



PRESS RELEASE

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Société Générale's new tower will be a "high environmental quality" tower

Société Générale and NEXITY, in association with VINCI, intend to make this project a reference point for the new generation of skyscrapers of the start of the twenty-first century. Work is scheduled to start on Société Générale's new office tower on 17 January 2005.

This tower, located right next door to the bank's head office in La Défense, will be outlined against the skyline of the Valmy district and of the new Seine-Arche district of Nanterre, and will represent the westernmost border of the Esplanade of La Défense.

The project, dubbed "Granite," was designed as a major signal in the site of La Défense. It presents as a high, slender triangular prism, like the leading prow of the Valmy district. This triangular shape and the constraints of the small plot of land (2,300 sq.m.) have presented a considerable challenge for the design studio of Christian de Portzamparc and the teams that are involved in this project, to contain 68,000 sq.m. of office space, rising to 180 metres, which is 14 metres higher than Société Générale's first two towers. The new building, which will be inserted in perfect harmony between the slab of La Défense and the urban fabric of Nanterre, will accommodate 4,800 people.

In the context of the Management's professed policy commitment in favour of sustainable development, Société Générale implemented a "high environmental quality" ("HEQ") approach in the design of this tower. To gain official HEQ certification from the French scientific and technical centre for building ("CSTB"), the project must undergo a series of three audits at the stages of initial planning, design and execution, to guarantee that it conforms to the highly demanding environmental profile that Société Générale selected. This environmental distinction concentrates on innovative and highly effective concepts in the fields of healthy air quality, hydrothermal comfort, visual acceptability, and energy conservation, for which Sogeprom, a Société Générale subsidiary, is assistant to the project manager. Above all, the technical architecture offers each occupant the ability to control his own personal comfort when it comes to illumination, lighting, replacement of air, and ambient temperature.

The governing body of La Défense business district is collaborating on the project to ensure that the urban development is harmonious and seamless from Nanterre to La Défense, and from the Valmy slab through to the new tower and Nanterre and its park.

Société Générale's CEO, Daniel Bouton, stated about the project: *"This tower will be a symbol of how dynamic and forward-looking our Bank is. By integrating into the existing Valmy infrastructure, it will infuse the district with renewed vitality and coherence. Its architectural and environmental quality will be emblematic of the values of the Group.*

Alain Dinin, CEO of Nexity remarked: *"The way in which Société Générale committed to carry out this project is exemplary, in terms of both a demand for quality and consideration for the environment. Nexity is proud to have been selected and is pleased to have been able to bring Vinci on board. Nexity is quite aware of the responsibility it incurs in executing what will eventually be a new symbol of the La Défense business district."*

The timetable

It was 2003 when Daniel Bouton selected Christian de Portzamparc's architectural plan on the recommendation of a selection jury. All the supplementary investigations have now been completed. The building is due to be completed in the first quarter of 2008. The tower has been designed to either bringing together the departments already located at La Défense, or to be rented out. The decision is due in 2006.

The Group

At each era, it has been able to epitomise modernity within timelessness in its architectural creations.

The buildings it has occupied, or that it is currently occupying, from the historic head office on Boulevard Haussmann to the Alicante and Chassagne towers located in the business district of La Défense, have had an impact on the Paris architectural landscape.

Continuing a long tradition of corporate patronage, it conducts a high-quality arts policy, which is given expression by the many works of art displayed in the head office.

At the same time, in the real estate realm,

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Nexity:

Nexity, the leading French real estate operator, is involved in this project with its subsidiary Nexity-Sari, one of the key players in the French corporate real estate world.

When it was selected by after a consultation of developers, Nexity wished to work in association with Vinci, a world leader in construction and public works. Since June 2001, Nexity has been working with and advising With a proud catalogue of expertise (more than 605,000 sq.m. of net surface area delivered since 2000), in the context of a real estate development contract signed on 14 December 2004, Nexity will produce what will become a benchmark building in the La Défense business centre.

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VINCI

Vinci is the world's leading expert in performing construction concessions with associated services, earning a turnover of € 19 billion a year and employing 128,000 people world-wide. Its construction subsidiaries have contributed considerably to the building of the La Défense area, and, in particular, built the infrastructures of the business district when it was created in the 1970s.

