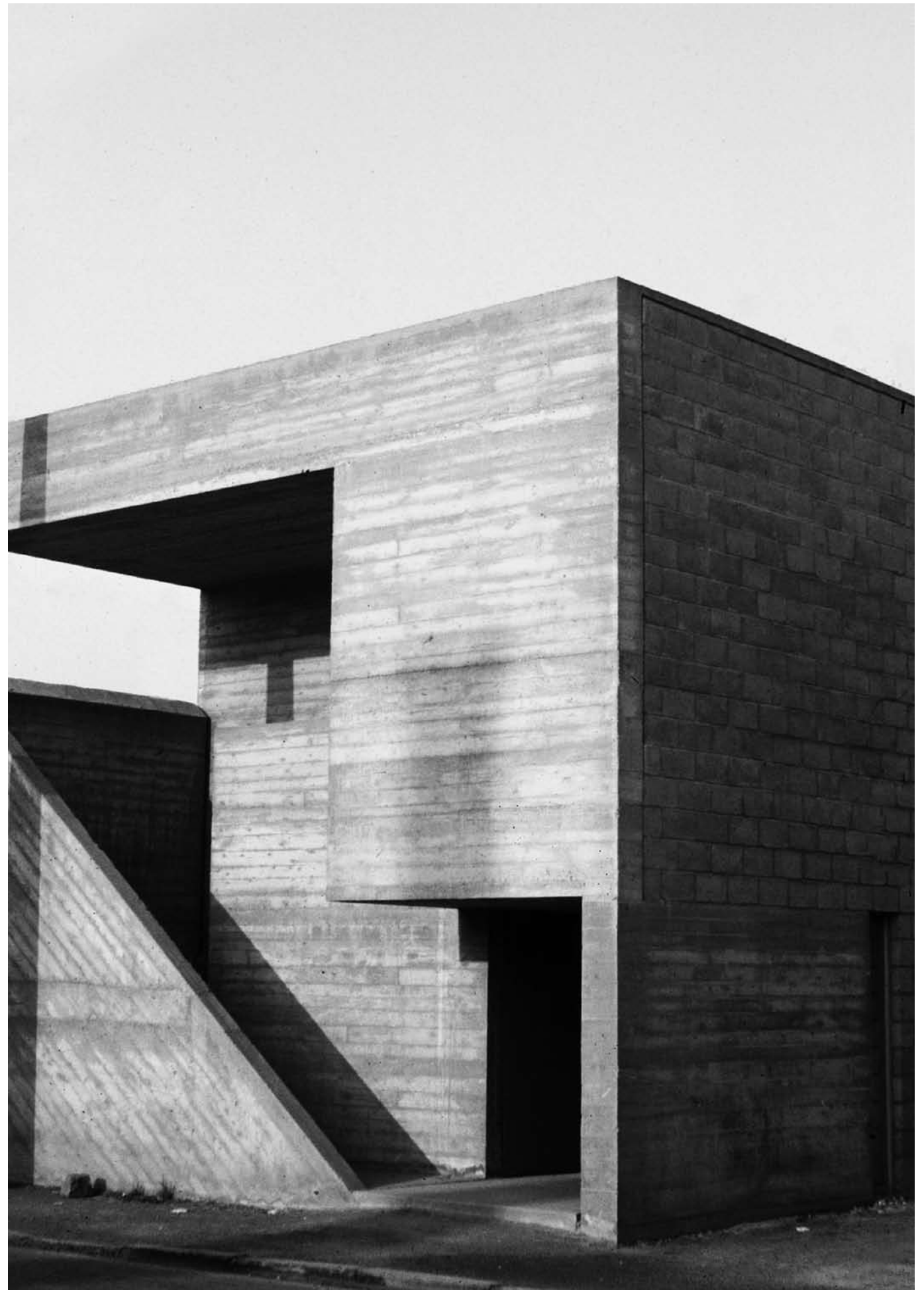
Public Library  
1970, Eke (Nazareth)  
Ink drawing on tracing paper  
Source: Juliana Lampens Foundation





Public Library,  
1970, Elke (Nazareth)  
Main space with reading room  
Colour photograph  
Source: Juliaan Lampens Foundation

[SNCD A] [Functional Objects]  
In the front, wooden prisms: a table  
and stools.





































































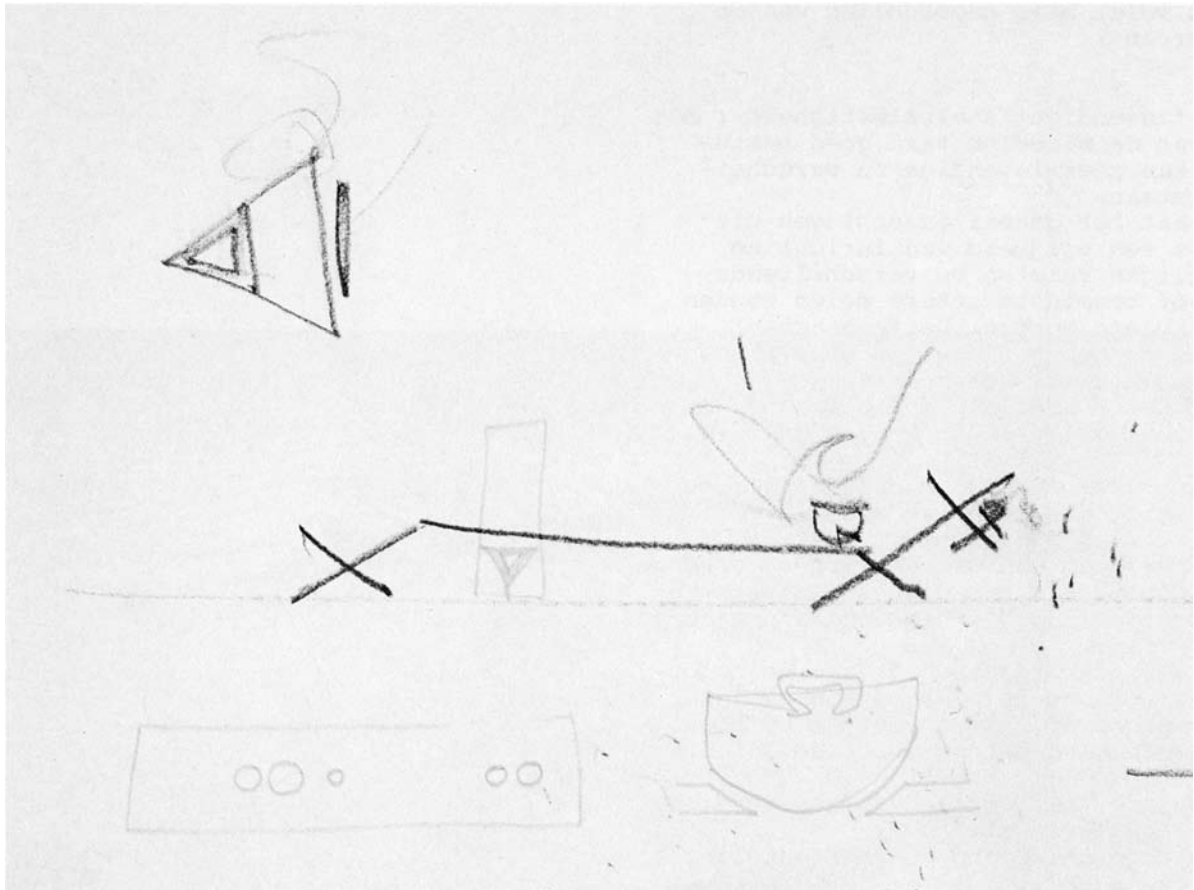


## PROPORTION

is not size  
is not weight  
is not form  
is not an idea  
is not studied planning — IS PLANNING IN ITSELF  
is not large or small — IS LARGE AND SMALL — IS GRAND  
is not heavy or light — is weightless — not weighty  
is not much or little — IS EVERYTHING  
is not beginning or end — IS BEGINNING AND END — boundless  
is not sense or logic — is emotionally LOGICAL  
is not known is not practicable — IS ABLE TO BE EXPERIENCED  
is now and before and tomorrow — IS ALWAYS  
is new and old — is newer than NEW, OLDER THAN OLD  
is unchangeable, is renewable, not reproducible  
is not science  
is not technique  
is not goal  
is not effectiveness  
is not moderation  
is not fashion  
is not trend  
is not fixed — is definable  
is not a solution  
is not a luxury — is wealth In SIMPLICITY  
is intrinsically valuable  
is unsubstantial substance  
is corporeality begotten by spirit  
is absent presence — enriching occupancy  
is unconfined space within spatiality  
is extraordinarily ordinary

Excerpt from a text by Juliaan Lampens  
explaining his ideas on proportion.

