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## Regional building archaeology

The stakes involved in the improved management of historic architecture in Brussels

*Pour une archéologie régionale du bâti. Les enjeux d'une meilleure gestion de l'architecture*

*Voor een gewestelijke bouwarcheologie. Beter omgaan met de oude architectuur in Brussel*

**Paulo Charruadas and Stéphane Demeter**

Translator: Jane Corrigan

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# Regional building archaeology. The stakes involved in the improved management of historic architecture in Brussels

Translation: Jane Corrigan

Although the situation in Brussels has improved considerably in recent years, the management –identification, protection and preservation – of built heritage from the Old Regime is still faced with a certain number of administrative, regulatory and scientific problems. This article intends to illustrate the importance of the development of regional building archaeology: [1] by reviewing the current situation of the study and protection of historic architectural heritage in Brussels; [2] by identifying the main problems which hinder this management; and [3] by proposing several ideas for solutions and by showing the potential of this type of development for the future of the city-Region.

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## Introduction

1. After the 'Brusselisation' of the 1960s and 1970s, the development of the regional urban territory and the integration of the cultural value of built heritage have improved considerably and have allowed the wealth of the built environment in Brussels to be revealed. Nevertheless, several deficiencies in terms of the protection of architectural heritage may still be identified today as regards financial and material means as well as administrative and scientific tools. Built heritage in Brussels is getting better, but progress must still be made in order to effectively identify, protect and preserve the monumental, archaeological and historic heritage of the city, in particular the most common heritage which, despite its strong presence, is the least known.<sup>1</sup>
2. The objective of this article is twofold. On the one hand, it intends to review the current situation of the issue in Brussels and bring out the main problems to be solved and, on the other hand, to propose ideas for solutions and show how a better management of this heritage via

the development of building archaeology could be extremely positive for the future of the City-Region.<sup>2</sup>

3. But before going any further, it is essential to provide some background elements and definitions which will mark out our analysis. What exactly is meant by built heritage or historic built environment? What is building archaeology? What exactly can archaeological studies on the built environment and a better knowledge of the resulting material history of the city bring to the sustainable management of architectural heritage?
4. The notion of heritage refers unconsciously to the image of the important monument, traditionally called major heritage (church, cathedral, town hall, castle, etc.), and to the idea of the listed building for cultural, artistic, historical or folklore reasons. Although the importance of this heritage in the strict sense should not be questioned, one may, however, consider it as the tip of the iceberg, with the submerged part still to be identified, studied and ultimately protected. The notion of historic built heritage as we consider it here therefore refers to all of the

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<sup>1</sup> A short inventory of historic houses in Brussels carried out by Philippe Sosnowska following the *Monumental Heritage Inventory* (1989-1994) reveals the existence of 678 houses, 457 of which date from before the bombing of 1695. The perspectives for the future are therefore truly heartening if a serious and complete archaeological study of this unknown heritage is begun today.

<sup>2</sup> This article is in keeping with a Prospective Research for Brussels project financed by the *Institut d'Encouragement de la Recherche scientifique et de l'Innovation à Bruxelles* (IRSIB, Institute for the Encouragement of Scientific Research and Innovation in Brussels) and conducted at the *Centre de Recherche en Archéologie et Patrimoine* (Archaeology and Heritage Research Centre) at ULB, in close collaboration with the Department of Monuments and Sites (Stéphane Demeter, Coordinator of the 'Brussels Archaeology Laboratory', and Cecilia Paredes, Coordinator of the 'Documentation Centre'): Paulo Charruadas (ULB), *'Archéologie du bâti en région bruxelloise: analyse, mise en œuvre documentaire et éléments de programme'*, editor Michel de Waha, 2009-2012.

built environment in Brussels from the Old Regime,<sup>3</sup> i.e. both listed heritage or heritage included on the safeguarding list<sup>4</sup> as well as unprotected heritage, which has not yet been the object of a complete inventory and in-depth study. This historic built environment, which is highly visible yet little known, concerns above all ordinary civil architecture made up of old houses or parts of houses which are discreetly preserved in the urban built environment of today, often hidden by more recent facades and developments which inevitably mark the existence of a building.

5. And it is in this specific framework of ordinary heritage made up of successive chronological layers that archaeology plays a fundamental role. Building archaeology is a recent scientific discipline which consists in studying the material vestiges left by past generations in the area of construction and architectural production (mainly above ground, but also underground).<sup>5</sup> Like its sister discipline, subsoil archaeology, it is based on a dismantling – partly real and partly intellectual – of the constituent and successive strata of a building (the different phases of construction) in order to understand the structure, the organisational logic of a building in its environment and, finally, the societies which produced and transformed these buildings. Building archaeology is a means of understanding the past. It has also established itself as an essential activity in the process of the management of historic heritage (DE JONGE and VAN BALEN, 2002; SCHULLER, 2002). It allows very

precise knowledge about the general state and historical value of real estate. This knowledge goes well beyond the traditional approaches based on a description of outer walls and on aesthetic and stylistic considerations.

