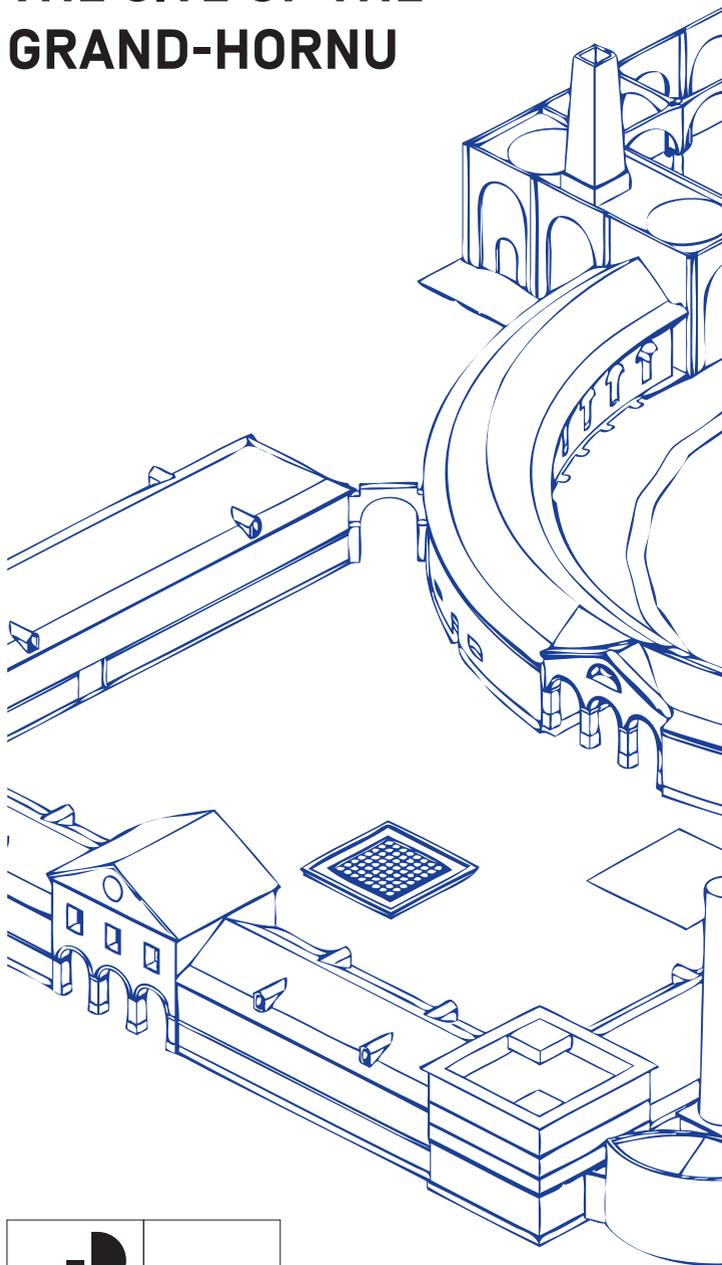


# THE SITE OF THE GRAND-HORNU



# PRESENTATION

In the heart of the Province of Hainaut, a few kilometres from the cities of Mons and Valenciennes, Grand-Hornu is one of the most beautiful architectural complexes dating from the industrial revolution.

A former colliery built between 1810 and 1830 by Henri De Gorge, a French captain of industry, Grand-Hornu is effectively a new town project and offers a unique example of functional urban planning in continental European from the early industrial age. Built in neoclassical style, it includes the colliery workshops and offices, the miners' residential district with some 450 houses of exceptional comfort for the time, each with its own private garden, and the director's house, known as the Château De Gorge. The residential district also included a school, a hospital, public squares, a library, a dance hall, etc.

In order to accomplish his ambitious dream, Henri De Gorge called on the services of Bruno Renard. He took inspiration from this style for the overall construction, combined with principles taken from the community ideal defended by certain theoreticians and utopianists of the time.

Symbolic of the coal industry throughout Belgian and French Hainaut, Grand-Hornu was also a fantastic technological laboratory. Indeed Henri De Gorge pioneered the use of new extraction techniques and steam machines. Furthermore, in 1830, he innovated and installed the first horse-drawn railway in the country, to support the firm's economic development.

The Grand-Hornu colliery continued to operate to win the Coal War although its operations slowed down in 1951, when the ECSC Treaty (European Coal and Steel Community) was signed, which rationalised the production of coal-producing countries.

Grand-Hornu remained active until 1954. The industrial operations then stopped and the site was abandoned. At the end of the 1960s, a handful of heritage enthusiasts battled to save the site from its scheduled demolition, a shadow of its former self, devastated by the elements and vandalism. Furthermore, in 1969, the demolition was even the subject of a royal decree, which envisaged its total destruction.

In 1971, the architect Henri Guchez definitively saved the site by buying it. He undertook an initial renovation phase and established his offices there. The Province of Hainaut began the second phase of renovation works in 1989, when it purchased the site under the initiative of Claude Durieux, the then Permanent Deputy.

In 1984, the provincial non-profit association Grand-Hornu Images nevertheless established its offices there, from where it pursued its threefold mission: promoting heritage, tourism and culture. It put Grand-Hornu on the list of major international heritage associations and developed a cultural programme at the site in order to breathe new life into the premises and enable the public to rediscover it in a new light.

