I was approached at Leeds Light Night by the Belgian light artist Tom Dekyvere, a participant at the event, who requested that I send a video recording of Building Dreams to Jeroen De Schuyteneer the Director of Stad Ghent who commission the tri-annual Lichtfestival Ghent. He expressed an interest in exhibiting the installation and a contract was negotiated to exhibit ‘Building Dreams’ at the 2018 Lichtfestival Ghent.

The Ghent festival attracts such large audiences on each of the 5 nights that there is a steward controlled, four-mile, one-way, traffic-free city centre circuit. This, however, created problems for the organisers in finding a suitable and accessible 3-storey building to site the work on route. Through online conversation we finally agreed on using the historic Ghent Planning Offices, despite the issue that the ground floor screen would be set back in the entrance lobby.

We were attempting to produce the work, without a site visit, utilising online resources. The editing of the films and purchasing screen material was calculated using forwarded photographs of the building, rooms and windows and architectural floor plans. To create the projection required re-cropping the master copy of the original Building Dreams film to fit the proportions of the new building. The 3 films were then synchronised by Lumen, a digital production company, and supplied on memory sticks to be played on Bright sign media players which I hired to bring with me to Ghent.

The festival also required a countdown introduction to the work to help maintain the crowd circulation. I took the opportunity to create a one minute countdown by taking and using photographs of different 1-60 house numbers edited into a one minute film to run between each showing.
However the lack of a preparatory site visit did impact on the set up as there were a number of small practical issues that emerged. The design of the windows, their opening handles and the requirement for the windows to be able to be opened during working hours meant that each panel of glass needed a separate screen fixing rather than a single screen to cover the whole window. This resulted in having to pin 9 separate screens on the upstairs hardwood windows rather than 2. The ground floor glass partition double doors required pinning a further 12 screens. A further issue which impacted on the final visual quality of the piece was being unable to fully resolve the amount of ambient light falling onto the front of the building from street lights and shop windows at night.

The set-up for the building required a complicated logistical timetable as the first and second floor rooms were working offices during the day. This required setting up the technical equipment and cabling within strong health and safety guidelines and extra time to set up and close down at the end of each evening. This was even more complicated at ground floor level as this was the main entrance and exit for the large number of staff working in the Planning Office. Another issue was the automatic movement sensor lighting system in the building which created problems with accessing the building during the performance.

For practical reasons and transport costs I requested the festival director Sophie Van Neste to access and supply the digital projectors, PA and speakers on site. This did raise a further issue in that different specification projectors were supplied for each floor which affected the overall brightness balance across the 3 floors. However a technician was available to help set up the sound system and digital projectors to the best of their capabilities.

The viewing direction for the audience was very good with a narrow street leading directly onto a small square facing the building, with the road closed to traffic and stewards controlling and directing the crowds.
In onze dromen kan alles... Met die gedachte zet professor Graham Tansley het alledaagse om in iets magisch.

Voldersstraat