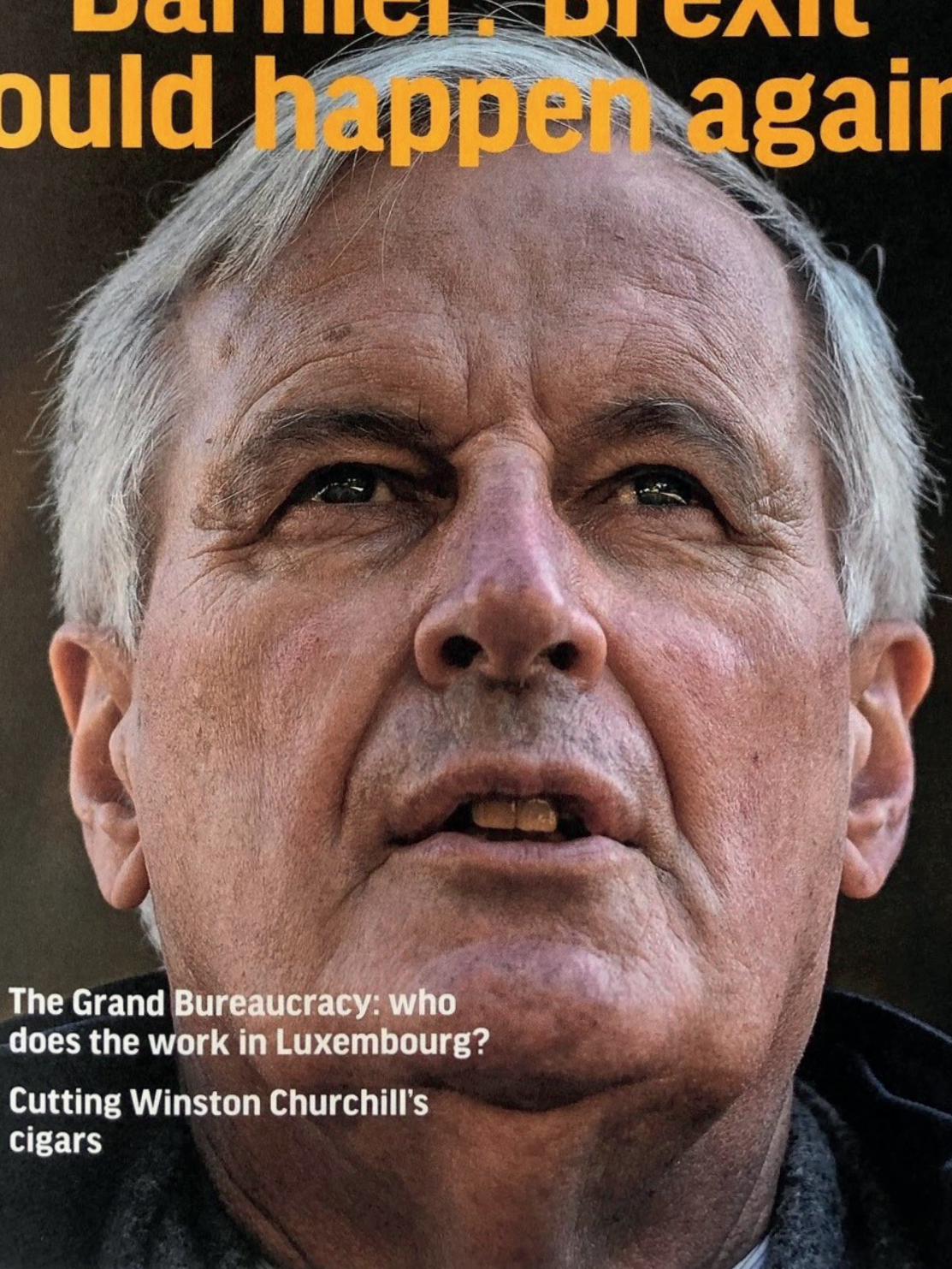


# LUXEMBOURG TIMES by Luxemburger Wort

Business and politics in Luxembourg

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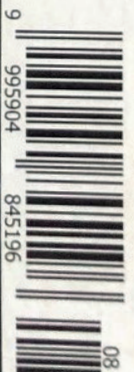
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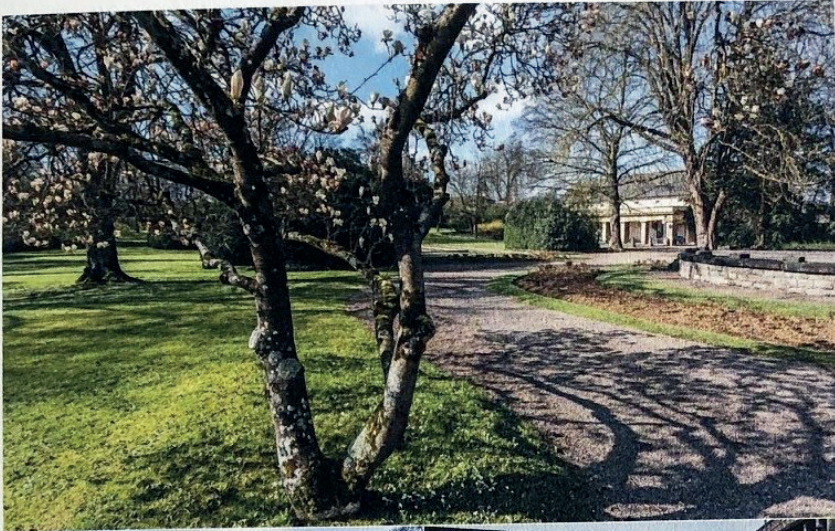
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# The paradise behind the fence

