

# KOP VAN LOMBOK

MASTERPLAN AND BUILDINGS WITH A MIXED PROGRAM

ST11

1997-2014



## brief

Masterplan and design of two buildings  
Kop van Lombok,  
Utrecht. Building 1: 84  
apartments.  
Building 2: 43  
apartments (3.300m),  
commercial, retail and a  
public car parking with  
230 places

## client

Bouwfonds  
Ontwikkeling, Regio  
Midden, Amersfoort

## architect

Architectenbureau  
Marlies Rohmer

## design

Marlies Rohmer

## team

Floris Hund  
Ronald Hageman  
Kirsten Gabriëls  
Jan van Erven Dorens  
Martin Koster  
Boris Briels

## constructor

Ingenieursburo van  
Nunen B.V., Rosmalen

## contractor

Aan de Stegge, Bouw &  
Werktuigbouw, Goor  
UAV-GC contract

## consulting offices

Cauberg-Huygen  
Raadgevende  
ingenieurs, Zwolle

## photography

Thea van den Heuvel /  
DAPh

## design

1997-2010

## completion

Building 1: 2014

## area/building costs

GFA: ca. 17.000m<sup>2</sup> incl.  
parking  
€ 19.000.000,- excl. VAT  
incl. parking

## Colourful Lombok

Lombok is a 19th century district lying immediately to the west of Central Station in Utrecht. It is a colourful neighbourhood forming an important link between the city centre and the new Leische Rijn housing estate. Typical Dutch chain stores like Zeeman and Maminette mingle effortlessly there with Moroccan butchers' shops and Turkish vegetable stalls. At the time of Eid-el-Adha, the cyclists navigate with alacrity around delivery trucks with lamb carcasses. This is the vitality which is Lombok's strongest quality and should be preserved.



# KOP VAN LOMBOK UTRECHT



## Kop van Lombok – background 1997-2014

It may seem a world away, but in reality it is only a few minutes walk from the Lombok district to Utrecht's main railway station. A busy four-lane thoroughfare terminating at a huge, complicated traffic intersection separates the densely populated district from the city centre. Compare the XL scale of the station zone to Lombok's fine meshed urban fabric, the commercial modern architecture of office towers to the brick-built 19th century houses and shops, or the throngs of commuters and shoppers compared to the multicultural neighbourhood. It's as though the two areas were completely unrelated.

Build a bridge between those disparate worlds: that was the city's brief to Architectenbureau Marlies Rohmer (AMR) in 1997. In other words, we were asked to design a unifying urban master plan for the zone defined by Westplein, de Vleutensweg, Damstraat and Lombokplein. The aim was to define space for homes, shops, a car parking facility and a mosque. AMR has been working on the scheme for 17 years, an office record for project duration. Now at last the Kop van Lombok is there: a large built block which answers both to the surrounding urban fabric and to the planning boundaries,

with its varying roofline height and its corrugated facade of grey brickwork alternating with large bands of floor-to-ceiling glazing.

The fact that it took so long to finish the project (actually only part of it, since a second block is still to be built) says a great deal about the difficulties of this brief. The barrier effect of the Westplein intersection, and the huge contrast between the district and the centre, were only part of it. It was above all a place where diverse interests were involved.

The municipal government nurtures an ambition to transform the station zone – which, with its Hoog Catharijne shopping mall, is considered one of the Netherlands' most unattractive locations – into a calling card for Utrecht. Alongside the multi-auditorium concert centre TivoliVredenburg, a new station and city hall are under construction, and all the old shops are slated for redevelopment. The sky, it seems, is the limit.

In the first drawing AMR submitted, we buried the traffic infrastructure in a tunnel, and covered it with a neighbourhood square for games and sports, street markets and events. Four blocks of building centred around the mosque





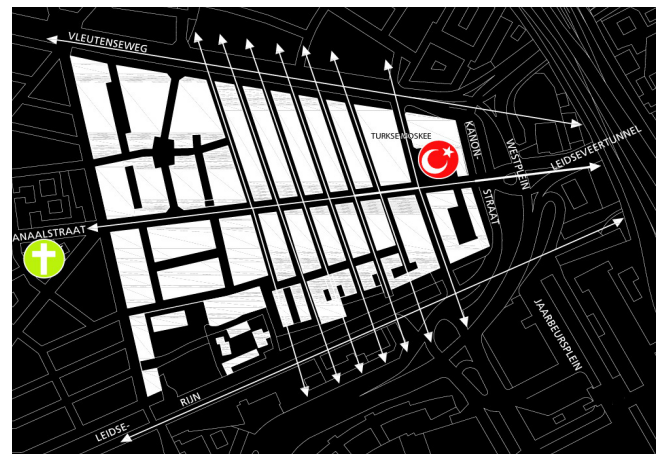
KOP VAN LOMBOK UTRECHT

were to fill the gap in the urban fabric. In 2000, however, the city rejected the Utrecht Centre Project (UCP) of which our plan formed part. A line was then drawn through the plan area, and the area to the east of Westplein was henceforth designated part of Project Organization Station Zone (POS). Two of the blocks and the proposed tunnel area ended up outside our planning zone. A question left hanging was what representative significance would the remaining two blocks fulfil: a termination of the Lombok residential area, or the beginning of the revitalized centre? The name Kop van Lombok ("Head" of Lombok) implied the former of these, but the client, the development company Bouwfonds, favoured the latter. They called for a building with a metropolitan aura and the maximum allowed height of six storeys. This gave rise to AMR's design for an urban wall alongside Westplein with glazed facades and striking Arabic motifs.

