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# CONIX RDBM Architects, Belgium

De Blauwen Oijvaert & De Cleynen Oijvaert, Leuven, Belgium

CONIX RDBM Architects is a notorious architecture agency in Belgium, founded by Christine Conix, Jorden Goossenaerts and Frederik Jacobs. The organisation consists of a multidisciplinary team of 65 members operating from offices in Antwerp, Brussels, Rotterdam and Terneuzen.

CONIX RDBM Architects merges the rationale of research with emotion, creating a basis for functional, sustainable and innovative architecture. Their current ambition is to design 'Livable Lovable' projects where people enjoy living, working and living in. 'Livable Lovable' projects have been awarded both the 'Carbon Neutral Design' and 'Human Touch' labels. 'Carbon Neutral Design' refers to projects that are good for our planet. Their ambition is for all project designs to be 'Carbon Neutral Design' by 2025. 'Human Touch' projects contribute to people's wellbeing and are places where people like to be in, work in, live in and enjoy looking at as well as provide an added social value to society.

**The agency's ultimate goal is to create architecture that offers an added value to its users as well as to society as a whole.** They want their architecture to be functional, flexible and aesthetic, for now and for the future.

De Blauwen Oijvaert is the historic name of the brewery that once stood here. The two stately town houses on the Brusselsestraat have been renovated, with respect for their



historical significance and character, to accommodate nine apartments and two commercial spaces. At the rear, in a new courtyard, a new building with an additional nine apartments has been constructed. This lies on the banks of the newly opened and exposed Dyle river.

The site is part of the inner-city Hertogensite development. The land itself has its address on the Brusselsestraat; in the future, it will be extended to the eastern borders of the exposed Dyle river. The three buildings have been organised around a communal courtyard. The positioning and the facades of the two buildings with heritage value—the town house on the corner (number 79) and the broad terraced house (number 77)—have been kept. Only the facade of the broad house could be kept; the existing structure has been completely renovated. As much as possible of the corner town house's two facades has been kept, except for the corner on the rear wall.

Two indoor roof terraces have been provided for the corner town house. Between these two historical buildings, a new construction has been erected in contrasting material. It connects the two sites, with a passage below leading to the rear courtyard. The ground floor has been designed to host a commercial space and an office. To the south of the central square, a new building, with a modern design, consists of four floors and a pitched roof.





#### MASTER PLAN

The Hertogensite is the crown on the triptych of urban renewal—one of the largest urban projects in Flanders. The hospital site between the Kapucijnenvoer, the Minderbroedersstraat and the Brusselsestraat covers an area of more than six hectares. Today, there is an isolated mix of buildings from the distant past and more recent times. It has become a sustainable city neighbourhood, with a balanced blend of housing types. A place where living, nature and culture meld together to honour the past and embrace the future.

#### CONCEPT

The existing buildings and their profiles are a fixed detail from which the architect was unable to deviate. But he did have options for the building. By placing it transverse to the length of the Dyle river, CONIX RDBM Architects created a new courtyard and at the same time, we closed it against the existing building, returning cohesion to the building block.

For the architecture, a strong differentiation between the existing buildings and the new additions was made. A brown-red tile plan was used, with an engobe glazing treatment that gives a rusted-steel look. The architect used this material on the facade and the roof of the new construction, as well as for the roofing of the existing buildings. By primarily applying that one material, cohesively the old and new have been brought together. ◀

▶ For more information: [www.conixrdbm.com](http://www.conixrdbm.com)  
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