6. The complexity of the urban fabric and the historical potential of built heritage in formerly occupied areas – certain archaeologists use the metaphor of the millefeuille – have been illustrated recently by the interesting case of the Dewez House, Rue de Laeken 73-75. With a classical facade, the house was dated for many years and without much precision from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. An in-depth archaeological study conducted during the building's restoration from 2004 to 2009 allowed a true understanding of the building through the close examination of the masonry and the carpentry structures, which showed that the building was in reality a hybrid construction built from several former houses (one of which dates perhaps from the 15<sup>th</sup> century), which were partially salvaged to create a house with a classical appearance as we know it today (SOSNOWSKA, forthcoming publication). At the level of a big city such as Montpellier, a systematic programme for the study of classical mansions from the 17<sup>th</sup> century led to the identification of a very high number of older structures, two hundred of which were remains of houses dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (SOURNIA and VAYSSETTES, 1991).

<sup>3</sup> The chronological limit corresponds to the period during which the archaeological method constitutes the main or essential method of study and means of knowledge for a full understanding of the built heritage of human societies. For a long time, this period was limited to Antiquity and then to the Middle Ages, and today it extends up to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century will probably soon be included due to the acceleration of technological developments.

<sup>4</sup> Since 1993, the public authorities – initially the state and, since 1989, the Brussels-Capital Region – have had the power to legally protect any building with a patrimonial value, either by classifying it as a monument, or by including it on the safeguarding list as a protected monument (see the registry of protected heritage: [www.monument.irisnet.be](http://www.monument.irisnet.be)). In both cases, the preservation of the patrimonial value of a building is the owner's responsibility. When a building is listed, its demolition – even partial – is forbidden, but this status entitles the owner to public grants for maintenance and restoration; when a building is included on the safeguarding list, less conservative projects are authorised for existing buildings, but without public financing.

<sup>5</sup> The conceptual hesitations which marked the emergence of this young discipline based on 'traditional' subsoil archaeology are illustrated by the many terminological variants used in different European countries: '*archéologie du bâti*', '*archéologie du bâtiment*', '*archéologie monumentale*', and even '*archéologie de la construction*' (French-speaking countries), '*Bauforschung*' and, more specifically, '*Hausforschung*' (German-speaking countries), 'building archaeology' (English-speaking countries), '*archeologia dell'architettura*' (Italy), and '*bouwhistorie*' and '*huizenonderzoek*' (Flanders and the Netherlands). Today, building archaeology is practised mainly on architectural structures from the Old Regime. Only the United Kingdom has developed methods and expertise in the area of contemporary industrial building archaeology.



Fig. 1. Dewez House with its classical outer facade, Rue de Laeken in the centre of Brussels (© Philippe Sosnowska, Royal Museums of Art and History, 2004).

7. In these representative contexts, building archaeology allows the different layers of construction to be clearly identified, the heritage to be precisely recorded and documented in all of its complexity, and the classification and protection processes to be oriented for sustainable management and an optimisation of financial costs.



Fig. 2: Dewez House. View of the interior developments from the end of the 18th century (© Philippe Sosnowska, Royal Museums of Art and History, 2009).





*Fig. 3: Anderlecht Beguinage, 8 Rue du Chapelain. View of the attic of the west building of the complex, built with bricks in the 17th century. In the foreground, the roof truss n° 2 is a structure built from the former facade truss of a mediaeval half-timber building perhaps dating from the 18th or 19th century (© Paulo Charruadas and Philippe Sosnowska, Centre de Recherche en Archéologie et Patrimoine, Université Libre de Bruxelles, 2010)*

8. Currently, whilst the Brussels Region is equipped with a regulatory tool intended to maintain built heritage (CoBAT,<sup>6</sup> art. 206 to 250), the role played by building archaeology is quite inadequate and examples such as that of the Dewez House are rare. For the traditional historic built environment, there is therefore a gap between the high quality of protective tools and the deficient character of the identification and qualification processes for this heritage, which essentially remain confined to the exterior of buildings and are therefore based on rough observations. The effective preservation processes applied to imperfectly identified heritage may lead to major shortcomings even when the

buildings are protected by a preservation order; the risk is of course even greater for heritage which has not been the object of legal protective measures. This lack of knowledge reduces the quality of interventions on behalf of those who manage historic heritage and who therefore have to act blindly at times.

9. These shortcomings are also denounced by the specialists in the history of Brussels, who observe a lack of studies and research on the material history of the city and its outskirts, the processes of urbanisation, and the morphologies and typologies of the mediaeval and post-mediaeval civil habitat. We are pleased to mention the recent studies

<sup>6</sup> *Code bruxellois de l'Aménagement du Territoire* (CoBAT, Brussels Regional Planning Code), promulgated in 2004. Available online at: [http://www.bruxelles.irisnet.be/fr/citoyens/home/urbanisme/contexte\\_legal.shtml](http://www.bruxelles.irisnet.be/fr/citoyens/home/urbanisme/contexte_legal.shtml)

conducted for the Region between 2004 and 2009 by building archaeologist Philippe Sosnowska, from the Royal Museums of Art and History (excavations at the Dewez House, in particular), despite their limited scope. Fundamentally, most of the research on architecture and urbanism – based more on the history of art than on an archaeological approach – concerns production from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The period of the Old Regime is generally dealt with very little, apart from the emblematic case of the Grand-Place (HEYMANS, 2007).

