



BEELD: EVA BLOEM

CONNECTING TUNNEL VAN HEEKGARAGE

You are heading for the hospital, feeling tensed and anxious. Will there be good news or bad? Your state of mind does not really help you to pass the three minutes through this dark tunnel in the underground parking. Being aware of that we realized that we should not design just a tunnel. We looked for an almost adventurous excitement to add an extra dimension to this underground journey. An ingredient was added to complement the dark robust and tough materials contrasting with the fine white gloss portals. A moving and colouring light scheme (art work by Claudia Wissmann) adds a new virtual dimension to the journey. It has become even agreeable.

In 2003, the largest underground car park in the Netherlands was constructed in the centre of the city of Enschede, designed by atelier PRO. The parking garage for 1700 cars and 1000 bicycles forms part of an urban planning, created by West 8 Urban Design & Landscape Architecture, for the Van Heekplein, a square that houses various large department stores, a casino and other buildings.

To realise a proper survey and orientation, this underground world has been interpreted as a large public space. In the centre of the parking garage, under the Van Heekplein, there is a second square. On this square, the various 'parking rooms' are situated, each

with their own colour, lighting scheme and lifting points to the shops above. Besides this division in rooms, daylight is brought in near the entrance route and the public lifting points onto the lowest parking layer, to improve the orientation.

Almost a decade later, the decision was made to connect the Van Heek car park with the new hospital Medisch Spectrum Twente (MTS). The starting point of the city council of Enschede, to provide a moving walkway to the MTS, was again translated into an atelier PRO design. Visitors of the MTS, who park their cars in the Van Heek car park, are comfortably led to the hospital by this rolling pathway. Thus, the overcapacity of parking places at the eastern part of the garage near the shopping centre Twentec are utilized.

In the western part of the garage, a breakthrough has been made in a southern direction. From this point a tunnel was built to the MST, and this tunnel is equipped with a moving walkway in both directions with an adjacent pedestrian path. The moving walkway is completely underground, sunken under the pavement on a minus two level of the Van Heek car park, and is connected to the entrance of the hospital on that same level.

At the spot of the breakthrough in the car park, a new lifting point has been made available with stairs and an elevator. This lifting point brings light to the tunnel. Moreover, on ground level, this point forms the centre of a junction of various walking routes, on a newly planned green square. The positioning of this lifting point is as close as possible to the casino and hinders the visibility

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line from the Van Loenshof to the hospital as little as possible.

Lastly: the start of the route in the car park is marked by a well-lit and recognizable entrance hall, where clear information is provided about the routes that should be followed. Halfway along the glass corridor zone in the car park, there is a second possibility to ascend or step down. It is of major importance that people feel safe and at ease during the whole route. The light, colourful and friendly materials at the portals provide a congenial contrast with the robust and tough materials used for the walls and floors.

At a few places, day light penetrates the area till deep down below; as a consequence the middle and the end of the tunnel are highlighted by extra daylight. The diversity endowed by direct daylight, indirect lighting and lighted works of art, turn the entire route into an attractive space.

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