Hundreds of people walk down the Rue de Hollerich near the central train station every day, weaving in and out of parked cars and construction work. The street is an avenue of chaos, cracks in the pavements, half-finished buildings and workmen galore. But at number 31, there is a paradise to be found. If only one looks behind the fence.

By Kate Oglesby  
Photos: Eberhard Wolf



*Once open only for employees of a tobacco factory, the park will now be open to the public*

**T**he garden of the Heintz van Landewyck tobacco plant sits abandoned. It is situated in one of Luxembourg's former industrial districts, Hollerich. Outside of the park cars trudge down the road, the smell of tar and concrete permeating the air, while the sounds clattering from building and road works resonate around the district.

But beyond the road and trees, the park is a place of tranquillity, with memories of workers from the tobacco factory coming into the area on their breaks, milling around the swimming pool or trees, to smoke a cigarette and gossip. With its

lush green grass and trees, with petals sprinkled about and a fresh smell, it is a marked contrast with the rest of the surroundings.

One of the factory's former owners – Joseph-Heintz Michaelis – created the park for his family and the employees so they could meet there and have parties. Now that the factory is moving out of the city, the park sits empty. At the centre of it is a pool that workers could use during summer to cool off during their breaks or after work. It also functioned as a water reservoir in case a fire broke out. But now it sits deserted as the centre piece of this historical landmark.



*The park – a protected landmark – will be at the centre of a development housing 4,500 people*

At one end of the swimming pool is the sculpture of a deer, designed by local artist Auguste Trémont, who also created the two lions on the “Knuedler”, for the 1937 World Fair in Paris. Nearby stands the former main guardhouse of the Prussian garrison in Luxembourg. The “Haaptwuecht” originally stood at the Place d’Armes, but Michaelis moved it in 1902.

The park was always private, and is now deserted – but will become a city park in a few years’s time as part of a redesign of the entire plot, which spans some 20.5 hectares between rue de Hollerich and rue d’Aciérie. The land will host a housing complex for around 4,500 people

– Nei Hollerich – including in the former tobacco plant, the Heintz van Landewyck building.

#### **Factory development**

The plant, a national historical monument like the park, was home to a family-owned tobacco factory until recently. Although it is no longer a production site, it still holds the Heintz van Landewyck headquarters – and will continue to do so after the site is ready.

The factory, built in the 1930s, was constructed by George Strauss in the Bauhaus architecture style. Bauhaus originated in



*The park is partially visible only, through barbed wire that shields it from one of Luxembourg City's most urban areas*

Germany in 1919 when architect Walter Gropius opened a school of art and design of the same name in Weimar. The style is characterised by flat roofs, functional design and the use of materials such as steel, glass and concrete. The Heintz van Landewyck building for instance has a steel frame, covered by concrete. "For the time [it was a] very modern approach," said Patrick Meyer, who heads Belvedere Architecture, responsible for the new site. "It's the same way they built skyscrapers in the United States [in the 1930s]."

#### **History of a tobacco company**

The architects looked at plans of the original building and at what changes were made, in order to return it to its original state. One thing that will be brought back are rounded glass windows on the side of the building – a typical feature of Bauhaus architecture. "It's a very special building, because we don't have many of these kinds of buildings in Luxembourg," said Meyer. "That's the great challenge, that people understand which parts of the building are

new and which are the historical parts of the building... long before I knew that I wanted to be an architect, I came down this street with my mother to go shopping in Luxembourg," said Meyer. "We passed this road and I knew this building, and knew that it existed because it was different, it was special... it's the kind of project you know that it's a once in a lifetime."

Heintz van Landewyck is a Luxembourg family-owned tobacco company. It has six production plants, two in Luxembourg, and one each in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Hungary. The company began when Jean-Pierre Heintz, just 25 years old opened a tobacco shop and small factory in the city centre in 1847. The name of the factory comes from Heintz's wife – Joséphine van Landewyck – whose name was a reputational boost because of the high quality of Dutch tobacco at the time. Company head Joseph Heintz-Michaelis moved the factory to Hollerich at the turn of the twentieth century, following complaints from residents about the smell and noise.