10. In the absence of in-depth knowledge of built heritage, any attempt at sustainable management, patrimonial development or cultural or tourist promotion proves to be extremely difficult to implement and risky in terms of results.

## **1. The practice of building archaeology in Brussels: history and current situation**

### *1.1 Before regionalisation in 1989*

11. Despite a few studies on prestigious religious buildings such as the Saint Michael and Saint Gudula Cathedral, La Chapelle Church and the Saint Nicolas Church, one may consider that the archaeological concern for the historic built environment in Brussels did not come into being before the very beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, on the occasion of the rehabilitation works around the current Central Station in preparation for the North-South railway junction. In 1903, on the proposal of the Brussels Archaeological Society, the city decided to create an Old Brussels Working Committee, a mixed committee composed of representatives of the city and members of the Archaeological Society. This Committee was mainly in charge of a threefold mission: to carry out a

major campaign throughout the ‘Pentagon’ and the old neighbourhoods, in order to locate and photograph the historic built environment with an artistic or picturesque relevance and gather this documentation in a structured and commented collection; to publish monographs on the neighbourhoods at risk or patrimonial themes significant to the identity of Brussels; and to ensure as much as possible the preservation of buildings and examples of architecture presenting an ‘archaeological and aesthetic importance’ by evaluating the impact of restoration, urban redevelopment and reconstruction projects, and addressing – if need be – recommendations to the competent authorities. The Committee ended its activities on the eve of World War II (MEY-FROOTS, 2001).

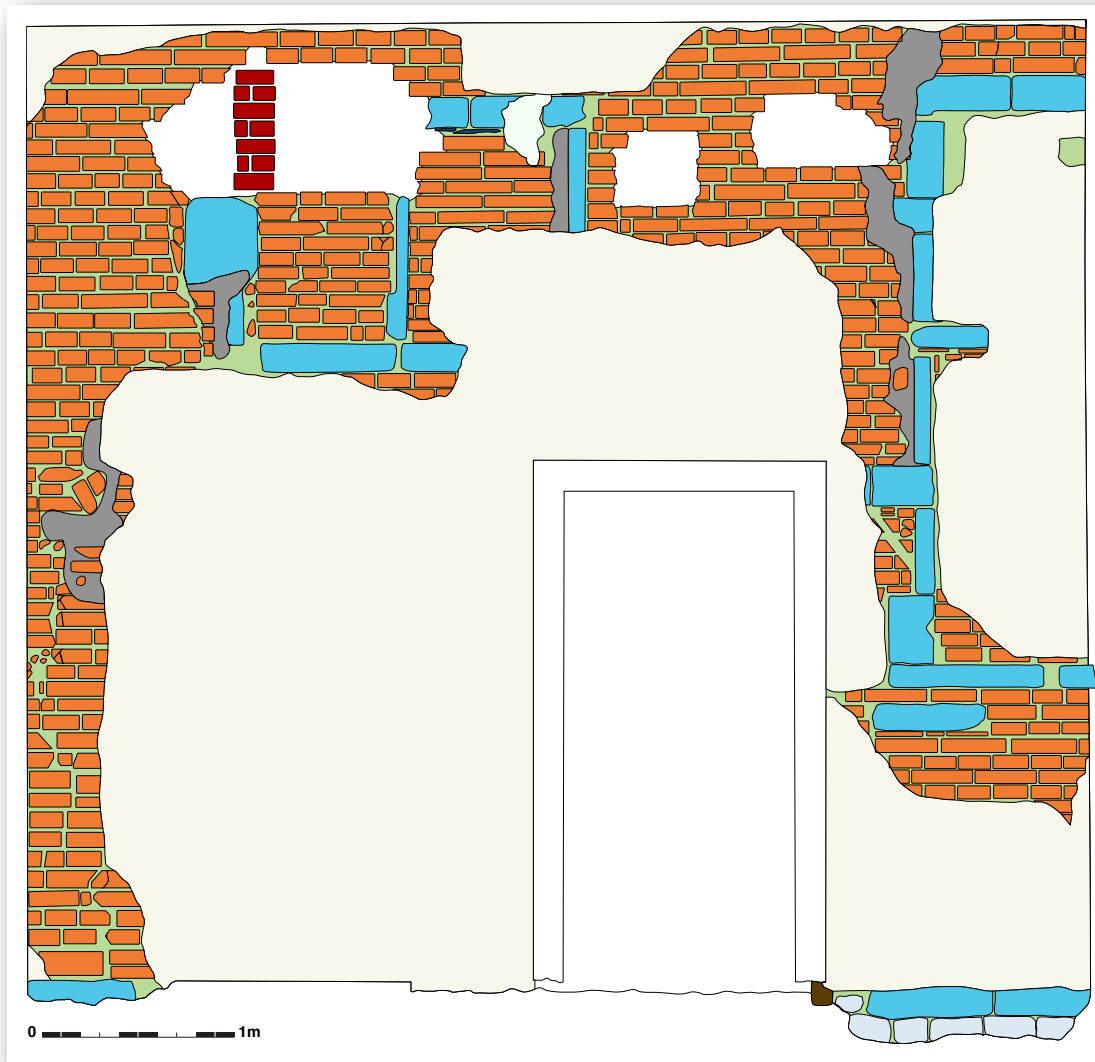
12. Although this excellent start could have led one to expect a favourable follow-up, one must acknowledge the fact that the actions carried out later were disappointing, to say the least. The classification and examination of buildings continued, of course, but there were only four true archaeological studies of the built environment conducted before 1989: Rue d’Or, during the works on the railway junction; Rue Haute, at the Breughel House; Rue du Chêne, at the Schott House; and Place Royale, on the vestiges of the Hoogstraeten Mansion. With such a low number of interventions, this situation is painfully reminiscent of the many cases of the renovation of old structures, which were altered or destroyed without investigation or archaeological appraisal.<sup>7</sup>

