

ART DECO PARCOURS

Enjoy this nice cycling tour of approximately 40 kilometres alongside the most beautiful Art Deco buildings of Brussels. This cycling tour starts at the biggest Art Deco building of Western Europe, the Basilica of Koekelberg. The tour continues alongside some famous buildings of Brussels, like Flagey or Bozar, but doesn't forget the less known Art Deco constructions of the city.

ROUTE:



1. The Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Koekelberg



The Koekelberg Basilica ranks fifth among the world's largest churches, after the Basilica of Notre-Dame de la Paix in Yamoussokro on the Ivory Coast, St Peter's in Rome, St Paul's in London and Santa Maria Dei Fiori in Florence.

Today, the church is in the first place a place of prayer for peace. The church is still used for celebrations of the parish or for big national celebrations. But the basilica is more than that. It has also an important cultural function.

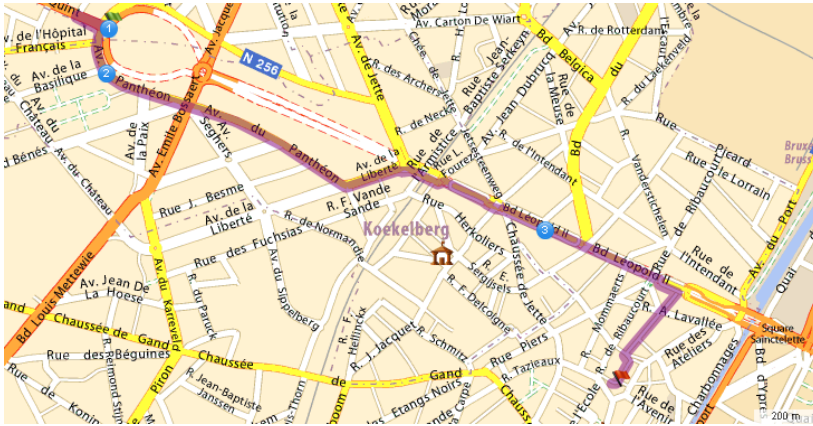
It's a magnificent Art Deco monument, there are two museums, there are yearly different expositions and you can enjoy a wonderful view over Brussels!

At the basilica, there are 500 free parking places. Therefore, its an excellent take off location of this beautiful Art Deco cycling tour. The basilica is also easily accessible by public transport.

Visit the impressive interior of the basilica, and go with the elevator to the panorama just under the dome, from where you have an excellent view over Brussels and Brabant.

The basilica is open every day, in winter from 10 to 16 hours and in summer from 9 to 17 hours.

More information: www.basilicakoekelberg.be.

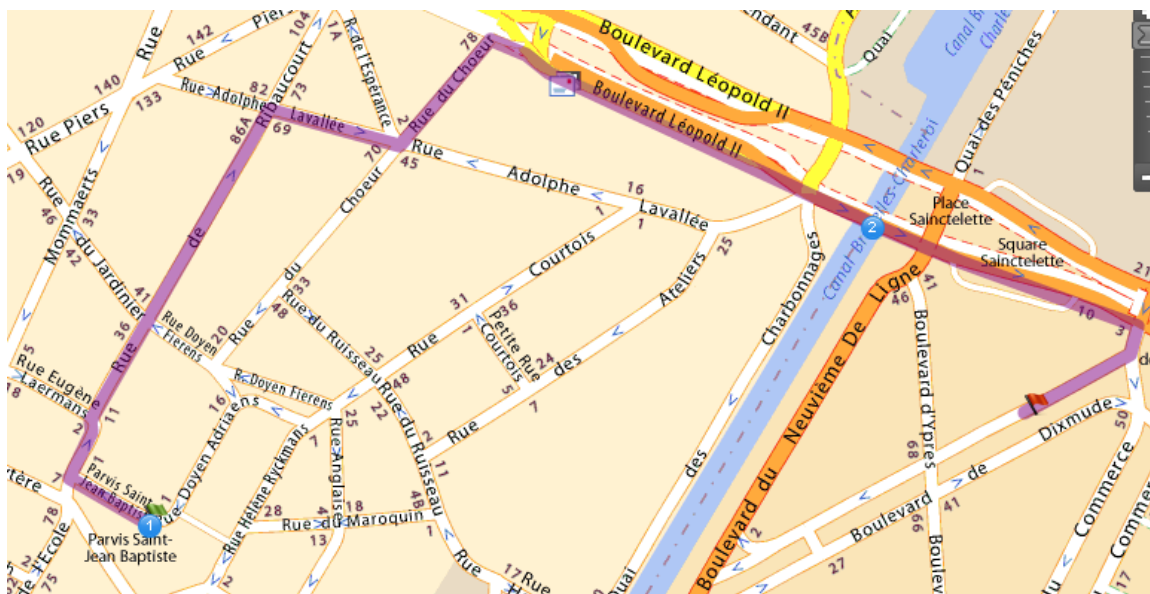


2. Saint John the Baptist Church

Sint-Jan-Baptistvoorplein, Sint-Jans-Molenbeek



This Art Deco church is built entirely in reinforced concrete and was constructed in the 1930s. Its architect is Joseph Diongre, who also built the Flagey-building in Elsene. In the church there is a special atmosphere thanks to the ellips arches in concrete.



3. Halles America

Diksmuidelaan 21-29, Brussels

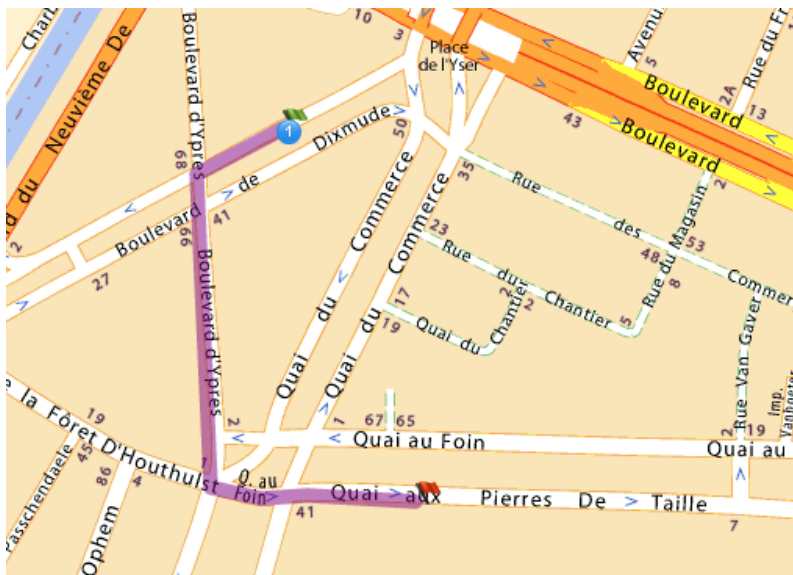


This building was designed by Jacques Obozinski and Fernand Petit in 1921 – 1926, for *America et Cie*. The building was protected as a monument in 1993.

The *Halles America* refer to the port function of this neighbourhood, next to the canal. In former times, the Customs Offices and Trade Dock were installed here.

In 1910 – 1911, the Brussels-Seaport was constructed outside the city. The dock disappeared and the city approved a new project of urbanisation. From the 1920s, a lot of wholesalers of fruit and vegetables settled in this neighbourhood. The *America et Cie* company was one of them. They built a fruit auction where the local retailers could provision. This fits in the economic revival from after the First World War, which can also be seen in a lot of other realisations in this quarter.

The mixed function of the building (house/trade/warehouse) is characteristic for this district. The importance of the living function of the buildings in a commercial area shows the wish to use at best the available surface in the city.



