

2024 SG 4 - Place de la Concorde redevelopment project (Paris 8th arrondissement): Approval to carry out the project: scope, ambitions, organisation of the project management consultation, public involvement, governance, timetable, financial terms and conditions and partnership.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A vast mineral space entirely devoted to cars, the Place de la Concorde is now one of the capital's worst heat islands. It is also an inhospitable and dangerous area for pedestrians, who struggle to cross it despite the fact that, between the Tuileries gardens and the Champs Élysées gardens, it is an essential milestone on the historic axis of Paris. The obelisk at its centre is inaccessible and the square's historical heritage is not promoted.

Following on from the work to improve the avenue and gardens of the Champs-Élysées, the City of Paris would like to undertake a long-term redevelopment project for the Place de la Concorde. The Rugby World Cup, with its village occupying half of the square, and the sports facilities prefiguring the Olympic and Paralympic Games have shown that Parisians and visitors alike are ready to take advantage of this freed-up space to make the most of this historic heritage and available public space. The challenge of redeveloping this square is one of climate, heritage and landscape.

The scope of the operation

The project covers an area of 7 hectares, including the whole of the Place de la Concorde, from the Seine to the Hôtel de la Marine, and from the Champs-Élysées gardens to the Tuileries gardens. This square, a Parisian symbol of the major developments of the 18th and 19th centuries, is a listed historic monument. It is also surrounded by remarkable buildings and public spaces, whose heritage value is recognised and protected.

The redevelopment of Place de la Concorde will be a further milestone in the renovation and enhancement of the Porte Maillot/Place Charles-de-Gaulle Etoile/Avenue des Champs-Élysées sequence, which has already been initiated by the major works carried out on Porte Maillot, and the investments made by the City of Paris in 2023 on Avenue des Champs-Élysées, in its gardens, and on Place de l'Etoile. These works have restored the urban and landscape quality of these areas, in particular by repairing a large part of the floors and furnishings on the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, but also by planting a large amount of vegetation, removing the waterproofing from more than 5,000 m² and planting more than 100 trees in the gardens.

The future of the Place de la Concorde will therefore be built on the initial heritage enhancement work already undertaken with the renovation of its fountain and two gatehouses, as well as on the discussions initiated by the Atelier Parisien de l'Urbanisme and the Direction des Espaces Verts et de l'Environnement on the master plan for the gardens of the Champs-Élysées.



The historical development of the Place de la Concorde

La Concorde has not always looked as we know it today, having undergone several transformations between the 18th and 19th centuries.

In the middle of the 17th-century, the district evolved according to Gabriel's plans. Ditches were dug, grassy flowerbeds were planted around the perimeter, sentry boxes appeared and the royal statue was installed in 1763, giving rise to major festivities.

From then on, the Place Royale became the venue of choice for major Parisian celebrations and events. During the Restoration in 1836, Hittorff completed the development of the square, installing monumental fountains and all the street furniture we know today (rostral columns, lampposts, balusters), while preserving the ditches, in which orchards with fruit trees were cultivated.

But on 29 July 1844, during a fireworks display attended by more than 200,000 people (the anniversary of the 3 Glorieuses of 1830), a misdirected rocket created a crowd movement that resulted in 133 deaths falling into the ditches. The architect Hittorff was commissioned to fill in the ditches. Since this major transformation, the Place has changed little in terms of its geometry and minerality, although its subsoil has undergone a number of transformations.

The redevelopment of La Concorde will therefore have to be based on its historical evolution, by working with the Regional Conservation of Historic Monuments (CRMH) to develop guidelines that will best reveal the traces of its past, while responding to the climatic challenges of our century.

The square was listed as a Historic Monument by decree on 23 August 1937. This protection covers *the ground, the fountains, the statues, the small pavilions formerly known as sentry boxes, its balustrades, rostral columns and lampposts*. The different years of the

The buildings listed are from the 2 Gabriel periods, and the 2 Hittorff periods: 1757; 1772; 1836; 1840.



