

Cultural Institution in an existing building · Danshuis Noord · Amsterdam



An institution like a dance house safeguards the position of Amsterdam in the international world of modern dance. The informal character of this institution – primarily a working space for professionals and amateurs – also provides a unique opportunity to boost citizens' cultural development.



The positive results of the feasibility study carried out by LÖHMANN'S in 2012 for a dance house in a hundred-year-old factory in Amsterdam Noord prompted the city council to promise financial support for the initial design phase of this project.



Among other things, the feasibility study showed that just by opting to use an existing building instead of constructing a new one, savings of over six million Euros could be achieved. Thanks to an intensive course of action, the design for Danshuis Noord in Amsterdam is an exemplary project.



A feasibility study into dance houses in Europe provided extra insight into programming and functional requirements in practice, and the information about space and construction from the archive drawings gave valuable knowledge for an affordable transformation. In agreement with the future users, it was possible to plan smart programming and an efficient use of space.



Ground floor



First floor

AN EXCITING CHOREOGRAPHY OF SPACES

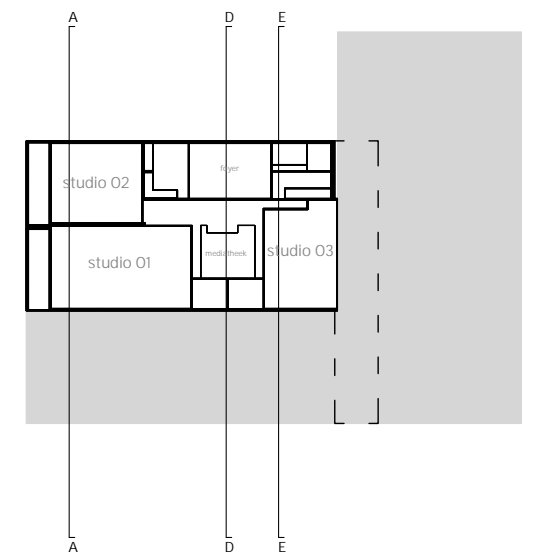
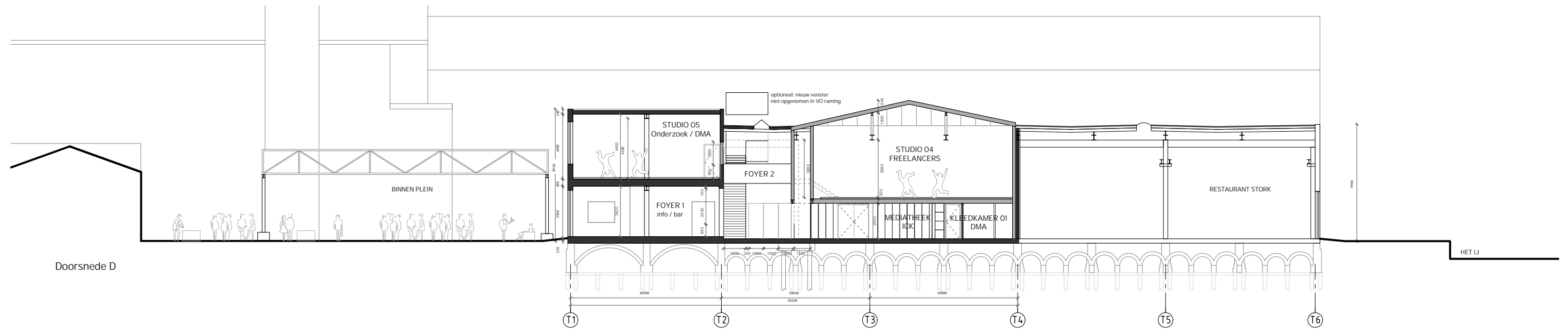
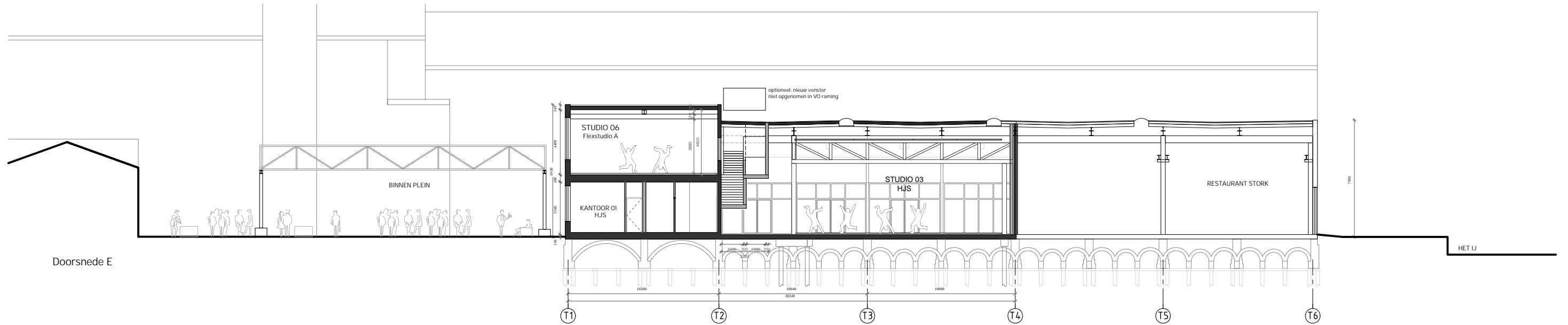
The aim of the design was to combine the existing features of the building with the requirements of the dance house in a compact way. Besides the economical and functional organisation of the space, it also creates a spatial choreography, with exciting connections, specific relations between spaces and unexpected views and insights.

