

ROTTERDAM.CLIMATE.INITIATIVE

PRESS RELEASE

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Europe's largest green façade in Rotterdam

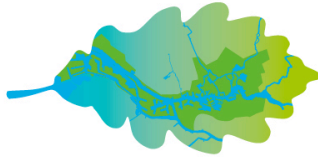
The front of the Westblaak car park in Rotterdam will be turned into the largest green façade in Europe. A total of 5000 m² of green façade will be installed along the various side walls and on the top parking level. Activities will start in May 2010 and are expected to be completed by the end of August. The installation will partly be funded by a financial contribution of the City of Rotterdam.

The City of Rotterdam already encourages the installation of green roofs by means of a subsidy scheme. These green roofs play an important role in the retention of excess rainwater in times of heavy downpours, while at the same time extending the life of the roofs and removing particulate matter and CO₂ from the atmosphere. By providing a financial contribution towards the installation of the first green façade, Rotterdam takes a new step towards enhancing the city's sustainable quality.

Alderman Bolsius (responsible for the port, finance, external space and organization in Rotterdam): 'Green façades add to the local reduction of particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide and environmental noise levels. In addition, they contribute to a green and more attractive living environment. Especially for a large and centrally located car park like Westblaak, these are significant benefits. Furthermore, green façades have a cooling effect in summer – reducing radiant heat – and in the Westblaak car park, rainwater is recycled.' The green façade for the Westblaak car park is the first pilot to be carried out. In future, several pilots will follow in order to survey the effects of green walls.

Rotterdam design

The Westblaak car park will be provided with lightweight, stainless steel wire mesh, hexagonal netting containing evergreen climbing plants (Hedera). The combination of the green branch motif of the construction and the plants adds an extra architectural element, creating a fresh green impression. A fully automatic system feeds rainwater to the plants after it has been filtered and stored in water tanks underneath the car park. Kühne & Co Architects is responsible for the design of the Westblaak car park green façade. Kühne & Co is an all-round firm of architects based in Rotterdam, with ample experience in the area of city centre renovation and an integrated approach with respect to sustainability.



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Dedicated Danish owner

The car park is part of the Westblaak Building, a complex that is already equipped with various 'green' facilities, including a green roof covering the office building and LED lighting in the public area. 'As a corporation, we live up to our responsibilities when it comes to enhancing sustainability,' according to Christian Stadil (owner of Thornico, a Danish multinational, and the hummel fashion brand) and Ronald Bouwens (CEO of Thornico's international property portfolio). 'The "greenification" of our property serves as an example, in Rotterdam as well as in other places all over the world. Today, after all, more than half of the world population lives in cities, and greenery is an important element for the quality of life in the city.' Stadil, a Danish entrepreneur with a high level of moral commitment, is convinced that companies even bear universal responsibility. 'Through the years, we have cooperated closely with various organizations, ranging from WWF to Red Cross, and recently with Save the Children in Sierra Leone in connection with our sponsorship of the national football team there.'

Rotterdam Climate Initiative

The Rotterdam Climate Initiative (RCI) aims to realize 50% reduction of CO2 emissions and full climate change resilience by 2025. The RCI is an initiative of the City of Rotterdam, the Port of Rotterdam, DCMR Environmental Protection Agency Rijnmond, and Deltalinqs, the umbrella organization uniting the industrial sector in Rotterdam. As a decisive and innovative climate city, Rotterdam lives up to its responsibilities for the future. In an approach that focuses both on the causes and consequences of climate change, Rotterdam proactively addresses the entire climate file, setting a unique example for others to follow. The ambitions pursued and the results achieved in the area of climate change, energy and water management will contribute to a sustainable, attractive and economically successful city.

High resolution image of the park can be found on www.rotterdamclimateinitiative.nl/groenegevel