



GROUES

un nouveau quartier pour Nanterre
une autre idée de La Défense

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

SPIRIT OF LES GROUES

EP/ADESA

ÉTABLISSEMENT PUBLIC D'AMÉNAGEMENT
DE LA DÉFENSE SEINE ARCHE
OPÉRATION D'INTÉRÊT NATIONAL

A DESIRABLE FUTURE

The Les Groues project reflects today's cities. Les Groues brings together all of the urban challenges faced by the Paris Region, from the international positioning of its business hubs to the ties that bind those to surrounding neighborhoods, from the regional housing shortage to the infrastructure-induced urban disruptions, from the issue of maintaining production-based activities in densely populated areas to the quality of life that the neighborhood's urban planning scheme makes possible. Les Groues must be a laboratory, inventing a new way of designing active, efficient and diverse cities gifted for innovation, cities that encourage environmental performance and promote well-being.

Les Groues was designed with the needs of urban development in mind, to contribute to the infrastructure and the overall growth of La Défense. The neighborhood reflects the golden age and subsequent decline of industrial and railroad activities. Until now, this highly strategic area, located at the gates to Europe's foremost business district and a major hub of higher learning, had been overlooked by the major development projects in Seine-Arche and left out of the intensive growth of La Défense. Today, it appears as a patchwork of urban fabrics and atmospheres, displaying extraordinary diversity and exceptional potential.

Building on this singularity, Les Groues is now at the center of development initiatives in the inner suburbs of Paris, thanks to the creation of a new transportation hub served by line 15 of the Grand Paris Metro and the western extension of RER E. With the availability of local real estate and land, the dynamism of its business environment and the potential of its industrial legacy, there is no doubt that Les Groues is the right neighborhood for a large-scale development program. This initiative represents a unique opportunity to create a new Nanterre neighborhood that brings together density and quality of life: in short, to invent a new vision of La Défense. The development of this new district will take place in a double dynamic of urban redevelopment. On the one hand, the process initiated with Seine Arche, which allowed to simultaneously redevelop the Terrasses and other neighborhood of Nanterre. On the other hand, Les Groues will be a common experimentation ground for the La Défense business district and the University, powering a new ecosystem.

Nonetheless, the spirit and originality of the site requires taking a new perspective on urban development. The era of major building programs led entirely by proactive public authorities is over: today, various players must come together around a shared vision. The public development body continues to play its role ensuring overall consistency and coordinating urban transformations, but it also takes on new and overarching responsibilities as a project facilitator, generating possibilities and establishing a network of actors who have not traditionally worked together. As such, the Les Groues project will at once require collective consideration of public spaces and new constructions, and an abundance of private small-scale initiatives to instill functionality, dynamism and life into the neighborhood. Implementing such programs calls for new design approaches whereby traditional real estate players work closely with people and institutions leading alternative projects.

The value of a neighborhood, the affection it inspires in users, cannot be measured by the number of new constructions, but rather by the wealth of possibilities it provides, the abundance of activities it presents and the quality of life it offers.

CHALLENGES

The Les Groues development program will be inclusive both in the outcomes it achieves and the method it implements: it aims to produce an urban melting pot, a city that stands out for its diversity. As such, it must encourage civic initiatives and new ideas. Innovation will be the common theme, the trademark of the Les Groues project, from design to construction, from short-term measures to permanent achievements. It will provide space for unorthodox projects, reflecting emerging demands that sometimes struggle to fit into traditional urban development paradigms.

Necessity is the mother of invention, and Les Groues faces significant challenges that will stimulate creativity among those willing to rise to them. These challenges revolve around user well-being, economic activity and project methodology, and address the following topics:

encouraging diversity through urban planning

Social and functional diversity, together with density, are pillars of urban sustainability. However, it remains difficult to recognize and describe this phenomenon, in spite of abundant feedback: today, it is clearly necessary to go further. A more natural and proactive form of diversity must emerge in Les Groues: recognizing the ever growing functional heterogeneity of modern cities, the challenge is to invent a form of urban planning that does more than simply multiply functions, that organizes cross-fertilization and value-creating encounters. Closer ties between the neighborhood's rich human legacy and the business district must become the nerve center of this process, making it possible to anticipate new lifestyles as well as new ways of working and traveling.

reinventing La Défense:

Les Groues must become a diverse and balanced neighborhood within Nanterre; it also offers an incredible opportunity to revitalize La Défense. Indeed, the competitiveness of international business districts is no longer linked to their exclusiveness, but rather their ability to foster a dynamic and diversified urban culture. As Europe's oldest and largest business district, La Défense must move in that direction by exhibiting greater openness, taking on new functions, welcoming new uses and lifestyles. New urban links - particularly economic links - will ensure complementarity with Les Groues: for example, new real estate offerings in Les Groues will make it easier for businesses to move between offices.

