

# Architects *and sustainable development*

10 proposals  
of the Ordre  
des Architectes

# Architects *and sustainable development*

Conclusions of the initial study undertaken  
by the Ordre des Architectes  
in association with ecodurable®

June 2004

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# Introduction Jean-François Susini

President, Conseil National  
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*It is a social issue related to a cultural ambition which aims at providing pleasant living conditions. Accordingly, it reflects the permanent concern of architects.*

All developed countries are now aware of the need to revise their economic model in order to confront issues which did not seem crucial just a few years ago. Global warming is the most sensitive issue but also to be included are the conservation of our environmental heritage, the social balance between rich and poor countries, the capacity to create enduring prosperity and to maintain the cultural diversity which structures our societies.

Large international organizations, as well as protest groups, provide evidence of the need to now take into consideration these issues in all development policy. We are well aware that if we do not undertake the necessary changes, we prepare for future generations a world more difficult to live in which might even undergo irreversible damage.

This concern is particularly relevant in our cities. Urban planning concentrates almost entirely on issues of sustainability. So perhaps the nature of urbanization will doubtlessly have to be rethought to try and accommodate, in the decades to come, new urban populations in

increasingly scarce space and this in the best conditions of human dignity. Associated with this movement are the control of energy, social mix, the integration of mobility and a more participative democracy which are some of the factors to be taken into consideration when inventing our future.

Through their global approach and their capacity to integrate multiple parameters, architects are obviously trained to make these factors co-exist in the built environment. Because the need “to think and act sustainable” is implicit in their professional practice, they are also able to go beyond their usual fields of activity.

This makes the architect one of the rare professionals capable of undertaking part of the activity susceptible to provide the public, politicians and the economic community with constructive solutions more in accordance with the economic, social, environmental and cultural considerations which define sustainable buildings. Accordingly, this awareness of context led the Ordre des Architectes to mobilize in order to make a particular contribution to the

formulation of sustainable development policies being put forward. Other than the national strategy launched by the French Government in 2003, in response to the OECD and European recommendations, major construction companies have already undertaken practical measures.

Under the leadership of Patrice Genet, Vice President of the Conseil National and President of the Mediterranean Union of Architects, in association with *ecodurable*<sup>®</sup>, the professional institution initiated a study on architects and sustainable development. The synthesis of this study results in a list of 10 proposals published herein. It is a contribution aimed at authorities, politicians, economic sectors and architects irrespective of their form of practice.

To develop this project, it is important that the Ordre quickly passes to an operational phase. For this purpose, we are creating an "architects and sustainable development" forum directed by the regional chapters and the Conseil National which will supervise the initiative and will work on three major points:

- ▶ the initial training and continuing professional

development of architects in sustainable development;

- ▶ the methodological approach to sustainable construction; and
- ▶ a meaningful dialogue with both public and private sectors.

Accordingly, architects will demonstrate their mobilization around these issues proving that architecture is a major factor for sustainable development in society and a means of being the indispensable partner in the current political work undertaken in France on the subject.

For several years, our European colleagues, notably Swiss and Scandinavian, have showed their commitment to this new approach. In the short term, our objective is to integrate the French approach within the European context. Yet let it be clear that sustainable development cannot be reduced to a simple question of technical arbitration or even to a pure debate on standards. Indeed, it is about a social issue associated with cultural ambition which aims at creating the best living conditions. This reflects the essential concern of architects.



# Tomorrow's architecture has to serve sustainable development

SUMMARY OF THE COMMITTEE  
AND PANEL OF ARCHITECTS STUDY  
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
AND ARCHITECTURE



“Sustainable development is one of the reasons for our existence”

In order to better respond to the requirements of society and global issues in general, in accordance with the vocation of the profession which is to facilitate and to improve “living together” by means of the built environment and landscape, the Ordre des Architectes undertakes to make sustainable development essential to architectural professional practice.

Society expresses itself through construction in the broadest sense of the term. More than ever, architecture should reconcile individual aspiration and collective constraint in an activity which also takes into account the interest of future generations. Construction in the 21st century can no longer ignore the physical limits of the planet, the social requirements of growing urban populations, their expectations for security and comfort, the cultural role of the built environment and the severe limitations of the environment and economy.

It is a question of allowing the greatest number to attain architecture, to live better and improve the “living together”.

The concept of a sustainable dimension needs to be introduced into the architectural act and the responsibility of the professionals who design and develop our built environment.

The architect is recognized as an expert who delivers this sustainable dimension of construction, while acknowledging that he is only one of the participants in the chain of construction management, listening to others, end-users, developers and builders.

