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BRUSSELS : THE ROYAL PARK



The entire area of the royal park and the royal square is **situated on the site where the medieval court of Brabant used to stand**. This enormous palace dated from the 11th century when the duke of Brabant left his 'castrum' in the centre of the city. A new castle was built on the so-called 'Koudenberg' at the edge where the higher part of Brussels stops and the lower part begins. The successors of the dukes (e.g. Filip the Good and Charles V) kept enlarging the palace which turned into one of the most beautiful and picturesque royal residences in medieval Europe. The entire complex,

however, burnt down in 1731 during the Austrian rule of the Southern Netherlands. The palace, which lay in ruin, was never to be reconstructed.

A part of this royal residence was the '**warande**', or the forest and the park of the [palace](#). In 1775 the Austrian governor decided, together with the City of Brussels, to construct a new prestigious and modern residential area. The former park was almost like a forest in the city, with hills and little valleys where game and other animals lived. The Austrian empress Maria-Theresia agreed to turn the forest into a new park in classical style for the rich citizens of Brussels to spend their free time in. The park was leveled, new trees were planted and the roads were traced according to geometrical plans. The architects were **GUIMARD** and the Austrian **Joachim ZINNER** come from the burned residence. In 1780 a Waux-Hall was built, where music was to be played and where people could sit down and relax while having a drink or something to eat. In 1803 a dinner for 1800 people was organized there in honour of Napoleon and his wife Josephine.

In September 1830 the royal park became the **cradle of the Belgian independence**. After an uproar had broken out in the Brussels Opera, the revolutionary army fought the Dutch army in the royal park in order to break away from the union with Holland and the Dutch king, William I. The Dutch army had to leave Brussels on September the 27th, which finally resulted in the creation of a new state, Belgium.

