



25kV Recharged

Mei architects and planners

In recent years Schiecentrale, the former electricity generating plant on Lloydpier in Rotterdam, has undergone a transformation into the centre of the creative industry of the city. In and around the original building of the former electricity power plant a lively creative industry, ranging from studios to workspaces for almost all related activity, has blossomed.

The generating station dates from the early years of the last century. The Schiehaven station was a large brick structure that contained a battery house, canteen, porter's lodge, transformer house, turbine hall and boilerhouse. The complex fell into disuse in 1990. Mei architects and planners played an important role in the transformation of the Schiecentrale and its surroundings into the audio-visual centre that it now is.



Fig. 2 Old to new facade concept. © Mei architects and planners

Glass panels

In 2000, Mei architects and planners turned the originally introverted and blank transformer house, which is part of Schiecentrale, into a transparent structure that houses various businesses: the 25kV building. The transparency of the new structure was achieved by removing the originally blank façade over the full length of the building. In its place is a steel frame faced entirely with glazed panels.

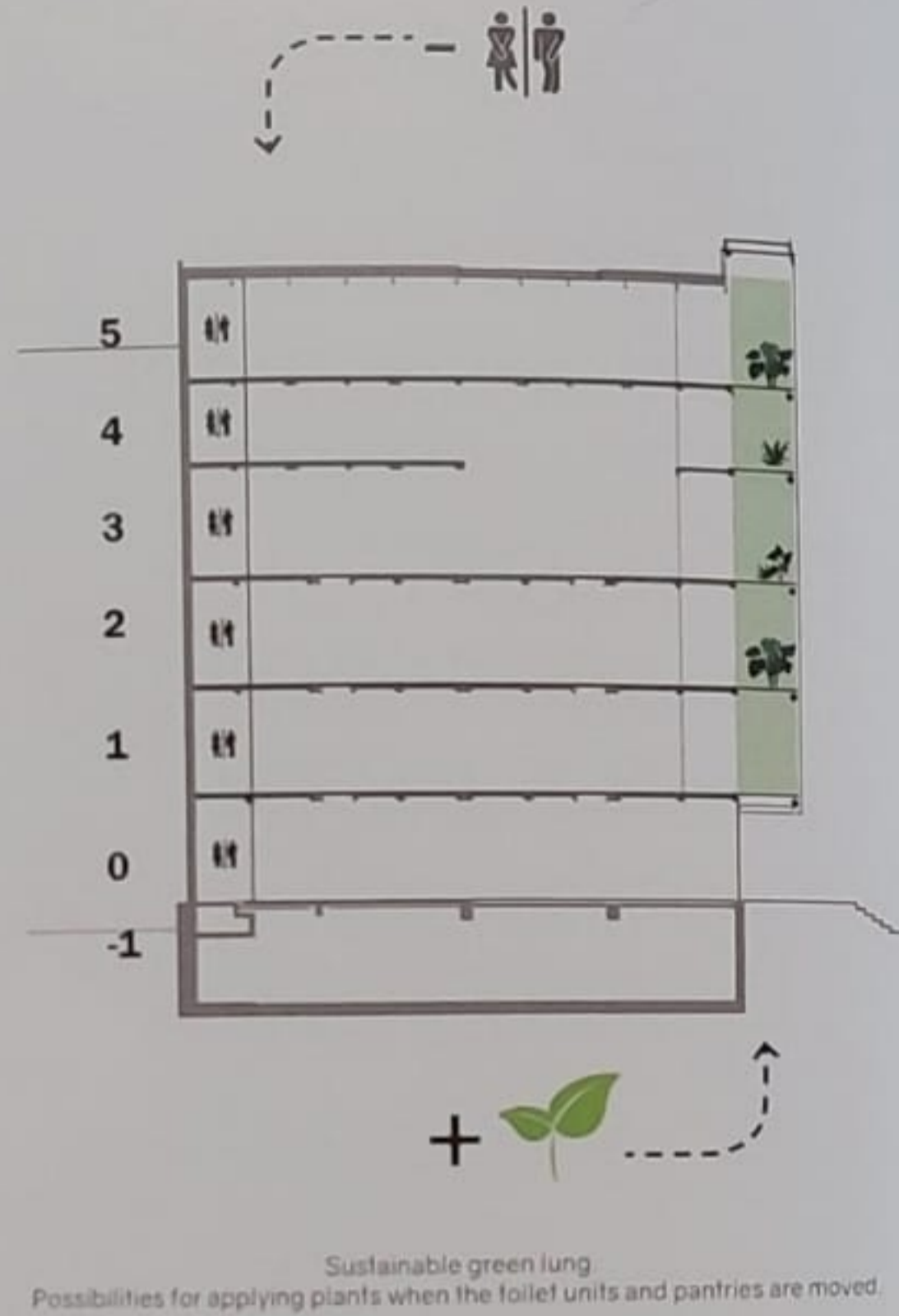


Fig. 3 Cross Section Concept. © Mei architects and planners

Housed in the new volume are all supporting facilities for the adjacent 46 office spaces such as toilets and pantries as well as stairwells, the lift and a corridor that provides access to the offices. Because all daylight enters the building through this zone, even the toilets and pantries are made of glass, albeit translucent glass for privacy reasons. The stairs are dimensioned as lightly as possible to that as much daylight as possible can enter the building.