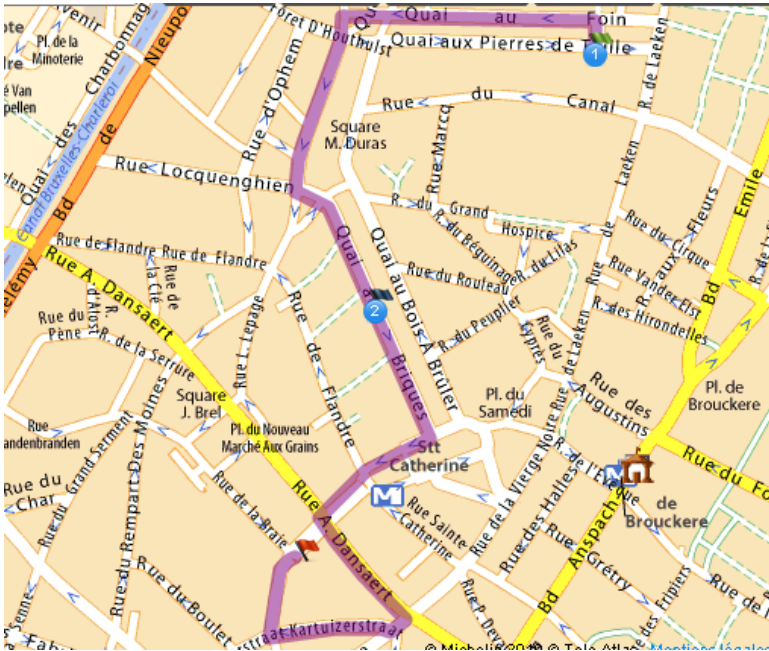
4. Depot Stiel and Rothschild

Arduinkaai 28 – 29, Brussels

This former depot of textile was built in 1926 by A. Warny, for the company *Stiel & Rothschild*, in an Art Deco style. Since 1998, the building is protected. Nowadays, the Archive and Museum of Flemish Life, and the editorship of the Newspaper “De Morgen” are established in the building.

The situation of this depot refers to the commercial function of this area, close to the canal. The Arduinkaai was the south quay of the 17th century end dock of the canal to Willebroek. In 1827, the canal was prolonged to Charleroi, and the port function was moved. In 1910 – 1911, the Brussels-Seaport was constructed outside the city. The dock at the Arduinkaai was filled in and planted with trees. The commercial function of the quarter remained. In the 1920s, a lot of wholesalers settled here, and *Stiel en Rothschild* was one of them.





5. Trading House Company G.K.F.

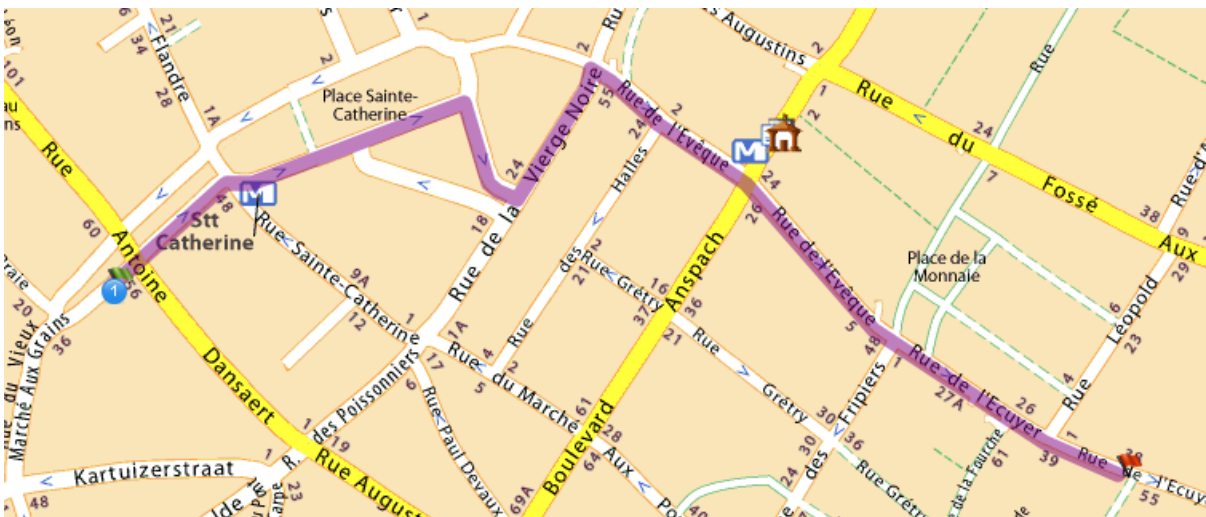
Oude Graanmarkt 7 – 11, Brussels



These former buildings of the G.K.F. Company (Gérard Koninckx Frères – wholesaler in exotic fruit) are a magnificent example of the architecture from 1920-1930, designed by the architect Eugene Dhucque (Brussels 1877-1955). He studied at the Brussels Academy for Arts and with the architects Janlet in Brussels and Seltersheim in Paris. He designed a lot of industrial buildings. They were all realised with the same concern for details.

The structure of the building is in reinforced concrete, which was used a lot in this period. The use of the façade for publicity is typical for this era.

The mixed function of the building (house/trade/depot) was not unusual in the closeness of the canal and shows the wish to use all the available surface in the city.



6. Tapestry commerce *Benezra*

Schildknaapsstraat 41, Brussels

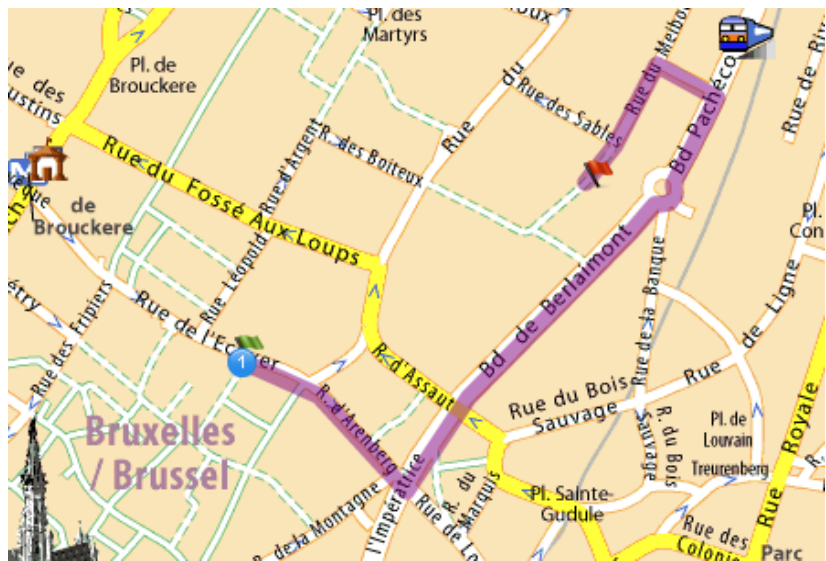


Adrien Blomme built this edifice in 1922 for *Benezra*, a company in oriental tapestry. It's one of the first Art Deco buildings in Belgium, with a modernistic accent due to the sober design.

Adrien Blomme considered himself as a modernist and he was interested in new architectural trends. This remarkable façade with a minimum of decorative elements reflects the interior.

The interior responds completely at the original commercial function of the building.

This building is important for the further evolution of Blomme's work.