The Ordre des Architectes intends to

- ▶ **Confirm the sustainable dimension of architecture**
- ▶ **Confer upon the architect the responsibility to inform the public and politicians of the sustainable dimension of the built environment**
- ▶ **Give to the architect a role in the integration of the sustainable dimension of the city and, in particular, reference to regional variation**
- ▶ **Facilitate the expression of the architect on sustainable development issues which entails better organization and identification of the role of architect in public decision tomorrow.**

\*\* The quotations and tables presented in this publication are extracts from the survey of members of the Ordre des Architectes undertaken in February and March 2004 on architecture and sustainable development to which 1,198 architects answered (Survey [DonnezVotreAvis.com](http://DonnezVotreAvis.com))

## The break with “sustainability” as applied to architecture and urban planning

Sustainable development questions construction practices of the past century; wasteful in energy and landscape, expensive in maintenance and destructive of social links. Accessibility to a viable environment which favours solidarity is effective on the environmental plan, economical in resources and creator of aesthetics and a challenge for contemporary society. Also for architects who note that the demand for “sustainability” no longer allows us to design and construct buildings as in the past.

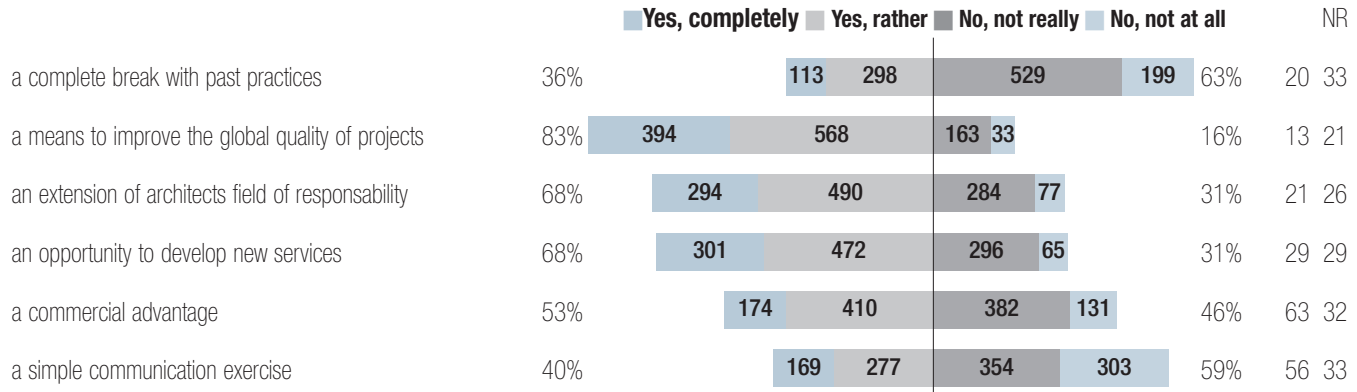
**F**or a long time, within the framework of its international institutions, the Architects Council of Europe (ACE) and the International Union of Architects (IUA), the profession has thought about the general principles of sustainable development. On this subject, it has produced very voluntarist and committed contributions (the work of the 2002 IUA Congress in Berlin, the ACE environment and sustainable architecture policy proposed in 2002 or yet again the ACE proposals in March 2004 concerning architecture and the quality of life). Within the architectural community, there exists a high social awareness of global

environmental issues connected with habitat, to the growing needs of end-users in construction and, at the same time, the challenge of understanding a more economic, more efficient and more creative means of built environment design and management in our civilization, in the name of both present and future generations.

Architecture is certainly an art as well as a technique for integrating constraints. Sustainable development now adds a major problem, i.e. to find the best compromise, in a given time and place, to reconcile the imperatives of environmental precaution and protection and the optimization



Do you agree that sustainable development with its three related factors (economic, social and environmental) is for the profession of architect:



of social needs, comfort, accessibility and collective integration with good resource allocation. Accordingly, no architectural project exists for itself. It demands a "sustainable balance" at the heart of the profession which is expected at the head of the criteria for good building. This assertion of the sustainable dimension in the professional act has immense implications which architects assume positively, not as a constraint but as recognition of their contribution.

The bearer of the sustainable dimension of construction, in time and space, but also in the

humanist approach to the subject, the architect does not claim a role apart. He enlists his contribution in the chain of responsibilities which leads from clients to contractors, from public authorities to end-users. To participate in the design and construction of buildings, to listen and remain open, in a political and economic context which operates today through dialogue and the complementarity of knowledge and goodwill, is also "a sustainable method". It is this pooling and sharing of skills that the architect now claims at all levels, from the built to urban environments.

*It is not technical solutions which matter most but the overall combination of the project and its global, financial, spatial, ordinary, climatic, environmental nature ...”*

# The architect in the service of the public

The architect should guide the public towards sustainable construction; it is also his responsibility, in his relation with clients, in projects and in public debate.

