

BRUSSELS HERITAGE

SPECIAL EDITION – 2018



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



La Grand-Place, Brussels
inscribed on the World
Heritage List in 1998

THE RESTORATION OF AN EXCEPTIONAL
DECORATIVE ENVIRONMENT

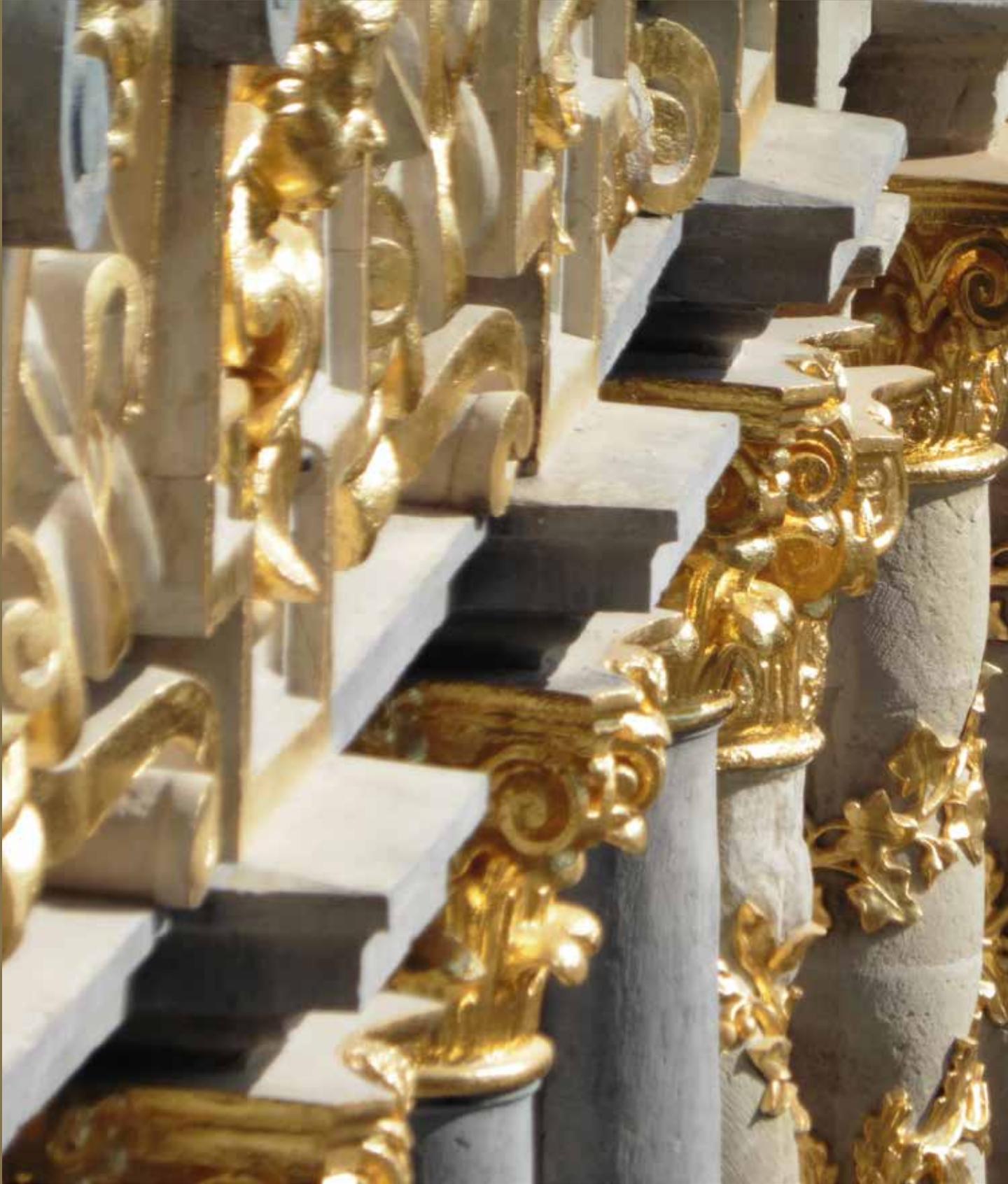
The facades of the Grand Place





INTRODUCTION

Photograph of the Grand Place taken by a drone (© Utopix, D-ms, 2018).





The Grand Place in Brussels is an imposing architectural ensemble that owes its appearance to the renovations and reconstruction work carried out after the 1695 bombardment, as well as to the major restoration work conducted in the 19th century. It comprises a collection of Baroque-style houses displaying a multitude of different influences, from the traditional and the Classical to the Italian Renaissance. These are all set out around a Gothic town hall.

The town hall and the *Maison du Roi*, which are public monuments, were listed in 1936. Interest then moved to the opulent houses that create such a prestigious environment, drawing an increasing number of visitors. All the façades were listed in 1977, with this being extended to the interiors of the houses in 2002.

