

Walloon Heritage Institute



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Wallonia
Belgium

INTRODUCTION

The Walloon Heritage Institute is about to organize a fund raising campaign in the United States to restore and conserve listed monuments.

The Institute already has a project bringing it into very close contact with the United States, namely the ruins of the feudal castle of Walhain. A team of archaeologists and students from the University of Eastern Illinois visits each year from the United States to carry out excavations at the castle and in its grounds in cooperation with the Catholic University of Louvain.

Another link between our two countries, this one historic, is the fact that many Belgians emigrated to the United States at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Certain villages in Wisconsin thus still bear the name of Walloon villages, for example Champion, Namur and Walhain.

The Belgian ruins of the feudal castle of Walhain are therefore intimately linked with the American village of Walhain.







WALLOON HERITAGE INSTITUTE'S MISSIONS



The Walloon Heritage Institute is a public corporation of the Walloon Region of Belgium.

Its mission is to assist the owners of historical monuments, both private and public, in restoring their property and to work with them, as necessary, to decide on a new use for the building. The Walloon government has drawn up the list of historical monuments entrusted to the Institute.

The Walloon Heritage Institute is made up of a team of art historians, architects, lawyers and an economist. It works alongside owners to help them with administrative processes and procedures, to look for private investors, draw up finance plans and finalize legal arrangements. All this enables historical monuments to be saved but it also, and most importantly, improves the brand image of Wallonia, by exploiting the jewels of its heritage by giving them a contemporary use.

Most of the endangered monuments entrusted to the Institute require major investment so that they can be restored.

Therefore, the Institute raises money. Funds are to be collected through « King Baudouin Foundation United States », based in New York.



THE KING BAUDOIN FOUNDATION UNITED STATES



The « King Baudouin Foundation United States », named after a former king of Belgium and based in New York is a subsidiary of the « Fondation Roi Baudouin » based in Brussels. This Belgian foundation is recognized in Europe and is also a founder member of the European Foundation Centre.

The KBFUS, is a foundation recognized as a charitable organization under sections 501(c)(3). In practise, the KBFUS collects donations from American individuals or corporations to support non-commercial organizations in Europe. The Walloon Heritage Institute has opened an « American Friends Fund » with the KBFUS called the « American Friends of the Walloon Heritage ».

Donations can be made by check sent to the Foundation, specifying the fund to be supported, or directly online by credit card. Donors qualify for maximum tax deductibility. The organization supported also has to report on its activities and the use of the funds received, which ensures donors that their gifts are being properly used.

King Baudouin Foundation United States (KBFUS)
10 Rockefeller Plaza, 16th Floor,
New York, NY 10020.
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THE HERITAGE OF WALLONIA

Wallonia has about 3,350 properties listed as monuments, sites, architectural complexes or archaeological sites, of which over 150 are recognised by the Region as exceptional heritage. Four Walloon monuments or panel of monuments have been entered on the World Heritage List by UNESCO.

A full inventory reveals that some 30,000 constructions are deemed to be of interest, to which thematic inventories have been gradually added in recent years. When they are threatened, the most outstanding buildings can be entered on a safeguard list which protects them from any attack for a year, before they are possibly listed.

As in neighbouring countries, classification implies major constraints but also opens up access to public subsidies for the restoration of listed monuments : the basic rate is 60 %, which may be raised to 80 % if the collective interest of the restoration work is recognised and even 95 % for exceptional heritage. And to these subsidies can even be added municipal and provincial contributions, although these are much smaller.

The regional public players in heritage policy are the Minister, who has decision-making power, the Commission of Monuments, Sites and Excavations, which delivers opinions in most of the procedures implemented by the Administration (in terms of classification, restoration work and excavations), and finally, alongside the latter, the Walloon Heritage Institute, which has specific tasks complementing those of the Administration.

In heritage matters, the Walloon Region advocates the transmission of knowledge and know-how through basic and further training for professionals in the construction industry to ensure restoration of historic monuments to professional standards. Moreover, it prioritises the principle of reutilisation of the architectural heritage for the installation of its own administrations and in the policy for the granting of subsidies for restoration. Listed monuments that are restored thus regain a function that they used to have in the past or, very often, acquire an entirely new function in the cultural, social, pedagogical, commercial or tourist field.

www.wallonie.be





RUINS OF THE FEUDAL CASTLE



The seignory, records of which go back to the 11th century, was the property of the Walhain family who were in the service of the Duke of Brabant and sometimes the Count of Namur. The seignory was established as a county in 1532 by Charles Quint for Jean de Berghes and it passed into the hands of the Glimes family who modernised the fortress in the middle of the 16th century. The residence was abandoned in around 1700. The castle suffered serious deterioration over the years until it finally fell into ruin.

