

Nomination of
The GREAT
SPAS of Europe



for inclusion on the
World Heritage
List

Volume I: *Spa*, Belgium

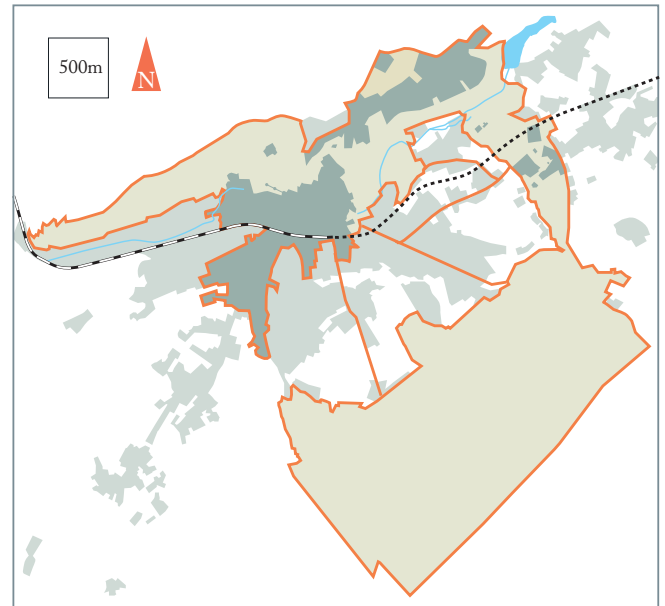


2. *Spa* (BELGIUM)

Introduction

Spa, the eponymous spa town; also called the “Café of Europe” (it was also the birthplace of the modern casino) and the “Pearl of the Ardennes”. *Spa* has, since the sixteenth century, played a precursory role in the recognition of the medical properties of water, becoming internationally-renowned with its waters distributed all over Europe. This contributed to the introduction of the name “spa” in the English vocabulary. Many of the springs, known locally as ‘Pouhons’, issue on a hillside south of the town so that an extensive network of walks through the woods connect the springs to the town. Since the early eighteenth century this landscape served for both crenotherapy and physical activities.

In 2016, the town had 10,415 residents and an area of 39.85 km², giving a population density of 261 inhabitants per km². Less than 5,000 live in the nominated property for an area equal to 7.72 km² (and 15.36 km² in the buffer zone), containing a substantial block of uninhabited therapeutic and recreational landscape with springs and woodland walks in the south.



- Boundary of the component spa town
- Urban fabric within the component spa town
- Urban fabric outside the proposed boundary of the component spa town



The urban spa quarter with Casino (centre) and Anciens Thermes (old thermal bath, lower right)

Location and setting

Spa is located 35 km southeast of Liege and 45 km southwest of Aachen, in the Walloon Region and Province of Liege (jurisdictional district of Verviers). It lies in the steep and attractive valley of the River Wayai in the Belgian Ardennes: a region characterised by extensive forests, interrupted by steep-sided valleys carved by the numerous, swift-flowing rivers into hills, with heights between 350 m and 700 m. To the south of *Spa* is the high plateau of Hautes Fagnes (High Fens), which forms the principal catchment area for the spa water.

The *Wayai* valley characterises the spa town: it runs broadly from east to west, with different tributaries joining: '*le Soyeureux*', '*la Picherotte*', '*le ruisseau de Creppe*', '*le ruisseau de Charwion*', le '*Vieux Spa*' and others. The historic centre of *Spa* was founded in the lowest part of the valley, at about 250m above sea level, right against a steep slope on the north side, that rises up to hills 350m above sea level where the forest of Staneux is situated. On the south side, the valley's boundary is less abrupt, with the contours spread over a regular distance. This slope leads up to the '*Hautes Fagnes*', a large natural reserve on a plateau region, containing peat bogs, grasslands and forests.

Principal features described

The description of the component part has been sub-divided into the following:

- Historic urban landscape of the 'Great Spa'
- Springs
- Urban ensemble of the spa town
- Therapeutic and recreational spa landscape
- Spa infrastructure
- Internationalism, scientific, artistic and literary values, events and cultural tradition

Historic urban landscape of the 'Great Spa'

The spatial plan of the nominated property can be divided into:

1. The historical centre of the spa town, located in the lowest level of the valley of the River Wayai in the north.
2. The sloping woodlands in the south with their springs and the network of historical routes that connected them.
3. The promenades that linked the two main areas.

