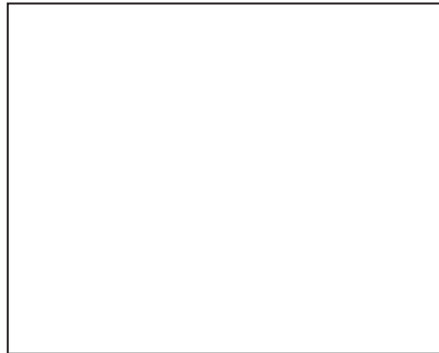


Young people's training centre Antwerp



7x500 Architectural
Engineering
Assignment 2010/2011
Semester 2, Block 1
Paper 1:1 scale model

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INTRODUCTION

For the lessons of Architectural Engineering (products and parts) we are asked to make a 1:1 scale model of a detail from a building by one of the architects giving a lecture this semester. We also have to write a text about this building, related to the oeuvre of the architect.

We have, after some research, chosen for a building of B-Architecten. This Belgium architectural office made the design for the young people's training centre in Antwerp. Pictures of this building on the internet looked very nice with a clear grid. After visiting the building there were some things that strokes us. We will tell more about it further on in this paper.

In this paper you can read about the architect of the building, about the building itself and about the detail which we have chosen for the 1:1 scale model. In this paper vision is compared versus reality.

After all you can read the conclusion and the sources we have used.

1. ARCHITECT

Vision

B-architecten started with a company of three architects. At the beginning of their career they won an architectural contest for the Brussels "Beursschouwburg". They have got a lot of recognition for this. Nowadays they grown out to an office that plays a big role in the Belgium architectural world.

B-architecten is a company with a clear vision. Their projects are always very recognizable. They try to design in an innovative and advancing way. They don't see architecture as a separate discipline. In their eyes architecture is a part of a multidisciplinary web, that is the source for revolutionary ideas which should lead to impressive realizations.

According to the architects of B-architecten their recognizable style is not established consciously. It is the consequence of a working process that is widely used within the office.

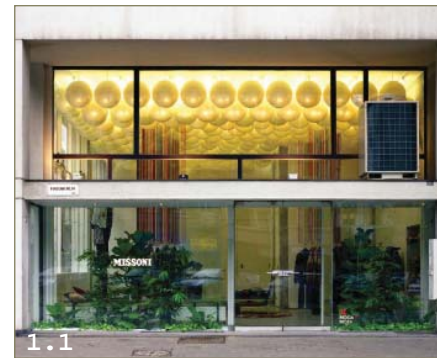
Their architecture often has something liberating about it. That is because of the attention is not focusing on architecture, but on the world around. They draw more inspiration from the world of everyday life than form that of architecture and its history. They say that this kind of mannerism is alien to them.

B-architecten designs a lot with raw and unfinished materials. They want the client to fill in the rest. No or maybe a few materials are used for esthetic purpose only. They say for example that when you use concrete you have to play it right.

Beside that B-architecten often design their buildings as a reflection of the users.

Buildings

Next to this text you can see pictures of some buildings of B-architecten that will show their vision clearly.



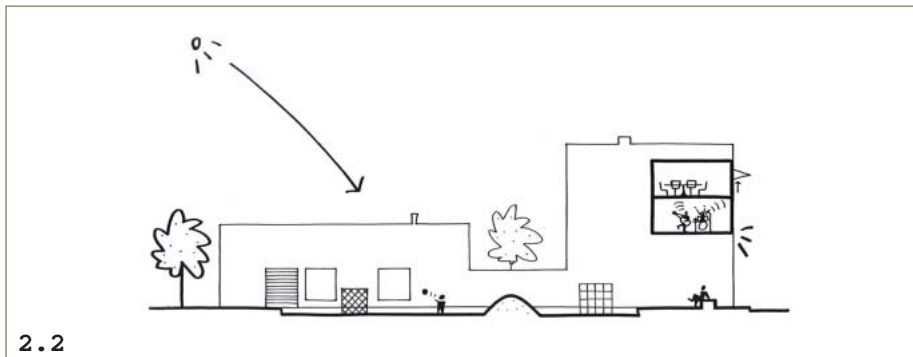
Figures:
1.1 Missoni home store; 1.2 House D; 1.3 House VZ; 1.4 Anyplace; 1.5 House TP



2. BUILDING



2.1



2.2

Vision

B-architecten do not want to make neutral spaces, let alone situations that are boring or minimalistic. They want to make architecture that offers a gripping and lasting experience.

