

EUROPAN 14 - TUBIZE (BE)

SITE BRIEF



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SITE SPECIFICATIONS

SITE REPRESENTATIVE
Mr. Ol. WALEFFE – CEO Duferco Wallonie
ACTOR(S) INVOLVED
Commune of Tubize/Duferco Wallonie

TEAM REPRESENTATIVE
Architect
EXPECTED SKILLS WITH REGARDS TO THE SITE'S ISSUES AND CHARACTERISTICS
Architect, urban planner or landscaper

COMMUNICATION
Exposition of national results – Architect'House Bruxelles
(date to be specified)

JURY – 1 ST EVALUATION
With the participation of the site representatives
JURY – PRIZE SELECTION
Ranked Selection: with Winner (€12,000), Runner-up (€6,000) and Special Mention or no prize : The final decision rests with the jury

POST-COMPETITION INTERMEDIATE PROCEDURE (in fonction of the relevance of the projects):
Meeting to present the rewarded teams to the site representative(s), followed by a discussion
Direct selection of one winning team for an implementation process
Workshop onsite with the rewarded teams –winner(s), runner(s)-up, special mention(s)– allowing the site representative(s) to choose a team for the implementation phase

MISSION GIVEN TO THE SELECTED TEAM(S) FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION
Urban study to be carried out of partial realization of the project following the relevance of the proposals

Tubize – Belgium – European 14

"The way into town"

1. Tubize

1.1. Territorial and urban planning context

Located in the northwest of the province of Walloon Brabant, **Tubize** stands on Belgium's 'language border' on the French-speaking side. It is 20 kilometres from Brussels, 50 kilometres from Charleroi and 40 kilometres from Namur, in an ideal location on the **Brussels-Mons-Paris** axis.

Standing on a silt plateau, Tubize is part of a geographical region called "**Roman Païs**" that consists of 4 municipalities (Braine-le-Château, Ittre, Rebecq and Tubize) and 17 villages, characterised by streams and calm, green valleys. Indeed, Tubize has no less than **13 rivers** within its municipal borders, flowing along a number of valleys. The name "Tubize" originally meant "two streams", referring to two of its rivers (the Senne and the Sennette).

The present-day municipality of Tubize brings together the 4 old ones of Clabecq, Saintes, Oisquerq and Tubize, regrouped after the merger of the municipalities in 1975. Its **surface area** is **32.66 square kilometres** and the town stands between 40 and 100 metres above sea level.



Nowadays it has a population of **just over 25,000**, one that has been increasing constantly for many years (20,533 in 1991, 21,429 in 2000, 23,553 in 2010 and 25,399 on 31 December 2015).

Although the territory was populated in the prehistoric era, the first historic reference in Tubize goes back to 877. At the time, Tubize was a village belonging to Nivelles Abbey. In the following centuries, the village suffered wars between lords and passed from one to another. Until the 19th century its main economic activity was **agriculture**. In 1829, the municipality only had 2,244 inhabitants.

However, the opening of the Charleroi–Brussels canal (1832) and the opening of the railway station at Tubize (1840) helped it enter the **industrial age**. Several companies set up operations there: the Forges de Clabecq, the artificial silk factory of Tubize (Fabelta), Etablissements Léon Champagne, the Ateliers Métallurgiques (metal workshops) of Tubize, as well as several foundries and mechanical workshops. This industrial revolution led to a big increase in the population, transforming the region and its economy. The agricultural town gave way to a workers' town.

The **20th century** was a more difficult period to get through: world wars, the 1929 financial crash and the crisis of the 1970s considerably affected the industrial economy of the town and factories that were previously prosperous gradually shut down. These old sites became '**industrial cancers**'.

Tubize still conserves assets and heritage that are worthy of note.

Its **construction heritage**, which recalls its Middle-Ages past, consists of the castle of Clabecq, old noble homes, mills and churches. Several farms and rural buildings complete the picture, strongly evoking the area's agricultural past. Unfortunately, the industrial buildings that date from the most glorious period of Tubize have almost all disappeared. In contrast, this period can still be seen through the workers' housing estates that still exist.

