



THE CEILING IN THE TOWER IS DECORATED WITH PATTERNS THAT ARE RELATED TO THE FUNCTION OF THE FLOOR IN QUESTION.

ON 13 MAY 2000 A CATASTROPHE STRUCK an impoverished working-class neighbourhood in the Dutch provincial town of Enschede. Due to causes that have never been fully explained, a fireworks factory exploded. Consequently, the neighbourhood in which it stood, was blown off the map. Two hundred houses were destroyed, about 2,000 seriously damaged. There were 23 dead and over 900 wounded. The Dutch government declared the event a national disaster. Twelve hundred local residents had to be evacuated for an extended period of time.

The fireworks disaster did not merely traumatise those who lived through the explosions, but friends or relatives, or were victims of its aftermath; it also fanned the embers of a growing dis-

trust among Dutch citizens towards the authorities. Conspiracy theories emerged about the cause of the accident; those held responsible received death threats. The government had to be blamey, many people thought, for having allowed this kind of business to operate in a residential neighbourhood, for evidently not having enforced safety regulations properly, or at the very least for trying to hush up all sorts of social revolutions during the disposition of the affair. And so the reconstruction of the area became a highly sensitive prestige project with a therapeutic aspect: the trust of the citizens had to be earned anew here, by acting decisively, by giving public inquiry and consultation procedures a significant role, by rebuilding something that would

satisfy everyone. And lo and behold, in eight years' time an entirely new city quarter has risen from the ashes – quite an achievement by Dutch standards. This April the queen came to inspect the results, with virtually the entire Dutch press in her wake.

One of the most significant steps in this therapeutic process was the appointment of Pi de Bruin of de Architekten Cie as master planner for the new quarter. De Bruin proved to be the perfect person to formulate a plan without a personal agenda, his sole objective being to accommodate everyone's wishes as much as possible. As noted by architecture historian Bernard Colebrand, when the city engaged as a 'chronicler of the reconstruction' to document and comment



A SLENDER TOWER HOUSES THE OFFICES OF MUSEUM TWENTSEWELLS.



TO SHIELD THE MUSEUM FOWER FROM THE SUN, METAL CURTAINS WERE USED. SOME FILLED AND SOME SLOTTED.