VALUE ASSESSMENT OF YOUNG HERITAGE

THE IMPORTANCE OF MATERIALITY IN AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

MARYLISE PAREIN, INE WOUTERS AND STEPHANIE VAN DE VOORDE

'Preservation is overtaking us.'[1] In 2004 Rem Koolhaas asserted, in his typically provocative manner, that the buildings we are protecting are getting progressively younger: at the beginning of the nineteenth century the age of heritage was around two thousand years, by 1900 that had been reduced to two hundred, while at the last turn of the century quite recent buildings were being recognized or protected as heritage, like OMA's Villa Lemoine in Bordeaux – completed in 1998, listed in 2002.[2] Although Villa Lemoine is an exception, we indeed see a trend towards ever shorter historical distances to heritage objects.[3] But how should we deal with that 'young heritage'? While Koolhaas proposes a somewhat ad hoc approach, we underscore the importance of a scientific framework.

◄ 1. ASLK office building in Brussels, elevation on Broekstraat (photo W. Kenis, urban.brussels 2021)

Three aspects are of particular relevance: what do we mean by the term 'young heritage', how do we determine the value of that young heritage, and what expertise is required to recognize its specific qualities?

This article considers these three questions. In the first part we look at how the term 'young heritage' is interpreted and what is specific to it. We focus in particular on materiality as one of the properties that make it not only relevant but also essential to pay special attention to young heritage within the wider heritage field. The second part focuses on the methods and instruments employed in the assessment and protection of young heritage in the Brussels-Capital Region, again with particular attention to materiality. Interest in young heritage has increased in Brussels in recent years; a new assessment method introduced in 2021 is also being applied to recent objects. In addition, in-depth research is being conducted on the relation between the heritage value and materiality of young heritage.[4] Therefore, in the third part the importance of materiality in young heritage is examined in detail with reference to two projects that have been included in the Brussels Inventory of Architectural Heritage. Highlighting the importance of expertise with the materials used, we argue for a more integrated approach to materiality aimed at recognizing the specificity of young heritage.

YOUNG HERITAGE

The question of how young architectural heritage can be is not easily answered.[5] The (minimum) historical distance for a building to be recognized or listed as heritage differs from country to country, and even from region to region. Moreover, theory is not the same as practice: the minimum age applied in practice is often an unspoken rule of thumb rather than an official administrative rule. In Flanders, for example, thirty years is the (unofficial) benchmark, whereas in the Walloon provinces there is no age limit. There is no strict minimum age in Brussels either, but an analysis of post-1945 listed buildings yields an average age of fifty years.[6] Recent years have seen the emergence of an international debate about 'young heritage' in which various terms have been used, including 'recent heritage', 'modern heritage' and 'Post 65 heritage'; only the last entails a specific time span (1965-1990).[7] There is no consensus on the application of a minimum age. Some heritage experts argue for a minimum historical distance on the grounds that it is indispensable for positioning a building within the historical context and the architect's body of work.[8] Others, keenly aware of the vulnerability of young heritage, are opposed to a minimum age.[9] There are legitimate arguments for both standpoints: rather than opposing views, they represent two conditions or parameters that are related to each other.

Young heritage is indeed vulnerable. Valuable buildings are being radically renovated or even demolished, often in response to increasingly strict energy performance requirements, before it has been possible to assess their value.[10] Sensitization and greater recognition of the specificity of young heritage are consequently essential. That recognition must, however, be based on extensive expertise, supported by both primary and secondary sources on the built object and its position in the wider context. Yet, the availability and reproduction of such extensive expertise is not evident. As *Conserving Twentieth-Century Built Heritage. A Bibliography* makes clear, the main focus of most publications is on buildings dating from before 1970.[11] Buildings less than fifty years old are significantly under-represented. In the last few years there has been growing interest in late-twentieth-century architecture on the part of organizations like the Getty Conservation Institute, Icomos, DOCOMOMO and The Twentieth Century Society.[12] But all too often knowledge about the realization and conservation of that architecture is confined to specific buildings.

MATERIALITY AND ARCHITECTURE

Increasing the body of knowledge on young heritage is particularly crucial regarding its materiality. Materiality is not confined to building materials and techniques but relates to the broader building culture which, following Howard Davis' definition, encompasses the complex and coordinated system of people, relationships, building types, knowledge, procedures, techniques, and habits that surrounds the building process.[13] In *The Materiality of Architecture*, Antoine Picon emphasizes the importance of materiality in a broader sense. He argues that the notion of 'materiality' applies not only to the material dimension or substance of a building or object, but is highly contingent on technical, economic and cultural factors, the availability of materials and machines, and the organization of labour. In other words, materiality is not a clear-cut concept, but strongly rooted in a wide historical context. As a result, different 'regimes of materiality' arise, related to a specific time and place.[14] The final decades of the twentieth century are also characterized by a specific 'materiality regime'. Building on the post-war emergence of new, innovative and complex building materials, a wide range of high-performance materials like high-strength concrete and high-efficiency glass were adopted.[15] Traditional materials like brick also made a comeback with numerous variations and improvements, and DIY materials entered into the market. At the same time, materials were being applied in specific ways (cf. the increasing popularity of the masonry cavity wall), which gave rise to particular

issues such as thermal bridges. Furthermore, regulations increased: the exponential growth of standards went hand in hand with ever higher performance requirements and the transition to EU-wide standards.

Given the importance of the concept of materiality for the architecture of the last decades of the twentieth century, it merits a special place in the recognition and value assessment of young heritage. This should not be limited to the absolute value or material properties (structural, chemical, technical, et cetera) in their original and present-day condition. It is important to also look at their relative value and positioning vis-à-vis the aesthetic, cultural, scientific, technical and socio-economic standards of the day (that is the then prevailing building culture or the materiality regime) in order to unveil its relationship with, for example, social, urban, and artistic developments and values. Therefore, several recent research projects in Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland have explicitly focused on the materiality of young heritage.[16]

In practice, value assessment methods often reduce the use of materials to experimentation with new materials and innovative construction techniques. Yet, calling for an interpretation of materiality that looks beyond the material substance or structural innovations when assessing young heritage, is not so unorthodox. One of the general principles of value assessment is that it is necessary to look both at the intrinsic value of the object itself, and at its value in relation to the context. We therefore look at how a broad approach to materiality can be implemented in current value assessments– like that employed in the Brussels-Capital Region.

