



West-African workshop of urban planning in Porto-Novo

2nd session : from July, 23rd to August, 13th 2011

Strategy and urban design for the city centre of Porto Novo.

Giving extra value to the former colonial urban texture, major equipments, and the Botanical Garden - a living memory of the old sacred forest.

International workshop for students and young professionals from Africa and other continents. Four international, cross-disciplinary teams make proposals to the territory's actors.

Workshop's presentation.



Foreword

Porto-Novo's West African workshops.

Les Ateliers developed its original method since 1982. It allows students and professionals from all over the world to meet and to work inside cross-disciplinary teams about planning projects proposed by the local authorities.

In November 2005, within the frame of the decentralized cooperation with the Cergy-Pontoise Agglomeration, an international planning workshop was organized in Porto-Novo with professionals in order to think about the urban project of Benin's capital city, and its territory's development and promotion strategy.

In June 2009, following the demand of Porto-Novo's new mayor, M.Oceni, Les Ateliers came back in order to propose a guiding project for the banks planning.

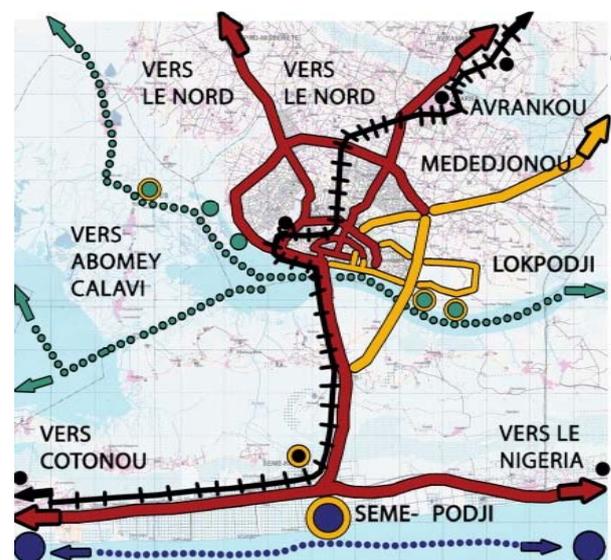
Since 2010, Porto-Novo has developed its own cycle of planning workshops for students and young professionals, with the support of Les Ateliers: This year is meant to confirm and bring sustainability to the workshop's existence, by launching a second session that will focus on the urban planning of Benin's capital-city.

Model of a West-African workshop of urban planning of Porto Novo.

Three working weeks led by a team made of both Porto-Novo actors and Les Ateliers members, following the original method of Les Ateliers.
 4 teams of 6 international contestants, 3 African contestants at least in each team.
 24 contestants chosen with their applications.
 Young professionals and students at the end of their academic period.
 An international jury, under the presidency of Porto-Novo's mayor, which is made of local authorities representatives and international planning experts.



Tour of the site as an introduction to the workshop



↔ Graphics produced during the workshop about the lagoon district of Lokpodji in August 2010.

Porto-Novo's partners

The Cergy-Pontoise Agglomeration and the city of Porto-Novo have been partners since 1995, within the frame of a decentralized cooperation's convention that focuses on improving the African capital's authority in terms of urban planning. The Porto-Novo's planning workshop is meant to reach that goal.

Benin's development agencies that support the West-African workshop

AGETUR: Urban Works' Execution Agency

SERHAU: Regional Studies for Housing and Urban Design.