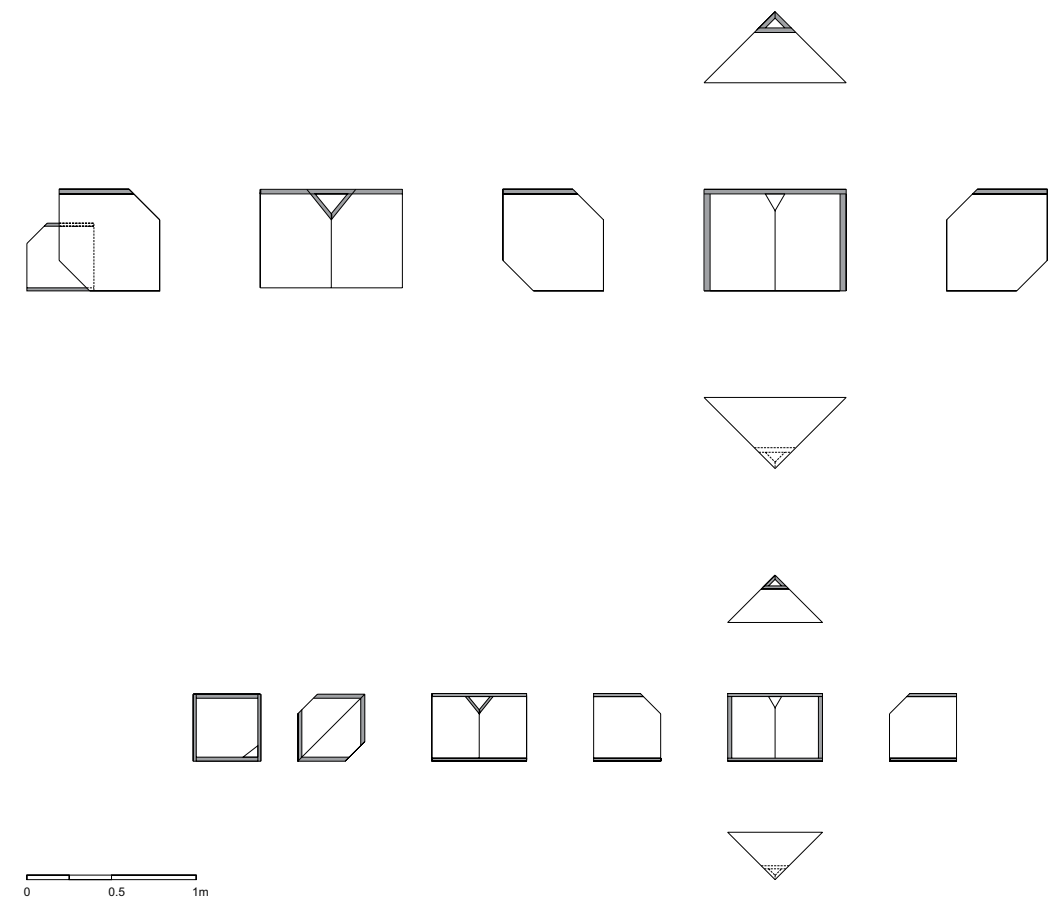
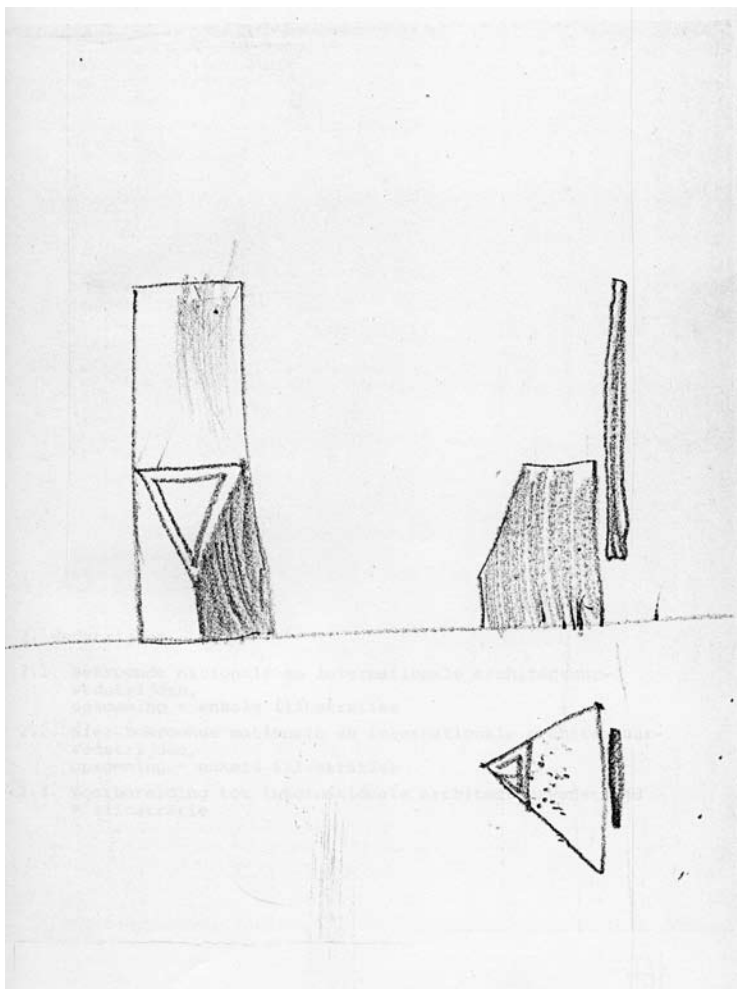
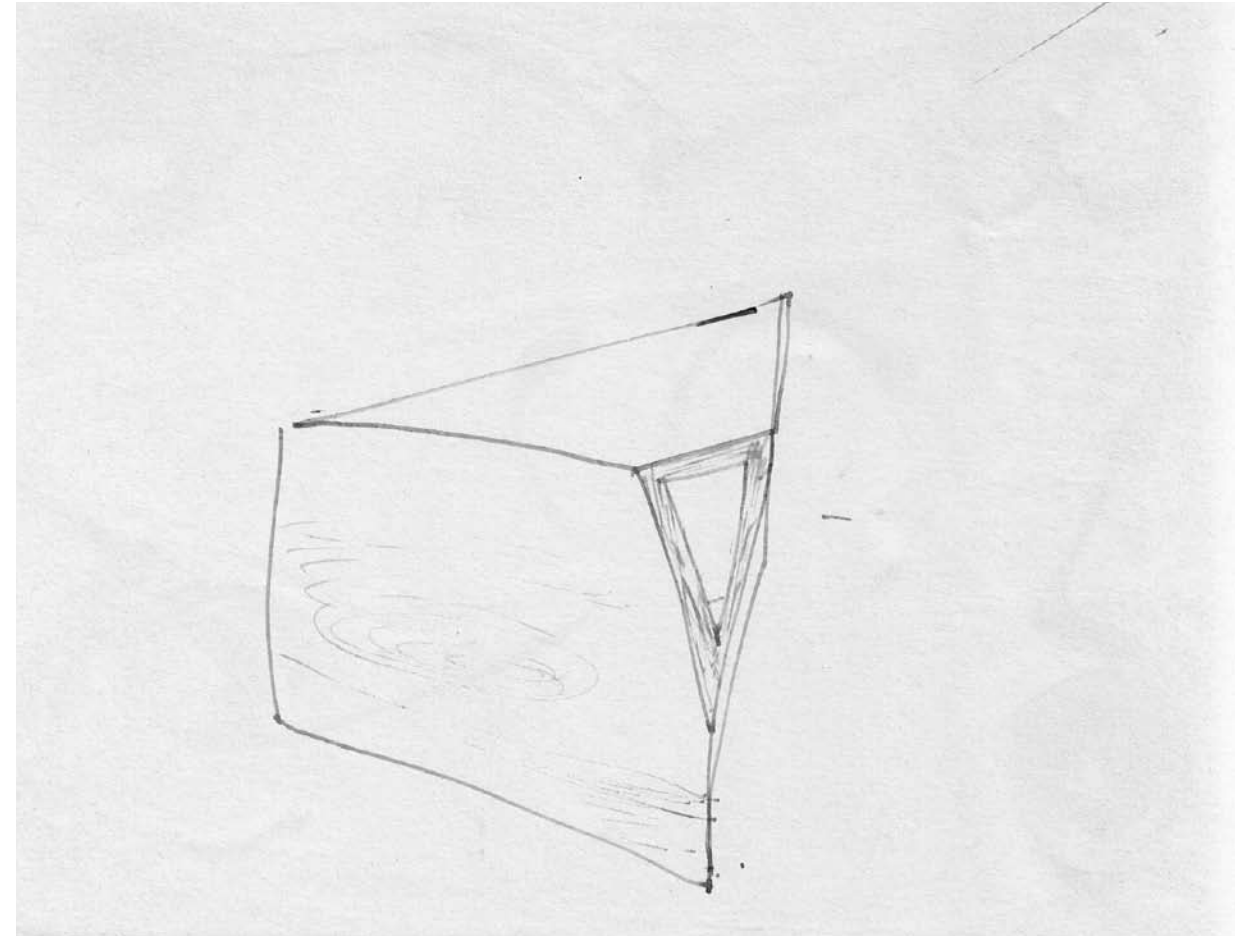




[SNCDA] [Pure Materials]  
A triangular stool. Back view per-  
spective. A reference to the materials  
and the final assembling.

Tables (top) and Stools (bottom)  
Technical drawing. SNCDA, 2010

[SNCDA] [Functional Objects]  
Plan, section, elevation, composi-  
tion. Function changes with size.







HOUSE DERWAE – THIENPONT 1973

[SN CDA] [Pure Materials]  
In the front, a table with a wooden top and a bench with a wooden seat, both with I-beam legs. In the middle,

two wooden stools. At the back, the penetration of natural light above timber cupboards.

