

Dominique Perrault Architect

NEW LONGCHAMP RACECOURSE



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LE NOUVEAU LONGCHAMP, PARIS, 2011-2017
DOMINIQUE PERRAULT ARCHITECT



Aerial view

THE NEW LONGCHAMP RACECOURSE

The renewal of the Longchamp racecourse should ensure that it maintains its place in both the Grand Paris and on the international scene of the world's major racecourses.

Such an ambitious goal must be guided not only by an emblematic architectural project that can be adapted to future needs, but also a landscape project that transfigures the area, highlighting the built legacy, the historical heritage of the racecourse, and especially the green heritage of the Bois de Boulogne, which originated in the composition designed by Alphand in the 19th century.

The race for the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe is the highpoint of the life of the racecourse. Therefore, the main challenge of this project is for it to be able to host this event, which draws up to 60,000 spectators, under exceptional conditions, while also welcoming a much smaller crowd on ordinary racing days.

This is why the project proposes to deconstruct all the stands dating from the 1960s and to replace them with only one stand, which is both more compact and more functional. Buildings housing support services for the horse races, which are currently scattered around the site, will also be demolished and rebuilt in the form of pavilions. Finally, the historic buildings of the racecourse will be renovated.

The architecture of the stand is in motion, like a galloping horse. A slight overhang orients the interplay of superimposed stands toward the finish line. But this gap on the racecourse side creates stands that overlook the course, while on the side of the parade ring, a balcony stand is formed.

In fact, all the features terraces, walkways, transparencies, and open staircases will provide permanent views of the entire racecourse with, of course, privileged views over the parade ring and over the course itself.

The architectural concept is one of transparent "shelves", with neither front nor back, enabling spectators to go back and forth from a view over the stables to a view over the racecourse.

In short, the architectural project creates generous perspectives over the landscape thanks to the significant reduction of the size of the existing constructions on the site.

The architectural design is very pared down, simple and elegant, allowing the gaze and light to pass through the buildings.

The public is always in visual contact and proximity to the horses and professionals, without ever coming into direct contact.

One could describe it as fluid architecture that guides movement, as symbolized by the overhang of the grandstand, which also allows the landscape to pass through it.

Hidden in nature, The New Longchamp revives the charm of garden parties of the past, of promenades in the wood and the poetry of the Bagatelle gardens, while also offering comfort for all types of public and an effective and efficient facility for all the better.

The project for the New Longchamp will be a model environmental facility of its kind and thus meet the objectives of the climate plan developed by the city of Paris.

In conclusion, the intervention consists of creating a more natural place encouraging future planting; more ecological, thanks to an innovative design and the integration of both passive and active systems encouraging the use of renewable energy and the energy independence of its buildings; more flexible, by creating a wide variety of places enabling Longchamp to welcome greater numbers under conditions adapted to the diversity of racecourses; and finally, more pleasant, for the comfort of all users of the site, the horses, jockeys, horsemen and women, professionals and the public at large.

Dominique Perrault
September 2015

NEW LONGCHAMP RACECOURSE

PARIS, FRANCE

international competition, winning project september 2011, estimated completion 2017



client FRANCE GALOP, Boulogne - Billancourt, France

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architect Dominique Perrault Architecture, Paris

- **engineering** Tractabel Engineering, Gennevilliers (structures); Grontmij, Rosny-sous-Bois (mechanical engineering); RPO , Paris (economist); Ter, Paris (landscape architect); JP Lamoureux Paris (lighting and acoustics); Renaud Pierard, Paris (exhibition designer)
- **consultant** Denis Thelot (architect, security and accessibility), Paris, Terrell (facades), Boulogne-Billancourt

location Route des Tribunes, 75116, Paris

site area 63 ha

built area 20 000 m² net floor area / 70 000 m² gross floor area

beginning of conceptual design September 2012

beginning of construction October 2015

program

Refurbishment of 4 buildings:

- (1) Administration office: creation of the security post (other spaces, existing offices);
- (2) Existing stables: it includes a relaxation circle, surrounded by 98 boxes dedicated to horses and a box for showers, a farrier, etc.
- (3) Totalizer: it was built at the end of the 20's and it housed the first calculators necessary for the rating of the numbers assigned to each horse. The refurbishment will cover offices on the first floor and rooms for lads on the upper floors.
- (4) Pavilion Tribune (conditional phase): this historical tribune designed by Charles Adda in 1921 is refurbished in order to renew with its original aspect (especially the reopening of the gallery on the 2nd floor on the tiers with the needed structural reinforcement). It includes a 780-sqm room on the ground floor and 1,500 seats in two tiers.

