



Miramas (FR)

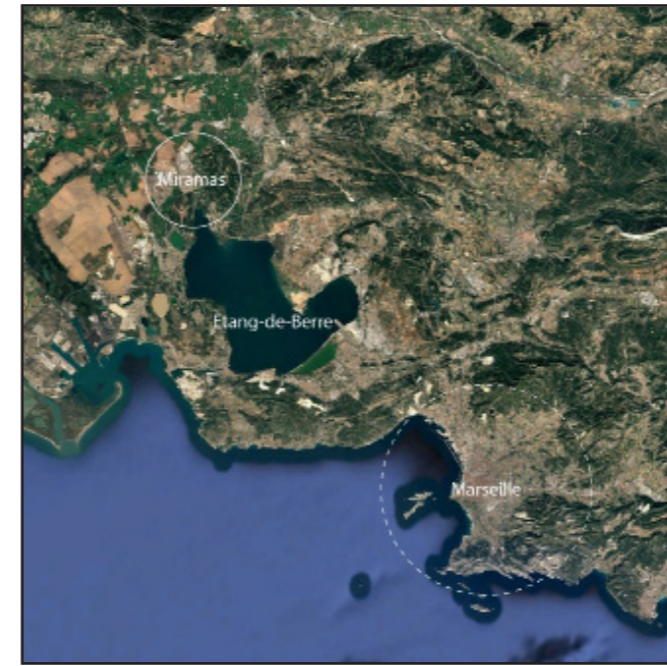
Garden city of the 21st century

Scale
XL/L

Team composition Architect mandatory
Location Miramas, Métropole Aix-Marseille-Provence (13)
Population Miramas 26 405 inhabitants (2021), Aix-Marseille-Provence 1.9M inhabitants
Reflection site 124 ha - Project site 12.7 ha
Site proposed by City of Miramas, ICF Habitat
Actors involved City of Miramas, ICF Habitat
Owner(s) of the site ICF Habitat

Pre-operational and operational urban and landscape studies for the revitalization of the town center.
Project management for the renovation of housing buildings owned by ICF Habitat.

Commission after competition



SITE / CONTEXT

The town of Miramas is a “railway agglomeration,” meaning it developed around the activities generated by the railway freight station and the expansion of the Paris-Lyon-Mediterranean line. With over 900,000 passengers annually, Miramas is now a major station in the Metropolitan area.

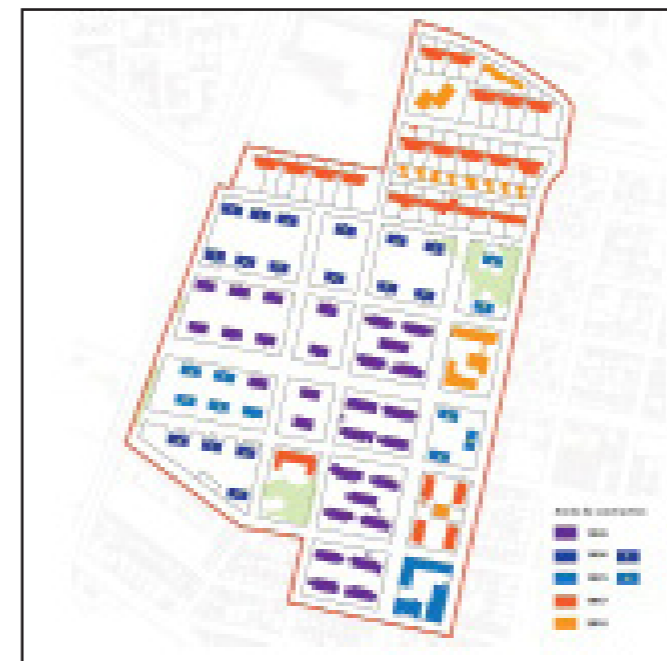
An industrial town was established to house railway workers starting in 1924, and its development continued through the 1950s. With more than 750 homes in the municipality, including 420 in the workers’ housing area, ICF Habitat is a key housing provider in the town.

Miramas, well connected by both rail and road, sits at the heart of the West-Etang-de-Berre basin, a hub for transportation and economic activities. However, the town suffers from an underdeveloped town center and is currently implementing a strategy to revitalize it.

The workers’ housing area is located to the west of the town center. It is a unique neighborhood with significant heritage value, strategically placed between several urban development projects. A thoughtful approach must be taken to evolve the neighborhood in relation to its surroundings and current challenges, while preserving both its built and unbuilt heritage.

From the first phase of development in the workers’ housing area, collective housing, particularly the “railway block” urban form, became the dominant architectural feature. This trend continued throughout subsequent phases of expansion, but from the 1950s, a shift toward individual housing began. Recent constructions, which break away from the architectural and urban identity of the workers’ district, highlight the importance of taking a firm stance in preserving this heritage.

Miramas is also one of the ten municipalities bordering the Etang-de-Berre, a region heavily impacted by industrial and economic activities. The transition in this area must include the regeneration of the environments affected by these activities.





Crédit : Sud Drone

What changes in the workers' housing area could initiate social, economic, and ecological transformations at the town center scale?



QUESTIONS FOR THE COMPETITORS

The Miramas site is a location with significant heritage and landscape value. The renovation of the workers' housing area will have social, economic, and ecological impacts on the city and its territory. In the pursuit of improving quality of life at different scales, from thermal renovation of the railway blocks to the regeneration of natural environments, including the revitalization of the town center, the Miramas site raises several questions:

- How can the workers' housing area become an urban link between the town center, the development zone (ZAC), and the train station—three entities with strong economic stakes?
- How can the economic and industrial activities of the region, through their transition, help regenerate the environments they have heavily impacted?
- How can the built heritage from the 1930s be renovated to meet the challenges of the 21st century while preserving the identity of the railway blocks?
- What individual, communal, or collective uses can the outdoor spaces of the workers' housing area accommodate? What spatial transformations can encourage these new practices? And how will these uses foster a dialogue between the neighborhood and its immediate environment?



How can the renovation of the «railway blocks» and their surroundings contribute to opening up the neighborhood to its environment and boosting the town's economic dynamism?