

# THE CURE : ANATOMY AND REGENERATION OF A CRITICAL METABOLISM

## Diagnosis

Limoges

### Defective synapses

A three-headed living organism, the Limoges metropolitan area is affected by a disconnection of its main components – the ville-centre, the ville-route and the ville-campagne. The project site benefits from an ideal situation: the N520 connects the ville-route, and the Borders of Vienna project opens the ville-campagne. This is a unique opportunity to open the city centre, reconnect these components and implement new synergies between the stakeholders and the inhabitants of both the neighborhood and the larger city. But as long as this urban synapse remains inoperative, the nervous influx of the metropolitan organism cannot flow. Yet, this neighborhood's rightful place is to be a synapse, as it shall be the connection between the ville-centre and the territory. To this end, we postulate that urban revitalization is necessary. Its purpose would be to reassert the preexisting neighborhood identity, restore the consistency of roads and landscapes, and reactivate the lost, or ignored, economical, ecological, and social dynamics.

### Disturbed vascularity

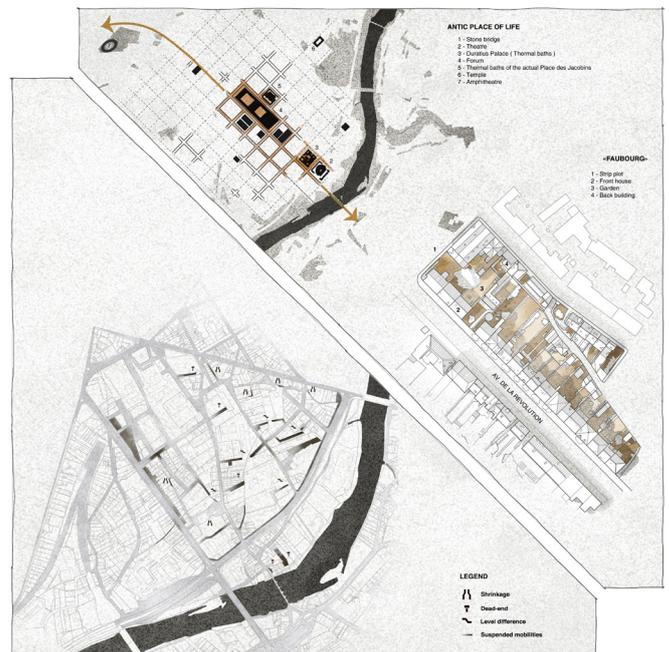
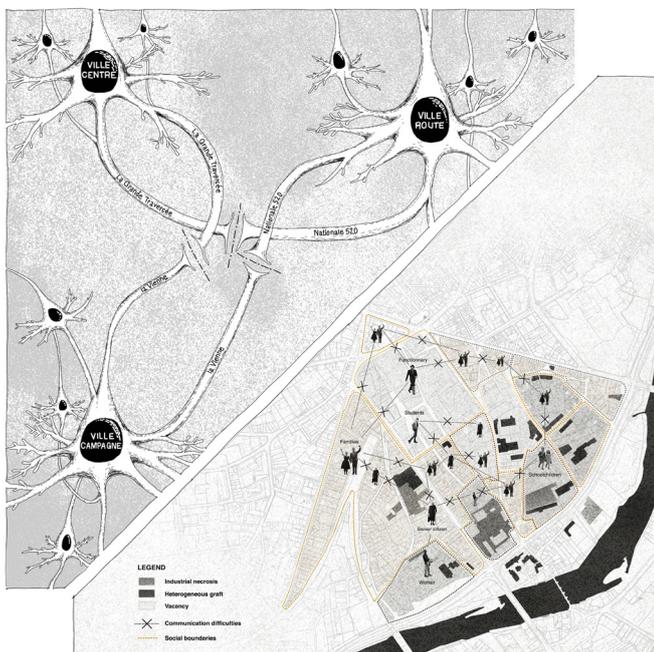
Over time, the neighborhood's mobility has been disrupted. Many elements prevent the flows from circulating fluently. Many retaining walls have been built as an adjustment to the rugged topography. The road profiles, the invasion of parking spots and the lack of transversal porosity of the trio of Mairie-Pont Saint Martial-Portes Ferrées all contribute. Additionally, the neighborhood's porosity has been undermined by the opaque skyline of the Avenue de la Révolution, and by the crossing of the N520. Fluidity is critical, as capilla-

rity will propagate the urban dynamics to come, so that consistency and unity can be brought back within the area. The first step to a successful frugal requalification is to fluidify this vascular system. This requires an upgrade of the crossing of Rue du Pont Martial. Yet, this upgrade cannot be just about crossing the neighborhood. It needs to deeply irrigate it, so that the organism will work again. Amongst other things, the original neighborhood genetics was based on the inheritance of the roman layout and on the strip-based parcels. These genetic components shall be respected in any attempt.

