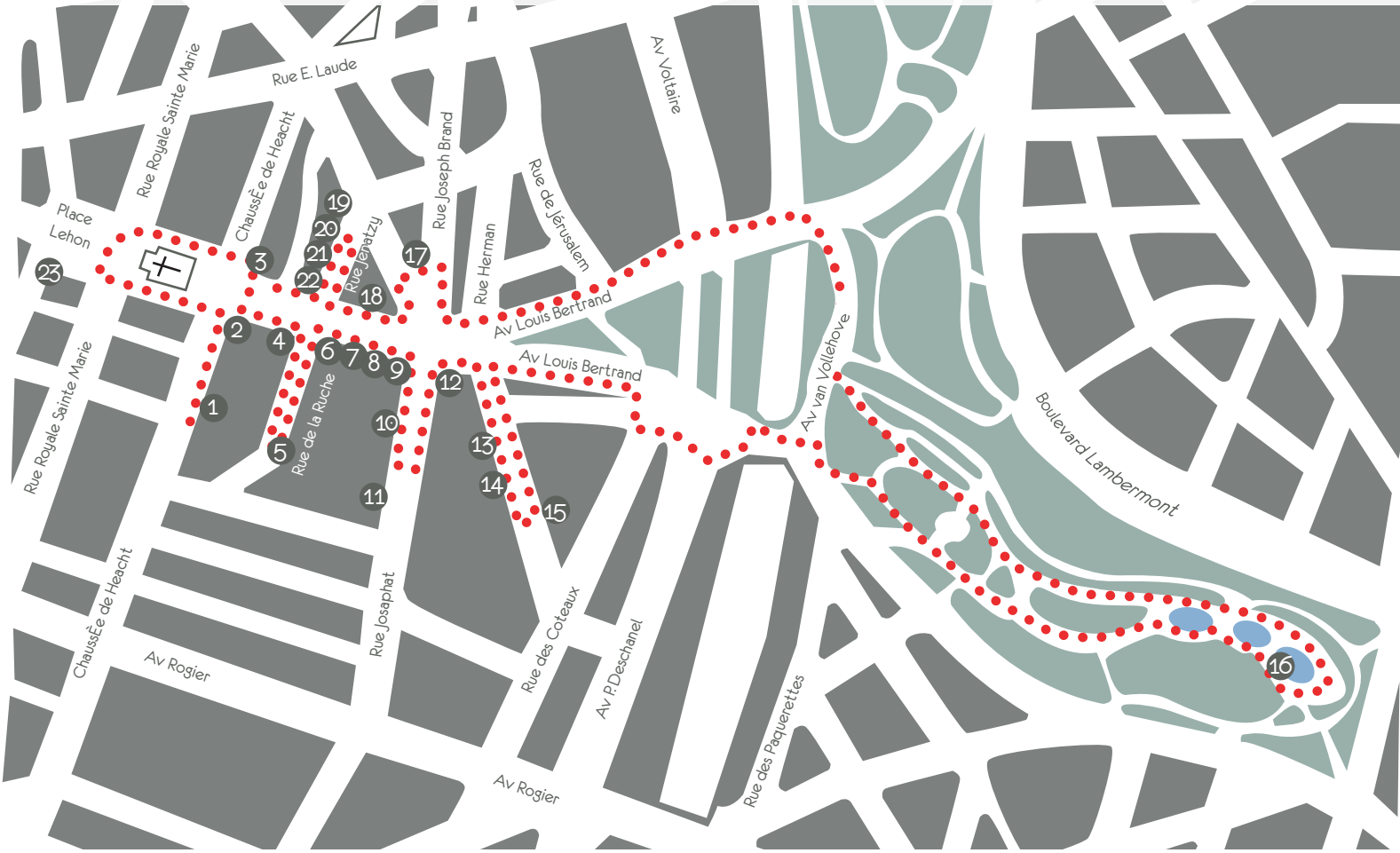
A walk around the Autrique house



The Avenue Louis Bertrand and its side-streets show a remarkable coherence, almost unique for Brussels. The present-day spatial arrangement, which is based on an ancient road, dates back to 1905 and a large amount of the surrounding buildings were constructed at the start of the 20th Century.

