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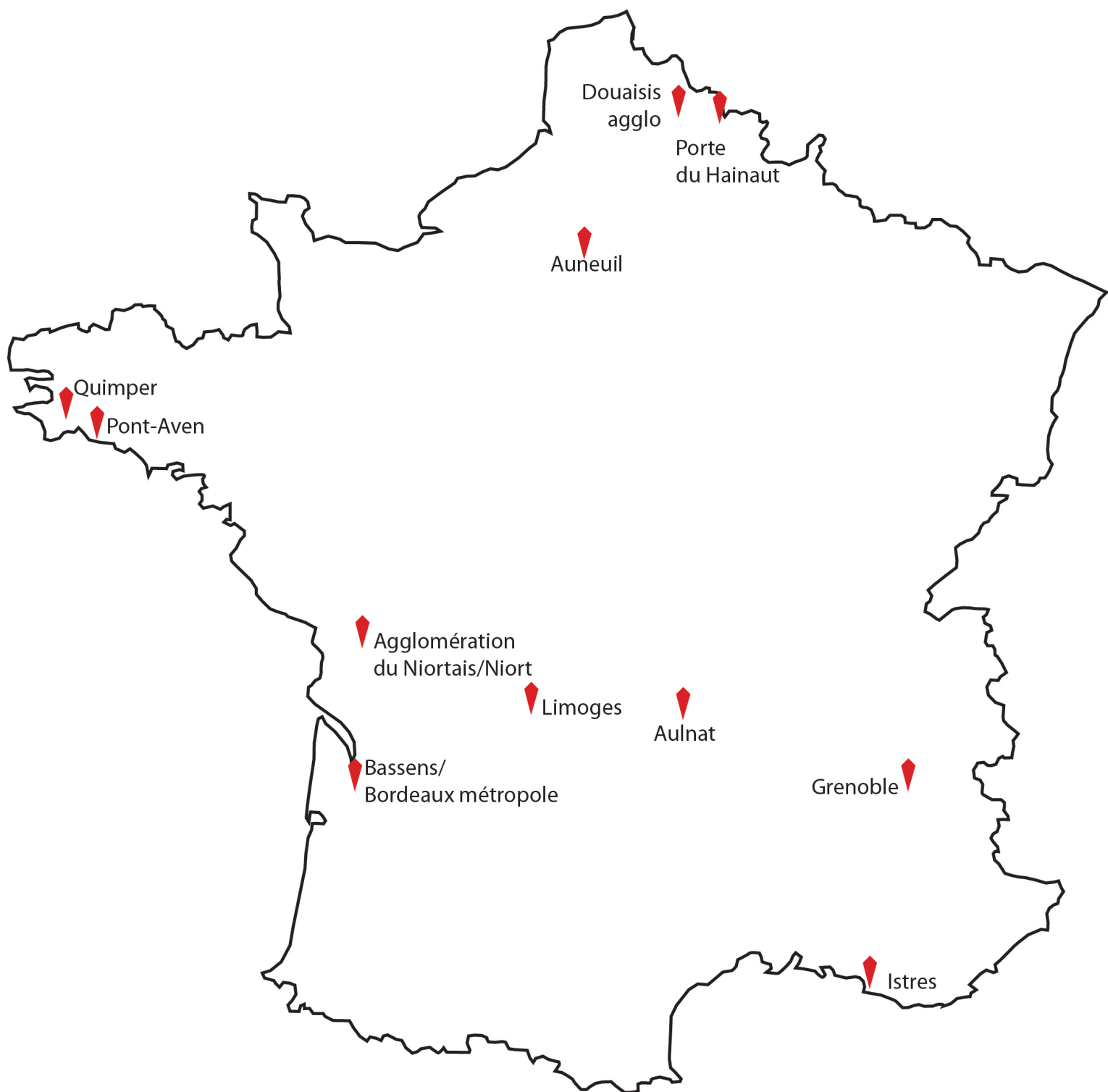
E16 - Living Cities

ISTRES

EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL CENTRE 'LES HEURES CLAIRES', FROM ONE UTOPIA TO ANOTHER

Site Brief





SITES, IDEAS, AND MORE!

Europan is once again presenting 11 sites in France for the 16th session, based on the theme Living Cities, Metabolic and Inclusive Vitalities.

For more than 30 years, European has provided an opportunity to experiment with new ways of thinking and creating cities, and the themes regularly address major issues at the heart of their relevance.

It left nobody in any doubt that the word LIVING is at the center of debates, works, research, and that considering the progressive extinction of this world, little by little reached by a dominant human civilization of exhaustion of the resources and the otherness. And as soon as we position ourselves in this thematic, the horizon of the revitalization is huge, and the work to be carried out on the scale of these perspectives.

We often use the term European « competition » when we should be mentioning the overall original process which continues to demonstrate its capacity to adapt. First of all, the sites are identified and then analyzed in collaboration with the various players, starting with the theme and exploring these themes in situ. The meetings, visits and films, and the proposition of articulation between site and theme allow the candidates to reexamine and question them.

The proposals submitted by the teams are once again part of a long and very rich process that will lead in one way or another to a recognized experimentation, that of ideas, encounters, expressed possibilities, and re-expressed questions. The follow-ups will continue the elaboration of a living urban and architectural thought, in evolution and in active transformation.

The theme Living Cities reflects the urgency of thinking differently about human lifestyles, with a heritage that is sometimes fraught with consequences but also very rich: the prospects for renewing, recycling and transforming modes of production associated with a thought of the living are immense.

The European process makes it a unique ongoing event because, like a philharmonic narrative, it allows young generations of architectural and urban designers to speak out and then to be commissioned. European allows them to tell us that we are sometimes wrong, that there are other ways of thinking, of doing things, and of projecting themselves into the future.

This theme Living Cities, after such a particular year of pandemic, is dedicated to them.



EUROPAN 16 THEME : LIVING CITIES

CREATIVE PROCESS-PROJECTS TO REGENERATE INHABITED MILIEUS

In the conditions of the Anthropocene –a new bio-geological period where human activities on the global scale have a destructive impact on life on earth– how to face climate change and inequalities? How to imagine other possibilities to inhabit the planet Earth?

The European 16 topic focuses on living cities as a new paradigm, in which new kinds of synergies can be considered between the environmental, biological, social, economic, cultural and political dimensions. This paradigm leads us to think the space in terms of co-evolution and interactions, and to work with regenerative project dynamics, combining metabolic and inclusive vitalities.

METABOLIC VITALITIES

Metabolic vitalities go beyond the nature-culture combination, allowing the European projects –mixing architecture, urban design and landscape architecture– to identify and to negotiate with an ensemble of transformations taking natural elements into account –like water, material flows, energy...– which are all part of the life cycles. These new relations generate inhabited milieus. These milieus are considered as complex ecosystems generating flows (with entries and exits) and in constant evolution. Developing such cyclic processes leads the design process to minimize the environmental footprint and the consumption of non-renewable energy, and to promote new forms of dwelling.

