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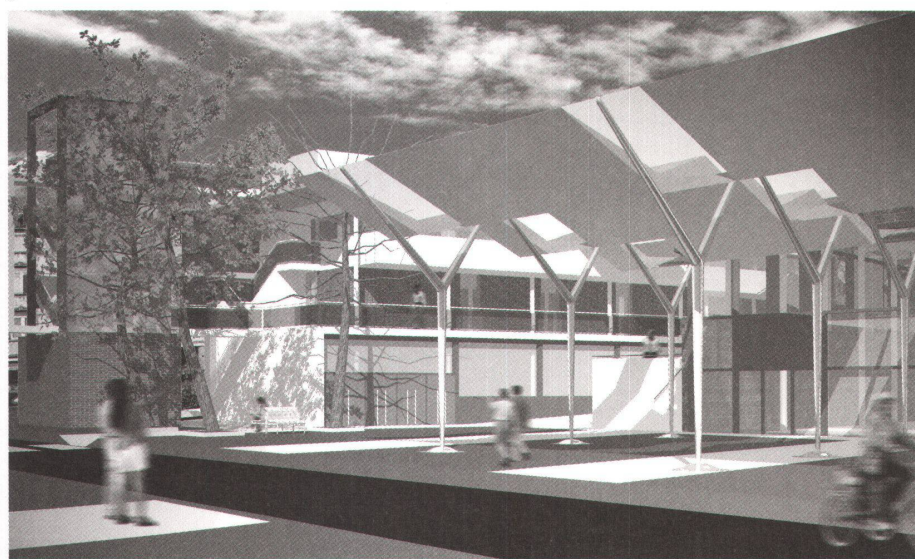
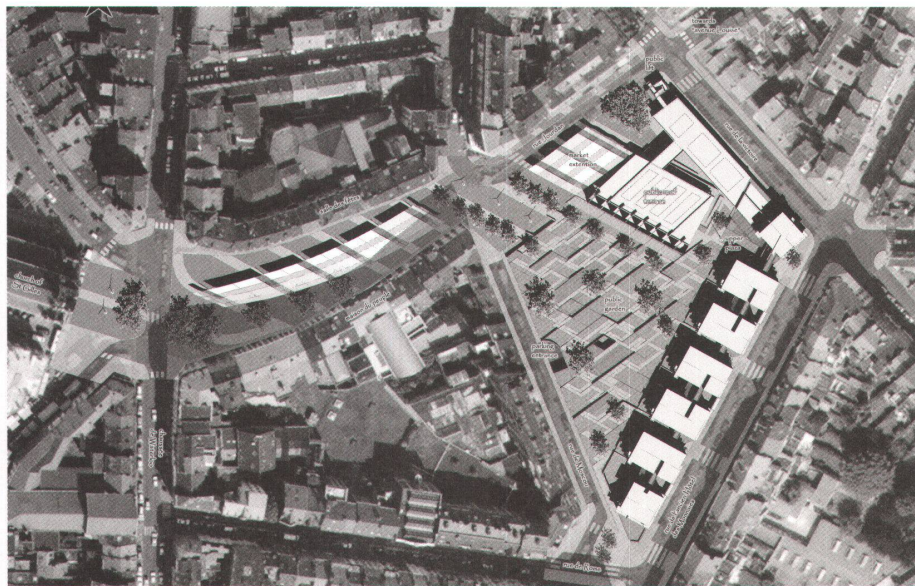
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A public park as a new heart

In this project, a many-terraced public garden forms the heart of Saint-Gilles. A multipurpose building and a row of residential buildings frame the park on two sides, and ramps and elevators connect the different levels. An elegant, beautifully designed project by Cécil Tirard from Paris.



