



Rotterdam  
city centre

**FORUM**

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# ROTTERDAM



# Rotterdam city centre



# An icon in the heart of Rotterdam

The ABN-AMRO Building, established as the Rotterdamsche Bank, was realized in 1949. It is the first building to be realized within the destroyed central zone since the war. Its position, away from the Coolsingel, is due to the original position of the Coolsingel. The building was built according to Plan Witteveen, the first masterplan for the center developed during the war and based on the old city from before war. The architect of the building was H.F. Mertens. Soon after the war ended, this plan was replaced by the progressive modern 'Basisplan Van Traa' in 1949. In this plan the Coolsingel changes direction towards the harbour, leaving the bank building in an awkward position. The position of the bank in the new plan has remained unresolved since then.

It is also the spot closest to metrostation Beurs. This metrostation is the central hub that connects the two existing metrolines of Rotterdam. With the cities ambition of developing Coolsingel to a pedestrian orientated boulevards, this station will increase in importance. The development of the Coolsingel will add to the attraction of the heart of Rotterdam.



LATITUDE 51°55'51" N

LONGITUDE 4°28'45" E



*"The city that continually reinvents itself."*



# history of an icon

## A permanent asset on the Coolsingel

In 1941 the foundations were laid for the new building of Rotterdamsche Bank Vereeniging (Association) at 119 Coolsingel and this was the starting signal for the reconstruction of the city. Due to delays in construction and lack of materials the building was only completed in 1949. It is one of the few developments that was built according to the traditional style reconstruction plan of Witteveen. In the 50s glass pavilions were built on the very wide pavement in front of the building. Herman Mertens (1885-1960) was the regular architect of the National Bank Vereeniging and the Rotterdamsche Bank, for whom he had previously designed offices in Gouda and The Hague.

His most famous design in Rotterdam is the headquarters of Unilever (1931) on the Wytemaweg. Right after the war the bank building on the Coolsingel was one of the first of the main buildings to go up in the bombed out centre of Rotterdam. The stately, oblong colossus is almost completely symmetrical. Its main entrance, decorated with sculptures by Gerard Héman, stands in the middle of the Coolsingel. There are two other entrances, located on the Binnenweg and on the Van Oldenbarneveltplaats. Behind the

main entrance for visitors lay an oval entrance hall, on the right were the stocks hall and the cash desks for private people. The hall was of double height with work stations for 500 employees, with three floors of offices in the shape of a U.

The building was not only impressive from the outside, the interior was also designed in grand style. The walls were covered in wood and there were tall stately windows.

The building had a facade of red bricks, pierced with vertical window frames. In the rounded corners there were windows, classical columns and decorative sculptures. The slightly

sloping saddle roof was covered in copper. The sculpture "Peace and Prosperity" by Pieter Starreveld, better known as "Naked on the Blaak", came from the Incassobank on the Blaak.

Since the mid 70s the building has been used as the head office of the AMRO bank, a merger of the Amsterdamsche bank and the Rotterdamsche Bank. In 1978 further low rise space and a tower were added at the back of the complex (Kraaijvanger Architecten in collaboration with A.J.B. van de Graaf). In 2007 the building designed by Mertens was listed as a protected State Monument.





