



PART-DIEU #1 NOTEBOOKS

The Birth of a Project

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LA PART-DIEU** p 5

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OF TOMORROW
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GENESIS OF THE PROJECT

Reinventing La Part-Dieu



To define
an innovative
planning strategy
well upstream.

Driven by a strong political impetus, the Lyon Part-Dieu project took shape in a novel way in just one year. Technicians, operators and thinkers shared their experience and expertise with project designers during discussions at multidisciplinary workshops. Their goal was to define an innovative planning

strategy well upstream because the contemporary metropolitan hub at La Part-Dieu entails much more than a mere urban project. It is an urban laboratory integrating the multiple functions, utilizations and services of a city of tomorrow under the leadership of an ambitious project contractor. This is the story

of the first steps on the path to a unique intellectual and urban adventure.

La Part-Dieu: 334 acres of land in the center of Lyon and nearly 900,000 square meters of offices, primarily used by the highly skilled services sector. La Part-Dieu is the leading French business district after La Défense and benefits from an outstanding advantage. It is located at the heart of an urban agglomeration and is home to a major multimodal center with high-speed train and airport connections.

Let's go back for a moment to 2007. In this heavily populated district, which was designed in the sixties and seventies, the last commercial areas are being finished. The Oxygène and Incity high-rise projects are being discussed: they will most probably be the last large urban operations in the sector. The station that nearly 120,000 people cross each day from east to west sees its future as a multimodal center. There are heated arguments about the lack of land to build on. All sorts of subjects vie for attention.

At this major site, the Greater Lyon community found itself "too often in a mode of managing opportunities." This is what Bernard Badon, a former urban consultant to the President of Greater Lyon, remembers. Because of this, La Part-Dieu is now menaced by saturation, as well as stagnation and

even regression. Part of the buildings have become obsolete with respect to new environmental norms. Originally designed by architect Charles Delfante as a "total project" (slab urbanism), La Part-Dieu gradually became a "tract" structure (a collection of separate operations) that led to a loss of meaning and value. "We needed to restore coherence and legibility to this district, to think about its future and reinvent it," concludes Fabienne Cresci, General Delegate for Urban Development for the Lyon Urban Community (see interview).

The imperative is, above all, economic. La Part-Dieu is a very well connected central business district and is the epicenter of service companies in the Lyon agglomeration. It is also the city's economic gateway and showcase. To reinforce this central role, it was necessary to develop the offer of office space and therefore renovate La Part-Dieu, making it more massive and denser. But it was also necessary to act on factors that enhance the territory's economic attractiveness, in particular its offer of services. Because he was convinced that this was the key area to develop, Gérard Collomb, the President of Greater Lyon, provided powerful political backing for the project and made it one of his top priorities for political action.

The imperative
is, above all,
economic.

To provide a solid basis for the project, Greater Lyon started by defining the strategic positioning of the district. Is it a business district and commercial area housing one of France's largest shopping centers. But is it a place to work, a place of passage or a place to live? Is it all of these at once? Rather than a "directional center" or a second city center, isn't it really the true center of the agglomeration, a veritable hub, a geographical interface, a multimodal platform and a crossroads of utilization? What are the distinctive values the project can be built on?



We opted for innovation, creativity and a rather iconoclastic, even unexpected, approach to make things really move

A series of studies has confirmed that La Part-Dieu suffers from an image as a purely functional district, stripped of any kind of feeling, where one merely travels to the office, takes a train or goes shopping. It is a sort of “hole in the imagination of the people of Lyon,” according to the study diagnosis. In this context, how is it possible to regenerate the district, to make it exist in the minds of the population or simply to give it a “story” that will fit into the agglomeration’s history and goals?

Strategic planning thus goes far beyond that of a simple economic or urban development project. This is what Nathalie Berthollier realized immediately when she arrived to participate in the Part-Dieu Mission in October 2009. “We needed to approach the subject by taking into account all of its aspects and by re-examining all of its functions at different levels,” she states. To do this, it was necessary to mobilize energy and confront different points of view. She created a highly motivated project committee with members from the different Greater Lyon services and organized a series of four workshops that officially launched the project elaboration process. Together, they invented a new approach to urban planning.

This method, which brought together different disciplines, topics and functions, is highly original. By starting the project with discussions that combined expertise from hands-on operators with the views of thinkers who were able to step back from the situation, Greater Lyon ensured that the project would be interdisciplinary from the start, shared and co-produced. It promoted a project that would integrate everything that constitutes urban diversity and complexity.

The same original approach was applied to the choice of the design team for the Part-Dieu urban project. “We opted for innovation, creativity and a rather iconoclastic, even unexpected, approach to make things really move,” comments Nathalie Berthollier. The group that formed around l’AUC combined multidisciplinary and complementary skills: architecture and urban planning (l’AUC/l’AUC as), urban programming (PRO Développement), transportation expertise (CITEC) and sustainable development (RFR Eléments). The group was coordinated by François Decoster, an architect-urban planner and one of the three founding associates of l’AUC with Djamel Klouche and Caroline Poulin.

As soon as they were chosen, the project designers were invited to participate in a series of workshops bringing together operators, technicians and thinkers. Participants in these four workshops discussed the topics of positioning, strategy, utilization and overall impression, as well as sustainable development, flow, traffic, business and trade. No one was allowed to remain closed off in his or her special area. Everyone participated in a stimulating approach based on sharing experience and knowledge and on product coproduction. “These workshops and the cooperation between services from the start were highpoints of project genesis. The workshops immediately revealed the group’s level of ambition. Whether internal or external,

the different contributions were very high-level and extremely stimulating. It is interesting to note that the opinions and analyses of all participants systematically converged on all the issues being discussed,” adds Nathalie Berthollier.

After these four workshops, the multidisciplinary team led by l'AUC elaborated the Planning Strategy and the Concept Plan that would position La Part-Dieu as a “contemporary metropolitan hub”. The architects fought for an “integrated project” that would take into account “the new factors of sustainable mobility, corporate responsibility, flexible working schedules,

“The number of different players implied in the Part-Dieu project is a major constraint, but it also enables multiplying energy and innovation,” adds Nathalie Berthollier. How will it be possible to incite all players to participate actively in the coproduction of this district and to share a common goal? This is the challenge that must be taken up now. As the project continues to take shape, it must be able to provide self-governance and the means of fulfillment.

The number of different players implied in the Part-Dieu project is a major constraint, but it also enables multiplying energy and innovation



business/culture/recreation and the public area of contemporary urban living.” They based their project on a series of transversal principles, such as the innovative concept of “easy ground”. Another principle was based on a “transversal cultural and events principle”. Share, hybridize and de-compartmentalize were the project keywords.

The originality of this new model of city regeneration also stems from the diversity and weight of the participants. At La Part-Dieu, the major landowners are RFF (Réseau Ferré de France), SNCF (the French national railway) and the State, as well as EDF, Foncière des Régions, Gecina and Unibail (owner of the shopping center). Greater Lyon cannot accomplish anything without them. “The role of the group is to be the contractor of project ambition,” point out Nathalie Berthollier and Bernard Badon of the Part-Dieu Mission. Co-production and innovation are key to this ambition.

“THE ROLE
OF THE GROUP

IS TO BE
THE CONTRACTOR

OF PROJECT
AMBITION”

La Part-Dieu: Key Figures



- Located just 1.8 km from the city centers of both Lyon and Villeurbanne.
- A TGV-TER train station, direct connection to the airport via RhônExpress, a multimodal center of exchange with 1 subway line, 3 tramways lines, 11 bus lines, taxis, Vélo'v bicycle stations and car rentals.
- 114,000 passengers per day go through the train station.
- 80% of agglomeration residents are less than 45 minutes from La Part-Dieu by public transportation.
- On average, people take 477,000 trips per day in La Part-Dieu.
- 2,200 businesses employ 40,000 persons. Average size: 18 employees (as compared to an average of seven in Greater Lyon). Over 60 companies have more than 100 employees.
- The service sector is represented in 91% of jobs, including 13% in business services, 15% in financial and insurance activities and 20% in public administration.
- A 130,000-square-meter shopping center with 267 stores counts 100,000 visitors daily; 95% of them come from outside the district.
- There are nearly 900,000 square meters of offices. On average, La Part-Dieu houses 20 to 25% of offices in the Lyon agglomeration (Source: Greater Lyon). 52% of buildings are over 20 years old; 64% of owners are institutional investors (investment funds, insurance and life insurance, real estate companies, civil real estate investment companies, mutual insurance companies, retirement funds).
- 3,335 places of residence, including 63% that are privately rented and 32% with 3 rooms.
- 5,410 inhabitants in 2006. 34% are fifteen to twenty-nine years old. 73% of the population from fifteen to sixty-four is active. There are 2,875 households, including 22% of couples without children and 8% of single-parent families.
- 1,600 hotel rooms.
- 7,000 public parking spaces.

These data concerning economic structure are taken from the INSEE Sirène file dated January 2009. Data concerning business comes from the Eighth Study on Purchasing Behavior carried out in 2007. Sources: La Part-Dieu, a Strategic Business District at the Heart of a Metropolitan Service Offer Undergoing Restructuration), Observatoire Partenarial Lyonnais en Economie, by the Lyon Urban Planning Agency, May 2010. Core Socio-demographic Statistical Data on the Part-Dieu, Lyon Urban Planning Agency, June 2010.



First Project Steps

July 2009: publication of the call for tender for the Lyon Part-Dieu project support and design mission.

October 1, 2009: arrival of Nathalie Berthollier, Director of the urban project.

End October 2009: choice of members for the group created around l'AUC.

November and December 2009: mobilization of Greater Lyon services.

December 2009 and January 2010: organization of four workshops.

February 4, 2010: first meeting between l'AUC and Gérard Collomb.

March 15, 2010: l'AUC, ProD, CITEC and RFR submit their first recommendations.

April 22, 2010: presentation of the first urban recommendations to Gérard Collomb using a study model.

May 1, 2010: arrival of Bernard Badon as Director of the Part-Dieu Mission.

June 22, 2010: validation of the Concept Plan proposed by l'AUC and its team by Gérard Collomb.

End August 2010: the Part-Dieu project is presented at the 12th Venice Architecture Biennial as part of the "Metropolis" exhibition created by Dominique Perrault for the French pavilion. The architect displayed models of five French cities, including Lyon.

January 6, 2011: validation of the Plan-Guide by Gérard Collomb; this is a more precise, better structured and more operational version of the Concept Plan and includes urban programming, sustainable development strategy and transportation elements.





INTERVIEW

“Building the City of Tomorrow at La Part-Dieu”

Interview with **Gérard Collomb**,
President of Greater Lyon,
and leader of the Part-Dieu project



Lyon will thus be at the heart of high-speed Europe.



What is the main goal driving the project to reinvent La Part-Dieu?

Since La Part-Dieu is located in the heart of the city, it has an exceptional development potential. Our overall ambition, as it is expressed in the project we have undertaken for this district, must be in keeping with this potential.

By 2020, the train station will provide direct high-speed lines that are connected to the largest cities in Germany, along with Barcelona, Turin and Milan. Lyon will thus be at the heart of high-speed Europe.

In anticipation of this evolution, we have decided to breathe new life into La Part-Dieu.

To do this, we called on the prestigious l'AUC team of architects and urban planners led by Djamel Klouche, François Decoster and Caroline Poulin.

for living, enjoyment and travel with the possibility of meeting other people and creating a symbiosis between the different urban functions.

We have broken with the concepts of total project or tract development that dominated in the past. We want to use an integrated approach that will reinforce the overall identity, impression and attractiveness of the district.

To make La Part-Dieu a "great metropolitan hub," we must imagine the district on a much larger scale. Thus, the project will include Les Brotteaux and the Thiers business part to the north; the Buire district to the south, where we are developing a business park on the west edge; the Cours Garibaldi, which will be fully redeveloped; and to the east, the Mouton-Duvernnet/Dauphiné sector, which should be rapidly operational.

How will the train station fit into this arrangement?

The station will also undergo a vast reorganization, in partnership with the SNCF, RFF, the region and the State. We are planning to redesign it and rethink its overall layout from Cours Lafayette to Avenue Pompidou. Our goal is to facilitate mobility over an area that corresponds to the scale of the district's future and to that of the city.

Instead of being a mere station, it will be designed as a large square with multiple accesses, an area for businesses and services, and a place of welcome that encourages interaction.

We want to use an integrated approach that will reinforce the overall identity, impression and attractiveness of the district.

What was the road map you gave to l'AUC?

The goal is to build a powerful economic core for the city, a large European business district that will also be a place



Will the creation of new areas provide an opportunity to affirm architectural choices?

To reinforce the role of the business district, we will extend available real estate surface to one-and-a-half million square meters, as compared to around 900,000 square meters today. Since space is lacking, urban densification will be one of the major project challenges. Real estate development at La Part-Dieu will, of course, provide an opportunity to display some resolutely contemporary architectural styles. We will continue to shape the Lyon skyline.

After the Oxygène high-rise, which already towers over La Part-Dieu, the Incity and Swiss Life buildings will be add a powerful architectural signature to our urban landscape, which will be worthy of the greatest European business districts.

How can La Part-Dieu, which is a very functional business district, become a lifestyle district?

Effectively enough, we want this district where people work to become a district where people live, where they will want to enjoy themselves after office hours, where they will want to come in the evening or on weekends to relax, find cultural resources or have fun.

This is why we want to open La Part-Dieu to the city and promote its many cultural venues, like the auditorium and the library, as well as sports installations like the Garibaldi swimming pool. We are going to create what is known as “a creative diagonal” that will extend from Les Halles Paul Bocuse to Place de Francfort.


The roof of the shopping center will become a huge terrace, a sort of “Hanging Place Bellecour,” since it has the same dimensions as the square, and will feature sports and leisure activities. This will be a new place to go in Lyon that will greatly benefit the shopping center.

How does the development of La Part-Dieu signify a change in the way of designing the city?

Above all, we envisage the contemporary city that we are building in Lyon as a place for meeting and exchange, relaxation, beauty and pleasure. La Part-Dieu will be an outstanding example of this concept.

For me, this new urban mobility and mixing characterizes the immense wealth of our city and the overall success of Part-Dieu evolution.

We envisage the contemporary city that we are building in Lyon as a place for meeting and exchange, relaxation, beauty and pleasure. La Part-Dieu will be an outstanding example of this concept.



Real estate development at La Part-Dieu will, of course, provide an opportunity to display some resolutely contemporary architectural styles.