The Avenue Louis Bertrand starts at the St.-Servais Church (Gustave Hansotte – 1871-1876) and stretches all the way to the Josaphat Park. At the beginning we see two Late-Flemish Neo-Renaissance style buildings by Lauwers (1909). 2 3 The buildings look almost exactly the same, but it's fun to seek out the tiny differences.

We follow the pavement on the right hand side. At n° 19 we stop 4 (private residence – 1908). The front is decorated with strange and fantastic motifs. Next we take a little detour through the Rue de la Ruche, where we see the back of the municipal school 5 (H. Jacobs – 1907) at n° 30. The main entrance is situated in the Rue Josaphat. We backtrack our steps and on the corner of the Rue de la Ruche and the Avenue Louis Bertrand (n° 27) 6 we find an elegant and imposing building.

A little bit further down the road the beer museum of Schaerbeek is situated (open on Wednesdays and Saturdays, between 14h and 18h), which is bordered by a very beautiful building 7 (n° 39) and at n° 43 we find a house that was designed by Gustave Strauven (1900). This pupil of Horta has taken the usage of flower motifs and arabesques to the limit, especially in the forged iron. He was also responsible for an amount of apartment buildings and shops, which we find a bit further, down the Rue Josaphat. The building on the right 9 carries a picture of the old St.-Servais church in ceramic tiles. On the left hand side 12 we find a café that was named after the architect.

We penetrate the Rue Josaphat to marvel at two little wonders: the front of the school building 10 at n° 241 and its entrance a bit further 11 (H Jacobs – 1907). Next we return to the avenue and immediately turn right, into the Rue Kessels, where we find two buildings by the architect Franz Hemelsoet 13 14 (n° 86 & 88). At n° 51 we find the old municipal swimming pool (Francken – 1904), which recently underwent a restoration. 15

If there's any time left, we go to the Josaphat Park, which is situated in the extension of the central square of the avenue. In the park we see a kiosk, bronze statues (among which a most charming Cinderella), ponds and even a miniature golf court. 16

We go back to the Avenue Louis Bertrand for a few surprises: on the corner where the Rue Joseph Brand and the Rue Henri Bergé meet, we see a strange and monumental building, which is decorated with two towers 17 (Fastré – 1907). A bit further, at n° 38, there's another remarkable house by Hemelsoet 18 . After which we find ourselves at the Rue Jenatzy.

This street was named after one of the Belgian pioneers of the automobile: Camille Jenatzy and his 'Jamais Contente', an electrical car in the shape of a grenade, were the first to cross the 100 km/h border, in 1899.
Other interesting buildings:
N° 25 P. Piquet, private residence (Neo-Renaissance – 1908) 22
N° 18 private residence (1906) 20
N° 19 Th. Serrure, private residence (beginning 20th Century) 21
N° 13 & 15 twin houses (an unbelievable masterpiece of popular art) 19

We return to the avenue and end the walk at the Place Lehon, behind the church of St.-Servais. N° 4 23 used to be the house of the painter G.-E. Guffens, who also designed the plans of his own dwellings.

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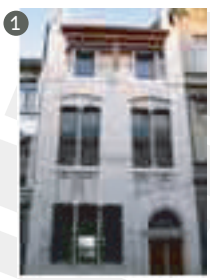

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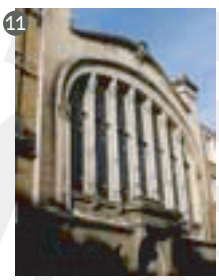

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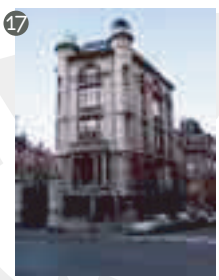
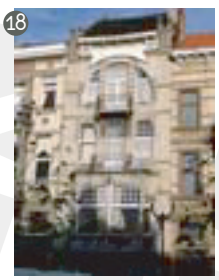
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