



SAMSA | VOLT ARCHITECTEN + BERT MICHELS | RONSE

Belgium is a place where everyone lives everywhere. It's a challenging future to house new families but prevent this drift of further expansion. Our way of living becomes increasingly more expensive, therefore co-housing can be seen as an interesting way of living in the future. It's cheaper, more energy-efficient and brings people together. At the same time, Flanders is filled with old or underused houses, barns and other structures. A 19th century textile factory in Ronse seemed like one of the many rural warehouses/barns scattered throughout Belgium. Big, bland and out of date. Brother and sister Johan and Mimi Vandendriessche saw great potential in this building. It would offer a place where they, family and friends could all live together as neighbors.

Today, the building can be seen as a prime example for co-housing projects. By using an existing structure in the rural landscape, they unknowingly realized an answer to the increasing demand for cheap housing that fits in. A single industrial warehouse becomes the home of 6 families and even a common studio and 2 offices. This mixed program offers a more versatile and vivid environment, where people work and live. A long common courtyard acts as the binding component. The project goes back to the roots of a small rural village, where everyone knows everyone. The grandparents never feel alone, there is always someone to look out for the children, bills are split, goods are shared and people can easily carpool. This unique way of co-housing shines new light on how people can live, work and socialise on common ground.

When reallocating the building, Volt Architects and Bert Michels stayed loyal to the existing early-industrial character. Elements like the iron beams, re-used roof tiles and concrete floors all add to the sum. On the outside, it remains the single entity which feels right at home in its context. On the inside, contemporary housing for a family and friends create a cheaper and more social living typology for tomorrow.

<http://www.voltarchitecten.be/>

http://www.bertmichels.be/NL/Realisaties/meergezinswoning_verbouwingen/lofts_samsa-9-17

http://www.belgium-architects.com/nl/projects/35883_03_H_098

<http://www.nieuwsblad.be/cnt/ba3hv43p>

Also known as the Lofts Samsa, Samsa Project and 03.H.098