Metabolic vitalities encourage design processes on different scales. The recycling competence, the enhancement of organic or energy material, the adaptation to climate change, the integration of nature and biodiversity are as many metabolic vitalities that European 16 sites should trigger to allow their own transformation into ecosystems between nature and culture. To be rewarded, the projects should translate this metabolic dynamic in their proposals.

INCLUSIVE VITALITIES

Urban environments are facing increasing inequalities and conflicts produced by invisibility, exclusion, marginalization, and inaccessibility to housing, to work, to education and to public services. To fight against these social fractures, inhabited milieus should become places where new inclusive policies and practices are

supported.

Inclusive vitalities put on the foreground modes of doing that can support territorial justice articulating social and ecological concerns. Issues of accessibility to public infrastructures and to housing should get a predominant role, promoting conviviality. Taking care of living environments could promote inclusion by transforming marginalised spaces into places of exchange, co-learning and biodiversity. This could allow new inclusive narratives of inhabited environments across scales and generations, promoting new forms participatory democracy.

When choosing the sites, when defining the programmatic frames that come with their evolution, and when judging the participants' proposals, European 16 will emphasise on the consideration of the inclusive dimension of the inhabited milieus.

CONCLUSION

If we want to face these social and environmental emergencies, we have to address new creative and responsible project dynamics, which should be able to reconnect with the cycles and rhythms of the living nature, associating metabolic and inclusive vitalities.

The European 16 sites should therefore consider these two dimensions in their transformation goals. How can the project spatialize and, at the same time, spare resources, common goods, recycling processes, hybridisations, sharing and the different temporalities ?

This is the question raised for European 16.

EUROPAN EUROPE

*See also : Contributions to the theme Living Cities :
<http://www.euopanfrance.org/publications/single/38>

GENERAL INFORMATION

SITE REPRESENTATIVE : ville d'Istres

ACTOR(S) INVOLVED : ville d'Istres, Métropole Aix-Marseille-Provence

TEAM REPRESENTATIVE : Architect/ Urbanist/ Landscape Architect

EXPECTED SKILLS REGARDING THE SITE'S ISSUES AND CHARACTERISTICS : sociology, ecology, architecture, urbanism, landscape

COMMUNICATION: Promotion of the projects after the competition:
publication of a catalogue of the results and national exhibition

JURY – 1ST EVALUATION : With the participation of the site representatives

JURY – PRIZE SELECTION:

Selection of three projects per site. With the participation of the site representatives

Reward: the rewards are granted by the jury independently of the sites:
Winner (12.000€), Runner-up (6.000€) and Special Mention (no reward)

POST-COMPETITION INTERMEDIATE PROCEDURE :

- Meeting with sites representatives and 3 selected teams, organized by European France in Paris at the beginning of 2022
- On-site meeting with sites representatives and 3 selected teams organized by cities and partners from January 2022
- Assistance and consultancy to the cities and partners, also their collaborators, for the implementations processes, by European France.

MISSION GIVEN TO THE SELECTED TEAM(S) FOR THE

IMPLEMENTATION : urban and architectural feasibility study followed by project contract of urban and/or architectural implementation according to the selected projects. Encouraging an operational and/or architectural contract with associated clients.



Aerial picture of the study site
(FR-ISTRES-SS-AP1.JPG)

CONNECTION TO THE THEME

¹ Atelier de Montrouge (ATM, 1958–1981) was an associative practice, with four, and then three architects: Jean-Renaudie (1925–1981, who left the studio in 1968), Pierre Riboulet (1928–2003), Gérard Thurnauer (b.1926) and Jean-Louis Véret (b.1927). In all their projects, the four architects of the practice sought to avoid becoming shut-in by reductive or systematic thought and, thus, to draw out a specific approach, renewing theories and models; voluntarily communal responses to planning the future sustainably by improving living conditions throughout society.

² In order to reply to a social and economic situation then in full evolution, certain movements in teaching proposed ‘open schooling’; schools that ‘step outside of their walls’ to get closer to life, while the external world ‘enters school’, opening the doors to adults (library, alternative classes, professional training, etc.) and to economic and social entities (companies, unemployment office, organisations, youth centres, etc.). The first educational and cultural centre was founded in Yerres (Essonne) in 1967

THE SITE’S PARTICULAR CHALLENGES WITH REGARDS THE THEME

‘Les Heures Claires’ educational and cultural centre (ECC) was built in the 1970s by Atelier de Montrouge¹, with ideas of sharing, of collective reflection and of embracing multi-disciplinary collaboration. It stems from the model of ECCs and ‘integrated amenities’ that appeared at the end of the 1960s in France². The Istres educational and cultural centre ‘Les Heures Claires’ is also part of the dynamic of development of the industrial area of Fos-sur-Mer and the large-scale influx of workers.

Today, the ECC houses an ‘open school’, arts and sports amenities, a music school, a multimedia library, a dance school, around a tree-lined avenue ending in a terrace and belvedere looking over the Étang de Berre lagoon. Based on the idea that relationships between art, sport and education constitute the basis of a society that is more fair and more open, the ECC today needs to rekindle its utopian dimension and build on what is the force of the site, sharing and collaboration, education and creation, while also clarifying its position within contemporary transitions (digital, anthropocene, participative democracy, communal, etc.). While on a national level many ECCs are now derelict or abandoned, Istres has decided to reanimate the utopia in light of contemporary issues

THE SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS OF THE TOWN AND ITS PARTNERS

Istres is a town in the recently created metropolitan area of Aix-Marseille-Provence (AMP); it was originally an old Provencal village looking down over the lagoon, Étang de Berre. During the end of the 20th century, Istres saw its population grow considerably under the auspices of a new town that spread out like a blanket, with a new town centre and residential areas (clusters of houses, small buildings, etc.), but also with a large number of public amenities, among which the ECC. The town wants to **find a new use for the ECC’s ‘Alain Savary’ secondary school, which is going to move elsewhere**, to preserve its experimental and working-class character through a project of a ‘third place’, a collective place, for learning.



Aerial picture of the study site
(FR-ISTRES-SS-AP2.JPG)

One line of thought has led to the idea of a centre of higher education around the notion of movement and oscillations, with a Fablab dedicated to the creation of contemporary choreography, in resonance with the sports activities practiced elsewhere on the site.

This idea of a ‘third place for learning’, a collective place that is neither workplace nor home, is envisaged to accompany the entire transformation of this 15-hectare site, in all areas – arts, education or sports. With this in mind, it should be pointed out that the ECC is already accommodating the Coline professional dance company (which since 1996 has trained several generations of contemporary dancers in France and throughout Europe), a third level school of design, applied arts and communication, and a number of sports activities. With the creation of a third place for learning in mind, the ECC could thereby revive its vocation for experimentation and the intermingling of a range of cultural, educational, sports and environmental interests. This is the challenge for the town of Istres in this project to transform the ECC with European, the European competition for architectural and urban projects: to give young professionals the possibility to express new ideas for towns looking for innovative architectural and urban solutions to evolutions in lifestyle and environment.