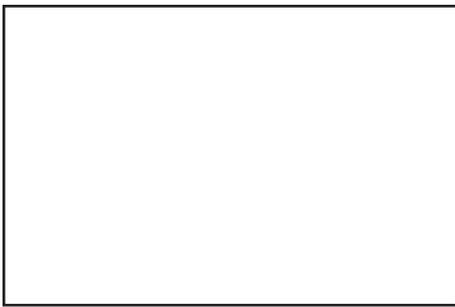
### Disruptive urban transplants

The buildings of the neighborhood participate to its lack of consistency. The older strip-based tissue of the faubourgs was once rather homogeneous. At the borders of the riverbank, it is now tangled with the necrotic tissue of the ancient industrial footprint. Several empty spots and sporadic interventions also stain the north of the site. On the centre-ville side, the large exogenous university buildings present their back to the neighborhood. The perfectible organism circulation will not irrigate organs of such heterogeneity. The body functions must be made clearer, by promoting the tissue of the preexisting faubourgs, reactivating the brownfield sites and putting a halt to the erratic property transactions. The propagation of these undesired urban transplants must be stopped. These disruptions, these heterogeneities are all symptoms of an exhausted organism. A healthy vascular system, based on a consistent urban landscape and on the reconnection of the disconnected functional organs, is the only way to the neighborhood revitalization.

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granulates, and a recycling center for the materials coming from the recurring deposits. This combination of processes shall place the inhabitant at the heart of the various projects of this urban acupuncture. This requalification will sustain the core neighborhood identity, and will also take advantage of what already exists: the runoff landscape, the diversity of what has been built and of the parcels, but also the rich history of the site, would it be in terms of road and buildings roman heritage, of industrial buildings or of the faubourgs tissue. These small productive, mobile or adaptable units are the first step of the project implementation over the brownfield sites. Above all, they are destined to the genesis of a negotiated landscape. In addition to the production of raw materials, the vocation of this site is to foster interactions between the various implicated civilian and professional populations. It should be noted that the success of this intervention is independant from the second phasis.

### System intersection

The site is located on the top of a rocky, low permeability soil, with a strong topography and many artificial grounds. This low porosity creates islets of heat and a landscape where water runoff is high. We are today the effect of this specificity. But it could be the key to tomorrow's landscape. The water irrigates all the project spaces and goes by the requalification of the public spaces, where it brings a landscape consistency to the entire neighborhood. Its subtle presence is the guiding principle which brings freshness islets and new usage through several spatial layouts.

The project rethinks the limits. It creates parking lots outside of the site to give back space for the pedestrians. The profiles of the avenue de la Révolution and of the N520 are redefined to give a real stand for soft mobility and natural landscape. The neighborhood boundaries are made softer and are reopen towards the city and the riverbank. The synapse finds back its road connections and the neighborhood blood system reestablishes the metropolitan system nervous connections.

### Fluidification of the blood system

The water runoff landscape lets the neighborhood find back transversality towards the grand crossing of Mairie-Pont Saint-Martial-Portes Ferrées. It relies on the penetration capacity of the strip-shaped faubourgs, which is a strong heritage of this site, the thinness and the depth of which generate chosen urban porosities. The meeting spaces between these porosities and the crossing are an occasion to requalify the spaces that surround this specific, permeable landscape, and, also, to reintroduce life and biodiversity at the heart of the neighborhood. Mobile and fluid, the rainy days water gives place to the vegetal landscapes on the sunny moments. Water's linear figure follows the neighborhood mobilities and generates and lands-

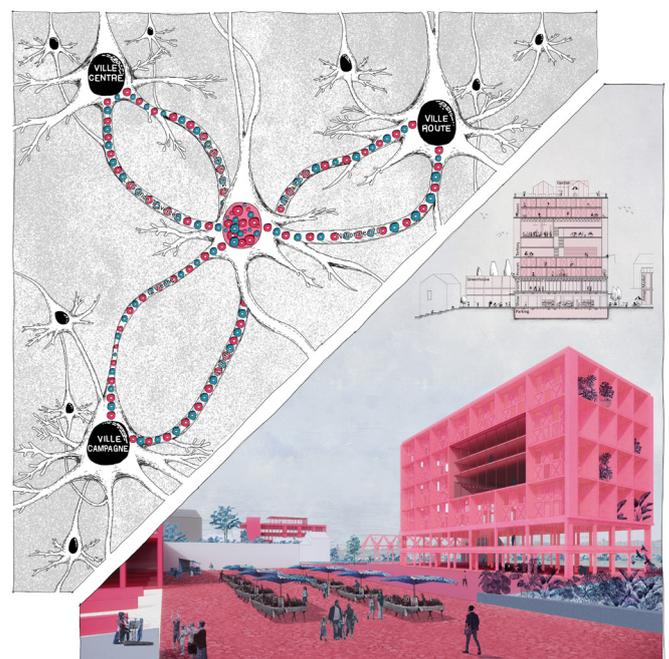
## Recovery

cape that evolves along the seasons. It fluidifies all the organs of the system and upgrades the spaces that had been left aside. This attention to soils is nurtured by the recycling culture, as the waste of inhabitants become the new raw materials of the others' vitality. This is also what makes this project ecologically positive, as its frugality guarantees viability, and as it shows minimal amount of destructions and excellent economical impact for all the stakeholder of the recycling process.

