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MANUELLE GAUTRAND ARCHITECTURE

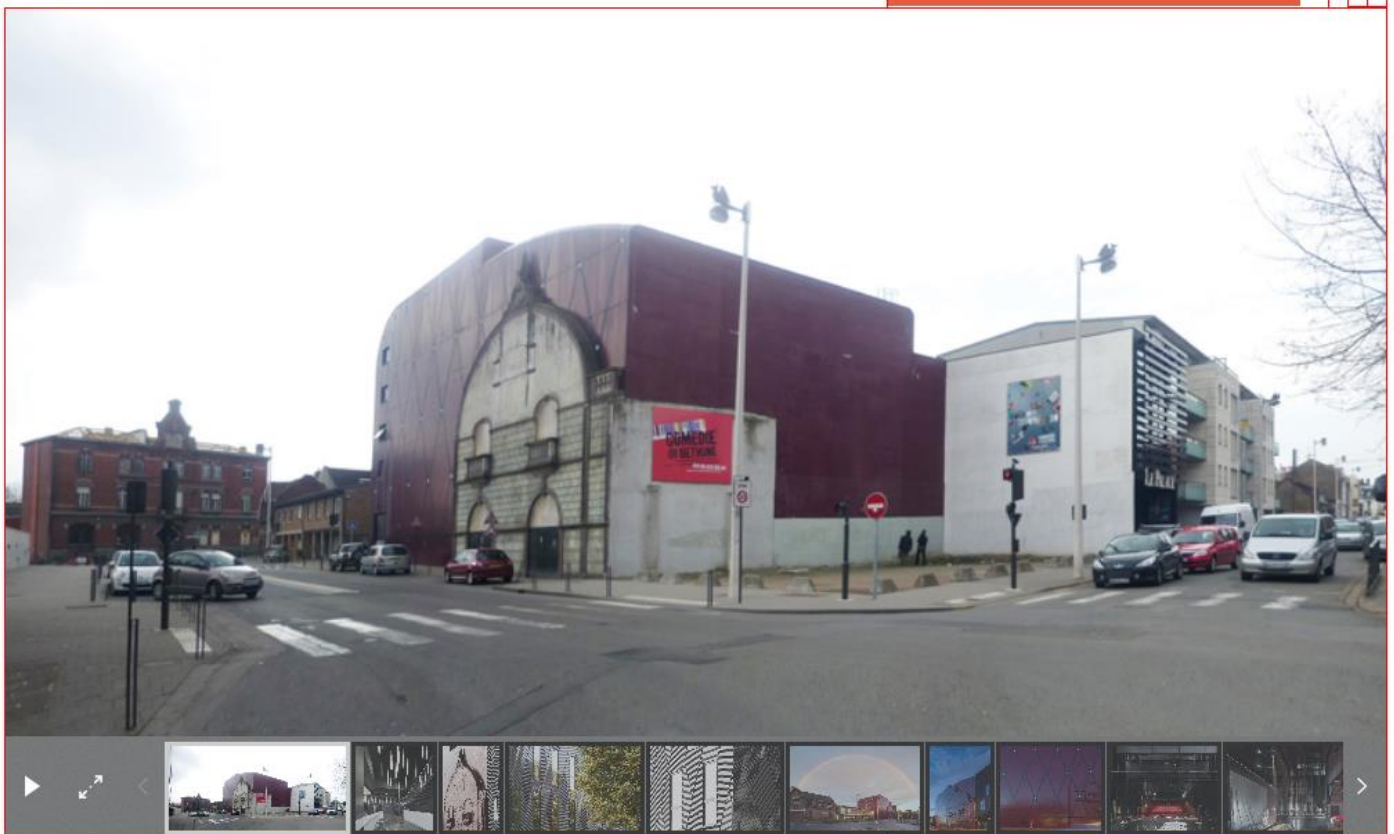
COMÉDIE DE BÉTHUNE

BETHUNE || FRANCE



Since the 1980s, culture has become a priority in the development of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais area; La Comédie De Bethune reflected the will of the elected representatives of the department to be equipped with a National Drama center and represents the most emblematic cultural equipment of the city. Installed in a marquee with three hundred seats in 1992, the theatre moved in 1993 in an old powder magazine, built by Vauban and refurbished into a Studio Theatre which is still used nowadays.