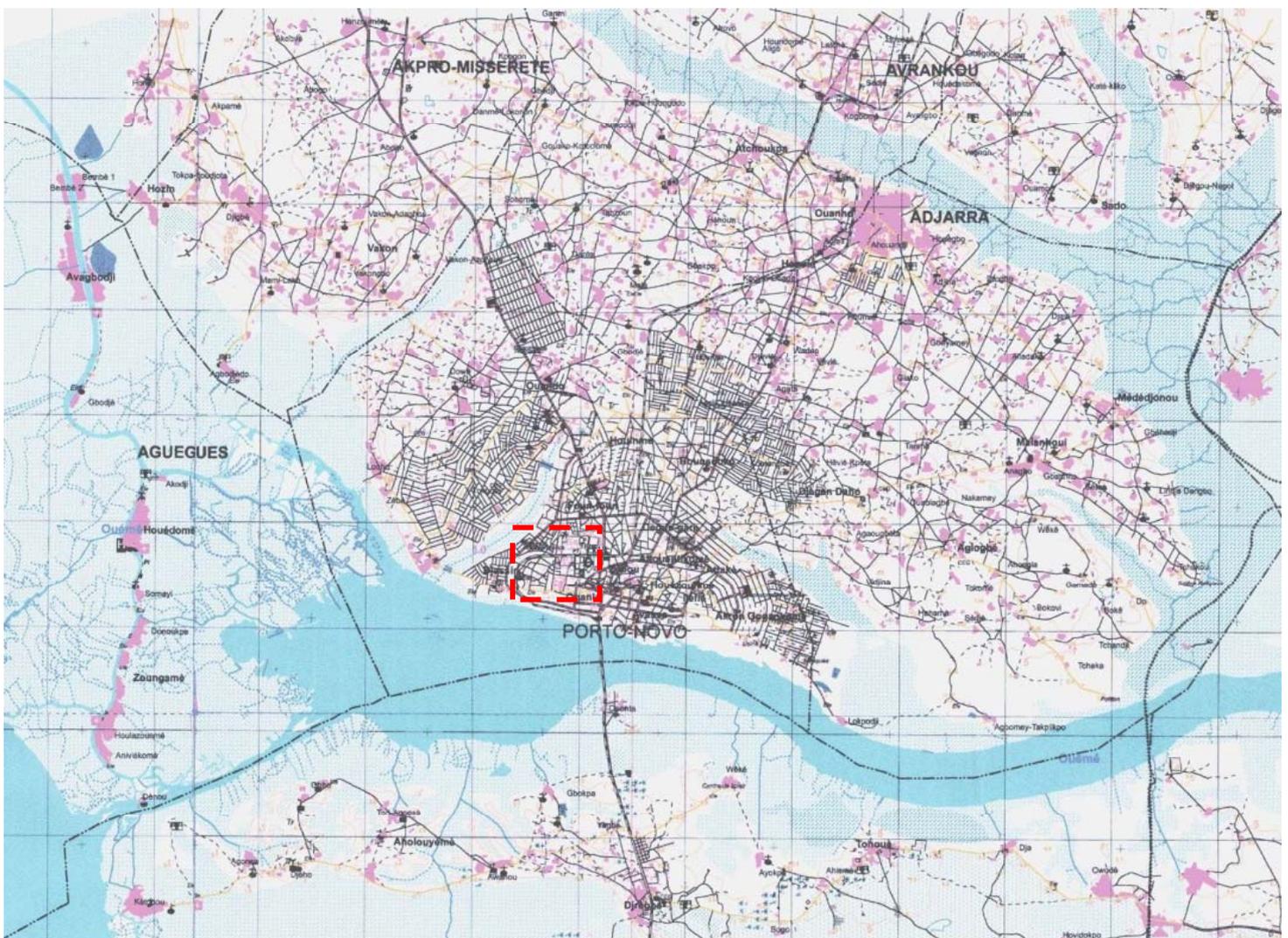
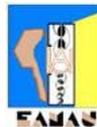
African universities are partners of the workshop and offer scientific expertise as well as students and young professional contestants:

EAMAU : African School of Architecture and Urban Planning form Lomé, Togo.

ESIAU : Superior School of Engineering, Architecture and Urban design of Bamako, Mali.

INAU : National Institut of Urban Planning and Design of Morocco.

UAC : Abomey-Calavi University, main university of Benin.



