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Opinion

The former Godin stove factories in Laeken-Brussels: how a major heritage site ended up in the scrapyard

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Anyone would acknowledge the relevance of the site of the former Godin stove factories as a major component of our social and industrial heritage.

Jean-Baptiste Godin was a blacksmith whose idea of creating a co-operative was not welcome in Guise, France, where he was accused of “socialism”. He exported his utopia to the periphery of Brussels in Laeken, where in 1858 he acquired a former ‘indiennerie’, a cotton textile printing factory built in 1829. Here he gradually established his stove factory as well as a “familistère”, a housing complex for workers based on the utopian principle of the phalanstery. Both sites developed almost in parallel. In Guise, he would call the ‘familistère’ the “social palace”.

The Tychy brewery museum in southern Poland which was built in 1629 and is still used to produce beer. The glass building displaying original machines demonstrates the manufacturing technology. See Conference Report from TICCIH Hungary