

## EUROPE-BRUSSELS, VISIONING & THE DESIGN OFFICE The 'collision city' as a metaphor and the cloverleaf model

### 1.INTRODUCTION, URBAN STRATEGIES&URBAN DYNAMICS BRUSSELS-EUROPE

In 2003-2004 I wrote a dissertation, under the supervision of professor Bruno De Meulder and Maureen Heyns, on urban strategies & dynamics applied to the relation between Brussels and Europe<sup>1</sup>. In this study I offered a theoretical framework regarding the political [related to the political institutes and administrations] and vernacular [related to the peoples' activities] context of the European presence in Brussels. Using this theoretical framework, I analyzed different studies for the European Quarter, made by different offices:

- 1.Masterplan Brussels/Europe by Clerbaux [November 2001]
- 2.Guidelines Brussels/Europe by Agora [May 2002]
- 3.The competition procedure for a 'Global urban Concept for the European Quarter which resulted in
- 4.The Ombudsplan by Aries and Moritz & Simon [July 2004].

In this dissertation I concluded that on the one hand due to the political structures in Brussels and on the other hand due to the empirical research on the planning processes, we can speak of a typical Brussels' condition. This is no value judgment, neither a barrier to achieve quality in contemporary architecture or urban projects. The appropriate way to describe this condition was to use the term **collision city as a metaphor**. The European Parliament is a good example of the result of the dynamics of this 'collision city metaphor'. The difference with a more representative building, such as that of the Washington Congress is clear at first sight.



Fig 01: The Congress, Washington [01]



Fig 02: The European Parliament, Brussels [02]

My dissertation focussed on the analysis of proposals for the European Quarter. However other interesting sites [potential Eurospaces] outside of the traditional European Quarter have come up in Brussels. The most important are Tour&Taxis and Josaphat. Since then some [new] theoretical studies were published like '*Change, Brussels Capital of Europe*' and a publication of the Berlage Institute. At the same time some urban processes on these sites were started. This paper wants to see whether over if the collision city metaphor is still valid, as a **tool**, or whether there are new trends to be seen. It also wants to see what the significance of this could be for the development of visions and elaboration of projects. Starting from a rather abstract theoretical level we will sink into the current urban processes and go through the mud of legal regulations and the restrictions based on real practical knowledge of the sites.

### 2.THE COLLISION CITY AS A METAPHOR

It became clear through my study that the development of the European Quarter had been very dependent on [most of the time ad hoc] political decisions. A clear vision to regulate the

building had never been developed. This clear vision can be compared to the working method of the scientist of the engineer. Whereas the first one, the ad hoc approach, contrary to that, can be described as the one of the 'bricoleur'. *'The 'bricoleur' is a adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks: but unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project. His universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with 'whatever is at hand', that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what is contains bears no relation to the current project, or indeed to any particular project, but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or destructions.'*<sup>ii</sup>

In '**Collission City and the politics of bricolage**' Colin Rowe places two extreme examples next to each other, namely **Versailles** and the **Villa Hadriana**. The first is an example of a totalitarian concept, a total architecture, whose moral is to be declared to the world. It is a triumph of the general, an overbalance of an exceptional idea and the refusal of the exceptional. Versailles can be interpreted as a **critic** on medieval Paris. The second example, that of the Villa Hadriana, tries to avoid any reference to a controlling idea. The Villa seems a kind of **anthology** of Hadrianus' memories of his voyages and symbolizes the enormous area that the emperor ruled.<sup>iii</sup> It only seems to need an accumulation of different ideal fragments and by this it is a **subscription** to Imperial Rome, rather than a protest. The Villa Hadriana is characterized by its multiple divisions, by the fact that it was constructed by different people over longer periods of time [118-133]. This combination of the schizophrenic and the inevitable, makes it very applicable for political communities where power often changes, as in a democracy. Versailles on the other hand is a symbol for a holistic vision, which tries to summarize the world into one centripetal concept.

In the European Quarter there is this tension between a scientific approach and the 'bricolage'. We have to accept that there are dialectics between both approaches. In fact it is applicable to the whole Brussels Capital Region.

By this we can answer the question which identity is appropriate to the European Quarter or what vision it needs. The solution has to be sought in the collision<sup>iv</sup> of interests, in a continuous debate between opposites. This proposal leads us quasi automatic towards the condition of 17<sup>th</sup> century Rome, to this collision of palaces, piazzas and villas, to this inescapable fusion of imposition and adaptation, these extremely successful and elastic traffic jam of intentions, an anthology of closed compositions and ad hoc rubbish in between, which form at the same time a dialectic of ideal types plus a dialectic of ideal types in an imperial context.

