

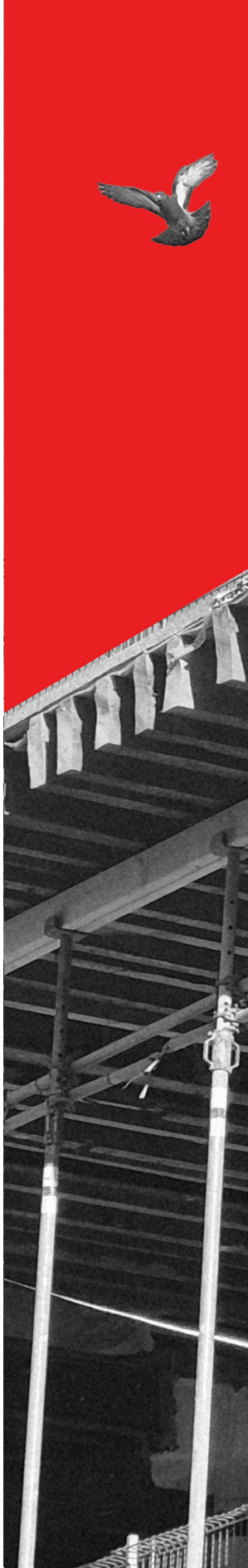
The Herestraat Groningen project, commissioned by Redevco, transforms the current C&A department store into an ensemble featuring a mixed program of shops, residences with communal roof gardens, and public bicycle parking. The top two levels of the four-story retail building are making way for forty-four new residences spread over three to four levels. The design by project architect Eke Wondaal unites apparent contradictions that are considered 'in line with one another': demolition and new construction, urban integration and architectural expression, volume expansion and human scale.

o begin with the first point: the C&A building consists of various sections that have been merged over the years. Each has its own load-bearing structure – some parts in wood, others in concrete. While neighboring buildings with predominantly residential functions exhibit

a similar refinement in their parcelling, the retail building has, over time, acquired a single facade that clashes due to its sheer scale. This is not only due to the absence of facade openings on some sides – a legacy from the department store era – but also to its uniform appearance. It was decided to demolish the facade and the top two retail floors, with a plea for the preservation of the building-by-building load-bearing structure as a guideline for the reconstruction for residential use. Each load-bearing structure has its maximum load and thereby determines the possible building height per section. This results in a natural variation (parcelling) within the ensemble, with different masonry colors per section. At the same time, the ensemble forms a unified whole because all sections are given a consistent facade rhythm and detailing.

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The building's distinctive beveled corners are not only a historical reference but also align with the existing buildings on the opposite side. The turret on one side of the building marks the sightline from the Grote Markt as an architectural element. Crucial is the facade section at the site of the former Burchtstraat, where parts of the current ensemble were situated on either side. In 1970, the ensemble was connected by building up the street, causing the passage to disappear. On both sides of this new retail section, the facades have now been set back and provided with a gate-like opening – a reminder of the former passage. The roof of this section serves as access to the communal outdoor space for the residences above the retail section. These and other urban planning choices fit within the vision in which the building is given accents that reinforce the ensemble and substantiate the choice for an otherwise restrained architecture.



“Yes, this part is temporarily less interesting,...but that is temporary,
and has everything to do with the upcoming developments,”