AMSTERDAM-ROTTERDAM BANK



Amsterdam - Rotterdam Bank, entrance Coolsingel, 1950

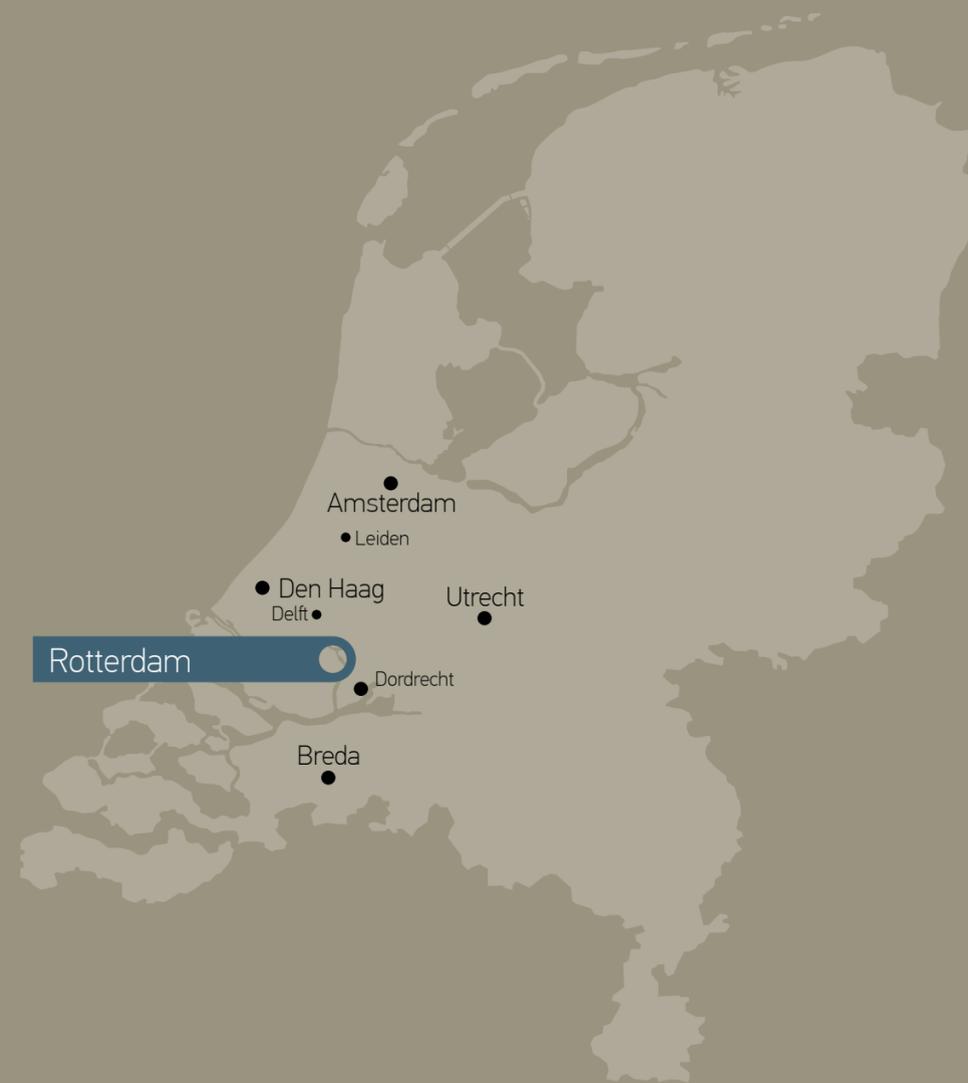


Amsterdam - Rotterdam Bank, monumental staircase, 1950



Amsterdam - Rotterdam Bank, entrance hall, 1950

# it's the centre of the centre



## Rotterdam city center

The location is well connected to the metro station 5 minutes from Rotterdam Central Station. Metro-lines offer direct connections to all parts of the city and also to some towns in the agglomeration. Furthermore the most important node of bus- and tram-lines is just opposite of the location at the Coolsingel, in front of the main-entrance of the historic ABN-Amro building. This makes it one of the best accessible locations in the city centre.

The inner-city high-street retail is centered adjacent to the building around Lijnbaan, Hoogstraat, Korte Lijnbaan, Beurstraverse and the Coolsingel. This is the dominant location for fun-shopping in Rotterdam as well as the region. Two large suburban shopping centers in Rotterdam are Alexandrium in the northeast, a strong location combining shopping, big box retail, and themed furniture retail, and Zuidplein in the south of the city. However, both do not have the scale and nor the mix similar to the inner-city retail.

In a wider area around the city-center Rotterdam offers many more destinations for visitors. The nearby museum district, the opera-house and various theaters and also districts with a wide variety of restaurants, bars and other going-out venues are all within walking distance and attract consumers from a wide region. Rotterdam is known in the Netherlands for national weekend tourism, a.o. driven by new developments and modern architecture as well as by the city center retail offer.

## Population

Rotterdam has 639.587 inhabitants (apr. 2017) and is the 2nd largest city in the Netherlands.

Rotterdam is the most important city in the Groot Rijnmond conurbation. This is the economic region clustered around the harbor complex stretching from just east of Rotterdam to the west where the harbor complex connects to the Northsea. Groot Rijnmond with a total population of 1.39 million is growing by 0.3% per year. The expected population in 2025 is 1.43 million.

The region of Rotterdam consists of mid-size towns predominantly between 30.000 and 70.000 inhabitants.

## Economy

Rotterdam is the second largest port in the world and is a crucial cornerstone in the Dutch economic system.

