

landscape. The hope was that the development would be a bridge between city and suburb, and act as a 'gateway' to Paris from the east. This design agenda was a pure act of will of the French government rather than one based on a market study. It was developed under the strong influence of the then President of France, Giscard d'Estaing. He had chosen Adrein Fainsilber from amongst 27 French architects to convert the Grande Salle into a science museum.

The competition for the park attracted 472 entries from 41 countries. The team headed by Bernard Tschumi won the competition (see Figure 5.17a). He was then appointed head of the project team to implement it. In 1984, a closed competition for the Music Centre and for four housing schemes on the north side of the park was held (Baljon, 1995). The construction of the park began in 1985 and can be said to have been completed in 1997. The design was conceived so that it could evolve as construction progressed and changes are still occasionally being made. Its 'finished' state is shown in Figure 5.17c.

The design has attracted considerable attention because it was associated with a design ideology derived from contemporary literary analysis. It consists of three largely independent systems superimposed on each other. The first is a series of points at the intersections of a 120-metre (390-foot) grid, eight squares to the north and south and five squares east to west. At the intersections are a series of follies, their structural envelope covered by bright red-enamelled steel sheets (see Figure 5.18a). Tschumi designed them all. The second system consists of a set of lines. These are the paths of pedestrian movement organized in two interconnected systems. One consists of cross axes of covered galleries, and the second of a meandering

'cinematic' promenade presenting a sequential series of vistas and enclosures. The third system consists of the surfaces of the park. In addition, alleys of trees link the major activity sites of the park. The surface materials, grass and paving, were chosen to best afford the activities that were expected to take place in different locations.

The follies are 10.8-metre (36-foot) cubes 'divided three dimensionally into 12-foot cubes forming "cases"'. These cases according to Tschumi 'can be decomposed into fragments . . . or extended through the addition of other elements' (Tschumi, 1987). Certain gardens on the 'cinematic promenade' were allocated to other architects to design. Each garden had, however, to be designed within the framework established by Tschumi.

The park contains of a mix of facilities. The Cité des Sciences, a science and technology museum, is housed in what was the largest of the old Villette's slaughterhouses (see Figure 5.18b). It is 40 metres (133 feet) high and stretches over 3 hectares (7 acres). Adrien Fainsilber (with Peter Rice and Martin Francis) had three major concerns in creating his design: water should surround the building, vegetation should penetrate the greenhouses, and light the cupola. The park also contains La Géode, a giant entertainment sphere with a high hemispherical screen, the Grande Halle, an old cattle shed converted into exhibition space, the Cité de la Musique, l'Argonauts, a navigation museum with a submarine parked outside it, and the Zenith Theatre. The theatre is a polyester tent designed for audiences of 6000 attending pop-music concerts.

During the summer, the Parc attracts as many as 15,000 people a day; during the winter it has about 3000 visitors each day. The French government has achieved its goal. The park attracts international acclaim