CLOSE-UP

Economic Factors are the First Consideration

La Part-Dieu is the economic hot spot of Lyon; it is a gateway and the leading investment area in the agglomeration. With a very strong image as a high-tech services center, La Part-Dieu is home to the regional headquarters of banks and insurance companies (Dexia, Caisse d'Epargne, BNP Paribas, Société Générale, April, etc.), consulting companies (Ernst & Young, Oracle, Alliance Advertising, etc.), administrative sites for large companies (EDF, Rhodia, AREVA, etc.) and national and local administrations. It concentrates businesses and services that support the entire economic tissue of metropolitan Lyon.

It is one of the country's most highly-rated areas for office building investment. This business district is a counterpoint to Paris, where capital gain is higher

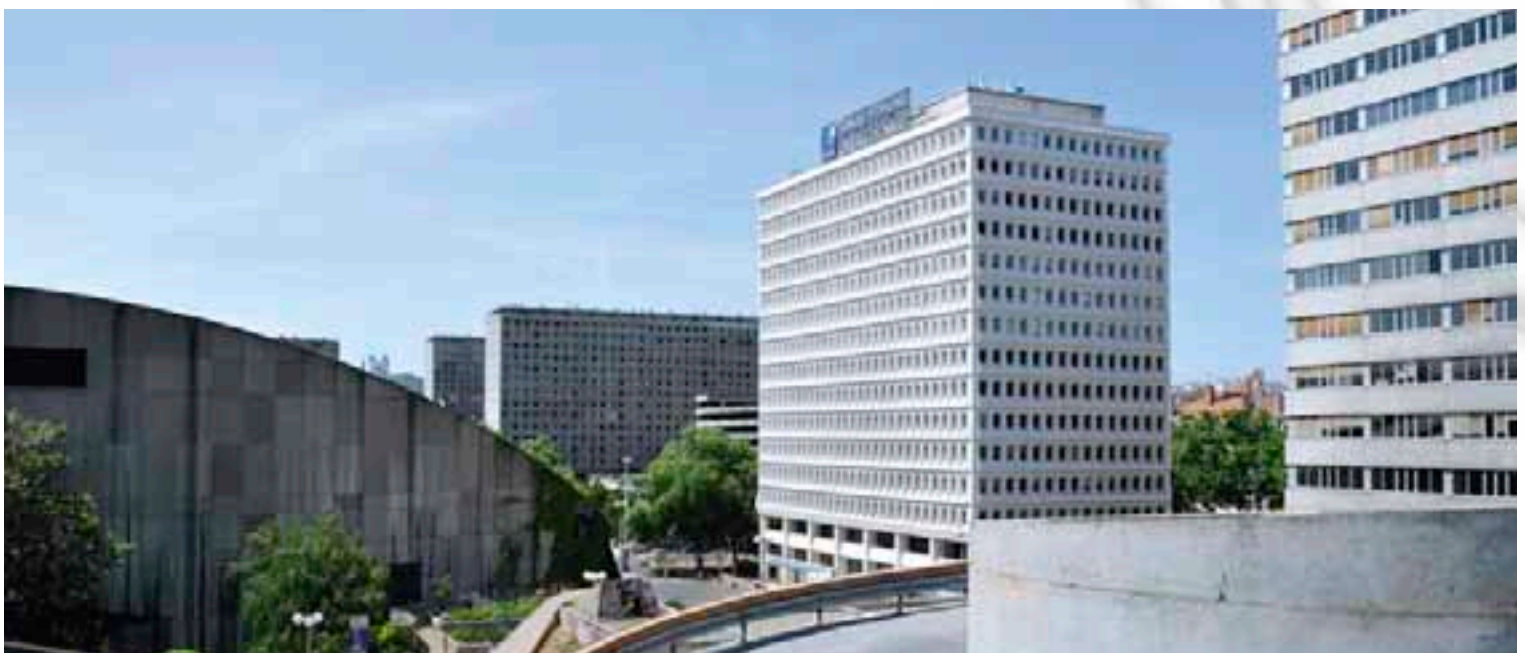
but where the offer is completely disorganized. Lyon, which represents 10 to 12% of the Paris market, plans its economic development, which gives it solid credibility with investors, particularly German investors.

To continue to attract investors, Lyon must present a coherent vision of its economic development and of business real estate. However, during the past few years, La Part-Dieu, which represents up to 50%

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of the market for office buildings in the agglomeration, has been approaching the saturation point, while emergent economic centers at Saint-Priest, Vaise - Lyon 9^e and Vaulx-en-Velin tend to give the impression of a dispersed public community. According to Lionel Delbos, "We must work toward a true strategic vision of the offer of economic possibilities in the agglomeration, one that will once again give a pivotal role to La Part-Dieu." This former economic consultant to the cabinet of the President of Greater Lyon is convinced that the district should remain "the driver and epicenter of our offer of services" in the agglomeration because "in the future European landscape having such a well-connected central business district is a tremendous advantage". This network of connections avoids having to go through Paris and ties Lyon to Turin, Frankfurt and Barcelona. With the economic power of 900,000 square meters of office space on a European level, La Part-Dieu enables Lyon to play an attractive role in the interplay of European cities.

To strengthen this central role of La Part-Dieu it will be necessary to develop a new offer of office real estate that renovates La Part-Dieu and makes it denser. The goal is to double net floor area while acting on all the factors that make the site economically attractive, such as hotel availability, recreation, sports and relaxation facilities and lifestyle. This includes everything that makes Areva engineers, for example, prefer to work at La Part-Dieu rather than in the Paris area. "If the idea was only to build additional square meters, it would be totally ineffective. We must rely on the territory's overall service offer," explains Lionel Delbos. With this in mind, the Greater Lyon Department of Economic and International Development has, since 2007, created guidelines that have been decisive for the emergence of an ambitious Part-Dieu project.



“CHANGING THE CITY’S PRODUCTION MODEL”

INTERVIEW



Interview with
Fabienne Cresci,
General Delegate
for Urban Development
for the Lyon Urban
Community

What triggered the Part-Dieu project?

La Part-Dieu is a nerve center for transportation, economy, business, large administrations and human beings; it is a gateway... in the midst of the city. These characteristics make the Part-Dieu project a complex one that concerns many different players. The most difficult question was knowing how to “approach” the project. In parallel to a thorough assessment of the functions I just mentioned, we also studied utilization, the district’s image and an approach in terms of potential (such as real estate and economic possibilities and user trajectories). We asked ourselves questions like: How can we position

the district? What words should we use to describe the project? What story should it tell?

Why is it important to give this district a narrative?

In all the studies we made concerning the image that regular or occasional users have of the district, the conclusions were the same: La Part-Dieu is a district with functional values and not much in the way of feeling. Currently, it is difficult to find a value that qualifies the district and offers the basis for a project of urban reinvention. For La Confluence, it’s much easier, the story is already there in all its immediacy and with all its magic:

the joining of two rivers that gave birth to the city. The story of Gerland is anchored in the history of science and industry, bio-tech and medicine. With the Canal de Jonage and the race track, the Carré de Soie district has an image of leisure and a popular lifestyle. Its story goes in the "direction" of history and the future: toward the east! Things are more difficult for La Part-Dieu. However, the market is doing very well, and investors credit La Part-Dieu with an economic visibility and reliability that make it a sure bet, an economic powerhouse for the agglomeration in spite of the crisis. At La Part-Dieu, we can say that the economic war has been won, but the battle for strategic positioning remains to be fought. In this sense, it is important to work on strategy, to define a direction and a vision that will qualify and make visible the future positioning of this district within the agglomeration.

Why have you insisted on accompanying this project with major work on strategic urban planning?

La Part-Dieu has no choice but to be a modern district. As was the case nearly fifty years ago with the original Delfante Project, we are still anticipating the future of the agglomeration at La Part-Dieu. Thinking about strategic urban planning and imagining what this district will be like twenty or thirty years

from now is to bet on how social and urban changes will occur. It means, of course, that we must implement the conditions for sustainable development of the district. For this reason, we wanted to organize workshops to confront the different opinions and visions. We wanted to avoid being stuck on a production model for the city. The Part-Dieu project required us to create a forward-looking strategy while building the project. We must constantly ask new questions, use brain power, exchange skills... We can't create values unless we have worked hard on their contents beforehand. La Part-Dieu is both a theoretical and a practical case that imposes an innovative approach.

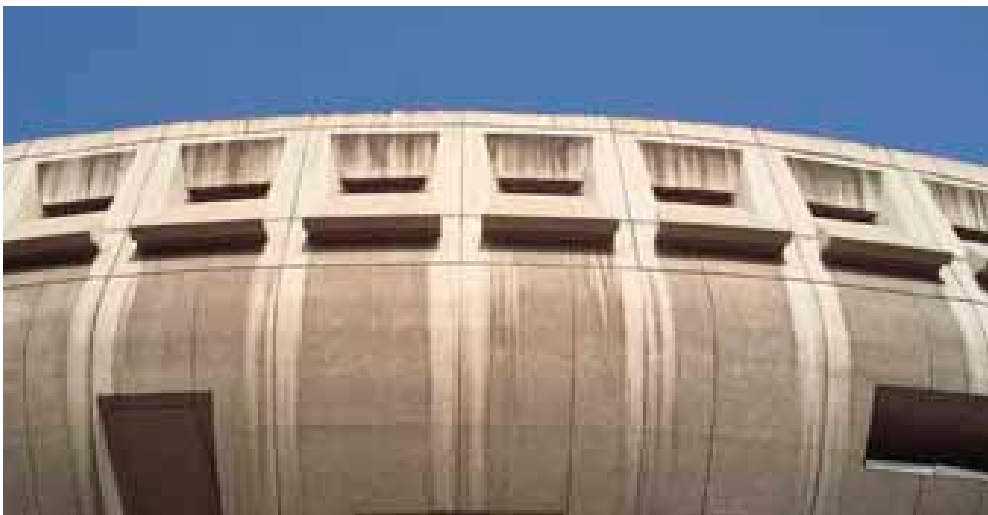
Since it is not a major land-owner, Greater Lyon has little room to influence the Part-Dieu project. In light of this, how do you see your role as project contractor?

In twenty-five years, La Part-Dieu will provide 950,000 square meters of additional net floor area according to the project. In ten or fifteen years, half of the existing surface will be obsolete as concerns energy performance rules and standards. There are many private, governmental or semi-governmental players, such as the shopping center, private companies, SNCF, RFF, SYTRAL, and EDF. These players also own real estate that the project will be built on.

Greater Lyon and the City of Lyon are the poorest owners because they possess only public facilities like the library, the auditorium and the public streets and spaces, as well as a bit of real estate. Nonetheless, the community is the project contractor and is behind project goals.

What do you feel are the conditions for Part-Dieu project success?

At La Part-Dieu, mostly private projects will be developed. For the overall project to succeed, investors must adhere to the project contractor's goals. This is the greatest challenge for all urban operators. We are currently considering the governance method to adopt and the types of operations to implement. We must invent new ways of managing that are adapted to the different types of operations, goals, schedules and configurations. We must use urban planning regulations to impose project goals on the players and invent partnerships to boost development. We must know how to coordinate the multiple project dimensions and schedules. Certain operations, like the reconfiguration of the train station (which is currently saturated) into a metropolitan hub, will be carried out in successive phases until they are "completed" in fifteen or twenty years. These schedules are layered over immediate operational strategies, such as those at the east of the train station on Rue Mouton-Duvernet or on the Incity building. Each initiative in the district, whether private or governmental, must help attain this goal. The combination of innovation and operational realism requires both method and boldness.





A LOOK AT THE DISTRICT'S HISTORY

A Singular Urban Adventure



La Part-Dieu is the result of an ambitious global urban project that was torn among contradictory ambitions and remained unfinished.

For a long time, the lands in the Part-Dieu district were an unhealthy area that was subject to flooding by the Rhône. Later, they were occupied by large farms based on nurseries and market gardens. They were owned by the Hospices Civils at the beginning of the 18th century and were sold to the State in the middle of the 19th century for the construction of a military barracks that housed one of the world's largest cavalry units. In 1957, Louis Pradel, who was the mayor of Lyon, decided

An extremely modern architectural identity.

to acquire this military land to implement an active policy of lodgings and facilities for the city. The deed of cession was signed

in 1960, although the army was not entirely evacuated until work started in 1968.

In the meantime, the Lyon city hall contacted the SERL company to begin the renovation and construction of a massive residential program known as "Operation Moncey". Zumbrunnen was the main designer of the layout for a building complex with 2,600 apartments, which was guided by the spirit of the Charter of Athens published

by Le Corbusier and by health principles that were in fashion at the time. Approved in 1962, the ground plane followed a regular layout and included 8 large bars that were 50 meters tall; these were grouped in pairs and surrounded by large gardens and the fixtures necessary for neighborhood life.

In parallel during the sixties, the government began to develop the territory and tackle the issue of large French urban agglomerations. The goal was to provide provincial cities with "decisional centers" that would be able to counterbalance the weight of Paris, an idea with lasting impact. The focus at the time was on designing a total urban project including a center for business, administration, culture, commerce and lodgings for public and private interests, as well as providing a transportation network and green areas.

For Lyon, this center would be La Part-Dieu. The sector was chosen because of the real estate opportunity provided by the departure of the army, as well as for the sector's role as a connection point for SNCF train lines and its geographical position as the center of the agglomeration formed by Lyon and Villeurbanne. The project was structured along an east-west axis (Rue Servient) and included plans for creating a station, although this was rejected by the SNCF at first.



SERL built this new center under the leadership of the urban community, presided at the time by Louis Pradel. Contracting was awarded to Charles Delfante's urban planning workshop, with E. Beaudoin as a technical advisor and J. Zumbrunnen as the architect. La Part-Dieu was designed according to the principles of the Charter of Athens, which recommended a slab urbanism that separated pedestrian and automobile circulation.

During the sixties and seventies, the overall project resulted in a large building complex (Zumbrunnen layout) based on slab urbanism (Delfante project) that endowed La Part-Dieu with a series of remarkable architectural creations. The EDF high-rise, the Moncey-Nord buildings, the Halles parking lot, the Résidence du Lac and the Résidence Desaix make up a collection of highly original architecture. The complex featured a number of emblems or highlights, such as the "Crayon" high-rise, the auditorium and the

municipal library, giving La Part-Dieu an extremely modern architectural identity.

But the Part-Dieu project soon went astray and became a banal tract scheme that was thoroughly analyzed by Charles Delfante in his book, "La Part-Dieu, the Success of a Failure". Tracts were allotted to a public or private organism for construction. These organisms made choices that were very different from the ones found in the initial master plan. "This way of thinking tended to produce independent objects that were juxtaposed and competed for their own goals of expansion, utilization and economic equation," notes François Decoster, designer of the project to reinvent La Part-Dieu.