### *1.2 After 1989*

13. At the time of regionalisation, the situation was therefore far from brilliant. A review of the areas of destruction in the territory of the ‘Pentagon’ paints a negative picture of the archaeological erosion (DE WAHA, 1994, p. 251; Cabuy and Demeter, 1995, p. 32). The creation

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<sup>7</sup> In particular, during the construction works for the metro (ramparts from the second surrounding wall between Porte d’Anvers and Porte de Hal, sections of the first surrounding wall at Place Sainte-Catherine and Rue Montagne de la Cour, Couvent des Augustins at Place de Brouckère, the Clutinc family’s ‘steen’ at Marché au Bois, etc.) and for most of the big buildings between 1965 and 2005 (Philips Tower and the Administrative Centre of the City of Brussels at Place de Brouckère, the establishment of major banking and insurance firms, the state administrative district site, and renovated cultural complexes such as the Ancienne Belgique, the Beursschouwburg and the Théâtre national de Belgique, etc.). Vestiges from the city’s development since the year 1000 may be found throughout the territory of the Brussels ‘Pentagon’.



of the Brussels-Capital Region in 1989 marked a major turning point in that it allowed the development of archaeological competences. The official implementation of this prerogative within the Department of Monuments and Sites did not occur, however, until 1996, when the 'Archaeology' unit was created. In 1991, however, a major inventory was begun in the framework of an agreement with the Royal Museums of Art and History. This is how the *Atlas du sous-sol archéologique* (Atlas of the Archaeological Subsoil) came into being, providing archaeologists and developers with a classification of the plots of land in the Region according to reasoned degrees of archaeological potential. This publication campaign – which was interrupted between 1997 and 2002 – should soon be finished and will cover the entire territory of the region.<sup>8</sup>

14. Apart from a few occasional studies conducted prior to restoration, the development of building archaeology in the 'Archaeology' unit began in 2004 with the hiring of a specialised archaeologist in the framework of an agreement with the Royal Museums of Art and History. This post has allowed several – sometimes large-scale – archaeological sites to be overseen, most of the time for a duration of a few weeks. This remains fundamentally inadequate given the scope of the urban modifications which occur in a metropolis such as Brussels.

*Fig. 4. 'Stone-by-stone' assessment of above ground masonry at the Hôtel de Mérode. This 16th century facade wall, incorporated in an 18th century construction on Place Poelaert, illustrates the archaeological task of understanding and piecing together the phases of construction (© Pacôme Béru & Philippe Sosnowska, Royal Museums of Art and History, 2007)*

<sup>8</sup> Published so far: vol. 1-20, Brussels, Ministry of the Brussels-Capital Region, 1992-2005: Cabuy Y., Demeter St. et al. (1992-1997); Guillaume A., Meganck M. et al. (2004-2009). A simplified version is also being put online gradually on the cartographic website of the Department of Territory and Housing Development of the Brussels-Capital Region ([www.brugis.be](http://www.brugis.be)).



### 1.3 Financial framework, administrative logic and scientific potential

15. The *Code bruxellois de l'Aménagement du Territoire* (CoBAT, Brussels Regional Planning Code), legally establishes a method of operation which is invaluable to archaeological practice in an urban environment: archaeological management in Brussels is integrated into the mechanisms for obtaining planning permission (art. 245). In theory, the granting of permission by the regional administration may require excavations to be carried out and/or a follow-up of the worksite to be conducted. Furthermore, the CoBAT requires all properties included in the Legal Inventory of Built Heritage to be examined by the Consultation Committee.<sup>9</sup> This general inventory of built heritage of all properties dating from before 1932<sup>10</sup> (art. 207) is awaiting adoption and is not yet published in full in the *Moniteur Belge*. The Archaeology unit participates in this commission through the intermediary of the representative of the Department of Monuments and Sites who is a member. In practice, it is not in a position to oversee all files and worksites. Due to a lack of means, it must therefore carry out arbitrations.