2.1 Springs

The *Spa* mineral waters are coming from four independent groundwaters overlapping one another at an altitude of 250 to 550 m. *Spa* and its surroundings have more than 300 cold water springs classified into two great hydrological types: light mineral waters and so called “pouhons” or carbo-gaseous naturally sparkling waters. To the first category, the light mineral waters, belong among others *Spa Reine*® and *Spa Intense*®. Rain and snow falling on the Malchamps Moor (*la Fagne de Malchamps*), some 4 km south-west of *Spa*, are filtered first through a peat layer then through a rockmass formed by quartzophyllites. As the waters are little dissolved, their sodium, magnesium and calcium levels are very low. For example, the *Spa Reine* mineral water, which is at an approximate depth of 50m, is tapped after three years spent through the demineralised underground. It only contains 33mg dry residue, probably the lowest sodium amount of all mineral waters in Europe.

The carbo-gaseous waters, or so called “pouhons” are the second category. The word “pouhon” comes from the Latin “potionem” which means to drink or a potion. These springs come from 50 years-old rainfall which has reached calcareous rocks several hundred meters underground. In contact with water these rocks liberate carbonic gas (CO₂) as well as mineral salts in order to finally produce naturally sparkling waters through a chemical reaction. Best known is Marie-Henriette water ® which presents the carbo-gaseous characteristics, that is: CO₂, calcium bicarbonate, iron, manganese and lithium. This water is mainly used for bottling and for spa treatments.

A difference has to be made between the “historic” springs (Pouhon Pierre-le-Grand and the so called “Tour des Fontaines”: *Tonnelet*, *Sauvenière*, *Géronstère* and *Barisart*) on the one hand and the boreholes of water achieved in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries on the other hand (*Reine*, *Marie-Henriette*). In the first category we have natural emergences (with a low flow now) mainly used from the sixteenth century until the nineteenth century for bottling and spa treatments, whereas the second category corresponds to the boreholes with a strong flow serving the spa and the bottling.

Today the spa is mainly treating circulatory problems (mineral water bathing) and arthritic pathologies (peat bathing). As Pliny the Elder wrote, the spa waters follow a strict regulation. The first instruments introduced to protect the *Spa* mineral and thermal waters date back to the eighteenth century. Today, the catchment area is one of the largest in Europe (40 km²) and an infiltration area of more than 130 km² is protected by the Walloon Region Government.

Whilst *Spa* has its bathing treatments, it is especially famed for its drinking cures with different springs for different ailments. Each spring therefore has its own shelter and capture infrastructure. *Spa* was also the first spa town to export its mineral water, as early as the sixteenth century, initially to nearby regions, and then Europe-wide, even as far as Russia. Its bottled waters are of world-renown.

2.1.1 Sauvenière – alt. 410 meters

The *Sauvenière* as well as the *Pouhon Pierre-le-Grand* has been used since the sixteenth century. Jan Breughel referred to both of them when he visited *Spa* in 1612. The *Sauvenière* is well known thanks to the legend of *Saint Remacle's foot* and to the enriching virtues produced by the water. A high degree of iron explains its reputation to cure anaemia and certain forms of infertility. The pavilion protecting the spring dates from 1650 and is one of the oldest in *Spa*.



2.1.2 Groesbeek – alt. 410 meters

Another *pouhon* rises right next to the Sauvenière spring, the *Groesbeek* spring, the properties of which are slightly different from those of the Sauvenière (it was renowned for dissolving kidney stones). Baron de Groesbeek had a marble niche erected in 1651 and the Marquis de Croy restored the construction in 1776. It was further refurbished in 1963.



2.1.3 Géronstère – alt. 430 meters

Géronstère was one of the busiest and liveliest in the seventeenth century. Its ferruginous, sulphurous and carbonated waters cured Peter the Great of his digestive problems. In 1651, the marble niche - which still protects the spring - was built by the Earl of Burgsdorff. Since 1975, the site has been restored to its original eighteenth century appearance.



2.1.4 Tonnelet – alt. 330 meters



Less well-known than other springs, the *Tonnelet* was not in use before the seventeenth century. In 1772 chemist Briard proposed bathing in the *Tonnelet* carbonaceous water. Of little use for a cure, this is the most sparkling and less ferruginous “pouhon” in *Spa*. Today, it is part of a complex that includes the Marie-Henriette and Wellington springs which supply the present-day spa. The metal and glass rotunda that houses the spring (altitude 327m) and the restaurant, was built in 1883 by architects L J Devivier and W Hansen.