Construction of 7 buildings and the "wooden catwalks"

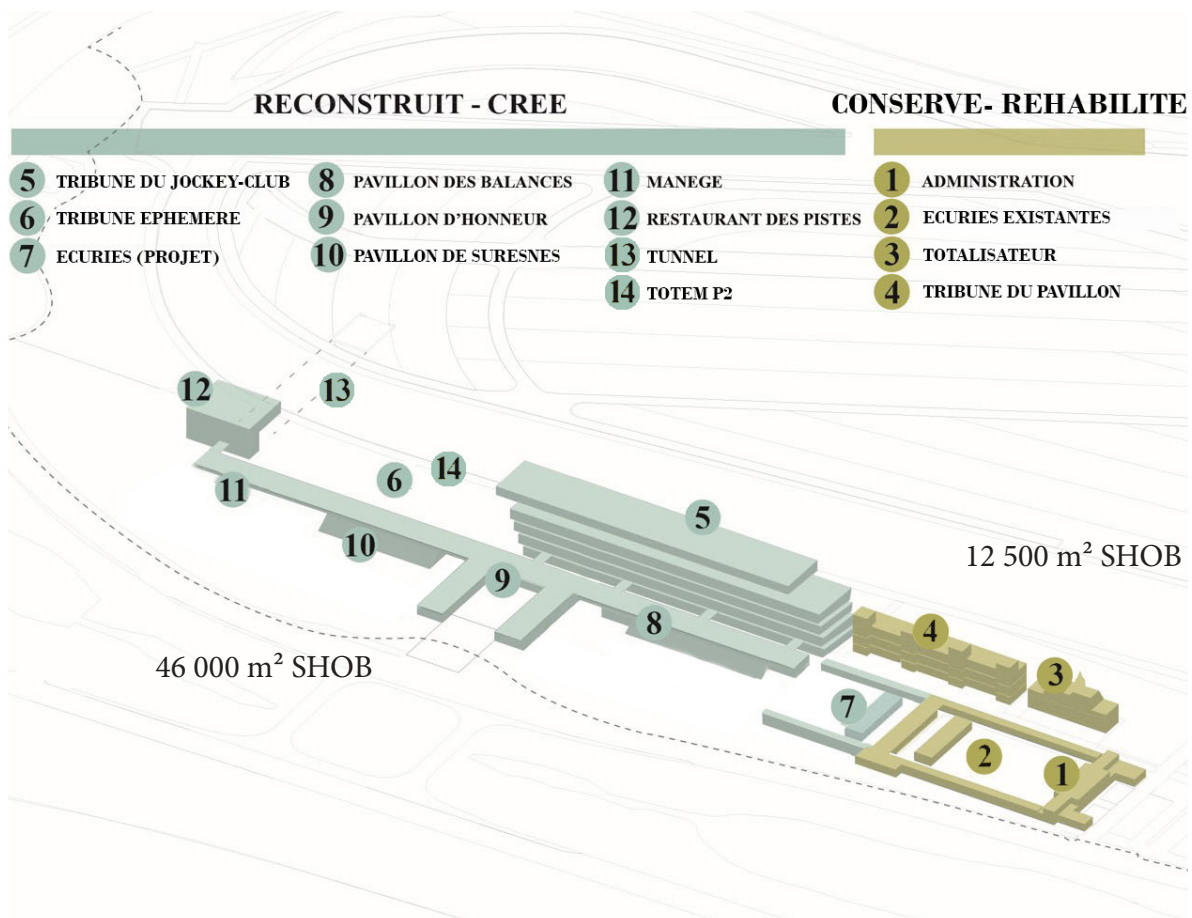
- (5) New Jockey-Club Tribune: the demolition of the existing tribunes will make room for a unique tribune integrating the presidential tribune; the reception halls are located on the historical axis of the entrance (with the Pavillon d'Honneur). The Jockey-Club Tribune offers 10,000 tiered seats; it includes also 1 restaurant with its terrace on the 4th floor, 5 reception halls, 5 bars, 1 brasserie, press rooms, rooms for monitoring the races (especially for the photo finish) and areas for the staff (including a restaurant).
- (6) Ephemeral Tribune: this removable tribune extends the Jockey-Club Tribune during the major events (+7,500 seats). On the back of the tiers, a large platform hosts the events (i.e. tents...)
- (7) Extension of the stables: 30 new boxes are added to the existing ones. A transversal building for vet is created in extension of the existing one. This new area for stables includes a preparation circle for the horses;
- (8), (9), (10) and (11) the "wooden catwalks": a 5,500sqm-promenade located about 4 meters above ground level. The wooden catwalks organize the circulation of the grand entrance, the access to the paddock via the tunnel, the restaurant of the tracks, the tribunes (Jockey-Club, ephemeral,

