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Green light for renovation and reconstruction of Théâtre des **Varietés**

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The Brussels Region has given the green light to the renovation and partial reconstruction of the building of the former Théâtre des Varietés in the city center, a work by the architects Victor Bourgeois and Maurice Gridaine. State Secretary for Urban Planning and Heritage Pascal Smet reported this on Friday.

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Smet informs us that urban.brussels is issuing an urban planning permit for the renovation and partial reconstruction of the building of the former Théâtre des Varietés at Mechelsestraat 25 and Sint-Pietersstraat 43-45. The project is being designed and executed by two architectural firms, the Spanish Flores & Prats and the Brussels OUEST.

In addition to a large spectacle hall (999 seats), a small spectacle hall (405 seats), offices and technical rooms for the teams, the plan also provides for a large public forum and a bar. It will be a cultural hotspot where art, culture and neighborhood life come together, it sounds.

"The rehirth of the Théâtre des Variétés, a modernist jewel by the architects Victor Bourgeois and Maurice Gridaine, is another step in the revival of the city center. The alleys of the city center between avenue Adolphe Max and avenue Emile Jacqmain have long been neglected and had a bad reputation. Now they are being completely redeveloped in the context of beautifying and making the city center more car-free. By reopening this historic site, a new cultural and art destination is added for local residents and passers-by," explains Pascal Smet .

Risk of collapse

The commission for the construction of the theater was given in 1937 to the architects Victor Bourgeois, a famous Belgian modernist architect, and Maurice Gridaine. When it opened, the hall was a concert hall, variety theatre, music hall and cinema. It was also the first spectacle hall in the world to be lit entirely in neon. When the theater opened, it had about 2,400 seats, with a balcony and the Baghdad café on the first floor.

Due to the danger of the roof collapsing, the building was permanently closed on February 16, 1983 by order of the fire brigade. The Théâtre des Variétés then lay abandoned for thirty years. On June 16, 2003, on the initiative of the City of Brussels, the main facade, the roof and the spectacle room were protected as monuments.







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