16. It should be added to this first point that the administrative link between urbanism procedure and archaeological follow-up is sometimes disrupted when the site concerned is controlled by a special land-use plan (PPAS) which does not include archaeological measures. The building regulations enacted for the PPAS are drawn up beforehand, such that if a site or property complies with all regulations, permission may be granted by the municipal authority without being examined by the Consultation Committee and therefore without the possibility to impose an archaeological clause. Currently, archaeologists in the Region are trying to raise the awareness of the municipalities regarding

the importance of imposing clauses of this nature in the areas highlighted by the Atlas of the Archaeological Subsoil, either at the outset during the elaboration of PPASs, or whilst granting permission on a case-by-case basis.

17. Finally, although the CoBAT provides for the notion of 'excavation of public utility' conducted on the initiative of the Brussels-Capital Region (art. 244 and 255) or on request by a person authorised to conduct archaeological research (royal decree of 3 July 2008<sup>11</sup>), it essentially favours the notion of 'preventive excavation', inferring that only buildings which are in immediate danger of being altered or destroyed are investigated. In essence, this option conforms with the recommendations of the 'Malta Convention'<sup>12</sup> and with the exercise of regionalised public competence as regards regional development and its impact on cultural heritage. Nevertheless, in this option, the archaeological approach is not taken into consideration as a whole (in particular, the research and cultural aspects), as it falls partly within the remit of other regional and/or federal administrations (environment and scientific research) or community administrations (moveable heritage and culture). These authorities currently do not exercise their competences in this domain.

18. Upon analysis, several problems may be identified and therefore require reflection in order to attempt to resolve them:

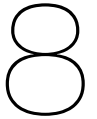
- There is a lack of financial means. A greater capacity for archaeological intervention is necessary in order to be able to cover all of the development projects and the multiple restorations within the territory of the Brussels-Capital Region. Due to the absence of sufficient means,

<sup>9</sup> The Consultation Committee is a consultative body which exists in each of the 19 municipalities. It is responsible for voicing an opinion intended to enlighten the administrative authority prior to the issue of planning permission when provided for in urban planning legislation.

<sup>10</sup> The Inventory of Built Heritage is established, kept up to date and published by the Department of Monuments and Sites. This very long-term undertaking which was begun before regionalisation took place, now includes an internet publication ([www.irismonument.be](http://www.irismonument.be)) of scientific value. The legal publication in the *Moniteur Belge* is still very limited.

<sup>11</sup> Royal decree regarding the authorisation to conduct archaeological excavations or surveys by those authorised to do so.

<sup>12</sup> European agreement for the protection of archaeological heritage (revised) concluded in La Valette (Malta) on 16 January 1992, which defined in particular the areas of competence and obligations of the states as regards archaeological heritage. It was approved by the Brussels-Capital Region in 1992 and will soon be ratified definitively by Belgium.



the archaeological studies which should accompany the classification and restoration processes are still not an automatic administrative step. Only the Royal Commission of Monuments and Sites – on issuing a recommendation (therefore restricting) – is in a position to impose a prior study in the framework of a single application for planning permission related to a listed building. This possibility therefore concerns only a small percentage of the built environment from the Old Regime in Brussels as a whole (less than 1%).<sup>13</sup> These studies are not, however, regulated by specifications or requested within reasonable amounts of time. It often ensues that they are conducted briefly by the project architects in a biased patrimonial perspective without archaeological reasoning. Their scientific quality is therefore often inadequate.

- Because it is managed by the Department of Territory and Housing Development, regional archaeology is practised in an incomplete manner, cut off from its scientific research measures. Management and research activities are complementary, with one feeding off of the other and vice versa. In the end, this situation runs the risk of reducing regional archaeology to a simple recording procedure, leaving the scientific work to others. This situation prevents the possible interactions with management itself, which would allow a better consideration of the development of the territory in the global process. In fact, it places the archaeologist systematically downstream from projects which undermine heritage and hardly allows him or her to have a proactive approach. This rescue archaeology runs the risk of becoming a hasty archaeology.
- Beyond the lack of means and the question of the archaeologist's position in the administrative machinery, there is an absence of a true culture of building archaeology as it is seen in certain European countries such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Switzerland. The recent example of the restoration of the facade of 'The Donkey' House (*den Ezel*) – though it is the property of the City of Brussels – clearly demonstrates this. Located at number 39 Grand-Place – a place

