# Ce(ux) qui restent

## UNFOLDING THE IDENTITY OF THE INDUSTRIAL VALLEY

Located in the heart of the Seine Valley, the Dunlopillo site is part of a territory shaped by the meanders of the river. This blue figure, linking Paris to Le Havre, aggregates along its route a series of large, rich, and contrasting territorial entities. It includes vast landscapes—such as the ordered forests of the alluvial plain and those along the erosion front of the slopes—historic town centers, leisure and sports complexes, as well as an industrial and logistics fabric established since the 19th century.
The meander, a geographic folding of the territory, generates the "collision" of these "mega-objects" which, as some industrial sites decline, create genuine "zones of friction" carrying a potential for urban intensity with a singular identity. Situated at the interface between the historic town center and the urban park of the Seine riverbanks, the Dunlopillo industrial site is one of these zones of friction.

Chloe Dewe Matews ,Reading the Sunday Papers Grays, 2011

In its evolution, the site must therefore hybridize its productive vocation by carrying three key elements that today contribute to the urban and landscape identity of the Seine Valley: (1) an industrial and river architecture characterized by its robustness and sobriety, (2) a landscaped public space on the banks of the Seine, (3) a centrality for water-related sports and leisure. This project offers the opportunity to extend the idea of the inhabited park, developed by architect-urban planner Antoine Grumbach as part of the Grand Pari(s) project for the Parisian conurbation in 2009. In this project, Grumbach emphasized the notion of "alternation" to define this interweaving of city, nature, and industry.

Aurelio Galfetti, Piscines de Bellinzona, 1967

Given the scale of the Dunlopillo site and the architectural, technical, and landscape challenges it faces, the project developed below does not aim to control the entire site with a large master plan. Instead, it seeks to question its evolution by asking the following questions: where to start, and on what exploitable material basis can any reflection on the site's renewal rely? The scenarios presented offer different possibilities for opening the site in the short term, with minimal and low/medium-cost interventions, making it possible to consider them as transitional steps over the long term.

## THREE HISTORICAL PERIODS

The historical analysis of the site reveals three significant development periods, marked by a specific spatial structure and/or construction methods.
The first period corresponds to the installation of the Braunstein paper mill at the end of the 19th century. It is characterized by a "comb" structure, oriented towards the Seine, formed by two-storey buildings with load-bearing masonry walls and metal framework roofs, housing both administration and machine halls. This comb backed onto an industrial courtyard, framed by a row of small single-storey workshops. These workshops were made of a metal frame resting on a masonry wall, marking the boundary between the factory and the Gassicourt workers' housing.
The second period follows the destruction caused by the bombings of the Gassicourt district in May 1944, and extends over about five years. The structure of the small developed courtyards—which formed the now fragmented comb—was extended by the creation of two planted squares in the space freed up in the industrial courtyard.
The third stage marks the acquisition of the paper mill by the Dunlop company in 1950. The reorientation of production towards foam and rubber semi-finished products gradually saturated the site with new storage and manufacturing sheds, often built "economically" with metal frameworks and cladding. This trend continued until recently. It is also during this period that the infrastructure linked to the new boiler room appeared, whose brick chimney and overhead pipe

Carte postale de la Papeterie Braustein, cour d'honneur de l'usin, 1991

Photo aérienne, 1955 - réalisation de cours plantée suite aux bombardements

network still mark the architectural identity of the site today.

This reading of the site makes it possible to distinguish two main families of resources available for the project: spatial resources and material resources. The masonry structures from the first construction phase present important architectural and urban qualities. Moreover, the high environmental and economic cost of their destruction encourages their preservation as spatial resources. The metal sheds, characteristic of the last period, have relatively low architectural quality but are made of efficient structural elements that are easily dismantled. Once dismantled, these components become a stock of material resources to be used for the construction of new buildings.

Photo aérienne, 1981- étalement maximal de l'usine Dunlopillo

ECONOMY AND POLLUTION

The EPFIF study reports particularly high costs for asbestos removal in the buildings of the former paper mill. This cost remains unavoidable, whether one chooses to demolish or preserve these buildings for renovation. According to Richard Hees, author of the thesis **The Beauty of Contaminant Renovations** and adviser on this project, a significant share of the costs (between 25 and 50% of the total asbestos removal cost) is linked to preparing the contaminated material for transport to treatment sites. For example, contaminated products must be packed in "big bags," costing €50 to €100 per ton of material.