Little by little, the project deviated from its original essence. The rigidity of slab urbanism joined to the anarchy of track development blocked and paralyzed the possibilities of district development. The cultural center championed by André Malraux

The rigidity of slab urbanism joined to the anarchy of track development blocked and paralyzed the possibilities of district development.



did not survive his departure from the ministry; only the auditorium and the library remain, at opposite ends of the site. The east-west axis was destroyed by the shopping center, which tripled its initial surface area (120,000 square meters) and crossed Rue Servient. As for the train station, it was necessary to wait until 1983 for the quays to open, two years after the inauguration of the high-speed train line between Paris and Lyon in 1981. But the exponential development of this line (designed for 35,000 passengers, the station is now used by three times as many) propelled La Part-Dieu to a position as a hyper-connected and therefore hyper-central site.



By the end of the eighties, La Part-Dieu had become a footnote to multi-center urban development at the Cité Internationale, then at Gerland, La Confluence and Carré de Soie. La Part-Dieu continued construction on its fringes and no longer gave rise to emblematic buildings. No longer a collection of outstanding objects from the sixties and seventies, the buildings of the last two decades of the twentieth century became a banal part of the city fabric. "La Part-Dieu has lost its overall meaning and now runs the risk of losing its personality," says François Decoster, who suggests using the singularity of La Part-Dieu and its history as a basis for cultivating its "hidden resources" and regenerating the district, making it the city's heart and showcase.



"LA PART-DIEU
HAS LOST

ITS OVERALL MEANING
AND NOW RUNS

THE RISK OF
LOSING ITS PERSONALITY"

“The Part-Dieu Timeline”

1957: Louis Pradel, who was elected mayor of Lyon, decides to acquire military acreage at La Part-Dieu. The initial goal was to construct lodgings and streets.

1960: Ground plan of the major complex by J. Perrin-Fayolle, J. Sillian and J. Zumbrunnen, approved in 1962.

1963 : Early studies of restructuring of the center of Lyon.

1967 : Presentation of the Part-Dieu project.

1968: La Part-Dieu, a strategic site on the left bank; implementation of an ambitious services program; development of a contemporary commercial image.

1970: EDF and GDF are installed at La Part-Dieu; creation of a parking garage known as “The Snail” at Les Halles.

1972: Inauguration of the municipal library.

1975: Inauguration of the shopping center and the auditorium.

1977: Inauguration of the Crédit Lyonnais tower, also known as the “Crayon”.

1979: Creation of the Part-Dieu station commercial area; concern arises on how to integrate the station into the city.

1983: Inauguration of the Part-Dieu station.

The success of a failure



In a personal account, the architect and urban planner Charles Delfante provided an in-depth analysis of how the urban adventure of La Part-Dieu was led astray. “The Success of a Failure” tells how financial success was achieved in spite of a failure in urban planning.

The story of the design and creation of the Part-Dieu district resembles a worst-case scenario. Charles Delfante was supposed to design and coordinate the urban project; in fact, he didn't coordinate anything at all. Torn between politicians worried about their re-election and economic players obsessed by profit, he lost control of the situation. In the beginning, the project was nonetheless a veritable “humanist manifesto,” recalls Charles Delfante. “Convinced of the solid reasoning behind balanced cities, we imagined a city center for everyone (...), where creation would be synonymous with prestige and where a humane character would predominate,” he wrote.

But the overall urban project for this city within a city fell apart, and La Part-Dieu became “a banal urban operation instead of an urban project,” according to Delfante. The construction of a shopping center (1972-1975) dealt a final blow to the project. “We wanted a shopping center for the city center with streets and small squares and not a factory for selling, a suburban shopping center in the middle of the city. The permeability and fluidity that are indispensable to evolution changed into a locked cube in the midst of so-called highways,” notes the architect and urban planner. Initially oriented east-to-west in conformity to Charles Delfante’s original dream of extending the center of Lyon along this

A banal urban operation instead of an urban project.

axis, the shopping center is positioned on a north-south axis that is blocked and withdraws inside a hermetic box.

But the crowning blow came from cutting the area into tracts on which the “architects could have cared less about the building context and slathered pride on their slices of land,” writes Charles Delfante about the Cité Administrative or France Television programs (1975). The designers of office buildings like the M+M or the Britannia also refused to following the urban planning directives and went so far as to deny their utility. According to Delfante, “Remondet, Lafon and the others never wanted to play the city game as a group.”

These attitudes contributed to La Part-Dieu’s chaotic image, where any overarching scheme seems to be absent. The search to obtain maximum profit from the office buildings generated “shapes and volumes of uncommon heaviness that bump up

The search to obtain maximum profit from the office buildings generated “shapes and volumes of uncommon heaviness that bump up against each other and damage the overall image”.

against each other and damage the overall image,” writes Delfante. Finally, the “preposterous” adventure of the train station, a succession of hesitations on where a regional station should be located, followed by the high-speed train station at La Part-Dieu in 1983, which also gave rise to a few false starts.

The disillusioned architect notes that his idea of a “humane urbanism” was not able to withstand the diktats of financial imperatives. “I remain convinced that the project established by people living with other people became nothing more than a vast real estate operation; the project was crushed by events that turned a magnificent land development opportunity into an island where only those who were after immediate profit found their place,” he continues.

But since the Part-Dieu project remained unfinished, Charles Delfante did not discard the possibility that this “piece of a city” could be reworked, adapted to its time and capable of moving forward. He remains very attached to “a Part-Dieu style that would embellish while bringing novelty and innovation.”

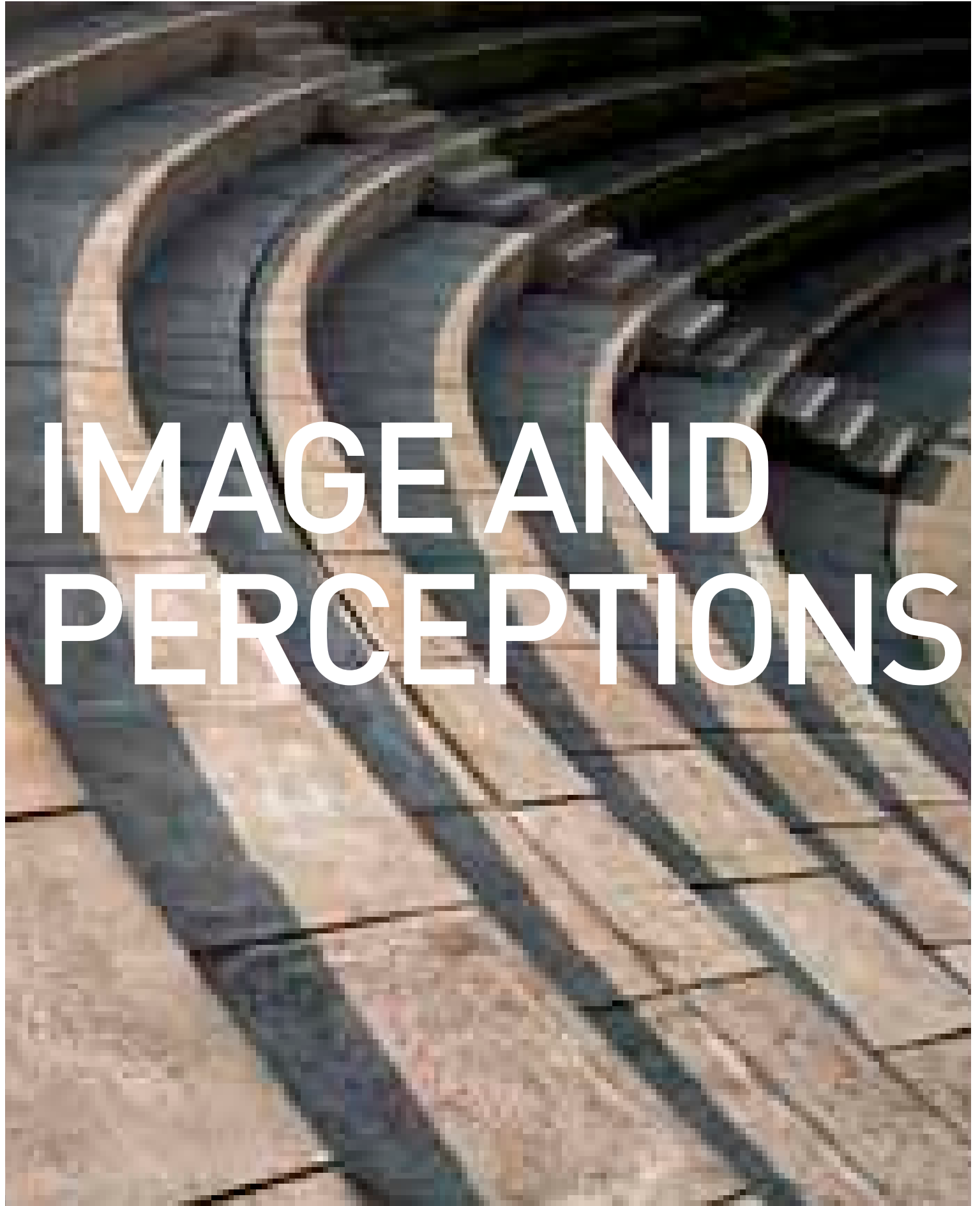
Charles Delfante, “La Part-Dieu, the Success of a Failure” (Editions Libel).

EXCERPT

“From the viewpoint of urban planning, La Part-Dieu is a resounding failure because the original goals were not reached and plans were upset in all directions. However, financiers can consider this operation as one of the outstanding French successes because of the spectacular rise in the value of real estate. As an urban planner, I have always preached that there is “no profit without a reason.” Thus, I can only regret the sale of land that transformed an urban project into a tract development. I would have liked to see the land remain the property of the community, which would have greatly facilitated the task of putting Lyon.”

Excerpt of the prologue to “La Part-Dieu, the Success of a Failure,” by Charles Delfante (Editions Libel).





A “Hole in the Concept of Lyon”



Although it plays a very strong functional role, La Part-Dieu features few affective values. This leaves the door open to reinventing its future.

La Part-Dieu is a very popular area that benefits from a strong reputation. Anyone who lives in the agglomeration, and even those who live far beyond it, are familiar with this name, which they also use as a metonym for the train station or the shopping center. The major advantage of this site is its practicality: at La Part-Dieu, you can shop in one of the biggest shopping centers in France, then take the train from one of the leading train stations outside the Paris region in terms of number of passengers, or you can go to work in the second largest business district outside La Défense. Since the station is next to the agglomeration's major multimodal center, nearly 500,000 trips are taken there each day.

The exceedingly strong functional value of La Part-Dieu protects it from having a poor image. “For it to have a bad image, La Part-Dieu would need to be useless. But the opposite is true: La Part-Dieu is efficient in all the services it provides to the city, in spite of the

fact that it is necessary to enter a potentially disagreeable urban area to take advantage of these services,” states Sébastien Sperto, Manager of the Urban Processes and Design Department at the Lyon Urban Planning Agency. At La Part-Dieu, a feeling of satisfaction for services rendered is stronger than

a feeling of attachment. This is why it is necessary to constantly watch over the quality of the service offer proposed at La Part-Dieu. If it were to deteriorate – in particular as concerns transportation, which is menaced with saturation – the entire district would lose value.

For the moment, the functional values attached to La Part-Dieu seem rather void of affect. Studies of how the district is perceived demonstrate this: La Part-Dieu has little emotional impact. And when this impact does exist, it tends to be unpleasant. Visitors oscillate between frenetic movement and absolute calm, passing from “stressful” to “boring” areas. The environment offered by La Part-Dieu conveys either a hectic, hurried impression or an impression of deadness after business hours. More positive feelings may, however, emerge, since the flow of people can also give rise to excitement and emulation. “La Part-Dieu centralizes everything; everything goes through La Part-Dieu. There's a feeling of vitality and movement that I like,” says a resident of the district.

This is because La Part-Dieu is easily accessible and has good links since it is at the center of a network of communications. Nonetheless, the district is not well integrated into the city and is poorly linked to the historical center; it does not continue the urban weave. It is easy to get lost there because there are no landmarks or orienting views of the surrounding city. Slab urbanism, which separates motorized traffic and parking from pedestrian walkways, is undoubtedly

La Part-Dieu is efficient in all the services it provides to the city.

a major reason for this confusing image. It has brought about a loss of legibility and transparency as concerns façades and ground-floor levels. Public areas are also of poor quality. The creation of deserted and unsafe areas on underground levels and terraces adds to the inadequate overall impression at ground level.

At higher levels, conditions are not much better. Although we can appreciate the architectural quality of a certain number of constructions (auditorium, Part-Dieu tower, Les Halles parking garage, etc.), independently of their attractiveness or lack of it, they are obviously dated, with a resolutely seventies style. Because it has not been continually fed, the architectural modernity of La Part-Dieu has become retro. Since the evolution of building style stopped in the seventies, many people have given up on the idea that this district could be the basis of a positive, contemporary and dynamic urban landscape.

La Part-Dieu primarily developed under the influence of May '68, when the proper thing to do was to cut off heads and walk on symbols. The result is that all the public buildings constructed in La Part-Dieu at this time have become invisible and lack any kind of personality. One example is the Courthouse in the Old City with its twenty-four imposing columns. It was extended into a judicial center (Rue Servient) that is indistinguishable from the neighboring office buildings. "The functions associated to a representation of power and command have been erased in the urban landscape of Part-Dieu," notes Jean-Loup Molin,

Deputy Director of the Strategic Planning and Public Dialog Department of Greater Lyon.

However, the role of "metropolitan hub" assigned to La Part-Dieu represents a reinforcement of command and directional functions at the crossroads of traffic. In the research domain, the idea is to provide an administrative base rather than laboratories. In the cultural domain, this translates to supervising temporary exhibitions and permanent collections. In the economic domain, it means providing a home for company headquarters or "middle back office" systems rather than for production centers. With this in mind, the fact that La Part-Dieu is a neutral area lacking in affect and not yet earmarked could be beneficial. According to Jean-Loup Molin, "It would represent an advantage for the elaboration of ambitious future plans in areas like politics, economics and university studies and would provide a place to develop in the heart of the city."

Although La Part-Dieu is a sort of "black hole in the concept of Lyon" lacking in emotional appeal, François Decoster, who is the designer of the Part-Dieu urban reinvention project, considers this to be an advantage. "We need to look at this as a chance to reinvent La Part-Dieu based on its difference. (...) La Part-Dieu will never be like the rest of Lyon, a city of regularly laid-out blocks and limits. This is what makes it singular and adds value to its attractiveness," continues l'AUC architect and urban planner.

The fact that
La Part-Dieu is a neutral
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could be beneficial.