VALUE ASSESSMENT OF BRUSSELS HERITAGE

In Belgium heritage is a regional competence; the Brussels-Capital Region thus employs a different method from the Flemish and Walloon Regions. In neither of the three regions a specific method for evaluating young heritage is employed. This begs the question of whether the 'regular' method and instruments are capable or appropriate to recognise the specificity of young heritage.

In the Brussels-Capital Region, three heritage statutes can be assigned: 'inventoried heritage' ["geïnventariseerd erfgoed"], 'heritage included in the safeguarding register' ["erfgoed ingeschreven op de bewaarlijst"] and 'listed heritage' ["beschermd erfgoed"].[17] Inventoried heritage is included in the Inventory of Architectural Heritage. Inclusion in the Inventory carries no legal or financial implications: it is simply a means to identify buildings with heritage value and can be a first step towards preservation or protection. The two other categories, 'heritage included in the safeguarding register' and 'listed , are heritage' both part of the Register of Safeguarded Heritage. Both statutes are permanently and legally binding, with a view to the preservation of the buildings concerned. This means that prior permission is required for any modifications, but what is then permitted differs: the status of listed heritage is very restrictive, whereas 'being included in the safeguarding register' allows for more flexibility.[18] Whereas inventorying and listing are standard instruments for recognizing and conserving heritage, the statute of 'being included in the safeguarding register' is unique to Brussels. It has been used since the late twentieth century for buildings where a strictly enforced protection might stand in the way of its continued use and preservation. For instance, in the case of office buildings that no longer meet contemporary energy and comfort requirements, certain conversions might be permitted provided they do not conflict with the heritage significance.

None of the three statutes entails a minimum age. Nevertheless, only four buildings dating from 1970 or later are safeguarded: the CBR office building by the architect Constantin Brodzki (Watermaal-Bosvoorde, 1970), the Longchamp swimming pool by Charles de Meutter (Ukkel, 1971), the rectorat building of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel by Renaat Braem (Elsene, 1974-1978) and student housing La Maison Médicale (La Mémé) by Lucien Kroll (Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe, 1970-1982).[19] The Inventory of Architectural Heritage yields a better result for young heritage (c. 190 out of a total of 25,000 entries). Furthermore, the inventory also includes buildings realized in the 1980s and '90s.[20] However, given that Brussels has a total of some 195,000 buildings, 19,000 of which were built after 1971, young heritage is seriously under-represented in the Inventory as well. This can be partially explained by the method used in setting up the inventory: until recently, the only buildings realized after 1970 considered for inclusion were those of an exceptional nature that were also designed by a famous architect.[21] In 2021 these requirements for young heritage were abandoned. This amendment was in tune with the ambition of the current Brussels regional government (2018-2024) to put greater emphasis on inventorying and protecting post-war heritage.[22] Also worth mentioning in this context is the recent thematic inventory of architectural heritage from the period 1939-1999. This undertaking drew on a survey towards the general public, but more especially on a comprehensive academic survey supported by systematic field research.[23] The results of this exercise are currently being included in the official Inventory.

NEW ASSESSMENT METHOD

The new method that has been in use since 2021 for drawing up the Inventory of Architectural Heritage is based on ten heritage values (archeological, artistic, aesthetic, historical, landscape, social, urban design, technical, folkloric, scientific) and six heritage criteria (authenticity, contextual value, ensemble value, integrity, representativity, rarity).[24] While theoretically it suffices to meet one of the heritage values and one of the criteria to be included in the Inventory, in practice it usually involves a combination of several mutually reinforcing values and criteria. In addition, the value assessment is not based solely on intrinsic grounds; a comparison with similar buildings on several levels, from local to international, also needs to be carried out. Although the formulated values and criteria are identical to those that were already used for listing heritage, the various statutes work with different 'weights' for these criteria and values.

With respect to young heritage, additional 'discriminatory' conditions were dropped. In fact, the new method explicitly states that there is 'no time limit, so that even young architecture qualifies for inclusion in the inventory'. But does this offer sufficient possibilities for recognizing the specificity of young heritage? There are a few values and criteria that do not appear to apply to young heritage, such as 'archaeological value' and 'historical value'. Nor do 'rarity' and 'authenticity' seem particularly relevant: not only are there large numbers of young buildings, but many have already been renovated without regard for possible heritage values. On the other hand, the description of values and criteria does provide opportunities, allowing for a broad interpretation and nuanced application geared to the specific characteristics of the type of heritage under consideration. So the values mentioned above may after all play a role. For instance, historical value can be assigned, even to young heritage, if it 'bears witness to a special period in the history of the region or municipality'. The historical value of young heritage is however often limited, and rather secondary or supporting other attributed values (landscape, social or urban design). One example of this is the De Drevekens project described below: it is typical of 1970s housing schemes in Brussels and illustrates the search for an innovative spatial design model.