In the most buildings of B-architecten the surface finishing is very rough. The architect said about this: 'The cosines is for the client to fill in'. They also wanted to make honest architecture. The materials may not be fake.

In figure 2.2 you can see the concept of the young people's training centre. Important elements are the playground, the sun/daylight and the placement of the different rooms in the building.

Building

The young people's training centre in Antwerp is a building of about 770 m², delivered in 2009. The building fills up the existing front elevation and it consists of a concrete grid. This grid is filled in with wood panels and glass. Beside that there is an opening in the building that results in a connection between the street and the existing playground behind the building.

The new training centre contains various reception areas, a neighborhood centre, a training centre and the administrative offices of the youth department.

When you are entering the covered space under the building you can see the red entrance. The appearance of the entrance and how it is situated are not very inviting. Especially for the function of the building, young people's training centre. Young people have to come there because they have got a problem and the door does not have the looks of a 'warm welcome'.

The first space you will come in to when you are entering the building, is the staircase. It looks rough and almost unfinished. It is exactly what the architect preferred. It is also very narrow.

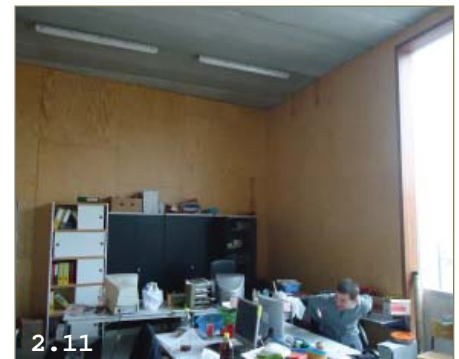
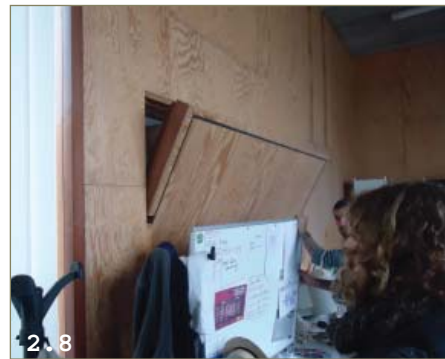
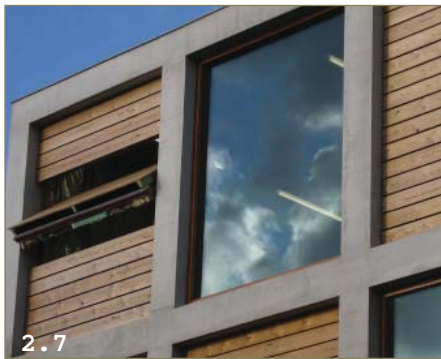
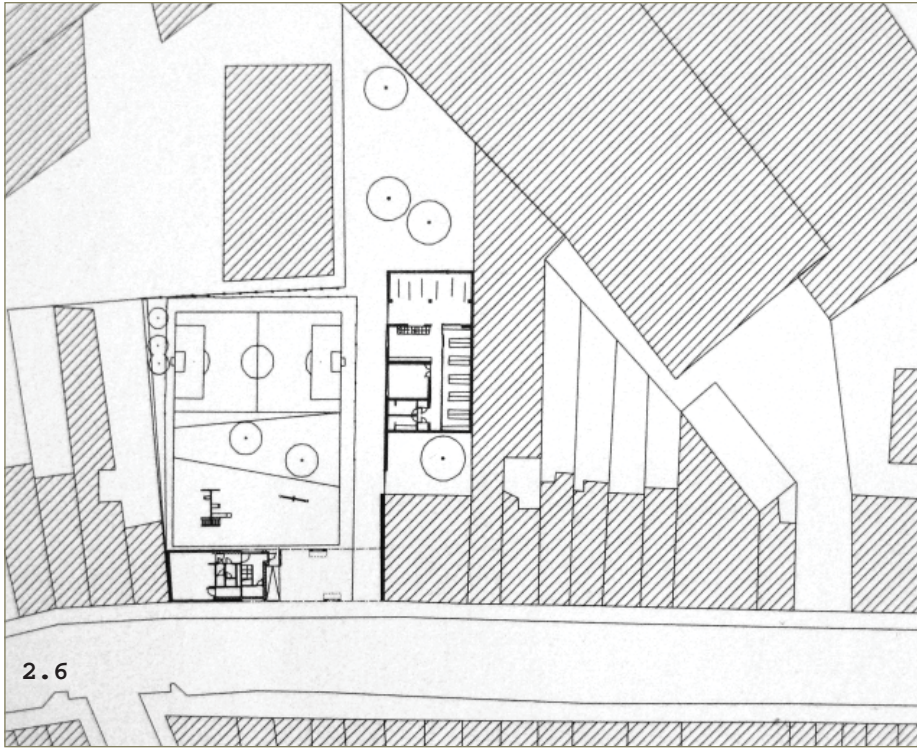
When you walk further you will come in a small corridor that leads to the toilets and the multi-purpose room with a small kitchen. When you walk back to the staircase and