2.1.5 Barisart – alt. 300 meters

Barisart is the last spring of the “Tour des Fontaines”. Close to the town, it had nevertheless been quite neglected for a long time. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that an English doctor living in *Spa*, Dr Thomas Cutler, published an article in which he extolled its virtues. It is the most digestive and agreeable of our “pouhons”, and in spite of the same name, very different from the bottled water from the Spa-Monopole factory. A modern trinkhalle and restaurant were built at the source in 1972.



2.1.6 Reine – alt. 440 meters

Unlike the other springs the *Spa Reine* is very lightly mineralised. Marie-Henriette helped its popularity as it was quite ignored beforehand. It was inaugurated in 1933 and represents the latest addition to the natural spring water of *Spa*. Very different from the carbo-gaseous “pouhons”, the *Reine* spring is slightly acidic and has a very low mineral content. Commercialised on an industrial scale by the company Spa-Monopole created in 1921, its success grew while the bottling of “pouhon” type waters gradually decreased.

2.2 Urban ensemble of the Spa Town

Spa town was born with, and for the use of, mineral waters. The development of the little town is closely intertwined with the evolution of hydrotherapy. Based on two urban cores, one reserved for the curists and the other dedicated to the local population working for them, *Spa* still embodies all the thermal infrastructures, building typologies and leisure-facilities that contribute to the thermal function. Today the town presents a coherent set dominated by the new thermal centre situated on one of the hills circling the town.

2.2.1 Building ensembles connected to ‘curative’ waters

During the second half of the nineteenth century, in order to put an end to gaming (1872) the town was transformed into a real thermal town with essential infrastructures for a modern thermalism which was in a full development process at that time. Great urbanistic changes gave *Spa* its present appearance: the *Wayai* river was vaulted, a new bathhouse was built as well as a covered gallery (the Gallery Leopold II), the buildings housing the main springs (*Pouhon Pierre-le-Grand*, *Barisart*) were renovated or rebuilt, and a pleasure lake and kiosks for music were built.

2.2.1.1 Anciens Thermes – old thermal bath (1868)

This emblematic building is the town’s finest example of thermal architecture. Designed by Brussels architect Leon Suys (who also designed the Brussels Stock Exchange), it was inaugurated in the centre of the town in 1868 as the third public establishment built in *Spa*. At the time, it offered all the very latest features in balneotherapy and brought in a series of urban transformations which, allowed *Spa* to again become a spa town at the cutting-edge of progress. It is a vast magnificent eclectic style building built, in stone from France, around a central courtyard. Charles-Henri Thorelle was in charge of carving and sculpting the stone, whilst Jacques Van Omberg and the Van Den Kerkhove brothers created the statues that adorn the Neo-classical façades and flanks. The painter Carpey decorated its entrance hall and rooms. It was constantly transformed and modernised over the years in



order to meet customer demand and technical changes up until 2004 when the spa activity was moved to the new baths built on the hill overlooking the town. Some parts of the building are listed as exceptional heritage of Wallonia.

2.2.1.2 Pouhon Pierre-le-Grand (1880)

The *Pouhon Pierre-le-Grand* in the Winter Garden shelters the most prolific spring (altitude 250m), naturally fizzy, full of mineral salts and rich in iron with an average flow rate of 5,700 litres per day. This structure is emblematic of the urban transformation which followed the end of gambling in 1872. It was constructed in 1880 by architect Victor Besme. It is the fifth monument built successively on *Spa's* main spring. Fully restored in 2012, it still houses the “Livre d’Or”, a vast 9-metre long painting which presents almost 100 famous visitors.



2.2.2 Buildings for leisure and pleasure

Since the eighteenth century, the thermal cure in *Spa* included three obligations: to drink mineral water, to take physical activities (walking, dancing, riding horses) and to experience diversions. For this purpose, a number of pleasant pastimes were organised for the wealthy guests: gambling activities, concerts, balls, and open-air lunches. Some places were planned to allow visitors to parade at chosen times of the day. Beside the pretext of the cure, visitors came in *Spa* to enjoy and be seen.

2.2.2.1 Waux-Hall (1770)

Listed as part of the exceptional heritage of Wallonia, Waux-Hall is one of the few architectural remnants of the first golden age of *Spa*. It is now considered to be the oldest casino in Europe still in place. Built by architect Jacques-Barthélemy Renoz, who was directly inspired by the symmetric plans of the eighteenth century *Maisons de Plaisance* (pleasure houses), it was opened to the public in 1770. It is cleverly located at the meeting point between the main roads coming from the springs. This “house of meetings and games” was much appreciated by visitors who, after taking the waters, stopped there to lunch, gamble and dance. It has preserved its original external appearance which, built in three phases, allows several styles to be observed: neoclassical, Louis XV and Pompeian.



