

public

Natural History Museum, Rotterdam





The Natural History Museum (Natuur Historisch Museum) is situated in the Museum Park Rotterdam next to the Kunsthal designed by OMA. The museum occupies an historic villa dating from 1851 with the new extension housing exhibition spaces, library and offices. The extension is designed to contrast with the villa and is comprised of a series of layers. A concrete volume housing the new exhibition hall is set within a steel frame structure wrapped in glass. A narrow opening in the exhibition wall allows daylight to enter and offers views to the park through the glass veil. The exhibition box is set back on the east side, making room for a spectacular whale skeleton to hang within the glass and steel outer skin. The new and the old building are linked by inserting a layer of glass behind the existing entrance and extending it to form a transparent link between the two structures. This link is one of four glass bridges that allow a continuous route through the entire museum. With its simplicity and orthogonal geometry, the rejuvenated Natural History Museum easily competes with its contemporary neighbour, and at the same time, enhances the historical villa's identity by successfully uniting old and new.

client

Rotterdam Development Corporation (OBR),
Municipality of Rotterdam

project

country: Netherlands
city: Rotterdam
category: public
status: completed
gross floor area: ca. 1080 m²
design: 1994
completion: 1996

designed by
diirke van egeraat