Plafond amienté, Image issue de la thèse de Richard Hees, The Beauty of Contaminant Renovations

Thus, one of the strategies to limit expenses precisely consists in avoiding renovation of buildings where asbestos removal requires dismantling too many elements (notably roofs), which would then necessitate heavy and costly renovation. Our approach will therefore prioritize on-site treatment of chemical and mineral pollution, by developing thorough research into in situ encapsulation and burial strategies, building on Richard Hees's work, in order to minimize transfers to other sites. Therefore, beyond preserving existing elements that contribute to the site's architectural and historical identity—such as certain slabs or building bodies—their conservation is also a major avenue for savings, while avoiding denaturing the place.

SPECIFIC INTERVENTION STRATEGY

Our intervention is organized into three distinct modes of operation, each responding specifically to the various built conditions encountered on the site.

Photo prise sur site - bâtiment issu de la papéterie

The first strategy, called **clearing**, specifically concerns the buildings from the Braunstein paper mill period, built in rubble masonry and covered by metal truss roofs. The body of these historic buildings, which have high heritage value, constitutes a stabilizing element, as their structure has endured over time. We assume that their robustness, scale, and construction system characteristics make them efficient and stable structures, capable of adaptation over time and allowing a certain spatial and constructive flexibility. As the true backbone of the project, these buildings initiate the transformation of the site and provide a stable image that frames future developments.

The second, **reassembly**, concerns the reuse of structures to be demolished due to pollution, degradation, or low spatial quality. The site thus becomes a large resource center, offering a substantial reservoir of standardized materials with varied reuse potential. A dedicated space (potentially building 76) is planned to store these elements with the aim of reusing them in various forms, thereby creating new architectural solutions to complement the preserved buildings. This reuse approach does not seek to replicate the original uses, but to explore new assemblies, embracing constructive and aesthetic contrasts that extend and reinterpret the site's identity.

Photo prise sur site - hangar propice au démontage

**Ruinatio**n concerns the site's open spaces, understood both as logistics slabs and planted courtyards, which were part of the original plan but also served as waiting areas, either replacing a disappeared building or prefiguring another. These suc-

cessive layers have left traces often disconnected from their initial logic: rows of trees without a destination, technical networks bypassing vanished obstacles, patchworks of ground surfaces. As part of the partial dismantling and transformation of the site into a park, it is proposed to inscribe new traces there, considering these open spaces as a valuable component of the site's memory. This approach to ruination, different from mere demolition, consists in deliberately preserving fragments—ruins, motifs, vegetative elements—that prolong the site's labyrinthine and romantic character. These public spaces must be reinvented based on the qualities of the existing slab, a mosaic of asphalt made up of zones of varying structural density and performance. These interventions use simple and low-cost means (planting, ground treatments, pavilions, sculptures) to compose transitional situations. They make it possible to accompany the site's gradual withdrawal while preparing for its future evolution.

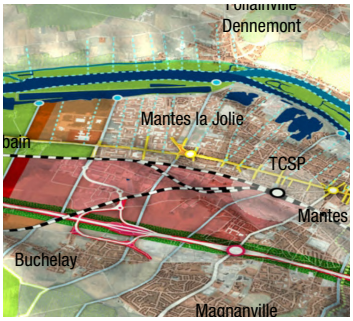
Photo prise sur site

SCENARIOS

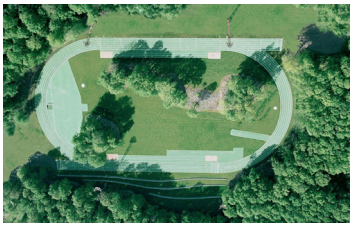
These three implementation tools combine in the following three scenarios. They illustrate different approaches to managing and storing dismantled materials, with dedicated areas still to be defined. These scenarios highlight the potential for specific projects, which can be combined in the short or long term. They propose ways to quickly invest in the Dunlopillo site, at moderate cost, within a transitional urbanism approach as mentioned by the city of Mantes-la-Jolie. These simple and contrasting hypotheses are by no means limiting and serve as a basis for discussion with all project stakeholders.