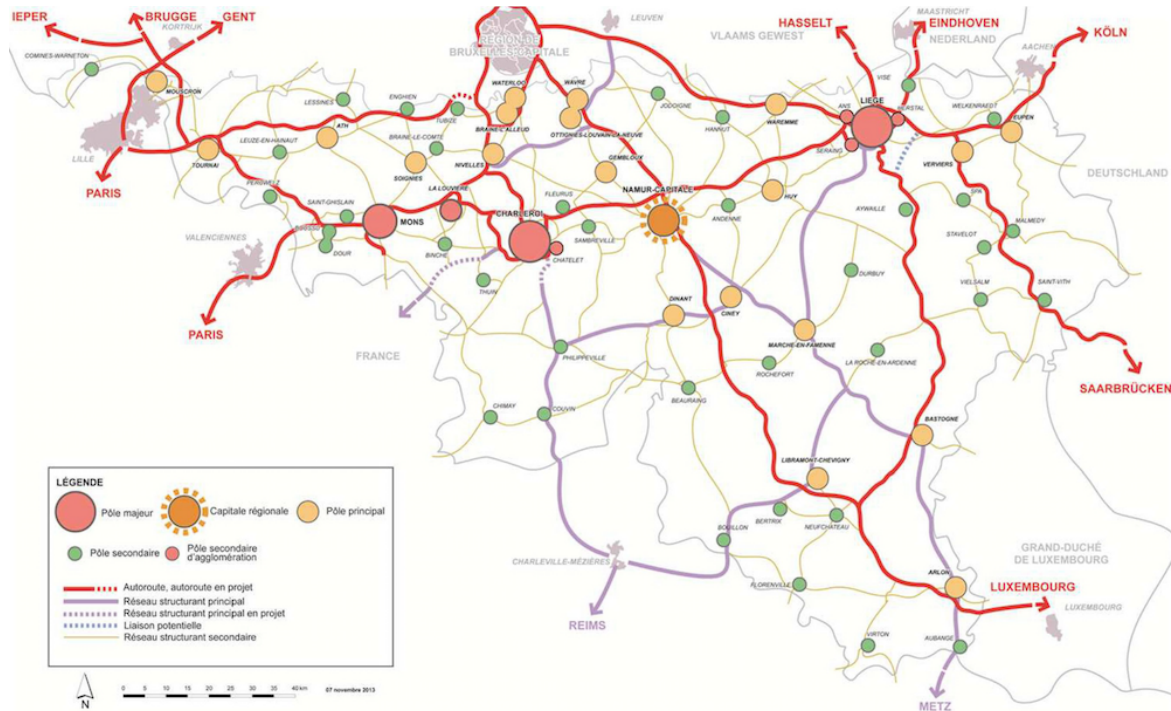
Its **natural heritage**, with valleys, rivers and landscapes, is often highlighted, particularly through prizes in competitions for well-cared-for towns and floral villages. The highest natural waterfall in Belgium is also located here.

Its **cultural and folklore heritage** is mainly seen in the mounted procession of the Tour Sainte-Renarde, and also through "Betchard", the town's humorous mascot.

Tubize also has a Museum of Archaeology, Art and History, a Tourism and Heritage Office, a Cultural Centre, two libraries, a Youth House and a number of sports facilities. Local life is also shaped by the town's shops, weekly markets and bars and restaurants.

The main **means of transport** serving Tubize are:

- the E429 motorway from Brussels to Tournai
- the N6 and N7 main roads
- bus lines (TEC) nos. 115, 472, 47, 200, 118, 86 and 83
- rail services (SNCB): Brussels to Mons and Quévy
- the Charleroi-Brussels canal (with a multimodal port at Clabecq)
- Charleroi (Brussels-South) and Zaventem airports, each around 45 kilometres away.



Map of the **road network of Wallonia**, the result of the **SDER** project (Development Outline for the Regional Area) **2013**
Tubize is considered a "**secondary pole**" there.

1.2. Prospects for transformation

Following the vicissitudes of the previous century and the strong impact of the economic crises, Tubize has begun its economic and social recovery. Its main objective now is to continue - and even speed up - this reconversion process by creating jobs, housing and spaces for community life.

It has everything it needs to do this. First, due to its **history and traditions**, marked by economic and social transformations, adaptation and innovation.

It can also exploit its **landscape and natural resources**: a green and blue mesh covers its territory to favour both biodiversity and walks along its numerous river banks. The return to 'slow routes' that is currently fashionable fits in perfectly with the characteristics of Tubize.

Basically, its **reconversion is already under way** on several sites, with intentions, projects and initiatives that have already provided positive and promising results:

- The site of the old artificial silk factory of Fabelta.

On a site ideally located in the centre of Tubize, this project involves a new neighbourhood of 250 apartments and around twenty shops. The first phase, which covered two-thirds of the project, was completed in 2012. It has been very successful and has improved the image of the area as a whole by creating commercial activity and a pleasant residential area.

