# LAN

## Press Release /

*July 2015*

# Urban Renovation Lormont

Consisting of primarily collective and social housing, the urban development project accommodating roughly 10,500 people and 50% of Lormont's population is now complete.

**Technical information:**

PROJECT: Rehabilitation of 709 housing units, relandscaping and creation of a new car park.
CLIENT: Domofrance
LOCATION: Lormont, Genicart district (33)
BUDGET: 16,8 Mio Euro excl. VAT
TIMETABLE: 2009–2014
TEAM: LAN (mandatory architect), Agence Franck Boutté (HEQ consultant), BASE (landscape architect), Beterem ingénierie (all-trades engineer)

**Lormont Génicart**

The Génicart district, located near the centre of Lormont and adjacent to the town's main urban and interurban network, consists primarily of collective and social housing. Comprising 10% of the city'smunicipal territory, it accommodates roughly 10,500 people and 50% of Lormont's population. This ambitious urban and social renovation project is organized around four different residences, located on the South sector of the district: Saint-Hilaire (387 units), Leroy (114 units), La Boétie (105 units) and Villon (104 units). The project has established a residentialisation programme. The term "residentialisation" originated in the 2000s and follows the first phase of rehabilitation of housing estates operated from the 80s. Residentialization responds pragmatically to the constraints of collective housing for large populations set by the investors. In this programme, housing units are gradually distinguished from one another, and public space follows suit. Through the use of pathways and a more progressive hierarchy of public and private, the presence of unused collective space is reduced. The pitfall of residentialization lies in its premise. It is an impoverishment of shared spaces, a homogeneous privatization of ground against the very principle of large sets: the free plan. The risk is to strengthen the withdrawal, and return once again to the margins of neighborhoods. The project area Génicart attempts to reconcile the redefinition and the free plan. Taking advantage of every opportunity offered by the need to intervene on the buildings, the project follows an overall strategy of making urban blocks more comprehensive through architecture, whilst keeping the landscape open. This is achieved through gradually transforming public and private

spaces such as green areas, sports facilities, and new pathways into an entirely pedestrian area.

**From suburb to city block; from no-man's land to urban park**

Each residential group is reconfigured into a distinctive entity and follows the logic of the plot area. The renewal of the façades, which is initially designed to thermally insulate the building, opens up an opportunity for a dualistic approach to the rehabilitation. On one side, the rehabilitation has presented an opportunity to generate more space through creating additional rooms, loggias and balconies. On the other, it has defined a new architecture, visibly distinguishing each city block from one another. The three towers of St. Hilaire define with their new envelope a bright plaza and a playground area. Leroy, situated on a wooded hill, creates a bucolic atmosphere. Boétie, positioned around a large central lawn, is reestablished by new landscapes and equipped with linear seatings, offers open green spaces for families. Villon, situated at a crossroad in the heart of a forested area sheltered from wind, offers sunshine in the afternoon and a space for relaxation, hidden from major traffic at the esplanade Saint Hilaire and peripheral highways.

The parking areas are entirely redesigned, rationalized and concentrated around the site's edges. As a result, the absence of vehicles will create a genuine urban park area at the foot of the buildings. Within this park, wooden and concrete elements will be placed to serve as transitional spaces, terraces, retaining walls, abrupt shifts of the levels and playground areas. Each space creates a network of wooden and concrete landmarks, pedestrian pathways and meeting places between the housing groups. These defined elements will contrast to areas of lush vegetation. The wooden and concrete structures are characterized by their spatial qualities and will thus function similar to classical elements of the romantic garden such as follies, bandstands, pavilions, belvederes, terraces and fountains, and will complement the existing landscape to create anurban park. Thus, the spaces between each residential unit and crossroads will be marked by green zones.

