

# EUROPAN 3 – GRONINGEN – NEDERLAND

**Location:** Groningen, the Circus site

**Category:** Urbanisation of vacant urban sites: un- or underoccupied land

**Population:** 169,000 inhab.

**Surface:** ± 1.5 ha



## SITE

More than 10 ha are in the process of being restructured on the North of the old town, between the ancient core and the Korrewegwijk district, a residential area from the 1930s. As a former industrial zone with warehouses and car parks, the area has had a negative influence on its environment; it is a “black hole” on the edge of the ancient centre and forms a barrier to the urban fabric, developed later. The sector proposed to the competition is the one of the Circus, named after its frequent occupation by a travelling circus. It includes a massive car park and vacant plots and is partially bordered by constructions. The municipality owns all the non-constructed spaces on the Circus site.

## CONURBATION

Groningen is looking for an urban identity “at a time when European frontiers are slowly being erased”. In order to find one, the municipality has supported numerous architectural studies and realisations. It has also been drawn into exploring other realms, more or less related to construction, communicating

its efforts through projects like *City Highlights*, *What a Wonderful World* and a *Video Musical on Architecture*.

Actions are being held to requalify certain parts of the urban fabric from which all activity has departed: numerous sites, at the heart of the current conurbation, the functions of which are radically being modified.

## OBJECTIVES

The site is full of potential. The area has a strategic position in the urban fabric and is close to strong concentrations of employment, such as the university hospital. At the junction of two urban structures, the ensemble allows the creation of new living and working spaces. Renewed life can be breathed into the district.

The Circus site is part of the fortifications built during the Renaissance. It is therefore bordered by districts backing onto it. Today, the Circus must become the new façade of the Korrewegwijk at the exit of the old town. An appropriate road system is to be created.

## PROGRAMME

The old town and the Korrewegwijk district must interpenetrate one another. For this, the historic structure and the signification of the Circus site have an important role to play. Housing, shops and services are to be built. The new buildings must be of a reasonable density and height.

The habitation is to be divided between housing for the elderly, family apartments with specific floor space set aside for work and for studio flats. Care is to be taken with the treatment of public spaces.

## THEME

The site, situated at the interspace between two very different urban fabrics, needs a treatment of public/private transition spaces, enabling the fabrics to turn towards each other.

