

The office of Silvio d'Ascia Architecture, in association with the Moroccan firm Omar Kobbité Architects, has delivered the new Kenitra TGV station, north of Rabat.

The station, part of the “Royal” construction project of Africa’s first high-speed train line, which connects the Mediterranean with the Atlantic, is also conceived as a lively transition zone for Kenitra, linking its historic center with districts of the modern city.

High-speed train station, Kenitra, Morocco

The Kenitra station was imagined as a jewel case framing the renewed identity of traditional Moroccan architecture in an urban context, in particular thanks to its facade, a reinterpretation of a moucharabieh expanded to the scale of the city. Associating the socio-economic and technological progress concretized by the arrival of the Al Boraq TGV, the station is a symbol of this city’s and of Morocco’s integration with the modern world.

The station as intermodal hub

In addition to being the place to take the train, the station’s spatial and functional organization is designed to serve as a key public space of the city’s daily life. It now enables city dwellers to pass back and forth between the new city districts on the south side and the historic district on the north side. Prior to its construction, the only connecting point was a narrow subterranean passageway.

This new urban bridge above the railways contains shops and services and facilitates the smooth flow of the foot traffic of passengers and inhabitants crossing the city. The station’s dual entry points to the city, to the north and the south, help balance the urban fabric and turn the city into a genuine public space for all.

A great urban moucharabieh

The facade of the station is an imposing screen on the cityscape, like “an urban moucharabieh”, permeable to the flow of foot traffic crossing the plaza and the passenger building. 200 meters long – the length of a standard high-speed train (TGV) – and a height of 12 meters, it is composed of more than 800 triangular blocks of fiber-reinforced, ultra-high performing concrete overlooking the broad marble and concrete plaza, on the historic city side, thanks to 8 imposing arches of varying geometries.

The triangle motif on the building’s skin is inspired by the geometric compositions of Islamic architecture. Expanded to the scale of an urban edifice to create the perfect balance between light, shade and transparency, the motif of the facade becomes an enormous frame and filter through which to view the city.

This enlargement of the “moucharabieh” architectural element offers a way of dealing with the strong seasonal variations of the station’s outdoor temperatures. This active and porous skin naturally filters light and air to ensure comfortable interior temperatures. Shadows cast by the functional blocks onto the gray marble floor and the glazed surfaces of the facades, evolving with the season and the time of day, are the poetic result of the natural thermal regulation ensured by the moucharabieh feature.

Data sheet

Client

ONCF - Office National des Chemins de Fer

Project management

Silvio d'Ascia Architecture: G. Perino, E. Seif, F. Nicolosi, A. Ares Sainz

Omar Kobbité Architectes (Moroccan lead architect): O. Kobbité, F. Mannella, E. Giudice

All trade works: TPF Pyramide Ingénierie, Control office: DEKRA, SPC Coordinator: SOGEA Maroc,

Acoustics: TPF Pyramide Ingénierie, Lighting engineering consultant: TPF Pyramide Ingénierie

Program

High-speed train station and multimodal exchange pole

Mission

Project management

Address

Royal Army St, Kenitra, Morocco

Surface area

13 500 m² (145312,79 sq ft)

Cost

€ 30,000,000 excl. VAT

Calendar

Delivery: 2019

Photo credits

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NEWS

1- O'origin

Office building - Nancy, France

Contractor

Covivio

Project management

Silvio d'Ascia Architecture

Kephren, Structural engineer

Barbanel, Fluids engineer

Green Affair, Environmental engineer

Dal, Economist

Program

Office building

Mission

Complete

Surface area

6,600 m²

Cost

€14,000,000 excl. VAT

Calendar

Studies 2012-2013, delivery 2018

Sustainable approach

Double environmental certification HEQ and BREEAM « Very Good » level

Photo credits

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2- Pont de Bondy station

Iconic metro station of Line 15 East of Grand Paris Express - Bondy, France

Contractor

Société du Grand Paris

Project management

BIG - Silvio d'Ascia Architecture

Systematica, Elioth/Egis Bâtiments

Agence Babylone

Program

Office building

Cost

€107,000,000 excl. VAT

Calendar

Ongoing - Status: Studies

Perspectives

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Silvio d'Ascia Architecture

Since its creation in Paris in 2001, the office of Silvio d'Ascia Architecture has been tackling issues linked to new forms of “urbanity” in the 21st-century city, through three main avenues of research: transport, service industries and enhancement and renewal of heritage. This sensitive approach to architecture rooted both in its contemporaneity and its humanist dimension is manifested in the diversity of its project typologies – centers of exchange, innovative commercial and service buildings such as the data centers as well as projects to add new floors to existing buildings and housing – blending technological, aesthetic and societal aspects.