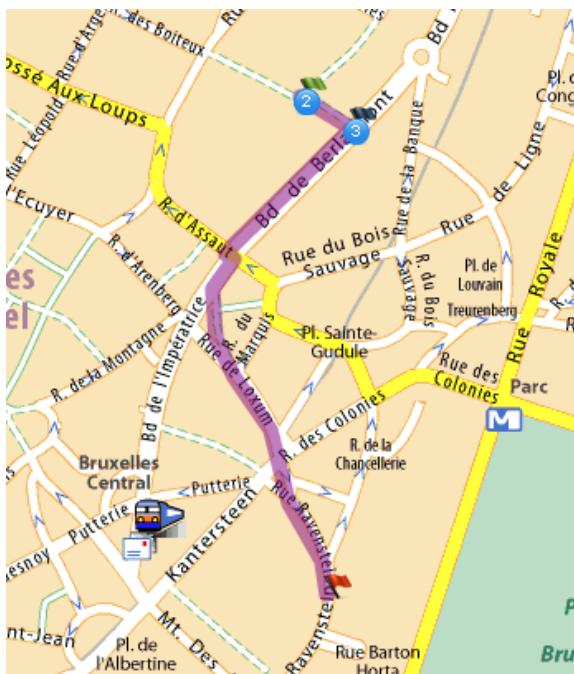


7. Printing office Daily Paper 'Le Peuple'

Sint Laurensstraat 30-34, Brussels

This Art Deco building was realised by the architect Maxime Brunfaut. In 1989, it was protected as a monument.

Brunfaut studied architecture in the Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels from 1929 till 1929. Victor Horta was one of his teachers.



8. Centre for Fine Arts - BOZAR

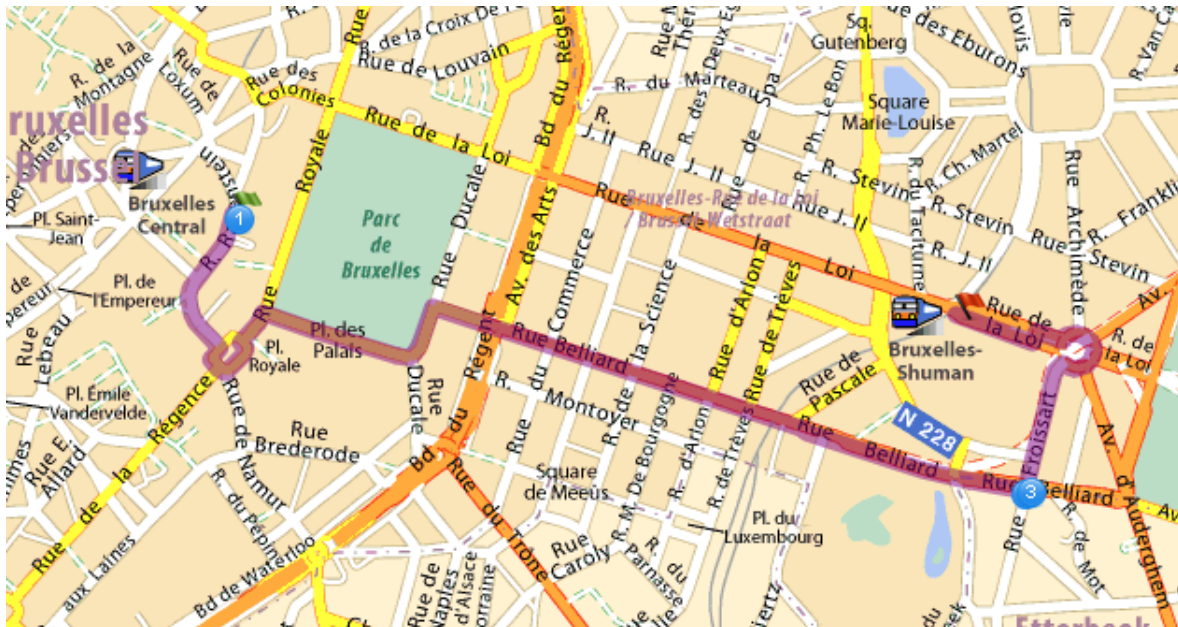
The Centre for Fine Arts was designed in 1928 by the famous architect Victor Horta. He had to deal with a lot of restrictions: the palace had to be built in a zone with a lot of differences in height between the higher and the lower part of Brussels. Moreover, the height of the highest façade in the Koningsstraat could not obstruct the view from the Royal Palace on Brussels.

The result is a building with eight different levels, enormous but invisible due to the numerous subterranean rooms.

For the Centre of Fine Arts, Horta exchanged the curling lines of the Art Nouveau for the geometric lines of the Art Deco. In his memories, Horta calls the centre a highlight in his career.



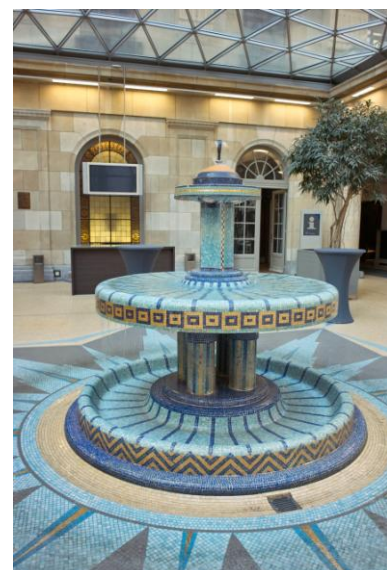
More information: www.bozar.be.



9. Résidence Palace

The Residence Palace was designed after World War I by the Swiss architect Michel Polak, as a luxurious apartment complex for Brussels' aristocracy and bourgeoisie.

The principal, the successful Walloon businessman Lucien Kaisin, had two objectives with the construction of the palace, the biggest in Europe at that time: help to resolve the accommodation crisis from after the war and give a solution for the heavy scarcity of domestic staff. The inhabitants of the Residence Palace could appeal to the personnel from the complex.





The complex includes not only luxurious apartments, but also bars, restaurants, a theatre, a swimming pool, conference rooms, a hairdresser's salon, a bank, a post office, garage, grocers, a flower shop etc. The first inhabitants moved to the Residence Palace in 1927. In 1940, the building was confiscated by the German occupier and after the war, the Belgian state bought the complex and civil services were installed here. Today, the Residence Palace is the biggest press centre of Belgium. National and international press services can find information here about Belgium, the federal government, the regions and the communities. Press services can also

organize seminars, conferences and debates.

More information: www.presscenter.org.



10. Les Pavillons français

Notelaarstraat 282, Schaarbeek.

The *Pavillons français* were protected in 2005. This apartment complex in the Notelaarstraat 282, or the *Pavillons Français* was built between 1931 and 1934 by a design of the architect Marcel Peeters. Halfway the 1920s, living in an apartment was very popular in the middle classes. In the first place, there was an urgent need for houses after the war. At the same time, prices increased and living in an apartment was cheaper than in a family house. An other advantage was that the maintenance of an apartment was easier, and therefore, less personnel was needed.



In the 1920s, a lot of luxurious apartment complexes was built in Brussels.

Lucien Kaisin and his son Gerard Kaisin started building the *Pavillons Français* in 1930. Although it are also luxurious apartments, the intention of the *Pavillons Français* was less excessive than *Residence Palace*. There were some joint facilities, like a system for mail, garbage, a restaurant and reception rooms, but everything was more sober than in the *Residence Palace*.



