

ORDRE  
DES  
ARCHITECTES



# Habitats Cities Territories

A PLEA

ARCHITECTURE AS A SOLUTION

# Why a plea?

The making of the city shapes our life in society for decades to come: when we build, demolish or rehabilitate, we affect our daily environment. **Taking care of the living environment of the French is therefore, in a way, spatializing our democracy.**

Who today aspires to spend half their salary, or even more, to live in a place that is too small, poorly served and far from their work? Housing, transport and work must be linked. Furthermore, today's ecological challenges and the global economic situation oblige us to "take care" of our territory: the cost and scarcity of resources, heat waves, meteorological hazards, and the like... the IPCC report shows us how vulnerable our territory is. We must work to avoid major crises and shattered lives. **We cannot declare a state of natural disaster indefinitely.**

**The urgency no longer needs to be demonstrated. Together, we must act!**

The good news is that solutions already exist and we are innovating every day! Successful experiments and good practices can be found everywhere in the country, carried out by citizens, elected officials and architects. It is urgent to spread and expand them. It is urgent to listen to the inhabitants and to make them actors of their living environment – and proud to be so.

We need public investment and a clear political vision:

- ▶ **Strengthen the territories to allow for a more balanced development.**
- ▶ **Move from a housing policy to a habitat policy.**
- ▶ **Repair the city by giving priority to rehabilitation.**
- ▶ **Change our practices in the face of climate change.**
- ▶ **Decarbonize construction by developing new channels for materials.**

Architectural creation provides indispensable solutions for better living together and for the success of our country's ecological and social transition. Let's seize this opportunity! Its inter-ministerial nature places architecture at the heart of public policies. It is about investing in the future. It is about changing the current economic model which no longer allows us to guarantee a quality of life for our fellow citizens. Architects are present to act in all territories.

Elected officials, citizens, construction actors, let us collectively put the public interest back at the heart of the making of the city.

Let's carry this vision of the future together!

# IN THE FACE OF THE EMERGENCY

## Climate deregulation

**1990** First IPCC report. Everything is said about climate deregulation: the increase in greenhouse gases and the rise in temperatures are linked to human activities.

**2022** Everything is picking up speed. Extreme weather events, such as extreme cold, floods and droughts, increase in number and are expected to intensify.

**2050** 2050 The rise in sea level on the French coastline will affect at least 1.4 million French people, 165,000 buildings and more than 860 municipalities<sup>1</sup>.

**2100** There will be at least 20 deadly heatwave days per year<sup>2</sup>.

**Living things are threatened, the Earth's habitability is in question.**



In 2100,  
**3 out of 4 people**  
Could be victims of deadly  
heat waves in the world<sup>9</sup>.

## Poor housing and social crisis

**Precariousness, homelessness, forced cohabitation, overcrowding:** poor housing affects 12 million people in France<sup>3</sup>.

**Loss of quality:** collective housing built over the last 20 years is smaller, more difficult to furnish, less bright and without outdoor space<sup>4</sup>. This deterioration, linked to the financialization of production, has not made it possible to build either more or less expensively.

**Peri-urban sprawl** and 'zone' urbanism have dominated the making of the city in recent decades. They make inhabitants more vulnerable, leading to dependence on cars and fossil fuels, and they spatialize inequalities.

**Ageing of the population:** 30% of the French population will be elderly<sup>5</sup> in 2070 (compared to 25% today). This development requires a strong adaptation of housing and cities.



In twenty years,  
**New flats have  
lost up to 15%  
of their floorspace,**  
i.e. the equivalent of  
one room<sup>10</sup>.

## Depletion of resources

**Raw materials crisis:** construction is responsible for a third of carbon emissions in France, and accounts for more than 40% of the energy consumed<sup>6</sup>. Concrete is the manufactured product that emits the most greenhouse gases. Sand<sup>7</sup>, its essential component, is becoming rare.

**Disappearance of fertile soil:** 60,000 hectares of arable land have been artificially developed every year for the past 40 years, i.e. a 72% increase in urbanization when the population has only increased by 20%<sup>8</sup>.

This contributes to the **decline in biodiversity** and natural ecosystems.