“ *With thought, it is especially the means to correctly undertake our work, a voluntary participation of the client and, as such, an awareness of what our profession can contribute, so it seems to me!* ”

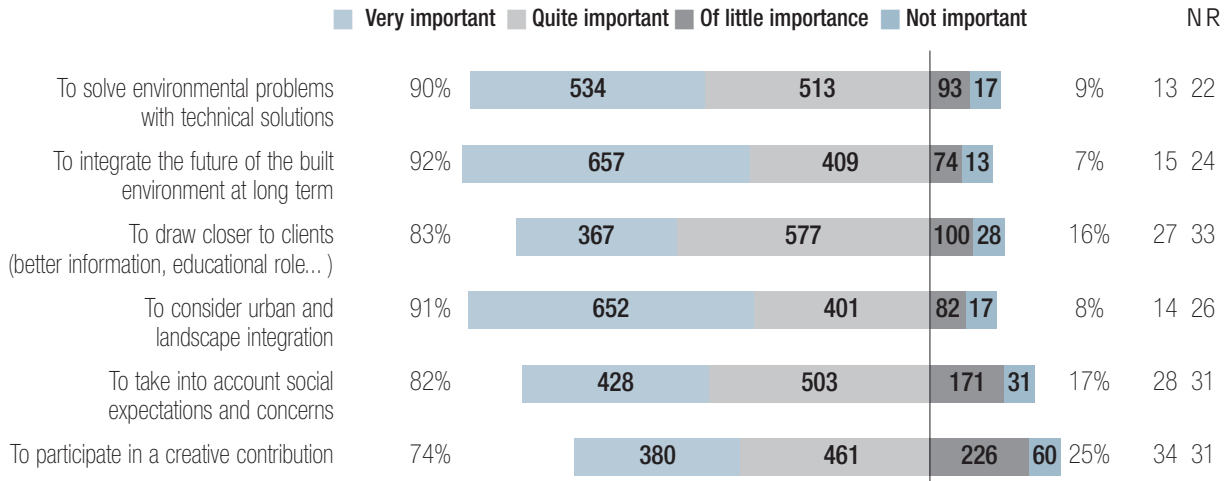
**T**he education and advising of clients, whether private individuals or public authorities, are one of the keys to sustainable development in construction. It is the necessary condition in order to abandon the destructive tyranny of the lowest bid which bears the weight of pernicious choice for the environment, unsuitable for men and for which future generations will assume the consequences. At the same time, the role of the architect is to be familiar with the site peculiarities and local identities to better assure integration within the landscape and the requirements of end-users.

The architect can also bring to the public the creative dimension without which no

construction can last, because it no longer arouses interest to be passed on to future generations. Yet aesthetic creation is inseparable from the environmental quality of the building and its integration in the natural or urban landscape. By referring to these fundamental principles, architects dismiss the mass production which deprived millions of people of the right to architecture in their daily lives. The return to a creative vision of the built environment is essential for the viability of our modern urban spaces where today the child, the lonely or elderly person find their place with difficulty.

The architect should be actively involved in public debate which draws attention the

## Which of the following sustainable development issues do you consider important?



problems of social life linked to the management of space, to social facilities, to the cohabitation of communities and the organization of public services. This debate is intense because it highlights the complexity of sustainable management where the combination of contradictory requirements and the natural conflict of interests meet in the design decisions. By sharing his point of view and experience, the architect brings a sustainable vision which allows the general quality of buildings to develop and so enlightens the debate in the long term.

This participation in the debate should be accompanied by a better understanding of the client and the local population at the instigation

of projects and during their development. Redevelopment and Sustainable Development Projects are the privileged legitimate opportunity for the general public to express their opinion on different planning projects at the outset of Local Development Plans which have a considerable importance for the long-term restructuring of our cities. Architects should participate in the consultative and participative procedures, to develop their analysis as well as to create a detailed, independent and practical position. Sustainability has to bring urban planning to an era where the regulations do not replace dialogue and where the collective vision, at the crossroads of individual projects, is better understood and accepted.

*In this time of questioning previous schemes, let's not lose sight of our social and educational role in urban issues. ”*

# The architect at the heart of the city

Will our living spaces be “sustainable”? The question arises more than ever and the extent of concern confers to the architect a role to shape the decisions and the main development options.