Opinions from Greater Lyon Users and Residents

“There are white-collar employees and youths from the suburbs, mothers on shopping trips and beggars; in fact, there’s a bit of everything. It’s a district for everyone, for Mr. and Mrs. Average Citizen. I think everyone finds a place here, and at the same time, it’s hard to feel exactly what your place is.” *(a young working woman)*

“If it becomes a place to visit with things that you can’t see anywhere else, whether they are artistic, technological or commercial – in sum, something to talk about – and if this happens regularly, people will talk about it. And people need something to talk about!” *(a student)*

“What it could be is a sort of contemporary symbol, a model of modernity. They should try to be ahead of everyone in building, functionality and small symbols. They should try to go even further, to make something interactive, like an ultra-modern bike parking lot or panoramic sites that take advantage of the height. Right now, no one interacts there. You cross someone’s path, and you both return home without saying a single word. There isn’t any interaction. We could create interaction through modernity.” *(a young businessman)*

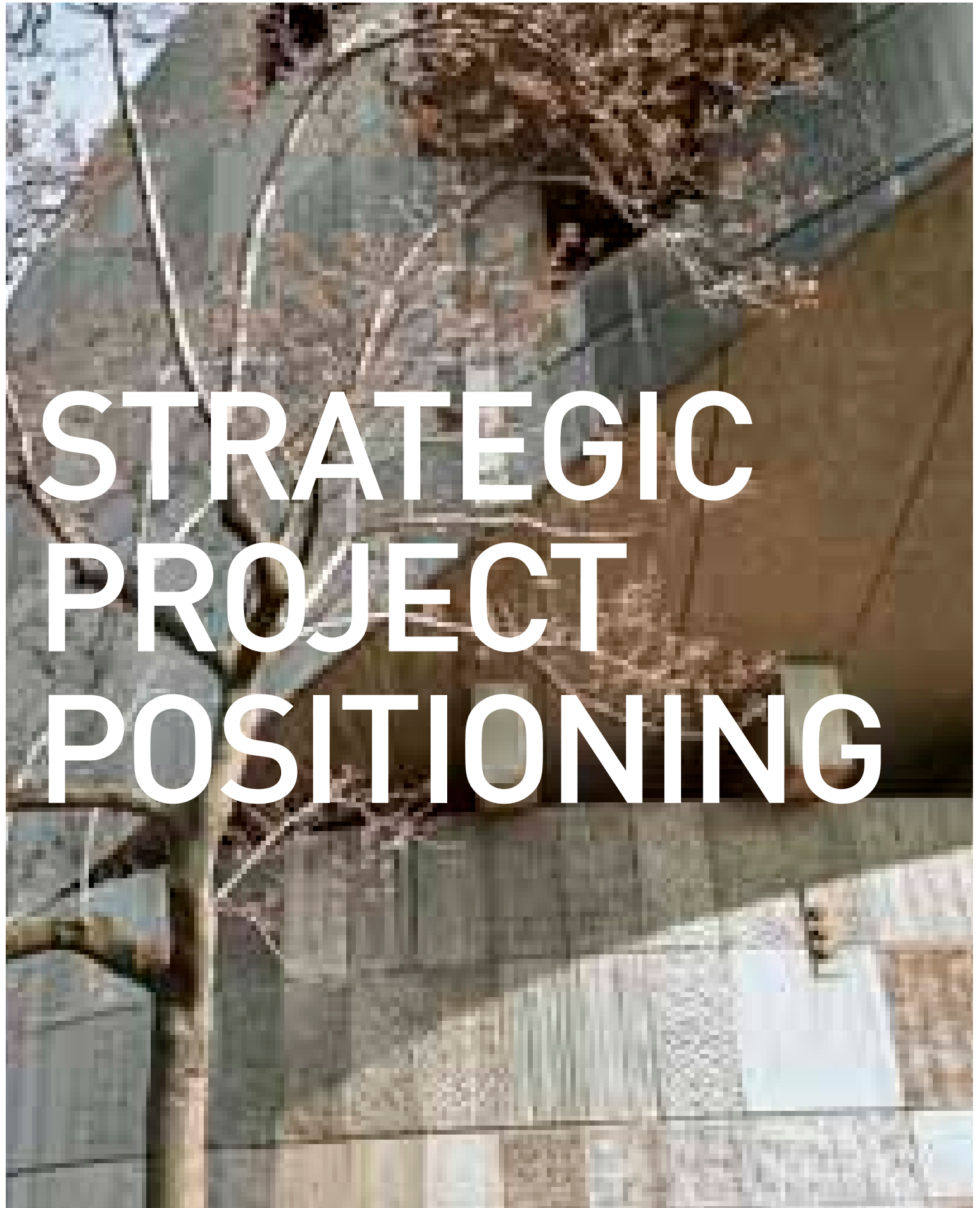
Quotations from the qualitative study entitled Perception of the Part-Dieu District by Residents of Greater Lyon Who Are Not Site Users; Grégoire Mages, French Urban Planning Institute, August 2010.

What I like are the masses of people swarming about me, people who are looking for something; it’s full of life and enjoyable. (...). The excitement generated by the presence of people and the services add an urban touch.” *(a manager from La Part-Dieu)*

“It’s a practical district where everything you need is at hand. I looked for proximity to the train station when I moved here and that’s exactly what I found.” *(a district resident)*

“I’m a fan of La Part-Dieu. It’s a place where I can just sit on the terrace of a café and watch people go by for an hour; I like that. One of the pleasures of La Part-Dieu is watching all sorts of different faces, people making connections at the train station. I really enjoy that...” *(a manager from La Part-Dieu)*

Quotations from a study of the Part-Dieu district’s image: How Do Users and Residents See La Part-Dieu? by Emile Hooge and Geoffroy Bing, Nova 7, February 2009.



Four key points to reinforce strategic positioning



Thinking on the strategic positioning of the Part-Dieu urban project brought to light four key points that were thoroughly debated during brainstorming sessions and workshops on the district's future.

1. What kind of center should La Part-Dieu be?

La Part-Dieu was born from a national policy of "balancing cities" that would enable the major French agglomerations to provide a counterweight to the centralizing power of Paris. To do this, the cities would develop a powerful center ensuring a smooth transition between the region and the districts. This center would be relocated according to the growth of the city and of the region. Flexible and able to evolve, this decision-making center would provide "an on-going critique of city development," according to Charles Delfante. In Lyon, La Part-Dieu was chosen because it is the same distance from Lyon and Villeurbanne. In the beginning, the project was designed as an extension of the center of Lyon on an east-west axis that would be strongly tied to the historical center. But it never actually became this extension.

However, the question of Part-Dieu's centrality remains. "The classification of the Part-Dieu district has always been problematic. Is it a primary center? A secondary center? A hyper-center? Does it belong to the Lyon Presqu'île or to the edge of territorial development on the east? The definition of type of center, which was debated in particular by Delfante, is still an open question," according to Sébastien Sperto, Manager of the Process and Design Center at the Lyon Urban Planning Agency.

The metropolitan gateway

For the development of a decision-making center at La Part-Dieu, the issue of accessibility soon became fundamental. Most decision-making centers in foreign cities are developed around a train station. It was thus necessary to move Lyon's main train station from Perrache to La Part-Dieu. It would be necessary to wait 20 years (until 1983) for the end of the "preposterous



tale” of the central station, as Delfante called it, to finally be written at La Part-Dieu. But this is precisely the station that ensures a metropolitan positioning to La Part-Dieu. The high-speed train station provides fast connection from the city of Lyon to the Europe of metropolitan regions. La Part-Dieu is thus an international and interregional gateway to Greater Lyon, its geography and economy. With a TER (regional train) station and a multimodal exchange center, La Part-Dieu is a traffic and flow redistribution center that functions at all levels throughout the Lyon agglomeration for tourism, business, commerce, culture, daily travel and exceptional events.

The high-speed train station provides fast connection from the city of Lyon to the Europe of metropolitan regions.

La Part-Dieu is thus more than a mere transportation hub. It is a true urban hub, a “contemporary metropolitan hub” according to l’AUC.

A welcoming attitude

This positioning requires welcoming all users (tourists, residents, families, workers) and is based on the values of hospitality, openness and solidarity. La Part-Dieu is on its way to becoming a metropolitan center and must aspire to be a place of social integration. In this sense, it draws on the history of Lyon, a city dedicated to solidarity and humanism.

Seen in this way, a number of services are essential: multilingualism in the station, the public area, the welcome areas and the immaterial gateways; accommodations, with an offer that is up-to-date, digital, cosmopolitan and original; and, simply enough, the possibility to get away from the urban agitation. To counterbalance the effect of constant movement, it will be necessary to create places where it is possible to stop and rest and to invent a time framework that combines high points, periods of movement and moments of rest.

Finally, there can be no metropolitan hub without taking into account information technology and communication! These are new gateways that provide opportunities for global encounters, and they are perfectly at home in the project. La Part-Dieu must give shape to these immaterial flows. In this respect, free access to certain services is essential to the Part-Dieu project because metropolitan centrality must necessarily integrate the culture of free services that is in full bloom and driven by Internet and ICT.

2. A center of flow and/or a center for living?

Because it houses a large shopping center and a high-performance multimodal center, La Part-Dieu generates considerable traffic. Each day, approximately 500,000 people pass through the train station, the public transportation network, the shopping center and the office buildings.

Hyper-consumerism and hyper-connection

At La Part-Dieu, the commercial aspect is represented by Les Halles Paul Bocuse, an upscale food enterprise, and the shopping center, a metropolitan super-store and a temple to the mass market. The shopping center was opened in 1975 and, with the addition of the Oxygène walkway,

includes nearly 270 stores and a 130,000-square-meter sales area, while producing an annual turnover of 600 million euros. The presence of this shopping center is

highly attractive to people from the Lyon agglomeration and is rivaled only by the Porte des Alpes and Presqu'île centers.

However, since it withdraws into itself by turning its back on the train station, the shopping center hardly benefits from the flow generated around it. It is above all a destination in itself. But now, when consumption is no longer limited to specific times (we consume at all hours and in all places, looking for excitement and stimulation), the center has everything to gain by opening on the district and the city to capture the flow of people passing through and create a friendly, market-oriented atmosphere.

The transportation aspect is structured around a bipolar multimodal exchange center organized around the TGV-TER train station. This station is the city's major transportation nexus and counts 114,000 daily users. Even though 75% of traffic comes from the agglomeration, users arrive from local, regional, national and international points. A twenty-seven percent increase in the number of travelers is expected by 2013, which risks saturating the lines if they are not updated quickly enough.

A place to live and experience on foot

One of the paradoxes of La Part-Dieu is the low number of local residents. Although studies show a clear trend toward wanting to live in an area with good transportation, places to live at La Part-Dieu are scarce. The district counts 3,800 inhabitants within a limited radius and 15,000 within an extended area. The ratio is one apartment for every 11 square meters of office space. This under-representation of places to live prevents qualifying La Part-Dieu, which is mostly dedicated to traffic and offices, as a residential district.

In the long term, this absence of mixed functionality could create insecurity and a loss of attractiveness. Outside working hours, La Part-Dieu lives at a considerably slower pace. During the workshops, participants insisted on the reinforcement of the residential function because it would generate activity in the evening, at night and on Sundays and add dynamism to the area (in terms of business and activities). Currently, this is lacking in La Part-Dieu. Finally, reinforcing the residential aspect of La Part-Dieu, would lead to a rediscovery of what walking means and to a "city of walkers" in this district that prefers large-scale mass transit flow.

The possibility to get away from the urban agitation.





3. How can the district be adapted to utilization and social change?

From the beginning, the Part-Dieu project contractor wanted to include urban planning, think about what the district would be like in twenty or thirty years and anticipate social and urban changes. This is, of course, one way to establish the conditions for the district's sustainable development. It is also a way to bring distinctive value to La Part-Dieu. "Being one step ahead with a services offer is what can differentiate us," says Bernard Badon, Director of the Part-Dieu Mission. He suggests a new way of looking

The Part-Dieu project must encourage new ways of working.

at things: "We must go from managing flow to managing the people who make up this flow."

Utilization is thus a very solid way to approach the subject. Work on identifying new utilizations, urban practices and lifestyles was carried out in order to plan the responses that the district can provide to meet the new expectations of employees, businessmen, consumers, residents and travelers. At La Part-Dieu, the urban and social aspects of the project are closely interwoven.

A new work structure

What does a European business district need today and tomorrow to make it a promising site for the future? First there are the traditional needs: a dense network of connections, potential jobs for both managers and their spouses, a pleasant lifestyle, an environment of higher education and a high-quality cultural offer. A priori, Lyon and La Part-Dieu offer this already. But it is necessary to go even further and anticipate social and economic changes, in particular in office buildings. "The Part-Dieu project must encourage new ways of working, ways that are more creative, more comfortable, more collaborative and shared, better adapted to different conditions: mobile and sedentary workers, permanent employees, part-time assistance, French citizens, foreigners..." notes Véronique Granger, Director of PRO Développement.

The district must distinguish itself through an innovative "work structure" that gives precedence to the availability of meeting places because they are an increasingly important factor in economic cross-fertilization. This service-based structure would also allow sharing a certain number of services between companies, such as company cafeterias, large meeting rooms, auditoriums, company nurseries, fitness rooms, concierge services and waiting or work rooms for visitors. We can imagine a hybridization of functions that would create new services, such as posting train schedules – and possible delays – in the lobbies of office buildings.

An original urban experience

Until now, La Part-Dieu has been a functional site that has not been particularly concerned about user's comfort and the evolution of user's needs. But we are witnessing the emergence of new ways of consuming that are more emotion-based and more focused on experience and events, as well as new ways of traveling that provide environmentally friendly or group solutions.

For these reasons, the positioning of La Part-Dieu as a metropolitan hub implies paying careful attention to hospitality, directional markers and the quality of welcome. Currently, nothing is done at La Part-Dieu to make it easy to find one's way or make waiting more pleasant. To meet this need, flexible services and areas that are free of charge and virtual must be

4. What type of sustainable urban development should be chosen?



Discussions of the Part-Dieu urban project obviously include questions concerning sustainable development principles. But the project does not limit itself to a pale goal of building the n^{th} “eco-neighborhood” with a string of HEQ (High Environmental Quality) buildings. At La Part-Dieu, the “sustainable development” approach is more global and includes concepts like the place of people in the city, environmentally friendly transportation and rehabilitation instead of demolition. “The notion of sustainable city areas must cover additional elements like social mixing, urban planning, economic performance, the idea of the hub and culture. And all these elements must be considered along with technical factors,” noted Jean Frébault, President of the Greater Lyon Development Council, during a workshop on this topic.

