

Ferry Landing Stage

DESIGN DAAD ARCHITECTEN
LOCATION VLIELAND, THE NETHERLANDS

Landing stages to enable both people and cars to load and disembark on trips between the islands and mainland of the Netherlands are a common part of Dutch coastal architecture. Most are situated within environments cluttered with huge-scaled harbour engineering and as such are seen as a small element, requiring no special architectural thought to blend with the overall industrial setting.

However, the ferry landing stage at Vlieland is situated in a small harbour with no visible industrial workings. This called for an architectural solution that would not create an eyesore. Having been involved in the design of other ferry landing stages, DAAD Architecten realized that the basic principles of the design had to be retained. A hinged bridge-like structure is suspended on steel cables underneath an engine room that sits atop heavy columns. This ungainly structure has historically been designed with no thought towards its aesthetic appeal. A typical example would take the form of a massive closed box with the bridge slung underneath.

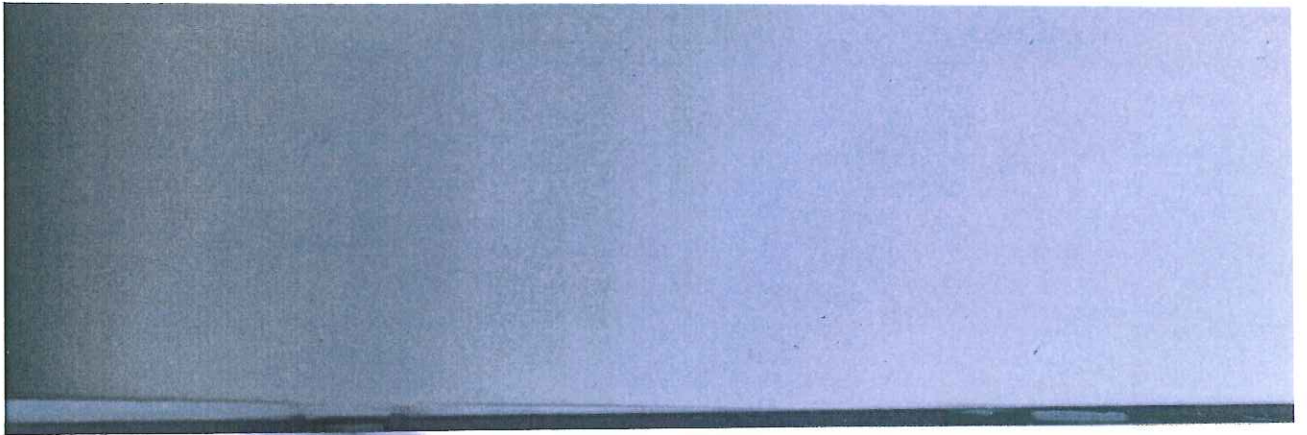
With no possibility of redesigning the entire structure, DAAD had to consider how it could rework the structure to lessen its impact on its surroundings. The practice has sought to reduce the bulk of the engine room by cladding not in a solid material but with glass. The sides of the structure are fully glazed and the roof contains large skylights to allow natural light to penetrate the box and so relieve some of its bulk against the skyline.

This treatment necessitated the addition of a walkway around the exterior of the box for cleaning purposes. Again, the view through is of paramount importance, rather than the material in question – steel mesh walkways and box steel and cable balustrades provide a visually light solution. Finally a spiral stairway adds drama to the landing stage, looping up over eight metres (26 feet) from the dock to the engine room.

During the daytime, especially when the sun is shining, the glass box mirrors the sea and sky surrounding it, becoming as invisible as a large piece of industrial lifting gear can be. At night it is illuminated by the harbour lights, the glazed facade glinting in the soft yellow light and acting as a welcoming beacon to approaching ferry passengers.



