

# Restoration of the Maiden Tower

**Design:** Studio Roma (restoration) & De Smet Vermeulen architecten, 2008–2014  
**Construction:** 2010–2016  
**Project architect:** Peter Geens for De Smet Vermeulen architecten  
**Structural Engineer:** Norbert Provoost bvba  
**Restoration specialist:** Linda Van Dijck  
**Photos:** Filip Dujardin  
**Location:** Zichem, Belgium

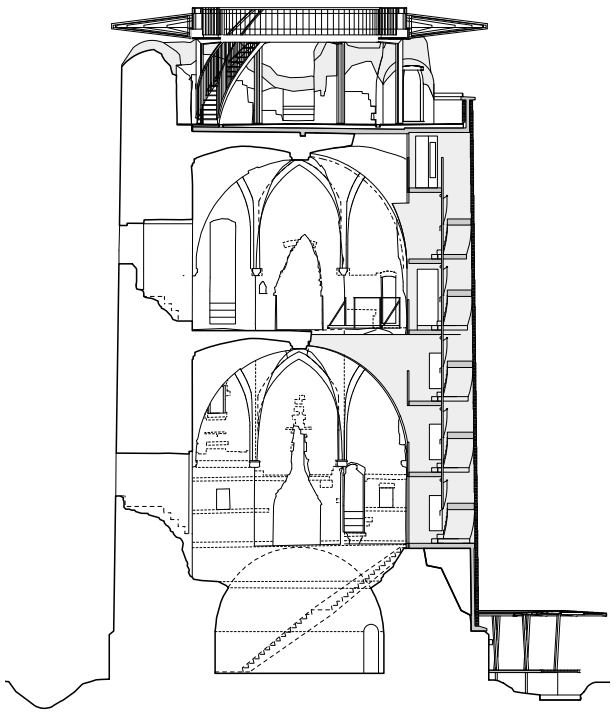


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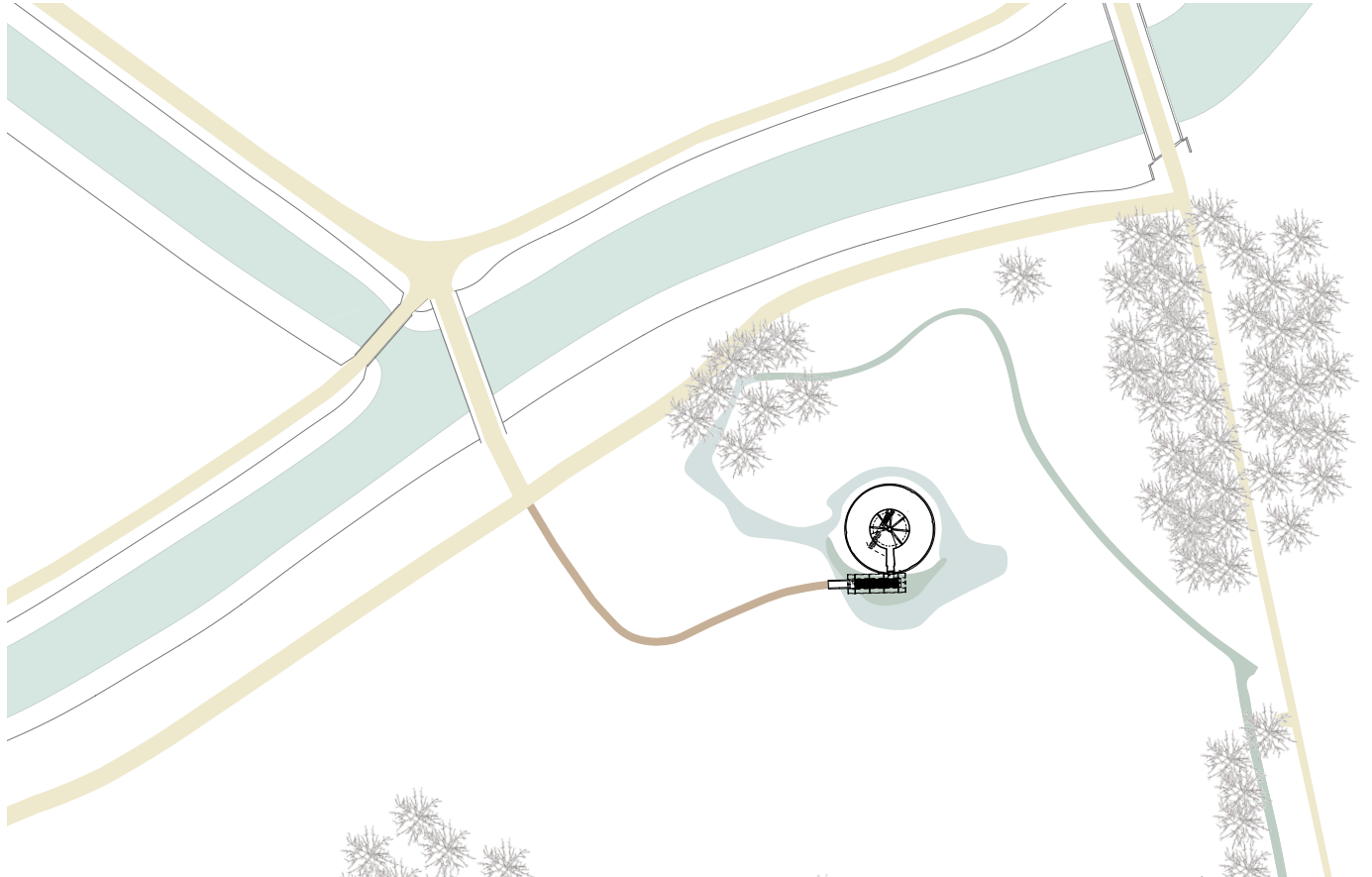
The Maagdentoren is a partially collapsed, fourteenth-century donjon. Reconstruction is virtually impossible because the historical documentation is lacking and the building material, a local ironstone, is no longer available. The aim of the restoration was to consolidate the ruin, prevent further deterioration and render the tower accessible as a viewing platform for the surrounding landscape. The restoration was based on structural logic: the metres-thick, crumbling walls needed to be capped, repair of the cylindrical, internally octagonal, geometry would ensure stability.

A path leads to an access bridge, covered to protect visitors from falling debris. Access is via the nineteenth-century stable entrance. A long metal stair leads to the upper floor where a staircase fills the breach in the outer wall. The stair landings plug the gap in the reinforcement rings of injected synthetic resin in the donjon walls. On the inside, concrete piers replace collapsed cross vaults, on the outside a brick shell closes the cylinder. Brick-sized openings illuminate the new stairs without the need to perforate the elevations with new and historically unvalidated windows.

The final stair to the roof is a spiral stair, built into a stair shaft discovered in the wall. The steel structure that raises the metres-thick wall coping above the crumbling wall and that in silhouette restores the circle, generates a tempietto whose upper level serves as an observation post.



scale 1/300



-3,50 scale 1/1250