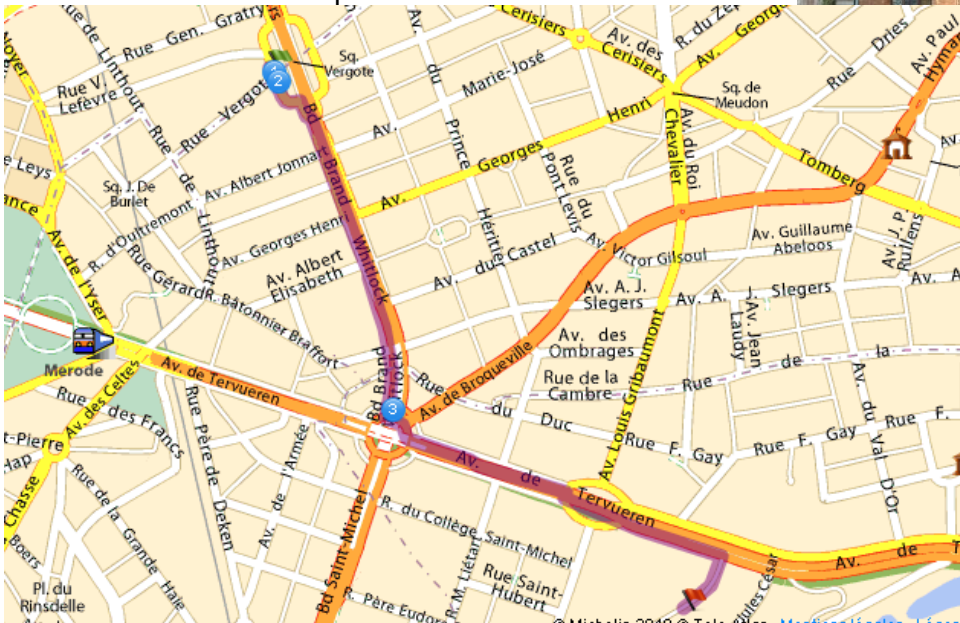
11. Fournier House

Vergotesquare Schaarbeek

This magnificent house at the Vergotesquare in Schaarbeek was designed by Albert Nyst. Nyst, coming from Liège, designed a lot of buildings in Brussels. He started his career as an engineer and was originally involved in industrial projects. In the beginning of his career as an architect he designed in a classical monumental style. But after World War I his work changed radically.



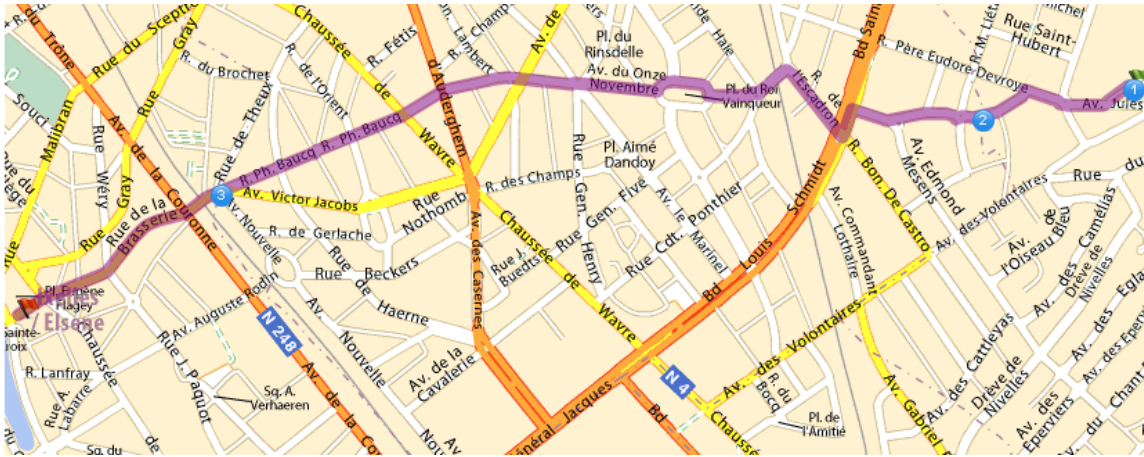
The Fournier House was protected in 1993.



12. Villa Gosset

This Art Deco villa was built in 1928 by Adrien Blomme. The villa has a square form and symmetrical volume of two construction layers. The garden is also the work of Blomme. The totality of the villa, the entrance gate, the house of the caretaker and the garden are protected following a decision of 10 march 1994.





13. Belgian National Institute for Radio Broadcasting (NIR)

Belvédèrestraat 27, Elsene



This Art Deco building dates from the 1930s. It's nickname is "the sound fabric", for its unprecedented acoustic qualities. It's one of the first radio broadcasting studios in the world.

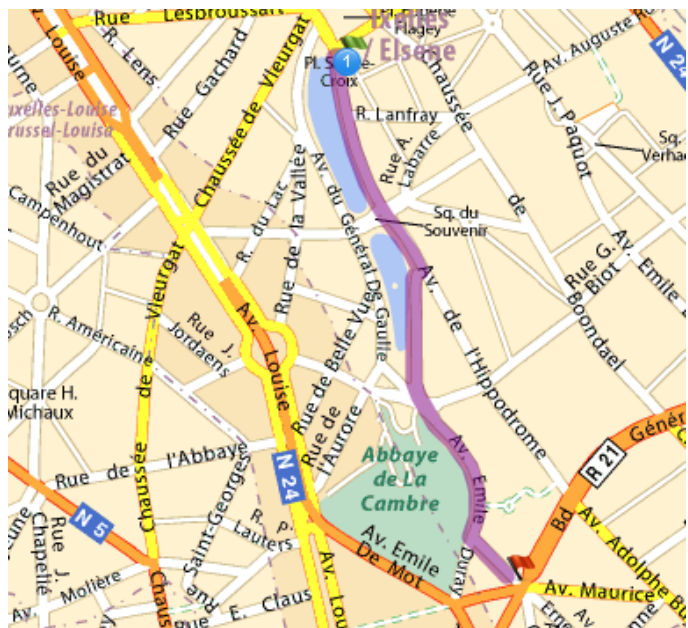
The architect Joseph Diongre won in 1934 the architecture contest of the NIR together with Raymond Brillaud.

In 1939 the building was used for the first time and it soon obtained fame all over the world for the quality of its studios.

In 1973, the National Radio Companies moved to Schaarbeek. The building deteriorated quickly, although it was protected in 1994 and

in 1997, it was put on the UNESCO list with the most threatened buildings in the world. Luckily, it was saved in 1998 by a private organisation and today it is an important cultural centre with music festivals, concerts, films and debates.

More information: www.flagey.be.

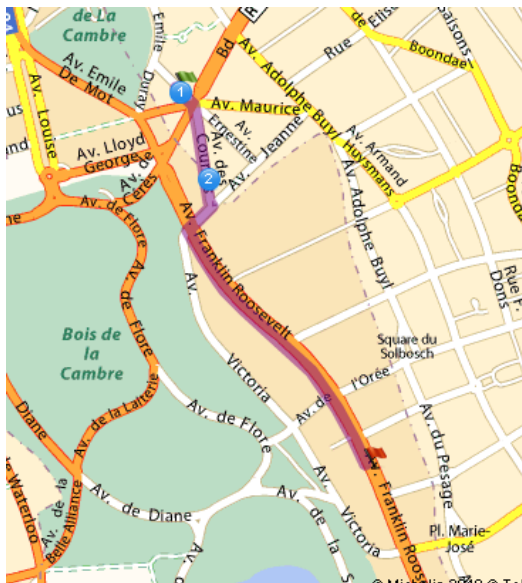


14. Palace « de la Folle Chanson »

Lied Van Sotternieënlaan, Elsene

The Palace « de la Folle Chanson » was built in 1928 by the architect Antoine Courtens. Courtens studied in Paris, Lyon, some German cities and he also studied with Victor Horta, who was building the Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels at that time. In 1928, he would build the Haerens Hotel and the Palace « de la Folle Chanson » in Elsene.