- The national centre of Tubize.

This is a top-level sports centre designed to be home to training sessions by elite Belgian sportsmen and women in a number of disciplines (including football). It has several pitches, a 79-room hotel, seminar rooms and an auditorium with capacity for 150 people. The construction of the centre started in 2005 and was finally opened in 2016 after a series of delays.

- The IBW Economic Activity Park at Saintes.

Located 3 kilometres from Tubize along the E429 and the N7, the park is the result of new sectorial plans to develop the regional economy. The site currently employs more than 1,500 people in 74 companies, although it is at full capacity, a victim of its own success. From 2017, an extension project will cover 65 hectares with the aim of creating 1,650 new direct jobs.

- The site of the old foundries at Clabecq.

This site is the oldest of the Belgian steelmaking sector. The aim is to redevelop the 87-hectare site to create 2,000 new homes, a school, a nursery, a medical centre, a series of public facilities, a green space, recreational facilities, offices, shops and multimodal activities, a hotel and car parks.



2. The strategic site

2.1. Description

The **strategic site for the European 14** competition is located in the northern part of the 87-hectare site of the old foundries of Clabecq, and exceeds it by including an economic area (the “Sarsi” area) and both banks of the canal.

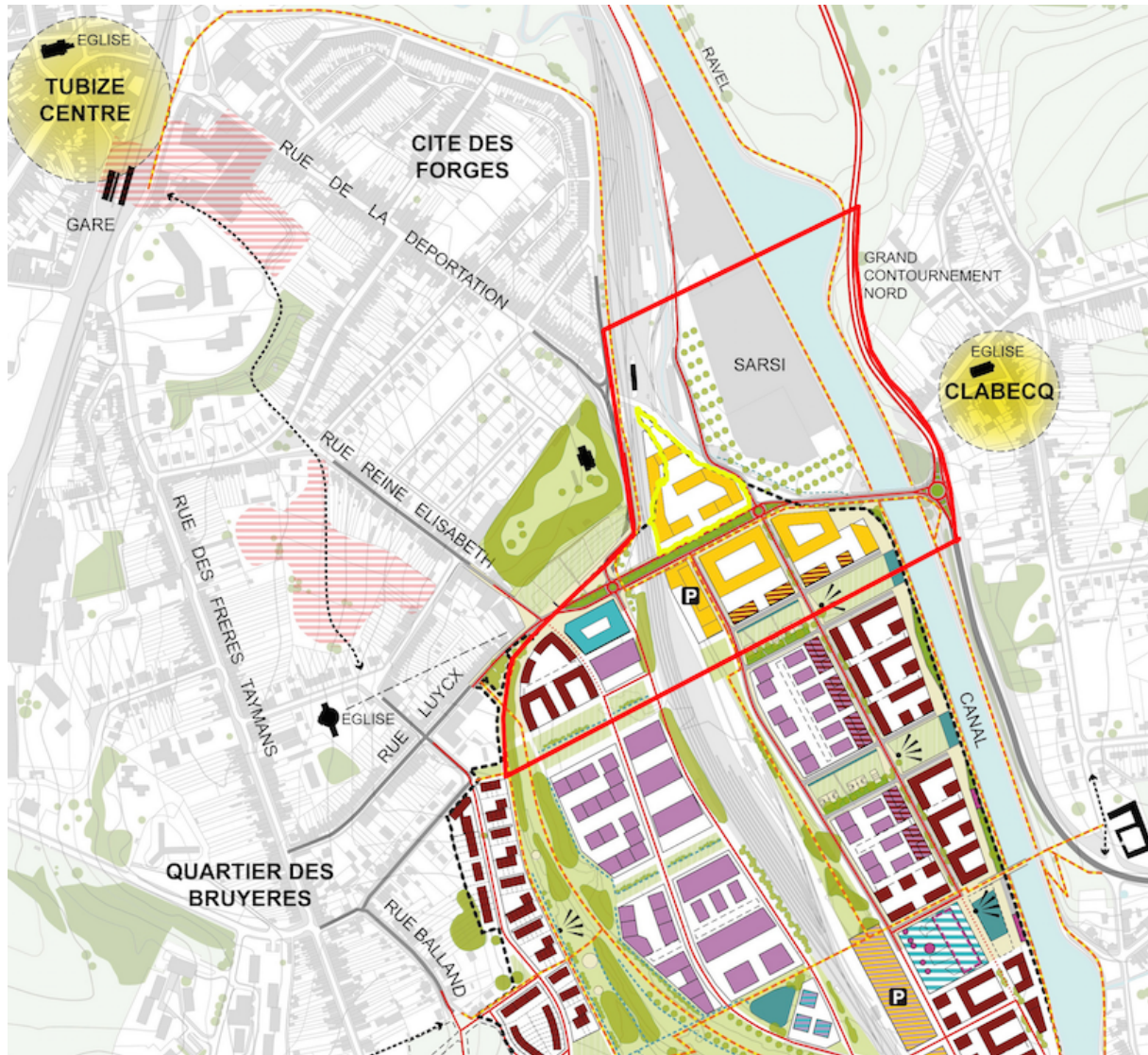
Set up in the 18th century, Forges de Clabecq is the oldest steelmaking site in Wallonia.