What is more, the ECC is soon to benefit from the construction of a new multimedia library and the installation of a 'Maison de l'Energie' energy centre. Down the slope on the banks of the lagoon, a project to renovate the marina is underway, with a maritime shuttle to provide a fast link to Marseille-Provence airport, thereby opening up the town. Furthermore, accommodation currently offered by the ECC's Maison Familiale de Vacances (subsidised holiday houses for low-income families) could be converted into artists' and students' residences, an important tool, notably in welcoming choreographers selected by the centre of choreographic experimentation and creation, Pôle d'Expérimentation et de Création Choréographique (PE2C).

It remains to be defined how to link, not only symbolically but also physically, the cultural, educational and training establishments of the ECC with those of the town centre. An initial track would be the creation of a cycle path, a dedicated route between the ECC and the town centre, making the most of the emergence of the sports cluster dedicated to cycling and putting the site at the centre of non-motorised circulation around the town.

Via these various possible orientations, **the challenge will be to regenerate the original utopia of the Heures Claires educational and cultural centre.** Several different reasons explain the gradual decline of the ECC's utopian dimension:

- Because over time there have been a variety of different client bodies, breaking down the collaborative links between the different structures, already undermined by the change in use of some of the units to uses bearing no relation to the founding project;
- Because the central concept of the 'open school' has been undermined by a feeling of endemic distrust;
- Because the aging infrastructures no longer represent the innovative project of the time. Energy drains, they are generally badly adapted to the development of collective and collaborative activities as practised today;
- Because the management of rooms, small and large, is subject to rules, timetables, different hierarchies, and because digital technology is nowhere to be seen, despite the fact that it has nourished and been nourished by the 'digital natives' of generations X, Y and their successors, from their earliest years.

Because of all this and the natural aging of the ECC structure, the town of Istres now wants to launch a broad reflection on the future of the site. A support body for the client for the conversion of the ECC 'Les Heures Claires' into a 'third place' has been established (2020–2021). By means of this process of reflection, it is a question of **giving cachet to the ECC and building on what has been the strength of the site – sharing and collaboration, education and creation, combining both forms and spaces, favouring introduction between businesses, people in culture as well as social and environment, around, fundamentally, the notion of the third place for learning.**

Carte : the study site in the conurbation (FR-ISTRES-C-M1.PNG)



Aerial picture of the study site (FR-ISTRES-SS-AP3.JPG) - Construction of the ECC Istres at the beginning of the 1970s)



BACKGROUND

TERRITORY, GEOGRAPHY AND LANDSCAPE

The town of Istres, headquarters of the sub-prefectorial administrative district of Étang de Berre (18 'communes' – districts), covers an area of about 11,373 hectares and, according to the last census, is home to 43,462 permanent residents (46,818 with the Hameau d'Entressen development), thereby placing it sixth in the list of towns in the département of the Bouches-du-Rhône. The town is the centre of the Istres-Ouest Provence Conseil du Territoire local council (Cornillon-Confoux, Fos-sur-Mer, Istres, Grans, Miramas, Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône) within the Aix-Marseille-Provence metropolitan area (institution created in 2016 by the fusion of six municipalities), and is characterised by its remarkable natural environment.

Framed by the lagoons Étang de l'Olivier and Étang de Berre (formerly Mer de Berre), the town is situated on the edge of the Crau alluvial plain (which boasts the most abundant water table in Europe), near the low Alpilles mountains and close to the Mediterranean coast. Its particularities are linked to the omnipresence of water and its proximity to conservation sites. Because of its characteristics, the town is classified a 'tourism resort', a label of excellence guaranteeing a certain level of comfort and amenities for tourists.

Istres has undergone three major phases of development related to:

- Salt extraction and the development of the chemical industry at the end of the 19th century;
- The creation of the flying school and the 125 Charles Monier airbase during the First World War. The Istres airbase is now a strategic site for the French army (the base employs 5,000 soldiers and civilians); with the longest runway in Europe, it was one of three bases selected by NASA for the emergency landing of the American space shuttle Discovery. The national importance of the town is demonstrated by the presence of the DGA Essai en Vol national flight-testing centre, Dassault Aviation, an aeronautic centre currently under development, and the BMW circuit (which at the beginning of the 20th century hosted the French Grand Prix)
- The development of the industrial-dockland area of Fos-sur-Mer in the 1960s, which is home to the Grand Port Maritime de Marseille-Fos (Fos-sur-Mer and Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône account for 86% of the GPMM's business), and the creation in the 1970s of the new town (originally comprised of the villages of Miramas, Fos-sur-Mer and Istres). This site of national interest is still considered today as the first great industrial zone of Southern Europe.

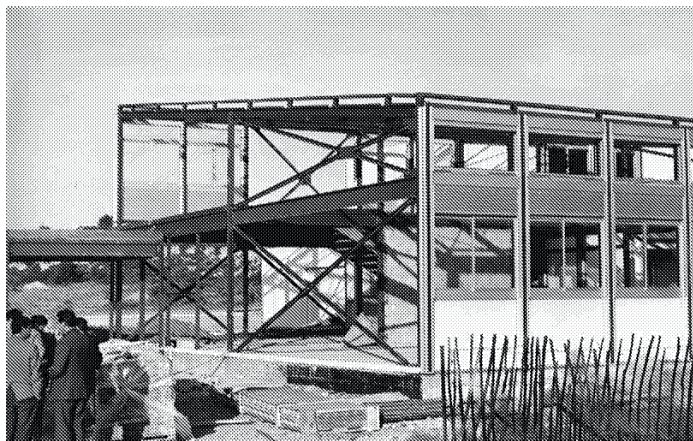


Figure 2 : Vue du CEG en construction, décembre 1971, cl. ATM [fonds ATM/IFA/CAPA].

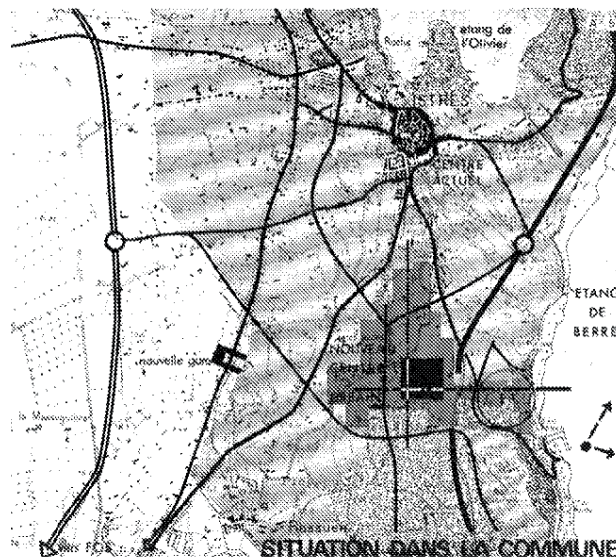


Figure 4 : Situation du CEC dans la commune, in ATM, CEC Les Heures claires, juillet 1971, pl. A5 [fonds ATM/IFA/CAPA].



