

# A10



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**#61**

JAN / FEB 2015

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DKK 75.00 / KRW 30,000

ON THE SPOT

Is this the end  
of seating?

START

Layering  
heritage in  
Tirana's public  
space

INTERCHANGE

SO-IL's  
overseas view  
on Europe

READY

Densification,  
incubation,  
socialization  
in Nantes

EUROVISION

Hungary:  
Don't quit the  
night job

TOUR GUIDE

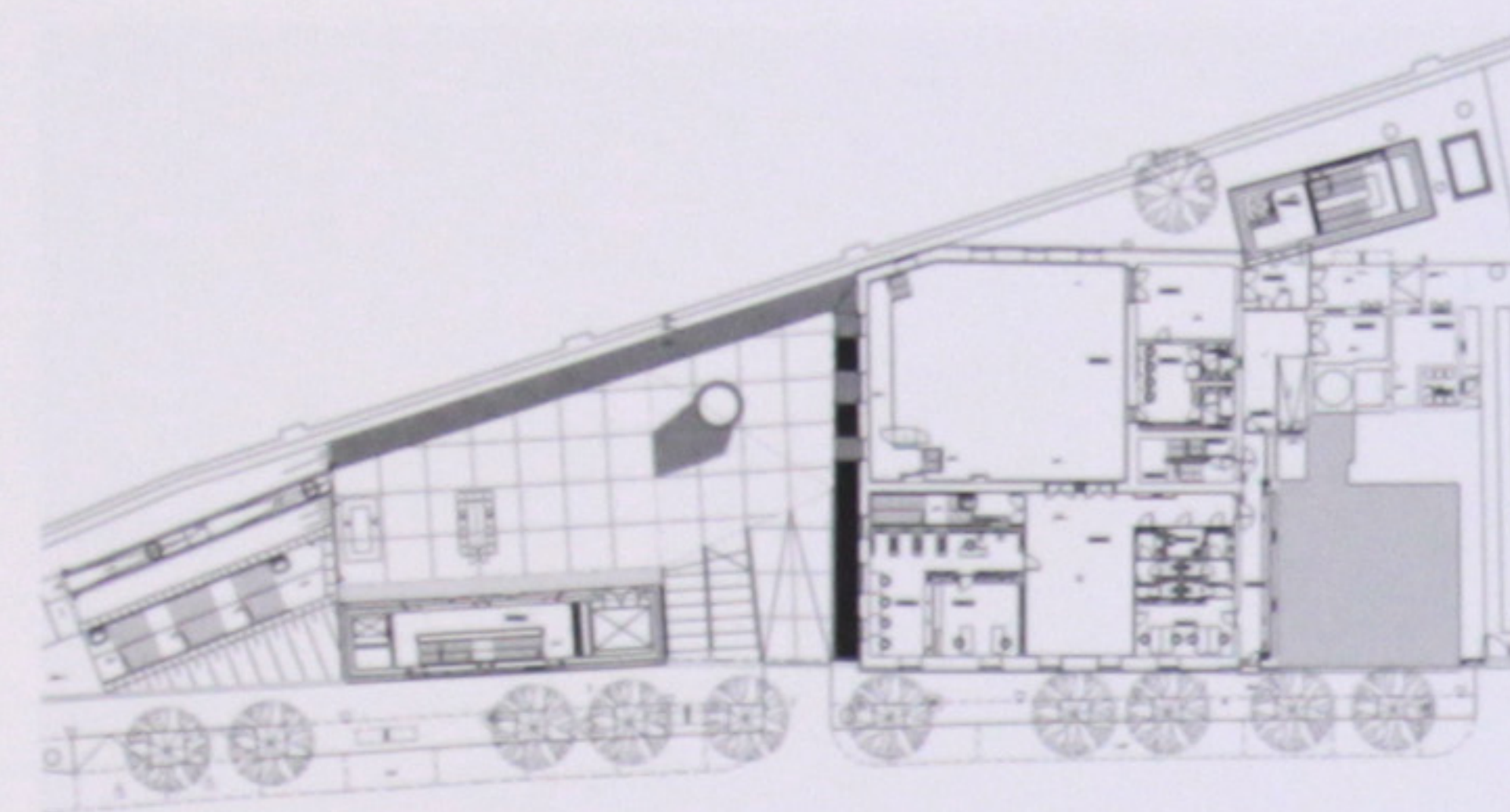
