



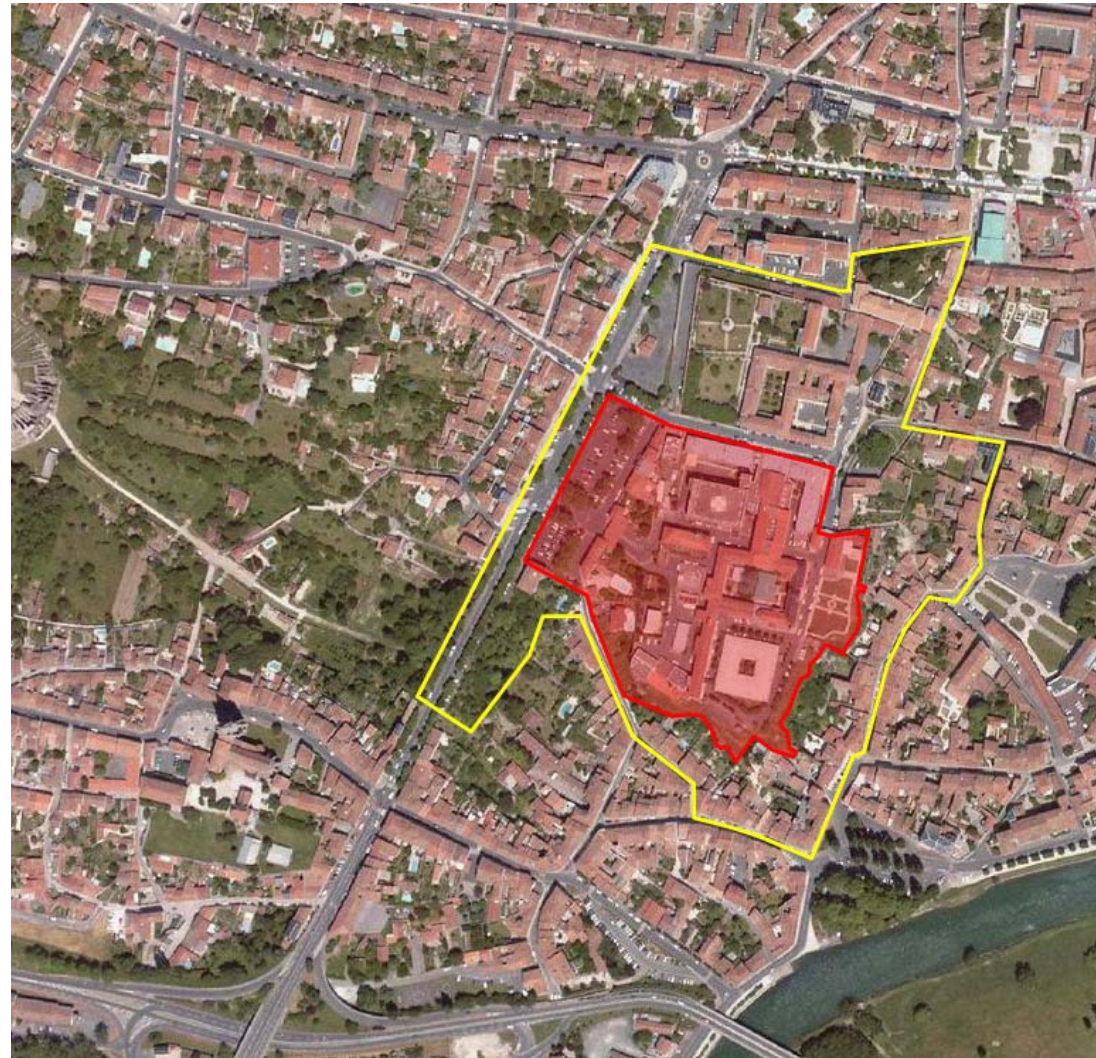
CATEGORY urban/architectural
LOCATION SAINTES - Site Saint-Louis
POPULATION City 26300inhab. Conurbation 45000inhab.
STUDY SITE 11 ha **SITE OF PROJECT** 4,20 ha
SITE PROPOSED BY Ville de Saintes
OWNER OF THE SITE Ville de Saintes (acquis en 2008)
COMMISSION AFTER COMPETITION
 Urban project management role, design of public and landscape areas, project management of an architectural program (housing or public amenity)

TRANSFORMATION OF SITE

The Saint-Louis site corresponds to the promontory of the mediaeval citadel of Saintes (now lost) which dominated the city's defensive system. Saint-Louis Hospital developed here through a succession of buildings, extensions and additional layers. When the hospital moved in 2007, it left a derelict plot in the heart of the city and created an opportunity to recover an exceptional historical site. The Saintes authorities wish to convert this plateau back into a viewing point, which would provide a remarkable view over the landscape. The existing buildings are of little use for conversion, so demolishing them would allow the introduction of new functions and uses, enabling local people to reclaim the site.

