



PERFECTLY TILED WITH RUBBER FLOOR COVERINGS FROM NORA SYSTEMS

Project: Meridiaan College, Het Nieuwe Eemland, Amersfoort, the Netherlands

Product: 1.800 m² norament[®] 926 arago

Installation: 2017

Architect: Bureau Q2, Nijkerkerveen

nora[®]
by Interface[®]

Rubber floor coverings enhance the monumental character of a building

Pupils run through the magnificent halls or sit together in small groups during breaks. They are all inside an imposing room that exudes calm and order. The floor is decorated with elegant, dark slate flags that beautifully emphasise the look of the curved stairwell. But, if you look carefully, you may ask yourself: Are those really slate flags? The answer is no. They are a rubber floor covering made by nora systems called norament arago that perfectly suits the look of this splendid building. "The building is classical in appearance but is actually quite a new building finished in 1955. It was originally built by the monastic order of the Holy Cross. The pope has even visited this building. It was originally called Constantijn College, but was recently renamed to Het Nieuwe Eemland and now forms part of Meridiaan College. Here at the college we teach around 1200 pupils from the lower to upper secondary stages" explains Maaïke Swets, principle of the Dutch school.

Traditionalist architecture of the post-war period

In Amersfoort, the building is considered to be a prime example of post-war traditionalism, a stream of architecture connected to the concepts of the Delft school



(1925 - 1955). The complex is constructed in a robust, Medieval/Romanesque style with columns, capitals, pilasters, crenellations and elegant, Byzantine, onion-domed towers that reference the architecture of ancient Constantinople. As these also resemble the towers of the Kremlin in Moscow, itself inspired by Byzantine architecture, the building is also commonly referred to as The Amersfoort Kremlin. "In 1986, the building was added to the list of the town's sightseeing attractions. The fact that we have everything here on our grounds, including our own sports grounds, makes us unique. In recent years, the building has been extended by the addition of a modern sports hall and media centre that interface exceptionally well with the older structures. This is also true, though to a lesser degree, of the lower grade building that was once built as separate accommodation. The thinking at the time was that children must become acclimatised to the transition from primary school to high school. The various extensions make this a very special configuration in which you can access the building from anywhere outside", adds Swets.

A multifaceted building

"The building is elongated and features multiple wings", continues Swets. "For our pupils, the large assembly hall and canteen on the ground floor form the heart of the school from which everything else fans out. Our teaching methods are still relatively traditional. We do not have any subject-specific spaces or open-plan learning environments as the building is unsuitable for these. However, we do have a spacious reading room and media centre in which pupils can work in peace. We have used the principle of BOYD (Bring Your Own Device) for several years. This means that pupils can work on their own notebooks wherever they are. The building provides structure and peace as well as some surprising options. Many schools are laid out with rooms on both sides of the corridors. In contrast, our building only has one row of rooms and the hallways are interrupted by columns. This allows us to set up workspaces in the niches between to enable our pupils



to work alone or in groups. The niches also provide a wonderful structure. The building is unusual in that it can be used in a variety of ways. The fact that we have everything on site means that this school is perceived as a safe place. You feel at home as soon as you enter the grounds.”

Calm, dark colours

Plans to modify the school building were first laid around four years ago. An interior designer was then consulted to determine a suitable colour scheme and choice of materials. The interior of the building was decorated in a somewhat unusual mixture of yellow, blue, red and even pink on the doors. “In collaboration with the pupils’ council, we looked at the rooms and considered what we wanted and what we wanted to do away with”, continues Swets. “The pupils chose a wide range of subdued colours, such as white, wood colours and dark grey. They rejected bold colours, such as red or yellow, and wanted unnecessary ornamentation on the walls to be removed”, says the head teacher. The new design naturally also needed a floor that suited the interior whilst ensuring outstanding acoustic properties and high durability.

Good acoustics on a non-slip basis

“The old linoleum flooring was torn and badly scratched. Moreover, it did not create good interior

acoustics”, adds the project manager for construction issues, Annette Berrevoets. “It was absolutely necessary to replace the floor and, of course, we wanted its appearance to tie in with the monumental character of the building”, says Berrevoets. The project manager was already familiar with nora systems rubber-floor coverings. As norament arago fulfilled all technical demands and visual requirements, this product was quickly chosen. “norament arago was the perfect choice because the tiles have a classic yet modern look and furthermore have excellent acoustic properties with footfall sound absorption of 10 dB”, explains Peter Campo, account manager at nora systems. The floors dampen the clacking of heels, for example. The influence that this noise reduction has on the well-being and concentration levels of staff and students alike should not be underestimated. In addition, norament arago tiles have excellent non-slip attributes that make them safe to walk or run on.

Outstanding durability

nora floor coverings also score points with regard to durability and care. Their extremely dense surface makes them particularly resistant and also eliminates the need for coatings. This saves time and money during complex renovations. nora floor coverings





thus prove themselves to be particularly economical throughout their long service life. Furthermore, they can be cleaned quickly and using only minimal amounts of cleaning agents. And, if a tile is damaged for whatever reason, it can be easily removed and replaced by a new one. "Our aim was to tile the floor in a way that brought back the original rectangular pattern. We believe that the building's designer had a vision that should not be destroyed", stresses Berrevoets. Campo

adds: "This floor pattern involved a great deal of calculation and cutting because the entire design is made up of half tiles and quarter tiles." Swets concludes: "We worked out all installation tasks beforehand and then laid around 1800 square metres in phases during the holidays. The result is a durable and sustainable floor covering that perfectly reflects the building's character and that contributes to a quiet and stimulant-free environment for pupils and staff."

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