



PIERRE

- 5 MAI 2024 -

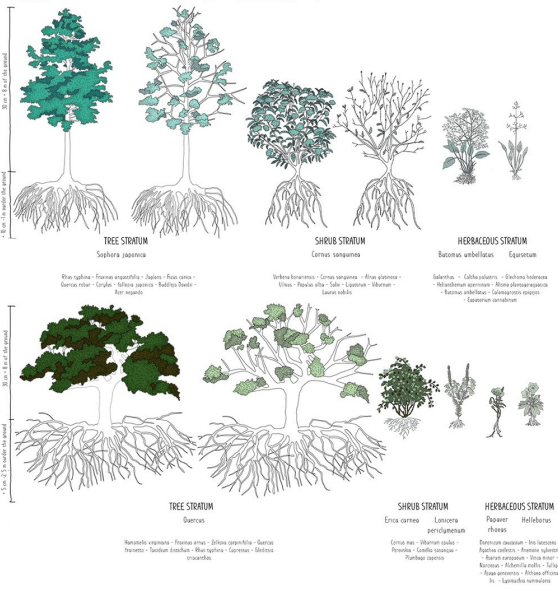
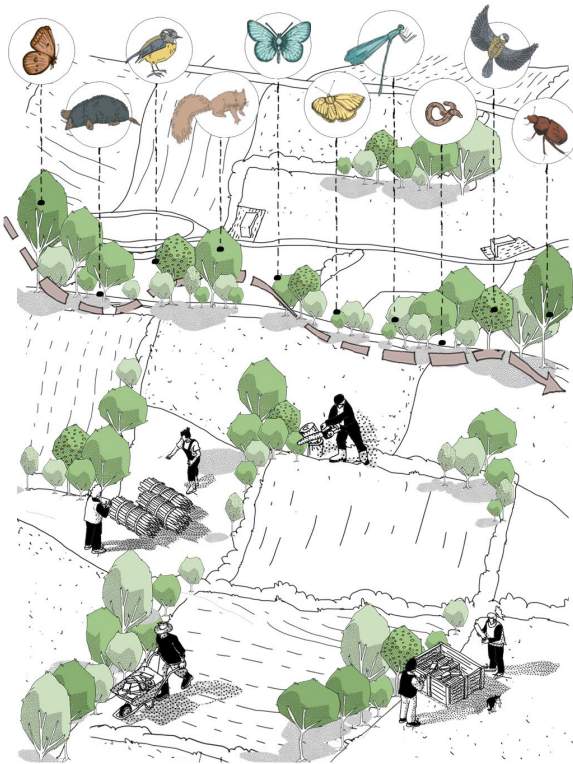
Within its territorial scheme, Fleurance is an exception. It is a main town tucked away at the bottom of a valley and hidden in the Gers landscape. We look at the rehabilitation of the former Gersycoop cooperative as an opportunity to restore Fleurance's visibility in the wider landscape and in the cultural spirit of the Gers region.

Fleurance lies at the crossroads between the metropolitan area, to which it is connected, and the rural area, in which it is embedded. The landscape is open, with a myriad of "villages perchés" with shared views. Large agricultural plots open up to the horizon and occasional wooded hedges define agricultural plots. Just like Lectoure, the second influential town in the region, the villages provide a structure to the area.

But Fleurance stands out in this scheme. It has a unique location, at the bottom of a valley, which makes it the only commune in the territory to be on the riverbank. This also breaks the pattern, which generates a loss in visibility and in territorial presence. The city stands as an economic and social hub, which is a tremendous opportunity. But this as well comes at a cost: the town's entrances are devastated by mono-functional industrial and residential areas, and the population does not directly identify with the agrarian world of the Serre.