**Saint Hilaire**

The St. Hilaire's esplanade is completely redesigned as a public outdoor space to be in balance with the surrounding dense vegetation.This space is focused around a children's playground, thus creating an area for interaction and community building between the young population of the neighbourhood. This is achieved through an easy to access, three-tier compact structure, entitled «Quartier général»
The first two tiers of «Quartier général» areused as playground, with the third tier operating as a public terrace. The structure is formed out of wooden frames with perforated metal sheet cladding, providing safety and privacy for the children. The outdoor area features two slides, a trampoline, climbing nets, adventure courses, all 25m x4m, rising up to 6m high. The playground arouses curiosity and attracts families, which will stimulate activity and community in the neighborhood. This unique public facility on its own serves as a source of pride for residents. The playful and sports facilities in themselves have tremendous potential for urban development because they project directly on the image if the neighbourhood.

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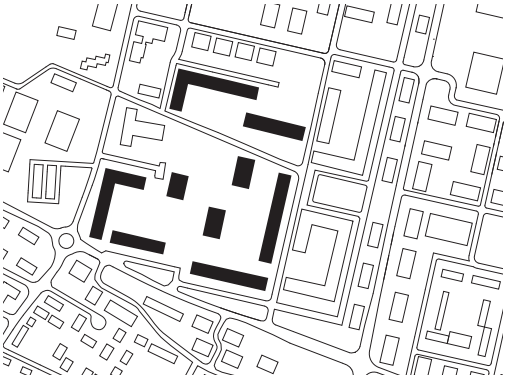
LAN (Local Architecture Network) was founded by Benoit Jallon and Umberto Napolitano in 2002 with the intent of exploring architecture as the intersection of several disciplines.
This approach has today become a working method, and it has allowed the firm to explore new territories and to develop a vision that encompasses social, urban planning, functional, and formal issues.
The firm's projects consider this universe of possibilities at all different scales and contexts, and they have been recognized on multiple occasions in France and across the world, be they sophisticated architectural objects such as the EDF National Archives or experimental housing developments (Paris, Bègles, Beirut), commercial buildings (the Euravenir Tower in Lille), cultural projects (the Théâtre du Maillon and most recently the Grand Palais) or urban planning projects (the Brossette neighborhood in Île de Nantes and the Neue Hamburger Terrassen housing development).
In 2004, the firm was included in Nouveaux Albums de la Jeune Architecture (New Editions of Young Architecture, or NAJA), an award bestowed by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication.
In 2009, LAN was honored at the International Architecture Awards (Chicago Athenaeum), the Archi-Bau Awards, and it won the Special Prize at the 12th International Triennial of Architecture in Sofia.
In 2010, the firm received prizes at the AR Mipim Future Projects and Europe 40 Under 40 Awards.
In 2011, the firms received the Best Sustainable Development prize at the LEAF Awards and was nominated for the Prix de l'Équerre d'Argent.
In 2012 the firm brought home the Silver Medal from the Fassa Bortolo International Prize for Sustainable Architecture. In 2013, it received a «Commendation» at the Civic Trust Awards, the WAN Residential Award, and the BIGMAT 13 France National Prize.
In 2014, the Euravenir Tower received the Prix SMABTP-Pyramides d'argent prize and was nominated for the Prix de l'Équerre d'Argent and the European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture – Mies van der Rohe Award 2015, EDF Archives Centre was nominated for the Philippe Rotthier European Prize for Architecture, 79 Collective Housing Units Bègles were awarded second prize for residential concept category for the Rethinking the Future Awards, and the Neue Hamburger Terrassen received the International Architecture Awards (Chicago Athenaeum) and the Carl-Friedrich Fischer Preis 2014 – Humanes wohnen. The same year, the French Academy of architecture distinguishes LAN with the Le Soufaché Prize, a medal awarded for excellence in architecture.
LAN is an active participant in international architectural debate. The firm is strongly committed to the dissemination and interrogation of the values underlying contemporary architecture, whether in an academic setting or at major institutions and cultural events worldwide.
In 2013 LAN published the book TRACES, interlacing reflections on the nature of different cities with discussions of the various issues that characterize the firm's projects.

