

International Criminal Court, The Hague



Location

The Hague, The Netherlands

Built

international competition 2008, 1st prize

GFA: 50,500 sq m

Green Building: LEED platinum

The dunes in The Hague, a place between nature and city, are a unique site for an international institution like the International Criminal Court (ICC). Founded in 2002, the ICC had so far been housed in interim premises on the eastern edge of the capital of the Netherlands. In 2008 an international architectural design competition was held for new headquarters north of the city, which ingenhoven architects have won. Their proposal literally pulls the attractive setting further towards the city: the court seemingly hovers above the dune landscape in a light and unobstructive manner. The dunes seem to continue underneath the courthouse and are extended into the building in the shape of several gardens. While neither standing in the tradition of imposing and intimidating temple-like court buildings or the “palace of justice”, the design opts for a different architectural expression: it reunites the realm of the people with nature. Rather than offering a strictly hierarchical building, the image of nature dominates the man-made construction. The layout of the floor plans is clear, allowing easy orientation and navigation. The three main areas for the prosecutors, the judges and the registrars are clearly separated from each other.

Views into nature and the gardens provide orientation for everyday users and visitors, who are visually exposed to the weather or daylight at all times. The architecture of the five-storey building is light, careful, elegant and transparent. While respecting the legitimate needs for privacy, the building promotes openness towards the public and the media, to make verdicts comprehensible.

Highly effective insulation, thermal activation of the concrete slabs, natural ventilation and day-lighting reduce the need for cooling, heating and conditioning of the building. The architecture is detached from any specific cultural context. As an institution with a worldwide scope, the building's architecture reaches beyond the limits of western culture, bringing together people of all backgrounds and nationalities.

Awards, Nominations

Team

Client

International Criminal Court, The Hague

General planning

ingenhoven architects, Düsseldorf

Christoph Ingenhoven, Ben Dieckmann, Rudolf Jonas, Michael Reiß, Dominic Black, Darko Cvetuljski, Clara Gerhardt, Ahmad Hakami, Dieter Henze, Soo Jin Kim, Peter Jan van Ouwerkerk, Yahya Özütürker, Peter Pistorius, Peter Georg Vahlhaus, Thomas Vontz, Christopher Waddell, Tessa Zaune

Green Building Design

DS-Plan GmbH, Stuttgart

Structural Engineering

Werner Sobek GmbH, Stuttgart

Fire Protection

BPK Klingsch GmbH, Düsseldorf

Organisational Planning

Quickborner Team, Quickborn

Landscape Architecture

Gustav Lange

Transportation Systems

Jappsen, Berlin