The Subject

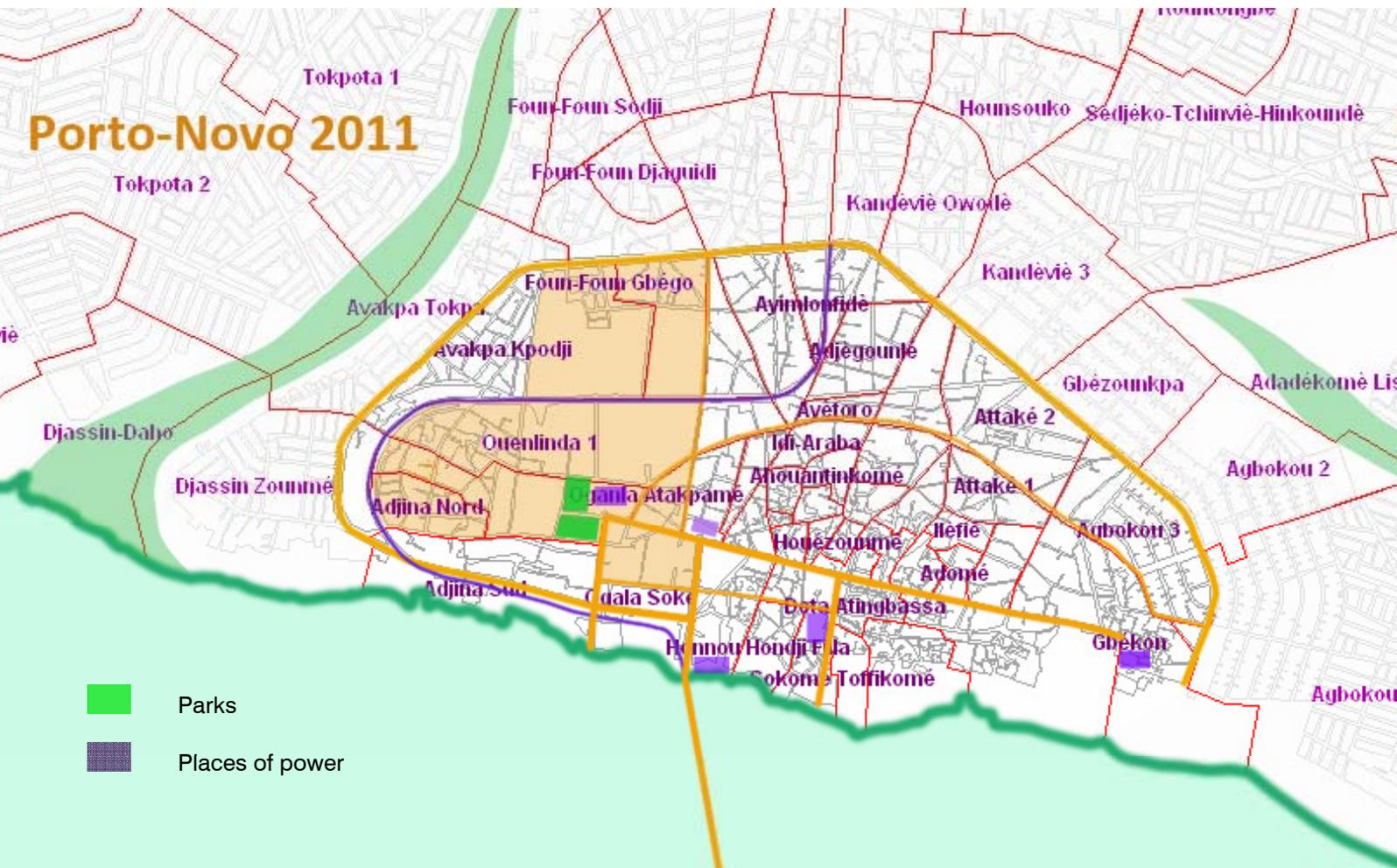
Controlling the massive amount of land lots in the West area of the city-centre will allow Porto-Novo to elaborate and apply an important city project in order to improve and guide its economic dynamism, all the while controlling its urban development.

This session's goal, after presenting a sustainable and global urban vision of the city centre's future, is to elaborate a consistent strategy for the Western area whose main characteristic is the former colonial urban fabric, then to imagine a first realization within the frame of a planning project for the entrance of the city, between the bridge over the lagoon and the Bayol square, a strategic location inside the capital.

What modern city-centre can we imagine in order to fulfil the economic development's needs, all the while respecting the heritage and the historical urban landscape?

The main goals are:

- to answer the city's expectations by proposing an ambitious planning project and a modernization of the city-centre of Benin's capital city.
- to re-value the assets and the existing infrastructures taking advantage of the land opportunities.
- to respect the historical urban landscape
- to design attractive public areas
- to propose a planning project for a genuine entrance to the city at the exit of the bridge.



Goals

A New Urban Trend

Porto-Novo, the capital city of Benin, has launched its mutation in order to gain the status of Sustainable African Capital of the 21st century: construction of the new Parliament's building at the city's entrance, planning of the lagoon boulevard while preserving the bank's ecosystem and its biodiversity, taking control of land lots belonging to the private domain of the city, freezing building operations inside flood-risks areas, building cultural and sport infrastructures, building of new hotel equipments, project of the new City Hall's building, launching of new management and programming urban tools like the Planning and Soils Rights Services,

launching of Porto-Novo's West-African workshop... all these projects are a proof of the strong urban dynamic epitomizing the strategy of Moukaram Ouceni, Porto-Novo's mayor, who have shown a strong political will for several years and is supported by the municipal council's representatives.