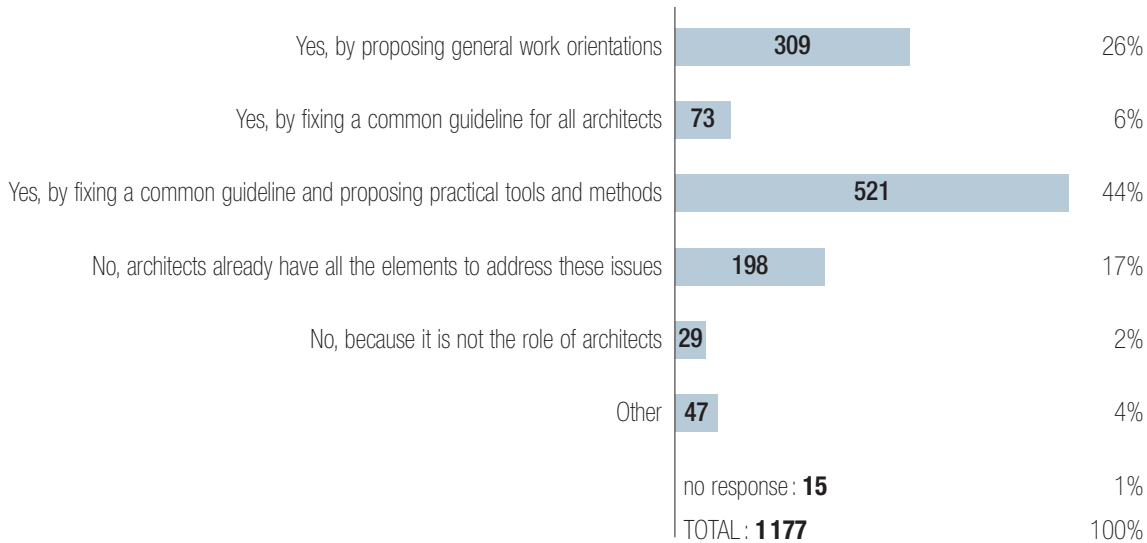
“Avoid damaging the physical and psychological health of those for whom we are supposed to deploy all our talent. For those who most of the time is not the client... but the end-user! We should be the guarantors of these values by obstructing the client, if necessary. But who would give us the authority?”

**C**ities are the seriously ill of the planet, yet they do not stop growing. Some are already uninhabitable and we cannot imagine that future generations will agree to live in the projected conditions. Their sanitary quality is deficient and the production of waste excessive. Their energy consumption is unreasonable and social segregation keeps increasing. They are congested and increasingly inaccessible. The mastery of the urban environment is one of the challenges of this century which will inevitably bring us to build, to construct and to develop differently. It is a challenge for the whole profession because architects are concerned parties to the failures and the reactions, the questions and the answers which create this explosion of megalopolis and the cancerous conurbations

where it is no longer habitable. The necessary space for growth and sociability, tomorrow's city remains to be invented.

**The techniques and methods of construction are also to be contested** in this century if we want to build more ecologically, more economically, to consider the complete life cycle of a building and if we want to leave to future generations buildings which respect their health, their investment and their new dreams. The architect must re-find the freedom to design, to propose, to decide in favour of sustainable buildings with respect to the well-known concerns whether they be of a physical, aesthetic or social interest in the widest possible sense as felt by their end-users and not only the developers or their consultants. Architects know that market constraints and

**Do you think the profession should instigate a certain number of discussion and action criteria better adapted to a sustainable development approach?**



their logic can be in conflict with the idea of sustainable development and return to identify and confront them. For them, sustainability is a way of striking other balances, of developing improvements before short-term gains.

Public decisions are always unsatisfactory when it is a question of thinking about the future in the city, of projecting landscapes and imagining the use of new facilities. **Yet, sustainable development is indeed a practice of consultation** and the expression of committed parties around common issues seen as the opportunity for progress. Legislation has provided the procedures for long-term debate, opened the means of consultation through the development of participative democracy (resident committees) and encouraged the

provision of inquiry procedures. These are new opportunities for architects to match their expertise with local expectations and to participate in the development of social compromise, more inclined to "sustainability" than the former decision making process. The pressures of sustainable development can appear to slow down the decision-making period whereas it endorses them. It contests the professionals yet promotes the consideration of human parameters. It is an opportunity for the architect.

**Professional par excellence for more sustainable construction, the architect alongside politicians, associations and city residents must find his original rightful place in order to give back a future to cities.**

*This difficult liaison (economy, social and environment) can only be born out of the collective consciousness and thus from a new culture. ”*

## Tomorrow, the architect in a sustainable society

Tomorrow, society will not bypass the issues of “sustainability” which development imposes with little concern for the environment, the human being and efficiency whilst the fundamental needs of the majority are still widely dissatisfied. Architects can contribute to the development of sustainable solutions in terms of habitat and built environment with new approaches.

“ *Sustainable development is not a framework for new regulations but a practice, a state of mind and an awareness.* ”