recognised as a jewel of Brussels architectural heritage included on the prestigious UNESCO world heritage list since 1998 – this house was not the object of a close examination of all of its structures during the operation, whereas very exhaustive technical investigations of the facade (in particular with a dismantling, an identification and a diagnosis of the materials used, the mortar, the paint, etc.) and subsoil excavations were carried out (CORDEIRO and MARTOU, 2005). The restoration – even localised – could have been an occasion for overall archaeological research (from the basement to the walls) allowing us to add to our knowledge of this essential part of the old city which is too often reduced to a homogeneous built environment from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The observation of an underuse of building archaeology is all the more regrettable because, since the 'Charter of Venice' (1964),<sup>14</sup> in terms of preservation/restoration, the doctrine has imposed major work to document and deepen the knowledge of restored heritage (art. 16), which may only be achieved through archaeological examination. Many studies conducted by the private sponsors of renovation or restoration works are unpublished and inaccessible. The studies supervised directly by the Department of Monuments and Sites are indexed and may be consulted on reasoned request at the Documentation Centre, in accordance with the decree of 30 March 1995 regarding the public nature of administrative acts. One therefore cannot but strongly encourage the publication of the studies conducted – particularly since 2004 – or any other effort to make data available for research.

<sup>13</sup> In the case of unlisted buildings, the Commission's opinion is only an indication and in some cases may not be requested.

<sup>14</sup> International charter on the preservation and restoration of monuments and sites, 2<sup>nd</sup> International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, Venice, 1964 (adopted by ICOMOS in 1965).

## 2. Courses of action for efficient archaeology integrated into regional society

19. Whilst the lack of means can only be resolved by increasing budgets allocated to archaeology, the implementation of well-designed scientific tools may lead to a gain in efficiency as well as allowing, at least in part, the problems created by the special conditions in which archaeology is practised to be overcome. Given the position of this discipline in the administrative process, the realisation of the Atlas of the Archaeological Subsoil allows choices to be optimised to a certain extent in terms of subsoil archaeology. It illustrates the necessary link between research and the management of heritage. In the area of building archaeology, the Department currently does not have an equivalent tool. The inventories of monumental heritage (1989-1994) are appreciable, but too imprecise as regards the built environment from the Old Regime.

20. The realisation of an atlas of architectural heritage from the Old Regime is therefore necessary and, ideally, must involve a dynamic archaeological research programme. With the aim to develop contextual knowledge allowing decisions to be optimised, it must be flexible and capable of accumulating new data from archaeological interventions or follow-ups of worksites and of updating the state of knowledge on a daily basis. Such a tool must be designed as a true umbrella project requiring the realisation of an atlas inventory at first, followed by its updating and use within an archaeological research programme. The programme must be conducted in the framework of a true collaboration between the administration and the research organisms set up in the Brussels Region (universities and scientific institutions such as the Royal Museums of Art and History, the City Archives or the Royal Institute of Artistic Heritage). This synergy would allow in particular the professional training and hiring of skilled and less skilled staff for a regional project.

21. This database does not by any means prevent the modernisation of the city, and instead may constitute a convenient interface between the different stakeholders concerned and an efficient multimodal tool allowing the convergence of approaches regarding common stakes