Rough and  
ready:  
Amsterdam-  
Noord



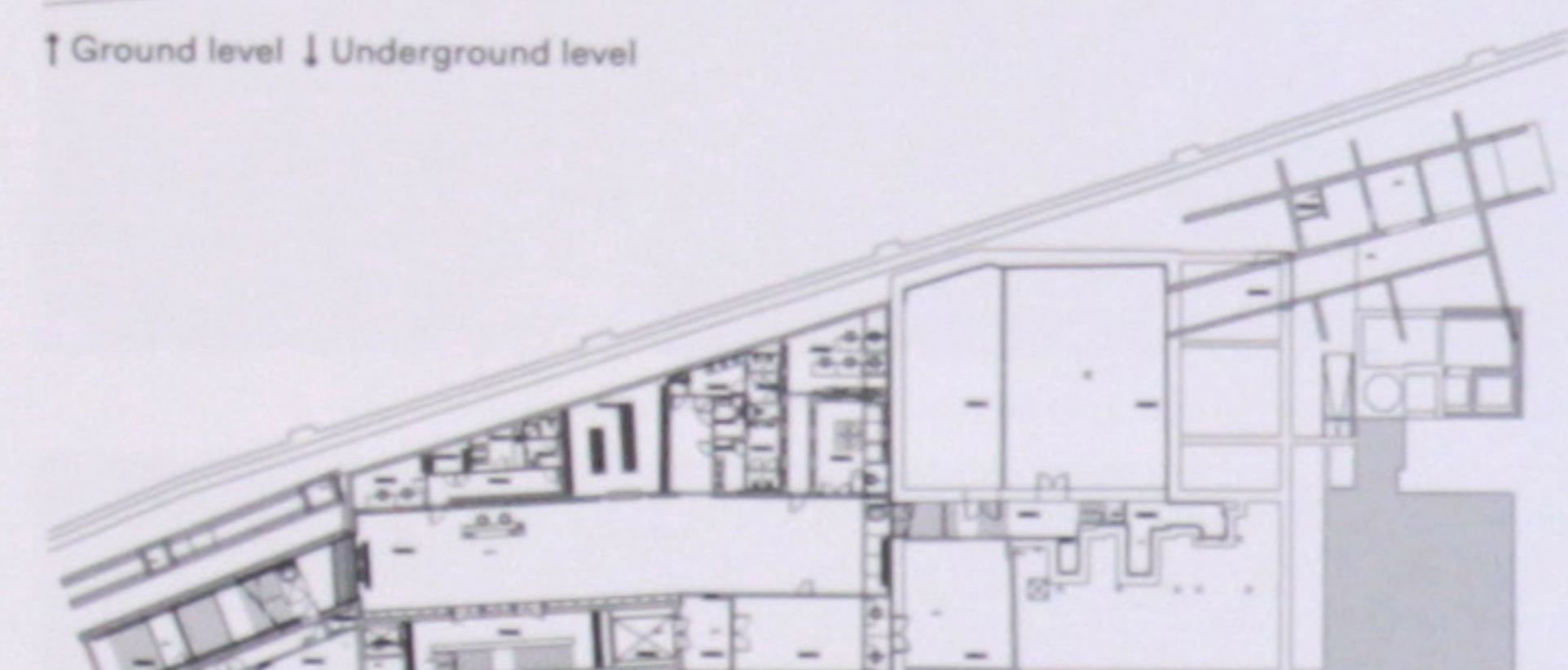
Ovation for a  
Finnish reprise

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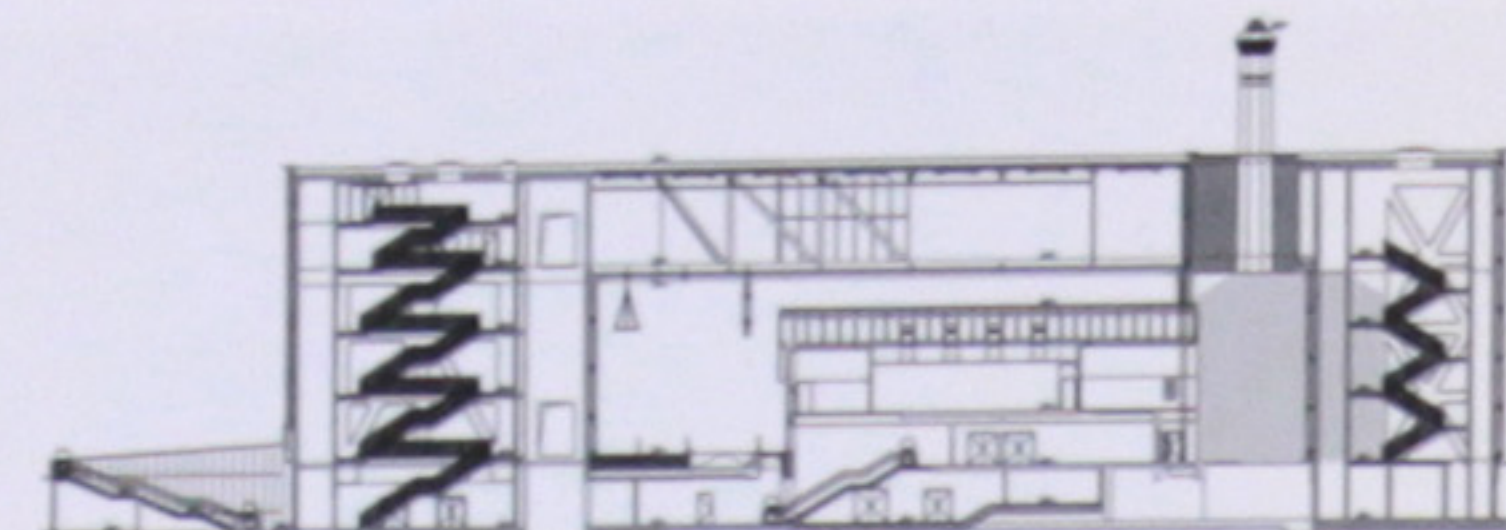