Figure 3 : Vue de détail du CES n. d. [vers 1973], cl. ATM [fonds ATM/IFA/CAPA].



Figure 6 : Vue intérieure de la bibliothèque, nd [1973], cl. Biaugeois [fonds ATM/IFA/CAPA].

Archive pictures, from de C. Blain, R. Borruet, « Le centre éducatif et culturel "Les Heures Claires" d'Istres : Un éclat d'utopie dans la région marseillaise », Histoire Urbaine, n°3, 2007 (FR-ISTRES-SS-AP10 à 13) -

Benefitting from its proximity to the conurbations of Aix-en-Provence and Marseille, Istres is part of a region marked by the development of industrial-dockland sites and constitutes the central town in an area that still remains relatively autonomous with regards the rest of the département, as much economically as in terms of services and amenities.

ARCHITECTURAL AND URBAN HERITAGE

From an urban point of view, the town has been developed along a north-south axis, restricted by the presence of the Rassuen and Olivier lagoons to the east, with the airbase limiting extension to the west. The town benefits from a good level of facilities and numbers 30 educational establishments: 12 primary schools and 12 nursery schools, 4 middle schools, 1 general high school and 1 vocational high school. There are four colleges of further education – CFAI, AFPA, GRETA and Espace FO – with the addition in September 2018 of the ESDAC (school of design, applied arts, communication and internet studies).

For some decades the town has stood out for its creation of numerous cultural, sport and social amenities. It has placed culture as the non-negotiable axis in the development of its urban projects. In 1993, the town founded a centre of contemporary art. In Istres, contemporary art is also present in the public space: Buren's Diagonale in front of the town hall, Art'Zoo, Ben's Les Squares, Zanca's floating sea-urchins on the banks of the Étang de l'Olivier and, since 2012, the 'abribus' bus shelters transformed into Art'bribus. As well as the Contemporary Art Centre, other cultural amenities have been created in Istres, such as the Olivier Theatre and the Le Coluche cinema (both part of the public company Scènes et Ciné). These amenities are supplemented by Usine, a musical café where both known and upcoming artists perform, and which supports creation by offering artists' residencies. As well as these, the council-run Saint Sulpice Chapel, overlooking the Étang de l'Olivier, promotes amateur art by means of a regular programme of exhibitions of amateur artists.

Since 2007, the ECC has been listed as 20th-century heritage :

Les édifices labellisés patrimoine du XXe siècle

département	Bouches-du-Rhône
commune	Istres
appellation	Centre éducatif et culturel Les Heures Claires
adresse	avenue Radolfzell
auteurs	Atelier de MONTRouGE (Pierre Riboulet, Gérard Thurnauer, Jean-Louis Véret, architectes), Henri FAURE-LADREY (architecte d'exécution)
date	1970-1977
protection	édifice non protégé
label patrimoine XXe	Commission régionale du patrimoine et des sites (CRPS) du 15 mars 2007



Photo : © Sylvie Denante, drac paca crmh, 2006

"L'atelier de Montrouge est créé en novembre 1958 par Pierre Riboulet (1928-2003), Gérard Thurnauer (né en 1926), Jean-Louis Véret (né en 1927) et Jean Renaudie (1925-1981), qui quitte l'atelier en 1968). Architectes diplômés des Beaux-Arts, ils ont cotoyé de près de grandes figures du mouvement moderne et des Ciam (telles que Le Corbusier, Michel Ecochard et Jean Prouvé). Ils font partie d'une nouvelle génération qui, à l'échelle internationale, se démarque par sa volonté de repenser la modernité sur de nouvelles bases, en tenant compte de la dimension sociale de l'habitat, de l'histoire et de l'esprit du temps" (Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine).

Entre 1967 et 1970, la zone industrielle de Fos-sur-mer prend progressivement corps : le paysage géographique et humain s'en trouve modifié, notamment en raison de l'arrivée sur place de 20 à 30 000 ouvriers, sans compter la main-d'œuvre affluant de Lorraine et de Savoie. Le constat d'une insuffisance d'équipements sociaux, culturels et éducatifs amène la municipalité à acquérir 12 hectares de terrains sur le plateau des Heures Claires, à 1,5 km de la ville ancienne, en vue de créer un collège et un "centre éducatif et culturel".

Le programme, ambitieux, est soutenu par l'Etat et va se découper en de nombreuses tranches de travaux. La première réalisation, en 1971, est le collège, suivi la même année de la bibliothèque et de la Maison pour tous. Depuis, des équipements supplémentaires se sont ajoutés : un centre aéré et un centre sportif en 1972 ; un centre social, l'agence pour l'emploi, un dispensaire et une halte garderie en 1974 ; un théâtre en 1976, la Maison de la Danse en 1988, le Conservatoire de musique et de danse en 2000, etc.

"Le CEC se présente donc comme un ensemble, avec une rue centrale qui mène jusqu'à la falaise. Les bâtiments n'ont qu'un seul étage avec des terrasses accessibles, des préaux, des porches, des lieux de rencontre. Il n'y a pas une entrée imposée, c'est d'abord un lieu ouvert, auquel on accède de toute sa périphérie. La composition a la forme d'un T. A la rencontre des deux axes, sont placés les équipements les plus animés : le restaurant, la Maison pour tous, le gymnase. Des décrochements au sol ou en hauteur permettent de conserver quelques arbres et d'éviter la monotonie des barres uniformes".

Les principes de base de cette construction adoptant la logique des "mailles" sont le décloisonnement et la polyvalence des locaux : le centre était en effet dès son origine destiné à s'étendre progressivement ce que permettait la technique employée, mise au point par GEEP Industries (Paul Chaslin) : le principe est celui d'éléments préfabriqués très facilement assemblables. Les constructions comportent une ossature métallique, les planchers sont en béton armé, la toiture en aluminium nervuré et les façades sont des mur-rideaux. Le CEC d'Istres illustre parfaitement la pensée de l'Atelier de Montrouge et constitue une référence pour la conception d'autres projets d'ensembles intégrés.

Rédacteurs : Eve Roy, Sylvie Denante, drac paca crmh, 2008

Source : Fraissenet Gérard, Mejean Alain, CEC, 30 ans de vie, CEC Développement, Istres, 2000

Heritage note from the list of 20th-century heritage about the CEC

(source : www.culture.gouv.fr/Regions/Drac-Provence-Alpes-Cote-d-Azur/Politique-et-actions-culturelles/Architecture-contemporaine-remarquable-en-Paca/Le-label-Architecture-contemporaine-remarquable/Les-edifices-labellises-Architecture-contemporaine-remarquable/Label-ACR-Bouches-du-Rhone/Istres/Istres-Centre-educatif-et-culturel-Les-Heures-Claires)

SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC DATA

From an economic point of view, the activity of the town's businesses is primarily focussed on commerce, services and transport (65.6%). This sector of activity employs 36.9% of the population. The second sector represented (17.7%) is that of the civil service, education, health and social work. Finally, the sector of manufacturing and extracting industries employs 15.8% of the population. It should be noted that more than half of the workers work in the town³.

