



Libraries through the lens

De Petrus Library, Vught, the Netherlands

LIBRARIES through the lens heads to Vught, near S’Hertogenbosch in the Netherlands for its latest instalment.

Built on the site of a 14th Century straw-roofed chapel, the De Petrus Library is a re-purposed church building that was built between 1881 and 1884, but which fell into disrepair before being closed in 2005.

Thomas Guignard reveals how the local community came together to breathe new life into the building, saying: “Combining elements of Neo-Romescque and Rhein-

land Gothic, the church is in the shape of a basilica with the cloverleaf apse and transept. Due to declining attendance and a shoestring budget, the church gradually fell into disrepair before it was finally closed in 2005 following an incident where debris fell from the ceiling during a service (thankfully no one was hurt).

“St Pieter was saved from demolition by a group of local business owners and concerned citizens who established a nonprofit entity dedicated to the monument’s preservation.”

Initial work was done to stabilise the

building, before it was transformed by architects Molenaar & Bol & Van-Dillen (now Buro Kade). Thomas says: “Renamed DePetrus, the church building now serves as public library, local museum, charity shop and community centre. All bookshelves and museum exhibits are cleverly mounted on tracks allowing them to be pushed aside in a matter of minutes, opening up the space for events. An elegant café occupies an extension built to one side of the choir, with seating expanding in the choir as well as the lush park surrounding the church.”