JARDIN D'UNION 2014 - 2019

Housing, shops, daycare center and park on the avenue de la DeuxiÃ¨me ArmÃ©e Britannique in Forest



Site
Boulevard de la IIÃ¨me ArmÃ©e Britannique, 20 1190 Brussels

Client
s.a. Union

Structural engineer
StuBeCo bvba

Services engineer
BM Engineering

Budget
20 200 000 EUR htva

Jardin d'Union might seem just one more (albeit large) drop in an endless sea of housing, but by careful massing and clear definition of public-private space it positively impacts two very different worlds : a busy bustling boulevard ... and a diligently protected peaceful garden-side. Compact volumes along this important city access redefine street-space ... their calibered volumes, rhythm and punctuation offering scale in relationship with the neighbouring constructions. The generous width of the avenue allows five to nine floors in height, culminating forcefully at the edge of the plot thus marking the junction with the railway bridge.
Garden-side offers a more intimate scale with three to four level height, positionned in order to maximize sunlight entry into both built and unbuilt space.

The seemingly rival worlds front and back connect via two high-ceilinged porches, leading to a paved public plaza around which smaller-scaled housing is organized. Unbuilt space is delicately proportioned and positionned considering sunlight penetration, user-control, and fire-safety regulations. This is play space, meet-your-neighbours space, or simply slow-down space. Generous planting extends the lush greenery already present along the railway.

In all, 163 new homes are proposed, complete with street-level retail and offices, a Daycare Centre, and underground parking. Family-tailored duplexes, medium-sized flats, and even one-room studios make up an evenly distributed panoply of dwellings. The limited number of flats organized around each vertical distribution remains in scale with everyday human interaction. Indeed, in order to foster connection between occupants, the ensemble is broken up into digestible sub-parts : the nine-story corner marker, eight independant units (two flats per floor) stacked one-by-one next to each other stepping down the boulevard, and five garden-side units distributed by sunny exteriour passageways striving to initiate conviviality.