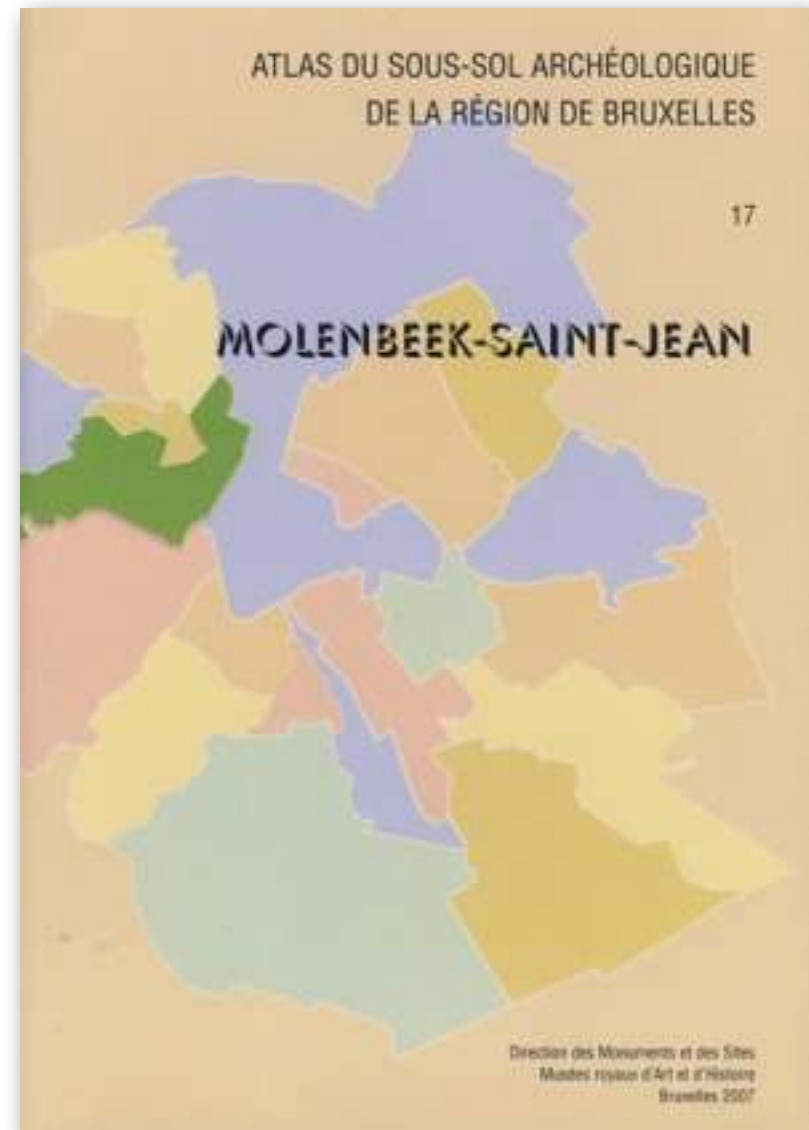


Fig. 5: covers of the Archaeological Atlas.

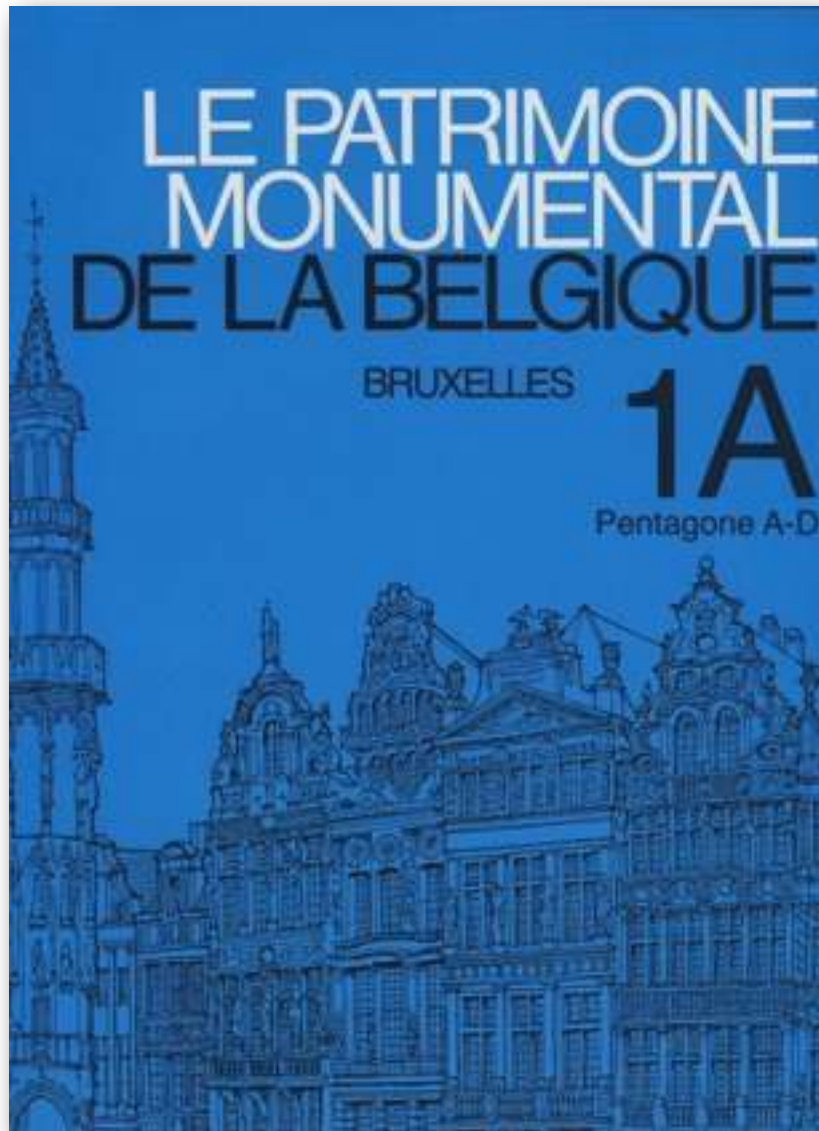


Fig. 6. Couverture d'un Atlas du patrimoine monumental

defined by the regional authorities:

- for the Department, such a database must facilitate the coordination of work between the 'Territorial Development' section (Planning, Urbanism and Urban Renovation) and the 'Archaeology' section (Monuments and Sites); it would allow an easier targeting of the existing scientific and patrimonial stakes as soon as a development project or a classification process is announced, thanks to more and more in-depth contextual knowledge; it must above all structure the information by providing the regional authorities with the knowledge and reference points necessary to develop the city of tomorrow with full knowledge of the facts;
- for civil society, the database must be published on the internet in a bilingual version and must participate in the patrimonial and archaeological awareness-raising process;
- for developers and ordinary owners of historic buildings, it must constitute the first step in the creation of their project and a tool to raise awareness about the quality of their property; they would therefore be obliged to consult it and to begin a dialogue with the Department of Monuments and Sites;
- finally, for the scientist, such a tool must allow an orientation of the studies concerning archaeological structures in the region (questions regarding the topographic origins of the city and surrounding villages, the types of housing, the social groups which comprise it, their lifestyles, etc.); with such a tool, the prior archaeological studies – which are so essential in a perspective of good management and efficient restoration of a historic monument – will be able to go beyond the simple recognition of an isolated building and consider it in its global context. They will thus become genuine global archaeological studies which identify the patrimonial and archaeological value of the property, use its potential as a source of history and preserve it in the best quality conditions for the future.