The Palace is situated at the corner of two big avenues. It thanks its name to the Avenue da la Folle Chanson. In 1986, the complex was protected as a monument.



15. Empain House

Franklin Rooseveltlaan 67, Elsene

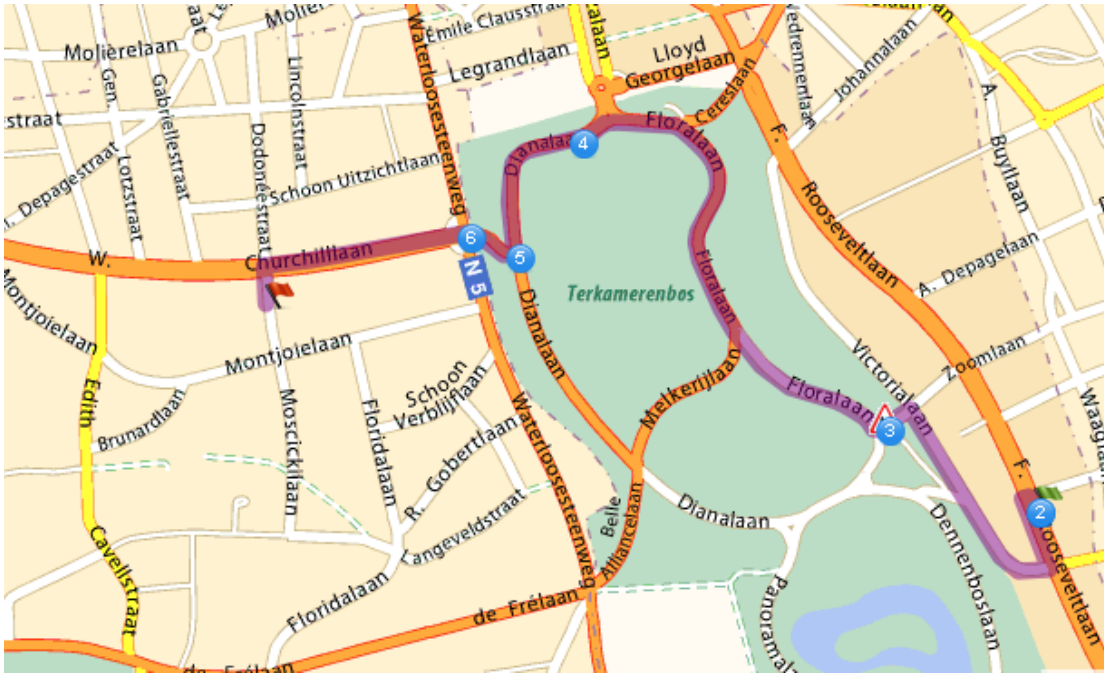
Villa Empain was built for the businessman and benefactor Louis Empain (1908 – 1976) and was designed by the Swiss architect Michel Polak. It's a masterpiece of Art Deco.

The young baron Empain only lived here for a short period. In 1937, he donated the house to the Belgian State, with the intention to make a museum for decorative art. In 1943, the villa was confiscated by the Gestapo and after the war, it got a lot of destinations and inhabitants, such as the Russian embassy and Radio-Television-Luxembourg. In 1990, it was closed and neglected. Only in 2007, the villa has been protected and now it is a centre for cultural and artistic dialogue between the oriental and western cultures. It's also an exhibition room.



Villa Empain is open every day from 10 till 18.30, closed on Mondays.

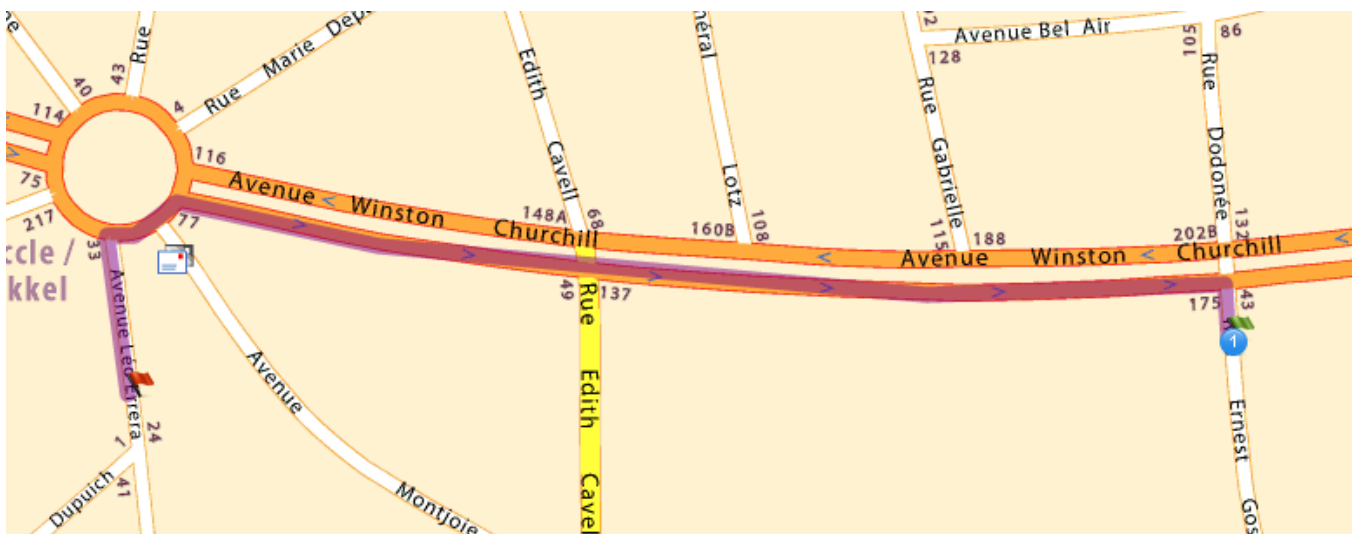
www.villaempain.com.



16. Labarre House

Ernest Gossartstraat 34, Ukkel

This house was built in 1936 by L. Tenaerts. It is the house of the painter R. Labarre and it was protected in 1998.



17. Museum David en Alice van Buuren

Léo Erreralaan 41, Ukkel



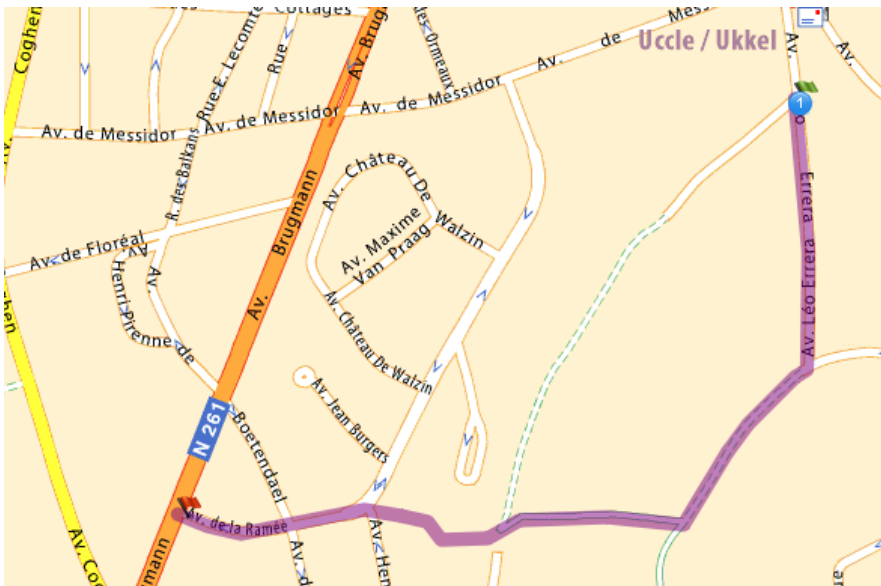
The Dutch art collectors David and Alice van Buuren visited the *Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels* in Paris in 1925. It was the beginning of a dream. They asked the Belgian architects Léon Govaerts and Alexis Van Vaerenbergh to design their 'ideal' house in the Léo Erreralaan in Ukkel. Between 1928 and 1940, the house became a mondain and intellectual salon, like the French "salons" from the 18th century. The house was visited by the artistic and intellectual

elite from that time.