Following its closure in 2002, a partnership involving the Region, the Town Council and Duferco has developed a **project to develop and reinforce the urban centre of Tubize**. Most of the industrial buildings have been demolished, e.g. blast furnace no. 6. The decontamination of the 80 hectares of the Duferco site is now under way. The strategic site is almost bare nowadays, with the exception of the railway buildings and industrial sheds to the north of the site (in the Sarsi area).



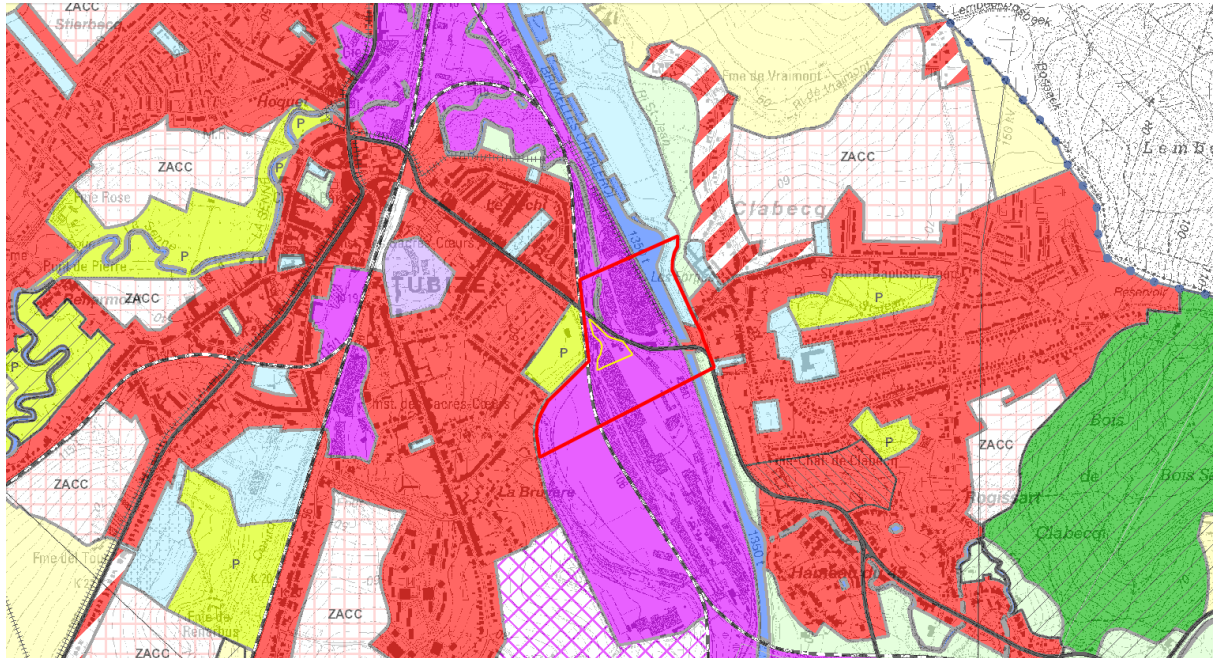
Bordered by the Charleroi-Brussels canal and crossed by the railway line, the site marks the eastern point of entry into Tubize, towards the town centre. This location also gives good access to soft mobility routes.



2.2. Regulatory framework

In regulatory terms, and according to the Sector Plan, the strategic site is almost completely included in a “**zone of economic and industrial activity**” (mauve zone).

Only the east bank of the Brussels-Charleroi canal is in a “**zone of public services and community amenities**” (light blue zone) and in a “**habitat zone**” (red zone).



2.3. Prospects and transformations

The Clabecq site, created in the 18th century, is the oldest industrial site in Wallonia.

