

Antwerp's New Law Courts

Richard Rogers Partnership
delivers an iconic landmark
for the city



Richard Rogers Partnership delivers an Iconic Landmark for Antwerp

New Law Courts will be a catalyst for RRP's long-term masterplan for the new 'Zuid'

On 28 March the new law courts for City of Antwerp will be formally opened by King Albert II. This is one of RRP's major public buildings of the early 21st century. Like many projects by the practice, it reflects a vision of the city as a humane and democratic place with a commitment to the regeneration of urban life.

The site for the law court is at the Bolivarplaats, on the southern edge of Antwerp's central area, where the urban fabric is broken by a massive motorway interchange, cutting off the boulevard that leads into the city. The new building is one of the catalysts for RRP's long-term masterplan of "the new south" of the city, currently in progress.

RRP is the lead architect of the new building, designed in conjunction with Belgian co-architects VK Studio. It is conceived both as a gateway to the city and as a link across the motorway between the city centre and the Schelde River. It houses eight distinct civil and criminal courts and includes 36 courtrooms plus offices, chambers for judges and lawyers, library and cafeteria, with a great public hall (the space traditionally known as the "Salle des Pas Perdus") linking six radiating wings of accommodation. This space is capped by a striking roof-structure, crystalline in form, linking the paraboloid roofs that cover the courtrooms.

Making Justice more transparent

Unlike traditional law courts, the new scheme creates courts, hearing rooms and public space all filled with natural light, as well as providing spectacular views across the city. Highly transparent clear glazed atria, lifts and stairwells provide instant legibility and respond to the initial brief to make the workings of Justice more transparent. Coloured steel work also acts as an orientating device that is legible both in the broader context of the city and from within the building.

The building, straddling a major highway, looks out to a large area of open land. The design creates 'fingers' of landscaped parkland which extend right into the heart of the building. The landscape is configured and planted to shield the building from the noise and pollution of the motorway.

Ivan Harbour, Senior Director at RRP and project leader for the new law courts, comments, *"Despite the building's massive area, we wanted to create a structure that was sympathetic to the scale of the city. The result is a long, low building with a roofscape animated by the hearing room enclosures. We placed public spaces above the office areas so as to provide views across the city to the north."*

Press Release continued

Respect for the environment

When designing the new law courts building, RRP also focused a great deal of attention on the environmental aspects of this project and on the effective use of energy. Natural light is used to optimum effect, natural ventilation is supplemented by low-velocity ventilation for the hearing rooms and rainwater is recycled.

The environmental strategy is based on utilising the thermal mass of the pre-cast concrete frame, the reduction of solar gain by high performance glazing and the use of external glazed louvres.

According to Ivan Harbour, *“the new Antwerp court house looks grand, yet subtle and offers monumentality on a human scale. The building also makes a clear statement: environmentally friendly, unsophisticated and a high degree of transparency between the public and private spaces. It’s a glass house in which the public is key and where everyone should feel welcome.”*

End

About Richard Rogers Partnership

Richard Rogers Partnership is an international architectural practice with offices in London, Barcelona, Madrid and Tokyo. Over some three decades, the practice has attracted critical acclaim and dozens of prestigious international awards and honours.

The practice is committed to schemes which create successful public space and enliven inner-city areas. Projects recently completed include the new National Assembly for Wales in Cardiff and Barajas Airport, Madrid. RRP has also designed a 48-storey tower in the City of London which now has planning permission as well as an award-winning primary school near Kyoto and a City Academy in East London. RRP is well known for iconic structures such as Lloyd’s of London and the Millennium Dome.

In the USA, the practice has recently won the international competition to redesign the Javits Conference Center, is masterplanning Manhattan’s redevelopment of the East River Waterfront, as well as designing a major mixed - use scheme for Silvercup Studios adjacent to the Queensboro Bridge and a significant residential development in West Chelsea. In Spain, the practice is also working on a high-rise hotel and conference centre at l’Hospitalet, the redevelopment of a bullring as an entertainment complex in Barcelona, and a winery near Valladolid.

Masterplanning forms about one third of all work: key masterplans include the 120-hectare Greenwich Peninsula, 115 hectares of docklands near Lisbon, two projects in Rome and Mantova and a mixed-use scheme on a 4.6 hectare site in Yoido, Seoul, proposing 40 per cent of external public space.

For further information and for copyright free images, please call the RRP Press Team:

Richard Rogers Partnership Paul Stelmaszczyk

Head of Communications

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7746 0213

Email: paul.s@rrp.co.uk

Richard Rogers Partnership Lucy Dean

Press Officer

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7746 0204

Email: lucy.d@rrp.co.uk

or please call RRP’s Communications Consultants

Weber Shandwick Sven Voet

Tel: +32 (0) 2 240 97 72

Email: svoet@webershandwick.com

Weber Shandwick Paul Baeyaert

Tel: +32 (0) 2 282 16 26

Email: pbaeyaert@webershandwick.com

Project Description

The new law courts for the Flemish city of Antwerp is one of RRP's major public buildings of the early 21st century. Like many projects by the practice, it reflects a vision of the city as a humane and democratic place with a commitment to the regeneration of urban life.

The site for the law courts is at the Bolivarplaats, on the southern edge of Antwerp's central area, where the urban fabric is broken by a massive motorway interchange, cutting off the boulevard that leads into the city. The new building is one of the catalysts for RRP's long-term masterplan of 'the new south' of the city, currently in progress.

The new building, designed in conjunction with Belgian architects VK Studio, is conceived both as a gateway to the city and to provide a link across the motorway between the city centre and the Schelde River. It houses eight distinct civil and

criminal courts and includes 36 courtrooms plus offices, chambers for judges and lawyers, library and dining room, with a great public hall (the space traditionally known as the 'Salle des Pas Perdus') linking six radiating wings of accommodation.