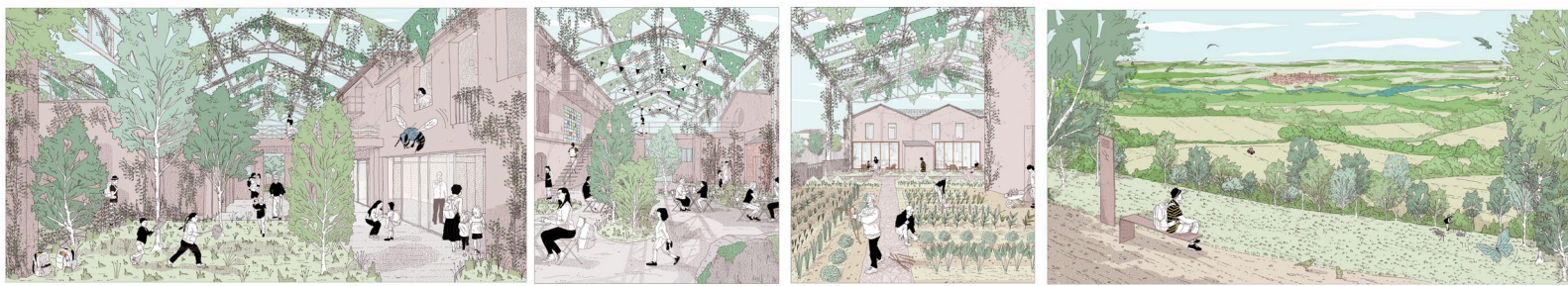
Redeveloping the former Gersycoop cooperative provides an opportunity to propose an alternate survey of the territory. Through a few frugal actions, this will let us requalify how the commune is perceived in the wider landscape. On the wooded slopes, we set up Belvedere viewpoints, allowing visitors to contemplate the valley and Fleurance within its natural setting. Down below, the project site is close to the spot where we can feel water the most. This is an opportunity to generate porosity between urban spaces and watercourse – for the benefit of Fleurance residents and of their occasional guests. Much better than the fast tracks scratching through industrial zones, the new park along the banks of the Gers restores the river's structuring value and offers an alternative, more qualitative route to access the city. This should restore the biotic corridors, which are identified as a specific issue of the Scot Gascon and amplify the local biocenosis through a living corridor leading to the gates of Fleurance, on our site.

The project site becomes the setting for an exemplary construction approach: a real manifesto promoting the wealth of local resources and know-how. The architecture will combine reuse and first usage of traditional Gers resources. Studying the existing building stock, we knew which resources are on site and the extent of the deconstruction we shall apply for each building. A concept of urban mining has been defined which, correctly phased, will make the most of the existing buildings' potential. Then, all the local resources that exist within a 50km radius have been identified, thanks to a separate study. The construction process promotes the local economy and supports the local craftsmen, in a philosophy which is both inclusive and educational. The Fleurance of tomorrow will be the herald of its territory.



AMPLIFIED HEDGEROWS

Hedgerows exploitation to obtain ligneous material for the benefit of the boiler room on site is an opportunity to launch an amplification of this iconic landscape item into Serre and Ribere areas.



The building of the grain silo will undergo a targeted deconstruction. The partitions of the vast adjoining floors will be removed. The secondary silos within this annex will also be dismantled, to release the full-height space. The principle behind the work on this building is to minimize intervention and free up a flexible space that makes maximum use of what's already there, with a minimum of alterations. The shell of the grain silos will be preserved, prepared and partially perforated. Some roofs will also be removed from the top of the silo. Access is made independent between the grain silos and the annex. The side building on the west side is completely removed to free up public space and increase the amount of vegetation on the plot.

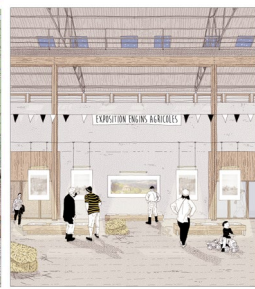
The stores are fit to a tangle of dwellings invaded by industrial buildings. The first step is to dismantle the "light" structures to lighten the heart of the block and reduce it back to the domestic scale that fits the neighborhood. After dismantling the sheds, we recover the non-asbestos materials for reuse and recycling. We also demolish the hardened overhangs (concrete slabs, brick walls), and crush the rubble to produce fill and gravel-type finished flooring. Re-tiled roofs can be used to install energy-efficient facade systems and landscape public space, while the demolished blocks become a source of materials for the future phases. Reuse is optimized. In the end, the amount of waste resulting from the site cleaning should be as small as it can be.