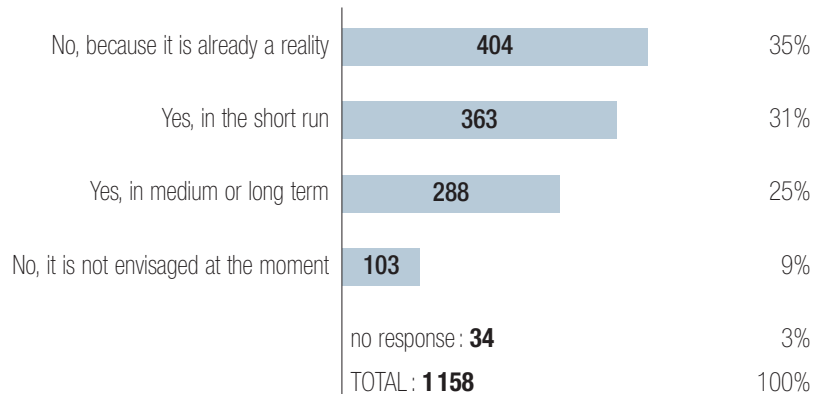
**P**ropose differences and changes in our options. Whether it concerns the choice of materials, the origins of building, the energy efficiency of building, the production of waste and their treatment, about maintenance costs, landscaped quality, social accessibility and their economic viability there is today a demand for a better treatment of alternatives in our urban options, to avoid dissatisfactions and correct unacceptable situations. It requires boldness in prescription, different assertions and conceptual risks. The architectural profession has to abandon conformist behaviour and learn from past experiences to provide innovation if it wants the sustainable approach to develop. It faces an enormous range of problems and few solutions. These will only become apparent from specific attempts as was always the case in past

generations that today remain references. The epoch demands it.

**Define together the social terms of sustainable architecture.** Sustainable architecture must be appreciated for its just value. Tomorrow, this truth must lead communities to take into account their economic and financial priorities, the efforts and contributions leading in the direction of a better established social utility i.e. coherent projects integrated into their regional policy of sustainable development. It is also true of public and statutory policy for which simplification can be achieved by a better asserted commitment to responsibility and the encouragement of professionals who resort to this new approach. In particular, this has to be the case in regard to



## Do you plan to strengthen the concern for sustainable development in your projects?



the energy consumption of habitat. Sustainable construction will not arise from professional ethical intentions and awareness only. It must follow from an institutional dialogue and an open contract between concerned parties around shared objectives and public interest.

**Organize the promotion of sustainability in architectural practice.** The profession knows that collective progress will not develop from new procedures and regulations. It sees that to take into account sustainability requirements in architecture can only result from social demand and economic incentive. It has experiences, studies and evaluations which will allow it to formulate recommendations, beyond the training and the technical recommendations which develop. For this reason, it acts in three

directions: collaboration with the public sector to adapt the institutional tool, relations with industrialists to reconcile the technical agreements and operational modes, and dialogue with social groups to enrich relations at the level of expectations and uses.

The profession believes it will know how to participate more directly in the development of sustainable practice. It will take part in the instigation by providing the means training, analysis and monitoring of sustainability in construction allowing architects to play an educational role but also the necessary authority, in association with all concerned. It will give future generations of architects the possibility to apply their full responsibilities in this domain.

# The 10 proposals of the Ordre des Architectes

FOR A BETTER CONSIDERATION OF SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN ARCHITECTURE

The Ordre des Architectes intends to deal with the sustainable development issues which confront the profession.

Its 10 proposals assert the role and responsibility of architects on the subject and establish orientations to further develop.

## 1 Commitment in favour of a more sustainable development

Undertake in favour of a "more sustainable development" and mobilize to exploit the importance of a sustainable development approach in urban planning, construction and habitat management policy decisions.

- 1 To appeal to all members of the Ordre des Architectes
- 2 To subscribe to the "Global Compact", the initiative of Kofi Annan, the United Nations General Secretary, which calls upon the private sector to undertake principles in favour of sustainable development
- 3 To require public authorities to be associated with national and international programmes in this direction (e.g. National Sustainable Development Strategy, National Sustainable Development Council)
- 4 To ensure within the profession, action to advance knowledge and competence on this issue
- 5 To regionalize the approach by confirming the specificity of "regional culture" through sustainable architecture, by the implication of the regional chapters of the Ordre des Architectes.

*It is not an extension of the architect's field of responsibility. It is his field of professional and human responsibility. ”*

## 2 Definition of the architect's contribution

Define his contribution to sustainable development through 7 very specific factors which he intends to undertake in the proposition and analysis of projects he is entrusted.

- 1 To envisage the destiny of any building (in the long term or not... ), in regard to future generations and also social utility
- 2 To undertake economic design in a global cost approach, integrating the collective costs and search for the optimization of resources around the concept of "sustainable value"
- 3 To guarantee the safety and sanitary imperatives of a project and avoid risk to its users and the environment and, in particular, the natural environment
- 4 To ensure the maximum eco-efficiency of all construction in respect to its contribution to the reduction of waste, discharges and, in particular, impact at the construction phase
- 5 To integrate the search for well-being and "due comfort" in the habitability of a building, whether it be valid users, handicapped persons, children or elderly persons
- 6 To provide cultural satisfaction through the development of buildings which answer the local and, in particular, regional requirements for integration and the new aspirations of the public
- 7 To institutionalise consultation with the public and interested parties within the framework of project development to ensure the listening to and undertaking of social expectations.

