



beeld: atelier pro

Vrijzinnig Christelijk Lyceum (VCL), The Hague



The Vrijzinnig Christelijk Lyceum (VCL) is an independent school for senior general secondary education and pre-university education. Its old building is comprised of various component parts built at different points in time, with a total floor area of around 8,000 square metres. The oldest part, a villa dating back to 1903, is a national monument and has been preserved. The more recent parts, built in the 1930s, 1960s and 1980s, were replaced by new construction.

The assignment

A positive outcome of the school's gradual expansion in the past is that the building does not appear overly large and offers a sense of human scale. The VCL drew up an extensive design brief in which they outlined their request for a building that is more practical, compact and accessible, but which also preserves the identity and positive characteristics of the

other important parameters in realizing this project.

Difference in elevation

The school is located in a unique spot in the Van Stolkpark. The villa was built at the point where two roads meet, with behind it, squeezed in between the Van Stolkweg and Parkweg, the later additions, which have made way for the new construction. The Van Stolkpark lies at the edge of Scheveningen's dune landscape and is marked by differences in elevation that are rather unusual in the Netherlands. The terrain that houses the VCL features a height difference of around three meters from the highest to the lowest point. This characteristic of the landscape can lead to unusual solutions, as we experience every day in our own office, which also lies on hilly dune land, only a stone's throw away from the VCL.

The villa and the school's grounds are part of the Van Stolkpark's green ensemble, which was designed by Louis P. Zocher following the principles of English landscape gardening. For the new building, we searched for a form that blends in with the green, grainy nature of the spot. By making use of the existing difference in elevation it was possible to build the school gyms partly below ground, while they still retain a good connection to the rest of the school. This helps to create more space for air and greenery above ground. Atelier PRO's concept presentation was based on a star-shaped

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current building. Naturally, the nature of the location, integration in the surroundings, improvement of the internal climate and sustainability were

space with a maximum of three levels, with the villa forming one of the star's points. Two other points or 'wings' extend to the two bordering roads, as if they were villas, too. The entrance and the main auditorium, forming the heart of the school, lie at the centre of the star.

The logo of the VCL, Escher artwork 'Pegasus' used to embellish the old façade. In the new building, this artwork has returned to almost the same place.

The building was put into operation at the end of 2018, as planned.

VCL in de media

Film AD VCL is ready for the future
Film Omroep West Escher's Mosaic is extracted from VCL's wall

Nominated for the Haagse Architectuurprijs
Berlagevalg 2021