Rome, 17<sup>th</sup> century, imperial or papal, the 'collision city' as a metaphor, is a paradigm for a society guided by the politics of 'bricolage', as in a democracy. The metaphor contains a plural concept, suited for a plural solution. An this solution has to be found in a collision of interests, in a continuously maintained debate between opposites, be it the present or the past, be it the engineer or the 'bricoleur', be it political or vernacular, be it Manhattanism<sup>v</sup> or Brasilialism<sup>vi</sup>, and so on. Only in this way can a European Capital be representative for all these elements.



Fig 03: Imperial Rome [03]



Fig 04: Vatican City [04]

### 3.RECENT SPATIAL / THEORETICAL RESEARCH

This part will summarize the most important ideas, related to the papers' subject, of some recently published studies, concerning Brussels/Europe. Special attention will be given to the sites of Tour&Taxis and Josaphat, since they are to be developed soon.

**Tour&Taxis** is the name of a site with a surface of 45 ha, situated in the Brussels North Quarter, between the Havenlaan, Picardstraat, Scheldestraat, Laekenveldstraat, Jubelfeestlaan and the Dieudonné Lefèvrestraat, at the right bank of the Willebroek Canal. Thirty ha is property of the developers. The other fifteen ha belong to the BILC/TIR project. The existing patrimony of the site is very valuable and contributes firmly to the identity.

**Josaphat** is a site of 25ha situated between the Generaal Wahislaan, Charles Gilisquetlaan, August De Boeckstraat, Oasebinnenhof and the Bloemtuinlaan, next to the Leopold III-laan which connects the airport with the center and houses the **NATO**, some headquarters of international companies and office buildings related to the European Commission. The latter traffic artery clearly has a **global** ambition. The area itself has an irregular organic form, cut in two by the railway-tracks from the south to the north. The left side has become a vacant space. The right side is filled in with urban industry buildings and at the bottom there is an area for open-air recreation. At the left side of the site we find a residential area **with single houses with gardens**. At the other side there is a mix of housing and high office buildings, some already used by the European Commission.

#### 3.1.VERNACULAR & POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN BALANCE

The study 'Vacant city [2000]<sup>vii</sup> is a theoretical and spatial research and focuses on the cultural complex in the heart of Brussels, the Mont des Arts.

The political landscape was superimposed on the organic developed vernacular landscape of the city. In the case of the Mont des Arts whole neighborhoods with Flemish bourgeois houses of the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> were demolished. These houses are given a central place in the collective memory and thus are immediately defined as the building blocks of Brussels' identity, as an immediate reflection of a splendid bourgeois culture, the articulation of individualism as an expression of free citizenship.

The demolition of many of these houses expresses itself in a tension between the vernacular and the political landscape. But there are certain nodes where a **new harmonious balance** has been created. An example of this is the composition of the Warandepark with on one side Royal Palace and the government buildings and on the other side two rows of bourgeois houses. It gives us an idea of how the balance between both interests can translate themselves in an urban morphology. Today one could imagine more contemporary approaches to the same idea.



Fig 05: Warandepark [05]

### 3.2.HARD CAPITAL

In 'Brussels, Capital of Europe' [2001]<sup>viii</sup>, Rem Koolhaas considered two particular forms of representation of the European Union' identity: the first is through communication, both verbal and visual; the second through the physical substance and buildings of the European Institutions:

*'[...] Brussels today is a European capital by default, a curious aesthetic landscape, sometimes generic and sometimes of such a scale that you can only talk about megalomania. In this condition it is unable to articulate any idea about Europe. [...] I will consider only two options for improving the present urban situation of the European Institutions in Brussels. The first consists in assuming the meaningful, space. In doing so, it may perhaps also resolve the tensions between the European Institutions and the inhabitants of Brussels. The second and perhaps easier option is to make a new start outside the present area where the European Institutions are concentrated, in the site known as 'Tour et Taxi', along the canal. This could be conceived like in a more 'idyllic' campus.*

***I am fairly explicit in suggesting that in my opinion the challenge of assuming the past is a much more interesting option, even though it is a complicated one. It would imply trying to find a better coherence for the Quartier Européen, with less ostentatious, well-defined actions linking it to the surrounding neighborhoods and making it work as a centre. The issue of connection needs to be faced more explicitly. [...] I ask myself whether in Europe we are unable to simply assume the contrast between the 19th century typology of the city and the scale of the new institutions, perpetuating a nostalgia for a kind of city that in the past 30 years we have not been able to build.'***