Renovate rather than demolish: recycling a district

La Part-Dieu constitutes one of the key areas of the Lyon architectural heritage; it is a singular example of modern urban planning. A “collection” of emblematic architectural works (the Moncey-Nord buildings by Zumbrunnen, the Municipal Library by Perrin-Fayolle, the Auditorium by Pottier, the “Crayon” high-rise by Cossuta, etc.) are Part-Dieu’s landmarks. It is obviously important to keep them, but their full potential must also be developed.

created for La Part-Dieu. These can include areas for working together, meetings, discussions and relaxation. This can also mean simple improvements like free water fountains in the public areas or very clear signing that indicates where services like the subway are located.

La Part-Dieu must propose a multiple and hybrid service offer that creates a new urban experience for all users. The cultural offer can, of course, contribute to this urban experience. l’AUC team proposes highlighting a “cultural pathway” at La Part-Dieu, which would feature the cultural installations that participate fully in the life of the district. Examples of this are the municipal library, which Véronique Granger sees as an “urban lounge,” and the auditorium. An area dedicated to using digital tools could complete these installations and affirm La Part-Dieu’s goal of being a laboratory for creation and innovation in metropolitan Lyon.



In the district's rather problematic quest to establish an identity, they incarnate an indebtedness to the past. According to l'AUC, "A sustainable development approach at La Part-Dieu must aim to enrich and improve by taking what exists today and ensuring that it evolves in the proper direction. (...) Building on the district's history seems to us the only way to do this."

Using a "sustainable" recycling approach, l'AUC recommends using the potential of what already exists ("hidden resources") and making it evolve. This will not do away with the need to demolish a certain number of buildings which have become obsolete and

Adding density does not necessarily mean pouring cement; it also means hybridizing functions

no longer meet new regulations (the Disability Law, dated February 11, 2005, RT 2005, and the Grenelle Meeting on the Environment decree dated June 13, 2008). However, the intrinsic value of many buildings makes them candidates for renovation. Using what exists to the fullest extent and renovating rather than demolishing characterizes the "sustainable" approach proposed by l'AUC.

Increase density and hybridize functions

Another work axis concerns urban densification. In the district, as in many areas where large building complexes were built in the sixties and seventies, enormous volumes are placed next to vast open areas. Smaller structures at the foot of these massive volumes are missing, along with an intermediate level, such as residential buildings, along the street. It is thus necessary to create elements of this type to facilitate social interaction, activities and urban living, as well as to anchor the large volumes to the

ground and to the urban landscape. Businesses and neighborhood installations, such as day nurseries and sports or cultural facilities, must also be developed. But adding density does not necessarily mean pouring cement; it also means hybridizing functions to create new ones. Shared services must be invented, as well as shared areas and facilities.

One of the most visible ways to add density is to build high-rises or buildings. Following the Oxygène building, inaugurated in 2010, two more high-rises are being planned: Incity and Swiss Life. They, too, will contribute to the Part-Dieu skyline. Also these high-rises are very much desired because they are prestigious symbols and add a vertical dimension to the city, they are "energy-consuming blind alleys" to be used in moderation, according to experts. In addition, they are a visible economic barometer (in prosperous times, they rise) and their development is thus problematic during times of crisis or when the market contracts. But high-rises are not the only source of prestige. Original architectural creations, special lighting and outstanding public areas will also do the job. All these elements can be developed at La Part-Dieu.

Natural vs. artificial

A key area of "sustainable development" is nature, which is almost totally missing from La Part-Dieu, a district created during a period when nature was massively destroyed in the city. There are some green areas, which are often invisible or inaccessible, and they should be developed. It will undoubtedly be necessary to create micro nature areas, where trees can help to lessen noise pollution coming from traffic. Since space is very limited, nature can be introduced on rooftops, on blank walls, or on the many empty lots at the foot of the high-rises. But it is not necessary to limit the natural presence to greenery alone. On a very mineral site like La Part-Dieu, nature can also be artificial, with, for instance, sprayers or facilities that reflect light.





THE PROJECT CONTRACTOR'S CHOICES



INTERVIEW

Urban Strategy Precedes the Urban Project

“Project Management Takes
the Initiative but is Based on
Openness and Participation”

Interview with **Nathalie Berthollier**,
Director of the Lyon Part-Dieu Urban Project

You arrived in October 2009 to begin the project. What were your first impressions and actions?

I began by reading a strategic fifteen-page note written by Fabienne Cresci that clearly stated the political goal of Greater Lyon concerning the future of La Part-Dieu. This note was a mission letter for me and for the future project and design teams. Expectations were very high!

With this in mind, I very quickly discovered that it was difficult to have an overall vision of this district because data were very scattered or inexistent and parameters were interpreted in different ways. I did, however, find information on a few operations that indicated very clearly how La Part-Dieu has developed during the past few years on the basis of one-shot operations, particularly real estate operations, that followed no global strategy.



Since I knew the Greater Lyon institution very well and trusted the skills and expertise of its members, I called on a number of services, each of which gave me only “part” of the story based on data and strategy concerning the service’s particular area of interest, operation and field of action. In order to provide l’AUC team with information for their mission, I organized a first project committee in December 2010 that brought these

previously mobilized services together. We were very quickly able to make a complete diagnosis of the situation, take note of on-going actions or operations and share diverse territorial strategies on different levels.

As the procedure moved forward, I analyzed in parallel the different project contractor bids. Making a choice was difficult because of the candidates’ qualifications and because of the high project expectations. After carefully studying the references and skills, as well as the site analysis and working methods of each candidate, the group which had been formed around l’AUC was chosen. This was a daring choice because the agency was not known locally. However, their ability to grasp the urban issues using a multidisciplinary analysis, their creativity and their method of renewing by recycling convinced us. When we read their proposition – we had never met them because the public bidding procedure does not allow it – we saw that they were visionaries who would be able to reinvent the exceptional site which is La Part-Dieu.

At the same time, territorial dynamics did not wait for the project to be elaborated to put in an appearance. Very soon, we had to pilot operational activities and track on-going studies. Some thirty operations needed to be launched, managed and coordinated in parallel to the elaboration of a global vision. The Mouton-Duvernnet site, for instance, was waiting for a clear,





The strategy elaboration phase is a basic step that we needed to take a minimum of time to develop.

organized and well-regulated strategy to follow; the study on the station which had been recently launched by the SNCF had to be oriented in line with the still-emerging urban project; applications needed to be filled out and building permits applied for; contacts from Unibail, Gécina, Swiss Life and Foncière des Régions were waiting to see what our position was on their project or property; numerous SYTRAL operations needed to be carried out; we had to select a designer for Garibaldi, etc. These activities were already well underway.

You organized these workshops that, according to everyone, were a great success and a good method for grasping the project. Why did you proceed this way?

What seemed to be really essential in these workshops – and this is something that is too often forgotten in the elaboration of urban projects – was to ask the right questions as far upstream as possible concerning how to position this district and the project within the Lyon urban agglomeration. The goal was to build a strategy before creating an urban project. Even if the time spent on this step meant a longer wait and even if it made some people impatient, it would have been a shame to go too fast on the physical design of recommendations that were above all urban. The strategy elaboration phase is a basic step that we needed to take a minimum of time to develop.

To do this, we defined a core team to participate in the series of four topical workshops. This team was able to listen, consider and discuss on the basis of diagnoses and analyses from many internal and external contributors. These included managers from Greater Lyon or the City of Lyon, sociologists, philosophers, professors, writers, consultants and experts with whom we shared ideas and thought about what La Part-Dieu would be like in 2020-2030. Our discussions were extremely fruitful, and we quickly understood that the Part-Dieu district was much more than a business district and that the hub function was key to the strategic positioning of the project.

How were the next steps organized?

In light of the positioning of the district within the city, the complexity of the Part-Dieu structure, the numerous roles that this district plays at different levels – European, national, regional, metropolitan and local –, the many public and private players that all have intentions or goals, we decided to proceed gradually, step by step, within the framework of project management

INTERVIEW **Part-Dieu Notebooks #1**

that takes the initiative but is based on openness and participation and enables enriching and ripening the project as a group and encouraging implication at each step.

After the workshops, which lasted from March to June, l'AUC team met with all operational contractors, as well as the major landowners of La Part-Dieu and their respective architects or contractors, and listed to a certain number of Greater Lyon and City of Lyon services and bodies like ADERLY, the Tourism Office, the urban planning agency, etc. The next step was to produce a future strategy and a Concept Plan. The Concept Plan was the foundation; it provides a written and graphic framework that enables establishing the project's major intentions, transversally and by sector.

Gérard Collomb validated this Concept Plan on June 22, 2010. We used it as the basis to meet once again with the same public and private players to dig deeper, refine, check the pertinence of our proposals and launch complementary studies that might be deemed necessary.

We also met twice with Charles Delfante during this process. After this step of exchange and discussion, l'AUC team produced the Plan-Guide. The Plan-Guide represented an important step because it launched the operation and communication phase of the project. It very clearly establishes the project by stating Greater Lyon's goals and vision concerning the future of the Part-Dieu district. Because of the project's specificity, it could only be carried out as a coproduction and the Plan-Guide currently provides a framework for discussions and negotiations with all project participants. Finally, it sets the guidelines, which may sometimes be non-negotiable, to impose on the players and to apply to public policy, regulatory tools or operational processes.

That said, the Plan-Guide is only one step in an overall process and is not a final result. It will need to evolve since it most probably does not answer all questions at this stage and must be tested against reality and the functional, economic and legal thinking of all the contracting owners. Thus, a new step begins.

The project was born in just one year. How do you explain this dynamism?

I think this is due to four complementary elements. First of all, the site. Since it has strong potential, is very active and attractive, and is the focus of public policy and private concern, it mobilizes energy and gives rise to enthusiasm. Second, Greater Lyon, which is a strong contracting owner under the aegis of the Part-Dieu Mission, provides impulse and manages the project in a rigorous way. It is able to assemble the proper contacts for obtaining expertise, orientation or validation at the proper time and is capable of convincing and coordinating a multitude of internal and external contacts. Third, there are the skills of the members of the group around l'AUC, which does an exemplary and very professional job and is coordinated by a highly committed project director. Finally, there is one more essential element: the quality of the relationship, understanding and trust between the contracting owner and the team of designers that has existed since the beginning. Being on the same wavelength facilitates many things.

Since it has strong potential, is very active and attractive, and is the focus of public policy and private concern, it mobilizes energy and gives rise to enthusiasm.





The Part-Dieu Workshops: a Laboratory of Ideas

Think before acting.
Mobilize all intellectual resources
before launching a major urban project.

The productive approach for defining and developing the Part-Dieu project centered on organizing planning and strategy workshops, confronting different points of view and pooling knowledge from the different domains.

Think before acting. Mobilize all intellectual resources before launching a major urban project. That seems natural enough, the minimum in light of a project's strategic importance. And yet, these are not automatic reflexes, in spite of the imperatives of sustainable development which encourage taking an overall look at urban issues and tying them together.

The approach used for the Part-Dieu project is original in more ways than one. Greater Lyon mobilized all its services, which tend to work in the compartmentalized way typical of all services, to share their vision of this territory. Next, the group confronted the viewpoint of these operational technicians and experts with that of thinkers who were more distant from the situation. Four series of workshops enabled "opening up a world possibilities," according to Jean-Loup Molin, Deputy Director of the Strategic Planning and Public Dialog Department. "The workshops encouraged us to work in coproduction with all the players," adds Véronique Granger, Director of PRO Développement.

The first workshop was rather general and concerned the positioning of the district within the city of Lyon. The goal was to define the project base. However, the traditional concept of a business center or mere city district rapidly took on a richer and more ambitious aspect. The idea was to create a veritable contemporary metropolitan hub. Since the workshops mobilized different disciplines, they led to a much richer vision of the territory and to the planning of a more global project, one that would integrate today's urban diversity and complexity, where services would be included and not just urban planning. The idea was to play hard and play soft and go beyond the traditional models of city production.

"On the Part-Dieu project, we developed an urban strategy before taking on the urban project. And this strategy involves everyone," says Jean-Yves Chapuis, a consultant for the Greater Lyon General Delegation on Urban Development. It is not enough to have ideas on urban planning; they must be submitted to testing by users, who are increasingly fickle, and to lifestyles and behavior that are increasingly varied. It is thus important to maintain dynamic thinking and keep an eye on the future even when the operational phase begins. "We must constantly ask ourselves new questions, use brain power and exchange skills. This is the only way we will be able to create value,"

comments Fabienne Cresci, General Delegate for Urban Development for Greater Lyon.

The Part-Dieu will be developed on very different time scales. Some major operations will take fifteen to twenty years; others will be completed in the coming months. "We must be able to take care of partial or fragmented matters quickly while maintaining an overall vision and building an idea of the project over the long term," explains François Decoster. This is why l'AUC architect and urban planner recommends a continuation of the workshops. "What would be original and innovative would be to make this way of building projects standard for all the players," says Decoster. Continuing workshops on concrete subjects would enable breaking away from a single traditional framework, such as a list of specifications, and to thoroughly mesh different approaches. This is what Jean-Yves Chapuis also recommends, "in order to maintain strategic anticipation of the project."

The Part-Dieu workshops: urban tissue and brain power

A number of strategic planning workshops organized in 2009 and 2010 enabled identifying the key strategic points of the Part-Dieu urban project. Technicians, operators and thinkers shared their ideas and established the project guidelines together. This series of workshops covered the following subjects: positioning, strategy, utilization and impressions (Workshop 1); sustainable urban development (Workshop 2); movement, flow and commercial exchange (Workshop 3). Brain power was used to feed developments by l'AUC, which was in charge of urban and district reinvention. Following are some examples of the different contributions.

URBAN PLANNING

"We are in an area that is packed to the brim, with facilities that work incredibly well and considerable resources. Defining the problems in terms of adjustment seems like a good idea to me. We need to characterize the issues and invent corresponding adjustments. Adjustment is not something mediocre and secondary. In this new urban planning cycle, it

represents major urban creation. Adjust utilizations that are completely different, transform different situations... This work by adjustments should result in making La Part-Dieu a pleasant place to be in, a pleasant place to use. It would be a mixture of 'comoditas' and 'voluptas.' (...) The major issue at La Part-Dieu is one of overall impression and specific impressions."

Alain Bourdin, *sociologist and urban planner at the French Institute of Urban Planning, Workshop 1, "What Kind of Center Should La Part-Dieu be?", December 2009.*

ARCHITECTURE

"I was very impressed by the urban atlas proposed by the Urban Planning Agency. Certain architectural elements are very high quality. In the restructuration of the district, there is a quest for identity. Even though it is being modernized, La Part-Dieu must hold onto its historical aspect and its particular cachet. It's a magnificent district you know. To demolish or not to demolish, that is the question. Since I admire the beauty of many of the buildings, I am not in favor of massive demolition. However, these very beautiful volumes lack something to tie them to the ground. Because of the water table, all the parking garages were built at G and G+ 1 levels. Volumes on columns or piles disturb the pedestrian's visual grasp. Intuitively, I would seek to change the base of these buildings and rework the way their extraordinary volumes are tied together with the ground and with a human scale."

