



BEELD: STIJN POELSTRA

CARMEL COLLEGE SALLAND INTERIOR, RAALTE

Atelier PRO has designed a completely new learning environment, encompassing both the architecture and interiors, for the senior general (HAVO) and pre-university (VWO) students at Carmel College in Raalte. The landscape design was made in collaboration with Oase Stedenbouw en Landschap urban planning consulting agency.

The challenge

The aim was to create a school that would provide over 1500 students with an intimate, comfortable atmosphere – a school where students themselves are top priority. To do so, a special focus has been placed on small-scale design aspects. The result is a building with comfortable and engaging learning environments, where interior and exterior merge seamlessly with one another.

Sector Director of Carmel College Ingrid Hegeman says the following about the new school: 'Our teaching model was taken as the basis, which Dorte Kristensen and Martijn de Visser from atelier PRO successfully translated into a learning environment with the desired facilities. We are surrounded

by a beautiful park, and so a key challenge involved the unification of internal and external spaces. The resulting building is modest yet spacious, small-scale and fully grounded in our vision of education.'

Domains

To achieve the desired intimate character, the building was divided into six 'domains', where students and teachers work together in small teams. All domains can be accessed via the central hall. The building takes the form of a hand: the palm is the central hall and the fingers are the domains, which fan out and allow the building to dovetail with the surrounding green landscape.

Interior design

The lightness of the interior is in keeping with the school's educational principles. The outdoor areas also include many spaces conducive to learning, covering a wide variety of styles from informal group learning to secluded concentration. Light and natural colours and materials have been used, and each domain has its own highlight colour. Several furniture items were also developed by atelier PRO specially for the project, including large couches on wheels that can be divided into four smaller units.

Flexible functionality

The domains themselves offer flexible functionality: the outer walls and the columns provide the supporting structure, and the remaining spaces can be set up as desired. The layout takes circumstances into consideration, ranging from hectic activity to concentrated study. The entry to each domain is located on the side of the main hall; this

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Beyond those is where the flexible study spaces begin, where students can work independently or in groups. The rearmost and quietest area of each domain houses the open learning centre, with views of the surrounding landscape. This is also where the silent workspaces are, offering solitude for ultimate concentration.

The main hall (to which all domains are connected) is two storeys high, containing balconies and footbridges that give the space a multi-purpose and playful character. The main hall is great for break times, as well as for school exhibitions and presentations. A stage and bleacher-style seating form the heart of the hall, and are the ideal spot for students enjoying their break. There is also a piano, free for anybody to play. The hall has a large glass wall with a view of the sports field and the adjoining park, filling the space with openness and light. Curtains allow it to be transformed into a theatre.

Science labs

The practical labs for the science domain are located along the main entrance, where visitors can catch a glimpse of the experiments and tests being carried out by the science students. Carmel College thus establishes itself as a Universum school where students are free to explore their interests in science and technology.

Integrated whole

From school building to classroom, from lobby to silent workspace, from large to small, from inside to outside – the new Carmel College HAVO/VWO forms a comprehensive and integrated whole. During the opening, philosopher Bas Haring noted, 'What we have here is a beautiful school building: a public asset that looks amazing, and which makes me very happy indeed.'