

RECONVERSION EAI IN MONTPELLIER REACHED A MILESTONE

15-08-2018



Since the winning of the competition for Reconversion EAI, former School of the Infantry in 2012, West 8 has been commissioned as the project's master planner and urban designer to execute our winning design. West 8's proposal consists of a urban landscaped which covers 40 ha and encompasses both park and public spaces of a former barrack '**La Caserne Guillaut**'.

One of the core parts of West 8's winning design is **La Place d'Armes** within 'La Caserne Guillaut', a former military site which is now being transformed into a Cité créative, a vibrant and creative neighborhood. La Place d'Armes will be the key meeting place for its residents. The ecologically valuable elements like the mineral edge, existing trees and green patches were important factors in the design and will be incorporated into the regeneration. In addition to the conservation of existing qualitative architecture, West 8 also supervises the design developments of each architecture component, aiming to archive a unity in this revitalized urban environment in reference to its military past.

West 8's design converts a classical French public space into a modern element, a symbol of the 21st century. West 8 proposed accessible routes that facilitate a plethora of activities and act as connective tissue for the area. Optimal connections within the park create a permeable urban area where soft modes of transportation are privileged.

The new district has started to get shape this year particularly when many of the architectural components have started construction. Aiming to become the most urban part of the plan to target new creative industries and young start-ups, this dense urban environment with its harmonic composition of buildings will contain a multitude of activities and a diverse typology of housing units. The most recent developments include:

- As part of a larger project which contains commercials, housing and educational facilities, Phase 1 of a school designed by Ignacio Prego Architectures, "**Groupe Scolaire Jeanne Moreau**" located in the Croix d'Argent neighborhood has started construction since March 2018. Completion is expected in September 2019 providing space for 20 classes (15 for the public school and 5 for the associative, bilingual, secular and free calandreta lepic school) to the new inhabitants. This building will define the modernity, mixed-use and vibrant character of the area.
- On the edge of the Caserne it reconnects the site with the adjacent low-density residential area and the other surroundings. As an education area its public space will demand an urban and institutional character.
- **New campus of l'EMSA (École supérieure des métiers artistiques)**: it is a new building by Mateo arquitectura that will host 4 schools, permit has just been submitted to the municipality, delivery should be between 2019 and beginning of 2020. It will host 1400 students and 350 students housings. The 4 Schools are : l'ESMA, one of the best animation film and design schools of the world. IPESAA for design, illustration and game art. ETPA that will set up video game department and Cinécréatis for movie department. In addition of class and IT rooms, the campus will provide a film set (600m2), a recording studio, a Fab Lab, a professional projection room, an exhibition area of 500 m2 for digital art and a pre-incubator (250 m2) area for young start-ups.

This new campus area will be renamed as the new "Cité Créative", it will also host:

- la **Halle Tropisme** a 4000 square meter converted building into a Tiers-lieux la, providing co-working space designed by the Illusion & Macadam association with meeting room and creative studios for freelancers and creative entrepreneurs, to be open before the end of 2018
- total renovation of the former Carserne, including transformation of an old cinema building into a new film house **Le Cocon** for artistic animation films that can host 400 guests; a 100 m2 gentrified building for small and medium start-ups, to be ready by the end of 2019
- a completely new building for larger companies with 3500 square meters floor area
- a new kindergarden to be delivered at the end of 2018.

The park Montcalm, the local "central park", should start to get shape at the end of 2018.

more information: [Reconversion EAI, former School of the Infantry](#)