The Museum David and Alice van Buuren exists since 1973.

The museum is open every day from 14 till 17.30 hours. Closed on Tuesdays.

More information: www.museumvanbuuren.com.

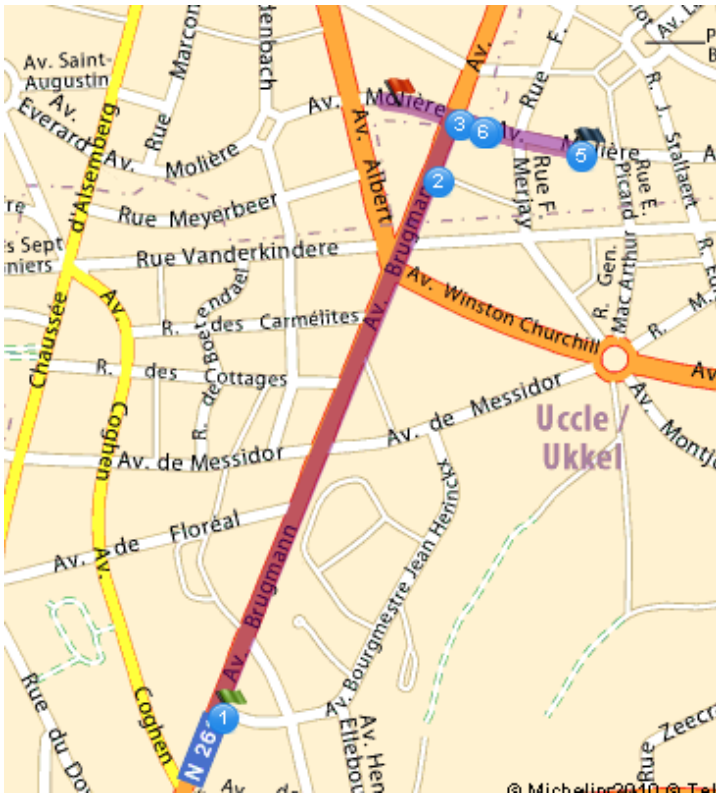


18. Haerens House

Brugmannlaan 384, Ukkel

In 1928, Antoine Courtens, a student from Victor Horta, designed the Haerens House, one of his most important realisations. He was architect, decorator, furniture designer and the most important representative of Art Deco in Brussels. This corner house was built for Robert Haerens, an engineer who worked for the Empain Group.





19. Dewin Houses, Molièrelaan

Molièrelaan 151 en 172, Brussel



The two houses of Jean-Baptiste Dewin in the Molièrelaan 151 and 172 are beautiful examples of the transition from Art Nouveau to Art Deco in the period from 1905 – 1920.

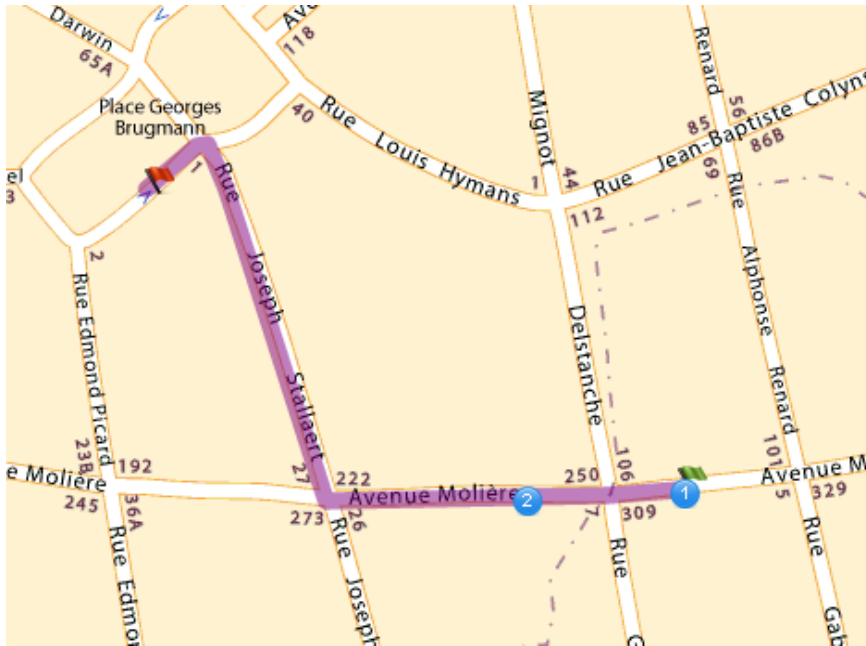
Dewin studied at the academy of Brussels. His earliest designs are characterized by a sober geometric Art Nouveau. Gradually, Dewin developed his own form of Art Deco, for which he used the local building traditions. He prefers animal designs and stained glass windows.

20. Art Deco Apartment

Molièrelaan 210, Elsene

This Art Deco apartment complex was built in 1929 by Joe Ramaekers. In 1995, it was protected as a monument.



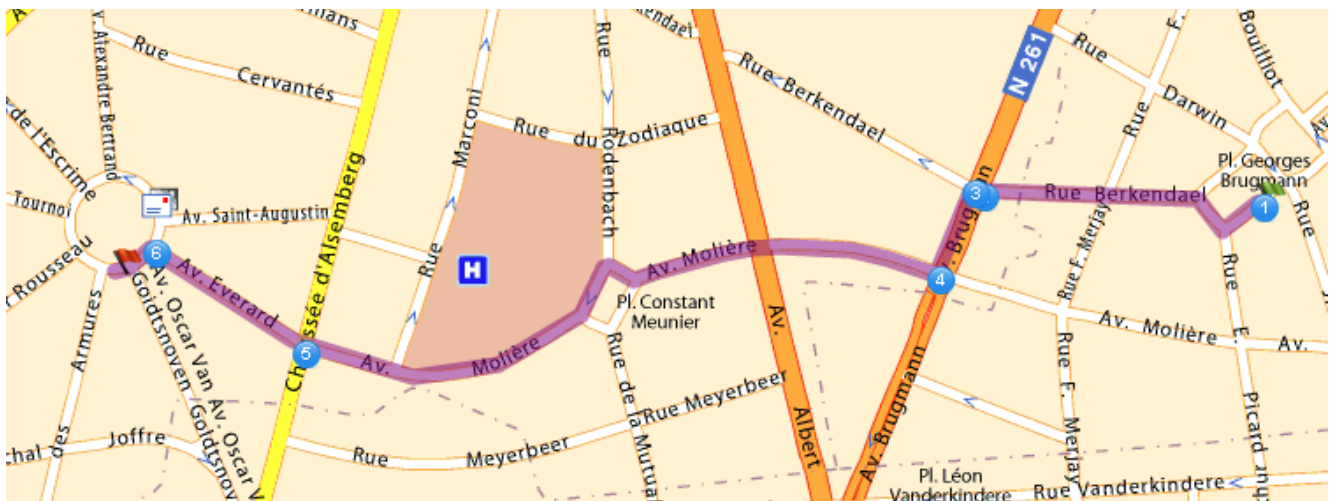


21. Former Medical – surgical Institute and Health Centre

Corner Georges Brugmannplein 29 and Joseph Stallaertstraat, 1 Elsene



This building in a sober Art Deco style was realised in 1926 by the architect Jean-Baptiste Dewin, for the Belgian Red Cross. The building was protected in 2006. The composition of the building is very sober and shows the concern for details which can be seen in the whole oeuvre of Jean-Baptiste Dewin.



