



REPORT OF THE BELGIAN/SWISS JURY

SESSION 13 OF EUROPAN COMPETITION

Belgium has agreed to host Switzerland in the European session 13.
The Belgian/Swiss jury, which was held in Charleroi (B) , October 3, 2015 , judged 19 projects on the
site " Onex - Bernex - Confignon » Geneva (CH)

FIRST SESSION OF THE JURY

COMPOSITION OF THE JURY

URBAN/ARCHITECTURAL ORDER

Martine RIDIAUX, Architect, Direction of operational planning of Wallonia
Emmanuel LAURENT, Head of Property Development Department / ArcelorMittal
Belgium Real Estate (and Holland)

URBAN/ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Anne-Mie DEPUYDT, Architect Urban planner, bureau uapS, www.uaps.net ,Paris
Laura FALCONE, Architect Urban planner, team Due di Quatro, winner European 11
(Sambreville), Italie
Makan RAFATJOU, Architect Urban planner, <http://www.makan-rafatdjou.com>,
Paris.
Bernard DEFFET, Architect Urban planner, <http://www.baumans-deffet.be> , Liège,
Belgique.

PERSONALITY

Bernard REICHEN, Architect Urban planner, <http://www.reichen-robot.fr> , Paris.

SUBSTITUTES

Jean-Michel DEGRAEVE, Architect Urban planner, Habitat-Concept, V-P of EUROPAN
Belgique,
Fabienne HENNEQUIN, ir-architecte Urban planner, Liège, Belgique

Additional members for the Swiss project :

Robert PROST, ingénieur ENSAM, architect DESA, Paris
Jürg CAPOL, architect, Lausanne

Ms RIDIAUX have kindly asked the other members of the jury to excuse them of not being present at meetings on 2 and 3 October. Mr Jean-Michel DEGRAEVE, initially first alternate, occupied therefore the vacance.

Meeting of Saturday, October 3rd, 2015

Before starting deliberations, Messrs. R. Luscher and M. Ruffieux – respectively Chairman and Secretary General of European Switzerland – presented the Swiss site and expounded to the jury members upon the challenge facing the candidates for this 13th session.

Onex-BERNEX-CONFIGNON (SWITZERLAND): TRANSFORMATION PROCESS FOR A SINGLE HOME SUBURBAN AREA

CATEGORY: Urban planning / architecture

REPRESENTATIVE of the TEAM: Architect - urban planner – landscape designer

LOCATION: Onex - Bernex - Confignon

POPULATION: 1,240 inhabitants

STUDY SITE: Territories of the Onex, Bernex and Confignon municipalities

PROJECT SITE: 54.8 ha

SITE PROVIDED BY: Republic and Canton of Geneva

SITE OWNER: Private Owners and State of Geneva

TYPE OF CONTRACT AWARDED AFTER THE COMPETITION: Mandate to study and assist the transformation process of the suburban single dwelling area.

A real challenge to devise a research strategy in a multi-professional and interdisciplinary development!

HOW CAN THE SITE CONTRIBUTE TO THE ADAPTABLE CITY?

The proposed site is part of a suburban fabric made of "villas". In the late fifties, increasing the density in that type of urban environment became a strategy that contributed to densify substantially the number of housing units in the Geneva territory. First, large expanses of free land were used to develop quality neighborhoods. In recent times, densification had to be carried out on plots of land that were smaller and already built, based on a development procedure favoring the replacement of villas by land reorganization and the construction of collective housing.

However, many villas are still inhabited by their owners who are afraid that housing developments will threaten their home-owner lifestyle, their social ties or their moving and shopping habits. Another blocking factor comes from the use of complex planning tools, which create significant constraints, particularly in terms of land-price control or minimum density.

