

2018

Competition : Construction of a Hotel (137 rooms), ground floor retail and public rooftop, Place Rogier in Brussels.



Site
Place Rogier 1000 Brussels

Client
PANDOX AB

Other architects
B4f, ASM acoustics, ACSC, Michel Penneman

Structural engineer
Ney & Partners

Services engineer
DÃ©tang engineering

Budget
22.000.000 EUR htva

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A windy terrain on the fringe of Brussels' medieval centre, the competition site is a long-abandoned corner plot on the Place Rogier. Magnificent but forlorn, the existing Palace Hotel by Art Deco architect Antoine Pompe occupies only half the available sqm's, pushing PANDOX to imagine an efficient extension. In architectesassoc+'s proposal, focus is on developing "enlivening connections" whether between old and new, built and unbuilt, people inside and out, or finally between guests and non-guests, ... In short, relationships and reciprocities capable of breathing in new life and triggering regeneration are targeted, those capable of healing the present inner and outer dysfunctions, and finally those that develop a transversal sense of belonging. Such invigorating interactions offer added value to both the Palace client and the city as a whole, while strongly addressing the social, civic and moral values embedded in the responsible ethos proper to PANDOX but share-able by all, in or outside the hotel walls.

A compact volume strictly following street alignments and cornice levels is imagined : a minimal straightforward extrusion of existing party walls stretching the whole length of the city block, inspired by Brussels' long history of elegant "bâtiments ilôts". No PoMo reminiscence here, no artificial "building of buildings" nor "breaking down" of the urban scale : instead architectesassoc+'s proposal strongly capitalizes on the project's sheer façade length in order to forcefully articulate the east-west transition between the « haut » and « bas de la ville ». It equally capitalizes on the project's strategic corner position on the Place Rogier where a double-height « urban vestibule » echoing the Horta's Bozar entrance is positioned. Although the design is heavily impacted by the metro tunnel underground, its typical floor plan developed with Ney&Partners and Detang is barely affected, with 137 efficiently organized and serviced hotel rooms. Special attention has been paid to fluidifying all vertical and horizontal circulation routes, even integrating a public elevator up to the proposed public rooftop bar. A permeable Agora in the center further facilitates communication between all parts, and a new access spilling out onto the majestic boulevard adds prestige to the ensemble.

Cost-effective innovation and sustainability infuses all efforts, and particularly facade principles : a light-weight timber skin pre-fabricated off-site is imagined, offering elegant natural finish inside and warm-coloured terra-cotta cladding outside. All material choice invites to touch, colors respecting a soothing palette developed in collaboration with interior designer M. Penneman : sense-tingling finishes like smooth terrazzo, sanded stone, soft ceramics, warm-to-touch wood and textured fabrics prevail.

As a result and for each guest, the tingles and thrills of enlivening connections become the defining emotions of the PALACE HOTEL guest experience.

And concomitantly for all users and thus for the city as a whole, the capacity to regenerate and reconcile thru enlivening connections becomes the defining characteristic of the PALACE HOTEL'S architectural identity.

