

MVRDV in Spijkenisse, the Netherlands

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MVRDV designed the recently opened [*Book Mountain*](#), in Spijkenisse, the Netherlands. Photo: © Jeroen Musch
A new library and adjacent residential neighborhood have recently been completed in Spijkenisse, the Netherlands, a municipality southwest of Rotterdam. Both the [library](#), and the adjacent Library Quarter, which consists of 42 social housing units, together with parking and public space, were designed by Rotterdam-based [MVRDV](#).



The prismoid exterior of the new library. Photo: © Jeroen Musch

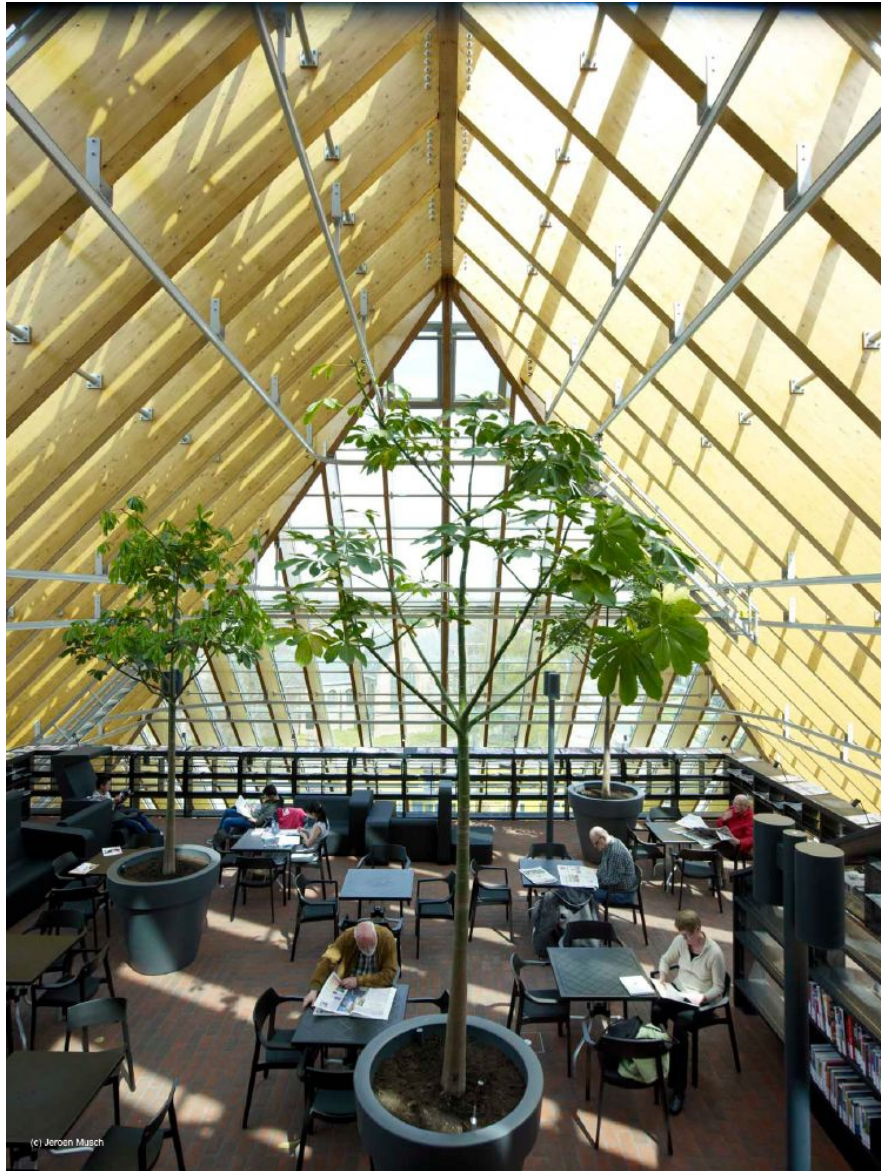
The library -- named [Book Mountain](#) -- is a crisp geometric form comprising a rectangular base finished in brick and glass, that seamlessly transitions into a pyramidal, glazed hip roof. Located in the centre of Spijkenisse, the 9,300-square-meter (100,100-square-foot) building also stands along the traditional market square, next to the historic village church.

In addition to the library, the building houses an environmental education centre, and a chess club, as well as auditorium, meeting, commercial, and retail spaces. Much of the commercial space forms the base on which the library functions sit. According to MVRDV, the exterior of the library echoes in shape of a traditional Dutch Farm, a reminder of the town's agricultural past.



Photo: © Jeroen Musch

Inside, glulam beams support the building's roof, creating an immense vaulted space under which a book-stacks ziggurat -- the so-called "book mountain" -- is positioned. Around the perimeter of the stacks, open spaces benefit from extensive access to daylight and views. Reading rooms are found throughout the space, including a space on the top of the ziggurat, just under the building's hipped roof.



A reading room located at the top of the ziggurat. Photo: © Jeroen Musch

The ziggurat's exterior surface is composed almost entirely of bookshelves. The shelves that are out of reach hold the library's archives, while readily accessible shelves contain books in regular circulation. The bookshelves are made of recycled flowerpots, which provides a fireproof and economical structure that the architects intended to

connect with the town's agricultural history.



Reading space at the perimeter of the book stacks. Photo: © Jeroen Musch

The building's vaulted space is not air conditioned. Instead, shading and natural ventilation provide for the library's summer cooling needs, while winter heating is provided by an under-floor system.

In several general respects, the building's diagram is reminiscent of the [Seattle Public Library](#) (2004), in Seattle, Washington, designed by Dutch architect [Rem Koolhaas](#). However, the Spijkenisse Book Mountain is clearly a simpler and more staid implementation, and one that may well be appropriate to the needs of Spijkenisse.



The brick-clad housing units and plaza adjacent to the library. Photo: © Jeroen Musch

The neighborhood and library were dedicated on October 4 in ceremonies presided over by Princess Larentien of the Netherlands.