Important sectors in the Rotterdam economy include logistics, trade, industries, and services.

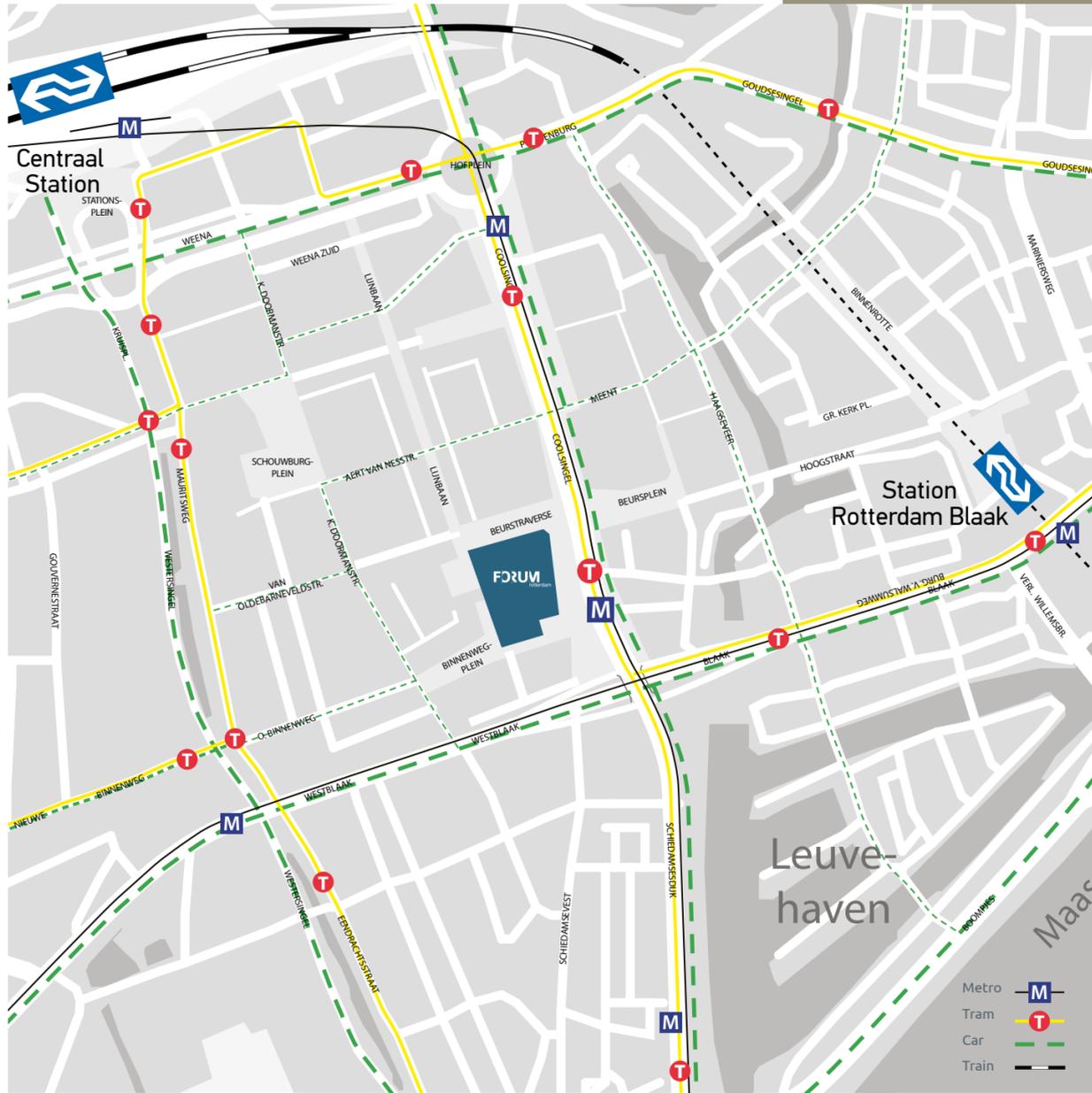
Erasmus University is among the top universities of Europe and is well known abroad a.o. for the international business school and attracts many foreign students and scholars.



# central location

The site is positioned in the centre of Rotterdam, where the city's primary streets: Coolsingel, Lijnbaan, Beurstraverse and Binnenweg. These streets, developed in different time periods, have a distinct character and attract different users. The project has the opportunity to attract all the different groups through a diverse program.

