

Press release



“La Maison du Savoir”, Belval, Luxembourg
be baumschlager eberle, Christian Bauer & Associés © Eduard Hueber, archphoto

Floating centre for the university campus

“La Maison du Savoir”, University of Luxembourg, Belval, Esch-sur-Alzette

Paris, October 8th 2015 – The “Maison du Savoir” is both an icon of the future and a reminder of the past. Conceived by be baumschlager eberle as the focal point of the new University of Luxembourg campus and constructed in cooperation with Christian Bauer & Associés Architectes, the building is a striking and highly visible landmark. What was once the site of a steel plant in the Belval district of Esch-sur-Alzette is now the centrepiece of the new Cité des Sciences.

The design of the “Maison du Savoir” has its origins in an international competition won by be baumschlager eberle in association with Christian Bauer & Associés Architectes. Planning started in 2007 and construction work in 2009. “The ‘House of Knowledge’ forms the organisational and communications core of the complex”, says project leader Elmar Hasler, explaining the underlying idea of the building. The horizontally and vertically elongated structure accommodates the general infrastructure of the university, which was founded in 2003. This includes lecture halls, seminar rooms and professors’ rooms as well as administrative offices and catering facilities. The adjacent buildings of the individual institutes clearly relate to the central location, their front ends being grouped around the “Maison du Savoir” and the planned library building.

The structure seeks to build a bridge to the past when steel was produced on the 27.3 hectare site at the “Terrasse des Haut-Fourneaux”. The 18-storey tower block matches the dimensions of the former steel furnaces. The floating sensation felt is due to the pre-stressed concrete constructions which project out from the second floor upwards. In urban development terms the “Place du Saint-Esprit” in the north is connected with the open spaces for the library and institute buildings in the south. The “Maison du Savoir” thus establishes an urban context without forfeiting its solitary position.

“In the interior we have devised a spatial programme which facilitates a variety of different uses”, says Elmar Hasler. The multi-purpose structure allows for flexible ground plan configurations. The teaching rooms and professors’ rooms are arranged to form a network of paths, bridges and squares which correspond directly with the outdoor space. Foyers and seating areas provide places to meet and talk. Access to the upper levels of the building is via high stairwells which bring plenty of daylight to the areas that do not form part of the facade. The Maison has its own garden on the fourth floor of the horizontal block. Both the two-storey auditoria hover above the ground at the corners of the horizontal beam. **be** baumschlager eberle have opted for a double-shell facade. The internal layer forms the building’s climatic barrier. The outer layer envelops the building with a steel honeycomb structure, which enables the degree of visibility and thus the amount of light to be regulated.

Facts & Figures

Building type

University building

Location

2, avenue de l’Université
Esch-sur-Alzette, L

Client

Le Fonds Belval
Esch-sur-Alzette, L

Photography

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Brooklyn NY, USA
archphoto.com

Architect

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Building technology

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Site area

13.720 m²

Area of building

1.512 m²

Gross floor area

53.560 m²

Net floor area

33.800 m²

Building volume

214.857 m³

Competition

2007

Commencement of planning

2007

Commencement of work

09/2009

Completion

06/2015



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With over 300 completed buildings, **be** baumschlager eberle counts towards one of the successful architecture firms in an international context. The quality of its work since the founding of the company in 1985 has won it notable recognition and numerous awards.

The fact that the work of **be** baumschlager eberle is so widely accepted results from a concept that is able to combine the specific demands of a building with the user's wishes as well as cultural sustainability. The teams working in the ten branch offices in Europe, China and Vietnam have a special architectural responsibility: for the client, the regional context and the social environment. At the same time enough scope is left for realizing aesthetic visions. This complete approach is the basis for confidence in **be** baumschlager eberle's architecture and the flexible range of services they offer whenever and wherever necessary with the aim of constructing sustainable and thus economically efficient buildings.

News

Completions

La Maison du Savoir, Belval, Esch-sur-Alzette, L
be st. gallen, June 2015

Law courts, Caen, F
be paris, July 2015

Residential building, Valence, F
be paris, September 2015

ZAC Dieppe Sud, F
be paris, October 2015

The Metropolitans, Zurich, CH
be zürich, June 2015 and April 2016

Tic, Tric und Trac, Zurich, CH
be vaduz, Tic: July 2015, Tric: December 2015
Trac: September 2015

Competitions

Adliswil-Dietlimoos-Moos, Zurich, CH
be zürich, 1. prize

Bäumlequartier am See, Lochau, A
be lustenau, 1. prize

Raiffeisenbank Altnau, CH
be st. gallen, 1. prize

Hospital Lohr, D
be berlin, 1. prize

Sonnenareal, Altenrhein, CH
be st. gallen, 1. prize

Porte des Lilas, Paris, F
be paris, 1. prize

Press and communication

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