This dynamic will be improved by the new economic growth period that is occurring on the African continent.



The new Parliament in construction (seen from the bridge)



The new Parliament in construction (seen from the lagoon boulevard)

The opportunity to free land lots in the city center.

Since 2008, the city's services have realized a tremendous job with the identification, classification and management of a large amount of land lots, which either are the city's property, or made of smaller lots, that can be modified with moving public administrations that are currently occupying the lots. It is particularly true in the former colonial area: customs house, camp and military housings, police stations... The presence of these public administration buildings is no longer relevant in the city center: they could be located on other, less strategic areas.

About 20 hectares could therefore be freed in the heart of the city, and they bear an important

potential for Porto-Novo's economic and planning development.

New public amenities, housing, important functions of the town, higher-education facilities or major economic projects could take place on this land, and therefore play a tremendous part in the city's economic development, by creating new housing modes, and increasing the life quality of the inhabitants by offering them new services and new public areas.

This land potential is a major opportunity to devise a new development strategy in order to improve the city center's value.

Economic development and preserving the historical urban landscape.

Now that Porto-Novo is about to engage into the creation of a New Urban Development Design that is supposed to be a guide and a catalyst for its dynamism, especially in the city center, the question of respecting and preserving the capital's heritage is at the heart of this project.

How to combine economic efficiency, globalization, intensification and urban development, all the while preserving the city's heritage and its quite unique identity?

Porto-Novo, which is a candidate for the UNESCO's World heritage list, pays a particular attention to these issues: the presence of the African Heritage School on its soil is a proof of that. The urban, landscape, architectural, and cultural heritage of Porto-Novo is exceptional and is deeply rooted in the city's identity. The values of Porto-Novo's material and immaterial heritage are very much intertwined with the identity of the city, which is a historical town, mixing traditional and sacred culture with knowledge and nature.



The mosque, african-brasilian architecture.



The Supreme Court of Justice is the highest building in the city.



The remarkable aspect of Porto-Novo's landscape, as seen when one arrives from the opposite bank of the lagoon, is a major part of the city's identity and heritage.