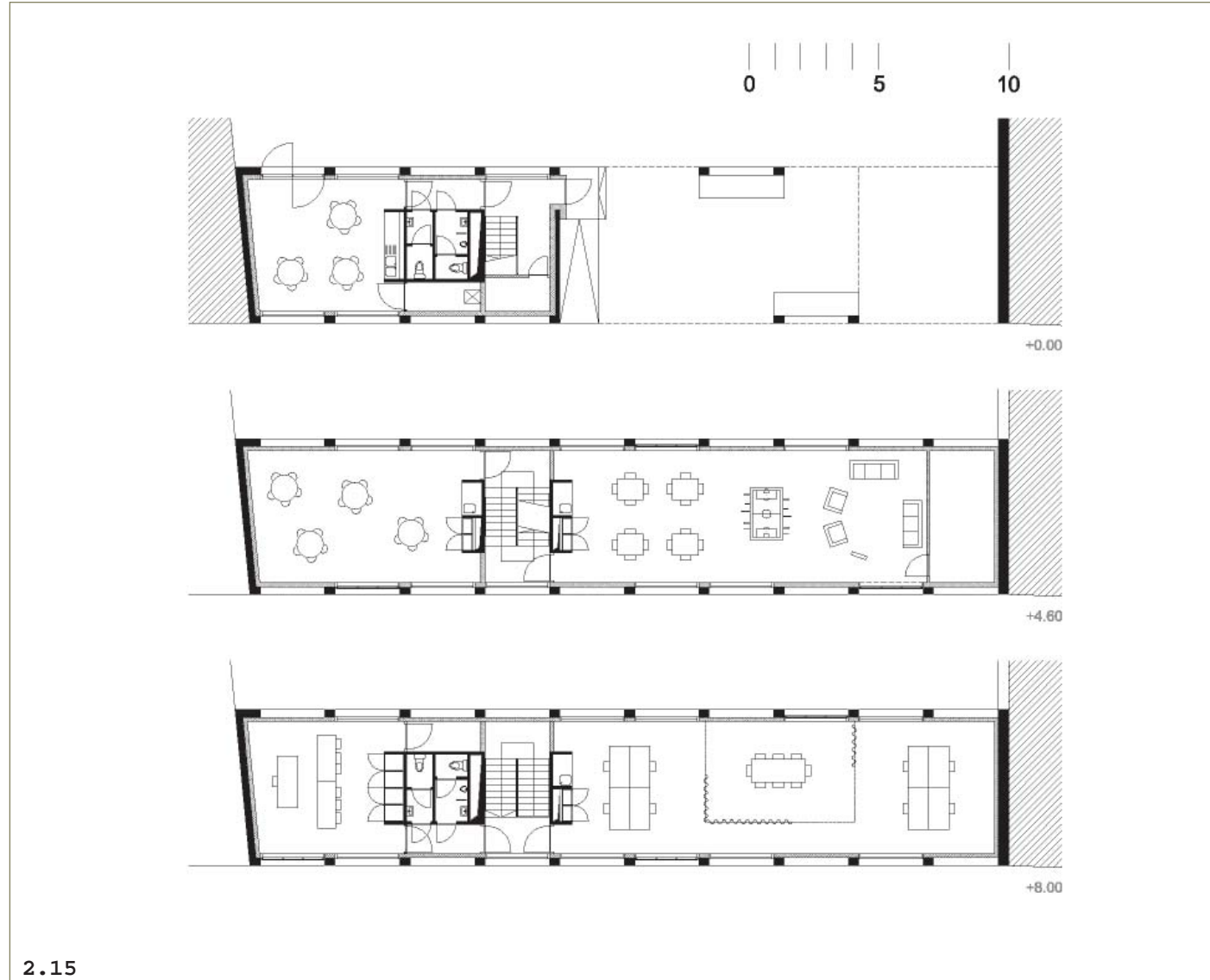
go up to the first floor you can choose to go to the right or to the left side. On the plan in figure 2.15 you can see the playroom on the left side and the youth centre on the right side. Both rooms have got a little kitchen. On the second floor is the training centre on the left side and the office and the meeting room are on the right side. A remarkable element of the plans of the building is the clear grid in which everything is set out. Even the surrounding facades fit exactly in this same grid. In the wooden façade there are parts which can be opened for ventilation. You can see that in figures 2.7 and 2.8. The vision of the architect about honest architecture is also apply to this building. The concrete elements of the facades are not only for decoration, but it is also the construction of the building. Besides that the building should reflect the character of the users. It is a building for Young cheeky people and the building reflects it by not covering up anything. As if the building is shameless. During the visit the users of the building gave their opinion of the building. They said that they were not happy with some elements of the building. For example there was a leakage near different walls of the building. Another aspect of displeasure was the entrance. As told earlier the entrance is not a 'warm welcome', while it has to be. Furthermore the ventilation system do not work well, there is algal bloom on the concrete facades, the big windows have the effect that it becomes very hot in the summer and the interior of the building is not very nice in their opinion. During the visit it was clear that the big windows were very dirty because of the sand from the sandbox next to it. All of this may indicate unwanted consequences in the design.

