

## Press release



"La Maison du Savoir", Belval, Luxembourg  
Baumschlager Eberle Architekten, Christian Bauer & Associés, archphoto inc. © Baumschlager Eberle Architekten

## Floating centre for the university campus

**"La Maison du Savoir", University of Luxembourg | Belval, Esch-sur-Alzette**

**Paris, Spring 2016 – The "Maison du Savoir" is both an icon of the future and a reminder of the past. Conceived by Baumschlager Eberle Architekten as the focal point of the new University of Luxembourg campus and constructed in cooperation with Christian Bauer & Associés Architectes, the building is a striking and highly visible landmark. What was once the site of a steel plant in the Belval district of Esch-sur-Alzette is now the centrepiece of the new Cité des Sciences.**

The design of the "Maison du Savoir" has its origins in an international competition won by Baumschlager Eberle Architekten in association with Christian Bauer & Associés Architectes. Planning started in 2007 and construction work in 2009. "The 'House of Knowledge' forms the organisational and communications core of the complex", says project leader Elmar Hasler, explaining the underlying idea of the building. The horizontally and vertically elongated structure accommodates the general infrastructure of the university, which was founded in 2003. This includes lecture halls, seminar rooms and professors' rooms as well as administrative offices and catering facilities. The adjacent buildings of the individual institutes clearly relate to the central location, their front ends being grouped around the "Maison du Savoir" and the planned library building.

The structure seeks to build a bridge to the past when steel was produced on the 27.3 hectare site at the “Terrasse des Haut-Fourneaux”. The 18-storey tower block matches the dimensions of the former steel furnaces. The floating sensation felt is due to the pre-stressed concrete constructions which project out from the second floor upwards. In urban development terms the “Place du Saint-Esprit” in the north is connected with the open spaces for the library and institute buildings in the south. The “Maison du Savoir” thus establishes an urban context without forfeiting its solitary position.

“In the interior we have devised a spatial programme which facilitates a variety of different uses”, says Elmar Hasler. The multi-purpose structure allows for flexible ground plan configurations. The teaching rooms and professors’ rooms are arranged to form a network of paths, bridges and squares which correspond directly with the outdoor space. Foyers and seating areas provide places to meet and talk. Access to the upper levels of the building is via high stairwells which bring plenty of daylight to the areas that do not form part of the facade. The Maison has its own garden on the fourth floor of the horizontal block. Both the two-storey auditoria hover above the ground at the corners of the horizontal beam. Baumschlager Eberle Architekten have opted for a double-shell facade. The internal layer forms the building’s climatic barrier. The outer layer envelops the building with a steel honeycomb structure, which enables the degree of visibility and thus the amount of light to be regulated.

## Facts & Figures

### Building type

University building

### Location

2, avenue de l'Université  
Esch-sur-Alzette, L

### Client

Le Fonds Belval  
Esch-sur-Alzette, L

### Photography

Eduard Hueber,  
Brooklyn NY, USA  
archphoto.com

### Architect

Baumschlager Eberle  
Architekten

### Project lead

Elmar Hasler  
Marco Franzmann

### Team

Christian Bieber  
Robert Urbanek  
Daniela Concin  
Xiao Fen  
Christopher Heinzelmänn  
Gu Sung Lim

### Partner

cba Christian Bauer & Associés  
Architectes, Luxembourg, L

### Static

Ingenieursbureau Jan Van Aelst  
BVBA  
Antwerpen, B

### Building technology

Jean Schmit Engineering  
Luxembourg, L

### Site area

13.720 m<sup>2</sup>

### Area of building

1.512 m<sup>2</sup>

### Gross floor area

53.560 m<sup>2</sup>

### Net floor area

33.800 m<sup>2</sup>

### Building volume

214.857 m<sup>3</sup>

### Competition

2007

### Commencement of planning

2007

### Commencement of work

09/2009

### Completion

06/2015



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### **Baumschlager Eberle Architekten**

With over 400 completed buildings, Baumschlager Eberle Architekten counts towards one of the successful architecture firms in an international context. The quality of its work since the founding of the company in 1985 has won it notable recognition and numerous awards. The fact that the work of baumschlager eberle is so widely accepted results from a concept that is able to combine the specific demands of a building with the user's wishes as well as cultural sustainability. The teams working in the ten branch offices in Europe and Asia have a special architectural responsibility: for the client, the regional context and the social environment. At the same time enough scope is left for realizing aesthetic visions. This complete approach is the basis for confidence in the architecture of Baumschlager Eberle Architekten and the flexible range of services they offer whenever and wherever necessary with the aim of constructing sustainable and thus economically efficient buildings.

### **Contact**

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