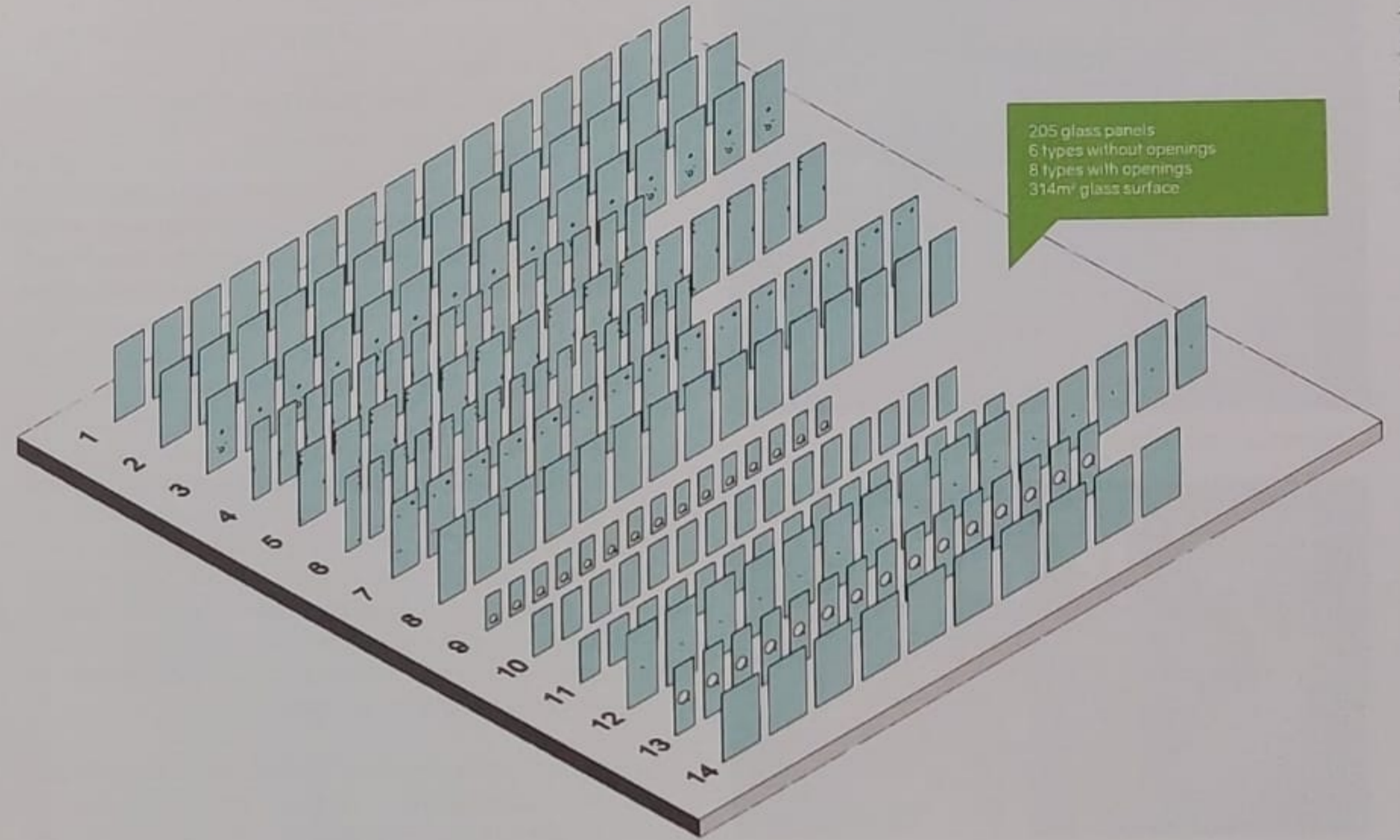


Fig. 4 Glass Inventory © Mei architects and planners

Space for encounter

The voids in these service zones also function as air channels. Slats at the bottom and top open in the summer to ventilate the offices. What's more, the buffer zone has a positive effect on the energy performance and building physics of the structure, an achievement that was rewarded with the Rotterdam Sustainable Building Prize in 2001. The corridor between the offices and the service spaces, such as the pantries and toilets, is a shared zone that

functions as a space for encounter. The occupants of the different offices can forge new plans here that can lead to new collaborations. The former sombre block is now a successful address for modern firms involved in one way or another with the audio-visual sector. The transparent glass façade gives the office building a contemporary appearance, while the typically industrial character of the building has been preserved.



Fig. 5: Interior pantries (Current Scenario) © Jeroen Musch



Fig. 6: Impressions of kV Recharged © Mei architects and planners

From glass space to green lung

Since its completion, the transparent façade has functioned as a vertical plaza providing access to daylight meeting areas. It invites employees to step out of their offices into the collective space of the creative community.

Now, 20 years later, the glass meeting spaces are being transformed again. Commissioned by Dudok Real Estate, Mei will once again create a contemporary 25 kV building, suitable for the new generation of users. The glass space will be transformed into a 'green lung': a communal garden

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where everyone can meet and stay. The green lung, which will be developed by MOSS, will provide space for activities spread throughout the day. From lively collaborations with colleagues to a quiet cup of coffee in the greenery. Passers-by on the street will see a facade full of life - a symbiosis of green and social activity.

A healthy working environment

Sustainability and well-being are the common threads running through the new transformation of 25 kV. An important part of the transformation is to build on the qualities of the building already present, and to reuse existing materials. For example, in the design, the planters in the green lung are made from old pantry parts, whereby the pipes for toilets and wash basins already present are reused to provide plants with water.