Figures:

2.1 Location building in Antwerp, district Deurne; 2.2 Design concept; 2.3 Building from streetside; 2.4/2.5 Building under construction; 2.6 situation; 2.7/2.8 Opened facade; 2.9 Rough staircase; 2.10/2.11 inside the building; 2.12 backside under construction; 2.13 Backside after delivery; 2.14 Backside two years later; 2.15 Floorplans







3. DETAIL



Figures:

3.1 The detail is located on one of the places where the concrete construction comes together; 3.2 Detail; 3.3 inside window frame; 3.4 Wooden facade; 3.5 inside wall and ceiling; 3.6 outside detail window frame; 3.7 detail after visiting the building; 3.8 detail from architect; 3.9 detail after visiting the building and see the detail from the architect; 3.10 sketchup model; 3.11/3.12/3.13 1:1 scale model

Vision architect

As said before B-architecten do not wanted to make neutral spaces, let alone situations that are boring or minimalistic. They wanted to make architecture that offers a gripping and lasting experience. The surface finishing is in the most buildings very rough. They also wanted to make honest architecture. The materials may not be fake. This vision is also very clear in the details of the buildings. The chosen detail of the façade, is a detail in which B-architecten designed a honest concrete construction and used rough materials.

Detail

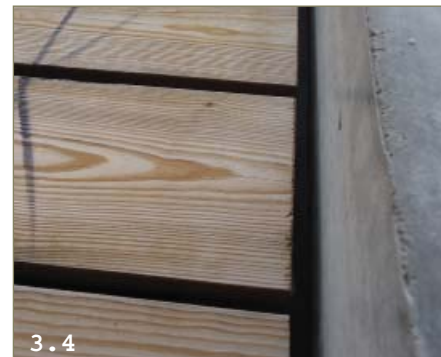
In figure 3.1 you can see the place of the detail. It is located on one of the places where the concrete construction comes together. In figures 2.3-2.6 you can see the more detailed photos of the detail. The first sketches of the detail are made during a building visit on the 24th of February. That sketches are made without seeing the drawings of the building. The building was analyzed and the library of Antwerp was visited during a visit to Antwerp. There it was possible to look in the book of B-architecten, which has pictures of the building site and an interview with the architect about their vision. This was very useful to find the right detail. In figure 3.7 you can see those details. A few weeks later there was a presentation of B-architecten. He was telling about different projects, including the young people's training centre. Unexpectedly he showed the detail that building. It was not the same as the detail as assumed and drawn before. It was also different from the reality. In figure 3.8 you can see the details of the architect as shown in the presentation. The concrete fill under the window frame is not completed like this and the window frame on the inside is different. Since the detail of the architect is not the same as the completed detail there is made a new detail which you can see in figure 3.9.