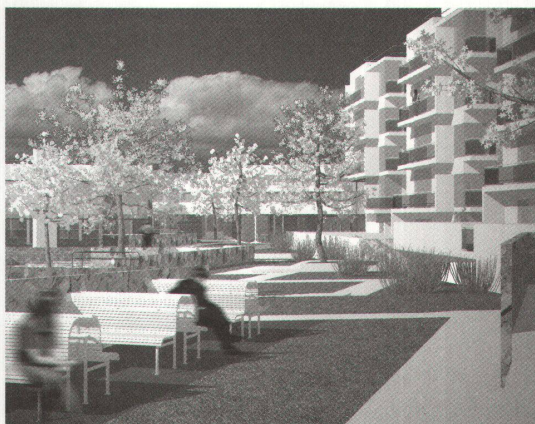
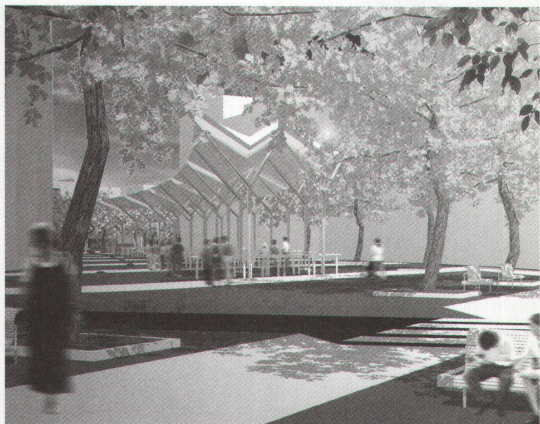
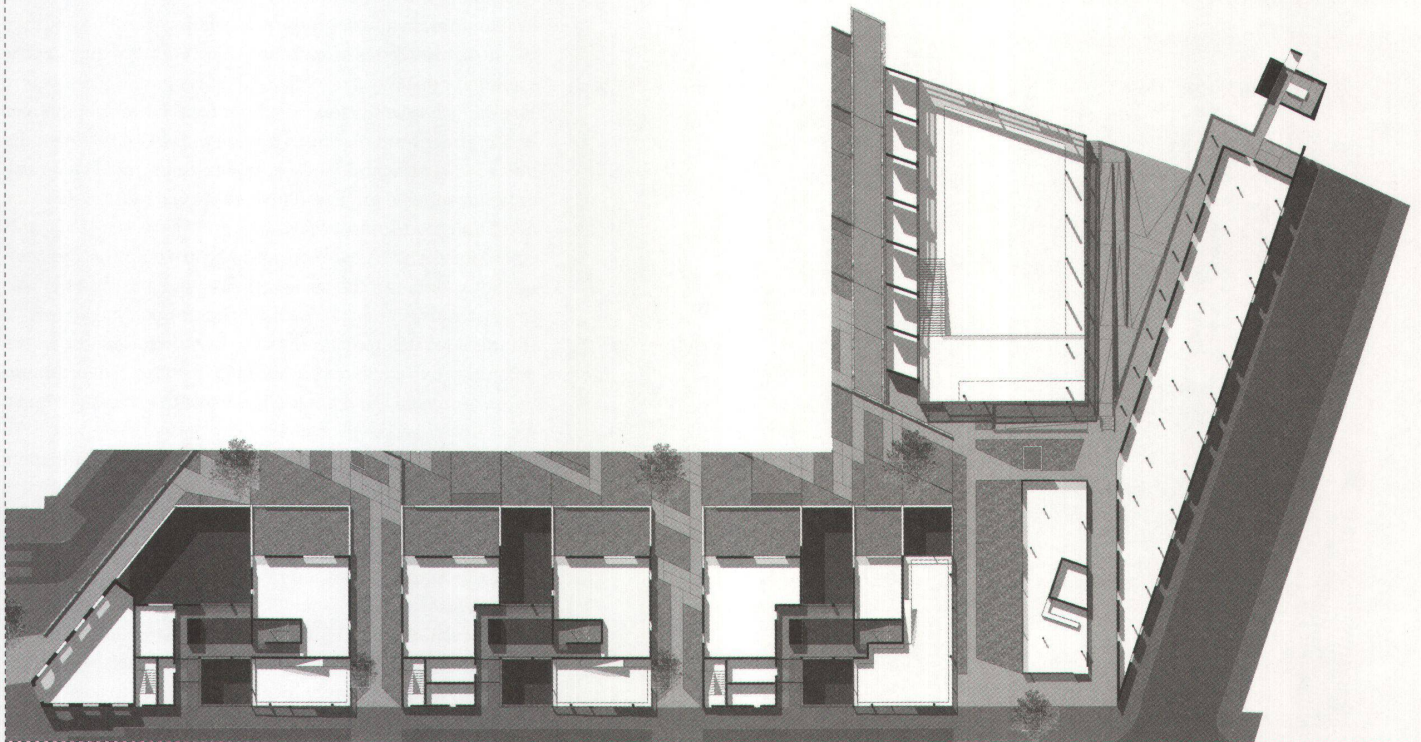
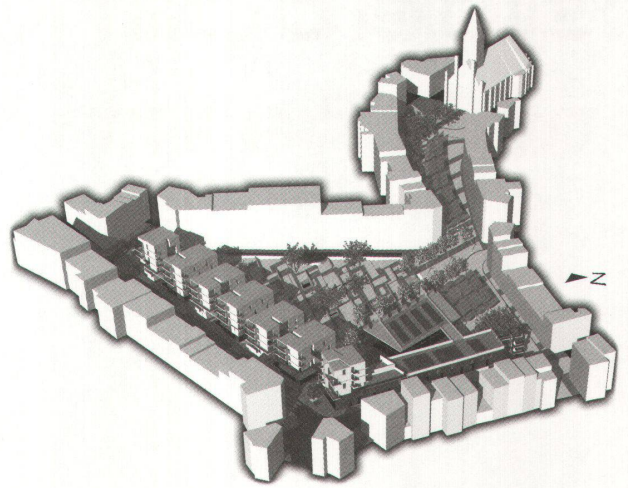
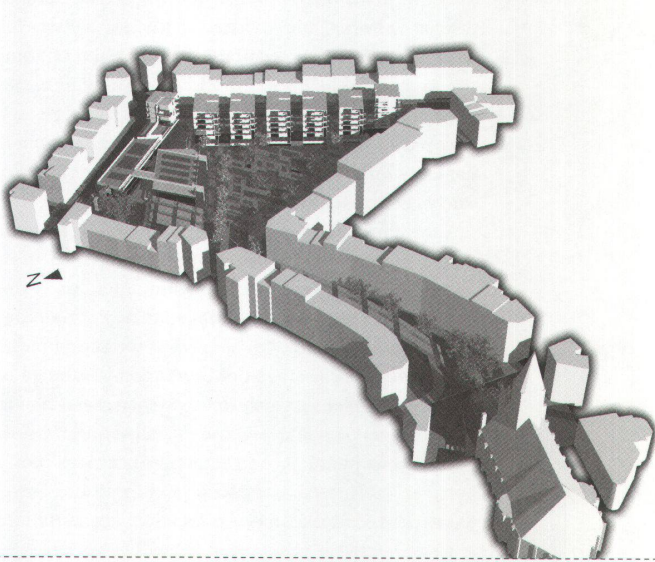
The heart of the project by Cécil Tirard from the Paris-Belleville school of architecture is the public garden on the west part of the Carré de l'ancien Hôtel des Monnaies. A row of seven residential buildings separates the park from the rue de l'Hôtel des Monnaies, and a low building with several shops and social facilities in the rue de la Victoire marks the boundary of the public park. In the corner is a multipurpose building opening onto the garden. The Parvis de Saint-Gilles is a pedestrian zone connecting the church with the garden, and the lower Plaza at the end of the Parvis functions as a joint between the Parvis, the garden and the extension of the market in rue Jourdan. Lightweight roofs in the middle of the Parvis protect the market from the weather. A grid developing from the row of houses along the rue de l'Hôtel des Monnaies extends over the Carré de l'ancien Hôtel des Monnaies and the Parvis de Saint-Gilles and structures the center of Saint-Gilles. The counterpart to the lower Plaza is formed by the upper Plaza with a café and a terrace located on the corner of rue de la Victoire and rue de l'Hôtel des Monnaies. This is also the site of the access to the social center and the entrance to the multipurpose building. Six of the seven residential buildings are grouped in pairs, each of which shares an access with steps and an elevator. The seventh house above the café consists of two duplex apartments arranged vertically.