Studied Site

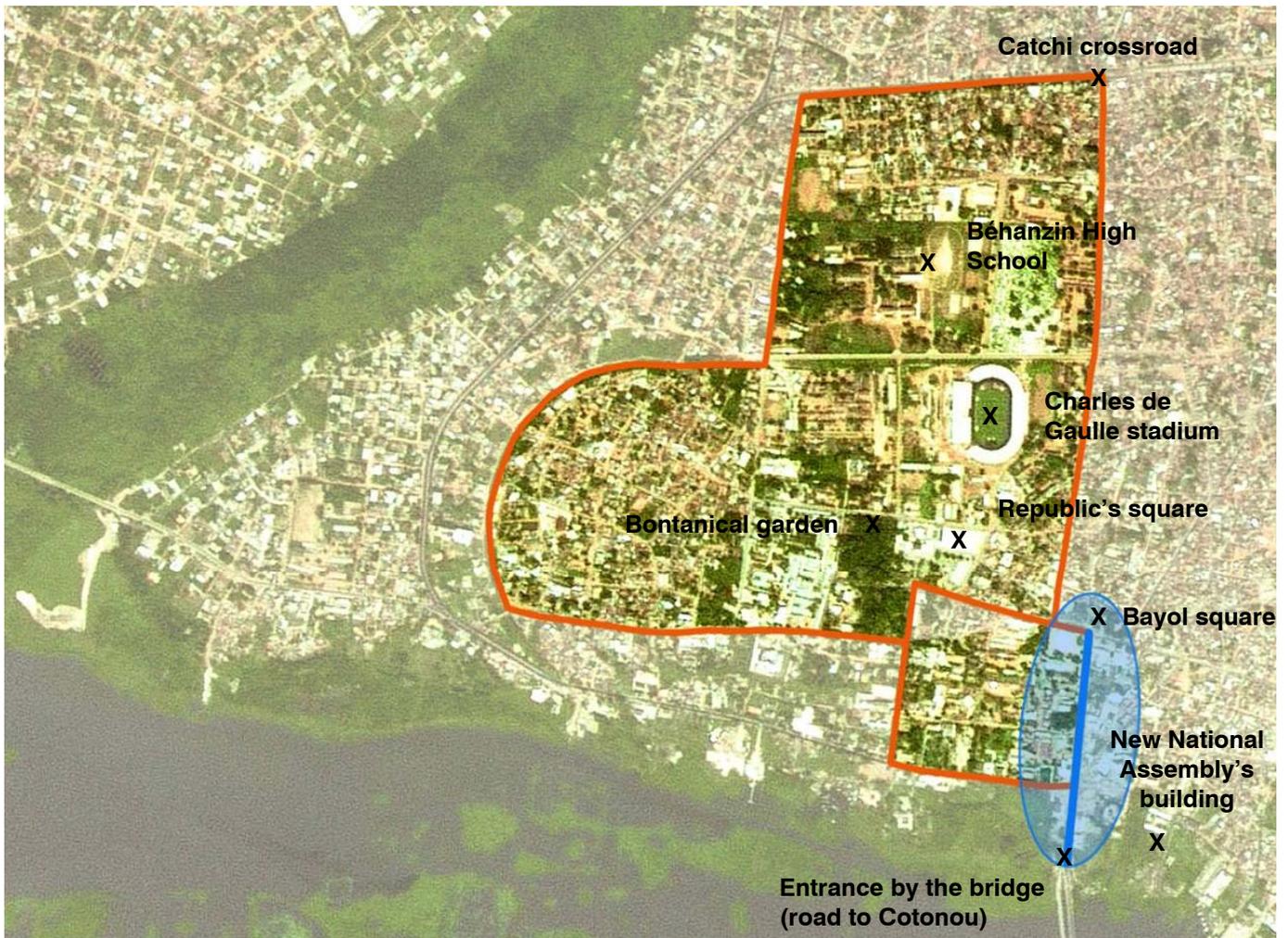
In the heart of the city, the site unfolds in the West along an axis that goes from the bridge (the only access to the city from the south bank of the lagoon and Cotonou) to the Place Jean Bayol until the Catchi crossroad and the ring boulevard, which epitomizes Porto-Novo's urban renewal, the city finally deciding to consider its lagoon again.

With important traffic axis, highly symbolic squares and crossroads (Place Bayol, Cacthi crossroad, Place de la République...), a colonial heritage, mainly home for public and military administrations (The gendarmerie's grouping of Ouémé-Plateau, Behazin high-school, Sainte-Jeanne's Cathedral, The Governor's palace which is home for the current Parliament....) and places yet to be conquered and planned again, such as the area at the exit of the bridge or the

area nearby the Charles de Gaulle stadium, the site is a border between the colonial city and the traditional historical city.

Today, many amenities seem obsolete in regards to the Sustainable African Capital status that Porto-Novo wishes to acquire. Thus, many structures such as firestations, police stations, gendarmerie brigades and other military housing will be relocated on other sites, this will free an important amount of land.

The city has to think about an urban economic dynamic that is in favour of the site's development, which is now home for a lot of administration buildings and hosts some quality leisure areas (sport fields, botanical garden, museum, restaurants, hotels)



The studied perimeter.

The capital's gate : urban renewal and strategic planning.

The entrance to the capital city, from the exit of the only bridge that crosses the lagoon until the Bayol square is to be deeply transformed. The transformation has already started with the construction of the new Parliament house and the planning of the Boulevard along the lagoon. An important open space area, opened to the lagoon, that is meant to host artistic exhibitions and leisure areas must be a part of this planning project. The area is located on a strategic place inside the city's urban structure and the articulation of its different functions.

A massive amount of land lots can be freed next to the main axis linking the city's entrance, the Place Bayol and the Catchi crossroad, thus offering an improvement and a restructuring potential that is fundamental to allow the necessary mutation of this area, which is a gateway to the city. It will eventually be a symbol of Porto-Novo's new status of sustainable African capital.



The end of the Place Bayol- Catchi crossroad axis offers great land opportunities.



At the entrance of the city, the road linking the bridge crossing the lagoon to the Place Bayol have been entirely redone.