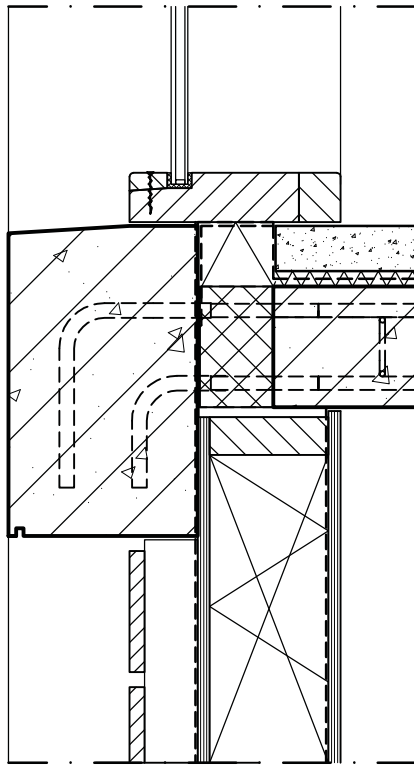
In detail the cheekiness of the building comes forward. The concrete frame shown on the outside is a very honest and shameless way of showing what is bearing the building. This also brings out a solvable problem, a thermal bridge. This thermal bridge is solved by a console where the floor is laying on, attached to the concrete frame on the outside with a thermally interrupted connection. This is shown in figure 3.9.

Another obvious thing is the unfinished wooden underlayment panels that cover up the insulation. B-architecten specifically chose for not painting these panels to show the building as it is. This is the same with the concrete floor and ceiling. None of the concrete in the building is prefab.

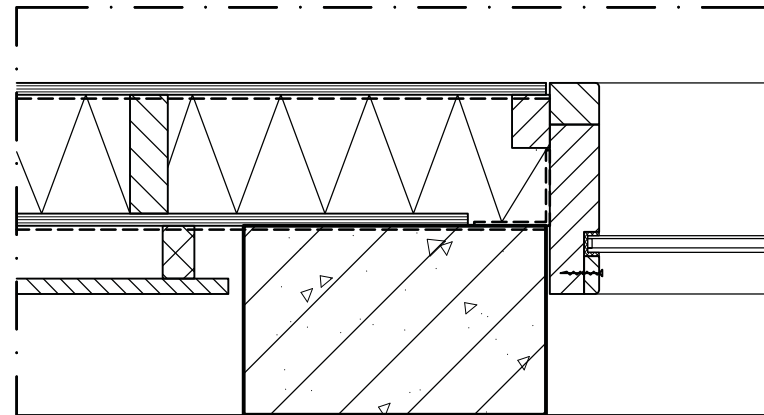
Two other things got noticed too. One of them was that there were moist spots on the inside of the building walls. This is a technical problem that should not have happened. The second thing was that the wooden panels and the concrete turned green on the outside. Especially on the spots where there comes only a bit of sunlight.

After analyzing the building and drawing 2D-details there is made a digital 3D model which is shown in figure 3.10. This model was helpful by making the 1:1 scale model as shown in figures 3.11, 3.12 and 3.13.