Managed by artisans from the Lomagne and experts of the reuse practices, the warehouse will serve as a prefabrication and recycling space, based on a participatory principle of pooling production resources. It represents a « capable space » which enable site transformation. The plastic silos will be dismantled, and the asbestos-contaminated cement roofing sheets will be removed. The tanks and elevators are retained. This way, site meeting rooms and administrative areas can be installed in the towers. The existing sloping floors are reworked using gravel sub-bases made from the first resources recovered on site during the soil permeabilization operations. Between the load-bearing walls, we demolish the walls interior infill, which creates a hangar, open to the rest of the operation. This intervention comes first in the phase, gradually freeing up space for vital worksite areas. The more space is freed up, the more the site base grows, like an indicator, showing the intensity of the project and of the whole operation. We also implement an industrial principle called "forward motion": the materials are recovered from the deposits provided either by the buildings themselves, or by local resources centers. Then, they are transported to the logistic dock at the bow of the building, where they are successively received, sorted and stored according to their nature, condition and size. Rubble, stone, tiles, bricks and paving stones are cleaned, crushed and sieved. Wooden elements are cleaned, then undergo a corrodng process before being transformed and assembled in situ before being reused on site.



Just like the Lomagnole farmhouse, many types of architectures have been built to fit Gascon's resources throughout history. For its part, Fleurance is at the crossroads of raw earth and limestone architecture. The adobe - a raw-earth brick process - a bit of bouge and pisé, and the cob architecture, are all materials coming from our experience of this beloved territory. The nature of the soil, geology and topography are essential assets of the Gascon identity, which still characterize our territory today. And our next challenge will be to explore new techniques, to deepen our methods and to replenish all the good that is already there.





FEUILLE

- 5 MAI 2027 -

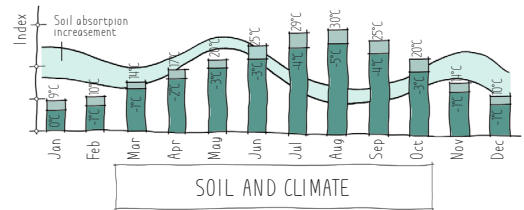
Here, we respond to the programmatic needs that the commune accurately expressed. We reconnect the people who live in the "villages perchés" with the people of Fleurance, the travelers passing through, and even with the surrounding cities. On this site we produce the social fabric of this land in the service of ecosystems, the inhabitants and the living.

As we enhance the biocenosis of the Gers riverbanks, soft mobility can be supported right up to the site, gateway to the city center, via a re-qualified ecological corridor. Combined with the redevelopment of the land, the natural site components will generate multiple impacts on the local living environment. Cool spots are numerous, thanks to soil permeabilization, mostly in open ground, and the de-densification of selected buildings. We increase soil absorption significantly, which is conducive to water tables maintenance and to a better control over run-off-water. The biotope coefficient soars. Biotic corridors are rebuilt. As we use materials sourced from on-site deposits, and as we process them within the former warehouses, the cost is kept under control, and the carbon impact remains as low as it can be.

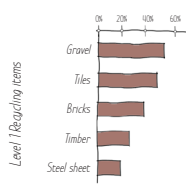
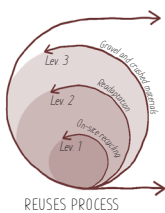
Now perfectly flexible, the former warehouses become a "Capable Hall": they are free to evolve without constraint, and can accommodate the tools and players who will build here and elsewhere. To complete the building restructuring, we invoke local and re-used architecture and its endemic archetypes. Programmatically, this site becomes the headquarters of a cultural institution. It comes with a vocation: bringing the Fleurantins of urban culture and the inhabitants of the "villages perchés" together, by exploiting the full potential of the Capable Hall. The economic and cultural players of the Plateaux de la Serre come back to the site, and unite in a moment of interaction. Occasional and seasonal ephemeral installations become an opportunity for sharing agricultural

fairs, educational workshops enabling local craftsmen to promote their know-how - and the economy that goes with it - gastronomic or cultural events that mark the identity of the Gers region... The institution may offer a culture on the move, with events taking place onsite, at the organization's headquarters, but also within the "villages perchés" themselves. When the institution finds vacancy or traditional buildings in ruins, they would organize participative worksites led by craftsmen to rehabilitate this built heritage. It then could be offered to cultural players as a supporting asset of the culture on the move, enlivening the villages' cultural program and creating an operational link between the Capable Hall of Fleurance and the surrounding villages.