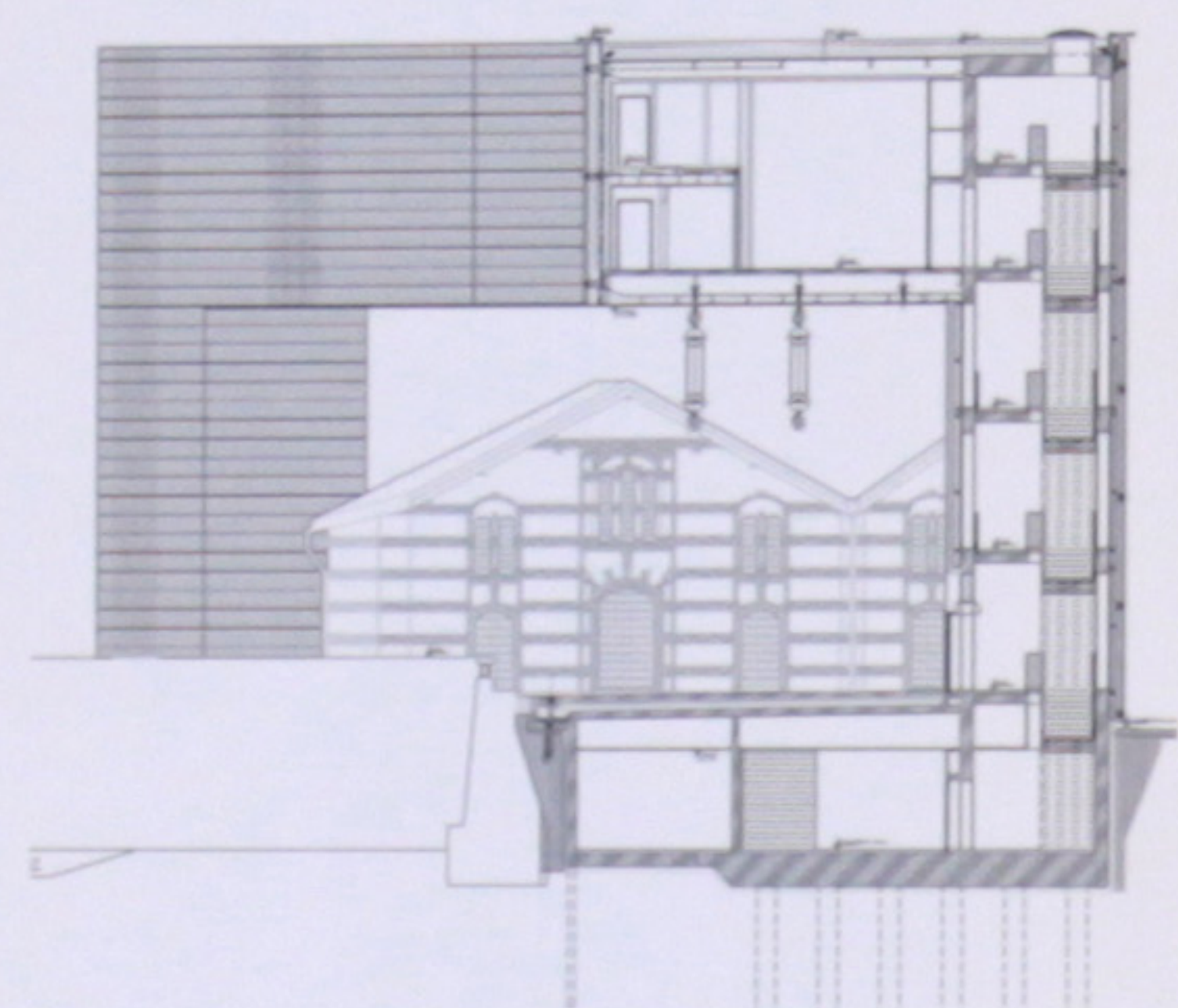
↑ Ground level ↓ Underground level



↓ Staircase to the underground entry hall



↑ Longitudinal section ↓ Section



↓ On bright days, the new structure's cladding creates a dappled effect.

#### FACTS & FIGURES

Tadeusz Kantor (1915–1990) was a Polish painter, assemblage artist, set designer and theatre director. He is renowned for revolutionary theatrical performances in Poland and abroad.

In 1955, he founded *Cricot 2*, an experimental theatre company based in Kraków that quickly became known as the *Cricoteka*.

In 2006, 47 architecture teams were invited to take part in the competition for the development of an architectural/urban design concept for *Cricoteka* (see A10 # 14).



(Urban frame, Kraków)

The square is also doubled in a way by a reflective underside on the elevated part of the building, topped by unexpected views of surfaces below. If the project may be considered brilliant thus far, here begins an aspect that is somewhat doubtful. The urban gesture of the design is strong: the station and the square cannot be more central in the structure, but this centre, as Nawara claims, 'a place of potential events and Kraków's new public space', is not where one enters the building. To access it, one must go to the tip of the site and descend a modest staircase to the underground entry hall, which connects the station to one of the legs of the new building that

contains vertical communication to the top exhibition floor. Call it a mistake or a deliberate decision, this regardless poses a question about how far we can go in architecture with a Kantor-like perversion of reality. So far that we detach the perfectly good square in front of (or rather within) the building from its entrance, and the exhibitions from the programme's other parts? ▀

#### CRICOTEKA, 2010–2014

Architect Wiszja Biuro Architektoniczne and nsMoonStudio  
Established 1993, 1996  
Client Centre for the Documentation of the Art of Tadeusz Kantor  
Address ul. Nadwiślańska 2-4, Kraków  
Info [www.cricoteka.com.pl](http://www.cricoteka.com.pl), [www.wiszja.krakow.pl](http://www.wiszja.krakow.pl), [www.moonstudio.com.pl](http://www.moonstudio.com.pl)



↓ Exhibition galleries



## Tactical social housing, Nantes

The white, gridded tower imagined by **Antonini + Darmon** makes an admirable step in developing a former industrial site.

