

Les carrés potagers du quartier de la Fontaine d'Ouche à Dijon



50 square-shaped allotment gardens integrated into the outer spaces of the Community Center.

Project summary

1. Entertain a public space which hasn't been qualified yet
2. Create conviviality and social links in a populous area
3. Use the allotments gardens to act for socially disabled people
4. Raise people's awareness about biodiversity and nature in the city

The context

The Fontaine d'Ouche area was built in 1967 upon the hills where you could find the last vineyards of Dijon, near Lake Kir. This social housing area has 10 300 inhabitants, living in 4 500 dwellings, half of them consist of social housing. A major program of urban renewal is on its way, in order to open up the area and to improve the lives of the local people.

The Community Center is a major place of entertaining and activities for the people. It is also a resource and information center.

The request for allotment plots came from the expressed need to find an appropriate use for the green space around the Community Center.

The National Association for Allotment Gardens was called, so that its research department made a site survey, a project to create the allotments and the management structure for them.

This expertise showed the following facts :

- a 4 100 sqm surface which 600 sqm could be devoted to build allotments gardens,
- the future allotment site has strengths but also has constraints.

Some strengths...

- A nice place for gardening and have a walk : the future gardens will be near the Canal de Bourgogne, which will be visible;
- The site will be very close to the blocks where the future gardeners live; access to the gardens will be by foot;
- This versatile place promotes exchanges between the different users : gardeners and youth in the Community Center;
- An area which is largely fenced;
- An enclosed space which can be used as storage for gardening equipment;
- A group of bushes and a cedar tree near the storage will make a transition between the gardens and the Community Center;

- High brightness in the central part of the land, after 3 poplars have been chopped down
- The recovery of rainwater from the storage roof will be possible.

But some constraints...

- The small area of the land will only accommodate very small plots to meet the demand from local residents;
- The irregular geometric shape of the land;
- The shadow of some large plants (cedar trees, poplars...)
- A levelling will be necessary to get a flat, even field (it's currently highly uneven) and the presence of an embankment near the Community Center building
- The presence of a gap to the north and a 1 meter deep underground network.

The project

- 50 plots arranged in squares of 2,25 sqm and elevated 20 or 30 cm. Those very tiny plots will allow to satisfy many local residents, due to the surface of the land. Obviously the food aspect is not the main goal in this type of project, but the contribution in terms of usability and social links. Those plots are also well adapted for disabled persons and for educational activities that require a large space.

- An associative area composed of a group of bushes at the entrance of the garden site, a lawned area with various activities (educational pond, suitable plots, rest and exchange area). A small tree, replacing the linden trees, adorns this central area and provides some shadow.



- The main paths made of stabilized material allow to move and contemplate the garden plots.
- The fairways, 0,60 meters wide, are lawned or covered with wood chips.
- Gardening equipment is stored into drawers built into the shed.
- Bird shelters and composters make the installation complete.

Plots will be assigned either to local associations for their activities or to families. Each family will have 3 or 4 afore mentioned squares to be used as gardens.

An association will be created and attached to the FNJFC.

The actors

- The Fontaine d'Ouche Community Center : project leader
- FNJFC : Fédération Nationale des Jardins Familiaux et Collectifs : the National Association for Allotment Gardens : project design, definition of the management structure