When artists draw the planners attention

En préalable de la session, pour enrichir la réflexion et proposer un regard décalé sur la problématique urbaine, il sera proposé à plusieurs artistes de Porto-Novo, associés à l'atelier d'urbanisme, de réaliser pendant la période de préparation une œuvre conçue pour interpeller les participants , donner leur propre vision du site étudié et prendre position sur les enjeux soulevés par le sujet de l'atelier.

Les artistes associés présenteront les œuvres qu'ils auront spécifiquement réalisées d'abord aux participants lors des journées d'introduction de la session, puis aux membres du jury.

Ils seront invités à participer aux débats et forums pendant la session. Leurs travaux seront exposés pendant le jury puis présentés dans le cahier de session de l'atelier.



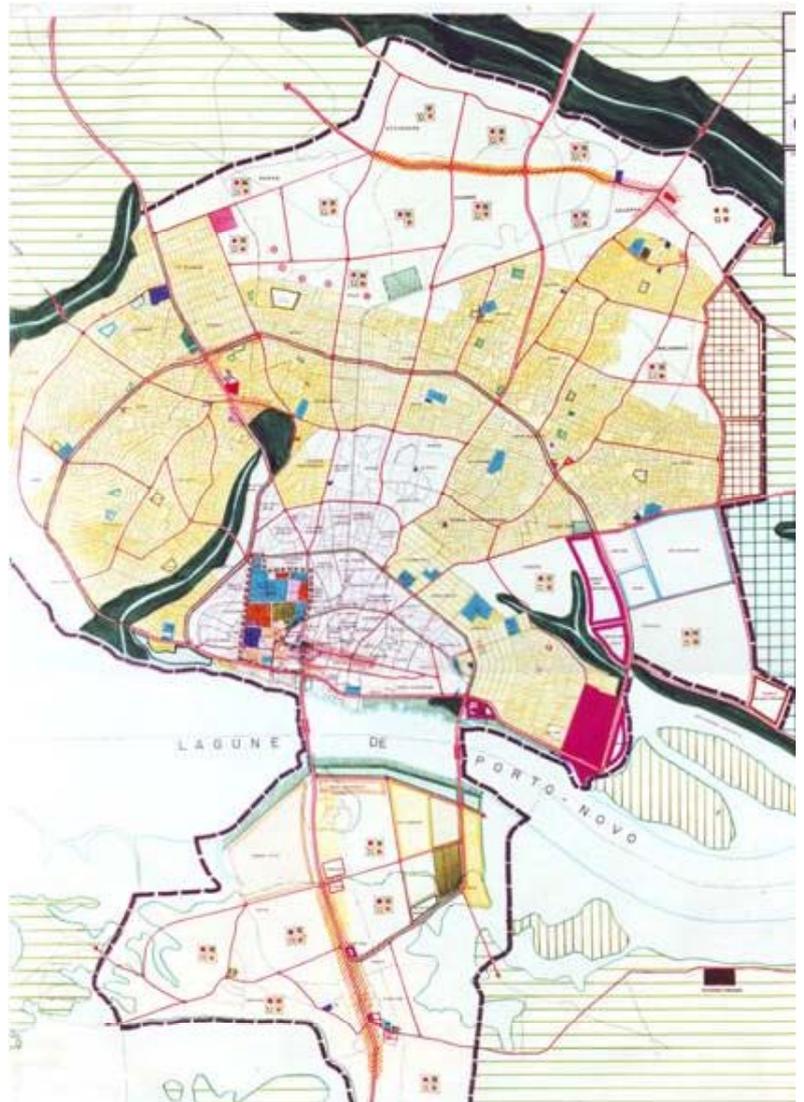
Banks – Drawing made in August 2010. The lagoon banks planning has already produced important efforts from the city: two workshops have worked on it, and other projects are on-going: the new Parliament, the lagoon boulevard, the land management. Today, the former colonial area is to be a part of the city's improvement and modernization. It is mostly an administration area, with little activities and housing.



Porto Novo's police's training centre.



Near the Behazin high-school, brownfields are not used.



