

information centre

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Groeneveld Castle

It wasn't clear where Groeneveld Castle's entrance was. In addition, the restaurant was inconveniently located, as well as the offices that were scattered over the coach house, orangery and main building. With the increasing number of visitors, there was an obvious need for a clear floor plan, a convenient route and good climate control. In collaboration with Jonkman Klinkhamer, Studio Groen+Schild came up with a renovation plan.

"It's always very busy here during the weekend", says architect Ellen Schild, who lives nearby Groeneveld Castle in the City of Baarn. "Many people enjoy coming here to walk, cycle, have a coffee or visit an exhibition. During the week it's mostly school classes that come to visit and the country estate makes way for meetings and conventions."

Spacious reception

Groeneveld Castle has been in use as a centre for nature, landscape and rural areas since 1982, and the number of visitors is rising steadily. Schild: "The increase in the number of students, elderly people, personnel and convention attendees, who all had to

enter through the same narrow entryway simultaneously, caused logistic issues in various ways. We made the entrance a lot bigger, by broadening the entryway, creating a spacious reception area and shop.

Based on the schedule of requirements and a thorough analysis of the existing buildings, Studio Groen+Schild developed a new concept that focused on one set function per building. The orangery became an office building with offices upstairs and a reception area downstairs, the coach house was transformed into a grand café with a spacious room on the first floor, and the main building is now ready to host conventions and art exhibitions.

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Scraped off paint

Mezzanines were realised in the wings of the main building, with large stairways between the first floor and the attic. This resulted in a clear route through the castle, causing beautiful sight lines to appear. Several rooms in the orangery and coach house were also visually connected by adding mezzanines. "We used modern materials such as steel and glass to clearly show what is new and what is old", says Schild. "Without affecting the historical quality of the castle, the mezzanines and staircases can be removed again. Reversibility is a requirement that the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands proposes to the renovation of Dutch monuments."

'The mezzanines can be removed again, without affecting the historic quality'

A specialist in historic colours investigated the original use of colour in the castle, by analysing pieces of scrapped off paint. This resulted in purple and grey walls in the room with murals from the 18th century. "The paintings stand out much better against the walls now that they have been repainted in their original colours." To connect the past and the present, contemporary colours were added to the range of historical colours. As an example, 'corn' yellow was used in the coach house, and pink and red in the orangery.

Skinny clinkers

It was a difficult task to place the right climate installation in the main building. Schild: "We concealed all the pipes, wires and grids behind the existing paneling. Together with the installation advisor, we solved the puzzle." Modern techniques also came to good use in the coach house. "We wanted to preserve the original floors on which the horses and carriages once stood, but at the same time we wanted to add insulation and warmth. The solution was to cut the clinkers to three centimetres thick, so that we could lay them down on top of the insulated floor. It still looks the same as it did before and we were able to keep the original atmosphere."



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In fact, Groeneveld Castle isn't really a castle. It was built in 1710 as a country estate. At that time, it was quite common in the Netherlands for rich city-dwellers to own a country estate. During the summer they would leave the hot and busy city to enjoy life in the outdoors. Marcus Mamuchet from Amsterdam ordered for Groeneveld to be built. The castle was an exact copy of a property on the Keizersgracht in Amsterdam, and consisted of a middle section of the current main building, a coach house and an orangery. In 1760, two semicircular wings were added to the main building. Many families have lived here since. Staatsbosbeheer, an organisation commissioned by the Dutch government that manages a sizeable amount of the nature reserves in the Netherlands, bought the property in 1983. Nowadays, the properties are part of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, which operates this country estate.

Project: Groeneveld Castle

Location: Baarn

Total floor area: 4,140 m²

Completion date: July 2012

Client: Ministry of Economic Affairs

Interior architect + architect: Studio Groen+Schild and Jonkman Klinkhamer

Website: www.studiogroenenschild.nl