

ROYALE-BRIALMONT 1997 - 2005

Housing, retail and offices rues Royale and Brialmont in St-Josse.



Site

Rue Royale 157-159 / rue Brialmont 1-3-5 1210
Brussels

Services engineer

Solitech

Movie

<http://www.archiurbain.be/?p=3774>

Client

CFE immo sa

Contractor

CFE Brabant

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Vincent Piroux - Marc Detiffe

Structural engineer

Ellyps

Budget

10 000 000 EUR htva

Brussels is characterized by, amongst other things, a series of royal boulevards tearing through the medieval city ... creating a somewhat discrepant urban grid. The Botanical Gardens constitute a rare and welcome oasis situated at the intersection of two of these boulevards : the rue Royale and the boulevard Léopold III connecting the Basilique to the city center.

This strategic position explains the careful proportioning of the building's masses, from the more compact housing (1800 m²) on the sunny but busy rue Royale, to the slender office block (6300 m²) on the narrow side street. The neighbouring P & V tower bans almost all direct sunlight from this street which explains why city authorities and Brussels Heritage accepted offices on what was normally an all-housing site. Transparency and criss-crossing views from ground level up to the skyline, indifferently for the apartments and offices, have been favored in order to create connection with the existing context: all street entrances (pedestrian or vehicular) offer views onto the inner courtyards...insides extend outside through the use of cantilevered porches, see-through reception areas, exterior gangways and staircases. To add to this effect, identical finishes for façades and interiors were chosen for both functions. Retail occupies the ground floor on the rue Royale.

From the onset, the goal was to create an articulated whole for living and working. Discrete repetitive structural grids and uncluttered ceilings are meant to highlight the panorama the site offers, as do the terraces. Dwelling types are varied, simple or double-height; office floor-plates make both open or partitioned spaces possible, for single tenant or multiple letting.

The extensive use of floor-to-ceiling glass elements, galvanized steel, and especially black heavy-duty tread-plate for the façades give the project a strong but also shimmering and transparent quality (dynamic character), fluctuating with the varying light as one walks or drives by.