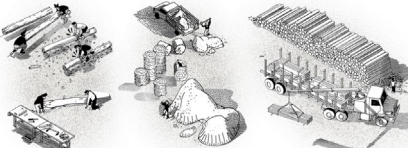
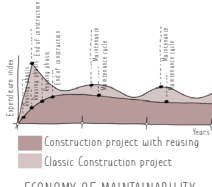
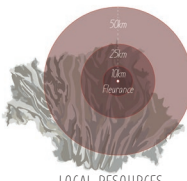
After the clearance/demolition phase, the built heritage offers diverse typologies. The municipality program distribution was very close to the actual transformation capacity of the pre-existing buildings. In respect to this distribution, we established all the programs within the heterogeneous space of the stores and silos. This scheme preserves the former warehouses and their great capacity for reversibility. It builds an innovative program that can be appropriated by the local society. Fleurance is a town of commerce and trade. Its community and entrepreneurial fabric is dense and dynamic. The professional and civic network will support the dynamic exchange and pooling of knowledge.



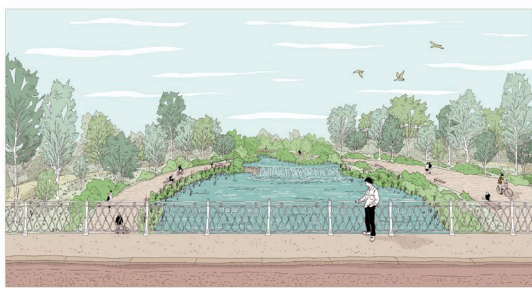
In a difficult situation like that of raising a child alone, daily isolation cannot be viable. There comes an ideal to be pursued: the dream of a place where mutual aid and solidarity rhyme with nature and climate-friendly space, in touch with the other living beings. We never feel closer to our roots than when we pass on what we've learnt from our land and living place, while in return receiving help, advice and feedback from other Gersois. This is a place where one can think of their land and climate, where elders talk to the children. This is a place where we could see the new generation flourish.



REUSED MATERIALS



LOCAL RESOURCES



CISEAUX

- 5 MAI 2029 -

Sew links between various populations is a main goal of this project. Humans and non-humans, craftsmen, farmers, people from hills and valleys, urban citizens of Fleurance, youth and elders... can coexist within a citizen cooperative area nestled in lush greenery

The annexes to the silos offer vast, flexible and inexpensive floor space, which will house the Maison des Associations on the first floor and co-working spaces for Fleurantine businesses on the upper floors. Thanks to the flexibility of the premises, a wide variety of uses can be expected in line with the needs of the municipality. The economic viability of this program should enable further investments to be made in the future, and a permanent auditorium shall be built in place of the void left by the annex's plastic silos, complementing the community centre. The media library, a center of local knowledge, will make masterful use of the silos high volumes – and also will have a new, independent access on the first floor. In the aedicular on the top level, an astronomical observatory will complete the roof terrace overlooking the valley.

Several of the store buildings are suited to housing programs, whether for single mothers, isolated young people, artists in residence or travelers passing through. Built around a reopened interior street, this space is handled by retirees who take care of its management, childcare, gardening and canteen. The intergenerational link is intended to be one of solidarity: the elders support mothers and children alike around educational and natural spaces. As we can see, la rue des générations offers a more domestic typology, conducive to the notions of inhabiting, residing, living and staying. However, none of the lots sweeps the past clean entirely. Let us look at the silo on this block. For economic reasons, it keeps its initial storage function. Only the production is redirected towards the neighborhood, as it will provide fuel for the collective boiler room.

At this scale, we can do more than just relying on reuse: we can leverage the local craftsmanship, breaking the operations down into several smaller projects, compatible with the small local businesses capacity. With these projects, money is invested in three assets: people and living things, economic support for small business, and the development of virtuous industries.

I was descending the slopes when suddenly I saw through the foliage the valley down below. The Fleurance bell tower seemed to preside over the surroundings. At its feet, the Gers was running through the hills. I entered into the city, and crossed a park where a few families were playing on the banks. I found a square. It was teeming with life. Surrounded by laughing children, a gardener was pushing his old tools towards a flowerbed hidden within the shadow of the church. For an entire day, I wandered in the streets. Here and there, I took the time to chat with a few local residents in a planted courtyard. They told me the story of their Pays.