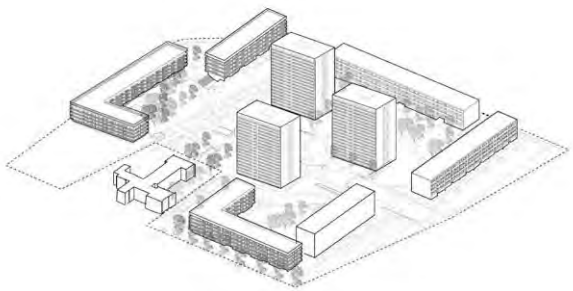
# New ideal

Large-scale demolitions of housing developments have been anticipated in France over the past few decades. Fundamental questions have emerged as to how to confront this subject. Should we preserve the historical and social layering of the city or should we torn down the past? Amongst this critical discourse lies the option of alternative approaches to rehabilitation



# Cité Genicart

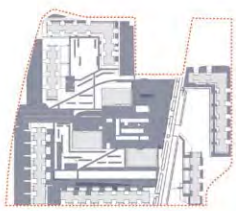
The Génicart district is experiencing an urban renewal. Consisting primarily of collective and social housing, it accommodates roughly 10,500 people and 50% of Lormont's population. The program of this ambitious urban and social renovation project is organized around four different residences.



# Urban renovation

For the new urban development we propose to create an alternative strategy by generating two different approaches: rehabilitation and identification of the existing buildings and a new, better equipped communal space with a park.

Before



After

# Qualification of the void

The parking areas are entirely redesigned, rationalized and concentrated around the site's edges. The absence of vehicles will create a genuine urban park area at the foot of the buildings.

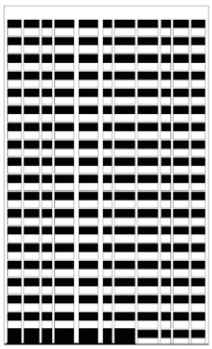
Existing

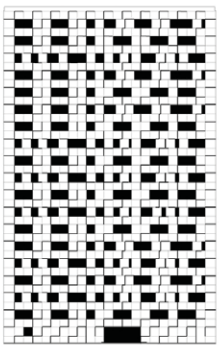
Green parking

Parking outskirts

# Saint Hilaire Towers

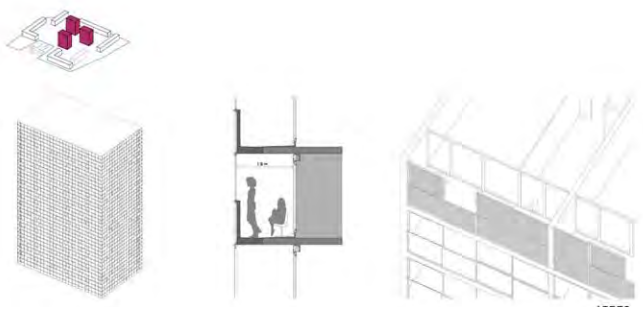
The treatment of the façade and the expansion of the interior space of the three towers of St. Hilaire is the focal point of intervention. In this programme, housing units are gradually distinguished from one another, as public spaces follows suit. Through the use of pathways and a more progressive hierarchy of public and private, the presence of unused collective space is reduced..