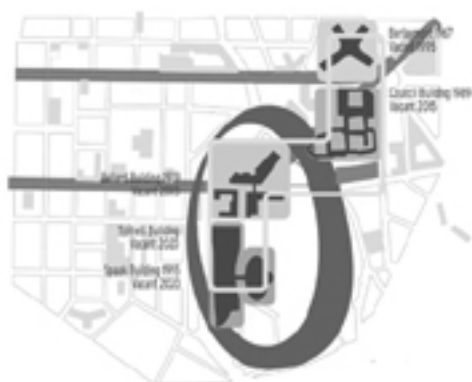


Fig 06: European Quarter, emerging logo [06]



Fig 07: Tour&Taxis, alternative site [07]

### 3.3. DREAMSCENARIO

Some reputable architecture offices from Spain, Finland, the Netherlands, Italy and Belgium were invited by the architect Joël Claisse and Prisme Editions to develop their dream-scenarios about Brussels, without thinking about the real restrictions and leaving behind

doom-saying [2004]<sup>ix</sup>. Brussels offers chances. *'As capital of Europe it could become a model of a multilayered, flexible metropolis, without mono-functionality. Instead the vision of a hyper-vibrant, hyper-diverse metropolis appears. It develops organic cores, with new radical connections and networks.'*<sup>x</sup> Two dream-scenarios on the sites of Tour&Taxis will be discussed.

### 3.3.1. Tour&Taxis: Project by West8

In the proposal of West8 the site of Tour&Taxis will be developed as one pole of a bi-polar structure with Schaerbeek station. The latter will become above all a logistics center. **One could imagine the replacement of the existing logistics center on Tour&Taxis towards this logistics pole.** The site of Tour&Taxis must also be linked to the railway network with a Terminal. *'The zone currently vacant to the north of the existing buildings would be filled with high-rise buildings for activities linked to the Terminal. At the end of the zone the planners envisage establishing a park. To the north, the existing district will be replaced by a residential zone as far as rue Marie-Christine and the Laeken bridge.'*<sup>xi</sup> Important is the linking of the project to the North Station and the city centre. This project proposes a very integrated urban vision of the development of the northern area linking it a new waterfront, linking urban quarters, opening up green areas, revitalizing the North Area by reinforcing existing infrastructural and other urban potentialities. An urban project like this could lift Brussels upon another level.

### 3.3.2. Tour&Taxis: Project by Xaveer de Geyter

*'Most of the area is vacant and undeveloped. This potential void could be used to structure the entire northern zone of Brussels. [...] The open spots are to be merged gradually into a continuous space using a contemporary green concept and this area can then be sharply demarcated by a series of dense areas that each link to the surrounding suburban fragments outside the zone. The new park landscape on the scale of the entire agglomeration of Brussels can function as a magnet for new developments. The scale and impact of the project are similar to those of the Terkamerenbos on the south side of Brussels.'*<sup>xii</sup>

Screening the two projects, keeping in mind the theoretical frame of part two, they are creating a new Utopia, a fata morgana, the implicit dream of Versailles [see above]. The whole program is to be placed in an ideal structure.



Fig 08: Tour&Taxis, West8 [08]



Fig 09: Tour&Taxis, XGDA [09]

## 3.4. ARCHIPELAGO OF MONUMENTAL ARTEFACTS

Recently the Berlage Institute published *'Brussels, a manifesto towards the capital of Europe'* [2005]<sup>xiii</sup>. The Berlage Institute says that **instead of falling apart into the false [and useless] dialectic between global and local**, the city must be seen as City – as enacting space of tangible, experimental differences that share a common, identifiable stage of representation: **the architectural artefact**. Artefacts that are in the form of large-scale

punctual interventions, yet modest in form. They see architecture as the rendering of a continental consciousness that takes form in **a new, vast monumentality**.<sup>xiv</sup>

To them, the basic concept of the project of Brussels Capital City of Europe is to address the city as **an archipelago of centralities** in the form of different but complementary artifacts. *'These collective artifacts dialectically engage the existing geography of Brussels as a city that more than any other city has developed as a land of political social, and urban differences not as an indulgent surrealist collage or as a collection of fragments, but as the very possibility of making Brussels as a veritable representation of Europe.'*<sup>xv</sup>

The Berlage institute proposes to construct a new Parliament of the European Union on the Tour&Taxis site at the western extreme of the Institutional Promenade. They imagine their promenade to be stretching from the newly built Parliament in the west to the European Council of Ministers in the east. The institute also proposes to demolish the existing Parliament Building in the European Quarter because of its ugliness. Cynically, they take away the royal storehouse, which is considered one of the most beautiful buildings of Brussels, and other parts of the existing patrimony to give way to their new project. They propose a flat parliament building that stretches to the borders of the site, some housing and the preservation of the existing Industrial Buildings.

