

Delft, Friday 10 May 2019, Faculty of Architecture, Room F (1st floor)

No more monuments please! The future of valuable architecture in large real estate portfolios

12h45 – Walk-in lunch & coffee

13h30 – Introduction (Herman Vande Putte, TU Delft)

13h40 – Lectures part 1: the viewpoint of the owners and users

- Philip Koppels, TU Delft
- Jacob van de Goot, ABN Amro (retired)
- Karin Laglas, Ymere
- Leonard de Wit, Rijksdienst Cultureel Erfgoed

14h40 – coffee break

14h50 – Lectures part 2: the viewpoint of the producers

- Joost Ector, Ector Hoogstad Architecten
- Paul Chan, TU Delft
- Elsbeth Ronner, TU Delft
- Ana Pereira Roders, TU Delft

15h50 – break

16h00 – Debate

moderator: Hilde Remoy, TU Delft

panel: Philip Koppels, TU Delft; Jacob van de Goot, ABN Amro (retired); Karin Laglas, Ymere; Leonard de Wit, Rijksdienst Cultureel Erfgoed; Joost Ector, Ector Hoogstad Architecten; Paul Chan, TU Delft; Elsbeth Ronner, TU Delft ; Ana Pereira Roders, TU Delft.

16h45 – End, drink.

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Motivation

It is striking that large organisations, that in the past have been responsible for the production of what are today's iconic buildings, no longer see the value of keeping these buildings in their portfolio - think of the eagerness with which ING, BNP Paribas and TU Delft discard of their monumental buildings. There is a growing trend among large organisations to rent buildings or, if they develop and own buildings themselves, to deliberately make them less monumental.

Apparently something has changed in the mind-set of large organisations when acquiring accommodation: buildings are no longer seen as solid and lasting creations that serve current and future generations, but are approached as products that solve a temporary problem at hand. It seems that less assignments are given to leading architects to design iconic headquarters. Is part of the motive to prevent new buildings from becoming monuments in the future? Is this because the monument-label amounts to an expropriation of their right to decide on the future of their properties? It looks as if the production of “future monuments” is gradually coming to a standstill and that agility has become more important than durability. Ephemeral architecture and disposable buildings are the extreme forms of this trend.

In the long term, the focus on short-term performance may have a negative effect on the quality of the built environment: for the users of disposable buildings and for the urban fabric. It may also damage the liveability in the city: as the lifespan of buildings decreases systematically, there will be more construction sites and the living environment will be in a high pace of change, almost instable without reference points. It is also questionable whether, technically, volatile constructions can go together with the environmental objective of achieving higher densities in the built environment.

Questions from the perspective of the building owners and users

1. Are large portfolio holders disposing of monumental buildings? Is there a new trend? What are the driving forces of this (now and in the past)?
2. Is the production of high-quality architecture under pressure from large portfolio managers? To what extent is this an intended strategy? What may be the motives for this strategy? Is this related to the stage of organisational maturity, or does this relate to the context of action?
3. What is the added value of a monumental building in a user's portfolio? What is at the flip side? What (type of) organisations have monuments at the core of their portfolios and what are their drivers?

Questions from the perspective of the architects, conservators, society

4. What makes a building a monument? Was there in the past such a thing as an intended production of monuments? Who were their commissioners, and for what reasons?
5. Is a decreasing production of high-quality architecture a threat for the liveability of cities, and how? How does this relate with the global sustainability goals?
6. What does it mean for the faculty's research and education practice when there is less need for high-quality architecture and more need for ephemeral or agile buildings and environments?