³ Source : Insee, RP2015
complementary exploitation.

Demographically, the town of Istres experienced a significant influx of residents in the 1970s (executives, employees and labourers in the industrial-dockland zone). Between 1968 and 1999 its population tripled (from 13,000 to 39,000 inhabitants), necessitating development and building with particular intensity, thereby irrevocably linking its urban future to that of the industrial development of the Fos gulf, and vice versa. Today there is a notable slow-down in annual growth in the municipality, with rates now level with the rest of the département and region. Immigration, having been abundant (influx when the area was built), was at the last count (2006/2011) negative for Istres, for the area and for the département, while it remained positive for mainland France overall.

Istres benefits from a fairly young population, with nearly 40% under 30. This young population is largely concentrated in neighbourhoods of social housing. It should be specified that 10% of the municipality's population lives in a neighbourhood that is part of the town's political geography, Le Prépaou ('Quartier Prioritaire' – a disadvantaged neighbourhood identified as requiring particular investment for improvement of conditions – social and material) and Les Échoppes ('Territoire de Veille Active' – an area designated as requiring special attention for local improvements). The population of the Prépaou neighbourhood displays all the marks of social fragility: low standards of living and poverty levels higher than those of the municipality overall, one third of households living below the poverty line, many single-parent households, low levels of education and revenues dependant on social benefits.

A breakdown of Istres' socio-professional groups reveals low levels of senior management and professions (5.91%), whereas mid-level professions (17.35%) and employees (21.14%) are well represented⁴.

⁴ Source: INSEE, Population
census 2014.

Finally, Istres is characterised by limited qualifications and training, 27.4% of the population left school with no qualification. This is lower than the 30.6% average of the Conseil de Territoire area council (a grouping of six adjacent localities), which in turn is lower than levels of the département and the rest of France. Higher education qualifications are under-represented, by only 25.1% of the population aged 15+. This result is higher than that of the Conseil de Territoire average, but lower than those of the département (30.6%) and nationally (28.3%). Levels of vocational qualifications ('CAP' and 'BEP') approach Conseil du Territoire levels



Aerial picture : situation of the study site in the conurbation (FR-ISTRES-C-AP1A.PNG)

(28%). 20.7% of the population has the professional baccalaureat (more vocational than the classic baccalaureat), against 16.9% for the département and 16.8% for mainland France.

ENVIRONMENTS: HUMAN AND NATURAL

With an area of 11,373 hectares, Istes is rich in remarkable natural spaces, whose fragile ecosystems are the object of special protection. From its solar parks, to the pesticide-free maintenance of its green and urban spaces, via the promotion of non-motorised transport, the 'Istres Propre & Durable' ('Istres clean and sustainable') exhibition, and the construction of buildings that respect environmental standards, the town is committed to the long-term improvement and preservation of its residents' living environment.

One major economic issue concerns the Étang de Berre, the biggest lagoon on the European coastline, which is suffering from increasing pollution. The ecological richness of a hundred years ago is unanimously regretted. Since the 20th century, the choice has been made to develop industry around the lagoon, creating one of France's major industrial centres and including, notably, petrol and aeronautics. The consequences of these choices were massive urbanisation along with the general degradation of the environment, exacerbated by the installation of the Saint Chamas hydroelectric plant, which proved damaging for the lagoon's ecosystem. However, these activities also constituted major sources of employment, wealth and energy production.

Today, and in order to restore the Étang de Berre, the various actors have developed several strategies, notably by:

- Limiting the impact of man-made activity, improving the filtration of waste water from industry and towns, while maintaining industrial activity;
- Restoring the lagoon's ecosystem, limiting waste water from Saint Chamas and re-opening the Rove canal, while maintaining hydroelectric activity, in order to restore all the potential, notably fishing, of the environment;
- Using a general improvement in the environment (in particularly the banks) and in the image of the Étang de Berre, in order to diversify economic activities in a move towards leisure and tourism for a management of the environment that is ecologically, economically and socially efficient.

A change in both the image and the actual state of the lagoon is already perceptible; it is progressively returning to being a place for walking, bathing and leisure. Nonetheless, there remain numerous aspects requiring improvement. The biodiversity of the water remains weak: the restoration of the lagoon ecosystem is not yet underway.



Aerial picture of the site with the perimeter of the study site (red) and the perimeter of the project site (yellow)
(FR-ISTRES-SS-AP4.JPG)

THE STUDY SITE

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The ECC Les Heures Claires is located in Istres, at the edge of the Étang de Berre, on 12 hectares on the Heures Claires plateau. The ECC was designed at the beginning of the 1970s by Atelier de Montrouge and is based on an ambitious brief, supported by the government, aiming ‘to open schools to the world and to life’ and to enable students to themselves determine the environment of their cultural and social life. Over the years, amenities have been added that today form a collection composed of structures for education and training, culture, leisure, health and municipal services relating to sport and citizenship. The administrative services of the Conseil du Territoire group of local councils are also installed on the site.

From the beginning, the ECC was conceived as a site of inspiration and experimentation at the service of local, regional or national policies. This dynamic of innovation and experimentation is expressed through:

- Its industrialised construction system (from GEEP-industries). Through this construction process, the ECC began a stream of experiments on new processes of open industrialisation, encouraged, among others, by the ‘Plan Construction’, put in place by the French government in 1971 to stimulate innovation and research in the construction of housing;
- Its programme. The ECC is one of the first examples of building that sought to apply the policy of integrated functions and programmes. This policy was encouraged by the government in the form of the Plan (1971–1975).
- Finally, the ECC took its place at the centre of the Étang de Berre’s new town, whose construction was only just beginning; it played a role in the reflection on the way new sectors of housing were implemented⁵.

⁵ Source: Catherine Blain, René Borruy, ‘Le centre éducatif et culturel Les Heures Claires d’Istres : un éclat d’utopie dans la région marseillaise’, *Histoire urbaine*, n° 20 : villes nouvelles et grands ensembles II, December 2007, p. 101–124.

The reconversion of the ECC as a ‘third place for learning’ is designed to continue this history. Basing itself on the dreams and desires of local socio-economic and cultural actors, and the major actors and challenges of the development of the area, the ECC aims to become a ‘transitional space’ within the metropolitan area, dedicated to cultural, ecological, social, economic and digital transitions. Consequently, reflection on the transition of the ECC should also figure on the level of the metropolitan area, in relation notably with the diversity of other transitional collective places in the Aix-Marseille metropolitan area and the region of southern Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur (PACA).