FRANCE — TEXT: ANNA YUDINA, PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEXANDRE WASILEWSKI

'We are too young to have a signature style,' says Laetitia Antonini of Paris-based office Antonini + Darmon. 'We take our cues from the elements of the context and reinterpret them with an up-to-date approach,' explains Tom Darmon. The two partners describe their work as 'exploring the fundamentals' to design 'endemic buildings', the ones that could exist nowhere but in this particular place.

The Isle of Nantes, where Antonini + Darmon have just completed a social housing project, is a particular place indeed. One of France's oldest harbour cities, Nantes has gone through a period of economic decline towards the end of the past century. With the commercial

harbour relocated to Saint-Nazaire and the shipyards closed down, the city reinvented its *raison d'être* by shifting towards innovation-based industries and undertaking large-scale urban renewal. To accommodate the growing population yet avoid sprawl, the city has adopted the strategy of densifying, repurposing and reconnecting its different areas within the existing boundaries. Former industrial sites are getting reintegrated into the urban fabric. Once the epicentre of harbour and shipbuilding activities, the Isle of Nantes saw a couple of miserable decades as a 350-hectare brownfield in the heart of the city. The redevelopment plan that has gestated throughout

the 1990s puts it back on the city map as the nucleus of the urban community. The flexible, evolution-friendly proposal by Alexandre Chemetoff envisioned a vibrant amalgam of residential, commercial, educational and cultural projects within an urban grid shaped by the area's industrial past. Abandoned facilities take on new functions, such as the incubator for biotechnological companies, or the Hangar à Bananes, an immensely popular cluster of restaurants, bars and nightclubs. Foundations of industrial buildings, crane rails, the shipyard's surface plate (now hosting a solarium) – everything is considered as heritage in quest of new uses.

The Prairie-au-Duc eco-district where Antonini + Darmon's contribution is among the first newly constructed buildings represents the current phase of the Isle of Nantes revival. The scheme occupies some eighteen hectares of the island's western end facing the historic part of the city. Central to the project is a large contemporary park surrounded by five mixed-use urban blocks. The absence of constraints was the biggest challenge, says Darmon: 'Used to Paris with its extremely limited spaces and fixed outer envelopes, in Nantes we had to deal with a clean sheet. The project could be placed anywhere within the plot.' At the time of the competition, little was known about the new buildings that would emerge in the area. Only the school designed by Bruno Mader was already complete, and its wood-clad exterior and vegetated topographic roof has provided some catchwords for an architectural dialogue.

As the urban plan prescribed the combination of a low-rise 'plinth' for a human-scale streetscape with a compact