This led to a patchwork of small development projects, based on land acquisition opportunities, without any overall urban project or coordinated land-use strategy. Therefore, the objective is to suggest a transformation of the suburban fabric based on a method that could better reflect the aspirations and interests of the existing stakeholders, while promoting a rapid emergence of new densely populated neighborhoods (land-use index 1.2 minimum). The transformation should breed social and morphological diversity structured around public spaces and facilities, in order to create a vibrant and high quality urban life.

CITY STRATEGY

In the proposed site, the State of Geneva wants to test a new type of territory planning, less centralized and more flexible, with the aim of making the whole territory planning process and housing production more efficient. Used as the guideline to a progressive urban transformation, the project will help define new operating procedures, while revisiting the role of the stakeholders or the approval process by local authorities. However, for urban density issues and public access to open green areas we expect results similar to those obtained with the use of existing tools.

SITE DEFINITION

The site involves three suburban municipalities, whose links to the heart of the metropolitan area were recently strengthened with the opening of a tramway line. The area is also very well connected to the road and motorway networks. There are a few dead ends which is not unusual in a suburban environment. Soft mobility will not be easy to implement throughout the site considering the break created by Chancy road, one of the main thoroughfares of the urban area.

Even if the site is located far away from the centers and public facilities of the Confignon and Bernex villages and loosely connected to the neighboring town of Cressy, it will be close to the future Bernex north neighborhood with the creation of a new downtown area and a future agro-urban park.

FUTURE OF THE SITE IN RELATION TO THE SITE FAMILY AND TO ADAPTABILITY

Some small parts of the site have already been the object of a progressive densification, resulting in a significant fragmentation of the land plots, the construction of non-detached homes and the development of social heterogeneity. Large estates with few buildings – legacy of ancient large agricultural properties – are still present, especially south of Chancy road.

The site morphological and social diversity must be used as the basis of the transformation process considered. The challenge consists in reconciling social realities with densification and land use constraints. The project will have to deal with a lack of open spaces, public facilities and an absence of diversity. De-compartmentalization and a better accessibility of the site will be needed as well. That means upgrading the road network and improving the connections with soft mobility networks, particularly with public transport stops and communal centers. Parking issues will be treated in sync with the successive development stages, but they must minimize soil sealing and the use of the land surface.

Emphasizing existing green structures and a selective preservation of existing trees will contribute to the future identity of the neighborhood. The existing greenery and plants are very representative of current residential areas, with a strong presence of mixed hedges and a wide range of plant species. However, some wooded hedges - a legacy from the past - can still be seen on the southern slope, close to the agricultural area.

To inform the jury about the objectives, Mr. LUSCHER made a commented reading of the report of the site visit which took place on 21 April.

Advice to the contestants following the April 21, tour of the site

Geneva's current urban situation is that of a city center, surrounded by a green belt and sprawling suburbs made of villas: 47% of the building land is used by 13% of the population only. The three villages of Onex, Confignon and Bernex, located in the red perimeter, are highly representative of that situation.

The issue is about increasing the density of the "villas" area while giving landowners the opportunity to use their land in a different way to meet their housing needs. Ultimately the plan should induce the villas owners to find a new type of community housing in a high quality development project with a higher density and access to a broader range of services, more shops and better transport facilities.

In this particular case, the contestants have the opportunity to develop urban-architecture concepts for the selected site (the large plot of land within the yellow perimeter) or for a virtual space on a free scale to plan the development of a mixed and multi generation urban community (individual ownership, condominiums, coops, rental housing, mixed services, shops, medical and social facilities, etc.). The main obstacle is the land purchase price set by the State for the development area (price of land and residual value of the built structures). It barely covers half the capital required to relocate on the same terms, in the same region. Thereby, it is imperative to offer to each owner willing to leave his individual home the opportunity to resettle elsewhere, in a newly built environment. He should be able to move there right away with the money received from the sale of his property. The contestants will have to think about the changing needs of the current owners over

a period of time while meeting the new (development) targets; this is called a "Sustainable urban transformation"!