Landing stage structure



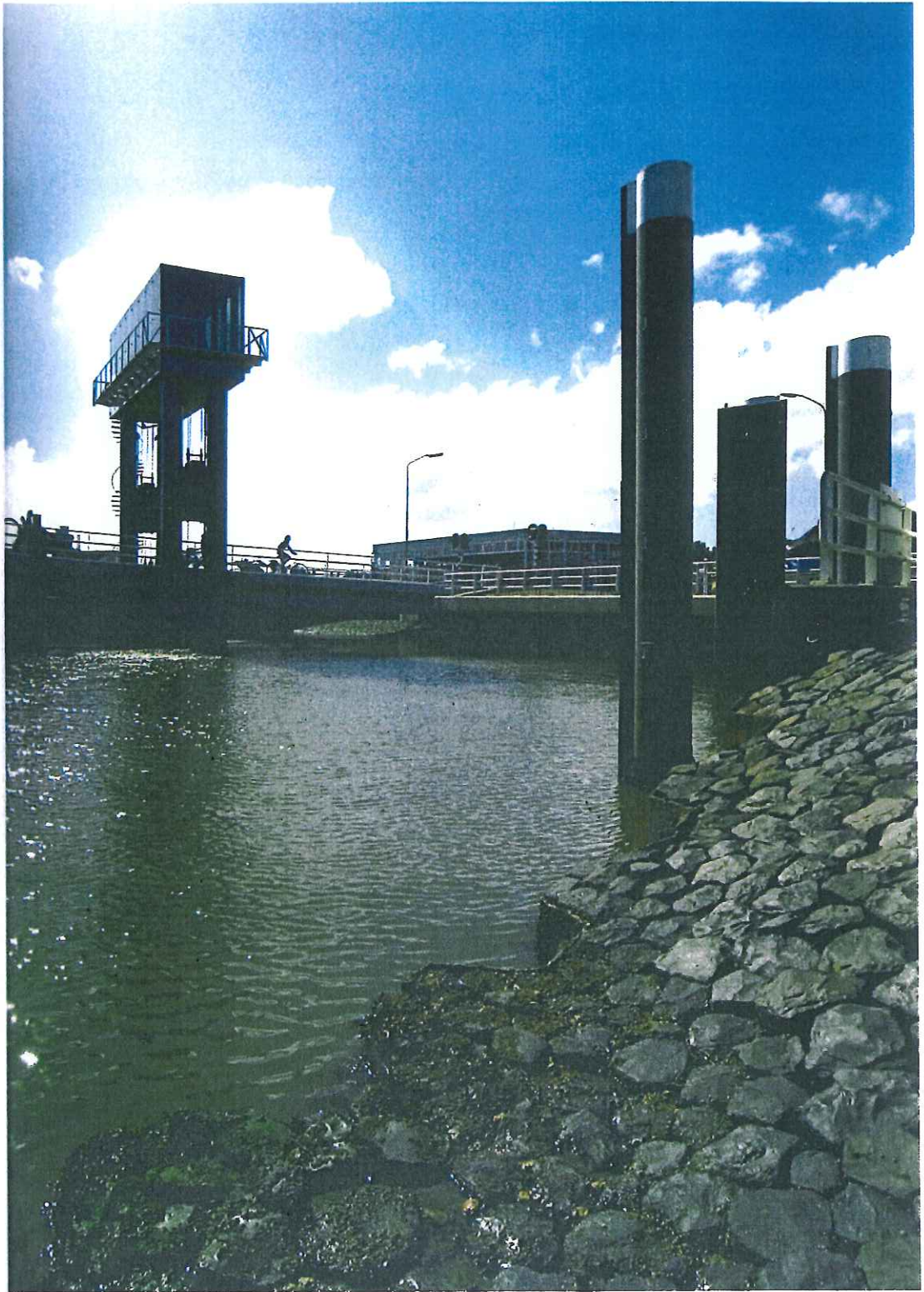
Water





View from base towards engine room

This architectural solution is not inherently sculptural, but it does echo the surrounding aesthetic and exude a confident Modern aesthetic. The strong columns mimic nearby metal bollards in the dock, while the glass box reduces the mass of the landing stage engine room against the skyline. The architect has designed exactly what was required, rather than trying to overstate a relatively diminutive addition to the flat expanse of the waterfront vista.



View from the break-water