Pavilion Tribune via the Jockey-Club Tribune), the tiers of the presentation circle and the tiers of the garden of Longchamp. The catwalks host also the events (i.e. bars, kiosks of the better);

- (8) Pavilion of the Scales: running along the presentation circle (which green and shady ambiance will be enhanced), this pavilion comprises professional areas: cloakrooms for jockeys with relaxation spaces, a weigh-in hall (where the jockeys are weight before and after the race), a saddle room, an office of the director of the races, a room of the stewards. The control room is also located here;
- (9) Pavillon d'Honneur: located at the grand entrance (main access), this pavilion covers the professional spaces (brasserie, reception rooms, etc.) next to the presentation circle. Symmetrically, it covers a large brasserie for the general public next to the garden of Longchamp. A press room is located next to the Jockey-Club;
- (10) Pavillon of Suresnes: it includes technical and storage areas;
- (11) Manege: this area is reserved for a future pavilion called Manege, which locates symmetrically to the brasserie for the general public of the Pavillon d'Honneur;
- (12) Restaurant of the tracks: situated at the northern end of the wooden catwalks, this 450sqm-restaurant benefits from a large terrace on the track;
- (13) Tunnel: the existing tunnel will be renovated and will have some lifts at each end;
- (14) Totem P2 (conditional phase): located at the "pelouse de Suresnes" (Paddock of Suresnes), it includes some race areas linked to the P2 finish post. The paddock of Suresnes hosts the ephemeral tribune during the main events.

Landscape:

The total size of the project is 92,000sqm, for which 22,000sqm will be built and 70,000sqm will turn into green areas. They were designed as a whole. The landscaping restores the coherence of the original edges, by reviving a visual porosity at the west border. Besides, it enhances the existing green heritage.



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Aerial view from the Seine river



Main Entrance

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Stands of the Jockey-Club



Presentation ring

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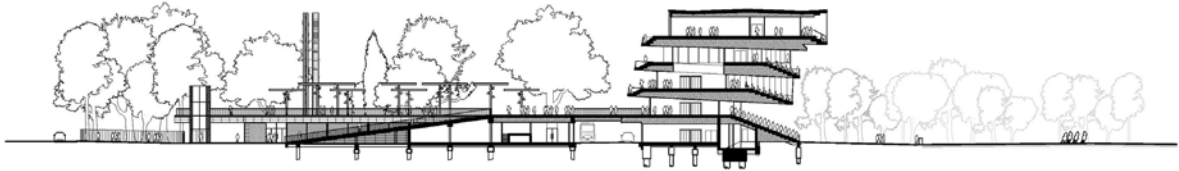


Presidential lounge



Owners lounge

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section



plan

Dominique Perrault

Dominique Perrault has made his own path in contemporary architecture, gaining in notoriety over the years both in and outside of his native France. Born in 1953 in Clermont-Ferrand, he studied in Paris and received his diploma as an architect from the *École des Beaux-Arts* in 1978. He received a further degree in Urbanism at the *École nationale des Ponts et Chaussées* in 1979, as well as a Master's in History at the EHESS (*École des hautes études en sciences sociales*) in 1980. He created his own firm in 1981 in Paris. Though he completed works before that date, Perrault's career took a sudden upswing when an international jury selected him to design the French National Library in Paris in 1989. The last of President François Mitterrand's *Grands Travaux*, a series of cultural projects that included the Louvre Pyramid by I.M. Pei, the Library is made up of four 79-meter high towers, imagined like open books around a sunken central courtyard. This project underlines a number of characteristics of Perrault's other work, in particular the use of "chain mail" cladding for surfaces, replacing the more usual smooth, modern appearance. The central garden merits attention. "The modern movement always had a very Puritan relationship with the earth," says Dominique Perrault. "When Le Corbusier imagined setting buildings up on pilotis so that they would not touch the earth, his attitude was very peculiar. In my project, the idea of the natural level of the earth disappears, and the building blends with nature. In Paris, one has the impression that the garden of the Library is at the level of the Seine, but in fact, it is ten meters lower. One almost feels that the garden was there before the building and that the Library somehow protects it. This relationship with the earth is complex, and it contradicts the usual Modernist tenets." When pressed on this point, Perrault goes on to explain "The garden is not only beautiful, it is sacred. Visitors cannot enter it. It is the symbolic place of origin of the Library, it brings calm and light to the interior. It is in some sense the first garden.¹" Twenty years after its inauguration in 1995, the French National Library remains one of the most significant contemporary public buildings in France.