Its rich interior décor by painter Deprez and sculptor and stucco artist Franck is also well-preserved. Restoration works began in the 1980s and 1990s.

2.2.2.2 Casino complex (1904-10, 1929)

Spa is the birthplace of the modern casino; the very first “maison d’assemblée” - where games of chance could be played - opened in 1763. The present-day casino is the result

of successive modifications of the former Redoute as a result of several fires. The main façade and the one opening out on to the gardens date from the first years of the twentieth century (1904-10, under architect Alban Chambon) and was greatly inspired by the original Louis XVI style façade built in 1785. The interior decor of the “Kursaal”, completed in 1910, is inspired by the theatre at Versailles. Kept intact until 1916, some parts were destroyed by a fire during the German occupation, but the interior has preserved some interesting Empire style decorations. After the war, this interior space was rebuilt in order to install a new theatre, the Salon Bleu and the Salon Rose. In 1929, architects were Marcel Paes and Marcel Hansen.



2.2.2.3 Léopold II Gallery and its pavilions (gallery, 1878, pavilions, 1880)



Listed as exceptional heritage of Wallonia, and designed by architect William Hansen, this covered walkway in the Parc de Sept-Heures is built mainly in metal (cast-iron for the structure and iron for the eclectic decorative features). It allowed visitors to shelter from bad weather, but quickly became used for purposes other than walking (e.g. concerts and theatre). This space was extended twice and measures 130m long and is marked out by two masonry structures: the “pavillon des Petits Jeux” to the east and the “pavillon Marie-Henriette” to the west.



2.2.3 Accommodation

During the second part of the eighteenth century, numerous buildings were constructed to meet the increasing demand for lodging during the season. From the simple guest house to the vast rented private residence, accommodation had evolved to fulfil the customer demands. By the nineteenth century, the bourgeoisie replace the aristocracy and the “villegiature” flourished. Hundreds of villas were erected in the vicinity of *Spa* in various styles. A large part of them remain in very good condition today.

2.2.3.1 Hôtel d'Irlande (1769)

Facing the Hôtel Bourbon, this hotel was built in 1769. The place was greatly appreciated because the street led directly to the Promenade de Sept-Heures. It is an outstanding example of civil architecture of the second half of the eighteenth century. It is also a complex building that follows the profile of the road and comprises a half-timbered structure dating from the seventeenth century to which a brick and limestone façade was added in about 1769.



2.2.3.2 Hôtel Bourbon (1774)

The Hôtel Bourbon is located in a part of the town that was only slightly affected by the dramatic fire of 1807. Classical style structure built in 1774, the main façade, which comprises five bays on three tapering levels, is in light yellow painted brick with limestone stripes. It has undergone several changes. Serving its function as a hotel up until the middle of the twentieth century, it was completely restored in 2012 and now shelters six social housing units.



2.2.3.3 Grand Hôtel – Hôtel de ville (1776)

It was Lambert Xhrouet, one of the four shareholders of the Redoute (the first “casino”), who built it in order to invest the enormous earnings generated by gambling. It was one of the most beautiful and largest in the town. In the 1920s, it underwent large-scale renovation work. Since 1941, the Grand Hôtel has served as the Town Hall.



2.2.3.4 Hôtel du Midi, later Villa Royale (1863-65)

When it was built, this hotel only comprised one building, the present-day west wing, to which a rear extension was added. Two hotelier families from *Spa* successively managed this hotel until 1894, the year when the Civil List acquired the property on behalf of Queen Marie-Henriette. The queen made some major changes: the removal of two floors in the west wing, the construction of communication galleries, the creation of the garden, etc. The exterior appearance of the building was modified and was given the classical appearance which we know today. Today, the site is occupied by the Musée de la Ville d’Eaux.



2.2.3.5 Hôtel du chalet du Parc (1870)

The Chalet du Parc enjoys a magnificent location in the heart of the Parc de 7 Heures. Its style is rustic, similar to the neo-Norman style particularly popular in holiday resorts (spa towns, seaside resorts, etc.). Relatively unusual, the building has preserved its large cornices and zinc pelmets which highlight the roofs’ different levels. Modified in the 1930s, the ground floor windows were enlarged and fitted with sash windows with Art Deco style stained glass.