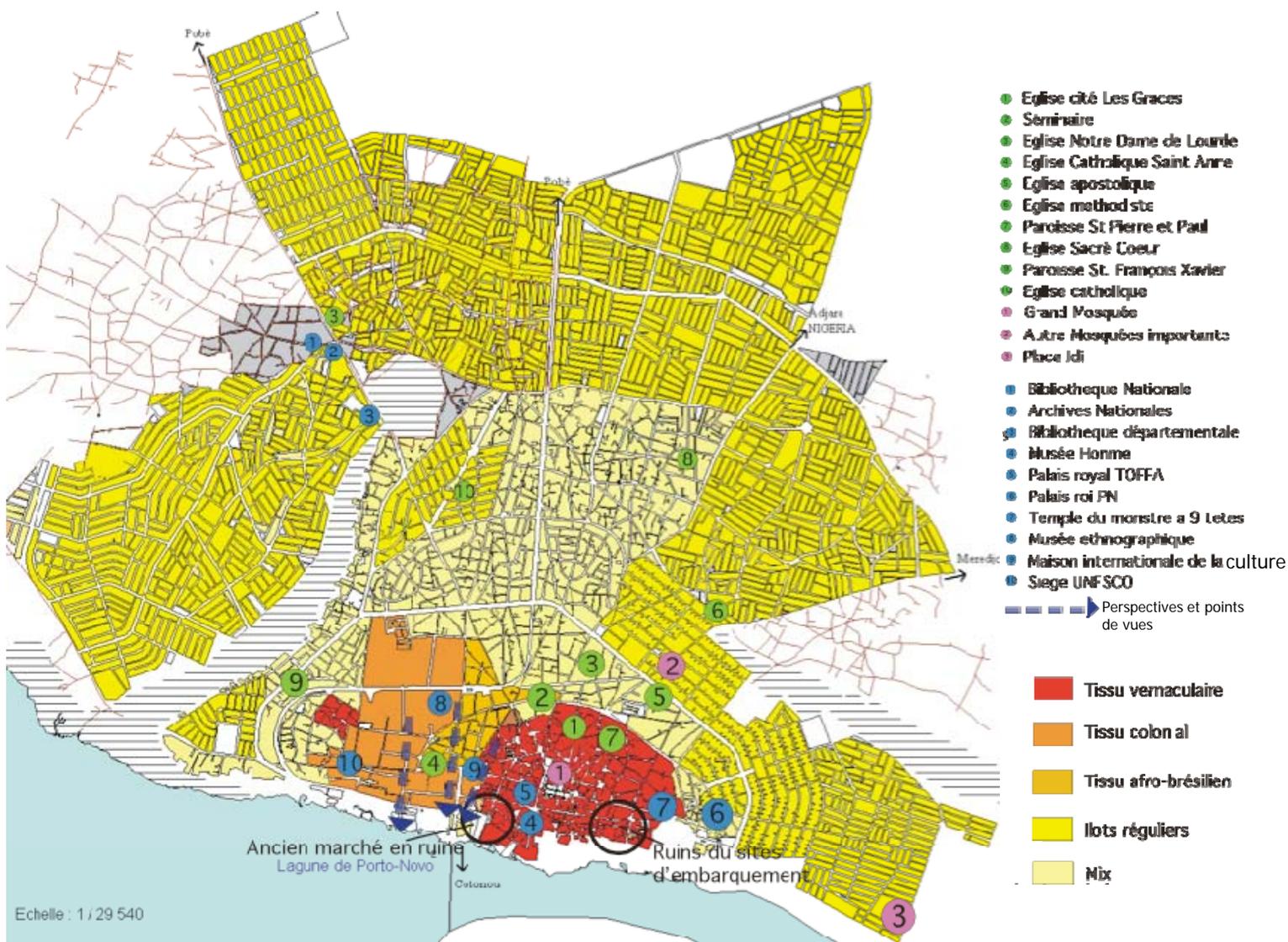
The 2005 main planning design. The studied site is one of its major challenge.



Afro-brasilian from Porto-Novo's city centre.



Sainte-Anne Church, along the « Bridge-Bayol square » axis.



The colonial fabric, here in orange, is the studied perimeter. In red, the traditional city which is the spiritual heart of it.