Perrault went on to dig into the earth in such seminal projects as the Velodrome and Olympic

Swimming Pool (Berlin, Germany, 1992–99), or more recently the Ewha Womans University in Seoul (South Korea, 2004–08). The Ewha project appears like a slash in the earth, leading users down to the facilities. This kind of typological and stylistic inversion is indicative of the profound nature of Dominique Perrault's contribution to contemporary architecture. With the 2015 *Praemium Imperiale* award to Dominique Perrault, notice is duly taken on the international scale of the significance of his work.

With projects such as the reconstruction and expansion of the Court of Justice of the European Union (Luxembourg, 2008/ ongoing), the repurposing of the former Poste du Louvre (Paris, 2018) or the 250-meter DC Tower (Vienna, 2014), Dominique Perrault has engaged in different types of work, often on a large scale and with considerable technical challenges that he always meets with an inventive spirit. His innovation is first theoretical but then also esthetic. Although his work is identifiably contemporary it is also permeated with unexpected materials and surfaces. Dominique Perrault has actively sought to make his approach to architectural innovation known through an initiative he calls DPAX, a research platform "that calls for a multidisciplinary dialogue to explore architecture from a wider perspective."

Through his built work, his projects and his thought, Dominique Perrault has created a unique place for himself in the world of contemporary architecture. He is young by the standards of the highest level of his profession and it is clear that Dominique Perrault will more and more be considered one of the outstanding figures of his generation.

Philip Jodidio

Article written on the occasion of *Praemium Imperiale* 2015

FRENCH NATIONAL LIBRARY

Paris, France
1989-1995

The French national library was the last of the major public works initiated by President François Mitterrand. This project is a skillful interweaving of urban planning, architecture and landscape. Exploring the figures of the square, rebalancing the east side of Paris with the center and La Défense; of the open book, a place for storage where books are stacked in the sky; and of the cloister, a place for strolling, study and transcendence, placed in a broad and deep hollow in the ground.



VELODROME AND OLYMPIC SWIMMING POOL

Berlin, Germany
1992-1999

Undertaken in the context of the reunification of East and West Germany and Berlin's subsequent bid for the Olympic Games, the velodrome and the Olympic pool are inserted between a residential area and a brownfield site, amidst a dense and heavily trafficked network of circulations. To reconcile these diverse urban components, the project embeds the program in a vast orchard, into which are immersed the simple yet massive volumes of the velodrome and the Olympic pool.



COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Luxemburg, Luxemburg
1996-2008

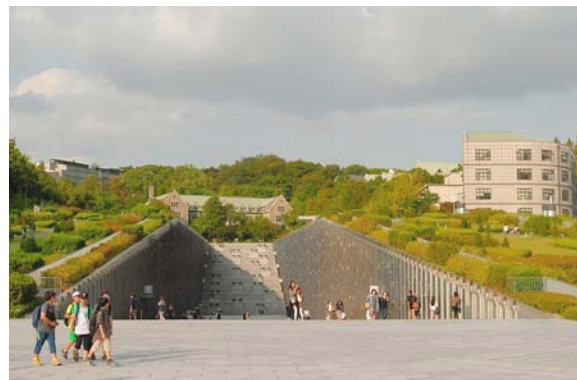
A fourth extension was deemed necessary to meet the growing needs of the Court of Justice in keeping with the important enlargement of the European Union occurring in 1996. The project calls for the renovation of the existing building. This original part is then ringed by another structure, designed to clarify and facilitate the distribution of functions. Two newly erected towers are connected to the whole by means of a long gallery, which serves as an indoor street. The arrangement of the volumes creates an impressive new silhouette, thereby greatly enhancing the visibility of the institution.



