

Literally translated 'Bauhaus' means 'Build house'. The notion seems to resonate the often uncritical attitude of educational programs in architecture and urbanism towards greenfield development. To be honest, the number of assignments that challenge students to design something new on pristine land still overwhelms the number of questions that ask them to think about an architecture that goes along with reclaiming open space. As the European Commission has set the ambition in 2015 to evolve for all member states to a situation of no net land take in 2050, it is time for architecture schools to reset their ambitions too.

Tackling the effects of climate change is not merely coping with inundations, drought and urban heat islands. At least as important is desealing soil because of its vital role for carbon sequestration, evaporation, water infiltration, mineral cycles, biodiversity, etc. The master program in urbanism and planning at the Faculty of Architecture at KU Leuven has been exploring, in different collaborations between teachers, students and researchers, possibilities of reclaiming open space from the already built up area. Specific assignments have risen awareness about the large number of abandoned constructions in open space that could easily be removed to allow for new development at better locations. Students were also challenged to design the removal of this 'spatial garbage', as we called it, and the situation afterwards. But also oversized road infrastructure or kilometers of rural roads to serve merely one dwelling, terraces and driveways in private gardens, farmsteads of retiring farmers that would otherwise be turned into residential villas with large gardens and private horse pastures, have passed the scene.

Making architecture and urbanism students well aware of the importance of unsealed soil helps "pave the way" for new and essential strategies. Isn't it about time for 'Abbauhaus'?

## Isn't it about time for 'Abbauhaus'?

*Hans Leinfelder*  
KU Leuven-Faculty of Architecture