uniting two worlds: the university and the La Défense business district

As a future hub of La Défense Seine Arche, boasting all the benefits of a downtown area, Les Groues will serve as the keystone bringing together the university, several institutions of higher learning and the La Défense business district. Today, links are being established between these two worlds, and Les Groues has a strategic role to play as the backdrop for these new connections. To make this possible, we must go beyond geographic distinctions, transforming them into more programmatic economic distinctions: this is the issue projects developed in Les Groues must address.

a new way of living

There is a gap today between the rapid transformation of lifestyles and new housing construction. This is particularly true for the housing market in the Paris Region. Les Groues must make it possible to anticipate these new needs and encourage innovation in the housing sector, leading to new types of living spaces and new services, providing for new uses and new ways of designing, independently or collectively. Projects must meet emerging demands, particularly highlighting flexibility and adaptability, integrated services (mobility, neighborhood concierge service, etc.), use of ground floors, openness to the city, relationships between public and private spaces, unconventional program structures, etc. Future building managers and users must be involved in designing living spaces.

promoting urban well-being

A dense city often suffers from dependence on an outside area, a place where users can go to get away from it all. As such, enhancing urban resilience requires creating a more welcoming urban environment both for users and for nature, as the two go together and nourish each other. The Les Groues project must demonstrate a pragmatic approach to sustainable development, maximizing the beneficial effects of nature within the city to enhance users' quality of life. For the first time, the question of well-being and health will be considered upfront, in the conception of a huge new district in the Paris Region. Biodiversity, bioclimatism, a landscaped environment, well-being, health and dynamism are the values that must drive all future projects.

meeting energy needs

The Les Groues project will have the écoQuartier label, through sobriety, preservation of resources and integration of nature within the city. It also must be exemplary in terms of energy efficiency. The neighborhood will be designed to continuously reduce greenhouse gas emissions (factor 4), taking account of gray energy associated with building construction. Once operational, the neighborhood will work towards achieving a positive energy balance. All projects must contribute to this goal. Refusing to start from scratch leads to the crucial question of existing structures, and the search for ways of enhancing what is already available. This exemplary energy performance should offer greater comfort and well-being for all.

building on the Cœur des Groues

As densely populated areas transition away from industrial activities, Les Groues stands out as an exception: its industrial character endures, and the economic heart of the area remains

strong. This is an opportunity and a strength to be highlighted, the foundation for distinct economic positioning. Les Groues must serve as an example for the future of production-based activities at small businesses located in densely populated areas, for the way these activities can be compatible with the city's other functions and how to shield them from the expansion of the service economy and real estate pressure. New and existing properties will be designed with complementarity in mind, with an eye to promoting diversity among the neighborhood's businesses and residents. Cœur des Groues will be open onto the full urban program, infusing it with a spark of innovation.

creating a testing ground

Today, the heart of the Les Groues neighborhood features a diverse human and economic legacy that boasts an exceptional environment thanks to its proximity to La Défense, the university and the Terrasses de Nanterre. Furthermore, it offers real estate and buildings ready to be refurbished, providing the opportunity to begin the renewal process right away. Proudly displaying its industrial past, the Cœur des Groues sector must become a testing ground for innovators in search of unconventional properties, on a temporary or permanent basis. Three criteria will determine the success of this approach: its innovative character, its ability to act on existing structures and its visibility. Innovation must feature prominently throughout the urban project, from start to finish, and in every aspect of its development: public spaces, mobility, new properties and new uses for existing structures, as well as future occupants.

activating the future without waiting for tomorrow

Perhaps as important as building physical connections, Les Groues must become known to people who live and work in the western Paris Region. Those who are not familiar with Les Groues will only discover this new neighborhood if it features interesting destinations and offers practical value. These must be created today. It is essential to initiate new practices and attract new users to Les Groues through existing property assets available immediately for use or renovation. The innovative positioning of the Cœur des Groues sector must contribute to this revitalizing approach. The area will enjoy enhanced visibility thanks to projects to improve public spaces, occupation of ground floor premises, etc. For the program to be a success, the public must see today what the neighborhood will offer tomorrow.

managing a city in transformation

Building on the previous challenge, managing transition, phasing, and life in a changing city is a central issue for the Les Groues project. Today, the neighborhood includes few amenities, and initiatives to build facilities are part of the long-term urban development project that will only be fully operational in 15 years. Furthermore, during the transition period, construction itself will lead to the additional constraints associated with work zones. Les Groues will thus be a neighborhood in transformation for many years to come, even as it welcomes an increasing number of users (inhabitants, newly established companies, construction workers, etc.). It is therefore essential to guarantee excellent quality of life from the very beginning, offering the neighborhood's first users convenient access to transportation, services and facilities while minimizing difficulties due to construction projects. Each program must contribute to the pressing need to create a neighborhood without delay, while at the same time remaining flexible and adjusting to emerging uses.