EWHA WOMANS UNIVERSITY,

Seoul, South Korea
2004-2008

The answer for a new program requiring the combination of spaces for study and recreation, this immense university facility has become a telluric interface blending the city space into the landscape, and further enriching it through the masterful interplay of sensory perceptions.



REPURPOSING OF THE PAVILLON DUFOUR - CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES

**Versailles, France
2011-2016**

Blending restoration, rehabilitation and contemporary intervention, the redesign of the Dufour Pavilion in the Palace of Versailles establishes a new entry and exit point for the five million visitors welcomed here annually. This is where they receive their initial introduction to the exceptional heritage of the site in a facility that fulfils the requirements of a fluid and functional itinerary. Taking advantage of variations in height, the project is physically and metaphorically rooted in this place. The intervention has been thoroughly contextualized down to the very last sophisticated detail of the construction.



DC TOWERS

**Vienna, Austria
2004-2016**

These two towers serve as a signal and gateway to Donau City, a business district of the Austrian capital rising along the banks of the Danube. The base of the towers is carefully designed to ensure transitional zones offer comfortable and inviting public areas. The cycle of the seasons and the changing light of day is reflected in the shimmering materiality of the smooth and undulating geometry of the towers' façades, placing them in an intriguing architectural and urban dialogue.



ALBI GRAND THEATRE

**Albi, France
2009-2014**

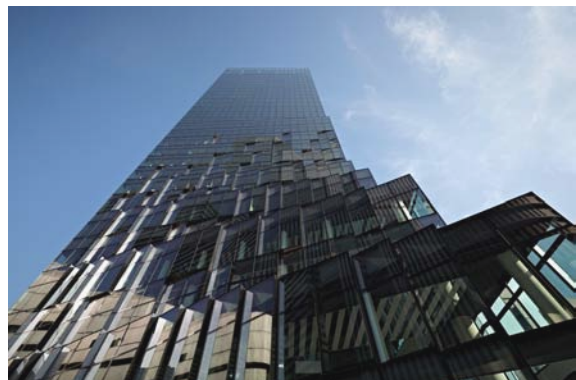
Mindful of the need to comply with the requirements of its inclusion on the World Heritage List, the city of Albi has undertaken the construction of new cultural facilities, including this grand theatre, to enhance the quality of life and the drawing power of its activities. Thus, theatre's relationship with surrounding public spaces was carefully designed to facilitate its insertion into its context and its appropriation by the city's inhabitants. The metallic veils surrounding the parallelepiped blur the lines between interior and exterior and reflect a lyrical and evanescent image of architecture.



FUKOKU TOWER

**Osaka, Japan
2007-2010**

The Fukoku tower, located near Osaka's main train station, houses the offices of the eponymous insurance company. Inspired by the shape of a tree, it is metaphorically rooted in the underground mall network from whence it draws its energy; while tapering as it soars upward to the sky.



SPORTS HALL

**Rouen, France
2006-2012**

Near the port area, the new lift bridge over the Seine and the center of Rouen, the Sports hall becomes a pivot which joins disparate and juxtaposed urban ensembles. The building devotes itself to be an “accessible relief”, as shows the large exterior steps inviting pedestrians to gather and melting the facility into the territory. The architectural language is deliberately concise; it makes extensive use of concrete and mirror-polished steel and it exploits their plasticity with finesse to sculpt the components of the hall. This results in a kinetic device dematerializing architecture, a new landmark for the city.



OLYMPIC TENNIS CENTRE «CAJA MÁGICA»

**Madrid, Spain
2002-2009**

A sport facility built for the candidacy of Madrid to the 2016 Olympic Games, this project transcends its conventional program to turn into a “magic box” and constitute a new landscape in the Madrilenian surroundings. The three pieces forming the roofing move, open themselves, and tip up at the mercy of the uses and the meteorological conditions. On the one hand it multiplies the potentialities of the hall, and on the other hand it associates to this box a mesmerizing and constantly renewed silhouette.



ESIEE ENGINEERING SCHOOL

**Marne-la-Vallée, France
1984-1987**

In this project, the traditional organization joining façade and roof is replaced by a long and inclined plane, rising up from the ground. Thus, a new horizon emerges west of the campus, associating the school of engineering with a single and luminous image.

