

Resurrection Chapel - Verrijzeniskapel Kortrijk



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The modernist resurrection chapel in Kortrijk was built in the beginning of the 1960s and is situated in the garden of the school *Lyceum Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Vlaanderen* (translated: Lyceum of Our Lady of Flanders). The chapel was built with the intention to replace the old chapel of the school which was destroyed during the Second World War.

The oldest buildings of the school were built in 1913 by architect Jan Robert Van Hoenacker (1875-1959) from Kortrijk. The intention was to build a new monastery for the Poor Clares from the city of Mons. Because of the First World War the monastery never moved into the newly erected buildings. In 1923 the foundation "Our Lady of Perpetual Help" bought the former monastery buildings to start a new school there. During World War II the school and the old chapel were heavily damaged during a bombing. The school was entirely reconstructed afterwards, the old chapel wasn't.

In the beginning of the 1960s the new modernist chapel was built, nearly 20 years after the old one was destroyed. The construction finished in 1963. Soon after the school had

to expand by building a new wing. Architect Arnold Van Geluwe was inspired by the chapel and decided to design the new school wing in a similar modernist architectural style.

The chapel will be upgraded to a fully recognized parish church in 2020 to replace two other churches in the area which will cease their activity as parish churches.

The Architect

The design for the new chapel in the garden of the school was drawn by artist André De Smet (1927-1993). De Smet wasn't an architect by education. He started out as a painter and was also an art teacher in the city of Kortrijk. Along the way he got interested by architecture and started designing buildings himself. As he lacked the education as an architect, it is presumed he closely collaborated with other architects. For the chapel in Kortrijk he worked together with the unknown architects R. D'Hondt and G. Speybrouck.

Not much else is known about the architectural activity of André De Smet. Next to the Resurrection Chapel in Kortrijk he also designed the Church and monastery in Sleihage and was involved in restoration of the monastery of the Order of Saint Benedict in Poperinge. The church in Sleihage shows lots of similarities in its design with the chapel in Kortrijk.

The Construction

The chapel was built next to the older school buildings. As it was not connected directly with the school, the architects had no restrictions in their choice of architectural style. The architects chose a progressive and innovative design. It was heavily inspired by the chapel of the Saint Louis Abbey in Creve Coeur in Missouri in the United States. The shape of the chapel is similar, but instead of using parabola shapes for the windows they used triangle shaped windows.

The structure of the church rests upon 16 supporting points and was erected by using reinforced concrete. The usage of concrete makes it possible to use large triangle shaped windows in a crown-like shape. Inside one large space is created which could host around 600 people. Underneath the chapel there is a bicycle shed for the students of the school.



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