This space is capped by a striking roof-structure, crystalline in form, rising above the paraboloid roofs that cover the courtrooms.

A low-energy services strategy is fundamental to this project – natural light is used to optimum effect, natural ventilation is supplemented by low-velocity ventilation for the hearing rooms and rainwater is recycled.

The building, straddling a major highway, looks out to a large area of parkland – the design creates 'fingers' of landscaped that extend right into the heart of the building. The landscape is configured and planted to shield the building from the noise and pollution of the motorway.

Data

Place/Date

Antwerp, Belgium 1998 - 2005

Client

Regie der Gebouwen

Cost

£86 million

Gross Internal Area

77,000 m²

Cost/m²

£1,115

Team

Structural Engineer

Arup / VK Engineering

Services Engineer

Arup / VK Engineering

Cost Consultant

VK Studio

Main Contractor

Interbuild / KBC / Artesia

Lighting Consultant

Arup

Landscape Architect

Wirtz International BV

Fire Consultant

IFSET NV

Façade Engineer

Lesos Engineering

Acoustic Consultant

Arup Acoustics

Co-Architect

VK Studio

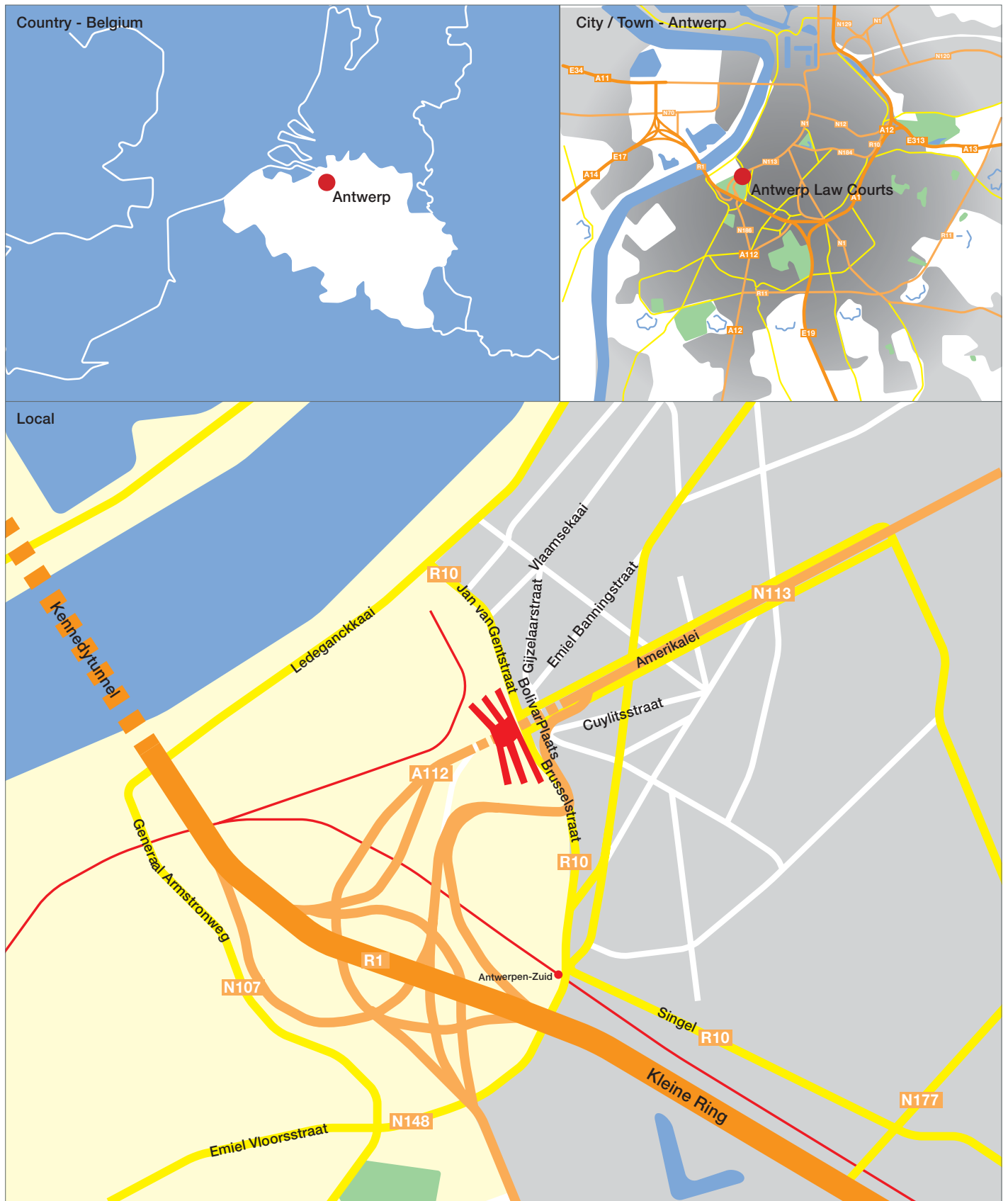
Location

Image Number : N/A

Access by road:

From Brussels, take exit 5a on the R1 'Schelde, Hoboken'. At the T-junction turn left onto the R10/Singel direction 'Antwerpen-Centrum/Schelde'. The new Law Courts are a little further on the left.

From Gent, take exit 5a on the R1 'Boom, Hoboken'. Follow signs for 'Antwerpen-Centrum' and then 'Hoboken, Singel Schelde, Plaatselijk Verkeer'. At the T-junction turn left onto the R10/Singel direction 'Antwerpen-Centrum/Schelde'. The new Law Courts are a little further on the left.



Antwerp Law Courts
Antwerp, Belgium 1998 - 2005

Credit: N/A
Copyright: N/A