The architect used the access zones between the houses as a spatial as well as a functional connection between the different levels: airspaces conduct light into the underground garage, and the entrance halls of the residential buildings are transparent in design. There is a roof terrace situated on the level of the second floor over the multipurpose hall and the social center, with a footbridge leading from it across all the houses to the end of the row. All these levels are connected by the town elevator on the corner of rue Jourdan and rue de la Victoire. The difference in the levels of the park is used as an element of design and conceived as a terraced patchwork. Here, too, the ramps connect the different levels so that wheelchair users can use the paths through the park. A cascade-shaped pool in front of the multipurpose building adds additional emphasis to the different levels and is reminiscent of a brook lying hidden far below the square.

Numerous strong points

The jury liked a number of aspects of the project: the elegant association between the old and the new market, the public garden with access for everyone, and the apartments with the qualities of single-family houses. The apartments have private gardens and entrance areas that facilitate contact with visitors and other residents. The elevators open on two sides – a considerable advantage for wheelchair users. The extended market provides a series of rest rooms and vantage platforms. Different surfaces, colors, materials and textures help handicapped persons to find their way around independently in spite of the numerous ramps and platforms. The jury was unanimously agreed that this is an elegant project, easily comprehensible and beautifully presented. •

- > School: Ecole d'Architecture de Paris-Belleville
(Architectural School of Paris-Belleville, France)
- > Professor: Bernard Leroy
- > Student: Cécil Tirard



- 1 A public patchwork park, flanked by buildings on two sides, forms the new heart of Saint-Gilles.
- 2 The market is extended beyond the Parvis into rue Jourdan.
- 3 The connecting grid gives the Saint-Gilles center the appearance of unity.
- 4 Openings at the entrance to the apartments in rue de l'Hôtel des Monnaies create connections between the storeys.
- 5 Lightweight roofs span the market on the Parvis de Saint-Gilles.
- 6 The park with its different areas constitutes a calm oasis in the hectic bustle of the city.