

Library & Academy for Performing Arts

Location

Aalst, BE

Client

Autonoom
Gemeentebedrijf
Stadsontwikkeling Aalst
(AGSA)

Initiated

2016

Size

8.500 sqm

Project Team

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The city council of the Flemish city of Aalst has commissioned KAAAN Architecten to design their new library, a largely new complex in the city centre which will also house the Academy for Performing Arts. The complex, situated on the corner of Oude Graanmarkt and Esplanadestraat, will be completed in 2018 – a full century after the end of World War I.

The preliminary design is a complex with lively, urban allure. Precisely because its plan is functionally driven, it achieves a sense of spatial freedom that enriches the experience of the building. The so-called Pupillenschool, with its grand presence and eventful history, is being used as a ‘cornerstone’ to anchor the new complex in the surrounding urban fabric and in the hearts of the people of Aalst.

The irregular street pattern of the historic centre of Aalst was a source of inspiration and forms the foundation for the new complex. At various points the streets converge erratically, leaving small open spaces – tiny public squares that dot the old city centre. By inserting a rectangular edifice loosely against the back and part of the side of the Pupillenschool, Aalst has gained two more of such small public squares: one serving as the entrance area for the complex and the other as terrace to the reading café.

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