The exhibitions presented by the association explored the fields of relationships between art and industry; design, industrial creation and applied arts were given pride of place there, in line with the spirit of the site and in harmony with the region's history.

On 1st December 2014, Grand-Hornu Images became the CID - Centre for Innovation and Design at Grand-Hornu. It aims to promote contemporary design through a programme of exhibitions and mediation activities highlighting innovation, experimental research, the

emergence of new themes and horizons for research in the fields of design, architecture and the applied arts.

Furthermore, in the early 1990s, the French Community of Belgium decided to establish its future Museum of Contemporary Arts at Grand-Hornu, which thus secured the completion of Grand-Hornu's renovation. In 2002, the Museum of Contemporary Arts, the MAC's, was opened to present all aspects of international contemporary creation to the widest possible audience.

After being one of the jewels of Belgian industry, the Grand-Hornu site is now one of the leading cultural centres in Belgium devoted to contemporary creation. It has been given a new lease of life and welcomes a wide range of international visitors each year. Since 2012, it has been classified by UNESCO as World Heritage of Humanity, along with the other former collieries at Bois-du-Luc, Le Bois du Cazier and Blegny-Mine. ([www.sitesminiersmajeursdewallonie.be](http://www.sitesminiersmajeursdewallonie.be))

## A FEW DATES...

- **1774:** Birth of Henri De Gorge
- 1778: Digging of the first coal extraction pit at Grand-Hornu by Charles Godonnesche (the first mine operator at Grand-Hornu)
- 1810: Acquisition of the Grand-Hornu mines by Henri De Gorge from Godonnesche's widow
- 1816: Start of construction of the housing district
- 1827: Start of construction of the Machines Workshop at Grand-Hornu
- Spring 1830: Installation of the first railway at Grand-Hornu
- 10th October 1830: Revolt by the cart drivers (the De Gorge pillage) following the installation of the railway
- 1832: Death of Henri De Gorge during a cholera epidemic
- 1843: Constitution of the société civile des Usines et Mines de Houille de Grand-Hornu
- 1855: Elevation of the statue in memory of Henri De Gorge (sculptor: Egide Mélot)
- 1927: Construction of the mausoleum following authorisation to remove the remains of Henri De Gorge and his family from the cemetery at Hornu to Grand-Hornu
- 1950: Dissolution of the company belonging to the De Gorge family and absorption by the Société anonyme des Charbonnages du Hainaut
- 1951: ECSC Treaty
- 1954: Closure of the Grand-Hornu colliery
- 1969: Grand-Hornu is condemned by Royal Decree
- 1971: Acquisition of the site by Henri Guchez and first phase of the site's restoration
- 1984: Creation of the non-profit association Grand-Hornu Images
- 1989: Acquisition of the site by the Province of Hainaut and second phase of the restoration
- 1991: Decision to establish the Museum of Contemporary Arts at Grand-Hornu
- 1993: Grand-Hornu is listed as Walloon Heritage
- 2002: Official opening of the MAC's
- 2012: 1<sup>st</sup> July, the Grand-Hornu site is listed as UNESCO World Heritage
- 2014: The non-profit association Grand-Hornu Images becomes the CID - centre for innovation and design at Grand-Hornu

# PRACTICAL INFORMATION

## SITE OF THE GRAND-HORNU

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[www.grand-hornu.eu](http://www.grand-hornu.eu) / [www.cid-grand-hornu.be](http://www.cid-grand-hornu.be) / [www.mac-s.be](http://www.mac-s.be)

[www.facebook.com/cidgrandhornu](https://www.facebook.com/cidgrandhornu) / [www.facebook.com/musee.macs](https://www.facebook.com/musee.macs)

## OPENING TIMES

Every day from 10 AM until 6 PM, except on Mondays.

## ADMISSION FEE

- Combined ticket for the Grand-Hornu site / CID / MAC's: €8
- Discount: €2 or €5
- Group rates (minimum 15 ppl.): €5
- School groups: €2
- Free for children under 6
- Free entry every first Sunday of the month
- Free guided tour from Tuesday to Friday at 15.30, Saturday at 11.00 and 15.30, Sunday at 15.00 and 16.30.
- Audio-guides for the historic site: €2 (FR/DUTCH/GERMAN/ENGL/IT/SPANISH)

## BOOKING NUMBER

Advance reservation required for guided tours (by appointment) of exhibitions and/or historic site (FR/DUTCH/GERMAN/ENGL).

T: +32 (0) 65 61 38 81 or [reservations@grand-hornu.be](mailto:reservations@grand-hornu.be)

## M.I.C.E AND ROOM RENTALS

Organisation of private and VIP views and receptions

T: +32 (0) 65 61 38 87 or [gaetan.delehouzee@grand-hornu.be](mailto:gaetan.delehouzee@grand-hornu.be)

## DOCUMENTATION CENTER

T: + 32 (0) 65 61 38 68 or [celine.ganty@grand-hornu.be](mailto:celine.ganty@grand-hornu.be)

Freely accessible to everybody, the documentation center of the Grand-Hornu provides access to a documentary fund of nearly 9,000 volumes dealing with contemporary arts, design, architecture and industrial archeology.

## LA BRASSERIE DU GRAND-HORNU

T : +32 (0) 494 52 24 32

Facebook : La Brasserie du Grand-Hornu