The whole edifice clearly resembles medieval fortifications : there are three circular corner towers, an entrance with two towers and a circular keep. This probably dates back to the end of the 12th century and it forms the core around which the castle was built in the 13th century.

Conservation and development plans for the site

The overgrowth of vegetation has been removed from the vestiges of the feudal castle of Walhain but the site needs to be reinforced if it is to be designated as a tourist site. An American team is carrying out archaeological digs in parallel each year at the site in partnership with UCL the Université Catholique de Louvain.

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Owner : Walloon Heritage Institute
 Budget : \$ 222.000
 Location : 25, 5 miles from Brussels

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THE ABBEY OF VILLERS-LA-VILLE

The foundation of the abbey of Villers goes back to 1146, when an abbot, twelve monks and five lay brothers arrived in Villers from Clairvaux to found an abbey. The first buildings no longer exist : the abbey was completely rebuilt during the 13th century. The Cistercian abbey of Villers was forced to close its doors in 1796. In fact the French revolutionary administration abolished the abbey and sold it as a national property to a merchant of materials. The first restoration works were started in 1893. It was not until 1984 that new large-scale restoration works started and these are still underway.



Restoration and reassignment plans

The Brussels Gate located to the west of the site of Villers-la-Ville was the main entrance to the abbey until the 18th century. This Romanesque gateway is comprised of a wide arcade for the cars and a smaller one for the pedestrians. Currently in ruins, the Brussels Gateway needs restoration works.



Owner : Public owner
Budget : \$ 750.000
Location : 25, 5 miles of Brussels

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CASTLE OF THOZÉE



The castle is a neoclassic U-shape building in brick and blue stone. The castle was a holiday home of the painter Félicien Rops, whose grand-daughter continued to live there until her death in 1996 - the year when the castle was listed. She bequeathed the property to the Félicien Rops Foundation in order to increase the status of the estate and the heritage site.

Plans for the restoration and reassignment

The Félicien Rops Foundation undertook to restore the Castle and Farm of Thozée in order to reassign it as a study centre focusing on Félicien Rops and his era. The centre will receive artists, writers, historians and researchers who will come to draw inspiration from this site that they need for their studies or in order to create.

Important works have already been started thanks to a private sponsor and the co-financing of the Institute : restoration of the roofs of the castle, replacing the wooden framework, renovation of the guttering system, installation of a sewage system, renovation and painting the façades of the castle, installation of central heating in the castle, electrical installations, restoration of a piano and maintenance works on the farm.

A new important restoration phase could start up soon. This involves the interior of the castle.

The not-for-profit Foundation is continuing works using the sponsorship money acquired and matched by the Institute.

Owner : The Félicien Rops Foundation
Budget : \$ 270.000
Location : 53 miles from Brussels

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TOWER OF THE HOUSSOY FARM IN VEZIN



Located in the heart of the village of Vezin, the stronghold of Houssoy, the tower dating back to the 14th century forms the angle of the buildings of a farm. The building comprises the main elements of the medieval strongholds and is made up of four levels of +/- 9 metres in length. The building was left unmaintained for a great many years as it was not used. It was on its way to becoming a ruin, but a concrete sheet installed during the fifties to act as a roof succeeded in preventing water leaking into the building.

Restoration and reassignment plans

The Walloon Heritage Institute signed a partnership agreement with the not-for-profit « Les Compagnons de la Tour carrée » (« Friends of the Square Tower ») association in order to provide support for the project as a multi-purpose socio-cultural centre. The not-for-profit association has an emphyteutic lease.

An initial urgent phase to reinforce the façades of the medieval tower was completed in December 2003 and the study for the reassignment of the building is currently underway. The Walloon Heritage Institute has participated in this programme by offering administrative assistance, financial help in the form of a stability study in advance of the restoration, finance for which was provided by the Ethias insurance company sponsorship.

The « Friends of the Square Tower » have also been organising a medieval fair on 15 August during certain years in order to collect funds, the objective being to renovate the tower and one day to organise exhibitions, meetings and conferences there. The heritage certificate is coming to its end and the association is looking for funds to finalise the financing of the restoration project.



Owner : Private Owner, through a emphyteutic lease.
Budget : \$ 365.000
Location : 42 miles from Brussels

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HAVRÉ CASTLE

Located in the Valley of the Haine, Havré Castle stands amid verdant surroundings. All the buildings laid out in a quadrangle are surrounded by deep moats. The castle is accessed by a drawbridge on the south side defended by two guard towers.

The castle was abandoned in 1839 by the Croÿs and passed into the hands of the canon Puissant who tried to save it. The task was too great however. The Province of Hainaut took over the ownership in 1919. Vandalism, vegetation were the cause of several collapses. The castle was listed in 1936.

