

VIRGINIA UNION
UNIVERSITY



**City of Richmond
Planning Commission
May 3, 2021**

Dr. Allia L. Carter, Executive Vice President/COO of VUU
Mr. Dale G. Mullen, McGuireWoods LLP

Virginia Union University

Vision

Virginia Union University is a premier liberal arts urban institution of higher education and center of excellence for the preparation of students and the development of leaders for tomorrow's world.

Mission

Virginia Union University is nourished by its African American heritage and energized by a commitment to excellence and diversity. Its mission is to:

1. Provide a nurturing intellectually challenging and spiritually enriching environment for learning;
2. Empower students to develop strong moral values for success; and
3. Develop scholars, leaders, and lifelong learners of a global society.

To accomplish this mission, Virginia Union University offers a broad range of educational opportunities that advances liberal arts education, teaching, research, science, technology, continuing education, civic engagement, and international experiences.



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The Belgian Friendship Building

- The Belgian Pavilion is a four-part complex constructed for the 1939 New York World's Fair showcasing technology and innovation.
- Instead of having the building return to a University in Belgium. The Belgium government offered the building to any US college or university.
- After competing with 27 other Universities, VUU was awarded the recipient of the Belgian Pavilion in 1941.
- John M. Ellison, 4th President of VUU, worked with the community to raise \$500,000 to relocate the building from New York to VUU.



The Belgian Building, Fund

Richmond, Virginia

Ca. 1941 fundraising brochure describing reconstruction.



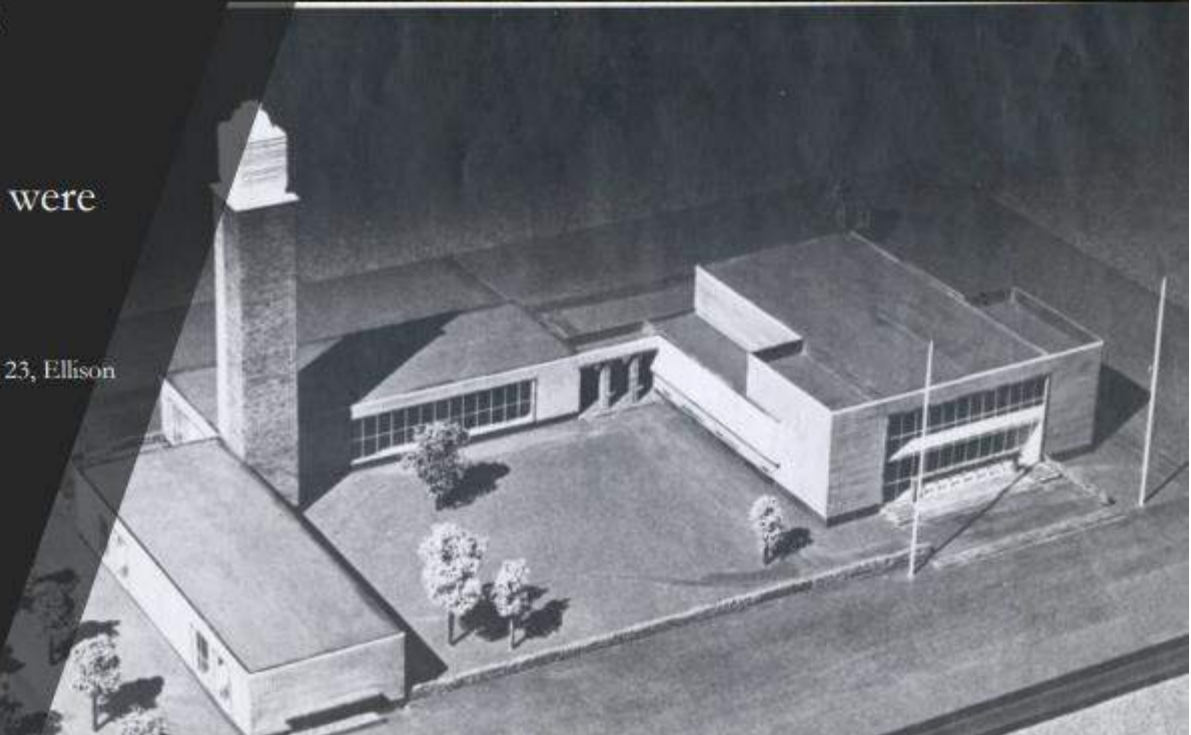
The Belgian Building, Cornerstone Laying

Richmond, Virginia

The Belgian Friendship Building

- The Pavilion was designated as a multi-use educational space, classroom, library, performing arts center, and gymnasium.
- The building was used as a processing center for the United States Department of Selective Services for draftees entering World War II.
- From 1943 until 1947, 161,000 individuals from eastern Virginia were inducted.

(Richmond News Leader, Feb. 4, 1943, p.3 and July 24, 1947 p. 23, Ellison letter Jan. 14, 1944, VUU Archives)





Example of broken louver from wind damage that



Broken louver from wind damage



Example of a missing panel from storm and wind damage



Penetration for logo support



Design & Fixture

International Architectural Significance & Style

Methodology of lighting (i.e., install, design, and means in which signs are affixed to the building are *not* inappropriate for the building and are *not* incompatible with its historic feature and international style.

According to Fletcher (1963) Belgium architecture can be described as wild, licentious, and picturesque, while sobriety amounting to dullness.



Consistent with Modern Architecture (1925-1950)

Modern architecture, or modernist architecture, new and innovative technologies of construction, glass, steel, and reinforced concrete.



The Belgian Pavilion
Undated photograph, probably 1939
Photograph depicts Belgian Building at New York World's Fair

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Symbols of Change

Richmond, Virginia



The Belgian Pavilion, Tower
New York, NY
World's Fair 1939



Robert E. Lee Monument
Marius Jean Antonin Mercié
Lee Circle, Monument Avenue
(May 29, 1890)



Robert E. Lee Monument
Jean-Antoine Mercié, Sculptor
Lee Circle, Monument Avenue
July 22, 2020



Robert L. Vann Memorial Tower
Belgian Friendship Building
Future of RVA



Request: Is that the sign stays and the four wall signs upon the Vann Tower on the campus of Virginia Union University be illuminated.

References

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- Fletcher, Sir Banister (1963). *History of Architecture on the Comparative Method*. 17th edition, revised. New York.
- Green, B. & James-Chakraborty, K. (n.d.). *A Towering Memoria: The Robert L. Vann Tower and the Belgian Friendship Building*. Global Architectural History Teaching Collaborative. Retrieved December 10, 2020, from <https://gahtc.org/lectures/395>
- Lighted VUU tower enhances city skyline* (2016, March 8). Richmond Free Press. Retrieved December 8, 2020, from <http://richmondfreepress.com/news/2016/mar/08/lighted-vuu-tower-enhances-city-skyline/>

