

## A prime example of contemporary architecture

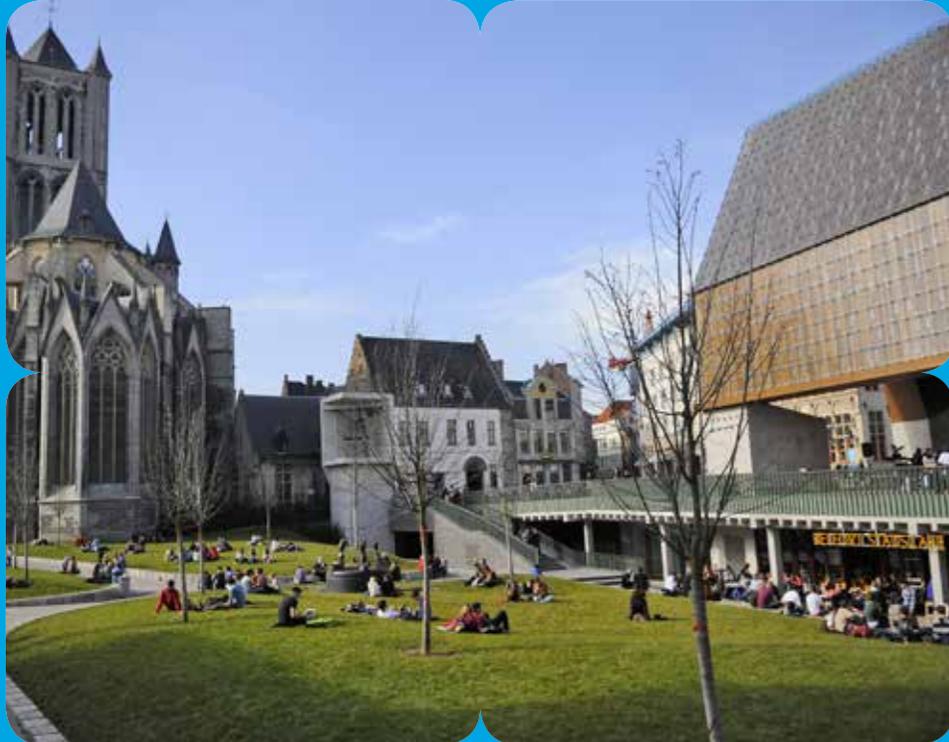
The city hall is a prime example of contemporary architecture. The building even made it to the final of the prestigious Mies Van der Rohe Award.

The city hall is 15 metres wide and 40 metres in length and rests on four concrete pillars. A steel framework was used to span this distance. The building was assembled on site, like a Meccano construction. The walls and roof are **clad in wood**. African teak was used on the outside, while the roof frame was built using oak. There are **1,400 windows** in the walls and roofs, which let natural light seep through, creating a playful lighting effect under the hall.

The roof is covered with more than **3,000 glass roof tiles** to protect the wood against weather conditions. Elevators, ventilation shafts, utilities for the spaces below and a fire place are incorporated in the pillars.

The city hall has **two pointed roofs**, which mirror the stepped gables of the town hall. The city hall is about 20 metres high and matches the proportions of the surrounding buildings.

The surrounding squares were refurbished using 'kandla grey' natural stone. A black basalt belt encircles the city park and Sint-Niklaasstraat. The railings along the staircase and the park slope are done in steel.



## The city hall: both meeting place and events hall

The city hall at Emile Braun square is a covered meeting place in the city centre. In addition, it is perfectly suited as an events hall, as it is equipped with all the technology required to organise events. Below the city hall there is a **'grand café', as well as artist dressing rooms, public conveniences and a bicycle shed**. When the night falls, the oak roof frame is illuminated, which makes the hall the ideal venue for performances and other events.

The city hall was inaugurated on 1 September 2012. City composer An Pierlé and other Ghent-born musicians, including Helmut Lotti, kicked off the event, after which the citizens of Ghent treated to a picnic, a story-telling festival, discussion sessions and a dancing event.

