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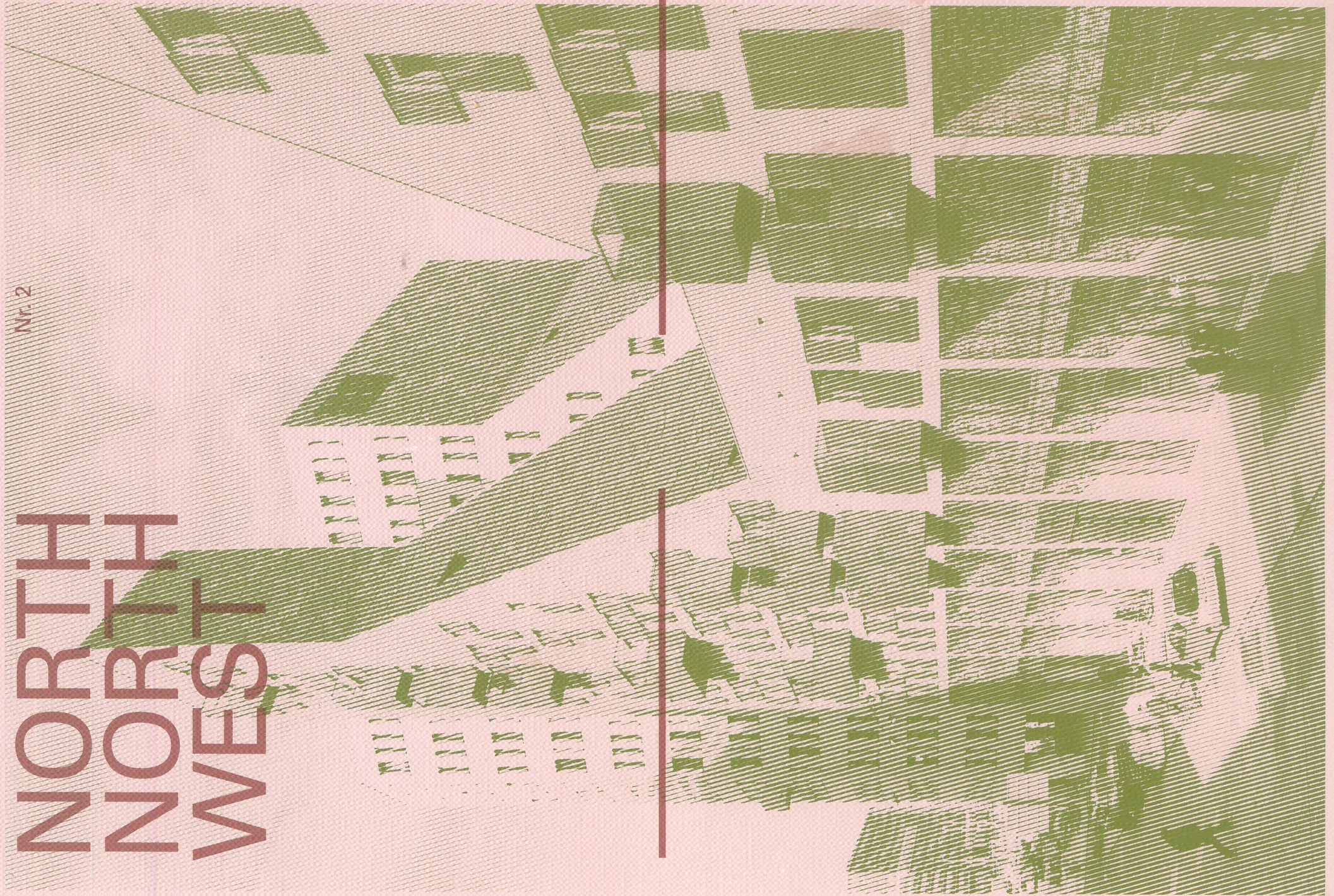
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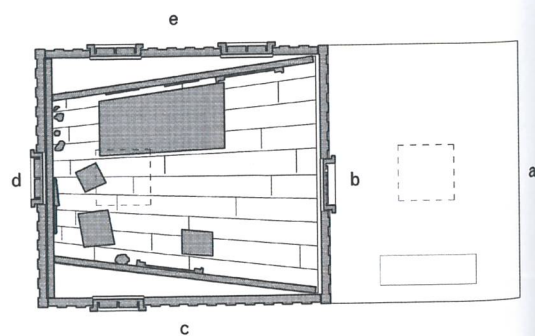
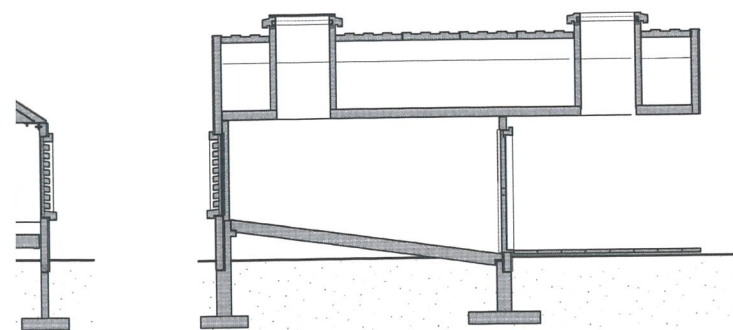
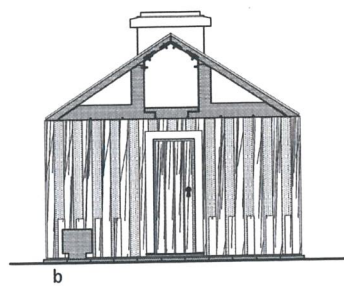
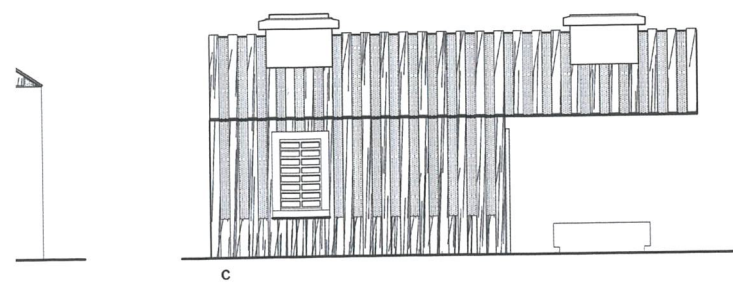
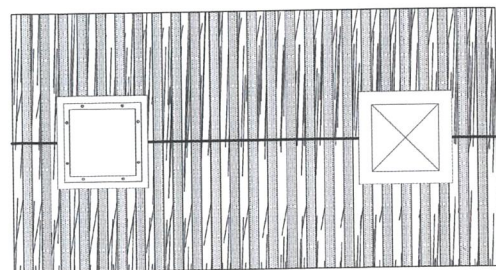
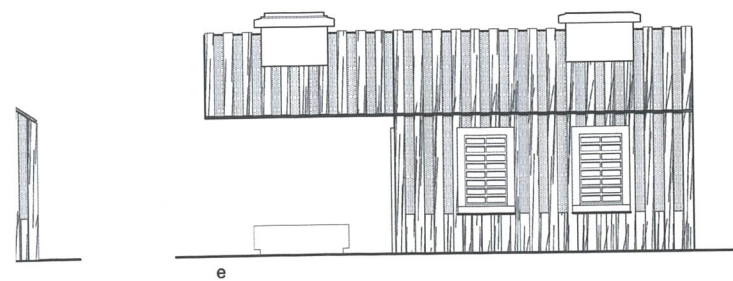
# Bus House