*'As architecture, the flat building shows an understanding of multiplicity that does not immediately coincide with a useless collection of quarrelsome minorities. On the contrary, the architecture of the flat building involves the definition of a common field for the exchange of experiences; it suggests and imagines the possibility for the multitude to share a common political project. [...] The flat building is covered with the debris of European history. Colossal heads of dead European philosophers and dead European musicians crowd the roof of the flat building. By reducing its architecture to extreme silence and abstraction, the flat building opens up an unpredictable possibility for a popular, figurative representation of Europe.'* [...]

The proposal is a kind of totalitarian design for a Utopian development of the site since the building measures 1150 by 850 meter. The rest is filled in with housing [2500 units] and the existing industry. The design pretends not to be *'parlante'* or iconic, but in contrary that seems exactly what it doing.

The Institute also developed a project for the Josaphat site. It start from two needs: first the need for housing and the desire of Belgians to live in individual housing with a garden and secondly the tendency to develop peripheral business parks. Answering these two problems, a dense residential [1850 houses] and office district is proposed at Josaphat, with the train as protagonist. Car circulation is arranged in such a way that it is never seen from the public spaces. The Berlage says that this project proposes an alternative to the dilemma between two antithetic ways of living: the urban and the rural. *'The Josaphat Quarter brings together disparate elements and scales, not as a collage but as a repetitive sequence of elements that together compose a dense residential and office district, a clear urban form.'*

The random dispersion of the [European] office-apartment buildings, as extrusions of the housing rows, between the houses seems to be inspired by the actual Brussels' condition, sometimes labeled as 'Brusselisation', and it contributes to the illegibility and the irrelevancy of the design.

The program [houses and offices] is orientated in a formal way [though interesting as design] towards the railway-tracks, but the urban design itself does not exploit the train-station as a new **'urban hub'**, where all movements [pedestrian, bicycle, car, bus, tram, train] come together. Hiding the cars from the public spaces also does not contribute to the creation of urbanity.

Through their typology the houses should merge with the surrounding. But in fact the project

lies behind, as an attachment, to the surrounding urban tissue. [Not to mention that it denies the real topography of the site]. The same counts for the relation between the office towers and [the buildings of] the LeopoldIII-straat.

What the project does in reality is creating 'a periphery' on a very central spot in the city. It urbanizes the site with a very dense program, but it is not an urban project.

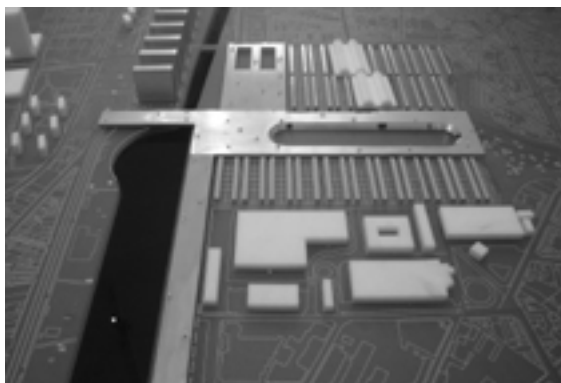


Fig 10: Tour&Taxis, European Parliament [10]

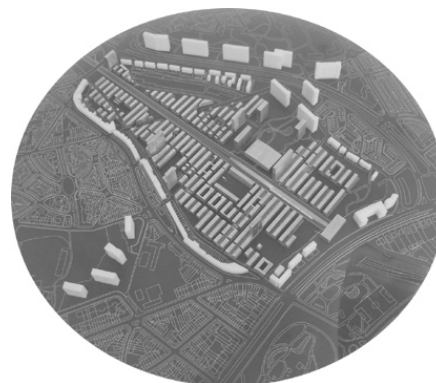


Fig 11: Josaphat, Living Area [11]

#### 4. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITES IN REALITY

For Tour&Taxis and Josaphat urban processes are running. A short-cut through the history, process, state of affairs and the related legal regulations is an interesting starting point for reflection.