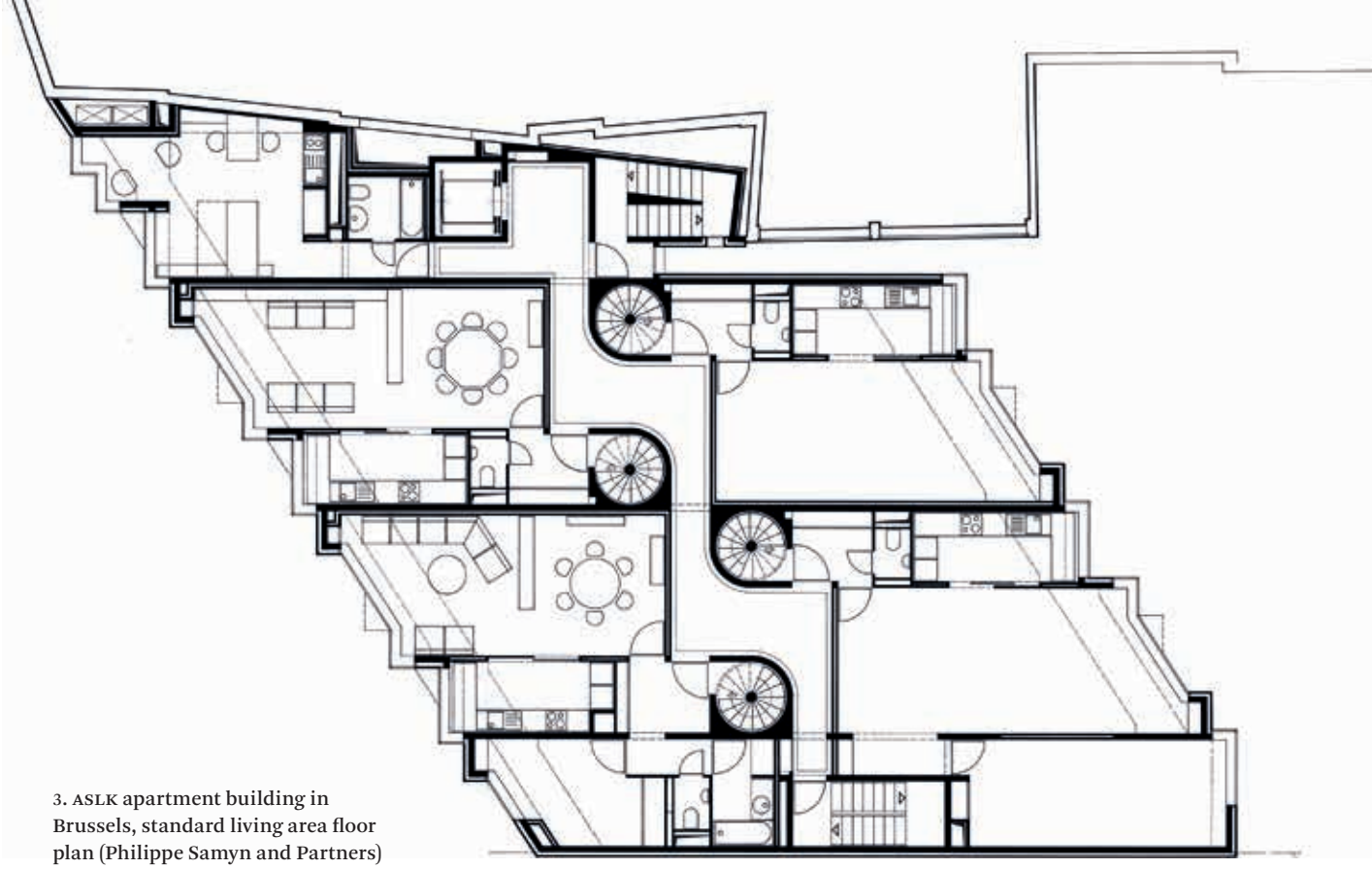
The new method also makes it possible to take account of the materiality of young heritage. Until 2021 'use of materials' was a separate criterion, yet its interpretation was explicitly restricted to the use of and experimentation with new materials. Today, the use of materials and building techniques is no longer considered as a separate criterion, yet is integrated in the assessment of artistic, technical and scientific values, and the criteria on rarity, authenticity, ensemble value and integrity, which enables a more nuanced approach. In artistic value, for example, materials and technical mastery are taken into account when referring to the 'execution'. As for the technical value, this can be related to the early use of a particular material or technique, buildings of structural or technological significance, a structural or technological tour de force, technological innovation, and witnesses of former building methods. Special and experimental materials, construction processes or components are recognized under scientific value.[25] With regard to the heritage criteria, rarity entails a consideration in relation to the building-historical context, including the common building techniques and materials of the time. With regard to ensemble value, a homogeneous construction method and architectural coherence are put forward as important considerations. These non-limiting descriptions, in combination with the encouragement to link various values (for example technical and scientific value), provide opportunities to recognise the materiality of young heritage based on several, possibly mutually reinforcing criteria. Below we discuss in detail two case studies that underscore the importance of materiality in heritage value. Both are included in the Brussels Inventory of Architectural Heritage.

THE ASLK APARTMENT BUILDING

The first case study is the ASLK apartment building in Brussels (1985-1986). Upon completion, the architectural press praised the strong architectural expression of its elevations. Our analysis shows that this expression owed much to the carefully considered detailing, including of elements that are not visible.

The construction of the building is indirectly linked to the development of the first large computers in the 1970s. In the banking sector the transition to computerized operations was fairly rapid since no bank wanted to lag behind its competitors in terms of technology. For the Algemene Spaar- en Lijfrentekas bank (ASLK) that technological switch led to an expansion of its offices: the main office on Wolvengracht in the centre of Brussels was too small to accommodate the integration of computer technology, so the bank decided to buy up several properties in a nearby block and to build a new office on the site.[26] The block, bounded by Koolstraat, Broekstraat and Martelarenplein, was already densely built, presenting the designers with a complex jigsaw to fit the various functions together. The largest and most impressive building was erected on Broekstraat (fig. 1). The delivery and car park entrance was on Koolstraat. This was topped, probably at the request of the city council, by a five-storey apartment building (fig. 2). The design of the project as a whole was entrusted to three Belgian design teams:

2. ASLK apartment building in Brussels, elevation on Koolstraat (photo J. Bauters, 1980s)



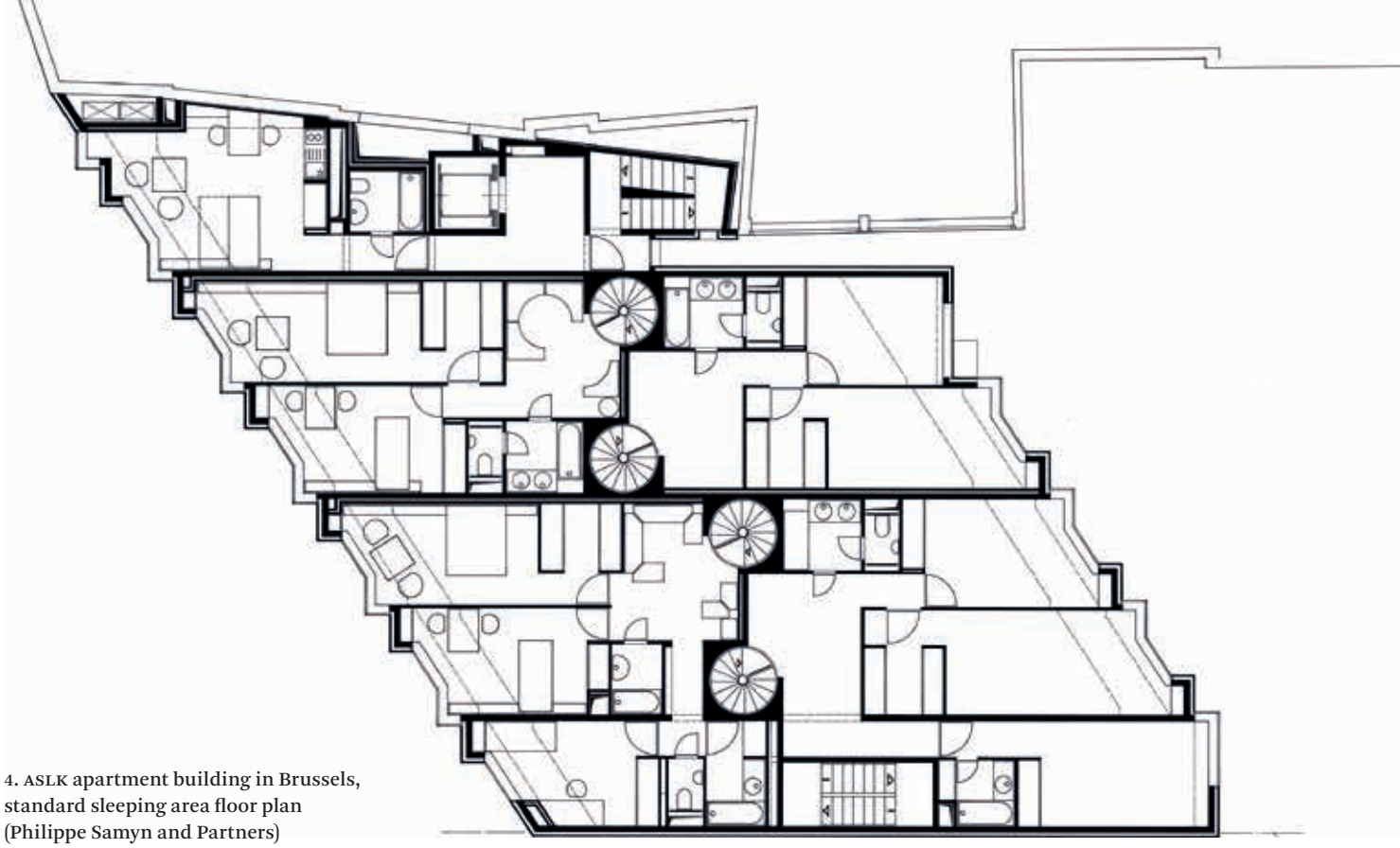
3. ASLK apartment building in Brussels, standard living area floor plan (Philippe Samyn and Partners)

the office of Walter Bresseleers, the ad hoc partnership of Albert De Doncker – Jacques Wybauw – Philippe Samyn, and the office of Henri Guchez. The apartment building on Koolstraat was designed by the architect and civil engineer Philippe Samyn.[27]

The design of the apartment building was complicated by the constraints of the programme (including a car park entrance at street level and residential function on the floors above) and the building's north-south orientation. The individual apartments extend over two floors: the lower floor contains the living areas, the upper floor the bedrooms (figs. 3 and 4). An internal spiral staircase links the two sections. Each living and bedroom floor takes up just half the building depth. Because they are horizontally alternated, each apartment enjoys a double orientation (fig. 5).

