

Landmark, Nieuw-Bergen, the Netherlands

Monadnock's new landmark building, cast at the centre of a pedestrianised regeneration of Nieuw-Bergen, purposefully creates a focal point for the Dutch town, without reverting to civic or religious type. By **Hugh Strange**



The building sits as a landmark structure within the reconfigured central square

All photos: Sijm Bollaert

Project Landmark
Architect Monadnock
Location Nieuw-Bergen, Netherlands

The villages of the Meuse Valley in the Netherlands form a coherent group, known as the 'Church villages', with each hamlet centred around a tower, that in turn provides a silhouette recognisable from afar. These traditional villages - Bergen, Aijen, Afferden, Siebengewald, Well and

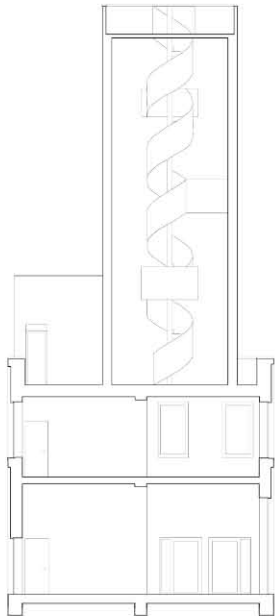
Wellerlooi - together make up the local municipality. Following heavy bombing during The Second World War, they were joined by a newly constructed settlement of Nieuw-Bergen. The new town was designed according to prevalent planning principles and sited close to the highway and organised around centrally located car parking provision. Crucially, there was no church tower.

A renewal plan is now under way that will significantly transform the village centre. The car parking

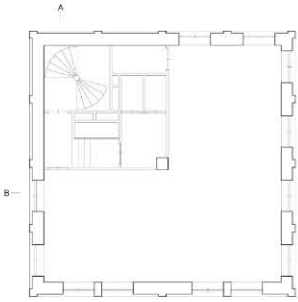
has been moved to the edge of the town, and the central square pedestrianised. As a key part of this regeneration, Rotterdam-based practice Monadnock have completed the design of a new landmark building within the renovated square. As part of their research, the architects studied the trade buildings that traditionally sat adjacent to the market squares within medieval Dutch cities. Their new building seeks to appropriate many of the qualities of this typology; providing a building that whilst clearly not

religious or civic, nevertheless identifies a recognisable centre and provides a symbolic representation of the collective.

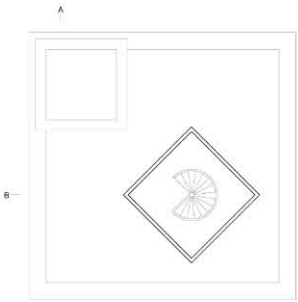
The building marries three distinct volumes into a striking formal combination. Of a similar scale to the surrounding housing, a low, cubic base houses a café-restaurant that provides a meeting place for the local community. A smaller block sits on top of this, allowing access to the rooftop via a spiral staircase. Finally, adjacent to this sits a much larger, and altogether differently scaled



