

E¹⁸ Clermont (FR)

How can the endogenous transformation of La Fontaine du Bac be initiated?

Scale
XL/L

Team Composition: Architect mandatory

Location: Clermont-Ferrand

Population: City – 150,000; Metropolitan Area – 300,000

Reflection Site: 90 ha

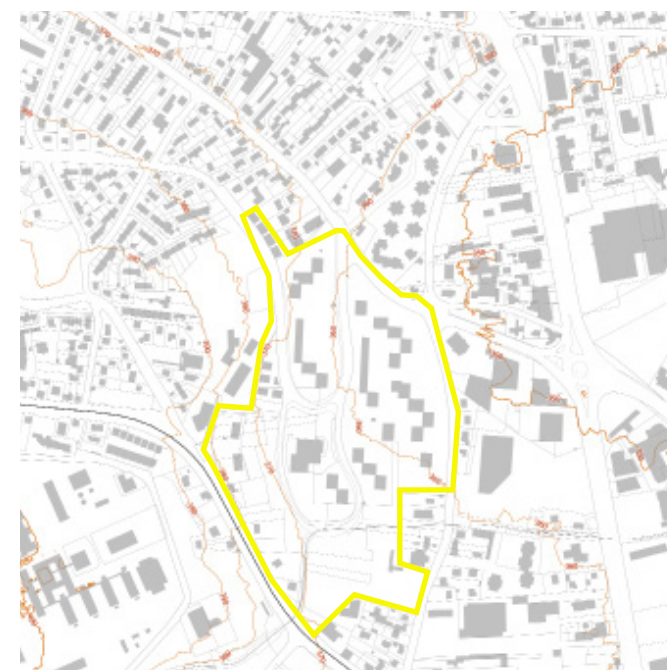
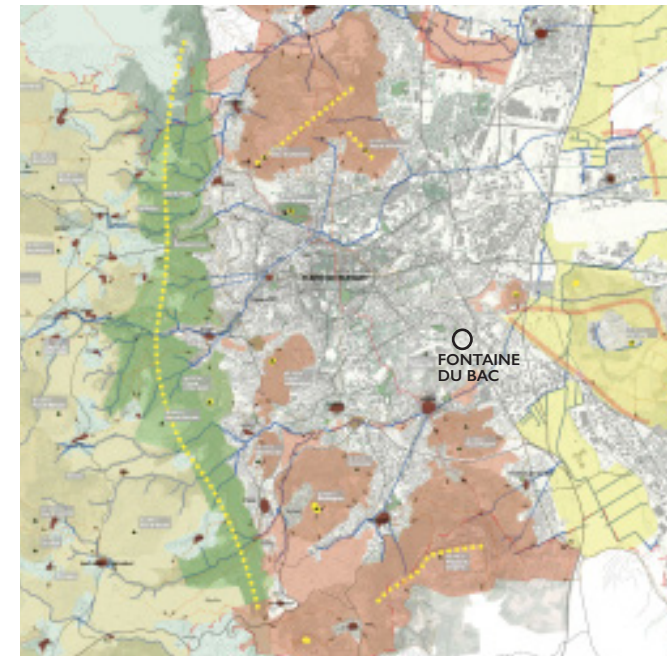
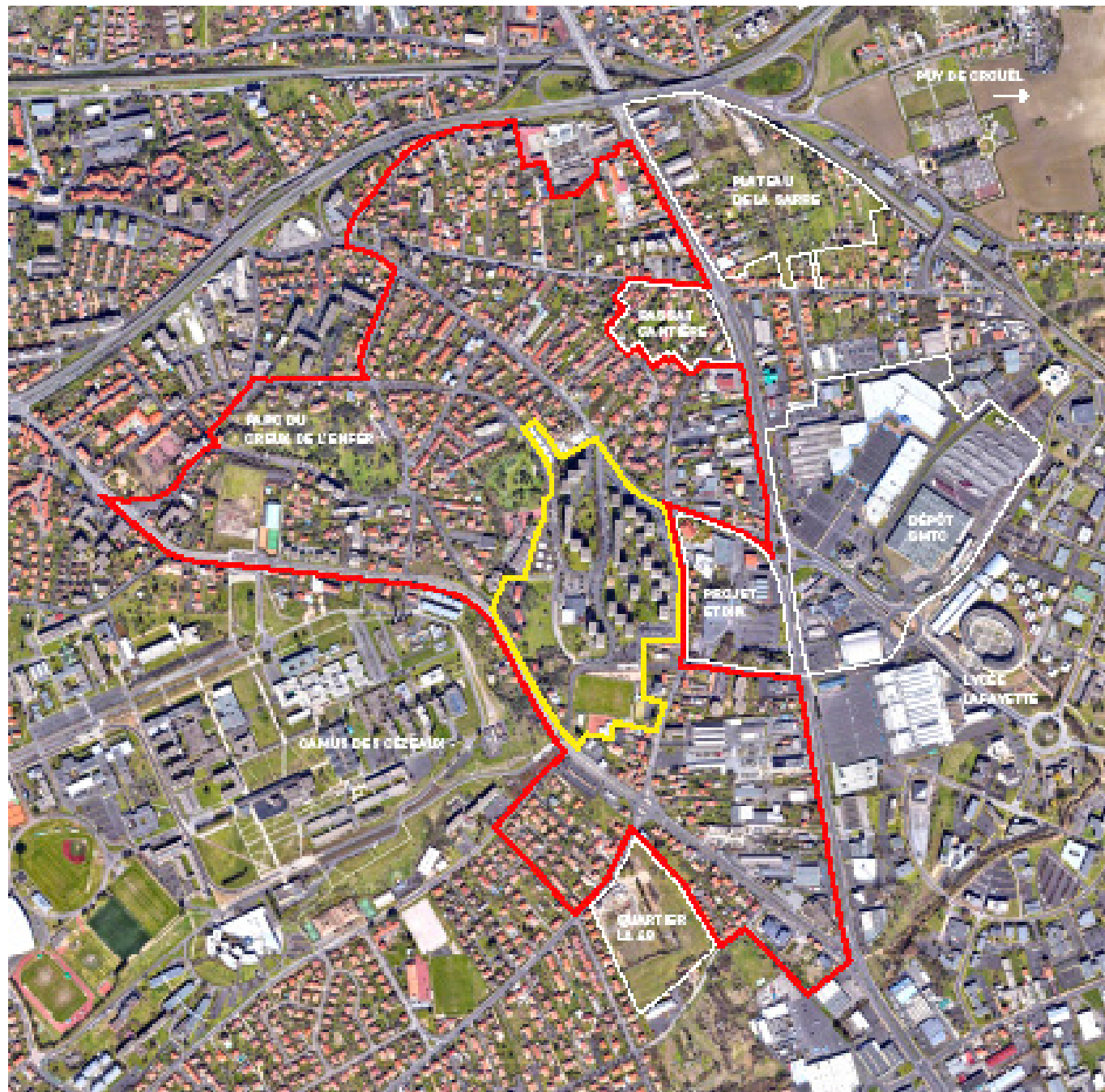
Project Site: 13 ha

