



*previous state*

An old, psychiatric clinic in Melle. Already there, since the turn of the century. Back then, a unique place, ahead of its time, given form as separate buildings. Villa's. Every department its own villa, united by the architecture. A historical, mannerist architecture, but on a human scale. Especially this.

And in between the villas, a park. Green and open. Always open. An unlikely, unique ensemble.

Since the fifties and sixties, however, the old villas have steadily been replaced by new buildings. New buildings that fulfil the demands of the new times. But without unity. Ordinary hospital buildings, that hide behind rules and regulations. And have lost their humanity.

The unity, and the idea, of the villas – as villa – is lost today.

Two years ago, another demolition campaign was started, again, destroying two more villas. Without the need for renewal – the demolition as such. Of course, the old villas do not respond to the new times anymore. But, at the same time, the clinic as ensemble falls apart, and as such, does not respond to the human scale anymore, as well.

*aim of the intervention*

A new director halts the demolition campaign and initiates an architecture competition. By then, one of the villas was already gone, and the other had been partly demolished.

But the demolition was stopped and the question of the villa was raised.

The question of what the remaining villa could mean. Or at least, what remained of the remaining villa. Not from the point of view of norms and regulations, but from the point of view of the building, as building.

*description*

Starting from the actual state and finding a new way of perception and use was the answer. Keeping it as it was found. As was found celebrating as a new horizon.

Making a new place to meet was the proposal. An open space. Though building a public space. Though public space still building. A public space part of the park. But still a building in the park.

The roof was already gone. The rain reached the ground floor. The wind moved the open windows. But when the sun came through the old building became a small paradise.

Making that small paradise even without that sun. That was the idea.

All mineral materials were removed. The ground floor became gravel, to let the rain out. The old floors were perforated to do the same. The windows on the ground

floor were lowered to the ground. The floor between the basement and ground floor was removed. A small auditorium was found.

The building has been fully opened, now. At the same time it still guaranteed the intimacy of a building. Of the old villa. Of a house.

A house has rooms. The old villa had rooms. Still there. The house got new rooms. On the different levels, glass rooms were added. Seven. Seven empty rooms. Small ones. High ones. Big. Low.

Rooms though without walls. Glazed rooms. Greenhouses as rooms. Rooms for a garden.

The park became the inhabitant of the house. Finding intimacy in the greenhouses. Greenhouses sheltered in the old rooms of the villa. The villa became an inhabitant of the park. As it opened all windows and doors.

And at the end few things more. A tree. A fireplace. An amphitheatre. Lighting and benches. Jeu de boules and garden chairs.

A place to meet. A new place to meet.

*assessment*

A new place to meet. To meet freely. To meet on purpose.

A new place to meet. Patients and therapists. Family and relatives. To play theatre. To perform music. To speak out loud and clear. To listen silently. To be alone. To find friendship. To change mind. To think differently. To confirm live.

All that was opposite is not opposite anymore. Here. In this place. Feeling home in a park. Feeling free in a house. Day and night. If you wish.

The younger inhabitants of the psychiatric clinic gather the evening around the fireplace. And find a new way of life in the clinic. The nursery school connected to the clinic teaches in the greenhouse and the open-air auditorium. On Sunday cyclist passes along the park and make a stop at the villa to drink and eat something. The board of the clinic loves to have board-meetings over there.

The winter different then to summer. The evening different then the morning. The sun different then the rain.

Always different. So different. But never ever anymore without.

This place. This Park. This garden. This house. But everything together.

Open. Public. Intimacy. Yours.

