



Romainville (FR)

Les Ormes, a popular suburban neighborhood

Restore without altering its nature

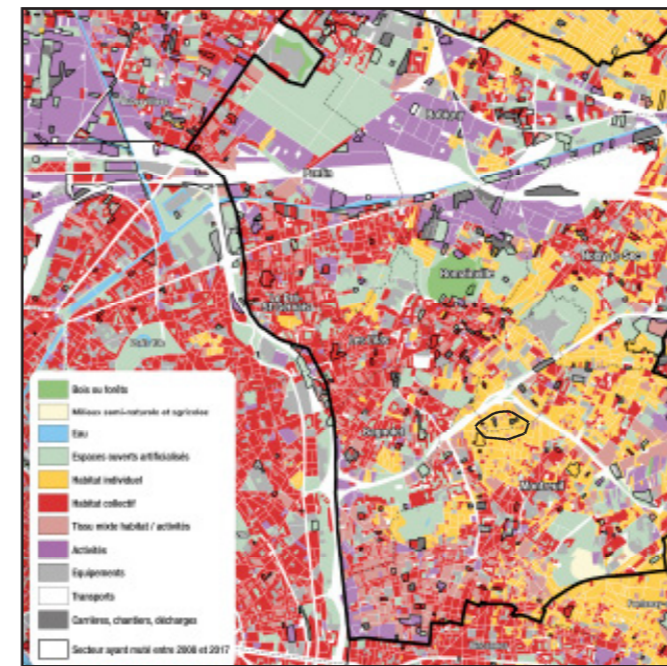
Scale
XL/L

Team composition Architect mandatory
 Location: Quartier des Ormes, Romainville, Île-de-France.
 Population: EPT Est Ensemble 435,582 inhabitants.
 Romainville 33,266 inhabitants.
 Quartier des Ormes 1,097 inhabitants.
 Reflection site: 275 ha – Project site: 18 ha.
 Site proposed by: EPT Est Ensemble and the City of Romainville.
 Actors involved: EPT Est Ensemble and the City of Romainville.
 Owner(s) of the site: 350 private owners, the State, EPFIF, and the City of Romainville.
 Follow-up after the competition:
 AMO and AMU missions, Pre-operational urban study

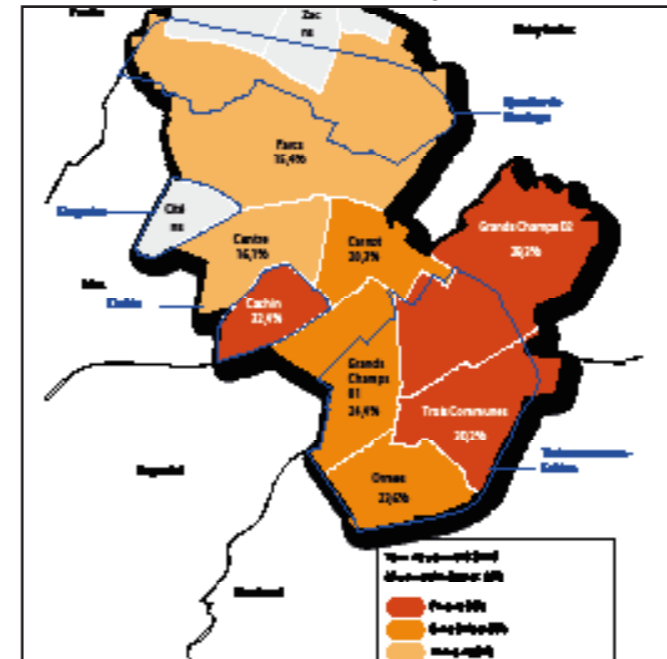
(such as a master plan), urban project management study, programming study in the first phase, architectural or urban project management missions in the second phase.
 Commission after competition:
 Selection of three projects per site, with the participation of site representatives.
 Prizes: Awarded by the jury regardless of the sites:
 Winner: €12,000 / Mentioned: €6,000 / Special mentions: No prize.



Extrait de l'Atlas Est Ensemble (Institut Paris Région 2022)



Extrait de l'Atlas Est Ensemble (Institut Paris Région 2022)



Extrait du Portrait Social de Romainville (ABS, 2022)

The Popular Suburban Housing of Les Ormes: A Neighborhood to Restore Beyond Speculative Logics

Suburban neighborhoods represent a significant chapter in urban history, structured around an object of both desire and rejection. In its architectural expression, it often embodies a so-called «regional» character, creating a unique urban landscape. Beyond its materiality, the suburban house carries connotations of escape, freedom, and proximity to nature and neighbors. It had its golden age in the 19th century—this is its brighter side. The other, less idyllic aspect is embedded in urban financialization dynamics.

Today, suburban housing is at the core of densification and land value enhancement issues in French metropolises in general, and the Paris metropolitan area in particular. All planning laws and regulatory documents have identified suburban areas as potential land reserves, leading to residential densification projects that often exclude more vulnerable households.

The Ormes neighborhood embodies all of these dynamics. It is a historical urban entity, a space of desire, a social marker, an object of speculation, and a projection of alternative ways of living in a future France facing +4°C by 2100. It is also a fragile urban fabric—sometimes outdated, sometimes unhealthy—undergoing rapid densification. Located at the heart of the Est Ensemble territory in the municipality of Romainville, bordered by the A3 highway and the future T1 tramway, Les Ormes is a working-class suburban neighborhood undergoing radical transformation. Composed mostly of single-family homes built between the late 19th and the second half of the 20th century on former agricultural plots, it is now experiencing often brutal densification dynamics that erode its unique character. The urban forms emerging from these densification processes contribute to standardizing the neighborhood and fostering social exclusion. Now situated within a dense urban environment whose appeal continues to grow due to improved public transport connections, this neighborhood stands at a crossroads in terms of its urban future.

As an object of speculation and urban desire, how can we ensure that it does not become an urban object at risk of disappearing?



How can we change the way developers perceive suburban housing, shifting from a speculative land approach to one that sees it as a resourceful territory?



QUESTIONS TO THE COMPETITORS

Est Ensemble and Romainville seek to identify the levers that will allow the suburban fabric of Les Ormes to evolve in a context of high land pressure while continuing to accommodate middle and working-class households without losing its unique character. The competition should enable local authorities to explore alternative approaches within a fabric composed of numerous small property owners by leveraging existing resources.

At the metropolitan scale, how can we balance attractiveness and real estate pressure while preserving the intrinsic qualities of this fabric in Paris' inner suburbs? How can the neighborhood be integrated into the broader geography of Eastern Île-de-France while maximizing its existing resources?

At the city and project area scale, it is essential to consider the ability to foster a neighborhood identity and urban polarity, given that Les Ormes currently functions as an isolated enclave within the urban continuum. Can this sector become a new urban focal point in the future? What are the inherent qualities of its fabric (built environment, open spaces, public and private spaces) that could support an alternative model of intensification while addressing climate adaptation challenges, despite its low construction quality? What renewal strategies should be prioritized, and how can residents be engaged in a way that restores their sense of pride in living there, while creating the conditions for greater diversity (generational, household, and social mix)?

At the scale of controlled land, what programs could help rebuild a neighborhood life, fostering shared spaces that reinvent sociability?



How can we help current and future residents regain pride in living in a resourceful neighborhood by creating the conditions for welcoming a diverse community?