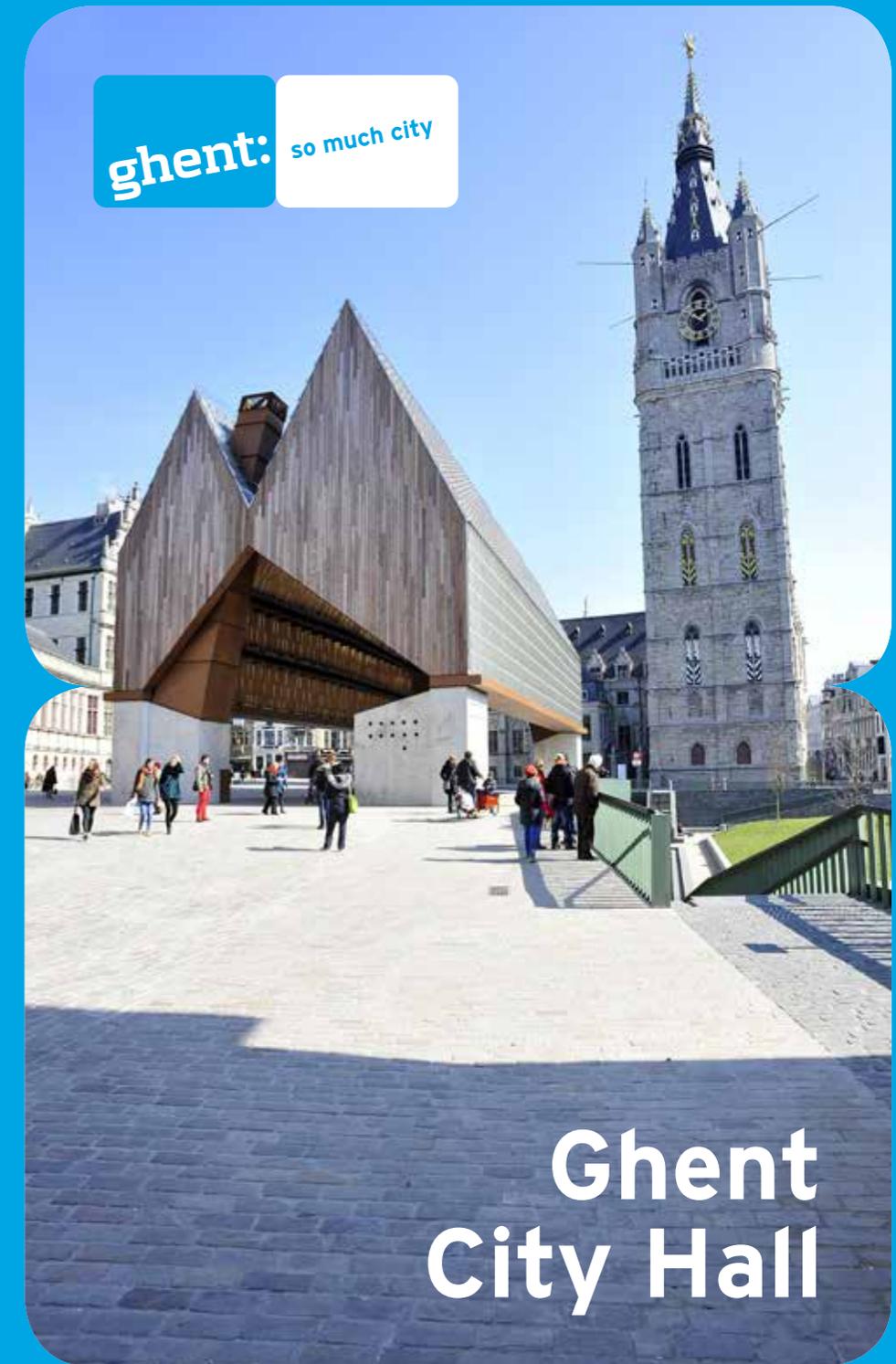
## More info?

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ghent: so much city



# Ghent City Hall

## History

Until the end of the nineteenth century the Ghent city centre was much more built up. Emile Braun, the then mayor, ordered that several houses in the shadow of the Belfry be demolished. The resulting freed-up square was subsequently named after him. After the last houses had been demolished in the 1960s, the town council temporarily used the square as an outdoor car park. In a 1997 referendum, the **inhabitants of Ghent** voted against plans to build an underground car park in the square.

In 2000 the City of Ghent launched a **new architectural competition**. Following a consultation round, a jury selected the city hall design by architects **Robbrecht & Daem and Marie-José Van Hee**. In 2007 the city council approved the 'Row of Towers Master Plan for Ghent' for the refurbishment of Korenmarkt square, Emile Braun square, Belfortstraat and the surrounding area.

In the autumn of 2009 the preparatory works started at Emile Braun square. In 2010-2012, the city hall was built and the square was refurbished.

## Emile Braun square design

The city hall is a key element in the Emile Braun square design. The new building structures the space and as such breathes new life into several historical squares, i.e. Goudenleeuw square, Poeljemarkt and Botermarkt. Below the city hall you can find a **'grand café', artist dressing rooms, public conveniences and a bicycle shed** for more than 80 bicycles (including a repair service and a bicycle hire service).

The café's outdoor patio overlooks the new **city park**, with its trees and seating areas where you can unwind and enjoy a moment of peace and quiet.

The **'Fountain with Kneeling Youths'** by Ghent-born sculptor Georges Minne takes centre stage in the city park. **'The Triumphant'** bell is now housed in a new bell cote behind St Nicholas' Church. The bell sounds on special occasions.

Emile Braun square, Goudenleeuw square, Poeljemarkt and Botermarkt were refurbished using 'kandla grey' natural stone, which was also used at Korenmarkt square.

The design of Emile Braun square was drawn by a temporary association formed by several contributors to the project, to wit architects Robbrecht & Daem and Marie-José Van Hee, Wirtz International, BAS-Dirk Jaspaert, Dirk Boydens, Marianne France and the engineering firm Technum nv.