Manuelle Gautrand, *architect, Workshop 2, "A center of flow and/or a center for living?", January 2010.*

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

"I agree entirely with the idea of an overall approach using sustainable development. La Part-Dieu must not be a one-shot experiment and non-reproducible. We must go beyond the scale of the buildings and

work at the project level. This is what constitutes the real breakthrough, one that offers new possibilities to urban planning professionals. Too often, we think of a sustainable district as a collection of high-environmental-quality buildings. (...) The idea of the district as a piece of the city must be extended to other areas, such as social integration, urban life, economical performance, the hub and culture. The elements that provide meaning should be combined with the technical elements."

Jean Frébault, *President of the Greater Lyon Development Council, Workshop 2, "What type of sustainable urban development should be chosen for La Part-Dieu?", January 2010.*

NATURE

"La Part-Dieu is an area that is essentially mineral, where local greenery has been forgotten. (...) the district was developed at a time when the relationship between nature and urban planning was conflictual. The seventies corresponded to a period of massive destruction of nature in cities. Planners thought about architecture and transportation infrastructures but not at all about landscape identity."

Frédéric Ségur, *Director of the "Trees and Landscapes" Service, Greater Lyon Streets and Roadways Department, Workshop 2, "What type of sustainable urban development should be chosen for La Part-Dieu?", January 2010.*

"What does nature mean in a site with artificial nature? How can nature be reintroduced into a city without greenery? Very extensively used in Hong Kong, micro-nature can be thought of as an urban amenity that appears right in the middle of density. Nature cannot be limited to 'green vs. non-green.' Nature is an experience involving the senses. It includes psychic, psychological, poetic and perceptive elements. How can we encourage this singular relationship within the city? In an artificial world, we can imagine a natural presence although there are no actual natural elements."

François Decoster, *l'AUC architect and urban planner, Workshop 2, "What type of sustainable urban development should be chosen for La Part-Dieu?", January 2010.*

TRANSPORTATION

"At La Part-Dieu, the public transportation center is physically connected but not virtually. However, success means combining the two. (...) At a time when a simple cell phone provides access to many different possibilities, it is incomprehensible to buy a ticket for every single subway trip. Virtual connection that offers 'easy access to everything' will necessarily find an echo at La Part-Dieu".

Jean-Yves Orfeuil, *research scientist at the Paris Institute of Urban Planning, Workshop 3, "What is the role of movement and flow in the development of a central metropolitan district?", January 2010.*



CONSUMERISM

"Hyper-consumerism will develop in the coming years. What will disappear is one of the consumerism models, i.e., unbridled hyper-consumerism, carbon hyper-consumerism. Growing awareness of the importance of environmental factors and sustainable development will see the emergence of sustainable hyper-consumerism. This would be intelligent hyper-consumerism that is no longer based on waste and pollution but concentrates on service and self-satisfaction. Functional hyper-consumerism will give place to emotional hyper-consumerism, to the limitless marketing of life experiences. (...) We must introduce hybridization so that the shopping center becomes something different from what it has always been. Otherwise, it will remain a purely functional place. We are still thinking in terms of the paradigm of a society of mass consumerism instead of looking at the reality of an emerging society. We must think of new ways to create experiences and events. In this sense, shopping centers must renew

themselves much more rapidly because renewal creates emotion. It creates the need to go and have a look.”

Gilles Lipovetsky, *philosopher and sociologist, Workshop 3, “What is the place of business and commercial exchange in the project?”, January 2010.*

HOSPITALITY

“There is one word that you have never mentioned and that seems to me essential in a metropolitan setting. This is the notion of free enjoyment, an idea that I would readily associate with the issue of welcome and hospitality. We have been talking only about the world of business, but in the places found in a hub like La Part-Dieu, which are places of social proximity rather than social mixing, it seems to me that the idea of hospitality could be a guideline. This guideline would depend on the supply of certain services: finding a public restroom, a place to change your baby’s diaper, water when the weather is hot... for free! The place of families is extremely important. And it is frequently expressed with indignation in all the surveys carried out in the city and in these business districts: ‘But how do we go there with children?!’”

Véronique Granger, *geographer and urban programmer, Director of PRO Développement, member of l’AUC group, Workshop 1, “What functions should be developed, how should they be used and in what setting?”, December 2009.*

HABITAT

“If we ignore habitat, we risk obtaining a pile of proposals for events that have no real roots in the territory. Even when considered through the cultural prism, if there are no local practices, metropolitan mixing is not possible! Above all, we must not ignore the scarcity of local residents. Otherwise, we will fall into a trap concerning certain practices.”

Véronique Granger, *geographer and urban programmer, Director of PRO Développement, member of l’AUC group, Workshop 1, “What functions should be developed, how should they be used and in what setting?”, December 2009.*

“We must refine the notions of inhabitant and user. At La Part-Dieu, we have all the elements that make up a small global city. And what is a global city? It is a

city that is plugged into circuits of globalization, where the headquarters of multinational companies are next door to top-performance educational centers. But the city is not cut off from its environment. When we encourage people to live in the area, we can halt this trend and grasp the urban experience at different speeds. The priority flows are there, but there is no relationship between David Mangin’s ‘open city’ and the flows, nothing at all.”

Olivier Mongin, *philosopher and research scientist, Workshop 1, “What functions should be developed, how should they be used and in what setting?”, December 2009.*

“I hear a lot about social interaction, urban living and activity programs, but here again, there’s no secret. What makes the city come alive are the people who live there. I’m not talking about temporary inhabitants who stay in residences or hotels. I’m talking about permanent inhabitants. Measured within its perimeter, La Part-Dieu counts one housing unit for every eleven offices. With such a weak proportion, we cannot envisage a sociable and sustainable city. It’s impossible.”

Philippe Courtois, *Director of the Mission to Prefigure the Euatlantique Project, Urban Community of Bordeaux, Workshop 2, “What type of sustainable urban development should be chosen for La Part-Dieu?”, January 2010.*

WORK

“The real-estate approach that prevails today at La Part-Dieu and concerns only office space is not able to sufficiently anticipate social and economic change. The Part-Dieu project must promote new ways of being at work that are more creative, more comfortable, more collaborative and shared. They must be adapted to workers who are nomads, sedentary, permanent, occasional, French and foreign. (...) This work structure should lead in particular to reducing the barrier between inside and outside by extending the public area and services into the ground floor of office buildings, developing architecture and design with a strong sensorial value and promoting the visibility of meeting places.”

Grand Lyon, La Part-Dieu, *Future Strategy and Concept Plan by l’AUC team, June 2010.*





True Group Dynamics

INTERVIEW

Jean Frébault, an expert in urban planning and President of the Greater Lyon Development Council, participated actively in the workshops on the future of La Part-Dieu. He brings the viewpoint of a representative of civil society to this urban project.



In 1976, you became the Director of the Lyon Urban Planning Agency after Charles Delfante, and you have supported the development of La Part-Dieu. In what way does this district seem singular to you?

La Part-Dieu is an original project as compared to the so-called “urban renewal” operations carried out in the sixties and seventies in France. These included Mériadeck in Bordeaux, the Seine riverfront in Paris and the stock exchange district in Marseille and were done at a time when slab urbanism was very much in favor. Independently of the defects presented by this type of operation, La Part-Dieu is undoubtedly unique in France. A new and very strong central link was created that enabled giving a second base to the center of Lyon, which until then had been limited to the Presqu’île. La Part-Dieu affirmed the metropolitan role of Lyon. From this point of view, it is the project that has proven to be the most solid in the long run. This is tied in particular to its geographical location. The pertinence

of choosing La Part-Dieu was confirmed as first the subway, then the high-speed train station and, finally, the tramway were built. It is a project that has helped Lyon to consolidate its metropolitan dimension and its role as a hub.

La Part-Dieu, which is the second leading business district in France, is often compared to the La Défense business district. Since you worked at La Défense, can you tell us what you think of this comparison?

The comparison with La Défense is not obvious because critical mass in terms of urban function is not on the same scale. At La Défense, what is very powerful is the forecourt that prolongs the historical axis designed by Lenôtre. It is a public area that provides a stage for the high rises, the large architectural volumes and the service, commercial and cultural functions, as well as the residential area. It is truly a magical place. But La Défense is detestable because of its surroundings, of its non-integration into the urban



landscape, of its undigested infrastructures. The circular avenue through La Défense has created a brutal rupture. Parking inside the area is a surrealistic adventure.

At La Part-Dieu, the urban composition is the opposite of what I found at La Défense. There is no true central public area around which all functions are organized. The center is evanescent. But to my way of thinking, the district has an enormous advantage: its fringes are visible and most of its components are anchored in the landscape and accessible from elsewhere in the city (the library, the shopping center, the train station, the auditorium, many of the services, etc.). But the problem is that these components are often isolated, with no link between them. This is what the project designer Charles Delfante wrote about in his book, *La Part-Dieu: the Success of a Failure*, when he criticized the break-up of the projects into "tracts" with the resulting fragmentation. One of the future challenges is to re-create this link.

We can't say that the Part-Dieu project was a failure, quite the opposite. I feel that the initial project had intrinsic qualities that will lead to the success of the new project and that it has proved its ability to adapt and change over time.

What do you think of the approach that has been implemented for the project to reinvent this district?

I have followed a number of projects in France, but this is the first time that I have seen a method for conducting the project that is almost the opposite of normal practice. It means taking a justified risk that has very positive aspects.

First of all, it gave great weight to upstream discussions and took time before choosing a designer or a precise operational method. This enabled giving free rein to discussion and establishing a multidisciplinary approach, as well as leaving a large place for creativity and imagination on key urban issues, social perspectives and the spirit of place and project before even mentioning an operational program. This, however, did not exclude introducing the notions of feasibility and phasing upstream to clarify strategy.

I have followed a number of projects in France, but this is the first time that I have seen a method for conducting the project that is almost the opposite of normal practice. It means taking a justified risk that has very positive aspects.

Next, the team of designers was designated very early, before the contractor and before finishing the upstream studies, which were done in close collaboration with l'AUC team. The team participated with other partners in this interactive process of creating an urban program and looking for the "meaning" behind the project. I note that Djamel Klouche, François Decoster and Caroline Poulin have strongly interiorized these discussions. The workshops were a special moment. They were based on true group dynamics. The quality of the proposals made to the design team following this step strongly reflected this.

We must congratulate them on this urban contracting approach, which is indispensable today for large projects that are shared by a group of partners and politicians.

During the discussions, you spoke about the skyline. Why is the issue of an urban silhouette so important to you?

Lyon's great singularity is that it is a city of viewpoints. These geographical perspectives provide a setting for the city's history and urban development. In this landscape, the "Crayon" high-rise stands out: it is all by itself and has an architecture (by Cossuta and Pei) that is not found anywhere else. It accents the identity of Lyon. It has withstood the test of time very well and has been totally adopted by the people of Lyon. There will be other high-rises in La Part-Dieu and perhaps in other places. At a sensitive site like Lyon, the urban silhouette must be carefully planned, even if it takes negotiating. It cannot be the mere result of real estate opportunities.



What we are most concerned about is maintaining an open and non-fragmented city.

Thinking about La Part-Dieu has concerned what is “soft” as much, if not more than, what is “hard.” What do you think about the impact of immaterial issues on the urban debate?

This was an impressive aspect of the workshops. In the context of an emulation between attractive cities, immaterial components are now as important as the physical components of an urban project. We used to think of the city primarily in terms of square meters and function, but a city is much more than that. It also includes feelings, social and cultural interaction, dreams and imagination.

At the Development Council, for instance, we have insisted on the cultural dimension, which has long been neglected in urban planning but which is becoming a fundamental ingredient

of cities. This immaterial offering can include Lyon’s humanist tradition, which says that the poor also have their place in the city. In real estate communication, urban operations are too often associated with an image of “luxury” that sounds good to the international market of real estate professionals, but an open city is one that is open to everyone. Paying heed to the least favored should be part of the considerations concerning La Part-Dieu.

As the President of the Greater Lyon Development Council, which represents social diversity, what was the most important thing to defend in elaborating this project?

What we are most concerned about is maintaining an open and non-fragmented city. This implies an access to affordable housing, paying attention to the least favored and affirming the place of culture in the city – culture in the broad sense of the term, which includes artistic creation and new technologies, as well as popular knowledge or living together. Everything that concerns training and the spread of knowledge is important, and Lyon has some major advantages. La Part-Dieu is home to France’s second largest library, and it looks like a fortress! We must work toward a future project that encourages real social cross-fertilization in the different functions and in the development of different areas, as it concerns both visitors and the people of Lyon. A transversal city, living together and the mixing of flows are important factors in the contemporary urban experience.





ABOVE ALL, A CITY IS HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

Jovial and eloquent, **Jean-Yves Chapuis** has supported urban development in the Lyon agglomeration for many years.

Jean-Yves Chapuis has been a Socialist representative for the city of Rennes since 1983. In 2001, he was named Municipal Counselor for Patrimony and Tourism and is Vice President of Metropolitan Rennes for Urban Development. "The idea is to invent urban development that corresponds to changing lifestyles," he says, insisting on his credo: "Above all, a city is human relationships, which we as elected representatives must make even more human, without being naive or demagogic."

Chapuis has been a consultant in urban strategy and projects since 2003 and works with a number of communities, including Marseille, Béthune and, more recently, Bordeaux and Strasbourg. At Lyon, he affirms that "project contracting is of exceptionally high quality" and is "one step ahead of the others." A sign of its "robustness" is the fact that the Greater Lyon General Delegation on Urban Development did not hesitate to submit its ideas to outside examination and to combine social science and technical competence, while encouraging a transversal approach that brought together multidisciplinary skills.

This is precisely what was done during the workshops on the future of the Part-Dieu district, in which Jean-Yves Chapuis participated. This original way of thinking, which was based on a global, transversal approach, is part of what this representative from Brittany calls "urban strategy." This process was necessary because of the complexity and uncertainty of today's world, as well as the financial problems of communities. "Being less certain means you need to pour your knowledge into a common pool," comments Jean-Yves Chapuis, who likes to cite Edgar Morin, Jean Viard, Pierre Veltz and Jean-Paul Dollé.

According to Chapuis, the design of an urban project must constantly evolve and urban strategy should remain active throughout the operation, all the way down to everyday operations. He thus favors the idea of the Plan-Guide described by Alexandre Chemetov. This approach implies returning to local geography, using history to define the urban narrative, paying attention to all the different urban scales and obtaining better knowledge of lifestyles.

