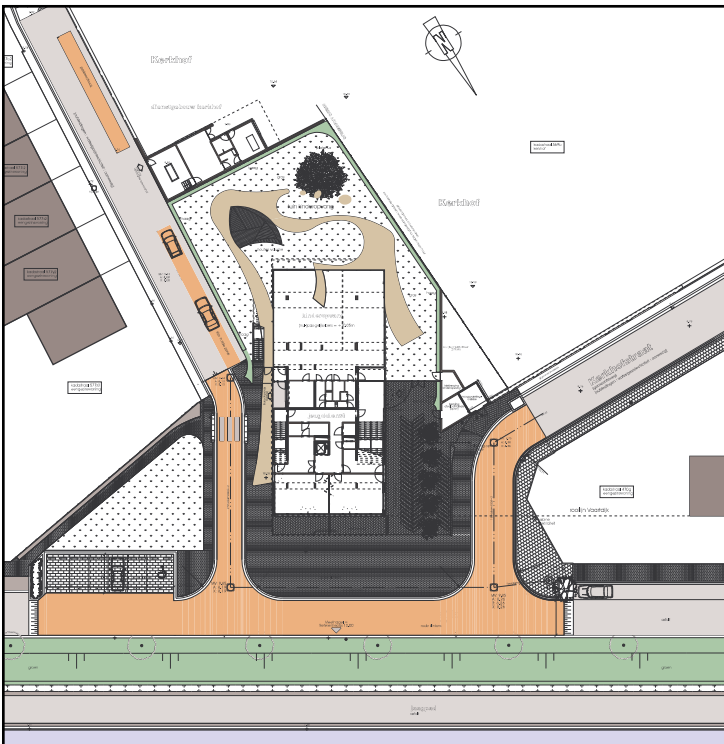


# YOUTH ACCOMMODATION AHOY WIJNEGEM



**Principal**

Wijnegem municipal council  
Dexia NV

**Project**

Youth accommodation  
Cemetery service building

**Address**

Corner of Kosterijstraat - Kerkhofstraat  
2110 Wijnegem

**Surface area**

1300m<sup>2</sup>

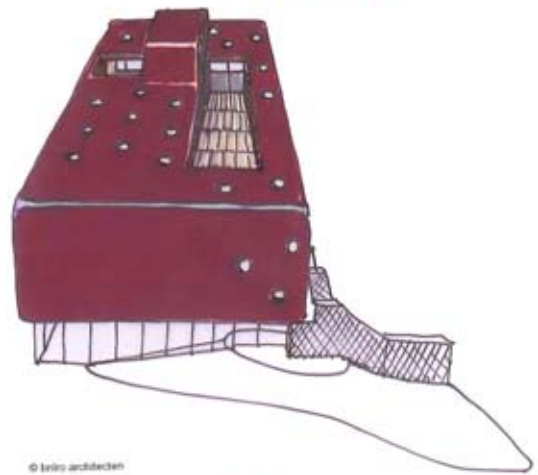
**Execution**

design : 2001-2006  
construction : 2006-2008

**Cost**

1,800,000 euros

# YOUTH ACCOMMODATION AHOY WIJNEGEM



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## CONCEPT OF PRELIMINARY DESIGN

The "Nautilus" sets sail, with the Argonauts on board... The "Nautilus" is a metaphor for discovery. It is a world marked by experimentation, dreams, investigation... a world in which reality and fiction meet and sometimes overlap, the world of youth. Everything is at hand in the "Nautilus" (even a roof garden) for this voyage of discovery. The various functions have been stacked and interwoven into a compact shape. Youth (the "Argonauts") looks out into the world from the large window and sets out to discover it from the safety of the surroundings which determine their lifestyle and way of thinking, their own "Nautilus". In the belly of the boat, they can let their hair down and have a good time. The radar is then switched off for silent navigation and all the outside world can observe are its light signals. "Ahoy!", yells Captain Nemo... ..