##### 4.1. TOUR&TAXIS

###### 4.1.1. Music City [October 1997]<sup>xvi</sup>

The project is made by Reichen&Robert and the client was the city of Brussels. Starting on an urban level and ending with a feasibility study of a new design-proposal for the industrial patrimony this is a very complete, profound and realistic study. In a schematic way, the most important urban and architectural building stones of the proposal are:

01. a pedestrian mall [12.380m<sup>2</sup>] starting at the north station, crossing the canal and perforating the 'gare maritime'
02. a green stream/river
03. entrepot A: cultural and commercial manifestations [21.785-37.260m<sup>2</sup>]
04. a multipurpose hall [4000 places]: music city [8.555-31.285m<sup>2</sup>]
05. entrepot B [49.120m<sup>2</sup>]
06. 'gare maritime': offices and high tech workshops [atelier] [40.550m<sup>2</sup>+820m<sup>2</sup>]
07. public parking beneath of the gare maritime of 1200 places [40.200m<sup>2</sup>]
08. foreign covert market [5.475-8.214m<sup>2</sup>]
09. a railway museum [7.085-21.114m<sup>2</sup>]
10. housing [20.800m<sup>2</sup>]
11. l'hôtel de poste as a cultural house [4.655m<sup>2</sup>]
12. l'hôtel de douanes as a museum [9.460m<sup>2</sup>]

The pedestrian mall **mediates** between the site and the housing and the Brussels North Area. The green stream/river functions as **interaction switch** between two blocks, on one side the restructuring of the existing industrial patrimony and on the other side the offices and storages of the Port.

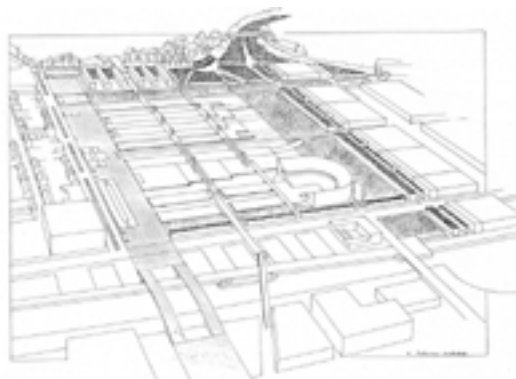


Fig 12: Tour&Taxis, Reichen&Robert [12]

#### 4.1.2. Project T&T [21 January 2002]

The project was developed by T&T, a joint venture of Leasinvest [Extensa] and Robelco together with HOK, an international architecture office. In the first stage the royal entrepot would be renovated. The final aim was to create a quarter accessible for everybody and encapsulated into the urban tissue of Brussels. They planned a big footpath, a hotel, a park of 3 ha, a library, a university campus, spaces for expositions, more than 60.000m<sup>2</sup> of houses [1000 inhabitants], a commercial center and an event-space for concerts. The renowned architecture critic Bert de Muynck described it as: '*Words like superficial, corporate, uninspiring, vague, one-dimensional, ill considered and boring only hint at the nasty feeling left by the presentation.*'<sup>xvii</sup>



Fig 13: Tour&Taxis project T&T [13]

#### 4.1.3. The Particular Destination Plan [27-11-2003]

The destination plan and the implantation plan was made in 27-11-2003 by L'atelier d'architecture et d'urbanisme. It was refused by the Brussels Capital Region because there was a strict division between office space and housing. Besides the scale and implantation of the park was estimated not to be sufficient to respond to the future needs, taking into account the needs of the neighboring quarters. Having a look at the implantation plan it seems that the proposed urban layout is inspired by 19<sup>th</sup> century Anglo-Saxon garden-landscaping style that seems inappropriate to organize the urban design. It becomes difficult to understand the interrelations between the different elements of the proposed program.



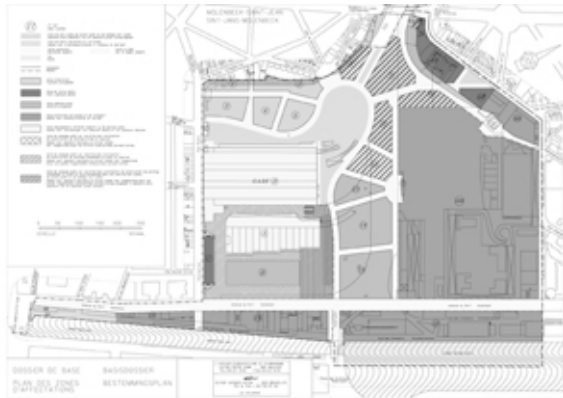


Fig 14: Tour&Taxis PDP [14]

