

BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND THE CITY

THE IN-BETWEEN

Architecture ideas competition

LEAP

April 2019

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BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND THE CITY

1. PRESENTATION OF THE COMPETITION

Between the School and the City is a student competition launched by the Laboratoire d'étude de l'architecture potentielle (LEAP) as part of a research-creation project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). The Laboratoire d'étude de l'architecture potentielle (LEAP) is an interuniversity group of researchers from the Université de Montréal, Concordia University, McGill University and UQAM. The research-creation project is led by professors Anne Cormier, Jean-Pierre Chupin and Georges Adamczyk from the École d'architecture of the Université de Montréal.

This project aims to explore the didactic potential of architecture in its relationship to the city, this, more specifically considering the design of in-between spaces mitigating the school and the city within the 21st century context of one of the Canadian downtown, Montreal. To do so, an original mode of investigation relying on an ideas competition is proposed. In architecture, ideas competitions do not necessarily lead to the construction of the winning project. Its objective is to bring out innovative proposals and to contribute actively to the public debate. In the framework of this research, the ideas competition is the creative constituent of the project. The completion results will be analyzed and made available online, in French and in English, on the Canadian Competitions Catalog website (<http://www.ccc.umontreal.ca/>).

On June 1st, 2019, six selected teams will benefit from a workshop offering a basic training on the subject of school architecture. The competitors will then submit their proposals in August.

In September, actors from the fields of architecture and education will join in a jury and evaluate them to choose a winner. The six participating teams will each receive \$1,500. In addition, the winner will be awarded the prize of \$3,000.

1.1 Competition goals

The competition *Between the School and the City* aims to explore new ideas for schools to be built in dense urban environments. The purpose of this competition is to encourage a critical reflection on the architecture of schools located in city centers and its ability to introduce schoolchildren to the quality of their built environment. Competitors will have to generate questions and develop proposals, which will be of interest to both specialists and citizens. The ideas competition *Between the School and the City* focuses more specifically on the interfaces between the school and the city. These spaces are part of the daily lives of students and teachers, without being exclusively dedicated to teaching.

The researchers located the project in Montreal's Griffintown neighborhood, which has recently undergone a major densification and where there are no public elementary schools. The chosen site is the southeast section of the block defined by William, Eleanor, Ottawa and Murray Streets. The buildings located at 287 Eleanor Street and 290-316 Murray Street are to be preserved.

In Montreal, as in other Canadian cities, school design presents new challenges because the generalized model of monofunctional building with an exterior playground no longer answers to the realities of urban centers. School boards are struggling to change this model and to encourage real estate developers to contribute to this transition.

The ideas competition *Between the School and the City* invites students to design a mixed-use architectural project that will include a primary school, residential units and commercial space. Presumably, for practical and economic

reasons, the school building would occupy the first floors. Some of its spaces could be shared with the public outside of school hours. The residential units would be located primarily on the upper floors while the commercial units would be located on the ground floor, with direct access to the street. The challenge of the competition is to reflect on the interfaces between the school and the city, but also between various spaces (for instance: between the residential units and the school, between the indoor and the outdoor, etc.).

1.2 Questions about the in-between

- How can the interfaces between the school and the city promote the relationship and interaction of schoolchildren with the neighborhood and the city?
- Can the forms, materials and spaces of a school make schoolchildren aware of architecture and the urban environment?
- How to imagine connections between various spaces to enhance the daily experience of schoolchildren?
- Can the in-between trigger events?
- Which perceptual and visual relationships could enrich the in-between experience?
- How can the school be inserted in a new way and affirm its presence in the denser city?
- How to calibrate openness and security while enhancing the interfaces between the school and the city?
- Should the school be a landmark, and if so, how?
- How can school architecture encourage dialogue between people, whether they are students, parents, teachers or neighbors?

1.3 The in-between realm

The in-between realm was studied by the Dutch architect Aldo van Eyck in the 1960s (*The Child, the City and the Artist*, 2008). Aldo van Eyck deals with the articulation between spaces of different functions and with the design of a friendly architecture rooted in urban center. In doing so, he considers playgrounds, these small trivial spaces that are often determining in the interaction between the children and the city. His work was further deepened by the Dutch architect Herman Hertzberger through his writings and numerous school projects (*Lessons for Students in Architecture*, 1991; *Space and Learning*, 2008).

