



Groningen, 26 November 2019

Dear members of the press,

Welcome to the new Forum Groningen! After years of planning, building, designing and programming, the time has finally come for the grand opening. We are very happy that you are able to join us for the all access press preview prior to the official opening on Friday 29 November 2019.

This press kit contains all the information you need. In fact, it tells you everything you need to know about the Forum in a nutshell:

- > Forum in brief
- > NL Architects discuss their Forum
- > An introduction to the interior designers
- > The transformation of the eastern side of Grote Markt
- > Contact details and practical information

We hope that you will be just as blown away by the design and facilities of this unique building as we are. Explore the Forum, discover the opportunities. Explore the world, meet the future.

Welcome to all of you,

The Forum Groningen Team



## Forum Groningen in brief

After a long and intense planning and building process, the time has finally come for Forum Groningen to open its doors to the public! Another eye-catching building is added to the skyline of Groningen's historic city centre. Forum Groningen was designed by Amsterdam-based NL Architects for the City of Groningen. It covers a surface area of 17,000 m<sup>2</sup> on ten floors, is open seven days a week and hosts a diverse array of activities around one coherent ambition.

### Explore the world, discover the future

Forum Groningen's ambition is to let today's world and tomorrow's opportunities inspire the residents and visitors of Groningen. It hopes to achieve this with international exhibitions, film and literature festivals, panel discussions and talk shows, as well as courses, workshops and talks. Forum Groningen challenges the public to keep an open mind while exposing them to the latest social and technological developments. To this end, the Forum has two exhibition galleries, the interactive Storyworld museum, five cinemas, a multi-purpose events venue with a flat floor, the complete collections of the city library, dozens of study and work places, a Medialab and a Smartlab.

As a result, Forum Groningen is an inspiring and easily accessible meeting place. You can easily walk in and there is always something going on. The three recurring themes in all of the Forum's programming are **current events and society**, **technology** and **popular visual culture**. The Storyworld Museum on the Forum's seventh floor seamlessly ties in with these themes. This new Dutch museum focuses on visual narratives in all their manifestations, including comics, animation and games. This highly interactive museum challenges visitors of all ages to start working with the main components of visual narratives to discover how powerful they can be.

### Freely accessible

You need a ticket to visit the exhibitions, events and film screenings and performances. The majority of the building is freely accessible, including the city library's collections which can be found on different floors as well as the many comfortable study, work and meeting places. This also applies to the three bars and restaurants in the building. There is a café on the ground floor with an outdoor seating area that gives out onto Nieuwe Markt, as well as a cinema café on the fifth floor, near the cinema theatres, and the café and restaurant on the tenth floor. At a height of 45 meters, the rooftop terrace has a fabulous view of the city of Groningen while the large, glass atrium offers appealing glimpses of the same view from inside the building. Below the building is our underground car park and a public bicycle parking.

### Artful car park

Anyone who parks their car under the Forum and finds their way up into the building cannot fail to notice *Wervel* or Whirl, the aptly-named artwork in the car park's atrium. This ingenious, 20-metre long LED sculpture was inspired by the shape of a tornado or whirlwind. *Wervel* surges in between the concrete, following the building's architectural contours and giving visitors a hint of what awaits them: imagination, light, movement and turbulence. *Wervel* projects colourful, composed images that are based on natural phenomena and the science behind them. CBK Groningen commissioned *Wervel* from the artist Nicky Assmann. You should visit the Forum just for the pleasure of seeing *Wervel*.



NL Architects about their Forum:

## 'Endlessly browsing the building, you'll find more than you bargained for'

Forum Groningen is a new-style public amenity. It is neither a library, nor a museum. Nor is it a cinema. Here in this space the traditional boundaries between these institutions are simply eliminated. The information is provided thematically, in a way that transcends several media. The desire for synergy is apparent in the design, which combines the various components in one easy-to-read volume. Deliberate 'cross-sections' add to the building's versatile appearance, grounding it in its place.