House Derwael – Thienpont, 1973, Gavere  
Colour photograph  
Source: Juliaan Lampens Foundation

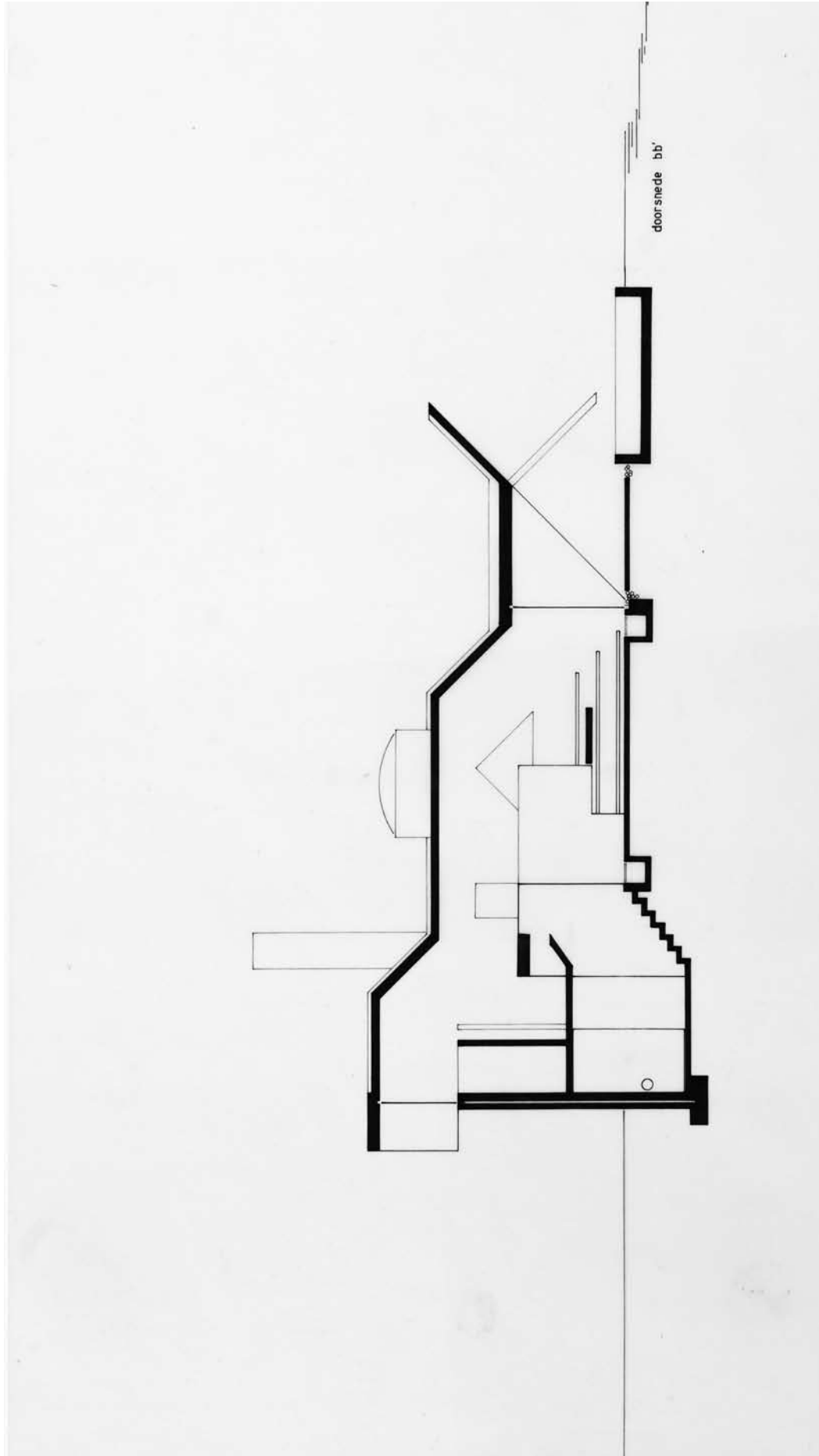
[SN CDA] [Structures]  
At one end, the roof rests on a beam. At the other end, it rests on a band of windows. Roof-weight supported by assembled L-profiles, non-structural

brick walls. An apparent contradiction exists between the load-carrying columns and the 2.07m high decorative walls.

House Derwael – Thienpont, 1973, Gavere  
South façade  
Colour photograph  
Source: Juliaan Lampens Foundation







[SN CDA] [Functional Shelter]  
A singular sculptural roof enhances the interior space by demarcating the different sectors.

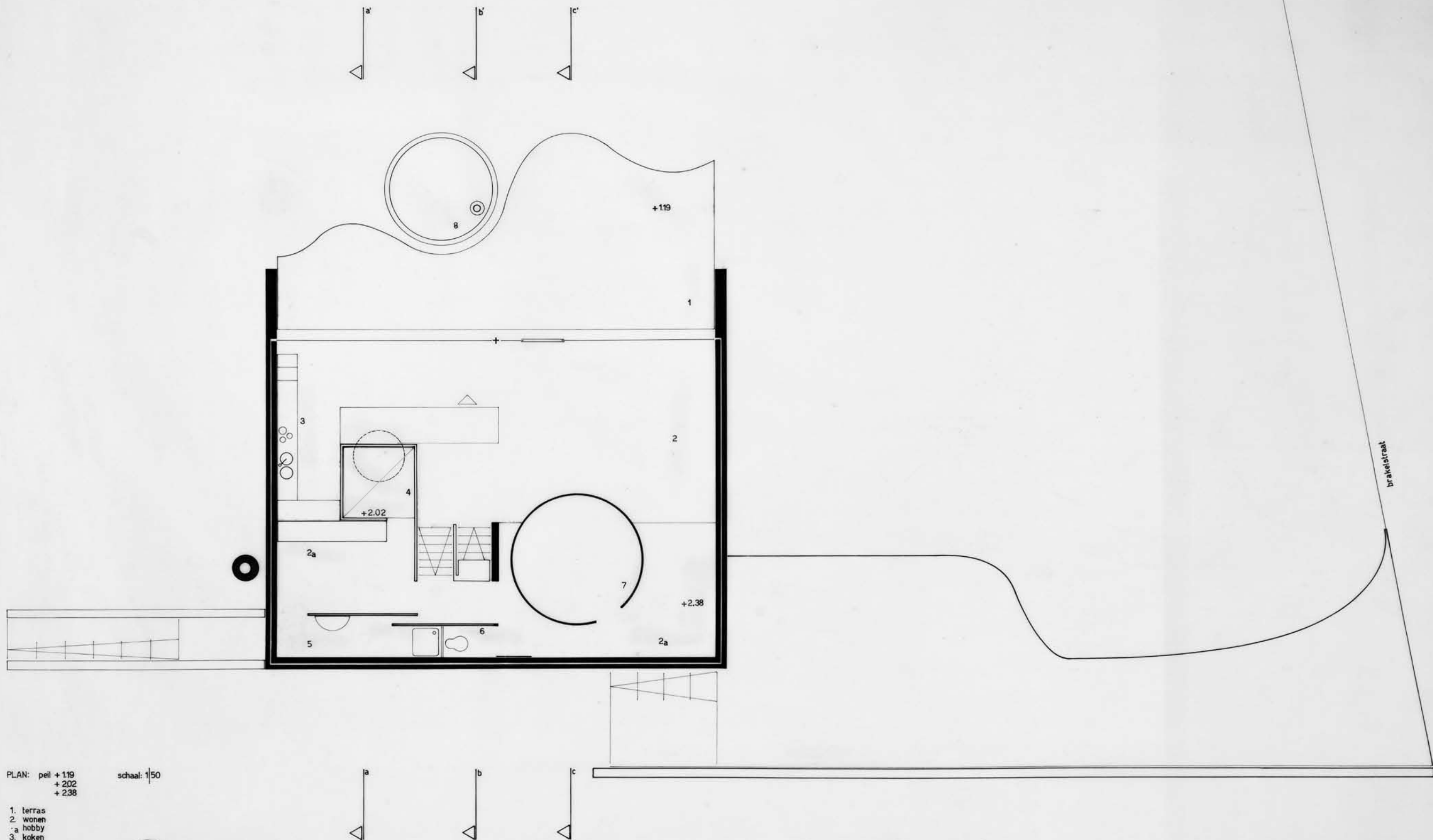
House Van Wassenhove,  
1974, Sint-Martens-Latem  
East West Section  
Ink drawing on tracing paper  
Source: Juliaan Lampens Foundation



[SN CDA] [Functional Shelter]  
The stepped shape of the freeform roof follows the declining level of the site, and defines the overall external volume. The basin created at the lowest part, informs the gutter. Bands of windows light the space.

House Van Wassenhove,  
1974, Sint-Martens-Latem  
Construction site and garden façade North East  
Colour photograph  
Source: Juliaan Lampens Foundation





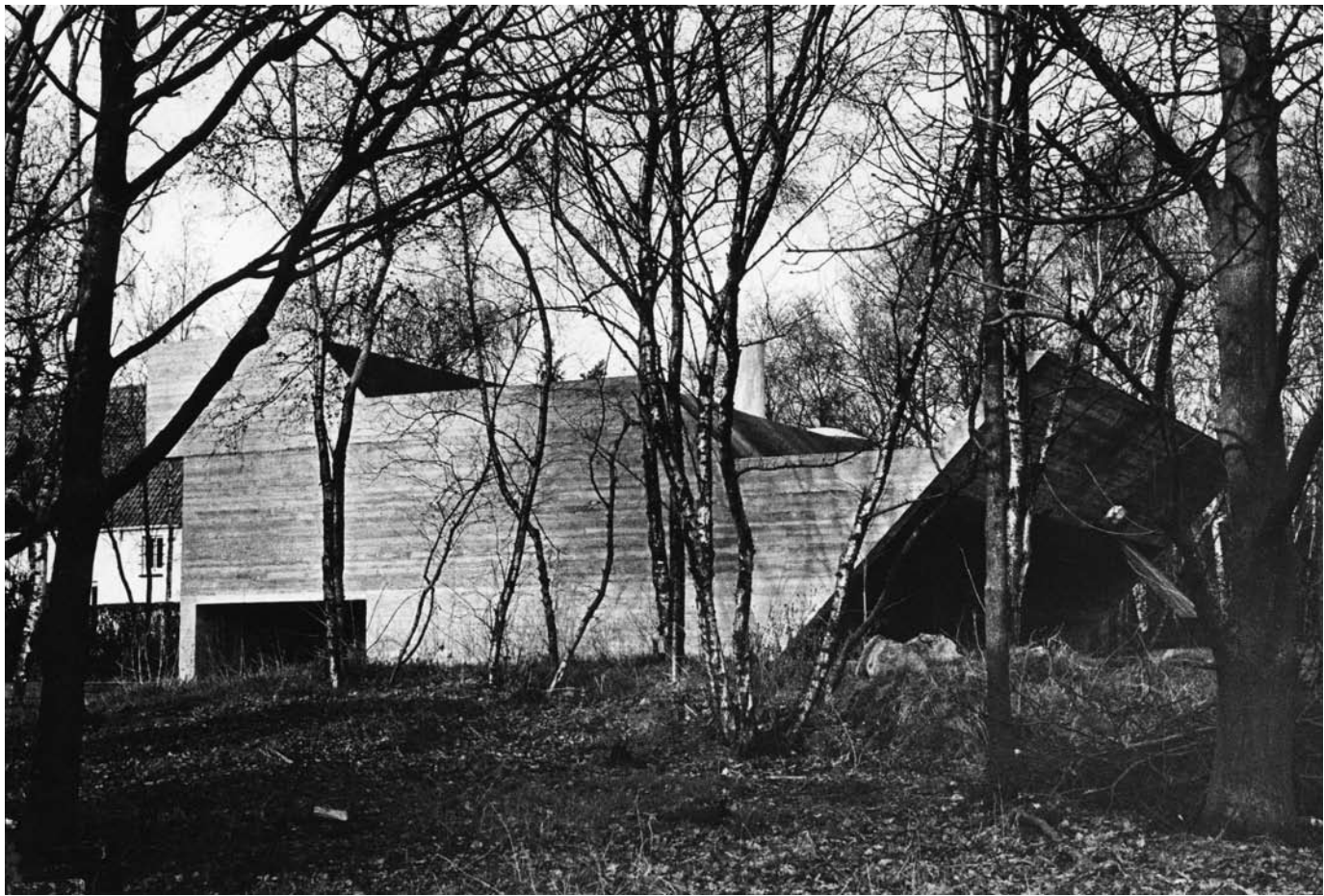
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+202  
+238

