



## **EUROPAN 15 - AUBY**

### **Report on EUROPAN site visit to Auby**

**April 16, 2019**

**10am - 5pm**

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#### **Étaient présents lors de la journée de rencontre avec les équipes :**

**Total number of participants:** 35

The visit was divided into two parts:

- (morning) a presentation of the city and visit of architectural and urban planning projects completed or under construction: town hall and park, site of the future pedestrian bridge, multimedia library (Escale), îlot Collège (college city block), open-air museum;
- (afternoon) visit of the study and project sites followed by discussions at city hall.

#### **MAIN URBAN PLANNING ISSUES FOR AUBY**

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The Mayor recalled the context and issues that concern the city of Auby and above all the role the city can play in both the construction of greater Lille (Auby is 20 minutes by train from Lille via Leforest Station) and metropolitan area of Douai (7 km by road). The city of Auby (currently about 7,400 inhabitants) is pursuing an urban planning and real-estate strategy to increase the population, since the municipality has facilities to accommodate about 15,000 inhabitants. A long-term urban project began with the development of the industrial wastelands north of the canal during the 1980s and continued with urban renewal (ANRU financing). Many territorial resources are available to continue a sustainable development of Auby, while giving priority to values such as dignity, solidarity and equality of opportunity.

The Mayor considers urban planning to be one of the keys to achieving this. The question of dignity is currently the subject of an experimental participative approach (by the association La Ville en Commun) being carried out on the site of the former college (Îlot College). Another concern for the municipality is health and aging: for this, a medical centre project is being considered that would bring services back to Auby (although this falls under the responsibility of the State).

#### **THE INTERPRETATION OF « PRODUCTIVE CITY » FOR AUBY**

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The European theme productive city is being interpreted in Auby as "production of urbanity" and living together. Before massive industrialization, Auby was a small village that was first settled about 3000 years ago (recent archaeological discoveries). Auby's industrial development accelerated considerably after the discovery of coal in the area (cf. history of the Nord-Pas de Calais mining area). Industry (mining, metallurgy and related activities) was able to exploit local resources (including the canal for transporting freight) and promoted the settlement of workers and their families in nearby workers' housing estates. The factory was the centre of life at the centre of the city and the workers walked to work.

However, this area has experienced a major economic recession since the mines closed. Auby represents a possibility of reversing that pattern, starting with the housing and existing urbanity and bringing new forms of production into the city. The inhabitants become the new main resource. Thus, new urban possibilities open up: What services for the inhabitants (i.e. for the elderly)? What forms of mobility? What types of work (i.e. distance)? What types of agricultural production are suitable for polluted soil? What new social links and place for solidarity economy?

## **REAL-ESTATE STRATEGY AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

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The city of Auby has long pursued a strategy of property and building acquisition. With what it now possesses, the desired urban development (i.e. housing, shops, etc.) can be carried out. However, 60% of the population does not currently earn enough to even pay taxes, the poverty rate is high, which makes it difficult to support local businesses and other things. New inhabitants could help develop the local economy and social diversity. However, one will have to be careful to avoid new social fractures, new barriers. The new projects will have to consider spatial continuity and environmental improvements as supports for new social ties.

In this regard, the participatory process currently underway for Îlot Collège is important. When the old college was demolished, the new one was built on the neighbouring block and housing was planned for on the now empty block. However, the investor withdrew from the project and the land was bought by the city. They questioned the relevance of the programme and stopped the project to allow a consultation with the inhabitants. A question of establishing nature in the city, thus taking into account the impacts of global warming that in recent years have also been observed in the north, arose. A green, shaded area in the city where temperatures would be lower in summer would make it possible to recreate social links in the public space.

**Mobility.** The new pedestrian bridge connecting the city centre to the area north of the canal (coinciding with the European site) is to be built for the same purpose: a means of reciprocal exchange between the inhabitants of the new neighbourhood who will benefit from services, public facilities and shops in the city centre and inhabitants in the centre will use the footbridge to reach the railway station and the city's green lung on the other side of the canal (Roselière du Boulénrieu nature area). Thus, the canal will no longer divide the city but find itself at the heart of the city. It should be a pleasant place that works with the wide-gauge canal going to Lille; a marina could be part of project proposals. The banks of the canal should be for environmentally friendly means of transport remaining a place of urbanity and recreation. The car should be kept behind, away from the canal. It takes less than 15 minutes to reach the administrative centre Douai by bicycle along the canal.

The departmental bypass road (RD 120) has been completed and it is now possible to reconsider the width of Rue Jean Jaurès and Rue Léon Blum (bordering on the European project site and leading to the city centre) so that they can become principle municipal axis.

**Resources.** Wind turbines could be installed within the Auby city limits; there are already turbines outside the urban area: we do not know what the inhabitants think of these (there have been no complaints yet) but in urban areas, noise nuisance will have to be taken into consideration. The old mill is to be converted to a wind turbine.

Architectural heritage (listed or not) is one of Auby's resources. However, the miners' housing estates need to be renovated (especially to be more energy efficient); this is to be financed by the ERBM funds (Engagement pour le renouveau du bassin minier/programme to revive the

mining area) and is among the first projects to take place in the mining area, renovation should begin in about a year.

The Communauté d'agglomération du Douaisis is responsible for waste. Waste sorting and collection are in place; there is a dump in Auby and a recycling depot will be built.

**Constraints.** Two types of areas are at risk from flooding in Auby: one is the collapse of mines (flooding of abandoned mine shafts); the other is the potential for the canal to rise out of its banks (especially in heavy storms, even if all preventative measures are in place; studies are not yet available but are in taking place). This second type of flooding questions building along the canal and particularly the use of the ground floor.

The question of ground pollution (although already cleaned in certain areas) needs also to be taken into account, especially when linked to flooding or urban agriculture (already in Auby) in the proposals.

### **VISIT OF THE EUROPAN SITE**

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The visit was an opportunity to remind candidates that the European competition is looking for project proposals that imagine new ways of building the city other than the ZAC model (joint development zone). It was reiterated that the feasibility study conducted by JNC agency allowed the city to understand the area's development potential, but that both study and project sites (on city property) are completely open to all proposals.

Candidates are expected to examine carefully questions of housing and new ways of living, new family (re)compositions and contemporary demographic developments. Can we imagine housing that evolves? Can we consider working at home? What links can be established between housing and outdoor space (especially for children)? What size should housing be (there is, for example, a lack of T2 one-bedroom apartments in Auby), especially social housing?

Candidates are advised to take into account the typical territorial and urban characteristics. Issues and topic areas are more fully described in the site file

### **ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS**

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Several studies have already been carried out in the community on these topics:

- landscape and environmental study of the Roselière du Boulénrieu nature area, including an inventory of local fauna and flora;
- public space charter;
- JNC agency urban study.

Additional documents are provided to candidates on request. A public commission for semi-aerial photos of the European site is being carried out (photos will be available soon).