In the meantime, this heritage was recognised internationally on 2 December 1998, with the inclusion of the Grand Place on the UNESCO World Heritage List. This was based on two criteria:

Criterion (ii): The Grand Place is an exceptional example of a perfect Eclectic blend of architectural and artistic styles characteristic of the culture and society of this region.

Criterion (iv): Due to the nature and quality of its architecture and its extraordinary value, the Grand Place provides a remarkable illustration of the development and achievements of a Northern European merchant city at the height of its prosperity.

This international recognition was the starting point for new in-depth studies of these old buildings, and prompted the resumption of a series of major restorations carried out on the façades of the houses. These had begun in the 1980s-1990s with *Le Cornet/Den Horen* and the imposing façades of *Les Ducs de Brabant/Hertogen van Brabant*, *Le Roi de Bavière/De Koning van Beieren*, *La Balance/De Wage* and *Le Roi d'Espagne/Den Coninck Van Spaignien*. This new phase began with the restoration of *L'Âne/Den Ezel* in 2004. The projects then continued, block by block, from 2008 to 2016. They culminated, by way of a finishing touch to this long-term operation, in the replacement of the T'Serclaes monument with a replica and the erection of a new statue of Saint Nicholas on top of the gable crowning the *Le Renard/De Vos* house. These final additions were made in 2016 and 2018 respectively.

La Brouette/Den Cruywagen. Detail of the façade (© HHU, 2015).

COLOFON

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Stéphane Demeter, Paula Dumont, Murielle Lesecque, Griet Meyfroots, Cecilia Paredes and Brigitte Vander Bruggen

EDITORIAL SECRETARY

Murielle Lesecque

ICONOGRAPHIC COORDINATION

Paula Cordeiro and Marie-Noëlle Martou
The Historical Heritage Unit of the City of Brussels

AUTHORS

Paula Cordeiro and Marie-Noëlle Martou
With the assistance of Quentin Demeure, Vincent Heymans, Yves Van Cutsem
The Historical Heritage Unit of the City of Brussels

TRANSLATION

Ubiquis Belgium nv/sa

REREADING

Augusta Dörr, Françoise Cordier and the members of the Editorial committee

GRAPHICS

Polygraph'

INITIAL LAYOUT CREATED BY

The Crew communication sa

PRINTING

IPM Printing sa/nv

DISTRIBUTION AND SUBSCRIBER MANAGEMENT

Cindy De Brandt,
Brigitte Vander Bruggen.
bpeb@urban.brussels

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Karel Breda, Francis Dardenne, Lode De Clercq, Marianne Decroly, Chris De Greef, Éric Dulieu, C. Grégoire, L. Halleux, Sandrine Herinckx, Francis Glorieux, Gaston Kuyckx, Pierre-Yves Lamy, Gilbert Looockx, Cecilia Paredes, Catherine Pennequin, André Pien, Michel Provost, Arie Roelandt, François Schollen, Isabelle Segura, Francis Tourneur, Jean Vereecken, Yves Vanhellemont, Koen Van Balen, Dionys Van Gemert, Ronald Van Gysel, Luke Webber, Marc Wertz and the Galère s.a. and Renotec n.v. company teams, as well as the owners, tenants and managers of the houses on the Grand Place, and the traders operating there.

The aldermen of the City of Brussels responsible for Heritage: Olivier Maingain, Henri Simons, Christian Ceux and Geoffroy Coomans de Brachène, together with their directors: Jean Brédart, Jean-Pierre Demeure, Michaël Goetyncq, Dirk Van Asbroeck.

The entire team at the Historical Heritage Unit of the City of Brussels (coordinator : Vincent Heymans).

The chief architect of the City of Brussels, Nicolas Decoster.

PUBLISHER

Bety Waknine, General Director, urban.brussels (Regional Public Service of Brussels Urbanism and Heritage), Mont des Arts/Kunstberg 10-13, 1000 Brussels.

Each author is responsible for his / her published article. All reproduction, translation and adaptation rights are reserved.

CONTACT

The Cultural Heritage Directorate – Sensitisation Unit
Mont des Arts/Kunstberg 10-13, 1000 Brussels
<http://www.erfgoed.brussels>
bpeb@urban.brussels

PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS

Although every effort has been made to trace the beneficiaries of reproduction rights, any copyright holders who have not been contacted are kindly requested to inform the Cultural Heritage Directorate of the Brussels-Capital Region.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVB – Archives de la Ville de Bruxelles
CSTC – Centre scientifique et technique de la construction
HHU – Historical Heritage Unit of the City of Brussels
KIK-IRPA – Koninklijk Instituut voor het Kunstpatrimonium / Institut royal du Patrimoine artistique
KU Leuven – Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
VUB – Vrije Universiteit Brussel

LEGAL DEPOSIT

D/2018/6860/039

Cette revue paraît également en Français sous le titre *Bruxelles Patrimoines*.

Dit extra nummer verschijnt ook in het Nederlands onder de titel *Erfgoed Brussel*.



urban
.brussels 

BUP BRUXELLES URBANISME ET PATRIMOINE
BSE BRUSSEL STEDENBOUW EN ERFGOED

15 €



ISBN 978-2-87584-172-8