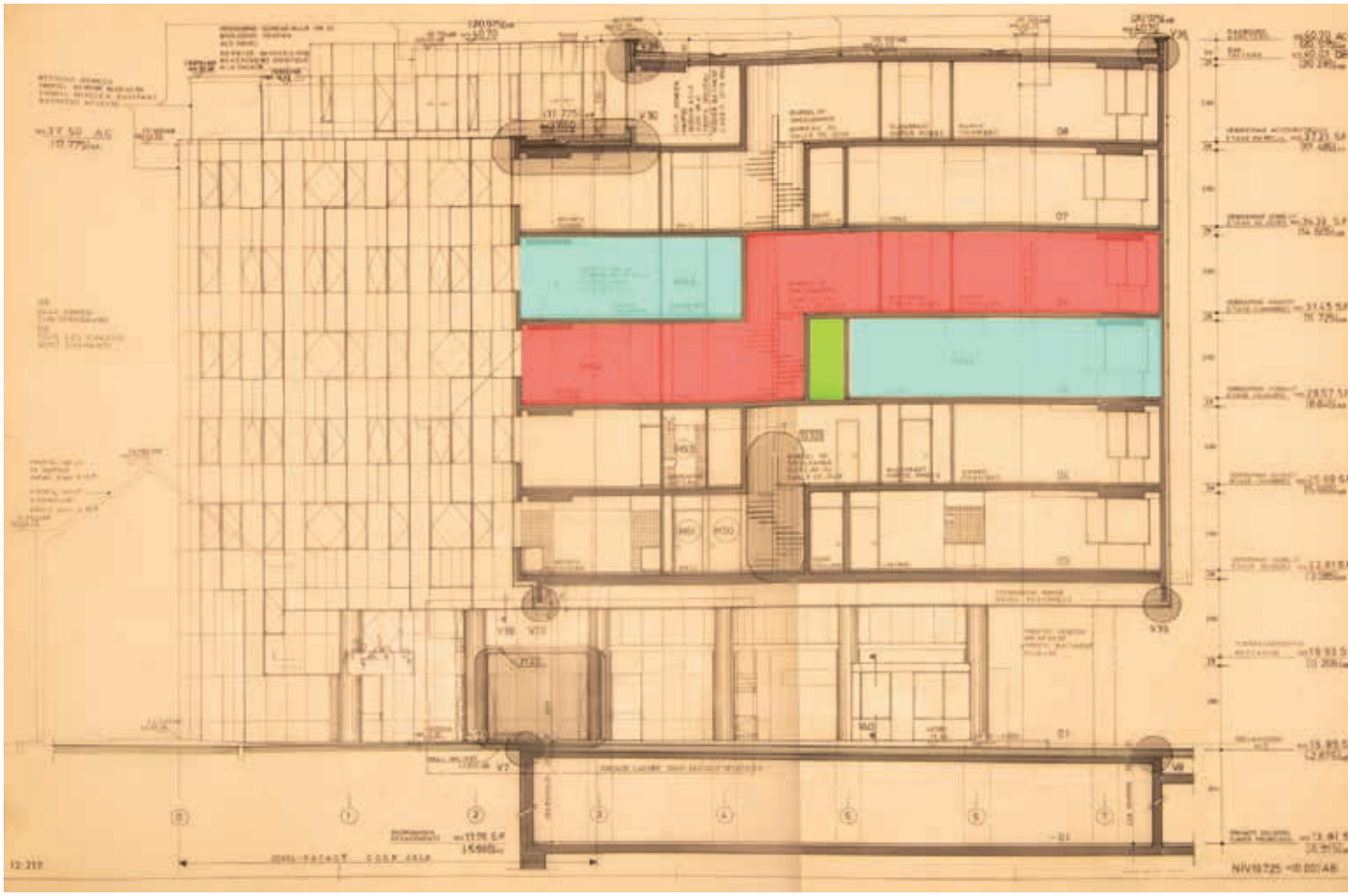
Although the apartment building was not the main part of the building programme, a great deal of thought went into the design of its elevation. In terms of design and materials it resonates with the bank building on Broekstraat. The travertine facade cladding was chosen to match the colour of the white stone elevations on Broekstraat. In addition, the two building volumes have a similar architectonic expression: sharp, elongated triangular projections on the bank elevation and a 'folded' elevation for the apartment building. The travertine facade panels, executed with mitred corners, are ideal for such forms. The windows and the pleats in the facade are aligned in such a way as to optimise the view from the inside and the daylighting of the apartments. In that respect it also appears that the alignment of the windows in the facade plane is not purely aesthetic but has also been designed to increase the incidence of daylight. On top of that, the windows are structurally advanced. Because they are flush with the outer plane of the facade, the window frames could not be mounted and directly fixed to the load-bearing structure in the way that was usual in the 1980s. Instead, they were extended five centimetres beyond the load-bearing elements by means of metal anchors (fig. 6). This solution was subsequently employed more frequently, especially because of the continuing increase in the thickness of the thermal insulation. Equally remarkable is the attention to windproofing, a concept that only started to catch on in Belgium in the 1990s.[28] The technical detailing in the (preliminary) design of 1982 shows that the window openings were rendered windtight by sealing the window frames on all four sides with synthetic rubber flashing (Butyl).

When considering how materiality might be included in the value assessment of this building, the use of travertine and its distinctive structural detailing can be seen as contributing to the aesthetic and artistic value of the building. Although the use of Butyl is not visible, it too merits special attention in the value assessment: it can be regarded as the application of an innovative material (in accordance with the previous 'use of materials' criterion), but also signals a completely new technological development, in particular



4. ASLK apartment building in Brussels, standard sleeping area floor plan (Philippe Samyn and Partners)

5. ASLK apartment building in Brussels, cross-section. Two apartments highlighted (red and blue) as well as shared corridor (green) by the author (State Archives of Belgium)

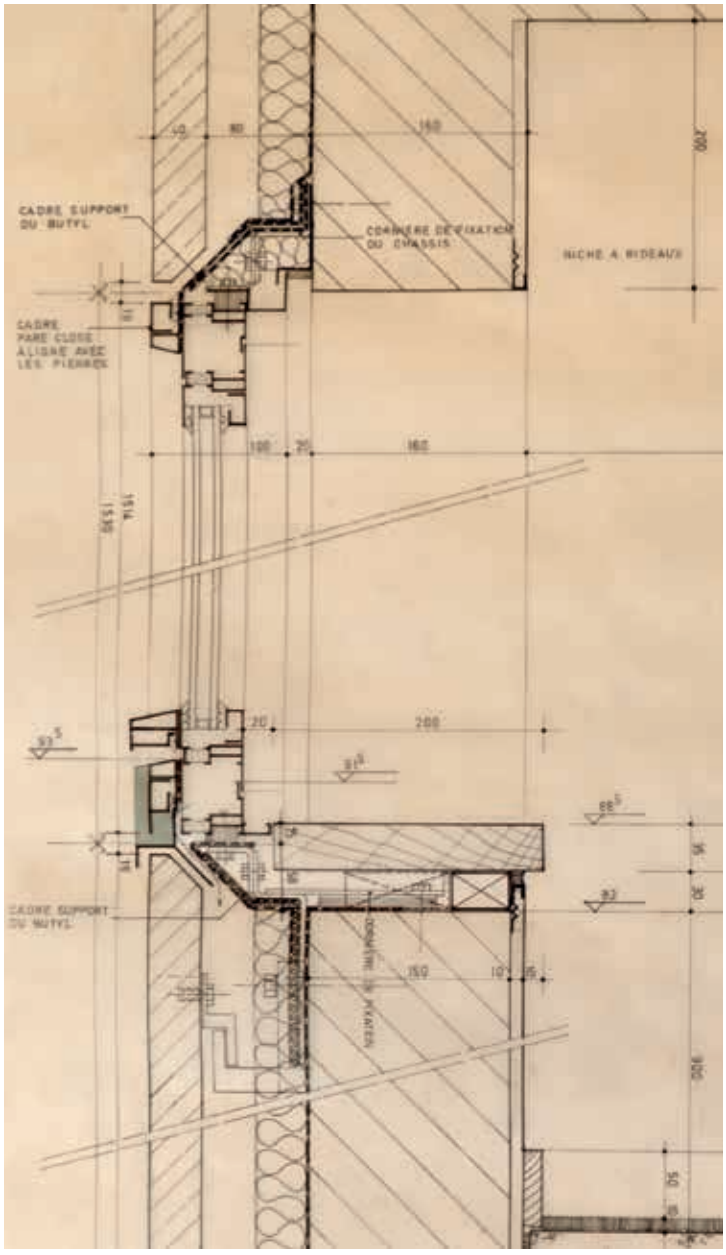


in the area of windtightness. At the time, Butyl was used primarily for damp barriers in roofs, but had not yet been used to windproof windows. This positioning with regard to the prevailing building culture demonstrates that not solely the use of the material in itself, but also its specific use for windproofing is important for correctly assessing the technical value.