For this reason, Jean-Yves Chapuis was particularly captivated by l'AUC team and, in particular, by the fact that the architects and the urban planners in the team accept the highly criticized heritage of La Part-Dieu and aim to reintegrate it. "La Part-Dieu has all the basic elements, but the links between these elements don't work well together," he states. The consultant thus appreciates the "link urbanism" proposed by l'AUC. The time when urban planning was based on prestigious features is over. From now on, the goal is to reinforce complementarity between the different city functions and build a "sensitive" city that pays careful attention to the urban atmosphere and to human relationships.





“The Main Goal: Break Down Compartmentalization”

INTERVIEW

Interview with
François Decoster,
l'AUC, designer
of the Lyon Part-Dieu project

Isn't it rather paradoxical to design an urban project in a district that seems to be completely finished and stuffed to the brim?

It could seem to be a paradox to want to “reinvent” La Part-Dieu. We have the impression that it's already filled, but it's very poorly filled! There are even real estate possibilities left and parts that don't fit together. We are working simultaneously on comparable situations at La Défense and the Méridadeck district in Bordeaux. Today, the urban project paradigm is required to shift. Worldwide, we estimate that eighty percent of the city of tomorrow is already there. The idea is to transform it and make it evolve. This is urban planning based on recycling rather than extension, and this changes everything. In addition, there is a need for sustainable development. To sum it up succinctly, sustainable means recycling things instead of throwing them away.

What are your main axes for “reinventing” La Part-Dieu?

We must use what exists to reinvent the district. Our main goal is to break down compartmentalization because everything tends to turn its back on everything else. The train station is more than a station: it is a public area that

crosses the district from east to west and is a place for exchange. I like to use Tokyo as a reference. There, the train station has totally blended into the city. The shopping center is a closed box.

Why not open it up and provide a large open area on its roof so that it plays the role of a public area? We must open La Part-Dieu, hybridize functions, share areas and bring a certain number of relationships to light. We must reconnect upper and lower levels in an inventive and attractive way. We must invent a certain number of innovative real estate products that feature new utilizations. We must bring to life this material that has become rigid over time and reactivate it. In this way, we can also give it a new developmental impetus.

You began by participating in a series of workshops. What did these discussions bring you?

They were very interesting. The workshops helped us understand the key points of the district in a very focused way. Each time a workshop was held, the Greater Lyon services and the participants who were invited to attend opened a new window for us. This enabled us to freely explore a number of possibilities. We must find a way to make these workshops permanent because when we get to the operational stage,

where we are working on individual parts, we need to be able to continue thinking in an overall manner. What would be original and innovative would be to make this way of building projects with different players standard – not merely using the traditional set of specifications, but continuing the workshops on concrete subjects and finding ways to weave the different approaches together.

What lessons have you learned from the urban planning history of La Part-Dieu?

La Part-Dieu, Step One was the slab urbanism of the sixties and seventies. It was the golden age of public power that controlled everything – or thought it did. The result was a “total” urban project that planned for cultural centers, a train station, a shopping center, etc., and aimed to separate cars and pedestrians. The plan designed by Charles Delfante is exceedingly functional and has a very generous vision of public areas.

La Part-Dieu, Step Two was the “return to the city” of the nineties. This was the

time when individuals created their bit of the district. The district was cut up and divided into tracts; holes were filled in. A consulting architect attempted to supervise but contracting owners built in their own little corner without a global view of the urban program.

The history of La Part-Dieu shows that economics and real estate ambitions went faster than urban planning. It’s true that slab urbanism is an issue, but this is not because of the principle; it’s because the program was not fully carried out. There was not enough ambition to see it through. The district was left to develop on its own.

Today, reinventing La Part-Dieu means reinventing creative project governance that will allow activating the proper levers. We must create a platform that will bring different energies together. Partners must understand that by working together, values are created. These values will be multiplied for each participant.

La Part-Dieu is often seen as an ugly, outdated district, as a has-been. What do you think of the district’s architectural creations?

La Part-Dieu is a collection of rather remarkable buildings that should be highlighted and continued! Did you know that in a film Chris Marker made in the sixties, you can see La Part-Dieu under construction in the spiral parking garage located next to Les Halles? This means that a film that wants to speak about modernity has used La Part-Dieu as an emblem! La Part-Dieu inherited some very beautiful architecture from the sixties and seventies, such as the buildings by Zumbrunnen, and the Moncey-Nord buildings, the Résidence du Lac, the Résidence Desaix and the EDF high-rise. There are also important emblems like the Crayon building by I.M. Pei and Coussuta, the auditorium by Pottier and Delfante and the municipal library by Perrin-Fayolle. Unfortunately, I haven’t seen anything enrich this collection for the past twenty or thirty years...





We must affirm La Part-Dieu as a “contemporary metropolitan hub”.

Tomorrow's Part-Dieu architecture will not be only high-rises. There will also be a train station that will open on the city and catalyze a mutation in urban transport. That could be extremely visible, much more so than a high-rise! In a similar manner, if a community like Greater Lyon positions itself as a go-between and lever with respect to compartmentalized initiatives, this could be very innovative and ambitious.

What conditions does the Part-Dieu project need to succeed?

Accepting the global project should be the primary condition for redeveloping La Part-Dieu for all players. We must affirm La Part-Dieu as a contemporary metropolitan hub and visible symbol of the agglomeration's dynamism. We must not try to put anything and everything into La Part-Dieu. We must not dedicate all land to buildings with

28-square-meter offices, nor forget the role of the community. We must intervene in adjusting the speed, quality, richness and novelty of development in La Part-Dieu. We must define intangible principles that cannot be negotiated, find ways to be more open and make sure all partners accept this. Otherwise, we will have carried out workshops and communicated on the subject, but in reality, the district will continue to develop on its own.





“An Urban Project Cannot Be Dissociated from a Social Project”



Lively and enthusiastic, **Véronique Granger** works with l'AUC on the urban programming and planning aspects of the Part-Dieu project.

The notion of services provides as much structure as the notion of facilities.

Véronique Granger is a geographer and urban programmer who began her career at the Public Works Ministry. In 1986, she founded PRO Développement, a consulting and urban and architectural programming agency. For the past five years, she has worked on strategic programming and reconversion studies for Nantes, Lille, Boulogne-Billancourt, Angers, the Ministry of Defense, Saint-Etienne (Cité du Design) and Lyon (La Confluence and the banks of the Saône).

For the project of reinventing La Part-Dieu, PRO Développement joined with l'AUC for the programming and strategy aspects, as well as for the cultural area. “AUC is a young team with a very open interdisciplinary attitude. It’s a pleasure to work with them,” states Véronique

Granger, who has had enough of the posturing of so many self-assured “star architects.”

When the first Part-Dieu concept plan was drawn up, Véronique Granger worked in close synergy with l'AUC. This corresponds fully to her ideas on urban project development: “a technical urban planning project cannot be dissociated from a social project.” For Véronique Granger, urban planning is not merely surface area and square meters. “It is also the organization of flow and time,” she adds. During the Part-Dieu workshops, she developed the notion of a “time aesthetic” and pointed out the need to create pauses and provide places where it is possible to stop and rest free of charge in this district, which is filled with a constant flow of workers, shoppers and travelers.

She worked on hospitality, friendliness, solidarity and gratuitousness, which are for her essential values in a hub like La Part-Dieu, a place of community but also a temple to consumerism. "The notion of services provides as much structure as the notion of facilities," she continues. Véronique Granger notes that "La Part-Dieu is totally lacking in services and things to do outside working hours."

Many of her proposals have been well received, in particular the "cultural crossbeam" that will enable cultural facilities like the municipal library and the auditorium to participate fully in the life of the district.

Following the example of the Lloyd Hotel in Amsterdam, which offers rooms for a wide range of budgets, Granger proposes the implantation of multi-range hotels in La Part-Dieu to favor a cosmopolitan atmosphere. "There should be places where people can get together to work on projects regardless of social class. This would made sense in a place like Lyon," she says.

Since instability is part of urban programming, Véronique Granger must constantly measure what is stable and what is not. Here is an example of a stable given: an increasing number of people will want to live next to a transportation hub. "We are amazed by the dearth of

inhabitants at La Part-Dieu: reinforcing the residential function is an absolute necessity," she feels. Here is an example of an unstable given: the commercial domain fluctuates widely. But Granger bemoans "the extreme nervousness of shopping centers in spite of their enormous profits." How is it possible to involve this type of private player in the urban reinvention of La Part-Dieu? Having established a diagnosis and recommendations, Véronique Granger is now ready to ask this question. She suggests creating a club or foundation to enable implementing a method of governance by ground-level occupants that would fit in with the idea of "recycling" the existing buildings.



There should be places where people can get together to work on projects regardless of social class. This would made sense in a place like Lyon.



CLOSE-UP

An Innovative Concept: “Easy Ground”

The “easy ground” concept is an example of the innovative approach proposed by l'AUC.

For those who have walked through La Part-Dieu, the expression “easy ground” is unexpected to say the least, because there is nothing harder to understand at La Part-Dieu than its anarchic ground layout, a remnant of the slab urbanism that was fashionable in the seventies. By creating deserted and risky areas in underground areas and on terraces, slab urbanism generated obstacles to the proper functioning and perception of the city. Even when it is level, the ground is segmented by barriers or low walls, creating a labyrinth that makes orientation a nightmare. Just how can a path from Les Halles to the train station be found?

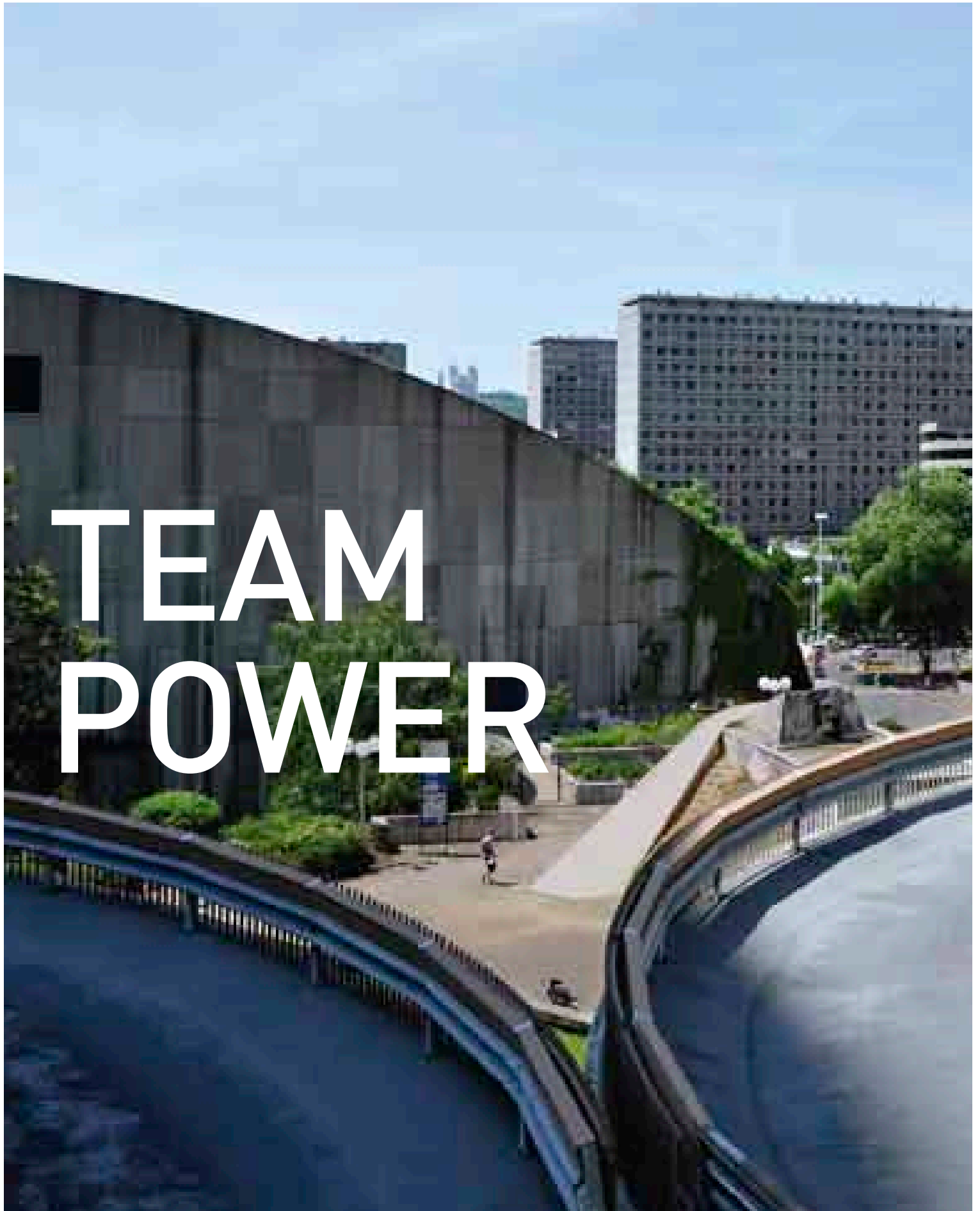
“At La Part-Dieu, only thirty percent of land that can be crossed on foot communicates with the ground floor of buildings. On seventy percent of land, nothing happens: there are merely entrances to parking lots, delivery areas, and so forth,” says Sébastien Sperto, who manages the Urban Processes and Design Center for the Lyon Urban Planning Agency. As the years have passed, the addition of new strata and an absence of cooperation among the different players has not helped. When SYTRAL installed a tramway at La Part-Dieu, the Lyon public transportation agency did not consult with LPA, the company that manages the parking garages, the shopping center and the train station. As a result, “turning in a rental car at La Part-Dieu is quite a challenge!” according to François Decoster. To remedy the situation and provide a shared, coherent and readily visible basis for the district, l'AUC recommends the implementation of “easy ground.”

According to l'AUC, "The ground at La Part-Dieu must be designed to facilitate utilization and promote exchange and interaction. (...) It must reconnect inside and outside, front and back, top and bottom. It must become land that is properly equipped and informative, that provides orientation and enables finding a direction. (...) It should provide a rich area, based on land that already exists and is requalified or perhaps entirely renewed, that organizes movement and rest, that penetrates high-rise lobbies, the auditorium and the library, that is home to café terraces, that climbs over the slab with escalators and elevators, that goes across the train station and the shopping center."