Main historical developments in the market

Taking account of these different historical states will be a major element in the future project management's thinking, through the two major historical markers of the square: the Gabriel state, which was accompanied by the development of planted flowerbeds in addition to the ditches, and the "Hittorff 1" state of 1836, constituting a reference state in terms of the furniture and statuary that appeared during this redevelopment (fountains, rostral columns, etc.).

Contemporary climate issues and heritage preservation issues could therefore come together to restore the splendour and plant history of the Place.

The project's ambitions

This site, which has undergone several major transformations over time, now appears to be severely restricted by motor traffic in terms of its uses and preservation. The central aim of the project will therefore be to restore the appeal of the largest square in Paris by re-establishing the link between the Avenue des Champs-Élysées and the Tuileries Gardens, by reducing the amount of space given over to motorised traffic in favour of pedestrians, and by restoring the old ditches and flowerbeds.

With pollution peaks still threatening our health and Paris facing 50°C summers, there is an urgent need to return the Concorde to pedestrians and cyclists, to plant it with as much vegetation as possible to make it a cooler place to stroll around the obelisk and fountains, and to reconnect with the square's plant heritage, its history and its emblematic views, while preserving its vocation as a meeting place.

The main objectives for the transformation of this square are as follows:

- **Pacifying and calming** Paris's largest square, making it easier to cross and encouraging active mobility
- **Combating the heat island**, cooling the square and encouraging ecological continuity
- **Reconnecting with the square's plant heritage, history** and emblematic views
- Preserving Concorde's role **as a meeting place**
- **Offering a new experience** and new uses

Meeting these objectives will mean changing the landscape of the square to provide open areas and planting, while respecting its historic geometry and layout, its perspectives and its symmetry.

The redevelopment of this site should therefore make it more resilient, with sober development and architectural intervention. In this respect, the project will be exemplary of the City of Paris' commitment to the climate, by minimising the carbon footprint throughout the operation (choice of materials and construction methods).

Launching the project and consultation

The project will be entrusted to a multi-disciplinary project management team, with a view to starting work in 2026. A call for tenders will therefore be launched in the first half of 2024 to select a team of heritage architects and landscapists capable of proposing a project that meets the major heritage challenges of this square, while incorporating the City's ambitions to adapt to climate change. The City of Paris' CAO will ultimately decide on the winner.

To prepare the specifications for this consultation, a development programme will be drawn up under the aegis of a committee comprising heritage historians and architects.

A consultation will be organised for the general public before the summer of 2024. The aim is to involve a wide audience in the project (site stakeholders - local residents and shopkeepers, Parisians, people from the Paris region, visitors) and to provide food for thought, particularly from the point of view of expected uses. The results will be included in the specifications for the project management tender. It will be the subject of a decree and will be organised around discussion and information events.

The estimated budget for the project is €30m excluding VAT, or €36m including VAT by January 2024.

Activating the site after the Olympic Games

A prefiguration of the layout and uses of the Place de la Concorde will be proposed from autumn 2024.

This temporary development has a number of aims: to provide a place for people to occupy and use the pedestrian areas that have been taken out of the way of general traffic; to adapt the square to climate change as a precursor to the final project; to provide a place for pedestrians to occupy the square with features that offer shade, coolness and humidity.

Lightweight installations in the space freed from motorised traffic could provide a balanced setting for alternating major events, cultural and sporting events, as well as a more everyday use of public space for families and tourists, contemplating the square's magnificent landscape.

Initial prefiguration work, proposed by the selected heritage project management team, may be undertaken in compliance with administrative authorisations. Given the size of the square and its heritage character, the aim is to create a monumental setting with a range of uses over time, and to ensure the aesthetic quality of the fittings and their implementation.

I have the honour of asking your Assembly:

- to approve the redevelopment of Place de la Concorde (Paris 8th arrondissement);
- to authorise the Mayor of Paris to make any long-term loaned applications for the administrative authorisations required for the redevelopment of Place de la Concorde (Paris 8th arrondissement);
- to authorise the Mayor of Paris to sign any agreement or contract with third parties concerning land, adjoining land or technical matters necessary for the completion of the project;
- to charge the corresponding expenditure to the City of Paris investment budget for 2024 and subsequent years, subject to the funding decision.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would be grateful if you could take this matter under advisement.

The Mayor of Paris