The dimensions of the old factory buildings correspond well to the spaces needed for the studios. Only a few columns have to be replaced or removed, for which fortunately there is the benefit of extra support from the existing foundations. These minimal alterations to the construction mean big savings on building costs.

USING EXISTING PARTS OF THE BUILDING

The most characteristic parts of the old factory are 'the house' (a small-scale part of the building enclosed by the shop floors), 'the arcade' on the west side, the 'high hall' with skylights and the 'gallery' in the adjoining monumental Kromhouthal.

The specific qualities of these different parts of the building are linked to the new functions. For instance, the house is home to the changing rooms and offices. The big studios are situated close together in the large, high hall. The arcade is an internal stretching and relaxing room, and the gallery in the Kromhouthal is the domain of the freelancers.





Foyer 1



Foyer 2

STAGED ENTRANCE IN TWO-PART FOYER

The foyer of the dance house consists of two parts, lending flexibility to this public space. The first part is on the ground floor of the house. Its low ceiling (3.80m), which is in proportion, makes this part an intimate place to welcome the public, provide information and create an accommodating space for both dancers and visitors from the neighbourhood.

Adjoining this is a second foyer (over 7m high) in the big hall. Its balcony and interior windows make it an ideal place to see and be seen, forming a stage for the public before a performance or in the interval. The foyer gives access to all the studios, the media library and the zone for the freelance dancers further on. So during working hours, this space functions as a direct link between dancers, choreographers and other users.

EACH STUDIO HAS ITS OWN CHARACTER

In order to create a pleasant dance climate, all the studios can be shut off and separated acoustically. Each studio benefits from direct daylight, sufficient changing rooms, stretching space outside the studio, a good dance floor with minimum dimensions of 10 by 14 metres, a rectangular space (no squares or angled walls) and a minimum height of 3.80 metres.

Retaining the existing walls and constructional details of the old factory and keeping them visible has given each studio its own character and identity. While one studio is characterised by a wonderful view, for example, another has lots of daylight, a sloping ceiling or a double façade. This ensures that the various dance companies, producers and classes can make these spaces their own.





Freelance studio

A HOUSE IN A HOUSE

One studio stands out in particular: the studio for freelancers. Here, the roof will be replaced and raised, creating a high, light and original space that rises above the rest and thus becomes a hallmark of the dance house.

A PLEASANT CLIMATE

The big studios in the hall are very high and have a large excess, so there is always a buffer of un-used air. All the new walls will be covered in loam, and the dance house is heated by a radiant heating system. These two factors en-sure a pleasant climate, while minimising the use of mechanical installations and thus reducing energy consumption.

Credits

<i>Client</i>	Stichting Beheer Danshuis Amsterdam (SBDA) on behalf of the Amsterdam Municipality
<i>Size</i>	2600 m2
<i>Project architect</i>	Heike Löhmann
<i>Contributors</i>	Olga Chulkova, Jesse Zweers, Carmen Buitenhuis, Marcus Kempers
<i>Structural engineer</i>	Bouwadviesbureau STRACKEE
<i>building services consult</i>	ingenieursbureau Linssen
<i>consultant acoustics</i>	Peutz
<i>cost consultant</i>	Bornia bouwadvies
<i>projectmanagement</i>	MAAR!
<i>processing period</i>	2013