

A FUTURE FOR THE POORTGEBOUW

Introduction

27 years ago, the Poortgebouw officially became registered for the function of youth housing. Since that time, much has changed; in the Poortgebouw itself, in the surrounding district "Kop van Zuid", as well as in the city of Rotterdam. Built in 1879 when the area was a bustling harbour, the Poortgebouw still stands proud within this constant transformation. But some things haven't changed. Since the last renovation 23 years ago, very little structural maintenance has taken place causing the building to have lost a bit of its allure.

In 2001, the Rotterdam Housing Corporation (WBR), the owner at that time, sold the Poortgebouw without the knowledge of its inhabitants to the project developer "de Groene Groep". This party wants to evict the 30 person living group and turn the Poortgebouw into expensive office space.

Legal proceedings have been running for over three years now. As the inhabitant's association filed for appeal against the negative verdict in Municipal Court, this dispute can still go on for quite some time.

The inhabitants association is well aware that the Poortgebouw—a national monument—is in need of renovation. However, the inhabitants want to show that this is possible with the current collective housing and cultural functions. **Together with "Tussen-Ruimte" Architects and external professional advisors, they have developed their own renovation plan.**



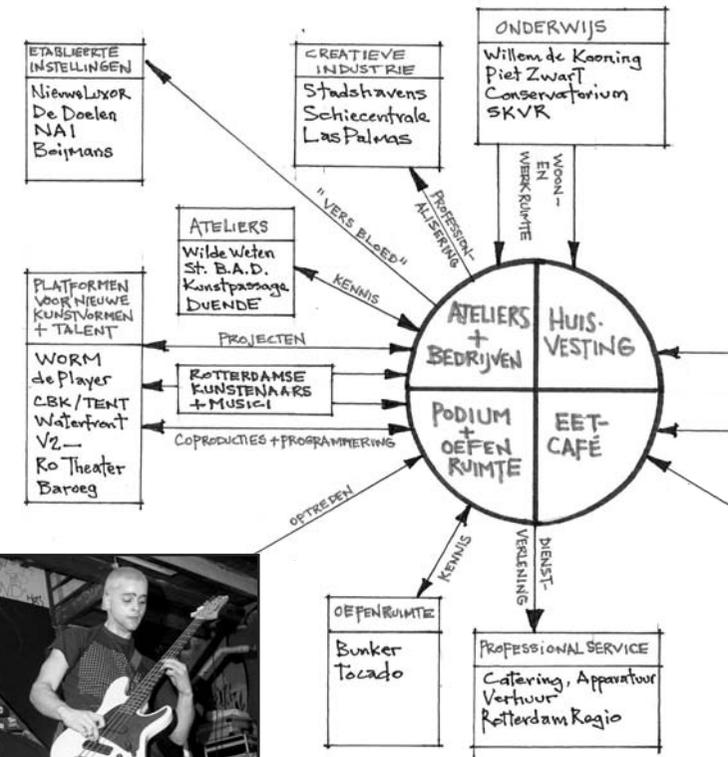
The Vision

Since 1980, the Poortgebouw has been home to several generations of individuals active in a variety of artistic, social, cultural and technical fields. The Poortgebouw makes it possible to combine living and working as a collective and thereby fulfills a cultural "breeding ground" function on a local and international level. Living and working in the Poortgebouw is a way of life: a dynamic made possible through cooperation, mutual inspiration and a do-it-yourself mentality which leads to diverse artistic and cultural activities open to a broader public.

The inhabitants of the Poortgebouw and their numerous supporters are of the opinion that this model of living and working is unique in Rotterdam and is of great societal and cultural value, also in the future.

A central question is whether the Poortgebouw needs to be re-developed into offices, when there is already far too much office space (a structural 15% over-supply), or should it be preserved as a cultural breeding ground for Rotterdam? The latter is a function which would be further strengthened by a renovation and fit perfectly in the image of Rotterdam as a "City of Culture" and the development of the creative economy which the city council desires.

The direct involvement and collectivity of the inhabitants remains the departure point in the alternative plan. The combination of working and living is sustained however with clearer spatial and legal separation. In this manner, **the quality of living space is strengthened and the activities can be more open to the public** than is the case currently. In the future, the Poortgebouw inhabitants association wants to assume a more prominent place in Rotterdam as a "creative city" and broaden its local and international network of collaborators.



Want to know more?

The complete 25 page vision document can be downloaded from the Poortgebouw website or requested during one of the weekly vegetarian eetcafés Sunday and Wednesdays 19:00.



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