

25 Years Euregional Prize for Architecture

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REVELATION OF A MODERNIST ICON

Participant info

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Project info

In the city center of Liège, protected by a wooded area, the bishopric swimming pool and the sport center (E.G.A.U., 1962-1965) are probably one of the most interesting modernistic buildings of Liège. Unfortunately it's disused these days and threatened by real estate projects.

The first intention was to make this private enclosed green area in a real public garden and revitalizing the original buildings. In an economically realistic approach, it was necessary to enhance this iconic block by a emblematic program. However, the site is adjacent to the large provincial library which currently suffers from inadequate infrastructure, difficult to read and to access. Managers therefore seek to renew the image and the design of this cultural spot.

The strategic position of the neighbor block, bordering the river Meuse and crossing the pedestrian routes, the idea has naturally led to implant a new library on the public garden.

The project includes three clearly identifiable parts: a tower that dominates the whole, a low wing that accompanies the urban journey toward Kennedy Bridge and the three modernist pavilions located in the heart of the public park.

The tower is a city landmark and fully expresses the cultural influence. It unifies, by design, the diverse departments of the library to aim a hieratic expression.

Among the piles of this tower is a large transparent lobby droops clearly connecting the vertical circulation, the rangy wing of the administration and the glass gallery which connects the three pavilions at the heart of the park, spontaneously inviting users to linger, the encounter and discover the library activities.

These, with their singular spaces and open type, receive the most communicative functions of the library: a brewery in the disused pool, an exhibition space and a literary animation space in the old gym.