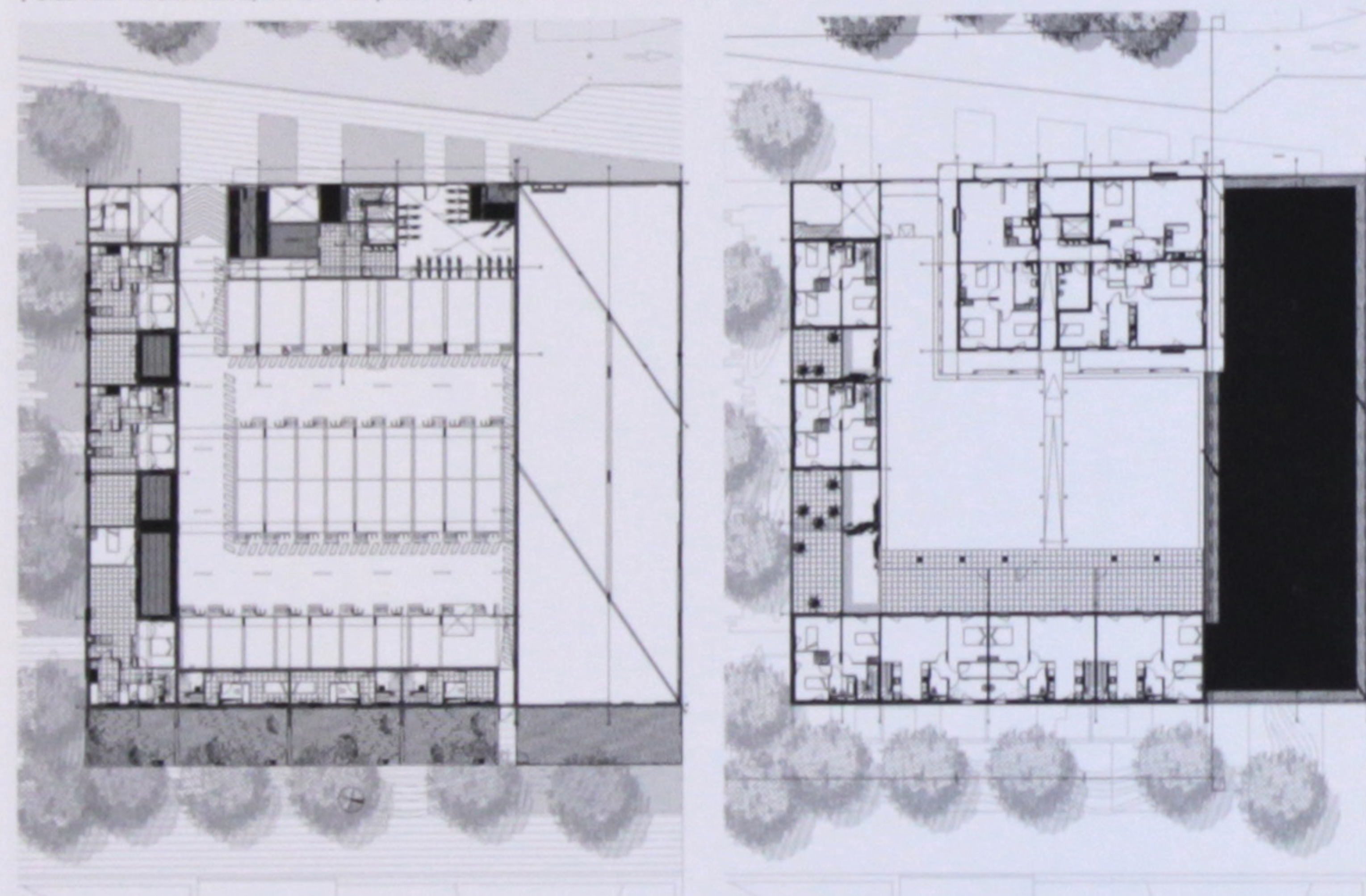






↑ Clad with wooden laths, the low-rise plinth wraps the tower's base and lends contrast to the whole.

↑ The plinth integrates a restaurant and six street-level houses.