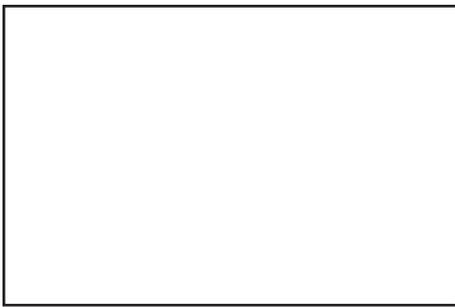
### Reconnected synapse

The second intervention must answer in the long time. This is time for the metropolitan stakes. The healing of the metropolitan nervous system requires a program-based reactivation of the defective synapse. The brownfield sites are bordering the connection neurons of the ville-route and ville-campagne (that is, the Vienne and the N520) and are a valuable land opportunity for new programs. This is the opportunity to eradicate the boundary of N520 and enable its integration, which better articulate the opening towards the riverbank and the mobility changes of the ville-centre.

The main purpose of this intervention is to reveal the latent synergies between the populations of the ville-centre, ville-route and ville-campagne, by implementing mixed, shared and flexible programs. Based on both public and private investments, these construction projects must involve the main economic actors of the territory as much as the small merchants of the city centre. The issues at stakes are economical, but also deal with production and culture. The negotiated landscape et its recycling assets and its water and natural space mana-



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gement also participate to requalify the soils of the brownfield sites, which finally creates a unique biotope that can't be found elsewhere.

### Micro-organisms

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During the requalification of the Vienne riverbank, the implementation of the Portes-Ferrées eco neighborhood and the implementation of the negotiated landscape are factors that increase the area attractivity. To avoid gentrification and guide densification, the building of housings and offices must be planned and controlled. The disorganized necrosis of the urban tissue must be countered by implementing mixed and flexible program-based micro-organisms that carry human synergies.

During the first intervention, the project relies on minimal construction. Reusing the old IFSI school to create the management center for negotiated landscape was an opportunity to reopen the place du campus on the Pont Saint Martial street. Then, we reserve the housing offer to local inhabitants by lifting the houses of the faubourg at the angle of the strip-shaped parcels where we want to create new arteries.

During the second phase, the mixed brownfield programs are pushed to include offices and housings in sufficient quantity to answer the market needs. This vertical densification matches the local, large parcel morphology, and is beneficial to the free open spaces at ground level where the programs can claim the space.

### West synapse

The former Enedis building is rehabilitated, whereas the GRDF warehouse is used to implement a second small tower. These buildings create visual milestones for the walker of the Vienne riverbank, and anchor the synapse in the landscape.

Except for the offices and housings, these programs are an hypothetical scenario which is destined to change over time. The scenario assumes that tripartite partnerships – the content of which will be negotiated – will emerge between the inhabitants and public and private stakeholders. For the West Synapse hosting the Enedis building, the current scenario envisions various functions.

On the west side, a Congress Center will host conferences and expositions within a space that is given back to the city, and will be co-managed by the Ester technopole and the municipality. The existing parking lots under the vegetal mound are preserved and enlarged in response to the need for more pedestrian space. The mobile reuse cycle leaves the GRDF brownfield to reach the East face of the Enedis building, and to pursue on its ecological and civic activity.

## Recovery

Offices are provided to professionals of the merchant areas and of the technopole, to make their activities closer to the inner city. Programs for the inhabitants and users colonizing the area are exemplified through a kindergarten and a brewery.

### East Synapse

The east synapse is implanted on the former GRDF brownfield. Once the negotiated landscape is settled in the neighborhood, the reuse cycle gives place to new stakeholders. Housing and offices are deployed in the tour, which returns the property investment by generating new partnerships with local real estates. In addition to these programs, the tower also hosts, in its first floors, a showroom for the merchants of the commercial zone and of the centre-ville, so they can meet their consumers. A publicly managed cultural place hosts the associations and echoes the negotiated landscape central management. Open to the surroundings and to the riverbank, this new entity coordinates the brownfield stakeholders and deploy a cultural offer within the public space of this new urban forum. An AMAP market is implemented at the remote warehouses of the parcel, which provides a weekly market to the forum and also uses the rehabilitated covered market as a productive greenhouse. Urban agriculture spreads over the parcel and the roof of the tower. The walkers from the ville-campagne cross through the synapse, up until the entrance of the negotiated landscape, which is then the main thread towards the city center. Overseeing this view, the synapse also makes advantage of the topography to host an underground parking lot, and thus, complete the surrounding parking offer.