# Infrastructure & accessibility



Forum is located on the site of the former ABN AMRO bank, right in the heart of the city centre. The location is situated between the Coolsingel, Lijnbaan, Binnenwegplein and Beurstraverse, at the heart of an area of well-known streets and squares of major

significance to the city and its visitors. It is a highly visible location, with an prominent address on the Coolsingel.



*“A modern metropolis with an attractive business heart.”*



## Essence of the development

Forum plans to bring this city centre location to life for the wider public. It will be a mixed-use development consisting of retail, food & beverage, offices and housing. This will make it a true city centre location, catering to numerous target groups at different times of the day and week. Retail and food & beverage functions are located on the lower levels, with strong links to the existing spatial structure. The offices and

residential properties are located on the higher levels and will add to the vibrancy of the location. The total development spans an area of 60,000 m2, making it a major project of economic significance, considering the creation of employment opportunities.



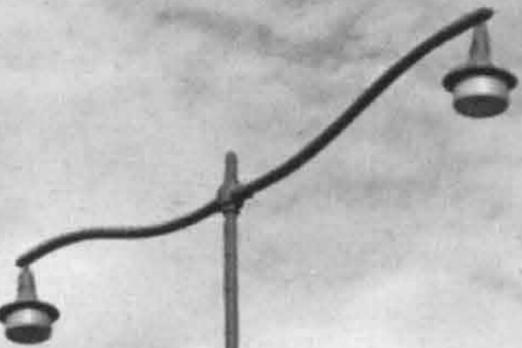
an icon in a vibrant City







ROTTERDAMSCHE BANK



SPIDO

LINKS  
AFSLAAND  
SNEL  
VERKEER

# city of architecture

## Architecture

Rotterdam is the architectural city of the Netherlands. Within an area of a few square kms a representation can be found of everything produced in the past 60 years in terms of architecture. Here you can find modern architecture from well known national and international architects such as Abe Bonnema, Dam and Partners, Rem Koolhaas, Renzo Piano, Helmut Jahn and Norman Foster. The tallest buildings in the Netherlands are in Rotterdam. You can see the imposing skyline from far away, with the Euromast and the Erasmus Bridge standing out as landmarks. This is why Rotterdam attracts national and international interest as an architectural city.

## Rotterdam cherishes its classics

There are a number of jewels in the crown when it comes to the rebuilding of Rotterdam. The St Laurens church, the Groothandelsgebouw and the Witte huis (White house), the first skyscraper in Europe, are just a few examples. The industrial heritage of Rotterdam has been respected. Old warehouses and factories have been converted to new uses and the original architecture has been given a contemporary feeling. The monumental van Nelle factory complex for example, now serves as a design centre, the former central electricity building in the Lloyd kwartier is now the heart of Rotterdam's audiovisual industry and the recently developed Markthal. The historic town hall on the Coolingsingel is still in use.

## Exciting cultural city

Over the last 25 years the city of Rotterdam has grown to be the most exciting cultural city in the Netherlands with a rich offer of museums, theatres, concert halls, galleries and festivals. The most important museums are clustered near Forum Rotterdam.

- Schielandhuis
- Natural History Museum
- The Boijmans van Beuningen Museum
- The Rotterdam Art Gallery
- The Maritime Museum
- The Dutch Architecture Institute



# meet the architect

It is no coincidence that Wessel de Jonge has his office in an inspiring building, the former Van Nelle factory in Rotterdam. The factory, designed in the 20s, is a classic example of the New Building style. Wessel de Jonge was the co-ordinating architect for the conversion of this transparent monument into a contemporary office complex which is popular with companies in the design sector. The restoration shows his love and appreciation of the original architecture.

As a third generation architect in Rotterdam, de Jonge describes how his life has been bound up with the city. He is familiar with all of the interesting

properties. "My grandfather ventured out from Zeeland to Rotterdam, and my father Leo de Jonge had a very large office here. He was responsible for many buildings when Rotterdam and its surroundings were being rebuilt. I really enjoy and appreciate that as the third generation of architects I also work in this city where I was born and raised. The projects we have done in Rotterdam include the renovation of the HUF premises, the conversion of the old customs building on the Kop van Zuid into the Pincoffs hotel, and together with other architects, the St Jobsveem in the Lloydkwartier."



Wessel de Jonge, Architect

## What is your role in this proces?

We are the ambassador and the conscience of the existing building. We are doing the conversion of the bank building on the Coolsingel.

