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## PRESS RELEASE

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### Office building redesigned into vibrant meeting place

**A former ABP [pension fund] office building dating from 1977 is now a breeding ground for education, research and entrepreneurship. Diederendirrix architecture & urban development and Van Eijk & Van der Lubbe designed the Brightlands Smart Service Campus in Heerlen. The building got a new entrance and two floors were redesigned into 'community floor'. It is the perfect place to meet and work together in the building.**

#### **Architecture encourages people to meet and work together**

Diederendirrix renovated the former giant ABP office building measuring 21,000 square metres and made it into a campus for start-ups, companies and a scientific institute. An initiative of pension provider APG, the Maastricht University and the Province of Limburg.

The characteristic concrete structure, with columns and façade elements in a beautiful hourglass shape, forms the basis of the design. Diederendirrix designed two zones in this structure. The middle zone is a warm wooden world for meeting and knowledge exchange, including among other things the Living Room, espresso bar and the Forum. In the zone around the Forum, diederendirrix designed a light, glass world offering a view of the park-like surroundings. Office spaces, meeting rooms, education and research spaces – among other things – are housed in this glass world.

In the middle zone the flooring between the first and second floor was partly broken through, which creates a double-height space. This space, the Forum, contains a large wooden stand which also serves as circulation area. Here, people can work together and debate and lectures can be held. The glass walls provide a view of the surrounding spaces, such as the meeting places and the restaurant.

#### **New awning makes welcoming entrance**

On the east façade we made a new, inviting entrance. The part of the façade and the awning at the new entrance are made up of a special steel construction. The diamond shape and details fit in with the existing building. In collaboration with the garden and landscape designers of Donkergroen we designed the lay-out of the park at the entrance.

*"Encouraging people to meet and work together more. Our architectural interventions at the Brightlands campus are focused on this." Paul Diedereren, architect/partner diederendirrix.*

#### **Interior design connects places and people**

Van Eijk & Van der Lubbe designed the interior of the community floor. A raster of slanting lines forms the basis for a pattern of coloured carpet on the floor. The lamps and furniture also find their place along these diagonals, sometimes right through walls or glass partitions. This way, the pattern makes a connection between the spaces and the visitors. The colour grading creates different atmospheres. There is a lot of red in the Forum. The warm heart of the building. Furniture hanging from pulleys should enable an informal and flexible use of the central space in the future. When needed, you can pull down a chair or table and just as easily pull it up again.

*"By adding a contrary movement - the slanting lines in our design - in the linear building, we create dynamism. This way, we connect the spaces and also the people in the building." Niels Van Eijk, designer / partner Van Eijk & Van der Lubbe.*

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When using one or more photographs, credit photographer: Jeroen van der Wielen. For more information and images, please contact Jessica Sibbing, T +31 (0)40 2606749, [j.sibbing@diederendirrix.nl](mailto:j.sibbing@diederendirrix.nl) or Maureen van Dijk, T +31 (0)40 2868636, [maureen@vevdl.com](mailto:maureen@vevdl.com).



the Forum after transformation



the Forum during transformation



the Living Room



espresso bar in Living Room



the characteristic concrete structure forms the basis of the design



meeting room in glass world



ABP office building for transformation



entrance with new awning



view of the park-like surroundings



informal meeting room