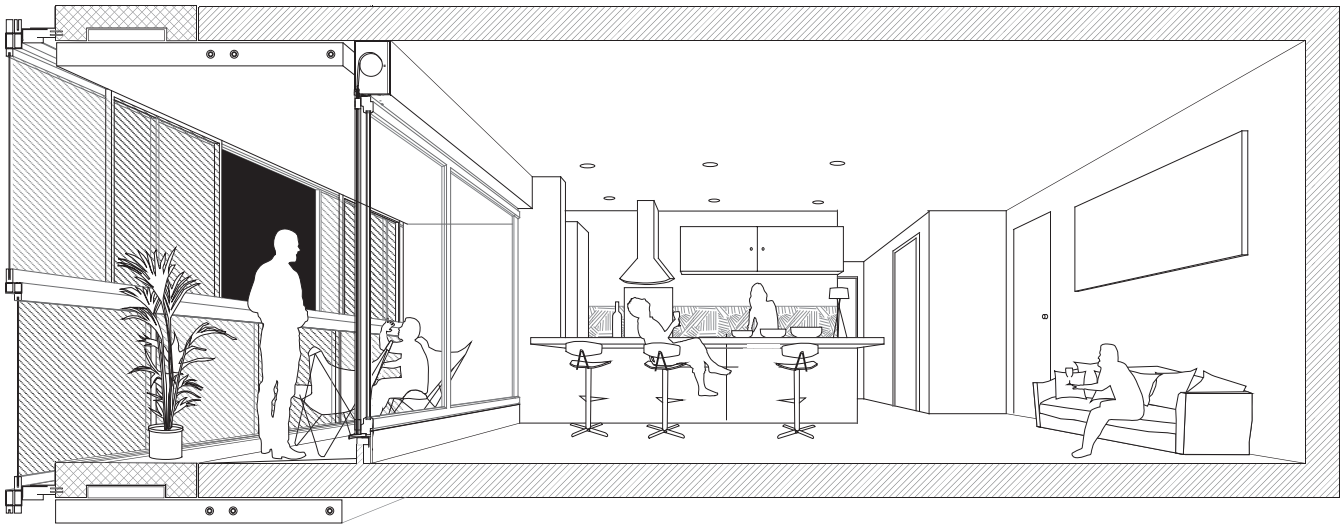




# The Esplanade

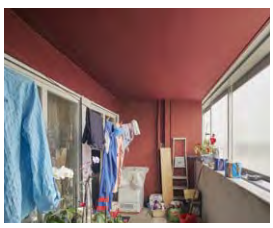
The esplanade Saint Hilaire is perceived as a public space, which offers improved circulation and creates balance within the vast vegetation, thus shaping off and reducing the use of public space. The different elements on the level of Saint Hilaire's plot are organized around the green landscape.