#### 4.1.4. Special tender for the creation of a masterplan for the ‘leverzone’ nr. 5 “Thurn and Taxis” [December 2005, January 2006]<sup>xviii</sup>

In the tender some paragraphs are related to our subject:

*[article 17.] Taking into account the description of the situation, the actual masterplan will be composed. It includes **aims, a general perspective of development, a program of development** and measurements of execution;*

*The program of development will include several coordinated projects and if necessary propose different scenarios or possible versions, taking into account the budget, the actors and the premised terms;*

*[article 18.] The masterplan has to define the development of the site, particularly taking into consideration:*

- the balance between the regional or metropolitan urban ambitions [lever for the development of the Brussels Capital Region, an urban symbol, a symbolic project in the sense of the Regional Development Plan] and a self-sustaining quarter;*
- the functions on the site have to be integrated / the mixed character, in a functional way [relation commerce, offices, houses, services, etc.] and in a social way;*
- the mobility: served by public transport, a separate route that can be crossed cars, space reserved for soft mobility, space reserved for parking lots;*
- public space: the improvement of the existing public space, the creation of new public space, the creation of one or more new big green spaces;*
- the connections to make with the neighboring quarters: visual, access, sociologic, economic connections;*
- the patrimony: the treatment of all the architectural and urban patrimony;*
- the treatment of the space: the statute of and the connections between the public and private spaces;*
- the urban structures: urban density and forms [form of the housing blocks, and so on];’*

The tender asks for the development of a kind of an ‘Urban Project’, although it does not contribute to the content. The descriptions stay rather superficial and general. A lot of the implementation of these ideas depends on the capacities of the design office.

#### 4.1.5. Brussels International Logistics Center

The Brussels International Logistics Center [BILC] is an extension of the existing logistics center [TIR].

It foresees on the one side the transshipment from heavy trucks to smaller vans and on the other side storage and related activities. At the Havenlaan a small office building is planned. The first plans were drawn by the office of Atelier d’Art Urbain [10-02-2004].

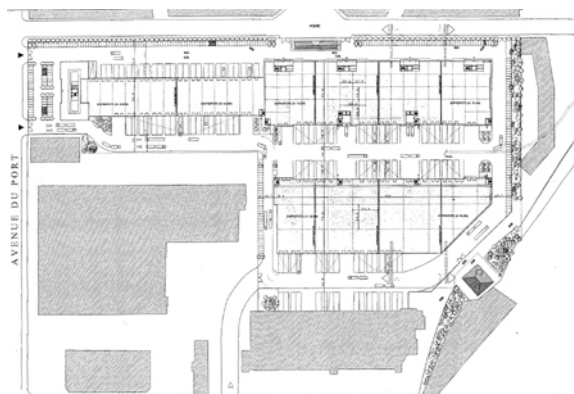


Fig 15: Tour&Taxis project BILC [15]

There is no doubt that these plans are blocking a structural redevelopment of the site of Tour&Taxis. First of all the existing TIR makes **the linking** of the quarter between the Koninginnenlaan and the Dieudonné Levèvrestraat impossible. Otherwise the Molenbeeksestraat, the Wautierstraat and the Claessensstraat could connect directly to the site of Tour&Taxis. Secondly the heavy trucks of the BILC extension would generate noise that would make the location of housing next to the site of the BILC rather impossible. Thirdly these things come along with the fact that the Brussels Port prefers to develop activities along the canal instead of backing of and opening up the site to the water.

On 5 May 2006 three architecture offices were invited to participate in a competition for the BILC: Atelier d'art urbain, Brussels Office for Architecture and Accarain-Boulliot. After the final presentation on the 6 March 2007 the office of Accarain-Boulliot, in association with Greisch, Bgroup infra and Denis Dujardin was chosen. The program and the localization of the program remains the same as before. The main entrance and street for heavy traffic will be at the center of the complex, to avoid noise impediment at the edges of the site, that could trouble the positioning of housing. But all together the architecture competition is a cosmetic operation and does not go beyond the '*m<sup>2</sup>-logics*'. In this case there is a **juxtaposition** of totally different programs. The collision area is designed as a **buffer-zone**, which is a non-design, a **cease-fire** area.

#### 4.1.6. Master plan\_Richtschema\_Schéma directeur by Benoit Moritz and Yves Lion

The office of Benoit Moritz is making up the guidelines. Together with the office of Yves Lion they do spatial research on the site and they propose an urban layout based on public space. They will also try to integrate, and adapt if possible, the preliminary plans of the BILC into the master plan. The design-team will advise the Brussels Capital Region to organize a competition for the next phase. In the next phase a new Particular Destination Plan will be made.

