

HOMAGE TO HAUSSMANN

ZAC Saussure Pont-Cardinet

Îlot 4.2, Paris 17th, France



After two years of construction, LAN's project for Block 4.2 is finally finished and inhabited.

LAN (Local Architecture Network) was founded by Benoît Jallon and Umberto Napolitano in 2002 with the intent of exploring architecture as the intersection of several disciplines. This approach has today become a working method, and it has allowed the firm to explore new territories and to develop a vision that encompasses social, urban planning, functional, and formal issues.

LAN has been recognized and awarded several times. In charge of undertaking the extension of the Grand-Palais. It was recently nominated for the « Équerre d'Argent 2014 » and for the Mies van der Rohe award with the Euravenir Tower in Lille. In 2004, the firm was included in Nouveaux Albums de la Jeune Architecture (New Editions of Young Architecture), an award bestowed by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication. In 2009, LAN was honored at the International Architecture Awards (Chicago Athenaeum), the Archi-Bau Awards, and it won the Special Prize at the 12th International Triennial of Architecture in Sofia. In 2010, the firm received prizes at the AR Mipim Future Projects and Europe 40 Under 40 Awards. In 2011, the firms received the Best Sustainable Development prize at the LEAF Awards, and the AMO Prize from the Fondation d'Entreprise Excellence SMA. LAN was nominated for the Prix de l'Équerre d'Argent in 2011.

In 2013, it received a "Commendation" at the Civic Trust Awards, the WAN Residential Award, and the BIGMAT France. In 2014, EDF Archives Centre was nominated for the Philippe Rotthier European Prize for Architecture and the Carl-Friedrich Fischer Preis 2014 – Humanes wohnen.

The project

Lot 4.2 is part of the new Clichy-Batignolles mixed development area and is located at the edge of boulevard Pereire, at the meeting point of two different periods in the history of Paris' urban development. The building plays a key

role in linking these two architectural worlds.

The project renders homage to Paris and the 19th century architecture of the Haussmann building. It seeks to preserve the “intrinsic intelligence of this form,” which has allowed the buildings constructed during the Haussmann period to survive many changes and grow with the city, providing multiple, often very different uses of the same building.

The Haussmann building was designed primarily as a place of residence for the bourgeoisie, but it revealed itself to be an extraordinarily open architecture capable of incorporating other uses besides habitation: offices, stores, workshops, schools, etc.

There are common characteristics in all these architectures that lie at the base of this flexibility: a clear structure, a ground floor that is accessible from the street and which can extend to include the mezzanine, a wealth and variety of door and window openings to allow for the construction of all kinds of plans, variable heights in the floors, adequate thickness, and a high level of compactness. The project considers these values as the great heritage of the Parisian building, and we have sought to translate them into an architecture that forms part of the city's current logic, but which also offers solutions to current and future challenges.

The volume is a perfect extrusion of the triangular parcel which fully exploits all the plot's spatial possibilities. Through its flexibility, the project introduces the notion that by emptying an architecture of its program, a building generates potential that will accompany the evolutions in urban development and allow it to respond more readily to changes in use. The rue de Saussure building seeks to anticipate needs and changes by proposing a full reversibility between a residential and an office building.

At the same time, this sense of openness gives each residence a very particular quality. The apartments have a lot of windows and are very well lit and spacious. They are all set up around a loggia, an extension of the interior living space towards the exterior. This type of patio also has a thermal function, introducing a new orientation in the building that helps ventilate the housing during the summer months.

The materials favor a certain sobriety and are limited in number: polished concrete tinted black for the prefabricated panels for the façade, black lacquered aluminum for the concealed opening frames, glass for the windows, both for the half-height windows and the railings, stainless steel mesh, etc.

“In Paris, the transformation of flats into offices and of offices into flats is an opportunity to come to grips with this sort of fertile offsets and ‘resistance’. Whenever you have something that is serving another purpose than the one it was designed for, there's a chance of getting away from norms and repetitiveness. Which is one of the most promising paths of modernity is mutation.” Jean Nouvel

PROGRAM: 40 housing units and commercial spaces / CLIENT: ICF Novedis / ADDRESS: ZAC Saussure Pont Cardinet, Ilot 4.2, Paris 17e / NUA: 3,700m² Floor Area: 2,900m²

BUDGET: EUR 5.9M, before taxes / SCHEDULE: 2010 – 2014 / TEAM: LAN (Commissioned Architects), Bollinger+Grohmann (Structure), Agence Franck Boutté (HQE Consultant), LBE (Fluids), JP Tohier & Associés (Budget Surveyor)

To receive more information, please contact
ROSANNA WOLLENBERG / BRUNSWICK ARTS
+1 917 975 8350
EMAIL: rwollenberg@brunswickgroup.com

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