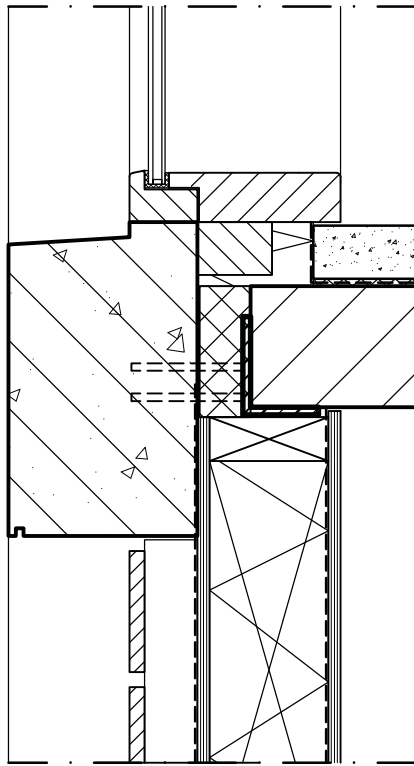


VERTICAAL DETAIL

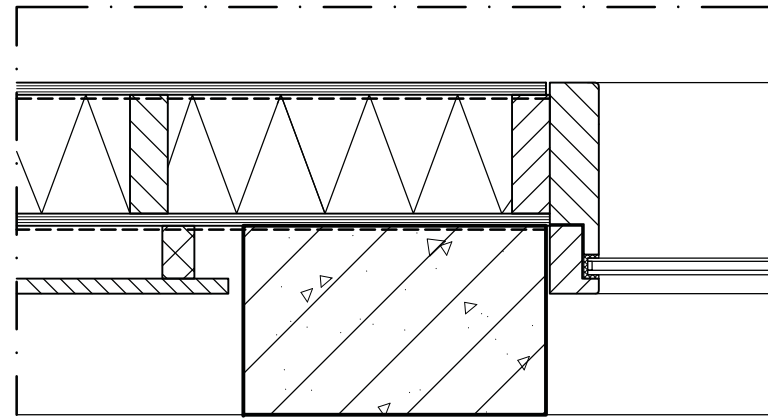


HORIZONTAAL DETAIL

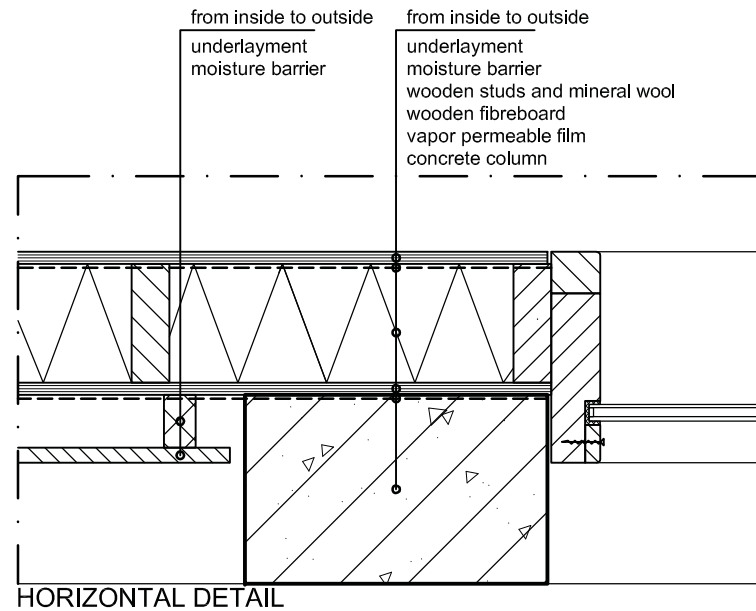
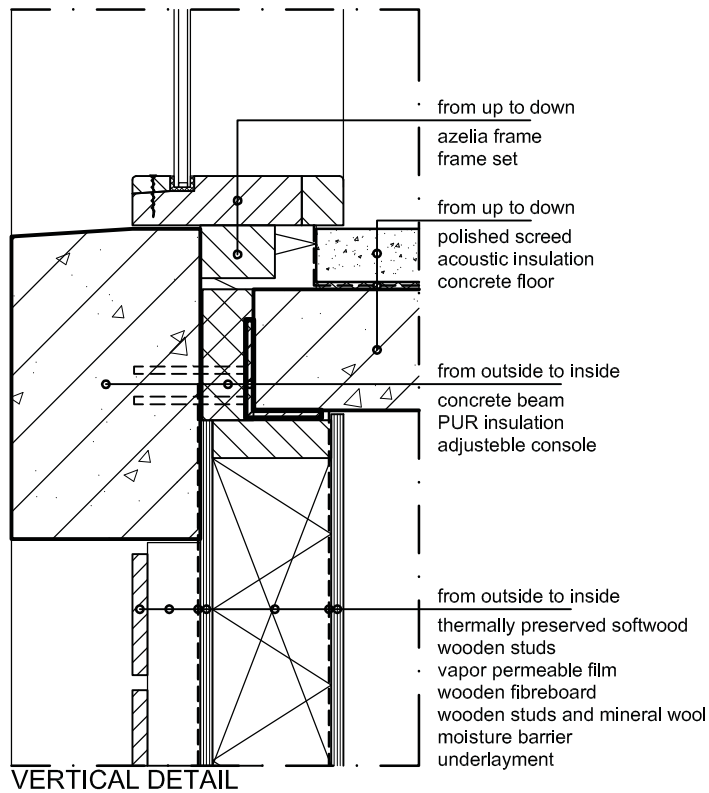
3.7