22. Saint Augustine Church

Hoogte Honderdplein, Vorst

Under the influence of the president of the Church Fabric, Victor Dufays, professor civil architecture at the university of Leuven, the architects Léon Guinotte and André Watteyne started the building of the Saint Augustine Church in 1928.

The church was built at the Hoogte-Honderdplein in Vorst and was consecrated in 1936.

The eight streets from the quarter all lead up to the church.

The church is made of reinforced concrete and is a characteristic example of the revival of religious architecture of the interwar period.



23. City Hall, Vorst

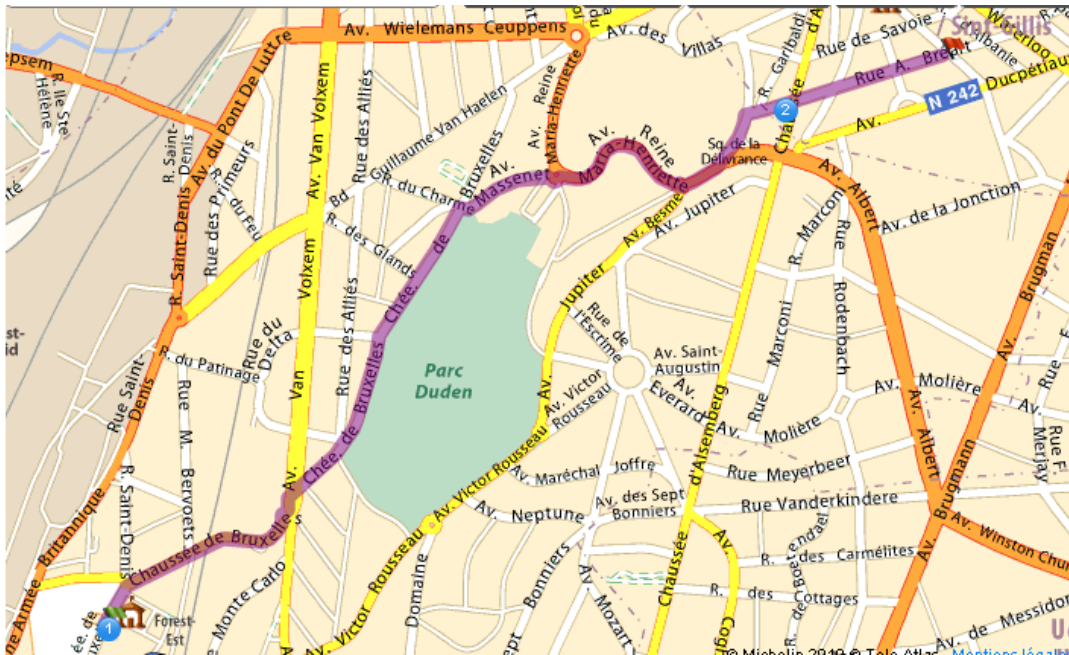
Pastoorstraat, Vorst



In 1925, Jean-Baptiste Dewin received the instruction to build a new city hall in Vorst, but due to financial problems, the works only started in 1934.

In 1939, the building was finished. The city hall is the personification of the demographic and economic development of Vorst, and is one of the most important and characteristic examples of Art Deco in Brussels. The façades are extensively decorated with animal motives which refers to the name of the community – Vorst is an old Dutch word for “forest” – and to the

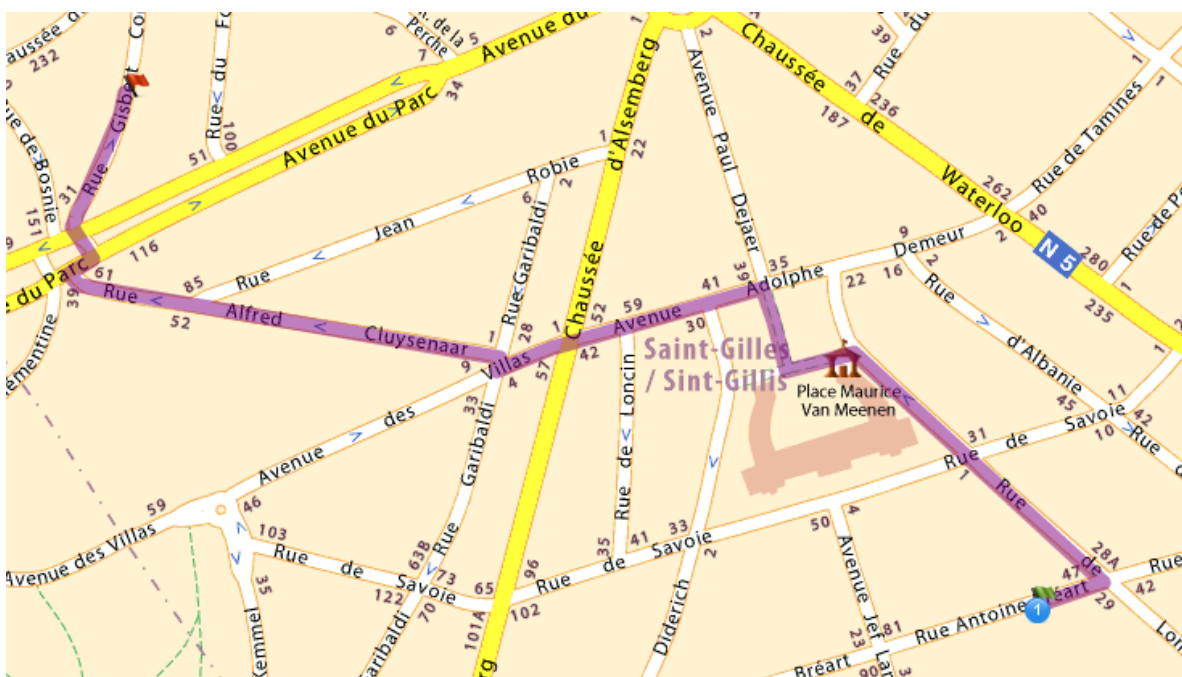
fact that this area in former times was part of the Sonian Forest.



24. Verbruggen House

Antoine Bréarstraat 47, Saint Gillis

Architect Pierre Verbruggen built this house for himself in 1924. The house was a remarkable building in the eclectic quarter around the city hall of Saint Gilles. Verbruggen had to deal with a lot of incomprehension from his contemporaries. In his correspondence with the community it appears that he had big difficulties with the acceptance of his design. Fortunately, the architect executed his plans, and today we can admire the result of his determination and talent.