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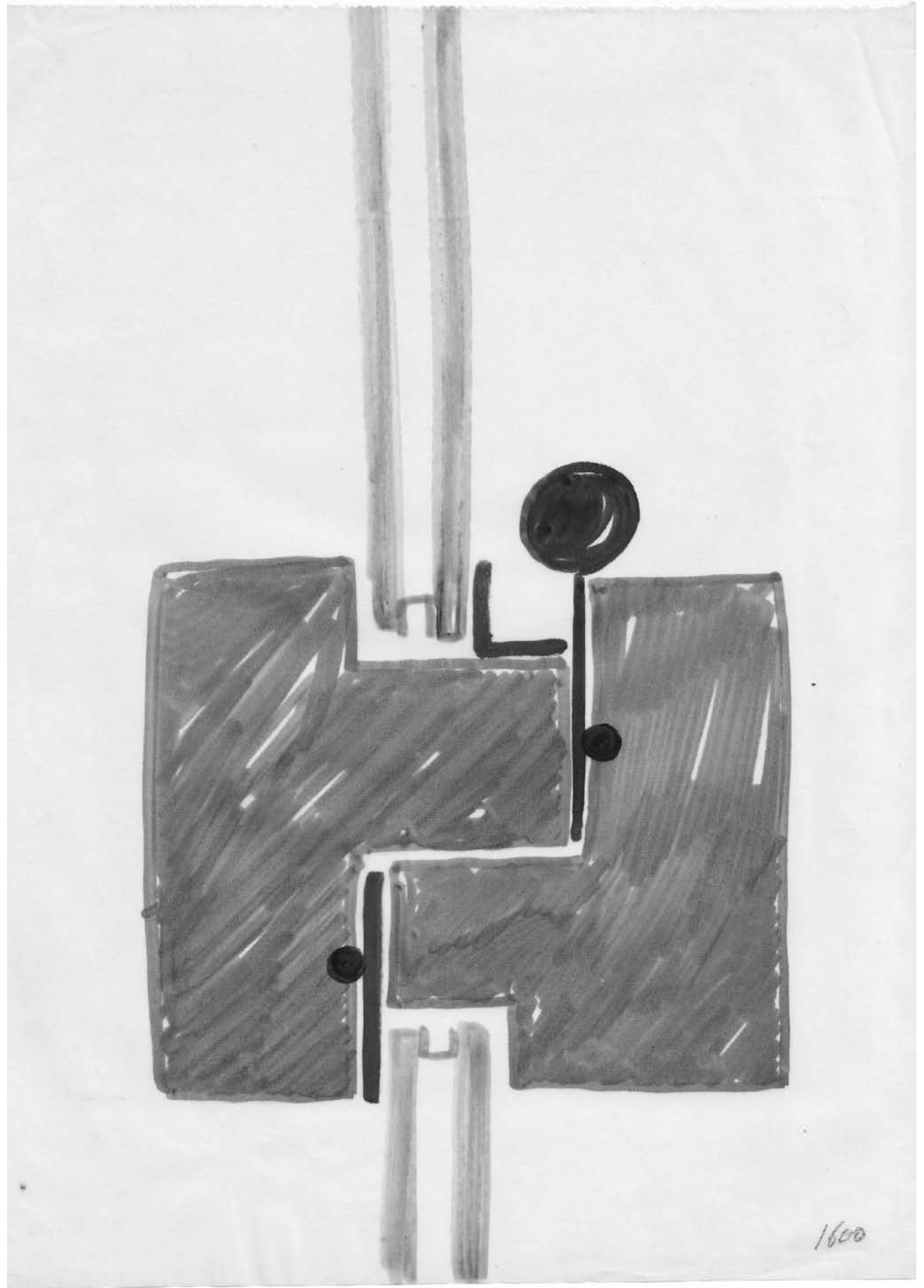
- 1. terras
- 2. wonen
- 2a. hobby
- 3. koken
- 4. studie
- 5. bad
- 6. wc
- 7. slapen
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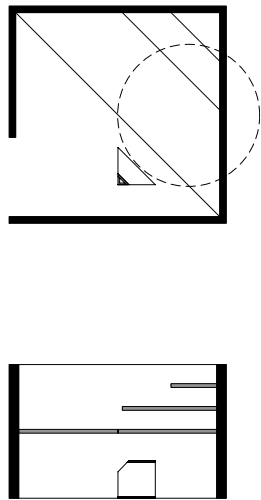
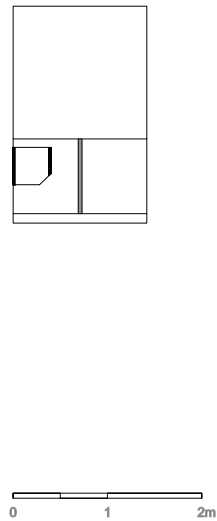


House Van Wassenhove,  
1974, Sint-Martens-Latem  
Felt-tip marker on tracing paper  
Source: Juliaan Lampens Foundation



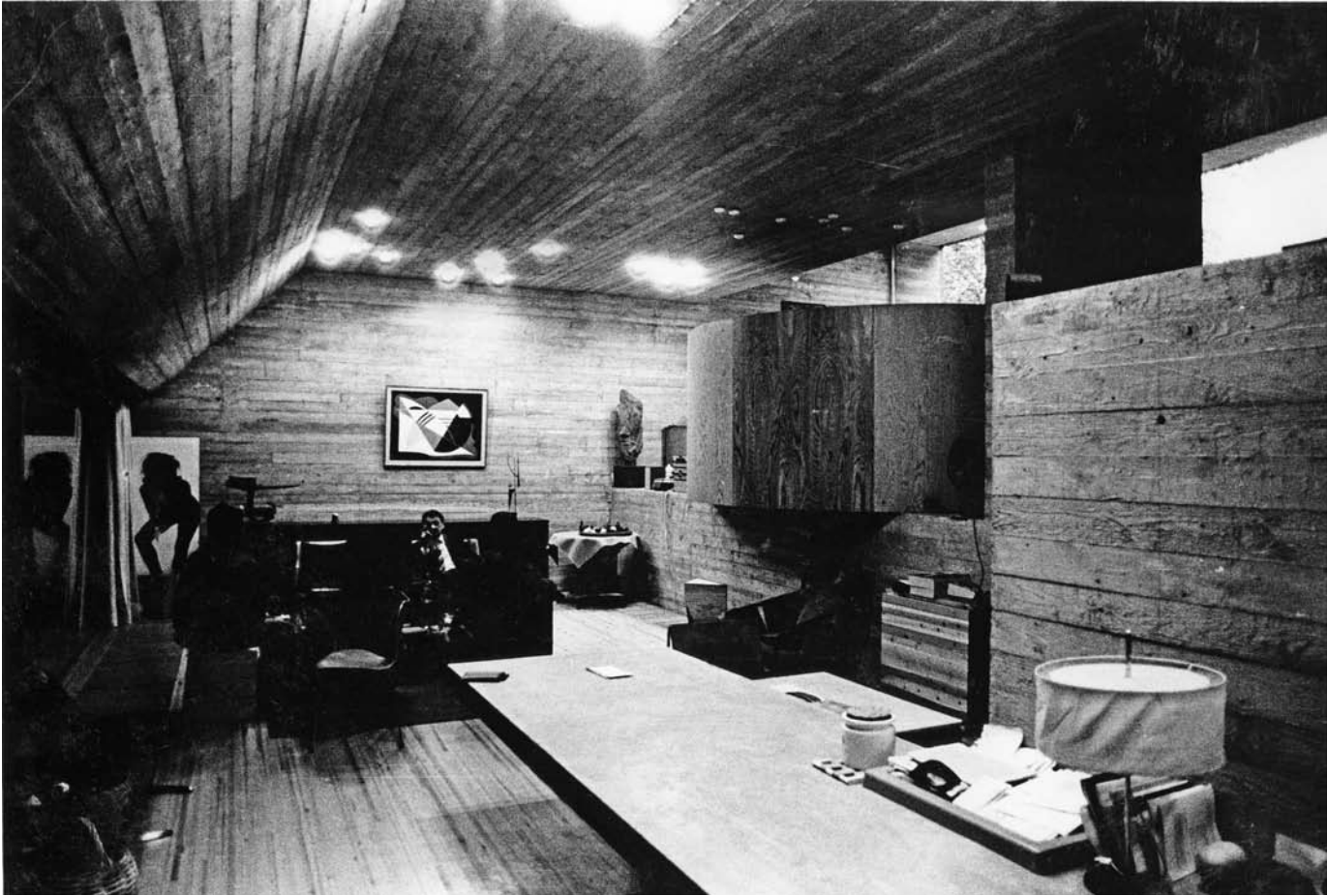
[SNCRDA] [Details]  
Section through the hinge of the  
window frame.