Bus House is situated near the main bus stop that serves a number of schools in the town of Ede. The small concrete house has an outspoken archaic appearance, with a pitched roof, chimneys and shuttered windows. Its protruding roof in the front offers a covered space for students waiting for the bus to arrive. All façades are closed: the only opening that gives a look inside is a bronze key hole in the front door. Peeping through this opening, the viewer will see a strange, but also familiar bedroom: a reconstruction in grey concrete of a famous painting by Vincent van Gogh.

## Campus, Ede



Interior model





Interior through keyhole

abstract skin, which reveals its complexities only gradually and from a distance, towards the water. On the landside, the detail of the brickwork and the changing hues of green are complemented by the intricate ornament of the screened balconies, using laser cutting technology for the production of small outdoor rooms bursting into the air above the pavement. Working through the essential repertoire of urban architecture, the IJdock project explores the limits of several languages: Miesian glazed façades, concrete panelling and the craftsmanship of brick known from early twentieth century Expressionism – to reduce a building that states its presence and even timelessness in one of the most changeable environments of a dynamic European capital. In the *Scientific Autobiography* Aldo Rossi wrote: 'I have always believed that in life as in architecture, whenever we search for something, we do not find merely what we have sought; in every search there is always a degree of unforeseeability, a sort of troubling feeling at the conclusion. Thus the architect must prepare his instruments with the modesty of a technician; they are the instruments of an action which he can only glimpse, or imagine, although he knows that the instrument itself can evoke and suggest the action.'<sup>4</sup> The building on the IJ, in my view, is a precise illustration of this statement, and one of the significant contributions to the problem of understanding the city as a collective work made up of buildings that endeavour to speak to those in whose life they make an appearance.

The latest work of Zeinstra van Gelderen is not one of the housing projects, which make up the bulk of their professional work. *Bus House* in Ede, a small town in the middle of the Netherlands represents the spirit and character of their style and approach to architectural design to the full. As a result of a commission formulated by the municipality of Ede for the creation of an artwork, this design should be capable of acting as the new fulcrum for students of the campus, were several schools of the region are situated.