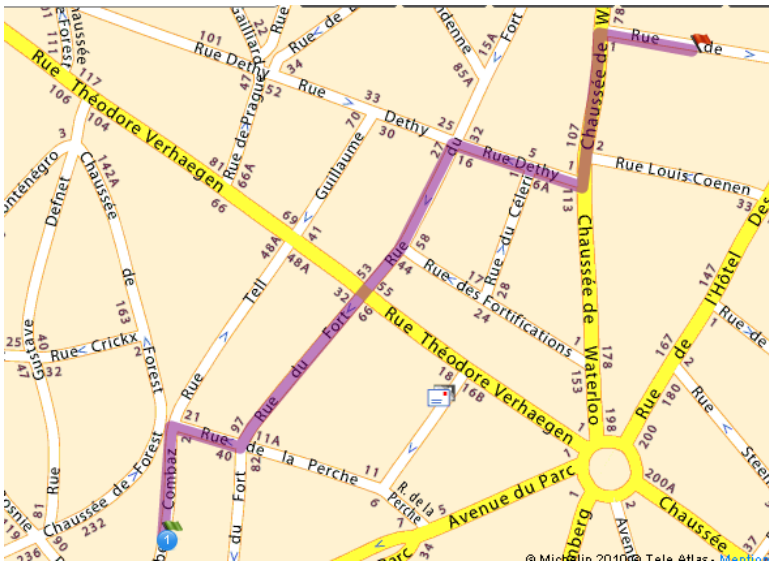


25. Sint-Gillishaard

Gisbert Combazstraat 10-14, Sint Gillis

The Cooperation of Saint Gilles for the Construction of Cheap Houses (Société coopérative Saint-gilloise de Construction d'habitations à bon marché) built different apartment complexes in the Gisbert Combazstraat.

The cooperation appointed four architects - Joseph Diongre, Armand Delalieux, Henri Derée and Franz Van Meulecom – to build ten apartment complexes in the same style. The tree buildings (numbers 10, 12 and 14) are in an Art Deco style from Joseph Diongre. They are characteristic for the expressionistic style from the architect.



26. Hoguet House

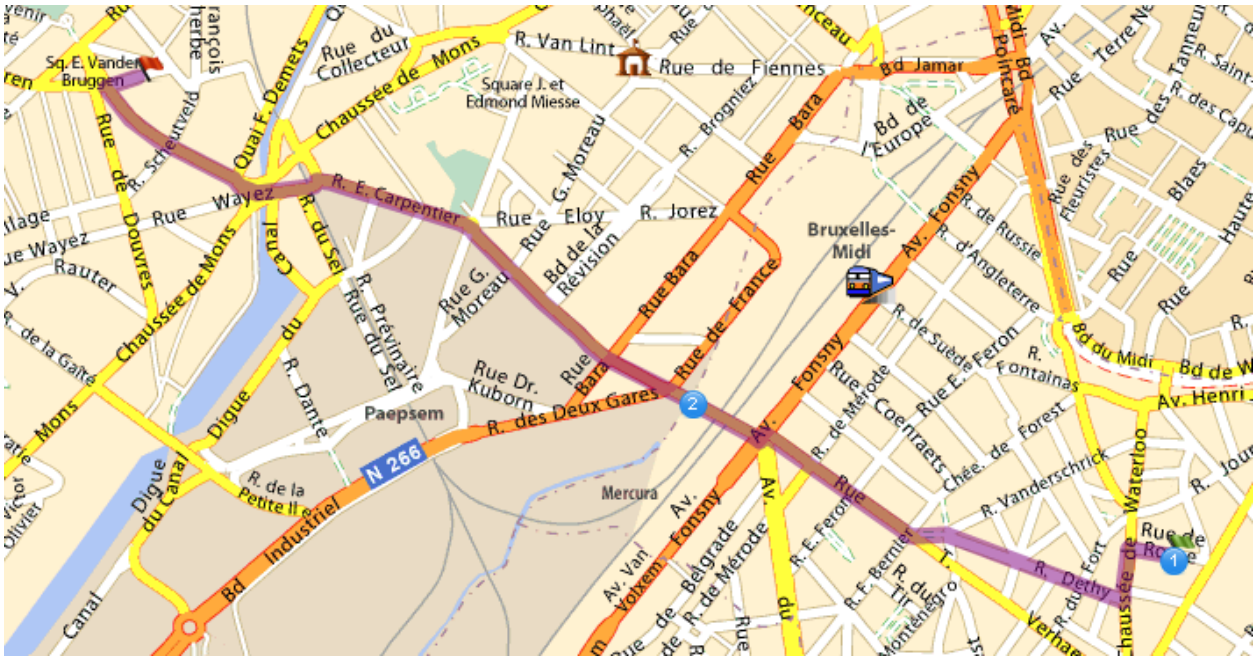
Romestraat 24-28, Sint Gillis



The Hoguet House is a unique witness of the ready made clothes industry which was very important in Saint Gilles from the beginning of the 19th century till its crash in 1980.

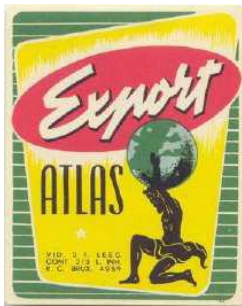
In 1929, Mr. Hoguet gave the order to build this workshop/house. The company was already very famous then. They owned a shop in the Waterloosesteenweg and sub-offices in the centre of Brussels, Sint-Joost and Schaarbeek. Hoguet appealed to the architect G. Ligo from Vorst. He probably designed the interior too.

The family Hoguet donated the house to the community with the explicit wish to give it a cultural destination. The house was protected in 1998, and today the “Centre of the Book” is established here.



27. Former Brewery Atlas

Vrij-Onderzoekstraat 13, Anderlecht



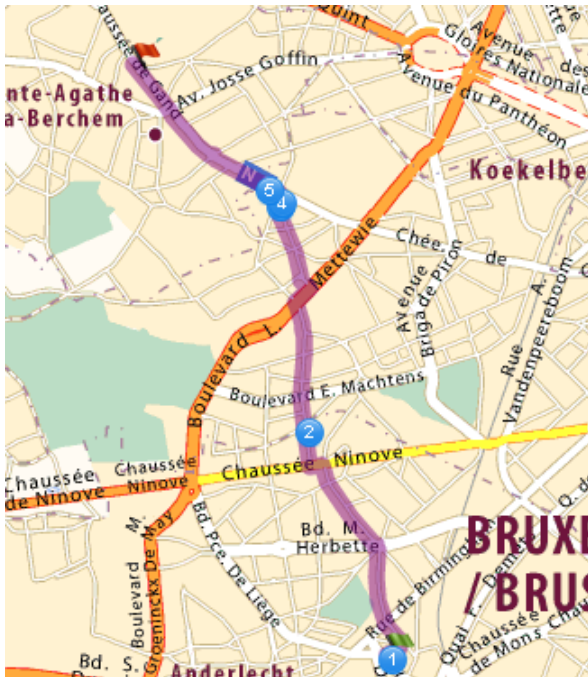
In 1912, this brewery was founded. In this district, all the activities for the fabrication of beer were centralised: breweries, bottle producers and brew machine producers.

In 1926, the factory tower of 30 meters was built. The tower is not only an example of the advertising function of Art Deco, but it is also an example of an ingenious construction technique.

The activities of the brewery were stopped in 1952, but the Atlas beer was still produced by the Haecht Brewery till 1980. Haecht kept using the buildings in Anderlecht as a depot.

Some years ago, the brewery was bought by the non profit organisation Emmaüs. It was protected in 2001.





28. Former cinema Forum

Gentssesteenweg 42-46, Sint-Jans-Molenbeek

In the beginning of the 20th century, there were five cinemas in a ray of 100 meters in Sint-Jans-Molenbeek, with seats for 5000 people. The original façade from 1921 is conserved. The cinema was designed by the architect E. Poupko. The maximum number of seats was 1425 in 1967. The cinema was closed in 1975, and now there is a clothes store. Cinema Forum was protected in 1997.



29. Basilica of Koekelberg

After this beautiful cycling tour alongside the most beautiful Art Deco buildings of our capital, we arrived at our starting point: the Basilica of Koekelberg, a magnificent Art Deco Monument and World Heritage of the UNESCO.