2.2.3.6 Hôtel Britannique (1905), arch. Emile Mouris

The present-day building was completed in 1905 in order to house a luxury hotel called the Grand Hôtel Britannique. Famous for having hosted the General Headquarters of the German Emperor Wilhem II at the end of the First World War, the hotel closed in 1958. Bought by the Belgian state, it has since been occupied by a boarding school for boys. This eclectic structure in white varnished brick and limestone is particularly interesting in that it was built entirely around an invisible metal frame. Inside, many decorative elements are still original features, as is the former dining room with its exceptional neo-Rococo style.



2.2.3.7 Hôtel Balmoral (1905) arch. Auguste-Charles Vivroux

The Hôtel Balmoral is the only establishment in *Spa* that has always been a hotel even if this typical Anglo-Norman style construction was designed initially as a villa. Opened as a hotel on 8 July 1909, the building was extended between 1910 and 1912. At the time, it was an establishment with all the latest comforts, the first in Belgium to be equipped with running water and central heating.



2.2.3.8 Villa des Fleurs (1912), arch. Auguste-Charles Vivroux



Again, this is a villa that was converted into a hotel. Located in the town centre, but with a beautiful garden, it is a neo-classical building of Louis XV inspiration with façades covered with a pale yellow painted decorative coating. Occupied by the German army in 1914, then by the American army in 1944, it became the property of the concessionary of *Spa* casino. Its function as a luxury hotel was restored in 1997.

2.2.3.9 Château de la Terrasse (1857)

The Château de la Terrasse is one of the rare preserved examples of the first villas built in *Spa*. The neo-Gothic style was chosen here in a daring reinterpretation of the contemporary work of the architect Joseph Poelaert, the creator of the famous Courthouse in Brussels.



2.2.3.10 Château d'Alsa (1869)

Built in about 1869, in a neo-classical style, the Château d'Alsa was equipped with various outbuildings: a picturesque chalet, a caretaker's lodge, stables, a barn, a farmyard, a pavilion and a gymnasium. The property also boasted a pond and a waterfall, which are still intact, various small bridges, spouting water features, waterfalls, caves, paths, walks, benches, a vegetable garden and an orchard.



2.2.3.11 Villa San Antonio (1896)

Many villas were built in the second half of the nineteenth century along Rue de Barisart, which led to the spring of the same name. The Villa San Antonio is typical of Meuse style holiday resort architecture as much for its general appearance as the choice of materials and their association with wooden elements, such as overhanging trusses, galleries and balconies.



2.2.3.12 Villa White House (1896) arch. Paul Jaspar



Paul Jaspar was one of the few architects to have developed Art Nouveau in *Spa*. Modern audacity combines with reminders of a regional past that were evoked or reinvented with great subtlety. The *White House* (1896) is a great example of this indisputably successful adaptation of English style residences to the continent: the house combines the purest English style with Meuse half-timbered architecture.

2.2.3.13 Villa Le Freuheux (1909) arch. Marcel Hansen

Following the movement initiated on Rue de Barisart, with a slight delay but with much more ambition, villas were built along Avenue Professeur Henrijean and constitute the most remarkable group of buildings in the town. As in other neighbourhoods, some of them delighted in reinventing major French styles. This was the case of Freuheux, who opted for an updated version of neo-classicism.



2.2.3.14 Château du Neubois (end of the nineteenth century), arch. Charles Etienne Soubre

Near the *Sauvenière* spring, Le Neubois was built for Edouard Peltzer de Clermont in a vast estate. Famous for being the official architect of the 1905 Universal Exhibition, the architect Soubre created in *Spa* various villas inspired by ancient regional styles. Le Neubois is a successful example of regionalism that brings to mind traditional Meuse, Flemish and Norman style half-timbered construction. The castle accommodated Emperor Wilhelm II in 1918, then the French delegations during the Inter-Allied Commissions and, finally the diplomatic *Spa* Conference in 1920.



2.2.3.15 Château de la Fraineuse (end of the nineteenth century), arch. Charles Etienne Soubre

The Château de la Fraineuse was built at the end of the nineteenth century. Here, the architect took inspiration from the Petit Trianon built in 1769 for King Louis XV in the park of Versailles Castle. Far from being a simple pastiche, the castle is a genuine

tribute to its illustrious model. It was the site of the diplomatic *Spa* Conference in July 1920, which settled the question of the repairs owed by Germany.



2.2.3.16 Villa Le Soyeureux (1912) arch. Georges Hobe

The architect Georges Hobé is famous for his Art Nouveau style furniture, but his architectural work, which includes the Namur Casino, is no less interesting. On the edge of tradition and modernity, Hobé designed many villas in the style of English cottages. Built in 1912 in the recently inaugurated Balmoral neighbourhood, the villa is a successful example of integration into the surrounding landscape, one of the architect's major concerns, and alone embodies the spirit of the neighbourhood.