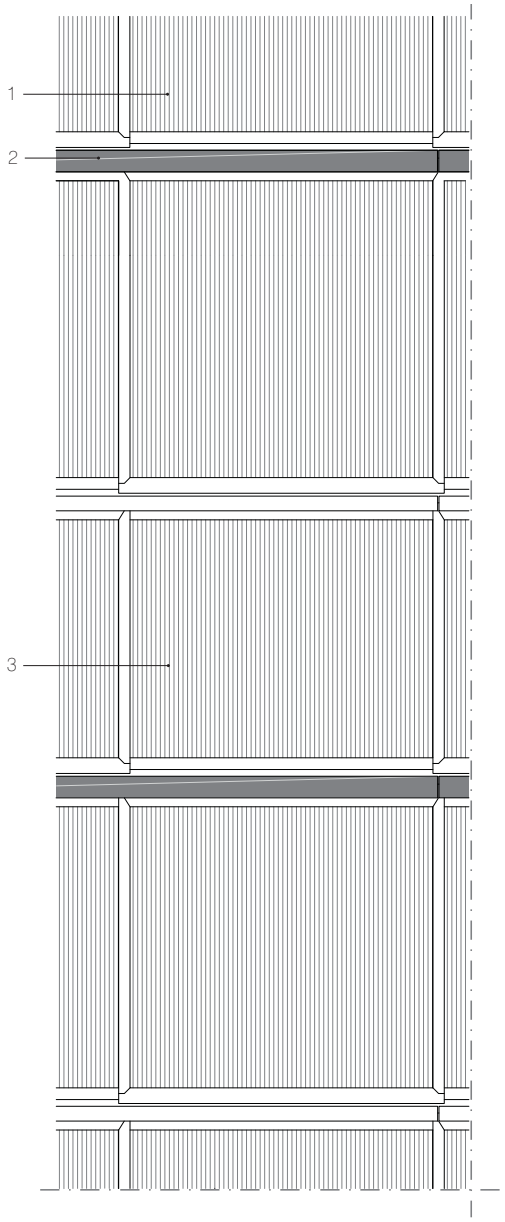
# Expended spaces

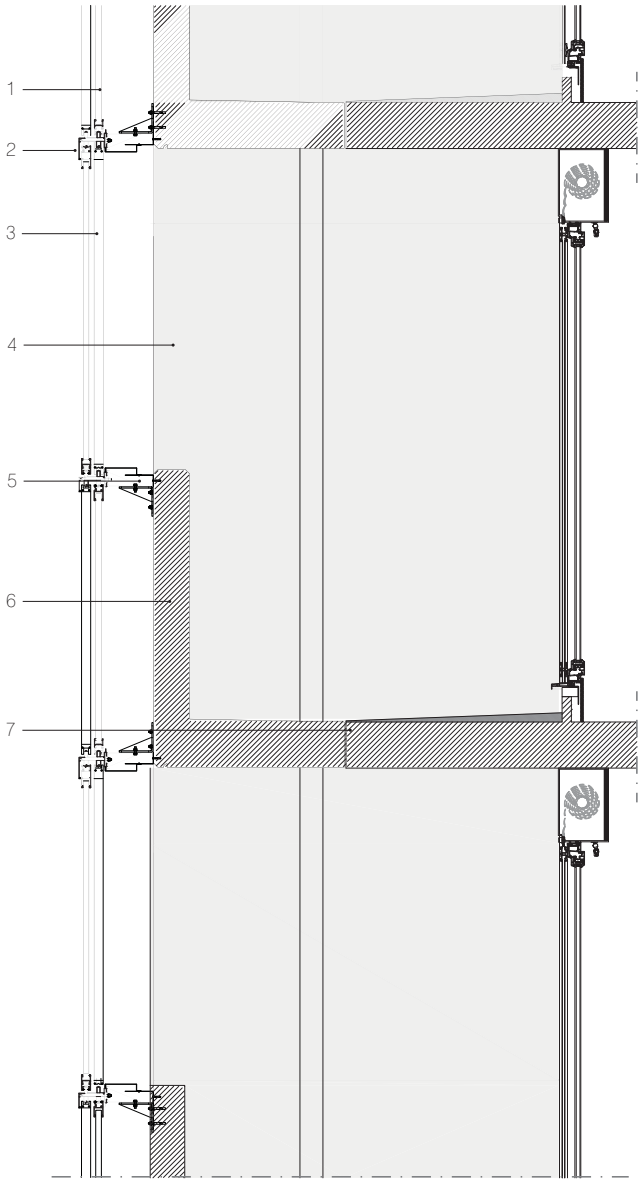
Decisive in the concept was the use of the facade, read as an extension of the interiors. The loggias surpass its depth of 93cm to 160cm and remain part of the exterior spaces, maximizing the air flow and enforcing the thermal exposure of the buildings' envelopes.

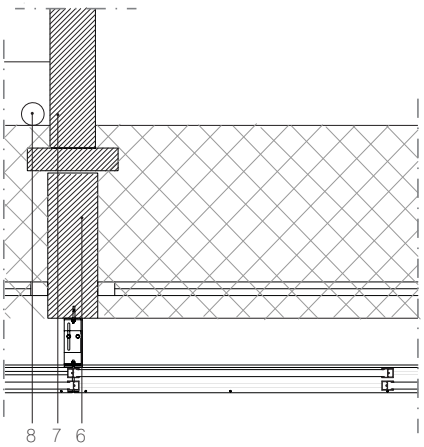


# The Façade

The movable wings attached to the glass balustrade animate the facade and optimize the climate efficiency and the acoustic qualities of the building. From the outside the buildings appear light and create a highly visible landmark for this new district. The design answers to the specific requirements of the location and offers a new better solution for the residents.