Within the existing structure, flexible office units of about 50 - 300 m² are realized. Floors are connected by means of voids, creating space and allowing even more light to enter the building. The plinth and entrance are optimized, and the visibility of the users is enhanced. The active programming enhances the social interaction of the community and the connection with nature.

Pantries and toilets are currently located between the existing meeting spaces in the glass façade. These will be moved to the rear of the office units. The newly gained space will have an active programming in the green lung, which contributes to a pleasant and healthy working environment that the new generation of users will gladly identify with. Not only the glass façade will get an abundance of greenery, but the roof is also an important part of the sustainable

design. The roof will be made climate-adaptive, so that it can withstand longer periods of extreme drought or rainfall. Moreover, there will be solar panels and a large roof terrace, to which the building's users will have access.

Facts

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Green design: Makers Of Sustainable Spaces

Constructor: Pieters Bouwtechniek Delft

Fire & building physics: Peutz

Installation advisor: J. van Toorenborg

Light advisor: Lichtstudio Ralph Blankenaauw



Mei Architects

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Mei architects and planners resides leading projects in the Netherlands and abroad. Our work is founded on respect for the environment, for the history of the location, the current context and future living environment. Based on our expertise in the field of adaptive-use architectural heritage, new build projects and urban development strategies, we work on designs that put the user first. Our distinct designs tell their own story, which increases the involvement with the building and the connection between its users. With creativity, expertise and courage, we introduce innovative technical applications and user concepts that contribute to social and ecological sustainability.

Mei was founded by Robert Winkel, who leads the firm together with Michiel van Loon and Robert Platje. Established in Rotterdam, we work with an ambitious, international team on assignments in the Netherlands, France, Germany and Norway, among other countries. The office structure is based on the expertise domains of Building Transformation, New Build projects and Urban Planning, within which research is fostered and knowledge is secured. To further increase brain power and decisiveness, Mei seeks collaboration with various parties in the field, from experts in the area of urban nature to the building materials industry.