It developed strongly in the 19th and 20th centuries before gradually declining in the 1970s.

Since 2002, the 80-hectare site has become an industrial wasteland, and in 2007 a public-private partnership involving the Region, the Town Council and Duferco was set up to breathe life back into it.

On 8 May 2009, the Minister of Territorial Development marked out the **perimeter of the site to be redeveloped (SAR)**, the "Blast Furnaces of the Forges de Clabecq » (SAR/NI58a).

A collaboration agreement was signed in November 2010 to establish a **Master Plan** for the whole of the SAR perimeter.

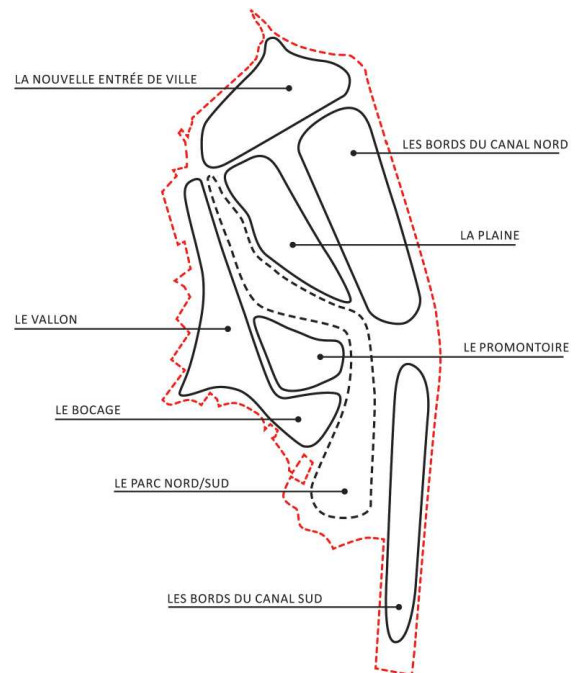
This tool was developed based on contributions from a wide range of sources, including advice from experts, an evaluation of the impact of the Master Plan and comments and suggestions from a Monitoring Committee. The process was completed in 2012.



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1752	1781	2002	2007	2009	11/2010	03/2012
First activities on the site	First forge	Work stopped	Study Confederation perimeter	SAR	Launch of a Master Plan	Approval of the Master Plan

The general redevelopment plan in the Master Plan was divided into main sectors (seen in the image on the right).