We have won awards for the conversion to modern use of historic buildings or of buildings which are interesting for other reasons.

We have won big international prizes for such schemes. We won the European Heritage Award from the EU for the Van Nelle complex, and recently at a ceremony in the MOMA in New York, we received the World Monuments Fund/ Knoll Modernism Prize, for the restoration and conversion of the former TB hospital, Zonnestraal in Hilversum. These are prizes to be proud of."

Both projects were recently selected by the Dutch government to be submitted for the World Heritage List of UNESCO. De Jonge continues: "We have been convinced for a long time that the conversion of buildings could become an important component in the activities of architects and in the building world in general, and we are now the front-runners. The Netherlands is full, and we lack space. Once you realise that there are very good buildings available in good inner city locations, that are very close to public transport, education, and other facilities, but which are not used anymore, then it is quite logical to say: let's do something with that.

The monument is a good example."

## What has been your approach?

"The first question for us was to investigate how we could make the former bank building, which is a National Monument, a functional part of the development. You could say that our role in this project, is to be the ambassador and spokesmen for the existing building.

## Is the bank building still entirely as it was originally?

"Over the years a few things happened to the building which we are not happy with at all. For instance brown smoked glass was put into the windows on all the facades. This makes it terribly sombre and dead, and we want to change that. Unfortunately a lot of the interior has been demolished."

## Are you planning to restore the original quality and architectural features?

"As far as it matches with what is required in the office and shop programme, yes we do. Almost nothing is left of the original bank interior and decorations, but on the other hand we can bring back the feeling of spaciousness. Many details got lost in the 70's. We mainly want to try to bring back the feeling that you are in a historic building.

It was one of the first buildings to be completed after the war. They started on it already while the war was still on. For a long period there were no building materials, and it took quite a long time to build. It was only finally completed in 1949.

It is a very rational building. A rebuilding plan was drawn up during the war but it was rather conservative. It was based on rebuilding the city according to the old street pattern and meant rebuilding in traditional style. When the war was over, this plan was completely overturned, and the existing street patterns were changed to make room for future car traffic and for rational building.

The plan that was focused on the future was the one made by Van Traa. Under that plan the Blaak (a well known street) was extended into the Westblaak, and therefore the Bijenkorf, which had survived the war, had to be demolished after all. The bank building is not

even in line with the Coolsingel because the Coolsingel originally was going to bend towards Schiedam West.

It was made straight by Van Traa in order to connect up with the Schiedamse Dijk but the building had already been started. In that sense it is evidence of an older city plan.

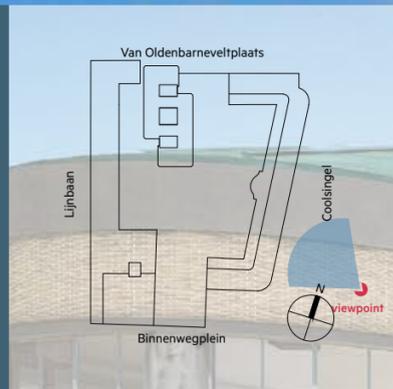
The bank building used to be enormous in relation to those around it, but soon its relationship will be totally different.

Under the post-war urban building plan the level of buildings along the street was kept quite low. You can see that especially on the Lijnbaan the higher buildings are set back.

The buildings around it form as it were a skirting board that conforms to the scale of the city as it was. Set back from the street we can see the new scale emerging, and that is more the scale of the city as it is going to be. You could say that this project forms a bridge between the post war urban building plan and the future, and that is a sensible choice.

Impressions

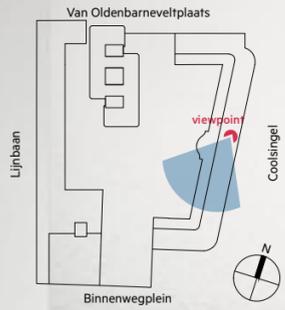
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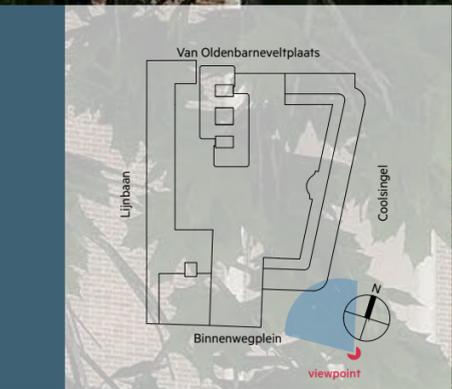