Hertzberger's first projects consider the school building as a micro-city. He introduces urban archetypes (houses, street, square, etc.) into the design of interior spaces and establishes a spatial gradation from private to public with numerous transitional spaces or in-between (threshold, entrance, interior street, gallery, stairs, etc.). In his more recent projects, the school building contributes even more to the city: it qualifies the urban environment and offers public places.

For his project of the *De Vogels School* in Oegstgeest (2004), Herman Hertzberger extends the interior street and transforms it into a large, elevated open-air place including a recreation area. In the *Opmaat School* in Arnhem (2004-2007), he pursues the same idea, by applying it to the topography. The large slanted roof of the school becomes an urban park: a green socialization area with a view of the city. In the *Schalkwijk School* project in Haarlem, he also builds an outdoor elevated place that covers the entire building. The school becomes a big urban place for meeting, social exchange and play.

Other architects have recently rethought the typology of schools in dense urban environments. The five floors of *Marlborough Elementary School*, designed in 2018 by Dixon Jones in the heart of London, are equipped with large terraces. These spaces are for recreation and socialization and are opened to the city. However, they are not accessible to citizens, as the ones designed by Herzberger. The inner courtyard located on the ground floor welcomes parents and schoolchildren while the terraces are only for students and teachers, it represents a compromise between openness and protection.

Squares, terraces and urban parks are just some examples of transitions spaces between the school and the city, but perhaps the most obvious ones. In Montreal, off-hours, school playgrounds are also spaces opened to the public. An analysis of targeted projects made us discover other in-betweens, an array of architectural devices: thresholds, windows, embrasures, modulated by textures, shading, colors, and also by the scale of these places.

2. CALENDAR

April 2019	Official launch of the competition and opening of the call for applications
April 22nd, 2019	Question period opening (call for applications)
May 10th, 2019	Question period end (call for applications)
May 17, 2019	Deadline for application
May 22nd, 2019	Announcement of the 6 finalist teams
	Question period opening (ideas competition)
June 1st, 2019	Mandatory workshop on school architecture
August 23rd, 2019	Question period end (ideas competition)
August 30th, 2019	Deadline for projects submittal
September 2019	Jury

The competition results will be announced in the fall and all the projects will be included in the Canadian Competition Catalogue. They will thus be accessible to the public. Following the jury, the LEAP research team will do a full analysis of the competition results.

3. ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION

Teams must include minimum 3 students registered or admitted to a Quebec university master degree. At least one of these students must be registered or admitted in an architecture master degree at the Université de Montréal, McGill University or Université Laval. In addition, all students must have been registered in a university program during the winter semester of 2019.

A proof of eligibility is required (a letter from the registrar or an other document confirming registration admission in a university program for the winter semester of 2019 and registration or admission at a master degree) for each student. Students can only be members of one team. By entering the competition, students commit to developing a project that meets the requirements of the competition.

Each team will have to submit a recommendation letter from a professor or a lecturer. This letter will testify the earnestness of the team's candidacy.

Each team must complete the registration form available on the website <https://leap-architecture.org/> including an identification code and identify a representative. The identification code must be composed of three letters and two digits (ABC23, for example). The designated representative will be the team's contact person.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

All questions should be sent during question periods via email to concours.leap@gmail.com. During the call for applications, the questions and answers will be posted on the LEAP website. During the contest, they will be sent to each group's contact person.

The questions that will be raised during the workshop will be collected and the answers will be sent to all competitors.

5. PROCEDURE

5.1 Call for applications

The call for applications is opened to an unlimited number of teams. The application files must be sent via *we transfer* to the competition organizers at "concours.leap@gmail.com" no later than May 17, 2019. No proposal received after this date will be considered.

The received documents will be used by LEAP for research purposes.

5.1.2 Application

The team's application files must include:

5.1.2.1 The registration form

5.1.2.2 Proof of eligibility of each team member

5.1.2.3 A letter of recommendation

5.1.2.4 A document containing a portfolio and a text presenting the vision of the project.

This document (PDF of 20 MB maximum) must not exceed 13 pages (8½ x 11 landscape). It must preserve the candidates' anonymity and be identified as follow: ECOVI_PORTFOLIO_VISION_ABC23.

5.1.2.4.1 Portfolio

Portfolio of works demonstrating the creativity, innovation and criticism of the team through architectural design.

This portfolio must preserve the team members' anonymity. No name should appear (students, professors, universities).

