

The road to non-specialisation. The Métropole takes back the strip

The main objective of the proposal is to rethink the role of the industrial zones bordering the Seine in order to find their place within the Métropole.

Until now, these strips have behaved as alienated and specialised zones. Self-contained bubbles cut off from the life of the cities and the territory that hosts and serves them.

Designed for a different scale and speed to that of their immediate surroundings, these pieces have remained self-enclosed, acting as territorial barriers, isolated and incapable of participating in the urban and rural life of the local inhabitants.

In the specific case of Rouen, these strips have historically been settled along the course of the river, as have the large infrastructures in similar cities. A location which, although it may have been favourable at the time, is gradually losing its significance as the means of transportation and logistics evolve. This has led some of them, as in the case study, to become partially obsolete.

The proposal attempts to take advantage of this opportunity in a context of climate and socio-economic change. A new era that we can call post-industrial, in which the path marked out is sustainable production, recycling and proximity consumption.

In this context, it is proposed to break with the specialisation and alienation of these pockets in order to use their undeniable characteristics, both structural and infrastructural, for the benefit of the territory as a whole. Opening up the strips to turn them into points of exchange between the cities and their immediate surroundings.

Their privileged situation and their extension allow us to imagine their reconversion into areas which, far from losing their productive capacity, are capable of integrating the reproductive and even biological life which they now lack in order to become the necessary link between cities and territories. A point of symbiosis that leads us to rethink settlements on a territorial scale. Bringing us closer to the territory we live in and to which we belong without often realising it.

In the case of the Seine-Amont sector, this link is facilitated by the fact that we find ourselves in a narrow strip of land in constant contact with the forest, the river and other urban settlements. These conditions of proximity between fabrics make it possible to find these synergies by acting above all on the boundaries that separate them, both topographical and infrastructural, in order to break the bubble and remove the existing barriers.

At the same time, it is planned to increase the mix of uses, favouring the repurposing of the strip for other types of users in order to be recognised as a new pole of attraction with a territorial vocation.

Reversing the anthropogenic culture. The new industry as an engine of symbiosis.

Today, our territory is often divided between that which is a metropolis and that which is not. Between a part of the territory that serves and another that is served. A system based on feeding and making cities function by constantly transforming and intervening in their rural and natural environment. The result has been to turn the landscape into a kind of machine at the service of humans, leading to consequences such as desertification, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, abandonment of the countryside, climate change and even the emergence of new diseases.

The aim of the proposal is to use these obsolete industrial pockets as transition and exchange zones between these serving and served territories in an attempt to blur these two realities. Places of economic and biological symbiosis that, far from trying to resemble city or countryside, try to bring both realities closer together and take advantage of their privileged situation.

Its large surface area and intermediate location between city, river and countryside are fundamental characteristics for finding this intermediate and catalytic role. Thus, all the proposals for action that are carried out will have to seek this spirit of synapse between city and territory. To remove barriers and incorporate bridge programmes between one and the other world, today so far apart.

The aim is to find a model rather than a concrete proposal. A system that can be implemented gradually and incrementally, not only in the parts that are already obsolete but, in the future, in other areas with similar characteristics.

Tools

To achieve these objectives we have three fundamental tools:

Mixité. A complete life

In order to break with the specialisation of the strips, it is necessary to incorporate other uses and take advantage of the reciprocity between all of them. A functional hybridisation that will be adapted according to the needs and in which the industrial elements are rethought to compact their storage and access areas and incorporate elements of the reproductive fabric such as housing or facilities. A density of uses that is not transformed into urban density and that pursues the objective of altering the floating population of the site and introducing a new permanent population.

Infrastructure. Connecting city and territory

Their geographical location means that, in order to become inclusive areas, their access and infrastructure need to be rethought. The reduction of the presence of road and heavy mobility is compensated by the incorporation of new public transportation lines and pedestrian and bicycle routes. A recycling of existing infrastructures now acting as a connector between said areas and the city, the surrounding villages and the immediate territory. Infrastructures that will contribute to reduce pollution and bring these areas closer to all types of users.

Ecosystem. A place for the non-human living

Industrial sites are nowadays not only infrastructural but also biological barriers. It is proposed to reduce the areas of impermeable artificial soil to an absolute minimum and to multiply the permeable surface in order to encourage the appearance of fauna and flora, as well as to improve water management around the Seine riverbed. An indispensable tool for increasing urban comfort, bringing the countryside and the city closer together and responding to climate change.

Proposed scenario. Implementation of the system

The implementation of the proposed system is envisaged to be gradual and incremental as the effects of the different axes of the project become apparent. It is also intended to be applied differently according to the different zones that make up the strip.

Using the three proposed tools, the intervention will be based on three fundamental concepts: blurring and reinterpreting the limits, recycling existing structures and recovering contact with nature and the river. The first point of intervention will be the transformation of the departmental road into a civic axis and the recovery of the river's edge as a living space. What today are barriers become spaces of opportunity.

To achieve this, it is proposed to eliminate heavy traffic on the side of the river and to work on the pacification of the departmental road and its relationship with the neighbouring villages. The road becomes a platform for coexistence and an axis of entry to the city, transforming the Saint Paul crossroads into a new square. The edge of the river is transformed into a renaturalised promenade favouring the *mobilité douce* and open-air activities.

From here, it is proposed to concentrate existing industrial activity as much as possible, bearing in mind that the coming industry, already called 4.0, will need much less space thanks to the emergence of new tools and artificial intelligence.

This consideration, together with the obsolescence of some of the built parts, invites us to think about intervening in the built heritage. Taking advantage of the existing structures, of great technical capacity and volume, to house a new programme that complements the existing one and generates new poles of attraction to put an end to specialisation. A trade school, a cooperative or a landscape institute are some of the proposed uses that will be able to feed back on each other and coexist with the existing activity, taking advantage of part of its resources and recycling part of its materials.

At the same time, it is proposed to recover a large part of the land as a permeable surface, generating a green corridor between the countryside and the city in which new plantations are envisaged for production, entertainment and mitigation of the urban heat island effect.

Urban prescriptions. The catalogue

In order to implement the different strategies proposed, a catalogue of all the buildings and specific cases is foreseen as a way to have enough information to act on them.

Then, a series of intervention strategies are proposed for the different cases, which can be combined and applied differently according to the specific needs of each case.

Four paradigmatic cases are chosen: the functioning building, the obsolete building, the new construction and the current open space. All these cases are mixed on the site and each of them requires a specific action.

This set of strategies is intended to be a way of making both the interventions and the use of the site itself more flexible. At the same time, this system allows to act gradually, monitoring and evaluating the different interventions so that they can be modified or accentuated if necessary.

Future. Three case studies

_1. Quai près aux Loups. Being the most urban area, the aim is to concentrate the existing industrial programme and incorporate new programmes associated with a new public space and the industry of the site, creating a hybrid complex with a more human environment at the gates of the city.

_2. Quai Lescure. Reuse of the industrial heritage to incorporate hybrid uses between city, industry and countryside. An agricultural and housing cooperative is proposed to revalue the environment and be a motor for the distribution of local production.

_3. Quai Amfreville-Mi-Voie. Action is being taken on the border between the department and the river to connect the village with the Seine. Transversal interventions for the treatment of public space and the removal of infrastructural barriers accompanied by the incorporation of a new housing programme.

Indicators

To measure the effect of the different strategies implemented, it is proposed to use the three tools also as objective parameters.

These indicators, although indicative, show a clear change of paradigm: reduction of waste, multiplication of green areas, emergence of permanent population or appearance of different alternative means of transport.