



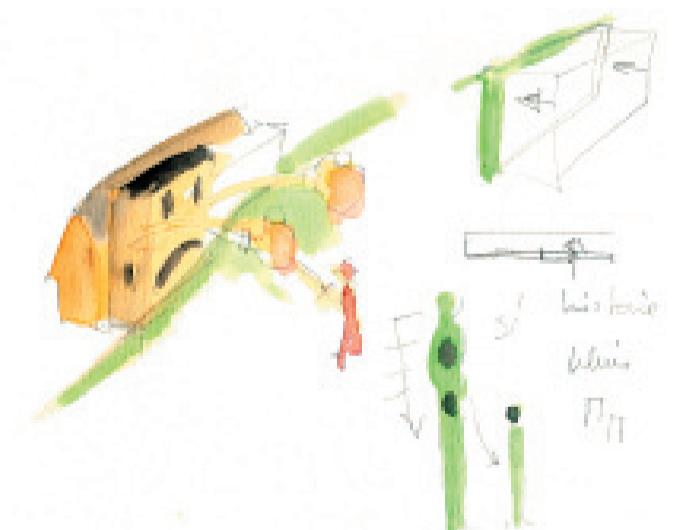
### 'Smallest House', Meppel, the Netherlands

A narrow alley in the Dutch provincial town of Meppel recently had to be widened into a ring road as part of an urban restructuring project. As a result, an existing building, a butcher shop, would have to be demolished.

The city asked us to come up with a solution for the blank wall that would now dominate this new street.

We discovered that the existing building was instrumental for the structural stability of the buildings next to it. Demolishing it would bring down these buildings as well.

We also felt the memories associated with the old edifice should not be allowed to simply disappear. Therefore we came up with a proposal that combines poetry with engineering. We have narrowed down the existing building to a mere 70 cm in width, so that on the one hand it assures the stability of the neighboring houses as a sort of 'book end', while on the other hand the openings in the side wall are reminiscent of the former butcher shop. The narrow edifice has its own house number and front door, but is now used as a display for the printers next door.





'Our outlook is one in which the new is linked with history, instead of confronting it.'



We see architecture and its setting as a narrative with layers in meanings and time.

To us its is the hidden qualities that are important to a place: the traces of the original patterns of use, the living memories, the frayed edges, the routes, the stories.'