**2 out of 3  
municipalities**  
Are affected by at least  
one natural hazard<sup>11</sup>.

1. Note entitled "L'adaptation au changement climatique sur le littoral français" [Adapting to climate change on the French coast], la Fabrique Écologique, July 2019. – 2. Météo France. – 3. Annual report of the Fondation Abbé Pierre, February 2022. – 4. The study entitled "Nos logements, des lieux à ménager" [Our homes, places to be carried for ], IDHEAL, August 2021. – 5. "France, portrait social" [social portrait], Insee, edition 2018. – 6. Key figures of the Ademe, September 2018. – 7. Sand is the second most consumed natural resource after water, Ademe. – 8. Report entitled «Objectif "zéro artificialisation nette" : quels leviers pour protéger les sols?» [Objective "zero net artificialisation": what levers to protect the soil?], France Stratégie, July 2019. – 9. "Nature Climate Change". – 10. IDHEAL. – 11. Cerema, March 2021.



# RESOURCES AVAILABLE

## Existing structures

**The city of 2050 is already 80% built!**

Building the city of tomorrow means repairing the city of today. It means rehabilitating existing buildings in a virtuous way: reusing materials, transforming the use of buildings, and mobilizing empty offices and the 3 million vacant homes<sup>12</sup>.

It means converting military, railway, industrial and commercial wastelands into land reserves: cleaning them up, making them denser and replanting them.

## Raw material deposits

**The construction sector is responsible for 66% of the waste produced in France<sup>13</sup>.**

Rehabilitating buildings means reducing waste production. The best waste is the waste that is not produced.

Reuse, re-employ, recycle: we can revalue wasted resources.

Use renewable materials that consume less energy and cause little pollution, such as wood, raw earth, straw or hemp. It means offering new outlets to the agricultural and forestry sectors. It means creating local industries that create jobs that cannot be relocated.

## Know-how

**30 000 architects work throughout the country.**

To transform cities and reshape this existing material, architects provide advice from the outset of development projects, supporting local elected officials and interfacing with residents.

To build and renovate in a more sustainable way, architects support their clients from the design stage to the delivery of the work.

To change the model, architects work with craftsmen and companies to reinvent local know-how and develop innovative construction methods.



In 2021, **a pool of 2 700 brownfield sites covering more than 4 000 hectares** has been identified in the Île-de-France region alone<sup>14</sup>.



**€1.5 billion worth of new materials** are thrown away each year in France<sup>15</sup>.



## OUR CHALLENGES

### New risks, new needs

How can we adapt the city to the extreme phenomena that are becoming the new normal?

We, as elected officials, residents, and construction stakeholders, must all work together to build “resilience” for our territories.

**Architecture provides solutions by designing buildings that respond to the new climatic constraints, by renaturing the soil, renovating with respect for the heritage.**

### For a transversal approach to planning

How can we rethink territorial planning that takes the interdependence of territories into account?

By promoting balanced development that is part of a shared approach to planning between the State, the Regions, the towns and villages. This new approach must:

- ▶ no longer juxtapose territories, but focus on their complementarities;
- ▶ involve public decision-makers and inhabitants in a long-term vision;
- ▶ deal with the issues of housing, development, construction, mobility and sustainable development in a cross-cutting manner;
- ▶ rely on local dynamics, which use the territory’s artistic, agricultural, industrial and cultural resources to create a new appeal outside the metropolises.

**Architecture provides solutions by thinking about planning in relation to society.**

### Towards a new line of imagination for the city

How can the ecological transition be successful?

- ▶ By forging a more sensitive cultural imagination to the build and landscape heritage, geared to the qualitative transformation of the existing stock.
- ▶ By rethinking other urban and architectural forms to make them desirable: grouped individual houses, stacked houses, small collective buildings, etc.; housing that is directly linked to generous outdoor spaces and that preserves privacy.
- ▶ By designing housing that is welcoming to all, with easy access to services, facilities and shops. By making the city pleasant for everyone.

**Architecture provides solutions by opening up the possibility of a “happy and chosen densification”.**





## PROPOSALS

# Strengthen the territories: Enable a more balanced development

### 1\_\_ Rebalance territorial development

- **Promote solidarity and complementarity between metropolises/medium-sized and small towns:** make the regional level the reference for regional development so as to build a strategic, non-competitive vision. Encourage a rationale of mutualization and complementarity of infrastructures and programmes (following the example of the Brittany region).
- **Conduct a "local territorial inventory"** to gain a better understanding of the assets and resources of each territory.
- **Launch a national "mobility" plan** to ensure equal access to services:
  - **Encourage soft mobility at all territorial levels:** widen and secure the spaces dedicated to alternative mobility to the car.
  - **Secure, develop and maintain major pedestrian routes:** give "paths" a purpose other than tourism.
  - **Ensure "universal" coverage of public transport.**
  - **Develop carpooling platforms and shared mobility,** particularly in suburban and rural areas.

