



Severe threat to Belgian Modernist Masterpiece: support needed!

...sign the petition

Some 19km from Brussels lays the **Joseph Lemaire Sanatorium**, a modernist masterpiece by the architects Maxime and Fernand Brunfaut. Both designers were closely linked with the socialist movement in the Interbellum period and played an important role in the introduction of the modernist principles in Belgian architectural culture. Before embarking on a successful personal career, Maxime Brunfaut was for a longtime Victor Horta's principal assistant.

Just like Aalto's famous Paimio Sanatorium and the celebrated Zonnestraal Sanatorium by Duiker and Blijvoet, the Lemaire sanatorium was conceived in a typically functionalist manner, providing a state of the art infrastructure for the cure of patients suffering from tuberculosis. From its opening in 1937 on, the Lemaire Sanatorium attracted international attention from both the medical and architectural world who praised its functional organization, the fluid sequence of its interior spaces, the plastic articulation of the building mass and the detailing of the façades, clad with ceramic tiles. A remarkable invention is the block system.

After the building was disused in the late 1980s, it quickly fell pray to decay, vandalism and theft. Paradoxically, its listing as a historical monument in 1993 even stimulated this perishing as it led to a situation of immobility. Propositions for reuse of the structure as lofts, offices or an asylum for political refugees were aborted in an early stage. Despite its current ruinous state, the building continues to attract international attention from scholars, architects and photographers who are impressed by the strength of its forms and its interaction with the surrounding landscape.

In an attempt to safeguard the building and stimulate the debate about its future use, in 2007, we started a preservation campaign called 'Save the Sanatorium'. Our aims are threefold:

- SAVE THE SANATORIUM** strives for a sustainable reuse of the Lemaire Sanatorium with respect for its cultural, architectural and social significance and its relation with the natural environment. We ask that, like in the past, part of the building and the surrounding park remain accessible for the general public.
- SAVE THE SANATORIUM** demands a proactive concern of all involved parties (public and private) before the dilapidated state of the building becomes irreversible. Given the current harsh winter conditions, time is of utmost essence.
- SAVE THE SANATORIUM** asks all concerned actors, public and private, to urgently team up in developing a strategy for reuse with respect for the exceptional character and the specific features of this architectural landmark.

We intend to send letters to all parties involved to express our concern and force a breakthrough in the deadlocked debate about the future of the Lemaire Sanatorium. For this, we need your support as an individual, as an institution or organization. We are convinced that a clear call from the architectural community will help raising the awareness about the architectural, historical and cultural importance of this structure and the critical condition of its current state.

Please express your concern by surfing to this page (<http://www.redhetsanatorium.be/petition/index.htm>) where you will find the appeal that we will address to all public and private actors involved in the future of the Joseph Lemaire Sanatorium.

On our website www.savethesanatorium.be you will find ample documentation illustrating the past and current state of the Joseph Lemaire Sanatorium as well as information about our campaign.

Many thanks,
Save the Sanatorium





Severe threat to Belgian Modernist Masterpiece: Declaration of Agreement

Since 2007, 'Save the Sanatorium' attempts to stimulate the debate about the future the **Lemaire Sanatorium** in Tombeek. Its aims are threefold:

- **Save the Sanatorium** strives for a sustainable reuse of the Sanatorium Joseph Lemaire that maintains its cultural, architectural and social significance, with respect for the surrounding landscape and its partial public character.
- **Save the Sanatorium** demands a proactive concern of all involved parties, public and private, before the dilapidated state of the building becomes irreversible. Given the current exceptional winter conditions, time is of utmost essence.
- **Save the Sanatorium** asks all concerned actors , public and private, to urgently team up in developing a strategy for reuse with respect for the exceptional character and the specific features of this young architectural heritage.

I support the actions by Save the Sanatorium for the safeguarding of the Sanatorium Joseph Lemaire as explained in the appeal above.

I agree that my name and affiliation will be displayed publicly in the context of this request.

Name:

First Name:

Profession:

Affiliation:

City:

Country:

e-mail:

Date, signature:

Please fill in this form and send it:

1) By FAX to **0032 (0)16 22 21 08**

or

2) by MAIL to:

Stad en Architectuur vzw

Rijschoolstraat 4/201

3000 Leuven

Belgium

or

3) Sign the petition ONLINE at <http://www.redhetsanatorium.be/petition/index.htm>

contact: info@redhetsanatorium.be

website: www.savethesanatorium.be - www.sauvezlesanatorium.be - www.redhetsanatorium.be