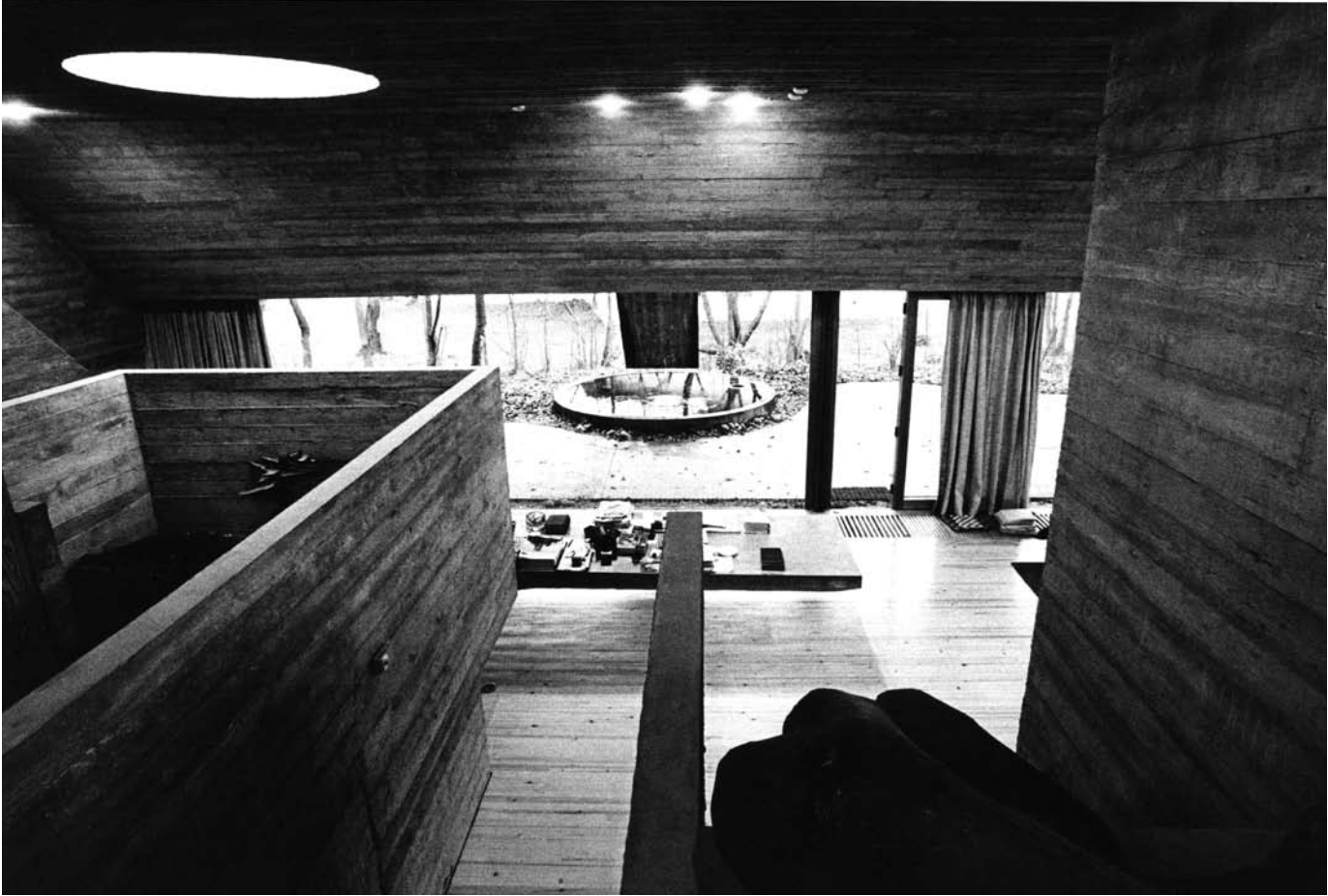
[SNCD A] [Clear Shapes]  
Prisms  
Proportion and height are based on  
the owner's measurements.

House Van Wassenhove,  
1974, Sint-Martens-Latem  
Office/Library  
Plan, section, elevation  
Technical drawing: SNCD A, 2010

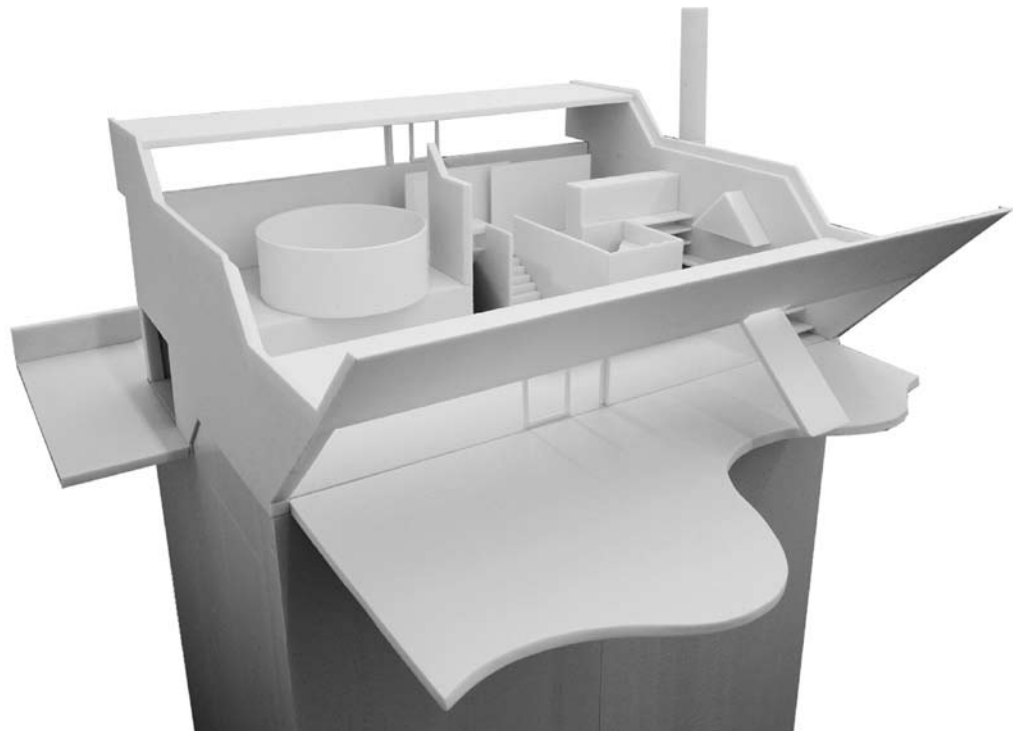


[SNCD A] [Integrated Landscapes]  
No visual obstacles to interfere  
with the view to the outside. The  
openness created by the absence of  
window frames is cancelled by the  
shape given to the roof. The roofline  
pronounces the closure of the  
perspective view from the mezzanine  
towards the garden.

House Van Wassenhove,  
1974, Sint-Martens-Latem  
View from the mezzanine towards  
the garden  
B/W photocopy  
Source: Juliaan Lampens Foundation







The window forms a continuous band across the entire height and length. In the middle, a door frame within a glass panel.

House Van Wassenhove,  
1974, Sint-Martens-Latem  
East view  
Foam Model, 1/20. SNCDA, 2009

underneath the roof, creating a large open space, continuing the living areas into the exterior. The kitchen features a triangular prism, here defined by the extractor hood. The mezzanine level, a zone of rigid forms, contains the sleeping area, the office/library, the toilet and the bath. The sleeping cylinder and cubic office contain the private areas.

[SNCDA] [Composition]  
Interior view of the split-level house. The lower entrance level contains the carport, cloakroom and boiler room. A stairway allows access to the upper (public) area of the house; a large, roofed space is in direct contact with the exterior. Kitchen and living room are flanked by a terrace partially positioned

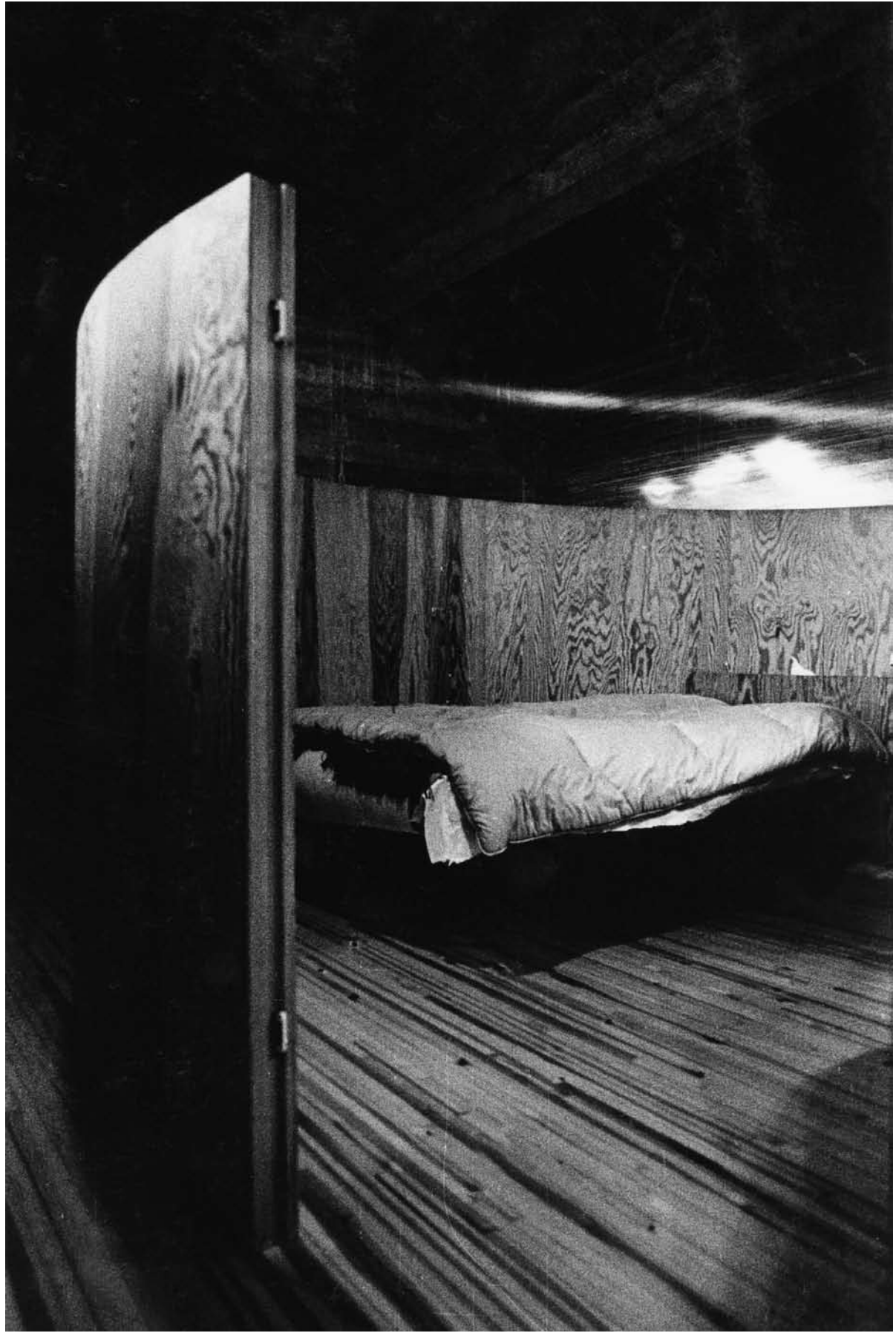
sculpture. The profile of the gutter defines the east west elevation of the house.