2.2.4 Religious buildings and facilities

As the curists were coming from various parts of the world, a number of buildings related to different religions or beliefs were built: a parish church (middle of the sixteenth century), a Capuchin monastery (1645), a masonic lodge (1777), the first Anglican temple on the continent (1876), an evangelical temple (1877), a new catholic church (1886), and an Antoinist temple (1931). Several of these still exist today. The Jewish Faith Communities were holding their ceremonies in different places (Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews being separated).

2.2.4.1 Protestant Chapel (1876)

Many Protestant and Anglican visitors have stayed in *Spa* over the centuries. This chapel, designed by architect Legros, was built in 1876 in a neo-Gothic style. The red brick masonry contrasts with the large windows fitted with small light-coloured stained glass. The building was completely restored in 2015.



2.2.4.2 Parish church (1886)

This imposing limestone structure was designed by architects Eugène Carpenter and then C. Sonnevile, and built in a neo-Romanesque Rhineland style (Cologne School) between 1883 and 1886. It was intended to cater for the many visitors to *Spa* during the summer season, and is the third parish church to be built on previous foundations on this small hill (the first dated to the early fifteenth century). The funeral of Queen Marie-Henriette was held there, after her death at her residence in *Spa*.



2.2.4.3 Cemetery (1841)



Spa cemetery, since 1841, was located at a distance from the centre of *Spa* in order to meet the concerns of hygienists at the time. Surrounded by a high wall, it brings together many tombs and funereal monuments that bear witness to life in *Spa* in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Several leading figures from *Spa* are buried there, as well as artists, writers and important members of the British community who died in *Spa* and who have been brought together in the “English Cemetery”.

2.3 Therapeutic and recreational spa landscape

The spa function has always conditioned the development of the town, which has evolved organically around its main spring (the *Pouhon Pierre-Le-Grand* in the bottom of the valley), extending towards the other springs in the surrounding landscape. Since the eighteenth century, medical prescriptions for crenotherapy have been linked with amusement, leisure and walking. In the middle of the century, the first network of promenades, laid out in the surrounding landscape and linking the different springs, offered viewpoints on the neighbouring hills and confirmed the close link between nature and thermal cures. Several urban parks and promenades were created – and followed by those taking the waters who wanted to “see and be seen” all day long. The therapeutic and recreational landscape of *Spa*, still visible today, was established in this way. Walks in the forest, man-made, are punctuated by a series of pavilions, points of view, rest areas, waterfalls and rocks, and wooden walkways. In the nineteenth century, visiting spas became one of the first forms of tourism. *Spa* therefore developed this activity, maintaining its close relationship with nature by establishing its tourism infrastructures harmoniously in the landscape.

2.3.1 Parc de Sept-Heures (c.1757, 1876-80)

At the start of the seventeenth century, visitors walked in this central green area of *Spa*, especially at the end of the day. In about 1757, this large central alley lined with elm and lime and flanked by two alleys lined with bowers was created as a public promenade. Gradually, from 1850 onwards, the garden created in keeping with French taste was turned into an English-style park. In 1876, a hurricane ravaged the ancient alleyway and two years later, the building of the Léopold II Gallery gave the opportunity to restructure the entire site of several hectares under architect William Hansen.



2.3.2 Promenade Grünne and the “champignon” (middle of the eighteenth century)

At the end of the promenade Parc de Sept-Heures, this short walk that dates from the mid-eighteenth century is part of a network of walks created to the north of *Spa* by the Englishman Berkeley. In 1813, the Count de Grünne erected a resting place in the shape of a mushroom (soon after replaced by the mushroom we see today) and afterwards also installed a small stone monument.



2.3.3 Promenade des Montagnes Russes (1752-53, 1824) and “de Hesse-Rhinfels” pavilion (1851)

Starting on Boulevard des Anglais the walk of 1752-53, redesigned around 1824, starts with a series of hairpin bends that lead to the so-called “de Hesse-Rhinfels” pavilion of 1851. This path and those that run alongside it are the work of Englishman Berkeley.



2.3.4 Promenade Annette et Lubin (1785)



The present-day Promenade Annette et Lubin starts at the end of the Parc de Sept-Heures via Promenade Grünne and arrives at the new baths built on the site of the former Annette et Lubin cabin. From there, it is possible to descend to the Parc de Sept-Heures.