Maximum (10) pages

5.1.2.4.2 Vision

Text written in French or English describing the team's vision about the competition topic.

Without adhering strictly to the questions presented in section 1 (Goals), participants are strongly encouraged to refer to them. The text must preserve the team members' anonymity.

Maximum (3) pages

5.1.3 Submission of the application

Application files must be submitted as a compressed digital folder including all required documents. The folder should be identified as ECOVI_STEP1_ABC23. A receipt notification will be sent by email to the team representative.

5.1.4 Teams selection

LEAP researchers will review the texts and portfolios of the eligible teams and select six teams to complete the competition. These six teams will have distinguished themselves by demonstrating their research and creation skills, and most importantly, a strong approach and vision.

On May 22, 2019, the selection of the finalist teams will be published on the LEAP website. Each team representative will be notified of the results by email.

5.2 Ideas competition

The competition includes the mandatory participation of the selected team members in a one-day workshop on Saturday, June 1st.

The complete finalists' project files must be sent via *we transfer* to the competition organizers at "concours.leap@gmail.com" no later than August 30th, 2019. Each team having submitted a complete project by this date will receive \$1,500.

The projects will be used by the LEAP for research, exhibition and publication purposes.

5.2.1 Workshop

The workshop includes two lectures in the morning: one by Mark Dudek and the other by Adam Wood, both specialists in school architecture. The afternoon is dedicated to workshops to introduce competitors to school architecture and children's motor and perceptual skills. The members of each team will be divided into the various workshops where they will meet the morning lecturers as well as education specialists.

5.2.2 Competition projects

The projects must preserve the anonymity of the candidates and must include:

5.2.2.1 Written document

A text of at least 2,000 words outlining the ideas proposed by the team.

The text must have a title and may include supporting illustrations.

Format: maximum of (4) 11x17 pages (landscape format, font 11 pt minimum) The use of color is allowed. This text must be saved in PDF format (maximum of 20 MB) and identified as follows: ECOVI_REFLECT_ABC23.pdf

5.2.2.2 Graphic presentation

Three landscape size panels (A, B and C) saved in PDF format (maximum of 200 MB per panel) and that can be printed (therefore legible) in A1 and A3.

Definition: 300 dpi.

The panels must include a 200-word text summarizing the project and explaining key elements and important ideas. The presentation of the project must demonstrate a critical reflection on the architecture of schools in city centers and its ability to introduce schoolchildren to their living environment quality. In view of a broad diffusion, the representation methods must also anticipate the reading of the project by a wide audience. A graphic scale must be drawn next to each drawing.

Panel A:

- project title
- conceptual diagrams
- Section perspectives expressing the spatial quality of the in-between

NOTE: This type of drawing can easily be generated from a SketchUp model providing a simple manipulation of the depth of field. Technical explanations and sample drawings will be made available to the competitors at the end of May.

Identification: ECOVI_A_ABC23

Panel B:

- basic plans and sections (1: 250)

Identification: ECOVI_B_ABC23

Panel C:

- site plan (1: 500)
- key map of vignettes (1: 500)
- vignettes - point of view of a child: towards school
- vignettes - a child's point of view: from the inside of the school, looking to the outside

Identification: ECOVI_C_ABC23

5.2.2.3 Project summary

Teams must submit a project summary including the 200-word text presented on the panels and 3 images representing clearly the main ideas of the project.

Format: maximum of (2) 8½ x 11 sheets. This document must be saved in PDF format (maximum of 20 MB).

Identification: ECOVI_FICHE_ABC23.pdf

5.2.3 Projects submittal

The projects must be sent as a compressed digital folder including all the required documents. The folder should be identified as ECOVI_ETAPE2_ABC23. A receipt notification will be sent by mail to the team representative.

5.2.4 Jury

In September 2019, the jury will examine the 6 projects according to their contribution to creation, innovation, as well as to architectural and urban criticism within the context of downtown school architecture. The jury will then award a first prize.

The jury includes architecture and education specialists. It does not include any LEAP members, whether they are researchers or associates. The names of the members of the jury will be known and communicated shortly via the LEAP website (<https://leap-architecture.org/>).

In the evaluation of each project, the jury members will consider, among other things, the following criteria:

- the ability to introduce schoolchildren to their built environment
- the articulation of the in-between interface of the school and the city
- the integration of the school into a mixed-use building that is also opened to citizens