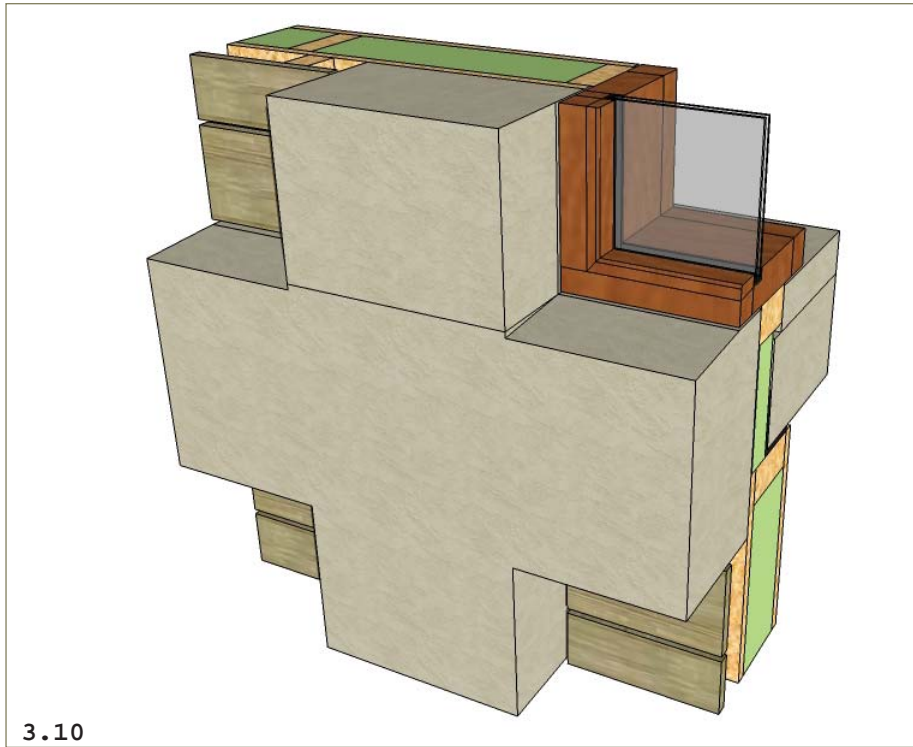
VERTICAAL DETAIL



HORIZONTAAL DETAIL



3.9



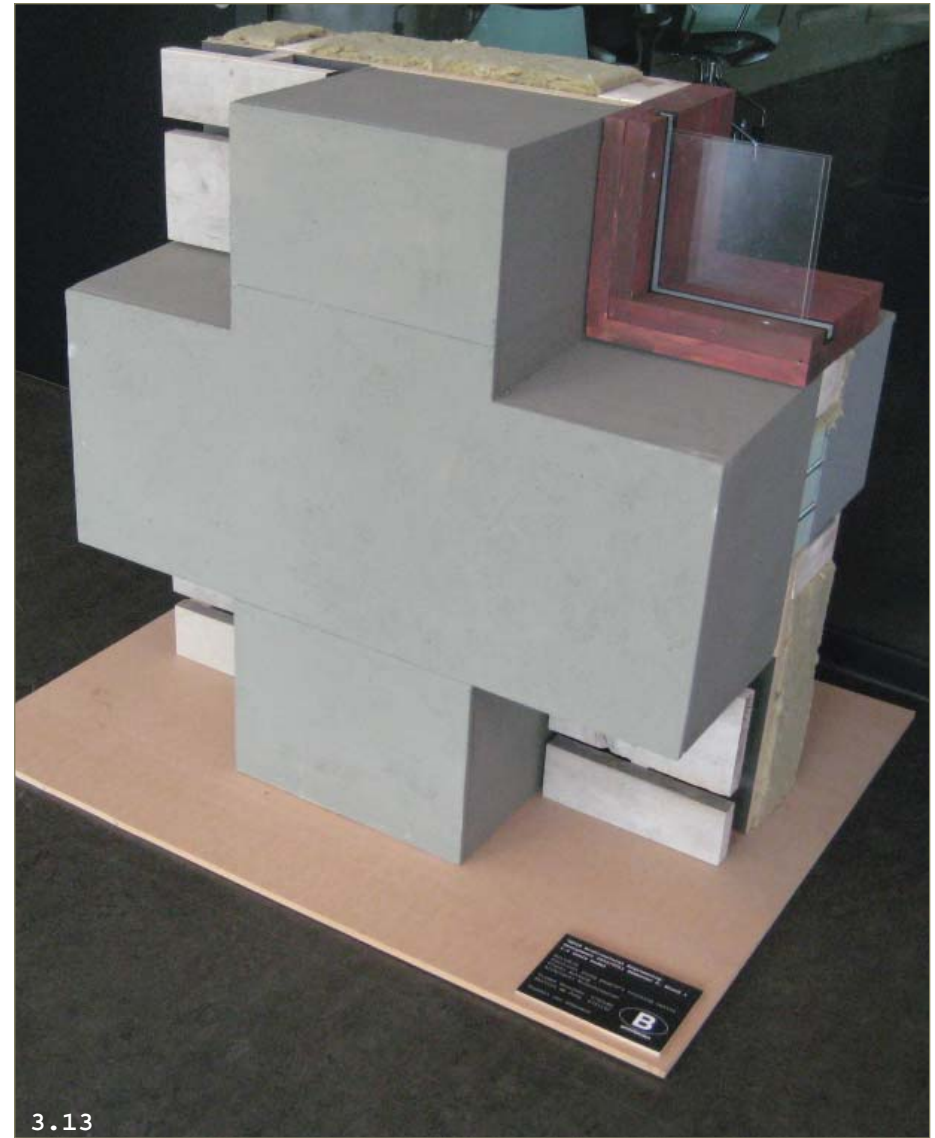
3.10



3.11



3.12



3.13

4. CONCLUSION

As said in the introduction, vision is compared versus reality. On three scale levels this compartment is made, on the level of the architectural office, the building and at last the made detail itself.

The pictures of the buildings B-architecten used during the presentation in one of the lectures show that their designs often meet created expectations pointed out in their vision. The pictures really show a reaction of the vision of B-architecten. They are indeed very liberating and raw. What the pictures do not tell you is if these buildings work in the way the users want them to work, but this is not a part of their vision.

This also counts for the young people's training centre. As earlier said in this report the building of B-architecten often are a reflection of their users. They used the cheekiness of the young people in their design which also shows some kind of cheekiness. It has a very raw and authentic look. The authentic look comes from the honest use of materials.

In detail, no materials are used for esthetic purpose only and always shown as they are. No finishing layers for esthetics and materials are used for what they are for. For example: concrete is only used to bear the building and placed in such a way that less extra material is needed. There is minimal use of hidden layers in the building.

