

LILLIAD — Learning Centre “Innovation”  
Lille University, Villeneuve d’Ascq, France

Press Information — July 2016

# LILLIAD — Learning Centre “Innovation” Lille University, Villeneuve d’Ascq, France



The library of the “Cité des sciences” (en: City of Sciences), designed in 1965 by Noël Le Maresquier in collaboration with Jean Vergnaud: with its circular floor plan, the university library looks like a big cylinder.



Forward-thinking education requires contemporary concepts, including renovation of university infrastructure, which the French ministry of education has provided extensive funding to expand. An important goal of these reforms is to rethink outdated learning concepts.

Technical progress, as well as new methods of communication between teaching institutes (students and teaching bodies) and the public, begin to question the traditional form of scientific libraries.

The new Learning Centre “Innovation” is part of a series of similar institutes tasked with stepping up to the new challenges and preparing for the future.

During the mid-60's, the architect and Le Corbusier-student Noël Le Maresquier designed the central, identity-defining volume of the new university campus: a circular library building. As a refuge for research and learning, the library aged not only structurally.

The existing building and its iconography were to be kept, and spatially extended and reinterpreted in its urban landscape with new contents.

A new events area, cafeteria and experimentation, the “Xperium” – a place where current research results are presented to the public – were therefore added to the existing use of the building as a university library. These changes redefined the classical library as a modern “Learning Centre”.

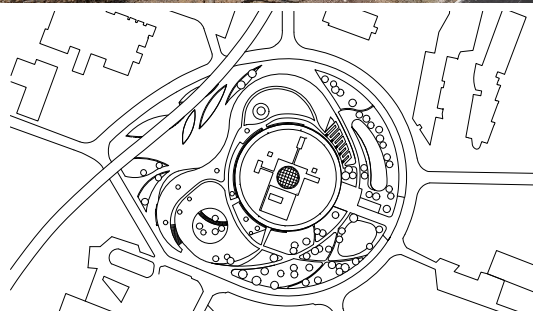
This raised the question of how to deal with the perfect circular form of the existing building and its defining facade, which was to be kept.

Our competition design chose to forego a typical extension building, favouring instead the expression of a landscaped solution: A tall landscaped element surrounds the volume, creating a new main entrance and integrating the new spaces into the concept.

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To support the university quarter of the inner city, a Cité scientifique was developed in the mid-60's as a structuring urban area, following the example of the “Villes nouvelles” (en: New Cities). The university library was part of the new campus and simultaneously its symbol. As a connection between knowledge and all disciplines, the library was placed on a crossing of all paths of all departments. The round form allows views in all directions; it becomes the focus, the centre of the large disciplinary sector of the campus.



The new landscaped base defines a clear spatial edge to the western square, becoming the threshold between Learning Centre and the neighbouring cultural centre. The square becomes a new space for communication between students, harbouring life on the campus.

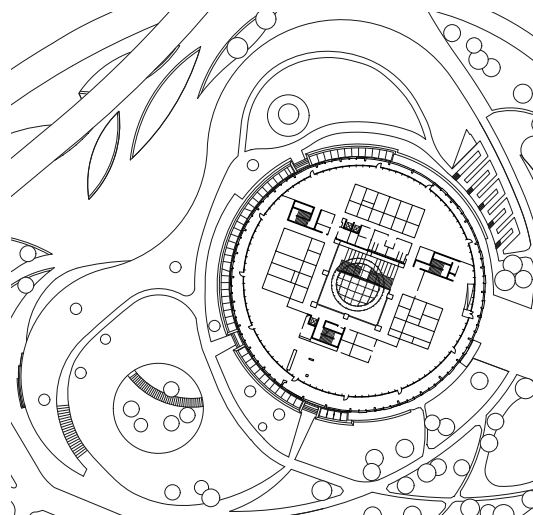
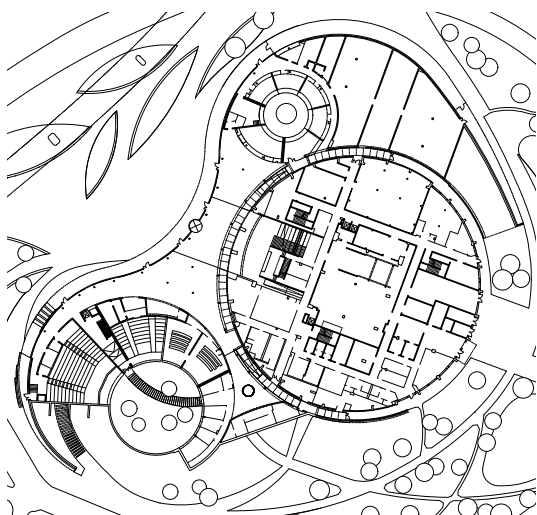
The form of the existing building – the geometry of the circle – serves as a design element between old and new. The circular form is repeated, scaled and offset to each other. This defines new spaces with various functions, architectural qualities, depths and illumination.

The organisation of the accesses and new functions beneath the plateau are legible as “old” and “new”: a light-well gap offsets the landscaped base from the existing cylindrical volume and uses the strip of light as the threshold between the old and new bodies. A large hall from the entrance level to the upper floor connects both. The existing façade is neither broken nor disfigured.