This "independent layer" with a key site at Place Charles Béraudier between the train station and the shopping center, will provide a coherent and unified perception of the public area. For l'AUC, easy ground could be "the most concrete and dynamic manifestation of the co-productive dynamics of the Part-Dieu project." To function properly, it must connect public and private areas and be jointly owned or under easement, which would require the agreement and participation of many types of players. The idea is exciting but is not an easy one to implement.

The ground at La Part-Dieu must be designed to facilitate utilization and promote exchange and interaction.





CLOSE-UP



“l'AUC, the Bold Choice”

for future-oriented methodology, urban programming and cultural aspects; RFR Eléments (Paris) for environmental engineering and sustainable development; and CITEC (Geneva and Lyon) for transportation and sustainable mobility.

Featuring very good references, the group combines all the necessary skills in a resolutely multidisciplinary approach. “l'AUC is a young team that is sincerely interested in a multidisciplinary approach. There is no separation between urban programming and the urban projects. We work in total symbiosis and discussions are on-going. This is rather exceptional in an urban planning sector that is dominated by ‘star architects,’”

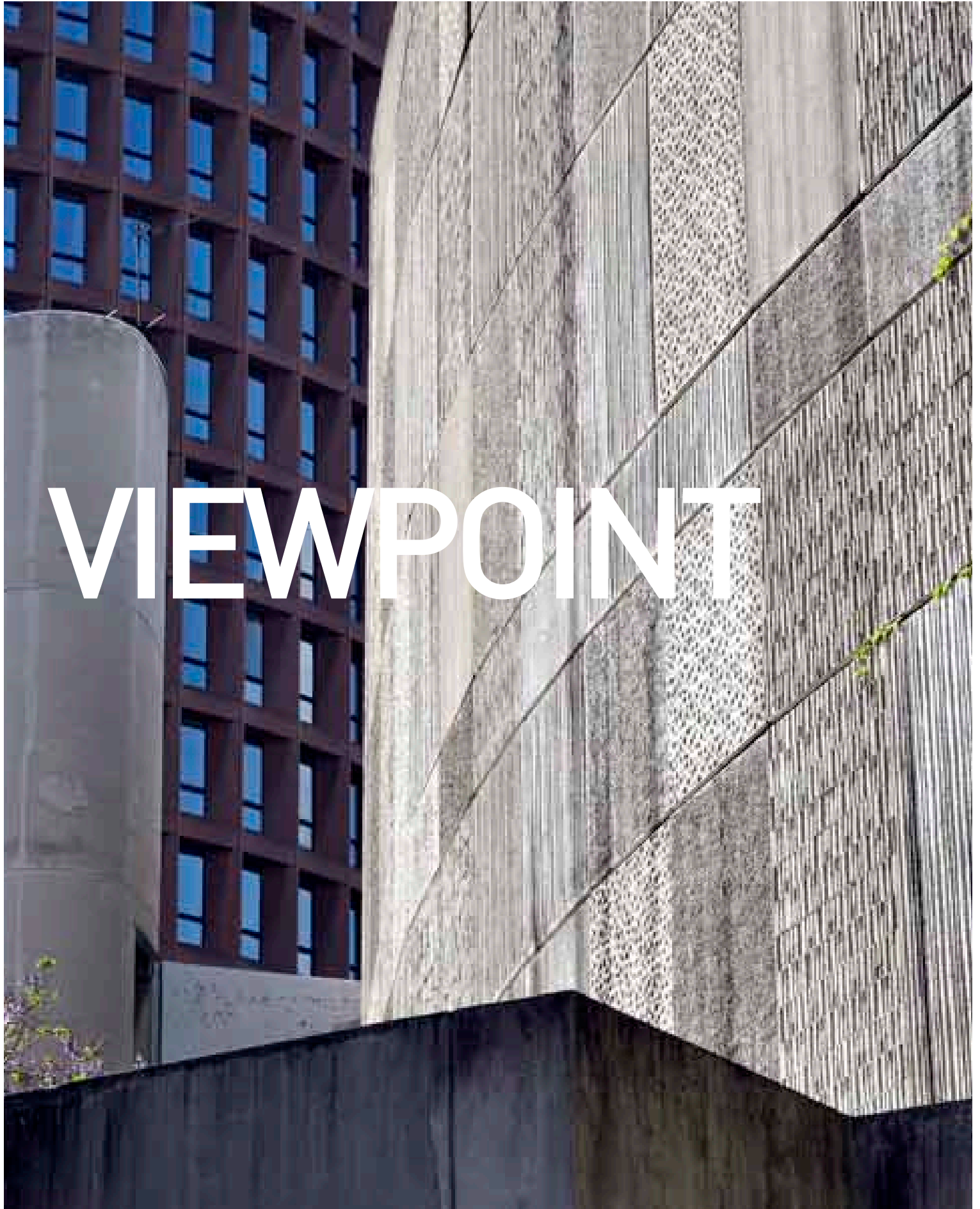
The ideal of urban recycling adopted by l'AUC.

comments Véronique Granger, Director of PRO Développement. In an area like urban planning, which “implies an accumulation of knowledge” as Olivier Mongin notes ^[1], it is better to crossbreed skills and disciplines. l'AUC, which is a multidisciplinary and multi-subject team, grasps urban issues by taking into account all aspects and by combining all functions.

l'AUC is known for its “thorough analyses, imagination and creativity.” This is evident first of all in the team’s method, which calls for thinking through the issues (historical, patrimonial, etc.) before establishing an operational approach. For the Greater Paris project, l'AUC carried out a complete historical study and a careful analysis of some twenty micro-territories, thus demonstrating more interest in the local scale than in major monuments and high-rises. The idea was to “make the invisible face of Greater Paris emerge,” according to Djamel Klouche.

What was also very attractive was the ideal of urban recycling adopted by l'AUC. The goal is not to erase everything but to give meaning to what exists by identifying potential and “hidden resources” and regenerating them. “They are not obsessed with new construction at all costs; they are much more concerned with ties to what exists. They propose urban planning based on links,” says Jean-Yves Chapuis, a consultant for Greater Lyon. The first recommendations by l'AUC, which were presented in the concept plan delivered in June 2010, confirm the creativity of this team, which proposes a number of innovative concepts, such as “easy ground” and the “cultural crossbeam,” which originated from a thorough analysis of the territory and how it is used.

[1] Article in *Télérama* magazine, dated December 12, 2010





Joining Forces

and Inventing Governance

As it develops and takes shape, the Part-Dieu project must invent its own means of production and governance.

The make-up of the players on the Part-Dieu territory is highly unusual. It has nothing to do with those numerous urban projects focusing on empty territories or wastelands where the community is the main land-owning entity.

Here, the territory is “full” – even if it is “poorly filled,” according to the definition of François Decoster. The community owns only a small part of the sector. The other landowners are many different private players, including many investment companies, and public or semi-public bodies.

In spite of being a minor owner, the community is the project contractor. And this is an ambitious project because it concerns 334 acres that will provide economic stimulus for the entire agglomeration for the next twenty-five years. The scale of the project and its strategic importance thus call for strong and sustained political and technical governance.

To avoid a replay of the urban planning failure described by Charles Delfante – which occurred in spite of a strong master plan because individual players did as they pleased on their private property – this new generation project must find a way to impose itself on all players.

To do this, it is imperative to convince all players that it is in their interest to share a common goal. “We must show that by working together, we can create value. And this value will be multiplied for each participant,” says François Decoster. As an example, if investors buy a building at La Part-Dieu, they must accept not putting a digital control on the main door to ensure peace of mind. By placing shared community services on the ground level of the building instead, the building will be connected to the city and will acquire greater value. Instead of an introverted notion of people doing business in their own little corner, a broader vision is needed, one that focuses on utilization. Here, La Part-Dieu would become a sort of mega-machine for producing shared values.

“The project must take the offensive and become visible and dynamic,” says François Decoster, who would like for the Part-Dieu project to define intangible and non-negotiable principles and more open requirements. “Otherwise, we will have held workshops and communicated, but in reality things will continue to develop on their own.”

What is currently happening – and this is rather normal at this stage of the project – is that all local owners and investors are launching discussions and studies and looking for contractors. In this context, it is urgent to create a sort of platform where all energy is assembled, where everything is discussed and where the global project has enough weight to be a strategy that is truly shared.

Reinventing La Part-Dieu thus means inventing creative project governance that will enable pulling the right levers. This is the current challenge and Greater Lyon is actively working on putting together operations that will implement it. “We must invent new operational methods that can be adapted to different types of operations, objects, schedules and perimeters. We must use urban planning regulations to impose project goals on all players and invent partnerships that will boost development,” explains Fabienne Cresci, General Delegate for Greater Lyon Urban Development. This implies that the community must be very energetic, have solid legal knowledge and tirelessly educate.





TEAM POWER

MULTIDISCIPLINARY EXPERTISE

The Greater Lyon Urban Development General Delegation

Fabienne Cresci, who is the General Delegate for Urban Development, is the project contact on behalf of the Greater Lyon Directorate-General. Greater Lyon is an unusual project contractor because it owns only a small part of the land in the territory and must reckon with many other private, semi-private or public landowners. A tagline sums up this singularity: Greater Lyon ensures “project contracting for project goals”.

The Part-Dieu Mission

The Part-Dieu Mission led by Bernard Badon spearheads the Part-Dieu project. Like all territorial missions, the Part-Dieu Mission is a temporary organization with a limited lifespan. It is attached to the Greater Lyon Directorate-General and was created to facilitate the implementation of projects on territories with major strategic importance. This applies, of course, to La Part-Dieu. This mission provides impetus and coordination between Greater Lyon and the institutions concerned by the project, economic partners, real estate operators, private contracting owners and district residents. It mobilizes Greater Lyon resources and many of its services and coordinates their actions without substituting for them. The Part-Dieu Mission is key to production, communication and discussions on the Part-Dieu project. It organizes themed meetings with the services or Greater Lyon satellites (Urban Planning Agency, SYTRAL, Tourism Office, ADERLY, etc.), brainstorming sessions and workshops and works closely with L'AUC team chosen to design the project.



The Streets and Roads Department and the Travel Service

Valérie Philippon-Béranger, Olivier Laurent and their team are very active on the project because of the key importance of travel and mobility. The challenge includes creating a shared public transportation development strategy for the year 2030, developing environmentally friendly ways to travel, equipping “easy land,” taking urban logistics into account and creating innovation in shared parking areas while facilitating private vehicle access.

The Greater Lyon General Delegation for Economic and International Development

Since La Part-Dieu is the economic epicenter of the Lyon urban area, the Economic and International Development Department was the first group to establish the foundations of strategic discussions on the district's future. The department thus produced key guidelines for the elaboration of a project to reinvent La Part-Dieu. These guidelines are not limited to economic aspects but take into account a more global services offer. Jean-Philippe Hanff and the other delegates have understood this perfectly.

The Greater Lyon Strategic Planning and Public Dialog Department

This department, which is led by Pierre Houssais and his deputy Jean-Loup Molin, was associated well upstream to the discussions on the Part-Dieu district. It called on a network of development trackers to carry out a study of the district's image and make a careful diagnosis of the utilization and functioning of the district from the point of view of the individual. The department also pointed out consumer trends, dining habits and new economic models that fed the workshops. In particular, this group insisted on the necessity of adopting a “services” approach for the urban project, with a strategy of re-establishing the visibility of public institutions located on the site and installing new functions (e.g., cultural functions) next to the dominant service and commercial functions.

Other Greater Lyon Services

All Greater Lyon services, as well as members of the Greater Lyon presidential cabinet, were associated to discussions on the emergence of a Part-Dieu project and during inter-service meetings.

Operational services, such as the Development Department, the Public Roads Department and the Logistics and Buildings Department, are already working on very important public development operations.

The Land and Real Estate Department, Financial Department, Communication Department, Financial and Administrative Services of the Urban Development Department, the Data Observation and Use Service, and many others also played strategic roles in project advancement.

The Lyon Urban Planning Agency

The Lyon Urban Planning Agency was created in 1970 and has as its mission to assist project contracting for the emergence of the Part-Dieu urban project through the intermediary role of Sébastien Sperto. First, the Urban Planning Agency carried out a two-part study on the historical background of the district and how it is made up. Next, the agency participated in workshops and in the creation of a “documentary investment” to feed thinking. Finally, it ensured a mission of territorial knowledge by making an urban and landscape atlas of the Part-Dieu that precisely describes all aspects of the district related to function, landscape, urban development, architecture and patrimony.

The Greater Lyon Development Council

In 1999, the Greater Lyon Development Council was placed under the Community Council and is designed to associate civil society to “the building of a shared vision of the urban agglomeration.” The council may be consulted on all questions related to improvement and development of the agglomeration. It was represented at La Part-Dieu by its president, Jean Frébault, who participated actively in the workshop discussion on the future of the district.

Outside stimulators

The Part-Dieu Mission invited outside contributors to provide their analysis of the Part-Dieu urban project during the four workshops. Participants included: Jean-Pierre Orfeuill of the Paris Urban Planning Institute, who is a specialist in transportation; Gilles Lipovetsky, philosopher and sociologist specializing in consumerism; Manuelle Gautrand, architect; Olivier Sidler, energy expert for BET Enertech; Philippe Courtois, Director of the Euratlantic Planning Mission at Bordeaux; Alain Bourdin, sociologist and urban planner at the French Institute of Urban Planning; and Olivier Mongin, sociologist, an urban specialist.

L'AUC team

The group that formed around L'AUC participated in all workshop discussions and took note of the different points of view to enrich its strategic vision and the Concept Plan for the Part-Dieu project, which was delivered in June 2010.

L'AUC and L'AUC as – urban planning and development, architecture and public areas: Djamel Klouche, François Decoster and Caroline Poulin, associated architects-urban planners; Simon de Dreuille, Odysseas Yiannikouris, Fabien Filippi and Paola Lucan, L'AUC architects; Fabrice Long and François Chas, NP2F architects for L'AUC; Ivo Chytil, Marek Chytil and Nada Fridi, trainee architects at L'AUC.

PRO Développement – urban programming and future-oriented urban and cultural methodology: Véronique Granger, Mémia Belkahid.

RFR Eléments – environmental engineering/HQE: Benjamin Cimerman, Marc de Fouquet.

CITEC – travel, transportation, and sustainable mobility: Philippe Gasser, Cunxiao Zhang.



Gerard Collomb
President of Greater Lyon



Fabienne Cresci
General delegate for urban development for the Lyon Urban Community



Bernard Badon
Director of the Part-Dieu Mission



Nathalie Berthollier
Director of the Lyon Part-Dieu urban project



Sébastien Sperto
Lyon urban planning agency



François Decoster
Designer of the Lyon Part-Dieu project



Véronique Granger
Geographer and urban programmer



Jean-Yves Chapuis
Consultant



Charles Delfante
Architect and urban programmer

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