CITY STRATEGY

The Town has a number of objectives: to introduce a variety of uses in contrast with the hospital's mono-functionality: housing, crafts, services and shops; to improve accessibility through new public spaces for linkage and enhancement; to develop the site as a convergence point for daily pedestrian routes (between the lower and upper town) and tourist itineraries to the Gallo-Roman amphitheatre; landscaping that both highlights legacy and includes contemporary architecture. By bringing together a group of agencies dedicated to heritage, architecture and urban planning, the Saint-Louis site is set to become a place where the townspeople can learn about and participate in the life of the community.



SITE DEFINITION

Open to the east and south, the plateau dominates the town centre and provides distant views over the Charente Valley. To the north, an 18th century convent (la Providence) forms a homogeneous structure. To the east, a network of steep and inaccessible alleyways restricts the links to the town centre. To the west, Place du 11 Novembre, a square set aside for parking, provides the current entrance to the site (the houses bordering the square will be retained). The site is within an area of architectural and urban protection (Projected Sector), a scheme which recommends clearance of the rocky spur. Within the walls of the former hospital, only two buildings must in all circumstances be retained: the Governor's house (17th century) and the Chapel (19th).

NEW MOBILITY

The creation of pedestrian discovery routes and the re-establishment of continuities between the surrounding neighbourhoods are development objectives. Another objective is to structure the role of the car and parking inside and around the site.

NEW LIFESTYLES

This site, emblematic as it is of the urban history of Saintes, is set to become a key social and recreational space overlooking the city, a place of encounter for future inhabitants and visitors. The methods used to reveal the site should emphasise its historical value and its sociological dimension: former fortress, place of life and death, a space of hospitality.

NEW SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

The City wishes to combine the regeneration of this derelict hospital site with environmental objectives. The buildings were constructed on a limestone base cut with ravines and gullies running down to the floodplains of the Charente. In addition to decontamination issues, the project will require reflection on the management of run-off water and on planting possibilities. The decisions about whether to demolish or convert buildings, the timeframe of the project, the design of public spaces and architectures, will need to be founded in a sustainable development process and incorporate environmental quality and energy performance criteria.

Saintes - France - europap10



Aerial photo



South façade of the site



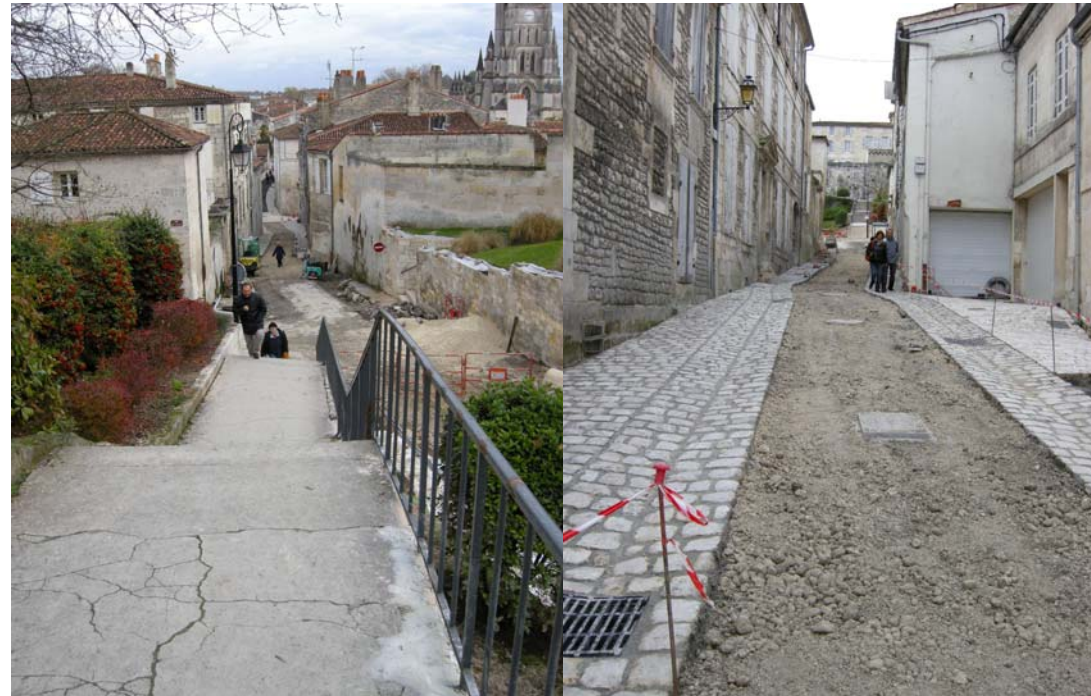
Historical access



Chapel and Governor's house



Health building with extension



Linking alley towards the historical centre