Free of any pre-packaged ideas or design preconceptions, the architects made themselves familiar with this part of town. To learn the way students and residents use the spaces of the campus took them to this area on more than one occasion. The conclusion was that the idea of designing an artwork, requested by the council was determined more by a desire to follow fashionable models of urban redevelopment. A symbolic gesture could be used as the town's visiting card and outward manifestation rather than taking care of real community requirements or satisfying solutions for the needs of the users. Almost all are commuters going to work, school or university. Thus, in accordance with the Dutch urban model in general and its dense, coherent network of a few large centres and thousands of smaller ones, students travel a great deal every day using private and public transport, above all buses.

It were precisely these thoughts about the local situation which prompted to conceive of the town's needs less in terms of art than as a hangout to pause for a chat while waiting for a bus. So the architects began to believe that the social and public function could best work with an alternative type of architecture, namely a 'Bus House', a bus stop that differs from those with which Dutch country is so populated. Their work should mean to be a full-blown public space open to the community and facilitating the usual waiting process. A list of requirements determined the design. Things as the space should be large enough to accommodate a substantial number of people, it should form a shelter when raining and also a seating area for the more physically fragile. A further requirement, however, was to introduce an element capable of car-

rying out the symbolic task nowadays usually demanded in the design of a public space.

The architect's memory can always be a good starting point. It functions as an instrument and source at the same time, in which the story is not a linear process and objects are positioned on an emotional map, an atlas of feelings and memories which transform and transfigure real experiences into project materials. References emerge in the project's design proposals and models, some indirectly and others more specifically, like Vincent van Gogh's Arles bedroom interior (Van Gogh, *Bedroom*, 1888). The painting is recreated in three dimensions, giving life to an image stamped into the collective memory of all Dutch people and far beyond. It is a masterpiece synthesising the painter's inner world and the intimate landscape during his stay in Arles while he was waiting for a visit of his best friend Paul Gauguin.

In the reconstruction of the Van Gogh painting on this location in Ede, the objects are more rarefied in order to increase the distance to real life. To reinforce the symbolic and mnemonic value of the painted interior, the architects used a single material, concrete. Everything in the room, from the walls to the furniture, is cast as if it were a single gigantic sculpture, which presents itself in a secret, quasi voyeuristic form to bus passengers. This urban scale sculpture recalls something else. A public sculpture by Rachel Whiteread, *House*, made in London in 1993 and demolished only eleven weeks later. It was designed to give a consistent and readable expression to the rapid urban transformation processes taking place in the London suburbs.

In *Bus House*, a single roof window enables enough natural light to filter in for a glimpse of an inner space in half-light and a single small opening in the front enables us to look into the room from the outside. An Opening that echoes other stolen views, the interior of Sigurd Lewerentz's 1927 Chapel of Resurrection at the Stockholm Woodland Cemetery and the Rome panorama to be glimpsed from the entranceway keyhole to the garden of eighteenth century villa Cavalieri di Malta all'Aventino (the only Rome work by Giambattista Piranesi). Images, recollections, emotions which are stratified in the makers

memory, merging and mixing up with the project style which has slowly taken shape in models and sketches.

Above the entrance door, from which you can see the Bus House interior, there is a protruding roof continuing the room's ceiling. It is an overhang which generates a full-blown waiting space closed off by one side of the room encompassing the three dimensional re-evocation of the Van Gogh interior and on a further two sides with long benches designed to accommodate those waiting or simply smoking a cigarette, perhaps waiting for a friend to come back. But also conceived of as a space for the town's elderly to stop for a chat and take advantage of daily to-ing and fro-ing. As if it were one of the many cities which Marco Polo describes to Kublai Kahn Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* (1972). It is a privileged place for watching people go by. There is something familiar about the roof's triangular shape protruding boldly over the waiting area and the door through which Van Gogh's room can be observed. On one hand it echoes the pitched roof of the Dutch inhabited landscape. At the same time it also conjures up another excellent reference, Erik Gunnar Asplund's 1920 Woodland Chapel at the Stockholm Woodland Cemetery. The chapel's forecourt has the same roof as the interior and extends the religiosity of the place beyond its perimeter generating a strong bond between interior and courtyard without opening up windows or walls, establishing the primacy of meaning over image, symbolic over figurative value.

*Bus House* is thus an incredible bridge between architectural memories and recollections, resident behaviours, waiting-related requirements and Ede's public space needs. Without forgetting the desire to give the building a symbolic value in the hope that it will be able to transcend the limitations of its time and the functions it was designed for.



Erik Gunnar Asplund, Woodland Chapel Stockholm 1918-1920



Sigurd Lewerentz, Resurrection Chapel Stockholm 1921-1925

# Zeinstra van Gelderen Architects