

Pharmacy in Herentals, Belgium

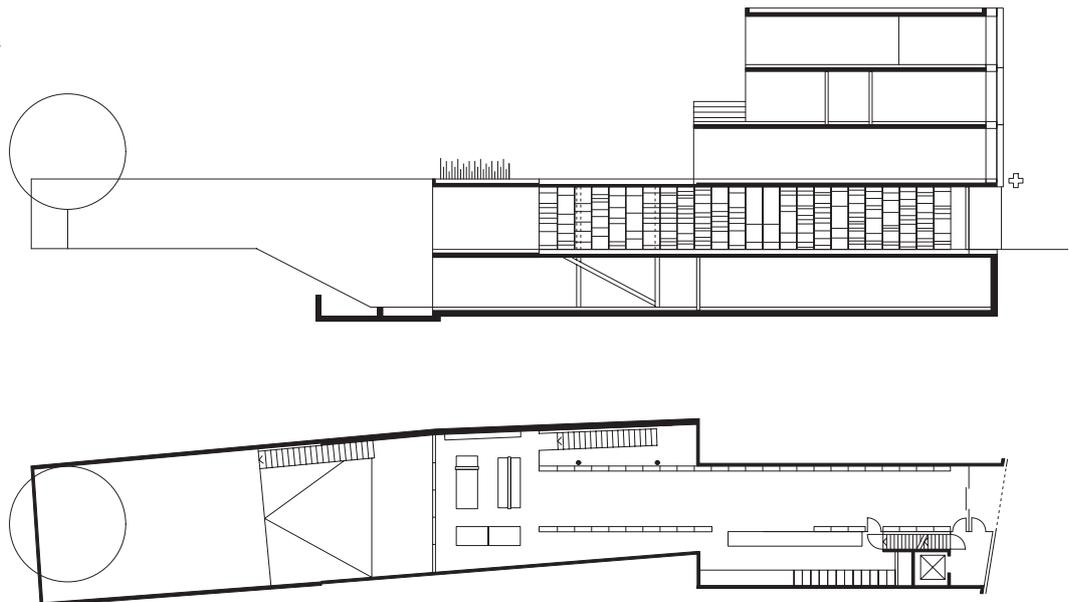




The unusual design of this pharmacy stands out in the traditional patchwork of buildings in the Flemish town of Herentals. Apart from the wide, sliding glass door of the entrance on the ground floor, the entire façade is covered with stainless steel panels. Inside, the main sales space opens up as a rectangular glass box, 25 m long by 3.30 metres wide, stretching out towards the back of the narrow, four-storey building, as if slotted in place.

Displayed on narrow shelves along the glass walls of this space are the over-the-counter medicines and a range of lifestyle and wellness products. The areas behind the glass are accessible only to the employees; this is also where the prescription medicines are kept and made up. The rear wall is fully glazed, affording customers a view out into the garden at the back of the plot.

Individually controlled, the perforated shutters of matt-grey stainless steel present an intriguing and ever changing face to the street.



Section, plan of ground floor scale 1:400

The transparency of the design continues in the open-style flights of stairs, leading down to the private rooms belonging to the pharmacy and up to the three-floor city apartment above the shop. Treads of architectural grating spanned between the stringers of stainless steel sheet (grade: EN 1.4301) and simple flat-steel handrails attached to the wall complete the light, unfussy treatment. As the floors of the long steel frame span across the entire width of the building, no supporting walls are needed. Not only does this facilitate a flexible division of space, leaving options open for later changes in use, it also meant the entire façade could be fully glazed.



From the counter, the view extends right through the 25-metre glass-walled sales space to the street beyond.



The light, airy style of the interior is continued in the stainless steel handrail profiles and open gridwork treads of the staircases.

Fitted in front of the storey-high sliding windows on the street front are shutters of profiled and perforated stainless steel sheet. The matt surface was achieved by sand-blasting. When closed the panels shade the interior from hot summer sun and filter light to create a pleasant indoor environment. At the same time they provide a degree of privacy from the inquisitive gaze of passers-by. As each shutter can be individually positioned, via an electrical control system, the building presents an ever changing face to the street.



Architectural grating (grade: EN 1.4301) was used for heating vents and for ventilation grilles between the glass panes and the shutters.

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