2.3.5 Promenade Reickem (1827) and Félix Bernard pavilion (1911)



This walk of 1827 corresponds partly to the route of an older path used by pilgrims passing through Ardenne on their way to Rome or Compostella. Below this walk is a small neo-classical style viewpoint designed by Marcel Paes and inaugurated in 1911. It is a hexagonal-shaped structure which has three sides open to the valley and which is supported by Tuscan columns.

2.3.6 Promenade d’Orléans (1839, 1850)

Originally, this walk was a simple path that led from the Sauvenière spring to the Orléans monument. It was built in 1787 by the children of the Duchess of Orléans to perpetuate the memory of their mother’s cure thanks to the waters of the Sauvenière. It was extended in 1839, and again around 1850.



2.3.7 Promenade des Artistes (1849)

It is again Joseph Servais, the Mayor of *Spa* from 1862 to 1869, to whom we owe the creation of this popular promenade.

2.3.8 Promenade Meyerbeer (1859)



The Promenade Meyerbeer connects *Spa*'s two main springs: Géronstère and Barisart. The bridges, benches and resting places along the path, which passes from one side of the Barisart stream to the other, were named after the works or characters created by Meyerbeer in his different operas.



2.3.9 Fountain Tour (end of nineteenth century)

This is a great classic from the end of the nineteenth century. The “Tour des Fontaines” could be completed on foot in about three hours, including stops at each of the springs, but most visitors preferred to hire a carriage and coachman. The traditional route included, in order, the *Tonnelet* spring, then the *Sauvenière* and *Géronstère* springs before leading down to the Barisart spring.

2.4 Spa infrastructure

To help accommodate spa guests, various infrastructure was built. Some of the relevant infrastructure can be considered as the railways which were essential to growth and sustaining the economy of the spa. Besides this, there are more modest elements that are witness to the development of the town, international attendance or the stewardship of so many visitors.

2.4.1 Train station (1863)

The railway line to *Spa* was built in 1855. The neoclassical style building still used today dates from 1863. In 1918, this station saw the arrival of the cream of the German armed forces as well as many of the Triple Alliance allies. It also welcomed the negotiators of the Armistice Commissions in 1919 and those of the Spa Conference in 1920.



2.4.2 Tram shelters (1909)

These are four lightweight structures, designed by architect Georges Hobe and which today would be called “urban furniture”, with very different appearances and functions. Firstly, there are three shelters that served the local tram line built in 1909 between *Spa* and Verviers. The fourth element is a resting place.



2.4.3 Ice Rooms (eighteenth and nineteenth century)

Today, Belgium has more than 200 ice rooms spread around Flanders and Wallonia. An exceptional case, *Spa* alone has more than 15 of these small structures which were used to store food and make sorbet. This high concentration, which can only be explained by the large-scale hotel activity, offers an insight into the evolution of building techniques from 1757 to 1924.



2.5 Internationalism, scientific, artistic and literary values, events and cultural tradition

The international reputation of *Spa* as a thermal town is until today noticeable by the use of the noun “spa” in the English language when referring to a mineral water resort. Indeed, as early as the seventeenth century, the word “spa” was already used in England to designate a mineral spring or a source with medical properties similar to those of *Spa*. One hundred years on, it designated a town having one or more sources of recognised therapeutic value and then, in the nineteenth century, in English-speaking countries, it came to refer to a thermal resort with accompanying leisure facilities. Today the word “spa” is also used in different languages, even in French, to talk about commercial establishment offering health and beauty treatment through such means as steam baths, exercise equipment, and massage.

The thermal town of *Spa*, with its natural resources of mineral water, was a pioneer in developments in hydrotherapy. From the sixteenth century onwards, *Spa* has had an important role in literature about natural sources and its healing water virtues. In the seventeenth century, the first scientific analyses were carried out on the basis of distillation and evaporation. Scientists wanted to discover where the healing powers of these waters came from. Famous doctors across Europe wrote publications on the mineral waters of *Spa*. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the medical use of mineral water was diversified: Jean-Philippe de Limbourg, physician of the Prince Bishop of Liège, was the first in *Spa* to suggest using water in the form of showers or baths.

The town of *Spa* bears witness to the image being an international meeting place of fashionable society, political and diplomatic events and for musicians and painters who have visited *Spa* over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The town has always welcomed guests attracted by the medical virtues of the waters, but also by a type of mondaine or polite practices and by a concentration of leisure activities. To pique curiosity and attract visitors some sort of tourist guides have been published as in 1734 *Les Amusemens de Spa* (“entertainments/amusements of Spa”) abundantly illustrated where the emphasis is within the title, on the amenities of the village, associated with the benefits of the cure. It was later translated into English, German, and Dutch. *Spa* is also known as one of the early pioneers of the modern casino, the oldest surviving is the Waux-Hall, being one of the first casinos in Europe (1770).