The Forum's unique central space and beating heart consists of an atrium with horizontal 'tentacles'. This atrium is a spatial 'interface', linking all of the building's amenities, thereby enhancing the confrontation of opinions and the exchange of knowledge and ideas. In a sense, the Forum is like the built version of Wikipedia. It is conceived like a 'search engine'. You can endlessly browse the building. Those who do so can expect to find more than they bargained for.

The spaces that are connected by the atrium are similar to stacked 'squares'. These squares are open to everyone and provide access to the various activities. The staggered interior offers ever-changing perspectives of the surrounding city, culminating in a roof terrace with an astonishing panoramic view. From the roof terrace you can really see how the Forum's stacked squares are an extension of the characteristic layout of Groningen's city centre. Vismarkt. Grote Markt, Nieuwe Markt and Forum form one network of open spaces.

The Forum's openness is underscored by the large windows on either side of the atrium. In addition to offering fantastic views of the city, they also offer a glimpse of what's going on inside the building to the outside world. As a result, the atrium becomes the animated logo of Forum Groningen's vibrant character.



## The Forum's interior design

What does Forum Groningen look like and what does it feel like when you wind your way through the open spaces? It's difficult to convey what's so special about the atmosphere in this building. You will just have to experience it for yourself. Many people have joined forces to create a comfortable living room-like environment where everyone feels welcome. The main partners:

### **NL Architects**

NL Architects was established in 1997 by Pieter Bannenberg, Walter van Dijk and Kamiel Klaasse. The firm has about 20 employees. NL Architects specialises in urban planning, architecture and its surroundings, interiors and project design. The emphasis is on clear and sustainable design concepts with attention to detail. NL Architects aims to create catalysts for urban living. How can we intensify human interaction even more? How can we enhance the public nature of buildings?

They analyse the programme and the location to create a building and analyse ways of intensifying the programme while establishing relationships with the surroundings. NL Architects strives to design buildings with added value for the environment in which they are built.

The materials were specifically chosen to enhance the building's concept, rather than creating another example of statement architecture. The same applies to the techniques used throughout the building. They were chosen in function of the space, the building concept and its clarity. Sustainability was another key principle in the design process. It was a factor in every step of the process, from thinking about the building's urban positioning and the building volume down to the smallest details and the choice of materials. For NL Architects, sustainability means designing quality and providing value for the future.

[www.nlarchitects.nl](http://www.nlarchitects.nl)

### **deMunnik-deJong-Steinhauser (DMDJS)**

The deMunnik-deJong-Steinhauser architects' collective is a partnership between Bert de Munnik, Gertjan de Jong (deMunnik-deJong architects) and Abbie Steinhauser (spatial designer). This experienced team has a lot of combined experience working on unique interior projects. Their approach gives rise to inspiring spaces, that make visitors feel at ease. They designed the interior of Forum Groningen's public spaces. The main challenge was clear to the designers from the outset. They wanted the interior to bridge the gap between the building's overwhelming architecture and the many functions to which it is home. The Forum had to be more than a destination for architecture lovers and more than a collective building for a cultural programme. The Forum's interior had to resemble a nice living room, for all the people of Groningen. A place that people would like to visit, that would offer an enriching experience.

[www.dmdjs.nl](http://www.dmdjs.nl)

### **&Prast&Hoof**

&Prast&Hoof (formerly PrastHoof) is celebrating its 16th anniversary and was founded by the architect Herman Prast and the designer Ronald Hoof. The architectural firm employs () men and 8 women who design and build projects. This includes new builds (offices, housing and hotels) as well as transitional buildings (education, culture, hospitality industry) for a vast array of institutional and private clients. &Prast&Hoof designed the cinemas and the square between the cinemas on level 5 west. The project team consisted of Suzanne Weeda (project architect -management) and a design team including Hanna Maring, Stefanie Krietemeijer, Anouk van Deuzen and Ronald Hoof.