Its subsidiaries SOGEA and GTM – specialists in building multi-storeyed buildings – have completed forty buildings and towers at La Défense, accounting for nearly 42% of the buildings there. In 1995, SOGEA with CBC and BATEG delivered the tower that contains s head office. At the end of 2001, SOGEA and BATEG completed construction of the tower that now accommodates EDF's departments.

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Christian de Portzamparc:

The Granite project was designed as a major signal in the site of La Défense. It presents itself as a high, slender triangular prism, like the leading prow of the Valmy district.

It will be built in its triangular plot in a twin form: the dihedral that forms the point jutting out from the whole and prismatic faces of the side of the existing tower.

The shapes arise out of a synthesis between a search for the outward expression in the site and the internal requirements. The idea is to create a collection of work spaces with the most conducive qualities: functionality, flexibility, atmosphere and comfort, and to provide, via this project, a major event in the environment, a pace-setter that can unite the district.

Due to its shape, the tower can be seen foremost as an autonomous, aloof building, yet being at the point of a triangle made up of the other existing towers, Alicante and Chassagne, it is also in continuity with the existing outline.

The accentuation of the height by the raised point and the inclined roof successfully provides a presence in the figure of a prow in the landscape of La Défense and Nanterre. At that spot the building must both unite and complete the Valmy district, by this slender skyline, which is without parallel in the district.

The prismatic and oblique work continues with more breadth the research begun by Christian de Portzamparc in prior projects, in Lille, New York and Frankfurt, by optimising here the efficiency of the plates and the relationship with the neighbouring tower, whose view and light it is important to preserve.

Currently, two large projects dedicated to music are under way: the Luxembourg concert hall (inauguration in July 2005) and the Cidade da Musica in Rio de Janeiro. In December 2004 delivery will be made of the head office of the Le Monde newspaper, a revamping of a 1970s Paris building. On another scale, that of an entire district, the urban development of the Masséna Seine Rive Gauche sector in Paris is currently in progress. The major projects at the planning stage are: a district in Beijing, the Hergé Museum in Belgium, and a residential tower of the same height as the Granite project in Manhattan, New York, at the corner of Park Avenue and 28th Street.

An exhibition "Christian de Portzamparc, Plural and Singular" at the Lille Palais des Beaux-Arts, running till 10 January 2005, presents these new projects and achievements, in a trail through models and projects.

Christian de Portzamparc received the 1993 Grand Prix National d'Architecture, and the prestigious Pritzker Prize in 1994. On 20 December 2004, he will be awarded the Grand Prix de l'Urbanisme (town-planning grand prize) by the Minister for Infrastructure, Transportation, Territorial Development, Tourism and the Sea.

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EPA Seine-Arche:

The "public development body" or "EPA" Seine-Arche undertakes one of the largest urban operations of the Greater Paris Region. At the heart of the parish of Nanterre, on 124 ha between the Seine and the Arche de La Défense, 640,000 sq.m. of residences, offices, shops, infrastructure and services will be developed over 15 years around ample public areas of good quality: a 14-ha park on the banks of the Seine, to be delivered in 2005, and 17 landscaped terraces that rise gently from the Seine to the Gardens of the Arche.

Less than four years after the formation of the EPA, the operation is solidly involved in the start-up of two major real estate programs on the sector located between the railway station of Nanterre Préfecture and the district of La Défense: the building of 60,000 sq.m. of offices last September and, today, the 68,000 sq.m. of offices of the Granite project.

The high requirements for architectural and environmental quality, expressed in the running of the project management for this tower bring together the desired ambition by the developer for the entire Seine-Arche project.

At the same time, the EPA Seine-Arche is undertaking the development of the environment of the Granite Project to restore an urban character to a sector that has now become beholden to the car, and to link the Park district to Nanterre, with the La Défense district. These developments, that are due to be finished at the same time as the Tower, include transforming the boulevard into a landscaped pedestrian avenue, and creating a network of easy links by the town planner Albert Amer; the creation of a pedestrian walkway to LD designed by engineer Schlaich Bergermann and architect Dietmar Feichtinger, the engineers responsible for the Tolbiac footbridge; the creation of yet another bridge to cross the RN 314 main road, designed by Ingerop and AOA.

All of these developments will come under the sustainable development approach adopted by the EPA: easy links, shared roadways, no surface-sealing and recovery of rain water, among other principles.

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