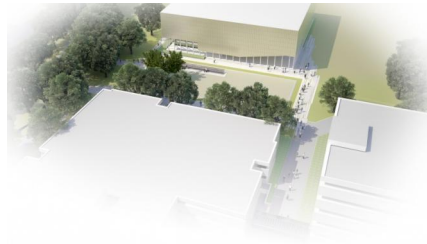


ANTWERP UNIVERSITY CAMPUS DRIE EIKEN

2012, Antwerp, Belgium



Scenic Plinths Reconnecting the Landscape Legacy

The existing campus of the University of Antwerp is situated at a historical attractive location. Development through the years and its surrounding landscape forms the scenery which we know today as 'Drie Eiken' (Three Oaks). The ambition of the new multifunctional auditory and laboratory building is to intensify the character of the university campus, not merely by an architectural expression, but also through the dialogue between the existing valuable and morphological landscape elements.

One of the qualitative characteristics of the campus is the original network of ditches, woods and an orthogonal plot structure. These elements are now hidden between the different infrastructure. By restoring and rehabilitating the original stream valley, this site will gain a good base for future development.

The new building is strategically located in the centre of the campus. It will become the central gateway between the foyers and all traffic flows. This new heart will re-connect different parts of the campus, which consist of: the Northern campus, the 'woods' with free standing buildings as objects; the Centre campus, with an avenue facing an open field and landscape intergraded architecture; and the Southern campus with an urban grid and a high density of compactness. These different tissues of spaces within the campus characteristics used to be disconnected, interrupted by infrastructure. West 8's winning master plan successfully re-connects them by creating a new central green space. Additional links with an attractive network of meeting places will visually strengthen the connection between the surrounding landscape and the different building plots.

The existing landscape elements - such as the woods edges, ditches and the orthogonal grid - will be emphasized again. The connection between the scattered plots will be intensified by a green plinth surrounding each building in the campus. Shaded areas will be covered with an abundance of ivy, which will bring a lively contribution to the colorful hydrangeas nearby. Custom designed pergola will be an ideal carrier for blossoming climbers. Further, an open lawn with a south facing monumental sitting area provides a simple and inviting gesture. This space is formed by the facades of the buildings, the existing trees and a hardened edge. The granite edge is firmly defined and articulated along the lawn, forming the unregulated edge which joins to the landscape beyond.

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