DE DREVEKENS

The second case study is De Drevekens, a large-scale housing scheme comprising 360 dwellings in Sint-Pieters-Woluwe (1975-1977), designed by the multidisciplinary design studio Architectes, Urbanistes, Sociologues, Ingénieurs, Associés (AUSIA). The use of materials here is not so much technically advanced, but rather representative for the time period and contributing to the ensemble value. For the spatial configuration the designers drew inspiration from the large-scale 'megastructures' of interconnected modular (residential) units (fig. 7).[29] The result is a district consisting of a single continuous ribbon of buildings – not one elongated volume, but a conglomeration of diverse volumes that together form a single whole. Access to the individual dwellings is via a network of car-free streets and paths on different levels. As such, the project combines the advantages of the individual dwelling, like private access and a sense of security, with the advantages of housing blocks (primarily shared amenities).

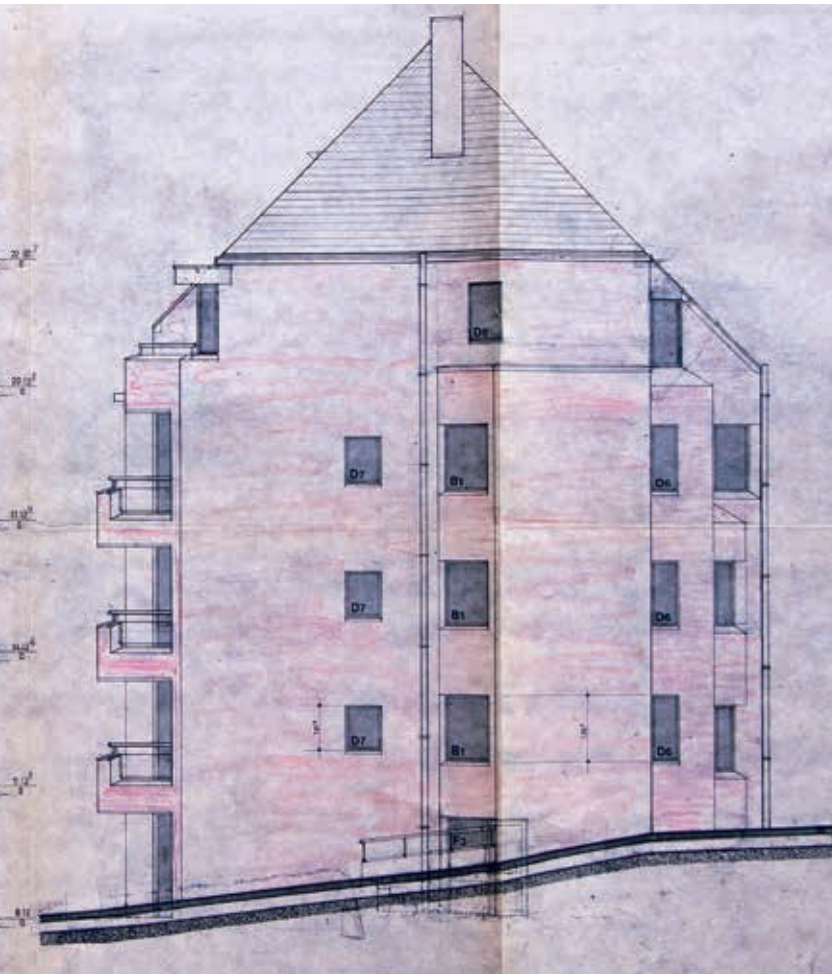
6. ASLK apartment building in Brussels, section through window in elevation (State Archives of Belgium)



The project is defined by the sloping roof planes that act as the unifying element between the volumes. From the 1960s, the sloping roof grew in popularity in Belgium, for both individual dwellings and apartment buildings, while the modernist flat roof fell out of favour (fig. 8). The roof plane was often maximized, becoming an explicit component of the architectural design. In some instances in the 1960s and '70s the roof forms a kind of mantle around the building, with the slates or tiles being used as both facade cladding and roofing material (fig. 9). The return and 'expansion' of the sloping roof brought with it a growing use of different roofing materials like fibre cement slates. These had been on the market since the beginning of the twentieth century, but now began to be used much more widely: about one in four 1970s housing projects included in the Brussels Inventory of Architectural Heritage has a roof and/or facade clad with fibre cement slates. They were available in a wide range of colours and shapes and were also cheaper than stone slates. As the name implies, fibre cement slates consist chiefly of cement and fibres – mainly asbestos fibres.[30] Despite the public debate about the health risks of asbestos in the 1970s, the first asbestos-free slates were not produced until the mid-1980s.[31]

Research into the history, application and evolution of fibre cement slates in relation to the building culture of the time shows that the slates used in De Drevekens were neither unique nor innovative: slates with the same composition, size, colour and texture were used in countless other Brussels (housing) projects in the 1960s and '70s. Even the attachment method using hooks and nails on timber battening is very common. Therefore, it is difficult to attribute a technical heritage value to the project. Yet, because it is so typical or common, this use of slates is representative of general trends in housing in Brussels of that time. In addition, the slates contribute greatly to the ensemble value. In this respect, and considering that striving for material authenticity in the case of restoration would

7. De Drevekens housing estate in Sint-Pieters-Woluwe, Brussels (aerial photo Ministry of Public Works, 1970s)



8. Atelier d'architecture et d'urbanisme, side elevation of apartment building in Ukkel, Brussels, 1975 (Archives Louis De Waele, Machelen)

9. Advertisement for Eternit slates (*A+: architectuur, stedebouw, design* 16 [1975])

be complicated by the presence of asbestos fibres, it is important to note that the exact composition of the material is less important than the overall materiality: the homogeneous construction method and the architectural coherence generated by the uniform application of the slates in roofs and elevations, and the interplay with the facade brickwork, ensure a close connection between the materiality and typology, with the expansive and visually defining function of slates being crucial in the overall spatial effect (fig. 10).

