Photo Studio in Schilde, Belgium
PHOTO STUDIO IN SCHILDE, BELGIUM

The small town of Schilde (20,000 inhabitants) lies on the main road between Turnhout and Antwerp. Along its high street a collection of variously sized retail outlets all vie for the attention of shoppers.

Housed in what was originally a 1970s residential building, this photography studio has recently undergone a facelift. All the non-structural parts of its façade were removed, and the entire front remodelled in a single material: stainless steel. The new skin over the external cavity wall is made up of large-scale panels (grade EN 1.4404) with a brushed finish fixed to an 18-mm plywood frame.

The first floor features a projecting window assembly encompassing both existing windows in one unit. It consists of a frame of square hollow-section steel affixed to the masonry and clad with stainless-steel panels.

With its glass ‘lenses’ and shutter-like sliding panels of perforated stainless-steel sheet held in steel profiles, the assembly alludes distinctly in its design to the principal tool of the photographer’s trade. The 45° angle of the windows at ground-floor level was retained, and an 80-cm high stainless-steel-clad parapet added to the shop front to more clearly define inside and outside space. Four small ‘showcases’ on the left-hand side of the façade whet the appetite for the studio’s services.

Instead of a traditional shop sign, the studio advertises itself in the form of its own web address bead-blasted and countersunk in the stainless-steel panel. At night the lettering is illuminated from behind.
The projecting window assembly adds relief and depth to the façade.

Horizontal and vertical sections through the façade scale 1:20

1 3 mm stainless-steel sheet, grade EN 1.4404 on 18 mm plywood
2 40/80 mm battens
3 existing façade
4 stainless-steel window frame with solar glazing
5 80/80/5 mm steel frame
6 sliding panel, 100/40/3 mm steel frame
7 3 mm perforated stainless-steel sheet grade EN 1.4404
8 60 mm thermal insulation
9 laminated plasterboard
The stainless steel seems to change colour according to time of day and lighting conditions.

The perforated stainless steel of the sliding panel retains a visual connection with the outside while also protecting against direct sun.

The services of the photo studio are presented in the inset showcase windows.