*Globalize the answer to the different issues: the architect is most apt to succeed. Moreover, it is his duty. ”*

### 3 Confirmation of the architect's role

“The opportunity to have recognized our inseparable and indispensable aptitude for quality sustainable architecture and not merely economics.

Assert the specific role of the architect in the consideration of sustainable development in urban planning and construction decisions which must form part of his contribution.

- 1 Confirmation of his ability to formulate sustainable development impact studies. Promote the service known as “sustainability analysis” at the instigation of all projects proposing project development procedures
- 2 Confirmation of his duty to develop more sustainable projects, by taking into account diagnoses and to promote the “undertaking of better project sustainability by suitable modifications”.

### 4 Solicitation of public authorities

“Architects must be integrated in the construction process as early as possible in the project, i.e. in the choice of sites and the location of buildings.

Solicit public authorities and politicians to introduce sustainable development when formulating policies and awarding public contracts.

- 1 To analyse the global impact of a building in terms of sustainable development through sustainable development analysis and presentation in terms of “total public cost”
- 2 To take account of the “sustainable best bid” in tender calls
- 3 To introduce the requirements of sustainability in regulations, standards and practice
- 4 To encourage Redevelopment and Sustainable Development Projects by training programmes and the exchange of experience
- 5 To improve public inquiries so that they take into full account the scope of sustainable development
- 6 To review regularly public construction policies with regard to sustainable development (public accountability)
- 7 To take into account within the construction tax system their contribution to sustainable development.

## 5 Development of research with all the construction team

Undertake jointly with the whole construction team research leading to sustainable development by organizing annual conferences on sustainable construction with the support of the State and in partnership with

- 1 Industrialists concerning materials
- 2 Developers and financiers concerning costs
- 3 Environment and habitat professionals concerning the ways and the means
- 4 Politicians and planners concerning the needs
- 5 Real estate professionals to identify "sustainable value" of property and to optimize investment management.

*It is not the problem of architects alone, but of the whole chain of construction decision and building management. ”*

*We must join the debate with other concerned parties. The resulting directions must exceed the scope of architects. ”*

## 6 Introduction of sustainable development in architectural education

Architects already have all the skills to address these issues. Notwithstanding, we should develop an awareness to communicate, manage and exchange with the other groups our intellectual, artistic and practical potential.

- 1 To set up continuous professional development corresponding to needs identified by architects training programmes (publications, Internet... )
- 2 To promote research and create education programmes in all disciplines concerned
- 3 To spread knowledge and diffuse it through
- 4 To open these education programmes to foreign experience and existing contributions in the developed world.

*Architects already have all the skills to address these issues. Notwithstanding, we should develop an awareness, to communicate, manage and exchange with the other groups our intellectual, artistic and practical potential. ”*

## 7 Take into account sustainable development in European policies

Put sustainable architecture and planning in the centre of European policies

- 1 To consider the importance of a “European model” in urban issues
- 2 To introduce this factor into the axes of European development policies
- 3 To find the incentives and the mechanisms to bring about consideration of sustainable development in construction in general
- 4 To encourage the exchange between European countries of experience and the development of knowledge
- 5 To develop a system of reference for sustainable architecture within the ACE.

## 8 Development of public and market professional awareness

Educate the public and market professionals in sustainable development issues in architecture and urban planning and stimulate the debate

- 1 To publish information about the requirements of cities and their practice in sustainable development in architecture and urban planning (advertisement and discussion on Redevelopment and Sustainable Development Projects)
- 2 To hold proposal and discussion “local assemblies” on the expectations of sustainable development when a project exceeds a certain scale, with a contribution from the architects involved
- 3 To provide opportunity for architects to explain and discuss options with the local population concerned by public projects
- 4 To make public opinion a criterion of project appraisal.

“  
*It is indispensable!  
Essential! If architects do  
not show the way  
forward, who will?*”



## 9 Share the knowledge of environmental benefits

Clarify and simplify the knowledge of material and technical environmental qualities.

- 1 To simplify and harmonize the eco-efficiency quality criteria
- 2 To obtain independence and tender evaluation in respect to environmental matters by introducing the opinion of end-users and consultants
- 3 To avoid the excessive use of standardization by seeking objective information on environmental quality.

*Reduce building maintenance and construction costs in investment. ”*

*Examine energy solutions, composition and origin of material (production energy loads including transport), treatment of (construction) waste, treatment of (water) effluents. ”*

## 10 Development of model and exemplary buildings

Favour experimentation by developing model and exemplary buildings which promote sustainable architecture

- 1 To develop programmes with public and private sectors to provide experience and example
- 2 To associate very diverse “groups of architects” in these actions
- 3 To incite politicians to involve “consultant” architects for sustainable development in their new projects.