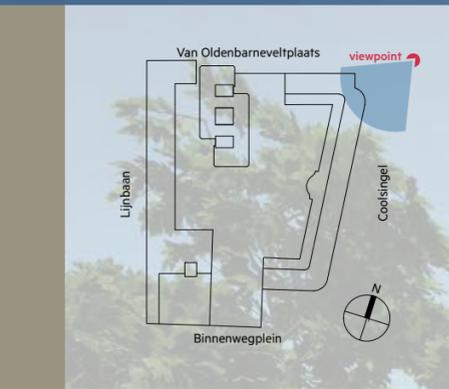


# modern standard

The striking entrance of the monumental building is the main address on Coolsingel. ABN-AMRO will remain an important tenant in the future in combination with the added retail program the building will feel reinvigorated. Another tenant for the retail program is Donner, a bookstore with exposure in the wider region of Rotterdam.







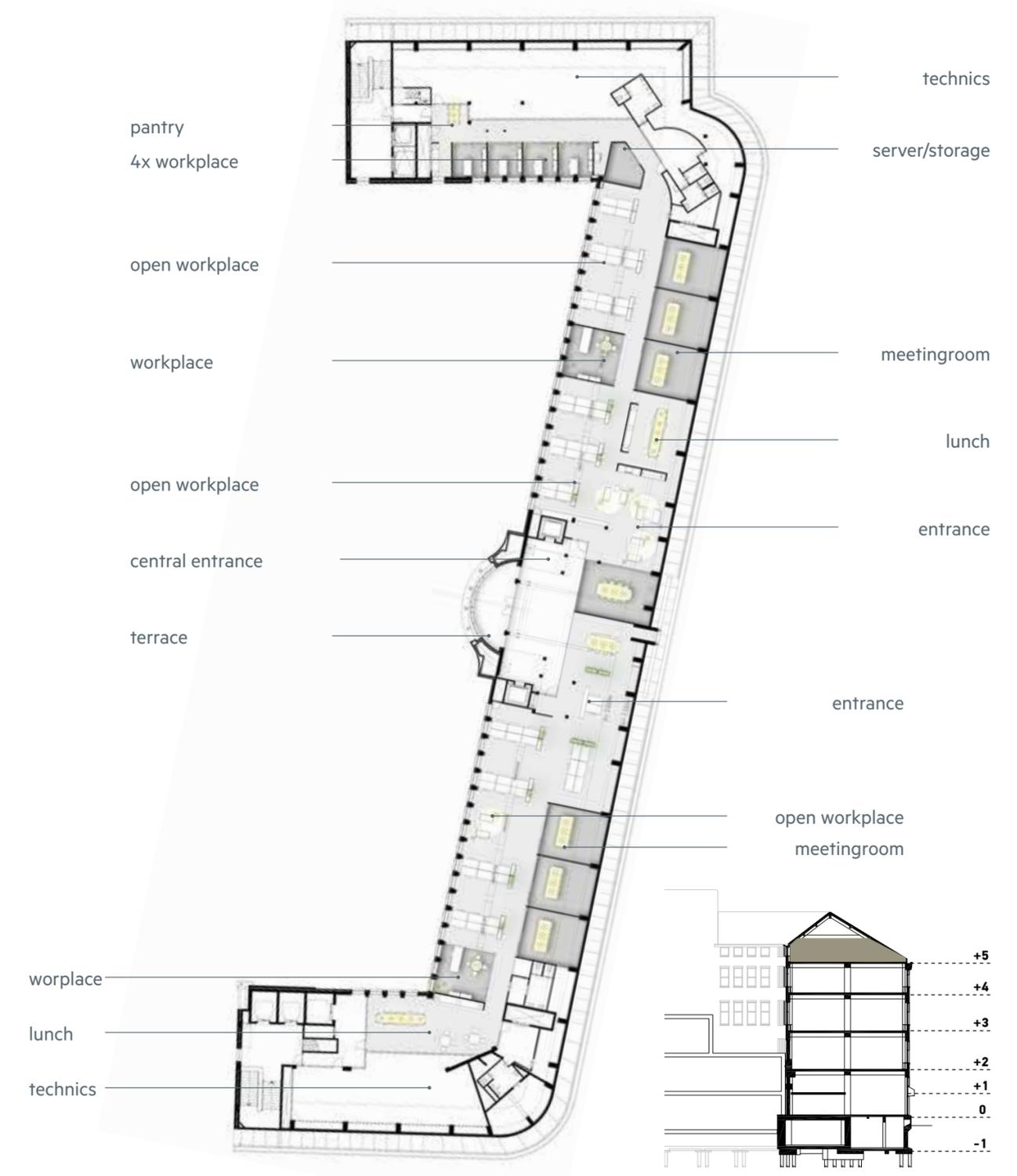


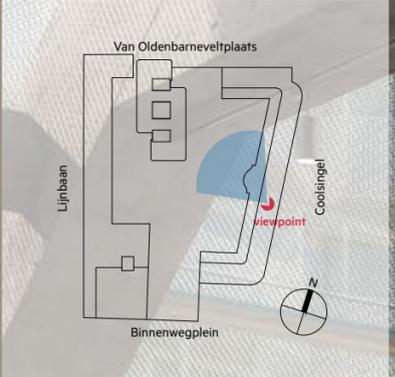
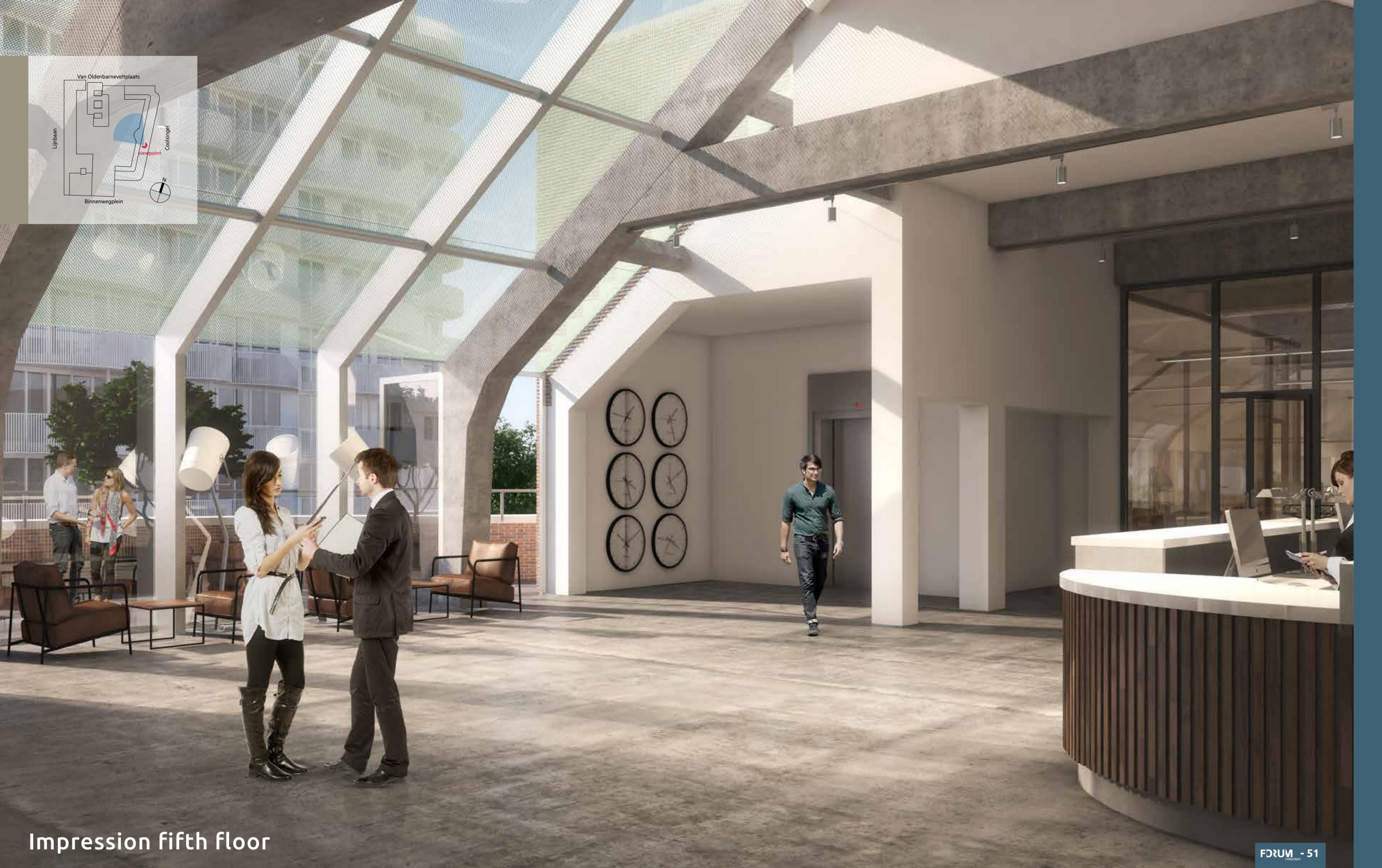
Floorplans &  
Impressions fifth floor