[www.prasthoof.nl](http://www.prasthoof.nl)



City of Groningen:

## > The transformation of the eastern side of Grote Markt

The City of Groningen has always actively focused on the city centre's development. In the past twenty years, the emphasis was on Grote Markt, the main square in the city's historic centre. The eastern side and the building block behind it especially were vacant and run-down. Despite the diverse interests, Groningen succeeded in developing a far-reaching plan to redesign the eastern side of the square. It took two referendums and many years of consultation with stakeholder groups, residents' organisations, experts and individual citizens as part of an open planning process. In many respects, Forum Groningen was at the heart of this proposal.

### Urban plan

Following the transformation, Grote Markt's pre-WWII dimensions and shape have been restored. The eastern side was demolished and the new buildings have been moved forward approximately 18 metres to the original building line. The car park behind the eastern side has also been demolished. A new underground 380-spaces car park was built to replace it. Another building was built in the location of the demolished car park, i.e., Forum Groningen. This eye-catching crowd-puller is located along a new square between the buildings on the eastern side and the Forum, called Nieuwe Markt. A parking for 1,200 bicycles was built under Nieuwe Markt. The south side of Nieuwe Markt will have a number of new buildings for retail, the hospitality industry and housing.

### New eastern side

The new eastern side consists of three buildings and a connecting street between Grote Markt and Nieuwe Markt. In 2014, the new building of the Vindicat atque Polit student association was completed on the corner of Martinikerhof. The building was designed by De Zwarte Hond architectural firm. The hotel in the centre of the eastern side was designed by Müller-Reimann Architekten. The developer was VolkerWessel real estate, the owner is WestCord Hotels. The hotel has over 100 rooms, with a grand café on the ground floor and a rooftop terrace that can seat 200 people. Everyone is welcome in the café and on the rooftop terrace.

Merckt will be built on the corner of Poelestraat. The developer is MWPO-Mensenborgh, while the architectural firm Powerhouse Company is responsible for the design. The ground floor is home to a coffee bar, a food market and a brewery. The middle section is occupied by private apartments. The rooftop terrace is open to everyone.

### Financial aspect

The construction of Forum Groningen is inextricably linked with the 'Grote Markt oostzijde' project, of which the finances are budgeted and overseen by the City of Groningen. The project is expected to be concluded in 2021. The total municipal investment currently stands at approximately 275 million euros. The project will be developed within the applicable financial frameworks that the municipal council provided for this.

The City of Groningen has invested approximately 148 million of these 275 million in municipal real estate, including the Forum (101 million), the car park (43 million) and the bicycle parking (4 million). The other estimated costs are very diverse and include archaeology, site preparation and preparation for usage, acquisitions and compensation, the construction of Nieuwe Markt zuidzijde and the new society building for Vindicat, the interior design of Forum, plan development, interest, reserve and after-care.