To meet these challenges, a thorough analysis of the current situation in the study area (yellow perimeter) must be carried out. It will be used as the foundation of the contestants' proposals that must also take into consideration the expectations of the existing population, mainly composed of individual villa owners. Under current regulations, it is possible to use a district (neighborhood) development plan. Even if this approach is possible within the existing legal framework, it rarely leads to a coherent densification development. This planning tool is often limited to a plot of land. Unfortunately plot by plot developments usually end up choked by a mounting opposition from various stakeholders.

European Switzerland suggests a more radical approach with innovative urban-architecture concepts developed for a virtual piece of land with different types of housing units. The idea is to create a community with multiple housing typologies to choose from (depending on the households requirements) and different "privacy" levels (multi generation, individual, collective, mixed owners) while offering a wide range of investment values.

We are looking for new types of neighborhoods and new processes to give the owners the opportunity – before putting their existing property up for sale - to leave the villas area while agreeing to move over to a new dwelling that can be readily purchased and used ! Obviously the intrinsic needs of the "villa" owners must have been clearly understood beforehand, to pave the way for a new life in a reinvented urban environment !

*Two major tasks must be completed: **a study of the existing situation** (the "villa area" life style tenet has been made obsolete by the urban sprawl) and **a plan for the future** (defining a housing form/ shape that will trigger the change). The land in the "yellow and red perimeters" that is the object of the challenge offers a double opportunity to develop and illustrate complementary strategies, based on the context and the region.*

Such is the challenge of the contest.

In summary, concerning the two sites:

- The "Existing" sites

Candidates will have to get familiar with the "urban culture" of the current villa owners. It will be difficult to address feasibility issues without gaining that knowledge first. After all, this type of site will suit the candidates who need a real site to make proposals ... so, there it is !

- The "virtual" sites

*The idea is to submit a strategic option to address "potential" types of solutions: typology / morphology of housing and related services + retail + transportation, or **develop various densification scenarios**. Furthermore, the suggested solutions may be used later to negotiate with existing villa owners, the options considered for their neighborhood and unveil opportunities that they could not see on their own.*

We remind the contestants that the densification of Swiss cities is closely linked to the strict conditions set for preserving agricultural land and it is not a local issue. The questions asked exceed the limits of the Geneva Canton. Other regions, other cities are facing the same problems and may take advantage of the innovative and convincing proposals born from the European Switzerland contest !

This explanatory reading raised questions from the jury members to which the Swiss members replied, explaining in particular the rather specific land policy currently in force in Switzerland.

The jury will judge the 19 projects on the website of " Onex - Bernex - Confignon / Geneva

AP681 - GENÈVE: CONSERVATION...
BP312 - CITÉ - FERTILE -
CC905 - LA VILLE INTERMEDIAIRE -
CG640 - METROPOLITAN VILLAGE -
DX168 - YOTOK -
HW860 - RE (HO) EN UTILISANT GENÈVE -
JJ339 - EMPHUTHEUSIS -
JL470 - DÉVERROUILLAGE CAPITALE VERTE -
KU974 - URBAN CAIRN / CAIRN URBAIN -
KW675 - METRONATURAL GENÈVE -
MW992 - VILLE GROVE -
ON876 - OPEN SPACE TISSU -
QR494 - VILLAGE -
RK983 - SANS ARRIÈRE-COUR -
SB600 - PIXEL GARDENS -
UL894 - URBS SE CREAT -
VB612 - FANTASY -
XD855 - RISE ACCUEIL -
XE515 - ONU-VILLE -

Methodology for the evaluation of the projects

The projects were examined individually by the members of the jury. The analysis of the projects conducted by European Switzerland was made available to them.

In accordance with the European rules of internal procedures, the jury assessed the proposals in light of the conceptual content and innovative contribution to the theme of European 13 ("adaptability"). It is therefore for conceptual reasons, lack of innovation proposed and/or unsuitability with the theme of adaptability that the projects have been rejected during this first session.