1 Sliding shutters, aluminum frame filled with 16mm thick polycarbonate
2 Aluminum fascia
3 Fixed running sill, frame in aluminium filled with 16mm thick polycarbonate
4 Paint mix of Seigneurie SE2298 at 50% and white at 50%
5 Aluminium angled connector
6 Fixed precast console L CF 1h with polycarbonate cladding
7 Existing concrete slab
8 Existing EP downpipe

0 500 1500 3000

East façade

# Nightscape

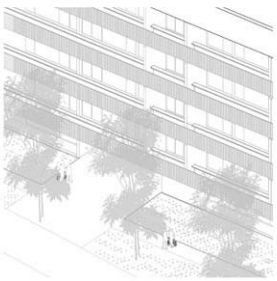
The buildings' envelope loses its limits, reflects the surroundings, the changes of easons and light. In this evanescence, the dialogue between the new and the old becomes interesting: it's not mimicry, but a thread that unwinds and distinguishes built environment from nature.

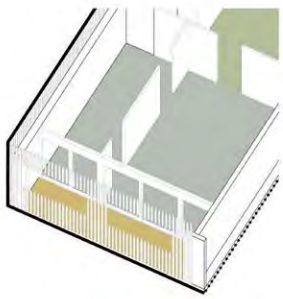
# Reflection

From the outside the buildings are characterized by patterns and colour change, based on the reflections of light, standing up as individuals within the urban nightscape.

## Establishing a new identity

Each residential group is reconfigured into a distinctive entity and follows the logic of the plot area. The renewal of the façades, which is initially designed to thermally insulate the building, opens up an opportunity to generate more space, more additional rooms, loggias and more spacious balconies; on the other, this has defined a new architecture.