Restoration plans

In 1978, a number of residents of Havré got together and founded the not-for-profit « Les Amis du Château des Ducs de Havré » (« The Friends of the Castle of the Dukes of Havré ») association in order to try and save the site. The association took possession of the site and signed an emphyteutic lease with the Province. Thanks to volunteers as well as public and private aid, the association continues reinforcement works and the renovation of the site in spite of its meagre resources.

Practically all the work carried out to this end have been financed out of the association's own funds. The association is looking for sponsors. The towers have been protected by a provisional covering for example ; the guard tower, completely stabilised, houses an exhibition room and the offices of the association ; works



on the armoury will make it possible to organise different activities such as meetings, dinners, exhibitions, etc.

An initial restoration grant has been allocated and works were carried out at the beginning of the spring of 2006. The Institute organised a course in parallel on the site in order to enable the workers of the association to carry out small maintenance works themselves.

In spite of this dynamism, the scope of the works is enormous. The association wants to install a library in Tower of Engnien. A project planner has been selected.

Owner : « The Friends of the Castle of the Dukes of Havré » association
Budget : \$ 600.000
Location : 55 miles from Brussels

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CHAPEL OF SAINT CUNIBERT

Set off the main road, the Chapel of Saint-Cunibert dates back to the 18th century and is built in small rendered and bleached stones under a roof of « cherbain » tiles.

The nave is lit on the south side by three rectangular windows in wooden frames. This nave is covered by a cradle of wooden roof planks. Set back in a framed gable, a slate bell-tower with four sides under a short octagonal spire dominates the chapel.

The Chapel of Saint-Cunibert is a lovely example of local architecture but no longer contains any furniture.



Restoration and reassignment plans

The chapel is unused but not yet deconsecrated. Its general state is satisfactory. The roof and the walls were restored shortly after 1953. The interior however, has never been restored and the Municipality and the Church do not envisage doing anything about it. However, a private individual would like to carry out cultural activities around the chapel. This person has in fact purchased a piece of land adjoining the property in order to ensure proper access with their own funds. A not-for-profit association has been founded and has an emphyteutic lease with the current proprietor (the Church).

Owner : Association
Budget : \$ 10.000
Location : 2, 5 miles from Bastogne

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CASTLE OF DEULIN

The castle has been in the hands of the Harlez family since the 18th century. Canon Simon-Joseph de Harlez purchased the property in 1758 for his father Guillaume-Joseph de Harlez. He had been promoted to the role of Governor of the city of Liège and obtained the title of Knight of the Holy Empire in 1762. He was also named Lord of Fronville, Deulin, Monville, Monteuville and Noiseux. Deulin Castle, at the time of its acquisition by the Harlez family, was only a small independent fief. Works were started in around 1760 and it was at this time that the former property called Massart Castle disappeared. The castle in Louis XVI style is approached by a double alley of lime trees and is built in a U shape in stonework and brick rendered in white.



Restoration plans

Located in the extension of the line of the outbuildings, the chapel of the castle dedicated to Saint Remacle deserves to be restored. The façade of the Baroque-style religious building needs repairs doing to cracks, rejoining, cleaning and rendering of the stones, and the protective grills on the stained glass windows need to be treated with an anti-rust protection. Inside it is necessary to repair the stucco work, the imitation marble, the gilding, the altar furniture as well as the woodwork. It is also necessary to repair and repaint the rendering of the ceiling as well as the doors.

Owner : Private
Budget : \$ 80.000
Location : 68,4 miles from Brussels

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SCHÖFFER TOWER

The Schöffer Tower, designed in 1961, is located right next to the Palais des Congrès of Liège. The designer, Nicolas Schöffer, was the father of cybernetic art and one of the most important artists of the second half of the 20th century. The cybernetic tower of Liège is the first of the cybernetic towers to be installed and it remains the greatest of his works.

It is an abstract sculpture measuring 52 metres in height and it is made up of a loosely woven skeletal structure in steel tubes. This skeletal structure with plates, mirrors and paddles, all in different shapes and sizes, moved in the past thanks to engines driven by an electronic brain.

In addition to the metallic structure, the cybernetic operating functions are based on three different elements : a lighting system, a sound system and, driving everything, an electronic brain that sets off three types of action : movement, music and lighting the tower.

Restoration plans

As it has not been operated for more than twenty years and as the electronic material is totally obsolete, the Schöffer Tower requires important restoration works that are rather costly and the Town of Liège, the owner, is looking for funds needed to restore it to working order.



After consultation with the different people interested in the case, the Institute proposed looking for patronage in order to complete the financing of the restoration project of the monument.

The Town of Liège has named an agency that is drawing up plans for the project. During an initial stage a feasibility study was carried out. This was presented at the end of 2008. It also made the widow of Nicolas Schöffer an associate. She can offer her expertise regarding the different restoration options as this is a listed monument and also a work of art. And finally the Town has included this project in a wider redeployment project of the area.



Owner : The City of Liège
Budget : \$ 100.000
Location : City center

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