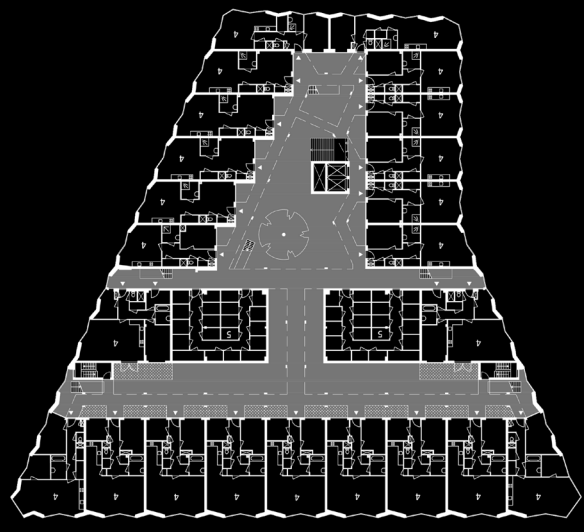
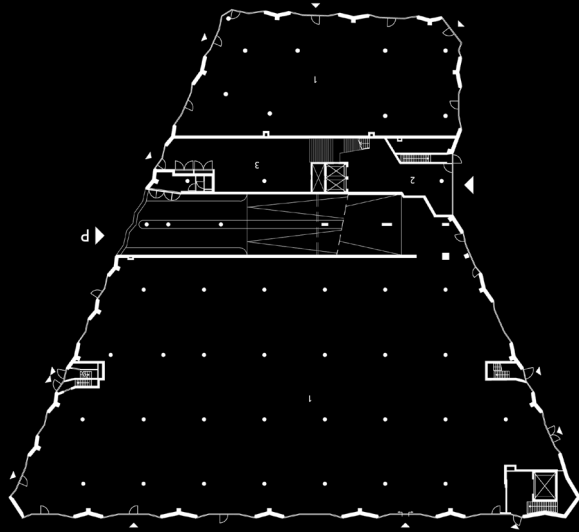
The residents of Lombok did not like it, however. It would be alien to the neighbourhood's character and far too massive. And why was the mosque now hidden away? An action committee formed to oppose the "Great Wall of China" and the new design variant was soon discarded. Workshop sessions held together with the residents finally led to AMR's current plan, with the mosque flanked by two large building blocks.



2007



# KOP VAN LOMBOK UTRECHT

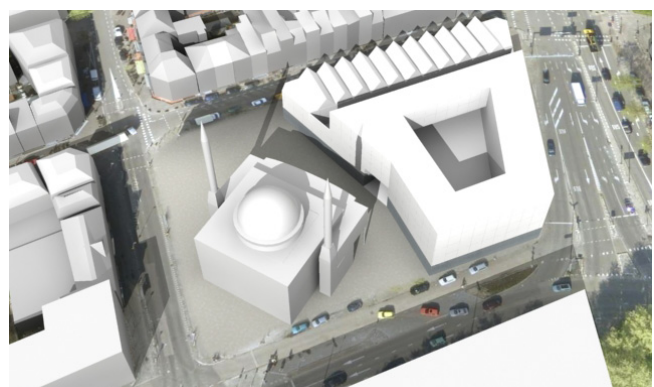


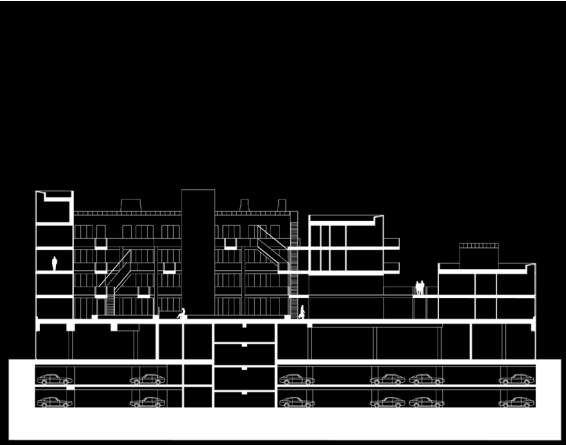
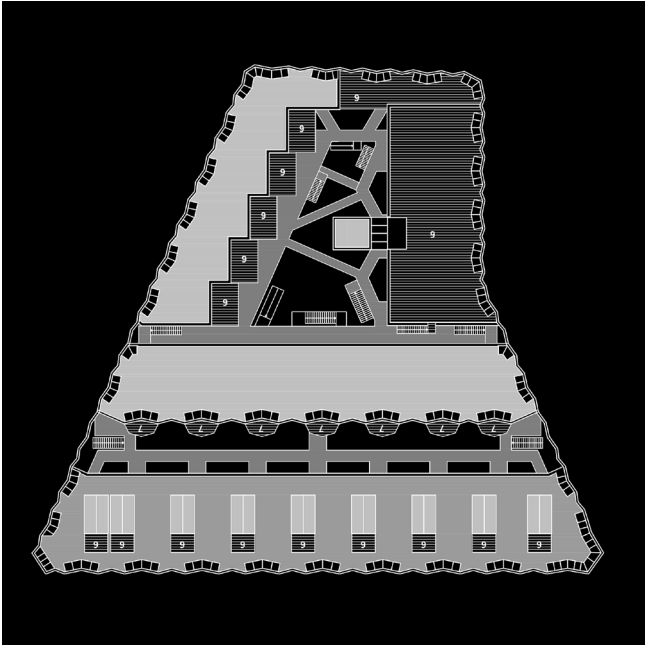
## Functional and social diversity