Using this basis for judgement, 4 projects were retained:

CC905 - LA VILLE INTERMEDIAIRE -
CG640 - METROPOLITAN VILLAGE -
ON876 - OPEN SPACE TISSU -
QR494 - VILLAGE -

CC905

The concept is based on detailed analysis of the site and proposes rehousing in situ based on a charter drawn up between the authorities, owners and the inhabitants.

This approach implies participative management that can be interesting from the very start of the process. By drawing on empty spaces, or even unoccupied plots, the densification can be carried out step by step through the proposal of relocations that are possible in the existing environment.

CG640

The proposal splits the site into various sub-perimeters of intervention that can be built upon. It gives each mega block its own identity.

These mega blocks are distinguished, in addition to their built volume, by specific attention paid to the landscape, public spaces, mobility, type of buildings and the place held by water.

The result is a sort of "garden town".

ON876

The concept firstly proposes to proceed with reserving the land to promote the natural qualities within the various fields.

Concerning these reserves, a final decision on their use will be taken as the densification progresses.

This framework is the instrument for high densification without compromising conservation of the place's identity with its high living standard.

This implies coordinated decisions between the various population groups at the different decision-making levels.

A villa transformation strategy promoting the enlargement of the built-up area through the addition of complementary volumes and spaces could entail the installation of co-tenancies.

QR494

This concept radicalises the intervention by proposing to remove the plot structure and introduce a new organic fabric on which occasional interventions are set up in a random manner, becoming satellites of the

buildings retained.

This dissonant organic organisation with diversified spaces, but with a high intensity of interaction, gives this urbanised sector projects an image with a strong identity...

This proposal acutely flirts with utopia.

The meeting is closed at 17:00 p.m.

Bernard DEFFET,

President of the Belgian/Swiss jury of session 13 of European competition

REPORT OF THE BELGIAN/SWISS JURY

SESSION 13 OF EUROPEAN COMPETITION

Site :
« Onex - Bernex – Confignon » Genève (CH)

SECOND SESSION

Liège (B)
Museum of “ Liege Beaux-Arts”
November 21, 2015

COMPOSITION OF THE JURY

URBAN/ARCHITECTURAL ORDER

Martine RIDIAUX, Architect, Direction of operational planning of Wallonia
Emmanuel LAURENT, Head of Property Development Department / ArcelorMittal
Belgium Real Estate (and Holland)

URBAN/ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Anne-Mie DEPUYDT, Architect Urban planner, bureau uapS, www.uaps.net, Paris
Laura FALCONE, Architect Urban planner, team Due di Quatro, winner European 11
(Sambreville), Italie
Makan RAFATJOU, Architect Urban planner, <http://www.makan-rafatdjou.com>,
Paris.
Bernard DEFFET, Architect Urban planner, <http://www.baumans-deffet.be>, Liège,
Belgique.

PERSONALITY

Bernard REICHEN, Architect Urban planner, <http://www.reichen-robot.fr>, Paris.

SUBSTITUTES

Jean-Michel DEGRAEVE, Architect Urban planner, Habitat-Concept, V-P of EUROPEAN
Belgique,
Fabienne HENNEQUIN, ir-architecte Urban planner, Liège, Belgique

Additional members for the Swiss project :

Robert PROST, ingénieur ENSAM, architect DESA, Paris
Jürg CAPOL, architect, Lausanne

Meeting of Sunday, november 21th, 2015

The meeting began at 14:30.

All the members of the jury are present .

During the morning session, on Belgian projects , Mr P. Sauveur , President of Europan Belgium, had reminded the jury the evaluation criterias of this second phase of the jury.

To do this he read Article 3.1.4. of the procedures for the internal competitions to Europan structures:

"During the second session, the jury considers proposals by:

- The relevance to the theme and the challenges of sustainable development
- The appropriateness of the program in relation to the programmatic framework of the site for which they register.
- The ability to enroll in an urban process adapted to the context
- The innovative aspect of the proposed public spaces
- Taking into account the relationship between habitat and other functions
- The architecture quality
- The technical qualities

The President also reminds the rule regarding the number and type of prizes to be awarded: Depending on the number of sites in Switzerland (1), the jury may designate maximum 1 winner prizes and 1 runner-up prizes throughout the session.

