From demolition towards preservation

A paradigm shift for building in Brussels

1987-2025

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Construction and demolition waste in Belgium

C&DW (ton) /capita (2016)

Europe
Belgium
The Netherlands
Germany
France
United Kingdom
Denmark
Italy
Spain
Portugal
Poland

C&DW (ton) in Belgium

22 658 151

8 000 000
Brussels Capital Region produces 600 000 – 1 000 000 ton of C&DW annually.

The demolition of the WTC towers produced 100 000 ton, or 10 - 17% of the annual C&D waste.
What is the environmental and social impact of the premature demolition of large-scale buildings and why is this still the norm?

Demolition of the Tour Bleue in 1993
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Narratives on the city and demolition
“Cet immeuble n’était pas rationnel, explique Alain Devos, le patron du département immobilier d'AG 1824. Et l’esthétique a joué: si cet immeuble avait eu de la valeur, nous l’aurions conservé, mais non, alors nous avons décidé de le démolir.”

– Le Soir, 18/03/1993

“J'avais beaucoup entendu parler de ce projet bruxellois, a déclaré le prince. Et je suis très désappointé de ne pas avoir pu détruire moi-même cette horrible tour Bleue. Ah! Si j'avais eu un bâton de dynamite en poche. Mais je n'en emporte jamais dans mes bagages...”

- Le Soir, 20/11/1992
The inventorisation of large-scale demolition projects to gain insight in patterns in demolition practices regarding location, function, age, aesthetics,.. of the buildings.
Critical reflection on premature demolition and obsolescence in Brussels context
Identify the relations between urban policies and demolition practices.

Formulate recommendations for future policy making
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Who decided what
Case studies: demolition and preservation projects in BXL 1987-2022 to understand motives and decision processes of project teams.
What can heritage studies contribute to the preservation of young buildings
Develop an alternative consultancy protocol and instruments to maximise preservation and provide methods, arguments and best practices to guide project teams in the maximalisation of the preservation of existing buildings.
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