The division of interior spaces follows the composition between existing building and the new landscaped plateau.

While the generous reading areas and book stores are organised in the existing building, the functions such as the events area and Xperium, loaded with new technology, are publically positioned in the base.

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Left: ground floor; right: level 2

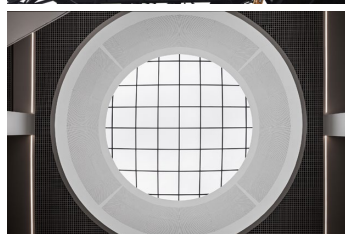
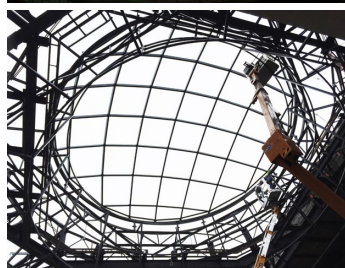
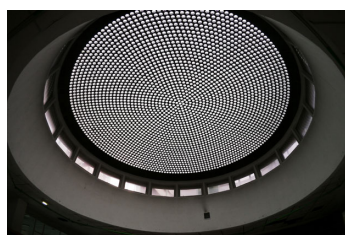
The university presents itself as a modern institution, able to connect innovation with tradition.

The Learning Centre offers many different learning environments. Boundaries dissipate in the digital age; the classical library is obsolete; digital media and interaction are gaining significance and cause the dissolution of the spatial boundaries in the learning areas.

The building sketches a landscape of knowledge, surrounding a central hall as a communicative area. Various learning institutions flow into each other and create spaces with multifunctional uses, providing the users with spaces to be used flexibly.

Working with the inner facade of the circular building allows an extension of the library to the exterior space.

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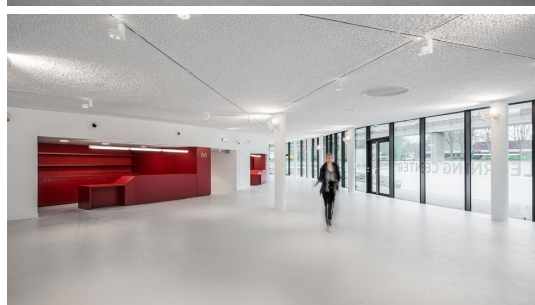
The historical heritage of the library building includes a dome of glass components over the central hall, which was not up to modern thermal and acoustic standards. In its place, a new light dome using a metal structure and insulating glazing. Placed higher than the original dome, the volume of the atrium is expanded and well-lit.



**Sections**  
The new functions are located in the extensions, while the documentation retains its original place in the renovated, modernised existing building.

The new Learning Centre opens its doors in September 2016, in time for the new semester.

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Distribution of functions: a central entrance hall clearly separates the spaces and makes them legible; to the left the research-focused Xperium, to the right the university events space; the large staircase directly opposite which leads to the upper floors and library.

## LILLIAD — Learning Centre “Innovation”, Villeneuve d’Ascq



### Location

2 Avenue Jean Perrin,  
59650 Villeneuve-d’Ascq, France

### Client

Région Hauts-de-France, Lille, France

### Architects

Auer Weber, Munich, Germany  
Prof. Stefan Niese (project associate),  
Eric Frisch and Nina Schuberth (project  
manager), Markus Böhm, Carmen  
Duplantier, Gabriel Kiderlen; Julia Schmid  
and Jieqing Zhao (competition team)

### Local architect

MorphoZ 2.0 architectes, Valenciennes,  
France

### Landscape architect

Atelier Villes & Paysages, Paris, France

### Structural engineer and electrical planner

Maning, La Chapelle-d’Armentières,  
France

### Energy consultant

Symoé, Lille, France

### Services engineer

JLL Ingénierie, Lille, France

### Guidance system

CL Design, Paris, France

### Façade planner

VS-A, Lille, France

### Photographer

Aldo Amoretti, Barcelona, Spain

### Date

Competition 2012  
Construction start 2014  
Completion 2016

### Floor area

Gross floor area 10.850 m<sup>2</sup>  
Net internal area 8.800 m<sup>2</sup>

### Cost

Total cost EUR 30 million  
Construction cost EUR 19 million

### Programme

Library, events area with auditorium and

exhibition space, cafeteria, “Xperium”,  
reception, service and logistics.

The project was initiated by the Lille  
University of Science and Technology  
(French: Université Lille 1 and the  
Hauts-de-France Region;  
it was co-funded by the Hauts-de-France  
Region, Eurometropolis Lille, the  
European Regional Development Fund,  
the European Union and the government.

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Photos: Aldo Amoretti  
[www.aldoamoretti.com](http://www.aldoamoretti.com)

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### Current events at Auer Weber

- » Topping-out ceremony for the School Centre Obermenzing, Munich, Germany.
- » 1st Prize for the Sports Park Zhangjiakou, China; the stadium and sports halls are to be part of the Winter Olympic Games in Beijing and Zhangjiakou in 2022.
- » Exhibition “Carlo Weber – Architect, Artist and Reader” at the Saxon Academy of Arts, 4 June – 7 October 2016.