House Van Wassenhove,  
1974, Sint-Martens-Latem  
North view  
Foam Model, 1/20: SNCDA, 2009

[SNCDA] [Composition]  
The façade as the product of a carefully studied composition of functional elements (exterior stairway, car platform, boiler room, chimney). A small hole in the outer wall forms the vent to the kitchen's extractor hood. The added elements supplement the

[SNCDA] [Clear Shapes]  
Wooden bedroom cylinder.  
Closes with two magnets.  
Interior of cylinders develop into privatised and non-designed islands where owners decide on furniture.

House Van Wassenhove,  
1974, Sint-Martens-Latem  
Bedroom  
Colour photograph  
Source: Juliaan Lampens Foundation

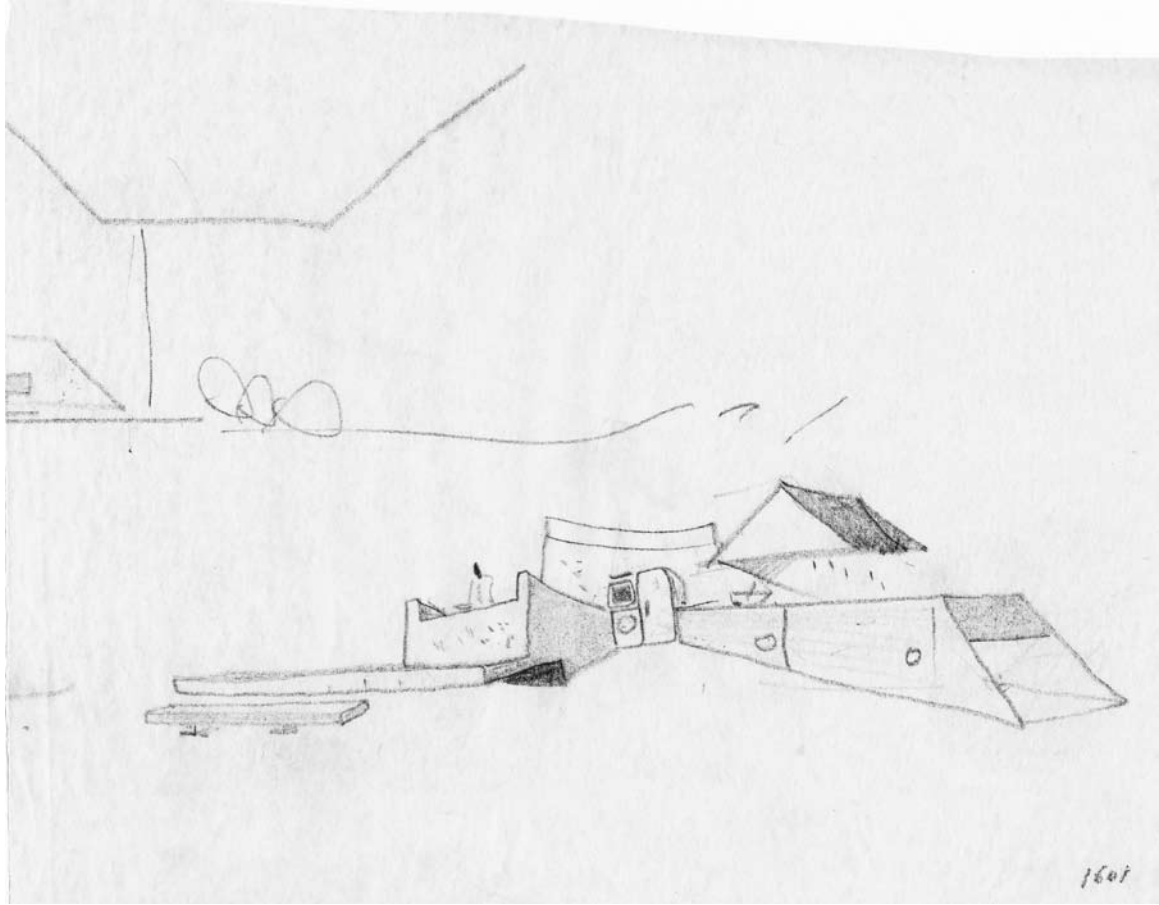






[SNCD A] [Functional Objects]  
No object has the ambition to dominate the visual field. The importance of the object is determined by the function. At the back, kitchen shelves with integrated appliances. A triangular concrete hood. At the front, cantilevered concrete dining table attached to a concrete library block.

At the back, wooden cupboards at mezzanine level. Four wooden stools.  
House Van Wassenhove, 1974, Sint-Martens-Latem  
View from the living room towards the kitchen.  
Colour photograph  
Source: Juliaan Lampens Foundation



[SNCD A] [Composition]  
Composition of misplaced objects in a room. On the right, kitchen cupboards with integrated appliances. A triangular exhaust hood. On the left, a cantilevered dining table with library block. Bench seating. At the back, cupboards at mezzanine level. Fridge and oven in front.

House Van Wassenhove, 1974, Sint-Martens-Latem  
View from the terrace towards the kitchen  
Charcoal sketch on tracing paper  
Source: Juliaan Lampens Foundation

[SNCD A] [Pure Materials]  
Concrete walls and ceiling. Sleeping areas delineated by timber partitions.

House Van Wassenhove, 1974, Sint-Martens-Latem  
Bedroom  
Colour photograph  
Source: Juliaan Lampens Foundation

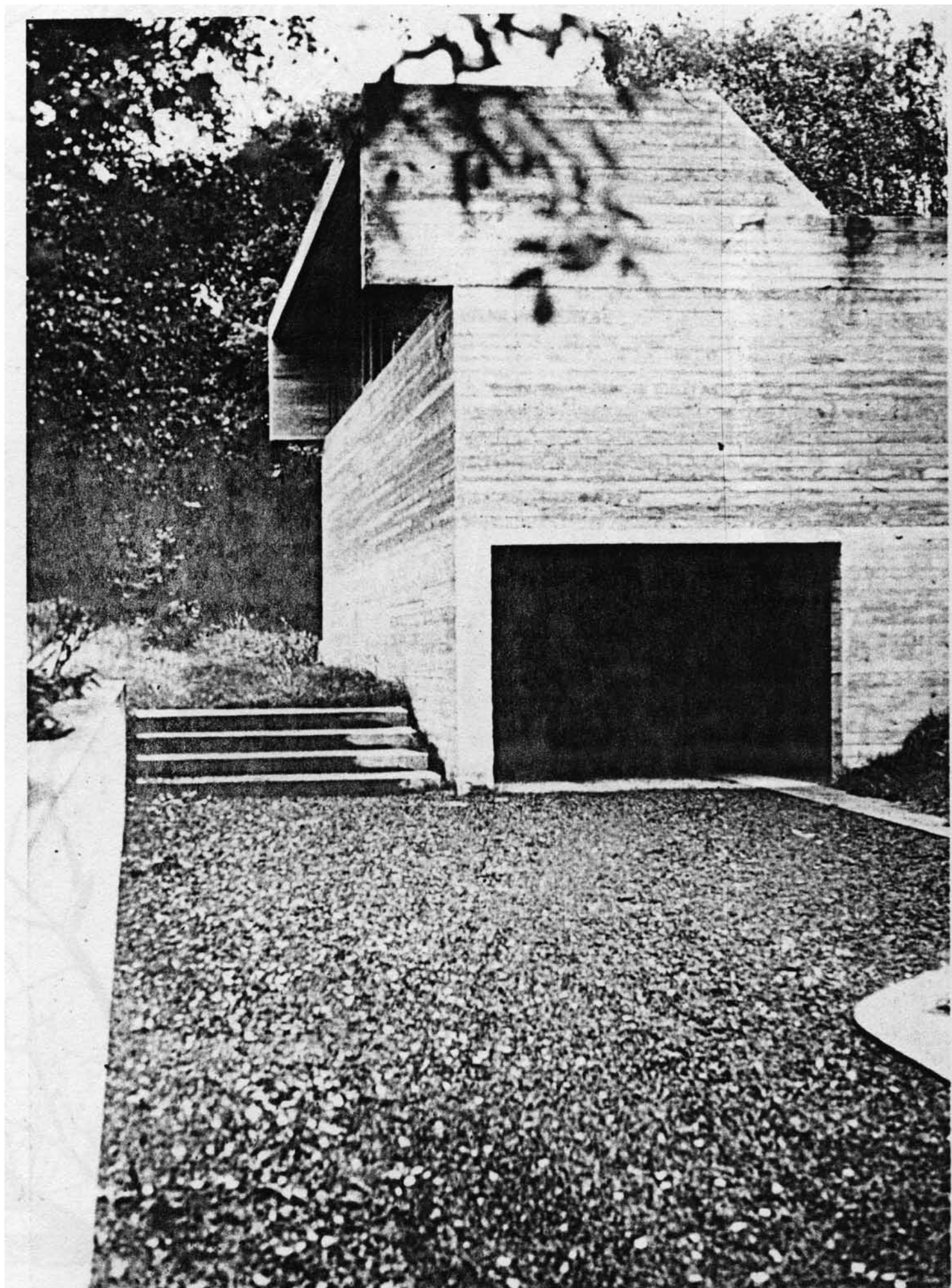






[SNCDA] [Functional Objects]  
Concrete library prism. A light shaft  
above further implies a churchlike  
environment.