## 4.2. JOSAPHAT STATION

### 4.2.1. ZRI13 [ZONE OF REGIONAL INTEREST] [29 January 2004]<sup>xix</sup>

These are some fragments, interesting for the research of creating visioning, distilled out of the resolution of the Brussels Capital Region concerning the ZRI13:

*'The area is destined for housing, public services, production activities, offices and green spaces that preserve the existing biological qualities of the sorts.*

*The floor-surface for offices may not be greater than 25% of the total floor-surface of the site.*

*The urban design of the complex takes care of the connections between the Charles Gilisquetlaan and the Leopold III-laan. The spaces reserved for public transport have to be planned in accordance to the involved administrations. [...]*

*Considering that the urbanization of the site has to take up different challenges:*

*-to create a coherent new city-space, including the area for urban industry, fitting into the eccentric neighboring living areas.*

*-to create links between the northwest- and the southeast edge of the side to take away the urban barrier it generates*

*-the realization [...] of a new GEN-station [...]*

*There are two privileged places for a partly covering. These coverings connect to the bridges and can be prolonged to create only one covering the longitude of the site.*

*-these newly created structural spaces are fundamental in the context of the urbanization of the site; they should have a public character and need a qualitative high standing landscape-design; [...]*

*To guarantee a social presence beside of the working hours, the part directly aside of the railway-installations will receive housing.*

*In the perimeter of the ZRI one will work onto a parity between housing and other destinations, with a minimum of 40% of the floor-surface for housing. [...]*

*The density will be urban and have floor-surface/terrain-surface-index between 1,5 and 2,2, in function of the importance of the covering of the railway-installations'*

The ZRI results in being a very functional description, which does not define clear goals or an 'Urban Project' in content in the sense of M. de Solà-Morales<sup>xx</sup>, J. Busquets<sup>xxi</sup>, A.

Masbounji<sup>xxii</sup>, J-Y. Toussaint<sup>xxiii</sup>, P. Panerai<sup>xxiv</sup> and R. Rogers<sup>xxv</sup> or the definition of the 'Witboek'<sup>xxvi</sup>.

#### **4.2.2. THE PARTICULAR DESTINATION PLAN, CLERBAUX-PINON**

On 22-05-2007 the urban planning office presented the actual state of the study for the options of development of the Josaphat-site for the inhabitants of the surroundings. In the first phase the office will work out a plan for the municipalities of Schaerbeek and Evere. Afterwards these plans will go to the Brussels Region. In the second phase the different parties will give their advice and in the third phase it will be approved.

The urban planning office makes a kind of spatial research on the site to test the spatial capacity of the area for different programs. Afterwards they will reduce this research to a single zoning plan.

This is the proposed program: housing [50%, 184.500m<sup>2</sup>], offices [25%, 90.750m<sup>2</sup>], production [15%, 56.940m<sup>2</sup>], provisions [10%, 35.260m<sup>2</sup>] which makes in total 367.450m<sup>2</sup>.

The 3d visualization of the spatial research shows the implantation of a European School next to the recreation sporting area, a huge 'U' which encloses the zone for urban industry, one big tower destined to the European Commission and the rest of the site will be filled with housing. The housing will be ecological. The city of Freiburg in Germany is the reference. It will be impossible to cross the site by car. A tramway is planned on top of the covering of the railways.



**Fig 16 Josaphat 3D visualization [16]**

The program that is proposed by this project is located on the site in a way that the functions are rather separated than related to each other.

It is not clear what the spatial relation is between on one side the European School and the European Tower and on the other side the European Institutions [**the political landscape**] and the housing [**the vernacular landscape**].

The European School is pragmatically located next to the area of recreation, while the tower is situated at the other side of the area in a periphery-like environment. By combining most of the office-space in one building block the tower misses the right proportions. There is a strange relation with the Leopold-III-laan and the other high office blocks.

The orientation of the housing is said to be ecological [orientated to the sun] and inspired by some projects in Freiburg, but this 'Zeilenbau' is in fact '**anti-urban**' and does not attempt to create a vivid urban area, especially when the streets in between are more like blind alleys. Through this the residential area is turned into itself.

The same happens with the zone for urban industry. Instead of foreseeing a strategy to absorb this part into the whole design, a huge U-barrier blocks off any relation to confirm the [suggested] incompatibility.