If you compare the vision on the different scale levels to the realized, then they did a good job on the implementation. The architect did show what they wanted to show with the building and their detail.

The next question that should be asked is if this means that this building is a good building. In the eyes of the architect it is a good building, because they accomplished all the goals they wanted to accomplish. But for example the users are not happy with some elements of the young people's training centre as a building. We decided to ask

the architect about it after his presentation at the 15th of March. The architects reaction on the question how they implicate users reactions: "Not all clients can be pleased"..

Personally as analyzers of this project we have a different vision. We don't like that the concrete and the panels are getting green, and that the building has some leakages. We would favor a method where the client interest is taken in consideration.

So may it be that the vision of the architect of making honest buildings above everything else is not the right "parti" (starting point)?



Making 1:1 scale detail

5. SOURCES

www.b-architecten.be

Visit the building on the 24th of February

Visit the Library of Antwerp on the 24th of February

Book: B-architecten X; Davidts

Presentation of B-architecten on the 15th of March

Architectuur in Vlaanderen / Jaarboek 2008-2009, editie 2010; Ilse Liekens

Util Structuurstudies, portfolio en referentielijst december 2010

Persbericht Stad Antwerpen: Opening JCC Deurne en JCC Zappa; Axel Dingemans en Joris Minnen; 29 april 2009

www.ludion.be

