

Aim of the intervention

HOSPER was asked to make a design for the public space of the square and its surroundings. The aim was to turn the square into a relevant part of the public realm. This calls for spatial qualities and conditions that enable and encourage people to spend time at the square. As a first step the square was made part of the pedestrian area. The urban plan envisaged new shops, cafés and terraces along the square. Obviously the Frisian Museum and the entrances to the parking garage add to the liveliness as well. At the same time, space had to be kept for the existing functions, such as the weekly market and different kinds of festivals and festivities. This calls for large open spaces of specific dimensions and a strong durable pavement, dealing with the high loads generated by machinery and traffic. As Leeuwarden will be the European cultural capital in 2018, representation was also an issue, as the square links the railway station to the inner city. All of these ingredients provided many opportunities for enhancing the quality of the area and making the square a pleasant place to reside.

Description of the intervention

In view of the public nature of the place an open planning process was essential to the project. A response group was formed that evaluated the plans on a regular basis. Using three models in a broad public online survey, the plan elements were examined to find out which could count on the most enthusiasm of the population of Leeuwarden and other stake holders. Despite the technical challenges this brought about, as a leading principal, HOSPER introduced trees on the square in each of the models. This was done in order to create a green atmosphere, suitable for human urban interaction. Based on the preferences that came up in the public consultation a final plan was drawn up.

In the design the centre of the square is paved with a chic "carpet" made of three types of long and narrow granite pavers, laid out in a varied pattern. The granite plane "carpet" is a separate spatial element and mediates between the differences in scale and construction periods of the surrounding buildings. In the



plan



former situation view towards the courthouse



view towards the courthouse



the waterfountains and new Frisian Museum