



A new Cultural Centre for the borough of Verdun

Description

Quai 5160, a building that opens to a waterfront promenade and adjacent linear park

Winner of an architectural competition held for the conversion of the Guy-Gagnon Arena into a **Cultural Centre** for the borough of Verdun, **Quai 5160** includes a 360-seat performance room, an art gallery, a mediation room, a circus school for the children of the neighbourhood as well as additional offices and spaces necessary to implement this mission.



The primary objective was to open this opaque building on the waterfront promenade and adjacent linear park, fostering interaction with citizens while enhancing the sense of security around it.

The project is part of a broader vision of valorisation and development of the riverbanks that were once places for swimming and recreation before being contaminated by waste spills and the construction of buildings with an industrial character surrounded by vast asphalted areas. A new public beach has just been laid out, the renovation of the Verdun Auditorium is underway and a new public indoor pool is planned.



The arena was a concrete structure covered with brown concrete bricks and, later, coloured acrylic plaster surfaces. The outer shell was partially demolished but the structure was retained. An expansion allowed the addition of a large entrance hall generously open to the park, which includes a step staircase for performances and cultural mediation activities in an informal setting. A forecourt in the extension of the hall encourages complementary activities outside.

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Mechanics are hidden in the sanitary vacuum under the building and biogas from the soil contaminated by decaying waste in the ground is channelled and discharged through drums on the periphery of the forecourt.



The new building envelope, designed on the principle of a rain screen with a ventilated cavity, is coated with aluminium panels with small perforations producing a slight visual vibration of the painted surface (fluoropolymer) with a high lustre.

Golden accents and oiled oak plank siding warm public spaces in contrast to the cold whiteness of the envelope. Some brick surfaces of the original building have been preserved and dyed black. They serve as a support for a wall of brass cut plates designed as part of the arts integration program.



This conversion project reflects the significant change that occurred in recent years in public space, cultural practices and the environment. It reflects the expectations of the public, the elected officials and architects who converge through more participatory design processes, including the architecture competition, presentations to citizens and the move to the Urban Planning Advisory Committee.

Les Architectes FABG

Founded in 1954 and formerly known as Blouin et Associés, FABG offers comprehensive architectural services with special expertise in cultural venues and restoration and renovation projects that have earned it more than 50 awards and mentions of excellence here and abroad.



Over the past twenty years, FABG has been the recurring choice of major cultural stakeholders, including the Cirque du Soleil, Jazz Festival, National Theatre School of Canada, Ex-Centris, World Film Festival and Place des arts, for the realization of many projects in Montreal.

Quai 5160 – Maison de la Culture Verdun

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Images: Steve Montpetit

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