↑ Ground floor ↑ Elevation

↑ First floor

↑ Section

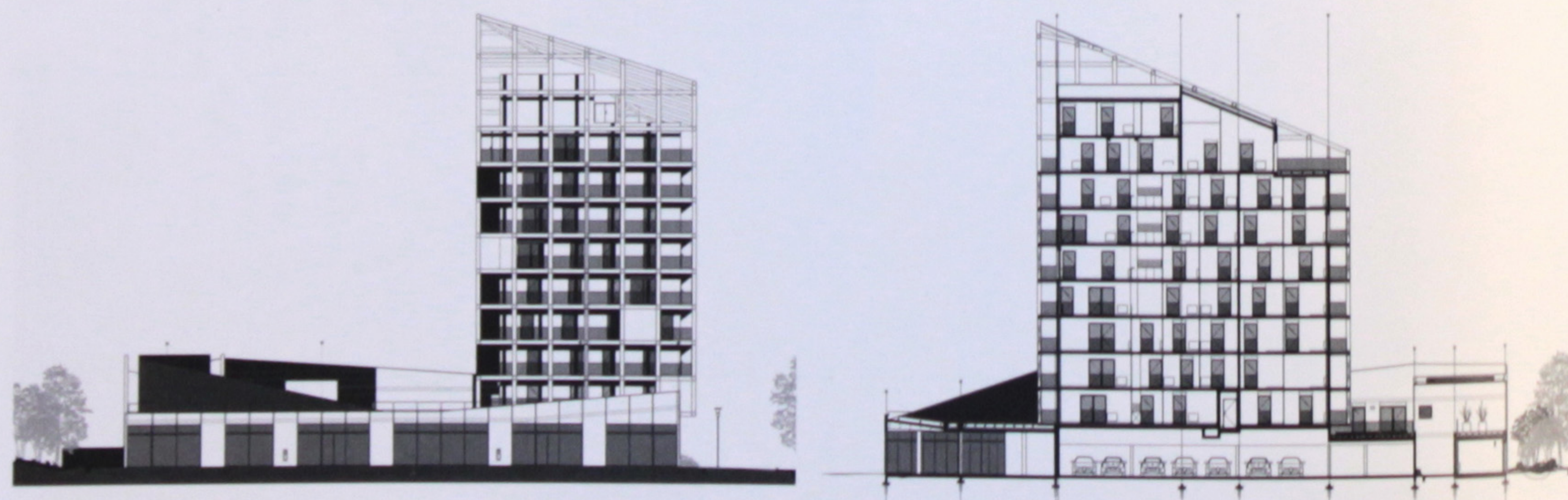


#### FACTS & FIGURES

Nantes is France's 6th-largest city, its metropolitan area comprising some 600,000 inhabitants.

In 2013, it held the title of European Green Capital, awarded by the European Commission.

'L'oiseau des îles' refers to the last sailship built at the Isle of Nantes' Dubigeon shipyards in 1935.



↑ Whether the facade grid is opened or screened depends on the function of the space behind it.



↑ Ground-level private patio

#### (Tactical social housing, Nantes)

mid-rise top permitting views and sunlight, Antonini + Darmon split their design into two contrasting parts. The plinth is covered with wooden laths whose orderly arrangement is juxtaposed to Mader's impressionist solution; its undulating roof forms a fifth facade that jazzes up the flat landscape and nods towards the neighbour while concealing the car park and the ventilation system. Open to the street on all four sides, the plinth integrates a restaurant and six individual houses: three of them are entered directly from the street and have their living rooms looking into patios, while three others boast front gardens acting as buffer zones.

Pushed towards the plinth's fourth side, the white apartment tower creates a slight cantilever marking the entrance. Full-perimeter balconies are enclosed in a square, wind-breaking grid in painted steel (a delicate hint at the 'elements of the context', notably the pitched, trussed

steel roofs of the shipbuilding hangars). With no more than four units per floor, each apartment has daylight and balconies on at least two sides. Depending on the function of rooms behind them, the cells of the grid are partly open, partly screened with solid infill or perforated panels, either fixed or sliding. This arrangement merges functional and aesthetic purposes: opaque panelling conceals storage spaces, drying linen, etc., and ensures weather protection and privacy – all of this without turning balconies into ugly sights cluttered with stuff or closed off with reed screens. Additionally, the sloping roof incorporates solar panels; its well-calibrated slash completes a sober, elegant design that stands out without showing off. ◀

**L'OISEAU DES ÎLES MIXED-USE BUILDING, 2014**  
 Architect Antonini + Darmon Architectes  
 Established 2006  
 Client Nantes Habitat  
 Address Île de Nantes, the eco-district of  
 Prairie-au-Duc, Nantes  
 Info www.antonini-darmon.fr

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READY

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