House Van Wassenhove,  
1974, Sint-Martens-Latem  
Library interior view  
B/W photograph  
Source: Juliaan Lampens Foundation











# CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF WORKS A SELECTIVE OVERVIEW

Angelique Campens

This list contains only projects and buildings that were acknowledged by the architect, the most important and characteristic of which are briefly described below.

Unbuilt architecture [indicated in grey]

Many of Lampens' designs and competition projects were not implemented. Of the sixteen architectural competitions in which he participated, he won three. For twelve of them he received an award. The pilgrimage chapel of Our Blessed Lady of Kerselare in Edelare (1966) is the only one of these that was executed.

In 1975, Lampens won the competition for a new town hall and administrative centre in Lokeren. However, implementation only began eighteen years after the launch of the competition, and the city authorities wanted to see a new design by Lampens. The architect, however, removed himself from this project.

The design for the Art Institute, Sint-Lucas, Ghent, was awarded to him in 1981, but due to high building costs, this project was not executed.

1945 Small Family House, Eke

1948 Two-Family House Knudde, Eke (Nazareth)

1953 Doctor's House Vermaerke, Eke (Nazareth)  
Juliaan Lampens built a number of traditionally styled houses shortly after his architectural studies, including the doctor's house. The house consisted of two levels, with a front gable featuring wooden latticework. It was demolished in 2007.



1957 National Housing Institute: The Modern Ardennes House  
Special mention for originality

1959 Thirty-Nine small land-ownership homes, De Pinte

1958 House Cooreman, De Pinte  
This house evokes the kind of Modernism that came to characterise Lampens' architecture from 1960 onwards. It forms the transition between his traditional and his self-consciously modernistic practice. The roof is asymmetrical and the window frame on the left-hand side brings the composition of the façade into equilibrium. Leading from the front façade to the sidewall is a balcony ornamented with alternating black and white triangles.



1960 House Juliaan Lampens–Vanhove, Eke (Nazareth)

The construction of Lampens' own house was a milestone in his career. In this house, he introduced the open-plan living concept that would prove to be fundamental to his further practice. From the street, a cobblestone road leads straight to the carport that is situated in the middle of the house, between the office and the dwelling. The plan of the latter is based on a grid of eighteen squares, each 2.6m by 2.6m, and covers a rectangle of 8m x 16.2m. The house is constructed of concrete, glass, brick and wood. With the exception of the concrete wall of the carport, it has no bearing walls. The roof is supported by twenty-six steel H-sections. Inside, the walls are covered with wooden planks. The same wood was also used for the sleeping areas, partitions, and table. [pp. 16-31]

1960 International architecture competition: Flanders Annual Fair: The European Home Preliminary design for an apartment building. [Third prize (50 contenders)]

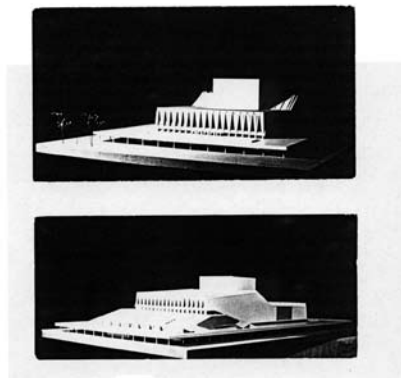


1960 National architecture competition:  
Sports Centre at the Watersportbaan,  
Ghent  
[Fourth prize (9 contenders)]

1961 International architecture competition:  
Euratom European Institute for Transura-  
nium Elements, Karlsruhe (B.R.D.)  
[Third prize (46 contenders)]

1962 House Delbeke, Kortrijk

1964 International architecture competition:  
Opera Madrid, Madrid  
[Not commended]



1965 Van De Ven Prize  
First in line (36 contenders): prize not  
awarded

1966 Our Blessed Lady of Kerselare Pilgrim-  
age Chapel, Edelare National architecture  
competition in collaboration with architec-  
tural professor Rutger Langaskens (1913-  
1984), competition 1961  
The building materials for this pilgrimage  
chapel in the Flemish Ardennes are limited  
to concrete and glass. The roof consists of  
two layers of concrete separated from one  
another by beams. The roof extends 14m  
over the forecourt, sheltering the pilgrims,  
who are able to follow the Mass through  
the huge glass wall. A water feature sup-  
plied by run-off from the roof, separates  
the secular and liturgical areas. The altar  
of the chapel is a concrete cube accentu-  
ated by a skylight, and the benches are  
concrete beams. The choir can be reached  
via a staircase built inside a concrete cyl-  
inder. The entrances were originally large

concrete swinging doors located on both  
sidewalls. [pp. 33-48]

1967 House Vandenhoute–Kiebooms, Huise  
(Zingem)  
This house is positioned in the middle of  
the landscape. The site is a long narrow  
lot running parallel to and five feet deeper  
than the street. A row of trees creates a  
visual barrier between the street and the  
house. The house is reached via a ramp.  
The overhanging roof serves as a carport  
and forms a buffer zone between inside  
and outside. With this house, Juliaan  
Lampens pioneered his most radical open  
plan. The house is constructed completely  
of concrete and glass and covers a square  
area of 14m by 14m. The north side is  
fully closed-off, while the other sides are  
entirely of glass. In the square space,  
three cylindrical elements rise from the  
floor, containing, respectively, the bath, the  
toilet and the staircase to the cellar. Their  
fixed locations define the sleeping, living  
and entrance areas. Vertically opposite  
these — as if falling down from the ceiling  
— is a suspended concrete square that  
reaches shoulder level and demarcates the  
kitchen area. The sleeping units are com-  
posed of beds with adjoining cabinets.  
This creates a kind of ‘sleeping niche’,  
but since these units are not fixed to the  
ground, it allows for the continual re-shap-  
ing and re-imaging of the space and its  
degrees of privacy. [pp. 60-74, 89-101]

1968 House Diane Lampens, Semmerzake  
(Gavere) [p. 80]

1968 House Claus, Etikove (Maarkedal)  
The house is built on the elevated side  
of the plot. The façade faces the street  
and consists of an enclosed brick wall  
with an entrance to the private area and  
an entrance to the public area (a medical  
practice). The house has three levels and  
follows the slope of the terrain. It consists  
of two superimposed floors with an ad-  
ditional, skewed floor in-between, where  
the living space is located. Positioned on  
the ground floor are the medical practice  
and the kitchen, and on the top floor is

the sleeping area. The living room is fully  
glazed and overlooks a green valley. The  
spaces are adjoined with a concrete stair-  
case. The sleeping area is an open space  
where sleeping places are delineated by  
wooden cabinets. Both the interior and  
exterior walls are of Kempen brick. The  
ceiling and the furnishings are in wood.



1969 House De Vos–Smesman, Eke (Nazareth)

1969 House Pijpaert with Butchery, Nazareth

1969 Apartments, Oostduinkerke [p. 81]

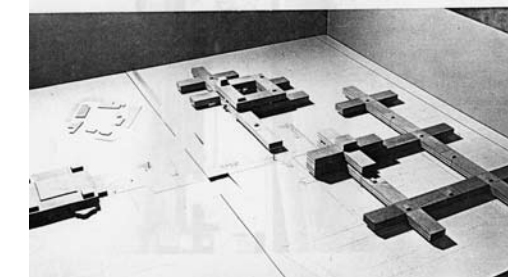
1970 House Jozef Vandenhoute, Huise

1970 Public Library, Eke (Nazareth)  
The front of the municipal library looks  
like a sort of cube that, through a play of  
lines, is almost mathematically divided into  
squares and triangles. Behind this concrete  
cube that contains two levels is a single  
storey construction. This part runs through  
the first part and allows natural light to en-  
ter through skylights. Due to the use of cel-  
lular concrete, the single storey part looks  
different from the outside. The library is on  
the ground floor while the first floor con-  
tains Juliaan Lampens’ archive. This space  
was originally intended for the office library.  
The first floor is only accessible by way of  
a staircase inset into half of the front wall  
on the exterior of the building. The internal  
walls consist of cellular concrete, but the  
ceiling, library furniture, shelves and tables,  
are in wood. [pp. 82-88, 103]

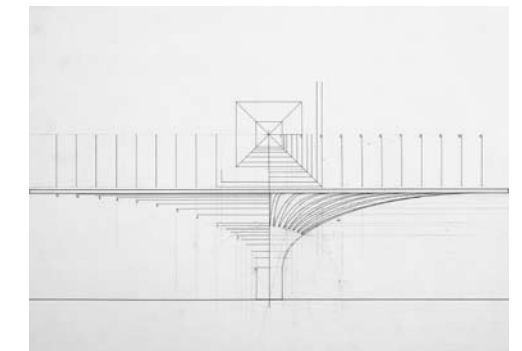
1970 Furniture: Stool  
Since 1970, this triangular wooden stool,  
originally designed by Juliaan Lampens for  
the library in Eke, has served as a univer-  
sal element of furniture. It functions as a

seat, coffee table and waste bin. Lampens  
designed this furniture-piece in diverse,  
larger formats so that it could also be  
used as a table or desk element. In a later  
phase, the stool is further trimmed down  
to make it easier to pick-up. [pp. 122-124]