Launch the "one mayor, one architect" scheme

### 2\_\_ Implement the "Zero Net Artificialization"

- **Sanctuarize agricultural land and natural areas.**
- **Limit the conditions for opening up undeveloped land to urbanization in urban planning documents** by encouraging cities not to open up any new areas without having demonstrated the impossibility of renovating/densifying the existing stock.
- **Prioritize new construction on urban wastelands** that need to be reclaimed: industrial/commercial sites, military sites, abandoned railways.
- **Stop the construction of shopping centres** outside cities.

Sanctuarize agricultural land and natural areas

### 3\_\_ Strengthen advice, territorial engineering and mediation

- **Guarantee accessible and independent public service for architecture:** secure the functioning and financing of the Councils for architecture, urban planning and the environment. Strengthen the bodies of State Architects and Urban Planners, Architects of Buildings France, and State Advisory Architects.
- **Mobilize the 30,000 architects throughout the country to launch a "one mayor, one architect" scheme.**
- **Make it compulsory to use the expertise of designers (architects and landscape architects)** when preparing urban planning documents.
- **Increase the number of architectural mediation actions aimed at the general public** by relying on the "Maisons de l'architecture" [Houses of Architecture].

## PROPOSALS

# Move from a housing policy to a habitat policy

## 4\_\_ Put the living environment back at the heart of the State's priorities

- **Create a Ministry of State in charge of Habitat, the Living Environment and Regional Planning.**
- **Promote an inter-ministerial policy on architecture.**
- **Organize a National Conference on Habitat,** bringing together elected representatives, citizens, decision-makers and professionals in the built environment, to agree on collective objectives that will enable everyone to rethink their practice, to guarantee quality habitat for all.

Identify the minimum quality standards for housing

## 5\_\_ Improve the quality of housing for all

- **Identify the minimum quality standards for housing** (size, height, luminosity, outdoor space, storage) based on the Girometti-Leclercq report<sup>16</sup>.
- **Make all tax and public aid measures conditional on quality and ecological criteria,** guaranteed by comprehensive design studies.

Create a Ministry of State in Charge of Habitat, Living Environment and Spatial Planning

- **Apply rules for the award of quality project management contracts for social housing:** supervise the use of global contracts (design and build), make it compulsory for architects to carry out a complete mission, including in the case of sale in future state of completion, and reinforce the use of architectural competitions.
- **Encourage the reverse sale in future state of completion,** which consists of a low-cost housing body selling non-social housing to a private developer, as part of a mixed operation.
- **Enable a chosen residential pathway** by promoting the production of accessible, adaptable, inclusive and shared housing.

## 6\_\_ Control housing production costs

- **Limit the number of parties involved when setting up private operations so as to limit the carrying cost to 10% of the price of housing.**
- **Encourage cooperative development methods:** participatory housing, residents cooperatives and collective self-development.
- **Support an ambitious public land policy:** rely on public land establishments to set up a public holding of land identified as strategic by local authorities so as to control disposal costs. Encourage the fight against unwarranted capital gains on land (anti-speculation charters, measures to control construction exit prices).
- **Encourage home ownership by dissociating buildings from land:** develop joint real estate leases, and allow local authorities to offer free real estate leases on the land they develop.





## PROPOSALS

# Repair the city: Prioritize rehabilitation

## 7\_\_ Implement a national and local policy of urban repair

- **Intensify and broaden the policy of contractualization between the State and local authorities:** perpetuate the "Brownfields Fund", deploy "territorial revitalization operations" and "programmed housing improvement operations" extensively to accelerate the recovery of old degraded blocks. Support and expand the "City Heart Action" and "Small Towns of Tomorrow" schemes.
- **Create diversity in peri-urban areas** by systematically including in the Local Urban Plan objectives for the conversion of single focus areas: business parks and suburban areas.

## 8\_\_ Rehabilitate existing buildings

- **Limit and control demolitions**, particularly in programmes of the National Agency for Urban Renovation, and preserve 20th century heritage.
- **Encourage the renovation and adaptation of buildings:** intensify public aid for renovation, particularly for social landlords and low-income households. Extend the "Denormandie" scheme for old buildings to the entire country, subject to significant environmental performance.
- **Include studies in public renovation grants** to encourage comprehensive renovations.
- **Refocus tax incentives for the construction of rental housing (Pinel type) on the rehabilitation of existing structures** (wastelands and old buildings in town centres, extensions). Extend the 10% VAT rate for renovation from the first square metres renovated.