*Avoid over strict new legislation but develop an awareness with developers.*

*Every building or urban project must bring a different answer to the criteria linked to sustainable development which cannot be determined by legislation. ”*

# From proposals to actions

“ARCHITECTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT” FORUM OF ARCHITECTS  
IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION IN FRANCE:

- To promote the objectives of sustainability in urban planning and architecture
- To encourage the relationship between the architectural profession and the public sector concerned with more sustainable development
- To encourage initiatives and experiences with clients
- To assist architects to train and be informed on the practice of sustainable development

The Ordre des Architectes established this “architects and sustainable development” forum to prepare a technical and methodological guide for the whole profession. This guide will be the practical support to which architects can refer together with training programmes and commitments which remain to be defined. Under the direction of the Conseil National, the

forum is a meeting of architects concerned by sustainable development who want to improve the practice by this means and to exchange their experience in this domain. They meet for this purpose on the dedicated Internet site which permanently associates them with all initiatives and allows them to share their comments and their contributions.

The forum “architects and sustainable development” will work under the following terms:

- ▶ **Supervision of the production of the sustainable development technical guide** whose preparation will be entrusted to a panel of experts and validated progressively by the most committed architects
- ▶ **Permanent information and creation of a resource centre**, the sharing of experience and a panel actively giving advice and comments to promote sustainable architecture
- ▶ **Working party** meetings to regularly review public debate on standards and regulations concerning sustainable architecture, as well as the content of training programmes which remain to be set up. It can also launch and supervise technical studies as necessary, in association with partners, on fundamental subjects such as global cost analysis and energy saving certificates
- ▶ Make available practical experiences and contribute to the development of education programmes to favour **the training of architects in sustainable development**
- ▶ **Evaluation by an annual report** recording successful practical experiments, the situation in France, current issues and the results achieved. This report will summarize the recommendations of the Ordre des Architectes to continuously promote the profession’s proposals.
- ▶ Organization of an **annual open day** of European architects engaged in sustainable construction, to discuss the orientations and promotion of the subject with all concerned partners, coming from the economic and industrial sectors, the institutional community and general public. This day will be organized around proposed and solicited “themes”. It will generate new working proposals and will compare the position of the French construction industry with what is being done elsewhere in Europe.

The “architects and sustainable development” forum proposes to the public and private sectors, to associations and communities which want to promote its objective, a **partnership** which will work under the following terms:

- ▶ link on the Internet site to share information
- ▶ joint development of studies and operations
- ▶ participation and support for joint actions such as the “annual day”, the publication of studies and technical documents.

Today, “Architects and sustainable development” is an objective for the profession and a guideline for the future. It must be an attitude shared by all within the construction industry. Tomorrow, it will become an identification label for projects which most integrate the fundamental criteria of sustainability in advance from their design, from the development brief, in their construction and their use for the utmost benefit of the residents and the public who, from now on, want to live in a sustainable world.

# Conclusion Patrice Genet

President, Architecture and Sustainable  
Development Committee  
Vice President, Conseil National  
de l'Ordre des Architectes

**Sustainable architecture is not reduced to a standard.** It is a social attitude which has to be translated into an economic and civic approach.

The Ordre des Architectes calls upon parties interested in sustainable construction and planning to co-operate in promoting progress and to study developments. Architects are available for this purpose.

During six months, we listened, observed, thought about what was said and what was done in France in architecture, construction, urban planning and the relation with sustainable development.

The initiatives are interesting but scattered. The concerns are strong but diverse. Apparently, there is a lot to share and to say on the subject and the moment has come to collate the comments and to converge the efforts. It would be paradoxical that, in the circumlocution of an approach which is by definition the search for a consensus, the participants did not try to work more together. Sustainable architecture will not be imposed by way of a standard, be it ambitious and

precise. It will not result from a semi-regulated process. It will not work on limited a base.

It is clear that sustainability questions many fundamentals in architecture and urban planning. Firstly, the logic of excessive standardization which substitutes mechanisms for well-balanced and considered decisions, but also the economic calculations which neglect the global operating costs by investing at the lowest price and especially the absence of a link between planning and fiscal policies and the incentives for developing buildings within a global vision. Sustainability will notably affect the choice of construction materials and techniques which it is necessary to make more energy efficient and more compatible with controlled waste management, from construction to demolition. Yet, it is mainly the prospect in time of the building which will be consequent because if we have never built well in the short-term, it will certainly be necessary to learn to make choices in the interest of future generations, but who are obviously neither really listened to nor consulted. Moreover, the representation of the interests of future generations is one of the most complex

problems of sustainable development. As concerns habitat, it remains central.

These practical issues give back to the architect three prospects.