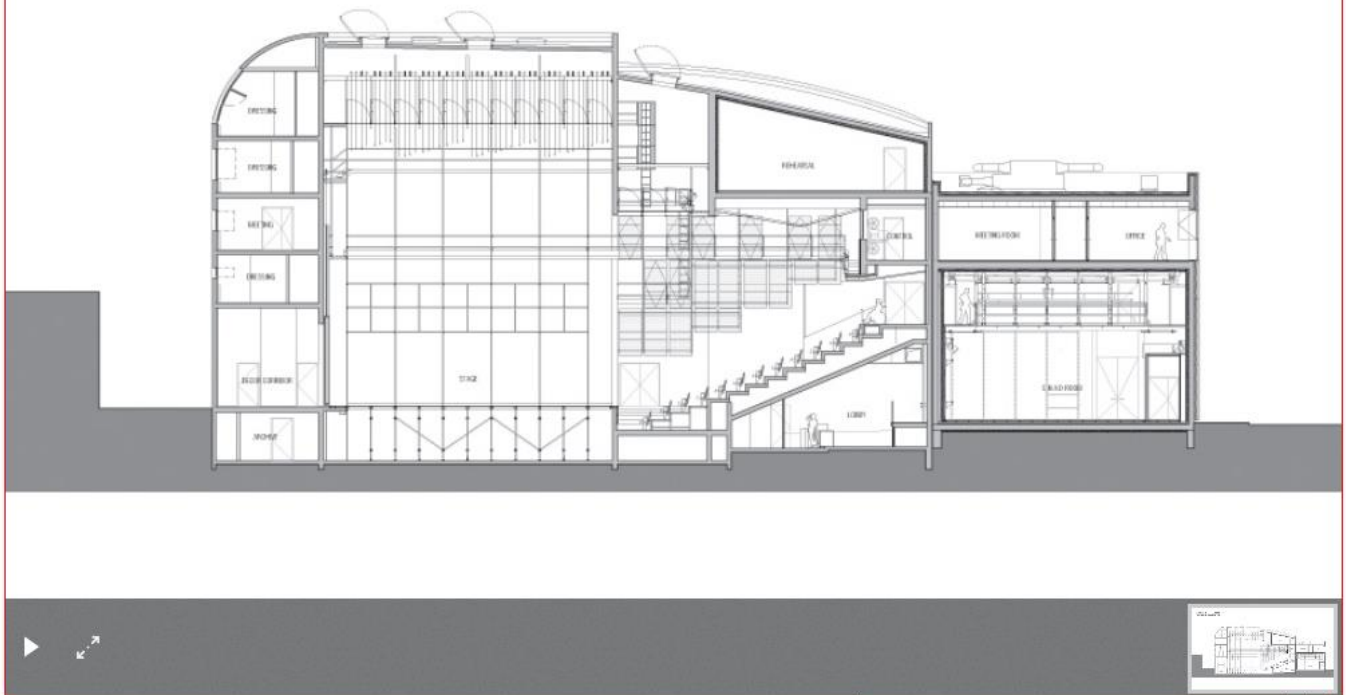
There was initially a movie theatre called The Palace built in the 1930s on the present site of La Comédie De Bethune. The facade of the building maintained by girders, was all that was left when it was demolished in the 1990s.



