



INTERVIEW WITH
Patrick Vandembemt & Jasper Vandembemt, founders & owners

SUSTAINABLE BUILDING SOLUTIONS

COMPANY

Facadeclick

REGION

Flanders

Founded: 2015

Location: Leuven

Number of employees: 2

Website: www.facadeclick.be



Following an environmentally circular building approach, the Leuven-based company Facadeclick has developed a patented solution to construct brick façades. "Without using mortar or glue, our dry building system makes it possible to build a jointless façade quickly by clicking bricks onto inserts. With these inserts, the bricks can be easily connected and disconnected," explains Patrick Vandembemt, inventor of the innovative solution and founder and co-owner of the company.

BUILDING REFERENCES

Today, Facadeclick installs and licenses out its technology worldwide. "We first had to demonstrate that our product met the challenging expectations. Five years ago, we started our journey in Belgium with a brick producer (Nelissen) and a connector producer (Didak) who were willing to manufacture the Facadeclick elements for us," explains Vandembemt. "In the meantime, we have fine-tuned our technology and installation process and installed over 10,000 m² of houses in Belgium and

"It remains our strategy to sell directly to building sites locally and to license out our Facadeclick technology in the rest of the world."

the Netherlands," he continues. Obtaining building references means that other building companies start recognizing all benefits of the Facadeclick solution. "In the Netherlands, the brick producers we work with know all the local building companies and project developers and they confirm that our system is circular, fast and easy to install, in virtually any weather conditions," says Vandembemt.

Furthermore, Facadeclick has concluded a cooperation agreement with Unilin to license out its technology worldwide. "As a result of this cooperation, some of the biggest construction companies are now testing Facadeclick. It remains our strategy to sell directly to building





sites locally and to license out our Facadeclick technology in the rest of the world,” emphasizes Vandenbempt.

AN EMOTIONAL SKIN

Facadeclick’s goal is to offer every color, every size and every type of brick that exists in traditional masonry work. “That was one of the issues when we started. We came with a new product, but just one type of brick and a very small range of colors. In addition, we realize that bricks are the emotional skin of a house so it is important to pay attention to design,” explains Vandenbempt.

For its current projects in the Netherlands, Facadeclick works with Nelissen bricks and Didak inserts. The same applies for bricks and inserts destined for the United Kingdom. “However, we cannot rely solely on Belgian suppliers for our future orders to the Netherlands, the United Kingdom or even other European countries. Didak will be able to supply inserts to a large part of Europe on account of it being a lightweight product. However, it is more difficult for bricks because they have an emotional value and you need to have the same colors at your disposal as in traditional brickwork,” adds Vandenbempt.

MATERIALS BANK

A lifecycle analysis conducted by Facadeclick in collaboration with the University of Brussels suggested that

bricks and inserts can be reused at least three times. “We adopt a future-proof way of building and stock our building material in the same way as in a materials bank. If we get word that a house will be demolished, we can reuse this material to build a new house or just stock the material for the future. Eventually, there will also be a brick inventory for every type of house,” comments Vandenbempt.

The company believes that its customers need to be able to make the deliberate choice to remove the skin of a building for insulation or design purposes. “We recently built a shop for a supermarket chain with Facadeclick. Six months later however, they decided to use another brick color and asked us to remove the skin of the building which can easily be done with Facadeclick,” he adds.

SUSTAINABLE AND AFFORDABLE

Working with Facadeclick is also cheaper than with traditional building materials. “If a product is more circular than traditional building materials but at a higher price, it would never gain market share.

“We adopt a future-proof way of building and stock our building material in the same way as in a materials bank. ”

Moreover, thanks to the ease of installing in any weather and the low-level training required of workers, we can build between 12 and 15 m² a day with Facadeclick instead of 5 m² a day in the traditional way. Besides it is becoming increasingly difficult for building companies and project developers to find enough trained people to work on site. All of these reasons explain why we are 20 to 25% cheaper than traditional building techniques,” says Vandenbempt proudly.

A CIRCULAR FUTURE

Although it is difficult to build, jointless brickwork is becoming more and more popular in Belgium and Europe. “In Belgium, jointless brickwork accounts for more than 60% of the enquiries coming from architects. With Facadeclick we can address this demand,” Vandenbempt explains.

In the future, according to the Green Deal, all European countries will have to build with construction products that have an Environmental Product Declaration (EDP). This means that every brick factory will be able to offer a sustainable solution and that the products used to build the houses of the future will be environmentally sound throughout their entire lifecycle. “Facadeclick is the first product in Belgium certified by an EDP. We are ready for this rule change and we believe that Facadeclick is the right partner in building a circular future,” concludes Vandenbempt.