

Press release

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"Ilot Queyries", Bordeaux - a pioneering residential complex**Laboratory-developed: the future of the city by MVRDV**

The Dutch architecture firm MVRDV has just completed a residential complex in Bordeaux in the autumn of 2021: Ilot Queyries is unusual in many respects, but its striking ceramic outer skin is very special. The building sculpture is located to the east of the River Garonne, directly opposite France's largest cathedral, which is an architectural highlight marking the historic centre of Bordeaux. The architects want the new building to give the life of the growing city a future-proof design. They are reflecting the master plan of the old town on the bank side of the Bastide Niel and making the new residential area, which borders a park-like green space, a visual landmark in the district. As naturally as if it was meant to be, the future of the city is thus linked to its history. A contemporary interpretation of the architectural traditions of Bordeaux.

Ceramic landmark

Anyone thinking about ceramic façades is probably thinking about smaller houses in southern countries. The dimensions here are completely different and yet, in many ways, the material proves to be the right choice for Ilot Queyries. The impressive new building grabs onlookers' attention with its heights, depths and angles, but the bright, three-dimensional shell of the building attracts admiring glances from afar. Differently shaped tiles from the Agrob Buchtal KeraTwin system make this possible. They skilfully capture the light and give the architecture a vibrant, sculptural appearance with the reflections of the sun and shadows transforming it into a ceramic landmark. The tiled façade surfaces also boldly transition over the roofs. Their sharp, precise edges stand out from the red plaster of the inner courtyard, which contrasts as it wends its way outside through cut-throughs, openings and passageways.

The major project was initiated by two clients, Kaufman & Broad and ADIM. It forms an entity with three smaller adjacent residential buildings by JA Joubert Architecture, the office of former MVRDV employee Marc Joubert. He was also involved in the overall plans of the building ensemble, along with the local Flint office. The Flint architects were also the co-designers with MVRDV, both of the main building and – together with Sabine Haristoy – the landscape of the large courtyard and the surrounding urban spaces. According to Bertrand Schippan, a partner at MVRDV, the courtyard is accessible to both residents and the public, as it is part of the public space of Ilot Queyries. The building stands on the edge of Bastide Niel, a district that is being completely redesigned: this district on the outskirts of the city is to be urbanised, preserving or reusing as much as possible

of its heritage of warehouses, barracks and railway tracks, and adding new elements. In future, about 3,500 families will live in Bastide Niel. It will also house offices, University of Bordeaux facilities, shops and a range of public facilities. MVRDV created the master plan for this 35-hectare area, which will create a sustainable environment dominated by pedestrians and cyclists, with narrow streets and the atmosphere of a historic city centre. Schippan explains: "Ilot Queyries is just outside the boundaries of Bastide Niel, but conforms to all the guidelines we have drawn up for the district."

The material is the key

For MVRDV, the Ilot Queyries project is a kind of laboratory of the modern city that combines intimacy with density, ecology, light and comfort. Buildings extending to a length of 200 metres, 10,000 m² ceramic façades, the heights of which rise to up to nine floors and have a dynamic angle of 14 to 45 degrees – a glance at the key data makes one thing clear: without the support of a project-specific and trailblazing surface design, this unconventional and identity-forming architecture would have struggled to succeed. The AGROB BUCHTAL ceramic specialists created and produced special designs of the KeraTwin intelligent façade system for Ilot Queyries to meet the architects' specifications.

First and foremost, the non-standard colour: MVRDV carefully selected defined light grey, which brings the vertically laid tiles together to form a harmonious façade. The building blends subtly into the neighbouring architecture. The true design-led virtuosity of ceramic as a façade material is revealed by the combination of its colour and three-dimensional texture. Reflecting the light beautifully, it lends an almost unlimited number of shadows to the monochrome colour. The Agrob Buchtal specialists therefore developed ceramic elements with three different profiles for Ilot Queyries to meet the architects' specifications. Their sublime locations not only breathe life into the colour, but also allow the residents and passers-by to experience the entire diversity of their building.

Sustainable presence

Apart from the contextual and design-based considerations, the light exterior colour is also motivated by environmental concerns, as MVRDV partner Schippan stresses, to lend the building a high level of 'albedo' (the ability of a surface to reflect solar radiation), which helps to avoid the urban heat island effect. And without question, one of the most important parameters for sustainable city construction is also the achievement of durable building lifecycles. Agrob Buchtal ceramic façades are equipped with Hytect technology, an innovative surface with a self-washing effect. This innovative refinement ensures that Ilot Queyries will continue to radiate aesthetically even when a new era overtakes the innovative architecture and refers to it as a historic building sculpture in the district. Until then, the antibacterial Hytect files will withstand any weathering, pollution and moss formation, impressing with their significantly low maintenance costs. They also destroy pollutants, like nitrous oxides, contributing to a healthier air quality: a gift to the inhabitants of the city of the future.

agrob-buchtal.de

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Image 1

Source: agrob-buchtal.de / Ossip Architectuurfotogr. Rotterdam
Ilot Queyries combines a self-assured presence with a richly faceted style. The residential complex is integrated as a new orientation point into the environment and interprets Bordeaux's building traditions in a contemporary way.



Image 2

Source: agrob-buchtal.de / Ossip Architectuurfotogr. Rotterdam
The ceramic shell of the building is a striking feature of Ilot Queyries. Working closely with renowned architects MVRDV (Rotterdam), Agrob Buchtal created flat and profiled surfaces in a special shade of grey specifically for this project. The grey varies according to the incidence of light, underlining the sculptural effect of the ensemble.



Image 3 Source: agrob-buchthal.de / Ossip Architectuurfotogr. Rotterdam

The inner courtyard, enclosed by the 200-metre long building and which can be accessed by residents and the public, is a further feature of the complex.



Image 4 Source: agrob-buchthal.de / Ossip Architectuurfotogr. Rotterdam

Atmospherically illuminated, the inner courtyard reveals its unique effect as an urban space at night as well.



Image 5 Source: agrob-buchthal.de / Ossip Architectuurfotogr. Rotterdam

In spite of the imposing dimensions of the building with over 280 apartments, there is still space for individuality and "human" proportions. The Agrob Buchthal KeraTwin ceramics used on the façade also create a pleasing atmosphere. As a symbol of architectural rigour, it transitions seamlessly from the vertical wall into the angled roofs.



Image 6 Source: agrob-buchta1.de / Ossip Architectuurfotogr. Rotterdam

The structure opens up at defined points to provide insights and create transparency. A restaurant is located in the upper glazed area.



Image 7 Source: agrob-buchta1.de / Ossip Architectuurfotogr. Rotterdam

Red plaster, which is found in cut-outs, in the inner courtyard and in passageways, acts as a striking counterpoint to the bright ceramic façade. Skilfully created roads open up and link the individual zones of the expansive area.



Image 8 Source: agrob-buchta1.de / Art-Milan Mazaud, Bordeaux

This detailed image shows the skilful interplay of light, shadow, colour, shape and reference lines.