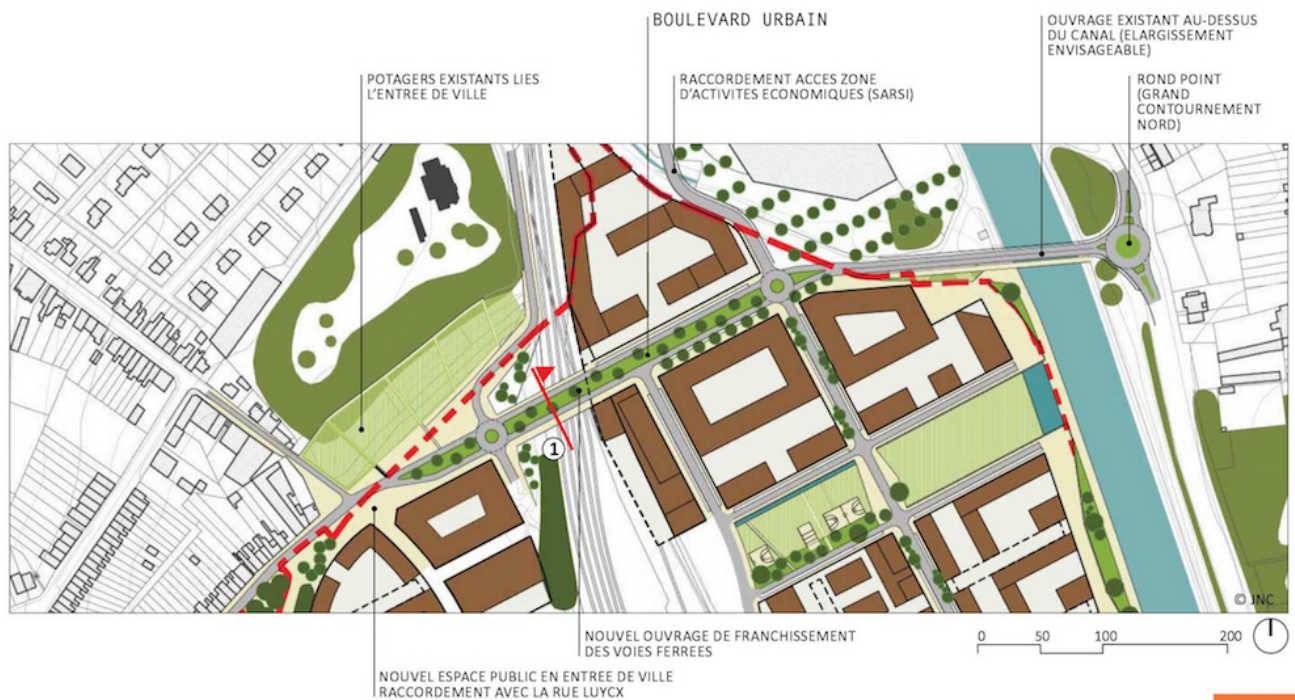


The **strategic site for the European competition** (23.4 hectares) covers the sector called “**The new way into the town**” (*la nouvelle entrée en ville*) in the general plan (to which the Sarsi area and the canal banks should be added).

What does the Master Plan on the SAR perimeter say about this particular sector?

The new way into the town is structured around an urban boulevard, extending from the existing bridge over the canal. This boulevard crossed the railway lines and will allow the elimination of the present level crossing. Its axis points towards the bell tower of the Church of Christ Resurrected, which overlooks the Forges site. A Great Northern Bypass will complete the territorial grid and will be one of the elements of success of the project in terms of accessibility.

Future building programmes will run along the boulevard in relation to the neighbourhoods of Luycx and Reine Elizabeth streets, creating a new zone that could be home to the service sector (offices, hotel...), shops, housing and other amenities.



The urban boulevard providing entry to the town is one of the biggest elements in the project, both in terms of accessibility and of a new image for Tubize. It improves access to Tubize by eliminating the level crossing, but it also simplifies traffic flows at the entry to the town. The boulevard is made of up long pavements and central reservation that could be used in the future for public transport.

The sector as a whole should provide a strong, coherent and powerful image, both for the entry into the town and for the new identity of the site. Its development will, therefore, be closely linked to structural elements such as roadways and civil works projects. The use of large buildings along the two boulevards is encouraged, with value as landmarks in the remodelled urban landscape, but also to place an architectural screen between the new neighbourhood and the industrial activities to the north (Sarsi area). Development activities are basically linked to the tertiary sector, but do not exclude the possibility of developing housing units in the form of apartment blocks. The introduction of shops is also encouraged on the ground floor level, and a hotel could have a place in the sector. The western side plays the role of linking up with the urban fabric of the neighbourhood standing at the crossroads of Luycx and Reine Elisabeth streets. The programme includes housing in this area. It also

envisages the setting up of SMEs, opening up a zone of economic activity planned further south, and a zone of community amenities that could give onto a public square.

3. The project site

The project site (in yellow) covers **1.5 hectares**. It is bordered to the west by the railway line. The future **urban boulevard** will run along it to the south, while the north-east will be next to the **Sarsi economic area**.

This is a key zone in the reconversion of the industrial wastelands of Tubize because it is directly located at the entry to the town and will have a strong influence on the image of Tubize for its inhabitants, workers and visitors.



The **site belongs to Duferco Wallonie** and has been proposed for European by the Town Council de Tubize and Duferco Wallonie.

4. Contribution to the productive town

The town of Tubize developed around textile and metalworking industries. The biggest was the **Forges de Clabecq**.

Following the gradual decline of their activities, the old industrial sites will be progressively **reconverted** by combining habitat, shops and services.

The reconversion of the 87 hectares of the Forges site represents a major issue for the economic development of Tubize.

The **master plan** created in 2012 envisages habitat, ancillary functions and economic activities. Apart from ground floor premises allocated to shops, bars and restaurants and liberal professions, the project envisages 8.6 hectares for SMEs, 7 hectares for multimodal activities and 3.3 hectares of tertiary sector activities (shops, offices and services).

This document has been prepared using the following sources:

- **Report on environment impacts – Old Forges of Clabecq, Town Council de Tubize**; April 2007; Duferco Belgium.
- **The Redevelopment of the Forges de Clabecq site – In search of the Master Plan**; June 2012; Duferco Belgium, Diversification Division.
- **SDER project, a vision for the territory of Wallonia**; 2013; Public Service of Wallonia.
- **Tubize and its entities – The subtle marriage of the five senses**; April 2016; Town Council de Tubize.