

LAN

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70° Sud Boulogne- Billancourt

In a framework where the ability of the architect is knowingly limited and in a context where economic conditions are uncertain, how to imagine an architecture capable of resisting a state of crisis?

Technical information

PROGRAMME: 58 housing units
CLIENT: NACARAT
PROJECT OWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE: SAEM Val de Seine
LOCATION: 3 Allée Robert Doisneau
92100 Boulogne-Billancourt, France
COST: □ 7, 2 M Excl. VAT
BUILT UP AREA: 4639 m²
COMPETITION: 2008
COMPLETION: 2011
TEAM: LAN Architecture (lead architect),
COTEC (all-trades engineers)
CERTIFICATION: QUALITEL and H&E in BBC
Effinergie

Architecture of the crisis.

This project, for which the competition occurred in 2008, is the result of a complex transformation process in the city along with a precise economic context.

Located on the former site of the Renault factories in Boulogne-Billancourt, the concerned project is part of the Trapèze Ouest, one of the sector of the operation Ile Seguin-Rives de Seine, amongst the most important emerging centres in Ile-de-France.

It consists of a new mixed use neighbourhood, residential and dynamic altogether, at the cutting edge in sustainable development. Each block of the Trapèze is the object of an architectural amalgam of high level. The harmony between open-market and social housing, offices, green spaces, commercial premises and public facilities, along with the ambitious cultural vocation of the Ile Seguin, are all elements that contribute to creating

an exceptionnel living space on the immediate west side of Paris.

In this territory, public and private interests are evidently bound to cross.

The segregation of disciplines omnipresent in the french system is antagonistic to this approach and it is manifested in the clear separation between the practices of urban planning and design, architecture, landscaping and project management. Certainly, collaboration is existent, but the large number and diversity of participants causes a normalized rarity in the points of intersection between the many different visions.

A programme and volumes rigorously defined, diminished costs of construction, the hit of an economic crisis, a private real estate system that isolates the site designer, strict certification labels... this abruptly depicted a reality, that any idea, vision or architecture is one day bound to face.

Imagining an object of resistance.

The first step of our work consisted in drawing from this hostile context a fruitful questioning:

« In a framework where the ability of the architect is knowingly limited and in a context where economic conditions are uncertain, how to imagine an architecture capable of *resisting* disruptive change? That can *reassure* in moments of instability? And *face* situations of crisis? An architecture that can justify itself by itself and in any moment? What would then be the cardinal values on which to base our intervention? ».

In difficult moments, one must return to fundamentals and choices are narrowed: it is simply survival instinct. With this projects we decided to face the most challenging scenarios from the very first sketch.

In this operation we have let aside exhaustive studies on urbanity and potential grabbing –costly and previously explored methods at the agency–, to pivot back around an essential postulate : *a space exists only if it is built*.

Simplification, subtraction and timeless values drew the three guidelines for 70° Sud, whose name was chosen by the client’s Marketing team.

Simplification : from a technical point of view, a way to reduce cost. A single detail drives the wholeness of the project : window–corridor—railing. Within this ensemble, we can also include solar protections and openings.

Subtraction : the structure becomes façade, exposed concrete, no superfluous elements, no gratuitous ornament.

Timeless values : to attract people, the strategy put into place is found upon incontestable building qualities: light, orientation, views and organization.

If each individual is allowed to act upon his dwelling in regards to his own taste and needs, the fundamentals that make for quality are, in this building, unchangingly insured.

Extracts from the memoire of the competition

The project suggests a built form that is simple and readable. The South and East façades are punctuated by multiple larges openings, extending the interior of the dwellings to exterior corridors running along the building. Larger balconies are inserted at intervals in the line of the terraces, projecting out. The juxtaposition of protruding, punctual and linear elements give the impression of a slender and lighter building onto Yves Kermen and Emile Zola streets.

The building fulfills its role as a corner element and provides a clear distinction from the surrounding buildings. Plays with solids and voids, horizontals and verticals, light and shadow, glass and curtains, give the façade both sobriety and animation.

To the simplicity of the drawing is added the richness of the material. We have sought for a finish that is clean, shaven and refined but rich enough to reflect light, and communicate with the colours of its environment.

LAN (Local Architecture Network)

was created by Benoît Jallon and Umberto Napolitano in 2002, with the idea of exploring architecture as an area of activity at the intersection of several disciplines. This attitude has developed into a methodology enabling LAN to explore new territories and forge a vision encompassing social, urban, functional and formal questions. LAN’s projects seek to find elegant, contemporary answers to creative and pragmatic concerns.

LAN has received several awards: the Nouveaux Albums de la Jeune Architecture (NAJA) prize awarded by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication (2004); the International Architecture

Award from the Chicago Athenaeum and the European Urban Centre for Architecture, Art, Design and Urban Studies, the Archi-Bau Award, the Special Prize at the 12th World Triennale of Architecture, Sofia (2009); the AR Mipim Future Projects Award and the Europe 40 Under 40 Award (2010).

In 2011 the office was awarded at the LEAF Awards with the Best Sustainable Development in Keeping with its Environment prize, the SAIE Selection Awards 2011 and the Special Prize AMO Fondation d’Entreprise Excellence SMA. LAN has been nominated at the Prix de l’Equerre d’Argent 2011 .



Urban Insertion.

The project fits in an environment very rich architecturally and in its materiality. We have therefore conceived of an architecture possessing a double character responding to the urbanity of the Yves Kermes and Emile Zola streets, and the landscape of the Grande Traversée.

Compactness.

The project is situated on a block with a constraining morphology and orientation. The lot is relatively small (839 m²) and of irregular shape. These issues enriched our dialogue on compactness and on ways to approach it. The result is a piece of architecture that fulfills its role as a corner building and creates a clear distinction with the surrounding buildings.

Street Façade.

We brought forth a building with a clean and simple reading. The façades are lined with exterior balconies punctuated by steel boxes and glass openings, to lighten the impression of a mass.

Details.

10 dwellings benefit from a 80 cm wide balcony framed by an inox steel box, extending from the interior living room and displayed throughout the façade in a random-like manner.

Courtyard.

Large glazed openings, with exterior carpentry work in aluminum on the street façade and in wood and aluminum on the courtyard façade, create a linear purity.

Housing units.

Where the building is anchored to the ground, a copper skirt runs along the building, and is given visual correspondence to the balcony strips above.

Energy.

The compactness of the building, the number of floors, an 88% net habitable area to floor area ratio, thermal bridge breaks, the heating system, along with very strict auto-control procedures, have contributed to the certification of the BBC-Effinergie® label.

Photography by Julien Lanoo.

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