## Spatial intervention

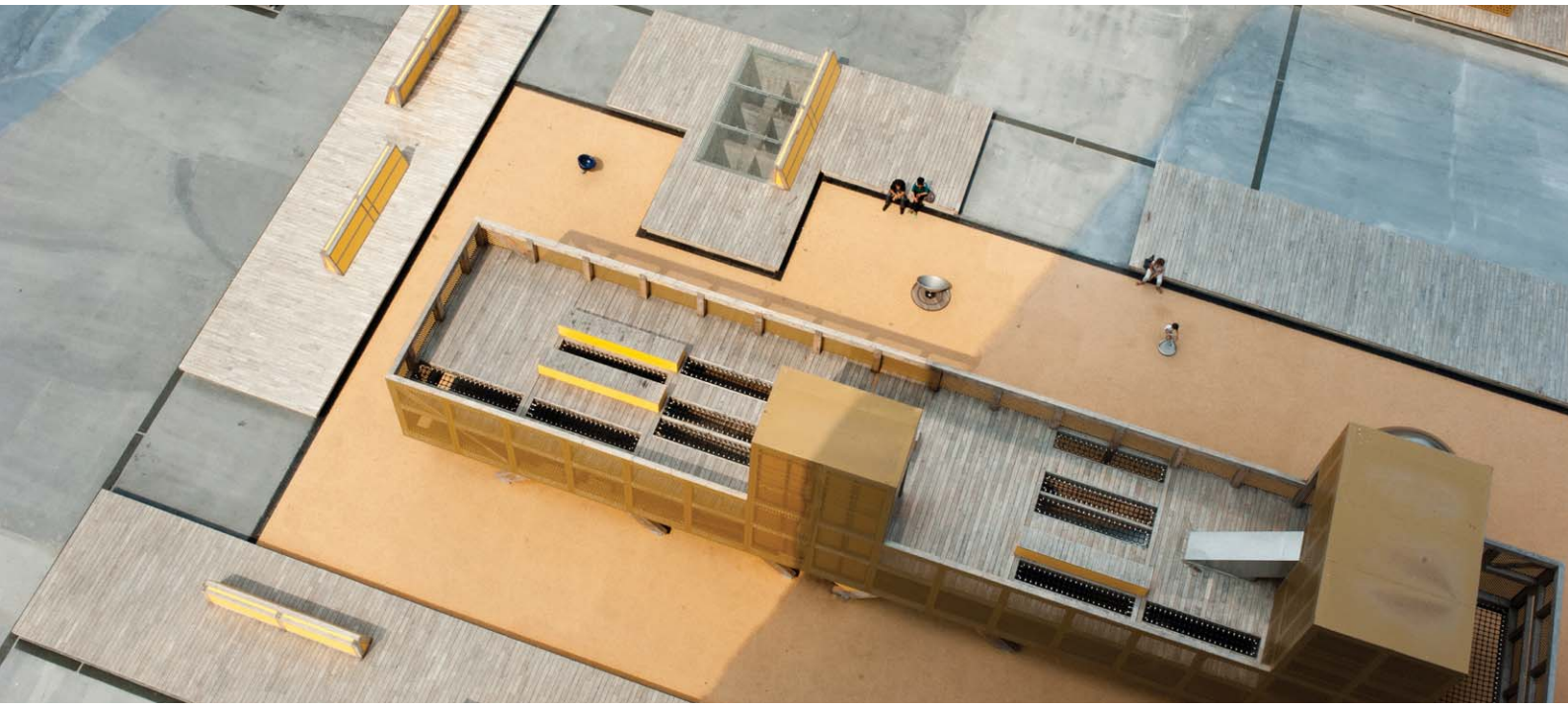
The aim of the project is to creating a more open and better equipped communal space and a genuine urban park within the city block. The parking areas are entirely redesigned, rationalized and concentrated around the site's edges. The absence of vehicles will create a genuine urban park area at the foot of the buildings

## New urban space

Within this park, we place wooden and concrete elements that will serve as transitional spaces, terraces, retaining walls, abrupt shifts of the levels and playground areas. Each space creates a network of landmarks, pedestrian pathways and meeting places between the housing groups. These defined elements will contrast to areas of lush and diverse vegetation.

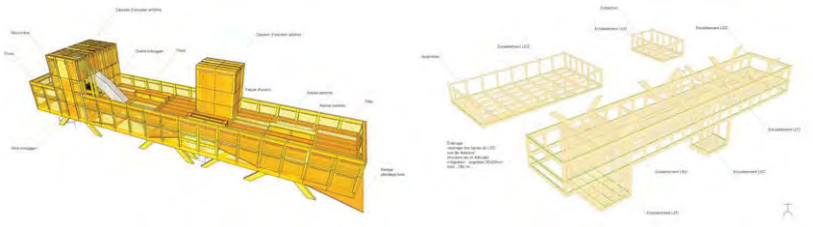
## Interactive system of relationships

The exterior lighting calls out specific elements and offers a spectacular nightscape, thus highlighting the playground itself. This interplay of light and darkness, day and night, transforms the neighbourhood into a dynamic sequence of spatial events.



## The ‘Quartier général’

Vehicle access within the estate’s South sector is limited to deliveries and emergency services. The area of Saint Hilaire, the focal point of the site, is redesigned as a public outdoor space and centered around the Quartier général -a new children’s playground, thus creating an interaction zone for the young population in the neighbourhood.



Drawings: BASE

**Reportage: Julien Lanoo**

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**LAN**
25, rue d'Hauteville
F-75010 Paris
T. +33 1 43 70 00 60
www.lan-paris.com

To receive information, please contact :
Grégory Fleuriet / Brunswick Arts
+ 33 (0)1 53 96 83 83
+ 33 (0)6 26 54 28 67
gfleuriet@brunswickgroup.com