- ▶ He becomes the privileged consultant, due to his independence, in terms of the analysis of the sustainability of a project, either at the design or construction phase. A new range of services opens for the profession: to analyse, define and set the rules of an optimal consideration of the parameters of project sustainability whether by preliminary analysis or as a supplement to the commission.
- ▶ He becomes the necessary chairman of the debate which must accompany the definition of the building or of planning regulations. Redevelopment and Sustainable Development Projects are the occasion for architects to exploit their listening capacity, their educational role and their social concern, so as to help clients and, in particular, communities and their representatives to take into account a perspective not only spatial and temporal, but also human and technical, as expected of modern architecture in a democratic society. Accordingly, it is the

social dimension of the profession which has to assert itself

- ▶ Finally, the architect becomes a more innovative and more creative professional by asserting the importance of the habitability of a building, of its insertion in its broader context and its social impact beyond the short-term economic constraints imposed upon the architecture of these last few decades. He is the only one able to undertake synthesis in his proposals, in a universe which has become particularly constrained and conflictual.

**Our wish is to favour this new “social” position of the architect**, through the integration of his expertise and judgment in sustainable construction in the decision-making process which decides the future of our cities and our way of life.

We know that there are many things still to clarify, to define together and to experiment in the course of the years. Our European colleagues seem more audacious in this matter, perhaps because they are better respected and listened to more. Paradoxically, French architecture can be recognized throughout the

world but here it is voluntarily limited when it is not marginalized in the process of development and construction which sacrifice the beautiful to the urgency and the sustainable to the necessary minimum. It seems to us that the broad concept unifying the economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions opens an exceptional opportunity to escape the one-sided options which sacrifice by convenience one factor with respect to another. Who can better remind and care than the architect whose profession is to understand what the inhabitant wants, to understand the need of the client and to identify the potentialities of a given space?

**By making sustainable architecture an occasion of national consensus** between all construction professionals, the Ordre des Architectes is conscious of the responsibility which it takes on. It projects into a society where the quality of the environment becomes essential. It makes urban planning the subject of public debate par excellence. Accordingly, it's for us to provide solutions, methods and

results so that our constructions are buildings worthy of the social and economic expectations of this country's inhabitants and their children who will inherit it, to keep or destroy them if we have given them the possibility to choose the place to live which suits them.

**May these proposals serve to open the debate** with all in a broad and well-intentioned way. May they generate strong and truly sustainable solutions! Might they especially free us from the "regulations only" in which we have locked and imprisoned ourselves agreeing to define between all city participants, a spirit and the means of decision respectful of a "sustainable" vision of living together.

If we listen to our fellow countrymen, who in the end will be the best judges of what we shall bequeath them, the second stage of our project is to encourage this French consensus in favour of a sustainable architecture which we need so much. There are many possible practical opportunities. Indeed, the life of tomorrow is our concern.



# Annexes

Persons interviewed who shared their comments and practical experience with  
“the Architecture and Sustainable Development Committee”

**Patrice Guyot**, Agence Nationale pour la Rénovation Urbaine (ANRU)

**Marc Lainé**, General Secretary, Fédération de l'Industrie du Béton (FIB)

**Caroline Lestournelle**, Engineer, Fédération Française des Tuiles et Briques (FFTB)

**Isabelle Dorgeret**, Engineer, Fédération Française des Tuiles et Briques (FFTB)

**Sabine Boury**, Technical Department, Fédération Française du Bâtiment (FFB)

**Alain Birault**, Business Development Manager, Lafarge

**Léopold Lombard**, Architect Liaison Manager, Lafarge

**Eric Jean-Baptiste**, Urban Planning Department, Mairie de Paris

**Pascal Douard**, Senior Civil Servant Sustainable Development, Ministère de l'Équipement

**André Ladousse**, Senior Civil Servant Sustainable Development, Ministère de la Culture

**Régis Meyer**, Construction Consultant, Mission Interministérielle de l'Effet de Serre

**Agnès Charbonnel**, Public Authority Sustainable Development Liaison Manager, Saint-Gobain

**Olivier Lluansi**, Environment Health and Security Director, Saint-Gobain

**Françoise-Hélène Jourda**, Architect

**Livia Tirone**, Architect

**Maria-Antonietta Sbordone**, Architect

**Philippe Madec**, Architect

**Dominique Gauzin-Müller**, Architect

**Members of the Conseil National de l'Ordre des Architectes (CNOA)**

**Architecture and Sustainable Development Committee**

**Patrice Genet**, Committee President, Vice President CNOA

**Laurence Croslard**, Vice President CNOA

**Philippe Castans**, Secretary CNOA

**Albert Dubler**, National Councillor CNOA

**Dominique Gendre**, National Councillor CNOA

**Jacques Canal**, National Councillor CNOA

**Philippe Barbeyer**, National Councillor CNOA

**Isabelle Moreau**

**Christian Tardivon**

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Represented by Patrick d'Humières, Director and Julien Rivals, Consultant.

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9 rue Borromée - 75015 Paris  
Tel 01 56 58 67 00  
[www.architectes.org](http://www.architectes.org)



9 rue de Villersexel - 75007 Paris  
Tel 01 45 48 21 11  
[www.ecodurable.com](http://www.ecodurable.com)