During this session the price formerly said "quoted or honorable mention" are now called "special mention" and can be attributed on unlimited bases as before.

Only prizes for winners and runner-up are valued by twelve thousand euros for the winning price and six thousand euros for the runner-up price.

The first phase of the jury focused mainly on detecting the projects that are conceptually interesting and innovative regarding to the theme of Europan 13.

This second phase will attempt to identify projects that present the performance of their innovative ideas to connect the reality of the environment and its problems, projects that have been able to offer a full scale adequacy to the site - in summary, projects who have successfully integrated all criteria and also presenting the quality of positioning in an operational potentially project.

Mr R. LUSCHER, President of Europan Switzerland, who was present at the Bratislava meeting in early November, gave a summary report to the Jury members, referring to the reflections that were made during the debates on the pre-selected projects.

From the 4 pre-selected projects in the first meeting of the Jury (CC 905 / CG 640 / ON 876 / QR 494), the international experts chose to focus on projects CC 905 "The Intermediate City" and ON 876 "Open Space Fabric".

These two projects were shortlisted by the Jury due to their interesting concepts, with project CC 905 accommodating the negotiation procedures better.

In the meantime, Europan Switzerland organised a meeting with the authorities of the city of Geneva during which all the projects were examined.

Three projects (CC 905 / XE 515 / JJ 339) were shortlisted by the city, as they offer scope for the State to develop negotiation processes based on the planning tools proposed in them.

These projects reveal a will to enter into a dialogue with the property owner.

Following this introduction, and in the light of these developments, the members of the Jury examined the 3 projects shortlisted by the city of Geneva. They wished, however, to compare them against the projects that had been retained in the first meeting.

The debates therefore took place around 6 projects.

CC 905
CG 640
ON 876
QR 494
XE 515
JJ 339

At the end of the meeting, it was decided to hold a vote.

Project CC 905 was unanimously awarded the Prize.
The members of the Jury also unanimously agreed to distinguish project ON 876 with a Mention.
Projects XE 515 and JJ339 would receive a Special Mention.

Projects QR 494 and CG 640 were discarded.

CG640 METROPOLITAN VILLAGE

The Panel acknowledges the inclusion of the major transport thoroughfare and the attempts to move towards a city garden. Unfortunately, the strategy outlined in the proposal does not allow for a densification policy that builds on tried-and-tested solutions.

QR494 VILLAGE

The panel recognises the relational high-density contained in the proposal which reinterprets the "cluster".

However, the exclusion of any future plan for the plots of land renders this proposal unfit for purpose as it does not allow for a densification policy that respects the property owners who are central to this issue.

The selected projects receive the following comments :

« Winner » project CC 905 « La ville intermédiaire »

This project addresses the problems posed at the Bernex site in Geneva:

The public sector is charged with the task of urban planning, which responds to public will but has no real power over the land ownership. This land is, therefore, in the hands of private owners with individual needs. This dilemma has been an obstacle to a number of urban planning projects over the years.

The 'intermediary town' project proposes the implementation of a legal-organisational interface that is neither public nor private but takes the form of a collective charter. The content of this charter takes the particular needs of stakeholders into account. By addressing these needs, dialogue becomes possible.

The charter is accompanied by a series of tools that allow a specific response to situations of conflict that may arise. These tools also propose a series of planning strategies that address the densification needs of a particular territory, these strategies integrating the notions of upgradeability and adaptation over time.

The charter and its tools are a realistic basis in the context of Geneva to reach a solution that could be repeated in other territories in the Geneva area.

A particularly interesting aspect of the proposal is the introduction of a multi-functional dimension for the place, even though this dimension has not been explained in detail.