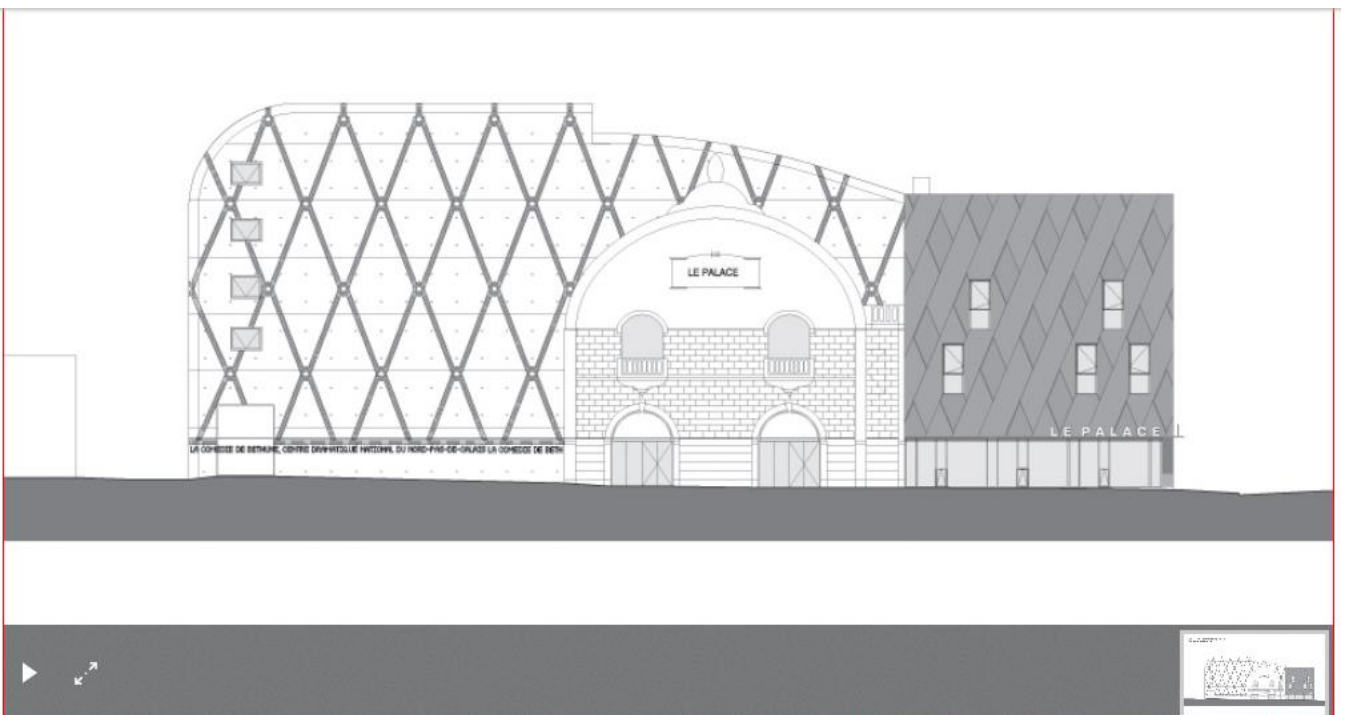
In 1994, the agency Manuelle Gautrand Architecture won the competition for the construction of the theatre. From the beginning, the project anticipated what has now become an extension: it already was in the form of two functional sections, the first one containing most of the program, which was then carried out, the second one immediately unrealizable because it was positioned on the corner of the plot, involving the demolition of a house.

In 2009, having the corner house been demolished, the project could be completed and Manuelle Gautrand Architecture, winner of a new architectural competition for the extension of the existing theatre, improved and completed the global functioning of the theatre, adding a rehearsal room and updating the building in order to meet safety regulations (which have changed since 15

■ SEZIONE AA / AA SECTION
COMEDIE DE BETHUNE



Now, the construction of the hall corner connects directly to the coffee, bringing a natural lighting and making it an animated and welcoming passageway. Above, the administration has a larger and more functional space thanks to the extending from the second floor of the existing theatre. Many spaces have also been changed within the existing building. Indeed, since the delivery of the original building fifteen years ago, several safety regulations evolved, including the fire safety regulations and the accessibility to all spaces of the theatre for disabled people.



The extension also required the construction of a staircase located on the right of the future hall and serving on the first floor the upper level of the rehearsal room of the CNAD (National Academy of the Dramatic Arts) and its additional premises, and the offices on the second floor. Finally, the building reached the most ambitious thermal and energy regulations.

The agency used all these work to complete the room above the pit, which had been left «raw» during the construction of the original building, into a second, smaller rehearsal room without grid, with an access facilitated by the raising of the staircase of the offices.

For the extension, Manuelle Gautrand took the architectural concept of a simple volume, almost rectangular, which comes to close the angle between the Boulevard Victor Hugo and the 11th November street.

Symbolically this extension seems to connect all the functions: the lobby envelops the new rehearsal room to open itself on both streets. The lobby connects successively the historic hall and the new rehearsal room. Its length allows installing several bars that create more places of breaks dedicated to the artists or the audiences.

CREDITS

Location: Béthune, France

Client: La Comédie de Bethune

Completion: 2014

Gross Floor Area: 20,820 m²

Cost of Construction: 3,600,000 Euro

Architects: Manuelle Gautrand Architecture

Main Contractor: Ramery

Consultants

Stage design: Bati-scene

Structural engineering: Khephen

Acoustics: Jean-Paul Lamoureux

Fluids engineering & economy: Hexa Ingenierie

Scheduling and coordination: HD Project

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