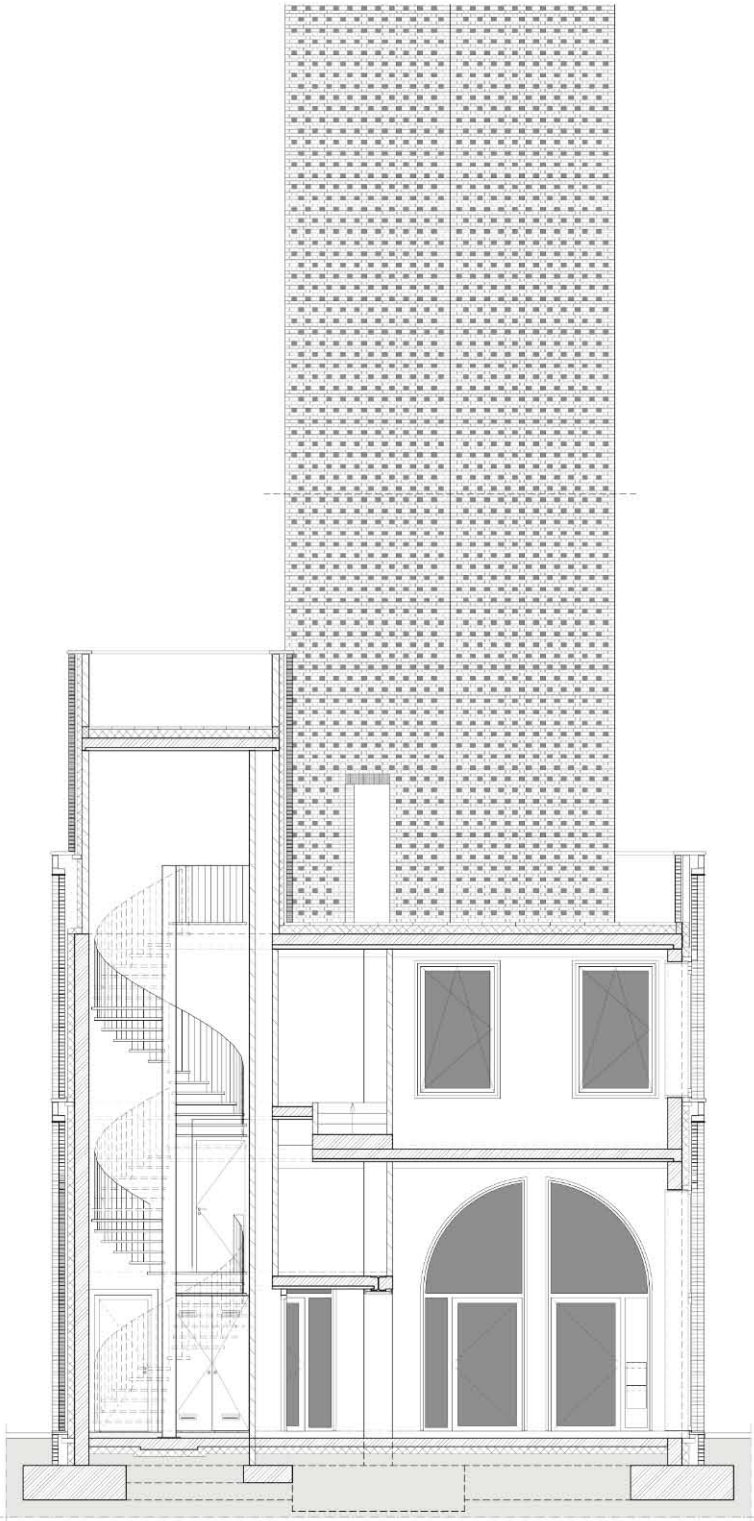
SECTION B



FIRST FLOOR



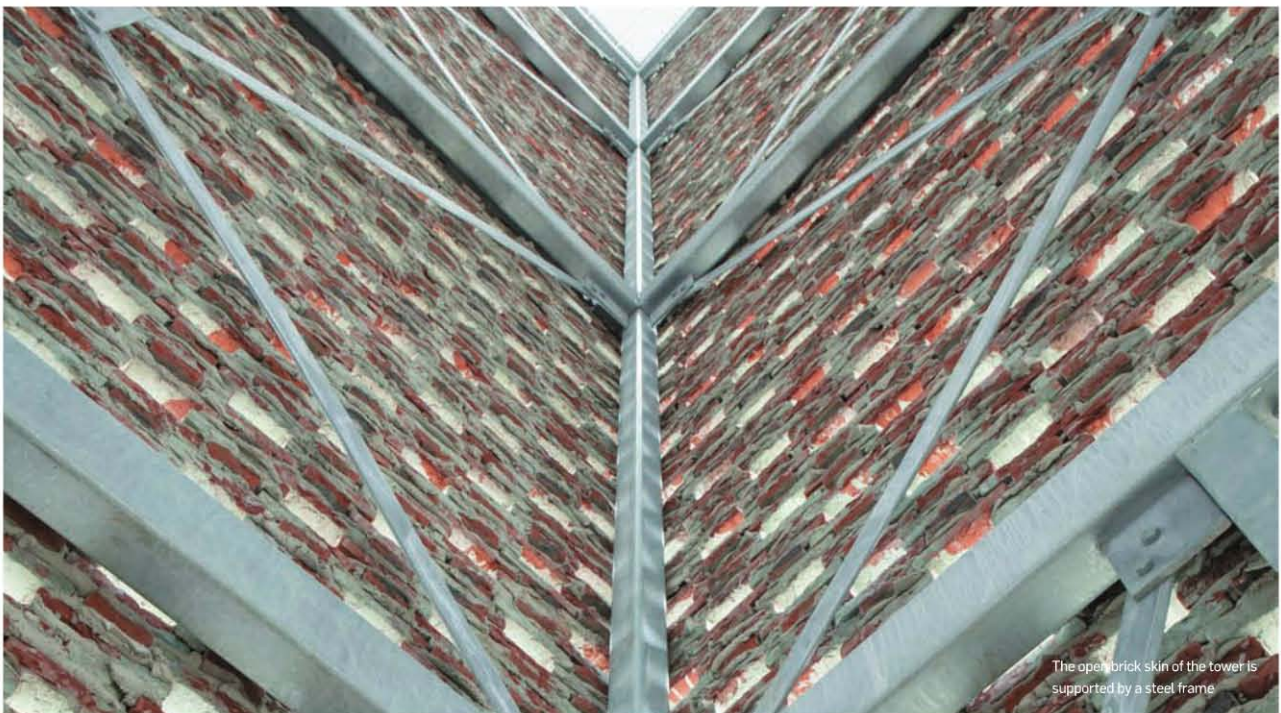
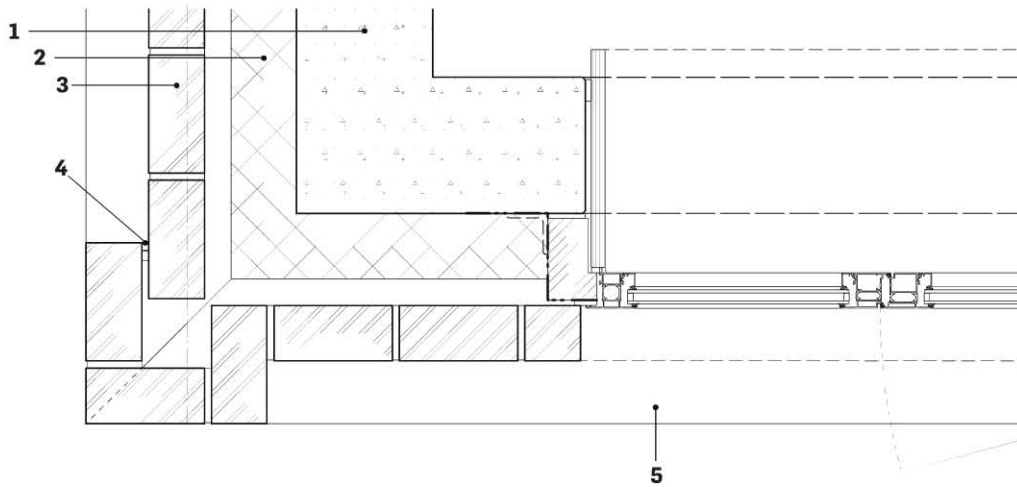
VIEWING PLATFORM



Corner detail

- 1 In-situ concrete wall
- 2 Thermal insulation
- 3 Masonry hand-molded bricks

- 4 Vertical expansion joint masonry sealant
- 5 Blue lime stone sill continues under the masonry piers



The open brick skin of the tower is supported by a steel frame



The tower above is supported with a latticework of diagonally braced steelwork rising up behind the outer masonry skin

element; a tower, square in plan and reaching 25m in height. Traversing the low building's roof leads one to a separate stair that spirals up to the top of this tower, providing a publicly accessible viewing platform with vistas beyond the town and to the surrounding nature reserves.

All three volumes of the building are clad in various combinations of red and green brickwork. The low base building is square in plan and largely clad in green brick with a framework of protruding masonry that provides an appearance of depth and solidity to its elevations. Round arched windows at ground floor, together with red brick lintels above apertures at both levels, combine with gold-plated window and doorframes to give this block a distinct and decorative character. Its external facades comprise a cavity wall construction with an inner leaf of load bearing in-situ concrete. This structure allows the walls to transfer the wind loads on the tower without deformation while avoiding the requirement for cross bracing. Pre-fabricated concrete floor panels direct the load from above through steel beams to the perimeter walls and to a concrete column centrally located within the square plan.

The two volumes above are more abstract in tone. The smaller rooftop block is clad in alternating red and green brickwork while the tower, set at 45 degrees to the base, is clad solely in green brick. In contrast to the concrete construction of the base, the tower above is supported with a latticework of diagonally braced steelwork rising up behind the outer masonry skin. The brickwork of this outer skin is laid in an alternating bond, producing a perforate surface. The open structure allows light to shine through in the evenings, acting, in a very literal manner, as a landmark beacon.

PROJECT TEAM

Project team Sandor Naus, Job Floris, Rebecca Aguilera

Client Concept-NL

Structural engineer Bolwerk Wekers

Project manager Monton / Peter van Stipdonk

Main contractor Burgtbouw