The jury underlines a coherent and comprehensive approach that is clearly distinguished from other projects whose qualities are partial and do not reach a level of overall consistency.

The jury decides to choose this project. The hope is that this approach will be extended within the framework of a reflection to be made together with the competent services on different levels in the authorities and private owners.

« Runner up » project

ON 876 « Open Space Tissu»

The proposition revolves around three main objectives:

- The articulation of a will to conserve elements on the site considered, and a need for resilience so that the transformations made could be acceptable and regenerate the site in the process.
- Work on the potential of the site and not on the basis of *tabula rasa*, which involves maintaining the existing buildings and creating new compositions with added buildings.
- A search for urban forms that stimulate the birth of new community forms. This is achieved through green spaces that would offer public areas to foster encounters among people, through which the candidate aspires to create new places of social interaction and give rise to a new community. It is a reflection on the mission that a public space should fulfil, put forward with a specific concern for issues that affect different generations.

A North-South-type 'slice' illustrates the process, suggesting a densification principle to be developed on the site, recomposing an evolving urban form in the development of detached houses. The area around the site has been taken into account on the North and South edges, reflecting the consistency of the proposition.

The preview explicitly conveys the main ideas of the proposition and opens up the fields of application to be developed in more detail.

There are two conceptual approaches that should be considered in a more operational development:

- The desire to systematically conserve everything that is there now could cancel out opportunities regarding the resulting urban form (e.g. the demolition of a villa to find a property that is of interest for the positioning of new buildings).
- Restructuring by only starting from the housing angle leads to depriving the neighbourhood of interesting proximity activities (leisure, services and social amenities...) as well as office surface if the densification aims to be more ambitious.
-

Projet with « special mention »

XE 515 « Un City»

The proposition is based on a densification process of plots with a range of buildings added (in terms of volume, form...). The empty spaces around the existing buildings (about 30% of the property) would be systematically exploited through a "filling in" process that would lead to a densification, although without too much consideration for the coherence and relevance of the resulting urban form.

The concept creates expectations for original landowners in the neighbourhood.

A reflection on the diverse nature of the activities to be introduced would lead to a variety of architectural forms that the preview suggests rather than explains in detail, not specifying the activities involved enough. The future urbanity would run the risk of being eclectic, with little unity and poor legibility.

The quality of the representation is uncertain, particularly in terms of the visualisation of the urban concept and the resulting architectural quality.

Projet with « special mention »
JJ 339 « Emphutheusis »

The specific nature of the proposition consists of presenting different densification scenarios rather than an applied result.

Different levels of transformation were discussed, evaluating their consequences on the urban form and on the resulting urbanity ('urbanity' being understood in the sense of the capacity of the urban form to create social links and fostering 'living together'). To lay the foundations for decisions, it was proposed to carry out a sociological approach on the affected population.

The candidate sets out to respond to new urbanisation strategies with the notion of 'eco-neighbourhood'. By insistently articulating mineral/vegetable, he puts forward a new urban landscape whose qualities could exceed those of a series of villas while avoiding the traps of the city centre, basically consisting of buildings and streets.

The jury, however, regrets the lack of clarity on the relation between the stages of densification and the introduction of a range of activities beyond housing.

In order to obtain more rounded propositions, the Jury recommends that the client should follow the following process:

The Urban Planning office could commission the 4 teams that created projects CC 905, ON876, XX 515 and JJ339 to set up a pool to reflect on instruments used prior to the planning process, (charter, local facilitation, legal instruments, etc....) and then allocate mandates to them – either overall or specific – to ensure that urban development should evolve through these innovative legal planning instruments.

As an extension, more detailed studies would visualise and evaluate feasibility projects that would be developed on the basis of a wider range of parameters that include societal factors within evolving and sustainable urban planning concepts.

The President thanks all members of the jury and the meeting is adjourned at 17:45 p.m.

Bernard DEFFET,
President of the Belgian jury of session 13 of European competition