Intensify public aid  
for renovation

## 9\_\_ Aim for the "Zero Vacant Buildings" objective

- **Map vacant buildings:** create a national inventory of empty buildings on the example of "Carto-Friches" [mapping of brownfields].
- **Tax vacancy more** to increase the supply of housing and activate the land reserve.
- **Encourage temporary occupation**, by proposing the "protection by occupation" of vacant heritage.

## 10\_\_ Revitalize and intensify the city

- **Encourage the reclamation of town centres through the mobilization of new tools:** elevation, multi-site development permits, and block curing.
- **Offer constructability bonuses** (increase building rights) for new operations that include a proportion of renovation of existing buildings.
- **Renovate the suburban fabric** by financing renovation through soft densification. To do this, conduct comprehensive studies at the neighbourhood or housing level.
- **Guarantee the quality of operations by setting up quality charters** for housing and facilities, co-constructed with local actors.
- **Increase urban and architectural experiments.** Promote transitional urban planning and open programming involving all local stakeholders.





## PROPOSALS

# Change our practices in the face of climate change: Adapt and mitigate

### 11\_\_ Develop a risk culture

- **Take into account the issue of risk in territorial studies** by raising awareness and involving the inhabitants in planning choices.
- **Conduct a strategic audit in all municipalities** to carry out a "vulnerability diagnosis" and propose adaptation solutions.
- **Anticipate the relocation of houses in areas subject to major risks** (coastal erosion, flooding, mudslides, fires, etc.) by informing owners of their investment strategies: map, raise awareness, inform. **Stop urbanization in these risk areas.**

Stop urbanization  
in major risk areas

### 12\_\_ Launch a national greening plan

- **Create "oases" in urban areas within 10 minutes of each other, for everyone:** green outdoor spaces and public or even private facilities (courtyards of condominiums).
- **Preserve existing forests and replant massively adapted species,** which are sources of biodiversity, in all areas.
- **Impose a biotope coefficient per surface in the Local Urban Plan and the Territorial Coherence Scheme.**
- **Complete the landscape section of the building permit with a planting plan.**

### 13\_\_ Aim for energy sobriety

- **Encourage the public or private generation of renewable energy** adapted to the resources of each territory.
- **Pool energy infrastructure and facilities on a city scale** (urban heating and cooling networks) or on a block scale (collective facilities). Encourage the recovery of waste heat (industries, computer parks, grey water).
- **Support research** into easy-to-implement economic and low-tech solutions.
- **Encourage "switching off" buildings voluntarily and punctually:** allow buildings to disconnect their heating systems from the electricity network temporarily, without any loss of comfort.

Create "oases"  
in urban areas

## PROPOSALS

# Decarbonize construction by developing new channels for materials

### 14\_\_ Implement short supply chain architecture

- **Develop local production channels for building materials based on local resources:** make "100 km architecture".
- **Adjust the VAT rate of materials according to their carbon index**
- **Favour eco-design** to facilitate the future re-use of materials and equipment by anticipating the end of the building's life.
- **Grant public aid to cover any additional costs** related to these techniques during the "start-up" period.

Make 100 km architecture

### 15\_\_ Develop eco-materials: bio-sourced, geo-sourced and re-used

- **Map the territorial resources of bio-sourced and geo-sourced materials** (availability, construction performance, etc.), and the network of trained professionals capable of implementing them (architects and craftsmen).
- **Bring together the stakeholders in the agricultural and construction sectors** to develop the local production of bio-sourced materials.
- **Ensure the traceability and quality of materials from deconstruction** by obtaining a label or certification.
- **Implement the "CO<sub>2</sub>-score"** included in the Climate Act by 2024.