## YOUTH ACCOMMODATION AHOY WIJNEGEM



### DESIGN AS EXECUTED

The building serves as accommodation for a youth centre (with youth services, party hall and rehearsal space, youth café, etc.) and an after-hours child day-care facility on the ground-floor level.

The child day-care facility uses the entire ground-floor level and looks out into the garden through large windows. It has been conceived as an open space with the possibility of subdividing it into two smaller spaces. The aim is to create various atmospheres and corners thanks to a landscape of cabinets, furniture and toys. Other facilities on the ground-floor level include youth services with a secretariat and meeting room, a workshop and storage space. Young people attending a party are led to the first floor via a broad outside stairwell (part of the building

volume). The hallway provides access to the party hall and the washrooms, but you can also walk up another level to the youth café, the "Pierlala". A void above the expansive outside staircase ensures that staff in the Pierlala can keep an overview of youth entering and exiting the facilities.

On one side the party hall is bordered by a stage, which gives access to a rehearsal space. On the other side, the hall has steps, which lead to a type of stand, where youngsters can sit down for a drink and take a break from dancing... The DJ is "suspended" in an orb-like volume, which protrudes from the façade's "skin" as it were, and thus marks the entrance to the youth centre. On the opposite side is the bar, meaning that staffers can supervise the audience at all time.

## YOUTH ACCOMMODATION AHOY WIJNEGEM



Next to the Pierlala (café) is the roof terrace, which looks as if part of the building's volume has been hollowed out. The evacuation stairwell, which runs along the outside of the building on the side of Kosterijstraat and which connects all floors within the building, gives out onto the terrace. The staircase can also be used as a separate entrance to the rehearsal space, so that it can be used without requiring access to the whole youth centre.

At the top of the building is a technical space, which can be accessed through a sluice next to the Pierlala café's kitchen.

The building's form is a direct consequence of the combination of various functions, which have been interwoven by means of the circulation system made up of broad staircases. The form of the industrial buildings down the road is determined by their specific functions: often complex constructions, through which raw materials are conveyed from barges to the warehouses.