Proposed by: Assemblia

Key Stakeholders: Assemblia, City of Clermont-Ferrand

Post-Competition Outcomes:

- Study and project missions to refine strategic proposals
- Feasibility studies on the project site, including the prefiguration of uses and/or the repurposing of buildings
- Urban and/or architectural project management mission(s)



SITE / CONTEXT

La Fontaine du Bac is a neighborhood located in the southeastern arc of Clermont-Ferrand, near La Pardieu—one of the largest commercial and business districts of the metropolitan area—and just below the Cézeaux university campus. Bounded to the north and south by two major roadways connecting Clermont-Ferrand to the southern and southeastern municipalities of the metropolis, including Cournon, the neighborhood experiences the daily ebb and flow of commuters. Strategically positioned just 10 minutes by car from the Clermont La Pardieu SNCF train station and 5 minutes from the highway interchange between the A71 (linking Orléans to Clermont-Ferrand) and the A75 (connecting Clermont-Ferrand to Béziers), it serves as a regional and national gateway into the city.

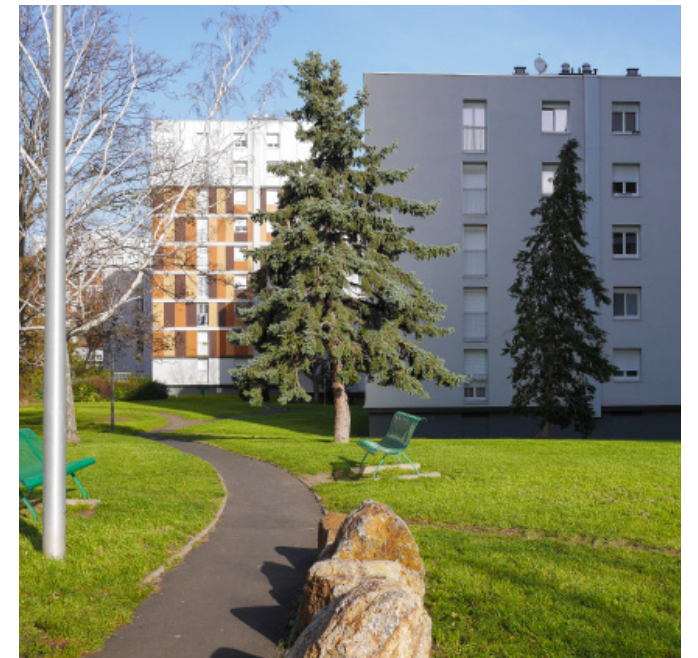
Built in the early 1970s on the urban fringe, on former agricultural strip plots, La Fontaine du Bac long retained its status as an entry point into the city. Over time, its surroundings have densified—first with the creation of the Pardieu business district in the early 1980s, bringing the aesthetics of a «franchise city» to this urban gateway, and later with the proliferation of suburban housing developments from the 1990s onward. Today, as one of many fragmented urban entities, La Fontaine du Bac is part of a sprawling, diffuse cityscape that extends almost continuously to the metropolitan limits. The expansion of Clermont-Ferrand's public transport network, combined with the transformation of adjacent commercial zones, is set to reposition La Fontaine du Bac—once on the city's periphery—at the heart of the metropolitan area in the near future.

A large-scale housing complex with 909 units distributed across 24 buildings on a 6.4-hectare site, La Fontaine du Bac, like many developments of its era, benefits from generous outdoor spaces weaving between and around the towers—accommodating parking lots, green lawns, and playgrounds. The presence of these green spaces, along with the neighborhood's accessibility, contributes to the deep attachment of its residents, who affectionately refer to it as «the village.» Among Clermont-Ferrand's priority neighborhoods (QPV), La Fontaine du Bac has the longest average length of residence, resulting in a significant proportion of elderly social housing tenants.

To address the aging and increasing economic vulnerability of its population, while also embracing ongoing societal and environmental transitions and anticipating the evolution of neighboring districts, La Fontaine du Bac must now embark on a profound transformation.



How can the landscape of La Fontaine du Bac be revitalized? How can it be transformed into a new shared public foundation, actively used and embraced by all its residents?



QUESTIONS FOR THE COMPETITORS

How can the transformation of La Fontaine du Bac be approached in a measured and sensitive way through the revitalization of its landscape spaces? By enhancing and intensifying its outdoor spaces, the neighborhood can become a valuable resource in terms of biodiversity and everyday uses, fostering an endogenous transformation. What spatial reconfigurations and landscape interventions should be implemented to make the neighborhood more adaptable to major future changes—whether urban, social, or climatic?

How can metropolitan dynamics and neighborhood-scale dynamics be reconciled? La Fontaine du Bac is currently an isolated district, seldom frequented by outsiders. Reintegrating it into broader metropolitan transitions requires overcoming both physical and psychological barriers. How can the neighborhood be opened up to adjacent districts while preserving and even strengthening existing social and community dynamics?

What role should residents play in the transformation and management of their neighborhood?

The transformation of La Fontaine du Bac cannot be dissociated from a long-term strategy for its governance, led by and for its residents. This transformation offers an opportunity to rethink how social housing is inhabited and, consequently, how it is administered in the 21st century.



How can the transformation of La Fontaine du Bac's spaces foster new ways of living? How can evolving uses initiate and shape these transformations?