

Sint Macharius monastery • Laarne



THE MONASTERY, THE FARMHOUSE AND THE WELFARE CENTRE



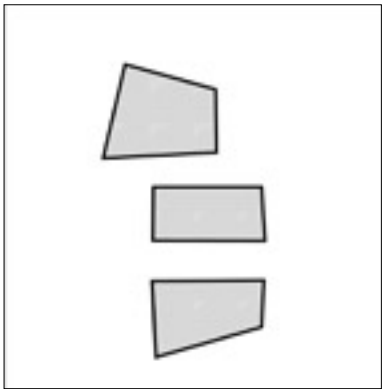
THREE BUILDINGS WITH THREE DIFFERENT STORIES



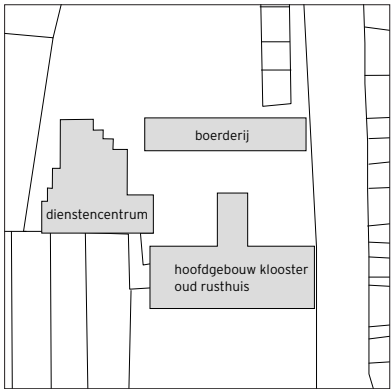
Location



From the public to the private



Three outside rooms



Three buildings





A valuable venue for intergenerational meetings and social support is being created on the site of the former St. Macharius monastery in Laarne, to the south of Ghent. New social and cultural functions will be added and the distinctive monastery buildings will be surrounded by expressive landscaping to create a coherent whole with the existing welfare centre and homes for the elderly.

Setting up a children's day care centre, new social housing and a community hall, as well as moving the welfare contact point to the location, will create a meeting place for a community of mixed generations and cultures.

The three buildings to house the new functions are situated close together and are each distinguished by their age and architectural language. In order to retain their individual identity while placing them in a common context, LÖHMANN'S opted for a simple but effective architectural theme - a structure of wooden mullions - which gives form to the 'repairs' and modifications to the existing buildings. In the monastery building, this structure is used to create a light and inviting entrance to the Welfare Contact Point. The monastery's wealth of history is retained or even brought to light again, as in the former chapel on the first floor, which is turned into the community hall. The traces of use over the years and many of the original materials are retained and integrated into the transformation.

The welfare centre, built in the late 1980's, is extended by the wooden structure. New social housing will be built on the site of the farmhouse, integrating the characteristic long façade of the stable buildings into the new elevation. Placed as volumes in front of the façade, the wooden mullions here form the entrances to the homes, which also gives a certain amount of zoning between the public and private space.

Respect for privacy and zoning from the public to the private space are essential to the success of creating opportunities for people to meet one another. In LÖHMANN'S design for the outdoor space, this takes place by defining three distinctive 'rooms', the garden, the square and the

orchard, and also by carefully designing the transitions between the buildings and the outdoor spaces.

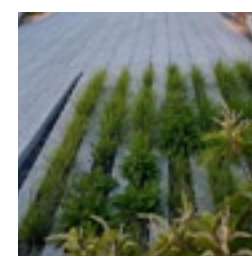
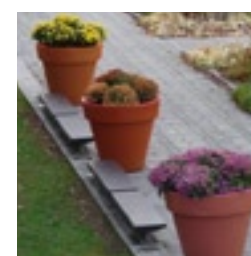
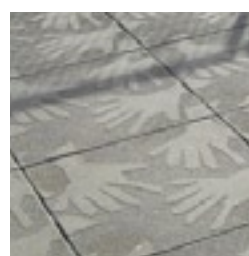
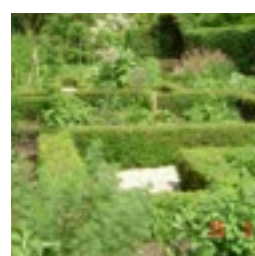
The vegetable and herb garden, the large flowerpots in front of the social housing and the trees in the orchard can be adopted by the residents, children, employers of the welfare institute or visitors to the welfare centre. Besides generating involvement with the space and a sense of responsibility for it, this also stimulates informal contact and exchanges between different generations and cultures.

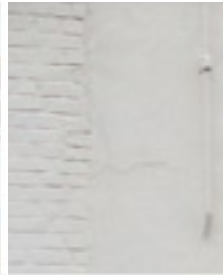




THE OUTDOOR SPACE ENCOURAGES ENCOUNTERS

AND GENERATES PEOPLE'S INVOLVEMENT WITH THEIR ENVIRONMENT





references

Quotes from the jury's report:

" This proposal accepts what is there in a simple and honest way.... Based on a correct analysis of the location, the architects make a fresh design, which gives good answers to the questions asked. The wooden elements form points of recognition between the different architectural styles and are consequently a beautiful addition....The vision of the outdoor space is clear and well thought-out. The proposal deals coherently with the public and semi-public spaces.... The maximum preservation and reuse of existing structures is positive from the point of view of cultural heritage..."

*The competition was organised by the Flemish Government Architect according to the selection procedure of the 'Open Call' in 2011
The design by LÖHMANN'S won the 1st prize*

Credits

Client	OCMW Laarne, and SBK Dendermonde for the social housing
Size	7000 m ²
Planned execution	2014
Project architect	Heike Löhmann
in collaboration with	Holger Gladys
Contributors	Egle Matulaityte · Sander Janssen · Egle Suminskaite
Landscape architect	Dirk Vandekerkhove landschapsarchitecten · Ghent
Building services	studiebureau Boydens · Bruges
Structural engineer	NEY+ Partners · Brussels
Advice and logistics in Belgium	POLO architects · Antwerp