CONCLUSION

Following the increasing interest in young heritage in heritage circles in recent years, the imperative for a scientifically based framework for the recognition and value assessment of this heritage becomes stronger. Several terms are used to delineate 'young' heritage, some defined more precisely in terms of chronology or age than others. Yet, for assessing the value of young heritage, defining an exact time limit is not necessary, as it is neither desirable nor productive to evaluate this as a separate category, using a value assessment method specifically geared to its age. It is, however, important that general value assessment methods allow for the specificity of young heritage to be recognized. A major challenge lies in the fact that much of the necessary knowledge about young heritage still needs to be assembled, including in the area of materiality, and that the method used to assess the value of young heritage allows for this knowledge to be implemented.

The heritage value assessment method used since 2021 by the Brussels-Capital Region allows for the recognition of the specificity of young heritage. What is crucial in this respect is the openness to interpretation in relation to the various heritage values and criteria; a strict or traditional understanding of criteria like 'rarity' or 'historical value' is clearly inadequate and unhelpful in the case of young heritage. A second important aspect of the Brussels method is that values and criteria are not considered separately but can be linked to one another. In that integrated approach, different values can reinforce one another and the positioning of an object vis-à-vis the wider context is also taken into account.

Each of the two case studies illustrates in a different way the importance and the challenges of a correct value assessment of young heritage. Our analysis focused specifically on the aspect of materiality. The ASLK apartment building demonstrates that rather than concentrating solely on the material itself, this should be evaluated within the wider construction culture of the time to grasp its innovative character. By contrast, the De Drevekens project shows that even unexceptional materials can contribute to the her-

10. De Drevekens housing estate in Sint-Pieters-Woluwe, Brussels (photo P. Braquenier, urban.brussels, 2022)

itage value. Despite the differences, both case studies underscore the importance of (research into) materiality and of an integrated approach to this in assessing young heritage: only with a sufficiently broad and deep insight into materiality is it possible to reach a correct and specific interpretation of the heritage values and criteria. This applies of course to every heritage object, irrespective of period, but our incomplete knowledge about the materiality regime of the last part of the twentieth century means that young heritage is in danger of not being assessed on its merits. Nor is materiality the only aspect requiring special attention: more knowledge is needed about other aspects, such as architectural culture, alternative forms of living, or urban design developments, in order to arrive at a correct and nuanced value assessment of young heritage.

NOTEN

1 R. Koolhaas, 'Preservation is overtaking us', *Future Anterior. Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism 1* (2004) 2, xiv, 1-3, www.jstor.org/stable/25834941?seq=3.

2 Le ministère de la Culture (France), policy document 'Maison Lemoine' (PA33000068), published on 16 March 2003, www.pop.culture.gouv.fr.

3 G.J. Ashworth and P. Howard, *European Heritage, Planning and Management*, Exeter 1999.

4 This article fits within the framework of the doctoral project 'The Brussels housing stock (1975-2000). Materiality and heritage value' of Marylise Parein under the supervision of Stephanie Van de Voorde and Ine Wouters (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) and Manja Vanhaelen and Stéphane Demeter (regional heritage administration urban.brussels) and financed by Innoviris. www.vub.be/arch/project/archbxl1975.

5 S. Sterken and Y. Schoonjans, 'Hoe jong kan bouwkundig erfgoed zijn? Reflecties omtrent de erfgoedwaarde van het naoorlogs architecturaal patrimonium', in: M. De Kooning et al., *Architectuur sinds de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Brussels 2008, 13-35.

6 S. Van de Voorde et al., 'Geërfd goed. De eigen woning van architect Georges Volckrick', *M&L* 40 (2021) 1, 28-45.

7 Sterken and Schoonjans 2008 (note 5) use 'modern heritage' to refer to heritage from the Second World War onwards; in the Netherlands 'Post 65 heritage' was introduced by the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed for heritage from the period 1965-1990 (www.cultureelerfgoed.nl/onderwerpen/post-65-erfgoed); this expression is now used by local heritage administrations and academic institutions.

8 Agentschap Onroerend Erfgoed Vlaanderen, 'Het Gentse naoorlogse erfgoed in kaart gebracht', 8 January 2020, www.onroerenderfgoed.be/blog/het-gentse-naoorlogse-erfgoed-kaart-gebracht.

9 Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, 'Recommendation No. R (91) 13 of the committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of the twentieth-century architectural heritage', 9 September 1991, www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/texts-of-reference.

10 The 'at risk' actions of DOCOMOMO draw attention to radical conversions or demolition of modern heritage. Recently, post-1970 buildings have started to appear on this list, such as the iconic Nakagin Capsule Tower (Kisho Kurokawa, 1972, Tokyo) and the Robot Bank building (Sumet Jumsai Architects, 1983-1986, Bangkok), docomomo.com/momo-at-risk/.

11 S. Macdonald and G. Ostergren (eds.), *Conserving Twentieth-Century Built Heritage. A Bibliography*, Los Angeles 2013.

12 In 2021, for example, the Getty Conservation Institute and the ICOMOS International Committee on 20th Century Heritage (Icomos ISC20C) developed an historical framework to help identify and contextualize twentieth-century heritage areas. In addition, DOCOMOMO has widened its focus from mainly modernist architecture from before 1940 to architecture from the second half of the twentieth century. There are also organizations active at the national and regional level, such as The Twentieth Century Society in the United Kingdom that, like ICOMOS, campaigns to save at-risk buildings from the wrecking ball.

13 H. Davis, *The Culture of Building*, Oxford 2006.

14 A. Picon, *The Materiality of Architecture*, Minnesota 2021.

15 S. Van de Voorde, I. Bertels and I. Wouters, *Post-war building materials in housing in Brussels, 1945-1975*, Brussels 2015; F. Graf, *Histoire matérielle du bâti et projet de sauvegarde*, Lausanne 2014.

