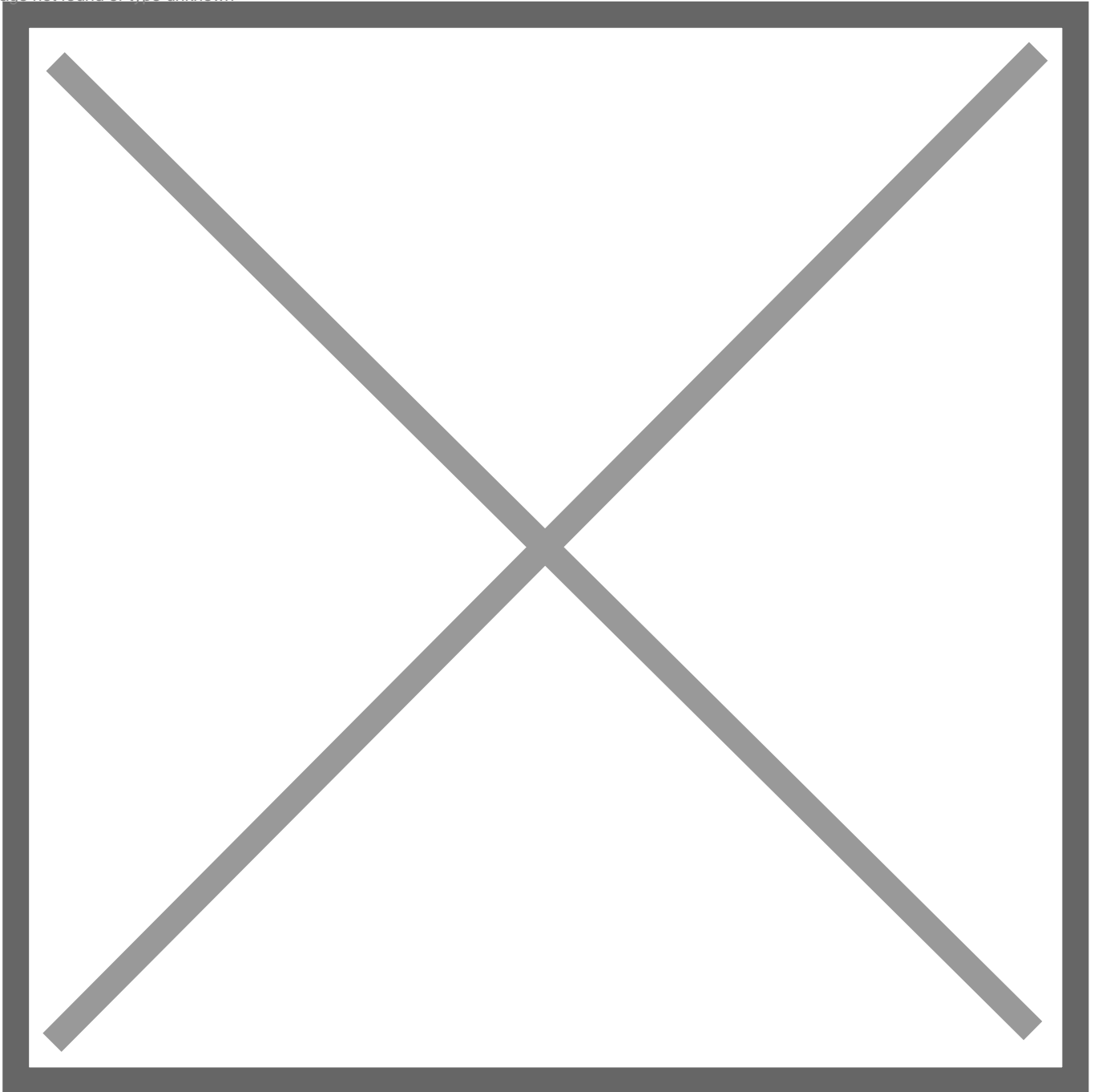


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Unité d'Habitation Marseille [Marseille Housing Unit] and Hôtel Le Corbusier

France

Boulevard Michelet 280
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (Région), Bouches-
du-Rhône (Département) 13008 Marseille

Commission

1945

Completion

1951

Original name

Unité d'Habitation Marseille [Marseille Housing Unit]

Original use

Housing/housing block

Current use

Housing/housing block

Architects

Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret, André Wogenscky,
master builder

Engineers

Etude et exécution: ATBAT (Atelier de Bâisseurs),
Vladimir Bodiansky, directeur de l'ATBAT, Marcel
Py, Directeur des travaux, Charlotte Perriand,
Internal services

Concrete by reinforcement

Reinforced concrete

Construction method

Cast-in-place concrete, in-situ concrete, Facade
cladding

Architectural concrete

Architectural concrete

Structural types

One-dimensional/concrete frame, Two-
dimensional/[cylindrical two-dimensional/barrel] vault

Description

The Unité d'Habitation is more than a residential building; it is a central element in the residential city concept developed by Le Corbusier for postwar reconstruction. Different versions of the Unité were built in other places, but the one in Marseille, the work of Shadrac Woods, George Candilis and Le Corbusier himself, is the first and most complete example. It has had an enormous influence on the subsequent development of the collective housing typology; it stands as a precursor of Brutalism and has inspired myriad buildings and neighborhoods all around the world. It is a rectangular building, 130 m long and 56 m high, containing 337 duplex apartments that are

accessed through an interior corridor running the length of the building, every three floors. The version in Marseille differs from other subsequent Unités in the ample size of its common spaces and its wide array of services: shops, sports installations, educational and health facilities, and a hotel. The open ground floor, raised atop pilotis, is surrounded by a broad landscaped space. The accessible roof functions as an area for socialization, incorporating a daycare center, swimming pools and zones for games and sports, with large sculptural concrete elements that singularize the space. As such, the building fulfills all the constitutive principles of the cité radieuse, which was not always the case with other models.

The use of exposed concrete responds to both economic and aesthetic reasons: the façade is organized by the apartments' double-height terraces, protected from the sun by an expressive prefabricated concrete brise-soleil. The walls, painted in primary colors following a random distribution, and given a characteristic treatment to denote common service areas, provide variety and liveliness to the volume. The structure of concrete pillars and slabs is not displayed externally on the façade, except on the ground floor where the immense pilotis are adapted to the building's urban scale.

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