Map of the main transitional and innovation-focussed collective places in the region of south PACA (Source: Villes Innovations, 2017)

Project of extension of the marina (FR-ISTRES-C-M2.PNG)
Source: <https://www.istres.fr/index.php?id=189>



RELATED PROJECTS UNDERWAY AND SPECIFIC LINKS TO THE AREA

Beyond the context of the metropolitan area, the municipality is developing numerous projects for development and amenities, with which links could be developed with the project of the ECC's reconversion. Several projects are expected to be confirmed soon:

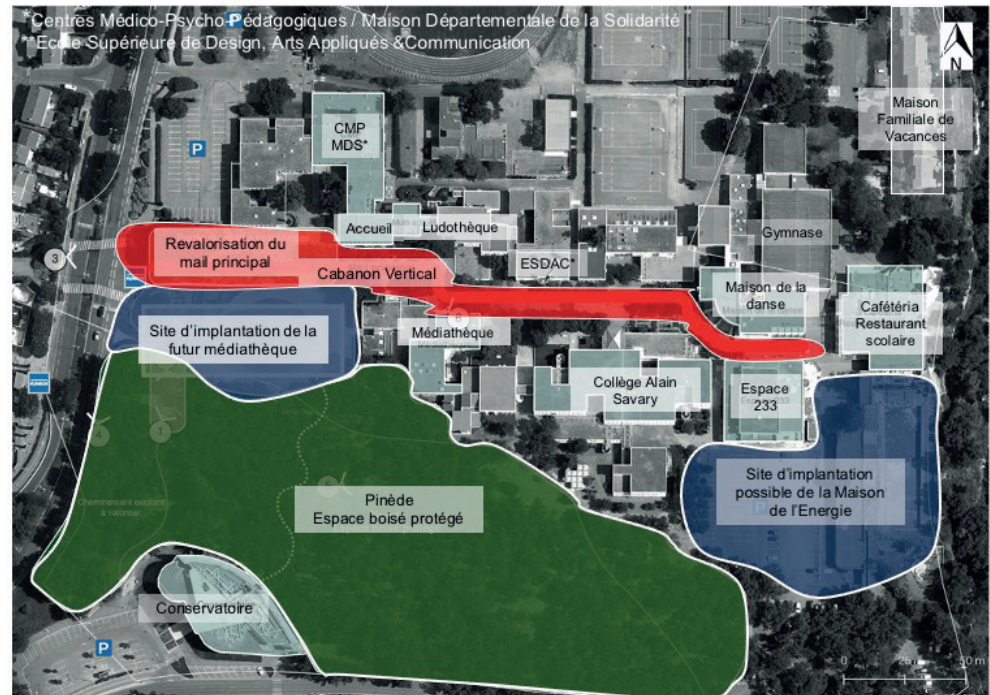
- The creation of a **Forum des Arts**, which by 2022 will replace the current Centre of Contemporary Art, with over 500m² dedicated to important regional and national artists, right in the town centre. The Forum des Art will propose multiple exhibitions and events in situ in 2022, transforming the town centre itself into a gallery of urban art, thereby actively participating in its own revival.
- The construction of the **Olivier Theatre**, for which initial architectural designs are planned for 2022, with a brief for 900 seats. Just like the Forum des Arts, the Theatre constitutes an ambitious project for reviving the city centre, which, like so many medium-sized towns, is suffering.
- The creation of a new **aeronautics centre** next to the 125 airbase in order to accommodate industrial projects in the airships sector, and in time to transport both goods and people more ecologically and more competitively. This project constitutes a major element in the strategic economic development at the level of the metropolitan area and of the region.
- The development of new **sports facilities** such as the sports complex in the Trigrance neighbourhood⁶, and the golf course made on industrial wasteland in Rassuen (next to which an eco-neighbourhood is to be created).

⁶ This complex will comprise a 1000m² multi-use sports hall, a 310m² boxing arena, a 412m² fencing salle, a 640m² table-tennis hall, a leisure area, a snackbar, a 250-place tribune and a 200-place lecture hall.

Consequently, the reconversion of the ECC should constitute an opportunity for renewed visibility and influence, with opportunities for partnerships and collaboration with:

- The key metropolitan projects of Istres;
- Neighbouring colleges: AFTA, LEP Latécoère, Lycée Rimbaud, etc.
- The natural environments of the parks of Salles and 4 Vents, the harbour and the lagoon, and their stakeholders and visitors.

A project of extension of the marina Les Heures claires is also underway. It provides for an arrival dock for the «trans-étang de Berre» shuttle linking Istres to Marignane, and possibly the reopening of the staircase linking with the CEC.



Map of the project site
(FR-ISTRES-PS-M1.JPG)



Picture of the project site
(FR-ISTRES-PS-P1.JPG)



Example of a sculpture-place.
Cabanon Vertical, Marseille

PROJECT SITE

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

⁷ The 'Conservatoire à Rayonnement Intercommunal Michel Petrucciani' music school is a public entity specialised in teaching music, dance and theatre, associated with activities of performance and creation.

The Educational and Cultural Centre is based on the arrangement whereby numerous cultural facilities are organised around a secondary school, all within a relatively open environment. There are cultural establishments such as the dance school, the music school⁷ and the multimedia library, but also educational facilities (the design school and secondary school), administrative offices (local council services) and leisure and sports facilities (toy library, a 'Maison Pour Tous' multigenerational community activity centre, subsidised holiday houses, cafeteria, gym). This proximity is an important asset in creating a reconsidered dynamic between the different entities. In this respect, it can be seen as a place overflowing with life, but also as a deserted space, particularly in the evening and at weekends (when the school is closed).

Reflection on the reconversion of the ECC must be conducted with several points in mind:

- The **conversion and transformation of buildings freed up by the departure of the Alain Savary school;**
- The **future of what is currently the ECC's family holiday housing;**
- The **transformation of the ECC's restaurant/ cafeteria** into a lively community space.
- The **redevelopment of the central avenue and the co-construction of 'sculpture-places'** by the architects of Cabanon Vertical. In the pedestrian area around the ECC, Cabanon Vertical will develop a project of co-conception and co-construction of two (or three) 'sculpture-places' with multiple functions. This intervention seeks to promote the relationship between residents and students with their environment by implicating them, enabling them to appropriate the way public space is used and to promote a variety of uses of the shared spaces. The project will consist of the creation of an artistic intervention on two sites in the urban space that are selected for their potential. By conducting this operation in a short time frame, it will serve to mobilise local residents and associations with regards the neighbourhood's needs and eventual developments in the future.

It is also essential to include three development projects on the ECC site in the reflection:

Picture of the project site (FR-ISTRES-PS-P6.JPG)- Proposal for the Istres multimedia library



Picture of the project site (FR-ISTRES-PS-P2.JPG)



Picture of the project site (FR-ISTRES-PS-P4.JPG)- View over the Étang de Berre lagoon from the ECC's cafeteria



Picture of the project site (FR-ISTRES-PS-P3.JPG) - Rural family house, Les Heures Claires, Istres

8 The multimedia library will reflect all the characteristics of the concept of 'third place' libraries, which, while fulfilling their primary role in public reading, constitute facilities where innovation is at the heart of the proposed cultural activity (Fablab, Coworking, multimedia, etc.)