16 In addition to the authors' project at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, one can mention for instance the 'Erfgoed van de 20e eeuw' (20th-century heritage) project of the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed and a research project on the protection and preservation of post-war heritage at the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, headed by professor and restoration architect Franz Graf. See for example F. Graf and G. Marino, *Avanchet-Parc.'Cité de conception nouvelle et originale'*, Gollion 2020.

17 'Titel V: Bescherming van het onroerende erfgoed', in: Brussels Wetboek van Ruimtelijke Ordening (BWRO), last amended on 8 September 2022, www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi/summary.pl.

18 urban.brussels, 'Wettelijke vrijwaringsmaatregelen', erfgoed.brussels/doen/wettelijke-aspecten/wettelijke-vrijwaringsmaatregelen (accessed on 24 April 2023).

19 The Brussels-Capital Region's safeguarded heritage register contains some 1300 objects. As well as buildings it includes landscape elements and architectural ensembles, making it difficult to calculate the percentage of 'young heritage'.

20 Calculating the percentage of 'young heritage' in the Inventory of Architectural Heritage of the Brussels-Capital Region is hampered by the limited functionality of the search tool and the size of the inventory (c. 25,000 files and 40,000 objects). As a result, these quantitative data amount to no more than a snapshot (July 2023); the quoted statistics with regard to the Brussels building stock were established on 1 January 2022 and are accessible via the Belgian statistics office, Statbel: statbel.fgov.be/en.

21 Ministry of the Brussels-Capital Region, Directorate of Monuments and Landscapes, Cel Inventaris, *Inventaris van het bouwkundig erfgoed van het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest. Methodologie*, Brussels 2010.

22 Cel Communicatie van de Stad Brussel, *Meerderheidsakkoord 2018-2024. Een harmonieuze en solidaire internationale stad*, Brussels 2018.

23 urban.brussels, '1939-1999', monument.heritage.brussels/nl/1939_1999/96 (accessed on 24 April 2023); the thematic inventory was carried out in 2022 by researchers affiliated to the Université Libre de Bruxelles.

24 urban.brussels, *Inventaris van het bouwkundig erfgoed van het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest. De selectie van gebouwen en gehelen in de inventaris van het Bouwkundig Erfgoed*, Brussels 2022.

25 Ministerie van het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest, Directie Monumenten en Landschappen, Cel Inventaris 2010 (note 21).

26 T. Henrard and T. Greck, *Etude historique. BNP Paribas Fortis*, Brussels 2021.

27 Henrard and Greck 2021 (note 26).

28 P. Wouters, 'Ventilatie en infiltratie in gebouwen: de stand van zaken in België', *WTCB Tijdschrift* (1986) 3/4, 39-48.

29 Verbal communication from Jean de Salle, co-founder of AUSIA, with the author, 29 November 2022.

30 O. Hardy-Hémery, *Eternit et l'amiante 1922-2000. Aux sources du profit, une industrie du risque*, Histoire et civilisations Villeneuve d'Ascq 2005.

31 The first advertisements of this new technology by Eternit appeared in Belgium in 1986, trumpeting 'a new composition without asbestos'.

IR ARCH M. PAREIN obtained her Master of Science in Architectural Engineering degree from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). She is currently a PhD researcher with the Department of Architectural Engineering at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), where she is working on a PhD thesis on the materiality and heritage value of the Brussels housing stock (1975-2000) in collaboration with the urban.brussels regional heritage administration.

PROF DR IR-ARCH S. VAN DE VOORDE has a tenure track position with the Department of Architectural Engineering at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). Her expertise is in the field of architectural history, construction history and heritage, with a special focus on twentieth-century building culture and young heritage.

PROF DR IR-ARCH I. WOUTERS is a professor in the Department of Architectural Engineering at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). In addition to teaching contemporary construction and renovation techniques, she conducts research into building materials and techniques in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The authors' individual contributions to this article are as follows. Marylise Parein: idea development, data collection, literature study and archival research, and editing; Stephanie Van de Voorde: idea development and fine-tuning, context and theory of value assessment and the importance of materiality, and editing; Ine Wouters: idea development and fine-tuning, structural engineering context, and editing.

VALUE ASSESSMENT OF YOUNG HERITAGE

THE IMPORTANCE OF MATERIALITY IN AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

MARYLISE PAREIN, INE WOUTERS AND STEPHANIE VAN DE VOORDE

The recent surge in interest in 'young' heritage is coupled with a growing need for a scientifically based framework for dealing with it. This article examines the specific characteristics of 'young heritage', how it is evaluated, and the knowledge required for that. The term 'young heritage' is not easy to define because the minimum historical distance required for assessing or protecting a building as heritage differs from country to country.

More important than an exact definition, however, is increased awareness and greater recognition of the special characteristics of this heritage. One of these characteristics is materiality. This refers not just to the building materials and techniques used but includes its positioning with respect to the wider building culture in which it is rooted. The final decades of the twentieth century were characterized by a distinctive materiality, and this too needs to be included in any value assessment.

To work out how this might be done using existing value assessment methods, this article looks at the method used since 2021 by the Brussels-Capital Region in drawing up its Inventory of Architectural Heritage. This method is based on ten heritage values and six heritage criteria. The individual values and criteria are not strictly defined but rather described, so as to allow room for interpretation. And instead of dealing with the values individually, the goal is an integrated approach in which different values and criteria are able to support and reinforce one another. This provides opportunities for recognizing the specificity of young heritage and for emphasizing the importance therein of materiality.

The article then applies the Brussels method, with a particular focus on materiality, to two case studies: the ASLK apartment building (engineer and architect Philippe Samyn, Brussels, 1985-1986) and the large-scale housing project 'De Drevekens' (AUSIA design office, Sint-Pieters-Woluwe, 1975-1977). The first case study demonstrates that a proper assessment of the technical value requires that the materials used be assessed within the context of the wider building culture. The second case study illustrates the fact that materials without any special technical value can still play an important role in other heritage values.

Both case studies attest to the benefits of an integrated approach to heritage values and the importance of materiality in the recognition of young heritage. One major challenge is acquiring sufficient in-depth insight into the materiality to arrive at an accurate and specific interpretation of the heritage values and criteria.