**1. Sports Strip**

This scenario proposes creating a sports strip along the Allée des Marronniers, adjacent to the Gassicourt lakes. It would complement the two existing basketball courts at the site entrance by developing several additional sports areas and a nautical base. Organized around a North–South axis linking Mantes-la-Jolie station to the riverbanks, this scenario continues the projection developed by A. Grumbach's team in one of the Mantes case studies, which already identified this route as a "water access path." This "quick win" scenario, located on plots made available by CD78 and already serviced for the recent occupation by the Château de Versailles, has the advantage of rapid implementation. It thus constitutes a first stage in prefiguring the site. It is based on three main interventions: (1) transforming the entrance parking lot into a 7-a-side football pitch, (2) redeveloping the west wing of the paper mill with a new opening onto the Gassicourt lake by dismantling the small Algeco buildings (buildings 56, 73, 70, and 75) and creating a grass athletics track (reference: RCR, athletics stadium, Olot, Spain), (3) creating a small nautical base on the lake by reassembling the metal structure from the high-end workshop hall (building 50).



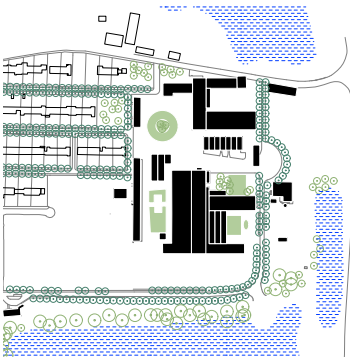

A. Grumbach, 2009 - voie d'accès vers la Seine



RCR Architectes, Tossols-Basil Athletics Track, Olot, Espagne, 2000

**2. Between the Lakes**

This scenario proposes developing a connection between the two lakes, along the old wall that separated the workers' housing from the factory, thereby creating a landscaped "figure-eight" promenade around the water bodies. This link is punctuated by a sequence of small squares that back onto the paper mill buildings, referencing the site's spatial structure before its acquisition (see diachronic diagram, 1955). This scenario is based on the assumption of extending the housing grid on the footprint of the buildings damaged by the fire (buildings 60 and 61). It is thus structured around the interface between this new inhabited frontage and the sequence of public spaces. Funding could partly come from developers' participation in the development and renovation of public spaces facing their operations. The sequence consists of four squares defined both by the programming of the adjacent buildings (workshops, theater, offices) and by ground constraints, sometimes polluted (mound gardens) or permeable (cracked gardens). Renovations progress from the outside toward the interior of the site: each square opening corresponds to the clearing of the paper mill buildings facing it. Finally, dismantling the industrial halls prior to these developments makes it possible to

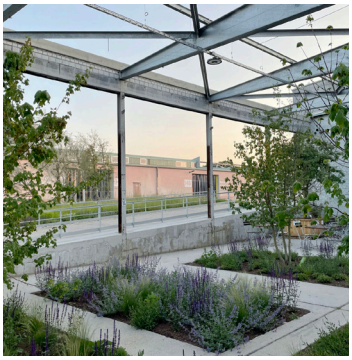


Schémas du site en 1955

install a community center in the form of a “carousel” building placed at the site entrance as a welcoming landmark.

### 3. Seine Banks

This scenario proposes developing an industrial park open to the Seine, sized to match the metropolitan vocation of the river, and forming part of the sequence of public spaces developed along the river promenade. This new piece of the Seine riverbank urban park therefore requires regional or departmental funding and management.
The park’s implementation unfolds in three main stages: (1) creating a large void by dismantling numerous metal buildings (buildings 50, 51, 53, 58, 72, 16, and 4), (2) selecting and preserving certain emblematic buildings that act as “follies” structuring this created void (the boiler room chimney, the overhead pipe structure, the south wall of the high-end workshop), (3) programming or landscape adaptation of the slab ground, notably through strategies for covering polluted interfaces.
This extension over the factory plot is delimited by the northern part of the “comb” structure of the paper mill buildings. The resulting park asserts its industrial identity, presenting itself as a large floodable green area punctuated by emblematic “follies” like the boiler room and its chimney.



Hütten und Paläste, U-Halle, Mannheim, 1938 / 1962 / 2023

Tanja Lincke Architekte, Ruinengarten, Berlin, 2010