22. In this framework, the financing system for preventive archaeology operations must absolutely be revised and oriented towards the principle of the 'developer/payer' applied by the majority of European countries which ratified the 'Malta Convention' (LODEWIJCKX, 2008, p. 15).



This, of course, does not exclude the possibility of public financing in partnership with the developer. This principle must however – at least symbolically – insist upon the moral responsibility of the developer, which makes him or her the initiator and therefore the main payer (DE WAHA, 1994). The experience abroad (in particular in the United Kingdom and France) shows that this supplement to be met by the private individual does not at all hinder urban development. This cost is taken into account at the beginning of a project, and often represents only a minute percentage of the total cost which, in the end, provides the developer with a symbolic capital and a positive image for his or her activities (DEMOULE and STIEGLER, 2008, p. 6).

#### **In conclusion: the economic, social and cultural consequences**

23. The recognition of heritage in urban rehabilitation policies is already well tried (SCHAUT, 1996). Since the creation of the Brussels-Capital Region in 1989, built heritage has been explicitly recognised, in the first *Regional Development Plan* (1991), and then in the recent *International Development Plan* (2007), as a major asset in the expansion of the City-Region. One may be surprised at the relative discrepancy between words and actions. Heritage in Brussels, however, has true potential and is a benefit to the general public, as evidenced each year by a large number of publications and the success of the Heritage Days.

24. The under-use of the notion of heritage in the discussions held during the Citizens' Forum of Brussels in 2008-2009 is in this respect both significant and disturbing.<sup>15</sup> However, on close examination, several points in the debate reveal just beneath the surface the importance of the enhancement of heritage. Several observations were made in terms of the development of tourism and the improvement of the image of Brussels and urban living conditions. The organisation of tourism in Brussels currently emphasises the European, international and cosmo-

politan dimension of the city. The aim is to attract tourists interested in the European identity, in particular those from EU member states (CALAY, 2006). As regards the image and the living conditions in Brussels, the discussions underlined the necessity to strive for the development of a better public transport service, the creation of a greater functional mix in neighbourhoods in order to favour contacts and relationships with fellow residents, and the development and maintenance of public spaces for relaxation, well-being and the establishment of social relationships. The objective is to limit the urban exodus and to attract investors, tourists and new populations.<sup>16</sup>

25. As regards these different points, on the one hand it would be advisable to add to the current tourist offer, which should not be limited to the European institutions and contemporary heritage, but should present the city's historical and archaeological aspects. On the other hand, the legibility of the urban built environment should be improved, in particular by underlining the importance of historic constructions, their integration into the contemporary environment and the use of the built environment in the long term. These objectives can only be reached through the promotion of a collective imagination which is not based on 'Brusselisation', but on the understanding of a rich historic built heritage, preserved in harmony with the more recent built environment and managed by the owners and different stakeholders of heritage. This fundamental work is crucial for Brussels, as the main characteristic of its architectural fabric is precisely a very wide diversity of styles.

26. This type of development may therefore have a positive impact on the regional economy and the city's image at national and international level. An ambitious archaeological and patrimonial policy would generate employment of a very diverse nature, among others for archaeologists, researchers, road workers, technicians, managers and communications officers (tour guides, heritage class leaders, neighbourhood heritage group leaders, etc.). The improvement of the city's brand image would have an impact on urban attractiveness, which generates employment and diversified economic development in itself. Let us

<sup>15</sup> Two brief mentions in synopses n° 4 (Brussels, sustainable city) and n° 7 (The Brussels Economy).

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.etatsgenerauxdebruxelles.be>; printed edition in Collectif (2010).



mention that the promotion of tourism depends more on the projected image than on local potential. Tourists' mental representation of Brussels in terms of architecture and urbanism is far from enchanting. Several surveys have confirmed the preconceived idea of a city whose built heritage has been spoilt and is therefore less interesting (PAUTHIER, 2006). Such a view is obviously based on a value judgement which is greatly due to poor promotion. Finally, we should not forget the social benefits. Developing the urban environment through the promotion of heritage leads to increased social well-being and allows the construction of civic awareness linked to heritage – object of memory and vehicle of identity par excellence (BABELON and CHASTEL, 1980).

27. This urban enhancement through building archaeology, which 'produces' heritage by identifying it, studying it and protecting it, could be the object of high-quality popularisation providing historic architecture with real public visibility. Historic architecture has a true capacity to interact with contemporary architecture other than through the defence of the old faced with self-justified and triumphant modernity. In this context, building archaeology would take on a special civic meaning.

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