Block 1 is a residential building on a plinth volume consisting of shops together with a 2-level underground car park. The apartments differ in type and size, and will thus attract a corresponding diversity of residents, as is appropriate to a city atmosphere. Access to the apartments varies: some can be entered directly from the deck, and others via an internal street (on the Damstraat side) or via an elevated court with gallery (on the Westplein side). These alternatives give rise to different “domains” or mini-neighbourhoods. At the same time they add an extra dimension to the public space: you cannot take it all in at one glance but you must, so to speak, discover it gradually. Going from the entrance, from which a staircase rises, to the apartments on the court, you find yourself in a different world, a world like a sparkling oasis. There are trees growing here, and bench seats in sunny spots. Wooden stairs rise criss-cross all around, as though in a drawing by M.C.Escher, leading up to landings and the front doors of the apartments. Countless vertical openings admit light and air, while strategically placed windows offer glimpses of the street outside. Finally there is a communal roof garden with picnic tables, loungers and a magnificent view of the city.

The sense of domestic comfort that rises to meet you is not only a product of the “warm” materials used. Even more it is the intimacy of the space that puts you at your ease. The building, seen from outside, may have the bulk of a gentle giant, but the interior enjoys an unmistakably human scale.

The spatial interest is amplified by the many different apartment types designed by AMR with the varied residents in mind. They include maisonettes with roof terraces, apartments with balconies, and houses with French windows which can be folded fully open. Some dwellings have a private bench seat at the front door, others may have small front gardens – details that enhance the apartments and give them individuality. Two small apartments can always be combined to form a single larger one. The plinth is dedicated to shops and other commercial spaces. Larger businesses, such as a supermarket or a furniture store, are embedded deep in the centre of the complex. Disposed around these, along the outer walls, are the smaller shops, restaurants, bars and workshops. The two underground car parks serve the needs of residents, shoppers and the mosque congregation. Supplies can be delivered to the shops directly from the street.

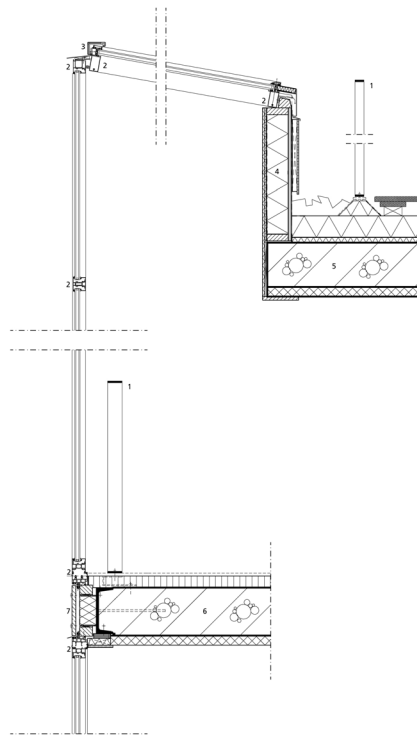




**KOP VAN LOMBOK UTRECHT**



# KOP VAN LOMBOK UTRECHT



## Rugged materials

The first completed block is on the one hand a front end for the Lombok district, while on the other it faces out towards Utrecht's station zone which is dominated by greyish high rise. Its six-storey height puts it more in line with the city-centre mood than with predominantly low-rise Lombok. It is precisely for this reason that the block shares a family look with the industrial premises scattered around Lombok. With its timeless solidity and industrial-style brickwork, the building seeks a connection with those rugged little factories that are so integral to Lombok. The kinked facade embodies simultaneously the sloping building lines (due to the trapezoid shape of Lombok) and the height differences of the context. The material tone is set by a combination of handmade Danish brick in subtly varying shades of grey, with strips of slate visibly fastened by large cap nuts. The out-folding glass doors of the angular oriels can be set wide open, instantly uniting the apartment with the outside world. The glass doors are topped by a skylight, creating a suggestion of vertical endlessness. The inner facades are similarly clad in sustainable materials that will age beautifully: azobé wood for the galleries and gold-anodized aluminium for the frames and panelling.