These remarks are all related to each other, a clear vision on the function and design of **public space** as cement, as structural basic element of the urban design is necessary. The conclusion is that the project urbanizes the site, without creating urbanity.

## 5. A KEEN EYE & 'THE CLOVERLEAF MODEL'

A first reflection is about **the sequence of the urban process** from urban void to urban development. It makes more sense to only make a Particular Destination Plan after there is an 'Urban Project' and after the developers have done a proposition.

From the side of the municipalities it appears they only have the means to convey a passive policy, in the sense of inspection and permission.<sup>xxvii</sup> At the department of the Region only five people work part-time on fourteen Zones of Regional Interest.<sup>xxviii</sup> The [local or regional] authorities should create the means to **watch over the quality of the project** and stimulate these processes. It is therefore interesting that the administration not put out to contract and only decides, but also **develops its own strategies and visions** in a **pro-active** way. It needs a **research and development department** to analyze and start up projects and also to guide these projects. The regional administration has already started to construct a long term vision with regard to the further development of the European Quarter. This trend opens up new possibilities for urban development in the city.

The evaluation of the projects brings us back to the first chapter and **the metaphor of the collision city**, which again seems very suitable. The sites urban development of Tour&Taxis and Josaphat share certain similarities. How is this then again related to the bigger scale?

First of all Brussels is the political capital of Brussels Region, the Flemish Region, the Dutch community, the French community, the Federal government, it houses some of the most important institutions of the European Commission, and some international institutions like the NATO. The Brussels Region itself is divided into 19 communities. All this forms the **institutional landscape**.

Secondly except from the Belgian inhabitants, it houses residents from all over the European Union and also a majority of immigrants from the Mediterranean Area, which contribute all to the identity of the city. This makes up the **vernacular landscape**. [row houses, kitchen gardens, laundry, bars, tea houses, squares, football fields, clay pigeon shooting, ...] When we speak about the relation Europe-Brussels, we often only focus on the political landscape.

Thirdly beside of the tension between the vernacular and the political landscape, there is the tension between **the local and the global**. This quadripartite tension can be visualized in this cloverleaf. It can be used as a simplified or reduced '**collision model**' for Brussels.

Every architectural or urban design has to do with this. Every **'Urban Project'** is to be situated somewhere on this scheme. It can be defined by all kind of circumstances or indeed be a choice of the designer. The more crossings the urban project has, the richer it can be. **The ideal Brussels urban [leverproject] should be located at the centre of the cloverleaf.**

The **designer** can be a product designer, interior architect, a landscape designer, an urban planner, an urban designer, a public space designer, depending on the particular project or mission. It is important that the designer is suitable and capable for the task he is asked for. For many projects it is necessary to compose a **team** of designers. In this team it should be clear if there is one person who is the **author**, advised by the others or if it is a **poly-nuclear** team. To improve the quality of the team it is advised to work with **'open' tenders or competitions**. This is especially the case when the site is a 'lever'-area.

It is the task of the **designer** to define where the project is potentially located and in which direction it should be guided, keeping in mind the actual existing of the tension between the approach of the **engineer / Versailles** and the **bricoleur / Villa Hadriana**.



Fig 17: Cloverleaf collision model [17]

## 6. FIGURES

- (01) Photo taken by Bart Steenwegen
- (02) Photo taken by Bart Steenwegen
- (03) ROWE C., *Collisition city and the politics of 'bricolage'*, Collage City, MIT press, 1978, p86-117
- (04) aerial picture
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- (10) AURELI P. V., PATTEEUW V., *-Brussels- A Manifesto Towards the Capital of Europe*, Berlage Institute/ NAI Publishers, 2005, Photo of exposition in Bozar, taken by Bart Steenwegen
- (11) AURELI P. V., PATTEEUW V., *-Brussels- A Manifesto Towards the Capital of Europe*, Berlage Institute/ NAI Publishers, 2005, Photo of exposition in Bozar, taken by Bart Steenwegen
- (12) REICHEN & ROBERT P., *Réflexion sur le site Tour&Taxis à Bruxelles*, October 1997
- (13) [http://www.classic.archined.nl/news/0302/ground\\_euro\\_eng.html](http://www.classic.archined.nl/news/0302/ground_euro_eng.html)
- (14) PDP
- (15) project BILC
- (16) Picture from the presentation of Clerbaux-Pinon for the inhabitants of the surroundings of the site of Josaphat, 22-05-2007
- (17) Model made by Bart Steenwegen

## 7. NOTES

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