- **Make the "resource diagnosis"** carried out by the project management team in charge of the project mandatory in renovation operations.
- **Support and encourage the development of storage spaces and local reuse platforms in all territories.**

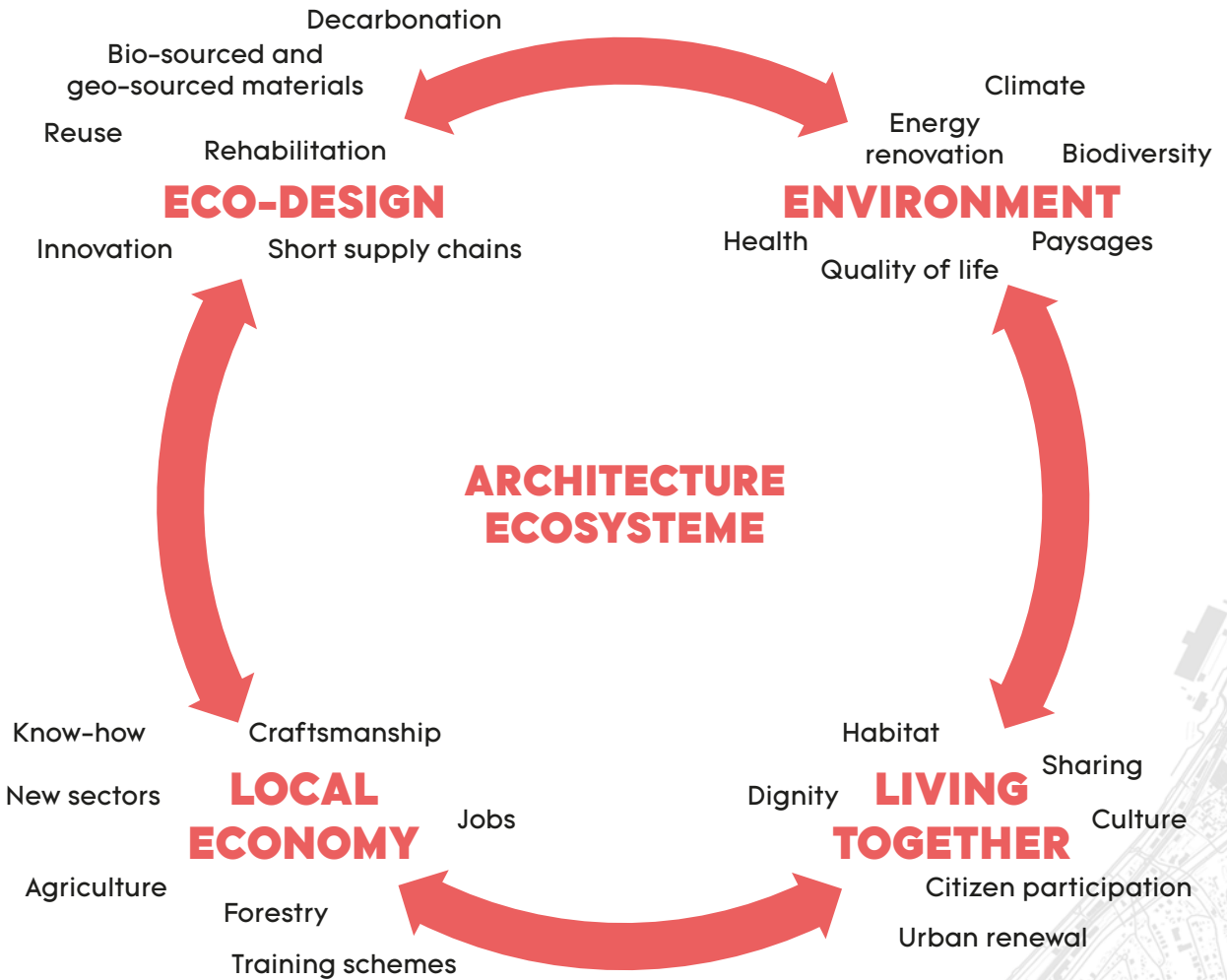
Map the territorial resources of materials

### 16\_\_ Encourage training and the transmission of know-how on eco-materials

- **Promote the various trades in the building sector in secondary schools** by organizing site visits in partnership with the Maisons de l'architecture and the Councils for architecture, urban planning and the environment.
- **Finance the training of stakeholders** (architects, design and inspection offices, craftsmen, teachers) under the energy saving certificate scheme.
- **Stimulate R&D and encourage the right to experiment in architecture** ("Permis de faire" [Permit=, Call for Expression of Interest) to find and validate solutions.
- **Strengthen the budget of national schools of architecture and initial training courses related to the building industry,** to include in their programmes modules on eco-construction and the use of bio-sourced materials.



# ARCHITECTURE: AN ECONOMIC LEVER AT THE SERVICE OF THE INHABITANTS AND THE PLANET



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