Workshop schedule

<i>Friday 22nd July</i>	Arrival of the foreign contestants. Settling in the accommodations.
<i>Saturday 23rd July</i>	Afternoon: Tour of the city. Welcoming dinner with the organisation team. Presentation of the Porto-Novo's workshop and of the session's organisation
<i>Sunday 24th July</i>	Morning: Introducing the candidates and presentation (1/3). Afternoon: Guided tour of the site.
Monday 25th July	Morning: Introducing the candidates and presentation (2/3). 11am : Opening ceremony and speeches from the authorities. Afternoon: Lectures. Introducing the candidates and presentation (2/3).
<i>Tuesday 26th July</i>	Morning: Lectures or visits on the site. Making the teams, explaining the methodology and launching the workshop.
<i>Wednesday 27th July</i>	Workshop
<i>Thursday 28th July</i>	Workshop
<i>Friday 29th July</i>	Workshop
<i>Saturday 30th July</i>	9h-12h : first Exchange forum. Then, workshop.
<i>Sunday 31st July</i>	Free day. Organized tour.
<i>Monday 1st August</i>	Workshop
<i>Tuesday 2nd August</i>	Workshop
<i>Wednesday 3rd August</i>	Workshop
Thursday 4th August	Workshop. 2pm-5pm : second Exchange forum.
<i>Friday 5th August</i>	Workshop
<i>Saturday 6th August</i>	Free day
<i>Sunday 7th August</i>	Workshop
<i>Monday 8th August</i>	Workshop. Arrival of the jury's members. Welcoming dinner.
<i>Tuesday 9th August</i>	Workshop. Delivering the 8 A4 pages at 8pm. <i>Jury : Introduction to the theme and the site in the morning. Then, lecture of the members of the jury to Porto-Novo's local authorities.</i>
<i>Wednesday 10th August</i>	Delivering the A0 boards at 12am. Rehearsal of the presentations. <i>Jury : Tours, then preparation work of the jury during the afternoon.</i>
Thursday 11th August	9am : International jury. Introducing the teams, debates, then, jury's deliberation. Closing party with results announcements and awards attribution.
<i>Friday 12th August</i>	Collective tour to Ouidah, and departure of the contestants and the jury.

Workshop's organisation

The workshop will take place in Porto-Novo from 23rd July to Friday 12th August 2011, and will gather 24 contestants that will form 4 teams of 6 people, led by a mixed team made of professionals from the city and Ateliers internationaux members (2 or 3 assistants and 1 or 2 expert tutors).

The contestants will stay in houses that have been renovated by the city, in an Education institute or in a hotel. The workplace will be equipped with IT and the necessary drawing material. The teams will have access to documentary resources available on paper and digitally. A buffet will be served everyday for lunch, participants will have to take care of their dinners.

The jury will be a privileged moment for leaders, local and international experts, and contestants to meet. The jury will decide the rank of the four teams.

How to participate

This workshop is for young professionals and students of every background and whose education is related to urban planning: architects, geographers, landscape artists, engineers, economists, sociologists, artists... A Bachelor's degree is required. Age: between 22 and 30 years old.

Application process:

- A one page résumé. Name of the file : NAME_surname_CV
- Research work about a similar subject than that of the workshop but applied to a different site (preferably in your home country). Analysis reports+ graphic elements made by the applicant. Form: 6 A4 pages or 3 A3 pages. Name of the file: NAME_surname_RW
- Filled Application form. Name of the file: NAME_surname_ID

The complete file will be sent by email (attached files size up to 10MO accepted) to portonovo@ateliers.org

The deadline for applications is : **Sunday, 1st of May 2011.**

Results will be announced at the end of May.

Financial conditions

Participation Fees : 25 000 francs CFA for African contestants and 150 euros for non-African contestants.

25% of the price of the journey, personal insurance and visa will be refund by « Les Ateliers ».

Bursaries may be granted based on each contestant's personal situation.

Demands should be made to the following partners: Foundations, French ministry... .

Contact

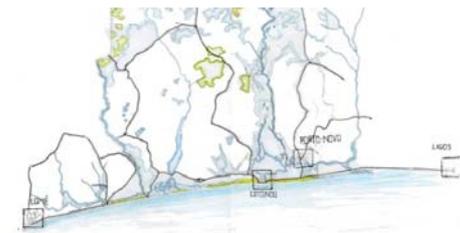
For further information, see our website www.ateliers.org and go to the Porto-Novo 2011 workshop page, or write us at portonovo@ateliers.org.

Porto-Novo : Daniel Zinsou Hounkpévi, director of the city of Porto Novo / Joëlle Akodjenou, workshop manager.

Les Ateliers : Antoine Plane, deputy director.



Benin in West-Africa



Benin's coastline



City-centre



In the street



Daily life during the workshop