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Villa KBWW

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Villa KBWW
The Double House

SeARCH

In this semi-detached villa on the Wilhelminapark in Utrecht the party wall functioned as a “therapeutic” compromise element during the dealings with the two client families. Both desired a spacious view of the park, optimal benefit from the sunshine, and a good relationship with the garden. This has led to the creation of two, four-story “inverse sculptures” held together between the party and end walls.

As a result of the offsetting of the party wall it was necessary that the transparent north and south facades were load-bearing. This almost unworkable condition has led, in collaboration with Rob Nijse of ABT structural engineers, to an experimental steel construction. A practically invisible structural solution was developed whereby the floors are supported by

steel window mullions constructed from ten- by ten-centimeter hollow steel sections. Thus, alongside the spatial complexity of the building there co-exists a structural intricacy where the lateral forces “disappear” from one dwelling to the other and then “reappear” two floors below.

On the second floor of Dwelling One two “cocktail sticks” are visible that stabilize the seemingly precariously balanced bath and bedrooms above. The overall stability of the building is completed by the concrete landings and steel compression members in Dwelling Two that combine with other tension and compression members concealed in the end walls. In this way, and in spite of the extremely light structural presence, a striking contrast between solid and void was created.