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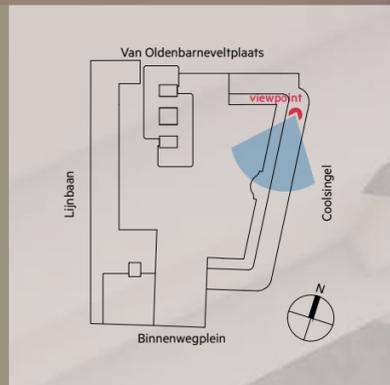
# Programma

## indicative floorplan Fifth floor +5



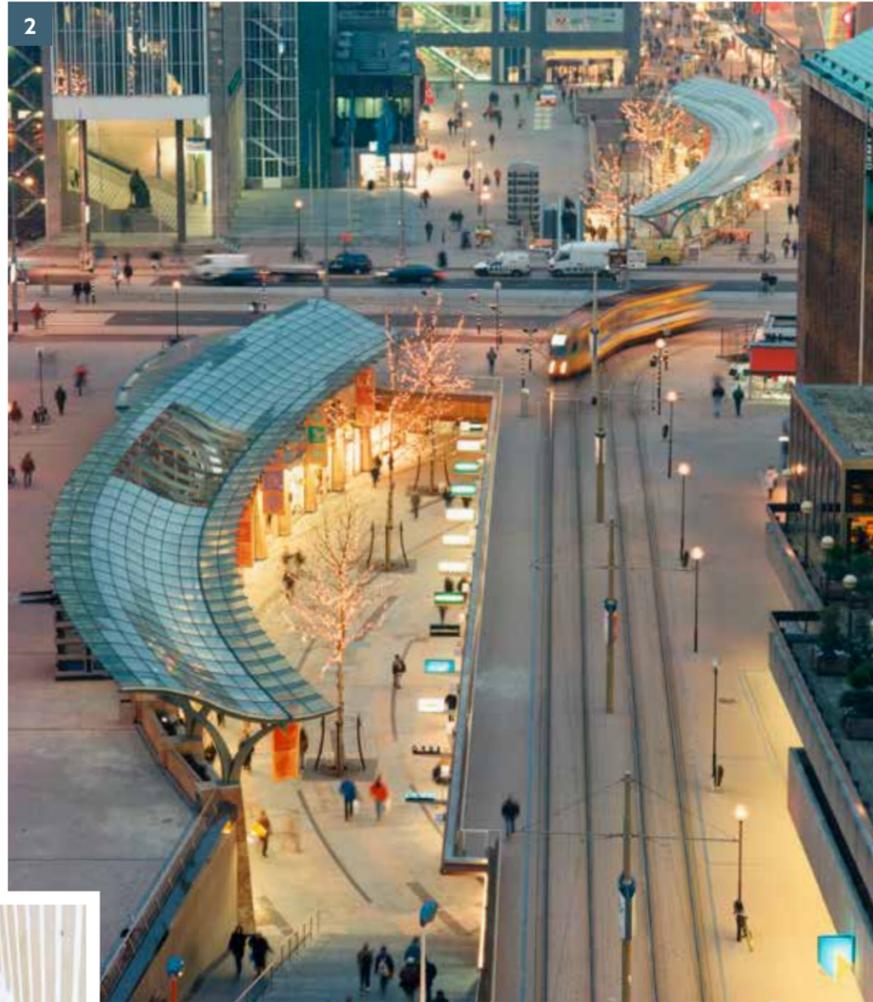


Impression fifth floor



Impression fifth floor

# Multi references



- 1 Forum Dyarbakir - Dyarbakir (TK)
- 2 Beurstraverse - Rotterdam (NL)
- 3 Entre Deux - Maastricht (NL)
- 4 Forum Sintra - Sintra (P)

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