At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, many sportive and worldly activities were organised and widely promoted in *Spa*. In 1896, the first Belgian

car racing is organised in *Spa*, precursor of the “Formula I Grand Prix”. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the city was the preferred spot for many political events, such as the abdication of Emperor Wilhelm II (the Villa Neubois was his private residence and in 1918 the Hôtel Britannique his headquarters), the headquarters of the armistice commission of the allies during the winter of 1918-19 (Hôtel Britannique) and the Spa Conference in July 1920, the first post-war conference to include German representatives (Château de la Fraineuse).

Comprehensive knowledge exists of the visitors who came to *Spa*. By means of “*Liste des Seigneurs et dames*” and “*Liste des Etrangers*”, published each year from 1751 to 1939, with only sporadic interruptions due to war disturbances, the list of individuals who attended *Spa* is known. In the *Pouhon Pierre-le-Grand* there is a very large painting on display by Antoine Fontaine from 1894 which depicts some of these illustrious visitors of *Spa* and the memory of these prestigious guests is preserved in the names of the sources (s.a. Pouhon Pierre-Le-Grand, Prince de Condé, Marie-Henriette, etc.), the buildings (Galerie Leopold II) and the walkways (la promenade d’Orléans, la promenade des Artistes, la promenade Berkeley, la promenade Meyerbeer, etc.).

Information related to the scientific publications, visitors who attended *Spa* and “guide books” can be found in the bibliography.

2.6 Continuing spa tradition

The history of *Spa* is linked with its waters as the basis for its development, allowing the spa town to become a place where wellness, pleasure and nature intermixed. This is still true today.

The town offers a central concentration of original spa components with fine French classicist architecture, whilst new interventions include an hotel and the sensitive renovation and modernisation (2009-12) of Pouhon Pierre-le-Grand with a new glass roof added to the 1880 creation of Victor Besme. Beyond lay the Waux-Hall and an exceptional belt of villas that remain private homes. One of the distinctive originalities of the plan of *Spa* is the role played by walks. Routes lead from the centre to the meadows, steep winding paths cut into bedrock ascend the steep river cliff of the Wayai valley to historic viewpoints and rest areas, whilst the Route des Fontaines (1862) in the surrounding forest to the southeast still connects the Tonnelet, Sauvenière, Géronstère, and Barisart sources with their traditional spring structures and attendant lodges. The network of steeper historic trails is maintained, following wooded narrow valleys with boulder-strewn streams and cascades that drain the Fagnes, crossed by rustic bridges dedicated to the artists of *Spa*.

The collection of springs is free of access for visitors who wish to drink the special carbonaceous water, the ‘pouhons’. Since the sixteenth century these waters have been exported throughout Europe, then little by little replaced by medication concurrent with pharmacological developments. Today, the natural and lightly mineralised water Spa Reine is commercialised by the Spa Monopole company.

Today, *Spa* maintains its tradition and thermal know-how and has reacted to new pressures linked to modern spa tourism. When the Social Security decided to withdraw the repayment for treatments, the spa and leisure activities prevailed the medical aspect

of a cure. Nevertheless, continued sympathetic investment has seen the town build a new state-of-the-art thermal centre (Thermes de *Spa*, designed by architect Claude Strebelle, opened in 2004) on the Annette et Lubin hill immediately to the north. Overlooking the town, yet nestled within the forest of Staneux and a High Fens habitat, Marie-Henriette spring water is used for crenotherapy and balneotherapy treatments that are combined with peat and carbo gaseous bathing, thermal showers and modern wellness options. In technical continuity as a 'Great Spa', a new funicular railway was constructed to link the historical centre with the new establishment. In 2017, the thermal baths received 198,000 guests.

Amusements are still forming an integral part of the life in *Spa* and the town's international reputation is further sustained by hosting or lending its name to sporting and cultural events at the highest level: from the Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix to the international festival of music from French-speaking countries - the "Francofolies" (in partnership with La Rochelle in France and Montréal in Canada). In 2007 the artist, Marc Renier, realised a similar exercise to that of Antoine Fontaine's work of 1894 by depicting the personalities who visited or stayed at *Spa* during the twentieth century.



The new funicular railway - in technical continuity as a 'Great Spa'