



Case Study

Historic industrial site C-Mine transformed into cultural center

Location
Philips Lighting

Genk, Belgium
LEDline



PHILIPS



“The mix of energy efficient, standard and customised LED solutions has brought our historic site to life. Future events will be guaranteed the style that they deserve.”
Wim Dries, Mayor of Genk



Background

From 1914 until its closure in 1988, the Winterslag Mine was right at the heart of the local community and culture. Employing 6,350 full time staff at the peak of its operation, it has played a seminal role in the lives of most families in the area.

This former industrial complex of the coal mine near Genk has been redeveloped as a cultural center. Housing C-mine expeditions, Media, Arts & Design (MAD) Faculty, a number of creative businesses and unique cultural events, C-mine has become the cultural heart of this Flemish city in the province of Limburg. “C-Mine stands for dynamic, livable and friendliness”, says Mayor Wim Dries. Because of its growing popularity, the city council decided to enhance it by commissioning an attractive square with ponds, mist fountains, removable seating and in which dynamic lighting would play a vital role. The brief was to create a stylish feel based on various color accents, highlighting the special nature of the site and surrounding buildings.

The project

The center pieces of the whole site are two massive pit heads, once the heart of the mining operation and used to winch workers, machinery and coal to and from the 100 kilometers of tunneling and the various coal faces between 600 and 850 meters below ground.

Still majestic, they dominate the local landscape at 70 and 50 meters high respectively, and have become the stunning visual hub of the site's neo-industrial visual 'imagineering'.

The two points that were considered to be really important in the design of the lighting concept for the site were: “a living square” and “respect for the historic look and feel of the site”. These two concepts can be interpreted as complementary, giving the historic patrimony a concrete social meaning, now and in the future. For a square to be alive there has to be space for people. This space has to be sufficiently flexible to be used in several different ways. The design concept of the square asked for an open-plan design, leaving as much floor space as possible available. An extra advantage of moving the lights away from the center of the square to the square sides was that people's attention shifts to the structures around the square. Dominant on the square are the two pit heads. These deserved special attention; not only because of their dominance, but also because of the task as a beacon (of light) or landmark they have been fulfilling ever since their construction for Genk and its surroundings.

After careful consideration, LED proved to be the winning lighting solution. “LED works simply to transform the various small enclosures, in a very natural way actually”, says Luc Peumans from lighting design agency Painting With Light. The subsequent tendering process saw Philips as the winner.

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Low Total
Cost of
Ownership



Increased
tourism



Benefits for
the community

The Philips lighting installation is a mix of conventional light sources and high-output LEDline projectors delineating areas of the square itself as well as the window frames of the MAD facility. The old pit heads are illuminated by individually controlled LED projectors with a mix of amber, white and blue colored LED's, producing light color which changes from a cold white, through warm, and finally a deep blue at night, but other

lighting settings are also possible. The seating is also fitted with LED lights. Ground spots are used for the lighting of the façades and buildings around the square, and halide floodlights for the general square lighting.

Benefits

The repurposing of this disused mine benefits an entire community. The citizens of the Belgian mining city of Genk and visitors now enjoy the benefits of a culture center for the arts which is self-funding from various business ventures on the site.

The city benefits from a dramatic, exciting landmark replacing a derelict mine, and from the increased tourism the facility brings.

The lighting exceeds the expectations of the city council. The municipality benefits from the low cost of ownership of energy-effective lighting with exceptionally low maintenance costs. Moreover there was nothing for the council to worry about. The entire project, including lighting design, programming and commissioning, was in the hands of professional and reliable partners.





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