- The **construction of the new Istres metropolitan multimedia library**, which will form an important and symbolic beacon of the regeneration of the ECC. The multimedia library will be located at the entrance to the site. Designed as a 'third place'⁸, the scientific, cultural, educational and social project is expanded to incorporate digital technology and arts, as part of a network with the existing entities – the music school, dance school, ESDAC design school – and the innovative projects of the ECC. A strong artistic intervention is also being considered to accompany this remarkable establishment, for which the public commission will be confirmed in 2022, for inauguration in 2023.
- **Redevelopment of the Heures Claires marina.** Beyond the extension, with 160 supplementary moorings, 130 parking places will be made, a pedestrian promenade will be developed, as well as sailing-related shops. A wharf is planned for the future maritime shuttle that, notably, will connect Istres to Marseille-Provence airport in Marignane. This shuttle should create new streams of public for the Heures Claires Educational and Cultural Centre.
- **The Maison de l'Énergie energy centre.** The Aix-Marseille-Provence metropolitan area is shortly to install an energy centre on the ECC site, where individuals can seek advice for their projects of energy renovation, with a showroom of solutions and innovations in the field. The unit will also be given over to education, teaching and supporting companies.

EXPECTATIONS, ORIENTATIONS FOR THE PROGRAMME AND PROPOSALS FOR USES

9 Catherine Blain, René Borruey, 'Le centre éducatif et culturel Les Heures Claires d'Istres : un éclat d'utopie dans la région marseillaise', *Histoire urbaine*, n° 20 : villes nouvelles et grands ensembles II, December 2007, p. 101-124.

As Catherine Blain pointed out⁹, the ECC was conceived "as a seedling town to be incorporated into the project of the new town of Étang de Berre. It is in this project of multiple scales that a utopia resides, both social, architectural and urban, approaching that of Thomas More. Politically, it is that of living socialism, that is to say a desire to make each man the creator of his own environment."

It is this seedling, this communal utopia, that now needs to be revived and reinvented in order to make the ECC a collective place for the local community and the whole metropolitan area. In this spirit, two main orientations appear for the programming:

- The construction of a **collective place for transitional learning**, between adaptation, resilience and transition.
- The development on the ECC site of a **space for the co-management of a lively town based on cooperation, learning, and cultural, sports and intellectual ambition.**



Picture of the project site (FR-ISTRES-PS-P5.JPG) - The ECC's central avenue



Picture of the project site (FR-ISTRES-PS-P7 et 8) - Hall of the Alain Savary school

¹⁰ Aalto University, Design Factory (Finland), Campus Fab (Essone, France), The camp, La Hive (Aix-en-Provence, France), Ateliers des savoirs partagés à Sainte Camille (Quebec, Canada), BLIIIIIDA (Metz, France), Darwin et le Lycée Edgar Mordin (Bordeaux, France).

THE ECC, A COLLECTIVE PLACE FOR TRANSITIONAL LEARNING

The town wants to find a new use for the ECC's Alain Savary school, which is moving elsewhere, preserving its experimental and working-class character, in the form of the project for a 'collective ('third') place for learning'. Today, numerous collective places have taken up problems of learning in order to rethink the field of education in a changing world¹⁰. According to Jean-Baptiste Labrune, collective places for learning differ from "ritualised and structured institutions in principles of verticality They enable the development of informal, interdisciplinary practices, focussed on DIY, learning by doing and lifelong learning. In a third place, you learn about yourself and through yourself (how to be), you learn to interact with others (how to live), you perfect specific and specialised skills (savoir-faire) and you gradually become the memory and spirit of the place, keeping it alive (how to relay)." (Labrune, J-B, 'Tiers-lieux apprenants', Medium, 2018)

In order to understand the emergence of collective places for learning, one must look at transitions. The social and environmental challenges that we currently face (climate change, preservation of natural resources, poverty, migration, food, access to education, growing political extremism, equality between men and women, etc.) plunge us into a world that is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous.

For all that, today's education system remains largely based on the needs of the industrial society of the 20th century, whereas the skills needed to deal with the problems of today's complex world are quite different. Indeed, in a world marked by a succession of 'crises without end', it appears indispensable to equip individuals with a capacity for resilience and reinvention in order to cope with multiple changes (social, digital, ecological, economic, etc.). Faced with these changes, it would seem essential to develop new skills, an assessment that over the last few years has been largely shared by: the academic community, particularly in research in educational sciences and cognitive sciences, the world of adult education and training, by governments and international organisations (UN), all cooperation and development agencies (AFD, GIZ, USAID, etc.), as well as the business community, in the midst of the transformation of its ways of innovating and the skills necessary to maintain performance.

Four main skill-sets emerge:

- Skills enabling problem-solving and finding solutions;
- Skills encouraging creativity;
- Skills enabling working collaboratively;
- Skills encouraging empowerment, leadership, entrepreneurialism.

It is around these four types of skills that the transformation of the ECC and its school could be imagined. Several possible tracks appear:

- A line of reflection emerges around the creation of a centre of further education on the notion of movement and instability by means of a Fablab dedicated to contemporary choreographic creation, resonating with the existing sports activities elsewhere on the site.
- The prospect of developing coworking spaces uniting the ECC's various



Picture of the project site (FR-ISTRES-PS-P9) - former summer pool, filled in 2015, in front of the "Le préau" cafeteria

stakeholders and creators, for example to promote the creation of a sports cluster dedicated to cycling.

- The accommodation of new teaching sectors (sports sciences) and/or alternative schools (digital technology schools, coding and development, an upper secondary school experimental section like that of the Lycée Edgar Morin in Bordeaux, etc.).
- The creation of a public teaching and 'learning by doing' space focussing on ecological questions, developing experiments in permaculture, allotments, etc..
- Other than defining possible directions for the evolution of the school and the creation of a collective place for learning (identity), the challenge also constitutes defining:
- The sizing of the project and the scenario of evolution/ modularity of the site,
- The guiding principles for internal and external developments to be established.

THE ECC, A LIVELY SPACE BASED ON COOPERATION, LEARNING AND CULTURAL, SPORTING AND INTELLECTUAL AMBITION.

To make the ECC a really lively place, one of the directions concerns the evolution of services proposed, of catering (a Mediterranean cookery school?) and accommodation on the site. The accommodation currently offered by the ECC's family holiday home could, for example, be converted into artists' and student residences, an important facility, notably to accommodate choreographers selected by the Pôle d'Expérimentation et de Création Chorégraphique (PE2C) centre of choreographic experimentation and creation.

The strategy will also lie in the evolution of policies regarding the organisation and co-management of the site, by means of:

- The pooling of services between the different entities on the site;
- The policy of management, organisation / coordination of communication policies by the ECC, with a desire to stimulate passage in the evenings and at weekends;
- The creation and co-management of a really lively place, cafeteria/ restaurant, a convivial place where different people will enjoy coming, open all day and some evenings, where discussions, debates, meetings, workshops / cookery incubators, and many more will be held.

