

GARDEN SQUARE

GARDEN SQUARE: n.m. (1725) English word "square", of former French "esquarre" (équerre). **Little park, generally surrounded by a grid and arranged in the middle of a public square.** (Translated from the Petit Robert Dictionary)

The square appeared in the 17th century in England then in France in the 18th century. "The French "square" is a park formed in the middle of a public square, circumented by traffic and surrounded by buildings.. It should not be confused with the London square, a free space between for streets, reserved for the use of the residents; initially a paved area used as a court, it was later often planted": Dictionary of town planning and development (Dictionnaire de l'urbanisme et de l'aménagement), edited by P. Merlin and F Choay.

In 1630, the **Place Royale (1)** inspires Inigo Jones with the design of the first English planned square, Covent Garden (2). In the United Kingdom, the squares are related to the land system which generated in the 17th century a particular residential development: the landlords use a systems of long leases to impose to the promoters genuine town planning schemes, where nature plays a great part and the square is a kind of **cloister** with residential vocation for the residents, as Lewis Mumford underlines it: "the squares were used in fact for various domestic uses, beating carpets, spreading linen. The owners of the surrounding buildings finally transformed them into community parks or gardens "

From 1800 on, the enclosed lawn is systematically planted with plane or other trees. Its use, originally reserved only to the residents who have the key, becomes public. The garden square corresponds to a new

" Indépendamment des parcs plus ou moins étendus, nous trouvons dans nos villes des espaces plus restreints, mais qui n'en constituent pas moins un apport important au point de vue de l'esthétique et de l'hygiène. Chaque fois que les impérieuses nécessités de la circulation le permettent, toutes les places libres doivent être transformées en surfaces engazonnées et plantées. En général on donne à ces espaces le nom de squares. Ils peuvent être de dimension très réduites ou prendre une extension considérable. Ils sont souvent situés à l'intérieur des pâtés de maisons, au centre d'un carrefour, sur une place suffisamment vaste ".

Michel Conan

need for comfort, intimacy and amenities expressed by the middle-class.

The Kensington squares (1830-1840) bring in the field of **urban forms** a variety of public spaces contrasting by their freedom with the traditional urban squaring, like the English romantic garden. The network of squares dedicated either to traffic or to plants constitutes at that time a very important quality element in the urban composition. About 1880, the garden square suggested to Raymond Unwin the idea of the "close", which is a community field for the residents (3).

In 1840, in France, an experiment of English-style square is carried out on the grounds of the old Tivoli garden, in the 9th arrondissement of Paris. The owners transformed it into a closed garden exclusively reserved to them. In 1858 this garden square is given back to the public and becomes the square Vintimille, today square Berlioz. Indeed, the development of the garden square, which takes in France a public character, is impelled by Napoleon III and equips it with George Haussmann. Adolphe Alphand, a Ponts et Chaussées civil engineer, created in 1855 the first garden square of a series of 21, around the Saint-Jacques Tower (4). The garden square takes place in the sys-

flowers ". The garden squares are before all very designed as urban decoration, places of walk and relaxation. Playing was in the beginning practically prohibited; but as time went on, it became permitted and the lawns became accessible.

Many components such as lawns, flowers beds, benches, dustbins, tree lined walks, puppet theatre, roundabouts, basins and jets of water, auditorium, **bandstand**, and children playing equipment are used in its composition. One thus witnesses the development of specific furniture and decoration, which is still reference for the realization of many district parks, like the square Saint Lambert laid out in 1933 in the 15th arrondissement (8).

The garden square is above all today a neighbourhood park, but it can also be the framework chosen as a scene for other activities, like the "gallery square", which contains a shopping gallery (9). In general, it is all the same based on proximity, in the tradition of the residential garden squares. However, the forms evolve: the fence becomes indistinct. In the public garden squares there is generally a hedge masking it. In the garden squares included in housing estate as common parts, in fact the buildings being next to it sometimes act as fences (7) and they are sometime complemented by new shapes of barriers like the window of the "Jardin Lecourbe" designed by the architect J.-M. Wilmotte, who created here a community garden square (10). This transformation corresponds to new urban forms where the car has no longer a place.

Cf.: CLOITRE, CLOSE, COURT, URBAN FORM, GALLERY, STREET BLOCK, PARK, KIOSK, ROYAL SQUARE, SYSTEM OF PARKS

1. PLACE DES VOSGES PARIS, 1612

2. COVENT GARDEN, LONDRES, (1720)

3. LE CLOSE ANGLAIS, R. L'ANW. S. PARIS (1860)

4. LE SQUARE DE LA TOUR SAINT-JACQUES PARIS, 1855

5. LES SQUARES D'ALPHAND DANS LE SYSTEME DE PARCS DU JARDIN DU SECOND EMPIRE

6. LE SQUARE DES BATAIGNOLLES PARIS, 1862

7. LE SQUARE JACQUELLERMAN PARIS, 1990

8. COMPOSITION D'UN SQUARE : SQUARE SAINT-LAMBERT, PARIS, 1933

9. DIVERSITE DE TRAITEMENT DES SQUARES

6. PLACE JARDEN

7. SQUARE NON CLOS

9. SQUARE GALERIE

10. SQUARE COMMUNAUTAIRE

10. JARDIN LECOURBE, PARIS, 1993