

Europas 15 - La Louvière (BE)



SCALE: S - architecture + context
TEAM REPRESENTATIVE: Architect
SITE FAMILY: MAKING PROXIMITIES - Third spaces in-between
LOCATION: La Louvière, Saint-Vaast, Cité Jardin district
POPULATION: 80,719 inhab.
STRATEGIC SITE: 19 ha **PROJECT SITE:** 3.5 ha
SITE PROPOSED BY: Centr'Habitat
ACTOR(S) INVOLVED: Centr'habitat
OWNER(S) OF THE SITE: Centr'habitat
COMMISSION AFTER COMPETITION: Urban planning and architectural study prior to the development

HOW CAN THE SITE CONTRIBUTE TO THE PRODUCTIVE CITY?
Following the closure of the coal mines and the industries (mainly steelmaking and metalwork) that brought prosperity to the Centre region in the Province of Hainaut in Wallonia, the economic reconversion was a major challenge. The unemployment rate in La Louvière is 17.9% (2016). Projects for the gradual reclassification of the brownfield sites around the site have been managed by the town of La Louvière, with the multi-functional nature of the programmes leading to the productive town of the future as a common thread. It is therefore quite natural that this "reclassification in progress" spreads to the "dormitory town" to activate its transformation into a productive, lively and dynamic area.

CITY STRATEGY
The mutation of this single-function neighbourhood into a productive town could be brought about through various approaches, for example, the installation of multi-use buildings or the creation of a productive street to the scale of the neighbourhood. The filling in of wasteland within the area by productive activities or local micro-agriculture could also be studied at a later stage.
The strategy is two-fold: 1/ Open up and connect the neighbourhood to its surrounding environment via soft connections to the town centre and the multimodal platforms, as well as by connections to urban areas that border it or will do so in the future. 2/ Foster employment by creating areas within the neighbourhood that can stimulate the development of micro-, small- and medium-sized companies.



SITE DEFINITION

The strategic perimeter is located 2.5 kilometres from downtown La Louvière and the railway station. It is bordered by a major network of entry and link roads, agricultural zones, a joint development zone covering several hectares, an old slag heap, the old Saint-Vaast social housing estate (in which all the housing units have been sold) and detached house developments. Except for two schools and a community centre, the site only includes 500 homes (either new or renovated), of which more than 400 are social housing (houses/apartments) together with quality public areas.

The project site mainly consists of an undefined central green zone and a linear strip that creates a physical and visual break with the rest of the urban sprawl.



HOW IS PRODUCTION CONSIDERED IN THE URBAN DIVERSITY PROGRAM ?

The programme envisages the integration of a multi-use building, connected to the public area and the recently-built dwellings. The implementation of production modules on ground level, compatible with multi-storeyed apartments (around forty), will mean that the residential area (monofunctional to date) can be revitalised.

The size of the modules will be adapted, depending on the activity developed.

The programme also envisages the creation of a productive thoroughfare through the work on the linear strip located in a section of Emile Urbain street, which borders the site. This strip (almost 500 metres long) will be reworked sequentially to allow, on one hand, the creation of openings and connections to the rest of the urban area and, on the other, the installation of shops and other local services, “micro-, small- and medium-sized companies” with unloading and storage areas for the smooth operation of the activities.



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Bouveleurs street, south of the study site and project site



North of the project site (Château d'eau» street)



Garden city, North of the project site



Professeur O. Tulippe street