The strategy will also lie in the development of links between the ECC and the collective places for learning of the Aix-Marseille metropolitan area and the cultural, educational and training centres in the centre of Istres. One line of thought would be the creation of a cycle route, a dedicated route between the ECC and the town centre, consolidated by the creation of a sports cluster dedicated to cycling, thereby putting the site at the heart of the town's non-motorised transport network.

By means of these different possible orientations, the challenge is to regenerate the original utopia of the Heures Claires Educational and Cultural Centre. It is a question of giving cachet to the ECC and building on what has been the strength

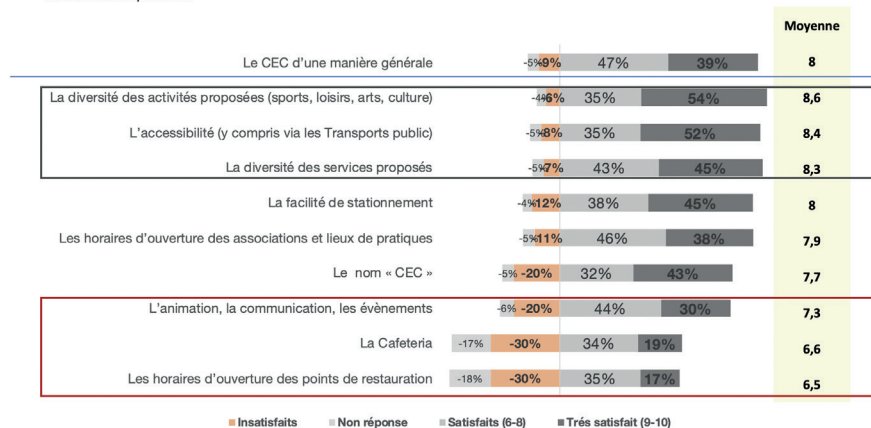
of the site – sharing and collaboration, education and creation, combining both forms and spaces, favouring introduction between businesses, people in culture as well as social and environment, around, fundamentally, the notion of the collective place for learning.

Summary of the results of the 2020 survey carried out for the client advisory body concerning the reconversion of the ECC Heures Claires and its transformation into a collective place. A survey was carried out with a sample of the local population, circulating more than a thousand questionnaires. The aim was to ascertain the opinion of the stakeholders in the project by mixing the diversity of the different publics. The majority of respondents considered that the value of the ECC lay in culture, education, transmission and sharing:

- For 7 respondents out of 10, the ECC represents access to culture
- For 6 respondents out of 10, the ECC is access to sport and leisure.
- For 6 respondents out of 10, the ECC is about convivial collective space and sharing.
- For 6 respondents out of 10, the ECC is a place of education.

The people asked were particularly satisfied with the accessibility, multiplicity and diversity of the services provided. Contrary to this, the animation of the place (events, communication, opening times) was highlighted as a limitation by the respondents. The same goes for the catering on site.

Sur une échelle de 1 (pas du tout satisfait) à 10 (très satisfait), merci d'évaluer votre niveau de satisfaction du CEC aujourd'hui et de ses différentes composantes

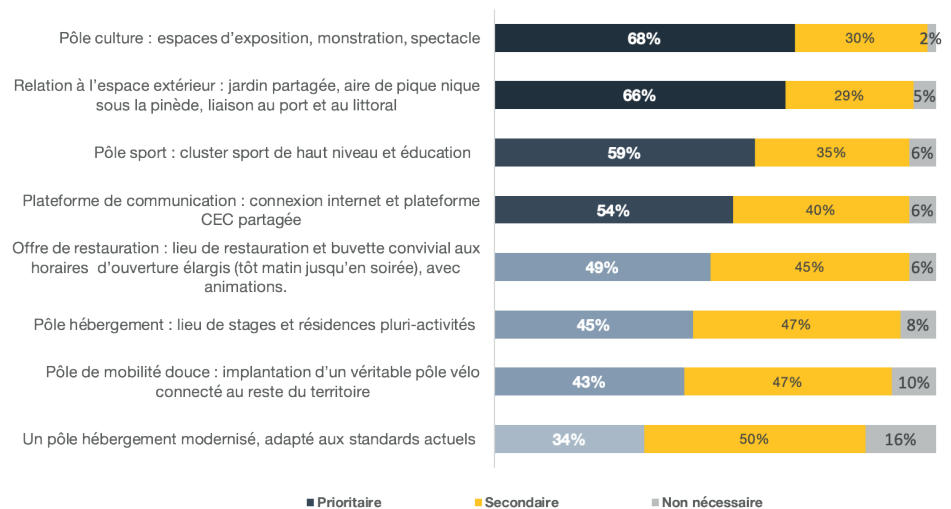


Base : ensemble répondants

Reconversion du CEC – Enquête auprès des publics

With regards desirable futures for the ECC, the participants identified two essential points:

- The fundamentals of learning must be maintained: culture and sport, but supplemented by new mainstays such as citizenship, ecology, embracing entrepreneurialism (incubator, fabrication, etc.).
- The need to open and connect the ECC to the outside by offering appropriate services (wi-fi, catering, accommodation, etc.).



DOCUMENTS FOR DOWNLOAD

CONURBATION - TERRITORIALE SCALE

FR-ISTRES-C-AP1A.PNG	Aerial picture : the study site in the conurbation
FR-ISTRES-C-M1.PNG	Map : the study site in the conurbation
FR-ISTRES-C-M2.PNG	Map : the study site in the conurbation

STRATEGIC SITE - URBAN SCALE

FR-ISTRES-SS-AP1.JPG	Aerial picture of the reflexion site
to	
FR-ISTRES-SS-AP4.JPG	

PROJECT SITE - URBAN-ARCHITECTURAL SCALE

FR-ISTRES-PS-M1.JPG	Plan and perimeter of the project site
FR-ISTRES-PS-M2.JPG	Extension project for the marina Les Heures Claires
FR-ISTRES-PS-P1.JPG	Project site pictures
to	
FR-ISTRES-PS-P14.JPG	

APPENDIX

FR-ISTRES-PS-T1.PDF	Catherine Blain, René Borruey, 'Le centre éducatif et culturel Les Heures Claires d'Istres', Histoire urbaine, n° 20, 2007
FR-ISTRES-PS-T2.PDF	Heritage notice of the CEC

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	p. 3
LE THÈME : VILLES VIVANTES	p. 5
Connection to the theme	p. 9
The site's particular challenges with regards the theme	
The specific expectations of the town and its partners	
BACKGROUND	p. 13
Territory, geography and landscape	
Architectural and urban heritage	
Social, cultural and economic data	
Environments: human and natural	
STUDY SITE	p. 21
Description of the site	
Related projects underway and specific links to the area	
PROJECT SITE	p. 25
Description of the site	
Expectations, orientations for the programme and proposals for uses	

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