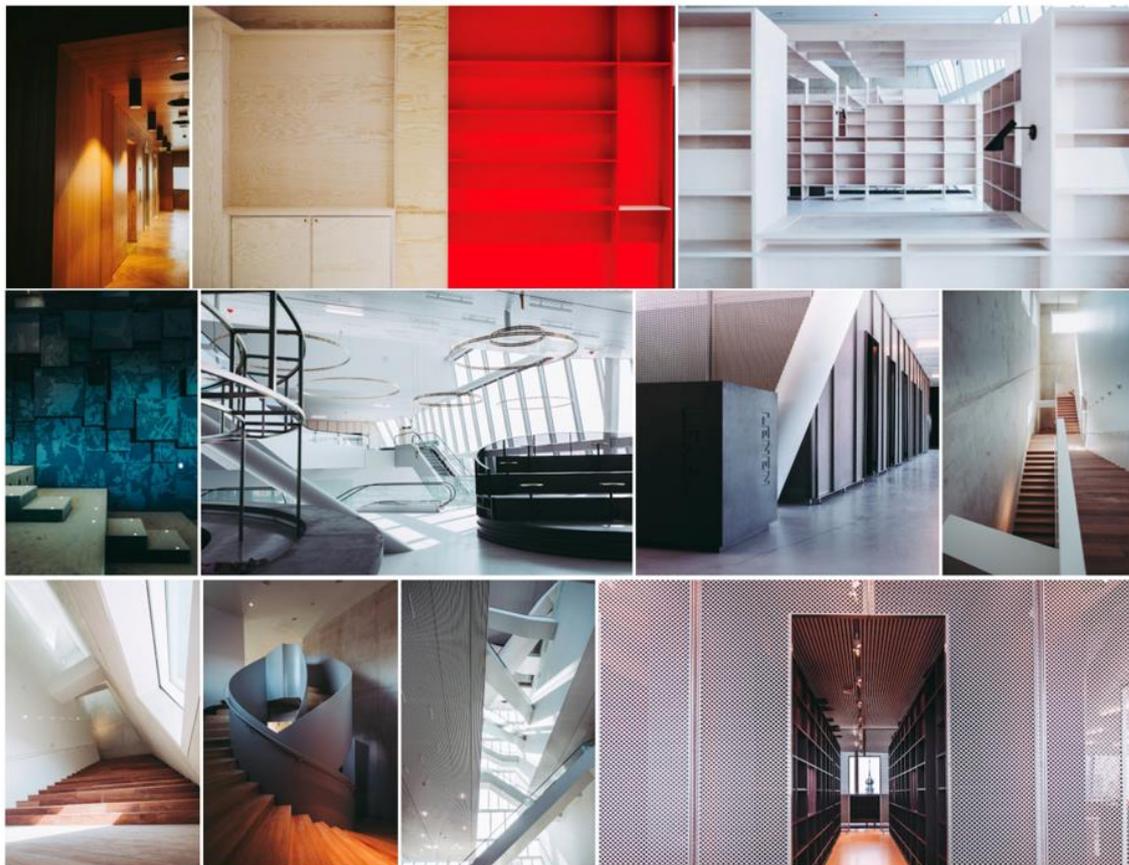


## Practical information and contact details

There's plenty to say about Forum Groningen. In fact, there's simply too much information to share in this press kit and during the press preview. That is why we have gathered all this information in one place so you can read it at your leisure.

### Press page

In addition to digital general information, you can also find a comprehensive database with high-quality photos of the Forum('s interior) on our press page at <https://forum.nl/nl/over-ons/voor-de-pers>. You are free to use these photos on condition that you give credit.



### Contact

For information about the Forum, the building, the organisation or our programming, you can contact the Communication Department by calling +31 (0)50 368 36 32 or by e-mail to [communicatie@forum.nl](mailto:communicatie@forum.nl). Alternatively you can reach Pernille Claesen at + 31 (0)6 536 111 06.

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9712 AT Groningen, the Netherlands  
<https://forum.nl/en>



## **Credits construction of Forum Groningen**

### **Principal**

City of Groningen

### **Contractor with delegated responsibility**

TwynstraGudde

### **Architect**

NL Architects

### **Construction plan implementation**

ABT (Engineering office during the tender phase)

### **Construction and geotechnical Advice**

ABT

### **Construction Cost Advice**

ABT

### **Building logistics (design phase)**

ABT

### **Specifications**

ABT

### **Installation Advice**

Huisman & Van Muijen

### **Building Physics & Fire Safety**

DGMR

### **Interior**

NL Architects  
deMunnikdeJongSteinhauser  
&Prast&Hoof  
NorthernLight  
Tank

### **Project management interior**

abcnova

### **Construction**

BAM

### **Seismic advice**

abtWassenaar  
ABT  
BAM, Advice & Engineering