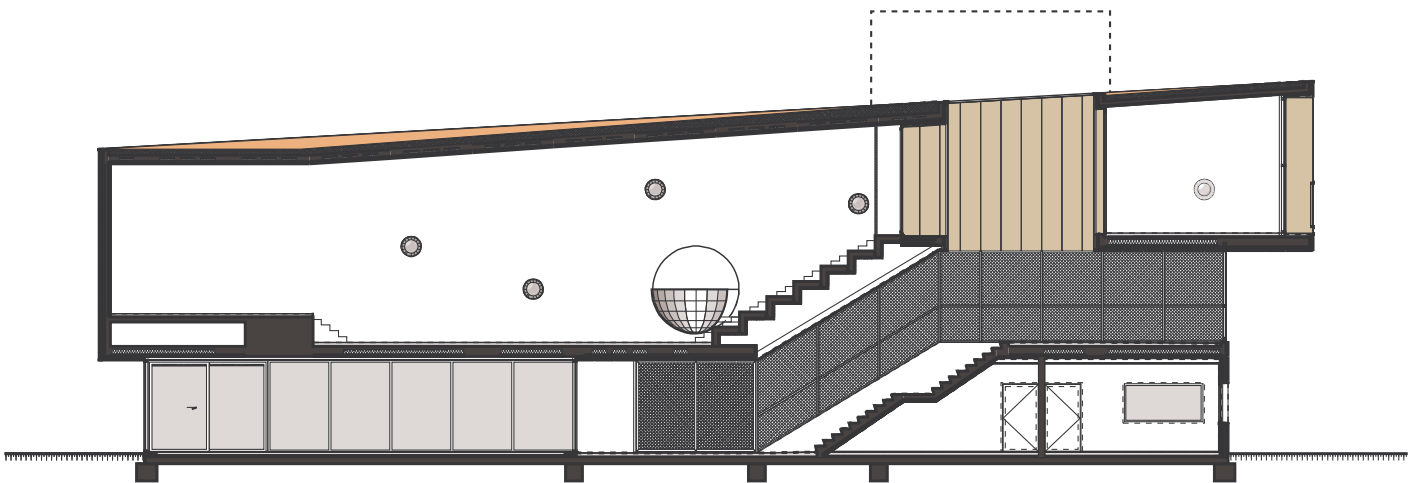
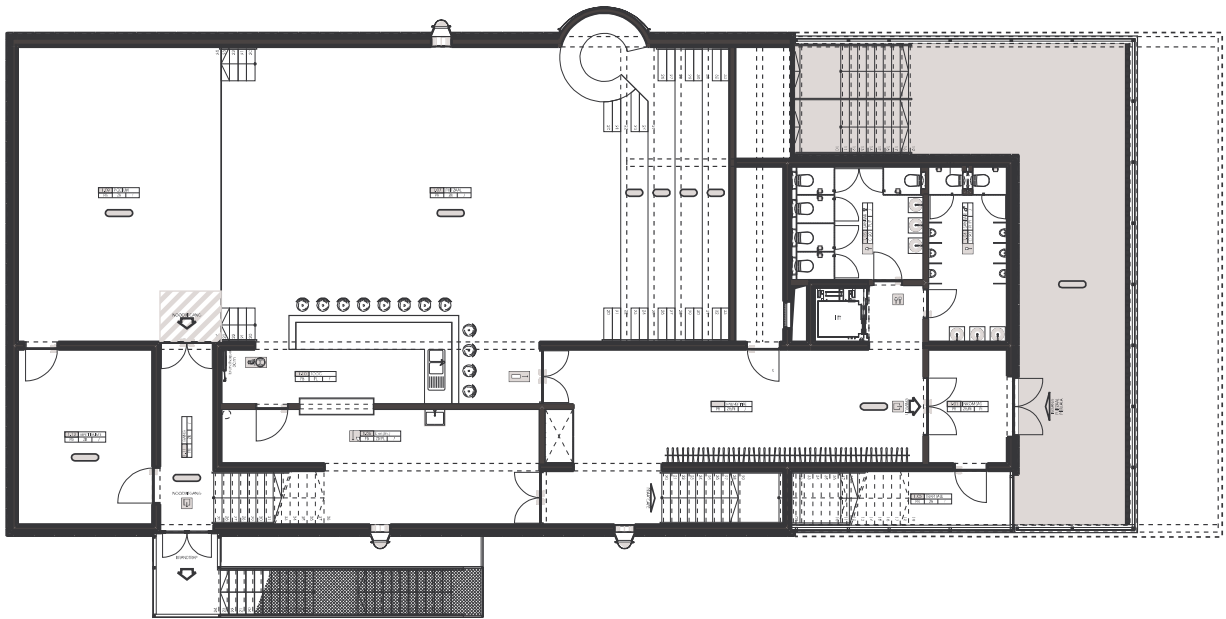
A closed "almost raised" volume is used for the noisiest functions (party hall and café). This closed volume opens out on the second floor, at the height of the Pierlala café, onto the Albert Canal, in line with the cranes down the road.

Initially, the design dictated that the building's top volume would be cloaked with fibre-cement boarding, to be covered with a terra-cotta-coloured PU coating. This would have created a waterproof membrane, which could then have also served as roofing and a cover for the terrace thus assuring a seamless transition between walls, floors and roof.

The colour is also used on the roofs and facades of the surrounding houses. During the execution phase, the principal opted in favour of terra-cotta-coloured sandwich panels and PVC roofing in the same colour, for budgetary reasons. With its 11-metre high eaves, the building is well within the reference height of the surrounding dwellings.

Moving the party hall and café functions to the first floor has meant that the building's footprint is relatively small. The built-up volume only occupies one third of the entire site. By shifting the building towards the canal, it now has even more breathing space.

YOUTH ACCOMMODATION AHOY WIJNEGEM



GROUND PLAN FIRST FLOOR  
LONGITUDINAL SECTION THROUGH PARTY HALL

YOUTH ACCOMMODATION AHOY WIJNEGEM



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