

# Boekentoren

Rozier - 9, Ghent (BE)

**Complete stability mission**

Owner  
Ghent university

Architect  
Robbrecht en Daem

Cost of the works  
€ 23 M excl. vat

Studies  
2010 - 2019

Phase I: € 6,3 M excl. vat of which € 3,3 M for the structure  
Phase II: € 11 M excl. vat of which € 4 M for the structure  
Phase III: € 5,7 M excl. vat of which € 0,4 M for the structure

Execution  
2012 - 2019  
Phase I (underground bookshop): 2012 - 2014  
Phases II and III (restoration existing building and concrete): 2014 - 2021

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The Boekentoren is a building icon in Flanders. Designed by Henry van de Velde, the university library was built between 1936 and 1939. At 64 metres high, the tower houses 2,000,000 books. Adjacent to the tower, the library still has reading rooms and offices. As a complete artist, van de Velde designed everything, down to the smallest detail, such as the metal window profiles, the paving designs, the hardware, the furniture, etc. The building has been listed since 1992.

In collaboration with G. Magnel and J-N Cloquet, he chose reinforced concrete, a modern building material at the time, in combination with the innovative technique of slipform. As a result, it was the first smooth exposed concrete building in Belgium.

Like most buildings from the 1930s, the Boekentoren is suffering from «concrete cancer». The layer of carbonated concrete had to be removed by hydrodemolition. After treatment, a new layer of concrete is poured over the walls to create a new surface of smooth, exposed, healthy concrete.



To accommodate the growing quantity of books, a new underground warehouse of 2 x 1,050 m<sup>2</sup> or 8,300 m<sup>3</sup> is being built under the central garden.