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.

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's municipal 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 residentialization 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

Technical information:

PROJECT: Rehabilitation of 709 housing units, landscaping and creation of a new car park
CLIENT: Domoffrance
LOCATION: Lormont, Génicart district (33)
BUDGET: 16,8 Mio Euro excl. VAT
TIMETABLE: 2009-2014
TEAM: LAN (mandatory architect), Agence Franck Bouillé (HEG consultant), BASE (landscape architect), Betero ingénierie (All trades engineer)
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, opens 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 an urban 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» are used as playground, with the third tier operating as a public terrace. The structure is 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 Midim Future Projects and Europe 40 Under 40 Awards.

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.
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.
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.
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.

Qualification of the void

Existing

Green parking

Parking outskirts
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 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 airflow 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, aluminium frame filled with 16mm thick polycarbonate
2 Aluminium fascia
3 Fixed running sill, frame in aluminium filled with 16mm thick polycarbonate
4 Paint mix of Sengsire 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

East façade
The buildings’ envelope loses its limits, reflects the surroundings, the changes of seasons 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.
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.
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.

Establishing a new identity
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.
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.
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.
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.

The ‘Quartier général’
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