1972 National architecture competition:  
University Institute Antwerpen, (Wilrijk)  
First trial winner



1972 Reception area for tourism office,  
Blankenberge



1973 House Derwael–Thienpont, Gavere  
This house, located in an allotment area,  
is enclosed by brick walls on two sides.  
Remarkably, near-invisible columns sup-  
port a detached roof of 16m x 16m.  
Between the roof and the walls, narrow  
horizontal window strips are installed, in  
order to provide extra light. The house is  
organised on an orthogonal grid of 4m by  
4m, under a suspended roof. This house,  
too, is free of the traditional hierarchy; the  
interior is characterised by a long table  
and the demarcation of the sleeping areas  
by open wooden walls. The fireplace with  
connecting conversation pit is a prominent  
feature. Concrete, wood, glass and brick  
are the primary materials used throughout  
the interior and exterior. [pp. 124-125]



1973 House Jozef Claus (Zero) with Factory, Eke (Nazareth)

1973 Extension to House Vanhove–Volkaert, Eke (Nazareth)

1974 House Van Wassenhove, Sint-Martens-Latem

This house, built entirely out of concrete, is located in a residential neighbourhood in Sint-Martens-Latem and has a bunker-like shape. Surrounding the house is an area of cultivated land that has in the meantime become wild. The driveway ends at the carport, where the entrance of the house is located. Due to the topography, the house is positioned 1.2m above street level. Only the entrance area was excavated, to bring it down to street level. The rhythm of the roof was determined by the topography of the land and the same principle was applied to the different levels in the house, interconnected by a staircase. Here too, the living room, kitchen, bedroom and offices are worked into one open space. The light enters through a large glass area on the east side, a skylight above the living room, and a vertical glass strip on the west side. There is a doorway in the large glass wall on the east side. From the house, one can look out on a massive spout that spills into a water feature. The house is built entirely of concrete. In the interior, pinewood has been used for the flooring. The cabinet elements and sleeping hutch are also of pine. The suspended table and the cooker extract are of concrete. [pp. 104-119, 126-141]

1975 House Libeert, Komen



1975 National architecture competition: City Hall and Administrative Centre, Lokeren  
First trial winner, together with architects Lode Verbeke, Emmanuel Gautot and Walter Verschueren.

1976 House Vandenhoute–Vereecken A., De Pinte

1976 Studio and house for the painter Wallaert, Wannegem-Lede



1977 International architecture competition: Pahlavi National Library Project, Tehran, Iran  
Preliminary design, final design not submitted.



1978 House Merckaert, Geraardsbergen  
The house is situated on a busy road next to a garden centre and all four sides have views onto developed land. The house is on a sloping plot and the garage and storage space are buried in the slopes. The living room overlooks the garden

CHRONOLOGY

centre and the terrace, which consists of a suspended timber structure. The ceiling comprises a ribbed concrete floor deck that spans 14m and has vertical ribs that jut 70cm downwards. The wooden kitchen furniture provides a counterpoint within the rather brutal interior. The bedroom and bathroom are positioned behind the kitchen wall and are accessible via an opening next to the kitchen cupboards. On this floor, curtains replace the doors.

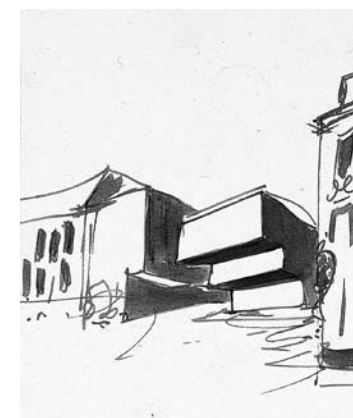


1979 House in Lauwers hangar, Nazareth

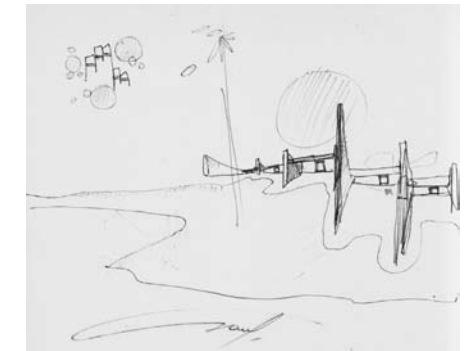
1979 National Boerenkrijg Museum, Overmere-Donk (Berlare) [p. 120]



1981 Architecture competition Sint-Lucas Secondary Art School, Ghent  
Honourable mention.



1983 International Architecture competition: Stawon, Amsterdam  
Social housing in collaboration with Marianne Eeckhout. Not awarded.



1988 House De La Ruelle–Van Moffaert, Deurle (Sint-Martens-Latem)

Juliaan Lampens extended this prefab house with a triangular portion that follows the borders of the plot. The bedroom and bathroom are partially underground. In the adjacent portion the spaces are left open. The toilet and bathroom are fully open. Both the exterior and the interior of the building are entirely built in cellular concrete. The ceiling and floor are clad in timber. The fireplace is the central element and divides the ground floor into living room and office. Where the two cellular concrete walls intersect, the concrete blocks do not finish in a right angle but instead run above one another.



1990 House Wouter Lampens, Semmerzake  
Juliaan Lampens built two houses for his two sons on adjacent land in the Schelde valley. Both houses are positioned such that the highest point of the vertical house



corresponds to the living room level of the horizontal dwelling. The first house consists of a horizontal beam-shaped volume buried in the highest part of the slope. The walls leading into the valley are completely glazed. The house is built of concrete and contains only a few wooden elements in the interior.



- 1992 House Dieter Lampens, Semmerzake  
This house is built vertically at the foot of the hill on the street side. Again, the house follows the terrain and makes use of the slope. On the west side are three floors. The entrance is accessible via a garage that is connected by a staircase to the first floor, where the living space is located. The living space is positioned along the south side, on the ground floor. The house is built entirely of brick (Schelde brick) and timber.



- 1997 International architecture competition, Jyväskylä (Finland)  
Not awarded
- 2002 House Frank Velghe, Astene  
This house in Astene is the last project that Juliaan Lampens executed in his career. Built at the end of a street, the house borders a nature reserve. The plot reaches its maximum width on the west side. This

side fully opens out by way of large glass windows overlooking the sloping lawn, the river Lys, and the neighbouring natural landscape. In this way, the house is completely integrated in nature. The eastern and southern sides face the street and are fully enclosed. This property comprises concrete, cellular concrete and wood. In the interior, the office, lounge and kitchen overflow into each other. The bedroom is separated by a sliding wall. Lampens made the furniture out of soaped wood, from which the ceiling and garage door are also made. For this house, the architect also designed a family shower to enable the parents and children to shower together.



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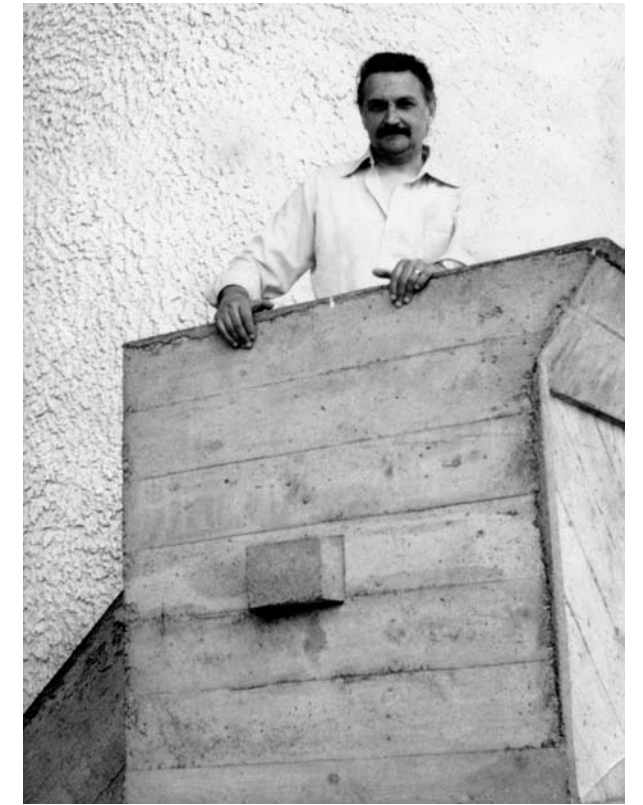
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## BIOGRAPHY

Juliaan Lampens was born in 1926 in De Pinte, Belgium. In 1940, he enrolled at the Higher Institute for Art and Vocational Training, a department of the Sint-Lucas Institute in Ghent, where he started his training to become a technical draughtsman. From 1946 to 1950, he studied architecture at the same school. In 1950, he started his own business as an architect in Eke (Nazareth), but his career only really took off ten years later. Before 1960, Lampens designed houses in a sort of modernised traditional style. After 1958, however, influenced by the World Fair in Brussels, he radically changed course. His own house, constructed in 1960, became a turning point in his career. Since then, Lampens has worked almost exclusively with concrete, steel, wood and glass, and occasionally with brick. Formally, the houses have been designed to emphasise an interior and exterior harmony with the surroundings and nature, although an exception in this respect is the bunker-like aspect of the work. Delineation, orientation and perspective are central with regard to the location and the construction of the house. From 1974 to 1985, Lampens worked as a teacher and workshop master, and from 1985 to 1991, as a professor at Sint-Lucas Ghent. He participated in various national and international contests. He won, for example, the contest for the Our Blessed Lady of Kerselare Pilgrimage Chapel in Edelare (1966, in cooperation with professor Rutger Langaskens). In 1991, a retrospective exhibition, Juliaan Lampens 1951-1990, was on view at the international arts campus deSingel in Antwerp. In 1995, Lampens won the Great Architecture Prize (Grote Architectuurprijs) of Belgium.





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