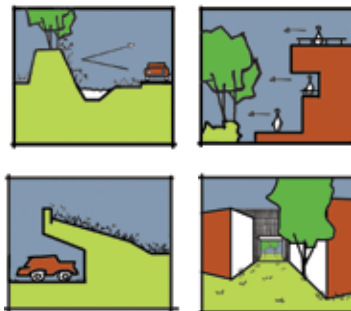
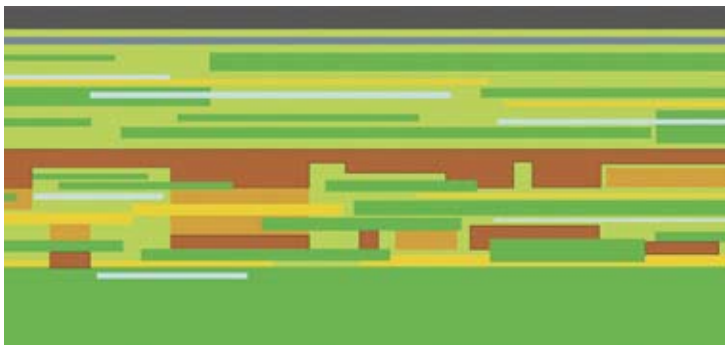




Living  
next to the **forrest** with  
with a view over the  
**highway**

Living next to the forest with a view over the highway



Why should well designed residential quarters be hidden behind noise reducing barriers? Moreover behind barriers that rather blemish the Dutch landscape than giving it an aesthetic impulse. Can it be otherwise? Can't the world in front of the barrier be connected to the world behind the barrier, in order to add value for both residents and road users? Buro Lubbers sees possibilities to do so. The Boschkens project shows how. Here, in the south of the Netherlands near the city of Tilburg, a noise barrier connects the green and quiet inner world of the forest to the hectic world of the 24/7 dynamics of highway A58. Along the highway, huge trees in containers on pillars form a catchy landmark. A noise reducing residential building has become an icon.

### Façades reducing noise

In the Netherlands, the view from the highway is dominated by a large variety of sound barriers. The design and materialization of these landmark interventions often lack any landscape or urban format and the barriers rarely relate to the world that lies behind. Instead, they appear as autonomous objects with an ambiguous representation. A large discrepancy exists between the world in front of the barriers and the one behind. With this analysis in mind, Buro Lubbers developed an innovative and multidisciplinary concept, that joins the forces of landscape architecture, urbanism and architecture against the noise of the A58 motorway. Worth mentioning is the fact, that Buro Lubbers being an office of landscape and urban design, formulated radical architectural conditions prior to actually involving the architect. Further development of Lubbers' landscape, urban and architectural concept was completed in collaboration with Crepain Binst-Architecture. Together they won the Boschkens design competition in 2003.



Near Goirle and Tilburg the A58 is characterized by a number of icons: two black towers of Jacq. De Brouwer, some road related artworks, a lake with distinctive architecture plus a striking building of architect Storimans. Boschkens adds a new landmark to these series. More than 700 meters long and 14 meters high, the façades of 170 houses function as a noise reducing barrier. Usually the houses stand behind the barrier. In Boschkens houses are the barrier.



This architectural concept is based on specific landscape features of the place: the north side at the highway, the south side at the forest. The design principle was to connect the world in front of and behind the soundwall. How? First, by creating a new folded landscape, which includes all spatial, ecological, hydraulic and traffic issues that apply to a residential area in such a special place. Second, by sloping the noise barrier with 5% both space is created towards the highway as well as a sheltered location for housing.



#### **Iconic tree containers in nature area**

Normally, the security zone between the highway and the noise reducing barrier expires into limbo. Not in Boschkens. Here the strip of 40 meter has gained a new function, as a nature area. The folded landscape between the façade and the highway houses solitary trees, water storage and infiltration zones, high and low grass and herb strips. The combination of dry spots and wet ponds leads to optimal conditions for nature development where even amphibians will find a home.

The nature area also provides space to the enormous containers with pines. Lifted from the surface, they create an extra dimension in the landscape and announce the

Living next to the forest with a view over the highway



forest lying behind the façade. The trees can be seen from a distance: indispensable for a worthy experience from the perspective of the road. As the tree tops in the containers visually intertwine with the woods in the background, so the wooden ribs on the corten steel containers follow the lines of the narrow windows in the façades. This is how architecture and landscape enter into a special interplay. Even at night, when the coloured light stripes in the façade wrap the trees in an almost fairytale-like atmosphere.

The nature area and the entrance side of the building are connected. The buildings' passages give access to the sunken parking boots in the nature area. The parking solution is almost invisible, as it dissolves in the landscape. Furthermore, at the south side there are so-called outdoor rooms: public spaces between the houses, situated against the wall. Their stairs and windows offer a view over the nature area and the highway. The houses also offer an inside look at the highway, while at the same time they all overlook the forest to the south. Behind the uniform noise reducing façade a variety of housing typologies is hidden, all of which have architectural outdoor areas like picture windows, terraces, balconies and loggias, all sun-oriented. From the penthouses residents can even see beyond the forest and spot the church towers of Goirle and other villages in the area.

What at first sight seems a contradictory combination - living in the woods overlooking the highway - ultimately has led to a surprising environment rich of possibilities. Residents of the new Boschkens can walk through the woods, silently enjoy the sun on the terrace or spot special cars from the bedroom.



The characteristic architecture, the coloured lights behind the windows, the pine containers and the nature area turned Boschkens into an icon. An icon that shows that noise barriers can also be beautiful and add new meaning to a place.

